

Lines That Define



Mel Dare & Olga Cironis

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17 June - 3 July 2016

Paper Mountain ARI, Perth

Cover:

Left: **Mel Dare** *Thread 3*, 2015. Acrylic paint and ink on Belgium linen.

Right: **Olga Cironis** *Penelope*, 2016. Concrete.

How long is a line?

Ric Spencer

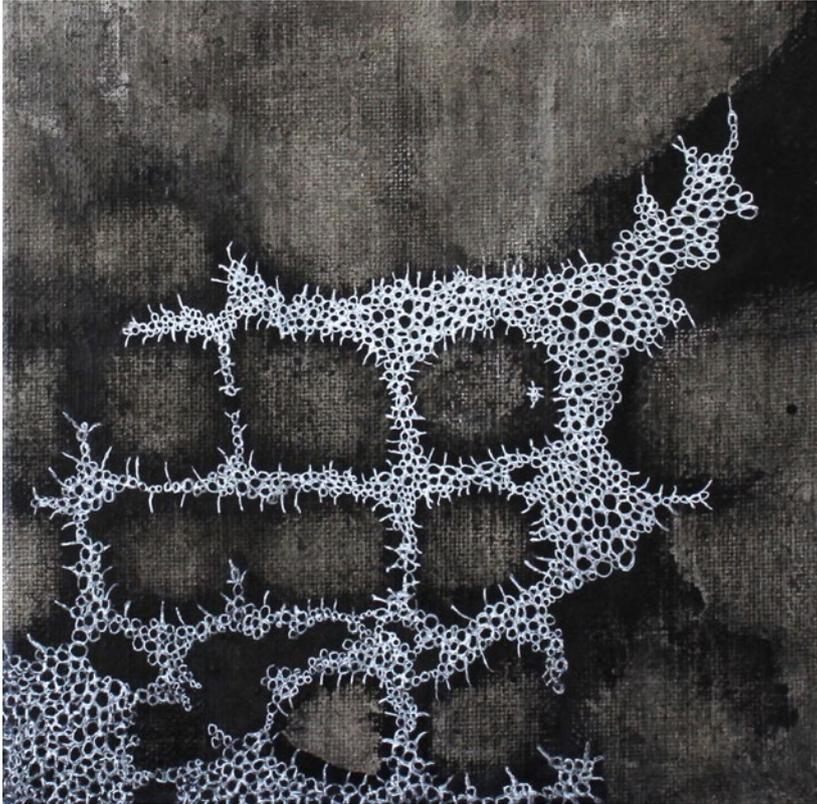
A piece of string is twice as long as it is from one end to the middle – the equation reads as such: $2 (L/2)$ where L = length. Theoretically then a line is also twice as long as its half, a string being a physical manifestation of a line.

A life then, as another manifestation of a line between two marked points, is also twice as long as its half - but things start to get more complicated when we try to locate points along that line called life and then try to measure between these. This will to negotiate backwards through various points of our lives is something we define as memory – a skill which at once isolates, congeals and elucidates on these points, thereby measuring not through length but through experience. Experiences are a measure of any life, experiences create memories and memories build lives, build families, societies and cultures; memories are stories told from which others gain insight into our lives.

From these stories values, ethics, law and principles of reason are born. When I look at Olga and Mel's work I am reminded that experiences and their measure through memory are not universal but rather shift and shape through context. The stories they tell in their work respond to their own lives, and all that comes from this in terms of identity, displacement and belonging. The shifting, lucid nature of their use of material to me offers a reliable reflection on the unreliability of memory as a collective measure.



Olga Cironis *Crazy desires*, 2016.
Mixed media.



Mel Dare *Thread 1*, 2016.
Acrylic paint and ink on Belgium linen.



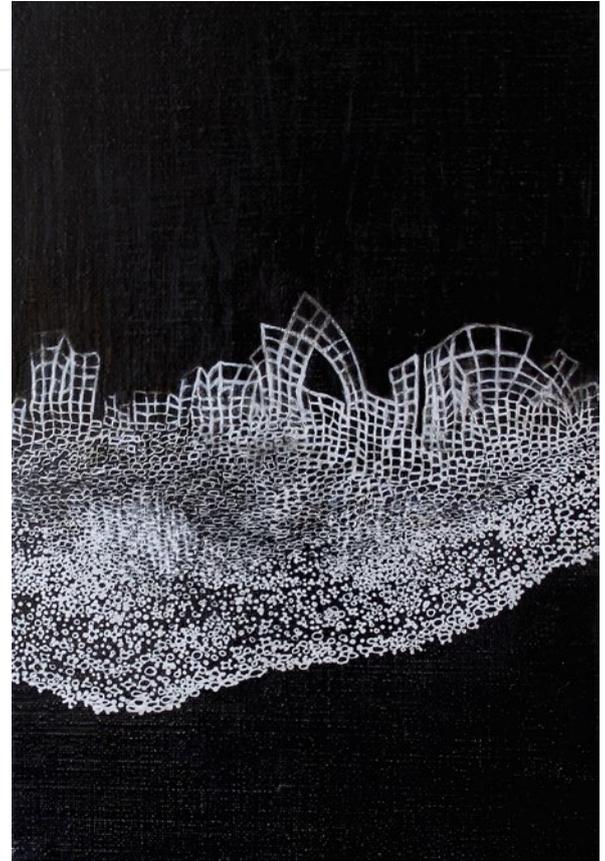
Olga Cironis *Falling from grace*, 2016.
Mixed media.

If memories (personal and cultural) create identity they also over time become less and less linear and more and more wave like, washing over our lives and descending into haze. I was reading, almost as a reflection of this, that the universe of space-time that we all live in is created in gravitational waves. Last year scientists at the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO), who had been looking for it for forty years, measured a gravitational wave that washed over the earth at the speed of light. The wave of gravity was created by two black holes colliding, two individual entities whose existence intersected to create matter, energy and ultimately us. Gravity is the curvature of space and time, gravitational waves are imprinted with information about their source—our source—the source which creates the space time fabric. I recently read a column in *The Straits Times* (Singapore) by Justin Ker which I think puts the relationship between this wave, us and memory beautifully: "The gravitational wave made all the masses on earth ... (it is) perhaps an astrophysical form of memory, carrying information about the history

of its formation, as it ripples across the universe. The gravitational waves prove that Einstein was right, and we live in a fabric known as space-time that is malleable and unreliable, like walking in a mist where the faces of wives, lovers and children fade in and out. The solidity of our existence, and the forward arrow of time that we experience, are false."

In light of Ker's article it's interesting to think about the complications of identity in a PGW (Post Gravitational Wave) world. Again when I look at Olga and Mel's work, together, not only am I reminded of the collision and collaboration of two entities but also of the fractious nature of identity over time, particularly in terms of the subjective nature of experience, and again particularly as it relates to memory. The sandblasted, reacquainted nature of Olga's sculpture and the floating spatial linear forms of Mel's paintings for me list toward understanding ourselves not in terms of social media, facebook, family or even world history - but rather how we might exist in a constantly shifting universe with non-linear memory.

If the gravitational wave moves reality as it moves across us, leaving behind a material memory somehow disjointed, then likewise Mel and Olga's work leaves a wake of fluid identity, their works shift as waves of new materialism wash over them. If in effect we are living in a dream then things like creation and recreation become cyclical as a constant renewal, and I think this is beautifully approached in *Lines That Define*. Olga and Mel's work is embedded with the tension of erasure and rebuilding, where memory becomes pivotal to understanding identity in a constantly shifting physical and material existence. It seems to me in a PGW world that memory begins to mean more to us than a pleasant daydream - rather we become attached to it because it gives us a sense of self and cultural longevity in the face of a wave that constantly reprograms the source and creates an ebb and flow of reality. Perhaps we always knew this wave was there and so we have over evolution embedded memory in our cells to withstand its presence. Cultural memory is memetic and we rely on its knowledge to pass on learning and to keep building lives. When we lose memory, when our stories disappear, we mourn as a species - the loss that gets us most is the loss of data.



Mel Dare *Thread 2*, 2016.
Acrylic paint and ink on Belgian linen.

In this sense how long is a line?

In *Lines That Define* the most important lines are the lines that connect, the ones we throw into cultural history, into time, when memory becomes an anchor. Olga and Mel's work reminds me that the lines that are long enough reach out over time and space to connect cultures, people and stories of place – they become the crucibles of memory and the measure of our existence.

Dr Ric Spencer is an artist and writer and currently Curator at Fremantle Arts Centre.

Justin Ker *The Memory Biopsy*, **The Straits Times**, Saturday May 28, 2016: Opinion, A49

On 11 February 2016, the LIGO and Virgo collaborations announced the first observation of a gravitational wave. The signal was named GW150914. It matched the predictions of general relativity for the inward spiral and merger of a pair of black holes and subsequent 'ringdown' of the resulting single black hole.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_observation_of_gravitational_waves

Olga Cironis is a highly respected multidisciplinary artist and lecturer. Since graduating in 1996 with Masters of Visual Arts at SCA/University of Sydney, Cironis has exhibited nationally and internationally with solo shows including Listening Under Water at Perth Centre for Photography 2014, Into the Woods Alone at Turner Galleries 2013, FAJR at Fremantle Art Centre 2011, and most recently, Listening Under Water at Thessaloniki Art Gallery, Greece 2015.

Informed by her migrant Greek/Czechoslovakian history as the place of experience and memory, Cironis explores social norms and notion of belonging within the Australian cultural landscape and cultural globalisation. Cironis upsets cultural norms, plays with social taboos and uses archetypal symbols while exploring materiality and different processes such as film, photography, sound, embroidery, weaving and stitching to develop her works. Known for her interactive installations and performances, Olga uncovers hidden histories while creating new narratives. Not dissimilar to an anthropologist, Olga focuses on vigorous research and interviews before concentrating on the making process.

Mel Dare is a visual artist who primarily paints and draws. She has been interested in many different but interrelating ideas including subjectivity, identity, psychology, sociology, biology, neurology, time and perspective. Recently, she has been preoccupied with personal narrative and its construction as part of her ongoing investigation into the relationship between meaning and context.

Dare has exhibited nationally and internationally. Since graduating with Honours BA (Arts) in 1999 she has produced eight solos and two duos and has been selected for numerous group exhibitions including the Bankwest Contemporary Art Prize 2015, Pure Contemplation without Knowledge 7 (2015), Painting as an Artform (2015), Mid West Art Prize 2015, Waterhouse Natural Science Art Prize 2014 and Sunshine Coast Art Prize 2D 2014. Her work has received 6 art awards and are part of many national and international public and private collections including St John of God, Princess Margaret Hospital and Old Swan Brewery.

She currently teaches drawing at Central Institute and has taught art in prisons, Curtin University, Applecross Gifted & Talented program and other institutions. Dare currently resides at Gotham Studios (Northbridge, Western Australia).

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Paper Mountain is on Noongar land.

