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Experiencing the creative process: narratives of visual artists.

by

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation submitted in completion of the degree Magister of Social Science at the University of the Free State is my own, original work and has not been submitted previously at another university, faculty or department.

I furthermore concede copyright of this dissertation to the University of the Free State.

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August 2017

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SUMMARY

Creative expression is a concept that is integral to the functioning of artists. The ability to think creatively enables artists to devise innovative solutions to the numerous problems that they encounter in the process of art-making. Through creative expression, artists are able to transcend personal, interpersonal and social boundaries to communicate messages through their artwork that can change the nature of social reality for the people who experience the art. How the artist experiences the process of art-making will in return have an influence on the nature of the artistic product that comes out at the end of the art-making process. In this study, I use phenomenology as a principal lens to study the lived experiences of visual artists in the creative process of art-making.

This study emerges from a narrative inquiry design, which is informed by the interpretive paradigm on which the study is embedded. In addition to using phenomenology as the main theoretical lens, I also made use of social constructivism, reflexive sociology, existential sociology and interpretive hermeneutics as subsidiary theoretical lenses to assist me in the process of acquiring understanding of the phenomenon under study. The phenomenon under investigation is approached according to a qualitative framework. This is because qualitative research orients people's experiences at the centre of understanding social life.

Fieldwork for this study took place over four months between June and September 2016 in Bloemfontein, the Free State Province. Non-probability and snowballing sampling were used to obtain the six male visual participants who composed the core research participant group of this study. The narratives of these individuals were elicited through the use of semi-structured interviews. In addition to this I made use of visual methodologies, namely, photo-elicitation, personal note-taking and documentation to accompany our discussions on their creative processes and artworks. Lastly, participant observation is a key research method that was used to arrive at an understanding of the unique experiences of each visual artist's creative process.

The data gathered is coded thematically and aspects of the dialogical approach are used to analyse it. The data is in line with the study's primary and secondary research objectives and is presented and discussed in accordance to a total social science framework as proposed by Pierre Bourdieu. The findings suggest that creative and artistic people are as much subject to the influence of external forces as any other human subject. The creative process itself is affected by external circumstances that on the surface seem to have nothing to do with it. However, it is evident upon deeper reflection that the process of art-making relies on

there being a balance between an artist's external conditions and what he/she experiences within his/her creative process.

The creative process of art-making for visual artists is one that mirrors their unique everyday experiences in social reality. The art that these artists create is a reflection of what they know, who they are, what they would like to become, their feelings and emotions, and the times and places in which they find themselves in the history of the world. This is the nature of social experience. There is always a subjective component to the experience that rests on objective circumstances for the verity of its existence. The creative process of art-making is a long process where an artist makes use of his/her lived-experiences in their totality; to create meaningful interpretations of social experience.

KEY TERMS

Art-making

Creativity

Creative process

Habitus

Lifeworld

Lived experience

Narrative Inquiry

Phenomenology

Social constructivist thinking

Visual art

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Chapter one: theoretical foundation

Introduction

The decision to approach my research from a qualitative standpoint stems from the fact that qualitative research offers the researcher rich opportunities for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals ascribe to social or human situations and problems (Creswell, 2014:4). As I am directing a narrative-based inquiry, the manner in which research is conducted within a qualitative research framework is suitable for this research project.

The qualitative research paradigm claims to describe people's lifeworld's from the inside out, namely from the worldview of those who participate in the research. By doing so, qualitative research seeks to contribute to a better understanding of social reality and to draw attention to processes, in particular patterns and structural features within society (Flick, von Kardoff and Steinke, 2004:3). With its insistence on precise and 'thick' descriptions, qualitative research goes beyond merely depicting reality—it provides unexpected sources of insight into people's lives and makes the unknown known and opens up new possibilities for self-recognition.

In its approach to phenomena under investigation, qualitative research is more open and as a result more involved than other research strategies that work with strictly standardised and therefore more objective methods (Flick, von Kardoff and Steinke, 2004:4). Qualitative research offers a rich perspective of a person's everyday life in that it probes deeper into processes of everyday life rather than just collecting normative or objective information about how an individual lives his/her life. The very openness in which it approaches individuals' subjective experiences and perceptions makes the qualitative research design the most appropriate for my research.

The theoretical essence of this chapter encompasses various concepts and ideas derived from different schools of sociological thought situated within the interpretive sociology framework. In this section I present a concise description of some of the relevant ideas and concepts and I indicate how they are put into use for the purposes of this project. In the forthcoming chapters the reader will again encounter various concepts from the theoretical schools of social constructivism, phenomenology, reflexive sociology, existential sociology and interpretive hermeneutics. The epistemological implications that these concepts have on the understanding of the creative process of art-making, more particularly the visual artists'

narratives of these processes of creation, will also be dealt with. This will allow for an extensive understanding of the theoretical paradigms integrated into this study.

1.1. Social construction of reality

Everyday life presents itself as a reality that is open to interpretation by social beings and is essentially the lifeworld that is subjectively meaningful to them. These meanings attached to the lifeworld form a coherent worldview for the people who these lived-experiences belong to (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:33). This perspective aims to acknowledge that the world of everyday life is not merely taken for granted by the ordinary people in society. It instead argues that people are often aware that their external world is made meaningful by their subjective thoughts and actions (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Alfred Schütz, considered the father of modern phenomenology, stated that: *“all our knowledge of the world, in common sense as well as in scientific thinking, involves constructs or sets of shared abstractions or generalised idealisations relevant to a particular level of thought organisation”* (Flick, von Kardoff and Steinke, 2004:89).

By making such an assertion, Alfred Schütz wants to show us how knowledge is socially constructed and distributed. In terms of this principle, knowledge-creation is in the hands of knowledge-creators such as artists, academics, or any other individual existing within our socially constructed reality. Knowledge-creators decide which information to select and they structure this information in a way that will be easily subsumed by fellow knowledge-creators (Flick, von Kardoff and Steinke 2004:89). Knowledge-creators such as artists and academics are in control of what kind of knowledge goes out into the social realm and how. As universal experts in what they do, they receive the official task of defining paramount social reality (Koppl, 2010:221).

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann expand Schütz's ideas. Their theory of the social construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1966) serves as one of the predominant theories in the interpretivist framework in that it explains how people construct their social reality. They argue that human consciousness must be seen as the apex of all social phenomena (Inglis and Thorpe, 2012:93), although their fundamental viewpoint is that reality is socially constructed and that the sociology of knowledge is tasked with analysing how this came about. Berger and Luckmann (1966) maintain that the prevailing social order is not biologically given or a product of any biological process in how people experience it. Rather, the nature of the social order, in terms of the consistency or inconsistency of its patterns and regularities, is a by-product of the structure of human consciousness. Berger and Luckmann's ideas on the social construction of reality bring us to the issue of creativity—the core concept in this dissertation.

It is important to recognise that creativity is a heterogeneous concept. This is owed to the fact that there are various meanings that are attached to creativity. The nature of creativity cannot just be confined strictly to the realms of art and science. A concept such as creativity is vast and therefore open to different ways of interpretation and practice (Glaveanu, 2012:347). The divergent interpretations of the creative process are seen in the narratives of this study's research participants who engage in the discourse about creativity. It is essentially a reflexive process of construction and reconstruction—very much similar to the hermeneutic cycle of hypothesis-revision-hypothesis-revision—where the person takes centre-stage in the appropriation and creation of external phenomena such as works of art. Instead of it being solely a process of reality imposing itself objectively on the individual (Mace, 1997:266-267), the artist in his/her creative process wields control over various aspects of the process and the life of the ensuing product.

The particular kind of creative activity that an individual participates in defines his/her perspective of what creativity is. In broader terms, creative thinking is similar no matter where you find it; the significant difference lies in how it is put into practice. How it is practised has to do, to a large extent, with how the artist understands himself/herself as a person and his/her role as an artist. This issue is further elaborated on in the literature and findings chapters of this study.

People in society have a mutual understanding of what creativity is—this understanding that is shared and nurtured is a result of the assumptions that people in social reality normally have. These assumptions are created intersubjectively by people who exist within a singular social reality which is made up of the shared experiences of its members. That implies that the everyday reality of an individual has to conform to that of other people in society for experience to be considered real. Berger and Luckmann call this assumption that people have “the natural attitude”. This is the subconscious assumption that there is an on-going connection between one individual's meanings and another person's meanings and this is how people make sense of things and each other in social reality (Koppl, 2010:221).

For meaning of social reality to be substantial there has to be some kind of social agreement between the parties involved (understanding). Then only can true meaning-making and the sharing of personal experiences with the collective occur (Glaveanu, 2012:347). This is a classic example of what social constructionists refer to as the negotiation of meaning. Meaning-making does not merely happen in a mechanical fashion. It is a complex and iterative process. In this dissertation, I would like to refer to the artist or knowledge-creator as making meaning inside his/her lifeworld and in his/her creative process. In reality there are agents in the social realm who consume this knowledge and interpret this information

whichever way they want to. These agents become involved—either consciously or subconsciously in a process of meaning-making. In this process of meaning construction, the artist becomes co-constructor of his/her subjective and objective lifeworld.

These meanings that people attach to social phenomena—whether it be subjective or objective—help them navigate their way in the social dimension or realm. This explains why an artist may derive inspiration from anger or jubilation. In addition, it also explains why an artist is able to create works of art that are tied ontologically to who he/she is as an expressive and impressionable human subject. People's identities are linked to the meanings that they give to the experiences that they encounter in their everyday lives. I am interested in how artists in their narratives of their creative processes attach different and sometimes similar kinds of meanings to facets of their creative processes and their lifeworld experiences.

Yoshihisa Kashima (2014:82) claims that meaning is information that has been humanised. What I understand from this is that people who construct meaning (e.g. the artist) utilise and ground information in such a way that people are able to engage with the information and create and also propagate cultural meaning and understandings. This is a complex, intersubjective and interpretive exercise. This process typically occurs between relations of people in the various modes of social interaction and experience. The artist as knowledge-creator engages in this operation on two levels. Firstly, the artist is a creative being. The artist has certain skills that he/she uses practically to render a subjective or objective variable, rich with meaning. A variable that subsequently becomes an object of cultural knowledge and consumption. This object of artistic expression is thus left open to be experienced and interpreted by human subjects. Secondly, the question arises as to how the artist conceptualises and speaks about the objective art-product. This conceptualisation and speaking are also manners of knowledge distribution and social construction in that he/she shapes how this particular artwork is seen and therefore understood. This discursive process helps people to externalise and act upon the meanings that have been created for them and gives birth to either artefact, or creative practise, or sometimes both (Galbin, 2014:88).

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966) state that society starts off as a human product and then gradually, through underlying processes of objectification, institutionalisation and internalisation, it transforms into a completely objective reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). For Berger and Luckmann, social reality does this not only exist in the sense of humans experiencing reality as it is an oppressive external force that they cannot resist. It does this also in the sense that the social is something that human beings 'internalise' (Overgaard and Zahavi, 2007:109). Human society, as emphasised by Berger and

Luckmann, must therefore be understood in terms of an on-going iteration of externalisation and internalisation (Overgaard and Zahavi, 2007:109). In this dissertation, I draw similarities between the emergence of human social experience and art-making. These are both processes of human and social experience and are a result of on-going iterations by the human subject/s. Berger and Luckmann imply that in order to have a comprehension of human sensibility the individual must acknowledge the influence outside forces have on the social being.

One factor that opens itself up to human externalisation and internalisation is language. When it comes to communication, any type of speech is a form of social construction (Galbin, 2014:83). The differentiation that we encounter on an empirical basis in our lifeworlds has “speech alone” as its support (Kotze cited in Coetzee and Rau, 2017:251). Art-making is an important form of human expression with its own unique language that communicates directly to the people it touches. Language plays a crucial role in how people construct their worldviews. This is because human expressivity is emotion-driven, and for this reason highly subjective. Language is a conveyer of human expression and can exert itself on people from the outside, altering the individual’s motives. This emerges most clearly in the observable products of human expressivity that are at the heart of the relations between people in our social world (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:49).

How human beings produce these abstractions is made visible and audible in the human products of signs and symbols. The use of signs is particularly distinct from other objectifications in that they perform the primary purpose of serving as a reservoir of subjective meanings (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:51). There are a variety of signs being utilised in the domain of social reality and they are organised in a number of systems. In this respect we find systems of gesticulatory signs, peculiarly patterned movements of the body, as well as signs that are composed of material artefacts (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:51). Signs and symbols are central to how an artist communicates meaning through his/her creative work. This is because signs and symbols allow the artist to overcome the constraints imposed upon him/her by time, space, and other numerous internal and external factors that confront him/her. Symbols are primarily part of humans’ social stock of knowledge and enable us to communicate our lived experiences (Dreher, 2003:141-143).

In the art world it is possible to find art forms that fall within each of the above-mentioned classifications of signs. For this study, the third classificatory system, namely that of material artefacts is focused upon. I do not endeavour to deconstruct the message that is being conveyed through this system of communication but rather highlight the characteristic processes that produce this system of subjective meanings.

Language, in its purest sense, is a symbolic system of vocal signs, and is the most important system of human communication (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:51). Furthermore, language and the ability that humans possess to communicate messages, is the essence through which we exist and perceive our external world (Shaw and DeForge, 2014:1572). Its foundations lay squarely on the innate capacity for human beings to express themselves vocally. The artist or creator formulates different kinds of concepts in his/her mind. He/she then decides on which system of signs they wish to use to communicate the meaning or essence of the creation that he/she has formulated or conceived. This is primarily how they get to decide on a medium of communication that then becomes the artist's signature vehicle of creative expression.

The material artefacts that are produced by artists are pregnant with meaning and value. I will not be able to comprehend the creative process that was embarked on in producing these artworks if I analyse the artwork as a solitary entity. As a result of this realisation, I know I cannot cast my analytical gaze exclusively on the artwork as the product of the knowledge-creator (artist). This decision is brought about by the recent turn in creativity research to move away from the art object and towards the study of the artist (Mace, 1997:266). This shift underlies the importance for me to engage the creators of the artworks in constructive conversation. An understanding of language is essential for any understanding of everyday life (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:52). Semiology plays a fundamental role in the process of knowledge creation. It not only allows people to interpret and represent the world, but it also plays a significant role in constructing it (Galbin, 2014:90). In a face-to-face situation, oral communication possesses an inherent quality of reciprocity where people can share intimate details about themselves both consciously and unconsciously. These intersubjective transfers of knowledge give rise to shared narratives of social reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:52). I will connect to this idea to expand on the limitations my study may well encounter.

1.2. Phenomenology

Phenomenology is a theoretical framework that studies truth. It examines the limitations of truth—those inescapable factors that keep things from ever being fully disclosed. The errors and vagueness that accompany certain evidence; and the sedimentation that makes it necessary for us to always remember the things we know (Sokolowski, 2000:185). Phenomenology seeks to demonstrate how a person's vast array of experiences constitute his/her lifeworld, and how precisely these multiple experiences are connected to one paramount reality which we call our everyday life (Dreher, 2003:142).

Phenomenology is a critical pioneer theoretical framework for the conceptualisation of reality. It attempts to unmask the meaningful context of which many of life's actions and interactions between human beings occur (Ferguson, 2006:17). I would be remiss to underestimate the resounding impact that phenomenological analysis has had on the understanding of lived experience in human societies since the inception of the paradigm. Due to phenomenological analysis, it has been possible for thinkers to study the subjectively and intersubjectively embedded in structures of social reality and human life.

The role of the human being has come into the foreground where the consensus among theorists of this school of thought is that the, *"everyday lifeworld is something that we have to modify by our actions or that modifies actions"* (Dreher, 2003:143). This means that the individual person (micro) has the agency to change the nature of his/her social reality but social reality (macro) can also change the behaviour of the individual. Phenomenology attempts to reconcile experience and consciousness in relation to the lived experiences of people. This happens in as far as the subjective dispositions of people are not merely understood as subjective but are juxtaposed with the intersubjective encounters one has in his/her lifeworld (Flores-Gonzalez, 2008:188).

Experts in the field of phenomenology have stated that what gives birth to the mind's fascination with the phenomenal is its insatiable preoccupation with the presence of things (Ferguson, 2006:17). This is the point of departure that is taken by phenomenologists to understand any conceptions formulated by human consciousness. Phenomenology seeks to understand and come to terms with how individuals understand the world which surrounds them (Inglis and Thorpe, 2012:89). In order to achieve this, phenomenological analysis has to familiarise itself with the inner workings of the consciousness of the subjects under investigation or scrutiny. The fixation that the mind has with the presence of things can be attributed to the wonder in which it treats subjective and objective phenomena. As Ferguson (2006:17) so aptly puts it: *"the phenomenal is astonishing; the astonishing is phenomenal"*. This is because the phenomenal has the capacity to manifest itself as outside (phenomena) and within (noumena) the person's mind.

Phenomenology has a marked interest in how people's perceptions and notions combine with their actions to create a formula for negotiating everyday life circumstances. This is what is called in sociological theory, practical consciousness. Practical consciousness is the ordinary, mundane context in which people operate (Inglis and Thorpe, 2012:89-92). It is this practical consciousness that lies at the root of all human interaction in ordinary social life. For this study, I narrow the phenomenological gaze to the intersubjective dynamics that occur between the artist and artwork which can also be seen as a dialogue between object

and person, and person and tools (Banfield and Burgess, 2013:68). Within this dynamic there is a lot of activity that takes place on the plane of practical consciousness. In talking about the creative process—which for the visual artists who participate in this activity is an entirely haptic activity—here is a relationship that the artist establishes with the material or equipment that he/she uses to create with. The artist develops an understanding with his/her tools which is seen in how he/she uses them. As the understanding deepens the artist grows in confidence and his/her work grows in depth. The artist will then show more skill and ability in the creation of his/her artworks.

Phenomenological reasoning was a notion that was used firstly by renowned thinkers such as Kant, Fichte and Hegel. It is Kant who suggested that as humans we do not simply and directly perceive objective reality (Inglis and Thorpe, 2012:88). According to him, humans were able to perceive the external world owing to the innate faculties of their minds that make it possible for them to structure the external world. Descartes, another thinker whose work heralded the advent of modern philosophy, made the reductionist claim that philosophical knowledge is nothing but having a secure grasp on experience itself (Ferguson, 2006:37).

The way in which these thinkers use the term phenomenology does not constitute a well-defined and comprehensive philosophical position. It was contrary to how it is perceived and understood in the present day (Ferguson, 2006:37-38). Edmund Husserl is a major contributor to this shift in phenomenological thinking. It was Husserl who laid the groundwork for phenomenology to be acknowledged as a form of scientific investigation. He had an interest in how the mind makes sense of the objects which surround it. Although Husserl revered the epistemological processes which were entrenched in empirical science. He still held the firm belief that science is an artificial world that is constructed only for the purposes of explanation (Bindeman, 1998:69-72). This view is in contrast to phenomenological analysis which is primarily concerned with the stream of consciousness that lies at the very centre of human conscious awareness. Creative thinking is underpinned by this stream of incessant ideas that are conflated by the artist into creative practice.

The man who is responsible for ushering phenomenology into the modern-day discourse is Alfred Schütz. Schütz, a student of Edmund Husserl, was inspired to a large degree by the interpretive sociology of Max Weber. Weber defines sociology as a science that endeavours to interpret social action and subjecting these actions to causal explanations (Eberle and Hitzler, 2004:67). Weber states that the social world is properly understood in terms of the concept of 'social action'. He wanted to discover the intended subjective meanings that actors associate with their actions. The intention of Weber's sociology of action

was to take shape from the basic account of action, social action, and interaction to much larger institutions and structures (Turner, 2000:11).

Alfred Schütz is of the belief that the way in which human beings experience the world is from frameworks of meaning that are triggered by instinctual sensibilities and independent reasoning (Overgaard and Zahavi, 2007:100). In his work Schütz is trying to fill the void between Max Weber's philosophy which is not entirely focused on questions of epistemology and Husserl's phenomenological sociology which is reflective of a genre of scientism. The most fertile point of contact between sociology and phenomenology was established with Alfred Schütz's arrival in America around the Second World War (Ferguson, 2006:5). Schütz is instrumental in introducing phenomenological thinking and methods into sociology. He was initially focused on the issue of intersubjectivity as he deduced it to be the unresolved difficulty in his predecessor's (Husserl) phenomenology. Schütz's phenomenology seeks to give us a means in the form of words to describe the peculiar and commonplace details and particularities of how specific people live their lives (Inglis and Thorpe, 2012:100-101). He wants to interpret the actions of individuals in the social world and the ways in which individuals give meaning to social phenomena.

1.2.1. Action and intentionality

Action is a spontaneous activity that is oriented towards the future (Schütz, 1972:57). What directs this action towards the future is the consciousness of the actor intending to commit the act. Consciousness as a state of mind is always directed towards objects. This is because intentionality is a functioning feature of consciousness (Rogers, 1983:23). Intentionality implies 'consciousness of objects' and 'objects of consciousness'. Action and consciousness involve intentionalities of lived experience which drive action towards the future (Schütz, 1972:57). The artist as a creator is impelled by known or sometimes unknown forces within him/her to create. These forces may be inspired by a ritual (conscious and repeated activity) that an artist favours so that he/she can get inspiration. These rituals are pre-meditated and when the artist practises them he/she is conscious of his/her actions therefore making his/her behaviour intentional. You also get forces that arise from deep within the artist's psyche and that give the artist inspiration. At the root of the actions of an artist, whether he/she is in the process of conceptualising or in the actual act of creation—is an intrinsic directedness stimulated by certain conscious mental events. These mental events are inseparable from the ontological nature of the artist (Farkas, 2008:273). For instance, many artists refer to their parents being artists themselves as to the reason why they took to art.

An intentional act is therefore one which anticipates the future. Prior to carrying out this act; we devise a mental picture of what we are going to do (Wagner, 1970:129). By devising a mental picture, the action is rendered conscious and therefore constituted as a conscious and intentional act. The difference between behaviour (unconscious action) and an act (conscious action) is the element of intention that is attached to it. The creative process of visual art-making is a process with a beginning and an end. It is essentially an activity that is carried out by an actor or actors, in most cases having a clear picture of what he/she would like to create. On other occasions, this activity is carried out spontaneously based on the creator being swept away by some kind of emotion or flight of ideas. Finding out what drives the action of creating will be paramount to me trying to understand what makes the process of creation meaningful to the creator. Hence that is why understanding the actions and the intentions of my participants will be important in guiding this study towards an interpretation of the creative process. This interpretation will include the artists' accounts about where inspiration in their respective creative processes may come from (cf. section 5.1.1. where I discuss the role of emotions and inspiration in the artist's creative process).

1.2.2. Experience

If experience is to be understood well from a phenomenological point of view it is important to explore its relationship to consciousness (Rogers, 1983:32). The starting point for such an inquiry into actual, immediately vivid experiences is the individual's stream of consciousness (Wagner, 1970:318). This is because an individual's stream of consciousness contains memory traces of other experiences. Experience, much in the same way as consciousness, is always of something (Rogers, 1983:33). This is because it is possible for a person to have an experience of an object and an object of experience—this happens particularly within an individual's lived experience. Lived experience occurs in the world, which is regarded as unquestionably real (Rogers, 1983:36).

Experience manifests itself objectively, in the real world, or subjectively, within the experience of the empirical subject. This means that experience, like consciousness, does not exhibit boundaries in terms of interiority and exteriority (Rogers, 1983:36). The individual experiences all phenomena in totality and leaves nothing behind as sensory stimuli as well as subjective processes impose themselves on the individual in equal measure. In phenomenology the individual subject's empirical reality commonly experiences his/her reality as being relatively conditioned by time, space, name and form. The same individual subject will experience the whole of potential reality and each of its constituents when in the act of creation (Kotze cited in Coetzee and Rau, 2017:251–252). In the creative process, the artist has a transcendental subjective

understanding of his/her experiences. This means that his/her experiences of the past, present and future coalesce into one experience during the creative process.

Lived experiences are fundamentally interpreted accounts of reality. That is why it will be so important to draw from the perspective of interpretive hermeneutics further on in this chapter (Rogers, 1983:38). Interpretive hermeneutics is a result of people directing a reflective gaze on their experiences (cf. section 1.5. in this section interpretive hermeneutics is discussed). By reflecting on their experiences, the actor gives the experience subjective meaning. How an experience is interpreted is facilitated to a large extent by the typifications which support these experiences. The way in which different people interpret the quality of a single experience varies profoundly.

The set of typifications that each person uses is the cause for the differentiation in terms of how people explain or interpret experiences differently (Rogers, 1983:39). In this study, I will put significant emphasis on the meanings that the research participants attribute to their experiences in the creative process. There are many subjective meanings that are given to the experiences that people have. Experiences also assist a person to compile a 'stock of experiences'. These 'stock of experiences' enable the person to define the situation within which he/she finds himself/herself. The person will then act according to the typifications which are suitable for the situation that he/she finds himself/herself in (Wagner, 1970:318).

1.2.3. The lifeworld and typifications

Lifeworld phenomenology was developed by Alfred Schütz on the basis of the ideas derived from Husserl which were then re-imported at a later stage to the USA by Thomas Luckmann. Lifeworld phenomenology is an important background theory of qualitative research (Eberle and Hitzler, 2004:67-68). The lifeworld is defined as encompassing all natural attitudes which present themselves in pre-scientific experience, and as they present themselves prior to their scientific interpretation in the modern sense of the word (Ferguson, 2006:31). Even the most abstract scientific speculations rely on the type of pre-scientific evidence that the lifeworld offers.

Lifeworld, in the Edmund Husserl sense, is the original domain, the undisputed foundation both of all types of everyday acting and thinking and of all scientific theorising and philosophizing (Eberle and Hitzler, 2004:67). In its most concrete manifestation, the lifeworld exists in its countless multiplicities as the only veracious reality of every individual person, or every ego. These variations or multiplicities are built on

general and absolute structures, the 'realm of immediate evidence'. This is because the lifeworld is a permanent source of meaning and evidence (Overgaard and Zahavi, 2007:102-103).

Alfred Schütz adopts these ideas of Husserl and proceeds to attempt to discover the broad but nonetheless essential features of the lifeworld. This he does with particular concentration on the social sciences as opposed to the natural sciences (Eberle and Hitzler, 2004:67). Schütz, relying on research conducted prior to him by Husserl, claims that the social world reveals itself in various intentional experiences. Schütz believes that social experience makes up the vast world that is constituted in a very complicated network of dimensions, relations, and stocks of knowledge (Schütz, 1972:xxiii).

Schütz distinguishes between the kinds of social realities that human consciousness is capable of experiencing. The first one is the social reality that people experience directly, and the reality that lies beyond the possibility of direct experience. In the directly experienced social reality, one encounters the conscious beings that make up his/her lifeworld (cf. section 2.1.2. for an elaboration on the role of consciousness in creative thinking). These experiences are made meaningful by the subjects that perform them and thus give them meaning (Overgaard and Zahavi, 2007:101). In order to understand these actions on a scientific analytical level it is necessary to examine the agents which cause these actions. Schütz not only analyses the lifeworld in terms of how it was reified by people's subjective consciousness; he also looks at how it is produced by the social actions of people. Schütz defines a social action as an action whose in-order-to motive contains some reference to another person's stream of consciousness (Schütz, 1972:xxiii). The actions that people produce in everyday life are made possible by the individual having typifications to work with (Inglis and Thorpe, 2012:88-89). This is because typifications are the very bases of all human thought and action. Typifications make up many dimensions—if not the entire sphere of an individual's lifeworld.

Human life can be reduced to the use of typifications in the practical consciousness of individuals. The practical things that an artist partakes in when consumed by the act of creation makes up his/her own set of embedded typifications. This results in all the other people who share this particular lifeworld, having typifications that will shape their thoughts and actions. By venturing into what constitutes the creative process of art-making I am making a conscious effort to understand an important aspect of the artist's lifeworld. I say this based on the knowledge that a style of painting is often likened to a worldview, a mode of thought or a metaphysical system (Schapiro, 1999:3). These are all things that characterise the framework of a person's lifeworld. Looking into the creative process entails participating in an

epistemological activity. I will be aligning myself with the sociological notion that our experiences rather than objective factual content are decisive in the way we define situations (Eberle and Hitzler, 2004:68). My presence in the field with the visual artists will render me susceptible to the biases that may arise from my subjective experiences of such phenomena that I will encounter.

The everyday world of each individual consists not only of brute facts but also of a plenitude of meanings. Therefore, engaging with artists whose works are representative of certain majestic or subtle themes will be no different. I will use the sociological method of lifeworld analysis to understand, in a reconstructive way, how the meanings that these artists attach to their creative processes arise and how they describe them in accordance with their lived experiences (Eberle and Hitzler, 2004:68-69).

1.2.4. Stock of knowledge and the natural attitude

According to Schütz, each of us experiences our social environment as structured in layers around ourselves. These layers are structured in such a manner that the empirical subject finds him/herself at the centre (Overgaard and Zahavi, 2007:101-102). These are the layers of temporality and spatiality and they begin with embodiment. Such layers are made possible by recalling what phenomenologists refer to as 'stock of knowledge', which are transmitted from one generation to another and are available to the individual in everyday life (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:56). An individual's stock of knowledge is a repository for his/her previously lived experience. As a result individuals are free to repeat or relive their lived experiences in free reproduction (Schütz, 1972:105-106).

Phenomenological investigations of consciousness develop from recognition of the living body as the primary phenomenon to be assessed in order to obtain a socio-historical understanding of the stocks of knowledge rooted in bodily experience. Embodiment is an important point of contact between the stock of knowledge that an individual possesses and his/her lifeworld. The primary source of this knowledge is our previous experience (pre-understanding)—experience transmitted to us by others or experience that we have had ourselves (Overgaard and Zahavi, 2007:103). An individual's stock of knowledge is moulded and evolves through the continuous amassing of experiences and the navigation of various situational events that take place throughout his/her life. Therefore it is genetically and functionally related to his/her biologically-determined situation (Kotze, 2013:16-17).

Artists mostly have a sense of the relevance of their work. This is because artists see their work as documenting history and also representing the sentiments of people in present-day society (Schapiro,

1999:237). Artists in their work are able to capture the *Zeitgeist* of the times in which they live. This requires the artist to have a pervading comprehension of his/her social reality and of the people in it. An individual's stock of knowledge consists of the lived experiences of his/her body, of his/her behaviour, of the course of his/her actions, and the artefacts that he/she has produced (Schütz, 1972:100). They create ways of understanding our environment that are generally so organic and familiar that we hardly reflect on them. With the support of his/her stock of knowledge an individual acquires knowledge of his/her situation and of its limits (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:56).

In this manner an individual's stock of knowledge becomes the primary means in which the subjective self tries to interact with his/her lifeworld and the objects, events and actors that exist within it (Kotze, 2013:16-17). Participation in the social stock of knowledge allows the designation of individuals in society and the handling of them in the appropriate manner (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:56). To interact successfully with the actors in one's lifeworld, requires one to have practical knowledge accumulated through experience and consisting of certain skills or recipes, or, most appropriately, typifications. The main purpose of reflecting on stocks of knowledge is to understand and master our routine or habitual situations (Kotze, 2013:17).

A person's social stock of knowledge helps him/her to understand his/her reality and organise it into categories of familiarity (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:57). It provides the individual with volumes of detailed information regarding the different spheres of everyday social life that the individual encounters. The knowledge that it provides varies according to what the individual already knows. It is not unusual for an individual to take the knowledge that he/she possesses in his/her stock of knowledge for granted (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:58). This is normal and would require an event that falls outside of the norm for an individual to question his/her knowledge stock. It is mainly because of his/her stock of knowledge that an individual's consciousness is so integrated with his/her social reality.

The natural attitude is the focus we have when we are consumed in our unique, world-directed stance. When we purposefully do things, encounter situations, facts and other kinds of experiences (Sokolowski, 2000:42). The natural attitude is thus the default perspective, the one we start from, the one we originally have. From the standpoint of his/her natural attitude, an individual understands the world by interpreting his/her own lived experiences of it. "*The natural attitude is the state of consciousness in which we accept the reality of everyday life as a given*" (Dreher, 2003:143). Schütz was of the belief that society and social action were both the precondition for, and the consequence of, the ever-renewed positing of the natural attitude itself (Ferguson, 2006:92). The key issue for Schütz was to understand how this persistent and

compelling belief (natural attitude) was constituted and generated, directly and unreflectively, through social action (Ferguson, 2006:92).

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann also point out that the knowledge that we encounter every day is in itself socially distributed. They are referring to how different kinds of knowledge can be possessed by different individuals (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:60). Although it may sound as if in this manner knowledge is easily transferable from one person to another, it should be noted that this process can easily take up highly complex and confusing pathways (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:60). Knowing how the available stock of knowledge is socially distributed is an important element in becoming familiar with the very same stock of knowledge (Berger and Luckmann, 1966).

Social interaction produces habits that begin to seem as if they had always existed (Overgaard and Zahavi, 2007:94). It is important to note that one's upbringing and the manner in which he/she is socialised into the world, from early childhood through to all the forthcoming stages of life. The knowledge which is imparted in these stages grows gradually in depth. This is also assisted by cultural and religious orientations which create habituation and institutionalisation, helping to further deepen the sedimentation. People who are born into a particular kind of family or cultural are made to endure a process of socialisation which in later life constitutes their stock of knowledge. It is a well-established fact that from the moment of birth, a human being's biological development is subjected to continuing socially determined interference (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:66). A human being's biological constitution is subjected to a variety of socio-cultural determinations. These socio-cultural determinations shape an individual's perspective and actions and his/her 'stock of knowledge'.

Alfred Schütz makes a vital point when he states that the use of typifications is not limited to the present lived experience of an individual. He claims that typifications can also be found in our apprehension of past experiences or in our memory of our predecessors. Furthermore, since typifications are interpretive schemes for the social world in general, they become part of our stock of knowledge about our world and our lived experiences (Schütz, 1972:185). This finding has weighty implications for the way in which members of a given group perceive and engage with their lifeworld. Once the relationship between individual and collective stocks of knowledge has been significantly understood, the analysis will be guided into questions like: what is the source of an artist's creativity; and why or how do they perform art; and how is the knowledge of their processes of creation shared with and among fellow artists and creators?

1.2.5. Intersubjectivity

A human being is born into a social world; he/she encounters his/her fellow men and women and takes their existence for granted (Schütz, 1972:98). It was Husserl's claim that a person can only be a world-experiencing entity insofar as he/she is a member of a community composed of other subjects. Husserl's standpoint suggests a vital phenomenological statement: that the experiences that a subject has are reliant upon the experiences and encounters with others (Overgaard and Zahavi, 2007:96). It is however critical not to downplay the role of the individual subject. To understand sociality it is important to get down to its most fundamental form and intersubjectivity lies at the very core. A concrete phenomenological perspective is dependent on understanding the dynamics of this relationship. Creativity is much like intersubjectivity, namely "the world-as-agreed-upon". Creativity and intersubjectivity are similar in that they are not physically locatable or physically measurable (Kotze, 2017:254). We can only get to know them through our subjective understandings of the meanings which they carry.

Intersubjective reality refers to the collective subjectivity, the 'pure' collective consciousness which is located in the body as the empirical interactive ego (Ferguson, 2006:21). The ego interprets its lived experiences, it gives meaning to them, and this meaning becomes intended meaning. Therefore within the individual self, within the consciousness of the human life, there exists an experiencing of the world (including other body-subjects), which according to the experiential sense, is an intersubjective world. It is there for everyone, and objectified by everyone. For Alfred Schütz, the inquiry into intersubjectivity—in particular how one subject relates experientially to another, and how a sense of community is established among a group of people—has a fundamental place in sociological theory (Overgaard and Zahavi, 2007:101-102).

Each human body-subject has his/her experiences—appearances and world-view. The experienced world exists over and above these subjective occurrences. Phenomenology asserts the experienced reality is a paramount reality that goes beyond the experiences of subjects and their world phenomena. For Aron Gurwitsch, the Latvian American phenomenologist—intersubjectivity as a given phenomenon is principally bound with the structure of 'context' or 'complex'. He says that intersubjectivity becomes less and less of a factor in the very constitution of contexts. This is because from a reflexive position—for example traditional philosophy—intersubjectivity cannot be treated as a phenomenon, especially not in the way it is involved in everyday life (Vaitkus, 2000:281).

With that being said, it only makes sense to speak of intersubjectivity, if the speaker is referring to a possibility of a plurality of subjects. Furthermore, intersubjectivity can therefore never presuppose nor be the foundation of individuality and the uniqueness of various subjects (Overgaard and Zahavi, 2007:103). This is because intersubjectivity points to the sharing of experiences and information with other members of a person's social reality. It is a concept that claims that the self cannot absolutely contrast itself with another self. A person's experience of his/her self is based upon his/her experience of another body like his/her own (Sokolowski, 2000:154). A typical intersubjective relationship begins with two selves that are bound in this nexus of intersubjective understanding that allows for the acceptance of the notion stated by Ferguson (2006:24-25) that "*not all my own modes of consciousness are modes of my self-consciousness*".

Maurice Merleau-Ponty criticises sociology for its tendency to overemphasise the role of objectivism in society. He rejects such objectivism and argues that social relations and practices are meaningful. He also says that social practices and relations are intersubjective praxes and sociologists only ever have access to them by their intersubjective participation in them (Crossley, 2008:78). With this critique Merleau-Ponty asks for a unity between sociology and phenomenology, in that sociology should become more phenomenological and vice versa. Merleau-Ponty, in contesting that the ontology of social relations should be understood in terms of intersubjectivity, was pushing beyond Husserlian parameters and into sociological territory (Crossley, 2008:78). Merleau-Ponty called this 'Concrete intersubjectivity', and he referred to it as a web of meaningful relations characterised by interdependence and inequality. He made it clear that intersubjectivity is an inextricable part of a person's lifeworld and an offshoot of an individual's subjective experience.

Artists are different social agents in that they are perpetually grappling with uncovering what lies beneath their unconscious, preconscious or semi-conscious state of minds. The phenomena which emerge in these mental states surface largely in the form of the creative process which can be likened to a dream in its own sense. The only difference between the two is that dreams keep the dreamer asleep but the processes of creativity and the resulting creations thereof arouse the creator and the recipient (Rothenberg, 1979:47-348). William Kentridge (2008:69) reaffirms this when he says that, "*the artist is always at work, even when he sleeps.*" I elaborate further on this notion in the following chapter.

What springs forth from these deep-structures that reside within the artists psyche are creations that conjure up certain feelings in people who consume them. This causes an intersubjective reciprocity of these feelings and impulses between the artist and audience. The relationship that exists is a result of the

universal feelings presented in the products which induce a sense of expansion, and relatedness between the audience, the work and the artist. The creative process is the medium and the forbearer of these complex but meaningful intersubjective relationships.

One should bear in mind that the artist uses typifications in his/her dealings with his/her audience. When I enter into dialogue with these artists I remember that there are going to be two kinds of typifications that are fundamentally going to be at play in our dialogue. The first set of typifications are called first-order typifications, these are the accounts that I got from the artists. And, the second types of typifications are called second-order typifications, which were my understandings and renderings of my engagements with the various artists. By this I refer to the exercise of making sense of what is told to me by the artists that I come into contact with (Inglis and Thorpe, 2012:89).

1.3. Reflexive sociology

There is a particular need to incorporate the ideas of this paradigm of social reality that are so impassionedly pursued by Pierre Bourdieu. In framing reflexive sociology, Bourdieu wants to reconcile some of the deep-seated antinomies that tore social science apart. These include the antipathy between subjectivist and objectivist modes of knowledge, the separation of the symbolic from that of the material, and the continued inconsistency of theory from actual research (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:3). Reflexive sociology is primarily about bridging all of the aforementioned gaps and cultivating a novel approach to sociology, what Bourdieu calls a 'total social science'.

In this section of the study I will introduce and elaborate on some of Bourdieu's ideas which I deem to be pertinent to my study. I will also expand on Bourdieu's concept of social praxeology in which his term 'total social science' originates. It is important to note that Bourdieu in his work analyses the concepts of subjectivity and objectivity significantly. To do this he makes use of terms such as 'habitus' and 'field'. In this study I give an overview of phenomenological notions in the work of Pierre Bourdieu, who shares many similarities with the work of Alfred Schütz. For the purposes of this study I am particularly concerned with Bourdieu's efforts to marry objectivist and subjectivist approaches to the study of reality (Kotze, 2013:19).

1.3.1. Total social science and the double reading

The social science that Pierre Bourdieu envisions is one that is committed to unveiling the most hidden structures of the social world. These structures which Bourdieu thinks require illuminating constitute what we know as the social universe, and it is these structures and their mechanisms which ensure the transformation of social reality as we perceive it (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:7). Bourdieu refers to this

as a 'total social science'. This social science expounds a science of society that understands the dichotomous nuances of relations of power and the meaningful nexuses woven by groups of people and different classes (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:7).

What inspires Bourdieu's conceptualisation of the notion of a more reflexive sociology is the idea that the universe leads what he refers to as a 'double life'. The 'double life' can be seen in how material resources are distributed throughout society, and how scarce goods and other values are appropriated by people. The latter Bourdieu refers to as an objectivity of the first order, which has a counterpart in the objectivity of the second order. This one manifests itself in the forms of systems of classification; those symbolic schemes which we use to function in society as social agents (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:7).

To bridge this antinomy, Pierre Bourdieu insists that we need to practice a double reading of the social world. He urges us to think of social physics and social phenomenology as two sides of one coin. When one side is overlooked we fail to see the value of the entire object. On one side of the coin we have social physics. Through its excesses we are pushed into perceiving the social world as an objective structure, which can only be understood or made sense of from the outside. From this perspective, the social world is observed strictly in its most material form (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:7). This manner of looking at society is devoid of any categorical representations for those who live in it. This is why so many people operate in society on a seemingly unconscious level. The same reasoning will be applied within this study when looking into the act of creation of visual artists.

This study will rely heavily on the narratives that the artists will convey about their creative and artistic experience. To guard against a one-sided perspective that over-emphasises social phenomenology, attention will be given to the role of the artist's environment within which he/she creates. In addition, attention will also be given to the art-piece as an object given birth to by the artist's creative impulses. This will be done to acknowledge the dimension of social physics that is the subject of the artist's surroundings. Christopher Williams (2004:236) argues that artists represent the world in measured and controlled efforts that serve to reproduce the objects and subjects that confront them. However, Williams (2004) goes on to state that artists are not reproducers of the objective world, but as experiencing subjects for whom art is a medium for the expression of that subjectivity that underpins objective reality.

Bourdieu says the danger of thinking about society in a closed-minded or structuralist way is that this objective view does not account for the knowledge which pre-exists such an objectivist way of structuring

social life. There is practical knowledge (taken for granted pieces of knowledge) which is a predecessor of the structuralist point of view (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:8). The reading of objectivist elements of social physics in isolation from subjectivist elements of social phenomenology promotes a way of seeing conscious subjects as instruments of a force that mechanically operates in tandem with independent logic (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:8). Such a materialist science of society is seldom if ever able to make exceptions within its scope for the consciousness and interpretations of social agents in a social world (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:9).

As much as it is true that society has an encompassing objective component to its ontology. Society contains another less materialist side that is accomplished by the actions of social beings who perpetually construct their social world via their practices (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:9). Bourdieu asserts that by perceiving society as containing an ever-present element of social phenomenology, we allow ourselves to come into contact with the subjective operations of the human mind. This could be the decisions that people make or the ways that meaning is created by individuals and woven into their everyday lives. This is an exercise that people engage in on a daily basis. What I am curious about discovering is the nuances involved in how the individual uses his practical knowledge to create a cogent representation of his/her lifeworld.

But to view society strictly through the lenses of this social phenomenology, the social scientist will be making himself/herself susceptible to committing an error. By conceiving social structures as mere constructs of the human consciousness, we fail to acknowledge the emergent, objective configurations our consciousness perpetuates or challenges (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:10). This way of conceiving reality cannot explain completely on its own merits why social reality is a recurrent consistent activity. Bourdieu therefore urges the fusion of these two approaches namely considering the social physics and social phenomenology of everyday life to be adopted. He encourages this total science of society to abandon a traditional and one-dimensional approach to perceiving social reality. Bourdieu calls for what he refers to as a social praxeology—in other words: a way of approaching social science which combines structuralist and constructivist tendencies in equal capacity. For this study, it is important to weigh what the artist tells me about his/her creative process against the observations I make of her or him working, as well as his/her finished product.

1.3.2. Methodological relationalism

The total social science explained above is a predecessor for what Bourdieu later terms methodological relationalism. Methodological relationalism is the term Bourdieu uses to assert his belief in the primacy of relations. He is opposed to the split conception of individual and society, and the methodological divisive ways of perceiving individualism and structuralism (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:5). He wants sociology to rid itself of what he calls methodological monism and adopt a more open way of analysing a human being's relations with the social world.

He implements his concepts of field and habitus to illustrate the bundles of relations. By bundles of relations, Bourdieu is referring to the internal conversations (intersubjectivities) that propel society forward (Farrugia and Woodman, 2015:626). The concept of 'field' refers to the enduring situations that an individual finds himself/herself engrossed in. Bourdieu defines field as a network, or configuration, of objective relations between positions. To think in terms of field is to think relationally (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:96-97). The relational model is the hallmark of modern science. Bourdieu states that what exists between individuals are relations and not interactions between agents or intersubjective ties between individuals (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:97). These relations between agents occur independently of the consciousness of the individual.

Bourdieu uses his concept of the 'field' to describe the objective states that he/she is impelled to adjust himself/herself to. The degree to which one's field imposes itself on the human being should not be omitted. Most of a social actor's actions are made in reaction to, and on the basis of the effect the external reality (field) has on his/her person. The acclaimed playwright Arthur Miller was cited (in Akerman and Ouellette, 2012:393) saying that he sees no divide between his internal life and the social and political context in which he lives. He conceives of his identity as inextricably linked to the circumstances he encounters in his external world. For this reason, I will use the concept of 'field' as a lens to contextualise the artists' narratives of his/her lifeworld and the external social factors that also drive artistic creative practice and human action and interaction.

Concepts such as 'field' and 'habitus' are difficult to define in isolation; they tend to have an underlying dialectical undertone to them. It is better to define them within the theoretical framework/s they are constituted (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:96). The art-world is a 'field' and according to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:98), individual action that occurs within any field is not solely a product of deliberate and individualistic action. Human action and human relations reproduce social structure and a person's

creativity always needs to be linked to his/her field of relations. Moreover, adopting a social view of conceptualising creativity provides a context for emergence. A social view of creativity is relevant because it connects creativity with every day social life and practices that require creativity not to be rarefied and idealised as something requiring genius (Paloniemi and Collin 2012 cited in Rae, 2016:2).

The second concept of 'habitus', attempts to reconcile the subjective individual's experiences with his/her external environment or the 'field' (Kotze, 2013:20). The 'habitus' can be referred to as an individual's general stock of knowledge and pre-existing sets of information deposited within his/her person through perception, appreciation or action (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:16). Social beings function according to the exigencies of their habitus. Creativity is a generative mechanism in art-making as much as habitus is a catalyst of socially embedded creativity. Creativity can be seen in different forms of social action which work to restore the inherent social structure (Farrugia and Woodman, 2015:627). It is for this reason that I want to find out to what extent human creativity, no less artistic creativity, is a result of one's 'habitus'. If this would happen to be the case to a large degree, then creativity would have to be something that we would have to measure carefully. To measure it we would have to take a person's historical background, family composition, biological make-up, social class and other pre-existing factors, over which the creative person has little direct control, into consideration (cf. section 2.1.6. where I discuss the impact that an artist's conception of his/her identity has to their art-making and creative process).

Bourdieu wants us to think of the social world in a dualistic and relational manner. Within bundles of relations, individuals act in line with ways that are conducive to the inherent social structure. It is important for my study to situate the narratives that I collect from the research participants within the framework of these bundles of relations. There are certain things that people cannot divest themselves from and the relational perspective forms the core of Bourdieu's sociological vision (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:16). Situating my study within this theoretical paradigm will be important if I seek to understand the socio-historical meta-narratives that accompany the production of such knowledge that the subjects possess. Bourdieu has realised that habitus and field designate a bundle of relations where one cannot exist without the presence of the other. The one concept is non-existent without the existence of the other one—social reality would not make sense. Bourdieu extrapolates further on these concepts and deconstructs society into a multitude of fragmented fields. In these fields the individual must use his practical knowledge to cope with the unforeseen and ever-changing situations (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:17).

If the artist is able to strike a balance between the objective and subjective forces of his/her lifeworld, he/she enters what Csikszentmihalyi terms as 'flow'. According to Csikszentmihalyi when an artist is in this state of 'flow' he/she is able to integrate his/her attention and action therefore bringing order to the contents of the mind (Banfield and Burgess, 2013:63). Furthermore, Csikszentmihalyi uses 'flow' to describe optimal experience in the sense of exhilaration and deep enjoyment. The state of 'flow' is said to be an "*automatic, effortless, yet highly focused state of consciousness*" (Csikszentmihalyi 1996 cited in Banfield and Burgess 2013:61). This is a crucial period in the creative process of any person no less so in the process of an artist or artists. This is because in this state of 'flow' the individual manages to bring together his/her objective and subjective experiences. This takes place without any conscious awareness from the agent besides a feeling of euphoria that accompanies this state (Csikszentmihalyi 1996 cited in Banfield and Burgess 2013:61). I accept that this is a similar type of experience that visual artists go through at particular stages within their creative process. This is where the artists sense of who they are diminishes to the point where there seems to be no 'I' at all (Banfield and Burgess, 2013:64).

1.3.3. Epistemic reflexivity

Pierre Bourdieu's obsession with reflexivity arose from his early investigations into the marriage practices in the Pyrenees Mountains, a small village where he was brought up. Also in his hunt for *Homo Academicus*, he searched for the tribe he came to join as a result of his own journey at the beginning of his life (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:36). Throughout his career, Bourdieu has been inclined to turn the scientific gaze inward on himself—which is a primary factor in why his work has been so well respected across various fields in the social sciences. Bourdieu's brand of reflexivity differs from other forms of it in three crucial ways. First, it has as its primary target, not the individual analyst but the social and intellectual processes that are embedded unconsciously in society. Secondly, he emphasises that it should be a collective push rather than a burden of the academic. And thirdly, it seeks to reinforce rather than lay under siege the epistemological security of sociology (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:36).

Bourdieu is conscious of the different kinds of reflexivity that are extant in the social sciences and expounded by a number of thinkers. Farrugia and Woodman (2015:628) define reflexivity as "*how a subject makes their way through the world: through internal conversations, subjects deliberate on their goals, values and commitments that together make up a meaningful existence*". In this way individuals establish what they call a 'life project'. The artist is spurred on by internal motives and I think the creative process gives expression to these motives. Reflexivity is considered the motor of social life (Archer, 2007 cited in

Farrugia and Woodman 2015:628). There are conceptions of society that range from self-referencing to the importance of self-awareness in the researcher.

Reflexivity promotes a self-conscious approach by the researcher and serves to establish reciprocation between subject and object. Reflexivity is the hallmark of substantiated social science research methods (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:37). The creative process revolves around the artist being reflexive. In the creative process of art-making or of any other kind of creative activity the agent subjectively and purposively engages in constructing and making meaning of his/her inner life or of those of others. This process of meaning-making and constructing remains affected by social structures that are outside the subject and that present sets of constraints and enablements (Farrugia and Woodman, 2015:628).

Bourdieu outlined three kinds of biases that the aforementioned reflexive approaches can bring about: (1) the individual researcher's social origins, (2) the position that the researcher occupies in the academic field and, (3) the intellectualist bias of the researcher. He claims his reflexivity is different in that it aims to increase the scope of and solidity of social scientific knowledge (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:37). Bourdieu's reflexivity provokes us to explore our taken for granted mental and emotional categories which determine what we think about, how we think and what actions we produce (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:40). This kind of reflexivity encourages the observer to be subjected to the same kind of critical analysis as that which is extended to the external world (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). I will need to have these reflexive approaches in mind when I do my fieldwork. Human beings are not objects and they should never be treated as such. Adopting a reflexive position throughout the research is essential for how I converse with the research participants.

In doing my research I am particularly aware of the personal biases that can manifest in my role as a researcher. I am wary of the fact that the very conception of reality which underlines a particular paradigm specific to my research may distort the social reality which I am studying. Therefore it will be very important for me to acknowledge a meta-analysis throughout this study. Bourdieu's reflexivity provides the framework for such a meta-analysis (Kotze, 2013:21). This meta-analysis is achieved with the help of a perpetual reflexive stance used as a guide throughout the research. In its observations of social life it is important for science to be subjected to continuous reflection and criticism. If the study of the social world is to progress and maintain its relevance, it is mandatory for science to surrender itself to such reflexive scrutiny.

Moreover, as I will be investigating the process of creation I should be cognisant of the collective unconsciousness often embedded in theories, problems and categories of scholarly judgment (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:40). The domain of social science must be ultimately reflected on in its totality. Everything from the observer who performs the act of critical analysis, to the field which he/she is analysing, must be scrutinised in equal measure.

1.4. Existential sociology and the sociology of emotions

Existential thought or thinking took root in Europe after the Second World War. It garnered significant attention in the writings of the French philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre. It also receives particular attention in the novels and essays of Algerian born French writer, Albert Camus (Kotarba, 2009:141). Existentialism is on one hand a philosophy and on the other hand something other than a philosophy. Existential sociology is first and foremost a paradigm that functions well as an orientation to the understanding of people's everyday lives. This is because when looked at from a non-philosophical perspective, existential sociology is a way of life, a passion for living, and an intuitive desire for the actual lived experience (Kotarba, 2009:141). This paradigm has as one of its central features the changing nature of people's experiences and social reality (Kotarba, 2009:140).

Art is a fundamental component of human existence and everyday lived experience. This is because everyday life is full of expressions, signs and symbols through which people seek to establish their presence, identities and meanings in creative ways. Concepts such as art—beauty, representation, expression, emotional response and creativity—provide a lens through which an array of human activities and relationships can be investigated. Artists, in the process of art-making are making use of the creative and expressive dimensions of their being. The expressive quality of being human is a definitive feature of art and art-making (Williams, 2004:234-236). Dwaine Greer (1986:62) argues that the process of art-making begins with an initial excitement that gradually gains coherence as the artist feels release and his/her feelings become clear and coherently lucid.

With the emphasis that this perspective places on the individual and on emotion, it allows me to look at the choices, responsibilities, passions and emotions of the research participants (Kotarba, 2009:142). This perspective can assist me to describe the various strategies that individuals use to construct their identities within a variety of social and cultural contexts. It also elucidates the ways in which feelings and emotions have a bearing on this construction (Kotarba, 2009:143). This is motivated by the notion Badiola (2010:1) proposes where she says: "*emotions are intertwined in a complex social framework, which includes among*

other issues, our understanding of rationality, the self, or the physical and mental." Emotions can be used to some extent as a yardstick to grasp what other factors (subjective or objective) trigger the intention to engage in art-making. Gross (2002 cited in Stephan, 2012:159) claims that existential feelings are responsible for many of the encounters we have in our lifeworld.

Emotions and emotional episodes or moods are driven by intentionality. This means that they are caused by objects, situations, and events in the world (Stephan, 2012:158). There is a significant emotional dimension to what makes artists engage in art-making. Loneliness, as an emotional episode and as an act of intentionality is a state that gives artist the time to interpret his/her emotions. Not all emotions are directed towards something specific however visual artists often make use of emotional feelings as instruments to relate their experiences both to the world and to themselves (Stephan, 2012:158). Artists use art as a way registering their reactions the way they feel them. Artists are able to express themselves in this way in their art as well as in their personal lives (Williams, 2004:236).

Everyday life can be dramatic and people can experience it as such (Kotarba, 2009). The field of creative research was in need of a perspective that can account for the emotions that people have when confronted by different situations in the creative process of art-making. The sociology of emotions is an appropriate approach through which to explain such occurrences in the lives of the research participants. Emotions are fundamental to a human being's understanding of the world. Artists often communicate much about their worldviews in their artwork. That is why I find that there is a link in the creative process of art-making between emotions and what drives one to create a worldview, and how one sees himself/herself as a creator.

A person's emotions may very well trigger him/her to create. However, it is his/her worldview that determines what kind of creations he/she comes up with. In order to have an adequate grasp on the sociology of emotions, it is requisite to consider the function of emotions in sociology in an overall sense. This perspective can assist in me in understanding how artists manage their complex emotions to conceptualise and create tangible objects that are loaded with meaning. The emotions that people have may be all the more crucial to an artist as it may contain the feelings that he/she derives from a certain experience to begin the process of creating. To channel emotions constructively necessitates a significant degree of personal management. To manage one's emotions, a person should be able to direct his/her emotions and bring them in tow with the demands of the situation (Poder, 2009:335). Hence, it takes an

effort from the individual to do this. It is the nature of this effort and how it is managed that is also of particular interest in this dissertation.

1.5. Hermeneutics and the hermeneutic cycle

Hermeneutics is regarded as the theory and practice of interpretation. The word 'hermeneutics' originally derives from the Greek God Hermes, whose duty it was to communicate messages from Zeus and other Gods to the ordinary mortals. Hermeneutic phenomenology has been likened to interpretive phenomenology due to the fact that it is not preoccupied with re-experiencing the experiences of others. It attempts to understand what the other's experiences entail and interpret his/her experiences in a way that is pertinent to the researcher's intended meaning and lived experiences (van Manen, 1990:179-180).

In this paradigm, understanding is seen largely as an iterative process where the reader and the writer are locked in a continuous cycle of understanding—interpretation and application (van Manen, 1990:180). This paradigm recognises the important role that the subject plays in creating and altering the meaning that is conveyed in language, texts and symbols (Shaw and DeForge, 2014:1571). But these texts and symbols or language need to be understood in a way that will reveal something about the person/s who brought them into being. This is what hermeneutics portends to do. Interpretation is central to human knowing and as I stated earlier, language is axial to the formation of meaning and its interpretation.

As Gadamer (cited in Shaw and DeForge, 2014:1752) argues: *"language is not only an object in our hands, it is the reservoir of tradition and the medium in and through which we exist and perceive our world"*. Therefore, in this study of the experiences of the creative process of visual artists the stories that the research participants narrate to me of their experiences are looked at carefully. Thereafter, these narratives are interpreted with the use of the hermeneutic framework in order to derive an understanding of the lifeworlds of the respective individuals who participate in this study.

Any creative process—more especially art-making—is constituted by a cycle of revision-hypothesis-revision. How artists arrive at their understanding of reality is an interpretive process where the artist takes his/her understanding of himself/herself or even the artwork that he/she is creating as the starting point. This process of understanding happens within an iterative cycle where the artist moves from the whole to the individual parts and from the individual parts to the whole (Debesay, Naden and Slettebo, 2008:58). Art-making happens in similar fashion where artists find themselves with a draft that they continually revise as

they begin to obtain a greater understanding of what they wish to create (Debesay and Naden and Slettebo, 2008:59).

This hermeneutic cycle is fundamentally a reflexive process. The creative process is one domain where such regression and progression as seen in reflexive thought processes, can take place (Akerman and Ouellette, 2012:383). It is common for an artist to reach a stage in his/her artwork that he/she is creating where he/she may find it difficult to continue further. When such an instance occurs the artist goes into a reflexive process where the iterations between his/her current engagement, his/her future life and his/her past come together to offer a solution for the creative problem that he/she may be facing. Reflexivity and the hermeneutic cycle have a paramount role to play in the creative process. This is because the hermeneutic cycle can assist making what is internal to the artist external to him/her. This occurs through the artist constantly reflecting on the state of the artwork and what he/she wishes to create.

Creativity and reflexivity are inextricably linked in the artistic and creative practices. Reflexivity is seen as essential to the growth and personal development of an artist. It allows the artist to map his/her progress within a dynamic and ever-evolving landscape. According to Guillaumier (2016:354) any creative process, endeavour or project will not be successful or even sustainable if the actors do not allow space for reflexive engagement with the task at hand. Reflexivity is important because it forces artists to delve deep into a sustained conversation with their work process and not just with the artistic product. Furthermore, it allows for the revision and re-valuation of the methods used and the outputs garnered from it, thus making it possible for the artist to improve on his/her successes and failures (Guillaumier, 2016:355).

1.6. Conclusion

This chapter introduces the various theories and philosophies underlying the epistemological, ontological and methodological approaches embraced during the various stages of this study. The importance of phenomenology, existential sociology, reflexive sociology and hermeneutics to the conceptualisation, implementation and successful conclusion of the study is highlighted. This is done alongside an ontological and epistemological conceptualisation of the dissertation. The chosen ontology and epistemology is designed to conform to particular views regarding the intersubjective nature of the construction and interpretation of social reality.

Chapter two: epistemological foundation

Introduction

Creativity as an area of research is typified by multiple theoretical and methodological approaches that provide alternative insights into the nature of creativity and its processes (Mace, 1997:266). These approaches are the direct consequence of the multiple, self-constructed meanings that people actively form when they engage in the creative process, and when they talk about it (Mace, 1997:266–267). Most research on creativity has tended to look at the correlates of creativity (such as personality traits or psychopathology), characteristics of creative thought (the cognitive approach), the developmental pathways to creativity or the contexts in which creativity may be found (looking at social, environmental, or historical variables) (Nelson and Rawlings, 2007:217).

Before I embark on providing a delineation of the approaches and insights that are extant on the topic of creativity and its processes I would first like to define what I mean by creativity and the creative process. Rollo May (1975, cited in Golden 2012:13) describes creativity as “*the encounter of the intensively conscious human being with his/her world.*” Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi elucidates two types of creativity, one he calls creativity with a lower case ‘c’ and the other is creativity with a higher case ‘C’. A person who possesses creativity with a small ‘c’ has unique perceptions of the world and is very insightful but he/she does not have any major recognisable accomplishments as a result of what he/she does. This individual is called a ‘personally creative’ individual. Furthermore, creativity spelled with a small ‘c’ pertains to the common hobbies and passions of ordinary people who want to do something (Beaty et al., 2014:2).

A person with creativity with a capital ‘C’ has changed his/her culture in some way, and his/her creative potential is recognised by the members of society (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996:25). According to Guillamier (2016:355) this kind of creative individual has managed to break away from the habitual patterns of thought. Creativity of this kind is used to refer more to genius and eminence, and this person is said to function with an integrated creativity (Beaty et al., 2014:2). When I speak of creativity, I am referring to the ability to respond flexibly to the need for new ways of being, thus bringing something new into existence (Golden, 2012:7). Moreover, in this dissertation the operational definition of creativity that will be used will be of “*thinking that is aimed at producing ideas or products that are relatively novel, in some respect compelling*” (Sternberg cited in Rae, 2016:2). I am referring particularly to those individuals who change and shape people’s perceptions of social reality through their work. The creative person is constantly

generating novel and innovative ideas. His/her perspective on life is unique and is constantly forming new problems that he/she can challenge himself/herself to solve (Smith & Carlsson, 1990:1).

Arthur Koestler (1989 cited in Robinson, 2008:7) believes that creativity is responsible for individual growth and the evolution of society. He also argues that humans have tremendous potential for creative expression. Creativity scholars have stated that there is a difference between the creative process of that of a child and that of an adult. It is assumed that although the child may be aware that what he/she is doing is different from others, he/she still does not have full appreciation of the rules and conventions of symbolic realms. The child artist is risk-taking and adventurous, whereas the adult artist has full comprehension of the norms and values embraced by other people he/she encounters in his/her lifeworld. In the theoretical chapter I make specific mention of this when I discuss Bourdieu's reflexive sociology (cf. section 1.3.). I make the claim that a person's internal and external experiences are inextricably linked, and this acts as the basis from which an ordinary person's lifeworld, no less that of an artist, is formed.

In this study the concept of creativity has been contextualised as art-making, more particularly visual art-making rather than any number of other possible creative actions (Rae, 2016:2). If in his/her work the adult artist rejects convention or social norms, his/her decision to do so is made at the full knowledge of the consequences that will arise from this decision that he/she makes. The child artist's creative process does not easily get disrupted by societal expectations whatsoever, and if there is any influence, most probably in the way of socialisation (cf. section 1.3. for the discussion of Pierre Bourdieu's habitus), the child is still too naïve to let these influences affect how he/she produces art.

The creative process can be defined as the engaged emergence of insight that brings about new forms of perspective that grows out of the interaction between the ingenuity of the creator and his/her circumstances, as well as the physical environment that he/she finds themselves in. In the creative process, the artist or the creative individual may either derive his/her inspiration from the realm of human consciousness or understanding, or from latent unconscious functions in the mind (Rowe, 1994:14). The process is a dynamic and consuming one where unconscious functions of the mind come to manifest gradually. The overriding purpose of creativity involves integrating and reformulating our understanding of the world as we know it (Robinson, 2008:6-7). Therefore, if we are to go by the interpretive hermeneutic paradigm which I discuss in the theoretical chapter (cf. section 1.5.); it is possible to argue that the creative process, particularly that of art-making, is an instrument which artists use to understand the world in a way which will make sufficient sense to them.

2.1. Multivariable approach

There has been considerable debate on what is the most accurate way to investigate creativity (Mace, 1997:265). In the past, research on creativity has often studied this phenomenon as a product, a state of mind, or a process. When viewed solely as a product, creativity is rendered into something that may be precisely definable or measured. When viewed as a mental state or a dynamic process, creativity is limited to the psychological experiences of the creator or creative being (Bindeman, 1998:69). Proponents of the multivariable approach insist that any veritable account of creativity will consider elements from the following loci: the creative person, the creative product, the creative process, and lastly the creative environment. They also claim that a study conducted on creativity that fails to include one or more of the abovementioned components will tend to pose incomplete conceptualisations of creativity (Mace, 1997:265). Moreover, using the abovementioned loci as lenses into the nature of creativity will allow for a double reading that is propounded by Pierre Bourdieu, discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation (cf. section 1.3.1.). The multivariable approach makes it possible to look at the social phenomenology of the creative or artistic problem as well as at the social physics of it.

Proponents of the multivariable approach hold that the direction of any inquiry on creativity will rely on where the determinants of creativity are assumed to reside. This claim has brought about considerable contestation amongst the advocates of the multivariable approach. For example, there are some people in this approach who argue that the determinants of creativity can be obtained within the composition of the creative product. Furthermore, the proponents of this perspective go on to state that the creative product in its material form has superior influence over the creativity of the person and his/her psychological traits (Mace, 1997:265). According to Plucker et al. (2004, cited in Jackson 2010:16) the creative product is the most visible result of the creative process. Crowther in his book *Phenomenology of the Visual Arts* makes the argument that within the visual artwork are traces of its physical causal history (Crowther, 2009:26). This means that in every artwork it is possible to find details of the creator, whether these characteristics are subjective, such as the memories or emotions of the creator, or are they are strictly practical such as the artist's unique style and technique.

It is for this reason that scholars of creativity in people state that there is cause to believe that the creative product is a window into the creative process. In the theoretical chapter I discuss how artworks can be seen as symbolic systems that can communicate meaning and thus carry out the same functions as that of spoken human language (cf. section 1.1. art-making as a symbolic language system is discussed). It is

therefore important to also look at the art product because of its role as a symbolic system of meaning and meaning-making. This insight will be critical in understanding what propels the creative process of art-making. This contradicts Jackson's (2010:9) argument. Susan Jackson states that when people study and evaluate creativity they put too much emphasis on the creative product when in actual fact intrapersonal aspects are more important. Without the characteristics of the creative person and his/her creative process, the creative product would not have come into existence.

Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault's essay on the "*Death of the author*", in which they indicate that there is a shift in emphasis from the process of artistic production, where the artists are the central agents, to the process and products of consumption receiving more attention. This essay was crucial in the change of how the role of artworks has become to be seen in the post-modern era. This transition has had unforeseeable implications for the visual arts. Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault locate the "*Death of the author*" or artist within the context of the "deaths" of God and Enlightenment. In a short essay he wrote titled "*The death of the author*," Barthes claims that "*to give a text an author is to impose a limit on that text ... to close the writing.*" This opens space up for the reader to interpret it as he/she wishes. Barthes indicates that a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination (Haynes, 1995:167). By saying so, Barthes thereby affords those who are going to consume the creative product, the freedom and responsibility to interpret it.

The implications that Barthes and Foucault's work has had, has seen certain scholars and artists refusing to consider a work of art as being complete until it has been perceived. For the advocates of this view, the true origin of creativity is not in the act of creating the work. Rather, they posit that the work itself, as it lays in isolation awaiting the viewer to experience it, is where the true origin of creativity can be found (Mace, 1997:265). Thus Barthes concludes that "*the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author.*" In the case of the visual arts, the visual artist's abstractions will be sacrificed in order to give the viewers' interpretation of the 'text' a voice in the discourse.

Aesthetic experience comes from the interaction that occurs between the perceiver of the object and the object which they perceive (Koestler, 1964:366). This statement affirms that the viewer's interpretation of the artwork is valuable in the understanding of the artwork. This aspect is important, as the subjective experiences of people are recognised for the meaning that they hold. In addition, Koestler asserts that the aesthetic experience that we encounter in the perception of a creative product is laden with values and meanings that represent aspects of our private lives. Pierre Bourdieu (1996:297) agrees with this and

states that the particular habitus a person adopts has a marked influence on how he/she views and understands the artwork.

An artist's perception, goes beyond perceiving images on his/her retina, this is a significant trait of his/her artistic creativity. Arthur Koestler (1964:367-368) explains that what most people take to be a mere pigment on a canvas goes beyond its frame to the artists. Furthermore, Koestler states that *'the range of luminosity in the painter's pigment is only a fraction of that of natural colours; the area of the canvas only a fraction of the visual field'* (Koestler, 1964:372). With this statement, I believe Koestler refutes the assumption that the creative product may be a complete window into the experiences of the creative process of the creator. Especially if one considers that aesthetic experience is derived from within the individual who is driven by his/her own values, dynamic experiences and other such subjective motives. Because of our prejudices we are constantly being deceived by the work of art (Koestler, 1964:380). We so readily accept the perceptions that our experiences give us as the truth that we open ourselves to misinterpretation and misunderstanding. Therefore, Koestler is inadvertently implying that the lifeworld of human beings contains much more than any of their subjective experiences, particularly those that are attached to a specific context or circumstance.

Because of the acknowledgement of the divergent perspectives within the multivariable approach, greater emphasis has been put on the relationships between the sub-components of this approach. I have placed specific importance on the role of the individual-environment interaction in creativity (Mace, 1997:265). It is axiomatic in that art-worlds and the alternative environments influence the ways artists represent both their inner creative impulses and themselves as artists and individuals (Brunton, 2006:42). Along with these worlds, a person's family, education, training and identity are also signifying factors. Marissa Robinson (2008:2) argues that *"creativity can be facilitated or hindered by socio-environmental factors"*.

Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi (1996, cited in Jackson 2010:16) states that the presence or absence of people in the creative individual's environment can prove to be telling at different points within the creative process. This is because the presence of people in general in the creative process can be detrimental to the creative state of the artist, in terms of causing distraction or affecting the process of creation. However, the presence of certain individuals within the creative process can also benefit the artist with helping to induce insightful ideas to help solve creative problems in art-making, or even act as a muse or collaborator in the creative project. On the other hand, Brunton (2006:102) claims that whether the background or environment is a creative one or not, artists still find a way to direct their own creative practice.

A good creative background nurtures the artistic instinct whilst a non-creative one offers adversity to the artist and inadvertently strengthens his/her identity as a creative person. Scholars of creativity believe that artistic training opens up unimagined doors to tools, knowledge and techniques that the artist did not have prior to undergoing education or training. One such skill that is taught to some students of fine arts is that of reflection. Most students tend to see reflexivity as an activity which is divorced from their day-to-day artistic practice. However, artistic training helps to show students how reflexivity is such an indispensable skill that enables them as students to explore and question their processes (Guillaumier, 2016:355). According to Brunton (2006:42–43) “*training helps to know that something's possible*”, contrarily, for others, artistic training serves a less welcomed purpose namely that of diminishing their access to originality and unselfconscious activity. In this study, emphasis will be put on the role that reflexive thinking has on the artist and the nature of his/her creative process. I have identified the hermeneutic cycle of revision-hypothesis-revision-hypothesis as a vital ingredient in creativity and creative practice (cf. section 1.5. for an in-depth discussion on the hermeneutic cycle). I want to argue that the hermeneutic cycle makes the artist aware of himself/herself and his/her surroundings and shows what kind of influence that this awareness from the artist, and these forces have on his/her creative process.

Studies on creativity claim that creative learning has three distinct levels, with several distinctive cognitive and affective factors present at each level. These levels are described by Treffinger, Isaksen and Firestien (1982) in their book *Theoretical perspectives on creative learning: an overview*. The first level consists of divergent functions where people are taught the basic techniques in creative learning. The affective factors in this level include risk-taking, curiosity and openness to experience. On the second level people experience complex thinking, and feeling processes, as well as the development of awareness, and values, fantasy, and imagery. Lastly, in the third level people experience the involvement in real challenges, such as independent inquiry and they gradually move towards self-actualisation (Jackson, 2010:16).

However, the overarching opinion on artistic training according to Brunton (2006:47-48) is that the practical concerns that artistic training addresses contribute to the artists' attitudes and activities, including the production of artworks. I concur with this statement, as I believe that artistic training benefits rather than hinders the evolution of the work of the artist. A person's upbringing is where most of the negative experiences such as pain, struggle, and conflict are experienced. These emotions are said to be attributed to familial issues and other matters related to the upbringing of a person and, according to Williams (1987:32) men and women experience the creative process differently. This is because the creative

process is in some way tied to their gender and societal roles. These affective factors could be a major reason why there are contradictory findings in studies on creativity (Nelson and Rawlings, 2007:219). Many artists, instead of letting these experiences overwhelm them, perceive these experiences as powerful creative tools. Jennifer Brunton (2006) further asserts that family attitudes towards creativity are very influential. I agree with Brunton's statement because many of my study's research participants have a close family member or close friend who was directly or indirectly affiliated with the arts whilst they were growing up. These participants mention the influence of the close family member or friend as a key motivating factor that pushed them into practicing art.

2.2. Consciousness and the creative process

The experiences that we have are a result of the brain and the mind working together. With every new experience that a person has the brain creates new neural pathways. It does this through altering its composition in the form of its nerve cells and nerve connections (Newberg and d'Aquili, 2000). For this reason, in this dissertation I want to look at how consciousness is affected or how it affects the creative process. Howard Gruber argues that: *"the student of creativity must reconstruct the mental life of the creative individual at various points in the development of his/her work"* (Gruber in Gardner, 1982:353). Likewise, French mathematician and philosopher, Henry Poincare, acknowledges that the lifeworld in which the creative process takes place is created by human consciousness and does not exist outside of it (Bindeman, 1998:71).

Poincare performs an exercise of phenomenological reduction that is indicative of Edmund Husserl's conception of the lifeworld. Phenomenology scholars imply that any existential consideration pertaining to the consciousness of a corporeal phenomenon should be accompanied by the awareness of the relation that phenomenon has to a person's field of experience. This may ultimately lead that person to encounter the intersubjective lifeworld network he/she is part of (Vaitkus, 1996:277). This happens primarily on an experiential level where conscious beings in this social reality share similar kinds of experiences. Since these intersubjective experiences between people who are in the same field of experience are real, Haynes (1995:178) states that *"the individual's consciousness always remains outside another person's consciousness."* Therefore, (Haynes, 1995) claims that an individual person within his/her own lifeworld is also capable of comprehending other people's experiences and this forms an individual's intersubjective understanding of the paramount social reality. A person's conception of his/her lifeworld is also a construct of the intersubjective understandings that he/she shares with people around him/her. The artist, just like

any other person, takes these intersubjective understandings into his/her creative work. I want to see how the artist conceives of these socially constructed and socially shared assumptions and how they surface in his/her artistic process.

Paul Crowther (2009:26) makes the point that the creative process or the creative state is characterised by the experience of paradox. This paradox, he says, occurs as a result of the constant balancing act that the creative individual has to perform between the physical and subjective spheres of his conscious experience. This means that the artist, because of the nature of the creative process has to merge the ideas or inspirations he/she receives from his/her subjective experience into the actual work he/she will undertake to do. Likewise, there is the occasion where the artist receives his/her inspiration from real social situations or circumstances. In this case, the artist should reconcile such objective experiences with the processes that occur in his/her subjective experience if he/she wishes to create a meaningful art-product for himself/herself and people in society to experience. The ability for the creative individual to perform such an act, which I refer to as meaning-making, requires him/her to have an understanding of himself/herself. He/she is able to go beyond one-dimensional perception and ascribe to a creative thinking that happens on multiple levels.

Creative thinking demands an individual to be able to perceive social reality in various ways. The creative individual is able to merge these different ways of viewing reality into a single message. Marissa Robinson (2008:25) concurs and asserts that the individual experiences the creative state or process if he/she is able to envision a multiple ideas and has the capacity to translate these ideas into reality. When this occurs primary and secondary processes come together in what becomes tertiary process in which creative synthesis unfolds (Arieti 1976 in Smith & Carlsson 1990:4). However, it must be stated that the views expressed above are not accepted as absolutes and true by all scholars.

Arthur Koestler, in his seminal anatomy of creativity, *The act of creation*, uses his hypothesis of bi-sociative thought to understand the patterns of creative individuals in the creative process. Koestler also uses the term bi-sociation to illustrate the combinatorial nature of creativity which I will discuss in-depth below (Popova, 2013). In his book, Koestler posits that the act of creation is a conscious and unconscious process which underlies scientific investigation, artistic authenticity, and cosmic inspiration and he claims that all creative activities have something in common (Koestler, 1964:21). Carl Jung in his work on creativity agreed with Koestler's position. He theorises that creative products and ideas are offsprings of an interaction between consciousness and unconscious mind processes (Rowe, 1994:14). Restructuring is at

the core of creativity; this is the ability to take separate and unrelated matrices of thought and view them together. This is often referred to viewing a problem in a new way that fundamentally differs from conventional ways of doing so (Ward, Smith and Vaid, 2002:209). .

One sees from this statement how Koestler and most scholars who work on creativity during this time adopt a dualistic way of hypothesising about the creative process. The way that these thinkers theorised about creativity differs starkly from the authors above, including Koestler, who proclaims that the creative individual immerses himself/herself more in the act of creation if he/she thinks laterally but can still unify all these multilateral concepts. Colin Martindale (1999, cited in Brown 2000:46) asserts that the act of creation is akin to the process of merging ideas or images that were previously unrelated into a single logical construct. In the creative process the artist makes use of his/her various mental abilities, such as his/her imagination, intuition, and ability to reason logically. The artist will then synthesise these predominant structures in the faculties of his/her mind. This constitutes the roots of his/her creative energy and functionality. My work aims to improve on how subjective approaches such as phenomenology seeks to understand the irrational and subjective, which form the many-sided richness of human experience and creativity and the creative experiences that one has (Tarnas 1991 cited in Williams, 2004:235)

In his book, *The act of creation*, Koestler discusses the concept of dualism with more clarity and states that: *"The creative act always involves a regression to earlier, more primitive levels in the mental hierarchy, while other processes continue simultaneously on the rational surface"* (Koestler, 1964:316). The creative act as Koestler describes it, is similar to the hermeneutic cycle of revision-hypothesis-revision. In acquiescence with Koestler's position on the relationship between conscious and unconscious states and the creative process, Bindeman (1998:74) believes that creativity is a peculiar kind of reasoning that can possibly be divided into two forms, namely, intellectual and perceptual. He claims that both types of reasoning may occur in the conscious and the unconscious mind. The creative individual seeks to organise various concepts and facts scattered across his field of experience into one coherent subsystem (Gardner, 1982:354).

There are many scholars who agree with Koestler in calling the creative process an interaction of the unconscious and conscious states. Henley (1999, cited in Robinson 2008:7) concedes that the integration of the unconscious and the conscious is promoted in the creative process and adds that the subjective and objective realities are also unified in the process of creation. Some scholars do agree with his theory of bi-sociative creativity that claims that the creative state or process occurs as a result of the fusion between the

unconscious and conscious states. Arthur Koestler suggests this as a mental process of synthesising raw materials from the unconscious levels of the mind and turning them into new ideas that will manifest themselves on the conscious level (Popova, 2013). He essentially sees the creative process as a, “*sudden interlocking of specific, previously unrelated conceptual matrices*” (Bindeman, 1998:74). What these scholars have attempted to do is to show that the functioning of the unconscious and conscious minds is not dissimilar in kind. When Rothenberg (1979:38) claims that the creative process resembles dreaming, in that it is largely a result of subjective processes, he deviates from what Koestler asserts about this phenomenon.

Although Rothenberg gives the subjective processes that take place within the individual more importance when he talks about the origin of creative thinking. He still acknowledges the role that the objective factors play in creativity, primarily because artists create in what we understand to be a conscious state. He still views the creative process as flexible and initially conscious (Smith and Carlsson, 1990:4). Otto Rank (1941, cited in Robinson 2008:22-23) affirms that when the creative individual has immersed him/herself in the creative process he/she leaves our ordinary realm of experience behind. The artist steps into the domain of the unknown, more unknown to the public than himself/herself. Because in this domain, the artist not only gets into contact with material from his/her inner self but also with transcendent forces in the universe. Sigmund Freud, on the other hand, believes that the creative individual is different from the ordinary human being in that he is more capable of retrieving unconscious material than is the less creative human being (Williams, 1987:11).

Albert Rothenberg and Sigmund Freud are not the only scholars on creativity who have afforded unconscious processes weight in the act of creativity. According to Neumann (1959: 84-85) the individual's consciousness is largely blind to the underlying forces. He asserts that an artist's reaction to the subjective suggestions of the creative impulse is not to evaluate but rather it is to obey and execute the commands. To emphasise this standpoint, I would like to mention a study conducted by Yokochi and Okada (2005:241). Focusing on the cognitive process of art-making, they state that the artists that they worked with said that they were unconscious of what happened in their minds while they were in the process of creating their work. Contrarily, Smith and Carlsson (1990: 5) claim that the more the artist participates in creative activity, he/she evinces new artistic and scientific products and he/she is also gaining relevant control over his/her unconscious realms of experience—in other words, the more they practised the better they became.

Arthur Koestler (1964:317) confirms what these scholars hypothesized when he describes the first stage in the creative production of a poem, as more of a passive and involuntary process—he calls it a '*natural secretion*'. The subjective states of the creative mind are seen by most scholars of creativity as being responsible for most of the inspirations that the creative individual has in the creative process. To an extent, these scholars may be blamed for portraying creativity as mystical and irrational (Gardner, 1982:353). Conversely, there are scholars who are active during this period and who do not acknowledge the relationship between creativity and the unconscious. Alfred Adler is one such scholar. He describes creativity as a component of the conscious mind (Williams, 1987:12).

I believe that the creative process is a result of both the subjective and objective dimensions of an artist's experience coming together. The artist needs both to construct and reconstruct the artistic concept. Also, both the objective and subjective processes of the mind are integral to the tactile creation of the artwork. I don't disagree with any of the hypotheses that are put forward above by the respective thinkers. What they call unifying or synthesising multiple realities, I refer to as meaning-making. The creative process is a prolonged exercise of meaning-making-or-construction. An artist's subjective and objective experiences contribute to the conveying of meaning into an artistic product. Christopher Williams (2004:240) affirms my assumption when he says: "*the creative and expressive nature of being human further implies that the search for a meaningful and fulfilling human life entails the fulfilling of artistic propensities*". This is a perennial search for meaning that the artist undertakes, and his/her whole being is enthralled in this experience.

2.3. Stages of the creative process

According to Brown, there are several stages to prolonged creative work. First, there is a preparatory conscious period characterised by confused upheaval followed by a second stage, which is an intervening period in which the worker loses all purpose and hope in what he/she is doing. The worker either pushes the problem back, or down, or out of mind, or into another compartment of the mind, where it is left to the influence of the unconscious. The third stage is characterised by a sudden and unexpected illumination or flash of insight that serves to provide answers to the problem. In the fourth stage comes a period of verification and reconstruction (Brown, 2000:46). As much as it is difficult to think of the creative process taking such a linear pattern, there are numerous accounts that have verified the validity of the stages of the creative process. In his book, *The act of creation*, Koestler tells the story of a poet who after several weeks of struggling with the writing of a poem, thought going to the local pub to numb the brain with a pint of beer

would offer him some much-needed respite. Upon arriving at the pub, and as he sat at the bar stool, he looked around at his surroundings, and suddenly with a flood of unaccountable emotion he was hit by a line, which was then followed by a verse that became a stanza and soon enough he was sitting with the vague notion of a poem (Koestler, 1964:319).

Inspiration does not come as readily for every one that is engaged in art-making or problem-solving. Most of the time, it requires a significant amount of effort from the side of the creative person. It can be a laborious task where the creative individual may repeat himself/herself to the point of exhaustion. This is referred to as 'creative block'. The labouring might, however, not be to no avail as according to Brewster Ghiselin (1954:42) the moment of creative breakthrough may occur at any time. There is a level of discipline, attention, will and therefore conscious effort that is necessary to achieve it. Creative people, according to Jackson (2010:14), are usually highly motivated individuals. She points out that they are willing to confront difficult situations and have a higher tolerance for mistakes than most average people. According to Bindeman (1998:71) the different levels of consciousness play a part in the early stages of the artist's work—eventually having an influence in the moment of creative inspiration. The act of creation is dynamic and exhilarating. It helps the creator to restore contact with the early stages of a human being's constructive process (Smith and Carlsson, 1990:7). An artist is continuously going through countless iterations in his/her creative process. He/she goes through all the stages in the creative process repeatedly as they attempt to create the artwork. In order to solve the problems he/she encounters in his/her process, an artist has to be dynamic in his/her thinking. This is where his/her creative function is utilised the most.

2.4. Inspiration and the creative process

Inspiration constitutes another central factor in the creative process. According to Robinson, inspiration is instrumental within the process of art-making. Artists may derive inspiration from either the presence of a muse or other similar external influences (Robinson, 2008:8). The scientist Friedrich Kekule who was grappling to understand the structure of the chemical benzene, came upon the answer when he was staring desolately into a fire. This is just an example of how the moment of creative breakthrough or inspiration can come to people at unexpected times (Newberg and d'Aquili, 2000:64). In terms of artistic creativity, it is possible that the creative breakthrough may come about in much the same way.

This is not to say, however, that the creative process is made up of spontaneous flashes of insight. Although, it is understood by scholars of Gestalt psychology (Latner, 2013) that spontaneity is equivalent to free-functioning. Free-functioning is another term for 'flow' coined by Csikszentmihalyi (1990). Joel Latner

argues that spontaneity is the grounded impulse in creative adjustment and creative imagination (Latner, 2013: 91). For example, Greer (1986:62) argues that when a poet is in full-fledged recitation of his/her work, he/she is exhibiting the spontaneous overflowing of his/her feelings. It is the expressive constituent in the temperament of the artist that allows for the affirmation of spontaneity and the free-play of imaginative and creative energies (Williams, 2004:238).

In most cases, the process of creating develops through a complex set of operations (Haynes, 1995:170) and Koestler (1964) remarks that the creative process is relatively the same across all domains. Oftentimes, it is absolutely crucial for the artist to take a break from the artwork, and allow the ideas he/she has about a particular artwork to synthesise into the ideal work that he/she envisioned. When looking at the creative process from the point of view of improvisation and inspiration, it is possible to divide it into two processes. Abraham Maslow calls them primary creativeness and secondary creativeness. Primary creativeness has to do with inspiration and secondary creativeness has to do with hard work and discipline (Maslow 1971, in Brown 2000:47). Abraham Maslow shows the two sides to the creative process. The first is one in which the artist receives a sudden flash of insight that directs him/her throughout the creative act, and the other needing hard work and perseverance. There is a mutually beneficial and reliant relationship between the two aspects inherent in the creative process.

Many artists spend a relentless amount of hours working on strategies that will bring them toward an inventive state that cultivates rather than blocks creativity. These practices can be referred to as rituals of discipline and stimulation. It is primarily through these ritualistic practices that artists invite the spark of creativity or the moment of inspiration (Brunton, 2006:57). The rituals that artists practise are used to either calm negative thoughts or sentiments, or even objective circumstances that might prove to be impediments in the creative process. They could also be used to reinvigorate artists who may appear to be lacklustre and inspire them. Jennifer Brunton (2006:58) claims that rituals are important to artists in that they *"contribute a sense of consistency and control in the artistic endeavour."* The iterative process of representation and reflection that artists go through causes a dynamic flux of meaning which brings new knowledge into existence (Somerville, cited in Rae, 2016:3).

Artists more often than not get their inspiration to create from underlying subjective factors which lay dormant within them. One such influence, is emotions. Emotions serve as a primary catalyst for artists to bring their creations alive. Emotions are components of creativity in as far as emotions are responsible for forming human action (Rae, 2016:5). In this dissertation, the impact that an artist's emotions have on their

lifeworld will be investigated with an attempt to be understood with the help of existential sociology's theory of sociology of emotions (cf. section 1.4.).

2.5. Problem-solving and the creative process

It is said that for creativity to occur, there must be a problem that requires solving (Newberg & d'Aquili, 2000:63). Problem-solving stands as a central theme in the creative process (Jackson, 2010:15). Recent studies into creativity have suggested that problem-solving strategies are among the most essential components that make up the art-making process. Creativity scholars have characterised the process of art-making as "*a problem solution problem continuum*" (Mace, 1997:267). Creative persons are said to be endowed with the ability to find problems, look at them in different ways, and find multiple solutions to the problems (Jackson, 2010:15). Along with this, sensitivity to problems is said to be a prerequisite factor in the personality of the creative individual (Williams, 1987:15). The creative impulse is stimulated by the problem-solving and problem-finding orientation of the creative process (Robinson, 2008:15).

One thing that scholars on creativity do agree on despite the complex nature of the creative process is that at the foundation of all creative performance is decision-making. The decisions that creative individuals have to make could be inductive, scientific or spiritual (Newberg and d'Aquili, 2000:63). Or, in the case of visual artists, they could be required to make decisions which may have an aesthetic consequence on their creative product. This could be with regards to the materials they would like to use, the initial concept that their work will rely on, making changes to this concept, discontinuing the concept and rebuilding on current works (Mace, 1997:267).

Although there can be no doubting the importance of problem-solving in creative production. Problem-finding exists as an important forerunner to it. Joseph Zinker states that "*every creative encounter is a search for and a partial resolution of a problem*" (Zinker, 1977:9). According to Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1976, cited in Henle, 1977:590) it is problem-finding and not problem-solving that is the hallmark of creativity. Creative people have a tendency to initiate creative problems in the creative process; it is a trait that is unique to them. The artist or creative individual works on these self-made projects in the creative process, and is determined to carry through the art-making project to its completion (Gardner, 1982:355).

The problem-formulation process which precedes problem-solving will determine if a creative product (for instance an artwork) will qualify or be considered as creative. Jacob Getzels and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

(1976, cited in Henle 1977) identify two kinds of problems in the art-making process. The first one they call a *discovered problem situation* and the other they call a *presented problem situation*. A presented problem they claim is one which has a predetermined solution in place with a customary method of achieving the solution. And, a discovered problem is one that artists use as a mechanism that ensures that they do not produce unoriginal pieces of work through their application of a pre-formulated solution to a pre-formulated problem. The *discovered problem situation* method is a consequence of what Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi refer to as 'stimulus seeking behaviour'—a characteristic that most creative people share (Williams, 1987:21). Ultimately what Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi find out is that the artists, who work according to the discovered problem situation, find that their work is judged to be more creative. Furthermore, it is concluded that the artists whose works are based according to a presented problem situation, are judged as producing works that are of a safer and less creative nature (Mace, 1997:267).

Problem-solving is a key component in the process of art-making but it seems as though it has more to do with how creative individuals approach the problems that they encounter. If the creative individual works with the problem-finding situation conjectured by Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi as being the most suitable for the generation of creative and unique works, they will receive better results in their creative works. According to Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1976) "*there will be a positive relationship between problem finding and quality of art products.*" Although the point should be emphasised that if an artist has a problem-finding-orientation in his/her approach to his/her work that does not necessarily make him/her a successful artist (Henle, 1977:590). Marissa Robinson (2008:15) disagrees with the idea that problem finding precedes the need to solve a problem in the art-making process. She says: "*The solution is not understood or planned before the encounter takes place.*" There are other external factors that exist in the person's field that may play a role in his/her success or failure (cf. section 2.1.9.). It is important for the purposes of my study not to exclude them from the scope of my discussion but at the same time I heed the words of truth that emanate from the ancient adage: "*One who looks at everything might end up seeing nothing*" (Henle, 1977:591).

Artists are often perceived to be emotionally sensitive human beings, and the broad assumption is that the more conflicted the artist is, the more beautiful his/her artwork. Artists in their capacity as creators seek to work through different kinds of problems. These could be objective problems seen in the social structure or subjective problems that emerge from within them. The aim of this dissertation is to understand how the problem is first conceived by the artist, worked through by the artist, and solved by the artist. I aim to try to

understand this process whilst taking into consideration the artist's position as a social being subjected to subjective and objective forces.

2.6. Identity and the creative process

The way in which an artist forms and expresses his/her identity can be seen through the creative process (Brunton, 2006:101–102). *“Central to being a human is the creation, definition, and the redefinition of self and world—the artistic transformation of the personal and the social, the phenomenological and the cultural”* (Williams, 2004:240). The relationship between an artist's sense of identity of himself/herself and how that shows itself in his/her creative process is attributed to factors arising from, amongst others, his/her childhood. Between the ages of 5 and 7, children start becoming expressive in their behaviour and how they play (Gardner, 1982:128). For some children it is merely a stage that they eventually pass, but for others, it is a time where the decision to become an artist is established. The decision to become an artist is often motivated by experiences or events that happened to them in the past. In adulthood, artists remember these moments and regard them as being integral in their choice to pursue a life as an artist (Brunton, 2006:102).

When people make the conscious decision to become artists they adopt a different perspective towards certain features in their lifeworld (Nelson and Rawlings, 2007:221). Jennifer Brunton (2006:113) reiterates this point when she argues that the daily world of an artist may be taken over by completely arts-related interactions, brought about by the closeness between the artist's social life and creative spheres of his/her lifeworld. Participating in creative pursuits allows artists to: *“Explore their identities”* (Beaty et al., 2014:2). The creative impulse cannot be actualised without a degree of introspection (Robinson, 2008:17). This is in line with how psychologists have described creativeness as a quality that is consistent with healthy human behaviour and rooted at the very core of artistic production and life experience (Rowe, 1994:15). The hindrances that they encounter in the creative process can get translated into the artists lives. If an artist experiences a feeling of emptiness in his/her personal life, he/she may choose to engage in art-making to fill this feeling of emptiness that possesses him/her (Nelson and Rawlings, 2007:221). The creative instinct that lies at the core of human life helps to compose our experience of self and world (Williams, 2004:240).

The creative process is also a vehicle for self-exploration for the artist. This is because so much is revealed to the artist in the creative process. The artist has certain existential feelings that he/she experiences and the creative process gives the artist a platform or vessel to explore and understand where these existential feelings come from. The subject matter and the aesthetic qualities that the artist infuses into his/her work

speak volumes about his/her personal mode of self-expression and this self-expression is primarily an emotion-driven intentional action (Brunton, 2006:109). This is because the ability to have total control over his/her subject matter and technique asserts the point that the artist has freedom of expression (Grenfell and Hardy, 2007:113). Artists are specifically adept at creatively situating their identities in the social realm. This is the case because of their acute awareness of themselves and despite the dynamism of social reality, particularly peoples' social practices in society. Artists often continue to maintain their independence and identities as cultural custodians and story-tellers.

Jean Paul Satre (1946, cited in Golden 2012:11) outlined how important authenticity is, by saying that it "*consists in having a true and lucid consciousness of the situation*" and accepting responsibility for the consequences that this may have. The artist must mould his style, genre, and creative medium with the personal expression of his identity. The creative act and the tensions that occur in the process represent a struggle between the individual creator and the artistic object. The creative process is fluid in its nature. The artist must maintain a reflexive attitude in the assessment of his/her place in relation to the process. The dialogue that the creator has with himself/herself in the creative process is the creative encounter (cf. section 2.1.11.) (Golden, 2012:18). In this encounter, the artist is not only engaged with trying to produce a work of art but he/she is also busy crafting his/her identity. According to Smith and Carlsson (1990:5) creativity generates new and productive ways of experiencing reality and the perceiver's own self. One can see this in the ability of most creative artists to sublimate different kinds of energies and direct his/her artistic gaze towards solving underlying conflicts (Akerman and Ouellette, 2012:385).

According to Haynes (1995:55) the authenticity of an artist's identity is realised in the creative object. It is a state that is actualised through the artistic object. To a degree, the artistic object expresses the identity of the artist and substantiates the artist's existence as himself/herself. Sibel Golden (2012:12) acknowledges this when she says: "*The inherent connection to the self, along with the creative encounter, brings into existence the new creation.*" At the core of being an artist is the propensity to create and this inclination to produce art holds profound importance for the artist's existence. "*For some artists, creativity may be seen to represent existence*" (Brunton, 2006:112). The creative process can harness growth in the individual and creativity can contribute to the evolution of society (Koestler 1989, cited in Robinson, 2008:7).

However, there are perspectives on creativity that examine it as a phenomenon that supersedes the individual's personal experience. These perspectives want to show that the creative process can help the individual go beyond his/her ego-self. Marissa Robinson (2008:20) emphasises that "*art is an expression of*

what is both imminent and transcendent". Ricoeur (cited in Akerman and Ouellette, 2012:356–386) concurred with this opinion when he said that *"within artistic practice there is a dialectic between exploration of one's current and future life and that which is rooted in the past."* Speaking about the creative product, Michel Foucault, once claimed that all manner of discourses with an author or artist have the function of indicating what he called a "plurality of selves." He stated that nowhere in those products can there be a real individual or self. He implored us to consider the nature of things in the postmodern framework. Foucault went further to say that in one single text there are multiple voices: *"This is something that is not only typical of the postmodern identity but also of how identities are being constructed"* (Haynes, 1995:172).

However, the practise of art may serve as an anchor that brings a sense of coherence to an artist's identity. Art-making does this through providing the creator access to his/her subjective self (Akerman and Ouellette, 2012:389). This happens only in the creative process. In this dissertation, I want to suggest to researchers that they should not attempt to confine the work and the life of an artist to one particular medium or character. Artists are multi-dimensional, and I maintain throughout this dissertation that they think in a fluid and pluralistic way. Constraining the artist's actions and behaviour to fit certain ideals expected of him/her by society will frustrate the artist. Furthermore, you will also limit your own understanding of the artist's identity and creative process.

Identities are of course subject to the contexts in which they are constructed or performed. They urge the artists to contextualise their choices about their subject matter and use of aesthetic principles according to their cultural background (*habitus*), and art-worlds (*field*) that they form part of. These are factors that influence how artists creatively express themselves creatively and artistically. Therefore, as Brunton (2006:109) puts it, *"identity, then, is reflected in the production of art that is influenced by the artists and institutions with which artists identify, either through association, rejection or emulation."* The experiences that an artist has in his/her lifeworld will have an impact on the kind of creative work that he/she produces. Similarly, the creative process will also have an impact on the individual experience of his/her world (Robinson, 2008:1).

2.7. Impact of the environment on the creative process

The creative artist's environment has an influence on his/her creative process. Artists have to be aware of the environment in which they practice their art because their success depends on them conforming to the codes of practice imposed to them by the field of cultural consumption they belong to (Grenfell & Hardy,

2007:111). John Hospers (1984) states that: *“Much can be said for the view that during the act of creation the artist must be cold as ice: he must be completely the master of the complex, intricate, and recalcitrant medium in which he/she is working that he cannot allow any disturbance, not grief, not distress or worry, not sadness, not even joy, to disturb his efforts at total mastery”* (Greer, 1986:63). Therefore, the general opinion is that for researchers to understand the creative process of art-making, they have to also look into the artist’s everyday environment (Beaty et al., 2014:2).

The environment of the artist is a huge contributor to how he/she develops as an artist. For instance, as Gardner (1982:89) states, in his/her preschool years, the child artist needs to be in an environment which exposes him/her to artistic materials and works of that nature. There is no real need for active intervention. As the child artist goes through the school system, and comes across more rigid rules, and restrictions start to be imposed on him/her, this is where the environment that surrounds her/him performs a more active role.

The creative choices that an artist makes are influenced by what goes on in his/her individual lifeworld. These external influences emerging from the artist’s lifeworld will be referred to as social practices. Social practices do not affect each and every artist in society in the same way, even those who co-exist in the same artistic field (Haynes, 1995:169). Michael Grenfell and Cheryl Hardy (2007:113) affirm this statement and assert that *“art production needs to be understood as essentially immanent within the structures of society.”* With the artist’s upbringing being so crucial to the composition of his/her identity—another important factor that needs consideration is what does the cultural environment that artists form part of do to their functioning as artists?

The widespread opinion expressed by numerous researchers on creativity claims that men and women experience creativity differently. Women’s traditional roles as caregivers conflict very much with their identities as artists. Society often has a stereotypic and traditional way of viewing women’s role in society. Art-making is not what usually comes to mind when expected careers for women are thought of. Rather, women’s experiences have often been limited to the duties of raising children and taking care of the home. Society in the past saw experiences such as these as being unique to women. Therefore, female artists had long been affected by heteronormative assumptions such as these. These societal roles formed part of who they were and how they practised their artistry. It could have limited their time to create, or could have taken up so much of their energy that they failed to produce many works of art. Contemporary studies do

show that the experience of childrearing often offers women artists enhanced motivation to produce art and acts as a source for inspiration (Stephenson, 2010:32).

The environment that the creative artist is raised in holds answers to aspects of his/her creative development. The art-world or environment that the artist functions within may impact the way in which he/she represents his/her inner creative impulses or himself/herself as an artist or member of society (Brunton, 2006:43). This has much to do with how much the artist's environment influences his/her identity. The way in which the artist grows up in his/her environment has implications for his/her identity as an artist. The artist's talents can either be cultivated or be met with disdain. In the case of his/her talents being unappreciated by people artists are capable of taking negative experiences such as pain, struggle and conflict and use these experiences as powerful creative tools.

Artists often feel compelled to direct their own artistic learning and expression regardless of their environment being conducive to creative work or not. Self-taught artists often attribute it to situations of adversity, for them having being able form and express their creative identities. Artists from a very young age may use positive or negative aspects of their backgrounds to feed and define their identity. Creative backgrounds may nurture creativity, while non-creative backgrounds may offer adversity in such a way that artists' identities as artists are strengthened (Brunton, 2006:105-109).

A major environmental or structural deterrent to the artist experiencing flow in his/her creative process is the presence or lack of financial support. The financial or economic insecurity of the life of the ordinary artist is the primary structural cause for disruption or problems in the creative process of art-making. Economic insecurity causes a lot of problems for the artist because realistically speaking, how can they be expected to create art at their most fluent capability if they have not had food to eat or perhaps even a place to stay. On the other side of the coin, an artist who is financially secure might be able to produce artworks prodigiously. This is because all their basic needs have been met and therefore there is no need to worry about surviving. This security helps them focus their energies completely on expressing themselves creatively and artistically. Often artist may abuse the fortunate positions they may hold. This can be seen in deviant behaviour such as drug abuse or the improper use of money.

2.8. The importance of skill and technique to the creative process

The use of skill and technique is very integral to any creative process, more so when it comes to haptic art forms. Skill and technique are characteristics that are unique to certain individuals because people do not

have the same techniques and have different ways of using the skills that they have learnt. The artistic skills that a creative artist has may be determined by, for example, a person's perception of things that exist in the world. It is possible that some artists have a peculiar eye for spotting certain qualities in what are considered to be mundane properties of this earth. Two people given the same object or event to perceive most likely will have different interpretations of what they saw. This is because perception is particular to a person, as it draws amongst others upon a person stock of knowledge he/she accesses through memory (Jamieson, 2008:76). As I came to realise throughout this research, memory and remembering are important to the conceptualisation of the artistic problem or story that is to be told.

There are different types of skills that artists make use of in the creative process. In my opinion a very important skill that all good visual artists need to possess is perceptual skill. Perceptual skill pertains to the perception of, amongst other things, colour, tone, and line and the contribution of the aforementioned elements to what is the unitary whole (Jamieson, 2008:78). The visual artist needs to be able to construct, form and also be able to appropriate symbols which prospective viewers will be able to resonate with. Art-making as an activity invariably requires competency on behalf of the creator to handle tools and materials. By tools and materials, I am referring to the equipment and material that his/her medium or outlet is based on or the material and aids commonly found in art establishments and studios (Jamieson, 2008:78). Skill is certainly an integral part of the whole process of art-making; there are certain competencies that a practising artist needs to possess.

The issue of sensitivity is another skill that is important to art-making, but it is one that is often misunderstood. People see sensitivity as a personality factor: for example a term, to describe a person who is predisposed to being affective and emotional. But when it is seen from the angle of perceptual skill theory, sensitivity means gathering information and is related to a heightening of awareness. As Jamieson (2008:79) states: *"Art as practice by its nature demands a keen awareness of visual cues, of being sensitive to certain features that are essential to the task at hand."* Another skill that is vital to the creative process is decision-making (cf. section 2.1.5 where decision-making is being discussed in the context of problem-solving and problem-finding). A person's decision-making style is how the individual conducts working with a certain tool, material or object used in art-making. As Maxwell (2010:181) states each individual has his/her own unique way of making decisions—this is connected to the differences that are present in the art-making processes that different artists have.

2.9. Artistic field and the creative process

The art-world is an institution whereby a certain hierarchy has to be observed. In the art-world, artistic production is controlled by entities that often occupy the top of the art-world structure. It is safe to say that all artists want to see themselves not being subject to the contingencies of this world. Because of the precarious nature of their lives, artists often find themselves at the mercy of forces that control the artists primarily through monetary considerations. These factors affect what and how the artists produce the kind of artwork that they do or they would like to. Artists, like other individuals in this world, are structurally conditioned. The routes they take to overcome this conditioning are often complex and most of the time impenetrable (Bourdieu, 1996:132). The relationships that artists have with the market exemplify this structural domination, as it is precisely from the structures of the market that artists seek to remove themselves. The market creates the incongruent picture that artists have of the public at large (Bourdieu, 1996:57). Because of their status as producers, artists occupy a position of structural inferiority in relation to the persons who sit at the top of the structures and produce the ideologies which the artists work according to.

Artists are in a continuous struggle to divest themselves of the impact that objective structures have on them. Creative thinking is such that it allows the individual to surpass or transgress all conventional conceptions of reality (Smith and Carlsson, 1990:191). The artist wants to create beyond his/her visual and perceptual field but the field of production he/she finds himself/herself a part of controls the specific principles and ways of appreciating the natural and social world that the artist relies on. Therefore, what and how the artist aesthetically relates to in his/her work is a function of his/her environment. Since he/she strives for autonomy, the artist never achieves it absolutely. He/she is subject to the forces that exist within his/her person and outside of it in the realm of social reality. The more dominant the artist's field is on the artist, the less likely it becomes for the artist to produce works of art of value and true meaning (Bourdieu, 1996:295). In addition, the form and the content of expression is a representation of the dominant social order, the time and place in step with the structural needs, argues Williams (2004:240).

2.10. Artistic training and the creative process

There are two divergent views on how artistic talent can get developed to its fullest potential in the creative artist. One view, called the natural perspective, opts to view the child as a seed that is tiny and fragile but which contains everything that it needs to become a great artist. The duty of the teacher is to provide protection and sustenance to the seed in the form of nurturing it and shielding it from any malevolent influences that may disrupt its growth. The process of learning begins when the child artist is very young. It

stops once the artist has taught himself/herself to forget what he/she has learned (Koestler, 1964:379). The other view is much more in favour of training the artist, in the way of giving him/her directives, equipping him/her with the necessary skills to flourish (Gardner, 1982:208-209). Once the artist has acquired sufficient ability through his/her learning of the skills given to him/her, then he/she can express himself/herself as he/she wishes (Koestler, 1964:373). The artist cannot achieve this without the assistance of a gifted teacher or practising artist. To be proficient in the arts, the artist needs to acquire intricate skills which he/she can only acquire from educators (Gardner, 1982:209).

Art training helps an artist to learn new techniques which he/she can apply in his/her work. Art training can be an empowering experience for the artist (Stephenson, 2010:42). Artists can broaden the scope of their work by adding new dimensions to it through the new techniques and skills that they acquire. Not all artists are in favour of art training. Some artists are critical of artistic training, claiming that it limits their creativity, through having them often to work with mainly one utilitarian technique. Artists attach a lot of meaning to their technique. According to Grenfell and Hardy (2007:112) the artist resonates with his/her technique and craft on a very intimate level. Many artists are opposed to this narrow approach to art-making which can often be attributed to formal arts training (Brunton, 2006:46).

As can be seen throughout this chapter, artists are people who often refuse to conform to expected standards. Either in their creative work or in their lives, artists want to put their own unique stamp on their work. Artistic training can stifle this impulse. Artistic training gives utilitarian methods to practitioners but the problem is that from such dissemination of knowledge very little differentiation occurs. On the other hand, other artists admitted to owing it to training for them being versatile artists. *“During periods of training and education, some further refined their creative inklings, while others recognised and developed previously unknown artistic identities”* (Brunton, 2006:101). Art-training has an impact on how the creative artist will experience the creative encounter. Pierre Bourdieu’s reflexive sociology helps me understand the influence that art-training has on the creative process compared to when an artist has not received any kind of artistic training at all (cf. section 1.3. for a discussion Bourdieu’s concept of methodological relationalism).

2.11. Encountering the creative process

In the creative process the artist realises that there is a gulf that exists between his/her subjective experience and objective reality. Pending on how the creative individual deals with such a realisation, this tends to result in the perennial tension that artists encounter in the creative process. Sahar Hajali (2016:316) states that the subjective impression that the artwork has on its creator is a result of the tension

that occurs between the creator and his/her creative product. Most of the time, the artist is able to overcome the tension and eventually new meaning is established (Golden, 2012:17). The artist who uses particular pigments of paint on the canvas does not wish to represent the pigment used or the canvas. Conversely, they are also not showing the represented objects and events as they really happened, too. What they are doing, is giving their own interpretations which is a product of their mental experiences and imaginings of *"the nature, causes, shape, and colour of objects and events"* (Koestler, 1964). Arthur Koestler argues that, when practising art, one participates in a subjective exercise, where one's vision as the artist and the viewer of the art is compromised (Koestler, 1964:370). It is compromised in such a way that, as the artist, one will always try to give a true reflection of the times, but never recreates the actual event. Moreover, as the viewer of art, one will always get a secondary representation of the phenomenon that the artist tried to portray and you will interpret it in your own way, thus making it a tertiary interpretation.

The artist works on the periphery of the external world, as well as trying to honour what his/her inward self wants. The creative process forces the creator to confront these two dimensions of his/her lifeworld (Haynes, 1995:174). He/she has to do this whilst being subjected to the constraints of corporality. So, as much as there are claims from certain scholars in the sphere of creativity research who state that the creative process is an experience that transcends space and time, there is no experience that can take place outside of the dimensions of space and time. In addition, space and time are dynamic entities and are always changing. Change is an important feature of the creative process and since experience is also a consequence of space and time, it is variable. Therefore, the subjective experience of the creator in relation to his/her product of creation will have different constitutions (Haynes, 1995:166). The artist's creativity is delimited to space and time and within the boundaries of space and time he/she somehow creates new visions of the world. However, through the realisation of their creative and expressive nature, artists can transcend the alienating character of structure and normativity (Williams, 2004:244).

After reviewing much of the literature written on the creative process, I realise that most studies that have been conducted on the creative process were predominantly within the scholarly discipline of psychology. So, where does my study fit in the context of other research that has been conducted on the creative process of art-making? Phenomenological studies on the creative process are not in abundant supply. For those studies that boast a research problem such as this study's, many do very little to provide a narrative analysis of the artist's experiences of the creative process of art-making. More especially, how problem-solving in art-making is experienced. Putting the creative process into words is said to take something away

from the process itself. The creative process loses its essence because all verbal accounts of experiences such as the creative process of art-making, turn an activity that is engaged in by people who are in a subjective state and make it fully objective (Koestler, 1964:371). With that having been said, in this dissertation I make use of hermeneutic analysis to investigate and break open the narratives of the visual artists and observe how, through the use of story-telling, these creators uniquely interpret and understand the creative process of art-making. Furthermore, I make use of the hermeneutic paradigm to obtain an understanding of the reflexive creative process which primarily all creators, specifically in this case visual artists, engage in.

I attempt to understand the lifeworlds of creators through Bourdieu's reflexive sociology. Assertions have been made that the artist's habitus and field can be identified in the product of his/her art (Grenfell and Hardy, 2007:126). Through methodological relationalism proposed by Bourdieu (cf. section 1.3.2.), I try to examine how an artist's subjective experience and objective reality influence each other and how the influence manifests itself in his/her art production. Bourdieu speaks of a double reading when he refers to the relationships people have with their subjective experiences and objective reality. This will inform my study as I will not take preference of one over the other. The creator, as much as he/she engages in a cerebral process of art production, is impacted by his/her environment, culture and other institutional forces that exist outside of him/her. To neglect one and focus on the other would be disregarding an important part of the artist's lifeworld. The artist fuses his/her internal experience into the reality that exists outside of him/her.

Pierre Bourdieu's reflexive sociology is paramount to this study. This is because reflexive sociology allows the researcher to take his/her own viewpoint and scrutinise it, as he/she would, if it was itself an object of scientific investigation. Therefore, it is a result of this paradigm that the researcher is able to free himself/herself, and others from the enclosed point of view of which he/she might be unaware of (Bourdieu, 1996:207). The goal of the reflexive viewpoint is not to renounce objectivity, but rather it is to cast doubt on the privilege of the knowing subject. According to Bourdieu (1996:207) to adopt the reflexive point of view is to *"strive to account for the empirical 'subject' in the very terms of the objectivity constructed by the scientific subject."* Advocates of the reflexive stance have indicated that it no longer suffices to look exclusively at the subject for the preconditions of objective knowledge that is established by the subject. The researcher will do well to look at the objective constructions that constitute the subject's world (Bourdieu, 1996:208).

The process of art-making can generate strong emotion in the creator. This is because in art-making, a person illuminates aspects of his/her inner life (Zinker, 1977:16). But artists are known to sublimate these emotions and express them in the creative process. By making use of the perspective known as the sociology of emotions, I will venture into what kind of emotional experiences artists use as triggers to create, and furthermore how they use these emotional experiences to create (cf. section 1.4. sociology of emotions). *"A creative person is aware of his/her emotions and is able to use them effectively"* (Jackson, 2010:15). The creative process positions the creator in the space between being and non-being. This is the ethereal position where the artist is inside his/her physical body but mentally he/she is transcending the ordinary limitations of conscious experience. The artist is constantly engaged in a process of understanding his/her place in this world. Existential sociological tenets will be helpful to uncover what motivates and drives the creator in this world. This perspective will assist them in understanding how they perceive their position in the context of their lives and what does the creative process of art-making offer to their existence (cf. section 1.4.).

There are fundamentally two kinds of artists (two-dimensional and three-dimensional artists), and they have their respective sources of enjoyment when it comes to the creative process. This implies that, as well as the relationships these artists have with their tools, how artists experience the creative process is determined by the kind of artists they are. The nature and extent of self-differentiation amongst art-makers occurs in the form of two-dimensional artists (e.g. painters) and three-dimensional artists (e.g. sculptors). Two-dimensional artists derive pleasure from the act of creation itself and they get their meaning from the place or context in which the creative act took place. They are also known to attribute artistic control to their artwork. Three-dimensional artists on the other side of the spectrum derive enjoyment from the final product of their artistic activities, and they get meaning when they recreate their selves in material form. Contrary to two-dimensional artists, three-dimensional do not attribute artistic control to their artwork (Banfield and Burgess, 2013:60). As is evident from this description, these two kinds of artists are on opposite ends of the spectrum when it comes to how either of them conceptualise their individual creative processes and how they experience art-making.

This study will not only be focusing on what the artist does but also on who the artist is. The artist like any other human being, works by necessity; in the sense that they have a visceral urge to create art. He/she is also an element in the world but he/she is regarded more seriously than other natural creations. Art researchers want to understand the artist's artworks but fail to understand what brought them into being.

There is nothing in this world that cannot be replicated but it is rare to see a man working in his/her own way, and acting intentionally to create original works that serve to imitate nature. We give meaning to the creative products made by artists but we show little interest in the person that created these products (Ghiselin, 1954:52). Mainstream sociology has for a while turned a blind-eye to the complexity and uniqueness of its subject matter: human beings (Williams, 2004:248). In this dissertation, I wish to bring sociological scholarship back to its essence by focusing on the artist. There are sociological scholars who emphasise the relevance of uniquely human qualities such as, intentionality, determinism and meaning, as crucial concepts for understanding human behaviour. I seek to align my thesis with the advocates of this perspective.

A narrative account of the creative process of art-making given by visual artists themselves opens the possibilities of what hearing the muted voices of the artists will bring. The subjective and objective realms of experience that compose the artists' reality are important to an understanding of the artist. In this study the artist is made to look inward to encounter his/her feelings, thoughts and emotions. He/she is led to reflect on the influences of his/her objective and subjective experiences and how that affects who he/she is and what kind of work he/she produces. With the help of this understanding, I will arrive at a point where problem-formulation and problem-solving in the creative process, and the creative process of art-making, are understood in a holistic and epistemologically sound fashion.

Chapter three: methodological account

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to embed this study in a methodological framework through outlining and discussing the particular research methods that were utilised to arrive at an understanding of this study's research objectives. This task will be conducted to the effect of synchronising the theoretical and philosophical perspectives reviewed in the preceding chapters with this study's unique epistemological and ontological bases. I will begin this chapter with a discussion of qualitative research methodology. The purpose of this discussion is to set a framework in which this study's methodology can be located. From this I will proceed to an elaboration of the operational concepts (reflexivity and intersubjectivity) that were used to achieve 'understanding' in the process of gathering data.

Thereafter, I will embark on a delineation of the research questions or objectives of this study. This will be followed by a discussion on narrative methodology which will be succeeded by an exploration of the research methods that I implemented to obtain data in the field. Lastly, this chapter will be concluded with three discussions: (1) a deliberation on the ethical considerations that were taken prior, during and after data collection, (2) an overview of the process of data analysis wherein I embarked on interacting with and examining the data that were gathered in the field, and (3) I will offer a description of how the quality of qualitative research can be assessed and how this assessment was undertaken for the purposes of this study.

3.1. Qualitative research methodology

Qualitative research is an approach to doing social research that claims to describe people's experiences from the point of view of the people who participate. The main aim of this approach is to achieve an understanding of social realities through making the unknown patterns that run across and between people in society perceptible (Flick, von Kardoff and Steinke, 2004:3). Qualitative research does this through orienting the individual's experiences in all their complexity in the centre and using these experiences as starting points to arrive at an understanding of social life.

The central tenets of qualitative research differ from those in quantitative research. As opposed to quantitative research methodology, qualitative research methodology follows an inductive cycle of reasoning. In this mode of inquiry, theory is derived by an accumulation of small insights in the process of data collection. Whereas, quantitative research methodology is mainly a top-down approach in which

theory guides the data collection process. Qualitative research aims to describe and understand human behaviour, on the other hand quantitative research seeks to predict and explain it.

Conrad Kotze (2013:66) argues that qualitative research works at minimising the intersubjective gap that exists between the researcher and the participant. Qualitative research does this through bringing the epistemological and ontological positions of both researcher and participant under investigation within the context of the social inquiry. What this does is to enable the fertile exchange of mutually constructed meanings to be understood. It is from this process of collaborative sharing that the qualitative researcher is able to extrapolate the general from the specific, i.e. the basic principle of inductive reasoning.

3.1.1. Reflexivity in qualitative research methodology

Reflexivity is a fundamental principle in how qualitative research is conducted. In qualitative research the researcher's involvement in the field with his/her participants is regarded as a critical part of gaining knowledge about the field. In qualitative research, the subjective manifestations of the researcher and those people being researched constitute the core of the research process. The researcher in this approach is encouraged to reflect on the actions and observations he/she makes while in the field. The impressions or feelings that emerge from the researcher during his/her research process form part of the eventual interpretations of the study (Flick, 2009:16).

Tim May and Beth Perry (2011:84) claim that a reflexive researcher is one who seeks to understand the effects of his/her actions on the progression of his/her research practice. A researcher who finds himself/herself in a certain field context adopts a certain way of thinking and acting. His/her actions and thoughts are informed by the cultural and social milieu in which he/she finds himself/herself. The researcher then develops and produces knowledge that is an outcome of the practices learnt within the locality in which his/her research was conducted (May and Perry, 2011:85).

Reflexivity helps the researcher to maintain his/her self-awareness in the field. It allows the researcher to remove himself/herself from the various forces that occur in the field. This makes it possible for the researcher to establish a role distance between himself/herself as component of the field and himself/herself as analysing the components that exist within the field (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:37). The researcher who practises reflexivity in the field is able to acknowledge the impact of the actions that occur at a micro level (intersubjectively) and also acknowledge at a macro-level (structurally) the impact of actions that constitute everyday social interaction.

In order for reflexive practice to be effective for the researcher who is studying the lifeworlds of others, he/she has to start with his/her participants' understanding of meaning (May and Perry, 2011:86). This entails an intersubjective encounter between the researcher and his/her research participant where the two parties engage in communication which is conducive for learning, sharing and understanding to occur. The researcher, when presented with the facts (subjective and objective) of his/her participants' lifeworld, begins to question these facts against the pre-established assumptions of his/her research.

3.1.2. Intersubjective understanding in qualitative research methodology

Intersubjectivity is a term that is used to refer to the knowledge that people share in a given socio-cultural setting. Qualitative researchers use this term to understand how the sharing of knowledge amongst people translates into commonly accepted social actions or practices (May and Perry, 2011:23). The term intersubjectivity is often misunderstood to exclusively mean the understanding or rapport that the researcher accrues with his/her participant. Steven Vaitkus (2000:280) suggests that intersubjectivity should be understood to include both dimensions of intimacy (rapport and understanding) and anonymity (hidden structures that bring people together).

Intersubjective understanding is a fundamental characteristic of qualitative research. Mats Alvesson and Kaj Sköldberg (2009:55) argue that intersubjective understanding should be used to understand the micro-processes that occur between people and not the macro functions or structures. It is more of a term to grasp the interactive relations that take place between actors within the field. In addition, for a researcher to possess an intersubjective understanding of his/her research participants, the researcher requires the research participants to comprehend the symbols that are conveyed by actors in a given socio-cultural context (2009:55).

Therefore, intersubjective understanding happens primarily at a social level; in which social phenomenological occurrences are analysed by the researcher in relation to the social structures of the participants' lifeworld (Vaitkus, 2000:293). The complex activities, dialogues and discourses that form part of the process of social interaction are subject to the analysis of the researcher (Kotze, 2013:68). Without the theoretical possibility of such phenomena being present, communication in the normal sense would be meaningless (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009:151).

3.2. Research questions and objectives

The formulation of research questions in a qualitative research study is a deciding factor which may determine the success or failure of the study. This is because the manner in which these questions are

constructed exerts a marked influence on the direction which the research will take. The researcher should pay particular attention to formulate research questions or objectives that are unambiguous and well-articulated (Flick, von Kardoff and Steinke, 2004:149). Below is a discussion of the primary and secondary research questions or objectives that were integral to this study.

1. How is the creative process of art-making experienced by visual artists? This is the study's primary research question or objective. This is because this research question encompasses the secondary research questions. The purpose of this question or objective is to understand the experiences that the visual artist encounters or undergoes in his/her creative process.
2. From where do artists derive their inspiration to create? Inspiration is a vital facet of creative activity no less art-making. Artists make use of inspiration to creatively express themselves in their practice. The purpose of this research question or objective is to understand from which domain of the artists lifeworld does most of the inspiration for the artist to create comes?
3. How do artists perceive and solve problems in the creative process? Problem-solving is the most common characteristic of creative practice across all spheres of society. The ability to think about, find and solve problems in his/her creative process is a major part of an artist's functioning. The purpose of this research question or objective is to arrive at an understanding of how the artist perceives the problems that occur in his/her creative process, in terms of how he/she initially arrives at and encounters these problems. Secondly this research question aims to understand how the artist goes about working through these problems to achieve a solution for them.
4. In what way does the creative process of the visual artist influence his/her external environment and how does the external environment influence the creative process? The artist as subject is susceptible to the influences of his/her subjective and objective experiences. The creative process as an activity that the artist participates in is affected by the influences that impose themselves on the artist. The purpose of this research question is to investigate how the creative process of the visual artist and his/her external environment impact on one another to create the artist's lifeworld.
5. How does the creative process integrate subjective experience and objective reality? This research question or objective is similar to the one that precedes it. The purpose of this research question or objective is to determine to what extent and how does the creative process of an artist represent both the influences of external stimuli (structural factors) and personal feelings.

3.3. The narrative approach

Narrative inquiry and narrative research are terms that are used interchangeably to pertain to research that is directed at understanding... *"Stories as they are lived, told, retold and relived circulate in and fill spaces between people"* (Caine, Estefan and Clandinin, 2013:574). In qualitative research the narrative approach is used by researchers to delve into the stories of participants in the effort to understand the ways these stories are constructed and situated (Hickson, 2016:380). The narrative researcher's preoccupation lies mainly with what people do when they engage in storytelling.

The focal point of narratives is people and the widespread idea held by narrativists is that every individual, family, organisation and group possess their own narrative (Spector-Mersel, 2010:205). The narrative approach is considered the best way of representing and understanding the experiences of people. This is because the way people understand their lifeworlds is primarily through a narrative-based framework (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000:17–18). Narratives have enormous influence in how people shape reality. Narratives are instrumental to how a person chronicles his/her life, life story and the way in which that individual represents his/her past and future (Spector-Mersel, 2010:208).

3.3.1. The narrative turn

In the late 1980s and early 1990s social scientists began to initiate a shift in how social experience is understood. It was during this period that social researchers began to appreciate the narrative inquiry as a research methodology (Caine, Estefan and Clandinin, 2013:574). Researchers began to acknowledge the importance of narratives as a tool that people use to recount their life events in the form of stories. The intersubjective relationships that people have were also put under the social scientists' micro-scope in that these shared intersubjective meanings were distinctively circulated through story-telling (Hardy, Gregory and Ramjeet, 2009:8).

The narrative approach is taken from literary scholarship where it was established and has made its way into many social science disciplines such as: psychology, anthropology, sociology, history and socio-linguistics. The narrative paradigm is renowned for the diversity of its approach with regards to the fundamental elements that constitute a paradigm: the ontology, epistemology and methodology (Guba and Lincoln 1994, 2005, cited in Spector-Mersel, 2010:206). Furthermore, narrative inquiry constitutes a broad yet detailed framework within which various paradigms, theoretical orientations and analyses exist simultaneously (2010:206).

Helen Hickson (2016:383) claims that narrative methodologies are centred on social constructivist assumptions about the lives, relationships and experiences of people. According to White and Hede, (2008:26): *“the significance of narrative interpretation is said to be threefold: (1) it prevents the complexity of the participants’ experiences from being simplified and nuances from being lost through fracturing the data into smaller components or themes, (2) it allows for the researcher’s voice to be heard, and (3) it allows the reader to make his/her own interpretation of the data presented”*.

3.3.2. The role of reflexivity in narrative methodology

Narrative methodology is a dynamic but characteristically personal kind of research methodology. This, I explain above, is because of the way in which the narrative researcher is expected to obtain an understanding of his/her research participant’s lifeworld as if it was his/her own. As one would imagine, this is not an easy task. Amidst the encounters that he/she has in the process of conducting research, it is expected of the narrative researcher to maintain both fixed in his/her position yet flexible enough to interpret his/her and others’ experiences.

Nevertheless, the narrative researcher manages to practise the ability to critically examine the nature of the research and his/her role as the researcher. The role of reflexive thinking and the practice that the researcher has in the field is intricately woven within the fabric of narrative inquiry (Hickson, 2016:381). Furthermore, John Rae (2016:6) argues that the role of reflexivity in qualitative research is to replace the objectivity that would normally be sought in other research paradigms. Narratives are essentially retrospective in their nature due to people’s application of them to shape or re-order their past experiences. Narrative methodology is unique in such a way that it allows the researcher to understand his/her actions and that of the others in a given socio-cultural setting. With the reflexive understanding of his/her actions and those of the other—the researcher is now capable of organising events into a meaningful whole and of seeing the consequences of events and actions over a period of time (Chase, 2005, cited in White and Hede, 2008:24).

A researcher is not value-free in his/her capacity within the field which is under his/her inquiry. The knowledge the researcher has about facts and theories, as well as socio-cultural experiences, influence his/her thinking, behaviour and conversations (Hardy, Gregory and Ramjeet, 2009:11). Reflexive thinking assists the researcher to abandon her/his theoretical blinkers (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009:263) that limit the scope of his/her perspective when conducting co-constructive and interpretive research such as narrative-based research. In addition to this, reflexivity or reflexive thinking is there for the researcher to

acknowledge the impact of the values from which he/she is operating. Reflexive thinking helps the researcher to use his/her understanding to open doors to new knowledge about what is happening in a given context and why (Hickson, 2016:382).

3.3.3. The value of the narrative approach

Uwe Flick (2009:283) stresses that the narrative is a gestalt which is loaded with more than a statement or recorded facts. This means that inside an individual's story lies all the meanings that are necessary to understand that particular individual's lifeworld. What makes narrative inquiry special is its fluidity and its propensity to challenge accepted forms of inquiry and hegemonic representational assumptions. Due to its dynamic nature, narrative inquiry is in a perpetual state of development and this forces the narrative inquirer to be constantly wakeful and reflexive (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000:184).

When conducting narrative analysis it is important that the narrative researcher takes into consideration the "so called" usefulness and applicability of the stories he/she encounters. The researcher is encouraged to take advantage of the versatility of this approach to arrive at findings that could perhaps inform changes in practice. Furthermore, if a researcher focuses his/her attention more on how participants construct meaning through the experiences that they have rather than concentrating all of his/her attention on the story, the researcher will start recognising the form and structure inherent in these narratives (Hardy, Gregory and Ramjeet, 2009:12-13).

Gabriela Spector-Mersel (2010: 220) suggests that: *"the narrative paradigm may contribute to a clearer dialogue not only among narrative scholars but also between them and adherents of other research paradigms, consequently enhancing the "paradigm dialog" needed in light of the contemporary challenges posed to qualitative research"*. Narrative methodology, with its emphasis on the relationships that become formed in the course of research will also go a long way in making possible the democratisation of knowledge between all people in a society.

3.3.4. Criticisms of the narrative approach

Narrative-based research has not gone without its fair share of criticism. Firstly, critics have criticised the very texts that are getting analysed by narrative researchers. Contending that some of these texts are not worthy of being analysed because they belong to the realm of the 'popular' and that narrativists of any discipline should stay away from such texts (Denzin, 1997:233). Perhaps the primary criticism of narrative inquiry is that narratives lack transferability in informing or changing practice. This is a feature of qualitative

research paradigms because of their highly detailed nature which makes it difficult for such methods to be applied to other situations (Hardy and Gregory and Ramjeet, 2009:5).

3.4. Research methods and data gathering

The research methods that were employed in this study's research process were chosen insofar as they align with this inquiry's methodological design (O'leary, 2004:91). The research questions that I designed at the inception of this research were used as guidelines in selecting the most appropriate research techniques, to use in the process of gathering data from research participants.

Fieldwork for this study took place over a period of four months from June 2016 to September 2016, in Bloemfontein, Free State Province. The main research techniques put into practice are interviewing, visual representation and documentation and participant observation. In the following section I offer the reader a brief discussion of the abovementioned research methods and how they were put to effective use in this study. But first, I will begin this discussion with a description of the criteria used to select the sample population for this study.

3.4.1. Sampling

Drawing an appropriate sample population that is befitting of one's research's ends is crucial for the researcher. This is because the research participants that the researcher finds for his/her research should be representative of the larger population that the research participants constitute part of. Representation usually implies that the results that the researcher obtains should be generalizable to the larger population of people in this chosen sample population (O'leary, 2004:103). However, given the interpretive basis of this study the objective is not to generalise the findings obtained across a larger population but merely to explore the experiences of those people who participated in this study (Kok, 2015:76).

I used non-probability sampling to obtain the unit of analysis of this study. Specifically, two kinds of non-probability sampling were used, namely purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Using purposive sampling or hand-picked sampling allowed me to have a hand in selecting which research participants would form part of my study's core group. Along with purposive sampling, I also made use of snowball sampling in order to acquire more participants in cases where I did not have access or had difficulties in locating certain people. In that case, I asked the participants that I had already included to refer me to one or two of their fellow visual artists.

In this study, the target population is identified as young Black (African) South African visual artists between the ages of 25 and 35. Initially I set out to get a total of six participants for this study, three male and three female but due to the inability to locate female visual artists I resorted to working with 6 male visual artists. The participants were all based in and around Bloemfontein (Mangaung) at the time the fieldwork was taking place.

3.4.2. Interviews

The narrative interview is a conduit through which the researcher can explore and understand the ways people make meaning out of their experiences and interactions with the world (Hickson, 2016:382). The narrative approach and other such methodologies to interviewing emphasise the importance that the discursive aspect of the interview has on the nature of the dynamic between interviewer and interviewee (White and Drew, 2011:6). The discursive aspect of the narrative interview provides the interviewee with the scope to tell his/her own story.

The focus of narrative interviews is on the stories that people tell. The plots and structures that emerge are paramount in narrative interviews. Within the dynamic of the narrative interview, it is common for unexpected themes or stories to spontaneously arise (Kvale, 2007:72). It is for this reason that I elected to make use of semi-structured interviews seeing that they provide the researcher the opportunity to explore and to respond to stories as they emerge (Hickson, 2016). A semi-structured interview cultivates fertile ground for a discursive rather than a confrontational interview to occur.

In a discursive interview, the researcher and research participant are equally constructing the knowledge as they go about conducting the interview. The researcher is as a result able to see the meanings the research participant attaches to certain phenomena in his/her lifeworld. Intersubjective understanding is created and shared and the researcher is still able to probe the stories or responses that he/she receives from the participant. In addition to this, in a semi-structured narrative interview, the researcher encourages the research participant to open up about a given topic. The interviewee is afforded space to focus his/her attention on the given topic and may also discuss whatever else he/she thinks is necessary but related to the topic given to him/her by the researcher (White and Drew, 2011:6).

Recording and transcribing data gathered is another opportunity that the researcher has to engage and interact with the data. As the researcher listens to the recordings and transcribes what is being said, he/she allows himself/herself to experience a different interpretation of the data. The researcher captures the

social interaction that he/she has with his/her research participants (interview) on a recording device (Jenks, no date:2). As I sat down with my research participants and asked for their permission to record the interviews it never came to mind what the impact that this small device would have on the process and nature of our interviews would detail.

Christopher Jenks (no date:4) argues that *“recording data is a form of social interaction”*. The presence of the recording device influenced the interaction I had with participants throughout the interviews I had with them. The participants exhibited mixed reactions to the recording device. In some cases the recording device made the research participants more vocal about their experiences and they became really engaged in describing to me these experiences. Whereas, in other cases I also felt that the recording device impeded some of my participants to tell their stories to me without inhibitions.

Recording and transcribing interviews are subjective endeavours. The researcher must confront and be reflexive about his/her influence in the production and transcription of data recordings (Jenks, no date:4). Some of the interviews I had to translate from the vernacular (Sesotho) into English. In this translation I had to do, I do acknowledge that some meanings may have been lost in performing this activity. Therefore, it is important for researchers to be aware of the influence he/she has on the recording and on the transcript so that he/she can try to limit his/her impact as much as possible.

3.4.3. Visual methodologies

Social scientists in recent decades have begun changing how they analyse social phenomena by incorporating visual representations or techniques as part of their research methods. The inclusion of visual dimensions in the scope of social research alongside traditional research techniques has resulted in a consciously activated and coordinated criticism of social reality (Chaplin, 1994:1). I made use of visual methodologies in my research in an effort to creatively understand facets of the artists' creative process of art-making. As I was working with individuals whose lives revolve primarily around telling stories through visual mediums. I thought that it would be apt of me to make use of visual methodologies as a way to elucidate aspects of these artists' narratives and to convey their experiences.

3.4.4. Photo-documentation and photo-elicitation

Photo-elicitation and photo-documentation are terms used to refer to when a researcher (a) *“takes a carefully planned series of photographs to document and analyse a particular visual phenomenon, (b) asks research participants to take photographs which are then discussed in an interview with the researcher”*

(Rose, 2012:298). Utilising both these techniques of visual methodology in the second part of the interviews I had with my study's participants yielded interesting insights into the artists' lifeworld experiences.

The meanings embedded in visual images persuade people's perceptions about the world around them. Julie White and Sarah Drew assert that "*photos don't lie*" (White and Drew, 2011:7). I asked my study's research participants to take and prepare photographs of the following three specifications: (1) environment, (2) artworks, (3) act of creation. I also took photos of these same specifications so as to make it possible for me to draw from both perspectives—mine and the research participants'. This is because in the images taken by the research participants, I posit lays the truths about the lifeworlds, meanings and creative processes that form the cornerstone of the artists' narratives.

3.4.5. Participant observation

In the modern era, the position of the researcher or the author of the cultural text has come into question. His/her role in the development of the narratives of research participants has fallen under scrutiny and questions of: *Who speaks? Who writes? Where and how?* (Clifford and Marcus, 1986:13) have begun to be asked. Participant observation, the ethnographic technique of extended fieldwork where the researcher shares the same experiences with his/her research participant has surfaced. The researcher's ability to obtain a state of equanimity between his/her subjective and objective aspects in the process of conducting fieldwork is put to the test when doing participant observation.

The researcher becomes personally involved and his/her experiences are rooted within the social context as much as those of his/her research participants'. He/she experiences feelings in his/her research process as a consequence of this. However, the researcher is expected throughout the process to firmly exercise impersonal standards of observation and distance (Clifford and Marcus, 1986:13). I participated in an art-film as a means to experience working closely with one of the research participants of my study. I wanted to experience how an idea is taken from concept and worked on by the visual artist into a final product. In this process, I was using observation to see how he goes about creating stories through the use of his visual medium and what influences arise in this process.

I performed a role in the film and that provided me a unique experience into balancing subjective and objective aspects of my person. I was the central figure in the filming of the project therefore for most parts I was the subject. The camera was on me, as I had to assume this character that was a creation of the visual artist and director. Immersing myself in this character saw me digging deep within my reserves of feelings

to arouse emotions that were dormant to create this character. I became the subject of my subject and together we co-constructed meanings so that we can convey a story to viewers out there. My subject used my subjective experiences as if they were a paintbrush to paint a picture of a life of an individual who viewers would be able to identify with.

3.5. Ethical considerations

Codes of ethics are important in academic research insofar as they regulate the relations that the researcher has with his/her participants. It is an imperative that the researcher upholds the acceptable ethical standards to ensure good research practice and the protection of research participants (Flick, 2009:36). Before, I could participate in any kind of fieldwork I underwent a process where it was required of me to apply for ethical clearance from the University of the Free State Faculty of Humanities' Ethics Committee.

This was a crucial process because it would ensure that once I find myself in the field I would be able to conduct myself appropriately and also that I would have the support of the University in case anything untoward would happen. Applying to the board of the Ethics Committee was a somewhat protracted procedure. This is due to the fact that I found myself going backwards and forwards to the Ethical Committee because they required me to elaborate on various details of my study. The Ethics Committee applied severe scrutiny of my application. It took various steps consisting of revisions before I attained my ethical clearance number (**UFS-HSD2016/0345**). Below I will discuss the key ethical principles that I put into practice in conducting fieldwork with my research participants.

No deception was used at any stage of the research to manipulate the participants. An informed consent sheet was given to every participant to sign if they wished to participate in the research. This happened at the beginning of the project. In this informed consent sheet participants were informed about the aims of the study, and the subject matter that was going to be covered in the scope of the research. Furthermore, participants were given the assurance that they were free to withdraw at any point of the study if they, for some or other reason were no longer feeling comfortable with their participation in the study.

Participants were also assured that they will be given the liberty to withdraw any statements that they made during our encounters. The permission of the research participant was sought at the onset of the research to use a recording device to record the interview. Permission was also sought from the research participant to use a camera to take photographs of their work-space (environment), artwork and whatever else was

deemed necessary for the purposes of this study. The participants were ensured that their faces or anything else that would give away their identities in the images taken would be extricated from the study.

The important ethical standards of confidentiality and anonymity were respected to ensure that the research participants' identity and safety would be safeguarded at all times. The research participants were given the option to provide me with pseudonyms of their choice if they wished that their real names should not appear in the study. This was not an option that was taken up by every single one of the participants but the demands of those who did take it up, were honoured and the pseudonyms that they gave to me were used.

I also promised the research participants not to divulge, publish, or otherwise make known to unauthorised persons or to the public any information obtained in the course of this research project that could identify the persons who participated in the study. Micheal Kok (2015:92) argues that absolute confidentiality is very difficult to realize in qualitative research. This is because the research participants' direct quotes retrieved from the interviews are often used to support the findings of the research. Therefore, I ensured the research participants that measures will be taken to protect any information that will in any way be linked to the research participants being made explicit.

3.6. Data analysis

Data analyses and interpretation are two of the most important activities that the researcher must perform in his/her research (Flick, von Kardoff and Steinke, 2004:193). This is where the researcher codes the data that he/she gathered into particular chosen categories or themes. Then the researcher ascertains whether the outlined codes are commensurate with the general research questions he/she has drawn up for his/her research (Perri 6 and Bellamy, 2012:11).

In analysing and coding data, the researcher has to peruse the entire collection of interviews he/she has had with his/her participants. Thereafter, the researcher has to sort them in a way that will make it easy for him/her to know what kind of information he/she is working with. To perform this task effectively, the researcher has to carefully code all his/her field notes, documents, photographs, etc. The researcher does this in order to create a personal directory of the characters involved and the topics he/she dealt with (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000:131).

Norman Denzin (1997:127) suggests that there are multiple ways in which narratives may be analysed, and these are: semiotic, rhetorical, topological, structural, feminist micro-level, thematic, etc. In the narrative

researcher's initial analysis he/she will generally deal with issues such as, character, place, scene, plot, tension, end-point, narrator, context and tone. Thereafter, the narrative researcher will start narratively coding these organised sets of data and start setting the foundations of the story he/she wants to tell (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000:131).

Aspects of the dialogical approach were employed to assist with the interpretation of the subjective features that emerged during the interview process between researcher and participant. The dialogical approach is known to have the tools necessary for the analysis of subjectivity in qualitative data. It is a characteristic of narratives to be dynamic and fluid. Subjective phenomena are, in essence, constituted as such. The dialogical approach is pertinent in that it is capable of changing and being responsive to the caprice of others (Sullivan, 2012:1).

To arrive at the generalised findings that are linked to this study's research objectives, Phil Carspecken's five stages of critical ethnography were put into practice. Below I enter into a brief discussion of all the stages and how they were implemented in the course of data analysis and interpretation:

"Build a critically reflective record of thick description... to make sense of what is going on in the setting" (Grbich, 2013:57-58). The data that was collected in the field, together with any other sources has been collated and grouped according to the method of data collection.

"Preliminary reconstructive analysis or researcher interpretation is then undertaken regarding what has been gathered". All the various sources of data that was collected (transcripts, photographs, notes) are examined and a basic interpretation is carried through by the researcher. This is important so that the researcher may familiarise himself/herself with the data at hand and how it relates together with other sources of data.

"Preliminary data analysis and thematic analysis can be used to identify power location, role relations, meanings and cultural values as well as validity". Various codes or themes that are related to data gathered from the participants are defined. The relevant information pertaining to each specific code or theme is then prepared.

"Dialogical data... is examined to discover system relations between specific sites and these findings are linked to the wider social, political and economic contexts". The established themes with their pertinent information are rounded up, and the narrative researcher begins to construct the skeleton of the story which he/she is going to tell.

“Findings are considered in relation to general theories of society, both to help explain what has been discovered in stages 1–4 and to alter, challenge, and refine macro-sociological theories themselves” (ibid, 57–58). The researcher in the story he/she tells, weaves the narratives of the research participants together with the theories he/she demarcated and the supporting literature. The images collected in the field are used as supplementary aides in narrating the stories of the participants. These findings are then linked to the overarching objectives of the research.

3.7. Quality control in qualitative research

For long, doubts have been cast over the legitimacy of qualitative research. Questions such as the following have been asked: *“Can research be “valid” and “reliable” without be subject to the traditional ways of assessing validity and reliability?”*. And also, researchers have posed the question whether qualitative research should be assessed in terms of the same criteria and concepts used to assess quantitative research? (Flick, 2009:384). Questions such as these have dominated discussions about the quality of qualitative research as a distinct approach and as part of the wider concept of empirical research (Flick, 2009).

3.7.1. Reliability

Reliability primarily pertains to how qualitative data is measured and according to what codes is the system of measurement based. Perri 6 and Christine Bellamy (2012:21) argue that the researchers should aim for a system of measurement or coding that is consistent. Such a system should be able to yield the same measurements or codes on a regular basis. In the interview schedule or questionnaire, are certain questions which reappear throughout the interview. I disguised these questions by constructing them slightly differently but essentially the same question was being asked. The participants narratives when replying to these probes, were subsequently compared in order to determine if there was consistency in the replies.

3.7.2. Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which we see as researchers what is really there (Flick, 2009:397). The concept of validity measures to what degree do the statements that we are given by participants measure the truth (Perri 6 and Bellamy, 2012: 21). Creativity as a concept and the creative process as an experience or an action are very difficult to measure. This is due to them being very abstract and highly metaphysical. Therefore, in order for me to check the validity of the data that I gathered I compared it to the theories that I

had on the subject of creativity, and the creative process as to understand and measure the responses of the participants.

3.7.3. Triangulation

Triangulation means combining data from different sources, methods and interpretations based on different theories to arrive at a specific outcome (Perri 6 and Bellamy, 2012:270). I made use of different research methods (in-depth interviews, visual methodologies, and participant observation) to gather data in the field. Each individual research method contributed constructively in achieving accurate and consistent responses from the research participants. It is understood that the use of different kinds of methods helps the researcher to better understand a particular phenomenon (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009:86). The data gathered from the in-depth interviews were contextualised with the photographs collected and the observations made during field-work.

Each method brought out a unique aspect of the phenomenon being studied. However, instead of seeing the variation in data as an impediment—I used it to enrich the description of the experiences of this study's research participants. In conjunction with the field methods used, I used my personal reflexivity as an instrument of maintaining awareness of the adverse effects that my presence may or may not have had on the progression of the research. The use of all these methods combined with the theories that I set out in the first chapter of this paper were instrumental in distinguishing which information was appropriate and which was not. In addition, utilising triangulation techniques I was able to narrow the data and merge and integrate it with other sources of data to fit this study's research objectives.

3.8. Conclusion

In this chapter, the chosen methodology and the methodological techniques employed in the field were discussed. I used the narrative approach because it is identified as the most applicable and useful for the purposes of conducting this particular kind of study. This is because the narrative paradigm places an emphasis on the stories that people tell of their experiences and how they tell them. Furthermore, it was important to use the narrative methodology because of how it can assist the researcher to explore how people situate their individual identities in the stories that they tell. Lastly, the ethical considerations taken were also discussed together with the measures that were taken to ensure that the quality of the research project was of a high standard.

Chapter four: artistic creativity and the objective reality

Introduction

This chapter follows a thematic analysis of the narratives collected during the data collection process. As researcher I represent the participants' narratives according to a typology that holds this dissertation's ontological and epistemological orientation as its central tenet. In proceeding, the findings obtained are discussed in accordance to the total social science framework proposed by Pierre Bourdieu. The first section (cf. chapter 4) reviews, the socio-physical or objective effect on the artists' understanding of their lifeworlds. The second section (cf. chapter 5), engages the socio-phenomenological or subjective understanding of the lived experiences of the visual artists. In chapter five emphasis is placed on the complex nature of perceptions and interpretations in so far as their experiences are perceived from a subjective and intersubjective point of view. This is achieved through a double reading of the artists' experiences: firstly to the creative process and secondly what impact the experiences that emerge in the creative process have on an individual's everyday lifeworld.

As this dissertation is conceptualised and framed in the interpretivist framework, I rely on personal interpretations when analysing and presenting the findings of this study. The phenomenological paradigm requires a certain standard of transparency when retelling the experiences of others. It is for this reason that I adopt an interpretive ethnographic approach to presenting the data, which is influenced by a socio-cultural persuasion to understanding the data collected. In making use of the socio-cultural framework, my aim is to expand on the various typologies as inter-related, meaningful and coherent parts that serve to constitute the lived-experiences of the artists in their creative processes. I also endeavour to elaborate on those experiences which lie outside the creative process but have a direct or indirect influence on how the artist experiences it. For such an exposition to be possible, I call upon the use of thick descriptions to portray each participant's experiences in a manner that surpasses mere superficial accounts of their experiences of particular phenomena. This provides an interpretive and holistic understanding of the phenomenological experiences of visual artists in their creative processes.

4.1. Methodological relationalism and the social construction of the experience of being an artist

In the socio-physical or objective realm of the artist's lifeworld there are forces that shape his/her perception of himself/herself as an artist. In addition, these objective forces shape the scope of the artists' artistic and creative abilities. These experiences are fundamental to understanding the iterative process that takes place leading up to the artist's creations. The three constituents that I have identified are: the

impact of the artist's habitus on his/her creative process; the influence of the artist's field on his/her creative process; and the process of how the artist's habitus and field have come together to shape his/her outlook. This reveals the worldview which the artist adopts and communicates directly through his/her work. In assessing the impact of the field and habitus, I am applying the principles of Pierre Bourdieu (cf. section 1.3 where the concepts of field and habitus are put forward).

A very common misconception about creativity is that creative outputs are strictly the result of an individual working in isolation (Sawyer, 2006). Inferences such as this may perpetuate a notion that implies, to be creative one has to be completely immune from the influences of people around his/her environment and any other objective forces that impinge on the individual subject. The individual's lived experiences—both subjective and objective—emerge from the artist's experiences as a human subject in the social world. In order for me to understand the experiences of an artist in his/her creative process, I have to first understand the artist as a human being in society.

Artists, like other human beings in society, are susceptible to the sways of inter-subjective relations and interactions that they share with other members of our paramount social reality. As a matter of consequence, it is no coincidence that the creativity scholar Keith Sawyer observes that any form of creative spark is often the result of a series of ideas emanating from collaborative group work. He also states that conversations that artists have with others become the catalysts for the all-important creative insight (Sawyer, 2007). From this creative process, the artist draws on various inter-subjective insights/perceptions/emotions that can influence how one perceives and experiences his/her everyday lifeworld.

An artist is an experiencing subject in the world before he/she even becomes an artist. To become an artist, an individual has to have a perception of social reality that necessitates one to be considered as an artist. This is a process that starts at the very beginning of one's introduction into society. How an individual becomes socialised into his/her society has a direct or indirect effect on his/her conception of himself/herself and this shapes—to varying degrees—the nature of his/her subjective experiences. The artist's general "knowledge stock" or habitus is a product of the inter-subjective relations and understandings gathered throughout his/her life-time.

These shared understandings arise in the artist's creative process. The artist uses them to conceptualise his/her work, or through the recall of these experiences, to overcome stumbling blocks in his/her creative

process. Alternatively, the artist's stock of knowledge can be a hindrance to the artist's creativity in that it may inhibit the artist from being reflexive in his/her creative process. This entails that, if the artist in his/her natural attitude towards his/her process fails to question his/her established experiences (practical consciousness) or understandings, he/she may struggle to advance the creative functioning of his/her art-making. This may result in the artist lacking the necessary means to arrive at the "creative" insight that leads to the creation of new meanings and novel interpretations of human and social experiences. Furthermore, how the artist as an individual subject is socialised or habitualised into society, may act as a deterrent for him/her to experience his/her world in the way that he/she desires.

4.2. Introducing the artists

This section is used to introduce the research participants but due to the sensitive nature of the research and the undertaking regarding anonymity given to the participants, pseudonyms have been assigned to the research participants. Faceless is a 28 year old male, who hails from a small town called Leeudoringstad in the North West Province of South Africa. He is currently enrolled in a BA Fine Art degree at the University of the Free State and considers himself to be a multimedia artist.

Malik is a 30 year old male, who was born in Gauteng. He grew up in Yeoville, a suburb of Johannesburg which is renowned for being an artistic hub. Malik moved to Bloemfontein with his mother after the untimely death of his father when he was still of a very young age. Malik worked in the corporate world as an event organiser before quitting this job to take up his calling of being an artist. He is currently working as full-time artist in Bloemfontein, Free State.

Haile is a 28 year old male from a town in the Free State, called Frankfort. Haile claims to have been fascinated with art from a very young age. He claims that his uncle who was a miner and an artist inspired him to get into art. Haile is Rastafarian and you can see the influence of his religion on most of his works. Haile is currently a final year Fine Art student at the Central University of Technology, in Bloemfontein, Free State. Haile's two primary mediums are: painting and sculpture.

Natural is a 26 year old male who comes from Soweto in Gauteng. He has a Bachelor's degree in Social Sciences and is currently busy with Honours in Film and Visual Media Studies at the University of the Free State. Natural specialises in photography and filmmaking, and has his own company where he offers professional photography and filmmaking services.

Prince is a 28 year old male from Botshabelo, a town 45 kilometres from Bloemfontein. He is a drawing and illustration assistant lecturer at the Central University of Technology in Bloemfontein. He is currently working on his Master's in Fine Art where he is using both phenomenology and hermeneutics as the guiding theories of his study. Prince's primary mediums are: illustration and painting.

Kaizer is a 33 year old male from Maseru, Lesotho. He was born in Canada and moved to Lesotho with his family at the age of 1. Kaizer is an experienced filmmaker and has made documentaries for an array of Non-Governmental Organisations. He also writes and directs his own films which he bases around the stories of the people of Lesotho. Kaizer is currently based in Bloemfontein and works part-time as a film lecturer at the Central University of Technology.

4.3. The role of the artist's habitus in the construction of the artist's social reality

In my conversations with the research participants, I found that many of the artists actively explored/ relied on their lived experiences (stocks of knowledge, cf. section 1.2.4.) and social encounters (intersubjectivity, cf. section 1.2.5.) as a platform for creative inspiration and expression. According to Faceless, his mother (Lerato—pseudonym) played an essential role in how he perceives his lifeworld. This in turn influences how he engages in his creative process:

If I have a like... [creative block]. For example if at a practical level... if my room is untidy and there are a whole lot of clothes on my bed and it is not made, and I wake up, I find myself not being able to think clearly until I start removing the clothes. And then it's like air can come in and I can start breathing. I think it's more about ventilation. But also I think it's about cleanliness. It has to be. With cleanliness is godliness. Next to cleanliness is godliness. So also that helps me think a lot. But it's something that I grew up with. My mother was a very cleanly person. She always cleaned around the house. If she says you must put something there and then you move it. She would be like: I said you must put that thing there! She would clean the house for like two days and then it would look spotless... like a new house. I have got those traits too. There's [a] point where I can decide that, okay, I am going to buy the proper products then clean my place in a sense where it is spotless. (Faceless)

From this extract, Faceless expresses an incident where he was struggling to be productive in his creative process. He attributed his inability to find flow in his process to the chaotic state in which his studio was.

Therefore, in order for him to move beyond this barrier he decided that he should clean and organise his work space (studio). Faceless credits his mother's teachings as being influential in his understanding of the importance of cleanliness and order. This is a teaching that Faceless's mother imparted onto him as he was growing up. He makes use of it and many other teachings to make progress in his creative endeavours. The environment that the artist creates in is very important; the successes of the artist's efforts are often linked to the nature of his/her environment (cf. section 2.1. and 2.7. where discussions on the multivariable approach to understanding creativity and the impact of the environment in the process of art-making are advanced respectively). Haile expands:

I would say maybe when it is not too hot and not too cold [talking about the weather]. The people there also inspire me [people present in studio when creating art]. [Especially when] doing things that are in line with what I am doing. I then feel that I can work in that kind of place because I feel like that it is a [good] working environment like in a studio. Because I'm [not] able to draw nicely when I am sitting with people who are eating or they are drinking liquor, people are singing ... No! My mind would not be able [to think creatively]. I don't know, I am the kind of person that I get easily distracted. (Haile)

These two quotes reveal that artists prefer to work in conditions where they feel in tune with the state of their environment. This point of departure is particularly evident from Haile's testimony in so far as the atmosphere of his creative environment is concerned. Reference is made to the people around him and the influences they have in inspiring him to create. Therefore, an artist's social environment plays an important role in the creative process—inter-subjective messages that are being shared contribute to the artist's state of mind.

Natural was raised by many people and in many places around the city of Johannesburg. His mother had him while she was young and many people helped her to raise him as a result. Natural explains that:

I spent most of my childhood in the townships¹. So I guess it had an influence on me without me even seeing. And I saw that taking pictures there and telling the stories the way I want them to be shown would make things more raw [real]. (Natural)

¹ A term used to refer to under-developed urban living areas that, from the late 19th century until the end of apartheid, were reserved for non-white residents, namely Indians and black people.

Natural draws from his experiences of growing up in Johannesburg's various townships to create subject-matter for his artistic projects. The experiences of his upbringing have given him an affinity with the township environment. This is reflected in his work:

I first started shooting in the hood [township] basically. Before then I was scared to shoot. Because I was scared of people's eyes and stuff. People are not really used to seeing cameras or a person walking around in the hood. Well if they do, they know that: Aight [Alright] this guy is a regular hood cameraman! He takes pictures for money basically. But I did it just to share a story. Like to draw out meaning to them not just have pictures. And this is also one of my favourites. I have this collection: I want to take pictures of different gates in my township. Like things that people have never seen before. (Natural)

It is not surprising that artists such as Natural and many others would use their experiences of growing up as material in the conceptualisation of their work. Natural's lived experiences in the township are integral components of his lifeworld. These experiences that Natural has of himself growing up in the township have helped him to construct a coherent and meaningful understanding of his social reality. Natural recreates these experiences in his art-making:

This is before Lokshin [township] Geographic's. This is the... these ones are the Meadowlands Boys Club, before I got to naming it Lokshin Geographic's while I was shooting. I was just shooting them; this was just for them all the time. And I realised that: No! I should start having a collection of what's happening in my township. (Natural)

Haile also tells me how his childhood experiences and the inter-subjective understandings obtained thereof were instrumental in his decision to pursue a life as an artist:

Alright! I grew up in a background that is not different from anyone else who was born in the townships. You know that we are channelled in the same way. I grew up as a person who was more inclined into things that are related to art. Even though I did not do art in high school, I grew up with it because of the inspiration I got that came from my uncle, who's also a self-taught artist. And then my older cousin too inspired me. That is where I would say my first inspiration came from. Then later as I grew up I realised that my uncle was actually an artist. (Haile)

The environment of the artist is a huge factor in the development of his/her creative talents. Haile grew up in an environment in which he was exposed to art and artists. Most artists develop creative talents at a young age but the creative process is not exclusive to youth and can become more evident with experience and age. Kaizer explains how his interest in art developed:

I think from a young age... when I was growing up—we were like four children—but always going alone and none of my siblings would go. I was always going alone to the cinema. I was not going with any friends, with anyone. And I feel like that actually was a kind of formative thing in terms of being influenced. (Kaizer)

Kaizer's involvement in film began during this period in his life when he was frequenting the cinema as he explains in the quote above. Kaizer had the support of his parents, which is why it was possible for him to go to the cinema to watch movies that intrigued him. Malik who also grew up in an environment which was by and large an artistic one and acknowledges the importance of his upbringing in Yeoville, Johannesburg:

I could say that I just found myself in it [art]. I grew up in it [art]. I grew up in a place that had a lot of art around me. I grew up in a house that had a lot of art. My father had a lot of friends for artists and I grew up around it. And I guess it just became a norm. It became part of my existence. (Malik)

At the time that Malik was growing up, Yeoville was an important cultural centre in Johannesburg. It was renowned for attracting artists and musicians. Yeoville was considered a cultural mecca that was inhabited and patronised by bohemian-esque² people who turned it into a uniquely artistic and creative hub. Malik familiarised himself with the artistic lifestyle:

So you'd find that a lot of the people that left other parts of South Africa, who were artists or did art-related things or were just involved in the arts in some way or the other. Who wanted to find themselves in a place where they would find other artists to exist with. It makes sense, it's cheaper. You share a flat, you share food. You know how struggling artists live. And, I'd find myself in those places. I would find myself with those people; in their apartments, in their houses. (Malik)

² A bohemian individual is a socially unconventional person, especially one who is involved in the arts.

Malik at a very young age immersed himself into the culture of this area. This is in part attributed to the influence his father had on him. Growing up in an artistic village nurtured his creative desire/need to become more involved with the Yeoville art community:

If you had a father that was jamming Fela Kuti ³ [African Jazz] every day—it was just everything. It [art] was in the music, it [art] was in the food, it [art] was in the lifestyle, the dress code. It was just in everything. But to be more specific: art was everywhere. People there were very abstract in everything they did in their sense of style; it was not your conventional style. It was not what you found on the mannequins at the store. The conservative type, you know! It was not that. It was, how one would claim that one [one's sense of self]. How one would identify an artist is maybe in the way they dress and what they do. What they do and how they make their living. So it was very obvious to see. You had people that were selling sculptures on the street every day. People had their paintings every day in Yeoville; just put up. At one time you would find guys banging drums and just dancing about. And it was many forms, it was many forms. There were those that were years ahead in thinking. You would find there's someone standing in the middle of the street. But maybe what they had on or what they were doing was conveying a message.
(Malik)

A cultural artistic hub such as Yeoville can be stimulating especially to a child whose mind absorbs experiences and sensations at a rapid pace. A child's interests become increasingly significant to his/her outlook, if the child receives the support of his/her parents—like we see in Malik's narrative. An individual's lifeworld is comprised of many lived-experiences and Malik emphasises this when he describes how the death of his father resulted in his family having to move away from Yeoville, Johannesburg to Bloemfontein. The way in which Malik describes this experience, gives me the impression that it caused a disruption in his biographical narrative which became a significant and life-changing event in his life:

Nah, it was just my father passing away, man. It was my father passing away that led us to leave Johannesburg and head to Bloemfontein. And, you find yourself in a place where I come from a place where people are really expressive about their art and I then find myself in a place where people are not as expressive with their art. And the culture is different. It's a culture shock! The language is different, the activities are different, and the people that

³ Fela Kuti was a Nigerian multi-instrumentalist, musician, composer, pioneer of the Afrobeat music genre.

you meet are different. So if you are a young boy, you grew up in a place where you had friends; you were used to a system in society; and you find yourself where you don't know who you are. You are different. Your dress code or your sense of style, your ideals are different. You don't have anyone to talk about black consciousness⁴ with or talk about the Black Panther Party⁵ or talk about, Tsietsi Mashinini⁶ or things like that. There's no elder that's from around the corner making a big zol⁷—about to tell you about Marcus Garvey⁸ while he gets high [smokes marijuana]. That's what I grew [up on]! I lost all of that! And that for me was home. (Malik)

Everything changed for Malik when he moved to Bloemfontein. The people were different and the culture was different. He was forced to adapt to his new environment. His new environment differed starkly from the one he came from. It did not have an abundance of bohemian characters, and according to Malik it had a lack of artistic and creative expression. However, creative and artistic individuals are able to overcome the adversity that these kinds of environments present and find a way to continue expressing themselves creatively and artistically (cf. section 2.7. for how artists are able to triumph over the adversity they experience as a result of their environments to pursue their artistic projects).

Sometimes an artist's environment and socialisation may pose a challenge to the individual's desire to express himself/herself as an artist. This view is expanded on by Faceless. He believes that he has compromised aspects of his true sense of self to maintain social established norms and values—in family relations and social encounters:

You read and you study a lot and you [are] in a strict house like my family. You tend to become a block in reality cause if you look back at home—I am this guy who is always dressed formal, who always got the right words, who has always been doing the right thing. You know: mom's favourite, dad's favourite. (Faceless)

⁴ Black Consciousness is the awareness of one's identity as a black person, especially as a basis for a political grouping or movement.

⁵ The Black Panther Party was a revolutionary Black Nationalist and socialist organisation founded by Bobby Seale and Huey Newton in October 1966 Oakland, California in the United States of America.

⁶ Tsietsi Mashinini was the primary student leader of the Soweto Uprising that began in Soweto and spread across South Africa in June, 1976.

⁷ A hand rolled cigarette especially of cannabis.

⁸ Marcus Garvey was a proponent of Black Nationalism in Jamaica and especially the United States.

As you see in Faceless's quote above, at home he is forced to conform to the norms which he was habitualised to by his parents. He has to leave his identity behind and become what his family expect him to be (cf. section 2.6.). Haile has changed his religion from Christianity to Rastafarianism which he claims is more akin to the type of person that he is:

Yes, Christianity, the Christianity that we know—modern day Christianity. I come from a home in which my mom went to a church called Wessel⁹. As a child I was always being forced to go to church. I haven't felt the joy of church; I have always felt lost. Even the energy in church is not an energy that resonates with me. You see how it is, Rasta. People are not honest in church, and it is the very same church that brought us into slavery. The church brought division amongst people. Hatred. It taught man to condemn—to judge. It doesn't bring anything; it doesn't bring light into people's lives. Because you see how our situation as a black people is even to some people too. Because our system was set from the Bible [which is] the very same religion of the Romans. They imposed it on us and now we have lost our spirituality. (Haile)

Haile converted from being a Christian to being Rastafarian—Christianity is the religion he was born into. An individual can only be a world experiencing entity insofar as he/she is a member of a community composed of other subjects (cf. section 1.2.5. where this is discussed in the way of intersubjectivity and collective subjectivity). Sometimes the products of the inter-subjective relations can overwhelm the artist's sense of self. The artist has to find himself/herself amidst the flood of experiences and typifications. This is reflected on by Haile:

It is when I no longer see what is going on with me—like my surroundings. When I have connected with my higher being. And mostly I achieve that state when I do not have many distractions. Ganja¹⁰ is what takes me to that state most of the time. But obviously [I can] still reach that state without ganja depending on where I am. How quiet is that place. Are there trees? What else is there and what is happening there? (Haile)

Haile shows us how he was able to synthesise all these elements of his past and present experiences to integrate them in his creative process. He uses cannabis which is typically associated with Rastafarianism

⁹ Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa

¹⁰ Marijuana

and is also used by people from different spheres of society for varying reasons. Haile uses it for inspiration and as a ritual that is symbolically related to his religion. It is primarily through these ritualistic practices that artists force the spark of creativity or the moment of inspiration to emerge (cf. sections 2.4. and 2.5. to see how artists find and solve problems in the creative process and how artists receive inspiration to create because of this). Artists use rituals to either calm negative sentiments or thoughts, or even life circumstances that might be impediments to their creative processes.

The habitus of the artist and all the inter-subjective relations that are attached to it are not the only things that further contextualise the lived-experiences of the human subject. The field or the objective states that the subject has to adjust himself/herself to another dimension of the individual's lifeworld that imposes itself on the person. An individual's field/objective state is so predominant in his/her lifeworld that he/she is forced to base his/her actions around the conditions prevalent in his/her external reality. The individual subject does not have the ability to divorce himself/herself from the circumstances he/she runs into as a result of his actions and reactions in his/her field. The artist operates within a sub-field of our paramount social reality called the art-world; the art-world subjects the artist to its unique field of relations. This makes the leverage that a social actor's field has on him/her noteworthy in understanding the different layers that comprise the artist's observable experiences.

4.4. The influence of field relations on the artist's lived-experiences inside and outside the creative process

The term field or field of relations is used to refer to the setting in which social agents and their social positions are located. The position of each particular agent in his/her field is a product of the interaction between the agent, the networks within the field, configurations and the objective conditions between positions of the social agent inside the field (cf. sections 1.3.2. and 2.9. provide a discussion on the Bourdieu's theory of the field and the subjects engagement with field relations).

Field relations do not affect all players the same, even if social actors exist in the same field. The same principle applies to artists in the artistic field. Findings suggest that the artistic field in South Africa is especially daunting and difficult if you are a black African visual artist. In most African families, an individual who says he/she wants to pursue a career in the arts is met with disdain and is discouraged from following this path. A career in the visual arts is not seen as lucrative by black African families and therefore parents or guardians dissuade their children from pursuing these careers (cf. section 2.7. and 2.10. to see the interplay between artistic training and environmental factors in the artist's lifeworld). In addition to this

struggle, black visual artists' battle to make it in an art-world that is generally perceived as a "white" dominated space, wherein black Africans become structurally marginalised (cf. section 2.10.). Faceless shares his experience:

So I took a gap year and also my parents were reluctant to fund me for studying graphic design because they didn't understand what graphic design was. And anyway, Design School: what is it [did not know what design school is]? Technikon [Central University of Technology]: what is it? College, what is it? (Faceless)

Faceless had to forgo a whole year of school because his parents were not supportive of his ambitions to study Graphic Design. To Faceless's parents Graphic Design did not have a prestigious ring. It is the perceived apathy of the parents that leaves many would-be artists diverting to careers in other sectors of society which end up frustrating the artist and fracturing the individual's sense of self. There was a unanimous opinion amongst this study's participants that the reason for their misfortunes in the art-world was linked to them being black.

[Create art] so that they can see us [black Africans] as people. Because, they [white settlers] haven't been treating us as people [for] the past 500 years. (Haile)

As a means to comprehend his struggles in making a living as an artist, Haile, in this statement above links his hardships to the sufferings that the black race has been going through for centuries. He believes that black people are still getting oppressed to this day and that he is also a victim:

But it was inspired by the black struggle, my brother. It became inspired by conditions that you also have been asking me about today. Especially when it comes to the issues that we have touched on today. (Haile)

Haile uses these experiences and turns them into concepts that he can use in his work. His struggles, religion and creative process are intricately linked. This is evident in how Haile perceives the inter-related components of his lifeworld. The artists imply that the art-world can chew up the artist and spit them out if they do not know how it operates. Findings reveal that black African artists often find themselves at the wrong end of the dynamic between artist and art-world. As we can see from this quote by Malik:

Some guys have gotten away with taking a brush and just... [makes paintbrush sound with mouth]. But a lot of the time in the west as opposed to Africa is that... in the west they have

a lot of good writers that do a lot of good write-ups about artists. You find an agent. This agent sells your work. [He/she is your] publicist, and how he puts you out there is how the world perceives you. And many a times you find those with the best agents... are whites. And because of that you find their work is considered art more than blacks. You have a lot of great artists in Africa but on an unofficial scale. A lot of great artists in Africa whose work is done here in Africa is exported and claimed by other people. It's happened before, many a times. It's sold for millions and these artists that actually created the pieces are never even compensated. You know what I mean? You have a lot of white people that have in the past had ten workers in the back creating a piece. All he does is just come and puts his name on it. (Malik)

The artists seem to compare how they fare to how their white counterparts fare. The claim is that the art-world is much more congenial to white artists rather than black artists. Black African artists are taken advantage of by those who know the system and exploit uneducated black African artists, like Malik laments above. There are structural reasons why such exploitation prevails and why black African artists are often subjected to such structural violence. Firstly, like I stated above (cf. section 4.3.), there is a dearth of support in black African communities for individuals to follow careers in the creative arts. Secondly, historically black Africans in South Africa are underprivileged. For this reason parents are unable to take their kids to schools in which art is a focal point. However, there are scholarships that are made available to black African underprivileged children who show exceptional talent. These scholarships are some of the few opportunities that are available to black children to attend schools that have art as part of the schools' curricula.

Perhaps the greatest challenge to black African artists is financial security. The majority of South African artists do not get the required support that they need from government and therefore their work is put on hold and stunting their creative process. Faceless emphasises:

Yeah, if I am hungry I am really not that creative. I am not working at my maximum capabilities. Cause I have to focus my energies on certain things. If I am drawing I am going to focus on that [food] the whole time. Whereas, if I am working in a good economic social status where I stay now I can listen [to] myself. I can think. I can listen to the artwork. (Faceless)

We are all familiar with the image of the struggling artist who labours endlessly for his work. As much as this figure is romanticised, my research participants assure me that there is nothing desirable about that kind of life for an artist. As my research participants explain, a life of financial instability and insecurity hinders any progress that the artist might want to garner in his/her creative process. Prince has also experienced stagnation in his work process:

Well, when you are an artist, if you have mediums, you can work. But if you don't have mediums and a place, you cannot. I think if you have your own studio and your own paints which are many, and your own canvasses. The funny thing, if you are someone who draws on emotions, it's crazy. Because sometimes you feel like working, but you do not have mediums. So, you kind of like block your creativity. Sometimes you will see something and you will want to change. Maybe you will [see] something and you will want to portray it and if you don't have the medium you cannot portray it. (Prince)

What Prince describes is important because he relates it to his subjective experiences. He says inasmuch as the artist may want to express himself/herself creatively—he/she cannot because of a lack of mediums (tools) to do so. This is a crucial point that Prince makes. Many black artists are not able to create art because of the financial and economic constraints imposed on them by their environment. Natural also expresses how structural constraints have exerted a negative effect on his progression as an artist:

I was lacking economically. I couldn't buy the pencils; you know you have to have different types of pencils. You have to have different types of oil pastels, too. You have to have paint. You have to have brushes for the paint and canvasses and all of that. So with that, I couldn't afford most of the things. So it limited my artistic abilities. (Natural)

Artists often find themselves in situations where they are unable to afford the material that they use to create their art. When in this situation, the artist cannot create his art and therefore is unable to make a living. Malik similarly describes the shortcomings of being a black African artist:

When you depend on your art for survival; when business is really slow; and you now have to focus on feeding your family. There is no time to create. The immediate need is food. What now, nigga [sic]? Do you understand? It's all good, nigga [sic]? We see all these good pieces you have but what now? No one is buying; we are hungry now, what now? Now you need to start running, man. And trying to make means and find money. You are an artist

you are not a criminal so you won't start smashing into people's houses and cars and stealing their possessions and robbing people. You are an artist, man. A nine to five is not your thing. It's very difficult for an artist to be in a 9—5. It's very few that can survive in a nine to five. Do you know what I mean? You have pride. Are you going to start begging? Are you going to start begging? What are you going to do? (Malik)

To be a struggling artist is not a reality that is experienced exclusively by black visual artists. A life of suffering and struggle is a reality that most artists experience, irrespective of creed or colour. What makes my research participants lament the obstacles that they face, and attribute the suffering to their blackness has to do with the political economic history of South Africa. It is common knowledge that South Africa is economically an unequal society and it is also an established fact that black people are the poorest racial group in this country. As black Africans themselves, my research participants identify their financial struggles in the art-world with the economic struggles that black people face in their lives. Prince shares his sentiments about black people and the art domain:

Especiallly us as a black people, we express ourselves through art. We don't have anything outside of art. I was thinking on my own, some time ago, that people in South Africa, [art is] something that what they are good in. We are not scientists; we are a not philosophers; that's not our strength. That is not what we are strong at. What we are strong at is art. I feel like art plays a major role in our lives. That's how we communicate to each other. (Prince)

What Prince is trying to say is that because of the limitations that confront black artists, black artists are unable to express themselves as they would love to. Prince argues that it is in the nature of black people to create art. However, the system is set up in such a way that it makes it very difficult for black people to participate in the art industry. Kaizer states that:

Sometimes things don't happen the way you want. Film is very hard sometimes: There is no money, you can't get the right equipment, you can't get the right person. You have no money to get the right person. You don't have enough time and sometimes there are many compromises and then you look at it and then it's like: there are many films that I have done and I can't even watch. I think I've only done, of all my films, I think it's only one or two that I can actually watch. A lot have been compromised and its terrible compromises so that is also hard sometimes. There are compromises and then there are really bad compromises.

So that's really hard. I think it's hard that way because if you are writing a book or whatever, or a story. You are just writing down. But film now you have to make it and put it out. So it's never really easy making a film. (Kaizer)

Black artists in South Africa feel like the art-world can ostracize them from the art community and the opportunities that are present in this social domain. Kaizer articulates the experiences he went through while he was studying film in Cape Town:

I feel like Cape Town is one of those places that... I don't know at that time I felt like Cape Town lived in its own [world]. It is like... I felt like it was cut off [from South African politics]. Cape Town was fine. Cape Town was... I never really experienced racism. So to be in Cape Town and experiencing that was something new to me and it was hard. It was hard to deal with it because it is like I've never really been exposed to this and then you are there. It is a private film school. Most of the students are white, the owner is white and Cape Town has this kind of class system. It was white, Indian, coloured and then at the bottom, black. So it was really something I couldn't [handle]. It was hard to grasp and so that was really hard about Cape Town. Because I remember I really got depressed in Cape Town. I really got depressed where I was. I couldn't do anything. I was just lying in bed. I couldn't go to school and, so I went to see a psychologist. And he is like: Ja, what you are experiencing is depression. So I did get depressed. (Kaizer)

The art-world is exclusionary and elitist in nature. In cities such as Bloemfontein, artistic and creative expression is not as pronounced as other cities in South Africa. Because of this, artists in general in Bloemfontein struggle to make a living off their art. Seemingly black artists face an even greater battle to turn their talents into profitable returns. The participants in my study harbour a tacit "marginalisation complex" which is discernable in some, if not most of their conceptual artworks. The artists make use of this complex that they suffer from and regard it as parallel to the perpetual struggles of black folk historically and presently in South Africa and in the world.

Kaizer left his home to pursue a career in the arts in Canada where he was originally born. He was frustrated by the lack of opportunities in his adopted country of Lesotho. He decided to relocate to Canada to seek a better life there. But when he arrived there he was faced with financial and economic challenges which led him not being able to produce art. This led to a lack of artistic creativity and productivity:

At the airport in Canada: I don't know anyone here. I don't have any connections, and I don't have a place. So I had to hustle to find a space. And then I found a fucked up [sic] space. I stayed there for one night. I was like, fuck [sic] this! And then I found another space which was a shared house. Yeah, so I stayed there and then I started finding out about people who are from Lesotho there and then started linking up with them. Yeah man, Canada was... Canada was really, really hard. I think it was also hard because 2008 was that bad recession. I remember I think the rand / dollar exchange was like \$1 to R16, \$1 to R17; actually higher than that, it was maybe \$1 to R20. It was really, really high. So even the savings I had when I went there, they were just nothing. There were no jobs and... and also people there: [it] seems to be this culture in Canada where if you do not have Canadian experience, they don't value you. If you are coming from Africa or whatever and then they don't value anything outside of that. So I couldn't find jobs, it was hard... (Kaizer)

Artists are forced by their circumstances to find jobs that will maintain their artistic lifestyles, like in Kaizer's case:

I found a job. I think—maybe three months later. It is a job... I found a job working in a cinema. So I found a job working in a cinema. They had a food court. So, making food, cleaning up washrooms—it was hard man. Like it was... especially wearing a uniform and shit [sic]! Where it is like wearing this cap and it doesn't fit your dread and it is just on top of your hair. And the pay was like minimum wage. And it's like jobs that normally, it's like just high school kids do them. But for you; you are actually trying to pay your bills with this. So it was like really nothing and for you to even make up the hours. You are just working so long. So many hours just to be scraping a living. So it was really, really hard. (Kaizer)

Malik uses his passion for arts to make an extra income so that he can fund his artistic endeavours:

I have this poetry session thing I do. It's called "Just Poetry". Where I organise a poetry session and [invite] a couple of poets [for] food and wine. So I have a poetry session that I organise that creates some revenue for me and I have an event I do called "That Easy Sunday". It's a small event with an intimate crowd. It is people that just enjoy good music, good food. And they come through, sit on a roof top, very loungey setup and they listen to music the whole day. A small group, drink wine and eat good food. So that's how I create a

bit of revenue for myself at times. I have a clothing line called “Khanda”. “Khanda” is clothing, altered clothing, you know where I would... I don’t have the power to create my own caps right now so I would buy... I would buy caps and alter them to my liking. And play around with paint, but I collaborate with a couple of other artists where it might be my design. And you’d find there’s a guy called Check Art from the townships who comes through and he does his pieces. He is an amazing artist this young cat [colloquial term for guy]. He’s actually an old timer, he is a guru. This guru. Underground cat, guru—that man. Yeah, that nigga [sic] is on another level man; that nigga is on another level. Otherwise that’s what it is. (Malik)

4.4.1. Financial motivation

The creative economy in Bloemfontein is not that dynamic, and for this reason plenty of artists in Bloemfontein, not just black artists, suffer financially as a result. The central issue with being an artist in Bloemfontein is not the lack of creative people or artists. It is more a lack of support (economic, representation, family, educational and opportunities) for artists. And as a result, artists find themselves striving to be true to themselves and their crafts in an environment that is relatively unsupportive of their dreams. Natural expands on thoughts shared by Malik. He states:

I have to go past them [obstacles to make money] and find a way to make money. If I can find a way to make money with my art too, like sell one photo for a million [Rand] I would be fine for a long time. I don’t want to be stuck into one hole. I don’t want to say I will stick to my artistic side cause then I am being closed-minded. I am trying to see other opportunities around me. Cause you can learn. We are learning individuals. We learn a lot of things. You can learn. I taught myself how to edit. I taught myself how to take photos. I have been teaching myself! So I can teach myself how to do another thing that can benefit me in a good way. That will help me make money while sitting at home. In order to survive in society you need a lot of money and to do whatever you want, you need resources. You need resources. You need to own land, and you need to be a bourgeoisie, basically. So till I get to that point of being a bourgeoisie, controlling means of production. Then I can move onto the next step of just focusing on my creations and that’s how I solve that external problem [financial constraints]. I just want to live comfortably somewhere. Unless if I

become Tarzan and go live in the bushes—if I decide to go live with my grandmother and they'll look after me—which is unlikely. (Natural)

Some artists such as Prince are fortunate to be the recipients of the small amount that the Free State government does invest in art. Prince lost both of his parents when he was young and as the eldest of two sons, he had to take care of the household. He always knew that he wanted to become an artist. He received funding from the government in the way of a grant which made it possible for him to pursue his dreams. Prince elaborates:

I got a bursary. The first bursary I got—okay I applied for NSFAS¹¹. It helped me a lot. But then when I went to apply for NSFAS they said I have a DOL grant [Department of Labour]. Disability... [Thinking to himself]. I think [at] the Department of Labour, ja. It's for disabled students. When you are disabled they give you that—bursary. It comes from NSFAS but it is on behalf of the Department and they give it to students. It was in 2010, then 2012 I got... 2011 I got the bursary from the Department of Education until 2012. (Prince)

With the funding that he received from Government, Prince was able to study art at the Central University of Technology. This enabled him to get a job as assistant lecturer in the Art Department. However, the primary objective for artists is to generate an income from their creative products. Malik cements this point:

Photography is really what is making the money. Hence, I have focused on it. As we go on with our conversations—I'll give you insight into the lifestyle of an artist and what happens with art. And how, if your art doesn't feed you, [it] could actually even affect how your art is produced or even how your art comes out. (Malik)

Natural realises the structural bottlenecks that inhibit his creative process from gaining any momentum:

So I feel that the concept of not having to live without money is quite – it strangles artists. It takes time to create; you just don't create something great in a day. It's a process too. So with that you can't afford your rent you have to also create somethings on the side. (Natural)

¹¹ National Student Financial Aid Scheme

4.4.2. Environmental challenges that confront artists

None of the artists that participate in this study seem to show or have any confidence that the art-world will give them the opportunities they need to get their work out to the public. This can be a discouraging reality that the artists are forced to contend with. Nonetheless, the artists continue doing what they do best, and that is to create. Artists typically use their skills to find alternative sources of income, for instance free-lance photography at weddings, photo-shoots and craft art. The struggling artist is obliged to have some form of entrepreneurial activity which allows him/her to utilise his/her artistic skills to generate an income. It has become something of a necessity among visual artists, especially those who come from regions in the country that are not renowned for investing a lot in the arts, such as Bloemfontein.

An environment that supports the arts (visual arts) would be one in which cultural activity is high, for example, where certain areas are undergoing gentrification¹². Moreover, this kind of environment can also be one where artistic training in the form of schooling is available, or opportunities which make it possible for the training of artisans and aspiring artists. And also, an environment or domain in which money is invested, and efforts are being made to make the art-world increasingly vibrant and robust. But artists in Bloemfontein and other small centres in South Africa are excluded from the art scene that is mainly monopolised by big cities such as Cape Town and Johannesburg. After all, as Pierre Bourdieu (1993) emphasises in his influential theory of cultural production: the field is constituted by economic and power relations among subgroups and considers creativity as a kind of market transaction between producer and consumers (Sawyer, 2006:124).

Artists that exist on the periphery are under increasing pressure—to make an income that will sustain their creative endeavours or to migrate to big cities where economic activity/artistic sustainability is higher. This is the reality that confronts artists in their field—the greatest objective challenges that stand in the way of artists from being prolific are lack of finances, representation, opportunities and support (cf. section 4.1.4). What can be taken from the above discussion is that lack of finances is a serious impediment to the creative process. Artists claim that it is relatively impossible to obtain a state of flow (a state of performing an activity whilst being fully immersed, energised, and focused), if a basic human need such as eating is not met. Consequently, the artist is unable to create as often as he/she would like—he/she is forced to exercise creative thinking (small 'c' creativity) (cf. section, 2.1) outside their actual artistic projects in order to make ends meet. Unfortunately, this is a reality that artists have to face. Artists would not be able to

¹² The process of renovating and improving a house or district so that it conforms to middle class taste.

create if it was not for the domain of art being in existence. Therefore, the experiences of the artist in the creative process are inextricably linked to the dynamics of the social structure or sub-structure in which their lived-experiences occur. The latter is discussed in more detail, in this chapter's exploration of the third typology (cf. section 4.5.).

The habitus and the field are the contexts in which the artists' lived experiences are played out by the human subjects. Artists get to live out their experiences as well as interpret them in the act of creating art. Visual art is a language system of and in itself—artists use it to communicate messages, give meaning to their experiences and to construct a comprehensible reality for themselves and others (cf. section 1.1). Visual art is the lens or the paradigm through which artists see their reality. This is because visual art is not merely a means of communication; it is also used by artists and viewers to understand social reality and to construct meaning. This overview is expanded on by Faceless:

No matter what good of an artist you are [what] you achieve as a visual artist will be copied mostly—copy reality. When I am drawing a tree, I am going to look at a tree. I am not gonna try and imagine a tree. Why try imagining a tree if there's a tree outside? So in the concept of copying nature we can never ever have art itself which is nature. Because that is what art is, it is nature. It is a reflection of reality. It is a reflection of people. A reflection of society and reflection of landscapes of men's thoughts in regards to land. (Faceless)

Artists make sense or come to an understanding of their experiences through copying them. What happens in the creative process of the artist: in between those moments of relentless iteration is a process of understanding one's lifeworld and lived experiences. When I asked the participants how they interpret/perceive the importance of society and culture most emphasise that societal influences play an important role in their artistic imagination and creative endeavours. Kaizer unfolds this understanding by stating:

Yeah, everyone has a role to play no matter what. Do you know Griots? In African culture we used to have what we call Griots. These are like the people in the culture who are the guardians of that culture and the storytellers. It is like they are the ones who know the stories, the history and everything like that. They are the ones who are the guardians and also the storytellers of that community. So that used to be part of African community where you always had a Griot. They never forget where they come from. They always know these

stories. And I feel like that's what artists have to [remember]. I feel like art affects people differently. Art is different because it really affects your spirit. And I feel like as artists our work is to always keep the spirits alive with our work. Our work is to always, somehow, [a] creation. Like we live in this [world], everything [we] created. If you see something beautiful it moves you so it's like even if it's not beautiful it's something. I feel like artists are there to just keep the spirits alive because there are so many things that are killing the spirit.
(Kaizer)

According to the research participants, a very significant part of being an artist is the duty of conveying information (cf. section 1.1. for where art-making as a language device is expounded upon). Your artwork is the vehicle that carries the information—as Marshall McLuhan said: “*the medium is the message.*” All artworks carry a meaning—the artist creates the meaning and embeds it in the story that he/she tells and the way he/she tells it. The stories that artists tell represent what they are going through or what people in society experience in their daily lives. Malik claims the artist's purpose is comprised of:

We record history, man! We record history and we record [it] in its purest form. We archive [social experience]. Whether you paint, whether you [take photos], you gonna record what's happening in your surroundings. Or your feelings that are maybe influenced by your surroundings; but whatever it may be. It will be something of that time and because you did it in that time, it is saved for that time. It's memory of that time. You existed, in a certain era in time. We know it through your art and we see it and it lived. Here it is. And I just think with photography it's even more detailed because I capture moments in time. I capture moments in time, man! And these moments possibly last forever. They [artists] have a major role to play [in society]. (Malik)

The world-view of the artist comes out in his/her work—every artwork has a story behind it because it was created by a subject that wants to give meaning to its experiences:

I want to have an influence on people. I want to teach, basically, in a visual way using simple stuff. Not really making it hard for people to understand. And then they get the picture because it's put out properly. That's what I want. (Natural)

Most artists take the contents of their lifeworld experiences and construe them in such a way that the artist is able to tell a story from the meaningful experience. Artists are able to evoke different kinds of emotions in

individuals and collectively in society. It is the experiences of people that constitute the crux of human relations as we know them to be. The same applies to what is in the meaning that artists want to convey in their artworks. Experience is the consciousness of space and time as well as how history plays itself out inside the confines of reality:

I capture my surroundings, I capture my feelings. It's bad now that we're living in a country where the country's reliving apartheid in some way. You know we had white oppression now we have black on black oppression. To a point where the media or the powers that be have found ways now to say to people: that capture moments in time. To tell them that you will capture this and you'll capture that [censorship in media and the arts]. They control what the media capture. Like right now for a journalist to tell a story they would have to tell an omitted story. What are we telling if we say that? If we are showing you everything else but we are not [showing] you, the violence exists? That the powers that be then tell us that from henceforth that there we will not be showing of any violence. We will not be showing this, we will not be showing that. That is some real shit [sic]! What stories are we telling? What truths? What are we hiding? At who's benefit? (Faceless)

Art is the telling of stories and the expression of meaning in the quest to gain understanding (cf. sections 1.1., 1.4. & 1.5. to understand why I posit that to understand the artists world-view you have to see it as a composite by-product of social construction of reality, existentialism and interpretive understanding of lifeworld experiences). It is part of the phenomenological and existential experience of being a human to create meaning and to understand himself/herself, the people around him/her and his/her environment. The future of the human species is revolved around the sharing of information and art-making, and art is a primordial technique humans have been using to communicate. Besides from art being important for human beings from a pleasurable standpoint, it is also important as a means to generate the sharing of experiences.

From my perspective as a visual artist I believe I have a big role to play. If you take into consideration the influence of art in nowadays. Look at our fashion, look at how we dress: it is an influence of rock stars, man! (Faceless)

Malik expresses a sentiment that is similar to the one above:

And I think—artists have a lot of power. They will move [advance] society. They will provoke society. They will make society think. And they will get society out of their comfort zone. I'll make examples of images that have come out: works of Zuma, works of Helen Zille. These are people expressing their feelings about the political state in the country. Do you know what I mean? (Malik)

4.5. The constitution of the artist's world-view

Society is replete with external messages that enter peoples' conscious experiences and influence their individual actions and social practices. Art is a symbolic system of meaning-making that can have such an external and pervasive impact on the experiences of people. If you look at your surroundings, there are various messages in society that go through our minds and influence how we act. Natural believes the presence of art in social settings has this kind of effect on people. He claims that the subject internalises these art objects for himself/herself:

It does have a place cause people, everything is visual. Most of the things are visual. Most people see. So you see a piece of art everywhere you go. Even a KFC logo, that's a piece of art. That's a way of propaganda too; they use artists' ideas. So in this current political system, in terms of making it as an artist, it's tough. Because not everyone makes it, not everyone—I don't know if it's a destiny thing or its people prefer different art or people. In the current political system a lot of artists are not making sense basically. (Natural)

The experience of social reality is one that is emergent and enduring—in much the same way as the creative process is a phenomenon that is a result of endless interpretations and re-interpretations of the artist's conceptions. The world-view of the audience and the artist that is expressed in the interaction between subject and object is a dialogical and interpretive one. Hereby, the artist speaks to members of his social reality and the audience expect the artist to speak to their experiences. The audience search for these relational experiences in the meanings constructed and situated within the artwork. Social experience brings people together because it is in social reality that people get to intersubjectively share their experiences and feel part of a community of feeling, thinking and experiencing beings (cf. section 2.6. to see the importance of a person's intersubjective relations in the shaping of a person's identity). The creative products of artists are significant in that they entail the knowledge of a people, of a culture and of a society.

4.6. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to show the reader the importance of an artist's social/objective environment on his/her creative process and on his/her understanding of his/her lifeworld. Traditionally, the concept of creativity/creative process has not been understood according to the socio-cultural perspective. Since the introduction of the socio-cultural perspective into the spectrum of creativity research, research into creativity has broadened into how the concept of being a creative and artistic human subject has come to be understood. The narratives provided above of the research participants indicate that creative and artistic people are as much subject to the influence of external forces as any other human subject. The creative process itself is affected by external circumstances that on the surface seem to have nothing to do with it. However, it is evident upon deeper reflection that the process of art-making relies on there being a balance between an artist's external conditions and what he/she experiences within his/her creative process. An artist's objective reality and experiences can either be an impediment to art-making or can be a positive contributor to the process of creating art. A socially reflexive and socio-cultural approach to understanding the creative process of visual artists encourages an inter-subjective understanding of the phenomenon.

Chapter five: artistic creativity and subjective experiences

Introduction

In this section, focus is on the subjective experiences that take place within the creative process. Also those subjective experiences that occur outside the actual creative process and have a bearing on the artist's experiences in the process will be highlighted. As is evident from the narratives provided by the artists in the previous section, artists do experience the push and pull of their habitus and field in the decisions they make in their creative processes. What this points out is that the creative process cannot be limited to when the artist steps into his/her studio or is doing the actual creating. The creative process is an experience that is connected to many aspects of the artist's lifeworld and to delimit it to the traditional and archaic understanding of the work-environment would be to stifle creative insight from occurring. There is a conversation that occurs inwardly within the artist which is the cause for the artist's intentional actions inside and outside his/her creative process.

As previously discussed, an artist's consciousness in the creative process is laden with traces of his/her experiences (cf. section 2.2. in this section conscious and unconscious experience is discussed according to how the artist perceives creating and making art). The creative process is a platform where the artist strives to mould his subjective, objective and inter-subjective experiences into a synchronous whole. However, this is not to imply that experience occurs or happens in a fragmented or incoherent manner. Experience always takes place in the form of a unified stream of consciousness. Therefore subjective and objective experiences are indiscernible under the practical consciousness state that humans are prone to (cf. section 1.2.4. I discuss the integral role an individual's stock of knowledge plays in his/her understanding of himself/herself and also of his/her experiences in social reality).

In the creative process the artist puts his/her subjective and objective experiences under the microscope. The experiences he/she has are perceptively constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed and this is done to obtain understanding (cf. section 1.5. for a hermeneutic perspective on interpretation and how this relates to the creative process). It is not a mechanical and linear process. Rather it is one that is characterised by fluctuations of experiences and phenomena that are uniquely related to the artistic conceptions of the individual/s involved in the process. Subjective experiences are the other side of the artist's lived-experience and one which is important to how the artist perceives and understands his/her internal and external reality. Much of the artist's agency and creativity before, during and after the creative process of art-making is directed by the motives generated by subjective experiences. I discuss four

experiences of this nature that occur due to the human subject, more particularly the artist being a conscious, introspective and interpretive agent that is able to make his/her own decisions. The experiences have been labelled under the following typology: (1) Emotional experiences and inspiration (2) Meaning-making and creative story-telling (3) Problem-solving in the creative process (4) Reflexive creativity (cf. section 1.1. 1.4., 1.5., 2.4. and 2.5. for discussions related to the theoretical and literature based analyses of the abovementioned terminologies).

5.1. Emotional experiences and inspiration

Emotional experiences and inspiration are fundamental components of human existence and our everyday lived experiences. At the core of human consciousness is a motif inspired by an emotion-driven sensibility which pervades all of these experiences. Emotional experiences are the catalysts to so many of our actions. Some emotional experiences produce impulsive behaviours and the outcome of other kinds of emotional experiences can lead towards intentional actions from the human subject. When it comes to the visual arts and visual artists, the role of feelings or emotional experiences is twofold: (a) creating the initial excitement or inspiration inside of the artist that propels him/her to engage in a process of creation, and (b) being a comprehensible vessel or conduit where the artist's subjective experiences and his/her perspective on the state of social reality can be shared and known (cf. section 1.4. and 2.4. where I evince how emotion is experienced as an existential feeling and how that can inspire artists). Therefore, emotions and emotional experiences connect and hold networks and groups of people together.

There is a wide acknowledgement from the artists that the art that they create has a strong emotional value embedded within them. Faceless shares his understanding of the importance of emotions and emotional experiences in the production of his work:

So most of the time a client wants [me] to change something. [I am] going to have to change it without being emotionally attached. This is something that I learned once I studied art: [that] there is emotional attachment to it [art]. (Faceless)

Haile demonstrates how he creates artworks by communicating a message that has an emotional overtone that he hopes will prompt an emotional reaction from the viewer/s:

The human figure. I like showing emotions so that man can see them through drawings. I depict everyday emotions that you will be able to read from a person when you are looking

at them. You can find them anywhere. People who are sad, it is just an example. Maybe someone who is smiling—just expressions. (Haile)

When an artist experiences this kind of state in his/her creative process he/she produces work that echoes the sentiments of the masses. Artists are able to do this through visual story-telling that induces emotion. Sometimes the artist gets inspired by a spontaneous emotion. In addition to this, the artist will work to express a heavy emotional experience that he/she has been grappling with for a period of time. In either scenario, the artist engages, and at times deconstructs, the feeling/s associated with the emotion:

When I was travelling with the [in the car with his film crew going to location of shoot] I was like: my God! That guy I gave a ride to, I feel like that is the perfect guy for this story. And then I went back and I was conflicted because he can't write, he can't... He doesn't know how to read a script. He doesn't know how to read or write. All his life he has been a herd boy and now I didn't know how I was going to work with him. But I had this guy who can read and write and so I was conflicted. But I was like: Fuck [sic] it! I am going to go with the herd boy. I think sometimes life is exciting when you take the risk and I was like: Fuck [sic] it! I am going to go with the herd boy. (Kaizer)

Kaizer describes a time where he went with a spontaneous feeling to make a decision in the creation of a film he was working on. Emotions and feelings entail an impulsive orientation. Artists respond to these impulses in an artistic and creative manner. Malik expresses his own account of this experience:

These concepts... I sometimes feel them. I sometimes... it sounds strange, man, when I say I feel it. More than anything you feel it [urge to create] and if you don't feel it, you don't create it. That's why you'd find that writers go through writer's block because they can't create. Because at that point in time in their life there are no words. There are no words. It takes something drastic or something for something to happen and then words just come out. I don't shoot lately. I am not inspired. I don't just shoot. I wish I could. I feel like left out. But I don't feel left out any more. I feel like I'm just not at a point where I wanna create something. I don't wanna shoot anything. I don't wanna do anything. When that time comes when I need to create something I will create something. I don't force it. Because if I force it there's no heart in it and if there's no heart in it it's not a good piece, man. (Malik)

The artist is inspired by a sustained emotional experience that produces stimulation in his/her mind. In most cases this results in the need to express himself/herself.

So creativity is something that is in everybody and it is something that needs to be expressed from time to time. It helps relieve... It's like, it's a form of taking out those deep thoughts which you cannot tell anybody or you are afraid of telling people or it's not easy for you to express to people or feelings that came all of a sudden. And you cannot really explain them. So like I said: With abstract art, that's where you can explain all these things very nicely. Cause then now you are just making marks which can be expressed, interpreted as... the emotion of your feelings. (Faceless)

Artwork created without emotional value is inconceivable (cf. section 1.4). Emotional expression is an a priori in the conception of art-making. The creative process is absorbing and as a result the artist finds himself/herself expelling so many feelings that the process of art-making can function as an emotionally cathartic experience. Faceless attests to this by relating the importance of an emotional understanding of the self in the creative process. Artists allow themselves to be guided by their emotions in their everyday lived-experiences as well as when they are engaged in the creative process. In short, emotions help artists make important artistic and creative decisions. Malik indicates how he uses his emotional sensibilities to navigate his external reality as well as to give character to his artworks so that his audience can identify with him:

They [emotions] can be negative and positive. So, it's very important that we share these energies. We share energies in the form of wisdom, in the form of laughter, in the form of food, [and] in the form of pain. We share energies in so many ways. Energies are crucial! The energies you allow in your space are very, very important. Don't just allow anything in your space. You don't just allow them in because they affect you. They affect you and I like the thing of when you share knowledge, you share information. Information that could possibly improve someone else's position or circumstances. You part with something heavy; you inspire someone to think beyond. (Malik)

The creation of art is emotional. The artist's feelings and emotions come across in the iterations that he/she makes. His/her being is enveloped in the act of creating—as the artist seeks to imitate life in his/her art. Natural had this to say about how his emotions and feelings emerge:

With photos, since I am taking unplanned photos most of them: the ones I really like to call my art or what I am giving to the world. I can't take it back; you can't take back an unplanned photo. So you just have to... I just have to just look into the future and just see better things. That's how I go through it; I just want to perfect it. Basically, I always try to trigger myself to feel better. Like I said before I want to feel good within me and have balance. Calmness. I don't want anything to influence me at that time. So when I take that picture it comes out exactly the way I want it to. Basically that's what I need to control; mostly my emotion, my feelings, and everything. If I do I miss the picture—because it happens—something's are unplanned. Maybe I wasn't meant to catch the photo. That can happen too. So I just move on with it. Like I just tell myself I'll catch a better one next time. I'll just catch one. I move on from that and with the external part, how am I willing. (Natural)

Prince also draws inspiration from his emotional states in order to create his art:

Okay, for art, normally I draw when I feel like I am not happy or if I feel like I am angry at something. Maybe also if I want to do something but I can't do it. Or when I experience some kind of failure. If I am not feeling then I will draw, or if I want to show that I am good. I show that through my art. It's that kind of thing, I also want to prove [to] myself that I can do something and also sometimes, I also fail to express what I feel. I remember when I was doing my internship at Department of Arts and Culture, lots of my drawings: they were more surrealistic. They were so horrifying! Some people even thought that I was possessed or something. But then, that's how I would see myself expressing how I feel. Because I think it's difficult to explain emotion. It's difficult—feelings—but then visually it's easier. Sometimes I do such complicated drawings and that's because my feelings at the time are complicated. If you look at my drawings and they look complicated. That's how my feelings are. (Prince)

Prince claims that he sometimes becomes disillusioned because emotionally he could be in the mood to create but his life circumstances will not allow him:

The funny thing, if you are someone who draws on emotions. It's crazy because sometimes you feel like working but you do not have mediums. So you kind of like block your creativity. Sometimes you will see something and you will want to change. Maybe you will feel

something and you will want to portray it but then if you don't have the medium you cannot portray it. (Prince)

How an artist feels about a particular work he/she is busy with, is at the mercy of his/her moods and feelings. Artists acknowledge this all too well and this is one reason why the general opinion about artists is of them being capricious and unreliable individuals. This is because everything and anything can change at a whim. Prince confirms this:

I think it is a coping [mechanism] and kind of like therapeutic. Because you know what happens: if I form an attachment not just when I see her and I like her and then I just go and draw her. If I can maybe speak to her and see that this person understands me. That is when I will have the urge to draw her. But if that person and I don't have, I mean she rejects me; I don't have that urge to draw her. It goes away. There was this girl: I remember. We used to talk. It was fine. It was amazing then—I would have that energy to draw her. I would ask her for lots of her pictures and she was happy. But there was a time when she went her own way and I went my own way. She still wanted me draw her but I told her that I do not have the inspiration or the energy to draw you anymore. (Prince)

This is an experience that all the artists encounter in their creative process and one that artists skilfully translate into their artworks. The onset of the emotional experience can be an exciting and invigorating one for the artist. Describing their experiences when they get emotionally inspired to work, Malik has this to say:

It really depends on my mood, man. It depends on my mood, it depends on where I am, who I am with, and what I see. I am able to create when I am happy. I am able to create when I am sad. If I, if the feeling or if something comes up for me to create. If that feeling comes to say and it comes up strange, it just comes up when it comes up. [Laughs] It's a rush, your head gets hot. You start twitching. Personally, I start twitching, and my fingers start itching. I have a buzz! I then look for my tools that I use to create. I then put all the necessary items that I need to then create what I had envisioned or what I had felt. And there's no greater feeling than watching what you thought come alive. There's no greater feeling! It's a rush of adrenalin. (Malik)

Malik emphasises the importance of feelings, mood and the sensations that these experiences create in his process. The emotions and moods that he and other artists experience are largely driven by intentionality

(cf. section 1.2.1.). As one can see from the quote above, these sensations or emotional states engender Malik's artistic creations.

Negative emotions also have a profound impact on the creative process of the artist. Artists often feel lonely, depressed and exhibit behaviour that sees them wanting to withdraw from society. Artists claim that when they are overcome by such emotions or experiences they retreat into themselves. The artist becomes subsumed into an introspectively creative state where the mental and emotional processes of creation begin to unfold. Creativity studies have shown that these melancholic states that artists go through can be directly linked to the incubation stage of the creative process (Saywer, 2006). This is the stage where the artist begins to form linkages in his/her mind where he/she synthesises varying and complex ideas into a whole idea (cf. section 2.3. where I take you through a discussion of the stages of the creative process). Artists use these emotional episodes as inspiration. Faceless elaborates his account of an experience of this nature:

In a short span, to elaborate on that too. For example, now you found me alone in the studio at this hour and I am telling you that we should hook up at half past seven with the intention of leaving here around ten o'clock. Everybody that's been asking me: What's happening tonight? I have been telling them: 'Nah [No] I'll see you guys around ten.' I was with a couple of friends and I felt distance. Like I said, I felt isolated again. Maybe simply because of the attention I was getting in regards to what's going on around. So yesterday I felt lonely, hence today, on a Friday sitting in my studio alone, working. Just trying to recuperate and find myself again. And what I found is, in doing my work I actually find a balance [flow-state]. That balance that despite even if, once I am done, doing whatever I have to do what I am doing here today. If I go out there and it's not really happening for me I am still going to enjoy myself, simply because I did something that made me happy. Not that I want to achieve anything tonight. So yeah, I would say that plays a big role.
(Faceless)

Malik also expresses how feeling lonely has led to him finding inspiration to create:

It comes from loneliness. My work comes from loneliness. It comes from... Not all the time, though. It comes from happiness at times. And sometimes it comes from something that has inspired me. And, but how I really then started expressing myself to claim or to then

say: 'You know, here's art: it exists'. It is when I really started expressing myself through my work. I went through this period when I started creating works. I just started creating and creating and to a point where I then quit my job. But it was all on [passion and love for the art]. (Malik)

The emotional experiences of an artist in his/her lived-experience have a causal bearing on how the artist opens up meaning in his/her creative process. The act of transference that the artist performs when he/she takes the emotion and portrays it as he/she experiences it, is a hermeneutic one. The artist engages with the emotion on two levels: firstly, as a subject, and secondly, as a creator or person expressing creative energy. The artist transforms the emotional episode into a meaningful experience that will be capable of being read by others. Artists do this when they create works of art in their creative processes. The artist in the creative process allows himself/herself to be guided by his/her emotions. The emotional experience or inspiration is essentially the story that the artist wants to tell.

5.2. Meaning-making through creative story-telling

Perhaps the most fundamental aspect of the visual arts and art in general, is to tell stories. Our creativity as a human species and the ability we have to transpose our individual and collective experiences into meaningful stories have been vital to our survival. The way we understand ourselves as a people is enriched through story-telling and art performs a critical role in the telling of stories that all human beings are able to identify and connect with. Art-making is essentially about telling stories, communicating messages and conveying meaning. This is something that all art-makers have in common. Visual artists utilise the visual platform to express themselves, and to communicate and convey meaningful experiences to people. Art-making is spawned from a love of story-telling by the artist and the hankering to be told stories by society at large.

The way in which people interpret social experiences varies from one person to another. This is a truism that also applies to artists in the visual arts network. The common style of expression of all visual artists is of a strictly visual nature. The way in which artists express themselves is nuanced largely by two modalities, namely: the medium that the artist works with (e.g. photography or painting) and the stories that he or she wants to tell. Kaizer best summarises the essence of being an artist:

I love stories, and especially I love short films. I love stories. I just love stories of people who are trying to: I don't know. People who just trying to make it every day. (Kaizer)

Modalities such as medium and interpretation of internal or external experiences are shaped by the typifications the artist works under. A person's thoughts and actions are configured by his/her typifications and as a result of them we have multiple understandings of social experience. Visual artists base their creative works according to their own unique typifications. Therefore the stories that artists tell are intricately woven into their lifeworlds. Whether it is communicating a message or giving a phenomenological experience some meaning, the artist does these things effectively in a story-telling format. Artists are great exponents of this and Kaizer acknowledges this when he says:

Not sympathy. Because just to tell a story, I feel like maybe as humans we are... [storytellers]. Stories are so central to our lives that we sometimes understand something if it is a story. That is why as children, it is like the fables we are told. These fables are told to us to try to guide us morally, like these stories. Like stories are so central to us ... It is like the story of Jesus fables. Even Jesus told stories in fables. Like he would say in parables. It's like the parable of the... what's that guy? Who was... everyone passed and he was injured? The Good Samaritan! So it's like... and then it's like: who is the good neighbour? But we had to tell that story so that when you think: Oh, my God, like, yeah, man! I feel like sometimes we make stories for us to actually connect to something. Actually we do [it] to understand something or to see something. So that's sometimes, it's like you have, yeah, you see, whatever you have something. Like something bothering you or something that you just felt. And you feel like: why isn't anyone seeing this? So you feel like: maybe if I tell a story, maybe that is when people will realise this. (Kaizer)

Visual artists' penchant for story-telling comes from their desire to give their own interpretations of their lived-experiences and social experience. They give these interpretations from their lived-experiences or those of others which they derive inspiration from. Artists formulate concepts or themes which constitute the narrative/s that they wish to articulate through their work. Malik's work is inspired by the people in his environment:

It's always just best that as an artist, that your work has a body. Therefore sometimes it derives from a theme. I play around with themes a lot. I really do just conceptualise most of the time in terms of my work. Sometimes themes are not executed the way they were envisioned. (Malik)



Photograph 1. Malik. Planning story board for his exhibition of photo series called: *My brother's keeper*.

Malik took a series of portrait photographs (cf. photograph 1, pg. 106.) of street dwellers that he claims society has no regard for. He embarked on this work to draw attention to the lives of these individuals who are seen as the dregs of their communities. By documenting the collective lived-experiences of these individuals, he constructs a theme or concept around their experiences and his understanding or interpretation of them. Malik makes his audiences aware of the plight of these individuals who are often the forgotten people of society. He does this so he can render these people's experiences relatable through his art. Photography is a very appropriate medium to express socio-economic issues. This is because photography is an art form that is realistic and engaging in the process and manifestation of the art-product.

The concept that the artist wants to depict and how he/she wants to depict it depends on the medium that the artist chooses to express the concept or story through. Faceless is a multimedia artist and he plays a lot with the modalities of medium and concept:

I will make a painting out of it. Where with the painting the colours become more expressive of what I am trying to say about you. So, yeah, my key medium is concept. The whole idea of conceptualising. But if I had to pick a medium I would say photography. If I had to pick the traditional mediums I would say photography because it's spontaneous. (Faceless)

Painters are capable of using specific techniques and tools to give varied expressions to the stories that they want to tell in their artwork. Haile makes use of different creative devices such as the different hues available to him, paint mediums (oil and acrylic), and how he employs the paintbrush when painting:

Here (cf. photograph 2, pg. 108.) I want to show the corporate world and what it does to kids. Because here it is sweet manufacturers. So here is the mould of the sweet. The guys are making the sweet and throwing it into the big pan where the sweets are going to be formed. Instead of putting sweets here, I have put kids and this kid looks like a kid that is scared but still it is not a normal kid. Because this kid was formed by a sweet and the end result of it is not finished yet. The kid is going to end up as a sweet. It is not going to be just a human being—to show that these capitalists are shaping the character of kids because they are getting disorders that are brought on by flavourants that are poured inside sweets. Because they are not healthy but still they are alright for business. All those preservatives they are not alright for us. So that is why I have made these guys into sweets because they become what they eat. They get attention disorder and they cannot focus. They also get a temper that is not healthy for a child. So my context is a nursery. So you know that a nursery where plants a[re] grown and kids are akin to plants? Because that whole thing of children is derived from Chi. Chi meaning tree. So, children [are] small trees: the shades and the dark areas. Yes, I actually wanted to find kids, who are hyperactive. I wanted to show that this is a disorder. It is not a natural thing. (Haile)



Photograph 2. Haile. Painting depicting what the corporate world does to children.

So much of what we understand about ourselves collectively as a species and as individuals is symbolically linked to stories we have been told throughout our existence:

I think I connect because it is a story that my grandmother used to tell me. And because of my studies—in my studies I talk about traditional narratives of South Africans and how nowadays traditional narratives are not being given any attention like before. And I searched why in South Africa do we have traditional narratives. And it said that traditional narratives preserve norms and values of us as a black people. Back in the day, black people did not go to school. They were not... They did not know how to read and all those things. (Prince)

Prince is referring to an anecdote that was told to him by his grandmother as a young child. In South African and African culture it is customary for children to be taught important lessons of morality and Ubuntu¹³ through allegorical narratives that pertain to social life. Prince grew up on such rich oral storytelling traditions and presently in his artwork he seeks to replicate these traditional narratives in the way of visual art:

¹³ Ubuntu refers to behaving well towards others or acting in ways that benefit the community" ("Ubuntu refers to...", 2017).

When I was young I was raised by my grandmother. My grandmother would always tell us the story of Mellita. Mellita is a child who was conceived by her own sibling. The story is about a mother who doesn't have daughters; she doesn't have girls, only boys. She then sent her one child to his uncle's house to ask for medicine which is going to make it possible for her to bear a female baby. When the boy got to the uncle and got the medicine, on the way back he drank the medicine. You know how kids are when parents send them to do something like buy something like water or something; we would drink the water along the way. So the boy drinks the medicine and eventually the boy gets pregnant. He then gives birth to a female child and he calls that child Mellita. I learnt that nowadays when our parents send us somewhere or tell us to [do] something; we do what we want to do. We do not do what our elders tell us to do. I think that is a metaphor there in the pregnancy of the boy. This is the mistake that we as the youth fall into. We don't listen to our elders eventually we fall into bad behaviours. When the story goes on the mother of the boy supports the boy; she supports him. His friends told on him to his mother and his mother got angry. And also when I thought about it when I looked at how Mellita was loved by this boy. In this story we see how the young boy, who doesn't have the power to take care for Mellita, tries by all means to take care of Mellita. As the story goes on, the boy hides Mellita in the mountains. Every evening when all his friends get together he leaves and goes to the mountain to take care of Mellita. I think for me that also comments on abortion. Like how children, how valuable babies are. There are a lot of things that one can pick from this animation. (Prince)



Photograph 3. Prince. Story board of narrative of Mellita depicting scenes of village life (cf. discussion page 109).

Artists compose stories that speak to different and various components of their lifeworld. The artistic or creative concept is gradually crafted into a story by the artist who uses his/her skill to make this happen:

People tell different stories about Soweto or the townships to tell you the truth. They think it's all hunky dory. They send out the good side of the township and not showing the bad side of what's happening. And that's the type of things you see in social media. I don't know any artist—or, well heard thus far—I haven't spoken to even one who takes pictures while walking around in the township and taking pictures. Because to them that's kind of like a risk to. They feel like: "I am in a township. Someone might just take my camera and [I] get robbed". Sometimes I fear that too. But I try to shoot without any fear, 'cause you know I was raised there and I feel like I can fight back too when I do get attacked. It's more like a self-defence type of thing. And since I want to portray these stories I might as well do it without any fear and just spread the message. But the township is very... it's shaky in a

very strong way. But I am doing it to spread a message, because people don't really know anything about the hood. (Natural)



Photograph 4. Natural. Life in the township (cf. discussion pages 110 and 111).

It is commonplace for artists such as Natural in the extract above, to turn the communities in which they grew up in and the realities within these communities, into central themes of their artwork. In Natural's case, as is the case with many artists, the motive is to give new interpretations of old understandings of social life and of social reality as a whole. The way to do this is to tell different stories from the ones that were being told before. People's understandings of social reality are influenced by the stories they are told about these phenomena which they accept as being truthful.

An artist will take an experience, a memory, an emotion, or a thought and find the meaning that underpins his/her sense of self. To find meaning, the artist has to unwrap or excavate it from the experience or phenomena he/she seeks to offer an interpretation of. This process usually culminates in the artist producing his/her own interpretation of the phenomena which then becomes the story that the artist presents as his/her artwork. Haile elaborates on this:

You see the way the woman's body has been created. Like the body shapes that you see: it's like the depictions you have seen especially of black women. Like you see round shapes. Then you see straight lines and then it goes round again. Do you get it? Whereas, when it comes to males: you see that he is rigid. So I love those variations and the softness.

Because we need women, without women there is no life. We are the fruits of their hearts. It wouldn't be heavily conceptual because it obviously needs to reach people. I like things that can put the message across in a simplistic way; not too literal but at least have a lot of meanings behind it. When you speak about it I find it interesting because I think I am a person who has [a] really strong memory. That is the thing that I would say God blessed me with. Even though I do not have words but the image I have. I can remember old things from as early as two years. (Haile)

Kaizer discusses a recent film project he was working on:

So it is like a big reservoir where it's like these rivers of water are now being reserved in one place. And then the water is being sold to South Africa and it can also generate electricity. But right now we are selling water to South Africa. But then the problem is that when you are trying to conserve that water into one space then the water keeps piling up. But where the water was, there used to be villages. So they moved people from villages to make those hydro dams. And some of these people were forcibly removed because we have to make this. This is for the good of the country. So I was inspired by that... and I felt like, and I had a story, man, who... Of a young boy and his mother who were moved but their father's grave was in a village that now they were moved from. But he keeps dreaming of his father. But then he finds an old man who has a small hut by the water's edge and the old man says he refused to leave. This is all he knows. But the old man has a chicken and the old man is like: what's important was blood. Not cow's blood or whatever; any blood. And right now if you give the young man the chicken and he is like: "The blood flows into the river, the river will carry the blood into the grave." So he cuts the head of the chicken and then the blood spreads into the water and then that in a way satisfies his father's spirit. Ah yeah! So that's the story. The struggles, the pains of people and just showing people, what other people are going through. This is real for me. (Kaizer)

Artists manage to creatively construe seemingly mundane phenomena into meaningful stories. Artists do not create social reality anew; their artworks are second order and sometimes third order representations of social phenomena. In the act of creation, the artist merely provides his/her interpretation of it. Faceless aptly sums this up:

My artwork is about history. It's about now... it's about now for tomorrow. For tomorrow's kids, for the next generation. I am hoping that future artists or future society will look back into my work and read into it what was happening now. That, okay, a student could live the way I live also reflecting other students, also reflecting relationships that people have. In a way it tries to also draw comparisons to relationships, previously in generations that have passed. And hoping that whoever is going to look at the art is gonna draw comparisons from the present time to the time in the future. So that's why I am trying to make art that can last a hundred years. The type of mediums that I use, the type of paper that I use, the pencils that I use, photography, how I preserve my work—are put in a way that even when I am dead: Hopefully it will be easier for someone to just crack the code, okay. Because I file things a lot—I will make a file. That file maybe will be today. So with me doing: that is me trying to keep record. Recording everything: just keep on recording so my art is for the future. (Faceless)

Malik sees his duty as an artist in the same light:

They have a major role to play. We record history. We record history and we record it somewhat in the purest form. We know it through your art and we see it. And it lived. Here it is, you know what I mean? And I just think with photography—it's even more detailed. Because I capture moments in time, man. And these moments possibly last forever. (Malik)

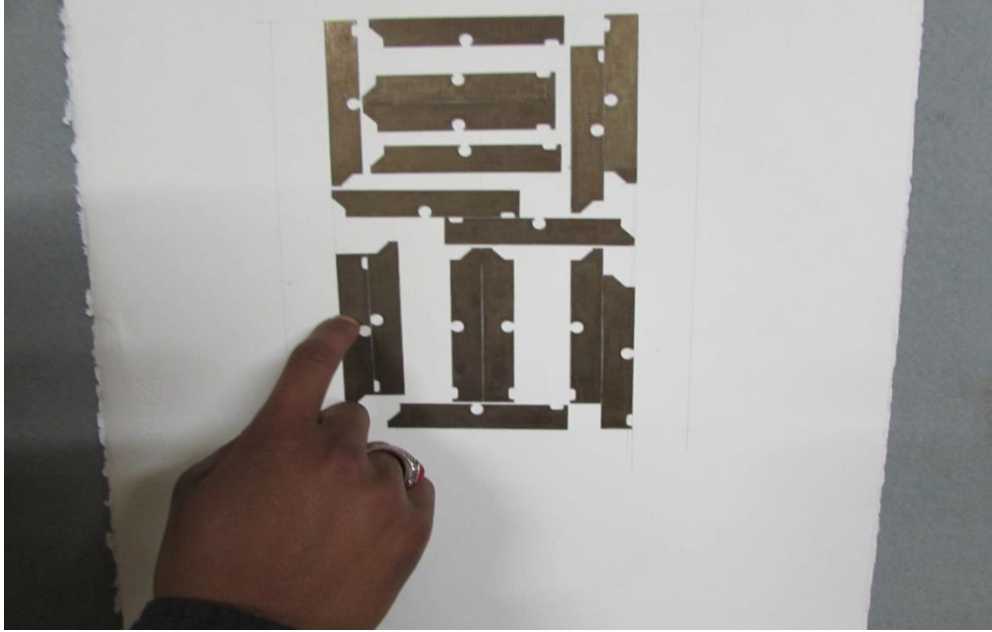
Meaning-making and story-telling are inseparable and integral components of art-making and the creative process that goes into it. Artists base their art-making around these two fundamental pillars of human understanding. To create artwork that is driven by these two concepts requires the artist to have an epistemological grasping of them. The artist accumulates such an appreciation of intersubjective, subjective and objective phenomena through his/her own lived-experiences and unique stocks of knowledge. However, the process of construction and deconstruction that is congenital to art-making is one that is marred with complexities. The artist encounters various problems in his/her creative process—these problems tend to be of an aesthetic or technical orientation. Other kinds of problems that the artist may encounter in his/her creative process are conflicts that the creative process evokes inside the creator that lead to periods of creative impasse in the artist's process.

5.3. Problem-solving and problem-finding in the creative process

Problem-solving and problem-finding cultivate the kind of dynamic and fluid thinking that is necessary for new creative insights to occur. Creativity does not happen completely in the mind, as idealist theories would have it. It also occurs during the hard work of execution (Sawyer, 2006:255). Problem-solving and problem-finding in art-making are conscious experiences wherein the artist seeks to reconcile the paradox that lies at the intersection of his observable and emotive experiences. Creative and artistic insights are derived from the dynamic that a problem-solving or problem-finding approach to art-making nurtures:

Okay, for one, it's a problem because if it had been more symmetrical it would have a stronger static attraction, so to speak. Like you have been saying: it has this attraction. I would say the attraction is more based on the idea of connection. If you check [showing me an art piece]: these two connect. It's like these connections that you see but your eyes tend to do it like—your eyes move these two back to make... this one. And then also that one is that one and then these two become a joint family. Which is, it's kind of like that game play; it's a mind game. So the problem is if it had been in the centre like here. Had I moved this one to the centre, yes. Then it would have looked statically more attractive. Even though it still is attractive, it would have added to the attractiveness of it. (Faceless)

In the extract above, Faceless is discussing an artwork which he was working on in my presence. He was taking me through each step of his process while simultaneously discussing the specific challenge or problem that the artwork in question posed to him at that given time. The problem that confronted Faceless in this particular artwork he is discussing, is a technical one. The idea behind this artwork is based on what he claims to be an ethereal mathematical principle, i.e. Fibonacci's sequence. The Fibonacci sequence, also called "The Golden Ratio" (Murph, 2014), is used to achieve visual harmony in any branch of the design arts. However, in the creative process he confronts a problem that is contrasting in nature to the actual concept that inspired the work. In the execution phase of his process, he encounters issues relating to how the work will look once it undergoes practical implementation.



Photograph 5. Faceless. Picture of artwork titled *Equilibrium 21* (cf. discussion page 114).

Problems such as these arise from the disjunction between subjective and objective experience; or more aptly, the disunity between Faceless's formulation and execution of the creative or artistic yield. Artists may also generate artworks that have controversial socio-economic issues as the catalysts. In the event of such artistic insights, the artist conceptualises work that will address and sometimes critique these issues. Haile's artwork takes on such a disposition:

Here I am working on the theme of capitalism, and the way it exploits us as a community. Yes, it is what I am working on in this painting, even sculpture. I show the way in which our value has decreased in the stock exchange. It was influenced by our current situation as people. You know how it came about? When I am sitting down I like to think about it. Because obviously I will think about it because it is something that I see and it is something that lives. It affects us as people because it is not right for us as people. We won't be able to live like this and we come together. Like we said the last time: we want unity. And within capitalism there is no unity. Not to say that I want communism or I want to fall under a certain party but at least let us come together, my lord. Yes, my brother, this thing was not made for us. It shapes us, and we then have a shape that is not fine. (Haile)

Artists encounter a multiplicity of problems in art-making, even before they get down to the actual creation of art. Artists also define these problems for themselves. Haile discusses what he finds troublesome in social reality:

The church brought division amongst people, hatred. It taught man to condemn, to judge. It doesn't bring anything; it doesn't bring light into people's lives. Because you see how our situation as a black people is. Because our system was set from the Bible. The very same religion the Romans, they imposed it on us and now we have lost our spirituality. Like I was saying: I am not challenged in a way that forces me to focus on one thing. I want people to see how it is and what happens in life. It is a picture that they all see but the picture should talk to them depending on what that person knows: what they care about and what kind of energy they resonate and what is their mind-set. I would say that it depends on the viewer mainly and not from me because what I did. It is complete. It can mean anything to any man. We are too divided! We are divided across many lines: by religion, by politics, places and class. Because obviously we are under this capitalistic system. So there won't be a time when things will be one. We won't be able to sing one song because even our backgrounds are different. You are a sociology student. You know what makes a good society. I want in the work that I do to give people that picture of that black man who is unapologetic [pause] who exalts himself, and who is not scared. Not the black man of today, myself as well. I do not want to be in the state that I am in today. I try very hard to be fine just like everyone else. So that we can earn our dignity from other races. (Haile)

As an artist Haile's artwork is positioned in a realistic and humane style. It is inspired by the disparities that he sees amongst people in society, in his community and by the anguish felt by the people he knows and those he does not know but whose stories he relates to. Artists such as Haile and others like him typically pursue the resolution of societal and humanitarian problems which they perceive through their artwork. In addition, when inside the creative process, there are other kinds of stumbling blocks that artists typically come across. Art-making is a deeply layered and iterative exercise. Problem-solving and problem-finding are integral to the process of creating art. Natural discusses his creative process:

Internally, it's when I don't have what I want. When I can't give the people or myself what I want. When I see this shot but I can't really portray the way I want to take it up. That's one issue I am battling with, so most of the time before I take a picture I want to make sure I am

in the right setting, right feeling, too. Make sure that I am in a right space before I do take it. Because if I don't take a very meaningful photo it has like: I have an issue within me, internally. It has this, I don't know—you know when you do something bad. That's how it feels. I didn't do this right. I know I can do better than this. I can, you know, portray better. So internally I am just trying to improve and become better at what I am doing. In terms of video editing too and video shooting, I always strive to be Scorsese. I try to even be better. I want to excel all the time. Basically, oh yeah, externally the issues I am facing. We spoke about the social pressure that's my main issue. When I can't do what I want to do because I have a responsibility—that's going to pay something at the end of the month. That's one thing I don't really [pause] I don't love that. These external things are issues. Most of these societal things there are pretty much issues to me. The fact that we can't live life the way we want to. That's just not free. We are not free at all. We are just slaves. (Natural)

And furthermore:

Some pictures, I really; I need to go put them in the computer. Go in a light room just to see what I can fix. If a picture does not really touch me the way, or I didn't portray it the way that I wanted to. Sometimes I put it in a light room just to give it that natural feel. That feel that happened at that time. Or sometimes I use manual settings on my camera, so they don't usually take pictures exactly as your eye can see it. Sometimes it can be more exposure sometimes less exposure. So, things are not as perfect. So I can put them digitally and make them look good or the way that I want them to look. But most of the things when it comes to videos, I feel like most of the work that I have done was just incomplete. It's just like I am rushed. It's rushed work. When you have an artistic deadline then that's when you gonna use the perfect—you know that perfect art. I don't think van Gogh: they didn't have deadlines. Picasso: I doubt he had a deadline. When there is a deadline, it's not gonna come out the way that they want it to come out. Because now they probably feel like it's incomplete. But if you work on something over time and then you know, you don't have a deadline because it is basically your work. It's not work for other people or to impress anybody then you can actually complete that one thing. You can get to that one complete picture or video that you wanted to portray. But deadlines and, you know, future constraints

and systematic things; they just make things harder to get to where you want to be. The way I want them to be; let me say that. (Natural)

The creative process requires the artist to be making decisions that will have a bearing on the final product. The decisions that artists tend to make are made from either a problem-solving or problem finding perspective. Whether the artist finds a new problem or revisits a pre-existing one, he/she will approach the problem in question according to a set of embodied typifications. The artist's typifications are informed not only by his/her lived experiences, habitus and field-related factors. But also by the kind of artist he/she is and how this kind of art-making does makes it possible for the artist to engage himself/herself with the problem. Prince discusses the kinds of problems he grapples with in his art-making:

What's happening: normally I like pain when I sketch my sketches. I like combining different images. Most of my work... it depends like, I would take different images then I combine then, I make one image. How I do that? I'll make an example with this sketch I did during this week. I drew a young woman, a pregnant young woman. So while I was still drawing her, like sometimes I think while I am drawing. It's true maybe: I will feel a certain way while I am drawing. While I am drawing I will think. What comes to mind when I see a pregnant woman? While I was drawing her, I thought of industries. There are these silo things, or construction work or whatever. Then I thought to myself that if in the townships we had those industries... I liken industries to pregnant women. Because you always get an output from the operations of industry. Everywhere where there is labour, there is an output. For me I feel like when kids are born, that is the output. They are the future; they are the outputs of the pregnancy. Industries and schools are more about developing youth. That's how I saw it: like a pregnant woman. Because I drew the industry inside her stomach and then I made a background... because I am planning to paint the background as a horizon. And there is an African lady who is working. I think for me, that's how I do my work. Like I take different images and I check how this image will combine with the other image and then how it will convey a story. Sometimes I just draw whatever comes to mind without even thinking. I just draw whatever comes to mind and how it fits into the story or the image I am trying to create. I never think of that, I only check what it means at the end of the day. (Prince)

He then describes another kind of problem which is more particular to his artistic domain or practice and how he aims to resolve it:

The other thing that I also forgot: we do have these narrations about Cinderella and all these other people. Those are animations that are not here in South Africa. There are a lot of narrations that people still know but my focus is on narrations that were not told. That the elders died with and that the elders forgot about. I also researched reasons why traditional narratives are dying [it] is because the elders are forgetting. They are forgetting our cultural narratives because they are no longer retelling them to children. They do not practice them any more so that they can remember them. That also inspired me. Like how the untold narratives, how are they dying. I am trying to preserve that because Mellita is a story that I have never heard from anywhere. I only heard it from my grandmother. (Prince)

Prince discusses a technical problem which he claims limits him as an artist; stymies his process and therefore impacts on his artistic and creative outputs:

Colour, colour drawing. Especially colouring, ja. I think I am still learning it. Especially when you have to blend your colours when you do the skin. For me sometimes I struggle with it. Especially, when choosing the right colours. So that after blending skin so I can see that this is actual skin. So I am still learning that. And the other part, the other technical challenges that I am trying to sort out, is painting. Most of my paintings that I have done myself, most of them are unfinished. I don't know what is happening; when I have to finish. (Prince)

Art-making is as much about finding and solving problems as it is about telling stories and conveying meaning to achieve and create understanding. The act of creation consists of the artist's lived-experiences while he/she encounters and works with important concepts and tools in the process of his/her art-making. Every component of the artist's lifeworld is demonstrated in the creation of his/her art and also in the artwork itself. Throughout the creative process the artist is consciously and unconsciously thinking of ways to synthesize all of these components of his/her stock of knowledge into a finished product. The evolutionary process that begins with a problem or inspiration and leads to the finished product is interpretive and open to change. In this process the artist creates and revises his/her artwork repetitively

until he/she can hardly do so anymore. This process is called the hermeneutic cycle, or as I refer to it: Reflexive creativity. Reflexive creativity is being dealt with in the next section.

5.4. The use of reflexive creativity

Reflexive creativity is a concept that I use to explain the conscious and unconscious, backward and forward iterations of the artist in his/her creative process. The practice of art-making requires hard work, perseverance and an openness to learn. This indeed necessitates the artist to be as reflexive in the approach to his/her art-making as the very process of making the artwork is. The backward and forward manoeuvres that the artist does in his/her art-making assist him/her to gain better understanding of his/her artwork thereby allowing the creator of the artwork to constantly improve on it. The more the artist interacts with the artwork, the better the artist's interpretation of the artwork becomes. Natural describes the importance of regular practice in art-making:

So I've learnt that I should stop following and just do my own thing. And by that I am giving out myself not really [doing] what people are doing. But I'm giving out the true me. I've learnt that. And practice, practice makes perfect cause I couldn't do video editing but from practicing it I have improved so much. And my artwork has improved a lot too. (Natural)

The degrees of revision and hypothesis intrinsic in the art-making process put artists' levels of desire and patience to the test. On occasion artists create with no conception of the end-product in mind. In this case the artist has to let the artwork take its form and this can take time. Haile knows the importance of having patience in his art-making:

Patience, my brother! Because when I begin something it bores me—especially painting. I do not want to lie; I know already that it takes long and that these paints dry up after a very long time. I have to wait for another layer. These are the kind of things that teach me patience; to wait but... This is something that I have to understand but it bores me. But once the painting is finished and it looks like this, I know I am finishing. (Haile)

When the artist lets the artwork grow within the art-making process, the creative process is driven forward by the artist's quest to find new problems to solve, and to revise the solutions that he/she had produced. Many insights occur to the artist if he/she steps away from his/her work for a period of time. Distancing oneself from the artwork helps the artist to gain awareness of how he/she influences the artwork and also on how the artwork is progressing. Kaizer acknowledges how important this is in creating art:

I think what is really important about that matter is when you have an idea. Okay, you have a good idea. Sometimes let it germinate. Give it time and then revisit [it] again and then give it time. Let it breathe. That's why for example, when you write a story, you write a story [and then] you put it aside. You then come back after some time. Look at it again. See if there is anything. But just let things have a life of their own. And also give it time because sometimes you have written a story and then because you gave it time something happens. Or someone says something—I am going to put it in that story I am writing. So if you have a story and you just go on and it is just rushed. Because that is also the problem with Hollywood—because it is a machine. They keep churning out films like that. That is why a lot of films are just crap, because it is just, whatever. It is just like MacDonald's: lots of orders whatever and all of this kind of shit [sic]. I feel like it's really important to sometimes let things breathe. But it's also subjective because sometimes you also don't want to be too late about them. But I feel like it's really important to give things to, just to dwell in your mind. (Kaizer)

It is of crucial importance for an artist to let the ideas or insights that he/she implements in the making of his/her art germinate and incubate as these are important steps of the creative process (cf. section 2.3.). This is because as the ideas germinate in the artist's mind—the artist's unconscious and conscious mental processes engage with the idea or insight. From this engagement, the artist is able to see new applications of these ideas. Old insights and concepts change into novel experiences and an artwork that may have seemed stagnant and incapable of progression is given a new breath of life. Prince also makes sure to give himself space from his artwork to allow new insights to come to him:

And there is a point where you want to do something and then you see this thing is not going where I want it to go. For me it happens and then I would get frustrated and then I would leave it. Then I would go around, take a walk or eat or maybe meet people. I will pick some solutions along my walking or when I am with the people I met up with. And [I] will come back to my work and see how I take it from here to there. That's how I sometimes find solutions. Sometimes I just take a walk and then when I come back, will look at the drawing and eventually I will pick something. (Prince)

The artist's understanding of the artwork gradually develops in the repetitious engagements that he/she experience with it. As a result of this, the artwork matures as the artist gives it a new meaning or

interpretation—from what it was when the artist started to work on it. With each and every reiteration, new interpretations and meanings are unearthed by the artist and become represented in the artwork (cf. section 1.5.). Prince discusses how utilising the hermeneutic principle of hypothesis-revision helps to assist his understanding of the life cycle of an artwork and unwraps his creative process:

Normally, my works, especially when I do my works not for someone else. I would know that I want to say something but I do not have... Sometimes I do not have that thing. Like this is what I want to say but I do not know how. I know [!] want to say something then eventually while I am still working and working then I will pick it along the way. Like this is exactly what I want to say. And as I go on, I don't know if you know this [pause] the phenomenology hermeneutics. Some of them they say: you are your own interpreter of the world. Whilst you are working going back and forth to check if the work is going well? Is it going where you want it to go and then after you go back, you change, you assess your own work during the process. So this is what I do most of the time when I work. (Prince)

In the creative process the artist gets involved in a reflexive dialogue with himself/herself. In this dialogue, the artist creatively opens up the meanings he conceptually constructed himself/herself. As he/she gains new hypotheses and revises them as the process grows—the artwork/s become representations of the self-reflexivity shown by the artist in her/his creative process. Faceless describes this dialogue or process:

It comes at three levels actually, eh, that answer. On the first level it's... When I am drawing the artwork, as I said previously, I would walk back and look at it and allow it to communicate its self back to me. And what it's communicating to me at some point it's going to say: enough, it's enough, you have done enough! If at some point, like I am going to give you an example with the artwork that I was working on recently, the one that I was showing you when you were here. Those two drawings I was busy finishing them at school for an evaluation recently. And I got to a point where the artwork looked finished but then it wasn't really kind of like finished. Because I was like ayt (alright) let me add one more line and in adding that one more line it changed it and caused me to add more. So there's a point when an artwork says you can stop and you decide to continue. So... when you reach that point, when the artwork says: you can stop. Then at that point I decide that I can stop. The second level comes when I say that: okay now I have to sell the artwork. Now it's marketing it, and so on and so forth. And then it comes to a point where it gets sold to

someone else. It gets to a point where it gets sold to someone else and then in that context from my care it is done. From my vision, from me seeing what's happening with it, what's happening with its life, it's done, you know. For me it moves on, it grows another life of its own. That's where it comes at a second level. Where is it now, whoever owns it can do whatever with it. Which I do not have control over it. At some point it might come back even after I passed away... (Faceless)

The artist is immersed in an enthralling process where he/she seeks to understand, interpret and eventually endow the artwork with meaning (cf. section 1.5. and 2.11. where interpretation and the creative process are discussed). The artist breaks down the meaning he/she assigns to phenomena into small parts and brings the parts together again to form a coherent whole. This is how the artist constructs new meaning in his/her artwork and also each and every reiteration of the impression or expression. The artist approaches an understanding of the essence of the experience that he/she seeks to imitate or the concept that she/he wishes to elaborate on. The concept always undergoes change once the artist starts to create art. The artwork has to go through a stage of evaluation where the artist reflexively examines the artwork (cf. section 2.3.). At this point, the artist is also examining his/her understanding of the concept and ultimately of his/her stock of knowledge and identity as an artist (cf. section 2.6.). It is at such a junction where I refer to reflexive creative thinking to begin to unfold. Faceless explains:

Actually it flows from the time the work is conceptualised. The time the work is conceptualised, in my head is complete. You know, so in me creating a work is just that what I am not aware of, cause I see the end product of it. So I want to get to finishing it. When I start putting it into a practical sense, start to want to communicate it to somebody else: first thing, you know, how would I communicate it to myself? How is it communicating to me? What is it saying to me? (Faceless)

Art-making is an interpretive, continuous and evolving process. This is because the meanings that the artist constructs and embeds in the artworks change character and interpretation, according to how the artist feels and how he/she experiences his/her creation of them. The artists all acknowledge the importance of revisiting a work of art regularly in order to breathe in new life. According to most of my research participants an artwork can never be labelled as finished or complete because there is always the potential to see new meanings and to add new interpretations that were not present before. Creativity and by default, art-making, are emergent experiences. Therefore, as the subject's experiences and understanding get

richer, the products of these experiences and understandings become increasingly revelatory and significant. Kaizer elaborates:

It depends, I think, but it does have to finish somehow. It does have to finish like the story I told you about, it does finish. Sometimes people watch a film and then expect something to still happen or whatever. But you are like: No, actually this is that story! No man, we were expecting this! It is like I understand. You were expecting that but this is their story and this is the way it is. And sometimes you have done a story and there is an idea that will come and you wish maybe: if I added this, or whatever. I feel like in every filmmaker, there is something that you wish could have done more. You could have done whatever. But if it's finished it's finished and you can't. It is done. It is out there. So, and you can't keep revisiting it because it is like... you are standing in one place. You are still now. You just gotta [got to] do something and then move on to the next. You can't just be still on one thing. (Kaizer)

Malik also believes that the artwork should always be open for revision:

When you put a piece down in your house, hide it away for two years. Possibility you'll come back and look at it two years from now and you want to change something else about it. Some people have pieces that they have been working on for 8 years. The piece is just not finished. You release a piece when you feel like: There's not much I can do on it now. It's enough to give this person. To say: you can go. It's enough to say you can go. There's always room for improvement. That's why a designer's piece will not look the same as last years. And last years will not look as dope as these year's. But you'll find there's those timeless pieces. (Malik)

The hermeneutic cycle makes it possible for the artist to be reflexive in the manner in which he/she evaluates his/her actions and decisions in the act of creation. Moreover, it encourages creative thinking and insights to emerge through how the artist is continually working on the artwork and applying changes that are inspired by creative breakthroughs. Creative insights or breakthroughs are products of the hard work that artists put in. The artist finds many small creative insights that guide him/her throughout his/her creative process. However, the all-important creative breakthrough is a result of conscious hard work by the subject. And if he/she is fortunate he/she will experience a moment of inspiration.

The artist creates and recreates continuously while new elements come to him/her within this creating and re-creating. As the elements of the artwork are moved around, the artist starts seeing each and every one differently. Parts of the artwork take on a different meaning when the artist sees them as individual parts and they also adopt another meaning when seen as a coherent whole. This is how the artist works through various problems and creates art. Artworks may start as spontaneous flashes of insight but after being subjected to the process of reflexive creativity, they become products which convey human and cultural meaning.

5.5. Conclusion

The narrative accounts that I have used in this chapter elucidate how phenomenological the experience of art-making is. The creative process of art-making for my research participants is one that mirrors their unique everyday experiences in social reality. The art that these artists create is a reflection of what they know, who they are, what they would like to become; their feelings and emotions, and the times and places in which they find themselves in the history of the world. This is the nature of social experience. There is always a subjective component to the experience that rests on objective circumstances for the verity of its existence. The creative process of art-making is a long process where artists make use of his/her lived-experiences in their totality; to create meaningful interpretations of social experience.

To create art the artist makes use of a complex combination of self-awareness, understanding, critical thinking, skill and focused hard work. All of these factors are part of the creative process as the artist interprets and reinterprets to create meaning. The artist is giving expression to his/her life and the lives of those people who share social reality with him/her. Art-making is an enduring process where the artist strives continually to create something that is real to himself/herself and to the people of society. The artist gives us what he/she deems as real either symbolically or tangibly in the stories that he/she tells to us in her/his work.

Chapter six: concluding remarks

Approaching this study's research topic through a qualitative research framework improved the outcomes obtained from the research process. The philosophical essence of this study necessitates for a research paradigm that describes people's experiences from the point of view of the people who participate in it. Phenomenology as this study's central theory relies largely on people's accounts of their everyday experiences of their lifeworlds. To unlock the meanings artists attach to their art-making and how the artists experience the creative process of art-making require an approach which seeks to derive an in-depth understanding of the artists' lifeworlds.

The scope of the qualitative research paradigm makes it possible for me to delve into the meanings that this study's participants ascribe to every day phenomena. This is due to the fact that that qualitative research's primary objective is to describe human behaviour in all its richness and complexity. If the same study was conducted according to a quantitative framework of analysis—the nature of the results obtained would have contrasted markedly from the findings presented to you in this study. This is because the research process would have been entirely different from the one pursued in this study. Furthermore, the theoretical tenets used to guide the analysis would also have had to be entirely different.

The theoretical framework of this study is crucial to how the concepts of the creative process, visual art-making and the artistic human subject are understood. The theoretical perspectives implemented in this study make it possible to conduct a holistic and engaging look into the subjective and objective experiences of visual artists in the creative process. Each individual theory offers a unique glance into the pertinent internal and external structures that constitute the lifeworld of the visual artist. As the complex creatures that human beings are, it would have been short-sighted of the researcher to use one theory to encompass the vast array of experiences of the artists that participated in this study. This would not have given the researcher a comprehensive understanding of what the research participants experience as artistic creators.

Therefore, it is imperative that the researcher uses various theories that are of a distinguishably qualitative orientation to interpret the experiences of this study's research participants. This was so that the experiences that are significant to the research topic and research problem could be understood sufficiently by the researcher. With the assistance of the theoretical pillars of this study the researcher is able to conduct an interpretive analysis of the narratives of the research participants. The interpretivist stance

adopted in this study combines well with the ontological background of this study to arrive at a sound epistemological position to direct quality social inquiry into the topic investigated in this study.

Human beings experience of the world around them is defined by the subjective meanings they give to the experiences they have. These subjective meanings are shared and each and every person's understanding of the experience is the result of his/her own unique interpretation of it. By maintaining an interpretivist posture the researcher was able to understand the personal meanings the research participants give to the subjective and objective experiences that they encounter. To interpret social experience is something that we do as qualitative social researchers to get to know the hidden meanings behind the superficial narratives or experiences told to us by research participants. Creativity is a vast and metaphysical concept and therefore very difficult to pin down to a particularly defined interpretation/s. For this particular study, the concept of creativity is conceptualised as an emergent process integral to the final art-product of the visual artist. Only a reflexive interpretation of such a conceptual phenomenon would suffice to unmask the truths behind the experiences emanating from the creative process.

The theoretical pillars of this study on their own are not enough to understand the creative process of art-making and the narrative experiences of the process given to the researcher by the research participants. The literature review conducted on creativity provides epistemological support to the ontological foundation of the study. It is paramount that the researcher familiarises himself/herself with the pre-existing knowledge on the concepts of creativity, the creative process and art-making. As the researcher wades through the various differing epistemologies on the subject, he/she selects the ones which speak specifically to creativity in the human subject and art-making as an experience that human subjects have. A large number of studies that are extant on creativity were conducted according to different philosophical and methodological approaches. This study manages to find itself a place within the maelstrom of knowledge in the domain of creativity research.

The epistemological understandings discussed in the literature section guide me insofar as situating the study in the broad discourse on creativity. Discussions on consciousness, inspiration and identity and the creative process are used to describe the subjective experiences that artists have in art-making. Arguments put forward regarding the impact of the artistic field and the artists' socio-environment represent the objective experiences that artists have as human subjects. Lastly, the discussions about problem-finding and problem-solving; the stages of the creative process and the importance of skill in the creative process give a semblance of what the artist actually does when he/she creates. Combined altogether, the

epistemological foundation of this study is conceived. The researcher is able to operationalize the concept of creativity and the narrative approach contributes significantly to this being possible.

Using narrative methodology is essential to fulfil the objectives outlined in this study. This is because narrative methodology is specifically oriented towards understanding people's experiences. The experiences that people have can range from trivial to deeply meaningful and personal and this includes either their past, present or future experiences. The way human beings think about and communicate their respective experiences is through a story-telling orientation. Story-telling is the foremost interest of the narrative approach, and the widespread belief amongst narrativists is that every individual has his/her own narrative. Phenomenology concerns itself with the nature of people's everyday conscious experiences. Narrative methodology helps in taking these experiences and understanding them as key ingredients of the individual's paramount social reality.

An artist or a visual artist expresses himself/herself through the stories he/she tells in his/her artwork. When asked to talk about their lives outside of their creative and artistic work—the research participants also articulate themselves in the form of episodic narratives pertaining to particular experiences. It was particularly interesting how the research participants mould the experiences they encounter into narratives in order for them to understand these experiences. Moreover, the research participants construct little narratives out of the experiences they are probed on so that they could make them comprehensible to the researcher. Thus, story-telling becomes a medium in which information is able to be communicated and understood between the research participants and the researcher. It is because of narrative inquiry that the researcher was able to obtain thick and descriptive accounts of the stocks of knowledge of the research participants.

In the data collection phase, it occurs to me that the research participants are not accustomed to being asked questions about their creative process and about their lifeworlds in general. The research participants are challenged to divest themselves of the practical consciousness state that they have been living under. As soon as they are able to do so they begin looking at the questions they are asked much more reflexively. This shows in the responses that I received from that point onwards. The research participants struggle at first because they are being asked to talk about something that they live their lives vicariously through. Furthermore, when probed about the subject-matter or the themes they explore in their works, it is difficult for them in the beginning to give clear responses. For the first time, they have to think

hard about what the kind of work that they do means to people in society and how does society influence them as people and as artists.

Once they were able to adapt themselves to this, the responses that come forth are a lot more insightful. The research participants search themselves on an introspective and intellectual level. The artists reflect on the significance that art and art-making carries for each of them in their individual lives respectively. In addition to this, the research participants are also made to encounter the meanings that they either consciously or sub-consciously deposit in their artwork—which eventually become sources of cultural information there for people in society to consume.

As the discussions venture into the creative process of art-making, the research participants look at how they experience and interpret social experience and phenomena. As creative thinkers, artists take ordinary social experiences and interpret them in a manner that is creative and produce artistic outputs through their perceptive interpretations of them. The creative process is then the process of interpretation and reinterpretation that the artist goes through on his/her way to the final art-product. The hermeneutic cycle is the best example of creative interpretive thinking that shows what the process of art-making looks like. As the research participants and I intersubjectively share this knowledge with each other. I can see new understandings and interpretations emerging from our encounters with one another.

The findings presented in this study reflect the numerous aspects of the lived-experiences of the visual artists. They indicate that the artist/artists subjective and objective experiences have an equal bearing on the progression and outcome of his/her creative process. The findings suggest that, on the artist's objective realm of experience he/she is confronted with factors that affect him/her as a member of society and invariably as an artist as well. These factors have an influence on what kind of art the artist wants to create, how he/she goes about creating this art and whether he/she will be able to create it or not. This is because these objective factors encompass the artist's habitus, the artistic field in which he/she lives and makes his/her art and how the artist envisions himself/herself as a human subject and as a creative and artistic being. All three of these external factors constitute an important part of how the artist experiences his/her world and ultimately his/her creative process of art-making.

The subjective experiences of the artists discussed in the findings serve to indicate the internal conversations and processes that the artist go through in art-making. Art has the power to arouse emotions inside people. An artist uses the emotional experiences that he/she has as inspiration to embark on

creative and artistic projects of his/her choice. How he/she embarks on these projects is through converting these emotions vis-à-vis a process of interpretation into stories. As suggested in the findings, story-telling is the conveyor belt that artists use to express their emotions, conceptual works, and opinions about social issues and their worldviews in general. However, expressing themselves through art-making requires the artist to possess the perception and skill required to articulate himself/herself in a way that is considered artistic, novel and therefore creative.

Artists confront these sorts of problems in the creative process. Sometimes the problems that an artist faces in his/her creative process are in relation to blending what inspired him/her to create with the story he/she wants to express and finding the right medium and technique to do so. Once the artist has established this, he/she engages in a cycle of revision-hypothesis-revision-hypothesis, otherwise known as the hermeneutic process. In this cycle of revision-hypothesis, what the artist is doing is to interpret and reinterpret the story he/she desires to tell. Furthermore, he/she is looking to see if indeed the medium and technique that he/she went for is appropriate for the concept and the message he/she want to express. The artist creates meaning in this way. The meaning the audience perceives in art and various artworks is a culmination of this entire process. Art carries meaning—people understand the world, inter-subjectively understand each other and also understand themselves with the help of art.

Due to the inability to have female representation in the research group, I accept the findings obtained may be gender-biased. The presence of female voices may have given the findings obtained variation in terms of insight and worldview. As the lived-experiences of female visual artists are omitted, this study may lack in diversity of opinion in terms of the gender stakes. This is one limitation that I see this study as having. This limitation informs what I believe future narrative based studies of this kind should focus on. Firstly, research on this subject should in future focus either exclusively on women artist voices or lived-experiences, or comparatively on both women and men. Secondly, research of this kind in future should include more visual aids (i.e. videos of artists creating art) that serve to illuminate artists' experiences of the creative process even further. This will indeed give a deeper documentary-style, quasi real-life representation of the narratives of the experiences of artists in the creative process.

Thirdly, memory and imagination are two important components of creativity and art-making that are not explored in this study. Imagination bridges the gap between the subjective and objective even before the artist starts planning and interpreting the artwork he/she wants to do. A narrative-based inquiry into the artist's understanding of the role of his/her imagination in the conceptualising and conceptualisation of an

artwork would add a psycho-spiritual and metaphysical contribution to our understanding of creativity and art-making.

In closing, creativity is a composite by-product of many things. What is presented in this study as the research's process's findings is another perspective in which the phenomenon can be understood from. The visual artist as a subjective and objective being is influenced and driven by several subjective and objective components that exist as part of his/her lifeworld. The artist uses these components to create a uniform approach to creating artwork. In this artwork the artist expresses who he/she is as an individual—in the way that he/she feels and thinks and lives his/her life as a conscious member of society, the human race and as a creator. Creativity and the creative process are the conceptual and practical forces that the artist utilises to make these experiences emerge.

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