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MASTER OF FINE ARTS
RESEARCH PAPER

CUT AND MIX CULTURE:
VISUAL EXPLORATIONS OF CONTEMPORARY DIASPORA IDENTITY

by
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Declaration

This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this research paper is my own work. This research paper has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes.

I certify that the intellectual content of this research paper is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this research paper and sources have been acknowledged.

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Abstract

Research Paper
In a globalised world, some black diaspora artists have used the agency of blackness as a strategy to interrupt our default thinking about visual arts formed by a dominant Western culture. This strategy, in combination with the methodologies of collage and street art, is an effective tool for black diaspora artists to interrupt the senses and challenge reductive ‘either/or’ categorisations (e.g. primitive vs. modern). The black diaspora identity has been established through a vocabulary developed by significant twentieth-century African-American texts and the field of cultural studies. It has also been shown through dialogic theory that black cultural identity is fluid in nature and can be redefined. This model of redefinition can be applied to my studio practice through Japanese and black cultural signifiers. In this paper, I establish that that I am a black diaspora artist and present the development of my artwork and the theoretical contextualisation through the texts of theorists Kobena Mercer and Stuart Hall and linguist Mikhail Bakhtin, and through the artists Romare Bearden, Firelei Báez and Swoon.

Creative Work
The following works will be presented for the examination to demonstrate cross-cultural amalgamation and translation and the fluid nature of black diaspora identity. A mural installation will be presented consisting of a large illustration simulating an alley of Sydney neighbourhood row houses. Posters and photocopy transfers of collages of African masks juxtaposed on Japanese bodies will be put up on the scene of the urban exterior. Street art methodology will be combined with the agency of the black diaspora identity to activate the gallery space. Digital collages composed of nineteenth-century African-American and Japanese imagery will be composed with sections of faces cut from Meiji-Era albumen prints juxtaposed with portraiture of nineteenth-century Victorian black women. Katagami stencil patterns used for textile prints from the same era will be added as a decorative element. Lastly, a series of silkscreen prints of female figures representing a mixing of Japanese and black signifiers will also be exhibited.
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Introduction

Working with themes of identity and race, I examined overlaps in Japanese and black visual culture and art history and, in the process of researching information to contextualise the topic, discovered that the related subject of the diaspora artist was a better approach. This direction of inquiry led me to art historian Kobena Mercer’s *Travel & See: Black Diaspora Art Practices since the 1980s*. The book comprises eighteen articles written over a twenty-year period examining the black diaspora art and artist experience. As part of the introduction, Mercer pointed out that, beginning with critiques on race and representation in the 1980s, African-American, black British and Caribbean artists have contributed to a fundamental shift in the way we think about contemporary black visual arts. The factor of globalisation also had an impact, as black artists have become more exposed and exhibited on an international level. Because of the black artist and theorist interventions, a critical dialogue about the agency of the black diaspora artist arose that gave rise to a better understanding of the cross-cultural entanglements encountered in society, aesthetics, and politics.

A key part of Mercer’s argument in *Travel & See* is the need to re-evaluate black diaspora art in the twentieth century and the entanglements of engrained and complex histories over the course of Modernism and modernity.¹ For a deeper analysis of black diaspora art and artists, he examined the long-term ramifications of the interactions between imbalanced relationships in visual culture politics and art history. Subsequently, Mercer used the contemporary diaspora concept to broaden the understanding of the interactions and relationships between heterogenous cultures in visual arts that interacted by chance as a result of unforeseen global circumstances, such as the trans-Atlantic slave trade, resulting in forced migrations of people. One resulting theme of importance for Mercer was the analysis of the historical marginalisation of black diaspora arts and artists.² He argued that, during this period, the foundation of a Western-based visual culture framed certain unwritten rules and shaped a dominant narrative categorising the black artist as non-Western and other and, therefore, of seemingly lesser quality. Taking this into account, Mercer identified that the

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² Ibid, 2.
creativity and inventiveness of black diaspora artist and the autonomy of the art were likely reduced once the identity of the artist was revealed.

In *Travel & See*, Mercer introduced a methodology to counter the embedded codes in Western-dominated ideologies of visual culture that disproportionately categorise black diaspora art and artists. Mercer provided examples of black diaspora art that illustrated the power of the black image or the black body. Black artists have used this subject matter as a response to themes such as colonialism, race, identity, slavery, etc. The agency of the black artist has been perceived as transgressive or subversive and was used by black artist as a powerful strategy to interrupt the senses of the ‘default’ Western-dominated thought processes into a state of ‘momentary crisis’. As a result, this interruption has created the possibility to open a space for dialogue and critique of the problematic Eurocentric codes related to race and representation.\(^3\) Furthermore, Mercer explained that the default codes and meanings relating to black diaspora signifiers have not been fixed and finalised and retain the possibility of modification when analysed in the context of the past, present, and future. With this reasoning, he has offered a theoretical solution through literary dialogism (introduced by Russian linguist Mikhail Bahktin) combined with the cultural theory work presented by Caribbean theorist Stuart Hall to break away from the rigid Western ideologies. The dialogic and cultural theories have provided structural mechanisms to illustrate the volatile nature of both the signifiers and the meanings related to race and representation. As a result, ‘the interruptive agency of blackness’ has been offered by Mercer as a strategy to find a way out of the trappings of the fixed meanings and illusionary realities that were once seemingly unchangeable.

Over the course of the twentieth century, Western-dominated ideologies and trappings developed that presented challenges to black artists.\(^4\) Mercer accordingly suggested that European and African cultures have been entangled since 1492, when explorers began to sail to foreign lands, resulting in Western colonisation. One of the devastating results was the trans-Atlantic slave trade, which forcibly dispersed black diaspora communities across countries around the Atlantic. Suffice it to say that since slavery, and its abolition by the mid-nineteenth century in America and Britain, practicing black artists have had to

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3 Ibid 2–5.
negotiate the challenges of racism, discrimination and access to art institutions and resources. Historically situated in positions of marginalisation, African diaspora identity became a source of cultural pride and importance. As a result, from the 1920s to the 1960s in the U.S., African and African-American artists were encouraged to only produce artwork that was representative of their ethnic origin, or that was characteristically ‘authentic’. Not all artists succumbed to the pressures of preserving ‘African authenticity’. Resisting the suggestion, American artist Romare Bearden followed his own path and utilised the cut-and-mix methodology to create a new visual vernacular, providing a voice for the African-American condition at a time when racism and segregation were institutionalised. During the Jim Crow and Civil Rights era, Bearden used his personal experiences of struggle and persistence as a source of inspiration of his work. Competing with the spectacle of the Modernist painters at the time, his significant collage work went unnoticed until decades later. The artistic ingenuity and the material and formalistic qualities of Bearden’s work, like that of many black artists in the twentieth century, were overshadowed by the biographical or sociological categorisations.

Resulting from the Civil Rights Movement that Bearden navigated in the 1960s, identity politics developed in the art world, and its backlash decades later in the 1980s and 1990s. In the 1980s, a major shift toward the critique of black representation and post-colonialism in the arts moved the dominant narrative away from Western monoculturalism. Despite the fact that black artists were still challenged by less access to art institutional resources, more black artists were able to pursue successful and critical practices reflecting the ideas of diaspora and transnationality, echoing a rapidly changing, globalised world. Also during this period, the field of cultural studies emerged, and with it a critical vocabulary for black diaspora art. This helped identify and begin to dissect, ‘the binaries of western centric tendencies amongst institutions of art and culture’ or, as Mercer stated, ‘the either/or logic of dichotomous reasoning, which for the most part of the past century had locked down our ability to understand cross-cultural interactions in the visual arts’.

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6 Ibid, 131–32.
8 Mercer, Travel & See: Black Diaspora Art Practices since the 1980s, 7.
neoliberal version of inequality developed in the art world. The global commodification and exploitation of black popular culture brought on a phenomenon of ‘hyperblackness’ in the entertainment industry. Some black artists in the United Kingdom and the United States critiqued the black representation in the visual arts in regard to global modernity, capitalism and international migration.\(^9\) Black British artists such as Yinka Shonibare whimsically played with themes of colonialism and post-colonialism, while Chris Ofili produced artworks with ironic, grotesque depictions and distortions of religious icons. African-American artist Kara Walker composed violent depictions of antebellum slavery in cartoonish silhouettes that soberly critiqued race and representation. The advancement of black diaspora art was normalised due to acceptance in multiculturalism; however, such art was still not fully accepted due to hegemonic ideologies that dictated what art could be representative of the black culture. For example, older African-American artists charged Walker with exploiting slavery to increase visibility among white audiences, indicating that the art world was still not ready for thoughtful sociopolitical critique, and that the issues of racism were still not resolved, merely reconfigured.\(^{10,11}\)

The identity politics backlash subsided in the 2000s and 2010s, as the idea of diaspora identity and its fluctuating nature became more apparent and accepted. Exhibitions around the world began to include more black artists, in contrast to the past when their work was categorised within the old Modernist tropes of primitivism or entirely omitted. The inclusion of diaspora artists, in general, had now become commonplace in major exhibitions worldwide.\(^{12}\) The familiar semblance of inclusion continued, but in contrast so did the lack of in-depth critical analysis of black diaspora artwork.\(^{13}\)

In Chapter 1, I present ideas that help define and describe the black diaspora and how diaspora identity, in general, is a fluid state with the capability for change. Critical texts are presented, written over the course of the twentieth century by African-American authors who helped developed a vocabulary for the black diaspora concept. These texts offer insightful critiques of the inequalities imposed on the black diaspora in American society.

\(^{10}\) Mercer, *Travel & See: Black Diaspora Art Practices since the 1980s*, 7.
\(^{11}\) Ibid, 156.
\(^{12}\) Ibid, 264.
With a vocabulary established, I then explain how Hall developed a discourse for black cultural identity and demonstrated how the social construct of race is used as an ethnic signifier and a classification tool in social structures. Hall investigated how notions of race work in ways similar to language, paying particular attention to the volatility of language and how the meanings of words can shift. Hall’s work shed light on how the signifier of black identity was fluid and could be redefined at any time, establishing a tool for the black diaspora artist to deconstruct racial stereotypes and to serve as an escape from reductionist ideologies.

In Chapter 2, the works of black diaspora artists Romare Bearden and Firelei Báez, from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries respectively, will be discussed. As a black artist practicing during the Harlem Renaissance and the Civil Rights Movement, Bearden utilised his experiences to create novel work to represent a new voice for African-Americans. Báez’s contemporary work parallels Bearden’s by developing a visual vernacular for the present-day generation. Informed by Mercer’s research, this paper explores black diaspora artwork to illustrate the agency of the black diaspora artist in combination with cut-and-mix techniques developed by both artists as interruptive practices to critique ideas of racism through the visual arts. Also included in this chapter is Street artist Swoon a.k.a. Caledonia Curry. Swoon is not a black artist, but has included the diaspora subject in her street art to create a dialogue about marginalised communities. Her methodology combines the agency of diaspora culture in conjunction with the transgressive nature of street art to interrupt the senses of the urban inhabitant – in this scenario, through viewing the work ‘put up’ on the city walls to initiate dialogue and discourse of inclusion and equality.

In Chapter 3, I will explain the development of my own artwork, from the cutting and mixing of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Japanese and African imagery to a present methodology of creating an identity through the amalgamation of signifiers. Mercer’s black diaspora art history is a contemporary perspective that provides a platform for diaspora artists in visual culture. Drawing upon these ideas to inform my studio practice, I explored my own Japanese/black diaspora background to find a personalised voice and visual vernacular. With this initial exploration for subject matter, I focused on one part of my dual heritage. Looking into the past and juxtaposing it with the future offers an effective way to critique Japan’s relationship with nuclear power. Further along in my research, my diaspora
experiences and cross-cultural interactions inspired me to isolate signifiers from the different cultures of my background and mix them to create a new identity.
Chapter 1 – The Agency of the Black Diaspora

In this chapter, I draw from Kobena Mercer’s book *Travel and See*, a twenty-year survey of black diaspora visual art and culture that contains the central argument of the contemporary re-worlding of the diaspora concept. I will not attempt to encompass the enormous breadth of Mercer’s manuscript. Rather, I will pick out specific components that relate to my studio practice from a visual and cultural perspective, specifically the ‘interruptive agency of the black diaspora’, which has the ability to disrupt the senses and interrupt our conventional modes of thinking. As a result, this opens a space for critical discourse about black diaspora art. This concept can be applied in a universal sense to the whole diaspora community so that the relevant topics can be addressed from a broader perspective. In this chapter, I will illustrate the development of black diaspora discourse through sections from significant literary texts. Additionally, the identification and mechanisms of the ethnic signifier will be discussed, supported by cultural studies theories of Stuart Hall and the dialogic theory of Mikhail Bakhtin.

**Development of Discourse**

Black diaspora art history has become better understood in recent years due to more complex and revealing critiques within black visual arts and culture. Looking back over the twentieth century, we can now see that the agency of black literature and art was used as a tool to increase and improve representation and access in the art world. There was a realisation that there had to be a constructive discussion and critique of black representation in visual art history and culture and that a black diaspora vernacular had to be developed as a foundation in order to conduct this discourse. Over the span of the twentieth century, such a vernacular began to form through contributions from literature and theory, along with other related sources. Art historian Stephen Nelson has written a book chapter titled ‘Diaspora: Multiple Practices, Multiple Worldviews’, and I will use his text, along with Mercer’s *Travel & See* survey of texts, as a resource to provide a small sampling of significant writings by black authors such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Paul Gilroy, Frantz Fanon and James Clifford, which were pivotal to providing the vocabulary for black diaspora politics and critique.\(^\text{(14,15)}\)

\(^{14}\) Mercer, *Travel & See: Black Diaspora Art Practices since the 1980s*, 156.
The concept of diaspora has changed with the development of a global and modern world. The first use of the word was in a third-century Hebrew text to describe the exile of the Jewish population from Palestine. Today, diaspora is a worldwide phenomenon that is changing both the cultural landscape and the physical appearance of the host communities. There are varying factors that have driven large global movements of people, such as capitalism, globalisation and technology. Some are forced to move involuntarily, but many others migrate of their own free will. Communication between diaspora communities and their places of origin has become easier with access to mobile phones and computers. Even as a transnational, one can stay in touch and connected with one’s family and home.\(^\text{16}\)

Now that the general condition of diaspora has been briefly described, the focus turns specifically to the black diaspora, using Mercer’s research as a reference and guide. Mercer writes about the groundbreaking text *The Souls of Black Folk*, in which civil rights activist and historian W.E.B Du Bois introduced the profound idea of ‘double consciousness’, a theory that has influenced the fields of African and African-American studies and that personified the black diaspora through its critique of the African-American condition in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century. The following quote clearly illustrates the struggles the black diaspora faced while negotiating the societal confines of racism.\(^\text{17}\)

The history of the American Negro is the history of this… longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not beach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face.\(^\text{18}\)

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\(^{16}\) Ibid, 296.

\(^{17}\) Ibid, 297.

\(^{18}\) Ibid, 297.
Another text addressing the issues of the inequalities resulting from slavery and colonialism was written by Frantz Fanon. He produced the powerfully insightful text *Black Skin, White Masks* in 1967, in which he ‘sought to decolonize the black body from its representation as ‘the Other’. In his critique, Fanon described in psychoanalytic terms how the object of the black body was represented in colonialis society and culture. The text described how racist stereotypes fuelled the ‘fears and fantasies’ of the colonisers. Through his critiques, Fanon attempted to dismantle racist and oppressive ideologies, as he could see that they were constructions of race.

American literature professor Paul Gilroy’s book *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* introduced the concept of an ‘Afro-Atlantic Diaspora’. In this text, Gilroy used ships as a metaphor for the ocean expanse, which allowed a paradigm shift in the understanding of diaspora. Gilroy’s development of the critique of trans-Atlantic slavery and its generational consequences was informed by his research on the Jewish diaspora experience. These oppressive conditions of a violently forced migration do not apply to just one set or group of people; rather, it is a universal, timeless, reoccurring sociological phenomenon. We can see this in twenty-first century events such as the civil strife in Syria and the perilous movement of immigrants from Africa to Europe across the Mediterranean Sea. As a result of Gilroy’s work, a ‘circulatory model of diaspora’ was introduced. This model included black cultures adjacent to the Atlantic Ocean: Caribbean, Latin American, African-American, and European. It also illustrated that, ‘since 1945, all of these have hybridised Western languages and cultures that black people have come in contact as a result of migration’.

Lastly, James Clifford’s work *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* explained the condition of diaspora and the desire of diaspora populations to return to the homeland. Clifford introduced the concept of ‘maps of the expanded field’.

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24 Nelson, 297.
26 James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard
Because of the trauma of dislocation and the compelling desire to return to the country of origin, diaspora communities develop certain mythologies or collective memories in reaction to rejection by their host countries and societies.\textsuperscript{27} Diaspora is not just about the movement of people; it is also about their collective experiences (mythological, intellectual, political) and how they deal with them. Some of the cultural and sociological strategies that result are appropriation, assimilation, acculturation, creolisation and hybridisation.\textsuperscript{28}

**Black Diaspora Identity**

In the remainder of this paper, the overall African diaspora experience will be encompassed for convenience as ‘the black diaspora’, as used in the title of Mercer’s book. In the 1980s, with black diaspora critical discourse equipped with a vocabulary, it was time to focus attention on the complexities of the black diaspora identity. Stuart Hall began the field of cultural studies, a major advancement in the knowledge of the visual arts and humanities. He initiated this investigation by examining the representation of the black diaspora in film and media in Britain. This new field of study helped develop tools and strategies for countering the twentieth-century Modernist narrative that had stalled the advancement of artists of colour on a global level. Hall understood that there needed to be a critical space to analyse black artists beyond the ‘semiotic dominance of codes and conventions’. At that time, the influence of the cross-cultural experience of the black diaspora artist was not considered as a component in art making. The antiquated dichotomy of ‘either/or reasoning’ was still influencing the way black representation was perceived.\textsuperscript{29}

Over the course of his life, Hall continued to develop ideas to free black representation from the constraints of destructive ideologies. After Hall’s death in 2014, Mercer, a long-time colleague and friend, summarised Hall’s resounding contributions to the area of black diaspora visual arts and to creating space to encompass a worldlier paradigm.

In his generous responsiveness to black diaspora visual arts, Stuart not only came full circle in reflecting on his own migrant journey from colonial Jamaica to post-Empire Britain, where he arrived in 1951 at age nineteen, but, on the two-way street of this dialogic encounter, also

\textsuperscript{27} Mercer, *Travel & See: Black Diaspora Art Practices since the 1980s*, 222.
\textsuperscript{28} Nelson, 297.
\textsuperscript{29} Mercer, *Travel & See: Black Diaspora Art Practices since the 1980s*, 3-4, 37.
led the way toward a new vocabulary for investigating global formations of identity, ethnicity, and diaspora in both the postcolonial conditions of contemporaneity and across the longue durée of modernity as a worldwide phenomenon that set cross-cultural dynamics of hybridity, syncretism, créolité, and translation in motion from 1492 onward. Our appreciation of the questions Stuart opened up for future research in art history and visual studies is deepened, I suggest, once we notice how aesthetics and politics come to be articulated in the philosophical breadth of the conception.\(^\text{30}\)

In Hall’s groundbreaking text on diaspora, ‘Cultural Identity and Diaspora’, he demonstrated that there was a violent, dominant relationship between the black diaspora and the West and that black identity was reduced to a form of ‘race as representation’. He also described the need to broaden the perspective from personal identity to cultural identity, going from a static idea of identity to one that was not fixed. Identity, in Hall’s understanding, was something continually in a state of ‘becoming’, meditating not just the experience of the past but also the present and the future. Hall understood that there was ‘constant transformation’ in cultural identity.\(^\text{31}\)

Breaking down the methodology behind his theory, Hall described two branches or modes of thought underlying cultural identity. The first mode was the ‘the one true self’, an identity that is static in nature, hidden under ‘collective identity’, which is the only identity seen on the surface. Collective identity combines a ‘shared ancestry, culture, and history’ and is a reference point to describe a static group wherein the ‘individual self’ is obscured. The second mode is the consideration of similarities and differences; identity is described as ‘a matter of becoming as well as of being’ and must come from the past and bring along its history, but also looks to the future as part of a perpetual state of transformation. Hall goes on to say that ‘cultural identities’ are continuously changing along with the ever-fluctuating conditions within ‘history, culture, and power’. Hall links this second mode of cultural identity to the black diaspora experience.

It is only from this second position that we can properly understand the traumatic character of ‘the colonial experience’. The ways in which black people, black experiences, were


positioned and subjected in the dominant regimes of representation were the effects of a critical exercise of cultural power and normalisation.\(^{32}\)

Hall demonstrated the universality of his critique of diaspora cultural identity by referencing Edward Said’s critical work, *Orientalism*, which illustrated how the West constructed the term ‘Oriental’ to define people who were non-Western as ‘different’.\(^{33}\) This was how representations were constructed and presented, and how non-Westerners were conditioned to see themselves as ‘Other’.\(^{34}\) The importance of the second mode of cultural identity was further emphasised when Hall discussed Homi Bhabha’s critique of otherness:

This ‘look’, from – so to speak – the place of the Other, fixes us, not only in its violence, hostility and aggression, but in the ambivalence of its desire. This brings us face to face, not simply with the dominating European presence as the site or ‘scene’ of integration where those other presences which it had actively disaggregated were recomposed – re-framed, put together in a new way; but as the site of a profound splitting and doubling – what Homi Bhabha has called ‘the ambivalent identifications of the racist world... the “otherness” of the self inscribed in the perverse palimpsest of colonial identity’.\(^{35}\)

In this violent space, black diaspora identities were systematically deconstructed, destructed and then reconstructed in a different way with both African and European influences; a ‘splitting and doubling’ had occurred, but specifically with a dominant European influence.

**Identification of the Ethnic Signifier**

After Hall illustrated that black diaspora identity was a complex notion and was in a continual state of transformation, he needed to demonstrate that race functioned similarly to language. Race, in the use of semiotics, could lead to the disruption of harmful stereotypes and stifling dichotomies. First, Hall established the concept of ‘the ethnic signifier’. He demonstrated that the signifier of race had the fluidity to shift in meaning. Hall recognised that the agency of language was in the discourse, the way we talked to one another, and that the words used to describe black representation needed to change. He made the connection

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34 Hall, 223–25.
that our cultural practices were influenced by our everyday conversations. Understanding the importance of this discourse, Hall looked to Fanon’s psychoanalytic critique of the black skin as a signifier. Where the black body is fetishised through the colonial gaze, the skin becomes a signifier of biological and unchangeable difference. The signifier serves as an organisational component in a structural hierarchy of class and power in an ‘oppressive regime of visuality in the colonial world’. In a lecture at Goldsmiths College, on ‘Race as the Floating Signifier’, Hall discussed race as a social construct:

And to say that race is a discursive category recognizes that all attempts to ground this concept scientifically, to locate differences between the races, on what one might call scientific, biological, or genetic grounds, have been largely shown to be untenable. We must therefore, it is said, substitute a socio-historical or cultural definition of race, for the biological one.

Hall contextualised this concept of race using the example of the politics of black skin tones in Martinique culture and Derrida’s theory of difference. The French colony could be described as heavily ingrained with European influences mixed with African slave ancestry. Darker skin tones were seen as a transgressive characteristic in relation to European tastes. There was not a distinct otherness in the society, but there was a visible difference that could be distinguished. Hall used French philosopher Jacques Derrida’s simple yet effective use of différencedifférance as an analogy. Through the simple substitution of the letter ‘a’ for ‘e’, Derrida demonstrated the slippage of the meanings between the two words without losing the recognisable spelling structure. This disturbed the representation of the word and interrupted the reading of the language. The ‘other’ was represented, but not quite a distinct ‘other’. Hall drew a parallel between the Martiniquais phenotypes and the différencedifférance slippage, demonstrating how race and language functioned similarly.

In Hall’s argument, he states that the West has the habit of creating signifiers for black identity, an ‘ethnic signifier’, by normalising and appropriating Africa by placing it in the static category of the primitive. Hall emphasised that the history and origin of Africa had changed over the four hundred years since slavery began and that history could not be

recovered. It was essential to disrupt the static compartmentalisation of those four hundred years as mere primitive representation.\textsuperscript{40} If arranged in a proof, it is demonstrated that race works like language and can shift in meaning. The representational difference of race is in the form of an ethnic signifier. The ethnic signifier functions analogously to a word as a part of language. The meanings of words are always in a state of change. Similarly, signification of race, the ethnic signifier, is not fixed. With this established, critics and artists can use this concept as a tool to interrupt fixed narratives and ideologies in black diaspora identity.

**Dialogism Practice**

Mercer paired Hall’s analogy between the ethnic signifier and language with Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin’s literary theory of dialogism, which describes texts as being in a continual dialogue with one another. In this this dynamic state, words in a conversation are allowed the space to transform in meaning. Bakhtin describes the word as an autonomous element that is abstract and boundless, with no beginning or end in meaning. The entire meaning of a word is not recalled in active conversations, in which the past of the meaning is dense and infinite. A slightly different version of the meaning may potentially be used. Dialogic theory recognises that there are moments of instability in dialogue where these shifts of meanings can occur.\textsuperscript{41} In dialogism, the nature of words that hold double or multiple meanings can be defined as heteroglossia, ‘text that has two or more meanings’, and polysemic, ‘a sign with the capacity to have multiple meanings’. A monologic mode of language ignores other voices or viewpoints and reinforces stereotypes and ideologies, but can be countered by using the dialogical model.\textsuperscript{42} Dialogism can be applied to the ‘ethnic signifier’ to demonstrate that the meaning of the signifier is in a continual state of flux. Mercer believes that the application of these concepts to black artist identities could result in an escape from the ‘biological and sociological reductions’ that plague black artists’ work.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid, 231.
\textsuperscript{41} Mercer, ‘Stuart Hall and the Visual Arts’, 14.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid, 30.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid, 9–10.
Mercer provides another linguistic theory to further analyse the utilisation of dialogism in black diaspora discourse. In 1929, Russian linguist Valentin Voloshinov theorised that groups from two social classes that use a common language will understand that common language differently. The host language is appropriated by the diaspora group and used in the context of its own cultural environment, such as the language shared between colonialists and slaves. Voloshinov argued that these differences in meaning were accentuated by sociopolitical tensions, such as in times of revolution. He termed this condition, ‘social multiaccentuality’.\textsuperscript{44} In the semiotic models, there is ‘an open-ended space’ and the possibility to redefine black representation. The black diaspora could be represented with a complexity of layers as the ‘ethnic signifier’ and could fluctuate in meaning, countering the old simplistic model of dichotomy and biological and sociological reductions.\textsuperscript{45}

In conclusion, Mercer’s research has been instrumental in identifying that ‘the interruptive agency of the black diaspora’ has been a common thread in the development of critical ideas and tools in the visual arts. Mercer’s efforts follow a long collective line of academic and cultural contributions to bring us to the point we are at today. This has been useful in dismantling old dichotomous paradigms, which hampered minority artists’ inclusion in and access to art world institutions in the twentieth century. The impact of black diaspora art history, literature and applied theory has shifted the asymmetrical relationship between black artists and the Modernist paradigm of the West more to the centre. The recognition of cross-cultural interactions between black diaspora and European influences has given us the tools to change the way we understand the development of Modernism. Globalisation and technology have given researchers unprecedented access to information and archival data, changing the way we view the black diaspora identity and representation. Also, the contextual tools developed in cultural theory and dialogism have provided powerful methods that can be used to deal with the problematic categorisations of black diaspora art and artists. Black artists can now be more informed in their selection of artistic tools and strategies to continue the significant efforts of their artistic, theoretical and cultural predecessors to use the agency of the black diaspora to interrupt closed systems of inequality and open up spaces for critical dialogue for hopes of a more equitable future.

\textsuperscript{44} Mercer, \textit{Travel & See: Black Diaspora Art Practices since the 1980s}, 29.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid, 5.
Chapter 2 – Contemporary Diaspora Lens

In this chapter, I will give examples of artwork that contextualise the ideas in my studio practice, which includes the cut-and-mix technique, the use and morphing of cultural signifiers and experimentation with street art. Works of black diaspora artists Romare Bearden and Firelei Báez will be contextualised with the theories and concepts presented in Chapter 1. Bearden’s artwork represents a period before Kobena Mercer’s analytical texts of black diaspora art were published and is an example of a period that now can be analysed with a contemporary lens using Mercer’s theoretical research. Like Bearden, Báez developed a visual language representative of the black diaspora artists, but for the present day, addressing issues of race, history and politics in contemporary visual culture. Street artist Swoon is not a black diaspora artist, but works with themes of marginalised, minority communities and utilises imagery of minority communities and, while doing so, develops a parallel visual language.

Romare Bearden

Romare Bearden was an important artist of the twentieth century who developed an African-American visual vernacular that became an important resource in black diaspora critical discourse. Bearden’s contributions were not widely recognised until decades later. He understood that images were important in forming public opinions about race and the challenges of racism in society and politics and the proliferation of primitive stereotypes. Bearden used a cut-and-mix aesthetic to unsettle the senses and open up spaces for critical discourse about black diaspora art. Informed by his European studies in painting, he drew from his cross-cultural experiences to translate a unique visual vernacular representing African-American life, resulting in new significations that disrupted the conventional notions of black cultural representation.46

Bearden mainly practiced as an abstract and figurative painter and was briefly an illustrator, but found that the collage technique better suited his artistic vision. After serving in the military in World War 2, Bearden studied at the Sorbonne in Paris and travelled through Europe, meeting artists and writers such as Joan Miró, Pablo Picasso, Gaston Bachelard

and Hannah Arendt. He also had close relationships with creative intellectuals in America, including James Baldwin, Stuart Davis, Duke Ellington, Langston Hughes and George Grosz. Ralph Ellison was also a friend and wrote extensively about Bearden’s work. In the late 1950s, Bearden was a community leader in New York during the Harlem Renaissance and the civil rights movement. His community involvement in the arts led him to his adoption of collage, a technique that spanned the rest of his career.47,48

In 1963, he formed the Spiral group and, for their one and only show, he planned a group collage installation. The plans fell through, but he continued with a collage project on his own to produce the Photomontage Projections series. These collages were constructed from cut pieces of photographs, magazines, newspaper clippings and photocopies pasted on Masonite board and then photographed and enlarged to large-scale black-and-white images, the literal and metaphorical colour theme for the show.49

In Photomontage Projection, The Street (1964) (Figure 1), Bearden cut pieces from printed media and used them as ‘street iconography’ to create a busy inner city neighborhood. The street is composed of ‘pieced together’ African-American men, women and children creating a ‘figurative vocabulary’. It is a bustling scene of urban life with a nod to music, as one figure holds a guitar. The proportions of the body parts are distorted, creating a grotesque element. The heads and hand are much larger than the bodies, and the combined pieces are disjointed and imperfect. The disfigured black bodies served as a metaphor for and reflection of the African-American experience in the 1960s.50 Mercer notes that a grotesque aesthetic can be translated from hybrid forms. This symbolic mixing of identities and crossing of boundaries can be interpreted as a subversive act to disrupt the senses and open up spaces for discussions of black representation in America.51

48 Rachael DeLue, ‘Conjure and Collapse in the Art of Romare Bearden’, Nonsite.org, no. #7: Formalism/Post-Formalism (2012).
50 Ibid, 137.
51 Mercer, Travel & See: Black Diaspora Art Practices since the 1980s, 19.
A critical element resonates in the collages as the found images from that period were masterfully transformed into snapshots of a reconstructed history, where simple and torn pieces yielded complex narratives.\(^{52}\) Ellison recognised how the collages filled the vacuum of context presented in the mass news and media sources:

> Therefore the image of American society presented by the newspapers, magazines and radio often missed much of the sheer human complexity of the life we knew. That life was marked by a ceaseless resistance against all attempts to reduce its complex humanity, whether by force or ideology, and by example it pointed a direction for the writer and artist.\(^ {53}\)

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In viewing Bearden’s collages, we can refer to Derrida’s theory of difference in the shift in visuality of the identifiable whole black image to a recognisable fragmented one. Mercer refers to Ellison’s astute reading of ‘Bearden’s dialectical relationships to regimes of representation’ in the use of the signifier.

Ellison stresses the critical moment of negation involved in Bearden’s dialectical relationship to the regimes of representation from which his source materials are derived… Ellison also observes the synthetic moment of re-assemblage whereby the photographic fragments that Bearden pulled out of antithetical sources are cancelled out and yet legibly preserved in his artistic re-articulation of signifying elements.\(^5^4\)

In *Conjur Woman* (1964) (Figure 2), Bearden portrays a mythological figure of the blues who was ingrained in the Negro American culture and related to rituals and ceremonies of ‘rebirth and dying’ and ‘baptism and sorcery’.\(^5^5\) The use of images of African masks and sculptures identifies the choice of subject position, with a metaphorical reference to ‘double displacement’ that can refer to the masks themselves and to the photographs and people. The assembly of an African artifact with an African-American face merges the meanings of the individual signifiers into something new. This collage made a critical reference to Primitivism. Bearden alluded to the cultural appropriation in Picasso’s *Les Demoiselles d’Avignon* (1907) as an example of the back-and-forth dialogue between ‘Euro American modernism and Black Atlantic diaspora culture’.\(^5^6\) Mercer connects the theory of ‘double consciousness’ and the ‘dialogic doubleness’ to *Conjur Woman* because it signified the multicultural entanglements that account for the fragmentation and dislocation of the black diaspora.\(^5^7\)

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57 DeLue.
Bearden’s twentieth-century work was re-examined with a global contemporary lens following Mercer’s 20 years of studying the black diaspora art of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In his collage technique, Bearden strategically used a cut-and-mix aesthetic to develop his visual vocabulary and represent the African-American condition as a dialogic shift in associated paradigms and signifier meanings. He opened a critical discourse about black diaspora art, culture and representation.  

58 Mercer, Travel & See: Black Diaspora Art Practices since the 1980s, 234.
the struggle to find his artistic voice.\textsuperscript{59} With collage, the semiotic function transcended the mere act of pasting. In mixing and combining the disparate images, Bearden found a way to explore deeper levels of meaning and create new personal truths.\textsuperscript{60}

**Firelei Báez**

Born in 1982, Firelei Báez is a Dominican-American artist known for her large-scale images that examine similar issues as Bearden in terms of diaspora race, identity and culture. She is informed by how race and the body are visually represented in the United States and the Caribbean, two regions that have complicated histories involving black diaspora identity resulting from the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Báez is from an immigrant family and has spent part of her childhood in the Dominican Republic and most of her adult life between Miami and New York; her main modes of art making are painting and drawing on both canvas and paper. She has a strong use of ornamentation and intricate patterning inspired by signs of cultural resistance in the black diaspora history and mixes and juxtaposes symbols from different time periods, resulting in the generation of new meanings of cultural signifiers.\textsuperscript{61}

In one body of work, she found inspiration in the resilience of women in the Creole community, who had to devise defence mechanisms in order to deal with the social, political, and legal restrictions they faced in eighteenth-century Louisiana. At that time, women of colour were fined a sumptuary tax if they failed to wear the *tignon*, a headdress wrapped and knotted into place. This law was passed to place class distinctions upon women of colour and to dictate the appropriate mode of dress in a colonial society. It was an expression of contempt and a means of control intended to prevent the Creole women from being seen as objects of desire.\textsuperscript{62} In Báez’s *Sans-Souci (This Threshold between a Dematerialized and a Historicized Body)* (2015) (Figure 3), a woman is portrayed with only the detail of her eyes gazing at the viewer, adorned with a *tignon* headdress decorated with juxtaposed patterns of various cultural symbols, intricate designs and floral motifs.

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\textsuperscript{59} Ellison, ‘The Art of Romare Bearden’, 676.

\textsuperscript{60} DeLue.


Signs of the Black Panther Party and the resistance fist, signifiers used for the Black Power Movement in the United States during the 1960s, are mixed with European-styled patterns and used as decorative elements on the headdress. Furthermore, Báez learned that the Creole women changed the signifying meaning of the *tignon*, enacting subversive power by constructing the headdresses from beautiful fabrics imported from France via Martinique. The *tignon* was later seen as a fashion statement in Europe, which led to the overturning of
the sumptuary law. Báez compares the symbol to a codex, where it can serve as catalyst to dialogue or to the discovery of something larger.\textsuperscript{63} The codex that represents aspects of black diaspora resistance acts as a signifier, which embodies the possibility to initiate critical discourse. She makes the effort to understand the history behind the symbols she appropriates, because without their histories they are in danger of becoming superficial ornamentation. The symbols representing both the Black Power Movement and the inventive resistance of the Creole women were researched and combined to illustrate the complex narrative of the challenges of oppression that the black diaspora have face in the United States. In the San-Souci composition, the thoughtful juxtaposition of the past and present images of resistance illustrates the continuation of the creative methods in black diaspora history that have developed to subvert and navigate the means of control enforced by hegemonic sociopolitical power.

Báez also looked at the prescribed notions of race and gender through phenotypes, such as skin tone and hair textures, as a racial signifiers of African heritage. In \textit{Can I Pass? Introducing the Paper Bag to the Fan Test for the Month of December}, 2010 (Figure 4), Báez explored the practice of the judgment of the racialised body through ingrained European social expectations and standards of beauty. Also informing her work were the brown paper bag test in the United States and the fan test in the Dominican Republic. The brown paper bag test is a classification system for skin tone that stems from discrimination against dark-skinned blacks in American society, a continuation of a stigma from slavery and Western civilisation that is still considered today by whites and light-skinned blacks. The fan test originated because men wanted to use an antiquated colonial law to their advantage in a divorce; the test was that the woman’s hair had to flow freely in the wind of a fan.\textsuperscript{64,65} Informed by these troubled histories, Báez used a portraiture series to create a system of her own reflecting current societal prejudices by producing daily silhouettes dictated by the style and kinkiness of her own hair and her complexion on the day. The work is presented in a serial nature, with identical methodology for each portrait. She positions them side-by-side to create a complete vision. Her different hairstyles and skin tones recall Derrida’s theory of difference, with the subtle shift in hairstyle and skin tone variations analogous to Derrida’s ‘a’. Her head and shoulders were painted with gouache in varying brown tones as

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{64} Vogel.
Figure 4. Firelei Báez, *Can I Pass? Introducing the Paper Bag to the Fan Test for the Month of December*, 2010. 

a fixed set of eyes gaze on the viewer. Báez has produced work that examines race as a signifier intertwined with the critique of women of colour in society. Dialogic theory is useful in the analysis of this series of drawings, because it can be used to demonstrate the modification of the racial signifier as a visual aesthetic disrupting harmful dominant narratives and lending to the critical dialog pertaining to race.

Báez engages visual traditions of race and representation in a critical dialogue that uses the agency of the black diaspora in such a way that it becomes a visual interruption in contemporary art. In both *San-Souci* and *Can I Pass?*, Báez also critiques eighteenth-century British and French aristocratic portraiture through the composition of her subjects. This style of portraiture was a popular method of developing an aristocratic identity. Báez
applies her inspiration to her work in a dialogical way. She was inspired by the subversive power enacted by the women in changing the signifying meaning of the headdress. In using an eighteenth-century portrait style, she shifts the significance of the painting format. From a dialogical perspective, the portrait is symbolic of relationships between the cross-cultural entanglements of the past and derivative relationships in the present and the future. She examines how ethnic signifiers are controlled by hegemonic visual culture and produces her own work that disrupt codes and conventions that seem historically commonplace and normal. Her critiques are of classification systems of race and a dialogic process can be applied, in that the signifying elements of black representation are transformed by pairing them with the mixing of cultural symbols and patterns. Báez’s work parallels Bearden’s, in that she examines the history of the African diaspora and selects imagery in one context and selects-and-mixes it to create new meanings. Her use of the agency of black resistance is used as a tool to interweave her own heritage with a critical dialogue of the past, present, and future. With Báez’s exploration of the topics, the two points on the timeline are brought into the present and dialogically altered so that we can gain a better understanding of the mechanisms of these visual codes in art and sociopolitical history.

**Swoon a.k.a. Caledonia Curry**

Building on my research into Bearden and Báez, the work of Caledonia Curry, known by the pseudonym Swoon, is included in this paper to demonstrate a use of street art as a methodology that can create awareness of minority and marginalised communities to examine the societal and political challenges similar to that the black diaspora face and to explore a subversive tool of disruption in public spaces and art institutions. Swoon’s visual vernacular provides a vocabulary to the people she presents in her portraiture. The negotiation of the use of the exhibition space and the back-and-forth between street art and gallery enforces her artist agency of the imagery and its political significance.

Before working in the streets, Swoon became disillusioned with the direction of her degree in painting while attending Pratt University in New York, as she realised that her art would be mainly shown in galleries and museums where only a select and limited group of people

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66 Rocío Aranda-Alvarado.
would be able to view it. Her warranted unease can be supported by Brian O’Doherty’s *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, where he describes how the gallery can become an intimidating, elitist environment, one in which visitors conduct themselves as if they were in a church.\(^{67}\) It was important to Swoon that people not familiar with the art world had an opportunity to connect with her work. To free her imagery from the confines of the ‘white cube’, she began participating in street art by wheat-pasting life-sized linoleum, woodblock prints and cut-paper portraits in different cities around the world.

Swoon prefers to place her work in large metropolises filled with graffití or street art, and she looks for areas that are on the periphery, and, within those locations, obscure corners or unassuming surfaces found in the marginal parts of the city: railway station walls, alleyways and abandoned buildings. In one example, Swoon pasted up in an abandoned lot a seated female figure from a remaining nomadic Australian Aboriginal group, one that had to negotiate a marginalised existence outside mainstream Australian culture (Figure 5). Australia is a country with a society and culture that has a violent, colonial past, and racial discrimination against Aboriginal people is still commonplace.

Viewing the ambiguous figure immediately disrupts the visual connection between the city and the viewer, revealing how the status quo determines not only the way people live but also the way they think. In *Of Other Spaces*, Foucault used the term ‘heterotopias’ to describe these sites as ‘non-hegemonic’ places of ‘otherness’, where deviant behaviour, such as street art, has the freedom to occur.\(^{68}\) French theorist Michel de Certeau describes in *The Practice of Everyday Life* how the urban inhabitant must navigate the city’s codified environment, which is ‘inseparable from everyday life’. The urban dweller is desensitised to the streets filled with messages in the form of economy-based billboards, advertisement, architecture signs etc.\(^{69}\),\(^{70}\) Influenced by the hegemonic infrastructure, when viewing street art in heterotopias a kind of mental policing is conducted, similar to that described by Tony Bennett in his essay ‘The Exhibitionary Complex’, whereby museum visitors police their

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\(^{69}\) Irvine, 248.

own behaviour in the confines of the space, as well as that of their fellow visitors.71 Like the agency of the black diaspora, the paste-ups of marginalised communities can take on a transgressive element, where the imagery is activated by the streets and urban environment and provides the opportunity for critical discourse of the subject matter and context.

**Figure 5.** Swoon, *Untitled*, 2007–2012.

Furthermore, the subversive nature of this type of work has important historical resonance. One of the first significant modern uses of markings on urban walls was seen in France in May 1968, when university students and working-class strikers revolted against the French government’s capitalistic policies and heavy-handed police force. Activists like the Situationists International, a group of intellectual artist revolutionaries, took their civil

disobedience to the streets by scrawling poems and creative slogans and pasting silkscreened posters containing political messages.72,73 Borrowing from her predecessors, Swoon uses the urban landscape as a canvas for her portraiture. Her street art takes the form of ephemera, due to the fragile nature of the paper exposed to weather and time. The emphasis of her laboriously intricate work is not on the material value but, rather, on the message and the action of being seen and discussed. The impermanence of her work is indicative of the vulnerable nature of displaced and marginalised communities.

After developing her practice in the streets, Swoon turned back to the use of the gallery space to disseminate her message to a broader audience. In the 1990s, she was part of a group of university-trained artists who gained inclusion in galleries and museum by developing the genre of street art or post-graffiti. The ability of these artists was substantially conceptual and contemporary compared to their graffiti forerunners. Counter to the anonymity and the subculture of vandalism and trespassing, Swoon and her colleagues went on to become respected artists, appearing in numerous solo and group museum and gallery exhibitions worldwide.74 For example, at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, in 2012, Swoon installed a large mural titled *Anthropocene Extinction* (Figure 6). The installation was a direct reference to the effects of climate change due to human intervention and industrialisation. The main subject is the same female Australian Aboriginal figure that was pasted up in the urban environment, now installed formidably atop a mound of intricately cut patterns and prints of Tibetan deity masks and surrounded by the soft colouring of clouds of blue and delicate little creatures haloed around her.75 Considering the history of displacement and racist treatment of Aboriginal Australians, Swoon creates new meanings of representation with the juxtaposition of images and opens a space for interpretation and dialogue to be developed through the combination of the differing Australian Aboriginal and Tibetan cultures. The masks are sometimes used to ward off evil; in this case, possibly the evil of the destruction of the environment and homes resulting in the displacement of

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74 Irvine, 236.
Aboriginal communities in Australia. The fragility of the delicately cut paper adds an extra element indicative of the ephemeral nature of the Aboriginal agency and condition.


In combination with her numerous gallery and museum exhibitions, Swoon continues to put up work in the streets. Her interventions and disruption of senses initiate a dialogue between the city dwellers and topics dealing with social and political issues. Like Swoon, many street artists practice this art form in order to reclaim the streets and the urban environment and to make art for those who inhabit it. Regardless of how famous the street artist is, this ‘illegal mode of expression’ still causes disruptions in the public space and can be used as an effective mode of communication. 76 Black diaspora artists seeking to initiate discussion can also use this methodology as a strategic tool. Bearden, Báez, and Swoon all

76 Waclawek, 73.
used art to intervene and disrupt the normative structural rule and classification systems in society through the strategic use of artistic tools and methodologies. In doing so, they have allowed imagination of alternative ideas and realities. Collage, mixing of cultural symbols, and street art can all be used in combination with the agency of the diaspora to effectively interrupt systemic ideological conventions and to develop and progress much needed in critical dialogue.
Chapter 3 – Contemporary Diaspora Identity

Like Bearden, Báez and Swoon, the cut and mix of signifiers has allowed me to visually manifest my concepts of identity. My background is made up of seemingly disparate cultures, and I am able to cut and mix relative imagery and juxtapose it to create new meanings. Printmaking, illustration and street art are my main techniques, and appropriation and digital collage the tools used to produce imagery. In this chapter, I will demonstrate how I use these techniques to address themes of race, representation and identity and also present my artwork, informed by these issues from its initial developmental stage to the present.

Japanese/Black Diaspora

My heritage is Asian/African-American. The Asian ancestry is Japanese; the specific African country of my background is unknown, as my black ancestors were forced to America through the trans-Atlantic slave trade. I was born in Japan and my family emigrated to the United States when I was two years old. I identify as an American, without a strong cultural affiliation with Japan, or with African-American or any other specific culture in the United States. I decided to explore the themes of race, identity, culture and belonging to fill in some of the gaps in my personal history resulting from forced generational immigration. My family lineage was dislocated centuries ago through slavery, and I was forced to move in my lifetime, albeit the move was a decision made by my parents when I was a child. As an adult, I have relocated to Australia temporarily for academic studies. This dislocation from place, and the navigation through different cultures, has shaped my decision-making in my studio practice and research. By Mercer’s criteria, I could be identified as part of the black diaspora; however, I apply Hall’s description of identity as ‘a matter of becoming as well as of being’. I will be informed by, but set aside, the ambiguous label of Asian/African-American and refer to my cultural identity as part of the Japanese/black diaspora from this point forward.
Development of Style

The development of my illustration style began prior to my MFA research. Drawing from my background, I examined Japanese history to begin piecing together visual signifiers to build my Japanese/black diaspora vernacular. At the start of my research, I was interested in the 2011 catastrophe at the Tokyo Electric Power Company’s (TEPCO) Daiichi nuclear power plant in Fukushima. Its facility was devastated by an earthquake-triggered tsunami in the Tōhoku region, resulting in a meltdown of three of the plant’s six nuclear reactors, causing the release of substantial amounts of radioactive material into the Pacific Ocean. This was the largest nuclear incident since Chernobyl in 1986.\(^{77}\) TEPCO has kept a comprehensive photography and video database of the repair and clean-up efforts since day zero of the meltdown. The photographs uploaded to this database have contained employees wearing personal protective equipment, including hard hats, hazardous material suits and chemical gas masks.

In my continued search for Japanese imagery, I discovered nineteenth-century albumen prints that captured rural Japanese history and culture before the rapid modernisation of the Meiji Era (1868–1912). As a result of military pressure from the United States, Japan opened its borders in 1854 after a strict 250-year isolation under the Shoguns’ rule. During this period, there were extraordinary transformations in social, political, economic and military sectors. Modern advances, including photographic equipment and supplies from the West, were imported into Japan. Japanese and Western photographers opened commercial studios, which produced prints depicting anthropological-like observations of everyday life, including fashion trends and personal possessions.\(^{78}\)

After finding the albumen prints, I proceeded by mixing the imagery from two points on the Japanese historical timeline. These images signified the past, as in Baron Raimund von Stillfried’s print *Singing Girl* (ca. 1875) (Figure 7), and the present and potential future, in the form of gas masks cut from the Fukushima photographs. Like the TEPCO database, the early Japanese snapshots were easily accessible online, with the images available in the public domain. I used photo-editing software both to collage the compositions and to

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manually render them into graphic illustrations. The dystopian figures manifested were indicative of the long, tumultuous connection between traditional Japanese culture and nuclear power. The signifiers, working together, represent a dialogic relationship between the past and the present, and suggest the traditional colliding with the modern.


My hand-pulled screenprint *Shamisen* (Figure 8) is an example of one of the illustration works produced using the digital cut-and-mix methodology. I used a brown shade of paper to critique the issue of race as a signifier, as the negative space of the paper gave the image an aged aesthetic but also served as the colour of the figure’s skin. The graphic style of the print is similar to the style of traditional Japanese Ukiyo-e prints. The literal translation of
Ukiyo-e is ‘painting of the floating world’. This centuries-old tradition of Japanese printmaking links two lineages to my creative practice, one to my heritage and the other to art history. There are design similarities between *Shamisen* and Nishikawa Sukenobu’s print from a well-known book of woodblock prints of beautiful women, *Ehon Asakayama* (*Mount Asaka, a Picture-book*) (1793) (Figure 9). Sukenobu was the most influential Ukiyo-e master in the first half of the eighteenth century in Kyoto.79 The graphic lines of both images create a composition in which the foreground and background are difficult to distinguish. An icon-versus-field format is employed, whereby the iconic figures are placed in the centre in basic rectilinear profiles but disembodied in neutral ground, with a flat field.

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devoid of shadow. There is simplicity to the compositional style that is intrinsic to the overall aesthetic.


In *Shamisen*, the style of the woman’s hair, clothes, and instrument signify a life in a pre-modern past; the juxtaposition with the gas mask, representing technology in an industrialised world, is paradoxical. The realism mimicked in the *Shamisen* print from the nineteenth-century photograph resulted in a pre-industrialisation feel to the illustration, similar to that of the Ukiyo-e prints that were widely published and served as popular culture entertainment during the Edo Period (1603–1867). The combination of signifiers can, perhaps, represent Japan’s rapid changes in the late nineteenth century, including industrialisation and the profound adjustments experienced by its people. Digital collage methodology is also a relevant component in this image, considering the introduction of
collage in modern art was based on a reaction to the shift toward industrialisation. Immediate access to online images and the shift from manual cutting and pasting to computer software is a fitting metaphor.

**Balancing the Visual Vernacular**

To further develop and balance the Japanese/black diaspora vernacular, I began to explore African culture. This signalled the starting point of my MFA studio work. Continuing with the cut-and-mix methodology, I produced a new series of images for an exhibition at Sydney College of the Arts (2015) organised by the Curatorial LAB course supervised by curator Oliver Watts (Figure 10). The exhibition explored the relationships between cultural hybridity, multiculturalism and artist authenticity. With this work, Japanese signifiers were juxtaposed with African ones (Figure 11) in order to achieve a balance to the theme of my personal cultural identity. Instead of gas masks, nineteenth century African masks were collaged onto the Japanese bodies. The inclusion of the African mask can be explained by the influence of the diaspora experience on African-American artists, as the desires for belonging and home manifest in the decision-making process in their artwork. Africa is seen as the lost motherland and the hopes of a reconnection are conveyed by the use of the

![Figure 10. Rujunko Pugh, Curatorial LAB installation, 2015.](image)
African signifier. It also brings a new perspective on how a diaspora artist makes their work. In order to negotiate two or, at times, multiple cultures, cross-cultural dialogue takes place in the compositions to convey a developed and complex visual language.

The visual language generated from the Japanese/African hybrids may be new in my vocabulary, but the stereotypes evoked are quite established. Also, there is a dialogic relationship between the signifiers, which demonstrates that the meanings have shifted in the elements of these collages. A new representation is formed in the pairing of the Japanese and African imagery. Further, the work can be used to critique the reductionist dichotomies that were dominant in Western Modernism, as the collages could easily be classified as primitive, exotic, Oriental, or ‘other’. Another consideration is the use of cultural symbols without histories. The various African ritual masks and kimonos decorated with textile patterns were used to compose the figures; however, without the histories of the masks or the patterns, the symbols acted as ornamental decoration. Báez makes reference to

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80 Nelson, 308.
this issue in her use of intricate symbol and pattern work originating from the cultures she has researched. Overall, the collages open the discussion in regard to perpetuating generalisations and reductionist pitfalls, but also to new meanings and possibilities in representation.

The experimentation in the selection and mixing of the images has also allowed me to contemplate and contextualise my Japanese/black identity in relation to visual arts and culture. I place distinctly Japanese images next to imagery that is distinctly black, resulting a collage of the two. Mercer noted that collage is the best medium for diaspora artists, as their experiences are of a composite condition. Also, the collage mix of imagery demonstrates that race is a signifier and can change in meaning. When the Japanese signifier is juxtaposed with a black racial signifier, the meanings of both transform.

**Additional Tool of Disruption**

Once the cut-and-mix aesthetic and visual vernacular was progressed, experimentation with the street art platform seemed to be a logical progression, considering the graphic nature of my work. Art exhibited outside the gallery space is not for commercial purposes. Also, in the urban landscape, the streets offer a democratic environment opposed to the institutional museums and commercial galleries. This aspect of the politics of visual arts space is explained by French theorist Jacques Rancière, who wrote *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, in which he discusses that there is an ‘equality of indifference’ in subject matter that is produced’ for example, ‘a written page’ or, in my case, street art, are both available for everyone to see. The hierarchies are destroyed because my work, along with everyone else’s, is randomly and democratically viewed in and around metropolises. My stickers are put up in the in the environment and are ephemeral and gratuitous in form compared to the barrage of commercial images in the city. According to de Certeau’s description, the street artist becomes a trickster in their transgressive act of putting up work:

> Though elsewhere it is exploited by a dominant power or simply denied by an ideological discourse, here order is tricked by an art. Into the institution to be served are thus insinuated

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81 Irvine, 277.
styles of social exchange, technical invention, and moral resistance, that is, an economy of the ‘gift’ (generosities for which one expects a return), an esthetics of ‘tricks’ (artists' operations) and an ethics of tenacity (countless ways of refusing to accord the established order the status of a law, a meaning, or a fatality). 82

As a result, this street art becomes the political act of a gift. My work is a rejection of the profit economy, differentiating itself from the consumer-based infrastructure in which it is placed.

**Figure 12.** Rujunko Pugh, *Shamisen*, Paste up installation, Melbourne, Australia, 2014.

In this paper, I give examples of paste-ups and stickers that were ‘put-up’ in two major city locations, Melbourne and Rome. In Australia, Melbourne is known as a street art-friendly city, where certain walls are sanctioned for use to spray paint and paste-up freely. I placed a cutout of *Shamisen* on a wall on Warburton Lane (Figure 13). The copier-generated print activated the surrounding visual elements and, in return, the space activated the print. There was a stark contrast between the figure’s brown skin and the brightness of the white wall. Also on the wall was a one-colour stencilled portrait by an anonymous street artist of a geisha holding a fan and a gun. There are similarities and differences between the two figures, but one is evident: the difference in skin tone. Stereotypically, the Asian female  

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82 Certeau, 26–28.
figure is one that fits preconceived Western notions of exoticness. The stencilled gun- and fan-holding geisha is portrayed with a sensuality that would fit the ideological Western mold. Also, the negative space of the wall filling in the white skin tone is appropriate. The *Shamisen* print, with the contrasting skin tone placed next to the stencilled figure, critiques the theme of representation and identity.

Nelson discusses the function of diaspora in contemporary art and how it challenges the ‘homogeneous fictions of nation, nationality, and citizenship’. One of the reasons diaspora artists produce work is to counter the hegemonic infrastructure that creates the institutions of racism, sexism, classism and nationalism that dominate the status quo. Nelson claims that these works are ‘interventions’, causing disruptions in these types of discourses. Some diaspora artists use fragmentation and montage to take old formal languages in art making and form new visual ones. 83

In Rome, Italy, I put up stickers on light poles in front of ancient Roman buildings such as the Piazza di San Giovanni in Laterano, the Pantheon (Figure 15) and the Colosseum (Figure 16). The juxtaposition of the collage imagery with significant cultural landmarks signifies that the cross-cultural entanglements in Western culture began aeons before Modernism. The granite, marble and concrete architectural structures have unyielding positions in the foundation of the Western canon. The buildings persist amid the result of the technological advances of modernity, Mercer has had the opportunity to reassess the work of dismissed black diaspora artists in the twentieth century in the shadow the Modernists. It would be interesting to look at black diaspora art produced during the Roman Empire with a contemporary lens.

83 Nelson, 298–305.
There are two ideas that come to mind with the application of these theories to my street art. The first is that in the street art environment, the use of the agency of the Japanese/black diaspora is unburdened, freed from the confines of the Western European canon that influence major international art institutions and the most influential art galleries. The graffiti and street art community, dealing mainly with the politics of and competition for space, globally defines the rules. The second idea is based on the theories developed by de
Certeau and Bennett. When the urban dweller navigates a modern or ancient city space their attention may be caught by the interventions of my images on a city wall or light post. The viewer immediately has a self-policing reaction, processing that the street art does not belong in that space. This disruption of the visual connection between the environment and the viewer allows the possibility of discourse.

**Further Exploration of Diaspora Identity**

In search of the Japanese/black diaspora vocabulary, I began to understand the mechanism of the signified elements in my images and to develop the work with more technical control of the signifier. Mercer noted that the cut-and-mix aesthetic was the best choice for diaspora identity because of the juxtaposition of different cultures. An examination of my identity from a strictly black, African, Japanese or American point of view, as Hall described, would yield essentialist results. Hall understood identity as a matter of ‘becoming as well as being’, and in this fashion, I employ collage and also an amalgamating methodology in an attempt to blend the Japanese and black cultures visually. In my previous work, the composite identity remained in two separate pieces and, as a result, read as static. The imagery for Japanese/black identity in my current work is presented in a fluid representation, where the past and present are taken into consideration in looking at the diaspora experience as a whole. For the Sydney College of the Arts graduation examination, I will present three bodies of work that employ various cut-and-mix aesthetics to explore various methods to develop a visual vernacular for the Japanese/black diaspora culture.

Exploring further with the genre of street art, I experimented with a mural installation (Figure 17) of a Sydney city alley using simple illustration and graphic style. This was an attempt to include an Australian element, considering I have live in the country for the past three years. Also, bringing the exterior into the interior space mimicked the act of putting up photocopy transfers and posters in an outdoor urban space. Photocopy transfer methodology was used to signify the transference that occurs in multicultural entanglements (Figures 18 and 19). The poster paste-ups were composed of image transfers on brown kraft paper in which, as in the *Shamisen* screenprint, the brown color acted as a signifier for skin tone. The gel medium transfer does not allow for a precise application of the image from one substrate to the other creating a worn aesthetic on both the paper and
the wall. This element added a quality that represents the imperfections in the transference from one culture to another.

Figure 15. Rujunko Pugh, Graduate Examination Exhibition mural installation, Sydney College of the Arts, Rozzelle, 2017.

Figure 16. Rujunko Pugh, *ImPoster Syndrome* (detail), poster #3, 2017.

Figure 17. Rujunko Pugh, *ImPoster Syndrome* (detail), photocopy transfer #4, 2017.
From a dialogic perspective, my new work is informed by my past work. The research itself has acted as an interruption to my personal conventional modes of thinking, in terms of my ideas pertaining to the twentieth-century Modernist paradigm and how much that paradigm had shaped the way I interpreted art. In the past, I instinctually dismissed including the black signifier in my work, as I did not want my work to look too ‘ethnic’. This psychological phenomenon is addressed in Said’s Orientalism, which notes that non-Westerners are conditioned to see themselves as ‘Other’. With race as a signifier in a classification system, and because of my black background, I was seen, and saw myself, as ‘Other’. Through my research, I came to the realisation that my mode of thinking had been transformed. This existential revelation can be referred to Voloshinov’s theory of multiaccentuality.

Figure 18. Rujunko Pugh, detail of 19th Century Modern Transfer, 2017.
The images of my new work develop a visual methodology that merges Japanese and black cultures. The compositions have a graphic quality and are printed on paper for continuity with the Ukiyo-e lineage. The body of work titled 19th Century Modern consists of twenty gel medium transfers arranged in a five-by-four arrangement referencing the Modernist grid to acknowledge the influential role of Modernism in art history (Figure 20). Each individual print includes three elements originating from the nineteenth century (Figure 21). The base of the image is of a black Victorian woman, a person of the black diaspora assimilating the colonialist clothing and hairstyle from that period. Collaged into the base photograph is a part of a Japanese woman’s face that always includes the eyes, an identifying feature of the Asian phenotype that has been sectioned from a Japanese albumen print. And the final component is a decorative element sourced from a katagami stencil originally used for Meiji Era textiles.

Figure 19. Rujunko Pugh, detail of 19th Century Modern Transfer, 2017.
In the final body of work, I screenprint images with the same illustration style as *Shamisen*. Instead of using the Japanese kimono for the clothes for the main figures, I replace it with dresses from the Victorian era. Katagami stencil patterns are used for decorative elements on the dress. Afrocentric hair, which is a polemic issue in black culture (as referenced by Báez in *Can I Pass*), is merged with a brown face and Asian eyes to create an amalgamated figure that aesthetically embodies phenotypic elements of both Japanese and black cultures. This figure is indicative of Hall’s fluid nature of cultural identity compare to that of the collaged images.

In the course of my MFA research and studio work, I began to build a vocabulary to describe my identity in visual arts and became more comfortable with using the black

Figure 20. Rujunko Pugh, *Keiko*, 2017.
signifier because of my sense of the responsibility to put out into the world the agency of the black diaspora in visual arts, thus, perhaps, initiating discussion of a new perspective on Japanese/black identity and dismantling reductionist notions of what Japanese or black means. Dubois’s ‘double consciousness’, in reference to the landscape of hegemony, is a motivation to cultivate new expressions and forms of identity to have a vehicle to push back the structures of racism and oppression.
Conclusion

The black artist is a newcomer to visual arts culture compared to his or her Western European counterparts. Since their arrival on this field, many hegemonic sociological and political challenges have had to be faced. During my exploration of the black diaspora identity in visual arts culture, I discovered that the interruptive agency of blackness could be used as a strategic tool to interrupt the senses and challenge reductive either/or categorisations. This disruption creates fissures in the normal thought processes and allows spaces to open for discussion and critique of dominant narratives, such as those influenced by racial stereotypes. This interruptive practice can be amplified by the use of the methodologies of collage and street art. As a result of this research, I now have a better understanding of how to use these artistic tools and strategies in my creative practice.

In the initial exploration of the themes of race, identity and culture, I struggled with the development of a discourse and visual vernacular to describe my artwork. A breakthrough was discovering Kobena Mercer’s twenty years of study of the black diaspora artist, which led me to a rich vocabulary for black diaspora identity developed over the twentieth century and the field of cultural studies and Stuart Hall. Hall understood that the signification of race worked in a similar way to language and that the discourse about black representation could be modified. Mercer brought together the ideas of Hall and Mikhail Bakhtin’s dialogic theory to demonstrate how the black diaspora identity was characterised by shifts in meaning. This model can be applied to diaspora cultural identity at large. Furthermore, globalisation, technology and migration have changed the meaning of diaspora and, as a result, allowed a contemporary understanding of the creative practice of the diaspora artist.

The contextualisation of my creative practice required defining the black diaspora identity, illustrating the relevant vocabulary and demonstrating the fluid nature of black diaspora representation. The artists selected for contextualising my artwork were relevant because they used interruptive practices of collage, cut-and-mix style and street art. Also, their work dealt with issues relating to diaspora culture, providing insight into elements of cross-cultural entanglements and multicultural translations. In the mid-twentieth century, Romare Bearden used collage to create a new visual language for the African-American condition during an era of segregation and racism in the United States. In doing so, he changed the
way the black identity was viewed in visual culture. In the twenty-first century, Firelei Báez used historical references to critique the impacts of colonialism, post-colonialism and structural racism. Her methodology involved selecting and mixing signifiers from disparate time periods and cultures. And Swoon uses the disruptive act of street art to broadcast imagery that deals with displaced and marginalised communities.

My work has been informed by the research in this paper, as a deeper knowledge of the historical references and relevant artwork has led to a richer understanding of diaspora culture and identity. With this newfound awareness, there is confidence and command in the choices that move my creative practice forward. In the beginning of my research, I understood that I needed to find a contextual and visual vocabulary to describe my creative practice. I was not able to do so until the discovery of Mercer’s studies of black diaspora artists and culture. He examined black artists’ work from the twentieth century with a contemporary lens and, as a result, brought to light the need for more information to be included in the art historical timeline that may have been ignored or excluded due to racism or stereotyping. The timeline of the diaspora artist in art history is a relatively short one compared to that of the Western art canon, which explains my narrow range of artist examples to support the contextualisation of my artwork and ideas. Fortunately, more studies are being conducted and more artists are contributing and being recognised on a global level. As for the diaspora artist, with a more thorough examination of the past, and innovative progress made in the present, it will be interesting to discover what lies in the future.
Bibliography


DeLue, Rachael. ‘Conjure and Collapse in the Art of Romare Bearden’. *Nonsite.org*, no. #7: Formalism/Post-Formalism (2012).


Catalogue of Work Presented for Examination

Framed Screenprints and *19th Century Modern Transfer* (installation view).
19th Century Modern Transfer, grid of twenty photocopy transfers.
19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), photocopy transfer #1.
19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), photocopy transfer #2.
19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), photocopy transfer #3.
19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), photocopy transfer #4.
19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), photocopy transfer #5.
19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), photocopy transfer #6.
19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), photocopy transfer #7.
19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), photocopy transfer #8.
19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), photocopy transfer #9.
19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), photocopy transfer #10.
19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), photocopy transfer #11.
19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), photocopy transfer #12.
19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), photocopy transfer #13.
19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), photocopy transfer #14.
19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), photocopy transfer #15.
19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), photocopy transfer #16.
19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), photocopy transfer #17.
19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), photocopy transfer #18.
19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), photocopy transfer #19.
19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), photocopy transfer #20.
A.C., hand-pulled screenprint #1.
*Natasha*, hand-pulled screenprint #2.
Nadia, hand-pulled screenprint #3.
Keiko, hand-pulled screenprint #4.
ImPoster Syndrome mural (installation view).
ImPoster Syndrome (detail), photocopy transfer #1.
*ImPoster Syndrome* (detail), photocopy transfer #2.
*ImPoster Syndrome* (detail), photocopy transfer #3. (72 x 200 mm)
ImPoster Syndrome (detail), photocopy transfer #4.
ImPoster Syndrome (detail), photocopy transfer #5. (173 x 250 mm)
ImPoster Syndrome (detail), photocopy transfer #6 and #7.
*ImPoster Syndrome* (detail), poster #1.
ImPoster Syndrome (detail), poster #2.
ImPoster Syndrome (detail), poster #3.
List of Images

Framed Screenprints and 19th Century Modern Transfer (installation view), hand-pulled screenprints with acrylic hand finish and photocopy transfers on BFK Rives 280 gsm (9.27 x 3 m).

19th Century Modern Transfer
1. 19th Century Modern Transfer, grid of twenty photocopy transfers on BFK Rives 280 gsm (1445 x 1521 mm)
2. 19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), image #1, gel medium photocopy transfer on BFK Rives 280 gsm (378 x 285 mm)
3. 19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), image #2, gel medium photocopy transfer on BFK Rives 280 gsm (378 x 285 mm)
4. 19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), image #3, gel medium photocopy transfer on BFK Rives 280 gsm (378 x 285 mm)
5. 19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), image #4, gel medium photocopy transfer on BFK Rives 280 gsm (378 x 285 mm)
6. 19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), image #5, gel medium photocopy transfer on BFK Rives 280 gsm (378 x 285 mm)
7. 19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), image #6, gel medium photocopy transfer on BFK Rives 280 gsm (378 x 285 mm)
8. 19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), image #7, gel medium photocopy transfer on BFK Rives 280 gsm (378 x 285 mm)
9. 19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), image #8, gel medium photocopy transfer on BFK Rives 280 gsm (378 x 285 mm)
10. 19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), image #9, gel medium photocopy transfer on BFK Rives 280 gsm (378 x 285 mm)
11. 19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), image #10, gel medium photocopy transfer on BFK Rives 280 gsm (378 x 285 mm)
12. 19th Century Modern Transfer (detail), image #11, gel medium photocopy transfer on BFK Rives 280 gsm (378 x 285 mm)
13. *19th Century Modern Transfer* (detail), image #12, gel medium photocopy transfer on BFK Rives 280 gsm (378 x 285 mm)

14. *19th Century Modern Transfer* (detail), image #13, gel medium photocopy transfer on BFK Rives 280 gsm (378 x 285 mm)

15. *19th Century Modern Transfer* (detail), image #14, gel medium photocopy transfer on BFK Rives 280 gsm (378 x 285 mm)

16. *19th Century Modern Transfer* (detail), image #15, gel medium photocopy transfer on BFK Rives 280 gsm (378 x 285 mm)

17. *19th Century Modern Transfer* (detail), image #16, gel medium photocopy transfer on BFK Rives 280 gsm (378 x 285 mm)

18. *19th Century Modern Transfer* (detail), image #17, gel medium photocopy transfer on BFK Rives 280 gsm (378 x 285 mm)

19. *19th Century Modern Transfer* (detail), image #18, gel medium photocopy transfer on BFK Rives 280 gsm (378 x 285 mm)

20. *19th Century Modern Transfer* (detail), image #19, gel medium photocopy transfer on BFK Rives 280 gsm (378 x 285 mm)

21. *19th Century Modern Transfer* (detail), image #20, gel medium photocopy transfer on BFK Rives 280 gsm (378 x 285 mm)

Framed Screenprints

1. *A.C.*, hand-pulled screen print with acrylic hand finish on Stonehenge 250 gsm, edition of 2 (Framed: 1080 x 770 x 7 mm; unframed: 1015 x 710 mm)

2. *Natasha.*, hand-pulled screen print with acrylic hand finish on Stonehenge 250 gsm, edition of 2 (Framed: 1080 x 770 x 7 mm; unframed: 1015 x 710 mm)

3. *Nadia*, hand-pulled screen print with acrylic hand finish on Stonehenge 250 gsm, edition of 2 (Framed: 1080 x 770 x 7 mm; unframed: 1015 x 710 mm)

4. *Keiko*, hand-pulled screen print with acrylic hand finish on Stonehenge 250 gsm, edition of 2 (Framed: 1080 x 770 x 7 mm; unframed: 1015 x 710 mm)

*ImPoster Syndrome* (installation view), acrylic, paste, gel medium, color and b/w photocopy, and kraft paper (4.75 x 3 m)
**ImPoster Syndrome**

1. *ImPoster Syndrome* (detail), acrylic, gel medium, and photocopy #1 (146 x 150 mm)
2. *ImPoster Syndrome* (detail), acrylic, gel medium, and photocopy #2 (150 x 150 mm)
3. *ImPoster Syndrome* (detail), acrylic, gel medium, and photocopy #3 (200 x 72 mm)
4. *ImPoster Syndrome* (detail), acrylic, gel medium, and photocopy #4 (250 x 82 mm)
5. *ImPoster Syndrome* (detail), acrylic, gel medium, and photocopy #5 (250 x 173 mm)
6. *ImPoster Syndrome* (detail), acrylic, gel medium, and photocopy #6 (260 x 150 mm)
   and #7 (167 x 150 mm).
7. *ImPoster Syndrome* (detail), gel medium, photocopy, and kraft paper #1 (1052 x 750 mm)
8. *ImPoster Syndrome* (detail), gel medium, photocopy, and kraft paper #2 (750 x 530)
9. *ImPoster Syndrome* (detail), gel medium, photocopy, and kraft paper #3 (750 x 530)