

Bachelor of Arts (Fine Art) Honours (BH052)

Eilish Hazell

Supervisor: Dr Drew Pettifer

Transcending the Body as Meat:

Queer Desire and Catharsis through Body Modification

23rd October, 2019

Abstract

My project is an exhaustive and continuous, macabre and masochistic love letter: first and foremost to my selves, but always also to *you*. I use photography, performance, poetry and tattooing as devices to disrupt hegemonic, cis-heteronormative, patriarchal notions of identity and desire and reconstruct my queer self. It is a project of personal resistance, celebration and transformation.

‘Transcending the Body as Meat: Queer Desire and Catharsis through Body Modification’ considers how tattooing the body and photographing the self provides a tangible manifestation of my queer yearning. I consider tattooing as a process for subverting gendered understandings of the body, actualising catharsis, asserting control over identity and facilitating transformation. I consider photography’s power as a tool for subverting the ‘straight gaze’. I use these mediums in chorus as a means of documenting desire and anguish.

I consider my project as informed by both painful failures as well as intricate shared respect and care within my relationship/s. The project is one of endurance and revolution that provides a window into the partnership/s that preface both sentimental and fleshly intimacy as a bolster of selfhood. Art making as lovemaking/Heartbreaking as art making.

Working through and on the body, I create an intimate, personal representation of queerness that is at once radically tender and politically charged. It is an interdisciplinary practice informed by poststructuralist, intersectional feminist theory that speaks against normative binary understanding of gender, sexuality and the body. Situating my work within a photography, tattoo and performance art lineage, I connect my work to a community of artists, tattooists, writers and photographers using a variety of tactics in order to argue for openness, potentiality, sincerity, fluidity, redemption and queer futurity.

<u>Table of Contents</u>	Page
List of Works -----	5
Introduction -----	6
Chapter One: Critical Frameworks and Research Methodology -----	8
Chapter Two: “ <i>Dettol, Latex, Meat, Ink, Metal</i> ” -----	10
Chapter Three: “ <i>FANTASY FAILURE</i> ” -----	18
Chapter Four: (<i>Amour Fou: Bygone Lover</i>) Production and Practice -----	23
Chapter Five: ‘Community of Practice’ -----	30
Bibliography -----	38
Week 8 Supervisor Report -----	42
Addendum -----	44

List of Works

Chapter One: Critical Frameworks and Research Methodology

Fig 1.0. Eilish Hazell, *Euphoric, Erotic, Dysphoria* (2019) Text work, dimensions varied. Page 8.

Chapter Two: “Dettol, Latex, Meat, Ink, Metal”

Fig. 2.0 Sally RIP, *Out of Body* series (2017), installation stills, The Living Gallery in Brooklyn, New York. Video and documentation by Aleck Venegas. (Santibanez, 2017). Page 14.

Fig. 3.0 Mary Coble, *Untitled* (from Blood Script Portfolio) (2008), Chromira Print, 24 cm x 20cm. (Coble, 2009). Page 15.

Fig. 4.0 Eilish Hazell, *Untitled (I AM IN TRAINING DON'T KISS ME)* (2019), Vinyl banner eyelets, 51 X 89cm. Page 17.

Chapter Three: “FANTASY FAILURE”

Fig 5.0 Catherine Opie, *Self Portrait/Pervert* (1994) Chromogenic print, 101.6 x 75.9cm. Page 21.

Chapter Four: (*Amour Fou: Bygone Lover*) Production and Practice

Fig 7.0 Eilish Hazell, *Wet; For My Lover* (2019), Photo printed mug, tattoo arm rest, tattoo mesh sleeve, Dettol, dimensions varied. Installation View. Page 27.

Fig 8.0 Eilish Hazell, *Wet; For My Lover* (2019), Photo printed mug, tattoo arm rest, tattoo mesh sleeve, Dettol, dimensions varied. Installation View. Page 29.

Chapter Five: ‘Community of Practice’

Fig 9.0 Eilish Hazell, *I am... (Community of Practice)* (2019) Text work, dimensions varied. Page 33.

Fig 10.0 Eilish Hazell, *Wet; For My Lover* (2019), Photo printed mug, tattoo arm rest, tattoo mesh sleeve, Dettol, dimensions varied. Installation View. Page 34.

Fig 11.0 Eilish Hazell, *Tattoo as Repossession of Self* (2019), Centerfold poster, 35 x 80 cm. Page 37.

Fig 12.0 Eilish Hazell, *I want you to feel so comfortable, baby* (2019) silk banners, nails, tattoo table, dimension varied. Page 46.

Fig 13.0 Eilish Hazell, *Silk Skin Contract* (2019) 6 ft steel clothes rack, silk banners, chain, mesh tattoo sleeves, Vaseline, Dettol, dimensions varied. Page 46.

Introduction:

Focusing on queer experiences of the body, particularly related to embodiment, intimacy and dysphoria, I canvas the self. I investigate the potential for body modification to express identity, articulate queer desire and achieve catharsis and transformation. I use tattooing as a means of turning my own body into a medium for communicating personal challenges and growth, as well as socio-political agendas related to visibility and solidarity.

In Chapter One, I outline my methodology. I contextualize my use of tattooing, photography and performance in conjunction with a queer, poststructuralist and feminist theoretical framework. Playing with deconstruction, masquerade and hybridity, I work fluidly across mediums of body modification, performance, photography and poetry.

In Chapter Two, I examine my interrogation of tattooing as performance, in an effort to build a case for its legitimacy as a fine art practice. Long ignored by mainstream Western art history, I carve space for tattoo artists to be seen for what they are: artists, the act to be seen as a performance and the modified body as an art object itself (Lodder, 2019). I draw on the practices of Gina Pane, Mary Coble and Sally RIP as examples of body performance artists who explore sadomasochism, ritual and play as a means of healing and transformation.

In Chapter Three, I elaborate on my use of tattooing and performance as processes with photographic outcomes. I examine key theories of 'the gaze' as established by Michel Foucault and John Berger. I explain why photography is an ideal medium for me to express agency and intimacy in ways that queer the straight gaze. I elaborate on my use of photography in terms of Derrida's concept of deconstruction as well as the tools of layering, collage, masquerade, play, repetition, mirroring and returned gazes. I align my practice with that of queer photographers such as Catherine Opie and Robert Mapplethorpe who use photography and sadomasochist practices in tandem to make visible queer desire.

In Chapter Four, I meditate on my methodology. I reflect on my aims and objectives and consider the significant turning points that have emerged throughout, necessarily morphing and strengthening the project. I discuss significant epiphanies that have enforced the importance of intimacy and of poetry to the project's drives and outcomes. Further than this, I discuss my project as responding to the personal triumphs and failures within my significant relationships.

In Chapter Five, I look outwards in order to situate myself and my work within a 'community of practice/s'. Highlighting the fluidity of identity as well as the multiplicity of pathways and inspirations in my work, I identify myself with a diversity of queer photographers, poets, tattooists, artists, and lovers with varying oeuvres.

facilitating healing and growth. Expanding from this, my process relies on critical reflection through reading and writing poetry and the editing, culling and synthesis of my photographic outcomes through printing on a variety of materials, namely silk. The work shifts and grows through the interrogation of printing and installation techniques becoming one of collage and curatorship. Thus, it is a redemptive and diaristic process of acting on the body, documenting and reflecting on this process, as a means of empowering the self through and against heartbreak.

Blood,

Scab,

Peel,

Heal.

My research outcomes should be understood in relation to queer theorists who challenge gender essentialist, biologically defined notions of sexuality and identity. As a conceptual starting point, my work looks critically at the Western art historical canon, that promotes cis-heteronormative patriarchal ideas of man as subject, woman as object. I use Judith Butler's theory of "performative identification" as a means of understanding how performativity can be used to reveal the fictitious nature of dominant cis-heteronormative pressures (Butler, 1990). Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's theory of "Allo- and Auto-Identification" also informs my project (Kosofsky Sedgwick, 1990) as well as Jack Halberstam's theory of failure as a queer mechanism of resistance to heteronormativity (Halberstam, 2011). My research and understanding of the hegemonic power and subjugation over the body is informed by Elizabeth Grosz's pivotal text *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism* (Grosz, 1994). I use Jacques Derrida's concept of "deconstruction" as a tactic for confusing gender and sexual binaries upheld under patriarchy (Derrida, 1967). I am further informed by key theoretical understandings of 'the gaze' established by Michel Foucault, John Berger and Jacques Lacan. My project is contextualized by key body modification theorists, namely Victoria Pitts, who argues that tattooing works to undermine hegemonic cultural norms in white, cis-heteronormative Western society (Pitts, 2003).

potential of tattoo art. Under the guise of concerns of ‘health and safety’, tattoo artists have had censored access to the art institution, performance space and gallery, which furthers an erasure of these practices. Attitudes to tattoo art are definitely shifting, allowing space for beautiful, innovation within the practice in a fine art setting, as long as they abide to the rules and bureaucracies of the art institution. As Lodder (2019) maintains, “thinking seriously about body modification as an art practice and revealing its possibilities and pitfalls should lead to better, more interesting, more creative, more heterogeneous and more politically-engaged body art” (Lodder, 2019, 257). Working fluidly between queer theory and creative practice, I have developed a methodology focused on using tattooing to question body politics and reclaim the non-binary body through a focus on empathy, intimacy and presence.

Discussing the socially constructed gender binaries inflicted on the body, Judith Butler poses the question, “how do we reconceive the body no longer as a passive medium or instrument awaiting the enlivening capacity of a distinctly immaterial will?” (Butler, 1990, 8). For me, it is by acting on it. While the body becomes subject to social classification, body modification can operate as a means of deconstructing and re-inscribing identity (Pitts, 2000). Feminist art historians such as Susan Sontag maintain that sadomasochist practices including body modification operate as a transgressive and transformative experience with the subversive power to turn suffering and subjection into pleasure and excess (Phoca & Wright, 1999, 84). Tattoos help reconstruct the reception of the body as a “dynamic body-space” that opposes biological or sociological essentialism (Botz-bornstein, 2013). That is to say that acting on the body allows what Victoria Pitt’s calls “self-fashioning and self narration” (Pitts, 2000). The permanency of the customized body facilitates a kind of control and agency, offering contingency in a world where nothing is assured and everything is in flux (Polhemus & Randall, 2000, p.9). By asserting control over our own body and our aesthetic intimacy, tattooing becomes an act of resistance and survival.

My objective of drawing on body modification in performance is contextualized within a canon of queer artists modifying the body as an act of queer resistance and anti-assimilation (Pitt, 2000). I maintain these practices have roots in the endurance and bodily performance art movement born out of the tensions of the political environment of the 1960s and 1970s (O'Dell, 1998). These artists used ritual and play to confront socio-political issues and facilitate healing and transformation. They explored 'somasochism' as a mechanism for challenging "a myriad of potentials through physical actions and interactions" (O'Dell, 1998). As Kathy O'Dell writes in *Contract With the Skin* (1998), "these artists did not advocate masochism for its own sake but used it to reveal symbolically the structure of agreements that we make...to come to terms with an unsettling, indeterminate consciousness of our own bodies" (O'Dell, 1998). As Newman maintains, "the performative act becomes a liminal space, where the lines between art and life, pleasure and pain, madness and sanity can be blurred and explored within a context that offers some leniency from societal normative rules and behaviour" (Newman, 2019). Most pertinent of this movement to my own investigation is the body performance work of artist, Gina Pane. In 1988, she noted of her engagement with the body: "[The body is] the irreducible core of the human being, its most fragile part... the wound is the memory of the body; it memorizes its fragility, its pain, thus its "real" existence." (O'Dell, 1998). Pane's somasochist performance art prefaced my notion of using the corporeal body to communicate and overcome personal trauma and political struggles, to assert difference and autonomy.

More recently, queer artists such as Mary Coble and Sally RIP have been engaging with body modification to "retrieve the body from the clutches of biological determinism... (instead) instating it in the realm of the social without succumbing to social determinism (Botz-bornstein, 2013). Queer, handpoke tattoo and performance artist, Sally RIP uses tattooing as a means of self-care, recovery, and redefinition of identity, having learnt to tattoo in a drug rehabilitation halfway home in 2013 using a sewing needle, thread and pen ink (Sally, 2017). RIP looks critically at traditional Western tattoo communities and their privileging of cis-

gendered white men (Sally, 2017). Acknowledging how such a male-dominated community feeds toxic masculine ideals and discourages involvement and safe space for minorities, RIP has developed a practice that seeks to foster community and accessibility (Sally, 2017). Rejecting the historical system of exchanging capital for a tattoo, they are interested in different kinds of exchange related to empowering community and intimacy (Sally, 2017).

Sally RIP's *Out of Body* performance series (Fig 2.0) manifested as two performances in which they lay on a tattoo bench in the gallery with a pillowcase over their head and invited viewers to participate in tattooing their body (Proudfoot, 2019). Relinquishing all control over the design, placement or skill level of their tattoo artist, Sally RIP lay passively as "some 18 viewers stepped over the chain divider, picked up a pink tattoo machine, and for a good number of them, made their first permanent mark" (Proudfoot, 2019). Of their relationship with the tattoos they received during the performances, Sally commented in an online interview with fellow tattooist Tamara Santibanez, "they represent an incredibly intimate but entirely indiscernible moment with a stranger, immortalized on my skin" (Santibanez, 2018). Giving up their body as a kind of sacrifice, RIP's work celebrates vulnerability and uses tattooing as a means of creating an intimacy between strangers (Proudfoot, 2019). This performance further serves to challenge hierarchical notions of value and commodity associated with the art of tattooing (Sally, 2017).



Fig. 2.0 Sally RIP, 2017. *Out of Body* series, installation stills, The Living Gallery in Brooklyn, New York. Video and documentation by Aleck Venegas. (Santibanez, 2017).

Queer activist and performance artist, Mary Coble has a diverse practice, which engages with body modification, particularly tattooing, as a means of revealing issues of “bodily, societal and symbolic navigation particularly focusing on issues of injustice and normative boundaries” (Coble, 2009). Coble marks the skin as a means of confronting trans-misogyny and transgender violence (Coble, 2009). Notably, her *Blood Script* (2008) (Fig. 3.0) manifested as a performance piece in which she had 75 bigoted slurs tattooed on her body in blood, without ink in ornate, cursive script (Coble, 2009). Using decorative lettering, Coble creates a dichotomy between the visual form of the words and the ugly meanings they convey semantically (Coble, 2009). As the words appear in blood, watercolour paper is pressed over the fresh tattoo, making a print, which is then hung on the wall during the performance (Coble, 2009). Prompting the impact of each scarred insult, of each inkless tattoo, this process reconciles an intimate exchange between participants, facilitating both a healing and transformation for artist and audience disparately and collectively (Coble, 2009).



Fig. 3.0 Mary Coble, *Untitled* (from Blood Script Portfolio) 2008

24 x20 Chromira Print (Coble, 2009).

My engagement with tattooing, as a process of empowering the self and the non-binary body against the pressures of heteronormative society is perhaps best actualized in my work, *Untitled (I AM IN TRAINING DONT KISS ME)* 2019 (Fig 4.0). For this work, I had these words permanently marked on the back of my head in homage to the nineteenth century queer avant-gardist, pioneer, photographer and performance artist, Claude Cahun, who has a work of the same name. My work operates as a means of connecting me to a lineage of queer artists as well as a kind of armour against patriarchal notions of intimacy and control. It is at once an intimate conversation between Cahun and myself and a public statement of agency and self-determination. An admonition to others and an affirmation of belonging to one's self. Both Cahun's work and my own prompts questions of what exactly we are in training for. Both questioning the dominance of traditional notions of male masculinity, Cahun and I assert our queerness and draw attention to the masquerade of gendered identity. Responding to a failure in my relationship at the time, this tattoo further worked to facilitate a shift in my mentality from heartbroken to headstrong. Feeling and being held by my tattooist and myself in this intimate exchange, this tattoo serves as a reminder of self-care and self-love.



Fig 4.0 Eilish Hazell, *Untitled (I AM IN TRAINING DON'T KISS ME)* 2019, Vinyl banner, eyelets. 51 X 89cm.

Chapter Three: FANTASY FAILURE

The body is subjugated by socio-political power relations and disciplined through society's mechanisms of power and control (Foucault, 1977). According to Foucault, the gaze is one such mechanism used to control and monitor the body (Foucault, 1977). Laura Mulvey elaborates on the concept of the gaze as one negotiated by gender and sexual imbalance which positions male as active viewer and female as passive object (Mulvey, 1973). She states, "the determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure (Mulvey, 1973) Berger elaborates on this in *Ways of Seeing* where he states, "Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at" (Berger, 1972, 47). Undoubtedly, throughout art history, 'the gaze' has been one that privileges straight, white men as active viewers while objectifying and de-personalizing 'others' (Cecot, 2014). Similarly, historically photography has been falsely assumed to provide an objective lens with which to survey, classify and categorise (Cecot, 2014). That is to say, the camera has been used as a "technology of power" that voyeuristically enforces uniformity and conformity to constructs of identity (Tagg, 2009). Acknowledging the construction of photography's objectivity to be a false one, I use the masquerade of photography in order to deconstruct and reconstruct versions of the self I find empowering. I exploit photography as a medium to express agency and intimacy in ways that confront and queer the gaze historically positioned to favour cis-heteronormative subjects.

Tattooing allows for me to construct my body, as I want it, combat dysphoria with transformation, temporary/permanent transition. In a similar way, photography allows me to construct how my body is read and viewed. Photography operates in my work as another means of drawing attention to the performative, unfixed nature of identity. I use photography to disrupt, deconstruct and demystifying the history of categorisation through the representation of diverse and hybrid identities (Cecot, 2014). Informed by the deconstructive theory of Derrida, I use deconstruction to disrupt and re-establish meaning. I disturb the 'political fictions' of the male and female binary, devouring patriarchal understandings of the

body and rearrange them (Preciado, 2013, 142). I use layering, repetition and collage as a means of fragmenting identity. Ultimately, I use photography as a means of self-transformation and self-acknowledgement through multiple versions of self.

Butler maintains “the masculine subject of desire” is confronted by the “sudden intrusion, the unanticipated agency, of a female “object” who inexplicably returns the glance, reverses the gaze, and contests the place and authority of the masculine position” (Butler, 1990, p. vii). Acknowledging this, I use techniques of reflecting and reversed gazes as a means of confronting the straight gaze and queering it. Since the motif of the mirror has been used throughout art history to negatively comment on the vanity of women, mirrors appear in my work repeatedly (Berger, 1972, 51). Rejecting criticism of narcissism, I subvert the motif of the mirror to empower the subject. I use self-love as a political tool of subversion. I take photographs to reflect my own queer gaze, my own queer desire. I do it for myself, for my lovers, for community. As Susan Sontag maintains, “photographs, which cannot themselves’ explain anything, are inexhaustible invitations to deduction, speculation and fantasy” (Sontag, 1977, 23).

Elaborating on this, being non-binary and often feeling invalidated by perception and reception of my body and identity, I exploit the fictitious nature of photography to construct my identity as I see it. Exploiting photography’s ability (or inability) to represent ‘true’ images, I construct my ‘selves’ as both ideal and vulnerable subjects. My work engages with photography as a means of performing or expressing new identities, queering the body and marking it as a site of opposition to heteronormative pressures. Ultimately, creating a visual dialogue against these systems. It is a medium for me to address gender ambiguity and celebrate visibility. Important to and prevalent in the work, is the ‘partner gaze’, which I invite the viewer into. My photography provides a window into my own sexuality and intimacy, dismantling heteronormative notions of desire while avoiding tokenizing perceptions of queer love.

My work follows and is informed by such artists as Nan Goldin, Robert Mapplethorpe, Jurgen Teller, Claude Cahun and Catherine Opie. These artists employ varying techniques of masquerade and drag in order to draw attention to the performative nature of gender and sexuality (Cecot, 2019). Notably, Catherine Opie and Robert Mapplethorpe use photography as a means of documenting and in turn celebrating subcultural experiences of the body, gender and sexuality. Their work visually resists and confronts voyeuristic, heterosexual identity and sexuality through their staged compositions, poses and confrontational gazes (Melia, 2013). In this way, their work operates as a way of ‘queering’ the gaze. Both artists engage with sadomasochist practices aligned with queer, subcultural experience in a similar way to my own investigation, oscillating between personal participation and engagement and documentation of the practices of others. Both Opie and Mapplethorpe’s practices engage with performance and photography simultaneously. Opie’s *Self Portrait/ Pervert* (1994) (Fig. 5.0) works through photography and performative body modification in order to speak to personal transformation, identity and transcendence (Melia, 2013). With hypodermic needles pierced orderly through each arm, a gimp mask and a bare torso revealing the word ‘pervert’ cut ornately into her chest, Opie’s *Self Portrait/Pervert* (1994) prompts a variety of visceral and emotive responses, maintaining her own agency while recalling the abject.

The relationship between photography and performance is key to my project’s investigation. The process of this shifting self-image, transmitted from one space to another, from one medium to the next, makes further comments on the unfixed nature of identity and expression. More so, while the tattoo marks the skin permanently, the ephemerality of the live performance relies on the photograph to be communicated posthumously. However, since “photography fails to provide an indexical representation of reality”, there is a loss of representation in this transference from the live to the photographed (Sontag, 1977). Nevertheless, this inability of photography is important to the work as well. It refers to Jack Halberstam’s theory that counterattacking cis-heteronormative principles of success and purposely failing is a queer art in itself (Halberstam, 2011). The absence of representation

between the photograph and the performance in my work draws attention to the lack of visibility of queer experience as well as the inability to categorise and represent subjective experiences of the body.



Fig 5.0 Catherine Opie, *Self Portrait/Pervert* 1994 Chromogenic print, 101.6 x 75.9cm.

Returning to my work *Untitled (I AM IN TRAINING DONT KISS ME)* (2019) (Fig 4.0), photography operates here as the medium for communicating the performative act. Both permanent and ephemeral, this performative work relies on photographic outcomes. Since, censure disallows the performative act from existing within the confines of the stuffy, white box of the art institution. Once the tattoo is concealed by the natural growth of hair, the photograph remains as the only evidence of this work. The photograph immortalizes what growth conceals. Existing in liminal space, my work reveals and conceals what I decide. Robert Mapplethorpe's documentary photography has a similar subversive engagement with this 'failure' or falseness of the conventions of photographic representation (Meyer, 1990). Mapplethorpe's work draws attention to the "insufficiencies" of photographs to stand as "indexical records of subcultural experience" (Meyer, 1990). Since, "although we are offered an image of the sadomasochist body...the visual evidence of that body's experience (pain, pleasure, orgasm?) is not recovered, indeed, not recoverable, by the photograph" (Meyer, 1990). Similarly, through a combination of performance and photography, my work speaks to both the motifs of body modification as well as more visceral bodily feelings of pleasure and pain. I acknowledge and highlight the failure and limitations of my mediums as another dimension of my work. I work with and against conventions of photography, documentation and performance, celebrating failure as an instrument of queer resistance.

Chapter Four: (*Amour Fou: Bygone Lover*) Production and Practice

“There is a difference between painting a black fence and writing a poem, but only one of quantity. And there is for me, no difference between writing a good poem and moving into sunlight against the body of a woman I love” (Lorde, 1984:58).

Initially, I have understood my project as an interrogation of the body. Of course, my interest and exploration of the body has remained integral throughout the project, however my intention has necessarily shifted. At first, I have understood my process as drawing attention to the performative nature of gender, through tools of masquerade best achieved through photography and body modification. Understanding my exploration as informed by queer and poststructuralist, feminist theory and critiques of gender binaries has provided a strong basis for my research. Critically I have realised my practice is as much informed by poetry and from ontological experiences of intimacy and love as it is from ideas around the gendered body and its modification. While at first my work has been directly informed by working through processes of tattooing the body, it is an oversimplification (that I have often made) to suggest that the work *is* tattooing. I use tattooing as a medium to express intimacy but in saying that, my process is not purely one that works through and on the body in this way.

Going in to the project, I had hoped to maintain a primarily tattoo-based practice. Quite bluntly, the institution and its bureaucracy have limited my ability to achieve this. Denied the capacity to tattoo, even myself, or be tattooed by a ‘professional’ tattoo artist anywhere on campus, I have had to improvise, abandon and adapt. Pragmatically, this denial has morphed the practice into one of photography and documentation. However, emotively and progressively the project has shifted to enforce the importance of intimacy, rather than tattoo, as the central point of my art making. Informed by the richness of the private dynamics that operate within my relationship/s, I have come to understand my process as much one of feeling, reading and writing poetry as it of tattooing and photography (Chadwick & Courtivron, 1996).

Certain epiphanies have revealed to me the importance of carving space for sincerity and sentimentality within my work and my writing.

A turning point:

Running away from Melbourne in the break between semesters coinciding with another:

break up

break down

break from you

Lying on the veranda of my sister's Woolloongabba share house, heartsick, exhausted, in hiding, I smoke and read. At first, tentatively, opening the book I had started to read aloud to you a week before on a packed 1 tram in Melbourne CBD. Roland Barthes' *A Lover's Discourse*. But engrossed, I devour. I am provided with an absolutely indulgent, excessive and painful analysis of the language of love lost. My heart sinks and yet a weight lifts. A comfort: "I was out of my mind, I'm over it now...love is a trap which must be avoided from now on" (Barthes, 1977, 7). Prefacing intimacy and its loss as the foreground of the work, I have come to realise my project as an emotive process of adjusting, coping, moving on, working through. Visiting *The Museum of Broken Relationships* at No Vacancy Gallery affirmed this aim of honouring love and its failure. The wall text reads: "our societies oblige us with marriages, funerals...but deny us any formal recognition of the demise of a relationship, despite its strong emotional effect" (Museum of Broken Relationships, 2019). As Barthes affirms, "every passion, ultimately, has its spectator...(there is) no amorous oblation without a final theatre" (Barthes, 1977). My work: the final theatre, you: my spectator.

Another:

Lying in bed, having a sleepover (with an almost lover...trapped in the anguished and nuanced space that is understanding the shift from queer friendship to romance), they read Acker's *Kathy Goes to Haiti* aloud. For me, a stirring realization that these tender moments are where the work lives.

Again:

But then you come back. Inspired, enamored I create for you a book, a birthday gift! It is a process of curating, preserving our love through photographs, binding them together non-hierarchically. These photographs are ours, secret, between us but I want to declare them to the world. A reminder of why I create. My practice is both a secret and public love letter for myself and for the other. But we fail, we dissolve too soon and so resigned, what I have made

of us, for you

I leave in your letterbox

I close the book.

It seems, you and I struggle.

And I respond. Bygone lover.

This relentless push pull, toss turn has undoubtedly informed my work and my process. We come together as collaborators but what is left when the lover leaves? What can I include? Who owns the work? What is permissible? Acknowledging my work to be so informed by my relationship/s and that so much of the work belongs to the other, I grapple with the dilemma of fulfillment and self-expression within/without out bond/s (Chadwick & Courtivron, 1996). When you are gone, I grapple with the products of our collaboration. Our images, our book is no longer mine to share. I find catharsis in collaborative processes but struggle with the singular output. Not only does consent shift, but so too does my relationship to the work. Thus the project has become one of responding, of adapting, of expressing, of devotion.

This fractured relationship dynamic has informed the synthesis of my work. Consciously and often subconsciously I have used tools of layering, distortion, collaging and mirroring as a means of de-contextualising, re-appropriating and empowering charged images that hold memory for me. In the case of my work *Desire's Power, Desire's Reciprocity* (2019) (Fig 6.0) I employed techniques of deconstructing and layering as a cathartic means of repossessing agency over memory, the self and over the photographs themselves. Images for me so tied to intimacy, vulnerability and love, I have cut and layered in order to conceal and reveal what I find empowering.



*loving and holding;
building and breaking;
loving and holding;
building and breaking.*

Fig 7.0 Eilish Hazell, *Wet; For My Lover* (2019), Photo printed mug, tattoo armrest, tattoo mesh sleeve, Dettol, dimensions varied. Installation view.

Other practical concerns have shifted my outcomes along the way. One particular question I have grappled with is: how does one represent the tattoo process/experience in the gallery in absence of the act? My installation for the trial presentation tackled this question. The work combined photographic images with tattoo equipment such as in the work *Wet; For My Lover* (2019) (Fig 7.0) where I stretched a fake tattoo sleeve over a tattoo armrest and rested my used coffee mug printed with a photograph of my spanked butt in 'I love Rich Boys' underwear. I poured Dettol on the floor as a means of viscerally connecting the experience of viewing the work to the experience of visiting a tattoo studio or getting a tattoo (Fig. 8.0). Responding to the objectifying history of tattoo magazine culture, I created my own centerfold poster and stacked it below a ready made one torn from an old Tattoo Magazine. Paralleled with the original, my work *Tattoo as Repossession of Self* (2019) (fig 11.0) confronted this narrative of objectification and re-empowered the self through the intentionality of my pose and juxtaposition. My project is concerned with the skin, and so it feels like a natural progression to then print my photographs of the body on large silk banners. Concerned with ideas around adornment and permanence, the silk banners turned garments come together as a kind of second skin.

Throughout the project, my understanding of my relationship with tattoos has shifted. For me, tattooing operates as a means of transcending the gendered body by asserting control and agency over identity. But more so, it operates as a marker of memory, an acknowledgement of experience, an act of devotion. I started tattooing out of a complicated relationship with self-harm and self-care, identifying with it as a similar catharsis with a more creative outcome. With this renewed understanding, my physical outcomes have expanded. But as the project's drives and outcomes have shifted, I maintain I have successfully met my aims and objectives. If that is something you can quantify through such a personal and emotive practice. My project has become a process of resistance, of celebration, of growth and of transformation. I have worked through, on and with the body to create a queer portrait of intimacy, desire, pain and transcendence.



Fig 8.0 Eilish Hazell, *Wet; For My Lover* (2019), Photo printed mug, tattoo armrest, tattoo mesh sleeve, Dettol, dimensions varied. Installation view.

Chapter Five: 'Community of Practice'

LOVER AS COLLABORATOR

EMOTIONAL AND FLESHLY INTIMACY AS A BOLSTER OF SELFHOOD

And so I work, I write, I create with you in mind

I situate myself and my work in the bedroom

Of my lover

Reading Myles, or Acker, or Nelson

Fingers twirling the hairs on the nape of your neck

The note I scrawl and stick to your mirror when I wake and you have left for work

The flower I pick for you and leave to dry

My tights tied in a knot on your bedhead

Kissing all the droplets off your back in the shower

The burning desire felt for you in absence as in presence

My most powerful and accomplished artwork

Understanding the importance of the *lover as collaborator, lover as enabler* in my work, I align my practice with that of other artists working through issues and expressions of intimacy (Chadwick & Courtivron, 1996). I situate my work alongside other artistic power couples who have used their relationships and their practices to contest previous gender and sexual stereotypes and point towards more fluid, equitable and enriching representations of partnership (Chadwick & Courtivron, 1996, 8). Such artistic and amorous collaborators who renegotiate social stereotypes about femininity and masculinity and their assumptive roles within partnership include; Anais Nin and Henry Miller, Rodin and Camille Claudel, Gilbert and George, Marina Abramovic and Ulay, Virginia Woolf and Vita Sackville-West, Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg (Chadwick & Courtivron, 1996, 8). My practice nods to the work of artists such as Nan Goldin and Felix Gonzalez-Torres who use their practices to document sexual and emotional intimacy, devotion and loss in raw and exposing ways.

I relate my work to that of Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore who's romantic and performative "collaborations offer a masquerade of queer tropes, staged collisions of gender signifiers and, most importantly, a contestation of female narcissism" (Lord & Meyer, 2013, 78). Of their relationship to contesting narcissism through self-portraiture, Cahun wrote, "Hermaphrodite can visit the house of Narcissus – and introduce himself there on my behalf" (Cahun, 1925). As Jennifer L. Shaw writes in *Reading Claude Cahun's Disavowals* (2013), Cahun's masquerading through photography operates as a means of reimagining the self and of creating desire (Fox, 2019, 17). Acknowledging the construction and deconstruction of identity in their own work, Cahun and Moore's I.O.U (self-pride) translates: "I will never finish removing all these faces...peeling off these faces...wearing these faces" (Fox, 2019, 17). Not unlike Cahun and Moore's collaborative work, I "parade my otherness for all to be startled by and to admire" (Fox, 2019, 149). Additionally, my work, *Untitled (I AM IN TRAINING DON'T KISS ME)* (Fig 4.0) as discussed in Chapter Three, performs a restaging of Cahun's work, expressing a desire for "queer genealogies and the complexities in finding them" (Lord & Meyer, 207).

As previously discussed in Chapter three, Catherine Opie's exploration of sadomasochist practice and self-portraiture in photography informs my practice. I further identify my work with Opie's tender depictions of partners and friends in such projects as the "Girlfriends" series (Art Observed, 2010). This series creates a portrait of Opie through a coalescing of carefully curated studio portraits with more improvised, diaristic moments of desire (Art Observed, 2010). Just as Opie's work draws on intimate connection with the other, my work structures a portrait of myself through fluid depictions of "the relationships and individuals that structure both affect and physical intimacy as a buttress of selfhood" (Art Observed, 2010). In a similar way, my work is also connected to that of Jack Pierson, whose photography documents "softly illuminated, quietly erotic pictures of naked men" as a means of representing the narrative of his own self (Meyer & Lord, 2013, 212). My work differs from Opie and Pierson in that my self-portrait often comes together, not through images of

others, but through the artistic and amorous collaboration with the other and the remnants that relationships leave behind.

*I once slept next to you like an angel
but my dreams of you are always softer than you are
and so I cut a piece of my hair, give to you and let go
I return to poetry and to language
find community and catharsis once again.*

I find community with poets, writers and autobiographical essayists who write with sincerity while crying for redemption over the vulnerabilities of intimacy and love. I connect my practice with other writers such as Helene Cixous, Charlie Fox, Kathy Acker, Maggie Nelson, Paul B. Preciado, Audre Lorde and Sara Ahmed that transgress the limits of academic writing through the exploration of experimental, poetic language. I associate my work with poets such as Sara Sutterlin who explores the disenchantments of love and the loneliness and perils of failing relationships (Sutterlin, 2015). Humorously, I identify with her: “PROMISE TO BLOCK AND UNBLOCK FOR ETERNITY OR UNTIL ONE OF US DIES” (Sutterlin, 2015). I see myself in Jim Carrey in *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* crying and screaming, “I am erasing you and I’m happy”. In my text work, *I am... (Community of Practice)* (fig 9.0) I locate my community through poetry. I identify myself with other writers, artists, lovers whose work combines prose and poetry, earnest personal anecdote with theory.

I find clarity in Barthes’ description of a bygone lover bringing one to thoughts of death; when Walt sings the body electric (Whitman, 1855); and Allen Ginsberg pleads please, please master. Because *nothing compares 2 U* but at least Sinéad and I both feel it; but Myles’ reminds me I shouldn’t kill myself today because it’s too beautiful and so does Mary Oliver’s *Devotions*.

I am Annie Lennox and you are my shining light

I am Sinead O'Connor ballading nothing compares 2 u, gorgeous and devastated

I am her Internet break down cry for help 20 years later

I am Sylvia Plath before she killed herself

I am Virginia Woolf but I don't have a room of my own

I am Kathy Acker's 200pages of hatred and fucking

I am always Dido and it's my life

I am Maggie Nelson but I am more so Harry Dodge

I am Eileen Myles letting the vibrations on the bus seat jerk me off

I am Patti Smith and Robert Mapplethorpe

I am Anaïs Nin, you're Henry Miller?

I'm Greer Lankton's shrine to Candy Darling

I am Angelina Jolie's Billy Bob tattoo

I am Catherine Opie's self portrait (cutting)

I am Nan Goldin's black eye

I am Gluck and I wanted you to be Nesta Obermer

I am Claude Cahun and you were Marcel Moore; I want to be more famous and die first

I am Gran Fury's Xerox Posters

I am Simone de Beauvoir and Sartre's polyamorous relationship

I am Mykki Blanco's rendition of Zoe Leonard's "I want a president" poem

I am Gina Pane but you think my self harm is fucked not art

I am Adrienne Rich's 'rose-wet cave'

I am Francesca Woodman's angelic suicide

I am Edie Sedgwick post-superstar, dozing off, lighting her apartment on fire with a cigarette

I am Marina and Ulay's final goodbye

I am me with you

I am me now that you are gone

Fig 9.0 Eilish Hazell, *I am...* (Community of Practice) (2019) Text work, dimensions varied.

But as relationships fail, sometime language too fails. Words fall short in deciphering emotions, feelings, and sensations. I study you, try to translate, interpret, respond. Return to the body.

A TATTOO FOR HOLDING ON
FOR LETTING GO
AS DEVOTION TO OTHERS
AS REPOSSESSION /AFFIRMATION OF ONE'S SELF



Fig 10.0 Eilish Hazell, *Wet; For My Lover* (2019), Photo printed mug, tattoo armrest, tattoo mesh sleeve, Dettol, dimensions varied. Installation view.

Engaging with tattooing as a means of working through pain and discomfort in order to actualize transformation and achieve comfort within the body, I situate my practice within a global and local network of queer and experimental tattoo artists. Necessarily, I access this community via the Internet. Over the last few years, the Internet (namely, Instagram) has documented a tattoo revolution. The democratization of the Internet has meant that Instagram has become the primary platform for tattoo artists to share knowledge and skills, document and share their work and find clientele and community. This new guard of queer, non-binary and trans artists have shifted the emphasis of tattooing to focus on inclusivity, respect, diversity, community and enthusiastic consent (Gamble, 2018). Resisting the historical narrative of exclusive, intimidating and often threatening cis-straight white male dominated tattoo spaces, this new community of artists aim to create comfortable, welcoming spaces for all people across all spectrums. The shift towards private studios rather than tattoo parlours has meant monitoring the atmosphere and creating safe space becomes a lot easier (Gamble, 2018). Seeing my tattoos on others as a ‘trade of intimacy’, I particularly connect with other stick and poke artists whose focus on DIY aesthetics, accessibility and trade have developed as a rejection of the mainstream Capitalist narrative of Traditional Western tattooing. This kind of practice creates accessibility, rejecting hierarchical gatekeeping and Capitalist values of labour, associated with the emphasis on unpaid tattoo apprenticeships (Gamble, 2018).

Whilst fostering safe space in their work, this new community of artists privileges individuality, innovation and performativity while rejecting conventional and dated, often culturally appropriative “trad” tattoo designs. This ‘queering’ of the tattoo industry confronts “older generations of Western tattooists that were driven by machismo values like gatekeeping and the idea of single truth” (Gamble, 2018). As queer tattooist Charline Bataille explains, “art and the dismantling of hierarchy of art is important- and important for queer people for purposes like connecting, feeling seen, feeling valid, and feeling worthy” (Gamble, 2018). She further states, “it’s important to open up what a ‘good’ tattoo is, as there is increasingly different types of people getting tattooed ” (Gamble, 2018). Renewed diversity

among tattoo artists and tattoo styles allows for diversity among tattoo patrons (Gamble, 2018). With this new school of tattoo artists has come a revolutionized understanding of how we recycle and dispose of contaminated waste, with new conversations about sustainability becoming part of this changing tattoo industry. I locate my work within this canon of queer and experimental tattoo artists whose work privileges intersectionality, connection and sustainability.

I resonate with and draw from a similar range of influences as the photographers Gillian Wearing, Nan Goldin, Robert Mapplethorpe, Jurgen Teller, Mark Morrisoe, Gran Fury, Ryan McGinley and Jack Pierson. I align my work with theirs and identify with their attraction to “fashion’s studied glamour, Larry Clark’s haunting lowlife, and the casual beauty of the snapshot” (Dicorcia, Philip-Lorca, Goldin, Nan & Pierson, Jack. 1998). I identify with the intensity of Diane Arbus’ oeuvre as well as her empathetic depiction of marginalised people in her portraits (Fox, 2019). Stylistically, I align my work with that of Wolfgang Tillmans’, the trademark of which is the miscellaneous installation of a diverse range of photographs. Importantly, while combining images in varying size, colour, quality and subject matter, Tillmans’ arrangements create a web of non-hierarchical, intimate moments (Meyer & Lord, 2013, 210). Just as in Tillmans’ case, my work comes together in installation with a site-specific consideration for the space it appears in. I connect my work to a canon of established and emerging LGBTQI photographers extending the parameters of the medium formally and conceptually in order to provide diverse and personal depictions of queerness and love (Tse & Jensen, 2018).

Acknowledging my project as interdisciplinary and nuanced with various stylistic outcomes and conceptual drives, I draw inspiration from, identify with and connect to a diversity of artists across a multitude of mediums. I situate my work within a photography, tattoo and performance art lineage alongside artists using a variety of approaches in order to argue for “fullness, potentiality, complexity, nuance, and for a queer future” (Tse & Jensen, 2018).



Fig 11.0 Eilish Hazell, *Tattoo as Repossession of Self* (2019), Centerfold poster, 35 x 80 cm.

Bibliography

- Acker, Kacky. 1984. *Blood and Guts in High School*, Grove Press, New York.
- Acker, Kathy. 1978. *Kathy Goes to Haiti*. In *Literal Madness: Three Novels*. 1994. Grove Press, New York. Pg 1-170.
- Ahmed, Sara. 2013. 'Sensitivity to Stigma: Eve Sedwick and Queer- of- Colour Critique', Feminist Killjoy [Online] Available: <https://feministkilljoys.com/2013/10/20/sensitivity-to-stigma/>
- Ahmed, Sara & Stacey, Jackie, ed. 2001. *Thinking through the Skin*, Routledge, London.
- Art Observed. 2010. "Go See- New York: Catherine opie's 'Girlfriends' at Gladstone Gallery, extended through May 1, 2010". AO Art Observed. 2010. Viewed 15 October, 2019. <http://artobserved.com/2010/04/go-see---new-york-catherine-opie-girlfriends-at-gladstone-gallery-through-april-24-2010/>
- Atkinson, Michael 2003. *Tattooed: The Sociogenesis of a Body Art*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto.
- Barthes, Roland. 1977. *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*. Penguin Random House, London.
- Barlow, Claire 2017. *Queer British Art 1861-1967*, Tate Britain, London.
- Berger, John 1972. *Ways of Seeing*, Penguin Books, London.
- Botz-Hornstein, Thorsten 2013. *From the Stigmatized Tattoo to the Graffitied Body: Femininity in the Tattoo Renaissance*. *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, viewed 15 May 2019, <<https://www.academia.edu/20552363>>
- Butler, Judith 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge, New York.
- Cahun, Claude, *Heroines*, 1925. trans. Norman MacAfee, in Shelley Rice (ed.), *Inverted Odysseys: Claude Cahun, Maya Deren, Cindy Sherman* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), p. 90.
- Caplan, J (ed) 2000, "Inscriptions of the Self: Reflections on tattooing and piercing in contemporary Euro-America" in *Written on the body: the tattoo in European and American history*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey. p.237.
- Chadwick, Whitney & de Courtivron, Isabelle. 1996. *Significant Others: Creativity and Intimate Partnership*. Thames and Hudson Ltd, London.
- Coble, Mary. 2009. *Blood Script*, viewed 13 June 2019, <<https://www.marycoble.com/performances-installations/blood-script-2008>>

Cornock, Stroud. 1983. "Towards a Methodology for Students of Fine Art". *Journal of Art & Design Education*, Vol 2, No 1, 1983. Viewed 15 October, 2019. Wiley Online Library.

Deleuze, Giles 1971. *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty & Venus in Furs*. Translated from French by Jean McNeil and Aude Willm (1989). Zone Books, New York.

Derrida, Jacques. 1967. *Of Grammatology*. Translated from French by Gayatri Spivak (1985) Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

Dicorcia, Philip-Lorca, Goldin, Nan & Pierson, Jack. 1998. *Emotions and Relations: Nan Goldin, David Armstrong, Mark Morrisoe, Jack Pierson, Philip-Lorca Dicorcia*. Taschen, Hamburger Junsthalle.

Foucault, Michel. 1977. *Discipline and Punishment: the Birth of the Prison*. Pantheon Books, New York.

Fox, Charlie. 2019. *This Young Monster*. Fitzcarraldo Editions, United Kingdom.

Gamble, Ione. 2018. "Meet the Self-Taught Queer Tattooists Making Beautiful and Inclusive Art". Dazed Digital. Viewed 20 October, 2019. < <https://www.dazeddigital.com/beauty> >

Grosz, Elizabeth. 1994. *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism*. Indiana University Press, Indianapolis.

Halberstam, Jack. 2011. *The Queer Art of Failure*. Duke University Press, Durham and London.

Halberstam, Judith. 1998. *Female Masculinity*. Duke University Press, Durham and London.

Haraway, Donna. 1991. "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century", in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, Routledge. New York. Pg. 141-181.

Hawkins, Katharine E. 2014. 'Freak'? *The Social Politics of Body Modification: Gender, Culture and Stigma*. Viewed 25 May 2019. < <https://www.researchonline.mq.edu.au/>>

Hebdige, D. 1979. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, Methuen, London. p. 90.

Kosofsky Sedgwick, Eve. 1990. *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley, University of California Press, California.

Lodder, Mark 2019. *Body Art: Body Modification as Artistic Practice*. Ethos.bl.uk, viewed 19 March 2019, <<https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.525734>>

Lorde, Audre. 1984. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, Trumansburg: The Crossing Press. Pg.58.

- Lord, Catherine & Meyer, Richard. 2013. *Art & Queer Culture*. Phaidon Press Limited, London.
- Melia, Juliette, 2013. 'Creating a new iconicity: an interview with Catherine Opie'. *Transatlantica*, Viewed 28 May 2019. <<http://journals.openedition.org/transatlantica/6430>>
- Meyer, Richard. "Imagining Sadomasochism: Robert Mapplethorpe and the Masquerade of Photography." *Qui Parle*, vol. 4, no. 1, 1990, pp. 62–78. Viewed 15 May 2019, *JSTOR*,
- Myles, Eileen. 2019. *I Must Be Living Twice: New and Selected Poems*. Ecco, New York.
- Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema". *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*. Eds. Leo Braudy and Marshal Cohen. New York.
- Nelson, Maggie. 2009. *Bluets*. Wave Books, Washington.
- Newman, Lisa. *Flesh for Fantasy: the Future of Sadomasochism and Performance Art in Virtual Worlds*. Viewed 28 May 2019
<<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/ff68/afedd4f7d79033da023f24b946ead211cbcf.pdf>>
- Nin, Anais. 1978. *Delta of Venus*. Penguin Books, London.
- O'Dell, Kathy, 1998. *Contract With the Skin: Masochism, Performance Art and the 1970s*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.
- Oliver, Mary. 2017. *Devotions: The Selected Poems of Mary Oliver*. Penguin, New York.
- Phoca, Sophie & Wright, Rebecca 1999. *Introducing: Postfeminism*, Totem Books, America.
- Pitts, Victoria. 2003. "Visibly Queer: Body Technologies and Sexual Politics" in *In the Flesh: The Cultural Politics of Body Modification*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York. Pg 87-119.
- Thomas, Nicholas. 2014. *Body Art*. Thames & Hudson Ltd, London.
- Polhemus, Ted & Randall, Housk 2000. *The Customized Body*, Serpent's Trail, London. Pg. 9.
- Preciado, Paul B. 2013. *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in The Pharmacopornographic Era*, Feminist Press, University of New York, New York.
- Proudfoot, Dylan. 2019. "RIP Sally" on Parloir. Viewed 13 June 2019
<<https://www.parloir.co.uk/rip-sally/>>
- Sally RIP, 2017. *Sally. TTTISM Contemporary Tattooing*. Viewed 13 June 2019.
<<https://tttism.com/2017/10/12/sally/>>
- Santibanez, Tamara. 2018. "Out of Body", *Discipline Press*, Viewed 30 May 2019
<<http://www.disciplinepress.com/blog-posts/2017/12/29/6lntdoevt7d6aptxdhuf87s6oe98ml>>

Strohecker, Dave Paul. 2011. *Body Modification, Gender, and Self-Empowerment*. Cyborgology. Viewed 13 June 2019
<https://thesocietypages.org/cyborgology/2011/09/22/body-modification-gender-and-self-empowerment/>

Stark, Erin. 2006. "Skin on the Internet: Tattooing, consumption and the Body Modification Ezine". Academia. Viewed 25 May, 2019.
<https://www.academia.edu/2177240/Skin_on_the_Internet_Tattooing_consumption_and_the_Body_Modification_Ezine>

Sutterlin, Sara. 2015. "Baveuse". Electric Cereal. Viewed 13, June 2019.
<<https://www.electriccereal.com>>

Sutterlin, Sara. 2015. "I Wanted to Be the Knife", Metatron Press. Viewed 13, June 2019.
<<http://www.metatron.press/work/i-wanted-to-be-the-knife/>>

Sontag, Susan. 1977. *On Photography*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York.

Tse, Ka-Man & Jensen, Matthew. 2018. "DAYBREAK: New Affirmations in Queer Photography" Leslie-Lohman Museum. Viewed 14 October, 2019.
<<https://www.leslielohman.org/project/daybreak-new-affirmations-in-queer-photography>>

"The Museum of Broken Relationships" Broken Ships. Viewed 14 October, 2019. <
<https://brokenships.com>>

Whitman, Walt. 1855. 'I sing the Body Electric', in Whitman, Walt, *Leaves of Grass*.

Transcending the Body as Meat Eilish Hazell

Above all, this is horny art.

W et.

Kinky. Fleshly. Bodily. Corporeal. Dripping. Dripping wet, rubbed thick and sticky. Can you feel it?

It is a silk skin contract. Where I can't be, the silk holds me. With fleshly material, I speak of/to the body, its reclamation and its adornment. With both body modification and photography, I communicate my queer desire, my queer catharsis. Yearning. I have created a tangible manifestation of my euphoria, erotica, dysphoria. Draped, cured, hung up, stretched tight. A clothes rack binds silk prints as if they were cowhide being turned to parchment. I am bound. But I kinda like it. Chained up, I want you to feel so comfortable, baby. Lie on the bed. Get ready. I don't want the tattoo to hurt you but it might? I love you, I want you, I want you. This is my fantasy, failure. Carved with metal, ink, Dettol, vinyl, blood, Vaseline, silk, chains.

Layering, collage, masquerade, play, repetition and returned gazes as a means of defiance. I deconstruct and reconstruct the self. I deconstruct and reconstruct the self. Transcend, transgress, devour. I spit myself out. Carve space for intimacy, sexuality and sentimentality. Both in my work and in my writing, accompanying. I structure a portrait of the self out of the remnants of intimate relationships and the photos left behind, of the performances of identity. My work becomes homage to the self and it's malleability.

I mark the body.

I act on it as an act of resistance. I inflict pain on the flesh as a rejection to the socially constructed gender and sexual binaries inflicted on it. I work through and on the body and document this process. I structure a new body. As Pitt's maintains, performance art, drag, as well as scarring, branding, tattooing and piercing in the body modification subculture has the radical potential to undermine cis-normative hegemonic categories of identity (Pitts, 2000). I act on the body as a means of control, catharsis and rebirth. It is a means of becoming. I control, curate my own self as a resistance to biological dictation or culturally decided binary identification (Pitts, 2000). More so, I employ body modification tactics as a form of sexualised embodied politics (Pitts, 2000). I do transcend pain, transcend disassociation lean towards identification, when I decide to be tattooed. But also, tattoos are just really sexy. I'm sweaty, dizzy.

These two main works, *I want you to feel so comfortable, baby* (2019) (fig. 12.0) and *Silk Skin Contract* (2019) (fig. 13.0) stand as visceral representations of tattooing in lieu of the act. Denied the ability to tattoo in this institutional space, these works stand in as remnants, fragments. They are what is left of the performance. They perform, resist, celebrate. They speak to the visceral subcultural experience of sadomasochism and body modification. Highlighting an art form that has been ignored by classist notions of value throughout the history of Western art history. But more than this, they stand as an examination of intimacy and identity. They demand for victory and redemption. Working fluidly between queer theory, poetry and creative practice, I reclaim the non-binary body, through a focus on empathy, intimacy, visibility and presence. Together these works manifest as an embodiment ritual, an open love letter, a self-portrait, a devotion. Carved in blood, in ink, in vaso; it's about feeling baby.