FLOWERS IN CONTEMPORARY OIL PAINTING: PORTRAYING MOTHERLY LOVE

By

Miss Cherie Chai Tze LO

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for Doctor of Philosophy DESIGN ARTS (INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM)

Silpakorn University

Academic Year 2023

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โดย
MissCherie CHAI TZE LO

วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปรัชญาดุษฎีบัณฑิต
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By	Miss Cherie Chai Tze LO
Field of Study	DESIGN ARTS (INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM)
Advisor	Associate Professor Sone Simatrang
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Floral still lifes, floriography and floral symbolism were historically part of the way society communicates values and feelings visually, using them as a language that signified virtues such as loyalty, truth and love. Today, maternal love is mostly represented in contemporary painting through figurative works. Nevertheless, flowers can express love and intimacy in close relationships and on significant occasions. Buchmann writes that there is an opportunity to revisit the importance of floral visual art and how they are "worthy of artistic rendition, have been rediscovered and rehabilitated" although to some parts have receded into the shadows of contemporary painting (2015, p. 247). In this research, the language of flowers takes on a new and revitalized form to present a new approach to a visual representation of love and human connection in contemporary painting. Here is an opportunity to emphasize the importance of floral visual art as a symbolic language of maternal love, emotions and character traits. Revitalized, the language of flowers takes on a new form, strengthened by a composition that strikes a balance between stillness and movement of the brushstrokes, while the overall experience is intensified by the monumental scale of the canvas. This research explores whether and how flowers show their maternal love in contemporary oil paintings in which flowers are embedded in a winter snowscape as an ambience. The methodology involves the tonal painting on a scale from white to dark gray, by day and night, visual analysis of paintings that serve as case studies, a compositional study underpinned by the idea of the *non-finito* or the unfinished, to reflect on the beauty of imperfection that reflects how a mother's love may not be perfect but brings security and unconditional love that is boundless. Primarily, this is a practice-based research that encompasses textual and visual analysis of historical floral artworks. The artworks are developed with jasmine to explore transparency, scale, dry brushstrokes, texture through lines, curves and intensity. Guided by a wintry ambience, the flowers take shape working with a palette of 'white on white', 'white on gray', 'white on dark' and 'dark on white'. Flowers, particularly jasmine, which symbolizes mothers in Thailand, express maternal love in the context of this research, which defines the final artwork in a series of large-scale floral oil paintings. Flowers as a

form of visual language can be successfully used to convey aspects of the human experience and the bonds of connection and relationships.

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Cherie Chai Tze LO

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

First is wonder. A flower is beautiful for no other reason than being true because it corresponds to its nature and unfolds its petals. Similarly, the greatness of blossoming, which leads outwards, upwards to nature and inwards to the child, can be described or referred to as a greatness that leads to wonder. Zylinska writes that “it allows reason to think of the absolute totality, which imagination fails to grasp.(Zylinska, 1998). This research is about the expression of maternal love shaped by nature, painting flowers and dissolving their original form into something transcendent. The flowers, especially the jasmine, bloom on the canvas, opening petal by petal, like one moment after another unfolding to trace a lifetime of caring. A mother's love goes beyond pure understanding. It is a realization formulated in mind, body and heart as she cares for her child. She overcomes herself to care for her child, moving between joy and fear until wonder guides her daily, repetitive tasks.

A magnitude of motherhood is beyond calculation that cannot be measured, but expressed in a powerful way visually. The final paintings are scaled to connect with the viewer through an experience of physical closeness, as intimacy plays a key role and therefore guides this creative practice. When looking at the canvas, the viewer encounters the subject – the jasmine flower from the perspective of a child. The size of the canvas and the size of the flower, which emerges through layers of transparency, transforms the jasmine into the iridescence of a watchful and loving eye.

In writing and painting, flowers have been used to represent love. It could also be used to speak of maternal love. A passage in the Zen Journal speaks about the life of a flower: "Before a bud unfurls into a blossom, there exists a quiet prelude, a phase of tender nurturing and patient waiting. It's a stage where the essence of the bloom is being molded in the crucible of nature, unseen yet profoundly alive." (The Daily Zen Pen, 2023). The life of a flower could speak of the seasons of motherhood. Poetically, it traces a cyclical process of love given and love received growing from bud to full bloom. A flower withers with each falling petal, but a fragrance once experienced lingers. Similarly, the fading of a single flower announces itself at the height of its bloom and moves as "the unseen dance between becoming and dissolving unfolds in every corner of existence. It's a dance that encapsulates the essence of life's transient beauty." (The Daily Zen Pen, 2023). The birth of spring marks the beginning of the year and moves towards summer, when flowers bloom. Summer is abundance and the crowning of the year. In the later part of autumn, some flowers grow into fruit. Then the year ends. Faded from existence, a flower may still bloom in the memory of the beholder. Spring, in this natural pattern, can be seen to depict the love of a mother. A young mother is, at best, full of liveliness and hope. The kind of love at this stage is mostly invested in tender physical care. When the child grows up, love moves into summer, and a balance must be maintained between holding on and letting go. Flowers bloom most powerfully at the very end of their bloom, when the petals are just about to fall. This holding and letting go reflects that both mother and child trust love, if the mother has communicated sufficient love for the child. A child begins to understand his or her individuality, but the time is not yet for the child to become his or her own. Giving motherly love bears fruit in the autumn season, when the child has become a grown up man or woman. Winter, being the last season of the year, depicts seemingly the end of motherhood but is really a new beginning. For a child to witness and support an ageing mother is to reciprocate that love. Another seed has been formed into a flower, one that is the mature life of what was once a child, or a bud. Within the context of research, the final work is set in a winter ambience or atmospheric backdrop to the stages of a flower's life or motherhood. The painting is a kind of

wintering: fading, final letting go, and re-emergence. The whiteness of snow and jasmine is a way of showing that there is no limit because white itself is a composite of all the other colors. What remains is not the physical demonstration of love but a transparent layer of constant care, invisibly wrapped around the child, who is now in adulthood. While the world is in constant motion, the complexity of creation and dissolution is not evident. Yet every journey, may it be one of childhood or a flower, begins and ends. Simple as it may seem, the process of preparation and the final letting go calls for contemplation. Turning around the complexities of motherly love, paintings can offer a space for reflection.

The thesis taps into a personal experience of motherhood by recalling the raising of three sons and attempts to visually translate such thoughts and feelings by inviting the viewer to experience a mother's love. Celebrating motherhood is important because it is not just a central part of life; it is life.

Mother's Love
Mother's love is bright
When I walk under the stars
Her light guides my steps

Mother's love is brave
Standing up to the unknown
She goes on before

Mother's love is safe
I have never doubted her
She brings me back home

written by Christopher Lo, 2024

1.2 Significance of Research

After a review of the history of symbolic and as a language, the research proposes a new approach in which jasmine is used to portray Motherly Love in contemporary painting.-Therefore, the language of flowers on canvas takes on a new and revitalized form, using the scale and layers of transparency to reveal and inspire the wonder of the bond between a mother and her child.

From the Renaissance, through Impressionism to Post-Impressionism, flowers have reflected love in its various forms. Some represent the love of a mother. In Thailand, jasmine is a flower that symbolizes and honors mothers. In this research, jasmine is proposed to represent the great and unconditional mother's love, which is depicted in an imperfect form overlaid by transparency and set in the atmosphere of winter. A mother's love, its constant presence, conveys a sense of safety and security.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How do flowers represent motherly love in painting?
2. How can the theme of flowers be applied as 'Motherly love' in contemporary oil painting?
3. How can transparency be integrated with motherly love in winter?

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To analyze and understand if and how motherly love was depicted in floral oil paintings.
2. To explore floral oil painting against the backdrop of a wintry ambience using transparency:
    - 'White on white'
    - 'White on gray'
    - 'White on dark'
    - 'Dark on white'
3. Create flowers in contemporary oil painting in transparency.

1.5 Scope of Research

This research investigates the use of flowers as an expression of maternal love in the field of contemporary oil painting in order to revive a historical and symbolic visual expression that lost its significance with the advent of the industrial age.

1.6 Research Methodology

Practice-based research will include primary and secondary research consisting of texts, collecting information through observation of practice, sketch work and reflection, followed by the development of artworks. The developmental practices of flowers will be: transparency, application of scale, questioning of composition, extension of technique through dry brushstrokes, adding texture through lines, curves and intensity. The idea of the *non-finito* or the unfinished is integrated into a suggestive rather than didactic visual language. The layering of darkness and light through chiaroscuro painting is intended to reinforce a sense of mystery. Ultimately, the canvases use an elongated, rectangular layout. The final artwork will be a triptych painted with oil on linen.

1.7 Research Output

1. Flowers as an expression of motherly love
2. Composition of contemporary floral oil painting portraying motherly love in transparency
3. Contemporary floral oil painting with transparency representing motherly love in winter

1.8 Definition of Terms

“Contemporary Floral Oil Paintings”: Current and modern works that depict flowers as the main theme in oil painting.

“Motherly Love”: The unconditional love shown by a mother towards her children.

“Transparency”: Levels of visibility ranging from complete see-through to almost opaque in oil painting.

“*Non-finito* ”: a renaissance visual, primarily sculptural, technique of leaving something unfinished as to not trying to mimic the perfection to the divine, therefore leaving a suggestion of an eternal trait, such as love.

1.9 Relationship between Research Questions (RQ), Research Objectives (RO), Research Methodology (RM), Research Output (ROP)

Table 1. Relationship between RQ, RO, RM, ROP

	RQ	RO	RM	ROP
1	How do flowers represent motherly love in painting?	To analyze and understand if and how motherly love was depicted in floral oil paintings.	Observe and analyze Information Research data Books Artworks	Flowers as an expression of motherly love.
2	How can the theme of flowers be applied as 'Motherly love' in contemporary oil paintings?	To explore floral oil painting in transparency against the backdrop of a wintry ambience using: 'White on white' 'White on gray' 'White on dark' 'Dark on white'	Experiment with flowers in transparency, through scale, composition, technique- dry brush strokes, Texture- lines, curves, intensity, Layering, in elongated rectangular shape layout (as in Chinese Landscape paintings).	Composition of contemporary floral oil painting portraying motherly love in transparency.
3	How can transparency be integrated with motherly love in winter?	To create flowers in contemporary oil paintings representing motherly love in winter.	Create flowers with transparency in winter: 'White on white' 'White on gray' 'White on dark' 'Dark on white'	Contemporary floral oil Painting with transparency representing motherly love in winter ambience.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

‘-essentially floral portraits, as if the flowers he painted were people. ’(Buchmann, 2015)

2.1 Introduction

Historically, flowers were a topic for both religion and politics. For the Moors in medieval Spain gardens were a piece of paradise. For Christians, flowers showed the presence of God's silent love. As part of society, flowers conveyed virtues such as fidelity, truth and divine. Motherly Love in a symbolic language on murals, walls, mosaic floors and in paintings especially in the Renaissance in scenes with the Madonna and Child. in 1819, Charlotte de Latour, published La Langage des Fleurs, or the Language of Flowers, in which the plants cataloged in an index provide a symbolic methodology of speaking about hidden feelings. The language of flowers is culturally specific and personal, but sometimes also universal and constantly evolving. In the West, the carnation still represents motherly love, while in Thailand, the jasmine is a symbol of maternal love and respect. In the works of artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, the carnation plays a central role in the depiction of the Madonna and Child Jesus, and flowers are used as symbols and language for motherly love right up to the Baroque period.

Buchmann writes that there is an opportunity to revisit the importance of floral visual art from industrialization to the present day: “In this postmodern world, flowers as something worthy of artistic rendition have been rediscovered and rehabilitated.” (Buchmann, 2015). In response to Buchmann and to enrich my reflections, the “Book of my Mother” by Albert Cohen (1954) complements the literature review, which begins with an exploration of the reason for flowers. The

methodology encompasses theory and practice, including a visual analysis of paintings that serve as case studies, an examination of composition, the idea of *non-finito* and eye movement around the dynamics of harmony, to finally expand on the technical process of painting, from brushstroke to chiaroscuro, with shifts and balances of light and dark. The literature review is primarily concerned with establishing the presence or absence of flowers in paintings of motherly love. The reason and history of flowers in the visual arts support the development of the practical part, techniques, science, composition, and approaches that draw on Eastern and Western thoughts and principles. These approaches aim to translate emotions and the vastness of motherly love into works of art.

Painting function, serves almost as case studies to understand how the story of motherhood can be told and to implement a symbolic language of flowers, composition and techniques that embraces transparency and brushstrokes. Most importantly, the reasons and history of flowers in art lead to the final paintings.

2.1.1 A Reason for Flowers

The Reason for Flowers by Stephen Buchmann from 2015 describes the history of flowers and their role in art and society. Buchmann writes that the oldest form of art can be found in cave paintings, where some of the finest artistic expressions showcasing an ancestral admiration and appreciation of nature (Buchmann, 2015). One of the oldest depictions of flowers can be found in ancient Egyptian culture and its stone monuments, temples and homes along the Nile dating back to 2600 BC that depicts garden scenes with water lilies and birds (Buchmann, 2015).Gardens also flourished in Chinese landscape painting, which often depicted flowering plants, beginning around two thousand years ago during the Han Dynasty. Later in Japan, during the Heian period, (785 to 1184), artists painted flowers in the meditative gardens of shinden-zukuri meditative gardens.

Flowers were not just something botanical, but even symbols of the divine and the universe - a sentiment shared by Eastern and Western cultures (Buchmann, 2015).

Buchmann writes that in a Europe before Christianity “flowers played an important role in the myths and legends of the Greeks and Minoans" as well as the Romans. On the Greek island of Santorini, the breathtaking Springtime Fresco of Akrotiri (1500 BC) from the Aegean island shows the Minoans' fascination with the local flowers.

Figure 1. Papyrus Fresco, Akrotiri
Image Source: https://www.worldhistory.org/image/1368/papyrus-fresco-akrotiri/

Mosaic-tiled murals often include flowers as an important component in the design of homes and gardens in the coastal cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Figure 2. The Painted Garden from the Villa of Livia.
Image Source: https://www.milestonerome.com/2018/04/the-painted-garden-from-the-villa-of-livia-for-naturemw/

With the fall of the Roman Empire between 550 and 800, floral art image vanished from Europe. The early Christians avoided flowers viewing as they regarded the motifs as decadent, as emblems of the dying and the dead and of neighboring pagan cultures. It was not until 800 AD that floral art was revived when Charlemagne, came across Muslim gardens in Moorish Spain, during the Crusades and was inspired by them. They opened up their courtyards, which were laid out with flowers and water features like a paradise on earth and flowers.

An interest in floral arts influenced by the orient of the floral arts resurged in Europe, despite its initial Christian resistance (Buchmann, 2015). In late medieval Europe, flowers such as the wild rose and the passion flower had a religious symbolic meaning. They were often used for the borders of manuscript pages, and flowers began to develop as a language. For example, wildflowers can be seen among rocks, as in the Adoration in the Forest by Fra' Filippo Lippi from 1459 (Buchmann, 2015). Science added to the inner life of flowers. With the invention of the telescope and the microscope, instruments that enabled people to closely observe natural objects and details. Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) wrote, painted and sketched a variety of Italian wildflowers. Although they were portraits of flowers, da Vinci painted them as

if they were people. Albrecht Duerer (1471-1528), the German painter, painted *Violets* (1503) with fine detail, an image that still resonates in its delicacy.

The majority of flower paintings in Renaissance fine art were both religious and secular. Buchmann notes that "the depiction of flowers in Renaissance high art mainly contained both sacred and profane pictorial messages. For example, the Archangel Gabriel offers the Blessed Virgin Mary a white lily, symbolizing her purity" (Buchmann, 2015). With the rise of the merchant classes, a new form of painting - the still life - was in demand to mark the breakaway from the rule and power of the church and the aristocracy, who favored murals that glorified their religious and military power. Holland in particular was a wealthy country in the 1600s and 1700s, deriving its wealth from trade. Much of this wealth was used to promote the fine arts, science, natural history and literature. Part of the lifestyle of the nouveau riche was to commission and buy paintings that illustrated pastoral scenes, domestic moments and hidden messages in flower still life. As an important part of life, paintings embellished the lives of the aspiring middle class (Buchmann, 2015).

The admiration for large flowers led to a sudden rise in the popularity of flower paintings in Holland. Buchmann writes that "A flower painting would everlastingly capture the beauty and essence of an unobtainable possession, a prized rare living flower." (Buchmann, 2015). Flowers became prominent, and adorned the walls in impossible and lavish bouquets. Not only as art, flowers were also widely obsessed in society. The Dutch flower bulb industry flourished in the early 1600s. "as these unusual large flowers were acquired and admired, their representation in flower paintings achieved unprecedented popularity in Holland."(Buchmann, 2015). Artists diligently painted and studied various flower especially exotic tulips, crown imperials, red ranunculus, Mediterranean narcissus and peonies. Fascinated, the artists depicted flowers with meticulous detail. Buchmann states that "the best still lifes were exacting portrayals yet mere illusions of real flowers."(Buchmann, 2015). Most flowers were imbued with religious symbols. Sunflowers were used to represent the reflection of God's world, while lilies symbolized purity. Floral still lifes attracted

famous artists such as Pieter Brueghel the Elder and Younger, and Jan van Huysum (1682-1749). Apart from their esthetic appeal, they also served as decorative objects with a moral or enigmatic character (Buchmann, 2015).

Buchmann suggests the viewer “look carefully at a selection of Dutch floral still life paintings. I imagine that any modern florist (or artist) would be envious of these immense and spectacular floral arrangements. They seem to defy gravity.” (Buchmann, 2015).

Figure 3. Nicolaes van Veerendael (1662), A Bouquet of Flowers in Crystal Vase.
Image Source: https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/437867

The ideas in the composition of the floral themes can be transferred to modern paintings. Buchmann writes that in A Bouquet of Flowers in a Crystal Vase (1662), an oil painting by Nicolaes van Veerendael (1640-91), a shiny glass vase is crowded with elaborately designed flowers (fancy tulips, carnations, irises, peonies, a marigold, hibiscus, and others). Typically, the still lives are arranged with harmonious colors, in a convincing illusion of three-dimensionality, with the flowers arranged centrally and

symmetrically. The background of this painting, as with most Dutch still lifes, is extremely dark, almost black, drawing the viewer's attention to the foreground, which focuses on the lushly depicted flowers (Buchmann, 2015).

Figure 4. Garden Museum, Alfred Stiebel & Co., 1910.
Image Source: https://gardenmuseum.org.uk/collection/the-language-of-flowers/

Floral symbolism was used to convey hidden feelings. March Gallery exhibition devoted to flowers in contemporary art, inspired by Charlotte de Latour's 1819 guide Le Langage des Fleurs, writes in its catalog that "The text, which assigns meaning to an entire index of plants, provides a symbolic methodology for conveying hidden feelings" and that "De Latour commissioned Pancrace Bessa, a student of Pierre-Joseph Redouté, to illustrate the book, combining his engravings with descriptions of the allegorical meaning of each plant. The effect is satisfying, as the author provides simple definitions for concepts that are both culturally specific and personal - and constantly evolving."(March Gallery, 2021).

Throughout the centuries and up until the 19th century, just before the advent of large-scale industrialization, European Pre-Raphaelite painters depicted accurate

studies of women and flowers, “obsessed with the subject, repeatedly depicting young women and flowers, especially yellow flowers.” (Buchmann, 2015). The works of Élisabeth Sonrel (1874-1953) are particularly delicate and intensely floral. They are photorealistic but engaging, combining the intensity of the Pre-Raphaelites with the style of French Symbolist painting (Buchmann, 2015).

Figure 5. Claude Monet 1873, Wild Poppies.
Image Source: https://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/artworks/coquelicots-1010

Monet (1840–1926), the master of garden painting, worked with colors “in tiny dabs of pure paint, unmixed and without blending strokes”. The flowers in Monet's paintings are not realistic, but "impressions" of color, and decorative elements. In his *Wild Poppies* (1873), his flowers are “simple, short brushstrokes instead of realistic blooms, splotches of bright red set against a green background.” (Buchmann, 2015). Claude Monet and his fascination with flowers, his technique of loose brushstrokes (Van Gogh had a similar style, but his brushstrokes are somewhat more realistic and delicate) and his large-scale paintings play a key role in this investigation.

Figure 6. Vincent van Gogh, 1890, Irises.
Image Source: https://www.vangoghmuseum.nl/en/collection/s0050V1962

“Nevertheless, by the mid-twentieth century, painting flowers had little to do with mainstream modern art. Now flowers were simply not subjects that professional artists chose to paint.” writes Buchmann (Buchmann, 2015). At least, not until Andy Warhol (1928-87). Flowers in an exhibition from 1964, blew up his silkscreens of flowers with splashes and strokes of added paint. Here we see flowers stripped of all their sensuality, along with much of their realism and beauty.

Figure 7. Janet Fish (1988) Daffodils and Spring Trees. Heritage Auctions.
Image Source: https://fineart.ha.com/itm/paintings/janet-fish-b-1938-daffodils-and-spring-trees-1988oil-on-canvas60-x-48-inches-1524-x-1219-cm-signed-and/a/5274-66053.s

Now, consider the flowers by artist Janet Fish (b. 1938) from the same period. They are engaging and beautiful, and painted in a rather realistic style. In her painting Daffodils and Spring Trees (1988), daffodils can be seen against a landscape background. Her flowers are skillfully painted, full of light, vibrant colors and interesting little details. In a way, Fish's paintings are parallel to the earlier Dutch still lifes.' (Buchmann, 2015).

Figure 8. Ben Schonzeit, 2016, Carlton Rose
Image Source: https://www.meiselgallery.com/artist/ben-schonzeit/

Another fine example is the work of artist Ben Schonzeit (b. 1942), who creates flowers that are once again sensuous, painted with great attention to realistic detail in an almost photo-realistic style. (Buchmann, 2015). Warhol, Pop Art and the hippies used flowers as common themes in the art and peace culture of the 1960s. “Despite the kitschy overuse of blossoms not found in nature, they represented a noble sentiment of the era-“make love, not war." Indeed, this was flower power at its best and most potent.” (Buchmann, 2015). Flowers became a symbol of love again. The language of flowers is currently being rediscovered, as a current exhibition at the March Gallery shows.

Buchmann writes that “the Dutch still lifes focused on good and pleasant things, flowers and foods, that are ephemeral. Their message is one of unique but transient beauty. The flowers will soon wilt and die along with everything else depicted in these paintings.” (Buchmann, 2015) In many ways, the life of flowers and their ephemeral beauty mimic the vulnerability of human relationships. In the end, only love remains, reduced to an echo.

2.1.2 On Motherly Love

"My mother's love is immortal' almost transcendent"

Book of my Mother by Albert Cohen (Cohen, 1954)

Albert Cohen authored *Book of my Mother* to honor the passing of his childhood and the loss of motherly love. A mother is one's childhood, and when you lose your mother, you lose your childhood. "We led a grand life, as you can see, my mother and I. But we loved each other." (Cohen, 1954). He grieves for his mother because she is eternally lost in her sleep. He reels off memories of how she dressed up and made herself beautiful, only to remember that she sold her precious jewelry for him. She was proud to sacrifice possessions without regret. Cohen exclaims, 'for I was a son, that those meager large sums were a sacrifice offered up by my mother on the altar of motherhood.' Her two goals in life were to provide for the two people she loved and cared for - her son and her husband. She served them humbly and with great love. She was fearful of death and separation, but her joy came alive when her loved ones were nearby.

Cohen was afraid to reread the letters she wrote to him, because he missed her. In the letters, he felt the pain of her absence. Cohen was in London when she died. He was deeply hurt when he thought of how death had taken his mother from him, because he knew that she often thought of him on her sickbed, in the same bed where she had waited for his letters. Now her voice had fallen silent. His heart ached and he felt like a dead man among the living. Cohen remembered her herbal teas, the verbena-scented linen beddings, the beautiful cherrywood cupboard, the fruity-scented jam, the keys on her apron, that had gone with her. 'Maman, you who were alive and always gave me a new heart, you who were a source of strength, you who had the knack of encouraging me blindly with absurd soothing words, Maman, from up there can you see your obedient little boy of ten?' (Cohen, 1954).

Her life consisted of waiting and anticipating her son and her husband. Toward the end of her days, he wondered if she had a sad life, and recalled that she loved him so much that she would serve him a birthday dinner even without his presence. She prepared several months in advance for her visit to see him in Geneva in the summer. It was a trick she had devised to give her the feeling that she was already with him in Geneva. Holding so much longing and love, she was 'content with so little, my dear mother' (Cohen, 1954). Cohen regretted not having communicated with her enough, not having loved her enough to write to her more often. Sometimes it is too late to make up for such things when loved ones leave us forever. Cohen feels guilty for keeping his mother waiting and writes: 'You forsook me, you did not wait for me...I am alone now,... I am unhappy, Maman, and you do not come. I call you, Maman, and you do not answer...she is silent forever' (Cohen, 1954). The expression of his disappointment confirms the immense pain and hopeless state of losing his beloved mother. 'Toothless or not, strong or weak, young or old, our mothers love us. And the weaker we are, the more they love us. Our mothers' incomparable love.' (Cohen, 1954).

Flowers, blossom like children and mothers, flourish, only to grow up and old, and return to the soil. For Cohen, and many others, a mother's love is unconditional, especially when we are weak and in need. This is the moment when mothers embrace their children with love. His mother's love, her willingness to support him and keep him company when he couldn't sleep, touched his heart deeply. He looked beyond her timidity and insecurities, and praised her for her love and care for him. She deserved trust and love and added: 'It is such humble things which make up sublime love.' (Cohen, 1954) and so the sublime can also be found in the vastness of a human relationship. In awe of their love, this became a sublime experience for Cohen. Cohen described his mother's actions in doing simple and humble things – such as doing her chores, unseen, in the kitchen. Instead, it is the love in her heart that is felt and seen. He missed the things she did for him and the moments they shared together: the walks, listening to her, take care of him when he was sick, and her stories. He never failed to describe the details of what she did for

him. He reminded the sons whose mothers are still alive, not to forget that mothers are mortal. He urges them to be gentle with their mother, to show her love and give her happiness, so that they will not regret it as he did. In the final chapters, Cohen highlights mothers and praises them for teaching, serving and forgiving. Love can be quiet, constant and immense, a tender thing that becomes monumental. Weiskel writes that 'man can, in feeling and in speech, transcend the human predicament' with words and emotions (Costellow, 2023).

For the philosopher it begins with superficiality, and for the painter, it is the surface of the canvas. The flowers embody the overcoming of change and the challenge of the love of transcendence that comes through reverence, confrontation with scale, transparency and movement in painting. Blake wrote that we could see the universe in a flower. Love can be touched in the infinite care of a mother. Odilon Redon (1840–1916) gave the flowers in his paintings a very personal style, flowers so large and immense that they seem to embody the infinite.

Figure 9. Odilon Redon, (about 1905-8), Ophelia among the Flowers.
Image Source: https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/odilon-redon-ophelia-among-the-flowers

Appearing to be floating in air, as in *Day* (1910) and *In Ophelia among the Flowers* (about 1905-8), Redon depicted flowers not as they bloomed in nature but as a symbolic and spiritual presence (Buchmann, 2015)

2.1.3 Greatness and Motherly Love

The flowers reveal a clear idea of motherly love and the greatness of her constant presence. Cohen described his mother's actions in simple and humble things – such as doing her work in the kitchen unseen. Instead, it is the love in her heart that is felt and seen. She deserves trust and love and he added: 'It is such humble things which make up sublime love.' (Cohen, 1954). And so, the sublime, or sublimis, which means greatness in Latin, can also be found in the vastness of a human relationship. In awe of her love, this became a sublime experience for Cohen.

Motherhood is understood through the female body. To convey the visceral quality of motherly love, I paint flowers constructed of layers of transparency and translucency. Starting with a flower, a metaphor for the fragility of life, Tracing its transformation from bud, to blossom to wilt. Some parts of the flower are clearly outlined, seemingly stable, while other parts fade into the background. Half obscured, parts are either clear or veiled by layers of transparency into translucency, to see love as a phenomenon. Glimpsed in individual moments, it is an incomplete flower to one person, a shadow to another. It is not the visible that is important here, but the intangible love.

2.2 Exploring the Connection between Flowers and Motherly Love

The literature review shows that there was a visual and symbolic connection between flowers and motherhood that has vanished due to modernization. Therefore, it is important to analyze and understand how floral oil paintings can express motherly love. The works that serve as case studies begin with Da Vinci's *The Madonna of the Carnation* end with O'keeffe's *Poppy*, looking at the figurative works together with and apart from the flowers.

2.3 History of Flowers and Figurative paintings on Motherhood: A selection of case studies

2.3.1 Figurative

2.3.1.1 Case Study 1: *The Madonna of the Carnation* Leonardo da Vinci, 1478–1480

Connection between the Figure and the Role of Flower: Figurative

Figure 10. Odilon Redon, (about 1905-8), Ophelia among the Flowers.
image Source : https://www.thehistoryofart.org/leonardo-da-vinci/madonna-of-the-carnation/

The work is a portrait of a mother and child. The child is sitting on a golden cushion. The mother in the painting is looking gently downwards while holding a red carnation

with her left hand and clasping her son's back with her right hand. It looks as if she is trying to get her child's attention. As desired by the mother, the child looks at the flower and reaches for it with both hands. The gesture conveys with her gaze the gentleness of mothers whose nature is to protect her child and keep him from falling, and the red carnation seemed to take on the connection between their relationship and their love. According to the NY Metropolitan Museum's article on Botanical Imagery in European Painting "beyond their decorative properties, plants and flowers usually had a symbolic meaning or association that related to the subject of the painting. Thus, a plant could be depicted either as an attribute, giving clues to the identity of the subject or sitter, or as providing a moral or philosophical annotation on the subject." (Meagher, 2000).

The carnation symbolizes the bond, the most essential aspect of the painting, and emphasizes both the flower and the interaction between mother and child. Da Vinci uses the red carnation to symbolize love. In Greek, the carnation is called dianthus or the flower of God. Historically, the carnation is therefore used as a central motif to express the love and bond between a mother and her child. Without the carnation, the painting would still show the Madonna and child and their relationship (Meagher, 2000). However, the carnation in the mother's hand gives life through a gesture of connection and conveys meaning.

The story of *The Madonna of the Carnation* was written around 1472-1478, when Da Vinci was still unknown and had to concentrate on religious paintings as the main part of his work. On the significance of the painting, Gurney writes, (Gurney, 2020): The carnation is used within this painting to signify the Madonna's love for her child, Jesus. This is strengthened by how mother and child gaze at each other in this composition. Additionally, the child is reaching out for the carnation as if accepting his mother's love. Italian artists regularly used this symbolism their works, and several Renaissance artists created dozens of depictions of the Madonna. He notes that the Virgin Mary and the infant Jesus sit facing each other and stare at each other. The composition emphasizes their strong bond of love and protection. The aspect of

connection is central to this painting, and in the hierarchy between the motifs - the figures, the flowers and the background Madonna and Child are the most important figures, outlined by the light.

On closer inspection, this is not a painting with a single central flower. There is a vase of flowers on the right-hand side. This could be the vase from which the mother has plucked the carnation, thus completing the story of this moment between mother and child. Nevertheless, Da Vinci allows the emphasis on the vase of flowers to recede into the background. In the end, the figures seem to dominate. And yet it is the flower that plays a significant role in the painting. The mother and child do not connect their gaze by looking at each other, but at the flower. Goffen (1999), (Goffen, 1999) writes: “In *the Madonna of the Carnation*, Leonardo frees the Child from artistic convention to be unique-seen in this instant, responding to this situation, hence with the implicit capacity to change. Mary sees only her Child, and her placid expression suggests that her vision of him is limited to sensory perception of the moment. Though we understand that Mary must know more than she sees, this knowledge is not evident in her visage or behavior. Rather, her prescience is assumed by the beholder, read into her image because we know what she will learn and experience. She knows these things too, of course, but does not express them - love?”. It looks as if Madonna is expressing her love through the gesture of giving the carnation, a gesture of closeness. The figures form a triangle in which the hands of the mother and child again form a triangle. The figures sit in the center in front of a background consisting of four parts, so that the underlying structure is that of a cross. The center of the painting is the carnation, which illustrates its importance to the story of the painting. The hands of the mother and child are linked, reaching out to each other, moving towards each other, and holding the carnation. The movement is one of connection. The flesh tones, especially of the baby, dominate the color scheme, which is offset by the blue of the Madonna's dress. The baby is the most important figure in the painting and its subject. Da Vinci works less with a line that moves across the canvas, but encourages the eye to be moved by dominant shapes, such as the triangle of the two figures, rectangles and squares throughout the

painting. Shapes and forms tell the story here. Harmony holds the painting together. There are no unexpected, crooked or different shapes to break the stillness. The stillness and the calm attention of the mother with her child are not disturbed by any visual elements. Even the expressions on the faces are peaceful, so the composition emphasizes this feeling of contented peace. The carnation is emphasized three fold - by the supporting triangular composition of the hands, the eyes of the Mother and child focused on the flower, and it is bright red, contrasting with the blue tones. Blue and red are on opposite sides of the color scale, making the flower stand out even more, showing how important the carnation is to the painting, the message of motherly love. Pieces of four and three are used throughout the canvas- first from left to right with four panels showing the landscape in blue, then the eye follows the 3 parts of the folds of the red sleeve. The eye is then encouraged by the triangle of hands to move from right to bottom and back to top left. Finally, the fingertips and toes form a triangle in the bottom left corner. The eye has then moved from the upper edge of the painting downwards and to the left in a strong S-shape. The figures are bright, the background is rather muted and has no dramatic contrast in the shapes. The figures sit equally on the canvas, which is divided into four parts. The flowers in the vase in the bottom right corner look like an afterthought, as if Da Vinci wanted to symmetrically balance the painting. Without the flower, it is a scene with a mother and child. With the flower, the mother and child are connected.

2.3.1.2 Case Study 2: Camille Monet and a Child in the Garden in Argenteuil Claude Monet, 1875

A Loving Bond: Figurative together with Flowers

Figure 11. Claude Monet, 1875, Camille Monet and a Child in the Garden in Argenteuil, Oil on Canvas. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Image Source: https://collections.mfa.org/objects/34242/camille-monet-and-a-child-in-the-artists-garden-in-argenteu;jsessionid=674BA74D5A3D3CD72198AD9BCA6A60C5?ctx=1972ac90-8ad5-4c44-90a0-10d6f3e3b324&idx=4

Between 1872 and 1877, Monet lived in Argenteuil, a north-western suburb of Paris. The title of the painting confirms that he painted this tranquil garden scene in his garden in Argenteuil. Buchmann writes that 'In 1883, Monet settled near the village of Giverny, about fifty miles from Paris. His lavish gardens allowed him to paint en plein air amid the sunshine, peony bushes, and buzzing bees. Here, he created his famous water garden with abundant water lilies, great clumps of irises, and lush flowering stems of Wisteria. In his later paintings, the flowers become less important than the abstracted masses of colors. Monet seems to have painted flowers not for

their own sake, or symbolically, but as an exploration of his continued growth in art (Buchmann, 2015). In the portrait, a mother and child sit together in an outdoor area. Camille Monet, his first wife, is dressed in a long blue dress and sits on the grass sewing a white fabric, while her child, dressed in a light blue outfit, plays beside her reading a book or enjoying a toy horse on the ground. Both of them look relaxed and comfortable in each other's company. It shows a calm connection. It could be a common activity that they often did together. This time it may have been painted in the late afternoon or on a cloudy day, as there are no strong light and shadow effects, a style Monet mastered. In addition to the figures, bushes with red and pink flowers serve as a background that draws the viewer's attention. As they go about their individual, simple activities, the painting conveys a comfortable and secure relationship between mother and child, enjoying an afternoon together in beautiful weather and beautiful flowers. The flowers in the background dominate, in red and pink, and crowd into the foreground, making the image almost flat, like a Japanese print. (Monet was strongly influenced by Japanese woodblock prints and collected them). The mother and child are not sitting close together as in Da Vinci's Madonna and Child, but at a slight distance. Both figures are calm and facing each other, with the mother facing the child, which conveys a sense of trust and security.

The canvas shows three horizontal blocks, with the flowers forming the largest block, which merges into a smaller, finishing block. The three blocks give the impression of continuity. Only two elements shape the painting: flowers and figures, although both are equally important. The flowers play a central role in the story that unfolds in the painting- the story of a quiet moment between mother and child. The flowers dominate the painting through pattern and color. The horizontally distributed flowers form a pattern of repeating red, almost dotted lines that contrast with the vertical lines of the mother's dress, which move from left to right. Here too, both parts are equally important and encourage the viewer to keep looking from one to the other, making the picture dynamic. Both the colors and the lines with dots are evenly distributed and repeated. Move the eye first to the mother's face, follow the

mother's gaze to the child's face, then to the flowers and around. The eye moves in a circle and returns to a sense of complete and caring presence.

2.3.1.3 Case Study 3: *Breakfast in Bed* Mary Cassatt, 1897

Intimacy and Physical Interaction: Figurative without Flowers

Figure 12 . Mary Cassatt, 1897, Breakfast in Bed, Oil on Canvas, The Huntington Library and Art Museum San Marino California
Image Source: https://emuseum.huntington.org/objects/5291/breakfast-in-bed

Cassatt, who was herself a mother, began figurative painting work in the 1880s, particularly with mother and child. For the rest of her career, she successfully portrayed these figures in her impressionist style. She often depicted the mother's attention on her child as the child explores the surroundings - the world, (The Huntington Library, 2024).

Cassatt paints simple scenes from daily life that she shares with her loved ones. The painting above is an excellent example of a mother's love and protection for her child. The contentment, joy and security of her child shines through the scene. (Heine, 2022) writes that in a comparison and contrast between Monet's and Cassatt's painting, it shows that Monet preferred to place flowers in a beautiful background and focus less on the interaction, while Cassatt shows that the interaction and creating a connection between her subjects, the mother and child, is the focus and the love is shown through the physical interaction with the arms wrapped around the child. In the light of the morning sun, the mother lies on her bed looking at her child as she holds him. The child sits in a confident and self-assured pose with his legs crossed and leans against its mother. This scene shows a loving and intimate relationship between a mother and her child. The child is looking out of the window and the sun is illuminating the room. It's not that the child shows no interest in his mother, but with security, he is sure to wonder what lies ahead, what there is to explore. There was a coffee cup on the bedside table. It is interesting that Cassatt has chosen white for all the fabrics here, including the sleeping clothes, the sheets, the pillowcase and the coffee cup and saucer. The focus is clearly drawn to the figurative, without much distraction. "Their abundance of vibrant color and delicate brushstrokes provide a level of aliveness and movement not seen in art until the arrival of the Impressionist movement." as (Heine, 2022) writes.

2.3.2 Flowers

These artworks were chosen as examples of scale, transparency and size. They do not necessarily show motherly love, but they are useful in providing information for the final artwork, particularly in technical terms, in composition and in the search for the integration of motherly love beyond the figurative through nature and flowers.

2.3.2.1 Case Study 4: *Water Lilies* by Claude Monet 1906

Monet becomes the main example of the development of works of art in combination with other works alongside *Mother and Child in Garden* , as it shows the scale, flowers and motherhood.

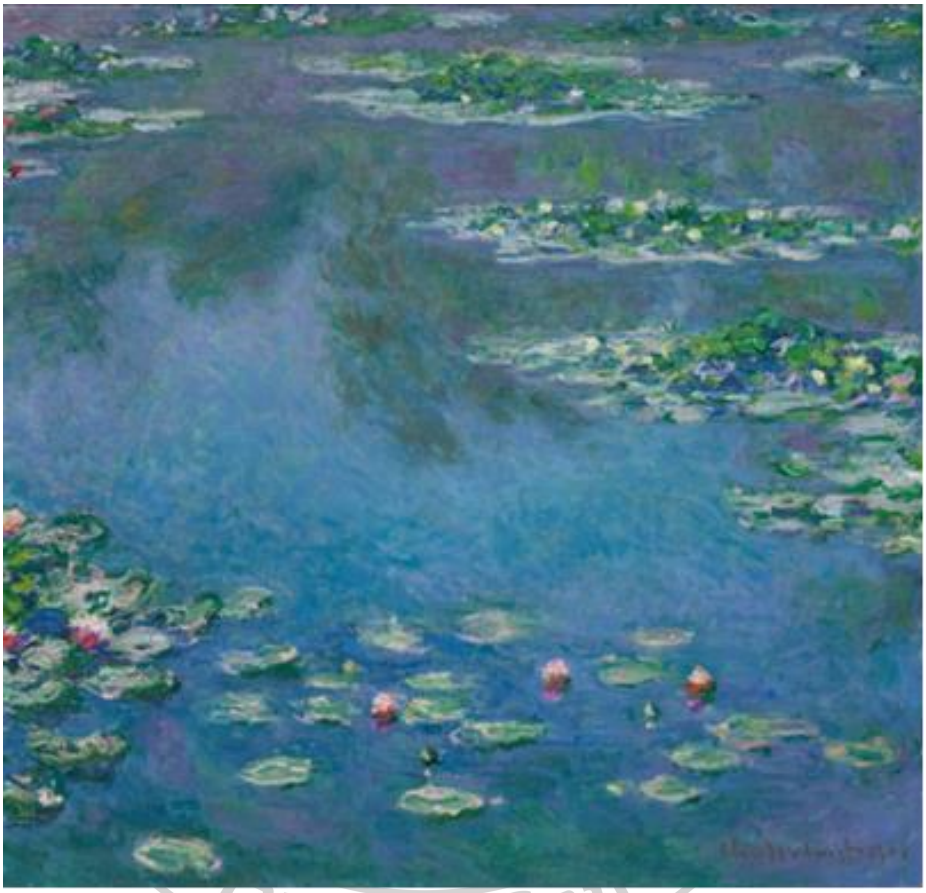

Figure 13. Claude Monet, 1906, Water Lilies, 1906, 89.9 × 94.1 cm Art Institute Chicago, Oil on Canvas

Image Source: https://www.artic.edu/artworks/16568/water-lilies

Monet created this painting Water Lilies in 1906 in his house in Giverny. He described this masterpiece as “one instant, one aspect of nature contains it all” and is one of the many *Water Lilies* paintings by Monet, (Art Institute Chicago, 2024). The focus is on the surface of the pond. A typical Impressionist style with light and shadow in plein air painting. The lights on the leaves and flowers and the reflection on the water create the floating effect on the pond. The green and blue convey a sense of soothing and calm.

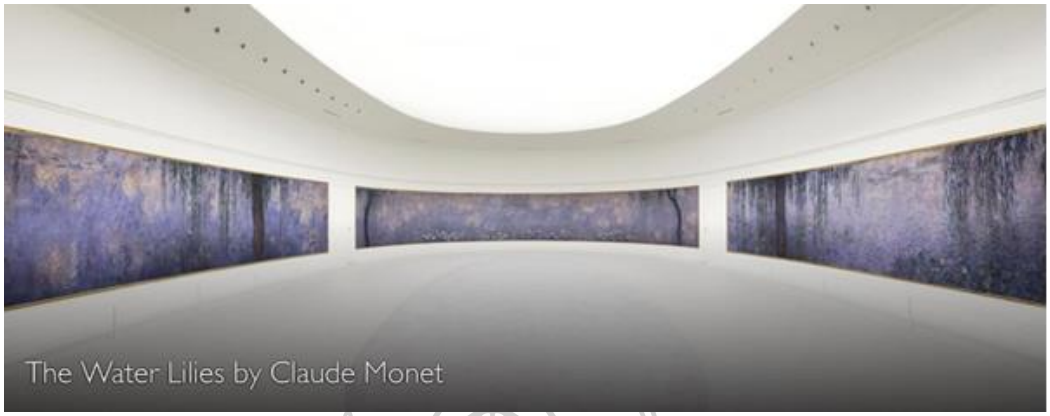

Figure 14. Claude Monet, 1914-1917, Water Lilies, Musee l'Orangerie, Paris, France
Image Source: https://www.musee-orangerie.fr/en/node/197502

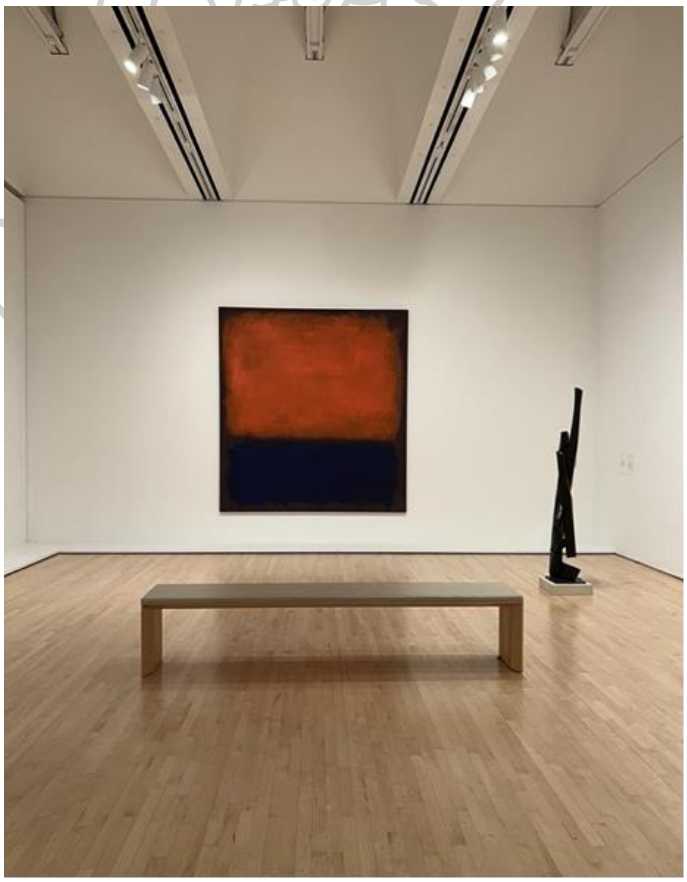

Figure 15. Mark Rothko, 1960, No.14, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2022

In Monet's *Water Lily Pond*, as in Rothko's work, the blurred forms that emerge when viewed from a distance are flowers, with flat colors that contain depth and richness, and "the self dissipates into and merges with something greater."(Duffy, 2023). It is the sheer physicality, the grand scale of the work that evokes awe and wonder. In O'keeffe's floral work, however, the scale is not created by the size of the canvas, but by the flower.

2.3.2.2 Case Study 5: *Poppy* Georgia O'Keefe 1927

Figure 16. Georgia O'keeffe, 1927, Poppy, Oil on Canvas, University of Minnesota Art Museum Minneapolis
Image Source : https://mfastpete.org/obj/poppy/

The painting zooms in on the poppy and shows the details of the flowers. This allows full attention, focus and concentrate fully on each petal and all the details. There are no other distractions. The bright orange contrasts with the almost black,

dark violet in the center and shows a strong character. The poppy offers a presence. The work of American artist Georgia O'keeffe (1887-1986) is characterized by an austere, linear quality, with thin, clear colors and bold compositions that focus on magnified and intimate features of flowers. Critics and scholars of O'keeffe talk about the cycles of life, birth and death that are symbolized in her work (Buchmann, 2015). A contemporary critic noted that her flowers had "the air of self-portraits.", but she rejected the classification as a painter of the feminine (Museum of Fine Arts St. Petersburg, 2024). It is the intimacy of an inward journey into nature and the heart of the poppy. It invites transcendence, where the viewer becomes smaller than the poppy and the roles are reversed.

2.3.3 Discussion of Case Studies: Ways of portraying human relationship within the context of Flowers

This overview of literature and images shows the role of flowers in conveying the intangible - love, loss, loyalty and longing. From antiquity to the Renaissance, artists have used flowers as a symbolic language. Nature follows us, and so art follows its mystery and beauty in the Spanish gardens of the Moors, on Japanese screens and in Warhol's screen prints.

My practice complements and expands the field of flower painting by finding and completing the gap that shows the motherly love in flowers, beyond the figurative. I dissolve the thinking that motherly must show a mother and child, but can simply be in the flowers themselves. To this end, I translate my findings into paintings that enhance the feeling by exploring a range of techniques, initially through qualities rather than applications.

2.4 Techniques and Formats

2.4.1 Transparency

2.4.1.1 The Nature of Transparency, History and Science

Transparency can be an inherent property of a substance, an object or the relationships between people. According to Pevsner, transparency matters in art because dematerialization was a triumph that represented an "effortless mastery" not only of the reality of materials, but also of the psychological reality of the physical world as something that constrains and limits the imagination. Transparency seemed to defy the earth-bound gravity that had hindered the merging possibilities of the new age. Moreover, walls in the past were translucent rather than permeable: The colored glass with its "saintly figures" allowed light through, but the light was tinted by mysticism and other worldliness (pink). (Whiteley, 2003). The boundary between a recognizable form and the indistinct becomes transparent, a transition rather than a boundary, and matter is transformed into fields of darkness and light. Transparency is seen as a sign of the scientific age. Whiteley (2003) notes that perceptual experiences are often described as transparent; that is, when we have a perceptual experience, we seem to be aware of the properties of the objects around us and never of the properties of the experience itself (Whiteley, 2003). The line between a discernible form and the blurry becomes transparent, a transition rather than a boundary, and matter is transformed into fields of darkness and light. Transparency is seen as a sign of the scientific age.

Throughout history, various techniques, and methods of displaying transparency have been discovered, as far back as ancient Egypt. The two best known features are the luminance relation and X-transitions described by Metelli. Metelli’s limitations on the luminance relation between the direct and filtered parts of the surface are consistent with the range of luminance values of transparency. X-junctions are observed where the contours of a transparent material overlap with the contours of the surface behind it. However, artists have also found that stimuli can be perceived as transparent even without these physical limitations. For example, ancient Greek

artists used simple black lines to depict transparency in drawings. Other techniques are also used by artists to depict transparency (Sayim & Cavanagh, 2011).

In his book Glazing, Michael Wilcox quotes Maxfield Parrish, who states that ‘it is generally admitted that the most beautiful qualities of a color are in its transparent state, applied over a white ground with the light shining through the color (Wilcox, 2014). In Art of Transparency, Sayim and Cavanagh (2011) write that around 1600 BC, transparency was depicted in paintings throughout the ancient Egyptian era. The main purpose was to capture valuables, sheer, delicate fabrics such as silk and cotton worn by pharaohs and members of the court. Many paintings show transparent objects and factors that are necessary for the perception of transparency and those that are not (Sayim & Cavanagh, 2011). The degree of transparency enhances the intensity of the illusion, which represents a desired stability but is still an illusion. At the beginning of the study of transparency, there should be a clear distinction between clear and opaque so that transparency can be identified and defined as literal or phenomenal transparency. The perception of transparency is now known as (Metelli, 1974).

Metelli's Law refers to the perception of transparency by seeing the luminance of the surface directly through a transparent layer. According to the Oxford dictionary, luminance means an intensity or physical intensity by the amount of light emitted or reflected from an illuminated surface: a physical dimension that creates the psychological visual perception of light. Following Metelli’s law, according to (Sayim & Cavanagh, 2011), luminance constraints are generally sufficient to create the perception of transparency rather than lightness, which appears to be a suitable method for measuring luminance. If these relations are reproduced consistently, this leads to a sense of transparency (Beck, Prazdny, & Ivry, 1984). Where this time the aspects of transparency, luminance offers as a route to cognition. There are different degrees of transparency: “transparent-unambiguous, transparent-ambiguous and opaque”.

2.4.1.2 Surface and Transparency

The luminous surface is all there is, but it is deceptive. The seemingly flat surface is built up by dry brushstrokes - the process of building up color with many layers of transparent, thin oil paint over a rather opaque layer. The impression of transparency can be achieved when two sets of colors with different levels of viscosity and dryness are joined by a third that is perfectly balanced between them. Divide the difference between the luminosity, hue and saturation of the two colors to obtain the third. The third is the experience, the sensation of something more than what is easily seen.

TRANSPARENCY CUES			PERCEPTUAL EFFECTS	Examples, see Figure	References
With X-junctions	Ratio	- magnitude differences	reduced luminance difference along a contour supports transparency	2D, 3	1 - 14
	Ordinal luminance differences	- non-reversing	transparency with ambiguous depth order	2B, 4, 5	
		- single-reversing	transparency with unambiguous depth order	2A	
		- double-reversing	no transparency	2C	
	No luminance differences	- lines only	usually no transparency (Fig. 6), but transparency through object knowledge possible (Fig. 7)	7	14
		- isoluminant colors	transparency when color constraints are met		15 & 16
Without X-junctions	Reflectance	- highlights	can enhance transparency	9 & 10	17 - 19
		- anti-Lambertian RF	can trigger transparency (e.g., sheer curtains)	11	14
	Transmission	- translucency	can enhance transparency		20 & 21
		- refraction	unimportant for transparency (e.g., violated in Fig. 12)	1	22
	Object-based	- world knowledge	can trigger and enhance transparency	all (but 6)	14

References: (1) Adelson & Anandan, 1990; (2) Anderson, 1997; (3) Beck & Ivry, 1988; (4) Brill, 1984; (5) Delogu et al., 2010; (6) Gerbino et al., 1990; (7) Metelli, 1970, 1974; (8) Kersten, 1991; (9) Koenderink et al., 2008; (10) Masin, 2006; (11) Nakayama et al., 1990; (12) Plummer & Ramachandran, 1993; (13) Singh & Anderson, 2006; (14) Sayim & Cavanagh (present contribution); (15) D'Zmura et al., 1997; (16) Faul & Ekroll, 2002; (17) Blake & Bülthoff, 1990; (18) Beck & Prazdny, 1981; (19) Fleming et al., 2003; (20) Fleming & Bülthoff, 2005; (21) Motoyoshi, 2010; (22) Fleming et al., 2011

Figure 17. Perceptual effects of transparency clues, The Art of Transparency, Pg. 694
Image Source: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Patrick-Cavanagh-3/publication/233397385_The_Art_of_Transparency/links/00463522740e5e3889000000/The-Art-of-Transparency.pdf?origin=publication_detail

2.4.1.3 Luminance and transparency

Metelli's Laws described the brightness relationships between the visible areas of a surface when viewed directly and when viewed through a transparent material. Transparent materials can both reflect and transmit light and are sometimes referred to as translucent.

Each of the three categories, namely transparent-unambiguous, transparent-ambiguous, and opaque, exhibits distinct brightness relationships between the two edges that form the X-junctions, (Sayim & Cavanagh, 2011).

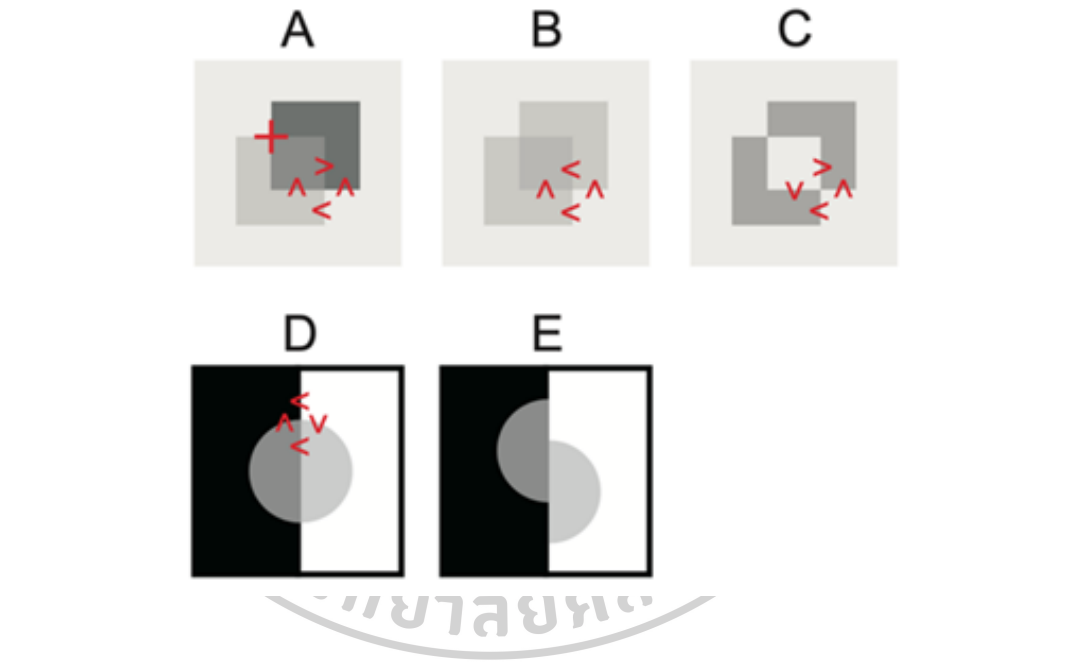

Figure 18. Transparency and Luminance, 2011
Image Source: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Patrick-Cavanagh-3/publication/233397385_The_Art_of_Transparency/links/00463522740e5e3889000000/The-Art-of-Transparency.pdf?origin=publication_detail)

In this figure, (a) a single- reversing junction where the lower square is usually perceived as transparent and lies in front of the darker square on the farther surface. The red cross indicates that an X transition is present. (b) This is a non-reversing junction where each of the two squares can be perceived as transparent and is positioned in front of the other. (c) A double-reversing junction with no visible transparency shows complete opacity. (d) The disc with X-junctions shows

intersections is transparent. (e) By moving the positions of the two halves of the disc, the X-shaped intersections are eliminated, resulting in the removal of the sense of transparency. The inequality indicators in panels (a) to (d) represent the brightness relationships between neighboring surfaces aligned with their respective boundaries (Sayim & Cavanagh, 2011).

Luminance constraints

Brightness results from the relationships at the X-junctions, which can predict how we perceive the transparency and relative depth of the surfaces of objects. Nowadays, we use Photoshop TM to estimate the brightness of X-junctions in artworks. There are several factors that affect the luminance we measure, such as pigment fading, inaccuracies in converting photographs to digital format, and the use of the “Value” scale in Photoshop TM is questionable. Despite these distortions, it is important to acknowledge that ordinal relations are sufficient for classifying brightness relations, (Sayim & Cavanagh, 2011).

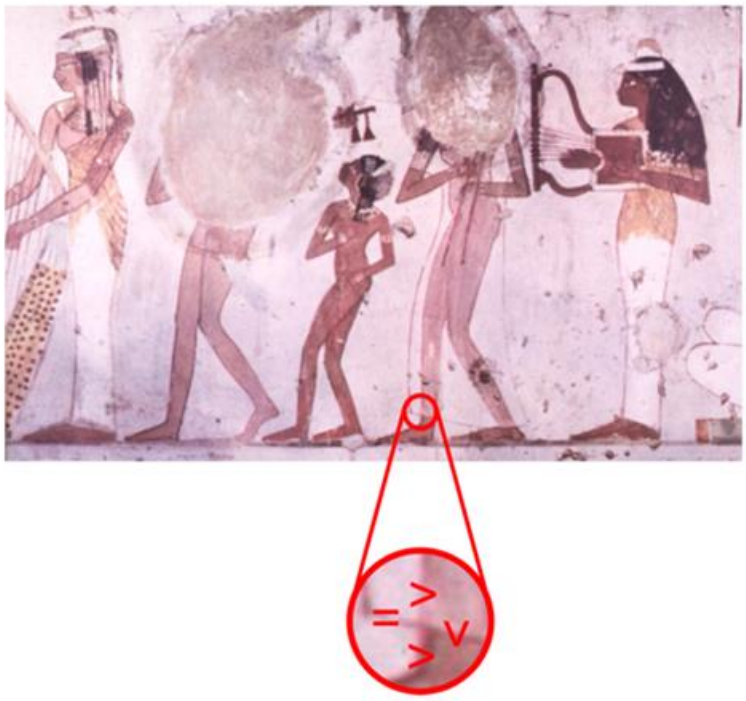

Figure 19. Transparency and Luminance, 2011.
Image Source: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Patrick-Cavanagh-3/publication/233397385_The_Art_of_Transparency/links/00463522740e5e3889000000/The-Art-of-Transparency.pdf?origin=publication_detail)

In Figure 19, the transparent dress of the second dancer from the right shows the contour outline of the legs, the dress and the background. We can recognize the X-junction as shown in the red circle. In contrast to the earlier illustration, in which X-junctions are caused solely by the differences in brightness between the four quadrants. Here they are caused on one side by the representation of a contour, in particular the outline of the dress. This confirms the categorization at the perceptual level: The arrangement of the perceived depth of the corresponding surfaces is ambiguous (Sayim & Cavanagh, 2011).

Figure 20. Rogier van der Weyden, c. 1460, Portrait of a Lady
(Image Source: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Patrick-Cavanagh-3/publication/233397385_The_Art_of_Transparency/links/00463522740e5e3889000000/The-Art-of-Transparency.pdf?origin=publication_detail)

The veil in Figure 20 covers certain areas of the woman's face and body. We do not see a transparent person with a veil behind her, although this is optical permissible. This is because the luminance or brightness directions have no reversals, so there is no indication of which surface is in front. In addition, the difference in brightness in the painting between the areas covered by the veil and the areas that can be seen as uncovered surfaces is minimal and therefore not significant enough to reduce the ambiguity (Sayim & Cavanagh, 2011).

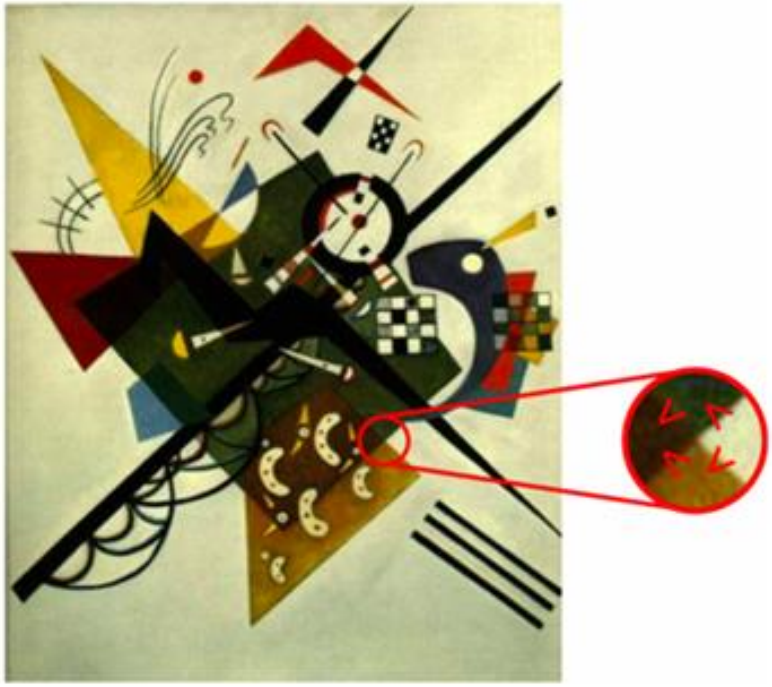

Figure 21. Wassily Kandinsky, 1923, On White II
Image Source: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Patrick-Cavanagh-3/publication/233397385_The_Art_of_Transparency/links/00463522740e5e3889000000/The-Art-of-Transparency.pdf?origin=publication_detail

Figure 21 above is an example of "failed" transparency, meaning simply because knowing water is transparent in nature is not enough to trigger the corresponding perception and there are inadequate X-junctions, appropriate brightness, and color values (Sayim & Cavanagh, 2011).

Material constraints

Figure 22. Roman Fresco, Pompeii
Image Source: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Patrick-Cavanagh-3/publication/233397385_The_Art_of_Transparency/links/00463522740e5e3889000000/The-Art-of-Transparency.pdf?origin=publication_detail

Figure 22 Shows the main indicator of transparency in the material covering the fruit, Because of its high level of transparency in the material, the material can only be visible with the highlights in white.

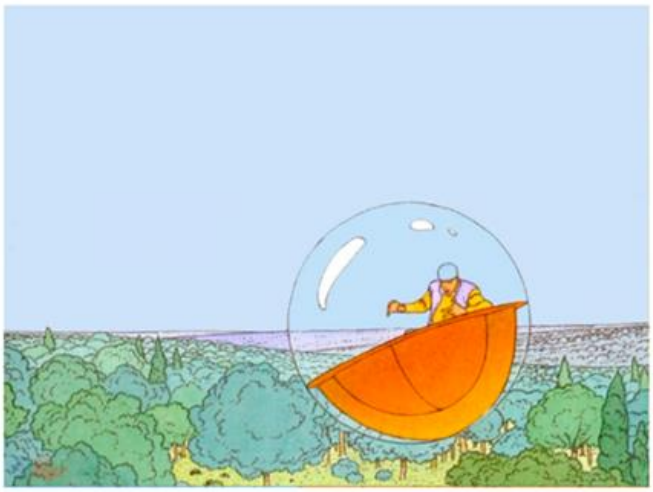

Figure 23. Moebius, Gardens of Aedena (1988)
(Image Source: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Patrick-Cavanagh-3/publication/233397385_The_Art_of_Transparency/links/00463522740e5e3889000000/The-Art-of-Transparency.pdf?origin=publication_detail)

The main indicator of the transparent sphere in Figure 23 is the visibility of its edges, the white areas showing reflections on the sphere also increased the perception of transparency.

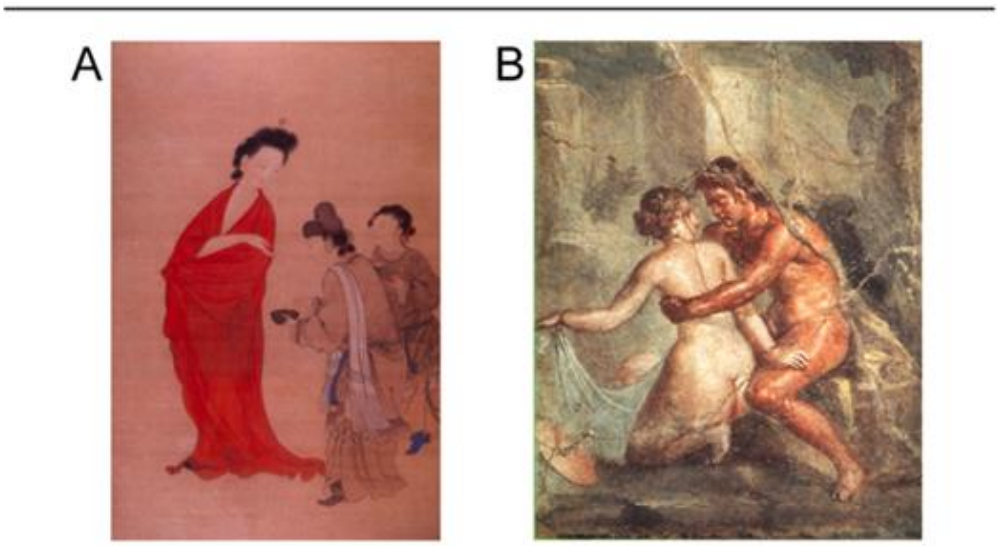

Figure 24. . Hua Qing in Her Bath by Kang Tao (1723-1795), B. Fresco, Pompeii
(Image Source: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Patrick-Cavanagh-3/publication/233397385_The_Art_of_Transparency/links/00463522740e5e3889000000/The-Art-of-Transparency.pdf?origin=publication_detail)

It is common to see characteristic patterns in sheer materials where folds influence how much light passes through or is reflected by the sheer material. In Figure A, we are unable to compare the areas covered by the transparent robe as there are no uncovered areas. Therefore, the contours on the folded parts of the robe, which are opaque, are evidence of transparency. Figure B shows a similar deduction of transparency in the folds of fabric that the woman is holding, as there are no sharp contours or X-junctions in the background, (Sayim & Cavanagh, 2011).

Object constraints

Figure 25. David Hockney, 1972, Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)
Image Source: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Patrick-Cavanagh-3/publication/233397385_The_Art_of_Transparency/links/00463522740e5e3889000000/The-Art-of-Transparency.pdf?origin=publication_detail)

Object-based principles are usually known as general knowledge of meaning about the properties of the world, which plays an important role in the perception of transparency. However, this principle is often neglected in the scientific search for transparency. Artists rely strongly on these inferences to portray transparency in their artwork when other principles are not adequate to depict transparent perception (Sayim and Cavanagh, 2011).

Figure 26. Fresco in the Villa de Poppea in Oplontis (c.70 AD)
(Image Source: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Patrick-Cavanagh-3/publication/233397385_The_Art_of_Transparency/links/00463522740e5e3889000000/The-Art-of-Transparency.pdf?origin=publication_detail)

Object-based inferences play a significant role in the Roman fresco in Figure 26. The bowl is perceived as transparent because the fruits in the bowl are visible. However, there are no luminance limitations or material properties that contribute to this. The blurred edges of the fruit in the glass may contribute to transparency, but this does not seem to be sufficient to provide a strong argument for the perception of transparency. Thus object-based inferences are essential to induce transparency in paintings, as in examples of Ancient Egyptian and Roman Art (Sayim & Cavanagh, 2011).

Figure 27. Liu Bolin, 2020, Teatro alla Scala
(Image Source: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Patrick-Cavanagh-3/publication/233397385_The_Art_of_Transparency/links/00463522740e5e3889000000/The-Art-of-Transparency.pdf?origin=publication_detail)

Object knowledge can be overridden by other, strongly indexical conditions that differ from effective object-based reasoning. In Figure 27, the figure is transparent, but this contradicts the knowledge that human bodies are opaque. Color and texture here also provide another clue to the object-based inference – the arranged red seats - serve as a background surface that is perceived through the transparency of the human body. The outlines of the shapes are broken up, causing the picture plane to merge with the shape of the object.

Cubism emphasized the flat, two-dimensional surface of the picture plane in art and rejected the traditional techniques of perspective, foreshortening and modeling as well as the time-honored theories of art as an imitation of nature. Cubist painters were not bound to copying form, texture, color and space. Instead, they presented a new reality in paintings that depicted radically fragmented objects whose several sides could be seen simultaneously. The monochromatic color scheme was suited to the presentation of complex, multiple views of the object, which was now reduced to overlapping opaque and transparent planes.

Figure 28. Georges Braque, 1922, The Portuguese, Kunstmuseum Basel.
Image Source: https://www.guggenheim.org/teaching-materials/picasso-black-and-white/cubism

Figure 29. Pablo Picasso, 1910, Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, Art Institute of Chicago.
Image Source: https://www.artic.edu/artworks/111060/daniel-henry-kahnweiler

Their work is suggestive, hinting at shapes, similar to the school and principles of *non -finito.* Adding scale, transparency and breaking up the form of the flowers, in the manner of the Cubist as Monet, add mystery to the flower.

2.4.2 Scale

McKee writes that “Monet’s last paintings mark a shift from a concern with the world’s beauty to a concern with its sublime aspects.”(McKee, 2023). Scale is central to Monet, and he uses physical scale - the size of the canvases, the subject of the painting is as much the act of viewing as the landscape itself, making it even more emphatically clear that the sublime exists in us, not in the object. Monet's lily ponds stretches across the entire room in the Musee de l'Orangerie and initially appears to be a peaceful sight of water lilies. When moving up close, the flowers are just a mass of fast-moving, loose brushstrokes. When we see clearly, by changing perspective and moving from near to far and craning our necks to look at paintings that take up the whole room. The enormous height of the painting from floor to ceiling, the loose, broken brushstrokes that leave the edges uncovered, and the formlessness are regarded as the main indicators of the overwhelming experience. Aside from the vast dimensions, the paintings are usually painted with loose brushstrokes resulting in an unfully, as in *non-finito*, covered canvas, sketched abstractions, texture of roughness and leaving all edges and ends uncleared. Similar techniques are applied in my Winter Jasmines series, which is many times the size of an experimental work, to overwhelm the space rather than lean back against the walls.

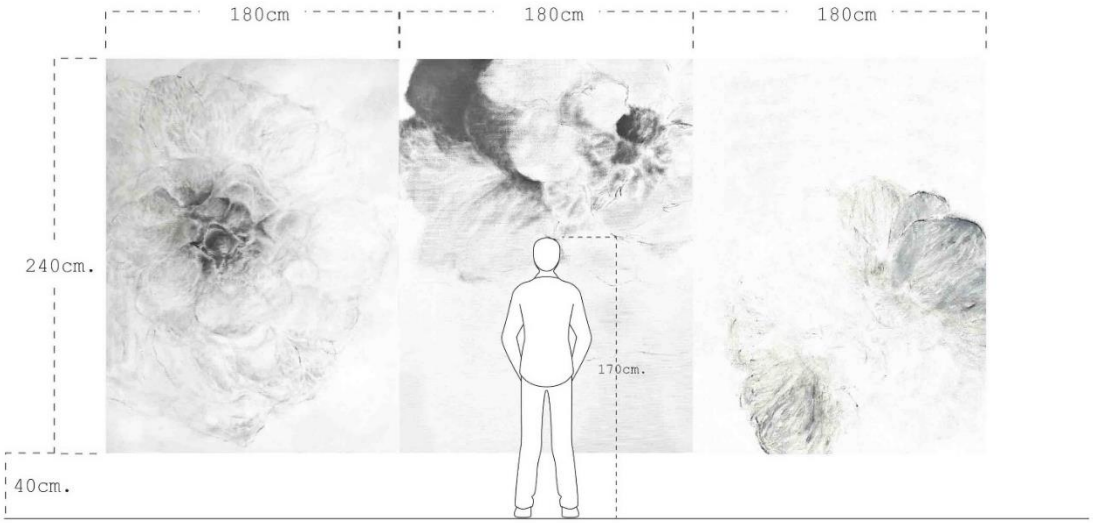

Figure 30. Winter Jasmines, front view. Image Source: Author, 2024

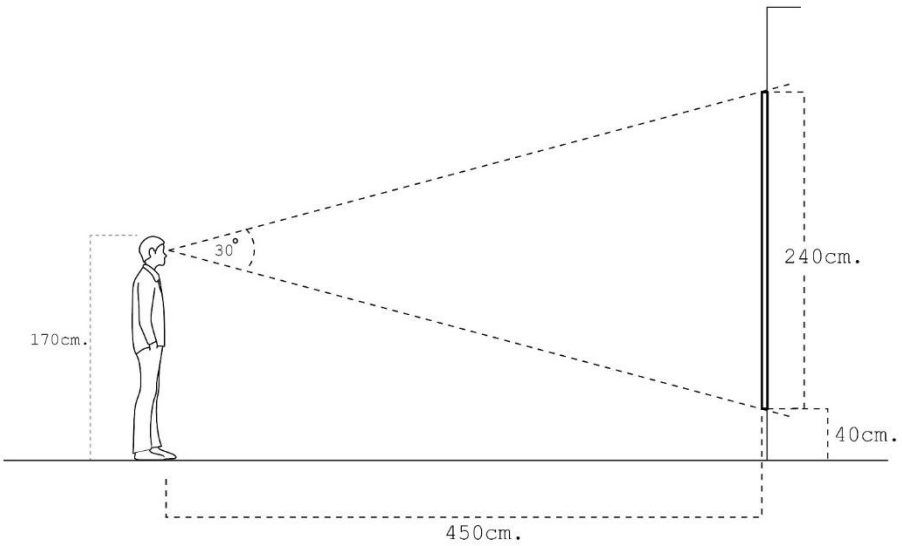

Figure 31. Winter Jasmines, perspective distance from side view.
Image Source: Author, 2023

The viewer has to step closer and is drawn into the picture by the movement. Parts of the canvas are exposed. No sharp edges indicate where the flower ends or begins. Seen close up, the flower is formless. It is an unsettling shadow and has lost its true form. The viewer feels half-blind, but “Monet found in the scenes he was seeing, with admittedly altered eyesight, (it) nevertheless served his effort to separate appearance and metaphysical reality.” (McKee, 2023). He argues for the necessity of the object, i.e. the separation involving scale and movement - in this research, it is the painting. Romanticism reminds us that external (paradigmatic) natural objects are necessary for an experience to emerge. What is the status of ‘nature’ and its ‘objects’ if they are merely the ‘occasion’ for an experience that (Costellow, 2023) argues, fundamentally private and self-referential. Can the painting then become an object of contemplation and not just something to look at briefly? A painting is static, and its contemplation is fleeting . Only the scale and movement of a canvas, the size of Rothko’s work for Four Seasons Hotels Dining Hall, and when placed in a gallery, the paintings later form a kind of spiritual space. Rothko's works cause one to become emotionally immersed, and where layers of transparency and intermittent light illuminate pigments. By forcing the viewer to move, a powerful reality invites wonder. The illusion of what we see first is not what we experience later.

2.4.3 Composition: the Construction of Harmony

To study composition in East and West, I primary look at the use of space- comparing byubo painting and Ikebana with Mondrian's abstractions for compositional work. Returning to practice-based work, where in Ikebana we identify where the subject should be according to its principles and varying dependent on schools, but always following its basic principles of height and angle. This leads to the composition of the painting. While Mondrian uses lines to create space, in Mondrian's work the motif becomes space- which is transferred to the canvas as a dynamic space that is empty or activated by its spatiality, as in the works of Monet and Rothko.

2.4.3.1 Ikebana

Ikebana seeks to express the universal in nature, which is fundamentally harmony, but not always through balance, equilibrium. Harmony in nature operates through homeostasis. Homeostasis is a self-regulating system that ensures stability while constantly adapting to changing circumstances. According to the Britannica Encyclopedia, "homeostasis is successful, life continues; if unsuccessful, disaster or death ensues. The stability attained is a dynamic equilibrium, in which continuous change occurs yet relatively uniform conditions prevail.".

A boundless space with ever- changing horizontals and verticals in abstraction, in which ovals become squares and undulating lines straight. This multiplicity leads to a dynamic unity, (Sciam, 2019) continues: Establishing equilibrium between the diverse appearance of the world and the synthesis brought about by consciousness does not mean reaching fixed points and unchanging truths. Like the trunk of the tree and then a rectangle, a square is now a metaphor for the unifying consciousness of humanity in dealing with the boundless and diverse space of the world.

Buddhist principles of existential balance underlying ikebana pose the question of how harmony can not only be understood, but also embodied. These two seemingly opposing creative expressions, both striving for harmony, appear to be static, but

they embody the dynamic balance necessary for harmony governed by the laws of nature - the balance of opposites. Ikebana can be a way to meditate and express the search for peace. Both in the Japanese flower arrangement and in the structuring of the composition in space, the basic vertical-horizontal and color elements represent the balance of the essential opposing forces, be it yin and yang, dynamic and static, or positive and negative.

Harmony is something imposed, something we have to consciously construct. It is a process of reconciliation. Working with ikebana is a way of creating harmony. Both in the Japanese ikebana flower arrangements that structure the composition in space and in the basic vertical-horizontal and color elements, the balance of essential opposing forces is represented. Even stillness is deceptive, a quietude that is only achieved through opposing forces. Harmony becomes a tense equilibrium characterized by a deceptive stillness.

Ikebana was defined and Japanese attitude to nature described as early as 1400 AD. The Japanese native religion of Shinto promotes a love of nature. With the rapid spread of Chinese culture and Buddhism, the Chinese practice of offering flowers was brought to Japan. After the rules were formalized, a standing style of Ikebana , Tatebana, later known as 'Rikka', was introduced in the Muromachi period. At this time, flowers were only arranged for religious ceremonies or offerings, but later they were often seen in courtrooms, temples, and homes, Richie et. al. (1966).

Figure 32. Ikebana arrangement displayed in homes and temples.
Image Source: Image Source: Donald Richie Edt 1966 The Master's Book of Ikebana

Figure 33. Ikebana arrangement displayed in homes and temples.
Image Source: Image Source: Donald Richie Edt 1966 The Master's Book of Ikebana

Coincidentally, the Japanese religious belief, Shinto, is similar to the Trinity like the Christian doctrines – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In Shinto, male, and

female generations are joined through the world, making three. In Buddhism, the trinity is formed by the Buddha, the principles and the priesthood. The number three, like the trinity and the triangle, is important for ikebana. Chinese flower arranging traditions, from which the Japanese abbot Senmu learned, also include the number three, where three lines represent fulfillment.

According to the basic rules of ikebana, the three branches are expressed by ‘heaven’, ‘man’ and ‘earth’. The principle of three represents wholeness in the flower arrangement, with man (so) standing in the middle position between heaven (shin) and earth (gyo). ‘Practicing with the heart, the harmonious wholeness of body, soul and surroundings are the important things’ (Herrigel, 1958).

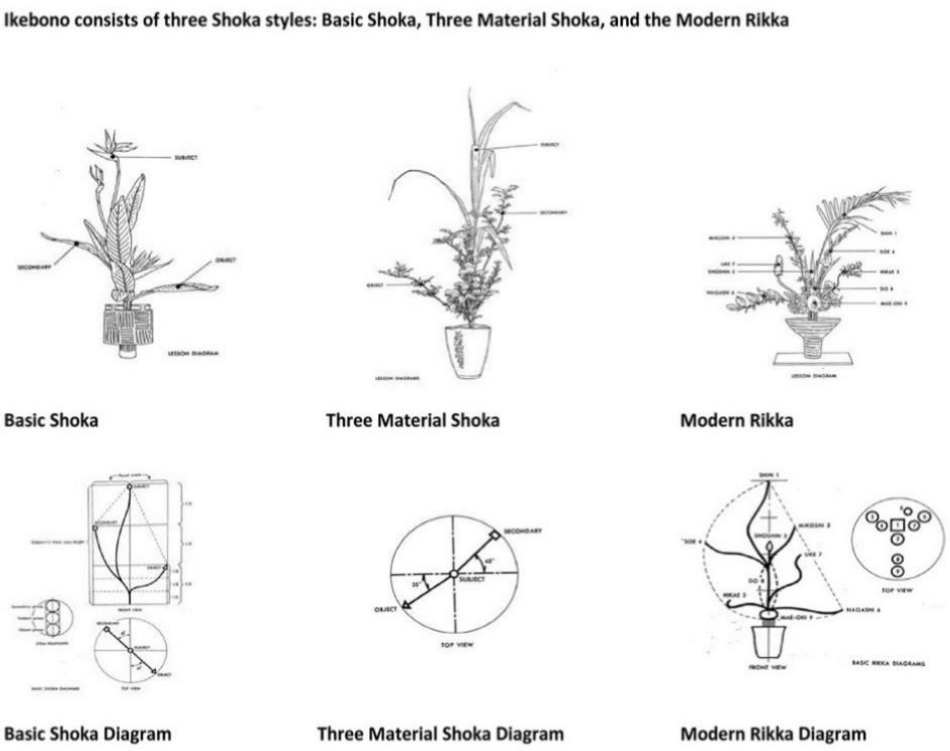

Figure 34. Ikebono School
Image Source: Donald Richie Edt 1966 The Master’s Book of Ikebana

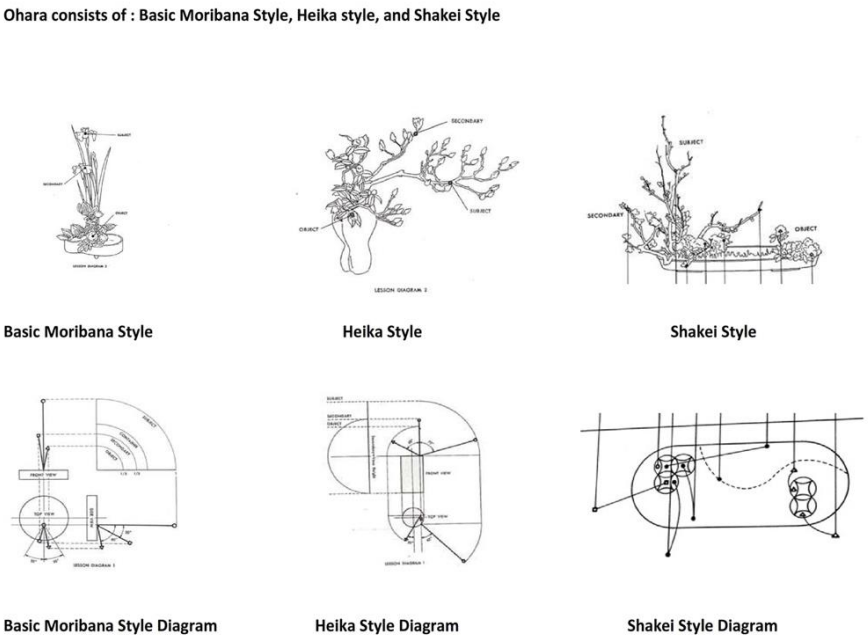

Figure 35. Ohara School.
Image Source: Donald Richie Edt 1966 The Master's Book of Ikebana

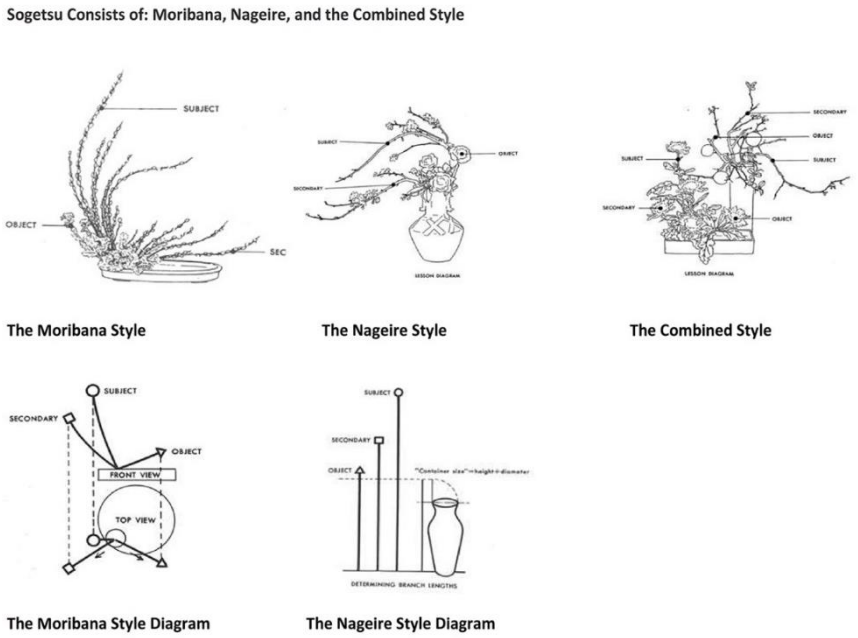

Figure 36. Sogetsu School
Image Source: Donald Richie Edt 1966 The Master's Book of Ikebana

Schools of Ikebana

Ikebana styles have developed over the last century. Ikebana styles or flower arrangements are displayed in homes and other spaces. Many schools have formed, the dominant schools of ikebana are: Ikenobo, Ohara, and Sogetsu.

Ikenobo

Ikenobo is the oldest form of ikebana. In the sixth century, Senmo studied the arrangement of flowers as a religious offering in China. He founded the Ikenobo tradition of Ikebana. Senkei XII laid down the first rikka rules. In 1820, a popular Shoka style was developed and later moribana was introduced. Modern Shoka also became known as sanshu-ike or “three-material arrangement”. Ikebono consists of three Shoka styles: Basic Shoka, Three Material Shoka, and the Modern Rikka.

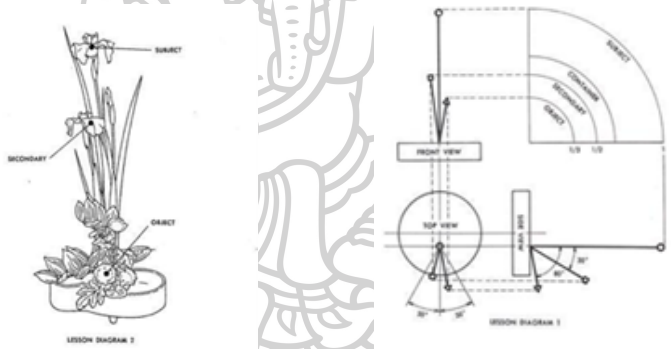

Figure 37. Sogetsu and Ohara School: Basic Moribana, Heika, and Shakei Basic Moribana Imagery & Schematic Diagram from Donald Richie Edt 1966 The Master’s Book of Ikebana

Ohara

Unishin Ohara was a sculptor of vases before he founded his own Ikebana school. He found the traditional style too rigid and began his creations with western flowers and low vessels called suiban. Unishin created a new arrangement trend, which is a realistic form of flower arrangement that looks like flowers on hills with grass. This modern Moribana's Basic Shakei technique led to a revolution in the Japanese history of ikebana. After Unishin's death in 1916, his son Koun formalized the newly established ikebana style into a new descriptive teaching method using the terms “subject line”, “object line” and “subsidiary lines”.

Figure 38. “CONNECT” Akane Teshigahara Solo Exhibition for 20th Anniversary (2021/Sogetsu West, Kyoto)
Image Source: https://www.sogetsu.or.jp/e/works/

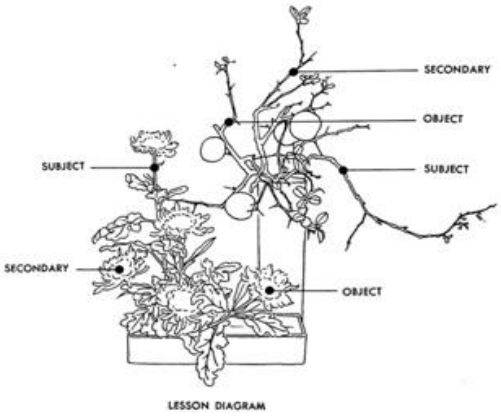

Figure 39. The Combined Style Imagery. From Donald Richie Edt 1966 The Master’s Book of Ikebana

Sogetsu

Sofu Teshigahara , the founder of the Sogetsu School, in Tokyo, combined the traditional theories of Ikebana with his revolutionary ideas of arranging flowers from the feelings of the moment and derived the free forms of Ikebana from this. in 1927, he founded the Sogestu school, which contains elements of the two earlier styles,

such as the main lines: the Subject line or shin (representing heaven), the Secondary line or soe (representing the earth); and the Object line or hikae (representing man). Similarly, Mondrian defined the lines in his work as feminine and masculine, representing vertical and horizontal, dynamic, and static. His compositions portrayed the balance of these universal and elemental forces.

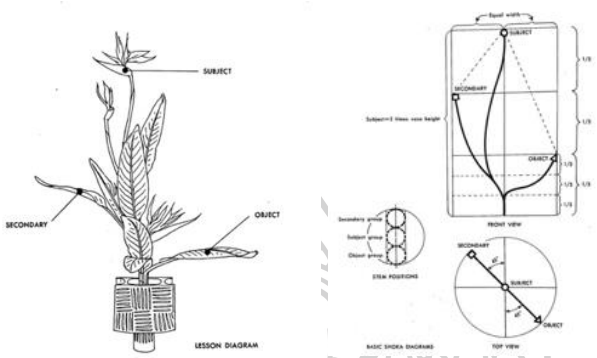

Figure 40. Basic Shoka Imagery and Schematic Diagram. From Donald Richie Edt 1966 The Master's Book of Ikebana

The Basic Shoka style begins by placing a bundle of stems from the container in the center. With the lines showing the three branches of Subject, Secondary, and Object, it is essential to note that the elements usually appear in odd numbers. Ikebana achieves a dynamic balance in different ways - based on Shintoism and Buddhism, where harmony is achieved through transformation and never through opposition, but through an embrace, an inclusion of the combined in the practitioner's process. Ikebana strives for a balance between heaven, earth and man. The search for harmony is a central balancing act for man, art and nature. The space around the flowers of Ikebana is activated in silence and is in dialog between object and emptiness. Rozhin said that "to create a balance of space", white blocks are carefully included in the experiment to achieve balance and harmony, similar to the “invisible" in Ikebana, which is not an empty space but a persistent spiritual fullness (2013). Ikebana acts as a meditation and an expression of the longing for harmony. As in Ikebana, a composition begins with giving lines, heights, and planes philosophical and human meanings. True Ikebana is a part of our lives that is not limited by time or lifestyle.

2.4.3.2 Mondrian's Abstraction on Structures in Space

Mondrian's paintings negate a modern reality marked by the world wars. Mondrian and the artists of De Stijl championed a new visual language that replaced a dying past of realistic, narrative imagery and allowed abstraction to convey ideas, just as the flower speaks of love. Pure abstraction sought to express universal harmony through a utopian ideal. Neo-plasticism, developed by Mondrian, uses the canvas as a method of representing modern reality. His paintings express the ideal of universal harmony in his work through plasticism, a form of plastic art in which forms are reduced to geometric lines, surfaces and colors. After the Second World War, Mondrian searched for an expression of harmony to bring the world back into visual order and balance. In his painting, Mondrian's 'elements of art' are line, shape and form, space, color, texture, and composition. For him, the rectangular plane is universal, for everyone, everywhere and always. The rectangular planes in the neoplastic composition are filled with a primary color (red, yellow, blue) or with a non-color (black, white, gray). He considered the interplay of opposites in the world to explain the constant interaction and movement towards balance and harmony. The 'doctrine of opposites' can be found in Mondrian's painting - neoplastic compositions, such as color against non-color, horizontal against vertical, small against large, and matte against glossy. The term 'the relationship of positions' refers to lines that are perpendicular to each other.

Figure 41. Piet Mondrian, 1912, Landscape with Trees, Oil on canvas, 120 x 100cm,

Figure 42. Piet Mondrian, 1912, Flowering Appletree,

Figure 43. Piet Mondrian, 1915, Composition 10 in Black and White,

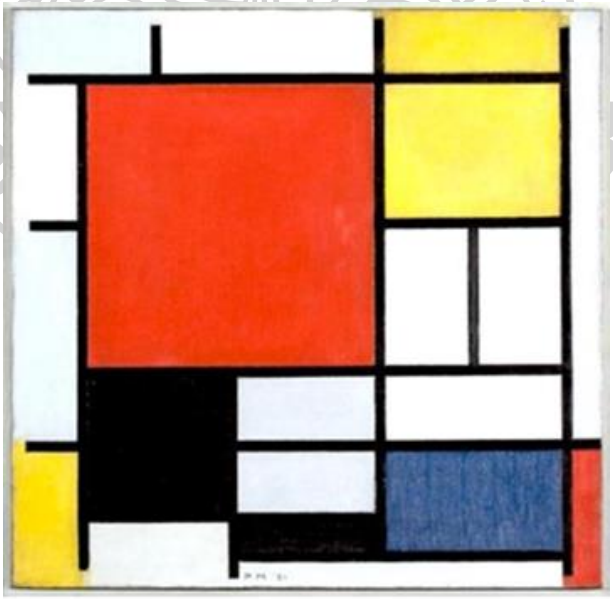

Figure 44. Piet Mondrian, 1921, Composition with Large Red Plane, Yellow, Black, Gray, and Blue, Oil on canvas, 59.5 x 59.5cm, The Hague, Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, 2021

Mondrian developed his abstraction of nature further by depicting the rhythmic movement of the waves in scattered lines with dominant vertical lines showing a jetty projecting out into the sea. The harmony between color and line could even be achieved through a discordance between the elements. In 1921, he successfully developed his new style of abstract art with black lines and primary colors - red, yellow, and blue. Mondrian expanded or loosened his grids. These expanded spaces or enlarged zones looked as if they had their own powers and “as if the colors could set the outer structure in motion from within,” according to (Deicher, 2021). Eventually, when the blocks of squares and rectangles became meaningless to Mondrian, they were simply identified as structures in space.

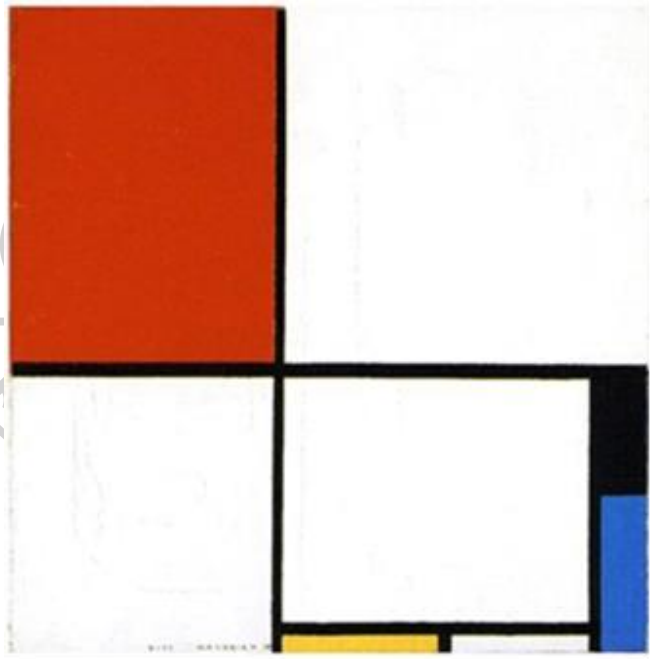

Figure 45. Piet Mondrian, 1921, Composition with Red, Black, Blue, and Yellow, Oil on canvas, 45 x 45cm, Ludwigshafen am Rhein, Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, 2021

The large areas of color defined by straight lines reflect his radical simplification of what he viewed as the essence of energy and the dynamic forces that govern nature and the universe. Pure areas of color create harmony through contrast to balance these forces (Deicher, 2021).

2.4.3.3 Discussion: Composition East versus West

Various schools of Ikebana follow the principles of stillness in natural forms, minimalism from Buddhist precepts, graceful lines, found forms, reflection of feelings, Japanese esthetics and the order or structure of heaven, earth, and humanity. The use of negative space, empty space, is an important component in achieving harmony and balance in the composition. Similarly, Mondrian's work with geometric shapes and primary colors creates a sense of harmony and balance, where the negative space between the lines is important to the overall composition. The experiment is to find out in what way harmony can take shape in space through the integration of Ikebana's principles with Mondrian's structures and whether harmony is really a dynamic balance, a push and pull relationship between different aspects such as lines, blocks, front and back, high and low, centered and off centered, fragile and strong, activated and non-activated space? Herrigel wrote that "practicing with the heart, harmonious wholeness of body, soul and surroundings are the important things", which is the core of Ikebana (Herrigel, 1958). Working with Ikebana, and then with Mondrian became a tool to understand what harmony is.

In Ikebana, and the Principles of Three, "one line is symbolic; two lines are harmonious, but three lines represent fulfillment," according to Herrigel, author of the 1958 book Zen in the Art of Flower Arrangement. Life, people and nature must coexist harmoniously, according to ikebana. It is an art that is at the heart of Japanese life and culture, a union of nature and man in which cut flowers take on a new meaning. Ikebana seeks forms that are harmonious but not symmetrical. In this sense, there is a tension in the still lifes depicted, a dynamic balance between what is bent, straight and dead and then brought back to life. The gaze moves up to the

heavens, guided by a set of principles and relationships between man, universe and earth, similar to the principles of the three in ikebana arrangements - ideas that also encourage my practice.

‘Principles of Three’ and ways of composing harmony

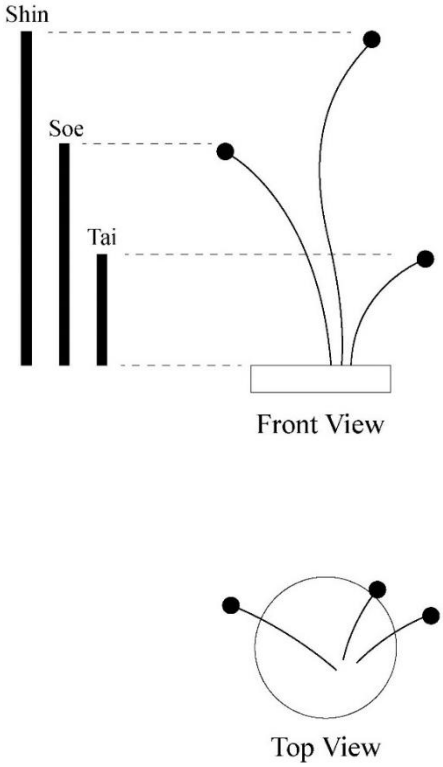

Figure 46. Ikebana Principles of Three.
Image Source: Author, 2024

Rothko and Monet took a similar approach, inviting the viewer to look at the lower part of the canvas and upwards. Rothko added an open or imperfect rectangle in the lower part of the painting, in which the lines point towards the upper part of the canvas. Monet directs the eye through the combination of active and empty space on the monumental canvases. The viewer must take in the entire scale of the work in order to grasp its size.

The Construction of Harmony East and West

The constant care of a loving mother conveys a sense of harmony in life. I find comfort in the realization that harmony is a dynamic process, an equilibrium of wavering forces. The Western approach suggests that harmony is created through opposites, through tension and conflict. Asians, who are influenced by the Confucian concept of harmony, expect it to be orderly, calmly absorbing diversity. Tak-lap Yeung argues that harmony exists both in diversity and conciliation and where both can represent something beautiful, (Yeung, 2020). It was first the tension that I needed to explore. Eventually, harmony can be understood through the Eastern art of Ikebana by the thought of a Western painter, Mondrian. The tensions can be peaceful, but deceptively calm like an Ikebana arrangement. In contrast, Mondrian's paintings seem at first glance to represent a Confucian ideal of harmony - a clean and methodical order. But in nature, harmony superimposed by control is an impossibility. Nature rots and comes back to life, just as an Ikebana arrangement consists of dead flowers brought back to life. This perfect order, a static section of nature, is instead a dynamic equilibrium and is in a process of change. Mondrian’s color blocks move together and apart, they are in tension with each other and create order.

2.4.4 non-finito (on the Unfinished)

'Just like everything else that does not go according to plan, unfinished works often hold an element of surprise. Abandoned or interrupted, they may reveal traces of the creative process in a composition that would have otherwise been turned into a unified surface and a coherent whole. A work halted in progress may thus remind us of the fundamental question of when do we consider an artwork to be finished. In many cases, it also allows us to consider the beauty of the imperfect.' (Reifert, 2016).

non-finito is an approach to art in which more parts are left out rather than resulting in a sculpture or painting that might look unfinished. Rather, it is a way of alluding to perfection by depicting something as imperfect that emerges from within the block

of stone or canvas. Donatello first introduced the term and technique during the Italian Renaissance. Michelangelo and other artists deliberately used the non-finito. Philosophically, the non-finito has its roots in antiquity and is linked to the theories of Plato. According to Plato, no work of art can fully resemble its heavenly counterpart. To leave a work of art unfinished is to pay respect to the divine and, to some degree, the sublime in all living things, from flowers to mountains to the human form (Metropolitan Museum of Art NYC, 2024) .

Non-finito is a technique which leaves something unfinished as to not trying to mimic the perfection to the divine, therefore offering a suggestion of an eternal trait, such as love. With origins in Plato's ideas around the impossibility to perfectly imitate the divinity of creation by works of arts, renaissance artists initially intentionally applied *non-finito* or the unfinished and imperfect to sculpture and later painting proposing that only God reaches perfection. In modern times, authors and artists argue that *non-finito* invites the reader or viewer to complete the work and that no art exists solely by itself. On a purely visual level, Eva Reifert in her text *Unfinished Works in European Art, ca. 1500–1900, non-finito* describes the deliberate use of the esthetic of the unfinished as an expressive means or to a stylistic end. In any case, *non-finito* holds a contemplative by engaging a viewer to question and search for an artwork not quite complete yet expressive in its rawness.
Unfinished art appears to be closer to the thought process that informed the work and the human hand which brought the piece into being. Pliny the Elder wrote when speaking of a series of half completed paintings, that "*those imperfect works*" were "*held in greater admiration than the completed pieces, for they display not only the final traces of each artist's hand but also his very thoughts*" (Gilbert, 2003). *Non-finito* puts the artwork in the very state of a suspended coming-into-being.

The question remains, if *non-finito* was ever intentional. There is a lot of writing about unfinished works originating for reasons of mishaps more than as a deliberate expression. After a few masters of the Renaissance and the Baroque it is never quite clear if such unfinished works were intentional until the end of 19th century and

onwards when more modern artists openly wrote and spoke about applying *non-finito.*

Over centuries the idea of what is finished or unfinished (*non-finito*) changed according to fashionable trends and taste. It is obvious where the demarcation lies. Perfect representation, even a heightened photorealism has been the holy grail for art from the Romans to pop art. Dotted along the line, numerous *non-finito* artworks have become part of history, but it is not certain to what degree these artworks were intentionally left unfinished or simply victims to the artists losing commissions, running out of money or time due to death or tragedies, or losing interest.

Michelangelo, Donatello, Titian and Rembrandt are among the earliest who deliberately applied *non-finito* to their works. Titian's brushstrokes were described by his contemporaries as stabs or spots of colour, while Rembrandt became notorious for leaving large parts of his canvases and prints unfinished confusing the viewer who expected a better imitation of the real (Reifert, 2016). After the renaissance, art history returns to favoring the realistic image until Turner re-invigorated the technique of *non-finito* heightening the sense of a mysterious, light filled atmosphere in his paintings by swift brushstrokes. He left figures more as suggestions than clear outlines. When view close up, the human forms dissolve into ether. At the end of the 19th century the impressionists consciously began to experiment with loose and fluid marks across the clay and bronze surfaces of sculptures and the roughly textured linen canvases bare of primer. Rodin deliberately left chisel marks, rough finger strokes on clay and Cezzane drew with lively, uneven brushstrokes and pencil lines. Suchh work remains close to the very moment of its creation and preserves the art work more as a suggestion than a final piece.

Figure 47. Joseph Mallord Willian Turner 1775-1851, Rough Sea c.1840-5. Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856.
Image Source: http://www.tate.org.uk/art/work/N05479

Figure 48. Michelangelo, Slaves or Prigioni, c. 1525-1530.
Image Source : https://www.jstor.org/stable/1483730

Vasari writes, according to Gilbert, that what is expressed in Michelangelo's *non-finito, it* is the very factor of unfinished that should not make us view the works as without value as we otherwise might be likely to do (Gilbert, 2003). When the works "show finished and unfinished areas adjacent to each other, disproportion is the effect, but the contrast heightens the effectiveness of the finished parts." (Gilbert, 2003).

Across the life of Michelangelo, he searched for a way of art to communicate expressive qualities (Gilbert, 2003). The work is neither done nor polished, but is at a point that perforce engages the artist. Benedetto Varchi, giving the funeral oration for Michelangelo in 1564, said his profundity and skill were so great that they showed in his unfinished works more than in others' finished ones (Gilbert, 2003). Gilberts writes that Michelangelo is among the geniuses who are sublime even while being "incorrect", eternal while struggling to find the truth. The clumsiness set against smooth perfection is a variation on the earlier paradox about the imperfection which can be perfect(Gilbert, 2003). In this mix of technical shop talk and eternal sublimity the artist exalted the conservative stipulation that there may be mistakes but the works has integrity. Areas that have not been finished intentionally or unintentionally reveals an unexpected turn in the aesthetic that lent more power (Gilbert, 2003).

Vasari continues that Donatello's sculptural works appear to be polished form a distance but up close, the chisel marks make for a rougher surface. Donatello did use *non-finito* intentionally. In the end the approach to leaving marks resembles impressionists' brushstrokes that make for a loose and large shapes coming together at a distance only to dissolve in a texture and colors close up (Gilbert, 2003). A sketchy luminosity follows loose brushstrokes (an idea expanded on in the literature review, methodology and developmental artwork) John Ruskin debated that rough chisel marks create a pictorial effect and set up a play between light and shade. (Gilbert, 2003). *Non-finito* is more than a technique in its fragmented form, it is also a marker of time and sometimes loss.

Figure 49. Alice Neel, 1965, James Hunter Black Draftee
Image Source: https://magazine.artland.com/unfinished-art-the-enduring-fascination-of-incompleteness/

In the 1960s America, the portrait artist Alice Neel deliberately used *non-finito* as a deliberate visual language, but it started as a tragic tale. Her work raises powerful questions. For a painting to be meaningful does it need to be completed with a polished finish, to look as true to a photographic snapshot of life as possible. Ricci writes: "She would often invite strangers to sit for a portrait until one day she met James Hunter and asked him to pose. It was 1965, and American authorities had decided on an increase of forces to send to the war in Vietnam; Hunter had just found out that he had been drafted for service and was required to leave within a week. In the first sitting, Neel painted most of his face and hand roughly sketching the outlines of the rest but Hunter never returned from combat to complete the work. Though unfinished, the piece captured the sadness of Hunter's countenance and soul" (Ricci).

In the end, what does *non-finito* reveal? Unfinished and imperfect, the image comes alive by vigor, intimacy, honesty, and vulnerability. Sketch-like and free of superficiality, the painting flows as opposed to a labored and polished surface. Spontaneity directs the brushstrokes adding a quality to an image that otherwise could feel static if worked to absolute finish. In a manner of coming into being the works appear more relatable, more strangely intimate, and with a canvas laid bare, the painting is skinless.

It is evident in the unfinished forms that an honest search for expression engages with the viewer as a question. The loose brushstrokes of *non -finito* also appear as traces representing how fleeting and incomplete feelings can be. Based on the reading and reflecting on the works, I aim to use *non-finito* intentionally to and part of my visual and expressive language. A partially completed form on the canvas invites the viewer to complete the image, filtering the visual story through memories and jumbled feelings. The viewer dynamically participates in of the work witnessing a human touch steered by a life bowed to imperfection.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Methodology: Qualitative Research

This is practice-based research combined with readings on the history of the symbolism of floral language and the nature of motherhood alongside visual analysis of existing artworks and of transparency, composition, brushwork and *non-finito.*

Supported by observing and reflecting on the process with sketches, developing a clear set of approaches when working with compositions based on the principles of Ikebana and Mondrian's abstraction, in an elongated format based on Chinese and Japanese screens to compose a triptych with jasmine as the central focus.

This research will explore (i) monochromaticity in oil painting using the dry brush technique to create effects of 'white on white', 'white on gray' and 'dark on gray' capturing different times during a winter's day, (ii) layering with layers from transparency to translucent and opaque working, (iii) working with scale and (iv) implementation in Chapter 4: Composition and Scale when working with a specific format.

Research Process Diagram

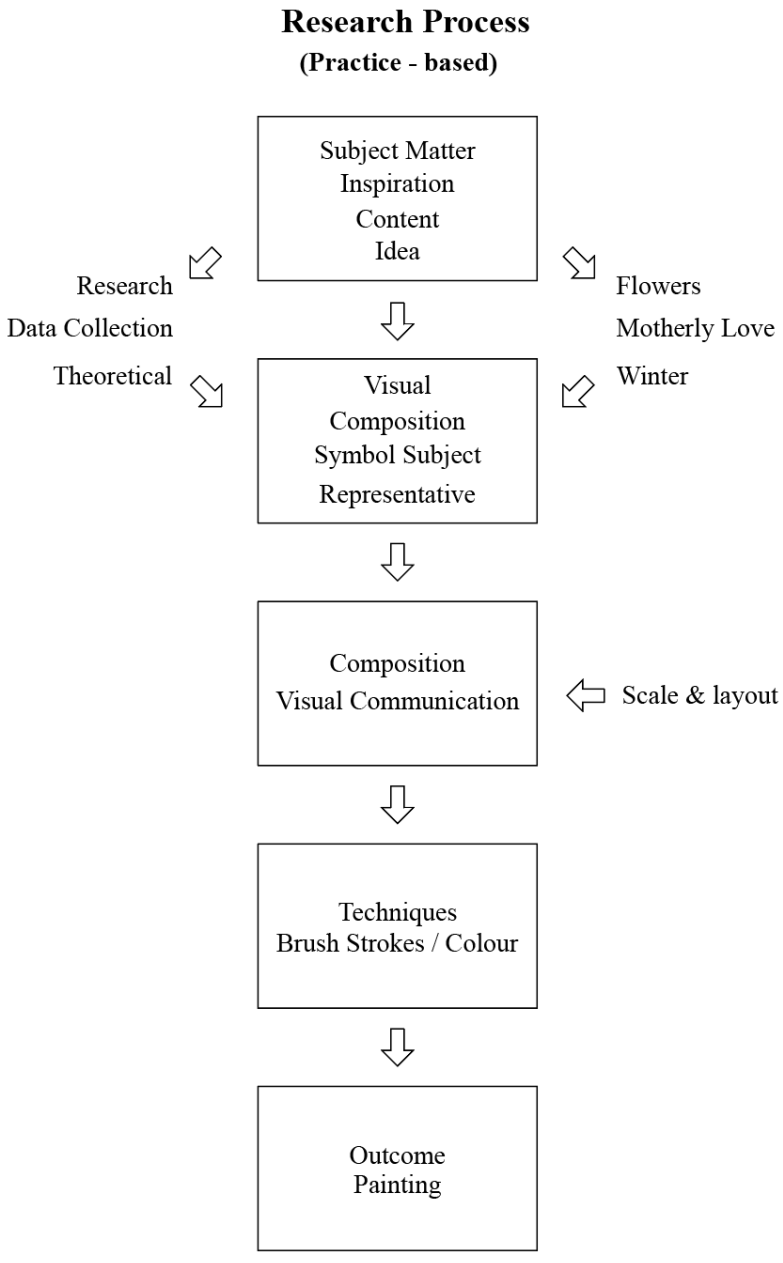

Figure 50. Research Process
Image Source: Author, 2024

3.2 Observation

The research begins with the observation and analysis of information on composition, format, and painting techniques gathered from texts and museum collections in order to consolidate research resources. Reading, visual analysis and exploration of Eastern and Western approaches to composition, working with the ideas Ikebana and Mondrian's Neoplasticism, form the basis for the development of the final artwork in Chapter 4.

3.3 Artworks

Following a structured approach to the flower paintings, applying transparency, and working with scale and composition. A series of techniques such as dry brushstrokes, the creation of texture through lines, curves, intensity and layering construct the paintings in the format of an elongated rectangular shape (as in Chinese landscape painting).

Finally, to create a series of paintings focusing on the symbol of motherly love - a white jasmine- the flowers are explored in a winter setting: 'White on White' represents a snowy landscape during the day, 'White on Gray' represents a snowy day without sun, 'White on Dark' represents night and 'Dark on White' is a reverse experiment with white snow at night. The technique of transparency and luminosity is applied to each state. Capturing the different times of day and night gives an impression of the passing of time.

3.4 Composition, Eye-movement, Scale, and Format

3.4.1 Composition

Composition and scale when working with a particular format, which begins with understanding the compositional principles of the East and West by looking at the composition of Ikebana and Mondrian. This is the first phase of the research, working practically. A preliminary exploration of the application of Mondrian's ideas to Ikebana principles of harmony. It is a way of working with both painting (Mondrian) and living flowers (Ikebana) to understand how to place flowers in a negative and

positive space, creating a harmonious composition that is asymmetrically constructed and exerts a dynamic push and pull. This insight is supported by Ikebana compositional principles of Ikebana, such as the principle of three and Mondrian's thought and balance through push and pull.

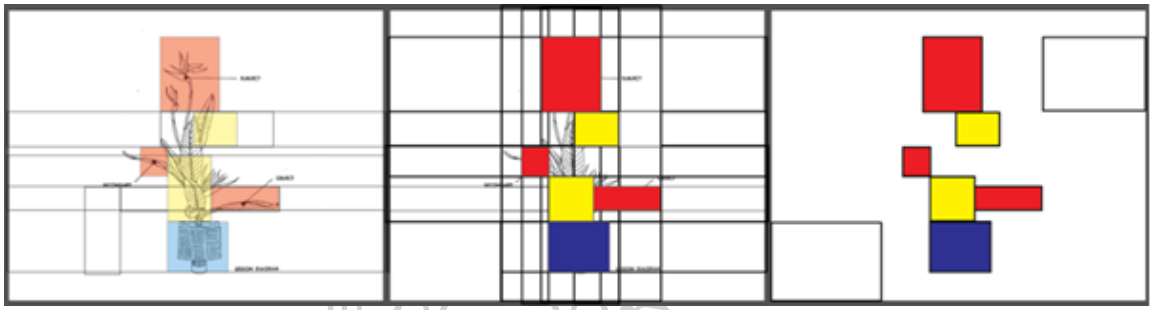

Figure 51. Experimental Composition of Basic Shoka Style with Structure in Space.
Image Source: Author, 2023

In Figure 51, Experimental composition of Basic Shoka Style with Structure in Space - Translucent yellow blocks are then placed on the complementary or supporting branches and leaves of the Ikebana image. In Ikebana, the entire flower arrangement encompasses the vessel as an esthetic unit. Following the Basic Shoka style of Ikenobo, the author has used blue blocks to indicate the position of the vase and the shape of the vessel.

In the images below, the original Ikebana drawing has been removed, leaving opaque colored blocks.

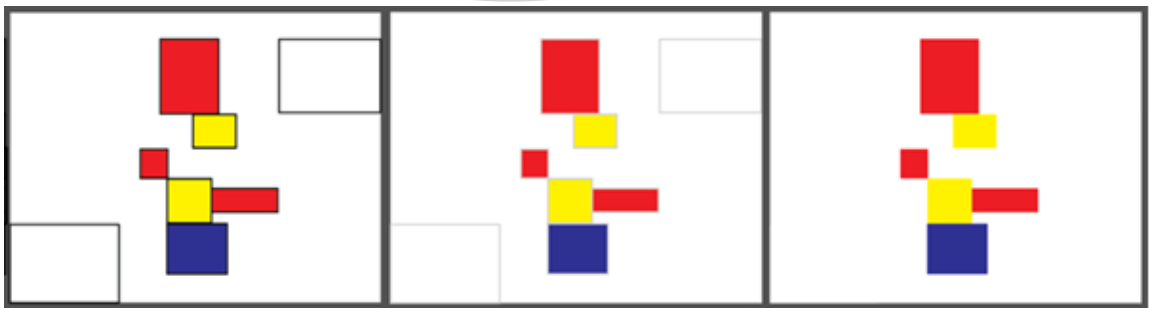

Figure 52. Experimental Composition of Basic Shoka Style with Structure in Space (Continuation)
Image Source: Author, 2023

Invisibility communicates the existence of space, even if it is not visually defined. Abstraction could serve as a universal visual language – one that communicates the dynamic, evolutionary forces that keep nature and human experience in balance. In essence, abstraction represents the purest form of truth and beauty.

The interplay of spaces is the biggest difference between East and West - what appears as a background to a Western eye is a resonant space in Japan. Therefore, the inactivated space with the activated space creates a dynamic, a push and pull between the fields that are not unfilled, busy, or empty - the invisible reverberates.

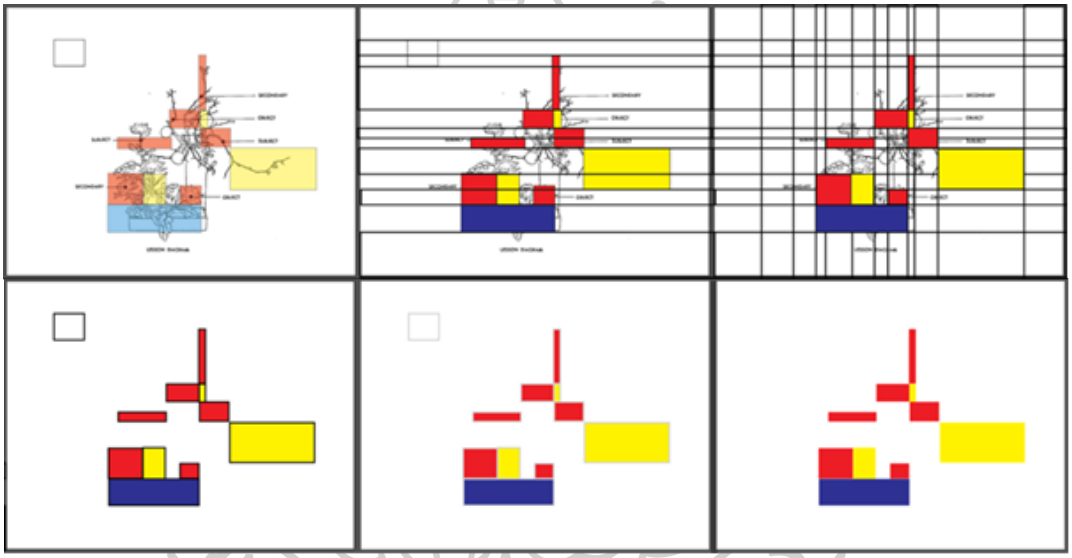

Figure 53.Experimental Composition of the Combined Style with Structure in Space.
Image Source: Author, 2023

The last style of the experiment, the Combined Style, combines elements of Moribana and Nageire. The rooms seem to be filled with an esthetic beauty where the calmness of the Moribana style merges with the energy and sensitivity of the Nageire style, referring to Mondrian's Push and Pull - where two combine in a dynamic energy. Building on the Nagerie and the Moribana - using two containers, I decided on the Sogetsu freestyles.

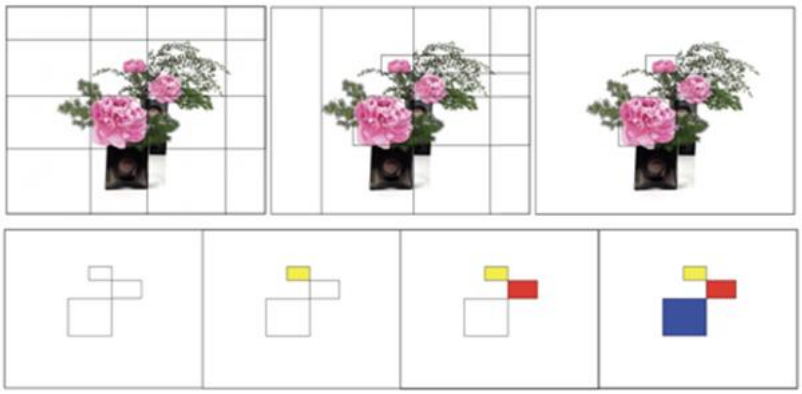

Figure 54. Experiment 1 - Experimental Composition of the Sogetsu Freestyle with Structure in Space.
Image Source: Author, 2023

The peonies were the main protagonists in the design of the composition. There is a center where the balance is created, spreading from the inside to the outside of the peony and reflecting the three central rectangles of Mondrian's ideas.

Figure 55. Experiment 2 - Experimental Composition of the Sogetsu Freestyle with Structure in Space
Image Source: Author, 2023

The following experiment with the calla seems to be a clearer illustration of Mondrian's push and pull, in which the branches connect the harmony of two vessels that come together to form a whole that focuses on the two positions of the

vessels and the flower unlike Experiment 1, in which the focus was solely on the peonies.

Figure 56. Experiment 2 - Experimental Composition of the Sogetsu Freestyle with Structure in Space (Continuation).
Image Source: Author, 2023

In the Mondrian's direction, primary colors are used to preserve the work in its purest form. The focus of the red shapes indicates the three critical points in Ikebana: the subject, the secondary subject and the supporting objects. The yellow blocks represent the supporting branches, leaves and flowers. At the same time, other supporting areas are shown in the blue shapes, representing the container in the arrangement.

Figure 57. Experiment 3 - Experimental Composition of the Sogetsu Freestyle with Structure in Space
Image Source: Author, 2023

The two vessels with their contrasting shapes - low and high - play a central role. The flowers - the tiger lilies are tall and stretch out in straight lines to show the support of the thick leaf woven into the decorative form, protecting and supporting the fragile flower - a balance between ragility and strength. In reference to Mondrian's desire to show the balance and harmony in life, where the weak and the strong harmonize with each other and do not disturb but protect each other.

Figure 58. Experiment 3 - Experimental Composition of the Sogetsu Freestyle with Structure in Space
Image Source: Author, 2023

By using the horizontal and vertical elements and the primary colors red, yellow and blue, the actual Ikebana elements are reduced to an abstract, minimalist form, with the aim of depicting a universal harmony that underlies the tangible objects themselves. Based on the three-dimensionality of Ikebana and the study of the use of space in Japanese art to apply it to the final artwork.

3.4.2 Eye Movement

In *The Art of Looking Sideways*, graphic designer Alan Fletcher discusses the importance that perceived negative space can have in art and writes: "Space is substance"(Fletcher, 2001). Cézanne painted and modeled space. Giacometti sculpted by "taking the fat out of space". Mallarmé created poems that contained not only words but also absences. Ralph Richardson claimed that action lies in the pauses... Isaac Stern described music as "that little bit between each note - silences which give the form... The Japanese have a word (ma) for this interval that gives shape to the whole. In the West, we have neither a word nor term. A serious omission." (Summerfield, 2013).

Studies support the view that analogical thoughts guide eye movement across the canvas in a similar way when viewing paintings, Ahmad (2014). His analysis of three paintings (below) Starry Night (p. 121), Last Supper (p. 122) and Artistic Expressions (p. 123) showed that eye movements are guided by the subjects, the gestures of the portraits and the expressions.

Figure 59. Analysis Study of Starry Night
Image Source:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281678933_Flow_of_Analogical_Thoughts_controls_Eye_Movements_in_Scene_Viewing

Figure 60. Analysis Study Artistic Expressions artistic portrait
Image Source: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281678933_Flow_of_Analogical_Thoughts_control_Eye_Movements_in_Scene_Viewing

Figure 61. Composition of Artwork
Image Source: Author, 2023

Figure 62. Beginning exploration of composition and eye movement for final art work , drawing on theories as follows in text
Image Source: Author, 2023

In addition, the composition takes into account the knowledge of eye movement to support the use of scale. The works arrive at the beginning of the final composition by considering the underlying principles of space, as understood through reflection on Ikebana, while synthesizing the findings from reading and analysis, beginning with a review of texts and artworks. Principles of Three helps the eye to follow through the entire canvas. There is a sense of tension triggered by the size of the flower, which is large and dominates the top corner of the central panel.

3.4.3 Large scale

Monet and Rothko were masters of making use of the whole room to create a heightened presence of the work. Scale asks the viewer to not just look at, but to participate emotionally in the work.

Figure 63. Seagram Murals, Mark Rothko Tate Modern UK
Image Source: https://fineartmultiple.com/blog/the-four-seasons-mark-rothko-seagram-murals/

3.4.4 Format

The Japanese are experts at creating tension between activated space and empty space. The result is a Dynamic Surface in which 3 groups of proportions and activated space play with each other and create a tension between: Light & Dark, Sizes, and Activated space (the flowers).

Figure 64. Pine trees by Hasegawa
Image Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/By%C5%8Dbu

The background is empty, but with the filled space there is a relationship alongside the empty space, a harmonious balance. Here the empty space holds the eye movement. In the Ma: The Realm of Art, (Nitschke, 2018)

"Ma ga warui or its opposite, ma ga umai, is often used as an esthetic judgment of Japanese calligraphy or sumi-e painting. Compared to Western painting, these Sino-Japanese art forms feature large unpainted areas. Anyone who practices calligraphy quickly realizes that the skill lies not only in mastering the form of the characters, but also in the relationship between the form and the surrounding non-form. This balance of form and space is always taken into account in the final artistic judgment. Chinese paintings also utilize resonant space, similar to Japanese Byobu.

Figure 65. Landscape by Zhuang Jiongsheng (1627-1679) Qing Dynasty Handscroll, ink, and colors on paper B68 D2e.
Image Source: https://education.asianart.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2019/09/Brushstrokes.pdf

Surprisingly, the painting leaves an empty space in the middle and uses an elongated format to create a balance between darkness and light. The elongated format is like a wall in itself, occupying a space that stretches from side to side. The eye moves from left to right and back, wandering over the central part instead of focusing on a central square surrounded by the blank space of a wall. An elongated format demands attention in the room.

Monet was greatly influenced by the Japanese use of space, and byobu screens to construct a room. Finally, Monet's *Lily Ponds* bring the outside world of nature into the room, representing a garden within a building. Scale is crucial to immerse the viewer in an experience.

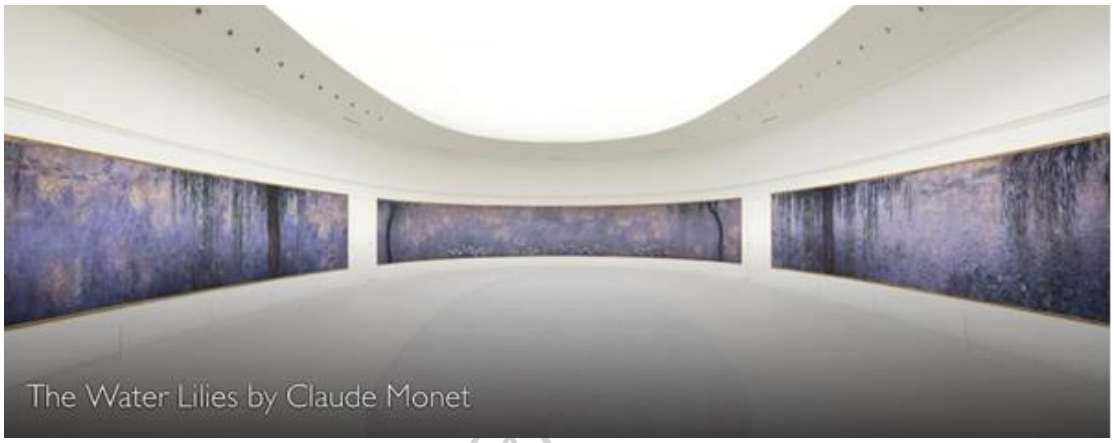

Figure 66. The Water Lilies by Claude Monet Musee de l'Orangerie Paris, France.
Image Source: https://www.musee-orangerie.fr/en/node/197502

3.5 Techniques

3.5.1 Brush Strokes

Figure 67. Claude Monet (1914-1917), Water Lilies, Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, 2022

Figure 68. Claude Monet (1914-1917), Water Lilies, Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, 2022

Monet's brushstrokes break up the flat surface of the canvas and add movement, like a calligraphic poem that expands the energetic mood of the painting. It is almost as if the brush is dancing across the canvas. The brushstrokes are more than just marks on the canvas. They also mark, by tracing the speed and movement of the brush, a sense of time. The brushstrokes are a glimpse of a moment passed (Nitschke, 2018).

Flowers do not have to be painted in detail, as if they were the subject of microscopic examination or simply specimens. The vitality of a flower can be expressed in loose and open brushstrokes. In the twentieth century, with the advent of Modernism, realistic still life had become unfashionable. Édouard Manet (1832–83), the father of Modernism, also painted flowers, but used them as secondary elements in his canvases. In his painting Olympia (1863), a female nude is accompanied by a housekeeper holding a bouquet of flowers. Towards the end of his life, Manet created simple pastel flowers (e.g. Moss Roses in a Vase, 1882). His loose and free brushstrokes bear no resemblance to the exquisitely detailed flowers in Dutch still life paintings." (Buchmann, 2015). The quality of the brushstroke runs through Eastern and Western visual.

According to Chinese traditional painting, it is “in the quality of the brushwork the artist captures qiyun, the spirit resonance, the raison d’être of a painting.” (Schardt, 1995). Although qiyun is an idea of the East, it resonates with the quality of Monet’s works and can inform contemporary painting where the brushwork is central to the quality of the paintings’ essence.

Figure 69. Pierre-Auguste Renoir, 1883, Mother and Child, Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco

Figure 70. Pierre-Auguste Renoir, 1883, Mother and Child, Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco

Renoir’s loose brushstrokes in the lower left part of the canvas do not show rapid movement as in Monet’s works. With the intention of leaving the colors visible on the reverse, the brushstrokes merely create a transparent and almost unfinished layer that nevertheless builds up volume.

3.5.2 Texture: Lines, Curves, and Intensity

Using rapid brush strokes and layers to create texture, and also construct or reduce intensity of transparency. The following images from impressionist paintings demonstrates different brush strokes: dry, light, rapid, and sketchiness. The sketch-like technique brought about harsh criticisms from art critics when the first exhibition of the impressionist took place on 15th April 1874, claiming that such paintings are considered unfinished.

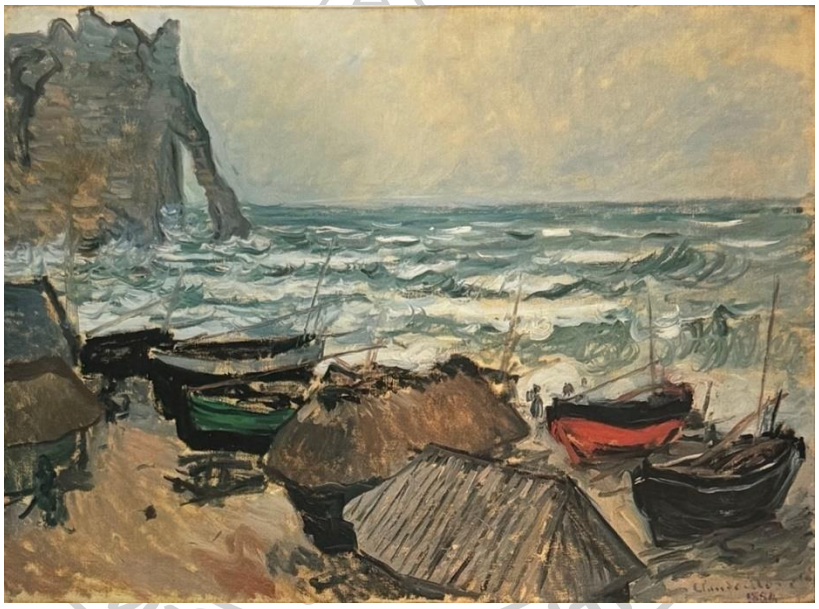

Figure 71. Claude Monet, 1883/4, Fishing Boat on the beach at Etretat, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Foundation Corboud, Cologne

Figure 72. Brisk painting technique seen from exposed grounds in Figure 71

Figure 73. Mary Cassat, 1881, Child among Hollyhocks.
Image Source: Painting Light, 2008, SKIRA

Figure 74. Zigzag brush strokes seen on unpainted canvas in Figure 73

Figure 75. Berthe Morisot, 1881/2, The Harbour at Nice
Image Source: Painting Light, 2008, SKIRA

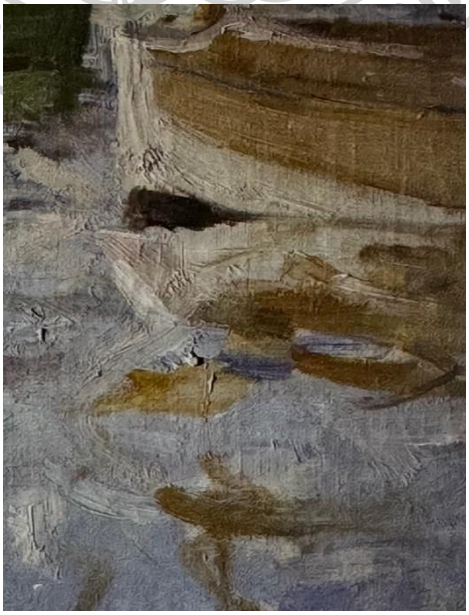

Figure 76. Details of free and rapid brush strokes in Figure 75

3.6 Ambience: Winter

In a winter landscape, most of the colors are removed, leaving only a series of muted grays and rich whites.

Figure 77. Winter ambience in Hokkaido (a)
Image Source: Author, 2022

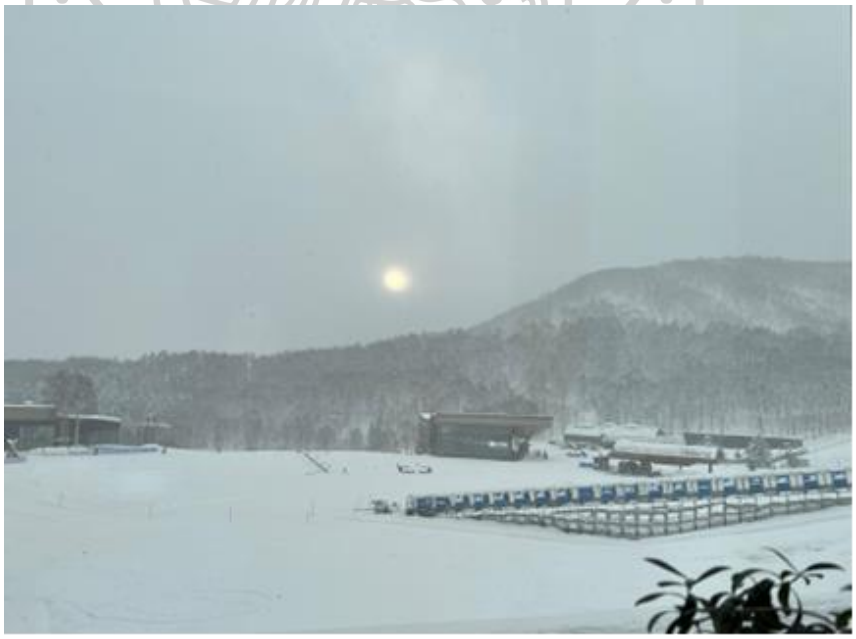

Figure 78. Winter ambience in Hokkaido (b)
Image Source: Author, 2022

Figure 79. Winter ambience in Hokkaido (c).
Image Source: Author, 2022

Figure 80. Winter ambience in Hokkaido (d)
Image Source: Author, 2022

Figure 81. Winter ambience in Hokkaido (e)
Image Source: Author, 2022

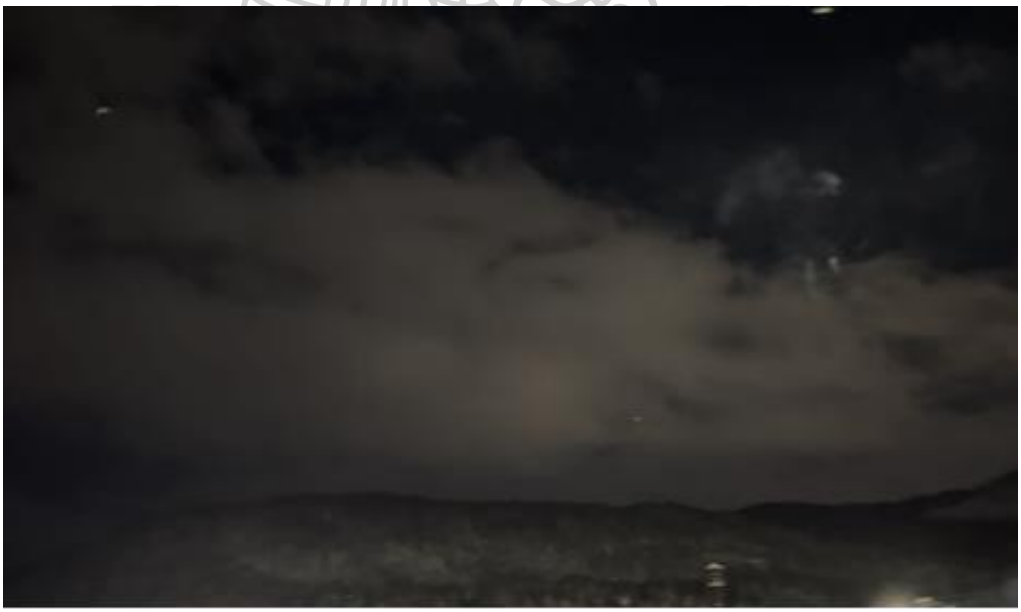

Figure 82. Winter ambience in Hokkaido (f)
Image Source: Author, 2022

Figure 83. Winter ambience in Hokkaido (g).
Image Source: Author, 2022

Observations

The scale, the composition, especially the use of an activated space, which can also feel like a calm but dynamic space, and using brushstrokes to construct the overall effect of the feeling.

In the practical work, the flower is enlarged so that the viewer can penetrate into its center, and be overwhelmed by the flower's presence. This is done by setting up and exploring the process of experimentation. Reflect by using the same questions that attempt to convey a loving relationship through flower: Why are the flowers here? What are the techniques about? Do they overlap or contradict each other from one case study to another? Are there contradictory discoveries? How do they affect the artwork? An overall analysis of the works will be discussed in the concluding results.

Chapter 4

ARTWORK DEVELOPMENT

Practice Based Research

To return to the painting Madonna and Child by Da Vinci: If we look at the technical aspect of the painting, there are no lines that define the figures or the motifs, but they are formed by light and darkness. In my work, the flower, the motif is created through an interplay between translucency, clearer, while others seem to be behind a mist. Similarly, the flowers are formed in the development and in the finished artwork by building up layers of transparency. The viewer can see through the flower in some places, while parts of the petals are darker and more defined, while others are incomplete. Da Vinci's forms are both organic, as in the figures and the flowers, and structural, as in the windows. Since the final outcome of this investigation is not figurative, there is no need to introduce details that construct a physical world. The main interest lies in conveying, through the gestures of the jasmine and through the painting, the greatness of motherly love. In the artwork, *non-finito*, freed from an all enclosing outline, conveys the boundlessness of love. A love that is as all-encompassing as the natural world, as the natural sublime, and reminds us to be reverent. In the context of this research, the sublime does not refer to a great nature, but signifies the vastness of unconditional love.

Technically, paintings use the following to express love, referencing Renaissance works such as Da Vinci's Madonna of the Carnation (in Figure 10). Where da Vinci uses shadows to construct the hierarchy of forms, as the artwork develops, layers of transparency push the flowers backwards, building them up into the foreground with darker brushstrokes. Da Vinci's texture is shown only as sensual - in the folds of the lush material, but the brushstrokes are invisible, melting into a smooth surface. The movement here is not through gestural brushstrokes, as in the last artwork, but through the story of the gesture playing with the child on the

flower. The mother emerges with the child through a strong interplay between light and darkness - through Chiaroscuro - a technique that made Da Vinci the master. Chiaroscuro sets a mode of gentleness and subtly speaks of calm, something I try to translate into my work. The colors in Da Vinci's painting are important and jewel-like. Where Da Vinci uses color, a range of dark, white and gray hues are applied to developmental works. Some are saturated, others are not. Some forms are complete, but most are not, in keeping with the idea of the *non-finito*, the incomplete. The above studies lead to the final works, where the development, metamorphosis of the flower and seasonal changes correspond to the stages of motherhood as seen in the diagrams below.

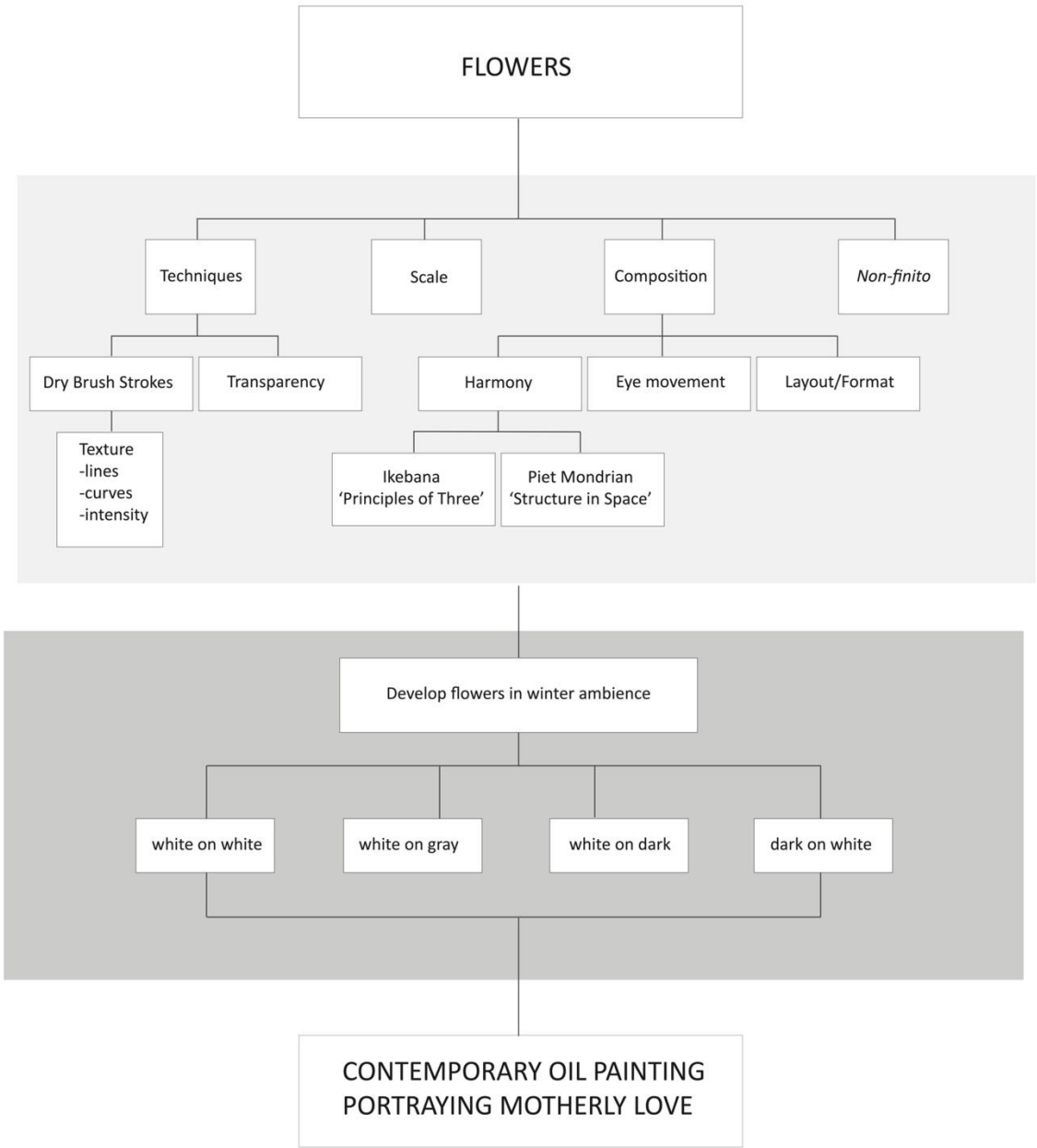

Figure 84. Development of Artwork Diagram
Image Source: Author, 2024

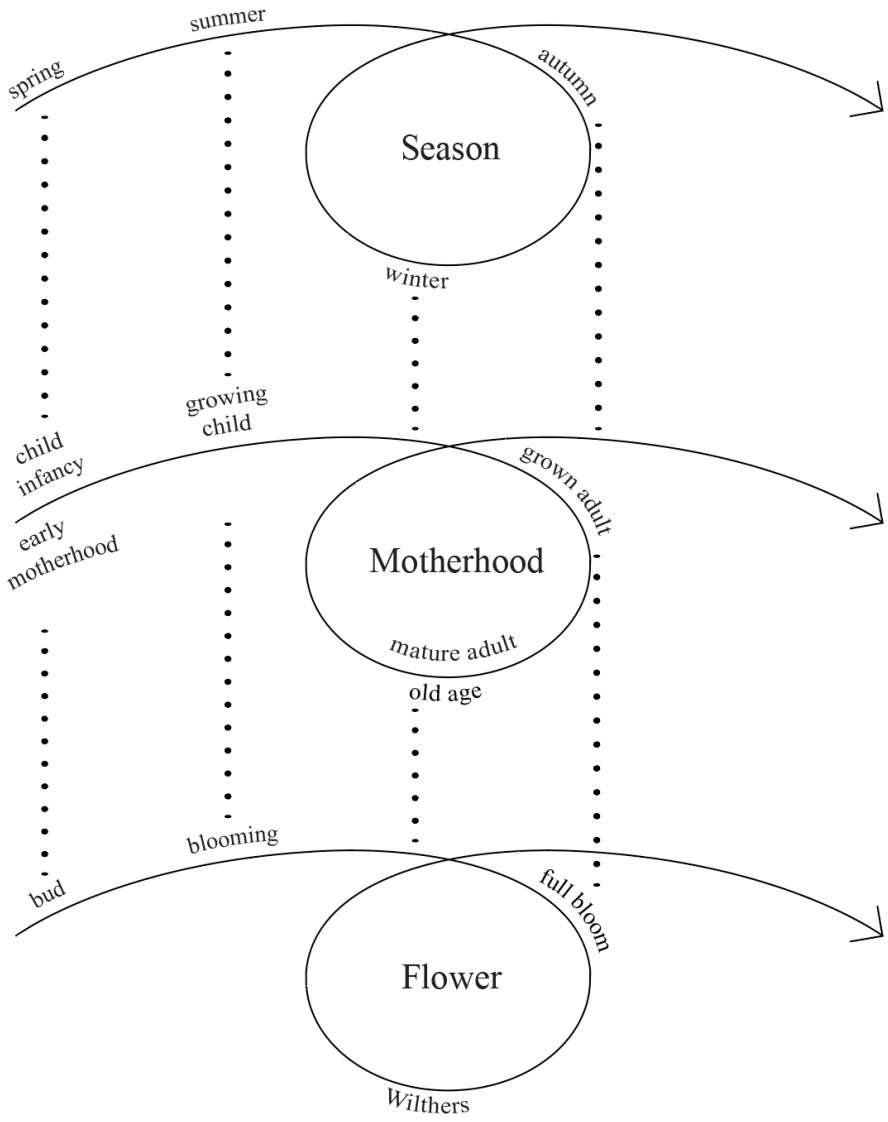

Figure 85. Life of A Flower: The Stages of Motherhood and Season.
Image Source: Author, 2024

4.1 Content- images and sketches of jasmine flowers

Figure 86. Jasmine flowers
Image Source: Author, 2023

Beginning with the photos of the jasmine, seeking to observe and to capture the beauty of the flower - rich yet tender.

4.1.1 Sketches of flowers

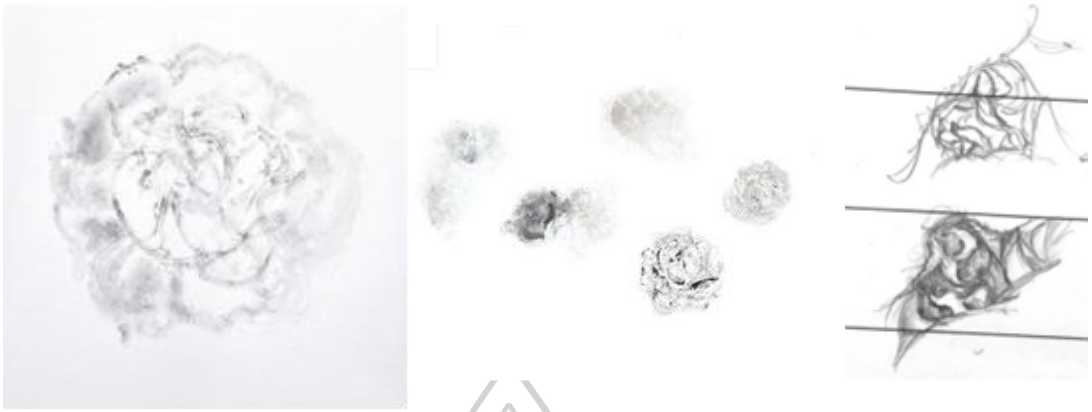

Figure 87. Developmental Sketches
Image Source: Author, 2023

Figure 88. Developmental Sketches
Image Source: Author, 2023

The sketches form the starting point for the paintings. They break up the form of the jasmine and search for the most essential parts that preserve the identity and character of the jasmine. The sketches are calligraphic, but not yet transformed into gestural brushstrokes or scaled. A close look at the overlapping petals helps to approach the use of transparency.

4.1.2 Development of Painting: Winter snowscape ambience

The works are set in winter time, and not shown in each season. These works are reflections of motherly love. Setting it in winter time, allows a feeling of a time that has past, or is still enough to think about what has been, and what will become, in the cycle of raising children. Winter ambience are illustrated as in diagram Figure 88 below.

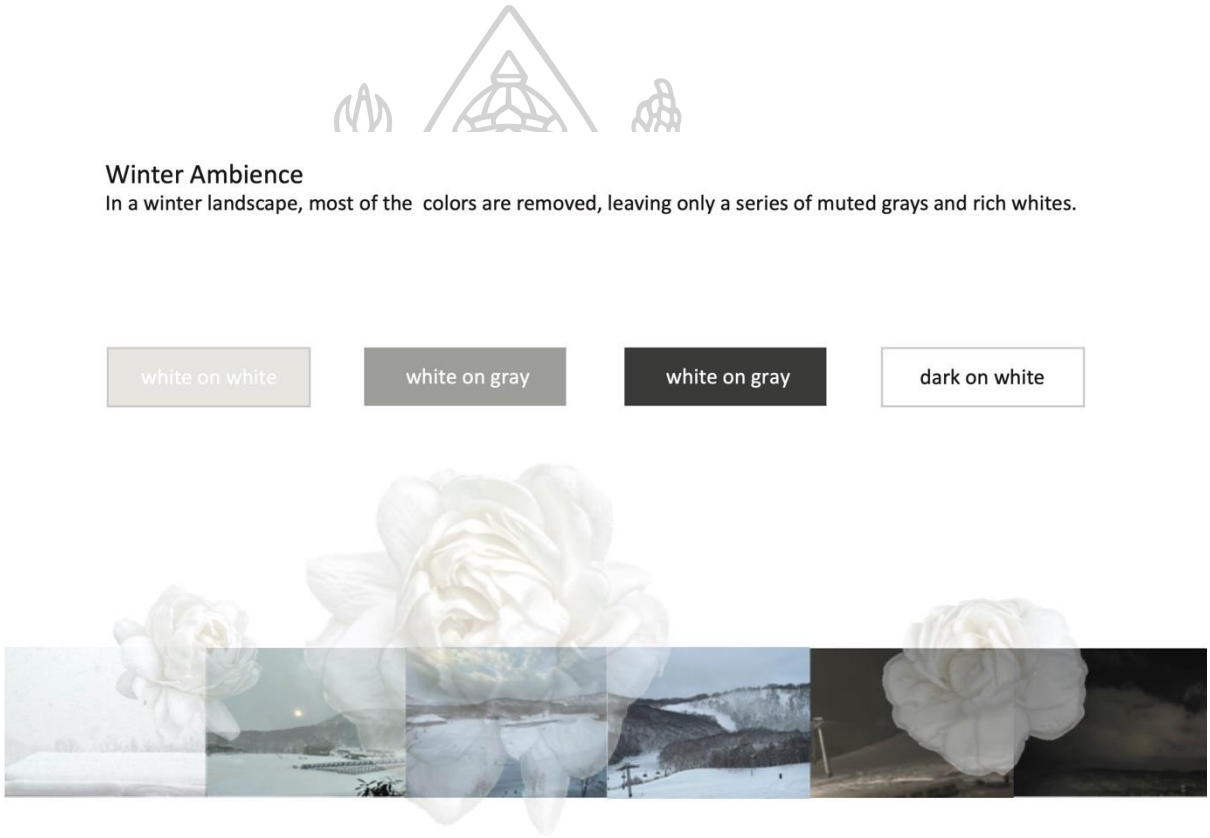

Figure 89. Winter Ambience
Image Source: Author, 2023

4.1.2.1 Development of 'white on white'

Figure 90. Developing paintings 'white on white' (Top right: winter image 2022)
Image Source: Author, 2023

The shapes are formed by luminosity, not by lines, but they still look misty, not as transparent as snow. This is an important observation that is reflected in the subsequent work on the flowers. At the moment it is an experiment in how to construct the background.

Figure 91. Developing paintings ‘white on white, (Top right: winter image 2022)
Image Source: Author, 2023

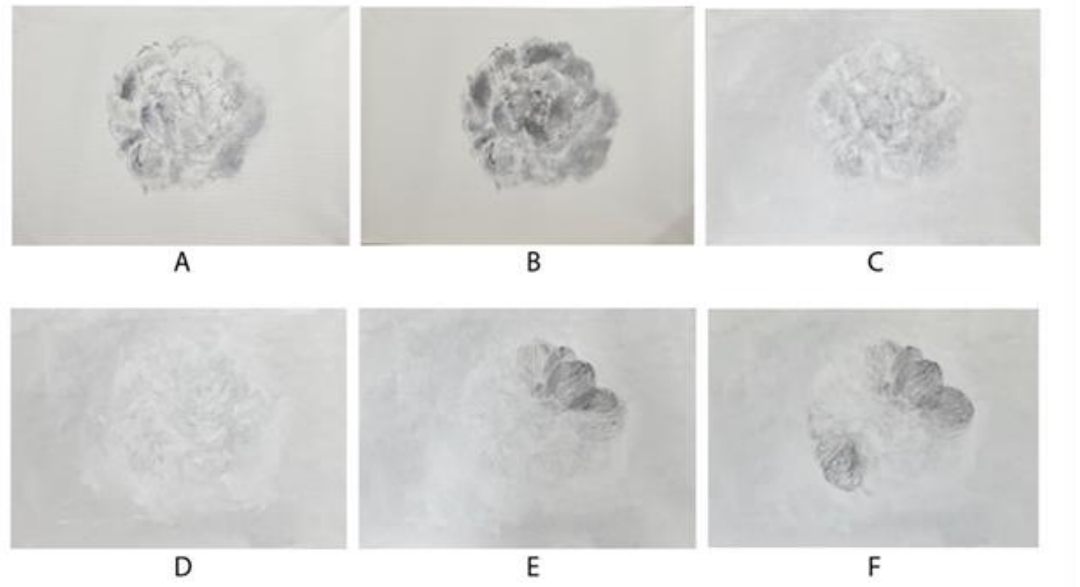

Figure 92. Process of developing paintings ‘white on white’
Image Source: Author, 2023

The process shows how transparency explores the boundaries of white on white to see to what degree the dark gray can be removed without the true depth of the flower disappearing.

4.1.2.2 Development of 'white on gray'

Figure 93. Developing paintings 'white on gray', (Top right: winter image 2022)
Image Source: Author, 2023

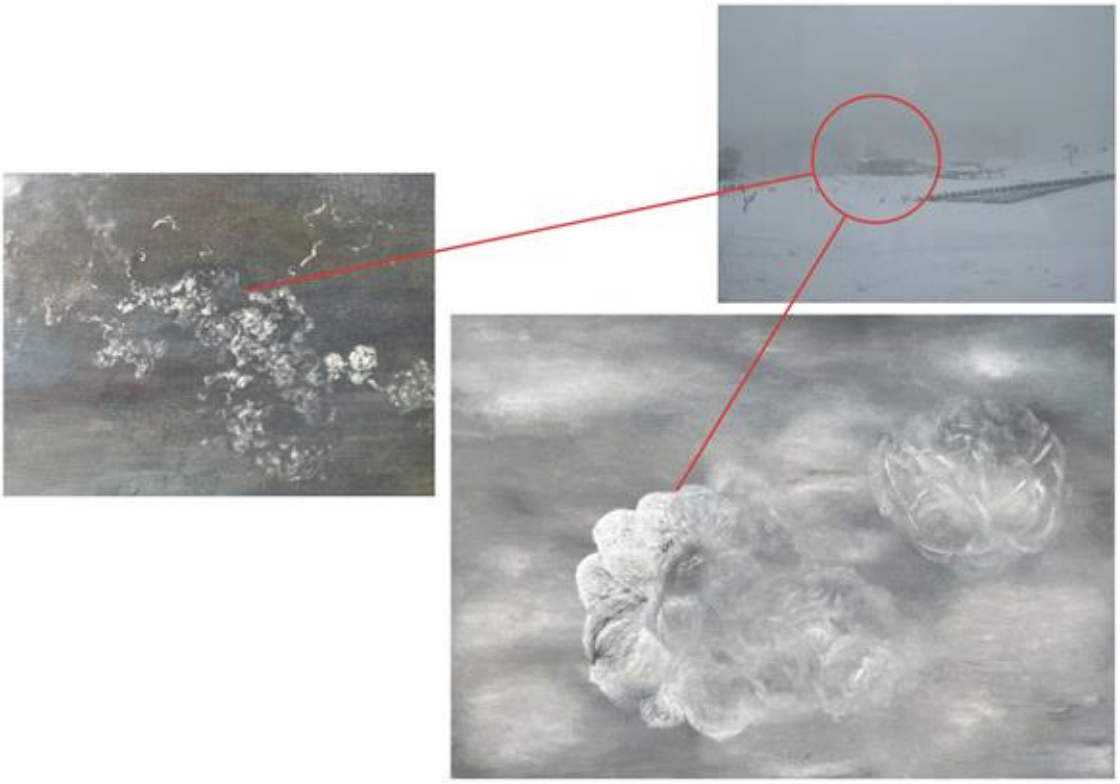

Figure 94. Developing paintings ‘white on gray’, (Top right: winter image 2022)
Image Source: Author, 2023

Noticing subtle tones looking for the quiet, still by layering white on gray shows an ambience of mid-gray tones.

4.1.2.3 Development of 'white on dark'

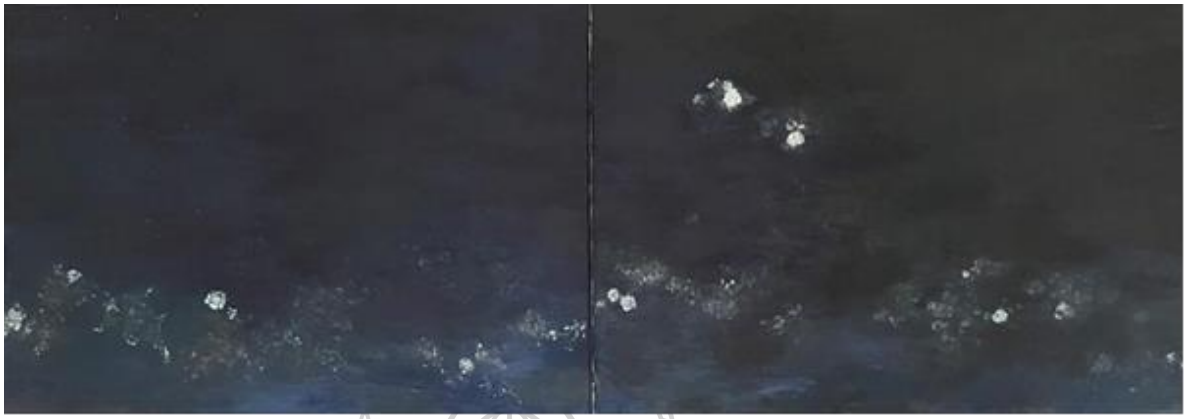

Figure 95. Developing paintings 'white on dark', (Top right: winter image 2022)
Image Source: Author, 2023

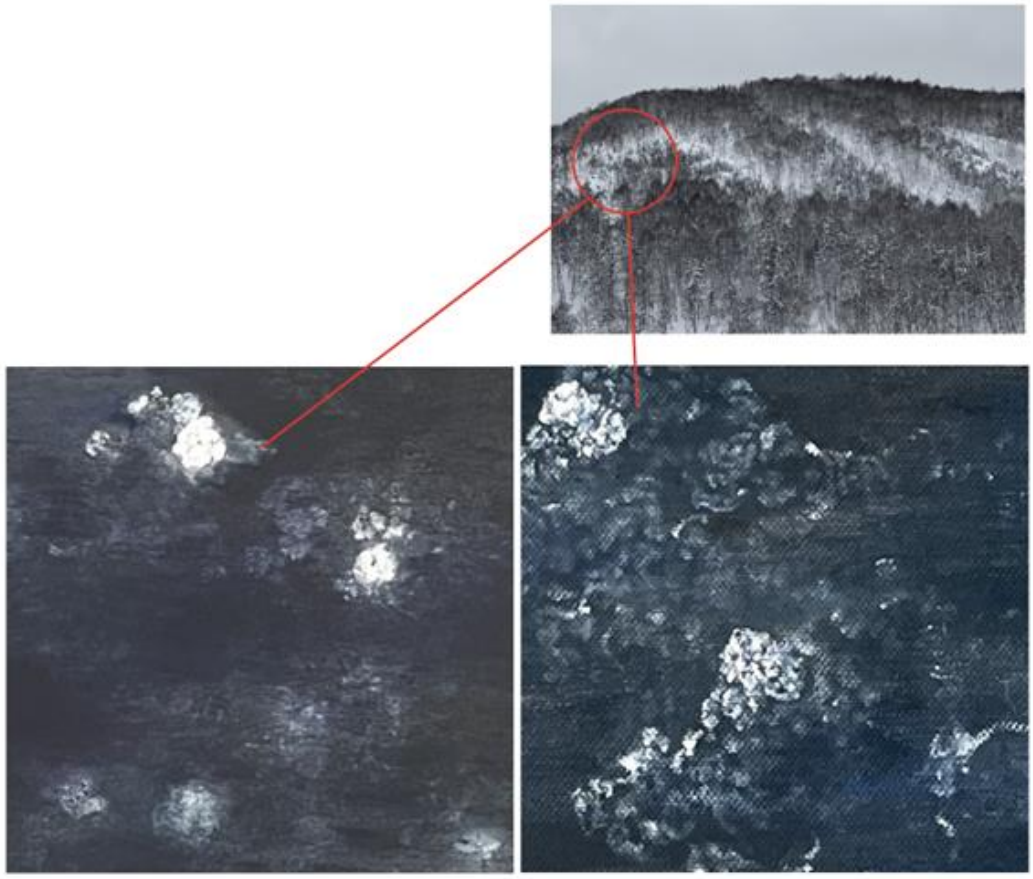

Figure 96. Developing paintings 'white on dark', (Top right: winter image 2022).
Image Source: Author, 2023

The experimental painting is inspired by the strong contrast of tones in the winter painting in Figure 84. The use of dark tones only serves to enhance the ambience of a winter night.

‘White on dark’ creates a strong contrast that does not convey something subtle but makes a stronger statement.

4.1.2.4 Development of ‘dark on white’

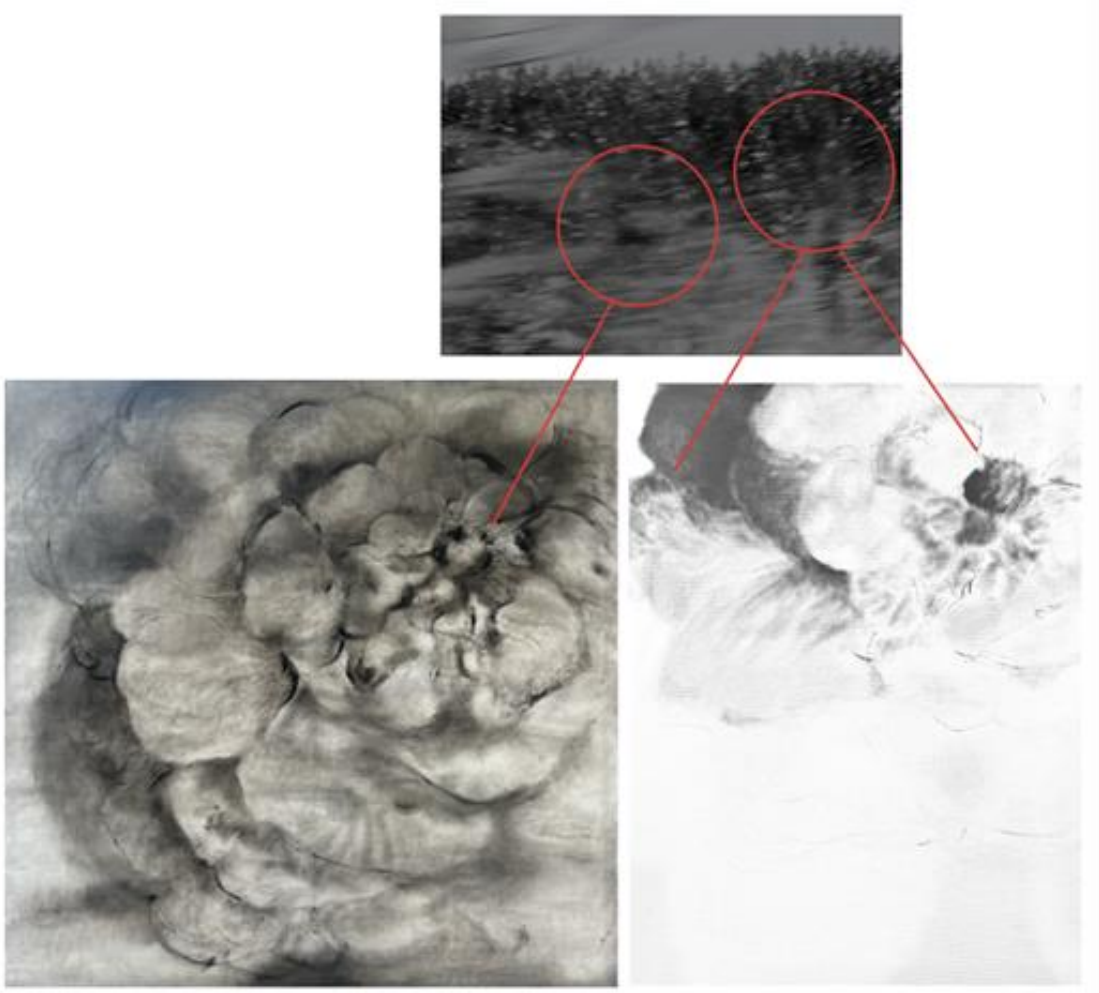

Figure 97. Developing paintings ‘dark on white’, (Top right: winter image 2022)
Image Source: Author, 2023

Working with dark on white creates a stronger sense of volume and mystery - the jasmine flower is not pushed into the background, but thrusts itself towards the eye.

The flower in the painting on the right is also not centered, but makes use of the Japanese idea of ma, which gives the composition a dynamic space. The above paintings also incorporate chiaroscuro with transparency.

4.1.3 Development of Techniques

4.1.3.1 Transparency

Overlays with transparency levels from translucent to opaque indicating where the flower begins and ends. Through the use of transparency, the *non-finito* becomes an outstanding visual approach.

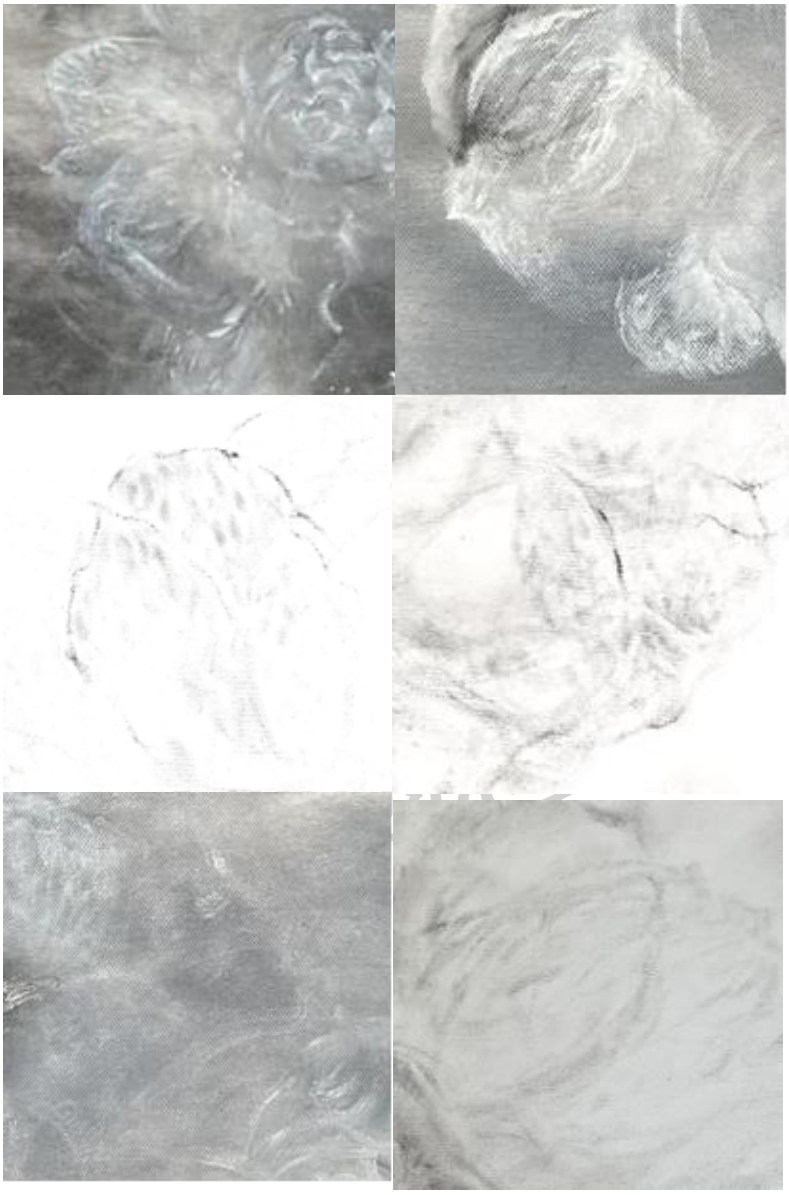

Figure 98. Developing paintings on transparency
Image Source: Author, 2023

4.1.3.2 Brushstrokes

Brushstrokes create volume and texture with lines, curves, and tones of gray.

Dry Brush Strokes

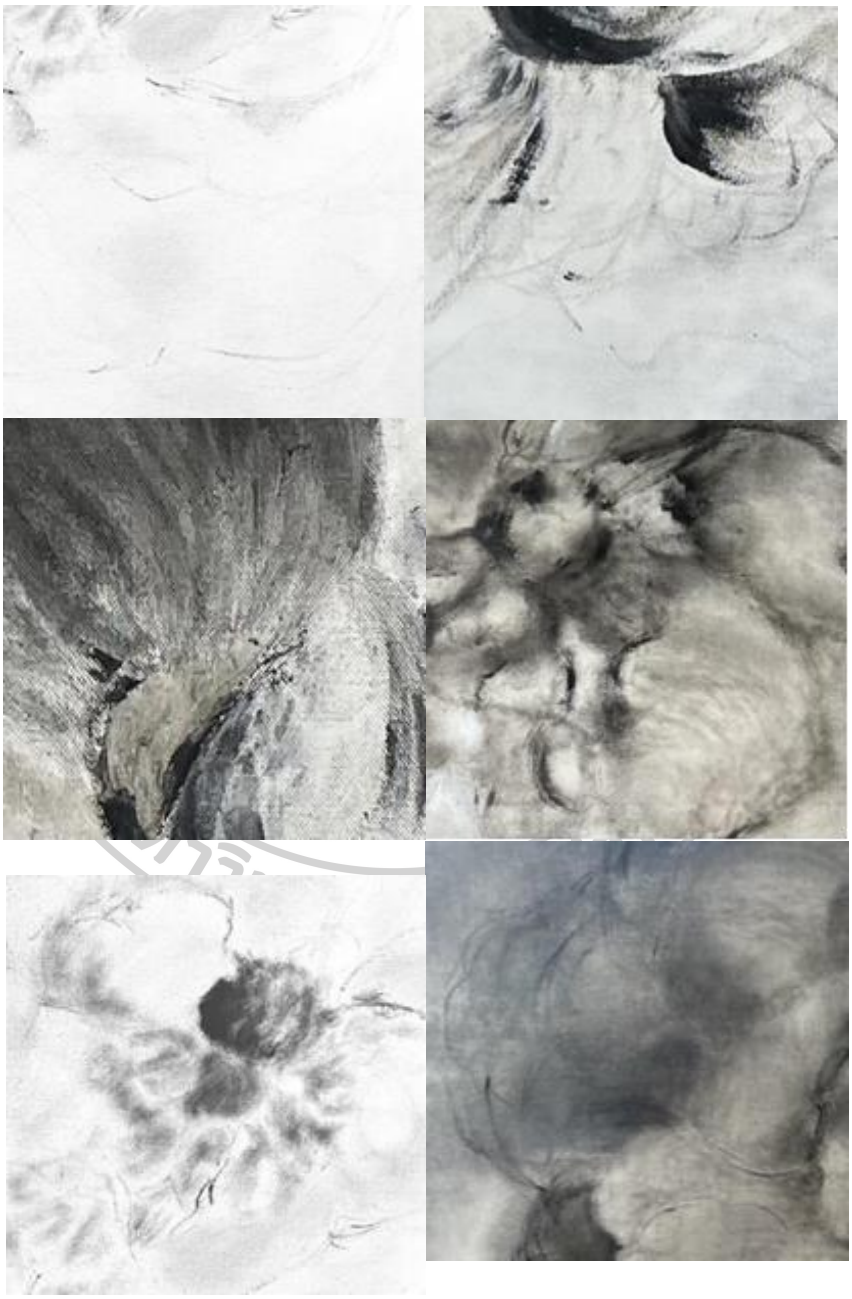

Figure 99. Developing paintings using dry brush strokes including some degree of transparency.
Image Source: Author, 2023

4.1.3.3 Texture: Lines, Curves, and Intensity

Brush strokes also force lines, curves, and intensity to become planes of dark and light building shapes by layering one mark next, and top of another.

Texture- lines, curves, intensity:

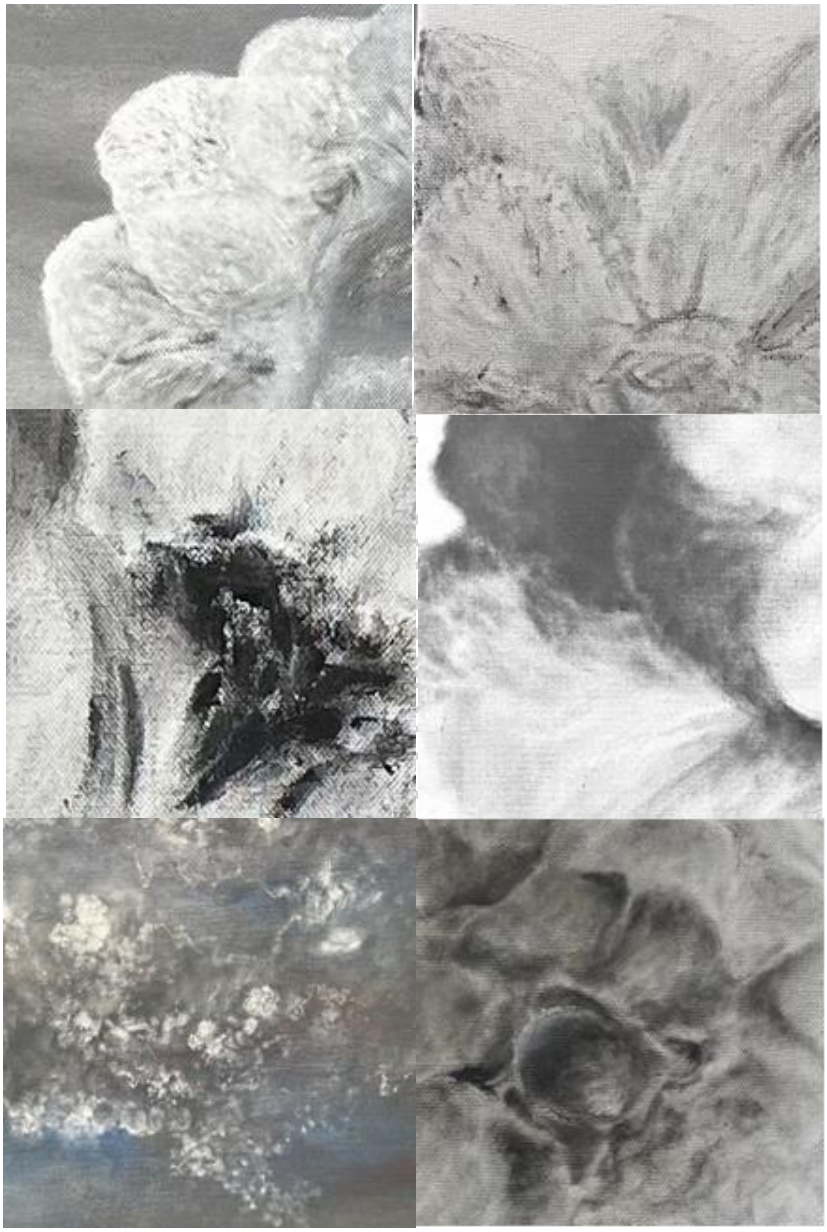

Figure 100. Developing paintings texture
Image Source: Author, 2023

4.1.3.4 Scale

In order to incorporate the findings from Monet's room in his work *Water Lily Ponds*, the canvas must be enlarged so that the viewer can approach the huge canvas. The viewer is immersed in the flower, as if the child is being embraced by his mother.

The flower almost protrudes, looking as if it was moving from the background into the foreground. Nevertheless, the flower is not clear, but changes from darkness to lightness through transparency and forms a shape not through lines but through dynamic brushstrokes.

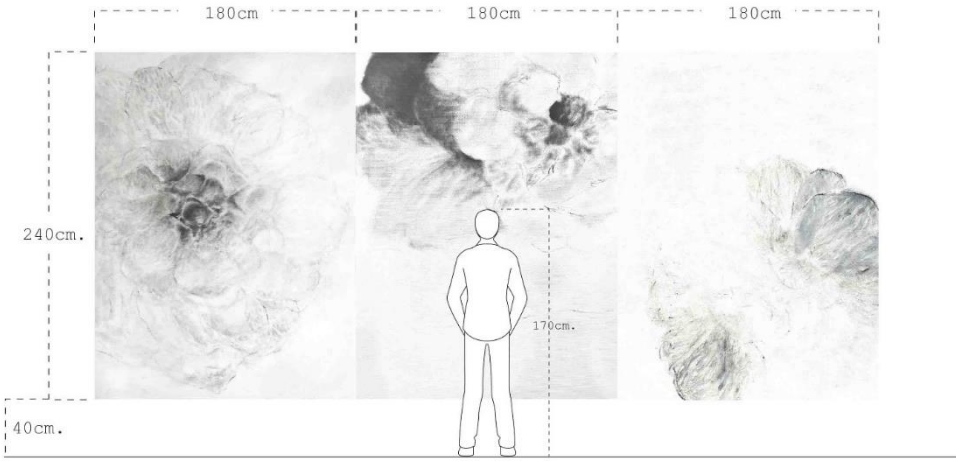

Figure 101. Developing scale
Image Source: Author, 2024

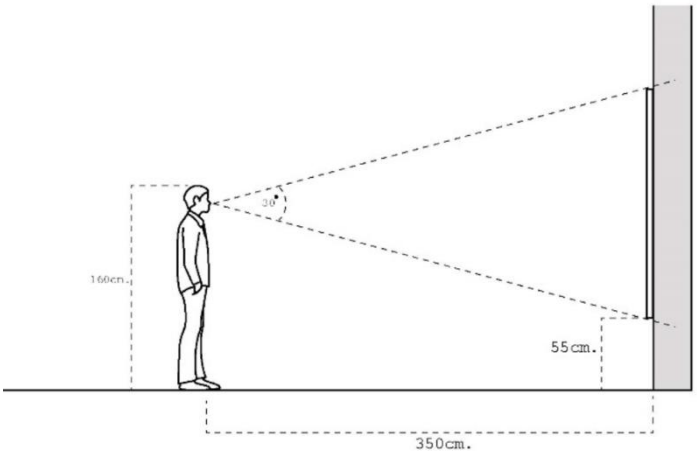

Figure 102. Developing scale from side view
Image Source: Author, 2024

4.2 Final Artwork

The artworks come together. The brushstrokes, the transparency and the dark versus light areas on the canvas convey the feeling that the jasmine moving, flourish and waiting, reflecting the love and presence of a mother.

Figure 103. Final artwork: full view (a).
Image Source: Author, 2024

Figure 104. Final artwork: full view (b).
Image Source: Author, 2024

Figure 105. Final artwork: full view (c).
Image Source: Author, 2024

The following close-up images from the final artworks the triptych show details highlighting approaches.

4.2.1 Jasmine Flower inspires to show Motherly Love

Figure 106. Final artwork: close up
Image Source: Author, 2024

Starting with pressure by the brush, a line follows the darker point leading to a half-transparent form.

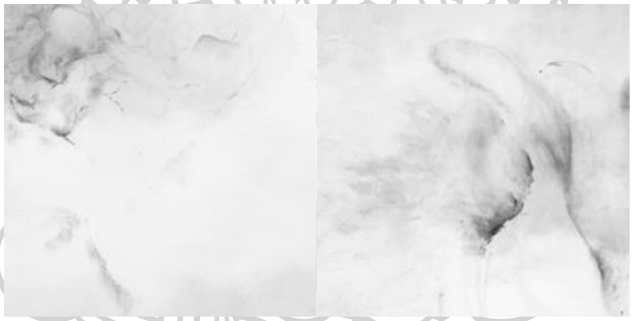

Figure 107. Final artwork: close up
Image Source: Author, 2024

Here the jasmine flower is light in form, while the faint partial curves show some movement and add depth to the petal.

Figure 108. Final artwork: close up.
Image Source: Author, 2024

The sketchy lines show lightness and create transparency, as illustrated and responding to *Metelli's Law of Transparency.*

Figure 109. Final artwork: close up
Image Source: Author, 2024

Texture is created with patches of dry brush which adds volume to the flower.

Figure 110. Final artwork: close up
Image Source: Author, 2024

Strong contrast adds drama to the flower. This is the heart of the jasmine flower and shows the richness of motherly love.

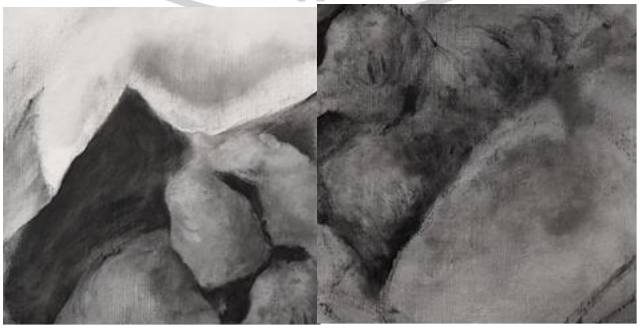

Figure 111. Final artwork: close up
Image Source: Author, 2024

Dark tones emphasize intensity. Drawing the viewer to a sensation of closeness.

4.2.2 Scale and the Sublime

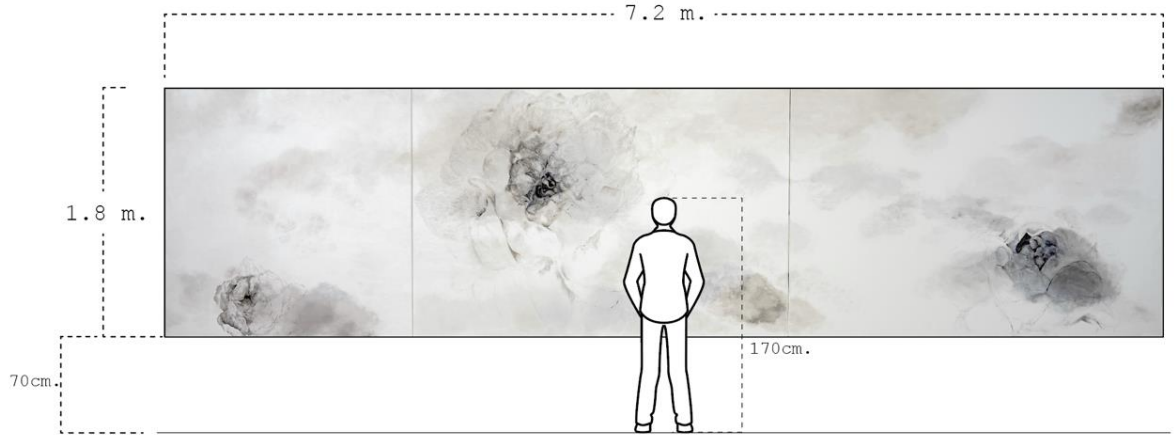

Figure 112. Final Artwork indicating Scale informed by the sublime
Image Source: Author, 2024

The sublime shows itself as the feeling of a great and unconditional love through the physical size; the large canvas. As the canvas is larger than the viewer, a sense of awe arises. The scale reinforces the feeling of a close and loving relationship.

4.2.3 *non-finito* (on the unfinished)

Figure 113. Final artwork: close up
Image Source: Author, 2024

Figure 114. Final artwork: close up
Image Source: Author, 2024

Figure 115. Final artwork: close up
Image Source: Author, 2024

The flower is neither technically drawn nor detailed, but suggests its entire form. It is *non-finito,* not trying to be completed, or finished, because motherly love accompanies the life of a child into adulthood and beyond. Such love knows no boundaries, as shown in the painting where the main jasmine in the center extends its petals to the edge of the canvas by being indistinct, showing the boundless nature of motherly love.

4.3 Discussion

The final artwork unites composition and technique. Reflecting on the triptych and the application of the seven principles of composition: balance, contrast, movement, emphasis, pattern, proportion and unity, the underlying process of a painting is more complex than usually assumed. This leads to drawing attention to the formal elements of art – the foreground and background.

The elements of a composition can be shapes and blocks, or, as in this research, the organic form of a flower. Combined together, they form a larger structure which consists of lines, brushstrokes, values, shapes, spaces, colors and textures. Lines or brushstrokes in particular, as in this case, are able to construct more intricate forms and direct our gaze from one area of the composition to another. Another element of composition is space, which is the area around the subjects, or according to the Japanese principle of Ma. When the space in these areas is enlarged or reduced, it affects the way we view the subject or object. If the visual themes are unclear to the viewer, or if they sense an imprecision in the technique, they naturally turn to the brushstrokes and pigmentation. The focus is then on the medium: canvas, paint and brushstrokes. The audience can look at the final artwork from a distance and be guided by the composition of the jasmine flowers, which follows the flow of negative space - it is neither static nor unruly - it is harmonious in a dynamic way. As moving closer to the canvas, the flowers dissolve into brushstrokes. The canvas becomes a structured sky. As viewer gets closer, the point of grandeur occurs when the viewer is overwhelmed by the size of the flower. If the three panels of the triptych were arranged vertically, the experience would be different.

In the final artwork of this research, the eye movement follows through the entire canvas. There is a tension between the size of the flowers, the degree of transparency and the light and dark tones. If the flowers were smaller, the space surrounding them, i.e. the background and foreground, would dominate the field of vision. Since the investigation focuses on the symbolic language of flowers, the flower must be the most important communicative part of the painting. It may be the flower as a natural form, but rather as a representation of motherly love.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

The aims to be achieved were first to analyze and understand how and if flowers can be used symbolically to convey feelings in floral oil paintings, and then to arrive at a personal composition of contemporary floral oil paintings depicting a mother's love. Therefore, in support of the first objective, an attempt was made to expand the field of contemporary floral oil painting by working with the jasmine in a winter setting through the technique of dry brush strokes that create transparency and texture. The process then followed the stages of painting, in different shades of white, and gray, corresponding to the different times of a winter day. As the process progressed, the canvas became larger and larger to communicate a sense of greatness. The principle of *non-finito*, demonstrates boundless love. Furthermore, this quest is resolved through the use of jasmine as motif and the application of ideas for a harmonious composition, which led to the final paintings in an elongated, rectangular format of Chinese landscape painting. The triptych powerfully conveys motherly love by creating a sense of intimacy through a connection, experiencing the jasmine as close, and calm, a watchful, caring gaze, both in the size of the flower and the size of the canvas.

5.2 Contribution to new knowledge

Today, flowers play a much smaller role, or no role at all, in the depiction of human relationships such as the loving bond between mother and child. Based on the historical forms of floriography, or the symbolic language of flowers that enrich my research, I concluded that it is possible to use flowers exclusively to represent motherly love in contemporary painting. Therefore, the language of flowers takes on a new and revitalized form. Through the reintroduction of floral symbolism, and

beyond the figurative, a new expression of human relationship emerges in the field of floristic painting.

5.3 Suggestion

Continue to explore flowers supported by philosophical concepts, allowing the viewer to delve into the inner nature of human emotion rooted in contemporary oil painting, by pushing abstraction through scale. Large scale paintings of flowers losing their forms, their colors embedded in layers of muted, transparent hues, transcend matter and hint at a destination beyond this world- that in the midst of unrest, we can lose ourselves in a moment of beauty and love. McKee (2023) writes that paintings can embody and convey philosophical meanings. Even when the world weighs on us, we can transcend the rational. According to Kant, aspects of esthetic perception show that a distinctly philosophical insight into our nature enables us to be free and rational agents, showing us our place (our “vocation”) in the universe. Within this research, painting unfolds motherly love to reveal the transcendent beyond and the continuous grandeur of selfless nurture (McKee, 2023). Duffy writes that our emotion prepares us for a precise moment of transcendence that occurs when the mind is ready for the experience, that is itself sublime (Duffy, 2023), just as the canvas moves from the surface to transcendence in celebration of motherly love.

The Mother's love triumphs over matter and time. Jasmine has no season and blooms seemingly endlessly throughout the year.

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