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MATERIALISING FEMINISM: OBJECT AND INTERVAL

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Abstract

This practice-led research upholds a view of sexual difference as a mutable field constituted in relations *between* materiality, subject positions and the situated conditions of feminism. It considers multiple and different subjects as equivalent, in a framework of ethical relations across the divide between the feminine and the masculine. This contested binary, previously operating as a negative and oppositional framework, is now radically affirmed as a generative and affirmative topology of difference and relation. Drawing on Luce Irigaray's framework of the interval of sexual difference, the research locates relations of difference and connection within the generative *space, place* and *threshold* of the interval. Modes of making manifest these relations through a material-discursive practice, rendered via collaborative curatorial projects and art objects. Through this work sexual difference is repositioned as non-hierarchical and non-oppositional, whilst the affirmation of this binary through the interval situates identity *through* relations. The reconfiguration of sexual difference through the interval extends the possibilities for feminist art via its affirmative and productive new strategies for practice.

Declaration

- (i) this thesis comprises only my original work towards the Doctor of Philosophy
except where indicated
- (ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used
- (iii) this thesis is fewer than the maximum word limit in length, exclusive of
bibliography and appendices

Signed by:

Caroline Phillips

Caroline Phillips, January, 2017

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Introduction

“The transition to a new age requires a change in our perception and conception of *space-time*, the *inhabiting of places*, and of *containers*, or *envelopes of identity*. It assumes and entails an evolution or a transformation of forms, of the relations of *matter* and *form* and of the interval *between*: the trilogy of the constitution of place.”

Luce Irigaray¹

Materialising Feminism: object and interval contends that new possibilities can be opened up for feminist art practice through a focus on relations of difference, as revealed through the object and the interval. This practice-led research interrogates the nature of relations between objects and materials, situating this work within the broader social and political context of feminism. This framework draws on Luce Irigaray’s articulation of the interval of sexual difference. It renders the interval as a productive *space*, *place* and *threshold* for articulating the multiplicity of difference, and a material discursive platform from which to materialise a relational practice, as a feminist strategy. Through this work, the binary of sexual difference is reconfigured as non-hierarchical and non-oppositional and the interval is demonstrated as a generative space, place and threshold of possibilities for practice.

The interval is defined here as a material, conceptual and ontological framework that both articulates and elaborates a multivalent topology of sexual difference itself. This thesis broadly identifies three modes of the interval that are developed through art practice over the course of the research; a clearing of a *space* of separation to articulate the specificity of identities, a complex *place* of differentiating forces that materialises difference and multiplicity, and a *threshold* of ethical possibilities and relations across space and time.

¹ Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, trans. Carolyn Burke and Gillian C Gill (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 7-8. Original italics of the author.

Addressing aspects of feminist theory and practice that segregate and marginalise identities through antagonistic and oppositional binaries of difference, the research opens a diverse and affirmative path towards positive ethical change through a consideration of the relationship *between* objects and materials. In so doing, it asks the question; can the interval of sexual difference offer new ways to theorise and practise contemporary feminist art?

This trajectory has emerged out of three main fields of enquiry: the inherently relational tendencies in my art practice, previous research I have conducted into the subjectivity of the feminine through sculpture² and a personal commitment for feminist theory and practice. This PhD research is conducted through a method of studio processes alongside a curatorial practice that is emergent, iterative and often collaborative. This has enabled a material-discursive platform, informing the art making in an immersive and reflexive relationship. Through this methodology, the research engages with a number of secondary questions: 'How do theoretical concepts of 'the other', 'the relation' and 'the interval' allow us to formulate a model of generative relations that can be productive for practice?'; 'Can the affirmation of material binaries reveal a generative interval of relation that might address inequitable and oppressive structures of power?'; 'How can objects become relational?'; 'In what ways can the multiplicity of difference be understood through the space of the interval?'; 'Can non-permanent modalities of connection and engagement create meaningful intervals in time and space?'.

The interval is interrogated as both a conceptual and material framework within which a re-reading of binary thinking can take place, in turn re-working feminist art as a relational practice. This research seeks to move beyond a purely metaphorical reading of (Luce

² C. Phillips, *Placing the Body: Towards a Subjectivity of the Feminine in Sculpture*, M. Fine Art (Research) thesis and exhibition, (Melbourne: University of Melbourne/Faculty of the Victorian College of the Arts and Music, School of Art, 2012). Information and abstract available at: <https://minerva-access.unimelb.edu.au/handle/11343/37092>.

Irigaray's concept) of the interval, towards a manifestation of the interval as a material-discursive practice – a relational practice – that encompasses feminist politics and practice within situated conditions. The 'relational' in this project is defined as modes of relation between objects, between materials, between theory and practice, between an artwork and its maker(s) and between an artwork and its audience. The differing modes of production and presentation are informed by the conceptual framework, enabling a relational methodology termed a feminist methodology of relatedness. This expansive elaboration of the interval enables a research project that is immersive and experiential. This framework has enabled me to question my practice and the context in which it sits, both amongst my immediate peers and geographic location, and further afield in Australian and international contexts.



Image 1 *f generation: feminism, art, progressions* workshop, UMSU Wom*n's Room, University Of Melbourne, 2015. Photo by Veronica Caven Aldous.

This material-discursive context produces specific outcomes across two parallel forms of production: art objects and collaborative and curatorial projects. The artworks are made of recycled and industrial materials combined with handmade and craft based processes, producing abstracted and embodied objects. These works enact new possibilities for the object that draw on tropes of Minimalism such as simplified form, industrial materials, and processes of repetition and seriality. The object is scrutinized through this particular formal discourse in order to operate outside of language based forms of feminist practice such as representation, narrative or symbolism. In this way the work does not immediately provide a 'recognisable subject', hence is opened up to alternate readings outside of what theorist Kate MacNeill defines as 'prescriptive gendered reading'.³ Materials used in the objects such as rubber, plastic and rope are soft and pliable, incorporating flexibility and non-permanent modes of connection to delineate tentative, emergent and non-fixed identities in relation. Hence, the object forms the porous and unfixed identity of the self, whilst the relation between forms and the material processes deployed enact the space of difference and the place and threshold of the relation. These objects reframe the relational nature of specific things and beings, through a focus on the object becoming relational.

Conditions of institutional power and production are opened up through the collaborative and curatorial projects. Three primary projects have been pivotal: *The f Word: Contemporary Feminist Art in Australia* (including the development components *A Dinner Party: setting the table* and *The Technopia Tours Feminist Art Bus*), *AS IF: Echoes of the Women's Art Register* and *f generation: feminism, art, progressions*. These projects are discussed throughout the thesis, embedded in context with feminist art past and present,

³ Kate MacNeill, *Art that Matters: identity and contemporary art in Australia*, PhD thesis, (Melbourne: University of Melbourne, School of Art History, Cinema, Classics and Archaeology, 2007), 52.

and the studio practice. Drawing on Elke Krasny's theorisation of *curatorial materialism*,⁴ these co-dependent projects enact relational solidarity and create material-discursive spaces and places of feminist practice. The projects enable a relational engagement with a diverse range of Australian and international artists across forty years of history, theory and practice. What emerges through these engagements is the transversal exchange of knowledge, production and discourse, namely the materialisation of contemporary feminist art-making. Conceptual and material lines of connection between past and present ideas, materials and processes create relational sites of interactivity and difference. These sites and actions reframe binaries as non-hierarchical and non-oppositional, reconfiguring relationships of power and ethical exchange.

The current economic and political conditions in Australia (and more broadly across the globe) support mass poverty and entrenched refugee populations, the rise of misogyny and family violence, and the continued marginalisation of LGBTQ communities. Feminism is again on the rise, enabling social and political discourse to address these systemic inequities. The multiplicity of feminist art can harness a range of visions to propose a more ethical future. Beyond a single, universal definition, feminist art operates across a number of levels: critique of structures of power and oppression; making visible subjectivities and identities that have been marginalised (such as women, Indigenous communities, women of colour and queer); activating for social change; experimenting with process and media; and providing a platform for collaboration and solidarity amongst feminist communities. Since its inauguration in the late 1960s, feminist art has produced an array of ideas, imagery and processes that cannot be reduced to a universal genre. Yet it has certainly introduced, as

⁴ Elke Krasny, "Curatorial Materialism. A Feminist Perspective on Independent and Co-Dependent Curating" in *Curating in Feminist Thought*, 29 (May 2016): 96-106.

artist, curator and theorist Virginia Fraser reveals, '*women* and women's experiences into the middle of the masculine stronghold of high modernism, and changed it.'⁵

A particular group of women artists is discussed in this thesis, in their capacity to create objects in a relational way. Lygia Clark, Gego, Kerrie Poliness, Bianca Hester, and Cecilia Vicuña have all produced work that uses the tools and tropes of Minimalism to build relations between their materials, the artwork and the audience. This occurs through the abstracted forms, relational processes of making, and/or participatory aspects of their work. In particular the research teases out a lineage of minimalist work by these women artists that radically differs from the dominant narratives (of the North American model) of Minimalism as either a 'masculinist' model that is devoid of feeling, subjectivity or context, or an opposing 'feminised' version. The alternate trajectory by these artists under discussion constitutes a shift in the minimalist tradition that does not hinge on a singular subjectivity (of either the feminine or masculine kind) but rather emerges as a material and relational framework between difference, that may prove productive for feminist discourse.

This thesis component explores aspects of feminist art discourse via texts that have informed the explorations into relational and material practices, in particular through objects and sculpture. Elyse Mallouk's work sheds light on the limitations of Relational Aesthetics, while texts by feminist art curators and theorists such as Amelia Jones and Catherine de Zegher are discussed in their capacity to open up new ways of thinking about the forms and materials that constitute feminist art, beyond historicizing narratives and segregating categories. As such, some discussion is contextualised through the lens of New Materialist and Queer theories. Although space does not permit extensive elaboration of

⁵ Virginia Fraser, "To the person who said feminism is over as though she was right"," in *Art Monthly* 250 (June, 2012): 34-38., 36.

these fields, texts by Rosi Braidotti, Karen Barad and others are pivotal here. Ideas by important theorists and interpreters of Irigaray's work including Elizabeth Grosz and Rachel Jones are discussed where they intersect, oppose or build on Irigaray's concepts.

For Irigaray, sexual difference is the greatest challenge to our current age and requires 'a revolution in thought and ethics [...] if the work of sexual difference is to take place.'⁶

Beyond a simplistic view of the 'difference' between male and female, for Irigaray sexual difference is a complex relation outside of fixed parameters and definitions,⁷ that proves useful for thinking about new possibilities for a relational art practice. Most importantly for Irigaray, this complex relation occurs within the site of the interval, a *space* that separates, yet connects *at least* two non-hierarchical and equivalent positions, a *place* that constitutes difference itself,⁸ and a *threshold* of transformation and ethical relation. This re-evaluation of sexual difference begs the question, 'How is this important for feminist art practice?' and in so doing, the question 'what is feminist art?' is foregrounded and reconfigured.

The reconfiguration of the feminine/masculine binary offered by Irigaray's framework of the interval (of sexual difference) extends the possibilities for feminist art as it can offer affirmative and productive new strategies for practice. This research explores these possibilities in three ways. First, it is now possible that images of women and representational practices that underpin so much of the feminist art tradition might now be read outside of the (patriarchal) framing of a hierarchical and oppositional feminine/masculine duopoly. Second, relations *between* binaries might now become more

⁶ Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics*, 6.

⁷ Irigaray's conception of sexual difference is articulated across a number of texts discussed throughout the thesis. For an initial introduction see Chapter 1 "Sexual Difference" in Irigaray, *An Ethics*, 5-19.

⁸ Irigaray's framework of the interval, like that of sexual difference, is also developed across more than one text. In particular, see Luce Irigaray, "How to Conceive (of) a Girl?" in *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C Gill (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 160-7 and "Place, Interval: A Reading of Aristotle" in *An Ethics*, 34-55.

productive in their capacity for exchange and inter-subjectivity, foregrounding dynamic, positive difference as the source and materiality of sexual difference itself. Finally, a focus on form *and* matter, through a material-discursive practice, means that feminist art might now move beyond its more traditional focus on the politics of specific subjectivities, towards an expanded definition of identity *through* relation and the elaboration of sexual difference in the world.



Image 2 Caroline Phillips, untitled studio work, 2015, recycled leather, acrylic rope, found plastic, resin. 15x15x8cm. Photo by Caroline Phillips.

This PhD research harnesses these possibilities by presenting a sustained focus on the interval as a framework for new forms of feminist art practice, through a relational methodology of material-discursive practice. To lay the foundation for this extended

elaboration of the interval through practice, Chapter one *Materialising a relational methodology: alternate possibilities for feminist practice* explicates the situated discourse⁹ of feminist theory and practice in which the research takes place. This discussion pinpoints limitations in feminist discourse that revolve around an antagonistic relationship of opposition between the binary of feminine and masculine, revealing the interval as a productive alternative framework. This conceptual framework is then materialised through a relational methodology that proposes a material-discursive practice. Commencing with the curatorial project *A Dinner Party: setting the table*,¹⁰ a locally based platform of encounter and response, the research enables situated relations of difference and exchange. Following this is *The f Word: Contemporary Feminist Art in Australia*, a curatorial engagement with contemporary artists based in Metropolitan and regional Victoria. The relational methodology of both these projects forms and informs further research questions and art making in the studio.

Chapter two *Clearing the space of the interval – separation and connection*, explores studio processes of object making that work to open out the space of the interval as a generative site of separation, making visible the particularity of situated identities and categories. By re-affirming the duopoly of feminine and masculine, yet in a non-hierarchical and non-oppositional relation, the research radically reveals the interval as a generative site for connection and the reconfiguration of structures of power. The mutability and open-ness of

⁹ I use the term 'situated knowledge' akin to Donna Haraway's concept, whereby a body's agency is constituted in their specific time and place, including cultural, political and social relations. In 'Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective' Haraway writes: "I am arguing for politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims. These are claims on people's lives. I am arguing for the view from a body, always a complex, contradictory, structuring, and structured body, versus the view from above, from nowhere, from simplicity." Haraway, D. (1988). "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective" in *Feminist Studies* 14(3), (1988). 589.

¹⁰ Held at West Space, Melbourne (2012), co-curated with Dr Victoria Duckett.

the interval is harnessed in sculptural form, repositioning the object as a potential feminist strategy of relation. Chapter three *Intense interval – activating a place of multiplicity and relations* explores entanglements of identification amid forces of differentiation. Proximity of multiple forms can produce intense effects and unstable identities, prompting an engagement with the interval as an intense site of interaction and exchange. New Materialist concepts of entanglement and becoming are discussed in this chapter, revealing convergences with Irigaray's concept of the interval. These convergences foreground the multiplicity of difference and the generative capacity of the interval as a non-hierarchical place of relation.

Finally, in Chapter four *Re-imagining the interval – a threshold across space and time*, the interval is explored as a threshold of open potentiality, exchange and relation. Beginning with Irigaray's conception of the 'first threshold' (woman) through central core imagery, the Chapter later moves to the generative potential of exchange and interconnectivity in site specific artworks that deploy immersive yet non-permanent modes of connection and encounter. Interactions and relationships of matter, energy and space render the interval as a poetic, re-imagined threshold of becoming and feminist art making. Collaborative, curatorial projects that traverse the history and knowledge of past and present feminisms, explore the threshold as a collective border of spatio-temporal practice. It is hoped this approach can enhance possibilities for social change through its shift away from prescribed patriarchal systems of power and oppression. Oppositional strategies critique from within. This research manifests an alternate position that does not focus on critique (as a negative tool), but rather holds open generative possibilities in the world through affirmative practice.

In so doing, this PhD research enacts a contemporary practice that materialises a reconfigured topology of contemporary feminist art. The interval, as examined and revealed through this material and relational practice, is conceived as a site where binaries are in place, yet re-aligned as non-hierarchical, equivalent and ethical. In contrast to prevailing discourses then,¹¹ binaries are *affirmed* as necessary and productive for practice. Within this framework, dualities such as feminine/masculine, nature/culture, inside/outside, queer/straight, subject/object, differentiation/fusion and immanence/transcendence might then be seen as affirmative constructs. Existing structures of hierarchical power and oppression might then be reconfigured, moving towards more ethical paradigms of respect for difference. Through this practice-led research, the reconfiguration of the object through the interval is shown to radically transform prevailing approaches to feminist art.

¹¹ In particular much queer theory and new materialist theory aspires to dispense with binaries altogether. Whilst I agree that hierarchical binaries can be damaging and oppositional binaries can be limiting if perceived as fixed universals, I argue that this does not require that binaries *per se* need to be removed (if this is even possible to do). Rather, the way that binaries have been theorised is continually open to change and may provide new avenues of enquiry for theory and practice.

Chapter 1 – Materialising a relational methodology: alternate possibilities for feminist practice

“A revolution in thought and ethics is needed if the work of sexual difference is to take place. We need to reinterpret everything concerning the relations between the subject and discourse, the subject and the world, the subject and the cosmic, the microcosmic and the macrocosmic.”

Luce Irigaray¹²

1.1 Introduction to Chapter 1

This chapter outlines a relational methodology for the research, combining the conceptual framework of the interval, which is drawn from Luce Irigaray’s concept of sexual difference, with a material-discursive practice of art making that is introduced through the projects *A Dinner Party: setting the table* and *The f Word: Contemporary Feminist Art in Australia*. The chapter introduces Irigaray’s formulation of sexual difference as a productive counterpoint to dominant paradigms of the binary of feminine/masculine (and nature/culture) as antagonistic and hierarchical, through its focus on the interval. The chapter sets out the interval as an ontological space, place and threshold of difference that provides a generative site for new possibilities in feminist art practice. The ethical and mutable site of the interval creates the conditions for new possibilities of thinking and practising difference *differently*. The framework for the project emerges through a relational methodology for the research and for feminist practice more generally. The interval is rendered as a material and discursive platform via independent and collaborative curatorial projects that actively engage and interact with a diversity of feminist artists and audiences. Through the project *The f Word: Contemporary Feminist Art in Australia*, including the development component

¹² Irigaray, *An Ethics*, 6.

A Dinner Party: setting the table, issues of contemporary feminist practice emerge that both form and inform the research in a relational paradigm. Elke Krasny's theorisation of *curatorial materialism* is a useful framework for these collaborative projects. In her study of feminist collaborative projects both in the 1960s and 1970s, and in recent European examples,¹³ Krasny articulates the resurgence of feminist solidarity in contemporary art collectives as the resurgence of 'practices of relatedness,'¹⁴ through which feminist artmaking enacts specific ideas, knowledge exchange and material conditions.

For Krasny, curatorial materialism enables specific and situated infrastructures, intersubjective exchanges and discursive spaces that are a form of 'co-dependence.'¹⁵ She writes:

By making public their dependence on spatial, infrastructural, economic, and affective resources, they [the feminist collaborations under discussion] point out that the term "independent" actually conceals that curatorial work is constituted by relations and always dependent upon the exchange and collaboration with other human and non-human actors.¹⁶

This co-dependence, argues Krasny, enables feminist artists to establish 'material and immaterial infrastructures', which in turn enable them to respond to the world in which they live, continue to make work, and expand their exchanges with others.¹⁷ I do not work through an official artists' collective, yet the collaborative and curatorial projects undertaken in this research allow me to engage with and respond to my environment, make new work and exchange ideas with an array of different artists and communities.

¹³ Krasny discusses the work of the Central European feminist curatorial collective *Red Min(e)d* -Danijela Dugandžić (Sarajevo), Katja Kobolt (Munich), Dunja Kukovec (Ljubljana) and Jelena Petrović (Belgrade/Vienna) – and *Queering Yerevan*, formerly known as the Women-Oriented Women's Collective, from Armenia.

¹⁴ Krasny, "Curatorial Materialism," 97.

¹⁵ Krasny, "Curatorial Materialism," 101-3.

¹⁶ Krasny, "Curatorial Materialism," 103.

¹⁷ Krasny, "Curatorial Materialism," 103.

Feminist art largely deploys tools of image making that foreground a complex history of individual subjectivities, cultural identities and specific politics that utilise representational, language based and/or materially charged ways of making work. Its history is multivalent and diverse, yet draws on unifying ethical principles of how to be recognised in the world. Feminist activism constitutes a large part of this process through actions that ‘push back’ against social and political structures of oppression. This research asks if feminist art practice can generate different strategies that are not entirely dependent on these formats, but rather emerge from a reconfiguration of the feminine/masculine binary through material and affective processes. Building on the legacy of earlier feminist practices in a non-combative, co-dependent paradigm of practice *through* relations, this chapter asks the question, then, ‘How do theoretical concepts of the other, the relation and the interval allow us to formulate a model of generative relations that can be productive for practice?’ I posit that this framework may offer feminist discourse a release from the oppositional and hierarchical thinking of past feminist contexts that has stifled feminist theory and practice.¹⁸ This release may prove to activate new outcomes that reframe feminist practice as a dynamic, relational field of difference (or *differentiation*) and a site of ethical interaction, connection and exchange. In so doing, feminist art may enact an alternate paradigm where material conditions of multiple bodies, communities and matter itself are encountered. In this encounter, relationships, objects and effects can be generated that reconfigure systems of authority and power relations to create ethical encounters in a non-hierarchical sharing of the world.

¹⁸ The ‘tyranny’ of second wave theoretical positioning is argued well by Clare Hemmings in “Generational Dilemma, A Response to Iris van der Tuin’s “Jumping Generations”: On Second- and Third Wave Feminist Epistemology’, *Australian Feminist Studies* 24 (March 2009): 33-37.

1.2 Project 1: *A Dinner Party: setting the table* – articulating a relational methodology

The relational methodology of the research first emerged through the curatorial project *A Dinner Party: setting the table* (2012).¹⁹ Co-curated with film historian Victoria Duckett, the project entailed a two-week collaborative residency at the independent gallery space, West Space, in Melbourne. The interdisciplinary and participatory program included two curated film programs, a craft workshop, three panel discussions and an exhibition of historic archival material. Conceived as a combined workshop/residency to develop a future exhibition, the project was a way for me to seek out and engage with local (Melbourne, Australia) feminist artists to both learn about their work and contextualise the beginnings of the research within a wider world beyond my studio. I wanted to explore the specificity of my space, place and context and how this relates to global and national trends and issues surrounding post-capitalism, relational aesthetics and the resurgence of feminist art around the world.²⁰ The project helped me to formulate a number of questions; Where do I stand

¹⁹ *A Dinner Party: setting the table*, September 3 – 16, 2012, West Space, Melbourne. Co-curated by Caroline Phillips and Victoria Duckett. Program of events: Exhibition of documents and ephemera from the 1970s; *Knitting Circle with Kate Just*; *Imaging Her World* film program presented by West Space and Other Film; *Feminist Forum Day* including panels: *Dialogues in 1970s feminist art* with Stephanie Alexander, Virginia Fraser, Dr. Kate MacNeill and Dr. Juliette Peers, and *Where are we now?* with Hana Assafiri, Victoria Bennett, Dr. Anne Marsh and Lyndal Walker; *Her Humour: Sex and Satire in Contemporary Victorian Art* with Laura Castagnini, Catherine Deveny, Dr. Victoria Duckett and Inez de Vega; *Time Capsule* film program curated by Virginia Fraser.

²⁰ Melbourne has been prominent in the global resurgence of interest in feminist art since the mid 2000s with a steady flow of feminist exhibitions and events being held. In contrast to the 'fembuster' international shows seen in Europe and the USA, the Melbourne versions have often been held in Artist-Run spaces, inner city social venues, or local university or art school galleries. Projects included: *Feminist Actions*, Spacement, (2006); *Bird Girls*, VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery, (2007); *Feminism Never Happened*, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, (2007); *A Time Like This*, VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery, (2008); *Girls, Girls, Girls*, Carlton Hotel, (2008); *Accidental Feminist*, Kings ARI (2009); *Female Capture*, Trocadero, (2009); *Unfixing the Feminine*, Shifted, (2009); *A Different Temporality: Aspects of Australian Feminist Art Practice 1975-1985*, Monash University Museum of Art, (2010); *The View From Here: 19 Perspectives on Feminism*, West Space, (2010); *The Feminist Salon Group*, *The Envelope Residency*, The West Wing (West Space Project Site at Melbourne Central shopping centre), (2010); *Re/gender*, Platform, (2010); *Backflip*, VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery, (2011), *Heroes*, Grace Darling Hotel, (2011). This list comprises projects shown before *A Dinner Party: setting the table* only, there have been many others since, and I am sure they will continue.

in relation to the current feminist art moment?²¹ How does my work fit in to this larger picture? How can I engage with others in a meaningful way through my art practice? 'In what ways does feminist art still have relevance?'



Image 3 Projectionist Marcia Jane, during *Imaging Her World* film program, *A Dinner Party: setting the table*, West Space, Melbourne, 2012. Photo by Marco Her-Gibard.

Using the premise of revisiting Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* (1974-79) and its tour to Melbourne in 1988 as a point of departure, the program at West Space invited an engagement with historical material, an opportunity to hear from artists who were 'there' during the seventies, and those who are emerging now as the next generation of feminist artists. As the final and tenth location for its global tour, Chicago's *The Dinner Party* was exhibited in the annex of the historic Melbourne Exhibition Buildings, Carlton, during the bicentennial year of white settlement in Australia. The exhibition was sponsored by the

²¹ For a detailed record of the resurgence of feminist art in Australia see the Australian Feminist Art Timeline at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_feminist_art_timeline. For a detailed list of recent international feminist art exhibitions, see Katie Deepwell's "A Chronological List of International Exhibitions on women artists and feminist art practices," (2015), an online resource for n.paradoxa: international feminist art journal, found at <http://www.ktpress.co.uk/pdf/feministartexhibitions.pdf>

Australian Bicentennial Foundation and the State Government, provoking considerable discussion and debate as to its relevance (and the financial expense) in that context.

Amidst audible concerns for Indigenous representation and the parochial Australian ‘cultural cringe’, *The Dinner Party* installation received a considerably localised response.²²

In tandem, it galvanized a large community of local women artists who celebrated the exhibition. A special event was organised by the *Women’s Art Register*, hosting Chicago and one thousand prominent Australian women at a formal dinner in the historic Melbourne Exhibition Buildings, making visible the Australian women’s movement and local women’s art practice on a grand scale.



Image 4 Casey Jenkins, Daine Singer, Kate Just and Andrew McQualter during *Knitting Circle* with Kate Just, *A Dinner Party: setting the table*, West Space, Melbourne, 2012. Photo by Catherine Evans.

The events at West Space in 2012 recognised that we need to examine our role in the renewed contemporary feminist art discourse, and reiterate our place in it. Envisaged as a preliminary exploration of my ‘own backyard’ I recognised, however, that my local peer

²² For a detailed critique of this event, see Kate MacNeill’s “When Historic Time Meets Julia Kristeva’s Women’s Time: The Reception of Judy Chicago’s *The Dinner Party* in Australia” in *Outskirts: Feminisms Along the Edge* 18 (2008).

group and the academic context of the research excluded other (marginalised) voices that needed to be heard and included. Therefore, the project expanded beyond the initial city-centric and academic context and developed a wider regional state-based focus (Victoria, Australia), and sought to include Indigenous artists, cross-generational age groups, a range of cultural backgrounds and a mix of emerging and established artists.

Through a process of research, word of mouth advertising and personal networks, the two-week program at West Space included the participation of over thirty practitioners including visual artists, film-makers, writers, theorists and commentators and an audience of hundreds over the fortnight. A knitting circle, film nights, theoretical discussions, communal lunch, humour night and exhibition space provided multiple spaces and places of discussion and inter-connection, and firmly set the project in the contemporary context.



Image 5 Stephanie Alexander and Virginia Fraser during *Dialogues in 1970s Feminist Art, Feminist Forum Day, A Dinner Party: setting the table*, West Space, Melbourne, 2012. Photo by Catherine Evans.

The program surveyed and explored the pivotal modes of feminist practice during the important era of the 1970s and its legacy for current conditions of production. For example

there were panels entitled *Dialogues in 1970s feminist art, Where are we now?* and two film programs, *Imaging Her World* and *Time capsule*. For many, *A Dinner Party: setting the table* served as a reminder of what history may have forgotten (or gotten wrong) through the patriarchal marginalisation of women artists in the historical canon of literature and art history. In particular, some of the younger artists commented on their discovery of 'new' artists they had never heard of, or works they had not seen before, enabling a pedagogical aspect to the program.

Others who attended the events spoke of them as a positive and communal social experience, recalling the legacy of early feminist consciousness raising events. The participatory space that was created in the gallery was informal and social. The program connected disparate group of presenters and audiences that were active in the city and regional areas such as craftivists alongside academics, or notable food industry women alongside queer artists. For example, the panel *Her Humour: Sex and Satire in Contemporary Victorian Art* brought together artist Inez de Vega, comedienne Catherine Deveny, film historian Victoria Duckett and curator Laura Castagnini. This multiplicity and interdisciplinary interaction enabled the emergence of a relational exchange that was diverse, energetic and open to new impulses. People, images, sounds, concepts and materials were brought together, manifesting a material-discursive site of relation. The focus on critical dialogue in the panel discussions encouraged different viewpoints of theory, practice and politics in an environment of shared experience, yet mindful of individual difference and positioning. This enacted a relational threshold across concepts and embodied materials (people, ideas and art making practice) through listening, speaking, thinking and asking questions.

Chicago's *The Dinner Party* functions now as a historic archival document and displays a particular conceptual position of white, western feminism, yet the work still prompts questions about feminism and art today. Is there still a place for feminist art? Has the world evolved to a place where women and minority groups now take their rightful places in public and political life? Have we addressed the oppression of women and families experienced as domestic and sexual violence? Are women artists now equally represented in galleries and exhibitions? And most importantly, have we sat down together? How do we speak across class, culture, language, and sexualities? Do we welcome new diners to the table? What is the next course?



Image 6 Maggie Brown and Melanie Irwin during a break in the *Time Capsule* film program, *A Dinner Party: setting the table*, West Space, Melbourne, 2012. Photo by Catherine Evans.

A Dinner Party: setting the table allowed past and present audiences to connect through channels encompassing the aesthetics, politics and ethics of feminist practice. A palpable sense of energy, ideas and art making was embedded in the program through the range of open questions and ideas about feminism, manifesting a sense of experiential learning through participation and interactivity. This generative platform could be viewed as a

relational interface - an interval of ethical practice - that allowed for the emergence of new possibilities and the sense of an optimistic future. Rosi Braidotti speaks of 'hope for change' as an affirmative practice towards an alternate feminist future.²³ She argues that in our current post-human condition, the situated, material subject can still affect change through forming situated (localised) communities and through taking action.²⁴ For Braidotti, the re-emergence of the patriarchal, dominant 'we' (of the white male) in current global politics provides an opportunity to re-engage with, and create new networks and assemblages of difference.²⁵ In embracing this 'politics of location'²⁶ Braidotti argues we can create relational accountability and strive to 'undo power differentials'.²⁷ Braidotti's affirmative framework resonates strongly with the research, directly informing my research question outlined earlier: 'How do theoretical concepts of the other, the relation and the interval allow us to formulate a model of generative relations that can be productive for practice?' Thinking about the *A Dinner Party* project, in conjunction with the research questions raised, led me to see that a relational methodology could provide new possibilities for feminist art practice that manifest this hope, and an active process of generating new ideas and an ethical art making practice. This process continued through a number of other collaborative projects, discussed later in the thesis,²⁸ involving an array of material interactions with people, places, concepts and art making processes. Over time the relationship between making objects in the studio and the collaborative curatorial interactions both formed and informed the practice, expanding and clarifying the

²³ Rosi Braidotti, INTRODUCTION, *Australian Feminist Studies* 24:59 (March, 2009), 3-9., 5.

²⁴ Rosi Braidotti, 'Posthuman Feminism', (Lecture at Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne, Friday, December 9, 2016).

²⁵ Braidotti, 'Posthuman Feminism'.

²⁶ Braidotti, INTRODUCTION, 5.

²⁷ Braidotti, INTRODUCTION, 5.

²⁸ A full list of projects undertaken is available in Appendix D.

possibilities of a relational feminist practice. What emerges is a situated response that engages with the specific conditions within and around me in this time and place.

1.3 Problematising feminism – Irigaray and sexual difference theory

Feminist theory has evolved to this point only after its long history of, at times, polarised positions. Complex discussions persist since Simone de Beauvoir stated in 1949, 'enough ink has flowed over the quarrel about feminism'.²⁹ Her ground breaking *The Second Sex* articulated a clear distinction between the natural, biological functions of women and the political and social conditions that define her relation with the world (of men), galvanizing yet complicating the goals and strategies of subsequent feminist communities. Following the Marxist social and political agenda of equality and rights for women that characterised the 1970s Women's Movement, and the turn to psychoanalytic theory of the late 1970s and 1980s, the landscape of feminist theory expanded to include theories of gender. Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*,³⁰ although a positive force in articulating the complexities of gender and opening up the field of queer studies, reinforced the positions of essentialism and social constructivism introduced by de Beauvoir, as oppositional platforms. The topology of feminist discourse became both expanded and fractured, with a persistent fear of essentialism that sought to exclude the specificity of sex and nature.³¹

Some key theorists are now challenging this oppositional paradigm. The biologist and theorist Anne Fausto-Sterling argues that our sexual assignation at birth is not fixed and can develop and change over time across a *biological* spectrum between female and male, as

²⁹ Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (New York: Vintage Books, 2011), 23.

³⁰ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

³¹ Tina Chanter, *The Ethics of Eros; Irigaray's Re-writing of the Philosophers* (New York: Routledge, 1995), see Chapter 1, *Tracking Essentialism with the Help of a Sex/Gender Map*.

part of a dynamic systems theory that links biology and the social.³² Elizabeth Grosz similarly looks to the material reality of nature and the necessity of differentiation to the formation of our sexed bodies. Yet Grosz looks beyond bodies, to a politics of difference that speaks to external material forces and the way we live in the world amongst others.³³ The recent emergence of New Materialism has sought to break down the division between culture and nature, through a focus on the inter-relationship between our structured societies and the emphatic materiality of existence. New Materialist theorists such as Braidotti and Karen Barad consider multiple feminist *differings* that take into account the forces of nature, time and the non-human to open up new possibilities outside of a negatively framed binary difference.³⁴

These materialist trajectories are fascinating and challenging. They resist the oppositional tendency that occurs in queer and feminist debate and minimise the conflation of ‘natural’ with ‘universal’.³⁵ Both these tendencies are factors which have served to limit the potential of concepts of sexual difference and have unnecessarily polarised feminist debate. Butler herself has revised her own thinking. In *Bodies that Matter* she concedes a productive constraint is enabled by the material conditions (including sex) of the body. Butler questions

³² Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sex/Gender: Biology in a Social World* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

³³ Elizabeth Grosz, *Becoming Undone, Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics and Art*. (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2011).

³⁴ Rosi Braidotti developed a theory of the nomadic subject in the influential text *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (Cambridge: Columbia University Press, 1994), whilst Barad’s key major text *Meeting the Universe Halfway: quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2007) brought together quantum physics and issues of gender and subjectivity. A more detailed discussion of these theorists and New Materialism takes place in Chapter 3.

³⁵ See Dorothea Olkowski (ed), *Resistance, Flight, Creation: Feminist Enactments of French Philosophy*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000) for a detailed discussion of a range of feminist positions on universalism.

whether there is an irreducible sex behind the construction of gender, and implies if there is sex *before* gender, then it is a discursive construct that is stable and fixed,³⁶ and a material force that is only delineated through discourse.³⁷ Furthermore, Butler frames this paradigm as only concerned with regimes of power, termed a 'regulatory ideal'.³⁸

This paradigm overlooks operations of difference that exist in nature for other functions such as growth or creativity. Butler proposes 'once "sex" itself is understood in its normativity, the materiality of the body will not be thinkable apart from the materialization of that regulatory norm.'³⁹ Her insistence on the regulatory norms of (patriarchal) discourse (and their dominance over sex) ensures that an oppositional and hierarchical framing of sexual difference ensues.⁴⁰ Is it possible that the potential of dynamic, positive *difference* as the source and materiality of sex, and a matter of the real, is ripe for reframing outside of existing regulatory structures? Would this open up possibilities for alternate paradigms of relations where the ethical is framed not as an external regulatory force (of power) but as a material and conceptual possibility of relations, through ethical encounters with the world? Within this ethical encounter it is neither the 'you' nor the 'I' that takes precedence (and takes control), it is the 'we' of the relation between us (an irreducible third term that we share between us), that however momentarily provides the ethical encounter.

³⁶ Butler writes: "the discursive practice by which matter is rendered irreducible simultaneously ontologizes and fixes that gendered matrix in its place" and "How is it that the presumption of a given version of matter in the effort to describe the materiality of bodies prefigures in advance what will and will not appear as an intelligible body?" in *Bodies that Matter, On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*, (New York & London: Routledge, 1993), 29, 54.

³⁷ Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, 10.

³⁸ Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, 2.

³⁹ Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, 2.

⁴⁰ In later texts, Butler moves toward a more equivalent relationality between different subjects, drawing on Adriana Cavarero's *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2000). Through Cavarero and Hegel, Butler examines the unknowable realm of 'recognition of the other' and implications for the ethical relation via 'the address' to the other. Butler's account continues to bind her thinking to language (and psychoanalytic theory), hence to the construction of the subject in normative discourse. See Judith Butler, "Giving and Account of Oneself," in *Diacritics* 31.4 (Winter, 2001), 22-40 and *Giving an Account of Oneself*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 20015).

Irigaray proposes a 'sharing of the world' where sexual difference is at the forefront of how we go about living in the world, and can enable a non-hierarchical division of sex and gender roles that can frame an ethical society.⁴¹ In *I love to you: Sketch of a Possible Felicity in History* Irigaray clearly states 'we are all of us, men and women alike, sexed'.⁴² Moving beyond a purely biological determination, Irigaray speaks of sexual difference as:

Constituting the horizon of worlds more fecund than any known to date ... and without reducing fecundity to the reproduction of bodies and flesh. For loving partners this would be a fecundity of birth and regeneration, but also the production of a new age of thought, art, poetry, and language: the creation of a new poetics.⁴³

This expansive conception of sexual difference opens the way for alternate practices of feminism and new strategies for feminist art. Relational practices that seek to include multiple identities and visions of gender, race, class and age can all be accommodated in a non-hierarchical framework of sex. Crucially, for Irigaray, sexual difference encapsulates a life and world of 'at least two',⁴⁴ and 'a two containing in turn secondary differences'.⁴⁵ Not always a discussion of feminine and masculine, she insists the relation between the 'two' can include relations between women, between a mother and daughter, and between one and 'the other'.⁴⁶ Irigaray has consistently argued for the positive possibilities of the material, ontological, social and political dimensions of an irreducible sexual difference necessary for any truly ethical framework. In this way, the interval of sexual difference can speak across conceptual, material and discursive art practices.

⁴¹ Irigaray, *Sharing the World*, (London & New York: Continuum, 2008).

⁴² Luce Irigaray, *I love to you: Sketch of a Possible Felicity in History*, (trans. Alison Martin), (New York & London: Routledge, 1996), 30.

⁴³ Irigaray, *An Ethics*, 5.

⁴⁴ Irigaray, *I love to you*, 35.

⁴⁵ Irigaray, *I love to you*, 35.

⁴⁶ Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter and Carolyn Burke, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985) and *An Ethics*.

The foundation of Irigaray's concept of sexual difference and its multiple elaborations through philosophy and psychoanalysis (and in later texts through her writings on education, architecture, spirituality, art and law) is the constitution of our bodies as living subjects in the world, that is, our natural condition as it is elaborated through our subjectivity. Irigaray argues that the feminine and masculine subject positions are a 'natural given' that we all must contend with on a fundamental level. Regardless of race, class or gender we all are here because of the (sexual) differentiation that exists in nature as a prerequisite for the human race. Our individual identity and subjectivity is then informed, and formed, through our sexed positions that began with feminine and masculine.⁴⁷ As Irigaray explains:

To affirm that man and woman are really two different subjects does not amount for all that to sending them back to a biological destiny, to a simple natural belonging. Man and woman are culturally different. And it is good that it is so: this corresponds to a different construction of their subjectivity. The subjectivity of man and that of woman are structured starting from a *relational identity* specific to each one, a relational identity that is held between nature and culture, and that assures a bridge starting from which it is possible to pass from one to the other while respecting them both.⁴⁸

As well as being a biological, ontological and originary difference, Irigaray's conception of feminine and masculine incorporates our situated positions as sexual, political and social beings that live amongst each other in the world. Both females and males have different ways of relating to the world and to each other, stemming from our individual subject positions, and of course not all females and not all males are the same. The way our sexual

⁴⁷ Irigaray's work in relation to intersex and non-binary gender is discussed in Chapter 4.

⁴⁸ Luce Irigaray, 'Approaching the Other as Other' in *Key Writings*, ed. Luce Irigaray (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), 26-7.

difference is elaborated and actuated in the world is embodied and lived through our differences such as race, gender and other factors, for example, age or family background. As such, Irigaray's framework can be said to exceed the distinction between sex and gender, providing a model of thinking that can shift preconceived and fixed binaries, allowing for difference and multiplicity across multiple categories. As will be teased out further in later chapters, this bridge that Irigaray speaks of above, one of her many metaphors for the interval, can provide a framework for thinking about a relational model for feminist theory and practice, one that foregrounds the specificity of all identities in a relational framework that is ethical and equivalent. Crucially, though, this framework begins with the primary distinction of sexual difference.

Grosz also argues for the primacy of sex. She articulates the important distinction between sex as a biological reality and other categories that affect bodies such as race, class, gender and sexuality as 'phenotypic classifications between bodies that are real,'⁴⁹ she writes:

Sexual difference functions differently than all the other forms of social oppression and discrimination; it is the condition by which all other bodily differences are produced because it regulates the operations of reproduction and always accompanies all other socially significant differences.⁵⁰

This is not to say that these 'other' significant differences are never biological or that they are not as important as sexual difference. It is exactly this variation and multiplicity (of various differences) that is at stake in the situational framework of a relational feminism. However, as Grosz argues, it is sexual difference that 'makes possible and accompanies all

⁴⁹ The Editors of *Interstitial Journal*, "Significant Differences; An Interview with Elizabeth Grosz," in *Interstitial Journal* 4, (March 2013), 2.

⁵⁰ The Editors of *Interstitial Journal*, "Significant Differences", 4-5.

other social differences.⁵¹ This line of thinking is very important for this project as it maintains the specificity of women, and requires us to consider the physical, social and political reality of each situation anew, with no preconception of the experience of 'reality' for someone else. It does not lump 'the other' (be it queer, indigenous, black or aged) into a universalising 'marginalised' category, or assume that we know the experience of 'the other'.

As Rebecca Hill shows in her extended study of the metaphysics of the interval, Irigaray's and Grosz's approaches to thinking through sexual difference 'converge precisely in the effort to conceive difference as a place of open potentiality.'⁵² Our innate difference begins with our material, sexed being, then elaborates further through the relationships and operations of power within cultural, social and political structures. Patriarchy operates on the assumption that the masculine is the norm, the 'one', and the feminine is 'the other'. All systems of oppression stem from this, and manifest according to a range of specific physical, social, political, geographic and economic conditions. Patriarchy has obscured sexual difference, and requires this effacement (of the feminine) to maintain its supremacy. Hence sexual difference can productively reveal systemic hierarchies and oppression in the world both past and present. A focus on the interval, as the site where this hierarchy might be reconfigured as an ethical relation (by maintaining, in fact *affirming* sexual difference), can perhaps then be the site where feminism can reconfigure this oppression.

1.4 Irigaray's interval as a conceptual framework for artmaking

The interval, then, can be conceived as a space and place for creativity, knowledge and possibilities for art. Irigaray's thinking has chiefly informed women's art practice across two

⁵¹ The Editors of *Interstitial Journal*, "Significant Differences", 2.

⁵² Rebecca Hill, *The Interval, Relation and Becoming in Irigaray, Aristotle, and Bergson*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 143.

fronts. Firstly, artists who interrogate the de-construction of patriarchal language through psychoanalytic theory and philosophy have been inspired and informed by Irigaray's early work, in strategies of textual, mimetic, (re)presentation or genealogical models, for example in the work of Janet Burchill and Alex Martinis Roe (Australia). These practices appear from the mid 1980s when Irigaray's *Speculum of the Other Woman* and *This Sex Which is Not One* were first translated into English. Alternatively, other artists have investigated the possibilities of a symbolic or imaginary feminine in keeping with Irigaray's insistence on women developing their own poetic language, for example in the work of Elizabeth Presa (Australia) and Utako Shindo Kanai (Japan). Although Irigaray's writing can be complex, her wide range of critique, metaphor and conceptual thinking lends itself to a diverse array of art making practices.⁵³ Most recently, her work is opening up collaborative group projects in the Australian feminist context that highlight participatory and 'grass roots' practices, such as Courtney Coombs' project *Conversing about the Other* (2016)⁵⁴ and Prof Anne Marsh's *Doing Feminism/Sharing the World* collaborative feminist residency program in Melbourne (2017/8).⁵⁵

Irigaray's work develops the discourse on sexual difference by opening up the space of the interval, a space of ethical relations and a place of possibilities that is revealed through this research as a productive site for practice. There are two particular texts in which Irigaray develops her early conception of the interval: *How to Conceive (of) a Girl*, which appears in

⁵³ There are few major texts that critique visual arts practice through Irigaray's work. Hilary Robinson's *Reading Art, Reading Irigaray: the Politics of Art by Women*, (London & New York: I.B.Taurus, 2006) explores strategies of mimesis, visibility, morphology and representation in the work of Louise Bourgeois, Rachel Whiteread and Bridget Riley, amongst many others. This is an analysis by the author, the artists themselves have not cited Irigaray as important to their work. Caroline Bainbridge's *A Feminine Cinematics, Luce Irigaray, Women and Film*, (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008) similarly explores Irigarayan frameworks through women's film-making.

⁵⁴ Courtney Coombs, *Conversing about the Other*, Metro Arts, Brisbane, 2016.

⁵⁵ Prof Anne Marsh, curator of *Doing Feminism/Sharing the World* collaborative feminist residency program, forthcoming (December 2017 – February 2018), Norma Redpath House, Melbourne.

the early work *Speculum of the Other Woman*,⁵⁶ and *Place, Interval: A Reading of Aristotle, Physics IV*, a later text from *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*.⁵⁷ In the former text, Irigaray explores ideas of the unrealised potential of the formlessness of woman (outside the existing, hierarchical structure of man/woman devised by phallogentric history) as a space between the gaps of beings.⁵⁸ In the latter text, the interval is more clearly articulated as a space between two, and also as the site of desire.⁵⁹

As Irigaray's ideas develop in her numerous subsequent texts from the 1990s to the present, the interval becomes the essence of her overall framework of sexual difference. The binary of feminine and masculine is no longer critiqued as an oppositional structure, but rather becomes a corporeal elaboration of ethical, sexed, difference and relation. For example, in the text *How to Live Together in a Lasting Way* (2001),⁶⁰ Irigaray proposes an architectural model for a man and woman to live together in an environment of respect, sharing and individual agency. In *The Way of Love* (2002), Irigaray sets out to imagine the wisdom of love.⁶¹ For Irigaray, when the antagonism of opposition is removed, and replaced with an open conception of 'difference', it immediately opens up a relational field, where the interval becomes the articulation of this possibility, and a threshold of being itself.

As Grosz argues, Irigaray's interval can be contextualised as not only the space between two, but the conditions for the elaboration of difference itself, which she names the 'figure

⁵⁶ Luce Irigaray, "How to Conceive (of) a Girl," In *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985).

⁵⁷ Irigaray, *An Ethics*, Part 1, 34-58.

⁵⁸ Irigaray, *Speculum*, 166.

⁵⁹ Irigaray, *An Ethics*, 35, 37, 48.

⁶⁰ Luce Irigaray (ed), *Luce Irigaray: Key Writings*, (London & New York: Continuum, 2001).

⁶¹ Luce Irigaray, *The Way of Love*, (London & New York: Continuum, 2002)

of difference'.⁶² Grosz calls for a total rethinking of the natural sciences, aesthetics and philosophy, including the intervals between these things that Irigaray precipitates, in a tripartite of ethics, aesthetics and politics.⁶³ This concept is appealing in reconfiguring feminist art as it allows for an expansive vision that is characteristic of feminist practice. The interaction between art, the social and the political is important to the work of feminism, and Irigaray's unique outlook can encompass this range of activity. For Irigaray it is only on the relational plane that our humanity can come to be truly realised; for her, relations are everything. What is conjured for us in her radical way of thinking is a 'third' that emerges between two, an ontology that is both conceptual and material (real), reconfiguring relations in a dynamic space:

The real exists as at least three: a real corresponding to the masculine subject, a real corresponding to the feminine subject, and a real corresponding to their relation. These three reals thus each correspond to a world, but these three worlds are in interaction.⁶⁴

This interactive world makes available an open framework of possibilities for practice. A productive relationship between Irigaray's thinking and New Materialism has emerged largely through Grosz's sustained engagement with the materiality of time and the 'natural' forces of matter. This has been useful for a number of contemporary artists and challenges fixed concepts. For example, artist Bianca Hester uses Irigaray's conception of air as matter to problematise conventional considerations of matter as solid and fixed.⁶⁵ For Irigaray, the question of matter is inextricably linked to the interval. Irigaray's numerous affirmations of

⁶² Elizabeth Grosz, 'Ontologies, Topologies, Temporalities: Irigaray, Ethics and Art'. (Keynote paper delivered at the 'Topologies of Sexual Difference' Conference, the Seventh meeting of the Luce Irigaray Circle, Melbourne, Australia, December 10–12, 2014). Rebecca Hill also works extensively on the Interval. In particular, see *The Interval: Relation and Becoming In Irigaray, Aristotle and Bergson*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012).

⁶³ Elizabeth Grosz, 'Ontologies, Topologies, Temporalities'.

⁶⁴ Irigaray, *The Way Of Love*, 111.

⁶⁵ Bianca Hester, "Material Adventures, Spatial Productions: Manoeuvring Sculpture Towards a Proliferating Event" (Melbourne: RMIT University PhD thesis, 2007), 44.

the interval as expansive, generative, subjective, metaphoric, cosmic and material are also useful for artists in their capacity as visual and spatial metaphors such as skin and mucous,⁶⁶ the bridge,⁶⁷ clearing and air,⁶⁸ the angel,⁶⁹ the lips,⁷⁰ topologies of colour,⁷¹ containers and boundaries.⁷² This research seeks to move beyond a purely metaphorical reading of the interval, towards a manifestation of the interval as a material-discursive practice - a relational practice - that encompasses feminist politics and practice within situated conditions. This concept of the interval and its materialisation through the art making in this research will be discussed further in Chapter two, yet for now Irigaray's framing of the interval as the essence of sexual difference lays the foundation for thinking through alternative modes of feminist art practice.

Irigaray suggests we, each one of us, should actively 'cultivate' our individual positions⁷³ as *sexuate* beings. She coins the term 'sexuate' to name the mode of being and becoming in a world of sexual difference to come, meaning, a world that is not dominated by hierarchical and oppressive patriarchal regimes. Irigaray promotes this 'cultivation' as a series of individual conscious actions, in relation to others and the world, from which the elaboration of sexual difference accumulates meaning. This research materialises and cultivates an ongoing practice of a relational, 'sexuate' art making that examines and breaks down hierarchical structures to envisage an ethical way of being a feminist artist in the world. In

⁶⁶ Luce Irigaray, *Elemental Passions*, (New York: Routledge, 1992), 27.

⁶⁷ Luce Irigaray, *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), 27, 30.

⁶⁸ Irigaray, *The Forgetting of Air*, 8, 9, 40, 41.

⁶⁹ Irigaray, *An Ethics*, 15.

⁷⁰ Luce Irigaray, "When our lips speak together," *Signs*, Vol. 6, No. 1, *Women, Sex and Sexuality*, Part 2, Autumn, 1980, 69-79.

⁷¹ Luce Irigaray, "Flesh Colours," In *Luce Irigaray: Key Writings*, 112-122.

⁷² Irigaray, *An Ethics*, 34-44.

⁷³ This 'cultivation' of the sexuate being, starting from the self, is a common theme throughout many of Irigaray's texts. In *I love to you*, (New York and London: Continuum, 2002), it takes the form of 'flowering' and 'blossoming'. Irigaray writes that 'the work of art that a human is invited to carry out is first the blossoming of self in its own singularity', 127.

its relations with materials, art making and connecting with others, 'ethical' is defined and constituted through a non-hierarchical practice.

Feminist theorist and philosopher Louise Burchill argues that feminist art practice intrinsically harnesses modes of practice that work against fixed binaries:

The dissolution of divisions (for example between "conceptualism" and "materiality", "high art" and "craft", or, indeed, "objective" and "subjective") and the bringing together of different movements and media that explodes traditional ("self-evident") definitions of what constitutes artwork are, of course, characteristic of the feminist practises that have historically functioned to question masculinist narratives of art. One might wish to view this as the *introduction* of sexuation into art, though, given that sexuation was/is always already there but simply effaced in masculinist models of universalism, let us rather see it as revealing that the universality of art remains an outcome ever in sexuated elaboration.⁷⁴

Beyond a straightforward 'difference' between art made by women and that made by men, what Burchill uncovers is the revelation of the possibility of a sexuate art practice that constitutes a challenge to (another) hierarchical sexed binary, that of a patriarchal art system.

For women artists, myself included, taking up this provocation to materialise a sexuate practice, can provide a framework for rethinking feminist art questions about representation of female identity, social engagement and the politics of power, in a different way to how those questions have been interrogated by feminist artists before me. There is a history of debate on the possibility (and possible figurations of) a 'female

⁷⁴ Louise Burchill, "Problematising Universals yet again ... and again!" in *The f Word, Contemporary feminist art in Australia*, Caroline Phillips, (ed.), (Melbourne: published by the author, 2014), 23.

aesthetic'.⁷⁵ This PhD research extends this debate, towards a rendition of a sexual practice whereby a contemporary feminist practice is revealed and activated through its methodology, processes and materials. The framework of the interval emerges as a strategy that can elaborate new ways that feminist art practice might operate, via a relational paradigm. This practice might then enable a discursive platform upon which difference and relations are reconfigured within the interval as a material and ethical space/place of difference.

1.5 Project 2: *The f Word: Contemporary Feminist Art in Australia*.

Following the preliminary work undertaken in *A Dinner Party: setting the table*, the exhibition project, *The f Word: Contemporary Feminist Art in Australia* (2014), developed as a multi venue exhibition in two regional Victorian galleries in the east and west of the state; Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale and Ararat Regional Art Gallery.⁷⁶ The exhibition consisted of works by nineteen artists, thirteen from Melbourne and six from regional Victoria,⁷⁷ along with three commissioned essays by Australian feminist writers Virginia Fraser, Louise Burchill and Carolyn Barnes. The artists were chosen through processes of conversation, looking at work, and thinking and responding to the primary issues that emerged during the earlier

⁷⁵ Lucy Lippard, *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art*, (New York, Dutton: 1976); in the Australian context see Catriona Moore, "'The more things change....', Feminist aesthetics, then and now', *Artlink* (33,3, 2013). Moore locates an original source of central core (vaginal) imagery in the work of Australian artist Vivienne Binns. The artist created a series of vaginal paintings which were made and exhibited in Sydney in the mid 1960s. This is years before the dominant narrative (of the birth of central core imagery) that attributes its genesis to members of the North American women's art movement in the late 1960s.

⁷⁶ *The f Word, Contemporary feminist art in Australia*, curated by Caroline Phillips was shown in two instalments at Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale (July 19 to September 7, 2014) and Ararat Regional Art Gallery, Ararat (August 28 to October 12, 2014). Full details in *The f Word; contemporary feminist art in Australia*, Caroline Phillips, (ed.), (Melbourne: published by the author, 2014) and project blog: www.thefwordaus.wordpress.com.

⁷⁷ The exhibiting artists and commissioned writers were: Carolyn Barnes, Catherine Bell, Kate Beynon, Karen Buczynski-Lee, Louise Burchill, Penny Byrne, Filomena Coppola, Destiny Deacon, Laurene Dietrich, Virginia Fraser, Eliza-Jane Gilchrist, Janice Gobey, Kate Just, Georgia MacGuire, Robyn Massey, Jill Orr, Caroline Phillips, Clare Rae, Elvis Richardson, Louise Saxton, Inez de Vega and Lyndal Walker. For commissioned catalogue essays see Appendix B.

West Space project, and the subsequent event, *The Regional Feminist Art Forum*, held in Bendigo, Central Victoria (2013).⁷⁸ The brief for the artists was open. The issues that they highlighted in their works were emblematic of earlier 1970s feminist concerns, reiterated in the contemporary context: identity, sexuality, visibility of women, femininity, motherhood, political activism and community. The imperative to revisit and (re)present these issues validated the importance of feminism to contemporary art discourse amongst the artists in the local context.



Image 7 Penny Byrne, *Free Pussy Riot!*, 2013, installation view, *The f Word: Contemporary Feminist Art In Australia*, Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale, 2014. Courtesy of the artist. Photo by Clare Rae.

The f Word project sought to find out what strategies were being used by contemporary feminist artists in both metropolitan and regional areas, how they were responding to the (re)emergence of feminism as a global social and cultural force, and in what ways the research questions surrounding this PhD might be informed by, and resonate with, the feminist strategies of some of my peers. Rather than dictating a curatorial premise or proposition, the artists were left entirely free to communicate what was most important to

⁷⁸ *The Regional Feminist Art Forum*, held at La Trobe Visual Arts Centre, Bendigo, included talks and panel discussion by Filomena Coppola, Dr. Juliette Peers and Virginia Fraser, followed by two workshop groups.

them, with a view to the resulting works enacting a dialogue in the gallery space. The project proposed this dialogue as a relational framework across materials, artmaking methods, political contexts and ideas; a space of sexual practice.



Image 8 Clare Rae, *The Magdalen Series Revisited*, light boxes, installation view, *The f Word: Contemporary Feminist Art In Australia*, Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale, 2014. Courtesy of the artist. Photo by Clare Rae.

The local political environment in Australia at that time was very much connected to the resurgence of feminism in the public domain, in response to issues such as the rise in violence against women. Figuring prominently in the media, issues of social justice surrounding refugees and Indigenous homelessness and incarceration were concurrently polarising political debate. In 2014, the year of *The f Word* final outcomes, the startling statistic was revealed that on average more than one woman per week was being killed as a result of domestic (family) violence in Australia.⁷⁹ That rate increased shortly after that pronouncement, leading to the formation of a Royal Commission into Family Violence in the

⁷⁹ Liz Burke, 'The numbers that will shock you to tears'. Online article, <http://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/the-numbers-that-will-shock-you-to-tears/news-story/8250b450739d9149a087a5d167599ecd>

state of Victoria, the results of which have recently been tabled.⁸⁰ Through these issues, common themes of trauma, visibility, safety and community were borne out in the two exhibitions, materialising the pain and frustration felt at the violence, isolation and oppression that was (and still is) evident in our community.



Image 9 *The f Word: Contemporary Feminist Art In Australia*, installation view, Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale, 2014. L-R works by Filomena Coppola, Kate Just, Catherine Bell. Photo by Clare Rae.

⁸⁰ Justice Marcia Neave AO, Commissioner, *The Royal Commission into Family Violence Report*, available at: <http://www.rcfv.com.au/>



Image 10 *The f Word: Contemporary Feminist Art In Australia*, installation view, Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale, 2014. L-R works by Catherine Bell, Elvis Richardson, Jill Orr, Clare Rae. Photo by Clare Rae.

The focus on exhibiting in two regional galleries included the affirmative action of seeking out quality regional artists, who at times, can experience marginalisation in the contemporary art world. The photographs, paintings, sculptures, videos, craft and collage works in the final exhibitions explored a number of themes that stemmed from the particularity of the artists' situated conditions and their social and political concerns; paying homage to extraordinary female figures of local history, the invisibility of ageing, Indigenous identity and colonialism, disappearance of language and culture, death and mourning, safety for women, sexuality and psychological spaces of the body. Issues particular to regional areas, for example the marginalisation and poverty of rural women, were given a platform.

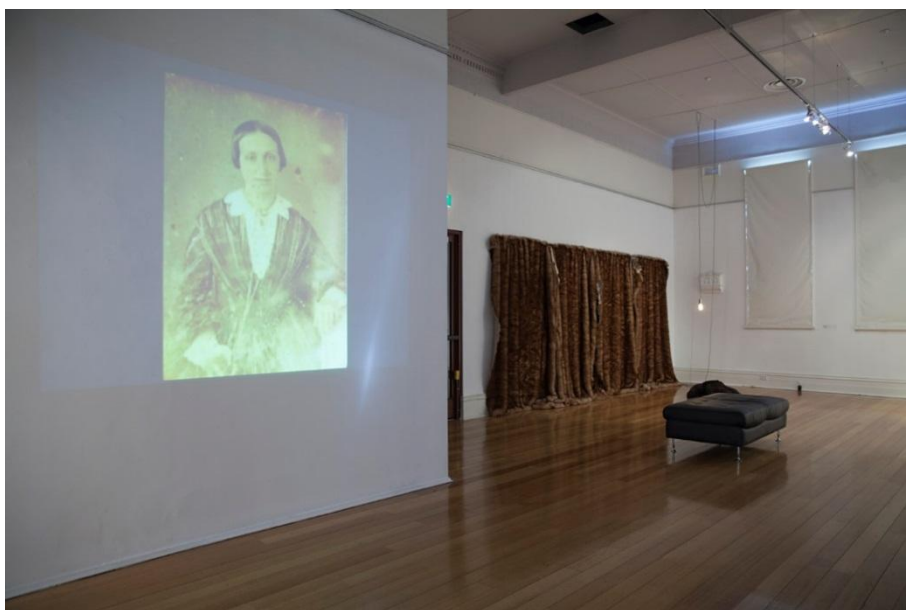


Image 11 *The f Word: Contemporary Feminist Art In Australia*, installation view, Ararat Regional Art Gallery, Ararat, 2014. L-R works by Karen Buczynski-Lee, Janice Gobey. Photo by Clare Rae.



Image 12 Georgia MacGuire, *Ill-Fitted Uniform*, 2014, plaster and paper bark, installation view, *The f Word: Contemporary Feminist Art In Australia*, Ararat, 2014. Courtesy of the artist. Photo by Georgia MacGuire.

The democratic approach to the project was manifested through an ethical consideration of the equivalence of each participant's voice. As curator for the exhibitions, my role was different to the collaborative and participatory nature of the earlier *A Dinner Party* project

at West Space gallery (Project 1, above), yet this second project was embedded with a similar goal to facilitate a non-hierarchical platform, bring disparate voices together, make space for an open and inclusive engagement and allow for the unknown to emerge. The relational methodology of the research enabled a material-discursive platform for art making in the feminist context.

Metaphors of travelling (out from the city centre) and moving (across the countryside) emerged as apt when thinking about this project. De-centralising and de-segregating feminist practice was evident across multiple levels, including the geographical, conceptual, material and metaphoric, as a way to address the dominance of oppressive structures. Framed by the map of the state of Victoria, the project was contained yet expansive. The accompanying catalogue and online blog further expanded the perimeters of the project, dispersing the conversation further afield (geographically), yet solidifying its presence locally. This project activated dynamic and relational networks across its geographic locations, its participants and its materials. Interactions and material connections in both a local and global context were enacted that reconfigured power systems and relations.

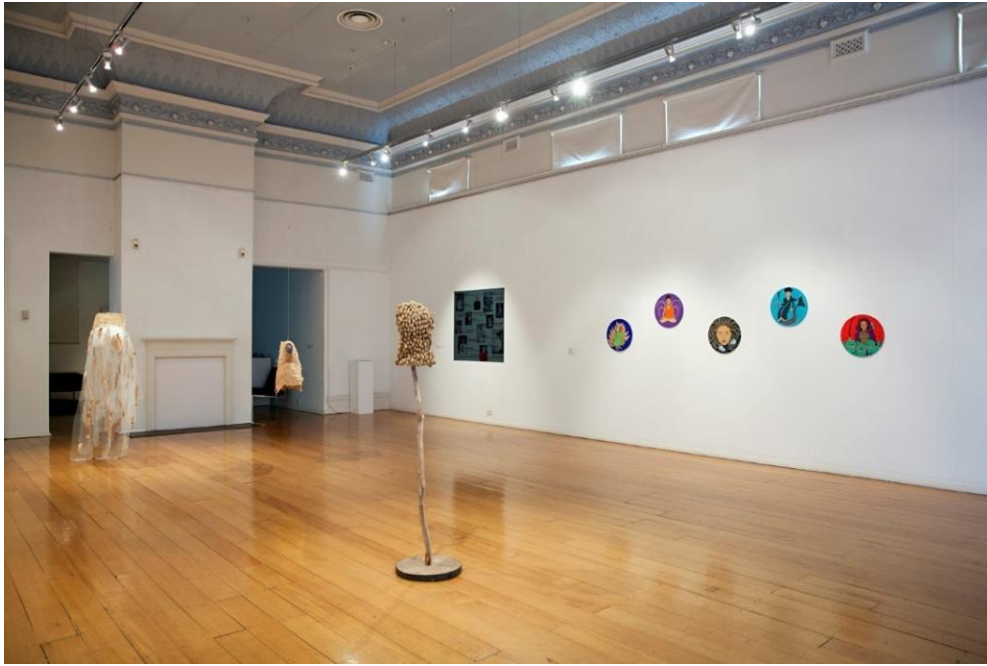


Image 13 *The f Word: Contemporary Feminist Art In Australia*, installation view, Ararat Regional Art Gallery, Ararat, 2014. L-R works by Georgia MacGuire, Eliza-Jane Gilchrist, Laurene Dietrich, Kate Beynon. Photo by Clare Rae.

1.6 Reconfiguring feminist art and social practice

This focus on a material-discursive, relational practice shifts the focus of relational art to an alternate (feminist) model from the dominant 'social practice' models of the last twenty years. These models, primarily stemming from the 1990s, have been characterised through their social and participatory nature, where participation is defined by the conscription of non-artist communities, that is 'the public', in the development and presentation of the work or political action. As a 'substantial subject for institutional and curatorial attention',⁸¹ feminism is conspicuously absent from the predominant European discourse of the last two decades surrounding participatory art and social practice. The influential positions argued by major theorists such as Nicolas Bourriaud (relational aesthetics)⁸² and Claire Bishop

⁸¹ Angela Dimitrakaki and Lara Perry, *Politics in a Glass Case: Feminism, Exhibition Cultures and Curatorial Transgressions*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 2.

⁸² Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. Simon Pleasance, (Dijon: Les presses due reel, 2002).

(participatory art)⁸³ do not address the specificity of feminist practices and the legacy of feminist art history. In the USA, work by feminist artists in the field of social practice has had somewhat more visibility over that same period, but is largely segregated as the subset ‘public art’.⁸⁴ However, the ongoing inter-relationship and continuity between social practice and feminist art since the 1970s is now being recovered increasingly by curators, historians and theorists.⁸⁵

Bourriaud and Bishop foreground relational practices in contemporary art through works that involve public participants (non-artists) directly in the making of the work. Often the communities and relationships formed are more important than the aesthetics of the art produced. Bourriaud asked ‘Is it still possible [for art] to generate relationships with the world?’⁸⁶ In response Claire Bishop refined this question by asking ‘what *types* of relations are being produced, for whom, and why?’⁸⁷ Both excellent questions: the responses raised

⁸³ Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells, Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, (London, New York: Verso, 2012).

⁸⁴ Some examples can be found in the following texts, amongst others: Suzanne Lacy (ed), *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, (Seattle, Washington, 1994); Miles, Malcolm, and MyLibrary, *Art, Space and the City: Public Art and Urban Futures*, (New York: Routledge, 1997); Thompson, Nato. *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991-2011*, (New York: Creative Time, 2012); Finkelpearl, Tom, and Vito Acconci. *Dialogues in Public Art*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 2001).

⁸⁵ In the Australian context see Anne Marsh’s *Performance, Ritual, Document* (Melbourne: Macmillan Australia, 2014) and Catriona Moore’s “Feminist Curating: The First Hundred Years”, in *Curating Feminism* (Sydney: Sydney College of the Arts/University of Sydney, 2014). For a European perspective see Angela Dimitrakaki and Lara Perry’s *Politics in a Glass Case: Feminism, Exhibition Cultures and Curatorial Transgressions* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013). All of these texts directly highlight the exclusion of feminist discourse from prevailing accounts of relational art. Maria Lind’s essay “Models of Criticality” in Brian Kuan Wood’s (ed) *Selected Maria Lind Writing* (New York: Sternberg Press, 2010) considers the legacy of feminism in performative models of collaborative practice. See also *The Longest Revolution: Feminist Social Practice*, a forthcoming exhibition project (USA, 2017) curated by Neysa Page-Lieberman and Melissa Hilliard Potter. Further information: <http://feminist-social-practice.tumblr.com/>

⁸⁶ Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 9.

⁸⁷ Clare Bishop, “Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics”, *October*, Issue 115, Winter 2006, pp. 95-107., 65.

circulated around relationships of post-capitalism and institutional critique, in a noisy debate that reverberated globally.⁸⁸

Throughout the trajectory of my practice and in this PhD research, engagement with the social is used as a platform for 'generating relations with the world', however it addresses this in a different way to how Relational Aesthetics has defined or designated the social. The artwork here becomes relational and social not through a focus on project based emancipatory social outcomes (although these might occur), instead its goal is to materialise 'practices of relatedness,'⁸⁹ to return to Krasny's *Curatorial Materialism* introduced earlier. The exchanges foregrounded in this research enact specific ideas, knowledge exchange and material conditions, in response to the social and political discourse of feminism.

Relational Aesthetics and participatory practice in general focuses on the relation between human subjects, relegating aesthetic and material concerns. In contrast, New Materialist practices, which are also relational, focus on human and non-human interactivity. The relational methodology of this research brings together matter and the social in a material-discursive practice that materialises a contemporary feminist practice. As Elyse Mallouk argues, in her study of relational art practices:

What counts as social investigation in art must be re-examined in order to make room for the varied practices that have developed since Relational Aesthetics, many

⁸⁸ Bishop is seen as the primary critic of Bourriaud's concept of 'relational aesthetics' via her article *Antagonism* cited above. This article was famously critiqued by Liam Gillick, one of the subjects of the text, in his response "Contingent factors: A response to Claire Bishop's 'Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics'", in *October* magazine, Issue 115, Winter 2006, pp. 95-107. The succession of critique on relational aesthetics is too numerous to mention here, but one example is Anthony Downey's, "Towards a Politics of (Relational) Aesthetics", *Third Text*, Vol 21, Issue 3, May, 2007, 267-275.

⁸⁹ Krasny, "Curatorial Materialism", 97.

of which don't look Relational at all but still pose potent questions about what it means to be individual subjects, bound up with one another.⁹⁰

Mallouk critiques the *theanyspacewhatever* exhibition of 2008 at the Guggenheim Museum in New York. This exhibition comprised the same group of artists who showed in the 1996 *Traffic* show at CAPC Bordeaux that formed the basis of Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics* text. Mallouk's article discusses the 'failure' of the works to fulfil a stipulation of Relational Aesthetics, that is, that the works are transformative and can create meaningful social relations. The naming of a category such as 'Relational Aesthetics' is shown to have limitations contingent on each particular work and the conditions through which the work is experienced.

Mallouk argues that Bourriaud encourages an unnecessary binary between private experience and the social, dependent upon a passive and alienated art audience. For Mallouk, aesthetic experience is already inherently social⁹¹. By simplifying the relation between aesthetics and the social (defining 'relational' as a set of proscriptive (normative) characteristics), the possibilities for open exchange and unknowable outcomes is limited, argues Mallouk.⁹² Drawing on Immanuel Kant and Jacques Rancière, Mallouk outlines how the true social characteristic of a relational work of art is in the shared potential of aesthetic experience that exists in the relation between the artwork and its audience, the viewer.⁹³ Responses will differ amongst individuals, Mallouk points out, however universalism is not the goal. This differentiation is what articulates the variation in people and the world.

⁹⁰ Elyse Mallouk, *The Generous Object: The Relational and the Aesthetic in Contemporary Art*, (Oakland, CA: California College of the Arts Thesis: 2010). Online version: <http://viscrit.cca.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/mallouk.pdf>

⁹¹ Mallouk, *The Generous Object*, 56.

⁹² Mallouk, *The Generous Object*, 57.

⁹³ Mallouk, *The Generous Object*, 57-8.

Mallouk presents aesthetics as a 'mode of thinking' and production that 'creates a discourse'⁹⁴ and maintains an open space of changeable possibilities.⁹⁵

In keeping with Mallouk's assessment, the new possibilities that open up for feminist practice through this research may extend art's impact on the social. Beyond a proscriptive 'doing good' intention that can limit the efficacy of Relational Aesthetics and much participatory practice, the relational possibilities made manifest through this research enact Mallouk's call for a 'mode of thinking' and an open discourse. Harnessing the sexual possibilities of a feminist practice, relational outcomes are not preconceived. The material-discursive relations at play here *hold open* a space (the interval) of difference, making visible the specificity of individual conditions and a moving, changeable field of differentiation. In so doing, a range of intervals are produced that engage in an interactive dialogue and produce a discursive platform as a way to work through questions and to share 'the work of feminism'. The artmaking acts not so much to produce items of exchange or represent experience, but rather as aesthetic objects of matter, intensity and affect through which, to borrow Larne Abse Gogarty's concept,⁹⁶ experience is *processed*, in different ways for different people.

1.7 Conclusion to Chapter 1

This chapter has outlined the relational methodology of the research, combining the conceptual framework of the interval (drawn from Irigaray's work on sexual difference) with a material-discursive practice of art making. Irigaray's formulation of sexual difference is shown to offer a productive counterpoint to dominant paradigms of the binary of

⁹⁴ Mallouk, *The Generous Object*, 58.

⁹⁵ Mallouk, *The Generous Object*, 65.

⁹⁶ Larne Abse Gogarty, "Aesthetics and Social Practice", in *KEYWORDS: A (Polemical) Vocabulary of Contemporary Art*. Online blog: <http://keywordscontemporary.com/aesthetics-social-practice/>.

feminine/masculine (and nature/culture) as antagonistic and hierarchical, through its focus on the interval. As an ontological space, place and threshold of difference, the interval provides a generative site for new possibilities in feminist art practice. The ethical and mutable site of the interval creates the conditions for new possibilities of thinking and practising difference *differently*.

The material-discursive space of the interval holds open a site of difference, exchange and art making that emerges in the projects *A Dinner Party: setting the table* and *The f Word: Contemporary Feminist Art in Australia*. These relational forms of 'curatorial materialism' facilitate a platform of relationality, bringing disparate voices together, making space for open and inclusive engagement, and allowing for the unknown to emerge. In contrast to Relational Aesthetics and participatory practice where feminism has been marginalised, this research approaches an ontological, *sexuate practice*, elaborated through material-discursive relations.

Feminist art, in its close relationship to social justice and identity politics, is ripe to participate in this alternate space of difference and connection, forging new possibilities for practice that explore identity in the interval of relations. This chapter has argued for the primacy of sexual difference, supported by Irigaray and Grosz, and the material, conceptual and ontological status of the interval. New Materialist thinkers such as Braidotti have offered a way to think the interval as discursive and material, beyond the human-human relation, that is not incompatible with Irigaray's interval. This PhD project builds on this turn to materiality and process, and considers feminist practice within the situated conditions of difference. Using a relational methodology, the research posits a material-discursive practice, manifested through a range of collaborative projects and the production of art

objects. The following chapter will explore the materials and processes of the object making that emerges in the studio, investigating ways the object might become relational.



Image 14 Inez De Vega facilitating the Regional Feminist Art Forum Workshop, Bendigo, Victoria, 2013. Photo by Caroline Phillips.

Chapter 2 – Clearing the space of the interval – separation and connection

“The recognition of the other as different means that approaching involves an irreducible distancing.”

Luce Irigaray⁹⁷

2.1 Introduction to Chapter 2

Chapter one outlined the conceptual framework for the research of the interval of sexual difference, and its potential to materialise a relational methodology of ‘sexuate’ art practice. There are three modes of the interval that are central to Irigaray’s elaboration of sexual difference; a *space* of separation and connection, a *place* of differentiation and multiplicity, and a *threshold* of relations. These three modalities are intertwined and interchangeable for Irigaray, revealing a complex, yet generative realm. This chapter approaches the interval from the first of these iterations - clearing the *space* of the interval – investigating its potential as a relational space of connection with the other, through the art object. Beyond a simple segregation of different categories (of objects, materials, identities), articulating the interval as space is an exercise in affirming the difference *and* recognizing the specificity of the other – who, along with ourselves, is another situated, sexed subject – in order to approach and build a relation. This chapter asks the question ‘How might the interval as a space of separation contribute to a relational understanding of a feminist object?’

This question arises through the relational methodology set out in Chapter one, whereby collaborative projects work in tandem with objects. Hence the research extends the notion of participation and asks if the minimalist object can be conceived, theorised and experienced as a source of interactive, relational processes. The legacy of Minimalism

⁹⁷ Irigaray, *The Way of Love*, 133.

emerges through the objects in their formal properties and (ostensibly) autonomous status. In the context of feminist art and according to an Irigarayan framing, then, two further questions arise: 'What makes this work feminist?' and 'How does the object become a relational, sexuate object?'

A discussion of Minimalism in this chapter, in the context of feminist practice and the interval, seeks to uncover alternate ways of looking at Minimalism that engage with separation and connection, reconfiguring relations of space and social connection. Sculptures by Lygia Clarke (Brazil) are considered here as geometric objects that frame the tense borders of space. Works by Kerrie Poliness (Australia) and Gego (Venezuela) are discussed in this chapter in their capacity to work with spatiality and a minimalist aesthetic as a relational practice. This discussion plots key points in the trajectory of Minimalism by women artists through a selection of particular exhibitions in the 1990s and the present. What emerges is a reconfigured narrative of women artists and Minimalism that offers new possibilities for the object becoming relational.

2.2 Specifying an open space

This section of the chapter introduces the minimalist objects created in the research. The work *Mirror, Mirror* (2016),⁹⁸ a large open circle rendered in pink, conveys a palpable open space in the void of a recycled trampoline frame. A quintessentially minimalist object, this large circular form sets up the space for a meeting, a relation between two potentials, or two imagined viewers. An intensity of potential encounter rendered through the formal presence of the circle is enhanced by its fluorescent pink covering. The trampoline frame engages with ideas of exercise and childhood play, while tiny black rubber arches ostensibly

⁹⁸ Shown in *Materialising Feminism*, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, February 2016.

hold up the large circle, rendering a lightness of air circulating in and throughout the frame. These airy, mutable elements render a material conception of the interval that is spacious, uncluttered and tinged with a sense of encounter; either a reflection of the self, or a view of the other. The repetition of grey nodules at intervals around the circle suggests the fluidity of a continuous circuit of relation.



Image 15 Caroline Phillips, *Mirror, Mirror*, 2016, recycled trampoline frame, acrylic tape, recycled rubber, 340x340x14cm, installation view, *Materialising Feminism*, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, 2016. Photo by Clare Rae.

For Irigaray, clearing the space of the interval entails a conscious exposure of the incalculable division between the one and the other. This incalculability speaks to the irreducibility of the self and the other, each in our own particularity (specificity), yet foregrounding the possible relationship with the other that is enabled *through* that space. In *The Way of Love*, Irigaray talks about this division as a nihilistic space:

The practice of the negative here is insurmountable in an absolute subjectivity or an absolute objectivity. It is what safeguards the unappropriable site of difference – the fact that the other will never be I, nor me, nor mine.⁹⁹

The central void of *Mirror, Mirror* enacts this open space of possibilities as both a barrier and a threshold to the other. The title invites a potential introspection, a mindfulness of sorts, to consider the implications of the space between two. Conceived as an invitation to approach, the fixed frame of the object and its implied surface membrane provoke a shared separation.

John Paul Ricco explores the concept of shared separation as manifested in art practice, in the art works of Felix Gonzalez-Torres.¹⁰⁰ Drawing on Jean-Luc Nancy's philosophy, Ricco proposes that art and ethics are 'two principle measures of our incommensurability.'¹⁰¹ For example, in his discussion of Gonzales-Torre's heaped confectionary work *Untitled (Portrait of Ross in L.A.)*, the invitational and participatory nature of the work is reconfigured as a 'space of decision' that reveals the shared complexity of being together *and* being apart. Yet where Irigaray affirms a potentiality of approach, Ricco's and Nancy's position is that of retreat, or withdrawal.

⁹⁹ Irigaray, *The Way of Love*, 168.

¹⁰⁰ John Paul Ricco, *The Decision Between Us: Art and Ethics in the Time of Scenes*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

¹⁰¹ Ricco, *The Decision Between Us*, 4.

In Irigaray's writing, the existence of the other comprises both a frontier and a limit because we can never truly know the experience of the other, it remains a mystery.¹⁰² This limit presents an opening to the 'work' of sexual difference, which for Irigaray is a continual question of how we relate to others in the world and what we might become, through that relation.¹⁰³ Recognising this mystery, for Irigaray, reveals a forever incalculable space that needs to be maintained as a 'free space of energy,'¹⁰⁴ and a bridge of connection with the other. As Grosz articulates, this space of encounter between bodies 'entails an ethics, a manner in which to live, a capacity to enhance or diminish oneself through these encounters,'¹⁰⁵ akin to Irigaray's 'work of sexual difference'.

This ratification of difference and alterity - the fundamental binaries of self/other and feminine/masculine - and their relation is at the heart of Irigaray's conception of sexual difference. The existence of two, when reconfigured as a co-relational, non-hierarchical duopoly (outside of patriarchy), provides both a space of freedom and a responsibility to 'respect, in the relation, two subjects, without ever reducing one to the other.'¹⁰⁶ Throughout her oeuvre Irigaray constructs a model of community and being in the world that illuminates this space of difference and challenges us to rethink our positions within that space. As Irigaray translator and scholar Gail Schwab articulates in her discussion of the text *Spiritual Tasks for Our Age* (2004 [2000]), Irigaray's interval when defined as space, is

¹⁰² Luce Irigaray, the use of the term 'mystery' appears in both "Approaching the Other as Other" and "Spiritual Tasks for Our Age", both of which appear in *Key Writings*.

¹⁰³ Emma R. Jones, "Finding/Founding Our Place: Thinking Luce Irigaray's Ontology and Ethics of Sexuate Difference as a Relational Limit" in *Building a New World, Luce Irigaray Teaching II*, eds Luce Irigaray and Michael Marder, (London and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), 15-30., 15.

¹⁰⁴ Irigaray, *Key Writings*, 181.

¹⁰⁵ Elizabeth Grosz, "Ontogenesis and the ethics of becoming", Interview with *Society and Space Open Site*: <https://societyandspace.com/material/interviews/ontogenesis-and-the-ethics-of-becoming-an-interview-with-elizabeth-grosz-by-kathryn-yusoff/>

¹⁰⁶ Irigaray, *Key Writings*, 26.

not a vision of fusion or assimilation with the other, but an open-ended difference that is always present:

I would relate the “virgin space,” and the “interval” that remains in between and where love circulates, to what Irigaray terms the “mystery” in our relation to the other who differs from us. We can neither assimilate the other to ourselves, nor ever know him or her completely. Like the interval in love, the mystery must be maintained between us, at the risk of destroying the relation we are trying to create.¹⁰⁷

This mystery is the incalculable and ever-present space between difference that we all share.

Roland Barthes tackles the division between oppositional binaries in his concept of ‘the neutral’¹⁰⁸ which is comparable to Irigaray’s cause in that it affirms a third term between two. Barthes’ concept is an asexual designation through which he articulates a number of figures such as sleep, colour, silence and arrogance, amongst others. Barthes’ neutral is a category of ‘non-choice’ that is fundamentally different from the active and affirmative awareness that is called forth in Irigaray’s interval of sexual difference. A closer analogy can be found in the work of Maurice Blanchot, whom Barthes calls upon in his text. In *The Infinite Conversation*, Blanchot explores the relation between one and the other as ‘belonging in a common space’,¹⁰⁹ yet in a relation of separation. Like Irigaray, Blanchot describes this separation as an interval, however he goes on to say that this interval ‘holds in the name of the neutral’.¹¹⁰ In Irigarayan terms both Barthes’ and Blanchot’s depiction of neutrality, within this in-between space, would not sufficiently represent the ethical relation

¹⁰⁷ Gail M. Schwab “Beyond the Vertical and the Horizontal, Spirituality, Space, and Alterity in the Work of Luce Irigaray” in Rawlinson, Mary C., Hom, Sabrina L., and Khader, Serene J., eds., *Thinking with Irigaray*, SUNY Series in Gender Theory (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 2011), 77-94., 92.

¹⁰⁸ Roland Barthes, *The Neutral: Lecture Course at the Collège de France 1977-78*, trans. Rosalind E. Krauss and Denis Hollier (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

¹⁰⁹ Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1993), 77.

¹¹⁰ Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, 77.

as it does not account for sexed specificity. In *Perhaps Cultivating Touch Can Still Save Us* Irigaray writes:

This sexless state and status offers no solution to emerge from fusion or confusion with the maternal world but to reach a neutral individuation that solves no problem at the level of a relational energy.¹¹¹

In a feminist methodology this specificity of sex is vital to the recognition of the other, as other, maintained in the space of the interval.

2.3 Repositioning the minimalist object, what makes this work feminist?



Image 166 Caroline Phillips, untitled studio work, 2013, recycled plastic, recycled rubber, rubber octopus straps, dimensions variable. Photo by Catherine Evans.

¹¹¹ Luce Irigaray, "Perhaps Cultivating Touch Can Still Save Us" in *Substance* #126 40.3 (2011), 130-140, 133.

Minimalist art, traditionally, has aimed for a certain neutrality. Mainstream accounts of minimalist sculpture frame the minimalist object (of the 1960s) as divested of meaning, existing for its own material sake and suppressing the subjectivity of expression. Although Minimalism itself was not a discrete art movement nor a cohesive group of artists, in this context I am referring to the group of male artists in New York that came to be known as the main proponents of Minimalism; Robert Morris, Frank Stella, Donald Judd, Tony Smith, Carl Andre, Richard Serra, Dan Flavin and Sol LeWitt. Generally speaking, these artists focused on perception (the interaction between object, site and the viewer), the fixity of the artworks 'matter' (with no trace of the artist's hand in making) and minimising subjective meaning. Another key characteristic of Minimalism is its relationship to space. It relies on a minimal amount of clutter, enabling expansive spaces within and around the work to emerge. Form, process and material intermingle in a minimalist work, creating conditions of encounter that somehow elicit transfer of experience and meaning in ways that the art that came before the 1960s did not.

For Michael Fried, a key theorist of Minimalism at its emergence, the audience is *asked to respond* to the object's physicality, in a relationship of complicity that 'extorts from the beholder'.¹¹² Quoting Robert Morris, Fried reveals the experience (that occurs in the presence of a minimalist sculpture) as an 'extended situation, because physical participation becomes necessary'.¹¹³ The idea that the abstract physicality of a minimalist sculpture, combined with its relationship to the body, elicits this 'situation', is a valuable space to draw out issues of relationality in minimalist sculpture that have not been highlighted in existing writing about Minimalism. This is perhaps the first step towards defining a relational art

¹¹² Michael Fried, *Art and Objecthood*, 1967. Online version, UC Berkeley Art, Technology and Culture series: <http://atc.berkeley.edu/201/readings/FriedObjcthd.pdf>, 4.

¹¹³ Robert Morris, quoted in Fried, *Art and Objecthood*, 4.

object, as the interactivity between the artwork and the viewer comes into being only through this 'participation.' In other words, the material presence of a minimalist sculpture is the very thing that calls forth this 'situation.'

This present day project extends this participation and asks if the minimalist object can be conceived, theorised and experienced as a source of interactive, relational processes. The differentiating matter and encounter with alterity that become part of this conversation can extend the neutrality of Minimalism and place it firmly in a feminist context. This work provides an encounter in the space of the interval, the site of the sexuate subject, that creates new possibilities for feminism. As Maria Lind articulates, 'by confronting us with our own presence, Minimalism obliges us to think about where and who we are, and how we came to arrive there.'¹¹⁴ Emerging in the space of the interval, the formality and praxical encounter of the minimalist object might serve to render the interval as an encounter in a feminist space, within which hierarchical and fixed binaries are contested and reconfigured. Susan Best demonstrates a link between Minimalism and feminism through her work on affect, demonstrated through the art of Eva Hesse, Ana Mendieta, Lygia Clark and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha. In her expansive text *Visualising Feeling: Affect and the Feminine Avant-garde*,¹¹⁵ Best analyses the multivalent effects of subjective feeling and emotion present in the work of these artists. Her account examines theories of the subject that arise in response to Minimalism, in particular in texts by Rosalind Krauss and Thierry de Duve.¹¹⁶ Best's analysis restores subjectivity to the narrative of Minimalism and foregrounds 'the feminine' in the canon of the avant-garde. In contrast, the alliance of Minimalism and feminist intent in this PhD thesis is not concerned with individual subjectivity and feeling,

¹¹⁴ Brian Kuan Wood, ed., *Selected Maria Lind Writing* (New York: Sternberg Press, 2010), 49.

¹¹⁵ Susan Best, *Visualising Feeling: Affect and the Feminine Avant-garde*, (New York: I.B.Taurus, 2011).

¹¹⁶ Best, *Visualising Feeling*, 12-28.

but rather the relational potential of the interval between subjects as an ontology *beyond* subjectivity. Best's account is beneficial in usurping the anti-aesthetic tradition that commenced with North American Minimalism, and furthers scholarship on the 'feminine avant-garde' since 1970.

A further connection between Minimalism and feminism is argued by Toby Juliff, who coins the term 'feminimalism,' in his examination of the material practices of Janine Antoni, Jeanette Christensen and Anya Gallaccio.¹¹⁷ Juliff builds on Mieke Bal's thesis that 'modern sculpture is involved with the materiality of duration,'¹¹⁸ through the embodied construction of making these works. For example, in the prolonged physical effort required by Antoni to make the work *Gnaw* (1992), where she inflicts hundreds of bites onto two enormous blocks - one of chocolate and one of lard – the work's durational evolution extends beyond the artists' involvement, projecting further in the gallery space through its melting. Juliff notes, 'Antoni's presence [...] is in the process: time is in the representation'.¹¹⁹

As outlined earlier, representation and the designation 'feminine' is resisted in this research. By honing in on industrial materials, the studio works minimise any immediate, stereotypical 'female' referent. The works deploy three main groups of materials; soft rubber and plastic; rope, leather and textiles; stainless steel, chrome and metal hooks. These materials oscillate between soft and hard, pliable and firm, stretchy and fixed, allowing for contingencies in the making of a work and a fluidity of movement and process. This pliability speaks to the contingent nature of approaching the other. The objects begin in the studio as explorations,

¹¹⁷ Toby Juliff, 'Sticky Images: feminist critiques of Minimal art.' Unpublished conference paper, 'New Voices', presented at Birkbeck College, University of London May7, 2005. A copy of this paper is held at the Henry Moore Institute Library, Leeds, UK.

¹¹⁸ Juliff, *Sticky Images*, unpaginated.

¹¹⁹ Juliff, *Sticky Images*, unpaginated.

samples, prototypes and interim objects or test pieces. The process of enquiry through handling and experimentation is important in getting to know the physical properties of the material, and working within those limits.



Image 177 Caroline Phillips, untitled studio work, 2012, recycled plastic, cyberlox, electrical plugs, dimensions variable. Photo by Caroline Phillips.

The materiality, form and spatiality of Eva Hesse's work, and its use of industrial materials, has acted as a precursor to this research.¹²⁰ Briony Fer, who writes about the 'studioworks' of Hesse, discusses a similar process of studio method to mine. Hesse's daily handmade ruminations are precarious, concludes Fer, and exist as 'work without necessarily becoming

¹²⁰ My Masters research examined the legacy of Hesse's work and exhibitions such as Lucy Lippard's *Eccentric Abstraction* to explore subjectivity of the feminine through minimalist sculpture. See C. Phillips, *Placing the Body: Towards a Subjectivity of the Feminine in Sculpture*, M. Fine Art (Research) thesis and exhibition, (Melbourne: University of Melbourne/Faculty of the Victorian College of the Arts and Music, School of Art, 2012). Information and abstract available at: <https://minerva-access.unimelb.edu.au/handle/11343/37092>.

a work.¹²¹ This way of making, Fer argues, defers the end product of art making in favour of process, allowing the objects to reveal 'actions unfolding.'¹²² What is important about this concept is Fer's assessment that this type of work exists at the 'tipping point between origin and leftover'.¹²³ This interim moment of the tipping point could be seen as another way to describe the interval, a moment at the praxis of thought, material and action, where a commitment is made to proceed. It articulates the relationality between the work of making and the object, in other words, the space between an idea and its material form. This cusp is tentative and provisional, as it approaches the relation of difference.

In my studio, different materials are brought together in a relationship of equivalence, particularly through opposing characteristics such as black/white or synthetic/natural. Cleanly cut edges of the often industrially produced shapes echo minimalist tendencies, yet reflect contemporary technological processes. In many cases the objects are temporarily constructed or assembled, then taken apart and reused in different configurations according to site and context. Working by hand enables decisions to be made quickly, allowing for instinctive actions and the unexpected synchronicities that can occur between the materials. Form is not predetermined, but evolves from the physical properties of the material being worked on, and doing its own work. The sense of immediacy in the construction and gestures inherent in the making enacts a relationship with and transformation of the materials that is not fixed, alluding to an openness to diversity of relationships and connection.

As in *Mirror, Mirror* discussed earlier, line emerges as a pliable tool to delineate the separation and connection of the space of the interval. A series of prototypes examine and

¹²¹ Briony Fer, *Eva Hesse Studiowork*, (Barcelona : Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 2010), unpaginated.

¹²² Fer, *Eva Hesse Studiowork*, unpaginated.

¹²³ Fer, *Eva Hesse Studiowork*, unpaginated.

explore ways that linear components relate to each other; how they assemble, conjoin, interact, react, converge, connect and delineate space. At times wound tight in the process of binding, at others curved and expansive, these linear experiments articulate the convergence of difference. Temporary modes of attachment such as threading or hooking allow for easy reconfiguration of the components in various networks of material connection. In many works, including *Web*,¹²⁴ industrial materials are joined in the studio with craft based components such as rope and chenille stems. Commonly known as pipe cleaners, these bright and distinctly child-like and tactile ‘things’ are very simple and enjoyable to handle. This provides a tactility and accessibility in the work that alludes to repetitive bodily actions and drives.

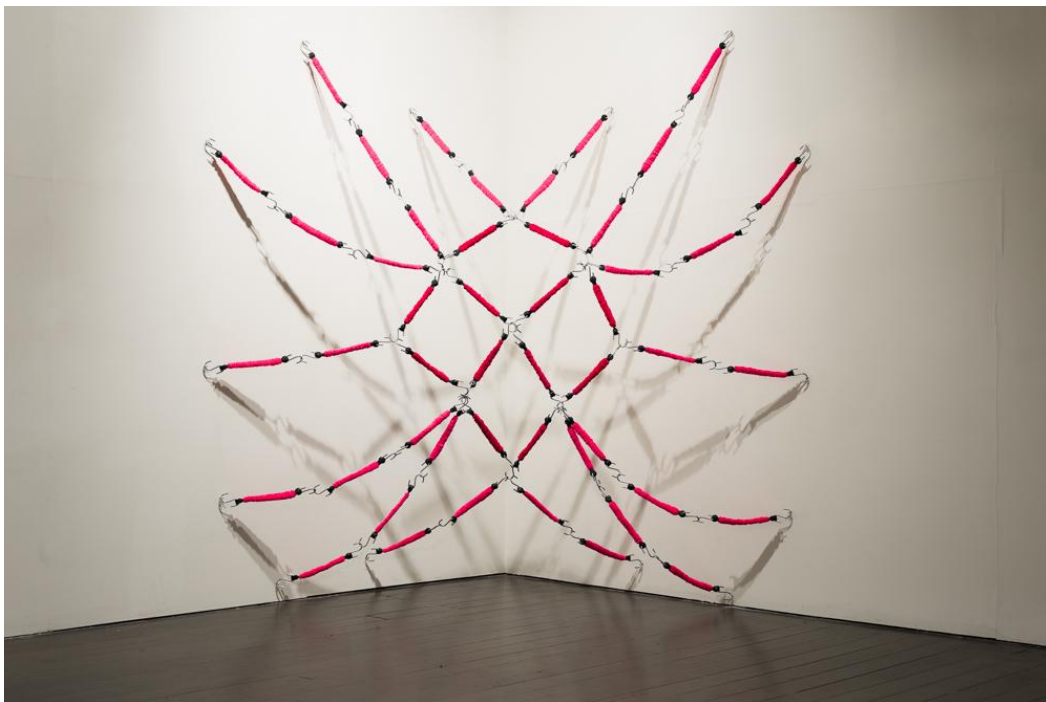


Image 18 Caroline Phillips, *Web*, 2013, rubber octopus straps, chenille stems, dimensions variable, installation view, PhD confirmation seminar, Founders Gallery, Melbourne, 2013. Photo by Catherine Evans.

¹²⁴ Shown at PhD Confirmation seminar, VCA Founders Gallery, 2013.

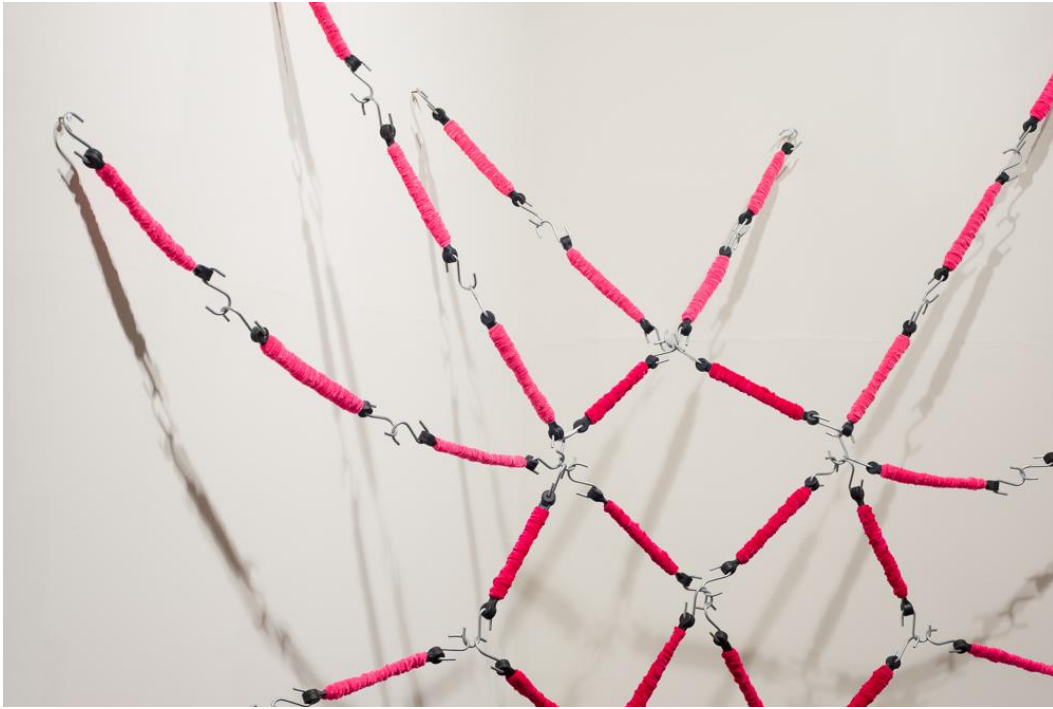


Image 19 Caroline Phillips, *Web* (detail), 2013. Photo by Catherine Evans.

Irigaray's mode of double listening develops in the work *Density* (2013).¹²⁵ A pile of circular foam components explores the potential of repetitive folding, creating co-relational spaces between paired and grouped forms. Irregular modules of cool white foam rubber are assembled from multiple identical components that twist and fold over onto themselves. Each single component, then, becomes two. This pairing is held fast by long and sharp stainless steel T pins, whilst multiple velcro connections aggregate the units into homogenous yet irregular groupings that sit on the floor, emphasising the gallery space and encouraging movement around its form.

¹²⁵ First exhibited at Founders Gallery, Victorian College of the Arts, 2013 and in *Topologies of Sexual Difference*, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, 2014.



Image 20 Caroline Phillips, *Density*, 2013, recycled foam rubber, stainless steel pins, velcro, 50x40x40cm. Photo by Clare Rae.

Found in a recycling depot, this formation of soft and alluring nodules creates a landscape that appears inanimate, perhaps like a rock or a snow-covered mountain. Yet a closer inspection reveals an intricacy of spatial topology more in keeping with the hive of a living or technological species. Open spaces exist between each element, with hints of the shiny steel pins visible. Imaginative viewers might picture an ant colony or a factory of tiny robots inhabiting these nooks and crannies. The work invites the viewer to bend down and ‘peer in’, invoking an engagement that references networks and communities. These conglomerating materials conjure the collaborative intertwining evoked in Irigaray’s ‘double listening’, within a world of relational components.

2.4 Bodies that rub



Image 21 Caroline Phillips, *Dysfunction*, 2013, recycled compression bandages, recycled plastic, recycled leather, acrylic rope, plastic, rubber octopus straps, installation view, *Materialising Feminism*, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, 2016. Photo by Clare Rae.

The work *Dysfunction* (2013) similarly evokes a point where separation is emerging, within the confines of a complex of components. A multiplicity of forms and matter render an entanglement of subject and object that seems to struggle to differentiate. Are these components damaged or in conflict? They seem limp, impaired, tired or under duress. This work proposes that the entanglement at play here is stifling and impedes a productive separation. A series of end-of-roll or rejected elasticised bandages have been filled with surplus studio supplies. Bags of unused hard and soft plastic, rubber, tubing and

miscellaneous materials offer up a range of surfaces and shapes that protrude within the confines of their elasticised containers. Directly referencing the body - through the skin coloured material and its use as a medical support for injury - these elongated and stocky forms are stuffed and plied into various shapes, then assembled via processes of knotting, hooking, hanging and tying into an amalgamation of intersecting forms.



Image 22 Caroline Phillips, *Dysfunction* (detail), 2013. Photo by Clare Rae.

Hovering between psychological affect and material relations, the work references abject bodies and tense relationships. An aura of damage or trauma is implied through the work's title and the medical reference in the bandages. The close and concentrated proximity of the multiple component forms produces an atmosphere of tension and suffocation. This work engages in ideas of contention and dysfunction that can occur between subjects that resist the specificity and autonomy of the other, that crowd the space of the interval in a stifling entanglement. The borders between each component are too close for comfort, rubbing against each other, or caught in hooks that pull and drag the components downwards. Support bandages are generally used for recovery or preventative health. In

this case the constriction of the elastic seems to delineate misshapen forms. Each 'body' relies on the support of leather cord tied in knots, pink acrylic rope that encircles and supports, black cable organisers that connect multiple points, or metal hooks on the wall that sustain the form and a semblance of health. What is missing is a clear articulation (differentiation) of each subject.

This bleak outlook is tempered by a pair of individual forms adjacent to the main conglomeration of 'bodies' in this work. Clearly articulated and freed from the oppressive entanglement beside them, these two forms hang confidently together, yet apart. Perhaps what emerges out of the dysfunctional, unbounded multitude is the clarity and distance of the specificity of two. The articulation of their individual specificity provides some space to breath, yet does not diminish a capacity for connection and inter-relation.

Irigaray writes about this separation as an aloneness:

Being-with is to be found [...] in the relinquishing of a common solution or truth, which does not mean settling into an in-finite controversy. Recognising difference requires renouncing even this in order to accede to a less immediate relational culture, one more conscious of the insurmountable limits of each subjectivity, of the irreducibility to the one, to the same. A gesture which demands a maturity capable of being on the way alone.¹²⁶

It is this irreducibility that is at the heart of Irigaray's sexual difference, a 'mutual singularity' that is made present in the space of the interval. The project ahead for Irigaray and for feminism resides in the question, "How can we make a more ethical space for ourselves and each other?"

¹²⁶ Irigaray, *The Way of Love*, 117.



Image 23 Caroline Phillips, *Dysfunction* (detail), 2013. Photo by Clare Rae.

The minimalist objects of Lygia Clark similarly work through the tension of confined bodies. To Clark, the minimalist object mediates the subjective experience. Following early works in painting that explored ‘the organic line’,¹²⁷ for many years Clark made sculptural forms in a limited colour palette, comprised of circular shapes and planes, and moveable structural components. A member of the Neo Concrete movement which emerged in Brazil in the late 1950s (a spinoff of the earlier Concrete group), for Clark, her objects imparted their full

¹²⁷ Clark used this term in a lecture given to architecture students at the Escola Nacional de Arquitetura, Belo Horizonte, Brazil in 1956, in *Lygia Clark, The Abandonment of Art, 1948-1988*, eds. Cornelia H. Butler and Luis Pérez-Oramas (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2014), 56.

meaning through their participatory potential – they were meant to be handled. Known as *bichos* (translated variously as ‘critters’, ‘bugs’ or ‘beasts’), these objects embraced phenomenological perception and sensory experience, in a combination of matter, body, ideas and subjectivity. Foregrounding the tense relationship between the inner, subjective self and its border with the outside through the material body, this liminal, in-between border-space embodies the space of the interval.

The Neo-Concretists wanted to create spatialisation in “work that is always in the present, always in the process of beginning over... in a new, expressive space.”¹²⁸ This idea resonates with Irigaray’s interval in its manifestation as a state of continual possibility. The singular, yet multiplicitous forms in Clark’s work, and their state of material shape-shifting, overthrows binaries of inside/outside, feminine/masculine and self and other. This can create relational possibilities for the object. Clark described her objects as ‘living organisms, a work essentially active’¹²⁹ and ‘a kind of embrace between two living entities’. The art object, for Clark, becomes much more than an autonomous aesthetic object; it has real application as a material exemplar of interactivity and a framework for articulating the self in the world. Bordering on the therapeutic, the experience of each beholder/holder of the work would be different, akin to Irigaray’s insistence on the irreducibility of the ‘one’ and the inter-relationship of ‘the two’.

¹²⁸ From the “Neo-concretist Manifesto, 1959” in *OCTOBER The Second Decade, 1986-1996*, (Cambridge, Mass. and London: OCTOBER Books and The MIT Press, 1997), 31-37., 31.

¹²⁹ Geaninne Gutiérrez-Guimarães, “Lygia Clark: Writing Revelations, Surrendering Authorship” in *Lygia Clark, The Abandonment of Art*, 50-54., 51.



Image 24 Lygia Clark, *Abrigo Poético (Poetic Shelter)*, 1960, installation view, Concrete Invention, Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, Museo Nacional Centro De Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, 2013. Photo by Caroline Phillips.

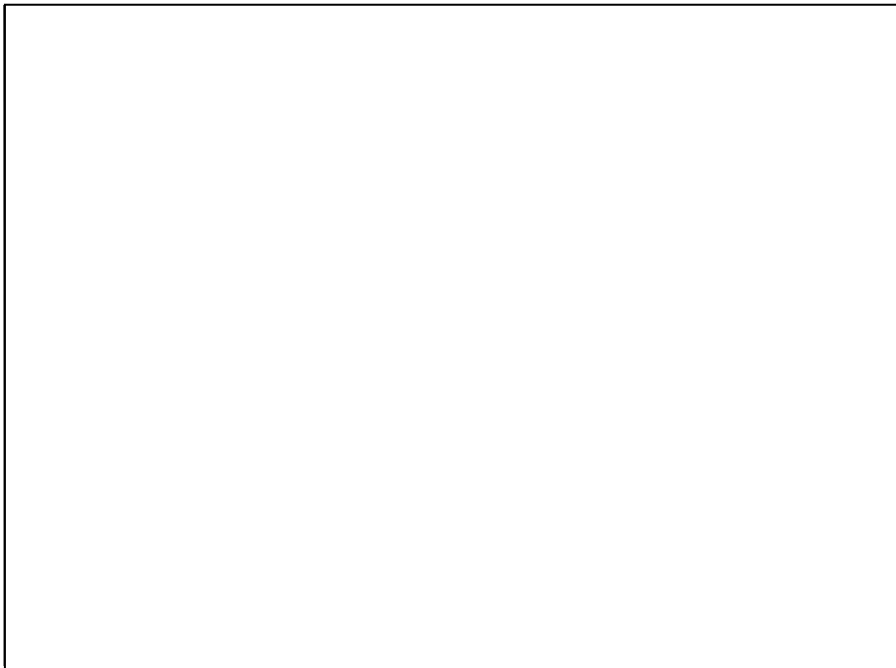


Image 25 Lygia Clark, *Bicho (Máquina)*, 1962, anodized aluminium, 21 X 35 1/2 X 21 1/2 inches (variable). Collection of The Museum Of Fine Arts, Houston. *Image has been removed due to copyright restrictions*

Following on from her *bichos* series, Clark began a series that explored the Mobius strip. This line that never ends became a metaphor for the relational to-ing and fro-ing between

the object and the body. In a work entitled *Caminhando* ('walking'), participants were invited to cut the mobius strip lengthways, a process that continues for an extended period, until the line becomes too thin to cut further. This line is particular. It not only connects the body and the object but, in its infinitude, works to create a spatial continuity between inside and outside, a mediation zone that is itself a third zone. Clark recognised the tension that can develop in a subject that is struggling for its identity, as Luis Pérez-Oramas articulates:

Clark was sensitive to the dilemma – the destiny – of separation: the separation between bodies, between beings and other beings, between mother and child, lover and beloved, between facts and their recollections, between present and past, ... from all of which arises the whole repertoire of ... divisions within her work.¹³⁰

Clark saw the potential for objects to become relational via their simplified forms and materially charged presence.¹³¹ The spatiality and interactive aspect inherent in Clark's objects helps to theorise a connection between the space of separation (between identities) and the object as its exemplar. In thinking of Clark's objects as intervals of separation, the minimalist object can then be viewed as a feminist, relational object. Through haptic interactive procedures her objects create a relational space of matter, process and form.

2.5 The balance of power

The discussions throughout this chapter are informed by the dynamics between power (conquest/mastery) and freedom (equivalence/the ethical relation) that operate at the centre of patriarchal oppression, hence at the core of feminism. Through this practice based research, procedures and relationships of tension, release, fusion and separation elaborate the proximity of what is often a fractious entanglement of difference. We are, all of us,

¹³⁰ Luis Pérez-Oramas, "Lygia Clark: If you Hold a Stone," in *Lygia Clark: The Abandonment of Art, 1948-1988*. eds. Cornelia H. Butler and Luis Pérez-Oramas (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2014)., 31.

¹³¹ For a detailed study of the affective response in Clark's work, see Susan Best, *Visualising Feeling: Affect and the Feminine Avant-garde*, (New York: I.B.Taurus, 2011).

entangled in matter, ideas, subjectivity and relationships, striving for ethical encounters and relations. The porous parameter of the interval is argued as a productive concept of proximity and distance that might frame a space for acknowledging specificity *and* difference in an affirmative, ethical relation.



Image 26 Caroline Phillips, untitled studio work, 2013, recycled rubber, recycled plastic, dimensions variable. Photo by Caroline Phillips.

As a feminist strategy, this work is concerned with elaborating modes of art making that reconfigure hierarchical and oppositional structures of power, allowing for the specificity of the sexed subject. What is at stake in this tension is the balance of power. Relations of power are explored through the sculptures via processes of weightiness, tension and constraint. In the work *Equilibrium #3* (2013), black rubber straps hang from two different

walls, inflicted with the weight of multiple circular, white components. The stretch and pull incurred on the rubber straps causes a change in shape, length and tension over time (the work was installed 10cm above the floor, and was skimming the surface of the floor by the end of a week). The pull, sag and tension between the black rubber and white rings imbues the work with a durational constraint and oppression. Yet the quick release hooking mechanism suggests relief is easily accessible, along with a freedom from the constraint and burden.



Image 27 Caroline Phillips, *Equilibrium #3*, 2014, recycled rubber, rubber octopus straps, installation view. Chapman and Bailey, Melbourne, 2014. Photo by Caroline Phillips.

The burden of oppression is a long held feminist concern, branded by the patriarchal structures of a hierarchical sexual difference. Representation (of women, minority groups

and/or gender diversity) is inextricably linked to the emancipatory aims of social justice and equality. Subjectivity and its attainment of spaces of freedom, then, is understood only in relation to a political and cultural determination outside of the subject. Grosz terms this conundrum a 'paradigm of recognition'.¹³² As an alternative, she calls for a determination of freedom that is not focused on a reaction to these external constraints, but is framed instead as an independent, material process that deploys the forces within the subject. Through a reading of Bergson and Irigaray, Grosz extrapolates that a subject's material freedom could then be thought of as 'the condition of, or capacity for, action in life'.¹³³ This type of freedom is 'above all, connected to an active self, an embodied being, a being who acts in a world of other beings and objects.'¹³⁴

Might then the interval of sexual difference be conceived as a non-hierarchical space that differentiates between oppression and freedom? Reading the artworks through this framework, aspects of certain materials, their construction and their form might speak of an intense zone/space of power relations, enabling alternate renditions of oppression and freedom. Processes of assembling and making might then be seen to enact relations of tension, agency, escape and freedom. This opens up a possible link between the abstracted art object and the emancipatory and social justice goals of feminism. Could dominant power forms be reconfigured and reconciled as awareness and commitment to the material conditions of difference, and their expression as forces of freedom, or in other words, processes of life. As Grosz proposes:

¹³² Grosz, *Becoming Undone*, 60.

¹³³ Grosz, "Feminism, Materialism, and Freedom" (Chapter four), in *Becoming Undone*.

¹³⁴ Grosz, *Becoming Undone*, 67.

Art continues a kind of parallel political struggle which is not directly translatable into the politics of everyday life but which is a struggle, ... directed to the forms, techniques, procedures, and values that govern the preceding generation of art.¹³⁵

In a shift from feminist art of the past, this research explores the potential of the minimalist object to reconfigure conditions of difference, power and oppression. Through alternate visions of the object, new possibilities of abstracted form that embrace mechanisms of restraint and tension might, too, suggest fractious forces of tension and balance. Sculptural processes of attachment and connection might then be deployed to reinscribe a feminist space as a site of relational, ethical practice.

2.6 Geometric space as Relational space

Irigaray writes about building and architecture, questioning how we might reconfigure the way we live in and think about space, as one example of a sexuate culture to come.¹³⁶ She also tackles time-honoured formulas of geometric space, and its relationship to the patriarchal discourse that has repressed sexual difference.¹³⁷ For Irigaray, Euclidian space is tantamount to phallocentrism in its strict, unsexed rationality that does not take into account the sexed subject. She argues, however, that the relational potential of the diagonal is useful in its capacity to represent the complexity and irreducibility of the (irrationally represented) female sexed subject. As architect and Irigaray scholar Peg Rawes outlines, for Irigaray:

¹³⁵ Elizabeth Grosz, quoted in Katve-Kaisa Konturri and Milla Tienan, "Feminism, Art, Deleuze, and Darwin: An Interview with Elizabeth Grosz," in *NORA-Nordic Journal of Women's Studies* 15. 4 (November, 2007): 243-57., 253.

¹³⁶ Luce Irigaray, "How to Live Together in a Lasting Way," in *Key Writings*, 123-33.

¹³⁷ For a detailed and insightful account of Irigaray's thinking in relation to space, mathematics, architecture and topology see Peg Rawes, *Irigaray for Architects*. Thinkers for Architects series, (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).

the diagonal is a significant geometric figure because it reveals an irreducible infinity at the heart of spatial thinking, undermining the pursuit for finite harmony in classical accounts of space and architecture.¹³⁸

Irigaray identifies the diagonal line as embodying ‘multiple qualities of space and time’.¹³⁹ So too, it emerged in numerous works throughout this research as an alternate form of fixed, binary space, encompassing ideas of relationality and difference.

The diagonal, as a connecting rod and a component of a larger network, appears in multiple works in this research, for example *Web*, discussed earlier in this Chapter, and *enmeshed* and *Horizon*, discussed in Chapter four. An affinity with the work of Gego became apparent in this group of works, particularly due to Gego’s immersive use of line and diagonals, and the importance of connecting modules across space to create a relational sculptural space. Her works harness a system of hooks, loops and twists that join modulated segments of metal rods. Defying the permanence of its metal constituents, Gego’s handmade process of construction produces highly ephemeral and provisional forms. Curator Brigitte KÖlle describes her dynamic mesh-like creations as ‘force fields,’¹⁴⁰ a description which resonates with the dynamic space of the interval that separates and holds open a space of relation. Gego’s method is resolutely handmade, yet incorporates industrial and machine made components. This ensures an openness to contingency and a direct relation with the process, space and matter that together constitute the work.

¹³⁸ Rawes, *Irigaray for Architects*, 69.

¹³⁹ Rawes, *Irigaray for Architects*, 70.

¹⁴⁰ Brigitte KÖlle, “No Day Without A Line,” in *Gego, Line as Object*, (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2013), 13-27., 23.

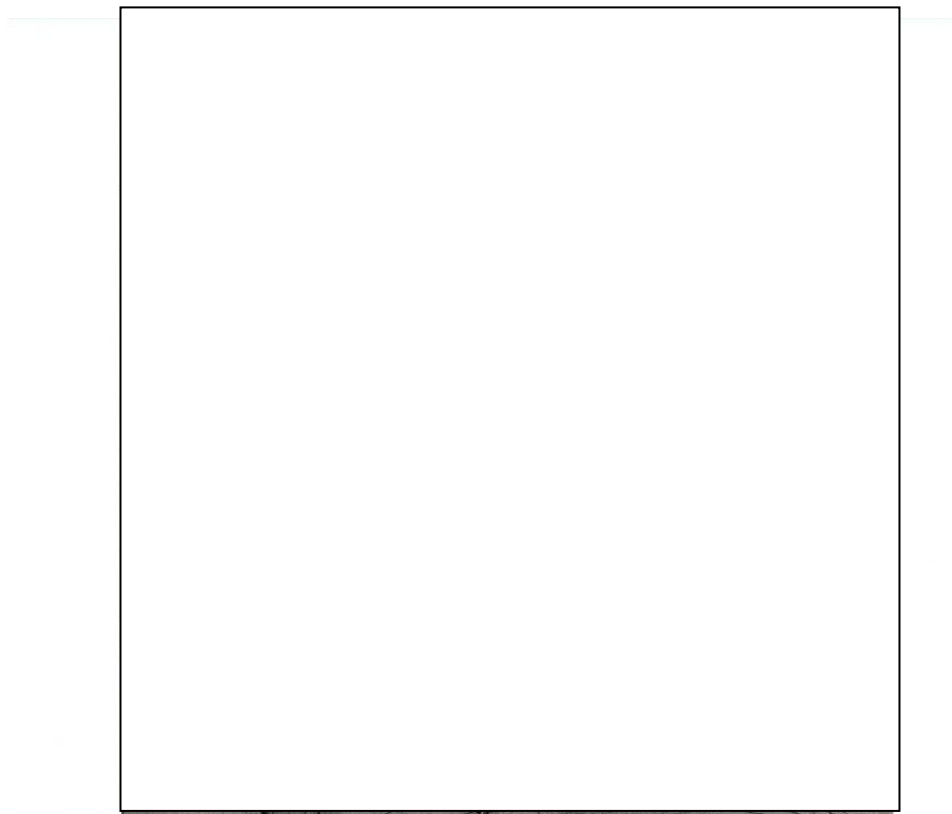


Image 28 Gego, *Reticulárea*, 1969, installation view. Museo Bellas Artes, Caracas, 1969. Photo by Paolo Gasparini. Archive Of Fundación Gego. *Image has been removed due to copyright restrictions.*

Gego studied architecture and engineering,¹⁴¹ which is evident in her immense affinity for space and connection. Of her arguably most well-known work, *Reticulárea* (1969), Mónica Amor writes:

An unconscious, formless, “other” geometry emerged, one in which defined form was substituted by flexible and unpredictable connections.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Gego initially trained as an architect and engineer in Germany, then after migrating to Venezuela just before the Second World War she worked as an architect, furniture maker and parent, not becoming an artist until later in life at age 41.

¹⁴² Mónica Amor, “Another Geometry: Gego’s *Reticulárea*, 1969-1982”, *October* 113 (Summer 2005): 101-25., 110. Amor refers mostly to the first *Reticulárea* exhibited at Museo Bellas Artes, Caracas in 1969 (pictured), which was totally immersive throughout the space of the room. A subsequent and slightly different installation of *Reticulárea* was installed in 1974, again at Museo Bellas Artes, Caracas, which was more centered and contained, enabling viewers to walk around its periphery. Other versions of the work were temporarily installed at the New York Centre for Interamerican relations (1969-70) and Frankfurt Alte Oper (1982). In 1976-7, a new installation of *Reticulárea* was installed in the Galería de Arte Nacional, Caracas, resembling more closely the original version. This was moved and re-installed in another room at Galerie de Art Nacional in 1981, where it remains today.

The relational potential of this work demonstrates the emergence of a pliable mode of minimalist form that is quite different from the work made by her male counterparts in Venezuela,¹⁴³ and the work heralded in North American minimalist discourse around the same period. Gego's uniquely spatial, connecting and open forms render the sculptural object as a relational mode of practice.

A dominant feature of Gego's work is its ephemeral, translucent, immaterial character. The work encapsulate space, yet defines it via a precarious fragility. Across drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, installation, poetry and mixed media, her work examines the possibilities for the thinnest of lines to become form, space and object. Through various series of works such as the drawing series *Sin Título* (untitled), the small metal sculptures *Dibujos sin Papel* (drawings without paper), the medium sized metal *Troncos* (trunks), the immersive *Reticuláreas* (no direct translation), the woven paper works *Tejeduras* (netting) or the short texts and poems *Sabiduras* (loose translation 'words of wisdom'), there is an indeterminacy of space between Gego's lines that resonates with the interval as a realm of incalculable space.

Gego's use of hooks, loops and connections materialises a network of incalculable relations, where lines meet other lines and planes connect with others, harnessing additional lines and planes through the shadows around each work. This matrix of links is tenuous and fragile, yet forges defined correspondences and relationships. Gego spent many years teaching and was well versed in the intricacies of formal geometry, yet the flow and variation of her forms, particularly in the *Reticulárea*, seem to dispense with the rigidity of

¹⁴³ In the local Venezuelan context, the prevailing art movements were Kinetic and Neo-Constructivist. Gego's mature work was unable to be categorised neatly within this discourse. Luis Pérez-Oramas argues that her work "differed radically from the heroic ambition displayed by her Neo-Constructivist equals-most of them male." See Luis Pérez-Oramas, "Abstraction, Organism, Apparatus: Notes on the Penetrable Structure in the Work of Lygia Clark, Gego, and Mira Schendel" in *Modern Women, Women Artists at the Museum of Modern Art*, (eds.), Cornelia Butler and Alexandra Schwartz, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2010), 316-333., 324.

established mathematical rules. Her non-hierarchical assemblages refute monumentality and embrace the space between form and formlessness.¹⁴⁴

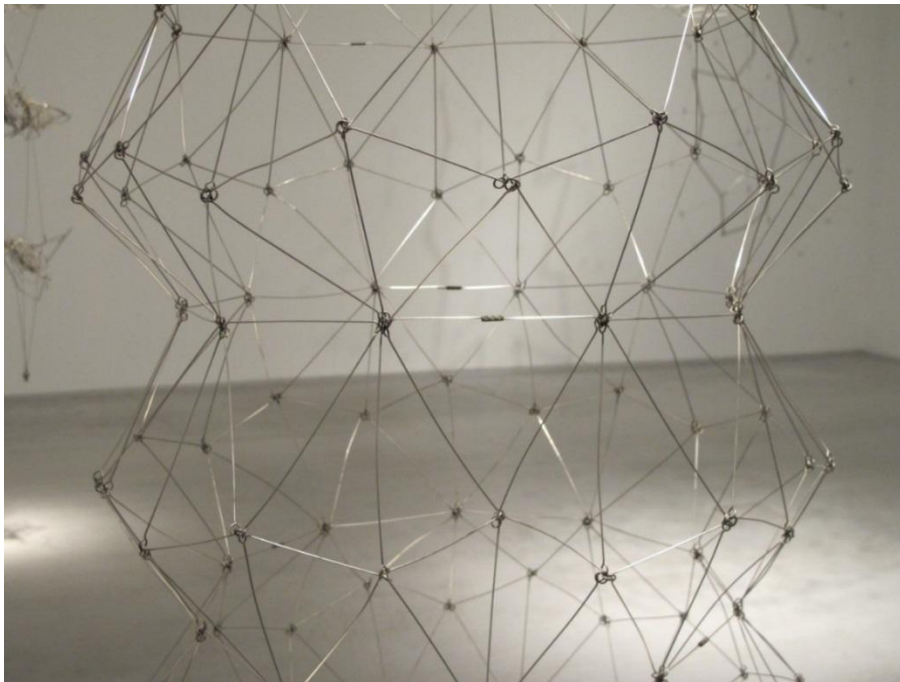


Image 29 Gego, *Tronco Decagonal No.4 (Decagonal Trunk No.4)*, 1976, installation view, *Concrete Invention*, Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, Museo Nacional Centro De Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2013. Photo by Caroline Phillips.

Gego did not draw a preconceived plan for each work and then construct it, rather each work emerged through the processes of its making. Limited by a defined selection of repeated components for each work, for example a standard length of metal rod,¹⁴⁵ Gego harnessed a technique of ‘thinking in space.’¹⁴⁶ These material and process based constructions encapsulate a relational and open way of working that materialises in-between spaces of form and matter. These spaces both separate and connect, rendering the object as a relational mode of practice that speaks to the concept of the interval as a relational space.

¹⁴⁴ Mónica Amor, “Nature Unbound: Gego’s Chorros and related proposals from the Seventies,” *Gego: Defying Structures*, (Porto: Museu Serralves, 2006): 23-35., 26.

¹⁴⁵ Yve Alan Bois, “From the Spider’s Web,” *Gego: Defying Structures*, (Porto: Museu Serralves, 2006): 45-50., 47.

¹⁴⁶ Lisa Le Feuvre, “Growing Lines Into Sculpture,” in *Gego, Line as Object*, (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2013), 31-48., 35.

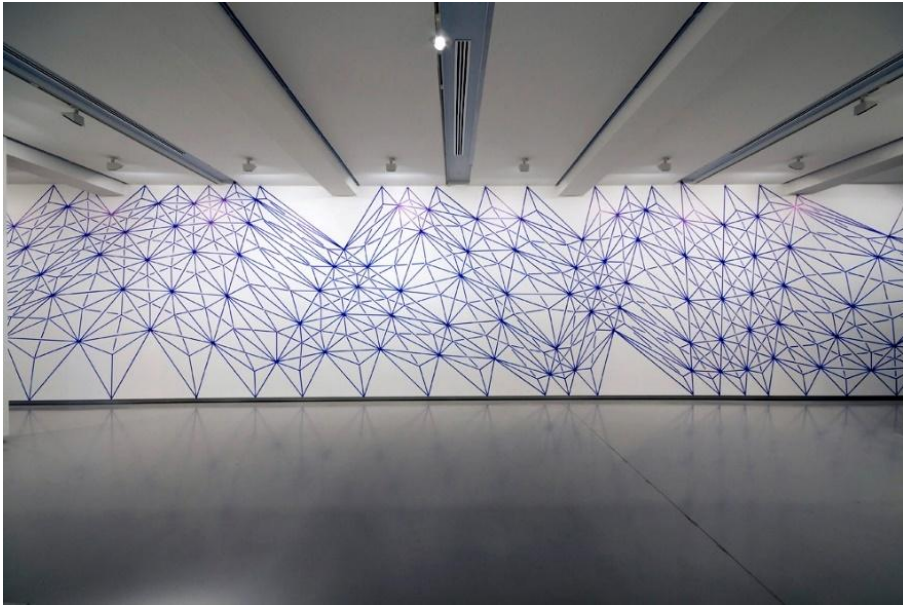


Image 30 Kerrie Poliness, *Blue Wall Drawing #1* 2007-11, installation view, *Cells and Silos*, Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne, 2007. Courtesy of the artist.

A similar sense of opening out through spaces of connection can be found in the work of Australian artist Kerrie Poliness. Her large wall drawings resonate with this aspect of the research in their capacity to explore relationality as a synchronicity between matter and form. In wall works that deploy instructional manuals and participation by others to ‘draw’ each work, Poliness creates a system of making art that is open and social, foregrounding the materiality of art practice as a space of relations.¹⁴⁷ As part of her ongoing explorations into patterns and forces of matter, Poliness’ practice renders visible the space of human interactivity, and the potential for difference to emerge in nature. Drawing on the minimalist geometry of early Constructivist works, her drawings engage with line as a relational activity and mode of generating difference.

¹⁴⁷ Carolyn Barnes, “Conflicted Territory: Aesthetics and Practices in the work of Melinda Harper, Anne-Marie May, Rose Nolan and Kerrie Poliness,” *UN Magazine* 6.1. Online version, 5: <http://unprojects.org.au/magazine/issues/issue-6-1/>

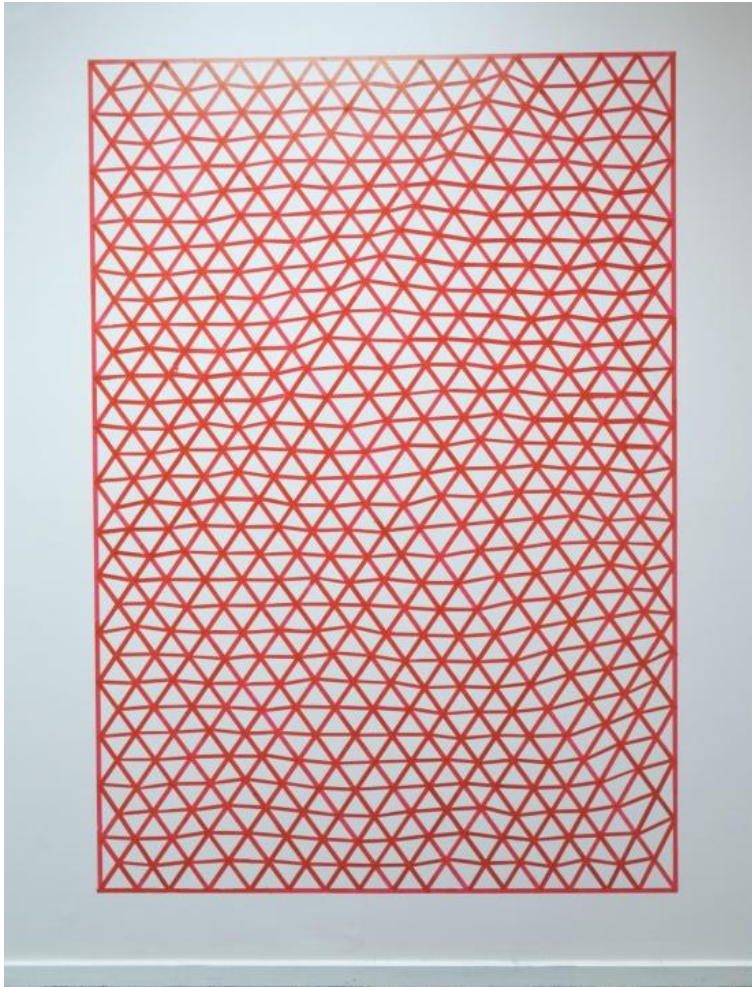


Image 31 Kerrie Poliness, *Red Matter Wall Drawing #3*, 1994-2014, installation view, *Topologies of Sexual Difference*, George Paton Gallery, 2014. Photo by Caroline Phillips.

Poliness' *Red Matter Wall Drawing #3* (1994-2014), realises the interval as the unfixed middle ground between two. Produced by a group of participants including scientists, students, a tourist and other artists,¹⁴⁸ it consists of a series of simple lines on the wall drawn with a thick red marker and a ruler. Once the artist had outlined the border of the work with four long lines, participants were given their instructions to intuitively determine

¹⁴⁸ The work was produced for the *Topologies of Sexual Difference* exhibition at George Paton Gallery (2014), Melbourne (see chapter 3.2) by Irene Mena (student visiting from Italy), Sandra Bridie and Alice Mathieu (artists and staff at the gallery), Danielle McCarthy and Caroline Phillips (artists in the *Topologies* exhibition), Roger Rasool (experimental particle physics Professor at University of Melbourne), Jim Black (Associate Professor at the Nossal Institute), Eric Liu Xianghua (artist from Beijing, research Fellow at VCA Centre for Ideas) and Chris Henschke (artist and lecturer at RMIT University, School of Media and Communication).

the halfway point between the ends of each line, a system of 'guessing half', and then to make their mark at that point. Secondary lines were then drawn to connect the marked points. This process continued until each line was intersected multiple times and an elaborate grid formation of diagonals and diamond shapes appears. From these markings, asymmetry and difference was intentionally generated through patterns that emerged from the intersecting lines.

This generating system to find 'halfway' struck me in its resonance with Irigaray's interval, on a literal level as the approximate midway point between of two polarities, but more particularly in its embodied, attentive and open-ended nature as each person makes their intuitive choice. The straight lines at first appear rigid and fixed, yet the matrix produced by the multiple and various 'guesses' creates a diversity of difference. This slippage, far from creating a messy, unorganised field, results in a fluid, emergent, energetic and surprising wave formation. Drawing on wave theory in Physics, the variable permutations of line create waves of pattern. The structured 'natural' variance elaborates a flowing and relational space of difference and diversity. The resulting drawing demonstrates the complex, yet poetic waves that form within nature, through lines of separation and connection, to form a mutable pattern.

As well as exploring the production of difference in nature, the artist is concerned with the relationship between people and nature. Poliness stresses:

This work is concerned with the innate commonality between things in the world that is often disconnected by notions such as 'natural' and 'manufactured'. Everything in this world, both natural and manufactured, is a part of nature and interrelated. 149

¹⁴⁹ Kerrie Poliness, artist statement, *Topologies of Sexual Difference* exhibition catalogue.

It is important to the work that it is participatory, produced by instructions drawn up and provided to the participants in advance. Poliness sees this process as the development of a system that is inherently social and relational. The estimation of a halfway point is something often used in sharing. The 'guessing half' instruction that is provided makes the drawing process easily accessible to non-trained participants, as well as producing ownership in the work. Their role is actively creative.¹⁵⁰ This work produces the specificity of variation that is found in nature, combined with a social collaborative structure that exemplifies difference as a relational process, generated by the complexity and 'felt' experience of the group. The work was constructed outside the confines of the gallery 'white cube', drawn on a wall in the communal student area in the foyer of the gallery. This interactive zone between the public and private space, reinforces the social nature of the work.

A defining feature of this and other works by Poliness is their use of linear abstraction. Connected to the legacy of Geometric Abstraction, this work remains contemporary through its materiality and process orientation. The drawings resonate with the linearity and abstracted pattern that emerges in my own work *enmeshed*¹⁵¹ (discussed in Chapter four) and the open, immersive lines and spaces created by Gego. It is also produced via handmade processes, yet in a quite different method to Gego's solitary 'thinking in space'. The participation of others in Poliness' practice manifests a more directly social relation, harnessing an embodied realisation of the interval as space. Both Poliness and Gego render line as an object, opening out spaces of difference and material encounter. These multiple

¹⁵⁰ Kerrie Poliness, "The Poliness Wall Drawings, Not Quite Right", *Artlink*, Vol 32, No.1, *Pattern and Complexity*, 2012, 57.

¹⁵¹ *enmeshed*, Craft, Melbourne, March 8 – April 27, 2013.

spatial encounters can be viewed as intervals, connecting disparate elements in an array of relations.

2.7 Women artists and Minimalism – an alternate narrative

The artists discussed in the previous section demonstrate the relational nature of space, and the lineage of Minimalism in their work. Earlier this chapter considered a group of defining characteristics that came to be known as Minimalism made by a group of (male) North American artists in the 1960s. A small number of well-known women artists of the period, such as Eva Hesse or Agnes Martin, are at times included in the discourse yet are generally seen as exceptions to the rule and placed in the different category of Post Minimalism. This research seeks to move beyond this traditional narrative of minimalist discourse, expanding the parameters of Minimalism through the work of a number of women artists. Two key exhibitions and art works viewed in the early stages of this research inspired me to look further afield than the mainstream accounts of Minimalism in art history, to investigate ways that a minimalist artwork might reveal new insights into feminist art.¹⁵²

First, *Less is More, Minimal and Post-Minimal Art in Australia* at Heide Museum of Modern Art (2012) - which included a number of women artists including Kerrie Poliness - explored a vast array of American minimalist and post-minimalist works, and their influence on a number of Australian artists over the four decades from the late 1960s to the 2000s. Second, the exhibition *Concrete Invention - Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection, Reflections on Geometric Abstraction from Latin America and its Legacy* at Museo Nacional Centro de

¹⁵² *Less is More, Minimal + Post Minimal Art in Australia* (2012), Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, curated by Sue Cramer; *Concrete Invention - Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection, Reflections on Geometric Abstraction from Latin America and its Legacy* (2013, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; *The 18th Biennale of Sydney: all our relations*, (2012), curated by Catherine de Zegher and Gerald McMaster (specifically, Cecilia Vicuña's, Quipu Austral, 2012).

Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (2013) displayed works by over thirty Latin American artists including Lygia Clark and Gego.

From this direct experience of viewing and experiencing these works, in conjunction with my explorations and processes of making in the studio, emerged an alternate way of thinking about Minimalism and the historical narrative handed down to me through art history. On the one hand there is a Western narrative of masculinity devoid of human expression, contrasted by a 'feminised' version (discussed shortly) that deploys such terms as soft and delicate, or personal and subjective. In viewing works by the particular artists discussed in this thesis, a number of whom are from Latin America, an alternate approach emerged. The minimal works of these artists eschew the gendered paradigms of soft, delicate, personal or subjective in favour of terms such as spatial, connectedness, difference and complexity. This realisation evolved with and through the research, enabling a reconfiguration of the autonomy and formality of Minimalism into a relational feminist practice.

The conceptual parameters of Geometric Abstraction, Minimalism and its legacies in Latin America fall under a range of categories. Geometric or hard-edge abstraction developed in a number of different countries in Latin America from the mid twentieth century; Arte Concreta and Neo-Concretism in Brazil (1950s-60s), Arte Madí in Uruguay and Argentina (1940s), Kinetic Art in Argentina and Venezuela (1960s-70s) and Informalismo in Argentina (1950s-60s). There are also many artists whose works do not fit precisely into these movements and dates, yet are informed by abstraction and Minimalism. In contrast to North American Minimalism, these southern counterparts are closely linked to the social

and political conditions occurring in their specific countries.¹⁵³ Women artists feature prominently within these discourses and, generally speaking, their work points towards alternate practices that encompass relationality, social engagement and ethical concerns, three of whom are discussed in this thesis.

There have been a small number of major exhibitions in the West where women artists are directly linked to the project of Minimalism, most notably *More Than Minimal: Feminism and Abstraction in the '70's*¹⁵⁴ at the Rose Art Museum, Massachusetts (1996) and *Sense and Sensibility: Women Artists and Minimalism in Nineties*¹⁵⁵ at MoMa, New York (1994). *Sense and Sensibility* focused on a small group of seven artists including Mona Hatoum and Rachel Whiteread, amongst others, who fulfilled three main criteria; they utilised the minimalist modes of repetition, the grid or geometric structure; they were women; they used mundane materials.¹⁵⁶ In her catalogue essay, the curator Lynn Zelevansky describes the exhibition as 'a continuum with Post-Minimalism: Post Minimalist forms...combined with a personal sensibility, manifested in the visual realization of subtle and individual intellectual and aesthetic distinctions'.¹⁵⁷

More Than Minimal moved closer towards an overtly feminist paradigm, deploying 'gendered subjectivity' as its crucial indicator.¹⁵⁸ The exhibition featured the work of eleven artists including Lynda Benglis, Eva Hesse, Ana Mendieta and Hannah Wilke, with comprehensive catalogue essays by Whitney Chadwick, Lucy Lippard, Anne Wagner and

¹⁵³ The ICAA – International Centre for the Arts of the Americas - at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, holds an extensive archive of material that elaborates the complexities of Latin American art in the Twentieth Century. An online archive is available at: <http://icaadocs.mfah.org/icaadocs/en-us/home.aspx>

¹⁵⁴ Susan L. Stoops, ed., *More Than Minimal; Feminism and Abstraction in '70's* (Waltham, Mass: Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, 1996).

¹⁵⁵ Lynn Zelevansky, *Sense and Sensibility: Women Artists and Minimalism in the Nineties* (The Museum of Modern Art, New York. (1994).

¹⁵⁶ Zelevansky, *Sense and Sensibility*, 12.

¹⁵⁷ Zelevansky, *Sense and Sensibility*, 12.

¹⁵⁸ Stoops, INTRODUCTION, *More Than Minimal*, 6.

Kate Linker. These essays ranged across topics including female aesthetics, the subjectivity of gender, and 'sensuous abstraction'.¹⁵⁹ Both exhibitions were framed as 'feminine' versions of a previously 'masculine' movement, reinforcing this binary as oppositional (in contrast to the Irigarayan non-hierarchical *equivalence* of this research).¹⁶⁰ This emphasis on female subjectivity limits the possibilities for relational readings of these abstract and post-minimal artworks, in the name of 'female sensibility' in the case of the MoMa show, or as 'feminine' in the Rose Art Museum exhibition.¹⁶¹

However, *More Than Minimal* introduced ideas of intersectional feminism and stressed the lived conditions of subjects and identities. As Kate Linker writes:

What is important is not what is in the object but what passes outside of it, in its enframing surround, made up by the multiple, changing and frequently inconsistent locations occupied by the viewing subject, often simultaneously. This space is one of mutual animation; it is constitutive of both subject *and* object. Perhaps the major accomplishment of the art of the minimalist period may be to have brought it into our view.¹⁶²

Most recently, the exhibition *Revolution in the Making, Abstract Sculpture by Women 1947-2016* (Hauser Wirth & Schimmel, Los Angeles), has linked women artists and abstraction (although not all the works are minimalist). The exhibition compares three generations of women sculptors as diverse as Louise Bourgeois, Francoise Grossen, Sheila Hicks, Gego, Eva

¹⁵⁹ Stoops, ed., *More Than Minimal*

¹⁶⁰ A further exhibition linking women artists and Minimalism was held in Melbourne in 1988. Curated by Rachel Kent, *The Infinite Space: Women, Minimalism and the Sculptural Object* was shown at The Ian Potter Museum of Art. The eight contemporary artists in the show included Lauren Berkowitz, Mikala Dwyer, Rosalie Gasgoine, Gail Hastings, Janet Lawrence, Susan Norrie, Rosslyn Piggott and Kathy Temin. According to the exhibition catalogue, the focus of the exhibition was 'in response to the gendered and bodily themes apparent amongst a number of female practitioners who reference Minimalism in their art ... it proposes an alternative to the largely masculine history of minimal art'. See Rachel Kent, "Minimalism Past and Present" in *The Infinite Space: Women, Minimalism and the Sculptural Object* (Melbourne: The Ian Potter Museum of Art/University of Melbourne, 1998), 3-10. 5. However, although this catalogue statement hints at 'the body and gender', the works in the exhibition do not appear to have a specific relation to feminist concerns.

¹⁶¹ Phillips, *Placing the Body*, 26-7.

¹⁶² Kate Linker, 'A Feminine Subject For Minimalism?' in Stoops, ed., *More Than Minimal*, 39.

Hesse, Isa Genzken, Karla Black and Shinique Smith, amongst many others (thirty-four artists in total). Again an all women show, with artists who work with abstraction and sculptural form, the exhibition did not, however, contextualise the work into categories of 'femininity' or 'female sensibility'. The curatorial rationale paid attention to the 'tectonic shift towards process and materials' that has been advanced by women sculptors over the last six decades¹⁶³ with conversations amongst the works surrounding networks and connection, material gestures, experimentation and labour, and liminality and mindfulness.

The works that most impressed me in this recent exhibition were those that conveyed a relationship between matter, process *and* identity. As highlighted earlier, this conjunction of ideas and material practice stood out for me in the exhibitions viewed at the start of the research. Viewing new iterations of this concept, affirmed for me the potential of the minimalist object to enact a relational space through its processes of making, its materiality and its form. In turn, this relational function of the object might then enact a feminist relational space, building on the legacy of feminist art and providing new possibilities for feminist practice in the future.

2.8 Conclusion to Chapter 2

In the space of the interval there is room to approach the other, form connections, engage and re-engage, yet still allow for the specificity of each one in its situated conditions. This is the irreducible space that is the ethical relation. The space and clarity of the minimalist object is ideal for this work; there is no recognizable subject immediately present in the work; there is space to move around and see different viewpoints; the shared separation of the sexed subject can be articulated. Because of these shared, yet differing viewpoints our

¹⁶³ Paul Schimmel and Jenni Sorkin, eds., foreword to *Revolution in the Making, Abstract Sculpture by Women 1947-2016* (New York: Skira editore and Hauser & Wirth, 2016).

experience as sexuate subjects is open to difference and change. In the artworks produced through the research, temporary and propositional modes of connecting materials and forms develop relationships that are not fixed, relationships that emerge only because of their interim proximity and because of their difference. As a feminist strategy, this material and participatory process materialises new possibilities for the ethical, 'sexuate' relation.

This chapter has argued that the reconfiguration of the minimalist object can delineate the space of the interval, affirming the object as a feminist, relational object. Irigaray's interval is theorised as the space of separation, difference and connection, revealed through the artworks in material strategies of folding, connecting and attaching. Sexual difference is constituted by the material and ontological space between sexed beings, and the autonomy of the art object speaks to the specificity and irreducibility of this space between two, between difference itself. The relation of difference is enacted in this space through bringing together different processes, materials and forms.

The interval as a space is not fixed, nor is it calculable, hence the objects produced in the research explore modes of temporality, pliability and transformation in modes of making that are flexible and open-ended. These modes of construction - combined with the differing materials and pliable forms produced - render the materiality and processes of the interval as a relational space. Line has emerged as crucial to the development of the relational object, marked through processes of binding, hooking, pinning and tying to enact growth, proliferation and connection. These processes work to define relations in the incalculable space of the interval.

The relationship between Minimalism and women artists has been contextualised through major international exhibitions, revealing the potential for new possibilities in contemporary feminist practice, in the space of relational practice. Sculptures by Lygia Clark have

demonstrated the border space of the physical subject (between inside and outside) as a relational interval. Works by Gego and Kerrie Poliness have been discussed in their capacity to utilise the line as a spatial tool, delineating space through open-ness, connection and the multiplicity of difference. The legacy of Minimalism is shown to have been adopted by a range of women artists in ways that are material and relational, subverting the autonomy and oppositional positioning of the traditionally 'masculine' object, or its opposing 'feminised' version.

Chapter two has outlined ways that the space of the interval can be opened up and articulated through the material conditions of the object and the formal properties of Minimalism. The 'mutual singularity' of sexual difference is foregrounded by the specificity of distinct materials and forms. In addition, fluid and provisional moments of connection reiterate the impermanent nature of the relation of sexual difference. The following chapter will explore the intensity of the interval through processes of doubling and repetition. Harnessing forces of differentiation and multiplicity will highlight the relational possibilities of the interval as place.

Chapter 3 - Intense interval – activating a place of multiplicity and relations

“Place is never closed. The boundaries touch against one another while still remaining open.”

Luce Irigaray¹⁶⁴

3.1 Introduction to Chapter 3

Whereas Chapter two delineated the *space* of the interval through modes of separation and connection, Chapter three deploys repetition, differentiation and materiality to expand the scope of the interval towards a *place* of intense relationality. This site is an active, complex field of intersection and multiplicity that draws on the forces of material life and elaborates difference as an ongoing process. Conceiving the interval as place intensifies the gap or space of the interval between two, towards a dynamic exchange that elaborates relations anew at each iteration. For Irigaray, place is extremely important to her conception of the interval and operates on multiple levels. The interval as place is a site for woman to find her *own* place. Indeed, woman is shown to have multiple places, and through the interval her role as place becomes a threshold of becoming. This aspect of the interval is discussed in Chapter four. For the moment though, this chapter explores Irigaray’s thinking on the interval as the place where matter and form intercepts, reconfiguring the sexuate relation through differentiation, multiplicity and inter-relations. The artmaking discussed is examined through the interval as a place of making visible and elaborating a relational feminist practice.

Enhancing the spatial properties of the interval, this topology of place encompasses matter, bifurcation and co-relationality. Explored through repetition, seriality and activating the

¹⁶⁴ Irigaray, “Place, Interval,” in *An Ethics.*, 51

vitality of materials, the artworks and events materialise the interval as place. The interval is articulated as an intense site of interaction and exchange and an affirmative place of entanglement and possibility for ethical exchange. Entanglement here is evident as an interactive conglomeration of matter, ideas and political operations that interact within and between subjects and objects. The concept of entanglement resonates with the work of Rosi Braidotti and Karen Barad, in their New Materialist framing of entanglement, intra-activity and vitalism. Features of Deleuzian thinking have informed these important developments in feminism, particularly the question of repetition and difference. This chapter explores aspects of the New Materialist discourse in conjunction with Irigaray's framework, to ask the question 'In what ways can the interval as *place* contribute to our understanding of the multiplicity of difference?'

In addition to Braidotti's and Barad's dynamic conceptual frameworks, fixed and language based frameworks of representation in art are being challenged by a range of thinkers including Amelia Jones, Grosz and Barbara Bolt, through a focus on materiality and process. To expand on singular conceptions of 'identity' which can at times be rigid and fixed, Jones theorises 'identification' as an alternate framing, encompassing performativity and temporality as feminist strategies.¹⁶⁵ (This is discussed further in Chapter four, in relation to the interval as a threshold). Grosz suggests that representations such as art, mediate the (real) world around us. Therefore, she argues, an artwork can create real forces that have real effects on the world.¹⁶⁶ For Bolt, all the elements of artistic practice including the artist, their materials and the interactive processes between them, together constitute the

¹⁶⁵ Amelia Jones, *Seeing Differently: A History and Theory of Identification and the Visual Arts* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 174.

¹⁶⁶ Katve-Kaisa Konturri and Milla Tienen, "Feminism, Art, Deleuze, and Darwin: An Interview with Elizabeth Grosz," in *NORA-Nordic Journal of Women's Studies* 15. 4 (November, 2007): 247.

emergence of art.¹⁶⁷ This research harnesses these material feminisms to work through the relational as a material and conceptual framework for a sexuate art practice.

Two curatorial projects are discussed in this chapter in their capacity to engage with the material-discursive possibilities of working with Irigaray's sexuate thinking, and the active dynamics of the interval as place. First, the exhibition *Topologies of Sexual Difference*¹⁶⁸ creates a place of knowledge, art making and inter-connectivity that draws together a roundtable of contemporary feminist artists. Second, *the Technopia Tours Feminist Art Bus*¹⁶⁹ is an intense, experiential event that renders visible a day-in-the-life of a collective, material-discursive, relational art practice. The curatorial projects continue to work alongside the studio processes of making and forming relational, feminist objects. In this chapter, ideas about forces of nature, the elements, control and power are invested in the works.

Strategies of co-relationality are foregrounded to escape hierarchical and oppositional thinking. Explored in the work of Bianca Hester (Australia) and Cecilia Vicuña (Chile/USA), forces of nature and community are brought together as sites of poetic expression and cultural connection. For both these artists, although in different ways, their work creates fields of energy that activate places of connection and relation. The object becomes collaborative, enabling a material practice of intensity and connection. Harnessing the potential of the interval as place activates a material-discursive feminism of relationality and difference.

¹⁶⁷ Barbara Bolt, *Art Beyond Representation, The Performative Power of the Image* (London, New York: I.B. Taurus, 2004), 9.

¹⁶⁸ *Topologies of Sexual Difference* - Luce Irigaray Circle conference and associated exhibition, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, Co-curated by Caroline Phillips and Dr. Louise Burchill (2014).

¹⁶⁹ *The Technopia Tours Feminist Art Bus*, IWD (March 8), 2014. Co-curated by Caroline Phillips and Kim Donaldson.

3.2 Project 3: *Topologies of Sexual Difference*

An opportunity to engage with other artist's responses to Irigaray's work arose with the curatorial project *Topologies of Sexual Difference* (George Paton Gallery, Melbourne) in 2014, an exhibition held in conjunction with the 7th Luce Irigaray Circle annual conference, Melbourne, 2014. My role as co-curator of the exhibition and member of the conference organising committee enabled a deep and interactive engagement with the philosophy and practice of Irigaray's thinking across a wide range of disciplines including art, education, ecology and architecture, amongst others. The exhibition component explored a diverse range of contemporary critiques and responses to Irigaray's work by eighteen Australian and international visual artists,¹⁷⁰ with a satellite exhibition of work by University of Melbourne architecture students held in the nearby Experimental Art Space.¹⁷¹ The array of artmaking practices displayed in the gallery encompassed painting, photography, video, performance, sculpture and text. The exhibition foregrounded Irigaray's writing as integral to current feminist thinking and practice.

Irigaray's output is so extensive that her publications are generally loosely broken up into three stages; an early period of intertextual analysis and critique (1970s), a middle period when Irigaray wrote about the elements, spirituality and sexuality in a more poetic style, emphasising materiality (1980s); a later stage of writing in a more pragmatic mode about life in the world including diverse engagements with education, architecture and law,

¹⁷⁰ Curated by Caroline Phillips and Dr Louise Burchill, eighteen artists from Asia/Pacific, Europe, and USA took part in this exhibition in Melbourne, Australia, from December 9-12, 2014. The exhibition was held in conjunction with the 7th Luce Irigaray Circle *Topologies of Sexual Difference* conference, co-hosted by University of Melbourne, Victorian College of the Arts (Research) and The Communication, Politics and Culture Research Centre at RMIT. The participating artists were: Cherelyn Brearley, Janet Burchill, Virginia Fraser, Helen Johnson, Marina Kassianidou, Utako Shindo Kanai, Danielle McCarthy, Joanne Makas, Alex Martinis Roe, Caroline Phillips, Kerrie Poliness, Elizabeth Presa, Julieanna Preston, Grace Pundyk, Tanis Smith, Jacqueline Taylor and Alison Thomson. <http://umsu.unimelb.edu.au/what-is-on/gallery/archives/>

¹⁷¹ Curated by Dr Louise Burchill

amongst other fields (1990s to date).¹⁷² The *Topologies of sexual difference* exhibition demonstrated a diverse range of approaches to engaging with Irigaray's thinking; mimesis and images of women, models of feminine genealogy, textual and language interrogations, representations of the feminine imaginary, performing and representing the psychic world of the body, exploring concepts of the Divine, narratives of nature and creativity, renditions of attentive viewing and listening, spatial explorations of fluidity and gaps, and the intermateriality of matter.

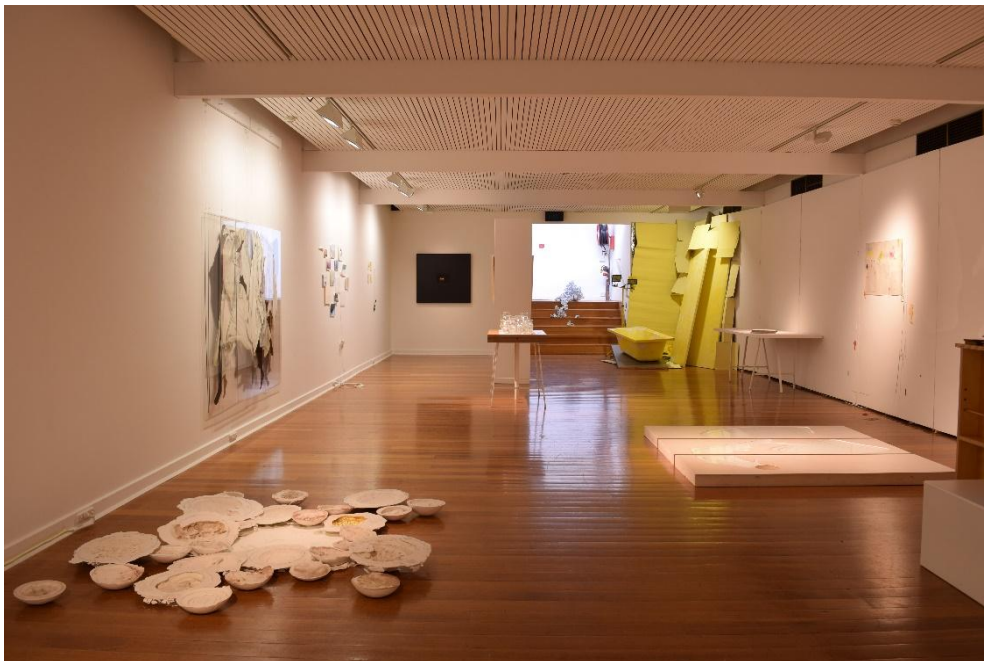


Image 32 *Topologies of Sexual Difference*, installation view, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, 2014. L-R works by Elizabeth Presa, Danielle McCarthy, Utako Shindo Kanai, Terry Taylor, Julieanna Preston, Caroline Phillips, Joanne Makas, Marina Kassianidou, Jacqueline Taylor, Alison Thomson. Photo by George Paton Gallery.

¹⁷² There are variations within these categories and the publishing dates vary for French texts and English translations. Irigaray's early texts took many years to be translated to English, for example, *Speculum de l'autre femme* of 1974 (Paris: Minuit) was not published as the English *Speculum of the Other Woman* until 1985 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press). This time lag impacted on the reception of Irigaray's ideas in Western feminism. Over the last two decades most of Irigaray's text have been immediately available in English.



Image 33 *Topologies of Sexual Difference*, installation view, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, 2014. L-R works by Kerrie Poliness, Alex Martinis Roe, Janet Burchill. Photo by George Paton Gallery.

The interactive process of working closely with the artists and their practice, whilst embedded in the deep engagement of the conference setting, was pivotal in working through the complexity of the research questions and elaborating my understanding of the interval. The project generated an intense dynamic of talking, listening, thinking, making and activating ideas through art practice. This discursive platform embodied the interval as place, echoing Irigaray's ideas through materiality, conceptual thinking and their relationship to art practice.

Irigaray herself writes very little about art practice.¹⁷³ She does, however, stress the importance of cultural expression, as a necessary part of practising our sexuate identities.¹⁷⁴

The framework of the interval as a specific paradigm for practice is yet to be fully developed

¹⁷³ For a detailed examination of Irigaray's writing on art practice, see Linda Daley, "Luce Irigaray's Aesthetic," in *Multidisciplinary Journal of Gender Studies*, 3.1 (2014): 373-395.

¹⁷⁴ Daley, *Luce Irigaray's Aesthetic*, 380.

in contemporary visual arts discourse.¹⁷⁵ The *Topologies of Sexual Difference* exhibition suggested some of the ways that Irigaray's conceptual framework of sexual difference is used metaphorically and as a material framework for practice. The project confirmed the potential to develop the interval as a material-discursive practice, through a relational methodology that encompasses the space, place and threshold of the interval.

3.3 Forces of intensity - differentiation and matter

The interval as place is generated by the activation of material forces of difference. The materiality of sexual difference is explored by Grosz in *Bergson, Deleuze and the Becoming of Unbecoming*,¹⁷⁶ and *Becoming Undone, Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics and Art*.¹⁷⁷ Grosz deploys Deleuze's difference as a 'field' and Bergson's articulation of the durational realm of internal difference, to argue that difference is a material impulse, not a signifying term.¹⁷⁸ In dialogue with Irigaray's concepts, Grosz demonstrates that the interval (of difference) can therefore be contextualised as not only the space between 'others', but the material conditions for their elaboration.¹⁷⁹ Irigaray proposes that the interval of sexual difference is a dynamic and generative ontological framework that is the condition of the *relation between two* and at times becomes the condition of difference itself. In 'The Way of Love' she writes:

¹⁷⁵ *Intermedialities: Philosophy, Arts, Politics* edited by Henk Oosterling and Ewa Plonowska Ziarek (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2011) links Irigaray's interval to the concept of 'Intermedialities', explored through multi-media arts and feminist philosophy and politics. Intermediality in art practice is theorised in this text through painting and film, with an emphasis on embodiment and new technologies, named in the book's Introduction as 'the "ecstatic ground" of social relations, new forms of artistic creativity, and political resistance,' p4.

¹⁷⁶ Elizabeth Grosz, "Bergson, Deleuze and the Becoming of Unbecoming," *Parallax* 11, no. 2 (2005): 4-13.

¹⁷⁷ Elizabeth Grosz, *Becoming Undone, Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics and Art* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2011).

¹⁷⁸ Grosz, *Bergson, Deleuze*, 6.

¹⁷⁹ Grosz, 'Ontologies, Topologies, Temporalities'.

Now the masculine and the feminine are in no case the inverse or the opposite of each other. They are different. This difference that holds between is perhaps the most unthinkable of differences – difference itself.¹⁸⁰

As such, the interval can be conceived as the place of proliferating matter and potential.



Image 34 Caroline Phillips, *Lug*, 2013, rubber octopus straps, chenille stems, 180x30x10cm, installation view,

Materialising Feminism, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, 2016. Photo by Clare Rae.

Grosz suggests a focus on matter by feminist artists might operate as a way to ‘speak’ to others beyond single categories.¹⁸¹ Using the minimalist object in this context, strategies of

¹⁸⁰ Irigaray, *The Way of Love*, 106.

repetition, seriality and abstracted form can invoke the intensity of bodily formations outside of preconceived categories. Whereas the original use of seriality and repetition as a feature of Minimalism produced an indeterminate multiplicity, here it is deployed to demarcate the specificity and multiplicity of difference, within a communal and relational space of the interval. In this way, sexual difference is not a fixed category and is beyond the binary of 'two', continually open to its material formation and the proliferation of multiple 'others'. The differentiating and active quality of matter opens up the space of the interval as an expansive site of discourse, materialising the interval as place in relation.

The work *Lug* (2013),¹⁸² conjures the bifurcation found in nature that reproduces and multiplies bodies and things. A series of rubber octopus straps are wrapped in lengthy coils made from chenille stems, attached through a winding and repetitive process. These furry accessories add colour and tactility to the smooth and stretchy black rubber, bringing together two disparate elements. Hanging from a single hook, the units multiply at each level, loosely amalgamating and becoming extremely heavy as gravity pulls them down to the floor. The toiling winds of red and pink chenille stems are accentuated by the black wall behind and the theatrical lighting, evoking performative forces at play. Hard metal hooks that connect each module struggle to contain the oppressive weight and the tentative construction of this work, bringing forth a sense of instability through the tension and release cycle of the repeating elements.

¹⁸¹ Katve-Kaisa Kontturi and Milla Tienen, "Feminism, Art, Deleuze, and Darwin: An Interview with Elizabeth Grosz," *NORA-Nordic Journal of Women's Studies* 15, no. 4 (November, 2007, 2007), 248.

¹⁸² First exhibited in *Regimes of Value*, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, 2013 and *QuietNOISE*, Chapman and Bailey, Melbourne, 2014.



Image 35 Caroline Phillips, *Lug* (detail), 2013. Photo by Clare Rae.

The idea of repetition as an expansive mode of practice may seem in opposition to the reductive goals of Minimalism (and at odds with the minimalist axiom 'less is more'), yet as curator Maria Lind illustrates 'contrary to common assumptions abstraction is not a means to simplify something but to intensify'.¹⁸³ *Lug* utilises haptic materiality, repetition and abstracted form as a vehicle to explore the intensity of nature in the bifurcation processes

¹⁸³ Maria Lind, INTRODUCTION, *Abstraction* (London and Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel Gallery and The MIT Press, 2013), 23.

of sexual difference. This multiplicity is produced by powerful forces of matter, explored in this work through the exponentially doubling procedure. The work's tactile surface highlights its materiality and produces effects of growth and reproduction. Bifurcation defines the limit, yet potential, of binary division.

Lug was first shown in the group exhibition *Regimes of Value* (2013),¹⁸⁴ along with some of the test pieces from the early stages of the research. Curated by Elizabeth Gower, the exhibition surveyed the 'collection, appropriation and re-purpose of ephemera and urban detritus as a contemporary art strategy'¹⁸⁵ in the work of twenty-six Melbourne artists. In response to Dr Gillian Whiteley's text *Junk: Art and the Politics of Trash*¹⁸⁶ the exhibition explored, in part, aspects of New Materialism materialised through contemporary art practice. As Whiteley identifies in her catalogue essay for the *Regimes* exhibition:

They [New Materialists] espouse a world of generative matter in which objects are agentic and material is constitutive, eschewing the distinction between organic and inorganic, inanimate and animate.¹⁸⁷

Some of the artworks in the show focused on the political currency of waste material, whilst others engaged in conversations about ecology or narratives of sustainability. This research does not employ recycled materials for an environmental agenda, rather it affirms Whiteley's assessment of the New Materialist project of generative matter, read through Irigaray's concept of the interval, to materialise the place of difference.

¹⁸⁴ *Regimes of Value*, curated by Elizabeth Gower, was shown across two venues; Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne (March 14 – April 13, 2013) and The Substation, Newport (7 March to 7 April, 2013). Artists: Lauren Berkowitz, Ryan Foote, Michael Georgetti, Elizabeth Gower, Nathan Gray, Lou Hubbard, Christopher LG Hill, Matt Hinkley, Melanie Irwin, Ash Keating, Nicholas Mangan, Rowan McNaught, John Nixon, Louise Paramor, Simon Pericich, Joshua Petherick, Caroline Phillips, Elvis Richardson, Stuart Ringholt, Ilia Rosli, Julie Shiels, Slow Art Collective, Kate Smith, Charlie Sofo, Masato Takasama and Alex Vivian. www.regimesofvalue.com

¹⁸⁵ Elizabeth Gower, INTRODUCTION, *Regimes of Value*, (Melbourne: Margaret Lawrence Gallery, The Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne, 2013).

¹⁸⁶ Gillian Whiteley, "Regimes of Value: Sensuous Stuff, Entangled Objects, Undoing the Order of Things", in *Regimes of Value*, (Melbourne: Margaret Lawrence Gallery, The Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne, 2013), unpaginated.

¹⁸⁷ Whiteley, *Regimes of value*, unpaginated.



Image 36 Caroline Phillips, works from *Regimes of Value*, 2013, installation view, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, 2013. Photo by Catherine Evans.

Despite their synthetic composition, the objects shown in the *Regimes* exhibition respond to natural forces such as gravity. From these repetitive, abstract forms, corporeal objects emerge that slunk in corners, hang from beams and spill out across the surface of a wall or floor. Ambiguous and sometimes abject these 'bodies' induce a form of subjectivity that conjures up the affective dimension. The intervention of handmade processes upon the materials in random, imperfect duration, elicits corporeal difference. This bodily experience renders the interval as place through the intersection of matter, thought and action, embodied viewer as a situated experience between the human and non-human. Different materials are brought together in temporary modes of connection and attachment, forming material relationships and generating objects of difference.



Image 37 Caroline Phillips, works from *Regimes of Value*, 2013, installation view, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, 2013. Photo by Catherine Evans

New Materialist concepts of difference and becoming take after Deleuze (and Guattari's) work. Deleuze argues that subjectivity, or identity, comes *after* a material elaboration of difference. For Deleuze, relations are materialised through difference and repetition as 'becomings', via affects produced by bodies.¹⁸⁸ Irigaray is critical of Deleuze in his denial of the specificity of sex. His 'becoming woman' is a framework that is available to both sexes therefore, Irigaray argues, his concept ignores the specificity of women.¹⁸⁹ However, Deleuze and Guattari's use of 'the middle' strikes me as relevant to thinking about a material framework of the interval.¹⁹⁰ Through the metaphor of the rhizome, the middle is theorised as a nomadic system of movement and growth, providing numerous in-between points from which to move about making connections with other points, 'coming and going

¹⁸⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans Paul Patton, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

¹⁸⁹ Luce Irigaray, *Conversations*, (New York: Continuum, 2008), 79.

¹⁹⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, INTRODUCTION, *A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans Brian Massumi, (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 0.

rather than starting and finishing.¹⁹¹ However, the middle is not the same as the interval. For Irigaray, the Interval *is* the relation. For Deleuze and Guattari the middle is *not* the relation of the two, it is the in-between.¹⁹²

For Deleuze, the whole universe is comprised of movement of substances, modes of interference between difference and repetition.¹⁹³ Repetition is a form of difference that is outside of representations or concepts.¹⁹⁴ Difference, then, is repetition where each iteration is unique. Therefore, art, in its uniqueness, is a field where difference and repetition can resonate. As Grosz outlines in *Chaos, Territory, Art, Deleuze and the Framing of Art*, art releases sensations that oscillate and resonate with the rhythm of repetition and perceptions.¹⁹⁵ Grosz outlines Deleuze's argument that encounters with art can destabilise in their capacity to produce unrecognisable effects and sensations, in particular through processes of abstraction and materiality termed 'visceral force'.¹⁹⁶

Terri Bird similarly argues that the materiality of a work of art provokes difference through the disordering effects of matter, providing the potential to destabilise heterogeneity and diverge towards difference.¹⁹⁷ She writes:

This is not difference understood as an opposition between two terms; on the contrary, it is the production of difference as divergence, a differentiating force aimed at interrupting the circular economies of representation.¹⁹⁸

Deleuze's framework of difference and repetition is important in its focus as an alternative to, in fact the opposite of, representation.¹⁹⁹ The use of non-representational forms in this

¹⁹¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 25.

¹⁹² Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, D293.

¹⁹³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 27.

¹⁹⁴ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 27.

¹⁹⁵ Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art, Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 18.

¹⁹⁶ Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art*, 88.

¹⁹⁷ Terri Bird, "Figuring Materiality", in *Angelaki* 16.1 (2011): 5-15., 5.

¹⁹⁸ Bird, "Figuring Materiality", 5.

research, embedded in materiality and processes of repetition and abstraction, similarly produce disordering effects and interactions that enact relationality and difference. When expanded in conjunction with the framework of the interval (framed as the place of differentiating force in nature), a conceptual and material limit of (sexed) subjectivity is present, and the difference and repetition becomes embedded in the situated relation.²⁰⁰



Image 38 Caroline Phillips, *Skulk*, 2013, recycled leather, octopus strap, 80x25x10cm, installation view, *Regimes of Value*, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, 2013. Photo by Catherine Evans.

¹⁹⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 10.

²⁰⁰ The metaphor of 'the frame' is also discussed by Deleuze and Grosz, and similarly can denote the specificity of the subject in the space of the interval, through the limits of the object.

3.4 Generating the place of active relations

The generating potential of matter as relational is evident in the work of Bianca Hester, who produces objects in the service of a relational practice. Her materials and forms are less autonomous than my own, often relying on the assistance of participants to activate them within a designated environment. Hester's materials (which include concrete blocks, wood, metal rods and hoops, dirt and rocks) similarly draw on the legacy of Minimalism, yet are more organic and indicative of the natural elements. Hester often disperses her materials throughout a gallery (or alternate) space, enacting a proliferation of energy and actions which, for Hester, works against 'display-ready' complete or autonomous forms of consumption.²⁰¹ Often her work will embrace alternate spaces such as public squares and parks, where people interact with her chosen forms and materials.



Image 39 Bianca Hester, *Sonic Alterations Of Constructed Space With Metal Objects*, part of *Fashioning Discontinuities*, 19th Biennale Of Sydney, 2014. Courtesy of the artist.

²⁰¹ Bianca Hester, *material adventures, spatial productions: manoeuvring sculpture towards a proliferating event* (PhD dissertation, RMIT University, 2007), 9.

Hester's work draws on Bourriaud's framework of art constituting an event, through its ephemeral situatedness.²⁰² In this way, Hester opens up the production (and reception) of sculpture to a 'field of activities' and processes including working with people in activities such as discussion and writing, and collaborative 'situational relations'.²⁰³ For Hester, the form of an artwork is integral to its content, in a co-existence that 'performs relations ... and activates particular spatial, temporal, material, institutional and conceptual relationships.'²⁰⁴ Hester views this aggregation of activities as a legacy of feminist practice.²⁰⁵ Although social and material relations are foregrounded in Hester's practice, without the specificity of the sexed subject that is at the heart of this research the subject position is non-descript, denying the specificity of the situated subject. Whilst Hester acknowledges a legacy of feminist practice, her practice departs from this research in its emphasis on materiality and place as an activated site of multiple economic, political and environmental narratives.

For Hester, the minimalist object is 'positioned at the nexus of the contingency of relations between objects, space, time and contexts of encounter',²⁰⁶ as such is an important precursor to her practice. Hester draws on the abstract formality of circles, lines and grids of Minimalism, alongside less formal structures such as soft or loose material heaped in piles, or cast metal forms that act as tools such as rods or measuring devices. Hester draws on the agency and vitality of matter to construct an array of active forces and materials that enact and perform relationships within the artwork itself, its collaborators and its spatial environment. Often participants are invited to experience space in different ways by moving

²⁰² Hester, *material adventures, spatial productions*, 10.

²⁰³ Hester, *material adventures, spatial productions*, 119.

²⁰⁴ Hester, *material adventures, spatial productions*, 73-4.

²⁰⁵ Hester, *material adventures, spatial productions*, 52.

²⁰⁶ Bianca Hester, *enabling restraints*, (2008), http://www.academia.edu/1325371/Hester_enabling_restraints

or carrying the materials, or testing their capabilities.²⁰⁷ In recent works, the actions and forces are linked to walking, geological history and the encroachment of urban development,²⁰⁸ enacting a specific sense of the geography of place. The authentic vitality of the materials chosen by Hester are integral to activating the spatial and collaborative relations that she seeks to materialise. In the context of this PhD project, Hester's use of the transformation and flux of matter,²⁰⁹ in its situated conditions of the natural environment, can be seen to be performing relations of place.



Image 40 Bianca Hester, *bronze rods* carried during an event on 11 July, 2015, from Te Kopuke / Mt St John, to Te Tokaroa / Reef, installation view, *Movements Materialising Momentarily*, St. Paul St Gallery at Aut, Auckland, 2015. Courtesy of the artist and St. Paul Gallery At AUT.

²⁰⁷ Helen Hughes, "Aestheticising Architecture/Architecturalising Aesthetics: Callum Morton and Bianca Hester," *Discipline 2* (2012): 35-48., 42.

²⁰⁸ See the exhibition *Bianca Hester: movements materialising momentarily*, St Paul St Gallery at AUT University, School of Art and Design, Auckland. 31 July–11 September 2015, and a further iteration of this work *constellating bodies in temporary correspondence*, shown at *Tarrawarra Biennale 2016: Endless Circulation*.

²⁰⁹ Abby Cunnane, online text for *movements materialising momentarily*: <https://movementsmaterialisingmomentarily.wordpress.com/exhibition/>

Rather than being used as tools or objects to be handled, the objects made in this research such as *Lug* (discussed earlier), do not require a participant to handle the object to complete the work. The objects deploy haptic surfaces and modes of doubling and repetition to enact a site of differentiating place through affective response. This moves the space of the one to the place of co-relation. In the minimalist era repetition and seriality were used to divest meaning from the work of art. The works made in this research propose seriality and repetition as an expanded form of relationality and difference, bringing different materials, ideas and processes together as a relational methodology. As Grosz illustrates, in *Chaos, Territory, Art*, art is more than its status as an independent cultural object:

Art is the opening up of the universe to becoming-other, just as science is the opening up of the universe to practical action, to becoming-useful and philosophy is the opening up of the universe to thought-becoming.²¹⁰

Grosz argues that art and philosophy can both equally render a ‘capacity to enlarge the universe by enabling its potential to be otherwise, to be framed through concepts and affects.’²¹¹ What takes place through this PhD research is the co-relation of art objects and the discourse that creates and receives them, where the place of this ‘becoming-other’ that Grosz articulates occurs in the interval of sexual difference.

Co-relations of form and matter as ‘becomings’ are explored in the work *Plug Ins* (2015). Produced for the exhibition *Relatedness*²¹² the work explores the co-relation and intensity between a form and its materials. Overlapping shapes and their shadows erupt in a quivering pile of circular rubber forms, pierced with pointy-ended plastic forms and fluffy pink protuberances. The antagonistic multiplicity of the earlier *Dysfunction* is replaced with

²¹⁰ Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art, Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 23.

²¹¹ Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art*, 24.

²¹² A collaborative exhibition project with Cathy Johnstone, held at Melbourne’s Living Museum of the West, Maribyrnong.

a more harmonious amalgamation of intense materiality. Reminiscent of spinning tops, the implied movement is perpetual, subject only to forces of gravity, friction or movement of air. These forces and vitality create an intensity that resonates for its own sake. As Grosz argues in *Chaos, Territory and Art*:

art enables matter to become expressive, to not just satisfy but also to intensify – to resonate and become more than itself.²¹³

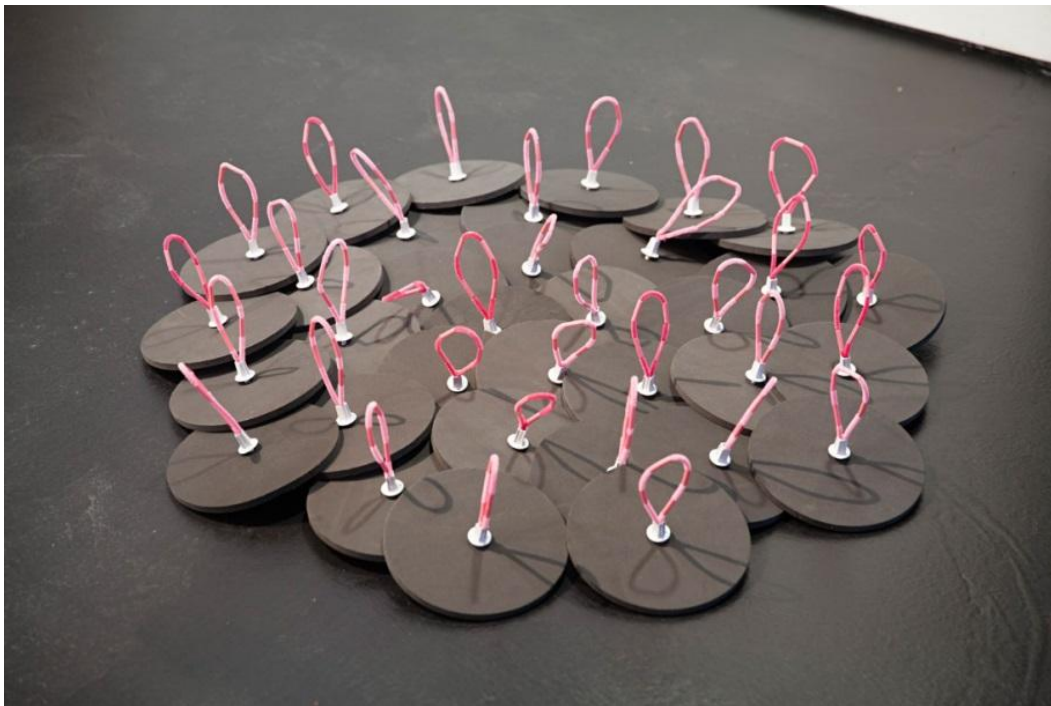


Image 41 Caroline Phillips, *Plug Ins*, 2015, recycled rubber, electrical plugs, chenille stems, plastic, dimensions variable, installation view, *Materialising Feminism*, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, 2016. Photo by Clare Rae.

The multiplicity of components in *Plug Ins*, however, leaves a nagging suspicion, for me, that something is missing. Irigaray does not endorse the concept of multiplicity.²¹⁴ For her, the impetus to materialise difference and the forces of matter in the world carries a risk, an

²¹³ Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 4.

²¹⁴ Pheng Cheah and Elizabeth Grosz explain why Irigaray does not endorse multiplicity as a concept. For her it is 'complicit with the logic of the one.' In her view the multiple is 'the one in its self-willed dispersal into unrelated atomistic singularities, many others of the same.' The alternative model she offers is the paradigm of the two, a mode of original relationality or being-with-the-other in which the otherness of the other is respected.' Pheng Cheah and Elizabeth Grosz, "Of Being-Two: Introduction" in *Diacritics* 28:1 (1998), 3-18., 5.

undifferentiated one-ness that lacks the specificity of the sexed (and sexuate) subject. This is not to say that the human is more important than the non-human, but rather is to foreground the situated specificity of the one, in its particularity. In Irigarayan parlance this would be named 'mutual singularity', a singularity that is essential to the work of sexual difference, and to the elaboration of the ethical relation, through a recognition of the other as irreducible to the self. This entails a risk, as Irigaray writes:

In every moment, each lays oneself open to the other, running the risk of losing one's way in a lack of recognition.²¹⁵

Multiplicity for its own sake leaves open the continuation of oppositional hierarchies and oppression. A realisation of the irreducible difference between the one and the other (of sexuate identity) requires the space of the interval, and the place of the relation that occurs within, to fully provide the conditions for a possible ethical relation. The sexuate subject is materialised *through* the irreducible differentiation of nature that is the interval. The potentially unbounded difference with no termination²¹⁶ at work in *Plug Ins*, raises questions about the limitations of multiplicity.

3.5 Material feminisms

This friction between New Materialist feminisms and Irigaray's framework of sexual difference is perhaps the most challenging and controversial area of her thinking. In the current discourse of Intersectional feminisms, Irigaray's insistence of the two (feminine and masculine) would seem at odds with feminist goals of inclusion and multiple *differings*. The multiplicity of forces and intensity of the haptic components in the artworks produced in

²¹⁵ Irigaray, *The Way of Love*, 126.

²¹⁶ Hester discusses repetition as proliferation through Rosalind Krauss' *Passages in Modern Sculpture* of 1977, she writes: 'The quality of 'one thing after another' (Krauss 1977: p.244) established by the process of repetition generates a potentiality for the work to extend or proliferate without logical termination (Krauss 1977).' in Hester, *material adventures, spatial productions*, 64.

this research resonate with Irigaray's interval *and* New Materialist conceptions of difference, particularly in the work of Braidotti and Barad. Both work to theorise difference as a multiplicity of events and actions, drawing on material forces of nature, the human, politics and the social. So too, New Materialist frameworks seek to elaborate alternatives to the fixed and oppositional binaries of nature/culture, human/non-human and body/thought. Through a liberation of matter and its processes they advocate for the *interdependence* of the forces of nature and culture.

In many ways the New Materialist position is aligned with Irigaray's expanded framework of sexual difference, although there are fundamental differences pertaining to the primacy of the sexed subject. This research seeks to avoid placing these two fields in yet another oppositional binary, instead proposing there is much to be gained from the insights of both. Braidotti, as a founding proponent of New Materialist thinking, moves matter away from its previous role of signification and representation,²¹⁷ an aim similarly embedded in this research project. Her neo-vitalist approach informed largely by Deleuze and Guattari (and others including Irigaray) embeds the subject in matter and its properties. For Braidotti, difference and becoming is enacted through processes and forms of material interaction. She writes:

The enfleshed Deleuzian subject is rather an "in-between": it is a folding-in of external influences and a simultaneous unfolding outwards of affects.²¹⁸

To Braidotti, the materiality and vitality of concrete conditions enables relationality, in their capacity to transform and create change through relationships with others. Termed 'radical relationality', her framework calls for the necessity to enter into ethical relations with

²¹⁷ Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin, "The Transversality of New Materialism" in *New Materialism: Interviews and Cartographies*, Open Humanities Press, 2012.

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/o/ohp/11515701.0001.001/1:5.2/--new-materialism-interviews-cartographies?rgn=div2;view=fulltext>

²¹⁸ Braidotti, quoted in Dolphijn and van der Tuin, "The Transversality of New Materialism", unpaginated.

multiple others to create 'possible worlds', a goal shared with Irigaray. This can occur, Braidotti argues, by mobilizing untapped resources such as desire and imagination, material forces that 'concretize in actual, material relations [...] of interconnection with others.'²¹⁹ For Braidotti and for Irigaray, subjects are separate, but their specificity is differentiated *through* their relation. For Barad the human subject is not pre-existent, it emerges only *after* the actions and relationships of bodily matter and phenomena²²⁰ that constitute it. These relationships are an intermingling of performative, material and discursive practices that create meaning, outlined as a theory of 'agential realism'.²²¹ Each action becomes an iterative 'intra-action',²²² multiplying processes of becoming (relations) in the world through a series of 'enactments'.²²³ In this sense, the non-representational forms and processes that constitute the making of the artworks in this research are aligned with Barad's concept of intra-actions, however they foreground the sexed subject *in conjunction with* the undifferentiated becoming of the New Materialist subject.

The connections in this research that emerge through art practice interrogate relations via processes of connection between matter and form. Irigaray considers this relationship as vital for the transformation of feminist thinking, as patriarchy has long denied the material conditions of the sexed subject. The research sites the place of the interval as the location where this relation (between matter and form) takes place. At play here is the materiality and processes of the work of the artist and the art object (the matter) acting not just as a physical substance, but in tandem and interrelated with its processes and operations as a

²¹⁹ Braidotti, "In Spite Of The Times, The Post Secular Turn in Feminism", *Theory, Culture & Society* 25, no.6 (2008): 1–24., 16.

²²⁰ Barad draws on the concepts of physicist Niels Bohr to define 'phenomena' as material relations in Karen Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of how Matter Comes to Matter," in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28, no.3 (2003): 801-831.", 814.

²²¹ Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity", 823.

²²² Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity", 815.

²²³ Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity, 822-823.

conceptual and material differentiation of the subject, as a further 'subject' of the work. Furthermore, this subject is conceived in continual elaboration of relation to other subjects, other materials and other forms. As Irigaray attests:

The world that we can share is always and still to be elaborated by us and between us starting from the perception and affirmation of what and who we are as humans here and now. Humans who endeavour to use their own energy as well as that arising from their difference in order to create.²²⁴

The primacy of the sexed (human) subject of Irigaray's thinking is another of the main differences between her framework and that of New Materialist thinking, which affirms the human and non-human in an interconnected relation. Irigaray does, however, prioritise matter and her affirmative and ethical approach is echoed in Barad's and Braidotti's work. For Irigaray, the relational is primarily concerned with the interval as the place of (the subject's) individual becoming, through nature (its sexed condition) and through its material and ontological relation to the other. Connection and commitment to the relation sits alongside the importance of othering and separating. This apparent contradiction is manifest as the interval.

Irigaray's insistence on nature as a vital force of sexual difference is often misread as an essentialising framework that enforces an oppositional and negative feminine/masculine binary. For this reason her work is often minimised in New Materialist accounts. For example, Rick Dolphijn's and Iris van der Tuin's concept of 'sexual differing', in their book *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies*,²²⁵ is positioned as a 'rewriting of sexual difference and sexuality not by means of dualist premises, but as a practical philosophy in

²²⁴ Irigaray, *Sharing the World*, 136.

²²⁵ Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin, "Sexual Differing" in *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies*, (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Open Humanities Press, 2012), (Chapter seven) 137-157.

which difference *in itself* comes to being.²²⁶ This position is argued through a critique of Butler's reading of de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*.²²⁷ A scant summation of Irigaray's thought is outlined via its interpretation by Grosz, with the authors acknowledgement that Irigaray's thinking can be viewed as 'traversing' across the divide of sexual difference (a discursive practice that they see as useful).

The position of these two authors is fundamentally opposed to Irigaray's affirmative view of sexual difference whereby two sexes are and always will be different, and separate. Dolphijn and van der Tuin seek to ameliorate the distance between the two sexes, framing sexual difference as a negative binary, and instead advocating for a multiplicitous array of interaction and difference. A more thorough reading of Irigaray's work shows that her concept of sexual difference is a lot closer to New Materialist thought than has been argued in the text under discussion.²²⁸ Irigaray's theorisation of the interval as the differentiating force of nature that produces sexual difference illustrates the closeness of these two positions. Her over-riding premise that sexual difference is a non-hierarchical and non-oppositional relational framework of connection should secure this position. Where Irigaray's framework of sexual difference and the interval diverges from (and extends) 'sexual differing' and its Deleuzian/New Materialist position, is its refusal to deny the specificity of the female (and male) positions, each in their *irreducible relation* to sexual difference itself.

Irigaray argues this irreducible difference will always require a spacing, a boundary, an interval, whereas New Materialist concepts conjure a less defined subject position. I agree

²²⁶ Dolphijn and van der Tuin, "Sexual Differing", 141. Author's italics.

²²⁷ Judith Butler, "Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*." In *Yale French Studies* 72 2008: 35-49.

²²⁸ In particular, Dolphijn's and van der Tuin's conclusion regarding their 'new' position that 'What we see here is that it is *in* sexual difference that we can find *sexual differing*' is precisely what Irigaray argues. Dolphijn and van der Tuin, "Sexual Differing", 156. Author's italics.

with Irigaray's premise that without this irreducible difference framed by the interval, the specificity of the subject would be lost in a universality or ceaseless becoming, impeding a true enactment of approaching, listening, or relating to the other. This enactment requires the autonomy and agency of the subject in a non-hierarchical and non-oppositional relationship with difference,²²⁹ arrived at through the interval as a place of relation (a relation both to the self and the other). As theorist Emma Jones articulates, Irigaray's conception of place is linked to the becoming of the self:

The sexuate self is in fact a place-in-relation, an emplacing-in-relation: ideally it both is a place and, in a limited way, a sharing of this place with the other ... the existence of the other at once both limits and enables my own becoming.²³⁰

The material-discursive actions and making that constitute this research bring disparate materials together in an activated dialogue of relations. The interval as place is *formed through* these actions and objects, emplacing my own art practice in context with the wider feminist discourse.

3.6 Place and identity – cultural connection

Thinking through the interval as place allows for a connection between identity and culture as co-constitutive elements of the sexuate subject. The artworks made in this research resonate with the work of Chilean artist Cecilia Vicuña, whose practice is embedded with the formality and materiality of the line alongside poetic, social and political considerations.

²²⁹ The philosophical rendition of *différance* coined by Derrida also equates to an interval, and theorises a 'systematic play of differences, of the traces of differences, of the *spacing* by means of which elements are related to each other.' (see Derrida, *Positions*, trans Allan Bass, (Chicago and London: 1981), 27). This is a relational paradigm whereby individual subjects cannot be constituted alone. As Rosalyn Diprose illustrates, Derrida's definition of being cannot be constituted without a production of an interval or a difference between the self and the other. No self-present identity, no relation to Being, is generated without this relation to the other. (see Rosalyn Diprose, *Coporeal Generosity*, (New York: SUNY, 2002), 7.

²³⁰ Emma R. Jones, "Finding/Founding Our Place: Thinking Luce Irigaray's Ontology and Ethics of Sexuate Difference as a Relational Limit," in *Building a New World, Luce Irigaray Teaching II*, (eds) Luce Irigaray and Michael Marder, (London and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), 17.

Vicuña's work moulds an intersubjective relationship with Indigenous Andean knowledge and culture. Her practice is multidisciplinary, exploring sculpture, poetry, film, performance, sound and political activism. Borne out of the modernist tradition of abstraction that had been dominant in a number of South American countries from the 1940s,²³¹ Vicuña worked against the grain, developing a unique personal interpretation of this tradition.

Through an embodied practice of poetry and performance in the landscape, which she describes as 'a camaraderie between threads and words',²³² Vicuña has for decades carried out performative actions and installations in the natural environment, in the urban landscape and in gallery and social spaces.²³³ During the 1980s and 1990s Vicuña made a series of installation works, radical in their simplicity and precariousness, involving a single thread tied to a number of rocks or trees. Articulating a network or a mapping of relationship and communication between the natural forms, this 'trail of communication',²³⁴ continued her emphasis on the line as a medium of connection. This research focuses on her series of *Quipu's* - objects, installations and actions that utilise the metaphor of the ancient Andean record keeping device of the same name.

A *quipu* (*knot* in Quechua language) is a series of knots along a rope or multiple ropes, that records information. Used for counting and making calculations in ancient times, it contains an intricate, material system not unlike an abacus. Lengths of twine hang vertically, tied with knots that record numbers and sequences, facilitating calculations. The spacing of the vertical cords and their subsidiaries, and the type of knots used on them, signifies different

²³¹ Geometric abstraction emerged in Venezuela and Argentina from the 1940s, Arte Concreta and then Neo-Concretism in Brazil from the 1950s and other centres of abstraction included Uruguay and Venezuela. See also page 108.

²³² Cecilia Vicuña, *The Artist as Poet*, performance/presentation at Trades Hall, Melbourne, October 6, 2016.

²³³ Recently Cecilia Vicuña has performed in Melbourne, Australia in *The Artist as Poet*, performance/presentation at Trades Hall, Melbourne, October 6, 2016, and at West Space, Melbourne in *Why Listen to Animals – Beast Language*, October 7, 2016.

²³⁴ Catherine de Zegher, "Cecilia Vicuña's Ouvrage: knot a not, notes as knots," in *Generations & Geographies in the Visual Arts, Feminist Readings*, ed Griselda Pollock, (London, NY: Routledge, 1996), 198.

numerical values. A range of colours further carries additional information. Vicuña appropriates the quipu to tell stories and make meaning that invokes silent histories, memories and dimensions of the present. She has made a number of *Quipus*. The first, made in 1965, was titled *El quipu que no recuerda nada* (the quipu which remembers nothing). The title is significant, proposes Catherine de Zegher, as it provides ‘the opportunity of finite inscription since the ‘inscribed’ is never fixed’.²³⁵ The information held in any given sequence on a quipu is easily changed through the untying, and retying of new knots, in different locations, in different quantities. The medium is temporal, and as a metaphor for relations and connecting through culture speaks to the transience of place and the need for communication anew in each iteration. The material and conceptual synthesis of Vicuña’s quipus resonate through this research in their linear forms, embodied materiality and relational interaction.



Image 42 Cecilia Vicuña, *Quipu Austral*, 2012, installation view. 18th Biennale Of Sydney, Cockatoo Island, 2012. Photo by Caroline Phillips.

²³⁵ De Zegher, “Cecilia Vicuña’s Ouvrage”, p208.

Vicuña's quipus have utilised rope, felt, wool and other textiles. *Quipu Austral*, shown at the Biennale of Sydney in 2012, deploys a dense stream of wool skeins hanging down from the ceiling. Each textile drop is coloured with rich natural pigments of earthy red and ochre tones, in dialogue with the colours of Australian Indigenous culture. Installed in the timber Drying Store at Cockatoo Island, the open-ness of the wooded slatted walls allowed free circulation of air, enabling an interaction with the remnants of old wool still in situ. The swathes of colour swaying in the breeze call to mind a Nepalese temple, with its prayer flags billowing in the wind. The thin lines of a traditional quipu have given way to large, chunky lengths of wool, with a single casual knot securing each line at the beams.

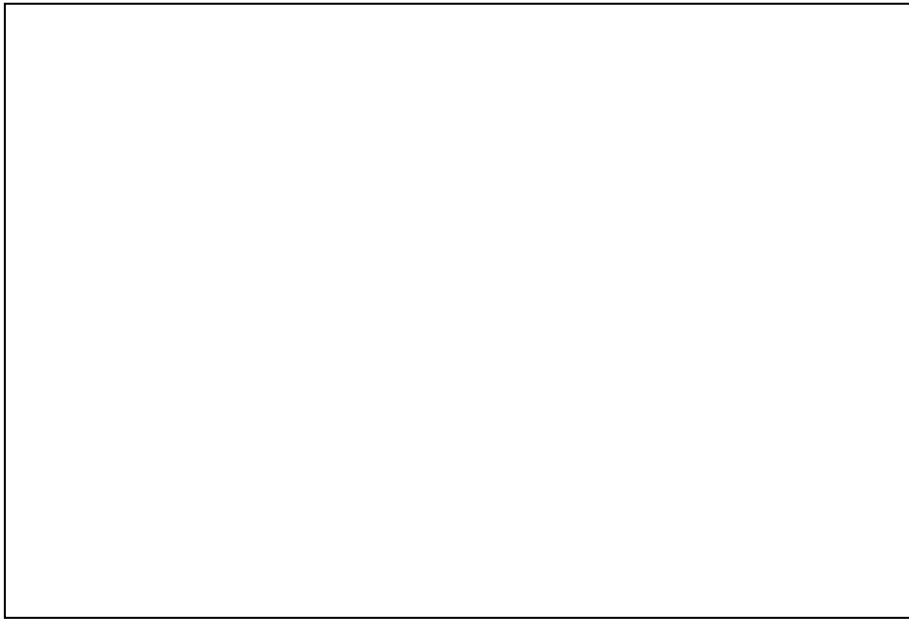


Image 43 Cecilia Vicuña, *Quipu Menstrual*, Participatory Action Centro Cultural Palacio De La Moneda, Santiago De Chile, November 17, 2006. *Image has been removed due to copyright restrictions.*

More recently, Vicuña has made *Quipu Menstrual*. Using a deep red fleece to symbolise the flow of blood, this work draws on archetypal 'mother earth' symbology and art as activism to protest the Chilean government's decision to sell land containing important glaciers to a

multinational mining company.²³⁶ First enacted atop a glacial mountain peak (on an election day in January 2006), the work was installed later that year in Santiago's Centro Cultural Palacio de La Moneda. Groups of women performed with the long strands outside the gallery, carrying the 'blood of the glaciers' in their hands.²³⁷

Recalling Hester's participatory actions with long bronze rods, both artists engage with environmental concerns. Vicuña's practice, however, forges additional links with her specific cultural background through the history of the *quipu* and the symbology of the feminine. These multivalent lines of connection and relation enact intervals of relation through the activation of objects, materials and place. This work emerged as important to the research in delineating a material and process based practice that deploys strongly minimalist form in a relational way. I saw a connection with the linear and hanging forms of my own work, and the connection to a wider social and cultural discourse. Although not commonly designated as feminist, the knots of this *quipu* work carry information, culture and meaning across time, an interval in history connecting past and present in a materially charged way. The transient nature and materiality of these contemporary quipus recall for me Irigaray's call to face each encounter with the other anew, in a sexuate culture of the interval as place-in-relation.

3.7 Project 4: *Technopia Tours Feminist Art Bus*

Activating place as an iteration of the interval was enacted through the curatorial project *The Technopia Tours Feminist Art Bus*.²³⁸ For this collaborative 'workshop on wheels' *Technopia Tours*²³⁹ was commissioned by *The f Word*²⁴⁰ to stage a discursive, material event

²³⁶ Further details and images about this work are available online at: <http://www.quipumenstrual.cl/>

²³⁷ Cecilia Vicuña, *A menstrual Quipu, The Blood of the Glaciers Journal*, http://www.ceciliavicuna.org/en_exhibition.htm

²³⁸ Co-curated by Kim Donaldson and Caroline Phillips, held in Melbourne, Australia on International Women's Day, March 8, 2014.

²³⁹ *Technopia Tours* was founded by Kim Donaldson. Further information can be found at: http://www.performingmobilities.net/symposium/passages_mobile/technopia-tours-working-melbourne/

to celebrate International Women's Day (2014) in Melbourne, Australia. The event was designed for local feminist artists as a workshop/art event to capture and interrogate the current moment in contemporary feminist practice. Within the relational methodology of this research, the project constituted a situated, discursive, material and active dialogue amongst peers, a platform for others to speak and be heard, and an opportunity for feminist art to be visible across the city.



Image 44 *Technopia Tours Feminist Art Bus*, 2014, preparing to board, St Kilda Rd, Melbourne. Photo by Kate Robertson.

Conceived by Kim Donaldson, *Technopia Tours* explores the phenomena of tourism as a platform for art practice through material encounters: the action of movement and travelling; a guided (curated) journey of 'must see' sights and experiences; expectations of leisure and enjoyment; seeing new things; mixing with new people; experiencing cultural sites and events. Enacted through the embodied and performative experience of a guided tour group, *Technopia Tours* requires all participants to wear 'universal orange' safety vests and jackets. On the *Technopia Tours Feminist Art Bus* the jackets were embroidered with

²⁴⁰ See Chapter one for full details of *The f Word* projects.

particular titles such as ‘art lover’, ‘curator’, ‘photographer’, ‘critic’, ‘driver’ and ‘feminist’. The jackets, along with other elements of *Technopia Tours* branding, create an aesthetic of the everyday in the generic urban city. For *The f Word* project, with the exhibition component of the project still in development phase at that time, the *Technopia Tours Feminist Art Bus* became a way to activate and generate ideas, enriching the project in a wider relational context.

Thirteen artists and/or curators were commissioned to make work, speak or perform on the bus and at particular bus ‘stops’,²⁴¹ to an audience of around forty artists and art world ‘tourists’. The participants selected for the curated program throughout the tour encompassed a multi-generational approach and a range of theoretical and political positions. Six speakers were invited to talk about their experiences of being a feminist artist and why feminism was vital to their art practice.²⁴² During a stop at Technopark studios in Williamstown, Elvis Richardson gave a CoUNTess lecture on the under-representation of women in contemporary art exhibitions and galleries in Australia,²⁴³ while at the conclusion of the bus tour Kate Just led an artists’ walk through the night club district in Melbourne’s CBD (where a number of attacks on women had recently taken place) with her knitted banners declaring HOPE and SAFE. Other events included performances,²⁴⁴ short talks and guided visits to cultural sites such as *The Great Petition* sculpture by Penelope Lee and Susan Hewitt (2008). This work was commissioned for the one hundredth anniversary of women

²⁴¹ The artists were Inez de Vega, Kalinda Vary and Ebony Gulliver. Talks were presented by Laura Castagnini, Lyndal Jones, Dot Kett, Vicky Kinai, Justine Makdessi, Nat Thomas, Elvis Richardson, Susan Hewitt, Penelope Lee and an art walk was conducted by Kate Just.

²⁴² Six short talks on the bus were given by Laura Castagnini, Lyndal Jones, Dot Kett, Vicky Kinai, Justine Makdessi and Nat Thomas.

²⁴³ See <http://countesses.blogspot.com.au/> and <http://www.thecountessreport.com.au/>

²⁴⁴ Two performances on the bus itself included Inez de Vega performing in the guise of Lillian Temple-Dumble (renowned art critic) and Kalinda Vary and Ebony Gulliver performing high tea, sharing a menu of feminist delights baked by the artists themselves.

obtaining the vote in the State of Victoria, and commemorates the 30,000 women's signatures collected in 1891 by local suffragettes²⁴⁵



Image 45 *Technopia Tours Feminist Art Bus*, 2014, at the Great Petition Sculpture by Penelope Lee and Susan Hewitt, Melbourne. Photo by Kate Robertson.

The *Technopia Tours Feminist Art Bus* toured the popular gallery district of Melbourne's CBD, but also ventured further afield over the West Gate Bridge to the inner West of Melbourne. Passing street art sites and an oil refinery, this specific aspect of Melbourne (in its marginalised Western suburbs) engaged beyond the mainstream commodified art spaces of the city and inner suburbs. This Western orientation enacted an alternate polylogue of voices and experiences, in a shared space, yet respecting difference. The situated experience of our location, our local conditions, and our chosen targeted issues for discussion, conjoined in an active, vibrant moment of material-discursive exchange. Our relational identities as feminist artists were formed and informed by the collaborative actions and collective energy materialised in that space and time, in that place.

²⁴⁵ *The Great Petition* sculpture by Penelope Lee and Susan Hewitt (2008), Burston Reserve, Melbourne. Further details available at: <https://au.pinterest.com/pin/374080312772317072/>



Image 46 Caroline Phillips and Kim Donaldson, tour leaders on the *Technopia Tours Feminist Art Bus*, 2014, Melbourne. Photo by Kate Robertson.

The *Technopia Tours Feminist Art Bus* activated the interactive place of matter, ideas, practice and theory. The dynamic atmosphere of sound, movement, colour and materiality provided an environment of intense encounter. The holding space of the bus itself suspended a moment in time, generated ideas, forged connections and created knowledge through the framework of art practice. The energy of multiple voices, objects and images was rendered as an experiential event, capturing a sense of collectivity, yet each within their own situated conditions. Utilising the social and collective experience of travelling in the bus and employing different modes of ‘doing feminism’, this project enacted a relational place. This place of intra-activity recalls Barad’s spacetime-mattering, where ‘the past, the present and the future are always being reworked’.²⁴⁶

The event/moment of the bus tour (re)enacted, in some ways, the consciousness-raising events of the Women’s Movement. A shared interest in feminism in the current post-global

²⁴⁶ Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin, “Matter feels, converses, suffers, desires, yearns and remembers” in *New Materialism: Interviews and Cartographies*, Open Humanities Press, 2012., unpaginated.

condition, however, does not ensure a pre-determined or universal feminist aesthetic or agenda is in place. Nonetheless, what was shared is a collective power and engagement that emanated from the material interactions and connections between us, and an intensity of experience on the day, on the tour. We collectively articulated a place of feminist art. Theorist and researcher Angela Dimitrakaki finds that the current resurgence in feminist collectives and collaborative practice is different from earlier iterations, that grew out of a more generalised social movement. In her study of post-global feminist collectives' responses to economic conditions of power, privilege and exploitation, Dimitrakaki argues that today's feminist collectivity stems from localised conditions, and focuses on 'embodied, lived struggle'.²⁴⁷ This type of situated response is foregrounded throughout this research. As Ellyse Mallouk outlines, Jacques Rancière argues for such a collective power as an 'aesthetics of distance', where 'the discrepancies in the ways individuals make meaning is the very thing that bonds them.'²⁴⁸ Rather than a universality of common experience, for Rancière the shared power of collective exchange is 'tied to an irreconcilable distance among people.'²⁴⁹ He writes:

The collective power shared by spectators does not stem from the fact that they are members of a collective body or from some specific form of interactivity. It is the power each of them has to translate what she perceives in her own way, to link it to the unique intellectual adventure that makes her similar to all the rest in as much as this adventure is not like any other.²⁵⁰

This adventure was enacted in the *Technopia Tours Feminist Art Bus*, forming and informing our individual and collective sense of place that is the interval.

²⁴⁷ Angela Dimitrakaki, *Gender, artwork and the global imperative*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 209-246., 241.

²⁴⁸ Mallouk, *The Generous Object*, 60-1.

²⁴⁹ Mallouk, *The Generous Object*, 61.

²⁵⁰ Jacques Rancière, quoted in Mallouk, *The Generous Object*, 61.



Image 47 *Technopia Tours Feminist Art Bus*, 2014, Melbourne. Photo by Kate Robertson.

3.8 Conclusion to Chapter 3

I have argued in this chapter that the interval as *place* is a locus of energy, intensity, vibrancy and active matter. Within this place, the relational subject - the sexed subject - emerges in the inter-relationship between form and matter. The interval has been discussed as a place of differentiation, co-relation and collectivity, where the forces of matter and energy elaborate difference and specificity through repetition, multiplicity and material exchange. This modality of the interval intersects with New Materialist feminisms, yet differs from them in its focus on the primacy of the sexed (sexuate) subject.

The artworks discussed in this chapter have emerged through this active, material exchange. Forms and processes of art making enact entanglements of repetition and haptic form that foreground the inter-connectedness of form and matter. In the context of Irigaray's interval

of sexual difference, the undifferentiated repetition of a Deleuzian framework is insufficient to enact a true sexuate relation. This research draws on aspects of both New Materialism and the framework of the interval to propose a co-relationality of material conditions through the situated conditions of culture and environment, the conditions of place.

Two curatorial projects have been discussed that engage with the interval as an intense place of collectivity and inter-relationship. The *Topologies of Sexual Difference* exhibition brought together disparate interpretations of Irigaray's thinking with contemporary art practice, cementing the potential for the interval as a relational framework for the research. *The Technopia Tours Feminist Art Bus* similarly brought people, ideas and art making processes together, yet in a moving, active, localised response to contemporary feminist conditions, that speaks to the specificity of place as a marker of sexuate identity. Artworks by Bianca Hester and Cecilia Vicuña were brought into this discussion of the interval as place, in their engagement with material and connective lines of enquiry and their deployment of the minimalist object in the service of a relational practice.

The interval as place is a vital locus of the interval of sexual difference. For Irigaray, it is the site that sustains the irreducible difference between the one and the other. Residing *in place* together, as the goal of an ethical world, would then depend on our relations with the others who share this space with us, and our relationship to our *own* place in the world. Art's capacity to uncover, reflect and enlighten might yet prove to open up new possibilities for living in place. Whilst this chapter has explored the place of the interval between one and the other, Chapter four will shift the focus to the interval as a relational place within ourselves and our sexuate becoming, crossing barriers of space and time through the interval as threshold.

Chapter 4 - Re-imagining the interval – a threshold across space and time

“Perhaps we are passing through an era when *time must redeploy space*? A new morning of and for the world? A remaking of immanence and transcendence, notably through this *threshold* which has never been examined as such: the female sex.”

Luce Irigaray²⁵¹

4.1 Introduction to Chapter 4

Building on the physical separation and specificity (of the interval as space) explored in Chapter two, and the intensity and co-relations of reconfigured matter and form in Chapter three (the interval as place), this final chapter explores the fully elaborated sexuate self (to come) as the *possibility* of meaningful relation and becoming, through the interval as threshold. For Irigaray, the interval is the threshold of not only opening oneself to the other, and the unknown possibilities (and risk) that entails, but the threshold to the self. Closely aligned to the interval as place, the threshold of the interval is the border between relations, between the place of the one and the place of the other. For Irigaray, this border must always remain open and in play, enabling the possibility of encounter with the other, in the sexuate relation.²⁵²

Importantly, the interval as threshold is both a material and ontological position, that Irigaray terms the ‘sensible transcendental’.²⁵³ Each sex is articulated in relation to the other via the ‘sensible phenomena’, embodied through the physical incarnations of women and men.²⁵⁴ Concurrently, this threshold is beyond the material plane, a threshold *between* form

²⁵¹ Irigaray, *An Ethics*, 18.

²⁵² Irigaray, *An Ethics*, 49.

²⁵³ Irigaray, *An Ethics*, 32.

²⁵⁴ Hill, *The Interval*, 66.

and matter, as such it is open to relations that do not have being,²⁵⁵ including relations of time and space. Beginning with a rewriting of our subject positions (both male and female), our relations and our discourses (including art), Irigaray argues:

in order to make it possible to think through, and live, this difference, we must reconsider the whole problematic of *space* and *time*.²⁵⁶

Through the exploration of spatio-temporal intervals, this chapter explores the question 'In what ways can artmaking create meaningful thresholds of sexual difference?'

Irigaray conjures a heterogeneous space-time that is manifested through encounters amongst sexed subjects.²⁵⁷ Homogenous space/time reinforces the singular repetitions of fixed identities²⁵⁸ and preconceived (hierarchical) relations. In contrast, Irigaray's conception of heterogenous, sexed space and time emerges from a relational co-habitation of subjects, where 'space and time are continuously differentiating inter-dependent relations'²⁵⁹ through the threshold of the interval. This threshold is explored in her work through spatial metaphors such as the bridge, the passage, the abyss, the speculum, the placenta and the envelope. The connections and relations that take place in the interval are not fixed and have a spatial and temporal capacity, open to (re)iteration anew at each juncture.

Beyond representing these modes of the interval as metaphor, this research positions Irigaray's concept as a framework for a material-discursive art practice, embodied in and through the interval as threshold. As such, the artworks discussed in this chapter engage in aspects of temporality, spatial installation and the provisional. This threshold of possibility

²⁵⁵ Hill, *The Interval*, 87.

²⁵⁶ Irigaray, *An Ethics*, 7. And see Luce Irigaray, *I Love to You : Sketch of a Possible Felicity in History*, trans. Alison Martin (New York: Routledge, 1996).

²⁵⁷ Peg Rawes, *Irigaray for Architects*, Thinkers for Architects series, (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 83.

²⁵⁸ Rawes, *Irigaray for Architects*, 83.

²⁵⁹ Rawes, *Irigaray for Architects*, 83.

links feminist generations and contexts through two collaborative curatorial projects; *f generation: feminism, art, progressions* (2015)²⁶⁰ and *AS IF: Echoes of the Women's Art Register* (2015).²⁶¹ Both these collaborative curatorial projects materialise feminist discourse past and present, engendering a sexuate culture. Art objects discussed in this chapter emerge from these spatio/temporal projects and consider the entwining of sexed bodies, space and time. Firstly, though, they investigate the threshold of the (female) self, recalling Irigaray's call to 'return to the first threshold.'

4.2 Woman as threshold– the first relation

For Irigaray, the problem that precipitates this need for change is that, at present, woman is constituted in patriarchy as irrational, passive, unstable and excessive (space). This makes her, therefore, formless and 'other' to man's configuration as rational, singular, complete and active (time). There is no definition of the feminine in patriarchal structures of philosophy, culture and power, argues Irigaray:

We lack, we women with a sex of our own, a God in which to share, a word / language to share and to become. Defined as the often obscure, not to say hidden, mother-substance of the word / language of men, we lack our subject, our noun, our verb, our predicates: our elementary sentence, our basic rhythm, our morphological identity, our generic incarnation, our genealogy.²⁶²

These negative notions of woman as place have been engendered in metaphysics since Aristotle, argues Irigaray, as the passive container and receptacle for man. Within this paradigm, woman is subsequently constituted as a container (or envelope) for man to

²⁶⁰ *f generation: feminism, art, progressions*, curated by Veronica Caven Aldous, Dr Juliette Peers and Caroline Phillips, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, October 7 – 17, 2015.

²⁶¹ *AS IF: Echoes of the Women's Art Register*, West Space, Melbourne, October 2 – November 7, 2015. Co-curated with Dr Juliette Peers, Stephanie Leigh, Kalinda Vary, Emily Castle and Danielle Hakim.

²⁶² Irigaray, from Luce Irigaray, *Sexes et Parentés*, quoted in Margaret Whitford, *The Irigaray Reader*, (Oxford, UK and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995), 141

realise *his* identity. Hence woman has no *place* of her own.²⁶³ A possible solution requires going back to the category of woman, finding the place of woman.

Irigaray develops a twofold response to this restrictive history, formulated through the concept of interval as a threshold. First, woman must reconfigure place as *her* place, through defining her own language, her own culture and her own body. Her place then becomes a site of multiple relations, constituted through the sexed difference, the specificity, of a woman's body. While man has one sexual external organ, the penis, through which his sexed subjectivity evolves, women has the biological formulation of two (the labia, or two lips), which mediate relations both internally and externally. As such, Irigaray argues, woman have multiple points of relation and exchange, through the lips, the mucous and other open places of her body; a threshold that is always *half-open*.²⁶⁴ The mucous is important as a threshold medium, in its mobility and interface between the inside and the outside, and between the two. Irigaray aligns it to the angel, as a symbol of 'that which unceasingly *passes through the envelope(s) or (containers)*, goes from one side to the other, reworking every deadline, changing every decision, thwarting all representation.'²⁶⁵

The second means to reconfigure the historically negative designation of women that Irigaray posits, is that place can also be engendered through the relation between two, the ethical relation of a sexuate culture to come. The task for women, then, is firstly to retrieve their *own* place, outside of the patriarchal economy that places her as the space/container for man.²⁶⁶ To do this, she must imagine and constitute this place, through a return to a *self-*

²⁶³ Irigaray outlines this complex problem in "Sexual Difference", in *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*.

²⁶⁴ Irigaray, *An Ethics*, 18.

²⁶⁵ Irigaray, *An Ethics*, 15. Irigaray goes on to say of angels: "Angels destroy the monstrous, that which hampers the possibility of a new age; they come to herald the arrival of a new birth, a new morning", *An Ethics*, 15.

²⁶⁶ Irigaray, *An Ethics*, 11.

relation that exists within herself, 're-enveloping herself with herself',²⁶⁷ which would 'presuppose a change in the whole economy of space-time'.²⁶⁸ Woman's task is to constitute her own specificity individually and 'on her own terms'.²⁶⁹ Then, Irigaray calls, women need to imagine, create, express and foster this relation, through relations with others in the world.²⁷⁰

Women already have this capacity, argues Irigaray, through the concept of the *maternal feminine*. The first encounter is the relation with the mother, what Irigaray terms the 'first constituting relation'.²⁷¹ We all are born from this relation, regardless of our sex, and the relation with the mother via the placenta becomes the first threshold, or interval, of relations. However, the maternal relation is much more than a purely biological reproductive process. For Irigaray, the 'placental economy' is an active, haptic process of differentiation that operates through fluid rhythms and interactions, in a self-regulating process that is continually open to change.²⁷² It is also an ontological space of in-between, shared between two and at the same time the condition of the relation between them, where otherness emerges. Therefore, space and time are reconfigured here, 'shaped by the spatio-temporal rhythms of a fluid and active matter.'²⁷³

The work *enmeshed*²⁷⁴ addresses this prediscursive realm of touch and interconnectivity within the maternal relation, a phenomenological and ontological site of sexual difference. Four walls are painted pink and covered with a network of black, rubber, octopus straps. The soft pink tone acts as a fleshy, almost primordial shade to reference skin and the womb.

²⁶⁷ Irigaray, *An Ethics*, 11.

²⁶⁸ Irigaray, *An Ethics*, 11.

²⁶⁹ Rachel Jones, *Vital Matters and Generative Materiality*, 159.

²⁷⁰ Irigaray, *An Ethics*, 9-11.

²⁷¹ Irigaray, *Sharing the world*, 74.

²⁷² Irigaray, *This Sex Which is Not One*, Chapter 2, 'This Sex Which is Not One' and Chapter 6, 'The Mechanics of Fluids'.

²⁷³ Rachel Jones, *Vital Matters and Generative Materiality*, 162.

²⁷⁴ *Enmeshed*, Craft, Melbourne, March 8 - April 27, 2013.

In Rudolph Steiner education, this shade is used for painting classrooms in early primary years to provide a 'holding space' for the very young child, to nurture and comfort them. *enmeshed* positions the threshold of the maternal feminine as the first relation²⁷⁵ - a phenomenological and ontological encounter - rendered through the materiality and embodied processes embedded in the work.



Image 48 Caroline Phillips, *enmeshed*, installation view. Craft, Melbourne. Photo by Catherine Evans.

In *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, Irigaray engages with phenomenology through a critique of Merleau-Ponty's *The Visible and the Invisible*. Irigaray argues that Merleau-Ponty's text privileges the visual, hence relegating other senses to an implied (feminised) negativity.²⁷⁶ Following the logic that the uterine experience of warmth, moisture, softness, kinaesthesia and sound all come before vision and language, then it is touch, Irigaray argues, that is the

²⁷⁵ This is not to say that all females need to be mothers to realise this place. It is the place we all have come *from*, and a *potential* that women have (to (re)enact this relation again), that men do not, that differentiates men from women.

²⁷⁶ Irigaray, *Ethics*, 134.

origin of meaning, through the specificity of the body.²⁷⁷ In *enmeshed*, the site specific installation responds to the overt and nuanced features of the room, such as a hidden door and a bench seat, that interrupt the audience's interaction within the space. Carolyn Barnes argues in the exhibition catalogue essay that this work 'addresses us as political subjects, challenging us to consider the gendered ideologies invested in cultural practices'.²⁷⁸ The bold expanse of pink and black pattern suggests more than a design intention. The liminal space of the walls in *enmeshed* and their surface treatment may also act as a trigger of the co-existent relation between the material, psychological and ontological self. As Diana Coole concludes, 'the phenomenological task is to show how consciousness emerges from, yet remains enmeshed in, this material world.'²⁷⁹



Image 49 Caroline Phillips, *enmeshed*, installation view. Craft, Melbourne. Photo by Catherine Evans.

²⁷⁷ Irigaray, *Ethics*, 135.

²⁷⁸ Carolyn Barnes, *enmeshed* catalogue essay, (Melbourne: Craft, 2013).

²⁷⁹ Diana Coole, "The Inertia of Matter and the Generativity of Flesh", in Diana H. Coole & Samantha Frost (eds.), *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*. (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2010), 92-115, 101.

It is the material and relational nature of being and becoming that Irigaray wants to redefine, outside of Merleau-Ponty's hierarchical and phallogentric symbolic system of feminine/masculine, interior/exterior and subject/object. *enmeshed* opens up possible questions to explore the corporeal body and its relationships with the other, through a haptic relationship to space and materials. Rendered through the skin colour of the wall, and heightened by the clinging black forms, the porous border between our internal and external selves becomes palpable. The process of multiplying, stretching and hooking the black lengths of rubber in part suggests porousness and pliability and the question, could one could penetrate and pass through this threshold space?

The pattern on the wall prompts the image of a wire mesh fence, cementing the sense of a physical barrier, or limit. Yet this physical limit potentially enables transfer and exchange between its two sides. Gaps and spaces in the fence-like walls allow for open-ness and change. While the tense octopus straps hold down this barrier, it's a temporary containment, poised for quick release. Through an embodied gallery space, the fluid, swelling, sagging and bulging octopus straps in *enmeshed* enact a rhythmic linear pattern that is uniform and regulated, yet remaining open to alterations akin to Merleau-Ponty's durable field of repeatable patterns.²⁸⁰

The maternal relation as an interval or threshold does not reproduce the same; it is the condition for the emergence of difference. It affirms lived experience and multiple identities to be present and in relation, yet is open to the ontological 'beyond' of the limits of the body. This discursive material threshold constitutes a shift from a representational expression of a singular or universal subjectivity, to a widening relation with the exterior world, the world of others, as Irigaray ascribes in *Elemental Passions*:

²⁸⁰ Lisa Guenther, "Merleau-Ponty and the Sense of Sexual Difference", *Angelaki* 16, no.2 (2011): 15., 26.

But others are open for you. And this bodily dwelling in which you can move or rest is not enclosed. It unfolds around you as you move, without need to search for windows or doors. You are not stopped by an opaque wall. The world belongs to us – does not belong to us. We live in it in all its width and breadth and in all its dimensions.²⁸¹

Rachel Jones elaborates on the generative potential of Irigaray's maternal relation, as 'the conjoined conditions of human beings, coming to be'.²⁸² She writes:

If sexuate difference is the dissymmetrical differing that allows new beings to be generated, maternal relation is the primary relation that makes all other relations possible. Sexuate difference and maternal relation are thus co-constituents of a generative and relational ontology, in which relations (the in-between as the articulation of difference) are ontologically prior to the beings they constitute.²⁸³

For Rachel Jones, this means that the maternal relation moves beyond 'hypostatizing "the mother" as origin',²⁸⁴ instead foregrounding the generative relationship (of difference) between the two, via the interval.

Exploring the specificity of woman beyond the maternal feminine relation, Irigaray develops her concept of the *sensible transcendental*.²⁸⁵ This is a further instance of the interval, where the interval becomes a 'corporeal and transcendental threshold'.²⁸⁶ Both a material embodiment and a link to the divine, this merging of the previously binarized sensible and transcendental realms challenges a preconceived oppositional framework. The divine, in this case, does not necessarily designate theology. At times, Irigaray does link the divine

²⁸¹ Irigaray, *Elemental Passions*, 68.

²⁸² Rachel Jones, *Vital Matters and Generative Materiality*, 159.

²⁸³ Rachel Jones, *Vital Matters and Generative Materiality*, 159.

²⁸⁴ Rachel Jones, *Vital Matters and Generative Materiality*, 160.

²⁸⁵ Irigaray, *An Ethics*, reveals the earliest usage of this term, in Chapters 1, 8 and 9, through which the concept develops different layers of meaning.

²⁸⁶ Hill, *The Interval*, 86.

(interval) directly to God,²⁸⁷ however at other times it equates to desire,²⁸⁸ mystery,²⁸⁹ or to wonder.²⁹⁰ It is embodied in the flesh, not just as sex or reproduction, but in the processes of becoming and relation. Regardless which possible path is taken (to the Divine), the *sensible transcendental* is the condition from which transformation is possible, entwining the corporeal body with a future possible that is unknowable.

The body in its corporeal reality is extremely important to Irigaray's concept of the sensible transcendental. Its maternal base (the *maternal feminine*) and subsequent generative potential is the unacknowledged debt to patriarchy. Hence, the link between women and nature needs to be restored as a priority in the sexuate culture to come. As key Irigaray translator Margaret Whitford explains:

What links god, language, and woman is the idea of becoming. And god and language are both defined in terms of house or habituation for dwelling. What is needed for women then is a habitation that does not contain or imprison them. Instead of an invisible prison which keeps them captive, a habitation in which they can grow is the condition of becoming, and of becoming divine. The sensible transcendental is a divine whose advent is still ahead of us.²⁹¹

For Irigaray, framing the embodied subject in time *and* space, beginning with the subject woman, reconfigures the phallogentric mode of metaphysical operations to date and retrieves the (effaced) position of woman. Previously metaphysics has corralled space and time into separate (gendered) corners. Irigaray's formulation of the *sensible transcendental* creates the horizon of an alternate future that recognises the sexed nature of the female

²⁸⁷ There are many instances when Irigaray discusses God in her texts. In relation to the Interval and to women's potential to find her place, in particular, see Chapter One of *An Ethics*. For a detailed study see Morny Joy's *Divine Love: Luce Irigaray, Women, Gender, and Religion* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006); and Gail M. Schwab's "Beyond the Vertical and the Horizontal; Spirituality, Space and Alterity in the Work of Luce Irigaray" in Rawlinson, Mary C., Hom, Sabrina L., and Khader, Serene J., (eds.) *SUNY Series in Gender Theory, Thinking with Irigaray*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2011).

²⁸⁸ Irigaray, *An Ethics*, 7.

²⁸⁹ Irigaray, *The Way of Love*, 169.

²⁹⁰ Irigaray, *An Ethics*, 72-82.

²⁹¹ Margaret Whitford, *Philosophy in the Feminine*, (New York: Routledge, 1991). 47.

and male subject positions, in a mobile sexuate culture. The hinge of spacio-temporality is the locus from where this movement takes place, reframing the ontological status of being through the porous, fluidity of the material relation.

4.3 Core properties

Aside from the maternal feminine function of woman as mother, as place for the embryo, for Irigaray woman is also place for herself.²⁹² She embodies multiple sexed modalities that can enable her to articulate her place, through her sex organs. Unlike a passive, closed vessel that is portrayed as the subjugated female form in phallogentric philosophy, for Irigaray, women's open and dilating cervix, vagina and labia, and her breasts, carry rhythms and flows of fluid, mucous, blood and sexual pleasure. This mobile and active *ground* of woman is the effaced ground of man's phallogentric anxiety (of castration).²⁹³ Women's ability to make space for herself and to create her own world is a foundational concept in Irigaray's writing, characterised eloquently by Emma Jones as 'the task of ... both finding and *founding* our own places'.²⁹⁴ Jones adds:

Whereas the place of the other is never wholly accessible to me, it is by taking into account this limit that I find my place, my arché of motion, my sexuate accomplishment.²⁹⁵

For Irigaray, this task requires a 'passing back through the original definition of place',²⁹⁶ a 'revisiting' of the place of the self, in order to make visible the source of becoming and the self in relation.²⁹⁷ This is important work, because woman has been made invisible by patriarchy.

²⁹² Hill, *The Interval*, 59.

²⁹³ Hill, *The Interval*, 63.

²⁹⁴ Emma R. Jones, "Finding/Founding Our Place", 19-20.

²⁹⁵ Emma R. Jones, "Finding/Founding Our Place", 17.

²⁹⁶ Irigaray, *An Ethics*, 37.

²⁹⁷ Emma R. Jones, "Finding/Founding Our Place", 17.

This interval of sexuate difference is more than a biological function, it is a material and conceptual threshold of potential and becoming, that is closely linked to duration and time. Ewa Plonowska Ziarek outlines this link between female morphology and time, seen in *Irigaray's Ethics of Sexual Difference*, through her discussion of the female morphology of the mucous and the two lips (Irigaray's terms)²⁹⁸ and the 'temporalisation of touch.'²⁹⁹ In what she names as the 'radical female imaginary', the fluidity and porosity of the female morphology is expressed by the mucous that travels and flows (over time) between the internal and external body,³⁰⁰ an effect of the temporal structure of becoming.³⁰¹ This open-ness to time and space (the outside) is argued by Irigaray as an alternative to the closed and fixed parameters imposed on the feminine by metaphysics. It also demonstrates, for Irigaray, the inseparability of the material body from the ontological state of becoming (in the future), articulated as a threshold of becoming.

Often occurring/(re)occurring in women's art making as 'central core' imagery, an important feature of early feminist art was to reclaim the visibility of women through this quintessentially female (vaginal) imagery. The material and ontological co-dependence of the interval as a relational threshold lends itself to new ways of materialising this future return to self (of the feminine). Processes of exploring ways to render this threshold are seen in the work *Untitled Black* (2012).³⁰² Exploring central core imagery through abstraction is not new, however these works seek to move beyond an 'essential' representation towards a material process of relation that speaks to Irigaray's feminine imaginary and relations of becoming.

²⁹⁸ Ewa Plonowska Ziarek, "Toward a Radical Female Imaginary: Temporality and Embodiment in Irigaray's Ethics", in *Diacritics* 28.1 (1998), 60-75., 67.

²⁹⁹ Ewa Plonowska Ziarek, "Toward a Radical Female Imaginary", 67.

³⁰⁰ Ewa Plonowska Ziarek, "Toward a Radical Female Imaginary", 67-8.

³⁰¹ Ewa Plonowska Ziarek, "Toward a Radical Female Imaginary", 67.

³⁰² Shown in the exhibition *Regimes of Value*, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, 2-13.



Image 50 Caroline Phillips, *Untitled Black*, 2012, cyberlox, electrical cord, octopus strap, dimensions variable, installation view, *Regimes of Value*, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, 2013. Photo by Catherine Evans.

The grid and formality that was encountered in *enmeshed* is now relaxed, appearing as a jumbled encounter of intersecting lines, introducing more fluidity and potential for interexchange between the elements. A porous, unevenly shaped and ephemeral ovoid form is rendered via decorative electrical cord and a length of black, tubular, synthetic mesh. Commercially available as 'cyberlox', this material is historically made of horsehair and used by milliners, but is now available in a synthetic crinoline and often appropriated for fake hair extensions and various craft applications. The mesh-like structure has an

inbuilt 'stretch appeal' that affords movement, tension and flexibility. In this work the form is free flowing and determined by the agency of the material, reverberating in a free form spatial arrangement with unlimited possible forms available.

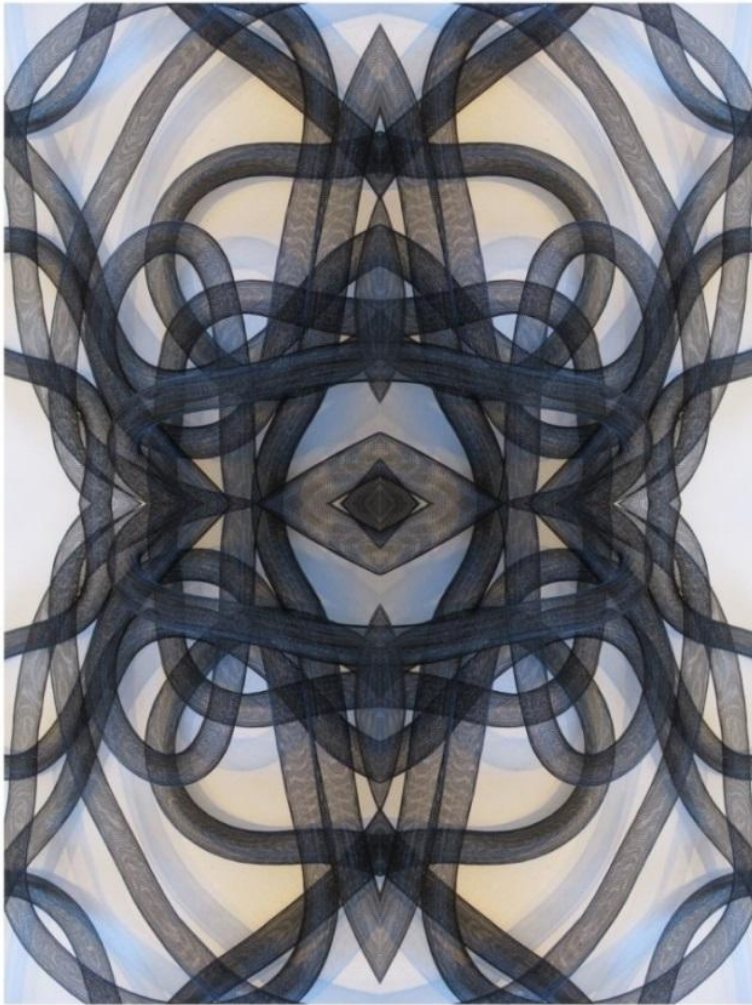


Image 51 Caroline Phillips, *Mesh#2*, 2016, digital photograph, 60x35cm.

The process of taking photographs of the material flowing freely on a table threw up optical effects that produced surprising results. These effects operated as a field of vibrancy and activity that resonated with the materiality of the interval and its threshold to becomings. In 'playing' with other photographic images of this material, the works *Mesh #1*, and *Mesh #2* (2016) resulted.³⁰³ In its free form state, the slinky, slippery cyberlox refuses to hold a fixed

³⁰³ Shown in *Materialising Feminism* exhibition, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, 2016.

shape, amassing in an entanglement of lines and points of intersection and interaction. These points of connection and relation create threshold spaces where new forms are encountered, such as diamond and elliptical shapes. During the photographic process two light sources passing through the material at the same time created a shimmer of effects that appear to be made by a drawing, enhancing its material and tactile properties. *Mesh#2* intensifies the rendering of the interval as a dynamic threshold of relations and a topological figure of the interval. Repeating and inverting the image resulted in the creation of a central void, conceived as a space between beings and things and a place for the (feminine) subject. Through abstraction and mirroring, the pliable and elastic material performs a kind of excess and embellishment, fighting against the limits of 'formlessness' and opening up the question of the invisibility of woman.

Amelia Jones theorises her concept of *queer feminist durationality*³⁰⁴ through the temporality of feminist cunt art (both historical and contemporary) to create new ways of thinking about the complexities of representation and identity in feminist art.³⁰⁵ For Jones, *queer feminist durationality* describes a way of identifying with an image through material affects (that are open to performative and durational understandings) that 'return' the image to process and embodiment.³⁰⁶ Crucially, for Jones, cunt imagery enacts a hole, or gap, that looks back at the viewer and implicates them in an interrelational (non-oppositional) enactment of identification.³⁰⁷ Through this process the subjectivity or identification of the (interpreting) viewer is in relation with the (delayed) subject in/of the

³⁰⁴ Amelia Jones, "Queer Feminist Durationality," in *Seeing Differently, A history and theory of identification and the visual arts*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), see Chapter 5.

³⁰⁶ Amelia Jones, *Seeing Differently*, 172-4.

³⁰⁷ Amelia Jones, *Seeing Differently*. 172.

image, and the material processes of the work of art. Jones hopes that this formulation will allow a move away from fixed, hetero-normative identity politics.³⁰⁸

The concentric waves of fluid movement and energy in *Mesh#2*, along with the doubling and repetition that potentially has no limit, produce a non-normative, multivalent identification of the feminine space. Through its materiality and affects of movement and repetition, and its pulsating forms, it resonates with Jones' *queer feminist durationality*. As Jones argues, in her discussion of Judy Chicago's shiny, metallic *Domes* of 1969:

The central core, then, becomes convex as well as concave. Its spatial oscillation creates an optical confusion and [...] potentially opens itself to a radical relationality.³⁰⁹

This series of works produces a co-extensive relationality between materials, ideas and meanings, in a threshold of identification and becoming that speaks to this 'radical relationality' and to Irigaray's 'return' to the originary subject and the threshold of the interval.

Moving beyond the 'one' to the multiple, two curatorial projects, *AS IF: Echoes of the Women's Art Register* and *f generation: feminism, art, progressions* enact a return/threshold in a wider context. Discussed in the following sections, these collaborative curatorial projects engage with the multiple histories and practices of feminist art in Australia, reconfiguring this past in the present through modes of temporality and relation.

4.4 Project 5: *AS IF: Echoes of the Women's Art Register*

The history of Australian women's art practice was at the centre of the curatorial project *AS IF: Echoes of the Women's Art Register*,³¹⁰ a curated projection program of works from the

³⁰⁸ Others who theorise a queer temporality, for example Sam McBean, are discussed in a later section of this chapter.

³⁰⁹ Amelia Jones, *Seeing Differently*. 185.

archive of the *Women's Art Register*.³¹¹ Functioning as a community based platform of connection, education and archival resource, the *Women's Art Register* has been running in Melbourne, Australia since 1975.³¹² Unique in the world as the longest continuously operating repository of women's art making, the organisation is run by volunteers. Its membership is open to all women who self-identify as artists. On the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the Register's founding (during International Women's Year in 1975), the exhibition traced connections and pathways across four decades of women's art practice in Australia. The purpose of the exhibition was twofold; to showcase the range and quantity of archival material held at the Register, and to demonstrate the breadth of practice undertaken by Australian women artists across multiple generations.

The generational (wave) model of feminism can be problematic. Relying on a singular narrative is limiting, and can set up relationships of hierarchy and competition. This model can prolong the paradox of universalism, whereby the universal category of 'woman' is pitted against the multiplicities of different gender and racial or economic groups. Now becoming outmoded, the generational wave model forever aligns feminism to a linear time

³¹⁰ *AS IF: Echoes of the Women's Art Register*, West Space, Melbourne, October 2 – November 7, 2015. Co-curated by Emily Castle, Danielle Hakim, Stephanie Leigh, Dr Juliette Peers, Caroline Phillips and Kalinda Vary. See Appendix C for the full list of 174 participating artists.

³¹¹ Conceived by Sally Northfield, the exhibition was one part of the overall program *AS IF: 40 years and beyond – Celebrating the Women's Art Register*, August – November, 2015, in conjunction with Melbourne Fringe Festival, 2015. The selection of works for the projection program at West Space was co-curated by Caroline Phillips, Dr Juliette Peers and Stephanie Leigh. The installation team included as above, with Danielle Hakim and Emily Castle. Concurrent with the program at West Space, the *AS IF: Echoes of the Women's Art Register* project included three public events; Art+Feminism Wikipedia Edit-A-Thon, facilitated by Caroline Phillips and Dr Juliette Peers, in conjunction with the State Library of Victoria; *AS IF: Echoes from London*, a performance event written by Holly Ingleton, curated by Laura Castagnini and performed by Eric Demetriou, Sanja Pahoki and Makiko Yamamoto; SLIDENIGHT panel of speakers including, Eleanor Butt, Ross Coulter, Elizabeth Gower, Danielle Hakim, Anne Marsh, Jill Orr and Clare Rae.

³¹² *The Women's Art Register* was founded in Melbourne in 1975 by Lesley Dumbrell, Erica McGilchrist (artists) and Kiffy (Carter) Rubbo and Meredith Rogers (then Directors of the Ewing and George Paton Galleries). It has been designated a 'Collection of National Heritage Significance' by the National Library of Australia and is now housed in the Richmond Library (formerly Carringbush library) in Melbourne's inner east. The Register contains in excess of 20,000 slides and digitised images, an extensive library of catalogues and archival material, and hundreds of artist files. For further information refer to their website: <http://www.womensartregister.org/>.

progression, causing those models of practice that fall outside this 'straight' time signature to be 'othered'.

In her 2016 text *Feminism's Queer Temporalities*, Sam McBean draws together a nuanced argument for an alternate feminist temporality drawing on the asynchronous time of queer theory.³¹³ Using examples from literature, art and popular culture, McBean argues for a 'collective belonging' that comes not from a shared sense of the past, present and future (seen from the same point of view), but rather from a collective experiencing of the dislocating moments and uncertainty of feminism. This research captures this 'collective belonging' through the assemblage of people, ideas, materials and forms. The multivalent moments of feminism are manifested and experienced through the situated experience of the participants (artists and audience), within their singular relationship to material conditions. Harnessed through this relational model, the interval as a threshold is used as a framework to articulate the inter-relationality of feminist art discourses.

The collective experience was embedded in the collaborative curatorial team that produced *AS IF: Echoes of the Women's Art Register*. Many days were spent sifting through thousands of images (via digitised slides and more recent CD's and electronic formats) to program a selection of 444 images, of work by 174 artists. The numerous themes that have come to epitomise feminist art were all present including sexuality, motherhood and family, political activism, feminine aesthetics, psychoanalysis and trauma, social justice and community. Yet each of us came to relate to these moments in time, differently. The lengthy, communal process of viewing over 8000 images took place over regular weekly intervals. Selecting the works for the show in this way became a time-travelling exercise, linking us directly to the trailblazing efforts of those who came before us, and the material presence of the many

³¹³ Sam McBean, *Feminism's Queer Temporalities*, (Oxon, UK and New York: Routledge, 2016).

hours of labour and art practice represented. Enacting intervals across time and space, the project materialised multivalent points of view, differing exchanges between forms and materials of women's art making, and the material intersection of ideas and practices.



Image 52 *As If: Echoes of the Women's Art Register*, installation view. West Space, Melbourne, 2014. Image shown: Kalinda Vary, *Abbott Victory Speech*, 2013. Courtesy of the artist and West Space. Photo by Christo Crocker.

This exercise brought to the fore the dislocating moments that McBean articulates. Expanding the context of the visual imagery, aural history recordings were available for listening and three posters on the wall listed the artworks and artists on view. The roll call of names on the wall came to represent much more than a catalogue of the images projected; the recurring concerns of women artists, the realisation that the work of feminism is not over, the absence of many women's names in the art historical canon, a memorial to those we have lost in the past, and a glimpse into the work of the future yet to come. Following the enormous task of curating the program, the cinematic experience of sitting and watching the images unfold via the projection enacted a repetition of intervals across generations and contexts, rendering feminist art practice as a threshold of becoming, akin to

Irigaray's call for a return to woman's place of her own, and Jone's queer feminist durationality.



Image 53 *As If: Echoes of the Women's Art Register*, installation view. West Space, Melbourne, 2014. Courtesy of West Space. Photo by Christo Crocker.

4.5 Project 6: *f generation: feminism, art, progressions*

In addition to McBean and Amelia Jones, other writers who theorise a queer temporality and its relationship to feminism include Robyn Weigman,³¹⁴ Elizabeth Freeman,³¹⁵ and Anne Emmanuelle Berger,³¹⁶ amongst others. Much earlier, Julia Kristeva's important text *Women's Time* argued that the cyclical and rhythmic nature of women's subjectivity operates against the grain of linear, historic time.³¹⁷ With the advent of queer theory, ideas about time have opened up access to non-proscriptive subjectivities, and, more recently,

³¹⁴ Robyn Weigman, "On Being in Time with Feminism" in *Modern Language Quarterly* 65.1 (2004), 161-76 and more recently in *Object Lessons*, (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

³¹⁵ Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*, (Durham NC and London: Duke University Press, 2010).

³¹⁶ Anne Emmanuelle Berger, *The Queer Turn in Feminism: Identities, Sexualities, and the Theatre of Gender*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013).

³¹⁷ Julia Kristeva, "Women's Time," in *Signs* 7.1 (1981), 13-35.

the non-human. Grosz employs a sustained engagement with time from a feminist perspective articulated over a number of texts.³¹⁸ Her studies explore the relationships between science (nature) and culture, as they are elaborated across identities and ontologies of difference.

All of these writers, in various ways, articulate the tendency in art history and theory to construct a narrative of feminism as both in the past and failed, sometimes making way for new, utopian (future) paradigms. An idealised future is ultimately unsatisfactory as it is never attainable. This narrative relies on loss - loss of past success, loss of identity in the present and loss of power. Grosz argues that an awareness of the indeterminacy of the present can prepare us to accept the uncertainty of the future, in a way that can enrich our lives in the (reconceptualised) here and now.³¹⁹ Irigaray's sexual culture (to come) might also on face value be seen as utopian, yet for Irigaray the concept of the interval and its indeterminate framework always signals a *possible* future, that shapes and impels our actions in the present. Grosz clarifies this aspect of Irigaray's thinking as the 'future anterior',³²⁰ a perspective 'yet to take place',³²¹ which can provide a transformative view of relations. So, returning to the past can provide new perspectives on the present and alternate possible futures.

Thinking through these problems and possibilities, the project *f generation: feminism, art, progressions*³²² opened up a platform for reconfiguring the relationship between the history of feminist art and its current recuperation in contemporary practice, within the situated

³¹⁸ Elizabeth Grosz, *Becomings: Explorations in Time, Memory, and Futures*, (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1999); *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely*, (Durham NC, Duke University Press, 2004); *Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power*, (Durham NC and London, Duke University Press, 2005).

³¹⁹ Grosz, *Time Travels*, p2-4

³²⁰ Elizabeth Grosz, "Histories of a Feminist Future", in *Signs* 25.4 (Summer, 2000): 1017-1021. 1020.

³²¹ Grosz, "Histories of a Feminist Future", 1020.

³²² *f generation: feminism, art, progressions*, co-curated by Veronica Caven Aldous, Dr Juliette Peers and Caroline Phillips, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, October 7 – 17, 2015.

conditions of Melbourne, Australia. A sister project to *AS IF: Echoes of the Women's Art Register* discussed above, this project was similarly devised to mark the fortieth anniversary of International Women's Year (1975) and the emergence of a hub of feminist art practice in Melbourne around the George Paton Gallery.³²³ It brought together the past and the present, and envisaged a feminist future through the reconfiguration of this past/present dynamic. A program of student workshops, a forum and interdisciplinary outreach to students enabled interactive engagement to explore the defining issues of feminist practice then and now. A final exhibition and online archive presented this array of practice through a material-discursive platform.

Whereas the *A Dinner Party: setting the table* project discussed at the beginning of this thesis focused on local Melbourne conditions, *f generation: feminism, art, progressions* opened up the scope of this network to include national and international artists.³²⁴ Yet the project retained a grass roots feel, recalling the similarly emergent roots of feminist art in the 1970s. This occurred through engagement with the student community through the University of Melbourne Wom*n's Room and the University's biennial arts festival. *f generation* revisited the idea of a 1974 exhibition at the gallery called *The Letter Show*, which sent out many letters to artists and others asking the question, 'When you think about art, what do you think?'³²⁵ For this contemporary feminist focus, the curatorial team sent two hundred letters to students, artists, curators, academics, gallerists and feminist commentators asking them to respond to the question: 'How is feminism important to you?'

³²³ For a detailed account of this history, including extensive exhibition documentation and specially commissioned essays, see *When you think about art: The Ewing and George Paton Gallery 1971–2008*, (ed.) Helen Vivian. (Melbourne: Pan Macmillan, 2013).

³²⁴ *f generation* included artists from around Australia and eight other countries including Canada, Cyprus, China, New Zealand, England, Sweden, Germany and USA. Relationships had been formed with the international artists directly out of networks created through the methodology of the research, one example being I attended the FAC International Feminist Art Residency in Canada (2015), hosted by Feminist Art Conference (FAC) Toronto.

³²⁵ This show was revised in 2008 on the occasion of the publication of Vivian's (ed.) *When you think about art*.

Ninety-six responses were received, including paintings, drawings, sculptures, textiles, letters, videos and performances. The results were exhibited in the gallery space as a conversation between each writer/artist, through which a polylogue of contemporary feminist voices could be heard.



Image 54 *f generation: feminism, art, progressions*, installation view, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, 2015. Photo by Clare Rae.



Image 55 *f generation: feminism, art, progressions*, installation view, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, 2015. Photo by Clare Rae.



Image 56 *f generation: feminism, art, progressions*, installation view, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, 2015. Photo by Clare Rae.

The 'old school' practice of writing letters relates directly to past feminist practices of grass roots organising, building communities and taking action. As part of this grass roots focus, craft workshops were held in the Wom*n's Room which resulted in a banner. A disparate group of undergraduate students from both art and non-art disciplines joined together to talk about feminism whilst making the communal banner. While we worked together informally, the group discussed a number of issues including safety for women on campus, sexism in the Australian parliament (and elsewhere), the increase in domestic violence in Australia and the representation of women in professional industries such as science and engineering. In the process of running these workshops, an archive of Wom*n's Department banners was unearthed in a forgotten storage area, inspiring a strong, material sense of connection with the past, and affirming our resolve in the present.



Image 57 *f generation: feminism, art progressions* craft workshop, 2015, UMSU Wom*n's Room, University of Melbourne, Melbourne. Photo by Caroline Phillips.

The banners were used to decorate the *f generation forum*, held during 'Mudfest', the University of Melbourne Student Arts festival.³²⁶ They generated a dynamic and inter-generational aesthetic space. During the forum two panel discussions were held, the first comprised of three students who hold the University Student Union offices of Wom*n's Officer, Disability Officer and the convenor of the Women of Colour Collective.³²⁷ These three young women spoke about their experiences on campus and as women in the current social, political and cultural climate. In particular they stressed the importance of inclusivity and respect, and the sustained need for activism and engagement with political issues. The second panel included women from an earlier generation (artists and writers)³²⁸ who

³²⁶ The *f generation forum* was held at Mudfest, University of Melbourne, August 22nd, 2015. The program was collectively curated by Caroline Phillips, Veronica Caven Aldous and Juliette Peers.

³²⁷ Sasha Chong, Lucy Curtis and Alison Ballantyne.

³²⁸ Elizabeth Gower spoke about the early days of Lip magazine, Juliette Peers recounted the history of feminist art at the George Paton Gallery, and Veronica Caven Aldous recollected of her student experience on campus in 1975.

brought relevant history and stories into the dialogue. Interspersed throughout the discussions were performances and artworks that provided encounters with the contemporary (sexuate) body.³²⁹



Image 58 *f generation forum* at Mudfest, 2015, University Of Melbourne Student Union Arts Festival, with panellists Sasha Chong, Alison Ballantyne and Lucy Curtis. Photo by Richard Aldous.

The Mud club venue was a rhizomatic tent structure placed on the lawn of the campus Student Union. Recalling the geodesic structure of Gego's *Reticuláreas* (discussed in Chapter two), the repetitive diagonals and diamond shapes enclosed the space/time threshold of the event. The tent manifested a tardis-like quality, seeming very small from the outside, but magically expansive once inside. This heightened, for me, the sense of a time travelling event, as the discussion and images flew back and forth between the past and the present, celebrating achievements yet calling for more action. The relational threshold of the interval was palpably manifested, echoing past communities whilst forming new ones, in an embodied community of feminist art making. This program of making artwork together,

³²⁹ Performers included Tania Smith (aka *Trashbags*), Kalinda Vary (video work) and Tonié Field (guitar performance).

talking about history and ideas, sharing experiences and showing work enabled a discursive engagement across time and space. The threshold of generative relations materialised across the various iterations of the *f generation* project reconfigured past histories and materialised future possibilities.

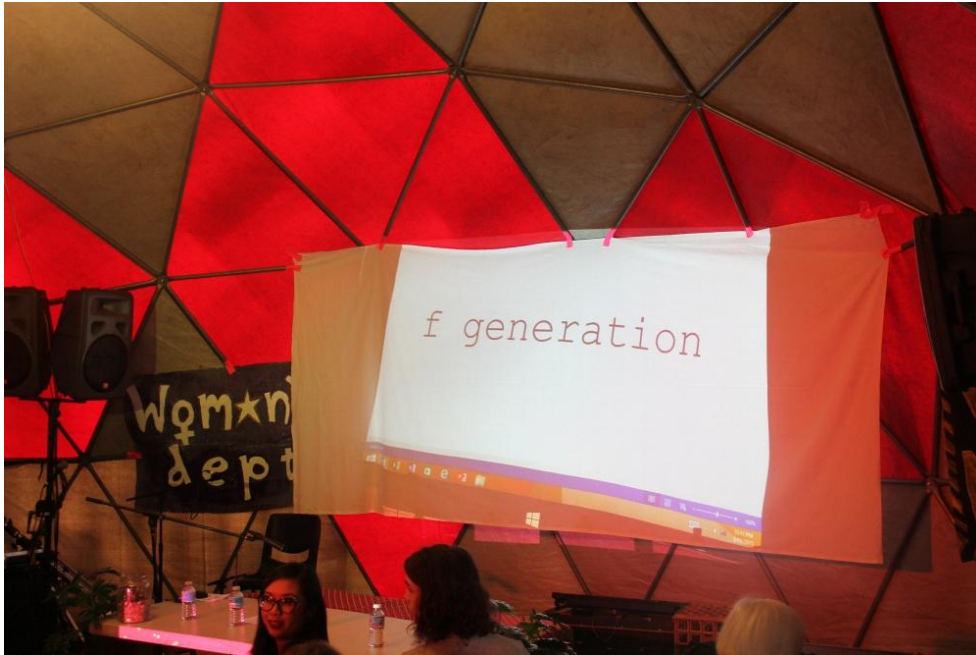


Image 59 *f generation* at The Mud club, University Of Melbourne, 2015. Photo by Richard Aldous.

4.6 Entwining bodies

This chapter has focused on the female sex, the effaced subject of sexual difference. Throughout the curatorial projects in this research most of the participants have been female, and 'she' is ever-present through my own gender as a female artist. This focus has not been to argue for a universal feminine aesthetic, nor to define a female subjectivity. What this component of the research has explored is the interval as a threshold of becoming, through a return to the 'first' place, the female sex, to reclaim the 'forgotten' maternal feminine. As Irigaray argues, this 'passing back' is the first undertaking in finding

the threshold of place. Materialising the threshold of the interval is something to be undertaken by other bodies as well, Irigaray argues:

In order for an ethics of sexual difference to come into being, we must constitute a possible place for each sex, body, and flesh to inhabit. Which presupposes a memory of the past, a hope for the future, memory bridging the present and disconcerting the mirror symmetry that annihilates the difference of identity.³³⁰

The ethical relation needs to take into account difference and multiplicity in all lived bodies, open to their 'situated conditions', including queer bodies, and non-normative relations.

Deployment of the minimalist form in this research provides a broad platform for materialising implied 'bodies'. The history of feminist art includes a strong emphasis on materially rich works, for example the experimental history of 'vaginal core' imagery in artists such as Frances Phoenix (Budden).³³¹ It is hoped that without dictating a pre-ordained or fixed identity, this research can also explore subjectivities that may be read as non-binary.

Rather than attempt to literally convey a range of 'appearances', the work *Social Sphere* (2016)³³² attempts to embody the spectrum of gender diversity. It develops the possibility of a threshold of difference and identity through entwining forms that intersect. The interval here is perceived as a threshold between these 'bodies', in an entanglement of form and colour. The array of colour in the stretch satin reveals a spectrum from blue to pink, confounding assumptions of gender stereotypes. As Amelia Jones argues:

A presentation of bodily forms, whether abstracted or explicit, might shift larger political structures and assumptions about gendered experience, enacting them in

³³⁰ Irigaray, *An Ethics*, 18.

³³¹ Budden (Aus) created a number of political posters in the 1970s and 1980s. Her provocative lace doily vaginal centrefold *Kunda*, featured in the inaugural Lip magazine of 1976.

³³² Exhibited in *Materialising Feminism*, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, 2016.

ways that can be experienced as non-binary....these enactments...might be seen to put in play a temporal and embodied relationality.³³³

Jones draws on Braidotti's 'radical relations', an interactive field of positive forces where ethical implications are foregrounded by relations.³³⁴ Braidotti outlines a concept of inter-relationality where its subjects 'are nomadic, not unitary; multi-relational, not phallogocentric; connective, not dialectical,'³³⁵ existing in a threshold space of relations. Amelia Jones credits Braidotti's ideas for helping her to rethink feminist art in tandem with queer materiality and the politics of identity.³³⁶



Image 60 Caroline Phillips, *Social Sphere*, 2016, stretch satin, foam rubber, cotton. dimensions variable, installation view, *Materialising Feminism*, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, 2016. Photo by Clare Rae.

³³³ Amelia Jones, *Seeing Differently*, 183.

³³⁴ See Chapter 5, in Amelia Jones, *Seeing Differently*.

³³⁵ Braidotti, "In Spite of the Times", 12.

³³⁶ Amelia Jones, *Seeing Differently*, (Chapter 5).

Irigaray scholar Rachel Jones, amongst others,³³⁷ argues that Irigaray's conception of the generative movement of sexuate becoming could be conceived in transgendered and transsexual elaborations:

given that working through such possibilities under heteronormative/hom(m)osocial conditions is more likely to involve critical attention to questions of sexuate difference as well as the complexity of maternal relations. Amongst these sexuate becomings, intersexed bodies might be seen not so much as confounding sexuate difference as its embodiment.³³⁸

If we truly engage with the other, we will continually rub against difference across a range of subjects and iterations including sex, gender, ethnicity, age and class, as Jones anticipates. Can *Social Sphere* be read through a lens of queering feminism? If so, would this interpretation create a meaningful threshold of relation? Certainly the materiality and form of the work enacted a slippage and collapse of meaning during its construction. What looks to be a smooth and seductive arrangement required strong force and perseverance to achieve. Stuffing the foam into tightly sewn cylinders taxed the endurance and determination of two people, at times three, with hours of clawing, pulling, and forcing the material into place. Assembling the final form and tying off the slinky tubes became equally frustrating as they slipped and slithered of their own accord, thwarting each attempt at closure and stability. The realisation came that the forces of matter held their own agency, and the struggle to achieve wholeness was an illusion.

Does this illusion (or impulse to one-ness) come from a situated position of white privilege?

As the artist and feminist Senam Okutzeto observes, one of the problems of contemporary

³³⁷ Alison Stone in *Luce Irigaray and the Philosophy of Sexual Difference*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006) and Rebecca Hill in *The Interval, Relation and Becoming in Irigaray, Aristotle, and Bergson*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012) discuss, in part, Irigaray's work in context with non normative sexualities.

³³⁸ Rachel Jones, "Vital Matters and Generative Materiality: Between Bennett and Irigaray", *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 46:2, 156-172., 160.

feminism is that 'categories of difference are cited but assimilated into a larger project that is really about sameness'.³³⁹ This project attempts to recognise and shift this ground and get working on alternate structures that acknowledge prejudice, respect difference and enable ethical relations between a range of identities and their situated conditions. As Irigaray attests:

What the ultimate unity will be, we cannot anticipate: it will depend upon the cultivation of one's Being by each one and upon the cultivation of the relation between the two. This end cannot be dependent upon only one being and it escapes representation.³⁴⁰

These art objects are stand-ins for bodies, they elicit bodies and they enact bodily discourses, yet in their non-representational presence they do not speak for others.³⁴¹ In so doing, the relational interactivity between the materials, forms and processes is proposed as a way to materialise what Nira Yuval-Davis terms 'different forms of difference'³⁴² without flattening or universalising the experiences of others. In turn, this awareness of difference might enact the threshold of possibility for the ethical relation.

The closeness of the entwined forms in *Social Sphere* problematises the efficacy of the threshold. Without the space of the interval different subjects are at risk of 'collapsing into one another'.³⁴³ The interval as threshold holds open the threshold of possibility for the worlds of (at least two) different subjects to connect. In this and in other art objects made in

³³⁹ Rosalyn Deutsche and others, "Feminist Time: A Conversation," *Grey Room* 31, no. Spring (2008): 32-67. p46

³⁴⁰ Irigaray, *The Way of Love*, 106.

³⁴¹ Rachel Jones points out that Irigaray's notion of matter and the 'speaking object' prefigure Jane Bennett's *Vibrant Matter* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2010) and much New Materialist thought. Rachel Jones. "Vital Matter", 157.

³⁴² 'Different forms of difference' is theorised by Nira Yuval-Davis in order to carefully work through the original signification of intersectionality by women of colour and expand understanding into other areas such as age, cultural difference or sexuality. Nira Yuval-Davis, "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics", *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13(3) (2006):193-209. p199-200.

³⁴³ Serene J. Khader, "The Work of Sexual Difference" (INTRODUCTION), in Rawlinson, Mary C., Hom, Sabrina L., and Khader, Serene J., (eds.) *Thinking with Irigaray*. (Albany, NY, USA: State University of New York Press, 2011). 4

the research, the open potential is rendered through the connecting components and the spatial enfolding of the linear forms. The material nature of this relational connection is crucial to the embodied processes of materialising difference. As Irigaray proposes:

It is this difference that ensures the becoming of a dialectic of two subjects recognized in their alterity. The movement there will no longer be circular but elliptical, given the duality of focuses and sources of impulse, of resistance, of withdrawal, of restraint.³⁴⁴

Social Sphere reveals these entwining energies and matter through its relational form and processes.



Image 61 Caroline Phillips, *Social Sphere* (detail), 2016. Photo by Clare Rae.

So too, in the work *Warped* (2015),³⁴⁵ the metaphor of the ellipse is revealed in the structure and processes of making. The curving spiral of connective material conjures an intensive process of connection and material tension. A centrifugal force pulls at the sleek, industrial cord of stainless steel and the metal hooks attached to the wall at each end.

³⁴⁴ Irigaray, *The Way of Love*, 100.

³⁴⁵ First exhibited in *Relatedness*, Living Museum of the West, Melbourne, 2015.

However, the virulent chunkiness and hyper colouring of the over scale rope is countered by a calming rhythm, rendered through the serial knotting embedded in the form. These knots are made through the process of macramé, an ancient form of weaving dating back to Babylonian times.³⁴⁶ In its reliance on the grid, the binary nature of the warp and weft is necessary to enable the ground on which to reconfigure an elliptical pattern and form.



Image 62 Caroline Phillips, *Warped*, 2015, acrylic rope, stainless steel, 100x2500x30cm, installation view, *Materialising Feminism*, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, 2016. Photo by Clare Rae.

Emma Jones likens Irigaray's 'relational weaving' to the ethical task of sexual difference, she writes:

The event, and/or advent of human subjectivity, of human being itself, as a 'relational weaving' of interwoven places, does not limit us in a negative way. Instead the recognition of the inappropriable otherness of the other urges us towards the ethical task of entering into communication with this other, in order to build together a shareable world.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁶ Karen Bucynski-Lee, Catalogue essay for *Relatedness*, Living Museum of the West, Melbourne. (Melbourne: Published by the artist, 2015).

³⁴⁷ Emma R. Jones, "Finding/Founding Our Place," 19.

Recalling the knotted quipus of Cecilia Vicuña discussed in Chapter three, the ordered sequence of knots in *Warped* enacts durational intervals of time and materiality. Elaborating a topological field along the connecting central line, the turbulent and modulating form could be seen as fashioning a vibrant and dynamic threshold. The idea of matter as vital and dynamic has been well established by Jane Bennett in her study *Vibrant Matter*.³⁴⁸ Closer to Irigaray's humanist, relational approach is Sarah Ahmed, who argues that 'action involves the intimate co-dwelling of bodies *and* objects.'³⁴⁹ In her study of the invisible meanings of the (sexed) body, in its orientation amongst space and things, Ahmed approaches a concept not unlike Irigaray's threshold. In a discussion of the spatial and temporal qualities of 'orientation', Ahmed accounts for differences and connections between bodies in their capacity to turn towards, or against, specific bodies and things. Communicating with the other in the threshold of the interval, requires a conscious turning to, and paying attention to what that turning reveals.

When facing the hyper-coloured, oversized and chunky rope used in *Warped*, a kind of generic strength and resilience is imparted that overrides a binary gender reading of textiles as a feminised medium. The active and time-consuming effort of constructing the form is visible as a result of this chunkiness. For Ahmed, 'the question of action is how we inhabit space.'³⁵⁰ The labour and materiality inbuilt in this work through the rope elicits spatial readings of enclosing, catching, holding, carrying or climbing as a cohort of material actions and operations exploring boundaries and containment. Yet these boundaries have open space, holes and gaps, allowing for movement, flex and transformation. These porous

³⁴⁸ Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter, A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2010).

³⁴⁹ Sarah Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology, Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2006). INTRODUCTION.

³⁵⁰ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 52.

boundaries could be understood as the spatial threshold of the interval, provided through the autonomous limit of the object, yet in relation to the surrounding environment.



Image 63 Caroline Phillips, *Warped*, 2015, acrylic rope, stainless steel, 100x2500x30cm, installation view, *Relatedness*, Living Museum Of The West, Melbourne, 2015. Photo by Clare Rae.

4.7 Past meets future in the present, holding open the space of the interval

Space and time connect more ephemerally in the final group of works discussed in this thesis. Conceived as a trilogy that would ‘hold’ the final PhD exhibition in the threshold of the interval, the works *Feminist*, *Suffragette* and *Horizon* are more closely aligned to installation than autonomous objects. Utilising the entrance-way, side hallway and rear space of the gallery,³⁵¹ the works are encountered as spatio-temporal embodiments of the material-discursive research. *Feminist* (2016)³⁵² deploys the multiple headrests made for the *Technopia Tours Feminist Art Bus*, discussed in Chapter three, as a wall installation. A simple stencil was printed on orange ribbon, then glued onto velveteen, pink fabric. A low-tech

³⁵¹ In the exhibition *Materialising Feminism*, Margret Lawrence Gallery, 2106.

³⁵² First shown in *Materialising Feminism*, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, 2016.

intervention into the bus décor, the headrests brought together the disparate identities on the tour and signalled an overtly feminist work.



Image 64 Caroline Phillips, *Feminist*, 2016, velveteen, silk ribbon, acrylic paint, installation view, *Materialising Feminism*, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, 2016. Photo by Clare Rae.

Beyond a documentary rendering of the *Bus Tour* itself, *Feminist* literally embodies the *presence* of the large community of participants so integral to this research. Drawing on minimalist tropes of repetition and seriality, the multiple components appear the same, yet encompass variations in size and shape. The only use of text throughout the entire exhibition, *Feminist* cuts to the core of what this research is really asking; What is a feminist art practice today? What have we learnt from the past and how does this provide a model for a feminist future? Flanked by the work *Suffragette* (in the entrance hallway) and *Horizon* in the back gallery, the central line of *Feminist* traverses the length of the gallery space, signifying and embodying the journey taken throughout this project, and the threshold between space and time that is the interval.



Image 65 Caroline Phillips, L-R works *Suffragette*, *Feminist*, *Horizon*, 2016, installation view, *Materialising Feminism*, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, 2016. Photo by Clare Rae.

To its left in the entrance hallway of the gallery, the work *Suffragette* restages the colours of the first generation of feminist activists, purple, green and white. Inspired by the release of the film *Suffragette* during this period,³⁵³ the work both looks back to the past and brings to a contemporary context the history and discourses of feminist practice. The entrance space of the gallery is split into two halves, enacting a spatial interval in the material configuration of the room. Passing through the 'split' in this wall, brings the audience into the main gallery, enclosing a safe space of encounter and relation with the art objects.

³⁵³ *Suffragette*, (2015), Dir: Sarah Gavron, Produced by Film 4, BFI, Ingenious Media, Canal+, Ciné+, Ruby Films, distributed by Pathé.



Image 66 Caroline Phillips, *Suffragette*, 2016, recycled cotton, recycled foam rubber, paper tape, cable ties, duct tape, installation view, *Materialising Feminism*, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, 2016. Photo by Clare Rae.

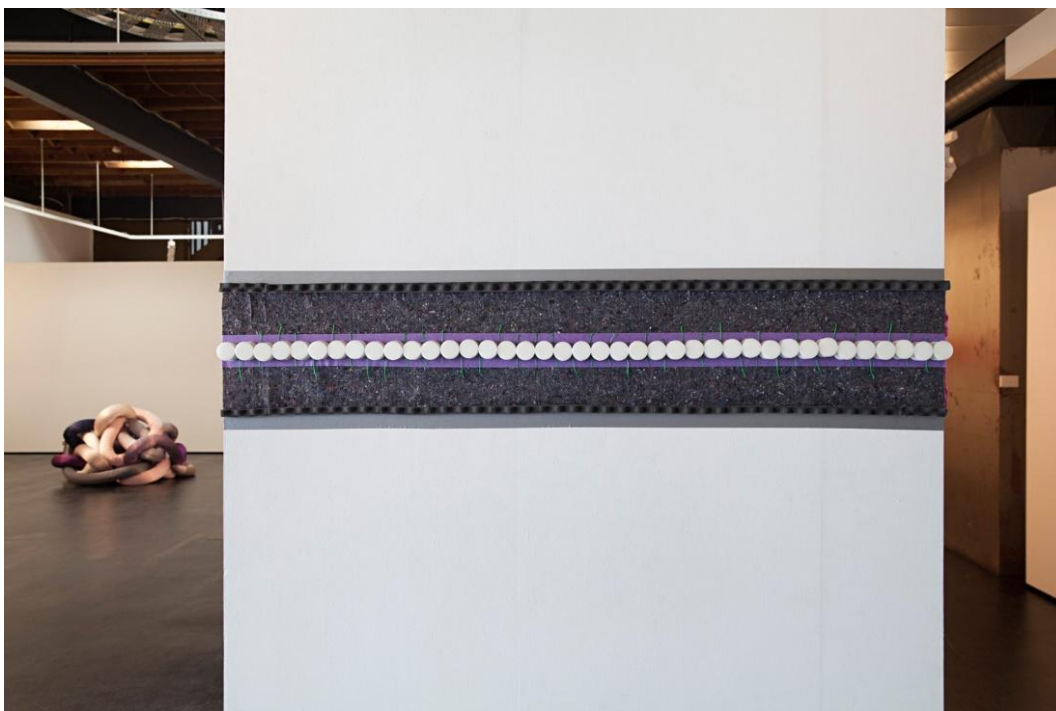


Image 67 Caroline Phillips, *Suffragette*, 2016, recycled cotton, recycled foam rubber, paper tape, cable ties, duct tape, installation view, *Materialising Feminism*, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, 2016. Photo by Clare Rae.

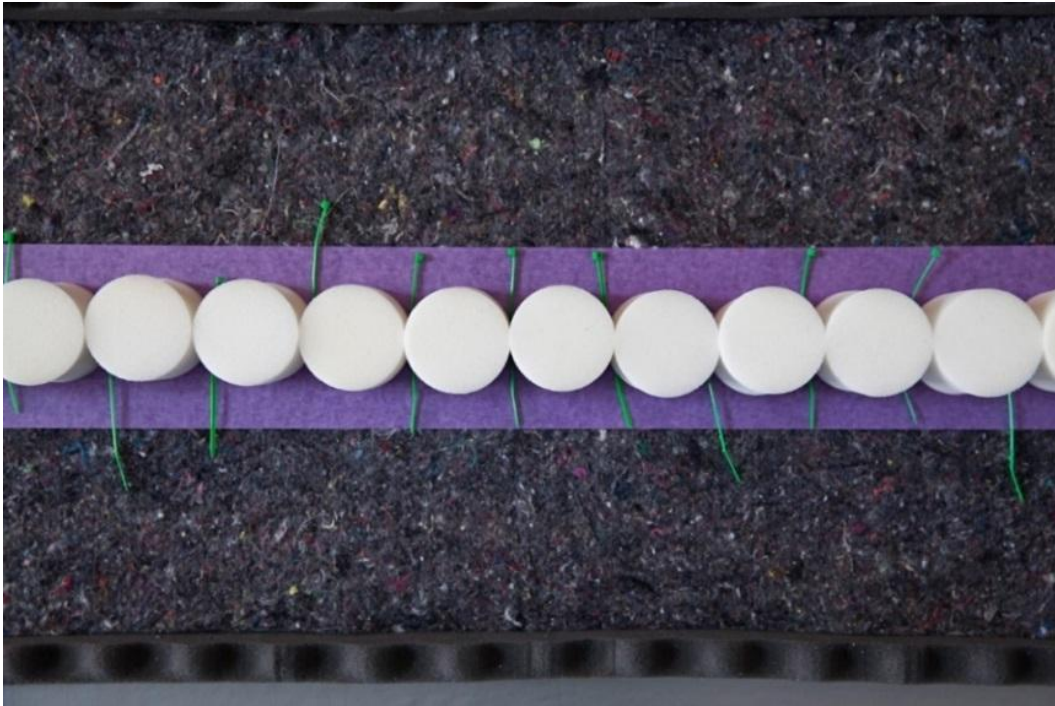


Image 68 Caroline Phillips, *Suffragette* (detail), 2016. Photo by Clare Rae.

The final work of the research reconfigures *enmeshed*, the ‘first threshold’ envisaged at the start of this chapter, in a new form. *Horizon* revisits the diagonal wall patterning of rubber octopus straps, in this case connected by pink builder’s twine and a background in lilac hue, to create a spatial threshold across the expanse of gallery wall. Echoing Gego’s geodesic sculptural forms, and the tent of the ‘Mud club’ venue in the *f generation forum*, the diamond shaped forms connect to Irigaray’s use of the diagonal as a sexuate geometry, introduced in Chapter two. For Irigaray ‘the diagonal is a *threshold* through which diverse spaces and times can be constructed.’³⁵⁴ As Rawes explains:

Irigaray develops a critique of Platonic geometry in Greek thinking by using a Pythagorean theory of the diagonal in order to show that the sexed subject is omitted from dominant Platonic theories of space. For Irigaray, Pythagoras’ scientific thought offers an alternative theory of the world (because it does not split the divine

³⁵⁴ Rawes, *Irigaray for Architects*, 70.

and empirical worlds from each other) that is the realm of immaterial ideas and physical matter continue to be interconnected.³⁵⁵

Part of Irigaray's framing of the *sensible transcendental*, this potential for a sexuate culture embodies spatio-temporal relations and possibilities for change, traversing the threshold across thought, matter and lived experience. The horizon appears in Irigaray's writing as the threshold of the interval via touch and the breath.³⁵⁶ In other instances, the horizon renders the distance from the known to the unknown (the other), beyond our knowledge and forever unknowable.³⁵⁷ As the 'locus of futurity'³⁵⁸ of spatial configuration, the horizon is the in-between of the here/now, and the future/possible.



Image 69 Caroline Phillips, *Horizon* (detail), 2016, acrylic paint, rubber octopus straps, builder's twine, installation view, *Materialising Feminism*, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, 2016. Photo by Clare Rae.

³⁵⁵ Rawes, *Irigaray for Architects*, 69.

³⁵⁶ Irigaray, *Key Writings*, 20.

³⁵⁷ Rebecca Hill, "Place, Interval," in *Engaging the World, Thinking After Irigaray*, (ed.) Mary C. Rawlinson, (New York: State University of New York Press, 2016), 39-49., 48.

³⁵⁸ Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Inside; Essays on Virtual and Real Space*, (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 2002), 94.

Whereas *enmeshed* and the 'return to the feminine' of central core imagery, discussed earlier in this chapter, sought an internal threshold of the self, *Horizon* once again turns outwards towards the other, the future and the world. Repetitive points of intersection, connection and difference appear across a landscape/field of vision. Relations of matter, thought and process intermingle to create a threshold space of material and immaterial connectivity. As Ahmed states; 'depending on which way one turns, different worlds might come into view'.³⁵⁹ *Horizon* enables a clear viewpoint from which to ponder worlds of difference.



Image 70 Caroline Phillips, *Horizon*, 2016, acrylic paint, rubber octopus straps, builder's twine, installation view, *Materialising Feminism*, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, 2016. Photo by Clare Rae.

4.8 Conclusion to Chapter 4

Irigaray argues that any possible sexuate culture (to come) requires a reconfiguration of the relations of sexual difference. The interval is the threshold of these possible relations

³⁵⁹ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 15.

because it is the place of possibility from where a transformation to authentic difference can reside. The movement across space and time epitomised in the interval as threshold is an active and material, yet conceptual and immaterial place. Its ontological condition enables a path toward the reconfiguration of matter and form (via sensible incarnations) that enable the ethical relation. This chapter has explored the art making processes and collaborative projects that reconfigure the material and conceptual relations of feminist practice.

Drawing on the 'first threshold' of woman and the maternal feminine, works discussed explored embodied installation and central core imagery. Turning outward to communities and collaborative practice, the multivalent relations that circulated around the projects *AS IF: Echoes of the Women's Art Register* and *f generation: feminism, art, progressions* both emerged from and were informed by feminist art histories, practices and connections, and their current specificities. Enabling an open platform of exchange and connection, the confluence of ideas and physical matter (through bodies, materials, and forces) forged links between past and present. Entwined in the locus of this material-discursive practice, the threshold of the interval is a site of becoming. Movements across space and time are materialised through repetitive forms, enfoldings and material inter-connections that divulge porous and fluid spatio-temporal boundaries. Objects that twist and turn, entangle and weave enact relational encounters. Colours, textures and patterns revealed through these encounters further activate the interval as the threshold of difference itself, manifesting a possible sexuate culture to come.

Conclusion

“The relational limit is the approach of the other, and the irreducible subjectivity of each. The cultivation of sexual identity and culture requires movement towards the other and a return to the self in a ‘continual back and forth/return(ing), simultaneously connecting and separating.”

Luce Irigaray³⁶⁰



Image 71 Caroline Phillips, *Materialising Feminism*, PhD final exhibition, installation view, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, 2016. Photo by Clare Rae.

Materialising Feminism: Object and Interval renders a radical critique of binary thinking that affirms the duality of sexual difference as productive for feminist theory and art practice. The research deploys Irigaray's framework of sexual difference as a non-hierarchical material and conceptual framework, from which to uncover new ways to consider the relational through practice. Through this framework, binaries of subject/object,

³⁶⁰ Emma R. Jones, "Finding/Founding Our Place," 18.

material/social, differentiation/fusion, nature/culture, queer/straight and sensible/transcendental might now be reconfigured as productive for practice. In particular the binary of sexual difference has been rethought through the framework of the interval. Intervals of matter, identity, space and time have been materialised through the methodology and practice, reconfiguring difference and the ethical relation.

Chapter one outlined the relational methodology for the research, combining the conceptual framework of the interval with the material-discursive practice of art making. The curatorial projects *A Dinner Party: setting the table* and *The f Word: Contemporary Feminist Art in Australia* introduced the collaborative and open processes of working with others, to engage with affirmative processes of questioning and exploration. The chapter introduced Irigaray's formulation of sexual difference as a productive counterpoint to dominant paradigms of the binary of feminine/masculine (and nature/culture) as antagonistic and hierarchical, through its focus on the interval. The interval was revealed as an ontological space, place and threshold of difference that provides a generative site for new possibilities in feminist art practice.

Chapter two investigated clearing the *space* of the interval, and its potential as a relational site of connection, through the art object. Articulating the interval as space both affirms difference *and* our shared separation. Extending the participatory aspect of the research, the Chapter asked if the minimalist object can be conceived, theorised and experienced as a source of interactive, relational processes. Works by Lygia Clarke, Kerrie Poliness and Gego demonstrated the links between abstraction and relational space that extend the parameters of relational practice. The chapter uncovered alternate ways of looking at Minimalism that engage with separation and connection, reconfiguring relations of space

and social connection. Through this investigation the research has contributed to a contemporary revision of minimalist strategies.

Chapter three explored the interval as a dynamic *place* of intensity, differentiation and relationality. Artworks deployed repetition, differentiation and materiality to uncover this complex field of intersection and multiplicity, drawing on the forces of material life as continual elaborations of difference. This chapter uncovered links between Irigaray's thinking and aspects of New Materialism, rendering the interval as the place where matter and form intercepts. This process reconfigures the entanglement of sexuate relation as an affirmative place of relation and ethical exchange.

Finally, Chapter four drew on Irigaray's concepts of the maternal relation and the sensible transcendental, which extend the framework of the interval as a threshold to the fully elaborated sexuate self (to come). The movement across space and time epitomised by the interval as threshold was manifested through the collaborative projects *f generation: feminism, art, progressions* and *As If: Echoes of the Women's Art Register*, along with a series of site specific works in the gallery space. The ontological condition of the interval as threshold suggested a path toward the reconfiguration of matter and form, framing the ethical relation.

The research has engaged with the sculptural object via modalities of Minimalism such as reductive form, seriality and repetition. From a relational approach to materiality and processes of making, has emerged modes of physical connection that are propositional, relational, contingent and responsive to site. Industrial materials, abstracted form and haptic qualities place the object outside of an immediately recognised subject, enabling a focus on identity *through* relations. Contingent encounters of space and durationality have further engaged with concepts of New Materialist becoming and Irigaray's *sensible*

transcendental, exploring the ontological convergence of matter and ideas. This conceptual materialist approach has reconfigured the minimalist object as a feminist object.

The research has sought to move beyond a purely metaphorical reading of the interval, towards a manifestation of the interval as a material-discursive practice - a relational practice - that encompasses feminist politics and practice within situated conditions. Drawing on Krasny's articulation of *curatorial materialism*, the collaborative, curatorial projects undertaken have enacted 'practices of relatedness', whereby ideas, knowledge exchange and material conditions are foregrounded. By situating the project within the broader social and political context of feminism, the research responds to the prevalence of social and political oppression, and recuperates the discourse of feminism into social practice.

The framework of the interval of sexual difference has revealed alternate strategies of feminist practice. As an artist in the world, the research materialises an affirmative practice of working, living and acting within the solidarity of a feminist politics, emerging from and in response to local and global conditions. The research articulates a feminist aesthetics of related-ness and connection, through a material-discursive practice. In a relational methodology, artworks and events have been produced that elaborate the interval as the space, place and threshold of difference and connection. Through these relations, the interval has been shown to produce new possibilities for feminist art practice.

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Concrete Invention - Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, January 23 – September 16, 2013 (included multiple works by Gego and Lygia Clark)

Contemporary Australia Women, Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, April 21 – July 22, 2012 (numerous feminist works)

Eva Hesse: Studiowork, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, September 22, 2010 to January 2, 2011 (multiple Eva Hesse works)

Explosion! The Legacy of Jackson Pollock, Fundació Miro, Barcelona, October 24, 2012 – February 24, 2013 (included a range of feminist works)

Less is More – Minimal + Post Minimal Art in Australia, Heide Museum of Modern Art, 3 August to 4 November 2012, Curated by Sue Cramer (a large range of minimalist works, including Kerrie Poliness *Wall Drawing O*)

Networks (cells & silos), Monash University Museum of Art (MUMA), February 1 – April 16, 2011 (included Kerrie Poliness *Blue Wall Drawing*)

No Man's Land: The Rubell Family Collection, Miami (a large range of feminist works)

Re.act.feminism. a performing archive #2, Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, 15 November 2012 – 17 February 2013 (a large range of feminist works)

Revolution in the Making; Abstract Sculpture by Women, 1947 – 2016, Hauser Wirth & Schimmel, Los Angeles, March 13– September 4, 2016 (a large range of work by women artists including Eva Hesse, Gego and a number of feminist artists)

The 18th Biennale of Sydney: all our relations, 27 June-16 September 2012, curated by Catherine de Zegher and Gerald McMaster (included Cecilia Vicuña's *Quipu Menstrual* and Bianca Hester's *fashioning discontinuities* work)

The Artist as Poet, Cecilia Vicuña performance/presentation at Trades Hall, Melbourne, October 6, 2016 (featuring poetry and spoken word performance)

Tarrawarra Biennial 2016: Endless Circulation, 19 August – 6 September, 2016 (featured Bianca Hester's *constellating bodies in temporary correspondence*)

Appendix A: *Materialising Feminism* - List of works and exhibition documentation

PhD Final Examination exhibition, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne. February 19-27, 2016

List of Works

Suffragette (2016)

Recycled cotton, recycled foam rubber, duct tape, masking tape, cable ties, 47 x 850 x 6 cm

Mirror Mirror (2016)

Recycled trampoline frame, duct tape, 340 x 340 x 14 cm

Social Sphere (2016)

Stretch satin, cotton, recycled foam rubber, 140 x 150 x 150 cm

Warped (2015)

acrylic rope and stainless steel, 70 x 450 x 25 cm

Mesh #1 (2016) and *Mesh #2* (2016)

2 x Digital photographs, 60 x 51 cm

Plug Ins (2015)

Recycled foam rubber, recycled plastic, chenille stems, wall plugs, dimensions variable

Horizon (2016)

Rubber octopus straps, builders' twine, screws, acrylic paint, 140 x 890 x 3 cm

Density (2013)

Recycled foam rubber, stainless steel pins, Velcro, 60 x 50 x 50 cm

Dysfunction (2013)

Recycled cotton, rubber octopus straps, leather, acrylic rope, new and recycled plastic, 190 x 300 x 23 cm

Lug (2013)

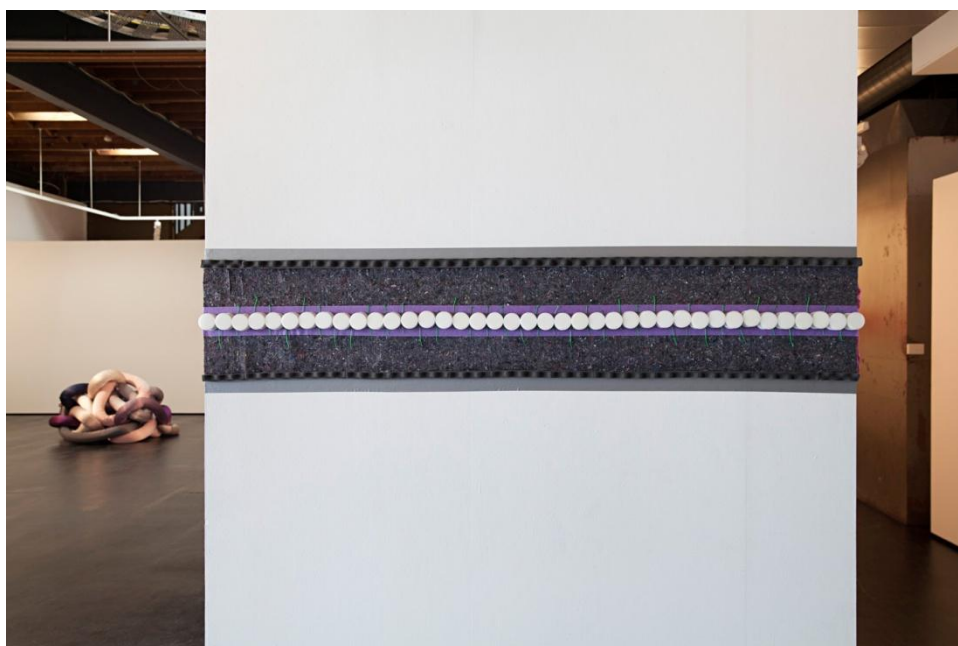
Rubber octopus straps, chenille stems, 180 x 30 x 15 cm

Feminist (2016)

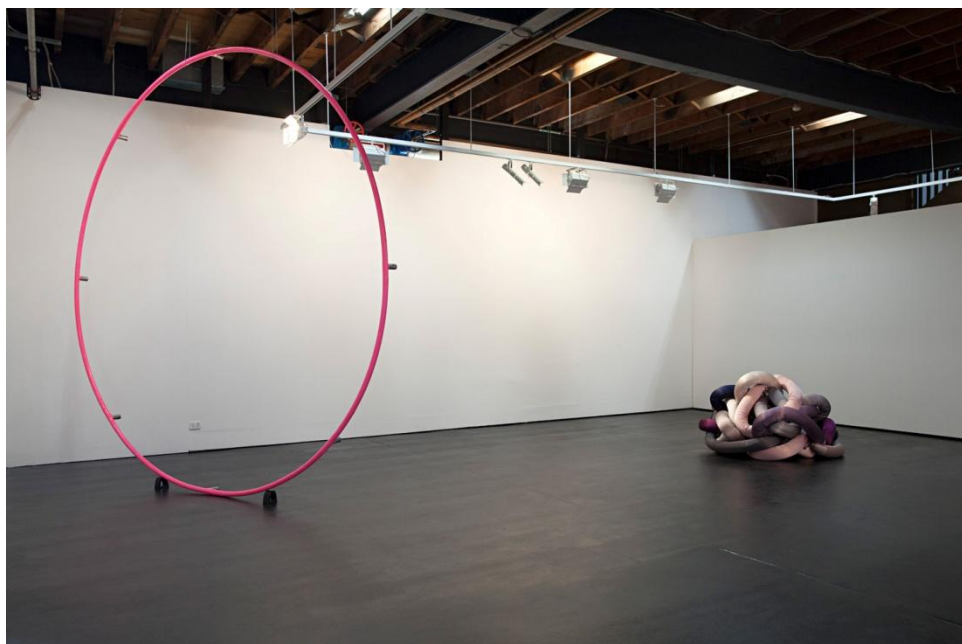
Crushed panné, satin ribbon, acrylic paint, 32 x 1260 x 2 cm

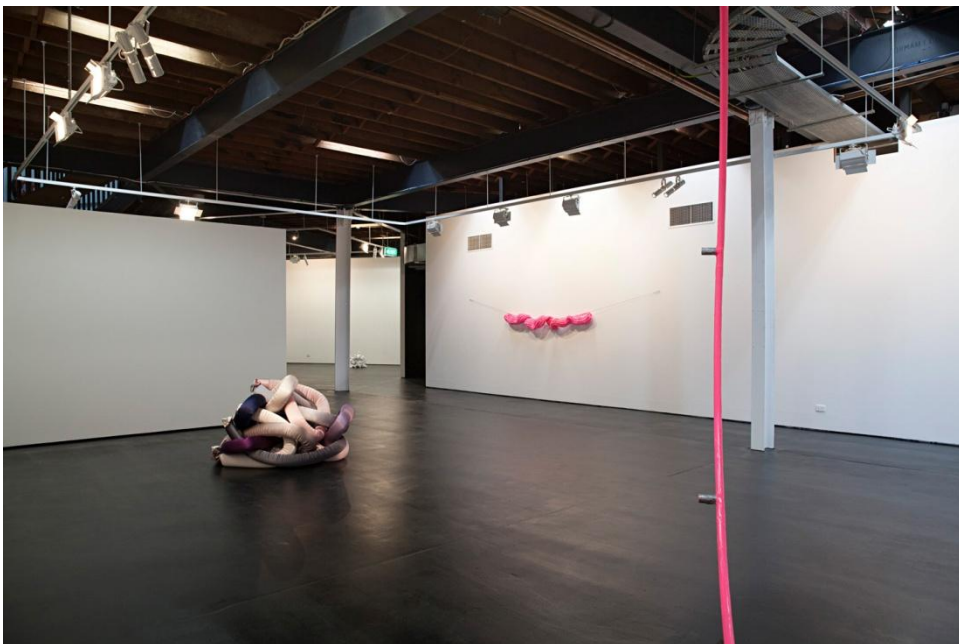
Installation documentation – all photos by Clare Rae

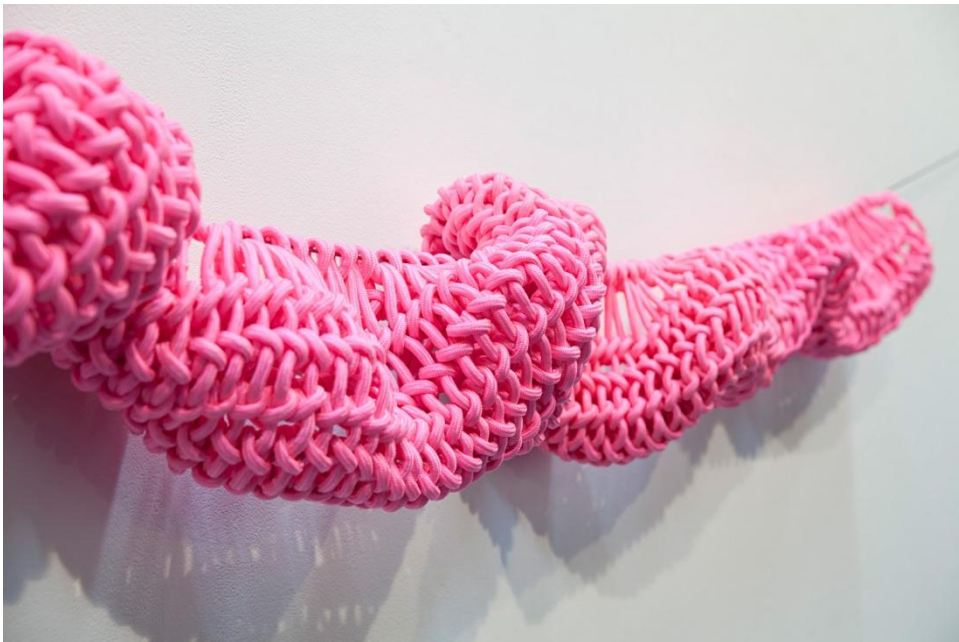
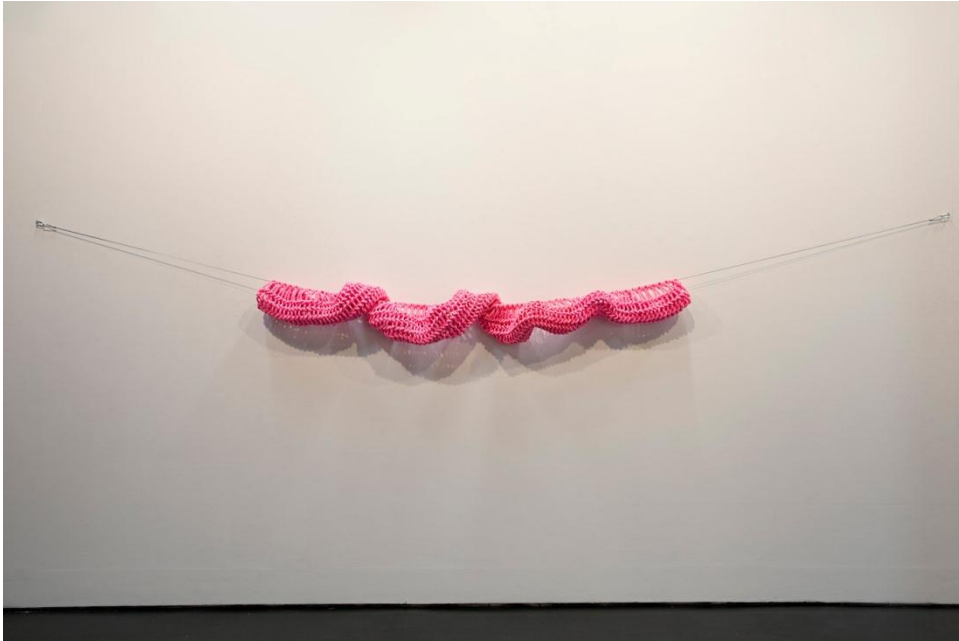
Entrance foyer: *Suffragette*



Front Gallery, l-r: *Mirror Mirror*, *Social Sphere*, *Warped*

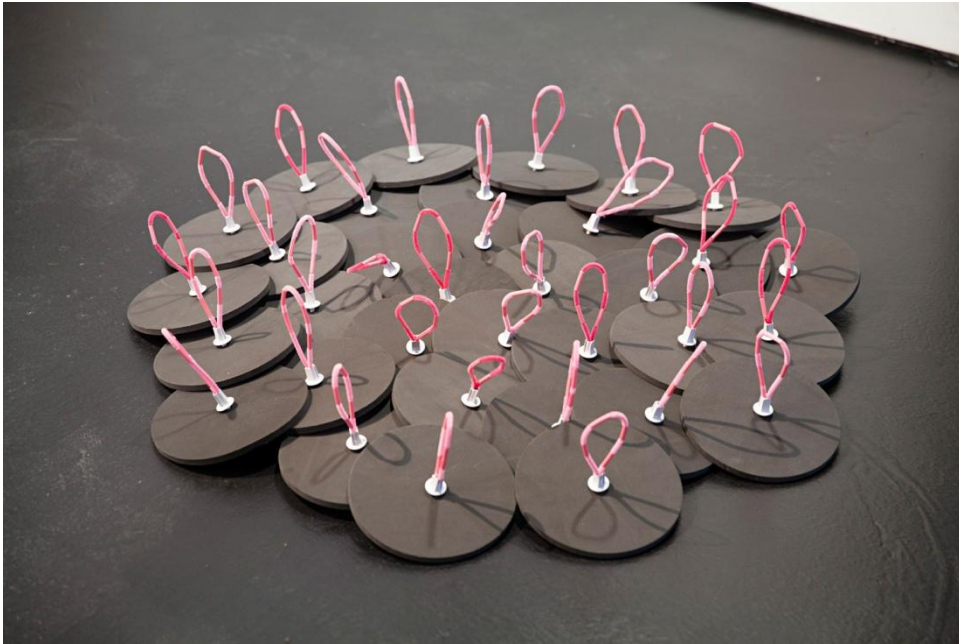






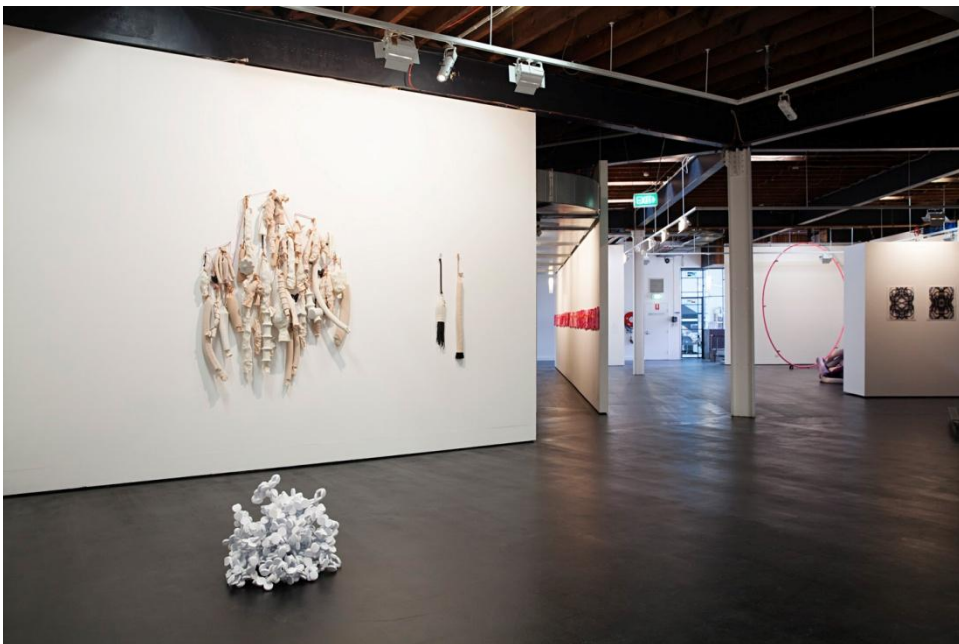
Central Gallery, l-r: *Mesh #1*, *Mesh #2*, *Plug Ins*





Back Gallery, l-r: *Horizon*, *Density*, *Dysfunction*







Alcove and Passageway: *Lug, Feminist*







Appendix B: *The f Word: Contemporary Feminist Art in Australia* - List of works and commissioned catalogue essays



List of Works

Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale:

Catherine Bell

Flower Tower, 2012-13. Yearlong community art project with cancer patients at Caritas Christi Day Hospice, Kew. Handmade paper flowers, florist wire and tape, paint, polystyrene column, 430 x 60 cm. Courtesy the artist and Sutton Gallery, Melbourne

Heavy Petal Series 2012-13, Flower petals, conservation medium, wooden board. 25 x 30 cm each panel. Courtesy the artist and Sutton Gallery, Melbourne

Penny Byrne

Free Pussy Riot! 2013. Wooden Matryoshka dolls, pva, acrylic paint, 16 x 38 x 7 cm. Courtesy of Fehily Contemporary, Melbourne

Filomena Coppola

Mother Tongue - Romulus and Remus, 2014. 80 x 120 cm, Pastel on paper.

Mother Tongue - Birth Markings, 2014. 80 x 120 cm, pastel on paper.

Mother Tongue, 2013. Video and sound installation, 15.29 min.

Sound and video by Robert Klarich. Courtesy of the artist

Kate Just

SAFE Walk, 2014. Digital Type C Print, 122 x 172 cm.

SAFE, 2014. Hand knitted bricklayer's thread and silver retroreflective thread, polyester netting, cotton, aluminium, steel, paint. 122 x 280 x 25 cm. Courtesy of Daine Singer, Melbourne

Jill Orr

The Promised Land, Moving, 2012. Pigment inkjet print on Museo silver rag, 113 x 157 cm.
Photographer: Christina Simons for Jill Orr.

The Promised Land, Still, 2012. Pigment inkjet print on Museo Silver Rag. 57 x 74 cm.
Photographer: Christina Simons for Jill Orr. Courtesy of Jenny Port Gallery

Clare Rae

Untitled, 2014. From the series *Magdalen revisited*. Lightbox x 3, 40 x 57 cm.
Courtesy of the artist

Elvis Richardson

All women artists recorded in various issues of Art and Australia 1990-1993, 2014
Collage, acrylic paint and PVA on box board, 75 x 113 cm
All male artists recorded in various issues of Art and Australia 1992, 2014
Collage, acrylic paint and PVA on box board, 75 x 113 cm
Courtesy of Hugo Michell Gallery, Adelaide and Gallerie Pom Pom in Sydney

Ararat Regional Art Gallery, Ararat:

Kate Beynon

Trans Mythic Woman Warrior Series, 5 works:
Nine Tailed fox Spirit, Spider Goddess, Transfigured Gorgon, Warrior Mer-Woman, Ranger, All works 2012-13. Acrylic and Swarovski crystals on canvas.
Courtesy of Sutton Gallery, Melbourne

Karen Buczynski-Lee

Mourning becomes electric, 2011-12. Video, animation, archival film and photographs,
Courtesy of the artist

Destiny Deacon

Melbourne girls in their Marys, 2011. From the series *Frieze Frames, Melbourne*,
colour inkjet print.
Lovely Hula Hands, 2011. From the series *Frieze Frames, Melbourne*, colour inkjet print.
Courtesy of Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

Laurene Dietrich

Old age is no place for sissies project: the f word bit, 2012-2014.
Colour print on Perspex. Courtesy of the artist

Eliza-Jane Gilchrist

Mutare, 2011. Wood, wire, cicada skins.

Courtesy of the artist

Janice Gobey

Degradation, 2014. Fake fur, recycled vintage fur.

Courtesy of the artist

Georgia MacGuire

Ill-fitted Uniform, 2014. Plaster bandage and paper bark.

Courtesy of the artist

Robyn Massey

Celebration, Floating Woman, Sofa Sitting, Human Rock Form, All works 2012.

Oil on canvas.

Courtesy of the Estate of Robyn Massey.

Caroline Phillips

Tongue and Groove, 2014.

Recycled leather, acrylic rope, cable ties.

Louise Saxton

Let the jungle in, 2013. Reclaimed needlework, lace pins, nylon tulle,

Bamboo birdcage, copper wire, wool carpet.

Courtesy of the artist and Gould Galleries, Melbourne

Inez de Vega

Dying not to be, 2012. Single Channel Video, 8:20 minutes.

Courtesy of the artist

Lyndal Walker

Embraces uncovered for me, Undressed for you tonight, Amorous nude in bed all 2013. Archival pigment print on Habotai silk.

Courtesy of the artist.

Comissioned Catalogue Essays

LOUISE BURCHILL

Problematizing Universals yet again ... and again!

Of the spate of exhibitions, conferences, articles and journal issues focussed on art informed by feminism over the last ten years — 2007 notably being hailed in the U.S. as the "year of feminist art"¹ — the massive consecration of women artists mounted at the Centre Pompidou in Paris from 2009 to 2011 stands out not just for its scale, scope and institutional politics (the museum hugely augmented its acquisition of works of women artists) but, additionally, its claims to/for a universality conceived in terms that, from the perspective of the other contemporaneous shows and critical exegeses, appear both long superseded and, yet, succinctly symptomatic of a renewed pertinence accruing to the problematic relationship of feminism and the universal.

As formulated by Camille Morineau, the curator of "elles@centrepompidou",² the decision to completely reinstall the museum's permanent collection with a selection of some 500 of the more than 2000 works it encompasses by women artists — 200 of whom were represented in the new hang — aimed "neither to demonstrate that there exists an art in the feminine, nor to produce a feminist object" but to proclaim, in the spirit of a manifesto, that "women artists are writing a universal history of art".³ In short, by showing works chosen according to the criterion of gender, the museum's objective was "to be universal", with Morineau qualifying this as a "paradox" of the kind analyzed by the historian Joan Scott particularly (though not exclusively) in relation to French feminism. Schematically stated, Scott maintains that feminists arguing for the universalism of individual political rights and against sexual difference as the justification of women's exclusion have necessarily appealed to the very idea of difference or specificity ("women's rights") that underlies women's exclusion in the first place.⁴ This paradox — the need to accept and to refuse sexual difference as a condition of inclusion in the universal, which constitutes the constitutive condition of feminism as a political movement per se, for Scott — is then transposed by Morineau to "the case of the Museum today". Her introductory essay to the exhibition's catalogue describes the "paradox of 'elles'" as follows: "A Museum attentive to the parity of

its collections has to fight against exclusion and for universalism by appealing to women's difference." "Only afterwards will it no longer be necessary to count" because "this attention to the criterion of equal representation will have become completely natural" (p.16).

Stating "elles" to have embraced the paradoxical necessity of both accepting and refusing sexual difference as a condition of women's inclusion in the "universal history of art" is, of course, tantamount, then, to a declaration of "constitutively feminist" agency on the part of the museum and Morineau as curator. Indeed, the latter proudly hails "elles" as "restituting to [the Museum] the revolutionary role that the twentieth century had sought to wrest from the institution and reserve to art alone" (p. 16) — a proclamation that is, that said, all the more resonant precisely insofar as the works presented in the exhibition were very deliberately "not reduced" to those representing "the militant attitudes" elsewhere celebrated in exhibitions such as "Wack! Art and the Feminist Revolution", "Global Feminisms" and "Kiss Kiss Bang Bang: 45 Years of Art and Feminism", to cite but some of the 2007 offerings. Whatever the reasons adduced—in this instance by the Pompidou's director 5 — for the museum's aversion to mounting "another" exhibition exploring the impact of feminism on artistic creation since the 1970s (the risk of repetition, the failure to fully do justice to the growing presence and impact of women in contemporary art), there is little doubt that, on the part of some of the institution's representatives, "feminist art" was deemed to make claims too "particular", too "radical" or too "accepting" of women's difference to be consecrated "per se" by a Museum conscious of its "mission" of narrating the (universal) history of contemporary art. The end result was the inclusion of a number of iconic feminist works (such as Export's Genital Panic (1969), Schneemann's Interior Scroll (1975), Wilke's S.O.S - Starification Object Series (1974) and Rosler's Semiotics of the Kitchen (1975), to mention but these) — amongst vast swathes of works that were often of far lesser interest and plastic quality, with the exhibition as a whole presenting a plethoric sampling of works in every possible medium and discipline (painting, sculpture, film, video, digital work, performance, design and architecture), all of which were accompanied by a profusion of citations from women artists, theorists and writers on the museum's walls. Generalized as one form of "women's art" amongst many others, the specificity of feminist art practices were collapsed — if I may over schematically adapt here Amelia Jones'

argument addressed to "postmodern art discourses" — into a "postfeminist" state of collective (and artistic) fragmentation that all in all ties in with the Museum's maintenance of "certain modernist and ultimately authoritative and masculinist models of artistic value."⁶ Indeed, it is not the least of the exhibition's paradoxes that its "disempowerment of feminist critiques" was wrought by its incorporating the latter within a narrative of universality that ultimately reduces those ("elles") supposedly writing a universal history of art to the common denominator of their sex.⁷ In this sense, Morineau's advocacy of a universalism in which sexual difference would neither be "counted" nor, a priori, "count" faces the very same feminist objection that she claimed "elles" to transpose within the field of art: the conception of a neutral or transpositional universal asserting truths valid for one and all would reference, in fact, nothing more than a particular that has become dominant, its self-proclaimed neutrality being but the mystifying sublation of masculinist values and point of view. "Integrated" within such a universal, Woman — as De Beauvoir was to assert — is merely "the remainder of the particularity haunting the masculine subject's claim to transcend particularisms." ⁸

All that said, from the perspective of the other contemporaneous shows and critical exegeses focussed on art informed by feminism — as well, more broadly, as much recent work dealing with subjectivation, sexuation and individual and political agency—what's problematic with the conception of a "genderless universal" of the kind promulgated by Morineau is less its effacement of sexual difference than, to the contrary, its remaining bound to a binary division of the sexes (whether joined or not in "equal representation") that ultimately posits the categories of "woman" and "man" as essentialist identities presumed to have universal validity. If the term "genderless" has, in contrast, any currency in this critical view it is that of signalling a "politics" — and *not* a "universal" — of multiple, shifting and discontinuous, subjective and corporeal positionalities emancipated from the normative regulation of reductively dyadic, heterosexist and essentializing categories. Feminism "itself", of course, as well as the art informed by it, has long been deemed guilty of "binarism and a tendency to universalism"⁹ from this perspective — which amounts, all in all, to the contemporary (post-Butlerian) rephrasing of feminism's "constitutive paradox" — with the formulation of "sexuate universals" proffered by the French feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray judged by many as the veritable epitome of unrepentant

reiteration in this respect. Yet, if Irigaray's notion of a double universal does, indeed, rest on an understanding of sexual difference — qua an irreducibly dyadic structure — as "an immediate natural given,"¹⁰ her entire philosophical enterprise consists in maintaining that this "immediate given" only accrues meaning through its complex interweaving with other ("relational" and "morphological") factors constitutive of subjectivation. Indeed, it is this complex, *differential*, configuration of subjectivation that she properly defines as sexual difference, arguing that the latter, furthermore, requires for its full "realization", a conscious "cultivation" on the basis alone of which there can be any possibility of dismantling a supposedly neutral universal that circumscribes the modalities of lived being and symbolic creation within hierarchical distinctions such as those of activity/passivity, form/matter, subject/object and vision/touch. In this sense, her project is not as distinct as it may seem, at first sight, from other recent conceptual refashionings of "sexed universals" that, all in distinguishing their understanding of sexuated identities from any primacy of a "given duality", nonetheless equally argue, both, that the subjective configuration of sexuation does affect the elaboration of concepts, the creation of a work of art, or, indeed, any other form of symbolic undertaking, and that what marks "masculinist" modes of thought is precisely their effacement of this sexuated condition of symbolic creation. Penny Florence, in *Sexed Universals in Contemporary Art*,¹¹ and Monique David-Ménard, in an article entitled "The Universality of Thought is an Outcome; Men Believe it to be a Principle,"¹² both contend that creation by "women" (a category within which David-Ménard would include "men" whose sexuation does not conform to dominant schemas of sexual difference) is marked notably by its problematization of unquestioned dualities, recognized divisions between disciplines and classifications that are accepted as self-evident. The works so produced do attain to a universality, but this is a result and not a (fixed, immutable, pre-established) principle.

The dissolution of divisions (e.g. between "conceptualism" and "materiality", "high art" and "craft", or, indeed, "objective" and "subjective") and the bringing together of different movements and media that explodes traditional ("self-evident") definitions of what constitutes artwork are, of course, characteristics of the feminist practices that have historically functioned to question masculinist narratives of art. One might wish to view this as the *introduction* of sexuation into art, though, given that sexuation was/is always already

there but simply effaced in masculinist models of universalism, let us rather see it as revealing that the universality of art remains an outcome ever in sexuated elaboration.

1 See: Rosalyn Deutsche, Aruna D'Souza, Miwon Kwon, Ulrike Müller, Mignon Nixon, And Senam Okudzeto, *"Feminist Time: A Conversation"*, Grey Room 31, Spring 2008, pp. 32–67.

2 "Elles" is French for the female version of the pronoun "they".

3 These quotes are taken from Morineau's introductory essay to the show's catalogue, (*elles@centrepompidou: Artistes femmes dans la collection du musée national d'art modern, centre de creation industrielle*), ed. Camille Morineau & Annalisa Rimmaudo, Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2009), p. 16, and the exhibition guide. This statement of the exhibition's

universalizing objective was also reproduced on a large panel at the entry to the exhibition, where, interestingly, the English translation replaced the word "universal" with that of "new".

4 Morineau, *Ibid.*, p. 17. And see: Scott, Joan. W., *Only Paradoxes to Offer. French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Harvard University Press, 1996).

5 See: Pacquement, Alfred, "Préface", *elles@centrepompidou*, op.cit., pp. 12-13.

6 Jones, Amelia, "Feminism, Incorporated: Reading 'Postfeminism' in an Anti-Feminist Age," *Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Amelia Jones (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), p. 324.

7 As Germaine Greer states in her review of the show: "*elles@centrepompidou* managed to convince too many visitors to the exhibition that *there was such a thing as women's art* and that women artists were going nowhere" (my emphasis). See:

"Why the world doesn't need an Annie Warhol or a Francine Bacon", *The Guardian*, 17 January 2010.

8 Zerilli, Linda M. G., 'This Universalism Which Is Not One', *Diacritics*, Vol. 28, N° 2 (Summer, 1998), p. 16.

9 As reiterated most pertinently in the present context by Amelia Jones in "1970/2007: The Return of Feminist Art", *X-TRA contemporary art quarterly* (<http://www.x-traonline.org/index.php>).

10 Irigaray, Luce, *I Love to You: Sketch of a Possible Felicity in History*, trans. Alison Martin (NY and London: Routledge, 1996), p. 47.

11 New York: Allworth Press, 2004.

12 *Women Philosophers' Journal*, n° 1, Paris: UNESCO, 2011, p. 61.

Virginia Fraser

Decision is Direction

Feminist writer Dale Spender, theorising the absence of women from certain historical records, asserted that a patriarchal society depended “on the experience and values of males being perceived as the only valid frame of reference for society”,¹ and that the invisibility of women and seeming unreality of women as a force was “fundamental to patriarchy”;² in short that it was a deliberate strategy for appropriation and control.

Similarly critical and post-colonial feminist theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, responding to Partha Chatterjee’s designation of women as a “marginal issue”³ in discussions of communal modes of power in India, asserted that the continuity of patriarchal community and its history depended “on the repeated emptying of [women’s] meaning as instrument”. In fact, she wrote, “the figure of the woman . . . syntaxes patriarchal continuity even as she herself is drained of proper identity.”⁴

In 1981, the American artist Edward Kienholz announced that his wife Nancy Reddin Kienholz, would in future receive equal credit for everything created in the nine years they had been together, although they had only begun co-signing work in 1979. Among Kienholz’s explanations for the revised attribution were that:

*My life and my art have been enriched and incredibly fulfilled by Nancy’s presence and I wish to belatedly acknowledge that fact . . . I further feel I no longer have a man’s right to signature only my name to those efforts which have been produced by both of us. [She has] labored beside me . . . exchanging ideas, making decisions, painting figures, managing homes, designing catalogs, and all the while maintaining a photo chronology.*⁵

In adding a range of emotional, intellectual, domestic, curatorial, and managerial tasks to what artists do Kienholz asserted in the revised author credit the essential role of certain “non-art” activities in the making of “art”.

This retrospective addition of a second author disturbed established attribution systems, throwing up new problems of interpretation for critiques of output based on the supposed personal qualities of artists rather than properties of the work. In a review of two shows –

one of Kienholz's output made before he began working with Reddin Kienholz, and another containing work made together – modern art historian David Anfam elided the problem by referring to both artists as the singular “Kienholz”.

Anfam explained in an endnote that the single appellation “for convenience's sake [was] meant where appropriate to designate both artists”.⁶ This apparent even-handedness was undermined by the fact that Anfam included comment on the work and on Edward Kienholz's personal qualities but about Nancy Reddin Kienholz added only that she was Edward Kienholz's wife.

What would happen if, following Anfam's cautious lead, Reddin Kienholz's name were inserted into every sentence in which Kienholz's name appeared as artist for works produced after 1972? Should the sentence from a 1979 catalogue – “These pieces display the exceptional formal vocabulary and control which Edward Kienholz has at his command” – now be read as meaning that both shared the exceptional formal vocabulary and control when they worked together? If so, could they exercise it only together, could each of them exercise it separately, or were the vocabulary and control still Edward Kienholz's, but qualities to which Nancy Reddin Kienholz now had privileged access?

When praise was completely transferred from skill in the work to the personal qualities of the artist, integration of an extra artist into a reinterpretation became even more complicated, as in the sentence: “His genius of transforming commonplace events into significant art works places him in a very select group of historic and contemporary artists.”⁷ Was this genius now recognised as Reddin Kienholz's also? Or, existing before their collaboration began, did it remain Edward Kienholz's property?

Less problematic was this observation: “Kienholz has transformed the radios into a metaphor of the German male which is accompanied by the German female in the form of washboards”.⁸ The focus here on the work and a particular reading of it, rather than the perceived qualities of the artist who made it, meant that any number of new collaborators could come forth without fundamentally altering the sense of the observation.

Even Kienholz's own thought about the relationship between his work, the viewer and himself as artist could survive the addition of extra artists where inter-subjectivity is assumed as a condition of the work's production and reception. In an undated quotation from a 1977 catalogue, Kienholz said:

*I mostly think of my work as the spoor of an animal that goes through the forest and makes a thought trail, and the viewer is the hunter who comes and follows the trail. At one point I as the trail-maker disappear. The viewer is then confronted with a dilemma of ideas and direction. The possibilities are there to push on further by questions and answers to a new place that I can't even imagine or to turn back to an old and safe place. But even the decision is direction.*⁹

In 1994, after three and a half decades of collaborating on art projects shown under the sole name Christo, partners Christo and Jeanne-Claude re-attributed all their work for those years using both names.¹⁰ According to writer Alexander Tolnay, the prompt for this re-assignment was a question at an art school lecture about their son Cyril, addressed to Christo as though he were Cyril's only parent. Their friend, Wolfgang Volz wrote that the "shocking thing about this remark was that even in the matter of parentage, Jeanne-Claude was not mentioned at all'." ¹¹

Interviewed in 1995 about wrapping the Reichstag, the artists explained their division of labour. Christo was quoted as saying:

. . . The only things I do myself are the drawings . . . It is not only one person's work, it's really a partnership and collaboration during all these years . . .

Jeanne-Claude said:

*The only things I do myself is write the checks, pay the bills and pay the taxes. Everything else is Christo and Jeanne-Claude, including the creativity. It's about time that people correct this mistake . . . I have not said a thing for thirty-five years and it is my fault. Now I have changed my mind.*¹²

Jok Church, a compiler of Christo and Jeanne-Claude's official website, wrote that he believed, although Jeanne-Claude had not said so, it was "sexism in action that works to keep knowledge of Jeanne-Claude's art suppressed".¹³ Whatever "art" meant in this context, it clearly did not refer to the visible works of which she was a co-creator. Those

works at any given time were no less well-known because her name was not attached to them. What was hidden was her connection to them as producer, and also the mystery of her consciousness in relation to them. Here again, as in Kienholz's acknowledgment of Reddin Kienholz the "art" was more – or even other – than the object produced.

Tolnay agreed with Jok Church's blunt assertion of sexism, but credited the artists with a conscious decision to exploit and pander to institutionalised sexism by cleverly casting and managing their performance of the role of artist. He also smoothly reinterpreted Jeanne-Claude's alienation and self-blame, restoring agency to both artists.

The self-imposed division of roles into male artist and creative genius on the one hand and female muse and manager on the other was chosen intentionally, in order strategically to foster a contemporary outward image, shaped by a patriarchal concept of culture. The aim of misleading the public in this way was to overcome initial difficulties in the way to artistic recognition and economic success. Collectors and museum directors were looking for great masters, 'masterpieces' and not 'mistresspieces', seeking some form of partnership in the 'genius' which had produced them. Christo and Jeanne-Claude made use of this desire for purchasable individuality.¹⁴

The year after Christo and Jeanne-Claude recast their artist attribution, an exhibition of early work planned for Berlin's Altes Museum was cancelled after a dispute over credits. ARTnews reported in 1995 that the general director of the state museums of Berlin, Dr Wolf-Dieter Dube, at first wanted to show works attributed only to Christo; to which the artists would not agree. Dube then proposed what he called a compromise, in which the catalogue would jointly credit collaborative works, but exclude Jeanne-Claude's name from the title of the exhibition, an offer they also refused, with Christo quoted as saying: "As long as we're still alive, we will have the last say."¹⁵

This struggle to control who is recognised as an artist by managing attribution and who can be exhibited (addressed above in life and death terms by Christo) confirmed, at the level of sign system, post-colonial historiographer Dipesh Chakrabarty's observation about class relations, that "the veneer of bourgeois equality barely masks the violent, feudal nature of

much of our systems of power and authority”,¹⁶ and supported Spivak’s assertion that a “functional change in sign-systems is a violent event”.¹⁷

1 Dale Spender, *Women of Ideas and What Men Have Done to Them: From Aphra Behn to Adrienne Rich*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1982, p. 5

2 Spender p.11

3 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*, Routledge, 1987, London, p. 219

4 Spivak, p.220

5 Robert L Pincus, *On a scale that competes with the world: the art of Edward and Nancy Reddin Kienholz*, University of California Press, USA, 1990, p. 77

6 David Anfam, “Ed Kienholz”, *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 138, no. 1120, July, 1996, pp. 484-485

7 Edward Kienholz, *Edward Kienholz Sculpture 1976-1979*, exhib. cat., Harry Gallery Association, Washington, 1979, no page number

8 *ibid*

9 Jorn Merkert (ed.), *Edward Kienholz: Volksempfänger*, exhib. cat., Galerie Meaght, Zurich, 1977, p. 12

10 “The Last Say”, *ARTnews*, vol. 94, April 1995, p. 29

11 Christo, *Christo & Jeanne Claude: Early Works 1958-1969*, Taschen 2001 Köln p.6. Tolnay sources the information

to Wolfgang Volz’s Epilogue in Burt Chernow *Christo and Jeanne-Claude: An Authorized Biography* St Martin’s Press 2000 NY pp. 306-353; but it does not appear in this place in the English edition of the book

12 Gianfranco Mantegna, “*Christo and Jeanne-Claude*”, <http://www.jcaordine.com/christo.html>, December 4, 2002

13 Jok Church, “Frequently Asked Questions”, Christo and Jeanne-Claude official website, <http://www.christojeanneclaude.net/christo/faq.html>, March 26, 2002. This observation was subsequently delated

from the version of the Q&A on this site, but appeared at <http://www.udel.edu/eli/nv4/christo/faq.html>.

14 Tolnay in Christo, p.7

15 *ARTnews*, “The Last Say:”, Vol 94, April 1, 1995, p. 29

16 “Invitation to a Dialogue” in Ranajit Guha, *Studies IV: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1985, p. 376

17 Spivak, p.197

Conversation

Dr Carolyn Barnes and Caroline Phillips

Carolyn Barnes: Aesthetic appreciation has long been recognised as a common human value, yet gender, as a primary driver of social differentiation, can slant the reception of an artist's work and influence who becomes an artist. Women have long been linked to specific aesthetic pursuits, sensibilities and statuses: craft not art, the decorative and the domestic, art as a pastime not a profession, aesthetic practices that require patience, manual dexterity and attention to detail, the role of the follower rather than the innovator. There's abundant evidence to challenge each assumption, but do you feel the general category of gender still affects women's participation in art?

Caroline Phillips: It seems to me that the recent recuperation of feminist art in terms of visibility and institutional interest across the world attests to the ongoing concerns of women artists in response to their current conditions, which of course are expressed through practice. The conditions at play in previous 'waves' of feminism required both political and aesthetic responses. Changes in those conditions in the '80s and '90s sought to submerge particular aspects of practice such as depth of feeling or emotion, personal narrative, vulnerability. Ultimately, I think the denial of these factors has resulted in the impetus for change over the last decade.

CB: You've got a point about postmodernism's rejection of depth models invalidating important avenues of critique and exploration for women artists. High profile artists like Barbara Kruger and Cindy Sherman made feminist critique visible in postmodern art, but postmodernism's focus on the seduction of the surface ignored the interplay between general structures of experience and individual lives, showing blindness towards the micro-politics of everyday life. You suggest that the artists included in *The f Word* have consciously rejected the axiomatic postmodern interest in depthlessness to explore the complexity of the gender dichotomy and the diverse, layered forms of subjectivity and experience it creates, using affective states, emotive orientations and sensory triggers as the primary basis for engaging their audience.

CP: I see many female artists today facing a double bind in needing to negotiate problematic gender stereotypes around hard/soft, emotional/rational, personal/political dualities while wishing to explore the affective dimensions of female consciousness, experience and agency. The research over the course of the project and the subsequent selection of artists for the two exhibitions shows that my contemporaries within a feminist art context—or perhaps just the artists that I am personally drawn to—are passionate about exploring interiority of the psyche, emotional affect and trauma, poetic narrative and political activism as did the major artists from the defining era of feminist art in the seventies. These interests respond to the problematic articulation of difference within the complexity of social life.

CB: The ‘practice’ turn in recent social theory nominates practices as the primary unit of sociality, acting as a material point of reference in gender differentiation. Andreas Reckwitz describes practices as routine behaviours composed of bodily and mental activities, material objects and their use, emotional states and tacit knowledge. Artistic agency is bound up in practices. The artists you have selected for The f Word project zone in on the symbolic orders that structure and organize activities, experiences and things, while exchanging fixed and singular ideas of subjectivity and identity for more plural and complex ones. Their work highlights the cultural and social politics circulating between the worlds of bodies, things and signs.

CP: It seems to me to be these relationships between art and social politics that are interwoven throughout each artist’s work and are certainly inspiring and motivating for my own practice. I think the interconnectivity you mention is a big one. For me personally, it is becoming the foundation of my PhD research as it relates to sexual difference theory. Many of the artists in the show explore connections with others through their work—their families, their histories, their communities, their sense of place. Reckwitz’s criteria—in particular bodily activities—are also fundamental. It is through the body that the other things follow, the mental activities, the making and handling of things, the performance of identity, emotional content and knowledge. Perhaps the point where gender comes into play is the routinised behaviour. All artists’ practices are specific routines in some way or another, but thinking now about

Reckwitz's assessment, maybe it is gendered repetition in the way we approach this that makes the difference.

CB: To me, the work of the artists in *The f Word* draws its impact from working with and against the normative affordances of objects, materials and practices, revealing how aesthetic and affective associations intervene in tangible and specific ways in relations between the personal and the social, including in terms of gender.

CP: Yes. On one level, a number of the artists in the show are reworking the previously gendered, arguably less valued practices that relate to craft and community in a way that reconfigures those activities and creates new outcomes out in the world. For example, the artists in the Gippsland Art Gallery show demonstrate finely tuned and nuanced representations of women artists, community groups and larger social migrations. Through the specific materials and methods of their practice, they comment on the powerful ways that lives are affected by their relations with others. In the second exhibition at Ararat Regional Art Gallery, the artists' concerns appear more personal, but on closer inspection they are drawing on abstract and symbolic referents that go beyond a single author. Many of these artists are drawing on trauma, memory and loss to tap into much wider spectrums of history and human life.

CB: For both groups, the way their work is simultaneously individualistic and social does echo the interweaving of aesthetics, practices and micropolitics in 1970s feminist art. I also see a parallel in the strong alignment of means and ends in each artist's work. When 1970s artists rejected modernism's maxim of aesthetic autonomy to reengage with everyday experience and agitate for social change, it resulted in a major expansion, an explosion really, of artistic possibilities. The work in both *The f Word* exhibitions seems to share a common quality in the way form and content cohere around the issues at hand to generate a complex, nuanced and diffuse body of critique. Whether the artists are creating highly crafted artefacts, developing open-ended situations, or repurposing elements of mass culture and the decorative arts, they take a conceptual approach to working that harnesses aesthetics and practices to the exploration of material-symbolic relations within social life. It is often regarded as simplistic to see a link between artist

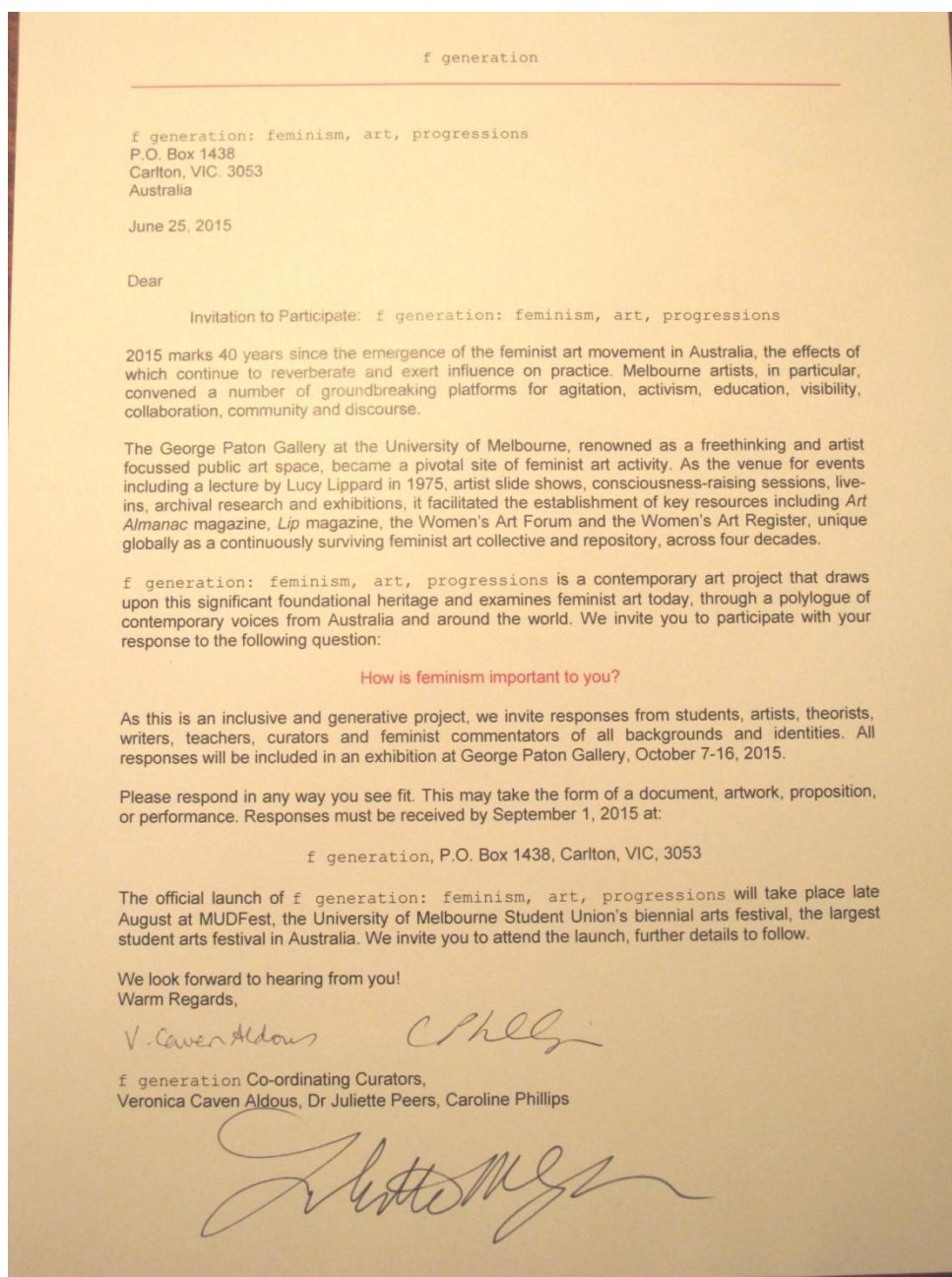
critique and social change, but 1970s feminist art showed that previously marginalised and muted subjects could act and speak for themselves on all manner of issues. The artists in The f Word project continue this legacy of acting through art practice within a feminist paradigm to claim a voice and to advance meaningful critique, doing this alongside other groups in society using other practices. Otherwise, there would be only silence and invisibility.

Appendix C: *f generation: feminism, art, progressions* and *AS IF: Echoes of the Women's Art Register* - Lists of exhibiting artists and works

f generation: feminism, art, projections, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, October 7 – 17, 2015.

Co-curated by Veronica Caven Aldous, Juliette Peers and Caroline Phillips

Invitation letter



Works listed as encountered in the space, with artist Country of Origin:

Main gallery, from West (left) wall:

Julieanna Preston (NZ) - *fatty solids, companions in elocution*, 2015, sound file, headphones, ipod, soap dish, mirror

Sandy Caldow (AUS) - *The public/private face*, 2015, digital print on cotton rag paper

Anne Bennett (AUS) - *Potentiality*, 2015, ink, gouache

Janice Gobey (AUS) - *Force*, 2015, oil on gouache

Filomena Coppola (AUS) - *Reclaiming Isis – Filomena* (from the series *Reclaiming Isis – Auset*), 2015, digital photograph

Micky Allan (AUS) - *The battle is not yet won*, 2015, pastel on paper

Lynx Sainte-Marie (CAN) - *Dis/engagement*, 2015, digital photography collage

Liz Coats (AUS) – *Untitled*, 2015, acrylic

Catherine Evans (AUS/GER) – *Snorkel*, 2010, photograph

Valerie Carew (CAN) – *Cocooning*, 2015, photography and fabric media

On and around the desk:

Kate Beynon (AUS) - *Remedios Varo & Ms Bird*, 2012, mixed media

Tasha Smith (NZ) - *Sharing Bruce's T-shirt*, 2015, 100% polyester

Penny Algar (AUS) – *Contours*, 2015, handmade printed book in case (collagraph with chine collée)

Simone Hine (AUS) - *A film and a conversation*, 2015, essay in booklet form

Lynn Mowson (AUS) - *The flesh that binds us*, 2015, artist book (latex & tissue)

Vida Goldstein (AUS) - *Woman Suffrage in Australia*, 1908, booklet (International Woman Suffrage Alliance), republished 2008 by the Victorian Women's Trust

Linda Wilken (AUS) - *Minister for Women*, 2015, collage

Kate Just (USA/AUS) - *HOPE & SAFE*, 2014, exhibition catalogue (from the exhibition *HOPE & SAFE*, Daine Singer, Oct 15 - Nov 15, 2014, with essay by Juliette Peers), soft cover, unpaginated

Kate Just (USA/AUS) - *The Furies*, 2015, exhibition catalogue (from the exhibition *The Furies*, St.Kilda Town Hall, Mar 8 - Jun 30, 2015, with essay by Caroline Phillips), soft cover, unpaginated

Women's Art Register (AUS) - *AS IF: 40 Years and Beyond, Celebrating the Women's Art Register*, 2015, exhibition catalogue (from the *AS IF*: festival, Melbourne, Aug 11 – Nov 7, 2015, with essay by Juliette Peers), soft cover, 10 pgs

Veronica Caven Aldous (AUS) - *Feminism is not a theory*, 2015, 3 x badges

Kathryn Eddy, Janell O'Rourke, L. A Watson Eds. (USA) - *Art of the Animal: fourteen women artists explore the sexual politics of meat*, 2015, book (Lantern Books, New York, 2015), hardcover, 185 pgs

Therese Kenyon (AUS) - *Pecadillo 8:4*, 2013, mixed media box

Jessica Kritzer (AUS) - *10 years younger in 5 minutes with 50% more radiance*, 2014, moving image/video

Various artists - *artist statements and additional responses* (inside cream folder)

Irena Kuzminsky and Jan Delaney (AUS) - *Light Muses*, 2009, book, soft cover, 63 pgs

WIA Projects (CAN) - *Border Crossings: An "Erotic" Affair?* 2012, book (WIA Projects, Toronto, 2012), soft cover, 34 pgs

Women's Art Register (AUS) – *The Women's Art Register*, 2005, booklet (with essay by Juliette Peers), soft cover, 18 pgs

Caroline Phillips (AUS) - *The f Word, contemporary feminist art in Australia*, 2014, exhibition catalogue (from the exhibition *The f Word*, Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale, Jul 19 – Sept 7, 2014 and Ararat Regional Art Gallery, Ararat, Aug 28 – Oct 12, 2014), soft cover, 48 pgs

Jocelynn Scutt (AUS/UK) - *Women and the Law*, 1990, book (The Law Book Co. Ltd. Sydney, 1990) soft cover, 596 pgs

Jocelynn Scutt (AUS/UK) - *Singular Women, Reclaiming Spinsterhood*, 1995, book (Artemis, Melbourne, 1995) soft cover, 320pgs

Critical Studies and Gender Theory in Architecture, KTH Stockholm (SWE) – *Critical Studies (Re)searching*, 2015, dossier of projects (KTH Royal Institute of Technology School of Architecture, Stockholm, 2015), 26 pgs

Juno Gemes and Aku Kadogo (AUS) - *Love Cancer*, 2014, film: still images, 5:00 (on portable DVD player)

Josephine Telfer and Christina Green (AUS) - *Cosmos 1*, 2015, video, 6.12 (on portable DVD player)

Deborah Kelly (AUS) - *A whistling woman and a crowing hen*, 2008-2010, 2 x offset postcards

Laurene Dietrich (AUS) - *f gen postcards*, 2015, 3 x postcards, digital image on card

Sunday School (Kelly Doley and Diana Smith) (AUS) - *Feminist Futures: The Lucy R. Lippard Lectures*, 2015, Video of live performance (Artspace, Sydney, 26 July 2015), 28:09 mins, filmed by Kate Blackmore, supported by Artspace Sydney and the Ideas Platform.

Louise Burchill (AUS/FRA) – *Postcard from Paris*, 2015, archival postcard, text

Behind desk and continuing West wall:

Maxienne Tritton-Young (AUS) - *The Birth of Pinocchia*, 2003, drawing

Elizabeth Gertsakis (AUS) - *My Grandmother*, 1998, 3 x digital prints

Jaye Early (AUS) – *Photograph of drawing of photograph of Margaret Fuller*, 2014, pencil and ink

Siobhán Hannigan (AUS) - *nafasi na usawa (opportunity and equality)*, 2015, 1965 photograph by Elizabeth Hannigan, 1929-2004, reprint from slides

Jane Trengove and Susan Long (AUS) – *Nice*, 2000/2015, text and original polaroid photograph

Michelle Neal (AUS) - *Finding Thelma McLean*, 2015, found object embroidery work by Thelma McLean (1988)

Barbara Bolt (AUS) – *Indifference*, 2015, watercolour

Videos on TV monitor:

Katherine Edwards (AUS) – *Thresholds*, 2014-2015, digital video, colour, looped

Katya Grokhovsky (AUS/USA) – *Gift*, 2013, digital video

Tania Smith (AUS) – *Untitled (heel)*, 2015, video, 0:57

Siân Torrington (NZ) – *Sunk*, 2014, mixed media

Art/Mums Collective: Clare Rae, Clare Needham, Nina Ross, Tai Snaith, Jessie Scott, Hannah Tai, Claudia Phares (AUS) – *F Generation progressive artwork*, 2015, text and digital prints

Jenna Reid (CAN) – *Childless//by//Choice*, 2015, hand dyed cotton, muslin, unbleached cotton muslin, cotton batting and thread

Floor sculpture:

Dianne Beevers (AUS) – *Sequels*, glass, digital images, wood

Projection screen:

Karen Buczynski-Lee (AUS) and Jocelynn Scutt (AUS/UK) – *The Incredible Woman*, 2000, Film: 10:00

Anna Helme with Rebecca Stegh and Nina Buchanan (AUS) – *Mother's not herself today*, 2015, single channel video with stereo audio 16:09

Wall drawing and hanging sculpture:

Danielle McCarthy (AUS) – *Moving, changing, ceaseless, restless*, 2015, performance drawing (chalk on black foamcore) performed Wednesday, Oct 7, 2015

Tracey-Mae Chambers (CAN) – *Burnt Offering*, 2015, tulle, copper wire, plaster

East (right hand side) wall:

Pam Patterson (CAN) - *The Ask*, 2015, photo based performance (2 x photographs)

Lynne Barwick (AUS) - *AGNSW/Gallery Shop/Monograph Shelves/August 1, 2015/A-Z Women*, 2015, print ink on Canson arches aquarelle rag, 310 gsm, edition 10+1 artist proof

hannah goldstein (AUS/GER) - *Protect me from what I want*, 2014, photograph

Stephanie Leigh (AUS) - *I want to walk home, not run*, 2014, photographic documentation of public art work

LEVEL Artist Run Initiative (AUS) - *Recipe for a revolution*, photograph

Tal Fitzpatrick (AUS) - *Feminist Killjoy*, 2015, appliqué quilt

Tal Fitzpatrick (AUS) - *Girls just want to have fun-damental human rights*, 2015, appliqué quilt

Amanda Fewell (AUS) - *Making Social Fabric*, 2012, cotton and synthetic fabrics, cotton embroidery thread

Cuntamponary Art Collective (CAN) - *Cuntamponary Art Manifesto (English text version)* 2015, poster

Gail Stiffe (AUS) - *Before I was an artist*, 2015, hand-made paper, batik, print and indigo dye

Paulina Campos (AUS) - *I've gotta voice*, 2014, digital print on paper

Maria Richardson (AUS) - *If I can't dance it's not my revolution*, markers and watercolour on paper

Ann Zomer and Lucy Parker (AUS) - *Balancing the ~~yin and yang~~ polarities*, 2015, illustrated poem

Paula do Prado (AUS) – *Fresh*, 2014, photo collage, acrylic on transparency

Central wall panels, sides of panel and on floor at entrance:

Jennifer Lade (AUS) – *Unstoppable*, 2011, photomedia

Bon Mott (AUS) – *She's got pace*, 2015, 3 x inkjet prints on acetate

Casey Jenkins (AUS) – *#gross*, 2015, wool on canvas

Casey Jenkins (AUS) – *attention whore*, 2015, wool on canvas

Rebekah Pryor (AUS) - *Continuous narrative with salt (installation view)*, 2015, photograph, found glass jars, salt

Joanne Makas (AUS) - *Mending our Desire*, 2015, acrylic, metallic paint, tissue paper, metallic thread, linen

Wendy Kelly (AUS) - *9 x 5 2015*, 2015, mixed technique on canvas on board

Julia Boros (AUS) - *Finding my voice*, 2015, stretch plastic wrap and letterhead

Sculpture with wooden plinth:

Alison Thomson (AUS) - *Being House*, 2015, mixed media

Tables – from front table, left to right anticlockwise:

Jacqueline Taylor (UK) - *(M)other tongue*, 2015, paint, resin, latex, embroidery, hand printed text

Elin Howe (AUS) - *How is feminism important to you?* 2015, text

Carol Mark (CAN) - *The corset of homelessness*, 2015, 2 x digital prints

Marina Kassianidou (CYP) - *(Re)Positionings*, 2015, digital print on paper

Anne Marsh (AUS) – *For me, feminism is a practice for living*, 2015, text

Nina Siska (AUS) – *Untitled*, 2015, prose with watercolour

Jocelynne Scutt (AUS/UK) - *Women, Law & the Writing of Women's Lives*, 2015, text

nattysolo.com (AUS) - *Wendy Whiteley, Fake or Fortune*, 2015, illustrated document, 17 pages

Kim Donaldson (AUS) - *It's hard work but its worth it!!!* 2015, Technopia Tours Feminist Art Bus 2014 postcard

Hotham Street Ladies (AUS) - *Installing 'You Beaut' on Punt Rd. with pram*, 2015, photograph

Cuntamponary Art Collective (CAN) - *Cut the Bullshit*, 2015, poster

Cuntamponary Art Collective (CAN) - *Cuntamponary Art Manifesto (French audio version)*, 2015, spoken word by Julia Maquet (FRA)

Leena Raudvee (CAN) - *Memory Scars*, 2011, photographic documentation of performance

Jane Polkinghorne (AUS) - *(Un)Titles: Red, Black, White*, 2014, 3x inkjet prints on cotton rag paper

Kathy Temin (AUS) – *Untitled*, 2015, text

Su Yang (CHI) - *Injection of Hyaluronic Acid*, 2014, egg tempera on clay board

Meredith Rogers (AUS) – *Untitled*, 2015, text with photograph

Sally Northfield (AUS) – *Untitled*, 2015, text

India Zegan (AUS) - *PAM/MAP (For Pam Harris 1946-1992)*, 2015, plywood, brass hinges

Rosa Jones (IRE) - *Bus Poem*, 2015, text

Kate Robertson (AUS) - *Self portrait, with camera*, 2014, iphone photograph, b/w

Grace Pundyk (AUS) - *Drink Me*, 2015, paper, glass

Juliette Peers (AUS) - *On Women, Art and Public Culture and Memory, reflections inspired by f generation: feminism, art, progressions*, 2015, iphone photograph in vintage headwear and text

AS IF: Echoes of the Women's Art Register, West Space, Melbourne, October 2 – November 7, 2015.

Co-curated by Emily Castle, Danielle Hakim, Stephanie Leigh, Caroline Phillips, Juliette Peers and Kalinda Vary

Audio recordings:

AS IF: Echoes from the Women's Art Register

Six artists speak about being a woman and being an artist, particularly when the Women's Art Register was formed in the 1970s, and the impact of the Women's Art Register over the following decades.

Erica McGilchrist interviewed by Barbara Blackman

Recorded at Canberra on 15 May 1985 (With thanks from the National Library of Australia - 31.24 mins - extracts from NLA 3 cassettes (ca. 270 min.) 1 7/8 ips.

The co-founder of WAR, Erica McGilchrist discusses the Women's Art Movement in Melbourne; Women's Registry of Art and the difficulties experienced by women artists.

Jan Delaney interviewed by Sally Northfield

Recorded in Melbourne 3 July 2015 (3.58 mins)

Jan is an artist whose involvement with WAR bridges the four decades of its existence. Jan was present at the first meeting at the Ewing and Paton Gallery at the University of Melbourne in 1975 following the visit from art critic Lucy Lippard. Jan continued as a volunteer at WAR until late 2013 when ill-health forced her reluctant retirement. Jan remains in contact with WAR and is exhibiting in the *AS IF: When and Now* – WAR members show at the QV gallery.

Anna Sande interviewed by Sally Northfield

Recorded in Beeac 13 July 2015 (11.56mins)

(formerly Anna Havana) – was the joint co-ordinator, with Bonita Ely, of the WAR extension project from 1976 to 1978 which documented women's artworks held within Australian art galleries and art publications and collated the foundations of the WAR archive. Anna is exhibiting in the *AS IF: When and Now* – WAR members show at the QV gallery.

Bonita Ely interviewed by Juliette Peers

Recorded in Sydney 5 March 2015 (8.17mins)

Bonita was the joint co-ordinator, with Anna Havana, of the WAR extension project from 1976 to 1978 which documented women's artworks held within Australian art galleries and art publications and collated the foundations of the WAR archive.

Pat Hillcoat interviewed by Sally Northfield

Recorded in Melbourne 30 March 2015 (7.07mins)

Pat was involved in WAR from 1978 and was on the committee that organised Judy Chicago's work *The Dinner Party* to travel to Melbourne in 1988. WAR hosted a celebratory dinner for over 1200 guests in the Melbourne Exhibition Building.

Elizabeth Gower interviewed by Sally Northfield

Recorded in Melbourne 25 August 2015 (22.39mins)

Elizabeth was present at the 1975 visit by Lucy Lippard and was subsequently involved in the Women's Art Register, the Women's art forum and the LIP magazine – all that was brewing from within and around the Ewing and Paton Galleries run by Kiffy Rubbo and Meredith Rogers at the time.

Lesley Dumbrell, the co-founder of WAR, lives overseas and was unable to participate in an interview for the AS IF festival. An interview by James Gleeson with Lesley talking about her art and practice is available from National Gallery Australia
<http://nga.gov.au/Research/Gleeson/artists/Dumbrell.cfm>

Isabel Davies (present at the first meeting in 1975 and a long time committee member and supporter of WAR) also spoke with Sally Northfield in July 2015 and chose to deposit her interview in the WAR archive only. Isabel's interview has informed the planning for the AS IF festival and a comprehensive collection of artist statements and images of her many works can be viewed by visiting WAR.

Meredith Rogers (Assistant Director of the Ewing & George Paton Galleries at the University of Melbourne (1974-1979) will open the AS IF: Echoes from WAR exhibition on 1 October 2015.

Curated projection programme of digitised slides from the collection:

AS IF: Echoes from the Women's Art Register

Wall Paste Up of projection program, with (incomplete) information held in archive

01	Ada May Plante	Max Watkins of Ballarat		
02	Adelaide Ironside	Self Portrait		1855
03	Adrian Axelrad			
04	Agnes Goodsir	Still Life		
05	Agnes Goodsir	Still Life		
06	Ailsa O'Connor		Mixed media	1983
07	Aletta Lewis	Tafagonei	Oil	1930
08	Anastasia Bekos	The Migrant Arrival	Oil on canvas	1989
09	Anastasia Bekos	Migrant Families	Oil on canvas	1988
10	Angela Reid-Robertson	Lavina Blue		
11	Angela Reid-Robertson	Mist		
12	Ann C Davis	Objects Reflected	Watercolour	1980-1
13	Ann Taylor	Bush Magic	Branches, melaleuca amaryllis, seed pods, grasses	1982
			Natural materials	1983
14	Ann Taylor	Mega Long		
15	Anna & Bron Platten	The Edible Woman	Cake	1984
16	Anna Cohn	Happy Tree	Fibreglass	1975
17	Anne Geroe	White crackle jar	Stoneware	1984
18	Anne Graham	A Cup of Tea		1964

19	Anne Graham	Tree Fern with Lyrebirds		1968
20	Anne Graham	The Opening Speech		1969
21	Anne Graham			
22	Anne Langdon	Sleeping	Silk screen	1987
23	Anne Langdon	Mother-In-Laws Tongue	Silk screen	1987
24	Anne Morris	To Make a Rug	Nylon, steel, enamel, wood	1980
25	Anne Morris with Phillip McKinney & Nicci Johnson	Laverton Community Caravan		1986
26	Anne Morris with Shang Dezhou & Luo Zhitan	Australia China Mural, Queen Victoria Markets Melbourne		1985
27	Anne Morris, Co-ordinator	Detail of Women's Mural, Ainslie Shopping Centre Canberra	Acrylic on concrete	1982
28	Anne Morris, Co-ordinator	Detail of Women's Mural, Ainslie Shopping Centre Canberra	Acrylic on concrete	1982
29	Annie Duncan	Image From Bath Fables Series No.8	Cibachrome prints with gouache	1988
30	Annie Taylor	Private Interlude	Collage	1994
31	Annie Taylor	Voyeur	Collage	1994
32	Another Planet poster Collective	Technical Skills Are Out of this World	Screenprint	1986
33	Another Planet poster Collective	Girls Apprenticeship and Technical Scheme	Screenprint	1986
34	Another Planet poster Collective	Breaking the Silence	Screenprint	1986

35 Another Planet poster Collective	Sobering Thoughts	Screen print	1986
36 Belinda Allen	Manifesto-Self Portrait	Photographic silk screen print	1981
37 Belinda Hellier	Women	Screenprint on canvas	1985
38 Belinda Hellier	Boy	Screenprint on canvas	1985
39 Betty Conabere	Hemlock	Watercolour	1973
40 Betty Conabere	Devil's Claw	Watercolour	1976
41 Bonita Ely	Blondie: A Self Portrait	Fibreglass	1972
42 Bonita Ely	The World is my Ashtray	Fibreglass, sand, water, foam rubber, plastic	1972
43 Bonita Ely	At Home with the Locust People, 1975	Mixed media	1975
44 Bonita Ely	Couch	Fabric, wood	1975
45 Bonita Ely	Mt Feathertop Project - Spring II	Pastel	1977
46 Bonita Ely	Mt Feathertop Project - Spring I	Pastel	1976
47 Bonita Ely	Breadline	Performance	1981
48 Bonita Ely	Mt Feathertop - A Wilderness Area, Part A	Sculpted map - brown paper, papier mache, drawings, slides, written material	1978
49 Bonita Ely	Mt Feathertop - A Wilderness Area, Part A	Sculpted map - brown paper, papier mache, drawings, slides, written material	1978

50	Bonita Ely	Mt Feathertop - A Wilderness Area, Part A	Sculpted map - brown paper, papier mache, drawings, slides, written material	1978
51	Bonita Ely	Mt Feathertop - A Wilderness Area, Part A	Sculpted map - brown paper, papier mache, drawings, slides, written material	1978
52	Bonita Ely	Murry River Punch Performance		1980
53	Bonita Ely	Murry River Punch Performance		1980
54	Bonita Ely	Tracing Mt.Feathertop		1977
55	Brigid Cole-Adams			
56	Brigid Cole-Adams			
57	Brigid Cole-Adams	Back Beach	Steel frames, cloth, paper, paint, wax	1986
58	Brigid Cole-Adams	Grey Room	Acrylic canvas mixed media	1983
59	Brigid Cole-Adams			
60	Bronwyn Oliver	Hatchery	Copper wire, led, wood	1991
61	Carol Bryan	Screen Door	Wood, polyester, resin hessian, latex	1976
62	Carol Bryan	The Office as House	Photograph	1979
63	Carol Bryan	Gender and our age of science	Performance	1980
64	Caroline Phillips	Warped	Stainless steel, synthetic rope	2015

65	Caroline Phillips	Dysfunction	Recycled and new mixed media	2012
66	Caroline Phillips	Enmeshed	Paint, rubber, octopus straps	2013
67	Caroline Phillips	Installation	Recycled rubber, paint	2009
68	Caroline Phillips	Untitled	Recycled rubber, wood	2009
69	Caroline Phillips	Curve Bar	Recycled steel, acrylic tape	2015
70	Caroline Phillips	Easement	Rubber, octopus straps, paint	2013
71	Cath Cherry	General Relativity & Quantum Mechanics		1980
72	Cath Cherry	General Relativity & Quantum Mechanics		1980
73	Cernak	The Dream (Fates)	Oil and encaustic	1984
74	Christine Berkman	Small's Paradise	Oil on canvas	1977
75	Cuna Island Women	The Creation	Cotton appliqué	
76	Danielle Hakim	Emerging Artist	Video	2010
77	Danielle Hakim	Sell Out	Photograph	2010
78	Danielle Hakim	Positive Negative	Photograph	2010
79	Danielle Hakim	Breakthrough Ideas	Video	2012
80	Danielle Hakim	How Am I Going To Explain This To My Parents	Digital print	2012
81	Danielle Hakim	I Don't Know If I Am Going To Make I...	Digital print	2012
82	Danielle Hakim	It's All Downhill From Here	Digital print	2012
83	Danielle Hakim	It's the Thought That Counts	Screen print	2013

84	Danielle McCarthy	Between Bodies	Oil on Perspex	2012
85	Danielle McCarthy	Entanglement	Oil on Perspex	2014
86	Danielle McCarthy	Entanglement (Detail)	Oil on Perspex	2014
87	Danielle McCarthy	Entanglement (Detail)	Oil on Perspex	2014
88	Danielle McCarthy	Entanglement (Detail)	Oil on Perspex	2014
89	Daphne Mayo	Portrait Bust		1922
90	Daphne Mayo	Two Jolly Sailors		
91	Deborah Klein	Sunny Sunday Afternoon	Linocut	1985
92	Deborah Walker	Boxing Day	Lithograph	1984
93	Deborah Walker	Love Knot	Lithograph	1984
94	Dora Chapman			c1940's
95	Dora Chapman			
96	Dora Chapman			
97	Dora Chapman			
98	Dora Chapman			
99	Dora Ohlfsen	Miss Nellie Stewart	Pink marble	1921
100	Dorothy Braund	Piggy Back	Oil on masonite	1983
101	Dorrit Black	Air travel - Coconut Palms	Coloured linocut	c1949
102	Eleanor Hart	Strata	Etching	1981
103	Eleanor Hart	Embryonic Forms	Etching	1981
104	Elizabeth Bodey			
105	Elizabeth Bodey			
106	Elizabeth Coats	Bridges Series	Acrylic on linen	1983
107	Elizabeth Coats	Bridges Series	Acrylic on linen	1983
108	Elizabeth Gower	Installation at Powell St Gallery	8 layers of mixed media sheets	1977

109	Elizabeth Gower	Installation 3rd Biennale Sydney	8 layers of mixed media sheets	1977
110	Elizabeth Gower	Re-arrangements series	Acrylic on cartridge paper	1982
111	Elizabeth Gower	Re-arrangements series	Acrylic on cartridge paper	1982
112	Elizabeth Gower	City series	Acrylic poster on paper	1983
113	Elizabeth Gower	Found Images		
114	Emily Castle	Toward Equilibrium	Two channel video	2011
115	Emily Castle	Wall 1	Digital print	2013
116	Emily Castle	Wall 2	Digital print	2013
117	Emily Castle	Wall 3	Poster	2013
118	Emily Castle	Untitled	Poster	2013
119	Emily Castle	Untitled	Digital Print	2015
120	Emily Castle	Flippers	Poster	2015
121	Erica McGilchrist	The Abandoned		
122	Erica McGilchrist	Patient at Kew		
123	Erica McGilchrist	The Enigma Series		
124	Erica McGilchrist			
125	Erica McGilchrist	Snore Putting its Best Foot Forward	Pen, Indian ink on paper	1967
126	Erica McGilchrist	Wall to Wall Snore	Indian ink and wash on paper	1967
127	Erica McGilchrist			
128	Erica McGilchrist			
129	Erica McGilchrist	Painted Tram		

130	Erica McGilchrist	Painted Tram		
131	Erica McGilchrist	Mural for The University College		
132	Erica McGilchrist	Mural for The University College		
133	Erica McGilchrist			
134	Ethel Spowers			
135	Eva Benson	Psyche	Bronze	c1919
136	Eve Glen	Peace Tram	Enamels, tram	
137	Eve Glen	A Blanket for Maria's Baby	Acrylic	1982
138	Eve Glen	Women's Mural	Acrylic	1985
139	Eve Glen	Women's Mural (Detail)	Acrylic	1985
140	Eve Glen	Mural, Railway Bridge, Westgarth Street, Northcote		1983
141	Ewa Narcowitz	Scaled Fish	Photographic emulsion on aluminium	1994
142	Francesca Mataraga	Installation for COFA Space		2012
143	Francesca Mataraga	Minimalismo 2		2012
144	Francesca Mataraga	Site Specific Painting for Queen St Studio		2012
145	Francesca Mataraga	A to B (Wall Work for Articulate Project Space)		2013
146	Francesca Mataraga	Banner for Bondi		2014
147	Gail Stiffe	Outback Impressions	Paper artist book	2002
148	Gail Stiffe	Outback Impressions (Detail)	Paper artist book	2002
149	Gail Stiffe	Signs of Life Suburbia		

150	Gaylene Allen			
151	Geraldine Berkemeier	The opening		
152	Gillian Lodge	And I'd Like to Roll to Rio Some Day Before I'm Old	Acrylic	1985
153	Gillian Lodge	Yellow Room	Aqua Tint	1983
154	Grace Crowley	Painting	Oil on hardboard	1950
155	Gwen Barringer	The Bridge Pylons	Watercolour	
156	Gwenda Wiseman	B.L.F. Banner in Progress; Side 2 Eureka Flag		1983-4
157	Hanna Haspel	Leda & the W.A. Swan	Embroidery	1982
158	Hatice Karvecioglu	No title, original d'oyley pattern	Cotton	
159	Hatice Karvecioglu	No title, original d'oyley pattern	Cotton	
160	Helen Casey & Sara Charlesworth	Annamalia Chimenton	Photograph	1984
161	Helen Casey & Sara Charlesworth	Lucy Charlesworth	Coloured photograph	1984
162	Helen Casey & Sara Charlesworth	Nell John, Yvonne Smith & Betty Olle	Photographs	1984
163	Hilda Rix Nicholas			
164	Hilda Rix Nicholas	In Picardie		
165	Hilda Rix Nicholas	Studio Corner		
166	Ilona Nelson	Shy as a Butterfly		
167	Inge King	Great Planet	Steel painted black	1976-7
168	Inge King	Echo	Steel maquette	1975
169	Inge King	In Flight	Steel	1978
170	Inge King	Forward Surge	Steel	1972-4

171	Isabel Davies	Collector's Items and My Father the Collector		
172	Isabel Davies	Change of Direction	Oil	1968
173	Isabel Davies	Silent Waters	Oil	1968
174	Isabel Davies	A Mungo Herbarium	Collage, assemblage	1986-7
175	Isabel Davies	A Mungo Herbarium	Collage, assemblage	1986-7
176	Isabel Davies	Desert Pears	Mixed media assemblage	1991
177	Jan Delaney	Kakadu Edge totem	Oil on canvas	1993
178	Jan Delaney	Untitled	Oil on canvas	1993
179	Jan Murray	Guarding die Grenze	Oil on Linen	1984
180	Jane Kent	Dead Bird Installation: Bound But Dead Anyway		1979
181	Jane Kent	Dead Bird Installation: Bound But Dead Anyway		1979
182	Jane Kent	Dead Bird Installation: Bound But Dead Anyway		1979
183	Jane Kent	Performance 2: At The Bakery		1979
184	Jane Kent	Performance 2: At The Bakery		1979
185	Jane Kent	Performance 4: Anyone Can Be An Experimental Artist		1980
186	Jane Kent	Performance 6: Yellow Cake		1980
187	Jane Kent	Performance 6: Yellow Cake		1980
188	Jane Nemec			1985

189	Jayn Thomas	Light Pattern II	Dobby loom weaving	1984
190	Jean Appleton	Artichokes	Oil on canvas	1980
191	Jean Appleton	Still Life in Grey	Oil on canvas	1984
192	Jennifer McMahon	Mesmerised in Paris	Oil on canvas	1983
193	Jennifer McMahon	Living in frames	Oil on canvas	1982-3
194	Jennifer Turpin	Waterworks III, AGNSW, South view	Water, nylon threads, copper pipes	1991
195	Jenny Carrington	Fish	Oil on canvas	1972
196	Jenny Carrington	Red Sun of the Morning	Oil on canvas	1974
197	Jenny Carrington	Sunrise with Rainbow and Clouds	Oil on canvas	1975
198	Jenny Carrington	Harvest Moon	Oil on canvas	1976
199	Jenny Carrington	Crater Lake	Oil on canvas	1978
200	Jenny Carrington	Self Portrait	Oil on canvas	1981
201	Jenny Carrington	The Dam	Oil on canvas	1982
202	Jenny Carrington	Double Rainbow	Oil on canvas	1986
203	Jenny Carrington	The Dam	Tapestry	1974
204	Jenny Watson			
205	Jenny Watson			
206	Jill Orr	Blinding Surface	Sculpture performance	1978
207	Jill Orr	Blinding Surface	Sculpture performance	1978
208	Jill Orr	Blinding Surface	Sculpture performance	1978
209	Jill Orr	Blinding Surface	Sculpture performance	1978

210	Jill Orr		Performance photograph	
211	Jill Orr		Performance photograph	
212	Jill Orr	Mildura Sculpture Triennial		
213	Jill Orr	Mildura Sculpture Triennial		
214	Jill Orr	Mildura Sculpture Triennial		
215	Jill Orr	Mildura Sculpture Triennial		
216	Jill Orr	Mildura Sculpture Triennial		
217	Jill Orr	Mildura Sculpture Triennial		
218	Jill Orr	Mildura Sculpture Triennial		
219	Jill Posters Collective, Carol Wilson and Catriona Holyoake	Women's Anzac March	Screenprinted poster	1983
220	Joy Hester	Young Woman	Ink on paper	c1940
221	Joy Hester	The Cellist	Watercolour	c1940
222	Joy Hester	Nude 1	Watercolour	c1940
223	Joy Hester	Woman Resting	Ink on paper	c1940
224	Joy Hester	Woman's Head	Oil on board	c1940
225	Judith Dinham	Wrapped Figure Form	Mixed media on paper	1985
226	Judith Dinham	Figure Lines	Mixed media on paper	1985
227	Judy Cassab	My husband reads to the children	Water colour	1948
228	Judy Cassab	Figure and gum tree	Oil on board	
229	Judy Cassab	Undulation	Gouache	1984
230	Judy Cassab	In the nursery	Water colour	1948

231	Judy Holding	Santa Teresa Box	Mixed media	1992
232	Judy Holding	Untitled	Oil on canvas	1989
233	Judy Holding	Untitled	Oil on canvas	1989
234	Judy Lorraine	Drum	Stoneware and skin	1974-6
235	Judy Lorraine	Gong	Stoneware	1974-6
236	Julie Cunningham	Still Photographs From Film, Whatsabody	Film Stills	1981
237	Julie Cunningham	Dandy of Late 19th Century with Corsetted Woman From Film, Whatsabody	Film Stills	1983
238	Julie Haas	The Song	Watercolour	1991
239	Juliette Peers	Selfie July 3rd 1863	Iphone photograph	2013
240	June Stephenson			
241	June Stephenson			
242	Justine Hall	Tropical Fish Pillow	Crochet	1999
243	Jutta Feddersen	Early Mail 1	Urethane foam, plaster bandage, found objects, paint	1987
244	Kalinda Vary	Untitled video still	Video (colour)	2014
245	Kalinda Vary	Crotch 2	C-type print	2015
246	Kalinda Vary	Victory Speech	HD Video 3:14 secs	2014
247	Kalinda Vary	Now Go Over There and Stand On That Chair	Horsehair, canvas, stretcher arms HD video 1:23 secs	2015
248	Kalinda Vary	Now Go Over There and	Horsehair,	2015

		Stand On That Chair	canvas, stretcher arms HD video 1:23 secs	
249	Kalinda Vary	Interview with Self	HD Video 10:14	2012
250	Karen Casey	Eternal Vigil	Linocut	1988
251	Karen Roberts	Untitled	Acrylic on canvas	
252	Karen Roberts	Untitled	Acrylic on canvas	
253	Katherine Griffiths	Rock Study	Clay	1983
254	Kathy Fahey	Rush Hour	Linoprint	
255	Kathy Temin	Wall Drawing	Cord, double sided tape	1990
256	Kerrie Warren	Private Garden (Detail)		2010
257	Kerrie Warren	Private Garden		2010
258	Kirsty Gorter	Seascape (As wall hanging)	Needlepoint tapestry	1984
259	Kirsty Gorter	Seascape (As garment)	Needlepoint tapestry	1984
260	Lesley Dumbrell	Zephyr	Acrylic on canvas	
261	Lesley Dumbrell	Littoral	Acrylic on canvas	1976
262	Lesley Dumbrell	Astra	Acrylic on canvas	1984
263	Linda Floyd	Aspendale Station	Oil	1983
264	Liz Honybon	Ellipse No. 1	Canvas	1971
265	Liz Loder	Seated Nude	Etching, aquatint	1985
266	Liz Loder	Nude with Reflection	Etching	
267	Lois Densham	Life's Full Circle	Recycled clothing and household textiles	
268	Loretta Quinn	The Birthday	Mixed media	1982

269	Louise & Pierrette Lovett	Animania- Kitchen	Paper mache	1983
270	Louise & Pierrette Lovett	Animania- Kitchen (Detail)	Paper mache	1983
271	Lucia Dessi	Duet Artist's code: 5,6	Modified porcelain	1983
272	Lucia Dessi	Duet Artist's code: 5,6	Modified porcelain	1983
273	Lucia Dessi	Fugue Artist's code: 3,9	Porcelain	1983
274	Lucia Dessi	Fugue Artist's code: 3,9	Porcelain	1983
275	Ludmilla Meilerts			
276	Lynda Hovey	Cape Tribulation	Oil on canvas	1986
277	Lynda Hovey	Dead Kangaroo	Oil on canvas	1985
278	Lynda Hovey	Close Pine Gap	Oil on canvas	1987
279	Lyndal Walker	From the Silk Cut Series	100% pure silk	
280	Lyndal Walker	Femme	Pegasus print	2001
281	Lyndal Walker	After all is said and done, gotta move whilst it is still fun	Photograph	2009
282	Lyndal Walker	Imogen Van Sebille's new skin	Archival pigment print	
283	Lyndal Walker	Lyndal holding Pole Street, Westgarth Street		2010
284	Lyndal Walker & Concetta Inserra	Pat, Smells like teen spirit	Photograph	2005
285	Lyndal Walker & Danielle Hakim	Remake/Remodel	Latex print on wallpaper	2012
286	Lyndal Walker & Danielle Hakim	Remake/Remodel	Latex print on wallpaper	2012
287	Lynn Herschman	Dream Weekend: Project for Australia	Display home Melbourne	1977
288	Lynn Herschman	Dream Weekend: Project	Display home	1977

		for Australia	Melbourne	
289	Lynn Herschman	Dream Weekend: Project for Australia	Display home Melbourne	1977
290	Lynn Herschman	Dream Weekend: Project for Australia	Display home Melbourne	1977
291	Lynn Plummer	Transient Extensions	Kassum palm, twine, wood, tissue, thread, polyurethane, oils	1982
292	Mandy King	Portrait of Jenny Munro		
293	Mara-Venera	Visso Rosso		
	Carmella			
294	Mara-Venera	Modern Woman		
	Carmella			
295	Mara-Venera	Of the Land		
	Carmella			
296	Margaret Baskerville	Lady of the Lillies	Plaster	
297	Margaret Bell	Lily Bush	Layered rice paper and cane	1977-8
298	Margaret Gurney			
299	Margaret Gurney			
300	Margaret Harrsion		Mixed media	
301	Margaret Harrsion		Mixed media	
302	Margaret Harrsion		Mixed media	
303	Margaret Preston	Sydney Heads	Woodcut	
304	Margaret Preston	The Foreshore	Woodcut	1926
305	Margaret Preston	Circular Quay	Woodcut	1925
306	Margaret Preston	Anemones	Coloured wood	1927

			cut	
307	Margaret Preston	Implement Blue	Oil	
308	Margaret Preston	Still Life	Oil	1927
309	Margel Hinder	Pinkerton Memorial Composition	Concrete, armour plate glass, cast iron	1949
310	Margel Hinder	Skyhook	Wire on white panel	1955
311	Margel Hinder	Rod and Perspex	Wire and Perspex	1955
312	Maria Kozic	The Birds	PVC plastic and wool	1981
313	Maria Kozic	The Birds	PVC plastic and wool	1981
314	Maria Kozic			
315	Maria Kozic			
316	Maria Kozic	Nine Carnivorous Cats	Paint on wood	1980
317	Maria Kozic	Bitch	Billboard	1990
318	Maria Kozic	This Is The Show	Acrylic on canvas installation	1991
319	Maria Kuhn			
320	Mariette Perrinjaquet	Le Repos	Lithograph	1960
321	Mariette Perrinjaquet	Life and Decay	Coloured Pencil	1976
322	Marily Oppermann	To You, Eva, Where Ever You Are Now	Glass, decal, water, laundry sink	1995
323	Marina Baker			
324	Marina Baker			
325	Marion Borgelt	Unfurl 3	Oil on linen	1983

326	Marlene O'Bree	Untitled Cat. 1		
327	Mary Ellen Kelly	Mt. Wallace		1877
328	Mary Ellen Kelly	Untitled		1877
329	Mary Hammond	Trimming Meat	Charcoal	1985-6
330	Mary Hammond	Going to an All Up	Charcoal, blue pastel	1985-6
331	Mary Kelly	Post-Partum Document		1973- 79
332	Mary Kelly	Post-Partum Document		1973- 79
333	Mary Kelly	Post-Partum Document		1973- 79
334	Mary Kelly	Post-Partum Document		1973- 79
335	Mary Kelly	Post-Partum Document		1973- 79
336	Mary Kelly	Post-Partum Document		1973- 79
337	Mary Kelly	Post-Partum Document		1973- 79
338	Mary Kelly	Post-Partum Document		1973- 79
339	Mary Leunig	Untitled	Pen, ink, watercolour	1985
340	Mary Leunig	Untitled	Pen, ink, watercolour	1985
341	Maryanne Coutts	Lisa	Charcoal and ink	1983
342	Maryanne Coutts	Isis	Charcoal and ink	1983
343	Maryanne Coutts	Guardian	Charcoal and ink	1983
344	May Barrie	Headstone	Sandstone	

345	Meg Benwell	Positano	Oil on canvas	1978
346	Meg Benwell	Hydra	Oil	1978
347	Micky Allen	The Live-In Show		1978
348	Micky Allen	The Live-In Show		1978
349	Micky Allen	The Live-In Show		1978
350	Micky Allen	The Live-In Show		1978
351	Mirka Mora			1980
352	Mirka Mora	Angle with Horns	Doll, Tempura on Linen	1980
353	Mirka Mora	Flinders Street Station Mural and Mosaic	Mural and mosaic	
354	Myra Hilgendorf	Self Portrait	Oil on hardboard	1961
355	Myra Hilgendorf	Figure Study of Johanna	Oil on hardboard	1963
356	Myra Hilgendorf	Waiting Room (from The Lonely Ones series)	Acrylic and oil on canvas	1971
357	Noelene Lucas	Thirty-four Eighty-nine	Steel and marble	1991
358	Noelene Lucas	Twelve Fifty-five	Steel and marble	1991
359	Noelene Lucas	Moon watching	Marble plaster bronzed seashells	1991
360	Nora Heysen	Self Portrait		
361	Ola Cohn	The Pioneer Woman Memorial, Adelaide	Sandstone	
362	Olive Cotton	Tea Cup Ballet	Gelatin silver print	1935
363	Olive Cotton	Fashion Shot, Cronulla Sandhills	Gelatin silver print	1937
364	Olive Cotton	Radio Telescope, Parkes	Gelatin silver print	1964
365	Olive Cotton	Dead Sunflowers	Gelatin silver	1934

			print	
366	Pamela Harris	Rape Crisis Poster	Hand cut silk screen on bond paper	1976
367	Pamela Harris	A Women's Place	Pamphlet photography	1977
368	Pamela Harris	The Redhead's Revenge	Handbill	1978
369	Pat Hillcoat	There is a Difference	Drawing, collage, paint	1988
370	Pat Hillcoat	Childrens Parties	Drawing, collage, paint	1988
371	Pat Hillcoat			
372	Pat Hillcoat			
373	Pat Hillcoat			
374	Pat Hillcoat			
375	Peggy Crombie	The Yarra with Shipping	Oil on canvas	1933
376	Peggy Crombie	Cloud Shadows, Mt Dandenong	Oil on cardboard	1939
377	Penny Algar			c1979
378	Rachel Buckeridge	Stella's Departure	Ink on paper	1989
379	Rae Marks	Winter Washing Line	Egg tempera	1975
380	Rae Marks	The Big Room	Egg tempera	1980
381	Rhoda Wagner			
382	Rosalie Cogan	Luck of the Draw	Textiles	1987
383	Rosalie Cogan	Am I as you see me	Textiles	1987
384	Rosalie Cogan	Conflict 2	Textiles	1987
385	Rosalie Cogan	Advance Australia Fair	Textiles	1986
386	Rosalie Gascoigne	Pub	Timber, enamel mug, wool,	1974

			painting photograph, wooden box	
387	Rosalie Gascoigne	Dolly Boxes (Detail)	Weathered timber, boxes, dolls	1976
388	Rosalie Gascoigne	Enamel Ware (Detail)	Enamel kitchenware, weathered timber, nylon thread	1976
389	Rosalie Gascoigne	Grass Rack	Weather timber, grass, wire	1977
390	Rosalie Gascoigne	Celebration	Wood, paint	1983
391	Rosalie Gascoigne	String of Blue Days	Wood, paint	1984
392	Rosalie Gascoigne	Deciduous	Lino, wood	1984
393	Rosalie Gascoigne	Prescribed Text	Found wood	1986
394	Rosalie Gascoigne	Promised Land	Found wood	1986
395	Rosalie Gascoigne			
396	Rosemary			
	Mangiamele			
397	Rosslynd Piggott	Glasses of Water	Oil on canvas	1986
398	Rosslynd Piggott	Breathless	Oil on linen	1986
399	Ruth Maddison			
400	Ruth Maddison			
401	Stephanie Leigh	Feminine Flatpack (Red With White Flowers)	Enamel paint on marine plywood	2014
402	Stephanie Leigh	Feminine Flatpack	Enamel paint on marine plywood	2014
403	Stephanie Leigh	Feminine Flatpack (Yellow)	Enamel paint on	2014

			marine plywood	
404	Stephanie Leigh	What's Left of Gustave Courbet's La Bacchante?	Enamel paint on marine plywood	2015
405	Stephanie Leigh	Reconstituting the Reclining Female (Blue and Orange)	Acrylic paint on plywood	2015
406	Stephanie Leigh	I want to walk home, not run	Projection	2014
407	Susan Fereday	Object a	Handbags, paint on wood	1993
408	Susan Fereday	I Resist		
409	Suzanne Archer	The Race	Acrylic collage on canvas	
410	Suzanne Macmichael	Drago Street	Fabric, water paint, glue, embroidery, pencil	1985
411	Sybil Craig	Miss Delamere the model	Oil on canvas	1931
412	Thancoupie The Potter	Untitled stoneware pots	Stoneware oxide decoration	1982
413	Thea Proctor	Girl with plaits	Pencil drawing	
414	Thea Proctor	The Race	Fan painted silk	
415	Theresa Walker		Wax cameo	c 1840s
416	Theresa Walker		Wax cameo	c 1840s
417	Toni Bucknell	Cosy Den	Oil	1980
418	Toni Bucknell	My Mother, Myself	Oil	1982
419	Toni Robertson	Taking Market Town By Strategy – 2	Screen print	
420	Toni Robertson			
421	Toni Robertson	Definitely	Screen print	

422	Toni Robertson	History I	Screen print	
423	Toni Robertson	History II	Screen print	
424	Tori De Mestre	Ignis Fatuus	Bamboo and muslin	1988
425	Tori De Mestre	Ephemera 2	Organza, bracken, cotton	1984
426	Tracey Moffat	Untitled (Something More series)	Cibachrome	1989
427	Trisha Carland-Salih	Portrait of Mme Ramel de Nagaret	Etching	1975
428	Unknown	Portrait of the artist as a housewife		1977
429	Vida Lahey	Monday Morning	Oil on canvas	
430	Virginia Coventry	Service Road, Moe	Photograph 35mm	1976
431	Virginia Coventry	Two Camera Positions at a Corner	Photograph 35mm	1977
432	Virginia Coventry	Two Camera Positions at a Corner	Photograph 35mm	1977
433	Vivienne Binns	Mother's Memories, Other's Memories, Black Town	Enamel & steel postcards	1980-81
434	Vivienne Binns	Mother's Memories, Other's Memories, Black Town	Enamel & steel postcards	1980-81
435	Vivienne Binns	Mother's Memories, Other's Memories, Black Town	Enamel & steel postcards	1980-81
436	Vivienne Binns	Mother's Memories, Other's Memories, Black Town	Enamel & steel postcards	1980-81
437	Wendy Black	Declare Antarctica a	Screen print	1983

	World Park		
438 Wendy Black	Nuclear Free Pacific	Screen print	1983
439 Wendy Donald	Untitled (Figure and Mirror 2)	Monoprint	1971
440 Wendy Donald	Untitled (Figure and Mirror 3)	Monoprint	1971
441 Wendy Kelly			
442 Wendy Kelly			
443 Wendy Kelly			
444 Women's Lib	Women Squatters	Mural	
Halfway House Collective			

Appendix D: Presentations, curatorial and research platforms, and publications arising from the research

Exhibitions (solo and collaborative exhibitions exhibiting works from the PhD research)

Materialising Feminism, solo exhibition, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne (2016)

Looking forward, looking back, group exhibition at OCAD University Great Hall, Toronto (2015)

Feminist Art Conference (FAC) International Residency Exhibition, group exhibition at Artscape Gibraltar Point, Toronto (2015)

Relatedness, (with Catherine Johnstone), collaborative exhibition at Living Museum of the West, Melbourne (2015)

Fertile Ground, group exhibition at Australian Tapestry Workshop, Melbourne (2015)

Hang Ups, solo exhibition, Factory 49, Sydney (2014)

Notes Towards a Future Feminist Archive, group exhibition at Affiliated Text, Sydney, (2014)

Topologies of Sexual Difference, group exhibition at George Paton Gallery, Melbourne (2014)

The f Word, group exhibition at Ararat Regional Art Gallery, Ararat, VIC (2014)

quietNOISE, group exhibition at Chapman and Bailey, Melbourne, (2014)

Curtain Call, group exhibition at Blindside, Melbourne, (2013)

Regimes of Value, group exhibition at Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, (2013)

enmeshed, solo exhibition, Craft, Melbourne (2013)

Open Studio, solo exhibition, Cite Internationale des Arts, Paris (2012)

Barely Breathing, solo exhibition, Factory 49 Project Space, Sydney (2012)

Curatorial projects (projects I have instigated and/or facilitated - individually and/or collaboratively – as part of the PhD research)

A Dinner Party: setting the table (a program of workshops, forums and film at West Space, Melbourne, 2012, curated in collaboration with Victoria Duckett)

Regional Feminist Art Forum (panel and workshop at La Trobe Visual Art Centre, Bendigo, 2013)

Technopia Tours Feminist Art Bus, (workshop on wheels, Melbourne, International Women's Day 2014, curated in collaboration with Kim Donaldson)

The f Word (two visual art exhibitions, Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale and Ararat Regional Art Gallery, Ararat, 2014, online blog and printed publication)

Imagining Social Equity; perspectives on migration, gender and community (exhibition at Museo Italiano, Melbourne, in conjunction with the inaugural Melbourne Social Equity Institute annual conference Imagining Social Equity, 2014)

Topologies of Sexual Difference (Luce Irigaray Circle conference and associated exhibition, conference co-convenor with Dr. Louise Burchill and Dr. Rebecca Hill, Melbourne, 2014, accompanying exhibition held at George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, co-curated with Dr. Louise Burchill)

AS IF: Echoes of the Women's Art Register (exhibition at West Space, Melbourne, co-curated with Dr. Juliette Peers, Stephanie Leigh, Kalinda Vary, Emily Castle, Danielle Hakim, the project included facilitating a Wikipedia art+feminism Edit-a-thon workshop held at the State Library of Victoria, the exhibition was held as part of the *AS IF: 40 years and beyond – Celebrating the Women's Art Register* and Melbourne Fringe Festival, 2015)

f generation: feminism, art, projections, forum at *Mudfest*, the University of Melbourne Student Union biennial arts festival, and exhibition at George Paton Gallery, co-curated with Dr. Juliette Peers and Veronica Caven Aldous, Melbourne, 2015, the project includes ongoing research via an online archive at omeka.net and continuing facebook community: <https://www.facebook.com/F-generation-feminism-art-progressions-811027382324243/>)

Research Platforms (ongoing groups and platforms that I have collaborated with, generating discursive research related to the PhD)

Luce Irigaray Circle (LIC), Stony Brook University, New York

Contemporary Art and Feminism (CAF), Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney

Women's Art Register (WAR), Melbourne

Victorian College of the Arts *Matters of the Body* (MOB) Research cluster, University of Melbourne (founding member)

Melbourne Social Equity Institute (MSEI) Gender Research Network, University of Melbourne

Melbourne Social Equity Institute (MSEI) Doctoral Academy, University of Melbourne

University of Melbourne Student Union (UMSU), through George Paton Gallery, Wom*n's Department, Creative Arts Department and Mudfest Student Arts Festival

Feminist Art Conference (FAC), Toronto

Women, Feminism and Art in Australia since 1970, Australian Research Council Discovery Project 2016-2018, Research Assistant (ongoing) to Prof Anne Marsh (Chief Investigator)

Conferences and presentations – academic papers and talks presented during the PhD

“Creating with Communities: A panel conversation on the ethics of Socially Engaged Art”, Panel Chair, iDare conference, Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne, September 27, 2016

“Feminist Art and Social Practice, Intersections and Implications”, presented at Victorian College of the Arts Graduate Symposium, February 27, 2015

“Relatedness as a Methodology: An Aesthetics of the Interval”, presented at *Topologies of Sexual Difference*, Luce Irigaray Circle 7th annual conference, Melbourne. Presented by Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne and The Communication, Politics and Culture Research Centre at RMIT University, December 10-12, 2014

“Interdisciplinarity in action: VCA ‘Matters of the Body’ research cluster”, co-presented with Dr Alyson Campbell at *Transgressive Teaching* (feminist pedagogy panel), Sydney College of the Arts, March 29, 2014

“Textures of Excess – an aesthetics of relatedness”, presented at GSA Feminist Research Workshop, Graduate Students Association, University of Melbourne, October 28, 2013

“A loosely woven fabric”, presented at *Thinking Life*, Luce Irigaray Circle 6th annual conference, Bergen. Co-presented by The Department of Philosophy (FOF) and The Department of Linguistic, Literary and Aesthetic Studies (LLE) at University of Bergen and The Centre for Women's and Gender Research (SKOK), Bergen, Norway, June 5-7, 2013

Academic publications – solo and collaborative writing and research published during the PhD

Researching for Social Change: Ethics, Methodologies & Responsibility, Collaborative INTRODUCTION and co-editing of volume with Cherry Hense, Gemma McKibbin, Julie McLeod and Sophie Rudolph, and Chapter “Art and Social Equity, A Feminist Approach”, published by the Melbourne Social Equity Institute (2015)

“A phenomenology of Sexual Difference in Sculpture”, in *Writing from Below* Vol 1, No.2 (2013)

A phenomenology of Sexual Difference in Sculpture, in forthcoming publication by Luce Irigaray Circle, Gail M. Schwab and Mary Rawlinson (eds), SUNY, New York (2017)

“Materialising the Interval: Relationality as a Feminist Practice”, in forthcoming publication by Contemporary Art and Feminism (CAF), *OutTakes: Feminist perspectives on contemporary art*, Jacqueline Millner and Catriona Moore (eds), Routledge, London, Gender Studies series, forthcoming (2017)

Topologies of Sexual Difference, volume of conference papers from *Topologies of Sexual Difference*, Luce Irigaray Circle Melbourne conference, co-edited with Dr Louise Burchill, forthcoming, (2018)

Other Publications (Arts writing that exchanges ideas and knowledge with the research platform and its participants)

Watch this Space (catalogue essay for Kate Just’s *The Furies* exhibition, St. Kilda Town Hall, Melbourne, 2015)

Call to Arms (catalogue essay for Filomena Coppola’s *Reclaiming Isis – Auset*, Phyllis Palmer Gallery, La Trobe University, Bendigo, 2015)

Conversation (co-authored essay with Carolyn Barnes, in *The f Word* catalogue, 2014)

Past Lives (catalogue essay for Eliza-Jane Gilchrist’s *Skins and Bones*, Blindside Artist Run Space Inc. Melbourne, 2012)

