LOU IN BATH

An Art Practice
2000–2019

LOU HUBBARD

19th SEPTEMBER 2019
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Title page image, Lou Hubbard Babs and Bunches Writing and Concepts 2016, edited by Jan van Schaik
When I not me spoke to Salusinszky, a former professor of English who published a monograph on Murnane with Oxford University Press in 1993, he brought up the story “Precious Bane,” which is also included in “Stream System,” pointing out that the title is a phrase used by Milton to describe money, something “we need to get the things we want.” Salusinszky went on, “I think for Gerald writing is a kind of precious bane. It’s a burden and a nuisance, almost a duty, having to explore the connections between the images in his mind. And he keeps telling us that he has done his duty, that this is it.

But of course, to use, if you’ll forgive me, Derridean language, there’s always a supplement. There’s always an appendix. There’s always something left unsaid.”

I’m tempted to replace the name Gerald with Virginia or Halldór – other writers who boost me. For now, let it be my name and my connections.

Bring on Derridean language. Without apology.

1. BUTTER BOX. 2018
A fat lot of goods.
A lot of good fats.

Throughout this document texts will absorb and transform others, rendering them opaque, unfixed. Signs appropriated, appropriate, improper too. Projected. Like Pauls Pizza, the sign below.

2. PAULS PIZZA (projection on neon sign).2006
Lou’s Pizza Manor
Lou’s Pizza Grotto
Lou’s Pizza Palace

Peter & Paul’s Pizza Plaza
Nan’s Pizza Rest Room
Frosted windows
Running tap
Do Not Enter

Paul’s Pizza Gas Heater
Bricks of empty wine casks

Margherita heater
INTRODUCTION

LOU IN BATH

I may be some time²

… as I traverse my art practice 2000–2019 through writing and images to find buried or lost thoughts made fresh.

In 2018 I made a website of thumbnail images of my artworks. Amidst the tedium of conforming hundreds of disparate images and captions, I was reminded of how my relationship to my work is language-based. I move through the verbal to arrive at the visual.

I organize, catalogue and number, to see, to remember, to understand.

Designed as an open-ended research site, www.louhubbard.com opens to a one-page grid of 100 thumbnail images similar to a model car poster: a full frontal taxonomy of materials, themes and processes. Tartan, teeth, eyeballs and much more, in rows and columns, exposed. A further three pages of 250 images amplifies the pattern and the emergence of a studio syntax.

LOU IN BATH tries to describe the work in all its matter-of-factness and sometimes an account of the encounter, seizing on certain aspects to amplify or develop them, sometimes writing to produce the same structure of feeling, the same constellation of feeling. Like a register of affect, a structure of feeling with obvious carefulness, sometimes with consistency and cohesiveness, and sometimes impenetrability, with the force of my assemblages: precarious and under duress.

I mostly work with found or gifted objects that are already forms of representation and signs of language before their involvement in art and spoken word: take a bath, my bath, Mrs Bath from Bristol, near Bath.

My approach is to use my archive that reference works—from anywhere—that have a similar affective charge and my experience living with apophenia, the tendency to (mistakenly) perceive connections and meaning between unrelated things³.

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² “…said Captain Lawrence Oates as he stepped outside on Scott’s ill-fated Antarctic expedition.” Francis Spufford, *I May Be Sometime - Ice and the English Imagination.* (New York: Picador, 1997), title page.

I harness this tendency as a positive ‘problem’ to fuel an art dependent upon process. Psychiatrists may analyse this condition of apophenia, but I have examined confluences in my life that have heightened both the inner understanding, my ‘drives’ and the outer ‘spontaneous’ connections between unconnected observations. Of course, there is not an entirely coherent plot to my narrative. Some of the pieces remain hidden, like icebergs, waiting to emerge (or melt) because I’m still alive, still. But here are some initial plot points to take into the bath with Lou.

When I was seventeen years old, I slipped out of The Gap, a Brisbane suburb in the gap between two mountains. I have since made artworks about formal and linguistic associations that link my experiences there such as the empty swimming pool, maths operations, eye operations, the horse that I got aged 11 when my father left me for ‘another woman’. There were further trials: show jumping, high jumping and fearlessness. The Gap is also where my early childhood play was central to my father’s research into writing his ‘modern maths’ series of textbooks Shapes and Sizes. Sorting sets of objects in Venn diagram exercises is a mindset that remains central to my operations in adult play: more apophenia.4

LOU IN BATH constructs my subject. Recurring themes include the shapes associated with the tools of geometry alongside my personal motifs: eyes, teeth, fitballs and soccer balls, the horse, my ‘skin’ raincoat and that most abandoned apparel in my school’s Lost Property, the jumper.

My desire for patternicity may underlie larger questions of making meaning.
My involuntary detection of pattern may be part of a larger symptom.

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4 Artist William Wegman describes an apophenia moment and a eureka moment too. One afternoon before going to a party I drew little circles on my hand (this was the 60s). The circles parodied the shapes in my ring that I wore on my index finger. At the party cotto salami was served. It was eerie. The salami looked like my hand. Little peppercorns were in it. They looked like the little circles in my hand and ring. I rushed home from the party, bought a new package of salami from the market and set up the picture that proved to be the answer and the way out.
YOU ARE HERE

Four sections organize my schema.
Right now, you are here, in a section without a number.
Over the page you will find yourself in section one.

1. The Gap.

If you, like me, tend to read a series out of order, or sometimes skip to the last page or chapter of a book before reading it, go to any of the following. I can’t vouch for coherence and you may be gone some time.

2. Departed Act
3. Funny Not Funny
4. A Bunch of Bunches

3. FRUIT LOOPS (video). 2012
A ‘fruit’ train moves along a track
on the frieze of a Hong Kong juice bar.

The footage—cut, diced, flattened, screened—
makes new tracks
from impossible couplings.
THE GAP
What I had dreaded, naturally already, republishes itself. Today, here, now, the debris of (débres de)

Last words, last column, *Glas*.5

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LIKENESS

When I said I wanted to age like Patti Smith⁶, my daughter said: but you don’t look anything like her.

My habit, since I was a kid, of likening a person to another person or thing, or an object thing to another thing or person, and declaring it to whoever was in earshot, was a conversation starter or stopper. These days I keep my thoughts in the studio.

But recently, LIKE met LIKE when I looked up from the Saturday paper and said that I wanted to age like Patti. I know I don’t look anything like Patti. I don’t sound like her either.

The form of THE GAP came to be, like a hoped-trusted-wished-for, willed-into-existence relationship of texts already prepared. I wondered and actually wanted to find out what my written words might become when read in the time of now. Right here, right now.

And what would they become when my voice, the one you are hearing now, must communicate without the support of facial expressions and bodily gestures to you, the reader, who may be in a plane or train or in bed, light on, light off, on iPad, smartphone or in the bathtub with water running or draining.

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⁶ Rockstar, punk poet laureate and friend of Bobs: Mapplethorpe and Dylan (you may wiki these yourself).
4. OMG VANITAS. 2012
Two door skins strapped together.
On one side a hand drawn sign ‘Lou in Bath’.
On the other side, eyeballs stare to heaven: now don’t look at me.

Last night I asked the ceiling what was going to happen.7

In his text Making Meaning: Printers of the Mind8 D.F. McKenzie claimed that when words cease to be vocalized in reading, they become images9. But I want to know what becomes of my images —first vocalized by me as words, sometimes loudly—when I return them to the written form.

In his preface to Louise Bourgeois’ Letters and Writing, Hans-Ulrich Obrist quotes Michel de Certeau: In relation to place, space would be what the word becomes when it is spoken, that is, when it is caught up in the ambiguity of an effectuation10.

I Googled: what is effectuation? I didn’t hit the top search result11.

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7 Matthew Dickman, Wonderland, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2018), 64.
11 … on entrepreneurial thinking.
I chose ‘Michel de Certeau and effectuation’ and found D.F. McKenzie, now quoting de Certeau, in these terms: the actualization of the text, which Michel de Certeau termed the effectuation, calls at times for its oralization. 

I can see, in this ‘circle of confusion’ that what the word ‘effectuation’ becomes, when it is spoken, when it is caught up in the ambiguity of becoming actual, through becoming oral, is, potentially, effective. My already prepared ‘reading texts’ have an oral counterpart; they have been spoken. I must now convert the oral word into the printed sign.

My spoken text relies upon my physical perception of language as my attention is drawn towards the variations in tone and speed with which my voice delivers words and sentences, not forgetting the sound environment at the site, or place of the listener.

So what about these already prepared texts? Selected words prepared for what reason or for whom?

They fall loosely into five categories:

1. Writing about my work before it is made.
2. Writing about my work after it is made.
3. Writing for other artists wherein I talk about myself.
4. Writing about place.
5. Writing for The New Yorker cartoon caption competition, a category in which I discuss my profound pleasure at the shortlisted captions and my cartoon dyslexia that stops me from entering. (For now, this section is held over.)

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1. WRITING ABOUT MY WORK BEFORE IT IS MADE

My first artist statement, in the year 2000, included the following words: rude, degenerate, basic, bizarre, disturbing, raw, anthropomorphic, used, rejected, retrieved, transformed.

I was describing HAIR.

My hair is corn coloured, thicker than Janet Frame’s, thick as a thatched roof and as easily set alight with a single match, my Mother told me. Brushed flat at daybreak, by noon my hair had rolled up to my ears like a wonky blind, like Captain Cook’s wig. My hair has never swished about my shoulders.

5. BALD. 2000

It began with hair. Human hair that is detachable, reversible and susceptible to constant modification: human hair and rubber bath mats as templates for transplants; rubbings on paper and wood simulate the physical action of dressing hair; trolleys and walking frames bulge with hair: cut, coloured and submitted to discipline.

Martin Creed said in a podcast interview\(^{13}\) ... the trouble with hair—it’s always growing a lot, it’s always coming out of you and I started equating hair with feelings—it always comes out of you but you don’t always have control over it—you don’t choose, you deal with it as it comes out, but you don’t get to choose whether you got curly hair or straight and its noticeable that a lot of people seem to wish they had hair that was different. And I feel that’s often the way with feelings: feelings come up and you are very much at the mercy of them, you don’t control... they come up and then you have to deal with them and then you maybe try and shape them. So I start thinking that hair and feelings are very much the same.

My first exhibition proposal 2002, at Gertrude Contemporary\textsuperscript{14}, the gallery showcasing emerging artists, was unsuccessful. But it is a testament to what was—and what I still play out in my work to this day, in a language before art parlance took hold—before I had the material syntax to develop an aesthetic of sentimentality or the confidence to declare that what I do is gravely literal\textsuperscript{15}. \textit{WEEP FOR THE LOVE OF IT} is the exhibition proposal that is in tune with my work today.

\textit{WEEP FOR THE LOVE OF IT} is a configuration of found objects—polystyrene packaging specifically—that excites in me a feeling of pity and sadness about being human. Polystyrene is a material of support and insulation: always the outsider, destined to be dumped. Polystyrene has been my obsession for a couple of years, since the moment I came upon some empty computer boxes peering over the top of an office partition like a still-life of sad-eyed children\textsuperscript{16}; their down-turned mouths referenced simply by the machine punched gaps in the polystyrene.

While I set out to undermine the modernist form of the curved Mac G4 packaging, inserting glass, plastics and personal objects into its cavities, polystyrene boxes provided the modular blocks to build quickly and play out rich association, as that Brisbane child at The Gap with an English imagination.

My pools of polystyrene came with titles that described complexes:

Outdoor Complex.

Indoor Complex.

Complexes real and imagined.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{14}If I was going to be seen as a serious artist in Melbourne, where I live and work, then I really needed to be seen at this gallery.

\textsuperscript{15}I will elaborate later.

\textsuperscript{16}The sad-eyed child motif on 70's t-shirts, mugs, towels.

\textsuperscript{17}I had many complexes. I have some still.
6. POOL. 2001
Polystyrene is a pool. Pool is a backyard swimming pool, in-ground mostly, concrete and purpose-built in 1960 as child-care. For years I was at the dark end, submerged like a submarine, neither in nor out, my snorkel erect, the waterline bobbing half-mast across my goggles, staring into the Deep Throat of the filter trap as it flapped. I sat under the dark end too, the Frank Lloyd Wright concrete outcrop, listening to the hum of the filtration plant, my head pressed against its belly of aqua steel as if a long lost friend, and fingering my prune skin fingertips I knew that just one turn of the spinnaker tap would release the basin of water amassed above my head.

When the pool was emptied for winter it became a fort, a Laplander’s igloo, Roller Derby skating rink, orchestra pit, squash court, laboratory with slime ponds, and a luxury ocean liner, The Himalaya. From poolside I hula-hooped on the game’s deck or took my binoculars to the Suez Canal, Cairo, the Rock of Gibraltar, Dover, Acapulco and Honolulu. I had an English imagination.

Mother watched me from a lookout tower—the dining room window—often while she fed the twinnies. This was my post during Brisbane storms.

7. CAMP: ON A CLEAR DAY YOU CAN SEE FOREVER. 2002
A room with a view. A room of polystyrene that features a large photographic image embedded in an ice block. In the image, an ‘Eskimo’ figurine and a husky pup peer out from a shelter constructed of polystyrene.

Where is this living room? Is it inside the photographic image or are we in an igloo-like living room looking out into a northern light?

Is it a designer living room from the pages of Wallpaper where one comfortably dreams of an exotic other?

Or is it a feature wall in a global living room, always the talking point, the social lubricant, the ice-breaker?
8. CAMP  I LIKE TO CAMP, I LIKE TO CLIMB BIG MOUNTAINS. 2002
My low-slung temporary dwelling is a three-sided cubby house, igloo-like and constructed from found polystyrene packaging of various dimensions and forms. The interior walls have cavities that shelve items not usually taken on an outdoor camping adventure—lucky charms, jewel box, photo album, framed photo, crystals, stress balls—some of the personal baggage that might support a timid or faint-hearted orienteer if mixed fortune is experienced in the great outdoors. But the scepticism ends. Evidence of an intrepid spirit is underfoot as a foam rubber ‘ground cover’ provides a cushy foundation for an idyllic romp in nature. The summit beckons. CAMP is at the foothills of a magnificent mountain of polystyrene: Heidi’s Matterhorn, Hilary’s Everest. Not for the faint-hearted, this vision splendid camouflages a mire of fridge shelving, moulded hooks, and rubber stoppers. Ignore the bunk-bed ladder and conquer at your peril. There is no support system for a formidable nature.

I looked forward to applying to Gertrude as an annual event. I was unsuccessful, perennially, but my applications describing these imagined exhibitions brought them into existence at other galleries in Melbourne, Auckland, Edinburgh, Hong Kong.

9. UNSTABLE TABLE. 2005
An Australian landscape on a table: a baroque cluster of wooden ornaments, hand-carved and manufactured, lines the skirting of an upturned settler’s table.

In this parched landscape objects are trophies of culture and conquest stripped of their varnish and bled dry: instability in boundaries geographical and domestic, laid bare.

This work, exhibited at Para/site Hong Kong, was a surprising fit for the precinct of Hollywood Rd and Tung Wah hospital with its trinkets and antique shops, coffin makers and votive stores.

In my applications, new words like duress and teetering, submerging and excising, described a burgeoning practice. And phrases cavalier: I perform operations on everyday materials according to set rules that I invent.
In those days, I would sometimes write narrative in the first person and sometimes in the third person; on occasion I would use inverted commas to quote myself.

*While Hubbard has a particular fascination with fitting and turning, it is measuring that matters most.*

*Hubbard’s HorseSTABLEtableBED will use the processes and materials in the care of horses to create stability and order in an upturned bed. It remains unmade. The tranquil and comfortable spaces that we make can provoke discomfort.*

My exhibition proposals received a higher-class of rejection letter when I adopted the language of art and formalism:

*... a fat floor drawing of dynamic composition. Optical play and spatial elements emphasized through planar and linear forms.*

*... a critical position or moment where surfaces meet abruptly on the brink or verge of action.*

However, when I used the language of the poetic personal, along with art and formalism, my exhibitions were reviewed:

*... two sides of a table in an equine landscape draws tension between abstraction and feeling: one, a floor drawing mapping an open gate, tumble-weed and horse in chain; the other, an upright field of trophies and score keeping.*
12. BRICK|HEDGING|EDGING. 2004
Walk hurried.
Wrong leg.
Uneven trot on straight diagonal.
Seat and hands fair, dressage assuages.
Figure. The basic unit of training.
Ground. A bridled horse loose in the paddock.

... a space compressed and buoyant with maritime utilities abstracted in form. A floor drawing of found objects in a reduced and muted palette; like the composition in Dali’s landscape of clocks, Persistence of Memory; like the austerity and stillness in the paintings of Morandi.

13. BEACHED. 2004
A mud flat after the tide has gone out; mangrove swamps and boat ramps, their smells and textures, like a heightened sexual awareness; like when Bogart sees the prim Katherine Hepburn dragging the battered tugboat onto shore, mosquito bitten and exhausted in The African Queen, John Huston’s Hollywood melodrama of 1951.
Louise Bourgeois said

> every day you have to abandon your past or accept it and then if you cannot accept it, you become a sculptor.\(^2^0\)

She also said:

> an artist’s words are always to be taken cautiously\(^2^1\).

I take words cautiously. Some days I am a sculptor.

14. PINCH STICK. 2005

The house at 27 Jevons Street The Gap
Between Waterworks and Payne.
A light over the house, under the TV towers.
Waterworks. Pain.
How could I forget\(^2^2\)

> Outside, outerspace, out of sight, out of time, out of my head,
Outerbridge, under the volcano.\(^2^3\)

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\(^2^2\) I have an iceberg theory: when I divulge the ‘personal’, it is inversely proportionate to what remains hidden.

Louise Bourgeois urged me to embrace the emotional pull of materials: name the object and call it by its name.

I went into the studio to name my object: I picked up my husband’s fitball. A paradox of identity, the fitball is both a gentle support for the body in its endless pursuit of fitness AND a pumped-up domestic obstruction. Best kept under chain when off duty.

Bruce Nauman famously said what makes the work interesting is if you choose the right questions. Then as you proceed the answers are what’s interesting. How do you determine the right questions in order to proceed? That’s the hard part said Bruce. You have to start somewhere. If you choose the wrong question and you proceed you still get a result, but it’s not interesting.

I heard Louise shout: call the fitball to account and get on with it.

And so, I turned to my fitball and asked:

*How fit are you?*

*Can you hold the wall?*

*What is your capacity?*

*Maximum load?*

*Life expectancy?*

*You claim support benefits?*

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25 Ibid.
15. **STUCK. 2005**
A boogie board and a fitball pinned by a ‘shooters’ stick.
Between a glass wall and a hard place
Forced to fit.

16. **STACK. 2005**
Tables fit, tilt and wilt.
A fitball fits.
They cling to handkerchiefs of lavender scent, a boat, a buoy, a blue moon.

17. **MOUNT. 2005**
On Deception Bay an able seaman clings to his upturned boat, the outboard motor rotor waving.

18. **STUCK IN DUDSPACE. 2013**

19. **STUCK IN DUDSPACE STILL (video). 2018**
Nauman’s idea of choosing the right question got under my skin.

In my conference presentation *Like Readymades* 2013, I explained my idea of Nauman’s idea of choosing the right question. It starts with a toothpick. Think of a toothpick.

If I asked a toothpick what it wants to be, it might say—a pack. A packet: confidence in numbers; not the chosen one pulled from the pack, entered into some orifice, bent, spent and discarded. When American artist Tom Friedman meditated on a toothpick, his toothpick wanted to be reflexive, a comment on itself.

Thirty thousand toothpicks later, Friedman provided a way to release the toothpick from its humble self to become a *star*, titled *Untitled 1995*.

It is simultaneously a pack of toothpicks (actually many packets) and a starburst. As a starburst the toothpick says *look at me, no hands*. But it is merely posturing. It is no closer to emitting light. It has not been released from itself; it’s simply having a moment in the sun.

Friedman subjected the toothpick to an inquiry of its possible states of being, addressing it from an understanding of its usefulness as an object while subjecting it to *my* understanding of misery and aspiration.

Ridiculous in effect.

Pathetic actually.

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26 Lou Hubbard *Like Readymades*, AAANZ conference VCA, University of Melbourne December 7–9, 2013.
2. WRITING ABOUT MY WORK AFTER IT IS MADE

My video HACK is consciously pathetic too.
And gravely literal.²⁷

HACK was the first video I exhibited as artwork.
HACK did not use the conventions from my filmmaking past.
HACK was not imagined through the act of writing.

When I received the gift of four rubber horses, words came flooding into my head.
But I did not commit those words to paper.
I wrote about HACK after I experienced it as a projected image.
The text HACK is distinguished by a newly obtained confidence in my subject. I
neither abandoned my past, nor accepted it. I began to toy with it.

HACK is a series of episodes in the systematic training of a three centimetre moulded
rubber horse. I manipulated a small rubber horse over and through a series of obstacles.
I used simple means and it delivered me a visceral and emotional experience.

The horse is subjected to a regimen of horrific acts of control and duress,
measurement and fitness as its body is variously hurled, pulled, squashed and
dropped into a field of obstacles. Relentless tugging affects the horse’s shape and
balance as it deforms, at times pulling it into flatness or rendering it an
indistinguishable mass. The horse’s tensile nature is exploited in various spatial
fields as it completes each ‘show trial’ in continuous time.
In some episodes real time appears to be thickened and slowed into space²⁸.

HACK: made in Paris at the Cité residency.
And I knew I had something affecting.
On Rue de Rivoli I bumped into an Australian artist and blurted out: Guess what David
I’ve made a video!

²⁷ I coined this term in a group tutorial, VCA 2005 after I described a student’s murky large-scale scanner print as
having the depth of an ocean at night, like after the sinking of the Titanic - bits of ‘stuff’ bobbing about; flesh flattened
on the flatbed scanner. Thumb in mouth. It was an idea of calling something out for its serious pictorial and
illusionary qualities - perhaps hinting at the numinous - yet confident that its affect went beyond the literal.
HACK is visceral and draws on primitive involuntary physical reactions. I have described it variously:

*The spectator’s autonomic discomfort is tried and tested as different objects are subjected to various physical pressures: dragged through a series of obstacles. As exercises in submission and subordination, the video’s events take place in the disciplinary spaces where subjectivity and knowledge are formed.*

*HACK is concerned with training and trauma in temporal space: the uneasy body. I asked myself how I could make a video artwork express the dynamics of force, compression and restraint, using formal, structural, and sculptural devices.*

*HACK foregrounds the psychological space of sentimentality. Its conceptual and material development was influenced by the artistic legacies of Eadweard Muybridge, Marcel Duchamp and Samuel Beckett.*

![HACK (video). 2006](image)

As a young school kid, I acted out sporting regimes that mimicked adult behaviours of authority, precision and brute force.

My twin sisters at three years of age were horses harnessed in tandem. I whipped them over jumps of sticks and bricks.29

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29 My bemused parents blamed television — *The 3 Stooges, not National Velvet.*
A curator once asked if I had other video works like HACK. Yes, I have DANNY BOY DOG, a toy dog that plays Danny Boy on the piano; and TURTLE, a turtle sand box that gets run over by a fork lift. DEPORTMENT too, a grave account of a bobble-head dog that undergoes training to correct its moto perpetuo nodding.

21. TURTLE (video). 2006
At the hazard zone entry to an industrial site, a fork lift charges at a plastic turtle sandbox. Shattered to bits, the fork lift returns and as it passes the mess of shards, the turtle is reformed—made whole again. The resurrection is short lived as the fork lift charges again in an endless game: marking time, on the spot.

22. DEPORTMENT (video). 2007
A bobble-head dog is subject to repetitive, escalating discipline as it undergoes training to correct its nodding head.

Our foxy roared at the wheels of moving vehicles.
One Saturday morning Mother cried ‘enough’ and my eldest sister drove him to the vet. That was that then.

23. DANNY BOY DOG (video). 2008/12
The bobble-head dog nods mournfully to the sound of Londonderry Air played on a violin.

The dog repeats the tune on the piano, achieving the right note with a firm hand at its neck: head to the keyboard and a snout-jab to the key.
I like referring to my works in crude terms. And I like titles—let them be caught up in the ambiguity of an effectuation. Let titles open a door and offer entry. Not an explanation.

24. BALD. (video) 2007

*Itchy scalp*

*Hairy legs*

*Greasy hair*\(^{30}\)

![Image of BALD video]

25. E.T. 2007

Stick a pair of nail scissors in the handle of a floor lamp.
Point the floor lamp to the wall.
Press two drawing pins in the wall opposite.
When the lamp is powered, believe it or not there, on the wall the apparition of E.T.

![Image of E.T.]

26. SCISSOR CHAIR. 2007

Scissors enter a barstool.
Two-tone yolk leatherette punctured wounded.
A barstool stuck with nail scissors enters a gallery wound up.

![Image of SCISSOR CHAIR]

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My BEAT ME TAP ME series is titled after Bruce Nauman’s artwork *Make Me Think Me*: four words drawn and redrawn on board—emphatic in black lines, raw—from a period when his titles and language games sometimes turned into instructions: *Violin Violence; Shit in Your Hat—Head on a Chair*31. Sometimes the lettering was reversed—as in *Pay Attention Motherfuckers*—to be read from the inside; the artist addressing himself and, in turn, us.

27. BEAT ME (video). 2008
I sit at my snare drum and whisk half a dozen egg whites to the beat of a Renaissance dance.

28. TAP ME (video). 2008
Mother’s quavering voice sings *O Sole Mio* as her hand taps a modern sensor lamp like a metronome, like a lighthouse, siren.

29. BORE ME32 (video). 2008
I have to excise a ring from the head, like removing a tick from the family dog.

30. CLAW ME (video). 2008
Through a shower screen and the focal point of a blood red ring, an electric toothbrush agitates like bowing vibrato.

31. PAUSE-SCRATCH (4 channel video). 2008
Like the habits of busy hands scaling fish, scratching ‘scratch-its,’ scoring crossword puzzles and singing *Vilja* from *The Merry Widow.*


32 BORE ME video in further detail p 40.
The BEAT ME TAP ME series of videos are raw and painfully repetitious and, some have said, physically uncomfortable to watch. However, these works focus on technical finesse through the act of repeat motion—‘the right touch’ of sensory manipulation—to transform a body into a functioning mechanism.

As I work through my DVD box set of Claudio Abbado’s Mahler Symphonies, Lucerne Concert Hall annual festival of individual virtuosos in one orchestra, I witness this functioning mechanism ‘lift off’ into poetry and ecstasy: the conductor, the players, and ultimately the audience. Abbado appears gaunt like a smoked trout (relying on a tube for nutrition, post-surgery for stomach cancer). In Symphony No. 9, recorded in 2010, I experience something that moves me to watch it over and over. I am moved to write. I am moved to Google to see if others were moved to write too. Paul Gent, for the London Telegraph, wrote best:

... the texture thinned to a spectral web. Several times, the music seemed to stutter to an exhausted halt. At last, the strings whispered the final phrase, almost inaudibly. And nothing happened. Abbado kept his arms raised, the players held their instruments in position. I almost forgot to breathe. Then, slowly, he lowered his hands and the musicians put down their instruments. And still nothing happened. The rapt audience sat in silence, unwilling to break the mood, for maybe two minutes it felt twice as long to me—an eternity in the concert hall. At last the applause started and went on even longer than the silence.

In 2008, I got the call from Gertrude Contemporary. My time had come. I was invited to have a solo exhibition.

But not with the work pitched in my application.

They did not want my video spectacular BEAT ME TAP ME in the main space. They were offering a street frontage: a space for a sculpture; and a video on a monitor, not a projection. The front window of a busy street in urban Melbourne is serious art house real estate: a 24hr drive-by to pull in a new audience day and night, if I could find the right work. I dug deep looking for that body of work and found BORE ME, a video made only months earlier and still fresh: not yet exhibited.

---

33 Looped for extra irritation!
35 My timings: After the last note, Abbado and musicians remained motionless for 2:27 minutes. Crowd applause: 7:27 minutes.
The video BORE ME shows in close up detail, like keyhole surgery, a ring extracted from a head (actually a human hair wig stretched over a rock-melon). Some words were uttered at the time I received the ring and scribbled onto paper just hours later.


\[\text{When I received the ring, a gift, it was gorgeous, an engorgement like a blood blister and I knew I had to remove it from the head like removing a tick from the family dog.}\]

As in the days of polystyrene, this was my instruction to self on how to proceed in the studio: how to make the work. And make it effective. To affect me, the maker: the first person to receive the work. BORE ME was the keystone work in developing the exhibition for Gertrude Contemporary. BORE ME gave me the place I wanted to go, but I needed to find a pathway to get me there. I set about laying a material and spatial foundation for BORE ME.

The result was LACKNESS: a spine of tumours under the lights of an operating theatre.

\[\text{32. LACKNESS (with BORE ME). 2009} \]

\[\text{The blackest hair is parted and plucked -} \]
\[\text{a ring levered from the roots like a ring top pull can.} \]
\[\text{Melon oozes in a flood lit theatre as a neurosurgeon extracts a tooth from a footballer’s scalp.} \]
\[\text{A lone soccer player, sidelined, tilts at the light.} \]
The Pathologist and the Husband is the catalogue essay I wrote for LACKNESS. It uses the language of anatomical pathology to annotate the potential alive within my assortment of props.

THE PATHOLOGIST AND THE HUSBAND

In my husband’s absence I made a sculpture. I threw a bit at it: glass light shades, a bank of shower-screens, a larger-than-life sized turtle watching a video, a tv-dinner tray, a cast-iron casserole pot, 4 floor lamps, 2 cut-glass salad bowls, a nest of tables, a figurine soccer player. The sculpture grew into a spine of tumours under the lights of an operating theatre.

Length: eight metres. Name: GLASSNESS.

My husband returned. My sculpture was in storage. I told him about GLASSNESS and my flirtation with the word Laxness, after the Icelandic novelist Halldór Laxness. Later that evening in a climactic flash, the sculpture appeared: GLASSNESS blazing and in full view. I recognized its form as my husband at once standing, kneeling and prostrate, knuckle on bone, finger in well, under the glacier. GLASSNESS became LACKNESS.

This experience lingers in my mind. I have a video BORE ME for which I’d like some explanation, a moment of LACKNESS. But so far there’s been no epiphany. Yet BORE ME inspired LACKNESS. It is a component of LACKNESS and it’s got under my skin. Its symptoms are plain: the ring was a gift; it looks like an engorgement; I have to excise it from the head, like removing a tick from the family dog.

After hearing about a neurosurgeon who extracted a tooth from a footballer’s scalp, I consult a doctor. Actually, I ask a pathologist who had earlier assisted my Master’s research by providing images of hair bezoars removed from the human stomach.

THE PATHOLOGIST

Subject: bore me
Date: Sat, 18 Oct 2008 05:18:58
From: george
To: lou_hubbard

I saw:

36 Lou Hubbard The Pathologist and The Husband
37 That old tick line again; this time from the body of the catalogue.
38 Small stony concretions found in the stomach of some animals (and schoolkids who habitually suck on their pigtails).
hair fingers false scalp (too many hairs per follicle)
fingers stroking gradually developing dome shaped tumescence
(mildly erotic)
plucking (shades of Lysistrata) stretching stretching (anxiety)
bursting out of red dome (relief-birth of baby’s head equivalent) awkward prolonged forceps delivery of rest of ring (high anxiety) greasy stuff on ring and skin like vernix caseosa (strengthens birth analogy)
ring on finger— which finger?? Is the finger a penis?

When I was at school the most erotic and therefore the most pawed book in the library contained Lysistrata in which the Greek women “plucked their motties smooth” to make themselves sexually irresistible then withhold favours until the men agreed to refrain from war.

Heigh Ho – I’ll keep you posted George

From: Louise Hubbard
Sent  Saturday, 18 October 2008
11:45:28 PM
To: George

George—Lysistrata reminds me—someone from culture and theory studies told one of my students to look up a story by Denis Diderot. So I did. You probably know it—The Indiscreet Jewels (French: Les bijoux indiscrets—the first novel by Denis Diderot, published anonymously in 1748. It’s an allegory that portrays Louis XV as the sultan Mangogul of the Congo who owns a magic ring that makes women's genitals ("jewels") talk. The magic ring requires each woman's body to speak the truth about her affairs39 (shades of Oprah).

Curiously or not, I have been blind to the birthing.

Until next instalment,

L

Subject: RE: bore me
Date: Mon, 20 Oct 2008 16:42:41 +1000
From: george
To: lou_hubbard

Hi Lou

Depilate from L depilare; L pilus means hair (Don't tell me you did latin or I will jealousise!)
It occurs to me that some few decades ago women giving birth had their pubes shaved in the mistaken belief that it would reduce puerperal infections—it actually made them worse! The Big Nurses of the day gave it up reluctantly, I believe.

A depilation to prepare for the birth of a bijou indiscret which is then slipped onto the finger of a latter-day Louis? And so on.

G

From: Louise Hubbard
Sent Monday, 20 October 2008 8:47:21 PM
To: George

Firstly, no latin trauma. I know nothing about nothing except for the life and times of Sam Beckett—more nothing.

Secondly, I'll concede the birth analogy is stacking up. Or maybe you've roused in me the scent of depilation and the latter-day Louis.

Thirdly, when I clapped eyes on the ring, a gift, it was an engorgement. "...it's gorgeous, it's a blood blister". And I knew I had to remove it from the head, like a tick.

And that's all I know. L
Date: Tue, 21 Oct 2008 16:17:15 +1000
From: george
To: lou_hubbard

OK
Denis Diderot
Magic ring/genitals/jewels/talk/VAGINA MONOLOGUES!

From: Louise Hubbard
Sent Tuesday, 21 October 2008 6:35:28 PM
To: George

George. Seriously bloody. And Funny. I'm done with Diderot. L

I seek a second opinion from another type of doctor, a critical theorist specializing in practices of the Self. His unorthodox procedures bedazzle artists who bring him their toughest conceptual conundrums. But I can't get an appointment for months—so I take up the matter with my husband. I ask him what he saw in BORE ME that so pained him.

THE HUSBAND
discomfort without pain
the extreme discomfort of knowing no pain human
discomfort
tweezers tearing hair from skin fingers pushing and stretching the skin
over a hidden shape: a ball, a tumour the skin stretching till translucent till a small hole appears even then stretching more
discomfort felt first in the genitals like a line drawn up and pulled
drawn like a thread through the flesh stretching until it sighs with a slight pop the dark sphere appears a dull gleam as another instrument lifts it finally lifts the ring and its dark red stone out of the skin flaked and tired.
how long can I stand this.
3. WRITING FOR OTHER ARTISTS WHEREIN I TALK ABOUT MYSELF

WHEN I SAY ME I MEAN YOU.

When I write texts for other artists, my tendency is to write about me. The actualisation of someone else’s story calls at times for MY story. For effect!

In the catalogue essay Susan Jacobs Melts Wizards⁴⁰, for Susan Jacobs’ exhibition Hard Age New Edge 2010, I identify Susan’s curiosity and primal pleasure in materials’ resistance and yield, yet I draw on stories from my experience to make tangible some of the complexities in Susan’s impulse and desire to transform materials.

(excerpt)...When I had my first experience with the power of caustic soda, I was home alone. An adult, in my own home.

I asked myself: why scrub this aluminium stovetop espresso machine?

The word caustic I knew as criticism long before I understood it as agency.

So this is what I did.

I plunged the espresso machine into a bath of caustic to get rid of the stubborn stains.

And it did—along with the entire apparatus. Result: 100% zero. The witch had truly melted. I stood before a substance that could reduce a robust object to a few specks in the laundry trough in a matter of hours. These days I know to use New Age solutions to age-old problems. I will not even use caustic soda to unclog soap hair from the drain. But the urge is there. Like paint stripper, the bubbling up and evaporation of matter into vapor is the bit that bicarb can’t deliver.

WHEN I SAY YOU I MEAN LOU

When Erika Scott asked me to write an essay for No Wonder, her solo exhibition in Brisbane, we began an email correspondence between Brisbane and Antwerp where I was resident during an icy winter. I felt simpatico with Erika’s interest in Glassness and Gapness. More precisely: Gap Filler. Erika discovered that I too was from Brisbane, and a suburb called The Gap, referenced in this excerpt from the catalogue essay Wonder in the World of Erika Scott⁴¹

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⁴¹ Lou Hubbard Wonder in the World of Erika Scott (Brisbane: Metro Arts, 2013), 2
Please Mind the Gap Please. Traveling by train from St Pancras to Heathrow, I heard the familiar warning ‘please mind the gap’ repeatedly, but now as if for the first time. What of this gap-space or gap-time between under or above some other matter? Bridge the Gap. Fill the Gap. No More Gaps! When I was seventeen years and seven months, I slipped through the gap. NO MORE GAP. I left The Gap a transitory, indeterminate zone: a Brisbane suburb nestled in the gap between two mountains. Flanked by a quarry and a dam, my Gap also had an exact point of entry and exit. For me, no more shrinking and cracking. Just fall out.

33. VIEW OF FUJI. 2015

WHEN I WRITE ABOUT PAINTING I HANG THERE TOO

Painting can affect me this way.

Notes for a floor talk, Ian Potter Centre National Gallery Victoria 2017.

TATTOO (1986/87) Rosslynd Piggott, Australian Collection.

Tattoo depicts a woman bare, theatrical and risen. She hangs from a high bar, her body bled and drawn with hearts as organ: not love hearts here, not indelible ink and love. Piggott’s hearts are meat cut adrift, lifeless. One of the painted hearts depicts a small curtain parted, like the cinched curtain, Baroque red, framing the stage, the painting mostly.

Tattoo was painted when I could hang from a high bar. But recently when I tried this, my organs slumped like a balloon sagging from the weight of water in its belly.
Monday, 30 September 2013 at 11:00 pm

Dear Conference Convenor,

I am an artist participating in the MUMA exhibition Re-inventing the Wheel: The Readymade Century.

MUMA’s Public Programs officer suggested I might do a presentation at the AAANZ conference around my practice of making sculpture and video from found objects and materials, and the potential for these works to carry a libidinous power (I am not such a good judge of this but I am happy for someone to argue the point).

However, I can speak as an artist to the various processes inherent in my practice: finding and selecting objects; enacting training regimes; performing operations; mounting a rescue. I could elaborate on processes whereby I abandon or fail the object. I may turn off the camera or life support.

I am currently interested in the relationships of works S. BABS 11 (2011) which I made in response to John Meade’s Screw Babs (edition 50/2010). We are showing these two works in a group show in Melbourne in September. I happen to also own John’s Screw Babs (#49). Lately I’ve been considering the consequences that might follow if one day I should use John’s Screw Babs in an art work of mine—just as I might use another furnishing or object, whole or operated upon.

In 2003, with a series of works Insult to Injury, Jake and Dinos Chapman altered a set of Goya’s Disasters of War etchings by adding funny faces. As a protest against this piece, Aaron Barschak (who later gate-crashed Prince William’s 21st birthday party dressed as Osama bin Laden in a frock) threw a pot of red paint over Jake Chapman during a talk he was giving in May 2002.42

Is this taking a Duchampian legacy too far? To fail in art. To fail the artist. To fail oneself.

I did present at the conference. And my paper, Like Readymades, in which I asked the question what a toothpick wants to be, also described my encounter with an object, its identity fully disclosed to me upon its selection. And yet again, here now, I enlist the email as a congenial form to uncover a curious praxis at play: how do I practise the practice?

---

Hi Lou,

I have a young writer interested in doing a review of our show and she has a few questions about the Screw Babs trio of works. I just wanted to check a couple of facts with you about the anecdote behind the work before I reply to her questions:

As I understood it, you found the elements of your version of the Screw Babs at Gertrude (?) during your show in 2009 (?) as an almost-readymade. With a little bit of re-configuring you adjusted it to resemble John’s original as a kind of tongue-in-cheek tribute. Have I got this right?

Also, you are now the proud owner of all three of the Babs’ correct?

Thanks Lou!

I reply promptly.

Hi Brooke

I am loving this Knock-On effect.

It was December 2011. I had been at Gertrude Contemporary for a couple of days, sitting on the annual studio selection committee when BABS caught my eye. I knew I had to have it. John had released Screw Babs as a Gertrude edition43 a year ago. I had been present at the edition’s launch and was taken by the piece, but at that time did not feel the need to own it.

Yes, I noticed the CD rack on a shelf while Screw Babs, was being boxed. I asked if I could have it too. No need to wrap it. When I got the parcels home, I set to work on the CD rack. I had thought it was pretty right just as it came, but I undid the screws and turned the ‘fringe around’ to be more like John’s44. A tongue-in-cheek gesture for sure, yet I was compelled to make this work no less than any other work. I signed it S. BABS 2011 after Duchamp’s signature on his Fountain work R. MUTT 1917. I photographed the piece alongside John’s BABS. Then I felt a bit shy about the whole thing. Yet I did want John to know I had bought Screw Babs, 49/50 and that I had made an homage: S BABS 11. So after a few drinks at the School of Art Xmas party, I got out my phone and showed John a photo of my Babs. He laughed.

My Babs is the pageboy cut I always wanted;
Your Babs is the combover I settled for.

43 An artist is commissioned to make an edition of artworks for the annual Gertrude Contemporary fundraiser.
44 It became apparent, through the email exchange (which sparked a conference paper, 2 lectures and artist pages) that my encounter over a counter at Gertrude Contemporary was driven by that leitmotif: hair.
But my Babs did not quite make a lasting impression. Several years later when our Babs are curated into *The Knock-Off Show*, John sent me an image of his Babs and asks what *is* my Babs exactly?

What happened next strangely skewed ‘everything’.

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*Subject:* RE: Knock-off show painting  
*Date:* Wed, 25 Sep 2013 21:40:29 +1000

*Hi Lou,*

*My name is Kez Hughes, I remember your name from when I studied at VCA around 2005 but unfortunately never got the chance to meet you. We have both been curated into "The Knock Off Show" for this October.*

*My practice is to paint other Artist's work as part of a long running documentary project. I work from photos or screen shots and repaint artwork in a realist style in oil. Please take a look at my Blog to see past paintings of Artist's work that will be familiar to you. kezhughes.tumblr.com/*

*Could you let me know if you would be interested in having your piece "Screw Babs II" appropriated and repainted for "The Knock Off Show"? I understand you have worked in collaboration with John Meade so I am not sure if a painting of your work will sit well contextually with the relationship between your two pieces.*

*If you are interested, I will need a high res image of "Screw Babs II" to paint from and I would be painting the piece at around 14" x 18". I title all my reproductions with your name and the title of the Artwork. If you have any hesitation or further queries, then please*
email me or give me a call. I understand that this idea may not be something you have had to consider before and I would be grateful for your time.

I did not give this proposition a second’s thought. When the lunch hour light was right, I shot a ‘studio’ portrait of my BABS on the office desk.

And yes Brooke, I am the proud owner of all three Babs.

An oil painting by Kez Hughes.

Detail: my Sharpie pen signature S. BABS 2011 (after R MUTT 1917), painted with fidelity by Kez Hughes.
4. WRITING ABOUT PLACE

Confucius said: Wherever you go, go with all your heart. But in the ambiguity of an effectuation, or a Chinese whisper, it may have become: Wherever you go, there you are.

My Dad’s joke goes:

Me: Are we there yet?
Father: No, we are always here.

On 18th March 2011, a twin bedroom was booked for one night only at the inner city Kangaroo Motel, Brisbane, to host an exhibition, Soft Site. The motel proprietor was unaware of the curators’ plans. I participated in this one-night stand from afar and mailed some fitting artworks and some words.

37. CUP-EYES & CROCS. 2011

In a Brisbane motel room grim pleasure awaits.
On the bed, eyeballs are cupped on fresh towels.
On the bedside table, crocodiles snap at their clips.

SAY CHALET. NOW SAY HOTEL MOTEL

I make works about compression and intimacy. So the hotel/motel interior is a perfect fit. The room is temporary but necessary—human shelter reduced to the essentials: bed, bath, toilet, bar fridge, kettle, air-con. And a locked door. Despite efforts to clean up and get out by 10am, traces of our pathetic, mortal beings remain, secreted, wedged, lost—phone chargers, belts, tissues, finger nails, hair balls. Recently I was holed up in a mountain chalet during summer in Melbourne. My husband booked a room with sweeping views of the valley, but fog and rain reduced visibility to twenty metres and prevented our leaving.
Trapped in the room, we watched the Queensland floods on TV.
MY HUSBAND’S STORY CALLS ME TO ACCOUNT.

It was in our Barcelona kitchen, during a spring studio residency, that he described an incident. It set off in me a chain of responses that I was compelled to understand by making an artwork, nine months later during an Antwerp winter. 

I can tell you the story vividly. Its physical descriptions affected me in the way that I’m drawn to certain objects and spaces that pursue me until the what and why of the relationship between it and me can be let go.

But months later I asked my husband to give me an account of the incident while I recorded it on video. When he got to the ‘funny bit’, the bit that had him gasping for air, struggling to continue, and me on the kitchen floor in a stitch, he turned his head away from me, restraining a smirk, paused, turned back to me and continued. His telling is remarkably plain for a 210cm tall-storyteller of daily encounters in a world impatient with his size and the space he occupies. This is the transcript:

Yet another incident occurred to me that has something to do with my height - pretty much. This time it was at a set of lights in Barcelona at a street called Balmes near where we were living. And as I got to the corner the pedestrian light had turned to red, don’t walk, and so I stopped and put my arm out to sort of prop myself up against the post waiting for the light to turn green. That was when I put my left arm up and sort of leant against the post. When the light eventually did turn green of course I stepped off the curb, meanwhile taking my arm down. However, as my arm came down, I felt something under my armpit. And what I felt in my armpit was the hairy head of a person and as I looked around I saw that it was in fact a rather elderly gentleman with a full head of hair and a sports jacket, quite well dressed, and he was muttering, and not very happy. But I saw that he was OK and hadn’t been hurt in any way so after a brief—I guess—hesitation as I looked back I just kept walking and he didn’t pursue me. There were no bystanders yelling at me to come back and look at the damage I had done to this gentleman, so I just kept walking and I didn’t look back again and that was the last I saw of this particular gentleman. I made it across to the other side of the street and walked briskly on.

I was a little disappointed with my husband’s formal statement of fact and, hoping to draw him out, I changed tack:

45 I am still making this work.
And you were wearing a t-shirt and he was wearing a sports coat OR were you wearing a singlet top.

No I don’t wear singlet tops!

That may well be his official version. This is mine.

ANGLE OF INCIDENCE: At 11:10am a man (A) waits to cross the road at the traffic lights. He leans against a post (X) with his arm (Y) extended. At 11:12am a man (B) comes along and stands between A and X. When the light turns green A steps off and lowers his arm. When the light turns green B is struck from above and buckles. You were wearing a t-shirt and he was wearing a sports jacket: is that right? Or were you wearing a singlet top? No I don’t wear singlet tops. Tank top? Not a tank top? Yeah, a tank top with a packet of Marlboros up the sleeve. That’s right. That’s my gang bait style! No, I can’t really remember. Yes a t-shirt was properly torn. As my lever rested there he must have shuffle-gated along and stood in the shadow in the lee of my arm a pit too close for comfort and as my swat came down *bingo* boomgate his head/hair/wire/ soap-pad got sandwiched in my skin of forearm and the first I knew of it was when I stepped off the curb and my lover naturally came down from the post and he didn’t shuffle/buckle/scratch/ pursue me and there were no bystanders barking at me to come back felt bad felt pad and look at the damage I had done to this tender loin so I just kept scuttling without a look smack back again. At the southern corner of the intersection of Carre Paris and Carre d’Enric Granados, Barcelona, a couple of gentlemen are caught by surprise in a relationship between variables arising from the special condition of their problem. The smaller of the two grumbles a few words of complaint in a language the other one does not understand. The taller man offers a perfunctory apology and keeps walking without looking back.

This written text, just read now, is undergoing treatment to become a screen text for a video to be read as image on a surface of moving images: The relationship of the variables arising from the special condition of their problem is the problem of the video. From so many angles, this humble story, so hilarious back in the Barcelona kitchen, is caught up in the ambiguity of an effectuation. It has got under my skin. As I convert oral sign to its printed counterpart into screen liquidity, I am on the verge of an evacuation.

Then bingo: a few years later a billboard commission opens a window of possibility. An image transported to Australia from Antwerp becomes a portal that folds in space and time: a window
turned billboard turned window turned portal.46 This is the angle of an incident that will suffice for now. I transform my husband into the Accidental Hero. Brick upon brick, open to readings over time and weather.

38. ACCIDENTAL HERO. 2017

A Melbourne billboard has been bricked up with a slice of Antwerp history.

39. ACCIDENTAL HERO was filmed at the historic lock keeper’s house in Antwerp.

The Billboard image ACCIDENTAL HERO is a looping and an accumulation of site and purpose. What are we looking at? Different bricks: a trompe l’oeil not painted, but a photograph. It is a ‘still’ from ANGLE OF INCIDENCE, that video work in progress—its ‘control bar’ a nod to the prominent barcode on the building.

40. ANGLE OF INCIDENCE (that video still)

Standing in the open window, my ‘accidental hero’ is a long way from the port of Antwerp.

And, in another fold in space and time, a long way from a set of lights in Barcelona at a street called Balmes.

My husband stands in full view of Russell St 24/7, like other figures seen on high: popes, royalty, despots, rockstars, Julian Assange.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING? I’M GOING TO SEE A MAN ABOUT A DOG.

Taboo encounters, dangerous liaisons and mixed business in the passage to a back-alley appointment: private dental, podiatry, refugee and asylum seeker help, shoe repairs. Wanna buy a lotto ticket?

I was looking for an angle to describe my exhibition ATT: MAIN RECEPTION, LEVEL 1, 12 WARATAH PL, MELBOURNE VIC 300047, so I Googled dread and anticipation but somehow hit enter before typing in Virginia Woolf.

The top search result was unBloomsbury yet sweetly coincidental: Adam Kucharski’s essay The science of dread: anticipating pain makes it worse48. Kucharski cites researchers who “looked at what happens when people can delay a painful experience much further into the future. The participants were given a hypothetical scenario in which they had to schedule an appointment for a painful dental procedure”49.

So I wrote to Dr Adam Kucharski | Research Fellow| Mathematical Epidemiology| London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine.

18/5/2016.

Dear Dr Kucharski,

In your 2013 article "The Science of Dread" you suggest dread could be a form of ‘stimulus substitution’. Perhaps you and your team would be interested in my most recent research on this topic?

If you are in Melbourne between May 25 and June 11, 2016, I invite you to examine artworks of teeth and feet in my exhibition:

Att: Main Reception, Level 1, 12 Waratah Pl Melbourne 3000.

As you enter from street level mind the large step. It requires an upward lunge and, for me, a very deep breath that I hold for the entire climb to Level 1. This quells the ‘episodes’ where my heart quickens, and my conscience stirs on the brink of doing something bad. Bad bad, like that time at the embassy in Budapest or the library in Kraków.

Impatience so bad you want it over. Done with.

Now.

49 Ibid.
41. ATT: MAIN RECEPTION LEVEL 1, 12 WARATAH PL, MELBOURNE 3000. 2016

42. (CUTTING) BOARD. 2016

43. (BANDAGE) GREETING. 2016

44. STUCK (IN THE HEAD). 2016

45. CLEAN SHEET (PROCEDURE). 2016
DEPARTED

ACT
DEPARTED ACT

LOU HUBBARD
30 mins Performance Lecture
Australian Centre for Contemporary Art
23rd October 2018.

With AV technician Eric Demetriou, as ‘Eric’.
"Departed Acts at Australian Centre for Contemporary Art"

Lou Hubbard, Nikos Pantazopoulos and Makiko Yamamoto

Opening: Tuesday 23 October 6-8pm

Bus Projects is pleased to present the fourth iteration of Departed Acts, a performance-lecture series at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art that invites Victorian artists, writers and curators to recall the experience of a pivotal exhibition or artwork that has influenced their practice.

Departed Acts embraces poetic, emotional, contentious, and contradictory readings as important components in mnemonic thought processes. It is conducted with varying degrees of visual accompaniment, and with a critical playfulness towards the lecture format. Rather than focusing on objective testimony, Departed Acts embraces the tangential nature of recollection, allowing for the factual and fictitious to intertwine. Intended as an open-ended, train-of-thought exercise, Departed Acts allows space for a personal, freely associative discourse, intending to provide a deeper and more intimate understanding of the creative process. 50

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47. IMAGE ONE PLEASE ERIC. 2018
No! The next one!

48. BEAT ME (video). 2008
A snare of egg whites

49. TWO TONE EGG YOLK LEATHERETTE, SWIVELING BAR STOOL, CIRCA1982, RADIO 3 XY WITH SENNHEISER HEADPHONES. 2008

50. TRAIN CROSSING (video). 2012
In the glare of an oncoming light, a steam train is stuck on the bridge, Spectacles’ Bridge like Bogan’s Crossing.

51. DEPARTED EGGS. 2018
Eggs recently departed.
Eggs separated for Departed Act.
DEPARTED ACT, LOU HUBBARD
is a close reading of my text LIKELY in three acts.

Act 1 LIKE ME
Act 2 LIKE LOU
Act 3 IT LOOKS LIKE IT WILL RAIN

ACT 1 LIKE ME

My Mother is 91. But like, she started going through her things 20 years ago. I got this. *Hold up Celebrated Marches for Piano*. Publisher Allan & Co Australia. 1934. Repasz Band composed by Charles C Sweely, is the only tune from this folio that I heard my Mother play, and only if the mood took her, like on New-Year’s eve, would she agree to sing along to it. Sing the song for me. It is only one line long:

*Go home to your mother you redheaded bugger you don't belong to me.*

Go on sing it, like your mother sang to you.
As the fair-haired child of the family, this was my song,
ACT 2 LIKE LOU

1. The egg separation ceremonial.
   Implore the audience to trust me this will take time. There is order here.

2. Crack egg number 1.
   Separate white.
   Place into bowl.
   Wipe hands.
   Swing chair.

   You may notice the heels of the loafers I am wearing

   are like meringue

   or cuttlefish

   or thick plaster

   like royal icing

   that trims brick churches.
3. Crack egg number 2. Proceed as for egg number 1.

Phill-eep Starck designed my loafers.

A pair like these is under glass in Paris, in the permanent collection at the Pompidou Centre.

4. Crack eggs numbered 3, 4 & 5. Proceed as for egg number 2. Wipe hands after each separation.

My Phil-leep Starck collectables were first worn in the video Beat Me 2008 when I performed whisking a half dozen egg whites.

Image one please Eric.
No!
The next one!

Here I am seated like a drummer
my snare of egg whites
clanched between my thighs.

I whisk the whites with a wire brush
that is sensitive
and responsive
to the softest strokes needed to form
soft peaks;
then with powerful accents and
strokes more vigorous,
I form firm peaks;
eventually whipping like crazy, to form
stiff peaks.

I beat to the thunderous drumming of
a Renaissance Dance playing from a
SAN-YO Boombox.

SAN-YA is the friend who gave me the shoes
after she agreed they didn't fit her
like they should.

5. Crack egg number 6.
Proceed as for egg number 3.

Image 2 please Eric. Thank you.

Here are my Sennheiser headphones
that I wore to listen to the Renaissance
drumming.

Today I am wearing Bose noise-cancelling headphones
for the racket
that is to come.
6. Crack egg number 7.
Proceed as for egg number 6.

My chair, a swiveling 70s bar stool,

from the basement of commercial radio 3XY Melbourne, 1982,

is height adjustable.

Now it is at maximum height for me
to be seen reading. Closely.

In 2007,

I stuck a pair of nail scissors into the seat

and it became an artwork: Scissor Chair.

Image 3 please Eric.

7. Crack egg number 8.
Proceed as for egg number 7.

As you can see my chair is upholstered
in two-tone yellow leatherette.

like egg yolks.

I look at the deep orange yolk of the backrest and imagine the egg is from a pasture-raised hen and, likely, has better nutritional qualities than the yellow yolk of my seat, laid by a caged hen.

8. Crack eggs numbered 9, 10, & 11. Proceed as for eggs numbered 3, 4 & 5

These glasses I am wearing are Alain Mikli Vintage.


Clear lenses, now, but black lenses
when I came across them, under glass, at Selima Optick.

Ope-teak.


The frames struck me.

Like train tracks.

Like vinyl records.

Image 4 please Eric.

See

I chose the train track option

for my artwork Train Crossing.

I chose the vinyl option too.

This remains to be explained.

9. Crack egg number 12.
Proceed as for egg number 11.
Dip hands in water.
Dry hands thoroughly.
In Train Crossing,

a toy steam train, which I

snapped off the top of a pencil sharpener,

is stuck on the tracks unable to cross

the bridge of the spectacle frames.

The sound is stuck too,

Like a vinyl record.

38 seconds of video please Eric.

PRESS PLAY ERIC

Crossings can be exhilarating.

Crossings can be fraught.

10. Turn table 90 degrees
ACT 3 IT LOOKS LIKE IT WILL RAIN

Towards a departure for the art world.

Three crossings. 3 years apart.

Peeks and troughs are forecast.

Prepare headphones.
Place bowl in lap.
Prepare whisk as baton.
Use baton as snare.
Whisk whites one minute.
With twice the egg load as the previous decade,
you may be some time.
Do the best you can.

Eric, please time me.

I am not in art during Post Modernism

in Melbourne 1990.

I am in a gallery

visiting an exhibition of Louises.

Yes, the artists on show have my name.
Louise, Louise, Louise, Louisa, and Louiseann.

Is this an amazing coincidence or,

more likely,

by design?

On the window ledge I find a sheet of paper explaining the exhibition

claiming this and attributing that,

but nowhere does it mention Louise as driving the selection of artists

into this event.

**BEAT furiously, 5 seconds. Headphones on.**

Imagine an exhibition of works on paper that is not about mark making,

but is an exhibition of artists named Mark.

I want to have this matter of Louise

settled but, as an art-world outlier,

I hesitate to bother the attendant at the desk -

it may just be a thing, a 50s, 60s, 70s even, girl's name kinda thing
and the thing least relevant

to the soft sculptures and paintings before me.

BEAT curiously 10 seconds.

I bother the attendant.

The attendant is not at all bothered.

Another artist, Sarah, is listed over the page.

Here. See? There.

There there. There is order here.

BEAT feverishly 2.5 minutes.

Please time me Eric.

1993

It is a rough crossing
to Tasmania.

A perfect blue sky and calm waters take us into the straight.

Seals are on Seal Rock and an actor is on board.

At the turn of the tide the tide turns.

The Sea Cat leaps into the air, surges full throttle, troughs and swells, swells swelling, swell higher.

Hour upon hour.

Reaching lurching lunging lurching lurching reaching
lurching lunge lunge

lurch lurch reach.

Seasickness

all around me.

Like egg on toast, unset.

Like egg-on sheila.

No Egon Schiele.

But I do not throw up.

I fix my eyes

upon a man’s head,

his comboy risen like

a Hi-Top loaf of bread.

I draw the man’s head.

In my Moleskin.
Like my skin.

Like raisins and sultanas.

Cut.

Side view.

Loaf.

Brioche.

Bree-osh.

Briōche.

Like French toast.

**BEAT on high for 1minute.**

I'll time myself this time Eric.
1995

Another LOUISE exhibition
1995

The Other Louise exhibition.

The works of Louise Bourgeois

are at the National Gallery of Victoria

until November 27.

I am here now, at the foot of the escalator.

Stuck,

in a field of sticks.

Pulled into the orbit of sticks.

Some touch each other. And huddle.

Featureless mostly.

Brancusi sticks,

sticks of rubber and wood,

like a group of people at a party.

nothing is as it seems.

I check the labels.
Rubber looks like clay

marble like metal

bronze like wood.

I need to touch the sticks
to be sure.

Just a quick feel.

One

and others.

I can make these sticks.

I'm pretty sure, I can.

Just like her

I can make my own sticks.

Sharp or blunt,

shameful,

painful or pleasant.

Likeness counts for little, Freud said.
He would say that, I say.

BEAT SOFTLY.
SLOWLY.
STOP.
Place whisk on bar table.
Wipe mess. Wipe hands
Remove headphones.
Tip bowl upside down, attentively
Like a rotisserie, like, real slow,
Raise upturned bowl above head.
Careful now.
Careful.
Watch out!

Yeow! Holy Shit

Conclude with Postscript.

I want to age

like Patti Smith.

Turn head stage left
But you do not look anything like her.

Turn Head centre stage.
Lower the bowl.
Place bowl on bar table.
Thank audience for their endurance.

Thanks for hanging in there.

Close book
OR
Turn page
Thank Eric
Close Book

Thank you Eric.

CLOSE BOOK
FUNNY

NOT

FUNNY
52. APPLE BIT. 2015
An upturned bowl.
An apple gnawed
screams.
A paper mâché newspaper ad
calls for a secretary.
53. SHEEP IN A BOTTLE. 2007 - 2010
On board, lamb’s fry in a bit of butter.
A tong twister and brain tweezer
gripping.
54. SLUMP. 2011
Jammed between the sheets.
A basketball pyjama bag
And a shooter’s slump.
My research question—a true question already, and for some time—has come into focus in the last few years. As I now take some time to examine it—at least while I continue to practice—I will focus on some recent events.

My thinking is directed by some questions from other artists who have variously described my artwork as a riddle. A joke: something to be ‘got’, as if I hold the answer to a conundrum. I am often asked, “do you intend the work to be humorous or serious?”

In an online video interview, artist Dan Graham tells a story with a compelling and quizzical tone. I transcribe it so that I can read it closely.

... Dean Martin in his TV show reads what he is supposed to say in the script, from idiot cards where he pretends to be drunk so that he misunderstands what he is reading. And that strategy makes him as an actor self-conscious which brings self-consciousness, as something important, into art. This brings up the ‘Brechtian prompt’ as it relates to reflexivity. Brecht wanted people to become conscious of each other observing.

I transcribed these spoken words by replaying the interview over and over. Dan Graham does not have the diction of an actor and I had to be sure of the placement and tense of the ‘self-consciousnesses’. If Dean Martin flubbed a line or forgot a lyric, he would not do a retake. The mistake—and his recovery from it—went straight to tape and then to air.

My ‘mistakes’ go out too: as embarrassments. No mistaking it—it’s not me, the work did it. In my art practice the ‘right amount of wrong’ or ‘conscious incompetence’ is a necessary conceit.

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52 The Dean Martin Show, NBC TV 1965-1974. ‘Theme Song: Everybody Loves Somebody Sometimes. Martin believed that an important key to his popularity was that he did not put on airs. His act was that of a drunken, work-shy playboy, although the ever-present old-fashioned glass in his hand often only had apple juice in it’. The Dean Martin Show, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Dean_Martin_Show. Accessed 20/3/19.

53 Ibid.
I don’t set out to be funny. But I am aware that humour might arise out of my choice of objects and the earnestness of the task at hand. Once I choose the question, the course of action follows until the attitude and its proposition emerge. If I choose materials that alert in me the need to stare something down, usually I will find a pathetic, oppressive nature at work. It may be funny to expose these tendencies and tensions in art; it sure is no laughing matter if you have to live with them.

55. FOLLOWER. 2011
The iron scaffolding with its attendant attraction.
An attendant in traction.

56. CHEEP. 2011
The nest fallen.
Writing for The New Yorker cartoon caption competition, a category in which I discuss my profound pleasure at the shortlisted captions and my cartoon dyslexia that stops me from entering. Except for the one time.

When the New Yorker Cartoon Caption Competition short listed captions are revealed, I groan ‘of course’. Sometimes they dazzle. Occasionally baffle. Overall, they are twee, but that’s beside the point. This ‘problem’ is an obsessive pleasure, weekly. Two weeks later the short list is listed and then another week later the winning caption is published.

The one time I entered the competition I was one word short of the shortlisted caption that went on to win: A man and woman in bed. The woman is reading a novel. The man is holding the blanket up, shielding himself from the rain that falls only on his side of the bed. Now that I am describing it, here, now, it seems very obvious.

My caption read: *It was a dark and stormy night.*

The winning caption: *It was a partially dark and stormy night.*

This is as close as it gets for me and for the regular thousands who enter, who probably answered similarly. But with a cartoon caption, it’s all in the wording.

54 Section 1, THE GAP p 12.
56 Bob Mankoff, cartoon editor, New Yorker 1997-2017, has an equation for the chances of winning ‘if X = your odds on winning at least once and N= the number of entries. (There are on average, five thousand entries per contest): X=1-(4999/5000)^N’. Bob Mankoff: *How About Never - Is Never Good For You?* (New York, Henry Holt and Company, 2014), 234.
My interest in the language of cartoons, it’s fair to say, was evident in my early taste in newspaper cartoons. Funnily enough, the bath and horse figured then too. And hair.

Aged 5:

| I cut the comic strip *Blondie* from the newspaper and glued it directly onto my bedroom wall, at eye level to my pillow. I liked the words Dagwood, Bumstead and the cartoonist’s signature—Chic Young—which I did not believe was a person’s name. I thought it described Dagwood Bumstead’s wife Blondie. |

Aged 7:

| In the Sunday Mail, I read and reread *Uncle Joe’s Horse Radish* (Radish, a chestnut racehorse). When it was good, my parents spoke to each other about it. But they would not explain it to me. Like when I asked my sister what *smörgåsbord* meant, she just repeated the word over and over—real slow—in a way that I came to recognise gave her lewd pleasure. |

Aged 8:

| For my entry into the *Brisbane Courier Mail* art competition I came up with a ‘play on words’ *Taking a Bath*, drawn from the theme ‘bath time’. I drew two masked bandits walking out of a shop carrying a bath. |

Aged 13:

| My cartoon for an English assignment: a bald man with a single strand of hair sticking up, walks into a barbershop. *Hi Joe, I’ve come for a haircut.* |

Aged 21:

| I arrived in Sydney and started a commission for a sports magazine: a one-off comic strip titled *The History of Ballooning*. The day I submitted it, the company went bust. |

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57 Wiki solved the mystery: *It revolved around the splay-footed racehorse and its owners Joe (Swedish like himself) and his wife Gladys, children Oigle and Doigle, their jockey cousin Manfred and the colourful characters of the racecourse—gamblers, drunks, bookies, nobblers, touts, society belles and so on. My Horse Radish: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_Jonsson. Accessed 8/7/19.*

58 My older sister pointed this out to me.
It is my cartoon dyslexia that has prompted me to investigate what I see as a paradox: I use the language of attitude and observation to make visual work that brings incongruent elements together, and that some people find ‘funny’. Yet when I look at incongruent elements in a visual form—a drawing—I struggle to find the language caption to make it funny. I mostly don’t get off first base.

I wonder if my artwork would prompt captions in the hands of New Yorker cartoonists Stevens, Finck, Kanin, BEK et al? Is it possible that my signs might provide them with a stimulus pattern to form meaning? And if so, what might their captions reveal to me?
58. BORED STILL. 2015
On Masonite board a metal tooth
grips a mouth, slit.
Under the glass of a clip frame
Masonite eyes.

59. DAY IS DONE. 2015
A wad of cotton wool hangs out of the athletic support.
The athletic support hangs off the door knob.
It’s Xmas in July.

60. ANTLERS IN THE SNOW 2015

   Every time he takes a step
   his childhood evaporates,

   branches begin to crawl
   out of his head, rise up like antlers\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{59} Matthew Dickman, \textit{Wonderland} (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2018), 69.
Two words above a doorway opposite my workplace get a rise out of me:

**MOUNTED BRANCH**

*Do those words do anything for you?*

*No, why?*

*Well I see legs straddling a branch like the one I used to use as my horse.*

The words are no longer there.
The words are no longer there.
They were demolished when the stables of the Victorian Police Mounted Branch became stables
for students and teachers of art.
FUNNY NOT FUNNY STILL

A Case Study
DEAD STILL STANDING: The Case in Point

After my artist talk for the solo exhibition, DEAD STILL STANDING, an artist I trust asked:

Lou, I find this work really funny but my friend said that it wasn’t, it was serious, and then I felt guilty for laughing.

I assured him:

It’s all fine by me Eric. I like your shirt.

DEAD STILL STANDING 2015 unfolds over the five exhibition spaces of West Space gallery. The titles of the rooms and the works therein are a testament to the strangeness and ambiguity of tone that might have had people wondering if they could trust their responses: Funny? Not Funny.

1) The Walking Dead: DEAD STILL STANDING; FLOOR FAN; DOG BIKE BRICK; STUDIO DOG
2) Crematorium: START FALL START; CURTAIN WITH CATSUIT
3) Votives Passage: VOTIVE DECALS & WALLPAPER; BURNT BUT HAPPY
4) Requiem Chamber: DANNY BOY CANON
5) The Vacant Plot: HORSE POOL WITH DOG PUDDLE

Practising critic, cinephile and member of Melbourne’s academic precariat, Dr Sophie Knezic observed DEAD STILL STANDING closely and wrote about her close encounter in Frieze. As I revisit these rooms for my case study, I will dip into Dr Knezic’s words for some expert commentary:

ROOM 1. THE WALKING DEAD

61. Installation view: DEAD STILL STANDING and FLOOR FAN. 2014

62. Installation view: DOG BIKE BRICK and STUDIO DOG. 2014
Dead Still Standing is a carefully choreographed set of interlocking installations. Steeped in enigma and play, comicality and unease, the various works reprise Lou Hubbard’s signature strategies: provocative encounters between everyday objects, such as vernacular furniture, plastic toys and kitsch ornaments; the anthropomorphizing of inanimate forms; and the structural tension produced through the spurring of these objects into precarious yet tautly balanced compositions…

ROOM 1. THE WALKING DEAD

63. DEAD STILL STANDING. 2014
My big rubber horse, dead still, goes for another run in the paddock, and in another completely new form. Upright and suspended behind the glass wall of the gallery this horse gallops like a Muybridge still. Nearby on a wall mounted monitor, FLOOR FAN keeps pace in moto perpetuo.

64. FLOOR FAN (video). 2014

Animal motifs recur, especially horses. Hubbard has deployed a life-size latex cast of a horse in previous exhibitions, each time subjecting it to forms of spatial coercion, so that the implication of unbridled vitality (the horse is cast in the motion of a gallop) is arrested by the discomfort of its structural constraints. Discomfort is key: squashed beneath sheets of glass or inverted on a sofa with legs akimbo, the animal is manipulated into postures of distress. In the titular work Dead Still Standing (2014), the horse reappears, this time placed behind glass in front of a window. The title of the exhibition pivots on this horse, referring to its inanimate or lifeless status, its previous subjugations and ongoing resilience: in spite of all, the horse still stands.
65. Installation view: DOG BIKE BRICK and STUDIO DOG. 2014

66. Video Still: DOG BIKE BRICK. 2014
67. DOG BIKE BRICK (video). 2014
The street dog is alive, but walks assisted: with shoes and socks on a ‘Carl Andre’ pavement. The cut and clatter of ‘dog’s eye view’ is called into question as it collides with a bicycle and a brick wall. The dog, with its paws burned off by a previous owner, wears socks in sunshine or in snow.

68. STUDIO DOG (video). 2014
The studio dog is a black t-shirt: a Trojan dog. It jumps relentlessly to the cut of a screeching music score. The t-shirt slung over the chair in my Barcelona studio was propped like a dog. Daily I sat at the chair and daily the ‘dog’ moved. In video time the dog waits for its master to return.

The suspended motion that this often entails brings forth an attendant layer of Hubbard’s work—its latent dialogue with both photography and cinema. Dead Still Standing, for instance, has a connection to the chronophotography of Étienne-Jules Marey and Eadweard Muybridge; the visual syncopations of the curvilinear glass window creating a sense of arrested movement akin to a time-slice of the photographic capture of animals in motion.

Dr Knezic is about to turn the corner into the colon of the Crematorium.
69. Installation View: Start Fall Start #2. 2014; Curtain With Catsuit. 2014
ROOM 2. CREMATORIUM

Start Fall Start (2014) echoes this technique of immobilized animation. Encased in a glass vitrine, three Coalbrookdale chairs are each tilted at discrete angles, as if articulating an arc of motion. Hubbard’s attraction to the interplay of propulsion and arrest—a poised equilibrium of contrary forces—is most pithily realised in this sculptural work.

A two-sided crematory. One side reflects the viewer and a green curtain on the opposite wall; the other side channels a clear view past the chalky bones breaking down, into the cavity of green light beyond.

It is not only the sense of the object in motion that suggests the cinematic in Hubbard’s practice, but the artist’s assimilation of auteur cinema. At times, she evokes the uncanny worlds of David Lynch and Roman Polanski, and even Matthew Barney’s weird cosmos, only shorn of its Baroque theatricals….Apart from the urge to make things perform, Hubbard betrays a love of dissonance and enigma. If her
72. Installation View: Curtain With Catsuit 2014

73. Detail: Curtain With Catsuit
installations turn on irrepressible forms of symbolic violence, they are simultaneously undercut with a mantle of humour. Curtain With Catsuit, after all, features not just a mysterious curtain but an absurd leopard-printed ‘onesie’. Cartoonish figures and kitsch bibelots curtail the various scenarios of cruelty, imbuing them with an unexpected levity, another statement of the works’ discordant tensions.

74. CURTAIN WITH CATSUIT. 2014
The crematorium cat lies on its back
To sit it out after a night on the tiles
Happy in the heat.

I slide my index finger against my throat and point to the two bare feet, soles up, protruding from under the curtain next to me. The waitress, in full hijab, hurries over to my table, brings her hands together in prayer and points to her watch—not long now.\footnote{On seeing my images CURTAIN WITH CATSUIT my sister recalls her curtain experience at Taj Benghal restaurant, Ashgrove, Brisbane, November 2018.}
ROOM 3. VOTIVES PASSAGE

75. Installation View: Votives Passage 2014

76. Installation View: Votives Passage 2014
79. Votive: Turtle potty, soccer ball, umbrella stand. 2014
80. Burnt But Happy 2014
ROOM 3. VOTIVES PASSAGE

Soccer balls, fake eyeballs, umbrellas, items of clothing, towel racks, coat racks and various forms of metal armature are used to break up the space, creating sculptural microcosms that reveal the unconventional aspects of banal objects and bring more unsettling meanings into play.

VOTIVES PASSAGE. 2015

Wallpaper from images of artworks: MOBILE IMMOBILE and APRON SHOWER.

And a model of a DIY brick incinerator from the internet.
A decal of sliced fruitcake from the internet.

Turtle potty, soccer ball and umbrella stand from APRON SHOWER evoke votive stores from Hollywood Road, Hong Kong Island.

BURNT BUT HAPPY. 2014
In the votive room
on drinking glasses
levitating
still grinning.
It was a slow roast through the dust jacket
to the cloth hardcover
while I was stirring the béchamel.
ROOM 4. REQUIEM CHAMBER

82: Installation View: Danny Boy Canon 2014
ROOM 4. REQUIEM CHAMBER

Here the critic listens closely and with some difficulty, straining, nauseous even:

…while the disturbingly exaggerated facial movements of the vocalist in the four-channel video Danny Boy Canon (2014), who whispers the lyrics of the Irish ballad, suggest the kind of warped expressions that Polanski captured in films such as The Tenant (1976). The lyrics are barely audible amidst the singing of the adjacent videos, the meaning of the words lost in a maelstrom of cacophonous sound.’

83. DANNY BOY CANON (4-channel video). 2014 (including DANNY BOY DOG 2008)

In the dusk of a Brisbane summer
Mother sits on a park bench
as my sister stands before her
singing Danny Boy.

In an Amsterdam winter
my sister sings the song again, now alone.

When all 3 videos play their Danny Boy, accompanied by the violin and piano of DANNY BOY DOG, en masse a requiem to scare the horses.
ROOM 5. THE VACANT PLOT

84. Installation View: Horse Pool With Dog Puddle. 2014

86. Horse Pool With Dog Puddle 2014
ROOM 5. THE VACANT PLOT

As a child, Hubbard took up dressage—a decision she now considers somewhat perverse, given that she had little skill in the activity. Faults 81/100. Her former hobby might account for the recurring equine imagery in her work. More fundamentally, the dynamic of discipline and performance that characterizes the sport has become the undercurrent of Hubbard’s practice, structured as it is by an incontrovertible logic of domination and submission. The tension at the core of her work is the push and pull between the object’s acquiescence to the artist’s fashioning and its internal forces of material resistance.

...In Horse Pool With Dog Puddle (2014), another horse is not so lucky. Carefully placed on plywood chairs, two rubber masks of horse heads enact a scene of violence. The back of one horse’s mane is gripped in the teeth of the other; the fugitive horse’s head is savagely injured, with torn skin revealing the red tissue of stretched muscles below, its bloodshot eyeballs savagely inverted to form a cavity accentuating the scene’s implied trauma.
88. HORSE POOL WITH DOG PUDDLE. 2014
Outside the Crematorium, ‘horseplay’ in a pool of dropped fruit, watched at a distance by the spotty bobble-head dog, in a puddle of its own; within earshot of that other bobble-head dog, DANNY BOY DOG, in the Requiem Chamber.

Detail: DOG PUDDLE

A distant view to the shaft of darkness that is the Requiem Chamber.

DEAD AND ALIVE

Please pause a moment to note:

The works STUDIO DOG, CURTAIN WITH CATSUIT and HORSE POOL WITH DOG PUDDLE viewed above have a precursor in the work below: DOG WITH CATSUIT. Here, dog and cat ‘go their own ways’, recombining with other hosts to become these new works.

89. DOG WITH CATSUIT. 2014
Drawn together in colour and markings, the bobble-head dog waits at the head of a big cat, like the Japanese dog Hachiko that waited for more than eight years for the return of his deceased master.
CURTAIN WITH CATSUIT later became CURTAIN WITH CATSUIT #2. Here we find the crematorium cat now curled up in a modernist Columbarium—a recessed compartment for placing urns containing cremation ashes.

90. CURTAIN WITH CATSUIT #2. 2019
A bundle of curtain scaled down, ‘through the looking glass’ and mysteriously dissected by steel panels.

Detail: a bundle of cat, warm or cool?

In this live box with its radioactive curtain I ask myself: have I got a Schrödinger’s cat\(^2\) on my hands?

\(^2\) Austrian physicist Schrödinger stated ‘if you place a cat and something that could kill the cat (a radioactive atom) in a box and sealed it, you would not know if the cat was dead or alive until you opened the box, so that until the box was opened, the cat was (in a sense) both “dead and alive”’. https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schrödinger%27s_cat. Accessed 4th July 2019.
ARE WE THERE YET
NO WE ARE HERE
Dear Supervisor,

I find myself here with a need. And a need to address this need before I can go on. After reading my second draft LOU IN BATH, you urged me to read Iris Murdoch’s first novel Under the Net\textsuperscript{63}. We agreed that we liked first novels. I downloaded it immediately, keen to find out how I might be connected with it. Why you have connected me to it.

In my late teens I knew Iris as the philosopher novelist and now, as I settled into this 1954 novel, I recalled her voice and her easy style of slipping the profound questions of life through characters confronting their ‘drives’ while performing their ‘everyday’. However, Dear Supervisor, you cannot have suspected this novel would evoke through its characters’ dialogue, specific memories of exchanges between my father and me. The young me is Jake, the translator of French fiction beguiled by the fireworks manufacturer Hugo, my father:

\begin{quote}
From first to last it was Hugo who conducted the conversation. In discussions he would very quickly realise when we were, from his point of view, at a dead end, and he would say: well, I can say nothing about that or I’m afraid that here I don’t understand you at all, not at all, with a finality which killed the topic.\textsuperscript{64}
\end{quote}

But when Jake speaks here about Hugo and ‘theory’, Hugo is more like me:

\begin{quote}
Hugo was interested in everything and interested in the theory of everything, but in a peculiar way. Everything had a theory, and yet there was no master theory. Hugo held no general theories whatsoever. All his theories, if they could be called theories, were particular.\textsuperscript{65}
\end{quote}

My father grew in and out of theories. After dropping God at 25, for the next 60 years he looked to: Communism, Marxism, Anarchy, Teletubbies. I was under my father’s spell until, at 40, I had an epiphany while recovering from a serious back operation: I could be dead before he is. I’d better get on with things.

And I did, in many ways. But my relationship to theory and philosophy happily remains as a search for the talking and thinking father, Godfrey. I was 45 when God died at 85. And still I gather influences that stand in for his influence: Barthes, Beckett, Bernhard, Brecht, Bourgeois, Bruce\textsuperscript{66}, Duchamp et al, compel me to make work tough and minimal, but with a sentimental lure. Barthes writes of sentimentality as transgression:

\begin{quote}
…a touch of sentimentality would that not be the ultimate transgression? The transgression of transgression itself? For, after all, that would be love: which would return: but in another place.\textsuperscript{67}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{63}Iris Murdoch, \textit{Under the Net} (London: Vintage, 2002), 69.
\textsuperscript{64}Ibid., 69.
\textsuperscript{65}Ibid., 69.
\textsuperscript{66}Nauman.
I understand Barthes’ sentimental as misplaced love. Is this the context in which I make artwork? In which I conduct my research? For the father?

I listen to Barthes’ voice in his lectures. In French. I don’t understand a word.

Ketchup soon, Moi

PS. When I went to Iceland, I had an out-of-place-and-time Barthes trip as well. The email below might be useful for Natures Mortes. Or it could just stay right here. What do you think?

Re: Robert Schumann and Barthes

Louise Hubbard
Fri 12/01/2018 3:34 AM

I forgot to mention that I chased down a recording of Schumann’s Gesänge der Frühe (dawn songs) because Barthes played this Schumann daily as a child and into his adult years. In fact after his mother’s funeral he played this ‘Gesänge’. The first movement he found the saddest of sad music. After reading about this in his biography, of course I had to hear it and have it.
I was excited to find that one of the few recordings is by my favourite pianist Mitsuko Uchida 🎹. I listened to it on repeat for the duration of the flight to Iceland.

https://youtu.be/DW_tR5rK8l4

Also at bostonglobe.com (will link in separate email) "Schumann, grief and an eddy in time" by Matthew Guerrieri January 2017, a review of a concert of that piece and quite a bit on Barthes and his grief for his Mother. You may find it interesting as counterpoint, or an interruption you could do without. Maybe your ‘conclusion’ is an ‘interruption’. As your father’s death interrupted. The ultimate interruption.

Another interruption: Today I slipped on ice and fell flat on my back—not concussed, just sore. Back of the head suffered. Resting this afternoon in prep for concert tonight and the hairy drive to Roni’s Library of Waters at Stykkisholmur—forecast to be the only clear day for our stay in Reykjavik. Halldórs house is on the way but we may not be on the right side to turn off and then too dark to see our way there on the return.

Bon Voyage 🎶

L

PS: When Barthes travelled with colleagues to the China conference his cohort were disappointed that he did not lend his powerful voice to protest the 1968 riots in a presentation. Always the sensualist, he preferred to spend his time on the street observing the hairstyles and clothing of the Chinese youths.
A BUNCH OF BUNCHES
91. APRON SHOWER. 2014
Organs on display in Sir James Monroe’s
Suite, at the Hotel Windsor.
A still life with naked apron, umbrella stand,
turtle potty, soccer ball and ‘floor fan’.
A bunch of crimson Japonisme.
Unlike my appendix, better out than in:

A BUNCH OF BUNCHES is of this body,

a body in the BATH,

a vital organ to the functioning of LOU IN BATH.
CAUTION

This bunching of artworks, ahead, is determined by a primary action, a sympathetic text or my whimsical methodology.

1. OPERATIONS
2. UPSETS
3. PROBLEM SETS
4. NATURES MORTES (a couple)

They are a universal set of rogue elements: a Wild Bunch of artworks out of order, always on the make, straying across fields: Operations as Problem Sets, Problem Sets as Upsets, any of them as possible transpositions.

But they all fit into my BATH as Still Lifes. Despite this name, they are not to be mistaken for the final Natures Mortes: artworks numinous and gravely literal, denouements as rehearsal.

For now, we are here and nearly there.
1. OPERATIONS

92. GUESS WHO. 2014
A paperweight moustache, mobile phone holder spectacles
and an actor’s prosthetic nose ‘stand-ins’ for this familiar visage.

EYES EAR NOSE SONG

I discovered the eyeballs in the “Happy Pills” lolly shop in Barcelona. For a while,
I’d been working with various types of toy eyeballs and so it was natural to want to
buy some. I was particularly attracted to this product for their life-like formation of
the pupil and its egg-like gooey centre. After I performed tests on the eyeballs I noted
how resistant the ‘whites’ were to cutting and prodding. The yellow pupils were more
appealing in their translucency than the blue or red and so I ordered a box of 50!
From a wholesale outlet near the general hospital!68

Before shooting the videos I set some rules: I should proceed with discipline,
examining the dysfunctional eyes as an optometrist, before performing the
‘corrections’ as a surgeon; use implements at hand; resist using fingers; permit the
use of background music, just like in modern operating theatres.

93. EYE OPS (5-channel video). 2013
In a series of five videos, confectionery eyeballs undergo correction
surgery. Sticky edible eyeballs are propped behind my spectacles
and worn across the face of my husband’s large knee bone. His
fingers patiently prod and coerce my eyeballs into place as they slip
slowly and shamefully from their ‘sockets’.

An eyeball rolls down and around my naked leg towards the bath’s
plughole. Scoring a ‘hole in one’ eventually, this exercise is
performed alone in a bathroom.

68 Interview with Laura Castaglini: www.ngv.vic.gov.au/melbourne-now-countdown-day-60/
After quite a bit of probing and scalpel work, my iris is lanced and an ‘eggyolk’ centre oozes out.

When my spectacles press down on the confectionery eyes they become like my eyes under pressure.

It was festive in Barcelona, with Easter and Saints’ Days strictly observed and passionately paraded: gaudy and Gaudi influenced me everywhere. I photographed displays of lambs’ heads and bought candles of cats’ heads; their glassy eyes designed to pop out as the wax melted. I found spectacles, egg slicers and tongs. I laid out my new ‘materials’ on the studio table, rolled up my sleeves and got into it.

The EYE OPS suite of videos was imagined and embellished from my experience of having been born cross-eyed. The unsightly vision of myself with patches on my spectacles after three unsuccessful attempts at corrective surgery, prompted EYE OPS to become a video recovery.

94. SPECTACLE. 2011
A lens stuck.
A pupil freed.

95. PERSOL PERSOL. 2013
Apertures poked.
I have also used imagined and fictitious events in my early life to explore subconscious urges and impulses.

96 TEETH (WITH FEET). 2018

97. EAR (WINK) CUP AND PLATE (DENTAL). 2018

98. MELEE 2018
Timeout in the bath.

In the bathroom at Sir James Monroe’s Suite, Hotel Windsor, Melbourne.

EVEN TEETH is a suite of videos, texts and tabletop assemblages inspired by the form, impulses and workings of the human mouth. They use video enactments of my childhood behaviours: “speech therapy” to correct a non-existent lisp; fastening rubber bands to my teeth to affect mobility of tongue and facial muscles; dredging metal bracelet charms from my gums.
Nana and her 12 siblings lived in Bristol. Most of them had big teeth: *all the English do.* When I lost my two front teeth it struck me that I would too: in my English imagination.

**THE PERSONAL**

For me, the personal is the familiar – objects suggest experiences that I can re-enact to examine curious conditions. Since my numerous childhood eye ops, processes of correction through training exercises and surgery have fascinated me.

100. **BLUE-EYES.** 2011

On a plate stand
Stands a wistful face on a seat.

101. **GLASS-EYES.** 2011

Eyeballs roll in cups
in a cut crystal bowl
of eyeglass lenses.

102. **MUSSELS.** 2011

Mussels in an open and shut case.
Should mussels be open or closed?
What happens if you eat a dead mussel?
103. POOF. 2007/2011
Baby bottle teats
cut and pressed
into a French novel.

104. BABY-FACE. 2011
An infant’s rattle cocked.
In a kitchen appliance
an infant rattled.

THE SENTIMENTAL
I became interested in staging the sentimental when the fallout from my video operations looked pathetic or painful. I registered the same appeal of ‘sad-eyed children’ in National Geographic, imagery designed to manipulate or seduce a reaction, through pity. I know I have a melting point. When I perform my operations through the camera view-finder I commit acts that I later set free to linger on screen. That’s when some unexpected responses are dislodged in me. I like testing the threshold of my melting point.

105. DRILL (video). 2008
Rudimentary operations correct afflictions in figurines.

*Bear:* cut cocked leg, graft straightened leg to hip.

*Dalmatian:* excise hat from hindquarters and graft onto head.

*Baby:* excise dummy from mouth.

*Tree-hugger:* excise body from stump.
106. DOG DOGGED (video). 2010
A porcelain dog undergoes surgery to remove diamanté warts.

107. EYES BALL. 2010
Quit balling

108. POKEY CHANEL. 2010
In the case of perfume, muzzled.

109. FLOATIE. 2010
Squash ball eyes
Visor band
Life support.

110. GLUE EYES. 2008
A common eye infection in a savoury dish.

I bought a piano: a Ronisch, the ‘make’ I grew up with, though not 19th century. My Ronisch, with a distinguished ‘tiger stripe’ veneer, was factory made in Japan. I wanted to learn to play *Danny Boy* and *Auld Lang Syne*, so that I could conjure Nana and her voice, Mother and Father too at my sister’s wedding. Why would I wish to conjure the Saga? Sometimes I need to be reminded. Sometimes the events shift in significance. That’s all I can say about it right now. I know, that’s not saying anything worthwhile. So why say it at all, you may well ask.
A lilt, a tilt and a kilt for this occupational attaché.

My specialist’s uniform is augmented with kilt, fashion court shoes, audio ear buds and other forms of occupational therapy.

Beneath a disciplined uniform you will find more discipline.

Miss Kirby practised ophthalmology on Wickham Terrace, Brisbane’s street of private medical specialists. In the early 60s I visited her ‘rooms’ several times a month so that she could check on the progress of my ‘post-op’ eye exercises designed to strengthen, train and possibly straighten the eye that remained turned despite several ‘ops’. Miss Kirby greeted me with several pairs of glasses around her neck and one on her forehead. She instructed me to sit up straight and follow her finger closely. From the floor of olive carpet upwards, I saw black pumps, green kilt, ruffled silk blouse, a spikey brooch that would catch my eye like the row of cacti in terracotta pots arranged in order of height along her window ledge—and I tried not to breath in Miss Kirby’s Minties breath.
I was the trip hazard: the cross-eyed child who played in a doorway central to household activities. By night, my doorway was a passage to ‘Tomorrowland’: *The Mavis Bramston Show*, *Peyton Place*, *The Frost Report* and other adult themes I had on my mind.

A doorway was also the preferred site for a performance by artists Marina Abramovic and Ulay. In 1977 they parked themselves in the entrance of a Bologna gallery. Completely nude. The public had to squeeze between them in order to pass, and in doing so choose which one of them to face. But before long the police closed down the performance, citing indecency (not a trip hazard).

112. IMPONDERABILIA (AFTER MARINA AND ULAY). 2014

My ‘sexy kitchen aprons’ sourced online stand in for Marina and Ulay.

Fact-check: I am consciously self-conscious of my body, even when fully clothed.

In this work bodily consciousness becomes a question of determinacy: how do I pass between the exposed apron appendages with minimum discomfort? I chose sliding front facing towards the male, as I do when shuffling in front of a row of bodies at the theatre.

A winning strategy: my arse to the backs of the heads that face the front, behind me. Agree?
Plain as day:
Robert Gober’s willow basket
penetrated by a large plumbing pipe is the union of phallus and womb,
signifiers pursued by psychoanalysts,
cultural theorists
and artists of Surrealism.

Like the *duck-rabbit* problem
my phallus womb is all hexagons and pentagons.
In a weathered plastic turtle shell, sly tessellations
of onyx
and swirls of Venetian glass.

Like Venus.
Like the Prada military boot too,
patterned and cut
from the pages of Hermes
and Longchamp catalogues
and the packaging of *Daddy* sugar cubes
from the *Supermarché*,
perched upon a plumbing block,
the silver soccer ball below,
a pearl in the pipe.

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70 Known as the rabbit-duck illusion—is it this or is it that—made famous by Wittgenstein ‘as a means of describing two different ways of seeing: "seeing that" versus "seeing as".
HE AND SHE

HE is my stimulacrum.

SHE is my experienced and trusted advisor.

SHE gave me the photos and said she’d kept a few. They didn’t work out – a couple of HIM. SHE said HE looks terrible.

An unrelated while later I told her I wanted to take HIM to my studio—lay him out on a table and play with his dial—pinch his nostrils flat and gape open his mouth a few times—roll up his flesh. He’ll let me do anything to him. When I set up the video in the late-night kitchen and called him in and said hug me just like this, I was wearing the human hair wig of a bald man. He hugged me like I was incurable. When I told him he was on the invite hugging the baldy, he put it on the fridge.

SHE got the idea. SHE knows body-parts, flesh and blur, dodge and burn, terror.

SHE said gestures of HIS tormented face sounded like Francis Bacon and SHE might give me those photos after all.

I want the photos

Nauman says that when you are making art you rein in the God-given gift for making

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things so it will not get in the way of an elegant and aggressive solution.
I commit acts of visual aggression. HE is my elegant solution.

HE asked me how I thought of him aging. I told him flatly: I want you as Duchamp.
He protests he is not Duchamp. I restate the problem.
Frankly, I want you as Beckett.
I suggest HE take The Last Modernist to the salon. Cut the Duchamp. Boof the Beckett. HE drives me to work. Hair drives me.

SHE gave me the photos.
A couple of snapshots privately felt.
In one instant, HE is too weak to cry.
In the other, my baby did a bad, bad thing.
I can’t go on.
SHE has unbuttoned his Beckett. The bit I bite down on. SHE snaps: the shots are duds—dud shots.
Dud dud dud dud dud dud dud. Utterlessly blank. Dudded—I am struck. SHE pictures HIM; I picture HIM; SHE pictures ME.
Shots I nearly missed.

The NGV runs the Acconci video CONTACTS. A man is cropped hard from waist to chin, naked.
A woman, kneeling in front of him, head not in view, moves her hands over his body. I hear their rapt whispering “yes” “now” “pelvis” “yes” “now” “rib” “yes” “now”.
This blow-by-blow goes on for some time.
I go on. I take my lunchtime pleasure and exit. At the entrance I notice a sign:

Please Note: The work CONTACTS does not represent sexual activity.
What it does represent is a performance focused on sensing perception.
3. UPSETS

Fracture fractus fracti
I’m practicing my Latin.

You’re making me tense dear.

A starstruck soccer ball loiters between shower screens.
An anglepoise lamp hangs its head as a forklift charges a turtle.
A star-studded ball all pentagons and hexagons
spins on a pool of water, like cartoon concussion,
like TURTLE when it is run down.
Off-site, side rules slide.

Pressure in the change room
surface tension
like gums bit and punctured.
UP HIGH
A football shriveled like rotting fruit delicately trapped between fine wires, strung across the site, like power lines or flight paths, like navigational signs, ambiguous and mysterious signs like ‘shoefiti’, the practice of throwing shoes with laces tied together so that they hang from overhead power lines.

DOWN LOW
Footballs cluster weathered and swollen, like the relics of games arrested; like buoys, markers for hazards or mooring.

INLINE
*Team TWINS*, Under 4s, always lose to Under 9s, *Team SHE, me*. Soccer one day, golf the next, in uniform: white long socks, Bermuda shorts (golf), bri-nylon shorts (soccer), polo shirt, sneakers and necktie (golf), kerchief (soccer). Indoors the moss green carpet is a fairway of holes: pots and vases on their sides, staked out in grades of difficulty throughout the house. *SHE* takes as much care in marking the field as providing *Salvital* when *SHE* decides they’ve earned a rest.

TOO SLOW
A handpicked team stuck in heightened and suspended play, upright in a stainless-steel trough. Water starts to fill up around them, disturbing their hexagonal formation and team spirit. As the figures succumb to the pressure of submergence, they cling to each other until the final siren brings them to rest.73

When I was invited to make a new work for an exhibition *The Politics of Art*. I wondered: if politics is ‘the art of the possible’, what might it look like as art?

120. FORCE-FIELD (4-channel video). 2010

I thought of how the players in contemporary art’s continuum, willingly submit to the pressure of its centrifugal force. They limp along, run ahead of the pack, seek polite attention, get struck off, sidelined, keep in step, trip up, step out wrong-footed, foot in mouth, look back, never look back. I ran amok with this thinking.

So, I set some goals. I found 2 goal posts in my studio. I also came upon a tiny figurine apparently modelled on a famous Portuguese soccer player his leg permanently bent at the knee. He could kick a ball, but only when his head was firmly pressed into his neck. I had bought him at a market in Porto, not for his star quality, but for his affliction. His disability would one day be profitable to me.

I devised video actions to test the resilience and aptitude of this player. *The Politics of Art* was a hefty load to bear: would he remain indefatigable when attacked from on high and behind? Constantly on the back foot, might he ever be ahead of the game in a field where the goalposts are constantly shifting? And what if it is the frustrated spectator who walks off with the ball?

‘Performance anxiety’ emerged triumphant. As suggested by the title of Peter Handke’s novel *The Goalies Anxiety at the Penalty Kick*, the nature of training and its effect on one’s nature is natural to the game.74

121. COME CLEAN. 2010

The Politics of Art, edition of 50 t-towels.
Wash before use.

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74 These words are a reworking of my essay *8 Points Towards a Politics of Art*, Lou Hubbard for *The Politics of Art* catalogue edited by Jan Duffy (Melbourne: Linden Centre for Contemporary Art, 2010), 9.
THE LÉGER MELEE: A CLASH OF VARIABLES

A scuffle between kids’ dinosaur chairs, inflatable Zimmer frames, hot dog-shaped dog toys, and hosiery—frozen mid fight.

122. THE LÉGER MELEE. 2018

Kids’ Dino-chairs and inflatable ‘metal’ vinyl Zimmer frames in a 3D composition.

Keen white eyes covered with black hosiery.

Blind combatants ever smiling their terrible teeth.

A flattened diagrammatic order of interlocking action.

Like my Léger Les Acrobates when viewed from above.

An idea in waiting.

The LÉGER MELEE PERFORMANCE 2019

It happened in a museum: enclosed with scaffolding, and a ramp up to a view of the action.

New ‘players’ too: ‘outliers’ with assigned roles and positions. And invigilators dressed as referees.

123. THE LÉGER MELEE PERFORMANCE. 2019

Scaffolding like a stadium for wrestling,

like a round-yard for livestock.

Two helmeted sentinels ‘off duty’ at the foot of the ramp.

75 MONA FOMA event publicity 2019.

76 The Acrobats, a terracotta low relief sculpture edition of 250, 1954.

77 Months later, when I was offered a solo museum show, I seized the opportunity to achieve my Léger ‘viewed from above’.
Elsewhere, on the sideline, a couple *like* a Greek chorus, outfitted for play.

At 6pm spectators took up their posts on the scaffolding waiting for something to happen: *a scuffle between chairs/zimmers/hot dog shaped dog-toys*, as publicized, I figured.

The invigilators were experienced ‘opening night’ performers hired by the museum. As ‘referees’ they went balls-out blowing whistles, strutting about, arousing the crowd, then controlling the crowd, shunting them here and there, away from their posts, up the ramp, down the ramp, onto the floor, onto their knees, into the ‘melee’.

Pretty soon, my opening event was happening: like a 50s Allan Kaprow performance art kind of *happening*.

*lou_hubbard_art* 2 refs 1 brawl no rules.

Two fallen players unmasked through ‘play’ faced each other, apart. How far apart should they be placed, I asked myself during the installation? One player’s position was a fixture of the original ‘Melee’. The other player was introduced as a casualty of the ‘stadium’ match and could be placed anywhere.

During the antics of the ‘opening’, the player’s sidelined position in the shadows was my post too; it felt tense and true to the game. It was suggested to me that the fallen player was flung far by the centrifugal force of the melee’s composition.

I liked this detail of formal logic. To be ‘flung’ fit.

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78 Remie Cibis, fashion practitioner, on a close reading of the work.
2. PROBLEM SETS

Like squares and marked lines
on concrete
like a Sudoku ‘diabolical’
like Rush Hour card #155
like reverse parking on a bend
like Praxis Maximius

Praxis Maximus, parking the car in Sudoku, was prepared for a pianola roll and player piano recital in the library at Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) Hobart, 2011.
It is also a list of ‘likes’ that drive me.

124. CATS IN THE WOODPILE. 2010
In the clothes dryer or swimming pool, snakes dead and alive.
At The Gap, a carpet snake on the roof was a lesson in estimation and approximation.

When my mathematician father said he wouldn't be able to speak to me about my maths’ problems until I learnt how to think, I was 13. Years later he said the problem with you kids is you didn't have a classical education. Yes. Non scire Latine.

I learnt that if you are mathematically inclined, you can justify anything.
For me, ‘set theory’ and Venn diagrams are systems that hold sentiment.
125. MOBILE IMMOBILE. 2014

Father considered mobiles as building the logic of balancing algebraic equations. My mobile is an elegant failure. It looms high fastened into place; extension poles akimbo in limbo. Ties tied. Hooks Twist’n’Stay. No balance required; no experience necessary.

DEVELOPING TECHNIQUE IN CALCULUS – THE TOTAL PROBLEM79

A man wishes to erect an enclosure using an existing boundary.

What shape should it be?

In deducing suitable relationships

There is proof: here. A stump is a log, bit.

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EYE-SCREEN, NEapolitan AND SWEET80

At face value, whatever meets the eye in an eyelid twitch alerts us to deception. I have acute left eyelid twitch under conditions of stress. If a line is a series of dots, is a closed eyelid a stream of flutters?

The shuttlecock—a high-drag projectile, batted and uncut, grafted to eye, lashed to lid—lags. The eyeball-bearing lubricates the oily dangling hood like morning roll-on. Eyelid-lag is the skinned snake that swallowed the cock, sunny-side up.

79 Lou Hubbard, Cock and Bull, edited by Vikki McInnes and Kate Daw (Southbank, Victoria.: VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Faculty of the Victorian College of the Arts, The University of Melbourne, 2009), 4.

In anglers’ paradise the little goldfish—flamingo pink really—surfaces for a flapping bit of action. The red emperor bucks on deck. The red emperor aroused to death onboard. We bat our eyelids faster in courtship: eye-lash, eye-bawl. Boo-hoo.

Fibrillation is the rapid, irregular and unsynchronized contraction of the muscle... tug’n’tease. Rapid eyelid flutter and strong upward eye deviation without loss of consciousness signals the game lured, crushed, captured, taken on trust. Hooded-flesh, skinned thin. Thick as twin peaks. Breathe deep and die. Happy humpin’ pumpin’.

Knock on wood. Muscular, airless wood. Rasp, the face reddens against the grain: sapped, notched. The vanishing carries you down with it: close in, undressed and thick, corralled, stuck breathless. When logs are choked, teeth hang onto the log even during... Once split, stumps receive immense forward and upward thrust effort from the curved face of a detachable stumper. Dead wood, cut dull, stumped.

A stump is a log, bit.

**ADVANCED PROBLEM SETS: FEASIBLE SOLUTIONS WITHOUT PROOF**

126. DEAD STILL. 2015

In a floor geometry inspired by El Lisitzky, my three centimetre rubber horse from the video Hack 2006 is scaled up life size and squashed under the weight of three thick plates of glass in the shape of lenses from my childhood spectacles. A ‘disposable’ cup (porcelain), ‘squashed’ and ‘carelessly dropped’ becomes the ‘punctum’ (like a staged embarrassment) in this conscious display of force, compression and sentimentality.
127. STRETCH. 2013
Planet lamps in perpetual congress.

128. TABLE TENNIS TABLE PAINTING. 2010
Abused as a play-table, celebrated as a painting.

129. TABLE TENNIS TABLE. 2010
A play-table bears domestic furnishings: compressed, bodily and still.

130. UNEASY BODY. 2010
Furnishings from the home—floor lamp, shower screens, tray table, towel rack, baby blue doors and flesh tone flooring—lie neatly together compressed in a diagram for a marriage.

131. MAT-TIC. 2011
A roller blind drawn
And cut.
A shaft and rotor still.
132. NO GYM FOR ME. 2013
A heavy-duty hook swings from the bar.
My message for Arnold Schwarzenegger: NO GYM.

Two clothes racks ‘buddy up’ sporting paper signs
DO NOT USE; NO GYM FOR ME Tab at 3 am.

The Terminator’s metal fist threatens.

NO GYM FOR ME uses notes penned by me and found around the home, like LOU IN BATH.

133. FLOOR FAN. 2014
A stack of chairs and tables propel like fan blades. My floor fan is a single image turned three ways, looped and played in real time, in a perpetual cycle of cool air, imagined, like the discarded electric fan on a stand spinning in a gusty wind as if to say ‘look, no hands’.
When I got Mactavish he became Samson. When I made Sam a tartan outfit he was like Mactavish again. All *event* horses wore tartan or silk.

For many The Gap Pony Club was a family affair. Or an affair, with V8s and floats. And music: *Delilah, Killing Me Softly, I Fall to Pieces*. We heard stories about horses escaping their paddocks in the night and colliding with cars. When Sam left our backyard in the night he wandered the three miles of Payne Road to his paddock. The next morning he was waiting at the paddock gate. A horse has needs. You can’t just leave it in the garage when you’re finished with it. Another time at the paddock, Sam was a bag of bones. It was a nightmare, like the one I had when I was eight: my sister Susie/ in her red tartan skirt/ murdered at the bus stop/ on the corner of Waterworks and Payne.

Sam had to go.
Detail FLING 2014
Paper cut to boot,
Prada military,
soled in a lingerie catalogue
in a Northern Riot.

138. TARTAN. 2014
*Wallace* tartan drawn
quartered, floored,
in a Northern Riot.

139. HORSE COLLAGE. 2015
A horse drawn, torn, quartered and framed.

140. HORSE STUCK. 2012
Foam pinched
Rider strained.

141. DEAD STILL STANDING II. 2015
The horse, ‘still dead’, is on the run,
with a dog on a skateboard in tow,
along for the ride.

142. TABLETOP. 2016
The spectre of darkness watches the innocent frolicking.
143. BRUSH-BUSH. 2016
Look up.
Hairy brush.

144. UNSTABLE TABLE. 2005–2016
On the skirt of an inverted colonial table, carved objects and a book of Russell Drysdale’s paintings opened at *Children Dancing #2*, 1950: two girls dancing in the dust of a vast outback.

145. FOUND LAND. 2016
Godfrey’s sister Molly crocheted this jumper for me when I was 10.

It is now in a box, unravelling across a photo of the sea at sunset. For me it is an inland lake rimmed with charred branches and, like much of Australia, a mirage.

146. UNTITLED (LANDED) 1994–2016
Molly who was widowed as a young bride lived with Virtue, her widowed mother. The two widows visited our house at The Gap fortnightly in a black taxi.
NATURES MORTES—Numinous

Jesus Christ all bloody mighty
Godfrey a student of theology
And called God by his wife
lost his faith in the wake of a cleric’s death:
his father’s.

147. CORE. 2007
Core’s truth
God’s truth
Gawd struth
Godfrey swore

Look at that bloke up there on the cross
Behave now...
(God’s joke)

My sister told me that after our father died
she sat with him in the mortuary, talking
throughout the night. And he listened.

I listened to Gesänge der Frühe on repeat for the duration of the flight to Iceland.

I am rereading my email to S and I read on:

Maybe your ‘conclusion’ is an ‘interruption’. As your father’s death interrupted.
The ultimate interruption.

Godfrey’s death was less an interruption than that he was ever present: his voice at times on
loudspeaker and often while I was in the bath—me in bath with tap running. This BATH too.
One Sunday I took a call from God while I was in the bath. But it was ‘too much’ for him and he
rang off. It seems I had presented a complex problem to Godfrey’s ‘imaginary’: his adult daughter
naked; the possibility of her electrocution.
148. SUNDAY BEST. 2016
Cloaked and collared.
My grandfather’s clerical costume distinguished him as a High Churchman.

My father recalls seeing his father’s hands, upper cheeks, nose and forehead.

No other flesh.

149. DO YOU REMEMBER THE LAKE? 2016
On a winery estate
Ophelia falls from the willow tree
Virginia’s raincoat with pockets of stone floats.
My collections of objects are boxed and indelibly marked: horses, eyeballs, glasses, fruit, teeth, wigs, soccer, aprons—and more.

To begin a fitting end to Nature’s Mortes—and, I expect Lou in Bath too, for it has been ‘some time’—I’ve chosen to present three objects, each with a different association with its namesake, to present a linguistic platter—bread, cheese, grapes—that will last…and last.

- *Bunch of Grapes*, from my collection of fake fruit, is Murano glass snapped up at a Sunshine Coast garage sale.

- *Bunch of Dates*: a 70s desktop calendar from House of Tudor fine stationery, is from my husband’s studio. It is also a wedge of cheese.

- *Another Bunch of Dates*: ‘best before’ bread tags gifted to me from a student, 2006.

- I will throw in a brick and an asparagus ‘dip’ too.

If this presents like a votives listing, so be it. I’m not going anywhere just yet.
151. BUNCH OF DATES. 2014
Signed L. HUBB 2014 in deference to R. MUTT 1917.

152. BUNCH OF DATES; BUNCH OF GRAPES. 2017
Three Bunches. A Bunch of Bunches.

153. SANDBANK. 2017
An ossuary brick to boot.

154. (HAND) BAG DIP. 2018
On one side of my Melbourne Pathology tote bag, a printed image of an x-rayed hand; on the other, the anatomy of a dip: an asparagus spear, a latex glove clutching a fish shaped soy sauce bottle. Name your poison.
My face was swollen with scabs and flakey like Milo, from a skin treatment I underwent to ward off further UV damage. I was instructed to avoid exposure to the face during healing.

It was a cold and windy day, when I had to collect my artwork from the 'Weaponry' show.

I cover up and enter the dungeon ‘gallery’ in couture fit for a highwaywoman.

I may be some time.
LIST OF WORKS ILLUSTRATED

THE GAP

1. Butter Box. 2018 (p. 3) Missoni sports handbag, butter, 20 x 35 x 20 cm

2. Paulo Pizzi. 2006 (p. 4) Single-channel video projection, 10 minutes Neon sign, dimensions variable Photos: Christian Capurro

3. Fruit Loops. 2013 (p. 7) Single-channel projection, 3 minutes, dimensions variable

4. Ong Vanita. 2012 (p. 11) Masonite door linings, octopus strap, surf flippers, skirt hanger, hand drawn sign on paper, 180 x 60 x 60 cm Photos: Zan Wimberley

5. Bald. 2000 (p. 13) Mixed media including hair, rubber, belts, harnessing, drying racks, trolleys, sticks, butternuts, dimensions variable Photos: John Brash

6. Pool. 2001 (p. 15) Polystyrene, objects: gifted, personal, collected and found, dimensions variable Photos: Paul Knight


8. Camp: I Like to Camp. I Like to Climb Big Mountains. 2002 (p. 16) Polystyrene, objects gifted, personal and found, dimensions variable Photos: Sanja Pahoki

9. Unstable Table. 2005 (p. 16) Timber table, dowels, book—Russell Drysdale's Australia, colour plate "Children Dancing no.2 (1950)" carved wood mother and child bookends, wooden goblets, pine vases, pine back massager, Tasmanian myrtle apple and pear, 80 x 118 x 55 cm

10. Extraction. 2002 (p. 17) Polystyrene, objects gifted, personal and found, dimensions variable

11. Raff. 2004 (p.17) Polystyrene, objects gifted, personal and found, dimensions variable Photos: Sanja Pahoki


13. Beached. 2004 (p. 18) Masonite, plywood, roller blind nylon, chair frame, polystyrene, packaging tape, plastic chain, hand crafted chair, foam surf board, plastic tubing, plastic basin, dimensions variable Photos: Sanja Pahoki


15. Stuck. 2005 (p. 21) Fitball, shooter's stick, foam surfboard, 1200 x 200 x 120 cm Photo: Judith Hall

16. Stuck. 2005 (p. 21) Fitball, Castelli tables, wooden tabletop, fluorescent light, 300 x 190 x 60 cm

17. Mount. 2005 (p. 21) Fitball, Castelli tables, 180 x 100 x 80 cm

18. Stuck in Dualspace. 2013 (p. 21) Fitball, fluorescent light, dimensions variable

19. Stuck in Dualspace Still. 2018 (p. 21) 3:00 minute looped video, a5 clip frame, verse on a5 paper, acrylic laser-cut lettering, dimensions variable


22. Department. 2007 (p. 25) Single-channel video projection, 8:11 minutes dimensions variable

23. Danny Boy Dog. 2012 (p. 25) Single-channel video, 3 minutes, LCD monitor, Miss Louisie packaging, dimensions variable Photo: Zan Wimberley

24. Bald Video. 2007 (p. 26) Single-channel video, 1 minute, LCD monitor, Photo: Christian Capurro

25. E.T. 2010 (p. 26) Floor lamp, nail scissors, thumb tacks, 120 x 20 x 90 cm Photos: Matthew Stanton

26. Scissors Chair. 2007 (p. 26) Bar stool, nail scissors, 150 x 60 x 50 cm

27. Beat Me. 2008 (p. 27) Single-channel video, 7 minutes, monitor, dimensions variable

28. Tap Me. 2008 (p. 27) Single-channel video, 1 minute, monitor, dimensions variable

29. Bore Me. 2008 (p. 27) Single-channel video, 4 minutes, monitor, dimensions variable

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31. Pause Scratch. 2008 (p. 27) Single-channel projection on 4-channel video 5 minutes, dimension variable.

32. Lucknow & Bore Me. 2009 (p. 29) Monitor, shower screens, floor lamps, power cords, soccer figurine, glass lampshades, cut glass bowls, cast iron pot, metal stand, dimensions variable Photos: John Brash

33. View of Fiji. 2015 (p. 35) Gold rimmed spectacle frames, wire, wood frame, sheet glass, acrylic boot, 34 x 30 x 3 cm Photo: Chriso Crocker

34. Screw Bubs. 2010 (p. 38) Hydrostone, polyesterene, steel, 55 x 35 x 12 cm Photo: Andrew Curtis

35. S.Bubs 11. 2011 (p. 38) Cd rack, sharpie pen 8 x 8 x 10 cm

36. S. Bubs 11 Low Hubbard. 2011. 2013 (p 39) Oil on canvas 41 x 51 cm

37. Cap Eyes & Crocs. 2011 (p. 40) Cap eyes: ceramic cups, google eyes, bath towel, dimensions variable Crocs: plastic crocodiles, metal hair clips 10 x 10 x 2 cm

38. Accidental Hero. 2017 (p. 43) Acrylic image, Hero building billboard, Melbourne, 1037 x 265cm Photos: Andrew Curtis

39. Lock Keeper’s House Answer. 2013 (p. 43) Digital image, dimensions variable

40. Angle of Incidence. 2013 (p. 43) Still from video in progress

41. Att: Main Reception. Level 1, 12 Warratah Pl, Melbourne 3000. 2016 (p.45) Invigilator, objects gifted, personal and found, dimensions variable Photo: Christo Crocker

42. (Cutting) Board. 2016. (p. 45) Cutting board, acrylic teeth 48 x 25 x 1 cm Photo: Chriso Crocker

43. (Bandage) Greeting. 2016 (p. 45) Paper tole, glass, wood frame, bandages, 35 x 30 x 5 cm Photo: Chriso Crocker

44. (Stick) In The Head. 2016 (p. 45) Wig, nano action figure, stained Board, clip frames, wall stain, 30 x 48 x 1 cm Photo: Christo Crocker

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DEPARTED ACT


47. Image One Please Eric. 2018 (p. 49) Photo: weilpearl.societyofrock.com

48. Beat Me 2008 (p. 49) See image #27.


50. Train Crossing. 2012 (p. 49) Single-channel video projection, 3 minutes, dimensions variable

51. Departed Eggs. 2018 (p. 49) Eggs shells, industrial primer, paint pen, cloth covered partition, dimensions variable

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54. Slump. 2011 (p. 73) Acrylic sheets, plastic, packaging tape, basketball pyjama case, 250 x 100 x 50 cm
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Photo: Christo Crocker

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61. Installation view Dead Still Standing. (p.83)
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63. Dead Still Standing. 2014 (p. 84)
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Photo: Christo Crocker

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Photo: Christo Crocker

71. Start Fall Start 62. 2014 (p. 88)
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Photo: Christo Crocker

72. Installation View: Curtain With Catsuit. 2014 (p.89)
Photo: Christo Crocker

73 Detail: Curtain With Catsuit. 2014 (p. 89)
Photo: Christo Crocker

74. Curtain With Catsuit. 2014 (p. 90)
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Photo: Christo Crocker

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Lycra, wallpaper, fluorescent lights, decals, dimensions variable
Photo: Christo Crocker

76. Installation View: Votives Passage. 2014. (p. 91)
Lycra, wallpaper, fluorescent lights, decals, dimensions variable
Photo: Christo Crocker

77. Installation View: Votives Passage. 2014. (p. 92)
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Photo: Christo Crocker

78. Installation View: Votives Passage. 2014. (p. 92)
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86. Installation View: Horse Pool With Dog Paddle. 2014. (p 100)


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Photo: Christo Crocker

90. Curtain With Catsuit # 2. 2019. (p. 103)
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Photo: Christo Crocker

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Photo: Dennis Tuspicoff

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94. Spectacle. 2011. (p. 113)
The artist’s spectacle frames, sticky tape, 6 x 13 x 7 cm
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96. Teeth (With Feet). 2018. (p. 114)
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123. The Liger Mee Performance. 2018 (pp. 126, 127)
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129. Table Tennis Table. 2010 (p. 131)
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NATURE MORTES—Rehearsal

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137. Horse Sofa. 2014 (p. 133)
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Photo: Christo Crocker

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Acrylic custom-made display box, digital print on particle board, the table’s dinner crochet by her Aunt Molly (1967), acrylic coat hanger, 136.7 x 66.1 x 7.1 cm
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148. Sunday Best. 2016 (p. 137)
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150. Bunch of Dates. 2014 (p. 139) Tudor desktop calendar, Sharpie pen, 8 x 12 x 6 cm

Tudor desktop calendar, Murano glass grapes, collection of bread packaging use by dates, vacuum packaging, plywood, 45 x 35 x 15 cm

153. Sandbank. 2017 (p. 139)
Plywood, Dulux sandbank acrylic spray paint, plastic toy shoes,12.5 x 22.86 x 2.54 cm
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Photo: Dennis Tupicoff
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<td>View of Fuji. 2015</td>
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**Dead Still Standing**

(Major Solo Exhibition, February 2015)

1. Dead Still Standing. 2014
2. Floor Fan. 2014
3. Dog Bike Brick. 2014
5. Start Fall Start #2. 2014
7. Votives Passage. 2014
11. Dead Still Standing ii. 2015
12. View of Fuji. 2015
13. Apple Bit. 2015
14. Bored Still. 2015
15. Day is Done. 2015
16. Antlers in the Snow. 2015
17. Horse Collage. 2015.
22. (Bamkage) Greeting. 2016
23. (Stuck) In The Head. 2016
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Schaik, Jan van.


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