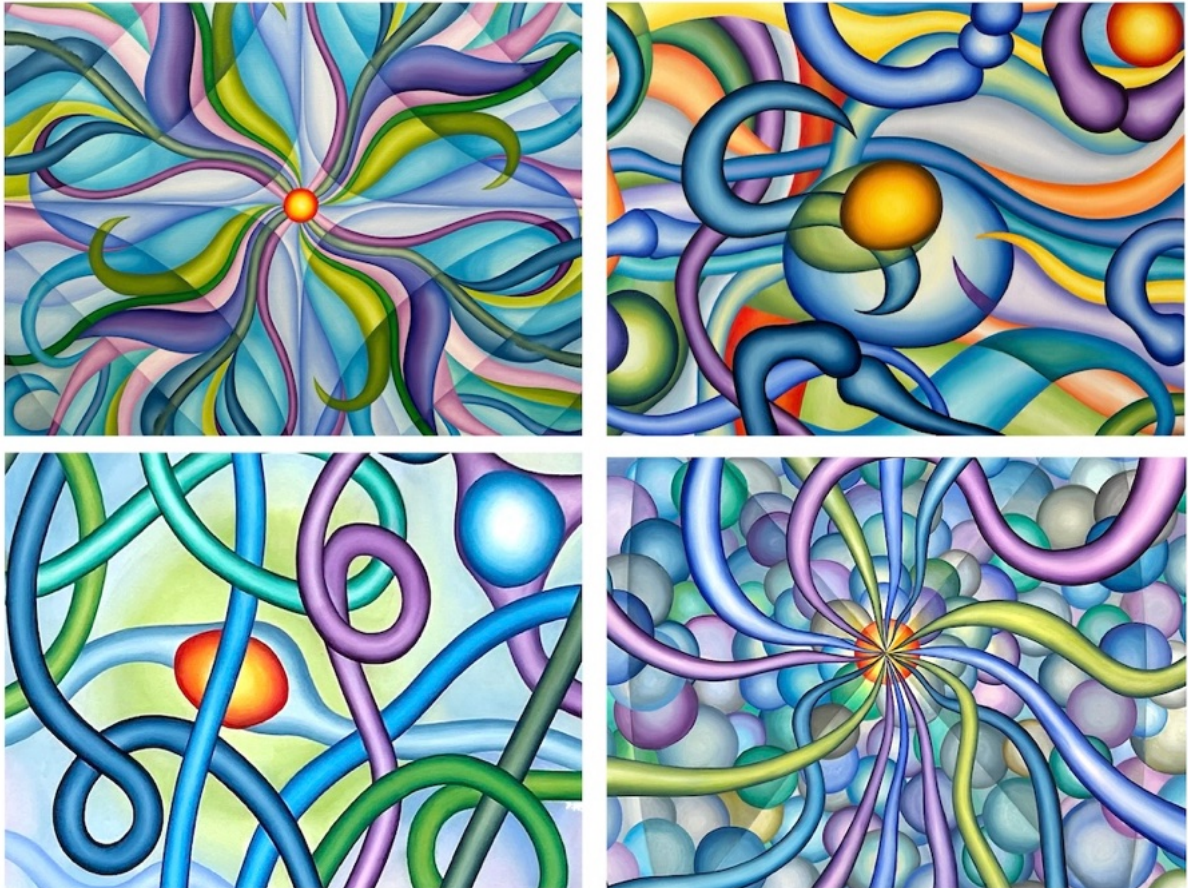


TIME

SPACE & LIGHT



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Time | Space | Light

six personal explorations

This exhibit is a exploration of the ways that time, space, and light can be both conceived and observed. It is a collaboration by three ceramic artists (Olivia Hamilton, Ramona Raven, Jacquie Garcia), two painters (Keith Nesbitt, Chris Buller), and one photographer (Paul Foley).

While creating my paintings for this exhibit I have been thinking about cosmogenesis, how and when the cosmos begins. I was thinking mainly about the role of time in trying to model how order emerges in our universe. Of course, time, space and light have an intimate relationship in the way we think, both philosophically, and even more mathematically about how the universe begins.

Our natural world, human society and even our creative minds are other complicated systems that begin and evolve over short and long periods of time. For quite a long time I've been interested in the general patterns we find in many complex systems. Likewise, how these patterns evolve over time. The universe, and its creation, is arguably one of the more complex systems to describe. But of particular interest to me is the genesis of ideas and the similarities that can be drawn between human creativity and the genesis of the cosmos.



Patterns emerging over different scales of time, inspire both the scientist and artist in me. The ideas I generate are my own personal universe of creation. So, I am on a quest to find order, to find rules to help understand how these ideas are created and change. While it is tempting to devise complex rules and models that describe these systems, the complexity is likely the result of quite simple rules and agents evolving together over time.

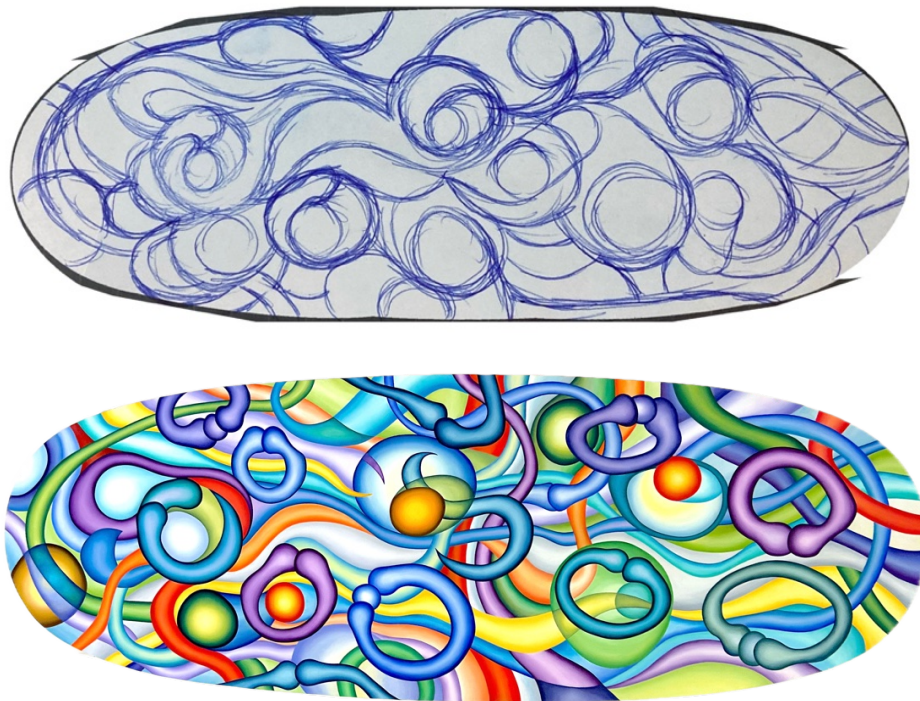
There are 5 original oil paintings included in the exhibit (Time Seed, Time Strings, Time Begins, Time Streams, Time Flows) and a single, limited-edition print (Time Flows). Below I describe in more details the ideas behind these works.

Time Seed

One of the questions that interest physicists, theologians and philosophers alike is “When does time begin?” Current scientific thinking tends to favour the idea that time has no beginning, or at least the rules and models we associate with the concepts of time, space and light have no real meaning at the earliest moments of the universe. So current academic consensus seems to be that there is no true single moment of beginning for the universe.

A difficult part of understanding the early moments of the universe is the need to integrate the principles of quantum mechanics. At a very small scales of space and time Heisenberg’s principle of uncertainty prevails. For physicists these models become critical in some extreme environments. For example, at the beginning of the cosmos or near black holes.

Science relies on observation and measurement, yet theoretically there is no way to measure a time interval that is shorter than Planck time ($\sim 5 \times 10^{-44}$ seconds). Planck Time is the time required for light to traverse 1 Planck length ($\sim 10^{-35}$ metres) in a vacuum. We tend to think of Time and Space, and even Light, as continuous yet there remains a fundamental discreteness when trying to observe Time and Space, and even Light.



For me, this painting seems like an internal observation of an ordered but turbulent beginning. From my artistic perspective it is an idea beginning. This beginning observed from within the system at a very small scale.

I originally called this painting *Time Egg*. For me the concept of an egg implies a dynamic phase of incubation where the contents evolve significantly before

emerging. However, despite the looping elements the painting has a stillness. The elliptic structure constrains the motion in some way. As a seed suggests a more static, suspended pattern that suddenly springs to life under the right trigger conditions I changed the name to *Time Seed*.

For me the real interest of understanding how the universe might begin is that my pictures also emerge, seemingly from nowhere, from nothing. The physics and mathematics that cosmogenesis builds on is complex and difficult, yet it is interesting exercise to try and translate them to the concept of creativity. In a sense all knowledge is a system of ideas that have been created and ordered in ways. A benefit a more mathematical model of this space might be the ability to navigate the space of all ideas. Potentially, unexplored ideas might be found, or even new ways to order the space.

My ideas at least seem to have a beginning in my subconscious, beyond what I can observe. The pictures seem to come from a 'hole' in my thinking. But do these ideas incubate, dynamically like an egg, or do they spring into life from a static pattern, like a seed? Is there some context to each idea? Do the same ideas emerge at different scales? Does there exist uncoverable rules and patterns that describe the idea creation process. Perhaps there is no real beginning for ideas, like the cosmos itself. Perhaps ideas are more like a leak of information at the horizon of a black hole. Perhaps ideas are truly unique, there is no order and to describe everything simply requires everything to be described.

Time Strings

All the pictures in this exhibit are on shaped canvases. For me a shaped canvas suggests the complex context of the concepts that underlie the painting. I believe that no picture, no idea in fact, exists in complete isolation. No idea begins from nothing. There is no blank canvas, no empty beginning.

Over time, the shape of this picture began to suggest to me a quantum of light. A wavey packet of energy. The concept of wave-particle duality for light arises because light at a larger scale can be observed to act as a continuous electromagnetic wave, while on a much smaller scale, light is emitted and absorbed in discrete amounts known as photons. Photons can also be observed to act like particles. There are indeed many dualities that arise at the quantum scale. All phenomena in systems at the scale of quantum mechanics also exhibit quantization: observable quantities that are restricted to a natural set of discrete values.

I also tried to imagine this picture at Planck scale (if that is possible) where quantum principles of uncertainty apply. At this quantum scale more classical models of space-time, such as relativity do not apply. Although progress has been made in unifying quantum mechanics with classical physics, much of this through rigorous mathematical modelling, the theory still remains open.

One open question revolves around the non-locality of space-time itself and the relationship of quantum entanglement to the more classical notions of space-time. Quantum entanglement is a phenomenon where the properties of two or more particles are linked and so cannot be described individually. Their behaviours are interrelated. A wavefunction may be used to describe the entangled objects as a single entity. In theory, with entanglement, simultaneous action or communication at a distance becomes possible.



Thus, the idea of non-locality, through entanglement, is used to explain how objects may affect a simultaneous event that is not near them in space. This suggests information is being transmitted faster than the speed of light. Yet, classical models of space-time rely on a fundamental constant which is the speed of light. This constant constrains the speed that information can be exchanged.

Although the information may not be accurate. Observing an entangled pair may result in disentanglement, and a collapse of the wavefunction that truly describes its state. The observed information would only represent a random state of the collapsed wavefunction. Although there seems to be consensus of an intrinsic relationship between quantum entanglement and classical spacetime, current technology limits the gathering of experimental evidence that might support or disprove different theoretical ideas around cosmogenesis.

For me, the picture is always conceived, made, and interpreted within a complex conceptual context or frame. I bring my own framing to the work, but the viewer may bring a totally new and unexpected context when they observe the picture. For me there is no right or wrong interpretation of the work. This is of course why art is so different from mathematics. Art is completely opposite, a picture is a random projection from a multi-dimensional design space. This makes it quite problematic to try and make reliable maps between something as abstract as the various mathematical models of cosmogenesis and the largely invisible, also abstract, domain of creativity.

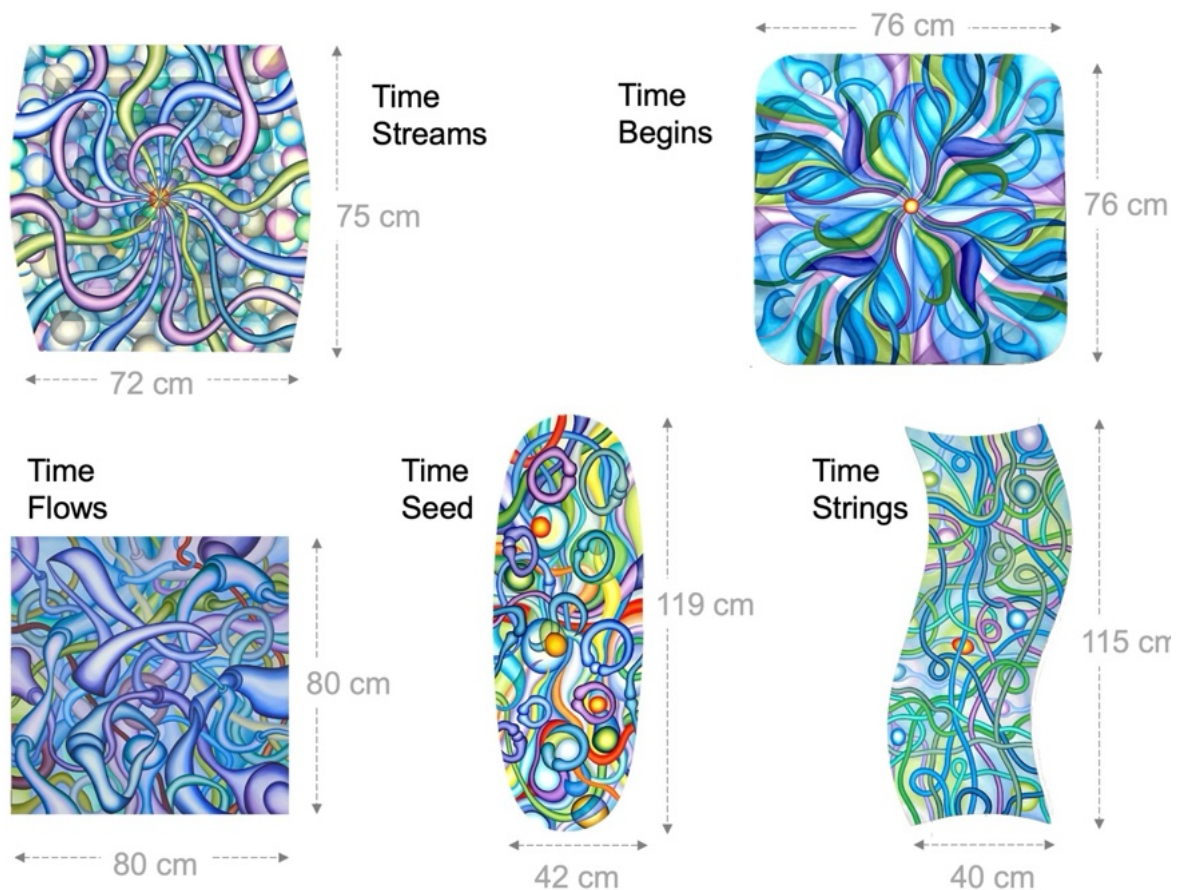
Perhaps it is not surprisingly such very abstract notions behind the ideas of quantum mechanics can also be translated, in a metaphorical way, to more philosophical realms, and even artistic concerns such as creativity. I should apologise in advance to physicists and mathematicians as the exhibit is intended to be artistic in nature. It is not necessarily bound by rigorous logic. It is only bound by the unique context of my own imagination. Again, for me art is the direct opposite of mathematics. But I think it can still be complementary and allow insight into unexpected relationships.

In physics a quantum more generally refers to the smallest discrete natural unit, or physical property of a phenomenon. For me, the smallest unit of creativity is an idea. Ideas, for me at least, always seem to emerge in two opposite, discrete, indeed incompatible, but entangled states. There are only two possible states. That should make decisions simple, but I'm often caught wrangling the probability of being in one or other of the two possible states. What my mind really wants is to feel safe in a constant single state, not caught between two incompatible states. Maybe this is why I create. Creativity feels like a form of problem solving where the problem is largely invisible.

For me the process of painting helps bring some insight to the connected ideas behind the work. For me one of the main insights I found in this work was the scale-free notion of connectedness between ideas. The connected ideas might be single small discrete entities or much larger complex groups of entities, a pattern of ideas that still act as a single object.

This picture also reinforced for me the recursive nature of context. The foreground, or figure in this work consists of these different coloured strings. How are the coloured strings related? Are all strings of the same colour more closely related in some way. How do the strings interact with each other? How do these strings

interact with the boundaries of the canvas. After painting the picture what I began to see more than the foreground tangle of coloured strings, or even the overall shape of the canvas, was the pulsing, almost luminescent coloured ground over which the strings were painted. Reminding me that whatever meaning I might attach to the strings themselves or the context they sit within, another layer of unexplained context lies below. There is no end to the recursive contexts, each context leads to another. There is no identifiable beginning to an idea.



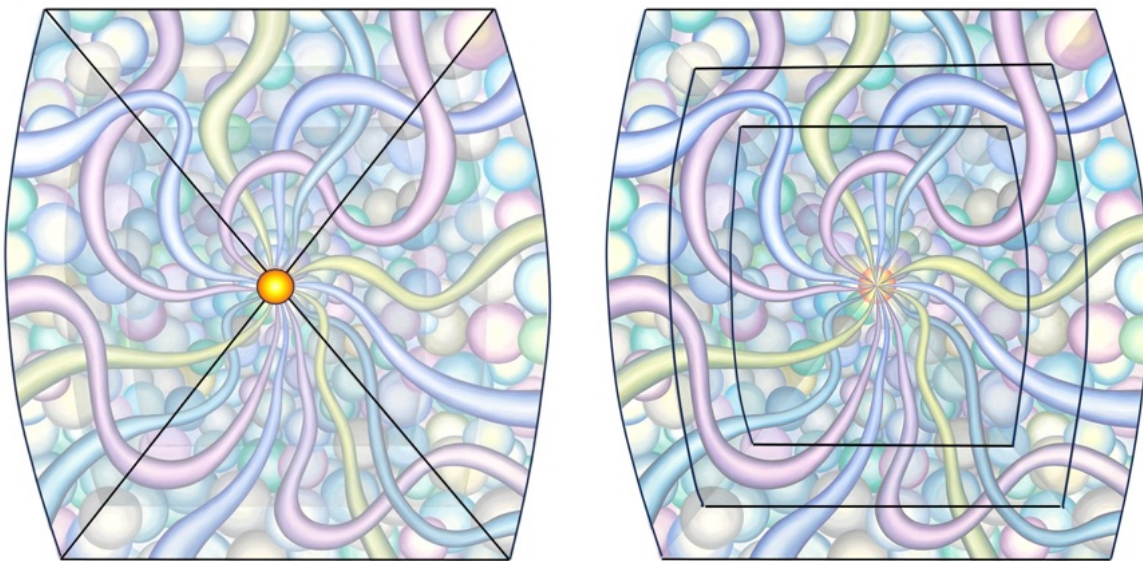
Time Streams

I find myself immersed within the frame of the first two pictures, *Time Seed* and *Time Strings* and also the final picture called *Time Flows*. I'm looking from inside the frame of the picture. By contrast, for the other two paintings, *Time Streams* and *Time Begins* I feel like a viewer looking from the outside, back to the beginning. The first two pictures are submicroscopic in terms of space, while *Time Streams* and *Time Begins* present a macroscopic view.

Time Streams tries to create a sense of expansion. It uses perspective lines to suggest a vanishing point at the centre of the picture, A tunnel looking back in time with the sun at the centre representing the beginning of everything. The 3D expansion effect is supported by two other 2D painters' algorithms, a texture gradient of bubbles growing in size from the middle to the edge and by an increasing level of

brightness from the middle to the edge. So larger brighter bubbles at the edges of the canvas and smaller, darker bubbles at the centre around the sun. The coloured ribbons or streamers grow out from the centre, becoming larger to also help suggest the expansion from the centre to the edge of the canvas.

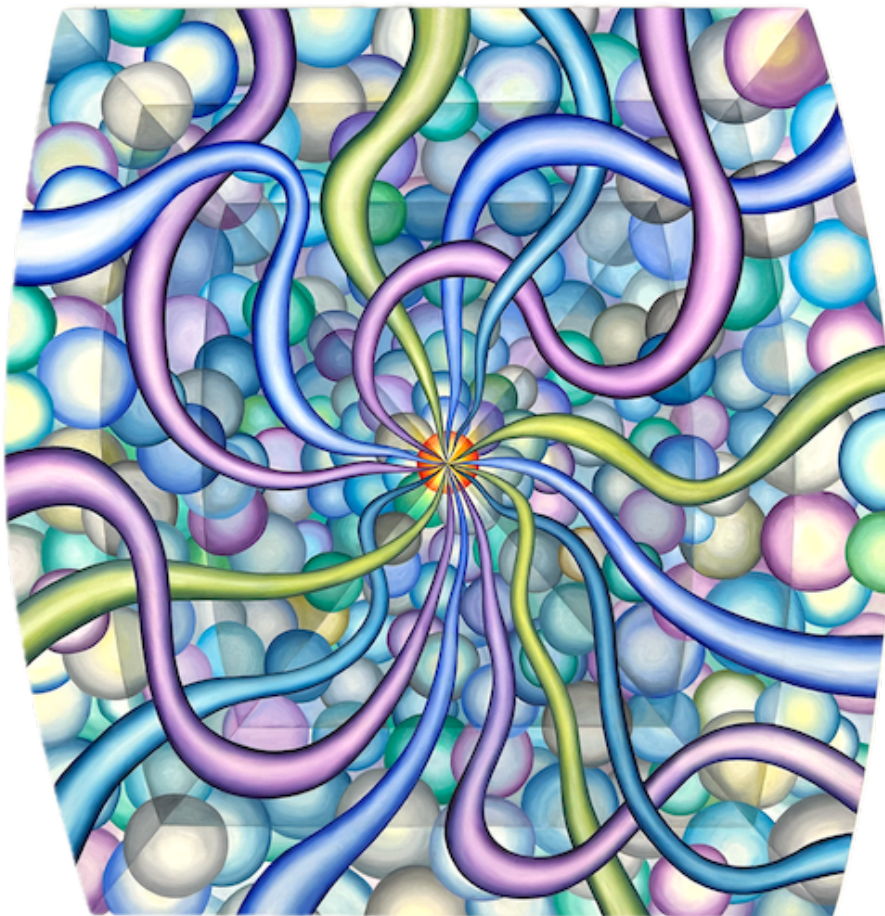
There are different levels of order represented in the structure of the picture. Three enclosed areas, or four if you count the space outside the boundary of the picture. This discrete division of the space, contrasts with the otherwise continuous space of the picture. These discrete areas remind me of two key concerns when modelling, whether to use a discrete or continuous model for space (or time). I also tend to think of these recursive levels of order as changes in scale, where different properties might emerge.



From the 1930s, some kind of Big Bang event has been used to explain a sudden expansion of the universe from some initial high density, high temperature state. While some kind of Big Bang model is widely accepted, various models with different features have been developed to explain the way the universe developed and to try to explain a range of observed phenomenon of the cosmos. For example, cosmic inflation, a short period of rapid expansion of the universe is one feature of Big Bang theories used to explain the observed uniformity of elements and particles in the cosmos, the relative abundance of different elements, the presence of background radiation and the even structure of the universe itself.

Big Bang theories do not necessarily imply a definite beginning, a time zero for creation. Indeed, just how the universe begins, especially the earliest moments, where the rules of physics, and even fundamental concepts such as time and space break down is well-debated. There seems to be issues trying to find an agreed theory on how to integrate quantum gravity with general relativity. Principles of quantum mechanics can be aligned for three of the fundamental forces of nature, the

weak, strong and electromagnetic forces. However, theories of gravity, at small scales, close to the Planck length, break down. Resolving this problem is particularly relevant in certain times and places of the universe. For example, in close vicinity to massive gravitational objects, such as, black holes and in the universe just after the Big Bang, when the concept of time emerges.



Models of the Big Bang often incorporate a dimension known as “Cosmic time”, defined for a consistent expanding universe with the same density at every location and moment in time. There is an observed flow to the cosmos. The further a galaxy is from earth, the faster it moves away. For modelling purposes, a theoretical clock that measures cosmic time has to move with this observed flow.

Modelling the cosmos also requires a reference point for cosmic time and two approaches are used. A simple approach is to use time as measured from the present time that is looking back (lookback time). Alternatively, time can be measured from the beginning, as time since the Big Bang. Currently, the age of the universe is estimated to be about 13.8 million years. Although, there may be no definitive, discrete moment of beginning or zero time, and a measure such as temperature, rather than time itself tends to be used as a measure in models that describe the earliest stages of the universe.

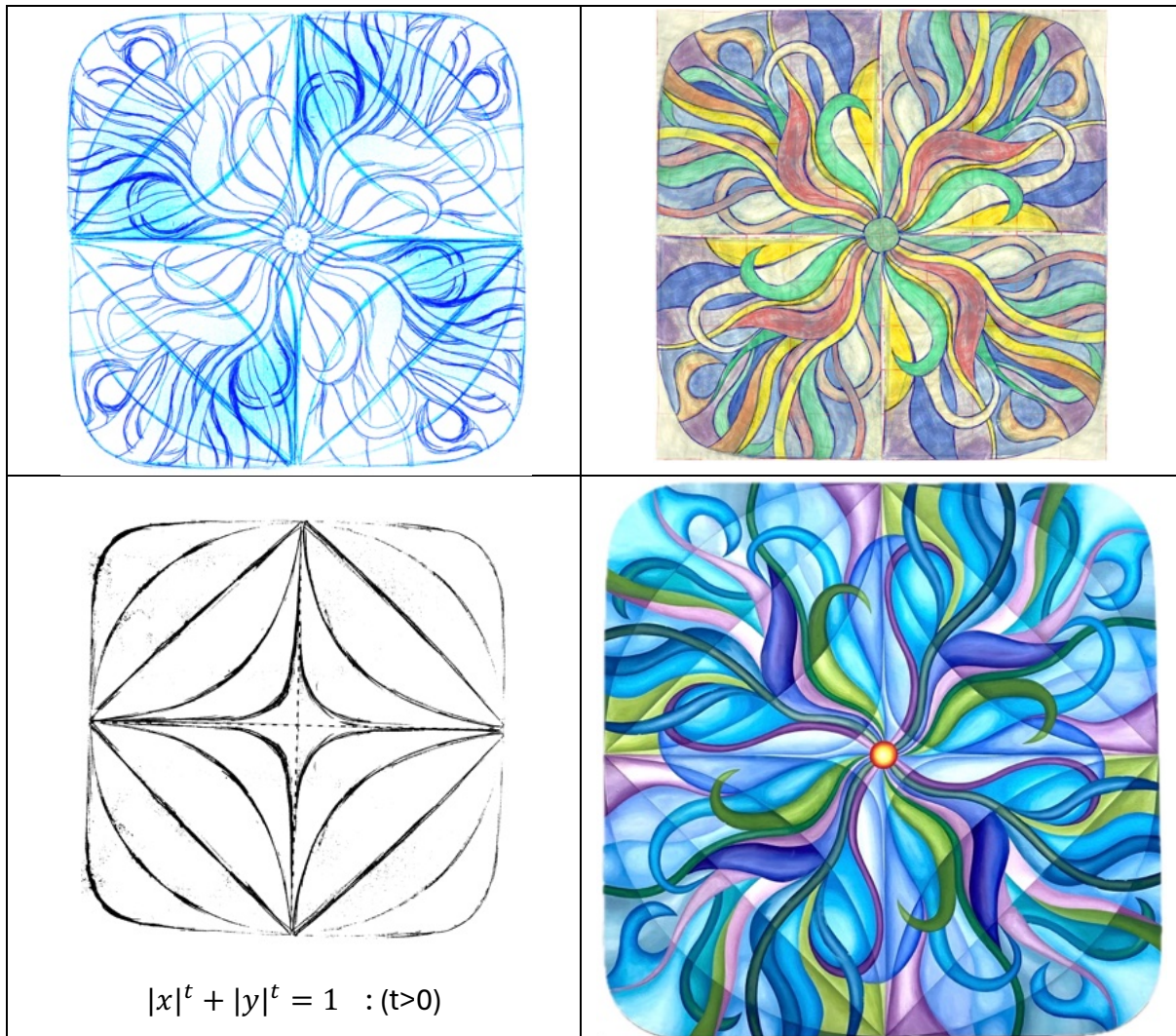
Time Begins

Back to the question of cosmogenesis. This picture is an artistic view of the beginning of time. Like many of my pictures its own genesis is both accidental and contrived. The recursive, geometric order in the pictures is based on the super ellipse. The super ellipse, or superquadratic, is a specific example of a family of curves named after Lamé. One of the things I like about the super ellipse is that it describes a geometry that is both curved and liner.

Although Lamé studied these curves in the early 1800s, This curved and linear relationship between the ellipse and the rectangle was notably written about by Piet Hein in the 1960s. He also was fascinated by this mix of straight and curved lines which seems to also occur in many man-made forms.

I am also interested in the contrast between straight and curved lines which I see as opposite and find occurring in the structure of my pictures. I also associate these with the concept of yin yang, straight logical human constructions versus the emotional curved and natural lines of nature. Straight geometric lines and the natural curved form seem to be quite opposite forms, working against each other in my pictures. For me they represent a common duality. Opposite forms, akin to logic and emotion or man-made versus the natural forms.

My interest in straight and curved is present in my very early pictures. However, my fascination with the super ellipse began accidentally when I was preparing a recent painting called “Some of the Parts” (2020). This painting is actually four paintings, a picture made of almost repeated parts. The figure of each part is the same but each has a slightly different context. Each part is basically square, but each part has a different corner of the square replaced by a curve.



These pictures are painted on canvas stretched over a wooden base. To prepare these four paintings I simply cut a larger square piece of wood into four pieces, with the four curved corners at the centre. This created a convex diamond, or astroid hole at the centre of the four pictures. Because of my interest with gestalt principles, including the idea that the hole is different to the sum of the parts I was drawn to study the shape of the hole.

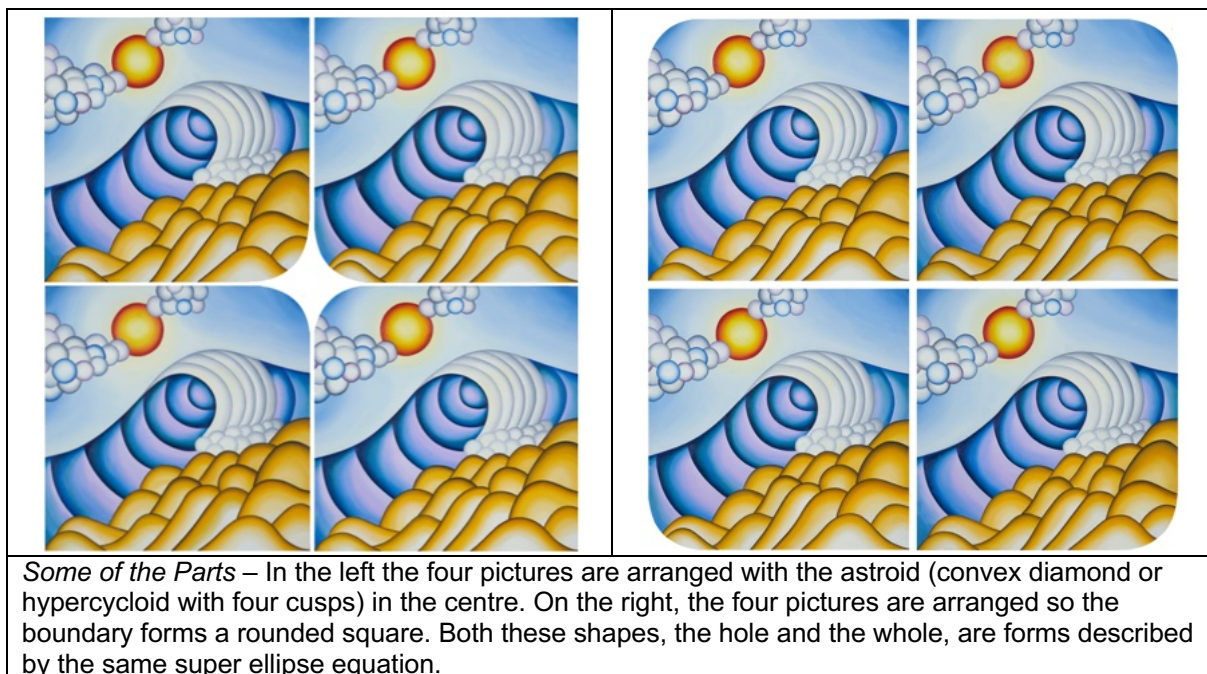
As it happens, an astroid is one version of the super ellipse. So, I accidentally found this family of Lamé curves. Interestingly, if you arrange the four pictures with the curved corners on the outside, rather than the inside, the overall shape of the whole is also a super ellipse – a square with rounded corners.

In this picture I've created different levels of order by using a simple, super ellipse that is symmetric on both dimensions. This order is in the form of recursive geometric shapes. Starting from the centre these include, two versions of the astroid (convex diamonds), a rectangle, a circle and finally the square with rounded corners which is the shape of the canvas. What seems to be many different levels of order in the

painting are all described by a single simple mathematical relationship, a simple super ellipse $|x|^t + |y|^t = 1$.

Apart from the combination of linear and curved forms, I like that a single mathematical formula can lead to such different shapes. What appears to be quite different types of order are in fact described by a single mathematical order. Super ellipses will also translate to higher order spaces, but fortunately for me, my paintings only have two dimensions!

Of course, this is not intended as a real model of time-space, but I do like to think of an abstract 2D expanding space described by (x, y) with a changing boundary over time (t). Like real models of space-time it is only defined if time is greater than zero. There is a singularity in this equation, a problem with real models of space-time.



The series of super ellipses within the picture are somewhat hidden. The main order, or figurative element in the picture is the flower like object with a rotational symmetry of four. It is made by rotating the same series of shapes through 90 degrees.

There is a perceptual conflict between the symmetric order of the figure and the super ellipses. I find it difficult to perceive both the symmetric coloured flower and the series of super ellipses at the same time. To see the super ellipses I tend to stand back and defocus my eyes by looking beyond the picture. By contrast, focusing on the plane of the picture makes the flower the dominant figure and so I tend to lose sight of the super ellipses.

This is an interesting problem perceptually but also cognitively as the seductive order of the symmetric flower may be masking the most interesting structure in the pictures in which the flower is overlaid. This can happen with modelling as well, we find a

system model that works so well at some scale that when breaks down at another scales we find it hard to see the more encompassing model. Of course, rather than changing models, using different models at different scales might reduce the cognitive ambiguity.

In this painting, the red circle (sun) at the centre is symbolic of the beginning of time (or light). But this symbol is also a visual metaphor for the beginning of an idea. I tend to use this symbol in all my pictures, capturing the notion that ideas have a beginning. The subconscious is a largely uncharted place, perhaps, like time, they have no true beginning. There really is no concept of blank canvas.

I don't think my pictures come from nothing, although they do arise unexpectedly from some hidden place in my mind, where no consistent logical rules apply. Over time I've found the energy for my own creativity seems to be a wave between two opposite, inconsistent frames of reference. Each frame of reference is consistent, but the two frames are not consistent with each other. Creating is an invisible urge to resolve this problem, this wave of inconsistent states. Again, with apologies to the physicist in the gallery, I think of my pictures as an observation that collapses the wave of inconsistent states.

Time Flows

Time Flows is the earliest picture of time in the exhibit and there is a limited edition print also available during the exhibit. The original was first painted in 1974 but was lost in a fire. I repainted it in 2021 so I could include it in the Paintings By Number book.



In 1974 this was my second painting and my first very abstract work. I originally imagined this as some kind of biological flow at microscopic scale. However, like many abstractions this picture really works at different scales of space or time. It could be a flow at a larger macroscopic scale, or in keeping with Time Seed and

Time Strings it could represent some kind of submicroscopic motion in space-time (if that is even possible).

Western society tends to conceptualise time as an arrow, moving from beginning to end. By contrast, eastern thought tends to see time as a circle. Various ancient cultures seem to have other ways of understanding time. Personally, I like the idea of a wave of time. The wave is moving fast and slow, collapsing when observed to create the present. Otherwise, a wave between past and future but no real present. Physicists sometimes model both forward and backward waves of time to help account for some of the energy that seems unaccounted for in the cosmos.

In this picture, like Time Seed and Time Strings, I find myself as an observer within the frame, caught within the flow of time. A local observer immersed with the world of the picture. This viewpoint contrasts with the global observer of Time Begins and Time Streams. In these two pictures, I find myself observing from outside the system, outside the frame.

Personally, I like the idea of observing all systems from two opposite viewpoints. So inside and outside the system. Of course, this leaves the problem of deciding on the boundary of the system. Choosing the boundary may also require a decision about what specific scale to view the system. Fortunately, scale may not be such an issue if the system is scaleless. In a scaleless system, the pattern being studied may emerge at different scales of observation.

An interesting feature of special relativity is that different observers will not necessarily have the same experience of time. The constant speed of light means that if you observe moving clocks with different velocities a difference in elapsed time (time dilation) may be measured. In general relativity, a different gravitational potential, rather than velocity might cause this time dilation.

However, it is not only physicists that concern themselves with time. As an artist I like to randomly navigate various ideas associated with time. For me the wave of time I experience seems to be simply a perception of time. My subjective experience of the duration of unfolding events.

Having worked a lot in computer games I'm also familiar with the notion of "Flow", of being positively immersed in play so that all distractions are shut out. This results in a highly focused attention and a distorted sense of time passing. Likewise, reward has been shown to impact our perception of time. Positive and negative emotions, such as awe or fear, can also affect the way time is perceived. An interesting question in our modern world is how the reliance on digital, rather than analogue clocks might impact on our perception and behaviour.

The study of the way we perceive and use time occurs across many fields including linguistics, neuroscience and cognitive psychology. Biological scientists have determined various timing mechanisms, or biological clocks, that living organisms

have developed. These mechanisms are distributed throughout the brain and presumably have local and global functions.

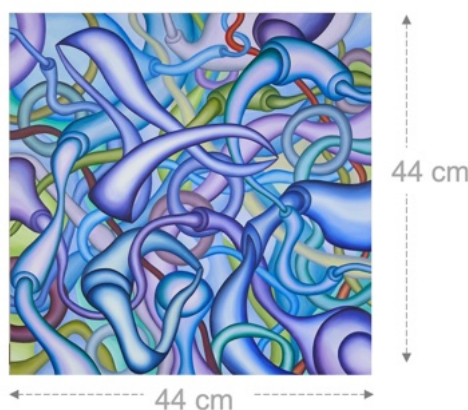
Biological clocks can be based on oscillations, repeating, rhythmic clocks, or waves, that create a temporal order in biological processes. Alternatively, these clocks may act more as a one directional timing process, like an hourglass, used for measuring duration or elapsed time. In some cases, these types of clocks might be combined and rely not just on internal processes but also external factors such as temperature and sunlight.

As a society we have had a tendency to impose various scales of time, perhaps to create personal order or to assist in the functioning of the community. These scales of time may be seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years, decades or centuries. More ancient societies were of course governed by patterns in solar and lunar cycles and spiritual practices were often linked to these cycles. There may have been biological drivers for these temporal patterns.

Certainly, food production or gathering at some point became linked with seasonal and even tidal patterns and predicting temporal patterns may have been essential to survival. It is likely that need and perhaps curiosity led to keener observation and measurement of these patterns. Over time this led to a more scientific interest in measuring accurate periods of time. There is no doubt that there has been a push to develop more and more accurate time telling technology. This technology in turn impacted on the way individuals and communities function. The driving reasons for improving timing technology is difficult to know but time has always been integrated closely with biological, spiritual, scientific and business practices.

Regardless at what spatial or temporal scale you like to consider the flow of time. Regardless of whether the framework you observe from is mathematical, philosophical, biological, psychological, sociological, or even as an artist, the flow of time is something we all experience in both common and distinct ways.

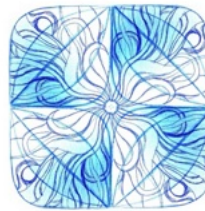
Time Flows
(10 limited edition prints)



Time Flows



Time Begins



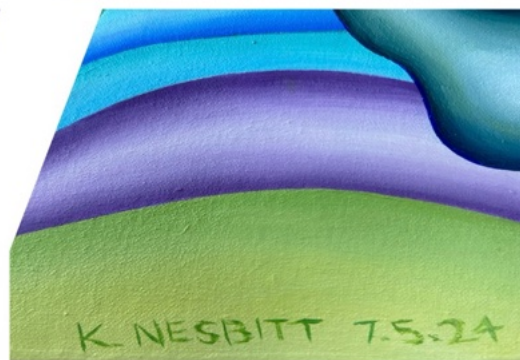
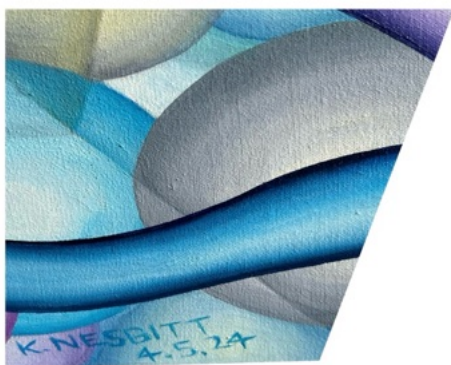
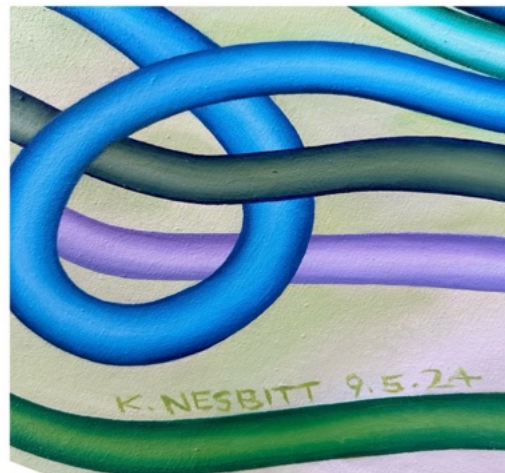
Time Streams



Time Strings



Time Seed



Time | Space | Light

six personal explorations

Olivia Hamilton

Keith Nesbitt

Chris Buller

Ramona Raven

Paul Foley

Jacquie Garcia

May 24 - June 9, 2024

Opening 6-8pm Friday - May 24

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APPENDIX 1 - Some Songs About Time

I have been involved in a lot of song-writing over the years. I mainly do lyrics as my tuneless inner ear means I struggle to be a musician. Like painting, writing lyrics can be creative. Yet for me at least it doesn't seem to be as mysterious as my pictures. My pictures seem to come out of nowhere, like the cosmos itself! For me, the manipulation of words seems to involve a much more cognitive process and this process is more structured than accidental. Regardless, Time and Space (or Place) seem to be common elements that I muse over in songs as well as in paintings.

At the same time as painting for this exhibit I have also been collaborating with people on some new songs about time. This EP should be released during the exhibit.

I've also put together a small collection of these new songs, mixed with some older songs. All these works integrate aspects of time and touch on creativity. So, they seem intimately connected to the painting exhibit.

Below are a few brief notes on each song. If you would like to listen I can provide a link to download the mp3s and also the lyrics – please just email me at kvnesbitt1959@gmail.com

01	Astro Girl
02	Big Train
03	Everything
04	Another Day
05	Another Day - reprise
06	Alcohol And Love
07	Angel's Wings
08	Thinking About These Trains
09	Summer Lost
10	Speed Of The Time
11	Time Pilot
12	Soul Windows
13	Good Feel
14	Ride On Wave Of Magic
15	Dreamer Of All Of Time

01 Astro Girl

(R. Newell, K. Nesbitt)

(From the *Tilt-A-Whirl* Album by EPV)

This first song is set at the end of cosmic time. (If you want to hear a song about the beginning of cosmic time then you will have to go to the last one). Does the universe end and how it ends are mirror questions to when and how the universe begins. Personally, I admire the optimism of the character in this song who is making the most of love as he waits for the final moment and takes one more loop on the cosmic carnival ride.

02 Big Train

(R. Newell, K. Nesbitt)

(From the *Underground* Album by *Train Things*)

Probably more of a realistic concern than the end of cosmic time, is the end of our own personal earthly time. The song is a strangely happy song about the end of a lifetime and moving on. Like most the songs on the *Underground* album it explores the idea that we travel on tracks of fate. Whether we lay our own tracks and ride them or if they are already laid remains ambiguous. I tend to think of life starting at some station and moving to an end station, like an arrow of time. No doubt, I've laid a lot of the tracks myself, but at times it feels like someone else created the landscape I had to lay them through. However, who knows, it may be a circular trip, a simple loop like a child's train set, around and around.

03 Everything

(R. Newell, K. Nesbitt)

(From the *Spaceship Made Of Wood* Album by EPV)

This song is based on a book I read once called the "Theory Of Nothing" (R.K. Standish). This book discusses the well-known and ongoing search by physicists and mathematicians for a Theory of Everything. That is, a hypothetical, singular, all-encompassing, coherent theoretical framework of physics. If it could be found and provided you could set the initial boundary conditions correctly, you could just simulate the universe like clockwork and let things unfold. The book argues that the Theory of Everything is really a Theory of Nothing as the Information required to capture everything would indeed be everything. The book also supports the many worlds hypothesis – which seems to be a way of getting around the many fortunate accidents that seem necessary for us to be here at all and to be wondering about all this time stuff anyway. There are many worlds where things don't work out so nicely, but because there are so many worlds you can expect at least one where the fortunate accidents happen and we can wonder about this time stuff.

(I should note that I was working in Boston when I wrote these words. One of the things that unsettled me was the presence of street beggars who wanted my quarters. Unfortunately, I had to save my quarters so I could do my weekly washing as the machines at the laundromat required them. Without this information there are a few lines in the song that may seem to mean nothing.)

04 Another Day

05 Another Day – reprise

(Chieh-Ying Tsai, K. Nesbitt)

(From the musical, *Mr Lee's Magical Circus*)

Again, in this song we come back to more human scale of time. While we may make lifetime plans, we do tend to measure our days by solar and lunar cycles. Whether it is one day, or one season at a time, we tend to have more pragmatic everyday problems

that we must navigate. Best laid plans of mice and men and all that. I like the saying that life is what happens while you are planning what to do with it.

In the musical, Mr Lee, the ringmaster, is getting older and he is making plans for retirement, Unfortunately the lion tamer and knife-thrower are unscrupulous and Mr Lee's entire circus is in peril. His daughter is quite the star performer and dances on the high wire. Unfortunately, his wife has died some years earlier and Mr Lee seems to be waiting for a turn of fortunes. I guess only the fortune teller knows how that will all turn out.

06 Alcohol And Love

(M. McClaren, K. Nesbitt)

(From the EP, *About Time*)

The words for this song were originally written for the Underground album, so it contains the familiar metaphor of fate as train tracks and the inevitably nature of switches, or decision points that occur along the track. While fate seems destined for the characters in this song there also seems to be some randomness about events and a sense of being lost in time and space. The character in this song seems to have had too many drinks one night and accidentally fallen in love.

07 Angels Wings

(R. Newell, K. Nesbitt)

(From *Landscape Album* by *Strange Things*)

Time and Place are two of my common muses when writing words. Heart and Soul also seem to work their way into many songs. Usually, the Angels and Devils I talk about simply serve as metaphorical devices for good and bad. In this song there is the more metaphysical sense of wings that fly across space and time. Of course, I only have wheels and there is a speed limit. I also loathe traffic, but the wheels will have to do. In this song, we get a sense that time is passing too quickly. The song was written travelling back from Wollongong towards Newcastle (on the number 7 highway to the North coast). Really, it's about going back to a familiar place to see someone familiar. Most songs are pretty much made up, but this song has some slightly autobiographical elements. I do paint the sun in every sky and often paint waves too. Sky and Sea are the last of my six main muses when I create.

08 Thinking About These Trains

(R. Newell, K. Nesbitt)

(From *Underground Album* by *Train Things*)

This song was written in bed one cold, foggy Bathurst, winter morning. I was stealing another 15 minutes to lie in my warm bed. I could hear the trains in the distance and they seem to echo in my dreams as I woke. It seemed like the sound waves carried a little clearer under the dank atmospheric conditions. Perhaps it was just a very quiet morning outside or inside my head. For some other reason I was attending to the sound and it weirdly recalled my sleeping thoughts. Night and Day are of course the normal cycle of things, along with sleep and a sense of dreaming. We all have an array of biological clocks in our heads, some that synchronise with the sun and temperature. I certainly feel a strong shift in my moods with seasonal changes. Don't worry the ghosts in the song may simply be memories. Although, there is also a sense of wanting to ride the ghost trains, not just into the past but also into the future. Maybe I should worry.

09 Summer Lost

(R. Newell, K. Nesbitt)

(From *Landscape Album* by *Strange Things*)

This song also has a feel of lost memories and looking back in time. There is a sense of regret for the passing of youthful years. Summer has been used a lot as a poetic device in this sense. Summer representing our halcyon days When I think back to my early days or surfing and falling in love it does seem that time is suspended and passing more slowly. Now everything rushes by. This seems to be a common experience of aging and time perception. We feel like time is passing more slowly when we are young and it seems to speed up as we get older. Maybe it is to do with the surprise of youth, the constant new experiences we have when we are young. Comparatively, as we age, we adopt such repetitive routines and seem to rely on patterns of behaviour and thinking that are ingrained. Anyway, nice to look back and remember what seemed like endless summer days on the beach. More nice memories is one advantage you can take into older age.

10 Speed Of The Time

(M. McClaren, K. Nesbitt)

(From the EP *About Time*)

This song picks up a similar theme to the last one. Although, there is a bit more tongue-in-cheek angst intended in this song. Running to catch up yet throwing days away. And still so much fascination with the speed of light and yet no concern for the speed of time.

11 Time Pilot

(M. McClaren, K. Nesbitt)

(From the EP *About Time*)

When I was young I liked the idea of travelling in time. Mainly backwards, so I could fix up the mistakes. One of the other problems with getting older is that the hopes and dreams and wishes of youth become harder to hold onto. You've got to try to keep the light but sometimes the forces of darkness gather. There's a spiritual feel to this song, keeping the light, staying positive as you move through time. I also feel like keeping the light is a reminder to me to stay creative. Painting and song-writing are something that seems to be integral to who I am.

12 Soul Windows

(R. Newell, K. Nesbitt)

(From *Landscape Album* by *Strange Things*)

This song again captures a fascination with time passing. I've been very lucky to work with some amazing musicians over the years. An interesting feature of this song is the reverse guitar solo. Richard always liked to have one song on each album with this effect. Not sure how he imagined the music in reverse. Musicians constantly amaze me with the order and beauty they bring to sound. Anyway, the guitar solo on this track is recorded in normal direction and then reversed in the mix. Maybe time can go backwards after all.

At a quantum time scale, future and past is one of those that can evolve in a wave of probability. The wave can collapse when the future is observed and the past can even be changed to ensure consistency. Thus the future can change the past. I guess this is a bit like the way history gets written by the winners. Listening to this song makes me wonder about whether dreams and memories are somehow out of time. The order of key events seem preserved in relation to each other, but there is no real linear, periodic track of time on which events occur.

13 Good Feel

(M. McClaren, K. Nesbitt)

(From the EP, *About Time*)

Creativity, like my moods can sometimes seem to move like a wave. Long summer days seem to create a slow wave of good feeling. Like many songs I write, the love angle can simply be added on to make the narrative. For me this song was really inspired by the sense of good feeling when my biological clock aligns with the long summer day. I know it's just a quirk of my brains biochemistry but it feels so nice.

14 Ride On Wave Of Magic

(M. Cotterill, K. Nesbitt)

This song was originally written to go with a painting. (I do write words for each painting, trying to keep them as automatic as possible.) At the time of writing these words I had no real understanding of the meaning of the either the words or the picture. Milton, who wrote the music and sings on this was really the first musician I worked with. We did a lot of early songs in the 1970s. Unfortunately, this was before the digital age, home studios and computers - so making quality recordings in any affordable way was difficult. Although I have copies of these early songs, they are still short of production and need to be recorded again. Of course, music has also moved on a bit since then, but maybe one day we can these updated.

This particular song was redone in 2004 to accompany my first painting exhibit. By then I had good idea this song and picture were all about creativity. It talks about Ideas being born and the creative decisions made as the idea emerges. The wave of time I interpret as the oscillations in the way creative ideas emerge, and as an artist I make observations (paint or write a song). Making observations collapses the idea wave at different moments in time. Presumably the idea state continues to evolve after the observation is made. I also like the idea of a wave of time, that things do not seem to pass at the same rate, but rather sometimes fast, sometimes slow, Ideas are like pulses moving along a compression wave. Even though the song was updated in 2004 it still has the feel of the seventies, ideas emerging from behind the doors of perception. I really like the way the guitar solo morphs into the violin as you move along the sound wave. Ironically the picture itself is my first odd-shaped picture. So, the ideas in this picture don't really "meet like corners on a frame". The first of my many framing problems.



Ride On Wave Of Magic (1979)

15 Dreamer Of All Of Time

(D. Rowe, K. Nesbitt)

(From Underground Album by Train Things)

Just as the first song was about the end of time, this last song is about the beginning of time. Perhaps there is a cycle. Anyway this is my own attempt at a creation myth. Although it can be interpreted in a more spiritual way, for me it was really an artistic description of the pattern I had discovered in my creativity. A pattern I call "Simplicity". The lyrics are also intended to capture the ideas behind this pattern. They describe the creative process and how the Simplicity pattern is used to create everything. So, even though the story of the song suggests cosmogenesis, for me it is really all about creativity. Creating ideas. It's a bit narcissistic, but we are all, essentially, creating all of our own time.



I do really like the way many of the issues and descriptions of cosmogenesis can be interpreted, metaphorically, if not mathematically, in terms of idea creation. You will find in the song references to the recursive nature of idea creation, the way ideas work together to create more ideas, the way parts can be added and combined or even removed. Likewise, the way ideas evolve, pretty much with a life of their own is also described.

The character in this song seems alone as they grapple with the infinity of contexts involved in making ideas. There is this problem, even if you track back to the first idea, there is still an underlying context, another idea behind this idea.

Lately, I've been thinking about the first time a baby opens their eyes and sees the light, hears their first sound, first experiences the world with touch. Wow, it must be amazing and a little frightening. Is this the moment when our first context begins or is it before. Is there really a moment of beginning. Or are there already patterns inside our minds that pre-set the way we create a sense of things. When and how do ideas begin?



simplicity

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