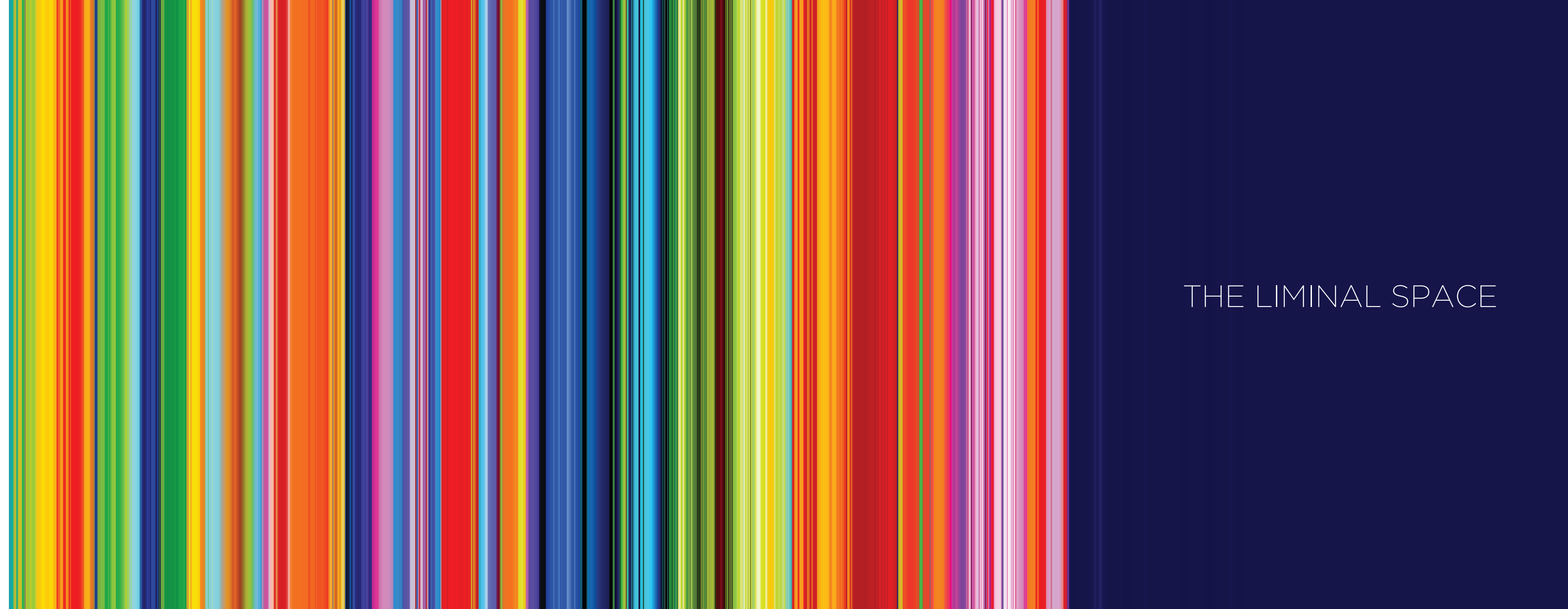


PAUL SNELL: THE LIMINAL SPACE

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Liminal spaces allow for the formation and unfolding of critical events; the events that steer our becoming. Such spaces are something we all enter into – knowingly or unknowingly – at different times, for different reasons, and with different implications. It is when you have left the tried and true, when you are finally out of the way. It is when you are between your own comfort zone and any possible new answer (Rohr, 2011). Liminality has to do with transition, and the ways in which transition ultimately shapes us. We know that transitions between are not always straightforward or easy to navigate. Transitions do not always have brilliant, best possible outcomes either. Horror and chaos can ensue in transitioning, in our becoming. Our becoming, whatever this may be, is the very essence of our investments in liminal space.

What happens here in this seemingly indeterminate yet palpable space between actions? Liminal space can be worrisome for some of us due to its intangibility, unpredictability and infinite-possibilities that can ensue upon moving in and out the space – how do we recognise liminality; how can we predict and define it? These are understandings we instinctively grasp for, but will inevitably always be denied, as this is the precise function of liminality; being is not without becoming. To enter we must relinquish control and yield to possibility.

Snell's work revels in the space between no longer and not yet, and in doing so baits us with a paradox; an affective experience that is simultaneously static and active, quiet and crackling, being and becoming. These synthesised conflicts of aesthetic and affect are so seamlessly uncanny that we can become unsettled in their presence. In yielding to uncertainty and opening ourselves to possibilities, we are then able to enter into Snell's visions of conjecture, uncertainty and distillation. These works only exist through Snell's materialisations of rendered becoming, where we are presented with an opportunity to interact with objects that prioritise process; a process that epitomises problem posing, capitulation, tangling and untangling.

A further compelling aspect of Snell's works are the entry and exit points his renderings offer for us to indulge in liminal wanderings. Some of us may be drawn to the vast depth of open spaces to sink into to, whilst others will favour areas of fast flowing and vibrant intensity. While there is a visual sense of the

linear and margin, these works honour the becoming space. Line performs as thresholds we encounter, but these experiential works do not seek to define the edge, or the peripheral, but rather, become with it and enable all manner of liminalities to unfold. Just as shorelines are shape-shifting liminal space between the vast fluidity of the ocean, and the familiarity of well-trodden earth, our wanderings through *The Liminal Space* see us moving between spaces, in different directions and at varied paces. The walking of shorelines performs as a conduit for many of us to indulge in liminality, where its' very in-between-ness prompts us to dwell momentarily, to linger and entertain what-ifs. We are presented with the opportunity to replicate this experience in *The Liminal Space*. Snell's renderings of liminality can be likened to Barthes' (1981) punctum, where we may encounter the phenomenon of an intensely affective personal experience while viewing an image.

Within these expansive works, Snell has purposefully and boldly opened up his method to create a space for us to linger in and cultivate personal insights. Snell has both stripped back and stretched his method in *The Liminal Space*, just as Deleuze and Guattari (1994) described how pre-established clichés must be erased, so as to let in a breath of air from the chaos that brings us the vision. We are invited to congregate in a place of paradox and confrontation, compelling those of us who enjoy nomadic wanderings, and evoking anxiety and disconcertment for those of us who typically cling to safety and the known.

The Liminal Space simultaneously harnesses and unleashes colour and form, pushing both threshold and the in-between intercept, creating a truly provocative and affective space. In this space, many things can occur as we move within and beyond it. We can be shaken into a disquiet that then provokes us to action. From this disquiet, we can find ourselves being compelled to seek out alternatives; be they new directions, understandings or ways of thinking. *The Liminal Space*, as rendered articulations of Snell's becoming artist self are, as Deleuze (1995) describes, thresholds or doorways of becoming between multiplicities. It is in and through this lens that *The Liminal Space* can be encountered as an insightfully constructed conduit space, within which Snell has assembled a liminal playground for his audience.

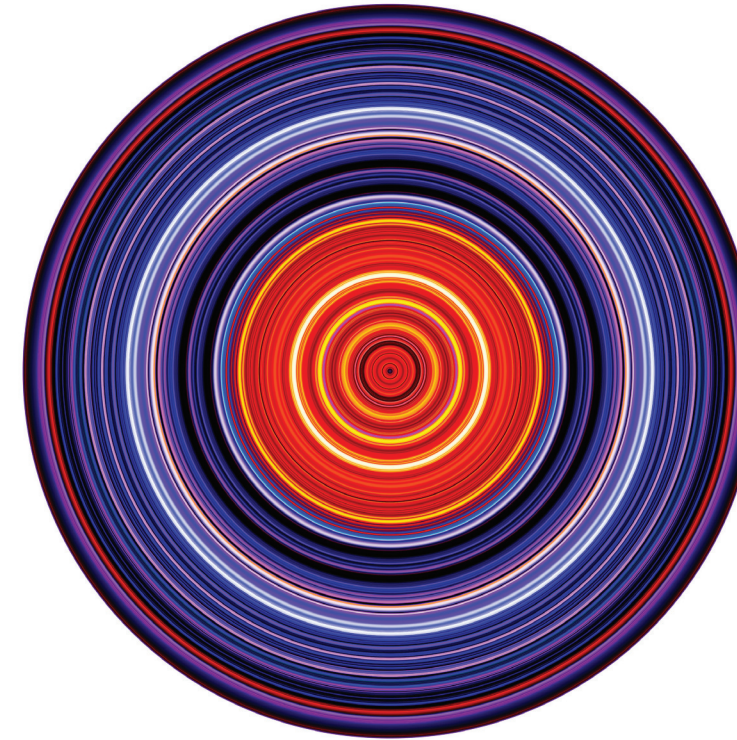
In *The Liminal Space*, we are invited into a playful yet perplexing space of assembled knowledge, situation and circumstance that moves and flows in a dynamic momentum. These works perform as penetrating and active punctums that compel us to explore the in-betweens of our own being and becoming within liminality. *The Liminal Space* provides an opportunity in which we can explore, challenge and potentially rupture pre-conceived perceptions of thresholds, limitations and possibilities. In doing so, we can emerge enlivened and open for new possibilities. However, this is not a space in which we can, or should remain unnecessarily. The liminal space is an ephemeral 'other' space that can prompt us to rise to the challenge of thinking differently, in an effort to create a future that somehow differs from the present (Holloway, 2006).

Rather than experiencing an easily shared idea or commonly held belief, Snell's work embraces how meaning making can be confronting, unexpected, and even hesitant. In entering into *The Liminal Space*, we can take some time to play in the void of vulnerability and uncertainty, where understanding can be interrogated and ruptured, allowing us to then, if we choose to do so, linger in an intensely affective personal experience. In the warming tingle that can follow a cold, sharp slap in the face, *The Liminal Space* calls us to attention to contemplate possibilities inherent to events and experiences, where, in relation to Snell's large scale works, we can encounter a space where becoming holds primacy over being.

It is at once a journey over time and a journey in time, synchronous and asynchronous, imagining the past and future in the present sense of becoming (Irwin, 2013). It is at once one project and a multiplicity of projects intersecting with all manner of possibilities.

Dr Abbey MacDonald
July, 2016.

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Pulse # 201601
Lambda Print
face-mounted to 6mm plexiglas
118cm diameter



Lumina # 201603, 201601, 201602
Lambda Print
face-mounted to 4.5mm plexiglas
180x12x12cm



Liminal # 201601
Lambda Print
face-mounted to 3mm plexiglas
100x1500cm

Exhibition Dates

Queen Victoria Art Gallery
2 Wellington Street
Launceston Tasmania
13 August - 2 October 2016
Opening Friday 26 August 6-8pm

Moonah Arts Centre
23-27 Albert Road
Moonah Tasmania
7 April - 29 April 2017
Opening Friday 7 April 6-8pm

Langford120
120 Langford Street
North Melbourne Victoria
1 July - 30 July 2017
Opening Saturday 1 July 2-4pm

