

Examinations for Post Graduate degrees in Fine Art are conducted in the candidate's exhibition space in conjunction with a written thesis which supports their studio practice. The University of Newcastle is able to facilitate such examinations for Fine Art and other Creative Arts degrees in a best practice, award winning, architect designed gallery.

Through exhibiting this practical component of the degree, the exhibition becomes an enduring visual record, an event which profiles our candidates within their industry and acknowledges the culmination of years of research. It also marks a conclusion to this enormous effort and so becomes a site of celebration.

**Gillean Shaw**

Art Curator  
The University of Newcastle

IMAGE FRONT  
**Mark Elliot-Ranken**  
*Dark Whispers*  
2009  
acrylic on canvas  
180 x 250 cm

THE UNIVERSITY  
**GALLERY**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE** CALLAGHAN 2308

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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**NEWCASTLE**  
AUSTRALIA

# Mark Elliot-Ranken

NOMAD STRATEGIES:  
reduction



POSTGRADUATE EXHIBITION  
**25 AUGUST – 4 SEPTEMBER 2010**

THE UNIVERSITY  
**GALLERY**

Mark Elliot-Ranken  
*Erasure*  
2010  
acrylic on canvas  
150 x 150 cm



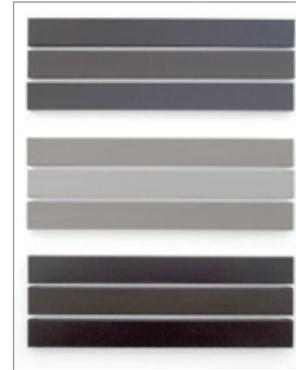
“...Art is an encounter that changes your existence...”  
Mark Elliot-Ranken



Mark Elliot-Ranken  
*Encounter I*  
2009  
acrylic on canvas  
150 x 150 cm

## Mark Elliot-Ranken

### NOMAD STRATEGIES: reduction



Mark Elliot-Ranken  
*Pulse*  
2009  
acrylic on canvas over ply  
120 x 100 cm

During the last decade of painting and research for this PhD, my work has followed a path towards non-figuration, and a reductive aesthetic. As a nomad carries only essential material possessions, staying light and mobile, then so has my work stripped itself down to essentials, this is the nomad strategy.

What has become clear to me as I reduce external references, is that I can 'see' the work for what it truly is, a deeply creative act, a verb rather than a noun, which drives its own dynamic visual language and established its own space of existence. This space may be found by those who can embrace movement/ travel, not as a sequence of departures or arrivals, but as a space unique to itself, an 'in-between' space of possibilities and fluid relationships with 'others.' This is an encounter with short-term phenomena, which resonate beyond their

moment of existence and need a poetic, personal language, which we all possess, to give itself voice.

The poet Constantine Cavafy gave the 'space-between' a voice in his poem 'Ithaca.'

*Ithaca has given you  
the beautiful voyage.*

*Without her you would have  
never set out on the road.*

*She has nothing more  
to give you.*

*And if you find her poor,  
Ithaca has not deceived you.*

*Wise as you have become,  
with so much experience,*

*You must already  
have understood  
what Ithacas mean.*

(Extract: Constantine Cavafy, 'Ithaca' 1911)

Mark Elliot-Ranken MA