

Sharing Space and Taking Care: Intersectional Feminist Approaches to Art Practice

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Abstract

Sharing Space and Taking Care: Intersectional Feminist Approaches to Art Practice explores the possibilities inherent within feminist art making to extend care (as a practice and a concept) to its audience. Through the examination of emancipatory theories of art by Jacques Rancière, and the feminist concerns of the conflation between labour and care for feminist subjects, installation, performance and drawing are used to investigate those caring possibilities within art.

The theories of Lola Olufemi, Donna Haraway, Legacy Russell, Joan Tronto, Audre Lorde, Judith Butler and Luce Irigaray are examined to animate a feminist argument for creative world building and embodied knowledge. Intersectionality is explored and reveals the problems associated with gender and constituting women, whilst simultaneously pointing to the potential for sharing space *through* intersectional inclusive practices.

It is my contention that intersectional feminist art, in particular installation, is capable of holding the complex experiences of women in tension together, and that this capacity invests the audience in the process of re-imagining the world, outside of their current conditions or their responsibilities under capitalism. This manner of investing the audience in the process of re-imagining the world, outside of their current conditions, promotes a sense of agency, and as such can be viewed as an act of care. The receipt of care is what promotes meaningful engagement for people with the world that surrounds them. In this way, I think of care acting as a catalyst for the ability to engage with the world in a self-determined, meaningful way. The installation space holds a shared, common ground for that imaginative enterprise to take place. For art to engage its audience with the possibility of agential world re-imagining and engagement, a type of care has to have taken place.

The work of intersectional feminist artists Tai Shani, Lee Bul, Emily Perry, Jenny Saville and Jade Montserrat is discussed to evidence the argument for the caring potential of art and the sharing of space. The exploration of gender as performance and the potential of repetition and parody to enact agency through that performance leads to an examination of ASMR, mesmerism and mediumism. The slow process of drawing is considered in relationship to the visibility, bodily autonomy and agency available to women and marginalised genders, and as an extended act of care for the bodies that are represented. The possibility to view the body as landscape and journey are alluded to in the investigation of the fat body.

Finally, each element is brought together and interpreted as an abstract, embodied and bodily journey realised through the installation.

INTRODUCTION

In my report I explore the potential of *sharing space* and *taking care* as ways to examine and describe intersectional feminist art practices. My title refers to a framing system I have worked under since 2017 and a research concern that has continued since my MA ended in 2011.

The report begins with an introduction to my practice from my Bachelors in Fine Art to the start of the doctorate in 2018, where I make apparent an interest in the audience reception of art works that continues as a theme throughout my practice to date.

The Creative Practice and Theory section of the report is divided into the main outputs of my practice: Installation; ASMR and Drawing; and through each of these, I explore artists and theories that address the predominant argument of this report: that intersectional, feminist art practice holds the potential to make and share space with groups of people frequently excluded from the arts due to gendered caring responsibilities. The concerns of my practice demonstrate the longstanding influences of care and the potential of art for the audience. These are explored and informed by the theories and writing of Jacques Rancière and feminist theorists such as Lola Olufemi, Donna Haraway, Judith Butler, Legacy Russell and Joan Tronto.

Intersectionality is discussed as foundational to my understanding of feminism, particularly when navigating the history of the women's movement in order to understand its place within art production. The political endeavour of including those who are frequently excluded from inhabiting these commonly held spaces is revealed as a necessary demonstration of care to those who are least likely to receive it. And the gendered female body is discussed as a site for journeying and world building.

Sharing space and taking care are framed and expanded upon as a way to think about intersectional feminist art practices and how I can shape my own practice. Installations and performances by Tai Shani and Lee Bul are scrutinised as consistent influences. I then consider the project of care and sharing space as a foundation from which to explore the world building possible through installation.

Development of performance as a site for interrupting perceptions of gender through parody and repetition are examined in relation to ASMR, mesmerism and mediumism, and through the work of Emily Perry. The Creative Practice and Theory section of the report concludes with drawing, a

mainstay of my practice, within which I explore women's visibility and capacity to hold space through discussion of the works of Jenny Saville and Jade Montserrat.

My prior professional experience as exhibitions and curation intern at Focal Point Gallery from 2017 – 2018, my experience as Gallery Assistant at Focal Point Gallery from 2018 – 2021, coupled with my role as Project Manager at The Old Waterworks from 2020 - 2022 and subsequent promotion to Co-Director in 2022, has resulted in a prolonged and in depth understanding and consideration of the audience. This has further been supported through my fellowship with the British Council in Venice, where I spent a month assisting a breadth of international audiences in their reception of Golden Lion winner Sonia Boyce's work. This professional framework has supported research into accessibility as understood through intersectionality and informs my discussion of the audience throughout the report and in my resulting VIVA exhibition. The work itself makes use of British Sign Language, supporting written information, multi-sensory stimuli and a physically accessible layout with seating to accommodate as broad an intersect of audiences as possible.

Accessibility is understood as greater than purely physical access, but as economic, classed and gendered accommodations (amongst others) and is a key responsibility for my position as Co-Director at The Old Waterworks. As such this has greatly influenced my approach to considering and making work and environments more welcoming and accessible to people across numerous intersects, which is accounted for in my discussion throughout the report.

1.0 PERSONAL AND CREATIVE CONTEXT

Art and object-hood was the principal research focus during the final year of my BA. I was interested in audiences and how they perceive meaning from artworks and objects with more immediacy and subtlety than language permits. I explored methods of codifying art works through scientific abstractions to induce audience engagement in meaning, using an aesthetic that derived from Systems Art and Minimalism.

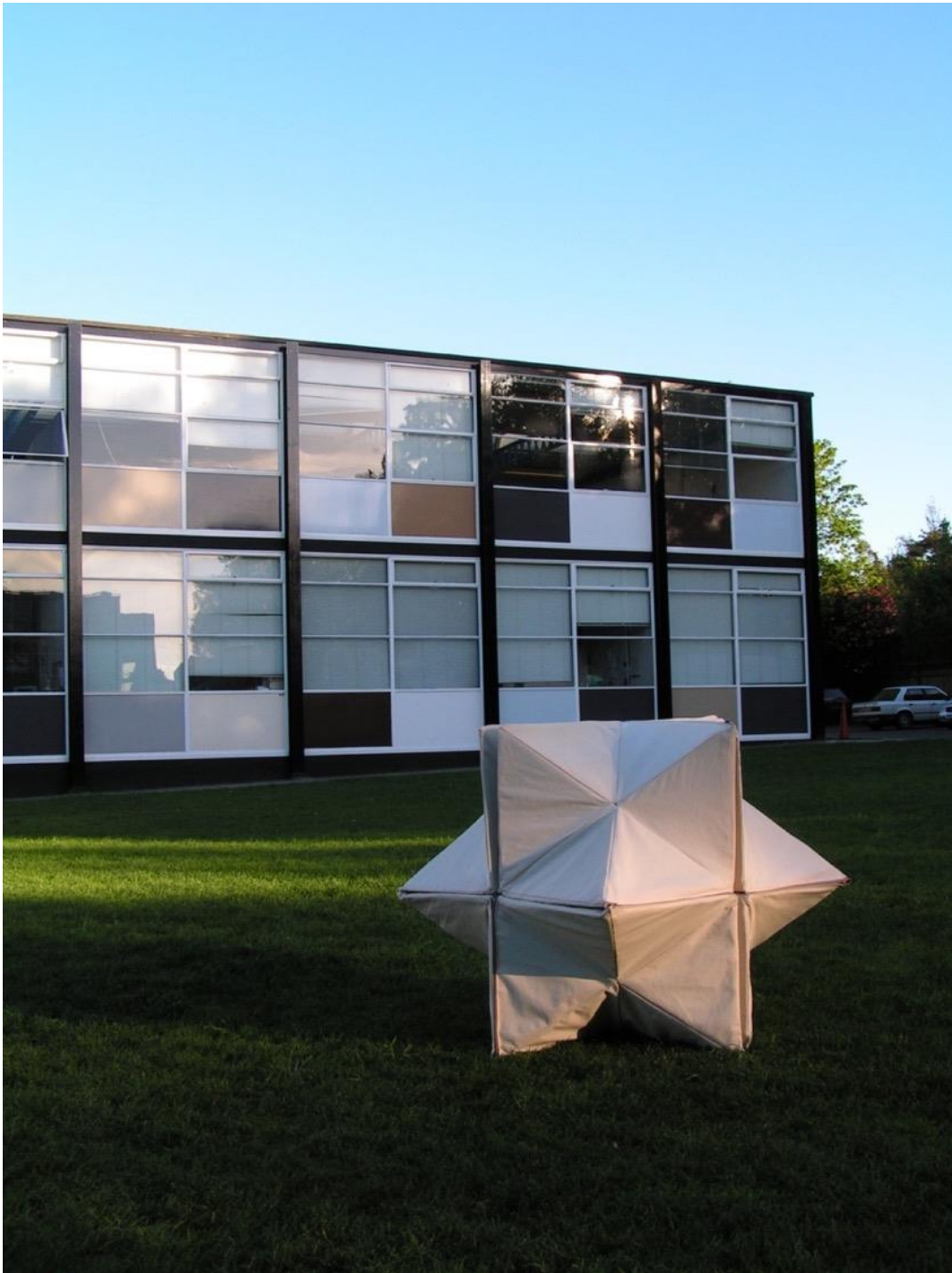


Figure 1 Ruth Jones, Object, 2005. Foam and canvas, 2.5m x 1.5m x 50cm interactive sculpture

My dissertation, 'Languages and Contexts within Art: Abstraction and Science', underpinned my understanding of objecthood and I investigated how meaning is communicated by studying Ludwig Wittgenstein and Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (Kant, 1781, 1787; 2000). I was concerned with how art makers, full of intentions, no matter how unconscious, could communicate those to their audience, how they might decode them and what the value of that could be.

Exploring how audience engagement could be encouraged rather than forced, I aimed to create a large, bodily work (approximately 2.5m x 1.5m x 50cm) with which the audience had to physically engage. The 'Yoshimoto cubes' geometric qualities were abstract and minimalist; the piece performed movements in unexpected ways provoking curiosity; interaction was necessary to understand the shapes. Increasing the scale meant people had to bodily interact with the works, creating an interesting dynamic in how the work could be understood.

During my MA, greater understanding of the theories of Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried forced an abrupt shift in my practice from minimalism and objecthood towards the politics of aesthetics, free play, care and democracy. In my MA, I continued to search to understand and manipulate the experiences of the audience in engaging with artworks. In hindsight it is easy for me to see that this was the link between my BA and MA and my practice thereafter: however, at the time I struggled to identify this intention.

I was looking at ways of codifying artworks as the key to my practice, rather than acknowledging a deep curiosity and sometimes even frustration, with how non-art audiences engage with art and how artists and the works they produce could minimise the gulf between what sometimes felt like opposed groups. This was explored in my text-based artwork, *Willful Slogans*.

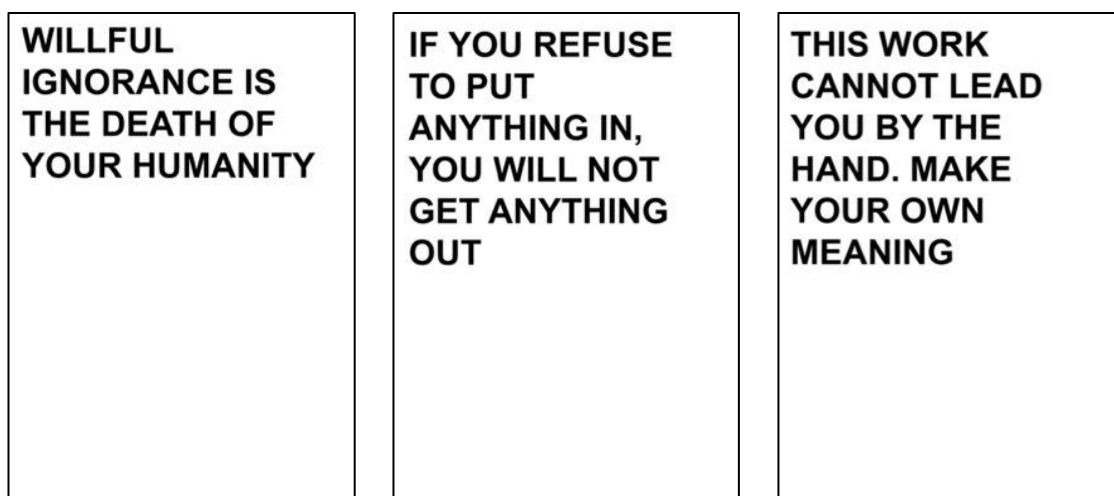


Figure 2 Ruth Jones, *Willful Slogans*, 2011. A3 poster series

Acting out frustrations by producing endless drawings from memory in abject and nihilist text works, I finally returned to installation as a means of engaging with the audience motivated by Michel Foucault's Technologies of the Self, particularly the transformation of the self and life into an oeuvre. Wanting to interrupt the internal subconscious narrative that occurs when being perceived by others or perceiving oneself in reflections, I produced an internally mirrored, but dimly lit box. This prevented others from seeing participants who entered the box, but also prevented the participant from making out any of their own features, whilst still reassuring them of their presence. I drilled a constellation of holes into the piece that allowed minimal light to enter the box and invited participants to record their experiences on the exterior of the box, as demonstrated by Fig. 3 *Self Reflection*.

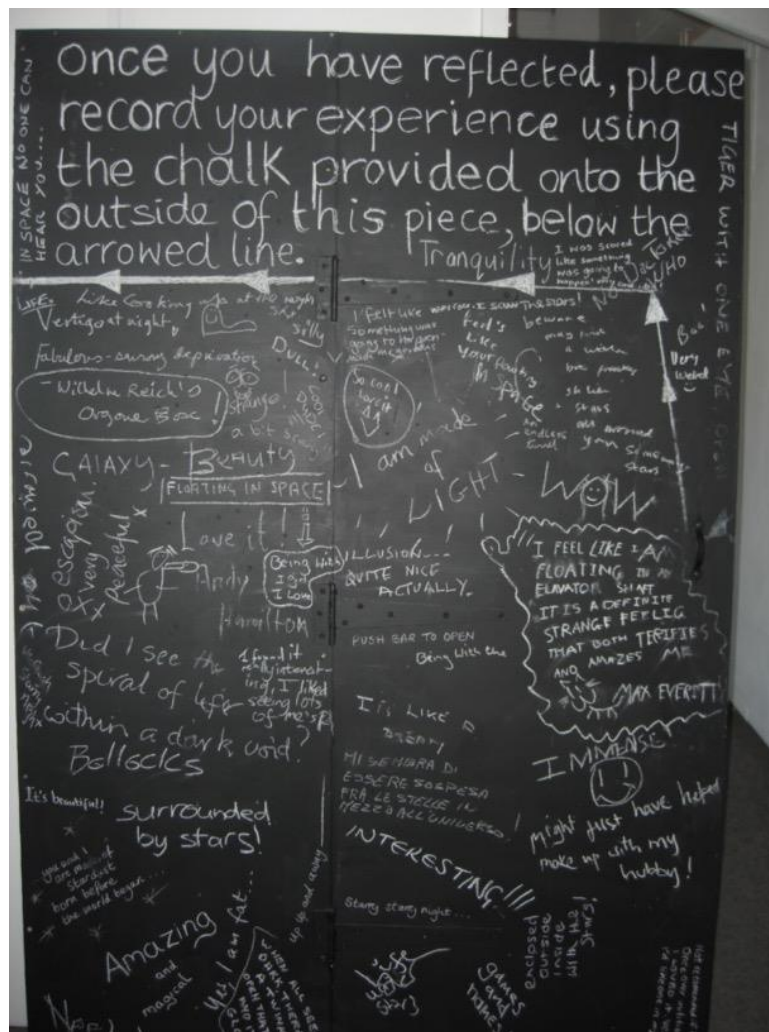


Figure 3 Ruth Jones, *Self-Reflection*, 2011. Plywood, mirror backed plastic, Blackboard paint and chalk, 2m x 1.2m x 1.2m

Deeply concerned with a democracy of experience, I still didn't feel I had reached to the crux of my practice and this led to an exploration of care, equality and agency after the MA. Using a synthesis of theories from Jacques Rancière, Michel Foucault, Immanuel Kant and Nicolas Bourriaud, I began a process of considering gentrification and artist involvement in the process.



Figure 4 Ruth Jones, Gentrification: Impact of the Artist, 2014. Bacterial growth in agar.

The gentrification work considered the artist role as an agent of gentrification through production and growth of bacteria and mapping. Equating capitalist gentrification with bacterial growth and homogenisation, I embarked on a series of site-specific drawing works that overlaid bacteria onto maps, showing older maps at the initial incubation of the bacteria and recent google mapping to show the changes in the structure of place overlaid with the homogenised bacterial growth after a longer period of time. The bacteria were collected from my artistic equipment, grown and documented by me and developed into a series of drawings, each considering my impact in the locations they were exhibited: Brick Lane, London; Porto Alegre, Brazil; and Kuwait.



Figure 5 Ruth Jones, *Gentrification: Impact of the Artist*, 2014.
Ink, pencil and gel pen on paper, A3.



Figure 7 Ruth Jones, *Gentrification: Impact of the Artist*, 2014.
Ink, pencil and gel pen on paper, A3.



Figure 6 Ruth Jones, *Gentrification: Impact of the Artist*, 2014.
Ink, pencil and gel pen on paper, A3.



Figure 8 Ruth Jones, *Gentrification: Impact of the Artist*, 2014.
Ink, pencil and gel pen on paper, A3.



Figure 9 Ruth Jones, *Gentrification: Impact of the Artist*, 2016.
Ink, pencil and gel pen on paper, AI.



Figure 10 Ruth Jones, *Gentrification: Impact of the Artist*, 2016.
Ink, pencil and gel pen on paper, AI.



Figure 11 Ruth Jones (2016) *Gentrification: Impact of the Artist*, 2016. Ink, pencil and gel pen on paper, AI. *What's Your Location? CAP* Kuwait, 2016.



Figure 12 Ruth Jones, *Gentrification: Impact of the Artist*, 2016.
Ink, pencil and gel pen on paper, AI.



Figure 13 Ruth Jones, *Gentrification: Impact of the Artist*, 2016.
Ink, pencil and gel pen on paper, AI.

The map, the artist and bacteria were all themes I carried with me. However, after three iterations, I felt that the gentrification series wasn't generating anything new. Instead, an understanding of how women experience environments became the way in which these investigations moved forward, and I began to explore feminist critiques of care within art and society through theories by, amongst others, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Amelia Jones, Griselda Pollock, Judith Butler, and Helena Reckitt.

In 2015 exploring care, equality and agency, I worked with numerous participants from differing backgrounds to produce *Quiet Rebellions: Hidden transcripts*. Contemplating *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* by James C Scott, (Scott, 1990) I collaborated with people who were in situations where they were at the mercy of those in power and unable to speak their truth without fear of physical, emotional or economic retribution.

The people I worked with revealed truths about themselves that they couldn't reveal in public, such as being homosexual in a country where the death penalty still exists for homosexual acts, bullying in the workplace, corrupt bank systems, arranged marriage, negligent care workers and immigrants treated as sub-human. Participants descriptions of their situations, particularly in their hidden transcripts, were paired with a pencil portrait of their eyes, occluded by layers of transparencies. The resulting work was a quiet rebellion, protest without a direct repercussion.



Figure 14 Ruth Jones, *Quiet Rebellions 6, Hidden transcript 6, 2015*. Pencil on paper and tracing paper, A4.

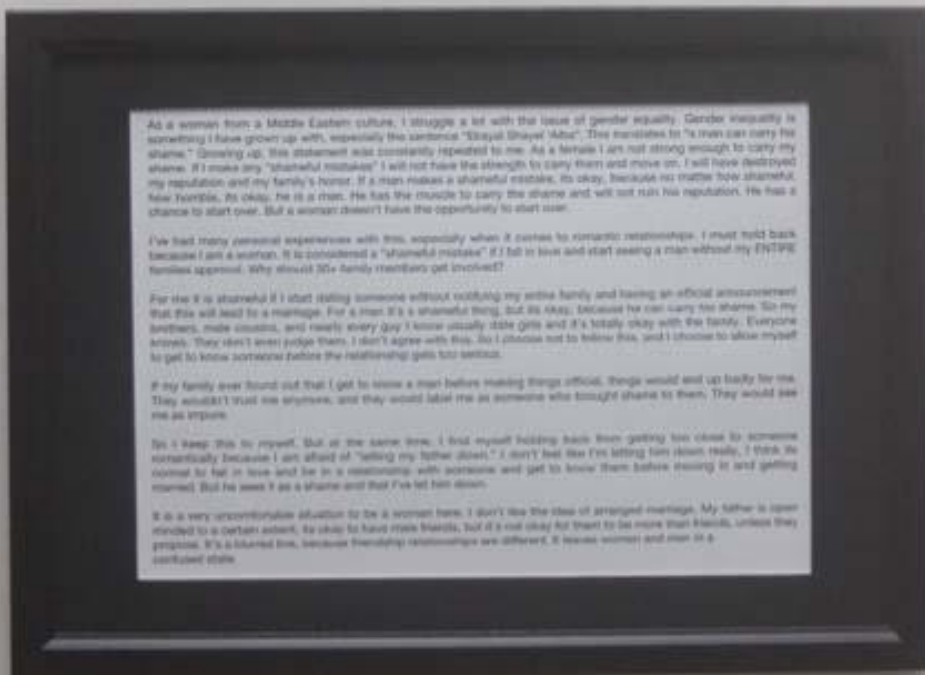


Figure 15 Ruth Jones, *Quiet Rebellions 2, Hidden transcript 2*, 2015. Pencil on paper and tracing paper, A4.



Figure 16 Ruth Jones, *Quiet Rebellions 1 - 3, Hidden transcripts 1-3, 2015. Pencil on paper and tracing paper, A4.*



Figure 17 Ruth Jones, *Quiet Rebellions 4 - 6, Hidden transcripts 4-6, 2015. Pencil on paper and tracing paper, A4.*

Quiet Rebellions offered a sense of agency to those who participated in the project, but it also encouraged the audience who visited to share their own hidden declarations with me. Due to the peculiar nature of the exhibition space, I was present for the duration of the exhibition and gained personal insight and feedback from each of the visitors. They engaged with the truths that were written and discussed them with one another and with me. Considering the engagement with visitors and the project participants to be one of the more successful consequences of this project,

I was motivated to see if I could build on the sense of agency that art could promote by working with communities more frequently.

I volunteered at my local Rape Crisis Centre and local council, I joined the Essex Feminist Collective, went to meetings at the council, went to political meetings and protests, in an effort to try to understand how agency (as a form of self-care) might be increased for the people who lived within my community, and how I might be able to shape my practice to that end. This has resulted in care becoming a primary focus in my practice, and my understanding of care has been addressed in the context and theory section of this report.



Figure 18 Ruth Jones, Care Work, 2016. Pencil and paper installation, audio track interviews, and performance space. Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend on Sea. February 2016.

However, at this point I was trying to articulate my own understanding of care which frequently became misinterpreted. Using care work as an entry point, I looked at the various ways that care took place: in gendered acts of caring such as the unpaid emotional labour/social reproduction that women perform; and the type of self-care women are encouraged to enact that is deemed frivolous and selfish, through bathing and beautifying themselves. In this set-up women lose agency. Mindful of this reduced agency, coupled with a heightened awareness of the of sexual violence conducted against women in my home town, I was left with a desire to focus on how I could use my practice to increase women's agency in Southend. By researching care further, I wanted to see if art was capable of increasing agency for those women who were caught up in the care-giving paradigm.

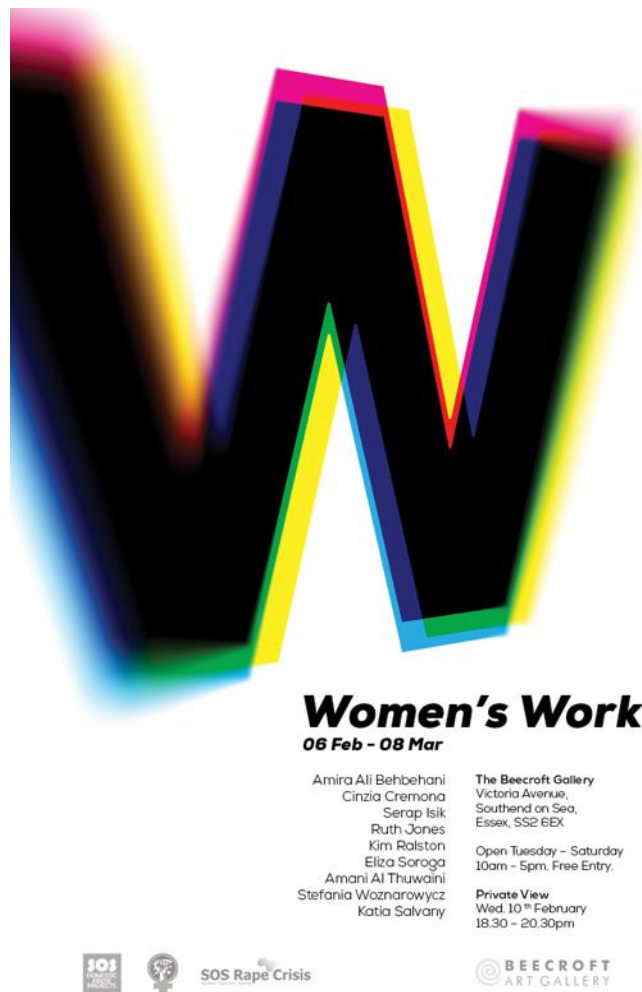


Figure 19 Stefania Woznarowycz, *Women's Work*, 2016. Poster Design

Organizing, exhibiting and curating *Women's Work*, an exhibition at Beecroft Art Gallery, as artist in residence for the Essex Feminist Collective in 2016 focused the aims within my practice. Examining the contentious matter of unpaid and emotional labour, I invited women artists, both local and foreign, to Southend to scrutinise women's work. Employing intersectionality as a selection method for artists and their work ensured that a range of voices was represented and could be heard. Intersectionality proved an apt term. First coined by Kimberlee Crenshaw in 1990, it refers to the specific conditions that black women faced that neither the civil rights movement nor feminism could adequately address. (Crenshaw, 1990).

To care for women, I listened to them while spending time drawing their faces. I presented these acts of care, especially the recordings of our conversations and the portraits I made, in a space where I performed further acts of care throughout the exhibition, welcoming women, listening to them and drawing them as they sat and talked with me.

Women's space-taking and visibility tied together my interest in gentrification and location and *how* care could be used through my practice. Drawing together an intersectional community of like-minded women has been a priority and is still in progress. Inviting women artists, local to Southend to exhibit for *The Agency of Visible Women*, led to a community of artists that have since started to benefit one another in other contexts, providing support to one another in navigating cultural institutions and situations. The Agency of Visible Women played on the double meaning of Agency and each artist invited took on a role as a member of the fictional Agency, as well as producing work that directly impacted their own agency as a woman artist.



Figure 20 The Agency of Visible Women, 2018. Installation shot with works by Eliza Soroga, Elsa James and Dana Aljouder from left to right. Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend on Sea. February 17 – April 14, 2018.



Figure 21 The Agency of Visible Women Shop, 2018. Installation shot. Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend on Sea. February 17 – April 14, 2018.

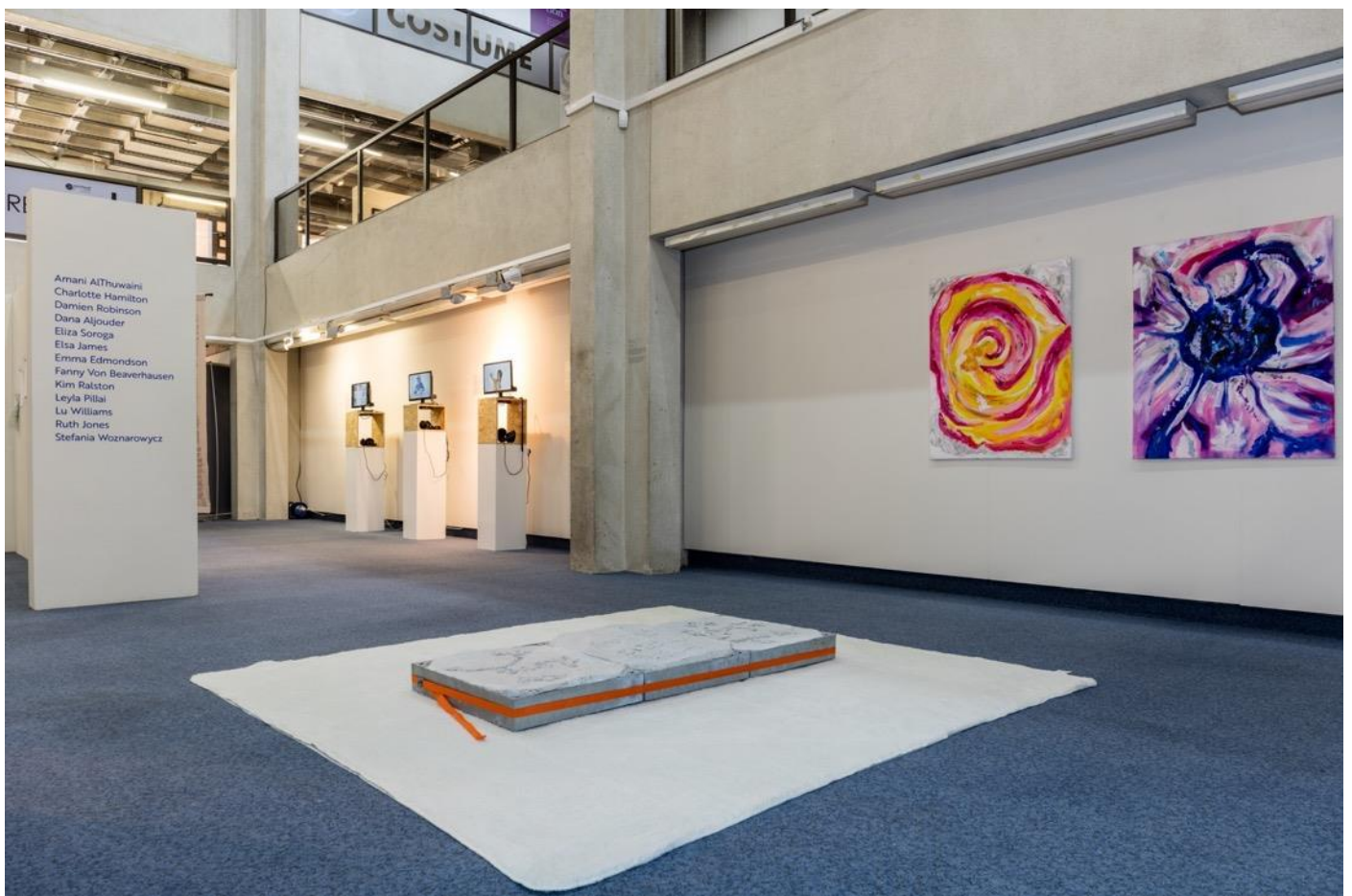


Figure 22 The Agency of Visible Women, 2018. Installation shot with works by Charlotte Hamilton and Lu Williams, background to foreground. Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend on Sea. February 17 – April 14, 2018.



Figure 23 *The Agency of Visible Women*, 2018. Installation shot with works by Stefania Woznarowycz and Kim Ralston, left to right. Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend on Sea. February 17 – April 14, 2018.



Figure 24 *The Agency of Visible Women*, 2018. Installation shot. Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend on Sea. February 17 – April 14, 2018.



Figure 25 Leyla Pillai, detail of parallel vision(s), 2018, A4 digital prints and mixed media on paper. *The Agency of Visible Women*, 2018. Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend on Sea. February 17 – April 14, 2018.



Figure 26 Ruth Hazel Femmes to the Front, 2018, installation and performance. *The Agency of Visible Women*, 2018. Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend on Sea. February 17 – April 14, 2018.

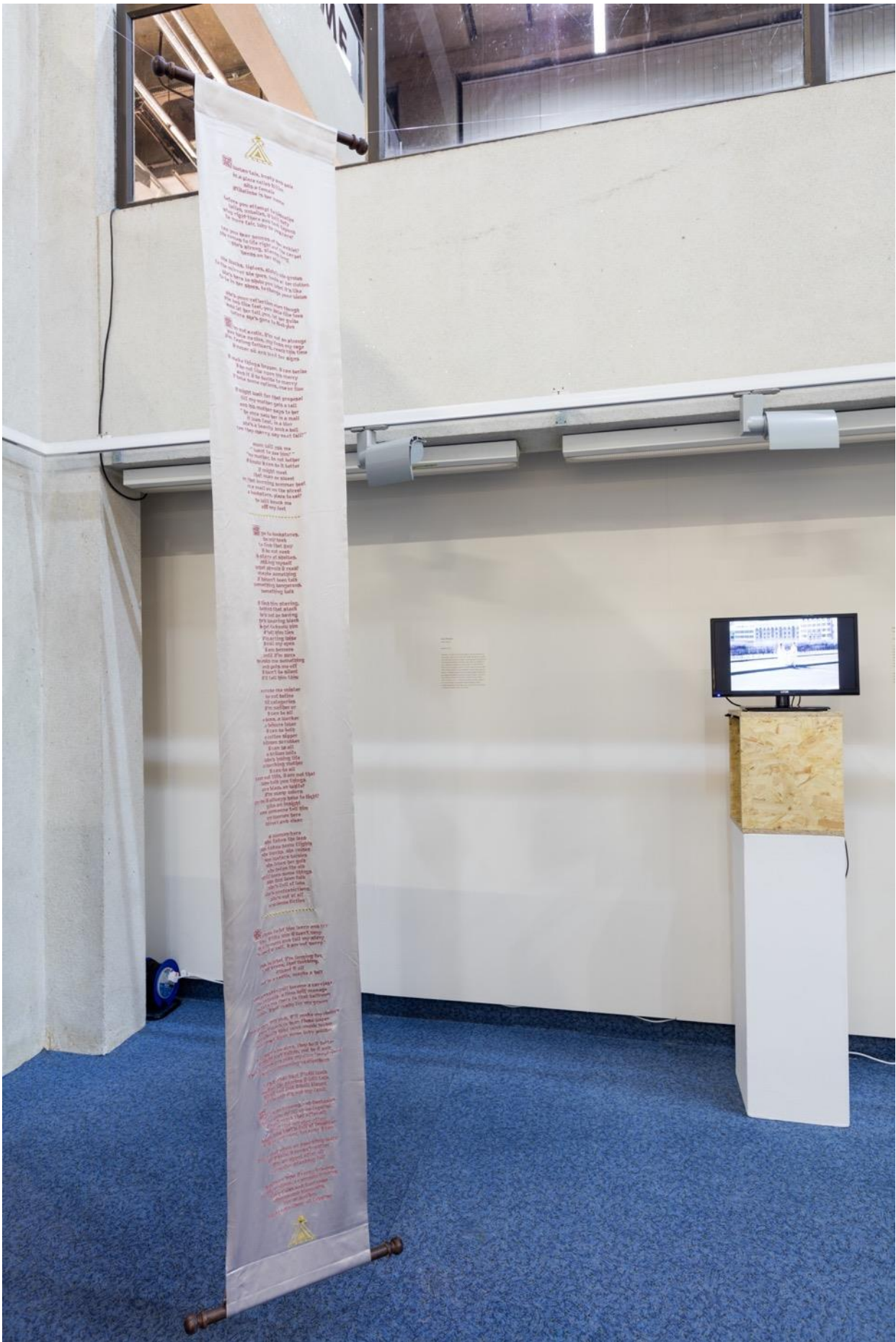


Figure 27 *The Agency of Visible Women*, 2018 Installation shot with works by Amani Al Thuwaini and Eliza Soroga from left to right. Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend on Sea. February 17 – April 14, 2018.

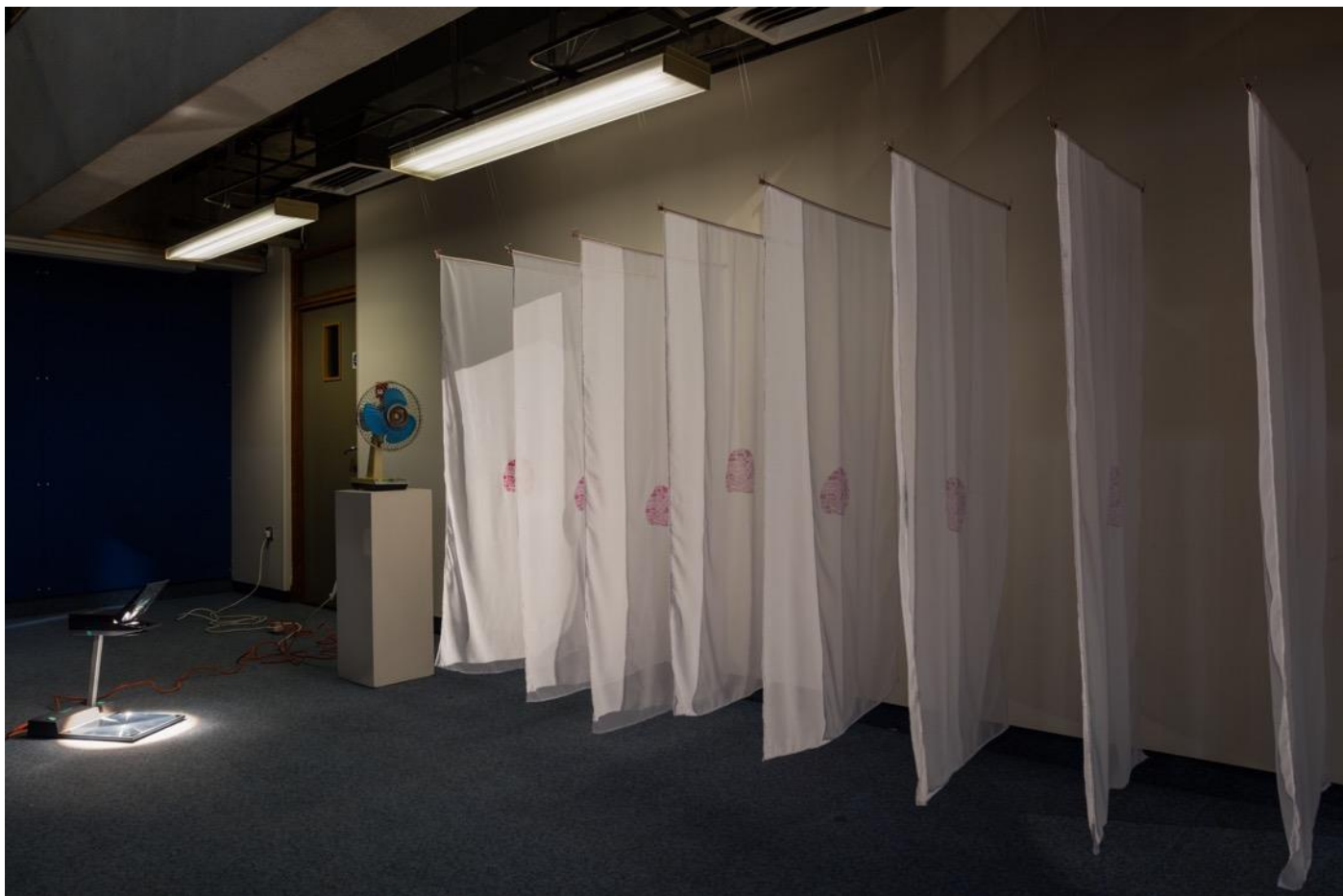


Figure 28 Ruth Jones, *Taking Space: interferences and redactions*, 2018, Installation. *The Agency of Visible Women*, 2018. Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend on Sea. February 17 – April 14, 2018.

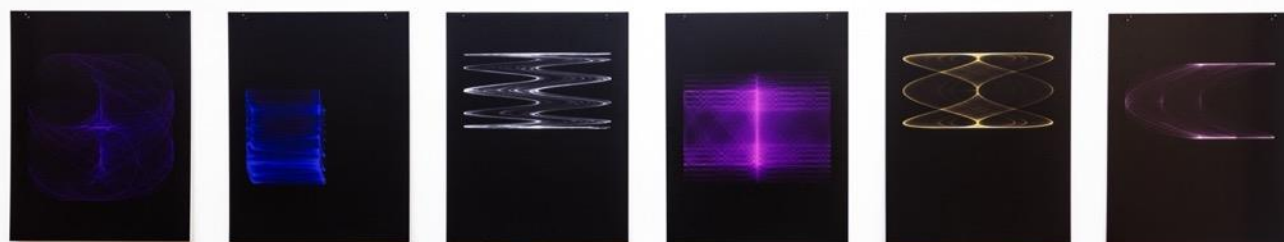


Figure 29 Damien Robison, *TANSTAAFL series*, 2018, A3 digital prints. *The Agency of Visible Women*, 2018. Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend on Sea. February 17 – April 14, 2018.

I exhibited *An Experimental Manifesto of Visibility for Women* as part of *The Agency of Visible Women, 2018*. The manifesto was a hand-made edition of 20 publications, exploring how women can take, hold and share space and care for themselves and one another. This publication was also translated into Portuguese as part of the Porto Alegre book festival in 2018 and was distributed for free.



Figure 30 Ruth Jones, An Experimental Manifesto of Visibility for Women, 2018. A5 artist book, perfect binding, paper, screen-print cover, edition of 20.

As a continuation of the manifesto, I printed space taking stickers, where I marked territory with my bacteria. These public interventions were originally going to develop by introducing larger versions of the stickers over time in public space with the hope of permeating people's consciousness.

However, the bacterial work gradually filtered out of my work as I was able to take advantage of different opportunities, such as a larger studio to work in and greater involvement with the local art community.



Figure 31 Ruth Jones, Taking space, 2017. Vinyl stickers, 5cm diameter.

The works I have exhibited attempt to represent the losses and gains women make when they inhabit space: Gendered care-work such as child rearing or caring for elderly relatives often reduces the space women can take for themselves and reduces their agency in caring for themselves. Threats of violence and acts of policing that women receive when they take space and are visible mean they might elect to remove themselves from public spaces for their own safety. To represent this I favour installations that demarcate spaces, but often in an ephemeral manner, implicating the fluid nature of space and how it is inhabited by women.

In each of these instances I endeavoured to find the most suitable way to produce my work so that I could reach my intended intersectional audience of women living in Southend.

2. 0 Creative Practice and Theory

Sharing Space and Taking Care: Intersectional Feminist Approaches to Art Practice

In my practice, I seek to explore the agency available to women and marginalised genders through installation, sound, performance, film, drawing and sculpture. I often take the conditions, oppressions and experiences of women and marginalised genders as the starting point for making work. I look at works by contemporary feminist artists such as Tai Shani and Lee Bul. I keep abreast of political issues such as the recent abortion bans in the US; the murder of Sarah Everard, Brianna Ghey, and Sabina Nessa in the UK; and wider events like the current Iranian uprising of women removing hijabs in response to the murder of Mahsa Amini. These events and influences are starting points for: imagining the installation space; organising collective curation and exhibitions; they also generate research provocations for papers, while expanding the breadth of available approaches to my professional roles.

The strategies of *Sharing Space and Taking Care* have provided a framing system for my research and practice since 2017. Each makes use of the interconnections and commonalities between the other to scrutinise the murkiness of the gendered conditions women and marginalised genders need to negotiate within the arts, and, more broadly, within socio-cultural relations. Much as each of these concepts intersect with one another, while expanding and contributing to each other, so too do the following statements in my research title: *Intersectional Feminist Approaches to Art Practice*

Intersectional Feminist Approaches to Art Practice alludes to a possible strategy to navigate the specific conditions facing women in the arts. As has already been stated, an underlying motivation in my practice as an artist has been a preoccupation with audience reception of art works. By employing the practice of *Sharing Space and Taking Care*, and analysing the works of women artists whose work I believe falls into these categories, I have demonstrated that a greater understanding of how to reach diverse audiences in meaningful ways is made possible. What constitutes meaningfulness in terms of artistic reception will be referred to later in this document, through the theories of Jacques Rancière and Lola Olufemi in particular. The project of sharing space is made possible through an intersectional lens. By this I mean that the complex intersections that women's identities bestride necessitate feminists to understand that greater care should be taken to include as many women as want to be present. This is why intersectionality and feminism are central to my approach within both making and thinking; I have discovered that feminist art approaches have an ability to reach female, femme and non-binary audiences and

provide them with a way to care for themselves and to empower and highlight their sense of agency.

By drawing upon the theories and writings of Jacques Rancière, Lola Olufemi, Claire Bishop, Luce Irigaray, Audre Lorde, Kimberlee Crenshaw, Legacy Russell, Kathy Weeks, Joan Tronto, Judith Butler, Emma Dowling and Donna Haraway; as well as works by contemporary artists Tai Shani, Lee Bul, Jade Montserrat, Emily Perry, and Jenny Saville, I have been able to pull together strands within my research and practice that I believe make the research title apparent.

Feminist Subjects and Intersectionality

Firstly, I would like to contextualise the constitution of feminist subjects and the importance of intersectionality within feminism before expanding on how that develops within art practices. The contentious constitution of women as political subjects underpins my thinking about the term “woman” and the position from which I approach making work as an artist. The complexity of experience for women, as founded in numerous contradictory elements of our identities and the projections and expectations of society, are mirrored in the complexity inherent in defining and constituting them as subjects.

Historically, the lack of consensus between those who might identify as women has been fraught with arguments as to *who* can be identified by the term and *whose* priorities are most important when fighting for the rights of those identified. The position of intersectionality within feminism is an important strategy in which limitations of feminism become recognised more broadly by women interested in forwarding women’s rights.

Whilst she was by no means the first to talk about these issues, the term ‘Intersectionality’ was coined by Kimberlee Crenshaw to point to the specific intersection of racial and gendered oppression that black women faced, where neither the feminist nor the civil rights movement could fully articulate nor address those oppressions satisfactorily. (Crenshaw, 1991) Feminism’s inability to account for the multiple factors that can affect women whose identities sit at various intersections of oppression (race/class/age/disability/sexual identification/sexuality to name but a few) exemplifies the difficulties of the multiple ways in which feminist subjects can be constituted.

The refusal of second-wave, white, middle-class feminists to recognise the differences between women, in favour of finding a universalising essence, something that all women relate to, has been the greatest stumbling block in divesting women from feminism. Many feminists have written of

this issue. As Donna Haraway writes in the Cyborg Manifesto, “Painful fragmentation among feminists (not to mention women) along every possible fault line has made the concept of *woman* elusive, an excuse for the matrix of women’s domination of each other.” (Haraway, 1998 p155) Lola Olufemi states: “Woman has never been a coherent group, it has always been a shifting category; ‘woman’ is frequently coded as cis, white and heterosexual. But it belongs to no one.”(Olufemi, 2020 p65) This coding effectively excises an entire group of people who might have identified as women if the scope of such a term was more inclusive.

By ignoring the differences between our experiences as women, we have failed to account for the myriad issues that women face. Audre Lorde writes of difference:

For as long as any difference between us means one of us must be inferior, then the recognition of any difference must be fraught with guilt. To allow women of colour to step out of stereotypes is too guilt-provoking, for it threatens the complacency of those women who view oppression only in terms of sex. (Lorde, 2017 p99)

The privileging of one narrative of feminism over another has caused damage to a movement intended to improve the lives of women. Lorde again contributes to this discussion: “As women we have been taught either to ignore our difference, or to view them as causes for separation and suspicion rather than as forces for change.” (Lorde, 2017 p91)

This brief outline of intersectional feminism, and the constitution of women as subjects, is an entangled and generative territory from which to make and explore. I am particularly interested in the potential of installation, sound and drawing as a means to explore how sharing space and taking care are enacted in intersectional feminist art making.

2.1 Installation

In my work I predominantly make use of installation as a way to hold together the different outputs of my practice. Installation provides me with the opportunity to create immersive environments that can tie together the ideas present in my drawing, film and sound works. In this section of the report, I will present my argument that installation can be considered a particularly effective means of world building by feminist artists, one that has an inherent shared public or common space as part of its constitution. Installation presents feminist artists with the prospect to build expansive worlds that encourage complex and diverse experiences to come to the fore, and through which to articulate and enact forms of ‘care’ for the audience. Coupled with this world building, the installation also offers parallels with the notion of the ‘body’. Feminist theorist Legacy Russell calls

the body a “world-building word, filled with potential, and...filled with movement.”(Russell, 2020 p41) For Russell, “bodies are not fixed points, they are not destinations. Bodies are Journeys...abstract.” (Russell, 2020 p146). In installation, and through the body, then, it is possible to journey and world build.

In this section of the report I will discuss theories about care, free play, the body and feminism and how I see the connections between them revealed through installation works by artists Tai Shani and Lee Bul. I also hope to make apparent the links between these theories, artists and my own practice.



Figure 32 Ruth Jones, Space for contradiction, invitation and refusal, 2022. Installation. DFA showcase 2022.

Lee Bul

Lee Bul uses feminism, autobiographical recreations, speculative fiction and notions of utopia to create creatures, installations and performances that centre both her as the focus of the work as well as the viewer. I consider this allows a collaborative space for a co-production of meaning between Bul, her work and her audience and for this reason I find that Bul, offers a clear example of how sharing space can be considered an aesthetic approach to the production of artwork.

In *Civitas Solis II*, 2014, Bul presents us with her imagining of a utopia inspired by Tommaso Campanella's 1602 book, 'The City of the Sun'. Lee's interpretation of Campanella's 'unified city for an egalitarian community' in which 'seven circular walls...enclose and protect the city, but also serve as a curtain of knowledge, bearing images from the arts and sciences'(Lee et al., 2018 p156) anachronistically reflects a fractured present, in which the walls of *her* Civitas Solis represent us with our own image as we, as beholders, then become incorporated into the art work.

Civitas Solis II offers the audience space, quite literally constructing an environment that can be walked around, but which also reflects the audience back to themselves as part of that environment. Bul has shared space in this manner in other pieces, such as *Bunker*, 2007/12, in which sounds produced by the audience are echoed back to them, obliging that audience to share in the generation of the work.



Figure 33 Lee Bul *Civitas Solis II*, 2014, Hayward Gallery, London, 2 June 2018

This understanding of the audience and how they experience art by being afforded rather than denied common ground, promotes a space of inclusion that encourages engagement of curiosity and imaginative interpretation of materials and their effects on the consciousness.

Bul's life experience appears influential in the manner in which she thinks about both her audience and space. In conversation with Stephanie Rosenthal in the catalogue for *Crashing*, Bul's most recent exhibition at Hayward, she comments on her understanding of space developing from an early age: "The outside, the outer world that surrounds me, the environment that is a part of me, has been an interest probably from about the time a consciousness of my self began to develop. Not as in 'me-versus-the-world', but more 'me-and-the-world' or 'me-in-the-world'." (Lee et al., 2018 p82) This critical perspective on herself and the world as a relationship to puzzle out rather than a source of tension and conflict leaves a space for others to contemplate their place in the world. Further to this, Bul experienced her early life as a constant outsider in a country under military regime with parents actively in protest against that regime, necessitating the habitual migration of her family around the country which left Bul continually trying to make sense of her transitory reality. The rapid modernization of South Korea in Bul's formative years, and her political and activist family ties have led to architecture and modernization becoming recurring themes in her work. My interest in her preoccupation with architecture is piqued by her critique of modernist theories of architectural design being able to usher in some forms of utopia. Her understanding of architecture, space and the body are relevant to her attitude to her audience, something of equal significance to me.

In her early performance piece *Abortion*, 1989, she comments on how she had planned the work, but that she also left a space for *reality*: "During that performance in a theatre, whatever happened, happened. I had a plan, devices in place, but there was no concrete storyline. So reality would form part of the performance as the audience showed their reaction." (Lee et al., 2018 p86) Leaving her work as contingent upon reality and her audience has become integral to her work. "I wanted to remove the line that divides reality and art and merge them together to see how it unfolded." (Lee et al., 2018 p86)

I think Bul's continual struggle with the inconsistencies and contradictions that reality presents her with has led to her sincere approach to her audience, as if she is trying to find some common ground with others. Her installations raise the question: Are we seeing and experiencing reality as she sees and experiences it? I also feel the open-ended invitations offered to audiences by her work are part of that sincerity, as if she earnestly wants to understand reality and values the opinions of others, but at the same time has no desire to force them to see things her way. If this is

indeed the case, I deduce that it may be a reaction against the dictatorial regime she experienced as a child and young adult in Korea.

Returning to *Civitas Sollis II*, the invitation for an audience to share space with the artwork, and by extension Bul herself, also allows the opportunity to refuse. It sets up a dynamic of choice and trust between artist, artwork and audience; it leaves room for decisions, for play, for self-reflection. In short, the opportunity refuse is agential.

Tai Shani

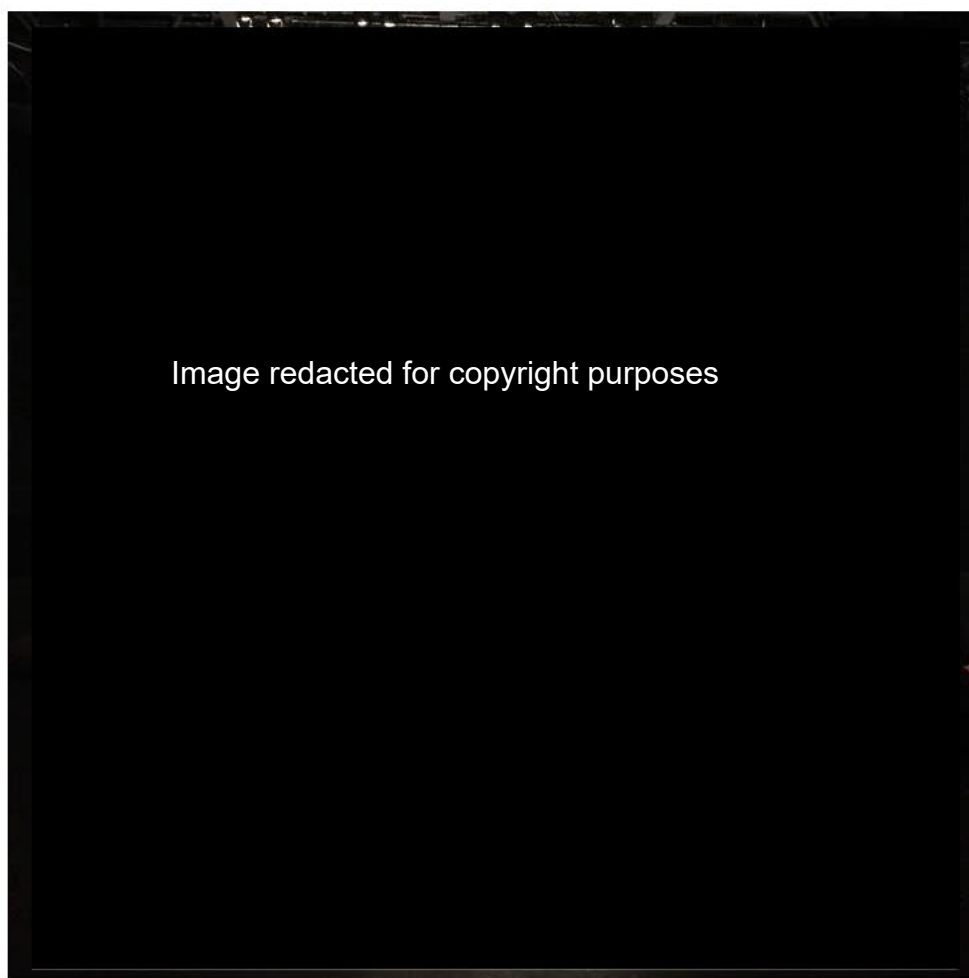


Figure 34 Tai Shani, Dark Continent: Semiramis, Tramway, Glasgow, 28 April 2018.

I have been particularly interested in the works of Tai Shani as an exemplar of successful feminist world building. Her worlds represent the overlapping and diverse experiences with which many women are familiar: Not only do these include gendered violence and oppression, but also, importantly, community, hope and solidarity. Her installations model the complexities of women's (and other marginalised genders) lived experiences, situating them outside of conventional contexts, offering their audiences a considered environment in which to experience, feel and contemplate their reactions to those experiences, importantly she speaks from an intersectional

identity that entails sharing the space for these myriad concerns with other women. As a methodology for making work, I consider this to be an act of care, a concept I will draw out further in this report.

Infusing artworks, installations and performances with the weight of the complex reality of gendered and intersectional forms of oppression and holding space for them in the comparative safety of the exhibition space, provides a protective distance for the audience, inviting safe contemplation without trauma, disengagement or didacticism. By entering the installation space, audiences are at one remove from “the real world”, further highlighted by the artists use of mythology and science fiction. Ironically, this removal from the “real” creates the distance necessary to engage with the emotive experience of reality, re-investing the audience in the real after the event has concluded. Furthermore, the installation mimics a shared no-woman’s land, in which all are welcome, creating an interpersonal dynamic between audience members of respect and care. I will expand on this later.

Tai Shani’s *Dark Continent: Semiramis* (now renamed *D.C. Semiramis*) is an example of such a removal from the real, activated through science fiction and experimental narratives. As Tai Shani explains, *D.C. Semiramis* is “an ongoing feminist project, currently iterated through character-led installations, films, performances and texts.” (Tai Shani, 2022).

Shani’s works offer the audience the opportunity to co-produce the space and meaning, even with the mesmerising meta-narrative that ties the series together. Shani employs ambiguous objects, lush textures and evocative lighting to envelop the audience in an unfamiliar world that references early 1980’s computer animation and technological devices.

The space and its objects permit the audience to play with ideas, populate it with fantastic characters, all while an otherworldly, subtly sinister atmosphere is projected by the space. Equally, this imaginative enterprise encourages the audience to consider themselves in relation to the work and others in the space. Shani layers dense experiences of sound, narrative, light and texture with rich literary, fictional references to Christine de Pizan’s *The Book of the City of Ladies* (1405), a proto-speculative fiction.

With the graphic violence, trauma and desire that heavily informs the narration in *D.C. Semiramis*, it is perhaps contradictory to consider Shani’s work as capable of “care”, but this is necessary as I elucidate below. (Turner Contemporary (Arts organization : Margate, 2019)

Shani introduces the theme of gendered violence through the monologues of each of the narrators that make up *D.C. Semiramis*. These violent narratives highlight “gender itself...as a series of

rules, experiences and productions...that are themselves formed under duress.” (Shani, 2019 p XIII). Gendered violence is common in the experiences of many women and Shani’s use of it in the installation and her performance is an acknowledgment of those experiences. It is reminiscent of Donna Haraway’s *Cyborg Manifesto*, where she declares that the achievement’s forced upon women to accept patriarchal, capitalist colonial determinations of gender, race and class, are violent. (Haraway, 1998)

Since violence and trauma are an unfortunate reality of women’s experiences, to leave them unacknowledged would suggest a lack of interest in the depth and breadth of those experiences, and the potential they hold for transformation. Put otherwise, it could suggest a lack of care. Indeed, as Lola Olufemi discusses in *Feminism Interrupted*, the creative power necessary to confront this gendered violence is possible through art in a creative project of world building: “ [the] space that art opens up reminds us that despite the violence we are subjected to, there are still parts of our minds that cannot be controlled.” (Olufemi, 2020 pp86-87)

Shani frankly addresses violent acts of sexual assault, bodily harm and the social structures of patriarchy that maintain and reproduce an environment that proliferates a destruction of women. But her frankness is not one dimensional, trauma is not the only experience of women and she also evokes a full picture of sexual desire, joy, boredom, fear and the difficulty of holding these contradictory elements together in suspension by her protagonists. What Shani does in the complex installation world of *D.C. Semiramis* is to offer the audience a chance to imagine beyond the limits of patriarchal oppression. It is my contention that this manner of investing the audience in the process of re-imagining the world, outside of their current conditions, promotes a sense of agency, and as such can be viewed as an act of care. The receipt of care is what promotes meaningful engagement for people with the world that surrounds them. In this way, I think of care acting as a catalyst for the ability to engage with the world in a self-determined, meaningful way. The installation space holds a shared, common ground for that imaginative enterprise to take place. For art to engage its audience with the possibility of agential world re-imagining and engagement, a type of care has to have taken place. Using feminist contributions to the study of the field of care and emotional labour, I hope to trace the connections between these ideas that makes them more apparent.

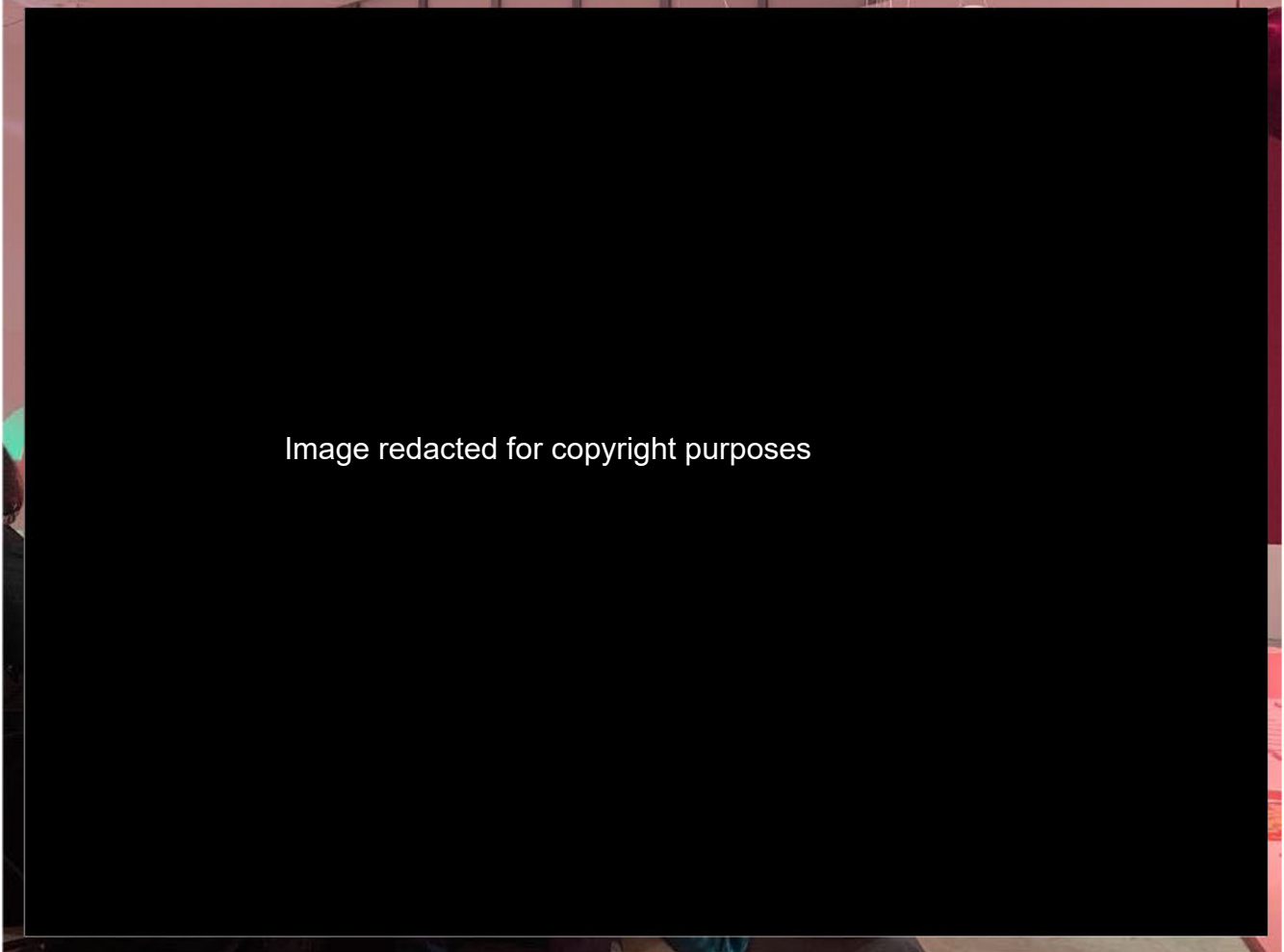


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Figure 35 Tai Shani D.C. SEMIRAMIS, Turner Contemporary, Margate, 17 November 2019.

Care

The concern with care is a reminder that productivist arguments for investing in care are not sufficient to capture what is at stake – namely, the possibility of leading a meaningful life beyond being merely instruments of labour. (Dowling, 2021 p45)

What is at stake within the complicated and often abstracted constitution of the term care? According to Emma Dowling, the possibility of leading a meaningful life outside of work. The benefits of receiving care, of needs being more than met, but fully attended, allows one the opportunity to lead a meaningful life. And, importantly, that meaning isn't attributed to a person's ability to be of benefit to capital – exchanging labour for remuneration in order to live. It offers one the chance to explore creativity and curiosity for the sake of it.

Care provides the possibility to lead a life full of self-determined meaning, a meaning not obligated to the labour market. For me, this conception of care ties into the arguments made by Friedrich

Schiller about art and play: “Man plays only when he is in the full sense of the word a man, and he is only wholly man when he is playing.”(Schiller and Snell, 2004 p80) Schiller launched this argument in response to Immanuel Kant’s *Metaphysics of Morals* in which he focuses upon duties of justice and morality. How does Schiller relate play and art to care? Schiller suggests that art, play and care each hold an important position in how we determine humanity and sense of meaning. I will return to this discussion later in this section, to more fully articulate the theories described by Kant, Schiller and Jacques Rancière that account for the relationships between play, art and humanity.

The benefits of receiving care are one element of the abstract notion of care. Joan Tronto has argued in her book, *Moral Boundaries; A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care*, 1993, that care operates from numerous positions:

Care is both a complex cultural construction and the tangible work of care. It is a way of making highly abstract questions about meeting needs return to the prosaic level of how these needs are being met. It is a way of seeing the embodiments of our abstract ideas about power and relationships. But thinking about social and political institutions from the standpoint of this marginal and fragmented concept, we see how social structures shape our values and practices. (Tronto, 1993 p124)

Dividing care into practice (or the *tangible work* as mentioned above), and concept (or the *complex cultural construction*), she teases out the tangled interpretations, uses and realities of this slippery verb and noun. Tronto believes care makes power relationships in our society visible. How care is valued, and by whom, is equally slippery. “To recognise the value of care calls into question the structure of values in our society.” (Tronto, 1993 p180) These are made apparent by the lack of value ascribed to care, through monetary compensation and recognition of reproductive labour which is discussed later.

Care has traditionally been cited as the reserve of women, and recent reports indicate that this is still the case. As Emma Dowling highlights in *The Care Crisis*, 2021, the Overseas Development Institute reported that “In 2014, on average across 66 countries representing two-thirds of the world’s population, women spent 3.3 times as much time as men on unpaid care.” (Sammam et al, 2016 p19) The report also confirms that this is the case across all the countries with available data, with ratios varying depending on the country: “At one end of the spectrum, in Sweden,

Norway and Denmark, women spent less than 1.5 times as much on unpaid care work as men while at the other end, in Mali, levels were over eleven times as high.” (Sammam et al, 2016 p19) The inequality involved in the tangible work of care that this report evidences, demonstrates little change since these issues were raised by feminists determined to have the labour of care valued as *labour*. Care work is overwhelmingly enacted by women, whilst the value placed on care in monetary terms is negligible comparative to the time spent engaged in this labour. As Tronto says, “The fact that care-givers can see an essential truth about the value of care...does not negate the fact that care is reduced to a lesser importance in society as a whole.” (Tronto, 1993 p117) There is a reliance on those enacting care being invested in the value of it to such an extent that they will enact it free of charge, for the benefit of the recipient. The crux of Tronto’s book *Moral Boundaries*, 1993, calls into question the idea that care is encoded as a “moral” undertaking laid squarely at the feet of women as their ethical duty. (Tronto, 1993 p3)

Situated as a naturalised predisposition of gender, entangled in moral concerns, the women who are undertaking caring labour predominantly sit across the intersections of class, gender and race – working class women, global majority or non-white, working class women. Women in the global south and non-developed countries and immigrant women are the women bearing the brunt of this labour. Given the Western hegemonic approach to capitalism and resource extraction, it is unsurprising that this is the case: “Groups that have been traditionally excluded from centers of power in our culture often exhibit a commitment to ideals of connection and mutual support, that is, to care.” (Tronto, 1993 pp116-117) Again, this point serves to reiterate that care helps to make visible the relationships of power in our society. We can see that the women who are doing the caring are the women who are excluded from the centres of power in our society. Alongside their lack of proximity to power, those who undertake the bulk of the care work become doubly invisible, when those with the closest proximity to power refuse to acknowledge that the care they receive is responsible for their ability to hold that power. Tronto remarks, “Those who are powerful are unwilling to admit their dependence upon those who care for them.” (Tronto, 1993 p124) This is once again an issue that relates to the lack of value that care accrues in society. Often the opposite of care is valorised – autonomy and self-reliance, individual success. Emma Dowling reframes the valorisation of the individual and his successes, to consider what the conditions were to promote that success:

Against the idea of the autonomous individual whose concerns revolve around himself and is always hailed as the epitome of social progress and individual freedom, we can ask what this celebration of individual autonomy obfuscates: who does the work to allow for that individual to emerge and thrive? (Dowling, 2021 p30)

The labour of care is time consuming:

Data suggests that when women work for pay, the amount of time they spend on care (in absolute terms and relative to men) is lower, but the reduction is not proportionate to the amount of time they spend at work. In other words, total demands on working women increase. Taking unpaid and paid work into account, women spend more time working than men do, especially in developing countries....Over a 50 year period, this would equate to 5.5 years more of work, on average. (Sammam et al, 2016, p20)

This shocking figure from the ODI report makes apparent just how much time women spend on labour and care. The conflation between labour and care is something that feminists have long fought to have recognised. This report demonstrates the labour that women perform, paid and unpaid respectively. The feminist arguments of women's unpaid labour recognition, through work and care, and where the two meet in social reproduction, will be discussed in greater depth in the section of this document that looks at ASMR.

Returning to Tronto's analysis of care helps to contextualise the ODI report's data further. Making visible the power relationships of care, we are able to see that women (those who perform the most unpaid care work and who sit at vulnerable classed and racial intersects) also receive less care: "Those who care are made still less important because their needs are not as important as the needs of those privileged enough to be able to pay others to care for them." (Tronto, 1993 p116) This quadruple bind of care is problematic for women: women perform the majority of care in society; on the whole they understand the transformative value (in more than just monetary terms) of care on the individual receiving it; the amount of time spent caring and labouring makes women time poor; those who care have their needs met far less than those who receive that care. In this dynamic women who simultaneously invest in the concept of care *and* the labour of care, without reaping the rewards that care should provide, lose out on "the possibility of a leading a meaningful life beyond being merely instruments of labour." (Dowling, 2021 p45)

This is why works of art that are produced by feminist artists, with an understanding of the intersectional oppressions that act on women's capacities in numerous ways, are so important. When women are able to access these kinds of artworks, works that speak to their experiences and that acknowledge the breadth of their personhood in all the messy and entangled ways they are formed, they are able to engage in the meaningful and agential business of imagining the world otherwise. As Lola Olufemi writes, "Creativity is at the heart of any new world we seek to

build. Without the demands placed on our body by capital, by gender and by race – we could be freed up to read, write and to create. Alongside political freedom comes an escape from the social conditioning that deadens our creativity.”(Olufemi, 2020 p84) Without the demands placed on women, there is space for creativity and imagination and Olufemi goes further, declaring that art helps to “abstract us from the demands placed on our bodies at any given time. It can remind us that we do not only exist in relation to our gendered responsibilities: we are not only someone’s mother or sister, or carer – we are individuals brimming with sophisticated ideas.”(Olufemi, 2020 p84) For me, this is the point at which a connection is made between art and care specifically for women. When caring opens up the capacity women have for meaningful engagement outside of capitalist calls on their bodies, and where art offers space for imagination outside of the demands placed on women by capital and gendered responsibility, that is the space in which intersectional feminist art enacts a certain type of care. I consider this to be agential care, that is, a type of caring that accounts for and expands the possibilities for women to enact their agency. And in particular, I believe that feminist installation art is especially effective in creating opportunities for this type of care. I will unpack this further, but first I want to return to the connections that I posited exist between care work and Friedrich Schiller’s conception of play. These connections and theories are foundational to much of contemporary art, and in particular installation art.

Free Play

As I discussed earlier, Schiller’s conception of play was written in relation to Immanuel Kant’s aesthetic arguments and led him to conclude that play is closely linked to our capacity to be fully human. (Schiller and Snell, 2004 p80)

In the Critique of Pure Judgement, Kant declares that fine art is:

[A] mode of representation which is intrinsically purposive, and which, although devoid of an end, has the effect of advancing the culture of the mental powers in the interests of social communication. The universal communicability of a pleasure involves in its very concept that the pleasure is not one of enjoyment arising out of mere sensation, but must be one of reflection. Hence aesthetic art, as art which is beautiful, is one having for its standard the reflective judgement and not bodily sensation. (Kant and Walker, 2007 p135)

Kant describes art as a “purposive” activity, a meaningful activity, which he specifically indicates is not created with the mere end of monetary exchange in mind - those he terms mechanical arts. (Kant and Walker, 2007 p134) For him, the fine arts are more than merely pleasurable to enjoy as a sensation, but as a cognitive exercise, effectively separating art out into a sphere in which it is seen as a higher, purposive activity, one which encourages more than bodily sensation, but reflective judgement. In this instance, Kant is describing the creation and reception of art as meaningful. Not only is it meaningful, he has separated it out from crafts and arts created as an exchange of labour for money, or, the *mechanical* arts. This separation from the production of art or artists merely being instruments of labour, if we borrow from Emma Dowling again, aligns fine art with the meaningful, engaged pursuit of human activity. Here, both producing art and receiving care, allow the possibility for us to connect with our humanity. Schiller adds a third, complementary element to this, that of free play, which accounts for the audience reception of art, and the emancipatory potential therewith.

Free play is conceived as a way of appreciating the aesthetic. It allows the spectator to play with ideas, projecting them onto the “free appearance”. Schiller uses the Juno Ludovici as that free appearance, as an artwork that encapsulates his understanding of beauty. For Schiller, beauty is the consummation of our humanity, as it represents both matter and spirit. Beauty straddles both knowledge *and* experience. It is an idea which changes, and is an idea that is “played” with. (Schiller and Snell, 2004)

His choice of the Juno Ludovici is determined because he reasons that “We shall never be wrong in seeking a man’s ideal of beauty along the selfsame path in which he satisfies his play impulse.”(Schiller and Snell, 2004 p79) For Schiller, that is most apparent in the Classical Greek desire to imbue the inhabitants of Olympus with the qualities that should have been realised on earth: truth and toil, futile pleasure:

[T]hey released these perpetually happy beings from the fetter of every aim, every duty, every care, and made idleness and *indifference* the enviable portion of divinity; merely a more human name for the freest and sublimest state of being...It is neither charm, nor is it dignity that speaks to us from the superb countenance of a Juno Ludovici; it is neither of them, because it is both at once. [Italics are my emphasis] (Schiller and Snell, 2004 p80)

The free appearance of the aesthetic artwork contains within it an indifference to the ideas that are played with by those who view it. Both Kant and Schiller's philosophy of aesthetics and play is just that, a philosophy. When compared to the very real issues that care addresses and thinking back again to Joan Tronto's assertion that care makes visible the power relationships in society, it is important to contextualise aesthetic philosophy through our contemporary power relationships. To do this, it is worth looking at the intersection of aesthetics and politics. Jacques Rancière contextualises the philosophy of aesthetics through the lens of the political, and this is an important shift towards the reality that care is frequently entrenched within. And, importantly, he has built on Schiller's conception of free play in a way that ties into this reconsideration of art and its potential for what he terms 'emancipation', but could also equate to my view of agency and care.

Jacques Rancière's conception of free play has been a dominant conceptual thread throughout my practice since 2010. His concern with the potential of art and its reception by audiences as a prospective site for emancipatory speculation underlies how I think about care within art.

Claire Bishop explains that some of the dominant thinking around installation art is discussed in political terms due to the belief that the manner of perceiving it is an emancipatory experience. (Bishop, 2012 p35)

Jacques Rancière's discussions of aesthetics and politics offer several readings of the emancipatory potential of art, however, his understanding of art as a container for contradiction, alongside the constitution of common spaces has informed my thinking about installation art as a particularly successful material practice for feminist work. In particular, the installation itself refers to a space made common for those who enter it and the feminist artists that undertake these types of work frequently make use installation for that purpose, to offer a potential equality of access for a range of audiences.

In his conception of aesthetics, Rancière points to the politics of constituting public or common spaces; who is permitted to occupy them and how they are permitted to imagine them. He uses a Platonian example which refuses to acknowledge workers as political beings, stating that they have time for nothing but their work and so never attend the people's assembly. (Rancière, 2009 p24) Rancière discusses this as a classed exclusion from political representation or rights: "Their [workers] 'absence of time' is actually a naturalised prohibition written into the very forms of sensory experience." (Rancière, 2009, p24) This naturalised prohibition draws parallels to the moral responsibility of caring that is considered a naturalised characteristic of women. The act of caring exerts limits upon the time women have to be present, but it also redacts them from public

space. Rancière borrows from Friedrich Schiller in his determination of why access to free time, and by extension art, is necessary for emancipation. For Rancière art is important *not* as an object in itself but as a focal point for “free play”. Free play allows the spectator to play with ideas as the free appearance on which those ideas can be projected.

Schiller’s understanding of what is at stake within play and art: “Man plays only when he is in the full sense of the word a man, and he is only wholly man when he is playing.”(Schiller and Snell, 2004 p80) suggests that our humanity is contingent upon our access to play. Play is a gratuitous activity that intends no serious outcome; ideas are free to be contemplated without thought of gain, reward or responsibility – factors which usually dictate our existence. Play is freedom from our assigned roles; “Play’s freedom is contrasted to the servitude of work.” (Rancière, 2004, p31). Much as the freedom of creating fine art is contrasted to the drudgery of remunerative art by Kant, play is contrasted to the servitude of work, and finally the time and agential capacity that comes as a result of care, each of these come together to make our free time *purposive*.

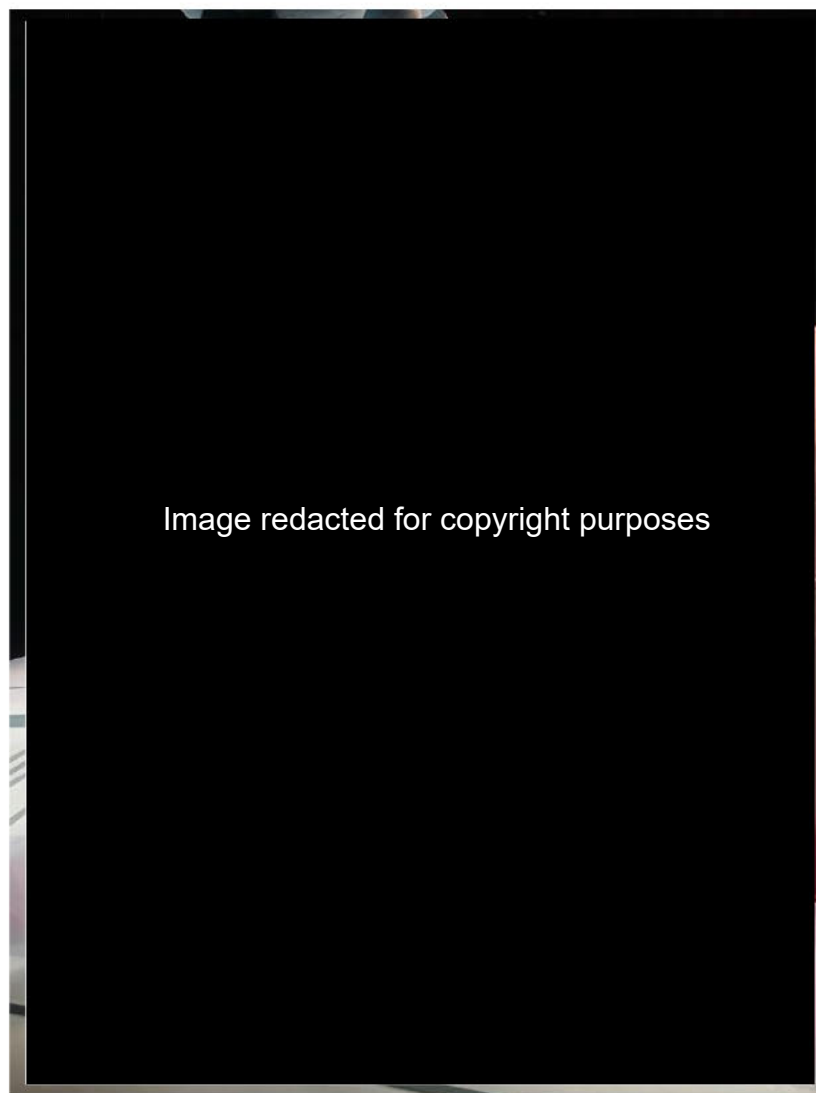


Figure 36 Tai Shani, *Dark Continent: Semiramis*, Tramway, Glasgow, April 28 2018.

When looking at Tai Shani's work again, with this specific consideration in mind, I'd like to look at why the ways in which she uses the installation space that can be considered specifically feminist, and as a result offer the kind of agential care that I believe is necessary.

The material sumptuousness of Shani's installation worlds, light absorbing velvets paired with highly reflective sculptural surfaces, carefully considered lighting, but ultimately the intense and rhythmic vocalisations in the narrative performance excite sensory responses from the audience. As already discussed, Kant holds that art should be a reflective experience, not a bodily sensation. However, the contention with installation art is that this form of affective atmosphere, alongside the intellectually compelling nature of the space is necessary to fully engage audiences in the project of imaginative world building. In sharing this space with her audience, Shani is able to affect these sensory responses.

Shani's installations make use of more than just lighting and sound, but introduce performance in a way that heightens the audience's investment in the world she is building. The performers activate this space with minimal movement, a sinister stillness and confrontation of violence as yet unacted. The mesmeric quality of the installation that Shani creates recalls something of a disembodied "stage presence". Jane Goodall describes mesmerism as "the compelling power...[that can] erase everyday thoughts and...transport [the audience] to another plane of feeling...create a sense of expanded destiny and heightened meaning...to all who wish to embrace it." (Goodall, 2008 p87) There is a sense of apprehension in being transported without agency or awareness, itself an act that holds the possibility for violence. But many are invested in this emotive transportation and heightened destiny. As I have previously stated, Shani's analysis of violence speaks to the breadth of women's experiences. The violence that women experience is from a society that subjugates them, with calls on their time that prevent them from imagining otherwise. Their transportation to another plane of feeling through mesmeric performance is not violence by comparison. This transportation permits them to imagine around and through their current conditions.

This affecting quality of the work, does much to "abstract us from the demands placed on our bodies at any given time." (Olufemi, 2020 p84) This is an urgent necessity for those who spend so much time labouring and caring. The intensity of affect in Shani's work is the result of her "desire to move people deeply, to the point at which a sense of overstimulation becomes inevitable and is likely intended. When entering a world that privileges sensation, it is required that we feel intensely, too." (Turner Contemporary (Arts organization : Margate, 2019 p78) This intense feeling,

coupled with the dense layering of meaning within the installation space makes for an enervating experience that encourages a complete abstraction from the demands that capital places on bodies.

To my mind, this type of world building seems feasible only through installation, activated through performance. In Shani's work her multiple strategies, layering of meaning, and material choices, all coalesce to produce a whole that eludes comprehensive mastery by its audience. Her work leaves space for contradiction as a necessary element for art works dealing with the contentious issue of representation for women. The irony of holding together the disparate elements of their identities, means that women are well used to the contradictions present within those identities. As Donna Haraway says in her seminal *Cyborg Manifesto*: "Irony is about contradictions that do not resolve into larger wholes...about the tension of holding incompatible things together because both or all are necessary." (Haraway, 1998 p149) Shani's installations hold these ironies together, well.

For Rancière, the potential of art is its capacity to contain contradictions that provoke specific contemplations for its viewers. Art can contain multiple meanings for those viewing it, but as a passive object, it cannot contain those meanings in and of itself. That art is capable of maintaining these contradictions as a passive container activated only by its viewers, is important. In this sense, art acts as a catalyst, without itself representing specific politics, this capability is termed 'metapolitics' by Rancière. (Rancière, 2009 p33) But it is interesting to consider, that audiences who themselves hold multiple contradictions as a matter of course within their identities, could potentially respond with a heightened understanding to works of art that contain contradictions, too. However, an understanding and experience of the aesthetic is not interchangeable with an understanding of political conditions that lead to emancipation. The aesthetic then, is a tool for holding these hugely complex relationships and ideas in suspension for an audience to "play" with. However, that art acts as a catalyst, is important. If, as Rancière suggests, the metapolitics present within art are what can potentially catalyse the audience into an emancipation of a sort, then it seems possible that part of that catalytic potential is the possibility to encourage agential care.

Installation art holds the space for contradiction, but it also holds that space for those viewing it, the possibility for multiple viewpoints. "installation art's multiple perspectives are seen to subvert the Renaissance perspective model [one that places the viewer at the centre with the world of the art work spread before them] because they deny the viewer any one ideal place from which to survey the work." (Bishop, 2012 p13) The nature of walking through the artwork means that the audience construct their journey. They might be led by persuasive curation, but ultimately, the viewpoint and journey will differ, sometimes subtly, and sometimes less so.

When considered as a feminist medium, installation art introduces non-hierarchical elements that privilege more than one sense. As Claire Bishop states:

Instead of *representing* texture, space, light and so on, installation art *presents* these elements directly for us to experience. This introduces an emphasis on sensory immediacy, on physical participation (the viewer must walk into and around the work), and on a heightened awareness of other visitors who become part of the piece. (Bishop, 2012, p11)

The awareness of others in Bishop's description of the installation is a complementary effect that engages the audience with one another, in a sense encouraging temporary relationship and awareness. This sharing of space and awareness of others encourages care, in so far as it brings a consideration of others experience of navigating the environment of the installation. This method of care, catalysed by the installation space, both immerses the viewer in the project of imaginative world building, and encourages the consideration of others as part of that project.

In her account of the history of Installation art, Claire Bishop suggests that the installation "introduces an emphasis on sensory immediacy." (Bishop, 2012 p16) She supports the sensory with Ilya Kabakov's notion of the 'total installation' which not only physically immerses the viewer, but, crucially, psychologically absorbs them too. She contrasts this to the previous tradition within the arts that placed sight as the primary sense and means of interacting with a work. (Bishop, 2012 p36) This shift from a detached intellectual method of interacting with an art work to one which doesn't privilege the primary sense of sight over any of the other senses, and which places an emphasis on the emotive, psychological and immersive experience is important for me. It connects a form of art that seeks to create an absorbing experience with a method of knowing that is informed by a depth of feeling, but also importantly encourages that to take place in a common, shared space. This is a departure from Kant's declaration that bodily sensation is not what makes art *fine art*, it is the intellectually reflective quality that the art work encourages that makes it fine art. But in this instance, it is reasonable to consider alternative conceptions of aesthetic appreciation, such as the phenomenology of being, in which our bodily experiences provide a richness of knowledge.

The depth at which we can determine how we experience a meaningful life, determined by ourselves is described through the embodied sensation that Audre Lorde terms the erotic. Lorde cites the erotic as:

a measure between the beginnings of our sense of self and the chaos of our strongest feelings. It is an internal sense of satisfaction to which, once we have experienced it, we

know we can aspire. For having experienced the fullness of this depth of feeling and recognising its power, in honour and self-respect we can require no less of ourselves. (Lorde, 2017 p23)

Our depth of feeling, our embodied and emotive experiences offer us ways to recognise meaningful pursuits within our lives, there isn't a privilege of intellect over emotion or vice versa. I will talk more about Audre Lorde's use of the erotic later in this document, where I will also discuss Mesmerism.

As an artform, a free-appearance that can be played with, installation art does not privilege the senses over reason, it encourages both, and more than one means of knowledge. By placing the viewer within the work alongside other viewers, the opportunity to think and consider is supported by the sensory experience of being within the work. This embodied or *erotic* experience is one which can offer audiences ways to identify what is meaningful for them within the work.

Space for Contradiction, Invitation and Refusal

In relation to my own practice, the installation plays with notions of the *body* of work. As my explorations embrace somatic qualities, offering the opportunity to traverse internal worlds, the possibilities inherent within installation complement an expanded approach to the "body". As previously stated, Legacy Russell talks about the body as an abstract journey, "body is a world building word."(Russell, 2020 p14)

Thinking through the body and with the body, as a journey, and the representation of an interiority has been enhanced by the works of Legacy Russell, Luce Irigaray and Donna Haraway. Each finds a way to complicate and enrich ideas about the body that is complementary to the complex and contradictory nature of intersectional feminist identities.



Figure 37 Ruth Jones, *Space for contradiction, invitation and refusal*, 2022. Installation. DFA showcase 2022.

Luce Irigaray has contributed to a feminist reading and rebuttal of psychoanalysis and philosophy for decades. Her argument against the Freudian notion of penis envy and Lacanian reading of women as operating from a position of lack, is a starting point for discussion of the female body. It is worth noting here that it is a predominantly essentialist view of the female body, one that does not account for nor mention trans bodies or non-binary bodies. My understanding of what constitutes “women” and marginalised genders is broader than merely anatomy, which is why I have expanded my approach to the body through the theories of Legacy Russell and Donna Haraway. However, this does not mean that there is no value in the conversation of bodily difference. Specifically, to consider how nearly all marginalised genders operate in our current society from a position of lack – lacking the privilege of cis-gendered, heteronormative, white, middle to upper class men – this is our Western societal “default”. As Grayson Perry says in *The Descent of Man*, 2016:

When we talk about identity, it feels natural to immediately think about someone who stands out against the background, someone unusual, someone distinct. The distinct thing about Default Man is that in many ways he *is* the background. Somehow his world view, his

take on society, now so overlaps with the dominant narrative that we can easily mistake them for each other. (Perry, 2017 pp14-15)

This default status of this particular “man” leads us to qualify all other identities as “other”, and in so doing I believe we can align ourselves against any kind of default gender or body. In our differences and diversities there is strength and the possibility for something new. As Legacy Russell says, “When we gender a body, we are making assumptions about the body’s function, its socio-political condition, its fixity.” (Russell, 2020 p8). As I have already discussed at length earlier in this document, the demands placed on bodies to reproduce society, calling on women to “care” as their moral proclivity determined by their biology, places them at a disadvantage. Russell offers the opportunity to “glitch”. “This glitch is a form of refusal.” (Russell, 2020 p8). Refusing the fixed, socio-political function of the “female” or “male” body, is a way of also imagining a meaningful life beyond being instruments of labour that reproduce bodies for capital.

Despite this, Luce Irigaray provides embodied insights that highlight ways of thinking that are beneficial to feminist thought and to the notion of the installation for my work.

Our all cannot be projected, or mastered. Our whole body is moved. No surface holds. No figure, line, or point remains. No ground subsists. But no abyss, either. Depth, for us, is not a chasm. Without a solid crust, there is no precipice. Our depth is the thickness of our body, our all touching itself. Where top and bottom, inside and outside, in front and behind, above and below are not separated, remote, out of touch. Our all intermingled. Without breaks or gaps. (Irigaray, 1985 p213)

Her description of women’s “all” not being able to be mastered or projected resonates with the Claire Bishop’s history of the installation as a break from the tradition of painting, where no one view allows mastery of the work. (Bishop, 2012) Irigaray’s descriptions draw parallels for me with the idea that the installation is suited to representing embodied and interior journeying, a journey not pre-defined. These journeys abstract the interior or embodied world. The abstraction capable through the body is discussed by Legacy Russell as part of its potential. “we use *body* to give form to abstraction, to identify an amalgamated whole.” (Russell, 2020 p42) This use of the body as a collection or amalgamation of abstract notions echoes Irigaray’s above statement; that no surfaces holds, no figures, points or lines, in front, above, below, inside and out; these are not separate or clearly defined and *boundaried* states. Pulling together these contradictory, nebulous and abstracted concepts is the *body*. Further abstractions of this contradictory body come from Donna

Haraway, who posits a cyborg future in which “people are...not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints.” (Haraway, 1998 p154) For me, these ideas tie together a possibility for installation as a space that references the body, but becomes a kind of body in its own right – particularly when it holds the potential to pull together these abstractions, negating mastery, amalgamating contradictions and holding them together in suspension.

The building of an interior world, with an intersectional feminist approach has been a goal of mine over the past two years of the doctorate. Refining the ways in which to approach the content for the installation has been a mixture of material considerations and conceptual ones. In the end of year showcase of June 2022, I brought together an installation I titled *Space for contradiction, invitation and refusal*. Comprised of the works that I had been developing and reconfiguring, the installation was a point where I could bring my research interests, feedback and new and existing works together into a cohesive installation.

Space for contradiction, invitation and refusal, was a chance to curate the space in such a way as to lead an audience through the works, but still allow them the agency necessary to create their own meaningful connections between works and experiences. I wanted the environment to be absorbing, a different space and I had begun to think of it as an internal, interior world, with bodily and synthetic references. My aim was that *Space for contradiction, invitation and refusal* would take the conditions, oppressions and experiences of women and use them as a starting point for imagining the installation space, seeking to create a space where the peculiar conditions of women’s lived experiences can hold necessary contradictions alongside one another. These contradictions become difficult to hold alongside one another with the cognitive dissonance that results from specific understandings of who we are versus what is projected onto us, internalised and expected of us; care-giver, lover, slut, frigid, prude, mother, bitch, crone, priss, childish, innocent, old-maid, girly, princess, house-wife, mutton-as-lamb, lazy, dumb, vapid, dowdy, narcissistic, pretty, ugly, stuck-up, flirty, caring, quiet, gossipy, loving, accommodating, over-emotional, weak, delicate, and so on.

The installation became a disembodied representation of those contradictory ideas and projections that collide in the social expectations of the “female” gender. Care and emotional labour were extended to the audience in a sincere parody of ASMR (ASMR stands for Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response and will be discussed in detail in the next section of the report) personal attention, delivered in intimate whispered bursts through headphones.

To further control the environment, to world build and mark a threshold into this other space, I used light, sound, and smell to impact the expectations of the audience and shift how they could navigate the space. Clouds of synthetic aroma were expelled by the installation space – reminiscent of childhood confectionary, sometimes inviting and delicious and sometimes cloying and a touch too sweet. The smell itself became a precursor to the installation. Breaching the boundaries of the space, and echoing Irigaray’s assertion that “all are intermingled without breaks or gaps.” (Irigaray, 1985 p213) This scent laid ground for the installation, insinuating itself into the audience’s awareness ahead of any other element of the work. Making use of soft, pink light and semi-transparent materials blown gently by fans placed around the space to shift the air and the aroma, I hoped to echo the whispering sensation, but ultimately no real boundaries were asserted by the chiffon curtaining. The journey ended with the clinical, objective spotlight poised on the paper-thin membrane of skin that contained these contradictions.

In titling the exhibition *Space for contradiction, invitation and refusal*, I wanted to offer a starting point for thought for the audience, literally referring to the space and what it held, how they might navigate the experience of the space under that title, but not be constrained by it either.

I am interested in the installations potential to change the way that people navigate artworks, how they approach them, and the space in this work intentionally set out its own influence, asserted its own alterity, through light, colour, smell, touch and sound. Before audiences even encountered the space, they could smell it. Upon encountering it, how they traversed it was immediately different, slowing them down, engaging their senses more thoroughly as they chose how to explore it. But the work itself, its “body” laid out as an abstract journey, forced embodied experiences in the audience.

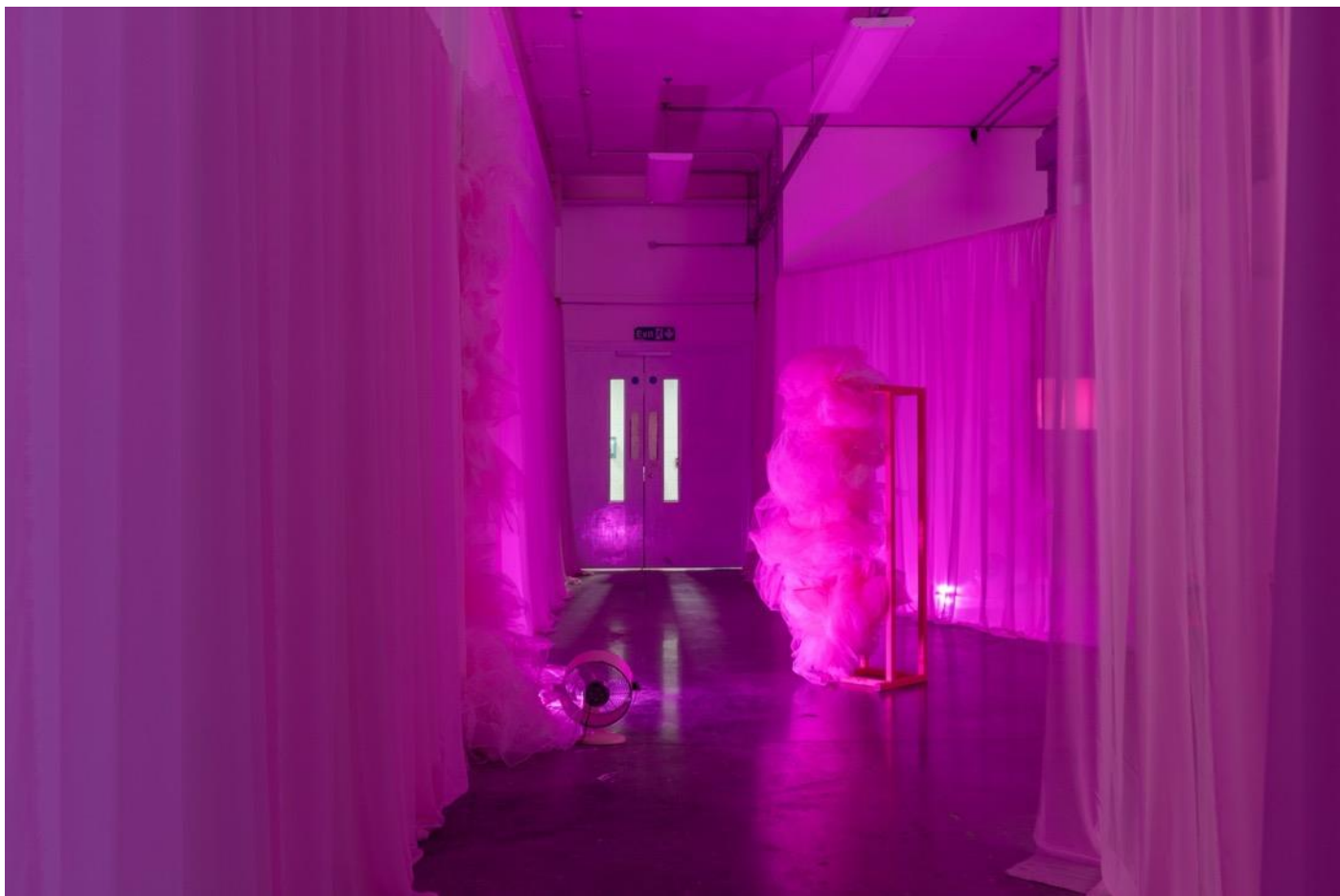


Figure 38 Ruth Jones, *Space for contradiction, invitation and refusal*, 2022. Installation. DFA showcase 2022.

My material and colour choices for the installation space are dictated by several factors. I always want the material itself and the colour to hold numerous connotations that can be brought by anyone seeing the work, imbuing the work with a personal charge that the audience can use to co-construct meaning in the work.

My colour choice of pink holds many connotations, and ones which vary according to age. Historically pink as a name for the colour, or more accurately the tint, was only in common usage from the 1840's onwards in the Oxford English Dictionary. The gendering of the colour pink towards girls was aggressively endorsed at the start of the 1980's. For context, I was born in 1980 and have strong childhood recollections of the marketing of the colour towards to girls in specific, in part causing my interest in the colour and its associations with girls and women.

As Jo B. Paoletti discusses in her text *Pink and Blue: Telling the Boys from the Girls in America*, 2012, the gendering of the pink and blue clothing switched between boys and girls across different countries from the 1800's onwards. Traditionally children were dressed in white. Then pastel tones of blue and pink, before the 1960s, where a confluence of events arose to change that. The advent of determining the gender of the child before it was born became possible, and child

psychology studies determined that bright colours provided clearer contrast as opposed to the pastel blue and pinks, and were better for children’s cognitive development. (Paoletti, 2012 p86) At this time the women’s liberation movement also impacted the use of the colour, which was associated with femininity, and a move towards de-gendering clothes and toys was popular until the early 1980’s: “During the heyday of unisex child rearing in the 1970’s, pink was so strongly associated with traditional femininity that it was vehemently rejected by feminist parents for their daughters’ clothing,” (Paoletti, 2012 p94). In part the feminist response to the gendering of the colour led to girls wanting the colour more, and with the advent of neoliberalism, and aggressive advertising campaigns aimed at children allowed more autonomy of choice than ever before: “little girls as consumers with considerable persuasive power, made their preferences clear.” (Paoletti, 2012 p96)

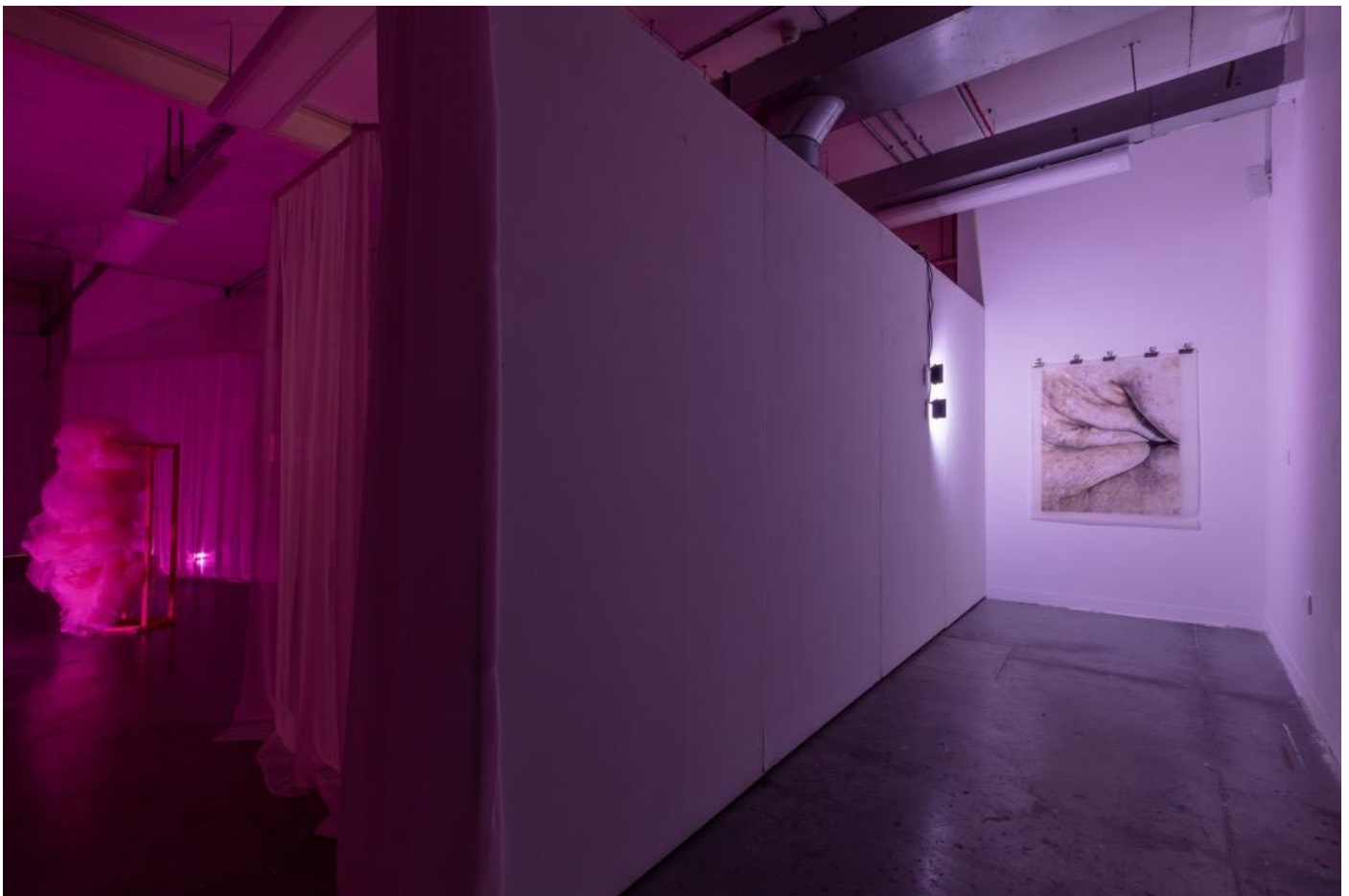


Figure 39 Ruth Jones, *Space for contradiction, invitation and refusal*, 2022. Installation. DFA showcase 2022.

The effeminate associations for the colour pink, in combination with the softness of the material choices for my installation allow so many connotations to be brought up by the audience. The multiplicity of meaning held by material and colour echoes for me Donna Haraway’s *Cyborg Manifesto*, whereby “the tension of holding incompatible things together because both or all are necessary and true” (Haraway, 1998 p149) hints at the complexity and irony inherent within women’s identities.

The choice to make use of smell was a strategic decision, smell is a sense that operates continually. It is something remarkably difficult to tune out and so smell tends to operate outside of rationality and consciousness, and instead goes straight to emotional reactions of pleasure or disgust, and frequently will trigger memory and melancholy. Alain Corbin's research into the olfactory history (of Paris in particular) discusses our relationship with smell and how it has shifted over time. In particular, he references Maine De Biran's unpublished journals with a quote that gets to the immediacy of smell and its effect on our memories:

“The kinds of memories that are attached to the sensations of smell must be of the same nature as the sensations themselves, that is to say, purely emotional; there is an affinity between odours and the internal impressions that compose the feeling of coexistence, which is entirely peculiar to this sense.” (Corbin, 1994 p201)

Employing smell as a sensory reference point in the installation is a way of pulling in an embodied and experiential means of affecting the audience. This, in contrast with the deluge of other sensory materials is an element which cuts through thought, or complements it. It encourages personal memories to come to the fore, allowing those to mix with the experience of the installation to encourage the audience to co-produce the meaningfulness of the work. An example of artists making use of smell are the recent Turbine Hall Commission at Tate Modern. Tania Bruguera's use of vaporised menthol in 2018 induced what she termed “Forced empathy.” (*HYUNDAI COMMISSION TANIA BRUGUERA: 10,148,451*, 2018) Bruguera considered the smell capable of circumnavigating thought processes causing the body to respond with sinus responses and eye watering. Frequently eliciting emotional responses, smell can also bring with it numerous connotations of taste, class, age and gender and so on. These intersections collide within each audience member to colour their experience of the installation.

The sound, film, performance and drawing works that make up my installations each bring their own sensory experiences and artistic and theoretical influences. These are addressed in the next section of this report, through ASMR, and later in the Redaction section of the report.

2.2 ASMR

Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response, or ASMR, refers to the pleasant tingling sensation across the scalp, neck and shoulders that some people feel upon listening to certain repetitive sounds, whispering or watching repetitive visual stimuli.

ASMR is technically a scientifically contested phenomenon, with a pseudo-scientific acronym and credentials largely bestowed upon it by its recipients. In a 2021 paper in *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, the term itself is contested as scientifically inaccurate: “The term ASMR is frequently used to describe these experiences, which stands for autonomous sensory meridian response, but these words are not accurate descriptions of the sensory experience, nor of the manner in which it is elicited.” (Niven and Scott, 2021) It is also principally defined by its audience, rather than through rigorous scientific discourse. As Joceline Anderson outlines in her paper about the ASMR “whisper community”: “In its current iteration shared via YouTube, the ASMR community is created through interactions with a number of different types of videos.” (Andersen, 2015 p684) As a phenomenon that effects some, not all, and a cult social status in the YouTube sphere, with predominantly female performers offering borderline sexual fantasy role play, it’s not surprising that ASMR is often misunderstood. The irony of making use of a contested phenomenon to explore the contentious and contested subject of care is not lost on me. I will discuss the conflation of care, labour and ASMR below.

I became interested in ASMR during the first year of the doctorate, but didn’t begin to explore it more fully until the lockdown period, where seminars moved online, giving me the opportunity to play with the delivery of my research. Fascinated with the phenomenon of “personal attention” ASMR on YouTube, delivered by smiling, ostensibly tractable young women, I was drawn to the gulf between this apparent intimacy and gendered care being delivered digitally to those willing to suspend disbelief and be recipient of that intimate care. Within ASMR role play, it seems that care has been outsourced to the digital realm. This digital capturing of a care act, and its potential for unending repetition, replaying the precise nuances of stylised performances, allows the audience the option to consume the type of care they desire. This consumer choice, through the YouTube monetisation of likes, shares and views, lays bare the obvious relationship between capital, labour and care giving. Mimicking this type of ASMR “care” performance in my own work has been enhanced by research into feminist concerns about labour and care, or, *social reproduction*.

In the 1970s, Mariarosa Dalla Costa, defying the dominant Marxist ideology, “insists that domestic labor is productive labour.” (Weeks, 2018 p75) She argued that “the exploitation of women has played a central function in the process of capitalist accumulation, insofar as women have been

the producers and reproducers of the most essential capitalist commodity: labor-power.” (Federici, 2014 p8) This social reproduction is at the core of the muddling of care and labour that I have hinted at previously. The reproduction of the labour class through child birth, child-rearing, housework and so on, is performed by women. This unpaid labour is care work: “Too often, care is described and defined as a necessary relationship between two individuals, most often a mother and child.” (Tronto, 1993 p103) Emma Dowling further expands this connection with her contribution to care and social reproduction: “Care in the sense of *caring activity* refers to the labour process itself: caring as the act of tending to the emotional and physical needs of others.” [Emphasis is the authors] (Dowling, 2021 p37) As previously stated, women’s investment in care and its benefits is predominantly what maintains their position in social reproduction: “Care is often also the motivating force propelling someone to carry out reproductive labour.” (Dowling, 2021 p37)

In considering ASMR as a type of care work, there are obvious connections to the roles ASMRtists select, such as doctors and nurses, hairdressers and make-up artists. These professions care for certain aspects of their recipient – their appearance or wellbeing. By mimicking this relationship, the ASMRtist sets up a dynamic whereby they provide undivided attention to the viewer with the attention of their choice.

Joshua Hudelson terms ASMR role play as *asexual reproduction*, in his paper *Wages for Soundwork...*(2020). He considers this to be “the remainder of the reproduction of labour power after the subtraction of sex.” (Joshua Hudelson, 2020 p199) Indeed, the role play parodied by ASMRtists “fall[s] within the Marxian category of “reproductive” labour – that is, labour put toward the reproduction of workers’ labour power, which was, and in many cases still is, the purview of housewives. It went, and in many cases still goes, unpaid.”(Joshua Hudelson, 2020 p202) By attributing ASMR workers labour as a type of social reproduction it becomes conflated with care. The fact that many of the ASMR videos that offer this personal attention go unpaid, further supports the link between social reproduction, care and unpaid labour. “Many ASMRtists began as fans and cite the desire to “give back” to this community as their main reason for producing videos. This only sharpens the comparison with the unpaid domestic labor of women.”(Joshua Hudleson, 2020, p195)

For me, this entanglement of care, gender and labour through sound provides a dynamic foundation from which to produce my own sound work. Several of the complications surrounding care become apparent for me in producing ASMR work. *Performing* an act of care as a critique and parody of ASMR personal attention with the knowledge that it is *still* an act of care, is

important. I am personally invested in the benefits of my audience receiving care. Despite my critique of the gendered role of caregiving, I still feel that care is a necessary activity that provides the recipient with the possibility for a meaningful life and connection with their humanity. This ASMR roleplay is one means through which to world build and invite the audience to engage in that imaginative pursuit. But, there is also an agency involved in the performance of that care. Creating stylised performances of gender through ASMR videos and sound serves to make visible the quadruple bind for women care workers that I mentioned earlier in the report: namely that women perform the majority of care work, are invested in its transformative value, frequently have unmet care needs of their own and have reduced time due to unpaid labour on top of paid labour. By shifting my care work into my practice, I pay homage to the number of feminist artists who have recoded their activities as art, but I also reassert its value. In the *Manifesto for Maintenance Art 1969!* Mierle Laderman Ukeles did just that. Her “Duchampian gesture of appropriation,” in which she “recode[d] all her activities as art.” (Reckitt, 2015, pp 133) was as a direct result of motherhood and an inability to find time to make art. Ukeles decision to appropriate the unpaid labour of cleaning and maintenance as art, in what Helena Reckitt terms a rejection of “the habitual distinctions between avant-garde progress and the cyclical processes of affective labour.” (Reckitt, 2015, pp 133) is exemplary of the care and labour paradigm. By switching unpaid labour into art, she created a space for that labour to be seen as work.

Beyond the desire to further complicate care and gender within my artistic practice and beyond the desire to complicate the value ascribed to caring practices and concepts, I am also interested in the agency that performance provides me as the performer in this work. This agency in world building through the installation space and performance, becomes a kind of self-care - a chance for me to reimagine the world otherwise. Whether or not that is determined a form of unpaid labour, however, is up for debate.

Making use of Judith Butler’s constitution of gender as a performance has informed much of the ASMR work I have developed and how I have been thinking about the performative aspect of the work itself. In *Gender Trouble*, Butler posits:

If the body is not a “being,” but a variable boundary, a surface whose permeability is politically regulated, a signifying practice within a cultural field of gender hierarchy and compulsory heterosexuality, then what language is left for understanding this corporeal enactment, gender, that constitutes its “interior” signification on its surface?...Consider gender, for instance, as a *corporeal style*, an “act,” as it were, which is both intentional

and performative, where “*performative*” suggests a dramatic and contingent construction of meaning. [Emphasis is the authors] (Butler, 2006 pp189-190)

Quite apart from Butler echoing notions of the body that I interpreted through the theories of Luce Irigaray, Legacy Russell and Donna Haraway, as a *variable boundary*, her question of whether gender could be considered as a corporeal style, or an intentional “act” is important. Is it possible that the performance of gender is what constitutes its meaning? She goes further by considering gender and its conflation with identity. “Gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylised repetition of acts*.” (Butler, 2006 p191) Rather than considering gender as the block from which women build their identities, her contention is that the stylised repetitive acts that “women” perform, over time, are what creates their gender as an identity. By playing with these stylised repetitive acts through ASMR role play, there is something parodic taking place in my performance. And this sense of parody is what offers some agency. Butler affirms parody of gender as a form of “transformation,” or what I consider to be “agency”:

The possibilities of gender transformation are to be found precisely in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a failure to repeat, a de-formity, or a parodic repetition that exposes the phantasmic effect of abiding identity as a politically tenuous construction. (Butler, 2006 p192)

I felt that ASMR, as a deceptively quiet and gentle mode of delivery offered the potential for a substantial diversity of content to be conveyed to an audience without feeling didactic or contrived, but one which also permitted an exploration of the parodies of gender possible in my performance.

Within the installation, ASMR holds specific significance in so far as it positions the contradictory and contentious act of care as one which is capable of agency and rebellion. This rebellion is most apparent in my parodic performance as a personal attention “ASMRtist”. This twist in the delivery of the caring ASMR act through parody is necessary to allow for my agency, and the agency of the care-giver, more broadly. This is achieved through particular phrases and giggles in the performance which serve to pull the audience in and out of the mesmeric ASMR state, I will go into more detail about mesmerism later on. Whilst it is subtle, the parody also helps to make apparent the obvious societal projections that have resulted in this stylised act of gendered caring. The work I create begins to resemble a body dissolved across the site of the installation, an interior, pink,

world with variable boundaries that the audience journeys through, and with its own smell and material texture. The ASMR sounds become an internal monologue directly and discreetly whispered into the audience's ears through headphones. The ASMR pieces feature a layering of the narrative that foreshadows itself and refers back to itself, making it unclear where the beginning starts and the end finishes. This, along with the specific practicality of the installation, gives the audience little opportunity to master the entirety of the work. Making use of these mechanisms within my installation work, I believe I am able to retain my own agency as a performative care giver whilst creating an environment that offers caring acts through ASMR personal attention, but also through the project of imaginative world building.

Taking inspiration from role play ASMR as a starting point, I wanted to subtly fade the experience from familiar, docile, and agreeable welcoming phrases typical of ASMR personal attention. Asking banal questions and reaching out to the camera to "stroke" the watcher/listener, before gradually shifting into the more jarring, layered giggling and uncomfortable questions, serves to lull the audience before encouraging receptiveness to the complex and contradictory content of the sound piece. I addressed the audience with worrisome questions, such as, "Should I tell myself I'm a good person? Are you? Are you?" followed by giggling. Or, "What were you expecting? That your mind would just empty? And you'd go somewhere else? *Giggle*". I interspersed these questions with an overarching "guided visualisation" of an internal realm, and they are accompanied with shifting visuals that echo the ASMRtist role play in which I smile continuously for the 13 minute 30 second duration of the piece, but are cut with increasingly stranger visuals of consumption and swallowing, and borderline fetishistic hand movements. The smile itself feels particularly symbolic of recent online debates where Instagram accounts such as *Stop Telling Women to Smile*¹ have been necessitated in reaction to street harassment.

Performing an outwardly genuine, warm smile for 13 minutes straight on each take of recording bordered on painful. The result of which in the film calls to mind questions about the authenticity of the intent behind it; after a while, watching without sound, the smile becomes psychotic, comical, unnerving. Or as Butler might call it, parodic. When combined with the ASMR sound, the possibility for the audience to be distracted, pacified, and lulled is more probable, decreasing the obvious peculiarity of the 13-minute rictus.

¹ Stop Telling Women to Smile was a street art project started by Tatiana Fazlalizadeh in 2012, it escalated to an online activism event where people could download the posters free of charge and wheat paste them in their hometowns, and has since been developed into a publication. I took part in one of the international wheat pasting events in 2016 as part of a the Essex Feminist Collective. <https://stoptellingwomentosmile.com/>



Figure 40 Ruth Jones, *Still from Is it strange?* 2022.

Performing in this way and editing together intimate close ups of applying lipstick or biting an apple, I wanted to capture the forced performance of care and gender such that if you look closely, you might only catch the most infinitesimal hint of disingenuousness. The repetitive nature of my performance, of the smile and small actions, recall for me the possibilities inherent in the performance of gender through “parodic repetition that exposes the phantasmic effect of abiding identity as a political tenuous construction.” (Butler, 2006 p192) Butler’s consideration that gender is “phantasmic” or impossible to fully embody, and is instead constructed through a “stylised repetition of acts through time.” (Butler, 2006 p192), situates the power of repetitive and overtly performative aspect of the gendered female traits in ASMR as a possible space to interrupt the consumption of “naturalised” gender and naturalised gendered acts such as care. The vocal address used in ASMR, whispering and quiet speech, gentle tapping and stroking are reminiscent of a kind of hypnotism, or mesmerism. Making use of stylised repetitions in my vocal performance, through gentle, rhythmic and intimate whispering, rising and falling in time with breath sounds, allowed me to play further with ideas of gender and care. Looking into performance, mesmerism and mediumism allowed me to further pull together feminist theories and artists that consider how women can experience a creative and meaningful connection to their humanity. I will discuss these below.

Emily Perry

Emily Perry's recent performance *Narcissus Nature Morte Mukbang*, in response to the work of Gayle Chong Kwan at Murray Edwards College, Cambridge in April 2022, was a particularly salient example of performance of gender that makes use of the parodic and repetitive performance described by Butler. Having performed in one of the iterations of Emily Perry's pieces before (*Woman with Salad*, 2019, Focal Point Gallery, Southend), I knew that Perry has a fascination with the performative aspect of women's labour and how audiences and performers alike respond to these live moments.

Perry states her intention for *Woman with Salad*:

'*Woman with Salad*' features...both actors and non-actors, performing commercial stock image actions such as laughing and gesturing with salad on fork, peeling apples and looking bored, sighing or sitting in yoga positions making slow gestures with a halved avocado. These women are animating patriarchal, sexist, reductive images of themselves to be consumed by capitalism. Their ridiculous performance, dumb, relentless enthusiasm and sarcastic, robotic delivery mocks and subverts agency. At first a one-liner, the performance becomes a grotesque cycle in which we are all implicit. (Emily Perry, 2022)

Narcissus Nature Morte Mukbang was a shift beyond *Woman with Salad*. The three femme presenting performers directed their audience around the grounds of Murray Edwards College, Cambridge, starting the performance with an off-kilter guided meditation, periodically announcing non-sequitur phrases or words. Unsure about the sincerity of the leading performers, the large, congregated audience took a while to relax into the directions given. Mostly uncertain about how to react to what was happening alongside a crowd of strangers, the audience became harder to control the more comfortable and curious they became.

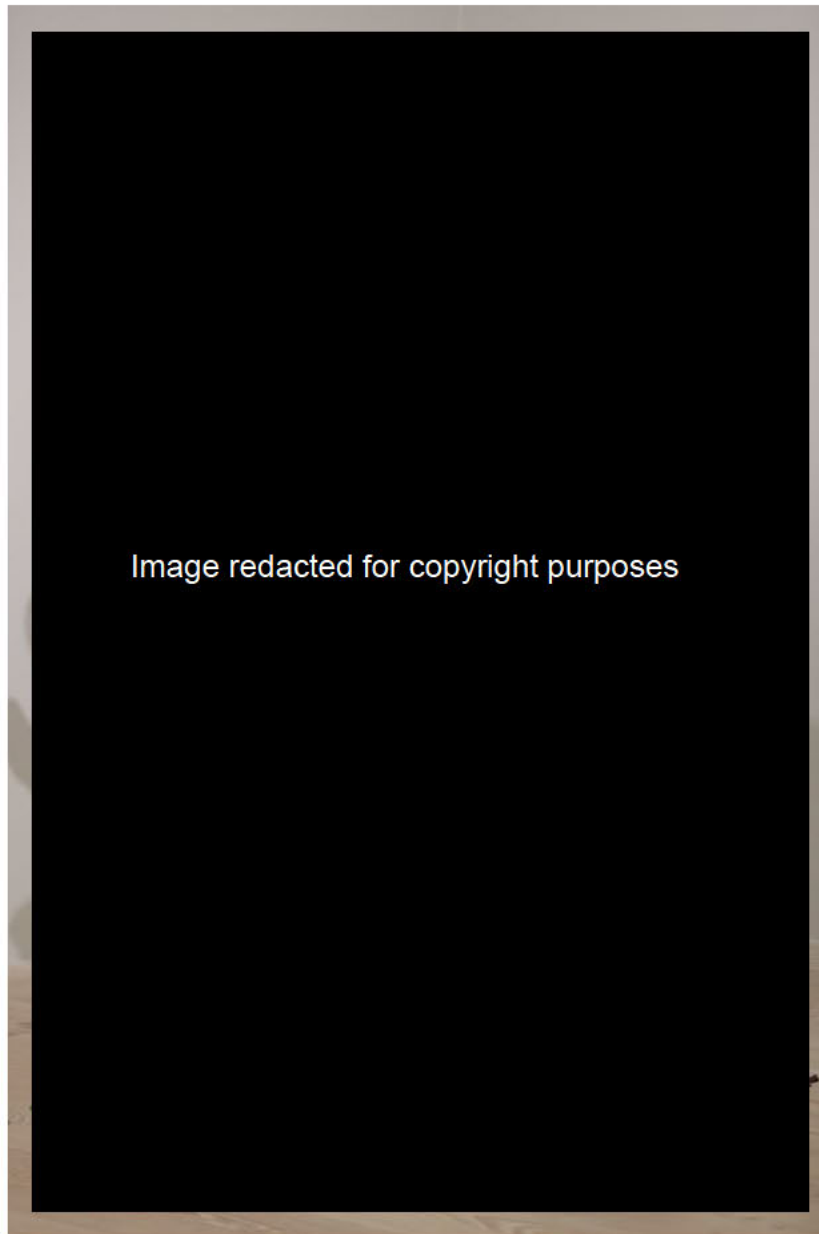


Figure 41 Emily Perry, Woman with Salad, 2019, Live Performance. Focal Point Gallery, Southend.

The disparate audience were gathered and led into a dining area, with a performer at the head of each table, and at this point the dynamic between the performers and the audience broke down entirely. The food at the table was gradually consumed by the audience and this disrupted the tension between strangers as they shared and passed food. Conversely, the performers became progressively stilted and manic, at the heads of the three tables they called out infrequent instructions on how to eat, to stop eating, to enjoy, to savour, before eventually being forced to shout over the noise of the audience, appearing increasingly unhinged in their declarations and demeanour.



Figure 42 Emily Perry, Narcissus Nature Morte Mukbang, 2022, Live Performance. Murray Edwards College, Cambridge.

So many preconceptions were revealed by this performance and the audience reaction. Whilst Perry determined the phrases and overall direction of the performers, she did not control the audience, but the manner in which they are likely to react was clearly anticipated. Her experience in directing women to perform a flat parody of single action, developing it into a living GIF, and then witnessing the discomfort and eventual acceptance of these characters to the point where they become furniture, has developed into a shrewd prediction of audience reactions. My experience of the performance caused concerns over the wellbeing of the performers, the comedy of the whole experience, and the absurdity of gendered roles. The chaotic moments where the performers were crying out at increasing intervals only to be ignored or looked at quizzically, caused self-reflection for the audience on how they perceive and treat women in the roles they take on, and how they are objectified and dehumanised. Being complicit in these superficially harmless moments ruptured the experience of the spectacle, the audience became confronted with how *they* were acting in this space, regarding the women and interacting with them. The complexity of this interaction staged by Perry evidenced for me how live performance could set up a dynamic that could shift perceptions abruptly for an audience.



Figure 43 Emily Perry, *Narcissus Nature Morte Mukbang*, 2022, Live Performance. Murray Edwards College, Cambridge.

Care is not mentioned in this piece, however, the roles each of the women perform, in aprons, guiding meditation, sharing information, leading the audience on a walk, hosting dinner, are typical of a *care-giver*. I read the gendered labour they performed as care-giving: “caring as the act of tending to the emotional and physical needs of others.” (Dowling, 2021 p37) Perry’s performance orchestrated a dynamic between the performers and audience that allowed the audience to recognise their complicity in the societal expectations projected onto women. The stylised and parodic caring labour of the performers visibly reduced their agency in direct correlation to the audience’s reactions to them. This revealed the inherent biases society has about the role’s women perform, to the point where they become ignored. For me, Joan Tronto’s assertion that “Those who care are made still less important because their needs are not as important as the needs of those privileged enough to be able to pay others to care for them.” (Tronto, 1993 p116) described the environment of Perry’s performance. By making use of care-giving acts, the performers made visible power relationships, a direct example of Tronto’s assertions.

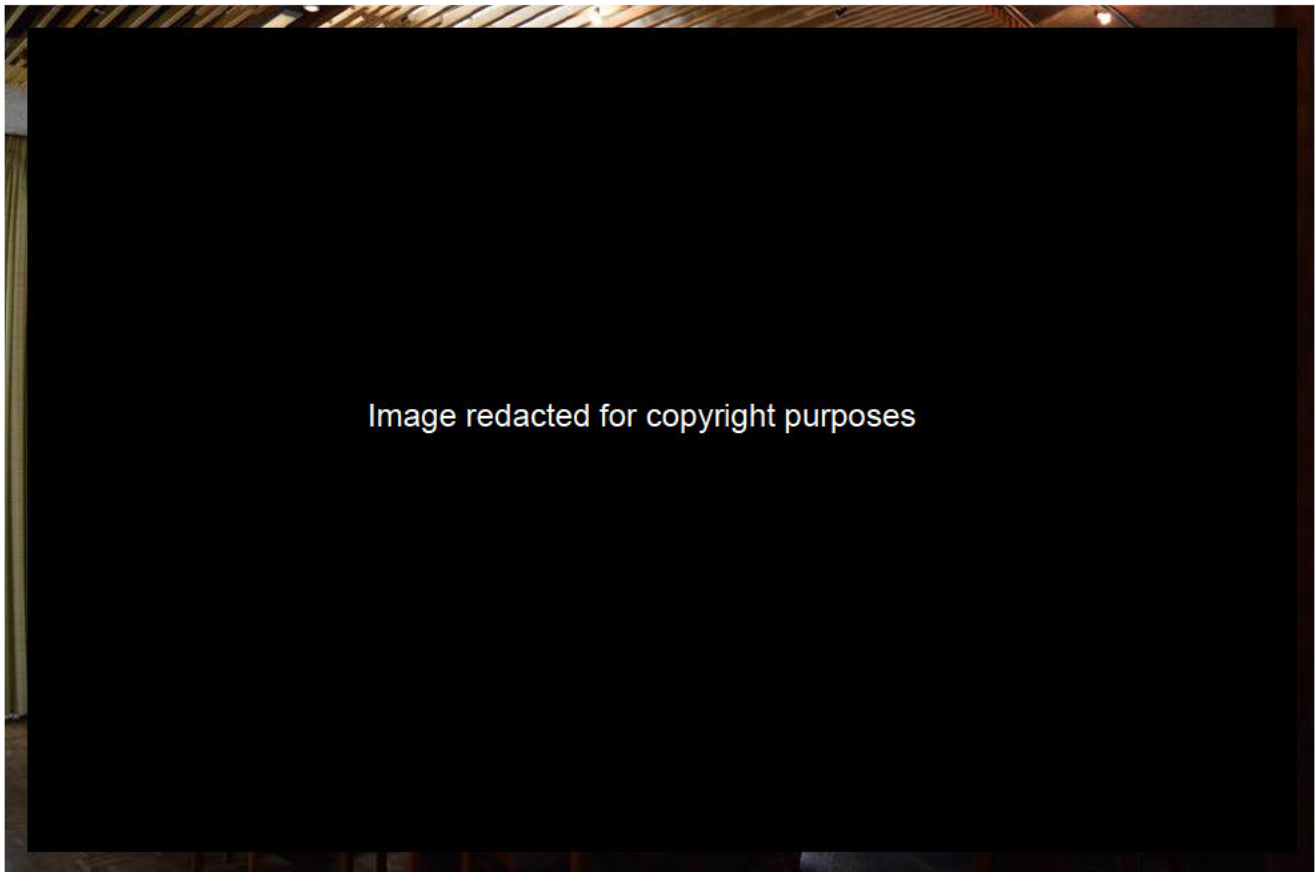


Figure 44 Emily Perry, Narcissus Nature Morte Mukbang, 2022, Live Performance. Murray Edwards College, Cambridge.

The Agency of the performers seemed to decrease as the audience's agency increased. But it also shifted how the audience understood their agency, the shift from subconscious to conscious choices in how to perceive and treat the women performing. As they became more and more hysterical in their delivery, the more it became apparent that they were human; the audience shifted away from passive experience of the spectacle to reclaim their autonomy, with some people trying to communicate with the women, trying to offer them food or listening to their contradictory instructions. The complex performance of labour and care was drawn out in Perry's work in a way that made visible the power relationships in our society and literally placed the audience in a situation in which that became apparent. This gave the audience the agency to choose how they react upon seeing those power dynamics revealed.

Is it strange?

Emily Perry's live work is capable of holding many of the complex concepts and realities of gender in suspension, making them tangible to the audience, allowing them to become aware of their own societal expectations as the performance unfolds. The possibility that live performance offered was something I wanted to explore within my own work, and to add to the dimension of the ASMR performance.



Figure 45 Ruth Jones, *Is it strange?* 2022, Live ASMR performance at Twenty One, Southend. 25 September 2022

In developing my ASMR work into a live performance, I was interested to see what would happen for the audience. Whilst I knew that I would be “contrary” in the way I offered and refused care through the whispered phrases, questions and giggles, I didn’t want to make the work inaccessible. I’d worked around different possibilities to minimise many of the issues that arise in terms of access and I specifically wanted to see if it would be possible to elicit an ASMR response in Deaf and hearing-impaired audiences by working with a British Sign Language interpreter. *Is it strange?* featured multi-channel headphones. The audience could switch between a pre-recorded channel that linked to the film that played in the background, or to the live ASMR performance channel. On the surface this choice between channels offered the audience agency in how they experienced the event, but it also denied them a definitive experience, causing some anxiety about missing out.



Figure 46 Ruth Jones, Is it strange? 2022, Live ASMR performance at Twenty One, Southend. 25 September 2022

Performing live in this way excited my understanding of the potential for the work to go further than it had during the DFA Showcase at the end of the 4th year of the doctorate. The performance gave me the opportunity to extend the moments of discomfort and welcoming, allowing me the chance to embody the notion of invitation and refusal. Employing contradictory methods, I staged what on the surface was an intimate performance, but offered it on a large scale. Soothing, lulling and disarming the audience in the company of one another, some complete strangers, was a way to enact agency as a care-giver. Speaking directly into people's ears, making eye contact and then giggling repetitively became part of the performance that elicited agency for me, as the care-giver. Having researched mesmerism as a possible connection to the intimacy of the whispered sound work in ASMR, a number of connections came to the fore after the performance.



Figure 47 Ruth Jones, Is it strange? 2022, Live ASMR performance at Twenty One, Southend. 25 September 2022



Figure 48 Ruth Jones, *Is it strange?* 2022, Live ASMR performance at Twenty One, Southend. 25 September 2022

Mesmerism

In the quality of compelling power often referred to as ‘mesmeric’, stage performers have something in common with charismatic political leaders. They convert a mass of individuals into a highly charged unity; they *erase the everyday thoughts and mundane reactions of their audiences by transporting them to another plane of feeling*; they create a sense of *expanded destiny and heightened meaning* that seems common to all who wish to embrace it. [Emphasis is my own] (Goodall, 2008 p87)

The erasure of everyday thoughts and mundane reactions, transporting audiences to other planes of feeling, when considered beyond purely stage performance, is descriptive of not only the effect of ASMR, but of the arguments I made earlier for art and care to act as catalysts for engaged and meaningful world building. Mesmerism is an effective tool for feminist artists occupied by the project of imaginative world building.

Mesmerism has traditionally been the reserve of women, delivered by performers and “mediums’ (and more recently ASMRtists), and, unsurprisingly, has been excoriated by the scientific community.

Mesmerism was situated in direct opposition to logic, reason and enlightened thinking; its credibility as an autonomous practice was minimised when appropriated by Andre Breton into the surrealist movement where it was reduced to “an expression of the hidden creative self.”(Grant, Larson and Pasi, 2020 p42). This shrouded mesmerism in a miasma typical of the patriarchal urge to diminish the practices and power available to women.

Mesmerism's origins begin with Anton Mesmer, in the decade before the French Revolution. As Jane Goodall recounts in *Stage Presence*, Mesmerism is “a theory of universalised magnetic forces [and] was applied in practical experiments, creating a pseudo-science that held sway over the cultural imagination long after its scientific credentials were exploded.” (Goodall, 2008 p14). Despite being rejected from scientific circles, mesmerism remained popular and it “disseminated new ideas about human power and communication.” (Goodall, 2008 p14) In a similar vein, ASMR is also scientifically contested as mentioned earlier in this report.

Mediumism

Despite its masculine inception, mesmerism’s connection to the feminine is explained by Goodall, through the potential that Mesmer brought back after the Enlightenment for “[s]upernaturalism and the drama of the expanded life cycle...feeding off exactly those scientific ideas that should have banished them.” (Goodall, 2008 p94) to re-invigorate magic and mysticism in the popular conscious.

Women as medium, channel or mouthpiece through which the mystical or spiritual could speak, placed a power at women’s disposal that had often been denied them in patriarchal, enlightened society, which has now been recognised as a possible site of mid-nineteenth-century feminism:

Mediumism is a method or tool that allows its practitioners the interpretation of larger cosmological, social or artistic systems....[it refutes] modernity’s firm distinctions between life and death, belief and fact, spirit and matter, reason and affect, mind and body. It has thus typically been an expression of worldviews that are widely deemed irrational and spurious. (Grant, Larson and Pasi, 2020 p77).

Interestingly, it seems that the women who possessed these mesmeric qualities, or who channelled spirits, did so in such a way as to refuse authorship of what they were doing. As if the “power” they possessed would be tolerated only if they did not claim to be speaking for themselves. The ambitious intentions of Myrminerest, a high priest channelled through artist Madge Gill, “provided her with a voice and grand purpose, even if it was not technically *her* voice” and could be seen as “a useful way to keep at bay sceptics who objected to [women’s] autonomy and pioneering visions.” (Grant, Larson and Pasi, 2020 p45) Grandiose ideas and claims could not possibly be taken seriously when originating from a woman, and mediumship offered a way to gain some autonomy over their own lives without being legitimated by men. “Public séances...set new standards for female visibility and behaviour, and star mediums – uniquely among unmarried women at the time – were able to make a living by travelling on their own.” (Grant, Larson and Pasi, 2020 p80) Labouring for themselves, these women were not merely reproducing the labour force for capital.

The power possible for women through mediumism and mesmerism, is a power that can be traced to ASMR today. Predominantly capitalised upon by women, ASMRtists exert a gentle power, over the physical states and minds of others, but in the name of something else. Taking clichéd “feminine” qualities of kindness, gentleness, and loving care and flipping them into their own service to wield a power over others, feels characteristic of the mediums who channelled other voices of power for legitimacy. How can the legitimacy of the act of caring by ASMRtists be questioned as acquisition of power, when they are performing their gender as it has been politically and socially conditioned and sanctioned?

Commonalities between mesmerism and mediumism, quite apart from their feminist overtones, exist where scientific reason pushes out the emotive, intuited experience that women frequently exhibited, for example, the knowledge systems that held their bodily autonomy in their own grasp. “Through the persecution of “witches”, women wishing to control their reproductive capacity were...subject to a demonization that continues to the present.” (Federici, 2020 p14) And as Larson quotes Isabelle Stengers and Philippe Pignarre in *Infinite Redress*:

‘magic’ is illegitimate in the capitalist order, it can empower people against ‘the system of sorcery’ that is capitalism: ‘it is necessary to employ words that resist the hold, which cannot be uttered by an executive of the World Trade Organisation or a CEO with impunity’. (Grant, Larson and Pasi, 2020 p83).

Mediums were able to negate capitalism's assignment of their bodies as the site of social reproduction in two ways; through a connection with a "magic" and spiritualism that could empower others against its systems, and through their ability to make a living through this "magic". Of course, as Silvia Federici states, the persecution of women who wish to control their reproductive capacity are still demonised, and these women, mediums aligned with "magic", were a threat to capitalism on that account and as financially independent agents.

The medium, the mesmerist, and the spiritualist all occupy a specific site in the public imagination. As practices that sit in the space between logic and reason, in an emotive or felt space, unquantified and unknown, it is not unexpected that these practices and spaces have been systematically denounced, condemned and delegitimised. These are spaces for possibility and it is not surprising that women inhabit them. This is reminiscent of Lola Olufemi's assertions about the apparently mysterious nature of creativity:

The project of building a new world and combating the harm produced in this one is rarely viewed as creative. Political endeavours are separated from the mysterious nature of 'creativity'... [the] space that art opens up reminds us that despite the violence we are subjected to, there are still parts of our minds that cannot be controlled. (Olufemi, 2020 pp86-87)

Reminiscent of Legacy Russell's slippery "glitch", these in between spaces and states are the places where women find the possibility to imagine something new. The space for possibility is a continuing theme across history for women's movements. In the spiritual movement, the political revolutionary notion that "the afterlife existed, independently of belief and confession, and was for the souls of everyone, whether black or white, rich or poor, baptised or not" stood in direct contradiction to the "hypocrisy of a rational, scientific, Christian, patriarchal culture." (Grant, Larson and Pasi, 2020 pp 79)

The very idea that women can make use of felt and embodied experiences, without holding them in hierarchical structure, not privileging one sense or state of being over another, is in opposition to the patriarchal structure enforced upon them. The very nature of existing as a woman is a threat to the capitalist system. That women have been led, through a systematic discrediting of the spiritual, supernatural or unquantifiable over the past centuries, to delegitimise the power available to them, is an intensely political act. That women still question the legitimacy of practices and knowledge that exist outside of the empirically accepted status quo, is disheartening.

Queer, feminist theorist, Audre Lorde, calls the power and knowledge that women possess, the erotic. In *Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power*, she situates the erotic as a deeply female spiritual resource, a truly embodied connection to feeling and sensation, that allows women to intuit their emotive state surrounding other knowledge systems which ultimately lead to the capacity for emancipation. How we feel and how that guides us to our true purpose in how we live – as fully rounded humans. (Lorde, 2017 pp22-30)

She states:

The erotic is a measure between the beginnings of our sense of self and the chaos of our strongest feelings. It is an internal sense of satisfaction to which, once we have experienced it, we know we can aspire. For having experienced the fullness of this depth of feeling and recognising its power, in honour and self-respect we can require no less of ourselves. (Lorde, 2017 p23)

The western tradition of divorcing the intellect from the emotive and embodied states has been forcefully achieved: “ Gender, race or class consciousness is an achievement forced on us by the terrible historical experience of the contradictory social realities of patriarchy, colonialism and capitalism.” (Haraway, 1998 p155) It favours rationality over intuition, masculine over feminine, thought over emotion, sight over other senses.

As women, we have come to distrust that power which rises from our deepest and non-rational knowledge. We have been warned against it all our lives by the male world, which values this depth of feeling enough to keep women around in order to exercise it in the services of men. (Lorde, 2017 p23)

This has been an oppressive state inflicted on to women over the centuries that have founded Western hegemony. The state of suborning; women to men; all races to whiteness; emotion to thought; all in service of capitalist progression. These colonial and extractive practices enforce hierarchies of knowledge, emotion and experience, that are in fact antithetical to whole and rich lives that humans can experience. As Silvia Federici claims of this capitalist agenda: “In no place has the attempt to reduce women’s bodies to machines, been more systematic, brutal and normalised than in slavery...Enslaved women in the US were forced to procreate to fuel a breeding industry” women’s wombs were not merely the source of local enrichment, but were also

suppliers in a global system of agricultural input, enslaved industrial input, and financial expansion.” (Federici, 2020 p14) This depressing, historical reality plainly demonstrates the reduction of women to machines in the service of capital, for social reproduction. But it also highlights the long-standing position that women (who occupy the most precarious intersections of race, class etc) have occupied that has reduced their capacity to enact their own agency. Lorde posits that women’s emotive experiences have been sanctioned only in favour of men’s pleasure (Lorde, 2017 p23), and that they have been taught to fear the power of their emotive understandings – of the many types of pleasure that exist outside of the services of sex and the procreative propaganda. In true connection to their senses, the thoughts and the feelings that help to guide them, women are able to understand what elements give their lives meaning. This careful interrogation of their inner narrative means a connection that will not allow women to settle for anything less than a life of purpose – and that is to say not a life that is in service only of capitalist cultures, as instruments of labour – but about what they view as truly important and necessary. Here we see additional ties to my earlier arguments surrounding care.

As might be expected, the political ramifications of bodily and spiritual experiences are always heightened for women. The apparently mundane sensations, emotions and experiences we all feel within our bodies become subject to politicisation when the body experiencing them is “female”. As such, it is impossible to extract the social, historical and political context from any movement, action or performance conducted by women.

Mesmerism, mediumism and ASMR offer a connection to the senses and sensations of the body, by drawing the mesmerised or the medium into a receptive state. A particular description that Jane Goodall lays out offers a number of clues about the efficacy of rhythmic performance and nuance:

There is an absolute command over time and space. Time is stretched out, so that all the senses are opened to the instant, then collapsed with a shock effect as the focus shifts...the whole performance is built on nuanced rhythms...building and relaxing tension so the entire concentration of the spectator is drawn in and involvement is all encompassing. (Goodall, 2008 p106)

In the intimate world of ASMR, involvement is encouraged to be all encompassing, suspending disbelief through roleplay, sensory immediacy through headphones is encouraged, to bring the audience into a binaural experience. To return again to the installation as discussed earlier in this document, there is a sense of possibility here in the description of the all-encompassing. To

literally encompass the audience in sound, light, smell, texture and environment is a strength of the installation, one steeped in feminine material practices.

To focus on the sense of sight and touch, and how that can be excited through installation, light and a physical immersion of environment, is to consider a different state of feeling – beyond what can be provoked through only performance and sound. But one which, if included with the mesmerist's techniques, could offer expansion of the artists installation and performance.

How mesmerism, mediumism and Lorde's erotic can all co-exist within the installation, intersecting and colliding but ultimately demonstrating the diversity of embodied experience, speaks of the range of feminist possibilities across history and art, possibilities that do not call for a hierarchy of thought or sight over emotion or feeling, almost in direct opposition to the Kantian assertion that the purposive activity of art should incite reflection rather than sensation: "Hence aesthetic art, as art which is beautiful, is one having for its standard the reflective judgement and not bodily sensation." (Kant and Walker, 2007 p135) But, if we view the complicated, emotive understandings that come from the intersectional identity's women straddle and combine them with the reasoned judgement that Kant champions, perhaps that is a space that complements the possibility to more than engage with the imaginative project of world-building, but to begin to create.

ASMR and performance both enliven the installation space in a way that I find draws out caring characteristics through the performance of care, and the agency I found in performing gender. However, as means to engage the audience in alternate ways, and to further explore the body, my work also features large scale drawings. These works share the installation space and represent bodies frequently redacted from public spaces.

2.3 Drawing



Figure 49 Ruth Jones, *Redaction: Vol 4*, 2022. Aquarelle on tracing paper, 101 x 130cm.

Frequently, my exploration of the interior space of the body through installation culminates in the presentation of that body's boundary: the paper-thin membrane of skin, carefully rendered in soft aquarelle pencil. These overscale drawings on paper have their own material language and colour palette, and focus on the slow, extended experience of large-scale drawing. Recurrently executed on tracing paper, the surface of the paper references the bodily membrane or boundary that tenuously separates the interior world from the external one. In reference to the difficulties experienced by women in maintaining bodily autonomy and presence in public spaces, the tracing paper acts as mutable boundary, like so many of the boundaries that women attempt to assert. Over the course of the doctorate, the '*Redaction*' series of work has been a response to those conditions that women experience. This series explores how the tenuous occupation of space can be an oscillating process of gain and loss, effectively eliminating women as a continual presence from public spaces, leaving perhaps only traces.

Drawing is a fundamental component of my practice that permits me a protracted process of thinking whilst making, mulling over complex theories, and is a way to process experiences,

conversations and memories. Ultimately, drawing allows me to coalesce my thoughts about my practice, with marks and moments on the page holding an archive of thought. It is also important to me to include mediums in my work that show a clear connection to the everyday. For me, the pencil is a tool that nearly everyone has experience of, and as such I view it as a democratic tool that gives the audience a shared understanding of mark making that they can bring to the work.

Redaction

The '*Redaction*' series began as an extension of thinking about women's visibility and the experiences surrounding women's speech going unheard. Rebecca Solnit's book *Men Explain Things to Me*, 2014, is a blow by blow account of the issue of silenced women:

It's the presumption that makes it hard, at times, for any woman in any field; that keeps women from speaking up and from being heard when they dare; that crushes young women into silence by indicating, the way street harassment does, that this is not their world. (Solnit and Solnit, 2014 p4)

Redaction, 2019, is a 120x120cm drawing, originally laid flat on a steel map table covered with a clear polycarbonate plate. The drawing has nine large scale, detailed pencil drawings of my mouth in various states of speech, representative of the space taken by the speech of women, the care in articulating and framing opinions for discourse, and it going unheard, which then necessitates the careful re-articulation of statement, and the subsequent disregard for the content of speech, as an ongoing process. A gradual redaction of women's attempts at holding space in public through speech. The refusal to hear the words coming from women's mouths, choosing to view women's mouths only as sexual orifices is highlighted by the overt sexualization of each drawing, mouths parted, tongues just visible or wide open, reminiscent of vaginal lips.



Figure 50 Ruth Jones, Detail of Redaction, 2019. Pencil on fabriano paper, 110cm x 110cm

Manifesting an image of this scale necessitates navigational tools, not dissimilar from mapping contours of landscapes. One can begin to see the contours of the face and body, and use them as navigation points in the process of mark making. Building on the body as a potential landscape or territory to be mapped, I looked at the work of Jenny Saville and Kathy Prendergast.

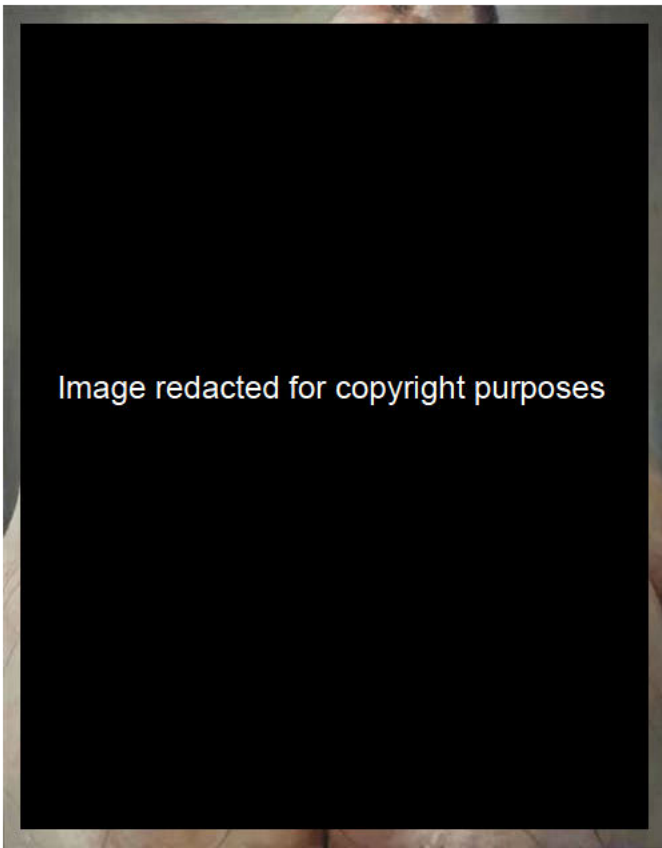


Figure 51 Jenny Saville, *Plan*, 1993. Oil on Canvas, 274 x 213cm.

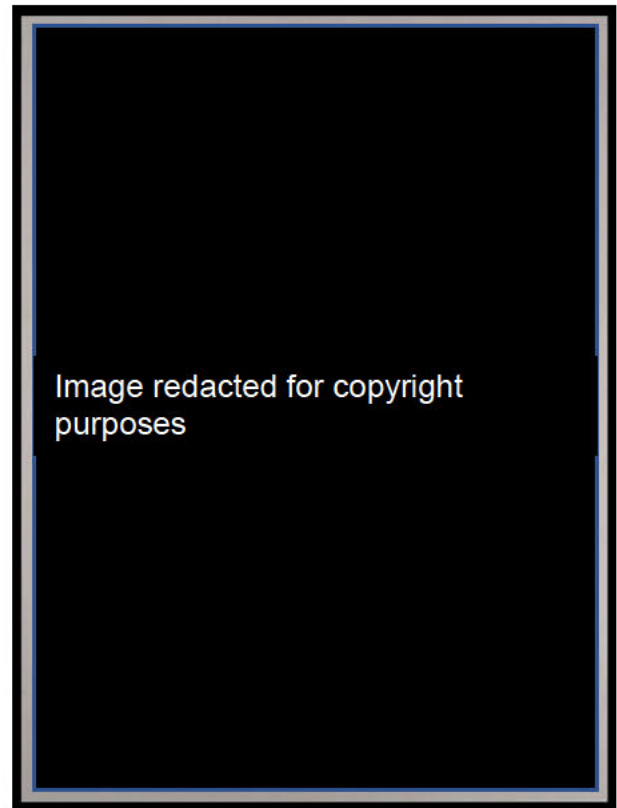


Figure 52 Kathy Prendergast, *Body Maps Series*, 1983, Mixed media on paper, Dimensions variable, Collection Irish Museum of Modern Art, Donation, Vincent & Noeleen Ferguson, 1996.

As Jenny Saville says of her paint process: “The process of painting them is a sort of discovery of the landscape of their face.” (Saville, 2005 p124) I too, viewed the process as a discovery of a landscape that signalled a potential journey, again referencing Legacy Russell’s assertion that bodies are abstract journeys. (Russell, 2020 p146) Both Jenny Saville’s *The Plan*, 1993 and Kathy Prendergast’s series *Body Maps* from 1983, were influential for the original ideas of this work as I began to think about the potential of contour lines to further explore the map-like qualities of the work and how the body itself can navigate space. This mapping of the body, of attempted speech, drew a line through possible journeys to agency.

Whilst drawing the mouths in the round, I thought about the work’s reference to a number of things: a top down “god’s eye view” that aerial maps provide; the hierarchy of who gets to speak and who gets to be heard; who has a seat at the table; a presence in the boardroom and other decision-making meeting spaces, such as the council of war to determine the plan of attack.



Figure 53 Ruth Jones, Redaction, 2019. Pencil on Fabriano paper, welded steel and polycarbonate, 120 x 120 x 100cm.



Figure 54 Ruth Jones, Redaction, 2019. Pencil on Fabriano paper, welded steel and polycarbonate, 120 x 120 x 100cm.

I turned the paper so that only two segments of the drawing would face the same direction, wanting to avoid traditional readings of the piece from top left to bottom right. I wanted to lay it flat, like a map of this redacted journey of speech, one that could be viewed from all sides, requiring the audience to orient themselves to make sense of the “topography,” much as one might when using a map.

The Fat Body

As the series continued, I moved away from the more concrete result of graphite pencil on paper towards translucent materials and soft, water colour pencil to better represent the ideas I was considering. *Redaction: Volume 2, 2020*, played with volumes of space and density, things fat bodies can be violently accused of taking too much of. I condensed the volume of a body, my body, to a surface representation of its membrane. This shift, to the body itself and away from the illustrative process of speech that the first piece represented, abstracted the body further, diminishing it to a section of its visible, enclosing boundary. Making use of speech through ASMR in the installation freed up my drawing process to unpick some of my concerns around the (and my) female presenting body. I was wary of the body positive movement taking place on social media, in which mid-sized women contorted their bodies to reveal their “rolls” of fat and preach acceptance of a little cellulite, whilst at the other end of the spectrum fatness is continually declared an “epidemic” on main stream media channels. In a 2015 study by Stuart Flint, Joanne Hudson and David Levallee looked at the portrayal of obesity in British newspapers. They determined that: “the media plays an instrumental role in the development of anti-obesity attitudes and provides a stimulus for weight stigmatization through shaping social consensus.” (Flint, Hudson and Lavallee, 2016 p16) Furthermore, weight stigma is maintained through the health care system, leading to poor levels of care for obese patients. In a recent study published in *Obesity Reviews*, the researchers looked into obesity bias in health care professionals. Britta Talumaa et al found that:

Preliminary research shows that a significant proportion of the relationship between obesity and health outcomes can be explained not by body weight itself, but by the negative experiences commonly shared by people with overweight and obesity. More research is needed to understand this relationship and to highlight the importance of weight stigma on health outcomes in the scientific community. (Talumaa *et al.*, 2022 p12)

How women take up physical space is acutely monitored by society. Fat people, especially women, are dehumanized on television: decapitated fatties regularly waddle up and down the

British high street on the six 'o clock news, embodying the fears of the Western world: women taking up too much space, uncontained, and uncontrollable. Fatness represents absolute failure in our current society, particularly where women are reduced to consumable appearances. Suzy Orbach determines that: "Being fat isolates and invalidates a woman. Almost inevitably, the explanations offered for fatness point a finger at the failure of women themselves to control their weight, control their appetites, control their impulses." (Orbach and Orbach, 2016 p5) And as John Berger states of appearances: "*men act and women appear*. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relationships between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves." (Berger, 1997 p47) Appearance is not in any small part, wrapped up in weight and perceived attractiveness. In terms of women's appearance, Laura Thomas looks into a series of studies conducted that examined the effects of self-perception of appearance on cognitive capacity. These studies (adapted from the original study "The Swimsuit Becomes You" 1998, which lacked diversity in its participants ethnicity and sexuality) determined that women used up more of their intellectual power on being concerned about their appearance when wearing a swimsuit. They were asked to solve maths problems whilst wearing only a bathing suit and again when dressed. An appreciable portion of their mental capacity was consumed with their appearance and it took them longer to solve the questions put to them. (Thomas, 2019 p43) Showing that women's awareness of their appearance and how they are perceived forms no small part of their day to day life and can have negative effects on their intellect.

Fatness is perceived as equating to a *lack* of care, a presumed stupidity and an inability to control oneself. This lack of care is interesting in the context of my work. It seems that by accruing this substance (fat) under the skin, over the skeleton and organs, the individual in question somehow no longer cares about themselves, and therefore signals that no care should be afforded them by society. How people talk about fat, obesity, weight and appearance reveals some of the power relationships that Tronto talks about in *Moral Boundaries*. The abhorrence in our Western society for needing any help "because we expect to be autonomous, any form of dependency is treated as a great weakness." (Tronto, 1993 p123) This leads to a perception of fat people as a drain on society who will inevitably require more resources to be supported. And again, this is supported by the study into weight stigma in health care professionals conducted by Talumaa et al. If the health care that obese people receive is subject to these perceptions, then the societal view of fat as weakness enacts a double bind of carelessness upon fat women. Apparently, they neither care for themselves nor are cared *about* or *for* by society.

Jenny Saville

Returning to Jenny Saville's work, obvious connections became apparent to me with my later *Redaction* drawings. However, my intentions do not always align with the manner in which Saville considers her subject matter, or her choice of medium. Saville's interests in the "mass" of the body and in fatness border on the edge of the spectacle or the freakshow, which in some instances is at odds with the experience of the works themselves. Her understanding of the fat body as abhorrent and wanting to represent it as almost diseased, does not sit well with me. Having considered ways of maintaining agency for women through exploration of intersectional issues and bodily autonomy, and existing as I have in a fat body for a number of years, to have that body considered a "disease" is reductive and unpleasant. Saville claims: "A body this size represents excess, lack of control, going beyond the boundary of what's socially acceptable. I wanted the paint itself to be kind of obese, to have a diseased quality to the paint- an overabundance of paint on the surface." (Saville, 2005 p127) However, due to my personal connection with fatness, empathising with the experience of the bodies she represents, I read her work in an alternative way. These bodies speak of an opportunity to hold space, to become powerful, un-containable, and disobedient, they signal an agency to other fat bodies.

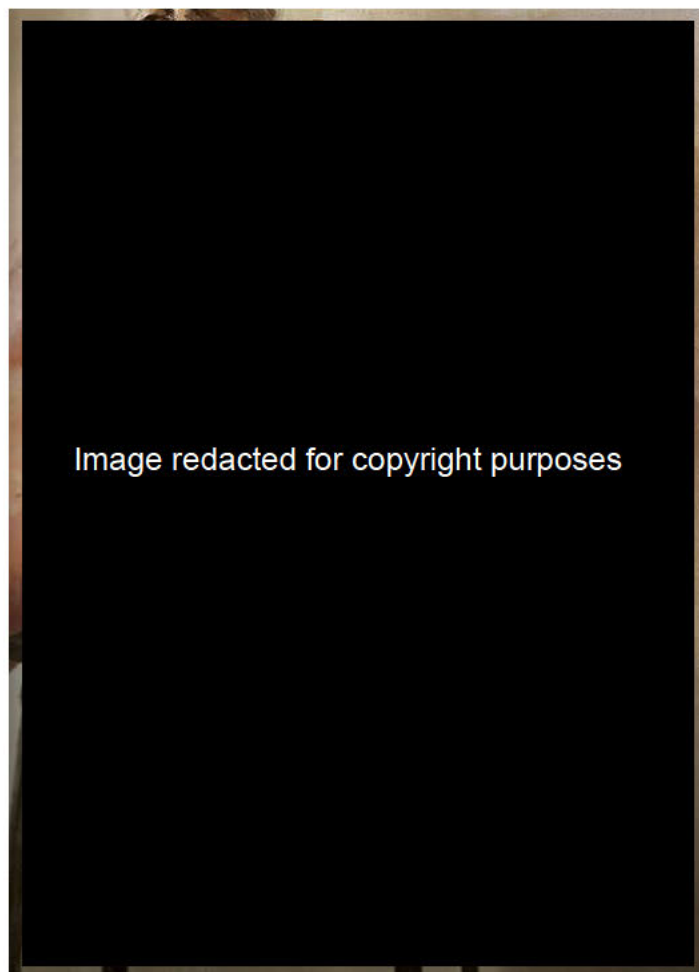


Figure 55 Jenny Saville, *Prop*, 1993, oil on canvas, 213.5 x 183 cm.

Saville equates fatness to disobedience: “I wanted as many associations as possible to do with the organisation of a mass, of a human attempt to order something unruly, in this case fat.” (Saville, 2005 p125) Being disobedient and unruly is a tempting disposition. It offers the opportunity to “glitch” and “refuse”. Legacy Russell says the glitch “is a mode of non-performance: the “failure to perform,” an outright refusal.” (Russell, 2020 p31) And she specifically uses it in the context of the body and gender: “we use glitch to rethink our physical selves. Indeed, the body is itself an architecture that is activated and then passed along like a meme to advance social and cultural logic.” (Russell, 2020 p31) Thinking back to the allocation of women’s bodies for specific capitalist ends, as sites of social reproduction and capitalist consumption, a disobedient body is one that negates these goals. Fatness, disability, queerness, trans-ness, each is an identity that refuses to perform gender as sanctioned, becoming disobedient by default.

Saville speaks of her work as breaking boundaries and expectations. For her: “the frame is important”, “I made a body that was too big for the frame, literally too big for the frame of art history”, “I wanted them to confront you and to exist” and “If there’s a narrative, I want it in the flesh.” (Saville, 2005 p127) Women taking up space in the frame of art history is an important element here, and what better way to do that than with the depiction of a body that takes up too much space. Her strategic occupation of space, physically through the scale of her paintings, make Saville’s position in the art world, unavoidable.

For me, the slow process of drawing and the application of pencil to tracing paper to trace the landscape of zoomed in, shameful bodies, became a process of extended care. Once again, returning to Emma Dowling’s description of the care act: “Care in the sense of *caring activity* refers to the labour process itself...when certain actions...lead to others experiencing a sensation of being cared for and about.” (Dowling, 2021 p37) The labour process of drawing, when directed towards a rendering of my own fat flesh, offered me an opportunity to spend time *caring about* my appearance or maybe *caring for* my appearance. Care as conflated with labour, as the act of drawing in this instance, sits in that murky space of examining the gendered roles of gendered bodies and thinking alternatively about world building. This act of caring for my disobedient flesh felt like an agential moment. As a component of the installation work, my drawings do take part in the broader project of imaginative world building, the engagement of an audience’s creative imagination outside of the limits of just their labour. But perhaps it is OK for this care through drawing to be a gentle act of *self-care*. Examining every “defect” of my skin in extreme detail, faithfully rendering it on a large scale, began to reveal a softly coloured, textured, abstract membrane. The process was a soft and kind rendering of flesh on translucent paper. It offered a chance to slow down the way that images of our bodies are consumed via social media, in a

frenzy of scrolling. The fragility of the tracing paper, unable to stop light transgressing its boundaries was an important choice of material. This piece is over scale, a comment on the contested space taken by fat people in public. Originally, I played with the display of this piece, hanging it at torso height within a welded steel frame. The paper was not fixed at the bottom, giving it the opportunity to move with the passage of the audience. I had hoped that it would emphasise the fluid process of space that women's bodies are permitted to occupy, held in a precarious state.



Figure 56 Ruth Jones, Redaction: Volume 2, 2020. Donated steel frames, spray paint, bulldog clips, aquarelle on tracing paper. 70cm x 22cm x 145cm

The position of balance, where one steel frame was balanced, not fixed, on top of the other, with the drawing itself hanging from a balanced steel bar, was something that I felt highlighted the stakes of care. The labour of the drawing took months to complete. Leaving it vulnerable to an audience that may or may not care to maintain the equilibrium of its perilous state was a calculated risk. At the time it felt emblematic of the disregard for unpaid and laborious care-work that women frequently undertake. Having been created during the initial lockdown of 2020, the conditions of the pandemic served to heighten the conditions of care and embodied fears that the framing of the work spoke to. The pandemic reframed (albeit briefly) our value of care and care-givers. The work performed by nurses, doctors and other key workers made apparent that these were people society cannot do without, that care is a necessity. Our fears of contracting the

COVID 19 virus led to fear of other bodies and proximity to those bodies. People's hyper awareness of their bodily proximity to one another brought to the fore a reciprocal investment in caring about one another, at least enough to stay away.

At the time, I felt that the steel frameworks I used for this piece were a necessary device to hold the many intentions of the work and reflect the social conditions I had been thinking through whilst drawing. Later developments, critiques and conversations surrounding the framing of the works led to a realisation that overcomplicating the drawn works was limiting how the drawings were viewed. The drawings themselves held the complexity of intentions without the belabouring the point with convoluted hanging mechanisms.

The ephemerality of the materials used: the fragility of the tracing paper, its likelihood of tearing, especially after over saturation of layers and layers of dry aquarelle pencil; and the ability to have borders transgressed in this instance with light, all remained relevant.

With *Redaction: Volume 3*, 2020, I wanted to consider how to manipulate the visibility of the image, through visual illusion, to provoke questions about why some bodies are visible and others are not. I wanted to explore how visibility increased or decreased for women according to certain bodily attributes they may have. Women's age, race, weight, disability, sexuality, gender identification, class etc, all have an impact on the amount of space they are allowed to take up, how visible they are in public spaces. For some their bodies are social currency, and for others, their very existence is contested.

Throughout my practice I have been developing a visual language through a collection of materials with properties that are sympathetic to my ideas. Translucent fabrics, paper and cellophane all feature. These materials hold numerous connotations for audiences to bring to them. The translucency is important, it creates mutable boundaries that refer back to women's bodies. The materials have varying degrees of opacity, fluidity, apparent lightness, and a limited colour palette. Invariably inscribed as "feminine", they may be placed in direct comparison with perceived "masculine" materials and minimalist steel structures. For *Redaction: Volume 3*, I wanted to incorporate a particular material with iridescent qualities. Florists cellophane comes in different colour options whilst still maintaining translucency. Materially, the reflective pink/green cellophane held numerous qualities I was interested in exploring further: translucency; lightweight, mobilised by passing air; colour shifts according to light and position of viewer/holder; partially reflective; optically exciting, sparking curiosity. I was also interested in the materials relationship to gendered applications, particularly in floral arrangement or through toiletry and gift sets.

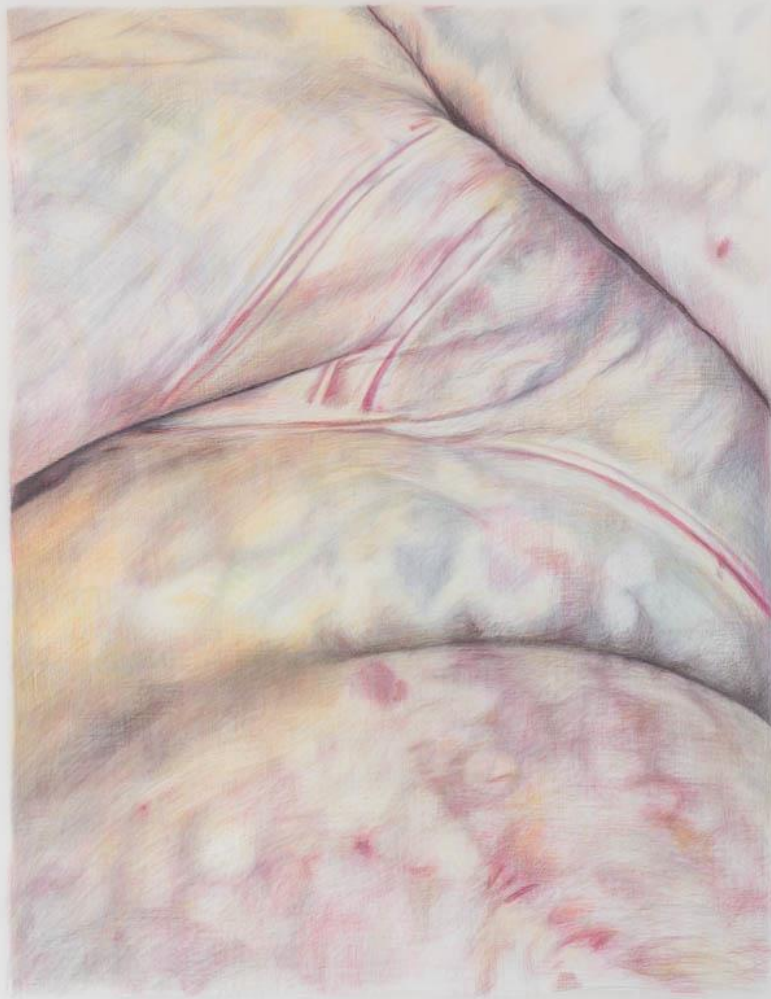


Figure 57 Ruth Jones, Detail of Redaction: Volume 2, 2020.

By sandwiching this material between two sheets of tracing paper and shining light through it, I was able to manipulate the two subtle colour properties of the cellophane. Using this as a ground for a kind of proto-projection, I wanted to play with the visibility of the image by using white aquarelle on the tracing paper, making a large drawing of a fat, naked, woman's back, covered in indentations from tight clothing. The use of white pencil on the tracing paper made it nearly invisible in some lights, but with the light shining through the paper it became visible as a ghostly, shaded drawing. The colour quality of the cellophane added to the shifts in visibility and opacity of the image on the tracing paper, especially with light sources shining either through or onto the surface of the paper.

In situ, its bodily qualities were enhanced by its apparent "breath": This was a gentle, rhythmic movement toward and away from the viewer.



Figure 58 Ruth Jones, Redaction: Volume 3, 2020. Aquarelle on tracing paper, aluminium channel, cellophane and bulldog clips. 70 cm x 100cm

Yet, as the drawing bordered on the edge of almost too subtle to be seen, it seemed incapable of inciting the type of reaction I wanted the audience to experience.

Redaction: Vol. 4, 2022, returned to some of the principles I had been considering with *Redaction: Volume 2*, and moved away from the less successful elements of *Redaction: Volume 3*. As part of a proposal for a residency with the art organisation *Metal*, I proposed to create a new large-scale drawing to expand the 'Redaction' series of work, and further consider how women's visibility, agency and safety can vary according to appearance. I used their support to find a life model who was happy for me to photograph zoomed in sections of her flesh to create an overscale drawing. Prior to the residency I exclusively used myself as a visual subject, but I felt that the work had less impact by not reflecting other experiences and bodies.

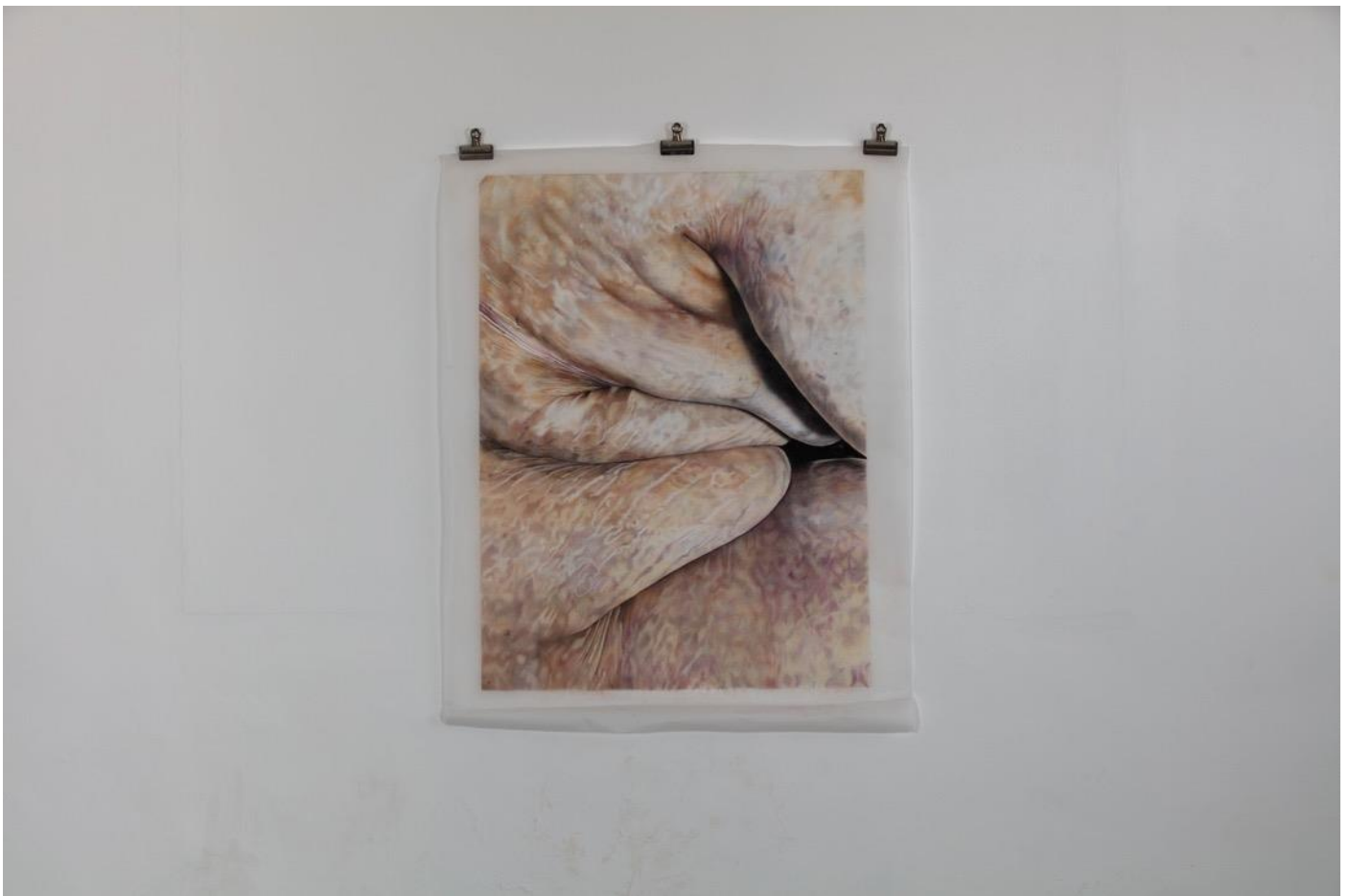


Figure 59 Ruth Jones, *Redaction: Vol 4, 2022*. Aquarelle on tracing paper, 101 x 130cm

The long and slow, four month drawing process that I invested in *Redaction: Volume 4, 2022*, provoked contemplation of my practice and my attachment to particular materials, such as the tracing paper, aquarelles and the scale of the drawing. Comments during work in progress seminars from tutors and peers were key moments for the development of how I thought about the work. The piece scrutinised the skin, blood and veins of the body. It was suggested that the piece

projected a sense of loss, through the sensitive nature in which the light falling on skin had been described in pencil on to the membrane of the tracing paper. It appeared almost as if the description of the skin alone eroded the body underneath. This felt poignant for the work as its rendering of flesh on the transparent tracing paper intentionally speaks to the incapacity to hold space, despite sheer scale.

The material choices, decisions and scale of the works hold some of the complex interrelation between visibility and agency that women experience that translate to a complex experience for an audience in experiencing the work. These decisions are based on a notion that agency, visibility and the capacity to take and hold space for women is a process of push and pull, both fluid and mutable. The materials themselves build layers of occlusion and translucency, transgressed by light and vision. For this reason, I considered the idea of redaction, as a means of sanitization and occlusion as something that women experience in public spaces. This entails the capacity to hold space being contingent on a perception of safety, something that changes according to time of day and the presence of others (often men) who frequently police women in a variety of ways in public, through their body language and their gaze, making the space uncomfortable or outright dangerous.

Jade Montserrat

Jade Montserrat's drawing practice has been of particular interest to me, particularly the visibility, agency and identity she traverses through it. As a white woman, I cannot speak to the experiences of race that Montserrat explores through her drawing work. However, she highlights the importance of visibility for Black women, a key concern for any intersectional feminist art practice. Montserrat's work frequently starts with drawing and often explores deep connections to race and belonging through her relationship with her body and her hair. The quality of drawing that she employs resonates for me in the way that I draw.

The works from *Constellations: Care and Resistance*, 2021, at Manchester Art Gallery had a loose, almost messy quality when viewed closely, but that resolved into clear and emotive forms further back. Her treatment of figures, within zoomed in sections and her cut off body parts was a productive comparison for me when thinking about my work. Montserrat's work is not just a faithful representation of an appearance. The quality of the marks and composition imbue the images with an emotive charge, something I hope that my drawing accomplishes.

A Reimagining of Relations, 2021, by Montserrat, outlines some of the concerns she holds in the exploration of her work. In Alan Rice's conversations with Montserrat for the chapter *Invisibility, Fugitivity and Hypervisibility*, he discusses how Montserrat sees her own contributions as an artist: "keen to see her work in terms of a tradition of Black women artists campaigning against invisibility and unbelonging." (Montserrat, 2021 p84)



Figure 60 Jade Montserrat, *Ignore the ground she sails over*, 2016. *An infinity of traces* [exhibition] Lisson Gallery, London. 1 June 2021

Montserrat's publication, *A Reimagining of Relations*, 2021, accompanied her commission by iniva (Institute of International Visual Art) at Manchester Art Gallery as the first artist engaged in the Future Collect programme initiated by iniva. This project invests in the investigation, enlivening and broadening of public art collections; questioning which artists' works should be preserved for future generations: "Caring for people, as well as objects." (Montserrat, 2021 p8)

Montserrat's exhibition *Constellations: Care & Resistance*, 2020 at Manchester Art Gallery, pulled together selected works from their existing collection, to which Montserrat responded. Her exploration of care extends into her understanding of visibility and agency.

there's a similar issue...around visibility and access, and this also links in with hierarchy. If one has the privilege of seeing themselves, hearing themselves, and really feeling they belong to the historical narrative perpetuated within the society one lives in...that belonging might also allow for a certain amount of freedom, because unless you're able to meet your basic needs, it's not possible to prioritise creativity. (Montserrat, 2021 p13)

She expands on this idea through discussion of her piece *Expendable Bodies in Unspeakable Isolation*, 2020: “the idea that you can feel expendable and isolated in these environments by the mere fact of where you’re positioned in society, how you’re viewed because of intersectional marginalisation and minimisations.” (Montserrat, 2021 p50) Montserrat’s engagement with intersectional marginalisation speaks into existence an internal monologue that refers to itself in the third person, suggesting an external view the speaker holds of themselves.



Figure 61 Jade Montserrat, Constellations: Care and Resistance, Manchester Art Gallery. 25 November 2021

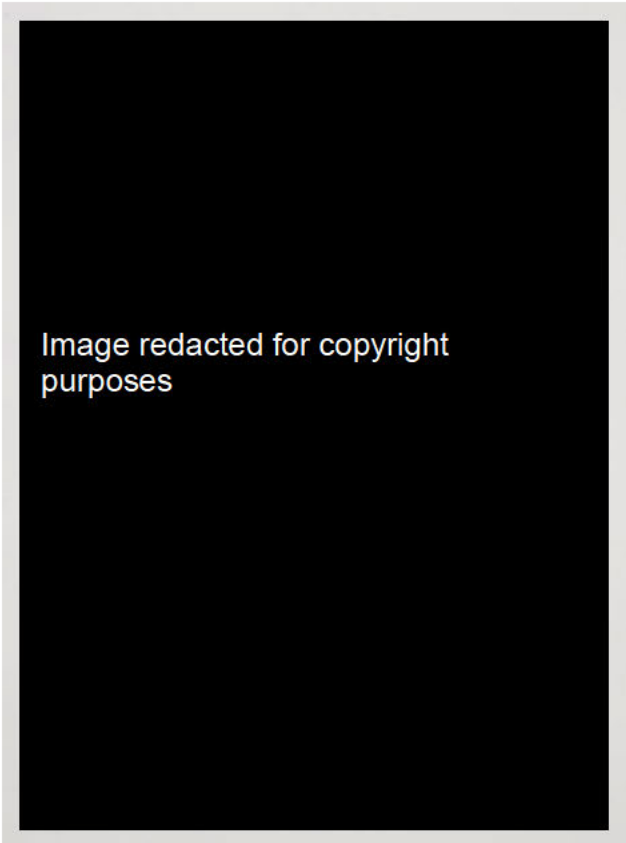


Figure 62 Jade Montserrat, Her body no father in sight, 2017, Watercolour, charcoal, pencil crayon, chalk, 28.5 x 19.2 cm.

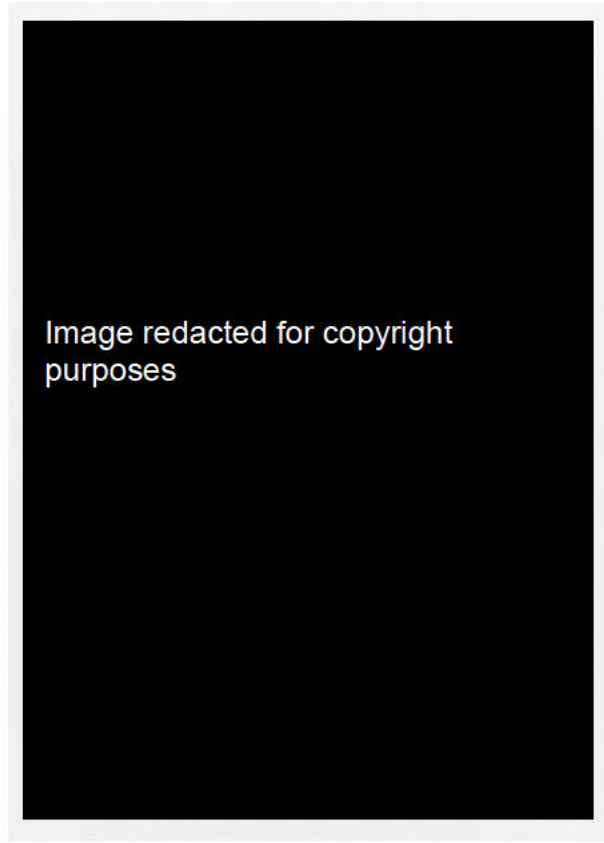


Figure 63 Jade Montserrat, Her body moved through darkness to dawn, 2017-21, watercolour and biro on paper, 39 x 30cm. Photo: Damian Griffiths. Courtesy the artist and Bosse & Baum, London.

Reminiscent of John Berger's suggestion that women take on the way that men view them as a way of viewing themselves (i.e. an internalised male gaze), Montserrat's works pull in a racial understanding of how her body is viewed. Her internal dialogue of the Black body as "other", through an internalised white male gaze, results in frequent reference to "The body," or "Her body." Often, her representations of the body dissolve entirely and are represented only through text. This choice to further abstract the white gaze from consuming representations of Black bodies, and replacing those representations with a monologue coded through the white gaze that speaks of *the* body or *her* body as other, negates a white consumption of her image. This simultaneously draws attention to the way that society views Black bodies by dehumanising them, and by extension, it draws attention to Montserrat's alienated internalised view of herself. The white gaze, or colonial view point that Montserrat has unwillingly and forcibly acquired is a direct result of the society in which she has been brought up. "if you're the only Black child in a school at eight years old, and you're staying there for weeks on end, you're in a very particular kind of isolation." (Montserrat, 2021 p49) This shrewd decision of depiction enforces a care for the Black body that is seldom exercised. As a way of commenting on the visibility afforded to certain bodies, her work is influential on my thinking, as is her drawing style.

Conclusion

I am heavily influenced by feminist theory and women's lived experience, and I am invested in the *practice of care* and what that practice allows for the recipient. Having experienced the opportunity to invest in the project of imaginative world building through the installation and performance work of Tai Shani and Lee Bul, I feel that installation in particular holds the potential to share space with its audience and offer its audiences the type of care I have explored in this document. The varied practices, acts, labours and conceptions of care are not easy to neatly contain, any more than it is easy to encapsulate what constitutes a woman. As such, installation offers the possibility to bring together and hold together contradictory elements investigated through different mediums. The variety possible in the construction of an installation world complements the practices of feminist artists looking to speak to the contradictory construction and experiences of being gendered a woman. The installation holds space in common for its audience, literally sharing space. The act of sharing space is a necessary endeavour welcomes those who would normally be excluded from participating in imagining the world otherwise. The possibilities inherent in performance of gender through repetition and parody, as witnessed in Emily Perry's live GIFs and her extended performances, provide a space where the audience are confronted with their own implicit gender biases. In my own practice, repetition and parody, when combined with the internet practice of ASMR, help to instil a sense of agency for care-givers, not just the recipients of care. And finally, by exploring the landscape and journey of the body through drawing, bodies made socially invisible are brought to the fore. Through their influential treatment of disobedient flesh and bodies made invisible, Jenny Saville and Jade Montserrat's representations expand the visibility and scale of such bodies and how they are cared about and for. In my own work, extensive periods of labour and care are archived on the surface of the paper-thin membrane describing the skin. These elements come together in the installation, creating a complex and abstract journey of an intersectional body. Interior worlds, internal monologues, acts of care and fleshy containers interact to cultivate the possibility of imagining a world otherwise.

The audience or viewer, witness or participant is a vital component of the work, and the consideration and care for their experience has been alluded to throughout this document. A specific understanding of the audience experience has been developed throughout my professional journey as gallery assistant, exhibitions and curation intern, project manager and finally director of an arts organization. In those positions I have developed an understanding of accessibility (or lack thereof) and view access as an extended form of care for audiences. This has been implemented in the exhibition spaces I have curated and the programming delivered by the organisation I direct, The Old Waterworks. Stemming from work with the Agency of Visible Women

and other artists, my commitment to accessibility extends beyond purely physical access and takes into consideration the intersectional barriers that prevent access to the arts, such as economic barriers and class barriers. Additionally, I aim to create spaces that function as safe spaces for marginalized identities, through a multi-sensory and “feminine” material language. Curating installations and exhibitions that account for these experiences has resulted in careful deliberation for how the space will be navigated by different visitors. Making use of BSL, large print, wide access spaces and seating as well as clear labelling and myriad points of interest that offer entry points into the work. Each of these considerations allow audiences to focus on the possibility of imagining the world otherwise through the experience of the work, rather than forcing them to focus on how they can engage with an ill-considered or physically or economically inaccessible space.

Aside from the decision to consider access as a form of care that is extended to the audience, the work itself is carefully considered to draw out the nuances surrounding care as it is received and given, and how care is consumed by its recipients, specifically through the use of the parodic ASMR performance. Deliberately shattering the lulling experience of ASMR by adding jarring questions and imagery ruptures the consumption of that care and encourages the audience to reflect on the manner in which they expect to be cared for, and in turn, what the impact of unthinking receipt of care does to the person who extends that care. It is also important that the role of ASMRtist that I parody in my performance is understood as parody. The use of these parodic performances allows the audience points of release through humour, which breaks the tension and weight of the subject matter being explored. Many internet phenomena, such as ASMR have resulted in an explosion of cult popularity over the last decade or so, and often make use of role play to engage their audiences. As a result, fans of particular film, book and game franchises engage in specific cosplay (or costume role play) of their favoured franchise. Whilst ASMR role play brushes up against this particular phenomenon it is not an area that I would explore within my work. Cosplay limits the role player to their understanding of the existing world of their character through books, films, games, anime or graphic novels. In this instance agency for the role player gets lost, as they are essentially following the script of the character they are playing. For me the ASMRtist that I parody represents the elements of performed femininity that women are socially pressured to undertake.

On the spectrum of art outputs, I do not consider my work to fall under the umbrella of socially engaged or collaborative practices. Equally, I do not envision my work being a paid experience as this goes against the necessity of making my work accessible to those who experience economic barriers to accessing art spaces. Having worked for an Arts Council England National Portfolio

Organisation, I am aware of the policies put in place by ACE that ensure those galleries are committed to providing high quality and accessible exhibitions for their audiences, and feel that these are the types of spaces most appropriate to my work. My ambitions for my career as an artist are to establish a greater presence as an emerging artist, through thematic group exhibitions and approaching galleries with proposals for solo shows. I intend to continue my research through submissions to academic open calls, and have recently been successful in applying to an international research conference on care and respect in Lisbon in 2024. I intend to continue my written research with submissions to academic calls for papers. I have also been approached to continue lecturing.

The critical shift in my artistic practice with the development of parody and performance are areas of exploration that I will develop further in the future. In particular, the ASMR scripts in my recent films are thematically aligned with speculative fiction, and I would like to investigate this in greater depth, in particular the notions of world building through environment and apocalyptic events as moments of possibility and freedom from capital. The impact of the doctorate is leading to new developments for my research as I begin to critically engage with a wider international academic community through calls for papers, and through application to the real world as I begin to implement caring practices stemming from my research into working with the board of trustees at The Old Waterworks and the studio artists I manage. The work conducted throughout the doctorate has led to a confident, comprehensive and academically engaged manner of participating in the broader arts ecology in my existing career, standing me in good stead to take advantage of future developments and opportunities.



Figure 64 Ruth Jones, Redaction: Vol 4, 2022. Aquarelle on tracing paper, 101 x 130cm.

3.0 PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Solo Exhibitions

2021. 'Is it too much?' The Old Waterworks, Southend. Installation and multi-channel sound piece with video accompaniment.

2015. 'Quiet Rebellions: Hidden Transcripts' Rayleigh Windmill, Essex. Drawing installation.

2005. 'Art and Objecthood' Castle Point Council Offices, Essex. Interactive large-scale sculpture.

Joint Exhibitions

2023. 'States of Exchange' Hypha Studios, Stratford, London. Installation and multi-channel ASMR sound-piece with film accompaniment.

2022. 'DFA Showcase 2022' University of East London. Installation and multi-channel ASMR sound-pieces with film accompaniment.

2021. "*Loving Care*", Way Out East, London. Installation and multi-channel sound piece with video accompaniment.

2021. 'Professional Doctorate Fine Art Showcase Exhibition' University of East London. Installation and multi-channel sound piece with video accompaniment.

2021. 'Precarious straits~ survival on Southend's new coast, Southend-under-Sea' TOMA Project Space, Southend. A2 Digital Print.

2020. 'Between Walls' Safe House, Peckham. Collaborative sound piece and large-scale drawing installation.

2020. 'Out of Isolation', University for the Creative Arts, Canterbury. Free standing drawing and sculpture.

2020. 'The Agency of Visible Womxn: Policy Making' Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend. Organiser, curator and exhibitor. Print series and large-scale drawing installation.

2019. 'Pets' TOMA Project Space, The Royals, Southend. Large-scale gentrification and bacteria stickers.

2019. 'Spread' Village Green, Chalkwell Park; Horse Hospital, London; Arcade Campfa, Wales. Co-curation and exhibitor. Large-scale sticker installation.

2019. 'East London Artists - Fine Art Professional Doctorate Showcase' University of East London. Large-scale drawing installation.

2018; 'Artist Book Fair' WYL? research collective, parallel artist book exhibition in CAP Kuwait and Centro Cultural CEEE Erico Verissimo, Porto Alegre, Brazil. Artist book.

2018. 'The Agency of Visible Womxn' Beecroft Gallery, Southend. Organiser, curator and exhibitor. Screen printed fabric installation with fans and artist book.

2017 'Lost & Found' Espacio Gallery, London. 7 drawings and 2 proto projection works.

2016. 'Venice Vending Machine 4: 'The Sea Has No Boundaries: Stories of Travellers and Dreamers'' A project by Marina Moreno. Hamburg Kunst Altonale 18. Hamburg, Germany. Two-sided drawing.

2016. 'What's Your Location?' CAP Kuwait, Kuwait. 6 Large-scale ink and pencil drawings.

2016. 'Women's Work' Beecroft Gallery, Southend. Organiser, curator and exhibitor. Performance and drawing installation.

2015. 'What's Your Location?' Centro Cultural CEEE Erico Verissimo, Porto Alegre, Brazil. Artist and curator, 10 x A3 ink and pencil drawings.

2015. 'REV it Up', Espacio Gallery, London. Tiny Acts of Care' Performance.

Residencies and Fellowships

2022. Venice Fellowship - British Council Venice Fellowship for 1 month in August 2022.

2021 Artist Residency at Metal Chalkwell Hall. (Autumn/Winter 2021 – Spring 2022)

2016-2018 Artist in Residence Essex Feminist Collective. Organisation and curation of exhibitions and artistic events.

Commissions

2022. FPG Sounds Commission – Performance 'Is it strange?' Twenty One, Southend.

2019. 'The Agency of Visible Womxn Library' The Old Waterworks, Southend. A curated and bespoke feminist library.

Teaching (including paper presentation, conferences, publishing and invited speaker)

2023. British Council Venice Fellowship Year Book 2022. Online publication. 'Biennale and Body' synopsis.

2022. Guest Lecturer – Contextual Studies BA Fine Art, UEL, Term 1 & 2, 2022

2022. UEL ACI PGR Annual Conference, Paper presentation 'Biennale and Body'.

2022. TOW / TOMA / Pluto Press – curation and delivery of artists to run workshops and reading groups for the launch of a Pluto Press Publication, including panel host and Q&A host

2022 '*Care and complexity; feminist considerations in the work of Tai Shani and Zadie Xa*', published paper in Crossing Conceptual Boundaries.

2022. Role change to Co-Director of The Old Waterworks, artist studios, Southend on Sea.

2021. Future Collect conference: Handle with Care, 25 November 2021. The Agency of Visible Women.

2021. PGR Conference - *Installation as proto-entity, (dis)embodied avatar* 24 September 2021. Winner of best presentation.

2021. *Taking Space, Sharing Space, Taking Care* – The Agency of Visible Women workshop programme and care package delivery (ACE funded).

2021. 'ASMR and Pug' 2021, Duration: 4 minutes 37 seconds. Contributed to '**Tender Order**' by Jade Montserrat with Jane Lawson and Industria - published by TOW.

2020. 'International Womxn's Day- EGLF ' Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend. Invited speaker.

2020. 'Play with Purpose' Paper presentation "Who gets to play and who doesn't?" at Bedfordshire University Conference.

2019. 'The Agency of Visible Womxn present a Snapshot of Southend as a Cultural Environment for Womxn by Damien Robinson and Ruth Jones' published by TOW.

2019. 'Grrrl Zine Issue 3' Essay - "How to build a femme utopia in the arts".

2019. 'Authenticity and the Arts and Media in an era of Fake News' Paper presentation "Authenticity in Feminist Art Practices" at UEL.

2016 – 2017. Southend on Sea Rape Crisis. Art therapy volunteer.

2016. 'International Women's Day' Invited speaker at Southend Borough Council.

2015. 'What's Your Location?' Invited panel speaker at Centro Cultural CEEE Erico Verissimo, Porto Alegre, Brazil.

The professional doctorate in fine art has had an impact on the direction, focus and possibilities available to me in my professional practice. Numerous opportunities have been made available to me through both the UEL academic network and outside education establishments, and in the industry of visual arts.

I have had the opportunity to research, write, present and publish papers that have had a major impact on the quality and ambition of my artistic practice and led to commissions, residencies and fellowships that likely would have taken far longer to achieve or been outright impossible to access had I not enrolled on the programme. Each year I have had the opportunity to improve my public speaking skills and confidence through the delivery of papers at UEL, which has led to a paper being published in *Crossing Conceptual Boundaries* at UEL.

The rigour, breadth and depth of my research has increased. Whether directly or indirectly, this development in my contextual thinking has led to me being offered the position of guest lecturer for contextual studies in Fine Art at UEL; led to the change in my role at The Old Waterworks from project manager to Co-director and now Director; increased the scope of the Agency of Visible Women with invitations to present regularly being requested, most recently at Manchester Art Gallery for Jade Montserrat's *Constellations of Care* in 2021; led to a collaborative development between the Old Waterworks, The Other MA and publishing house Pluto Press, and has seen the management, delivery and hosting of a series of events for major new publication release by myself.

The regular practice of reflection and presentation of ideas as part of the doctorate has encouraged an elasticity of thought that promotes an interconnected understanding of the contexts

that provoke my work and the works of others, allowing me to frequently engage in critique and debate with my peers, and now provide critical support to the studio artists at The Old Waterworks as part of my new role as Director.

The doctorate has encouraged a divergence of thought and experimentation in fields I had previously not explored. My work has shifted in trajectory quite dramatically over the last two years, and I have developed the confidence to create experimental sound and video works. This has directly resulted in my recently commissioned sound performance for Focal Point Gallery in Southend, and a residency with arts organisation, Metal.

Having been encouraged to apply for a Venice Fellowship with the British Council in 2022, I was supported to produce a successful application and was fortunate to spend the month of August in Venice, supporting visitors to the British Pavilion during the biennale. This experience was a life-changing event, profoundly effecting my development as an artist, exposed to such a culturally rich environment, but also through the extensive connections to developing and established arts practitioners and professionals. I have since been invited by the British Council to speak to prospective Venice fellows and intend to mount an exhibition with the cohort of fellows who were at the Biennale with me in August.

4.0 Summary

Over the course of the doctorate I have had the opportunity to explore my research concerns in an environment that has fostered my confidence and potential. The focus of my practice has long been influenced by care and the potential of art for the audience, however the doctorate has supported my research to incorporate surprising additions that have led to modes of practice previously unexplored. The encouragement to explore the potential of mesmerism offered me insights into how to integrate ASMR into my practice. Mesmerism, followed closely by its connections to mediumism, expanded the scope of my feminist research, leading to connections between women's labour and agency through performance. It connected together the emotive and embodied to the political in a way that was intuitive and generative for my creative process; allowing me to inhabit a central, performative role in my work. It also occupied the world of the installation in a way that was complementary to the journey of the body I had been considering.

My time spent in Venice on the British Council Fellowship, in the environment of the Biennale, curated by Cecilia Alemani, 'The Milk of Dreams' was a site of rich inspiration, and it will likely impact my research and practice for a while to come. In particular, identifying installation artists whose work engaged me in the project of imaginative world building, was a highlight. Precious Okoyomon's *To See the Earth Before the End of the World*, 2022, underscored the necessity to act on my growing realisation that I should incorporate my obsession with feminist science fiction into my work. The installation works of Okoyomon, along with Tai Shani, Zadie Xa and Lee Bul, have long signposted the potential of feminist speculative fiction and mythology to world build. Examining the nebulous worlds explored by feminist science fiction authors as a starting point for creating new worlds through installation is an ambitious project that I will embark on after the doctorate. The research I have conducted to this point has helped me to realise that the project of care and sharing space is a foundation from which to explore the world building possible through installation. As a medium that is well suited to intersectional, space sharing and caring ends, perhaps I no longer need to *explicitly* focus on those feminist concerns. The project of world building as a feminist artist implicitly holds these concerns, and I can begin to explore new subject matters with the knowledge that these concerns will always be present.

5.0 Supplement

The installation, '*Taking care*', has predominantly built on the themes already discussed within my doctoral report. However, there are some developments that I believe deserve further examination.

The ASMR works present within the installation require headphones to be listened to, as soft, quiet and whispered narratives do not translate well through speakers in a room of that size, and because they highlight a sense of intimacy between the work and the viewer/listener. To further highlight the multi-perspective facet of installation, I chose to use silent disco headphones, which permit three channels of sound to be broadcast to the headphones and allow the listener to choose which they prefer. Whilst each ASMR video work has a corresponding soundtrack which is indicated in the exhibition information, it is entirely possible for the audience to listen to different tracks while exploring the installation, creating their own experience as they journey through the space.

As some audience members can be averse to the whispered narrations, I wanted to consider the overall experience of the installation without headphones. Fans are used throughout the space to shift the translucent curtaining, waft the sickly, sweet aroma of candy, and add a low grade, audible hum across the installation. To play further on this background noise, I commissioned sound artist Kelly Ann Buckley to create a soundscape to accompany viewers on their journey through the installation. Having worked with Buckley before (see appendix 4f for more details), I chose to commission her rather than collaborate at this juncture, as I wanted specific elements referenced.

Buckley took notes from my research and intentions in order to create a soundscape that referred to a number of the elements of bodily social reproduction, such as various forms of housework like scrubbing floors and beating carpets. She made use of both pink and green sound frequencies, oscillating between the two, to mimic the shift in visitors' perceptions of light after spending time in the pink, curtained space. As requested, Buckley made use of monotonous, repetitive and droning sounds, in allusion to the ceaseless emotional and social reproductive labour women perform in a never-ending cycle. She sampled organic noises such as heartbeats and sobbing, and recorded herself squashing fruit to create uncomfortable squelching noises that require a double take, before pairing them with lulling, gentle synthetic elements. The overall effect is disquieting, with some elements rising into audiences' consciousness as they traverse the space, and others receding to a background hum. Some break through the headphones to add to the ASMR narration experience in the headphones. The clicking of stiletto heels or the quiet sobbing that can be heard in the soundscape creates an eerie and voyeuristic sensation for the viewer, unsure of who is present. This is further echoed through the new video ASMR work '*Imaginings*', 2023, where the audience are directly asked: "*Sometimes we wish we were alone. Is it what you'd hoped for? Loneliness?*"

In addition to the commissioned soundscape, two new elements that have been added are the British Sign Language (BSL) video accompaniments to the ASMR works '*Is it strange?*' 2022, and '*Imaginings*', 2023. Whilst there is reference in my report to the BSL translator I worked with in the commissioned live performance I completed in 2022, I believe it is necessary to further elaborate on the new BSL elements included in this exhibition.

The reception of the BSL interpreter for both hearing and D(d)eaaf audiences indicated that the interpreter added a dimension to the experience of the ASMR work that elicited the "tingling" that ASMR is purported to arouse, as well as an emotive depth communicated visually through the embodied movements of the interpreter. The exhibition does not make use of live performance and so will not have a live BSL interpreter, but I wanted to include BSL as integral to my newer work. The first ASMR piece encountered in the installation, '*Sinking into...*' 2021, does not have BSL translation which is purely due to monetary constraints at this point in time. However, I have included a transcript of the sound for audiences in lieu of BSL translation.

The choice to include Frances Everingham, an accomplished performance BSL interpreter, as a character in her own right in both ASMR pieces is one that signals the importance of catering for multiple perspectives and entry points within the installation. It is an intersectional approach to making that I want to continue to include as integral to my practice. Everingham's translation, filmed on the same set as both of my performances for '*Is it strange?*' and '*Imaginings*', creates a sense of visual and material continuity between the films and the installation itself. Her embodied performance signals much of my intention for the ASMR, creating soft and flowing movements through her interpretation, and embodying the feel of the whispered narration by making herself small and mischievous whilst she signs. The BSL helps to reinforce an understanding for the audience that there are multiple ways of knowing, not restricted to a hierarchy that privileges intellect over emotion or vice versa.

The new ASMR work '*Imaginings*', 2023, represents a shift in my parodic interpretation of ASMR role-play. Relentlessly highlighting and calling into question the expectations of gendered, caring roles, and the projection of sexualisation onto women and girls in society, '*Imaginings*', takes a barrage of sensual imagery and positions them so that the line between the sensual and sexual becomes difficult to navigate. In this state, the audience becomes aware of the myriad sexual projections present within the realm of the feminine. Making use of these multiple meanings, innuendo and humour, '*Imaginings*', causes a friction between the visual symbolism present as it runs parallel to the immersive multi-layered, whispered narration that seeks to lull the audience into an imagined, meditative state.

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APPENDICES

1. Appendix 1 Publications

- a. *The Agency of Visible Women Presents A Snapshot of Southend as a Cultural Environment for Women*. D Robinson and R Jones, 2019.
- b. *ASMR and Pug*, R Jones, 2021. *Tender Order*, J Montserrat et al, 2021.
- c. *Care and Complexity; Feminist considerations in the work of Tai Shani and Zadie Xa*, R Jones, 2022. *Crossing Conceptual Boundaries*.
- d. *Venice Fellowship Yearbook 2022*, British Council, 2022.

2. Appendix 2 Conferences and Presentations

- a. Authenticity in Art and Media in the Era of Fake News at University of East London, 2019
- b. Play with Purpose Conference at Bedfordshire University 2020 *Who Get's to Play and Who Doesn't?* R Jones, 2020. Presented at University of Bedfordshire.
- c. PGR Annual Conference, University of East London, 2021.
- d. Future Collect Conference: Handle With Care, Manchester Art gallery with iniva, 2021
- e. ACI PGR Annual Conference, University of East London, 2022. *Biennale and Body*, R Jones, 2022. Presented at UEL ACI PGR Annual Research Conference 2022,

3. Appendix 3 Residencies, Commissions and Fellowships

- a. Metal Residency
- b. British Council Venice Fellowship
- c. FPG Sounds Commission

4. Appendix 4 Exhibitions

- a. Taking Care, VIVA Exhibition, 2023
- b. States of Exchange, Hypha Studios, 2023
- c. DFA Showcase, UEL 2022
- d. Loving Care, Way Out East, 2021
- e. Is it too much? 2021
- f. DFA Showcase, 2021
- g. Between Walls, 2020
- h. Out of Isolation, 2020
- i. Policy Making, 2020

- j. DFA Showcase 2019
- k. The Agency of Visible Women 2018
- l. Women's Work, 2016
- m. What's Your Location? 2016 & 2015
- n. Quiet Rebellions: Hidden Transcripts 2015
- o. About Brick Lane, 2014

Appendix 1: Publications

a. *The Agency of Visible Women Present: A Snapshot of Southend as a Cultural Environment for Women* by R Jones and D Robinson, Published By The Old Waterworks, 2019.

Available to read here:

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5fcfb337941bd0096f2ca721/t/643e9cf39bb25912beb23fd3/1681825019005/A Snapshot of Southend as a Cultural Environment for Womxn-2019.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5fcfb337941bd0096f2ca721/t/643e9cf39bb25912beb23fd3/1681825019005/A+Snapshot+of+Southend+as+a+Cultural+Environment+for+Womxn-2019.pdf)



Figure 65 R Jones and D Robinson, *The Agency of Visible Women present A Snapshot of Southend as a Cultural Environment for Women*. 2019. Published by The Old Waterworks.



Figure 66 R Jones and D Robinson, *The Agency of Visible Women present A Snapshot of Southend as a Cultural Environment for Women*. 2019. Published by The Old Waterworks



Figure 67 R Jones and D Robinson, *The Agency of Visible Women present A Snapshot of Southend as a Cultural Environment for Women*. 2019. Published by The Old Waterworks.

b. Tender Order by Jade Montserrat with Industria and Jane Lawson, 2021, Published by The Old Waterworks as part of *Precarious Straits*. ASMR and Pug, R Jones, 2021.

Available to watch here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uKZinOepit4&t=3s>

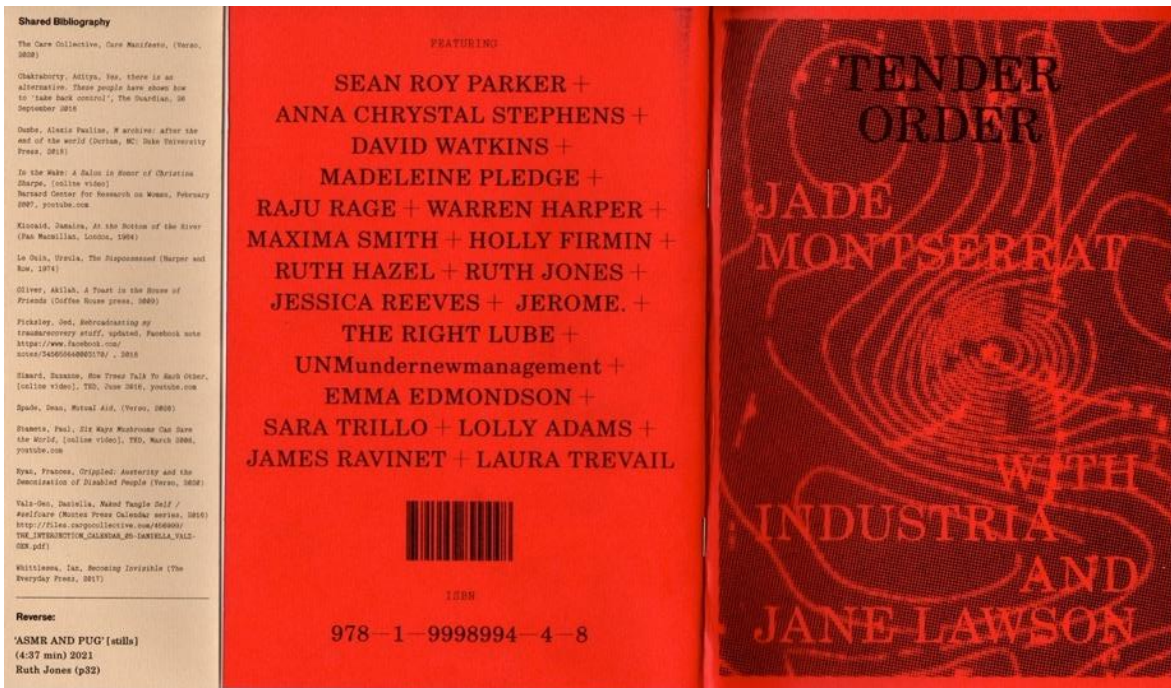


Figure 68 J Montserrat et al, *Tender Order*, 2021. Published by The Old Waterworks.

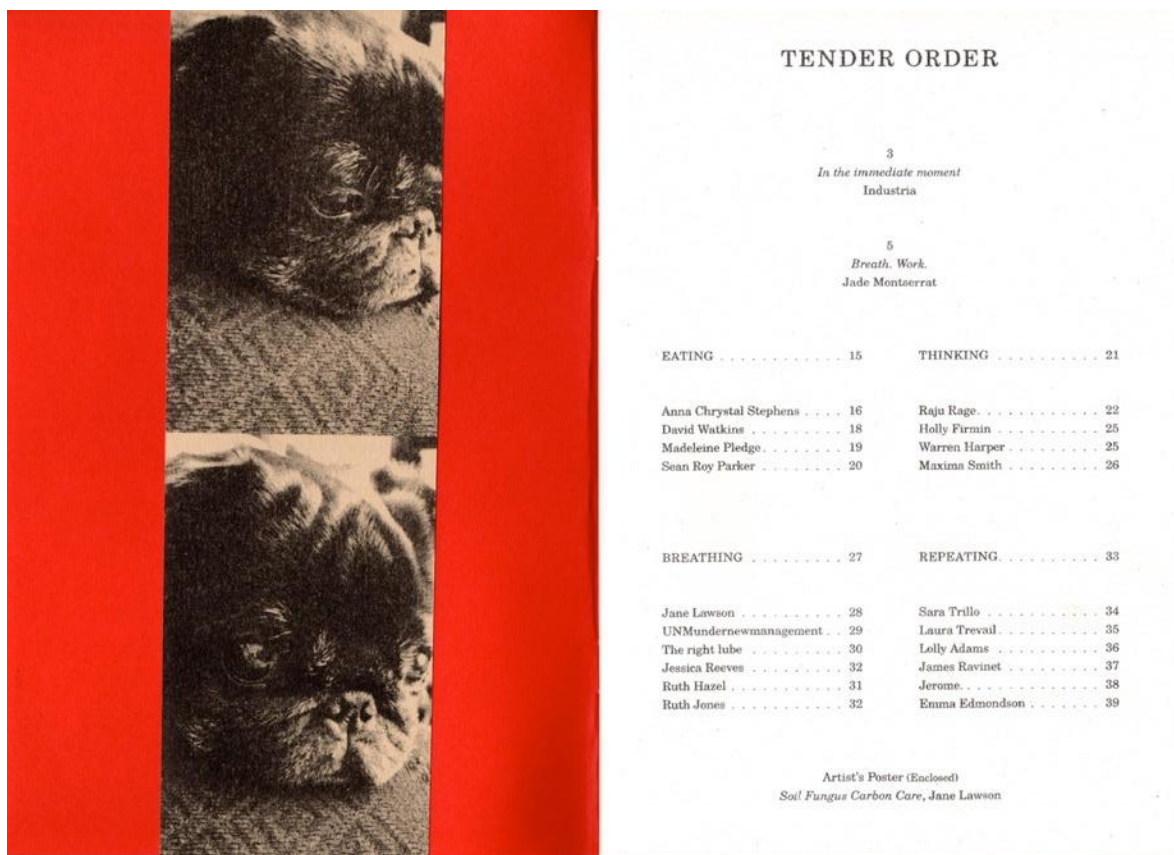


Figure 69 J Montserrat et al, *Tender Order*, 2021. Published by The Old Waterworks.



RUTH JONES

ASMR AND PUG

2021 (4:37 min)

ASMR and Pug is a short ASMR piece that can be accessed through the QR code at the top or this link: <https://youtu.be/uKZmOepit4>

It is best listened to through headphones.

For members of the d/Deaf and hearing-impaired community, there is a script below and audio description of the piece, I am sorry that I cannot provide more in terms of the experience of ASMR at this time.

I find ASMR useful. When I'm agitated and nervous and can't stop thinking. I set aside the world while I watch/listen to it. I slip into a state of gentle physical sensation and mental numbness. As if static feedback is creating a barrier between my anxiety and me.

Stroking my dog on a quiet afternoon, listening to him snore while my mind wanders, is a form of reciprocal care. He is a soft little weight on my lap, his ears feel like velvet and he snorts and snuffs while I stroke him. A content and self-important little being. This is a moment of tranquillity for me and a moment of comforting for him.

I wanted to share both of these experiences with you. I hope that you find some small solaces and quiet disconnects from them.

Ruth xxx

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

The piece is narrated by a woman in a whispered, undulating, rhythmic flow. There are layers of the same voice over the top of certain words to create emphasis. Sometimes the layers are slightly out of sync to represent alternative view-points and the internal slippages we experience of our own world view.

VISUAL DESCRIPTION

The film is of Douglas, the artists dog, sitting on her lap, being stroked while he falls asleep. He is a little black pug and snores as he drifts off. There are frequently two videos playing alongside one another and the rhythmic snoring is soothing.

SCRIPT

"Sometimes care is just too much. I can't face it. I can't provide it, I can't enact or receive it. Sometimes disengaging, detachment and silence are the order of the day. Do you feel like that too?"

We all have a complex intersect of needs, we all have interconnected desires. We have pain and anxiety over what we feel

we SHOULD be and how it never measures up to what we are. Sometimes we hold ourselves hostage to ideas that others placed in our brains, long, long ago.

In the swirling mass of panic and concerns; in the layers of over-analysis and depths of thought - that inevitably breed inaction - maybe it's OK to just set it aside and be numb."

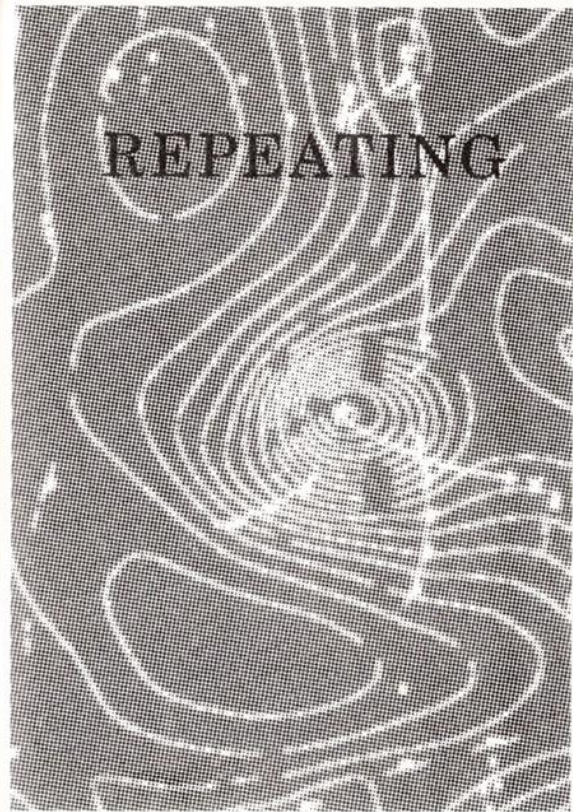


Figure 70 J Montserrat et al, Tender Order, 2021. Published by The Old Waterworks.

Tender Order

Lead Artists: Jade Montserrat
in collaboration with Industria
and Jane Lawson

Editors: Industria
Design: Ben Grewley

With thanks to all the contributors
to the publication.
All texts and images © the artists.

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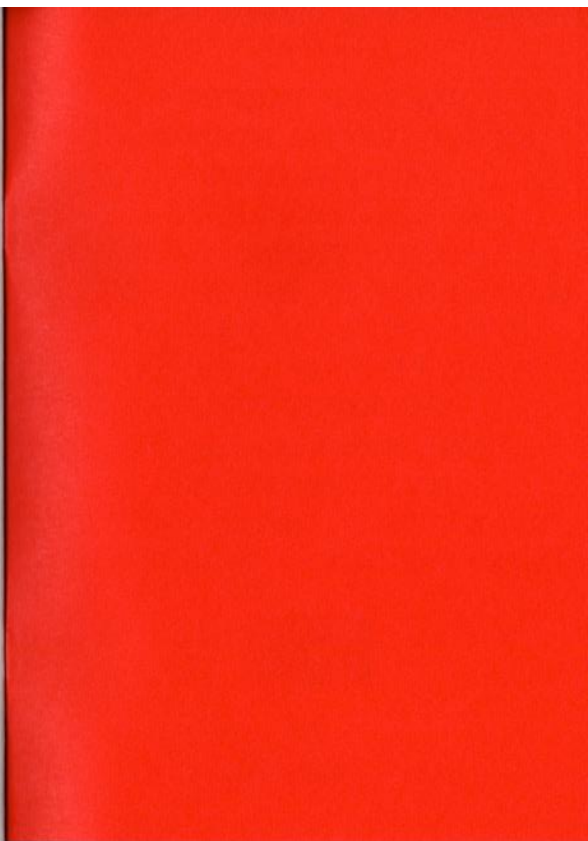


Figure 71 J Montserrat et al, Tender Order, 2021. Published by The Old Waterworks.

- c. Crossing Conceptual boundaries XII, 2022. Paper contribution: Care and Complexity: Feminist Considerations in the Work of Tai Shani and Zadie Xa, R Jones, 2022.**

The paper can be read here: <https://repository.uel.ac.uk/item/8v1zw>

- d. British Council Venice Fellowship Year Book, 2022. Available to read here:**

https://venicebiennale.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/12_bc_fellows_yearbook_2022_final_desktop_20230330.pdf

Appendix 2: Conferences and Presentations

- a. **Authenticity in Art and Media in the Era of Fake News, university of East London, 7 February 2019. Paper presentation of *Authenticity in Feminist Art Practice*, R Jones, 2019.**

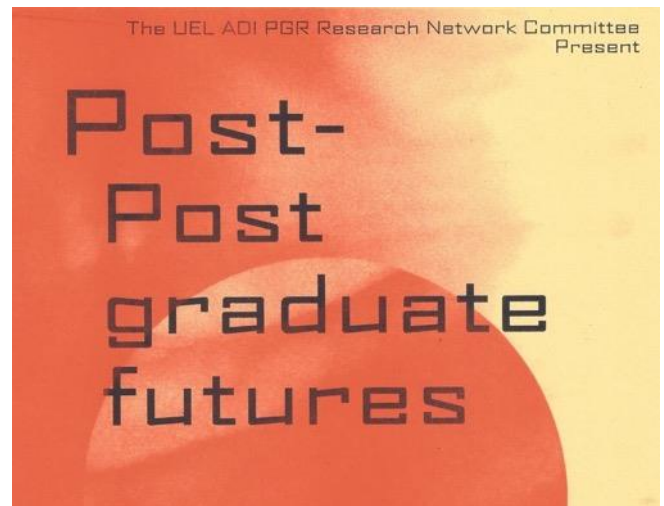


Figure 72 R Jones, *Post-Post Graduate Futures Poster Design*, A4 2 colour risograph, UEL ADI PGR Network Committee

Read the paper here:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5fcfb337941bd0096f2ca721/t/643eb92b0a5fbd327f01dc26/1681832235169/authenticity+in+feminist+art+practice+.pdf>

- b. ***Play With Purpose* Conference at University of Bedfordshire, 6 march, 2020.**

Paper presentation: *Who Get's to Play and Who Doesn't?* R Jones, 2020. Available to read here:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5fcfb337941bd0096f2ca721/t/643e9bd79bb25912beb21a82/1681824729002/Ruth+Jones+Who+gets+to+play+and+who+doesn%27t%3F+Paper+2020.pdf>



Figure 73 *Play with Purpose*, University of Bedfordshire, Conference poster.

- c. ACE PGR Research Conference, Presentation of *Installation as proto- entity, (dis)embodied avatar* 24 September 2021. Winner of best presentation.



Figure 74 UEL Call for abstracts poster for ACE PGR Research Conference 2021

- d. Future Collect: Handle With Care Conference at Manchester Art Gallery, 25 November 2021. <https://manchesterartgallery.org/event/future-collect-handle-with-care/>

- e. UEL ACI PGR Conference 24 September 2022 Presentation of *Biennale and Body*, R Jones, 2022.

Listen to the presentation here:

<https://uelradiopodcast.wixsite.com/listen/aci-pgr-conference>

Read the Paper Biennale and Body here:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5fcfb337941bd0096f2ca721/t/6399f72a87aeaa19d46c92f3/1671034669587/Biennale+and+Body+by+Ruth+Jones.pdf>



Figure 75 ACI PGR Conference 2022 Poster

Appendix 3 Residencies, Commissions and Fellowships

a. Residency with arts organisation Metal. September 2021 – August 2022.

<https://metalculture.com/artists-area/2021-residency-artists/>



Figure 76 Screenshot Metal Southend Residency

b. British Council Venice Fellowship. August 2022.

<https://venicebiennale.britishcouncil.org/fellowship/about>

As a recipient of the British Council Venice Biennale Fellowship I spent from 6 August to 5 September in Venice. The British Council and UEL supported my fellowship and a project, the result of which is part of the British Council yearbook in Appendix 1d and the full paper I wrote as a result of the fellowship is available to read in appendix 2e.



Figure 77 British Council Venice Fellowship Group 5 2022, Photo R Jones



Figure 79 British Council Venice Fellowship British Pavilion 2022, Photo R Jones



Figure 78 British Council Venice Fellowship British Pavilion 2022, Photo R Jones



Figure 80 Installation view of Precious Okoyomon, *To See the Earth Before the End of the World*, 2022, Arsenale, Venice Biennale

<https://www.fpg.org.uk/event/live-performance-is-it-strange/>

<https://www.fpg.org.uk/project/fpg-sounds/>

Is it strange? 2022 was commissioned by Focal Point Gallery and their FPG Sounds programme in 2022. The result was a live ASMR performance that took part at Twenty One in Southend on Sea, complete with BSL translation.

<https://www.fpg.org.uk/event/live-performance-is-it-strange/>

<https://www.fpg.org.uk/project/fpg-sounds/>

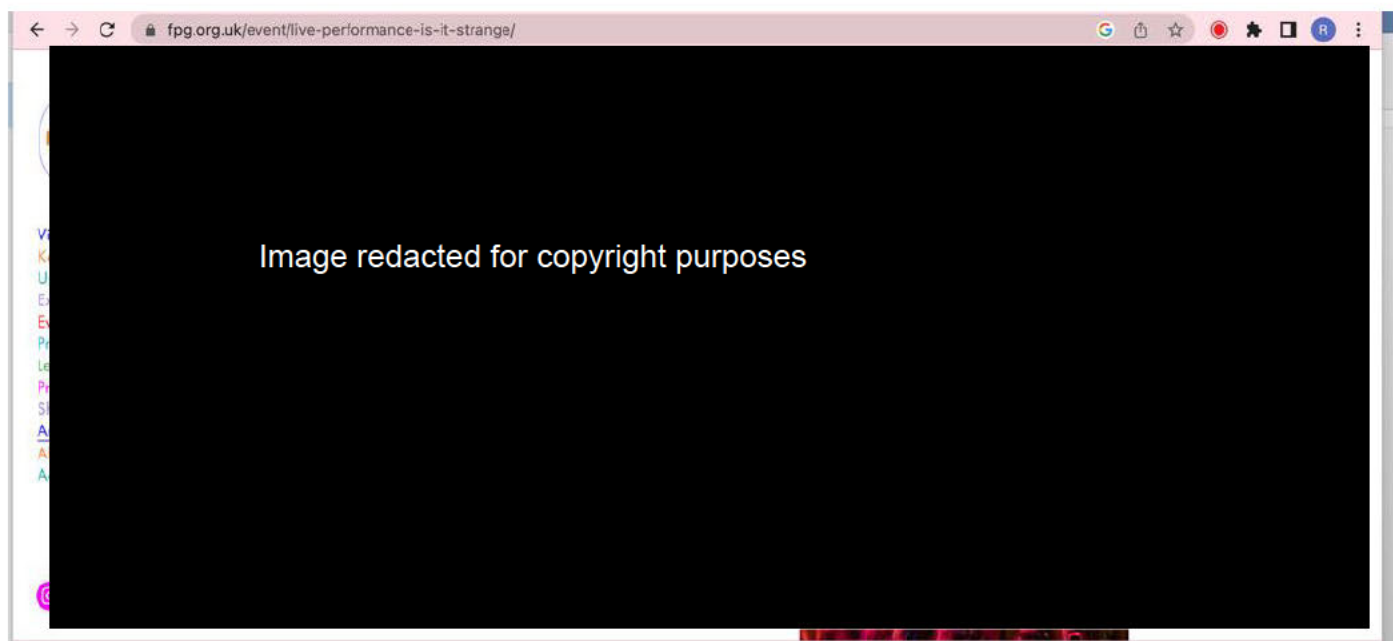


Figure 81 Screenshot Focal Point Gallery Website, Archive, Live Performance, Is it Strange?

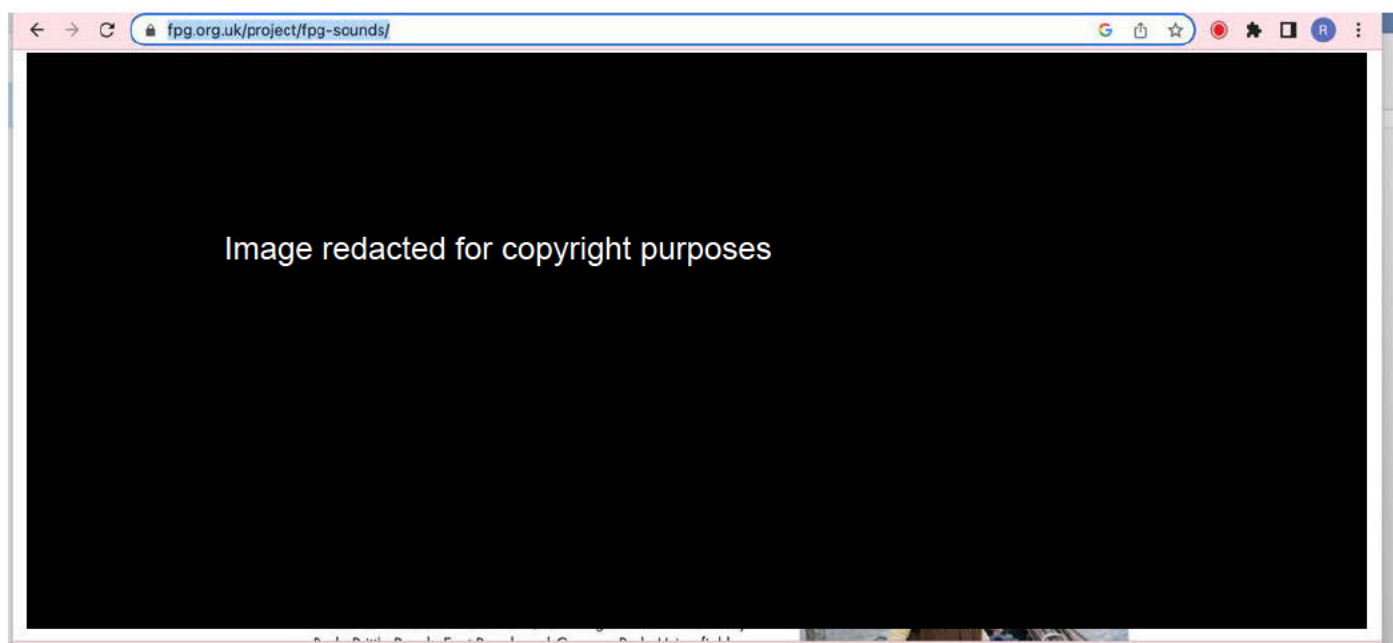


Figure 82 Screenshot Focal Point Gallery website, Archive, FPG Sounds

Appendix 4 Exhibitions

a. Taking Care, VIVA Exhibition, University of East London, 2023.

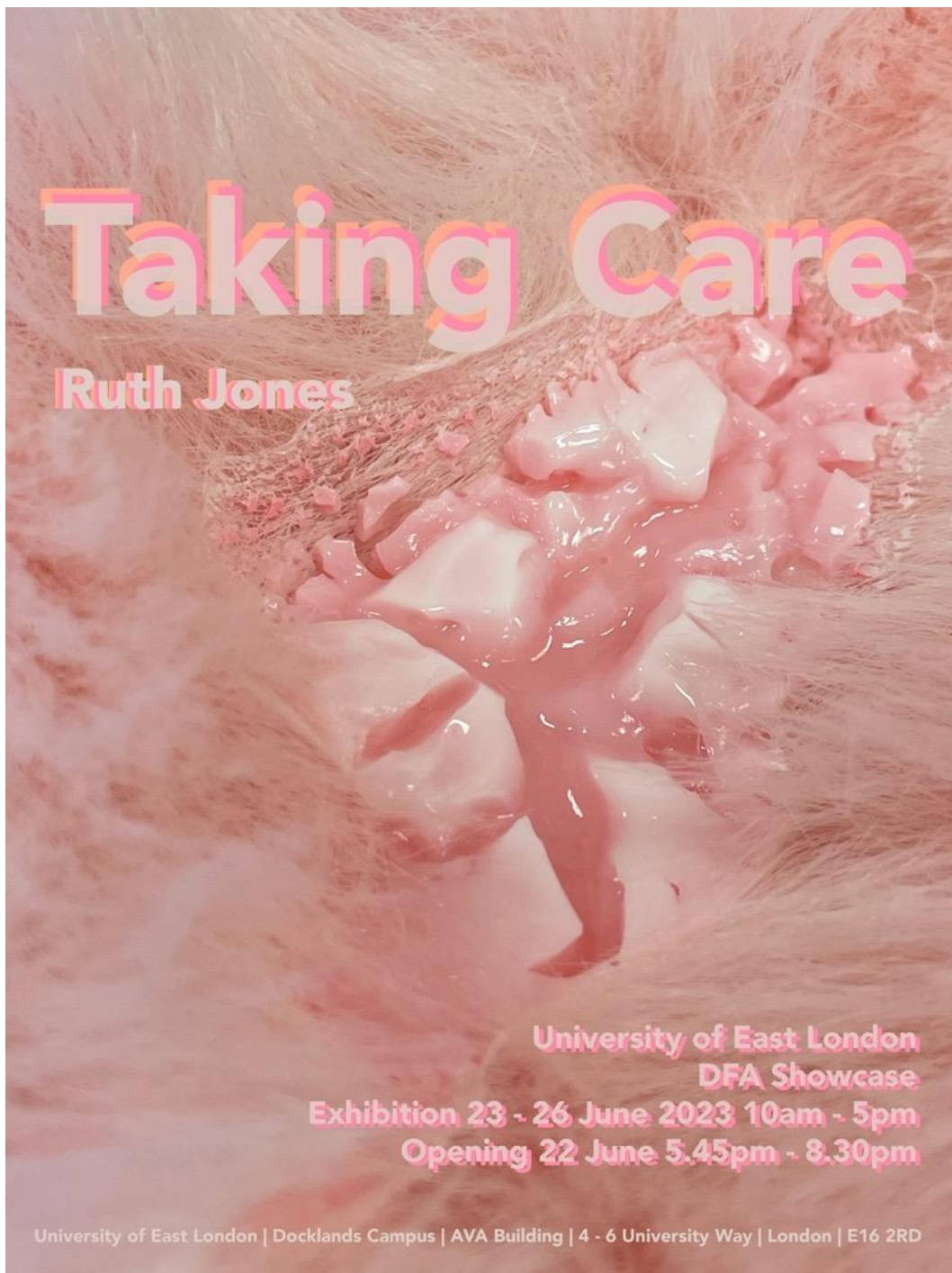


Figure 83 'Taking Care' exhibition flyer. June 2023



Figure 84 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition installation shot. DFA Showcase, University of East London, June 2023



Figure 85 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition installation shot. DFA Showcase, University of East London, June 2023



Figure 86 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition installation shot. DFA Showcase, University of East London, June 2023

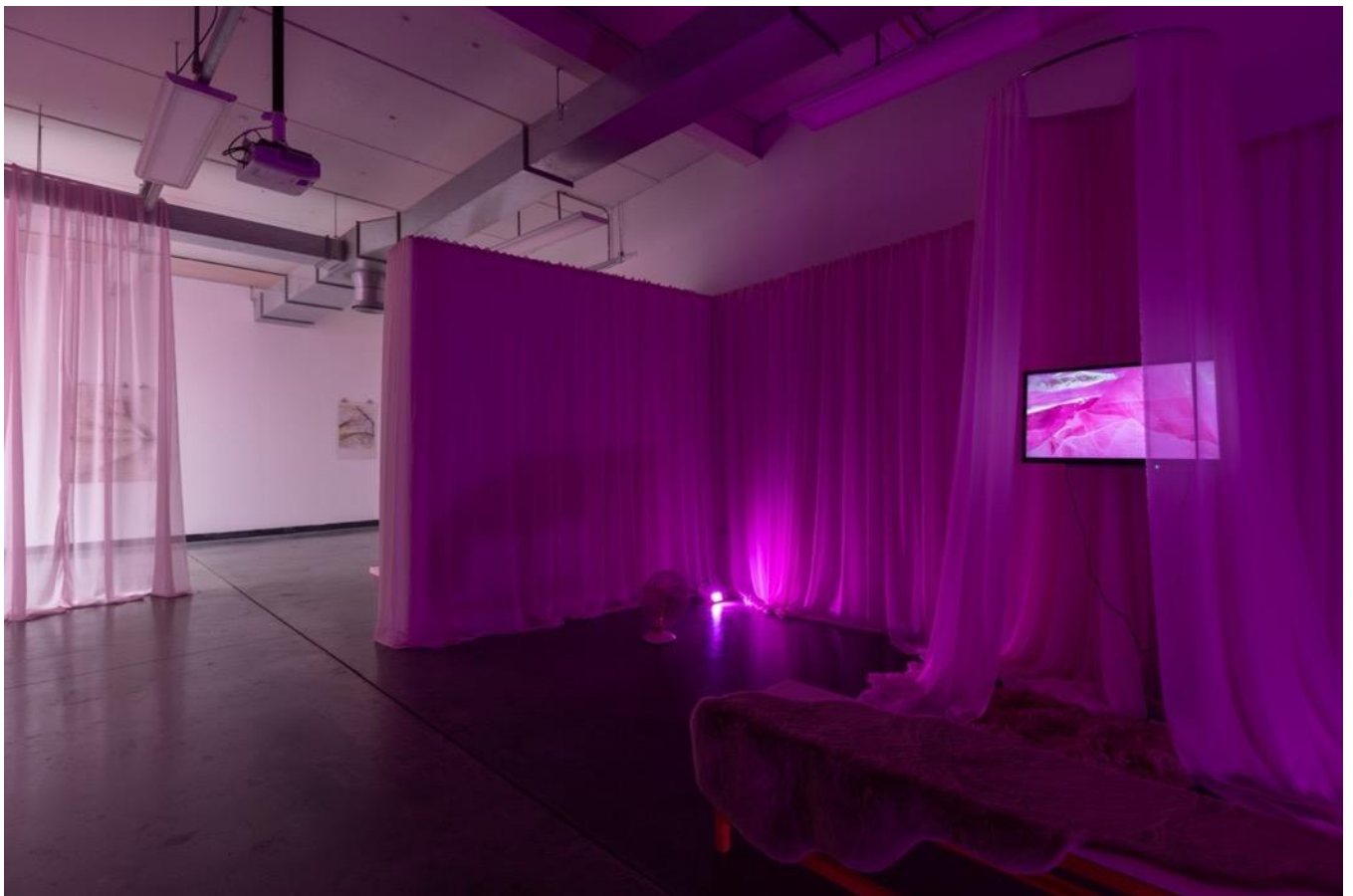


Figure 87 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition installation shot. DFA Showcase, University of East London, June 2023



Figure 88 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition installation shot. DFA Showcase, University of East London, June 2023

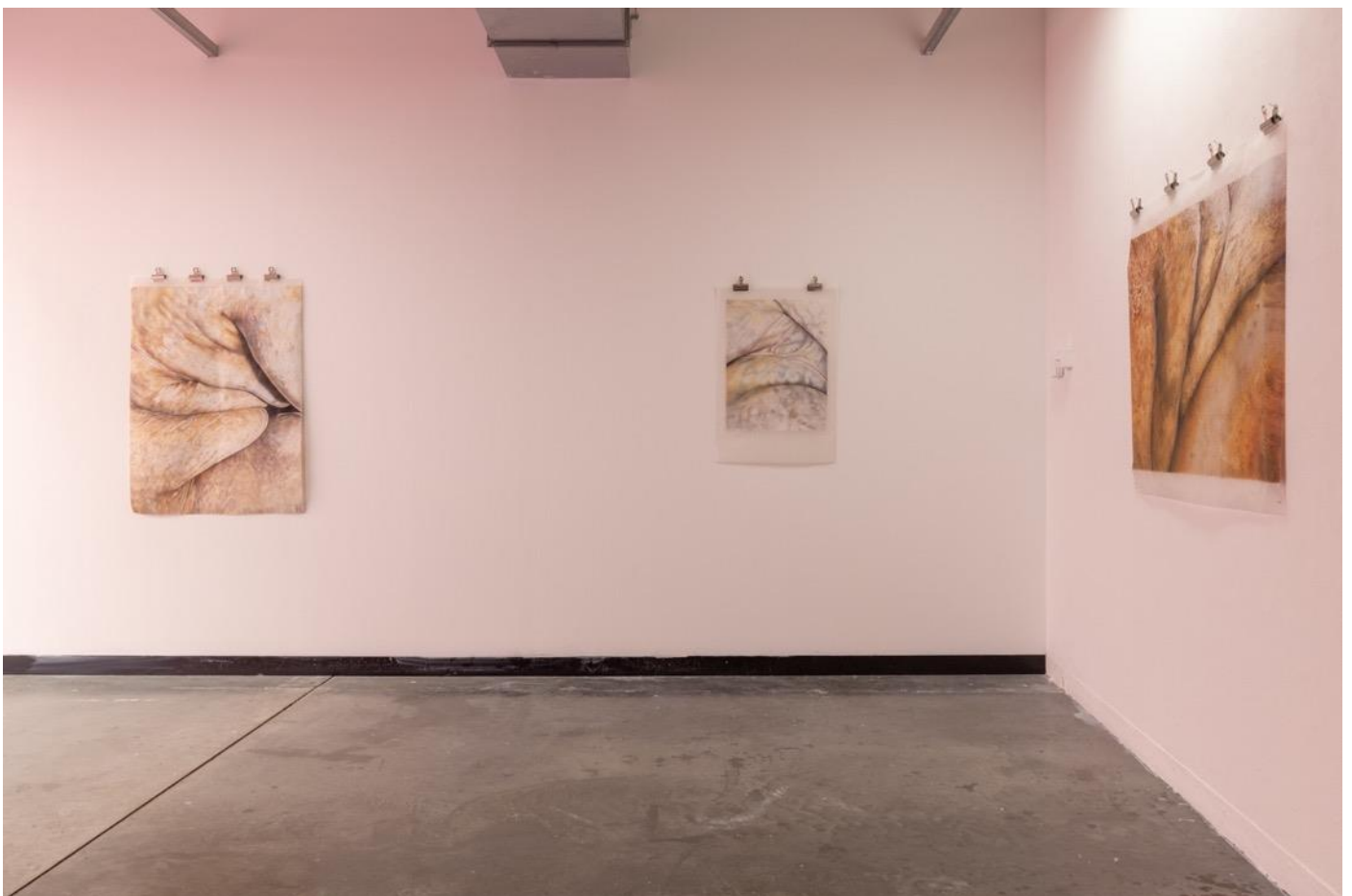


Figure 89 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition installation shot. DFA Showcase, University of East London, June 2023



Figure 90 Ruth Jones 'Redaction; Volume 5', 2023. Aquarelle drawing on tracing paper. 120 x 100cm.



Figure 91 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition installation shot. DFA Showcase, University of East London, June 2023



Figure 92 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition installation shot. DFA Showcase, University of East London, June 2023



Figure 93 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition installation shot. DFA Showcase, University of East London, June 2023



Figure 94 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition installation shot. DFA Showcase, University of East London, June 2023



Figure 95 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition installation shot. DFA Showcase, University of East London, June 2023



Figure 96 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition installation shot. DFA Showcase, University of East London, June 2023



Figure 97 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition installation shot. DFA Showcase, University of East London, June 2023



Figure 98 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition installation shot. DFA Showcase, University of East London, June 2023



Figure 99 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition installation shot. DFA Showcase, University of East London, June 2023



Figure 100 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition installation shot. DFA Showcase, University of East London, June 2023



Figure 101 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition installation shot. DFA Showcase, University of East London, June 2023



Figure 102 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition installation shot. DFA Showcase, University of East London, June 2023



Figure 103 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition installation shot. DFA Showcase, University of East London, June 2023



Figure 104 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition performance. DFA Showcase, University of East London, 22 June 2023



Figure 105 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition performance. DFA Showcase, University of East London, 22 June 2023



Figure 106 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition performance. DFA Showcase, University of East London, 22 June 2023



Figure 107 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition performance. DFA Showcase, University of East London, 22 June 2023



Figure 108 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition performance. DFA Showcase, University of East London, 22 June 2023



Figure 109 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition performance. DFA Showcase, University of East London, 22 June 2023



Figure 110 Ruth Jones 'Taking Care', VIVA exhibition performance. DFA Showcase, University of East London, 22 June 2023

b. States of Exchange, Hypha Studios, 2023

FAD Magazine review of States of Exchange, featuring my work here:

<https://fadmagazine.com/2023/03/24/repair-redux-x-states-of-exchange-to-open-at-hypha-studios/>



Figure 111 R Jones, Is it strange? Installation, 2023. Hypha Studios London, States of Exchange, 2023.

c. DFA Showcase, UEL 2022



Figure 112 UEL DFA Showcase Poster, 2022.



Figure 113 Ruth Jones, *Space for contradiction, invitation and refusal*, 2022. Installation. DFA showcase 2022.



Figure 114 Ruth Jones, *Space for contradiction, invitation and refusal*, 2022. Installation. DFA showcase 2022.



Figure 115 Ruth Jones, *Space for contradiction, invitation and refusal*, 2022. Installation. DFA showcase 2022.

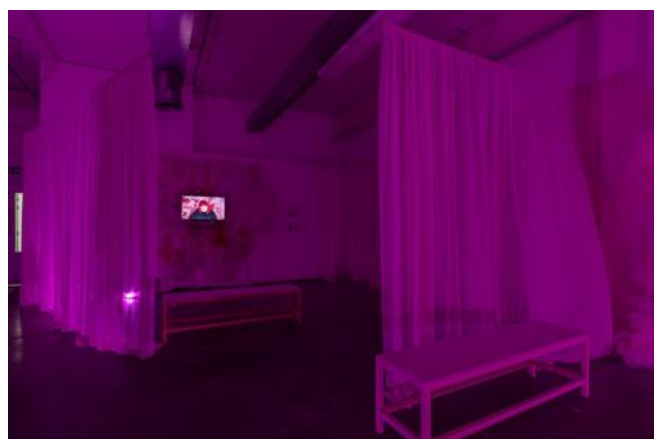


Figure 116 Ruth Jones, *Space for contradiction, invitation and refusal*, 2022. Installation. DFA showcase 2022.

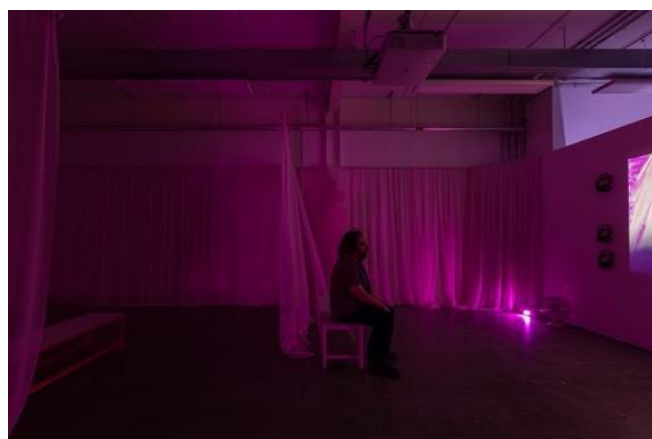


Figure 117 Ruth Jones, *Space for contradiction, invitation and refusal*, 2022. Installation. DFA showcase 2022.

d. Loving Care, Way Out East, 2021



Playing with ideas of extending and refusing care, the artists have each selected works that explore the tension between gendered perceptions of care and femininity, and how acts of refusal can create contentious spaces of agency.

The exhibition title pays homage to Janine Antoni's performance (1993) which recognised, in turn, the "Maintenance Art" of Mierle Laderman Ukeles (1973). These feminist acts of sincere care were also gentle, but insistent, rebuttals of the prescriptions inherent to the performance of gender.

Figure 118 "Loving Care" Poster, Way Out East gallery, London, 2021



Figure 119 R Jones, S Withers, Installation View "Loving Care", 2021, Way Out East, London.



Figure 120 R Jones, S Withers, Installation View "Loving Care", 2021, Way Out East, London.

e. Is it too much? 2021

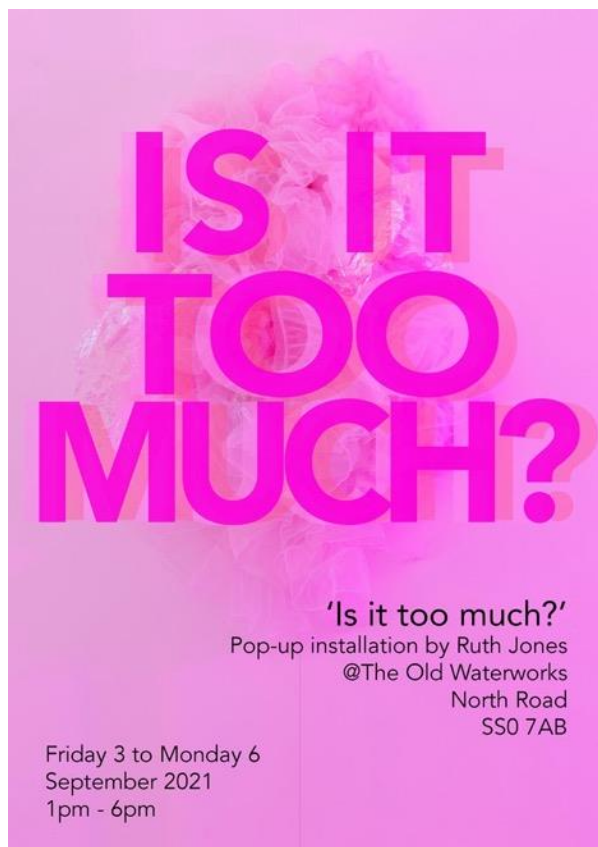


Figure 121 *Is it too much? Post card front, 2021*

'Is it too much?'
Pop-up installation by Ruth Jones
1pm - 6pm Friday 3 to Monday 6
September, 2021

'Is it too much?' Is an installation exploring ideas about gender, identity and care.

Finding ways to think about the spaces we can occupy and be visible within, and, at the same time, understand the expectations that can be projected on to women and other marginalised genders.

For 'Is it too much?' the installation becomes a gendered proto-entity, a disembodied avatar of a woman that offers and refuses forms of "care" to her audience, points to and embodies the contradictions of completing those efforts as a woman and all the complexities intrinsic to that experience.

The installation works to create multi-sensory stimuli that both soothe and agitate, calm and disquiet, entertain and unsettle.

Ruth Jones is an artist and independent curator; founder of the Agency of Visible Women, an intersectional feminist network in Southend on Sea; co-curator and organiser for the international research collective What's Your Location? And project manager at The Old Waterworks.

www.ruthkathrynjones.co.uk
Insta: @ruthkathrynjones

The Old Waterworks | North Road | Southend-on-Sea | Essex | SS0 7AB

Figure 122 *Is it too much? Post card back, 2021*



Figure 123 *Ruth Jones, Is it too much? 2021, Installation. The Old Waterworks, 2021.*



Figure 124 Ruth Jones, Is it too much? 2021, Installation. The Old Waterworks, 2021.



Figure 125 Ruth Jones, *Is it too much?* 2021, Installation. *The Old Waterworks*, 2021.

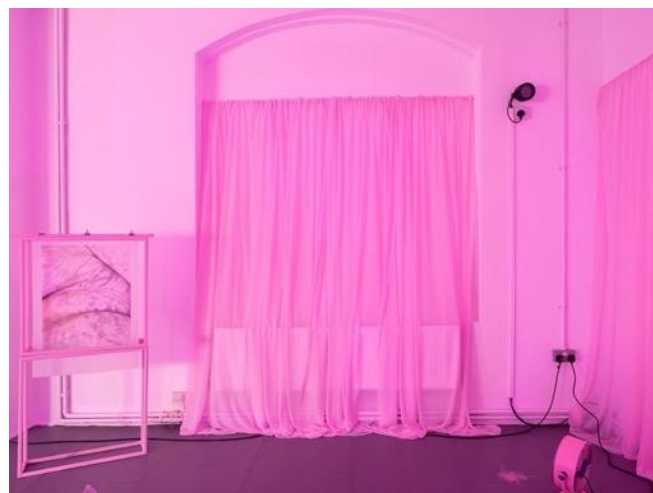


Figure 126 Ruth Jones, *Is it too much?* 2021, Installation. *The Old Waterworks*, 2021.



Figure 127 Ruth Jones, *Is it too much?* 2021, Installation. *The Old Waterworks*, 2021.



Figure 128 Ruth Jones, *Is it too much?* 2021, Installation. *The Old Waterworks*, 2021.



Figure 129 Ruth Jones, *Is it too much?* 2021, Installation. *The Old Waterworks*, 2021

f. DFA Showcase, 2021



Figure 130 Ruth Jones, *Is it too much?*, 2021. Installation. DFA showcase 2021



Figure 131 Ruth Jones, *Is it too much?*, 2021. Installation. DFA showcase 2021

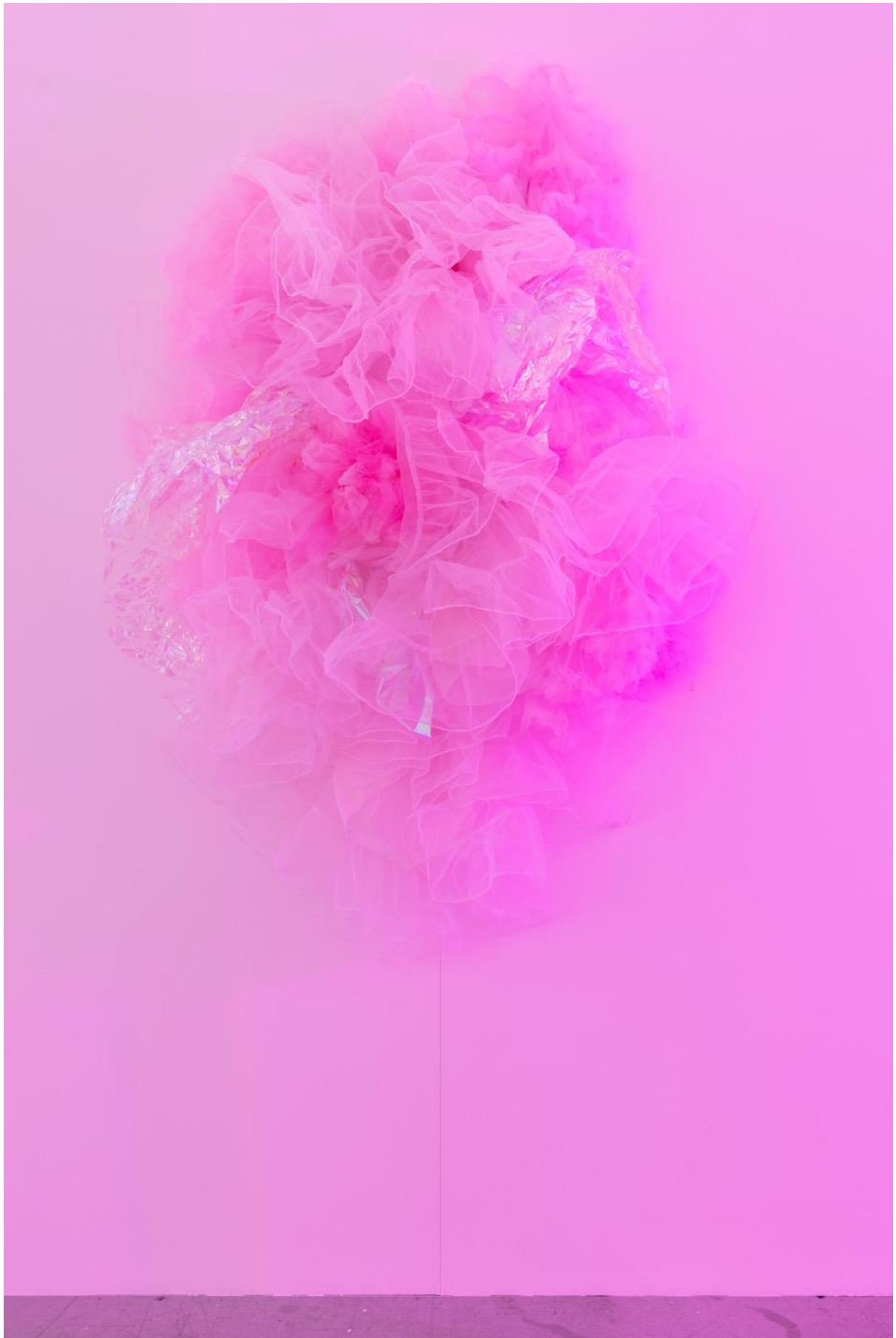


Figure 132 Ruth Jones, Is it too much?, 2021. Installation. DFA showcase 2021



Figure 133 Ruth Jones, Is it too much?, 2021. Installation. DFA showcase 2021



Figure 134 Ruth Jones, Is it too much?, 2021. Installation. DFA showcase 2021



Figure 135 Ruth Jones, Is it too much?, 2021. Installation. DFA showcase 2021

g. Between Walls, 2020

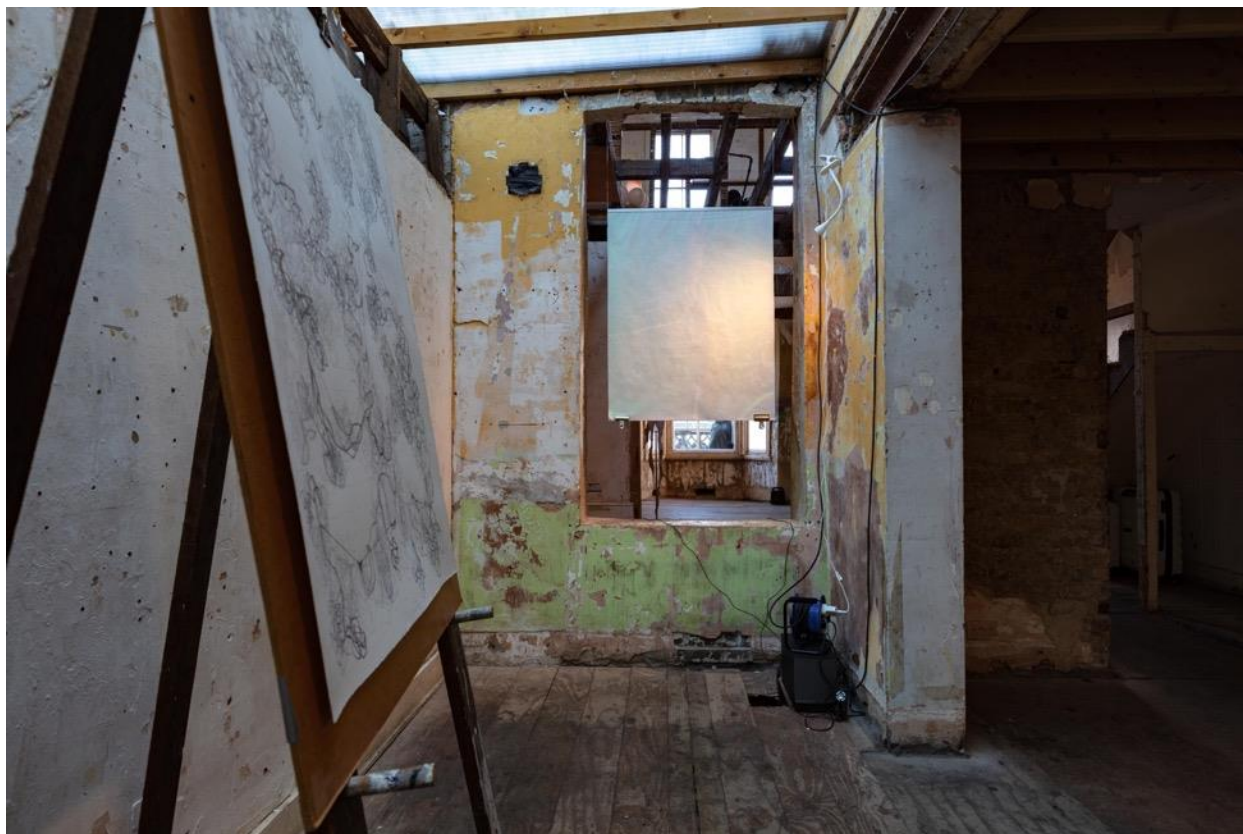


Figure 136 Ruth Jones, Redaction: Volume 3, 2020. Installation. Between Walls, Safe House, 2020



Figure 137 Ruth Jones, Redaction: Volume 3, 2020. Installation. Between Walls, Safe House, 2020



Figure 138 Ruth Jones, Redaction: Volume 3, 2020. Installation. Between Walls, Safe House, 2020



Figure 139 Ruth Jones, *Redaction: Volume 3*, 2020. Installation. *Between Walls, Safe House*, 2020.



Figure 140 Ruth Jones, *Redaction: Volume 3*, 2020. Installation. *Between Walls, Safe House*, 2020.



Figure 141 Ruth Jones, *Redaction: Volume 3*, 2020. Installation. *Between Walls, Safe House*, 2020.

'Redaction: Volume 3' accompanying sound by Kelly Buckley:

<https://kellybuckleymusic.net/track/2502822/accompaniment-to-redaction>

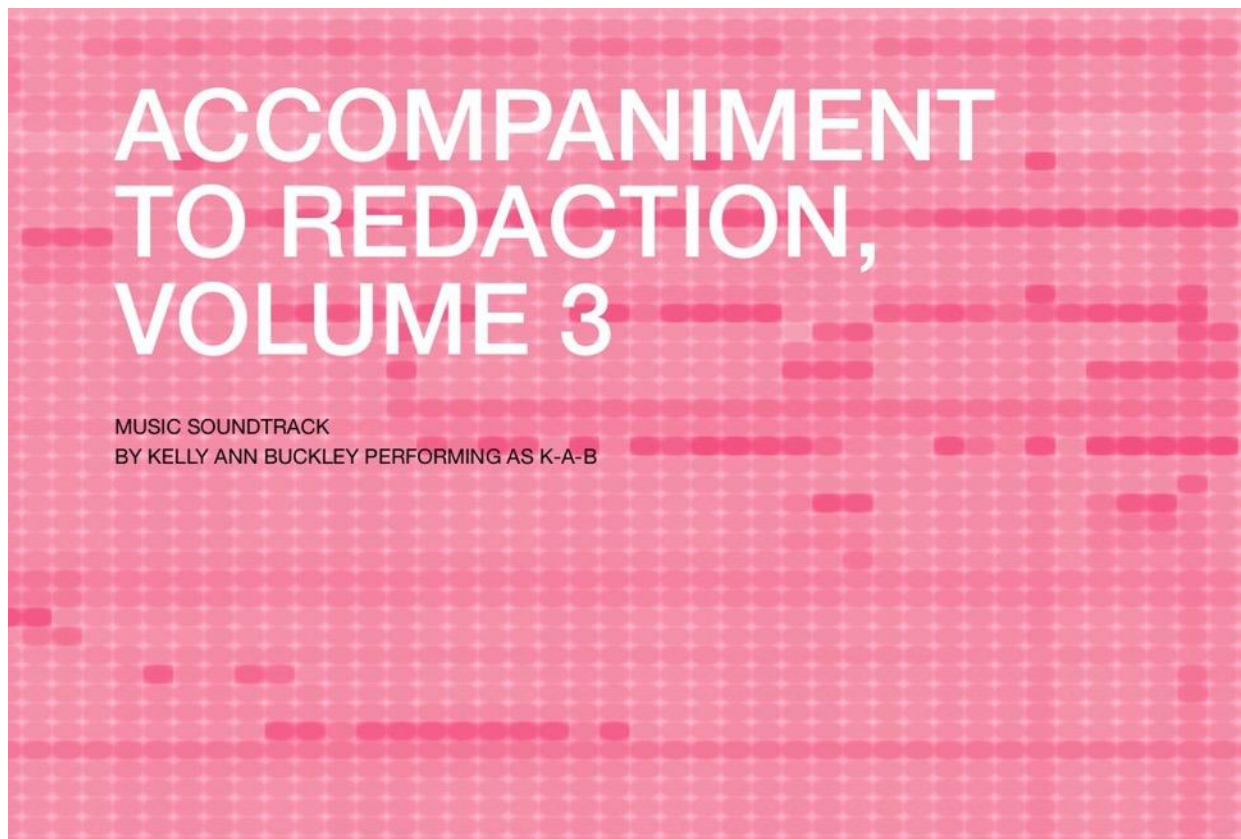


IMAGE: An abstract representation of the arrangement of this soundtrack, as displayed on its digital audio workstation.

ACCOMPANIMENT TO REDACTION, VOLUME 3

OCT 9-11 2020

SAFEHOUSE 1&2
COPELAND ROAD
LONDON

ACCOMPANIMENT to Redaction, Volume 3, is an experimental soundtrack created to echo the meaning and experience of contemporary visual artist Ruth Jones' work, Redaction, Volume 3.

The soundtrack, designed as a 12.45 minute loop, is largely created from recordings taken in Jones' studio.

The raw sounds were of Jones at work, and include her making pencil markings and shading; of pencils being dropped and picked up; the rolling and peeling of different sized tracing paper; of her footsteps and movements around the studio as she prepared her pieces, clipping them together, weaving string and attaching bulldog

clips of varying sizes; her working with foil; building the metal structure which holds part of her work and the rustling of polythene materials. To represent Jones' drawings of the curves and lines within her back, I recorded myself stroking my own skin, smoothing over the curves, tapping and slapping the flesh.

All the individual recordings were sliced and sampled into notes, chords and beats from which I created drum and melodic patterns, as well as adding sounds of some traditional instruments.

The track is in B minor, but at the start - a section which reflects the artist preparing her work - is a mix of layers, one part not in key, which therefore,

sounds uncomfortable. This section takes up too much space, there are too many layers to it, and it goes on a little too long. It is all a bit 'too much'.

The sound of rolling tracing paper comes in, again, too loud, a little too big, awkward, unfeminine, harsh, brash,

"Redaction, Volume 3 plays with volumes of space and density, things fat bodies can be violently accused of taking too much of. The redaction in this instance of the humanity of the subject, the remaining body parts..."
- Ruth Jones.

Gradually the thick paper sounds soften, the rolling becomes more 'curvy' as opposed to 'chunky'. Sounds of the beautiful pink lightweight crinkly polythene seen in Ruth's work, replace the harder paper. The atmosphere becomes kinder, softer. Sensual sounds of pencil drawings appear, individual strokes panning from left to right in the mix, notes covered in shimmering effects, caressing the listener's ear.

"...This drawing is a soft and kind rendering of flesh on translucent paper, a chance to slow down the process of the images consumed of our bodies. Soft colours, soft lines and marks, sheer and fragile paper. Gentle layering and attention to detail. I have been thinking about

fatness and softness and the violence's conducted towards and against fat bodies in online and IRL spaces. " - Ruth Jones

The beats enter the piece. They are spacious, somewhat carefully and laboriously placed, with emphasised industrial echoes, taken from recordings of the metallic elements within Jones' work. The repetitiveness represents Jones' discussion of woman's work.

A melody evolves, with chosen instruments which have rounded sounds, full, bubbly, bouncing, pretty. There is space between them as they cascade. The melody overrides the initial sense of discomfort.

The beats occasionally change in resonance and frequency during the track. This is a result of lines being plotted via automation, within the arrangement to alter and control sounds. The lines were marked to resemble the curves within Jones' pencil drawing.

"The piece is held at torso height within a welded steel frame, with clear reference to idealistic and "masculine" minimalism as an aesthetic language, but softened with colour. Taking colour cues from its sister piece, (Redaction, 2019) Redaction: Volume 2 echoes the use of pale pink as a symbol of redaction of the visceral red of woman-hood, sanitising and purifying with the

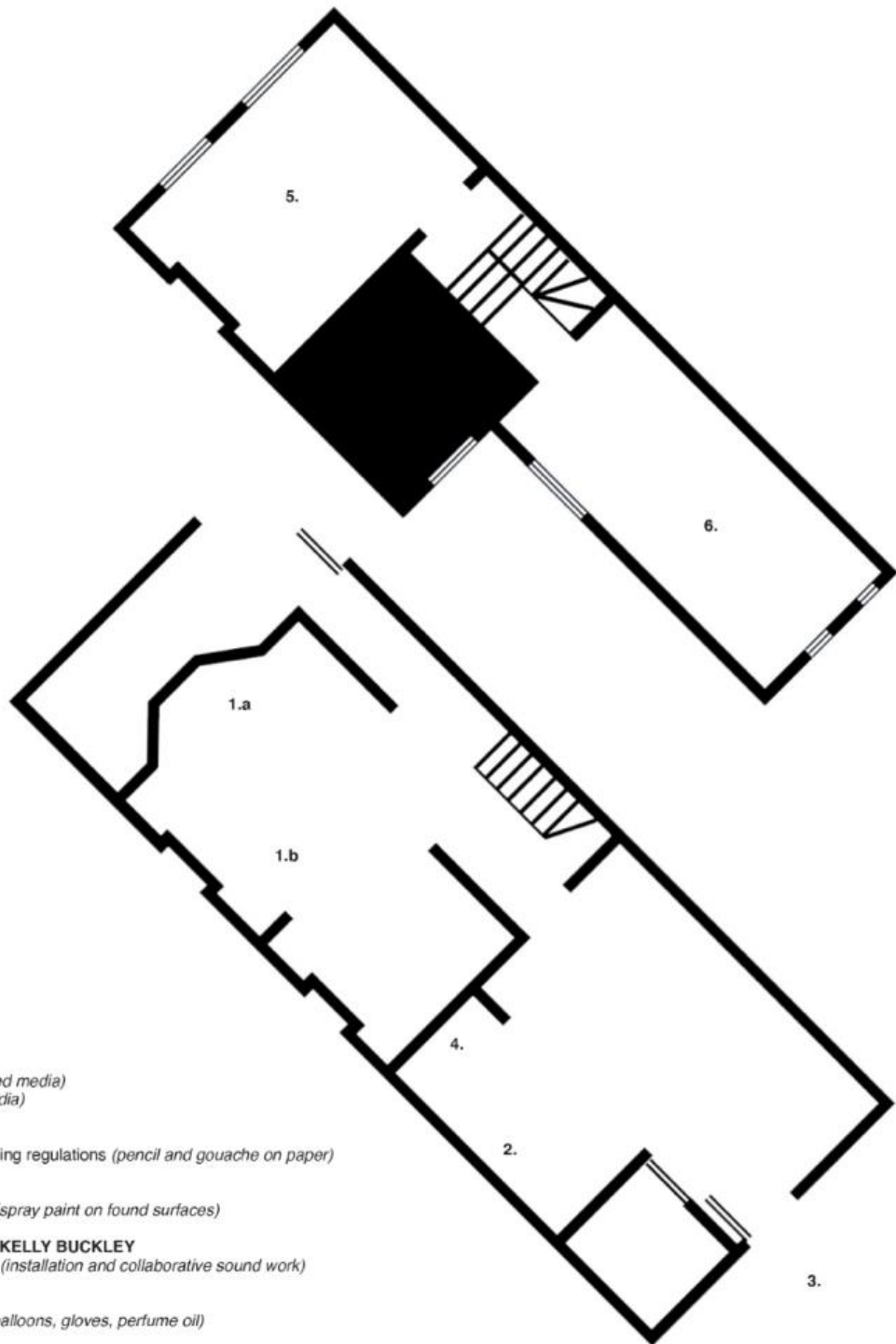
introduction of white cleanness, the sealed vessel, the infantilised, tractable, pliant colour of girlhood.
..." - Ruth Jones.

Recordings of the steel frame being put together by Jones in her studio were among those sampled into notes. At points during the soundtrack, chords are held, long enough to allow for the listener to clearly hear the frame being dragged and bumped across the floor. In addition to this, smaller sections of the same recording were sliced into single notes, and a melody created from them. Played alone, this melody, due to the steely sound, is rather minimal and 'masculine'. To oppose this with the idea of a purer sound, of 'womanhood', I chose to duplicate the melody with flute, also a metallic vessel with a hollow inside, as is the frame, but with much lighter, more typically 'feminine', natural connotations.

The overall melody was composed with dual considerations and aims. One was to evoke the sense of walking, stroking, teasing and provoking, to conjure the idea of women and how they do or are expected to behave, at times having to build themselves up to appear or behave overtly sexual in order to be heard, (as represented in the crescendoing elements of the piece). The other was also to act as a sonic companion to an audience, serving them with a cool, confident, striding, phat vibe as they experience the artist's work.

Figure 143 Kelly Buckley, *Accompaniment to Redaction, Interview*, Kelly Buckley Music, 2020

Between Walls



Safehouse 1

1. ALI DARKE
 - a. Strange Fruit (*mixed media*)
 - b. Beastly (*mixed media*)
2. DAVID WATKINS
Concrete, wire or zoning regulations (*pencil and gouache on paper*)
3. RALPH OVERILL
Garden of Monsters (*spray paint on found surfaces*)
4. RUTH JONES WITH KELLY BUCKLEY
Redaction: Volume 2 (*installation and collaborative sound work*)
5. SUE WITHERS
Live / Stock (*stools, balloons, gloves, perfume oil*)
6. WILLIAM BISHOP-STEPHENS
Thrum (*wooden box guitar string, sensors, motors, praxiniscopes, projection*)



Safehouse 1 & 2
137 - 139 Copeland Road
London
SE15 3SN

www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/between-walls-tickets-120955879291

Figure 144 Between Walls Exhibition Layout, 2020

h. Out of Isolation, 2020

<https://www.uca.ac.uk/news/2020/out-of-isolation-uca-artists-respond-to-lockdown/>

i. Policy Making, 2020

Policy Making

Transcript from the Essex Girl Liberation Front International Womxn's Day panel I was invited to speak at

Sunday 8 March 2020 at Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend:

Syd Moore: *The inaugural Turner prize was awarded in 1984, but it was 1993 before Rachel Whiteread became the first female artist to take the title. The next was Gillian Wearing in 1997. The winners for the next eight years were all male.*

The last decade has seen a shift towards gender parity: of the last 11 winners, five were female and five male, while last year's victors, the collective Assemble, were a mixed group.

In 2016, 2017, 2018 the winners were female, but last year there was criticism from the LGBTQ community and there was no overall winner.*

*I thought that **Ruth**, as our practicing visual artist, expert and representative of the Agency of Visible Women, you would be the best qualified to enlarge on what the controversy was and comment on the broader issues too.*

Ruth Jones:

"I think the interesting thing about the Turner Prize is that it's a focus for frustrations from all parties.

There's seldom a year when controversy of one kind or another is brought up, but more recently, the Turner Prize feels like it's knee jerk reaction to warranted criticism over who gets nominated and who sponsors the event is over apparent.

If you think in terms of representation the fact that it took till 2017 for artists over 50 to be included is kind of ridiculous.

But, moreover, if we think about the current debates that artists are engaged in: the issues of the gig economy, the precarity of late stage patriarchal capitalism, I think the question really needs to be about who gets to make art work and who doesn't.

The commodification of art is of course nothing new, but recent focus on class from the arts council England suggest that if there's no real concrete move towards supporting the working class to access the arts they are at least wringing their hands over it.

Again, the arts council seem finally to be thinking about full inclusion, some of its national portfolio organizations having lost their npo status over their refusal to acknowledge accessibility, rightfully causing a renewed approach to accessibility by institutions.

in considering the LGBTQIA* community, who are the artists that are most represented? Thinking back to the critique of Tate Moderns Queer British Art exhibition, the primary argument being that the hierarchy's present in society are largely reflected in the queer scene (i.e. that middle class, white, Cis gendered men take up all the space).

The recent conversation around race has been particularly disappointing, wherein Joaquin Phoenix has been applauded for highlighting the debate but Dr. Shola Mos-Shogbamimu and Stormzy, amongst others, have been shouted down in a storm of white fragility. The arts of course is little different, where again Tate seemed incapable of providing enough seating for events that took place during the Soul of a Nation exhibition, having shoehorned speakers into small spaces in a stunning lack of foresight about the uptake for speakers of colour.

The bigger argument is one of hierarchy and intersectionality. Intersectionality is a term coined by Kimberlee Crenshaw to highlight the specific intersections of oppression that black women are subject to, can be extrapolated upon to include race, gender identification, sexuality, class, age, disability and coloniality. The more intersects you sit across the greater range of interlinked oppressions you'll be subject to.

In our current patriarchal-capitalist society, the hierarchical nature of the way we conduct everything, including the arts, means that much time is wasted explaining to those with privilege that just because they don't experience what others go through, doesn't mean it doesn't happen.

In fact, there are instances in which it's been proven that aiming straight for improvements for those who bestride the most intersects makes considerable improvements for EVERYONE. However, as has been said before, men shouldn't need centering in feminism, white people don't need centering in race and allies don't need to be part of the acronym to get behind the idea that oppression is bad."

Critical Feedback from Katharine Stout and Warren Harper regarding Policy Making

Warren Harper, Director of The Old Waterworks, May 7 2020

Using the policy document and the associated institutional undertones as a curatorial and critical framework Ruth Jones was able to encapsulate the broad range of art practices that make up *Policy Making* whilst maintaining a commonality between the exhibiting artists. Each artwork is ascribed a policy number, which may hint to being a navigational tool as well as raising questions around policy making practices: who writes these governing documents and for whom? What purpose/agenda is the policy serving? Might one write or make their own? What even is a policy? The premise of artwork as policy not only allows for disparate formal qualities of work within the exhibition to sit alongside one another, it also provides a platform for this intersectional feminist network of womxn artists in Southend to come together in solidarity.

The exhibition encourages the viewer to question who compiles the documents that govern our bodies and our lives, and whose voices might not be heard in their production or fulfilment. *Policy Making* enlivens this discussion and questions the dominant narratives, seeking to disrupt and decentre them. This is made apparent as soon as one enters the exhibition space with the first part of the first policy/artwork, *Policy No. 1 Disrupt the Existing Narratives*, by artist Elsa James. One is confronted by a flag hanging from the ceiling, draped down across the threshold in the middle of the exhibition's entrance. It is the Essex flag but rather than the familiar red field and white seaxes James' appliqué flag is black seaxes of leather, satin and metallic materials on a black field. To enter the exhibition one must walk around the flag, this subtle shifting of where one can enter the exhibition, and the questions this raises, is amplified further through the second half of James' *Policy No. 1*.

Behind and to the left of the flag James' work continues, a black vinyl satin text on a black wall reading 'POLICY NO. 1 DISRUPT THE EXISTING NARRATIVES'. The text is difficult to read from certain angles, particularly front and centre; the whole becomes legible as one makes their way from the centre to the edges, the viewer must physically move to read it in its entirety. James' work

decentres the viewer and in doing so sets up the viewer to ask whose stories get told in the existing narratives as they might be known and whose are omitted. It does this by encouraging the viewer to do the work, disrupting how one usually encounters artwork on walls in gallery spaces, particularly within the context of the Beecroft Gallery where the whole exhibition set up is based around 'I' shaped wall structures that are intended primarily for paintings viewed head-on; *Policy No. 1* really makes the most of this somewhat restrictive interior architectural detail whilst simultaneously highlighting its limitations.

James' work questions visibility in our society and its stereotypes, since the well-known 'Essex Girl' stereotype is invariably a white one; this is put in sharp relief with the appliqué flag, a call to include black voices in the county's narratives. The curatorial decision to install *Policy No. 1 Disrupt the Existing Narratives* as the first encounter really sets the tone for the exhibition, framing *Policy Making* as a critical questioning of who is visible and invisible in our society, and who gets to take up space and why.

Warren Harper

www.warrenharper.info

Policy Making Exhibition

Feedback from Katharine Stout, Director, Focal Point Gallery

This thought-provoking exhibition offered a wide range of challenging and engaging work as a collective offering from the Agency of Visible Womxn, a group made up of Southend womxn, femme and non-binary artists. The most ambitious project since Ruth Jones founded the Agency in 2017, the theme of Policy Making allowed for a wide variety of responses and approaches to the topic, which combined humour with institutional and personal critique. The curatorial concept was both original and generous in that the participating artists were each able to offer a unique interpretation of the social, economic and intellectual questions and concerns set up by the concept of Policy Making.

The exhibition was very well presented with a good use of the modular display screens at the Beecroft Art Gallery, using this to systematise the presentation of a large number of artists, whilst also supporting artists to individualise their area and presentation. Obviously it is a shame that the associated events and performances were not able to take place which would have amplified the exhibition concept and the range of work offered.

In considering this exhibition, I wanted to highlight that I am approaching it as a curator that has worked in public arts organisations for twenty years (so extremely institutionalised!), whereas Ruth Jones is approaching her ongoing project as an artist working alongside peers and colleagues. Therefore, I can imagine Jones was treading a fine line between being the lead organiser and being a fellow artist and peer to the other artists on display. My main feedback is around the information offered about the individual artists and exhibition concept.

I would have liked to have known more about the artists involved, particularly as quite a few of them were unknown to me. There was some information about a couple of artists, but it would have been good to make this consistently available for all the artists, especially as the motivation behind the Agency's work is to give female artists in Southend more visibility. I also would have been interested to know a bit more about the selection of artists – are they all based locally? For example, Judy-Ann Moule is cited as a doctoral candidate in Sydney. Some of the artists are more foregrounded within the exhibition than others – with more than one work exhibited, or more space so would have been good to get a sense of the rationale for this. It is also a shame that there isn't information on the Beecroft Art Gallery website to make the exhibition and artists more widely known.

Finally, the foreword in the accompanying circular was useful and informative to introduce the exhibition but I felt that there was a lot packed into the paragraph below that could have done with being developed further to avoid it sounding like quite general statements. I liked the very personal tone, but it was a little confusing sometimes as to who the 'we', 'us' and 'they' were, so perhaps these pronouns needed qualifying.

'Art is a weird thing and we know not everyone thinks it's worth it, but it is, when all is said and done, a job. Work. With training and research and skills, philosophical, political and social investigations and the taking of a thought to its absolute limit. Sometimes we feel like art and artists make fun of us. But an artwork is sometimes the product of hundreds of hours of work, years of education or experience, working several part time jobs just so you can make it. It is work. You can't throw a stick in any corporation or institution without hitting a policy. How do the freelance, gig economy workers get treated? What policies are in place to protect them? Do they ever get consulted on them? Are they paid a consultation fee?'

Overall, I believe this was a very successful presentation of a diverse and interesting range of local artists brought together through an innovative theme. The project also illustrated the impact of the Agency in the sense that individually many of these artists would have been unlikely to exhibit at the Beecroft Art Gallery, thereby giving them this exposure within a well-known public

institution. Of course, after the huge amount of work that went into this project it is a real shame that it was closed to prevent the spread of the coronavirus just a couple of weeks after it opened. However, I do believe that the energy and ideas that motivated every artist's exhibited work will continue to be productive for each individual and evidenced the rich potential of the Agency to give collective voice to this powerful group of womxn, femme and non-binary artists from Southend.

Images from Policy Making, 2020

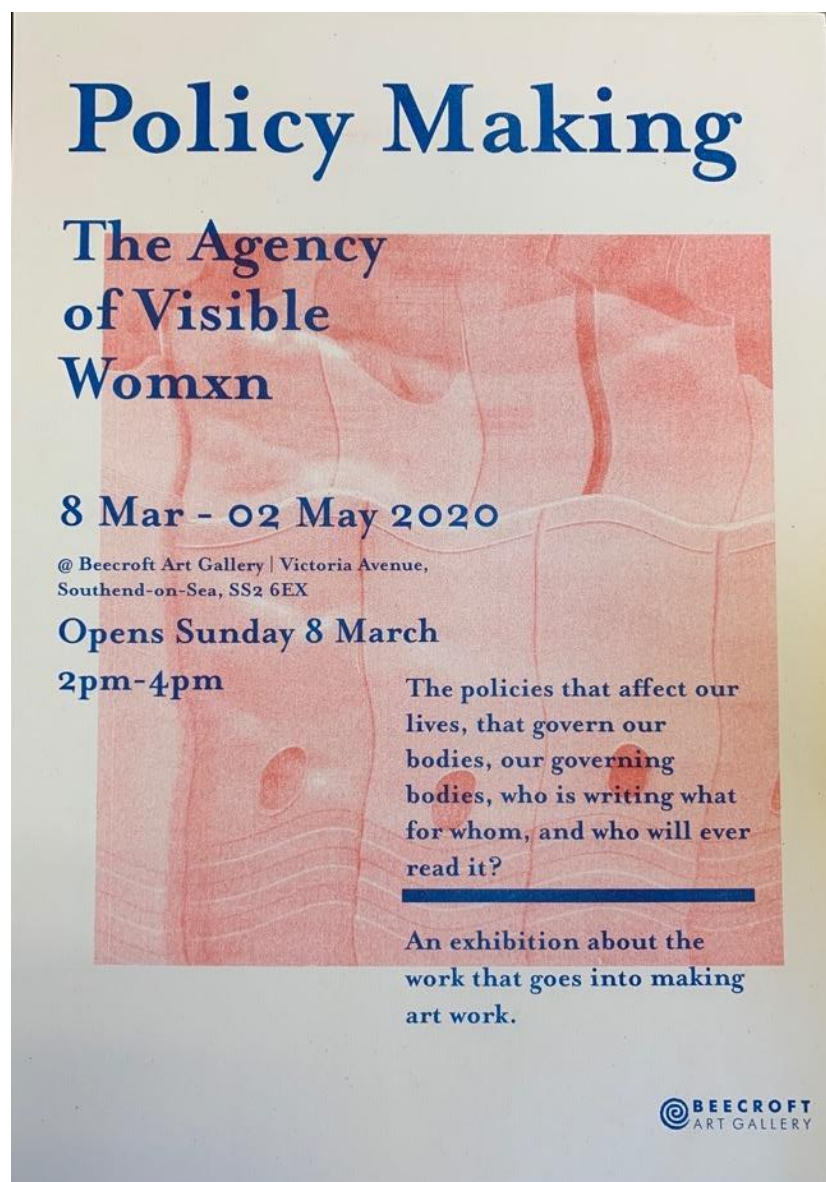


Figure 145 Ruth Jones, 'Policy Making', A3, two colour risograph print poster, 2020



Figure 146 Ruth Jones, 'In/Out', ply, woodchip composite, acrylic paint, 30 x 12 x 8cm. 2020



Figure 147 Ruth Jones, 'In/Out', ply, woodchip composite, acrylic paint, 30 x 12 x 8cm. 2020



Figure 148 Ruth Jones, 'Slogans for artists', unlimited edition, set of six inkjet prints on varied pastel 160gsm paper, A4. 2020.

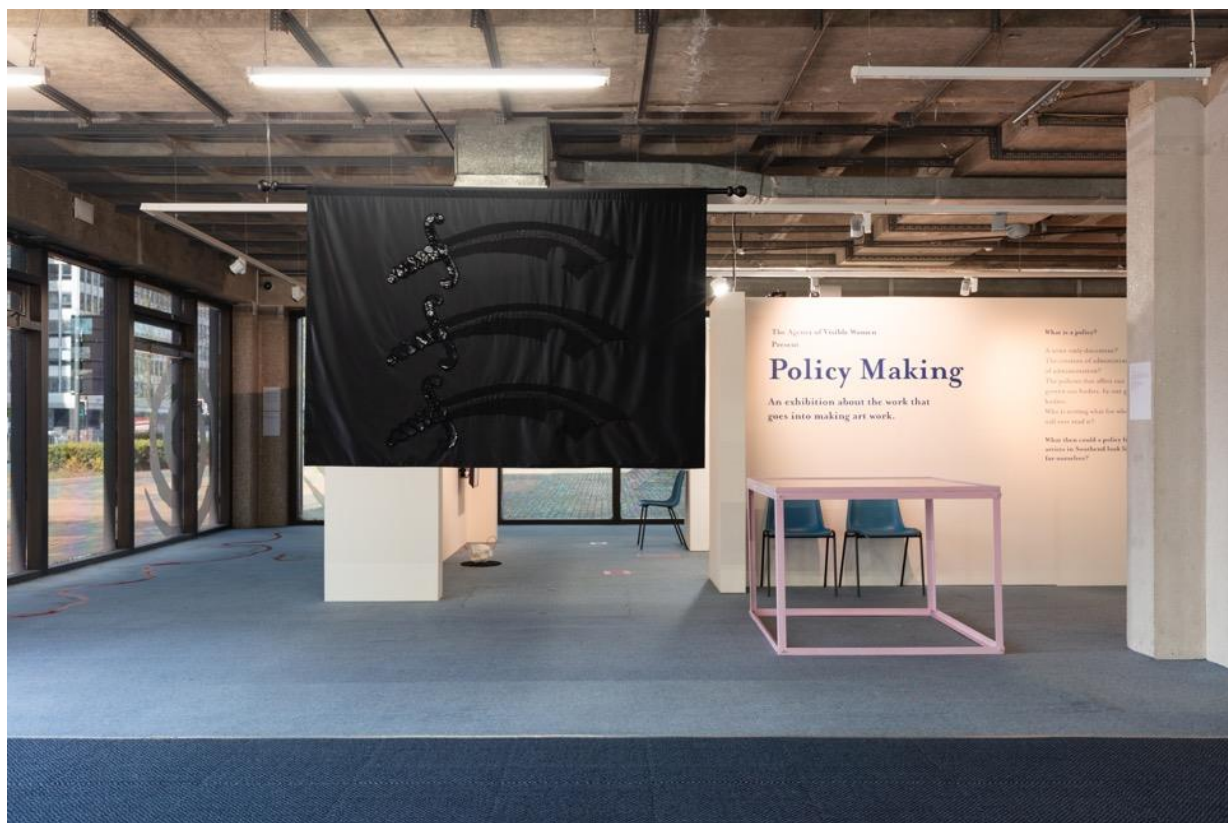


Figure 149 Policy Making', installation shot, Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend, 2020. Curated by Ruth Jones.



Figure 150 Policy Making', installation shot, Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend, 2020. Curated by Ruth Jones.



Figure 151 Policy Making', installation shot, Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend, 2020. Curated by Ruth Jones.



Figure 152 Policy Making', installation shot, Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend, 2020. Curated by Ruth Jones.

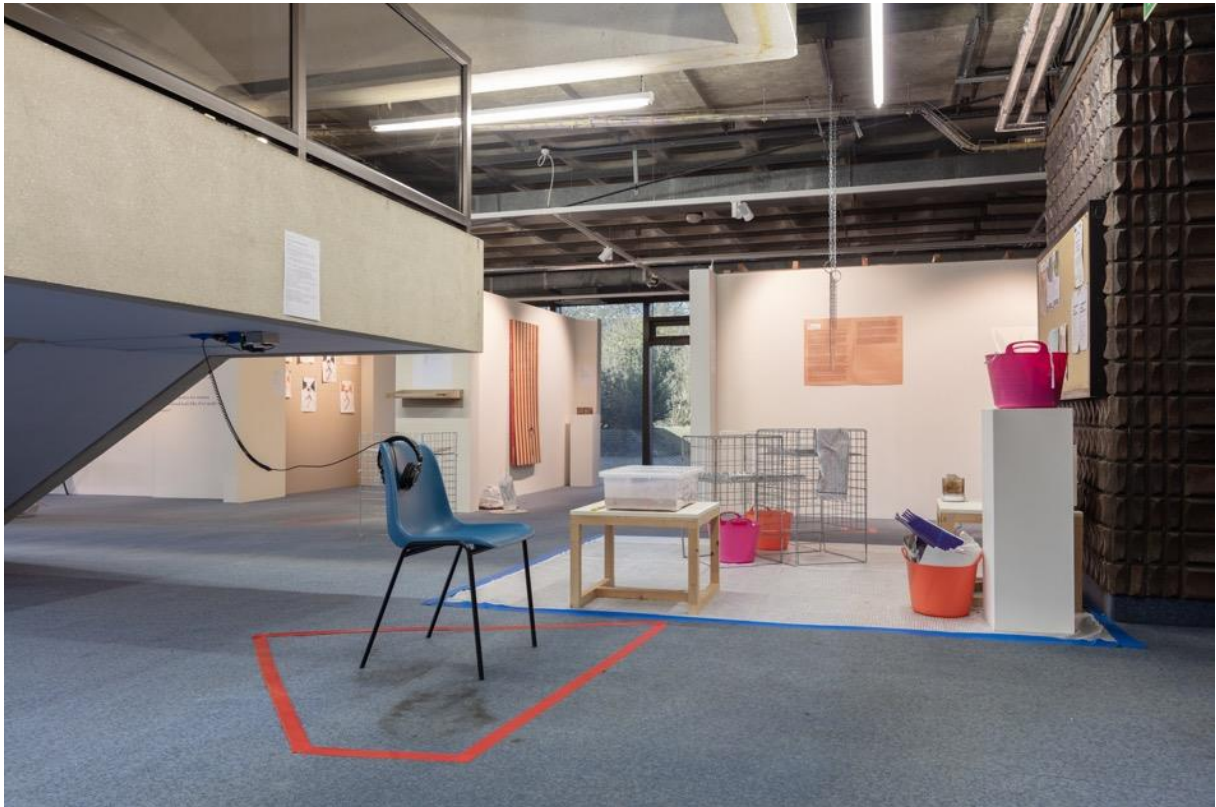


Figure 153 Policy Making', installation shot, Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend, 2020. Curated by Ruth Jones.



Figure 154 Policy Making', installation shot, Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend, 2020. Curated by Ruth Jones.



Figure 155 Ruth Hazel AKA Fanny Von Beaverhausen, "Testing, Testing: Stationary Cupboard" Installation and performance space, 2020 part of 'Policy Making' at Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend, 2020. Curated by Ruth Jones.

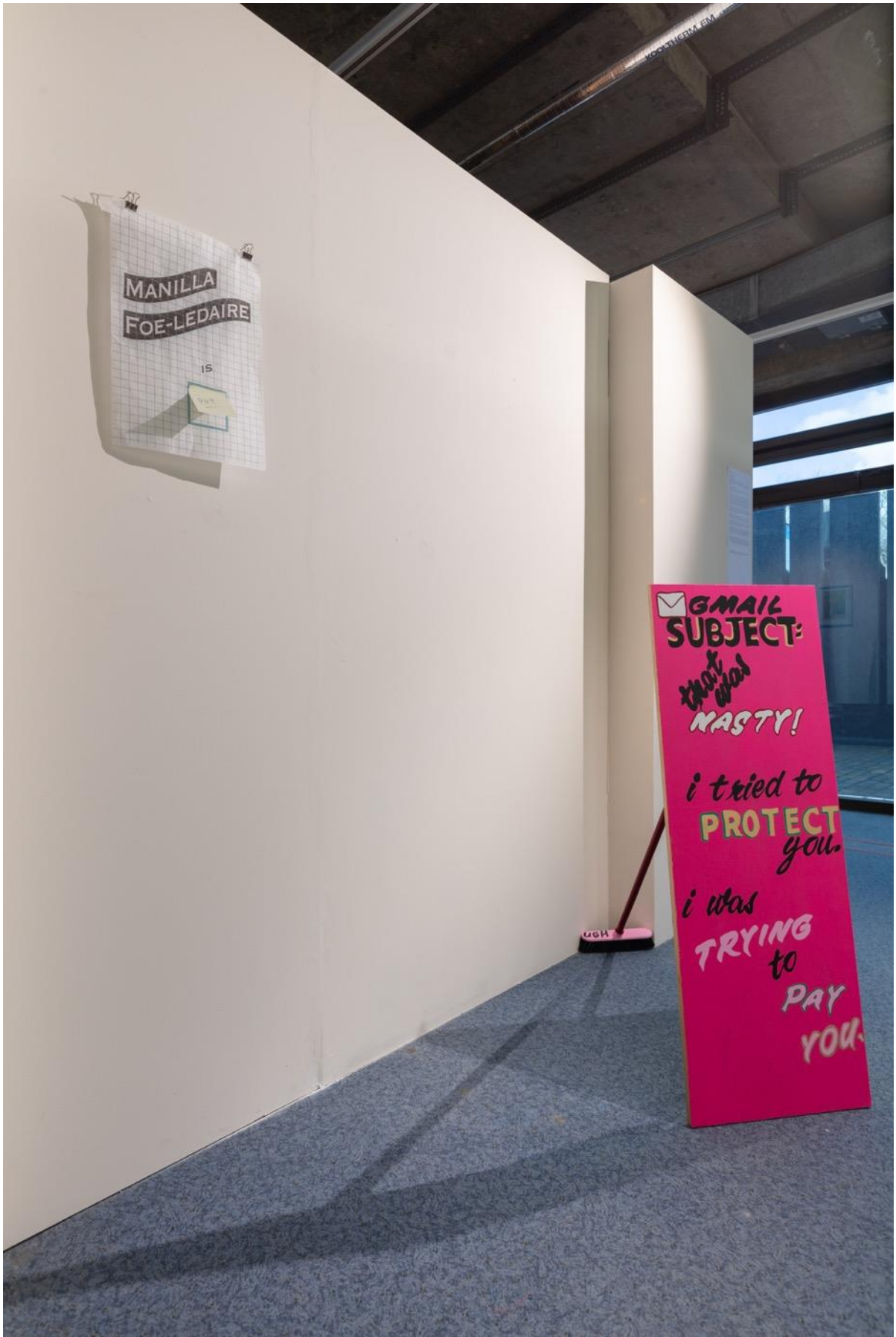


Figure 156 'Policy Making', installation shot, Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend, 2020. Curated by Ruth Jones.



Figure 157 'Policy Making', installation shot, Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend, 2020. Curated by Ruth Jones.



Figure 158 'Policy Making', installation shot, Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend, 2020. Curated by Ruth Jones.



Figure 159 'Policy Making', installation shot, Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend, 2020. Curated by Ruth Jones.

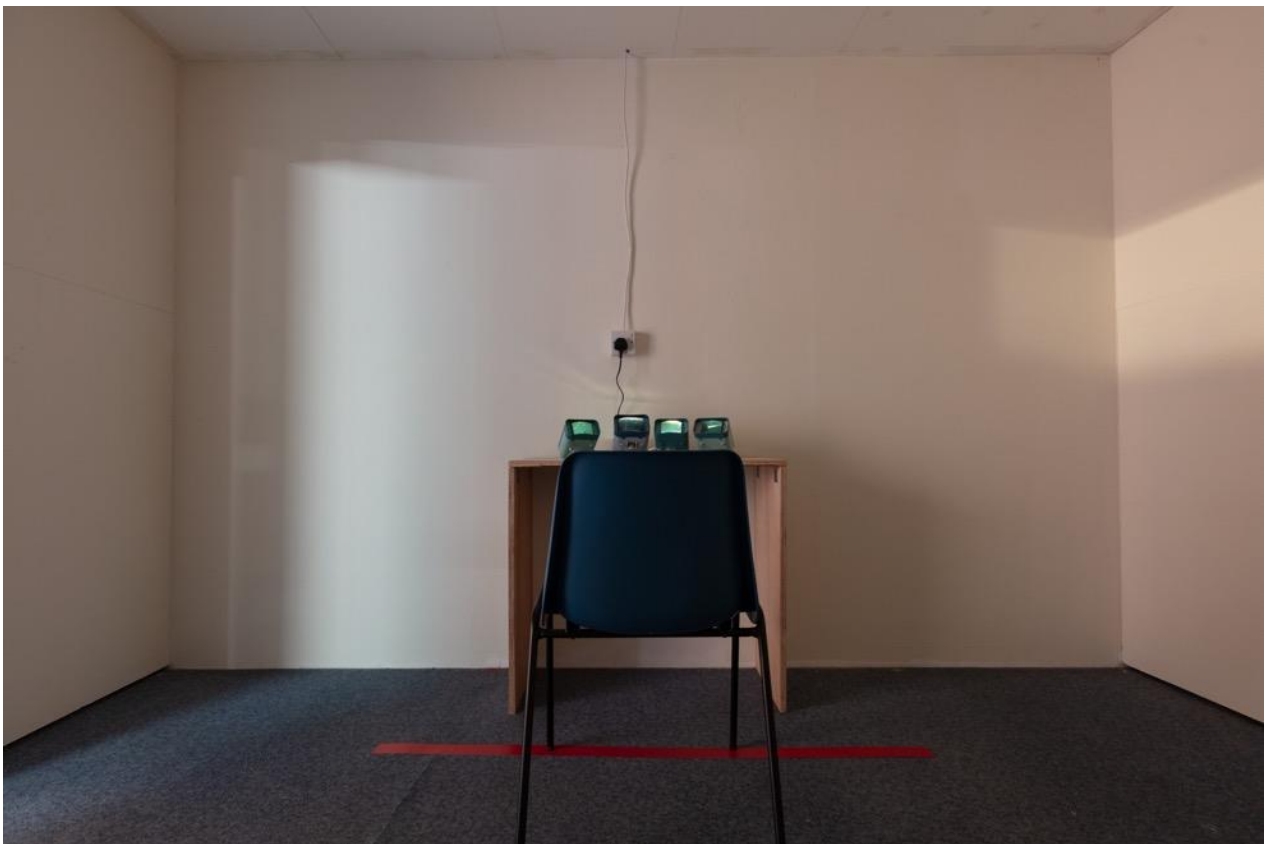


Figure 160 'Policy Making', installation shot, Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend, 2020. Curated by Ruth Jones.



Figure 161 'Policy Making', installation shot, Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend, 2020. Curated by Ruth Jones.



Figure 162 'Policy Making', installation shot, Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend, 2020. Curated by Ruth Jones.

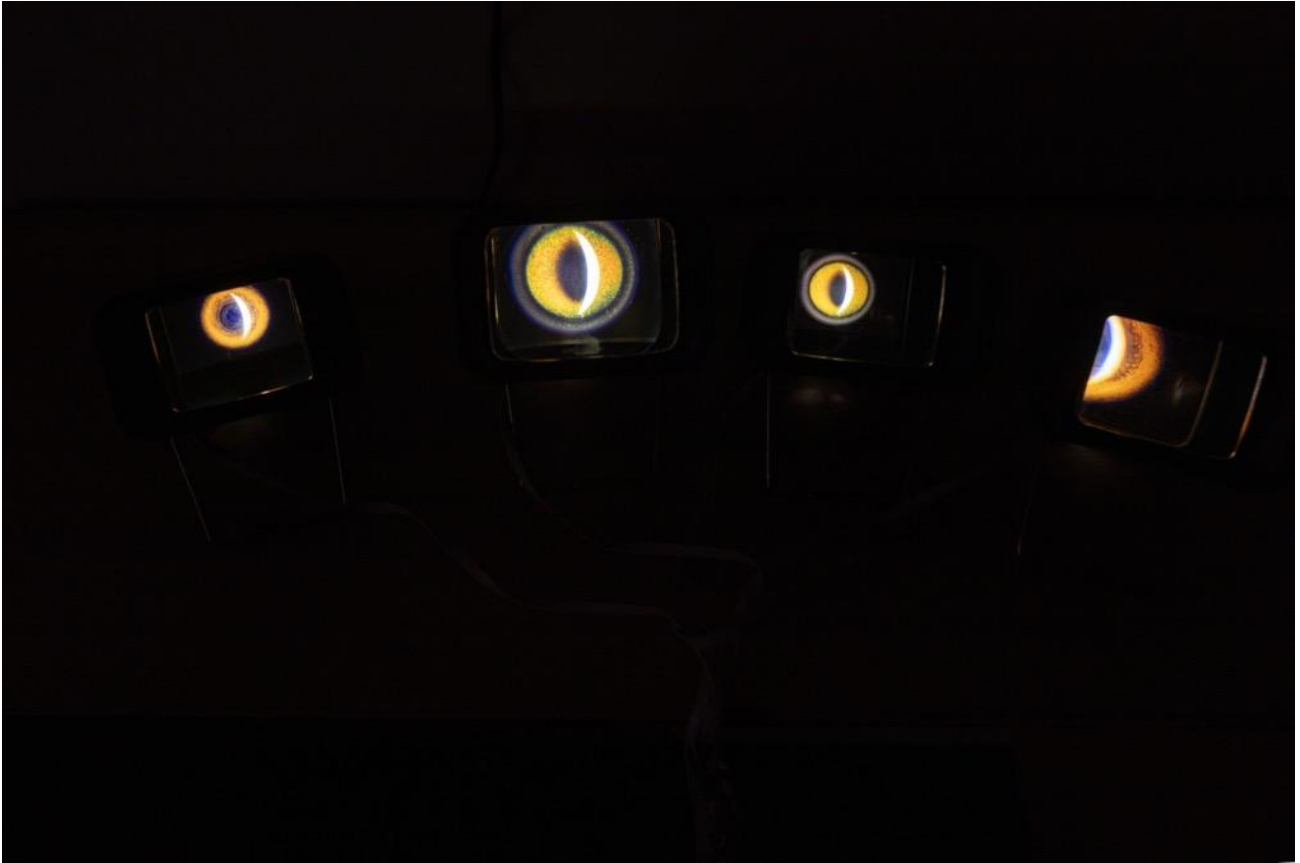


Figure 163 Damien Robinson, 'Panel', Slide viewers, table and chair installation, 2020 part of 'Policy Making' at Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend, 2020. Curated by Ruth Jones.

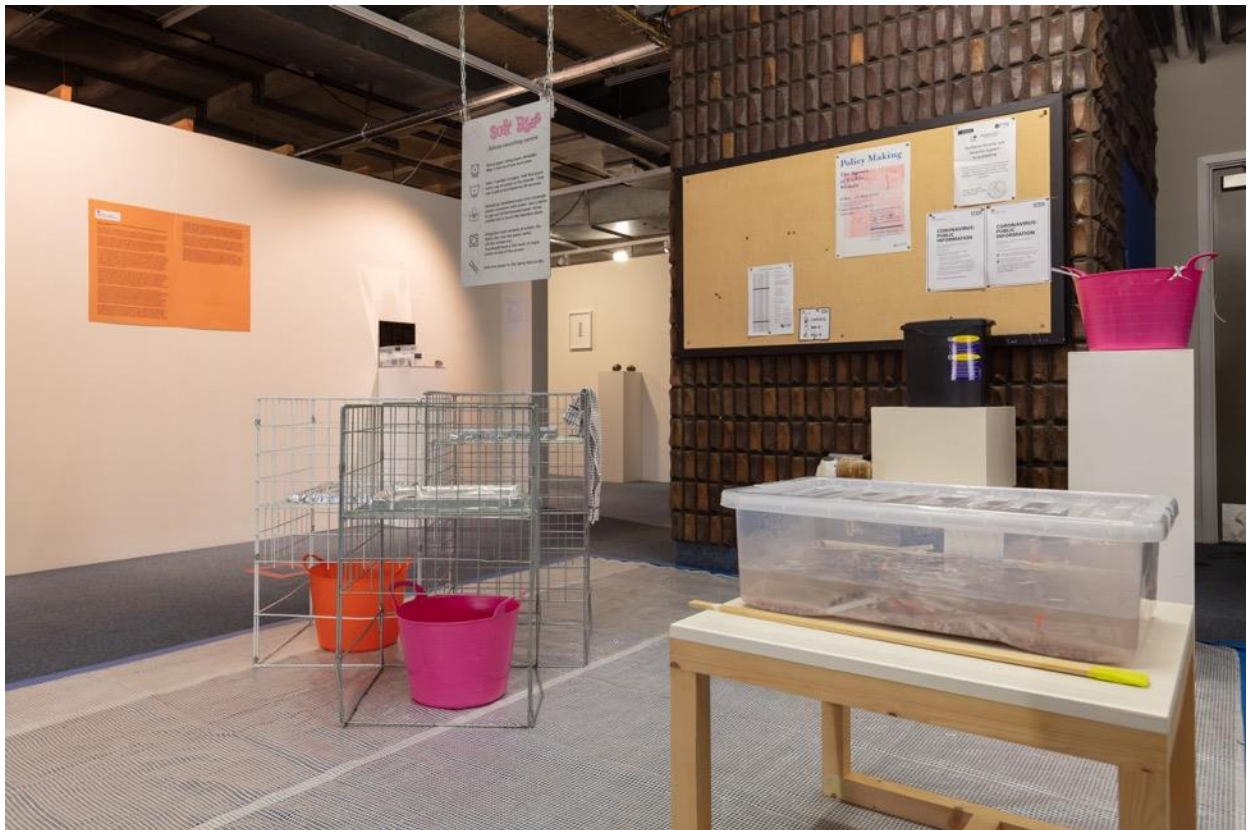


Figure 164 'Policy Making', installation shot, Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend, 2020. Curated by Ruth Jones.



Figure 165 Lu Williams, 'Soft Press', DIY paper making station and installation, 2020 part of 'Policy Making' at Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend, 2020. Curated by Ruth Jones.

EAST LONDON

ARTISTS

Fine Art Professional Doctorate Showcase

Will Bishop-Stephens - Marc Coker - Ashley Davies - Ali Darke
Anna Fairchild - Paul Fang - Mikey Georgeson - Paul Greenleaf
Chris Groothuizen - Christoph Hadrys - Ruth Jones
Shinwook Kim - Ralph Overill - Kostas Panagiotakopoulos
Lucy Renton - Yarek Soltan - Kevin Warren - Sue Withers

Opening 13/06/2019 6-9pm

Exhibition 14/06/19 - 16/06/19 11am - 4.30pm

College of Arts Technologies and Innovation
Architecture and the Visual Arts
AVA Building, 4-6 University Way
London E16 2RD
Stratford Station, London DLR
www.uel.ac.uk



University of
East London

Figure 166 East London Artists, DFA Showcase Poster, 2019



Figure 167 Ruth Jones, *Redaction*, 2019. Pencil on Fabriano paper, welded steel and polycarbonate, 120 x 120 x 100cm.



Figure 168 Ruth Jones, *Redaction*, 2019. Pencil on Fabriano paper, welded steel and polycarbonate, 120 x 120 x 100cm.



Figure 169 Ruth Jones, Detail of Redaction, 2019. Pencil on fabriano paper, 110cm x 110cm

k. The Agency of Visible Women 2018

The Agency of Visible Women
17 Feb — 14 April 2018

The Essex Feminist Collective is proud to present 'The Agency of Visible Women' for their second International Women's Day exhibition at Beecroft Gallery.

The exhibition brings together a diverse group of intersectional, self identifying women artists that examine the visibility of women and the agency they have, not only within the art world but within our local, national, international and social media communities.

'The Agency of Visible Women' is a fictional institution made flesh for the duration of this exhibition. Within this institution the artists works seek to make women visible and highlight the myriad ways this visibility is challenged, even within the intersects of our feminist communities. Each artist holds a position in 'The Agency of Visible Women' and they or their work upholds the responsibilities of their role.

A portion of sales of work and any donations made throughout the exhibition will go towards providing an artist led zine making workshop for survivors of abuse at Southend-on-Sea Rape Crisis.

Beecroft Art Gallery | Victoria Avenue | Southend-on-Sea | Essex | SS2 6EX

The Agency of Visible Women

17 Feb — 14 April 2018
@ Beecroft Art Gallery | Victoria Ave, Southend-on-Sea

PRIVATE VIEW

Saturday 17 February
6pm — 8pm

Amani AlThuwaini
Charlotte Hamilton
Damien Robinson
Dana Aljouder
Eliza Soroga
Elsa James
Emma Edmondson
Fanny Von Beaverhausen
Kim Ralston
Leyla Pillai
Lu Williams
Ruth Jones
Stefania Woznarowycz

ESSEX FEMINIST COLLECTIVE

BEECROFT ART GALLERY

Figure 170 The Agency of Visible Women, Exhibition Postcard, 2018

I. Women's Work, 2016

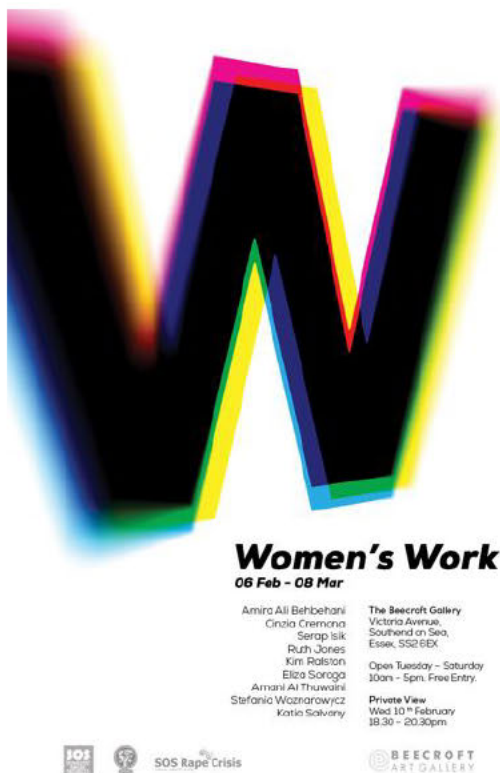


Figure 171 Women's Work, Exhibition Postcard, 2016



Figure 172 Echo News article for Women's Work, 2016



Figure 173 Women's Work, installation shot, Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend, 2016. Curated by Ruth Jones.



Figure 174 Women's Work, installation shot, Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend, 2016. Curated by Ruth Jones.



Figure 175 Women's Work, installation shot, Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend, 2016. Curated by Ruth Jones.



Figure 176 Women's Work, installation shot, Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend, 2016. Curated by Ruth Jones.

m. What's Your Location? 2016 & 2015

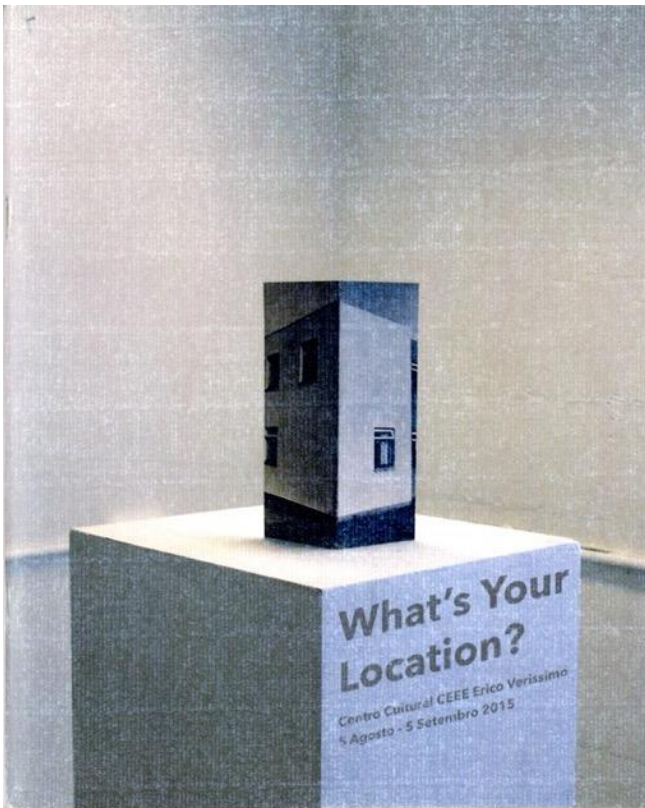


Figure 177 What's Your Location? Exhibition Booklet Cover, 2015

What's Your Location?

Re-imagined Reality

An Exhibition of Contemporary Art from Kuwait, Belgium and the UK

Qual é a sua Localização?

Realidade Re-imaginada

Uma Exposição de Arte Contemporânea do Kuwait, Bélgica e Reino Unido

Figure 178 What's Your Location? Exhibition Booklet, 2015

Colaboradores

Curadores:

Antônio Regis da Silva
Ruth Jones

Artistas convidados:

Amira Ali Behbehani
Steven Scott

Artistas:

Amira Ali Behbehani
Steven Scott
Ruth Jones
Frederick Bell
Amani Adel Al Thuwaini
Farah Salem
Jassim Alnashmi
Humam Shabani
Antônio Regis da Silva
Khaled Nazar



Centro Cultural CEEE Erico Verissimo
4º andar, Sala O Retrato.
Rua dos Andradas, 1223 - Centro
Histórico, Porto Alegre/RS - Brasil

Figure 179 What's Your Location? Exhibition Booklet, 2015

What's Your Location?

What is more real, that which we see for the first time or what we know from experience? Is our memory of a subject more real than its description? What of the many representations of the world; can we take them as substitutes for a deferred reality or the condition of the world itself? The works in the exhibition derive from artists living in different environments using various means to address their circumstances, and yet they continue to ask these same questions of us. How do we comprehend the world now that we can experience it more easily as representation than at first hand? Where does this leave us?

Qual é a sua localização?

O que é mais real? O que vemos pela primeira vez ou o que sabemos por experiência? A nossa memória sobre algo é mais real do que sua descrição? Qual, das muitas representações do mundo, podemos assumir como substitutas para uma realidade diferida ou da condição do próprio mundo? As obras da exposição derivam de artistas que vivem em ambientes diferentes utilizando vários meios para resolver as suas circunstâncias e, ainda assim, eles continuam a fazer as mesmas perguntas sobre nós. Como podemos apreender o mundo agora que nós podemos experimentá-lo mais facilmente como representação do que em primeira mão? Onde é que isto nos deixa?

Figure 180 What's Your Location? Exhibition Booklet, 2015



Ruth Jones

Ruth Jones is a contemporary artist from the United Kingdom with a first class degree in Fine Art from The Kent Institute of Art and Design and a master's degree in Contemporary Art and Professional Practice from The Colchester Institute of Art and Design. Jones' artistic practice is divided between commercial and private commissions, and investigating her preoccupations with equality and care within her own works. She is a member of an artist's co-operative in East London and exhibits regularly.

Ruth Jones é uma artista contemporânea do Reino Unido formada com distinção em Belas Artes pelo The Kent Institute of Art and Design, com mestrado em Arte Contemporânea e Prática Profissional do The Colchester Institute of Art and Design. A prática artística de Jones é dividida entre comissões comerciais e privadas, e a investigação de suas preocupações com a igualdade e cuidados dentro de suas próprias obras. Ela é membro de uma cooperativa de artistas na zona leste de Londres e expõe regularmente.

Artist's Statement

This series of work was initially started as a response to my impact as an artist on an area where I exhibit my work quite frequently; Brick Lane, London. In specific considering my role as an agent of gentrification. When I initially began to examine the impact of artists as agents of gentrification I considered interpreting data regarding the different people settling in an area, positing that different colours and quantities of colour could represent different groups of people. My hope being that the prevailing colour would represent the gentrifying individuals. This research led me to draw parallels between the colour groups and bacterial growth. Looking at the similarities between bacteria and the way in which gentrification takes place offered me a different foundation from which to work. Could I regard the impact of artists (and by extension, myself) on a geographical area as akin to bacteria multiplying and homogenizing a specific location? Could I collect my own 'artist' bacteria to literally apply to the location?

From these investigations I moved on to collect samples of bacteria from my most used artistic equipment. I applied it to maps of the Brick Lane, and grew my own bacteria during the exhibition to examine the impact of my "culture" on the area in which I was exhibiting.

For this exhibition I wanted to further examine the impact that I might have as an artist, this time in a different community and country. Whilst exploring the possibility that exhibiting my work may have consequences, it is my hope that I can reconcile the possible negative impact on the area I may contribute as an artist, against the positive impact that my artwork could have.

Declaração do artista

Esta série de obras começou inicialmente como uma resposta ao meu impacto como artista em uma área onde eu apresento meu trabalho com bastante frequência; Brick Lane, em Londres. Em específico, considerando o meu papel como um agente de gentrificação. Quando eu comecei a examinar o impacto de artistas como agentes de gentrificação eu considerei interpretar os dados sobre as diferentes pessoas que se estabelecem em uma área, postulando que as cores e as quantidades de cor diferentes podem representar diferentes grupos de pessoas. Minha esperança era que a cor predominantemente representaria os indivíduos gentrificadores. Esta pesquisa me levou a traçar paralelos entre os grupos de cor e o crescimento bacteriano. Ao analisar as semelhanças entre as bactérias e a maneira que a gentrificação acontece, cheguei a uma base diferente para o meu trabalho. Eu poderia considerar o impacto de artistas (e, por extensão, o meu próprio impacto) em uma área geográfica como semelhante a bactérias se multiplicando e homogeneizando um local específico?

Eu poderia coletar minhas próprias bactérias "artistas" para literalmente aplicar ao local? A partir dessas investigações comecei a coletar amostras de bactérias dos meus equipamentos artísticos mais utilizados. Eu apliquei-os aos mapas da Brick Lane e cultivei minhas próprias bactérias durante a exposição para examinar o impacto da minha "cultura" na área onde eu estava expondo.

Para esta exposição eu quero continuar a analisar o impacto que posso ter como artista, desta vez em uma comunidade e país diferentes. Enquanto exploro a possibilidade de que expor o meu trabalho pode ter consequências, é minha esperança poder conciliar o possível impacto negativo que eu possa ter como artista sobre a área, contra o impacto positivo que o meu trabalho artístico pode ter.

Figure 181 What's Your Location? Exhibition Booklet, 2015

What's your Location?

Re-imagined
Reality

PORTO ALEGRE

KUWAIT CITY

LONDON

Figure 182 WYL? Exhibition Booklet, 2016

What's Your Location? | Travelling Exhibition

What's Your Location? is an exhibition that explores a series of existential questions; what is more real? That which we see for the first time, or what we know from experience? Is our memory of a subject more real than its description? What of the many representations of the world? Can we take them as substitutes for a deferred reality, or the condition of the world itself?

The works in the exhibition derive from artists living in different environments using various means to address their circumstances, and yet they continue to ask these same questions of us. How do we apprehend the world now that we can experience it more easily as representation than at first hand? Where does this leave us? How do we move forward?



CONTEMPORARY ART PLATFORM

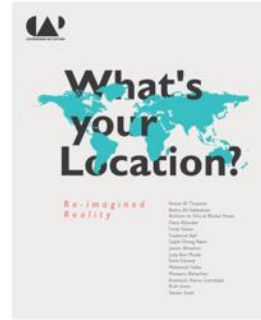
Centro Cultural Erico Verissimo | Porto Alegre, Brazil

Contemporary Art Platform | Kuwait City, Kuwait

Figure 183 WYL? Exhibition Booklet, 2016



What's Your Location? Catalogue Cover | CCEV | Porto Alegre, Brazil



What's Your Location? Catalogue Cover | CAP | Kuwait City, Kuwait

Curators António Da Silva
Ruth Jones

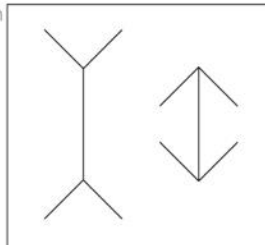
Artists Amani AlThuwaini
Amira Ali Behbehani
António da Silva & Khaled
Nazar
Farah Salem
Frederick Bell
Humam Shabani
Jassim Alnashmi
Ruth Jones
Steven Scott

Curators António Da Silva
Jassim Alnashmi
Ruth Jones

Artists Amani AlThuwaini
Amira Ali Behbehani
António da Silva & Khaled
Nazar
Dana Aljouder
Farah Salem
Frederick Bell
Gayle Chong Kwan
Jassim Alnashmi
Judy-Ann Moule
Katia Salvary
Mohamad Hafez
Muneera Alsharhan
Romulo Vieira Conceição
Ruth Jones
Steven Scott

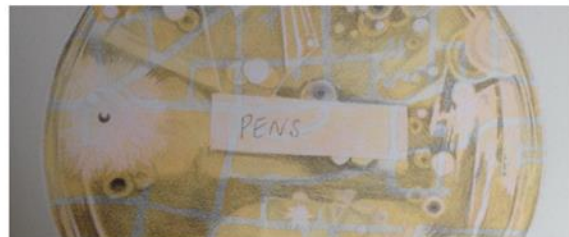
Figure 184 WYL? Exhibition Booklet, 2016

Steven Scott | United Kingdom



Steven Scott is an internationally exhibiting artist from the UK. For What's Your Location? Scott is presenting dual photographs from a series called Situation in which photographic space is divided by selection and presentation to suggest a mirroring of the subjects architectural planes whilst inverting its interiority.

Ruth Jones | United Kingdom



Ruth Jones, is also from the UK. For this exhibition she has further explored her Gentrification series of works, considering how an artist impacts the environment they exhibit in.

Figure 185 WYL? Exhibition Booklet, 2016



What's Your Location? | CCEV, Porto Alegre, Brazil | August '15

What's Your Location? was exhibited in the Centro Cultural Erico Verissimo in Porto Alegre. The opening night was August 4th, 2015 which gathered many students, artists, and art collectors, as well as the well known arts and culture critic of Porto Alegre, Gasporotto, and the curators of the South-American Biennale, Gaudencio Fidelis and Marcio Tavares. On August 5th, some of Porto Alegre's famous art collectors were invited for a private tour of the gallery followed by two lectures given by the co-curators, Ruth Jones and Steven Scott.



What's Your Location? | CAP, Kuwait City, Kuwait | May '16

What's Your Location? was exhibited at the Contemporary Art Platform in Kuwait. The opening night was May 3rd, 2016 which was attended by the Spanish Consul, Alberto Ucelay, the Ambassador of Brazil, Antonio Carlos do Nascimento Pedro, the Mexico Head of Mission, Eduardo Nino, Sheikha Fatima Alsabab, Sheikha Intisar Alsabab as well as artists, art collectors and connoisseurs of Kuwait. Most the artworks in the exhibition were sold.

Figure 186 WYL? Exhibition Booklet, 2016

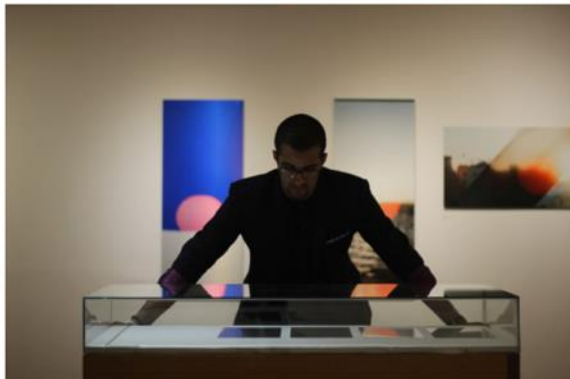


Figure 187 WYL? Exhibition Booklet, 2016



Figure 188 WYL? Exhibition Booklet, 2016



Press Coverage | Porto Alegre, Brazil | August '15

The event was very successful, the attendees had very wonderful things to say and so did the arts & culture critics and journalists. Gasporotto is the most prolific arts & culture critic in the region. He occasionally visits which means he will only visit if he thinks it is really worth it, but even after visiting it all depends on his news column which he writes. What's Your Location? ranked very highly in his opinion and other journalists said the same.

Location: Dismantling the geographic definition

*** By Miguel Haddad
Kuwait

The term "location" is defined as a point on the surface of the earth defined by numbers that represent its spatial and historical coordinates. This simplified definition may imply that a location is something simple that we can interact with or see with the help of applications on our smart devices or on Google Earth, which allows us to view our home from above, but for some reason, it is something we see for when we see it just as easily as we can reach the streets of London, Rio de Janeiro, Melbourne or Toronto.

But in reality, a location is much more complicated than the results of a web search or phone application.

When the question, "What's your location?" is asked, you cannot answer readily with just a series of numbers. This space on the earth in which you are located at the moment is part of a complicated fabric of geography, history, and culture, a space where your presence there is determined by political, economic, social and geographical information that cannot be easily summarized. Your relationship with that fabric and that information is what determines your identity



in a person, more so than any number or letter printed on a piece of paper or online system.

What can happen if the same question was asked of a group of artists having their art-based location around the world? Absolutely, the result will be interesting. We can observe the difference in these artists' answers to the question quite clearly through the results of an online art exhibition which adapted that very question as "What's your location?"

The second session of the exhibition was held at the Contemporary Art Museum (CAM) in Kuwait between May and June 2016, curated by Antonio De Soto (Spain), Susana Sotomayor (Chile), and James Snellett (England) with sixteen participating artists from Kuwait, Brazil, the UK, Australia, and Spain.

Regarding the complexity contained in this question, the answer given by the artists had many facets: imagining the location as a bar

Press Coverage | Kuwait City, Kuwait | May '16

The opening night was populated with journalists and photographers and some art critics visited the exhibition and wrote about it in local and regional arts and culture magazines

Figure 189 WYL? Exhibition Booklet, 2016

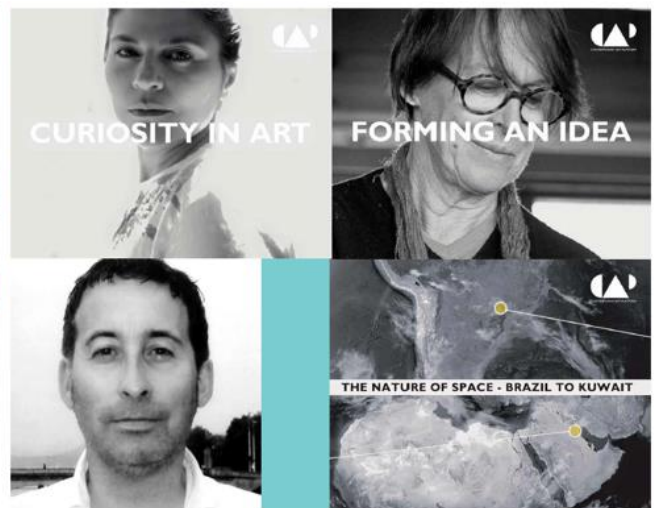


Figure 190 WYL? Exhibition Booklet, 2016



Lecture Series | Porto Alegre, Brazil | August '15

Steven Scott and Ruth Jones both gave lectures at the CCEV Auditorium, a translator was present and translated the full lecture live for all the Portuguese-speaking audience members. Each artist spoke about their research and current art projects.

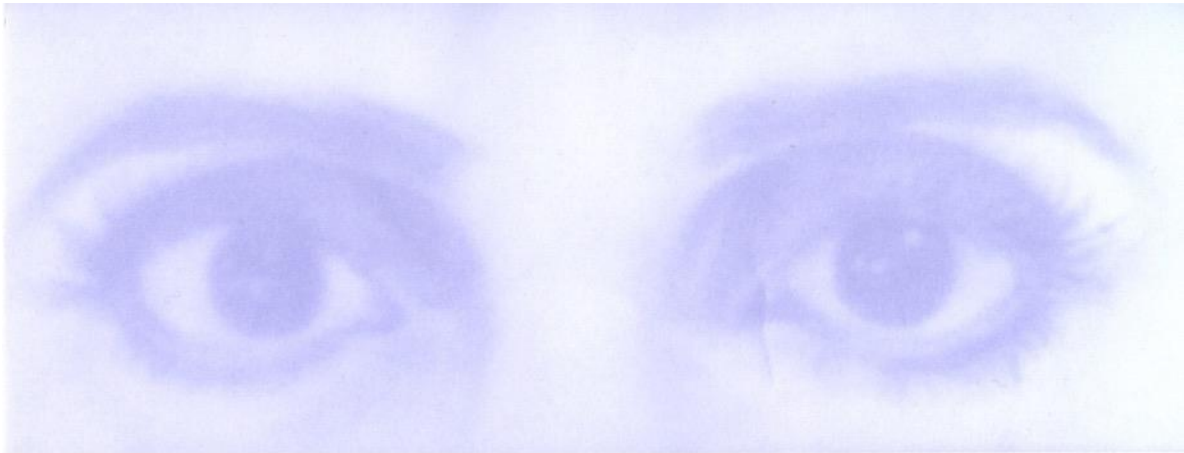


Lecture and Workshop Series | Kuwait City, Kuwait | May '16

The cultural program that was prepared was a good way of maintaining foot traffic throughout the 4 weeks of the exhibition, art teachers brought their middle school students to see the work and some of the artists gave talks on various topics. Amira Behbehani and Judy-Ann Moule spoke about their ways of working in art. Ending the lecture series, curators Antonio Da Silva and Jassim Alnashmi spoke about the relationship between architecture and art and the journey of the exhibition from Brazil to Kuwait. Finally, a tutorial was given by the PhD researcher, Steven Scott, which was well attended by artists in Kuwait.

Figure 191 WYL? Exhibition Booklet, 2016

n. Quiet Rebellions: Hidden Transcripts 2015



Ruth Jones Quiet Rebellions: Hidden Transcripts

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ruthkathrynjones.wordpress.com
www.facebook.com/ruthkathrynjonesart
Twitter: @ruthkjonesart1

For Quiet Rebellions: Hidden Transcripts I wanted to explore how people can find themselves in situations where they are at the mercy of those in power.

These situations have a public transcript or an accepted front to the situation that everyone has to be seen to agree with.

Open criticism of the public transcript may put a person at risk of emotional, physical or economic retribution from those in power.

In this exhibition, I have tried to make public the transcripts that normally remain hidden.

I am a self-employed artist from Westcliff-on-Sea with a first class degree in Fine art and a master's in Contemporary Art and Professional Practice.

My artistic practice is divided between commercial and private commissions, and investigating my preoccupations with equality and care within my own works.

Quiet Rebellions: Hidden Transcripts Sunday 29 March - Sunday 19 April 2015
I will be present in the exhibition space during the Windmill's opening hours to discuss my work with visitors.

Figure 192 Quiet Rebellions, Hidden Transcripts, Exhibition Text, 2015



Image redacted for copyright purposes

Figure 193 Echo News article for *Quiet Rebellions Hidden Transcripts*, 2015

Rayleigh Windmill Exhibitions 2015



The following exhibitions will take place on the second floor of the Windmill during the 2015 season. Visitors can also 'meet the artists', who will be there with their exhibition during opening hours.

The Windmill is open from 29 March – 30 September on:
Wednesdays from 10am-1pm and Saturdays and Sundays from 1-4pm

Entry is FREE, a minimum £1 donation per person is encouraged.
Please note the dates that the Windmill is closed for private events overleaf.



Sunday 29 March – Sunday 19 April

Ruth Jones - Quiet Rebellions: Hidden Transcripts

People can find themselves in situations where they are at the mercy of those in power. These situations have a public transcript or an accepted front to the situation that everyone has to be seen to agree with. Open criticism of the public

transcript may put a person at risk of emotional, physical or economic retribution from those in power. In this exhibition, Ruth tries to make public the transcripts that normally remain hidden.

Figure 194 Rochford District Council Exhibition Flyer for *Quiet Rebellions, Hidden Transcripts*, 2015

o. About Brick Lane



***espaciogallery About Brick Lane**
18th - 30th September Open 1pm - 7pm daily
Private View: Thursday 18th September 6-9pm

Graham Asker Mark Bell Julie Caves
Julie Eccles Ahmed Farooqui Esperanza Gómez-Carrera
Nick Hazzard Ruth Jones Ralph Overill
Liz Whiteman Smith Sara Wickenden

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facebook.com/espaciogallery
Jackson's
EST. 1847

Figure 195 About Brick Lane Exhibition postcard, 2014