



UNFOLDING INTO SPRING
JILL TRAPPLER
2015/2016



Title: Unfolding Into Spring

Date: 2013

Size: 96 x 130 cm

Medium: mixed medium on linen

WEAVING AND UNWOVEN



Title: Distillery

Date: 2016

Size: 160 x 250 cm

Medium: acrylic on canvas



Title: Weaving&Unwoven

Date: 2015

Size: 160 x 240 cm

Medium: acrylic on canvas



Title: Lee-Way

Date: 2015

Size: 140 x 218 cm

Medium: acrylic on canvas



(From top to bottom)
LJ1, LJ2 and LJ3
Date: 2016
Size: 50.5 x 40 cm
Medium: lithograph 1/10



(From top to bottom)
IJ4, IJ5 and IJ6
Date: 2016
Size: 50.5 x 40 cm
Medium: lithograph 1/10



Title: Inner City Blues

Date: 2016

Size: 50 x 80 cm

Medium: acrylic on canvas



Title: Matrix

Date: 2016

Size: 152 x 250 cm

Medium: acrylic on canvas



Title: Light-Lee

Date: 2015

Size: 140 x 392 cm

Medium: acrylic on canvas



Title: Over The Moon

Date: 2016

Size: 150 x 240 cm

Medium: acrylic on canvas

**VALLEY OF
THE RED
GODS**



Title: Transpire 1

Date: 2016

Size: 65 x 79.5 cm

Medium: acrylic on canvas



Title: Transpire2

Date: 2016

Size: 65 x 79.5 cm

Medium: acrylic on canvas



Title: Transpire3

Date: 2016

Size: 65 x 79.5 cm

Medium: acrylic on canvas



Title: Transpire4

Date: 2016

Size: 65 x 79,5 cm

Medium: acrylic on canvas



Title: Agency1

Date: 2015

Size: 40.05 x 50.05 cm

Medium: acrylic on canvas



Title: Salem1
Date: 2015
Size: 33 x 26 cm
Medium: silkscreen on canvas



Title: Salem2
Date: 2015
Size: 29.5 x 26.5 cm
Medium: silkscreen on canvas



Title: Salem3
Date: 2015
Size: 27.5 x 25.5 cm
Medium: silkscreen on canvas



Title: Salem4
Date: 2015
Size: 28 x 31.5 cm
Medium: silkscreen on canvas



Title: Agency2

Date: 2015

Size: 20.05 x 42 cm

Medium: acrylic on canvas



Title: Agency3

Date: 2015

Size: 28 x 36 cm

Medium: acrylic on canvas



Title: Agency4
Date: 2015
Size: 22 x 47.05 cm
Medium: acrylic on canvas



Title: Agency5

Date: 2015

Size: 46 x 19.05 cm

Medium: acrylic on canvas



Title: Agency6

Date: 2015

Size: 35.05 x 70.05 cm

Medium: acrylic on canvas



Title: BarkCloth1
Date: 2015
Size: 40 x 50 cm
Medium: bark cloth on perspex



Title: BarkCloth2
Date: 2015
Size: 30 x 49 cm
Medium: bark cloth on perspex



Title: BarkCloth3
Date: 2015
Size: 30 x 40 cm
Medium: bark cloth on Perspex



Title: BarkCloth4
Date: 2015
Size: 30 x 40 cm
Medium: bark cloth on perspex



Title: BarkCloth5
Date: 2015
Size: 30 x 40 cm
Medium: bark cloth on perspex



Title: BarkCloth6
Date: 2015
Size: 25 x 44 cm
Medium: bark cloth on perspex



Title: BarkCloth7
Date: 2015
Size: 23 x 45 cm
Medium: bark cloth on perspex



Title: BarkCloth8
Date: 2015
Size: 29 x 46 cm
Medium: bark cloth on perspex



Title: BarkCloth9
Date: 2015
Size: 26 x 50 cm
Medium: bark cloth on perspex

**UNFOLDING
INTO SPRING**



Title: Spirit Level1

Date: 2016

Size: 140 x 185 cm

Medium: acrylic on canvas



Title: Bending Airplanes1
Date: 2016
Size: 66 x 71 cm
Medium: acrylic on canvas



Title: Bending Airplanes2

Date: 2016

Size: 66 x 71 cm

Medium: acrylic on canvas



Title: Bending Airplanes3

Date: 2016

Size: 66 x 71 cm

Medium: acrylic on canvas



Title: Spirit Level2

Date: 2016

Size: 140 x 180 cm

Medium: acrylic on canvas



Title: Spirit Level3

Date: 2016

Size: 140 x 180 cm

Medium: acrylic on canvas



(From Top left clockwise)
Title: Sentient1, Sentient2, Sentient3, Sentient4
Date: 2013
Size: 30.5 x 27.5 cm
Medium: acrylic on board



Title: Post The Night
Date: 2016
Size: 45 x 110 cm
Medium: acrylic on canvas

Title: Bone Marrow
Date: 2016
Size: 42 x 115 cm
Medium: acrylic on canvas





Title: Half Light Crossing
Date: 2016
Size: 140 x 199 cm
Medium: acrylic on canvas



Title: Eclipse
Date: 2015/16
Size: 160 x 240 cm
Medium: acrylic on canvas

“Jill Trappler - An interpretation”

by Jeanetta Blignaut

Background

The joy of investing in contemporary art lies in the fact that the artist continues to produce work! The space between the patron and artist has to be skilfully negotiated to retain the creative freedom in which the artist flourishes, while managing the expectations of the “investor”. The middleman, such as the gallery, often disappoints the artist. As an artist, but also as someone who has spent the last fifteen years working as “middleman entrepreneur”, devising programmes to support and protect creativity while offering patrons unique investment opportunities, I am passionate about the way the creative space can be curated (selected, organised and looked after).

The challenge in the relationships may lie in the diverse demands on an artist. An artist needs to make a living, thus market their work, but they also need freedom to delve deep. The challenge of the artist is to not easily give up their business, with its necessary requirements and structure, to others. The challenge is to make sure the “creative self” has the perfect environment and the services needed to produce masterpieces.

Artists, think of your “business self”, as the owner of a hotel. Your job is to create the perfect environment for your guests’ sojourn and offer services that enliven and ease their stay. A good hotel has a concierge desk. In this “hotel” the desk offers carefully chosen services such as those of certain galleries. These services do not own the hotel. The piece to follow is part of this challenge to all artists to take better care of themselves.

I. Analysis and commentary on the paintings of Jill Trappler, *Unfolding into Spring*

Investment requires a decision-making process, a course of action to know which choice to make – to say yes or no to offerings. After some years as consultant of contemporary South African art, I have realised that I indeed apply a step-by-step method when deciding on acquisitions. The process should not be forced. If you do not proceed to the end, the artwork simply should not be acquired.

Flash read the composition of an artwork (made up of line, tones, texture and colour).

If possible, query the artist for additional insights about their motivation.

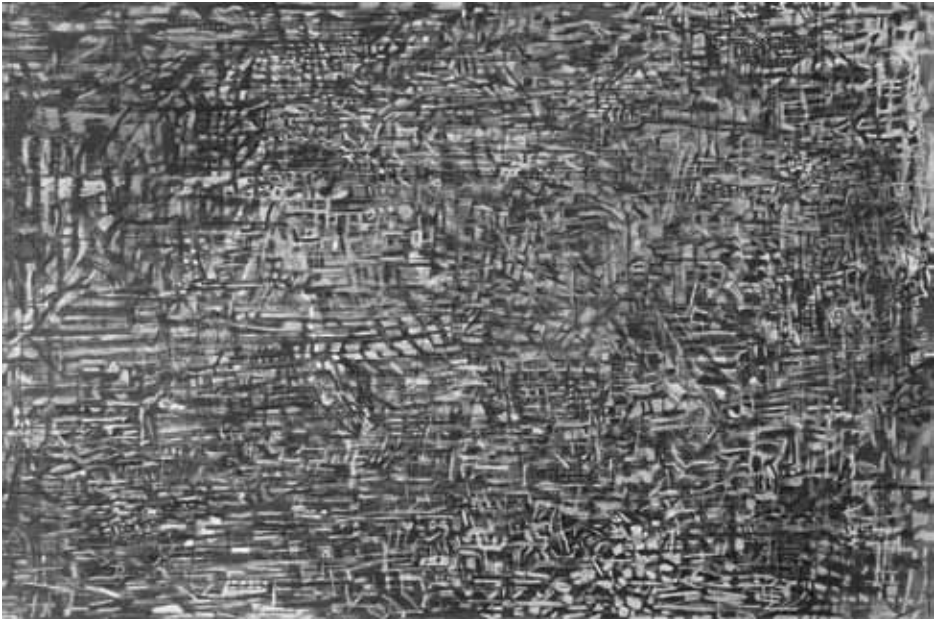
When at a gallery (or museum) exhibition, pick one work you would like to take home (if only in your imagination). After seeing the work (before making the purchase), see if you can recall the artwork. That is, if you think about the work again at all.

Place the work in your living space (whether it be at home or at the office) for some time and see whether you still find yourself staring at the piece or if you have forgotten it is there.

Of course, this method can only be rated as an artwork investment decision-making tool if you look at a broad spectrum of artwork (most especially in museums) very often.

Flash reading Jill's latest body of work, I noted her choice of various sizes and formats and also the strict limitation of her colour palette. Striking intensities of either primary blue or primary red, with some secondary green. Overall, it differed from my expectation of Jill's work. More feminine than her previous work.. Her paintings seem to have been a response to modernism (oscillating between abstract expressionism and the minimalism of Lucio Fontana) and her first influence, Bill Ainslie. I was curious to ponder this obvious change, so I mused on the exhibition space for a long while, trying to decide on my "favourite" according to the above method. The artist will be pleased to know that the process

of elimination took some time. The challenge was not to merely point to the largest work, but to consider each piece on its own merit. Here I apply another technique; question whether the work belies its scale, that is, if you saw an image of the piece printed in a book, would you be able to guess the size of the work? In these paintings the depth is gained from layered split complementaries, delicate tints that meander in mostly vertical contour lines and grizzled sashiko slashes that mesmerise. This is far more complex than primary colour alone. I can still recall at least one painting of each series. And I do indeed still see, ponder and appreciate the artworks with passing time.



Eclipse, 2016

Abstract paintings are easily boxed as passé, with little relevance to today's charged environment. So, I was pleased to have the opportunity to query the artist freely and not halt the questioning process with the "purchase" of an artwork.

"The voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new landscapes but in having new eyes." - Marcel Proust

II. Formal analysis of the artist's working process

Jill has sustained her creative output for over three decades. Can we bring to light what has been the underlying driving force of her commitment? Abstract paintings? Is there method in this madness?

An artist knows instinctively and recognises the moment an artwork of theirs is “complete” (even an abstract work like Jill's) – when it is good enough to let go. Artists appreciate another's good work. It inspires them to go directly to their own studio to paint! A dynamo process.

Business, on the other hand, spends a lot of money researching creativity and figuring out how to make it part of their conduct, knowing it will positively influence the bottom line. What would business pay to understand the drive of an artist, if it is not money? Likewise, can artists be further fired up (or helped out of a block) by what innovative organisations such as Google have learnt so far?

Eric Beaudan (Leadership Practice Director at Odgers Berndtson, Global Executive Search and Human Capital Experts) established five key ingredients of “creative execution”, which he concisely discusses in an article of that name in the Ivey Business Journal Issue March/April 2010*. Making these ingredients work for you, he says, will differentiate your “business” and show remarkable results.

As differentiation and being remarkable are two aspects that fit the work of a successful artist, and their execution is of course creative, let us use his five ingredients as stages and see how they correspond to how an artist operates. A better understanding might be gained of the resultant output of the artist (the artworks) and its role in the cultural fabric of society, even if it is an abstract painting.

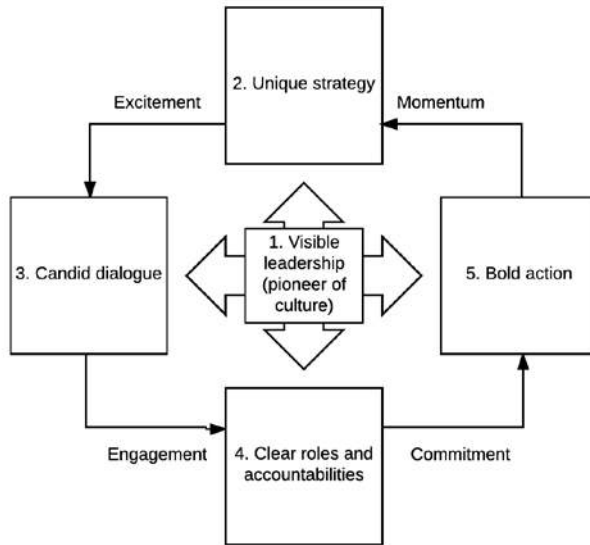
III. The five Beaudan ingredients to “Creative Execution”

Note to Jill: Please bear the crude analysis and let us understand who you are!

You are an established artist. You have been involved in so many organisations, in various roles over a number of decades. You’ve travelled. You know so many people. You have a large and involved family. Yet, you seem to have been compelled to find a quiet space to concentrate and produce with regularity. Considering this, you might have given the five ingredients specific thought already, even if it might be at different intervals, or very intuitively. Your intuition is uncommonly sharp, so perhaps reading the commentary looking backward might feel jarring. On the other hand, reading the blunt analysis might point to things worth considering as input into your recurring loop of creative execution.

“Creative Execution is the ability to execute a strategy so well-conceived, understood and embraced by all that it almost guarantees a successful outcome, even against the odds” - Eric Beaudan.

So let us remain confident in the business expert and carefully consider each ingredient and its composition, as it pertains to how Jill works. We’ll discover the worth of her latest body of work, Unfolding into Spring, and the process might bring clarity to the workings of a creative mind.



CREATIVE EXECUTION - THE LOOP as it pertains to the artist

1. Visible leadership

“Great leaders inspire action!” – Simon Sinek.

“What is a great leader? Great leaders start with Why?”

To date, as can be seen on her extensive CV, Jill has played many meaningful leadership roles in arts and culture over many years. Jill has offered up time to sit on various boards such as the National Art Council of South Africa and the international Triangle Artist Network. South Africa has also benefited from her skill in setting up craft studios in township areas and sustainable art projects in public health institutions. That aside, Jill has remained the head of her own business of artmaking, choosing to make and market her work herself. And most experts would agree, culture comes from the top. In this way, Jill has ensured that her guiding principles – her “Why?” – remain constant and her artmaking a vocation. This positive approach has given her courage and perseverance.

2. Unique strategy builds specific strengths

The artist’s objective is to launch an inquiry that will contribute to cultural

fabric by pushing the boundaries of what has been done before and produce distinctive works of art, namely that which we, the educated eyes, can recall and continue to engage with. Genius is timeless.

The outcome of the life an artist hopes for is to:

- remain engaged and excited by one's own work, even while working;
- find a way to incarcerate the vision or feeling within;
- be free from allegory, in fact, "there is a sort of tyranny of allegories which exists at the moment or which has existed recently in South Africa which certainly needs to be reconsidered" (William Kentridge, in his opening address of Jill's exhibition at the AVA, 1990);
- find connectedness with self, through painting as meditation;
- sense eternity; and
- practise, most days for thirty years and more.

In fact, unlike most parents, Jill's parents supported her commitment to being a fulltime artist, even against the odds. They understood when Jill said the day they went horse-riding in the veld, with the wind rushing at a good canter: "For this feeling, I love making art!"

What was the plan to achieve this aim? Jill joined the Johannesburg Foundation of Art, founded by Bill Ainslie from 1975–1979. At the same time, she enrolled for BA Fine Arts at the University of South Africa (UNISA). She was an apprentice in various craft studios. Not only did she build up skill, but also an invaluable network of friends.

Today, Jill has a spacious studio overlooking the city of Cape Town, the sea, the far-off mountains of the Overberg and Table Mountain. Yet, her personal objective in making art is not to remain shut up in her studio tower. It is not only to produce more and more objects.

She kept her studio work free from commercial intent.

Her objective is to be part of the world, to listen and to heal – herself and

others. Through her art.

3. Candid dialogue drives innovation

Yes, through dialogue about this strategy with peers and superiors (whether they be artists, art critics, curators, academics), perspectives are gained from constant dialogues with artists like Pat Mautloa, David Koloane and William Kentridge as well as art connoisseur Estelle Jacobs.

Sometimes one has to travel far to get “candid” dialogue. In fact, since leaving school, Jill has travelled at least every two years to specifically chosen areas around the world. In the past year, Jill travelled to Salem to receive a creative injection by the comments from peers who are not familiar with her life and work. And with a challenge, Michael Friedman commented: “This work is not exciting. What are you going to do about it?”

Back home, Jill decided to have a second studio at a house of shared studios, the Greatmore Street Studios. Jill was glad to have the studio at the front door to glean truth from passing comments of fellow artists. Often working collaboratively, she engages with other media and masters, like printing at LL Editions – Bag Factory, Johannesburg.

Notes to self in a style of poetry is her way of keeping track of thought threads. Jill reads remarkably wide and deep. These literary references scaffold her thinking process in the studio.

She surrounds herself with great spirits, yet she is never smothered.

4. Clear roles and accountabilities

Jill plays a particularly important role in the lives of the arts community in South Africa. At this point, it is worth considering whether these commitments and kindnesses might not prove fatal to the value given to her artworks. Do these various roles blur roles and accountabilities? Do they stigmatise the artist, so that candid dialogue is sacrificed and the

value of her own artworks is somehow tainted, even with these best of intentions? The perspective of time as well as her choices going forward will tell.

Jill has remained outside the commercial gallery and art fair chase. Instead, she has been clear that she prefers exhibition spaces with broader organisational foundations such as the Association for Visual Arts (AVA, Cape Town) and the Triangle Studios. Yet, without a gallerist committed to the sale of your work, are issues around an artist's work properly identified and managed? Is "good governance" – accountabilities – sacrificed by being part of the sales team, so to speak?

Jill has fenced in her own studio work from financial need. She chose to support this division by teaching. Not easily accepting commissions or the guiding principles of a gallery has been her way of protecting "creative execution".

By fulfilling her need to interact with artists from diverse backgrounds, Jill has learnt to exchange skills and ideas in a mutually beneficial way. Observing rite and rituals has brought reverence of life to her. The questions posed by "significant" remarks assist the ever-listening Jill to be part of her country's change, part of "the whole".

5. Bold action

So Jill has chosen to scale down her "outside activities" and commit more time to her studio practice. Yet, teaching and working in media other than acrylic on canvas will always be part of her output. Skilled hands come from repetition, deepening one's understanding of something, as demanded by a craft. This sharpens eyes. Sharp eyes (as gained from life drawing) makes a keen mind with the ability to "not so much recall the life of the race; he paints its future, just as he often does his own. It can't be explained!" *From man to man or perhaps only – Olive Schreiner (2015, p 410).

Ricky Burnett describes a mature mind that has the discipline to be

present with the result: “Trappler’s paintings strike me less as pictures of the surfaces of ponds or pools, as one might speak of Monet or Hockney, but rather more as pools or ponds in their own right – spaces where watery behaviour has accumulated and a compelling sense of place, a genuine ‘here-ness’ is conjured up. Nature is called forth as distinct from being mirrored.”

IV. Considering the value of her output

Jill Trappler holds an ideal version of what it means to be an artist. Conception is near divination. Material skill is honed over decades. A work of art is born as an inkling of the future. It is there to be shared, but not for praise in words or money. Those skilled with vocabulary comment. Peers divine their own work in dialogue. Sharing propels momentum to divine and to produce more. Jill produces so that others can feel the “knowing”, the “aha”.

Jill respects the interconnectedness of us all and this interconnectedness seems to be the crux of the matter. Jill’s execution of an uncommon strategy shows remarkable results. Her commitment to her own freedom to create what feels right to her helps others to find their freedom. And isn’t it exactly that which our Constitution, its rights and responsibilities upholds? And would realising more of it mean some healing of our nation and our world?

Jill Trappler

Unfolding into spring.

AVA gallery September 2016. Irma Stern gallery October 2016

Work from the series “Weaving and Unwoven”, “The Valley of the Red gods” and “Unfolding Into Spring”.

ISBN 978-3-940440-22-8

Galerie Seippel Verlag

Acknowledgements

Thupelo Cape Town, Triangle New York, AVA Gallery. Greatmore street studios. Irma Stern gallery, (Director Christopher Peter for his assistance in curating the exhibition). Jeanetta Blignaut. David Trappler. Family members and many friends.

Thank you.

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Printed by Hansa Print. Woodstock, Cape Town

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