COPYRIGHT AND USE OF THIS THESIS

This thesis must be used in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

Reproduction of material protected by copyright may be an infringement of copyright and copyright owners may be entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright.

Section 51 (2) of the Copyright Act permits an authorized officer of a university library or archives to provide a copy (by communication or otherwise) of an unpublished thesis kept in the library or archives, to a person who satisfies the authorized officer that he or she requires the reproduction for the purposes of research or study.

The Copyright Act grants the creator of a work a number of moral rights, specifically the right of attribution, the right against false attribution and the right of integrity.

You may infringe the author’s moral rights if you:

- fail to acknowledge the author of this thesis if you quote sections from the work
- attribute this thesis to another author
- subject this thesis to derogatory treatment which may prejudice the author’s reputation

For further information contact the University’s Copyright Service.

sydney.edu.au/copyright
Sydney College of the Arts

The University of Sydney

MASTER OF FINE ARTS
2014
RESEARCH PAPER

SECRETIONS AND CONFESSIONS - SURVEYING THE BED AS A SITE OF DISCLOSURE.

by

Lionel Bawden

December 8th, 2014

This volume is presented as a record of the work undertaken for the degree of Master of Visual Arts at Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>p3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Illustrations</td>
<td>p4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Research Paper and work presented for exhibition</td>
<td>p5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prologue</td>
<td>p6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>p8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter One: Prometheus and his Eagle/ THE PARRALLEL NARRATIVE</td>
<td>p13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Two: Recognising your Eagle/ SECRECTIONS</td>
<td>p18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Three: Feeding your Eagle/ CONFESSIONS</td>
<td>p31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Four: Devouring your Eagle/ THE STAND IN</td>
<td>p40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion: Digesting our meal</td>
<td>p51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>p54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalogue of Work presented for examination</td>
<td>p56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalogue of images included in dissertation</td>
<td>p57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank a number of people for their perpetual awesomeness supporting me whilst undertaking this Masters.

I can be very demanding and they were amazing.

Thanks to my supervisor- Lindy Lee, for her limitless insight, compassion, honesty and for reminding me of my own resilience.

To André Gide, Prometheus, his eagle and Zeus. You trouble makers- I love you!

Thank you Leah Grycewicz for surveying, proof reading, editing and understanding.

Too many reasons to thank you all, so Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!

John Tonkin,
Nell,
Leah Grycewicz
Loyola Bawden, Clint Bawden, Roslyn Kelley
Karen Woodbury
Mondo Casillas, Kylie Kwong,
Mikhaela Rodwell, Dr Debra Dawes, Robyn Backen
Nicholas Tsoutas, Liam Garstang
Greg Bork, Tim Hilton, Ric Aqui, Aaron Manhattan, Rocky Clark, Tim Kliendienst, Phil Soliman, Cris Clucas, Megs Cutler Footway, Ray Ford, Glen Noble,
Josephine Starres, Sandra Rotheraine, Deborah Garden, Nana Ohnesorge
And to my Best Lover Shannon Eduards for being remarkable!

Finally to Anne Lockley for gifting me the magical name- Fantasy Disorder.

To all my friends and supporters - you know who you are.
List of Illustrations

fig.

1. Lionel Bawden, ‘The comforts of anonymous paper men’ 1997, p.16
8. Mike Kelley, ‘Let’s Talk’, 1987, p.34
15. Lionel Bawden, ‘Fantasy Disorder’ (Isle of little death), 2013, p.46
16. Lionel Bawden, ‘Fantasy Disorder’ (to touch the back of the cave), 2013, p.48
17. Lionel Bawden, ‘Fantasy Disorder’ (the disappearance), 2013, p.49
18. Lionel Bawden, ‘Fantasy Disorder’ 3 works, 2013, p.50
SUMMARY OF DISSERTATION

Secretions and confessions - surveying the bed as a site of disclosure.

My research surveys the bed as a site of disclosure within contemporary art, my studio research and the history of my practice. Locating the bed as research focus and employing the mattress as studio material creates a direct engagement with both sexuality and depression, two key states impacting significantly on character and my work as an artist.

I have chosen artists whom have inspired me over the long term, each working at some point with the bed as site and material, including Mike Kelley, Sarah Lucas, Felix Gonzales-Torres. Tracey Emin’s ‘My Bed’ 1998 becomes a touchstone for thinking about disclosure, describing ‘a powerlessness over compulsions that, metaphorically, consume the body.’ (Brown, 2006)

My research extends to the primary role of ambiguity within my work, my ongoing use of landscape as a stand-in for the body and my employment of parallel texts with each body of work, specifically André Gide’s ‘Prometheus Misbound’ guiding the evolution of my research focus.

SUMMARY OF WORK PRESENTED FOR EXAMINATION

Lionel Bawden
Fantasy Disorder (to touch the back of the cave) 2013
Mattress fabric, wood, acrylic paint, polyurethane, foam, lichen, resin.
Each form: approx. 40cm x 90cm x 200cm

Lionel Bawden
Fantasy Disorder (the isle of the little death) 2013
Mattress fabric, wood, acrylic paint, polyurethane, foam, lichen, resin.
Each form: approx. 40cm x 90cm x 200cm

Lionel Bawden
Fantasy Disorder (the disappearance) 2013
Mattress fabric, wood, acrylic paint, polyurethane, foam, lichen, resin.
Each form: approx. 40cm x 90cm x 200cm


2 As I am referring specifically to Emin’s authenticity here I have used the female, but would use the female in
SECRETIONS AND CONFESSIONS: SURVEYING THE *BED* AS A SITE OF DISCLOSURE.

PROLOGUE

*I was in bed. I was in bed all the time, when I wasn’t out drinking. Some of the time I was drinking in bed. I was sleeping, masturbating in the dark during the day with the blinds drawn, barely eating, pissing in old juice bottles, wanking to porn. The sheets were stained with lubricant and bodily fluids, beside plates of half eaten canned tuna, piled up, days old. Some days I would awake beside someone and wonder how it ever occurred to bring him into this filth. And then perhaps, I would fuck again before I scurried them out.*

*The bed merged to the floor within a kind of exquisite landscape, of fabrics, clothes, dirty towels, cum stained t-shirts, chocolate and condom wrappers, unopened letters from my accountant and abandoned paperwork. Sometimes sleeping in a little space, carved out within the landscape, folded up, embryonic and willing myself away. I slept once I saw the sun come up and would have more courage to rise when I saw the sky had gone dark through the cracks in the blinds, because then the outside world felt more like an extension of the darkness I had manufactured inside my room. The blinds were down. The heater was on. I was sweating from the heat and the drink, unless I was totally dehydrated, too much effort to have made it to the sink in the bathroom for water. Always hopeful another unopened beer is hidden somewhere under the landscape of soiled and disassembled life. There is no hiding in bed, naked and filthy, which is why the drink was absolutely necessary and some other stuff, that made a dark hole open up inside my brain and annihilate myself from the inside out, which is what I wanted.*
You lie a lot when you are depressed and in hiding. You make stuff up about what you have been doing instead of willing yourself away. You feel like you are letting everybody down, so you cover it up. They do not feel like genuine lies, they are to help people you care about/who care about you, that is what you tell yourself, it is to shield them from the pain, so you excuse yourself of the mistruths. On good days or big appointments, you may be able to get up and fake it, smile and convince others of the necessary appearance of human functionality. They may know you from a better time, when you were functioning ok and they are easily convinced as they expect you to be happy. Nod, smile and lie. Easily hoodwinked. You have not shown many people this dark part of yourself, and for those that know him you try to validate a shift, that he has gone and you are doing better. Over time, however, the ones that really care for you, or know this darkness in themselves, recognize the unanswered calls, the just woken up voice at 5pm when you do steel yourself and answer on their third call, the barely convincing stories. They see the cracks and know you are a lying. The smaller lies add up to one big lie - a huge dark absence of truth and absence of life - a hollow inside you that can quickly start to smother other parts of yourself.

Buried deep within the abyss, this tear, this crack, often formed early on, which seeks obliteration, wants to be silenced, because disclosure would be unbearable. The only way to illuminate this encroaching darkness, the enveloping hollow, is to meet that part of yourself head on.
INTRODUCTION

My research locates the bed as a site of disclosure within contemporary art, my studio research and the history of my practice. This research identifies disclosure more specifically as a state of self-exposure and personal revelation within contemporary art making. This research into disclosure provokes questions about how much honesty and vulnerability is necessary in one's work, so necessarily explores in parallel: secrecy, partial disclosure, full disclosure, anonymity and ambiguity. The last of these - ambiguity has been a central tenet of my own studio thinking, over fifteen years, following a period of making myself totally naked within my work, both literally and metaphorically. That early period of disclosure, first approaching then celebrating issues around sexual identity, shame, desire and homosexuality, was quite literally exhausting and needed some kind of counter measure. This led to a deliberate and continued exploration of ambiguity and sinking ideas inside a work, to create form, without the necessary intention of having all the ideas that seeded the work remain readable to an audience. Of course this kind of making creates its own conundrums and again a desire to sustain the visibility of more personal themes within the finished work became stronger (or just plain necessary.) The desire to disclose naturally re-emerged.

The bed is a private space even when the bed sees high traffic, the hotel room has a lockable door and clean sheets for each new guest, and both the monogamous and the promiscuous make choices about whom they let into bed with them. Locating the bed as subject, site or material for an artwork involves a process of pulling back the covers and letting the stranger in. The viewer has an intimate invitation to survey the personal, no matter how full the disclosure. Truth and disclosure are of course two different things, an artist can disclose truth, or disclose fiction, or a blend of the two. My research questions the authenticity of that which is disclosed within an artist’s work and as is common in contemporary society, a questioning of the authenticity of the artist herself.  

---

2 As I am referring specifically to Emin’s authenticity here I have used the female, but would use the female in the general case anyway because I am a feminist.
Within my research I am seeking to identify the crux of why I make art, particularly in this moment now, and establish the ground on which to move forward, making sense of my practice so far and creating a fresh confidence for the direction of new work. Surveying the bed as a site of disclosure frames recent experience of severe depression, seeded in the long-term effects of homosexual shame, within a broad field of contemporary artists whom have chosen the bed as both material and subject. The bed is an intimate arena of birth, sexuality, sleep, dreaming, escape, injury, illness and death. When placed within the gallery artists have exploited the bed / the mattress as a site of disclosing despair, madness, guilt, vulnerability, shame, violation, fantasy, injury, illness, a vertiginous proximity to death, dying, loss and grief. The secretions of the research title invoke the abject nature of the body, the secretion or stain as a mark made by the body, along with notions of sexual experience, illness and decay. The Confessions, of my research are the literal telling of personal secret and shameful things, referring directly, for myself, to catholic guilt and gay shame central to the formation of my character as a young man and it’s lingering trace on my enduring sensibilities. My research title deliberately employs the word surveying, to suggest the bed as a landscape, an arena where significant human experience takes place and a landscape, which is literally marked by this experience. I identify disclosure in relationship to ambiguity, having long harnessed the beautiful secrecy of metaphor within my work as a deliberate counter tactic to early self-exposure. This survey of the bed, as a site of disclosure within the work of chosen artists, simultaneously surveys ambiguity, where relevant within each work.

**In Chapter one, Prometheus and his Eagle/ THE PARRALLEL NARRATIVE**

I introduce you to my two protagonists - *Prometheus and his Eagle*, dual aspects of the self and their role as guides to develop an awareness of my nature in relation to this research and my broader practice. I discuss the continued significance of parallel narrative within my ongoing practice, as a device to generate form and

---

3 Frida Kahlo, and her considerable number of paintings depicting her time spent in bed at various points through her life after a horrible bus accident, that changed the course of her life. Kahlo's bed paintings image illness, injury, loss, grief and sadness.

4 Ilya and Emilia Kabakov's series of ten characters include works detailing the madness experienced by individuals at the collapse of The Soviet Union. Specifically *The Man Who Flew Into Space From His Apartment*, 1981-88, in which a man sets up a complex launching system with springs and wires, literally launching himself into space from his own bed.
engage metaphor. My research methodology is one of attraction, being drawn to texts, which feed thinking, opening up new territory for exploration. In keeping with this modus operandi, this research engages the parallel narrative of André Gide’s *Prometheus Misbound*, (from the French- Le Prométhée Mal Enchaîné, 1899) as a methodology in which to think through the work and understand it’s making and significance to my vocabulary as an artist.

**In Chapter two, Recognising your Eagle/ SECRETIONS**

I discuss Tracey Emin’s *My Bed*, 1998, as the key work which generated an acceptance of my studio research and demanded a scrutiny of the self, guiding my research towards a focus on the bed as a site of disclosure. Tracey Emin’s *My Bed* 1998, is a complex installation, created through lived experience, disclosing ‘a powerlessness over compulsions that, metaphorically, consume the body.’ (Brown 2006)5 My research into Emin’s *My Bed* illustrates the importance of disclosure by the artist within an artwork, particularly beginning with a disclosure to the self. My reading of the work is informed specifically by Emin’s own discussion of creating the work, given at her 2003 artist talk at The Art Gallery of New South Wales. In this talk, the artist revealed the self-disclosure inside the experience of making the work and the absolute significance of the work. I have transcribed here, Emin’s discussion of the piece, a constantly shifting dance of unfinished sentences and segues, attempting to capture the magnitude of her lived experience and her proximity to death. This chapter also details my research into other works, in relation to Emin’s *My Bed*, highlighting differences and similarities in disclosure by the artist, degrees of disclosure and the change in impact of a work’s reading between personal disclosure by the artist of her own life - Emma Sulkowicz, *Mattress Performance, Carry that weight, 2014*, the disclosure of fictional acts Cindy Sherman’s 1987 *Untitled #179*, the disclosure of invasive acts by the state onto the private - Felix Gonzales -Torres’ *Untitled*, (Billboards) 1991, and the disclosure by an artist of the non-autobiographical personal, (representing another, anonymous or unnamed individual) - Toby Richardson’s mattress portraits, 2008. I survey Tracey Emens ‘My Bed’ 1998 as a mirror for my depression, self-destruction, desire to escape and eventual salvation (like Emin I

was finally able to emerge out of bed, in the face of death.) Emin’s work provides a resonant framework to argue the bed as site of disclosure and of secretion, one that provides succinct evidence, like a crime scene of daily life to the formation of the artist’s character and oeuvre as an artist.

*In chapter three - Feeding your eagle/ CONFESSIONS*

I situate Mike Kelley’s *Stained Glass Mattress*, 1989 as a mirror for my own experience of Catholic guilt in relation to sexuality and masturbation. I discuss the artist’s provocative engagement with the abject and his studio practice as one of continually inviting his eagle to dine on his liver. I discuss the tyranny of Catholicism, in which, you can never fornicate or touch yourself without God watching. I discuss Kelley’s practice as if he were yelling back at God; I know you are looking; cop a load of this. Kelley demonstrates the importance of repetition, within studio practice as an ongoing invitation for the visitation by the eagle by offering it your liver daily. For Kelley and myself this process of daily repetition finds grounding in the image of masturbation/Jerking-off, where the endless strokes of hand encircled around engorged phallus, mimic a daily indulgence in sin and the endless repetitions of the daily grind. I position here my 1997 series of three paintings on Mattresses, *The comforts on anonymous paper men*, as a survival mechanism and ejaculatory strategy of nocturnal emissions, for coping with gay shame and Catholic guilt. Positioning Kelley as raconteur of the abject I am framing the daily devouring by one’s eagle as a prism through which studio practice can liberate the torment of the soul. Kelley tampers with the notion of guilt and punishment, suggesting disobedience rewarded with treats, uttering expletives in expectation of a cookie, so necessarily Kelley’s discourse perverts the eagle as complicit in this bent narrative of their *Symbiotic Relationship*.

*In Chapter four - Devouring your Eagle/ THE STAND IN*

The making of the studio research is a deep examination of oneself. The creation of work is simultaneously, a device to learn to recognize one’s eagle, a fabrication of a process to learn to feed and to love one’s eagle and the best hope an artist has to devour one’s eagle - cultivating growth and transformation. Studio research is a process where intuitive disclosure can be examined and re-examined, and a place
for the asking of questions - what is it pertinent for me to say? And, how do I say it? For myself, finding form is always the highest goal, often relying on a familiar material, employing landscape as a realm of exploration, as a stand in for the body. Engaging a stand in provides a means to step back from earlier disclosure within my work and a means to reconcile the body to the world, as site traced with weathered experience, the body akin to a mountain experiencing growth and decay is both nourished and diminished. This chapter details my use of mattress/ bed as a stand in for both my own body and the landscape into which I craved escape. I survey the bed as body in Sarah Lucas’ Au Naturel, 1994 and the bed as raft in both, Evariste Luminais’ The sons of Clovis II, 1880 and Emin’s My Bed. I further scrutinize three states of bed as: body, raft and landscape in relation to my own studio research Fantasy Disorder, 2013. The making of the work is a process of staring-down the eagle, feeding the eagle, devouring and digesting it. The process of devouring the eagle means you ingest it, retaining some of its energy within your body whilst expelling, that which is not nourishing. Studio practice provides an opportunity to survey the self, take hold of what you see and wrestle with it, in order to harness one’s essential fire within the studio. The process of presenting work to the world, for examination and consideration, is a second kind of devouring. As an artist who considers the viewer’s hunger for experience and self-knowledge, I embrace ambiguity within my work, creating space for the intelligence and imagination of the viewer to expand the work through their own digestion process.

To conclude, I will reiterate my core argument and close with two quotes to elucidate the integral nature of Prometheus as a stand-in for myself and as a guide on this research journey. The first quote is from Dave Hickey discussing post-graduate study, used here, by me to explain the importance of Prometheus bringing us fire from the heavens. And in closing, I employ Gide’s own conclusion to Le Prométhée Mal Enchaîné, to illustrate the essential nature of my eagle, as without the eagle, there would literally be no work to look at and no text, before you to read.
CHAPTER 1. Prometheus and his eagle

I did not start at the bed, as subject for my research, despite a literal disappearance into my own bed during depression. Rather I started my research at the notion of digging as a signifier for the passing of time, repetition and futility (echoing the themes of the tale of Sisyphus) and employing the most fertile gesture of the gardener, the labour of my father and of myself for many years. Digging was a start point, grounded in relation to my core practice also over many years, of working with a sculptural conglomerate of hexagonal pencils. To make these works, I literally glue one pencil to another, then another, then another, an infinite gestural loop. Over time the process itself, (of first addition, then of taking away - through carving,) became a practice deeply linked to the endless daily repeated gestures of contemporary human toil and existence, starting each day climbing out of bed and ending it climbing back into it. Depression tangles with one's wires and throws things out of kilter, so this process of rising from bed in the morning and returning to bed at night to sleep - an essential image of facing the day, can fall out of rhythm with the world. I felt like I was digging my own hole, burrowing underground, away from the light and my thinking grew increasingly toward the Albert Camus exploration of The Myth of Sisyphus. 'There is but one truly serious philosophical problem and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy.' (Camus 1942)\(^6\) After a few months of alcoholic blur, mostly looking out from the landscape of my bed and the darkness of night and the bottle, Camus’ philosophical question made itself the centre of the narrative and formed a chasm, which I had to either chose to forge over, or throw myself into. ‘In a sense, and as in melodrama, killing yourself amounts to confessing. It is confessing that life is too much for you or that you do not understand it.’ (Camus 1942)\(^7\) For me, after that one day, that I made the decision to stay alive, there necessarily followed,

---


over time, a need for a substitute to the confession in the act of suicide, and a deep need to confess being overwhelmed and of not understanding, through the making of work. In a sense, for some of us artists, making work is a mechanism for coping and to try and make sense of the things we do not understand.

This confession or personal disclosure was a point at which I found myself in early work - The series of three mattress paintings *The comforts of anonymous paper men*, 1997, disclosing my homosexuality and the integral nature of desire and masturbation as a survival strategy prior to this disclosure. Back then it seemed necessary, honest and brave to make myself vulnerable. I had made various journeys in the realms of ambiguity over many years of work, using a material that I was able to sink myself into, yet the material qualities were so strong that they would, to a large extent override meaning. This was a deliberate strategy having exhausted total disclosure exploring the personal to create form. I had not really left the original confession of vulnerability and suffering, I had muffled it’s voice, whilst all the while, amplifying it’s internal weight. Studio practice is a continuum of core territory, perpetually in metamorphosis. After an early period of full disclosure within my work, my later embrace of ambiguity, parallel narrative and metaphor, slowly brewed toward an internal meeting with the abyss and some kind of disclosure, (other than suicide) needed to be made inside my studio work. Having practiced the exploration of parallel narrative, to cast ambiguity upon the personal, it was through parallel narrative that I was able to see the bed as both subject for and material through which, this disclosure could take place. I had begun with research into digging and the idea of the repeated gesture and the movement of the hand in manual labour, mirroring the movement of the hand in making my conglomerate pencil sculptures (at the core of my ongoing practice) and the movement of the hand in an escape into Onanism. Then, as is typical of my experience with connecting to key texts to employ parallel narrative, I happened to recall a story that had captured my attention, by chance, some years earlier, which engaged a compelling and playful examination of one very tyrannous tale of earthly repetition.
My arrival at the bed as site for investigation has been guided by the tale of Prometheus. Specifically André Gide’s protagonist from Prometheus Misbound, a satire following on from Aeschylus’ Prometheus Bound and Shelley’s Prometheus Unbound. Gide’s tale essentially tells the story of a man who is invited to look upon and explain his nature and the tale of a man whom, at the outset of the story does not know himself. In a complex and amusing meeting between three characters: Damocles, Cocles and Prometheus, a meal is shared, over which each is invited to tell his tale. ‘Gentlemen, anything I could say would have so little relevance.... I don’t even see how... in fact, the more I think of it... No, really, I can’t possibly say anything. Each of you has his own story; I have none.’ (Gide 1899) Before this meeting he claims ignorance of his nature, but in the ensuing tales of Damocles and Cocles, linked through an absurd set of actions - in which one gains as the other is diminished, Prometheus recognizes himself. Prometheus summons his eagle - the thing that devours him daily, his punishment, for stealing fire from

---

the Gods and giving it to mankind, is in fact his story and his nature. ‘You ask what I have, gentlemen? – What I have, I personally, is – ahem! An eagle.’ (Gide 1899)9

It was however this story of Prometheus Misbound that provided the fulcrum for my research to move away from digging and repetition supplanting Prometheus as the stand in for Sisyphus. The point of recognition by Prometheus that the eagle is not only essential to his story but is essential to his nature and his later declaration that every man must love his eagle, made me realize that I needed to be honest about what was really going on for me. It was integral to confess what my eagle is and to find a way to love my eagle. Just as I had chosen digging as the most fertile metaphorical gesture of the gardener, I could see that the bed and mattress, was indeed the most fertile territory for the disclosure of my depression and escape into sex, Onanism, sleep and dreaming. Shame and depression are my eagle and the bed had become the eagle’s body/ or conversely one could argue that the bed and sleep, inebriation, sex and masturbation were the only place I could escape staring my eagle down. For when making work in the studio, I must stare the eagle in the face as she tears my flesh and she eats my liver, repeatedly, day after day after day. Within this research the parallel narrative has become a modus operandi, to get inside my thinking. It guides my interpretation of the work made in the studio, a process that seems lucid in retrospect but in the present moment of making often relies deeply on intuition and impulse. Once I recognised my eagle and chose to stare it down, the process of it devouring me began to transform.

Arriving at the bed was immediate in my studio research - the work just came out, yet in the written research it did not want to be named. Like the bed buried underneath life’s detritus, it had to be unearthed as my subject from layers of meaning, mostly drawn from process and material that I have manufactured over fifteen years of studio. Each series I make exploits a parallel narrative, a driving poetic text, against which I can abstract myself. These have included Stanislaw Lem’s 1963 Solaris, which formed a parallel narrative to my series the monsters

and an exploration of the idea of uncovering the secret of matter. Fernando Pessoa’s *The Book of disquiet* (1984) which mined the idea of repetition as a liberator for the senses opening up to moments of beauty, within my series *the amorphous ones*. After many series of sculptural forms where landscapes opened up to reveal an internal void space, I made a series of paintings, *Avoid/ La Disparition*¹⁰, 2008, taking Joan Lindsay’s *The Secret of Hanging Rock* (1987) - the final Chapter to *A Picnic at Hanging Rock*, published after the author’s death, as parallel text. The denouement reveals the lost schoolgirls and their teacher are entranced by the landscape, enter a parallel world outside of time and are literally swallowed up by the country. This passage inspired a series of landscapes that summon the body to be swallowed by void space. These texts provided frameworks for thinking through material and added extra doorways for entry by the viewer. In keeping with ambiguity, the knowledge or meaning of this text is not essential to a reading of the work, rather it provides a way for me to find form, and can be entered as a secondary site after the work itself, to consider what it is, that I have made and to fertilise the experience of the viewer.

My research methodology is one of attraction, texts fall into my hand or literally draw me across the room to them, including both Gide’s *Prometheus Misbound*, with its ornate, blue floral binding and the work from which I will close this dissertation - Pirates and Farmers by Dave Hickey. I knew immediately and with confidence that it held something for me to elucidate the abyss and very specifically later discovered upon reading, simply named the entire crux of what a candidate needs to undertake masters research or to be an artist. This text from Hickey reaffirms Prometheus as my perfect guide. Akin to using a parallel text in making a series of works, it is comforting to have someone to back you up.

---

¹⁰ *A Void* (from the French *La Disparition*) is a novel by Georges Perec, 1969, in which the letter e is never used. This literary construction is used as a tool to create the work. I was particularly taken by the title’s English translation and used both the English and the French titles together *A Void/ La Disparition* as the title for my 2010 exhibition of paintings at GRANTPIRRIE Gallery, Sydney.
CHAPTER 2. Recognising your eagle/SECRETIONS

“This pain
it is a glacier
moving through you
and carving out deep valleys
and creating spectacular landscapes” (Grant 2013)\textsuperscript{11}

Listening to John Grant’s song Glacier, repeatedly within my studio, the glacier described, looks a lot like a bed. The pain, pictured as a landscape, looks remarkably like Tracey Emin’s \textit{My Bed}, 1998.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{Tracey Emin, \textit{My Bed}, 1998}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{11} Grant, John. "Glacier." \textit{Pale Green Ghosts}. Comp. John Grant. 2013. (Sound recording.)
“How I made the bed was, I used to be an incredibly hard core drinker and have these, (sic) and when you drink so excessively, you go on terrible downers. I mean, just really rock bottom because, your body, everything, nothing’s flowing. When you drink tonnes and tonnes and tonnes, your big problem is getting your keys in the door. Your big problem is walking. Your big problem is making sure you don’t vomit in your sleep. You know, life takes on a different level of reality. And in those days ... to be sober was like a weirder feeling than being drunk. So what happened was, I was in a bad way, I was very depressed and I hadn’t eaten for about four days and I hadn’t slept. I’d been up and I’d been drinking like an absolute lunatic, went home, got into bed, and when you drink a lot as well, you don’t, you tend not to tidy up, it’s not a priority. And got into bed and I woke and then when I did wake up, I just thought... it wasn’t like a hangover, it’s just I thought, 'I think I’m going to die,' because it, it was about a day and a half later. I’d been asleep. I’d missed like a whole day out of my life. I went to get out of bed to get a glass of water. And as I went, like, I just fell over. I couldn’t even walk or anything. And then I woke up a few hours later and I’d just been on the floor. Then I crawled, remember my flat is just two old shoeboxes it wasn’t very big. Crawled to the kitchen, got myself up on the sink and I thought 'If I don’t drink some water I am going to die.' You can, not eat for two months and you’ll stay alive but you cannot, you have to drink water, it’s an absolute necessity. And I drank these sips of water and started doing that dry retching thing and then I got back into the room and I looked at my bedroom and it was like a Galileo moment, it was like, you know, ‘the world is round!’ And I looked at my bed and I just thought, ‘Oh my God, I’ve been asleep in that’ and I thought ‘What if I had died and they’d found me here, with this.’ There was like bloody condoms, there was pill packets... there was stacks of old dirty newspapers, dirty underwear. The sheets were really disgustingly dirty and it was really, really like, I just thought ‘Oh my God!’ And I just thought ‘I am so lucky to be alive.’ This is one thing I genuinely thought and as I thought that, something happened. The bed, the thing, which I saw, which was so disgusting, then I, it mentally, I took it out of the room and placed it, you know like in a Chinese space, where you can, where you want your mind to go when you need relief. I put this dirty bed and everything into this white kind of floating space in my head. Maybe it’s like heaven or something, I don’t know. But this is
what I saw and then at that moment, I thought ‘It isn’t disgusting, it isn’t dirty, it’s just so beautiful, because if I’d died there, that’s the last place on earth where I would be. This isn’t dirty, this is, this is part of me.’ And it was seeing that and having that vision, I thought ‘This is probably one of the most fantastic things I’ve ever made.’” (Emin 2003)12

---

fig. 3. Tracey Emin, ‘My Bed’, 1998

12 Emin, Tracey. Artist Talk Sydney, NSW: Art Gallery of New South Wales, (February 1, 2003). (My own transcript from AGNSW sound recording.)
Once you recognize your eagle in that moment of abject reverie, where filth is transformed into something beautiful, there exist a few options of moving forward. The first is the key “philosophical problem and that is suicide” (Camus 1942): is life worth living? If you are still reading, then it is likely that you decided it was and are instead feeding your eagle, and in some fashion, learning to love your eagle. “‘Gentlemen, I have not always known my eagle. That is what makes me infer, by a form of reasoning which has a special name that I can’t recall for the moment, as I have only been studying logic for the past week- that, I was saying, is what makes me infer, although the only eagle to be seen here is my own, that an eagle, gentlemen, is something we all have. Up until now I have kept silence concerning my story- besides, until now I did not quite understand it myself. And if now decide to speak of it to you, it is because, thanks to my eagle, it now seems to me to be miraculously wonderful.’” (Gide 1899)

In that, Turning away and turning back toward her bed, and the breaking of thirst marking a distancing from her proximity to death, Emin was able to see the bed and the filth as something physically and temporally separated from her self. Then in her mental relocation of the bed into the vast, white, imagined space she reframed it and was able to see it as something fundamentally part of herself, created directly through experience and as evidence of both a falling apart and of survival. Having heard Emin describe the creation of this work, in person, at her artist talk at the Art Gallery of New South Wales (transcribed above,) on the First of February 2003, I now read the work primarily in line with her own experience of it’s creation. I recognize myself in the work, having created similar apocalyptic crime scenes over many months in my own bedroom. When I first heard of and saw images of Emin’s My Bed, 1998, I was underwhelmed and vaguely revolted, not by the subject or the vulgarity of it’s elements, more that it seemed greedy for attention, if even negative attention. But after hearing Emin speak of how that work was brought to be, I was moved and the significance of the work rapidly mutated, toward something of great tenderness, disclosure and human relevance.

It was not in fact a load of filthy crap, it was a highly confessional and supremely embodied work, the sheets marked physically by a very honest kind of abject materiality: blood, sweat and urine. For Emin as artist the disclosure is possible because her vision transformed her soiled bed, the site of sleeping off a drunken bender into something poetic, capable of capturing human frailty, failure, vulnerability, addiction, mortality and survival.

All work is mutable, despite of and because of what the different critics and theorists have written about it and Emin’s *My Bed* boasts mutability, highly subject to geographic and cultural relocation. In Deborah Cherry’s essay *On The Move, My Bed 1998 to 1999* (Cherry 2002) she describes a work, of which the reading is entirely subject to the shifting nature of it’s geographic relocations, changing physical installations and culturally specific responses. Despite the work being first exhibited in Japan, then secondly in New York, it was at Home in Britain, when displayed in it’s third incarnation at the Turner Prize at The Tate, London that the nature of Emin’s disclosure and character as an artist was most viciously judged. ‘American critics accepted, indeed promoted Emin’s art as open disclosure. They enjoyed what they saw as autobiographical revelation’ (Cherry 2002)15 ‘In London, however, My Bed met with controversy and notoriety...The question that most preoccupied London critics was whether Tracey was telling the truth. If art is no more and no less than the artist’s life, then authenticity becomes a key benchmark for a critical practice that judges the artist rather than the work.’ (Cherry 2002)16 If you are unwilling to believe Emin and remain skeptical about her authenticity in speaking of My Bed, then the object comes under an entirely different kind of examination, in relation to our contemporary world fed on celebrity, aspiration and notoriety. ‘It does not matter if an analysis of the work fails to yield a deductive conclusion; the mood of the work is all the more effective for not being completely specified. Summoning ancient ideas of an equivalence between sleeping and death, and the *petit mal*- little death- of the orgasm, *My Bed* implies compulsivity and obsession in the course of seeking

---


pleasurable relief from pain and fear, with a resulting loss of control that threatens death or a twilight endurance.’ (Brown 2006)

Cindy Sherman's 1987 Untitled #179, exhibited in the 1994 exhibition Don't Leave Me This Way, Art in the age of AIDS at The National Gallery of Australia, presents a recent historical precursor to Emin’s intimate portrait of filth and abjection. The colour photograph shows an anonymous and sexually ambiguous figure sitting amidst a floor littered with the refuse of sexual indulgence. The cramped frame boasts an alarming array of used condoms and phallic objects spanning dildos, bananas, carrots and plastic-wrapped sausages. The image would be almost comic, if not for the dominating mood of grime and disgust created by faeces stains and the hunched over body of the figure, familiar to depiction of drug users as a body turned in on itself. Sherman's work is powerful and invokes revulsion but the disclosure here is fictionalized. The work shares a sense of compulsion with Emin's My Bed, whilst never staking the claim to speak for the artist. Whilst not literally imaging a bed, the condom and phallus covered carpet of the image speaks of actions commonly prescribed to the privacy of the bedroom, having spilt out onto the floor, reinforcing an image, which speaks of excess and a lack of control. Although we may speculate on the protagonist and his or her indulgences and possible demise, themes of mortality and human frailty lack the weight of personal disclosure.

---

Young American visual artist and rape victim Emma Sulkowicz, has recently undertaken *Mattress Performance, Carry that weight, 2014*, an endurance work in which she carries a twin-sized mattress around the Columbia University campus with her for as long as her accused rapist continues to study at the college. “A mattress is the perfect size for me to, just be able to carry it enough, that I can continue with my day, but also heavy enough that I have to continually struggle with it.” (Sulkowicz 2014)\textsuperscript{18} “Many victims of rape and sexual assault are reminded of their trauma every day, everywhere.” (Deutsch 2014)\textsuperscript{19} The work is both confessional and a work of protest. Like Emin’s *My Bed*, in Sulkowicz’s endurance performance the bed, as site of personal experience is made public. Both works speak directly of the artist’s own experience, however it is not clear if

---


the mattress carried by Sulkowicz is the actual site of the experience or a duplicate or stand in. Her life “has been marked by telling people what happened in that most intimate private space and bringing it out into the light.” (Sulkowicz 2014)

fig. 5. Sulkowicz, ‘Mattress Performance, Carry that weight’, 2014

This performance work enacts an open disclosure and unlike Emin’s piece is a stand-in crime scene in which someone survived a sexual assault. The mattress becomes an emblem of the artist’s private sanctuary being intruded upon, the violation of the artist’s body and the continued emotional and psychological burden of physical harm and, to date, an unpunished crime. The disclosure here is deeply personal and speaks of a woman’s right to make decisions around the sanctity of her own body; the disclosure is a willful public act seeking consequence and action.

Felix Gonzales-Torres’ *Untitled, (Billboard,)*[^21] 1991, depicts the bed, as arena in which sex acts could be judged and punished by the state. ‘Displayed on twenty-four billboards throughout Manhattan and the surrounding four boroughs, this image floated above the city in all its provocative ambiguity. As with other works by Gonzales-Torres, its meaning is entirely open-ended; the bed, at present a site of legislation, is also a place of utmost intimacy.’ (Spector 1995) Gonzales-Torres engages directly the radical reality that the private space of the bed could be legislated over and lovers criminalised, as private acts of homosexual desire, were judged criminal by various states across America. Gonzales-Torres took the private space of the bed, invaded by the prying laws of the state and displayed this image made gigantic in the public domain, inverting this state violation of the private, to impose the private over the public. His sensually charged image of a clean white bed, recently occupied by two homosexual lovers, in which their bodies have left an impression in the pillows, rendering; an absence, a hollow, equally speaks of loss, specifically of his own lover from AIDS related death in the year of the work’s creation. This image echoes Gonzales-Torres’ *Candy works* 1991-92, the void in the pillows akin to the body diminished by disease, literally eaten away, (like the candy, able to be taken by gallery viewers,) the body disappearing over time. The work also reverberates themes of Prometheus’ body eaten by the eagle, here punished literally by the state for the act of sodomy, and HIV AIDS as a moral judgment punishing homosexuals. Gonzales-Torres’ work is open ended yet entirely personal, confessing crimes of the bedroom, at the very moment of their criminality, whilst speaking of deeper losses related to the heart and of a void left by the departed lover, diminished until disappearance.

Fig. 6. Felix Gonzales – Torres, ‘Untitled, (Billboard)’ 1991
Australian artist Toby Richardson creates disembodied portraits, photographing mattresses to infer a portrait of their previous owner. “Discarded mattresses bear evidence of intense use; they show the imprints and marks of the life in which they had a function. Individually stained with their owners’ sweat and urine, each mattress has its unique signature that distinguishes it from any other, some are stunningly decorative, others rich with colour. But that’s what intrigues me, marks that record everyday living especially when those marks are not generally for public display, marks which are particularly personal.” (Richardson 2008)22 His photographs presented unframed, hanging on the wall are one to one scale, enabling fine visibility of the intricate human stains, mold, rips and fabric pattern. The works reveal intimate stories but are anonymous, the mattresses collected by the artist across his travels. The works infer the sleeping or copulating body as a slow drawing machine, tracing histories and events upon the surface of the mattress. The surfaces are transcribed with lapses, climaxes and infirmities, traditionally hidden from view underneath bed sheets in closed rooms. These otherwise invisible and incorporeal transgressions take on a kind of abstraction of the personal where lovers and illnesses wait to be assessed for damage and imbued with unknown significance. There is a disclosure of the personal but not a personal disclosure by the artist, the secretions here are unattributed, so absent of any shame or embarrassment that would otherwise accompany their disclosure.

Fig. 7. Toby Richardson, 'Mattress Portrait', 2008

22 Richardson, Toby. "MORE Singles, Couples and QUEENS. ‘Ones trash is another’s treasure’." In MORE Singles, Couples and QUEENS. ‘Ones trash is another’s treasure’, by Toby Richardson. Adelaide, SA: Helen Gorey Gallery, 2008. p 5
If we take Emin’s word as sincere, in her 2003 artist talk, describing the making of my bed as a kind of survival story of this ultimate bender toward death, we have a new kind of Duchampian urinal moment, a dead stop in art history. The artist remakes the object in its mental consideration, where the artist’s experience becomes entangled with an object, not simply the re-designation of a utilitarian object to art object. Emin’s observation to herself -“This is probably one of the most fantastic things I've ever made.’ (Emin 2003)\(^{23}\) declares an awareness of having made the work, transforming the object implicitly. In a heightened state of awareness the artist looked back at this raft she had been marooned on for days, in a vertiginous proximity to death and her ‘Galileo moment’ (Emin 2003)\(^{24}\) of self-disclosure engaged a reframing of object. Here is the moment that disclosure is integral. There existed a moment where the artist was able to see herself from, at first without and then within an object, that had only moments earlier been a landscape that contained her body. This landscape that confined the body, once escaped, was able to stand in for the passage of the body. The disclosure to the viewer is secondary to the essential disclosure to self. You can set yourself on a path for self-destruction for days, weeks or years on end and this can be and most often is a subconscious kind of self-destruction, lacking real self-awareness, or wearing blinkers to it. Emin’s seeing, of herself in the crime scene of My Bed, and thinking “What if I had died and they’d found me here, with this.” (Emin 2003)\(^{25}\), she had stepped beyond the limits of that particular narrative of self-destruction. “I am so lucky to be alive.” (Emin 2003)\(^{26}\) The consequence of not dying is living, and having veered so close toward death, to have been in its pull but managed escape provides awareness around where one has been. In this scene of her own making - her bed, being alive and not dead Emin was able to observe human resilience and a little dumb luck. In terms of the creation of the artwork and it’s significance, it is this opening of awareness that is essential, as it is an awareness

---

\(^{23}\) Emin, Tracey. *Artist Talk* Sydney, NSW: Art Gallery of New South Wales, (February 1, 2003). (My own transcript from AGNSW sound recording.)

\(^{24}\) Emin, Tracey. *Artist Talk* Sydney, NSW: Art Gallery of New South Wales, (February 1, 2003).

\(^{25}\) Emin, Tracey. *Artist Talk* Sydney, NSW: Art Gallery of New South Wales, (February 1, 2003).

\(^{26}\) Emin, Tracey. *Artist Talk* Sydney, NSW: Art Gallery of New South Wales, (February 1, 2003). (My own transcript from AGNSW sound recording.)
of one's own nature formed through experience that creates the vocabulary of the artist. In this moment Emin recognizes her eagle, tenderness opens up and it becomes part of herself.
CHAPTER 3. Feeding your eagle/ CONFESSIONS

‘IT MUST INCREASE BUT I MUST DECREASE

And as Prometheus was bored to tears, when evening fell he called his eagle.
And the eagle came.

“I've been waiting for you for ages,” said Prometheus.

“Then why didn’t you call me sooner?” replied the eagle.

For the first time Prometheus looked at his eagle, as it perched unceremoniously on the twisted bars of his cell. In the golden light of the setting sun it looked dingier than ever. It was grey, ugly, haggard, sulky, resigned and woebegone. It seemed too weak to fly; seeing which, Prometheus wept from pity for his eagle.

“Faithful bird,” said he, “you seem in pain-tell me: what is the matter?”

“I’m hungry,” said the eagle.

“Eat,” said Prometheus, uncovering his liver.

The bird ate.

“You’re hurting me,” said Prometheus.

But the eagle said nothing more that day.’ (Gide 1899)²⁷

Gide's Prometheus is distinctive from the general tale of Prometheus in a number of senses. In Gide’s story, our protagonist inexplicably unleashes himself from his chains and walks free, escaping his bondage. Gide's Prometheus invites his eagle to dine on his liver, rather than merely subject, daily to this enslaved ritual and he befriends his eagle, encouraging the eagle to perform tricks (like a puppy, or circus animal,) to endear both himself and his eagle to the gentlemen of Paris. In this distinctive character of Gide’s Prometheus I am drawn to discuss the work of Mike Kelley, an artist who celebrates disobedience in the face of judgment and enchants us with the play between himself and his eagle.

Mike Kelley has stimulated my work over many years, particularly my formative undergraduate years, informing whole bodies of work and questions of self-perspective. Kelley’s work is dense with theory and poetic narrative, and for myself, dense with conundrums provoking questions and fleshy sensations. Kelley’s work traverses myriad philosophical territories but in terms of my own direct responses to his work I have been drawn to his play with the visceral, the abject and his Catholic tastes (The title Kelley gave to his first mid-career survey in 1993 at The Whitney.) These tastes are informed by the basic principle of being told you are a sinner from early age and the ever so succulent threat of punishment. Zeus and the Catholic God are both masters of conceptual artistry when it comes to exacting punishment, and most Catholics, (whether practicing, lapsed or ex) are attuned to the constant threat of this punishment being exacted, drawing our behavior in the present into an almost perpetual state of sin, requiring constant confession and absolution. But typically the worst of your sins are never confessed, in the confession box, just the minor ones - those not so painful to expose. In line with my engagement with Kelley as a provocateur, an essay Artist in Exile, by Howard N. Fox, in the book accompanying Catholic Tastes observes ‘Perhaps in the future just as he came to acknowledge that his early art was about belief systems, Kelley may clarify the apparent basis of his art in Judeo-Christian precepts; or perhaps not. For now, the central questions left unanswered- and unaddressed- in his art are: whether there can be an accommodation of the self and the culture; whether there is absolution, divine or otherwise, of imperfect human nature; whether there is salvation, of any kind, for human existence. And whether Mike Kelley believes there ought to be.’ (Fox 1993)

Kelley addressed themes of our daily crimes and the threat of punishment across numerous strands and formats of work, including the fabric wall hangings from 1987, which riff off liturgical banners at various contemporary religious institutions. Let’s Talk, 1987 features the text LET’S TALK ABOUT DISOBEYING,

---

with the text framing a large rotund cookie jar, implying reward as punishment.

Fig. 8. Mike Kelley, ‘Let’s Talk’, 1987

Another fabric work from the same period Symbiotic Relationship, conveys a similar relationship between disobedience and reward- comprising of the text F*CK YOU. NOW GIVE ME A TREAT. Symbiotic relationship echoes the relationship between Prometheus and eagle, but in relation to Kelley’s work, we could argue over, whom is eating whom and which one of them is waiting for the treat!

Kelley’s work is cheeky to say the least but astute as it articulates the temptation of the sinner to indulge, and the subtle erotic’s of a lingering threat of punishment. Like puppies trained to beg using snacks rewarding tricks learnt, young Catholics are trained from an early age, to sin and await the consequences; to sin and then feel dirty, which is the other sexier flipside of the coin to feeling guilty. Akin to
Prometheus’ punishment by Zeus, chained to a rock in the elements and his liver eaten daily by the eagle, the punishment exacted by the Catholic God is held as a promise, something that will happen at the end of this current phase of narrative. Kelley’s banners elucidate for me, the equivalence of - I will keep sinning if you promise to punish me, and the punishment better be good, as I have been sinning very hard, in expectation of my treat.

I recently saw the travelling, posthumous, survey of Mike Kelley at The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA29, (who sadly after many years of the dance, for whatever reason, decided to answer Camus’ philosophical question, with the finite.) The survey boasted the full force of all seven deadly sins bound with Philosophy and art theory embedded with such complexity it was woven into the fabric of his work. My style is not to unpick the fabric but wrap myself in it and see what it feels like to wear. It feels dirty. In Church and State, 1991, a large

drawing/painting on paper is emblazoned with three lumps, two large oval taking up most of the frame and one smaller circle, down to the left. The three lumps appear to be steaming turds, with the wavering lines emerging from above, a classic cartoon depiction of wafting unpleasant aroma. The Lump on the right has the text STATE, written across it, the one of the left reads CHURCH. In the shadow of CHURCH sits the smaller circular lump, emblazoned with the word MASTURBATION, the most selfish of all sins as it is entirely for one's own pleasure and isn't going to produce any more Catholics. As a catholic, (practicing or lapsed,) you cannot jerk off without God watching, and this is part of what makes it feel so good as not only are you getting off in the present, but there is also the promise of punishment in the future. This is particularly pertinent to me. What I am about to tell you explains a lot. When I was a youth, upon my parents leaving the house, and often, (long before consciously acknowledging my homosexuality) I would go into my parents room and construct the perfect den of masturbatory stimulation. I would take all my men’s exercise magazines30, (which I had bought secretly) and open them all to my favourite men, forming a skin to the billowing ocean of my parents’ waterbed. Once this fleshy collage was assembled I would jerk off, in the centre of the images, under the eyes of a three quarter scale Virgin Mary plaster sculpture, her amidst a sea of unfolded clothes and tax paperwork on mum’s desk. Also watching from my left, like Kelley's ominous lump representing Church, hovering above the smaller lump representing masturbation, the two portraits of the sacred heart peered on as I selfishly pulled my dick. There was no pretending I was not sinning, I was being judged in the present with each stroke of my hand. I knew I was going to be in big trouble, when judgment day came around. It felt dirty and it felt good. Some of us learn early on, that if you approach it with the right kind of mindset, sinning can feel really good. It is the later on, that you have to worry about. This is why I relate so forcefully to Kelley's work, he understands how good it feels to be naughty and the tantalizing nature of this threat of punishment. Anecdotally- in my early twenties my mother decided it was an injustice for the sculpture of Mary to be constantly immersed knee deep in unfolded washing and receipts (if only she knew about what the virgin had to witness,) so sought a home for her. My sister was working at the Old Catholic

30 A precursor to pornography, but deeply suspicious for a young boy who never exercised.
monastery on North head in Manly and the chapel was in need of a virgin. So Mary was relocated and soon afterward, Saint Mary of the Masturbation, as I call her, was in attendance to Nicole Kidman and Keith Urban’s wedding.

Fig. 10. Lionel Bawden, ‘The comforts of anonymous paper men’, 1997, Detail.

My supervisor, Lindy Lee recently described my mattress works Fantasy Disorder, 2013, forming my studio research, as seminal. There was an acknowledgement of a breakthrough in relation to my continued practice but also their sense of the ejaculatory. These works relate directly to my 1997 series of paintings on bed mattresses, propped up against the wall - The comforts of anonymous paper men, in which, images of men, mostly naked, were depicted in various scenes from fashion, exercise and porn magazines, posing, masturbating and fornicating (emerging form the stripes and floral patterns of the fabric.) Both series frame masturbation\textsuperscript{31} as a means of survival in the face of Camus’ big philosophical question amidst two distinct periods of frailty and depression. The works carry

\textsuperscript{31} My earlier research into digging provoked exploration of the work of Frank and Lillian Gilbreth, who used a chrono-cyclograph to create images of gesture with light captured stereoscopically, to examine the economy of gesture in the labour force - how to speed up the hand gesture of brick layer or physician. In light of this, the physical gesture of male masturbation, the repeated up and down stroke of hand around phallus, mimicking the act of penetration, is one of the most economical in producing a result.
the vast weight of onanism, the volume of ejaculate some signifier for periods of depression and escapism or as Kelley might say - the wages of sin. My earlier mattress works were suggestive of the hidden nature of my homosexual desire, until that point, known only to me and a few close family and friends, very soon displayed in the gallery in my first direct period of self-disclosure. *The comforts of anonymous paper men,* was my way of saying - without these nameless anonymous men, from magazine pages, to absorb my guilt, I would now be dead. My series - *Fantasy Disorder,* stands in for a body made so heavy it was immovable and overwhelmed by an ocean of formlessness.

‘In the Lump Drawings, I took on the task of “rendering” abstract biomorphic shapes. I used standard illustrative tropes to provide these shapes with distinguishing surface details and the illusion of three-dimensional form. The point was to fix shapes generally used to signify the formless. – Mike Kelley’ (Mark and Meyer-Hermann 2013)32 The history of my own work, between two periods of self disclosure, has been marked by a similar desire to engage the formless and a fascination with abstract, biomorphic shapes as a deliberate response to earlier direct and confessional representations of the body and it's urges. The abstract biomorphic shapes act as stand in for the body whilst more specifically satisfy a shifting exploration of a whole spectrum of the formless, how to embody desire, shame, guilt, sadness, mourning, joy, expectation and love without using the human figure. Much male abstraction is labeled ejaculatory, the repeated gesture creating the mark, with a kind of phallic triumph. When you ejaculate you are left diminished as something is created, losing fluid, some D.N.A. and a certain amount of energy. Something of the self now exists in the world, having been created within, but now existing outside the body, having given form to the formless.

Mike Kelley’s *Stained Glass Mattress,* 1989, speaks powerfully to me of my own experience despite only discovering it this year. It is a work, which, is rarely

---

published and even in this retrospective catalogue33 is pictured but not referred to in the vast text. The two felt wall - pieces *Ascending Hosts* and *Descending Order*; both 1989 are works emblematic of this period, speaking similarly of the relationship between church and body, but less explicitly inferring the body. *Stained Glass Mattress* speaks loudly for itself, particularly so, when on exhibition only metres away from the work *Church and State*, 1991, mentioned earlier. *Stained Glass Mattress*, is a collapsing of sinful body and church into one object, carnal desire becomes clothed in the architecture of the church - specifically the stained glass window (a shimmering miraculous play of light inferring the Holy Spirit.) The work is a double bed mattress displayed directly on the gallery floor. The entire surface of the mattress is covered with a pattern of slightly misformed rectangles in bold pinks, reds, oranges, and yellows, white and gray felt, surrounded by strips of black. In this collapse of body and church, sin and judgment occupy the same moment and the same space. Here the vaguely pathetic felt rendering of the normally radiant Stained glass pattern marks the fabric of the mattress, in place of the various human stains that the body creates. A serious reading suggests that judgment from the God above creates the abject. A more playful reading, and very much connected to my own masturbation beneath the eyes of God and the virgin is a provocation, a jest from Kelley, some approximation of - yes I am jacking off again, take a good look. What are you going to do about it? The work is a dare, to be punished, a joyful yet serious declaration, that the carnal body is an agent of sin and it feels good. Catholic guilt has created a lot of really good art and guilt is the body to innumerable eagles encircling their prey. The works I have named here illustrate Kelley as an artist with as much humour as Gide and as a man who very publicly celebrated his eagle/eagles, even if they ended up devouring him whole in the end, diminished to the point of disappearance. In the face of Kelley’s suicide, there is sadness to this work but one incapable of suffocating its joyfulness. Kelley not only fed his eagle, he invited it over to get drunk, watch porn and jerk off with it. Just as Gide’s Prometheus invites his eagle to eat, Kelley invites ongoing visitation by his eagle in his practice, he invites it to lie down with him allowing the creation of works, which give full

visibility to the awareness of his eagle. Kelley taunts his eagle as he stares it down whilst not totally dispelling its power over him.

Fig 11. Mike Kelley, ‘Stained Glass Mattress’, 1989
CHAPTER 4. Devouring your own eagle/ THE STAND-IN

In devouring one's eagle a process of digestion is set in play, and essential to this digestion, is a change in states: eagle becomes meat, meat becoming nourishment and waste. Process transforms matter and one things becomes another. In this way, speaking of the self and my eagle within studio research, I engage a swallowing up, a digestion and a transformation. My strategy to embody this transformation of one thing into another has always been the employment of a stand-in.

When newly in love or suffering depression, the bed can become an entire universe that one becomes powerless to leave. When joined in bed by a lover, this landscape becomes more expansive and the weather changes to the rhapsody of thunderstorm, embracing sexual metaphor like ‘Yun Yu’ (The clouds and rain) a Chinese euphemism for lovemaking, from an ancient tale where a mountain sprite appeared to the emperor as the morning clouds, the orgasm inferred as the falling rain, directly referenced in my abstract landscape sculpture *Yun Yu*, 2008.
Although the physical frame of the bed as territory does not literally expand, the internal world opens up, the lover's body as cave of the unknown and a journey through limbs and cavities becomes transcribed across the folds of bed sheets.

When hiking the experience shifts after the first journey, as familiarity with certain markers along the way, makes time travel faster, so a return journey seems quicker as one recognizes certain points already traversed. Our intimacy and familiarity similarly clothes our experience of sex. For this reason depression, pairs perfectly with the intoxication of casual sex as the unfamiliar landscape of the new lover’s body takes us further from the known experience we wish to flee, providing us a deeper sense of escape.

In Sarah Lucas’ *Au Naturel*, 1994, the double bed mattress is employed as a stand in for a man and a woman and implies the sexual act. The object occupies the ‘status as both a literal object - a mattress - and a surrogate for one or possibly
two bodily presences’ (Malik, Sarah Lucas Au Naturel 2009)\textsuperscript{34} ‘When we look at Au Naturel, it’s identity as a mattress, something to lie on is inescapable. But through the way it’s materials are arranged, it also complicates the gendered view of ‘horizontality’ as a sign for woman.’ (Malik, Sarah Lucas Au Naturel 2009)\textsuperscript{35} The bed becomes the body, and the bucket and melons insinuating the woman, and cucumber and oranges insinuating the man, amplify, rather indiscreetly the nature of mattress as a place/thing on which to fuck. There is no subtlety to the object, as characteristic to Lucas’ work, however the vulgarity of the sculpture belies its material intelligence.

Fig. 12. Sarah Lucas, ‘Au Naturel’, 1994

In my 1997 series of three mattress paintings, I employed the mattresses similarly to Lucas, slovenly propped up against the wall, invoking my own body, but mine


were more erect, standing, whereas hers are sitting up, as if smoking a cigarette after fucking. My mattresses in this series were all single, important at the time to suggest isolation in my sexuality (where as the single designation of the mattresses in my 2013 Fantasy Disorder is to recall the isolation of depression, despite having chalked up a lot of sex.) The earlier series featured two stenciled enamel images on each mattress, depicting naked men, posing and engaged in homosexual acts, in part representing a body marked by homosexual shame but also a body marked by the brazen fresh pride of coming out. Their personal reading was however very much located in a sense of confession, a confession of homosexuality but also of survival.

When depressed and alone the bed can become a tomb, clothed in darkness, body immovable, the limits seem to draw inward. The bed becomes a raft amidst isolation from the world outside. Tracey Emin’s bed represents this kind of raft, in which a journey of intoxication, towards death, takes place entirely within the limits of the bed, across days and nights bled into one another, a body out at sea. ‘Traditional aesthetics routinely demand some meaningful relationship between form and content, but liquids, however heterogeneous, take the form of their enclosure.’ (Hickey, Coping with Paradise 2013)36 During the making process of my work ‘Fantasy Disorder’ there existed the material challenge of how to sink enough abject misery into the object - answered literally with a body of fluid, a sea of intoxication and despair, becoming frozen solid in time37. The resin fills the skin of the mattress, taking the form of the raft on which the body is cast adrift.

This sense of bed as a raft on a journey toward death is most aptly pictured in The sons of Clovis II, Evariste Luminais‘ 1880 Painting, a key work from the AGNSW collection. The darkness of this painting has captured my imagination since childhood. The bed literally a barge, adrift in the landscape, is eternally frozen on its path toward death, amidst suffering and despair. Although the narrative of The sons of Clovis II, is particular, it forms an appropriate image for depressive malaise,}

37 This process of casting the ocean in resin in the studio was literally this, pouring the resin by the bucketful down over the landscape central to the pool within the hollowed mattress, filling the void and then watching from a distance, as time froze solid.
suggested by David Brooks as a kind of “lifelessness”\textsuperscript{38} characteristic of certain creative young men of the time of the paintings creation. The historical sons of Clovis, punished by their mother for betraying their absent father king become a stand in for these young men of contemporary malaise sharing ‘a ‘listlessness’, a ‘kind of torpor’ or ‘stupefaction’, as one might have found, amongst some of the young men of Paris in the late nineteenth century, in the smokers of hashish, the drinkers of absinthe’ (Brooks 2011)\textsuperscript{39}. The Sons of Clovis, have had their ankle tendons cut, unable to get out of bed, forever horizontal, forever bound to the limits of the raft. The painting as a metaphor for depression becomes apt, as depression seems to linger in an unending space outside of time, a dark loop of open water with perhaps a remote promise of rescue, but one that never takes place.

---

\textsuperscript{38} Brooks, David. \textit{The Sons of Clovis}. Brisbane, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 2011, p10

\textsuperscript{39} Brooks, David. \textit{The Sons of Clovis}. Brisbane, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 2011, p10
My mattress work *Fantasy Disorder (the isle of the little death)*, 2013, takes a similar image Arnold Böcklin's *Isle of the Dead* (Basel version, 1880) and transports the scene into the frame of the bed. Böcklin’s painting was repainted numerous times, almost becoming a stand in for itself, multiple versions imaging one’s unknown final journey towards death. The vast sea of Böcklin’s painting and the island at its focus, becomes contained within the limits of the mattress. Here the island itself becomes a stand in for the raft/boat, an almost meta sense of internalization, where the mattress becomes both the dreamer and the dream, the landscape erupting from the horizontal plane of ocean, in place of the pillow on a conventional mattress. Here the landscape conjured within the frame of the mattress mirrors the sense of isolation that one experiences, when the bed becomes a universe unto itself in depressive isolation, a world cut off, where the edges of reality go into free-fall.

Fig. 14. Arnold Böcklin, ‘Isle of the Dead’ (Basel version), 1880

The three single bed mattresses forming *Fantasy Disorder* refer directly back to the three single bed mattresses of *The comforts of anonymous paper men*, once erect, now horizontal. Spaced only a small distance apart, they are located in conversation with one another, standing in for Prometheus, Cocles and Damocles, each revealing the story of their nature and formation of character over a shared meal. This triumvirate for me also echoes the sentiments of Anish Kapoor in his artist talk at The Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, December 2012 in which

---

40 At this point it just seems interesting to note the synchronicity, here, that across the centuries these two key works; , Evariste Luminal’s *The sons of Clovis II*, 1880 and Arnold Böcklin’s *Isle of the Dead* (Basel version,) 1880, were both created in the same year.

he compared psychotherapy to the making of sculpture, explaining that the real work happens when a third presence enters the room. In psychotherapy there is present the psychotherapist and the patient, confessing his nature and in the sculpture studio there is artist and material. In each case Kapoor suggested, the real work, only occurs when this unnamed third presence enters the room. Perhaps self-knowledge, insight some kind of epiphany- in any case this conversation between three forces allows for transformation to occur.

Fig. 15. Lionel Bawden, ‘Fantasy Disorder’ (Isle of little death), 2013
Each of the three works in the series *Fantasy Disorder*, exploit the human longing for landscape as a means of escaping the present. The title was taken from a conversation with a friend with whom I annually go on a long camping retreat - she explained her constant longing to be in the bush by the sea, made her worry she had a Fantasy disorder, which immediately revealed itself to me as a title for future work. Each of these works, constructed from mattress fabric, wood, acrylic paint, polyurethane, foam, lichen and acrylic resin, refer to a specific landscape. The first work, *Fantasy Disorder (the isle of the little death) 2013*, mentioned above recalls Böcklin’s painting and images an approach towards death. The remaining two autobiographical in nature, refer to specific landscapes in which I lose myself/have lost myself. *Fantasy Disorder (to touch the back of the cave) 2013*, is a recreation of the ocean cave at the end of the beach. Every year I would attempt to swim to the back of the cave at low tide, only to be overcome with a primal fear as I reached pitch darkness, half way into the forty metre length of the cave. It was only in the summer of 2013-14 that I was able to overcome this primal fear and literally touch the back of the cave. This experience, empowered by months of post breakdown sobriety and an absolute desire not to be ruled by fear, embodies a personal triumph and connection to a landscape, which speaks of growth, life and discovery, in contrast to a movement towards death. *Fantasy Disorder (the disappearance) 2013*, takes the landscape of my youth, in the bush on the edge of Sydney and countless days spent wandering and exploring the ridges and caves of a seemingly infinite landscape. This work consciously calls forth Joan Lindsay’s *The Secret of Hanging Rock*, 1987 and the swallowing up of bodies into the landscape.42 Here two rocky outcrops provide a small aperture drawing the figure onward, toward an eventual disappearance into the void beyond. Each of these works, invoke the image of the sentient ocean of the planet Solaris, and the vast baroque formations, that erupt from its surface evident in my 2004 series - *the monsters*. These works speak ambiguously of a period of horizontality, of dead weight, of dreaming, where the fluid nature of inebriation and onanistic climax swallow the body whole. There is no desire for a singular reading, only that the

---

42 The quote from the text which initially inspired my series of paintings was - ‘It wasn’t a hole in the rocks, nor a hole in the ground. It was a hole in space. About the size of a fully rounded Summer moon, coming and going. She saw it as painters and sculptors saw a hole, as a thing in itself, giving shape and significance to other shapes.’ The Secret of Hanging Rock, Joan Lindsay, P30 Angus and Robertson, published upon the author’s death, Sydney 1987.
works hold within them, some measure of the formlessness of sadness, desire, depression, self loathing, longing, hopelessness and fear.

Fig 16. Lionel Bawden, ‘Fantasy Disorder’(to touch the back of the cave), 2013
With self-disclosure comes the possibility of transformation. You recognize the thing that devours you, you name the thing, and feed it for a duration and try to love it, disempower it’s all consuming terror through acceptance. In Gide’s Prometheus Misbound, when we are first introduced to Prometheus’ eagle, it is a thing of vulgar ugliness, much like Emin first seeing her bed from across the room and witnessing only filth and torment. Over time, Prometheus willingly invites the malnourished eagle bony and losing it’s feathers, to eat his liver daily. He learns to love his eagle and his eagle swells and becomes beautiful. Like Emin and her bed, Prometheus comes to see his eagle as part of himself and in that recognition, he
finds a desire to nurture it and make it well. At the close of the story, seemingly inspired somehow by the death of Damocles, who was taken ill after Prometheus’ presentation on how ‘Every man must love his eagle,’ Prometheus kills his eagle and dines on it with his two remaining friends, Cocles and the waiter (who originally served our three protagonists - Prometheus, Damocles and Cocles at their shared meal, in which the question of the nature of their characters was discussed.) “‘It had been eating me for long enough; I decided it was my turn.’” (Gide 1899)43

![Image](image_url)

Fig. 18. Lionel Bawden, ‘Fantasy Disorder’ 3 works, 2013

The use of the stand is essential to my practice. Akin to the employment of parallel narrative it allows me to deeply engage the personal at one state of remove. I can face myself revealed, made entirely naked, but continue to face the world at the same time filtering open disclosure with ambiguity using stand-ins for the self. I have no desire to be didactic, but require an honest disclosure from the core of my being. Direct transmission of the personal is non-essential; I only

require that the work carry the weight of this disclosure. For the possibility of transformation to occur, we need to devour our eagle and take nourishment from it. This open disclosure, which feeds the work, the fire, which nourishes both oneself and the viewer, is the nourishment we take from the shared meal of devouring the eagle.

'The meal was more hilarious than it is permissible to relate here, and everyone thought the eagle delicious. At dessert they all drank it’s health. “So it won’t have been good for anything?” they asked. “Don’t say that Cocles! - Its flesh has nourished us. When I asked it a question, it wouldn’t answer… But I eat it with no feeling of animosity; if it had made me suffer less, it would have been less plump, if it had been less plump, it would have been less delectable.” “What remains of its beauty of yesterday?” “I have kept all it’s feathers.”’ (Gide 1899)44

Masters research, when focused on the nature of character, mirrors Gide’s narrative, bookended by two meals each with three guests. At the first meal, the question is posed, what is the nature of one’s character and how is this character forged? The three guests are perhaps myself, my studio work and my written-research or alternately my supervisor, with whom the main conversation unfolds between the research and myself. This meal takes a very long time. The second meal is this one, the meal to which you have been invited and is shorter than the first, although it may have seemed painfully long to you. At this meal, we three dine out on what has devoured me. We devour it together, to digest it, which is what I ask of you as we read these words and stand in front of this work. In dining on my own eagle I see a few things happening, I will be nourished by that which in the eagle is good, and being of myself already, the eagle will feed my body and become my flesh, so I shall keep living with it, in some new dance. Further I will expel from my body that which in the eagle is foul and toxic, I will shit and piss it out. Finally, some small part of the eagle shall live on inside me as a small jewel deep in my liver.

CONCLUSION. Digesting our meal

Prometheus steals fire from the Gods and brings it to mankind, he is punished by Zeus, chained to a rock to endure the elements and daily subject to the brutality of having an eagle eat his liver only to have it grow back overnight, to be once again eaten by the eagle the following day. Prometheus in this research provides a stand in for myself. I look toward Prometheus as guide, first recognising my eagle as depression/ shame/ addiction/ a selfish fondness for pleasure as a means of escape. Prometheus’ narrative suggests a path of movement - from a lack of awareness of one’s nature to an embrace of that which devours him as the thing most essential to his nature. Having first pitied, then tenderly fed his eagle, it grows strong and fat, at which point Prometheus eats it, allowing the possible transformation of self. Prometheus teaches me that we must love and feed our eagle in order to eventually outrun it, because as long as it starved and malnourished, there is nothing within it to eventually nourish the self for transformation. Feed your eagle then devour it.

In Tracey Emin’s work, My Bed, I find the perfect evidence that you must be able to see the self clearly, even when you have to look through a whole pile of filth. Emin’s experience of making My Bed, is akin to Prometheus recognising his eagle and then developing tenderness toward it. In Emin’s work the absolute necessity of self-disclosure is declared. It is through self-disclosure that an artist can commence an understanding of the self or at least probe its authentic nature, to transmit that which is essential to us, out into the world.

Mike Kelley’s Stained Glass Mattress provides a mirror for surveying my own relationship to catholic guilt and the threat/treat of judgment and punishment. The experience of guilt, under the watchful eyes of the Catholic God, makes sinning pleasurable in the present and engages the subtle erotics of the threat of punishment in the future. Kelley’s work collapses sinful body and judgmental God/church into one object, so that sinning and judgment take place in the same moment, accelerating our awareness of not only a punishment needing to be
exacted, but how much fun we might have along the way if we willingly invite the eagle back for its daily meal.

I have continued my long embrace of ambiguity through the use of the stand-in in my studio research. There is a play within the works, of mattress as body, mattress as raft, mattress as landscape; whilst to some extent the mattress is still implicitly mattress. The materiality speaks directly to the arena in which my depression, intoxication and masturbation was situated, whilst the transformation of bed into landscape opens up the work, more suggestive of fantasy and escape. This use of mattress as stand in and the flux of what it is standing in for, affords an ambiguity which does not disempower the physical nor emotional weight of the work, a weight rendered overt by the physical mass of resin weighing the body/mattress down. This transformation of material and object claims the eagle as a catalyst for change, providing nourishment for the journey back into the world, beyond the limits of the bed.

In Dave Hickey’s essay, describing how one must arm oneself to survive graduate school, appropriately titled, *Nurturing Your Addictions*, he provides an end point for this research, a validation of Prometheus’ crime of stealing fire from Olympus to give to mankind and his sadistic punishment by Zeus. Hickey, here, also backs me up that diving headlong into the chasm and pulling the sheets back on my bed, was the only true path available to me, in this moment. “More to the point, in the egg-and-spoon race for artistic recognition, you are a thousand times more likely to get there with your egg if you avoid graduate school. More critically, if you want to be an artist you must go to graduate school, you must bring your own egg, your junk, your talisman, your jones, your touchstone in the larger culture. It has to be something that you love, even if it’s just an old Hobie or a street tag or Jane’s Addiction* 45. You need something whose loss you are sure to notice if it begins to slip away, something to serve as a hedge against ignorant opacity, because it’s not just about you, kid, it’s about bringing the fire from wherever you found it to an

---

45 I was, myself, listening to the Jane’s Addiction 1990 album *Ritual de lo habitual* on repeat in the studio during undergraduate studies at Canberra School of Art. If I listened to it now, I would of course imagine that the track, *Been caught stealing*, is about our protagonist Prometheus stealing fire from the Gods.
art world that desperately needs it.” (Hickey, Nurturing Your Addictions 2013)46

Bringing your fire comes with consequences, you leave home with fire and arrive with an eagle, an eagle that will stalk you, circle you and devour you, until you learn to first recognize it, next face it down and love it and finally devour it yourself. Consequences are good because it is in the self-disclosure of your touchstone and the owning of your junk, learning to love it and take responsibility for it, where your fire really starts to burn bright enough for someone else to see it, be drawn to it and warmed by its radiance.

In closing Prometheus Misbound, Gide writes, speaking of the feathers collected from Prometheus’ eagle - ‘It is with a pen made from one of them that I have written this little book. May you succeed, rare friend, in finding it not so bad as it might be.’ (Gide 1899)47

---


BIBLIOGRAPHY


Emin, Tracey. *Artist Talk* Sydney, NSW: Art Gallery of New South Wales, (February 1, 2003).


Richardson, Toby. "MORE Singles, Couples and QUEENS. 'Ones trash is another's treasure'." In MORE Singles, Couples and QUEENS. 'Ones trash is another's treasure', by Toby Richardson. Adelaide, SA: Helen Gorey Gallery, 2008.


Catalogue of Work presented for examination

Left to Right:

**WORK PRESENTED FOR EXAMINATION**

Lionel Bawden
Fantasy Disorder (to touch the back of the cave) 2013
Mattress fabric, wood, acrylic paint, polyurethane, foam, lichen, resin.
Each form: approx. 40cm x 90cm x 200cm

Lionel Bawden
Fantasy Disorder (the isle of the little death) 2013
Mattress fabric, wood, acrylic paint, polyurethane, foam, lichen, resin.
Each form: approx. 40cm x 90cm x 200cm

Lionel Bawden
Fantasy Disorder (the disappearance) 2013
Mattress fabric, wood, acrylic paint, polyurethane, foam, resin.
Each form: approx. 40cm x 90cm x 200cm
CATALOGUE OF WORKS

1. Lionel Bawden
   'The comforts of anonymous paper men', 1997
   Acrylic paint on single bed mattresses
   3 works each approx. 190cm x 22cm x 81cm
   Exhibited Peak, Peek, Pique 1997 Graduate exhibition Canberra School of Art and The
   comforts of anonymous paper men, TAP Gallery, Sydney March 1998

2. Tracey Emin
   'My Bed', 1998
   Mattress, Linens, pillows, rope, condoms, cigarette packet...
   Exhibition view - Sagacho Exhibition Space, Japan 1998

3. Tracey Emin
   'My Bed', 1998
   Mattress, Linens, pillows, rope, condoms, cigarette packet...

4. Cindy Sherman
   'Untitled #179' 1987
   Colour photograph, courtesy Metro Pictures New York, U.S.A.

5. Emma Sulkowicz
   'Mattress Performance, Carry that weight', 2014
   Columbia University Campus, U.S.A.

6. Felix Gonzalez – Torres
   'Untitled, (Billboard,)' 1991
   Printed Billboards displayed in twenty-four locations across new York City in conjunction
   with the exhibition- Projects 34: Felix Gonzales Torres at The Museum of Modern Art.

7. Toby Richardson
   'Untitled Mattress Portrait,' 2008
   Mattress photographs (each 1:1 scale with the actual mattress it reproduced)
   Exhibited in the exhibition More Singles, Couples and Queens 2008

8. Mike Kelley,
   'Let's Talk' 1987
   Glued felt
   240 x 149.9 cm
   Goetz Collection
   From the series /exhibition Half a Man, first exhibited Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los
   Angeles 1987.

9. Mike Kelley 'Church and State'
   'Church and State,' 1991
   Acrylic on paper, 60 x 72 inches

10. Lionel Bawden
    'The comforts of anonymous paper men,' 1997
    (studded mattress, pink stripes, detail)
    Acrylic paint on single bed mattresses
    3 works each approx. 190cm x 22cm x 81cm
    Exhibited Peak, Peek, Pique 1997 Graduate exhibition Canberra School of Art and The
    comforts of anonymous paper men, TAP Gallery, Sydney March 1998
11. Mike Kelley  
'Stained Glass Mattress,' 1989  
Mattress covered with felt  
23.5 x 156.2 x 203.2 cm  
Goetz Collection

12. Sarah Lucas  
'At Naturel,' 1994  
Mattress, melons, oranges, cucumber, bucket  
84 x 167.6 x 144.8cm  
Private Collection

13. Evariste Luminais  
The sons of Clovis II,' 1880  
Oil on Canvas,  
190.7 x 275.8 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales

14. Arnold Böcklin  
'Isle of the Dead' (Basel version) 1880  
Oil on Canvas,  
111 x 155cm  
Öffentliche Kunstsammlung, Kunstmuseum, Basel.

15. Lionel Bawden  
'Fantasy Disorder' (Isle of little death,) 2013  
Single bed mattress, wood, acrylic, resin, lychen, epoxy, fabric, foam, Polyeurethane  

16. Lionel Bawden  
'Fantasy Disorder (to touch the back of the cave.)' 2013  
Single bed mattress, wood, acrylic, resin, lychen, epoxy, fabric, foam, Polyeurethane  

17. Lionel Bawden  
'Fantasy Disorder (the disappearance.)' 2013  
Single bed mattress, wood, acrylic, resin, lychen, epoxy, fabric, foam, Polyeurethane  

18. Lionel Bawden  
'Fantasy Disorder,' 2013  
3 works  
Three single bed mattresses, wood, acrylic, resin, lychen, epoxy, fabric, foam, Polyeurethane  