transition of an experience as these energies change, weekly visits over a twelve-month period, were undertaken. The results from these visits are the first process on the journey towards the idiosyncratic visual code, recorded in forty lino-etchings.

4.3 PRACTICAL APPLICATION FOR ENCODING AN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

4.3.1 Introduction

By personal selection, twenty of the prints (the first process) are perceived to capture the notion of change in the five cycles discussed earlier in Section 4.1: growth, diurnal, seasonal, migratory and tidal change. These twenty prints have been grouped in five suites of four prints with each suite conceived as exemplifying one of the cycles.

In the following discussion, analysis of the practical application of the intuitive encoding process focuses on three factors perceived by the artist as contributing to the ability of each suite to capture the artist’s feelings:

- an exploration of the artist’s motivation at the time of executing the prints.

The approach for this exploration will take the form of a reconstruction of events, as the personal drive was often no more than gut feelings (Section 4.1) arising from a range of different circumstances. Moreover, the use of reconstructed events (in terms of an “experience engineer” [Section 2.5]) is appropriate, as the intention when drawing on the plates was to create prints capturing gut reactions without calculated intention as to the outcome.

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15 The idea of recording such changes over an extended period is not novel. For instance, Monet is famous for recording changes in light (National Gallery of Australia 2001), the North-West Australian Aborigines return to the same site to record “happenings” (Gwion Gwion 2000) and, specific to the Common, Brown returns to paint its changing physical features (pers. com. 2003).
• an analysis of serendipitous incidents occurring during the drawing stage.\textsuperscript{16}

This analysis takes account of unexpected happenings (Section 4.2) such as how an unpremeditated choice of inscribing tool results in marks that embody the artist’s vision of energy.

• an examination of serendipitous incidents occurring during the etching of the lino plate. In this assessment, the fortuitous accidents of the etching process—some of which may be attributed to insufficient attention during etching—are looked at from the perspective of how they may be viewed as characterising the notion of energy.

In addressing the two last considerations, the artist is not aware of serendipitous happenings applying to each and every print. Instead, the incidents discussed in relation to the five suites are given attention only when they produce a “wow look at that” factor when the first run of the print came off the press.

### 4.3.2 Growth Cycle

The *Growth Cycle Suite* [Plate 4.3.2.1] features the prints: *Townsville Common 5*, *Townsville Common 34*, *Townsville Common 21* and *Townsville Common 6*. Collectively, these prints exemplify a feeling of joyousness in continuity and of life regenerating. Individually, each print was executed at a different time over a period of months and each has a discrete feeling underpinning it: exuberance (*Townsville Common 5*), gently unfolding (*Townsville Common 34*), rejuvenation (*Townsville Common 21*) and fecundity (*Townsville Common 6*).

\textsuperscript{16} Graphic designer and typographer, Frutiger (1998) indicates that serendipitous happenings are integral to a work of art when he postulates: “The understanding that there is no element of chance around or in us, but that all things, both mind and matter, follow an ordered pattern, supports the argument that even the simplest blot or scribble cannot exist by pure chance or without significance . . .” (Frutiger 1998, p. 17)
**GROWTH CYCLE SUITE**

*Plate 4.3.2.1*
Regarding how these feelings were triggered, the feeling of exuberance shown in *Townsville Common 5* has its origins in the featured subject: dancing grass heads. This feeling was sparked by a visual feast of flowering plants. In the print, the feeling is characterised by the portrayal of shredded remnants of grass seed-heads after exploding into life.

In contrast to this sense of tumult are the circumstances arousing the feeling of gently unfolding expressed in *Townsville Common 34*. The feeling arose from seeing a transition in focal resolution when looking at the trees on a hillside in The Common. It was sustained, however, by the unfolding of events on the ground, where, in the artist’s creative mindset, amorphous shapes of strange vegetable matter metamorphosed into fungi forms.

Feelings of rejuvenation expressed in *Townsville Common 21*, on the other hand, is in response to renewed life seen graphically by the juxtaposition of dead, sun-baked reeds with the tide of swamp water surrounding them. Arguably fanciful, the artist perceived an association of reflections on water ripples with growth rings of plants: the notion that life is not static but is a continuum.

The feeling of fecundity experienced while executing *Townsville Common 6* emanated from a fruit-laden branch of an old battle-scarred pandanus. It stemmed from looking upward at the top-heavy, fruit-laden spiralling formation and an intense need to get up close and personal. This feeling was translated into the large and emphatic marks of the print and its top-heavy composition. In this translation, the hard, cold and smooth feeling of the etching tool mixed with a forceful gouging action—sometimes spiralling, sometimes slashing—imparted a sense of urgency that was pivotal in
expressing the feeling: a fully engaging urgency experienced exclusively while
drawing on this particular plate.

Regarding fortuitous happenings during the inscribing process, Townsville
Common 5 has an element of magic. The triggered feeling arising from seeing grass-
heads explode is captured by an unexpected hole that mysteriously appeared in the
wax ground at the upper edge of the plate. Examination of the plate reveals the blob
was caused by a pressure indentation on the plate. Circumstances creating the
indentation however are unknown. Once the plate is printed, this hole results in a blob
of dark tone appearing in the print. In terms of its affect on the composition of the
image, the mark lends a suggestion of uplift and release that is appropriate to the
feeling experienced at the time.

In Townsville Common 34, another notable fortuitous happening occurred
during the inscribing stage. Here, good fortune played a role in the unpremeditated
choice of tool. The feeling of a hillside gently unfolding is captured both accidentally
and remarkably by use of a stencil roulette—a tool designed to create a line of fine
perforations. In Townsville Common 34, the roulette is employed with a side-ways
motion to produce parallel marks that give a slightly out-of-focus portrayal to the
hillside of trees. In keeping with the feeling of unravelling, the effect of fuzziness
changes from the top to the bottom of the image. Arguably, the gradation conveys both
the artist's vision of unfolding growth when contemplating the hillside and lends a
sense of morphing to the ground litter.

Regarding the effect of unexpected incidents occurring during the etching
process, good examples of such occurrences appear at the sides and bottom of
Townsville Common 6. Here, as if the artist is trying to create a vignette, fine marks
fade out to become barely visible at the edges. Compositionally, this gives a soft
appearance to the shrubbery depicted in this area. The effect of softness contrasts
strongly with the heavily etched lines hovering top-heavily, like the pandanus fruit, at the upper right corner of the image.

4.3.3 Diurnal Change Cycle

In the Diurnal Change Suite [Plate 4.3.3.1] incorporating the prints, Townsville Common 13, Townsville Common 18, Townsville Common 24 and Townsville Common 26, focus is on portraying changes to the landscape as the day progresses from early morning through to evening. These changes are about energy, but unlike the scope of energy changes expressed in Growth Cycle Suite, here the concern is with the artist’s mood swings as the view of The Common alters through the day. Progression in this flow of feelings from dawn to evening is: anticipation (Townsville Common 13), struggling to survive (Townsville Common 18), tranquillity (Townsville Common 24) and mysteriousness (Townsville Common 26).

With reference to how these feelings were kindled, the feelings of anticipation expressed in Townsville Common 13 were prompted by seeing morning light filtering through trees. The softness of the light and awareness of vague forms emerging from the ambiguity of shadows triggered feelings of hope and suspense: a bit like a child contemplating Christmas on Christmas Eve. In Townsville Common 13, glimpses of faint light catching on the indefinite form of a stand of trees capture this spirit of anticipation. The feeling is sustained, however, by use of soft marks and a veil of tone lightly masking the scene.

The effect of light also plays a significant role in Townsville Common 18. Here, the light of the late morning gave rise to the intense feeling of struggling-to-survive. At this time of day, the intensity of light created strong, awkwardly angled shadows. In the artist’s mind these shadow shapes were synonymous with the feeling. In the print, the sense of struggling-to-survive is projected by the contrast of two line qualities in
Townsville Common 13, 2002
lino etching, 13 x 15 cm

Townsville Common 24, 2002
lino etching, 15 x 14.5 cm

Townsville Common 18, 2002
lino etching, 15 x 14.5 cm

Townsville Common 26, 2002
lino etching, 15 x 14.5 cm

DIURNAL CHANGE SUITE
Plate 4.3.3.1
visual conflict: broad calligraphic-like marks showing shrubbery abutting much finer lines showing the meandering curves of a watercourse.

By late afternoon, the effect of the change in light again heralded a refreshing change of mood: the feeling of tranquillity expressed in *Townsville Common 24*. Unlike the previous print, this feeling was triggered more from entering a heavily-shadowed quiet wetland area than the quality of the light itself. In the print, the artist’s experience of the impact upon entering this area is transposed by the juxtaposition of vertical reeds and trees, portrayed as strong pictorial elements by use of emphatic marks, against the horizontal expanse of wetlands and sky, portrayed as soft by the use of lightly laid curvilinear marks. In short, the impact of tranquillity is expressed by opposing pictorial elements framing the feeling.

Feelings of mysteriousness rendered in *Townsville Common 26* arose vividly for the artist when confronted by a mass of dead-vine shrouded vegetation along a creek-bank. The nebulous shapes in the plant matter incited flights of imagination unfettered in the dull evening light. This notion of ambiguity found its way into the print wherein the subject matter is dematerialised by the blurring of edges and absence of tonal modelling.

Regarding the occurrence of advantageous, but unplanned, incidents during the inscribing process, the history of one print is particularly interesting: *Townsville Common 18*. During the drawing stage, the plate was brushed accidentally against an overhanging branch. The inadvertent scratches, appearing in the portrayed shrubbery, enhance the expression of struggling-to-survive in the resulting print by creating additional awkward angles. From a light-hearted perspective, the ‘fight’ with the branch also reconfirmed the artist’s mood at the time.

Regarding serendipitous incidents during the etching process, *Diurnal Change Suite* was set apart by having no untoward incidents playing a significant role.
Nevertheless, one minor occurrence that helped appears in *Townsville Common 13*. The plate used for this particular print was a stray (a remanent from earlier excursions into lino printing) with different physical properties and of slightly different format. The plate qualities produced unanticipated tones of light within the veil sustaining the feeling of anticipation.

### 4.3.4 Seasonal Change Cycle

In the *Seasonal Change Suite* [Plate 4.3.4.1], there is a distinction between feelings kindled during the *Wet* depicted in *Townsville Common 1* and *Townsville Common 9*, and those of the *Dry*, *Townsville Common 8* and *Townsville Common 14*. Prints of the *Wet* typify more mellow energy in feelings of abundance (*Townsville Common 1*) and contentment (*Townsville Common 9*) than prints of the *Dry*. During the *Dry* there is a sense of surface energy characterised by harsher feelings of brittleness (*Townsville Common 8*) and barrenness (*Townsville Common 14*).

With regard to the triggering of these feelings, the notion of abundance shown in *Townsville Common 1* stemmed from standing in the rain at the onset of the *Wet*. Although drawing in the rain is not an everyday pursuit, the act made it possible to be at one with the plants. The idea of the surrounding grasses being fed by the rain and responding by thrusting upwards made the exercise rewarding. To the artist’s eye, the abundant tall guinea-grass looked powerfully connected to the ground. From reconstructing the line of thinking (or not thinking) at the time, the affect of the rain bouncing on the grass blades was seen to make little impression on their anchored connection to the ground. This connection is captured in the print by massed radiating lines arising from two grass clumps shown in the foreground. The vision of looking through these clumps to the open savannah beyond also helps in projecting the idea.
Townsville Common 1, 2002
lino etching, 15 x 14.5 cm

Townsville Common 8, 2002
lino etching, 15 x 14.5 cm

Townsville Common 9, 2002
lino etching, 15 x 14.5 cm

Townsville Common 14, 2002
lino etching, 15 x 14.5 cm

SEASONAL CHANGE SUITE

Plate 4.3.4.1
Contentment, expressed in *Townsville Common 9*, is closely associated with the previous print. This feeling was sparked by the rain-satiated landscape towards the end of the *Wet*. For the artist, the contentment arising from the landscape of this season was comparable to an evening of fine wine, dining and company. *Townsville Common 9* reflects the energy of contentment by the portrayed gesture of drooping water-laden foliage. Horizontal lines shown in the sky and branches accentuate this feeling of placid calm.

In contrast, a feeling of brittleness is projected in *Townsville Common 8*. Triggered by observing many broken branches within an expanse of seemingly dead upright trees, fragility seemed to pervade the landscape. This delicate energy is epitomised in the print in simplified oddly angled trees portrayed as piercing the ground rather than being nurtured by it.

Surface appearance again triggered the feeling of barrenness in *Townsville Common 14*. Stirring this feeling was the notion that the *Dry* was rapidly producing vast expanses of sharp-edged rocks in the landscape. These rocks appeared both embedded in and strewn upon the ground. In the print, the sense of barrenness is embodied in the left side of the print by horizontal striae of rocks sparsely interspersed with signs of broken vegetation. On the right side of the print, contrast of two vertical trees with the horizontal rock formations directs attention to the starved ground.

Regarding unanticipated outcomes arising from incidences while inscribing the plates, *Townsville Common 8* is memorable. In drawing on this plate, dead twigs and sticks were used as tools. These brittle instruments kept snapping during use thus creating abrupt endings to the line work. Nevertheless, the staccato-like endings were ideal as the marks fitted well with the feeling of brittleness.
In *Seasonal Change Suite*, an incidence of serendipitous happenings during the etching process occurs in *Townsville Common 9*. Here, the under-bitten marks in the sky darkened the intended tone of line work and enhanced the horizontal rhythm that is an important element in the feeling of contentment.

### 4.3.5 Migratory Pattern Cycle

Unlike the *Seasonal Change Suite* with distinct division between *Wet* and *Dry*, *Migratory Pattern Cycle Suite* [Plate 4.3.5.1] focuses on aerial vibrations: busyness (*Townsville Common 15*), agitation (*Townsville Common 31*), pathways (*Townsville Common 37*) and uneasiness (*Townsville Common 35*).

Sparking the feeling of busyness featured in *Townsville Common 15* was the aerial vibration of chatter from multitudinous birds. To the artist, this vibrating sound brought memories of the excited activity experienced as a small child during break-up day at school. In the print *Townsville Common 15*, the underlying variety and character of drawn lines (from dots to hatching) portray the idea of vibrating sounds of busyness. Wavy lines in the foreground and petering to aligned dots zigzagged into the distance exemplify, in graphic terms, the notion of busyness.

Closely connected to the previous feeling is a sense of agitation, shown in *Townsville Common 31*. The trigger for this print was an accelerated activity of sounds within the treetops and flurries of movement by well-concealed birds. During the drawing, the artist experienced a heightened sense of urgency that was rather like the concern of a child worried that an excursion bus may leave without them. This agitated state finds expression in fractured shapes like leaf-winged beings (or possibly wing-leafed beings) constrained in a cage of crossed lines.
Townsville Common 15, 2002
lino etching, 15 x 14.5 cm

Townsville Common 31, 2002
lino etching, 15 x 14.5 cm

Townsville Common 37, 2002
lino etching, 15 x 14.5 cm

Townsville Common 35, 2002
lino etching, 15 x 14.5 cm

MIGRATORY PATTERN SUITE
Plate 4.3.5.1
Air movement is also an important component in the print *Townsville Common* 37. Triggering the idea of air moving in pathways, was the observation of the many flocks of birds travelling back and forth at a lagoon. Each bird species seemed to have its own flight path as if under the direction of some unseen traffic controller. In the print, the sense of these pathways is captured by a rhythm of parallel swirling lines. To suggest that there are different pathways, spaces between trees portrayed in the bottom and right-hand side of the print act as corridors of movement.

The feeling of uneasiness embodied in *Townsville Common* 35, was again the vibrational changes in air. Although there was no apparent foundation for this feeling at the time, these changes evoked the presence of a lurking malevolence. For the artist, the trepidation sensed at the time was similar to that which creatures may have when embarking on their first migration. In the print, portrayal of this type of uneasiness is expressed by a gathering of broken graffiti-like line work on the left-hand side seemingly fleeing from a tightly delineated dark mass encroaching from the right.

With regard to unanticipated incidences during the drawing process, in this suite *Townsville Common* 15 is remarkable. The metal dog-comb used as a drawing tool produced many unexpected breaks in the wavy lines discussed above. This fracturing of the lines, appearing in the foreground of the print, greatly assisted the portrayal of busyness by being a visual equivalent to breaks in sound experienced by the artist.

Highlighting the value of unanticipated incidents occurring during the etching process is *Townsville Common* 31. Inadvertently, the plate for this print was over- etched, thus creating unforeseen holes and depressions that are visible at the centre of the print. These surface fractures hold the ink and create contrasts of dark and light tone supporting the expression of agitation.
4.3.6 Motion of Tides Cycle

In the *Motion of Tides Suite* incorporating prints *Townsville Common 33*, *Townsville Common 11*, *Townsville Common 20* and *Townsville Common 25* [Plate 4.3.6.1] the focus is on time as perceived within the fluctuation of tides. Three feelings drive this suite: openness (*Townsville Common 20*), impermanence (*Townsville Common 33* and *Townsville Common 11*) and viscous movement (*Townsville Common 25*).

Triggering the sense of openness expressed in *Townsville Common 20* was a walk through tangled scrubland into wide, flat expanses of saltpans at ebb tide. At the time of looking at the saltpans, recollections of the vast breadth of West-Queensland landscape resurfaced. The print projects this feeling of openness in a curved, low horizon line and uninterrupted expanses of tone.

Sparking the feeling of impermanence expressed in *Townsville Common 33* was the sensation of crusty dried-salt fracturing underfoot while walking on the seemingly inviolable surface of the saltpan. In the print, this surface disintegration is presented in crisp, broken, vertical lines contrasting with smudgy haloes set against a plane of light tone.

*Townsville Common 11* carries the feeling of impermanence from a slightly different mindset. Here, the sensation arose from walking on mudflats and experiencing the violation of its smooth surface by the artist’s feet. Capturing the ooziness of this muddy impermanence are rhythms of flotsam arranged horizontally to lend the appearance of ever-changing patterns within the mud.

Prompting the feeling of viscous movement projected in *Townsville Common 25* was the sight of tidal water welling up and gradually infusing the mudflats with a shiny glaze. As the volume of subterranean water increased, the mud seemed to creep
Townsville Common 33, 2002
lino etching, 15 x 14.5 cm

Townsville Common 11, 2002
lino etching, 15 x 14.5 cm

Townsville Common 20, 2002
lino etching, 15 x 14.5 cm

Townsville Common 25, 2002
lino etching, 15 x 14.5 cm

MOTION OF TIDES SUITE
Plate 4.3.6.1
as a slowly moving morass. This languid energy is projected in the print by contrast of sparsely laid horizontal marks set against a web of overarching curved lines.

Regarding the occurrence of fortuitous incidents during the inscribing process, such an event is intrinsically a part of Townsville Common 33. The act of having accidentally walked on the plate while working in the field resulted in an unexpected series of broken circles in the upper-right corner of the print. Arguably, the fragmentation of the circles conveys both the artist’s experience of underfoot crunchy crustiness triggering the feeling of impermanence.

With regard to unanticipated incidents occurring during the etching process, Townsville Common 25 is a fine example. During etching, areas of a previously applied block-out solution lifted, creating a patch of horizontal light tone in the upper left of the print. This was advantageous for portraying languid energy as this patch of light tone made a strong tonal contrast with the surrounding darkness and draws attention to the marks below expressing viscous movement.

In essence, practical application for encoding an immediate response hinges on recall of triggers initiating gut reactions, personal visions within the landscape and acknowledgement of the integration of “personally desired outcomes and external happenings” (Section 4.2).

4.4 COMBINING INTUITION WITH CALCULATION IN THE ENCODING PROCESS

The same three considerations addressed in encoding an immediate response (choice of medium, approach and subject matter) also need to be addressed when combining intuition with calculation in the encoding process. Driving this need is the idea that clear visual expression is facilitated by the appropriate choice of tools, method and subject material.
Regarding the first consideration (selecting the most appropriate medium), paint made from charcoal derived from the same plant species to be found in the Common and then bound in beeswax [Appendix B] is ideal for three reasons. Firstly, this medium allows for a calculated extension of the colour neutrality (black and white) employed in the etchings of the previous stage, neutrality traditional to etchings. Secondly, colour neutrality allows interpretation to be free, to some extent, from one aspect of both cultural input (Section 2.5) and psychological effect (Section 2.7) thus allowing for a more even playing field for a wider range of viewers. Thirdly, feelings aroused when working with the inherent sticky viscosity of beeswax has associations with the landscape (Section 4.2). Finally, use of charcoal made from plant species of The Common creates an intrinsic connection, felt at an instinctive level, to this park. From personal experience, this feeling of connection is awakened during the physical act of collecting and grinding the charcoal and it is sustained by memory of this process.\footnote{A psychological trigger in the awakening aroused by the gathering and grinding process is the blackness of the charcoal as pigment. The degree of blackness sought is directly linked to the originating plant species and the amount of grinding employed. Although use of plant matter taken from the Common would have been ideal, ethical and legal considerations preclude the collection of such material from this environmentally sensitive area.}

The second consideration (choosing a suitable approach), is simply directed in the sense that this stage in the encoding process draws upon the preceding stage wherein the intuitively based prints are specimens to be studied analytically as an entomologist might study an insect to discover its attributes. With such a mindset, the square format of the prints with its symbolic connection to The Common,\footnote{Shepherd (2002, p. 335) defines the symbolism of the square as “earth”.} is an appropriate format for encoding a calculated viewpoint. Use of the square for the prints, however, arose from practicality—a lino block quartered into squares thus creating an intimate size.
(Section 2.5) in keeping with the notion of a specimen to be studied; a practical size to fit on a freezer block to keep the ground stable during transportation and a portable size, the hand readily supports the plate—more than symbolism. From the perspective of incorporating an element of calculation to the approach, the inherent symmetry of the square focuses attention on the featured subject.

Pivotal to the encoding of analytical and intuitive responses is the process of choosing appropriate subject material: the third consideration. Line, shape, tone and texture of prints correlated into the five energy cycles are, in a sense, the subject for this stage rather than pictorial representations of the Common; even though the features of the Common can still be seen in the studies executed for this stage. These elements stand as ‘objective correlatives’ for feelings aroused by the energies [Plate 4.4.1]. From a practical viewpoint, however, pivotal sections from relevant prints [Plates 4.4.2-4.4.6], each epitomising a feeling, become subject material for the arrangement of the four elements. Choice of each section is subjective and based entirely on the artist’s perception of which part of the print is the most expressive in conveying energy.

Beyond the intricacies of the encoding process to be discussed next, the encoding of an analytical mindset with an intuitive response involves more than a formulaic use of devices; it must involve creative invention. Exploration into creative invention to achieve clear expression of ideas has occupied artists throughout time and is well documented. For instance, Olsen (Hart 1991, p.ix) states clearly that his ‘... paintings are created in the process of evolution ...’ From a personal viewpoint, the ‘evolution’ from making the prints to the present stage was reached after many such explorations into finding an appropriate method for this stage of transition. For example, remnant of

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13 Eliot (1963, p. 102) suggests that “objective correlatives” are the “only way of expressing emotion in the form of art ...” For this discussion, the objective correlatives will be visual analogues as explained by Edwards (1986, pp.66-95).
STAGE 1: IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

Plate 4.4.1
PIVOTAL SECTIONS: GROWTH CYCLE

Plate 4.4.2
PIVOTAL SECTIONS: DIURNAL CHANGE CYCLE

Plate 4.4.3
PIVOTAL SECTIONS: SEASONAL CHANGE CYCLE

Plate 4.4.4
PIVOTAL SECTIONS: MIGRATORY PATTERNS CYCLE

Plate 4.4.5
OPENNESS
(Section 4.3.6)

CRUSTINESS
(Section 4.3.6)

VISCIOUS MOVEMENT
(Section 4.3.6)

OOZINESS
(Section 4.3.6)

PIVOTAL SECTIONS: MOTION OF TIDES CYCLE

Plate 4.4.6
a somewhat unsuccessful venture in the encoding process are compiled into the book of prints, *Common Marks* (discussed later). Moreover, an insight from the writer, Jeans (1998, p. 61), highlights this complexity of encoding energies: “. . . from the heart of the cosmos we receive strange, unreadable signals . . . still awaiting the creation of a cipher book that can decode them.”

4.5 PRACTICAL APPLICATION FOR COMBINING INTUITION WITH CALCULATION IN THE ENCODING PROCESS

4.5.1 INTRODUCTION

To add the dimension of analytical thinking to the intuitive responses captured in the prints, the paintings in this next stage are encoded using the traditional practice of Western Art: visual communication through the elements and principles of design. That such encoding could have universal application is revealed in Table 4.5.1.1 wherein a strong similarity between art theorists’ principles of design and, in part, Ramachandran’s (2003) universal laws of art (Section 2.5) is demonstrated.

Table 4.5.1.1

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