

# LONG TERM (PRACTICED) ENGAGEMENT

By Oliver Lutz

I am interested particularly in the type of engagement that is obtained only through regular and long term practice. It is my belief that the kind of engagement that I experience through my own practice is distinctly different than the engagement that I associate with entertainment or even the act of listening. Furthermore, I have had a hunch that this kind of engagement does not necessarily result in a physically aroused state as one might expect of a theatergoer watching an action movie. I suggest reading an earlier narrative written by the author in conjunction with this class which outlines the experience of a typical painting session. The narrative is located in the author's first assignment response for the class.

## HYPOTHESIS

My hypothesis is that deep practiced engagement does not necessary result in immediate measurable skin conductivity and that the reverse may be true. For instance, certain learned practices that involve intense focus may produce relaxation as oppose to excitement.

## THE EXPERIMENT

The experiment consisted of a 4.5 hour studio painting session during which video footage was captured simultaneously with skin-conductivity readings to see if there is a correlation between my activities, appearance and skin conductivity. The skin conductivity readings were recorded using a Bluetooth Galvactivator that transmitted to a local laptop equiped with appropriate software and scripts. Existing scripts were manipulated to include a time-stamp for each data entry because the device has a variable transmit rate.

## FINDINGS

Initial review of the results have revealed some interesting findings. The below charts are a composite of conductivity data and time of occurance relative to the approximate start of video taped footage (1 sec. accuracy). Where activities have been analyzed, labels have been added directly above the occurance which is marked by a pink circular node. To view these graphs more closely, click on the desired graph. Initial analysis of the data provides **two insights into engagement associated with painting**.

1) Firstly, the overall trend from the begining to the end of the session suggests that generally speaking, the further I got into "the zone", the more relax I became. This is evident int eh overall downward slope of the data.

2) Secondly, when scrutinizing certain sequences, it is clear that the **moments of most intense focus resulted in a decline in skin conductivity**. For instance, while painting a detailed area of the picture, skin conductivity reading consistantly dropped until the moment I stepped away from the picture to either analyze it or to visit the palette in which case skin conductivity reading would rise sharply. In contrast, moments during which I step back from the painting result in an increase of skin conductivity. This patterned activity resulted in a regulated line that rises sharply (when occupied with assessing the image, paint preparation, and brush cleaning)and falls slowly (while painting). These findings suggest that deep focus can have a calming affect; while engagement in entertainment and reactive processes may be measurable by an increase in skin conductivity, processes such as detail-oriented crafts may in fact result in the opposite, or a decline in skin conductivity.

This is most clearly evident in the video footage that correlates to the center part of the second graph (as indicated by a box drawn in the center of the graph). The color of the video has been manipulated in order to indicate skin conductivity levels. High skin conductivity is indicated with yellow (warm) hues while low skin conductivity is indicated by blue (cool) hues. Notice that conductivity decreases (indicated by cool hue) with prolonged

periods of focus whereas activities such as assessing the painting, changing brushes, or visiting the palette result in an increase of skin conductivity (indicated by warm hue).

## VIDEO

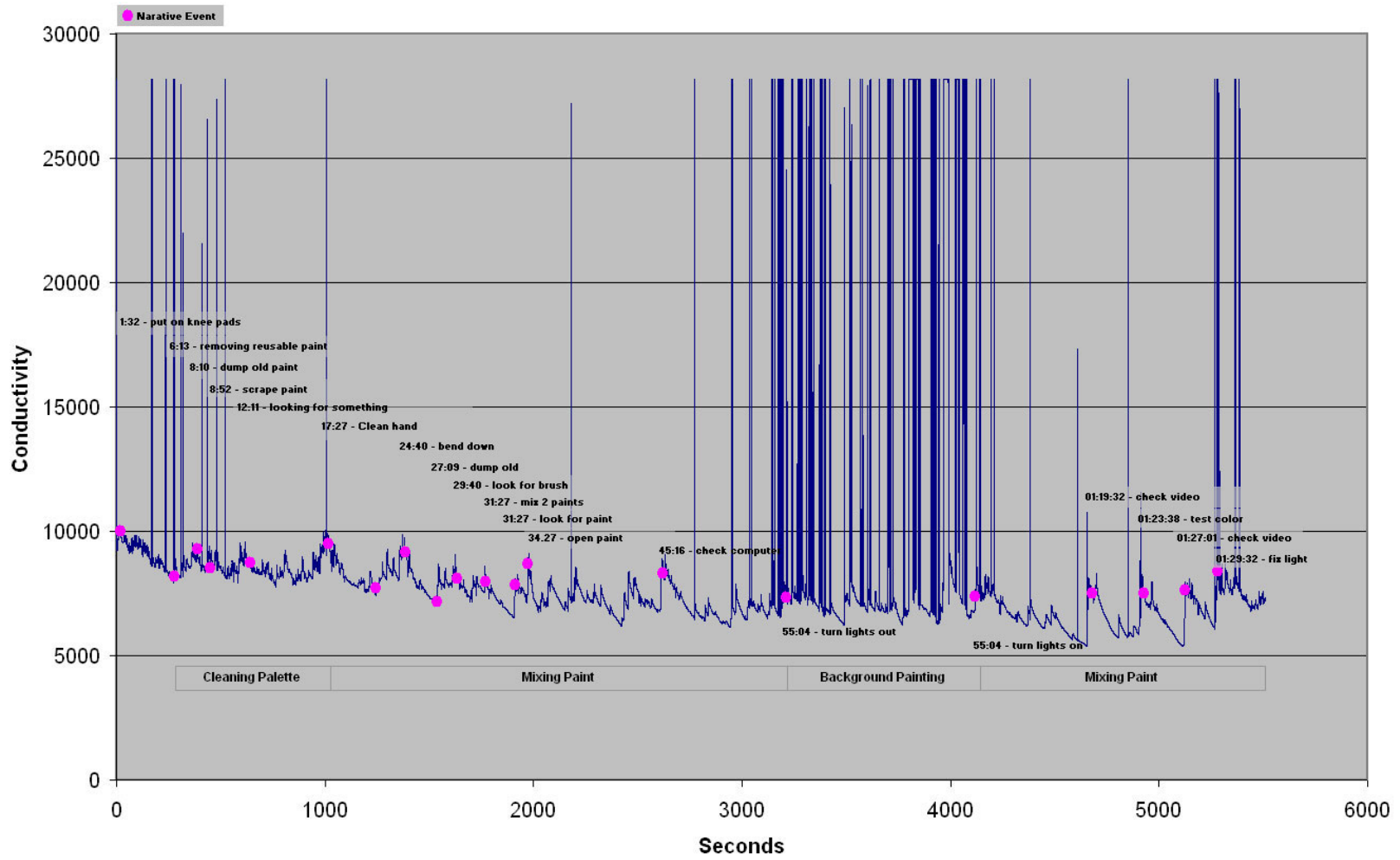
[View Video](#)

Demonstration of typical sequence in recorded video:

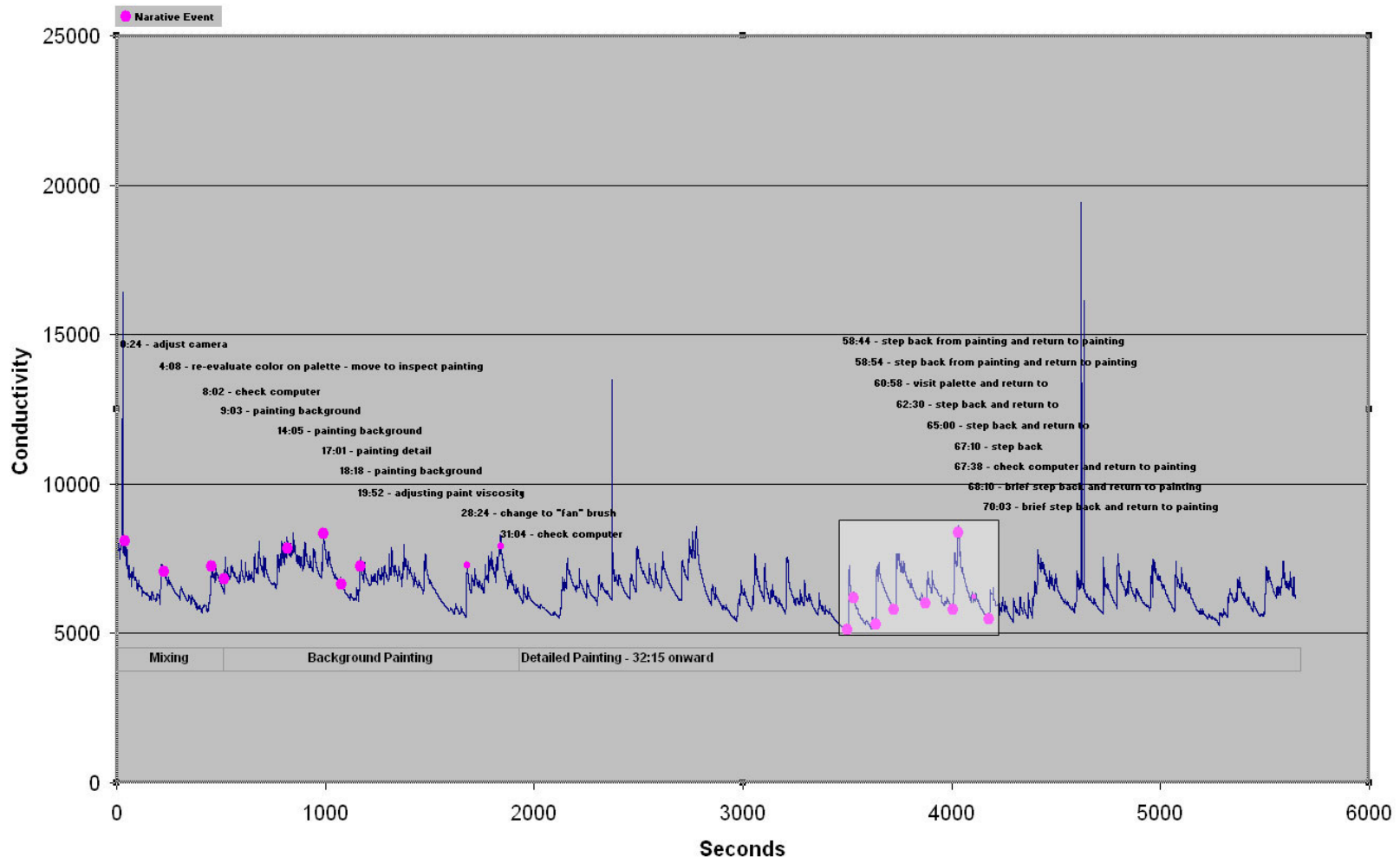
			
<p>Skin conductivity rises when stepping away from the painting. This is indicated by the yellow hue of the video image. In my own experience I regard these moments as "breaks" from intense states of concentration.</p>	<p>Skin conductivity drops as I begin to paint again. This is indicated by the greenish hue of the video image.</p>	<p>Skin conductivity drops further with prolonged painting. This is indicated by the blue hue of the video image. In my own experience, the longer I maintain direct physical engagement with a painting, the more focused I feel.</p>	<p>Skin conductivity rises again when stepping away from the painting again as indicated by the yellow hue of the video image.</p>

## GRAPHS

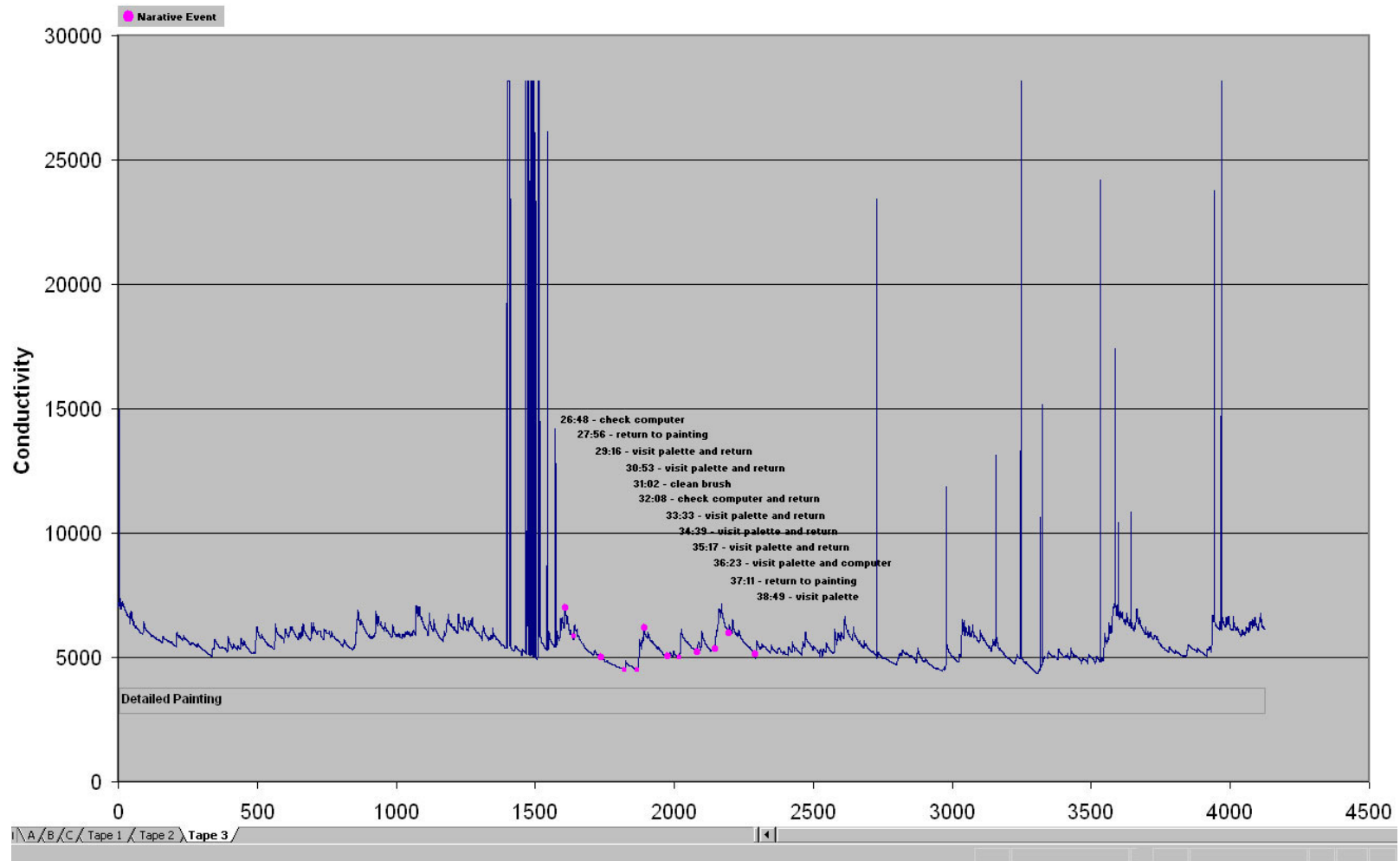
# Tape 1 (90 minutes)



# Tape 2 (90 minutes)



### Tape 3 (90 minutes)



**NEXT STEPS**

Additional video footage will be analyzed and posted. While the above video has been produced and manipulated manually, eventually it would be useful to do the same programatically, using a data-driven approach (for instance using a "timer" function in Flash).