BEING OR BECOMING

by

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Prologue: An honest critic with a hammer

November 17, 2014

I just finished my third series of female warriors. Hundreds of hours of work and hundreds of pounds of clay stand before me. And here they are: four female warriors trapped in four massive blocks of earth; pseudo artifacts from an unknown civilization, removed from their place of origin, but not yet totally revealed and comprehensible. It took me three years and twelve previous attempts to overcome the technical issues, and now, with the final touches completed, I feel nothing but disappointment and dissatisfaction. Two weeks from now, after going through all the laborious process of drying, firing, glazing, and re-firing, I will destroy them all. A very honest critique, fifteen minutes with a hammer, and here they are: thousands of shards on the floor of the ceramic studio and me, falling in love with the fragments.

Falling in love with fragments was a new and liberating experience. When I started my first warrior series, my main interest was energy and movement. But clay is a capricious medium. The more I have tried to impose these ideas, the more I needed supports for the figures. The more I needed supports for the figures, the more the figures started to be trapped in networks of structures, until finally structures became masses, and the figures immobile.

Throughout all these years in trying to master the process of ceramic art in a traditional way, I felt that my interest and appreciation of the art world followed the same kind of reduction. I started my undergraduate studies as a multi-media artist with a primary focus in painting and drawing. Then I was introduced to clay, evolving into working exclusively with clay, then exclusively with large clay sculptures, and then
exclusively with large figurative clay sculptures. This experience clouded my perspectives; leading me to say things like: “video artists use technology because they cannot make anything with their hands, performance art is some kind of cheap theatre done by untalented performers, conceptual artists are unskilled artists who pretend to be philosophers, and painters do no paint anymore; they barf their pizza on pieces of canvas and pretend that is art”.

Back in 2014…with a hammer in my right hand.

From this moment, I knew I had to change something in my art practice. My ignorance led me to an entire hall of shame of deplorable quotations to erase. I had many blockages, many limits, and many barriers. A few months later, I was making my way into graduate school with only one premise: to change.
Introduction

I am still not sure what brought me to abandon my career in civil engineering and to embark onto this unpredictable ship that is a Master Degree in Fine Arts. Somehow, during my time as an undergraduate student, my part-time study of Fine Arts evolved from an escape from the stress of my professional life to a source of dissatisfactions and I needed to find out why.

In some ways, I came to graduate school not to expand an earlier body of work but to destroy the preceding cycle of creativity. I needed time to study my creative process, to understand what has created the previous limits, and to try to change my art practice.

The following thesis is divided in three sections. The first chapter, *Nucleus*, establishes what the core of my art practice is; which elements are always present. It discusses how my undergraduate work was directly influenced by a breaking point in my personal life. This turning moment led me to change my ways of living and subsequently influenced my art practice in term of influences and aesthetics.

The second chapter, *Bifurcation Point*, examines how the creation of a cycle of destruction through a performance piece from August 2015 to December 2017 forced me to change my art practice by challenging each limit and ideology I had about art. This chapter is divided into two sub-chapters. The section, *Ceramics in the Expanded Field*, presents some of the experiences created to bring my work in a more contemporary format. The sub-chapter *Thesis* describes the processes and influences that guided the creation of the works; *Outgrowth, Trauma*, and *Bruises*, included in the Master of Fine Arts Exhibition.
The third section, **What is “change”?**, discusses how the research on the definition of the word “change” led me to an interest on objective versus subjective reality. This discovery is slowly guided me toward a starting point of a new cycle of creativity that will be pursued in the following years.

In conclusion, I will try to establish how this new intellectual interest can be expressed artistically in synergy with some recent discoveries about my personal creative process that came to light through the performance piece *Bifurcation Point*.

1. **Nucleus**

   “To change” is not an easy endeavor. A few years ago, I unexpectedly found my school report from kindergarten. Reading through my teacher’s comments about my behavior, my social interactions, and my interests, I suddenly felt that the last thirty years of my existence had barely damaged the five-year-old that I was, or maybe that I am…I don’t know. For sure, I have been educated, I have been influenced by many things, and I have learned (I will never jump over a functioning chainsaw again), but all these life experiences seem to act more or less like electrons spinning around a more stable nucleus. Perhaps, it is the same for my art practice. But in that case, what is my nucleus?

   I started my Bachelor degree in Fine Arts during a period of deep turmoil. The triggering event, a physical and mental breakdown following a disastrous judo tournament, forced me to modify thoroughly my way of living. This triggering event originated from a more fundamental weakness: a denial and a fear of dying. This disposition led me to live constantly in the fast lane in order to feel alive, but also to reach a point of self-destruction. After this breaking point, I found some answers in the
original teachings of Gautama the Buddha. Although never clearly mentioned, many notions related to my meditation practice make their way into my art practice: observation of the flow of consciousness, purification of the mind, experiencing the ephemerality of the being. This flow of events, from my breakdown to my spiritual juvenescence, constitutes the core of my art practice.

The influential artists during my undergraduate studies were sculptors with interests in the dualistic nature of destruction and creation such as Rodin and Stephen De Staebler. In *Four-Humor Army: Melancholic*, the influence of Rodin is primarily apparent with the use of fragments but also with the reference to time and decay (fig. 1, 2). The use of a stele-like base was influenced by the work of Stephen De Staebler whose work addresses “the loss of our primitive sense of being human.”

The use of an aesthetic of fragments combined with a reference to entropy and to the cycle of rock formation are all part of the vocabulary developed during my studies in order to convey a sense of perpetual change between growth and decay.

2. **Bifurcation Point**

Very quickly at the beginning of my graduate studies, I came to realize that my limits and blockages towards many fields of art were solely based on misunderstandings and a lack of education. To overcome this situation I decided to conduct an experiment on myself that I called *Bifurcation Point*. This experiment was defined by 12 parameters:

1- Do not make any objects

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1 Donald B. Kuspit, “Stephen De Staebler’s Archaic Figures,” in *Stephen De Staebler, The Figure*, ed. Lynn Gamwell and Donald Kuspit (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1987), 15.

2 Refer to some misjudgments towards the fields of painting, video and performance art, but also within the field of ceramics and the use of casting slip and the technique of dipping.
2- Do not reach a comfort zone

3- Do not make any work with a direct representation of a human figure

4- Remove the idea of forced meaning

5- Only trust a direct experience of things

6- Reduce the intellectual content

7- Do not pursue the development of an idea using the same material twice

8- Do not apply for shows

9- Do not have a social life

10- Work excessively hard on nothing specific

11- Do not make work based on skill

12- Do not study cycles of destruction and creation; make one

The goal of Bifurcation Point was to accumulate art experiences at a very fast pace, to create a kind of frenzy, to create a physical and emotional stress, to enhance an emergency to create. The intention was to reenact the same ingredients that led to the breaking point and a subsequent cycle of creativity at the beginning of my bachelor’s degree. In theory, Bifurcation Point was supposed to be conducted for 12 months; in practice, it was pursued for much longer. For that reason, I consider Bifurcation Point a performance piece that encompass all the works, experiences and performances created between August 2015 and December 2017. The following sections describe some of the experiments conducted during that period; the first section presents some of my attempts to bring my ceramics practices into the expanded field and the second section presents how some tragic moments in my personal life led me to the completion of the work for the Master of Fine Arts Exhibition.
2.1 Ceramics in the Expanded Field

After one semester of *Bifurcation Point*, I started to have an interest in bringing my use of clay into a more contemporary format and to explore the notion of ceramics in the *expanded field*. In *New Direction in Ceramics*, Jo Dahn discusses adopting the notion of *expanded field* in order to include the current variety of ceramics modes and how “their thought-provoking nature prompts searching questions about the discipline of ceramics and calls for some preliminary consideration of the intellectual environment within which they have emerged”\(^3\). My first steps into process art were guided by a departure from traditional processes and techniques and the study of artists working with clay through performance, site-specific installation and time-based work.

The first experience, *Body-Mov.-Exp.*, was influenced by two dance pieces: *The Rite of Spring* as choreographed by Pina Bausch and *Vertical Road* created by Akram Khan. The choice of these pieces was guided by their thematic concerns with spirituality and death, and by their scenography referencing earth as the source of life but also the place where everything returns. The goal of *Body-Mov.-Exp.* was to imprint the energy of movement sequences onto sheets of paper attached to the floor and to the walls. The imprints were created through repetition and endurance by my body covered with clay dust. The most notable problem encountered during this performance resided in the fact that I am not a dancer. I overturned the problem by doing what I know better: judo. Martial arts and dance have a similar way to train the body through repetition. In judo, we call this *uchi-komi*. It’s a repetition of an incomplete movement. The focus is on the

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preparation; placement of the hands, off-balancing the partner, opening for the body, rotation of the head, placement of the feet, and rhythm in the displacement in order to create the final impulse required to throw without the use of strength. By repeating these steps hundreds and thousands of time, judokas inscribed the sequence through muscle memory which allows the movement to arise at the right moment and to be performed without conscious thoughts in a fighting situation (fig. 3, 4). If my knowledge of judo came to the rescue, I understood that in order to embody a movement, it is essential to understand the essence behind the movement.

Building on Body-Mov.-Exp., I chose to create two other performance pieces, but this time, I tried to amplify the notion of time and endurance. For this purpose, I turned my attention to the work of Valérie Delarue and Alexandra Engelfriet; two European artists who use their body as their only tool, working with wet clay installation, performance, and video.

In Swirl-Exp. Version I, the goal was to create a large clay piece within a strict time frame; starting on a Friday evening, the artwork had to be completed by the following Sunday 13:00. Making a large clay piece within a weekend allowed me to deal more effectively with the aspect of endurance, energy, and immediacy, but here again my knowledge of judo came to the rescue as I met a blockage at the beginning of the assemblage process. From this moment, I realized that all my previous hand built projects followed the same type of working process: first I prepared the structural components, next I prepared the detailed/press-molded elements, then I prepared a kind of choreography of all the movements that I had to do to create the sculptures, and finally, I assembled the sculptures, usually in a series of four, during an intense creative
weekend. In my attempt to remove forced meaning in my work, I have tried to work in a more spontaneous manner by removing the third step of my usual process; which led me to encounter a series of blockages. Here again, in Swirl-Exp. Version I, my knowledge of judo came to the rescue. The assemblage started with an *uchi-komi* imprints on a bed of clay, then cylindrical structures replaced the feet placement, thirdly curved walls linked the cylindrical structures, and finally, sections of coiled cylinders covered the curved walls to amplify the energy flow of the judo movement (fig. 5,6,7,8).

For the subsequent *Swirl-Exp. Version II*, the goal was to conceive a lighter version of raw clay swirls and to try to break away from the judo influence by incorporating them vertically into a steel structure (fig. 9). Secondly, this project allowed me to have a glimpse into the logistics, the quantity of material required, and the time needed for the creation of a raw clay installation outside my studio.

Building on *Swirl-Exp. Version II*, I had the chance to pursue my exploration of raw clay installations through my participation to the project *For You*; a performance and installation piece created over the course of a three-week intensive course. My biggest contribution in the show was the construction of a 9 feet tall raw clay figure for which I had to study the technique used by ceramic artist Shay Church (fig. 10, 11). The construction of this figure was demanding on many levels. The first challenge was obviously technical: it was a vertical composition in a limited space and needed to be secure for the viewers. But for me the most difficult and stressful element of this project was to be part of this group effort where I didn’t have control over everything and where the creative process was in a constant flux. I knew that the figure was part of a certain narrative, but the narrative itself and the meaning of the figure has never been clearly
stated. Overall, my participation in the project *For You* helped to part away with the idea of forced meaning and to let go some of the structures that I usually impose upon myself and upon my work.

This series of quick experiences in the expanded field of ceramics were extremely beneficial for me in order to investigate my real connection with clay and with the field of ceramic art. Somehow, I needed to “desacralize” the history and the process behind the medium. Even though my performance pieces were less physical and spontaneous than the ones from Valérie Delarue and Alexandra Engelfriet, I realized quickly that making a piece without thinking about structure, cracks, air pockets, wall thickness, drying, firing and glazing is very liberating.

As an art medium, clay has a density and a heaviness that is good for some type of work, but its characteristics also create limits. Along the way, I chose to stop fighting again the limits of clay and I decided that it would be more beneficial for me to explore other media and their specificity and limits.

### 2.2 Thesis

The work presented for this thesis is embedded within the parameters and the philosophy behind the encompassing *Bifurcation Point*. In that sense, they are not the result of an exhaustive research on one subject but extremely personal works and the result of a quick flow between a myriad of art experiences. However, the pieces are all linked by the dramatic experience of losing my father while completing this degree.
2.2.1 Outgrowth

The work, *Outgrowth*, is the first offspring of *Bifurcation Point*. It combines the final stage of my experiments with dipped cardboard in casting slip and my new interest in working with elements borrowed from sciences; such as the relation between fractal geometry and chaos theory. Current research suggests that chaotic behaviors, which are characterized by “the non-linear interactions between the different elements of a complex system”\(^4\), have a fractal form; an irregular shape with similar properties at different scales. A chaotic tendency refers to a system controlled by a set of predetermined rules. Sensitive to its initial condition, the trajectaries of its behavior can bifurcate rapidly. The close relation between fractals and chaos is studied in systems reaching a critical point in a transformation process (liquids, solids or gazes) and subject to power-law connections (relation between two quantities). If these terms (critical point and power-law) were once only relevant in physics, they are now used to describe a wider range of systems like DNA, city growth, and economics. In fact, it is now suggested that “each phase transition, at its critical point, has a fractal pattern”\(^5\) and the correlation between fractal and chaos, within a phase of transition, is everywhere.

In the narrative *Outgrowth-Trauma-Bruises*, *Outgrowth* becomes an abstract representation of the chaotic behavior of cancerous cells. But *Outgrowth* will not be attached indefinitely to this narrative. In a different setting, it will represent any other

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systems who combine fractals and chaos: a bleached coral reef, an invasion of fungi, etc. (fig. 12, 13).

*Outgrowth* includes two components: masses of dipped cardboard and wedges of pinched porcelain slabs. In the masses of dipped cardboard, the reference to fractal geometry is present in the repetition of the triangular channels and the reference to chaotic behavior is embedded in the firing technique. The first firing works with the gravity to create a fragile and stable mass and the second firing destroy this unity by going against gravity. The end result is an unpredictable collapse of the cardboard where the channels created by corrugated cardboard become a metaphor for the unstable cells in the body.

In the surrounding webs of porcelain, the reference to chaos and fractals are embedded in the visual complexity created by the repetition of units of perforated slabs. Each of these units were pinched and combined to create larger modules that are both organic and architectural. Here the pinching action has an importance. It refers to a constant compression of an outer force upon the inner matter. But clay has a memory; after each compression, the material itself answers by a small expansion. The frenetic pinching of the clay in *Outgrowth* becomes a play of dominance and resistance; an analogy on how exterior factors influence inner reactions.

The work, *Outgrowth*, was glazed using only one color; clear. This was done in order to see properly the pinching and to have the negative space and the shadows as part of the piece. Also, it allowed the process behind the piece to be apparent. Consequently, there was no attempt to remove what could be registered as mistakes: sand, wadding, kiln
wash, and stains from unwanted oxides on the shelves and carried on the pieces in the atmospheric firing.

The visual complexity is also created by subtle differences between the materials used: white stoneware casting slip for the cardboard pieces and English porcelain for the organic/architectural web. This complexity is also enhanced by variations within the porcelain itself; a variation from a cold bluish white to a warm creamy white caused by an unplanned and uneven reduction during the atmospheric firing.

There is a certain beauty to *Outgrowth*; a beauty which contradicts the destructive nature of what it represents. This beauty and the dynamic composition are there to give a sense of wonder. It is also a reminder that even a subtle change, like a subdivision of a cell, can lead to a devastation like any other natural forces like wind (tornados), water (floods), and earth (earthquakes).

### 2.2.2 Trauma

The work, *Trauma*, is a mutation of the project *The Box* which itself was influenced by a semester spent in the Art X department. Over the course of the semester Fall 2016, I shared a studio with Kellyann. Somehow, she is a victim of modern sciences; half of her DNA comes from a donor that she will never meet. Not knowing this half of her identity is a source of suffering for her; a suffering that I understood and for which I sympathize. Her quest to understand her identity was the subject of the terrarium she was building for her exit show for the end of that semester.

In parallel, after a brief remission, my father’s cancer returned and the healing options were few. I was tirelessly working on some paintings; a kind of distorted
cityscape with a lot of repetitive gestures, created just to restrain my brain from thinking about the drama. In that context, sharing a studio with Kellyann forced me to question my own identity and my relation with my father. In French, the verb “to know” can be translated with two different words. The term *savoir* corresponds to a theoretical understanding of a subject; and the verb *connaître* refers to a practical understanding of a subject. I come from a rural area in Canada where the knowledge is transmitted in the form of *connaître*. This transmission is done through observation; to a certain extent words are absent. I was raised with this absence of language. The difficulty to communicate, especially with my father, has always been a constant source of suffering for my siblings and me. It is something that I have always confronted with more or less success.

The project, *The Box*, was constructed by using the materials from Kellyann’s terrarium (fig. 9). In that case, the use of repurposed materials follows the same philosophy behind El Anatsui’s work: “each human’s hand leaves a charge on the material, like an invisible residue of DNA, these charges create an anonymous connection between the people related to the pieces”.6

The project, *The Box*, was created in order to make a performance piece that was more spontaneous than the previous clay work; a six-sided painting under the theme of “without gravity”. The construction of a 9’ x 5’ x 9’ confined space was partially inspired by the work *Corps au Travail* by Valérie Delarue and recalls, in some ways,

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“Gutai artists’ conception of the void as a space of freedom in which individual creativity could reign”.7

My father passed away two weeks after the construction of the space for The Box. Consequently, The Box became a place where I could exist only as energy and movement; a place where I could stop reactions of aversion in my thoughts and confront reality with a quiet mind. The action of throwing paint on the walls became a series of movements without conscious thoughts during the span of six months (fig. 14).

Gradually, moments of calmness made their way in The Box.; these moments took the form of flat geometric shapes painted on the fabric, opposing moments of aggression expressed by violently throwing paint on the walls. Once the wave of shock started to fade away, The Box became also a place to study painting compositions and different ways of making marks by using ropes, sticks, and squeeze bottles.

The video, Trauma, is a mutation of the project The Box; it is a reenactment of these private moments spent in that space.

In the first sequence, a red rectangle appears and seems to be floating in some kind of emptiness. In this rectangle, I appear; dipping ropes in an unseen bucket of paint (fig. 15).

Following the first gesture, the red rectangle, representing a wall of the box, fills the entire space on the screen. Gradually, we adjust to the accumulation of the gestural imprints on the wall with the different types of movements: ascendant spirals, vertical and horizontal slashes, and up, down, and circular motions (Fig 16). Periodically, a

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reference to the first sequence of the video is made as I appear as a ghost reenacting the gestures.

The sound included in the video is the recorded sound of me throwing paint using different tools. There is an offset between the visual and the audio; this offset is purposely used to give the impression of a space adjacent to the red wall. It also imitates the fact that I was working simultaneously on all the walls and that some marks appeared as a byproduct of gesture done on an adjacent wall.

The video also includes letters to Kellyann. These letters are a mix of thoughts; some of them occurred during the time Kellyann and I have spent together in the studio, but I didn’t share, and some are directed to the father, but were transmuted and redirected to Kellyann. They are a series of missed opportunities; the fruit of being raised in a world of silence where knowledge means practicality and is transmitted through observation.

The letters to Kellyann combined with the release of tensions by throwing paint have a therapeutic effect in the video. There is no subtlety in the colors during the minute of the video; the background is an intense red, the marks are black. As the writing appears and the text goes deeper into personal thoughts, the red loses its flatness; creating and openness to the exterior world. This openness allows the marks to be gradually absorbed; they become more and more translucent. Gradually, the pattern created by the paintings *Bruises* makes its way in the video; the pattern appears by absorbing the gestural marks faster than the surrounding space. The pattern is reversed to enhance the fact that *The Box* was an analogy to an inner space, an inner trauma (fig. 17).
2.2.3 Bruises

The work, *Bruises*, is another mutation of the project *The Box*; it is this confined space that was unfolded, dismantled, fragmented and refolded.

The installation starts with “I”. It is the only recognizable word in this sentence for my father. The words were transformed into frames; frames to contain the violence of *Trauma* (fig. 18). The violence is contained but it is partially revealed, partially hidden.

The fabric used for *Bruises* is the same used inside the *The Box*. It is the reverse side of the same fabric, without any alteration besides the fragmentation. To a certain extent, they are some kind of empty paintings; what is apparent is the paint that bled through the fabric, the folds and the holes created by the precarious installation of the fabric in *The Box* and the folds created by the violent actions of throwing paint on it. *Bruises* consist of thirteen paintings; the first row have three canvases and the five subsequent rows are formed by the interaction of two paintings. On the left side, the paintings are lighter and calmer; the fabric is partially saturated with gestural marks and the surfaced colors are mostly white and pink. On the right side, the paintings are more intense and violent; their surface is completely saturated with gestural marks and the apparent colors are grey, black and deep red (fig. 19).

The work, *Bruises*, is another absence of language, another missed opportunity to communicate with my father. In the narrative *Outgrowth-Trauma-Bruises*, the “I” marks
the beginning of healing process; a constant shifting between moments of acceptance and moments of denial.

3. What is “change”? 

I came to graduate school to change. Soon, I came to the conclusion that some aspects of my art practice will always be present while others could be modified. Somehow, the most difficult obstacle I have met in this process was to answer this question: what is “change”? 

If you take the example of a green leaf turning yellow, you will quickly notice that many phenomena are involved:\(^8\) 

1. **Difference**: The leaf is green, and then it is not green  
2. **Newness**: Yellow that did not exist before  
3. **Time**: There is a succession in time from green to yellow  
4. **Persistence (or sameness across time)**: The leaf was not replaced, it is the same leaf  
5. **Transition (or process)**: The green leaf becomes yellow. 

When I started my research on the notion of change, I was directly catapulted into Ancient Greece. It starts in around 650 BCE, with two pre-Socratic thinkers. On one side, there is Heraclitus, a philosopher of unceasing change; on the other side, there is Parmenides, the philosopher of changelessness.

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\(^8\) This section is a summary of: J. B. Kennedy, Space, Time and Einstein (Chesham: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2003), 79.
Parmenides once declared that there is no change, that everyday appearance of change around us is some sort of illusion.\footnote{Kennedy, \textit{Space, Time and Einstein}, 83.} From his radical solution to explain the phenomenon of change, two important metaphysical theories were developed. The first one was created around 600 BCE by several philosophers now called the Atomists. They explained the problem of change by simultaneously creating the notion of atoms and the notion of space: change is the motion of changeless atoms through a changeless void.\footnote{Kennedy, \textit{Space, Time and Einstein}, 85.} A counter-solution to both Parmenides and the Atomists was proposed by Aristotle (circa 384–322 BCE). Aristotle solved the problem of change and dismissed the notion of void by creating a metaphysic theory based on the idea of substances: all things are made of substances, all substances are surrounded by other substances, and all substances have potential properties. Change is when a potential property becomes an actual property.\footnote{Kennedy, \textit{Space, Time and Einstein}, 87.} This theory was influential for almost 2000 years, only interrupted by Newton, in 1687, with the publication of \textit{Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy}. Newton’s solution to the problem of change was the revival of the Atomist’s void and the invention of a mathematic of change.\footnote{Kennedy, \textit{Space, Time and Einstein}, 105.} But his notions about time and space were quickly confronted by Leibniz, who was a fervent of Aristotle, and were later demolished by Einstein with his theory of relativity. Einstein’s concepts were soon challenged by Bohr and the rise of the uncertainties of Quantum Physics.

So, what is change?

A very simple question; even banal, considering that change is all around us, all the time. But the phenomenon of change is complex. The debate started in Ancient

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\begin{itemize}
  \item \footnote{Kennedy, \textit{Space, Time and Einstein}, 83.}
  \item \footnote{Kennedy, \textit{Space, Time and Einstein}, 85.}
  \item \footnote{Kennedy, \textit{Space, Time and Einstein}, 87.}
  \item \footnote{Kennedy, \textit{Space, Time and Einstein}, 105.}
\end{itemize}
Greece is directly linked to the birth of Western Philosophy and to the creation of several theories (space, time, substance, atoms, void, etc.) that are still subjects of debate today. In a very unexpected manner, this research on the notion of change in December 2017 led me to the breaking point I was looking for. From this research, I have started a new set of inquiries: What is the lineage of Heraclitus? How is he reflected in the work of Nietzsche, Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty? What are the similarities and differences between Heraclitus and the teachings of Gautama Buddha on the concept of impermanence? Since they are parallels between Einstein and Parmenides; are there any links between the concept of impermanence with Heraclitus, Gautama Buddha, and Quantum Physics?

What I find fascinating about the confrontation between Parmenides and Heraclitus and the confrontation between Einstein and Bohr is the tension between two trains of thought: a tension between the notions of being and becoming; between the changelessness and the flux. Ultimately, the problem underlying the notion of change leads to an even more fundamental question: Is there an objective reality or not?

**Conclusion**

I have recently begun studying the dualistic nature of the being and the becoming. I have the feeling that it does not conflict with the original core of my art practice but supplement and expand the creative possibilities. It is a research that encompasses science, philosophy and spirituality, and in which the personal is comparable to the universal and vice-versa.
This breaking point has arrived a bit late in the course of this master degree, but I totally assume the responsibility. Somehow, I feel I am more comfortable with leaving this program at the beginning of a creative cycle rather than at a point of exhaustion.

From the experience of *Bifurcation Point*, I also collected interesting data on my creative process that I will have to acknowledge for the creation of any future body of work.

My ceramic teacher used to say that being an artist is to jump from a plane and build your own parachute on your way down. Thinking back to my last warrior series during my undergraduate studies and the moment where I finished the sculptures with a total dissatisfaction, I realize now that I never jumped from the plane. All my previous attempts of warriors were some kind of failures; there was always a huge gap between the original ideas and the final outputs. Somehow, in the concepts, I always found a way to forget about the existence of gravity, which led to a very chaotic execution of the pieces. In all my previous pieces, I had to use my forehead or my feet as emergency backup tools to compensate for a third arm that I do not possess but was urgently needed. The experience of my last warrior series was exactly the opposite. The sculptures were exactly like I had imaged. Everything from my vocabulary (erosion, fragment, accumulation of debris, stele-like structures) was there and the technical challenges conquered.

What I have learned from *Bifurcation Point* is that my creative process follows a certain tension between determinacy and indeterminacy; the same kind of tension found within the notion of change in science, in philosophy and in spirituality and for which I have a new fascination for. I understand now that I need a certain structure to start a
project, but this structure has to lead me to a critical point where I will balance in indeterminacy and work in the flux. If I follow the structure for this entirety of the project and there are no signs of my personal struggle embedded in the piece, like it was the case in my last warrior series, I feel no connection with it. If I don’t have a structure to start with, I quickly meet some blockages like it was the case in *Body-Mov.-Exp.* and *Swirl-Exp. Version I*.

Another finding is the performative aspect in my work that has always been there, but I have always denied it because I was constantly misjudging performance art. Before, it took the form of planned choreographies and intense weekends of assembling my sculptures. At this point, I am more interested in creating works inspired by the art process of Valérie Delarue and Alexandra Engelfriet; with projects that exist simultaneously in different media or temporary works that feed a subsequent body work. From *Bifurcation Point*, I understand that it is now time to incorporate more types of gesture in my body memory: probably by taking contemporary dance classes or by studying the spiritual foundations in martial arts which I am already familiar with.

Finally, prior to graduate school, I never considered myself an artist; I don’t get a lot of inspiration from other works of art, I don’t like art theories or all the types of “isms”, and I usually have low affinity with other artists. *Bifurcation Point* was a very unsettling experience. By constantly studying new media and different disciplines, I had to continuously readjust my views on the art world. Somehow, along the way, I understood that I could create my own definition of what it is to be an artist. For me, I need to be surrounded by sciences, sports, and spirituality in order to feel complete, but
now I know that I need art to create bridges between all the poles of my existence, and this my definition of being an artist.

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