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CHAPTER 1

Purpose, background and problem statement

1 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of the research conducted for this thesis was to understand the combination of different modes of representation (multimodality) in contemporary art-making in order to better prepare art education for the challenges of communicating in a multimodal world.

For the purpose of this study the term 'art education' will be used to refer to the instruction or facilitation of visual art in a classroom or studio, with specific reference to the Further Education and Training Phase of secondary education in South Africa (the final three grades), and higher education (college and university). While it is acknowledged that instructional content fulfil different purposes, different sets of teaching and assessment criteria are used, facilitation takes place at different levels, and there are different sets of outcomes and level descriptors for each level.

As a preliminary working definition, the term 'multimodality' will be used to refer to a set of socially situated practices employing different means of representation, for example text, pictures, music, movement and colour. A basic assumption is that both the 'instructor' and the 'instructed' in art education need an understanding of this notion to function optimally in a world that no longer communicates by means of text only.

My interest in multimodality and the role it may play in visual art education originated in my career as a visual arts educator, initially as a secondary school art teacher, then as an educator in a faculty of education at a large residential university in the Gauteng Province of South Africa, and recently as a visual art lecturer at a comprehensive university in the Eastern Cape. During my career as an art educator I have become acutely aware of the limitations imposed by art curricula and the inadequacy of curriculum innovations to stay in pace with developments in a highly technological multimodal world. The needs arising from these challenges can be outlined as follows:

- Redefining the role of visual art aesthetics in a post-modern/post structuralist teaching paradigm

- Emancipating art making from the confines of traditional single/mixed media processes
- Questioning the notion that excellence (in most instances) is measured against a set of exclusively technicist outcomes.
- Re-evaluating instances where artworks are merely copies of collected source materials
- Embracing facilitated learning platforms and abandoning authoritative modes of information delivery
- Embracing the role of technology as a meaning making platform in contemporary visual communication.

These desiderata, which also resonate with limitations in art education highlighted by scholars such as Unsworth (2001), Duncam (2004), Zander (2004), Gude (2004), Holt (2006), Bamford (2008), Albers and Harste (2007), Andrew (2007, 2011) and Archer (2014), can be summarised as follows:

Redefining the role of visual arts aesthetics in a post-modern teaching paradigm

Generally visual art, and in turn art education, concerns itself with the aesthetic qualities of an image. These aesthetic qualities still seem to be locked away in modernist teaching pedagogies which may broadly be defined as rigidly categorized and compartmentalised approaches to teaching and art appreciation in general. Duncam (2004, p. 258) contends that art education still adheres to 'paradigms of modernist fine art, where the rationale behind the work is said to lie in the in the "elements of art"within the image itself'. This means that the 'cultural meaning' of a particular artwork is overlooked, as beauty takes precedence (*ibid.*). Gude (2004, p. 7) calls for art education to be hybridised, layered and appropriated beyond the backbone of the traditional seven elements of art¹. By embracing the post-modern trend, Bamford (2008, p. 18) believes that everyday experiences (social contexts) will enter the realm of art education, thus validating it in contemporary popular visual culture paradigms. She further cautions that 'students who have not been taught to appreciate art from a social and critical standpoint remain ignorant to its meaning' (Bamford, 2008, p. 19). According to Albers and Harste (2007, p. 9) contemporary art education needs to redefine the understanding of the role that aesthetic plays in art appreciation. For them 'aesthetic must be seen as an adjective used to describe, and single out, a mode of experience'. In its plural form, aesthetics

¹ Elements of art according to Bevin (1984) are line, shape, form, volume, texture, colour, unity, balance and proportion.

refers to more than one mode (multimodality) (*ibid.*). This becomes pivotal in the teaching of multimodal art education.

Emancipating art making from the confines of traditional single/mixed media processes

According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) western cultures restricted their communication structures to single modes of meaning making within their respective communicational/informational/educational paradigms. This form of single modal communication is referred to as 'monomodality', which means that linguists restrict themselves to text, artists to oil paint and musicians to reading notation. In the latter part of the 20th century advances in technology forced linguistic scholars to rethink the way they perceive and understand meaning making. However, for art education to consider communicative modes other than imagery, coupled with its traditional materials and media, 'goes against the long standing advocacy for visual art education' (Duncam, 2004, p. 257). Duncam is of the opinion that art education is still being promoted on the basis of its unique and exclusive nature, which centres on the traditional image (2004, p. 258). Duncam (2004, p. 256) pays tribute to the socio-semiotic scholars of the New London Group (1996), who realised that while pictures and written narratives obey their own discipline-specific conventions, they draw upon a much fuller experience when used together than alone. Words anchor the meaning of pictures and vice versa. In other words, visual images are no longer seen as autonomous semiotic modes (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996). According to Albers and Harste (2007, p. 15) learning spaces that encourage multimodality allow students across age groups to learn and play with a wider range of media. However, although art educators/instructors have generally accepted this as a reality, not much has been done to make it part of the curriculum.

Questioning the notion that excellence is measured against a set of exclusively technicist outcomes

The value placed on the traditional notions of aesthetics, centring on the elements of art, places the emphasis on how the artist manipulates them. Concomitantly, art is mostly valued for its technical qualities. This view is supported by Holt (2006, p.99), who is of the opinion that most art education curricula world-wide 'place a clear emphasis on the development of art skills exclusively'. He thus calls for a shift in focus from technicist to cultural. Duncam (2004, p. 254) calls the traditional approach "scientific", which in his opinion, construes the 'cultural' aspect of the artwork. By including the cultural aspect in art education the process of image making 'concerns itself with the whole context of the image, its production and the lived experience of those who view and interpret it (*ibid.*) Duncam states (2004, p. 252):

To be relevant in contemporary social practice art education must embrace interaction between communicative modes. The recent concepts of multiliteracy and multimodality are suggested for this purpose.

What multimodality ultimately advocates is that a mode should be seen as any resource that may be employed for the purpose of meaning making. Modes are usually socially shaped and culturally determined (Jewitt, 2009, p.55). By employing the notion of modes into the repertoire of art aesthetics results in an equilibrium that brings art aesthetics into the realm of social relevance.

Re-evaluating instances where artworks are merely copies of collected source materials
Art making exercises, especially at secondary levels, regularly employ strategies of copying source materials collected from, for example, magazines and newspaper clippings. These are often rearranged in the form of a collage and executed in the instructed media. Ultimately, this process involves making an image from an image, which remains monomodal, driven by various technical practices that are removed from relevant social contexts. Holt (2006, p. 99) warns that images that are merely copied from images create an activity which excludes the imagination. Archer (2014, p. 1) is of the opinion that this type of pedagogical process is caused by a conservative outlook by educators and the accessibility of traditional (high art) resources. She offers empirical evidence to prove that by broadening the resource patterns to include more semiotic modes, multimodal teaching and learning environments can overcome the state of monomodal meaning making. Archer (2014, p. 1) further states that modes unlock resources which often go un-noticed and which are de-valued in formal education settings. Thus, by 'broadening the base for representation and meaning' Archer (2014, p. 2) makes students aware of the social values of education. This allows a repertoire of other materials to be shaped into resources for meaning making (Stein, 2008, p. 122). These 'other resources' may be referred to as modes, and when more than one mode is used in order to create meaning, students are forced to 'critically interrogate their use and meaning' (Archer, 2014, p.19). Archer invokes Kress's (2010) notion of 'design, which offers insight into how modes are sequentially arranged to make meaning, and which is a vital process of multimodal meaning making 'because it encourages imagination, vision and problem solving when students become "designers" of meaning' (Albers and Harste, 2007, p.13).

Embracing facilitated learning platforms and abandoning authoritative modes of information delivery

Until the 1990's educational practices had been characterised by a unidirectional approach to information transmission. In essence, education still embodied compartmentalised strategies of curriculum design, which encapsulated the modernist educational model that was largely teacher centred (Zander, 2004, p. 46). McCullum (2006) defines modernist teaching practices as the authoritative transmission of unbiased knowledge, whereas post-modern educational trends seem to favour educators/instructors as constructors and facilitators of knowledge. The nature of multimodal meaning making, especially in visual art, favours the latter. Albers and Harste (2007, p. 6) embrace the post-modern shift to 'new literacy practices' and the attention it is given, especially in the arts. They are of the opinion that instead of teaching down, 'educators must be prepared to work with how messages are sent, received and interpreted as well as how media and technology position us as viewers in a multimedia world'. This is echoed by Zander (2004, p. 46), who states that a post-modern approach nurtures and encourages dialogues and discussions that are no longer teacher-centred. This means that 'teachers should also aim to share ideas rather than impose their own thinking on students' (Zander, 2004, p. 50). Bamford (2008, p. 17) supports this notion by advocating that 'Learning in the arts should be multidimensional as it involves making connections, playing with ideas, extrapolating, evaluating and criticising'. It thus creates a space which is co-operative and collaborative.

As a reaction to the above, scholars such as Johansson and Porko-Hudd (2007) and Andrew (2007, 2011) attempt to redefine the role of art education in general by proposing various paradigm shifts inspired by socio-semiotic multimodality. Johansson and Porko-Hudd (2007, p. 20) introduce a 'studio thinking framework', which in essence aims to place art students and teachers/instructors on equal ground in terms of facilitate learning platforms, thereby achieving an interactive learning environment. Andrew introduces his 'artist's sensibility framework' in 2007, where he calls for new terminology such 'artist-teachers' instead of 'art teachers', thereby laying emphasis on what he refers to as 'makeshiftness'. This notion is further explored in his doctoral thesis, titled *The artist's sensibility and multimodality: Classrooms and works of art*. (2011). Andrew (2011, p. 18) is of the opinion that artists in general, working in their studios, embrace 'makeshiftness' as they have the ability to 'think on their feet, take risks, are aware of contemporary knowledge making processes, and inspire game-like generative moments akin with play. If art teachers embraced this methodology they would 'behave more like artists and less like bureaucrats' (Andrew, 2007, p. 14). In his doctoral thesis Andrew uses various case studies to answer questions, such as: How does one make a class operate like a work of art and how can teachers create the conditions for innovative

changes in pedagogy? (Andrew, 2011, p. 23). He ultimately uses multimodal interventions to answer these pressing questions.

Embracing the role of technology as a meaning making platform in contemporary visual art communication

It cannot be ignored that one of the driving forces behind multimodality is technology, facilitated by desk-top and mobile computers as well as hand-held devices, such as cell phones and tablets, which carry with them an array of multimedia applications for communication and social networking. These devices have become the backbone of contemporary visual communication and forms of art that can be uploaded and delivered instantaneously. These phenomena need to be embraced in the teaching and learning of visual art in the 21st century. Duncam (2004, p. 252) has been emphasising that contemporary visual culture in its digital form, such as the internet and television, involve more than just the perceptual system of sight. More than a decade ago he already emphasised that visual images had become charged with more communicative tasks than they had been in the past (*ibid.*). What becomes fundamental to the present study is Duncam's observation, while he was making a shift to incorporating aspects of visual culture in art education, that art educators in general had not done enough to reconceptualise the broader definition of contemporary communication. Unsworth (2001, p.7) supports Duncam's views, and states that while some traditional pedagogies will remain necessary they are no longer sufficient in dealing with the continuously evolving information age of the new millennium. He further claims that most students engage in multimodal practices outside of their school experiences (in the form of digital devices), and education in general needs to take cognisance of this (Unsworth, 2001, p.7). Albers and Harste (2007, p.7) reiterate that students learn more about visual literacy outside of schools than inside, especially through digital devices and software. Students 'seem to see YouTube videos, wireless phones, iPads, interactive plasma televisions and global positioning devices as heir 'new art' (Albers and Harste, 2007, p. 7). Against this backdrop, Duncam (1997, p. 77) calls for a paradigm shift in art education towards a socially levelled, semiotic conception of culture with a great deal of attention to mass media images, popular visual culture and their multiple modal readings. He calls for art education to remain open-ended – a project of discovery (*ibid.*).

South African art education has made a conscious shift to embrace visual culture but has failed to make visible the full potential and the implications of multimodal communication. In order for this transformation to take place a multimodal approach to arts education needs to be undertaken, starting with the implementation thereof at the

level of Further Education and Training (senior high school) and moving into the first year of tertiary visual art education. In the next section I give an overview of national education policies, and draw on a prospectus from a tertiary institution in the Eastern Cape to uncover their implications for a multimodal art curriculum.

1.1 National education policies and documents for arts education

Prior to the 1960s, visual art education had justified its existence on the basis of its unique and visual nature (Duncam, 2004, p. 257). Visual images of this era became labelled as 'elitist', since they were produced by the skilled, but highly individualised, hand of the artist (Duncam, 2004, p. 257).

Since the 1960s, across a wide variety of disciplines, the focus has shifted from that of individual behaviour to a focus on social and cultural interaction (Gee, 2000, p. 180). This social turn² has become apparent in art education and art instruction across secondary and tertiary teaching bands, especially since the 1980s. Art instructors in general have become mediators of culture, attempting to bring learners and university students to cultural refinement. In a sense art education became a socially driven force (Bamford, 2008).

Since the 1990s the landscape of art education in South Africa has been undergoing a series of rapid transformational changes at all levels. The African Renaissance and the birth of a democratic society in South Africa reinforced the social turn, causing art education to become 'a socio-political agent used as a nationalizing force driving a powerful propaganda' (Bamford, 2008, p. 18). One of the changes that took place was the emphasis Government placed on the role of arts education by reintroducing the learning area Arts and Culture as compulsory in all South African schools with the inception of Curriculum 2005, and the later streamlined Outcomes Based Education programme (OBE). Strict notional time was set out in the subject guidelines and emphasis was placed on unity through diversity.

The National Curriculum Statement (2007) summarises the emphasis on *unity through diversity* by Government, as stated in the RDP policy document of 1994 (cited in National Curriculum Statement, 2007, p. 14):

² The social turn in education refers to the realization that the learner's social environment and real life experiences are no longer detached from teaching pedagogies. (Bamford 2008).

Arts and Culture is a crucial component of developing our human resources. This will help in unlocking the creativity of our people, allowing for cultural diversity within the process of developing a unifying national culture, rediscovering our historical heritage, and assuring that adequate resources are allocated.

One of the primary objectives of Arts and Culture as a learning area was to teach cultural tolerance. This objective is entrenched in the National Education Policy Document, which includes the following objectives for Visual Arts education (National Curriculum Statement, 2007):

- understanding and acknowledgement of South Africa's rich and diverse culture;
- a deeper understanding of South Africa's social and physical environment, and our place within that environment;
- practical skills and different modes of thinking, within the various forms of art and diverse cultures;
- career skills and income-generating opportunities that lead to enhanced social, economic and cultural life;
- insight into the aspirations and values of our nation.

Arts Education was thus clearly striving to take the cultural diversity and multiple visual literacies of individuals and groups into consideration as the core aims of Arts and Culture and Visual Arts practised at school level (ibid.). Instilling socio-cultural values and cultural tolerance in learners and students of all age groups received precedence over economic and moral values that the arts may have in society.

To an extent, the implementation of this learning area has served its purpose in improving cultural tolerance and understanding within the multi-cultural classroom, and keeping it on the agenda. However, in its endeavour to redefine the role the arts may play in a contemporary and transformed South Africa, the curriculum has neglected its role to stay abreast of technological advances in the new millennium, and to emphasise the role of art in creating meaning in a contemporary neo-capitalist society. Similar scenarios may be playing themselves out in tertiary institutions, where interdisciplinary approaches are embraced but have not as yet been fully defined and outlined. Most art departments at universities in South Africa teach foundational courses to students, with the emphasis on formal approaches to visual art, such as specific media and genres. The majority of these traditional (modernist) disciplines are clearly outlined, classified and demarcated into genres such as sculpture, painting, drawing, printmaking, ceramics,

stained glass and information design. Interdisciplinary approaches are primarily seen as processes that integrate traditional genres with the emphasis still clearly placed on the default mode of image, and the sense of sight as the primary mode of message delivery.

The introduction of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) of 2011 seems to have started changing the face and identity of arts education in South Africa by attempting to change its role from 'art as image' to 'art as multimodal meaning-making practice'. This was attempted, first, by changing the learning area name from Arts and Culture to Creative Arts; second, by re-emphasising personal creativity; and third, by placing overt emphasis on the role of foundational content knowledge (=basic art education):

The main purpose of the subject Creative Arts is to develop learners as creative, imaginative individuals, with an appreciation of the arts, and basic knowledge and skills to be able to participate in arts activities and as preparation for possible further study in art forms of choice in FET (Curriculum And Assessment Policy Document, 2011, p. 7).

These emphases are further specified in the 'Intention of the subject', as outlined by the CAPS policy document, *viz.* to:

- develop creative, expressive and innovative individuals and teams;
- provide access to basic art education for all learners;
- identify and nurture artistic talent, aptitude and enthusiasm;
- equip learners with adequate basic skills to be able to study further in art forms of their choice;
- expose learners to the range of careers in the arts;
- develop arts literacy and appreciation;
- develop future audiences and art consumers;
- develop life skills through the arts.

(Ibid.)

The above-mentioned excerpt from the CAPS document serves as an example that policy makers in secondary education have been aware of the changes in contemporary visual communication but it is evident that the outcomes are only broadly outlined, with very little guidance offered to educators as to how these outcomes should be approached. In the Faculty of Arts prospectus from a comprehensive university in the Eastern Cape

(2013, 2014) a similar broad outline can be identified in the undergraduate and postgraduate qualification objectives, *viz.* to:

- demonstrate competent engagement in techniques and research methodologies;
- engage in critical debate and reflective action and contribute to a body of knowledge of understanding and issues within the contemporary field of visual arts;
- extend and broaden practical and conceptual skills to produce a coherent body of work;
- demonstrate the confidence and powers of self-criticism and evaluation, a requisite for development as a practicing artist.

(Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, 2014, p. 129)

In current art practices, as demonstrated by school classrooms and university visual art studios around the country, art education in general largely operates within a technicist paradigm, which accommodates social and cultural diversity thematically, but largely in the format of pictures, detached from the discourses of the world in which the art maker lives. Although the diversity of media, and the resources available to the artist, are accommodated in the CAPS document for the Senior Phase by referring to multiple media such as copies, photographs of famous artworks, crafts, books and magazines, etc., the artistic output required is at best a collage – cut and pasted together at random, traced and executed in a single medium of choice. Learners, irrespective of their phase, continue to consume and remake existing knowledge in a decontextualised fashion, without an overt focus on meaning-making.

At face value, practices like these have the pretence of being post-modern. However, whereas post-modern artists are reflexive and self-aware – constantly deconstructing their own identities and those of society, as well as ‘unmasking’ hidden agendas – art education in secondary, and to an extent, early tertiary practices often show little evidence of self-reflective practices. The process of making and engaging with art practices becomes a denotation process through the use of images or iconography only (Machin, 2007). The end product remains rooted within a single medium output drawn from copied images (Hodge & Kress, 1988, p. 13). Furthermore, the incorporation of different media in current art instruction practices generally does not reflect a conscious consideration of the affordances of either the input or the output media.

Thus, while a focus on content has been re-introduced in the CAPS document (2011), and tertiary institutions continue to strive for a high degree of technical excellence, modernist interpretations of content cannot survive in a technological world of multimodal thinking and doing without equipping learners and students with the necessary 'tools' to do so. These tools of effective meaning making rests upon a socio-constructivist approach that embraces multimodal practices in order to fully utilize the affordances of media and give content constructive meaning. This ideal of a content-based programme within a formal framework emphasising technical mastery has not been – nor will it ever be – adequate to awaken the reflexive social voice of students or learners and give them the freedom to choose one or more modes of expression for the embodiment of a creative idea.

Tertiary institutions have to act as agents for the interpretation and implementation of the national ideal set out by government as to what art education should entail, but seem to have opted for a conventional methodology focused on developing technical skills. Furthermore, arts education at tertiary institutions largely continues to treat syllabi for different educational phases (as determined by the National Department of Basic Education and Training) in a compartmentalistic way. For example, a teacher trainee specialising in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Phase is expected to demonstrate only the skills required from learners in this particular age group and not to acquire a principled set of skills and sufficient theoretical knowledge to make their own informed choices. Furthermore, within a visual art setting, students are expected to demonstrate skills required from a single visual art strand of choice, for example, painting. While to a point inter-disciplinary visual art practices are encouraged, they remain limiting in scope, incorporating only that which is seen as traditional to the visual arts.

1.2 Personal triggers

Although much has changed in art education in the past twenty years, as an art educator in the FET phase from 1994 to 2007, I observed numerous difficulties educators were facing within arts education during various cluster meetings, road shows and moderation sessions that I attended during this period. Concerns regarding the understanding of the subject framework, the role of art in society, the purpose of the learning area and the lack of skills and development, were then, and still are today, a concern among art educators in South Africa. This, coupled with the lack of insight into multimodal practices, is one of the key factors that underpin the present study. According to my observations in schools there is a superficial, or misguided, perception of the role that

art plays in society. I also observed a large discrepancy between what is taught and practised in the overwhelming majority of schools, and the practices of cutting edge contemporary art projects, as demonstrated by the work of finalists in various national art competitions for nascent artists.

The Sasol New Signatures National Art Competition (SNS) is a case in point. It is not uncommon to find, for example, a traditional painting which incorporates projections of moving images and audio recordings, or a sculptural piece which incorporates found objects, text and motion in order to create new meaning. In linguistics, these are referred to as multimodal images. It may be interesting to note that the average age range of the art competition entrants is 25 to 35, which falls in the same age range as student teachers and students studying visual art at institutions of higher learning. The discrepancy between what is produced by the Sasol entrants and the students choosing art as an elective subject in a faculty of education at a large residential university in Gauteng, and those studying towards bachelor's degrees in visual arts at a comprehensive university in the Eastern Cape, has prompted me to ask questions as to why this misalignment exists, and to further investigate the possibilities of aligning art education across secondary and tertiary institutions with the multimodal practices instantiated by works of art that are recognised as 'worthy'.

During the period that this research was undertaken I both served as the national chairman of the Sasol New Signatures competition (2011 to date) and was employed as a lecturer of arts education at two different South African universities. While practising as an artist and academic, I have come to realise the dominance of monomodal (single-medium) output not only in my own work, but in that of the students at various universities I have visited and where I have lectured. At a national level, art education students at the university in Gauteng where I was employed from 2007 to 2013, failed to be selected among the top 100 finalists at various national art competitions. The question has arisen as to why this is the case. One of the problems seems to be that student teachers – and to some degree visual art students – fail to answer the 'why' question in the art-making process in the same way that art teachers and lecturers struggle to see the purpose and role that art may play in a multimodal society. Students struggle with the conceptualising process, failing to create a unique personal visual language, and to question or challenge the limitation of focusing almost exclusively on traditional media.

From 2010 to 2016 I was afforded the opportunity to travel nationally and consult with students, lecturers and practising artists on the status and role of art in contemporary South Africa. It transpired that art students at secondary and tertiary levels, as well as the majority of their lecturers, had given the notion of combining modes with different materialities little thought. On the other hand, young practising artists who had utilised their emancipation from the straightjackets of formal art education seemed to have grappled with the realities of a multimodal world to a much larger extent – although they may not have been able to frame this ‘new’ modal approach in academic terms. It is this discovery that largely sparked my interest in explaining the phenomenon of multimodal art making in order to develop a visible pedagogy of multimodal art makers.

This new found interest was strengthened in discussions with language experts and art academics at various tertiary institutions, and I became convinced that research into the notion of multimodality, with specific reference to art and art education, needs to be conducted in order to align the visual arts with general trends of 21st-century forms of communication.

Prior to formulating research questions and setting research objectives for the research, I first convey my pre-theoretical understanding of the notion of multimodality. A more comprehensive theoretical overview of multimodality will be given in chapter 3.

1.3 Origins and development of the notion of ‘multimodality’

The term ‘multimodality’ was coined by a group of linguists who became known as the New London Group (1996) in Cope and Kalantzis (2000). These scholars departed from the notion that technology had changed the way individuals and groups communicate, and claimed that image and text no longer exist as separate entities but were united in strengthening the process of meaning making. The notion of multimodality was further refined through the work of Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, 2001, 2002); Jewitt and Kress (2003); and Kress (2010). Thus, multimodality is deeply rooted in linguistic theory, in response to the literacy practices of contemporary society. However, despite the important contribution that various aspects of visual design makes to multimodal communication, visual arts scholars have until recently been silent in the scholarly debate about multimodality.

Machin’s work (2007) *Introduction to multimodal analysis* is one of the few book-length scholarly works that deals with the analysis of multimodal images and the ‘visual language’ that originated in linguistics. He shows that through the use of multiple

modes, strong semiotic bonds are formed between images and the written word. This has, in turn, formed a hybrid information highway of meaning-making, which contemporary visual art has strived for and embraced, especially with the worldwide interest of multimedia changing the face and identity of contemporary art as we know it. The embracing of technology to constitute this hybrid identity has now carved open a space for recognising the role of multiple modes and media as vehicles of meaning-making.

The influence of the above-mentioned may hold the key to unlocking multimodal thinking within art education, thereby empowering art students by equipping them to better understand the role and nature of art in society, and gaining much-needed visual literacy skills. Machin's contribution to the analysis of multimodality in linguistics may contain the seeds for understanding an approach to multimodality in visual art and art education based on the striking similarities found in the combination of image and text in both disciplines.

1.4 Previous research

To date, the majority of academic publications accommodating research on multimodal practices has included critical discourse analyses of combinations of text and visuals (for example Brandt & Carstens, 2010), research on the role of multimodality in children's language development (Stein 2008), and recently also multimodality in academic writing practices (Kittle, 2009; Frost, Myatt & Smith, 2009; Archer, 2011).

Although a number of authors have hinted at the desirability of research on multimodality from a visual art perspective, very little research has been conducted on the role of multimodality in visual art and art education. Among the scholars that have made an attempt at reflecting on multimodality from a visual arts perspective are Andrew (2007; 2011), Bamford (2004, 2008), Barone (1997), Eisener (2007), Duncam (2004), Stein (2008), and Finnegan (2002). These authors have all noted the value that the study and practice of multimodality may bring to arts education in general, among others to promote visual literacy and make new meaning in contemporary society. The potential of empirical research in establishing the origins and practices of multimodality in the visual and creative arts, which in turn may inform pedagogy and content in art education, has to date remained largely untapped.

In an article entitled 'Learners and artist-teachers as multimodal agents in schools' Andrew (2007) suggests that multimodal practice may cater for the inadequacies he

noted in art education at the school where he oversees the teaching practice of his students. According to Andrew a multimodal pedagogy may equip student teachers to 'be more like artists and less like bureaucrats' (Ross *et al.*, 1993, p. 162). According to Andrew (2007, p. 14), only the *artist-teacher* is able to teach visual art in all its richness and generate the results required for the subject to take a worthy place as a career opportunity and worth its strength in economic viability, since only a true practising artist is able to think in multimodal paradigms. He is thus of the opinion that the qualities of the multimodal contemporary artist need to be instilled as a methodology in teacher training.

The notions of 'artist teacher' and 'artist's sensibility' feature prominently in the scholarly work of Andrew (2007; 2011). His main interest lies in how artist-teachers, applying an 'artist's sensibility', would promote multimodal thinking and learning in the classroom. Since 2000, Andrew (2007, p. 16) has been working with the Multiliteracies Research Group at the University of the Witwatersrand. He noticed similarities in the pedagogy of teaching and learning language and forged bonds between this group and the Visual Literacy Foundation Course within his own department at the same institution. Andrew observed that both multiliteracy and multimodal practices in linguistics could assist in unlocking true creativity with learners working under the guidance of artist-teachers. He defines the terms broadly as follows (Andrew, 2007, p. 15):

Multiliteracies refer to the broad project of redefining notions of literacy.

Multimodal refers specifically to the identification of a further mode within a range of modes available to us for making meaning. I would argue that this further mode is often central to the repertoire of some contemporary artists.

It is upon this pedagogy that Andrew manages to build his artist's sensibility framework. He has been inspired by the work of Jewitt and Kress (2003) and Hodge and Kress (1988), who are of the opinion that people use whatever resources around them within their specific socio-cultural environments in order to create signs. These signs are not static but viewed as constantly remade (Andrew, 2007, p. 17). Like the multimodal linguists, contemporary artists seem to be more in touch with their socio-cultural environments; thus Andrew argues in favour of what he calls the 'artist-teacher' rather than the 'art teacher' who is trained in modernist and formal approaches. Although the mastery of skill remains important, the practising thereof calls for the conceptualising process to be multimodal in its origin and output, under the guidance of the artist-

teacher. In this approach mere copies of the world are avoided in favour of a process of interactive meaning-making and social commentary.

Andrew summarises what he calls the 'artist's sensibility framework' in ten points. The points that focus on multimodal practice have been extracted and summarised as follows (Andrew, 2007, p. 18):

- The artist-teacher is able to 'think on his/her feet' focusing on the multiplicity of practices of making and reflecting in a cycle of reflectivity.
- The true artist-teacher is involved in the knowledge making process, which in a contemporary sense encompasses multiple modes.
- The artist-teacher realises the power of improvisation and the inventiveness that may come as a result of working outside fixed affordances.
- The artist-teacher is aware of various nuances within the identity of various learners in a group and sees these as multiple entry points into unlocking creative thinking.
- The process of art making is never static, and often negotiated under guidance and then re-negotiated in order to form a clear iconological strategy.
- The artist-teacher engages in the creative process by asking questions and problematising situations.

The above-mentioned may be seen as characteristics that Andrew aims to instil in art students at his institution in order to cultivate a multimodal methodology for arts education training, and which may prove valuable to guide the present study.

Duncam (2010) has noticed similar issues regarding the modernist rigidity within art education, and proposes a change to the traditional seven elements of art which have in the past been the rigid backbone that held art education together. Instead, he offers seven 'new' principles of art: power, ideology, representation, seduction, gaze, intertextuality (Duncam, 2010, pp. 6–10):

- *Power*: Who exercises power and authority over what imagery?
- *Ideology*: Images stem from ideological struggles, beliefs and values and the source needs to be embraced and taken into account.
- *Representation*: Is the manifestation of ideology and stereotyping in a physical form which should be multimodal by nature.

- *Seduction*: When images offer arguments which reflect back on our own views and ideological positions, they offer pleasure of confirmation and seduce through their subject matter.
- *Gaze* is how we look at images and our predisposition to see things in certain ways and the relationships that we form with these images
- *Intertextuality/hypertext*: All images relate to other cultural texts such as books, poems, music and other interrelated images across cultural boundaries.
- *Multimodality* refers to the fact that there are no longer pure visual images in contemporary visual culture as they seldom appear without other modes such as text, sound and moving images.

Duncam (2010) emphasises that these principles do not adhere to the modernist paradigm of fundamental truth. For the larger part, they remain in flux in order to align themselves with the complexities of contemporary, visually mediated communication (Duncam, 2010, p. 6).

As early as 1997 Duncam (1997, p. 69) noticed another important gap in art education: While art educators in general believe in educating through art, students live through the mass media. In contemporary communication this phenomenon has escalated though advances made in digital communication and the internet. Duncam warns that it is time that scholars address the issues regarding the role of images in contemporary society, which include images from the past and the present, as well as fine and popular art. This needs to be done through a contemporary lens in order to solidify the dominant role that images play in contemporary communication (Duncam, 2010, p. 10). This is vital as the contemporary art student treats culture as an ordinary material commodity, exploiting electronic visual images and treating their identity as a multifaceted construction that is in continuous flux.

What is referred to as visual culture studies in secondary and tertiary institutions in South Africa serves to cater for the need to study and understand the power of the image and its use in mass or popular culture. Thus, what has developed is a contemporary situation where mass culture offers the same range of pleasures and insights as high art or high culture (Duncam, 1997, p. 69). In visual art, the study of visual images and how they impact on contemporary communication can no longer be restricted to the bounds of 'high art' exclusively. However, what has not been made clear as yet is how arts education will respond to this merger in applying it to teaching and

learning practices and applications in secondary and tertiary education. The answer may be found in applying socio-semiotic multimodality to arts education in order to unlock the true potential of visual communication in contemporary South Africa.

2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In order for the visual arts to make a valuable contribution to contemporary multimodal meaning making across secondary and tertiary institutions, a reinterpretation of visual communication and the role of art as a mode of communication is urgently needed. In the CAPS document (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, 2011), and in various prospectuses of tertiary institutions in South Africa, general references are made to the use of multiple forms of media or modes, which may be interpreted academically as multimodal practice. However, the ubiquity of multimodality and the role that technology may play in art-making and arts education today are not explicated in CAPS or in any university prospectuses consulted, nor are any clear guidelines given as to how multimodality should be facilitated and learnt.

Furthermore, visits to community centres and schools around the country while working on the SASOL New Signatures empowerment programme from 2009 to date, and the Nelson Mandela Arts Incubator in Umtata between 2010 and 2012, produced evidence that teachers and lecturers alike have little knowledge and skills to promote multimodal creativity in the classroom or studio. Instead, they opt for a single-medium output model embedded in a modernist pedagogy. In most instances the outcomes or aims of constantly changing national curriculum documents are followed slavishly, without taking into consideration the demands of contemporary society and the life-worlds of the learners and students.

The above-mentioned seems to be a worldwide phenomenon, as, for example, observed by Holt (1997) in schools in the United Kingdom and Duncam (1997, 2004, 2010) in arts education in general in the United States of America. Engaging with art materials and the technical process of art-making have long been the focus in art education worldwide. Unlike in other learning areas, development seems to have stagnated and there seems to be a lack of interest in building on the curriculum as learners enter higher grades. Holt observed that the positive attitude and energy had all but disappeared in children some years after their initial experience in the art class. Instead of building and sharing knowledge through a system of image making, a transition from confidence to uncertainty has been observed (Clement & Page, 1992). With this attitude in place,

learners see 'art' as having very little meaning and purpose in the real world (Holt, 1997, p. 95)

According to Holt (*ibid.*), the problems with art education in general may lie embedded in history, starting with the birth of psychology in the early to mid-20th century and the introduction of the concept called 'child art'. Through psychology primary school teachers were encouraged to see the art work and the process as purely developmental, which is a strong component of child psychology. This has been described as the 'unfolding' process (Marsh, 1970). Franz Cizek, an early pioneer of child art and art education, was under the impression that the role of the art teacher was twofold: first, to encourage the 'natural' process of art making; and second to 'protect' the child from any 'harmful' outside influence (Holt, 1997, p. 96). Within this framework the practice and process of art making is focused on the individual and the unleashing of his/her creative potential for the purpose of facilitating psychological health. This focus ignores the socio-cultural influence and collective meaning making potential of art. Children remain unaware of the role of art in society or the power of the end product as a tool of communication. The identity of art education is that of delegating an introduction and supervising the process from a distance, while allowing further facilitation by non-professionals, such as parents (Holt, 1997, p. 97).

It may be the teachers themselves who are to blame for the state of art education worldwide. Ross, Radnor, Mitchell and Bierton (1993), in their book *Assessing achievement in the arts* (1993, p. 162), add that 'School art at its worst, is the art of the bureaucrat: neat, safe, predictable, and orthodox. School art adds up: the real thing rarely does' (*ibid.*).

Andrew (2007) supports this notion and is of the opinion that these phenomena are currently just as relevant in South African schools. He echoes Ross *et al.*'s (1993) question of how it would be possible to get art teachers in the United Kingdom to act more like artists and less like bureaucrats. As mentioned, Andrew suggests the introduction of his 'artist's sensibility' framework in tandem with the practice of a multimodal pedagogy. He is further of the opinion that in language and literacy practices teachers work more 'artfully' when introducing the use of multiple modes, and raises the question as to why this is not true for art education (Andrew, 2007, p. 14):

And why the bringing together of what it is that the contemporary artist does with multimodality? This decision is based on a conviction that a multimodal pedagogy

has a critical role to play in both teaching and learning at school level and also for the training of teachers.

It is within a constructivist framework of meaning making and the relevance of its practice that may be of key concern to arts education and the endeavour of this research.

Currently, a modernist art education pedagogy remains in place at institutions of teacher training and some schools of fine arts in tertiary institutions. Artworks are process-driven, with the end result discussed and appraised purely in formal terms. While great emphasis is placed on skills training and the theory of technique, not much attention is paid to the role of art in society, and the social discourses with which the works of art engage. Students respond to the pedagogy of 'How I am doing this' but fail to answer the question 'Why am I doing this, and how is this rationale best expressed artistically?' in a meaningful way. Art is thus practised as detached from its role in society with the output in media often traditional and the expression thereof singular in character. It is therefore no surprise that students struggle with visual literacy skills and find it difficult to respond to artworks other than their own. By emphasising the importance of meaning making through the practice of multimodality, driven by technology, student teachers and students of fine arts may be assisted to become 'multimodal agents' of meaning making not only in schools (Andrew, 2007, p. 11), but in society at large.

3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As stated at the beginning of the chapter, the purpose of the present research is to understand the combination of different modes of representation (multimodality) in contemporary art-making in order to better prepare arts education in general for the challenges of communicating in a multimodal world. In light of this purpose, the following research questions have been formulated:

- 1 How has multimodality been theorised?
- 2 Which modes are combined in visual artworks by contemporary South African artists?
- 3 Why do these artists combine modes?
- 4 How are these modes combined in visual artworks?
- 5 How is meaning-making enhanced (made richer, more complex and layered) through multimodal combinations – both at a social and a semiotic level?
- 6 How might the above five research questions inform a generic framework for teaching multimodality in visual art?

4 OBJECTIVES

In keeping with the research questions, the objectives of this study are:

- 1 to give an overview of the history, development and theorisation of multimodality, with specific reference to visual art;
- 2 to explore the extent and nature of the use of multimodality by nascent South African artists;
- 3 to understand how meaning-making in contemporary art is facilitated through the combination of different modes and media; and
- 4 to indicate how the outcomes of the research inform a framework for multimodal teaching and learning.

5 SUMMARY AND CHAPTER PREVIEW

While the notion of multimodality has been studied for approximately 20 years in linguistics, it has thus far received scant attention in visual art. This state of affairs is particularly lamentable in an era where meaning-making seldom occurs within single modes of presentation, and where digital technologies have almost completely blurred the boundaries between different semiotic modes. National departments of education seem to be aware of the important social and communicative role that visual art plays, but have failed to offer guidelines in curriculum documents to assist educators in keeping up with technological innovations and trends. In fine arts and art education curricula the emphasis is still largely on the mastery of technique and medium within traditional genres, without overt attention to creative blurring of boundaries between various modes, media and genres. This echoes into the teaching and learning programmes of most tertiary institutions in South Africa.

It has also become evident that there is a discrepancy between the visual art that is taught practically in the FET phase and at tertiary institutions nationally and the art works of young contemporary South African artists that are entered for national art competitions and exhibitions. Although scholars such as Andrew (2007; 2011) and Stein (2008) noticed the gap between art curricula in formal education and art practices that are valued in society, and called for changes, no explicit curriculum framework has to date been put forward to make multimodality visible in secondary and tertiary art education.

The thesis aims to answer the research questions as follows.

Chapter 2 (Theoretical underpinnings) reviews the linguistic foundations on which the theory of multimodality is built. It offers a historical overview of the Saussurean and Peircean models of semiotics which paved the way for the study of social semiotics and Hallidayan systemic functional linguistics. These theories are expounded as they paved the way for Kress and Van Leeuwen's 'visual grammar' that attempted to analyse images in the same fashion as language.

Chapter 3 investigates the role of mode in contemporary visual art. In order to apply the notions of mode and multimodality to the visual arts, I offer an overview of various scholarly stances towards the notion of mode. I draw specifically on the work of Kress (2010), Stein (2008), and Finnigan (2002) as I am of the opinion that these scholars have offered the clearest definitions of what modes are and how they are applied in a working scenario of contemporary meaning-making. In summary, I offer an understanding of multimodality in visual art by drawing on Kress's concepts of 'design' (2010) and 're-design' (2014).

Chapter 4 offers an overview of modes and the working of multimodality throughout art history. Using images from art history, I show that the combinations of text and visuals and, later, combinations of various other technology infused modes have been evident in art history, especially since the turn of the 20th century.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to the research methodology selected to answer the research questions while *chapter 6* examines and analyses the data in order answer the research questions. In the final chapter (*chapter 7*) an overview of the research undertaking is offered. Furthermore, it demonstrates to what extent the research questions have been answered. Finally, based on the research findings, a curriculum design framework is offered based on the ADDIE model for the teaching and learning of multimodality in visual art.

CHAPTER 2

Theoretical underpinnings:

The linguistic foundations of a theory of multimodality

1 INTRODUCTION

Multimodality originated from social semiotic linguistics. It is firstly important to trace its roots to the beginning of structuralist semiotic studies, dating from Saussure (1916) to Peirce (1931–1958), and the influence their scholarly research had had on social and constructivist approaches to semiotic studies, especially systemic functional linguistics (SFL) pioneered by Halliday in the late 1970s. Post-Hallidayan social semiotics is the domain in linguistics that shifted the focus of pure linguistic study of the sign system to incorporate other modes, especially visual images, under the influence of the technological revolution at the onset of the 21st century. This allowed social semiotic scholars such as Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) to conceptualise that which they termed 'visual grammar' and which ultimately lead to a comprehensive multimodal approach to meaning-making.

The term 'semiotics' was first introduced into the English language by John Locke in 1690. He defined semiotics as the 'doctrine of signs' in his essay 'Concerning human understanding' (1690) (Deely, 2005). Today, semiotics, also known as semiotic studies, which includes Saussurean semiology, is the umbrella term for the study of signs and signification processes within linguistics. Semiotics is divided into roughly three branches: semantics, which is the study of the sign and the relationship to the meaning it represents; syntax, which studies the relation between signs and formal structures; and pragmatics, which studies the relationship between signs and their meanings as contextually activated by sign-using agents (Deely, 2005, p. 21).

More recently, scholars of language and literature have started conducting research into areas other than pure linguistic sign systems, which may include visual images, and is referred to as pictorial semiotics (Caesar, 1999, p. 54). This study first pursues a more or less linear historical timeline of multimodality in linguistics, and then explores applications of these linguistic approaches to visual arts.

2 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF MULTIMODALITY

The term 'multimodality' was coined by linguists in the mid-1990s to name practices of sign-making that combine and integrate different modes and media of communication, for example sounds (produced by human beings and by musical instruments), written text, pictures and gestures (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996, 2001; Kress & Ogborn, 1998; Jewitt, 2009; Machin, 2007; Kress, 2010). The question that almost immediately comes to mind is why this phenomenon has become so prominent in present-day communication, and why it is necessary to conduct research on its manifestations. Important reasons that have been mentioned are the changes that have occurred in the way the world communicates as a result of the technological 'revolution', primarily since the birth of the internet in 1991, and the focus on creating meaning instead of merely analysing meaning. Furthermore, the notion of multimodality has almost been monopolised by linguistic scholars, while visual arts practitioners and scholars have largely abdicated their responsibility to theorise this notion; have not engaged in debates about its manifestation; and have hardly conducted any empirical research on teaching and practising multimodality.

Before an investigation into the characteristics of multimodality is undertaken a historical background of its developments needs to be given.

Multimodality draws its conceptual content from different theories, mostly in linguistics, over a period spanning approximately a century. The most important influences are semiotics, constructivism (in particular social constructivism), systemic functional linguistics (SFL), socio-semiotics, and to some extent critical discourse analysis (CDA), which in turn draws upon post-modernism. De Saussure, and later Peirce, can be regarded as the founders of semiotics; Vygotsky (1978), who pioneered constructivism; Halliday, who is the most influential proponent of SFL (1978; 1985; 1994); and Wodak and Meyer (2001), Van Dijk (1997, 2004, 2005) and Fairclough (2001, 2003, 2004) are among the most prominent scholars in the field of CDA – which derive some of their basic tenets from the post-modern academic Henri Foucault. Socio-semiotics, made prominent by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) and Kress (2010), is primarily rooted in semiotics, social constructivism and systemic functional grammar, but also displays the critical and reflective stance of CDA. Furthermore, the role of technology has been pivotal in shaping modern semiotics, as is prevalent in the work of New Literacies scholars, such as the New London Group (1996); and the Brian Street multiliteracy group (2007).

Kress and Van Leeuwen's (1996) multimodal application of social-semiotics, which became known as visual grammar, was aimed at re-defining the way the world makes meaning. Kress and Van Leeuwen's ground-breaking research into the field of complex sign systems takes Halliday's simple lexical and grammatical approach, embedded in functionalism, as its point of departure (Machin, 2007, p. 5). This complex system of signs, involving multiple repertoires of media choices available to an individual or a group in order to make meaning, is what Kress and Van Leeuwen refer to as 'multimodal practice'.

Kress and Van Leeuwen claim that the world has become multimodal due to the fact that communication has changed, driven by technology. According to Kress (2010, p. 21) technology was responsible for forcing the boundaries of various modes of expression to become blurred (image and text, for example, are now inseparable). Since most forms of contemporary meaning-making are multimodal, establishing a unifying theory that spans and incorporates various modes of expression, has become a matter of urgency in contemporary multimodal research endeavours. This theory will need to describe the use of all modes that contribute to the interdisciplinary process of contemporary meaning making. Although an exploration of multimodality may start with text as a semiotic mode, since the use of language is seen as a central mode in communication, text may not always be the dominant mode in question (Kress & Ogborn, 1998, p. 39). However, according to Kress (2010, p. 19) the interdisciplinary approach to multimodality, as well as its characteristics, makes the theorisation of the term difficult.

Kress is of the opinion that no unified theory of multimodality has been formulated as yet, due to the complexity of multimodal processes. Furthermore, text does not always comprise the core or primary mode in multimodal communication; visual imagery may be the central focus of meaning. One of the aims of the present research is to consolidate theoretical constructs that are relevant to a theory of multimodality in visual arts.

While scholars have embraced multimodality as a contemporary form of communication it is not surprising that multimodality has found itself at the centre of investigation in many areas of linguistic research. Jewitt (2009, p. 29) divides multimodal research into three approaches: multimodal discourse analysis, multimodal interactional analysis, and social semiotic multimodality. Multimodal discourse analysis has been born from Halliday's systemic functional linguistics (SFL, 1985) and forms the basis for what O'Hallaran (2008) refers to as 'multimodal discourse analysis' (MDA). This approach

embraces 'discourse', which has a wide array of meanings, ranging from sociological to linguistic approaches, and which has had an influence on the work of semiotic scholars such as Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) (Jewitt, 2009, p. 31). Multimodal interactional analysis, pioneered by Scollon and Scollon (2003), explore how the physical and material characteristics of language give meaning to people's actions. It combines interactional sociolinguistics with intercultural communication and multimodal semiotics (Jewitt, 2009, p. 33). Social semiotic multimodality draws on systemic functional grammar (SFG) as its core approach, emphasising Halliday's characterisation of the sign system into ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions, which was interpreted in the visual domain by Kress and Van Leeuwen (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 54; Jewitt, 2009, p. 29). These notions will be addressed in more detail in sections 4.2 and 4.3 of this chapter.

In this study, multimodality will be explored from a semiotic and socio-semiotic approach, as it manifests in contemporary meaning making. This chapter will focus primarily on the four theories in linguistics that have made the most important contributions to the nascent theory of multimodality. These are semiotics, constructivism, systemic functional grammar (with its underlying theory, socio-semiotics), and critical discourse analysis (CDA).

3 STRUCTURALIST APPROACHES TO SEMIOTICS: SAUSSUREAN AND PEIRCEAN SEMIOTICS

Ferdinand De Saussure (1858–1913) is regarded as the founder of (classical) semiotic theory. He defines the practice of semiotics as the science that studies the role of signs as part of social life (Saussure, 1983, p. 14). Linguistics is but a single branch of this complex study of sign systems, as this science broadens its focus to include other sign systems for meaning-making, such as visual signs, drawings, paintings, sculpture, body language and photographic images (*ibid.*)

From the onset of semiotics, Saussure and other semiotic scholars chose to focus mainly on the linguistic sign system. This led Saussure to introduce his two-part model of linguistic semiotic sign systems in his seminal book *Course in general linguistics* (1983) published in 1916. He refers to a sign as consisting of a signified over a signifier with the dividing line between the two referred to as the bar. For Saussure a sign consists of two parts. The signified is seen as the concept that the sign represents, while the signifier represents the form which the sign may take (Saussure, 1983, p. 66). The sign is the sum of the two parts, with the relationship of the signifier and signified referred to as signification (Saussure, 1983, p. 67). For a sign to exist, Saussure stresses that the sign

must consist of both elements, as there can be no such notion as a meaningless sign or a formless signified (Saussure, 1974, p. 102). For Saussure, both the signifier and the signified are form rather than substance. Signs are immaterially linked in the mind and each will trigger the other (Saussure, 1983, p. 66). This is also true for visual art.

The above-mentioned notion has led various semiotic scholars, including Saussure, to emphasise the arbitrariness of signs and sign systems. The notion of arbitrariness, which was radical and new for its time, proposed that language is a system that functions autonomously from reality. Autonomy (arbitrariness) became the key design feature of language within a structuralist paradigm, which entails that there is no one-to-one link between the signifier and the signified (Lewis, 1991, p. 29). If there had been a natural link, the same object would bear similar names in different languages, which clearly is not the case. Arbitrariness also implies that signs may have multiple rather than singular meanings in the same language (Lewis, 1991, p. 30). Metaphor is a case in point.

The issue of the arbitrariness of the sign and sign systems have led semioticians to believe that the relationship between the signifier and signified is purely conventional in nature (Chandler, 2005, p. 9). Saussure argued that a word means what it does to a specific cultural group only when that specific group has collectively decided to let it do so (Saussure, 1983, p. 68). Thus, any means of expression within society rests in principle upon a collective habit or on a certain convention (Saussure, 1983, p. 69).

In 1931, the philosopher Charles Peirce formulated a triadic model, which is an adaptation of Saussure's model of the sign system. Figure 2.1 depicts his theory in the shape of a triangle. The sign system now incorporates three characteristics (Peirce, 1931–1958, (2), p. 228):

- The *representamen* is the form which the sign may take.
- The *interpretant* is the sense made of the sign (not the interpreter).
- The *object* is that which the sign refers to.

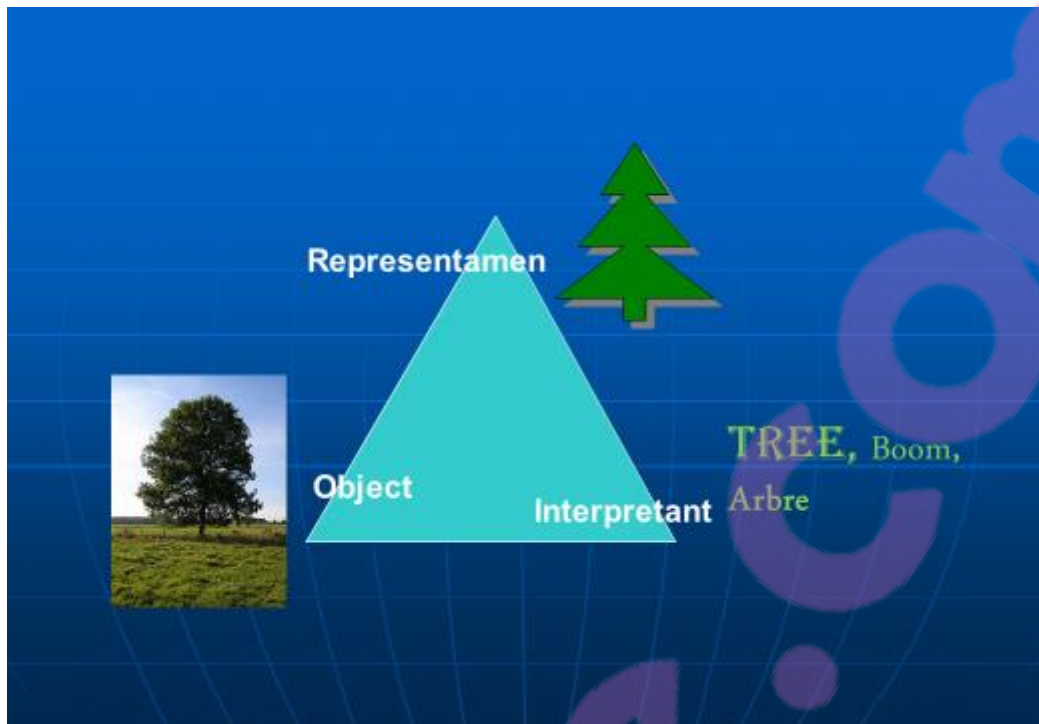


Figure 2.1 Peirce, Triadic model 1931 (adapted from Peirce, 1931–1958, (2), p. 228)

This triadic model, adapted by various semiotic scholars over time, has become the norm in semiotic studies. Peirce explains that the representamen represents something to someone. As we are unique individuals, the representamen creates in the mind of a person an equivalent sign, or a more developed version of the sign. This more developed version is called the interpretant of the first sign or the representamen, and is conceptual in nature. The sign then stands for something concrete, viz. a physical object in the 'real' world (Peirce, 1931–1958, (2), p. 228). The interaction between the three parts of the triad is what Peirce refers to as semiosis (Peirce, 1983–1958, (5), p. 484). Meanings thus become interpretations, and any interpretation has the ability to be reinterpreted many times (Peirce, 1931–1958, (2), p. 60). It is clear that Peirce focuses on language as a carrier of signs, and that his model leaves space for the incorporation of other modes of representation, although he does not explore these.

In later years the Peircean triadic model of the sign was criticised for excluding the role of the interpreter or audience. If a sign is to make sense, the role of the interpreter becomes the key to unlocking the meaning of the sign (Sless, 1986, p. 7). Peirce (1931–1958, p. 302) adapts his opinion by stating that humans make meaning through the creation and interpretation of signs. He refers to the human race as *Homo significans* or meaning-makers. Various media and communication theorists have to date stressed the importance of the active process of sign interpretation. A decontextualised view of the

static content and meaning of the sign is rejected in favour of an emphasis on the process of sign interpretation. Thus, the meaning of the sign is not contained within itself, but is constructed through its interpretation by an interpreter (Sless, 1986, p. 7).

With reference to the Saussurean notion of arbitrariness, Peirce argues that various signs may differ in arbitrariness. The meanings of literally used words will, for instance, be more arbitrary than those of metaphors and puns (Peirce, 1931–1958, (2), p. 243). In this regard, Peirce offers three types of re-classified signs: the symbol, the icon and the index (Peirce, 1931–1958, (1), p. 564).

- *The symbol*: A mode in which the signifier does not resemble the signified. Here the sign is purely conventional or arbitrary. The relationship thus needs to be learnt through cultural interaction.
- *The icon*: A mode in which the signifier imitates the signified, for example caricatures, scale models, metaphors, cartoons and portraits.
- *The index*: A mode that is directly connected to a prior event or action. Here the signifier is not arbitrary as the signified is the source of the sign or the action/event that produced the sign (Chandler, 1995, p. 10).

This sign classification is representational in its character, and has been used by visual artists throughout the ages in order to make meaning. An example of this sign classification system at work in visual art is illustrated in figure 2.2 below. The work of Piet Mondrian which represents a bird's eye view of New York City in the 1950s can be seen as symbolic. Here the signifier does not resemble the signified. The work of Chuck Close can be seen as iconic. It imitates the signified, in this case a naturalistic representation of the artist's model, named 'Bob'. *The Death of Marat* by Jacques-Louis David can be seen as indexical. As history reveals, Marat lies dead in the bath in an uncomfortable slumped posture. The viewer is led to accept that a murder took place prior to the scene depicted. It thus represents a state that is connected to an action.



Figure 2.2 Peirce's classification of signs applied to visual art

Left: Piet Mondrian, *Broadway Boogie Woogie* (1942–1943), oil on canvas

(http://allart.biz/photos/image/piet_mondrian_3_broadway_boogie_woogie.html);

Centre: Chuck Close, *Bob* (1979), oil on canvas

(<http://artsearch.nga.gov.au/Detail.cfm?IRN=37305&PICTAUS=TRUE>);

Right: Jacques-Louis David, *The Death of Marat* (1793), oil on canvas

(http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/cas/his/CoreArt/art/neocl_dav_marat.html)

Hawkes (1977) argues that this Peircean system may be too vague to serve as a fundamental classification of signs, and rather chooses to refer to different sign types as differing relationships between the sign vehicles and their referents (Hawkes, 1977, p. 129). Hodge and Kress (1988) are of the opinion that the index is based on an act of judgement by the interpreter, while the icon is more directly related to real perception, making it the highest-ranking modality of the Peircean classification (Hodge & Kress, 1988, p. 58).

Within a structuralist perspective, language is regarded to be a primarily symbolic sign system, while images are iconic and/or indexical. However, Peirce has realised that there is no such thing as a pure icon, even in art. This is the case, since the conventions of culture play an influential role in how concepts are represented. Views about the sign in social semiotics stem from Peirce's later work, where he acknowledges that the three sign types are not mutually exclusive. A sign may simultaneously be a symbol, an icon and an index, or any combination of these three categories of signs (Peirce, 1931–1958, (2), p. 306). This is especially true in the visual arts. Artworks are mostly iconic and indexical – very seldom are they purely symbolic. The abstract expressionist Jackson Pollock (1912–1956) loads his action paintings with symbolic values, but they always refer back to iconical and indexical properties, for example *Lavender Mist 1* (1950). Here the iconic value resides in the paint splats made by Pollock on the canvas to represent

lavender and grass tufts in a landscape. The painting is indexical in the sense that the action painted drips and splat marks resemble the physical aspects of action painting and the artist's temperament.

Peircean semiotics had a profound influence on the deconstructivist and post-structuralist theorists of the 1960s. Derrida (1967) sought to revolutionise the role of the signifier. He argues that the spoken word translated into its written form evolves in our sense of self, which in turn constitutes a sign of truth and authenticity in itself (Derrida, 1967, p. 22). He further notes that writing has always been relegated to the second position throughout history. Scholars such as Eco (1976), and Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) have sought to re-materialise the linguistic sign. Words are seen as things, which form part of our material world. This is evident in the influence of the media and the advertising world on how we communicate in contemporary times (Chandler, 1995, p. 10). Signs no longer signify but become signifiers in their own right incorporating all three of Peirce's signification modes (symbol, icon and index).



Figure 2.3 Contemporary media advertisement for Audi 2013

(<http://www.beautifullife.info/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/01/general.jpg>)

Figure 2.3 represents how the media has transformed and influenced the way we communicate in contemporary society. In this image, the Peircean symbolic, iconic and indexical properties of the sign system are evident. The image is symbolic in the sense that mud has created an image or we accept that the artwork is randomly comprised of mud (no logical relationship thus exists between an image of an eagle created in mud on a city driven vehicle); and iconic, as it references the actual motor vehicle and the artwork that the mud has created in the form of a landscape containing a soaring eagle. The indexical properties of the image inform the viewer that the vehicle has just been used on an adventure in the great outdoors.

Later, semioticians such as Bolter (1991) stress the importance of medium in the process of signification. The medium in which the sign vehicle is expressed becomes important, as a sign will always manifest itself in a chosen medium (Bolter, 1991, p. 195). For the phenomenon where a sign and its ability to create meaning rests upon the characteristics of one specific medium, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001, p. 3) coined the term 'monomodality'. Social semiotic scholars later started building upon this notion, and argue that contemporary communication has offered the world a wider range of media, bringing with it a wider repertoire of modes, and thus strengthening the sign and heightening the experience of how we see and learn. Bolter (1991, p. 196) adds that the contemporary sign has the ability to migrate across and into other media through the rapid advances of technology influencing media communication. Various media may in turn draw upon various sign systems simultaneously. Film, for instance, may use auditory, visual, verbal, and gestural signs, which may migrate freely from one mode to another within a certain cultural domain, altering the significance of a certain sign system (Eco, 1976, p. 276). The phenomenon where a sign migrates across various media may be referred to as 'intermodality', whereas the process during which content from one sign system is translated into another has been termed 'transmediation' by Charles Suhor (1989, cited by Mills, 2011, p. 63). An example of transmediation at work in contemporary meaning making would be the use of a cartoon in a newspaper depicting the same content as the editorial. A technological example would be the emoticons found within most contemporary communication devices, from cell phones to email applications on computer-based systems.

In sum: Structuralism emphasised the conventionality of the sign, even in the absence of context, and in a sense Saussure already saw the sign as a (mental) construction of reality (Chandler, 2009, p. 5). Constructivism takes the notion of the constructive role of

the sign further, by emphasising the fluidity of its meaning as a result of the social and cultural situation and collective meaning-making processes in society.

4 SOCIAL AND CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACHES TO SEMIOTICS

4.1 Social semiotics

Social semiotics is the overarching domain dealing with how people design and interpret meanings within a community (Hodge & Kress 1988, p. 62). Where structuralist semioticians were more interested in the classification and the study of signs themselves, social semiotics chooses to focus on the process of how the sign is made by people in certain cultural environments, and more importantly, how a certain combination of signs is composed in order to create a specific meaning (Chandler, 2009, p. 16). The main task of social semiotics is to develop an analytical and theoretical framework for explaining meaning-making in a social context (Thibault, 1991). Social semiotics became the rallying point for linguist scholars who were interested in analysing texts which included other modes that went beyond language (Iedema, 2003, p. 32). These modes included the visual arts, sculpture and other kinds of spatial construction seen in the work of O'Toole (1994, 2011) and Iedema (2003, p. 32).

Danesi (2007, p. 1) is of the opinion that the goal of social semiotics is to unravel the meanings that are built into all kinds of human products. These include words, symbols, narratives, symphonies, paintings and comic books, as well as theories and mathematical theorems. This shift in focus, of the semiotic approach, from the classification of signs to how signs are constructed or designed, used and interpreted reveals that historical events and new social interests may drastically alter the use and the interpretation of a given sign system (Hodge & Kress, 1988, p. 62). Stein (2008, p. 2) contends that social semiotic theories place mankind at the centre of meaning-making. We become designers and interpreters of meaning and we make active choices according to our interests for available semiotic resources. With the rapid advances made in communication, it has become an almost impossible task to classify the sign as something which is a fixed entity. For the social semiotician the sign is a resource which people use and adapt in order to make meaning. This approach to signs and sign systems is apparent in the work of the New London Group (1996) and the Brian Street Group (1997), and forms the foundation of Kress and van Leeuwen's *Reading images: The grammar of visual design* (1996), which contributed to the inception of the multimodal movement during the Birmingham meeting of 1999.

4.2 Hallidayan systemic functional linguistics (SFL)

Systemic functional linguistics is a sociologically based language theory that draws upon social semiotic principles. Language and other sign systems constitute social interaction, while being shaped by culture, and carried over from one generation to the next.

Halliday, who became the primary proponent of SFL, was inspired by the anthropologist Malinowski (1935), who placed the emphasis of his studies on the 'context of situation'.

Malinowski was of the opinion that a single word remains meaningless in a sense and is only fully understood within the context of other words, usually to form a sentence.

Furthermore, Malinowski pointed out that it may be profitable for linguistic scholars to widen their concept and understanding of context. This should not only embrace the spoken word, but also facial expression, gesture, body activities, including the environment, where the exchange of communication takes place (Malinowski, 1935, p. 22). It is clear that Malinowski was already aware of the importance of mode and media in specific contexts of usage. Halliday, however, did not give overt attention to other 'contexts' besides language. This thread would later be picked up by socio-semiotic scholars such as Kress and van Leeuwen (1996).

In his book *Language as a social semiotic system* (1978) Halliday bases his theory on two main characteristics: firstly, 'systemic', which aims to underpin the internal characteristics of language, and secondly, 'functional', where he attempts to seek a framework for describing language as a medium for social interaction (Halliday, 1978). Language exists by virtue of the functions it fulfils as 'text' in a given context and situation. He further emphasises the fact that his studies focus on language as a social process, and attempts to underpin the influences that a group's social interaction has on their use of language and the interpretation thereof (Halliday, 1985). In other words, language is a form of social interaction shaped by culture and carried from one generation to another (Halliday, 1978).

The functional orientation of SFL is captured by Halliday's (1985) three metafunctions of language, each of which instantiates a particular type of meaning:

- the ideational metafunction (field), which refers to the content of language;
- the interpersonal metafunction (tenor), which emphasises the meaning that a speaker (writer) makes through the use of language. This often deals with personal expression and personal opinions in order to persuade or sway an audience; and

- the textual metafunction (mode), which categorises the use of mood and texture with its relation to language and the expression thereof.

In general, Halliday's systemic functional linguistics (1978, 1994) has had a profound influence on the research conducted by social semioticians. Where the early semiotic scholars were interested in the study of the sign from a lexical point of view, Halliday's SFL seeks to study the sign system from a grammatical point of view. Signs sequenced grammatically, offer various combinations of signification possibilities (Machin, 2007, p. 4). The human race is able to unite the resemblances of physical and non-physical objects and we draw on such resemblances. Being able to transport these meanings from one domain to another is how humans organise their experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 63). The grammar approach to the sign system treats various modes of the sign system as a complex phenomenon. This complexity brings with it multiple meanings, especially when social and cultural events are infused in the process of meaning-making (Machin, 2007, p. 5). An example of such an event (although rooted in CDA) was the destruction of the artwork titled *The Spear* by Brett Murray (Johannesburg, 2012). Social and cultural events within South Africa led the general public to believe that the image the artist painted was that of President Jacob Zuma because of the phallic content of the work, which in turn questioned the president's sexual promiscuity that was exposed by the media.

With SFL, Halliday approaches signification from a grammatical point of view: that is, sign = grammar = meaning underpinning the SFG notion of lexicogrammar (Machin, 2007, p. 5). According to Machin, Halliday referred to grammar as something abstract, wedged between meaning and phenomenon, which forces the interpreter of the sign to rethink its meaning (2007 p. 5). Grammar is the level at which various strands of meaning potential are woven into fabric, or more so the level at which different meaning selections are integrated in order to form structures (Halliday, 1978, p. 93). Meaning cannot lie in the lexical or grammatical sign only but in a combination of both. For Halliday lexis and grammar are two ends of the same continuum. The term lexicogrammar then describes the semiotic relationship between the lexical and the grammatical sign in combination, claiming that they are inseparable entities: that is, sign = lexicogrammar = meaning (Machin, 2007, p. 6). Meaning cannot reside only within a simplex sign but will include grammatical associations, causing lexis and grammar to become part of the same continuum (Machin, 2007, p. 5). Lexicogrammatical associations become a new concept with in systemic function linguistics, as it describes the direct relationship between the sign system and grammar (Halliday, 1994, p. 17).

For Halliday, signs are thus tied up in grammar or grammatical associations. Within grammar lie the three characteristics of field, tenor and mode. This approach is later adopted by Kress and Van Leeuwen, who apply it to visual communication and refer to relationships between visual elements as visual grammar. This notion and the extent to which they apply to visual images are discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Halliday's ground-breaking theory of language as a semiotic system offers two approaches to sign systems and meaning-making. According to Machin (2007, p. 5), these are, firstly, the simple or lexical approach where a sign = meaning, which translates into meaning being direct and fixed; and secondly complex, which is later to become the multimodal approach. In multimodal communication, meanings are made through combinations of signs, which bring with them an infinite system of complex choices.

The most important contribution Halliday made to linguistic study and that of semiotics is that he was able to create a shift from the focus on the word and the sentence to that of the whole text. His tri-functional conception of meaning (ideational, interpersonal and textual) constitutes that text is predominately a mode of social action (Iedema, 2003, p. 31; Halliday, 1994). Halliday's tri-functional model and the implementation of mode have had a profound influence on the concepts of multimodality born from socio-semiotics. Systemic functional linguistics, in turn, has had a profound influence on sociocultural theory and research undertaken in the field of genre analysis and genre-based teaching. Socio-semiotic practice, pioneered by the New London Group in 1996, led to the birth of a construct named visual grammar. Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) expound the notion of a visual grammar in a book titled *Reading images: The grammar of visual design*. The notion of a visual grammar led Kress (2010) to theorise the process of stacking various modes together, and how this process may lead to transforming or strengthening meaning in contemporary society. It may be fair to say that Kress became interested in the way in which the meaning-maker is able to shift and arrange various modes and move freely between them in order to make meaning.

The remainder of this chapter sets the focus on Post-Hallidayan socio-semiotics as well as critical discourse analysis (CDA) which has also partially developed from SFL.

4.3 Post-Halidayan socio-semiotics

4.3.1 Introduction

Social semiotics differs from traditional semiotics regarding the role of 'semiotic resources'. Social semiotics sees semiotic resources as socially made phenomena that may undergo various changes through social interaction. Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) see semiotic resources as a connection between representational resources and what sign makers do with them. Van Leeuwen defines semiotic resources as actions, materials and artefacts that people use for communicative purposes (Jewitt, 2007, p. 22).

According to Jewitt (2007, p. 23) traditional semiotic scholars approach these resources as fixed sets of rules or codes which never change. These sets of codes join signs together to constitute fixed meanings that are often not modifiable. This is evident in the semiotic work of, among others, Barthes (1964) and Saussure (1974). Social semiotics has emancipated semiotic resources previously bound by fixed rules of application by realising that the role and situation of the sign-maker is as important as the sign that is made. This involves social interaction, hence the name given to this field of linguistic research: social semiotics. Signs are therefore seen as products of social signification, where sign-makers choose the sets of semiotic resources which best suit their purposes in particular contexts. The sign relies on the resources that are available at the time when the sign is made. This is referred to by social semiotic scholars as the 'affordances' of modes (Jewitt, 2007, p. 23). The affordance of a mode may also be seen as a 'set of meanings' that each mode brings with it when a sign is constructed.

Semiotic resources have become a complex system with *ad infinitum* choices. The nascent theory of multimodality aims at mapping these semiotic resources available for meaning making, but realises that there are new ways of using semiotic resources that develop constantly, thus altering the process of meaning-making. In the framework of multimodality, these semiotic resources have become known as modes, which are evident in the ground-breaking research into the combinations of semiotic resources, including image, language and text, by scholars such as O'Toole (1994), Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996), Finnegan (2002), Kress (2003), and O'Halloran (2008, in Jewitt, 2007, p. 25). In order for the reader to understand the application of a language-based theory to visual art, it is important to offer a brief overview of what is defined as 'visual grammar', the notion introduced by Kress and Van Leeuwen in their seminal publication *Reading images: The grammar of visual design* (1996).

4.3.2 Kress and Van Leeuwen's 'visual grammar'

As early as the beginning of the 20th century Saussure was aware of the need for a holistic approach to the study of language and other sign systems. He called for a science or theory that studies the life of signs within society (Saussure, 1916, p. 16). Halliday's social semiotic theory (1978) heeds Saussure's call and offers a powerful theoretical and descriptive model for the investigation and study of meaning (O'Halloran, 2012, p. 3). According to Kress and Van Leeuwen, the contemporary age of communication has resulted in the fact that verbal or written texts and images have developed side by side, which should lead us to expect that a linguistic model of grammar may well exist in the domain of visuals (Szczelkun, 2010, p. 97). This, in essence, is what Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) set out to do when they formulated a framework for the analysis of images within the domain of linguistics. In essence, it is argued that pictures have the same 'grammatical' characteristics or associations as text, and therefore they may be analysed in the same way. This form of analysing visuals in the same way as text is what Kress and Van Leeuwen refer to as visual grammar. This need for a visual grammar in linguistics became a matter of essence as technological advances in contemporary communication led these scholars to believe that visual images no longer need to be text-supported; or that the role of text in linguistic meaning making may no longer be the primary source of meaning making. Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 1) explain that:

Just as grammars of language describe how words combine in clauses, sentences and texts, our visual grammar will describe the way in which depicted people, places and things combine into visual 'statements' of greater or lesser complexity and extension.

As mentioned, Halliday classified meanings through multiple grammatical associations into three types: field, tenor and mode. By the early 1980s Kress had already established his idea of extending social semiotic practice to visual communication, based on these Hallidayan grammatical associations (Szczelkun, 2010, p. 97).

In order to design a visual grammar, inspiration is drawn from Halliday's (1978) three language metafunctions: field, tenor and mode. Forceville (1999, p. 165) summarises these as follows:

- *Ideational metafunction*: The ways in which semiotic systems refer to objects in the outside world and the relations between them;

- *Interpersonal metafunction*: Relationship between the sender and the receiver of a sign; and
- *Textual metafunction*: Various options available to make sure that signs form complexes of signs (modes).

Visual grammar is interpreted by Salbego *et al.* (2015, p. 5) as:

- any aspect of an image represents an aspect of the world;
- any image will interact with the viewer; and
- images combine visual elements into a coherent whole.

Meanings are made using a combination of all three lexicogrammatical language metafunctions. The way in which the sign-maker refers to objects in the outside world (field), the relationship between the meaning-maker and the meaning-interpreter or audience (tenor), coupled with various combinations of semiotic resources afforded by advances in technology in order to make meaning or multiples thereof (mode), brings with it Kress and Van Leeuwen's bold notion that images may be interpreted in the same way as text.

For Kress and Van Leeuwen, the metafunction of mode becomes the driving force behind their notion of visual grammar, as the SFL metafunction of mode contains the choices of semiotic resources the sign-maker uses or chooses to make different types of meaning. Field and tenor are equally important in the meaning-making process as they co-determine the outcome of the set of modal resources the meaning-maker chooses to use; in other words, what the meaning-maker wants to say and to whom he/she wants to say it.

Visual grammar was a radical attempt at marrying the communicational structures of language with semiotic resources outside the field of linguistics. While their 1996 seminal publication aimed at proving that grammar could be applied to the domain of images and three-dimensional objects, using a system of vectors which describe images in the form of verbs (1996, p. 51), compositional orientations (1996, p. 70) and relationship between the image, the viewer and the real world (1996, p. 85), their approach was met with much criticism. The main concern among scholars who offered criticism regarding the visual grammar theory is that Kress and Van Leeuwen were purposively selective regarding the image they chose to demonstrate the affordability of their theory. While visual grammar was proven successful to some degree, the model could not be applied

to all images in visual communicational structures, especially not to the realm of visual art. The following section offers a scholarly debate regarding the notion of visual grammar.

4.3.3 Scholarly debates on Kress and Van Leeuwen's *Reading images: The grammar of visual design* (1996)

In 1996 Kress and Van Leeuwen's approach to social semiotics was seen as radical, as history reveals that literacy in the form of written and spoken words formed the basis for most knowledge acquisition in western cultures. However, according to Szczelkun (2010, p. 96), cultures outside traditional Western communication approach knowledge acquisition differently. Oral cultures, for instance, rely on other and wider uses of sense media, including movement (dance), oral (song) and visual images for knowledge acquisition and meaning-making. Thus, the affordances of media are shaped by culture. Sign-makers use a set of meaning-making resources that are available to them at a certain time and in a certain place.

As with most seminal scholarly publications, Kress and Van Leeuwen's publication attracted much attention in the domain of linguistics. Attempting to write a grammar for visual images was not only embraced and critiqued by linguist scholars but it attracted the interest of scholars from the visual domain as well, such as O'Toole (1996, 2011), Finnegan (2002), Machin (2007), Andrew (2007, 2011), Szczelkun (2010) and Leborg (2010). Much criticism has been levelled at the choice of images by Kress and Van Leeuwen. The general consensus among these critics is that a visual grammar may be more complex than what Kress and Van Leeuwen led us to believe. This debate centres on the fact that the characteristics assigned to 'mode' become far more complex, especially when interwoven with advances in technological meaning-making. For Halliday, language and images are both abstract in character and expressive in nature until their meanings are realised or grounded (Halliday, 1978, p. 39); in other words, until a solution is found to the design problem. There is thus a call to focus on semiotic forms of communication other than the mode of the written word to make meaning. According to Szczelkun (2010, p. 97) what is innovative regarding Kress and Van Leeuwen's 1996 publication is the fact that the focus is placed on the syntax of signs rather than the paradigmatic approach that was the research norm in the past. Kress and Van Leeuwen thus take a bold stance in claiming that visual images can be read as 'text'; and thus the metaphor of 'grammar' can be applied to visual images. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, p. 156), this type of grammar may be used by sign makers/individuals to shape the subjectivities of others. They further claim that through

technology, contemporary visual communication has become more independent of verbal and written language in order to support its meaning, and therefore an attempt should be made to theorise images as they now form part of linguistic study. To date both scholars have admitted that no concrete answers have been found to resolve this pressing question (of theorising multimodality), owing to the ambiguous nature of modes and their uses in various combinations (Kress, 2010, p. 30). This ultimately means that a sign may contain different meanings when infused with various sets of modal combinations. Owing to the nature of mode, Szczelkun (2010, p. 97) states that within the realm of visual grammar, 'grammar' should not only be seen as rules for correct language use but rather as set of socially shaped resources for the construction of meaning. In this way, the analysis of images is not bound by such stringent rules.

Forceville (1999) offers further critique regarding the notion of visual grammar. He is of the opinion that applying visual grammatical principles to a wider spectrum of images (especially within visual art) may become one-sided, as the authors worked with images best suited to grounding their personal scholarly concept of visual grammar (Forceville, 1999, p. 2):

Whatever 'grammar' is operative in most pictures is less inter-subjectively shared than Kress and Van Leeuwen may suggest.

What Forceville may be referring to, is that owing to the ambiguous nature of visual art, now interwoven with technology and social media, the visual possibilities become complex and it may not be that easy to tie visual images down to a linguistic theory. In their defence, Kress and Van Leeuwen claim that people need to be trained to read images visually, similar to when individuals learn how to read and write. They further offer a disclaimer admitting to the fact that their visual grammar theory only supports certain images generated by western image-/meaning-makers (1996, p. 1). The above-mentioned critique offered by Forceville (1999, p. 2) is thus grounded by the fact that contemporary multimodal communication is fuelled by technology causing a global meaning making process across many cultures around the world. Images are no longer western or non-western but have become global. Later, Kress (2010) seeks a unifying theory of image in contemporary communication but admits that no theory has been formulated as yet due the complexities of image and text communication as a world-wide trend.

Jewitt (2007; 2009) seems to entertain a similar argument around the notion of visual grammar as Szczelkun (2010) in terms of seeing grammar not only as a set of fixed rules applied to language, but as a set of socially shaped resources to make meaning. According to Jewitt (2007, p. 56), another way of attempting to broaden Kress and Van Leeuwen's visual grammar is to refer back to role of semiotic metafunctions. As it is accepted that meanings are made using all three semiotic metafunctions (field, tenor and mode), these metafunctions can be seen as having 'meaning potentials'. She is of the opinion that metafunctions represent that which 'can be meant' or 'what can be done' with various sets of semiotic resources (Jewitt, 2007, p. 24).

Machin embraces the work of Kress and Van Leeuwen in a publication titled *Introduction to multimodal analysis* (2007). He offers a breakdown of multimodality and traces its historical roots back to Halliday's 1970s publication, with the inception of lexicogrammatical associations centring on the Hallidayan language metafunctions. Machin (2007) attempts to continue the quest of Kress and Van Leeuwen's visual grammar, offering attempts at analysing various other images from contemporary film posters to digital advertisements. He came to the conclusion that a visual grammar in essence may be more complex than originally anticipated, thus sharing similar concerns as the above-mentioned scholars working in this field.

Despite these criticisms, the ground-breaking work by Kress and Van Leeuwen in 1996 opened the research field of social semiotics to other scholars, who applied the principles of visual grammar to various disciplines of communication other than those that are text dominant. Kress and Van Leeuwen's visual grammar principles thus caused social semiotic studies to become multi- and interdisciplinary. This is evident in the research conducted by scholars such as Finnegan (2002), O'Toole (2011) and O'Halloran (2008, 2012), among others, all offering adapted versions of the notion of visual grammar.

Since 1996 the interdisciplinary application of Kress and Van Leeuwen's study has given rise to a better understanding of the complexities of analysing visual images. However, owing to the restrictions imposed by a rigid application of grammatical rules to analyse visuals, research into the application of a visual grammar across different modes has been abandoned in favour of an investigation into what is termed 'mode' and the characteristics thereof. An enquiry into the characteristics of mode, and revealing the hybrid nature thereof in contemporary communication, raised pressing questions such as:

- What are modes?
- What are their affordances?
- What does 'a set of socially constructed resources' mean?, and
- What are the implications when modes are mediated by personal experience?

These issues will be addressed in the following chapter, as they are important factors influencing the notion of multimodality.

4.3.4 The influence of visual grammar on contemporary interdisciplinary research

As early as 1990, O'Toole (1990, 1994) extended the principles of SFL to other sign systems by applying the notions of field, tenor and mode to the process of art-making and architecture. He applied the tripartite metafunctional system of language to the architecture of the Sydney Opera House in order to understand its meaning (O'Toole, 1994). O'Toole uses the labels representational, modal and compositional instead of Halliday's ideational (field), interpersonal (tenor) and textual (mode):

- *Representational* may be seen as themes, portrayals scenes, actions and events within an artwork.
- *Modal* refers to the approach used by the artist in order to create impact using gaze, rhythm, stance, characterisation scale and perspective.
- *Compositional* may be seen as the application of Gestalt and the use of the various elements and principles of art, such as line, form and shape (O'Toole, 2011, p. 24).

O'Toole further extends the concepts of systemic functional grammar to architecture by comparing the elements of lexicogrammar with the elements of a building (O'Toole, 2011, p. 15).

Like a clause in language, a building incorporates types of process and their participants; its specific functions are modified in terms of material, size and colour and texture; and its component elements are organised taxonomically like lexical items in the vocabulary of our language.

O'Halloran (2008, 2012) builds on O'Toole's work by applying Halliday's theory and Kress and Van Leeuwen's visual grammar principles to moving images (video/film). O'Halloran is of the opinion that Halliday's theory provides a framework that goes beyond the running commentary about multimodal phenomena. It focuses on the design of

grammars using semiotic resources (O'Halloran, 2012, p. 1). She claims that Halliday's language metafunctions fulfil *four* important functions that social semiotic studies need to take into account: first, to construe or experience the world (experiential meaning); second, to organise meanings into messages and text (textual meaning); third, to create logical relationships between experiential meaning and logical meaning (logical meaning); and fourth, to enact social relations (interpersonal meaning) (*ibid.*). This interpretation allows for the combination of a variety of semiotic resources. O'Halloran refers to meaning created through the combination of different modes as 'intersemiotic meaning'; which may expand across different semiotic resources, and which may themselves change according to the context of culture (*ibid.*).

The main aim of O'Halloran's work is to apply Halliday's theory to semiotic resources or modes that are able to be computationalised (semiotic resources which enter the digital realm via computers). At the time of writing this chapter, O'Halloran was assisting in writing computer software for the Multimodal Analysis Lab (IDMI) at the National University of Singapore. This software will assist in the analysis of various semiotic modes, such as images, text, sound and videos (O'Halloran, 2012, p. 1). She refers to this as digital multimodal semiotics (O'Halloran *et al.*, 2009, p. 9). This notion will be expanded in detail in the section on multimodality and the influence of technology in chapter 3.

The work of O'Toole (1994, 2011), O'Halloran (2008), Finnegan (2002), and Kress (2010) continues to contribute to the mapping of semiotic resources, especially in the field of visual art, design and architecture. Part of the research done in the field of visual images inspired other social semiotic scholars to include socially and culturally shaped resources other than text and still images, *viz.* colour, gesture and movement (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001), gaze (Bezemer, 2008), music and voice (Van Leeuwen, 1999) and space (O'Toole, 2011). This has led social semiotic scholars to understand that semiotic resources function in a system of multiples (multimodality) (Jewitt, 2007, p. 24). Multimodality later adopts these multiple semiotic resources and applies them to combined semiotic or modal resources which are socially and culturally determined.

In essence, what the term 'visual grammar' meant to Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) is that grammar is a set of grammatical rules that can be applied to images. However, as their research and research by other scholars continued, it became widely accepted that visual grammar should rather be seen as a set of socially constructed resources for meaning-making.

Since the main aim of this study is to consolidate research on multimodality across disciplines, and prepare visual art and art education for the challenges of a multimodal world, it is of importance to summarise the various scholarly stances regarding the metafunctions assigned to semiotic systems in tabular form. The purpose of table 2.1 (below) is to indicate the development of understandings regarding the notions of field, tenor and mode, as scholars from various semiotic domains sought to understand meaning-making in a multimodal world.

Table 2.1 Comparison of various scholarly stances and adaptations from Halliday's three language metafunctions

	SFL (Halliday)	Visual grammar (Kress & Van Leeuwen)	Visual art/ architecture (O'Toole)	Moving images/ video (O'Halloran)	Multimodal framework for visual art (Binsbergen)
Field	The content of language	Ideational metafunction Visual sign system must convey and represent ideas	Representational metafunction The themes found in an artwork: scenes, action, gestures	Experiential meaning Construct and construe an experience of the world	What does the artist want to say? Idea or concept of the artist Concept is refined into a theme
Tenor	The meaning that is intended by the meaning-maker	Interpersonal metafunction A visual sign must create a 'mood' of address	Modal metafunction Artist's approach: rhythm, stance, scale, perspective, etc	Interpersonal meaning To enact social relations and create a relationship between experiential and logical meaning	Why does the artist want to say it? What does the artist want to say and why does he or she want to say it? Artist's intent and personal experience (<i>Zeitgeist</i>)
Mode	The use of 'mood' and 'texture' in language to create a certain expression	Textual metafunction A visual sign must form a coherent form of address	Compositional metafunction Application of art theories: use of techniques, Gestalt and the elements and principles of art	Textual meaning Organise meanings into messages	How will the artist say it? How will the artist say it? Application of art theories in modal combinations

According to the first column of table 2.1, Halliday interprets the metafunction of *field* as the content of language. In visual art the artist works thematically on an idea which becomes conceptually refined. Field can thus be interpreted as what the artist wants to say. Kress and Van Leeuwen refer to ideas, O'Toole refers to themes and O'Halloran refers to experience. If it is agreed that meanings are made and understood when the members of a certain cultural group interact (Vygotsky, 1978), meaning-making in visual art and linguistics is clearly rooted within the constructivist paradigm. General ideas and concepts within society at large become the platform for engaging in meaning making processes. This is a notion shared by all the above-mentioned scholars.

The metafunction of *tenor* stems from Halliday's definition of tenor, which is defined as the intention of the meaning-maker. Kress and Van Leeuwen refer to it as the 'mood of

address' while O'Toole refers to tenor as the 'artist's approach'. The relationship between the artist and the audience thus manifests itself in the use of various elements of art (rhythm, scale perspective). The relationship between the sign-maker and the audience is referred to by O'Halloran as 'social relations'. With reference to a visual grammar in linguistics, the metafunction of tenor has not been given much scholarly attention besides what Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) refer to as 'gaze'. As sign-makers are unique in character and personality, each will forge their own personal relationship with the viewer. In visual art, tenor may broadly be defined as the relationship between the artist and the viewer. This ambiguous nature of the sign-maker's intent thus questions the ability of attempting to theorise or categorise the metafunction of tenor. In visual art, this is a given. Salbego *et al.* (2015, p 7) summarise tenor as the social relationship between participants/viewers and the image producer. Artists are seen as (socially manifested) barometric sign-makers of their times but their reflection always becomes personalised or internally driven. The language metafunction of tenor thus offers the sign maker a personal platform to comment on events driven by societal happenings and, more importantly, defines the question of the artist or sign-maker's personal intent. How meanings are constructed to form ideologies and how sign-makers react to certain ideological circumstances, concepts and events have for some time been at the core of critical discourse analysis (CDA) research.

The majority of scholars accept *mode* to be the physical form the sign may assume. Most academic disciplines will concern themselves with the primary mode of expression in their field. For example, in linguistics the primary modes of meaning-making would be oral and written text, in music the primary mode would be sound, in the performing arts the primary mode would be movement and gesture, while visual art will concern itself with the mode of visual image. For the purpose of this study, with its pivot on the visual arts, the definition of mode will be the answer to the question: How and with what does the artist make meaning?

What has become evident in contemporary meaning-making is that modes have become interdisciplinary. Furthermore, evidence has been offered to support the notion that modes are resources generated from social and cultural interactions. These interactions, in turn, are heavily influenced by socio-political issues. Thus, for the purpose of this study it has been deemed important to offer a broad overview of the linguistic discipline known as critical discourse analysis (CDA).

4.3.4 Critical discourse analysis (CDA)

SFL and social semiotics are sociological language theories foregrounding that sign systems are socially and culturally shaped. CDA scholars accept these as premises, and then add an emphasis on the role of power relationships in meaning-making. This may have contributed to CDA scholars investigating the role of ideology in texts (including images) and the way that ideology creates hegemony (uncritical acceptance of power relationships) (Song, 2005).

CDA is a philosophical framework interested in uncovering the role of power, ideology and hegemony that manifest in discourses (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 10; Van Dijk, 1997 a & b, p. 11). CDA was inspired, among others, by the post-modern scholar Henri Foucault (1977; 1980), who focused much of his research interest on theories of discourse. CDA also has roots within the Marxist notion of class distinction, which has been broadened to include the role of domination with regard to other marginalised groups, such as women and various ethnic groups.

CDA pivots on the notion of 'ideology'. Ideologies represent certain ways in which societies construct (or manipulate) certain meanings. Ideology is a socially constructed reality sustained and created by a dominant class within a certain social domain, thereby creating unequal relations of power, domination and exploitation. Ideology is thus a process that combines certain representations of particular constructions of identity, especially those of the collective identities of groups and communities (Fairclough, 1995, p. 46).

According to Fairclough 1992, p. 87), ideologies become most effective when they are 'neutralised' and have derived the status of 'common sense'. This abuse of power used by a dominant group in order to force their ideology upon a minority group is what Fairclough (1995, p. 17) refers to as 'hegemony'. Van Dijk (1997b, p. 19) is of the opinion that hegemony is characterised by the use of text (among others) as a tool of manipulation to enforce a certain code of conduct upon the lesser dominant group in society. In this way, the audience of a certain discourse may be manipulated to act or react in a certain way (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 87).

According to Van Dijk (1997b, p. 20) the success of hegemony rests on what he terms 'access'. This process involves how the power dominant group may grant or restrict access to knowledge to the lesser dominant group. Social cognition and access to knowledge play a dominant role. This access and certain restrictions placed on

knowledge, constitutes the primary interest of CDA scholars (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 82). According to Van Dijk, the power elite is the media, who have the power to sway opinions. By restricting the access of knowledge to the lesser dominant group regarding a certain discourse, and allowing free access to that of the power elite group through the media (among others), the process of hegemony may manipulate an audience into accepting a certain discourse as fact or reality (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 88). Van Dijk further argues that how the media is controlled and the way in which access is granted to members of a specific society becomes an important factor in the realisation and manifestation of hegemony.

Although language constituted the initial focus of CDA, there is increasing interest in how other modes, their cultural meanings and affordances contribute towards maintaining and creating power relations (Fairclough, 1995, p. 38). Theo van Leeuwen (2005, p. 292) is of the opinion that CDA has moved beyond language, arguing that discourses are often realised in a multimodal fashion, not only through text but through other modes of communication, such as images. In a multimodal world CDA has become more contextualised, and more interdisciplinary in terms of multimodal discourse (Wodak *et al.*, 2001, p. 16). An example of CDA entering the world of the visual domain is evident in research conducted by Brandt and Carstens (2011) where visual images of sportswomen were analysed to reveal gender stereotyping in a South African sports magazine with a predominantly male readership, using a specific element of Kress and Van Leeuwen's visual grammar (vectors) to unveil systematic stereotyping of sportswomen, and confirming the powerful role of the media. This study demonstrates how notions of SFL and CDA may be applied to images and visual culture.

Fairclough (1992, 1995, 2001, 2003), who can be seen as a major exponent of CDA, is particularly interested in how the media becomes a carrier of ideology. The media, driven by technology, has played an important role in that it has made people more visually aware, causing the audience to respond to various stimuli carried by various modes (Fairclough, 1995, p. 39). The affordances of different modes and media are used to promote certain discourses, which become dominant and are accepted as the truth irrespective of how abstract the concept may be. To a large extent the role of the visual artist in contemporary society has become that of a critical discourse analyst, as he/she draws inspiration from, reflects on, and reacts against power imbalances in society. Compare, for instance, Brett Murray's painting *The Spear* (2010), in which he analyses and critically comments on the abuse of power by politicians creating excessive media interest.



Figure 2.4 Brett Murray, *The Spear*, oil on canvas, 2010, Johannesburg, South Africa

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/the_spear

The role of CDA, and its influence on the contemporary visual artist, is thus profound. The artist as a visual creator of meaning reacts subjectively to an event or discourse, which in turn may become embedded in ideology within a socio-cultural environment. The visual artist is empowered by fulfilling two roles: first, to create visual meaning; and second, to enrich and embed social meaning (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 95). If the main aim of CDA is to uncover the social meanings in a certain discourse in order to investigate the role of power and ideology, visual artists may be seen as role-players in this uncovering process. The artist's reaction to certain social, economic or political events, as they manifest themselves through access, controlled by the power elite, may well serve as their inspiration to create artworks which in turn become the reflectors or barometers of their times.

5 SUMMARY

This chapter has offered a bird's eye view of the ontology and epistemology of multimodality, and how these have been theorised. I attempted to trace the historical footprint of multimodality, starting with early structuralist semiotics, SFL and its influence on social semiotics, which in turn gave rise to Kress and Van Leeuwen's (1996) visual grammar. The theory of visual grammar sparked interest in the notion of mode

and its metamorphosis into multimodality, which, in turn, was strongly influenced by technology-driven communicational aids.

Although Kress and Van Leeuwen's attempt at a visual grammar, as such, has not become a standard for multimodal analysis, it emphasised that contemporary society no longer makes meaning within the bounds of various disciplines. Driven by technology, the use of modes is no longer bound by a modernist segregation into discipline-bound means of meaning-making. When the analysis of images became a legitimate object of analysis in linguistics, Kress and Van Leeuwen demonstrated to the world that modes of meaning making are hybrid, and their boundaries are fuzzy in contemporary society.

This phenomenon has manifested itself in visual art, and the way that various or multiple modes are layered and combined in contemporary meaning-making has posed various scholarly research questions and undertakings. However, for the purpose of this study, it is important what the notion of visual grammar means for contemporary analysis of multimodal discourses: 'visual' has become a metaphor for communication appealing to senses other than sight (in the form of words), and sound (in the form of speech). 'Grammar' on the other hand, becomes emancipated from its traditional linguistic meaning in order to become a metaphor for a set of meaning-making resources constructed in a social and cultural environment, and constrained by their innate affordances.

Visual grammar not only highlighted the interdisciplinary nature of modes within the semiotic landscape but broadened the traditional field of SFL research to include other domains, such as that of the visual. This allowed scholars working in other disciplines, such as O'Toole, O'Halloran, Machin, Andrew, Stein, Forceville, Jewitt and Finnegan, to adapt Kress and Van Leeuwen's original visual grammar model of 1996. These adaptations, in turn, allowed a wider spectrum of applications in research, among others in contemporary visual art. The notion of visual grammar, and its metaphorical extension to multimodal analysis, has also influenced CDA. Research conducted by scholars such as Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) and Machin (2007) regarding the analysis of visual images has afforded CDA scholars the opportunity to apply their theory not only to text but to various other modes, including visual images.

The following chapter focuses on the new notion of 'mode', as it originated in linguistics and has been extended to other disciplines – particularly visual art.

CHAPTER 3

Modes and multimodality

1 INTRODUCTION

Multimodality has until recently largely been studied by linguists. However, the role of multimodality has not only had a profound influence on language practices, but also on contemporary visual art, locally as well as worldwide. While the visual arts have not as yet embraced multimodality by definition or included it in the teaching and training thereof, it is evident that contemporary artists are incorporating a wider repertoire of modes into their chosen media of expression. This is especially evident when looking at the annual entries to the Sasol New Signatures National Art Competition over the past six years.

In this chapter I first explore how scholars working in the field of multimodality delimit the range of possible modes available to the artist. Second, I give an overview of the characteristics of modes in order to justify 'mode-status' as it manifests in contemporary visual art. This is followed by a characterisation of multimodality, as primarily expounded in the work of Gunther Kress.

2 DEFINING AND DELIMITING MODES

In order to understand how multimodality is applied to meaning-making in contemporary visual art, it is firstly important to investigate what linguist scholars aimed to define as mode. According to Kress (2010, p. 54), Kress and Bezemer (2008, p. 169) and Andrew (2007, 2011) modes are *culturally determined resources for making meaning*. Kress (2010) and Kress and Bezemer (2008) add to this definition that the resources are socially shaped and culturally determined.

Although other scholars do not contest that a mode has these two components, a survey of the literature on multimodality, including seminal works by key social semiotic and multimodal scholars, has revealed that they delimit the range of modes they recognise in different ways, which may indicate that they conceptualise the notion of mode in different ways. This may be due to constraints imposed by the discipline or field of study, the interest of the scholar, and the fact that semiotic blurring has allowed modes to be combined across various disciplines and genres.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) and Kress (2010) include images, writing, layout, music, gesture, speech, moving images and soundtracks as modes, while Kress (2010) lists modes as speech, still images, moving images, writing, gesture, music, 3D models, actions and colour. These ranges are elaborations of the modes that the New London Group originally listed in 2000: audio, spatial, visual, gestural and linguistic (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 25). Recently, even more specialisation has taken place to accommodate sub-disciplines and genres. Kress and Bezemer (2008, p. 169), who became interested in how modes have shaped the layout of text-making in the printed media, including textbooks and e-resources, list image, writing, layout, speech, moving images and gestures as modes. They suggest that moving images and speech are used alongside or instead of writing or text (2008, p. 174), for instance when viewing online tutorials on YouTube (Kress & Bezemer, 2008, p 176). Iedema, who also became interested in a multi-semiotic approach to modes as they became technology-assisted through television, computers and the internet, lists image, music, gesture, sound, and film or moving images as modes in the technological domain (Iedema, 2003, p. 36). Andrew's (2007, 2011) context is the visual art classroom, and thus he includes various genres and mediums in art-making. He draws on the work of Jewitt and Kress (2003, p. 1). For him, the resources for meaning-making include image, gaze, gesture, movement, music, speech and sound (Andrew, 2007, p. 16). O'Halloran *et al.* (2009) are particularly interested in the study of multimodality as it manifests in film, and how moving images transmediate into the computer or digital realm. Their interest in how short films (moving images) in the form of advertisements are digitally made, stored and re-played has afforded them the opportunity to assist in pioneering software for digital multimodal analysis through the retrieval of multimodal patterns (O'Halloran *et al.*, 2009, p. 1). They specify lighting, movement, gesture, gaze, dress and camera angles as her list of modes (O'Halloran *et al.*, 2009, p. 2). O'Toole (2011, p. 24) applied various principles and elements of art (Gestalt) to Kress and Van Leeuwen's (1996) visual grammar in order to analyse architectural structures in Australia. O'Toole (2011, p. 25) specifies gaze, rhythm, stance, characterisation, scale, perspective, line and form as modes for architectural expression.

O'Halloran and O'Toole's approaches differ from that of Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) in that they regard language, mathematical symbols and images as semiotic resources rather than modes (Jewitt, 2007, pp. 21–22). Stein's (2008) main focus is applying multiple modes to teaching pedagogy in education and she includes colour, sound, movement, gesture, image and space as part of her list of modes. Kress identifies eight

'modes of communication', viz. writing, speech, moving images, still images, colour, action, gesture and 3D models (Kress, 2010, p. 21).

In 2002 Finnegan (p. 5) identified two further modes not mentioned by any of the other scholars. In addition to sound, sight, movement, embodied engagements and material objects, she lists touch and smell. What has, however, not been found in any of the sources consulted, is taste. This raises the question of whether taste does indeed manifests as a mode in visual art. Although not much research has been conducted on the inclusion of taste as a mode in visual art, there is evidence that visual artists have been including modes that draw upon all five senses. The sense of sight, and to some extent touch and hearing, have formed the basis for prototypical sensory modes in the arts throughout history, but contemporary visual artists have started utilising touch, smell and taste in the format of edible art, olfactory art and tactile art, which will be covered in detail in later chapters of this study.

Thus, the list of primary modes have now come to eleven: writing, speech, moving images, still images, colour, action, gesture, 3D models, touch, smell and taste. Still images, colour and 3D models may be regarded as the primary discipline-specific modes at work in visual art.

A question that comes to mind is how we might decide which of these are 'legitimate' or 'justified', without any criteria that are more specific than 'meaning-making resources' and 'culturally determined'. Andrew (2011, p. 106) draws on Stein (2008) and Schon (1999) who posit that modes occur on a social semiotic continuum where lexicogrammatical associations allow modes and the combination thereof to be free from fixed rules. Andrew (2011, p. 106) contends that the classification of modes may be difficult as their application to theorisation may seem 'rule like' but not 'rule bound' to its process of choice and combination.

Although Stein's (2008) work precedes many of the publications referred to above, her exposition of mode moves us the closest to a comprehensive understanding of the notion. She regards the enumeration of the characteristics of modes as the most useful starting point for defining mode, and thus her range of modes, as well as the ranges identified by other scholars, could be tested with reference to the following six characteristics (Stein 2008, pp. 25–26):

- Modes are an interface between the natural and cultural world.

- Modes may be disseminated through technology.
- Modes have grammars and communicative effects.
- Modes have materiality.
- Modes can be realised in multiple media.
- Modes may be related to sensory possibilities of the body.

In the next section a brief explanation will be given of each of these characteristics before they are applied as criteria.

3 CHARACTERISTICS OF MODES

3.1 Modes are an interface between the natural and cultural world

Modes are the carriers of meaning. Within the constructivist paradigm of meaning-making, modes transport information and make sense of the world, which in turn shapes social and cultural identity. As early as 1984 Charles Suhor, an educationist drawing on Vygotsky's 1978 constructivist theory, became aware of the changes in the characteristics of post-modern meaning-making. He introduced the concept of 'transmediation', signalling an awareness of the translation of content from one sign system into another. The notion of 'mode' coined by the New London Group in 1996 offered the crossing point Suhor (1984) was referring to. Furthermore, when modes relate to sensory possibilities of the human body, they are seen as the 'interface' between natural and cultural world (Stein, 2008, p. 26). The senses thus offer us the connection between the real world and our understanding and ordering thereof. This 'interface' is what Andrew (2011, p. 102) refers to 'makeshiftness'. Meaning-makers constantly shift between and adapt to different social and cultural circumstances, and are thus able to shift between different modal repertoires which are at their disposal in order to make the transportation of information more fluid and meaningful. Modal repertoires relating to all the senses of human experience offer a wider crossing for the transportation of meaning.

3.2 Modes have grammars

'Grammar' is seen as the system of a language which is governed by a certain set of rules. In other words, grammar is a set of structural rules that govern the composition of language into subject-verb-object word orders and relationships (Butterfield, 2008, p. 141). The key characteristic of grammar is that its function is more *prescriptive* than *descriptive* regarding the construction of the written and spoken word (Butterfield, 2008, p. 142). What Stein (2008, p. 25) seems to be stating is that most primary modes

(visual and auditory), such as words, pictures, speech and sounds (music), all subscribe to their own 'grammatical' rule bases governed by their specific disciplines. Such modes are constructed from subscribed guidelines which govern their acceptance and validity. To include touch, smell and taste to a list of modes operating in the visual arts would therefore be, according to Stein's classification, problematic. The grammars (or lexicons) of touch, smell and taste operate more descriptively than prescriptively and are in most cases ambiguous, relying on individual or cultural preferences. What may smell sweetly or appealing to some individuals may not smell that appealing to others. The same may be said for touch and taste.

Smell and taste are more difficult to identify or to define than touch, since odours, fragrances and tastes are elusive. They cannot be measured in the same way other senses such as sight and sound may be measured, classified or identified. The sense of smell and taste are seen as more continuous than discrete. According to Finnegan (2002, p. 182) smells have no edges or boundaries and do not contain a beginning or an end. No matter how powerful the sense of smell, taste and touch may be, they are difficult to underpin. Finnegan (2002, p. 192) contends that smell does not necessarily reside in things but escapes and floats above them. Thus, smell and taste have not as yet been fully exploited as standard communication systems in the way that sound, and visual senses have been, which may make it difficult to include and describe as modes. The modal status of the non-prototypical senses are further complicated by what Koster (2002, p. 27) claims to be a split between 'high' and 'low' sense classifications which started in the 19th century and still exists today. Touch, smell and taste fall within the 'low' sense category and despite advances in technology. Koster (2002, p. 28) believes that the status quo will remain due to the lack of rapid advances being made in technological developments.

It is therefore not a surprise that touch, smell and taste lack grammars. At most, they may be regarded to have vocabularies that comprise taxonomies of a kind. Finnegan (2002, p. 182), however, claims that smell does not contain its own vocabulary. Rather, a smell is referred to or signified in terms of the characteristic smell of another object. The same may be said of touch and taste. Thus, vocabularies are bound up with the materiality and the affordance of the object of which they comprise a characteristic or from which they emanate. For example, in the study of botany a plant or flower may smell sweet or foul. Or in cuisine, a certain edible substance may taste sweet or salty, bitter or sour. Furthermore, non-prototypical senses, especially smell, are seen as associative and carry with them a strong sense of personal and emotional intent (Koster,

2002, p. 29). For this reason smell, and to some degree touch and taste, adhere to the same characteristics, making them difficult to charge with the status of a mode. Touch, on the other hand, is more specific and direct, and is a regulated mode of social interaction (Finnegan, 2002, p. 194). Although it may not have a grammar, touch contains its own vocabulary. The vocabulary of touch is structured according to the weight, shape, size, spatial properties (such as depth), temperature, flexibility, movement, texture, hardness/softness, viscosity, and composition (Finnegan, 2002, pp. 196, 197). However, Finnegan refers to the associated vocabulary as 'a rather small vocabulary' (2002, p. 196).

According to Bevin (1993, p. 38), the formal elements of art are line, shape, form, *space*, texture, value and *colour*. These seven elements are the 'ingredients' in the composition of a work of art. Although these 'elements' do not have grammars, they do have vocabularies associated with the disciplines in which they occur. Each of the elements of art contains vocabularies, while 'rules' (like syntax) would determine how they are combined and what their compositional meanings would be within such combinations. A parallel may also be drawn between dance and visual art with regard to the elements of art. Both disciplines share the elements of line and form. In dance the elements of line and form are used to describe a dance movement or sequence, whereas in visual art they describe the content of a visual image. While these similarities are noted, the focus of this study is on multimodality in visual art and therefore the focus needs to remain within this discipline. Therefore, when referring to the elements of art in the domain of visual art, they are described through a set of vocabularies. Hunt (2010, p. 11) states:

Successful artists use their 'art vocabulary' so the viewer can 'read' what they are trying to say. As we go along, you shall soon learn that these vocabularies are used with regard to personal interpretations.

Hunt (2010) motivates that applying a grammar with fixed rules to the elements of art is simply not possible, as each artist will manipulate these elements to best suit their own personal compositional needs. The element of line is thus described through its vocabulary as being thick, thin, soft, hard, long, and short. Therefore, applying the notion of grammar in visual art is difficult, as the combination of these elements of art are applied to the artist's idiosyncratic style and intent in the composition of a visual message. This echoes the similarities regarding the role of modes in art education where, as mentioned, Andrew (2011) claims that modal ensembles in the arts are 'rule

like' and not 'rule bound' in their application. An example of such an idiosyncratic application of the elements of art would be to look at a class of drawing students who are asked to draw the contour of an apple using line only. The end result yields images that signify a representation of an apple although they all differ in quality of line. Here it would be difficult to underpin a 'rule of line' to the contour thereof as an element of art. Similarly, the other elements of art will adhere to the same characteristics in application.

Despite these challenges touch, smell and taste seem to be used increasingly in contemporary visual artworks and it has become evident that these senses are operating as modes within an ensemble of carefully chosen other modes in order to create multimodal artworks. I therefore argue for the inclusion of touch, smell and taste as part of the eleven modes at work in visual art, despite the fact that these senses are said to lack grammars. Furthermore, it is not justifiable to exclude them for the fact that they do not adhere to one of six characteristics listed by Stein (2008). Although modes appear to be 'rule like' in character, they simply cannot be bound to the rule of process (Andrew, 2011, p. 106). Here I draw on Iedema (2003, p. 38), who argues that a straightforward blueprint for the workings of mode may be difficult to underpin as the rules to 'what goes with what' and 'what can signify what' is constantly changing and challenging. In chapters 4 and 6 it will be demonstrated that touch, smell and taste have been embraced in the process of art-making regarding concept, execution and viewer interpretation.

3.3 Modes have communicative effects

The entrenchment of modes in the social world is that they contain communicative effects. These, according to Stein (2008, p. 25), may take the form of gestures, movement and body language, thus encompassing more than the discipline-specific linguistic modes of speech and text. Stein is of the opinion that these modes become difficult to underpin as they are culturally specific and shift according to social occasions and contexts of use (*ibid.*). Jewitt (2007, pp. 1–7) reiterates: multimodality deals with the use of any semiotic resources that sign makers configure in specific moments and places. These are by large culturally determined and socially shaped. For Stein (2008, p. 26) the communicative effect of a mode may be tied up in a basic psychological action of, for example, blinking. She states that the most basic of body gestures may contain different messages in relation to its cultural setting and even these may be subject to change depending on their affordances. This means that messages can be made and received at a multi-sensory level.

3.4 Modes have materiality

According to Stein (2008, p. 26) materiality is the way in which a mode is made into something material or how it becomes substantialised. The materiality of modes may contain two distinctive characteristics. First, primary modes are grounded to a specific location and space, where they are both produced and accessed. This means that modes take on a physical form – for example, a sound, a texture or a shape – and become embodied as the mode may be seen, heard, felt, touched or tasted (*ibid.*). Second, the materiality status of a mode may be determined by its permanence. This may be determined by the time and the context in which the mode is used. For example, digital flashing images (using action), or a performance art piece (using gesture) are bound to time and space and have a beginning and an end. On the other hand, a bronze sculpture erected in a public space (using the mode of 3D models) may not display the same characteristics, as it is more permanent.

It is evident from the discussion above that the delimitation of mode is dependent on variables such as the disciplines and genres at stake, which are, in turn, bound by the physical medium used for conveying the message, for example text on paper, digitally transmitted text and still pictures. This brings to the fore the distinction between mode and medium.

3.5 Modes can be realised in multiple media

While mode has to do with the sign system used for signification, medium is the substance through which meanings are made and become available to others (Kress & Bezemer, 2008, p. 170). Medium comprises two dimensions, material and social. Painting (still image) may be seen as a specific visual mode. Its medium would be oil paint on canvas. Similarly, photography consists of the medium of an image captured on light-sensitive paper. In language, writing is a mode, with its prototypical medium being ink printed or written on paper.

Technology has afforded the meaning-maker many new 'media' where, for example, the mode of writing is delivered via digital media such as e-books, tablets and cell phones. For Kress and Bezemer (2008), technology has forced social semiotic studies to reconfigure the media landscape, as technology has had a profound impact on the act of writing and how we communicate. The impact of technology has in turn forced the visual artist to redefine the way he/she creates and conveys a certain message. Besides Kress and Bezemer (2008), scholars working in this field do not make this distinction overtly.

This may be due to the fact that the role of the material aspect of medium may enter a grey area when a mode enters the digital realm.

A clear distinction needs to be made between multiple media and multimedia. A traditional landscape (mode of still image), for example, may be executed in materials such as oil paint on canvas, a photographic print on paper, and pastel on paper. In this sense, the mode of still image is materially grounded. As soon as this traditional landscape enters the digital realm, which is referred to as multimedia or new media in visual art, the material grounding of the mode is brought into question. I have chosen to refer to the eleven modes active in visual art-making as having either a primary or secondary mode status (or both). This means that when referring to an oil painting which exists physically within an exhibition space, the primary mode of still image is grounded materially to a specific time and place. When the same oil painting is uploaded into cyber space (as a digital image), it loses its grounded materiality to become a digital image of an oil painting. In this case it is assigned a secondary modal status.

3.6 Modes may be related to sensory possibilities of the body

One of the most important characteristics Stein mentions is that modes have a sensory relationship to the human body (Stein, 2008, p. 26). This resonates with Finnegan's (2002, p. 3) remark that communication takes place using resources from our environment and our own bodies, which means that our multisensory abilities with regard to communication need to be taken into account. People communicate and interact by 'mediational means' and mediation is interconnected via the human body (Scollon, 1999, p. 153). This takes place through the use of material objects and/or technologies (Finnegan, 2002, p. 41). Thus, we may argue that modes can be characterised by the way they are perceived. The way *Homo sapiens* perceives the world around him/her is through the use of the five senses.

Finnigan (2002) lays continued emphasis on the senses and how they are used in contemporary communication. Her research in the field of anthropology grounds the claim made in this study that the senses play an important role in the theorisation of multimodality.

Human beings have active and organised ways of communicating with each other. In *Communicating*, the anthropologist Ruth Finnegan considers these multiple modes of communication and the multisensory resources on which humans draw. Sound, sights,

smells gestures, looks, movements, touches and material objects are used by humans to creatively interconnect both nearby and across space and time (Finnegan, 2002, p. 1).

This means that the different manifestations of visual communication have become highly complex and integrated. Finnegan (*ibid.*) explains thus:

There are now overlaps between pictorial, graphic and gestural forms; between surface-inscribed graphics and three-dimensional artefacts; and between all these and the visual signs of our bodies both in embodied presence and in their representations in pictures, films, photographs and sculptures.

From the ranges of modes provided by multimodal scholars, it is evident that sight and hearing are prototypical senses of communication, while touch and smell are peripheral, and tastes do not feature in any of the literature consulted. In the modal taxonomies of scholars such as Jewitt (2007), O'Halloran (2008), Stein (2008) and Kress (2010) movement, which is a visual mode, has almost been elevated to the status of a primary mode.

Among the scholars who have offered modal taxonomies, only Finnegan (2002) and Stein (2008) list touch and smell as modes, with Stein further referencing taste as one of the materiality characteristics of modes (Stein, 2008, p. 26). These are the three controversial 'modes' in that they do not display all the characteristics of prototypical modes, as enumerated by Stein (2008). Finnegan is of the opinion that that these 'lower' modalities are almost dispensable, since, compared to sight and hearing, they are the least utilised in the communication process (2002, p. 176). Although this may be the case, the three peripheral modes do feature in works of art, and therefore they will be discussed briefly.

The sense of smell has received some attention by the above-mentioned scholars but not much attention has been paid to taste. Koster (2002, p. 28) regards both taste and smell as 'near senses', as both require direct interaction with the materiality of a mode or when the sense acts as a mode in itself. In other words, the audience or message receiver is in close proximity to the message which has been made. Thus, compared to sight and hearing, smell and taste have a lesser reach. Furthermore, the sense of smell and taste are fixed to a central part of the body and often work in tandem.



What Finnegan (2002, p. 177) says about smell is that it becomes socially and culturally defined in the same way any other modes may be socially and culturally shaped in social semiotic study. Smelling, like seeing and hearing, is learnt, experienced and ordered differently in different social worlds. It is thus fair to say that the senses, including taste, share the same characteristics as smell, and may be classified in the same way as other modes in social semiotic studies. Olfaction and taste thus deserve the social semiotic status of a mode.

The same indexical properties are at work in taste: like smell, taste is speechless, long lasting, and operates from memory; like smell, tastes are not named; we simply say 'that tastes like something or other'. In artworks, smell and taste are not traditionally seen as modes, although both are indexically inferred. Take for instance a digital image of a red rose and a lemon. Here, the images exist in their secondary modality, and the associated fragrance, smell or taste may be perceived through memory. It features neither as a primary nor as a secondary modality. Koster (2002, p. 32) refers to these senses as 'special memory' senses. This may be the reason why linguists have not included smell, taste and touch into their modal classification system.

The status of touch as a mode may be slightly different. Touch is an important mode, as it offers us a channel to explore the world outside ourselves (Finnegan, 2002, p. 197). In the visual arts, especially in sculpture, this importance may reside in the fact that touch can teach vision (Millar, 1997, p. 15, cited by Finnegan, 2002, p. 197). Sculpture is an art form that allows the blind 'to see' via touch. An example of this is Brancusi's *Sculpture for the Blind* (1916) depicted in figure 3.1 (below). Brancusi, among other artists, was fully aware of the sense of touch as a mode of communication. The work is sculpted from white marble and intensely polished to a smooth mirror surface, and Brancusi believed that the soul of the artist would be imparted into the material and thereby exposing the essence of raw primordial form through the sense of touch (Janson, 2007, p. 427).



Figure 3.1 Constantin Brancusi, *Sculpture for the blind*, marble, 1916, Paris, France,
<http://www.theimagist.com/node/5389>

Modes may be classified from the perspective of a sensory experience. Figure 3.2 (below) offers a basic classification of modes linked to the sense(s) with which each is perceived.

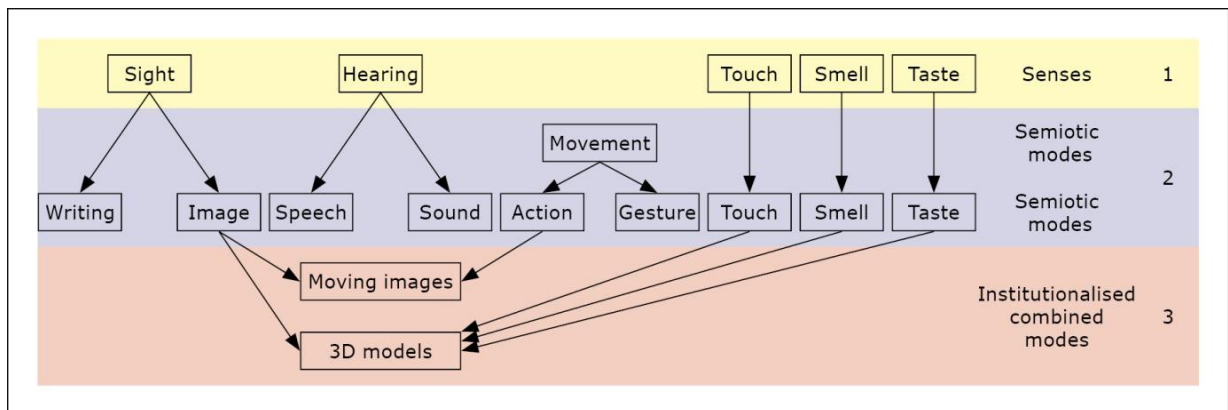


Figure 3.2 Sense-based taxonomy of modes

What the diagram aims to illustrate is that modes have a direct relation to the senses which will influence the choices visual artists make when orchestrating modal ensembles into visual artworks. The top row of the diagram represents the five senses, including movement, while the second tier depicts five examples of modalities, as characterised by socio-semiotic scholars such as Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996), Stein (2008), Finnegan (2002), Kress and Besemer (2008), Jewitt (2009) and Kress (2010). The lower tier offers examples of the combinations of modes/modalities as they may manifest across

disciplines as institutionalised combinations of modes. The combinations of modes listed on the third level may be termed discipline-specific modal genres, as they manifest in the visual arts. For example, the combination of the modes of touch and image gives rise to the genre of sculpture (3D model), whereas the combination of image and action as modes gives rise to the genre of film making in the form of video art (moving image).

3.7 Modes may be disseminated through technology

Post-literate paradigms embrace the technological age, in which cyber culture affords new ways of communicating, free from the rigid boundaries of the written word. Visual art, on its part, has followed the same trend as verbal and written text. According to Powe (1996), the post-literate condition has evolved and continues to do so as time progresses. Post-literacy does not denounce the role of reading and writing but rather accepts that the use of the written word is becoming less important, making way for a wider variety of modes in order to convey information (Powe, 1996, p. 27). The popular YouTube computer application with its slogan 'Broadcast Yourself' is a fine example of the process of post-literate communication. Here the written and spoken words remain important but the audio-visual experience becomes the main focus.

An important characteristic of digitally delivered meanings is message speed. The term 'surfing the net', for instance, refers to the rapid manner in which information and knowledge travels to and fro in its digital form (Levinson, 1999, p. 3). This altered state of communication was anticipated by McLuhan as early as 1962. Meanings are made, altered and remade at a speed which is uncontrollable at any instant. Message speed, in turn, is related to so-called 'citizen journalism'. 'Live messaging' systems, such as 'tweeting' via Twitter and instant messaging systems such as WhatsApp, offer the public on-the-spot information faster than the printed media can write articles and have them published in the form of newspapers and magazines.

This brings the notion of authorship to the fore. The end user, equipped with a smart phone containing various media applications such as cameras, video, Twitter, Facebook and email, has further strengthened 'citizen journalism'. Hand-held devices have afforded the public to be able to perform 'on-the-spot' reporting on social, cultural and political events as they happen. Equipped with such hand-held devices, the public play an active role in gathering and processing media information (Radsch, 2013, p 137). The people, who were in the past seen as the recipients of information and referred to as 'the audience', are now contributors and authors of the media themselves.

Alan Liu (2011), Professor of English at the University of California, prefers to refer to the state of literacy in a post-literate society as 'transliteracy'. This term refers to the human condition and our ability to use multimedia platforms of communication (oral, print, audio-visual and digital) (Ruby, 2012, p. 3). Liu contends that the process of reading and writing has not changed, but has merely moved from one domain to another.

This moving from one domain or medium to another has led to a blurring of boundaries: Language, spoken in real time by human beings, and written or typed on paper, is digitally captured and transported, and delivered through computers, cell phones and tablets, in other words mediated by technology. This has led to Walter Ong's coining of the term 'secondary orality' (Ruby, 2012, p. 3). In turn, visual arts genres, such as painting, sculpture, design, printmaking, mixed media, and even installation pieces and performance art, have through digitisation been transmediated to become part of unbounded digital galleries. Using Ong's term as a template, we may coin analogous terms such as 'secondary viscosity' and 'secondary kinesthetics' to refer to the 'virtual' rendering of different modalities. Kress (2003, p. 34) refers to the process whereby information is moved from one source domain into another as 'transduction' or 'intermodality'. Intermodality is sometimes used interchangeably with 'resemiotisation', which according to Iedema (2003) denotes the process of how meaning-making shifts from one context to another and from one practice to another (Iedema, 2003, p. 41). I prefer to use the term 'transmediation' to refer to transfer from a primary medium (musical performance, an authentic artwork, etc.) to the secondary medium of the 'computational sphere' (digital realm). The term 'resemiotisation' will be used to refer to the 'translation' of meaning from one mode to another mode (for example the same content being rendered through text and visuals, or text and performance).

An unanswered question that pertains to the digitisation of modes is whether all modes can be digitised, in other words disseminated through technology. The membership of three members of the category of 'mode' is problematic: touch, smell and taste. Do touch, smell and taste exist in the digital realm in the format of secondary modes, as is the case with text and visuals? Can the physical or perceptual properties of touch and smell be transported digitally? We are not referring to the indexical property of an image, for example, of a rose, that will enable the viewer to recall the sweet smell from memory or a lemon that may taste sour, but of the actual smell that would appeal to the same sense as it would in the natural world.

Finnegan (2002, p. 177) argues that smell becomes socially and culturally defined in the same way any other modes may be socially and culturally shaped in social semiotic study. Smelling, tasting and touching – like seeing and hearing – are learnt, experienced and ordered differently in different social worlds. Also, smell, taste and touch can be incorporated in the sensory experiences of works of art. They can be shared, are long lasting and can be extended beyond a single body (Finnegan, 2002, p. 180). However, smell and taste, in particular, are difficult to transport into the digital realm. To date it is still not possible to share smell and taste in a digitised environment in its primary form.

The sense of touch, which I have characterised as a mode, may be closer to being rendered via digital technology as time passes. In terms of being able to experience touch within the digital realm, many technological advances have been made in the digital age of the 21st century. According to Finnegan (2002, p. 217), *The New York Times* announced as early as 1999 that prototypes were being developed which will allow people to experience the sense of touch via a motorised mouse and touch pads making touch a digitally transported mode. The world of virtual reality has also made rapid advances since the year 2000 and is continuing research to bring the mode of touch and tractability into the virtual world.

Using popular search engines on the internet such as Google and Yahoo, I conducted a search using the phrase 'touch, smell and taste in virtual reality' (12/06/2013). A further search was conducted entering each of these non-prototypical senses separately in order to refine the online search method. The search revealed numerous digitally driven companies that have achieved this goal with reference to touch through the use of various interface applications. These applications are defined as devices or programs that allow a user to communicate with a computer (Iwata, 2008/2012, p. 292).

Regarding taste and smell, an online search of academic science platforms such as Scopus and Science Sciencedirect.com (08/08/2014) revealed that the goal of digitisation has been realised but to some degree not yet achieved. Some software companies have managed to transport multisensory experiences via digital software and hardware and are able to share these experiences with others. One such company is Immersive Touch™ (Industrial Virtual Reality Inc. 2013). In their marketing slogan this company claims to be the 'next generation of augmented virtual reality technology'. They describe their software as follows (<http://www.geomagic.com/en/products/haptic-applications/haptic-application-gallery/industrial-vr-immersive/>):

The high-performance, multi-sensory computer interface allows easy development of medical, dental, engineering or scientific virtual reality training applications that appeal to many stimuli: audio, visual, tactile and kinaesthetic. Immersive Touch is a complete hardware and software solution. The hardware integrates 3D stereo visualization, force feedback, head and hand tracking, and spatialized 3D audio. The software provides a unified API (Applications Programming Interface) to handle graphics rendering, haptics rendering, 3D audio feedback, interactive menus and buttons.

Regarding interface technology for taste, Iwata (2008/2012, p. 292) contends that such an unobtrusive device for transporting taste digitally is difficult to realise. This is due to the fact that taste receptors are spread across the tongue making the design of such an interface difficult regarding functionality and comfort. Yananida (2012, p. 306) reiterates Iwata's contention regarding an interface for smell. Like taste, the receptors for smell are located in the nose of the end user, challenging the comfort and functionality of such a device. However, such an interface is in existence but at this stage of its development it is still seen as a 'novel device' (Yananida, 2012, p. 306). In contrast to virtual reality devices that are already digitising touch, sight and sound, olfactory and gustation interfaces have not as yet been created. Yananida (*ibid.*) states that the season for taste and smell being left behind in the digital race is that these senses rely on chemical stimuli rather than physical stimuli such as touch. This makes the computation of these two senses difficult. However, Yananida (*ibid.*) reveals:

Researchers have recently begun to actively discuss and develop the use of olfactory and gustatory interfaces including the introduction of an olfactory display in virtual reality.

It was due to these technological developments in the digital realm and later that of that of virtual reality that forced academic scholars such as Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) to develop their theory of visual grammar. While it was successful to a point, further research is required in order to accommodate the grammars (syntax, morphology and semantics) of the digital realm in order to create software, which in the world of science, needs to be grounded by rules. However, this may prove challenging as it is predicted that as technology develops, especially digital multisensory applications, the boundaries of multimodality will shift even further.

3.8 Towards a classification of modes

Thus far, this chapter has aimed at identifying eleven modes at work in visual art making, taking into account that modes and modal choices are discipline-specific. In addition to sight and hearing, the 'lower' or 'non-prototypical' senses of touch, smell and taste have been legitimised as sensory bases for modes in visual art. Furthermore, modes have been assigned the status of secondary modalities as soon as they become digitised. The reason for doing so is that the materiality of modes is brought into question as soon as they enter the digital realm.

Table 3.1 uses Stein's six characteristics of modes as a heuristic to establish the prototypicality of each of the eleven modes. As mentioned, the reason for doing so is that her exposition of mode moves us the closest to a comprehensive understanding of the notion. She regards the characteristics of modes as the most useful starting point for defining mode, and thus my chosen eleven modes, which are at work in the visual arts, could be tested with reference to these characteristics (Stein, 2008, pp. 25–26). For clarity, the eleven modes at work in visual art are highlighted in yellow. Six additional modes listed by other scholars, such as O'Halloran and O'Toole, have been included as they are central to semiotisation in visual arts disciplines. It is important to note that speech and sound are included as separate modes in order to distinguish between vocal and instrumental sounds that are both perceived through the sense of hearing.

Table 3.1 Table of modal characteristics (based on Stein's six characteristics, 2008)

Characteristics of modes	Modes																	
	Writing	Visible image								Movement			Speech	Sound	Touch		Smell	Taste
	Written/ printed text	3D	Still pic	Lighting	Gaze	Dress	Layout	Space	Colour	Moving image	Gesture	Action	Human speech	Music (Non-musical sounds)	3D	Texture	Artwork with olfactory dimension	Artwork that can be tasted
Realised in multiple media	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Grammar	+	+	+	+	+	±	+	±	±	±	±	+	+	+	±	±	±	±
Materiality	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Communicative effects	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Interface between natural and cultural world	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Embodied	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Digitisable	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	±	±

The cells in the table are marked with a plus (+), a minus (-) or both a plus and minus (±) symbols indicating the following:

- Plus (+) = Yes
- Minus (-) = No
- Plus and minus (±) Yes and no depending on circumstance

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- Plus (+) = Yes
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- Plus and minus (±) Yes and no depending on circumstance

Table 3.1 shows that the majority of the modes adhere to Stein's (2008) six characteristics. It is interesting to note that Kress assigned modal status to some of the modes that prove the most problematic to characterize, viz. moving images (2007, p. 57), and space and gesture (2010, p. 28). This may also be said of the sensory modes of touch, smell and taste. It has been noted that these modes lack grammars, and their meanings rely primarily on the social contexts in which they are used. I believe that this is due to the complex workings of modal ensembles, especially when they become infused in cultural belief systems.

Modal materialities, social contexts and the interdisciplinary nature of multimodal meaning-making stand in the way of providing clear-cut definitions of what modes are or are not. In the event that a specific resource is needed to fulfil a specific task within a modal ensemble in a specific place, time and social/cultural continuum, it needs to be accepted that this resource deserves the status of a mode. This will include, in some instances, accepting that non-prototypical senses are important enough in a hierarchical order of modal ensembles to gain modal status. This is especially evident within contemporary art-making practices. Within the domain of visual art, these senses function as modes in representational and communicational roles and thus they operate as modes in terms of Kress's (2010) framework.

The above-mentioned difficulties forced social semiotic scholars to abandon their quest to define and delimit the notion of mode in favour of attempting to understand how modes are combined and used in order to make multimodal meanings. Since 2010, the heavy reliance on defining modes gave way to prioritise the understanding of how modes are combined into ensembles through the process of what Kress (2010) defines as 'design' in multimodality.

3.9 Multimodality

The term 'multimodality' can be broken down into two distinctive parts: 'multi' meaning more than one (not mixed media), and 'mode' referring to culturally and socially shaped resources for making meaning (Kress & Bezemer, 2008, p. 9). Multimodality is a linguistic theory born from socio-semiotics in the 1990s. In 1996 the New London Group scholars laid the foundation for multimodality with publications such as *Reading images: The grammar of visual design* (1996) by Kress and Van Leeuwen, and later *Multimodality: A social semiotic approach to contemporary communication* (2010) by Kress. Kress and Van Leeuwen's linguistic theories are based on the fundamental principle that images and text seldom stand alone in contemporary communication.

3.9.1 The challenges of theorising multimodality

In an attempt to explain the workings of multimodality and multimodality in visual art, I draw heavily on Kress's (2010) publication *Multimodality: A social semiotic approach to contemporary communication*, as it brings us closer to the understanding of 'how multimodality works' in contemporary communication through a process Kress refers to as 'design' (Kress, 2010, p. 28). As from 2010, Kress has abandoned any attempts at defining and delimiting the nature of modes; rather, he chooses to focus on the process of how modes are combined to create multimodal messages (*ibid.*):

Design rests on the possibility of choice – this mode could have been chosen instead of that – which dictates a certain style. Designs are based on rhetorical analyses, aiming at the purpose of the rhetor, and they are then implicated through the instantiations of choices of many kinds

This approach to the 'design' of multimodal messages will form the basis for the explanation posited for multimodality in visual art. Kress's approach to 'design' will be expounded later in this chapter.

While criticism may be raised regarding the heavy reliance on Kress's 2010 book, and his 2014 book chapter, I believe that to date this 2010 book still stands as a seminal publication. In an attempt to motivate this reliance on a single scholarly publication, various accredited academic online searches were conducted during the course of 2014 and 2015 (journals and book publications) in order to establish whether any new ground-breaking research has seen the light since 2010.

These researchers attempted to establish whether any criticism has been offered regarding Kress's stance on contemporary multimodal communication as well as to establish subsequent events that may offer new insight into multimodality. It is evident that a large number of scholars have offered various reviews on Kress's 2010 publication, but I have not found any serious criticism of his work. Authors such as Yang (2012), Wolfe (2011), Forceville (2011), and Böck and Pachler (2013), have all offered positive reviews on Kress's 2010 publication and continue to apply his multimodal strategies to their own specific fields of study. Most of these scholars are of the opinion that multimodality is in its embryonic phase of research development but none of them seem to break new ground in moving multimodality any closer to being theorised. Since 2010 Kress has repeatedly emphasised the crisis that text faces as a stand-alone mode of contemporary communication (Adami & Kress, 2013, p. 231). His most recent

publication, *Design: The rhetorical work of shaping the semiotic world*, in Archer and Newfield (2014), focuses more overtly on the process of design. In this publication, Kress seems to refine his concept of design originally offered in 2010. Here Kress attempts to offer an in-depth look at the process of message creation by introducing new terms such as 're-design and 'inner semiosis' to his original notion of design (Kress, 2014, p 9). New publications, such as the above, mentioned by Kress will further assist in the process of offering an explanation on how multimodality works in visual art and also further grounding the rationale for this study.

As various linguistic scholars, according to Kress (2010), struggle to devise their own respective theories of multimodality, four important inputs of the 20th century characterise multimodality as a contemporary meaning-making device. Kress and Van Leeuwen state that the first influence on multimodality is that the world started to pay less attention to 'monomodal' forms of communication, shifting the emphasis to that of 'high culture' (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 1). The arts, for example, started to use a variety of materials across various disciplinary boundaries in the form of new media. Second, semiotic 'boundary crossing' forced multimodal scholars to include social aspects of meaning-making from folk costumes to traffic signs, billboards and theatre into the process of sign production. This sign production, when infused with technology, further complicated the various modal characteristics, as their material status is brought into question. The third major impetus to the study of multimodal discourse was the birth of the computer and its increasing power to process multimedia data in the form of sound, voice, moving images, music, images and so forth. The fourth impetus on multimodality relates to the third in the sense that new technology allows the meaning maker to record and replay messages made. Signs are thus no longer a 'once-off' event (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 1). These four inputs identified by Kress and Van Leeuwen, in their publication *Multimodal discourse: The modes and media of contemporary communication* (2001), serve to ground this study in two ways. First, technology plays a major role in multimodality, and second, it grounds the fact that technological developments have further complicated the theorisation process of multimodality regarding secondary status of modes when delivered through the digital realm. Furthermore, I am of the opinion that these four characteristics also serve as challenges with regard to the theorisation of multimodality in general.

This lack of clarity, according to Iedema, and a move towards the study and theorisation of multimodality, revolves around two aspects: first, the 'de-centring' of language as the primary mode of meaning making; and second, the blurring of boundaries between the

modes of language and image and the traditional roles assigned to each (Iedema, 2003, p. 33). Iedema attributes the blurring of modal boundaries to changes made to the 'semiotic landscape' driven by technological advances (Iedema, 2003, p. 34). This seems plausible, as it proves that modes have the ability to move across genre boundaries, allowing multimodality to be approached and studied from a visual art perspective. However, attempting to underpin modes as socially shaped and digitally infused resources that are used across disciplinary boundaries makes the theorisation thereof a daunting task. Furthermore, the tactability – virtual, primary or secondary – and the memory-holding capabilities of multimodality in general, further complicate the theorisation process.

3.9.2 The influence of technology on theorising multimodality

Technology has had a profound influence on the way that human beings communicate, and can be regarded as one of the major contributing factors to have afforded the literate community with a wider repertoire of modes for creating and distributing information, and at an accelerated pace. Also, the visual arts have tapped into these new technological modes, blurring genre boundaries, and in turn offering infinite possibilities for artworks to become layered with meaning. Digital technology, such as the use of the computer, now provides a common platform for the use of semiotic resources. Since information is commonly shared via social networking in the form of smart phone technology and the internet, multimodality may be characterised as social semiotic technology (O'Halloran, 2008, p. 4). O' Halloran refers to this development as a shift to modal computation, as the world of computer graphic virtual reality causes a rapid shift of information from one source domain to another (O'Halloran, 2008, p. 5). This new technology has allowed the meaning maker and message interpreter to see the world in visual patterns. O'Halloran *et al.* call digital software semiotic technology, which brings with it a new set of interdisciplinary modes to create a digital meta-language (2009, p. 11).

Cyberspace, according to Finnegan (2002, p 233), is defined as something which is dematerialised and provides a fast way for the transfer of data in a non-material form. It is a world of pure information. She is of the opinion that networked computers expand communication in iconic (semiotic) formats, which transcend the division of language. This transcended language platform is now referred to as a 'global village' that communicates multimodally with relative ease. The computer has afforded a type of uniform cyber language consisting of various modal ensembles strung together in order to make global meaning. Finnegan (2002, p. 256) contends that this process started

with the inception of computer 'emoticons', illustrated in figure 3.3. Computer-transmitted emoticons typically carry multimodal qualities. An image becomes the carrier of language as well as gesture, action and movement, as most are digitally animated. It could thus be contended that contemporary emoticons are interdisciplinary images comprising various modal ensembles. As early as 1994, Mitchell referred to what he calls 'the pictorial turn' where 'attention to imagination, imagery and non-linguistic symbol systems set aside the assumption that language is paradigmatic for meaning' (Mitchell, 1994, p. 12).

Kress (2003, p. 32) refers to this type of multimodal communication as 'transduction', where semiotic modes become purposively reshaped across genres. New forms of meaning are created as a result of shifting ideas across semiotic modes.



Figure 3.3 Google animated emoticons, still image, www.google.co.za/download

Text is altered, changed, remade, sometimes replaced (Kress, 2010), and combined with other modes. Text is no longer fixed and it can be edited and manipulated by more than one meaning-maker at the same time. The term 'hypertext', embeds image, writing and other modes into interconnected patterns of information and genres. This allows the meaning-maker wider choices so to create new resources which are of personal choice (Jewitt, 2007, p. 19). An example of this would be the 'viral' information status websites such as Wikipedia.org have received. Within minutes the same subject may contain many co-authors. Uploaded information becomes instantaneously edited, deleted and altered.

The semiotic technology of multimodality, which is digitally delivered, escapes physical materiality. Finnegan (2002, p 233) contends that cyberspace comes with its own set of

characteristics and lacks the 'fixity' that books have. Texts on pages are grounded to a specific location with a fixed materiality. Books may now reside in a 'cloud library' in the 'virtual sky', which may be accessed in a timeless, spaceless, virtual realm. An example of such a 'cloud library' would be the internet-based bookstore Amazon.com offering 'e-books' that are downloaded onto their digital handheld device trademarked 'Kindle'. This lack of fixity has become evident in visual art in the form of 'virtual galleries', 'virtual art auctions' and 'virtual exhibitions'. Art works which may still exist in their fixed material state within a fixed gallery location are uploaded into virtual space, assigning to themselves the same qualities as digital text. An example of such a virtual art space would be 'V-Gallery', a South Africa-based virtual art gallery specialising in the sale of material and digital artworks (<http://www.vgallery.co.za/index.htm>, accessed 14 June 2014).

The term 'virtual art' has become increasingly popular within the realm of visual art. It refers to artworks, especially those containing moving images in the form of videos. Such artworks are unable to be grounded, as the content itself is virtual in nature. This means that it cannot be fixed or grounded in reality. An example is the artwork by David R. Burns titled *Visit Us* (2005–2013) depicted in figure 3.4 below. As his work is virtual by nature, it is housed in the *International Database for Virtual Art* on the internet (<http://www.virtualart.at/videos.html>, accessed 14 June 2014). It must be noted, however, that figure 3.4 represents a still image captured from the artist's video. This may be seen as a type of material grounding that resides in cyberspace. The image is moved transmodally to printed paper, which affords it a secondary modality to that which resides in the virtual world.

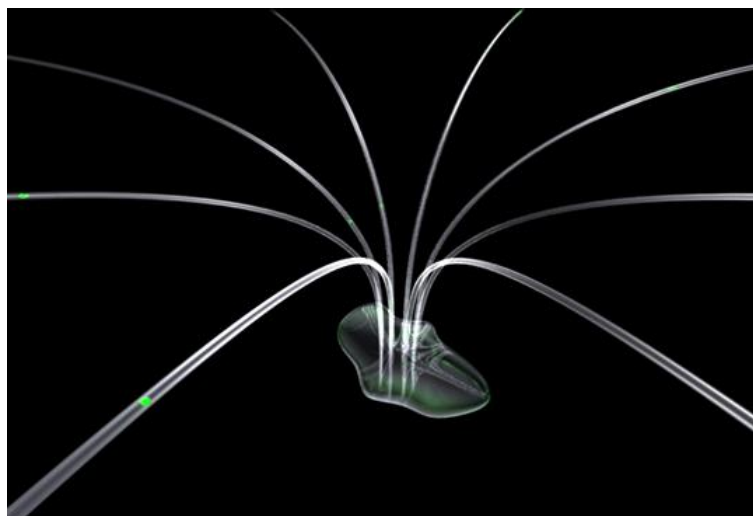


Figure 3.4 David R. Burns, *Visit Us*, still image from the virtual reality video, 2013,
<http://www.virtualart.at/videos.html>

Technology has thus afforded Burns a set of digitally accessible modes to create a multimodal artwork, which may not have been possible without technological advances in the field of digital graphics. This is another instance of what O'Halloran *et al.* (2009) refer to as semiotic resource technology.

Within the field of social semiotic multimodality, scholars such as Jewitt (2007, p. 31) and Kress (2010) state that technology has become the central driving force behind multimodality. Within the field of visual art, technology has had a profound influence on what the term medium/media implies with regard to what is defined as traditional media, for example painting, printmaking, sculpture and drawing. What technology has offered linguistics in terms of a multimodal platform for meaning making is also available to visual artists, and offers them a wider repertoire of modes and modal combinations to make meaning.

3.9.3 Attempts at theorising multimodality

Despite the above-mentioned challenges regarding the theorisation of a digitally infused interdisciplinary multimodal communicational system, Kress's (2010) approach to the 'workings of multimodality' through the process of 'design' seems to be the closest linguists have come to theorising multimodality. It is from this point of departure that this study attempts to build a framework for multimodality in visual art. In his 2010 publication *Multimodality: A social semiotic approach to contemporary communication*, Kress attempts to tie the theories of multimodality together but at the same time admits that such a theory may be difficult to underpin due to the complexities of the media landscape and the technological role of communication. Wodak and Meyer (2008) remain critical, however, claiming that it is not possible to design such a unifying theory, owing to the complex nature of communication. In the past, with the lack of technological advances, people existed and communicated in a monomodal world, described as a world of 'one kind of source in a specific domain' (Kress, 2010, p. 27). Language was the main form of communication and it is described as a monomodal carrier strong enough to deal with human rational meaning at the time. Andrew (2007, 2011) draws on Kress's (2010) modal types and remarks that further modes need to be identified in order to broaden the spectrum of meaning making, especially in the visual arts and art education (Andrew, 2007, p. 15). Andrew further comments on the fact that Kress' list of modes seems to be inherent in the repertoire of most contemporary artists worldwide (Andrew, 2011, p. 35).

To date, despite the challenges of theorising multimodality, Kress's 2010 publication offers a clearer understanding in the process of tying together a workable theory for multimodal communication based on the sum of the parts, although he admits that he does not offer a solution to the pressing issue of theorisation. Rather, a major contributing factor of this publication to the study of multimodality is his formulation of the processes of modal 'design'. The remainder of this chapter will deal with various characteristics of modal representations across sign systems, which the sign-maker may need to consider in the contemporary world of meaning-making, and which need to be included in a unified theory of multimodality through the process of 'design'.

3.9.4 Towards a theory of multimodality

3.9.4.1 The process of 'design' (Kress, 2010, 2014)

According to Kress the term 'design' was born in the early 1990s (New London Group, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000) but at the time it was loosely defined as 'humans being designers of meaning' (Stein, 2008, p. 22). While now recognising the role of technology and the rapid advance thereof, Kress refers to 'design' as a theory of communication and meaning which shapes the social and semiotic world (Kress, 2010, p. 6).

What was originally described as visual grammar in Kress and Van Leeuwen's 1996 seminal publication seems to have been abandoned altogether by Kress in 2010. This may be due to the nature of digital modalities used in various primary and secondary modal combinations. It seems that Kress has moved away from the term 'grammar' in favour of 'semiotic resource'. He seems to admit that a shift has occurred away from meanings traditionally associated with and attached to 'grammar'. Kress is now of the opinion that the notion of 'grammar' is too fixed, with high constraints of regularity, to describe or analyse visuals (Kress, 2010, p. 6). For this reason Kress states (2010, p. 7):

We do not have a theory which allows us to understand and account for the world of communication as it is now. Nor therefore do we have an adequate set of categories to describe what we need to describe.

'Design' as process is Kress's (2010) attempt to move towards a theory of multimodality. According to Cope and Kalantzis (2013, p. 7) the notion of 'design' was brought to the table of the New London Group by Kress as early as 1994. Originating from what Kress (2003) calls 'motivated signs', the notion of design was born from observing a child (age 2) drawing circles that represented a car. A circle represents a wheel and a wheel

became a metaphor for a car. As a two-year-old child cannot read or write, Kress coined the term 'design' and defined it as: 'the process of intervention in the world no less than any other meaning' (Cope & Kalantzis, 2013, p. 8). With the birth of multimodality, the process of design is expanded in Kress's 2010 publication. He states that 'design' is about the theory of communication and meaning, based – at least potentially – on equitable participation in the shaping of the social and semiotic world (Kress, 2010, p. 6). The process of designing a message allows for the meaning-maker to arrange a set of afforded and chosen modes in an order of choice. This choice of arranging a set of chosen modes rests on the meaning-maker and the type of message he/she wants to send to a specific audience. As discussed earlier, one of the driving forces behind the birth of multimodality has been the influence of technology, but it is technology itself that has made the theorising process difficult due to infinite possibilities (semiotic blurring) caused by moving across various disciplines.

Technology has afforded the sign-maker various new modes for making meaning. Combinations of various modes working together in one sign system in order to make meaning has affirmed the dominance of multimodality as a new form of communication. Kress (2003, p. 34) states that technology has afforded us with a new media landscape but he also mentions that this new media landscape has become blurred due to this new technological phenomenon. The new modes brought about by rapid advances in technology have afforded a new set of resources for representing the world. In visual art, this has manifested in the form of new media genres and techniques, which Kress terms 'transduction' (2003, p. 35). The result is that different translations of a sign can be made from one mode to another, or information can be moved from one source domain into another. In other words, modes or modal messages may exist as primary modes, secondary modes or a combination of both at the same time.

Conventionally, certain faculties of academics have an interest in specific modes and their media of expression. Art history, for example, is interested in the mode of image, whereas music would focus on the mode of sound. These modes have remained locked into the disciplinary silos to which they originally belonged (Kress, 2010, p. 5). Kress attempts to bring all modes of meaning making together under one theoretical roof and ultimately searches for a unifying theory which spans across all fields and genres of meaning making. For him, social semiotics may hold the key to unlocking the theory of multimodality (Kress, 2010, p. 2).

Kress's introduction of 'design' seems bring us closer to a unifying theory of multimodality. As modes occur as multiple ensembles questions arise on how these modal ensembles may be constructed or arranged in a specific sequence. In other words, Kress's earlier idea of 'grammar' for each mode, derived from SFL, has now been remodelled to become the notion of design (Kress, 2010, p. 28):

Design is the process whereby the meanings of a designer (a teacher, a public speaker, but also, much more humbly and in a sense more significantly, participants in everyday interactions) become messages.

Kress (2014, p. 4) stresses that the process of design breaks with the rigid boundaries of how we communicated in the past:

The profound, unsettling, corrosion and fragmenting of the social structures which characterised the later 19th and most of the 20th century, has led to the shift in perspective from 'just following tradition', from 'doing it the way you ought to do it' according to convention, to seeing all (semiotic) work as evidence of design.

According to Kress (2014, p. 5) design rests on two resources: first, the material kind which are embodied in the physicality and materiality of modes, and second, non-material resources, which are theoretical and abstract in nature. These non-material resources are what Kress refers to as 'cultural stuff' (2014, p. 4). According to Kress (2014, p. 5), what has become more evident in his attempt to define and refine the notion of design is that non-material or theoretical resources emerge and are materialized through modes. Three important issues tie in with the entrenchment of modes that are used as tools in the process of design. These are defined by Kress (2010) as: the interest of the sign maker, affordances of media and site of display.

(a) The interest of the sign-maker

Concepts of multimodality have forced social semiotic scholars to redefine the role of the sign and that of the sign-maker in contemporary linguistics. Kress and Bezemer (2008, p. 168) contend that writing no longer equals text-making; instead, writing is merely one mode of text-making. They use the term 'sign-maker' to refer to individuals or groups who participate in the making of new meaning by producing and using new texts, using one or more sign system (*ibid.*). These include visual artists, editors, writers, teachers and students. Like the structuralists, socio-semioticians still see signs as units in which meaning and form are brought together (*ibid.*). However, the choice of the sign

and the mode(s) used rests largely on the interest of the sign maker and the aptness and the availability of the modal resources at the time when the sign is created.

The term 'interest' has become important in the study of multimodality, as it accounts for much of what Kress refers to as 'design' (2010, p. 28). The interest of the sign-maker in a particular subject and in his/her audience will prompt the use of a chosen set of modes. Kress (1993, p. 174) defines interest as follows:

Interest is the articulation and realisation of an individual's relation to an object or event, acting out of that social complex at a particular moment, in the context of an interaction with other constitutive factors of the situation which are considered as relevant by the individual.

Kress and Bezemer (2008, p. 168) add that the interest of the producer of texts is twofold:

- *Representational*: How the sign-maker's interest in a specific event or phenomenon may be best expressed with the available resources or modes at hand; and
- *Communicational*: How the sign-maker may realise his/her best social relation to a specific targeted audience.

The audience may be seen as text-remakers, and not merely as interpreters. This echoes Hodge and Kress' opinion (1988), reiterated by Stein (2008, p 22), that individuals should not only consume new meaning but in turn create new meanings through interpretation.

(b) The affordances of modes

For Kress (2007, p. 55) different modes offer different potentials for meaning-making. These potentials for meaning have a fundamental effect on the choices of modes the sign-maker uses in the instance of communication. According to Gibson (1986, p. 16, cited by Jewitt, 2007, p. 55) affordance is the signifying potential and limitations of a material object. On a social level these material resources become shaped by a culture over time to become what is known as a mode. Gibson (1979, p 76) further explains that the notion of 'affordance' means that a mode has the ability to produce certain communicative effects but not others. It is thus the potential use of a given object or resource which may contain certain limitations.

Affordances also tie in with 'reach' or 'semiotic reach'. As social actions alter the semiotic resource over time, the reach of mode may be important when applied to multimodality (Jewitt, 2007, p. 57). Some modes are used differently and in different orders from one cultural context to another (*ibid.*), and certain societies have certain modal preferences used for certain purposes. For example, what is done in speech in one culture may be done in gesture within another (*ibid.*). In western cultures, fairy tales and folklore may be expressed orally or in printed form, whereas African cultures may express folklore in song and tribal dance.

(c) The site of display

The site of display also demands attention in terms of the social world in which communication takes place. Site of display refers to how, where and when the message is presented, which may involve format or layout. Duncam (2010, p. 7) asserts that any contemporary representation in a visual form revolves around more than mere likeness. In a digitally infused age, the emphasis needs to be placed not only on what is represented, but how, where and why it is represented. Examples of sites of display may be posters for advertising, flyers for promotions, product instruction booklets and billboards. Besides the physical site of display, the fact that the site of display has entered the digital realm has offered a broader platform for communication and therefore meaning makers become more critical of their choices. How these representations manifest themselves in the chosen format rests on various social factors and other complex semiotic resources. With the wide range of accessible social media affordances offered to the contemporary sign-maker, possibilities are endless (Kress & Bezemer, 2008, p. 171).

This has brought a new notion to the fore, which Kress defines as 're-design' (2014, p. 6). The process of re-design involves 'conception'. When interpreting Kress's (2014) notion of re-design from a visual art perspective, it is my contention that this process takes place when an existing concept within a cultural genre is altered using a repertoire of modal ensembles to change its traditional and culturally perceived outcome. In visual art, the genre of landscape painting is perceived to contain certain traditional characteristics. When this genre is altered by adding various other modes in a modal ensemble (thus, in addition to a still image with the material qualities of oil on canvas) together through the process of design a process of re-design takes place. In other words, the conception of a collectively shared idea is re-made or personalised by designing (arranging) a set of modes into a modal repertoire of choice. The original concept of the idea, which is culturally shared, is thus re-designed through a process of

choice. Kress refers to this as 'changing the genre-recipe' (Kress, 2014, p 6). He poses the question as to whether this message is 'designed' or 're-designed', or both? His stance is motivated by stating that the message outcome 'is an ongoing, ceaseless semiosis creating a transformation based on "addition" or "substitution", an event absolutely tied in to continuous social (inter-)actions' (*ibid.*). Conception and choice thus become the driving force in multimodal design.

The way in which modes are tied together and how they form part of a unified whole, as opposed to being a collection of unrelated entities, relies on the process of choice (Kress and Bezemer, 2008, p. 178). The process of designing meaning rests on individuality and choice, which in turn strengthens the notion of identity and image that is so prominent in linguistic practices and contemporary art today. These choices, and the combination thereof, are what make the system of contemporary meaning making so layered and complex. From this, an individual may develop a style of communication and output. Aesthetic evaluation thus becomes redefined as that which is aesthetically acceptable, resting on style, and what Kress refers to as 'aesthetics becoming the politics of style' (Kress, 2010, p. 28).

In summary, design shifts the focus to the individual and his interest in the world (Kress, 2010, p. 6). Design focuses on the sign-maker's current interest relating to the creation of the sign, and the focus rests on the future effects and reactions that the audience and the sign-maker himself/herself may have on the sign that was created. Furthermore, digitised signs (using secondary modalities or combinations thereof), executed at a specific time or during an event, now become timeless in the digital realm. I am of the opinion that contemporary artists use this process of design as a means to 'look forward' into a 'timeless' realm of digital communication in the form of 'uploading' information onto the worldwide web. The way signs are designed and carried forward forms the basis for the social semiotic theory of multimodality (Kress, 2010, p. 6). Meaning is now seen to be constructed and built upon rather than deconstructed and analysed (Stein, 2008, p. 23). To motivate this stance, Stein (2008, p. 4) draws on Jewitt (2009), who is of the opinion that people are all different and realise and interpret signs in a personal manner. This allows individuals to imagine a sign differently and in so doing they are able to redesign it. The designer chooses a sign from an existing sign system in order to personalise it and redesign it. Collectively, via technology offering new modes for redesigning signs, the sign system that has been built grows rapidly within a short period of time. Signs which carry this characteristic are known as 'reusable signs' (Stein, 2008, p. 24). As these signs are reused and transformed, they no longer have fixed

intrinsic relationships but achieve meaning relationally within a web of signification (*ibid.*). This means that semiotic sign systems are no longer discrete. The complex web of ever-changing signs spurred on by technology, creating what is commonly known as the global village, has become the key benefactor for what Kress (2010, p. 23) refers to as social and semiotic blurring, which in turn blurs the media landscape.

3.9.4.2 The new multimodal media landscape

A redistribution of the power of communication has come about not only socially but, as mentioned, in the form of digital devices. This has led to the remaking of power relations, which has had a direct impact on how we learn, gain knowledge and affirm identity (Kress, 2010, p. 21). Sign-makers act on their own behalf when they are interested in a domain of their own culture, giving rise to user created content and new genres of communication such as Twitter. This has altered the role of the media, communication, and that which Kress terms the contemporary media landscape. Kress (2010, p 22) offers six characteristics of the new (contemporary) media landscape:

- the affordance and incorporation and participation of current media technologies (manifested in new media genres in visual art);
- the global and the local 'reach' of the media (technology now obliterating the difference between the two);
- user-created content (artworks draw on viewer participation as part of the art-making process);
- accessibility, connectivity and mobility of individuals and the given information (artworks are no longer restricted to the confines of a gallery in fixed time and space);
- convergence of representational, productive and communicational functions in technologies and devices (new media offer visual art newer non-traditional materialities); and,
- multimodality (representations using many modes), where each mode is chosen from rhetorical aspects for their communicational potentials and possibilities (the dynamic and interdisciplinary nature of contemporary visual art).

Kress states that the media landscape may have disrupted communication, affecting its provisionality and fluidity, rendering it potentially unstable as a result of new forms of knowledge production, new principles of text-making and composition, including social and semiotic blurring, causing the abolition and disappearance of frames and boundaries (Kress, 2010, p. 23). Knowledge and text are now linked to become what is known as

user-produced or user-created content. Authors of shareware are not a community, nor are they necessarily from the same social background. Authorship is seen as collective, with various cultural groups worldwide contributing to building on new meaning. Authority of new knowledge made is assumed rather than achieved and texts are now open to modification at any time. Kress uses the authors of Wikipedia as an example of such a phenomenon (Kress, 2010, p. 24). According to Kress and Bezemer (2008, p. 172) this new form of meaning-making has brought with it questions regarding authenticity, validity and authorship of these kinds of texts. Common terminology used in multimodal processes of meaning-making are terms such as *cut and paste*, *downloading*, *mixing*, *sampling* and *recontextualisation*. The Postmodern scholar Gitlin (1987, p. 15) noticed this phenomenon as early as the mid-1980s, when he found that the search for uniformity had been abandoned all together. Textuality gives rise to a cultivation of juxtaposed surfaces which refer to, ricochet from and reverberate onto other surfaces. This process creates a construction that repeatedly interrupts itself. He refers to this process as genre-splicing (Gitlin, 1987, p. 15). 'Genre-splicing' has created a new platform from which visual art communicates within the new media landscape. User-created content and various factors such as the 'speed' and 'reach' of technology in the form of multimedia (new media in visual art) have contributed to the blurring of the media landscape. For clarity, these four benefactors are expounded below.

(a) User-created content

Kress (2010) refers to the younger generation (25 years of age and younger) to be the creators of such user-created content. For this generation, plagiarism and blatant copying are no longer guarded by modernist authority. He refers to contemporary artists such as Damien Hurst and Jeff Coons being of an older generation who still adhere to high aesthetics and academic theory, which in turn protect their work from the above-mentioned process (Kress, 2010, p. 24). I am of the opinion, after scrutiny of the finalists in various national art competitions in South Africa, which the younger generation of contemporary visual artists, not only here but worldwide, adhere to these new doctrines of user-created content. The average age of competition entrants are between 25 and 35 years of age. The conceptualisation of an artwork is claimed by identifying a certain sign system, which has been freely borrowed and shared. This existing sign system is then altered and infused with the creator's own identity. I am of the opinion that the notion of 'my place in this world' seems to have shifted to accommodate 'my world in this place'. In turn, it seems that the artists themselves have no fear or objection of their creations being drawn upon and altered in future. Much of the research which will be conducted in this study will seek to ground such observations.

(b) Speed and reach

We now understand that modes are semiotic resources which are shaped by social and cultural events. As modes are strung together in combinations or ensembles in order to make meaning, multimodal communication is defined by this practice. Driven by technology, with aid from the internet and the mobility of communicational devices, the speed at which messages are made, delivered, interpreted and remade may be at the forefront of multimodal communication. As the constructivists aim to study how meanings are made when groups interact, and the social semioticians study the increasingly hybrid nature of the sign system driven by technology, speed seems to question the validity of grounding multimodality as a theory. Speed, or what Kress refers to as 'pace' (2010, p. 30), operates in two distinctive areas: first, the speed in which messages may be delivered from meaning maker(s) to meaning interpreter(s) with the aid of technology; and second, the speed of technological advances itself. I am of the opinion that these two characteristics of contemporary communication in which the term multimodal practice exists continue to shift as technology makes rapid advances.

Pace is inherent in most cultural, social, economic and political geographies worldwide. In contemporary communication we value speed, with the assumption that 'slowness' is boring, wasteful and insufficient (Kress, 2010, p. 29). Kress poses the question as to 'what is human pace under current social conditions?' He agrees that while we may value the effectiveness of pace in delivering messages the human race seems to find it difficult to keep up to date with the rapid advances made in technology (2010, p. 30). This means that we are constantly learning and adapting, causing institutions and organisations to continue restructuring, which forces individuals to adapt on a continuous basis. This is what Andrew (2011) refers to as 'artfulness' and 'makeshiftness'. The world seems to be out of synchronisation where the machine advances too rapidly for the human race to follow, creating a continuum of constant 'catch up'. Along with these rapid technological advances comes constant need for the creations of new metaphors, which in turn need to be learnt by individuals who engage with them. I am of the opinion that the constant technological advances create a metaphorical metamorphosis, which in turn makes the theorisation process of multimodality problematic.

(c) Blurring of the media landscape and a rhetorical approach to message design

Kress refers to the blurring or abolition of frames and boundaries, which he feels is most relevant to understanding contemporary meaning making. He mentions that semiotic blurring manifests itself in various ways, but draws upon four main types (Kress, 2010, pp. 24–26):

- *Knowledge and its relation to fact and fiction.* The internet has had a profound influence on how reliable given information is. Reality, fact and fiction with regard to what is true or not becomes questioned.
- *Social interactional (issues of genre).* Blurring of genre types has become more prominent since the 1970s, especially with regard to educational teaching and learning aids and that of work and entertainment.
- *Power, authority and convention.* Canonicity of semiotic forms and the reliability of the knowledge they may carry have become an issue. Modernist conventions ensured that specific practices adhered to a set form of representation. For the visual arts it could mean a painting; for architecture a model or blueprint plan.
- *Knowledge versus information.* In the past, life-worlds were stable, rendering knowledge as stable in return. Current unstable life-worlds have led to the loss of authority, now rendering knowledge of that specific life-world unpredictable. New contrasting knowledge then needs to be fabricated to be used as tools to counter this unpredictability. Information is the material which individuals use to fabricate needed knowledge. This has made the relationship between knowledge and information problematic. There is now a need for an appropriate set of navigational aids in relation to text-making in order to discriminate against the source of knowledge and information.

Kress is of the opinion that a rhetorical approach to communication is needed in order to cope with semiotic blurring. The rhetor as the maker of the message must make an assessment of all aspects of the communicational situation. This must include the meaning-maker's interest, the characteristics of the target audience, the semiotic requirements of the issue at stake, and the resources or modes available for making a representation of meaning (Kress, 2010, p. 26). A rhetorical approach draws on aspects of both competence and critique and utilises them in the process of design. With an abundance of modal choices, the process of design gives shape to the interests of both the rhetor and the designer in their respective worlds. In turn, Kress asserts that production becomes the rhetorical implementation of design using various resources that offer a wide array of modes for a communicational sign to be made (Kress, 2010, p. 27). Design production carries three important features: a semiotic feature, where form is seen as content; a conceptual feature, where content is expressed as concepts; and, an affective feature, where the semiotic process is seen as expressive reflecting the sign maker's interest and personal investment (*ibid.*):

Knowledge is made and given shape in representation, according to the potential of modal affordances, the process of representation is identical to the shaping of knowledge. Makers of representations are shapers of knowledge.

What Kress refers to is that knowledge is not something that is acquired; rather, it is something that is produced, as a rhetorical approach to meaning-making aims at improving communication in order to persuade. In an ever-changing environment of knowledge and meaning-making, driven by technology, multimodal representations take on new routes in form, content and various social engagements. As sign-makers engage with these new routes of meaning, the process is able to reshape social and individual dispositions into what becomes habitual subjectivities and identity (Kress, 2010, p 27).

(d) Multimodality and multimedia

Kress is of the opinion that a shift has taken place regarding what is termed multimedia in contemporary communication. He states (2010, p. 31):

So to use the term 'multimedia' is to confuse past practices with present givens; to confuse the cultural technologies of dissemination – radio, TV, etc. – with the cultural technologies of representation: writing, speech, image, etc. It is now seen as a term which effectively blocks the path to clear analysis and thinking.

In visual art, the term 'multimedia' originated in the 1980s. The term embraced the age of the computer and the new concomitant modes of expression it brought with it. However, it created a problematic metaphor for the arts in the sense that questions have been raised as to where performance art and installation art may fit into the picture. Semiotic blurring has been on the increase in visual art. A performance art piece (using primary modes) that may be digitised (using secondary modes) raises questions as to where this 'creative event' is to be categorised or named. Is it video art, multimedia, performance multimedia? A metaphorical metamorphosis has since taken place and the term 'new media' was coined in later years as an umbrella term to replace 'multimedia' in order to cover a wider spectrum of message-making tools and conditions in the technological age. In order to better understand the technological metamorphosis of modes in the visual arts, I have categorised these modes not by genre but by assigning them primary or secondary modal status.

It is thus clear that rigid boundaries between genres have all but vanished in contemporary communication systems across disciplines. Art may depart from still

images and writing may start with text, but multimodality has influenced all institutionalised practices from the sciences to the arts. Had multimodality remained a linguistic phenomenon only, scholars such as Kress may well in time have formulated such a multimodal theory. However, due to the elusive character of multimodality, it may remain a 'horseless cart' (Kress, 2010, p 26).

3.9.4.3 The impact of 'design' on multimodality in visual art

Kress's 2010 publication has offered the notion of 'design' and highlighted the hybrid and interdisciplinary nature of modes. In essence, the process of design offers an understanding of how various modes are composed together in order to make meaning, in other words, an understanding of the process of multimodal meaning-making. This process of multimodal meaning-making is in continuous flux as a result of the advances of technology, especially the rapid advances of the computer software generation, including various cultural and social influences on various genres (Kress, 2014, p. 7). Kress's six characteristics of the new media landscape in which multimodality functions prove how blurred the boundaries have become between various disciplines, resulting in a magnitude of multimodal design options. While we have a clearer understanding of the process of multimodal meaning-making, what Kress describes as the 'new media landscape' brings with it further pressing questions regarding the 'stability' of multimodality, as meanings are constantly being made, unmade, shifted and altered. This process not only alters the outcome of the message but changes the process of design.

What this study aims to achieve is to uncover the process of multimodal meaning-making from a visual art perspective. Owing to the hybrid nature of the new media landscape, the blurring of disciplinary boundaries, and contributions made to contemporary communication by the advances in technology, a bounded theory of multimodality may not suit the hybrid nature of contemporary communication in the realm of a post-modern, post-structuralist world.

Instead of attempting to theorise multimodality in a rigid way, Kress (2010, p. 26) proposes a rhetorical approach to understanding and describing meaning-making. If a rhetorical approach to meaning-making aims to improve communication in order to persuade an audience, this approach may better suit the dynamic nature of multimodal communication, especially in the visual arts. As multimodal representations, which are outcomes of the process of design, continually take on new forms, content and routes, rhetorical approaches will continually reshape social and individual dispositions. Kress

(2014, p. 9) refers to this re-shaping process as 're-design'. This stems from the belief that there is no such a thing as new meaning; rather, meanings constantly change within the flux of the new media landscape.

In visual art, the rhetorical approach has formed the cornerstone of most visual communicative endeavours throughout art history, as artists have continually drawn inspiration from various existing ideologies and socio-cultural events and offered them to the viewer. Kress (2014, p. 10) uses the metaphor of a 'cultural recipe' to describe the process of continuous adaption to serve new rhetorical purposes.

3.9.4.4 Where rhetoric and semiosis meet

The semiotic approach to multimodality in visual art reverts back to Halliday's 1978 metafunctional model of language. This is illustrated by figure 3.5 below.

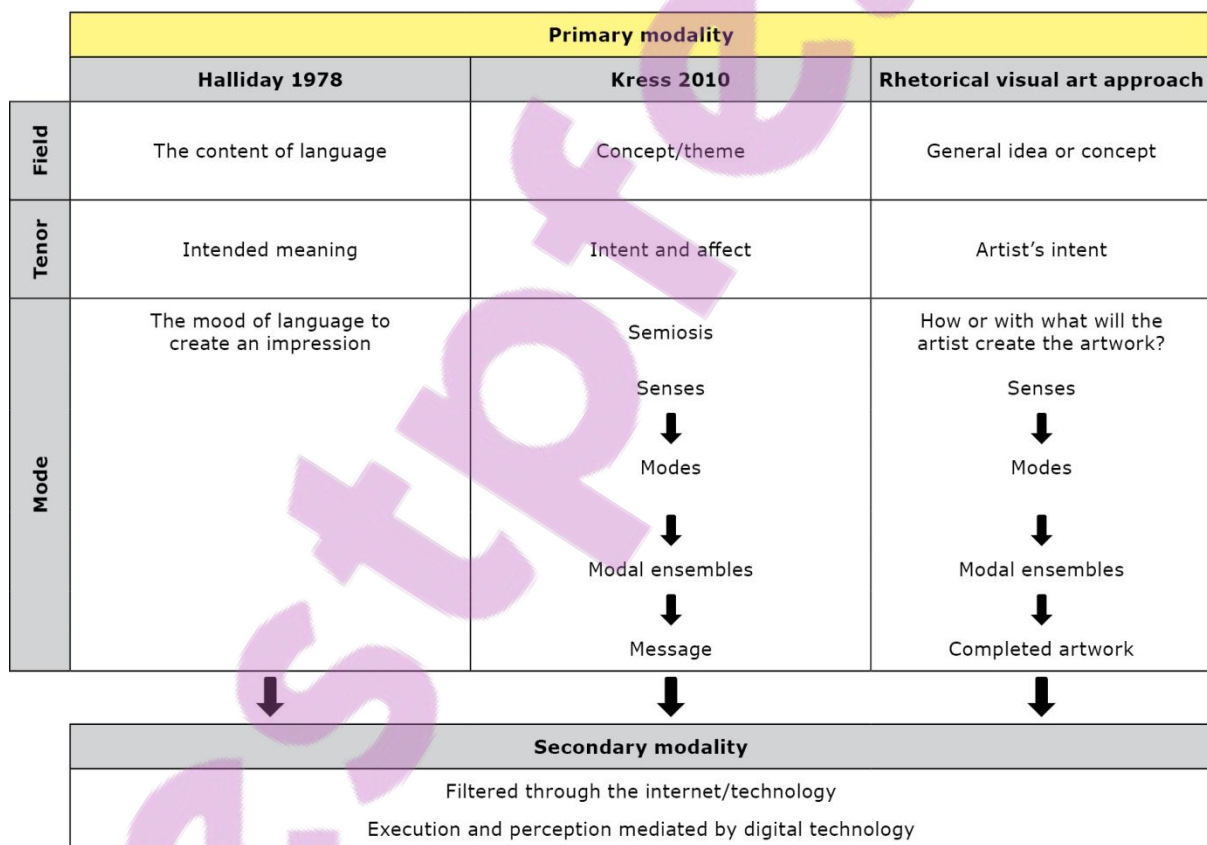


Figure 3.5 Semiotic approach to multimodal meaning-making in visual art

The figure presents Kress's 2010 interpretation of Halliday's 1978 model from a socio-semiotic point of view, taking into account a rhetorical approach to multimodal meaning-making. Kress (2010) refines Halliday's language metafunction of field referring to it as the concept or theme. Within a rhetorical approach, this refers to the interest of the sign

maker or designer regarding a concept or theme. In visual art it refers to how the artist refines a concept into a theme. Halliday's language metafunction of tenor is interpreted by Kress (2010) as affect. From a rhetorical point of view, this refers to the sign maker or designer's intent to influence the message outcome which is sent and received. In visual art it is referred to as artist's intent or the concept/theme which becomes personalised.

Halliday's (1978) third language metafunction of mode is translated by Kress (2010) as semiosis. The sign-maker or designer makes lexicogrammatical choices based on interest, affect and the intent he/she wishes to simulate through the selection of media, based in turn on the affordances of the chosen media. The senses determine the modes of choice and in turn modes are arranged into modal ensembles through the process of design in order to create the completed artwork.

It is not uncommon to find the 'real world' execution/reception of an artwork to be filtered through the use of technology. This means that the final product may in some cases be mediated by digital technologies such as computers, tablets and smart phones. What is important to reiterate is that these modes may be used in a physical form in real time and space, where the mode(s) have material grounding; however, when these modes are digitised, bringing their material grounding into question, they assume a secondary modality. It is also not uncommon to find primary and secondary modes used together in one modal ensemble. In other words, an artwork may be created using both primary and secondary modes in conjunction or at the same time. This has been described as the process of transmediation discussed earlier in this chapter, or that which Kress refers to as 'altering the genre recipe' (Kress, 2014, p 3).

4 SUMMARY

This chapter served to introduce and define modes and their multimodal characteristics as they shape communication in a technology-driven world. Generally, modes have been defined as culturally and socially shaped resources for making meaning. However, a deeper investigation into what modes are, reveals that they have over time become characterised by various interdisciplinary research endeavours (outside of social semiotics), which have shaped and altered their uses. Scholars conducting research in various disciplinary fields have introduced modes which are specific to their research areas.

I therefore chose to depart from Kress's (2010) list of eight modes at work in social semiotic meaning-making for the reason that they are the most open-ended (generic) and most recent in seminal academic publications regarding this area of multimodal research. Furthermore, each of the eight listed modes is at work in contemporary visual art. To understand the notion and characteristics of modes in order to apply them to multimodality in visual arts, these eleven modes were tested against Stein's (2008) six characteristics of modes. Four critical questions arise from measuring these modes against Stein's (2008) six characteristics. First, can non-prototypical senses operate as modes? Second, do all eleven modes have fixed grammars? Third, are all eleven modes digitisable? And fourth, if so, what happens to their material status in the digital realm? In some cases these questions can be answered with certainty, while others remain open-ended and inconclusive. In order to offer clarity, I proposed a sense-based taxonomy, which is an explication of how modes and modal combinations are linked to the senses, and which motivates why smell, touch and taste can be regarded as modes. This leads me to conclude that all modes are sense driven, including touch, smell and taste despite their slower development within the technological and digital realm. Digitisation is but one modal characteristic. The main rationale for including them (taste smell and touch) is that they form part of modal ensembles that make meaning even though they do not display all the characteristics of prototypical modes. I thus propose that modes are any socially and culturally shaped resources for making meaning which endorse all five senses despite their grammar and material status (whether in their primary or secondary modal state).

Various academic sources published since 2010 seem to have abandoned the notion of mode all together and have rather chosen to focus on the process of how these messages are constructed and not necessarily what they are constructed from. Construction of contemporary meaning-making seems to be the core focus in current linguistic research rather than a quest to uncover the nature of the resources themselves. Kress and other linguists have thus shifted their focus from the delimitation of modes to that of seeking a better understanding of how sign-makers use modes in multimodal ensembles. Similarly, the challenges of constructing a theory of multimodality, which were outlined and discussed throughout this chapter, proved just as challenging as the formulation of a fixed definition of mode. Adhering to the notions of Kress (2010, 2014) regarding the difficulties of such a multimodal theory due to the interdisciplinary nature of modes and the blurring of genre boundaries, Kress proposed his notion of 'design' claiming that a rhetorical and semiotic approach to multimodal design may offer a better understanding of how multimodality works in contemporary

communication. Underpinning the process of design from a rhetorical and semiotic point of departure draws firstly on 'inner semiosis', which is semiotic in nature, and secondly on the rhetorical nature of message construction. It has been demonstrated that the artist firstly alters a genre recipe and in the process a concept is born through design and (re)design, infusing a broader concept with personal intent. Besides the fact that artists immerse themselves in contemporary issues which they find pressing, they do take into account, via the use of modal ensemble construction, their intent and their relationship with the audience.

From a rhetorical point of departure, artists have throughout history been concerned with the outcome of message creation and the impact that the message (artwork) will have on the audience. I am of the opinion that artists have attempted to alter this genre recipe through the process of design throughout art history, especially since they were afforded new technological modes to work with at the turn of the 20th century. Therefore I believe that visual art has through many centuries practised the 'art' of multimodality, but has failed to formulate a framework in the same way the linguists have done. This notion will demonstrated through the use of examples in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4

An overview of modalities and multimodality in the history of art

1 INTRODUCTION

For many years, language and visual art scholars were separated into two distinctive schools of thought, where one school saw images as having an illustrative role, while the other saw language (text) as having an explanatory role (Dellion, 1999, p. 2). The study of the semiotics of images has largely been restricted to discussions surrounding images in textbooks and in advertising. From Barthes' (1964) *The rhetoric of the image* to the work of Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) *Reading images: The grammar of visual design*, which sparked great interest in multimodal communication, the majority of semioticians studied advertisements and text in print and, later, in the digital media.

Besides a few scholars such as Andrew (2007, 2011), Stein (2008), O'Halloran (2007), O'Toole (2011) and Duncam (2004, 2010), who have used semiotics as a framework and applied it to various genres in the arts, such as film, art education, architecture and visual culture, not much research has seen the light on semiotic frameworks applied to images in the visual arts, and ultimately the role that multimodality may play in contemporary visual art. One reason may be the fact that the visual arts involve many sub-genres and media of expression, such as artefacts, sculpture, craft, drawing, painting, printmaking, design, photography and digital media.

This chapter serves to offer an overview of multimodality in visual art and aims at plotting a historical timeline of multimodal images throughout art history. Although differences between visual art and design have been made throughout history, I made no distinction in this thesis. The genres and media of graphic design or information design will be included under the umbrella term 'visual art'. The reason for doing so is that technological advances in communication have blurred the boundaries between the schools of art and design, especially in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Owing to the complex nature of multimodality in visual art, the initial focus will be set on combinations with image only. The rationale for this decision that image is the default mode of visual art, while text represents the primary mode of linguistic communication. Furthermore, early examples in visual art mostly rely on these two modal combinations

due to the absence of technological advances in communication, which had been relatively slow until the turn of the 20th century. An exposition of the integration of sets of two modes may also pave the way for the discussion of more complex multimodal ensembles in visual art later in this study.

2 MULTIMODALITY IN VISUAL ART

2.1 Pre-20th-century multimodality in visual art

This section aims to trace examples of multimodality back to the times before vast technological influences on communication during the 20th and 21st centuries had taken place.

Apart from the Gutenberg press, no major technological advances were made until the late 18th century with the invention of the camera, and later film, followed by the internet in the 1990s. The history of image and text, and the combination thereof, is a complex network covering a wide field of disciplines, and there are distinctive differences between the development of images and text in eastern and western civilisations owing to factors such as religious beliefs, and social, cultural, political and economic developments. The images discussed in this section briefly track the development of multimodality from a western art history perspective, not denying that similar developments may be found in eastern (and African) traditions of image-making. Furthermore, I shall focus on the most famous artworks canonised in art history.

Art historians have established that the history of art, and thus the history of image, developed into a purposeful visual language containing formal elements of construction approximately 15 000 to 10 000 BCE (Janson, 2007, p. 18). The world's most famous paintings in the caves of Lascaux (Dordogne, France) (figure 4.2) and those in Altamira (Spain) bear evidence of an ordered visual language with a narrative connotation, 3 000 to 5 000 years before writing became evident in the format of counting tokens (figure 4.3) found in the Neolithic fertile crescent (Ryan, 2007, p. 2). A worldwide debate still continues among scholars regarding the issue of whether text developed from the early marks of images or whether the phonetic text system developed entirely on its own (Janson, 2007, p. 19). It may be fair to say that the two communication systems developed side by side later in history, as is evident when looking at the communicative mode of Egyptian hieroglyphs.

It is widely accepted among art history scholars that pictures and text were first combined by the Egyptians in the form of hieroglyphs as murals and on scrolls (figure

4.1) while the tradition continued with the medieval handwriting of manuscripts by monks and their decoration with illustrations and illuminations (Tappenden, 2004, p. 6). The invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg in the 15th century accelerated the process of combining images and text. This period shaped design-specific industries with specific functions, targeting a specific audience with a specific intent (ibid.). Ultimately, it cannot be denied that image and text had become intertwined in form and content before the Middle Ages.



Figure 4.1 Egyptian art. Section from the 'Book of the Dead' of Nany, Third Intermediate Period, Dynasty 21, reigns of Psensennes I–II, c 1040–945 BC,
<http://www.hudsonfla.com/artfirstciv.htm>

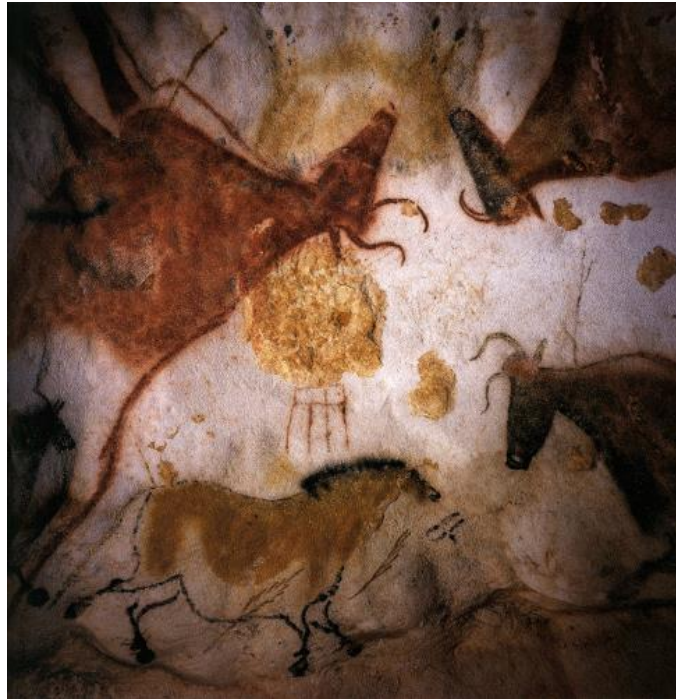


Figure 4.2 Example of an ordered visual language structure. Hall of the Bulls, the first third of the axial gallery, Lascaux Caves, France, 15 000 – 13 000,

http://www.kingsacademy.com/mhodes/11_Western-Art/01_Prehistoric/01_Prehistoric.htm

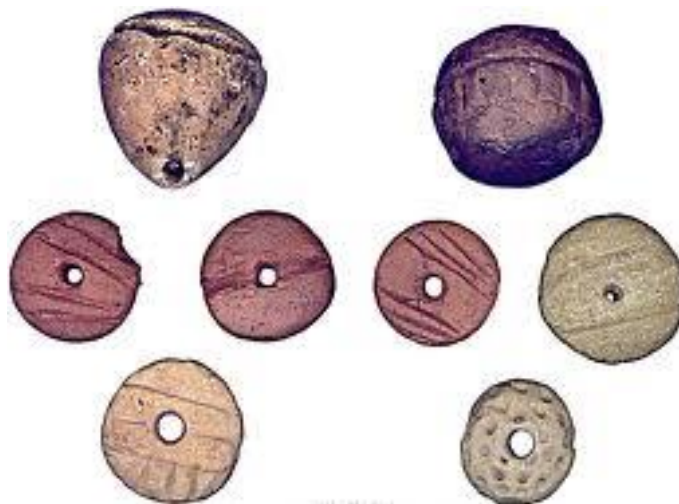


Figure 4.3 The birth of text. Counting tokens from the Neolithic fertile crescent, 4000 - 2300 BCE <http://www.schoyencollection.com/math.html>

Industrial design and architecture offered instructional tutorials and assembly plans combining image and text earlier than the 12th century (Janson, 2007, p. 20). Figure 4.4 shows an example of a combination of hand-written text and drawn images of devices used in medical practices and procedures.

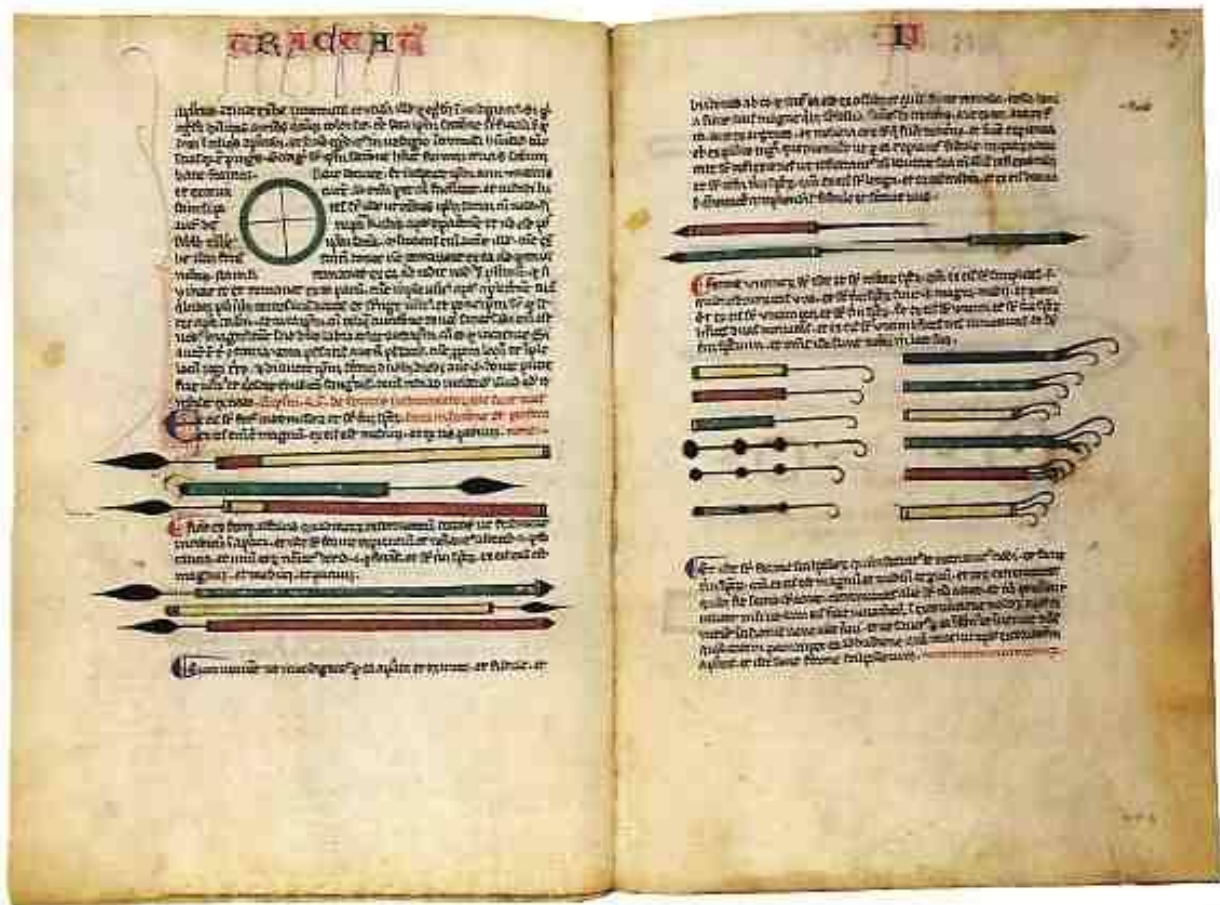


Figure 4.4 Two pages from an incunabulum of the 30th section of Al-Tasrif book of Abul-Qasim Al-Zahrawi (aka Abulcasis, Chirugia Abulcasum) as translated into Latin in the 12th century by Gerard of Cremona,

http://www.hektoeninternational.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=549:lithotripsy-a-historical-review&catid=85:nephrology&Itemid=435

The invention of the movable printing press by Johannes Gutenberg in the 15th century demonstrates the incorporation of images and text on a mass scale. Instead of producing manuscripts by hand, master plates made by engravers could create multiples (editions) of numerous quantities (Tappenden, 2004, p. 15). An example of such early printing processes is the famous Gutenberg Bible (figure 4.5).



Figure 4.5 The Gutenberg Bible, extract with text and printed illumination (42-line Bible), 1455, http://www.alterlittera.com/al_hm/oldtype/gutenberg_b.htm

During the Middle Ages, including the Gothic art period, and later the Renaissance, visual art was in service of the Christian religion in western civilisation (Kleiner, 2014, p. 151). Visual art was assigned the task of spreading the Christian faith in the form of visual narratives (Janson, 2007, p. 183). As a large part of central Europe experienced difficulties with the linguistic practice of reading and writing during this era, image and text were often combined in order to make meaning (Adams, 2010, p. 217). Figure 4.6 and also figure 4.10 offer examples of manuscripts and stained-glass windows containing images as well as text.



Figure 4.6 Gothic art. Miniatures from two different manuscripts based on the same model, *Apocalypse*, Oxford, Bodleian Library, 1100 to 1300,
<http://www.pinterest.com/whosch/illuminated-manuscripts/>

With the onset of the Renaissance, which is regarded as the era of scientific exploration, driven partly by the church, texts were often assisted by images to document great scientific discoveries (Dellion, 1999, p. 17, Kleiner, 2014, p. 615). Examples of such a documentation of scientific enquiries are the famous image of Da Vinci's Vitruvius man illustrated in figure 4.7; Dürer's celestial map, inspired by the invention of Galileo's telescope (figure 4.8); and Michelangelo's architectural drawings (figure 4.9).

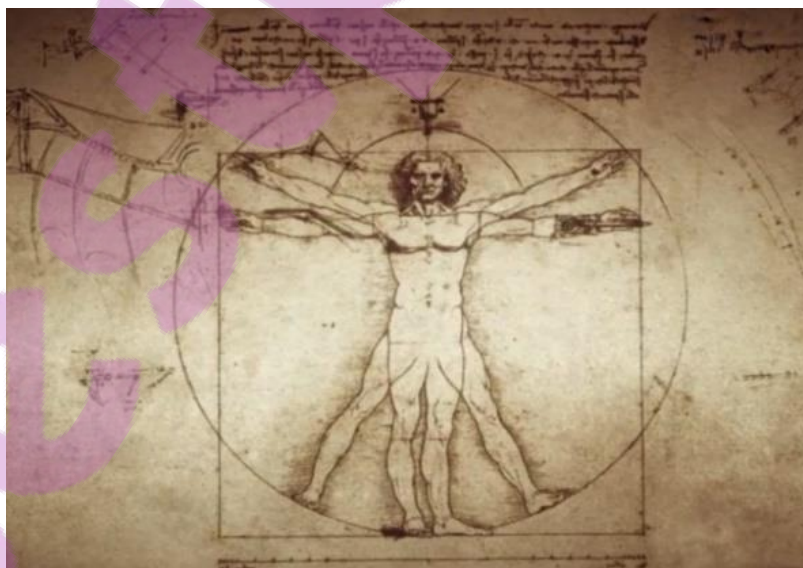


Figure 4.7 Early Renaissance. Leonardo da Vinci, Study for proportions, from Vitruvius's *De Architectura*, 1490, Italy,
<http://www.hellenicaworld.com/Art/Paintings/en/Part13793.html>

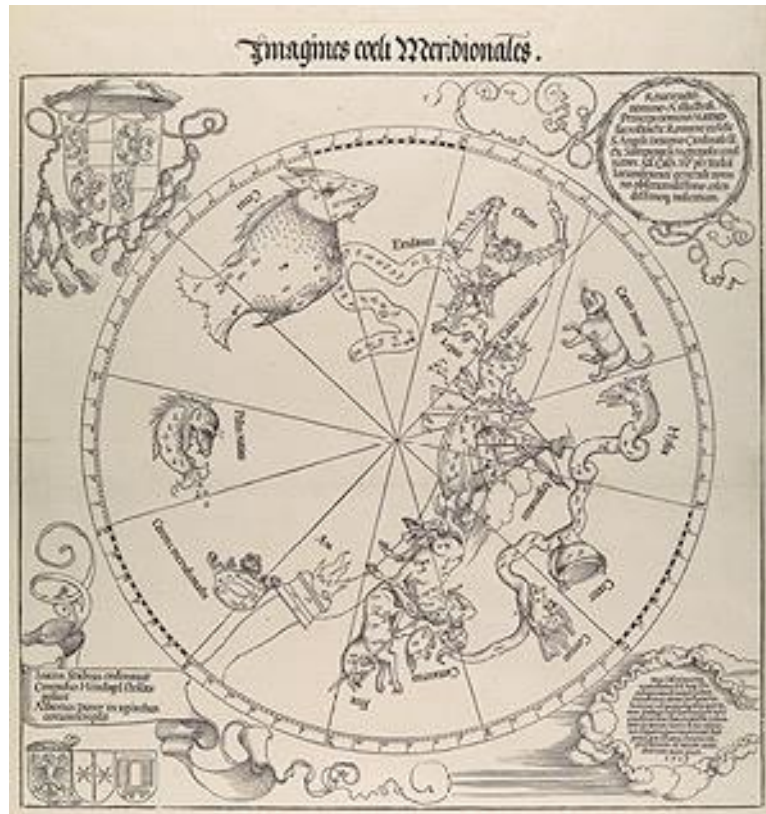


Figure 4.8 Early Renaissance. Albrecht Dürer, Celestial map of the southern sky, 1515, Germany, <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/51.537.2>

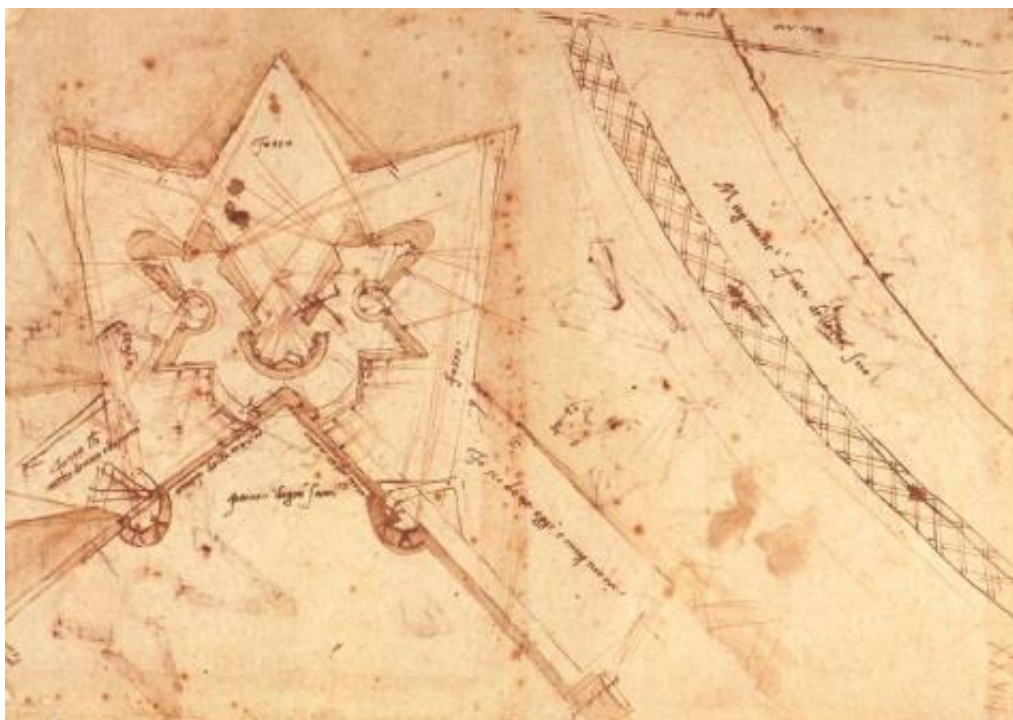


Figure 4.9 High Renaissance. Michelangelo, study, Casa Buonarroti, 1525, Florence, Italy, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Michelangelo,_studio_per_porta_san_gallo.jpg



Figure 4.10 High Renaissance. *The Adoration of the Magi*, stained-glass window, Circle of Peter Hemmel von Andlau, Strassburger Werkstattgemeinschaft, Munich, Germany, 1507, <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/1996.262>

From the Baroque, through the Rococo and Neo-Classicism, and into the 19th century, the role of art and its combination with text had shifted to fulfil wider communicative functions, such as the politically oriented work of Goya (figure 4.11), David (figure 4.13) and Blake (figure 4.14); the social commentary works by Reynolds (figure 4.12), Signorini (figure 1.15) and Manet (figure 4.16); and art as an early example of advertising in the work of Toulouse-Lautrec (figure 4.17). Since then, there has been a rapid growth in individual literacy skills worldwide: text seems to be less dominant in images after the Renaissance period.



Figure 4.11 Baroque. Francisco de Goya, *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*, plate 43 of *Los Caprichos* (etching), 1799, Spain, <http://www.slideshare.net/profmedina/chapter-11-social-protest-and-affirmation>



Figure 4.12 Rococo. Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Self-portrait*, oil on canvas, 1771, England, <http://www.alinariarchives.it/>



Figure 4.13 Neo-Classicism. Jacques-Louis David, *The Death of Marat*, oil on canvas, 1793, Belgium, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/powerofart/popups/david.shtml>



Figure 4.14 19th century. William Blake, *Laocoön*, line engraving, 1822, England,
<http://bq.blakearchive.org/37.2.paice>

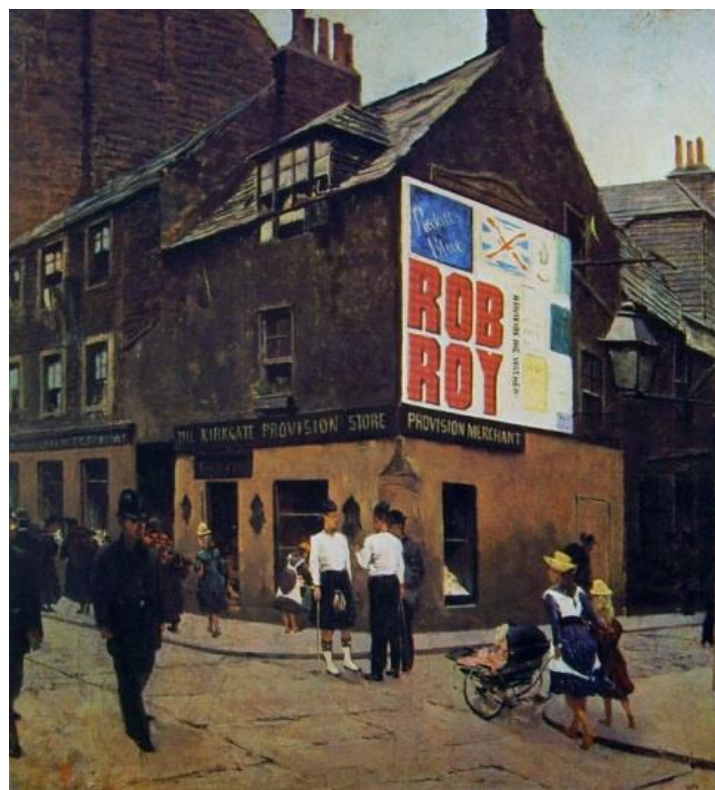


Figure 4.15 19th century. Telamaco Signorini, *Leith*, oil on canvas, 1881, England,
http://www.wga.hu/html_m/s/signorin/leith.html



Figure 4.16 Impressionism. Edouard Manet, *Portrait d'Emile Zola*, oil on canvas, 1867–1868, France, <http://www.artlex.com/ArtLex/b/batignolles.html>

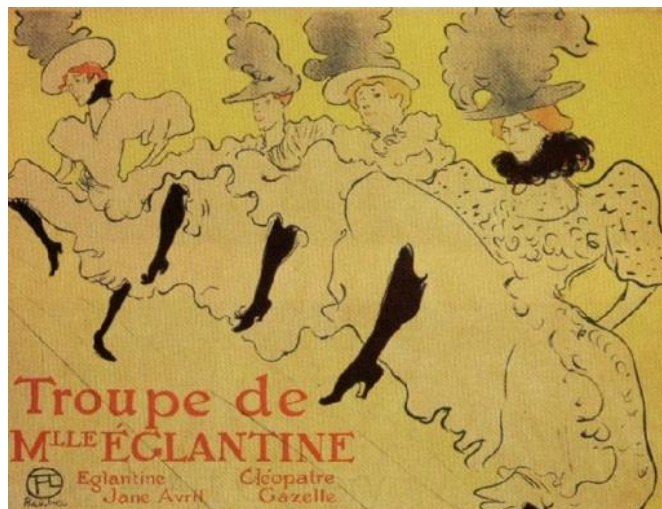


Figure 4.17 Impressionism/Post-Impressionism. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Troupe de Mlle Églantine*, lithographic print, 1898, France <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/82472236899215953/>

The invention of the camera and the profound influence it had on the visual arts at the turn of the 20th century, including the debut of film (moving images), created new technologically afforded modes for the visual artist to work with. From this point in art history, multimodality has manifested itself in the use of multiple modes of meaning-making.

2.2 Multimodality in 20th-century art

As a decline is noticed in the combination of images and text in high art after the Renaissance as a result of a worldwide growth in literacy skills, the 18th and 19th centuries saw periodicals and posters printed in black and white using intaglio and relief printing processes evident in the works of Goya (figure 4.11), Blake (figure 1.14) and Toulouse-Lautrec (figure 4.16). Although the dominance of text in visual art images declined, advances in printing processes regarding text and image were on the increase. This process became known as typography, which is rooted in the Roman alphabet with its proportion and symmetry, influencing mass production publications to this day and signalling the entry of the graphic designer in the 1920s (Tappenden, 2004, p. 8; White, 2011, p. 177).

Graphic design reaches new heights and manifests itself as an inseparable part of human communication with the rebuilding of Europe after the First World War and the beginning of the Art Deco and Art Nouveau movements of the 1920s and 1930s (Eskilson, 2012, p. 163). The start of the Bauhaus in Europe, which signalled the birth of the first design school (influenced by William Morris), lay emphasis on commercial branding, corporate imaging and trademarks (Newark, 2002, p. 10). Rapid advances made in technology with regard to communication, mechanical voice recorders, electrical power, recorded music, motion pictures and the invention of the camera offered the designer a wider platform to work from (Walsh, 2009, p. 2). On the other hand, visual artists started to question the role of images and their process of production of 'one-of-a-kind' signature artworks. I believe that the birth of photography and the motion picture on the one hand forced the artists to turn 'the eye' inward and on the other hand forced them to embrace these new modes of communication.

The Dada movement, which established itself in 1917 as a reaction to the disillusionment of the First World War in Europe, took upon itself to use these new modes in a nihilistic manner in order to free and emancipate the fixed boundaries of visual art (Stangos, 1988, p. 110). From this point in visual art the Dada artists laid the foundation for the interdisciplinary nature of multimodal image-making. New approaches to image-making in the form of collage, photography, film, mass media printing, ready-made sculpture, poetry, plays and installations became the new tools for visual artists, bringing along with it new modes for the visual art. Man Ray's *Indestructible Object* created in 1928 (figure 4.18), Hanna Höch's *Poetry Performance at the First Dada International Fair in Berlin* (1920) (figure 4.19) and Marcel Duchamp's *Mona Lisa L.H.O.O.Q.* (1919) (figure 4.20) all bear evidence of these new modes at work in visual art.

Man Ray's *Indestructible Object* (1928) is a readymade sculpture of a metronome containing a photograph the artist took of the eye of his muse, Lee Miller (Stangos, 1988, p. 110). The artwork consists of a modal ensemble encapsulating a 3D model, a still image and signalling movement, gesture and sound. Figure 4.18 below is a reproduction of the original artwork which was destroyed in Paris in 1953 (Kleiner, 2014, p. 981).



Figure 4.18 Man Ray, *Indestructible Object*, Readymade, 1928, Paris, France,
<http://www.npr.org/>

Hannah Höch's *Poetry Reading at the First International Dada Fair* in Berlin in 1920 is an early example of performance art which demonstrates the modal ensembles of movement, gesture, speech, writing, sound and colour at work in the creation of the artwork. Höch became well known for her interest in language as a medium for the visual arts inspired by the combination of image and text in the printed media, which echoes the fact that printed media had a large-scale impact on the Dada movement.



Figure 4.19 Hannah Höch, *Poetry Reading at the First International Dada Fair, 1920*, Berlin, <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/>

Further interest in the printed mass media and the combination of image and text is illustrated in Marcel Duchamp's *L.H.O.O.Q.* (figure 4.20) created in 1919. In line with the nihilistic nature of the Dada movement, Duchamp set out to destroy the high aesthetic nature of visual art. Appropriating Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, in the form of a pin-up poster, Duchamp added a moustache to the image and inscribed the letters *L.H.O.O.Q.* under the artwork. The letters are abbreviated in the form of a pun to represent the phrase 'she is hot in the arse' (Seekamp, 2004, p. 47).



Figure 4.20 Marcel Duchamp, *L.H.O.O.Q.*, 1919, Paris, France, <http://amccourt.public.iastate.edu/>

The rapid advances in technology brought on by the Renaissance in central Europe, and later the Industrial Revolution, including the birth of graphic design in the 1920s, allowed

early 20th-century art movements such as Dada to emancipate art from its static tradition. Technology now afforded these artists a wider repertoire of modes from which to conceptualise Dada artwork. I am of the opinion that at this point in art history, artists became aware of the use of multiple modes and the combinations thereof in the production of artworks. Modes such as sound, movement, gesture, moving images, 3D models and text were combined with the traditional visual art mode of still image. This set forth a sequence of events which followed through to Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism and into the Pop Art movement of the 1960s, where the impact and the power of the mass media on visual culture were realised in paintings and prints by artists such as Warhol and Lichtenstein (Kleiner, 2014, p. 1051).

It is evident that the technology-assisted mass media started to play a more dominant role in the conceptualisation of artworks. Towards the later part of the 20th century and with the inception of the home computer (1980s) and later the internet (1990s), visual art started to seek new platforms of creative expression.

As the home computer became more popular, the boundaries between art and design began to fade. This has been brought on by user-friendly hardware and software allowing the end-user to become self-sufficient regarding elements of design and the production of new forms of hybrid communication such as multimedia and instant messaging. This has caused new debates and raised questions regarding the use of image, text and other modes such as moving images, sound, movement, gesture and 3D models as communicative tools of contemporary meaning-making. By 1996, the semiotic scholars of the New London Group had found answers to this hybrid form of meaning-making and it was from these new understandings that the notion of multimodal communication was born. From a linguistic point of view, it has been accepted that image and text function side by side in contemporary meaning-making and that text is but one of many modes used in multimodal communication. Kress refers to modes as 'the stuff' that a culture uses as a way for expression of its meaning (Kress, 1997, cited in Stein, 2008, p. 26).

When modes are combined into modal ensembles through a process of design, contemporary artists make meaning (Kress, 2010, p. 28). What multimodality has afforded contemporary art is that the debate has been laid to rest regarding which mode is most important or which mode dominates the other. In contemporary meaning-making, starting in the late 20th century, a shift took place from a single dominating discipline-specific medium to a semiotic relationship between one or more modes within

an ensemble of modes working as equal partners, irrespective of the visual art discipline or genre where the work originated.

Another prominent shift was the rapid growth of technology, which afforded meaning-makers with wider and more accessible platforms for meaning-making. The following section demonstrates how these technological platforms created new media genres within visual art since the mid-20th century, and how this growth accelerated rapidly, incorporating the internet and various social media platforms in the 21st century.

2.3 Multimodality in contemporary visual art

2.3.1 Introduction

Twentieth-century technology has afforded visual arts genres a modal platform for meaning-making other than those which traditionally characterised the discipline. Starting in the 1960s and continuing into the 21st century, conceptual art, performance art, multimedia and new media have been added to the list of traditional media (sculpture, painting, printmaking, drawing and ceramics). What has become increasingly important to the visual artists of the new millennium is how these traditional and more recent technologically infused media are combined and accessed via digital platforms. Furthermore, accessing artworks on multiple platforms (real-time and digital), using devices such as the computer and cell phones, have caused the genre boundaries of visual art to become fuzzy. Starting in the late 1990s and continuing to the present, computer software has allowed modes to migrate freely across various disciplines of communication, including the domain of visual art, even between art disciplines such as painting, design, photography, printmaking, sculpture, drawing and ceramics. This has afforded a traditional still image the status of a primary and/or a secondary mode. Using various modal ensembles in an interdisciplinary manner and charging them with a primary and/or secondary modal status (or both) allows the artist endless modal choices.

Electronic text and image in the form of SMS, MMS, BBM, WhatsApp and other cellular communication applications, although not traditionally part of the visual art genre, have created a new type of communication referred to as instant messaging. This has filtered into the repertoire of the visual artist; hand-held devices are increasingly being used as art-making tools, where certain bar codes may be scanned to gain access to 'shareware artworks'. The computer age has also afforded the end-user an e-mail system where written communication and images move faster than they have done in the past. Besides their computer uses, various social networking applications such as Twitter, Facebook

and Skype are also available on cellular telephones (smartphone technology), which further accelerate the communicative process and extends its mobility. The speed at which text and image is delivered has popularised the image incorporated with the written word, and at the same time assisted it in evolving rapidly into a condensed communicative form. This growth, termed 'multimedia' in the world of IT, is what this study terms 'multimodality'. Contemporary national art competitions in South Africa over the past few years have proven that artworks are crossing these genre boundaries and demonstrate the interdisciplinary nature of such concepts and elements, harnessing the speed and accessibility of artworks not only in fixed time and space but also in the digital realm. Multimodal artworks have successfully been entered into such competitions and many have been awarded prizes.

Various new multimodal genres of art-making have come into use in the late 20th century and have been carried over into the new millennium. These include conceptual art, performance, and installation art, multimedia, and new media. What used to be accessible only in bounded material space has of late become widely accessible through digital technology. A performance artwork, for example, which exists in a fixed space and is bound by real time, may now be accessed in the digital realm via their secondary modal status. The following sections present a brief overview of the new genres in contemporary visual art.

2.3.2 Multimodal visual art genres

(a) *Conceptual art*

Conceptual art is the global or umbrella term often used to describe the new impetus of creative energy driven by the advancement of technological resources. It is commonly accepted that the artist's persona and approach to a concept becomes more important than in the production of a timeless artwork dedicated to historical documentation. This means that the 'artfulness' of art is driven by the artist's idea rather than the final product itself (Kleiner, 2014, p. 1049). Influenced by Marcel Duchamp's readymade approach to sculpture, such as the famous *Fountain* urinal of 1917, which forms a benchmark for Dada art, conceptual art has continued to grow over future decades (De la Croix & Tansey, 1986, p. 925). Conceptual art questions its own identity, and in the process seeks to unite various technological media such as interactive computerisation, robotics, kinetic driven devices and projections in digital format in order to heighten the visual experience (Roberts, 2007). Pioneers in the field of conceptual art are the American artists Joseph Kosuth and Bruce Nauman, who started experimenting with this approach to visual art as early as 1965 (Kleiner, 2014, p. 1050).

(b) Performance and installation art

Performance and installation art, starting in the late 1970s under the influence of the feminist and political movements in art, started imbuing visual art with the same characteristics and sequences as theatrical stage productions. Artworks now have a beginning and an end, and are thus bound to a restricted time period. Performance pieces are not new to visual art, as they had already debuted in the Futurist movement in 1909 and the Dada period around 1917. In 1974 the German artist Joseph Beuys performed his artwork titled *I Love America and America Loves Me* (Figure 4.21). Locked in a room of a New York art gallery, Beuys spent time with indigenous American coyotes. The performance was documented using still and moving images addressing both primary and secondary modal sequences.



Figure 4.21 Performance art. Joseph Beuys, *I Love America and America Loves Me*, still image from the performance, 1974, USA, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5UXAqpSJDk>

An example of 21st-century performance art using technological media such as YouTube is evident in the well-known piece *Interior Semiotics* performed by artist Gabbi Colette on 27 March 2010. After its upload, the performance art piece broke records by having been accessed 1,7 million times within the first month of upload (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9ImvX00TLY>).

A contemporary example of installation art is the work titled *Hyper Culture Madness in the Vertigo World* by Brazilian artist Ernesto Neto (figure 4.22). The work was constructed in 2011 from knitted wool and twine to form spiralling tunnels and walkways, and the audience are invited to interact with the work installed in the vast space of the Faena Arts Centre in Buenos Aires. The artwork combines modes of 3D models, touch, gesture and movement.



Figure 4.22 Installation art. Ernesto Neto, *Hyper Culture Madness in the Vertigo World*, knitted structure, 2011, Buenos Aires, <http://elledecoration.co.za/larger-than-life-knit-design-by-ernesto-neto/>

(c) Multimedia

Multimedia artists are contemporary artists who use a wide range of media to communicate or construct a message. Such media range from installation to traditional media, technological media, digital images, performances, projections and film.

Since the birth of the internet, the term 'multimedia' has become an umbrella term for conceptual, performance and installation artworks, with the emphasis on digital production (Hoetzlein, 2010, p. 3). What multimedia offers the artist in the digital age is in principle the same as the 'mixed media' approaches of the early 20th century, where artists used a variety of traditional media in combination (Hoetzlein, 2010, p. 4). What this means for contemporary multimodality is that traditional media may be used in combination with multimedia, affording modes a wider communicational platform due to their primary and secondary modal status.

Works created using multimedia are never static in time or space. They develop and may animate, changing the appearance of the artwork over a period of time. Usually gallery or cultural centre bound, the multimedia artwork may be presented in a variety of spaces or locations (Vesna, 2009, p. 345). Ultimately, in the same way that the Dada movement emancipated the arts during the First World War (1917), multimedia liberates the visual arts from the fixed bounds of modernist approaches by entering and encompassing other non-visual art domains such as film, drama, music and dance (Vesna, 2009, p. 346). Figure 4.23 depicts still images from Berni Searle's video

installation titled *Snow White* (2001). Here modes of sound and moving images, including drama and gesture, are incorporated with digital media to form a trance-like state, aided by editing software in order to create sequences of narrative events dealing with gender and race (<http://www.artthrob.co.za/03jan/artbio.html>, accessed 25 July 2014). Besides the race and gender concept of the artwork, Searle's video harnesses secondary modalities within the digital realm, allowing the original performance artwork to be accessible to a wider platform of viewers via the internet. In other words, multimedia artworks are multimodal by definition and also combine primary and secondary modalities.

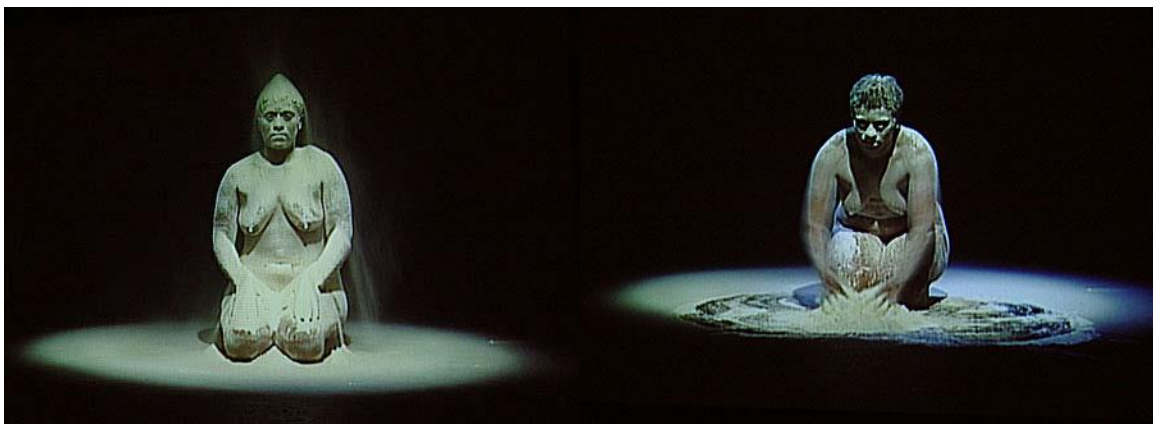


Figure 4.23 Multimedia. Berni Searle, *Snow White*, two-projector video, 2001, South Africa, <http://www.artthrob.co.za/03jan/artbio.html>

(d) New media

'New media' refers to the work of a contemporary generation of artists who use new media technologies such as digital art, computer graphics, virtual art, internet art, animation, video games, robotics and interactive software to create works of art. What is characteristic of this genre, and what sets it apart from multimedia, is that it demands physical interaction between artist, artwork, and audience (Shanken, 2005, p. 415). What new media offers contemporary multimodality is that artworks of this nature challenge modal ensembles on both a primary and secondary level, as they may exist in real time and space (primary) and in the digital realm (secondary) at the same time, or they may be digital only (secondary).

New media practices are grounded and inspired by technological advances in telecommunication, printed media and mass media, including various digital modes. These 'new media', an inclusive term, now encompass installation art, conceptual art, performance art and virtual realities (Shanken, 2010, p. 1). According to Shanken these new media practices are end-user friendly, which has profound implications for

contemporary modes of knowledge and meaning-making, as the artist invites the viewers to interact in a process of contributing, building and altering the concept behind the artwork (Shanken, 2010, p. 2). This new pluralism in the visual art, which emerged in the 1960s, has shown that contemporary art does not conform to any historical narratives, making the construction of a linear timeline for the history of multimodal art difficult (Shanken, 2010, p. 3). This is due to the fact that new media art demands interactivity, networks, and computer access, which make genres difficult to classify according to the traditional art museum categories, which are determined by medium and geography (Graham & Cook, 2010, p. 12). Graham and Cook's 2010 publication *Rethinking curating: Art after new media* addresses the pressing issues of categorising such works according to various museum standards.

Contemporary multimodality in visual art carries with it characteristics of speed and accessibility. Owing to new media existing mostly in the digital realm and accessed via a secondary modal status, artworks no longer subscribe to a fixed time and space within the confines of a gallery space (or the 'site of display' termed by Kress 2010), which is bound by geography. Rather, they are dynamic in nature which affords it to exist in many places at any given time, not only in the present but also in the future.

New media practices have brought along challenges regarding art as a commodity. Most auction houses and art dealers seek collectible art objects, while new media proves difficult to value, sell, appraise and copyright. Art traders and artists have since collaborated in offering 'aftermarket' commodities, limited in edition, in order to fuel the commercial market. However, the digital mass media still remain the contemporary artist's main dispatch point.

The work of Jeffrey Dooley (2010) (figure 4.24) encompasses characteristics of new media. The viewer is faced with a white, canvas-textured image on a digital television screen mounted on an easel. The audience is invited to lift a brush and suggest virtual brush strokes which manifest on the canvas aided by a web camera. Here the mode of image in the form of painting becomes redefined with the aid of technology, creating a multimodal and dual modal (containing primary and secondary modes) end product. Gesture, movement, still image, moving image, colour and 3D model modes have been combined to create a work which is typical of multimodal contemporary art. The artwork's material qualities in terms of hardware are locked within the bounds of a fixed gallery space; however, the materiality of the brushstroke which does not physically apply paint to the canvas is brought into question as it has a secondary modal status

which may be uploaded onto the internet. Thus, this artwork by Dooley serves as an example of modes which are used in both their primary and secondary status within a single artwork. Gesture, movement and 3D models exist as primary modes, whereas the artwork itself and the materiality of the brush stroke on canvas become secondary in nature. In other words, Dooley brings the materiality of an artwork into question by offering the traditional genre of painting as digital new media.



Figure 4.24 New media. Jeffrey Walter Dooley, *Untitled*, digital animated painting using a web camera, 2010, South Africa

As technology advanced into the new millennium and various digital applications are used in the creation of modal ensembles, defining and classifying these genres which are no longer rule bound, becomes difficult to underpin. Clarity was thus sought as to the definition of these new genres and how various modal statuses may change as they become infused with technology.

Whereas this section gave an overview of the operation of multimodality throughout art history, through providing various historical artworks as examples, the following section will discuss and illustrate multimodality by focusing on the combination of the mode of the image, which is regarded to be the default mode in the visual arts, with various other modes.

3 ELEVEN MODES AT WORK IN VISUAL ART

Image is the prototypical mode of the artist. This section aims to give a brief account of the combination of visual images working with the other ten modes, as suggested in chapter three. Examples of artworks have been selected from the 20th and 21st centuries.

As this study deals with multimodality in visual art, still images will be regarded as the prototypical or default mode, which in most cases incorporates the mode of colour and thus no subsection has been dedicated to this 'mode'. The combination of still image with writing/text, speech, moving images, actions, gestures and 3D models as well as touch, smell and taste, will be explored in more detail.

3.1 Still images and text

Kress (2010), when referring to the mode of still image, does not adequately capture what is seen as a still image in visual art. Most images in visual art that have been executed in traditional media, and combinations thereof (mixed media), such as paint and pencil, are 'still' by nature. Still pictures may also take the form of photographs, digital prints, drawings, collages, diagrams etc. As mentioned, the study of semiotic images, from Barthes to Kress and Van Leeuwen, has laid emphasis on the study of still images in advertisements, rendered in printed media only (Dellion, 1999, p. 2). The printed and painted image will form the point of departure to trace the origins of this mode in art history in the form of photographs and collages.

It is well documented that the invention of the camera at the turn of the 20th century jeopardised the role of the artist as a draughtsman. The printed media and the photograph did not form part of visual art until the inception of the Dada collage, which may also be referred to as mixed media. Dada artists embraced the new media in an attempt to fuel their nihilistic approach to what was seen as high art in the early 20th century (Stangos, 1988, p. 135).

Starting with Cubism in 1907, various 'real-life objects' started to appear on the artist's canvas. Printed material in the form of collage gained ground and manifested itself in the Dada movement, which was to follow Cubism. Although collage may traditionally be viewed as mixed media, the use of an image in combination with the mode of text or writing becomes most evident as visual art, and not as literature, as seen in the Middle Ages.

Collage is a word derived from the French word *coller*, which means 'to stick to, glue to'. It is the process of using found objects such as printed media, pictures and photographs in order to create a composition (Verlon, 1968 p. 384). Although the exponents of the Cubist art movement are credited with the invention of the collage in western art history, collage had made its debut in Japan during the 12th century and had spilled over to the monasteries of central Europe by the 18th and 19th centuries (Drucker, 1993, p. 82).

However, collage became popular during the Synthetic Cubist period, when the artists Picasso and Braque used this technique extensively from 1907 through 1912 (Gersh-Nesic, 2012, p. 1). One of the first examples of this process was Picasso's *Still Life with Chair Caning* (1912). Picasso glued oil cloth, wicker and rope to an oval canvas to heighten the process of synthetic cubism at the time. Whereas Picasso glued what was to become 'readymade' objects to the canvas, Braque applied the process of *papier collé*, or pasted pieces of paper on canvas, to create the work *Fruit Dish and Glass* in 1912 (figure 4.25) (Verlon, 1968, p. 384).

The Cubist art movement paved the way for the Dada movement to pioneer the use of the photomontage, which used photographs, pictures and printed media (thus involving image and text) to create an artwork; thus moving away from the traditional medium of paint on canvas (Gersh-Nesic, 2012, p. 1). From this point in art history, media images are seen to have a similar aesthetic quality as that of most traditional media, such as painting, drawing and printmaking. By the 1920s, at the Dada Art Fair in Berlin, Max Ernst, Hannah Höch, Kurt Schwitters and others had established the Dada collage in all of its facets (Elger, 2004, p. 60). Höch composed artworks by gluing photographs from magazines and advertisements together to create works such as *Cut with a Kitchen Knife* (1919–1920) (figure 4.26), while Schwitters used photographs and still images to create collage works he referred to as *Merzbilder* (Kleiner, 2014, p. 983). This process of creating collages was derived from another German word, *Kommerz*, referring to the commercial nature of art and also to the nature of commerce (Verlon, 1968, p. 386).

From this point onwards in art history the collage has played an integral central part in western art-making, reaffirming itself during the Pop Art (also referred to as Neo-Dada) movement of the 1960s. During this period the commercial approach to art and consumerism drove the use of the collage into high aesthetics with the works of Andy Warhol, Richard Hamilton, Jasper Johns and others (Kleiner, 2014, p. 1053). Since the technological advances of the home computer in the 1980s, and the birth of the internet in 1991, digital collage-making has gained momentum and has pushed the boundaries of this mixed medium to greater heights in digital reality. Processes of digital collage-making are now known as desktop publishing, e-collage and digital collage (Gersh-Nesic, 2012, p. 1).



Figure 4.25 Cubist collage. George Braque, *Fruit Dish and Glass*, 1912, France,
<http://www.artchive.com/artchive/B/braque/papcol1.jpg.html>

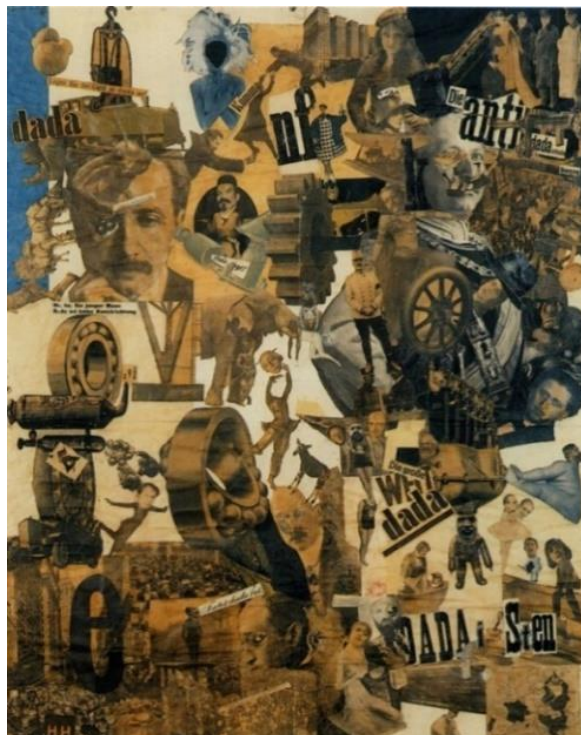


Figure 4.26 Dada collage. Hannah Höch, *Cut with a Kitchen Knife*, 1919–1920, Germany,
<http://smarthistory.khanacademy.org/hoch-kitchen-knife.html>

Throughout history, the incorporation of images with text has become increasingly popular within the realm of visual art. This started with the Dada artists who used media 'clippings' to create artworks. Later the popularity of the printed media inspired other visual artists to incorporate text with more traditional media, such as painting and printmaking. The process differs from pre-20th-century visual art, as text had previously been assigned aesthetic qualities within the 'art for art sake' paradigm. Words thus transcend the realm of textual communication, moving into the realm of high art. The digital era of the new millennium afforded new tools for this process to advance, allowing multimodality to accelerate and in so doing, allowing access to a wider audience. This audience has become known as the 'cyber generation'.

3.2 Image and sound

By the early 20th century, with the invention of the camera and the world engaging in its first mechanised world war in 1917, the Dada artist had established a new visual art movement in order to emancipate the arts and comment on the nihilistic outcome of the First World War. Within the context of literature and performance and visual art, Dada art was ahead of its time (Janson, 2007, p. 534).

By early 1916 Hugo Ball, a German poet and philosopher, founded Cabaret Voltaire in a nightclub by the name of Holländische Meierei in Zurich (figure 4.27). This became a space where artists, writers and performers would congregate in a kind of art society (Stangos, 1988, p. 110). According to André Breton, the founder of the Surrealist movement in 1924, Dada was more a state of mind than the manifestation of visual art. Disgust for the state of the world and the destruction of central Europe by the war forced Dada to act as anti-art diplomats in order to redefine aesthetics of the visual arts (Stangos, 1988, p. 111). As the war was designated to destroy people and cultures, Dada was designed to destroy itself to a point of meaninglessness, preaching non-sense and anti-art with a vengeance (Janson, 2007, p. 534). As mentioned, this process of self-destruction emancipated visual art, signalling the start of the incorporation of various modes into the repertoire of the visual artist.



Figure 4.27. Dada poetry performances. Hugo Ball opening the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich in 1916, http://reteaualliterara.ning.com/profiles/blogs/hugo-ball-anarhistul-dadaist?xg_source=activity

Dada poetry became popular at Cabaret Voltaire, where the performance of the written word became as important as the written word itself (Janson, 2007, p. 535). The Dada artists called it the 'poetry of rubbish' (Kleiner, 2014, p. 983).

Although Cabaret Voltaire lasted only six months, its impact on the visual arts was profound. Tristan Tzara, poet and artist, formulated ten steps, 'How to make a Dada poem':

- 1 Take a newspaper
- 2 Take some scissors
- 3 Choose from this paper an article of the length you want to make your poem
- 4 Cut out the article
- 5 Next, carefully cut out each word that makes up the article, and, put them all in a bag
- 6 Shake gently
- 7 Next, take out each cutting one after the other
- 8 Copy over conscientiously the words in order in which they left the bag
- 9 The poem will resemble you

10 And there you are, an infinitely original author of charming sensibility, even though unappreciated by the vulgar herd

Tzara refers to the 'making' and not 'the writing' of a poem, which offers an early redefinition of the materiality of text from visual and static to tactile and dynamic. This shows that these artists were accessing more than one mode, in this case text and speech, in order to create an artwork (Lewis, 2007, p. 107). In fact, Dada poetry was created to be read out loud in the form of a performance which incorporated the modes of speech, gesture, action and movement.

One of the most popular performance poems (speech, movement and gesture) by Tristan Tzara is titled *Proclamation without Pretension*. Below are the first two stanzas (Stangos, 1988, p. 112) (www.poemhunter.com/poem):

Art is going to sleep for a new world to be born
'ART'-parrot word-replaced by DADA,
PLESIOSAURUS, or handkerchief

The talent THAT CAN BE LEARNED makes the
poet a druggist TODAY the criticism
of balances no longer challenges with resemblances

It is important to note that these poems did not exist in the traditional written form only. They were combined with collages to form posters, artworks and performances as art pieces (Stangos, 1988, p. 112).

In 1996 Charles Bernstein and Raymond Federman performed the 'Dada poem for two face to face' (figure 4.28). This was based on a Dada poem by Federman and digitally edited by Bernstein some years later. (This audio performance may be accessed at http://media.sas.upenn.edu/pennsound/authors/Bernstein/singles/Federman-Raymond_Charles-Bernstein_Dada-2_1996.mp3, www.writing.upenn.edu.)



THE DADA POEM FOR TWO FACE TO FACE

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THE DADA POEM FOR TWO FACE TO FACE

Figure 4.28 Dada poetry. Bernstein and Federman, *The Dada poem for two face to face*, written text/image, 1996, <http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/bernstein/blog/archive-2009.html>

The nihilistic approach of the Dada movement and its reaction to the destruction caused by the First World War in Europe became the driving force behind the movement. In an attempt to destroy art in the same way as members of the human race destroyed each other during the war years, the Dada artist emancipated the rigid boundaries of art. This signalled the beginning of the incorporation of various other modes with that of image and paved the way for the Surrealist art movement of the 1930s to continue experimenting with other modes, as is evident in the work of Surrealist artists and thinkers such as André Breton, Max Ernst and Salvador Dali.

At the start of the 21st century, Dadaist poetry, which has moved into the cyber realm, provides an example of what Finnegan (2002, p. 233) refers to as 'cyborg poetry'. According to Finnegan, internet and computer technology caused text and language to be transformed by the modal senses into a new aesthetic experience. Text is no longer frozen but contains new sets of materialities (*ibid.*):

Participants feel the machine, the smell of the atmosphere of the site, the skilful touch of the fingers and the tactile manipulation of the mouse and screen. The auditory channel is now in full use and the tactability of the computer age has begun.

What was started in Europe at the turn of the 20th century by Dada artists such as Hugo Ball has been transformed into a global experience no longer bound by time or location.

3.3 Image and movement

In visual art the mode of movement refers to moving images in the form of film. It is important to note that a distinct difference exists between this mode and the bimodal combination of image and action. Film, for the greater part, is a two-dimensional simulation of the modes of image and action, which does not occur in real time and space. The bimodal combination of image and movement in film can thus be regarded as a secondary mode.

Film and visual art had not as yet shared the same stage at the onset of the 20th century. The birth of the camera, and later the moving image or film, forced the artist's eye inward in an attempt to capture that which the mechanical nature of still image and moving image could not perform. With the birth of Dada in 1917, which influenced the penning of the surrealist manifesto by André Breton in 1924 (Paris), the Dada artists paved the way for a variety of modes to become part of the Surrealist movement. Film or moving images were no exception.

Surrealist film, in relation to visual art, had its origins in Paris in 1920 during the Dada movement (Richardson, 2007, p. 5). According to McWilliams, film makes its debut into the visual arts during this period due to rapid technological advances in film and still image production. The main aim of Dada and Surrealism was to shock, delight and mystify the audience, encapsulating the new-found theories of the psychological theories of Jung and Freud. Moving images offered a new avenue of expression (McWilliams, 2012, p. 1). Film or moving images suited the vigour of the surrealist dream world, as Surrealism was never to be seen as a fixed aesthetic, but rather an ever-shifting art form (Richardson, 2007, p. 4). Richardson (2006) further states that Surrealism was the first artistic movement in art history to become associated with moving images or cinema. As the birth of Surrealism took place at the same time as that of the motion picture, the surrealist artists were the first generation to grow up with film as part of their daily existence (Kovacs, 1980, p. 37).

'Trick' film techniques, or an attempt to 'fool the eye' of the audience, was an important part of making the paranoid critical world of Salvador Dali a reality. His approach to applying paint to canvas was done in a realistic manner in an attempt to convince the audience that the dream world he created could exist in reality (Janson, 2007, p. 530).

Owing to this approach in visual art, film offered Dali, among others, a route to set still images on canvas into motion. According to McWilliams, these films took the form of live magic shows demanding the viewer to look inwards (McWilliams, 2012, p. 1). André Breton, the founder of the Surrealist movement in 1924, was of the opinion that surrealist moving images could assist the audience to abstract themselves from reality or 'real life' whenever they felt like it (Richardson, 2007, p. 5). As film techniques took rapidly advancing technological steps during the 1920s and 1930s, the Surrealist artist took full advantage of this medium incorporating moving image, gesture, sound, and colour, in an attempt to make the 'ridiculous' world more realistic. This meant that Dali's previous attempts at making his dream world real in the medium of oil paint or still image only was given a much-needed boost by his involvement in the combination of modal ensembles. This use of these modal ensembles made his dream world more persuasive.

A cornerstone piece of surrealist cinema which demonstrates the above-mentioned was a collaboration film between Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali titled *Un Chien Andalou* (figure 4.29) filmed in 1928 in France. The opening sequence to Dali's film portrays the now iconic shock imagery of a woman having her eye sliced open with a razor. *Un Chien Andalou* is seen to have set the benchmark for the use of film in the visual arts and it is seen as one of the finest examples of surrealist period film (Koller, 2001, p. 1).



Figure 4.29 Surrealist cinema/moving images. Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali, Still image from *Un Chien Andalou*, 1928, France, <http://www.zappinternet.com/video/danPvuMpaX/Un-chien-Andalou-1928>

The 17-minute art film paved the way for artists such as Dali to incorporate film or moving images as a further mode of expression to give flight to their artistic dream world (Koller, 2001, p. 1). This period in art history most probably laid the foundation for the popular medium of contemporary video art, which gained ground in the 1960s and was later elevated in status by the cyber culture generation. Uploading film to the internet answered the artist's questions concerning accessibility, which has become a key characteristic of multimodal communication in contemporary society.

Dali's interest in film led to a major collaboration with the father of animation, Walt Disney, in 1946. The short film resulting from this collaboration is titled *Destino* (figure 4.30). However, due to WWII financial constraints the project was shelved and never completed. During the re-make of Disney's *Fantasia* in 2000, Roy Disney unearthed the shelved project while searching for original footage of the same period. The film was completed and released by Disney Entertainment in 2003 (Taylor, 2008).

The full-length film may be accessed at: <http://vimeo.com/39728682>



Figure 4.30 Surrealist cinema/moving images. Still image from Salvador Dali and Walt Disney, *Destino*, 2003, USA, <http://networkawesome.com/show/destino-by-walt-disney-salvador-dali/>

3.4 Image and action

As mentioned, the combination of image, movement and sound in a film act as secondary modes. Image and action, however, are primary modes, with the

characteristic of materiality, because the actions or movements are carried out in real time and occupy real space. Most performance art pieces or happenings (live art events) will form part of this category, as well as artworks that move (kinetic art). Certainly one of the major limitations of performance art pieces and 'happening/intervention' art events is the fact that they are bound to a fixed location, and like theatre productions, contain a beginning and an end. This means that the accessibility of the artwork in question becomes limited to the audience in attendance only. Technology, in the form of the internet, has allowed such works of art to become timeless and thereby address an important characteristic of multimodality, which is access. Capturing such events on video and uploading them to the internet have created a secondary medium for performance art, which blurs the boundaries between video art and performance art, and thus making the work more accessible and timeless in the digital realm. As mentioned, when the primary modes of image and movement (performance art and kinetic art) are digitised they become secondary modalities because their material qualities are simulated in the digital realm.

Since the term and the characteristics of 'performance art' have been clarified and discussed earlier in this chapter, the remainder of this section will focus on kinetic art only, in other words, artworks that physically move.

Barrett, in an essay titled *Kinetic art* (Stangos, 1988, pp. 212–224), offers a basic classification of four directions in which kinetic artists have worked throughout art history: first, artworks that physically move; second, static works that produce a kinetic effect by the movement of the spectator; third, works involving the projection of light; and fourth, works that require the participation of the spectator (Stangos, 1988, p. 217).

Artworks that move became phenomena of the 20th century, with technological advances made in electricity, the motor car, flight and rail. With the world moving faster as a result of transportation, bridging the time gap of travel over vast distances, the artists of the 20th century were inspired to embrace this new technology, and use it as a bimodal form of expression in visual art (Dorin, 1999, p. 20). Thus the Futurist manifesto declares (Futurist Manifesto, 1909, cited in Stangos, 1988, p. 212):

A roaring motor car that looks as though it is running on shrapnel is more beautiful than the Winged Victory of Samothrace. We declare that the splendour of our world has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed.

Kinetic art started within the Dada and Futurist movements before the First World War. Although crude in comparison to Kinetic art, the Dada artist sought to emancipate static traditional sculpture while the Futurist movement embraced the machine. As Boccioni vividly explains: 'We cannot forget ... that the fury of a flywheel or the turbine of a propeller, are all plastic and pictorial elements which a Futurist in sculpture must take into account' (Boccioni, 1912, cited in Stangos, 1988, p. 213).

Duchamp, in an attempt to destroy the aesthetic value of art, which was true to the manifesto of Dada, mounted a bicycle wheel on a white stool to amuse himself (figure 4.31) (Atkins, 1990, p. 4). Duchamp (in Atkins, 1990, p. 5) describes the artwork as follows: '[...] like watching fire [...]. It was a pleasant gadget, pleasant for the movement it gave me.'

Duchamp's *Bicycle Wheel* (1913) is said to be the first example of kinetic art (Atkins, 1990). It was in Russia, after the First World War, that true Kinetic sculpture was realised by the Russian futurists Tatlin and Gabo. Gabo affirmed a new pictorial element in art, that of kinetic rhythm (Stangos, 1988, p. 214). The earliest example of an artwork to fulfil this criterion set by the Russian futurists was Gabo's *Kinetic Construction* (1920) depicted in figure 4.32. As the painter manipulates colour and form, the kinetic artist is primarily driven by coordinating a process; in this case, the process of movement (Dorin, 1999, p. 4).



Figure 4.31 Kinetic art. Marcel Duchamp, *Bicycle Wheel*, 1913, ready-made sculpture, 1913, France, http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object_id=81631

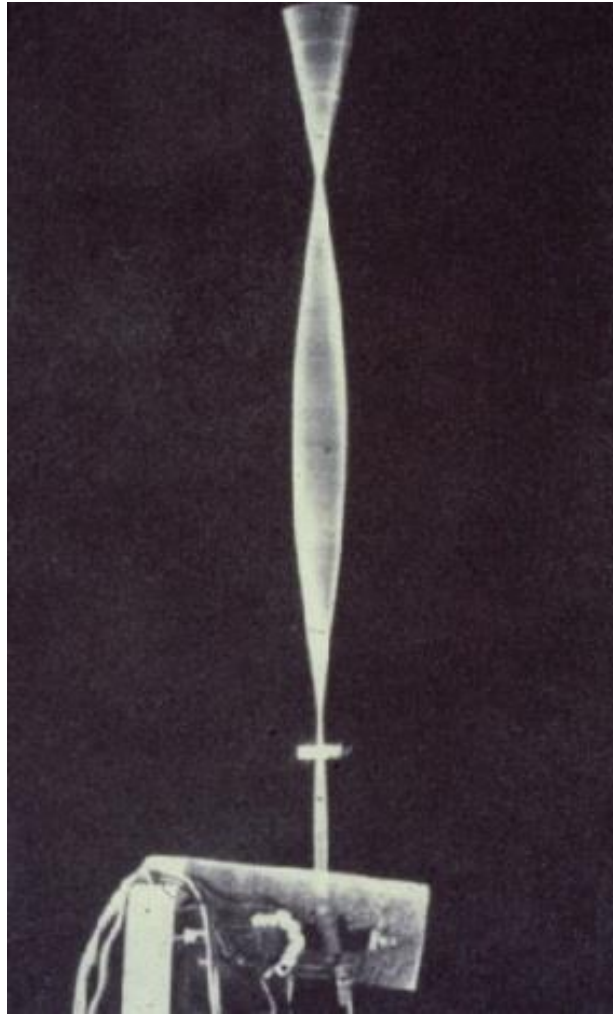


Figure 4.32 Kinetic art. Naum Gabo, *Kinetic Construction*, 1920, Russia,
<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/gabo-kinetic-construction-standing-wave-t00827>

In later years, Alexander Calder became the forerunner of kinetic art, producing mobile sculptures powered by air or wind. For many years he was one of only a few artist working in this trend, until the birth of the computer, which offered a further avenue of kinetic exploration, that of representing movement in a virtual kinetic environment. This is the world of the contemporary computer graphic artist (Dorin, 1999, p. 1).

Thus, in addition to Barrett's earlier-mentioned four classifications of artworks that move, a fifth may be included, viz. what Dorin (1999) refers to as virtual kinetic art driven by computer technology, which may take the form of real-time computer simulations, also referred to as cybernetics. Contemporary examples of this mode in visual art are found in the work of Dominic Harris (London, England), as depicted in figure 4.33.



Figure 4.33 Virtual kinetic art. Dominic Harris, *Baby Flutter*, 2011, Cinimod Studio, London, <http://cinimodstudio.com/project/baby-flutter/>

In a contemporary world, driven by digital media, visual artists seem to be tapping into the world of virtual reality, which seems to force the audience into participating with the artwork on display. Technology has in its own way broken the boundaries of static artworks on a gallery wall, which in the past were only perceived through the single sense of sight. As depicted in figure 4.33, virtual kinetic art becomes an interesting manifestation of dual modality. The butterflies are 'designed' to move in high definition upon gesturing by the spectator. In other words, in a world of virtual reality, the source becomes primary. It becomes an instantiation of secondary modality in the sense that the butterfly never existed in real space and time.

Questions may arise as to how this differs from film, as both may contain modes of sound and movement. A film is sequential, and has a beginning and an end, and all the modalities are seen as secondary. With regard to the above-mentioned artwork, in its primary and secondary modality, participation relies on the audience to physically engage with the work through the modes of action, gesture and sight. On the other hand, film relies primarily on the sense of sight and hearing and does not require gestural action from the audience.

3.5 Image and gesture

Gesture in visual art may be broadly divided into two categories: gestures that are static (still images) and gestures that represent movement (moving images). Static gestural

images can be divided into two sub-categories, namely representational or natural images (for example Rembrandt van Rijn, figure 4.34) and non-representational or abstract images (for example Jackson Pollock, figures 4.35 and 4.36). Static gestural images represent images which are static or still but the marks made by the artists on the picture surface represent or gesture a message. Moving gestural images, on the other hand, can be divided into three sub-categories: performance art (Gilbert and George, figure 4.38), viewer participatory artworks (Raphael Hemmer, figure 4.39) and video art (Churchill Madikida, figure 4.40). Performance art gestures actual movement in real time, while viewer participatory artworks signal movement through gestures made by the viewer participating in or with the artwork. Video art, on the other hand, represents a secondary modality, where gestures made on the screen do not necessarily happen in real time, and thus lack materiality.

Traditionally, gesture in art occurs in drawing, as an artwork executed in a rapid motion. It aims, in a short period of time, to capture as much information as possible of the subject's gesture. The primary objective of gestural drawing is to render the study of the human body (among others) in motion. In some instances gestural drawing acts as preliminary research in order to create an artwork, or it may serve as the end product in order to showcase the artist's energy in execution (Chaner, 2009, p. 12).

According to Gombrich (1966, p. 393), gestures made on paper by the artist are two-fold. First, marks are made in an abstract state in terms of the swiftness of the artist's mark, and second, what the mark itself may represent. In other words, gesture may refer to the swiftness of the movement of the artist's hand, which then represents this movement translated onto the paper by means of a mark. It is commonly accepted that artworks may be representational or abstract in nature. This becomes evident when comparing the naturalist drawings of Rembrandt (figure 4.34) to the abstractions of Miro or Kandinsky. The representational element of art aims, to a point, at mirroring life, using various gestures that have their meanings rooted in human existence. These are often culturally and socially bound (Gombrich, 1966, p. 394). Abstractions, on the other hand, rely mainly on symbols, as they may gesture emotions or concepts which cannot be seen.

Representational gestural drawing appeared in visual art around the 12th century and continued to manifest itself in later periods with the works of Da Vinci, Michelangelo and Rembrandt van Rijn. The trend has continued to grow and gained much impetus with

technological advances of the 20th century allowing gestural drawings to be made, for example, on digital tablets and touchscreens.



Figure 4.34 Gestural drawing. Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, pen and ink, 1660, The Netherlands,

http://www.bridgemanart.com/search?filter_prev_text=artist%3A+rembrand+van+rijn

Non-representational gestural drawing became a product of the 20th century with the inception of the abstract art movements of the 1930s (Janson, 2007, p. 534). The works of the abstract expressionists Pollock, Miro and Kandinsky bear evidence of gesture in the absence of natural representation (Kleiner, 2014, p. 1037). For most of the abstract expressionists a metaphysical approach to their artworks in terms of the artist's persona, actions and assertion became more important than the final product itself (Stangos, 1988, p. 169). Jackson Pollock, who was termed an action painter, moved around the canvas dripping and splatting paint on a canvas while lying on the floor (Kleiner, 2014, p. 1038). He saw himself as a shaman, and the process of creating art became a self-cleansing ritual (Kleiner, 2014, p. 1038). The artist's current mood and temperament would echo in the non-figurative marks he made on the canvas at the time. The process, for Pollock, became more important than the end product (Kleiner, 2014, p. 1038). The directness of Pollock's actions echoed in marks made on the canvas would gesture to the viewer the artist's intent.



Figure 4.35 Abstract expressionism. Jackson Pollock, *Lavender Mist*, oil and enamel on canvas, 1950, USA, <http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/pollock/lavender-mist>

A clear comparison can be made in the signalling of gesture when comparing Pollock's *Lavender Mist* (1950) (figure 4.35) with *Number 32* (figure 4.36) of the same year. The two works evoke different gestures resulting in the viewer reacting differently to each of the works.

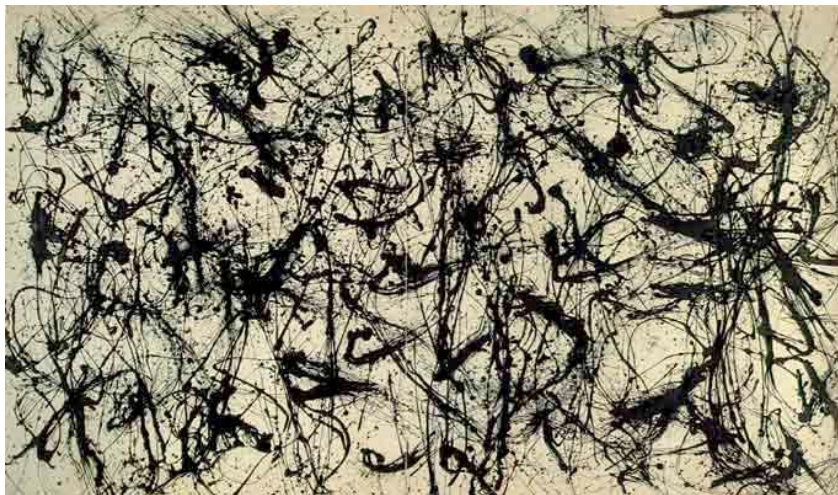


Figure 4.36 Abstract expressionism. Jackson Pollock, *Number 32*, oil and enamel on canvas, 1950, USA, http://www.artchive.com/artchive/p/pollock/pollock_32_1950.jpg.html

Gesture and action or movement are closely linked within visual art, in terms of the ambiguous nature of the relationship between artist, artwork and audience. Performance artworks, including installation art and video art (moving images), should form a third category of gesture in visual art.

According to Goldberg (1998), the Dada artists among others, are credited for being the first art movement to incorporate the modes of action, gesture and speech into visual art, followed by the German Bauhaus instructors who included theatre workshops in order to explore the relationships between light, form and space (Goldberg, 1998, p. 17). However, Goldberg claims that the inception of true performance art took place in the 1960s and by 1970 'performance art' had become a global trend and an established term worldwide. It was regarded to be 'live art' and not theatre. From 1980 onward, performance art incorporated technological media in the final art piece that was performed. In this manner, performance art sets no boundaries and becomes parameter-less in the 21st century (Goldberg, 1998, p. 21). Goldberg (1998, p. 25) offers eight characteristics of performance art:

- Performance art is a live event.
- Performance art does not adhere to strict guidelines; it becomes an artwork.
- Performance art is not for sale or cannot be sold as conventional art.
- Performance art may contain traditional media, dialogue, poetry, narratives, dance, music, film footage, screens, projections, live actors and or animals.
- Performance art is a legitimate art movement with degree courses offered in many tertiary institutions.
- Performance art adheres to the doctrines of the movement's forefathers, Dada, Surrealism, Futurism and Bauhaus.
- Body art, installation art and conceptual art are closely related to performance art.
- Performance art may be entertaining, informative, shocking or horrifying in an attempt to create an experience which is memorable.

It could be argued that Goldberg's characteristics of performance art provide space for including video art, conceptual art and new media genres. This is because the characteristics of performance art generally incorporate the modes of gesture, action and moving images. These modal characteristics remain in place irrespective of whether the performance is 'live', for example Gilbert and George's *The Singing Sculpture* (1973) depicted in figure 4.37, or captured on video, such as the piece by Churchill Madikida titled *Struggles of the Heart* (2007) depicted in figure 4.38.



Figure 4.37 Performance Art. Gilbert and George, *The Singing Sculpture*, 1973, London, England, <http://www.andrewgrahamdixon.com/archive/readArticle/277>



Figure 4.38 Video art / new media. Churchill Madikida, *Struggles of the Heart*, still image from the video, 2007, South Africa, <http://www.stevenson.info/exhibitions/aug2004/item20.htm>

Gesture thus becomes integrated with technology. It must, however, be taken into account that when gesture becomes integrated with technology and a 'live' performance art piece is captured on film for documentary purposes, gesture becomes a secondary modality as it no longer exists in real time and space and thus lacks material grounding. The work by Raphael Hemmer depicted in figure 4.39 is an example of gesture integrated with technology.



Figure 4.39 Installation art / new media. Raphael Hemmer, *Frequency and Volume*, 2007, Venice Biennale, Italy, http://www.sfmoma.org/exhib_events/exhibitions/459

The audience is invited to gesture in front of a screen, where software captures the coordinates of the viewer's actions. Whether a gesture is captured and recorded on digital devices for documentary purposes or directly aiding the performance piece in 'real time', technology has afforded the artist with a multimodal tool to heighten the senses, not only appealing to sight but also incorporating more than one of the human senses at the same time. In this instance the artwork is characterised by both primary and secondary modalities at the same time.

For the purpose of clarity regarding the two categories gesture, I propose the diagram below (figure 4.40) which in summary depicts these two main and sub-categories.

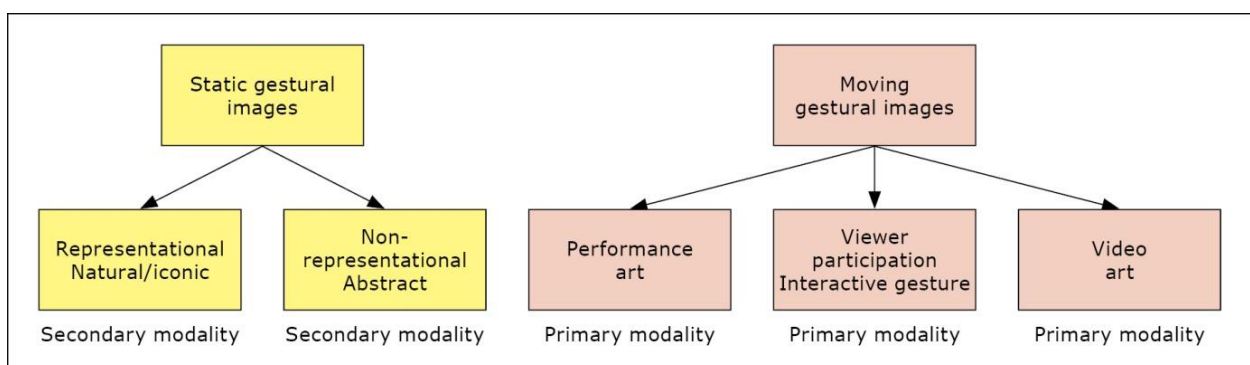


Figure 4.40 Categories of gesture

3.6 Image and 3D models

Visual art has worked in three dimensions since the earliest times. The mode of 3D was traditionally associated with sculpture, craft, or art objects (that which exist in physical three dimensional space). In the digital age, a further manifestation has seen the light, viz. virtual reality or digital models and projections. With digital technology offering a wider range of creative opportunities to the contemporary artist, the boundaries between various visual art disciplines have blurred even further. It has become increasingly difficult to isolate sculpture or any other traditional media in their pure form. The work of contemporary artists, not only in South Africa, but worldwide, share this common characteristic of hybridity, which has made genre and media classification extremely difficult, especially regarding their primary and secondary modal status.

An example of this form of hybridity may be found in the form of 3D mapping where computer generated software is used to map the outlines of a 3D model or sculpture and in so doing, projects light onto the surface of the model. Sober Industries and Studio Rewind collaborated on an artwork by creating a sculpture of an owl and a rhinoceros containing light projections which are mapped across the contour surfaces of each sculpture (figure 4.41). An added feature according to Studio Rewind (2013) is that the projections mapped onto the surfaces of the sculptures are spectator controlled and manipulated, thus constantly altering the characteristics of the artwork (<http://www.visualnews.com/2013/05/20/>, accessed 2 June 2014). The work was exhibited at the Rotterdam Museum Nights in May 2013, and the artists marketed their work with the slogan 'Welcome to the future: projection mapped sculptures'. They summarise the event as follows (<http://www.visualnews.com/2013/05/20/welcome-to-the-future-projection-mapped-sculptures/#vTCjh68bhewk7c6r.99>, accessed 26 June 2014):

Bruce Moerdjiman, who built cube shaped controllers that changed the colour of the visuals when tilted or moved by the spectator included buttons to skip through the projection type or create other effects like blending and scratching.



Figure 4.41 Hybridity in visual art. *Sober Industries and Studio Rewind, Projection Mapped Sculptures, 2013, Rotterdam, The Netherlands,*

<http://www.visualnews.com/2013/05/20/welcome-to-the-future-projection-mapped-sculptures>

The current hybrid nature of visual art dedicates itself to trans-disciplinary projects which are highly experimental in nature. Different media and genres are purposefully fused together in order to create new ways of expression and art discourses. This ultimately aims to transcend the boundaries between art, science and research. Owing to the multifaceted nature of these works, collaborations between artists and various digital studios, engineering, architectural and electronics firms are not uncommon (Papastergiadis, 2005, p. 42).

3.7 Image and touch

Throughout art history, sculpture has been one of the only traditional media which could be touched or felt; however, touch as a mode of experiencing art was mainly reserved for the blind. Artworks that can be touched, offered blind persons the opportunity to interact with visual art through sense other than sight.

However, Finnegan (2002, p. 197) states that our ability to touch and be touched by others must not be overlooked as an important modality of communication. Recently, this mode has become more prevalent in visual art, and has become integrated in modal ensembles. Apart from a piece of sculpture we can feel the texture of fabric, an inscribed ring, an embossed seal, a thick bound leather book printed on vellum. Furthermore, touch, along with gestural actions such as move, pull, press, shift, and turn, has become a typical instruction for the experience of contemporary visual artworks. Here, the use of the human hand becomes the primary tool for channelling touch. Two hands offer us the ability to interpret spatial relations, texture and irregularities as well as the manipulation of multiple objects at the same time (Finnegan, 2002, p. 197). Hands are sensitive and can be trained to accomplish high degrees of sensitivity.

The *Flaming Cactus Project* (2011) created by the ANIMUS art collective (USA), depicted in figure 4.42, beautifies the streets of New York and attempts to bring art out of the confined spaces of a gallery to the public. Pedestrians going about the mundane routine of commuting on foot are confronted with street lamps covered in coloured cable ties. The work itself gestures the viewer to come closer and touch and interact with the artwork, which was originally signalled by the mode of colour.

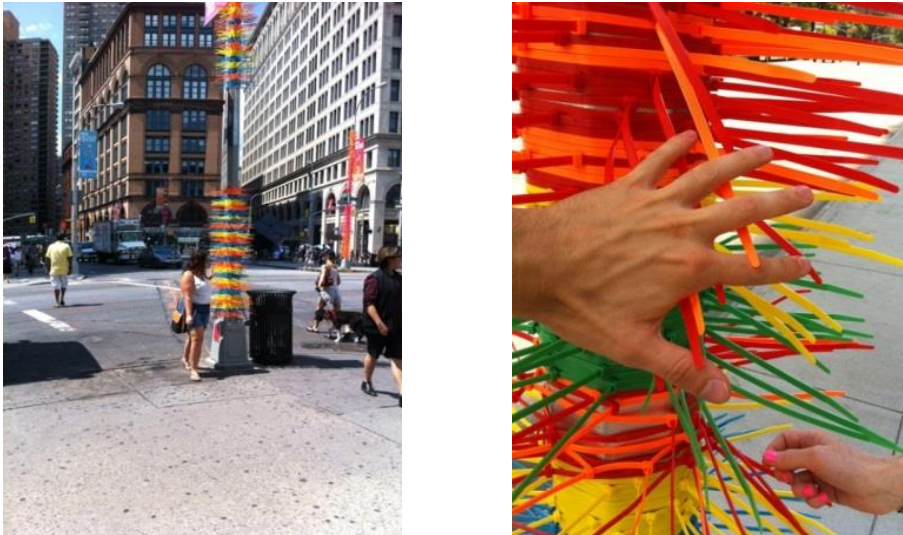


Figure 4.42 Tactile sculpture. The ANIMUS art collective, *The Flaming Cactus*, 2011, New York, USA, http://www.salon.com/2011/09/21/flaming_cactus_imprint/

However, to date touch has not been categorised as a mode by linguists despite the development of Braille in 1824 which makes it possible for the blind to read printed text using touch. In a sense the mode of text and 3D models have material qualities when referenced in their primary modality, as both sculpture and Braille may physically be touched to be 'read'. Regarding the blind, both modes lose their primary modality when digitised while for the seeing person, only the mode of 3D models has its material status challenged when digitised.

This notion becomes problematic when assigning the sense of touch a modal status. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Stein (2008, p. 24) states that one of the characteristics of modes are that they can be disseminated through technology. In the past it was not at all possible to capture the physical texture of touch digitally. However, with much experimentation under way, touch as a mode has finally crossed the boundary of the digital age in terms of displaying characteristics of a secondary mode as well.

Another characteristic of mode mentioned by Stein (2008, p. 24) that has been problematic with regard to touch, is that it does not have an inherent grammar, except when applied to orthographic systems such as Braille. In chapter 3 it has been argued that although touch may not have a grammar as yet, defining such a computational grammar may be on the cards, as computer hard and software develops in the future. However, although modal grammars develop within the primary modal status, all three of the senses in question contain vocabularies derived from the specific object or source in question. Touch has a tactile vocabulary; for instance in the example of the *Flaming Cactus* (figure 4.42), the title of the public sculpture references indexical properties of words such as 'sharp' and 'prickly'. In this sense, a sculpture made from coloured plastic cable ties (indexical) becomes ambiguous to the source it is referenced from originally via the title, 'cactus'. Plastic cable ties arranged around a street pole conjure up a sense of sharpness and prickliness. Thus, whether touch exists in a primary mode (physically touching the artwork) or lacks materiality in its secondary modality (digitised image of the artwork), the modal outcome remains primarily the same.

4.8 Image and smell

According to Finnegan (2002, p. 186) smell has long been deliberately produced from plant and animal substances. These smells are created to perform specific functions, and are culturally bound. Finnegan (2002, p. 186) is of the opinion that just as sight and sound have formed the basis for important and complex art forms, so too has olfaction. For example, the deliberate use of fragrance plays an important part in creating an atmosphere or shaping an identity or situation. Tuan (1993) uses the term 'aromatic architecture' to refer to the use of aromas in buildings used for religious and spiritual purposes (1993, p. 65). Olfaction plays such an important role in human communication that many Indian temples are known as 'houses of fragrance' (Tuan, 1993, p. 66). Olfaction has also played a fundamental role in medical practices, where aromatic oils and fragrances have been an important part of curing illness, including consciousness-altering smells of certain natural narcotics (Finnegan, 2002, p. 189). In contemporary times certain super-stores, for example, use the power of smell in order to create an atmosphere conducive to shopping (Finnegan, 2002, p. 188).

In visual art smell has become a way to heighten the viewer's senses of the visual experience and strengthen the conceptual approach to the work of art, and in the artistic world, olfaction as a mode has been playing an increasingly prominent role. In November 2010 the Museum of Art and Design in New York City launched a new centre dedicated to art and smell, named the Centre of Olfactory Art. It aims to host visual art

dedicated to smell as well as showcasing perfumes, food, wine, malt and spirits. The aim of the centre is to promote smell as art by launching public programmes to raise awareness of this mode of expression (Woollard, 2010, p. 1). A contemporary artist, who is breaking new ground using the sense of smell depicted in figure 4.43, is Mattia Casalegno. The work titled *The Open* (2010) urges the audience to wear a face mask covered in grass while listening to the sound of his/her own breathing through headphones. The mask forms part of larger installation incorporating not only the mode of smell but further modes of gesture, action, 3D models, sound, touch and moving images. The video installation may be accessed at:

<http://www.mattiacasalegno.net/theopen/#1>



Figure 4.43 Olfactory art. Mattia Casalegno, *The Open*, wearable architecture, custom made electronics, software, microphone and fresh sod, 2010, Canada,

<https://olfactoryart.allyou.net/1462608/mattia-casalegno-quotthe-openquot-2010>

The media which the artist used to construct this piece is by no means conventional. It speaks of hybridity in art and further defies any means of modernist classification. The artist makes the following statement in his online biography (Casalegno, 2010, mattiacasalegno.net/biography):

Sculptor, visual artist, live media performer, Mattia Casalegno is able to connect fields and disciplines so distant as neurosciences, fashion, biology, chemistry, electronic music and architecture to produce works dealing with notions of perception, synaesthesia, and audio visual improvisation.

Smell contains similar characteristics as touch in terms of being a mode that cannot be disseminated through technology in its entirety. In basic terms smell cannot be transmitted through a computer or transmediated through the contemporary digital realm, as touch has managed to do with aid of digital technology. As with the sense of touch, it may be argued that smell as a mode contains its own 'olfactory vocabulary', in the sense that smells could be sweet or sour, pleasant or unpleasant. It seems that strong smells, in particular, have been lexicalised. Compare, for instance, a *strong, putrid, foul, poignant* smell. The fact that smell does not adhere to two of Stein's (2008) characteristics of mode does not necessarily mean that it is to be excluded as a mode due to it lacking the ability to be transported digitally or for the fact that it lacks grammar. It has been proven that smell operates modally within visual art and a detailed account thereof will be offered, along with touch and taste in the empirical chapter of this study.

4.9 Image and taste

In essence, the question regarding taste in art translates to artworks that are able to be tasted or eaten. Similar to touch and smell, taste (not containing a grammar and is not yet easily digitisable) has gustatory properties. Edible artworks are a hybrid category straddling the boundaries between visual art and cuisine. An online search for visual artworks (June 2014) that appeal to taste confirmed this ambiguity. Is a decorated or representational cake an artwork or is it confectionary? The primary distinction seems to be that cakes and other food are primarily created to be eaten, whereas edible artworks or artefacts carry artistic qualities that dominate or overpower gustatory qualities of food type in question. This fuzziness between art and cuisine strongly suggests that the domain of 'art' has extended its boundaries to encompass more than just the 'high art' aesthetics associated with the artistic canon.

An internet search using the search term 'edible art', among others, brought up the name of the artist Kittiwat Unarrom, a baker from Thailand who has become a visual artist. Re-modelling his bakery into an artist studio and referring to it as the Body Bakery, Unarrom creates human body part sculptures from bread dough. Apart from the fact that he recently completed a master's degree in visual art, no more is known about this artist other than that his bread sculptures have recently become popular on the internet via Facebook pages, Twitter, various blogs and online shopping sites. Unarrom has not only managed to incorporate the mode of taste into his sculptural works but has offered the work for sale as 'one of a kind loaves of bread' on online shopping web sites such as <http://www.personal-shopper-bangkok.com/> (accessed 26 June 2014).

As an undergraduate visual art student at the University of Silpakron (Thailand), Unarrom studied painting specialising in portraiture. However, the single medium of paint did not afford him the means to think about and formulate his own ideas about the world and consumerism. At the bakery owned by his family, the artist turned to the medium of edible sculpture in order to offer social commentary on consumerism, gluttony, and greed. On his web page Unarrom (2013) made the following statement:

Everybody's lives are in a rush these days, even when it comes to eating. When we eat, we don't think about our health or medical safety, we just eat to satisfy our taste buds. When people see my sculptures made from bread, they don't want to eat it, but when they taste it, it's just normal bread.

The artist has chosen these specific modal ensembles in order communicate the fact that people should not generalise or make assumptions about things just by their outer appearances. His work ultimately forces people to ponder over whether they are consuming food or ultimately consuming themselves (*ibid.*).



Figure 4.44. Edible art. Kittiwat Unarrom, *Edible Portraits*, 2013, Ratchaburi, Thailand, <http://www.personal-shopper-bangkok.com/>

In Unarrom's work he traditionally exploited modes such as colour, gesture, action and 3D models, which are combined with the non-traditional modes of taste, or gustatory perception, as well as smell, or olfactory perception, for the purpose of offering social commentary.

4 SUMMARY

This chapter set out to demonstrate that what are identified and expounded as modes (in chapter 3) are indeed at work in visual art, not only at present but also historically. The chapter started by giving a brief historical overview of the interaction between non-orthographical or iconic visual modes (that which can be regarded to be prototypical of the fine arts and design) and modes drawing upon other senses and media. This discussion was structured according to three periods in the history of the visual arts, *viz.* Pre-20th Century, 20th Century and Contemporary. With regard to contemporary art I, demonstrated that two factors accelerated the uptake of multimodality in various art genres, *viz* various technological developments, and new ways of perceiving and reacting to the world. The Gutenberg press invented in the 1500s led to a sequence of events which eventually culminated in the phenomenon known as the 'mass media'. These media would, in turn, become technologically enabled in various digitised formats later in the 20th century. Furthermore, 'digital mass media' gave multimodal communication a platform from which to operate in the 21st century.

It has become increasingly clear that technology and the role of mass communication, mechanisation and industrialisation at the start of the 20th century spurred visual artists on to incorporate new modes of expression into their work. For instance, as early as 1917 Dada artists deliberately used modes in non-conventional and de(cons)tructive ways to protest against the atrocities of the First World War – the result of the kind of thinking that characterised a 'rational world'.

This chapter also demonstrated how multimodality in art became an institutionalised phenomenon, through new multimodal genres such as installation and performance art. The last part of the chapter attempted to give a semi-structured overview of how still images (the default mode of the visual arts) have been combined with other visual modes, as well as modes that draw on the senses of touch, smell and taste. Throughout this section I demonstrated that although a sense-based classification was followed, the meanings of multimodal ensembles are never the sum of their modal constituents. They utilise the affordances of the chosen modes to construct multiple layers of meaning that reflect, construct and critically comment on society.

In an attempt at building a framework for describing multimodality in visual art, it was important to investigate how modes interact in actual examples of visual artworks. As shown, the boundaries of disciplines that were once fixed, such as visual art, design and language, have become blurred, largely due to advances made in technology. The

phrase 'rampant eclecticism' seems to be an apt description for what appears to be boundless resources of media and genres in the domain of visual art. Although artists may not be overtly aware of the notion of mode, they intuitively select modes and build modal ensembles on the basis of the affordances of modes, and the ways in which these ensembles make social meaning in particular contexts. Kress (2010) refers to the use of 'modal ensembles' as the process of 'design'.

Whereas this chapter, and the three preceding chapters, constituted the contextual, theoretical and historical backdrop of the thesis, the next two chapters constitute the empirical part: chapter 5 describes and justifies the research methodology and chapter 6 presents and discusses the findings of the empirical research. Chapter 7 concludes the thesis by offering an instructional framework for teaching art in a multimodal world.

CHAPTER 5

Research methodology

1 INTRODUCTION

As stated in the first chapter of this thesis, the purpose of the research was to understand the combination of different modes of representation (multimodality) in contemporary art-making. Since multimodal research is dynamic and may lend itself to quantitative, qualitative or a mixed methods approach to research, it covers a wide spectrum of methodologies such as case studies, grounded theory, action research cycles and reflective practice (Jewitt, 2009, p. 27). To answer the research questions posed by this study, case study research within an interpretivist and constructivist ontology has been chosen as a methodology, as it comprises a systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events which aim to describe the phenomena of interest (Bromley, 1990, p. 302). In this research, a case study methodology has been chosen to explore the multimodal processes and products of ten contemporary South African artists who submitted entries to the Sasol New Signatures National Art Competition over the period 2010 to 2014.

2 PHILOSOPHICAL WORLDVIEW

This study is situated within an interpretivist and constructivist ontology. Ontology focuses on how the world and reality is perceived or how claims are made about the nature of being and existence. Ontology thus rests on the fundamental beliefs about the nature of reality, especially in a social setting (Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 172). The interpretivist/constructivist approach is built on the belief that there are multiple subjective realities constructed through human actions and interaction. Meanings are made and strengthened, and at times remade through group interaction.

The epistemology related to the constructivist worldview seeks to understand and explain reality through the interpretations and observations of interactions within a social context (Creswell, 2009, p. 6). In other words, it is seen as the study of human knowledge which stresses the knowledge of human reasoning (Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 165).

The goal of a constructivist/interpretivist research study such as the present is to understand the meanings that cultural and institutional practices have for those taking

part in them (Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 89). Within this study, the aim of an interpretivist enquiry is to understand people as conscious, self-directing, human beings who make choices from a range of meaning making devices available to them in order to create social meaning.

3 RESEARCH APPROACH

A qualitative approach underpins the research. Qualitative research attempts to study human action through the lens of the social actors themselves. The primary goal of a qualitative research design is to describe and understand human behaviour rather than attempting to explain it (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 270). Unlike quantitative research designs, qualitative approaches towards research design describe methods and approaches that deal with non-numeric data analysis (Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 173). According to Neuman (2011, p. 151), qualitative research applies logic in practice and follows a nonlinear research path along specific cases and contexts. Neuman defines the notion of 'logic in practice' as 'a logic of research based on an apprenticeship model and the sharing of knowledge about practical concerns and specific experiences'; and regards this as 'the key characteristic of qualitative research' (2011, p. 151). The researcher is thus free to make interpretations guided by qualitative design protocols. Banks (2007, p. xi) states that qualitative research concerns itself with accessing experiences and interactions in their natural settings. Furthermore, although concerns of bias may be raised, Banks claims that qualitative research acknowledges the importance of the role of the researcher regarding his/her experience and expertise within the chosen research field. He is of the opinion that the researcher's interest and expertise will assist in developing and refining the process of the research outcomes (*ibid.*).

O'Farrell and Meban, in a paper commissioned by UNESCO entitled *Arts education and instrumental outcomes: An introduction to research, methods and indicators* (2003), emphasise the appropriateness of qualitative research methods for arts education settings. Thomas Barone (1997), one of the main advocates of qualitative research for arts education, is of the opinion that this process is best suited in order to investigate interpersonal and aesthetic experiences offered in the process of art-making.

According to O'Farrell and Meban (2003) qualitative research offers a wide platform for the collection of data, which may be subject to diversion, due to the nature and the subjectivity of the research process, especially in the field of visual art. A wide variety of instruments are used in qualitative research on art-making and art education, such as

field notes, interviews, audio and video recordings, still photographs, focus group discussions and the review of printed and non-printed resources. Within this environment goals and methods may be subject to change in response to emergent issues (O'Farrell & Meban, 2003). In other words, the original research plan cannot be tightly prescribed; thus questions may change, and data and sites may be shifted or modified.

One of the overarching research strategies that is well suited to qualitative research and aimed at gathering information about how one or more particular person operates within a particular social setting is case study research, which will be described in the next section.

4 RESEARCH STRATEGY: CASE STUDY

Case study research strategies involve systematically gathering information about a particular person(s), social setting, event or group. The ultimate outcome is then to effectively understand how this entity operates or functions (Berg, 2007/9, p. 225). Case studies are rooted in the domain of sociological studies and are used in a wide variety of investigations, but have in recent years gained popularity in the research fields of education and instruction (Tellis, 1997, p. 1). According to Berg (2007, p. 225) case studies best suit educational research undertakings due to the fact that the method seeks out unique people, programmes and events through (among others), a purposive sampling procedure. The reason for this is that case study research strategies emphasize the participant's perspective as central to the research process (Zucker, 2009, p. 20). More importantly however, case studies move a certain phenomenon of interest into an intervention in practice (Zucker, 2009, p. 21). According to Tellis (1997) seminal case study researchers such as Yin (1993, 1994, 2009) and Stake (1995, 2006) have developed robust and popular procedures for case study research. Both researchers are of the opinion that most data collection procedures are known to hide some of the vital details the researcher may require in order to publish accurate findings. Case studies, on the other hand, seem to reveal these vital details of the participants by using multiple sources of data (Tellis, 1997, p. 1). According to Jones and Aloney (2011) case studies are a detailed, rigorous and systemic approach to gathering data, yet it allows the researcher much freedom and flexibility. As the concept of multimodality in visual art and art education is a relatively new field of research, case study methodology is appropriate to this study, as it provides insight into areas that are relatively unknown to the researcher (Jones & Aloney, 2011, p. 96).

Yin (1993, 1994, 2009) identified three different types of case studies: exploratory, explanatory and descriptive, to which Stake (1995, 2006) added three more. These are known as intrinsic, instrumental and collective case studies (Tellis, 1997, p. 2). For the purpose of this study two of Stake's case study types are of importance: the intrinsic case study, which demonstrates the researcher's interest in the case; and the instrumental case study, through which the researcher aims to understand more than what is obvious to the observer.

Intrinsic case studies are supported by Yin (1994, 2009) and Stake (1995, 2006), as cases need to be carefully selected in order to demonstrate the researcher's main objectives and to maximise accurate, detailed data within the time limits of the study. This means that case studies are selective regarding the collection of respondents, focussing on the research topic at hand rather than being randomly sampled (Stake, 1995, p. 88).

A case is literally an example of 'something' – in which that 'something' could be a school, an institution, an event or an organisation (Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 16). With reference to this study, the cases in question comprise the entries to a national art competition. Case studies are conducted within a bounded system. This system is bounded by the case in question, with reference to time, place and circumstance (Gomm *et al.*, 2000, p. 9). Within this bounded system two types of case study approaches are commonly used in qualitative research designs. First, a single (instrumental or intrinsic) case study may be used, where a single case is selected within a bounded system to illustrate an issue or concern. Second, the researcher may focus on a collective case study, where several bounded cases are used within a system to illustrate an issue or concern (Stake, 2006, p. 3). For the purpose of this research undertaking I selected a collective case study methodology in order to uncover the workings of multimodality in contemporary visual art. Ten winners and finalists of the Sasol New Signatures Art Competition over a period of five years serve as the cases for this study. Data will firstly be 'within case analysed' (as single cases) and then compared in an 'across case analysis' with other cases, within the bounded system (Blatter & Haverland, 2013, p. 216; Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 17).

To sum up, case study methodology is the best way to find out 'what is happening' in a particular context, especially when the researcher already has in-depth knowledge of and access to a specific context (Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 18). Regarding the cases in question, the researcher sought to gain knowledge of the multimodal process of

art making using winners and finalists of the Sasol New Signatures National Art Competition by finding answers to the following research questions:

- 1 How has multimodality been theorised? (Data generated from theoretical chapters)
- 2 Which modes and media are combined by contemporary SA artists? (Data generated from the analysis of e-mail questionnaires, artefacts and documents)
- 3 How do these artists combine modes (Data generated from theoretical chapters, e-mail questionnaires and document analysis)
- 4 How are these modes combined in visual artworks? (Data generated from e-mail questionnaires)
- 5 How is meaning making enhanced (made richer, more complex and layered) through multimodal combinations – both at social and semiotic level? (Data generated from the e-mail questionnaires, document and artefact analysis)
- 6 How may the above five research questions inform a framework for teaching multimodality in visual art?

5 METHODS OF SAMPLING, DATA GATHERING AND DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 Methods of sampling

The process of collecting a 'sample' from the larger population is called 'sampling'. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 173) a population is 'the theoretically specified aggregation of the study elements'. With regard to this study, the population has been identified as contemporary South African artists.

From a larger population, a 'study population' is selected. Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 174) define this as 'that aggregation of elements from which the sample is actually selected'. In the case of this study, the 'study population' has been identified as South African contemporary artists who have entered the Sasol New Signatures National Art competition. From this 'study population' a 'sampling unit' is identified. A sampling unit is a set of elements which the researcher considers for selection during the sampling process (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 174). For the purpose of this study the 'sampling unit' has been identified as winners and finalists of the Sasol New Signatures National Art competition spanning a period of five years (2009–2014).

The method of sampling for this study is purposive. Purposive sampling seeks sampling units within a certain segment of the population who holds the most information regarding a topic of the researcher's interest (Gautre & Barrios, 2006, p. 227). Purposive

sampling is characterised by subjectivity, since the researcher relies on his/her judgement and experience regarding a certain phenomenon (*ibid.*). Purposive sampling, also known as judgemental or convenient sampling (Neuman, 2011, p. 222), is a valuable type of sampling method used for special situations. It relies on the judgement of an expert in the selection of specific cases (*ibid.*). In this circumstance the researcher is serving a period of five years as the National Chairman of the Sasol New Signatures National Art Competition. As the researcher carries in-depth knowledge of such an art competition, he is in a position to select cases with a specific purpose in mind (Neuman, 2011, p. 222). The purpose was to identify ten entries to the Sasol New Signatures in which modal ensembles feature prominently. It should be added the majority of entries utilise more than one mode, but the overt focus was on works featuring multiple modes.

5.2 Data types

In social research, especially within a qualitative research design, data includes interview transcripts, questionnaires, diary entries, document analysis, interview schedules and artefact analysis (Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 165.) In case study research, Yin (1994, 2009) identifies six sources of data: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation/interaction and physical artefacts.

For the purpose of this study the researcher chose the following instruments for gathering data, obtained via purposive sampling:

- Document analysis – artist statement(s) which accompany the artwork(s) entered to the Sasol New Signatures National Art Competition.
- Semi-structured questionnaires – sent via e-mail in the format of a Word document.
- Artefact analysis – the physical artwork entered to the competition and/or digital reproductions thereof for documentary purposes.

(a) Semi-structured questionnaires (sent via e-mail)

Semi-structured target group interview schedules and questionnaires are widely used as data collection tools in qualitative research. Creswell (2009) advises the researcher to draw up an 'interview or question protocol'. This includes various headings such as time, date, place, interviewer and interviewee. The researcher should further draw up a set of instructions to be followed for the interview or questionnaire process in order to follow standard procedures from one data set to another. This ensures that data is captured accurately (Creswell, 2009, p. 183). According to Babbie and Mouton the format of a

questionnaire is just as important as the way in which the questions are worded. They further advise that the layout of such a questionnaire document should be 'spread out and uncluttered' (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 239). This will allow respondents not to miss any questions or become confused with the nature of the data that is required (*ibid.*). Furthermore, Babbie and Mouton advise that as a general rule there should be no more than one question per line. A variety of questionnaire methods are offered by Babbie and Mouton (2001, pp. 240–241). These are; standard questions, multiple choice options, block check questions and matrix questions.

Traditionally, questions are asked and answered orally; however, the internet has become widely accepted as a tool for conducting interviews or answering questionnaires, for example using e-mail and Skype (Thomas, 2003, p. 62). Open-ended questionnaires may best suit the nature and open-endedness of visual art and its process. Thomas (2003) defines four strategies in the process of setting up open-ended interview schedules. They are referred to as *loose questions*, *tight questions*, *converging questions* and *response guided questions* (Thomas, 2011, p. 63), which may occur in the form of: standard questions, multiple choice options and matrix type questions (Babbie & Mouton, 2010, p. 242). For the purpose of this study, setting up of semi-structured questionnaires will follow the same protocols as suggested for interview schedules suggested by Thomas (2011).

This method of conducting semi-structured e-mail questionnaires may best suit the target group identified for the present research, as the finalists in the Sasol New Signatures National Art Competition are spread across the country, and face to face interviews would not be logistically feasible. The questions that are contained in the semi-structured e-mail questionnaires were distilled from the literature reviews in chapters 2, 3 and 4. The semi-structured questionnaire is included as addendum A in this thesis.

After the semi-structured questionnaires had been returned via e-mail, the data was coded and analysed using qualitative content analysis.

(b) Artefacts

Artefact analysis formed part of the second data type collected. This consisted of printed and/or digital reproductions of the participants' artworks. Banks (2007) finds that visual data in qualitative research such as images are valuable for two reasons: First, images appear everywhere in society, and therefore they are seen as valid sources of data

(visual communication). Second, the incorporation of images or artefacts within a data set may reveal further sociological insights, which may remain hidden in textual sets (Banks, 2007, pp. 3–4). In most instances visual data aids to support and strengthen the findings which the coded data reveals (Banks, 2007, p. 4).

(c) Artists' statements

The third data collection method involved collecting the artists' statements or synopses which accompanied the artworks that were entered to the New Signatures National Art Competition. This is a condition of entry to the competition, and a data base of such documents from past winners and finalists are archived by the organisers. These archived documents and images are accessible to the researcher through contact with the organisers and/or the artists themselves.

5.3 Methods of data analysis: qualitative content analysis

5.3.1 Raw data

Qualitative research relies on understanding social realities through the interpretation of text (Flick, 2014, p. 95). According to Flick (2014, p. 96) text forms the basis of most raw qualitative data analysis formats. She is of the opinion that text fulfils three important purposes. Text forms the basis for all data transcriptions, whether coding takes place by hand or assisted by computer software. All analyses are done in text format, irrespective of the input mode (such as audio recordings) (Creswell, 2005). Second, text units carry the essential data on which findings are based, and thirdly, text becomes the central medium within a dissertation for presenting and communicating findings (Flick, 2014, p. 96). For the purpose of this study, one of the three data sets were coded directly in the form text (e-mail questionnaires) while the second and third raw data sets (artists' statements and artefacts) were used as supportive data during the analysis of the ten participants' artwork. In this case, artefacts are the artists' artworks that were used in the form of digital reproductions in the printed catalogue sponsored by the organisers and collected from the central database of the competition. None of the raw data thus needed to be transcribed from any other audio visual format. The raw data was then analysed using qualitative content analysis.

5.3.2 Defining and delimiting qualitative content analysis

In general, content analysis is a method of analysing written, verbal or visual communication systems, which are documentative and narrative by nature. It is thus best suited to the analysis of various communicational structures (Elo & Kyngas, 2008, p. 106). According to Elo and Kyngas (2008, p. 22) content analysis is thus the best

method for analysing documents. They are of the opinion that through content analysis, it is possible to distil words into fewer content-related categories. Ultimately, content analysis aims to achieve a condensed and broad description of the categories which yields a holistic result (*ibid.*).

The raw data which is considered for this study is documentative and explorative by nature. Content analysis may thus be the way to deal with such raw data as it is supportive of both qualitative and quantitative research paradigms (Elo & Kyngas, 2008, p. 107). Furthermore, content analysis aims to synthesize openness taking a holistic and comprehensive approach to analysing data (Kohlbacher, 2006, p. 21). Kohlbacher (*ibid.*) further argues that content analysis is best suited to case study research as it examines data of the real world and uncovers complexities of social situations allowing the researcher to freely report back on them. Hsieh and Shannon (2005, p. 1279) reiterate that content analysis lends itself to the subjective interpretation of raw text data allowing a systematic classification process of coding to take place. In turn, themes and patterns will emerge.

According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005, p. 1278) qualitative content analysis can be divided into three general categories: conventional, summative and directed content analysis. Conventional content analysis seeks to draw codes directly from the raw data. Furthermore, it avoids imposing any pre-determined codes on the data being analysed (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1280). Hsieh and Shannon (*ibid.*) warn that a drawback of such a content analysis is that the researcher may fail to develop a holistic understanding of the context, failing to accurately identify key codes in the process, which may lead to findings that do not accurately represent the data.

Summative content analysis relies on seeking word frequencies from the raw data and adding a numerical value to them. Hsieh and Shannon (2005, p. 1284) are of the opinion that this method may cause the researcher to miss the broader picture of the data further eliminating the possibility for new codes to emerge during the coding process. Furthermore, difficulty may be had in understanding the words in relation to the context they are used in, which may yield inaccurate data findings (2005, p. 1283).

Directed content analysis seeks to use the raw data to validate certain pre-determined codes that the researcher imposes on it. Thus, data is analysed within a fixed conceptual framework (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). This means that the researcher approaches the data with prior theory or knowledge regarding the subject. According to

Kohlbacher (2006, p. 23) it is not uncommon for the researcher to find emerging codes during the process of directed content analysis which may aid the researcher to further validate his/her data findings. Hsieh and Shannon (2005, p. 1283) warn that this directed approach to content analysis brings with it a certain degree of bias as the researcher approaches the raw data looking for text markers that 'fit' or 'match' the pre-determined codes. Findings may thus be pre-empted or pre-conceived.

For the purpose of this study, directed content analysis is the chosen method for data analysis as the researcher imposed a set of ten pre-determined codes (extracted from the conceptual framework) on the raw data in order to track similarities and frequency patterns. As directed content analysis brings with it a certain degree of bias, I draw on Creswell's (2009) approach to data triangulation which seeks to validate the findings and minimise bias. The triangulation of data will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

5.3.3 Selecting the coding parameter

The process by which large amounts of data are ordered and categorised into themes in order for the researcher to find information that supports the research question is known as coding (Lichtman, 2013, p. 248). Shank is of the opinion that the process of coding is an act of selective attention. He states: 'When we code, we mark those things in our data that we need to re-visit. Codes are grouped into categories and as these codes take shape they are referred to as themes' (Shank, 2006, p. 149). Hammond and Wellington define coding as process of applying tags, labels and names to strings of data often generated from interview schedules and questionnaires. Coding makes data manageable by grouping them into understandable categories (Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 162). Caudle (2004, p. 420) is of the opinion that coding is the interplay between raw data, the procedures used to interpret them resulting in emergent findings. For the purpose of this study, Caudle's (2004) data-coding matrix will be followed.

Caudle's (2004, p. 420) coding process is twofold: first using a descriptive coding process and second repeating the process using interpretive coding. Descriptive coding is carried out first as it assists the researcher to broadly identify concepts and ideas as it aims to identify processes, events and names of things. According to the author, these are easily linked to pre-determined codes which exist prior to the analysis of the raw data. The interpretive coding process offers the researcher a magnified lens as the process provides additional meaning/descriptions to codes and offers deeper explanations of the data, which in turn allows for the identification of emerging codes. In general, interpretive coding explains 'why?' questions often found in questionnaire and

interview schedules. Both types of coding procedures may support the pre-determined codes in the form of a single word or a phrase (Caudle, 2004, p. 421).

Caudle's coding procedure is characterised by three steps where the researcher is advised to first make sure that the code name matches the concept; second, to adjust the coding scheme or matrix as the analysis continues in order to include new emerging codes or to discard those codes which are no longer applicable; and third the researcher should revisit data that has already been coded to test previously assigned codes or apply new emerging ones (Caudle, 2004, pp. 422–423). This study will follow Caudle's coding procedure and data display. This is expounded in the following section.

5.3.4 Coding display and procedure

The qualitative content analysis (directed) of the data started by coding the e-mail questionnaires of each of the ten participants independently. Here the coding display took the form of firstly identifying the ten predetermined codes and mapping them directly onto the e-mail questionnaires. Caudle (2004, p. 423) refers to this as the rough display of data. Here the researcher may freely underline/circle or box words and phrases and make observation notes in the margin. This is done in order to form a general impression of the raw data as a whole. Once this process was completed a matrix was drawn up where the raw data was matched to the predetermined codes. Caudle (2004, p. 423) refers to this matrix as the 'second data reduction display'. All coding was done by hand using a computer-generated matrix (in MS Excel). This second data reduction display is included as addendum B of this thesis.

During this process of descriptive and interpretive coding, it became apparent that new codes emerged. Thus, the original matrix was continually adjusted by adding new rows and columns to accommodate a total of six emergent codes. Adhering to Caudle's (2004) data coding plan, previously coded data was revisited (all ten participants) in order to match the emergent codes. This process allowed the data to crystallise out allowing the researcher to categorise a total of 16 codes into four themes. According to Bradley (1993, p. 445) the researcher's understanding of emergent data patterns is vital to the process of qualitative research. Miller and Crabtree (1992) refer to this process as the immersion or crystallisation of data. Bradley (1993, p. 446) further states that the researcher needs to immerse himself/herself as deeply as possible in the experience of the participants in order to ground the crystallisation process so to report back in detail. Report-back took the form of firstly employing a 'within-case analysis' of each of the ten participants' artworks in order to validate the four emergent research themes followed by an 'across-case analysis' in order to consolidate the research findings.

6 REPORT BACK

Reporting back on the research findings occurred on two levels. First a 'within-case analysis' was conducted which was detailed and specific. This was followed by an 'across-case analysis' which moved the research findings to a general characterisation of the research themes. According to Patterson (2010, p. 973) case study methodologies often employ both approaches. While some researchers choose to move their analysis from a general to a specific discussion, it is not uncommon to find the approach being reversed depending on the nature of the study. For the purpose of this study a within-case analysis preceded the across-case analysis moving the research finding from specific to general. This was done in order to expound the characteristics of the research themes in order to motivate a framework for multimodality in visual art.

6.1 Within-case analysis of the emergent themes

Adhering to the stringent protocols of case study analysis, the emergent research themes were firstly applied in a 'within-case analysis' (ten individual cases) in order to establish the validity of the emergent research themes. A 'within-case analysis' is defined by Patterson (2010, p. 971) as an in-depth exploration of a single case as a standalone entity. It is mainly characterised as a confirmation process of what is already known. Patterson is of the opinion that a within-case analysis offers a lens to probe processes and patterns that can support or expand a theory obtained from data analysis or a literature review. Furthermore, a within-case analysis aims to develop an individual description of each case, which highlights detail. According to Ayres, Kavanaugh and Knafl (2003, p. 871) a within-case analysis is often used to highlight the uniqueness of a single case which in turn may expose various commonalities across other cases under study in order to consolidate the research findings. They further argue that data becomes decontextualised through the process of coding and sorting and is thereby separated from the individual's opinion that originally formed part of the case(s) under study (2003, p. 872). By reporting back firstly using a within-case analysis, places the coded data back into a real world context (Ayres *et al.*, 2003, p. 872). Furthermore, 'by reporting back using rich narrative descriptions' (Creswell, 2009) aims to tell the story in detail.

In order to validate the research themes that emerged from the coded data, a within-case analysis was conducted on each artist's winning work. This took the form of a rich narrative description (report back). The process was characterised by establishing how the research themes were applicable to the winning artworks. These were expounded in detail under clearly demarcated paragraphs applying each research theme to each

artist's artwork. In order to support the report-back process the artist statement and artwork (reproduction) were used as support material in order to cross-check and validate the emerging themes. Here ten within-case analyses were conducted, one for each of the ten participants (cases). Once it had been established that the research themes could be validated by applying them to the winning works of the ten participants through a rich narrative description, an 'across-case analysis' was conducted in order to seek the general characteristics of each research theme. This process aims at consolidating and summarising the research themes.

6.2 'Across-case analysis' of the emergent theme

According to Patterson (2010, p. 972) an 'across-case analysis' is conducted when there are multiple cases found within one bounded system. A cross-case analysis is characterised by comparisons to establish what the multiple cases have in common within one bounded system (Patterson, 2010, p. 973). Schwandt (2007, p. 56) claims that an across-case analysis examines a collection of cases in order to refine a concept, theory or social process. Yin (1989) summarises an across-case analysis as the investigation across multiple cases which aims to yield similar information that consolidate the predicted findings.

The final process of data analysis was to conduct an across-case analysis, which consolidated the main characteristics of research themes that were expounded and validated in the within-case analysis. This took the form of a narrative summation of the key characteristics of each of the research themes described by each of the cases in order to seek the foundational characteristics of multimodality as it manifests in the world of art. These foundational characteristics were used to inform a framework for the teaching and learning of multimodality in visual art, which is outlined in the final chapter of this study.

7 QUALITY CONTROL (STRATEGIES OF VALIDATION)

As mentioned, directed qualitative content analysis brings with it a certain level of bias. In order for the finding of the analysed data to be non-idiosyncratic or arbitrary (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1285) certain strategies of validation were put into place to minimise the accuracy of the data being compromised. One of these is trustworthiness.

Trustworthiness is a key characteristic of qualitative research methods. It is offered as an alternative to the traditional notions of 'reliability' and 'validity' to cover the credibility of the data which has been analysed in order to come to a conclusion (Hammond &

Wellington, 2013, p. 175). Babbie and Mouton (2010, p. 122) state that the term 'trustworthiness' or 'validity' refers to the extent to which an empirical measure accurately reflects the true meaning of the concept under scrutiny. As this research was conducted using purposive and convenient sampling and applying a method of directed qualitative content analysis, I needed to consider certain measures of quality control. For the purpose of this study, three measures were applied to ensure trustworthiness and to limit bias: triangulation of data, clarification of researcher bias and rich thick descriptions (Creswell, 2009, pp. 199–200).

7.1 Triangulation of data

Triangulation of data is defined by Hammond and Wellington (2013, p. 175) as research conclusions which are reached when drawing on data from more than two pieces of evidence. Neuman (2011, p. 149) defines triangulation as 'the idea that looking at something from multiple points of view'. Flick (2014, p. 184) states that it is of utmost importance in qualitative research to take different perspectives on an issue under study in order to strengthen the research questions of any qualitative study. She is of the opinion that this is achieved by combining different sources of data which are all treated on equal footing. As early as 1994 Yin, who is considered a leading author in case study research, acknowledges various critical stances regarding the validity of case study data analysis. He suggests three principles of data triangulation in order to ensure accurate data outcomes and findings. For Yin, the triangulation of data is grounded, first, by the use of multiple source data; second, by creating a case study database; and third, by maintaining a chain of evidence (Tellis, 1997, p. 9).

In keeping with the protocol of case study research, the data for this study was collected through multiple sources: semi-structured e-mail questionnaires, artefacts and document analysis. According to Patterson (2010, p. 973) a case study database is a primary method for storing and sorting raw data, which in turn reflects a chain of evidence. For Yin (1994, p. 73) a chain of evidence is the way in which the raw data was sequentially collected and analysed. For the purpose of this study the case study database consists of files and folders clearly demarcating the three data sources in order to include the evidence of the initial coding patterns. Adhering to Caudle's (2004) coding matrix this chain of evidence contains the rough data displays and the second data reduction display sheet.

7.2 Clarification of researcher bias

As mentioned, the Sasol New Signatures National Art Competition constitutes the research site and the entrants for the competition comprise the data population. Since the researcher has an affiliation with the selected national art competition and with the artists who enter such a competition, some bias might have been introduced. At the time of conducting the research the researcher had served a term of five years as the National Chairperson of the Sasol New Signatures National Art Competition (2010–2014) and his contract had been extended for another five years (2015–2019). As the National Chairperson, he liaises closely with the organisers and work in close proximity to and alongside the finalists and the winner of the competition each year (2009–2015), conducting interviews, workshops and information sessions. Thus, the identity of the artists, their work and the artists' intent had been well known to the researcher before he undertook this research endeavour in 2012.

7.3 Thick descriptions

Findings were reported using rich, thick descriptions. This is one of the most conclusive ways in which to offer feedback on qualitative research methods. In this way the reader is transported to the setting and is given a detailed account of the shared experience within the research context (Creswell, 2009, p. 192).

One of the primary strategies employed in ensuring the validity of data is to ensure that the feedback takes the form of rich, thick and detailed descriptions in order to lay a solid foundation and framework for the transferability of the research (Creswell, 2009, p. 200). Neuman (2011, p. 499) refers to qualitative research feedback as a 'zoom lens' process. The research report starts with a broad characterisation of the data and becomes progressively more detailed. With reference to case study reports, Zucker (2009, p. 18) is of the opinion that a narrative approach to reporting findings is the most suitable. Case studies aim to tell a story and proclaim their findings, which are clearly separated from conclusions and/or interpretations (Zucker, 2009, p. 19). For the purpose of this study a detailed narrative description will be offered of each of the ten participants' winning artworks, starting with an iconographical description followed by a iconological description centring on the themes that emerged from the coded data.

Finally, the researcher makes available all cycles of the research, in the event that the data is required to be scrutinised by an external auditor.

8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research was conducted in accordance with the code of ethics for research of the University of Pretoria. No research took place until consent was granted from the ethics committees of the two faculties concerned: the Faculty of Education (2012, reference HU 12/11/2) and the Faculty of Humanities. Final ethical clearance was granted by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities in 2015 (reference GW20150612HS).

Letters of permission were signed by the following stakeholders and gatekeepers in January 2015: the Director, Sasol South Africa, and the Director, Association of Arts Pretoria as sponsors and organisers of the Sasol New Signatures National Art Competition; as well as the Director and Trustees of the Pretoria Art Museum, as this museum hosts the exhibition of the competition finalists on an annual basis and it is also deemed as the research site. Letters of informed consent were signed by all ten participants taking part in this research.

The option not to participate, and to withdraw their informed consent at any time during the research process, had been communicated in the letter of consent to all the participants before the research was conducted. Consent was obtained to use the actual names of the artists in the thesis as both their names and their artworks had been published through the mainstream media and/or digital platforms and catalogues. Furthermore, written consent and copyright had already been dealt with by the organisers as part of the standard procedure when participants entered the art competition. They were therefore fully aware that their identity and works of art will be exposed to the media and disseminated in the public domain. Copyright of information and artworks are signed over to the organisation at the onset of the competition.

As undertaken in the research proposal, my research was conducted with honesty and reflect my true findings, which supports the credibility of the study. All other procedures have been carried out in accordance with the research protocol of the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Pretoria.

9 SUMMARY

The aim of this chapter was to explain and justify the research methodology used in order to gather sufficient data for arriving at an understanding of multimodality in visual art. In line with this goal the study adopted a constructivist and interpretivist philosophical worldview. The research approach is qualitative, using a multiple case study strategy. The research methods chosen to elicit the type of data required included

semi-structured e-mail questionnaires, document (artists' statements) and artefact analysis (artworks).

Directed content analysis was used by applying ten predetermined (literature-based) codes to the participants' responses to e-mailed questionnaires. The coding procedure was based on Caudle's (2004) coding matrix using a process of descriptive and interpretive coding sequences. This yielded six emerging codes, which brought the code total to 16. These 16 codes were grouped into four themes.

The report-back took the form of rich narrative descriptions and were divided into two sequential steps. First the emergent themes were used to conduct a within-case analysis in order to validate the themes through their application to the ten individual cases. Here the artists' statements and artefacts (artworks) were used in a supportive role in order to assist the validation of data. Second, in order to consolidate and characterise these research themes, an across-case analysis was conducted, which highlighted the key concepts and characteristics of the research themes spread across all ten cases. These consolidated research themes are believed to inform and describe the process and products of multimodality in visual art, and have therefore been used as the foundation of a framework for the teaching and learning of multimodality in visual art, as expounded in the final chapter of this thesis.

In keeping with the notion of data triangulation (Cresswell, 2014; Babbie & Mouton, 2010) it was argued that combining the results of these three instruments of data collection would ensure that information presented in this study is valid and reliable. The following chapter will offer a detailed account (thick descriptions) of the data that was collected, coded and analysed.

CHAPTER 6

Data analysis

1 INTRODUCTION

Through the analysis of data provided by ten participants, purposively sampled from winners of the Sasol New Signatures National Art Competition, this chapter aims to provide evidence that multimodal art-making processes are at work among young artists who enter this competition.

In order to introduce the reader to the ten cases under study, I offer a brief background of the nature and conditions of entry to the research site, which is the Sasol New Signatures competition. Hereafter the data analysis instruments are defined to offer the reader a clear understanding of how the data was coded and the results triangulated. Subsequently the themes that emerged are mapped onto the analyses of the participants winning artworks, which in turn are supported by the data derived from an e-mailed questionnaire and document analysis (artist's statement).

2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH SITE

The Sasol New Signatures art competition (hereafter referred to as the SNS), which serves as the research site, is one of two 'open category' national art competitions in South Africa. What is meant by an 'open category' art competition is that entrants are not restricted to any specific traditional art media and there are no specific categories in which artworks are adjudicated or entered. Furthermore, the call for entries to the SNS is launched nationally via a comprehensive media campaign and artworks are entered and received by the organisers across ten dispatch points countrywide.

The Association of Arts Pretoria arranged the first New Signatures art competition ('Nuwe Handtekening') in Pretoria from 10 to 22 July 1967 as an in-house art competition to tap into young talent in the then Transvaal province. In later years, owing to the popularity of the New Signatures art competition, a sponsor was sought by the Association of Arts Pretoria with the aim to grow the competition to include regions outside the former Transvaal. In 1991 the South African petroleum company Sasol offered a substantial sponsorship to the Association of Arts Pretoria, thereby allowing their regional art competition to be launched on a national level.

As early as the 1990s Sasol's mission statement was as follows (Sasol, *Competition catalogue 2014*, p. 12):

- To harvest and collect artworks that reflect themes of the diverse cultural history of South Africa;
- To connect undiscovered artists to the South African and international art world; and
- To advance the competition to reach all young and upcoming artists countrywide.

Having obtained much-needed funding, the competition was aptly renamed the Sasol New Signatures National Art Competition (SNS) in 1991 (Marais, 2014, p. 11). The competition was now able to operate on a national level, and the number of annual entries grew from an average of 80 in the 1990s to well over 600 to 700 entries by 2000. The numbers continue to grow.

Launching an art competition on a national level brought new changes and innovations to the SNS. First, owing to the advances made in contemporary communication, rigid categories under which artists entered in the past were abandoned, favouring an 'open call to enter' the SNS. Second, a national chairperson was elected to oversee the competition nationally across all provinces in South Africa (the chairperson serves a renewable five-year term). Third, information session lectures are offered by the national chairperson in May of each year at most of the universities' art departments countrywide. These information sessions bring the competition to art students' doorstep, which further strengthens the growth in the number of entries. Fourth, in 2012, the winning artworks received a substantial raise in prize money and offered the winning artist a solo exhibition to run in conjunction with the following year's competition and exhibition. Furthermore, to cope with the logistics of larger countrywide entries, a national carrier company was appointed to transport artworks to the Pretoria Art Museum, which became the new exhibition venue for the competition.

The open call to enter the SNS invites South African citizens (RSA identity document holders) who are over the age of 18, to submit art work provided that they have not held any major solo exhibitions and thereby gained media coverage and exposure. The conditions of entry stipulate that all works entered should be no more than 2,5 m wide by 2,5 m long by 2,5 m high; that works in all media and combinations thereof are permitted as long as they are not illegal, hazardous, or endanger the safety of the

museum staff and visitors to the exhibition; that if digital media (or a combination thereof) are used in the form of installation artworks, performances or intervention artworks, the artist is to supply and maintain such equipment during the period of the exhibition; and that performances and intervention artworks are to be video documented for educational and archival purposes.

3 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

3.1 Instruments and methods

The data was collected using three different instruments: an e-mailed questionnaire; the artist's statement that accompanied the artwork to the competition; and artefacts in the form of visual images (artworks). Data analysis comprised qualitative content analysis of the e-mail questionnaire responses and a critical analysis of the artworks (artefacts) and artist's statements.

3.2 Analysis of the e-mail questionnaire

3.2.1 Procedure

The ten sampled artists were each sent a questionnaire on their winning work (Addendum A). This questionnaire consisted of ten questions. It included a table (question 1) probing the use of various combinations of materials and eliciting Yes/No answers to questions that probed the participants' conceptual process regarding the construction of the artwork. All the Yes/No answers had to be motivated. The participating artists were given the choice to answer the questionnaire digitally in a document (.doc/.docx) format via e-mail or fill them in by hand, returning the the data in the form of a fax/copy, or returning a hard copy by hand. The aim of the questionnaire was to establish the nature and the extent to which the artists were using multimodality or multimodal art-making processes. Questions 2 to 5 of the e-mail questionnaire were focused on eliciting specific information on these processes to support claims made in chapter 3 regarding the 11 modes that have been identified as evident in the visual arts.

Questions 1 to 4 of the email questionnaire were used to elicit data for answering research question 2: Which modes and media are combined by contemporary South African artists? The table at the beginning of the questionnaire was aimed at identifying how many modes the artists felt were present in their winning work. Once identified, the artists were asked the following questions:

- Question 1: Did you use a combination of media or material?

- Question 2: If yes, please list the modes/media that you used to create your award-winning work.
- Question 3: Were some of these media/materials unconventional to traditional art practices?
- Question 4: If yes, please list the media/materials that are not considered traditional visual art media.

Questions 5, 6, and 7 were used to assist in obtaining data to answer research question 3: How are these modal ensembles combined in visual artworks?

- Question 5: Was the choice of media part of your pre-planning or did it evolve with the concept?
- Question 6: How did the process of selecting modes and media evolve with the process of the conceptualisation of the artwork? Briefly explain in the space provided below.
- Question 7: Have you ever been taught how/why to combine media in your formal training?

Questions 8 and 9 were used to elicit data to answer research question 4: Why do these artists prefer a combination of modes and media?

- Question 8: Briefly explain why you have chosen to use and/or combine various modes and media.
- Question 9: You have chosen a set of modes, media and/or unconventional media to create your winning artwork. Do you think it has enhanced the meaning-making process of the final artwork? Briefly explain how.

Questions 8, 9 and 10 were aimed at finding answers to research question 5: How is meaning-making enhanced through multimodal ensembles – both at a social and a semiotic level (made richer, more complex and layered) than meaning made through monomodal art work?

- Question 8: Briefly explain why you have chosen to use and/or combine various modes and media.
- Question 9: You have chosen a set of modes, media and/or unconventional media to create your winning artwork. Do you think it has enhanced the meaning-making process of the final artwork? Briefly explain how.

- Question 10: Briefly explain your winning work and state why, in your opinion, you think it was awarded a prize.

3.2.2 Responses to the questions of the e-mail questionnaire

In question 1 the ten respondents were asked to mark cells containing sense-driven modes at work in the visual arts (table 6.1). All ten artists used an average of more than half of the tabled modes in the conceptualisation and execution phases of their winning artworks. Table 6.1 captures the configuration of the responses and reflects the total number of times each mode was ticked.

Table 6.1 shows that the sense of sight and the modes that rely on this sense still feature more prominently than the senses of hearing, touch, smell and taste. Eight of the artists used touch in their artworks, seven used visible images, six used movement, four used smell, two used hearing and none used taste. As the sense of sight relies mainly on the viewer of an artwork to see writing, visible images, and to some extent movement (primary and/or secondary modality), it may be asserted that seven of the artists primarily appealed to the sense of sight, eight appealed to sight and touch, four appealed to sight and smell, a further four appealed to sight and hearing, and none of the artists relied on taste.

Thus, although sight remains the primary sense for the visual arts, other senses and the modes that are driven by them have found their way into the repertoire of meaning-making in the visual arts. Furthermore, it is interesting to observe that the sense of touch ranks higher in frequency than that of sight while the sense of taste does not feature at all in this across-case analysis. What needs to be taken into account is that the chosen cases comprise purposively selected samples. The fact that the sense of taste does not feature, or that the sense of touch ranks higher than that of sight, does not mean that this is the norm across the spectrum of visual art. What does, however, remain undeniable is that the ten cases under examination all invoke at least six to seven modes in a single artwork.

Table 6.1 Configuration of modes used by artists in their winning works

Modes																		
	Writing	Visible image								Movement			Speech	Sound	Touch		Smell	Taste
	Written/ printed text	3D component	Still pic	Lighting	Gaze	Dress	Layout	Space	Colour	Moving image	Gesture	Action	Human speech	Music (Non-musical sounds)	3D sculpture	Texture	Artwork with olfactory dimension	Artwork that can be tasted
Lange		x		x	x	x		x	x		x	x		x	x			
Makandula			x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x		x		x		
Bolton	x	x		x			x	x	x			x		x	x		x	
Erasmus		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x		
Stroud	x	x		x					x		x	x			x	x	x	
Vermeulen	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x							
Battson		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x					x	
Jorgensen	x	x		x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	
Von Maltitz		x		x		x		x	x		x	x			x	x		
Strümpfer		x		x	x		x	x	x						x	x		
Total	4	9	3	9	7	6	6	8	10	4	8	7	0	4	7	8	4	0

Although very few artists are actively aware of the notion of multimodality in practice, all ten participants seem to be retrospectively aware of the impact their work might have by incorporating modal ensembles. What is most evident is that all the artists play to more than the sense of sight, which is historically the dominant sense to be activated in the visual arts. Furthermore, nine of the ten participants indicated the use of the modes of hearing, touch and smell, while none of the participants appealed to the sense of taste in their winning artworks. Four of the ten indicated that the sense of smell plays an important part in the ensemble of modes comprising their final product while eight of the ten respondents regarded the role of touch as an active mode in understanding their artworks. Although human speech and artworks with gustatory qualities did not feature at all, it does not mean that human speech and taste do not feature as modal ensembles in contemporary visual art. The fact that these modes did not feature here may be due to the relatively small sample size of this study.

In question 2 of the e-mail questionnaire the artists were asked whether they had used a combination of media or materials. The terms 'media and materials' were used to uncover the use of various modal ensembles in the ten winning works. In other words, because the term 'mode' may not be known to the ten respondents, 'media and materials' were used as substitute terms. All of the participants said that they had used a combination of materials to evoke more of the viewer's senses than the primary sense of sight alone. Furthermore, it became evident that the tactability of the chosen materials played an important role in the conceptualisation of the work, as eight of the ten respondents made mention that touch was an important mode in understanding the message. Table 6.2 tabulates the total number of media used by the artists and indicates which portion of the chosen media/materials are conventional/traditional versus those that are considered unconventional.

Table 6.2 shows that each artist used an average of five different media. What becomes apparent is that the use of unconventional material far outweighs the use of what may be termed conventional. The sense of touch, for instance, outweighs the sense of sight.

Questions 3 and 4 of the e-mail questionnaire asked the participants to list the materials they thought were unconventional. What is interesting to note is the variable interpretations regarding the traditional media (painting, sculpture, printmaking, ceramics and drawing) versus unconventional media (digital imaging, video, performance art and interventions). This could probably be attributed to the fact that art students at secondary and tertiary institutions studying visual art under the

contemporary banner of post-modernism/post-structuralism have come to accept media such as digital images, video, light projections and the combination thereof as conventional. Traditionally, media such as these were termed 'new' or non-traditional. This is partly due to the role of technology, which has become a driving force behind communication in general and has in turn forced art schools to accept 'new media' trends as conventions in the 21st century.

Table 6.2 Media/materials used by the artists in their winning works

Artist	Material/media						Conventional	Unconventional	Total
Lange	Found objects	Chair	Natural wood	Bolts/nuts	Washers	Commercial paint	2	4	6
Makandula	Video art	Recorded	Orange bag	Rainwater	Self		1	4	5
Bolton	Motor oil	Steel	Nylon string	Porcelain			2	2	4
Erasmus	Polystyrene	Light projection	PC software	Digital projector	Canvas		1	4	5
Stroud	Bath scum	Body hair	Beeswax	Wood	Text		2	3	5
Vermeulen	Digital drawing	Digital animation	Oil paint	Plywood	Computer		2	3	5
Battson	Automotive paint	Cotton fabric	Digital image	People (event)	Canvas		1	4	5
Jorgensen	Water	Ultrasonic frequency	Plastic basin	Ink	Steel	Aluminium	3	3	6
Von Maltitz	Earth	Ash	Light	Wood	Resin		1	4	5
Strümpfer	Abalone shell	Perspex	LED lights	Resin			0	4	4
Total							16	35	

In questions 5 and 6, the artists were asked whether the choice of these various media were part of their pre-planning and conceptualising process. Eight of the ten respondents answered 'yes', one answered 'yes and no' (Stroud) and one answered 'no, it evolved with the concept' (Bolton). Eight of the respondents chose a set of media (modal ensemble) during the conceptual or planning phase of the artwork while one had a basic concept and during the art-making process discarded certain materials in favour of others. Another participant expressed the conviction that a strong enough concept would dictate the media (modes) needed.

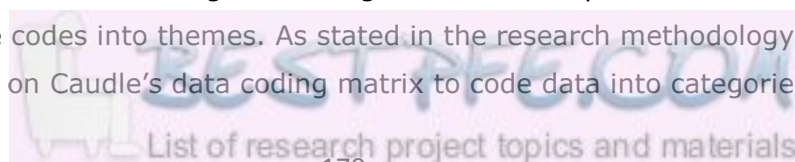
Questions 7 and 8 enquired whether the artists had been taught how/why to combine various media in their formal training. Nine out of ten participants answered 'yes' while one answered 'no' (Lange). Eight of the ten participants reported that they had been taught a process of 'mixed media' in their formal training. However, the term 'mixed media' does not refer to sense-based modes, and thus remains within the confines of traditional art materials that play mainly to the primary visual art sense of sight. Paint would, for instance, be mixed with drawing or collage, or drawing combined with watercolour.

Questions 9 and 10 enquired whether the respondents thought that the combination of media (mode) had enhanced the meaning of the artwork and why this meaning-making process was strong enough for the work to be awarded a prize. Nine of the ten respondents answered 'yes' while one answered 'no' (Lange). Lange is of the opinion that he uses the materials he has on hand and that the concept grows from that with which he intuitively works. Overall, regarding question 10, the artists seem to believe that their works were awarded prizes because the concept and theme of the artwork was layered with intent and strengthened by the use of combinations of different materials (conventional and unconventional). This may be interpreted as the use of carefully constructed modal ensembles that enhance the platform of message delivery.

This section has offered an overview of the responses to the closed questions supported by motivations. The following section reports on the findings generated from the analysis of open questions in the e-mail questionnaire.

3.3 Responses to the open questions of the e-mail questionnaire

This section will describe the coding of the longer narrative responses and the arrangement of the codes into themes. As stated in the research methodology chapter (chapter 5), I drew on Caudle's data coding matrix to code data into categories and



themes (2004, p 420). The coding process started with a set of pre-determined codes, but as anticipated, new codes emerged.

Originally, ten codes were identified on the basis of the literature review reported in chapter 3. These are mode, materiality, senses, concept, process, communication/message, unconventional, artwork/image, contemporary issues and technology. The following six codes emerged during the coding process; found materials/objects, combinations, viewer interaction, understanding, emotional response and enhanced meaning.

The total number of codes (16) were categorised into four themes, as indicated in table 6.3.

The detailed coding table, which reveals how the narrative texts were coded, and the codes clustered into themes are expanded in addendum B.

It is evident that the four themes emerging from the data (addendum B) support and ground the notion of multimodality as it operates in contemporary art in South Africa. The artists combine various materials (theme 1) in order to create a layered end product (theme 2). This layered end product is multimodal in nature, taking into account the specific arrangement of modes into ensembles, each with their own specific function. The ten participants seem to place a heavy emphasis on the viewer's response (theme 3) in order to substantiate contemporary issues (theme 4). It is evident that the artists and their award-winning works lay strong emphasis on the underlying concept and, more importantly, on how this concept is communicated in a manner that grounds their intent. Furthermore, the ten participants seem to be aware that their intent to comment on contemporary issues appeal to more than the primary sense of sight. The process of creating modal ensembles, which are primarily sense driven, seems to form an intense and rigorous part of the meaning-making process, which may be one of the reasons why all ten participants have been awarded prizes at the level of a national art competition.

Table 6.3 Codes and themes

Code	Theme
Materiality	Combining materials
Unconventional material	
Found object	
Combinations	
Mode	Layered end product
Senses	
Process	
Artwork	
Technology	
Emotional response	Importance of viewer response
Understanding	
Viewer interaction	
Enhance meaning	
Current contemporary issues	Validating contemporary issues
Communication	
Concept	
<div><div></div> Predetermined code</div> <div><div></div> Emerging code</div>	

In the next section, I discuss the four themes that emerged from the data of the e-mail questionnaire. Section 4 of this chapter will map these themes onto my personal analysis of the artworks of the ten participants as well as the artist statements that accompanied the artworks.

3.3.1 Combining materials

All ten participants combined various media, which include found objects, traditional media, unconventional material and combinations of technology-driven media. Furthermore, it became evident that the majority of the participants approached their concepts in an interdisciplinary way. Bolton, for example, has a background in microbiology. Jorgensen, on the other hand, expressed a keen interest in botany. Ideationally, their works draw on a combination of these and other disciplines.

As the artists were not familiar with the notions of multimodality at a meta-level, it was important to include probing questions in the e-mail questionnaire that would facilitate a deeper understanding of multimodality in visual art. The four codes which make up this theme (materiality, unconventional material, found objects and combinations of materials) all point to the fact that the artists were in search of a multimodal,

multisensory approach in concept and execution. Within a mode lies its material qualities, and the combinations of materials and their multisensory qualities have demanded much of the artists' attention and interest.

3.3.2 Layered end product

This theme refers to the thematic process that the artists used regarding the combination of materials. Conceptually, most of the participants selected a variation of materials (initially different modes) that they felt would strengthen the artwork conceptually. The layered end product speaks to the process of either arranging, or stacking and/or packing these modes into an ordered sequence that would gesture or prompt the viewer to respond to the artwork sequentially. In other words, once the materials have been selected, they need to be customised to fulfil a specific task. The sequential process assists the viewer in discovering the meaning of the artwork. In turn, this evokes a multisensory approach triggered by the material qualities of the chosen modes. When combined, the artist places these modes into a sequence. The overarching term for the process of arranging, stacking or packing modes into modal sequences or ensembles is referred to as the 'layered end product'. The term 'layered' seems to be very apt in describing the multisensory approach to multimodal art-making, as it refers to the complexity of modal sequences that offers a multitude of layers that are uncovered in a process of the viewer's response.

As stated above, the use and combination of various materials have given rise to the carefully constructed modal ensembles, which address more than just the sense of sight. The five codes which make up this theme (mode, senses, process, artwork and technology) relate directly to Stein's six characteristics of modes (chapter 3). If it is true that an end product, in this case the artwork, is layered with intent using a conceptualised modal ensemble, it has been demonstrated by these ten cases that (according to Stein, 2008) these modes have materiality and in turn have been realised in multiple media. Each mode chosen by the artist contains a set of material features. In some cases, as in the work of Jorgensen, Vermeulen, Makandula and Erasmus, these modes are disseminated through technology (in their secondary modalities). It is noted that this is not the norm, as in some cases other participants used combinations of primary and secondary modalities.

Stein's (2008) characteristics of modes, being related to sensory possibilities of the body, become of key importance here. Most of the artists state that in the process of completing the work, the materials – and therefore the modal ensembles related to

modal materialities – have probed more than the sense of sight. In most cases the materialities of these modal ensembles have urged the viewer to do more than merely look. Von Maltitz, for example, used earth, ash, resin and light as materials she combined to strengthen the concept. They were then arranged into modal sequences or ensembles to prompt the viewer to fulfil certain multisensory tasks. The viewer first sees and smells the soil and ash of the grave-like structures before being prompted to stand between two light boxes in order to feel the warmth and experience the transcendental nature of the light emanating from them. Jorgensen used a framed pool of water that triggered the viewer to move closer upon hearing the sound of water in order to respond to the mist and bubbles (by blowing on them) contained within it. Vermeulen in the e-mail questionnaire stated 'my art is concerned with the varied layers of art production'.

In summary, the artists are concerned with a multisensory approach to meaning-making. This is achieved by layering the artwork with various modes, each with a specific and unique function. I believe that this function rests upon the material quality that the mode provides. Furthermore, the codes reveal that the layered end product is a process using modal ensembles which trigger a multisensory response within an artwork. The term 'layered end product' in visual art is thus synonymous with the term 'modal ensemble' in socio-semiotics.

3.3.4 The importance of viewer response

Table 6.1 above revealed that an average of eight modes (in various combinations) were used in the construction of the winning artworks that were analysed. Table 6.2 demonstrated that the sense of touch was weighted as importantly as the sense of sight in the conceptualisation process of the artwork, which in turn manifested in the end product. As mentioned, these ten artists urged the viewer to do more than view, which motivates the linguistic term of 'tenor', which in turn emphasises the importance of the relationship between the sign-maker and his/her audience. Most of the artists invited the viewer to hear, touch, smell, move and physically interact with the artwork on exhibition. Thus, as will be demonstrated in the analysis of each artist's work in the following section, the traditional role or the name given to the viewer of an artwork is brought into question. Through the use of various modal ensembles the 'viewer' not only 'views' but is called upon to interact with the artwork on a multisensory level. Replacing the traditional term 'viewer' with 'perceiver' may better describe the multimodal experience evoked by each artist. The codes, 'emotional response', 'understanding', 'viewer interaction' and 'enhanced meaning' all address the need and importance of multimodal communication,

particularly in a technology-driven world where information is easily accessed and interacted with in more ways than using text and the spoken word (linguistics).

In support of the above, all ten artists placed an emphasis on the importance of the viewer's response (e-mail questionnaire). Lange speaks of physical interaction by the viewer in the form of play. Bolton left clues for the viewer through the metaphorical use of media. Makandula aims to create visual tension through a set of symbols altering the viewer's gaze. Stroud's creation of a miniature figure aims to draw the viewer in to expose a shock element by using materials that smell and rot over a period of time. Vermeulen wants the viewer to peruse the artwork in order to uncover how the media enhanced it. Battson plays on visual puns and parodies to encourage the viewer to decode the meaning of her work through visual images and statistical values. Jorgensen's work triggers a viewer discussion. She aims to engage with the audience by the use of material content that creates meaning. Von Maltitz wants the viewer to experience an emotion triggered by intervening in the viewer's space, using media such as light, soil and ash. She is of the opinion that the meaning is enhanced through the choice of media. Strümpfer emphasises the importance of a visual experience where the viewer contemplates issues regarding life and death. He admits that the work aims to shock people.

What is evident in the responses of all ten participants is that the combination of materials, and how these materials are layered into modal ensembles, are set up to form a carefully constructed end product which primarily takes the importance of the viewer's response into consideration.

3.3.5 Validating contemporary issues

All ten participants, in some way or another, expressed concern about an interest in current contemporary issues and how they may become validated. Each expressed the need to create work that is strongly conceptualised through a process of layered modal ensembles, which in turn communicate the message more strongly than a monomodal rendering could have done. Another one of Stein's (2008) modal characteristics is that modes become an interface between the natural and the cultural world, which to some extent characterises our post-literate society. This post-literate state, according to Powe (1996), does not denounce traditional communicational methods but seeks to embrace further modes in order to communicate. Also, in the visual arts, it has become evident that the artists have not rejected traditional media entirely but have embarked on a journey to create a modal platform in order to open more communicative channels. This

embraces Kress's (2010) notion of design, where the designer of a message expresses interest in realising the nature of a particular subject in relation to the audience. This will, in turn, dictate the choices of modes which carry a social and material aspect. Once these factors have been taken into account, the site of the display becomes of key importance. Regarding the conceptual process, I believe that these artists have indirectly followed this process of design where modes in their natural state (materiality) serve as interface or connection to our cultural world (Stein, 2008). When the artist places a great emphasis on perceiver interaction, and the perceiver makes a multimodal connection with the artwork (which I believe to be multisensory), the process of what Kress (2014) refers to as re-design offers endless message creation.

Current contemporary issues, communication and concept make up the codes that underpin the theme of validating contemporary issues. As the artist's primary concern is to construct an artwork that takes the viewer's response into account, these responses in turn echo back to the concept of the artwork, which deals with pressing issues that the artists feel are valid in contemporary society. In this way the viewer is challenged to respond to 'something'. In most instances the viewer is challenged to respond to contemporary issues which reflect cultural, socio-political and environmental issues of South African society. Although these issues are offered to the viewer through a personal lens, they become validated by sharing them with the viewer. In so doing the meaning-making process is re-designed, which echoes back into larger concerns or debates manifesting on a global level.

In validating the above, all ten participants express certain contemporary issues in some form or another. Makandula questions his social status as a black man through the traditional rites of passage, masculinity and sexuality. He refers to circumcision as a 'brutal act of violence afflicted on our bodies'. Conceptually he aims to express a sense of alienation that society creates among individuals. Bolton is of the opinion that the issues regarding climate change are 'debated in the public arena but often denied'. In concept, her work aims to 'encourage a discussion on climate change'. Erasmus created a projection consisting of pixelated images of pornography. In concept, the work aims to 'expose the way in which the media controls public perception'. Stroud's work exposes the expectations of women regarding the notion of contemporary beauty. In concept, her work deals with the contemporary stereotyping of women in the media. Vermeulen is interested in 'how images travel in and through contemporary media structures'. In concept, she aligns high art with digital imaging. Battson questions the 'reliability of information obtained from digital sources'. Conceptually she makes the viewer

understand that society seems to be more interested in 'social media trivia and nonsense' than focusing on real pressing issues that plague society at large. Von Maltitz deals with personal anxiety she has towards death. This was brought on by the 'death of a loved one in a fatal motor vehicle accident'. In concept, she exposes the statistics of road deaths in South Africa that are of the highest in the world. Strümpfer comments on 'man's inhumanity to man'. He expresses 'the capacity we as humans have for an evil and destructive temperament'.

The following section offers a detailed multimodal analysis of the ten participants' artworks mapped onto the four themes in order to motivate the above discussion. Both the artefacts (artworks) and the artist's statements that originally accompanied the winning works will be analysed to support and triangulate the findings from the analysis of the e-mail questionnaire data.

4 APPLICATION OF THE FOUR THEMES IN AN ANALYSIS OF THE ARTWORKS

4.1 Zane Wesley Lange, Joystick (Port Elizabeth)

Year: 2010 (Merit Award) Sculpture

Media: Found objects, nuts, bolts, washers, paint, chair and driftwood



Figure 6.1 Zane Wesley Lange, *Joystick*, Sasol New Signatures 2010

The work consists of a deconstructed white rotating chair with a found object 'stick' attached to the front of the seat. The work is playful, interactive and loaded with parodies of 'schoolboy' humour made concrete in its visual form. The viewer is invited to sit on the chair and interact with the 'joystick' creating suggestive humour. Here the formal elements of art are challenged by the art historian's and critic's view of a taboo topic regarding the 'fun' element in visual art. At the same time, the work carries with it a high aesthetic value.

Regarding the theme of *combining materials*, it is clear that Lange has combined various found objects in a manner that invites interaction. He deconstructed and re-crafted together an interactive sculpture that invites the viewer to 'play' while calling upon the

sense of touch, sight and hearing (all sharing equal roles). The combination of found objects clearly contrasts in construction and texture. In his response to the e-mail questionnaire, Lange makes his conceptualisation of the artwork clear; a rotating chair (found object) would form the basis of the artwork and the addition of 'nuts, bolts and washers to the construction' completed the concept. In this way, a high-art parody was constructed. Lange supports this analysis by stating in the e-mail questionnaire that 'I wanted to make a bigger and better chair selecting and using a combination of materials that worked as a whole'. In this case as with the other participants in this study, combining materials creates a layering of modes and materials (conventional and/or unconventional) to constitute a modal ensemble.

The *layering of the end product* is achieved by combining the modes of touch, gesture, sound and movement to constitute a 3D model. Lange states: 'I was always going to use those materials and combined them, they were at my disposal.' Using traditional sculpture as a point of departure, elements of gesture and movement became important in the modal ensemble, as the design process was refined in its moving parts. It is interesting to note that Lange did not want to concern himself with a detailed artist statement as he did not want the artwork 'to be confined by the boundaries of written text'. Thus Lange is presumably aware of the monomodal bounds in which traditional sculpture finds itself entrapped. By not offering an artist's statement, Lange's open-ended approach to the interpretation of the artwork allows the viewer to project his/her own experiences onto the work. In this way the process of multimodal design is re-designed ad infinitum (Kress, 2014) when the viewer forms an integral part of the artwork itself.

This awareness feeds into the theme of the *viewer's response*. Only once the viewer is seated on the chair and grabs hold of the joystick the full implication of the conceptual process is discovered in an event that constitutes a humorous parody, conjuring up a communicative effect which addresses gestures of a sexual nature reminiscent of 'schoolboy humour'. If the work had been explained in the form of an artist statement (using text) it might have been signifying to the viewer to interact with the artwork via a monomodal, linear set of instructions. Rather, Lange wants the viewer to discover the process for himself or herself, and by doing so the viewer's response validates the arrangement of carefully constructed modes and thus the viewer becomes a co-creator of meaning in the artwork. Therefore, the success of the artwork lies within the design and use of an ensemble of modes, which together evoke viewer interaction.

Taking the above into account, I am of the opinion that referring to individuals who actively participate in Lange's work as viewers in a traditional sense, is inaccurate. The viewer is gestured to do more than merely just 'look at' the work. Here more senses are called into play. The viewer not only views, but touches, feels, gestures, actions and hears. To this I ground the notion that Lange's work is multimodal in nature calling for a new definition of the term 'viewer' in the traditional sense, because the sense of touch is the major contributing factor to the success of the artwork.

Regarding the theme of *validating contemporary issues*, it is evident that Lange, unaware of the theory of multimodality, was addressing the similar issue made prominent by the socio-semiotic scholars from the mid-1990s, namely that a single mode – in this instance text – was no longer strong enough to meet the demands of contemporary communication. In the same vein, Lange was aware of the fact that a traditional sculpture, which is appreciated via the primary sense of sight, and seemingly static, would not suffice in constituting the meaning behind the work; that which Lange refers to in the e-mail questionnaire as 'suggestive, provoking physical interaction'. As Lange has not offered an artist's statement, the question may be raised as to which contemporary issues he is addressing. The open-ended approach to the work, through a process of re-design, aims to place the person who interacts with the work in an embarrassing situation regarding the de-sexualised nature of our society. Where the role of censorship struggles to hold firm in the realm of cyberspace, individuals are innocently (or not) confronted with content that is sexual or suggestive in nature.

4.2 Sikhumbuzo Makandula, *Ilolo* (Umthatha)

Year: 2011 (Runner-up) Video

Media: Video projection

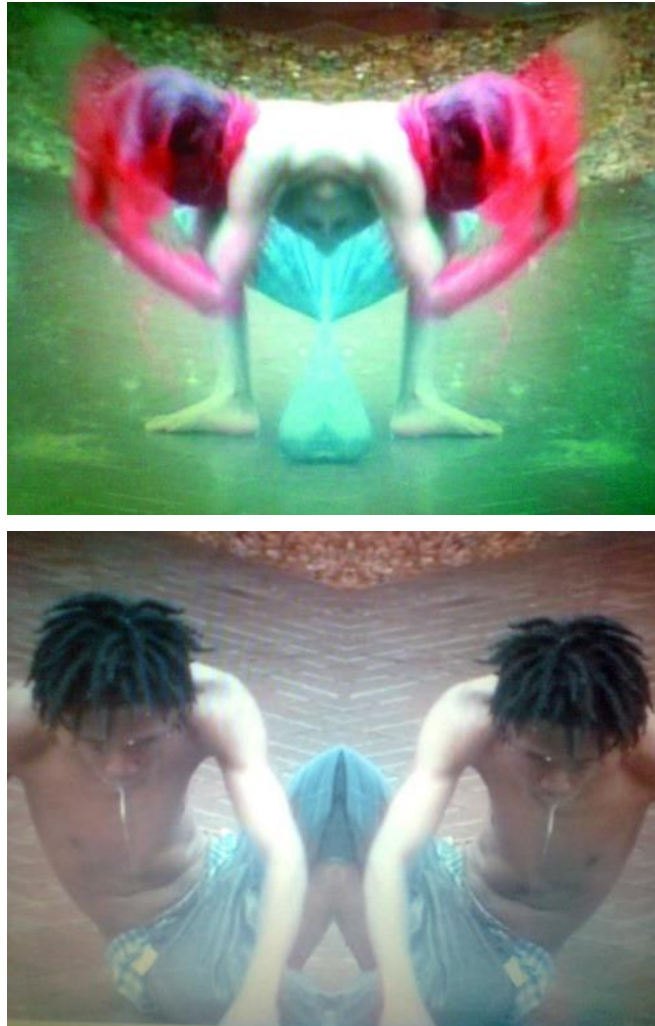


Figure 6.2 Sikhumbuzo Makandula, *Ilolo*, Sasol New Signatures 2011

Originally a site-specific performance piece that was captured on video and later edited, Makandula's video won the runner-up award at the SNS in 2011. In the video, the viewer is confronted with a trans-like ritual in which it becomes evident that the artist as subject is frustrated. Descending from a rock near the royal burial ground in the village of Qunu in the Eastern Cape (Nelson Mandela's home town), Makandula beats and thrashes a large orange bag on the paving drenched with rain in the Nelson Mandela Museum complex. The rhythmic sound of the bag beating the rain, offset by his own groans, is digitally manipulated to create a moving digital metamorphosis that resembles a violent-looking insect. The to and fro movement of the images and the repeated

rhythmic sound of the orange bag that is being beaten on the paving in the rain arouse the viewer to become uneasy and unsettled.

The *combination of materials* that Makandula used in the process of modal design is both striking and unconventional. Using video (moving image) as the primary mode, he combined site-specific installations with a found object in the form of a used orange bag. Furthermore, the artist waited for it to rain, as the mode of sound was enhanced by the pitter-patter of raindrops. In this event, I charge the environmental phenomenon of rain (rainwater) with the status of a mode, as it is evident that a rainy day contributed to the work both conceptually (cleansing) and materially (sound). This is motivated by Makandula in the e-mail questionnaire where he describes his media as 'video art, sound piece (rain) and found material (orange sack)'. The combination and use of materials were carefully constructed and conceptualised as he further states that 'by combining materials I can augment the materiality of the found object and thereby alter the viewer's gaze'. In the artist's statement, Makandula also points out that 'the use of found objects created load, tension and frustration symbolising the self'. Beating an orange bag on the paving of the Nelson Mandela Museum complex in Qunu in the rain motivates the notion that found objects and unconventional materials were chosen for their material qualities, which created a layered end product heightening the viewer's experience.

The choice and design of his modal construction enforce the notion of *the layered end product*. Makandula's modal ensemble addresses the concept of disconnectedness he experiences between himself and society. This is grounded in his statement in the e-mail questionnaire in which he stated that 'video, performance and sound were the best tools to use'. In this case, I ground the notion of 'tools' as modes. By questioning his 'social identity as a black man' Makandula is well aware of the limitations that a static traditional image offers in terms of grounding his concept. Here it is most evident that Makandula is aware of the role that modes play in altering the perception of viewer interaction by designing a modal ensemble that is multisensory. In the e-mail questionnaire he states that 'the video is unsettling, yet one is attracted to the complexity of the content that is largely open-ended'. Furthermore it is evident that video art, as it is defined in contemporary visual art, may have been limiting in the conceptual process of the artwork. In the e-mail questionnaire Makandula further states that 'I wanted to challenge the stereotype of video by addressing issues of rites of passage, sexuality, masculinity and gender politics'. By integrating modes of sound (rainwater, beating an orange bag on wet paving), moving image (video), gesture, movement (artist as subject), light, space and texture (environment), the artist has

created multiple layers that drive the sensory experience of the viewer beyond that which is traditional. Makandula motivates in the e-mail questionnaire that 'the use of space, rainfall and sound were important during the making of the video as they are factors that enhance how the viewer would understand my work'.

Regarding the theme of the *viewer's response*, it is clear that the viewer forms part of an interaction that sets forth a sequence of unsettling emotions. In the e-mail questionnaire Makandula states that 'the idea was to challenge how the viewer passively views video art, mostly in gallery spaces'. I am of the opinion that he is aware of the 'disconnectedness' that forms part of any viewing experience, especially when modes are presented in their 'secondary state' (video). Generally speaking, it is accepted that audio effects are an integral part of moving images (film/video). However, for Makandula, the mode of sound became overtly integrated in the process of meaning-making, as he states (in his response the e-mail questionnaire) that besides the mode of moving image, the use of space, rainfall and sound is 'as important as the video itself as they are factors which enhanced how the viewer would understand or not what [he] was trying to communicate'. When viewing the video it is clear that the natural sound usually found when shooting video clips was extracted, digitally manipulated and re-imbedded in the video to heighten the viewer's experience and thereby trigger a particular response.

It is evident that Makandula's work reflects the themes that emerged from the coded data where he has successfully combined modes to create a layered (complex) end product, which mostly takes the viewer's response into consideration. In motivation, the artist states in his response to the e-mail questionnaire that 'I wanted to articulate a strange or rather eerie mood that results in the "othering" of the body. It was necessary to take into account how space and found material would work in relation to the body in order to communicate what I wanted to put across.' This awareness of modal ensembles in turn grounds pressing contemporary issues which have been internalised and shared. The process further resonates with Kress's (2014) contemporary notion of re-design, which supports Makandula's statement in his response to the e-mail questionnaire where he states that the choice of modes 'enhanced the meaning, as many viewers who have had encounters with *I/o/o* have stated that the video is unsettling, yet they are attracted to the complexity of the content which I left open-ended'.

It is clear that a multimodal approach to the conceptualisation of the video piece charged the artwork with meaning and intent. In the e-mail questionnaire Makandula stated that

he aimed at creating a 'double consciousness in addressing complicity of the viewer as part of the meaning-making process of the work'.

Regarding the theme of *validating contemporary issues*, it should be noted that Makandula grew up in a conservative Xhosa community in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. The video aims to express his struggles and discontent with pressing social, cultural and gender issues in the form of a performance piece mostly using himself (his body) as the subject. As mentioned, he sets out addressing issues of (as per the artist's statement) sexuality, tradition and traditional rites of passage, which are sensitive subjects in a traditional community living in a socially changing environment of South Africa. The artist is an individual who is living at the interface of two cultures, as he states (e-mail questionnaire) that the video questions his social identity 'as a black man addressing social ills we have come to veil in the name of culture and tradition'. He continues by saying that the ritualised violence perpetuated upon bodies of many boys who undergo initiation rituals, be it circumcision or the calling to become a healer, 'challenges my masculinity and depicts its construction within these liminal spaces'.

4.3 Ingrid Jean Bolton, *Un(SEA)N*, (Pretoria)

Year: 2012 (Winner) Sculptural installation

Media: Used motor oil, steel, ceramics

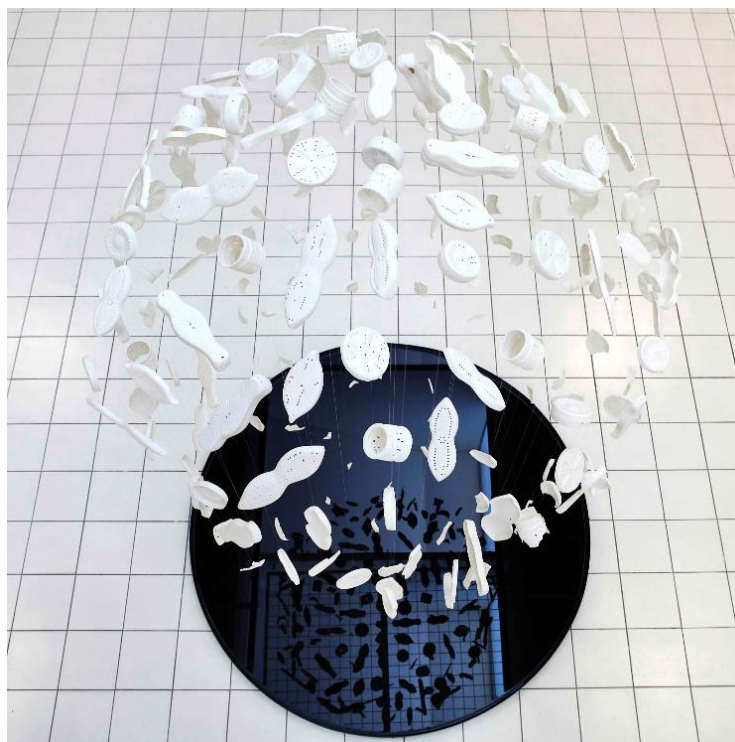


Figure 6.3 Ingrid Jean Bolton, *Un(SEA)N*, Sasol New Signatures 2012

The artwork represents a construction of microscopic diatoms made from delicate porcelain representing a ball that is suspended above a circular tray filled with used motor oil. The work not only concerns itself with the fragility of the micro-world but manages to echo back to that which is universal. The whiteness of the porcelain pieces reflecting in the pool of used black motor oil strategically placed in a tray suggests transience. The way the installation suspends above the circular oil tray requires balance and echoes the precarious dynamic of these organisms in nature. Their fragility reflects back and becomes a metaphor for our own existence and the fleetingness of life. The fact that the diatoms die and over time become oil embedded at the bottom of the ocean, which in turn is used as a human resource is delicately executed and well balanced.

Regarding the theme of *combining materials*, Bolton set out to manifest the micro-world of biology in the realm of visual art. In the e-mail questionnaire she explains using a combination of conventional and unconventional materials in the form of porcelain, steel, perspex and used motor oil. Bolton states: 'The used motor oil is not considered traditional; on the other hand, porcelain is usually associated with craft rather than art.' Having a background in microbiology, Bolton approached the work in an interdisciplinary manner. She explains (e-mail questionnaire) that through conversations with experts in the field of microbiology, she discovered that the diatoms were integrally connected to climate change. Diatoms contain silica, a material used in ceramic glaze, a medium that she was already working with. From the outset the term 'transmediation' comes to mind, where ideas, concepts and information are moved freely from one source domain into another via the materiality of modal choices. In her artist's statement Bolton explains that 'the microscopic size of the diatoms has been monumentalised to bring them into the public domain'. It is clear that her fascination with the world of microbiology allowed this scientific discipline to ground itself in the visual arts in the form of a sculpture. It is evident that Bolton was aware of the intricate play of materials that would strengthen the concept of her work and in turn layer the end product with multisensory meaning.

The world of diatoms – micro-organisms that can only be seen under a microscope – is offered to the viewer in a macro-world materialised in the form of a large porcelain mobile. Conceptually, this motivates the second theme of *the layered end product*. In support of my observation, Bolton explains as follows in her artist's statement: 'On discovering that diatoms – beautifully proportioned micro-organisms – convert carbon dioxide into carbon and oxygen, I became intrigued. These organisms, whose cell walls are made up of silica, produce half the air we breathe. Silica is the same material that is

used in porcelain.’ In order to trigger a strong viewer response, the two main ingredients of diatom construction were used to create the artwork; porcelain and used motor oil. Here the materialities of the modes are of importance. Porcelain is delicate, white in colour, translucent and fragile while used motor oil is black in colour, reflective and has a strong odour. The strong sensory capabilities of these materials cause a modal dialogue to exist between two extremities of their characteristics. It is thus clear that the end product is modally layered and the materiality of each mode carefully considered. In her response to the e-mail questionnaire, the artist motivates that ‘the materials and the mode of making all become a metaphor for the viewer to decipher’. Bolton harnessed multimodal art-making in the fact that she combined the modes of colour, gesture, movement, sight, sound, touch and smell, and incorporated them into the base mode of a 3D model. Motor oil as an unconventional material contains modes of sight, smell and colour (black). In the e-mail questionnaire Bolton motivates the use of these modes by stating that ‘the way that the installation hangs above the motor oil requires a balance in reflection, and echoes the precarious dynamic of these organisms in nature’. She adds that ‘the fragile porcelain organic shapes, the twisting movement, the white/black juxtaposition and the mechanical/industrial smell of the motor oil were all clues that I left for the viewer’. These modes were used in their primary modalities to drive and heighten the senses in order draw a strong viewer response, and in so doing Bolton validates the contemporary issue of global warming.

It is highly likely that Bolton considered the importance of the *viewer’s response*, as the use of these modes was driven conceptually and the artist was well aware of the role each mode would play in heightening a sensory experience beyond the stereotype of what is referred to as the ‘viewer’. In the e-mail questionnaire Bolton explains that ‘I was focused on concept, materiality and meaning. I feel that all material has an association and by being aware of those associations clues can be provided to the viewer to better understand the work.’ This statement bears evidence of a carefully designed modal ensemble, with each part playing an integral part in conveying her intended message. In the e-mail questionnaire Bolton states that ‘by combining these modes and media the viewers are able to draw their own conclusion about my work. Material carries meaning, to use material metaphorically can carry personal meaning for the viewer.’ Furthermore, it seems highly likely that these materials were selected for their strong multisensory capabilities, which would further trigger the viewer’s response. This resonates with Bolton’s comments regarding her combination of materials where she states: ‘I used a combination of pure white porcelain suspended over toxic smelling used motor oil in order to create a reflection. The porcelain moved and would at times knock against each

other creating a “pinging sound”.’ Here, once again, the stereotypical term ‘viewer’ is challenged on a multimodal platform. We are not only invited to ‘view’ but to hear, touch and smell the artwork.

When we read the artist’s statement, it is clear that Bolton is *validating contemporary issues* such as ecological changes brought on by global warming. When asked to explain her work, her response to the question in the e-mail questionnaire was ‘climate change is a current contemporary issue that is debated in the public arena but often denied. I felt the need to bring it into a public space so to encourage a discussion.’ This is grounded by enforcing the fact that these little organisms are under threat from constant pollution brought on by mankind and conceptually strengthened by a modal juxtaposition between the white ball of porcelain diatoms offset by their reflection in the circular pool of used motor oil (placed under the mobile construction).

4.4 Brendon Erasmus, *It’s all going down the tube thanks to the media lube*, (Pretoria)

Year: 2012 (Merit Award) Light projection

Media: Canvas, polystyrene, light projection

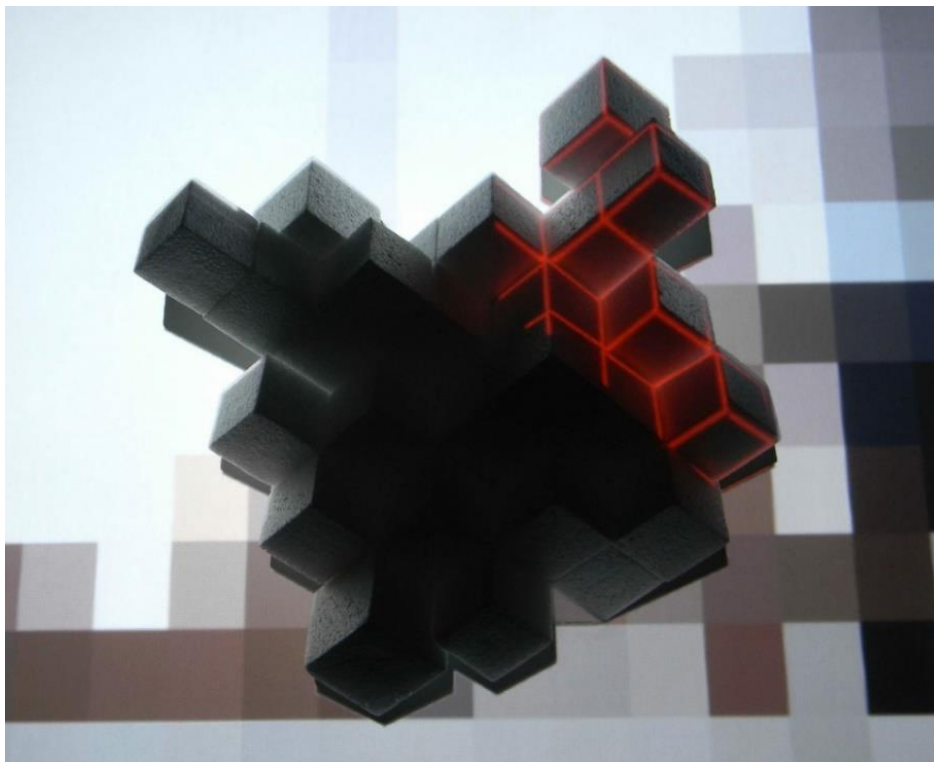


Figure 6.4 Brendon Erasmus, *It’s all going down the tube thanks to the media lube*, Sasol New Signatures 2012

The work deals with censorship in the South African media and the regulation of the press, which the artists feel takes precedence over the on-going scandals in our political system. It is evident that Erasmus has challenged the bounds of his traditional media practice and rather opted for a multimodal approach to convey his message of media censorship and the desensitising of pornography on the internet.

The *combination of material* demonstrates an example of technological innovation. In the e-mail questionnaire Erasmus states his choice of combined media as 'a 3D polystyrene construction and a light projection on canvas. He set out to create a 'painting' containing a 3D model in the form of polystyrene cubes which he pasted onto an unprimed (white) canvas. The traditional medium of paint is replaced by video-mapping software, which projects colour and lines (of light) onto the canvas via a digital projector and a laptop computer. Erasmus explains in the artist statement that 'the video installation was created using relatively new software that allows one to map specific areas when projecting a moving image or a still image on a three-dimensional object'. The projection is not static, but ever-changing (moving image). This new media work is a perfect example of the technological multimodal world we live in, where the media landscape has blurred to the extent that new meaning is continually constructed and reconstructed. The combination of these materials creates an artwork that becomes difficult to categorise within the bounds of traditional visual art, as it is neither a painting nor a sculpture, due to the combination of conventional and unconventional materials.

On closer inspection of this artwork, one is immediately struck by the complexity of layers found in the concept, message and end product, which motivate the theme of a *layered end product*. In the e-mail questionnaire Erasmus refers to his work as a 'light projection/video installation'. At first glance the medium is a canvas that hangs on a wall. However, this medium is simply the foundation of a multimodally layered concept. This multimodal layering renders the artwork difficult to categorise as a specific genre in visual art. The artist's explanation for the multimodal layering is that 'combining materials allows for a cross-current of ideas and methods which inevitably create tension and ambiguity'.

Erasmus carefully constructed a modal ensemble using the modes of still image, moving image, colour and 3D model in order to validate his concept of media censorship. He motivates this multimodal approach by stating in the e-mail questionnaire that 'the video-mapping software has a significant relevance to the theme of censorship whereby I am able to regulate what I want you to see and not what you want to see'. According

to Erasmus 'what you really see is pixelated images which are sexual in nature but are pixelated beyond recognition'. The reference he makes to a projection on traditional canvas further strengthens the work, formally moving it into a realm of transmediation.

Erasmus, in his artist's statement, makes it quite clear that 'as a painter, I generally work on canvas. What is interesting to note is that a 'painter' should use 'paint' in a traditional sense but it is evident that while the canvas is present, the paint is absent. This is motivated by Erasmus, who further states that 'my initial aim with this project was to transfigure the medium of painting while still working within its traditional framework. So naturally my inclination was to produce a work that could hang on a wall, in a frame.' However, Erasmus has chosen to replace pigment colour with colour from a digital projected light source. Like Bolton, Erasmus's work process bears evidence of genre-mixing. He said (e-mail questionnaire): 'I became increasingly fascinated with the light projections my brother was doing on 3D objects.' He mentions that it reminded him of the pixelation one would see when the media censor moving images.

It is clear that traditional oil paint on canvas would not suffice in underpinning his concept. Most importantly, if the artist is commenting on media censorship, then the media of choice should inform its source. In this case Erasmus is referring not only to the print media but includes media in the digital realm. Replacing traditional paint with a digital projection not only created various intriguing layers in the end product but aided the conception of the artwork itself. The modes of light, colour, space and moving image created an ever-changing image that is so characteristic of the digital media in contemporary communication. Multimodal layering offered the artist a platform of meaning-making other than the relatively static approach found in traditional painting. In the e-mail questionnaire Erasmus motivates his approach to multimodal layering by stating that 'combining various modes has aided my process, and therefore the conceptual thinking behind the work to become infinitely more complex'. This complexity which Erasmus refers to may translate into a 'layered end product'. In motivation, Erasmus reiterates: 'The moving images, layered with pattern and abstract constructions, continually reveal and conceal themselves, seductively conducting the viewer's eye in a repetitive orchestration of light and colour.'

What is most significant about the work of Erasmus is that his concept is driven multimodally, encompassing technology to motivate his message. In this sense the artist has laid emphasis on the importance of the *viewer's response*. These modal ensembles seem to be arranged to purposively endorse media censorship. In a world which

communicates digitally, and thus multimodally, Erasmus became aware that contemporary meaning making has become increasingly popular in a digital format (the internet and mobile messaging) and that the traditional medium of oil paint on canvas would not suffice in validating contemporary issues regarding the mass digital media and censorship. Erasmus is not only conceptualising multimodally but has called the materiality of his mode and media into question. The textured materiality of paint on canvas clearly does not strike a chord with the materiality of that which is digital. Therefore, if the concept centred on digital communication and censorship, the monomodal nature of a static image on canvas, executed in oil paint, would not have aligned with this concept and process. This observation is supported by Erasmus when he states in the e-mail questionnaire that 'this projecting and masking of light and moving images speak to the concept more than traditional media is able to (if at all able)'. This artwork has managed to break the boundaries of what we see as discipline-specific image-making through the use of a multimodal approach to painting.

This multimodal and genre-mixed approach to painting in the traditional sense has assisted Erasmus to successfully ground the social relevance of media desensitisation. Current media trends seem to be desensitised to a point where shocking images of violence and nudity are controlled by the media to a point that Erasmus feels they are able to shift our social perception of right and wrong. Through a multimodal approach the artist has succeeded in *validating contemporary issues* relevant to media desensitisation and manipulation. In a world where communication has become faster and somewhat 'slick' by nature, one cannot but ignore the fact that this work has aligned itself with contemporary communication. Somewhat hybrid in nature, Erasmus's modal ensemble assists in portraying the notion of media desensitisation through its characteristic infrastructure and speed (often seen on the internet and television). Like floating images seen in the printed, digital media and television, Erasmus claims his work to be a '3D construction of cubes and shifting colours, mostly in tones of red, where the usual stark black lines divide the primaries or white and grey, glowing beams of light instead search the edges of the cubic shapes, crawling systematically into grid formations and then rapidly disappear into blackness ad infinitum'. Using this multimodal approach of moving pixelated images, Erasmus manages to create an artwork which echoes back into the realm of moving images found on popular news and social networks. By character, the artwork itself represents the physical characteristics of a television, cell phone or computer screen.



In his artist's statement Erasmus points out that 'the mapping process has significant relevance to the theme of censorship, whereby I control what I decide you see'. According to the artist, these images are pornographic, but pixelated and blurred 'to a point of non-recognition'. What Erasmus manages to convey to the viewer is that the contemporary issue of censorship has desensitised our world. He motivates this in the artist's statement by stating that 'the idea of elaborate censorship is interesting to me in that the more you censor something, the more the potency and shock value decrease'. It is evident that traditional media (paint) may not have been as effective in communicating what Erasmus originally conceptualised or aimed to convey.

4.5 Zelda Stroud, *Body Butter* (Pretoria)

Year: 2012 (Merit Award) Sculpture

Media: Bath scum, wax, body hair, granite



6.5 Zelda Stroud, *Body Butter*, Sasol New Signatures 2012

The viewer is confronted by a highly detailed realistic figure of a nude woman constructed of wax and collected 'bath scum'. The figure sits on top of compressed hair blocks (resembling saintly relics) collected from various ablutions performed over a

period of time in the artist's bathroom. The artist has created a self-portrait as a classical figure. The work expresses the artist's interest in the social and economic manipulation of women by the media and peer pressure in search of the ultimate 'woman', resulting in a costly affair, both financially and emotionally. Rapid advances in technology spread an ideology of that which society sees as perfect. According to the artist in her response to the e-mail questionnaire, 'this has led to a more intense quest for perfection'. The work becomes iconic in its miniature form and is executed in great detail. Although alternative sculptural media were used, respect for master craftsmanship prevails.

Regarding the theme of *combining materials*, Stroud has pushed the boundaries of sculpture beyond the norm of that which is seen as traditional. However, in terms of the traditional classification in the visual arts, Stroud remains a sculptor. According to her artist's statement, she has a keen interest in sculpting the human form on a miniature scale. It is clear that Stroud combined various unconventional materials to create a modal ensemble that would address more than the primary sense of sight. In the artist's statement Stroud lists her *combination of materials* as 'perspex, hair, nail clippings, various exfoliation treatments, wax and bath scum'. These unconventional sculpting materials were 'collected from my bathwater over a period of six months and stored in my fridge' (e-mailed questionnaire). In motivating her process of combining materials (conventional/unconventional) Stroud explains in the questionnaire response that 'wax is a wonderful medium to work with and it really accepts the addition of other materials quite well'. Stroud explains her combination of media as a catalyst to drive the concept. She states that 'mixed media has always been part of my work because different media have different properties both physically and conceptually'. She adds that 'the use of debris from my own body (as well as other materials used in the process of day to day living) forms the core of my work both physically and conceptually'.

It is evident that the artist intended to *layer the end product* with a set of modal ensembles in order to ground the notion of female vanity being manipulated by the mass media. In the e-mail questionnaire Stroud lists the characteristics (modes) of her work as printed/written text, 3D model, lighting, colour, gesture, action, texture and smell. Regarding this work, I believe that Stroud was aware of the limitations traditional sculpting materials would have had on the conceptualisation process of the work. From the outset the artist reports in her response to the e-mail questionnaire that the use of these modes had been part of the pre-planning of the artwork in order to substantiate the viewer's response. She motivates this by stating that 'wax and other materials were physically, practically and conceptually suitable from the beginning'. She further states

that 'the concept often informs other materials and processes'. I assume that the term 'materials' used by Stroud refers to modes. While wax is seen as a traditional sculpting medium, Stroud set out to strengthen her message by layering the end product with unconventional materials such as bath scum, nail clippings, body hair and dead skin cells extracted from exfoliation sessions in the bathroom. Although the final artwork was made by physically mixing the materials mentioned above together, it yielded a process of multimodal layering in concept, planning and execution where the artwork becomes more than a traditional sculpture that is merely looked at. The modal layers become multisensory in that Stroud gestures the viewer to move in closer to view the work. At close proximity, the artwork carries olfactory qualities. Furthermore, the unconventional materials mixed with the sculptor's wax yields a work that will purposely disintegrate over time. Here the physical process of mixing materials together in the studio must not be confused with the notion of multimodal layering. Thus, if a mode has been defined as any resource that is socially shaped and used to make meaning, these above-listed modes and their material qualities speak directly to the concept of the work. It is this choice of modal design that embodies the qualities of a multisensory approach that is set to trigger the viewer's response.

It becomes evident from the artist's choice of modes and the manner in which the modal ensemble was constructed that Stroud set up a chain of multisensory encounters to draw a stronger *viewer response*. At first glance, the viewer is confronted by a miniature sculpture crafted from white wax. It portrays the image of a naked woman performing her ambulatories 'French salon style'. The sculpture was crafted in miniature scale in order to draw the viewer in to investigate the academically crafted detail. This is done with a purpose. The white wax of which the figure is made has an olfactory quality in addition to its tactile and visible qualities. Only when the viewer is drawn in closely to investigate the detail of the figure can the artwork be smelt. The motivation is that the artist intended the viewer to be drawn into the miniature scale of the artwork in order to experience the texture (materiality) of body hair, smell the odour imbedded in the wax, and see the 'saintly relic' for what it really is. In her response to the e-mail questionnaire Stroud states that by making a sculpture from wax the viewer is further informed about the 'impermanence and fragility as wax is usually only used as part of a sculpting process in order to create a master copy of something that is to become more permanent'. What Stroud aims to convey to the viewer is that beauty as it is defined in the media is not permanent and that the fragility of life takes precedence over one's external physical image. Stroud motivates in the artist's statement that the sculpture made of wax and mixed with materials from her bathroom will disintegrate over time,

which echoes back to the fleetingness of life. In the e-mail questionnaire she states that the concept and in part the materialities of the modal ensemble are 'akin to a form of my own self-preservation'.

Conceptually, Stroud took all these factors into account when the artwork was originally conceptualised, in order to draw the viewer's response. As in the case of Erasmus, the conceptual boundaries that traditional media offered to sculpture would have limited the artist's ability to properly inform a viewer response in order to communicate the contemporary issues regarding the exploitation of women in the media.

By the use of the above modal combinations and process in the production of the artwork *Body Butter*, Stroud has managed to *validate contemporary issues* surrounding the image of women in the mass media. Stroud mentions in her artist's statement that this work 'reflects the social and financial implications of the pressures to conform to successful middle-class stereotypes'. This statement motivates her inspiration for working on a series of sculptures titled *The Trappings of Success* (2012–2014), which aims to encapsulate the stereotyping of women according to the idealising of beauty created by the mass media. In the e-mail questionnaire Stroud states that she used herself as subject matter to comment on 'the stereotypes of contemporary western consumer lifestyles which suggest the fragility of our lives and the fragility of our attempts to achieve beauty and immortality'. While she admits that this theme is not new to visual art, as it refers to 'the age-old human condition', the combination of unconventional materials with a process of multimodal layering 'awarded [her] work a prize' (e-mail questionnaire). What Stroud is referring to is that although this theme may be exhausted in the visual arts, her combination of unconventional material, carefully arranged into a modal ensemble (each mode having a specific task), afforded her the opportunity to offer a fresh approach to an established theme within the visual arts. Through this approach to meaning-making, using the medium of sculpture, Stroud believes in 'the ability of art to effect social transformation'.

4.6 Dot Vermeulen, *Desperately Disciplined* (Bloemfontein)

Year: 2013 (Winner): Painting/digital installation

Media: Oil on canvas, digital video



Figure 6.6 Dot Vermeuleun, *Desperately Disciplined*, Sasol New Signatures 2013

As with most traditional art-making processes, including subject matter, the work concerns itself with the tensions of varied layers and stages when a work of art is produced. The painting, juxtaposed by a digital screen, mounted on a stand in front of the painting, offers a quiet interplay between the digital world and the traditional canvas. The process of traditional painting is captured in the form of digital animation. It does not echo the process but rather offers an interplay between traditional and new media mark-making. The work is layered with complexities, yet remains simple in its presentation. The painting serves as a fine example of the use of mediated modalities commenting on the contemporary process of art-making.

Regarding the *combination of materials*, it is clear when viewing Vermeulen's winning piece from 2013 that the artist was grappling with different modes of message delivery in contemporary visual communication. She had chosen to work from the traditional platform of painting within visual art and further incorporated this process with digital imaging. In essence, the combination of materials is traditional (painting) and digital (computer animation) and the materials have been purposively chosen to juxtapose each

another. Vermeulen motivates in the artist's statement: 'The work especially focuses on juxtaposing digital art processing with the traditional medium of oil painting and with this, corporeal movements (of editing and painting) are combined with absorptive modes of processing (of research and reading).' This extreme juxtaposition of materials and the combination thereof are further motivated by the artist's response to the e-mail questionnaire where she lists 'oil painting on plywood, photographic still images, digital drawing in Photoshop, digital animation and research on modes of absorption versus theatricality' as materials that were used to construct the artwork.

The theme of creating a *layered end product* is the most striking aspect of Vermeulen's work. According to her responses to the e-mail questionnaire, Vermeulen continually draws on the notion of layers. She refers to layers of movement, layers of motion, and layers of floating text which reveals 'Envoi is typing' in the form of text that floats across the digital screen. These layers set forth to convey to the viewer that 'messages are being sent via digital communication'. I am of the opinion that these exposed layers were only possible by the use of a set of modes which were carefully arranged in order to perform this layered task which demonstrates contemporary communicational characteristics.

Vermeulen refers to her work as a painting installation. In the e-mail questionnaire she listed text, 3D model, still image, moving image, colour, space and gesture as modes that were taken into consideration in the construction of the modal ensemble for this artwork. It seems highly likely that the artist was well aware of these modes and how they were combined in order to create an interplay between 'static' traditional media and the more dynamic approach that contemporary meaning-making offers. This observation is supported by Vermeulen's motivation for combining these materials/modes. She states (in the e-mail questionnaire) that 'I am sensitive and aware of the way that images travel into different modes and media in contemporary communication structures and I wanted to make an artwork that performed this travelling aspect'. This explains why Vermeulen introduced a digital aspect to the act of painting, which further grounds the multimodal meaning-making as an act of transmediation. By doing so, the static nature of a traditional still image is charged with various modal tasks in order to put across the artist's intent.

I believe that the static nature of traditional art images, in this case oil painting, is indirectly being exposed for having monomodal qualities. It has been emphasised that the multimodality is process-driven by the act of design. It is as if Vermeulen admits that

the 'high-art' end product of an oil painting does not suffice in exposing the process of meaning-making. This assumption can be supported by Vermeulen's response to her art-making process in the e-mail questionnaire, where she stated that 'having a visual game between painting and digital animation we are shown moments of the production of processes which otherwise remain hidden from the viewer in the end product'.

Vermeulen seems to be laying emphasis on the process of making meaning, as the process itself holds the key to understanding the artwork. To make this process known Vermeulen states that 'tension between visual movement and staticness is addressed within the animation in which we see the theatrical mark-making process of the animator projected around the subject who remains mostly still, absorbed and out of reach'.

The *viewer's response* became a vital ingredient in the conceptualisation process of this winning work. Vermeulen's fascination with exposing the process of traditional painting is shared with the viewer on two platforms: traditional and digital. Here the artist forces the viewer to become immersed in the interplay between a traditional reclining nude study (lying on a couch reading a book) executed in oil on canvas and the same image in a digital format, which to some extent obscures the traditional artwork. The slow-moving digital image is presented on a computer screen, which intrudes on what is traditionally accepted as a well-curated exhibition space. Vermeulen explains in the artist's statement that by arranging the viewing space in this manner she 'specifically focuses on juxtaposing digital art processing with the traditional media of oil painting and by this, corporeal movements with absorptive modes of processing are revealed to the viewer'. She motivates the above-mentioned placement of the screen in front of the painting by stating (e-mail questionnaire) that 'it was important for the viewer to see the difference between tactile (perhaps traditional) media and digital media'.

This artwork aims to *validate contemporary issues* by offering comment on the role that visual art plays/or may come to play in contemporary communication. What is most striking regarding the notion of multimodality in this artwork is that the artist is aware of the limitations that traditional media have in a world where digital meaning-making on a multimodal level has become the norm. In other words, Vermeulen questions the limiting positioning of the communicative effects that traditional art media may have on contemporary communication. I have come to believe that multimodal communication, like digital communication, is never static. In the form of 'shareware' on social networks, meaning-making is digitally altered and changed as it moves across various digital domains (re-design). This dynamism stands in stark contrast to what Vermeulen refers to as the 'staticness of visual movement' in the traditional media of oil on canvas.

4.7 Liberty Battson, Did you know? (Pretoria)

Year: 2013 (Merit Award): Painting/intervention

Media: Canvas, automotive body paint, fabric, intervention



Figure 6.7 Liberty Battson, *Did you know?* Sasol New Signatures 2013

Liberty Battson's winning artwork from 2013 is an intervention painting. In a traditional sense, the work is a triptych. The first two panels contain coloured grid lines representing a crude bar graph executed in automotive paint while the third image contains a digital photograph of nine people (with their backs facing the viewer) wearing different colour T-shirts representing trivial social statistics. The colours of the T-shirts correlate with the colours of the bar graph on the first two panels. The models in the photograph were physically present at the opening function of the exhibition. Thereby a public intervention (intervening or disrupting a public space) was created, which corresponds to the digital image and painting on the wall. Thematically and conceptually Battson's intervention invites the viewer to make a 'surprise discovery' regarding 'people wearing coloured T-shirts which represent the statistics of the painting on the wall'.

When referring to the term 'intervention painting', it is evident that the artist *combined various materials* (2K automotive paint and digital imaging) with an intervention (which has the characteristics of a performance piece) to allow a connection to be made between the artworks on the wall and the people physically taking part in the intervention within the gallery space. In the artist's statement Battson refers to the artwork as 'having game-like aspects that become intrinsic to the artwork'. In the e-mail questionnaire the artist lists the combination of materials as 2K automotive paint on canvas (two panels), digital imaging, printed T-shirts and an intervention. She adds that she 'always wanted to paint with this unconventional material (2K automotive paint) and therefore bring something different abstraction as abstract art already exists'. Battson's decision to combine these materials is motivated in her response to the e-mail questionnaire where she states that: 'I was looking for something visual that can connote, represent, symbolise or link the original concept, so when the viewer stands and looks at the visual, they can decode the artwork and get the same general idea.' By combining these materials, the artist was able to 'create an artwork that was abstract on the wall but figurative in theory' (e-mail questionnaire).

Regarding the theme of the creating a *layered end product*, it is evident that Battson has created an interplay of modes that exist in their primary state (actual people wearing coloured T-shirts in real space and time) and in their secondary state where the same people exist in a static digital image which hangs on the gallery wall. In essence, using the same mode in its primary and secondary modal state aided the process of layering the artwork with meaning and intent. This resonates with what Battson refers to (above) as the work being able to be both abstract on the wall and figurative in theory. This interplay between primary and secondary modes of text, gesture, action, movement, colour and still image are arranged in such a way that the artwork provokes a physical interaction between the artist, the intervention participants and the viewer. The documentation of this intervention becomes the artwork on the wall. In a sense, the only role the digital image and the painting play within the meaning-making process is one of documentation. In the first instance, the modes of still image, gesture, action, movement, colour and text exist in their primary modality in real space and time. The artwork on the wall addresses these modes in a secondary modality, which becomes a trace, a hint or a clue to an event which transpired in time and which has since passed.

When an artist conceptualises and executes an artwork that contains a public intervention aspect, the importance of the *viewer's response* becomes crucial. In her response to the e-mail questionnaire Battson explains that 'each stripe on the canvas

(executed in 2K automotive paint) represents an abstract statistic and could be matched, by colour, to a T-shirt worn by a person in the audience'. By doing so, 'the viewer could decode the painting by reading the statistic on the back of the coloured T-shirt'. Furthermore, by using 2K automotive paint on canvas to create 'statistical graphs', Battson forces the viewer to respond to the artwork as a 'contemporary sector of communication'. I am of the opinion that the use of automotive body paint on canvas addresses the materiality of the mode, which has been orchestrated to meet with the 'slick demands' of contemporary communication, which often goes unchecked. Battson motivates her choices of materials in her response to the e-mail questionnaire where she states that 'I chose these modes and media as I want to make my work relevant in the contemporary and commercial sector'.

In summary, the artist is of the opinion that the viewer needs to respond to the work, which raises valid contemporary communication issues. This was achieved by constructing a modal ensemble that would bring the concept together in order 'to get a final artwork that is relevant in contemporary art' (e-mail questionnaire). More importantly, however, Battson claims that the viewer needs to respond to a 'game of decoding a seemingly aesthetic image as something with specific meaning, something to relate to, ponder or laugh at' (e-mail questionnaire).

The validity and reliability of digitally created statistics and facts become the key factor in *validating contemporary issues*. In the artist's statement, Battson expresses that she is concerned with 'the idea of people being attracted to trivial nonsensical statistics on social media and the internet but bored of numbers related to serious social concerns'. She motivates the concept by stating that 'the coloured T-shirts contain printed text representing percentages of statistics gained from various digital sources which reveal nonsensical statistics'. In this way she comments on the nature of how serious information becomes desensitised by the digital media to form a hybrid string (sequence) of 'trivial nonsense'. This 'nonsensical trivia' are evident as statistics which were printed on the T-shirts found in the digital artwork (on the wall) and on the shirts physically worn by the intervention participants. They read as '15% of males use the slit in their underpants' and '50% chance that the lost TV remote is in the couch'. Battson further states that by 'representing these statistics in a human key, I urge the viewer to make the connection between numbers and real people' (artist's statement). Ultimately, this strengthens the notion of 'unreliable information' that the artist aims to drive home, emphasising the fact that people are too quick to trust information from sources that may not be reliable.

4.8 Claire Jorgensen, Seedlings (Cape Town)

Year: 2011 (Merit Award): Painting installation

Media: Water, mist, bubbles, coloured ink



Figure 6.8 Claire Jorgensen, *Seedlings*, Sasol New Signatures 2011

The viewer is confronted by an installation in a low-lit environment. It takes the form of a framed artwork that does not hang on a wall but, instead, is placed on the floor. A more apt description of the work would be a 'framed water pond'. Themes of nature and plant life, both alien and indigenous, are explored in this artwork. Three small flower-like spouts emerge from a black liquid in a rectangular 'pond' producing small black droplets representing seeds and new life. For the greater part these exploding water droplets represent germinating seedlings. This process is ongoing and ever-changing. As fast as these mystical globules appear they dissipate into a haze of white smokiness leaving the viewer mesmerised and transported into the ambiguity of timelessness and space. The viewer seems to lose all sense of chronological time and purpose while trying to understand the identity of the seeds, either being friendly, or hostile. The work is mystical in essence and demands attention and engagement, bringing along with it moments of peace and tranquillity.

The theme of *combining materials* in an unconventional manner within the genre of painting is most striking within this artwork. In her response to the e-mail questionnaire, Jorgensen lists her materials as 'water, mist (water atomisation), misters (a mister uses

ultrasonic sound frequencies to atomise water molecules), black ink, steel cover, plastic basin and aluminium strips'. It is evident in this instance that besides the use of black ink, the remainder of the materials are relatively unconventional to the domain of the visual arts. Furthermore, in the e-mail questionnaire the artist motivates that the physical properties of water 'were used for conceptual purposes rather than as a technical medium, for example watercolour painting'. She further states that 'mist and other equipment used to produce water vapour are unconventional to visual art'. It is clear that Jorgensen's approach has married the discipline of visual art with that of botany, as she admits to having a keen interest in the biological aspects of plants. The use of misters which use ultrasonic frequencies to 'atomise water' is a clear indication that the work is characterised by genre-mixing. Like Bolton and Erasmus, this interdisciplinary approach is further motivated by a statement Jorgensen makes in the e-mail questionnaire and where she says that 'my interest in plants and botany emerges through the title of the artwork where mist makers produce small "flowers" of ink-like seedlings'.

The entire artwork is carefully framed in the manner in which traditional paintings would be framed. The difference is that instead of hanging on a wall, the work is placed on the floor. This is done for technical reasons, but I believe that these technical challenges regarding gravity and its effect on the substance of water have further strengthened the artwork multimodally, as the very nature of traditional art-making has been redefined by the use of unconventional materials in the realm of painting. In other words, in the traditional genre of painting, it is not common to exhibit framed artworks on the floor.

Since the final artwork bears evidence of a *layered end product*, the work may be characterised as multimodal, embracing a continuous juxtaposition between concept and end product. In her response to the e-mail questionnaire the artist lists '3D component, lighting, gaze, layout, space, colour, moving image, gesture, action, non-musical sound, texture and smell' as modes that were used in the construction of the artwork. This is grounded in evidence Jorgensen provided in a comment she provided in the e-mail questionnaire, where she mentions that 'the medium is the concept and it is the process and the connection between the two are logical'. Here I believe that Jorgensen is aware of the multi-layeredness that a modal ensemble can produce to trigger the viewer's response. She states that 'in my creative practice I see my medium as being the final artwork and an important explorative into practice-led research' (e-mail response). The artist is reliant on the fluidity of water, which could not be simulated using any other medium. We are confronted by the modes of sound, movement, gesture and colour,

which are materially grounded by the use of water in a primary modal state. This means that water becomes the medium in itself, in other words it is used in its primary materiality rather than in its secondary materiality (for example the representation of water executed in oil on canvas). Jorgensen set out to carefully construct a modal ensemble which would aid the execution of the concept. Like Erasmus and Bolton, I believe that the modal ensemble that Jorgensen designed is primarily sense-driven. Water is something that is never static; it can be heard, felt, tasted (not in this case, though) and seen. Furthermore, the modal qualities of water are transformative, which allows the original process of design to be re-designed by itself, as the constant bubbling of the water produced by the misters never produces quite the same end product.

Regarding the theme of the *viewer's response*, Jorgensen places an emphasis on the viewer's engagement with the artwork. As soon as the viewer becomes an active participant in this process, the re-design process becomes intensely layered, which offers meanings to be made ad infinitum. Once again, the traditional use of the term 'viewer' is no longer applicable. The 'viewer' is urged not only to look but to hear, feel and blow on the artwork. Jorgensen states: 'I think the artwork is unusual. It mixed an eerie seduction and mystical quality of black ink (mixed with water) transforming into white mist (atomised water), with a more light-hearted and playful element of interaction' (e-mail response). In my opinion, this 'interaction' the artist refers to is primarily rooted in her belief that the concept was made stronger by multisensory viewer participation. I motivate this opinion by what Jorgensen writes about her own work: 'Audiences were able to engage directly with the work through "shaping" and blowing on the mist' (e-mail questionnaire). I believe that by blowing on the misty bubbles, the viewer reshapes the message, which in turn becomes internalised and personal. Furthermore, the artist speaks of a 'temperature change which can be felt' when interacting with the artwork. Jorgensen states that this was part of the concept, as 'a goose-bump effect is triggered by the work, using ultrasonic sounds that are beyond our hearing but nonetheless present' (e-mail questionnaire).

Water, as well as the ecological issues revolving around it globally, becomes an important theme in the *validation of contemporary issues*. I base my inference on Jorgensen's statement in her response to the e-mail questionnaire that 'water is in line with my larger theme of exploring nature and artifice through the use of it as medium, with hints of environmental concerns'. This is corroborated by her use of unconventional materials. For example, the frame has a far more significant role to play than emancipating her work from the genres of traditional artworks. The artist made the

frame from plastic and aluminium, which further grounds the ecological notion of water and pollution. In validating the contentious issue of the destruction of our ecology, she states that (artist's statement) 'this discussion also points to the environmental concerns behind water, hence I use plastic, metals and more so-called "destructive" materials to further explore what appears to be untroubled binaries and dichotomies'. This is done purposively as Jorgensen admonishes: 'Let's not forget that plastic and aluminium are substances that are non-biodegradable or non-recyclable.'

4.9 Adelheid von Maltitz, *Bodies* (Bloemfontein)

Year: 2014 (Runner-up) Sculptural installation

Media: Resin, earth, ash, wood, light projection



Figure 6.9 Adelheid von Maltitz, *Bodies*, Sasol New Signatures 2014

Conceptually, the artist deals with issue of road accidents, which claim the lives of many people on South African roads. This echoes back to the artist's own struggle in dealing with the anxiety towards death and shares with the viewer the sense of loss of a loved one in a fatal road accident. This sculptural piece, which takes the form of an installation depicting graves, is delicately crafted and flawless in its execution and presentation.

Von Maltitz refers to her work as a sculptural installation. Regarding the theme of *combining materials*, the artist used found objects and unconventional materials which she lists in the e-mail questionnaire as 'resin, earth, ash, and heat from light, in an installation to represent death in the form of graves and bodies of transcendence'. When the artist was asked to comment (e-mail questionnaire) on the use and combination of materials, she answered: 'It really depends on what traditional art media is in current visual art practices. All the media I have used have been used before, but all of them are not traditional if you are referring to oil paint, charcoal, pencil, etc.' It is clear that Von Maltitz' choice of materials was motivated by a desire to create layers of multisensory responses that are multimodal in concept and execution. This observation is grounded when the artist reiterates in her response to the e-mail questionnaire that 'the use of physical earth was used to suggest a burial but it also contrasts with the light, heat and repetition of the resin panels'. Von Maltitz summarises by stating (e-mail questionnaire) that 'the choice of materials is related to the theme'.

The various modal *layers found in the end product* of this artwork elevated it to the status of a winning work. The installation consists of two grave-like structures, one heaped with earth and the other a mixture of earth and ash. Alongside each 'grave' are two erect panels containing multiple segments of cast resin blocks which represent bodies. To create these modal layers (modal ensembles) the artist used the modes of light, dress, space, gesture, action, colour and 3D models. Although not listed, a sense of smell is evident in the use of large amounts of earth (soil) and ash. I believe that these modes were used to activate four senses, which cumulatively contributed to layering the end product. The clue to understanding the work lies within the design of her modal ensemble, where a comment regarding her 'consistent sense of anxiety' (artist statement) is strengthened by the materials used. The artist purposively arranged different modes to evoke in the viewer a sense of death and transcendence. As the notion of death is largely an abstract thought, the sense of sight alone regarding a 3D model in the traditional sculptural sense would not be able to evoke so vividly the sense of death and the artist's personal anxiety towards it. During the conceptualisation process of the artwork, Von Maltitz was clearly aware of the limitations of using only the sense of sight to portray her anxiety. In her response to the e-mail questionnaire she states that 'the modes and materials I used formed part of the concept and had to link in some way to what I was trying to visually communicate'. I am of the opinion that the artist selected modes with specific materialities that would harness the other senses to enable the viewer not only to see this fear of death but also to feel the experience by using light which generated warmth (resin-panelled light boxes), and found objects in

the form of ash and earth (grave structures), which appealed to the sense of smell. It is thus clear that the artist is dealing with an array of modes arranged in a way to evoke a multisensory experience of abstract notion of death and transcendence.

The importance of drawing the *viewer's response* is justified by Von Maltitz in the artist's statement where she claims that 'the viewer needs to experience a deep emotional response. In order to achieve this I used light and heat (not intense heat, just heat that could be registered by the body).' The viewer is drawn into the open space between two light boxes depicting resin-cast tiles, forming the positive and negative spaces of an apparition. The resin blocks are translucent, which allows them to be backlit, creating warmth and light when the viewer stands between the two panels. Von Maltitz mentions in the artist's statement 'repeating these resin blocks, which are laid out like a mosaic, strengthens the concept visually. Repetition, to my understanding, links to anxiety.' The artist actually gestures the viewer to use the space to contemplate the process of mourning and loss. This contemplation of loss challenges the viewer to respond to the artwork on three sophisticated levels. It is clear from the artist's statement that viewer participation is required to complete the artwork in order to bring the concept full circle. The artist's statement that accompanied the work to the exhibition further motivates my belief that the layered end product is modally driven. The viewer is gestured to interact with the installation, which is multi-layered. Von Maltitz explains (in the artist's statement):

In the work the physical space between the two light boxes can be used by the viewer as a space for contemplating concepts of mourning and loss which may be relevant to the viewer's own experience with loss and death. In this way the viewer is immersed and functions as a third type of body within the artwork. The first type, suggested by the heaped earth is a buried body, closed and dead. The second type is represented by fragmented apparitions in the light boxes. This body is in the 'grey area' between life and death. The third and final figure is the viewer (standing between the two light boxes), who is open, alive, lit, whole and wonderful.

In *validating contemporary issues*, this artwork addresses road accident fatalities in South Africa. However, the artist used a broad contemporary issue and internalised it deeply and emotionally on a personal level. Von Maltitz motivates in the artist's statement that 'personally, I experience an intense and consistent sense of anxiety towards death, and specifically the loss of a loved one due to a road accident'. While the

work has become personalised, it echoes back to a larger societal issue, inviting the viewer to reflect on his or her own personal struggles regarding death, loss and mourning.

4.10 Josua Strümpfer, *There is death in the pot* (Port Elizabeth)

Year: 2014 (Merit Award) Sculptural installation

Media: Perspex, abalone tiles, LED lights, epoxy, resin



Figure 6.10 Josua Strümpfer, *There is death in the pot*, Sasol New Signatures 2014

This winning artwork is a sculpture that hangs on a wall. It consists of a circular container made from perspex, which is backlit by LED lights. In the centre of the circular construction is a skull that is masterfully crafted in resin and covered in tiny mosaic-patterned squares cut from abalone shells the artist collected on the beach over a period of time. Like Von Maltitz, Strümpfer deals with issues regarding death. In the artist's statement he refers to 'death' and the 'skull' as representations of the 'heaviness or the magnitude of the dark side of humanity'. Strümpfer is of the opinion (artist's statement) that although a skull represents death, it was once a vessel that carried life in the form of a brain that housed an individual's human consciousness.

Regarding the theme of *combining materials*, Strümpfer admits in his e-mail response and artist's statement that although he is a sculptor, he tends to force himself to work with a combination of unconventional materials as this enables him to create 'new and interesting pieces of art'. Strümpfer lists his use of materials as 'abalone shell (mother of pearl), perspex, LED lights and resin castings'. He believes that 'embracing the real difficulties of combining conventional/unconventional material convincingly is a way of staying with the times' (e-mail questionnaire). Strümpfer, like the other artists in the sample, seems to understand that traditional materials may be restricting in a contemporary world of multimodal meaning-making, and therefore he seeks other combinations of materials that best suit the theme, concept and the viewer's understanding thereof.

The concept of the artwork deals with an abstract thought, which needed to be given careful consideration in its modal arrangement for the message of life and death to be understood. In doing so, Strümpfer offers the viewer a *layered end product* consisting of an interplay of parodies of light and dark, both materially and conceptually. In his e-mail response, Strümpfer states that he used modes of 'lighting, gaze, layout, colour, texture, touch and 3D model' in the concept and execution of the artwork, which skilfully integrated a multimodal approach to meaning-making. He was able to achieve this convincingly by arranging a modal ensemble that would best illustrate the concept of light and dark, good and evil, death and life. The mode of colour and light became an integral part of the conceptualisation process of the artwork, as the symbolic nature of light is physically grounded by using LED lights to illuminate the outer rim of the 'pot' while a dark negative background inside the 'pot' (which houses the skull) remained seemingly dark and eerie. This notion of dark and/or eerie was purposively orchestrated in a multimodal manner because the inside of the pot remains dark and physically unlit. Here I believe that the artist has worked with light in its primary modality to draw a strong viewer response. In other words, the mode is primary as the artist did not create the illusion of light and dark using an alternate medium such as paint, which would have rendered concept a secondary modality.

It is Strümpfer's ability to understand the materiality status of these modal ensembles that has made the work successful. The mode of touch, for example, is combined with light and colour in the use of abalone shells (which had been cut into 10 mm x 10 mm pieces) that not only cover the skull but are also incorporated to cover the outside rim of the pot. Once again the choice of material was conceptually driven, as Strümpfer states

that the intentional use of abalone shells 'echoes mankind's connection with the earth, as both shells and human bones contain calcium' (artist's statement).

Strümpfer's superior craftsmanship skills, coupled with his modal arrangements centred on materiality, further aided by his attempt to draw a strong *viewer's response*. He believes that his mosaic technique has added value to the artwork because 'I don't think people see good-quality mosaic craft these days, especially not on this scale using materials such as abalone shell'. In addition, Strümpfer contends that 'the use of LED lights to shine through abalone mosaics, which is perhaps unconventional, has enhanced the traditional mosaic technique, and thus the meaning and visual experience is better'. Being aware of using the over-exploited image of a skull, he set out to find new ways to deliver his intended idea. The ultimate goal that Strümpfer had in mind was for 'the viewer to contemplate the anthropocentric nature of the skull as a deeply personal object'. Because of the abstract nature of this concept, I believe that Strümpfer called upon the material qualities of modes, which he refers to as 'combining unconventional materials unconventionally' (e-mail questionnaire). It is clear that Strümpfer concerned himself with how the viewer would respond to the end product, which contains a message that may be too abstract to render in traditional materials using a monomodal platform of delivery. In motivation, Strümpfer's response to the e-mail questionnaire is 'my choice of media and concept always grow together. Concepts, modes and their materials inform each other in a process I call "percolation". I am always thinking of new ways to use different modes in sculpture.' It becomes evident that the artist immersed himself in a refining process using carefully planned and constructed modal ensembles to draw the viewer's response. These modes are believed to be chosen and arranged for their material qualities, which aim to trigger a multisensory response.

Like Von Maltitz, Strümpfer *validates contemporary issues* of death and life in a personal manner. According to the artist's statement, 'skulls represent more than just death. They bear with them material evidence of life from a beginning to an end. The skull becomes a proverbial seat of consciousness, now mute to reveal the thoughts and intentions it once contained.' Strümpfer is of the opinion that although we speak of 'matters from the heart', these matters arise from thoughts generated in the brain, which is contained within the skull. The skull as a vessel of consciousness thus becomes the key concept to which the artwork speaks (e-mail questionnaire). While overtly decorating the human skull is nothing new in the contemporary art world, a skull decorated with tiny pieces of abalone squares (in the form of tiles) plays on the concept of 'time', which is also related to life and death. Parallels are drawn between the

'remains' of the natural world through the use of materials such as bone and shell, which are manifested in the material qualities of modes. These, in turn, are any resources that are shaped socially and are used to make meaning.

5 SYNOPSIS OF THE THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Sections 1, 2 and 3 of this chapter analysed the data, which culminated in four emergent research themes. Using these emergent research themes, section 4 set out to offer a detailed narrative description of each of the ten participants' winning artworks using these research themes as markers. This was done to test the validity of the emergent themes as they manifest in the process of multimodal art-making in each of the winning artists' artworks. What follows is a synopsis of the thematic analysis, which aims to elicit the main characteristics of each research theme.

Theme 1: Combining materials

Materiality, unconventional material, found objects and combinations thereof are the pre-determined and emerging codes that make up this theme. It is clear that the participants were aware of the fact that a single medium in the traditional sense may no longer suffice in catering for the demands of contemporary meaning-making. Although the artists were pointed towards the definition of multimodality (in the e-mail questionnaire), few seemed to understand exactly what it entails. However, most of them chose to combine unconventional materials (in most cases) where these materials relate directly to the theme. Furthermore, most of the artists were interested in the material qualities that the unconventional media brought to their artworks. It is thus evident from the data sets that respondents combined more than one medium (traditional and/or unconventional), which created an end product that is layered with a multisensory approach to meaning-making. It is interesting to note that what the artists refer to as unconventional materials are in fact modes. The motivation for this is that the combinations of materials – especially ones that are unconventional – contain materialities that give rise to modal possibilities and opportunities far greater than those that were traditionally classified as traditional media (paint, pencil, clay, ink). These materials offer a wider variety of choices (multisensory) which encompass the general scholarly definition of the term 'mode'.

Theme 2: Layered end product

Mode, sense, process, artwork and technology are all pre-determined codes that emerged from the data sets. The unconventional materials the artist speaks of may be seen as modes because the material qualities of these modes become the key

determining factor for their inclusion in a modal ensemble. It further became evident that the layers of material qualities in modes within a modal ensemble created a multisensory experience that raised the level of viewer interaction. These layers of unconventional materials, chosen for their materiality, may be interpreted as modal layers, which may ultimately be defined as modal ensembles. In this sense, modes become refined as media, as they 'can do more' than a traditional monomodal medium because of their material qualities, which become layered with a multisensory experience (seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting). These modal layers offer more than just a traditional viewing experience and have been carefully chosen to fulfil a specific task. These modes are mostly used in their primary modal state, as it is within this primary state that the multisensory experience is shared with the viewer. The primary modal state refers to modes that are used in real time and space. In so doing, the viewer is able to interact with the artwork via the physical properties of the materials. In other words, actual electric lighting is used (for example) rather than simulating the illusion of light in a medium such as oil paint on canvas. Von Maltitz, for example, used light in its primary modality to create a physical sense of warmth, whereas Bolton used motor oil in its primary modality to create a physical sense of smell. Jorgensen used the physical properties of water to create mist, which invited the viewer to interact by blowing, hearing, touching and feeling the artwork. In motivation, both Bolton and Stroud mention in their responses to the e-mail questionnaire that modes bring something different to the artwork and the viewing experience. This resonates with various socio-semiotic scholarly definitions regarding modes and multimodal communication. In this case, modes are any resource for making meaning (Kress, 2007, p. 54) which are socially shaped and culturally determined (Kress & Bezemer, 2008). Mode, as it manifests by definition in socio-semiotics, could be seen as 'any resource'. In this instance, the resources used in visual art fulfil a multisensory roll.

These research results substantiate Stein's (2008, pp. 25–26) definition of modes as outlined in chapter 3 of this study. All ten participants realised modes in multiple media, whereas some chose to disseminate modes through technology. By using the material qualities of modes and realising their sensory possibilities, their communicative effects are manifested in visual grammars and syntax. Furthermore, the modal ensembles used for their communicative effects become the interface between the natural and cultural world of contemporary communication.

Theme 3: Importance of viewer response

The codes of emotional response, understanding, viewer interaction and enhancing meaning contributed to the theme of the viewer's response. It has been widely recognised that the purpose of visual art is not merely to decorate. From the analysis of the ten participants' winning works, it is evident that they expressed the need to create artworks that take the viewer's response and engagement with the artwork into account. It is clear that the artists paid careful attention to their approach and choice of materials (modal ensembles). This was done to draw a stronger visual response and align visual art with characteristics of contemporary communication, which is by nature multisensory and multimodal. While it has been noted that modal ensembles carry material qualities that trigger a multisensory response, the traditional role of the 'viewer' has been challenged by most of the respondents in this study. As stated earlier in this chapter, this multisensory approach challenges the viewer to not only 'view' in a traditional sense but rather to interact using senses other than that of sight. A term that is more appropriate than 'viewer' may be 'perceiver', which resonates with the term 'end-user' in contemporary communication (digital communication). What contemporary communication seeks to achieve in general is to make communication and interaction 'more real'. In contemporary meaning-making, the 'end-user' is exposed to more than just looking at still images accompanied by text. Multi-media messaging (MMS) and 'virtual realities', for example, allow the end-user to experience information in the form of sound and moving images in real time. Skype, for example, is an application which demonstrates this contemporary trend of communication. Furthermore, current multi-media researchers are in the process of creating haptic devices to transmit other senses digitally. This multisensory approach to digital communication, which is characterised by the 'more real' experience, seems to be manifesting itself in the visual arts. Thus it is highly likely that visual art is striving to align the 'perceiving' experience with that of the characteristics of the 'end-user' in digital communication.

Theme 4: Validating contemporary issues

The pre-determined codes of current contemporary issues, communication and concept contributed to the theme of validating contemporary issues. From the data sets, it became evident that the participants placed a strong emphasis on the term 'communication'. Here they felt the need to offer commentary on contentious contemporary issues such as traditional rites of passage, environmental destruction, social pressures regarding identity, media censorship and manipulation, and sociocultural commentary on life, death and transcendence. The final artworks bear evidence of themes carefully constructed around a set of materials aimed at evoking the concept

behind the artwork. It is therefore not surprising that the word 'concept' was repeated on numerous occasions by all ten participants. The majority of the artists mentioned that the theme, concept or idea dictated the choice and use of materials that made up the final end product. I believe that the artist's intense engagement with the design of modal ensembles grounds the notion of validating contemporary issues through a lens of personal experience, and in so doing, visual art is moved beyond the label of art as decoration, art as a pastime or hobby, or art as purely skill-driven. If the role of visual art is defined as visual communication device, all ten respondents encompass the role of visual art as a multimodal communicational device that serves the greater need of society.

6 SUMMARY

This chapter accounts for the detailed process of data analysis culminating in four themes that were mapped onto each of the ten participating artists' winning artworks: combine, layer, respond and validate. Multimodality in visual art is aimed at validating contemporary issues through a process of combining materials, followed by a layering process, which results in the construction of modal ensembles.

The following chapter concludes the thesis and offers a framework for multimodal teaching and learning within the visual arts based on the process definitions of combine, layer, respond and validate.

CHAPTER 7

Framework for multimodal teaching and learning in visual art

1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter concludes the thesis by offering an overview of the empirical research that culminated in four research themes, which will serve as the foundation for a teaching and learning framework based on the ADDIE (analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation) model for curriculum design. Focusing on the macro-level and meso-level of curriculum design, the framework aims to ground the importance of the multimodal communicative role that the visual arts must play if it is to survive and thrive in the 21st century. An understanding of the notion of speed, multiple platforms of delivery and perceiver interaction, as well as social, cultural and historical identities, is entrenched in the framework.

2 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

Six research questions were formulated to address the theorisation, application and instruction of multimodality in visual art. This section gives an overview of the extent to which the research questions have been answered.

Regarding the first research question of *how multimodality has been theorised and applied to visual art*, my summative conclusion is that the term 'visuals' has become a metaphor for communication appealing to senses other than sight (in the form of verbal text) and sound (in the form of oral speech). In 1916 Saussure classified the system of signs into a two-part model (signifier and signified) in an attempt to define the role of signs as part of social life. This model later inspired Peirce (1931) to formulate an adaptation that became known as the Peircean triadic model comprising a representamen, an interpretant and an object. Peirce added the notion of the representamen to reflect his belief that the sign must 'mean something to someone' – in other words, the sign system is contextualised.

In 1935, Malinowski drew on Saussure and Peirce. For Malinowski, signs could only be understood in context. This meant that a single word could only be fully understood once it was read in relation to other words in a sentence via their grammatical associations. However, Malinowski moved beyond a sign system comprising only grammatical

associations and proposed that the sign system should incorporate activities, gestures, and facial expressions. In other words, it could be said that Malinowski, as early as 1935, was hinting at what would later become known as modes in social semiotics.

By 1978, Malinowski had inspired Halliday, who embedded the sign system in contextual grammatical associations. However, Halliday largely disregarded Malinowski's hint at multiple modes and focused primarily on text. In Halliday's now famous systemic functional linguistics (SFL, 1978) he posits three metafunctions of language: field, tenor and mode. In visual art 'field' is interpreted as the theme or concept that the artist wishes to convey while 'tenor' is primarily interpreted as the relationship between the artist and his audience. Mode was later to become one of the cornerstones of multimodality in social semiotics, as it underpinned the form of the sign, or its material grounding. Mode affords the artist various platforms for the construction of meaning imbued in modal ensembles.

Social semiotics is the overarching domain within which modes as socially constructed vehicles for meaning-making have been studied. In socio-semiotics the sign system is said to be made up of social semiotic resources and scholars aim to study the process of how signs are made and understood in a specific socio-cultural setting; in other words, how resources are used by sign-makers to make meaning. By the late 20th century, the burst of technological advancement, especially in communication structures (internet, hand-held devices, cell phones) brought social semiotic scholars to the realisation that grammatical associations stretch beyond the use of written text and spoken words. The state of contemporary communication became the focal area of discussion during various academic colloquiums held by the New London Group (1996–2000) and during this period the terms 'multimodality' and 'multimodal communication' were coined.

The next important milestone in the origin and development of multimodality is Kress and Van Leeuwen's (1996) 'visual grammar', which draws strongly on Halliday's systemic functional grammar and offers a reinterpretation of Halliday's three metafunctions with reference to visual images. Visual grammar further attempted to analyse visual images using the functional grammatical categories of SFL. Although visual grammar broke new ground in social semiotics, it was also profoundly criticised for being too fixed (rule bound) and rigorous in its approach to underpin visual images. Furthermore, Kress and Van Leeuwen were criticised for being narrowly selective in their choices to which they applied the visual grammar theory. For visual arts in particular, this part-theory had little relevance, as the units of analysis mostly comprised pictures telling a story or

expounding facts. What remained relevant, as emphasised by Kress and Van Leeuwen and other socio-semiotic scholars such as Iedema (2003), Jewitt (2007), O'Halloran (2007), O'Toole (2011), Duncam (2004, 2010) and Stein (2008), was that contemporary society no longer makes meaning within the boundaries of singular disciplines, genres and modes. This has resulted in communicational structures becoming hybrid, causing their respective boundaries to become fuzzy. This tendency toward hybridity and genre-mixing has complicated the theorisation of multimodality in a single unified theory based on a set of generative rules. The strongest contribution by SFL to a cross-modal theory of multimodality is perhaps the tripartite division of meaning-making resources into field, tenor and mode, as demonstrated by O'Toole (architecture), Stein (education) and O'Halloran (film). Table 7.1 below illustrates the slightly varied application in disciplines with core modes other than text alone:

Table 7.1 Adaptations of Halliday's metafunctions of language (1978)

	SFL (Halliday)	Visual grammar (Kress & Van Leeuwen)	Visual art/ architecture (O'Toole)	Moving images/ video (O'Halloran)	Multimodal framework for visual art (Binsbergen)
Field	The content of language	Ideational metafunction Visual sign system must convey and represent ideas	Representational metafunction The themes found in an artwork: scenes, action, gestures	Experiential meaning Construct and construe an experience of the world	What does the artist want to say? Idea or concept of the artist Concept is refined into a theme
Tenor	The meaning that is intended by the meaning-maker	Interpersonal metafunction A visual sign must create a 'mood' of address	Modal metafunction Artist's approach: rhythm, stance, scale, perspective, etc	Interpersonal meaning To enact social relations and create a relationship between experiential and logical meaning	Why does the artist want to say it? What does the artist want to say and why does he or she want to say it? Artist's intent and personal experience (<i>Zeitgeist</i>)
Mode	The use of 'mood' and 'texture' in language to create a certain expression	Textual metafunction A visual sign must form a coherent form of address	Compositional metafunction Application of art theories: use of techniques, Gestalt and the elements and principles of art	Textual meaning Organise meanings into messages	How will the artist say it? How will the artist say it? Application of art theories in modal combinations

By 2010 Kress had abandoned a rigid grammar-based theory of modes in favour of focusing on how these modes are used in combinations to make meaning. The definition of modes has shifted from what modes are to how modes are used. Kress calls the use of modes (constructed into modal ensembles) the process of 'design' (2010) and 're-design' (2014). His 2010 publication is dedicated to describing how modes are used (on

multiple platforms) to make meaning, but most importantly, on the characteristics of the design process in terms of the site of display, materiality, speed and reach.

The second research question addresses the issue of *which modes and media are combined by contemporary South African artists*. This question was answered with reference to the responses of the ten artists to the first question in the questionnaire: 'Please tick the blocks that you feel embody the characteristics of your artwork'. These modes, and the media in which they are rendered, were described in detail through the qualitative responses to the other questions as well as in the artist's statements. The data revealed that the majority of the participants used the modes of writing, 3D models, still images, lighting, gaze, dress, layout, space, colour, moving images, gesture, action, speech, sound, texture, olfaction and taste. These modes were packaged in a variety of materials ranging from ultrasonic frequency modules, water, abalone shells, LED lights, motor oil, automotive paint, body hair and bath scum to video art, digital projection, digital animation, light projections, earth, ash and various found objects. The data revealed that an average of five to seven modes was used in the construction of the artworks by each of the ten participants.

The third research question deals with *how these modal ensembles are combined in visual artworks*. The answer to this question was provided by question 1 of the questionnaire, as well as the artist's statements and my analysis of the artworks as artefacts. The first and second themes that emerged from the data, in particular, respond to this question, namely that of *combining materials* and *layered end product* (which points to the construction of modal ensembles). It has been overtly demonstrated in the data analysis chapter of this study (chapter 6) that a multisensory approach to the construction of multimodal ensembles became an integral part in the meaning-making process of the participating artists. These modes are never used in isolation and are never the sum of their modal constituents. The artists utilised the affordances of the chosen modes to construct multiple layers of meaning that reflect, construct and critically comment or reflect on society. These are reflected in the themes of combining, layering, responding and validating.

Although none of the artists were overtly aware of the notion of mode, they intuitively selected modes and built modal ensembles on the basis of their affordances and the ways in which these ensembles make social meaning in the context at hand. Kress (2010, 2014) refers to the use of 'modal ensembles' as the process of 'design/re-design'. The findings clearly showed that the case study participants used modes mainly centring

on material qualities to prompt the viewer to respond in a specific manner. It was also evident that the material qualities of traditional art media (on their own) did not suffice in communicating conceptually with the viewer. Rather, modes were seen by the artists as 'unconventional materials', which translate into 'modes' within a socio-semiotic framework. The combinations of these materials/modes lead to carefully planned modal ensembles, each being selected and arranged (designed, combined, built, constructed) to fulfil a specific communicative task.

The fourth research question, which links to the third, was aimed at eliciting the reasons *why these artists prefer a combination of modes and media*. Questions 4, 5 and 6 of the e-mail questionnaire were aimed at eliciting data in order to answer this research question. The most salient answer to this research question resides in the third theme that emerged from the data analysis, namely that *the viewer's (perceiver's) response* lies at the core of the meaning-making process in the visual arts, from the onset of the conceptualisation process of the artwork right through to the modal and material rendering of this concept. Furthermore, the artists may subconsciously have sought to align their art with the characteristics and nature of contemporary visual communication. As the world is communicating on multisensory levels using various technological platforms, the participants were aligning themselves with its expectations. It is highly likely that the participating artists sought to draw a strong viewer response by entertaining the characteristics that are valued by contemporary society. Such an inference may be substantiated with reference to the various primary and secondary modes these artists used, including digital software (and their devices) as well as unconventional materials such as used motor oil, bath scum, water, electronic atomisers (mistifiers), video, automotive paint, digital images, video projections, abalone shells, soil, ash and light – often used in conjunction with more traditional art materials.

The fifth research question probed *how meaning-making is enhanced through the use of multimodal ensembles – both at a social and a semiotic level*. The answer to this question does not lie in the response to any single question posed in the questionnaire, nor explicitly in the artist's statements or the expert analyses of the artworks. Rather, it was answered through introspection and reflection on the process of multimodality in visual art, in themes 2 to 4. Artists combined various materials (instantiating eleven modes) to create modal ensembles that are layered in order to draw a strong viewer's response, which in turn confirms and validates contemporary issues. The participating artists proved that they set out to validate or share pressing social / political / environmental issues about which they felt strongly. These practices thus transcend the

notion of art as a pretty picture used only for decoration and demonstrate that art in general has an important role to play in contemporary communication. Furthermore, by using such multimodal ensembles, the reach of the artwork and the message it contains are stretched beyond the 'gallery wall' into different public spaces and communicative domains, including the digital realm. In addition, the breaking down of boundaries and expansion of sites of display have led to rapprochement between the two polarities of 'pedestrian' or 'street' visual culture and the realm of traditional 'high art'.

The sixth, and final research question, aims to draw on the findings of the first five research questions together, *viz.* how they may *inform a framework for teaching multimodality in visual art*. Against this backdrop it has become clear that arts education is in need of curriculum redesign to accommodate the realities and the needs of a multimodal world. Although the majority of art students at tertiary institutions are working on multimodal platforms and national education departments seem to be aware of the nature of contemporary communicative changes, no directives have been offered to assist in the teaching and learning of multimodality in art-making. Furthermore, there is still a considerable gap between visual art as taught in the last phase of secondary education (the FET phase) and in tertiary education and the art practices of young contemporary South African artists whose work has received recognition at a national level.

Based on the outcomes of the empirical research conducted for this thesis, a framework is offered for the teaching and learning of multimodality to assist in preparing the upcoming generation of visual artists for the reality and the challenges of an increasingly multimodal world. The remainder of the chapter attempts to use the process of multimodal art-making as manifested in the salient themes that precipitated from this study to construct a framework for multimodal teaching and learning.

3 FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING MULTIMODALITY IN VISUAL ART

In the problem statement of this study I problematise the fact that in most secondary and to some degree tertiary education institutions, the teaching and learning scenario involving the visual arts lay stringent emphasis on process-driven art-making practices and evaluation procedures that mainly focus on assessment of technical qualities. In other words, both content and evaluation are focused on formal aspects or technical mastery. As mentioned, students in the senior and FET phases of education, following CAPS guidelines, respond mainly to a pedagogy of 'How am I doing this?' but fail to answer the crucial question as to 'Why am I doing this and how is this rationale best

expressed artistically?’ My observations of this teaching and learning process over the past 17 years, including published sources that I consulted during the period of doctoral study, led me to believe that art-making at secondary levels of national education remains largely detached from the visual communicative role that art should play in society. This notion becomes a serious stumbling block in preparing arts education for the challenges of a multimodal world. These challenges have been confirmed by local authors who have written on this subject, such as Archer (2011), Andrew (2011), and Stein (2008); as well as internationally acclaimed authors, such as Eisener (1978), Barone (1997), Duncum (1997) and Bamford (2008). Some call for change and embrace various facilitated leaning platforms, which are largely a post-modern trend, while authors such as Andrew and Stein have successfully implemented multimodal pedagogies in teaching and learning, and have performed case studies where multimodal interventions have been employed to better art education.

Although it is accepted that an integrated multimodal curriculum cannot be achieved without certain basic skills (related to materiality) and genres having been mastered, many tertiary institutions still teach visual art as locked into specific genres (for example painting, printmaking and sculpture) and bound to the materials used traditionally for rendering art works in these genres, even in the senior years of tertiary study. While the majority of the participants in this study admit that they have been taught (at university) to combine materials and to work across genres and disciplines, it is clear that to date no coherent framework for teaching multimodal art-making has been formulated to address these issues.

In this section I offer a broad framework as to how the four themes that emerged from my research inform instruction at macro- and meso-levels of curriculum design and development. At the macro-level, I align the research themes with the outcomes of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Document (CAPS 2011) for the Further Education and Training band of secondary education, and with the level descriptors of the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) (2010–2014) level 7, which equals the third year of university study.

The reason for selecting level 7 is that at the third-year level of tertiary study, a firm technical foundation has already been laid for the chosen craft. Thus, although a multimodal approach to teaching visual art does not dismiss the importance of technical mastery, it regards the application of these technical skills across media and modes as vital in the process of meaning-making at the third year level of university study. At the

meso-level, I align the four research themes with a curriculum framework I designed on the basis of the well-known ADDIE model.

3.1 Alignment of the research themes with national policy documents

In an attempt to inform a broad framework for multimodality in the teaching and learning of visual art it is firstly important to determine the relevance of the four themes that precipitated from the data analysis. These are mapped on to the CAPS document (2011) for secondary education, and the NQF (SAQA 2010) level 7 descriptors for tertiary education.

3.2 Curriculum and Assessment Policy Document (Visual Art) 2011

The *specific aims* in the CAPS document for visual arts (2011, p. 8) seem to accommodate the characteristics of contemporary multimodal communication as characterised by this study. In addition, they emphasised the socially constructed content of visual art. The following table demonstrates how the four themes that emerged from the data emphasise some of the specific aims of the FET CAPS policy document for visual art. Eight of a possible twelve specific aims (CAPS), bolded in the table below, align well with the four themes.

Table 7.2 Mapping research themes on the specific themes of the CAPS

Specific aim (CAPS)		Emergent theme
1	Explore, develop and realise creative ideas in response to both externally set and self-generated projects, drawing on own experiences and knowledge of visual culture past and present	Combining materials
2	Explore and manipulate materials, techniques, processes and technology in the making of imaginative and innovative artworks of personal expression	
3	Be exposed to the diversity of visual art traditions in international and South African contexts and use these as a resource	
4	Explore materials, processes and techniques in an efficient, economical, safe and responsible way	
5	Manage own working process	Layered end product
6	Observe, assess and analyse art forms, processes and products	
7	Communicate effectively using visual, oral and written language skills	Importance of viewer response
8	Critically appraise own work and that of others	
9	Develop entrepreneurial skills and professional practice within art to explore a variety of career options	
10	Appreciate the critical role visual art plays in the enrichment of the visual environment the school and community	Validating contemporary issues
11	Understand the links between the visual arts and creative industries such as design and advertising	
12	Understand the social and historical role of visual arts in transforming societies	

It is evident from the table above that the aims of the CAPS document include references to the use of various materials that may be combined to create artworks. However, the CAPS document does not seem to accommodate the theme of multimodal layering and the viewer's response. The theme of validating contemporary issues, while not overtly evident, does seem to align with the specific aims of the CAPS document. This supports the conclusion that although the policy document alludes to the use of various materials and how the artworks may fulfil a vital role in visual communication, no space is made available for the combination of materials to create multimodal artworks. To extend the CAPS document in this direction it would be necessary to design a framework to facilitate the studio practice of multimodal art-making processes at a meso-level of curriculum design and development.

3.3 South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) NQF level 7

As mentioned above, the focus on level 7 of the SAQA level descriptors is that the first two years of a bachelor's degree in the visual arts be spent on acquiring much-needed technical skills in the student's craft of choice. It is imperative that the student should gain a substantial level of technical mastery before a framework focused on multimodal practices can be implemented. Technical mastery is a prerequisite for attempting to combine materials (theme1) through layering, using a design that makes use of modal ensembles (theme 2) in an attempt to evoke a response from the viewer (theme 3) and finally validate contemporary issues (theme 4). The four research themes are mapped onto, and aligned with, the ten NQF level descriptors (level 7) in table 7.3. As with the CAPS document, not all the research themes align sharply with the level descriptors. Again, this is not seen as a mismatch; the emphasis is on the fact that the level descriptors do not contradict the themes, but selectively allow them or align with them. Only the level descriptors that overtly coincide with the codes assigned in the qualitative content analysis of the questionnaire responses have been bolded.

It is evident from table 7.3 that only four of a possible ten level descriptors align with the emergent research themes. The level descriptors only broadly characterise knowledge gained by means of research and how these research endeavours assist the student in formulating an understanding of the world in the implementation thereof. SAQA advises that the level descriptors are by definition generic statements describing the character and context of learning expected at each level of instruction (<http://www.saqa.org.za/docs/misc.pdf>, accessed 24 August 2015). It is safe to believe that these level descriptors were focused on curricula for theory-driven subjects, which

are the norm for tertiary education. Furthermore, generic descriptors are open to interpretation and adaptation for all contexts, including studio practices.

The next section introduces the ADDIE model of instructional design in order to offer a meso-level instructional framework for multimodality in visual art.

Table 7.3 Mapping research themes onto the specific themes of the CAPS document for visual arts (2011)

SAQA level 7 descriptor		Research theme
1	Scope of knowledge: integrated knowledge of the main areas of one or more fields, disciplines, concepts, facts, rules of that field, discipline or practice	Combining materials
2	Method and procedure: range of methods of enquiry in a field, discipline or practice and their suitability to specific investigations; apply a range of methods to resolve problems or introduce change within a practice	
3	Problem-solving: identify, analyse, critically reflect on and address complex problems, applying evidence-based solutions and theory-driven arguments	
4	Accessing, processing, and managing information: develop appropriate processes of information gathering for a given context for its use; validate the sources of information, and evaluate and manage the information	
5	Contexts and systems: manage and process in unfamiliar and variable contexts, recognising that problem-solving is context and system bound	Layered end product
6	Ethics and professional practice: to take decisions and act ethically, and the ability to justify these decisions and actions drawing on appropriate ethical values and approaches, within supported environments	
7	Producing and communicating information: develop and communicate his/her ideas and opinions in well-formulated arguments	Importance of viewer response
8	Knowledge literacy: understanding knowledge as contested.	Validating contemporary issues
8	Management of learning: accurately identify, evaluate and address his/her learning needs and facilitate collaborative learning processes	
10	Accountability: take full responsibility for his/her work, decision-making and use of resources	

4 INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN FRAMEWORK FOR MULTIMODAL ART PRACTICES BASED ON THE ADDIE MODEL

4.1 Characteristics of the ADDIE instructional design model

The ADDIE instructional design model was created by the Centre for Educational Technology at Florida State University (USA) in 1975 for military training purposes and was streamlined in 1981 by Russell Watson to aid the development of educational training programmes (Muruganantham, 2015, p. 52). According to Ashad, Hassan and Sherwani (2014, p. 27), the ADDIE model has to date become the standard practice in curriculum design. Furthermore, it is used by instructional and training developers owing to its characterisation as a flexible guide in the construction of effective learning

programmes. According to Evans (2011, p. 71) the five phases of the ADDIE model are most suited to educational curriculum designs as they 'offer the means of analysing student needs, designing and developing content and materials, implementing and finally evaluating the efficiency of the instructional intervention'. Designed as a reflexive model, ADDIE comprises five phrases: analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation (Muruganantham, 2015, p. 52). The ADDIE model procedure is illustrated in the diagram below.

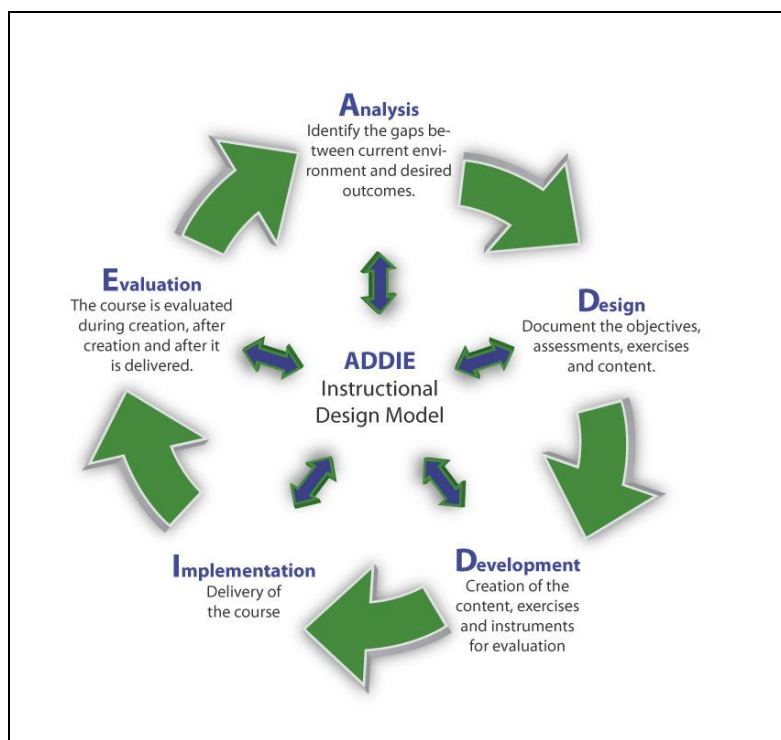


Figure 7.1 Diagrammatic representation of the ADDIE model of instructional design,
<http://mind42.com/public/41618bca-e6c2-4e96-ab2b-a16e70b7c0b0>

These five phases represented in figure 7.1 above can be summarised as follows (Muruganantham 2015, p. 53, Ashad *et al.*, 2014, p. 28, and Evans 2011, p. 73):

- *Analysis phase*: The source of the problem is identified, which may lead to possible solutions. This phase includes setting out the instructional goals and a list of tasks to be instructed. In essence the student/learner's needs and objectives are identified.
- *Design phase*: Once the problem has been identified and the student/learner's needs and objectives have been identified, the design phase begins. This phase

involves planning a strategy for developing the instruction and starts by identifying certain instructional delivery systems.

- *Development phase:* This phase develops lesson plans and materials to be used in the teaching and learning environment. Here the documentation of planning, execution and organisation of the learning framework is grounded.
- *Implementation phase:* During this phase the plan is put into action in the form of instructional delivery. It is characterised by the student/learner's understanding of the learning materials and the mastery of the objectives resulting in the transfer of knowledge.
- *Evaluation phase:* This phase is used to measure the effectiveness of the instruction that has taken place. This evaluation may be formative and/or summative. Formative evaluation is ongoing between all the phases while summative evaluation takes place after instruction and aims to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.

4.2 Framework for multimodality in visual art based on the ADDIE model (meso-level)

Based on the above five general characteristics of the ADDIE model, the following framework for multimodal teaching and learning is suggested at the meso-level of curriculum development. It is presented in tabular format by posing questions that aid the operationalisation of the framework construction adapted from Muruganantham (2015, p. 53).

Table 7.4 Questions that guided the operationalisation of the framework construction

Analysis phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the goals for the module? • What are the characteristics of the students that need to be taken into consideration?
Design phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the specific learning objectives? • The student will be able to ... • How will you know if the students have achieved the objectives? • What assessment and feedback tools have been put into place?
Development phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What instructional strategies will be used? • What is the impact of logistical issues on the execution?
Implementation phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module delivery • What is the process for the module delivery?
Evaluation phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of feedback was received? • Depending on feedback, what changes will be implemented?

Using the questions posed for each stage of the ADDIE model, the following framework is suggested which is largely driven by a facilitated learning paradigm:

Table 7.5 Curriculum design table for a multimodal framework in visual art (meso-level) adapted from Muruganantham (2015, p. 53)

Multimodal framework	Sample task	Sample output
Analysis The process of defining what needs to be learnt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify needs Identify problems Task analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Profile students Social status Cultural background Describe constraints
Design The process of identifying how it should be learnt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write down objectives Develop rubrics (test item) Plan instruction intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design questionnaires Design instructional strategy Define multimodal prototype Artwork specifications
Development Process of authoring and producing the teaching and learning intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop multimodal framework Examples & procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define multimodality in art Introduce conceptual process of multimodality in art
Implementation Implementation of the framework in a studio practice environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practical application of new knowledge of multimodality in visual art 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce four multimodal themes Monitor through intervention, facilitation and student feedback
Evaluation Determine the adequacy of instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor time factor Monitor student progress Monitor student understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation rubric Evaluation feedback

The analytical phase of the above table (7.5) sets out to identify the certain critical questions regarding what is to be learnt. In this event, it is accepted that a multimodal teaching intervention is required to broaden the students understanding of multimodal artworks. This will largely be determined by firstly profiling students in order to benchmark a general understanding of the groups' perception regarding what they define as visual art in general. The sample output thus makes provision for creating a benchmark in terms of firstly profiling students, establishing an understanding for their different cultural 'wants' and 'needs' regarding their individual perceptions of visual art. As it is widely accepted that South African teaching and learning environments are by nature multicultural, this forms the cornerstone of teaching interventions on a facilitated learning platform.

The *design phase* is used to introduce the concept of multimodality into a studio practice environment. Based on the general profile of the learner/students in the analysis phase, various teaching support materials are strategised to cater for a specific learning intervention. Here it is understood that the studio practice setup may vary institutionally.

Given the studio practice scenario the facilitator is faced with regarding notional time, learner/student numbers, module credits, instructional levels and general accessibility and viable facilities, it can be ascertained what is feasible both practically and theoretically. In order to assist this process the sample output phase suggests questionnaires and artwork specification that will assist in defining a specific multimodal prototype.

The *developmental phase* is used to design the specific learning and teaching materials. Here stringent emphasis must be placed on the four research themes that underpin the production of multimodal artworks. At this level a broad introduction to multimodality needs to be outlined by the introduction of for example artwork and multiple platforms of delivery. The sample output lays emphasis on expounding the notion of multimodality as a process-driven canon that manifests in visual art. This means that the conceptual phase should stem from a visual communicational foundation emphasising the role that visual art should play in contemporary communication.

The *implementation phase* concerns itself with the theoretical and practical interventions in a studio practice scenario. Here the theoretical approach to multimodality is put into practice by creating artworks which are fundamentally driven by the research themes of combining, layering, responding and validating. The sample output tier points towards an emphasis on these research themes by continuous monitoring on a facilitated learning platform. Figure 7.2 (below) offers a diagrammatic representation of the implementation phase within the studio environment (micro-level). As modal possibilities are infinite (Kress, 2010), figure, 7.2 serves as an example of but one of such a modal arrangement that could be used in the implementation phase of multimodal art making.

The 'combine' section of the diagram represents the institutionalised modes which stem from all five senses. Once a set of institutionalised modes have been chosen for their respective affordances, media and material characteristics they are stacked and 'layered'. The 'respond' section of the diagram points towards how these modal layers are sequenced, bearing in mind that this sequence is set to trigger various viewer responses which culminate in an artwork that is multimodal in its platform of delivery, which validates (fourth section) contemporary issues, and ultimately involves the viewer to respond to real life events.

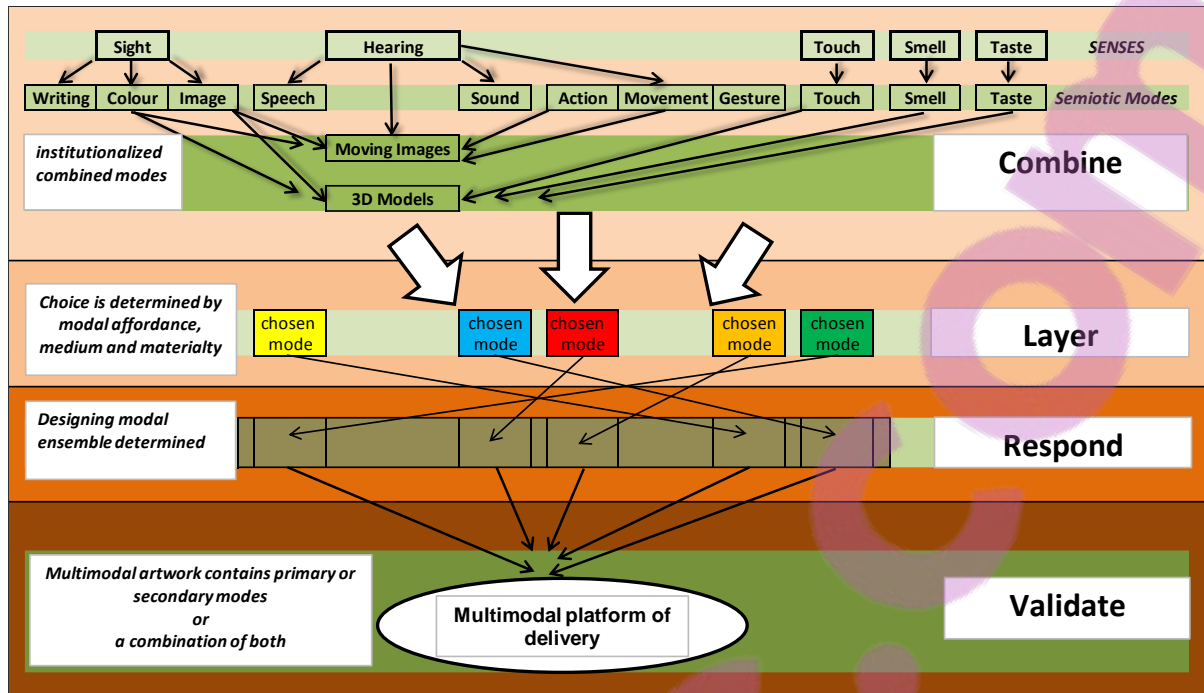


Figure 7.2 Diagrammatic representation of the execution phase of multimodal art making

The *evaluation phase* concerns itself not only with the evaluation of the process-driven characteristics of multimodal art-making, but provides valuable feedback to the facilitator regarding the learning intervention. The sample output tier points towards the use of an evaluation rubric(s) and/or evaluation feedback opportunities involving learners'/students' understanding and participation in the teaching and learning intervention. This may take the form of (for example) a feedback questionnaire. This will establish the success of the teaching and learning intervention and highlight areas where re-intervention is deemed necessary.

Figure 7.3 (below) offers an example of a rubric that could be used for evaluation purposes. The rubric is clearly demarcated into four separate sections which take into account the four emerging research themes of combine, layer, respond and validate. In this way it echoes figure 7.3 (above) regarding the implementation phase of the Addie model. It is noted that the descriptors may vary depending on the type and level of the learning intervention (phase and institutional levels). It is highly recommended that this form of evaluation and feedback are conducted on a continuous basis.

Descriptor	Theme	Mark	Comment
Choice of materials	Combine	25	
Theme dictates media choices			
Justification of material use			
conventional v/s unconventional			
multi-sensory approach	Layer	25	
modal combinations/layers			
Logical construction of artwork			
Technical execution			
Concept is understood	Respond	25	
Viewer prompts			
modal design			
viewer interaction			
Adressing contemporary issues	Validate	25	
Validates communicative aspect			
End product aligns with theme			
		Total	
		100	

Figure 7.3 Sample rubric for evaluation and feedback

In summary, the open-ended characteristics evident in the third tier (sample output) allows for a wide range of studio practice models to be put into action as a facilitated learning intervention. As examples have been offered above in the form of implementation and evaluation strategies, it remains open-ended in its approach. This open-ended approach serves to cater for the individual needs of the learners/students and educators/lecturers regarding their institutional structures and planning at a micro-level of facilitation.

The further recommendations I make in the following section may guide the operationalisation of the multimodal framework for teaching framework at a meso- and micro-level of instruction.

5 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

I anticipate the teaching of a multimodal framework to be somewhat challenging in light of the current modernist approaches that are still in place in most secondary and tertiary institutions in South Africa. While it was evident from data extracted from the participants' e-mail questionnaires that they had in fact been encouraged by their instructors to combine media and work interdisciplinary, none of the participants could explicate the process or guidelines. I believe that the reason for this is that the

participants in this study still work in traditional genre-bound studios where, in some instances, approaches underpinning high art drive the teaching and learning process. Based on the findings of this study, I make the following recommendations which encompass the four teaching strategy themes of combine, layer, respond and validate in order to emancipate art education from the bounds of traditional instructional methodologies centring on the exclusive mastering of craft:

- Redefine the traditional role of the artist and his/her relationship with the viewer.
- Abolish exclusive genre-based teaching at higher levels of visual art instruction.
- Focus on learner/student and learning-centred teaching instead of educator/lecturer-centred teaching to uplift a true humanising pedagogy.
- Emphasise genre-based media encompassing and enveloping the notion and characteristics of mode.
- Encourage an interdisciplinary and/or a mixed-genre approach to art-making processes.
- Be aware of interdisciplinary and/or mixed-genre approaches that may lead to collaborative projects.
- Understand that collaborations lead to complex understandings of new modal possibilities.
- Emphasise the role that visual art plays in multimodal communication.
- Challenge traditional sites of display such as traditional art galleries and drive alternative platforms of delivery for the visual arts.

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ADDENDUM A: E-MAIL QUESTIONNAIRE

Case Study Research Questionnaire: P A Binsbergen, 2015

Name: _____

Date and time: _____

Place: _____

Title and year of winning artwork: _____

Please refer to the table below.

For your convenience, a set of definitions are provided below should you not understand certain terminology. Some are self-explanatory while others may seem confusing. Refer to the definitions should you not understand the given terminology.

1 Please tick the blocks that you feel embody the characteristics of your artwork

Modes																	
Writing	Visible image								Movement			Speech	Sound	Touch		Smell	Taste
Written/ printed text	3D compo- nent	Still pic	Lighting	Gaze	Dress	Layout	Space	Colour	Moving image	Gesture	Action	Human speech	Music (non-mu- sical sounds)	3D sculpture	Texture	Artwork with factory dimension	Artwork that can be tasted

3D component: Does your artwork contain a 3D component (not sculpture in this case), for example an installation or performance or intervention component?

Lighting: Were you aware of the role of light and how it may affect your artwork?

Gaze: Were you aware of the fact that the images you use may alter the viewer's know perception of them?

Dress: The tone or mood that is set by your artwork.

Layout: Did you consider the layout of the artwork regarding the sum of its parts and how it would interact or communicate within a certain exhibited space?

Moving images: Does your artwork contain video, animation, stop animation, projections?

Gesture: Does the artwork gesture something to the viewer physically, optically or emotionally?

Action: Is the viewer invited to engage with the artwork in the form of interaction, participation such as look, touch, listen, look, smell, taste, press, pull, etc?

Artwork with olfactory dimension: Does the artwork contain an odour, that is, can the viewer smell it?

Artworks that can be tasted: Does the artwork gesture to the viewer to taste your artwork, that is, can your work be eaten?

Answer the following questions by placing an 'X' next to your preferred answer and briefly explain your motivation in the given spaces below.

Please note the following definition.

Mode: a socially shaped and constructed resource for making meaning (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996). In other words, modes may include any resources you may have used in your artwork other than, and including, traditional visual art media.

- 1 Did you use a combination of media or material?

YES NO

- 2 If yes, Please list the modes/media that you used to create your award-winning work.

3 Were some of these media/materials unconventional to *traditional art practices*?

YES NO

4 If yes, please list the media/materials that are not considered *traditional* visual art media.

5 Was the choice of media part of your pre-planning, or did it evolve with the concept?

YES NO

6 How did the process of selecting modes and media evolve with the process of the conceptualisation of the artwork?

Briefly explain in the space provided below.

7 Have you ever been taught how/why to combine media in your formal training?

YES NO

8 Briefly explain why you have chosen to use or combine various modes and media.

9 You have chosen a set of modes, media and/or unconventional media to create your winning artwork. Do you think it has enhanced the meaning-making process and the final artwork? Briefly explain how.

10 Briefly explain your winning work. In your opinion, why do you think it was awarded a prize?

ADDENDUM B DATA-CODING TABLE

Code	Lange	Makandula	Bolton	Erasmus	Stroud	Vermeulen	Battson	Jorgensen	Von Maltitz	Strümpfer	Theme
Materiality	I was always going to use the materials at my disposal	Video and performance were the best possible tools to use	High-fired porcelain over used motor oil. I feel that all material has an association and by being aware of that association/s clues can be provided to the viewer	Light replaces paint as medium	The sculpture was made from beeswax, bath scum, and body hair collected over a period of six months	The foreground is painted in a more expressive way that alludes to the qualities of oil painting such as thick, smudging and smearing techniques. The computer screen bears the same image	The artwork featured people wearing T-shirts that represented text. The text made connotations to stripes and colours using 2K automotive paint	Water and sound are used as conceptual media	Resin, earth, ash light, vertical and horizontal tension between physical pieces, and the heat from light	I found ways to combine traditional and modern materials and techniques in a way that was interesting and 'new'	Combining materials
Unconventional materials	Nuts, bolts, washers and a chair	Video art, sound piece and an orange sack	The use of motor oil is not considered traditional. Porcelain is usually associated with craft rather than art	3D polystyrene construction and light projections on canvas Using relatively new software allows one to map specific areas when projecting a moving or still image on a 3D object	The sculpture made from beeswax and bath scum sits on a platform of wood covered by my own body hair Her recent work combines personal items reminiscent of saintly relics such as hair, nail clippings and medication mixed with wax	Photography, digital drawing on a tablet, digital animation It focuses on juxtaposing digital art processing with the traditional media of oil painting	Intervention, 2K automotive spray paint. Text printed on T-shirts. I knew I wanted to paint with unconventional media	Water, mist, ultrasonic frequencies, plastic basin, aluminium strips	Resin, earth, light and heat	Abalone shell (mother of pearl), Perspex, LED lights and castings in resin	
Found object	Recycled materials and found objects convey my message	Beating an orange sack in rain water The use of found objects created load, tension and frustration brought on by oneself	Suspending high-fired porcelain over used motor oil creates a reflection					Water and a steel cover	Earth and ash	Abalone shells	

Code	Lange	Makandula	Bolton	Erasmus	Stroud	Vermeulen	Battson	Jorgensen	Von Maltitz	Strümpfer	Theme
Combining materials	I use selected combinations of materials that work together	Intentional use of my body, and found object, and orange sack. In this case, I challenge the stereotype using the media of video	The combination of pure white porcelain and used toxic-smelling motor oil	Combining various modes and media has helped my process, and therefore the conceptual thinking behind the work, to become infinitely more complex	The use of debris from my own body as well as the other materials used in the process of daily living forms the core of my work both physically and conceptually	The painting and computer screen bear the same image. The foreground is painted in a more expressive way	Right from the beginning the idea is created and the visuals follow that. I took stripes and colours that were then painted in 2K automotive paint on canvas	Water is a conceptual medium rather than a technical one. It was combined with materials and equipment to produce mist	This method may include how the media were used, combined, changed and exhibited	I think what makes it unconventional is the way in which I combined them (materials)	Combining materials
Mode	I always use those materials and combine them in a way to convey the message	The process of selecting various modes and media evolved with the process of the conceptualisation of the artwork	The material and the mode of making all become a metaphor	Combining various modes allows for a cross-current of ideas and methods which inevitably creates tension and ambiguity	Mixed media has always been part of my work. Different media have different properties both physically and conceptually	I am sensitive and aware of the way that images travel into different modes and media in contemporary communication	I was looking for an innovative use of media, but first and foremost it was aesthetically sufficient	Water is the medium because it is fluid and has the mutability of liquid to mist. Ultra-sonic frequencies beyond our hearing	The choice of materials relates to the theme	It is only when combining traditional material and techniques with modern materials and techniques that something 'exciting' happens	Layered end product
Senses	It provokes an interaction that was physical	The idea was to challenge how the viewer passively views video art in a gallery	Black toxic-smelling used motor oil. The porcelain pieces moved and sometimes knocked against each other creating a fine ceramic pinging sound	The moving images overlaid with patterns and abstract constructions continually reveal and conceal themselves, seductively conducting the viewer's eye in a repetitive orchestration of light and colour	The bath scum will rot over time contributing to the work's meaning in both colour and smell	It was important also to see the difference between tactile (perhaps traditional) media and digital media	When the viewer stands and looks at the visual, they can decode the artwork and get the same intended idea	The quiet sound of running water and water droplets built on the idea of an elusive space. A feeling of temperature change that triggers goose bumps (viewer)	I was trying to visually communicate through the work. I used light and heat	I don't think people see good-quality mosaic these days	

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Process	I use materials that are at my disposal	Video and performance were the best tools to use to further the concept without including unnecessary signifiers During the process of production completeness took precedence over prettiness	The media evolved with the concept. Through conversations with experts in the field of microbiology I discovered that diatoms were connected to climate change. I was using porcelain and the fact that these organisms together over millions of years became oil	The project developed into an abstract composition of polystyrene cubes mounted onto canvas while being strategically projected over using video-mapping software	The medium is an integral part of the message in all my work. The use of hair clippings on the platform evolved during the process of making the rest, as did the Perspex base	I am interested in how different modes and media travel in contemporary communication structures and I wanted to make a work that performed these travelling aspects	The process of selecting modes and media go hand in hand with the subject of the work	I have constructed a temporary environment through the mix of plastic and water. The medium is both the concept and the process	Conceptually the method of making the work was appropriate and sensitive	My process I can describe as a 'percolation'. I am constantly thinking of different modes, sculptural techniques, materials and media and as time goes by I find ways of combining them	Layered end product
Artwork	Interactive sculpture	Video-documented performance	Installation sculpture	Video-mapped painting	Sculpture	Painting installation	Intervention painting	Site-specific intervention/installation	Sculptural installation	Relief sculpture	
Technology		Video art and a sound piece	In conversations with experts in the field. (Technology assists artist to conceptualise artwork)	Light projection as medium (video-mapping software) became an alternative to paint		It is a painting installation consisting of a landscape format painting and a stand with an animation looping on a computer screen		Interest in botany by creating artificial garden space using frequency modulators and misters		I used LED lights to shine through the material	

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Emotional response		The ritualised violence perpetuated upon bodies of many boys who undergo initiation rituals is constructed within these liminal spaces	The fragility of the ocean is being adversely affected by climate change	It reminded me of pixilation that one would see when a moving image is censored	Using these materials is akin to a form of 'self-preservation'	I am sensitive and aware of the way that images travel into different modes	I am looking for something visual that can connote, represent, symbolise or link to the original idea	I wanted to explore a much more troubled aspect of water, problematising its visual association with light and purity	The space that was created between the two symmetrical parts of the work needed to allow the viewer to experience an emotional response	My use of unconventional media has perhaps shocked people. It has a shock value in the way these materials are combined	Importance of viewer response
		Matter or mind, so we are constantly confronted with paradoxes that create great tension in our lives						The work aims to take on an eerie feeling that is ghostly but also highly artificial			
Understanding	Recycled material and media are used to convey the message	Since I wanted to articulate a strange or rather eerie mood that results in the 'othering' of body, it was necessary to take into account how space, found materials in relation to the body can work effectively	I imagined that the text needed to be read in order to understand the artwork but in hindsight I realised the work left enough clues for the viewer	The work consequently aimed to show how technology and media can direct and divert the viewers' attention	I would like to think that the work was awarded a prize simply because it is 'beautiful' to look at regardless of how 'outmoded' the idea of 'beautiful art' may be	I wanted to make an artwork that performed this travelling aspect. (The artist is interested in different form of meaning-making in contemporary situations)	The viewer could decode the painting by reading the statistics printed on the back of the T-shirt	Whiteness became an empty or invisible page upon which black ink creates content and meaning	Using light and heat that could be registered by the body that is in close contact with the panels of resin	... through the symbolic use of a skull. There are further ecological overtones that only enhance and feed into larger concepts	Importance of viewer response
		Subconsciously we respond to symbolism				The work is concerned with the tensions of varied layers or stages of production which are often present in visual art production				We all have a skull. Contemplating this, one experiences something of the mysteriousness of our human condition	

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Viewer interaction	It is suggestive in itself as it provoked interaction that was physical	I can augment the materiality of the found object in relation to the body in order to alter the viewer's gaze	The fragile porcelain shapes, the twisting movement, the white/black juxtaposition and the mechanical industrial smell of the oil were all clues for the viewer	The moving images overlaid with patterns conduct the viewer's eye in a reparative orchestration of light and colour	The dirty aspect of bath scum and hair is linked to the business of our physical reality and draws the viewer, who reads the list of materials into the work; that is, at first glance a conventional portrayal of ideal beauty	Her body is exposed to the perusal of the viewer but her absorptive reading process shuts the viewer out. Text floats atop the couch surface suggesting online correspondence 'Envoi is typing'	When the viewer stands and looks at the visual, they can decode the artwork and get the same intended idea	Audiences were able to engage directly with the work by 'shaping' and blowing on the mist	The earth and ash was used to suggest a burial but also to contrast with the light, heat and repetition of the resin panels	My use of a mosaic technique has added value because I don't think people see good-quality mosaic craft these days, especially not on that scale	Importance of viewer response
							T-shirts are worn by same models as in the artwork who casually mingle with the crowd as spectators		The physical space between the two light boxes can be used by the viewer as a space of contemplation. The third and final figure is the viewer: open, alive, lit, whole and powerful	I want the viewer to contemplate the anthropocentric nature of the skull as a deeply personal object as it is central to our humanity and mortality	
Enhance meaning	Interaction gives some form of play to the viewer	Yes, my work enhanced meaning. The video is unsettling yet one is attracted to the complexity of the content, which is open ended	Materials carry meaning. To use the material metaphorically can carry meaning for the viewer	This projection and the masking of light and moving images speaks to the concept more than traditional media is able to (if at all able)	The bath scum which is made up of dead skin cells will rot over time contributing to the work's meaning	Yes, the use of media enhanced the artwork. The artwork is based on intermediality	I knew I wanted to paint with unconventional media that is therefore bringing something different to abstraction as abstract art has already been discovered	I use plastic and so-called 'destructive' materials to further explore binaries and dichotomies Let us not forget that plastic and aluminium are non-bio-degradable or non-recyclable	I believe it enhanced meaning. To visually communicate an idea through the use of media could be compared to sentence structure and grammar that make up language as a verbal means of communication	Using LED lights to shine through a shell mosaic is an unconventional technique that enhanced the meaning of the mosaic and the visual experience	

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Current contemporary issues		Using the video, I address issues of rites of passage, sexuality, masculinity and gender politics. I question my social identity as a black man	Climate change is a current contemporary issue that is debated in the public arena but often being denied	The projections included pixelated images of pornography that became unrecognisable when the viewer focused on the cubic shapes	Most of these issues are not new but perhaps the work can be seen as a contemporary comment on the age-old 'human condition'	Research on modes of absorption versus theatricality. I am interested in how images travel in contemporary media structures	Exploring abstraction, the stripe and contemporary media and bringing them together in order to get a final artwork that is relevant to contemporary art	Explore nature and artifice through the use of water as medium with hints of current environmental concerns I explore the more troubled aspect of water and the environment	I experience an intense and consistent anxiety towards death, specifically the loss of a loved one due to a road accident	My winning work attempts to express the capacity we as humans have for evil and destructive behaviour through the symbolic use of a skull	
					The work exposes contemporary expectations/interpretations of beauty		The artwork explores anonymity and the fact that few people question the source of statistics related to some serious social concerns				
Communication		The viewer forms part of meaning-making in the artwork. The body can work effectively to communicate what I want to put across	I felt the need to bring my work into a public space so as to encourage discussion (climate change issues)	The work brings to mind any of Piet Mondrian's compositions. However, here a traditional 2D work can in part be experienced in three dimensions. The work references digital desensitising of pornography	The work addresses the notion of stereotypes in both western and contemporary consumer lifestyles	I create an impression that a message is being sent via digital correspondence	Each strip on the canvas represents a statistic that could be matched to a colour of a T-shirt worn by a person in the audience	Water in a garden space then also points to the environmental concerns behind water	Repetition, in my understanding, links to anxiety. The medium of earth was used to suggest a burial. The viewer is able to process concepts of mourning and loss	I used the materials in combination in a way to try and communicate the 'magnitude' or 'heaviness' of this 'dark side' of humanity	
		The work is an expression of the sense of alienation that society has created among individuals	The microscopic size of the diatom has been monumentalised to bring them into the public domain		It demonstrates the social and economic manipulation of individuals by the media and peer pressure. I believe in the ability of art to effect social transformation					In most cultures the human skull represents one thing: death	

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Concept	Combining materials in a manner regardless of concept and the outcome of the piece. (Lange has a strong reliance on materiality in order to drive his concept)	It was necessary to take into account how space and found materials would work in relation to the body can work effectively in order to communicate what I want to put across	Since I was a third-year student, I was very focused on concept, materiality and meaning	My initial aim with this project was to transfigure the medium of painting while still working within a traditional 'framework'	The title is an integral part of my work and the pun/word-play always informs 'other materials' and processes. Wax is linked to the notion of mortality/immortality therefore it was conceptually and physically suitable to work with from the beginning	I am very research driven. The plan developed after a period of research and I mostly stuck to it except for small elements that changed. I moved things around compositionally	The concept was humorous coupled with statistics and the viewer was able to relate to the artwork through humour and intervention	The piece continues the artist's methodology of utilising dialogue with people to create issues of displacement and environmental concerns	The modes and media and how they are used within the work speak to the concept. This forms the structural part of the visual language of art-making. I think the work was able to speak to the concept of anxiety, death and peace in an interesting manner	My choice of media and concept always grows together. They often inform each other	Validating contemporary issues
				The mapping software thus has significant relevance to the theme of censorship			By representing statistics in a human key, I urge the viewer to make the connection between the numbers and people				
				The shiny Perspex base informs slick consumerism							

