

People I Know



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Attestation of Authorship

"I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning."

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My husband Mark Phillimore; you are amazing, reading my work, supporting me in my passion for my work and being there for our children. I have to mention our children, who have enriched my daily life and therefore this project; Kelly, Marc, Rhys, Grant, Drew, Shannon, and Erin. Mum you have never said no when I needed you throughout my project; thank you for your love and support.

And last but not least to the 9 participants in this project, I recognize and give tribute to your gifts of personal information and time. You are all so interesting and challenging and I have enjoyed your participation immensely; thank you.

Abstract

People I Know is a conceptual visual arts project which involves collecting and archiving information with the intention of extending the notion of portraiture and identity beyond the frame of the body. The collection is a body of collaged material that is a substitute for the body of the sitter, characterizing them. My practice methodology is a combination of collage and collection which allows for a wide field of research and an interdisciplinary approach. These works could be considered case studies of people I know; in object, text, and sculpture; brought together in installation.

Introduction

What is captured and similarly what is absent has always intrigued me in both portraiture and the notion of identity and self. The concept of identity as a constructed embodiment gives a depth of meaning to our individual lives that bears resemblance to, and in spite of lineage, is persistent in its idiosyncratic features. What is disclosed and what remains hidden adds character, depth and mystery, giving our lives a poetic quality. This structure of self definition leads me to look at ways to define different identities by means of a questionnaire, installation and sculptural practice, using objects, images and texts. Portraiture has played a significant role in this project and I have established a rationale that explores comparable qualities between identity and portraiture. The overarching essence of this project produced a questionnaire and selected 9 people, who each filled out a questionnaire giving personal information. I explore, interpret, compare and frame ideas of individuality, bringing forth notions of self via each character's uniqueness. *People I Know* culminates in an installation of sculptures that represent each sitter's idiosyncrasies, a bricolage; of objects as stand-ins for aspects of identity.

'Teasing out, *Identity and its Idiosyncrasies*', is self-explanatory, coaxing out aspects of identity. I look at the surrealist writings of Georges Bataille to describe the ambiguity present in descriptions of the self. This brings into play surrealist methodology typical of Bataille's writing, where 'no dominant reading' or 'no singular meaning' overrides another (Mical,2005,p.170). I also look to the works of Tracey Emin and Frances Hodgkins to explore different ways of revealing aspects of identity.

I bring out peculiarities or obscure personality traits of the sitters by reinterpreting them in objects in 'Read between the lines, *Object Experience*'. To read between the lines suggests that a layered dialogue is present. I look to the part object as explored by Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind E. Krauss who discuss Alberto Giacometti's work *Suspended Ball* and the notion of part object to assist the understanding of obscurity and subjectiveness in translation and individuality.

'Out of line, *A View of Installation and Collage*', offers debate on the complexity of our existence, what makes us distinct, levels of everyday complexity, in which interpretation, almostness and partiality play regular parts. How do titles play a part in my work? I also look into installation and how the gallery space isolates and exaggerates the encounter with each other and the work we view there. I use definitions or ideologies of the gallery space and disciplines to communicate ideas as part of the work. I do not substantiate a break down between disciplines within this text but I do enforce a dialogue to take place about translation, knowledge and new ideas brought about by engaging in methods of collage and collection.

Please note that the works in figures 7, 8, 14, 17, 22, 23, 24, 36 are unfinished at the point of writing this exegesis.

Teasing out

Identity and its Idiosyncrasies

Self Definition and the Questionnaire

What remains concealed or obscure and that which is evident in portraiture and the notion of identity and self is a fascinating phenomenon to contemplate. Self definition can resemble individual lineage; that is our hereditary characteristics, how we look, including status, upbringing and culture. However each of us constructs or collects worldly objects and notions. They indicate our preferences, and they make us unique, giving significance, force and purpose to our lives. What is disclosed and what remains hidden adds character, depth and mystery giving our lives a poetic quality. This construction of self definition has led me to look at ways to define different identities by means of a questionnaire and through installation and sculptural practice.

I began this project by composing a questionnaire over a 6 month period; researching and testing to determine exactly what I wanted from the participants. I established that the ideal questionnaire would produce lists of words in response to each question in relation to the individual's identity.

With their knowledge, I invited participants or sitters to fill out my questionnaire. In it they were asked to write lists in response to questions, resulting in texts or dossiers that built a personal 'portrait;' a collection designed for the purpose of a visual arts research project. I am entrusted with this personal information, which I reveal to the viewers of my work using a series of cues, metaphors and innuendo. I have protected the individual identities of my sitters through use of fictitious names, chosen by the sitters themselves.

This collection of questionnaires became the foundation for the visual texts produced in the studio. By combining questionnaire-oriented case studies and collections of objects specific to each sitter, the result is a broad field of research that proposes a dialogue between visual and linguistic texts.

Important to my project is the manner in which each participant has translated the questions as complex intersections of given and acquired characteristics. The project has reinterpreted that information into conceptual portraits extending the concept of identity beyond the frame of the body, yet still

contained within the notion of the portrait. I am also interested in challenging the frame of the portrait, or at least its traditions, transporting the work beyond the actual body of the sitter, into an evocative, partial interpretation.

Generating part information gives grounds for decentring or displacement which, for the onlooker, is a challenge repeated in the work again and again. It does this by extending the portrait outside the traditional frame and repositioning those boundaries using text, object, spatial control and unexpected juxtapositions. To qualify traditional frame, I mean a composed likeness of the body of the sitter, which is a relatively tangible stable form and view of the person. The substitute is a series of objects with a more fragmented, ambiguous view, which accentuates changeability and obscure aspects of identity that are the quirky nature of the individual.

Part information and fragmentation can be disorientating and arrest meaning, but hopefully it is engaging, as I would like the viewer to be inclined to search out meaning. What does the work make them feel; think of; what does comparison offer; does it help to differentiate dispositions between sculptures? When we look at each other, all is not immediately apparent; we have to put effort into getting to know one another's quirks. The work mimics this process by requiring effort from the viewer, I feel it is revealing in its obscurity.

The Portraits, Disclosure and Objects as Portrait

People I Know employs the notion of the portrait as a framework to contain and a means to examine identity construction. My approach to self identity shares some concerns with portraiture; I use the portrait as a means to examine distinguishing facets of individual sitters. The roles that I take as the artist are also key in the development of the work; these include director, interpreter and, as a result, author.

Portraits are significant documents in that they give opportunity for historical appreciation and understanding, but the potential for propaganda contained within the framework of a portrait reflects the views and interests of those advocating certain ideas – such as artist, sitter and patron. Portraits of leaders are often used as symbols of state, brands and political savvy. I believe that we individually construct our identity in a similar way to create our own

brands, often concealing our idiosyncrasies; we portray ourselves in certain ways to make those around us believe or see certain details and conceal others. This concealment establishes the idea of partialness; this concept is another key point in my research, and it is this that also engages us in the portrait.

Portia Minortia ^{Figure 2} is one work in the series that I produced as a first response to the completed questionnaires. I isolated the answers, as a printed list and framed it. The resulting works are texts that give examples of identity construction, positioning themselves conceptually as portraits and dossiers of each sitter. This text series is confessional in that it brings out peculiarities or obscure personality traits of the sitters. This is possibly due to the nature of the personal information, revealed by the participant but protected by the anonymity of pseudonym.

The name of this work *Portia Minortia* is appropriate to the work as this is also the fictitious name of the sitter who provided the alias and the framed text in their responses to the questionnaire. The alias that each sitter has chosen is what they feel best describes their identity. I have built a relationship with each of the sitters through their aliases.



Figure 2 *PORTIA MINORTIA*
Carolyn Lawrence
(2007)



Figure 3 Installation: Text portraits background,
portrait objects on table.
Carolyn Lawrence
(2007)

Tracey Emin's work disturbs and compels the reader into a series of emotions created by the sensation of what feels like full disclosure on the part of the artist. This reaction is comparable to the responses from the viewers of my project texts such as *Portia Minortia*. I observed the reaction of the spectators; many readers were initially curious then surprised, becoming engaged in the type of disclosure offered by the work, which felt very personal and certainly not what you would expect to learn about someone from first acquaintance. There are clear distinctions between Emin's works and my own; my work is not about myself directly, but about the sitters who are protected by pseudonyms and therefore they do not completely expose themselves.

Tracey Emin is almost always portrayed as a Diana-esque *femme tragique*. It's rare to get a glimpse of the happy, successful, confident person she's become. *'I've got it all'*, is a transient crowning glory: shameless, two-fingers up to her

critics. Emin's triumphed over all, and has money up the whazoo to boot! (Saatchi,2003-2008)



Figure 4 I'VE GOT IT ALL
Tracey Emin
(2000)



Figure 5 OH YES
Tracey Emin
(2005)

Emin's *I've got it all* (2000), and *Oh Yes* (2005), are two self portraits that show the artist in frequently unflattering poses, often sexual. Even where Emin is not represented by photograph or video images, they are still very much portraits that aim to expose herself by way of the work. Emin's practice is interdisciplinary with burlesque humour and recurring wisecracks. It performs a part with a lack of subtlety that is gutsy in a judgmental art world, but which honors the subtle and considers the indefinable clever. Emin's work is largely autobiographical and performs in a similar way to reality TV where the viewer is subjected to often crude exposure of a person's life in front of live cameras.

Emin's work interests me as it does not gloss over the facets of her personality that most people would conceal, but instead embraces difficulties and unpleasant experiences and preferences along with the good, respectable and amusing. You could say that *Portia Minortia* and any other works produced from the questionnaires in my project operate in a similar way, but are also very different from Emin in their concealment and conceptual orientation as lists. Emin's works are of a confessional nature blatantly

exposing her personal life in a crass and carnal manner. This includes using materials from her everyday such as soiled sheets, business cards, cigarette packets and other personal debris and matter. As I have mentioned before, seemingly more is revealed by the participants in my work because they are protected by pseudonym. This creates a portrait that expands beyond the public face, exposing private facets but not revealing their actual person.

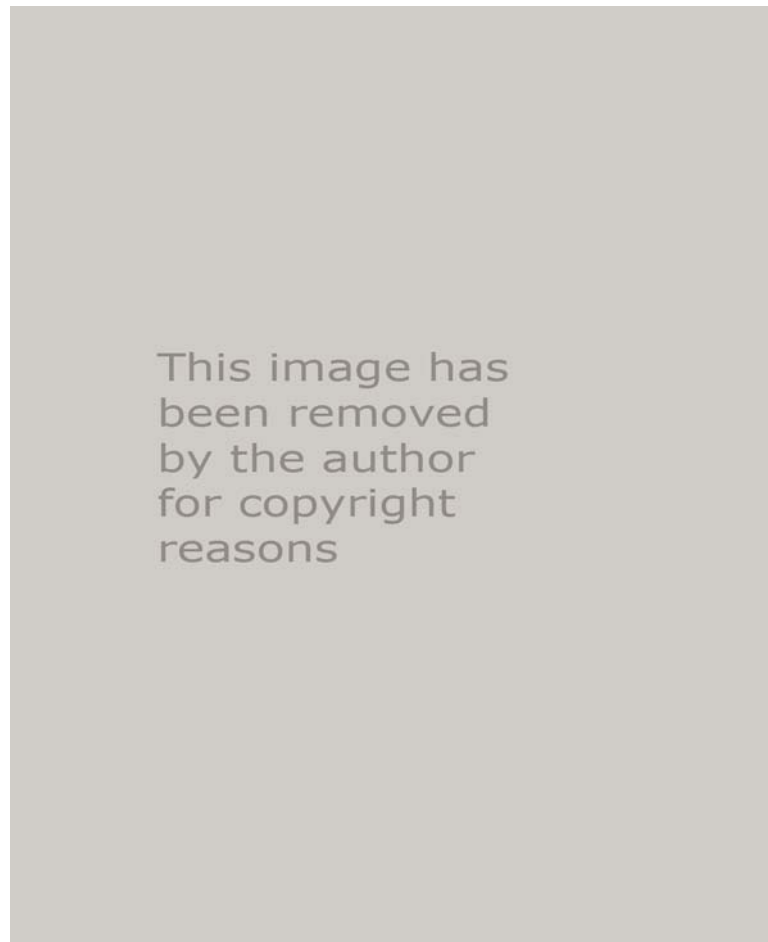


Figure 6 *SELF PORTRAIT: STILL LIFE*
Frances Hodgkins
(1935)

This self portrait by New Zealand artist Frances Hodgkins communicates her character by means of objects. The evidence of the individual behind this work lies in what is disclosed, its epoch, stylistic form, the colour and the objecthood of the contents. The power evident in this work lies in its ambiguity; which leaves the reader needing more as it provides only a glimpse, of perhaps favorite objects. And so the force in the work is desire; what is not revealed.

She never painted a traditional self-portrait, but instead created highly individual, semi-abstracted groups of favorite objects – scarves, shoes, belts, jewellery and flowers, which provide what today seems like a Post-modern metaphor for the self. This strategy of self-representation was very unusual for this period. (Leitmotif,2005)

The pictorial frame and the background create a boundary or skin to contain the features to the body of the work. The painting announces itself as a likeness of Frances Hodgkins; *Self portrait: still life* is what the artist feels adequate to describe herself.

The composition of the portrait is a controlled field; it gives clues and exhibits as much as it conceals the sitter's details. Motives for the control around what is and is not revealed are dictated by the artist's interpretation and observations. Erving Goffman writes, 'when an individual appears before others he will have many motives for trying to control the impression they receive of the situation' (Goffman,1973,p.15). This is pivotal to my project in that as individuals we create and control how we present ourselves each day. I take the concepts of identity creation and filter them through a questionnaire, which is then sorted and directed through additional filters; myself as artist, the portrait, found objects, part objects, text, installation, the gallery and finally the viewer. Reducing the subject by these filters shifts the identity of the sitter to an elevated or abstract level in which the work does not merely refer to visual nonfigurative representation but to a concept that is bound by a poetic integrity.

Identity

Both identity and portraiture frame and contain an impression of the person represented; they are both spaces to explore and impart visual rationalization for personal and symbolic definition. The work of art's final removal from the sitter's identity comes with the end reading which is dependent on the cognitive and historical framework of the viewer/interpreter, and is influenced by the author.

The process of self definition is transformative; we look to the collective to describe ourselves and to make comparisons and adjustments. 'Identities are

boundless and refuse to be subjected to simple cattle branding tactics; today, maybe much more so than before, as time and space keeps on shrinking. Localities and symbols cannot keep up with what we are, and even less so, do justice to what 'we' once were' (Eksteen,2005).

This makes any exploration of identity complex as we are constantly changing our skins slipping between signifiers and defying outright definition. Implications of this coincide with interpretation and understanding of one another and in the act of the representation of our individual identities. We have time, age and opinion to comprehend, as they perform as signifiers not of what we want to become but from which we want to create. In the creation of a portrait artists have a slight advantage as they are outside the body and lineage of the sitter; they are the observers of the sitter at a given time. Whereas for the individual, the difficulty of creating identity might be located in the concept of formlessness or the 'inform', for many artists, the force of the image *is* the 'informe'. Bataille describes the informe as a state of being at odds to describe, and that which avoids a formal or single explanation.

'Informe' is a term invented by the sometime surrealist writer Georges Bataille to describe the delicate, oscillating interplay between opposite conditions that undermines clarity and erodes or contaminates status. For Bataille, the informe is at the center of the surrealist project. As in a dream, no dominant reading coalesces, no singular meaning nor formal quality is stipulated, attempts at classification are thwarted, and signified is wrenched away from signifier. (Mical,2005,p.170)

In my own work, what can sometimes appear disparate or formless is actually drawn from concrete associations, that are collaged together individualising the visual outcomes. In practice each individual questionnaire acts as the adhesive merging together subtleties, idiosyncrasies, significant texts and objects. Together they are a platform to stimulate a study of the cause and effect objects have in our lives.¹

¹ I am aware of the discussion of the 'parts of the machine' instigated by Roland Barthes in his description of George Bataille's chains of signifiers, and that the part object stems from

Melanie Klein's discussion of the infant and the instability of the human form, but for the purpose of this exegesis have decided to avoid further discussion on these views.

Read between the lines

Object Experience



Figure 7 *NORMAN FOO*
I HATE THE TASTE OF DANDELIONS
AKA CHARLES BIGLEY
Carolyn Lawrence
(2009)

Finding Out

People I Know is located in the space of representation of the enigmatic and the poetic; a stacked bricolage; an identity. The series of sculptures are portraits; they operate with the poetics of objects, fragmentation and construction of meaning via bricolage, revealing information through a series of clues, metaphors and innuendo.

What information do I need to provide and how can I put together a series of objects that correspond to listed aspects of a character's personality? I have a fascination with locating the individual's idiosyncrasies and tend toward

lateral interpretations that give a reading that is strongly informed by my own 'readings of people'. I want the work to propose a sense of discovery for the viewer by way of a layered dialogue.

In *Teasing out*, I talk of identity being a constructed means of self representation, and so it seems natural to me to look at compartmentalisation and fragmentation as a means to recognise and distinguish eccentricities that impart our individuality.

Finding out what makes individuals' 'quirks', is a matter of teasing out distinctions and anomalies, reading between the lines. In order to recapture the idea of 'finding out' I aim to tempt the viewer to do the same, by investigating and trying to make meaning from what information is before them. The balance between obscurity and revelation is a crucial factor in keeping the viewer engaged. If there is too much information there is a possibility of illustrative 'wholeness,' which only results in closing down the work.



Figure 8 *CLEOPATRA MEDORA*
Carolyn Lawrence
(2009)

The objects operate mutually in each work to align different registers, challenging a unified text. How do we as individuals frame and separate ourselves from the act of encounter with each other? Part of this question

needs resolving in the installation of the finished works, but a large component is in the choice of objects and the composition itself of each portrait.

Fragment, the Poetic and Almostness

I collage together pieces of information from many sources, constructed, found and part objects. I use readymade objects that offer the common ground of everyday experience to locate the viewer; objects of familiarity help us to navigate through the work. They are markers of time and feelings, and can connect us with ideas. In contrast to this at times the viewer is in unfamiliar territory due to unusual juxtapositions, objects that are harder to distinguish, and part objects, but still with ideas imbued from a recognisable source.

For the viewer then, herein lies the clue to reading the work. The effort in getting to know someone is often a discerning process but, in the end there is no one impression, no ultimate sense, it is opinionated. Humour and indulgence for poetic interpretation on making and viewing the work is a necessary acquirement; each work is quite individual.



Figure 9 *Magda*
(2007)



Figure 10 *Amarantha*
(2007)



Figure 11 *Norman Foo
aka Charles Bigley*
(2007)

The fragment, the part object that references an elusive 'something,' an almostness, is debated in *Formless: A User's Guide* by Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind E. Krauss. It looks to Bataille's 1926 *Histoire de l'oeil* (The Story of the Eye) and Roland Barthes' analysis of this text (Bois & Krauss, 1997, p.152-161). In *Histoire de l'oeil*, desire takes on the form of lust, breaking taboos and shocking the reader with text packed with metaphorical and pornographic reverie. This has been critiqued by many due to the questions its contents bring forth. While disturbingly deviant and sexually graphic, the writing is

poetically charged with textual imagery of what Barthes describes as, 'perfectly spherical metaphor: each of the terms is always the signifier of another (no term is simple signified), without ever being able to stop the chain' (Barthes, 1963; Knight, 2000, p. 242).

Histoire de l'oeil operates in a similar way to Giacometti's *Suspended Ball* in that it does not have a conclusion; it has no ultimate sense; no one meaning. Bois and Krauss bring these works together in the chapter *Part Object* (Bois & Krauss, 1997, p. 154). The part object is forever in the throws of interpretation; it shifts between recognition and unfamiliarity, never complete and so perpetually sought. *Post-Impressionism to World War II* by Debbie Lewer considers part objects and defines the term 'extraplactic'. 'The objects depend only on the amorous imagination of each person and are extra plastic' – that is, outside formal or aesthetic considerations' (Lewer, 2006, p. 390).

Surrealism, Part object, hand and readymade

I recognise that my work could be based historically in surrealism, due to curious juxtapositions that bring together objects that are disparate and in the positioning of the readymade object. I find Salvador Dali's use of readymade objects especially humorous; his juxtapositions allure my consideration, revealing many narratives and implications via strange combinations. But, unlike the surrealists, my work is not 'a revolt against all forms of realism' but, like the surrealists, it is 'intended to be unsettling and to produce a frisson of excitement as the artist and reader come into sudden contact with the marvellous.' (Macey, 2000, p. 372). To describe what I consider the 'marvellous' in my own work is to engage with the aspects that interest me most: it is the moment of transformation through discovery and creation; it is the clarity, expressiveness and beauty when a combination of objects become fluent.

Surrealist works feature the element of surprise, unexpected juxtapositions and non sequitur; however many Surrealist artists and writers regard their work as an expression of the philosophical movement first and foremost, with the works being an artefact. ('Transubstantiation', 2008)

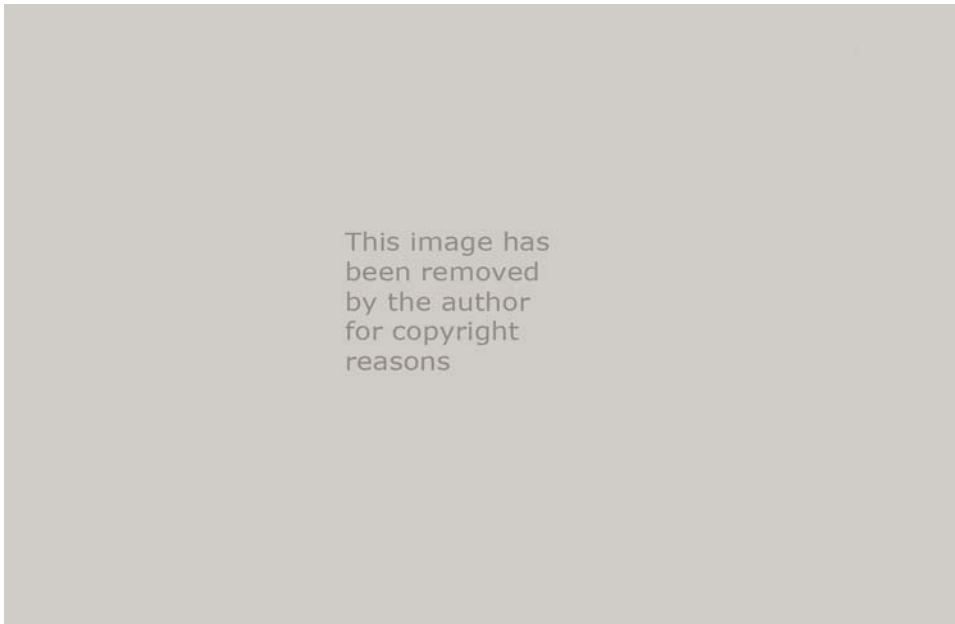


Figure 12 *LOBSTER TELEPHONE*
[APHRODISIAC TELEPHONE]
Salvador Dali
(1936)

Lobster Telephone holds a unique association to my practice and is symbolic of my interest in objects, art and meaning. I enjoy the bizarre juxtaposition of the lobster and phone and the curious line and balance of the lobster to the earpiece. Dali drew a close analogy between food and sex. The artwork asks, 'how would it feel holding it to your ear?'

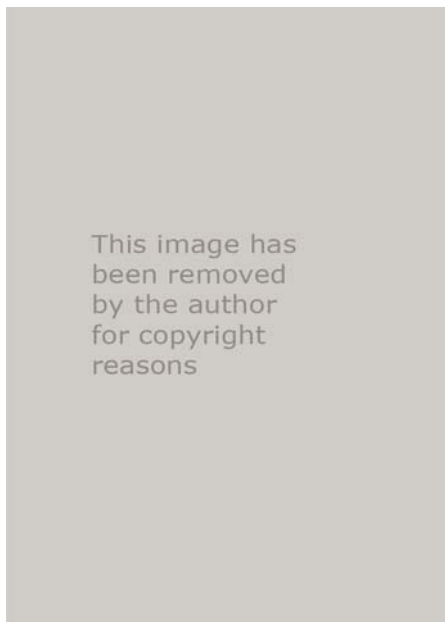


Figure 13 *SUSPENDED BALL*
Alberto Giacometti
(1930-1931)

The almost kiss, forbidden fruits and part versus whole associations are in Giacometti's interaction in *Suspended Ball*. The work allows the imagination of the viewer to physically experience the evocative 'almost'. I say almost due to the forms proximity to one another that causes a sensation like that of physical connection or an 'almostness'; nearly touching. The objects are on an axis where, given any movement, the suspended object would act as a pendulum and make contact with the fixed object. The tension is created in this work by there being no kinetic mechanism to make this action, but the possibility of movement is set up by a basic understanding of the axis that the objects are on. This then triggers for the viewer a lack, but also potential (of movement) which describes 'almost'.

Lack is repeated in the objects' indeterminacy that bears resemblance to fruit and sexual organs containing body sensuality, and it is seemingly cushioned by the curve of the support and framed by the scaffold. Where lack is present it is reasonable to assert the presence of desire; in the 'part object' and in 'almostness,' it is inherent that the condition of lack is never satisfied. Thus *Suspended Ball* endorses the feeling of lack – which is about desire, provoking paradoxical torment in the viewer. This logical process of engagement by the viewer, finding no conclusion or ultimate sense, gives reason to describe the forms as 'extraplactic.'

Formless: A User's Guide, discusses *Suspended Ball* in relation to the part object, the extraplactic, informe and the oscillation between desire and lack in its interchangeability. Dali reacted to *Suspended Ball* by saying that it engages with 'means proper to sculpture' and, 'The objects of symbolic function have no place for formal concerns' (Bois & Krauss, 1997, p.154). Which I interpret to mean that Dali interpreted *Suspended Ball* as having a formal quality and not necessarily requiring poetic interpretation, and can be understood logically or aesthetically, which therefore has no place in the surrealist paradigm.² The surrealist object seems to unite imagination with

² I feel Dali has been severe in his judgement of *Suspended Ball* as it has the ability in its physicality to shift between one explanation and another; this does engage the imagination and so is not just occupied with formal concerns such as aesthetical and sculptural. Yes it does also engage with formal sculptural

interpretation; it is an embodiment of imagination, it offers and is a product of poetic interpretation.

The action suggested by *Suspended Ball* is also compared with *Histoire de l'oeil* by Krauss in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (1986,p.63). Krauss compares the latent motion apparent both in the objects and fragmentation in *Suspended Ball*, and the metaphor embedded in the narrative of *Histoire de l'oeil* creating subjectivity thereby keeping the interpretation of each work in eternal motion.



Figure 14 Detail – *FOR SHITS AND GIGGLES
LEAP FROG GREEN PORTIA MINORTIA'S THE NAME BRO*
Carolyn Lawrence
(2009)

How does this notion of the part object, together with concepts of almostness, formlessness and the extraplastic, present in my work? I find that in my interpretation of a character sometimes no known or specific object can epitomize a certain aspect of that person, and so I create an object to represent a similar register. Often it is part of a found object or part of something remade, such as a cast knee as in *For shits and giggles leap frog*

concerns but that can be said about most surrealist work if strict critiques are followed. If formal concerns were to be left behind in surrealism then surely - the means proper to painting would also have been left behind. I am suggesting that Dali may have unwittingly placed himself into contradictory territory here and perhaps should have considered painting unreality with less realism and on less formal grounds.

green Portia Minortia's the name bro, or the wooden pebbles in *Norman Foo I hate the taste of dandelions, aka Charles Bigley*.

With no one overarching recognized system from which to qualify, such as an image of the actual sitter, or from where the information contained within the work comes, the viewer is left to make and remake sense by translation of what is before them. In past critiques of *Norman Foo I hate the taste of dandelions, aka Charles Bigley* some viewers want to touch part of the work, such as the wooden stones, to make sense of what they see. They try to string together a dialogue based on juxtapositions of objects and what the objects singularly indicate. The discussion does not rest or conclude, and so there is irritation to qualify, provoking a sensation of lack. *Cleopatra Medora* disturbs a reading of irritation like *Suspended Ball*, which motivated Maurice Nadeau to write,

Now, everyone who has seen this object function has felt violent and indefinable emotion doubtless having some relation with unconscious sexual desires. This emotion has nothing to do with satisfaction, rather with irritation, the kind provoked by the disturbing perception of a lack. (Bois & Krauss, 1997, p.152)

Cleopatra Medora is a table sitting on a velvet mat that is a mass of phallic, sensualised mounds and knobs; it is fetishised by flock (or flocking a velvet-like surface). Missing a leg it leans on a perfume box giving a sensation of incongruity. It aims to create an unsettling self-consciousness, physicality and unease brought forth by unfamiliar objecthood, and through this it irritates with lack.

Ultimate Sense

The idea of finding no *ultimate sense* in both of these works instils the viewer with a heightened sense of lack, triggering a journey that is circular and ongoing (Bois & Krauss, 1997, p.154). For my own work this idea sets in motion a concept that I call 'dynamic critique'. Dynamic critique begins for me in the making and continues in viewing the work where it becomes the viewer's role; it is the first impression through to the time when the viewer walks away or stops thinking about the work.

The part object and the absence of a privileged term facilitates a tension to come into being. This force is best described as the level of engagement the work demands, the process by which we try to make sense of it.³ The part object encourages the oscillation between ideas and imagination, as discussed with *Suspended Ball* earlier. Too much information shuts down the potential for continuance in the work and creates conclusions. Information becomes blurred by the part object and, as Dewey describes, 'to the traditional "cat in a strange garret", everything is blurred and confused; the wanted marks that label things so as to separate them from one another are lacking' (Dewey, 1997, p. 121). When we find that there is no ultimate sense or one way to interpret what we see before us, we either find this challenging or irritating, the intensity can be located as a desire to know more and lack, due to uncertainty. So I consider that the privileged term is lost when the source of the work is obscured by a metaphorical envelope, interpretation and the poetics of the part object combined with found objects and innuendo.⁴

Identity could also be described as having no ultimate sense, as in *Formless: A User's Guide*, where *ultimate sense* is used to describe that a story has no privileged term or main meaning, unifying or dominant idea (Bois & Krauss, 1997, p. 154). Instead identity seems to be a series of quirks that are both fundamental and superfluous at the same time. This gives rise to the idea of dynamic critique being a skill that each of us is charged with in order to interpret the world around us.

Bricolage

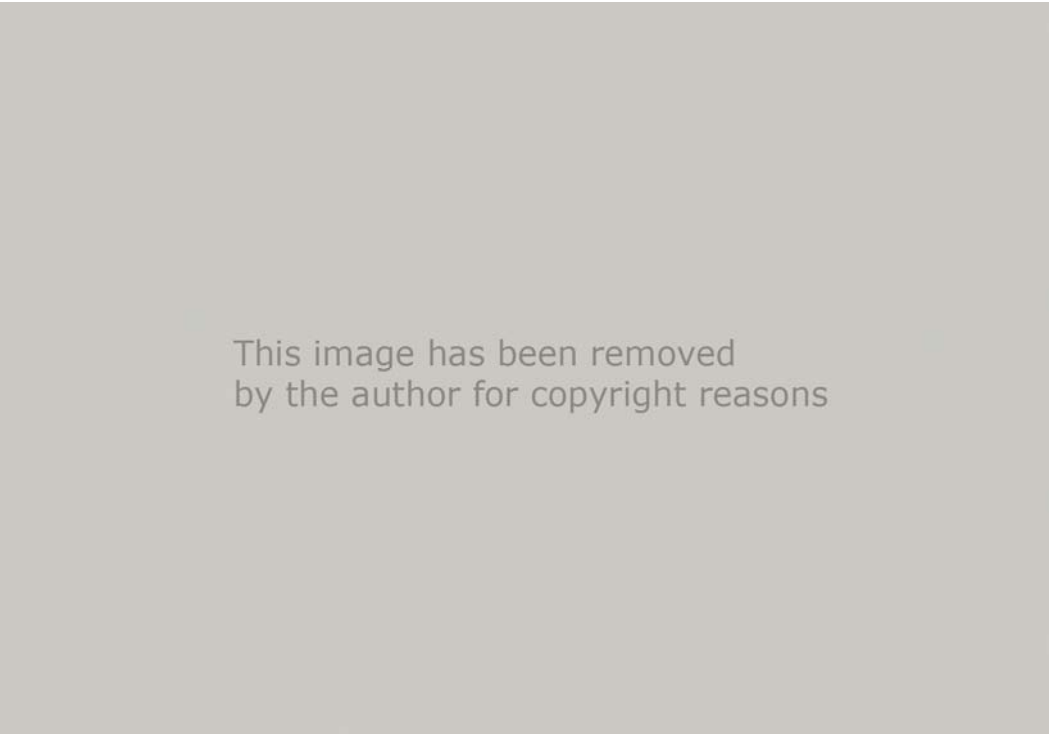
The object portraits, such as *For shits and giggles leap frog green Portia Minortia's the name bro*, present a space of representation; that is a poetic, stacked bricolage that gives rise to aspects of identity. I use this translation of bricolage to describe a way of working, and use '*the means at hand*' in a broad sense. I look to the questionnaire – which is *at hand* – to describe or

³ 'the fact that none could have a point of origin in the real world and thus none could serve as the stories privileged term, the one that provides it with its ultimate sense' (Bois & Krauss, 1997).

⁴ I also am aware of the discussion of the 'parts of the machine' instigated by Barthes in his description of Bataille's chains of signifiers, and that the part object stems from Melanie Klein's discussion of the infant and the instability of the human form, but for the purposes of this work have decided to avoid further discussion on these views.

refer to an object that I then look for and alter, placing it into the work. I do this using the process of collage, engaging first with the object *at hand* - readymade, and then I alter or adapt by hand - readymade, and finally collage and placement. The combination becomes a work that I describe as a stacked bricolage.

The bricoleur, says Levi-Strauss, is someone who uses "the means at hand," that is, the instruments he finds at his disposition around him, those which are already there, which had not been especially conceived with an eye to the operation for which they are to be used and to which one tries by trial and error to adapt them, not hesitating to change them whenever it appears necessary, or to try several of them at once, even if their form and their origin are heterogenous -- and so forth. There is therefore a critique of language in the form of bricolage, and it has even been possible to say that bricolage is the critical language itself. (Derrida, 1995, p.231)



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Figure 15 *OBJECT (LUNCHEON IN FUR)*
Meret Oppenheim
(1936)

Michel de Certeau describes bricolage as '*poetic ways of making do*' (de Certeau, 1984, p.XV). Bricolage consequently can include and convey notions of

construction, fragment, part object, inventiveness and the language that is associated with those terms. This dialogue with objects is found in many surrealist works, such as Meret Oppenheim's fur lined teacup, *Object (Luncheon in Fur)*, which to all appearances is a teacup and spoon lined with fur. The cup an object often *at hand* is altered. And Dali's *Objet Surréaliste à fonctionnement symbolique—le soulier de Gala (Surrealist object that functions symbolically - Gala's Shoe)* is a bricolage of objects that includes food (or at least wax as a substitute for food) to represent body parts.

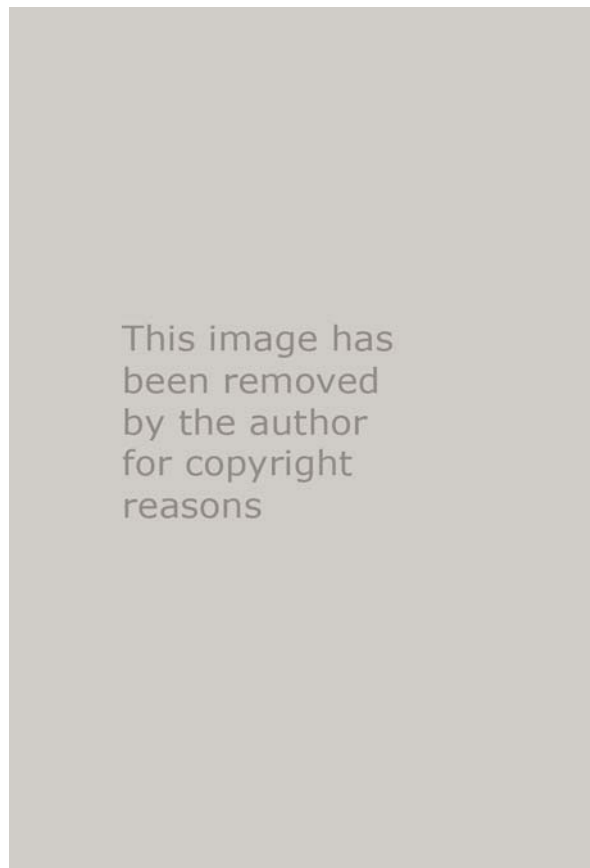


Figure 16 *OBJET SURREALISTE A FONCTIONNEMENT SYMBOLIQUE- LE SOULIER DE GALA*
(Surrealist object that functions symbolically - Gala's Shoe)
Salvador Dalí
(1931)

Bricolage evolved into more than an artistic style: It became a system for perceiving and processing the world around us. By juxtaposing unconnected and incongruous images and objects the artist creates art layered with meaning, full of feeling, humorous or disturbing, invocative and always thought provoking. (Smarter, 2008)

Bricolage is also evident in Sophie Calle's work *The Address Book*. In this instance the artist found a man's address book, photocopied the contents and interviewed the people who were listed in it. Calle then published these interviews in the French newspaper 'Libération', later remaking the work to place into the gallery, printing 45 editions. Calle uses '*the means at hand*' to produce works that reveal personal information. She takes on the guise of a reporter, extending and altering the information that she found (Ruby,2009). This is comparable to my method of translating the text from the questionnaires into object and text works, as they go through the process of alteration and by translation.



Figure 17 *MAXIMUS SOPHODES NOT JUST A DREAM WHITE KNIGHT*
Carolyn Lawrence
(2009)

The scale of the sculptures in this series relates to the body; their plinth-like mode of framing functions as both object and frames. The works assert a

personal space which is the area around an individual that could be considered their territory of spatial dimension, usually understood as psychological. I utilise and alter tools of gallery ideology to assert spatial control, mimicking controls we come up against in our everyday lives.

I often draw on everyday restrictions in order to enhance the impression of encounter with another person. Each sculpture highlights the relationship between objects and thought, especially in the lives of the subjects.

From our earliest years, says the psychologist Jean Piaget, objects help us to think about such things as number, space, time, causality, and life. Piaget reminds us that our learning is situated, concrete, and personal. We invent and reinvent it for ourselves. (Turkle,2007,p.308)

Subjectivity and Almostness

Identity is fundamentally insatiable and entertains the idea of almostness; its occupation is the pursuit of dreams, ideas, goals, ideals, desire and fantasy. In the definition of the self there are intervals or fragments, points of being and becoming. Almostness justifies identity as a progression and an admission of lack and therefore is not static.

No one thing is able to completely express our uniqueness; objects, spaces and people are part of the collection. They are like an anthology that marks an effort to be who we want to be. This anthology is symbolic of desires or goals, and so sets the premise for an object to embody identity or at least part identity.

The subjective idea of 'almostness' is extraplastic and formless. This is due to that interplay between desire to be complete which is never possible and lack which follows as a result. Unlike the text by Marcel Ritschel which states that this is un-conscious, I believe that this is conscious and subjective as well as being (like the text) unconscious and objective, and that is why we use objects to describe ourselves, who we are and what we want from life. 'In the Dalian universe of this period objects which function symbolically are extraplastic and depend only on the individual's amorous imagination and their unconscious acts' (Ritschel,2005). These terms allow for the meaning in the work to oscillate

between the represented, and the observation and critique of the viewer, making for a position of no fixed definition.

Sherry Turkle's *Evocative objects, Things we think with*, brings together writings from a variety of people that trace the power of everyday things – objects. Each writer describes the effect of these objects upon themselves and how they have shaped or influenced their own personal character (Turkle,2007). The importance that individuals cast upon particular objects and how those objects typify personality traits is subjective or even a little speculative on my part. However, it is a challenge that I feel compelled to attribute each sitter with an interpretation representing a performative relationship between object and subject in their life.

Out of line

A View of Installation and Collage

Collage

In relation to the concept of collage Kathleen Vaughan writes, 'Collage method allows for the collection and the analysis of data allowing creative outcome' (Vaughan,2005). In this respect collage provides a structure to navigate through many diverse sources of information. 'While incorporating simultaneous and parallel decisions, collage, invites creativity' (Starbuck,2003). From such a point of view, this chapter discusses the writing of Krauss, and the works of Emin, Calle, Christian Boltanski, Aby Warburg, and Louise Bourgeois in their construction of visual and written texts that offer rich juxtapositions of identity and objects.⁵

My practice is subjective and could not be called discipline-specific, I relate to and apply knowledge from multiple fields to best reinforce interpretation. Each element performs a part in the work serving to create a collage of objects and meaning in the form of an installation of idiosyncratic portraits. 'A collage emerges as the artist builds up layers of juxtaposed elements by adjusting many parts until the composition is complete' (Starbuck,2003).

Part objects, instability of interpretation and the subjectivity of the viewer are fundamental aspects of my project, as is the vernacular present in the notion of the fragment. To construct, deconstruct, to bring fragments or parts together, part object, constructed object, identity construction, installation, portraiture and collage.

Accordingly, the products of a collage practice are multiple, provisional, and interdependent. The creating of each fragment, each articulation—be it text, artwork, or some combination of forms—influences and is influenced by the others. (Vaughan,2005)

Collection methodology, which I mentioned early on, plays a part in my methodology alongside collage. It relies on the strength of association and connection to construct a concept; this is the ultimate difference between

⁵ I recognise that my project could include a study of semiotics, and consumerism, but felt that my interests in surrealism and the part object were foremost in my project's development.

collection and collage. Collage does not depend on associative elements but instead draws strength from disparity. Collection can at first appearances appear disparate and reliant on different modes of thought for interpretation such as metaphor and comparison. This is where the two methods are compatible. In *The Optic of Walter Benjamin* collection, its definition and methods are considered, compared and rediscovered through the discussion and definition of *atlas, archive, collage, montage* and consideration of *heterogeneity* (Coles,1999). Collection in my project revolves around each individual sitter. I gather material together that becomes a collection about that person; information collected is not always evident to an observer. Collage and collection are here both interconnected; a collection of apparently disparate information, objects, image and text is developed into new meaning. Collection in the most basic form is systematic gathering; information or data collection has relevance to *People I Know* through the formulation and then production and compilation of the questionnaire data.

The questionnaire as a document is helpful in isolating and organising information for me as interpreter and the viewer as analyst. This is like a script or scenario bound and isolated; a time slice released from the changeability of identity. But the questionnaire is still open to translation and so is not static. Vaughan expresses that 'the work of collage is open ended', and perhaps this is a strength that allows a freedom for the 'extraplactic' realm of imagination, a notion that prolongs narrative and 'outside formal or aesthetic considerations' (Vaughan,2005;Lewer,2006,p.390). The subject is always open ended and, as such, incomplete and uncertain. This leaves a void that is a mystery and a compelling strength.

Titles

The question of disclosure and the problematic of titling are elements that inform my work. This project's broad field of research has been achieved and constructed around a dialogue between visual and linguistic texts. Decisions about titling, such as explanatory notes or didactic documents, and whether

these arouse curiosity or reveal too much, or consequently remove mystery from the work, are active discussion points.⁶

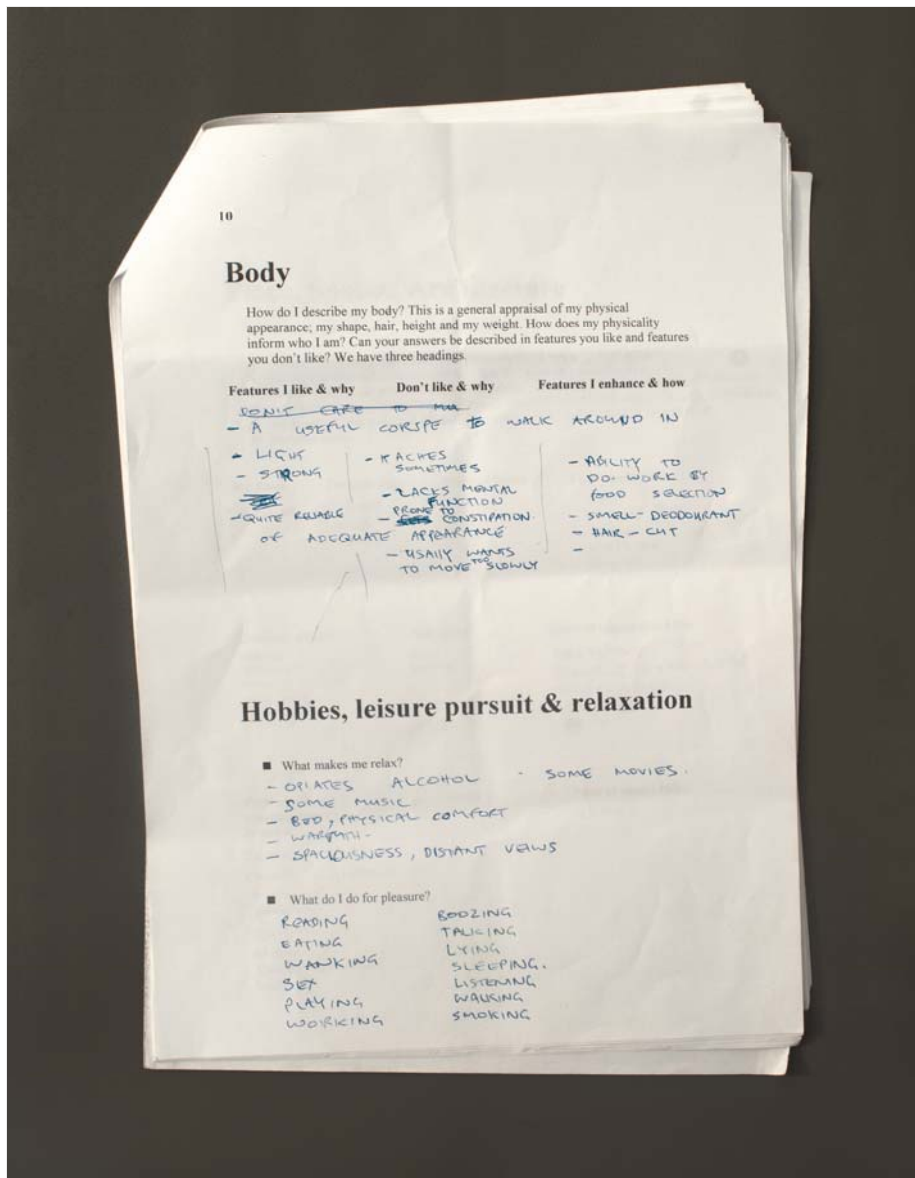


Figure 18 Questionnaire documentation

The influence of a title on the art work and viewer is significant. It can state purpose, give meaning and enrich the dialogue; it can also offer a means for

⁶ I add this footnote to highlight the subjectivity that exists around the titling of work, 'Among the harshest critiques ever received during my doctoral coursework came from a professor who was noticeably perturbed that I had researched and written a paper on an artwork without considering the title in the interpretation and analysis of the work. The professor insisted that the title is necessary to understand the piece. As a diligent student, the lesson was learned, and the following semester I wrote a different paper for a different professor including the title as part of the interpretation and analysis. The professor's response asserted that the sections of the paper discussing the title should be deleted to improve the paper because a title is a name only—a linguistic referent to speak and write about the work that has no other relationship to the work.' (Petersen, 2006).

the viewer to understand the work. Art titles are very assessable as provisions for analyzing, reviewing, and addressing art. Many titles are self evident, yet intuitive, encouraging one to contemplate and study the work further. Metaphor and wordplays are often used to make names or titles engaging. They also play an important part in recollection and memory formation and are significant as they help individuals recapture a particular piece of art they have enjoyed. But does a title close down further investigation?

Figure 17 and Figure 18 are objects of process; the first is a page out of Maximus Sophodes' questionnaire; it is a facsimile, evidence of the archive. There are 27 of these documents; 3 for each of the 9 sitters. As yet they have no title.

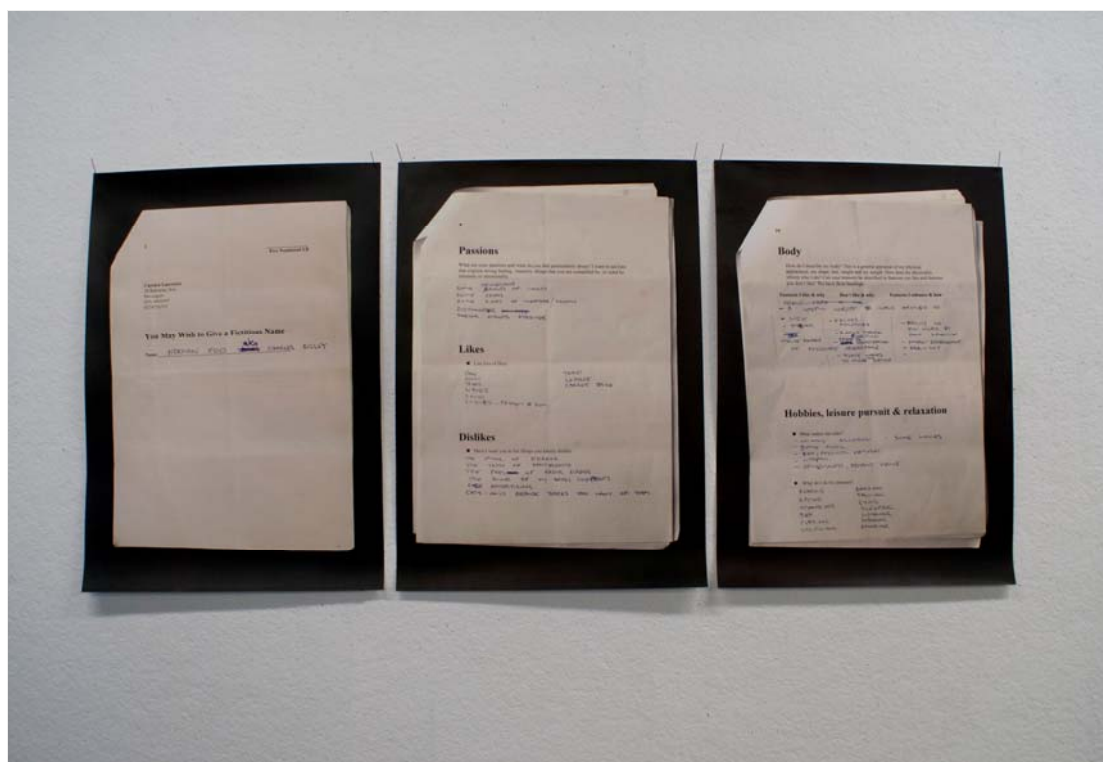


Figure 19 Questionnaire documentation

I have to question whether they need a title as they in one sense operate like a title, in that they are like an explanatory note, a document that could sit as a clue to the installation. In my final exhibition, *Installation*, I see these pages being bound into an exhibition catalogue.

Saying What You See: How to Talk and Write about Art gives testimony to the significance of titling: 'Look for text that accompanies the image you are

considering. It can help to clear your ideas and align them with someone else's theory, even if you disagree' (Annals,Cunnane,2009,p.26).

When I apply this to Andres Serrano's work, I see the title, and then I see milk and blood. How does this title affect what I'm seeing? I feel repulsed, but it provokes me to take a closer look because I'm curious, and fascinated by the exacting process of separation of the two fluids which is uncovered by the title.



Figure 20 *MILK, BLOOD*
Andres Serrano
(1986)

I recently listened to a conversation between art historian and critic Lucy Soutter and Serrano recorded at the Tate Modern, exploring Serrano's unique conceptual approach to photographic portraiture. Serrano enjoys the relationship between image and text. He explores provocative subject matter that is not always recognisable, and so uses text to reveal to the viewer what it is they are looking at. Instead of shutting down the work this offers the possibility of provocation; he uses the power of words to create the greatest impact. The relationship in his practice between image, text and subject matter is constant, If it's blood he says it's blood, if it's piss he says so too. The titles are self-explanatory, literal (Tate,2008).

Hodgkins' *Self portrait: still life* is a great example of a work and title that takes you to a specific place of interpretation. The painting pronounces itself as a likeness of Hodgkins; *Self portrait: still life* is what the artist feels adequate to describe herself. The title opens up a conversation that may otherwise not take place, making the viewer aware of particularities of taste, identity and individuality. But would the viewer have known that it was a self portrait if it was not named so?

A title is a component of the work, not something that should be regarded as an afterthought but an element that adds to the conversation the artist has with the work. The viewers' understanding of the work is subjective; a title provides the opportunity to open up meaning and interpretation.

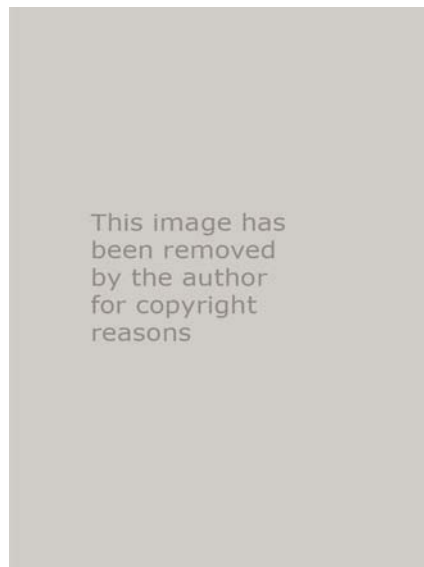


Figure 21 *DAVE'S BIG BRAIN*
THIS IS A CARVING OF A SKULL
THAT WAS LEFT UP AT THE
FAMPTON HUT AT THE END OF THE
WAIMA RANGE. I HAVEN'T YET BUT I PLAN TO DO A DRAWING
ON THE SKULL OF A V8 CLEVELAND
ENGINE THAT I FOUND IN A
SECOND HAND SCI-FI BOOK.
FICTION, FRICTION POOR GOATIE.
Glen Hayward
(2009)

The title for Glen Hayward's work takes you on a journey, activating for the viewer a history and a future in which the work could develop. The title being a

narrative keeps you engaged for longer; examining what is confirmed as a carving, and wondering where the drawing would go on the skull.

A question that I ask myself is, why am I interested in giving the viewer only partial clues? I want to tempt the viewer to tease out a dialogue between the objects and texts before them; this takes time and effort. Ultimately this experience replicates getting to know someone, and their peculiarities. I like the title to happen in my conversation with the work in its development; an extended thought, a mantra, a poignant or humorous exchange between myself and the piece and the person that I'm portraying. It is a reflection of the relationship I have built with the person and the work itself.



Figure 22. *FOR SHITS AND GIGGLES LEAP FROG GREEN*
PORTIA MINORTIA'S THE NAME BRO.
Carolyn Lawrence
(2009)

Therefore I prefer titles that introduce or extend the conversation for the viewer; titles that propose acquaintance but not interpretations. Titles that can be read before or after viewing, but not determine the works by revealing too much and, as a result, prematurely conclude the reading. Giving a title adds a referential layer between the object and the interpreter, lessening the obscurity or reduction that has occurred within the process of creating the work. As artists in a university we are afforded the curator's role in that we have to ask ourselves, who is our audience and are they experienced viewers? The titles for this series are complex in that they are bound together with an expression.



Figure 23 *NORMAN FOO*
I HATE THE TASTE OF DANDELIONS
AKA CHARLES BIGLEY
Carolyn Lawrence
(2009)

The title of this work suggests a great deal about the personality of the sitter by revealing a dislike; how many people dislike the taste of dandelions? How many people know what dandelions taste like? Who would give themselves a pseudo, pseudonym? Or two names? The title is a character reference, a name and referent that yields individual information creating a point of social contact.

As I have discussed, the part object facilitates an intensity to come into being. An open ended title works in a similar way, leaving room to complete the text yourself. The relationship of the text to object is self determining, like an introduction"This is..." what associations are made with the name? What type of person would say, "I'm taller than my friends" ...?



Figure 24 *LIKE MAGDA-LENE*
IM TALLER THAN MY FRIENDS...
Carolyn Lawrence
(2009)

The Gallery

St Paul Street Gallery, where my work will be installed, is a space where many students learn to question all that is placed within. It is also a contemporary gallery that reflects current exhibition practice. I have noted that labels and wall texts are generally kept out of the gallery space and only the exhibition title is displayed on the wall outside the gallery.

The intent of the person assigning the title may be to simply identify and/or differentiate a specific work; but notwithstanding intent, the title has its own intent: interpreting, pointing, directing, and/or emphasizing some aspect of the work. It is true that a title is not an independent entity; it requires an associative object. Nevertheless, the title is text and should be subject to textual theory and interpretation to the same degree as the image itself. (Petersen, 2006)

Using the idea of framing to contain characteristics of the subject in the work, I look to the space of the encounter and the systems or ideology imbued in that space to focus the outcome. The gallery isolates and exaggerates the encounter by its separation from the colour, movement and noise of everyday life. The space of the gallery is usually comprised of light-coloured materials and shut off from the outside world by means of its architecture. Using display devices, such as walls (more often than not painted white), floors, lights to light specific areas to draw attention to work, frames and plinths that are fragments of conventional museum aesthetics, the gallery positions itself as a space of isolation. These conventions help to introduce and enhance the encounter by making the viewer self-conscious. It does this by providing a setting with a set of ethics for them to conform to (or not). Brian O'Doherty talks of the gallery space being a transformative force; I welcome and rely on this influence to motivate the viewer into a scopic view that offers a greater sense of engagement.

The transformation of objects is contextual, a matter of relocation. Proximity to the picture plane assists this transformation. When isolated the context of objects is the gallery. Eventually the gallery itself becomes, like the picture plane, a transforming force. (O'Doherty, 1976, p.45)

Christian Boltanski, Aby Warburg, Collecting

Christian Boltanski uses objects that are vestiges of a 'time-gone-by' to construct a framed fixed script or scenario, bound and isolated; a time slice released from instability of change. But is this work released from change? It is open to interpretation and analysis and so is not stable, it is this that keeps the work of art alive, as I have said above, it is animate not static.



Figure 25 *VITRINE OF REFERENCE*
Christian Boltanski
(1971)

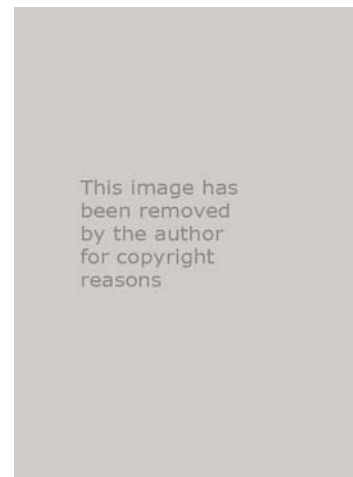


Figure 26 *MONUMENTI*
Christian Boltanski
(1989)

One of Boltanski's favourite themes is his own life story, both actual and reinvented, which he evokes through startling collections of photographs and objects. In other pieces, he assembles seemingly mundane elements to address some of the most fundamental and disturbing contradictions of twentieth-century life. (Gumpert, 1994, p.1)

It seems by this comment that we could claim that components of Boltanski's practice are both collection and collage. He assembles a narrative by connecting elements of his collection into a contained visual tribute that has historical associations, via the black and white images. The images are cropped in, blurry, and lit as if to mark each personal tragedy and never to forget. The pictures remain a token from the past; the clothing a collection gathered together to build a monument, an object in real time and the image a reminder of what was.

There appears to be a fine line between the two methods of collection and collage but also a complimentary relationship. For example in my 'dislike' works I collected together images that I felt reflected the sitter, and their own

personal form of dislikes. I collaged the pictures together and painted them onto the framed field (building paper over canvas support). When I finished these works I had a collection of paintings, portraits of an individual as edified by the portrayal of their dislikes. (These works are not part of my final installation.) A decision was made to exclude these from the final work; they became another iteration of what the objects are.



Figure 27 *AMARANTHA*
Carolyn Lawrence
(2008)



Figure 28 *MAGDA*
Carolyn Lawrence
(2008)

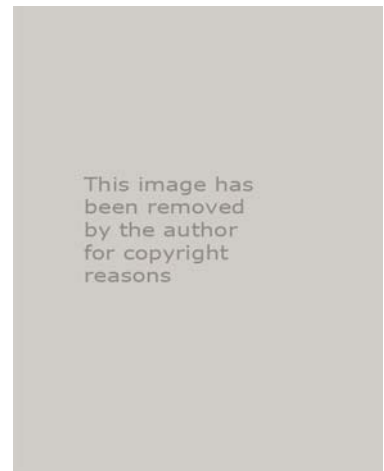


Figure 29 *MNEMOSYNE ATLAS*
Aby Warburg
(1928)

Art historian Aby Warburg created a series of works called the *Mnemosyne Atlas*, 'comprised of 79 wooden panels, covered with black fabric, on which were pinned some 2000 photographs from Warburg's collection'. It is interesting that Warburg pinned his photos to a black background, 'as he searches for the proper arrangement of his fragmentary universe' (Dillon, 2004). These photographic panels read like a collage built of humanities historical, cultural, political and emotional associations. I found that using this arrangement for my own project helped to define fragmentary, almostness and part notions. Warburg's panels are similar to my series of dislike paintings, such as *Amarantha* and *Magda*, as the images within each work are fragmentary, on a black ground, and appear as a collection. (These works became another reiteration of what the object works do and so the decision was made to leave them and keep working on the object works).

Warburg's *Atlas* thus reiterated his lifelong challenge to the rigorous and hierarchical compartmentalisation of the discipline of art history, it attempted to abolish its methods and categories of exclusively formal or stylistic description, and,

equally important, it eroded the disciplinary boundaries between the conventions (and the study) of high art and mass culture. (Coles,1999,p.124)

Acknowledging complexity and fragmentation is a means of conceptualisation, an open process that lays the path for the method of collage in both the gaining of understanding and the making process. Collage allows for the representation, juxtaposition, the creation (discovery) and generation of information for investigation and, consequently, new knowledge is amplified. As such, collage sets up a premise across disciplines and uses conventions to create a conversation that breaks them down into fragments and rearranges them in the hope of exploring homogeneity, and as a way of uniting and understanding a dialogue of disparity.⁷

Installations, Tracey Emin, Sophie Calle, Louise Bourgeois and the International Surrealist Exhibition

Installation practice as I have mentioned can operate as a discipline that enables subjects to be fragmented and reconstructed, offering the artist a space to perform control over a concept and for the viewer to play a part and be immersed in the controlled area. My installation practice is influenced by surrealist methodologies such as the fragmentation of the part object, formlessness and subjectivity. These are systems that operate as a force in the work, decentering the viewer. Installation offers the space to encompass other disciplines without contest; this is due to the ability of installation to accept physical and psychological space. Objects and everyday media all act as 'part' or a fragment in the interpretation of the work.

Perhaps most importantly, the key idea that emerges in writing on this work is that a traditional single-point perspective is overturned by installation art's provision of plural and fragmented vistas: as a result, our hierarchical and centred relation to the work of art (and to ourselves) is undermined and destabilised. (Bishop,2005,p.47)

⁷ The work of a collage practice is open-ended. No individual activity can be described as definitive. Rather, each work represents the practice at a particular moment: Its form and content reflect the juxtaposition of individual ideas, realms of thought, texts, images, and other creative works, and the conversation that develops between them (Vaughan,2005).



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by the author for copyright reasons

Figure 30 'UNCLE COLIN 1963-93'
MEMORABILIA
Tracey Emin
(1997)

'*Uncle Colin 1963-93*' is a crushing memorial to the death of a relative of Emin's. The way Emin has framed each object, text and image gives importance or weight and equates to the grief that every item in this work must have impacted on her. By placing each piece in close proximity, with the same frames brings the work together and substantiates Emin's feelings.

The fundamental metaphor of the exhibition can now move from 'containing' objects to 'showing off' objects. It is a move from the palace, container of beautiful objects, to the theatrical stage for the work of art. It is a move from the princely discretion to popular variability. At this point, elements of the logic of stage design (as opposed to set design) become pertinent. The architectural design of stages seeks above all to provide for the maximisation of the variability of possible sets.
(Cousins)

I have not seen Emin's *Why I Never Became a Dancer* and I must admit to reading the passage below the picture before I saw the work itself. I felt the text and image solicited my own reaction, making me feel the excitement Emin must have been feeling at the applause and then the mortification when the '*gang of blokes*' shouted. Once combined with the stills I found my compassion stirred more by the link created between the artist, text and

myself the viewer. My compassion was soon provoked into feelings of empathy and admiration and the horror of how hurtful people can be to one another. Emin's work demonstrates predominantly personal issues that may well shock or rock the viewer's moral ground, but in doing so the work feels honest, as if Emin herself trusts the viewer by revealing all.

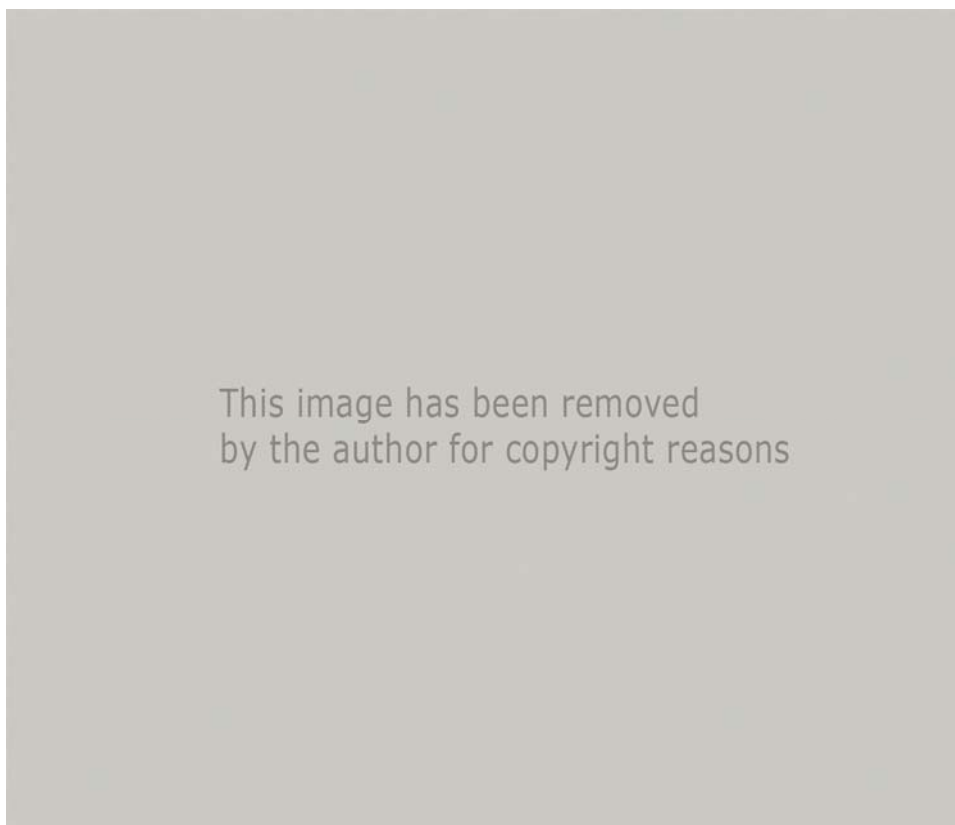


Figure 31 WHY I NEVER BECAME A DANCER
Tracey Emin
(1994)

If I won, I'd be up there: London, the Empire Leicester Square ballroom, dancing for TV. Big prizes: the British Disco Dance Championship, 1978. And, as I started to dance, people started to clap. I was going to win! And then I'd be out of here – nothing could stop me! And then they started: Slag! Slag! Slag! A gang of blokes, most of whom I'd had sex.....
(Emin, 2006, p. 198)

This discourse positions her practice and reflects her bolshy, open and frank character, addressing subject matter that most of us shrink from. It memorialises an event, by recreating the event in a public space where you can experience Emin's mortification; the moment is taken back and as a result celebrated as a victory. Emin is defined by her strength in exposing her

weakest moments, things that most of us work hard to keep hidden. Can a work that marks an event still perform like a portrait? I believe it can, as our memory of another person works by remembering a moment spent, observing that person and, as such, this memory becomes like the portrait, a mark, a facsimile.

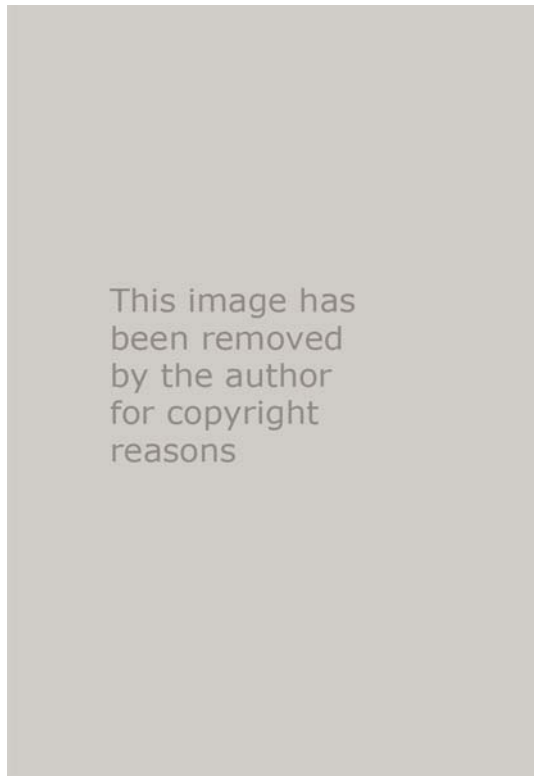


Figure 32 *EXQUISITE PAIN (DAY 12)*
Sophie Calle
(2000)



Figure 33 *EXQUISE PAIN, 99 DAYS*
INSTALLATION VIEW
Sophie Calle
(1984/99)

The combination of text and image employed by Calle in *Exquisite Pain (Day 12)*, operates similarly to a storyboard, comparable also to wall texts in museums and galleries. Calle's work is distinct from those texts though, and as a viewer I have no question about it being art and not wall texts that organise and inform viewers of the history of the work in the room. The arrangement; framing devices, materiality, colours and size of the texts and ground sitting in direct relation to the images, proposes to the viewer that there is a story to settle into. 'In some ways "Exquisite Pain," which operates between writing and speaking, is as close to performance as to literature: as we walk through it, it is enacted' (Princenthal,2005,p.143). In this way Calle lends the story a huge measure of importance by embroidering it; the repetitive stitching not only an indication of women and craft, but of time spent to repair. The ceremonial layout appeals to me, columns of text standing in memorial formation to pain. They are compelling 'real' photographs of a personal story, told so that you feel you are sharing intimate knowledge. It picks you up and takes you on Calle's journey with her.



Figure 34 *CELL (GLASS SPHERES AND HANDS)*
Louise Bourgeois
(1990-1993)

Louise Bourgeois' *Cell (Glass Spheres and Hands)* encourages feelings of intimacy: a dwelling that beckons in the dim gallery; positioning the viewer as

an outsider not registered by the inhabitants. However the work in its isolation and naming gives off a slightly disturbing presence.⁸

Bourgeois manages to convey the presence of five figures without representing their identities. She creates tension by limits of space and by trapping the participants within. This separates the viewer from the drama inside. The trapped occupants are represented by 'part objects' and encourage a psychoanalytic reading of association and appropriation. Louise Bourgeois creates a nostalgic atmosphere due to the absence of bodies of the represented figures and by the vintage of the furniture. The marble hands and glass spheres are stand-ins.

As I stood witness in the dimly lit gallery space outside the room I felt like I was intruding, a voyeur - and that only silence was permitted. This was enhanced by the low light and the feeling of authority that the hands held over the spheres. I was aware that the same constraints of the room's objects had also fallen over me. The vintage of the objects within signifies a time and event and, along with the cell, they operate in association. I want my portrait sitters to be organised in such a way that keeps them separated as individuals but connected through various aspects of stylistic repetition.

⁸ This work measures 86 x 86 x 83 inches. It stands in a space that is dim. The light source glowing from within the glass and metal multi-paned cage came from a spotlight focused upon a table which has marble hands resting on its surface. The glass in many of the panes is shattered and there is a sign telling of its fragility - placed there by the gallery. The size of the room leaves no space for anything to go unnoticed. It orders the occupants as the grid does, enclosing and trapping the conversation within. The translucent marble hands that are resting on a table appear relaxed and in control, poised as if ready to speak, creating drama and a focal point; starting and completing a circle of five figures, four others are represented by glass spheres that sit just on the boundary of the spotlight beam, which indicates the area of attention keeping them anchored to their chairs.

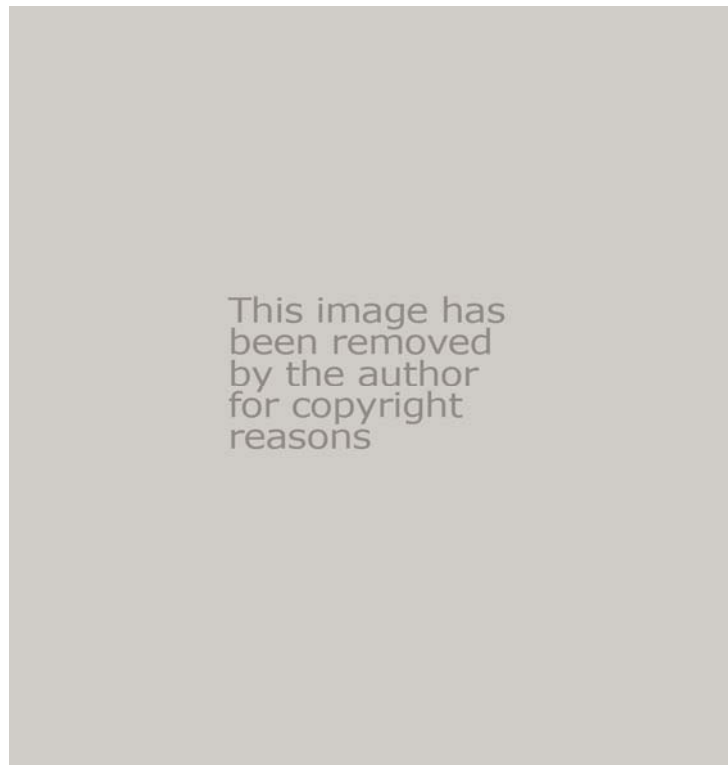


Figure 35 *INTERNATIONAL SURREALIST EXHIBITION*
Galerie des Beaux-Arts,
Paris, Jan-Feb (1938).

Although the works in the '*International Surrealist Exhibition*' of 1938 are by different artists, they appear to the contemporary eye as an installation. The works relate to one another due to their proximity and the overlap of object and light. The exhibition requests an integrated reading and questions where does one object stop and another start? Bishop says 'The Surrealist exhibition displays in Paris in 1938, 1947 and 1959, and in New York in 1942,' were 'referred to as an ideological hang' and later became 'oft-sited precursor of installation art, celebrated less for the individual paintings and sculptures it brought together than for its innovative approach to exhibiting them' (Bishop,2005,p.20). I enjoy the way that ordinary objects from the indoors and outdoors are brought together in juxtaposition. The paintings and their subjects place the reading in a 'dream like state' and the bed centres this understanding. The treatment of the space is stage like, uniting the works as one.

Installation, End of Thesis Exhibition

I see the *People I Know* series of works could be installed in one of two ways for my end of year thesis exhibition.

The first method of instalment under consideration is that each work is installed in the gallery space in a formal arrangement to isolate each work into a column of ranks that line the gallery similar to a row of portraits. I see the facsimile works placed on the wall in groups of three behind each sitter's characterisation. This alignment forces scopic separation further; the wall acts as a guide organising the viewer.

This strategy creates a link as the spectator is encouraged to make comparisons that by method mimic the process of attraction and curiosity. Our inclination toward something or someone is based on personal preference. This line up offers an array of personalities to choose from, encouraging our individuality through subjective attraction and association.

However, there could be a drawback to exhibiting the sculptural works alongside the texts; it is possible that the viewers could be inclined to read the texts overlooking the sculptural work and, as a consequence, affect the reading of the work, which could be driven by comparison and clue finding, therefore resistant to unaffected observation.

As an alternative installation method, the sculptural pieces may possibly be installed in conversation with each other as a group. There would be no wall texts and no formal line up. The works have an individual personal space proposed by the footing or plinth-like construction. The viewer would be able to walk around the works and engage in a casual arrangement, similar to a gathering at an art gallery opening where people cluster, move around individually, engage with work, and regroup in a casual non-methodical way. This way of installing may possibly set up an interpretive comparison as happens between one individual meeting another. The suggested wall texts in this method would become catalogues so, if the viewers want to engage further and find out more, they have access to the questionnaire texts.

What installation art offers, then is an experience of centring and decentering: work that consists on our centred presence in

order to then subject us to an experience of decentring. In other words, installation art does just not articulate an intellectual notion of dispersed subjectivity (reflected in a world without a centre or organising principle); it also constructs a set in which the viewing subject may experience the fragmentation first-hand. (Bishop,2005,p.130)

We are the observer, evaluator in association with the work; we judge it, participate and are judged – as when meeting an associate, watching passersby in a cafe, or on a jury. We enter the work and begin the task to solve who may be the signified. But we never get there we are always kept at a distance by what we cannot possibly know. The work is always made up of signifiers but never complete, a lack, opening up a void. We can read but the sentence is never finished. 'A space exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables. Thus space is composed of mobile elements. It is a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it' (de Certeau,1984,p.117).

Conclusion

Almostness and dynamic critique on the subject of People I Know

People I Know is a conceptual project which has involved 9 sitters from whom I have collected personal information in relation to their identity. The collection has become an installation of 9 sculptures using the notion of the portrait as a means to frame. Each sculpture is a bricolage of objects characterizing their quirks.

During the course of the research I have come to refine and develop my own texts around complex terms, such as the informe and the extraplactic (Bois & Krauss, 1997). These terms are the force keeping the work in motion; they are that which remains beyond logic or end. The concept of 'almostness' is one development. Releasing the pressure of critique and closure, 'almostness' allows for subjectivity and the idea of no *ultimate sense* (Bois & Krauss, 1997, p.155). At the same time the idea of almostness creates tension; it is the poetic in the work and the sense of discovery in observing and reading people. It describes that which cannot be fully explained, but somehow implied; it is a nuance. Thus almostness has a paradoxical function brought about by individual dynamic critique on the parts of the sitter, myself as artist and the viewer.

An idiosyncrasy is a disposition towards a way of being; it can draw upon notions that are both positive and negative. I have used the questionnaire and my own knowledge of each sitter to reflect on quirks that best portray the individual. The implications of this are that each work is about how I look at these people, or at least how I would describe them.

This research practice has enhanced the associations and significance of objects in trying to define the system that is peculiar to the idea of identity and how ephemeral it can be to pin down. Most terms I have associated with identity support enigmatic and intuitive interpretations to find and make that nuance in each work that respects a translation of each one of the 9 people I know.

The methodology of collage opened my enquiry, allowing links between an individual's quirks, the identity questionnaire, objects, surrealism, gallery ideology and the writings of Bois & Krauss and others. Collage and collection allow for questioning, experimental work and originality, and are open to change. This reflects the nature of identity as it too is transformative and open to uniqueness.

During this research, through making and theory, I have come to appreciate that the project is as much about me as it is about the people I know.



Figure 36 'PEOPLE I KNOW'
Installation, St Paul St, Final show
Carolyn Lawrence
(2009)



Figure 36
A *'ROB LOWE IS A HUNK THINKS MORGAN ALEXANDRA'*
'PEOPLE I KNOW' Installation, St Paul St, Final show
Carolyn Lawrence
(2009)



Figure 36_B *LIKE MAGDA-LENE*
IM TALLER THAN MY FRIENDS...
'PEOPLE I KNOW'
Installation, St Paul St, Final show
Carolyn Lawrence
(2009)



Figure 36 *LIKE MAGDA-LENE IM TALLER THAN MY FRIENDS...* (Detail)
'PEOPLE I KNOW'
Installation, St Paul St, Final show
Carolyn Lawrence
(2009)



Figure 36_D 'YOU KNOW ME ITS ZUZKA
GANG STARR STYLES
STILETTOES IM A DREAM CATCHER'
'PEOPLE I KNOW'
Installation, St Paul St, Final show
Carolyn Lawrence
(2009)



Figure 36
E AN ALABASTER TABLET
MAILS DESIRS TO CREATE A
MORTAL LIFE LESS DIFFICULT - AOPDITI
'PEOPLE I KNOW'
Installation, St Paul St, Final show
Carolyn Lawrence
(2009)



Figure 36_F 'PEOPLE I KNOW'
Installation, St Paul St, Final show
Carolyn Lawrence
(2009)



Figure 36_G 'PEOPLE I KNOW'
Installation, St Paul St, Final show
Carolyn Lawrence
(2009)



Figure 36_H 'PEOPLE I KNOW'
Installation, St Paul St, Final show
Carolyn Lawrence
(2009)



Figure 36_I 'PEOPLE I KNOW'
Installation, St Paul St, Final show
Carolyn Lawrence
(2009)



Figure 36
J 'YOU KNOW ME ITS ZUZKA
GANG STARR STYLES
STILETTOES IM A DREAM CATCHER'
'PEOPLE I KNOW'
In Gallery Window, St Paul St, Final show
Carolyn Lawrence
(2009)

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