

**Sydney College of the Arts**  
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MASTER OF VISUAL ARTS  
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RESEARCH PAPER

*Slippages.....*

*exploring the aesthetic encounter from the perspective of Merleau  
Ponty's ontology*

BY

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GLASS

This volume is presented as a record of the work undertaken for the degree of  
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I wish to acknowledge the assistance given to me in this project by my parents,  
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# Summary of Work Presented For Examination

## Abstract of Research Paper

This paper addresses the aesthetic encounter from the perspective of the writings of Maurice Merleau-Ponty on the visible and the invisible. It begins with the premise that from time to time we encounter situations which precipitate a sense of slippage in our experience of the world.

The paper proceeds to argue that the arts can provide a point of access to this experience, and that aesthetic theory has, for example, responded to it through the development of the notion of 'the sublime'. The writings of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and, in particular, aspects of his text The Visible and the Invisible, are presented with a view to augmenting this aspect of aesthetic theory. Proceeding from a 'Merleau-Pontian' perspective, the paper explores how the arts can serve to disrupt our conventional sense of space and time – creating ripples in the substance Merleau-Ponty names as 'flesh' – so as to expose the chiasm or blind spot in our experience of the world.

The methodology adopted is an experiential one, which draws on the writer's interaction with the selected works of various artists as well as her own practice in glass.

## Description of Studio Work

The work presented for examination is composed of five individual glass panels presented as a single wall piece. The work will be installed in the Sydney College of the Arts Gallery as part of the 2004 Postgraduate Show in December 2004.

The panels have been cast in a refractive orange-red glass and are mounted on metal brackets attached to the wall. The surface facing the viewer is flat and has been ground and polished. The rear surface has a negative relief which, when viewed from the front, appears as a positive form within the glass. This form resembles a length of draped fabric. The overall work measures approximately 2 metres in length and 0.4 metres in height.

The work seeks to deploy the singular characteristic of glass – its transparency – to explore notions of the visible/invisible and presence/absence, which have been the subject of the research paper.