

RCA
Cross–College
Feminisms &
Materialisms
Symposium
PROGRAMME

Friday 25th May 2018
10am – 5pm

Gorvy Lecture Theatre,
RCA Battersea



Royal College of Art

Postgraduate Art and Design



INTRODUCTION

The physicist and feminist philosopher Karen Barad suggests that: ‘matter feels, converses, suffers, desires, yearns and remembers’. This symposium will scope the RCA’s current interest in how feminisms are, and might be, made material. Our research values creativity, humour, artistic and design speculation, the production of wonder and exploration through practice. We therefore frame our research around practices of making and unmaking, of working with, but also responding to, and learning from, materials. Our ambition is to challenge taken-for-granted epistemologies in order to attend to what gets excluded, as well as what comes to matter. How do we think through feminism to materially practice it?

This symposium offers the opportunity to explore material practices through cross-college alliances and conversations. This symposium is experimental. We do not know how it will develop or what it will lead to. The outcomes are for anyone and everyone to take ownership of. It is an opportunity to share knowledge and to develop new communities of research and practice.

Fiona Curran and Freddie Robins, Textiles

Feminisms & Materialisms Working Group:

Fiona Curran, Freddie Robins, Rebecca Fortnum, Rathna Ramanathan, Teal Triggs, Chantal Faust, Hermione Wiltshire, Harriet Harriss.

Symposium

PROGRAMME

9.30am	Registration / Refreshments outside the Gorvy Lecture Theatre	1.30pm	Introduction to session 2: MATERIALISING SITE
10.00am	Introduction Christie Walker, RKE Office followed by Fiona Curran & Freddie Robins	1.10pm	Catherine Dormor – Transnational belonging and subjectivity-in- process: contemporary women artists' encounters with space
10.15am	Introduction to Session 1: HERSTORIES	1.20pm	Jennifer Nightingale – Cornish Knitting Pattern Film Series
10.25am	Hermione Wiltshire – Productive Vaginas	1.30pm	Fiona Curran – Your Sweetest Empire Is To Please
10.35am	Nina Wakeford – Smile?	1.40pm	Leah Fusco – Marsh Women
10.45am	Amina Abbas-Nazari – Complex Cinderellas	1.50pm	Denise de Cordova – The Materiality of Small Fears
10.55am	Teal Triggs – Writing and Designing Feminisms: 1990s Riot Grrrl Zines and their place in Herstory	2.00–2.30pm	Discussion
11.05am	Ben Cranfield – Holding materials and other ways of mattering: archival ephemera outside of History	2.30–3.00pm	Refreshments outside the Lecture Theatre
11.15am	Aura Satz – She Recalibrates	3.00pm	Introduction to session 3: MAKING MATERIAL
11.30–12.00	Discussion	3.10pm	Shehnaz Suterwalla – Fake New(s)
12.00–1.00	LUNCH — not provided	3.20pm	Eleanor Dare – Munging Analytica: God tricks, con tricks and yet more views from above
		3.30pm	Chantal Faust – Scratch the Surface and there's just more surface: On scanning, looking and touching
		3.40pm	Freddie Robins – Who's Scared of the Soft Stuff?
		3.50pm	Jo Stockham – Counter Canon, notes from the DIY store
		4.00pm	Harriet Harriss – Blocks Versus Knots
		4.10–4.40pm	Discussion
		4.40–5.00pm	Concluding Remarks/Discussion Fiona Curran and Freddie Robins
		5.00pm	Drinks

Feminisms & Materialisms
RCA Cross-College
Symposium

Friday 25th May 2018,
Gorvy Lecture Theatre,
Battersea

Her

stories

Writing and Designing Feminisms: 1990s Riot Grrrl Zines and their place in Herstory

This paper will look at feminist fanzines produced during the 1990s music-inspired riot grrrl movement in the UK. Such zines set out to celebrate the scene and to distribute information on the arts, music and related areas of performance. Examples such as *Aggamengmong Moggie* and *Vaginal Teeth* were important as spaces for a women-only discourse, often adopting an autobiographical approach (such as the use of diaries and other personal storytelling narratives). Such zines were recognized early-on as a form documentary evidence, capturing in print a paradigm shift in feminist discourse rooted in social, cultural and political activism. In terms of a history of feminism and graphic design, the process of archiving these zines has raised a series of questions around the construction of history and the diversification of canons. There is a tension between what were intended to be 'throwaway' graphic objects capturing 'fleeting' moments of time, versus a context of a 'permanent' or 'fixed' archive. For example, the materiality of the object (paper, scale, bindings, format, etc.) is put into question as it becomes collected, reproduced and analysed. What does it mean for an underground to go overground in this way? What are the implications for feminism and materiality?

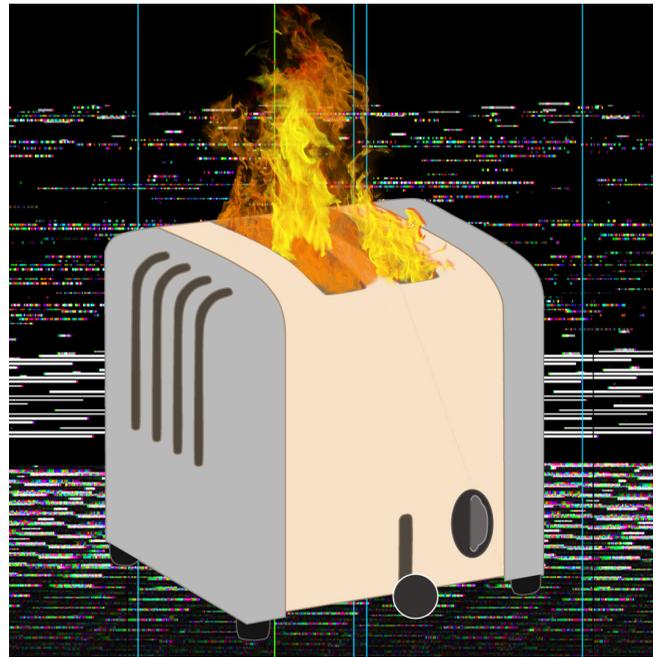
AMINA ABBAS-NAZARI

Research Fellow, Design Products

Complex Cinderellas

The Cinderella Complex was first described by author Colette Dowling in 1981 (the cusp of second wave feminism), who wrote a book on women's fear of independence – an unconscious desire to be taken care of by others. She describes women, having taken steps to extend their own autonomous presence in the world, but still not capable of changing situations by their own actions and having to be helped by an outside force, usually a male (i.e., the Prince). 'Complex Cinderellas' is a fictional design project that critically, and satirically, investigates Dowling's propositions through objects, using them as actors within the narrative; and dissection of the material worlds' power hierarchies. The project presents a collection of particularly feminine or domestic products specifically designed to be bought, used and then knowingly fail, but at an unknown point in time. The objects' catalytic malfunction would manufacture a situation of putting the woman in danger; facilitating the interaction of needing to be rescued.

The project challenges the male dominated design world and traditional roles of men and women, with objects created to be utilized by, empower and emancipate women; complete with their complex needs, emotions and sexual desires.



BEN CRANFIELD

CCA

Holding materials and other ways of mattering: archival ephemera outside of History

If the discipline of History has always been problematic for feminists, then Art History has been especially so (Broude and Garrard 2018: 1--15). Griselda Pollock, in approaching one of Art History's most troubling forms, the canon, suggests that feminism acts not just as a corrective to Art History's inclusion and exclusions, but is fundamentally antithetical to its disciplinary formations: it cannot simply amend or replace, but must undo its mythic structures (Pollock 2006: 18). Yet the archive, the *sine qua non* of the discipline of History, has long been a site of feminist work and practice. Whether through the formation of major archives, like New York's The Lesbian Herstory Archive, or through artists' projects like The Women's Art Library (MAKE), London, feminist archival work has been concerned less with the telling of a History, or even Herstory, than with the gathering-together of stories and materials to create sites of personal and political action, commonality and future production. So how might we form ways of being with the 'archives' of art institutions and art practice that produce, not just new histories of art, but different ways of being with the past in the present, and to what end? Furthermore, how might art practice be used to generate archival matter that sits before and after specific moments of historicisation to produce other ways of being with time that resonate with queer and feminist potential? It is precisely these question that I would like to take up in this paper presentation, specifically exploring the potential of ephemera - that which is produced as part-of, or as incidental to, events and projects, that is so often the matter

of informal and formal archives – to enact different ways of being with present-pasts and past-presents.

REFERENCES

Broude, N. and Garrard, M.D. (2018). *Feminism and art history: Questioning the litany*. London and New York: Routledge.
Pollock, G. *Differencing the canon: feminist desire and the writing of art's histories*. London and New York: Routledge.

HERMIONE WILTSHIRA

Senior Tutor, Photography

Productive Vaginas

This paper will ask if the view of the baby's head crowning, seen mainly by midwives, can be used to interrogate the theory of geometric perspective in order to find out if it is a gendered system of representation? Birth scenes in Fine Art are still relatively rare (Tyler 2009) and pictures of crowning even rarer only beginning to be seen in early modern medical studies produced in the 18th century. Most renditions of the birth scene from nativity paintings to contemporary television programmes like 'Call the Midwife' orientate the view to avoid looking directly between the birthing woman's legs. Any that do, provoke powerful responses both for and against. This paper will begin to account for this.

Historically, the direct view of women's genitals denotes a male artists' either medical or eroticized gaze. Since the 1930's, women artists have made pictures, sculptures, performances and films that challenge these representations of the female body and in doing re-open the question of affect in relation to the female genitals and the interior spaces of women's bodies in Western artworks since the Renaissance. Works by Frieda Khalo, Tracy Emin, Louise Bourgeois, Nikki Saint Phalle, Judy Chicago, Valie Export, Carolee Schneemann, Lynda Benglis, Cindy Sherman, Helen Chadwick, Jessica Clements and Catherine Breillat become defiant gestures that challenge the dominant rhetoric of the male gaze. This will be a richly illustrated presentation ending with 2014 legislation banning female ejaculation online.

AURA SATZ

Moving Image Tutor, Contemporary Art Practic

«She Recalibrates»

In recent years I have made a body of work which engages with key female figures that are largely excluded from mainstream historical discourse, as part of my ongoing engagement with the question of women's contributions to labour, technology and scientific knowledge. At present I am working on a series of drawings of hands of women who contributed to the development of electronic music, including Pauline Oliveros, Laurie Spiegel, Eliane Radigue, Delia Derbyshire, Daphne Oram, Maryanne Amacher, Suzanne Ciani, Wendy Carlos, and more. The hand on the frequency dial of an electronic synth is interpreted as a radical gesture of feminist instantia-

tion, inventing new soundscapes, and, in turn, new ways of listening. The dial becomes an emblem for recalibration, an indicator of the micro-perceptual act of sound-making and fine-tuned listening. To quote Daphne Oram, in this kind of compositional state, the 'act of one's sensory perception re-orientates itself —one slips into a different "frequency band", into a different "vantage point"'. My talk will include an excerpt of some sound works which engage with the feedback loop of fine-tuning, composing whilst listening.



NINA WAKEFORD

Senior Tutor, CAP

Smile?

Should feminists smile? Or should we, as Sara Ahmed and others have suggested, engage in a 'smile strike'? This presentation engages with smiling in the context of demands to perform (heterosexual) femininity but also as a gesture for machine recognition. I will show a set of works which I produced for Glasgow International 2018 including a performance about 'humourless lesbians', unsmiling puppets, and a roll of woven bookmarks which recognise the persistence of the injunction 'Give us a smile, love'. Although the focus here will be on the artworks, the performance and materials were produced alongside my engagements with the discussion of affect within feminist theory, particularly ideas about sentimentality, cruel optimism and affective attunement (Berlant, Hemmings, Stewart). I'm interested in how feminist (art)work might invent and deploy flat affect, or what Berlant calls "styles of underperformed emotion".

REBECCA FORTNUM

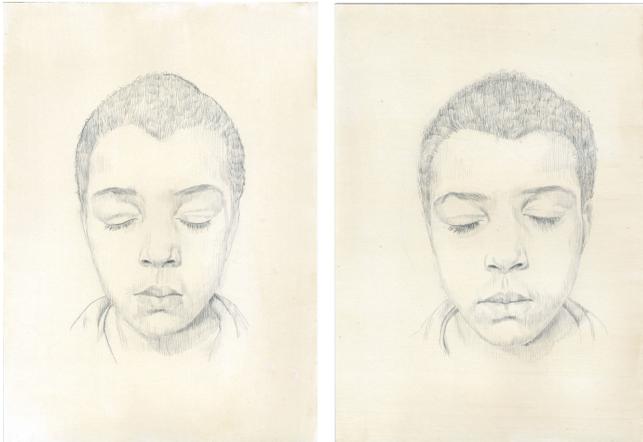
Senior Tutor, Research

Drawing's 'Touch' And The Maternal Gaze

This short presentation will reflect on several series of drawings of children, produced under the title *Dream*, that I exhibited at the Museum of Childhood and Anna Freud's Room in the Freud Museum between 2011-13. It will focus on their materiality and the process of their making, remarking on their origin in photography, the use of double images and the qualities of mark making and the context of exhibition. It will conclude with a discussion of how the maternal gaze can be seen at work in these drawings, a gaze that has been described as intimacy 'without judgment' (Walsh, 2013: 69-76) but perhaps also contains another, darker aspect that we are 'culturally blinded to', articulated by one critic as an 'all-consuming narcissism' (Williams, 2011:6).

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Materialising



site

CATHERINE DORMOR

Head of Research Programmes

Transnational belonging and subjectivity-in- process: contemporary women artists' encounters with space

Current nation-state narratives and rising nationalisms demand that we rethink notions of space and politics of access to space. We live in a crisis in which we need to renegotiate and reframe the potential of solidarity and cooperation. In rejecting the idea of space, Luce Irigaray names its patriarchal spatial exclusion, which renders women passive and removes them from participation with/in the community. Marsha Meskimmon's concept of 'be(long)ing' as a form of cosmopolitanism suggests novel ways of thinking about dislocated subjects, domesticity and citizenship.

Through such renaming and reframing, this paper focuses upon textile practices from Eastern Europe as model of practice that reset the politics of space and propose ways in which female agency can disrupt borders. This activates concerns around different modes of belonging, citizenship and transnationalisms. What is the potential of common and ethical figurations of being, human and non-human?

The session acknowledges ways in which generous encounters with space and a commitment to decolonize spaces through practices of solidarity, hospitality and friendship contribute to transversal thinking. The selected artists focus upon artmaking that articulates 'in-between' and co-affective models of belonging and questions current forms of citizenship and national subjectivity.

DENISE DE CORDOVA

Tutor, Sculpture

Deep Wood Women. Women Who Have Incidents With Animals.

These works are a result of a series of research trips to wilderness and remote territories in British Columbia, Canada, and the USA, visiting both settler and indigenous communities in order to experience first hand the sensations and thinking that can only take place by walking, usually alone, in deep wood spaces. The draw is fear and the uncanny, and a heightened awareness of mortality and vulnerability. In short, being really and magnificently alive. In my head, I walk with companions and heroines, both real and fictitious; Emily Carr (who can resist anyone who has an Art School named after the), Log Lady from Twin Peaks, Sacagawea, Fog and Volcano Woman, Isabella Bird, who become distilled and entwined entities that manifest as a series of figurative sculptures that explore the intercultural possibilities of dress, costumes and narratives that centre on identity, myth and folklore.

These are made things, embedded with details that are made in response to craft traditions or modes of production that I encounter when visiting First Nation Cultural Centres (not to mistaken for museums, as these are vibrant places that produce living culture). How this is approached is delicate, in order to avoid any issues of cultural appropriation.

FIONA CURRAN

Senior Tutor Mixed Media Textiles, School of Design

Your sweetest empire is to please

This presentation focuses on a recent public art commission for the National Trust estate of Gibside, North-East England – an architectural folly based on a 19th century Wardian case, a box used to transport plants and seeds by ship, filled with painted 'exotic' plants.

Gibside was the home of Mary Eleanor Bowes (1749-1800) and the commission focused on her interest in botany and the contested role that botany played in women's education and the gendering of knowledge during the 18th century. Botany was linked to 'polite' feminine activities including embroidery and music and seen as a suitable intellectual interest for girls. However, in advance of the Enlightenment, in depth material knowledge of plants, their medicinal properties and use as dyes, had long been the traditional preserve of women. Knowledge and skills were passed down through oral traditions between women contributing to early examples of feminist science.

Linguistic conventions were prevalent in the 18th century linking women with flowers and notions of purity, beauty and fragility. Mary Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), appropriated and subverted this play on floral references to draw attention to society's neglect of women's educational potential. Wollstonecraft confronted the contradictions implicit in Enlightenment ideas of gender by drawing attention to the ill effects suffered by women through inadequate education and the persistence of sentimental analogies between women and nature. Wollstonecraft substituted images of enlightened growth and cultivation with those of their opposite – curtailment, restriction and decay – suggesting that women had been reared like exotic plants or 'luxuriants.'

Using an example of site-related practice this project highlights alternative feminist epistemological traditions rooted in material practices of gardening and botany. In the process it also draws on further research into colonial histories of plant collecting and bioprospecting.



JENNIFER NIGHTINGALE

VisitingTutor, Visual Communication

Cornish Knitting Pattern film series

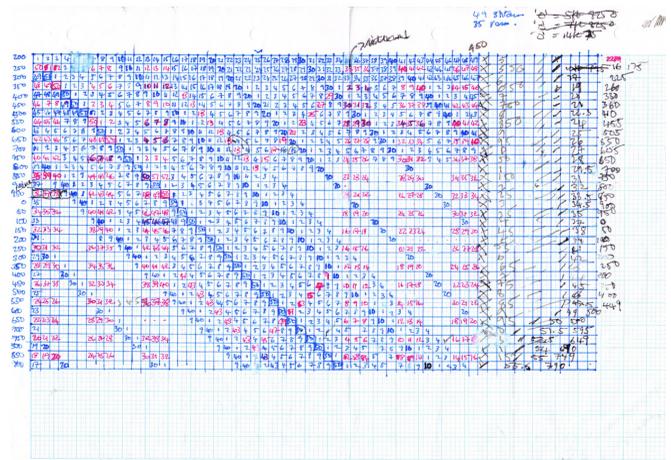
This paper will explore the analogies between textile production and film and the relationship between female practices and landscape. The presentation will center on a series of 16mm film/animations titled Cornish Knitting Patterns—outputs from period of practice-based research from 2015 to present—to highlight analogies between film and textile production and to ask questions on the relationship between the historical and cultural female practice of knitting and the landscape that has inspired it.

The experimental artist films are site specific having been shot in Cornwall's coastal landscape—a location significant in its production of historical knitting patterns that has produced patterns unique to individual fishing towns and visually representative of the landscape. The films create analogies between knitting and film practice. In the production methodology employed (single frame production) every knitted stitch from the pattern chart is translated to a frame of film wherein landscape becomes landscape as system-based-editing and both production processes (textile production and filmmaking) are highlighted as linear and durational. The series highlights not only the analogies coming out of the structural relationship between textiles and film practices but also the historical and cultural. The films embed the knitting patterns (a cultural practice of female labour linked to the fishing industry) back within the landscape and in doing so reimagines the patterns through not only the physical landscape, but also the cultural and historical landscape that inspired them.

It is important to me as a female filmmaker of the series to explore and question the female practices implicit in the work; women as producers, practitioners and carriers of the knowledge in non traditional means—i.e. the verbal exchange of knitting patterns or the context of experimental film. I will explore this with reference to other works of theory (Kruger) and practice (Rose Lowder).



Filming Vicar of Morwenstow (2016)



Porthleven F 1/8 Clancy 3.08.27th Feb 2016.

Shooting chart from Porthleven (2016) translating knitting pattern into editing system

LEAH FUSCO

Tutor, Research, Illustration

Marsh Women

This visual presentation draws together stories of women and wetlands, and examines their impact on the landscape, ecologically and culturally, through physical making.

Wetlands are transient in nature. Histories, identities and memories are dependent on fluctuating water levels, and alongside natural challenges to marsh environments, human interventions have irrevocably changed wetlands across the world. Boundaries between land and water shift, creating marginal territories. Cultural heritage often mirrors the physical geography of these landscapes – transformation is an inherent quality of wetlands - but often this heritage is at risk of draining away completely.

Moving across Mesopotamia (Iraq), Florida, (USA) and East Sussex, (UK) I put forward three examples of wetlands that have faced this challenge and how women have played a role in (re)materialising these sites. Spanning activism, labour and documentary, I want to look at how such landscapes have been brought back into being, geographically and/or culturally, using the physical act of making as a form of land reclamation. Drawing on geographic and historic subject matter, this presentation forms part of a wider body of work exploring past, present and future stories that observe the shaping of communities by physical environment. Approaching visual communication as a form of storytelling, I position contemporary illustration practice alongside other place-based disciplines in the exploration of time, space and movement. Broadly, my research investigates concepts of visualisation, imaging and graphic representation in understanding and communicating readings of transient landscapes and how illustrative strategies might be used to inform engagement with heritage, land use and policy.

Making

material

SHEHNAZ SUTERWALLA

Tutor, History of Design

Fake New(s)

This presentation is focused on the materiality of the female body and its representation in autofiction. In this work I read aloud a mashup of feminist autofiction that I have woven into a new, alternative text. Autofiction is a genre between fiction and autobiography in which the author, protagonist, and narrator share one identity. It is the fiction of real facts based on the adventure of language.

The women's autofictions that I am concerned with are writings that prioritise embodiment, and as such I propose that emotion within this genre is authoritative above and beyond the often disembodied—epic—nature of traditional autobiography. Simultaneously, in this presentation I use subcultural techniques of collage, cut and paste, bricolage and appropriation of text to focus on hybridity, métissage, structural fragmentation and multivoicing as feminist praxis. The project pivots on the experimental handling of autofiction as artefact and exposes its materiality as a designed and crafted method for emotional, sensorial and subjective experience. Together, these techniques are a deliberate rebuke and resistance to the increasing dominance of predictive algorithms and controlling 'zeros and one' that are dominating our digital and AI lives.

Instead: here we celebrate the unpredictability of a 'fake' material text that is expressed through manipulation in both its method and its form. The text sits at the interface between the material self and the immaterial imaginary, the real and the inauthentic, as both the subject and object of attention.

The presentation draws from feminist history, theory and literature that aims to break the historical silence and misrepresentation of women's material experience. The complexity created by textual play is a metaphor for intersectionality, where the sum is made of many parts. The result is like a textual hologram reflecting and refracting emotional intricacy and ambiguity so that fictional shimmers disrupt many gazes—male, colonial, digital—to privilege material polyphony as political practice.

CHANTAL FAUST

Senior Tutor Research, Critical & Historical Studies

Scratch the surface and there's just more surface:

On scanning, looking and touching

To think about touching implies a distance: a disembodied vision. This is the realm of the optic, the eye that sees, surveys and understands, that translates clearly visible matter into concepts that can be translated and understood. The relationship between knowledge and the ocular has longstanding foundations. To see things more clearly, to gain a better perspective over a situation, to give it a good hard look, to eyeball something: all of these sayings about seeing are bound up in forms of knowledge and critique. Needless to say, this kind of system has not been particularly kind to women and the optic has been legitimized, certified and ratified by art history.

This presentation looks at the intimacy of haptic visuality, focusing on scanning as a close-up form of vision, one which demands proximity. It considers the relationship between looking and touching, the fear of exposure, and the significance of surface encounters.



Feminisms and Materialities: After Gena Rowlands

ELEANOR DARE SENIOR

(Research) School of Communication, MA Digital Direction

Munging Analytica: God tricks, con tricks and yet more views from above.

In light of the recent exposure of Facebook 'leaks' and the claim by the now notorious, data brokerage firm *Cambridge Analytica*, that they used Facebook user's data to 'build 'models to exploit what we knew about them and target their inner demons' (2018), there is arguably a more pressing need than ever to evaluate some of the illusions of control and omniscience that prevail in writing and reporting about AI and broader computational technologies. One of the strengths of both Science and Technology Studies (STS) and a feminist STS, is their refusal to separate technology from politics, and, in the case of Donna Haraway's (1985, 1991, 2016) and Lucy Suchman's (2017) Situated approaches, a methodology that also provides us with an ethics of technological practice. This paper will critique the way in which AI is often presented within a technologically determinist trajectory, one that serves a neo-liberal status quo, but it will also outline alternative models, grounded in a materialist coding practice and an ethics that responds to, and learns from the entanglement of people and materials.

FREDDIE ROBINS

Senior Tutor, Knitted Textiles

Who's scared of the soft stuff?

The work that I produce is mostly soft and floppy, as textiles tends to be. This serves some practical purposes. Even a very

large piece can be rolled up and stored. However installing work for exhibition is another matter. I have spent a lot of time constructing invisible internal structures and suspending works from ceilings. Becoming frustrated with this process I have filled the soft forms to make them rigid and self-supporting, like traditional sculpture. This is not a perfect solution, it is denying the fabric it's inherent fluid, shape-shifting qualities. I have also become frustrated with the number of exhibitions that market themselves as exhibitions of textiles when the work is stretched flat and hung on the wall, like traditional painting. Whilst battling these contradictory positions it dawned on me that this question over the control of soft material also related to the way that the material of a woman's body is supposed to be controlled. We are constantly trying to keep the fat under control, or at least in place, through diet, exercise, the wearing of 'Spanx' and for the extreme, a 'tummy tuck'. A large number of swimming costumes also contain 'tummy control panels'. I heard a comment on the radio from an elderly woman who had asked a swimming costume retailer why they couldn't stock swimming costumes without these panels as they were uncomfortable and irritated her skin. The reply was that 'normal women' wanted these panels. She said "but I'm in my seventies and I don't care if my stomach isn't flat". Why would you have a flat stomach at seventy, gravity, if not childbearing, would definitely make that an impossibility, and more importantly why should you care if you are fit enough to swim? Why are we so scared of the soft stuff?

DR HARRIET HARRISS

School of Architecture, RCA

Blocks versus Knots

In his pioneering treatise entitled, 'The Four Elements of Architecture' (1851), Gott Semper asserted that the threading, twisting and knotting of threads – as opposed to the massing of blocks of stone – are the foundation from which all else was derived: not just textiles but also buildings. Furthermore, he argued that, 'the beginning of building, coincides with the beginning of textiles,' and that the most fundamental element of both building and textiles, was the knot.

When Gropius opened Bauhaus in 1919, he declared equality between the sexes. Whereas previously German women could only receive an arts education at home, at the Bauhaus, they were free to participate in school-situated courses. Today, the men of the Bauhaus – such as Gropius & Mies van der Rohe are celebrated. The women however - such as Gunta Stölzl and Benita Otte (both weavers) – have in contrast been largely forgotten. One exception is Anni Albers, who only became successful after she abandoned the Bauhaus in 1933. So when Gropius insisted that there would be «no difference between the beautiful and the strong sex» – his choice of words betray his real views: that the «strong sex» were to be directed towards painting, carving and, from 1927 onwards – architecture, whereas the «beautiful sex» had to be mostly content with weaving.

Anni Albers' "Intersecting", 1962, Otti Berger, Tasttafel aus Fäden 1930's, Gunta Stölzl in the Bauhaus studio.

Indeed, Gropius believed women thought in «two dimensions», and men thought in three. Subsequently, weaving and textiles became the only medium through which women could perhaps subversively express their spatial expertise. Or as Gunta Stölzl - the first female studio director of the Bauhaus asserted, «we wanted to create living things with contemporary relevance, suitable for a new style of life. Huge potential for experimentation lay before us. It was essential to define our imaginary world, to shape our experiences through material, rhythm, proportion, colour and form.» This presentation will examine the spatial legacies created by the textile structures produced by Stölzl, Otte & Albers, examining how their methods shared concepts with and have influenced interior design as well as their impact upon contemporary, three-dimensional textile works. It will also illustrate how the textiles produced by the Bauhaus women were three-dimensional studies in their own right – through a process of, “supporting, impeding or modifying” the tensions between structure and material” (Smith, 2014). Furthermore, it will contrast recent pedagogic & practice-situated experiments in form finding and spatial innovation that involve woven structures as opposed to block models, proposing that textiles should be more often used as a means solve structural and spatial problems – and as subsequently contend that textiles should also be considered a key component within the canon of the 20th Century architecture and interior design.

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JO STOCKHAM

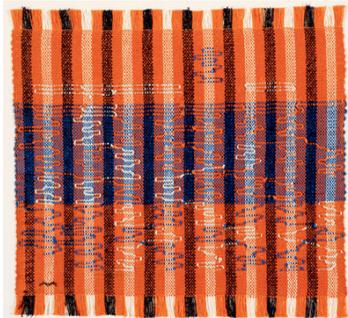
Feminism and Materiality

When giving a talk in the context of a show including my work, about Arte Povera a young woman art student in the audience asked «how could I get into this kind of work'. It made me reflect on my own development as an artist, how entering the builder's merchant in search of supplies is still a trial and how the way workshops embrace or sometimes subtly deflect female students, or anyone without the kinds of technical backgrounds in tool use and material know that are traditionally inscribed as male.

The recent film about Eva Hesse talked about she and Sol Lewit would trawl the second yards and builder's merchants of Canal Street in search of materials for her work. The kind of industrial waste and hardware she used is increasingly invisible in the city of London as manufacturing moves elsewhere. My Cannon disrupts a kind of Canon in this regard bringing together the domestic and the industrial (most scientific and technological advances are still driven by military imperatives.) In a time where STEM and STEAM are being debated it how women access the materialities of world making both as students and as participants in shaping public space is ever more important.

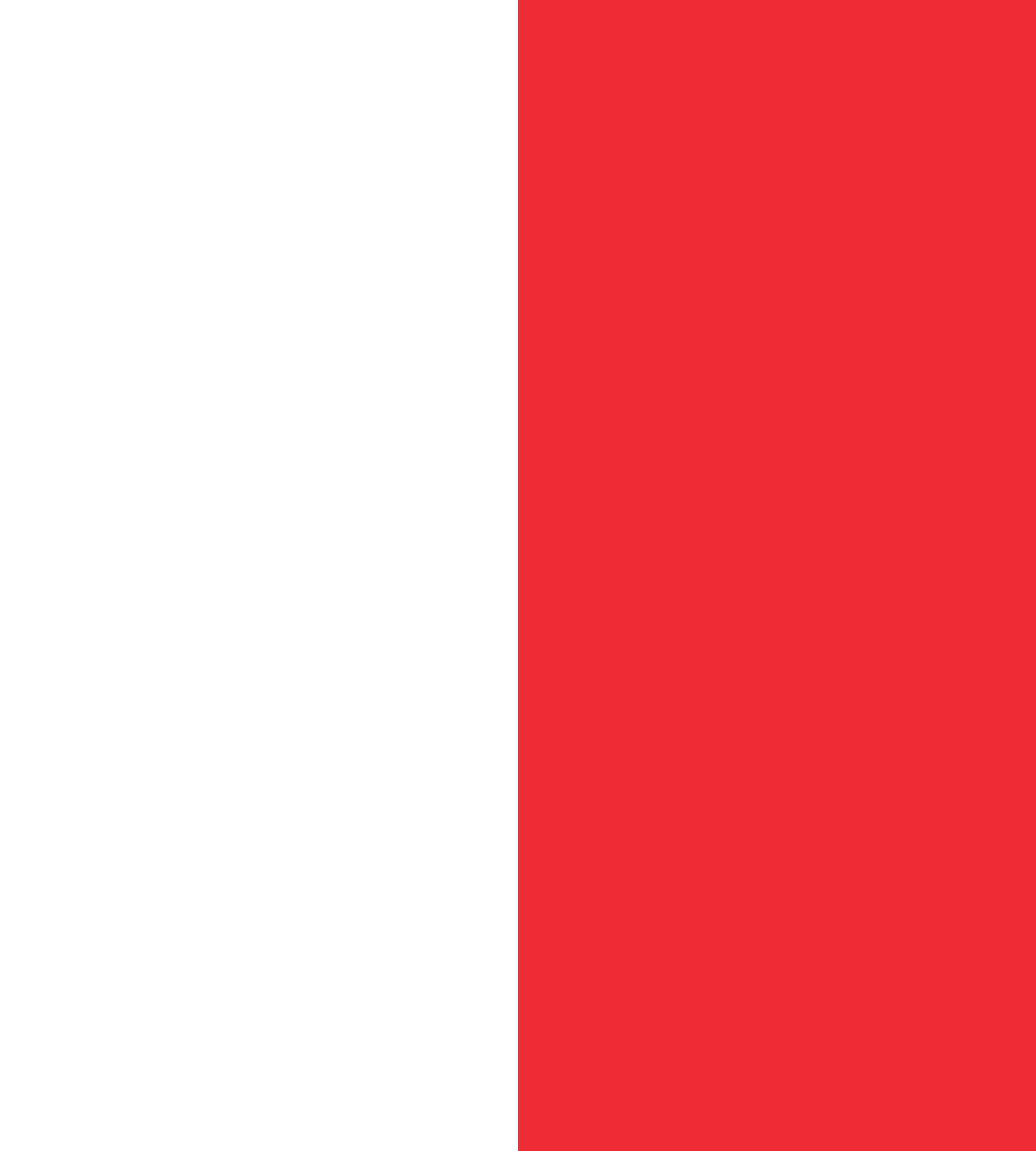


Knotted, interior space, MA students, (2014) [AND] Red, Yellow, Blue: Public Installation by Israeli-American Orly Genger in Madison Square Park using knotted, recycled lobster rope (2014).



Anni Albers' "Intersecting", 1962, Otti Berger, Tasttafel aus Fäden 1930's, Gunta Stolz in the Bauhaus studio.





The Mattering of Little Mother

The generative process of making in textiles enables an inner knowing of the self while engaged in a transformative process. This nuance became meaningful when reading Kristeva's declaration, "Matricide is our vital necessity, the *sine qua non* of our individuation and our first step on the way to autonomy". (Kristeva 1989, p. 38). It interested me to use the model of the heroine's path of individuation and stitch together a possible meaning of Kristeva's text as a contribution to textile thinking. The mattering of encountering holds the potential to unpick, 'What goes on during embodied textile making'. The loss of the mother becomes the quotidian search of the little mother within us.

Positioning textile making as central to the methodology using auto-ethnographic observations and self disclosure, support this movement to the call of materials. The tacit, encountering of texture that first intuits the road of trials opens the dialogue. The material is cut and separated. One descends into the shadow of ourselves triggered by the materiality. One crosses the threshold of the sub-conscious, using a needle to pierce the cloth, tensing the thread to unify the fabric. The ascent begins, renewal and reparation is meshed. This continues until we are unified, or the emotional self is synthesised.

I suggest in this research, that textile making is a performative enquiry that examines the psychological value of textile making. The iteration of the heroine's journey opens a liminal space to experience the necessary self-care that contributes to autonomous individuation and wellbeing.



'Retouching the Archive: Unknown Women in Early Photography in Scotland'

Photography is much more than alchemy. Power and privilege were present at its very inception. The history of photography has long been constructed and reproduced in such a way that many of the living, breathing participants of its earliest period remain unknown. Principal among them are women. It is forty-seven years since Linda Nochlin's ruptural 1971 essay became a cornerstone for uncovering the institutional barriers that have shaped women's encounters in the arts. We are only now coming to terms with how photography was gendered from its very inception. Early photographic discourse was replete with references to the female body, yet its qualification as art was secured on profoundly masculine terms (Galifot 2015). Women may have been cast as artistic, but rarely as artists in the late-Victorian era (Riches 2015). This gendering of photography, its close association with the female body, has been accompanied by the historical erasure of the agency of actual women, their hands, their thinking and self-activity that helped shape the medium through its fin de siècle phase.

CAROLINE WARD

Mres Architecture and Communication Design

Before the Creative City: investigating as affect in researching the Creative City

As a research group we were tasked with exploring modes of creative production that take a different view of the creative industries in London. The creative industries are often celebrated at the point of display as the iconic, on display. Yet where and when creative production happens, is often hidden from view. Here I describe more-than-human, inventive methods (Lury and Wakeford, 2014) that began foraging for mushrooms with my partner and developed through a series of walks around a civic landscape of interest both alone, with the research group and with an assemblage of DIY sensors. How does your everyday environment enable creative becoming to happen? Walking at a certain pace, wandering on foot, lends itself to looking, sensing and discovering textures, experiencing civic spaces. I consider an approach, a turn on the 'investigative flaneur' (Benjamin, 2003). As a queer,



feminist, disabled designer I experienced a civic landscape of interest through walking and imagined measurements of the city, which extended my perceptions of what supports creativity to in-between spaces, the air we breathe and the entangled, more-than-human presence of humans, non-humans and materials in cities (Barad, 2007).

Walking through my research, applying a slowness and patience to looking I let myself be affected by my surroundings as well as being aware of my affect in the surroundings. Over three separate walks, I used an element of 'bricolage' to create a bodily extended sensory and audiovisual assemblage. This list of assembled materials extended from me and my phone (walk one and two) to me, a camera, audio recorder, light and wind speed recorder (walk three).

This moves towards ethical, inventive methods (Lury and Wakeford, 2014) in performing, becoming, assembling and critiquing intersectional transdisciplinary practice-based research, offering a sense of a place through affect. It intersects across Haraway's 'situated practice', considers Pink's sensory ethnography 'at home' using everyday activities, e.g. walking and readily available tools (Pink, 2015). It re-emphasises placing resistance against humanist research practices (Braidotti, 2013; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017), questioning modes of academic performance, fosters intellectual activism (Hill, 2013) and considers the right to opacity (Glissant, 2009) as more-than-human lives entangle with methods.

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CATHARINE CARY

Quite honestly, I still don't have a handle on it. So this abstract is the touch of the moment of now, where I am moving in the time/space continuum, perched on the liminal edge, hoping to

fill the void with colors (Camus) and dancing faster than my shadow to enter into the now. In this entangled world whose description owes as much to Karen Barad *Transmaterialités* as it does to the Buddhism's Garland Flower Sutra.

DESPINA ZACHAROPOULOU

RCA Researcher in Fine Art (Performance)

“Spatium Monstrorum”

“[...] the monster is a process without a stable object. It makes knowledge happen by circulating, sometimes as the most irrational non-object.”¹

My practice-led PhD research, focuses on live performance in order to investigate whether the artistic practice might generate a parrhesiastic moment. A moment that is allowed to happen through a certain kind of wandering driven by curiosity, a certain kind of flânerie, otherwise called: ζήτησις (zētēsis).² Παρηγοσία (parrhesia) is an ancient greek term meaning; the courage of truth, as viewed after Michel Foucault's move.³ The parrhesiastic moment, being the moment of the encounter, allows for a certain kind of truth to be generated; while and at the same time that this truth is *circulated*. This circulation of truth thus presents itself as a kind of currency, which is allowed to emerge and circulate through a certain kind of encounter among different entities, that are co-created during this encounter. In that sense, the parrhesiastic moment is actually: a moment of *entanglement*.⁴

I would argue that, in order for the performer to generate a parrhesiastic moment, they have to get rid of the body's subjectivity and signification, and function as matter, or as Professor J.Golding would say: as *corpse*.⁵

I would call this kind of performing body-matter-corpse: *spatium monstrorum*. And this body is not (only) the performer's physical body: it is matter, it is space, it is the audience, it is energy and it is truth that circulates.

Supervised by Prof. J.Golding and Prof. N.Rolfe & supported by the Onassis Foundation.

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- 2 Ζήτησις v. ζητέω 1.a seeking, seeking for, search for a thing, c. gen., Hdt., Soph., etc. 2.a searching, search, ποιέεσθαι ζήτησιν τῶν νεῶν to search the ships, Hdt. 3.inquiry, investigation, Plat.,» in H.G.Liddell, & R.Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford. Clarendon Press. 1940). Indicated to me by my Supervisor Prof. J.Golding.
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EMILY HOONG

MRes Communication Design

What Messages are Conveyed in Menstrual Product Packaging?

Communications distributed by the menstrual product industry such as educational material and advertisements has a history of maintaining negative attitudes towards menstruation. In educational material, the size of illustrated reproductive anatomy are often distorted, vague terms are used, and negative, rather than positive aspects of menstruation are highlighted. In menstrual product advertisement, themes of silence and shame, embarrassment, ways to get caught, how to avoid getting caught, and dirtiness are present. However,

little study has been conducted into menstrual product packaging, a space which may be used by the menstrual product industry to further enforce negative attitudes towards menstruation.

My current MRes project aims to address this gap by investigating messages on menstrual product packaging. The research looks at menstrual product packaging across a range of brands — international and local that specialises in different types of menstrual products including disposable menstrual products (pads and tampons), reusable menstrual products (menstrual underwear and menstrual cups), and menstrual product accessories (disposable bags, washes, and wipes).

Ethnography is being used to determine international and local brands which will be used as samples for this study. Discourse analysis is then used to investigate messages on the identified brands and the frequency of arising themes.

Themes found in communications distributed by the menstrual product industry can be found in menstrual product packaging. However, new themes have also been identified. An example is discretion for stylistic purposes. Bodyform offers black liners ‘for ultimate discretion with black underwear’. The purpose of *Black Liner Normal* is to hide the menstrual product itself, a step further from hiding menstruation. This product exhibits a turn from providing functional menstrual products towards fashionable menstrual products. Through this, Bodyform has found a new way of profiting off a natural bodily function.

As a commodity that can be easily found in store, menstrual product packaging has a powerful position in influencing attitudes towards menstruation, at least to half of the population. Therefore, in identifying messages and themes embedded into menstrual product packaging, new ways of using this space to re-adjust attitudes towards menstruation can be explored.



JULES FINDLEY

PhD Textiles Research, School of Design

Feminist Substrate

Substrate is the key component of making paper. The first part in making the substrate is to break down all that is known into

the watery mix to make something new. The argument is that new knowledge materialises with the bonding of atoms that physically mix with the substrate, binding it together to form something new. Tactile, soft, strong yet fragile, paper is the ultimate feminist ideal that should be called 'her', 'she', instead of 'it' in the making of paper. Paper can be made as skin mimicry. She does not stretch like skin does unless other materials are added to the substrate. Otherwise like skin, she easily tears, partly transparent, uneven in texture, paper retains memory and embodies materiality that can move forward into a feminist ideal. 'It's good to have a vision. Even if it's flawed, or turns out to be not what you expected' Mary Kelly described of her Post-Partem Document installation exhibited at the ICA in the 'seventies' (The Guardian, 18th May, 2015). The watery substrate is remixed, remade, out of chaos emerges new knowledge, materialised, chewed, embodied, containing some imperfections. She retains what has gone before and absorbs the new. The arguments are that these meta creations are the purest forms of feminist research, and the potential development of new scientific and creative materiality.



KAREN BOSY
SoC IED MPhil/PhD

Inside here: daydreaming space and the immaterial monument

In this research, the role of the monument in art practice is explored as a way to interrogate the ways in which affect and daydreaming operate in immaterial artworks. The monument as a commemorative representation projects forward a notion of possible futures (Lefebvre, 1970) (Krauss, 1979) and in this way, the affective and relational space (Massey, 2005) of the monument occasions contemplation. Theorist Brian Massumi relates affect to process (Grieg and Seigworth, 2010) and affect is a corporeal dimension of imagination as conveyed by Doreen Massey drawing on Spinoza's writings in *For Space* (2005). For Massey, places can be conceptualised as processes within intersubjective, relational space. The relational, affective space of the monument as a prompt for day-dreaming, as a form of contemplation (Bachelard, 1957), is explored within art practice including in my own continuing process-based exploration

through practice.

As an example, Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* (1979) takes the form of a commemorative document. Traditional connotations of the monument including scale become elements exploring provocation through a connection made with feminism. This artwork evokes the monument's connection to contemplation (Lefebvre) while juxtaposing it with the female 'everyday' of women's decorative arts as well as with the irrelevant (Arendt) through the inclusion of representations of sexuality. Its affective (Massumi) (Kristeva) celebration of materiality (Taussig) and the processes by which it was made was well received in Toronto when exhibited at the AGO in 1982. As a student in Toronto at the time, *The Dinner Party's* cancelled US museum tour raised questions regarding the process of dissemination of ideas, which is related to the decisions inherent in the divide between irrelevant and relevant, private and public domains (Arendt). In some ways, feminist publications including Riot Grrrl zines (1990s - present) can be considered a progression from this, ideologically as well as in terms of dissemination, as they benefited from developments in computer technology allowing a new ability to disseminate globally (Triggs). Following on from this, part of the findings of this research will be to determine what might be gained and what might be lost in art's progression towards immateriality.



KMBosy, *film 6*, 2017

MARITA FRASER
Mphil/Pdf Fine Art, RCA

Writing and Performing 'The Dative': New Forms of Notation for Scoring Excess.

At a moment in history where the location of knowledge is contested space, my research examines how contemporary writing, sculpture and performative practice approach and articulate unstable knowledge. Utilising writing as sculptural material, combining fictive text, poetry and scripts with performers, objects and sculpture, my research uses text as scoring to record this textual-material grouping, speaking in multiple unstable voices, as a mutable chorus of excess. Here excess is understood as the subjective, speculative and unstable relationships between sculptural and narrative elements.

My research utilises ‘the dative’ as a term to describe the performative event’s recorded excess. Following from Feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray’s re-purposing ‘the dative’ from a noun passively receiving, to a feminist term articulating an active space of intimate exchange, this project utilises ‘the dative’s’ potential as textual mapping of performative and sculptural excess, to produce a new contribution to feminist fine-art writing and sculptural practice.

My research-through-practice examines personal and social frameworks encoded in institutional, artistic and domestic spaces of artistic patronage and production, writing into relationships with historical/contemporary characters including much over-looked designer/artist Margaret Mackintosh (1865-1933) through her archive, as well as furniture and domestic ephemera through its use in sculptural practice. This research utilises feminist writing strategies of direct-speech (Irigaray), performing gender (Butler), fictionalisation of the self (Nelson and Kraus) and ficto-criticism (Randolf), to conflate voices of real/imagined, contemporary/historical, animate/inanimate, characters, architecture, furniture and archival records, producing new written and performative sculptural texts. Research outcomes will be new writing methods and terms for scoring performance and the production of new performative text works; a libretto of ‘the dative’.

MELANIE KING

<http://www.MelanieK.co.uk>

My practice based research focuses on what it is to capture *Ancient Light* that has been travelling for thousands, if not millions, of years on to photosensitive film. On a recent residency and field trip to Iceland in February 2018, I wandered out into the darkness alone at night, and began to think of the gender politics surrounding the work that I do. I fight against feelings that have their roots in society and my own upbringing, that a woman should not be outside alone in darkness. I do not know many female photographers that go out alone at night, nor do I know female amateur-astronomers who take their telescope outside at night. Throughout the course of history, existing professional female astronomers are overlooked, but they have incredible stories. Caroline Herschel, for example, found many important comets but is in the shadow of her brother John Herschel and father William Herschel. Dara Sobel recently wrote «The Glass Universe» which focuses on an all female group of astronomers based at Harvard Observatory. Throughout this presentation, I will share some of my practice-based research on what it is to be a female photographer exploring nocturnal landscapes, as well as operating in a male dominated environment. I will also share the stories of female artists and astronomers who have used the night sky as their inspiration.

MIREILLE FAUCHON

Don't Believe the Papers...

Illustrative Interpretations of a Croydon Suffragette

Katie Gliddon (1883-c.1965) was a member of the Croydon branch of the Women's Social and Political Union. In 1912 Gliddon, a Slade educated artist and teacher, was sentenced to hard labour and imprisoned for two months in Holloway Goal for breaking a pane of glass in a post office door as part of the Suffragette mass glass smashing campaign. She was 28 years old.

While detained she kept a diary hidden in the margins of an anthology of poetry by Percy Bysshe Shelley. Gliddon was deeply informed by her time in Holloway and post release continuously edited and revised her account with the intention of her record eventually being published. It never was. The presentation will discuss the process of interpreting and creatively responding to Gliddon's evolving narrative and the emergence of a signature feminist methodology. The project forms part of a practice-based PhD utilising narrative illustration to describe and communicate location specific socio-cultural narratives. The research explores how and why personal and local histories, particularly women's stories, are preserved, what is deemed to be worthy of documentation and how this knowledge is both formally and informally understood and shared within the locations of experience. The research process always begins in the local archive, museum and/or library where narratives are excavated and interrogated through a process of 'illustrative thinking'. The intention is to investigate what is known of the past and how this is understood in the present whilst also exploring how this new knowledge is articulated for future reference.

Mireille Fauchon is a London born illustrator, educator and practice-based PhD candidate at Kingston University, London. The research is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council in association with the London Doctoral Design Centre.



NINA TRIVEDI

I am interested in how writers like Stacy Alaimo work with science fictional tropes and narratives in order to examine feminist new materialisms understanding of the manifestations of materialist shifts - whether as a reference to language, to technology, to networks or the body.

In Stacy Alaimo's, *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self*, she performs a literary analysis of Greg Bear's science fiction novels, *Darwin's Radio* and *Darwin's Children*. Alaimo refers to Bear's writing as a "post-human environmental ethics" and she considers how science fictional tropes can offer a pathway into how we may re-think our shared relationships with the non-human. In Bear's narratives, the role of non-human bacteria in creating life is questioned, as an endogenous retrovirus called *SHEVA* mutates and creates a new post-human species called, "virus children," through female human bodies. According to Alaimo, if we want the post-human to matter, then we have to make matter matter and we need to dispel the idea of our being alone in the universe.

Alaimo also she uses the concept of «trans-corporeality» to indicate the porosity of the bodies and inseparability of bodies and the environment. Alaimo theorises that with *trans-corporeality*, human bodies and non-human natures are open to one another. Therefore, what we do to the environment- we do to ourselves- whether through or with pollution of water, soil or air. From Alaimo's standpoint, bodies cannot be reduced to discursive constructions, or essentialist beings. Alaimo uses examples of everyday objects, such as plastics, and writes about how they enter our bodies, especially in the case of people with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS). Other cases she mentions are environmental justice problems or persons exposed to minerals and uranium in mining. She says "one of the central problematics of *trans-corporeality* is contending with dangerous, often imperceptible material agencies." Alaimo's aim is to erase the boundary between inside and outside through these real-world examples. Alaimo cautions against the divisions and distinctions between human and non-human natures, contending that bodies don't "exist before or beyond the material relations with their environments."

MRS. SHALINI SAHOO

Royal College of Art

MRS. STEPHANIE SPINDLER

Chelsea College of Arts

Material, Senses and getting Embodied; she making

The following text on "Material, Senses, getting Embodied and She-Making" has been generated in a dynamic dialogue between Stephanie Spindler, an artist-researcher working with new materialism and feminist phenomenology and Shalini Sahoo a material designer working on harmonising-Human-Material-Interaction within public transportation systems. As a child, I remember vividly using a cardboard box as a shelter, an imaginary dwelling in which I discovered privacy. It was the space between myself and the interior atmosphere of the box, slightly dark, quiet, a soft palpable sense of being alone within this environment.

Shared spaces in flow within technologically most advanced settings like hospitals, train stations and airports are often associated with a feeling of alienation, detachment and solitude. Although these spaces are often beautified with the dominance of satiating the visual they exclude all other senses

from participation into the space resulting in a feeling of detachment, isolation and exteriority.

It was a temporary architecture that enabled me to feel that whatever I did within this space was my own. It was in this moment that I became aware of myself. This was the power of this temporary architecture, it brought my attention to the possibility of and the intention to be my own person, agency, a theory of myself.

Ocularcentrism is the basis on which our consume-centric world benefits from the easiest and the most precarious of senses - the eye. Leaving behind the other senses like the aural, the olfactory and the haptic to coincidences. Making our urban landscape, thus a random puzzle of whims and fancies of various stakeholders.

'Art, especially the first and most primordial of the arts, architecture, is thus a particular linkage between living bodies and the forces of the earth, formed above all through rhythm' (Grosz, 2011 p.171).

Our technological advancements has connected and alienated us simultaneously from our material world. To summarize Grosz, in order for art to emerge, provisional territory must be secured in order for qualities or properties to be extracted and for bodies to resonate, intensify, transform or effect.

"Modernists design at large has housed the intellect and the eye, but it has left the body and the other senses, as well as our memories, imagination and dreams, homeless." (Pallas-maa, J., 2012)

SHANNON FORRESTER

RISE – a reparative encounter

"When art intervenes into politics, it happens via the cultural public sphere, where art by way of its specific formal and thematic tools creates 'odd' new insights and ways of experiencing, and on this basis offers its own, specific space of reflection as a mirror to other discursive fields, including the political." ¹

In the Oxford Dictionary, technology is defined as "the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes." ² Subverting patriarchal visualizations, definitions, and oppression of women is eminently practical and the tools it requires are often scientific as well as creative. As such, I propose using feminism as a technology to transform often marginalizing mass media visual culture images through communal cutting, reassembling, and pasting into reparative and powerful visual interventions. What is described here is an experiential cooperative collage session to occur within the context of the *Feminisms and Materialisms* symposium. The active collage encounter will allow the audience to participate in investigation, reimagining, and interrogation of contemporary mass media imagery using magazine, newspaper, and other printed media. It will hold making, transforming, and creating with material at its core. Using the image fragments, participants will create new collaborative collages that explore what aesthetic interventions can be used to visualize women in reparative and

liberatory embodiments. The collages will seek to create uplifting and empowering content with feminist aims while unmaking and/or telling the truth about the tropes and violence of patriarchal visual cultures produced in the printed mass media material used to create the collages.

A subject is commonly understood as an observer and an object as a something which is observed. Shamik Dasgupta defines object as “a statement of what something is...”³ This idea could offer a prompt as we seek to create art objects that are moved toward a form of parrhesia, collaborative art that looks to tell the truths of the value, power, and heroism of women.

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SHARON BOOTHROYD

Boundaries and Slippages of the Self: Photography and autobiographical fiction in the performance of female fantasy and delusion.

Boundaries and Slippages seeks to reduce stigmatisation around psychosis, delusion and fantasy in female patients and operates as an urgent feminist enquiry into the value of ‘feminine discourse’ in contemporary society.

Photography is strategically placed, with its indexical relationship to ‘the real’, to portray alternate and ambiguous versions of ‘truth’. Psychiatrist David Kupfer reports that people who experience extreme mental states (such as paranoia, delusions etc) function on the same spectrum of brain activity as everyone else¹. This research comes in the context of increasing mental health problems; thirty three percent of all women reported as having been diagnosed with a mental health problem in 2015 [Mind, 2017]. This project seeks to increase awareness and reduce stigma around mental health and in-so-doing give agency to the female voice through the production of ‘feminine fictions’ by working in partnership with Dr. Benjamin Attwood (Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry) and Martin Smith, psychotherapist at The Priory.

By gathering source material through archives and case-studies about women’s experiences of delusions I will interpret this data through the production of large scale photographic art and fictionalised narratives. I will present lived experience and research from healthcare settings to new audiences in a research environment of multidisciplinary expertise.

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Subtext of a Dream, 2017

