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Surfboard Making and Painting Within the Same Studio Environment

Thesis Submitted by
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In Fulfillment of
Masters by Research Art & Design
September 2018

School of Art, Design and Architecture
University of Huddersfield

Introduction

The following words comprise mostly of speculative studio diary. They are written in the style of Gonzo journalism, for the most part without objectivity.

'Gonzo Journalism is a style of reporting in which the journalist is far more than a detached observer of the events being recorded. It rejects objectivity in favor of vivid depictions of events experienced, subjectively, by the reporter. The Gonzo Journalist is part of the story, by coincidence, or a conscious choice to participate in shaping the events and outcome. Fictional elements sometimes co-exist with non-fictional elements in Gonzo Journalism. Gonzo Journalism, and the underlying concept of "Gonzo," have become part of our modern lexicon. "Gonzo" has come to mean that the creator is not absent from their creation. Because it adds value for the audience, the creator's role in the story is highlighted rather than marginalized.' Hoover, S. (2009).

Hoover, S. (2009). Hunter S. Thompson and gonzo journalism: A research guide.. *Reference Services Review*, 37(3), 326-339. Emerald.

The term 'Gonzo' was first used to describe the style in which an article by Hunter S Thompson, was written in. Thompson popularised this style of satire, critique and of author as protagonist. The term of gonzo has been applied to outputs of other creative practitioners, thanks to the pairing of Thompson's writing with the Illustrations of Ralph Steadman. The intentionally rebellious nature of Steadman and Thompson's work introduced the template of the gonzo movement. The presence of the artist within their art can also be attributed to other movements.

The DIY punk culture of bypasses accepted institutional or commercial forms of manufacture and creation to generate independent means of production. Raymond Pettibon is one such artist, almost synonymous with the punk image.. Known for the imagery behind southern Californian punk bands, Pettibon's art became representative of dissatisfaction with the status quo of the time manifested through both picture and music. Pettibon's *Captive Chains* (1978) zine aesthetic was adopted by makers as the culture popularity shifted to the punk movement from the science fiction fanzine.

The dedication of zine makers gained them access to bands that were currently at that time, or went on to be big names. This closeness of the artist and subject points back to gonzo journalism. Some punk bands even created their own zines. Today zine subject is greatly diverse. The internet has allowed collation, collaboration and extended trade for zines. Some zines solely exist in internet form, transcending even Walter Benjamin's postulation. (1936).

The work of Craig Stecyk III resonates with mine, through his transdisciplinary approach. Known for different things to different audiences, His work in building the surf, skateboard and DIY punk aesthetic through his gonzo writing style articles for 'Skateboarder magazine' under the pseudonyms Carlos Izan and John Smythe and his advertising campaign for Powell Peralta skateboards. His photography documents the rise of skateboarding from it's roots within surfing. One of Stecyk's handmade surfboards is saved at the Smithsonian.

Another is Mary Heinmann. Her saturated paintings, ceramics and furniture all have a back-story and are semi-autobiographical by nature. Her DIY ethic comes from a different place. "Being a hippie, we used to make our own furniture. You wouldn't buy anything – you'd be making shelves all the time." (2016)

The subject of the art that I create and my interests and identity are intertwined, resulting in the autobiographical nature in mind. This gonzo style is manifest in paintings and also zines that I make as a way of displaying my work. In DIY punk ethic, I also create surfboards from start to finish with no outsourcing and teach others to make boards for themselves. The relationship between the way that I make my output is core. I feel a need for authenticity in my work, to display a truth that cant be shown in objectivity.

With that being said; this has been one of the most challenging years that I have had. Not only as an artist within academia, but as the owner of my own business in creating surfboards.

I have used the method of presenting as studio diary in an attempt to map this year and use this documentation to reflect upon. In the reflection on both writing and imagery I have made, I may reassess my approach that I have taken on this year and to assist understanding on the position that the work is being made from.

The research that I have undertaken has been practice based. Through creating as a way to understand my own ideas and to test method, as well as a result of research. For example; the surfboards I have made are a result of research into design, hydrodynamic theory, experience through practice and creativity. My creative research focuses on the plurality of practice and Transdisciplinary studio. The plurality of practice comes through my work I am undertaking, as well as writing. The transdisciplinarity comes through my identity as a creative. I investigate branding; as myself, as HESHER and through an extending body of EyeBleach.

Chapter 1

Studio Diary

June 26 2017

I begin looking for studio space.

I had applied for a Masters by Research in Art and Design at the University of Huddersfield. The university does not offer studio space for postgraduate degrees and so I needed a space of my own. I had space at my home, but felt that I would not be as effective working from home due to everyday family life; I needed a commute, to remove me from distraction. Art studio space was

very hard to find in the local area and any space available did not offer the things I needed.

I planned to get a space big enough to share with other people, to share the cost and have company. This would help motivate each other. I was unable to find readymade art studio space in the area so I had to think around the problem. I was able to find a commercial business space in a local mill in Linthwaite, which is 5 minutes drive from my house.

I went to look around the available space. It was on the first floor of the mill. The workshop was roughly 840m².

The entrance from the corridor extends through the unit to the far window and it has a separate room on the side. Easily this unit could have been split into at least 3 workable spaces. I wanted to move in due to having outgrown shed I built in my back yard that I was building surfboards in. Due to the extremes in temperature that the shed receives, fibreglassing surfboards was very difficult.

The rent was affordable at £180 per month. The only problem was that the workshop had not electricity wired up.

I was given the option to wire it up myself and have it deducted from my rent, or wait until they wired it up themselves. Neither option seemed viable, as I wanted to move in as soon as possible.

July 3 2017

While waiting to make a decision about the unit offered to me, I also exhibited some work. One exhibition was NOMAD, featuring work centered on homelessness. This proved to be difficult. I submitted 4 prints from a previous collection of EyeBleach work. The curator constantly hounded me, my work

didn't fit in with the rest of the submitted pieces and then had my work returned damaged. There was a lesson learned that I need to research who I am working with and look in to how my work can contribute to the curated



Another show that I was involved in was the Holmfirth Art week. This is fun. As long as you pay the submission fee, you can submit any 2 pieces of work for the show. The previous year, I submitted 2 pieces and off the back of that, ended up selling one at the gallery and a further 2 from home. I like to submit pieces for this art show, as the other work showing there is quite literal, figurative and extremely well presented and finished, as well as mostly framed works.

I enjoy juxtaposing these works with some of my own, unframed, bright contrasting imagery. This year, I decided to see if I could disrupt with scale as well as with style. I submitted one of my large scale EyeBleach paintings, measuring 8ft wide. I just was curious about how it would be exhibited next to the small-scale, twee watercolor landscapes. The smaller, Shredder piece

was so well hidden that it did not sell and when it was time to collect works, I could not find it. The larger Cats piece sold for a ridiculous amount. This was another way that I tried to disrupt that art show, was by valuing my work at inaccessible prices. This sold and I agreed to deliver the work myself due to the size. Turned out that an elderly woman bought it as she had failing eyesight and the vibrancy and size of the work appealed to her. So the work I predicted would sell did not and the work sent to disrupt, sold.



August 14 2017

I received an email from the commercial unit letting agent, saying that another unit within the same building had become available. It was a ground floor space with direct access to the car park via a double door and a sliding door. It was right next to the bathrooms, which I thought would be good for

washing brushes. It was 640m², which was less than the previous unit, but It was well lit, had electricity and lighting wired in, albeit only one double socket. It did have one corner of the unit separated with a stud wall that was previously used as an office. I went to view this unit with a photographer friend of mine that was looking for studio space so he could do more portrait and product photography. Although this unit was smaller, due to the access and amenities, it was a little bit more expensive at £210 a month.

I decided to take the unit. I planned to use the office space to shape , glass and sand surfboards and the back by the window I would use for painting. The front of the Unit I decided to keep clean as a gallery space and for anybody the wanted to rent the space alongside me. There was still some work needed to be done to make it a usable space.

28 August 2017

I move in.

The unit needed some work done to it before being able to create in it. There were no usable work surfaces. I filled the holes in the walls from the previous owner, cleared out some of the items left there, such as a couple of doors and a smelly chair, wood and pvc pipes.

Once the walls were filled and clean, I then painted the whole unit, then cleared the floor and painted with floor paint to make it clean and all one colour.

4 September 2017

I moved in my previously created work as they were taking up too much room in my shed. Another reason for letting a unit was so that I could clear out the shed that I was using to make surfboards and move that business to the unit,

to be able to expand and grow the business and get more work. Also, I needed the space to be able to store, and show my paintings for anybody that want to view them. I felt that I would be able to mke this space a workable area, to create and to display and to invite others in . I wanted to make the space as inviting as possible so that not only I wanted to spend time there working , but others would want to be there too, to either work, so that I may share the rent, but also perspective buyers of surfboards and paintings would have a place that they could view in comfort. I was able to get some reclining leather couches for free, and moved them in. I decided that I would be able to sit in comfort and write, or think, and this would assist in productivity. My shed, which I built to make surfboards in, regained it's orginal function, that of being a shed and Elena, my wife, was happy that we had somewhere to store the lawnmower, tools, camping equipment and bikes.

In the end nobody took me up on the offer to share the studio space with me. I offered it to other masters students, other practitioners that I knew and freelance artists. No takers. I felt that this was ok and I could live with that. It would stop any conflicts about use of space, and I would be responsible for my own mess; both the cleaning and the creation of it.

I put up some shelves to act as an easel, as I had at my studio space at the university and got to work .



September 2017

This is where the problems started. I began to find myself in a loop. I couldn't create or paint or work in this space, as it wasn't 'ready'. The conditions weren't optimal. I felt, that to make good or best work, I needed to have the best studio space that I was entirely happy with. To be able to induce the strongest work out of me, the studio needed to be an extension of my art work. I felt as if I hadn't stamped enough of my persona on the workspace.

I put stickers on the door. Stickers, for me are a way of customising and personalising an item, to inflict your personality, by way of logos and images of brands, ideals and ideas that you identify with, extends your identity from

not just yourself, but then to the space around you in which you have marked as your territory or property.

Next, I felt that I needed everything at my disposal. I needed all the brushes, all the palette knives, all the paints, pens and canvasses at my disposal, ready at a moment's notice, should I feel that I needed to create at that very second, I knew that I could. I prepared some canvasses, I painted some skateboards white, to then paint on. I bought paints, brushes, and everything I thought I needed. I bought sketchbooks. I planned on sitting on my leather couch and writing my musings down in preparation or reflection.

2 October 2017

Now that the art side of the studio was ready. I felt that if needed, I could paint whenever I wanted. Due to this immediate availability, I began to feel two things. Because I could paint when I wanted to, part of the struggle and desire to paint was removed.

I once met someone that worked for McVities, on a factory line for Jaffa Cakes. He told me that the workers were allowed to take as many Jaffa Cakes from the factory line whenever they wanted. But nobody did. This freedom made the workers regulate themselves in a negative manner. Because they could take them whenever they wanted, they didn't, as they could always take one later, or later than that. This was the same with me. I'll do some painting later. It's all ready, so won't take too long to set up, so I'll do it later. I can always bust out a quick painting. It won't take too long, so I'll do something else first.

The second feeling was pressure. This manifested itself in a couple of ways. I now had the perfect studio. I could create whatever I wanted, and not have to answer to a brief or guidelines. I could create how I wanted, as I had my own space and didn't answer to anybody. All of these freedoms and enablement created the fear of failure. What if the work I create doesn't reflect the optimal working conditions that I had created for myself?

Also I had just come straight from my undergraduate degree, where I felt completely happy with the work I had produced for the degree show. What if I felt that the standard of my work took a dip? What if my work as a masters student was not greater than the work I produced as an undergraduate, AND with the addition of my own studio? Having a studio all to myself had its downsides. I would worry about these issues and I had begun already, the early stages of avoiding working in there. I didn't like being alone in there, to my thoughts and anxieties to perform and create to an imaginary, unobtainable standard I had set for myself. When I was sharing a studio, I could use other creatives as a benchmark. Not by quality, but I could pace myself against what they were doing. I knew that I was in the studio a lot, as I could measure against others that were in less. I put in longer hours. I created pieces at a faster pace. I had people to bounce ideas off, to complain about my own work to and in turn would help me rationalise the quality of my work, or help me see it from a different viewpoint. I had friends. I had distractions, that eventually would want to do some work, which would make me return to mine. I had people to offer opinion, and in turn would listen to mine. There was a social structure, I knew where I fitted in socially and also as an artist, I could place myself within the framework of other artists. I could network and felt comfortable.

I switched my focus. I would concentrate now on the surfboard side of my studio and practice. The shaping bay, what was once an office I should imagine, needed a door and to be painted. I needed shaping stands, I needed to mount all my tools on the wall, I needed to move the tools in from my shed. I needed also a shop vacuum that I could attach to my electric planer, to

reduce the amount of foam dust that would eventually cover the whole studio. I made a makeshift door from a large sheet of MDF and some gate hinges and allowed it to be shut from the inside with a deadbolt. Keeping the door closed from the outside would be done by a half full paint can.

9 October 2017

I painted the walls of the shaping bay blue. The mid tones of blues, greens and sometimes greys found in surfboard shaping bays are to allow the eye to see the contrast in the white foam easier. The shadows of the low points in the foam show up more clearly and any high points will reflect any light and are easier to spot against the mid blue of the walls. I wanted to mount waist high fluorescent lights in the shaping bay, but never got round to it. The lights would have a shelf above them so that they cast a horizontal shadow across the surfboard on the stands, assisting further in spotting irregularities in the shaped foam. I installed a number of hooks on the wall to hang my hand tools from, and the power tools were kept on the other side of the room, by the air compressor.

I got some wood and made some shaping stands. They were a bit unconventional. Most shaping stands are rudimental, they allow the board to be held flat and at 90 degrees, on their rail. I built mine to allow the boards to be held also at 45 degrees, to help with foiling the rails. As it turns out, I hardly ever held the board in the stands at this angle as it was additional to how my last stands were and so I had gotten used to shaping a board without the need to have the board stand 45 degrees on it's rail. I weighed the stands down with concrete in buckets to counter the weight of the board and any movement of shaping or sanding.

I wrapped the tops with foam, to protect the board and with the non slip matting found in cars, to hold the board still when I am sanding it.

I was lucky enough to acquire a small shop vac for free and attached a hose to it and suspended the hose from the ceiling so that I could easily plane a board without the hose rubbing along the soft foam of the board. I was ready.



16 October 2017

Field Trip: Phrenix Surfboards . Taunton, Somerset

I scheduled a trip to Taunton, to visit the man that taught me how to shape surfboards, Josh Dimery of Phrenix Surfboards. Josh taught himself to shape when he was younger, and so after studying with him and doing my own research and seeing how other shapers create their boards, I now know that

some of Josh's methods are quite unorthodox. Josh doesn't plan his boards out. He does everything by eye, with no prior measurements to follow. As a result, some of his boards are quite wide and he has become quite well known for thick and wide, high volume longboards. I was still working in my shed at the time and hadn't shaped a longboard before, and didn't have room in my shed to accommodate the length of a longboard so I asked him to shape me one. I had a clear idea in my mind that I wanted a traditional square tailed single finned board, bellied out in the mid point and foiled in the nose. I wanted it a light brown in colour, with minimal logos. I ordered and paid in May, and expected to pick it up in August when I was down that way on holiday. It was now October and still not finished. So I had to take matters into my own hands. I went down to help finish the board. It was shaped and glassed but needed a hot coat and sanding. While I helped him with this, I also assisted in helping him make a surfboard table for a company and also helped him repair a few boards. My pace of work was faster than his and so whenever I visit, I help him clear some of the back log of work that he often has. The longboard he shaped for me was 9'4 x 23 1'4 x 3 which was fine, but the nose was thick and not foiled out at all for noseriding (standing on the front tip of the board while the tail is buried in the wave) he had shaped a single concave running from the front 2/3rds of the board instead of the opposite, bellied out hull that I asked for. The single concave proved to give an already buoyant board too much lift when it picked up any speed and made it difficult to turn, as it would straight line plane too much. The tail although square, was too wide, making it hard to turn also and there was no nose or tail rocker. The board was almost completely flat. Surfing it was difficult. I had to take off right on the back of the board otherwise the nose would dig into the wave. I have gotten used to the board now, but it wasn't what I ordered, plus I had to finish sanding it back home at the studio myself.

This being said, It was good to catch up , to measure how far I had come as a surfboard shaper in my own right and to talk to a like minded creative about the technicalities of creating surfboards. A lot of surfboard shapers are quite cagey about how and what they create; for good reason too , as a lot of shapes are being copied by other people lately. Josh was working with

another shaper to help keep up with demand and offered me a job working with him, due to my strong work ethic and the advice of his father, who had seen some of my boards and how I was able to push Josh to work more efficiently. Obviously I couldn't work for him, but I always am available to do graphic design work for him for logos. I helped him clear a backlog of repairs and travelled home to finish my longboard at my new studio which I could now accommodate a longboard. Before travelling home I drove down to Triocean Surf, which is an online shop that sells surfboard equipment, but had recently started importing blanks. I bought a few seconds; which are blanks with deformities, such as dents or bubbles, as they would be removed in the shaping process. I was allowed to get these at discount as other larger surfboard manufacturers were their staple market and so would not take any blanks with deformities.



30 October 2017

I had the equipment now to start shaping . I had in my head a clear definition of what I wanted to make and why. This pursuit of a surfboard shape was now a distraction from my painting practice which I felt was a legitimate excuse for not painting, which superceded my fear of failure in creating in that medium.

Not before I reached another low. Feeling pressure that time was ticking on and that I hadn't accomplished anything of note as of yet, I made a start on a new piece of work. I previously had a canvas that I have painted black with a paint claiming to be the most black paint available. That investigation was over so I sprayed the canvas white and then primed it ready to start what I thought would be my new direction in painting, being able to further my investigation into disruption by generating a disruptive piece from scratch, this time on this smaller canvas, in opposition to an 8 ft banner or 4 ft board painting.

Without anything by way of pre existing material available to disrupt, breaking it down , all I was doing was mark making on canvas. When trying to force the visual disruption , all I was doing was making the work more busy on the eye, until viewing it made the piece instantly disregardable, null and void. The act of disruption was not present. There was no pre existing material available for the viewer to make sense of or identify a start point. The piece had no narrative.

I tried to make it seem so, but using different methods and layering, but parts were too sparse, others were too dense, It was too easy to read, while at the same time being too busy to want to read it. This painting was a failure. I felt that I was being too forcibly derivative of previous paintings, while at the same time , trying to rush the process and creating a good piece of work at the first attempt. This is a McPainting. It is to my previous works what a McDonalds meal is to fine dining. I made a couple more attempts, on cheap, readymade canvasses, but they were not of any note.

6 November 2017

I had a creative block. And at the same time I didn't.

I had an idea of extending my series of EyeBleach further than disrupted imagery from magazines. I had had this idea for a while, but hadn't acted on it. I wanted to use the pre-existing material of movie posters, which in themselves are easily recognisable, but I also wanted to take the method of 'EyeBleach' further. To make it more abstract and move further away from the format in which the disrupted material existed in. For example, previously, I had taken images from a magazine, disrupted them and then presented them back to the viewer in magazine form. This time, I wanted to take movie posters, disrupt them and present them back to the viewer but to have the effect of more confusion somehow, more disruption.

13 November 2017

I was going through a rough patch at home and couldn't focus on doing any sort of work. I would get up in the morning, Drive to the studio, unlock it, sit on the couch, play the guitar that I got for the studio for a few minutes, then drive home and go to bed. This went on for a month. I had no desire to do any work. The pressure to do work was building up and so by visiting the studio to do nothing, was on my part, showing effort but also an avoidance tactic from doing anything. I was of the 'I've tried today, maybe it'll be better tomorrow' mentality. I had no short term objectives to aim for.

20 November 2017

A friend of mine, who was enquiring about renting the unit initially with me, needed some space to do portrait shots of another professional photographer for her upcoming book. I let him use the studio and In return, he took some photos of me to help himself practice with his new camera and just to fool around. We have known each other since childhood so it wasn't too much of a favor for him to ask anyway.



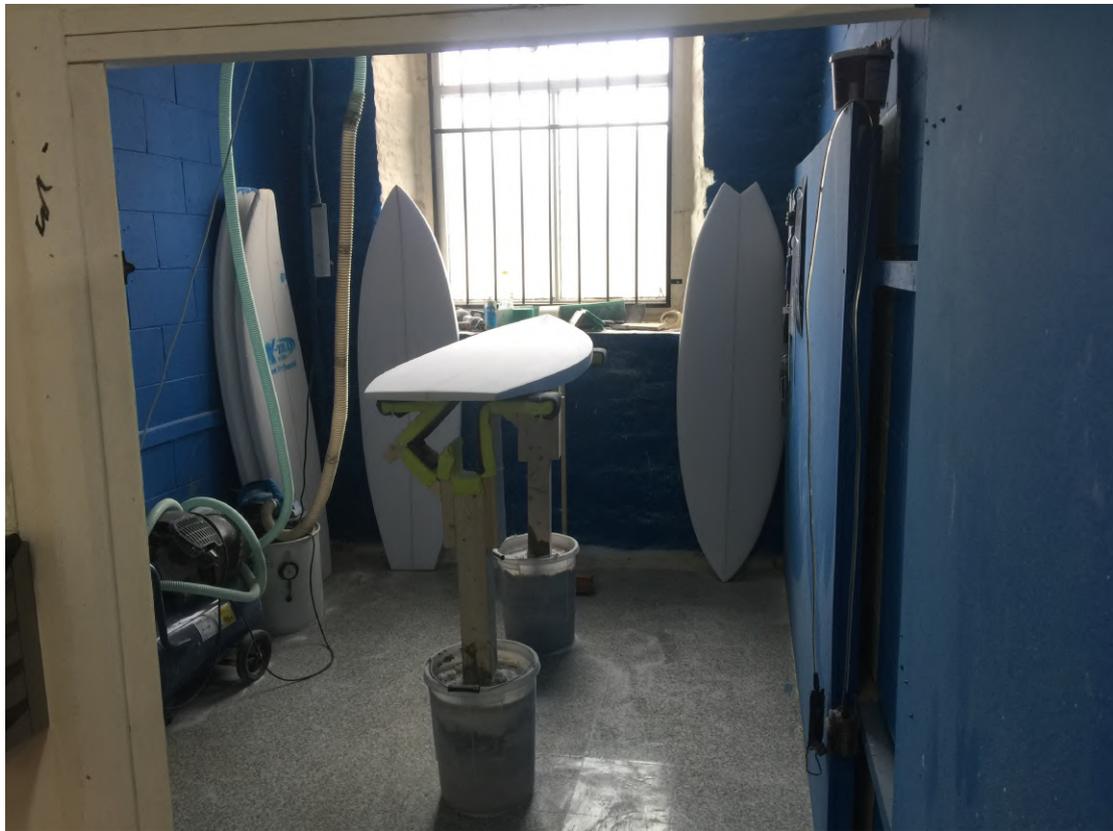
27 November 2017

My focus had completely shifted from my painting practice. I was doing a lot of research into hydrodynamics and hull theory. I was researching surfboard design and other shaper's designs, so as to not to tread on any toes by inadvertently copying, but also to make sure that I was on the right track with my design and that it was something new. I had shaped a number of fishes before and I was at that time, only surfing a fish board that I had made for myself the previous year. Fish surfboards are shorter than the average board,

wider and have a flat tail rocker and a wide tail profile, giving buoyancy, and hold, but the swallow, cut away area, like a fishes tail takes away from having too much buoyancy, so when surfing, the back foot can sink the tail into the water to initiate a turn. I had a board that operated like this, but the plan outline was too straight. The board's outline ran from nose to mid point and then the two rails ran almost parrallel through to the tail. The way that this board surfed, was that taking off and trimming, (going in a straight line in the same direction as the wave) were absolutely fine, but due to the nature of the board, turning was difficult, due to the parrallel straight rails, there was no curve to follow when you pushed that side of the board into the water to initiate a turn. The only way to cheat around this was to out-run the wave, to an unbroken section , (so it was just a bump) and then to do a flat turn. So that the board is not tilted into the water to carve, but to turn on a horizontal plain, without the rails sinking, turning the board toward the beach, surfing toward it. Then once the breaking wave catches up, the board would then easily and almost automatically turn and trim the wave again. This board was great for me when I weighed more and was a progressing surfer, but I needed something with a few tweaks. By shaping my own boards, It has made me more aware of how I surf and what I need from a board.

I needed a board now that would push my surfing a little further, but while still being 'easy' enough so that I can still enjoy surfing. I designed a board with more of a nose rocker, to get me into steeper waves, and with more of a foiled out deck and rails. Before, the previous board took the middle thickness right out to the edges where the rails started, so that they were quite thick . On this board, I began to thin the board out the closer it got to the edges, so that by the time it got to the rails, the board was thinner. This reduced the overall volume of the board, but I could still keep the same width , height and centre thickness. Next, I made the tail less wide, so that there would be a slight continual curve throughout the whole board from nose to tail, as opposed to before, where the curve ended at the mid point and went straight to the tail. This continual curve would help tuck into steeper waves and assist in turning, also I brought the wide point a little bit further back than the previous board. This would reduce the overall volume and by centering the wide point, would adjust my stance on the board to that of more or an aggressive performance

based style. All these changes to the board design were from that of conscious decision following riding the previous board and making considerations whilst riding, after riding and when designing the new board. This process, I find is that of an artistic, reflective nature and by knowing one's mind of the desired result, and how to obtain it. This direction is what I was seeking in my painting practice, but had found it in my surfboard design practice. Previously, I had made paintings, and made considerations about what worked and what did not, and refine the method into the next painting, sometimes paintings overlapped as I was eager to apply a theory or tweak in the next painting. This Methodolgy of refining had moved practices along with my focus.



4 December 2017

By this time, I had orders for surfboards that needed completing. There were people that wanted me to make boards for them. I was creating boards under the brand name of HESHER. The way I marketed my boards was unabashed and unrepentant. I make no secret that I hand shaped my boards, that I started shaping in a shed, and that my shapes were deliberately unorthodox. I knew that the boards that I shaped worked in the mushy british waves and that they were suficciently left-field of the surfboard trends, that nobody would try to copy my shapes.

Not only were people wanting boards from me, but were wanting some art too.

I was asked to paint a wall for Big Dog Workwear's store.

I used up old spray cans and then painted the store's logo over to top. The shop then framed the painting with a stool underneath for trying on boots and then clothing rails on either side. They run a tshirt printing company and I have done designs for them to help with work for their clients. The painting came out how I expected, but not the way I would have done it given the choice.



11 December 2017

I had no desire to paint. I wasn't enjoying shaping for other people, as some of the requests I was receiving weren't really the type of boards that I shaped. I received an invite to a Patagonia and Surfers against Sewage film night. I met a few people there that followed HESHER on social media and told me that they enjoyed the ethos of what I was doing, that I was bucking the trend and creating on my own terms. This was quite helpful and bolstered me. I was asked by a couple of people there if I would help them shape a board at the studio. One of the Patagonia employees came to the studio to help me shape the fish board I had designed for myself. They were nervous of working on my board, but with my assistance, they were able to learn the basics of measuring and cutting an outline, planing thickness and foling toward the rail.

I was having a difficult time outside of shaping boards. I was suffering with depression, I was having anxiety about my work. I wasn't in the best place at home and had no desire to go into the workshop. The only outlet I could lend myself to was going to concerts. At times, I wasn't too sure what sort of punk I was subscribing to. Whether it was the plastic pop punk of focussing on appearance, the way my boards were marketed and how I was viewed by others, or the DIY punk ethos of bypassing the consumer route by making my own boards for myself and others.

Being adopted, I have a question of my identity. To resolve this I want to leave a mark on the world. (Or a marque)

HESHER is a medium through which I

- A) Explore artistically
- B) Build a multi-faceted brand – t-shirts, surfboards
- C) Can hide behind as a kind of nom-de-plume to remove myself from any errors, artistic or non.

D) Can build an identity through choice, and not by heritage.

1 January 2018

Field Trip – New Jersey, Philadelphia and New York

I arrived on the Friday and was picked up by my brother. We went to a mall to shop for baseball caps and then went to an NBA Basketball game in Philadelphia. It was at this time that the East Coast of America was experiencing what the news had called it a 'weather bomb'; a cyclone of cold air was locked between 2 fronts on the east coast and wasn't moving. The temperature was at warmest -11c in the day and was as cold as -22c at night. On the Saturday, we ate breakfast at a diner, where our English accents caused a bit of commotion with the waitresses and then we visited some of his family, and looked around for a new house for him. On Sunday we took the train to New York, to do the stereotypical tourist things; Empire State building, Central Park and to see an NHL Ice hockey game in Brooklyn.

We visited the Museum of Modern Art, which was extremely novel. My Brother Andy has no interest in art. At that time, MOMA was showing Van Gogh's Starry Night. It was difficult to view among all the people and most were content to view it by their phone screens as they broadcast it via social media. Andy completely missed it, thinking it was the line waiting to get on the elevator.

Andy managed to get himself a stern warning by security, as he began absent mindedly touching some of the sculpture work, and then immediately after, leant up against another, while I was explaining why he should not touch them!

Another exhibition at the MOMA was a discussion about fashion. It proposed the argument that fashion should be considered as modern art due to the shift in the balance between function and form.

It felt that a mirror was being held up against me when, obviously, the T shirt was displayed and discussed. The reason for the t shirt, as an undergarment and then ultimately as a billboard, an extension to identity, and a mode to express. This was displayed next to the flanel shirt, discussing the shift from wear due to functionality through the grunge age to now being seen with hipster irony or affiliation with displays of masculinity regardless of which gender was wearing it. The baseball cap and sportswear in general were discussed. That items of clothing, designed as utilitarian and uniform were now seen as items of luxury and association.

The hyperpostmodernism of the shoes were what I could relate to my work as a surfboard shaper and also in my somewhat meagre painting practice. The idea that the form of the object superceeded the functionality to force the wearer (substitute with surfer or viewer) to adapt to be able to accommodate the item. This parralel was what I found most interesting. Although I am not a 'sneakerhead' – a subscriber to the sub culture of collecting rare and sought after limited release shoes by popular footwear brands. This is not so much by choice, but by economical and ergonomical reasons. They are expensive and I have size 12 feet!

The way that I painted, although sometimes the format was recognisable; it was easilsy able to be seen as a painting in the same way that a shoe is easily identified, but I paint or at least aim to paint in such a way that the viewer is thrown. That although they understand that they are to view it at an image, they question how recognisable it is and whether it subscribes to what they see is a painting, or even what is a good painting. Surfboards alike. I enjoy making things that firstly make people question why it was made looking the way that it does, counter to what is commonly accepted as 'surfboard

shaped' and then retrospectively accepting it, once they can attribute the specific forms to the functions of performance.

After MOMA, we went to Brooklyn for the hockey game. I had been exposed to the cold for so long that it had clouded my thinking. We missed the hockey game by 3 and a half hours. It was too cold for me to check my phone for the tickets, as my hands were so cold and my phone's battery kept dying due to the temperature. The next day was Monday and I was flying home that day . We spent the day in Philadelphia. My brother wanted to go to see a battleship in the docks, but the docks were closed and then we got his car stuck in the snow for an hour and had to dig it out by hand. We resigned to just doing something nearby, so we went to do the most american thing that we could think of – go to a gun range and both got certified to own firearms in the state of Pennsylvania.



We went to view the Liberty bell and also the courtroom where the state of independence was signed. This was pretty much pearls before swine as we had not had a lifetime of patriotism put upon us. The way the attraction was presented to us didn't sit right , as non-Americans and made us feel uneasy

as we felt as though we were being forced to feel something toward what was before us that frankly wasn't there. I guess this is how my brother felt being in an art gallery with people that actually wanted to be there. After that we went to the airport and said our goodbyes and I flew back to the UK, missing the whole of Tuesday in the process.

8 January 2018

The next few days were a blur, I was jetlagged, I didn't know what time it was, I only had foreign money in my wallet. I didn't get a chance to go into my studio as I was leaving 2 days later for Iceland for a pre booked trip with Elena.

15 January 2018

Iceland – Not a field trip

I was able to see the Northern lights, and Reyjavik seemed to be extremely accepting of street art. I was also able to see the Icelandic Punk Museum. Iceland is becoming known more for its shoreline and with increasing wetsuit technology and satellite imagery, finding places to surf is becoming more accessible.

15 January 2018

Being back in the UK, things became very busy for better and for worse. I was asked by Josh the surfboard shaper to redesign his logo. We went back and forth with design ideas for a while and settled on one that he was happy with. I had begun to learn that I didn't like the creative decision making process being taken away from me. I felt that compromise after compromise was beginning to undo my identity as a creative.

I decided to put the idea that I needed to extend the range of EyeBleach work into practice. I went to try my luck at the local cinema, and manage to catch them at the right time. I was shown into a small room that was full of movie posters. They were split into three sections throughout the room. That of old films that were no longer running, current films that were showing and received posters for upcoming movies. I was not able to take any of the upcoming movie posters naturally, but I was mainly interested in the films that had shown that weren't as popular or commercially successful as others. I wanted posters for films people weren't aware of. That throughout looking at the whole collection of work that I was going to make, the viewer could distinguish that the canvas was movie posters, and then would take on the challenge of being able to identify the film, through the disruption that had taken place on top of it. In total I loaded up 60 tubes of movie posters, some tubes had more than one of the same poster. The cinema was willing to let me have the posters for a donation to the mental health charity MIND, which I was more than happy to oblige. I felt that I had made at least some progress in obtaining the canvasses for my work.



I took a number of children's film posters and used them to wallpaper my children's bedroom with it. Out of interest I searched for the value that some of the posters would fetch, as there is a market for them. One original poster for the disney film Moana, in good condition, was selling for \$40. This reappropriation of the posters to cover the walls of my children's room satisfied me in a number of ways. First and foremost, this kids loved it. Also the revaluing of objects is something I find interesting. Adding value to something, whether it be by craft or by attributing an unfounded value to an object, such as the paintings I had submitted for the previous years Holmfirth Art week. The exchange of monetary value for emotional value was present here, as hundreds of pounds of film posters made my children's faces light up as it covered the walls of their room.

22 January 2018

I received a call from a couple of surfers that I had met at the Patagonia x Surfers Against Sewage asking whether I could guide them through shaping their own surfboards. This was a step that I had wanted to take as a surfboard shaper. As I had been taught to shape, to be able to shape boards for myself, I thought it only right to pass on the experience to others. I knew that although I would be passing on skills to others, that as a businessman, I was in no danger of setting up competition. I had the resources, the premises and the knowledge to not be usurped. Also the shapes that they were wanting to make with me were not what I would market myself. Unfortunately due to scheduling issues, they both wanted to visit on the same Saturday.

Becky has previously visit the studio to assist in shaping the fish for myself and so was quite confident when it came to measuring out and cutting her board. She was wanting to shape a mid length, something roughly between 7 and 9 feet in length. Anything shorter is seen as a fun board or hybrid and anything longer is named a longboard. She took her time and knew what she wanted from the board. She wasn't able to finish in in one day, but got the outline square and foiled the thickness and concaves. Rolling the rails and finishing would be done at a later date.



Patrick was wanting to make a fish. He was wanting to make a copy of a FireWire Go Fish, but a shorter, wider version. The Go Fish has a hard single concave through the tail quarter of the board, making the bottom of the rails pronounced. This helps in initiating a hard turn, while the single concave provides lift and drive. A board so derivative of an existing shape is not something that I would make. Patrick was planning to go to Portugal the following month and so time was running short in which to finish the entire board. Also that day, He was due back home and only had that day in which to shape a board under my tutelage. I felt that he rushed the board at the time. And my suspicions were confirmed as I needed to finish the board off as the foam was torn in places, where he had been too fast in moving the planer up the length of the board. The concaves were uneven. I wish he had more time to spend shaping as he thoroughly enjoyed it. Glassing the board for him was another sticking point altogether though.

29 January 2018

Up until now , I had planned to keep the messy work and the clean work separate. What I mean by this was that I would shape all of the blanks that I had and then fully clean the shaping bay and then begin to glass all of the boards one by one in a clean, dust free environment, and then revert back to the mess in which the sanding would take place. This idea seemed sound in theory, but when the deadline for Patrick's board cropped up, I knew that I needed to change the plan.

This was absolutely fine as I had all the materials in which to glass a board and I had enough time in which to do it. I was however quite apprehensive about the smell. The polyurethane resin emits an odour on its own, and then when mixed with catalyst to harden, it reacts, creating heat and another, stronger odour. Having shaped and glassed boards in my shed previously, this wasn't so much of a problem, as the shed was well ventilated and I was the only person that would be affected by the smell. Working in the studio was different. Immediately to the left of my unit was an office and store room for a café and next to that was the café itself. Outside the door to my unit was the corridor that the café's customers would walk to the bathroom. The main problem was the childrens indoor soft play area directly above my studio. The only thing to do was to go for it regardless and then see how much of an issue it would cause. I installed the fin boxes and left the board ready to glass the bottom the next day. Coming back to the studio the next day, Friday was ok. There wasn't too much of an odour, so I proceeded with glassing the bottom of the board. Almost immediately there was a knock on the door of my studio. It was the owner of the playgym. There had been complaints by some of the parents about the smell and some of the staff claimed to have headaches. This was not good. I can remember that I had a rush one time to finish a board and so glassed it first thing in the morning in my shed. I had gotten the mix a bit strong and had ended up feeling dizzy for a spell, due to the close quarters of the shed. My own children visit the indoor soft play area and so I felt a responsibility and obligation to fix this matter. I went up and visited. The owner was right, It was vividly strong as it seemed that all of the smell was

going straight up , which is why it wasn't so bad downstairs and I had received no complaint from my neighbors. I profusely apologised and promised that by the time the weekend was over, the smell would be gone and that it would not happen again.

5 February 2018

This was a big problem. I was half way through glassing a board for a customer to a tight timescale and now found myself with no premises to do so. There was only one thing that I could do and that was to go back and use my shed again in which to glass boards. The problem was, it had resumed it's role as a shed and was at that time storing a wendy house for my children, amongst other things.

That Saturday was an extremely busy one. I had to clear out the shed and move the contents into the studio, while also moving contents of the studio, and all of the tools and chemicals into the shed. The wendy house had to be removed from the shed and the only thing to do with it was to actually put it up. This job which we had been waiting for warmer weather to do, was now being done in February. And all this had to be done before resuming work on Patrick's surfboard. Still, the kids were happy and it had to be done at some point.

While I has been interrupted in glassing the bottom of the board, the resin had hardened without lapping round the rails. This then meant that more work had to be done to re glass the rails of the board. Once the shed was empty, I then fixed and finished glassing Patrick's board. Along with my equipment, had to use 3 heaters in the shed as the resin would not cure in the cold. There was snow on the ground and I had to run a power line from the house.



12 February 2018

The board was finished in time and Patrick came to pick it up . He was extremely pleased with it, even more so because he shaped it himself. (unbeknownst to him, I had to do a fair bit of cleaning up on it before glassing it)

Now that the rush was over, I could switch my attention back to my research. I had been looking at what came prior to shaping a surfboard. I was aware that I had become extremely preoccupied with the preparation stage of my studio,

making sure I had the correct tools, the canvasses and surfaces in which to paint. This should not loan itself to the preparation stage of making a painting. I had recently, made up some stretcher bars and made a couple of canvasses in which I was saving for when I had landed on a subject to paint. I was saving them for best in other words for a final piece. If I had a working knowledge of what occurred prior to a painting, then I felt that it was right to have a working knowledge too of what came prior to the act of shaping a surfboard. I had a standing invitation to visit Pro-Foam, which is the only surfboard blank manufacturers in the UK.

19 February 2018

Field Trip - Pro-Foam Factory Tour. Redruth Cornwall

Pro-Foam, previously known as HomeBlown have their factory in Redruth in Cornwall. I drove down as far as Taunton and stayed with Josh. The timing worked out well as he needed some help as he had just had a board to repair come in that had Futures fin boxes. There are 2 main types of commonly used fin systems, Futures and FCS. FCS are easier to install as they are sunk into the board post glassing, and Futures are installed before the board is glassed. Josh was not acquainted with Futures fin boxes, as a specific router is needed for installation. The repair that had come in was that of a kiteboard that had the Futures fin boxes installed at the wrong angle, so that when the fins were in the board they were angled inward toward the centre, instead of outward, toward the rail. We routed out the incorrect fin boxes and then filled them. After this had set, I then showed him how to route out and install the fin boxes correctly. While I was there also, I helped him with a couple of other repairs. He had changed premises again, as had been asked to leave his previous workshop due to him falling out with his neighbors a repairs garage. The next day, I continued the drive down to Pro-Foam, agreeing to collect some Blanks for Josh as well.

When I arrived, I met a man named John, who had agreed to show me round. The owner was away, but this wasn't a problem. As soon as you walked into the factory, you could tell that the operation was grass roots. There was no reception or any façade of so to speak; you walked right into the workshop. There, John and his colleague were cutting a formed blank in half and inserting and gluing a stinger in place, before clamping it back together.

John began to show me around.

First I was taken to where the blanks are molded. It was a room of controlled temperature. Blanks begin as a mixture of chemicals, a bit like the resin that is used to glass a shaped board. It comes in 2 parts.

The foam is 2 barrels. One of them is the resin, a base that is used for all blanks. The second barrel is a mixture of additives and catalyst. It is this second barrel which contains that mix that makes the foam different to other brands and any deformities or anomalies in a finished blank are as a result of something not being right in this second barrel.

Foam is then put into a mold and left to rise, and then set hard. In other manufacturer's methods, the foam mix is free poured by hand. One bucket has the resin, the other has the mix. They are both emptied out into the mold and left to set. In Pro-Foam's product research, when they were first setting up business in the UK, they found that this was a main cause of errors in the blank. This would cause soft spots in the foam, of much lower density. It would cause bubbles, which when the foam hardened, would create cavities if planed into during the shaping process. Also, as the mix of the 2 sets of chemicals was free poured, they discovered that the blanks would have a hard crust on the surface of the hardened blanks, that of much higher density than the rest of the blank.

As a solution to the industry wide practice of free pouring the mix, they came up with the idea of pre mixing the 2 sets of chemicals before pouring into the mold. The foam is sucked from the barrels by tubes that mix and then squeeze the foam mix out under pressure into the mold. This means that it is already pre mixed and it has more of a uniform density throughout the blank. Also, it has less of the crust on top. Meaning that shaping the board is easier,

and the blank is stronger as the concentration of harder foam is not only just at the top. Any problems that poured blanks have can be instantly fixed, by throwing out the mix and making adjustments immediately. With imported blanks, it is somewhat of a lottery. Is it just a couple of boards that have problems, or the whole shipping container full? If so, it will take weeks if not months for new blanks to arrive.

Because of the mix, and the way it is poured, it is not as hazardous as open air pouring. As the mix is not as hazardous, this is then passed down the shaping process, and is less harmful to shapers as other blanks as dust in the air.

Pro-Foam blanks are made using MDI instead of TDI. Others had tried and none had succeeded. The use of MDI was essential as making blanks in the UK using standard blank chemistry was incompatible with our strict health and safety regulations. Due to increasing concern regarding health hazards of isocyanates and TDI, UK-made MDI blank production was developed. This decision was based on global concern of both the short and long term health hazards of isocyanates in general, and TDI in particular. The main health hazard associated with isocyanates is inhalation of vapour or aerosol.

When working with surfboard blanks, there is an additional hazard of partially-cured foam dust, which becomes airborne in the shaping process. MDI is by far the least hazardous of the commonly available isocyanates, since its vapour pressure (which is an indication of how easily it evaporates) is some 2500 times less than that of TDI at ambient temperatures. This fact makes handling, storage and shaping of the blanks safer.

Pro-Foam blanks are the **ONLY** blanks available in the UK to use MDI Foam technology.

Another additional benefit of the system is it produces a closed cell structure foam, which is totally waterproof, unlike TDI or EPS foam. No more sessions pulled short trying to avoid water ingress! The MDI system relies on a

computer controlled pouring machine that ensures the foam is delivered precisely in the right amounts to each part of the mold. The result is consistent density from top to bottom of the blank. This provides a harder, less 'dingable' foam; production with minimal wastage of resources; and (by inference) a dramatically reduced rubbish disposal problem - a major issue worldwide. Pro-Foam blanks are produced in the UK, and use mostly UK-produced components.

The final surfboard will have a lower Carbon footprint than those made using imported blanks, but realistically there's no way to justify the impact a surfboard has on the environment. The whole process has to move on. It has to be market-led, which puts the onus on us the surfers to demand more of the materials in our boards. Using Pro-Foam blanks is a step in the right direction.

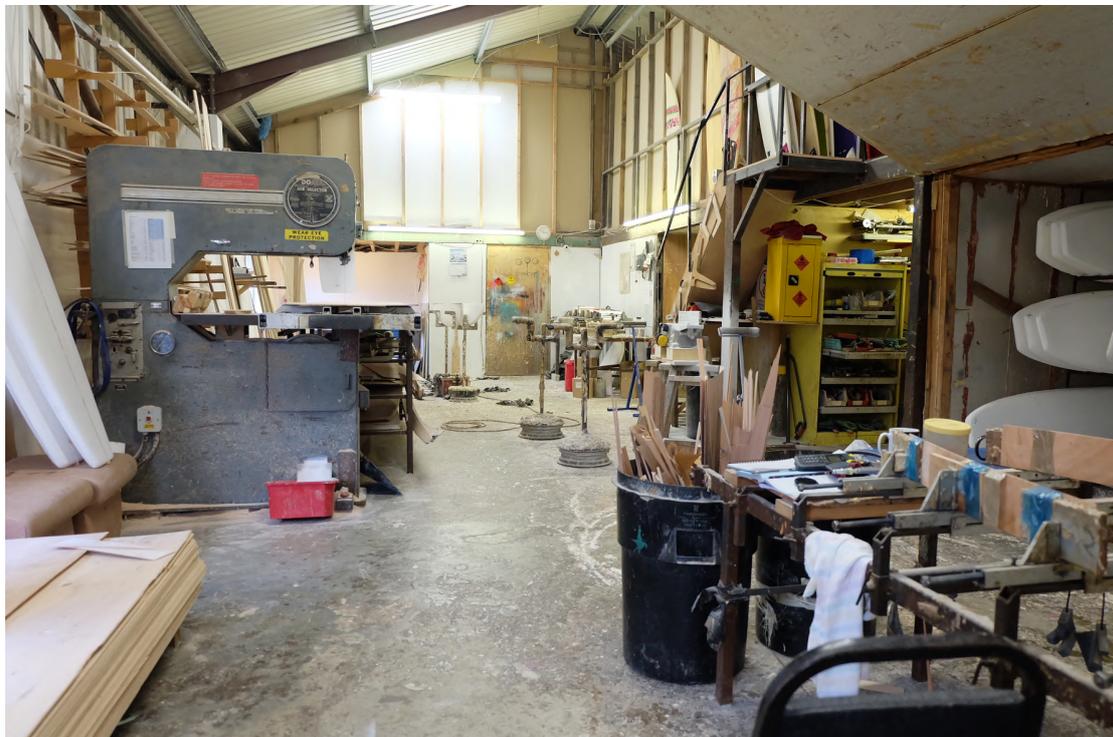
Pro-Foam took over from Homeblown UK in June 2017. Headed by Martin Mynne, a well-known name in the surfing world and surf industry since the early 80s. Pro-Foam continues the work that they started; researching more sustainable and environmentally-friendly alternatives with our chemistry and working practices.

There are a number of blank moulds available. Pro-Foam has become quite popular for longboard blanks. The reason being, that imported blanks are sent in shipping containers and so the aim is to make as much money from a shipping container as possible. A longboard blank takes up as much room as 2 or 3 shortboard blanks and so are not as often provided in mixed containers. This hole in the market made by the shortage of imported longboard blanks is filled by Pro-Foam, whose quality of blank, due to uniform density provides a better blank as well as a more cost effective one.

Once the moulds have been poured, they are clamped shut. The foam expands and creates tonnes of pressure and so the moulds need to withstand this. After the foam has set, the blanks are lifted from the mould and placed in a temperature controlled storage for 2 weeks for the foam to set through and harden fully.

Once the foam is fully set, it needs a stringer put in. A stringer is a piece of material, usually wood that runs through the centre of a board, giving lateral strength and marking the centre of the board for shaping. Stringers are inserted by cutting the blank in half on a table saw and glueing in the stringer and clamping the blank back together on a frame. These are all done by hand. As this is done in-house, customised stringers are made available at request. Different woods, thicknesses, custom colours can be inserted. Currently they are inserting strips of higher density foam instead of a traditional wood stringer Called Pro Flex.

John did not hold anything back and gave me a full tour, showing me every aspect of the manufacture process. I must admit that I was impressed. I could only see the benefits from a UK based blank manufacturer. From reducing the import of blanks, standardised density, custom blanks, instant correction of any error in the blank, these were all benefits that were passed on to the shaper. Creating a blank has possibly more margin for error than creating a surfboard from a blank.



26 February 2018

Momentum was starting to build. Becky came back to the studio and finished foiling the board and rolling the rails on it. It was a really good board for a first effort and was something we were both proud of. She had caught the bug of creating surfboards and was wanting to see the board through to finish. She was wanting me to help her to glass, sand and install a fin box. She also wanted a resin tint, but hadn't decided on the colour.

I went and visited Big Dog Workwear again as they were printing tshirts and I was wanting to enquire about a short run of HESHER tshirts. They had taken delivery of a second hand vinyl plotter but did not know how it worked. While I was there, I luckily had my Macbook with me and downloaded a programme to create and edit designs that was compatible with the plotter. I figured out how to work it and then trained some of the staff on the system. I printed out some stickers on the vinyl as a test run and by way of demonstration.

March 2018

Field Trip: Jay Surfboards gallery show. Edinburgh, Scotland

Winter had pushed back late. It was cold in my studio, making me not want to be in there much now for a different reason than before. I found another distraction. Snowboarding. I used to snowboard a few years previous, but knocked myself out on a trip in Scotland and had stopped ever since. My son had started to show an interest over Christmas and so I decided it was time to start back up again. How to sneak this new distraction over the line though? By killing two birds with one stone.

A surfboard shaper called Jason Burnett was having an art show in Edinburgh at the start of March. He had pushed back the preview night due to bad snowstorms and was holding a reception night that weekend. The art show would consist of Surfboards that he had shaped under the brand name Jay Surfboards.

A friend of mine that I surf with and also who snowboards offered to come with me. We spent the first day on the Ben Nevis range and then travelled down to Edinburgh to see the exhibition before spending the next day on Glenshee and then returning home.

The reception wasn't very busy. It was populated by friends, and family of the shaper and also some of his clients and people he surfed with .

The collection consisted of surfboards from Jason's personal collection and some on loan from his customers that he had made for them. Jason shapes and glasses the boards himself and had a rolling video projected on the wall edited showing the process of him shaping and glassing in his shaping bay. The video looked staged. The workshop looks as though it had been cleaned and tidied especially for filming and he was wearing full protective equipment, including a dust suit even at times when it was unnessecary. The film was well edited and visually informative on his creative process. It showed creation of a surfboard from start to finish and so the filming itself was a result of a large body of work, as surfboard making takes place in a number of stages. The film had entertainment value, from the accompanying soundtrack, the lighting and editing.

The surfboards showed Jason's area of focus within surfboard design. The video showed him making a short board, but the surfboards displayed, suspended from the ceiling were different. Jay focussed on shorter midlengths, and asymmetrical boards. Midlengths and longboards are often known for their resin work. As a board is fibreglassed , tint is mixed into the resin to create swirls or block colour. This can be done at glassing or at the hot coat stage. Resin work is becoming more popular as shapers and

glassers are wanting to put an original twist on existing surfboard shapes to set their boards apart from other shapers.

Jason's selection of boards showed confidence and competent glassing.

From a discussion with him, he showed me his other pieces of art, over 3 years of glassing boards different resin tints, he would empty the excess resin into a box, lined with plastic and collect the resin. Each time he would glass a different colour, he would empty it in and so would create layers of stacked colour. After three years, the box was full and he broke it open and cut it into perpendicular layers on a bench saw. He then proceeded to polish this cross section, showing a history of the boards he had shaped. He mounted this as a table. Other excess resin was used to create other pieces, from being poured over a mould, to make a bowl or being cut into smaller blocks and displayed individually. From what I could tell, the night was very well received. The piece that I was most interested in was a fibreglass spoon single fin kneeboard. I had only seen them before on the internet. The reason they are not very common is due to the decline in kneeboarding, but mainly how labour intensive these boards are.

The board is shaped with a hull bottom and then flipped. It is then glassed with 2 layers of volan fibreglass cloth. Volan has a stronger strength to weight ratio than regular surfboard fibreglass. After this, from nose to the tail, 4 more layers are added, so that the total thickness of fibreglass is increased the further back the board you move. The board is then left to cure and harden. The board is then flipped and instead of glassing the top like you would in process order for a regular board, the deck is then planed and sanded away until the foam is all gone and the bottom layers of fibreglass are met. Then widen the area until the whole content of foam on the tail is gone and all that is left raised is the rim around the top half rails and nose. This is called a scoop. Clean it up so it is balanced and symmetrical. It is now ready to glass. The deck needs 2 layers of volan glass cloth, to cover both the foam and to layer up on the other side of the exposed fibreglass tail. Then stagger 4 more layers of fibreglass down toward the tail. This totals 12 layers of glass that will support the weight of the surfer, and also act as the bottom of the board. Last

in the manufacture process is to glass on a large flex fin. Spoon kneeboards take fins that are a lot larger than other boards of similar length. The board is then finished like any other, with a hot coat and then sanded and polished.



12 March 2018

On return from my Scotland trip , I turned back to the project I had set myself to extend Eyebleach.

A film poster in itself was too big. The object was too identifiable as it was and imagery on it would prove difficult to disrupt, making any marks made on the posters look like an attempt to subvert the content. I realised that I needed to give the posters an initial abstraction before I could work on them. I had to

level the playing field. Currently the different movie posters as they were would have differing values to the viewer, based on their level of recognition and on how they valued the movie that the poster represented. A movie for a blockbuster that a viewer had seen a screening of, would potentially hold more value to them than a poster advertising an independent movie, with actors they were not aware of that they hadn't seen. In order to give myself a workable surface, I decided that a levelling would take place. I cut all of the posters into 11"x 17" rectangles. Most posters would offer me 2 of these rectangles.

The reason that I chose this size was simply that I found a box that would easily accommodate the sheets of 'canvas' if I cut them to this size. It was big enough to make gestural movements when the mark making happened, but small enough to assist in veiling the movie that the poster was for, sometimes making it unidentifiable altogether. I ended up with over 150 sheets of what would be my canvas.

I attempted a few interruptions of the canvas with little success. The marks I was making seemed to be forced, not free enough and so seemed to deliberately guide the viewer's eye. I realised that the marks weren't big enough. They were not gestural enough and needed more freedom. The marks are too literal, I have tried to draw a parallel between my art practice and surfboard shaping practice. This is something that continued to plague me, was that as a practitioner in both fields that I felt an obligation to tie the two together. The result was failure. I already knew that I did not want to paint, or make figurative art on the surface of my boards, so why was I attempting to make reference to surfboards on my artwork?

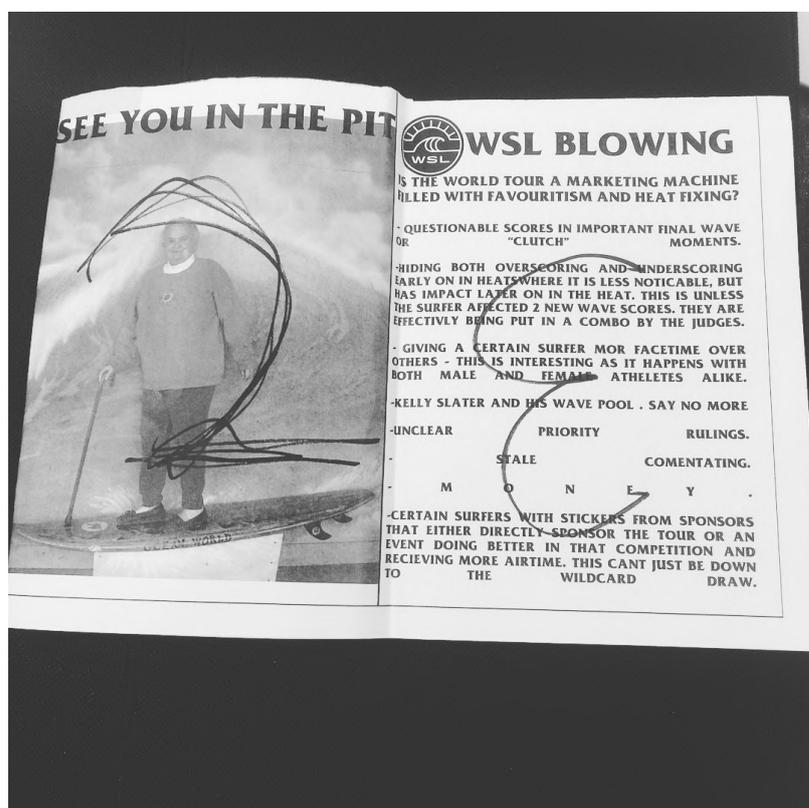
I benched the project. I felt that I had done enough by making the step to cut the posters into workable canvasses and that if I were to continue to work on them, that I would use too many of them up in trying to find the direction in which the images upon them would take.

19 March 2018

I was contacted by a surfer, Andy from York to come and make a surfboard with me. Andy had a tradition, where every year, on his birthday, he would take a course and learn something new. He had previously taken a welding course and a plastering course, which proved to be cheaper than to pay a plasterer to work on his house. I admired this DIY ethic in him and he had a willingness and ability to learn. He wanted to make a midlength, based on another existing surfboard shape, a Flying Frog model, by the surfboard brand Malaku. Malaku is a nonexistant brand. What I mean by this , they are a brand, concocted by the online surf retailer magicseaweed.com. They pay a 'ghost' shaper to make their boards and market them under the brand name of Malaku, as nobody would buy them if they were magicseaweed branded boards. Surfers generally speaking are always seeking some sort of authenticity, even if it isnt real. The board was 8ft in length by 22" wide, and we discussed the type of surfing Andy did, how often he went surfing, and his ability. We talked about also what he wanted from the board . He already had a similar, smaller shape. The FireWire Greedy beaver. These 2 shapes had an extremely wide nose area, and a parralel rail in the middle. This was for easy take off, and fast planing speed. Perfect for beginner to intermediate surfers, or for smaller mushy waves that needed the extra lift to stand up on. The 2 boards also taper toward the tail in a rounded pin. This thinning in width at the tail, gives more manuverability. The main difference in the 2 boards currently on offer was the length. The Greedy Beaver stops at sizes up to 6'10 and the flying frog at 7'10. Another difference, was the Beaver had a 5 fin set up and the frog, had a 1+4 set up . This means that it had a single fin box in the middle and 2 regular fin boxes on either side. This was the setup that Andy was wanting, in the larger length. We were able to design and measure the outline, cut it out and square off the rails and take down the thickness in one day. He would come back at a later time as he was wanting to do as much work as he could on the board.

26 March 2018

The following week I gave a seminar to 1st year Contemporary art and Illustration students on how to make a zine. I had been toying with the idea previously on how to present my previously made art work to make it accessible due to the sheer volume of it. I had made a draft of a zine based around my thoughts of surfing and took it in as a template and example for the students to follow. I thought that it was quite successful and I had no problems in being able to teach, share ideas and communicate in the capacity of teacher. The similarities in helping people shape their own boards and more formalised teaching of others is something I enjoy.



I went back to Big Dog workwear as they had asked me to do some more design work for them. The owner explained that as he had all of the printing equipment, that he wanted to begin a flagship brand that he could sell. He had previously owned a snowboard shop and this is how I had first met him. We discussed some ideas, and he really liked the HESHER brand which I

marketed my boards and ran a few t shirts off as. I offered that if he was willing, he could help push the HESHER label as well and that as it was an existing label, it would take less effort on his part to start up. He seemed accepting in this and we struck a deal to continue the clothing side of HESHER together. This meant that I needed to amend the logos that I was currently using. I had been using HESHER as a spearhead through which to channel my art, and so the logos that I had released previously had all been appropriated material. I had used the Oakland Raiders NFL team logo, The Join or Die newspaper clipping from colonial America and the Metallica band font to display by brand name. I had to come up with a new logo which could be printed. To not be seen to be copying anothers style within an already alternative subculture of freesport, surfing, skating snowboarding etc is very important. I decided to be quite tongue in cheek with it and make sure that by using somewhat of a visual lowest common denominator, something so simple could be seen as either riffing off every logo design imaginable, while also being so base, that it copied none of them. I settled on a black square. Non descript. Easily visable. The top of the square was edged with the HESHER in font FritzQuad Bold. This is the same font as the Black Flag band logo, giving a nod to my punk DIY roots. This logo I thought was familiar enough to be identifiable and similar enough to be individual.

EDIT: Summer 2018 the Brand FORMER, run by the surfer Dane Reynolds has re-released the first run of their brand. The run of clothing is highlights the aspirational value of clothing as they released a tshirt with a black square with the words 'luxury 29.99' over the top. This is visually similar to mine. I had no prior knowledge of this line of clothing's imagery to creating this logo, although I met Dane in May , but did not discuss this topic, only surfing.

2 April 2018

I had another student in the shaping bay making his own surfboard. Max was a self professed punk. He went to the shows, had the tattoos and was very much into the do it yourself, bypassing of commercialism. He wanted to make a high volume, short single fin board. In the weeks prior to him visiting, we bounced various ideas back and forth of how the board should look and operate. In the end I had to take my Macbook to the studio and sit down with him and design it in CAD with him in the morning, before starting on the board. It would be 5'10 x 22" with the mid point moved forward and a tail tapering to a rounded pin. The rails would be boxed, giving more volume throughout the deck. The board would be nice and thick. We got to work. Max had driven up from Berkshire and was wanting to drive back down that night, so we had to get finished in one day. With a board of this length, we would do it comfortably and as Max surfed quite a lot, had a clear picture of what he wanted the board to look and feel like. We quickly go through the board and he left, leaving me to glass it for him.

That weekend I went snowboarding again, as there was still snow in Scotland, promising myself that in exchange, I would be able to then focus on making pieces of visual work on my return. I was struggling still with my lack of direction and desire to make art and so tried to set up a reward structure to coax myself into making work that I didn't want to do. There were things I visually wanted to investigate, there were pieces that I wanted to make, but I still had anxiety when it actually come to starting them. In exchange for going surfing, I would promise myself I would make notes about the experience, In exchange for this snowboarding trip, I told myself I would actually make some work.

9 April 2018

I began to work on the HESHER logo for some t shirts that I thought would look good on my son Zac. The internet is a bit like the train of thought. You can be thinking about one thing, and then an aspect of that will set you off thinking about something else. I was looking through the internet at pop culture iconography and then followed a few links to Walt Disney and his involvement with Salvador Dali. I then followed up on Disney being a Nazi sympathiser and his involvement in the second world war. I watched the Disney propaganda videos and then came across something I really liked. In the second world war, Disney artists created insignias and badges for squadrons in the US Military. They adorned their clothing and the sides of planes. The style of these images and the clash of pop and uniform was something I wanted to reflect in the HESHER kids tshirts. I reflected the style in how they looked and added vivid colour to move away from association with their original purpose. I used a simpler font for the logo and felt that they looked good. I uploaded them to the HESHER Instagram account asking for feedback and most people like the turtle on rollerskates logo the best.

It had been a while since I had used Adobe Illustrator and so it was good to set myself a task which would reacquaint myself with the programme and get some work under my belt. My son preferred the parrot logo. I sent the images to the owner of Big Dog Workwear for consideration. He liked them, but eventually they were not used at all. I still think they could be lent to exist physically as a sticker.



16 April 2018

Having had done these designs, It acted as a springboard for me to revisit the canvasses that I had prepared for EyeBleach. I had a spare large sheet of MDF, leftover from when I was fitting out the studio. I clipped up to 8 canvasses to this sheet in a row and worked on all 8 at the same time. Each set became a miniature series of paintings that I would work on all of them, and then remove them and lay them out to dry and then clip up another set. I decided that to get bold, gestural movements, I needed thicker lines and more freemoving paint. I would use spray cans to interrupt the canvas. I lined 8 canvasses up and would work methodically through the cans, painting each colour in turn. Sometimes I would paint each colour on the canvas one by one, and sometimes I would paint all 8 as one giant canvas, knowing that when they were taken off the board and laid out to dry, they would be mixed up. The viewer may notice points of juxtaposition and connect the dots if looking at the series as a whole.

Working with spray paint was quite refreshing. I could get the bold colour that I was used to working with that really worked well making the canvas of the film

poster look dull and flat. I could build up layers quickly and found that I could stay in a train of thought easier due to the speed I was working at.

I work better when I stick to the rigidity of a method. Just like shaping a surfboard, I put steps in place for how I would create these paintings. If I kept to the steps, I found I could create within the boundaries I had set myself quite comfortably. I knew exactly what I was doing next, and what to do the next time I came into the studio , I could pick up along the methodology. I found that by adhering to this, I could overcome any anxiety that I had when entering the studio and creating work as all I had to do was what I had been doing. This was a relief and I enjoyed making the work.



I would go to the pile of canvasses, pick one up and walk over to clip it up. On the way over, I would have about 5 or 6 paces that would give me just enough

time to consider how to hang the canvas. I had decided previously that all of the canvasses would be painted and shown in portrait, as I had thoughts that the way to show them would be best seen in book form. Between the pile of canvasses and the MDF board, I had 4 options, up or down, or up or down on the reverse side. Because of the density of the printing ink on the film posters, the image was visible on the reverse side. This density was to allow the posters to be shown on backlit boards and not have the vividness or contrast bleached out by the light behind them. Most of the canvasses were hung to be painted on the correct side, but If I found that I had many of the same poster, I would paint on the reverse. The next step, once all 8 were clipped to the board was to paint them. I had a shelf of spray paints and I would take a selection of them and work through them one by one. Once exhausted, I would unclip the canvasses and lay them out on large sheets of cardboard in the studio to dry and start again with the next mini series of paintings.

23 April 2018

The tail end of April had a heatwave and so while sitting at the computer I reimagined the HESHER logo to reflect the temperature.

30 April 2018

I had been asked by a friend that I surf with to shape him a board. Knowing how he surfs and being able to make considerations of how the board should be with that in mind made the board easy to shape. He wanted a 5 finned board, that he could ride as a thruster (3) or a quad fin set up. I shaped him a shortboard with a square tail, as I knew that on his pop ups, (where a surfer first gets to his feet) his weight transition stayed on his back foot a little more, and so needed a larger area to support this and to balance him out. The board had a double concave, giving it 2 channels that any pressure on the

back foot while surfing, would give increased speed and also help keep steady and balanced.



I also took receipt of my original EyeBleach work in Zine form. I wanted to make the work more accessible as there was a lot of it so I split it into 3 Zines and had them printed.



I visited Big Dog Workwear again to collect some tshirts I had ordered and discussed with Graeme about my situation that I had with glassing boards. I explained how I was having to shape the board at the studio, take it to my shed to glass it, take it back to the studio to sand it , glass the other side at the shed, and then back and forth as I hotcoated and sanded it. He offered me a space on the 1st floor in the mill that he was expanding the printing business into. I would be able to come and go as I pleased and as it was only him and his staff that shared the building, the resin fumes wouldn't be too much of a problem and they would be able to source an extractor fan for me. Having me on site would be beneficial also for the t shirt company and also I'd be on hand for any design work needed. He showed me the space. It needed a lot of work, but the temptation of being able to create a shaping bay from scratch and it being more of a professional area in which to teach was good. There would be enough room to have a separate shaping bay and glassing room, meaning I would be able to keep the clean and dirty separate, as well

as a secondary area for an art studio and if I wanted, I was able to sub let. This was a dream. There were only a couple of snags. I was locked into a years lease on my studio and so I couldn't move in until the Autumn, when the future for what I was currently doing was uncertain. I wasn't sure that I would be able to use the space, as I might be too busy doing other things. It felt hollow and extremely bittersweet.

Work on surfboards was going well, as I was now used to drifting between the studio and the shed. I finished Max's board. He wanted a mustard tint on it, which came out well and I posted it down to him. Andy returned to finish shaping his board. We were able to tuck the rails and route out the fin boxes in one evening and I glassed it for him.

While this was going on, I received the 2nd and 3rd editions of the Zine that I had sent to print. It was the rest of the previous body of work for EyeBleach. The reason I had these printed was because I wanted a physical copy . I was proud of this body of work and wanted to use this zine to springboard into self publishing more of my work. Often when wanting to publish for myself, I have a few ideas, but it was lacking content. For the EyeBleach zine, I had pre-existing content, and would continue the editions with my new work.



7 May 2018

A friend from back home came and visited me. We went to the same primary school and used to surf together when we were teenagers. Through having the surfboard business, I held a trade account with a supplier, where I would get some of the materials for shaping surfboards and also other sundries. I would supply Justin with wetsuits and fins at trade cost. Justin was wanting to shape his own boards, but due to living so far away, couldn't spend time to come and shape with me. He was on his way home from a surf trip to Scotland and dropped in to see the workshop and some of the boards that I had been shaping. I was able to give him a blank that I had cut the outline of a board for, but didn't have the time to finish, as I was busy finishing boards for other customers and myself and this would be a stock board, so therefore had no buyer as of yet. It was worth more to him as a blank than it was to me at that time so I let him have it. Justin has since finished the board and made 2 others from recycled materials in his shed and is quite well known for being

the local shaper back home now. I also am the contact for that area for wetsuits bags and fins through him.

With a little bit of breathing space I was able to continue on a board for myself that I had the idea to do for a long time. Due to the typical British surf conditions, magnified by the fact that I could only go surfing when time permitted and not always when the conditions were good multiplied by my terrible luck – often I would get to the beach and not be too happy with what I had just driven 2 hours to see. Also it was often that my surf trips were with a full car of other people and equipment. Having to drive a fair distance is ok, but anything strapped to the roof really affects the fuel efficiency of the car, not to mention the risk of damaging a board goes up exponentially. It is always best to transport a board inside a vehicle. With those things in mind, I had a list of things I needed from a board. It had to be short. Shorter than anything I surfed normally. It needed to have a high volume. The higher the volume of the board, in most circumstances, the more weight it will be able to float. This would offset the weak power in the smaller waves. I wanted the board to be wide so it would have a larger planing surface, to glide over any dead mushy spots in the wave. It needed to be fast. It is easier to slow a board down than it is to pick up speed and so would work in a larger variety of conditions. A mini-simmons shape has all of these attributes. But I wanted to change a few to make it work better for me. I would create a mini simmons with a shortboard nose. Mini-simmons have a round nose, which depending on the wave, would pearl, meaning it would dig in the water and the surfer would go over the handlebars. I would create a board with a pointy nose, giving less volume to sink, but also for it to have a nose rocker, where it would curve up like a shortboard, to get around the issue altogether. The board would have a hulled bottom at the front leading to a flat mid to tail section. This means it would literally push the water away, leaving a flat planing area in which to speed along on. It would be twin finned, as these are typically faster, and would use keel fins, for hold. This board would fit in the boot of a

car, and be fun in smaller waves, but be able to handle bigger waves due to its nose and hard corners on the tail, giving it more hold in a steeper wave.



Nothing ever goes smoothly. Over the course of the past year I was on my 3rd car. While I was glassing the board for myself, the aggressive nosed Mini-Simmons, in my shed, My previous car was ready to be towed. Just as I had poured the resin onto the board and started to spread it round, there was a knock on the door and it was the mechanic. They needed help finding the toe hitch for the car. This interruption, paired with the hot weather we had been having, made the mixed resin kick and cure quickly before I had a chance to lap the resin onto and round the rails. This meant that the clumpy resin on the edges had to be sanded back and I had to glass the rails again. The board eventually got finished and I put an olive green resin tint on the board and felt that it came out quite well. The board visibly ticked all the boxes that it met the specifications that I had designed for it on the computer. The proof would be in the pudding and I needed an opportunity to surf it.

14 May 2018

Field Trip: Vans Duct Tape Invitational Surfing Festival – Zarautz Spain

That opportunity would come in perfect timing.

I finished the board just in time to be able to take it with me to Spain. About a month prior I had seen an announcement that the Duct Tape Invitational was going to take place in mid May in Zarautz in the Basque country of Spain.

The Duct tape invitational is a longboarding surfing competitions and festival that runs in opposition to most other established competitions. It celebrates the heritage of the sport and the tradition of a number of surfers being able to shape their own boards to ride. The Duct Tape invitational was an event sponsored by the shoe manufacturer Vans, who have a long history in their involvement with the surf industry, and was presented by Joel Tudor. Joel is a professional surfer and surfboard shaper. This would be a great opportunity to meet other surfboard shapers and to see some of the best surfers in the world compete. I sent Joel a message via social media saying that I was travelling over on my own and whether any help was needed with the event. He replied saying that nothing was known until they got there. I flew over to Bilbao and took a bus to Zarautz. Luckily, the bus services were accommodating of surfboards as luggage and I arrived at my hotel with no problems.

I dropped my things off at the hotel and went to find the beach. It was evening and there were still a lot of people in the water. I came to quickly realise that the culture was a lot different in the Basque country. As I sat on a bench which would become my permanent residency for the next 4 days I thought about what surfing was for me. It wasn't just the act of riding a wave, or sitting in the water. It was the whole thing. Travelling to the coast, the anticipation of what the waves would be like, if I would be able to catch some good waves and how my board(s) would work. Surfing gave me the reason to travel to places that I wouldn't otherwise have reason to go to. Sleeping in cars, on couches, in tents. Waking up at 3am for a 6 hour drive or to catch a flight. In hindsight, the reward was often nowhere near the effort put in. It was the

millennial coined term FOMO – the fear of missing out , that keeps me travelling long distances, just in case the forecast was wrong, or the lineup was uncrowded, or an adventure was had along the way. This was a different feeling to painting. The lengths I would go to to create or experience art were more that if entitlement and convenience. I would create if all the conditions were in my favour which explained my studio. The struggle I had was not trying to get to painting, but what to do when I had the opportunity to.

I met Dane Reynolds that night. He is a professional surfer and was one of four people invited to shape boards especially for the festival. Four surfers, Lee-Ann Curren, Tanner Gudauskas, Alex Knost and him, were asked to shape two boards each for the festival. They were to present a library of their own hand-shaped custom surf boards to share with the public and live permanently at local surf shop, Pukas Surf. The public were able to ride the boards that they otherwise might not get a chance to and give feedback on the different shapes. Led by these four influential surf icons, the 3-day beach festival would feature surf and skateboarding sessions, board shaping discussions, interactive art and music exhibits hosted by the local community. Dane and I discussed the boards that he had brought. He had shaped a twin fin short board and also a shorter, twin finned paipo board. It was short, wide and looked more like a bodyboard.



The next day I went back to the beach with my board. The bench on the promenade where I was sitting seemed to be the epicentre of where the festival would be. There was a stage, food tents and bar being set up. As I sat there, watching some of the surfers, one of the local kneeboarders came up and introduced himself. Inigo said that the local community was very pleased to have the Duct Tape festival in Zarautz, as the Basque country coastline had a long history with surfing and longboarding especially, which the waves were most suited to.

Following him was Joel Tudor. He had arrived the previous day and this was his first time at the event site, taking a look at the beach and surfers in the water. I introduced myself to him, and briefly explained that I too shaped my own boards and that I was there to watch the competition, while hopefully having a break to be able to write. Joel had lived in London for a time during

the late 90's and we talked about some of the things that had changed in Shoreditch and some of the differences between British and American culture. He invited me to the festival opening meal that night and we stood and discussed some of the activities that were planned for the festival.



The meal was almost surreal, I sat on the coach, surrounded by faces that I recognised from magazines, social media or surfing films. I found myself sat

at a table at one point with Alex Knost, one of the invited surfers and shapers, the Artist and designer Geoff McFetridge and skateboarder turned musician Ray Barbee. We were discussing old recording studios and skateboard shapes. Ray Barbee is one of the skateboarders that through the 1990's, brought progressive vert ramp tricks to the street. He has had a huge influence on how modern skateboarding is seen today. He was excited that many skateboarding companies were not only releasing skateboards that have the traditional lollypop stick appearance but, with a mixture of past single directional skateboard shapes and contemporary cambers and curves in the boards, that skateboards were now broadening their appeal and allowing skaters to become more individual. Like surfboards, skateboards over the past few years had become wider. When I was skateboarding regularly as a teenager, the thickness of my board was 7.6 inches wide . Boards now are averaging at 8.2 inches and I now am riding a 9 inch board. The width of the skateboard is reflective of the shift in style and tricks that are being performed. The focus has moved from flip tricks, where a drawn in centre of rotation is needed, to transition and big jumps, where a wider board is needed to land on and for foot placement. The movement for wider surfboard over the last few years was a step away from having boards exactly like professional surfers. Recreational surfers began to understand the difference between themselves and the professionals, and that they needed more volume under their feet. Geoff McFetridge, a long time skater and surfer had designed the poster for the event. Throughout the weekend, He would take out a cheap watercolour set and his sketchbook and live paint the spectators and the surfing action. At the meal, I sat next to Daniele Rama, a photographer who was documenting that week on retro analog camera and Super 8. He had an upcoming show in France displaying surfing photography in collaboration with Shawn Stussy, whom I met later that weekend. Stussy would annotate Rama's photographs on display.

28 May 2018

I cant keep still with creative outlets. I always need more than one project ongoing, so that if I get tired or burnt out on one, I either do absolutely nothing, or I can switch to another project I have ongoing. It was now June. I saw that a new band over in New Jersey, where my brother lives had a record out. They were called Beach Rats. I decided to make a logo for the band. Not so much to be used, but to keep up to date with Adobe Illustrator as I hadn't used it for a while. I made the image from scratch looking at other images I had found. I also decided to turn an old flight case that I had been given into a pedal board for electric guitar effects pedals. Both of these things were completely unnecessary, but allowed me to keep being creative, while also avoiding any focus. I was scrambling to justify what I was doing. I customised another guitar pedal I had, by teaching myself rudimentary electronics for pedals and resprayed it. I also at the time decided to respray the old surfboard that I was currently making a replacement for ; the fish.

4 June 2018

I was contacted to do some repair work on a couple of boards. One had a crack in the rail which was a quick fix. It just needed sanding and filling. The other had a whole fin box pulled out. I needed to reset the fin box, and re glass over the top. This was a larger job, but both customers were happy to have their boards back.

I was able to get some small pieces of MDF board that I wanted to do some test paintings on , and so as the weather was warmer, the studio became more berable to spend more time in and I was able to prime these boards, while setting up for painting more series of EyeBleach.

11 June 2018

Though all of this, my Wife suffered a miscarriage and we lost the pregnancy. I was not prepared for this at all and it really took its toll on me. I struggled with depression for weeks after, forcing myself even to leave the house. What work/study/life balance I had was out of the window. When I approached my Masters research I was quite happy and almost prepared for it to be all consuming, that I would be focussed and this would reflect in my output. Doing any sort of work at home was absorbed by having to collect or drop off one of my children at school, playschool or a club or having to be available while my Wife ran an errand. Working from home was impossible, but the alternative, being alone in a studio that I now resented was just as difficult.

25 June 2018

I realised that this year's Holmfirth Art festival was coming up. I had applied to submit 2 pieces, but hadn't painted them yet. I wanted to create them in the same style that I was painting the film posters, but with more layers and an appearance of texture. I wanted them to reflect my interest in addressing viewer's recognition process and disrupting it, by possibly making the viewer misrecognise something that was not there.



2 July 2018

The way that the two paintings came out was different than how I wanted. I feel that I was trying too hard. I painted on thin, store bought canvasses, addressing the aspect of adding value where there was none. I feel that the

paintings did not have as much visual depth as I wanted. Comparing these 2 paintings to previous, larger works I had made, I was unhappy with them. They looked like apologies on canvas and I think that's what they were, a manifestation of my lack of focus and desire due to one thing or another this year. I struggled to think about them and turned them into the Art show and out of my sight. At the end of the week, they had not been bought, which was no surprise. I didn't want to collect these sorry pieces if it wasn't for the fact that I need them as evidence for this thesis.



9 July 2018

I had a prebooked session at Surf Snowdonia. This was an inland pool, that had a track running down the middle. A trapazoidal wedge was pulled along

the track, creating a surfable wave. I had visited before, for a surfing competition, at the invitation of an online surfing magazine called theinertia.com. I had been able to interview all of the competitors and see the running of the competition from the other side. I had not surfed the wave. We started off on the intermediate wave, which was easy enough. We were to surf a broken wave as it refracted off the edges of the pool. So I would take off, surfing to the right, and as the wave refracted, would turn and surf left until the wave got to deeper water and lost all power. Next came the professional wave. We were to paddle out to the centre of the pool and wait for the wave to reach us. For the whole afternoon, I was not able to catch a wave. The wave approached faster than that of a coastline. As it was on a pulley, the wave matched the speed of the wedge and hit at full speed. On a coastal wave, it picks up speed as you start to ride it and move toward the shore, where there is less room for the water to go and the wave becomes steeper, before dissipating. A bigger difference however was how counterintuitive the instruction I was receiving was to how I would surf a coastal wave. I was told to hold onto the pontoon in the middle and stay to the right of where the wave would break. The breaking wave moved from the outside, shallower end of the pool to the deeper inside instead of a shoreline break moving from deeper water to the more shallow.

Speaking to others who had surfed there, they agreed that it was counter to surfing a beach, but once they were used to it they enjoyed it. Most agreed that the instruction needed to be taken with a pinch of salt, as the takeoff point for the wave was not where they were telling you it was.

16 July 2018

I continued making some paintings, deciding not to try and force my work as I had with the Holmfirth artweek paintings. I wanted to ease up and not put too much pressure upon myself. I was trying to make paintings while still going back and forth between the studio and my shed. It was summer now and the

weather was good enough to be able to glass boards in the garden. I no longer had any surfboard shaping or glassing racks, as I had disposed of them when I moved from the shed to the studio, and so I was glassing boards on an ironing board which I had taken from the local tip. This truly was a living definition of DIY punk craftism for me. I wasn't happy with doing this, but there was no alternative. My studio was almost surplus to requirement, as I could have stayed working in my shed to build boards and make room to paint in there, or in the house. I finished the square tailed board for my friend and the fish shaped board for myself. These would be the last boards that I would shape as HESHER surfboards. I realised that it wasn't sustainable making boards in the studio and having to keep switching between the two sites. The space offered to me at Big Dog Workwear was not available to me any more and the future of what I would do with the business looked pretty clear; I needed to fold. This was an obvious decision. As I had moved the glassing out into the garden in fine weather, the shed had gone back to its proper use, leaving no room to continue once the poor weather set back in. I would definitely not renew the lease on the studio for another year. The space was a wonderful one, but it was not for me.

30 July 2018

My work was beginning to come to a natural conclusion. I had finished over 150 individual 11x17 inch paintings on the cropped film posters, I had also created a small series of separate paintings, mirroring some of the techniques and reflecting the headspace that I had been in for this year.

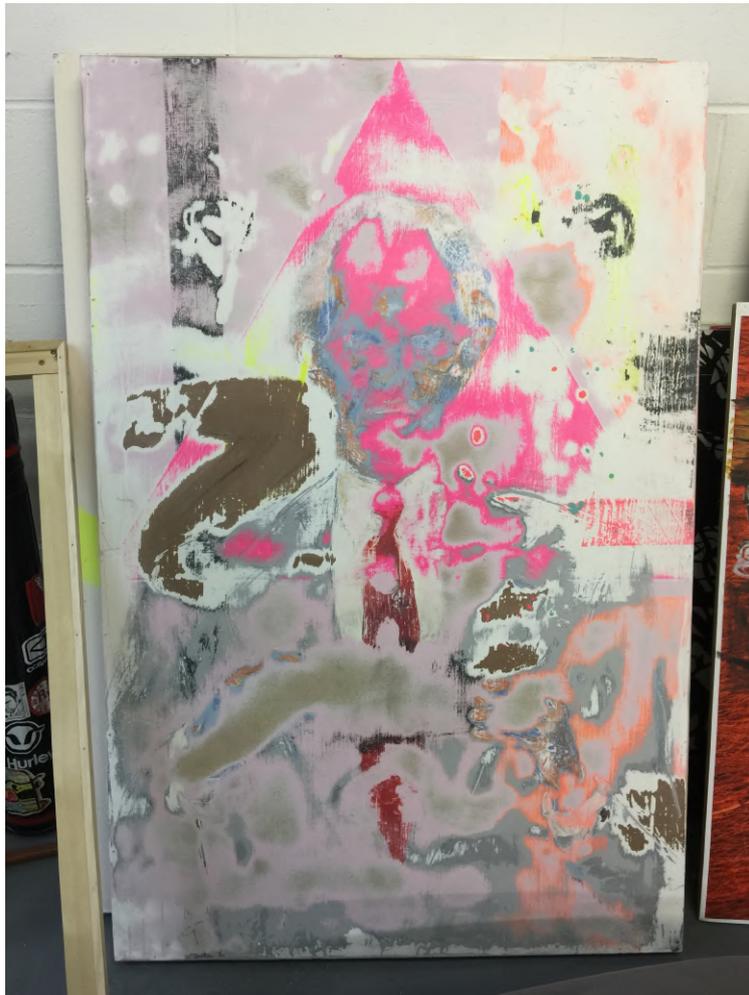
I laid each EyeBleach painting out one by one and took photos of them. I was wanting to push myself. I wanted to exhaust myself in the work as I felt exhausted with everything else. I wanted to see if I could interrupt the images digitally and rework some of the pop culture from my knowledge back into them, whether I would be able to do it, or whether I would run out of imagery to apply to the paintings. I edited a handful of the images, overlaying pop culture references and inside jokes. It seemed futile. I decided that the images

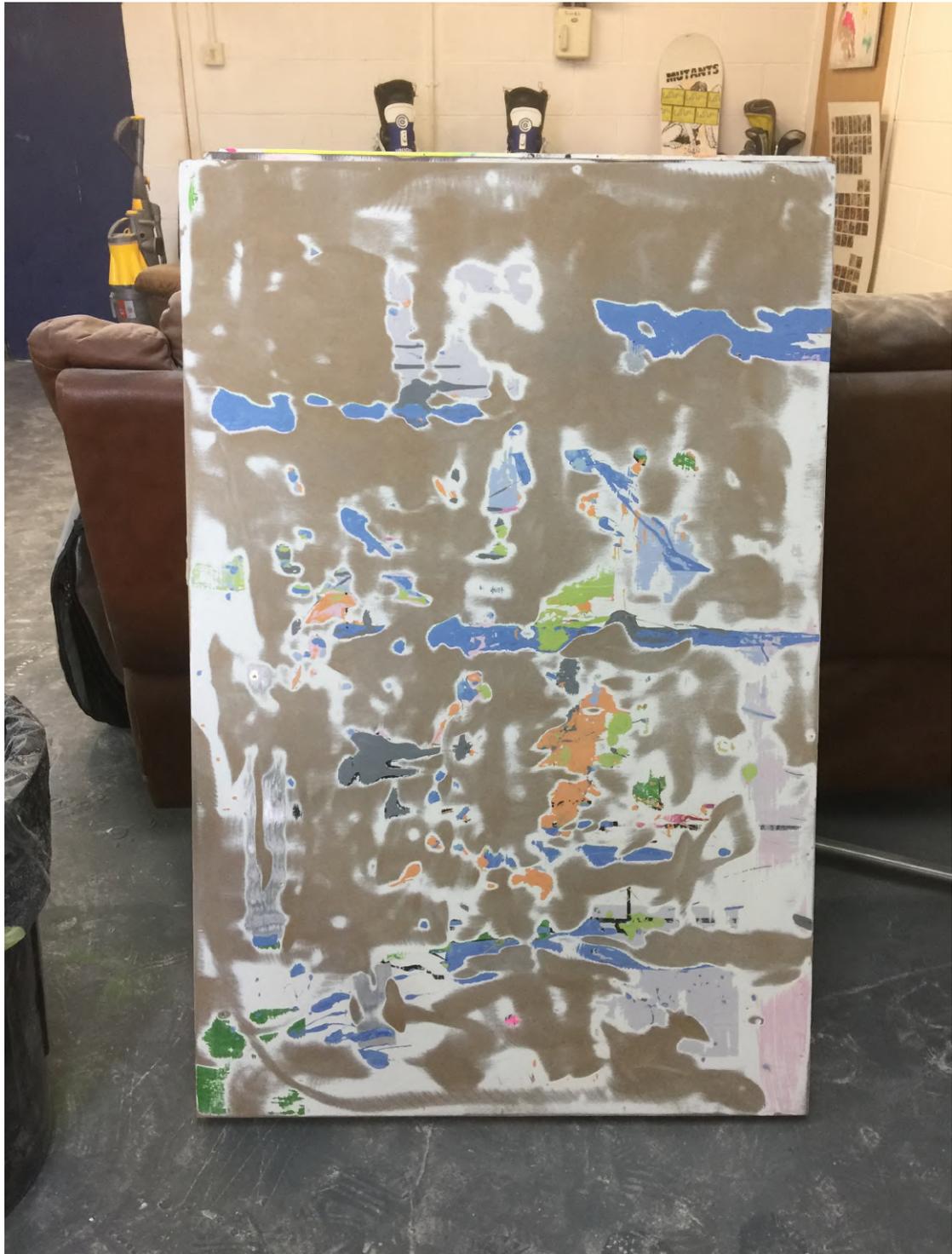
as they were, were enough to disrupt and affect the viewer and so abandoned my efforts. It was not that it was too much work to do, but that it didn't take long to realise that the imagery had no greater effect than if I didn't do it. Too many previous pieces of work I have created have been ruined by being overworked. I keep pushing imagery until often I break it. This is what I had done with the artweek paintings, and was determined to not make this large body of work go in the same direction.

6 August 2018

I looked around my studio at the previous pieces of work that I had created. I no longer wanted to keep them around. I wanted to use the canvasses for something else, for more work. I took one into the shaping bay, to sand it smooth so that I could prime and repaint it. It was here that was my 'eureka' moment. In the act of using my rotary sander, to smooth out the surface of the board, that I felt muscle memory almost kick in. The actions which I was performing and the movements that I was making, were the same as though I were sanding a board ready to be finished. This literal act, was what tied both my two practices together. I was sanding a canvas to start anew, but would sand a board to finish it. I used brushes to apply the hot coat and gloss coat of resin to surfboards, focussing on smooth application. In contrast to finishing a surfboard, a canvas is prepared by applying primer in such a fashion. The similarities in the the practices were becoming more clear and only at the end of a most difficult year. The tools I use to create are different in appearance in some aspects, but their use is the same. The shaping stands are an easel. Measuring tools are universal. Tools to create the size or shape of canvas. Removal of layers of foam in transverse was the application of layers of paint. The sanded painting became not only a literal disruption, but a metaphorical one too. The previous imagery was all but removed, and so only those viewers with a previous knowledge of the pre-existing painting would be able to appreciate the method of this reincarnation. The venn diagram of

recognition in which my work appears in had become smaller and more refined. The painting was both structurally subverted and narratogogically subverted. It's behaviour now existed in meta-irony. I have considered some of my paintings before, by their reliance on context and viewers knowledge as memes; through the act of sanding a painting back, I had confirmed it to myself. I sanded some more paintings back, making sure I treated them in the same way that I would a surfboard. Visually, these new paintings worked. They had not returned back to being canvasses, they were paintings in their own right.





20 August 2018

After returning from a holiday with my family, I began to empty my studio. I threw away old paintings from previous years. I donated surplus equipment to other artists. Although I had not used the studio as much as I wanted to, it had become a place of storage.

27 August 2018

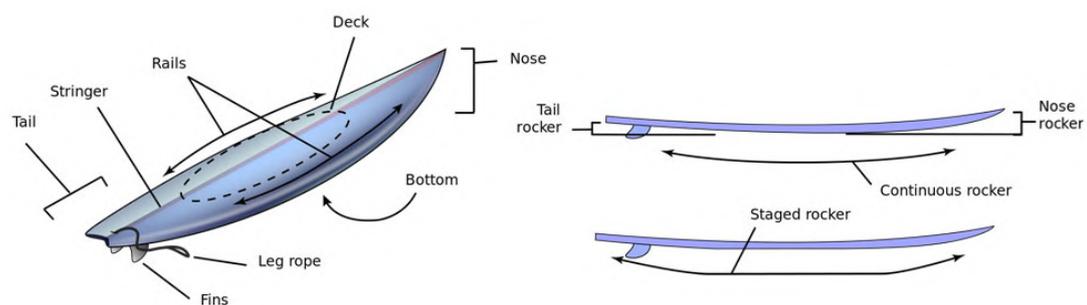
I handed back the keys of the workshop.

Chapter 2

Method: How I make a surfboard

Initially, I think about the end product, unlike my painting practice, the finished product is well imagined in its detail. Strong surfboard design needs to consider many elements, not just aesthetic. The design of the board needs to consider the rider. Their height, weight, ability and also the waves they wish to ride as well as the way in which they wish to ride them. Secondly, the rider's taste of what they want to ride. Surfboards come in all shapes and sizes. But they are different for many reasons. The way they perform, the style of riding, their volume displacement, (how buoyant they are)

- Surfboard shapes
- CAD design



With any specialist subject, it comes with its own terms.

As an object, a surfboard is described by its parts:

Deck: is the top of the surfboard, the surface that is to be laid or stood on. It is waxed to provide grip for the surfer's feet.

Bottom: Self-explanatory, the part you don't stand on.

Tail: is the rear of the board, behind the back foot.

Nose: is the front of the board. Not always tapered forward to a point.

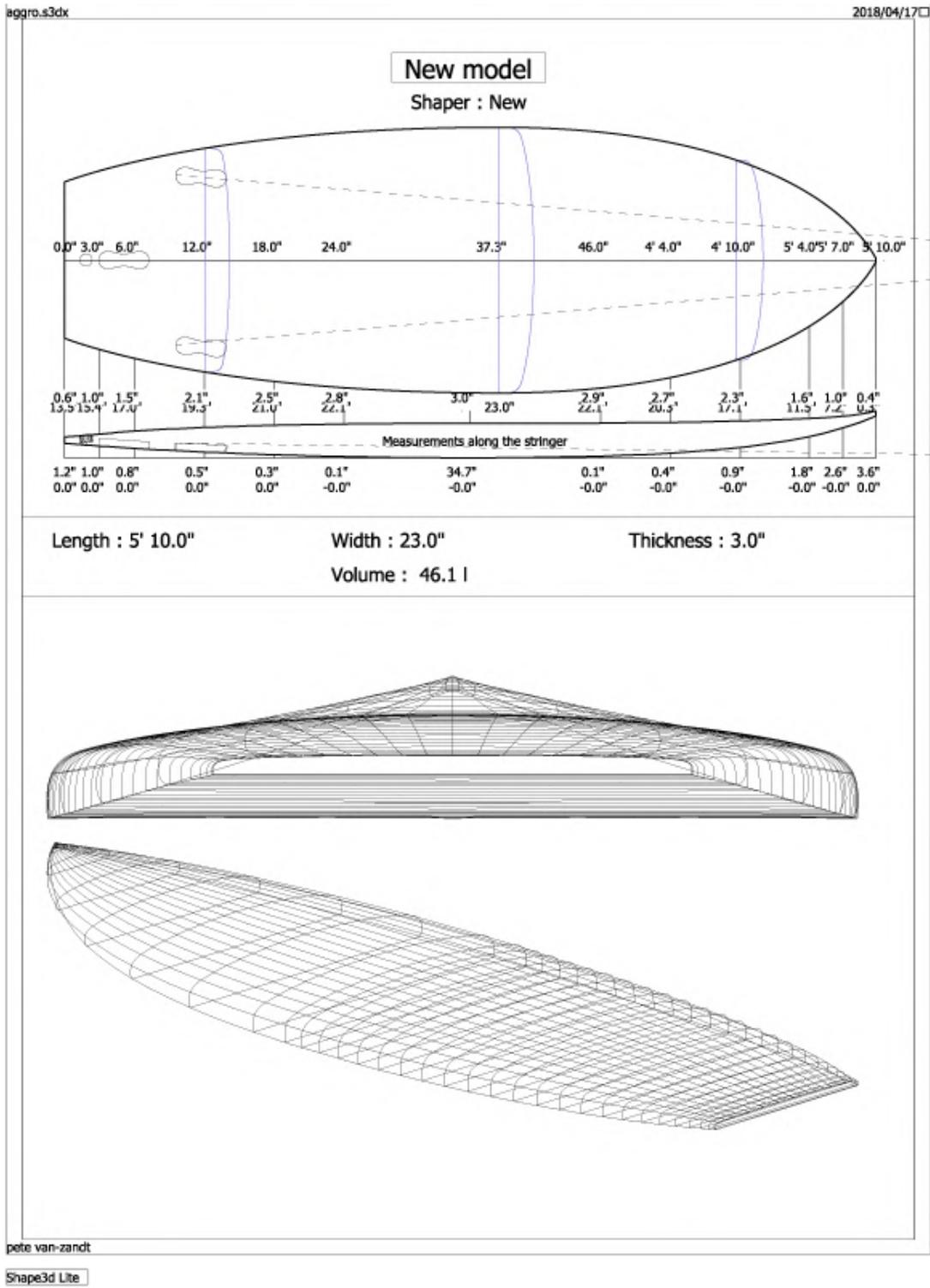
Rails: are the sides of the board.

Stringer: is the strip of wood running through the centre of the board, it keeps the measurements symmetrical, and acts as a spine, keeping strength and preventing longitudinal flex in the board. Not all boards have stringers as I will explain in the case study of Pro-Foam, a UK blank manufacturer.

Rocker: is the arc of the nose and tail from the level lowest point of the board.

Fins: Fins are a key part to the board. Some boards have one, and others have room for 5, enabling to switch between 3 (thruster) and 4 (quad setup) sometimes, quads can be ridden with a fifth reduced size centre fin, called a nub. 2 fins are called a twin, which can also be ridden with a centre, reduced size fin, called a trailer.

Leg rope: or leash. Surfboards today have a plug in the tail, which a leash can be attached, keeping the board attached to the surfer's leg.



I construct a board first in a CAD (computer aided design) program called Shape 3dx. It gives a 3d rendering of what the board is expected to look like, and calculates its dimensions into volume displacement. This is how much water it will displace when submerged in litres. This equates to how much

weight will sink this board. For a shortboard, anything from $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of weight needs to be displaced. In longboards, anything from 90% to 130% of bodyweight is to be displaced. And so in this case, a longboard is often be able to float its rider while stationary.

Once I have these measurements, I print off a dimensions sheet (pictured above).

This gives me the information I need to be able to cut the outline of the surfboard from the blank, and gives me an understanding of the rail profile and rocker of the nose and tail.

First I mark the length of the board in the blank. I do all of this on the bottom of the board, as usually it is a flatter surface. It is at this point to mention that some shapers skim their blank. This means, that they use an electric planer to remove the hardened crust from the blank to create a smooth flat surface with which to mark points on the blank. I source my blanks from Pro-Foam, which have a more unified consistency in the blank and so there is 1) less crust on the surface of the blank and 2) it is usually already a pretty good surface to mark out the blank.

For more nose rocker in a board, move the total length toward the nose of the blank, to use its natural arc for aid. For less nose rocker, move the total length of the board toward the tail of the blank to suit. Mark a line for the nose and tail perpendicular to the blank and saw to length. This can be done with a regular handsaw.

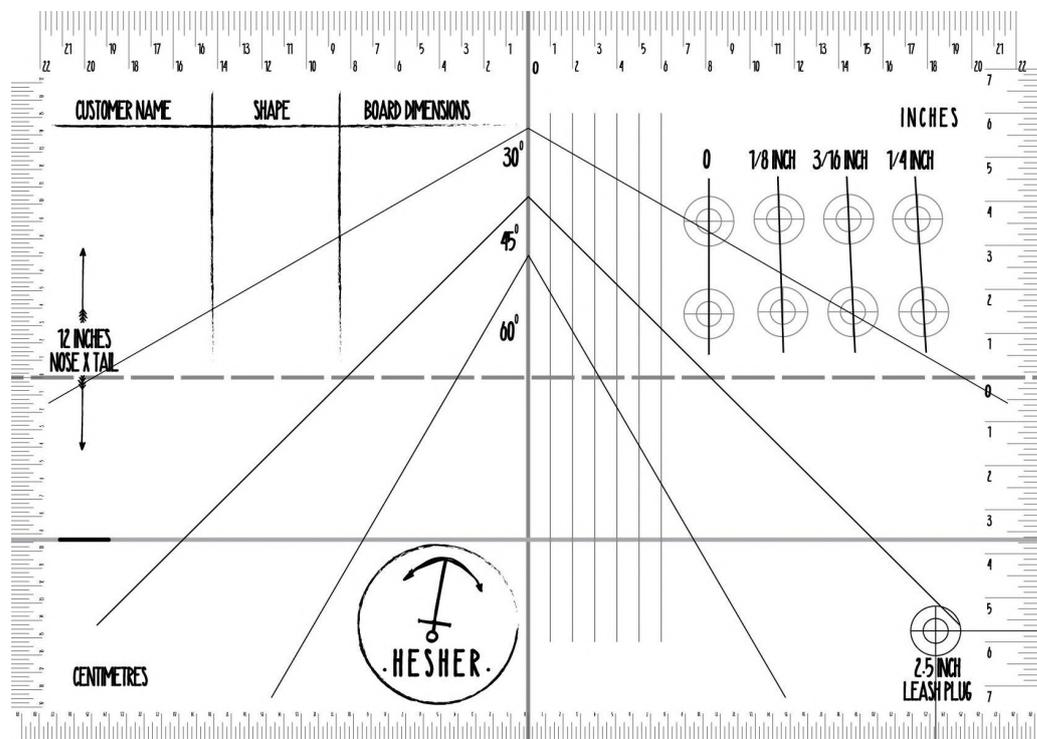
The diagram marks the width of the board in increments from the nose and tail.

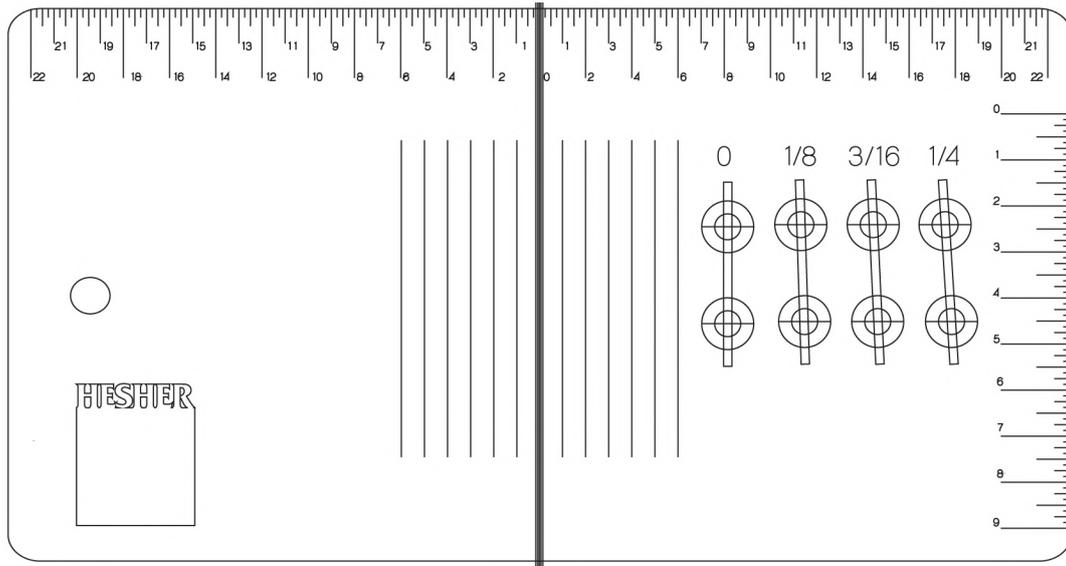
It marks at 0, 3, 6, 12, 18 and 24 inches from both the nose and tail and gives the location of the widest point of the surfboard, measured from the tail.

To keep the measurements symmetrical, I have made a tool to do just this. It is made from clear polycarbon, and has measurements etched in by laser cutter at half-inch increments. The reason for this is that as it measures out

from the edge it is doubled to meet the correct size. These are available commercially, but I was able to design and manufacture my own for less than half of what they are selling at.

Below is the original one that I had printed. Since then, I have reduced the height, cleaned up and simplified many of the lines, to give the laser cutter less of a cut path, which increases its efficiency, giving each shaper's square an more efficient cut time, and therefore reducing cost. I have removed the metric measurements also, as Surfboards are still mainly measure in imperial feet and inches.





Once the points on the board are marked, then the dots need to be joined up. I do this in single freehand curves, to the 24 inch marks on either side, and then join the nose and tail curves through the wide point marker.

At this point, I have a blank with the top and bottom cut square to size and then an outline drawn on. Next is cutting the outline. I do this with a pull saw, as it helps with flex to pull it round. You need to make sure that the saw is cutting perpendicular to the bottom of the board.

Then, square the rail. Flip the surfboard onto its edge and sand, or surform the rail square. Depending on how closely I have followed the drawn line, I may need to clean up the outline with an electric planer, and then continue to clean up with the surform and then sandpaper with a flat block in long straight strokes, following the outline of the board. Some shapers use sandpaper in a right-angled block to make sure that the rail is perpendicular to the deck. The more accurate this is, the easier it is later on to roll the rails in.

At this point, I will have an accurate profile outline of what my intended shape will look like. This is not counting if it is a fish shape, which has an incut swallow tail. This is usually done once the board is fully shaped, as then there will be less foam to remove, as it can be quite tricky.

Using an electric planer on the bottom of the board, I flatten out the bottom as much as possible, removing some of the overall thickness. I then sand any high points or grooves between the planer lines flat.

The best way to check accuracy of the surfboard is by eye. Heading to the nose and the tail of the board, I lift it to follow the 'horizon' down the length of the board, noting any high or low points and checking the flow of the outline round each rail as I raise and lower the board.

Once the base of the board is flat, I mark the nose rocker on the tip of the nose and on the base of the board, where I want the rocker to start. This helps show how much material I need to take away from the blank to get the desired upward curve in the nose. I remove this material with the planer or a surfm. I do the same with the tail, although the tail rocker is a lot less than the nose rocker and may not need doing, as it may follow the natural curvature of the blank.

The thickness of the board is shaped by removing foam from the deck (top) after the rocker is shaped into the bottom. Using a planer, starting from the tail of the board, remove foam in passes from tail to nose. The planer usually 'beaches' itself as it meets the upward curvature of the nose and will need shaping by hand. The upward rocker of the nose does not allow the planer to get an even depth of cut.

At this point the board's outline, thickness and nose and tail rocker are all shaped. At this point, I usually do a 'clean up'. By this I mean, I go over the whole board, working up through the grits of sandpaper, until the board is smooth. After this, I put in any contours in the bottom of the board. Some boards have channels and contours to direct and control the flow of water underneath.

Right now, the board has a hard outline. I proceed to shape out the rails. I get a pencil and draw a line along the flat rail to mark out where I want the deck of the board to meet the bottom. This is depending again on the type of

board I am shaping or style in which the board will be surfed. 50/50 is a common rail outline, sometimes tapering down to a 60/40 toward the tail for a sharper edge, giving hold and direction.

Round

Works well in small & sloppy waves



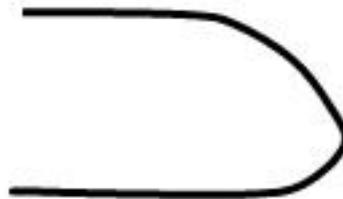
Mid 50/50

Generally for all conditions



Rolled 60/40

For cleaner steeper waves



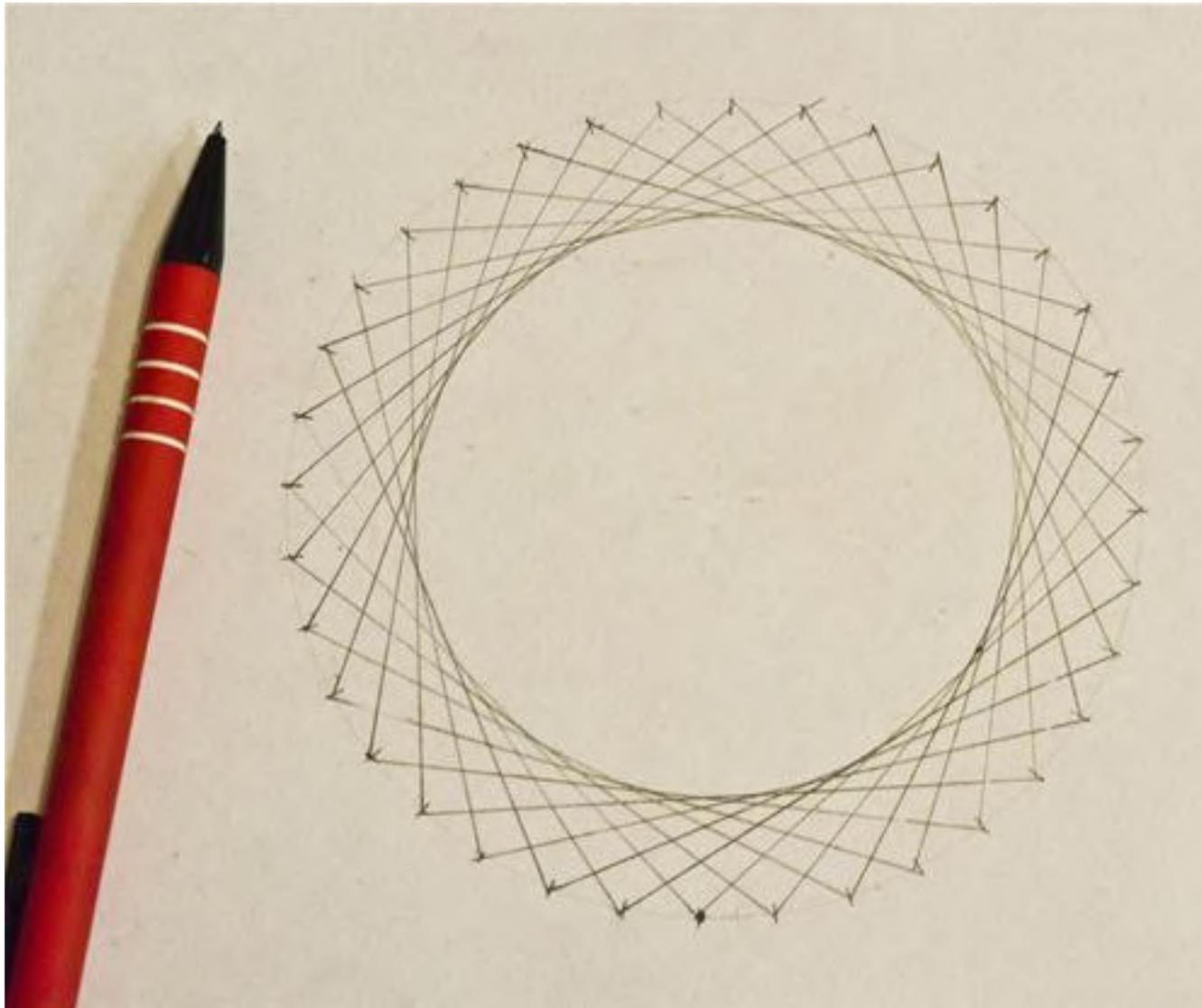
Low / Hard

For big waves



I trace the outline of the board with a pencil at inward intervals in the deck and bottom of the board. These lines act as guides as I go over with the planer. I don't know about other shapers, but coming from a maths teacher background, I like to think of shaping the rails as geometry. That the curvature of the rail can be made up of tangents, which remove foam in passes by the planer along the whole rail of the board. I firstly make a pass of a shallow angle and then steeper and steeper until the deck of the board rolls

down to meet the middle. The same is done on the other side and then the board flipped and the same principle applied the to bottom to meet the roll of the deck. At this moment the rails of the board are a series of bevels. I turn the board onto its side in the stands and with shapers screen and then sandpaper; I make long passes to blend the hard edges into a smooth rail.



The nose and tail is something that I finish by hand, I extend the rail bevels and finish through to the tips. I do this by hand because how thin they are and if I am planning them, I run the risk of taking too much foam off. I give the board a final sand, working up through the grits. The smoother the foam, the less resin it will absorb when fibreglassing, making the board lighter.

I take the board off the rack and hold it, running my hands along both rails and then flipping it and doing the same, I do this to check the rail's thickness with both hands. Handling a board allows you to make considerations between boards that you currently surf, and measure the board against your physical dimensions. Surfing is an activity where the relationship between rider and board is of great import. I find that while shaping a board that I know will be for myself, I am constantly making decisions and considerations of how the board will respond, float, behave and how it will push or test my ability. It is a combination of truth enforced by bias, that the boards I have shaped myself surf better than others.

I enjoy shaping boards; I can take my time with them. Sometimes I need to mentally prepare myself for shaping the rails and I leave it until the following day, so I can approach with a fresh outlook, as rails are difficult, but offer up satisfaction when you take the board in your hand and know that you've done them right. It reinforces and bolsters your confidence in your ability as a surfboard shaper.

Glassing the board is another step-by-step methodological process, which has many variables to take into consideration. I find this more difficult, but after committing myself to glass a board and start prepping, I understand that as long as I stick to what I know, then most of the building up glassing as a daunting task was in my head.

Before glassing a board, I install the fin boxes.

Due to the brand of fins that I use, Futures, installation of the fin boxes takes place before glassing the board. Also I route out the leash plug. I use the Shapers Square to mark out where the boxes will go. For cutting the holes for the boxes, I use a special jig and bit in the router specifically compatible with the fin boxes. I glue in both the fin boxes and the leash plug with resin. I use polyurethane resin, as it is consistent with the polyurethane blank. I put dummy fins in the boxes and tape them down so that the fin box doesn't float

up in the glue, and so that the fins are square. Once they are glued in and have set, then I tape over the holes in the plugs so that I can glass over them. When sanding the board, the raised plugs are then exposed and can be sanded flat.

First to be glassed is the bottom of the board. Once the fin boxes are set and taped, I lay over fiberglass cloth. For the bottom of the board, as there is less pressure directly applied to the board, the bottom can be glassed thinner than the deck. I use 1 layer of 4 oz. cloth. Depending on the way that I am glassing, I may tape off the deck so that as the glass laps around I can cut it off. Making a neat line on the deck side around the board. This is known as a cut lap. Where it is not taped off but the glass is fully saturated and sticks to the deck as it laps is called a free lap. I lay the cloth on the board and cut around the board leaving roughly 2 inches extra of cloth, so that it can wrap around the rails. Once this is done, I follow round the outline of the board, making perpendicular cuts into the edge of the 2 inch excess so that when wet, the cloth will drape round the contours of the board.

I roll back the cloth to allow for any decals that I will be applying to the board. Decals, logos and inlays are sandwiched between the cloth and the board. They are applied with resin, and then once in place the cloth is rolled back down while the resin is wet and then the rest of the resin is poured onto the whole board. It is spread lightly round the board with a squeegee. The resin needs to saturate into the cloth, so that it is fully wet before the squeegee is used again to pull any excess resin to the edges of the board and wet the laps.

Once the whole board is saturated, and the laps are wet, with the squeegee, roll the extended cloth round to make contact and stick to the other side of the board.

By this time, the resin will have started to 'kick' – meaning the reaction between the resin and the catalyst will have started and will become difficult to manipulate. Hopefully, by this time, all excess resin will have been squeegeed off the board.

Leave the board to cure fully, this can take between hours and days depending on the mix of resin to catalyst hardener. The temperature and access to direct sunlight also speed up curing times.

Once the bottom has set, the laps need to be sanded flat, so that any overlapping glass is flush with the board. Also, I sand the rails, making sure it is smooth, making glassing the deck easier.

The deck takes 2 layers of fiberglass, saturated in resin. The type of board determines the weight of the cloth. This is known as a glassing schedule. Regularly, I will use 1 layer of 6oz glass with 1 layer of 4oz on top. The thicker glass goes against the deck, with the lighter glass on top. This is so that the tighter weave which is smoother can go on top, making a hot coat of resin go on easier and smoother.

The bottom layer is cut close to the outline of the board, and the top layer left longer like before, as this laps round from the deck to the bottom of the board when wet.

The board is then wet and glassed in the same process as before, bearing in mind that more resin will be needed, as it need to saturate 2 layers of glass.

This is then left to cure and harden fully.

Once hardened, the board is sanded smooth. Any hanging laps will have hardened and need sanding flat, cleaning up the overall board, the rails will need sanding too for any overlaps. The board is ready for hot coating. This is a mixture of resin and catalyst, but with an additional styrene added, which creates a film and adjusts the consistency if the hardened mix, making it easier to sand. This is applied to the deck of the board first. Masking tape is applied round the outline of the board, halfway down the rail to let any drops drop directly down. The hot coat mix is applied with a brush and spread evenly over the hole board and then left to cure. Due to the styrene, the mix is not as pliable and, so needs spreading and then leaving, as it sets quickly.

Once set, the tape is removed and the board flipped and masking tape applied. The tape is applied so there is a small overlap between the hot coats, creating a full seal of the whole board. The board is coated again and left to cure.

The whole board now needs sanding. Working through the grits, using a rotary and then oscillating sander, I make passes up the board, making sure the to not focus on any one area, but bringing the thickness down evenly until it is flat and smooth. I only sand the rails lightly with the power sander, as have sanded through the hotcoat and glass before. If this happens, then a repair job of glassing and hot coat need to be applied before continuing. I sand the rails, tail and nose by hand, to avoid any unwanted additional removal of material.

In the sanding process, the resin and tape over fin boxes and leash plug are sanded off and the plugs exposed. The plugs are raised slightly and so need to be sanded so they are flush with the rest of the board.

If too much of the hot coat I had removed, or there is too much variation between the high and low points of the sanded surface, then the board will need another hot coat and then sanding again.

Once the board is sanded smooth, it can continue to be sanded, working up the grits through to wet and dry sanding and finally a polish. If this is not desired, then the accepted grit to finish at is 120 or 240. The board then needs to be sealed. This can be done by preparing a gloss coat, applied by brush in the same way as a hot coat, or sprayed with lacquer. Even though the board is coated, the lacquer seals, as there is a possibility of it still being porous. The lacquer or hot coat can then be sanded smooth as desired.

CONCLUSION

As I have moved between painting and image making to shaping surfboards; I began to explore the duality of self as an artist. I have at times found my identity fractured and having to pick up the pieces. I have found difficulty in explaining to others what I do. As I had two main areas of focus, I struggled to pin my identity on one. Eventually, throughout the course of the year, I reduced it down.

I would introduce myself to new people “ Hello. My name is Pete. I’m an artist and I build surfboards” – From this statement, people would then chose their area of focus. The conversation would focus on either surfboards or painting, according to their questions.

I found this interesting. Often people whom I wouldn’t expect would ask about the surfboards, and a lot of surfers or surfboard shapers that I spoke to would ask about art. Whether it was an element in safety in discussing a subject that was not primary to them I do not know. I have always put a lot of thought into how people view my paintings and sometimes have proactively responded in image form. This makes me question who I am making art for. This year, in contrast to previous, I have made the art to primarily push and question myself and the surfboards have been for the viewer/customer.

My Eyebleach paintings were exactly this. I began them with the viewer in mind. How I could manipulate the gaze and disrupt. Throughout the time of painting, which took a few months, they shifted. I began to use the method to push myself and to see how far my creative stamina could take me.

I set out to make the EyeBleach paintings as content to populate a zine. They are the visual product of the studio diary.

I had some imagery that I had used to fill 3 issues and so the movie poster EyeBleach paintings would continue to populate issues 4 onwards.

The top definition on UrbanDictionary.com describes eye bleach as “Looking or experiencing something nice after witnessing something horrid like a disgusting gif or a disturbing video. Typically used as eye bleach are nice images of whatever makes the disturbed person happy.” – another definition describes eye bleach as “Fictitious product mentioned when one views a horrible image online.”

Examples of eye bleach are given as kittens or flowers, the cure for looking at something classed as horrid.

I have created EyeBleach. The imagery is not of bunnies, but instead of saturated, vivid gestural work. In a world of accessible imagery and content designed specifically with viewing in mind I have strived to create something that challenges viewership. I attempt to provide an antithesis in hand held zine form to ward against the barrage of pictures passing the eye every day. It is a cure all.

Have you been staring at spreadsheets on a computer for 8 hours a day in an office environment? EyeBleach.

Bingewatched a season of a television show? EyeBleach

Going camping and have no reception to view your mobile device? Take EyeBleach with you.

Been looking at too many images of kittens, puppies and flowers? Definitely EyeBleach.

The similarities between each picture prompt the viewer to think about what they are viewing on a secondary level. Focussing on differences, similarities, looking to identify the canvas source. Eventually the question of why. Why are they viewing an A5 magazine of such images. What imagery has passed their eye for the viewer to relenquish ocular control to the pictures in this zine.

The volume of EyeBleach was to test myself. Is there a point where the method exceeds the result. I was having a testing time at that point. I was suffering the frustrations of not being able to use the studio for its intended purpose and having to scramble to resolve that problem. I was frustrated in trying to create other paintings and was having a difficult time in my home life. Being able to follow the method of creating EyeBleach gave me a controlled parameter to create. It became painting by numbers. I wanted to see if, as I was close to breaking point in other parts of life and practice, whether there was a breaking point for EyeBleach. If each image, painted so freely and relatively quickly, would begin to dissolve and start to no longer mean anything. As my desire was to push the viewer to exhaustion, then I too needed to be pushed in their creation.

Closing the studio was hard. I knew I was to have it for the duration of my research time, but I feel as though I have unfinished business with it. One of the reasons being that I could not use it for its full potential. It was cold in the winter and difficult to work in. I was not able to use fibreglass and resin in there. In closing down the studio, I have received offers to work in an art capacity at a design studio elsewhere in West Yorkshire. I have also received invitations to guest shape surfboards with other shapers around the UK at their premises. In manufacturing surfboards under the name of HESHER, they are not prescribed to a set geographical location. They can be made anywhere, and possibly by anybody. The studio is reduced to branding. HESHER surfboards are recognisable by logo, by their DIY aesthetic and by their physical shape. Creating a series of paintings and releasing them as EyeBleach too could be done anywhere. There is a relationship between studio and authorship. Work needs a place to be created even if it is a virtual space such as the example of online publishing or creating surfboards in CAD.

“The amount of research undertaken in the studio makes no claims to the studio as a primary site for the production of the meaning

of its output. If artists and designers continue to insist on requiring a studio—and in some cases highlighting its role in their practice—then shouldn't the way each of them mobilizes it be a crucial component of any analysis of their practice? The place and means by which a work is generated—which, on occasion, has a hand in shaping its reception—must be accounted for”

– Coles, Alex (2012) *The Transdisciplinary Studio*. Sternberg Press, Berlin. ISBN 9781934105962

My studios were:

Brain

Macbook

Unit 28 – Physical Studio – NOTE: This was physically split in 2 , for making surfboards and making paintings.

Shed

Lounge

Bedroom

Beachfront – Zarautz, Spain

The North Sea

Atlantic Ocean

Irish Sea

And more.

My outputs are combinations of these places. Some are linear processes and some are blends of practices originating from these studios. The sanded paintings are these. I had paintings that visually I was satisfied with. They crossed the realm of the painting studio into the surfboard shaping bay and were treated accordingly. This blended practice is indicative of Coles blended, transdisciplinary practice model.

