

# *Visions of Enchantment:*

## *Fictions of Intimacy within Contemporary Art*



by

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## ABSTRACT

The research seeks to create an innovative hyper femme vision of enchantment within contemporary installation art by exploiting the magical and vicarious pleasure of perfume bottles. The study proposes that hedonistic and 'conspicuous' feminine content acts to incite prevailing socio-cultural ideas concerning appropriate expressions of sexuality. Through the creation of an explicitly feminine mode of enchantment the aim is to progress pluralistic perceptions of gender and tolerance of diversiform modes of sexualised expression.

Parameters for the research were established through review of the practice of Jeff Koons, Sylvie Fleury, Mariko Mori and Pierre et Gilles. Surveyed as a collective, the work of these artists represents celebration of intimate concepts of desire predicated upon sexuality and identity. Consequently, they express a contemporary polemical aesthetic model for enchantment that builds upon a legacy of sybaritic practitioners within the arts. This is demonstrated through examination of the modes of rococo, pre-raphaelite, symbolist, aesthete and decadents, art nouveau and psychedelia, which explicate exuberant content and style. The research hypothesises is that the history of enchantment within art articulates sustained, occasionally cohesive and non-didactic counter- cultural activity.

The research contends that the emergence of secular enchantments within contemporary art segues with current salient philosophical discourse, which likewise seeks to re-enchant a disenchanted world. An analysis of the genus of fantasy within fiction resulted in the contention of fantasy as desire incarnate, and therefore an apposite visceral mechanism for enchantment within art.

The researched is conveyed in the installation *La Galaxie de Joy*, comprising a suite of feminised sculptures inset within a celestial milieu. Derived from perfume bottle designs and sampled from creative styles and relevant practitioners researched during the project, an

aesthetic methodology called superstyle was developed. This articulates a commitment to camp tenets of excess, glamour, exaggeration and spectacle and manifests formally in sinuous curves, dramatic posturing, playful ornamentation and glittering or strikingly coloured surfaces. A heavenly milieu for enchantment was created incorporating decor elements such as a cloud-floor, stars, swathes of fabric, deep blue walls that melt into the floor, a luminous bubble-web centrepiece, antechamber, specialised theatrical lighting and pink blush colouring.

The research project outcome is the exhibition installation that explicates an innovative and experiential paradigm for feminised enchantment within contemporary art. This has been achieved through employing the synaesthetic and affective power of perfume bottles in the practice to explore concepts of excess, intimacy, pleasure and desire in relation to gender and aesthetics.

This research project contributes to the existing field of knowledge in three ways. First, through identification, analysis and documentation of a specific mode of enchantment that has emerged within contemporary art. I describe this phenomenon as a fiction of intimacy. Second, the project proposes an innovative thesis with reference to fantasy in the history of art. The tracing of a historical context revealed a continuum of artists whose practices flourished in opposition to prevailing academic and western cultural values and established that enchantment within art articulates a provocative and sustained counter culture. Third, and most significantly, this research contributes new knowledge through development of an innovative paradigm for enchantment in contemporary art, aimed at increasing diversity of sexual expression through installation practice.

for MM, CREF, XAF

and

to my brother Paul, who sadly passed away during the term of this doctorate.

You will always be in my heart

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Signed

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Delle', is written over a horizontal line.

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## GLOSSARY

### BLISS OUT

Reach a state of perfect happiness, oblivious of anything else (Oxford English Dictionary).

### COSMOPHOBIA

Cosmophobia is described as ‘fear or ornament’ by James Trilling in his book *Ornament, a Modern Perspective* (2003).

### CULTURE

The term ‘culture’ is here used to describe Western culture and is informed more specifically by Australian value systems. This is consistent with the author’s experience and pertinent to the intimate nature of the subject matter under consideration. Core principals concerning democracy, political pluralism, traditions and syncretism are therefore assumed. ‘Culture’ also variously connotes ‘the arts’ and may refer to music, literature, theatre, cinema etc. As western culture is also defined within the broader context of globalisation, references and artists are not restricted to the west.

### FEMINISM

Feminism is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as: ‘the advocacy of women’s rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes’.

The issue of rights for women first became prominent during the French and American revolutions in the late 18th century. In Britain it was not until the emergence of the suffragette movement in the late 19th century that there was significant political change. A

‘second Wave’ of feminism arose in the 1960s, with an emphasis on unity and sisterhood; seminal figures included Betty Friedan and Germaine Greer’.

As the focus for this project is feminism in relation to art, I have included an article on feminist art in order to provide context for the research:

Women artists such as Helen Frankenthaler, Grace Hartigan, and Bridget Riley gained considerable reputations during the 1950s and early 60s. Although they were female, the content of their work was not, by design, feminist: that is, it neither addressed the historical condition of women nor could it be identified as woman-made on the basis of appearance alone. Until the end of the 1960s, most women artists sought to “de-gender” art in order to compete in the male-dominated, mainstream art world.

The counterculture of the 1960s inspired new and progressive social analyses. The mainstream was no longer regarded as ideologically neutral. Feminist analysis suggested that the art “system”—and even art history itself— had institutionalized sexism, just as the patriarchal society-at-large had done. Feminists employed the classic strategy of the disenfranchised, as did racial minorities, lesbians, and gays: they restudied and reinterpreted history. Of special concern to feminist theorists was the historical bias against crafts vis-à-vis high art. This new interest in art forms that had traditionally been relegated to the bottom of the status hierarchy (quilts, Persian rugs, Navajo blankets) eventually led to the emergence of Pattern and Decoration in the mid-1970s.

By 1969, overtly feminist artworks were being made and feminist issues raised. That year saw the creation of both WAR (Women Artists in Revolution), an offshoot of the New York-based Art Workers’ Coalition, and the Feminist Art Program, led by Judy Chicago at California State University in Fresno. (It soon recruited Miriam Schapiro as co-director and moved to the California Institute of Arts in Valencia.) Fledgling feminist institutions quickly arose in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and London, including galleries (A.I.R., SoHo 20, the Women’s Building, Womanspace); publications (Women and Art, Feminist Art Journal, Heresies); and exhibitions (“Womanhouse,” “Womanpower”). Throughout the 1970s, the meaning of feminist art and the roles that politics and spirituality play within it (the latter sometimes in the form of the “Great Goddess”) were articulated by thoughtful critics such as Lucy Lippard and Moira Roth. By the end of the decade the position of the essentialists—

that there was a biologically determined female identity that should be expressed in women's creations—was challenged by feminist artists and writers who regard that identity as culturally determined or “socially constructed.”

Feminist artworks have varied greatly. Predominating in the 1970s were autobiographical works in many media and cathartic ritualized performances—including Mary Beth Edelson's *Memorials to the 9,000,000 Women Burned as Witches in the Christian Era* and Suzanne Lacy's and Leslie Labowitz's *In Mourning and in Rage*, a series of events featuring black-hooded figures that was designed to attract the attention of the news and disseminate information about violence against women at the time of the Hillside Strangler rape-murders in Los Angeles.

The return in the 1980s to traditional media encouraged feminist artists to create works with a conceptual—and critical—bent. The notion of the patriarchal “male gaze” directed at the objectified female other has been explored by artists including Yvonne Rainer, Silvia Kolbowski, and the British artist Victor Burgin. Two examples of recent feminist art that have received widespread attention are Cindy Sherman's photographic investigations of the self in a culture of role playing and Barbara Kruger's evocations of cultural domination through the graphic vocabulary of advertising.

If such works seem less overtly feminist than their predecessors, it is largely because feminist principles have been so widely accepted—despite the brouhaha frequently surrounding the term itself. In opposition to the purity and exclusivity of modernism, feminism called for an expansive approach to art. The feminist use of narrative, autobiography, decoration, ritual, crafts-as-art, and popular culture helped catalyze the development of postmodernism (The Museum of Contemporary Art).

## **GESAMTKUNTSWERK**

Term first adopted by the Symbolists in response to the work of composer Richard Wagner. Wagner attempted to achieve a harmonious fusion of art forms incorporating the visual arts, music and poetry in order to engender a state of ecstasy. The resulting sensory assault was often almost intolerable, being spectacular, lengthy and physically implausible to sing or play.

## **GIRLIE FEMINISM**

A term coined to describe the adoption of conventional expressions of femininity adopted by contemporary young feminists. It was defined by Amy Richards and Jennifer Baumgardner in their book *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future* (2000). Girlie Feminists have reclaimed girly accoutrements, artefacts and craft in order to celebrate rather than erase historical and traditional aspects of feminine experience. Authors such as Baumgardner and Richards consider this an ineffective strategy because of its associations with nostalgia and potential for regressive politics. I would submit that the strategies used by 'the gurlies' are not particularly effective as they often emulate certain hyper-femme appurtenances, but without the benefit of the art context. While sympathising with the aims of 'the gurlies' (as I have had similar accusations concerning nostalgia and regression directed at my practice), this project aims to create a milieu for enchantment within the genre of art. It uses the context of art to foster tolerance of hyper-femme expression.

## **HYPER-FEMME**

'Hyper-femme' describes explicit and excessive visual expressions of popular tropes of femininity. The term was defined in response to a perceived lack of appropriate terminology in order to embody significantly exaggerated forms of conventional modes/ideals of femininity. Literally 'hyper' translates to 'greater' and 'femme' to 'femininity'. The use of 'femme' was derived from gendered literature, where the term is used to describe lesbians who dress in a feminine fashion, as opposed to the 'butch' who dresses in masculine attire. The 'hyper-femme' has some relation to the 'femme fatale' of popular crime culture, a heroine who uses beauty, charm and seduction to destructive effect, occasionally to the point of violence of criminality.

## **HYPER-REALITY**

Hyper-reality is a technique of fantasy.

In reference to cinema, Edward Colless defines hyper-reality as ‘a grossly inflated reality’ concerned with ‘intense subjective states’, where ‘we see in exaggerated form what we already know... an empty revelation’ (2000). In simple terms, metafiction is extended through a sophisticated process and ensuing synthesis of exposing both the mechanics and dialogue of the creative process. Successful hyper-reality induces a state of psychosis where the real and imaginary are in a constant state of flux. Therefore hyper-reality has elements of the illusory and real, kitsch and the sublime, truth and fallacy, perception and deception, pleasure and avarice, the artificial and the natural.

Hyper-real devices include:

- Metalepsis (confusion of diegetic levels, the story or narrative)
- Anachronistic adaptation (a sequence of time)
- The Viscious loop (no defined beginning or end)
- Enfolded or embedded narrative, critical parody, plot allegory (symbolic referencing)
- Stereotypical overlays

## **INSTALLATION AND SCULPTURE**

There is overlap between sculpture and installation in this project. Although the project outcome is conceived as installation, the work comprises ten sculptures which are the primary focus. It was important early in this project to attempt to define the form used in the practice. See the glossary for an explanation of sculpture and installation. In 1979, critic Rosalind Krauss noted in her essay ‘Sculpture in the Expanded Field’ that the category of sculpture was ‘almost infinitely malleable’ (p. 30). In the catalogue introduction to the exhibition *Sculpture is Everything* (Queensland Art Gallery 2012, p. 13), Tony Ellwood cites Krauss when discussing the diversity of contemporary sculptural practice, ‘suggesting the need for new conceptual frameworks for considering the sculptural’ (2012, p. 13). Similarly Gecsy and Genocchio in their book *What is Installation?* express divergent sentiment concerning precise definition of the term ‘installation’, making the point that ‘there is no such thing as Installation ‘...as it is not ‘a style’, ‘a movement’, ... or ‘an ideology’. They attribute installation as a ‘tendency, manifestation, ethos,’ which ‘approaches the very

consciousness of art itself' (2001, p. 1). Reviewing this, it is clear that there are no definitive genres or an answer to what exactly constitutes installation or sculptural practice. The broad interpretations of sculpture, in concert with the tentative explanations of installation, mean that it has been difficult to attribute a particular genre of art making to the study. After considering current research, I have described this project as 'installation' and have outlined why in detail in the section 1:7:ii. In conclusion, the enchantment artwork is conceived as a total space and single artwork, the elements which comprise the installation made to be considered in relation to each other, or components which form the whole. They form a complete milieu aimed at evoking enchantment.

## **IRREAL**

Illusory or not actually existing. The irreal differs from 'unreal' in that the irreal is not measured or defined in relation to the real, it is autonomous.

## **POSTMODERNISM**

The following is quoted directly from an internet excerpt. It is a compact definition which could be interpreted as too simplistic. There are numerous other attempted definitions of postmodernism circulating, as it is a difficult category to articulate and there is much disagreement as to the detail of expression, apart from that postmodernity is a reaction to modernism. The following definition proposes reality as construed and unable to be explained by any idea of a 'great truth'.

A general and wide-ranging term which is applied to literature, art, philosophy, architecture, fiction, and cultural and literary criticism, among others. Postmodernism is largely a reaction to the assumed certainty of scientific, or objective, efforts to explain reality. In essence, it stems from a recognition that reality is not simply mirrored in human understanding of it, but rather, is constructed as the mind tries to understand its own particular and personal reality. For this reason, postmodernism is highly skeptical of explanations which claim to be valid

for all groups, cultures, traditions, or races, and instead focuses on the relative truths of each person. In the postmodern understanding, interpretation is everything; reality only comes into being through our interpretations of what the world means to us individually. Postmodernism relies on concrete experience over abstract principles, knowing always that the outcome of one's own experience will necessarily be fallible and relative, rather than certain and universal.

Postmodernism is "post" because it denies the existence of any ultimate principles, and it lacks the optimism of there being a scientific, philosophical, or religious truth which will explain everything for everybody - a characteristic of the so-called "modern" mind. The paradox of the postmodern position is that, in placing all principles under the scrutiny of its skepticism, it must realize that even its own principles are not beyond questioning. As the philosopher Richard Rorty states, postmodernism "cannot on its own principles ultimately justify itself any more than can the various metaphysical overviews against which the postmodern mind has defined itself" (Public Broadcasting Service, 2012).

## **SYBARITE**

A person devoted to sensuous luxury and the gratification of self-indulgent sensual desires (Oxford English Dictionary).

## **SYNAESTHESIA**

Translates to a form of immersive experience and is a key component of installation art practice. Baudelaire's exploration of synaesthesia is subscribed to in this research project and will be effected in the exhibition outcome. This does not literally mean making elements to affect each sense, but aiming to describe or stimulate a complete perceptive response through the senses collectively. This aspect needs to be subtly contrived to avoid the potential for intolerable experience such as that invoked by composer Richard Wagner, who similarly tried to fuse art forms (*gesamtkunstwerk*) in order to engender ecstasy.



## **SYNERGY**

The interaction or cooperation of two or more organisations, substances, or other agents to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects. (Oxford English Dictionary).

## **TOTAL INSTALLATION**

This term was coined by Russian artist Ilya Kabakov (b.1933) and may be viewed as a progression of Wagnerian and Synaesthetic theories formulated specifically in relationship to Visual Art. Kabakov conceived the idea that an installation should not only be physically immersive but psychologically absorptive. He stresses this point by comparing the difference between being surrounded or superficially engaged with the experience of being totally engrossed and captivated, such as in cinema, theatre, reading and dreaming. This state of enthrall is similar to that of enchantment. Kabakov also identified the multi-perspectival nature of the installation viewing experience, which is important in terms of feminism as it represents a change from the hitherto dominant masculine hierarchical structure of single-point viewing to a multiple-perspective, feminine interpretation.

Artist Yayoi Kusama illustrates this succinctly with her 1965 installation *Infinity Mirror Room; Phalli's field*. Dots proliferate on every surface including the artist and she becomes just one mutable form amongst others. This demonstrates ideals of the social collective typical of 1960s psychedelic idealism and a spirit of emancipation.

## CHAPTER 1 RE-ENCHANTING THE WORLD

This research project examines the affective power of perfume bottles through installation/sculptural<sup>1</sup> practice. It seeks to create an innovative hyper femme vision of enchantment within contemporary art by exploiting the synergistic and synaesthetic experience of perfume. Perfume bottles comprise the focus for enquiry because they are intensely evocative objects that inspire vicarious pleasure and embody feminine desire.

The study is motivated by intimacy and articulates a preoccupation with appearance which manifests in the practice as explicit and conspicuous feminised content. The mode of expression functions to enhance the subject, demonstrating a euphoric engagement and veneration of archetypal appurtenances of femininity. I describe this phenomenon as the hyper- femme.<sup>2</sup>

The project is realised in the creation of the enchantment *La Galaxie de Joy*. *La Galaxie de Joy* is an installation comprised of a series of innovative and exotic sculptures derived from studies of flacons. Nominally planets, the sculptures may alternately be construed as genie bottles and are fashioned to be luminous, magical and seductive. The practice demonstrates a discrete mode (assigned as superstyle) based upon a bizarre yet apposite formal logic considered a contemporary iteration of camp sensibility. *La Galaxie de Joy* is implicitly provocative as the artwork illumines prevailing cultural, aesthetic and social mores concerning appropriate levels of expression. The project seeks to foster tolerance of diverse modes of sexualised expression through creative practice.

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<sup>1</sup> There is overlap between sculpture and installation in this project. Although the project outcome is conceived as installation, the work comprises ten sculptures which are the primary focus. It was important early in this project to attempt to define the form used in the practice. Refer to the glossary for an explanation of sculpture and installation terminology.

<sup>2</sup> For the meaning of hyper-femme refer to the glossary and chapter 1.3 iii.

The practice typically celebrates cosmetics, fashion, toiletries, hair ornaments, jewellery, perfume, lingerie and a range of sexualised accessories. These accoutrements function to intimate the protocols, rituals and sensation of modulating the body, concomitantly suggesting feminine presence. Cultivation of identity also incorporates an intoxicating blend of culturally prescribed traits, qualities, aspirations and behaviours denoted as feminine. These complex visceral states are imagined in semiotic form upon perfume bottles.

As a significant area of contemporary feminist debate and theory centres upon modes of sexualised expression and personal appearance, it is necessary to acknowledge the field. The project makes no claim to examine or interrogate feminist paradigms, but rather to locate the research within a broader gender studies framework. My research suggests that the hyper-femme content of the practice manifests a form of 'conspicuous' sexuality that functions as a feminist provocation. This occurs because feminist doctrine advocates a requisite mode of 'natural' (Scott 2009, p. 11) dress, which functions to stifle individual expression and suppress diversity.

The emergence of a particularly captivating, self-reflexive and explicitly fictitious style of fantasy within contemporary art segues with current philosophical discourse. I examine Theories of Re-enchantment in Chapter 1:4, focusing my investigation upon John Landy and Michael Saler's 2009 book, *The Re-enchantment of the World*. The authors interrogate the work of a number of salient philosophers who have published recent hypotheses concerning inventive strategies for enchantment. They suggest an array of secular stratagems and numinous forms aimed at re-enchanting a disenchanted world. Their concepts inform the practice outcome of this project. The research seeks to advance the theories of Landy and Saler within aesthetic practice. It articulates a paradigm for enchantment arising from 'lucid self-delusion' (Landy 2009, p.129), aiming to establish a mode of enchantment that 'simultaneously enchants and disenchanters, delights but does not delude' (Landy and Saler 2009, p. 3).

To establish parameters within the canon of art, the project traces a historical trajectory of sybaritic practitioners. In Chapter 2:1 I scrutinise an eclectic selection of artists, key art styles, selected artworks and creative strategies from the eighteenth to the end of the twentieth century, with the aim of extrapolating content substantiating romantic intentions, desire, femininity and pleasure. Beginning with the styles of rococo and pre-Raphaelite, the research samples from the symbolists, aesthetes and decadents, and art nouveau to conclude with psychedelia. Primary collective thematics are magic, heavenly aspirations, chimerical spaces, esoteric pleasures, high style, venerated femininity and profligacy.

Surveyed as a continuum, I contend that the extravagant and demonstrably decadent content of the practitioners articulates a spirit of innovation, flouting convention to challenge prevailing socio-cultural ideologies. As a corollary, the history of re-enchantment articulates a history of sustained dissent, describing strongly individualised, non-didactic and occasionally coherent counter-cultural activity. I posit that in consideration of these factors Dave Hickey's theories are significant, as he denotes a cluster of perennially unfashionable styles that flourish because they foster 'extravagant permissions, rather than reductive disciplines and institutional prohibitions' (2005, p. 64). The styles he identifies coincide with those cited as contextual referents above and privilege formal devices such as the curvilinear, fractal, decorative, pattern and complexity, which he contends also demonstrate a distinctively feminine aesthetic style. The formal devices described by Hickey as indicative of sexuality are also regularly used as visual mechanisms in perfume bottle design. This is articulated by the president of Thierry Mugler Parfums Vera Strubi, who maintains that 'You'll never see any rounds at Mugler ... The feminine is not our aesthetic approach' (Burr 2005). Mugler Parfums instead adopt a distinctive and seductive marketing strategy, the resultant perfume bottles demonstrating an interpretation and commodification of masculinity aimed at attracting feminine consumers. Arising from my studies of perfume bottles I submit that flacon designs derive largely from idealised, stereotypical and stylised interpretations of sexualised bodily form.

To establish a contemporary milieu for the research I scrutinise the practice of five germane artists who fabricate deliriously celebratory visions of enchantment (Chapter 2:2). Jeff Koons, Sylvie Fleury, Mariko Mori and Pierre and Gilles locate their practice in explicit and intimate concepts of desire predicated upon sexuality and identity. This ensures that their collective approach is one of pleasure and therefore non-critical. Working from a position of love, a form of enchantment emerges which is remarkable in that it simultaneously inspires wonder and veracity. It is a proposition of this project that artists who gratify self-fulfilling prophecies of desire in bespoke idyllic visions represent a unique position. Fully cognisant yet completely self-deluded, their practice operates to affirm certain expressions of sexuality, behaviour and etiquette not customarily condoned. By so doing their oeuvre continues the antecedents of sybaritic practitioners within the arts, providing a contemporary polemical counter to prevailing socio-cultural ideologies.

To focus upon hedonism as a strategy within art is fraught with complexity and contrary expectations. Critic Richard Shusterman addresses pleasure as an approach to art in his essay 'Come Back To Pleasure' (2009). He investigates the notion of aesthetic pleasure, citing the views of philosophers such as Plato and Kant to support his argument that: 'to identify art with the pursuit of pleasure was not at all a way of trivialising it, for pleasure was anything but a trivial matter, even for philosophers' (Shusterman 2000, p. 33). Shusterman negates the assumption that working with pleasure equates to a flippancy of conceptual ideologies which in the case of this project mutates to the issue of gender. He goes on to elaborate upon the profound and varied nature of pleasure, concluding that 'To think that prizing pleasure means condemning art to frivolity and narcotic escapism is one more fallacy based on the presumption that all pleasures are uniform and shallow' (Shusterman 2000, p. 47). Shusterman's research is salient because he accords a thesis of pleasure scholarly significance.

As enchantments are a discernible mode of fantasy, I conduct an analysis of the genus of fantasy (see Chapter 1:5) with the intention of contextualising the study within fiction. Arising from my investigation of perfume bottles, I suggest that the mode of fantasy is

explicitly contemporary because it is able to convey desire incarnate. I support this claim with evidence that the locus of inception defines the context of production within the inventive, imaginary and creative impulse of fiction. Implicit to fantasy and of significance to this project is transformation, meaning the genre promises a visceral mechanism for enchantment.

The exhibition *La Galaxie de Joy* represents the outcome of the research project. The practice proposes an innovative paradigm for re-enchantment predicated upon mystery and incandescence with the aim of creating a profane and quasi-numinous space which is vibrant, lucid and contemporaneous, yet also 'somehow possesses the allure of the sacred' (Landy and Saler 2009, p. 2). Numerous speculative strategies were employed in the fabrication of *La Galaxie de Joy*. How the research was pursued is described in Chapter 3. Developments in the methodology are documented together with intentions for the installation, which find their expression in the deliberate strategy designated superstyle. Proposed as a contemporary iteration of camp, this consummate style conflates hyper-reality, fantasy and a haptic fabrication technique to create an opulent aesthetic. When coalesced with the exotic, erotic and intimate content of perfume, an innovative vision of enchantment is envisaged. *La Galaxie de Joy* advocates a romanticised view, pursuing 'the tenacious maintenance of fantasy in the face of facts' which 'makes possible the re-enchantment of the world' (Landy 2009, p. 129).

## CHAPTER 1:2 VICARIOUS PLEASURES - PERFUME

Perfume bottles are the catalyst for the research as they are intensely evocative precious sculptural objects which embody feminine desire. The study scrutinises the form of contemporary perfume bottles and refers to 'modern' fragrances, i.e. those scent flacons produced in the twentieth century. The examination considers both the appearance and experience of perfume bottles and how they function to concomitantly enchant and incite desire.

During the term of this doctorate research I have amassed a considerable collection of contemporary perfume bottles in my studio (see chapter 3:3). I have also compiled a library of perfume bottle images and observed perfume bottles in situ. This involved travel to Paris to examine the source of perfume bottles and observation in retail outlets. I have also enjoyed the sensuous pleasure perfume provides. Consequently, the suppositions I put forward have partially arisen through personal experience. This sensuous genesis is significant as it forms the basis of my enquiry.



Figure 1: L'Air Du Temps by Nina Ricci, 1948

Perfume bottles are typically comprised of four elements: the vessel, the label (and/or moniker), the stopper and the 'accessory'. I consider each of these elements separately in the following paragraphs. The standard methodology is that the bottle maintains a lucid and elegant design which is then accessorised with the addition of labels, stoppers and/or miniaturised hyper- femme appurtenances. Lush packaging further informs the flacon design, ensuring the status of the perfume bottle as an exquisite, desirable object

Flacons are characterised by undulating forms, shapely silhouettes and rounded corners. Even rigorously pared-back bottles such as Chanel No. 5 by Chanel (Figure 1) or Joy by Jean Patou (Figure 2) exhibit softened edges. Their austere design equates exclusivity and good taste with aesthetic minimalism and simplicity. The aforementioned scents are also atypical fragrances in consideration of this project which concentrates upon fashionable and affordable contemporary perfumes. Both scents are costly and spruiked as 'signature' scents, with Joy tagged as 'the costliest perfume in the world' (de Mouy in Edwards 1998, p. 71).



Figure 1: Screenprint of *Chanel No. 5*, 1921



Figure 2: *Joy* by Jean Patou, 1930



Perfume bottles are customarily shiny, curvilinear and smooth, explicitly referencing idealised perceptions of the feminine body. A mode of high stylisation is invariably present, to the extent that the more figurative bottles often appear epicene, attenuated or molten. This sinuous aesthetic has been cultivated in several of the 'genie bottle' sculptures which comprise the project exhibition outcome.

Traditionally perfume bottles were translucent and fabricated in cut-glass or crystal, and this trend remains prevalent in contemporary design. However pre-nineteenth-century flacons were often made from porcelain, an element designer Annegret Beier re-interpreted for the Cacharel perfume bottle *Anais Anais*, in which she manufactured a white opaline bottle with a wrap-around label featuring captivating imaginary flowers (Figure 3). Beier claimed she wanted to preserve the sense of mystery implicit to perfume: 'I have always felt that one should not be able to see something as ephemeral as perfume' (Edwards 1998, p. 184). A similarly seductive intent informs the sculptures made for this project, all of which are clad in an opaque milky surface.



Figure 3: *Anais Anais* by Cacharel, 1978

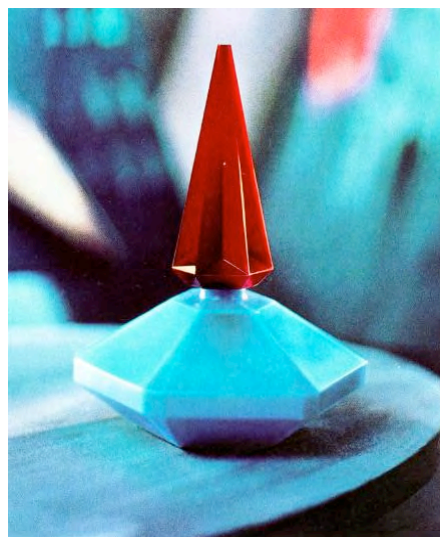


Figure 4: *Loulou* by Cacharel, 1987

The form and style of perfume bottle stoppers varies considerably, from the minimal and delicate to the outrageously flamboyant. Replicating rings, lovebirds, fans, small animals, flowers, orbs, diamonds, minaretttes, crowns, bows, fans, cherubs, snowdomes, fairies or teardrops, perfume bottle lids are the ultimate hyper-feminine appurtenances and appeal to diverse interpretations of femininity. At times the stoppers are incorporated smoothly

into the design, at others they blossom provocatively into the surrounding space, to the extremes of instability, for example, the oversize and colourful flower upon Marc Jacobs'/Coty's *Oh Lola!* or the large gliding bird perched upon Nina Ricci's *L'Air Du Temps* (Figure 1).



Figure 5: *Princess* by Vera Wang, 2006



Figure 6: *Cabochard* by Parfum (Mme) Gres, 1959



Figure 7: *Couture Couture* by Juicy Couture, 2009

Despite a utilitarian imperative, perfume bottle design is often subordinated to a creative vision, resulting in a selection of bottles unable to stand up without a plinth, such as *Baby Doll* by Yves Saint Laurent (Figure 8), the *Wish Diamond* series by Chopard, and the perennially popular *Angel* bottles by Thierry Mugler (Figure 9).



Figure 8: *Baby Doll* by Yves St Laurent, 1999



Figure 9: *Angel* by Thierry Mugler, 1992

The 'finishing touch' upon both contemporary and traditional perfume bottles is 'the accessory'. These vary widely and take the form of decorative elements attached to the bottle or applied directly to the surface of the bottle in the form of an image. There are a series of bizarre exquisite appurtenances draped or affixed to bottles, which range from tassels to jewellery; keys to miniature nameplates; bows to charms; or items intimately associated with a celebrity. The form decoration assumes is frequently lacelike, intricate and fragile, albeit a delicate pink bow tied about the neck of a bottle or a floral cluster design embellished with 'bling'. Symbols of transformation and renewal proliferate customarily in swirling designs featuring hearts, stars, butterflies, flowers and swans. As metamorphosis is a recurrent thematic of this research, these tenets have been re-iterated and re-interpreted in the surface treatments applied to the sculptures for *La Galaxie de Joy*.

Recent perfume bottle design is increasingly extravagant, vociferous and elaborate, driven by increasing consumer demand and corresponding commercial interest. A sustained growth in perfume sales (up 7.6% in the USA in 2011 to \$5.8 billion and reflected proportionally in Australia) (Holmes 2012, p. 6) demonstrates concomitantly perfume's value as both a commodity and an appealing esoteric object of desire.

In a recent article called 'Perfume Bottles Gone Wild' Elizabeth Holmes (2012) contends that fierce competition has resulted in the emergence of a new breed of extravagant perfume bottle design. She cites several examples, notably the Marc Jacob's *Daisy* and *Lola* range and celebrity Selena Gomez's self-titled fragrance, as examples of perfume bottles where boldness, spectacle and colour is utilised to attract speculative purchasers passing through the clamour of the department store perfume counter. Gomez's debut fragrance is 'the scented embodiment of the star herself' (ID Perfumes Givaudan 2012) and features a lavender skirt-like vessel topped with gilded gold and purple lip-shaped balloons (Figure 11). I contend that this perfume bottle is typical of the recent style of lush celebrity fragrances (for example Beyonce, Bieber, Spears) which are tailored to appeal to a younger and visually savvy demographic. It is the 'extreme' designs of Marc Jacobs,

Thierry Mugler, Vera Wang and Lolita Lempicka (see Figure 10) which are of interest to this project as they are overtly artificial and vibrant. They declare their status boldly as objects of desire.



Figure 10: [left] *Lolita Lempicka Le Premier Parfum*, 2012 ; [right] *Lolita Lempicka Si Lolita*, 2009



Figure 11: [left] *Selena Gomez* by Selena Gomez, 2012; [right] Selena Gomez, publicity image from website, 2012



Holmes quotes Isaac Lekach, (the president of a well-known contemporary perfume company) as saying that the bottle has 'become incredibly important – certainly as important as the actual fragrance' (Holmes 2012, p.7). I concur with Holmes' assessment concerning the wild new breed of unambiguous and superstyled perfume bottles, celebrating the manifold array of gendered expression they explicate. There is a theatrical element inferred when they are considered en masse, as demonstrated by the display techniques utilised by the lavish department store Galleries Lafayette in Paris. There, perfume bottles are presented in tiered waves of colour and glistening glass in an opulent display (for example, see Figure 1 and Figure 12).



Figure 12: Display of perfumes at Galleries Lafayette

The language of perfume is also intensely seductive. In her recent lavishly written book *The Secret of Chanel No. 5* (2009) Tilar Mazzeo explores the origins of the iconic perfume. Words like luxury, love, covet, opulence, inspiration, desire, seduction and

intimacy proliferate. She writes that the fragrance 'is about nothing so much as the production of desire' (2010, p. xix). Her discussion of the form of the bottle is scant but she makes the point that the success of the perfume rests not upon the scent (which surprisingly few people can identify) or the less than inspiring marketing, but rather upon the bottle itself, which established Chanel No. 5 firmly as a coveted and iconic luxury object.

Classic perfume bottles are completed with the discreet addition of gilded labels featuring exotic monikers inscribed in French and qualified by the words Eau de parfum, parfum, pour femme and Paris. Paris is equated with sophistication, cultivation and seduction, marrying idyllic dream and commodity, the 'city of love' attainable as 'Paris-in-a-bottle' (Stamelman 2006, p. 329). Hence a fervently superstyled version of the Eiffel tower comprises the central sculptural element in *La Galaxie de Joy*.

The parlance of perfume is implicitly glamorous, redolent and provocative. Inscribed upon perfume bottles are the alluring foreign names of the creators or designers (often a couturier), e.g. Versace, Bulgari, Chanel, Cacharel, Christian Dior, Issey Miyake, Calvin Klein, Dolce & Gabbana, Gucci, Givenchy, Elisabeth Arden, Helena Rubenstein, Yves St Laurent, Estee Lauder, Guerlain, Kenzo, John Paul Gautier, Galliano. These co-exist with enticing brand names which evoke an array of feminine dream-states: Fragile, Bliss, Black Pearls, Angel, Euphoria, Fantasy, Lovely, Pleasures, Chance, Forbidden Fruit, Joy, j'Adore, Shalimar, Opium, Shalimar, Tabu, Sheer Obsession, Baby doll, Miracle, Beautiful, Crystal, Kiss. These fantasy states have been incorporated poetically into the exhibition vision.

This research primarily considers the perfume flacon as a visual phenomenon that embodies desire. The intention has been to identify certain methodologies and key design elements that could be re-interpreted through art. The experience of perfume is profoundly affective and synaesthetic. This evocative imperative is why perfume bottles comprise the central topic of this research.

There is a perennial state of flux maintained between fragrance and flacon as each compliments and defines the other. Perfume and bottle are mutually dependent, as demonstrated by empty perfume bottles which retain their beautiful form but lose some of their emotive potency and thus become redundant. Alternately, scent has a transient and visceral visual identity until 'shaped' within a flacon, from whence it is alters form when spritzed or touched upon the body to occasion sensuous pleasure. The reciprocal relationship between bottle and perfume is also explicated as the unique composition of the distilled floral notes which comprise the scented liquid initiates the concept and design of the bottle. In other words, the perfume informs the bottle shape. The quest for enchantment which fuels this research is predicated upon transformation, alchemy and desire – all of which are embodied within the shape-shifting, synaesthetic expression and experience of perfume.

Perfume bottles are contemporary cultural artefacts which assist in reformation of identity. Stamelman observes that 'To choose a perfume is to assert one's body or more precisely to choose a certain way of being that body' (2006, frontispiece), a sentiment with which Marian Bendeth of Sixth Scents concurs: 'I like to say that fragrance is your "walking biography" – it... sets the tone for how you wish to be perceived' (Taylor 2012, p. 204).

Perfume bottles are exquisite objects of desire which promise vicarious pleasures. They are at once 'object, icon, talisman and fetish' (Stamelman 2006, p. 341). In charting the 'history of the folly, luxury and extravagance of past ages' (Kennett 1975, p. 194), flacons also demonstrate prevailing conventions and illuminate the ethos of popular socio-cultural history. Desire shapes those aspirations, the longing for transformation visualised in a single enchanting flacon: '...perfume is seen as a magical potion, an alluring lure, a dream in a bottle...' (Stamelman 2006, p. 21). Perfume bottles will continue to retain currency, longevity and salience for scholastic study.



Figure 13: [from left to right] Advertisement for *Angel* by Thierry Mugler, 1992 featuring model Jerry Hall; advertisement for *Chance* by Chanel, 2002; advertisement for *Femme* by Rochas, 1944

Perfume flacons conjure wild and eroticised visions of fantasy, articulated variously by appearance, name and packaging. Transient consciousness elicits dreamy ideas of romance, luxury, exoticism, beauty, love, glamour, liberation, leisure, eroticism, opulence and pleasure. Perfume assuages desire, through acquisition or selection of the fragrance. It also masks or denies certain less attractive or negative experiences such as depression, death, clumsiness and ugliness. The selection of a perfume implicates a sophisticated synaesthesia and synergy of olfactory, visual, emotive and haptic provocations. Implicit to choice of fragrance is the style, form, design and articulation of the perfume bottle which I contend functions to dually incite and visualise desire. An appraisal of the formal qualities of perfume bottle design has resulted in a number of salient observations which have been incorporated into the exhibition outcome of this research.

### **i. Perfume in Art**

My intention for this section is to establish a context for the representation of perfume in contemporary art. The aim is to extrapolate the sensuous, intimate, evocative and most importantly powerful nature of perfume: which no matter what the artist's intention, or medium, consistently dominates when perfume is the subject matter.

Portrayals of perfume in recent art have been focused upon representing the effects of perfume. Jackson Pollock's painting *Untitled (Scent)* (c.1953-1955) (Figure 14) comprises



animated swirling paint which morphs to convey the diffusive sensation of perfume. Pierre Bonnard's *Nude against the Light* (Figure 15) painting from 1908 is similarly redolent, with the artist seeking to convey the impression of perfume through visualisation of light. The perfume bottle acts as a conduit in the work, envisaged as transformative, evanescent, luminous, erotic and sensual. Light is associated with intimacy, a factor utilised in the research outcome for this project. In her mixed media work *Cell II* (1991), sculptor Louise Bourgeois evokes familial associations concerning memory and loss through the assembly and repetition of perfume bottles which also serves to emphasise the beauty of their shapes (Figure 16).



Figure 14: Jackson Pollock, *Untitled (Scent)*, (c.1953-1955)



Figure 15: Pierre Bonnard, *Nude Against the Light*, (1908)

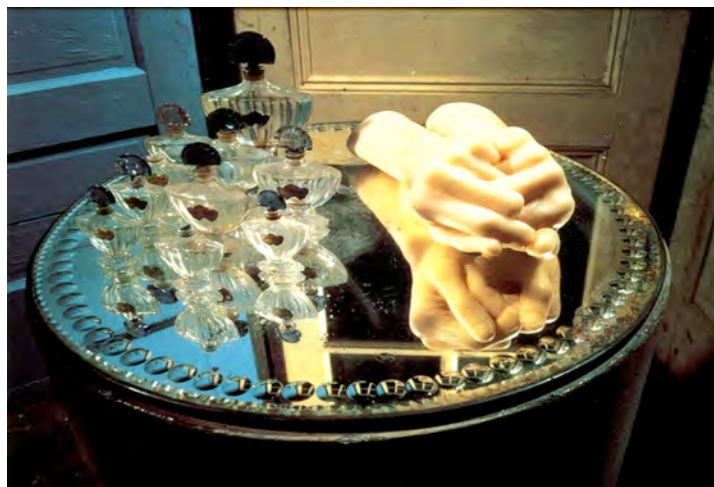


Figure 16: Louise Bourgeois, *Cell II* (1991)

A preoccupation with the formal qualities and exquisiteness of perfume bottles is the topic of Lee Miller's photograph *Scent Bottles* (1933) (Figure 17). Similarly Audrey Flack has painted several super-realist works incorporating perfume bottles as singular objects among many, indicative of feminine desire and evanescence. Her subject matter is the clutter of the vanity table which, in *Marilyn Vanitas* (1974) (Figure 18), poignantly pays tribute to the 1950s icon in a highly stylised and elegant composition incorporating lipsticks, glassware, beads, and allusions to the passing of time. The Chanel bottle is acknowledged as a cultural artefact, which pop artist Andy Warhol also commemorated in his silkscreen *Ads: Chanel* (1985).



Figure 17: Lee Miller, *Scent Bottles* (1933)



Figure 18: Audrey Flack, *Marilyn (Vanitas)* (1977)

There have been many artists who have designed perfume bottles expressly for commodification. A notable example is *Le Roy Soleil* by Salvador Dali for Shiaparelli in 1946 (Figure 19), which is one in a series of bottles still in production. Master perfume bottle designer and art nouveau artist Rene Lalique established a new standard from the early 1900s with innovative organic designs utilising new technologies in glass; for example *Coeur Joie* (1946) for Nina Ricci (Figure 20) and *Leurs Aves* (1913) (Figure 21). Another notable example of the exchange between artists and perfume is Paloma Picasso's 1984 signature perfume of the same name (Figure 22). More recently in 2009 Marcel Duchamp's Dadaist perfume bottle *Belle Haleine eau de Voilette* (1921) was auctioned for the vast sum of €8,913,000 (or \$11,489,968 [AUD]). The perfume features Duchamp dressed as Rose Selavy and photographed by Man Ray (Figure 23).



Figure 19: *Le Roy Soleil* for Schiapelli, bottle by Salvador Dali (1946 )



Figure 20: *Coeur Joie* bottle by Rene Lalique (1946)



Figure 21: *Leurs Armes* by d'Orsay, bottle by Rene Lalique (1913)

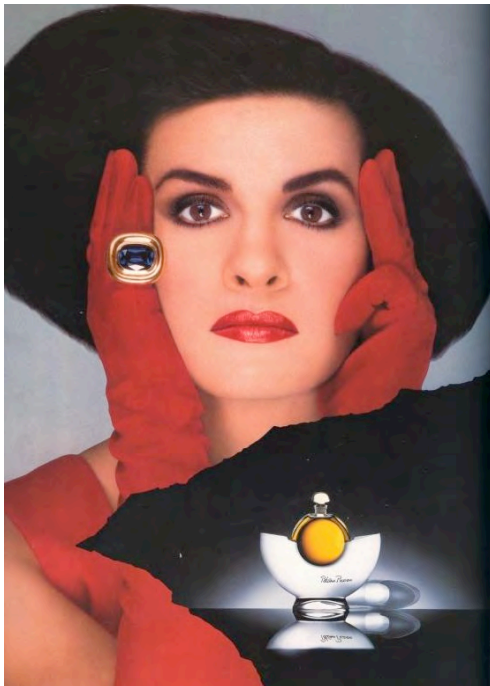


Figure 22: *Paloma Picasso* by Paloma Picasso (1984)



Figure 23: *Belle Haleine eau de Voilette* (1921) bottle featuring Marcel Duchamp as Rose Selavy, photographed by Man Ray



Currently there is another generation of emerging artists working with perfume as a medium. Sculptor Nobu Shioya invigorates the space surrounding his sculptures with scent in order to inspire a different sensory engagement with the work. While emphasising that form is paramount, Shioya is quoted as saying that 'the space that surrounds the form is an equally important part of my sculpture' (Burr 2006, p. 64). Australian duo David Haines and Joyce Hinterding use perfume as virtual aroma compositions within larger multi-media installations which investigate the immaterial, such as *Earthstars* (2008) and *Cosmic Vapours* (2010) to harness the effect of aroma upon emotion and memory.

New York artist Lisa Kirk uses perfume as a transgressive weapon to frame ideas concerning violence and war. In 2009 she created *Revolution*, a perfume which smells like gasoline, gunpowder, burning rubber and smoke. Kirk designed a limited edition miniature pipe bomb flacon which was cast in platinum, gold and silver. Ulrich Lange later replicated this work for consumption. Kirk's work highlights the power of scent to create an environment and evoke mass cultural, social and political experiences. Critic Yasmin Raymond comments that 'The work, when it smells, enters the realm of a human being, the living. This life component enters into it – which is very different from looking at a Monet' (Pollack 2011). It is precisely this synaesthetic and intimate experience that perfume bottles are uniquely situated to convey.

## CHAPTER 1:3 APPEARANCE MATTERS

The content of this study is motivated by a preoccupation with appearance. This intimate genesis articulates a longing for beauty and specifically what beauty looks like in terms of feminine physique, form, fashion and expression.

Expectations of feminine appearance proliferate within the mass media and have informed my perception of what constitutes desirable femininity. During the term of this doctorate I

have amassed a stock of images and literature sourced from popular culture primarily concerned with the appearance of women. Transformation is the dominant theme of this collection, and the processes of cultivation generally form a mysterious subtext. From fat to thin, spotty to flawless, gauche to sophisticated, aged to youthful, flabby to firm, tired to bright, the exhortations to achieve an enhanced altered state are consistent.

The following advertisement (Figure 24) is atypical in that it bluntly reveals the way conversion occurs. It explicitly links a physical process of metamorphosis with the underlying psychological and cultural beliefs which inform the desire for change. It is interesting to note that although the result of the transformation is highly desirable in Western society, the process of fabrication is regarded as deviant and is often shrouded in secrecy.



**Knock 'em out  
with your intellect.  
But get their  
attention first !**

Let's be honest – no one can spot your intellect from a distance. So just because you'd like to be admired for your intelligence doesn't mean you shouldn't look scintillating in the meantime.

If you're thinking about Breast Enhancement Surgery, or any other type of cosmetic surgery, use your intellect to make the right choice. At the Sydney Cosmetic Clinic we have both Cosmetic and Plastic Surgeons, each one selected for their expertise in a particular procedure or body area.

So before you commit to anything why not call us on **9267 3322** for an obligation-free chat with one of our friendly Clinical Advisers about your range of options.

**SydneyCosmeticClinic**  
level 8, 60 park street (corner elizabeth street), sydney  
for nsw country & act callers call 1800 new look (1800 839 5665)

Figure 24: 'Knock 'em out with your intellect but get their attention first', advertisement in *Marie Claire* (2004)

‘Knock ‘em out with your intellect but get their attention first’ was published in a widely circulated Australian women’s magazine in 2004. It features an image of a lithe, pink bikini-clad model covered in water droplets emerging from a sun-drenched milieu. The text reads:

Let’s be honest; no-one can spot your intellect from a distance. So just because you’d like to be admired for your intelligence doesn’t mean you shouldn’t look fabulous in the meantime (*Marie Claire* 2004).

Promoting the importance of appearance, the advertisement spruiks surgical enhancement by a Sydney clinic. There is an ideal bodily form propagated and the message is clearly that beauty is easily attainable via plastic surgery.

This advertisement serves to clarify a particular aspect of this study in that although desire is focused upon achieving a perceived ideal feminine form, the processes and accoutrements used must inspire pleasurable sensation. Invasive procedures of intervention into the body such as plastic surgery, tattooing, and piercing both incite pain and rupture the surface, so lie outside the parameters of the project. The process progresses from being one of modulation to modification, delineated by permanence. I remain resolutely fixed upon the surface, engaged with enjoyable and sybaritic modes aimed at inspiring superficial gratification.

The advertisement also conforms to an archetypal format concerning transformation of the body within popular media known as ‘the makeover’. Predicated upon themes of metamorphosis, beauty is demonstrated as attainable for anyone able to follow a certain regime or purchase a particular product, the aim being for revelation and a swan-like catharsis.

In *The Little Book of Beauty* (2000), Australian author Kaz Cooke demonstrates the hilarious paradoxes and complex codes which form an insidious cultural subtext concerning aspirational expectations such as the makeover. She exhorts all women to

‘keep trying’, revealing beauty secrets such as ‘The higher the hair, the closer to heaven’ (2000) and ‘If a shoe is comfortable and you can walk with dignity it’s no good’ (2000). Cooke’s observations concerning the protocols of personal grooming describe salient contemporary issues such as the obsession with ‘The Natural Look’, which she writes ‘.... takes a minimum of three hours, two make-up technicians, a professional lighting expert, a hairdresser and somebody called Georgiana to go out for bagels’ (2000).

Cooke incorporates humour as a communicative and comedic strategy. This approach has been adopted by feminist activists such as the anonymous Guerrilla Girls. For instance, in a witty response to an interviewer’s question asking if anybody knew their identities, the Guerrilla Girls replied ‘only our hairdressers know for sure’ (Guerrilla Girls 2011). Humour also comprises a persistent subtext in this examination as, unlike irony, humour is about ‘laughing with’ rather than ‘laughing at’ (*Press Play: Contemporary Artists in Conversation* 2005, p. 8). I use humour to reflect my position as a complicit participant within mainstream culture.

The act of attending to one’s appearance, whether in a domestic space or in a salon or surgery is often private, delicate or clandestine. This is demonstrated by the reluctance of celebrities to ‘confess’ to having ‘work’ done, (i.e. interventionalist procedures). I would speculate that the reason for this reticence lies in the artifice associated with intervention, which affronts conventional ideas of the ‘natural’ body as authentic.<sup>3</sup> Oscar Wilde’s quip ‘To be natural is such a very difficult pose to keep up’ (1895 p. 18) describes the absurdity of the phenomenon succinctly. He exposes ‘naturalness’ as yet another guise.

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<sup>3</sup> The ‘idea’ of nature remains the source for many contemporary enchantments, resulting in highly mannered symbolic re-imaginings of what nature should look like. This point segues into a discussion upon copies, authenticity, the original, fake and the artificial, which could potentially digress from the research topic. To précis: French philosopher Jean Baudrillard (1929 -2007) claims in his treatise ‘Simulacra and Simulation’ (1981) that reality has been replaced with symbols and signs and that human experience is actually a simulation of reality. He concludes that all meaning is being rendered meaningless by being infinitely mutable. In a contemporary context feminist, journalist Susan Maushart humorously re-iterates his point: ‘Reality itself resembles calf implants: the consistently is firm, yet rubbery’ (2004, p. 18).

In relation to perfume composition Burr notes that there is a similar perception that 'natural' materials or products are superior. He comments upon the irony of this situation, given that 'every great scent, from Armani to Gaultier to Lauren, is built on them'. Burr lists popular beliefs such as that natural products have better aroma, are hypo-allergenic, are exclusive (and therefore expensive), and are associated with France. He dispels the prejudice against synthetic scents as irrational and based upon incorrect presumptions.

There is a pervasive Western belief that a preoccupation with appearance and beauty is shallow, frivolous and denotes lack of integrity or depth. This assertion is based upon the old-fashioned idea that style and substance are mutually exclusive, a point disputed by Alexander Nehamas in his 2007 book *Only a Promise of Happiness; the Place of Beauty in a World of Art*. In relation to art, he argues that although beauty depends upon appearance, it is not superficial. Nehamas' hypothesis is that during the twentieth century the vivid and intense pleasures and passions of beauty as identified by the ancient philosophers were replaced with 'aesthetic pleasure' (2007, p. 1).

Nehamas' attempt to connect beauty, art and desire provides an addendum to this study. He concludes that whether or not beauty delivers upon its promise of happiness, it is the tantalising prospect of gratification which is attractive. Similarly, the potential for allure is exploited in the sculptural components of this research project.

Any discussion centred upon beauty, sensation, femininity and art must refer to Charles Baudelaire, whose deliberations upon beauty are typically contrary. He expresses divergent sentiment lyrically in his poetry from *Les Fleurs de Mal* (1861), simultaneously conveying reverence and disgust, passion and scorn, exultation and revulsion, seduction and antipathy, and the penultimate desire for metamorphosis. Conclusively, and resentfully, he acquiesces to the desire for beauty, in 'Hymne a la Beaute':



Who cares if you come from paradise or hell,  
appalling Beauty, artless and monstrous scourge, If  
only your eyes, your smile or your foot reveal the  
Infinite I love and have never known?

Come from Satan, come from God – who cares, Angel  
or Siren, rhythm, fragrance, light, provided you  
transform – O my one queen! this hideous universe,  
this heavy hour? (Baudelaire 1861 in Nehamas, p. 29)

### **i. Intimate Appurtenances**

This examination is inspired by desire and celebrates customary feminine artefacts used to articulate sexuality. Cosmetics, fashion, toiletries, hair ornaments, jewellery, perfume, lingerie and an array of personal accessories comprise the motivation for the project outcome (Figure 25). These accoutrements articulate the protocols, rituals and sensation of modulating the body and exert a definitively feminine presence.



Figure 25: Detail from candidate's Honours submission *Project Eye Candy* (2004) at the Plimsoll Gallery, Tasmanian School of Art. Part of cotton bud sculpture from the series 'the cocktails'.

Intimate appurtenances are innately sensuous and substantiate a close relationship to the body as they caress, touch, define, accessorise, inform, interact, explore, refine or intimate the surface of the body. These 'tools' or materials of cultivation assist the interface

between private and public, intimacy and spectacle, real and imaginary. It is my contention that these gendered appurtenances function to visualise transformation.

As intimacy comprises the topic of this study, sensation articulates the research and comprises the focus for the exhibition work. Susan Johnson argues that there is a sensory imperative at the core of sexualised appearance, citing Aquinas' theory that 'nothing is in the intellect which was not first in the senses' (2009, p. 31). She continues in this vein to cite Simone du Beauvoir's understanding of the sentient body, concluding that: 'The body leads us to beauty, and the body's first pleasures are always beautiful' (Johnson 2009, p. 33). In this instance the pleasure is mine, and there is a reciprocal and gratifying relationship between self, practice, process and the body.

The origins of the sculptural forms fabricated for the project outcome exploit the pleasurable, corporeal and sensual process of cultivating the body. The clutter of the dressing table, contents of the beauty case, bricolage of the wardrobe and condiments of the bathroom form the impetus for this body of work. Although these materials or appurtenances are considered banal, they represent an inherently narcissistic process and facilitate expression of intimacy. Baudelaire acknowledges this important point when he writes of 'the lofty spiritual significance of the toilette' (1964, p. 32), which Stamelman also concedes when he writes that 'Intimacy is first and foremost the fashioning of intimacy' (2006, p. 18).

The customary signifiers of femininity which have inspired this research and form the basis for the exhibition are most clearly described within the context of my studio (see Figure 26). There are many suspended elements, from crystals to ribbons, baubles to bangles, perfume lids to tassels, pearls to pink hairfoils, fans to pearl-headed pins, and false fingernails to umbrellas. The hanging elements jostle for space with multiple small drawers spilling over with feathers, shreds, cotton buds, hair accessories, jewellery, shimmering fabrics (including satin and netting), beauty 'essentials', florists net, perfume

bottles, toenail separators, Carmen rollers, artificial butterflies, crystal, plastic and glass beads, glitter, curling ribbons, bows, sequins, mirrors, and other multifarious accoutrements.



Figure 26: Studio interior (2011)

The rationale for collecting is obviously upon those feminine items used in the dressing and presentation process, with an emphasis upon embellishment, pink, 'bling' and ornament. The most substantial collection comprises perfume bottles, which when considered en masse radiate aspirational and pre-conceived ideas of glamour, beauty and luxury. Perfume bottles are the primary research focus for the dissertation, and the rationale behind this choice has already been analysed earlier in chapter 1:2.

## ii. Feminine Quintessence

Visualising desire comprises a complex and intoxicating blend of culturally ascribed qualities, ideals, inspirational traits and behaviours denoted as feminine. In my practice, I covet particular attributes such as grace, fragility, allure, elegance, sweetness, smoothness, poise, exoticism, style, charm, mystery, beauty and flawlessness while aspiring to states such as glamour, luxury, romance and love.

These features are typically elusive and difficult to imagine in the artwork given their emotive and psychological genesis. I quantify them in practice in semiotic form, adopting

a myriad of symbols of transformation which morph to create an exultant and quixotic fantasy milieu redolent with joy. Although the body provides the nexus for these fantasies, its role is primarily evocative and not explicitly delineated as the emphasis is upon the process of perception. Therefore, the enchantment which comprises the exhibition outcome of this study is envisaged as a vibrant and sanguine expression of self-determined quintessent femininity. A hallucinatory state is invoked which although irreal<sup>4</sup> and deluded is synonymous with intimacy, sensation and experience.

Richard Stamelman conducts a thorough analysis of the cultural significance of perfume in his book *Perfume: Joy, Obsession, Scandal, Sin* (2006) in which he attempts to describe the visceral, complex, associative and connective nature of perceptions triggered by scent. Stamelman distinguishes a theoretical mode of perception identified as the 'image-system' which is:

... a mind-set created from a nexus of poetic, philosophical, and psychological meanings, from a system of culturally coded images, and from a network of personal and collective fantasies that all *Swirl* around the perception of perfume, itself a sensory experience determined by both conscious and unconscious, poetic an psychoanalytic, private and consumerist desires (2006, p. 21).

Stamelman recapitulates to acknowledge the image-system of scent as an ever-present 'culturally constructed and unconsciously pervasive repertory of images, beliefs, practices, and associations' (2006, p. 21). His theories assist to locate the perfume bottle as a feminised fetish object able to facilitate vicarious experience. A similarly intricate web of ideas, meanings, imagery, values and associations have assisted to more broadly inform and shape my particular articulation of desirable femininity.

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<sup>4</sup> Illusory or not actually existing. The irreal differs from 'unreal' in that the irreal is not measured or defined in relation to the real, it is autonomous.

### **iii. The Hyper-femme**

The term hyper-femme was conceived in an attempt to articulate the discrete mode of explicit, excessive and 'conspicuous' sexuality which typifies my practice. It was articulated in response to a perceived lack of appropriate terminology in order to describe significantly exaggerated and highly stylised expressions of archetypal femininity. Literally 'hyper' translates to 'greater' and 'femme' to 'femininity'. The word 'femme' was derived from gendered literature, where the term is used to describe lesbians who dress in a feminine fashion, as opposed to the 'butch' who dresses in masculine attire.

Considered within the context of this study I would argue that the hyper-femme has some relation to the 'femme fatale' of popular crime culture, a heroine who similarly exhibits behaviour which does not conform to conventional ideas of appropriate feminine conduct. Femmes fatales use beauty, charm and seduction to destructive effect, occasionally to the point of violence or criminality. They are condemned for violating codes of femininity. As similar censure is directed towards the hyper-femme, my hypothesis is that there are obligatory levels of gendered expression which remain culturally prescribed.

Hyper-femininity coalesces an intoxicating blend of desirable culturally ascribed qualities and behaviours denoted as feminine (realised in symbolic form) together with actual appurtenances of femininity (as described in 1:3:i). The hyper-femme also incorporates a bespoke vision based upon veneration of the feminine and represents a quintessential sexuality. These elements fuse to create a consummate feminine mode. An aim of this research project is to deify and celebrate the hyper-femme in riotous style to progress diversity and tolerance of sexualised expression.

#### **iv The F Word ... a Footnote**

It has been established that the subject matter of this research project is motivated by intimacy and articulates a preoccupation with appearance, body image, fashion and sexual expression. This is conveyed in the practice through veneration and celebration of hyper-femininity, with this euphoric mode of expression functioning to further enhance the subject. Consequently, this project may be located in relation to feminism because personal expression and modes of sexualised expression are key issues in contemporary feminist debate. Although this research acknowledges the field, it is important to clarify that the project makes no attempt to engage with feminist doctrine, theory or paradigms. The intention is to articulate the research within a wider socio-cultural field.<sup>5</sup>

Linda M. Scott argues that fashion is a contentious and divisive feminist issue. In her recent erudite book *Fresh Lipstick* (2005), she considers the current unpopularity of feminism, evidenced by its common denigration within the media as the “f” word.

By far the most common response to feminism among young women today... is to embrace women’s rights but deny the label “feminist” – a development that seems to be closely linked to the lingering Second Wave (of feminism) politics of appearance (2005, p. 8).

Scott conducts a comprehensive analysis of data to support her assertion that feminism’s insistence upon a requisite mode of dress and ‘anti-beauty ideology’ (2005, p. 2), have been responsible for the current en masse rejection of feminism. She posits that ‘it is inconceivable (to many women) that a commitment to feminism could ever be reconciled with an interest in fashion’ (2005, p. 2) and expresses regret that fashion has become the

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<sup>5</sup> This project does not investigate the topic of Feminism more broadly because Feminism is inherently political and this research (as already stated) is determinedly apolitical. Therefore this section briefly acknowledges awareness of feminism as a contemporary contextual referent. The aim is to not make an argument or determination; rather recognise that this project may have relativity for those working within the field of feminist research. It is therefore a footnote in relation to the central research questions.

unfortunate focus for feminism at the expense of other more egalitarian goals. Scott concludes by emphasising the importance of fashion and beauty as modes of personal expression: 'At the basis of the anti-beauty prejudice is a compulsion to enforce homogeneity. Put differently, what we are dealing with here is the intolerance of difference' (2009, p. 9)

I will address several salient points arising from Scott's propositions. Firstly, she establishes appearance as a controversial area of feminist doctrine which is alienating many women. Secondly, she demonstrates that there are certain modes of dress not condoned by feminism, into which category I suggest this research is located. Thirdly, Scott links appearance with politics, a significant aspect in relation to this research which is subjective, has no activist agenda and is determinedly apolitical.

Lastly and most significantly, during the course of her analysis Scott demonstrates that in relation to the matter of appearance and expression, feminism advocates an exclusive mode of dress which enforces homogeneity and stifles difference. This means that prevailing feminist doctrine conflicts with the aim of this research which, through the practice, stresses explicit feminine content and pleasure with the aim of progressing diversity and tolerance of sexualised expression.

In consideration of the above points, it is my contention that this research project functions as a feminist provocation. This occurs because the explicit feminised content and celebratory mode of exhibition which typifies the practice appears to confront 'requisite' feminist dress codes. Consequently, the intention is to continue with 'superstyling' the practice in order to reconcile, on both an intimate and professional level, what I contend is an illogical ideology. This does not mean initiating a challenge to feminist dogma, instigating social protest or prescription, but rather acknowledging the prevailing sociological climate through expression of a counter view.

Feminism's focus upon issues of body image and appearance represents a broader social and cultural phenomenon. I make this claim in view of the prolific body of academic literature, popular communication and anecdotal evidence which rates body image as the number one issue for Western women. This contention is evidenced by Sarah Grogan who, in her book *Body Image* (2008), claims there has been a discernible increase in academic and popular interest in body image. She analyses experiences of embodiment and asserts that a dominant motif is the aesthetics of the body, which she submits originates from a single idealised view that consequently functions to stifle variety of bodily appearance.

The commonality of the phase 'somatic society' (which emerged during the 1990s in order to describe the discipline of the psychology of the body) bears further testimony to the claim that body image concerns are prevalent. Not only is bodily appearance assigned as important, but attractive features and beauty are stereotypically key determinants of success. This point is made in a recent feature article entitled *Making Beautiful Music* in the Australian magazine review (Neill 2012) in which the author describes the opera world's equivalence of physical beauty with operatic talent and the often less than pretty results.

My motivation in pursuing this research then may be regarded as typical or possibly representative of the experience of a wider demographic.

## CHAPTER 1:4 THEORIES OF RE-ENCHANTMENT

That the planet is in a progressive state of disenchantment has been popularly conceded since Frederick Nietzsche (1880s) and Max Weber (1917) wrote about the rationalisation, intellectualisation and disenchantment of the world. Less acknowledged is that running counter to this dominant mode of thought have been numerous radical ideas and innovative strategies for re-enchantment.



Morris Bearman presaged the modern desire for re-enchantment in 1981 with his book *The Re-Enchantment of the World*. Bearman identifies a crisis in human ecology and argues for a more meaningful and diverse engagement between humanity and the cosmos. He advocates re-connection with nature propagated via animism and mysticism as a way to attain re- enchantment. His book was a popular addition to the literature and his legacy sparked interest in the potential for re-enchantment. Suzi Gablik expresses similar views to Bearman in her 1991 book *The Re-enchantment of Art*, proposing a return to traditional mores concerning reconciliation and re- attachment with the cosmos as a way forward. Gablik's arguments are passionately voiced and the vision she advocates is seductive.

Simon During extends the debate concerning modern enchantments in a book written about the magic of conjuring shows and special effects. He labels this particular form of entertainment and performance 'secular magic' (2002, p. 2) and argues that magic has shaped contemporary society's perception of itself. He contrasts secular magic with 'natural magic' (that of science and alchemy) and 'power magic' which he sees as reliant upon audience manipulation into a set of beliefs via transcendental construct, i.e. deity, spirit, ideal. He writes:

Secular magic carries so little cultural weight. It is apparently trivial. Yet secular magic has been a powerful agent in the formation of modern culture precisely because it is trivial (2002, p. 2).

During's discussion concerning the perceived unimportance of secular magic illustrates an important point in regard to contemporary enchantments within art. Magic shows and art operate within culture as forms of entertainment which effectively communicate to a broad demographic and similarly challenge cultural hierarchies and dominant mores in order to spark re- enchantment.

Professor Jane Bennett presents enchantment as an experience of wonder able to be encountered everyday unintentionally or cultivated via deliberate strategies. She links the experience of enchantment with sensuous encounters she calls 'crossing' which perform a 'catalytic' function and collude to produce a transformative experience. Bennett also recounts that the word en-chant cedes from the French verb to sing (chanter) and operates as a sonorous magical refrain to galvanise hope and joy. Her theories engage with this project as they derive from the centrality of a point of transition from one state to another. This resonates with the idea of a portal or conduit, an important aspect of the practice discussed further in chapter 2:ii in relation to the work of the pre-Raphaelite artists. In contrast to Bennett's location of enchantment within the everyday, this research project and the artists cited focus upon exoticism in order to achieve transformation and an intensity of experience which concomitantly reflects human transience.

More recently, philosophers Landy and Saler have compiled a rational, secular paradigm for re-enchantment which is steeped in magic. Their analysis is comprehensive and provocative. They propose 'progressive re- enchantment' (2009, p. 2) and identify culture broadly and 'philosophers, artists, architects, poets and stage magicians' (2009, p. 1) in particular as critical if new approaches to re-creating enchantment are to be effected. It is significant that they ascribe art and creative practitioners a key role, which I submit acknowledges an egalitarian vision and indicates the centrality of transformation to the creative process.

The consensus of the above philosophers is that the world is disenchanted and that secular rationalism prevails. Each proffers differing ideas with a view to re-enchantment: Bearman and Gablik through re-styling holistic animism and human relationship to nature; During through celebration of the spectacle of theatre innate to magic, conjuring, entertainment and potentially art; and Bennett through the profuse experience of wonder, whether in contrived or casually encountered form. Each scholar proffers a set of strategies to effect re-enchantment, but in a singular way.

Landy and Saler's approach is unique as they focus upon an array of modes to evoke re-enchantment. They make an authentic contribution based upon the idea of a secular rational locus and by re-imagining convictions such as wonder, mystery, epiphanies and miracles, emphasising the importance of diversity (2009, p. 2). Their concepts for re-enchantment are innovative as they are not predicated upon reconciling or re-inventing past beliefs, or arguing that conversely the world is in fact enchanted; rather they attempt to establish 'the ... enchantment par excellence: one which simultaneously enchants and disenchants, which delights but does not delude' (2009, p. 3).

## CHAPTER 1:5 DESIRE INCARNATE - FANTASY

Given that enchantments are a form of fantasy (and that both are modes of fiction) it is logical to briefly investigate the genus of fantasy in order to locate the research.

Scholar Rosemary Jackson attempts to describe the term fantasy in her book on the topic:

Fantasy, both in literature and out of it, is an enormous and seductive subject. Its association with imagination and with desire has made it an area difficult to articulate or to define, and indeed the 'value' of fantasy has seemed to reside in precisely this resistance to definition, in its 'free-floating' and escapist qualities (1981, p. 1).

Her depiction of fantasy acknowledges both the vastness of the field and the intense allure of the subject, but of most significance is the correlation of fantasy with desire. Although Jackson couches her examination within a literary context, she imagines fantasy as an intuitive mode able to frame concepts of desire. I have adapted this rationale as a core strategy for this study, infusing inspirational narrative as subject matter to create a fiction of intimacy with an enchantment outcome.

Jackson continues to articulate a secondary key element of fantasy when she argues strongly against common presumptions of fantastical narrative as autonomous, i.e. independent of the present, removed from actuality or wholly make-believe.

Fantasy is not to do with inventing another non-human world: it is not transcendental. It has to do with inverting elements of this world, re-combining its constitutive features in new relations to produce something strange, unfamiliar and apparently 'new', absolutely 'other' and different (1981, p. 8).

Her ideas resonate with observations, exploration and development made within my own practice, as she establishes fantasy as simultaneously derivative, sentient, corporeal and eccentric. In post graduate forums during the course of this doctorate, my oeuvre was repeatedly assigned as 'pure fantasy', a description I considered inaccurate given there was nothing 'pure' about the enchantments I was producing. I determined that although the work functioned to enchant, it was far from being chaste or escapist as the content stemmed from intimacy, desire and actuality.

Jackson's concept of fantasy as living, lucid and 'impure' art, fuelled by longing, has informed this research. As a result, a subsidiary aim of this project is to redress the discernment of fantasy as inhuman or 'other' by stressing the vitality and vivacity implicit to the genre. It is my contention that fantasy is a perspicacious and animate mode able to eloquently articulate forbidden desires and entertain mad compulsions.

Jackson recapitulates by seeking to validate fantasy as more than mere escapism, insisting that it is a discreet mode of narrative process largely driven by insentient cultural disquiet:

[Fantasy] is a literature of desire ... and cannot be understood in isolation (from its social context) ... for Fantasy characteristically attempts to compensate for a lack resulting from cultural constraints (1981, p. 3).

I argue that this affinity of fantastical vision with identity means that fantasy performs an important function as it allows particular cultural ethos free expression. As a corollary, the

marginalised, inventive, radical or those ascribed secondary status find a voice, establishing the mode of fantasy as fundamentally egalitarian and pluralistic. Therefore subjective expression of aspiration assumes relevance in broader socio-cultural terms and this project may potentially be considered indicative of prevailing beliefs concerning gender and sexuality. It is logical to conclude that fantasy concurrently defines the locus of inception to eloquently establish the context of production within the inventive, imaginary and creative impulse of fiction.

### **i. Tales of Desire**

I have chosen to include a succinct analysis of fairytales in this exegesis as they explicate a number of salient points in relation to enchantments. As mutual and sympathetic forms of (secular) fantasy, both modes articulate a refined narrative of desire predicated upon transformation. Jack Zipes alludes to this in his book exploring the meaning of fairytales, when he writes that ‘tales are human marks invested with desire’ (1991, p. xii). Marina Warner concurs with Zipes, saying that ‘Like romance, [fairytales] ... remake the world in the image of desire’ (1994, p. xvi).

Despite being an ancient type of fiction fairytales retain currency in a contemporary context. I suggest that this occurs because fairytales are malleable, continuing to evolve and re-contextualise and maintaining relevance and vitality. Zipes suggests that key to their longevity is the important social and political role fairytales fulfil because they explore individual motivation and provide illumination in relation to human evolution:

As long as the fairy tale continues to awaken our wonderment and enable us to project worlds counter to our present society, it will serve a meaningful social and aesthetic function, not just for compensation but for revelation: for the worlds portrayed by the best of our fairy tales are like magic spells of enchantment that actually free us (1991, p. xxx).

The implication for this research is that captivating forms of fantasy such as enchantments and fairytales will continue to have relevance. This is demonstrated by the recently launched Re-Enchantment website by the ABC (Australian Broadcasting Commission

2011), (discussed in more detail in chapter 2:3:iv). The site is a comprehensive and continually evolving forum which explores the themes, sources, images and meaning of fairytales as a contemporary phenomenon. On-line forums upon the site demonstrate that the fairytale narrative is not naïve and recognises the role of class, cultural and social status, marketing, celebrity, commodity, media and consumerism.

Transformation is articulated as both subject matter and device in fairytales, a feature replicated in perfume bottle design. James Trilling writes that 'transformation is the expression of extremity' (2003, p. 154) and traces the Western fascination with transformation back to Greek and Latin literature which he claims culminated in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. While studying cosmophobia,<sup>6</sup> he delineates transgression as central to metamorphosis and distinguishes transformation as 'a disruption of the human order, memorialised in a disruption of the natural order. It is a crossing of boundaries that should not be crossed' (2003, p. 155). Yet within a framework of enchantment, transformation is credible and occurs frequently, overtly and seamlessly.

A similarly transgressive impulse is manifest in this research project, evidenced by the multifarious use of artifice which ranges from the figurative content of the dissertation where the hyper-femme prevails, to the adoption of highly stylised synthetic formal devices. Trilling's association of transformation with transgression exposes a lapse in socio-cultural convention which is rendered effectively in the exhibition outcome of this project given the sexualised imperative of the subject matter. I contend that the provocation envisaged is not seditious and has no political imperative; it is also not subversive but rather intended as a deliberate and critical prevarication on customary values.

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<sup>6</sup> Cosmophobia is described as 'fear or ornament' by James Trilling in his book *Ornament, a Modern Perspective* (2003).

The centrality of women in the provision and creation of fairytales must be noted in relation to this research project as this is consistent with the highly feminised subject matter of this study. Warner is drawn to fairytales because she senses 'the suspect whiff of femininity hanging around them' [fairytales] (1995, p. xviii). Zipes undertakes a more pragmatic analysis and establishes a synergy between femininity and secularity. He asserts that fairytales have provided a legitimate way for women to express themselves outside the dominant modes of power, such as masculinity, the church and commerce. From this it is logical to conclude that fairytales are demotic.

The early writers of fairy tales placed the power of metamorphosis in the hands of women – the redoubtable fairies. In addition, this miraculous power was not associated with a particular religion or mythology through which the world was to be explained. It was a secular mysterious power of compassion (Zipes 1991, p. xx).

## **ii. Modes of Fantasy in Art**

There are many and varied forms of fantasy; it manifests in an array of contemporary and traditional kindred art forms. In her 2010 Masters dissertation, M R I Hanenbergh reviewed the subject of fantasy within contemporary art. She identified four types of fantasy: obsession, monstrosity, utopia and enchantment, which she concomitantly explored within her practice. Hanenbergh describes enchantment as 'mediative, mediumistic and based upon altered states of mind' (Abstract 2010). Her analysis is useful in that it provides a timely Australian framework within which to consider this current research.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> It is necessary here to make note that there are many other types of fantasy which have no direct bearing upon the subject of this exegesis. These range from ancient forms such as traditional myth, legend, folklore, grotesque to more contemporary expressions such as gothic, magic realism, mannerism, symbolism, surrealism and science-fiction. There are also many notable practitioners throughout the history of art who produced work ascribed as fantastic, such as Guiseppe Arcimboldo, Francisco de Goya, William Blake, Hieronymous Bosch and Salvador Dali. The mannerist, symbolist and surrealist styles are of particular interest. Given the categories, Hannenbergh (Abstract, Masters Research Thesis, 2010) articulates and the content and aesthetic of their collective work, I would contend that the majority of their practice falls into the first three modes: obsession, monstrosity or utopia.

### iii. Techniques of Fantasy

Both hyper-reality and metafiction are recurrent tactics of fantasy. They are implicated in this research because they are transcendent forms of fiction which interrogate and explicate the creative process. Operating as self-reflexive modes, both forms of fiction explicate the creative process - art becomes the topic of the work and the synthetic act of art making together with conventions of viewing become the subject. Critic Daniela Salvionia identifies this tendency in art of the Rococo when she cites Fragonard's *The Swing* (1766) as 'the first metadiscourse in art' (1992, p. 22). Further analysis of this artwork and the rococo is conducted in chapter 2.

Hyper-reality fuses both a concern with explicating the mechanics and dialogue of the art process with 'intense psychological states' (Colless 2000, p. 2). It is possible to speculate that there is a current incarnation, iteration or re-branding of hyperreal theory emerging in contemporary enchantments. I identified this tendency in chapter 1:5 within 'superstylisation', i.e. art that emphasises the inherent artifice of art, the techniques and conventions used to create it, and the proclivities of the artist in production. These tenets operate in conjunction with a hysterical hedonism, manifesting in opulent and decadent form hence the emphasis on artifice and excess and the addition of the 'super' prefix.

## CHAPTER 1:7 CONSUMMATE STYLE - SUPERSTYLE

*La Galaxie de Joy* demonstrates the outcome of this study and articulates a consummate mode I describe as superstyle. I propose this lavish and opulent aesthetic style as a contemporary iteration of camp sensibility. Incorporating elements of hyper reality, together with key tenets of camp such as 'artifice as an ideal', theatricality, the performative ('life as theatre'), effeminacy, playfulness and 'a spirit of extravagance' (Sontag 1964, p. 283), superstyle manifests a bizarre yet apposite formal logic.



Susan Sontag's 'Notes on "Camp"', written in 1964, form the basis for my designation of superstyle. Sontag identifies key features of camp as excess, glamour, obsession, spectacle, exaggeration, elegance, frivolity, passion and fantasy. She argues that camp is primarily apolitical and operates as a purely aesthetic phenomenon, capitulating that 'Style is everything' (1964, p. 288). Her description of camp marries with the objectives of this research and has provided an array of conceptual and formal stratagems for enchantment able to be pursued within the practice.

Superstyle manifests formally in a preoccupation with surface and is typified by striking colouration, molten, glistening or bejewelled facades. Prime elements are ostentatious feminine display, epicene and attenuated forms, dramatic posturing, distinctive bespoke stylisation, multifarious radiant effects, adherence to the 'less is a bore' mantra (Venturi 1966 p. 1), excess in all things, a quasi-religious aesthetic language, opulent ornament, exuberant and obsessive attention to detail, numinous referents, immersive encounter (such as through installation), theatrical setting and redolent lighting effects.

The logic of hyper-reality is evident in superstyle and articulated in the artwork fabricated for *La Galaxie de Joy*. It is possible to speculate that there is a current incarnation, iteration or re-branding of hyperreal theory emerging more broadly in contemporary enchantments such as those comprising the topic of this research. I have identified this tendency as art that emphasises the inherent artifice of art, the techniques and conventions used to create it, and the proclivities of the artist in production. In this project these tenets operate in conjunction with a hysterical hedonism, manifesting in excessively lavish and decadent mode in *La Galaxie de Joy*.

I contend that as a creative strategy superstyle functions to confront existing orthodoxies within academia, culture, aestheticism and art. I make this claim partly based upon the prioritising of formal elements such as those itemised above, together with 'complexity,

pattern, repetition, the feminine, curvilinear and fractal' (Hickey 2005, p. 64). Critic Dave Hickey isolates these formal expressions as demonstrative of demotic 'outsider' styles which champion 'extravagant permissions, rather than reductive disciplines and institutional prohibitions' (2005, p. 64). Logically then, and in consideration of its genesis in camp sensibility, superstyle is implicitly egalitarian.

### **i. Enchantment as a Mode of Installation**

Curator Mark Rosenthal conducts a provocative analysis of the relatively modern phenomena of installation art in his book *Understanding Installation Art* (2003). He suggests a taxonomy of four forms, including the designation of 'enchantment' as a type of 'filled-space installation' (2003, p. 33) with roots in theatre and the gesamtkunstwerk.<sup>8</sup> Preeminent installation artist Ilya Kabakov preludes Rosenthal's hypothesis concerning enchantment as a mode of installation when, in a series of lectures delivered at the Stadelcule in Frankfurt in 1992-93, he wrote about the 'total' installation and the importance of the literal presence of the viewer in what is at once painting, sculpture, architecture, theatre, cinema and show. This study attempts to replicate a similarly immersive, sensuous and 'complete' experience by incorporating multiple media and a highly synthetic, stylised practice.

Rosenthal contends that enchantments create a 'simulacrum of consciousness' (2003, p. 33) of which a distinguishing characteristic is lack of site specificity. In other words the artwork is autonomous. His position is consistent with this study as *La Galaxie de Joy* makes no attempt to engage with site and maintains an ephemeral, separate but cohesive presence. The work has no 'roots', implying the potential to be reconfigured elsewhere. Rosenthal's definition of enchantment as transient also assuaged my initial reluctance to use the terminology 'installation', which I previously thought connoted permanence, fixation and grounding.

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<sup>8</sup> Refer to the glossary for the definition of gesamtkunstwerk.

Rosenthal illuminates another critical element of this project in that although the artwork is not generated in dialogue with a specific space, it does require a conventional museum, art gallery or discreet art forum. Kabakov views placement in a museum as desirable because 'the art context provides a refuge' (Kabakov 1992, p. 17).

In keeping with the enchantment approach, Kabakov wants to create a separation, using walls and doorway, between his installation and the museum or gallery in which it is found, all the better to create for the spectator the sense of entering a world apart from the external world (Rosenthal 2003, p. 41).

Similarly, the location of this project within an art forum is central to reception of the work as expectation of art experience is immediately instigated, with the intention being to convey intimacy akin to entering the artist's mind. The gallery functions as a timeless, placeless space or 'no place' (Zipes 1991, p. xiii).

...an installation can transport its viewer into a state of awe, providing also a sense of physical smallness vis-à-vis the all-consuming vision of the installation's artist. Some kind of transformation might even occur whereby the visitor is converted, as it were, to the vision of the creator' (Rosenthal 2003, p. 33).

Rosenthal suggests that enchantments originated as a form of 'tableau' and traces a neat trajectory from the work of Kabakov in the early 1900s to the 'intimate worlds' of Joseph Cornell and George Segal in the 1950s; to the 'happenings' pioneered by Alan Kaprow in the 1970s, through to the 'baptisimal' video works of Bruce Nauman and Bill Viola. Of significance in relation to this investigation is the centrality of Marcel Duchamp's elegiac and nefarious installation *Etant Donnes* (1946-66) (Figure 27). Rosenthal claims that *Etant Donnes* manifests Duchamp's ability 'to epitomize the metamorphosis inherent in an enchantment, with the quotidian world turned into art and vice versa' (Rosenthal 2003, p. 3). Of interest to this research is the important role given to the viewer in *Etant Donnes*, whose physical presence illuminates the scene to complete the work.



Figure 27: Marcel Duchamp, *Etant Donnes* (1946-1966)

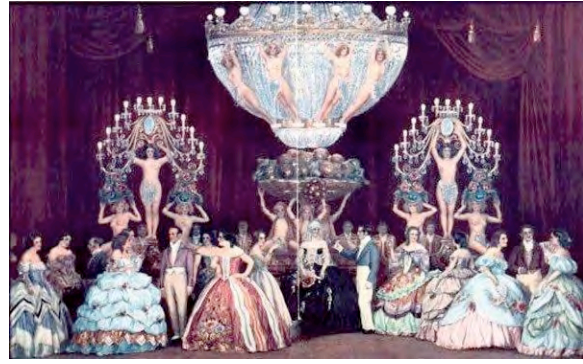


Figure 28: Tableau Vivant (1920)

The drama implicit in Tableau Vivant (Figure 28) has played a similarly formative role in the aesthetic of this project, demonstrated in the posed stasis and visibly assumed postures of the completed sculptures comprising *La Galaxie de Joy*. The exaggeration (a common affectation of camp sensibility), contrived stillness and quietude of these ‘Living Pictures’ is compelling and resonates with philosopher Jane Bennett’s highly visual description of enchantments:

...enchantment entails a state of wonder; and one of the distinctions of this state is the temporary suspension of chronological time and bodily movement. To be enchanted, then, is to participate in a momentarily immobilising encounter; it is to be transfixed, spellbound; Philip Fisher describes this as “a moment of pure presence” (Bennett 2002, p. 5).

Bennett’s account encapsulates a ‘state of continual incandescence’ (Sontag 1964, p. 286), which resonates eloquently with the intended visual outcome of this project.

## ii. *La Galaxie de Joy*

*La Galaxie de Joy* is an installation comprised of a series of innovative sculptural forms to be exhibited within a designated art gallery. The installation represents the culmination of the research and proposes an exotic and poetic milieu aimed at inspiring a state of enchantment. Nominally planets, the sculptures may be interpreted as angels or heavenly

'genie bottles' and are conceived as luminous and seductive. The shapes of the sculptures are derived from studies of perfume bottles and attempt to simulate their evocative qualities. Varying in scale, each sensuous form is designed to hover and has an incandescent 'heart', inferred quite literally with the use of emanating light. The intention is to imply a definitive and sanguine feminine presence.

*La Galaxie de Joy* is intended as a quixotic, intimate vision and has been devised with careful attention to fashioning drama. The installation proposes a contemplative 'floating world' conceived as a mode of contemporaneous tableau vivant. The highly affected sculptures are crystallised in a state of perennial stasis, hovering upon a misty sky of glinting stars to engender the feeling of 'walking on air'.

Deep blue walls and soft cascades of fabric set the décor for the genie bottle forms, which cluster around a luminous Eiffel Tower centrepiece. Four translucent strands comprised of 12x4 transparent orbs are suspended within super fine teardrop nets. Each sphere in turn cossets a coloured transparency within, inscribed with the delicately beaded name of my favourite perfumes. The effect is of a whispering web, conveying a mesmerising, magical and sympathetic core. Manipulation of light is central to affect metamorphosis, as is the antechamber through which viewers enter, construed as a 'cross-over' to poetically facilitate transition. The practice aims to facilitate a heightened sense of theatre. The sculptures are simultaneously autonomous and in concert, each one literally colouring perceptions of another. Alternately curvaceous, smooth and seductive, each form is completed with a flourish of sparkling accoutrements.

The title of the exhibition is a hybrid of English and French aimed at employing the parlance of perfume in order to excite similarly mysterious associations. As French language attributes gender, 'La' is indicative of the feminising of 'Galaxie', which in turn conspires to intimate an otherworldly feminine universe. This is particularly apt in relation to the hyper-femme content of the project. Joy concurrently denotes self (indicative of the

intimate fictional narrative upon which the exhibition is premised); the meaning of an emotive feeling of bliss; and the perfume Joy, created by Jean Patou in 1930. Fashionista and press agent for Jean Patou, Elsa Maxwell reports that during the development of the iconic perfume she suggested the name Joy to Patou. When he responded intuitively with the French translation Joie she reacted emphatically: “No”, I said. “Joy. It conveys a meaning that’s understood all over the world” (Edwards 1988, p. 71). This project seeks to exploit the universal experience of intense delight associated with Joy in order to inspire an intoxicating state of enchantment.

The colour pink plays a significant role in the lighting for the installation. The intention was threefold; to firstly play upon conventional and commercial ideas of pink as a signifier of femininity (as demonstrated by the use of pink blankets in the maternity ward and the adoption of pink as the Breast Cancer Council’s branding); while secondly challenging this simplistic signifier and singular definition of the feminine as a discreet colour through ‘overload’. Thirdly, the aim of the research is to create a feminised enchantment so by incorporating pink I was advocating the colour be used ‘in its role as a means of achieving distance from reality’ (Nemitz 2006, p. 36). Barbara Nemitz further identifies diverse qualities of pink as beauty, transformation, transience and the fantastic in her essay ‘Pink – The Exposed Colour’. *La Galaxie de Joy* features a soft pink tint which alludes to the sensation of blushing. To blush is indicative of typically feminine discomforting emotion, such as embarrassment, coquetry or pleasure. Therefore a delicate flush or rosy glow of flesh-coloured warm light is a primary lighting strategy used to coalesce the multifarious elements of the vision.



Figure 29: Roe Ethridge, *Pink Bow* (2002)

It must be noted that while acknowledging the importance of pink to *La Galaxie de Joy* that the genie bottles are articulated in a number of varying colours, mostly pastels which are distinguished by their 'warm' base of white. This is an intentional strategy aimed at avoiding the pure white membranes of the sculptures (which suggest remoteness) in order to privilege immediacy, intimacy, passion and gratification. This strategy is employed in order to celebrate the diversity of femininity.

A significant tenet of the research project is interrogation of the relationship between the various elements of the exhibition and how individually and collectively they function to enchant. Key to this process is transformation and investment of the space with identifiable qualities of enchantment such as wonder, charm and delight. Attaining a state of enchantment incorporates an intoxicating mix of manifold elements in what can only be considered a form of sophisticated alchemy. As a consequence it is difficult to conduct a final analysis in the dissertation until the final exhibition is installed. It is my intention to write a brief one-page précis upon conclusion of the exhibition, to be included in the bound exegesis and aimed at reviewing the project outcome.

The Opening night of the exhibition marks the culmination of the doctorate degree and aims to create a sense of 'occasion'. The plan is to extend the celebratory and theatrical concepts which typify the research by creating a gloriously faux, 'glammed up' and superstyled event. To achieve this, gilded invitations, champagne cocktails, exquisite aperitifs, perfumed 'Abstract' sheets, several entertaining speakers and psychedelic cocktail music will collude in order to create an exclusive party atmosphere. Redolent with conspicuous consumption, the intention is that the doctorate event be a decadent theatre to celebrate the conclusion of a particularly self-deluded yet lucid vision of enchantment.



## CHAPTER 2 SENTIENT PLEASURES, ROMANTIC INTENTIONS

This chapter contextualises the project through discussion of the primary aims and objectives in relation to other creative art forms. It includes material on practitioners of art, design, fashion, literature, music and film who employ strategies and methods that progress their intention to incite in audiences various states of enchantment.

Chapter 2 is divided into three sections. The first section establishes parameters for the project within the field of art and image-making. The research traces a history of sybaritic practitioners who demonstrate explicitly feminised content, style or aesthetics, in order to identify key strategies and concepts for enchantment which can be re-interpreted and employed in this project.

Part 2:1 scrutinises selected art styles, artists, artworks and creative strategies from the eighteenth century to the end of the twentieth century, with the intention of extrapolating content substantiating romantic intentions, desire, sensuality, sentience and pleasure. Key themes identified are: magic, heavenly aspirations, chimerical spaces, esoteric pleasures, high style, hedonism, transformation and venerated femininity. The subject matter is represented in extravagant, theatrical, synthetic and decadent style. I contend that (when surveyed as a continuum within art) the history of re-enchantment articulates a history of sustained dissent, describing strongly individualised, non-didactic, anti-academic and occasionally cohesive counter-cultural activity. The research demonstrates that enchantments have persistently flourished alongside, and in opposition to, the dominant aesthetic mode of the time.

The second section of this chapter is called 'Visions of Love' and analyses the practice of five contemporary artists who make enchantments inspired by desire, intimacy and love.

The artists are Jeff Koons, Sylvie Fleury, Mariko Mori and Pierre et Gilles. The project analyses their collective oeuvre and hypothesises that through creative practice these artists are building upon the legacy of the sybaritic artists identified in chapter 2:1. These practitioners consequently provide a contemporary polemical aesthetic paradigm for enchantment, which functions to illumine prevalent socio-cultural mores concerning expressions of sexuality and identity.

The last section of this chapter is entitled 'Enchanted' and considers other expressive and creative forms of contemporary enchantments within popular culture. The referents were selected because they demonstrate tenets central to the research project, such as a super-stylised aesthetic, fictional aspect, intimate thematic or hyper-femme content. These diverse art forms inform the research by providing a broader cultural framework for enchantment and include music, design, information technology and cinema.

## CHAPTER 2:1 SENTIENT PLEASURES: THE ROCOCO (1730-1765)

The genesis for this study was inspired by Jean Honore Fragonard's seminal work *Girl on a Swing* (1767) (Figure 30). This frilly Rococo painting elaborates upon the ebullient pursuit of pleasure and delineates social issues concerning pleasure, luxury, status, value and class. It depicts a pretty young woman reclining playfully upon a drifting swing. She flirts outrageously with her lover, who reposes strategically in lush undergrowth beneath her. The man gazes up the frothy skirts which flutter about her raised leg. The damsel drifts against an idyllic backdrop of luminous green foliage and is bathed in divine light, her inferred ecstasy illuminating the landscape. A myriad of delicate paint flecks form a frenzy of hysterical detailing to imply the joy of sexual frisson. Rose petals, cupids, dolphins, birds and vines writhe across a canvas sated with colour, light and erotic imagery.



Figure 30: Jean-Honore Fragonard, *Girl on a Swing* (1767)

Despite luxuriating in this poetic amorous intrigue, Fragonard insists upon the viewer's acknowledgement, participation and seduction in what is essentially a visual caprice. The highly construed nature of the scene conveys the artist's intention of exposing the artifice implicit in the painting process. Critic Daniela Salvionia discusses the metafictional element of *Girl on a Swing* in her essay 'Jeff Koons' Poetics of Class':

The rococo may have been the first metadiscourse in art, in which art is understood as a self-conscious illusion and in which aesthetic appreciation is grounded in the awareness of artifice (Salvionia 1992, p. 22).

Fragonard continues his blissful deliberation upon the nature of creativity and medium of painting in his suite of five paintings *Blind Man's Bluff* (1730 - 1778) (Figure 31). While varying in composition and size, the paintings focus upon the theme of love which is couched within an over-abundance of exotic creatures, incandescent scenery, luxuriant clothing, bountiful flora and dramatic postures. This stylistic rapture is mirrored in the protagonist, a blindfolded, flushed young woman who trembles with arousal as she strives to decipher her environment. Deprived of sight and reliant upon her imagination, Fragonard refocuses the emphasis from painting as a primarily visual medium. The girl's transient blindness connotes a more complete, immersive, synaesthetic and sensual experience. Associate Professor Jennifer Milam sees Fragonard's interrogation of the mechanisms of art making as significant because he stresses the viewer's role and highlights the creative nature of the encounter. She writes, 'The blindfold cues the viewer to combine experience with a sensual response, recreating the entire process of human understanding' (Milam 1998, p. 30).



Figure 31: Jean-Honore Fragonard, *Blindman's Bluff* (c.1751)

Fragonard's oeuvre is typical of the rococo style and raises other pertinent points relative to this project. The *Swing* manifests the 'sinuous, organic and sensuous impulse' (Hunter-Stiebel 2008, p. 3) of the rococo, which curator Penelope Hunter-Stiebel claims 'provoked critical censure whenever it gained any practical ascendancy' (2008, p. 3). She attributes this criticism to the rococo's affiliation with femininity, suggesting that key motifs were antithetical to dominant masculine mores which privileged unadorned form over decoration and abstraction over narrative.

The rococo articulates a cheerfully liberal spirit, flouting prevailing classical paradigms to flourish across a host of art forms. It manifests stylistically in sumptuous designs featuring lurid colours, gilt surfaces, exuberant curlicues and organic patterning. The surface is an all-important feature of the rococo aesthetic, represented most notably in architecture such as Louis XIV Palace at Versailles, in which walls, floors, windows and ceilings are subsumed by riotous ornamentation and multiple reflective surfaces. Hunter-Stiebel makes the bold claim that the rococo 'represents the rejection of mere intellect in favour of a broader appeal to the senses' (2008, p.3), which she considers a feminine sensibility. Her point is important in that rococo artists privileged sensation in order to redress prejudice concerning the inferiority or secondary nature of sensual experience.

It is a hypothesis of this research project that a rococo sensibility infuses contemporary visions of enchantment. This claim is evident in the practice of five key contemporary artists whose work is analysed in section 2 of this chapter. Each artist variously re-interprets distinctive rococo formal, conceptual and stylistic devices within a modern context, marrying sensuous values and intense stylisation to fashion innovative approaches in their practice.

## Heavenly Aspirations: Pre-Raphaelites (1848-1900)

The pre-raphaelite vision represents fervent veneration of feminine beauty and has been a significant contextual feature of this research. Practitioners such as John Everett Millais (1828-1882), William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1829-1896) and Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898) created dreamily romantic images predicated upon feminine allure. Their paintings portray languid women with translucent skin, attired in filmy shifts and engaged in intense inner reverie.<sup>9</sup>

Pre-raphaelite maidens are identified by stylised features, such as luxuriant loose hair, elongated necks, full lips and wide, unfathomable eyes. They are visibly enhanced, encrusted with appurtenances of femininity such as blossoms, peacock feathers, sparkling jewellery and pearlescent hair ornaments. Swathed in lucent lacework and heavily ornamented, the subjects embody an ideal femininity conspicuously articulated through verdant symbolism. The women are portrayed with quixotic passion. Flowers, birds, fruit and lutes cosset the pensive damsels within fecund highly artificial settings animated in vibrant, cinematic colour.

John Everett Millais' painting *Ophelia* (1852) (Figure 32) demonstrates a singular and intensely affective emotional state in order to convey ideas concerning the transience of life. Ophelia floats serenely, her delicate arms languorously raised as if in supplication.

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<sup>9</sup> As well as the widely known pre-raphaelite brotherhood there was also an active sisterhood comprised of many accomplished female artists, some the models or partners of the male artists. Although lacking in educational opportunities and confined within strict conventional expectations, the formation of the group is significant as the women vied to attain professional status as artists. Evelyn de Morgan, Elizabeth Siddal, Lucy Maddox Brown and Marie Spartali Stillman formed the core of the group. As the dominant leitmotif in pre-Raphaelite art is women, this collective of female artists created a novel paradigm; as women painting women i.e. 'from within' they conflated subject/object, creating a dual perspective. Given their chronological location this is a remarkable innovation. Their work is generally more stilted and less technically accomplished and their contribution to date has been largely ignored in the history of art. The 1997 book *Pre-Raphaelite Women Artists* by Jan Marsh and Pamela Gerrish Nunn has served to verify their contribution in art history.



The verdant setting mirrors her inferred ecstasy and she appears to melt into amber, mirror-like water. Partly submerged, her corporeal form is suspended between life and death, warmth and coldness, heaven and earth, water and air. Spirit and body are in a state of flux, Ophelia's beauty transcendent as she hovers in a liminal space.



Figure 32: John Everett Millais , Ophelia (1852)

Similarly Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *Beata Beatrix* (1865) (Figure 33) reflects upon the evanescence of humanity. It is a poignant, yet powerful painting. The character of Beatrix was initially imagined by the poet Dante Alighieri and subsequently transcribed into visual form by Rossetti. The artist depicts her as a beautiful maiden, conveying a flawless femininity. Rossetti modelled the form of Beatrix upon his deceased wife Elisabeth Siddal and there is a tender intimacy imparted in the portrayal. Beatrix is painted at the moment of death, with her parted lips, closed eyelids and tilted countenance implying a euphoric rapture. She is bathed in a halo of golden light and shadowed by a hovering angel. The angel is positioned within the frame of a cross, a strong compositional device aimed at conveying the angel's assignation as guide or conduit between the corporeal and spiritual. In an attempt to visualise transcendence, Rossetti mediates a profoundly delicate tension between earthly and celestial being.

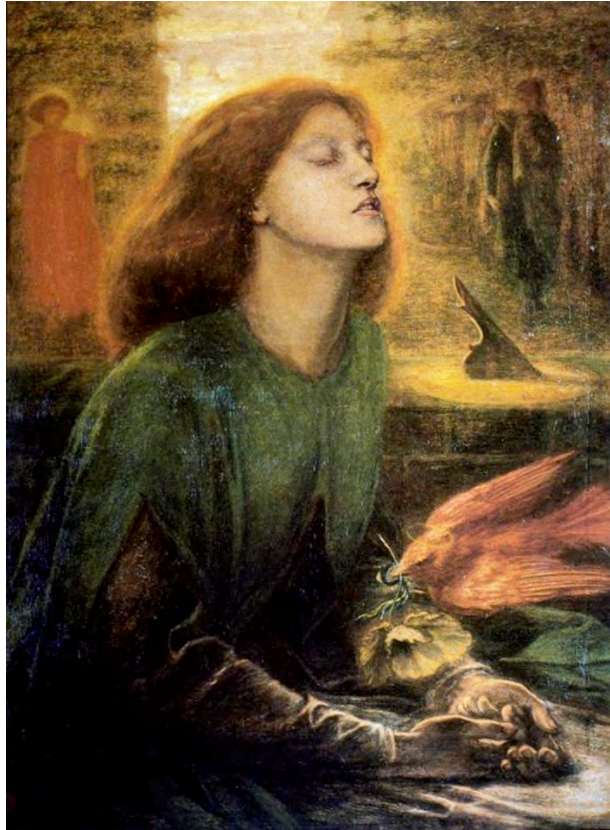


Figure 33: Dante Gabriel Rossetti , *Beata Beatrix* (1865)

Millais' and Rossetti's eloquent and intricate paintings demonstrate viable strategies for re-enchantment applicable to this research project. The artists use an array of sacred compositional devices, together with fecund aesthetics and lush feminine content to create luxuriant visions of enchantment. A key recurring element is that of the portal which typically functions as a threshold, gateway or point of cross-over. Used concurrently with celestial imagery, this strategy facilitates metamorphosis and creates subtle tension.

### **Chimerical Spaces: Symbolism (1885-1910)**

Symbolist artists Gustave Moreau (1826-1898), Odilon Redon (1840-1916) and Gustav Klimt (1862-1918) rejected literal representations of nature or objects in favour of suggestive and redolent visions. As a collective, they privileged emotive states in the



creation of 'necessarily chimerical spaces – distant, ambiguous and other-worldly' (Matthiesson 2010, p. 99) which manifest a mysterious and latent power.

Moreau was hailed as a quixotic visionary and his delicately inscribed, richly filigreed and obsessively layered paintings both enchant and fascinate. His painting *The Unicorns* (1885) (Figure 34) is an illustration of a fluid interior landscape where endearing unicorns and flaccid formless women shimmer in a perpetual mirage. Moreau achieves a hallucinatory quality by continually re-working the canvas until a peculiar state of intense fragility and flux is attained. Lush, decorative and synthetic, *The Unicorns* symbolises Moreau's intention 'to harness the sensual richness of exotic detail to transport viewers beyond the everyday and into an imaginary and quasi- religious realm' (Matthiesson 2010, p. 99).



Figure 34: Gustave Moreau , *The Unicorns* (1885)

The numinous quality attained by Moreau in his work is significant as it is a contention of this research that in order to induce a profound experience of re-enchantment that the artwork must be invested with an aura of sanctity. Moreau achieves this by suffusing the affective language of the church into the practice, with the aim of eliciting a widespread

tacit cultural response. This tactic imbues the artwork with theological imperative and celestial potency, conveying emotion at a subliminal level. Art Historian Edward Lucie-Smith concurs:

... (Symbolism) made the first moves towards investing the artwork itself with a mysterious, ambiguous power. Its job was how to be suggestive, not to describe, and from this it was a short step to giving certain works of art the status of holy relics (Lucie-Smith 1995, p. 7).

Moreau was fascinated with the 'Eternal Feminine' (Forest in Gott, 2010, p.12) whose themes Forest and Vaughan define as 'obsession, dream, luxury, magic, the femme fatale, exoticism, and the ideal' (Gott 2010, p. 12). He repeatedly depicts the femme fatale which is an intriguing aspect of his oeuvre and merits scrutiny given the hyper-femme content of this research project. As outlined in previous chapters, the hyper-femme and femme fatale often provoke similar censure, because both terms describe behaviour not consistent with conventional expectations of feminine expression.

Moreau constantly revisited the subject of the femme fatale, making numerous drawings, studies and paintings of flawed heroines such as the mythical figure Salome (c. 1876). The composition study Salome dancing before Herod is a black tonal chalk drawing, where the barely discernible forms of Salome and Herod are enveloped in a malevolent miasma. Resolved fully in the watercolour painting *The Apparition* (1876) (Figure 35), Moreau evokes sensation through the innovative use of various newly marketed mediums including pastel, Indian ink, pencil, gold leaf and gouache. This eclectic approach was radical insofar as it demonstrated significant dissent from the prevailing aesthetic rigours, challenging academic paradigms of the time.

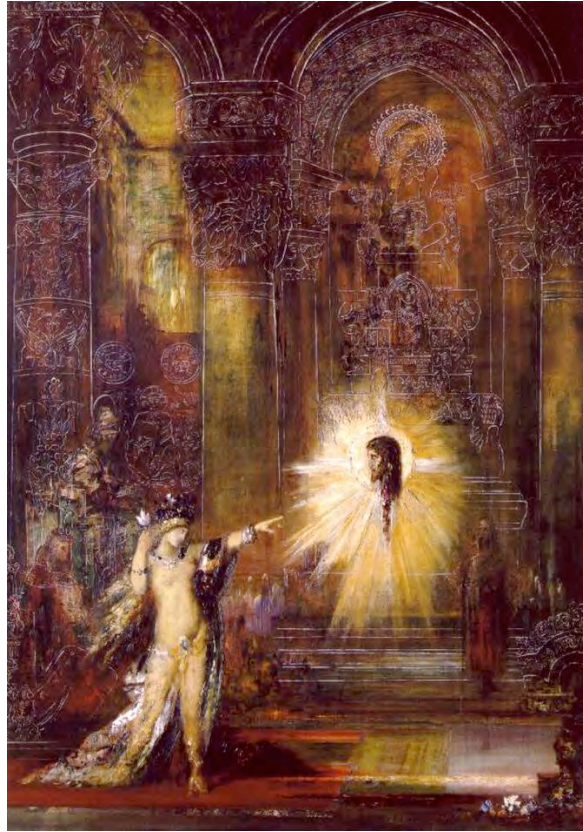


Figure 35: Gustave Moreau, *The Apparition* (1876)

### **Esoteric Pleasures, Unnatural Obsessions: The Aesthetes & Decadents (1860-1900)**

Symbolism emerged in part as a perceptual response to the literary perspicacity of Aesthete and Decadent writers, such as Joris-Karl Huysmans (1848-1907), Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867),<sup>10</sup> Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), Walter Pater (1839-1894),<sup>11</sup> and

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<sup>10</sup> The philosophies, thoughtful essays and elegant prose of Baudelaire are of profound significance to this research. He is noted in passing in several passages during this essay and figures prominently in chapter 3 in the discussion upon Perfume. There are several key concepts which typify his oeuvre including belief in refined aesthetic and sensual pleasures, the self-referential element (metafictional) of poetry, social values such as immorality and expectations of sexuality such as femininity and dandyism.

<sup>11</sup> Together with Charles Baudelaire, Pater wrote reflective essays, poems and books which inspired Aesthete and Decadent theories. As such his contribution is distinguished. Both philosophers were accomplished scholars noted for cultural criticism and their legacy endures. Pater's book *The Renaissance: Studies in Art & Poetry* (1893) created such a scandal at the time of publication he was disciplined and forced to alter parts of it by the Oxford dons. Wilde acknowledged the book as

later F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940). Although the focus of this research project is upon secular strategies for re- enchantment within visual art, the prose of these writers excites critical interest pertinent to this study and provides contextual insight for the project. This is because primary themes running through this project - such as pleasure, luxury, extravagance, desire, sensuality, beauty and the feminine - also comprise the central motifs of aesthete and decadent writers. A key idea explored in aesthete and decadent prose is perception and the concept of synaesthesia.<sup>12</sup> This is significant in relation to this project, which similarly focuses upon perspicacity and the attempted invocation of sensual gratification.

Huysman, Wilde and Fitzgerald created gloriously profane fictional visions which are quintessentially sybaritic. Their fabulous fantasies are couched in exquisitely crafted prose and celebrate a wildly opulent hedonism. Predicated upon aspirational themes such as wealth, possessions, luxury, leisure, vice, beauty and exoticism, their novels contemplate sensation, artifice and desire.

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'The golden book of spirit and sense, the holy writ of beauty' and claimed it was of crucial importance.

<sup>12</sup> Baudelaire explored the idea of 'correspondences' (in his sonnet of the same name) or synaesthesia of perceptive experience. Richard Stamelman dedicates a chapter to Baudelaire called 'Charles Baudelaire and the Music of Perfume' in his book 'Perfume'. In his analysis of Baudelaire's poem 'Exotic Perfume' Stamelman writes: 'for Baudelaire, vision is a form of smell by other means' (p.104) and 'Scent is musicalised and poeticised; perfume becomes lyric poetry as poem becomes scent sound' (p.105). He concludes with Baudelaire's own words from the 8th line in correspondences 'Sound, perfumes, hues echo in harmony' (p. 114). Stamelman views this as fulfilling 'Baudelaire's dream of a sublime poetry generated by the experience of synaesthesia, which ... is a perceptual process through which information provided by one sense is filtered, interpreted, and "read" through the medium of another'.

Psychedelic artists adopted the concept of synaesthesia with gusto during the 1960s, insisting that 'discreet impressions fuse into one intense synaesthetic experience in which colours produce sounds and forms can be perceived with tactile intensity' (Grunenberg 2005, p. 17). They achieved a visionary state largely through use of synthetic hallucinogenic drugs such as LSD.

Huysman's novel *Au Rebours* (translated as *Against Nature*, 1884) examines the cult of dandyism and quest for esoteric pleasure. Huyman's anti-hero Des Esseintes uses his obscene wealth to create a cloistered world of his own device, dedicated to obscene opulence. Huysmans's ideas concerning excess are most clearly demonstrated by Des Esseintes' acquisition of the ultimate exotic accessory, a turtle, whose *Shell* he so heavily encrusts with precious gems that the turtle dies, unable to sustain the weight. Likewise Wilde's epic novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) articulates the life of a rarefied dandy who attempts to defy nature and retain beauty by obtaining eternal youth in a pact with the devil. While Dorian's extravagant lifestyle becomes excessive to the point of torpidity, his portrait ages hideously in constant admonition of his vanity. Wilde's plot assiduously combines an affirmative commentary on the unnatural process of art and creativity with a sensual odyssey.

Fitzgerald's 1922 novella *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz* is an enchanting caprice, remarkable for its preposterous profligacy. Fitzgerald uses velvet prose to seduce the reader into an esoteric encounter of epic proportions. Building upon the legacy of Wilde and Huysman, Fitzgerald transports the reader to a secretive world of astonishing beauty, wealth and privilege, where the Washington family exists in a bubble-like cocoon of indulgent moral vacuity.

The protagonists in all three novels suffer dramatic and hideous demises. The quest for esoteric pleasure is unpleasantly terminated. It is interesting to note that despite their overwhelming endorsement of all forms of excess or pleasure, the characters remain resolutely androgynous. This is a primary tenet of camp sensibility. The protagonists also exhibit a peculiarly anaemic quality, the emphasis being upon their portrayal as characters, this lack of dimension joyfully exploited by the authors. Huysman, Wilde and Fitzgerald were keen advocates of the 'art for art's sake'<sup>13</sup> philosophy which aims for

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<sup>13</sup> Practitioners believed that art should be autonomous, not subject to moral, social, religious or moral standards. Art was therefore valued as a self-sufficient entity hence the phrase 'art for art's sake' (coined by philosopher Victor Cousin). The pursuit of beauty was paramount. Ironically the ideology died out due to the 'Ivory Tower' position artists adopted as a consequence of this

creative autonomy, the pursuit of beauty and the effective suspension of morality by the artist. What the novels testify to and what Wilde conceded is that art is never autonomous and that artists cannot expunge themselves from their artwork.

In France, Rene Lalique (1860-1945) created exquisite incandescent glassware and jewellery (Figure 36) as architect Hector Guimard (1867-1942) was designing intricate cast metal lacework entrances to the Paris metro. In Spain, Antoni Gaudi's (1852-1926) architecture wove its way throughout Barcelona like molten lava. In America, Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848-1933) patented a unique stained opalescent glass which he used to create objects reminiscent of swirling magma. English illustrator Aubrey Beardsley (1872-1898) penned erotically-charged posters scrawled in black ink (see Figure 37). In Belgium, architect Victor Horta (1861-1947) re-imagined helix designs to create undulating and eloquent cadences from inert industrial materials (see Figure 38). The oeuvre of these key practitioners of art nouveau demonstrates succinctly the primacy of style.



Figure 36: Rene Lalique artwork: [left]; rare *La Phalene* perfume bottle (c.1903) [centre] Hood Ornament Car Mascot c. (1929); [right] Pansy brooch (c.1903)

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doctrine, which left them isolated from popular culture (unlike my own stance as a commentator from and 'within').

The decadent movement was mainly a literary movement located in France and closely related to the aestheticism. It was largely initiated by Oscar Wilde. The Decadents embraced a perceived 'decline' from a higher order of culture and art, embracing a new state of being or form. Huysman, Baudelaire and Wilde were its most notable practitioners.





Figure 37: Aubrey Beardsley, Peacock dress illustration for Oscar Wilde's play *Salome* (1894)



Figure 38: Victor Horta, Interior of the Hotel Tassel, Brussels (1893)

Of significance to this study is art nouveau's use of the leitmotif of the female nude. Where this occurs, a pleasurable and sensuous response is animated in the viewer. This occurs because style, technique and content coalesce in a single work, creating a sophisticated mode of sexualised expression within art. An example of this occurs in Aubrey Beardsley's oeuvre, where compelling maidens with swirling hair arc in elegant sweeps across the paper surface (see the peacock dress illustration for Oscar Wilde's play *Salome* 1894, English edition). Similarly, Gustav Klimt's (1862-1918) *The Tree of Life* (1909) painting is a stylish synergy of verdant symbolism and gold leaf, the two depicted women completely subsumed within rippling pattern and spiralling design (Figure 39). The forms of the women are highly idealized and their supple bodies in a state of flux. Rene Lalique's jewellery works are revolutionary, as he used a miniaturised sculpture mode to conflate feminine form and jewels into a visceral mass. The lissom feminine body is used as site of transformation and symbol of metamorphosis, a consistent theme in enchantments.



Figure 39: Gustave Klimt, *Tree of Life* (1909)

### **Miss Nancy Beaton as a Shooting Star (1928)**

During a visit to the National Gallery of Victoria in 2008 I viewed an exhibition called Art Deco 1910-1939. I was captivated by an entrancing black and white photographic portrait of Nancy Beaton (1928) (Figure 40). The image was taken by her brother Cecil Beaton (1904-1980) and shows a svelte, sweetly pensive young woman enshrined within masses of cellophane. Pert stars adorn Nancy's glossy bobbed tresses, and she is poised as if upon a swing, holding on to a sparkling sceptre and sporting a shiny star fascinator. Backlit against swathes of glossy fabric, she emerges radiant like a silky mermaid from a shimmering pool of translucent wrapping. Nancy is described as 'a magical evocation of the bright young things of the 1920s who, like shooting stars, had brief but glorious moments of perfection, lighting up all in their orbit' (Crombie 2008, p. 185). Beaton has created a delightful metafiction which is so wholly enjoyable that the viewer surrenders to the beauty of the encounter.





Figure 40: Cecil Beaton, *Miss Nancy Beaton as a shooting star* (1928)

Beaton was known as 'a fabulist who conjured fictional worlds into being' (Wood 2008, p. 185). His fanciful photographs are highly staged and theatrical. They were primarily distributed in elite publications such as *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair*. Beaton's subjects were often celebrities but he also undertook sophisticated large-scale fashion shoots, which often demonstrate a type of dramatic stasis akin to that of *tableaux vivants*. Beaton's practice oscillated upon rococo concepts such as pleasure, luxury, romance, class and beauty. He proffered a formulaic and very specific idea of female beauty, as edified by Nancy who Crombie describes as having: 'a very long, thin almost scrawny neck, no chin at all, an abbreviated nose, three cherries for a mouth... big pansy eyes and a general bird like appearance' (2008 p.185). Nancy's portrait is a shimmering surface of refracted luminous reflections, expediting a bold and incandescent vision of romanticised femininity.

The most remarkable aspect of Beaton's creative process is his comprehension, manipulation and audacious use of light. His photograph of Nancy as a shooting star

demonstrates his expertise with the medium as he creates a synthetic and fecund image which concomitantly makes comment upon the light-reliant process and medium of photography.

### **Extravagant permissions: Psychedelia (1960-1975)**

The style of psychedelia was an international phenomenon which flowered during the 1960s -1970s. Defined as 'generating hallucinations' and referring to 'distortions of perception' (Grunenberg 2005, p. 14) the psychedelic movement represented non-conformity, freedom, turpitude and individuality. Psychedelic art of the time represented fervently idealistic values and articulated a radical social, political and aesthetic agenda.

Psychedelic style pioneered an extraordinarily creative and visionary form of art. Fostered by mind-altering drugs, the emphasis was upon the body as receptive and perceptive vehicle for magical, powerful and lascivious experience. The result was an explosion of exuberant art which blurred multiple genres and produced intense, vertiginous and miraculous experiences. Veils of luminous colour, amorphous forms, odd compositional disjunctions and hysterical, free-wheeling imagery assaulted the senses across a plethora of art mediums.

Psychedelia was fused with popular culture and as a result one of the most notable elements of the mode was the amorphous exchange between multiple genres and cultures, new technologies, low art, entertainment and media. Drawing upon philosophy and literature, the movement was profoundly influential across a diverse demographic. It primarily manifested in intense sensory experiential environments, built upon the legacy of gesamtskuntswerk, synaesthesia and 'total' installation. This is exemplified by mystical and erotic light shows such as Andy Warhol's slide and film projections at the Velvet

Underground nightclub and Yayoi Kusama's Self- Obliteration performance (1968, at Fillmore East on 6/7 December).

Posters and album covers were also important to the psychedelic experience and were widely circulated and cleverly articulated by artists such as Martin Sharp (b.1942) with Plant a Flower Child (1967) (Figure 41), or collectives such as Hapshash and the Coloured Coat (Figure 42) with Luv-Me Film Production's Jacob and the Coloured Coat (1967). Voluptuous lettering, *Swirling* bodily forms, stars, bubbles, and vivid colours abut, mutate, reform, transform and confuse the eye in a frenzy of decorative exuberance.



Figure 41: Martin Sharp (with Robert Whitaker), *Plant a Flower Child* (1967)



Figure 42: Hapshash and the Coloured Coat, *UFO Coming* (1967)

In the book *Summer of Love: Art of the Psychedelic Era* a group of erudite critics have submitted essays attempting to redress what Christoph Grunenberg in *The Politics of Ecstasy: Art for the Mind and Body*, describes as the 'continuing neglect of psychedelic art and culture by serious historians and academics' (2005, p. 13). Grunenberg puts forward

the hypothesis that there are a number of factors contributing to psychedelia's relegation to insignificance. In his essay 'Freaks' Dave Hickey attributes this scholarly disregard to a number of factors arising from the privileging of formal elements (such as 'complexity, pattern, repetition, the feminine, the curvilinear, and the chaotic) (2005, p. 64) and makes the claim that these characteristics have been 'permanently out of academic fashion for nearly three hundred years' (Hickey 2005, p. 64). Significantly, he identifies the rococo, Pre-Raphaelites and art nouveau as representative of those styles, which like psychedelia have become associated with kitsch, frivolity, extravagance and other 'decadent manifestations of mass culture' (Grunenberg 2005, p. 13).

## CHAPTER 2:2 VISIONS OF LOVE: CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS MAKING ENCHANTMENTS

This section analyses the related practices of five contemporary artists who are making fictions of intimacy within contemporary art. The artists selected are Jeff Koons, Sylvie Fleury, Mariko Mori and Pierre and Gilles. The writing is divided into four subsections with each focused upon a particular practitioner. In the following section I have sought to extrapolate key ideas and techniques used by these artists in order to assist in the fabrication of *La Galaxie de Joy*.

The artists cited locate their practice in explicit concepts of desire predicated upon identity and sexuality. Their shared approach is one of pleasure which manifests in celebratory, candid and exuberant enchantments. Their euphoric declarations of love result in remarkable fantasies which are once delightful yet cogent, divine yet mundane, sentient yet delusional, and magical yet believable.

Each artist uses decadent, self-indulgent and overtly synthetic strategies for re-enchantment in their practice. All work across multiple creative mediums (such as

sculpture, painting, video, photography, film, painting, print and design) and typically exhibit in installation form. The scope of practice is ambitious and very expensive. Processes employing modern technologies, skilled design, monumental scale and superior professional surface finishes are typical of their collective oeuvre. There is a shared dedication to 'extreme' visions, which use elaborate, glittering, ornamental, sensual, feminised and excessive super-enhanced imagery and forms. These techniques are used to create spectacular, sentient and theatrical environments. In this way their work builds upon rococo tenets concerning aspirational and metafictional states such status, luxury, class, sexuality, exclusivity and entertainment.

Each artist expresses no irony or interest in critiquing social paradigms. I contend that nevertheless their work functions to illumine conventional socio-cultural protocols and values concerning sexualised expression. However because their practice is not political but centred upon individualistic and intimate content, they represent a unique position. These artists substantiate my thesis as outlined in chapter 2:1 and build upon a legacy of sybaritic practitioners in the arts. They evidence a polemic contemporary alternative that operates at the same time, and in opposition to, prevailing socio-cultural values.

Artists making artworks with narratives of intimacy operate at the interstices between art and popular culture. This means their art and life is intimately entwined, resulting in innovative outcomes.

### **Jeff Koons b.1955 – America**

Jeff Koons explores themes of consumption and desire, social and aesthetic hierarchies, high and low culture, and context and commodification within his artwork. Following in the tradition of artists Marcel Duchamp and Andy Warhol,<sup>14</sup> his practice operates at the nexus between popular consumerist culture and art.

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<sup>14</sup> Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968) initiated the concept of the readymade, which are manufactured objects that the artist selects, repositions, titles and signs. Through presentation within an art context, the object then becomes art. This extreme form of minimalism is realised in his urinal

The Banality series (1998) is typical of Koons' oeuvre in that it comprises multiple images and objects. It consists of eleven porcelain and five polychromatic wood sculptures, an ad portfolio, a mirror image-drawing and two curlicued, gilded wood and mirror works. The polychromatic wood sculpture *Ushering in Banality* was exhibited at the Palace of Versailles as part of the monumental Jeff Koons Versailles exhibition in 2008-2009 (Figure 43). Located upon a red velveteen plinth within the luxurious Salon de Diane, the audience was confronted with a large sculpture of a recalcitrant pig with a green ribbon around its neck. The pig is flanked by two cherubs with wings and pushed from behind by boy in a black and red ski-suit. Described as a 'signature motif for the entire series' (2008, p. 140) the work is an impeccably carved collage. Through intense attention to detail and unequivocal investment in the creative process, Koons demonstrates his veneration for the work, which he claims is 'autobiographical' (2008, p. 140).



Figure 43: Jeff Koons, *Ushering in Banality* from the Banality series (1988)

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artwork *Fountain* (1964). Duchamp himself struggled to define the readymade, expressing dissatisfaction at his inability to do so. Andy Warhol (1928-1987) was a leading figure in pop art. This style flourished during the 1960s and explored the interstices between advertising, pop culture, celebrity and art.

Other pieces in the Banality series include the Pink Panther (Figure 44) and Popples (Figure 45). With both these works Koons demonstrates a bizarre devotional strategy involving scaling up of selected mass-produced objects. In this way he evidences his abiding affection for the banal commodities he covets by literally inflating the targets of his devotion. As he enunciates in typically brazen fashion: 'If you like ice-cream, have a big helping' (Salvionia 1992, p. 23). Popples is a large and cheerfully vacuous porcelain sculpture which had its origins as a child's toy. Painted in bright primary colours, Popples is rendered impeccably in a tacky textured synthetic fur finish. Similarly, the flaccid plaything Pink Panther has been perennially frozen in porcelain. Enhanced to life size, the panther is engaged in a gratuitous lewd embrace with a blond 'pin-up' companion. The pink panther has a surprised look on his face and the sculpture is overtly sexual, which Koons acknowledges when he says 'Pink Panther is about masturbation' (2008, p. 152). Typical dedication to skilled representation mean that the fine porcelain and vivid colours of the sculpture conflate to create an overtly artificial expression of desire within a figurative art tradition. Koons sees porcelain as a sexual and bourgeois material, commenting that 'There is this uplifting quality about it, this feeling of one's social standing being increased just by being around the material' (1992, p. 100).



Figure 44: Jeff Koons, *Pink Panther* (1988)



Figure 45: Jeff Koons, *Popples* (1988)



Daniela Salvioni, in her essay 'Jeff Koons' Poetics of Class', argues that the metadiscourse initiated by Fragonard during the rococo era is continued in the work of Jeff Koons. She theorises that Koons' work articulates ideas concerning 'the role of art, context, class and presentation, through the use of stylistic devices such as caricature, theatricality, and excessive ornamentation' (1992, p. 23). Her point is illustrated in the *Made in Heaven* series, made between 1989-92 (Figure 46). Koons employs rococo devices such as those listed above together with a divine syntax and prosaic sexualised content. This suite of work is comprised of a series of billboards, paintings, sculptures and statues. The subject is the artist himself, posing in an array of lurid sexual positions with his then-wife the Italian porn star Ciccolina. Koons uses a sophisticated methodology and the artworks are made in an array of mediums from marble, plastic, polychrome wood, and lithography to oil on canvas.



Figure 46: Jeff Koons, *Made in Heaven* (1989)

The lithograph billboard (1989, edition of 3) "stars" the couple inset against a plastic backdrop of swirling sky and writhing rocks. Ciccolina is partially attired in virginal white and draped seductively beneath a tanned and covetous Koons. This torrid image is implicitly contradictory; Ciccolina is at once chaste and ecstatic, almost asexual. Critic Robert Rosenblum attributes this to Koons' attention to hyper-artifice, demonstrated by the exorcism of explicit parts as attested to by Ciccolina's 'idealised ... thoroughly depilated, cherubically pink, and spotlessly clean body' (1992, p. 25). He concludes:



Instead of a porno show, the effect was like that of Japanese erotic prints, where the degree of stylisation is so exaggerated that the sexual acrobatics as such are quickly submerged in an all-engulfing artifice (1992, p. 25).

Rosenblum's claims are substantiated by other works in the Made in Heaven suite, which feature Disneyland-style wholesome cherubs, flowers, vases of flowers, puppies, kittens, bourgeoisie baroque busts of the couple and some explicit glass statues. This visual delirium is particularly evident in the single oil painting of the series *Ilona on Top (Rosa Background)* (1990) (Figure 47). Koons continues to reify his sexual union with Ciccolina in sustained titivation of his subject matter, set within verdant flowers, fluttering butterflies and cherubs. By effectively pasteurising the content with the use of 'Koonsiana' (Rosenblum 1992, p. 25) Koons achieves a transcendent sensuality to effect a highly successful mode of secular enchantment in art.



Figure 47: Jeff Koons, *Ilona on Top (Rosa Background)* (1990)

Koons ensures his completed works are expertly fabricated and have superlative finishes. He achieves this by using an entrepreneurial approach in the manufacture of his artworks, commissioning skilled artists and craftspeople to construct his images and sculptures. Precious materials are used in the fabrication of each artwork, and he insists upon faithful

imitation of the original surfaces of the objects. In this way each piece is ascribed a new entity. These new, shiny and often luxurious forms and images are subsequently exhibited in an art gallery. The result is often confronting as the completed works assume an iconic status at odds with their humble origins.

A pertinent example of Koons' sophisticated manipulation of the creative process is the sculpture *Hanging Heart (Red/Gold)* (Figure 48), which is part of the dazzling *Celebration* series constructed between 1994-2006. Inspired by cheap gift wrapping and celebratory balloons, *Hanging Heart* is listed on Koons' website as coming in 'five unique versions'; magenta/gold, silver/blue, violet/gold, gold/red. The statistics are impressive: every burnished heart is executed in chromium stainless steel, weighs over 3,500 pounds, is almost nine feet tall and coated flawlessly in more than ten layers of paint.



Figure 48: Jeff Koons, *Hanging Heart (Red/Gold)* (1994-2006)

In the exhibition catalogue for Jeff Koons Versailles, *Hanging Heart (Red/Gold)* is photographed adjacent to the Escalier de la Reine (Queen's Staircase). The sculpture represents a gleaming red heart that is suspended from the ceiling on a flowing gold ribbon. The shiny surface of the heart is flawless and seductive, capturing and mirroring the surrounding environs in distorted form. The luminous red surface tint of the sculpture tint acts to attract and dazzle, transforming the mundane mylar balloon which was the source of the work into an iconic artefact. It is my contention that Koons succeeds in inspiring contemplation upon the heart as a symbol of romance and love. Glistening and lascivious, Koons' *Hanging Heart (Red/Gold)* embodies human aspiration and desire in a single precious object.

The *Hanging Heart (Red/Gold)* sculpture is particularly pertinent to this study as the heart symbol is inextricably linked to the feminine. The other sculptures in this suite are similarly predicated upon feminised artefacts such as ribbons, bows, swans, bunnies and flowers. It is my view that *Hanging Heart (Red/Gold)* as exhibited above the Queens staircase at Versailles in France is Koons' most significant work in relation to this current project as it envisages a profoundly alluring form of feminised enchantment.

### **Sylvie Fleury b. 1961 – Switzerland**

Sylvie Fleury takes pleasure in pleasure. She is an epicurean who purchases expensive perfumes, glamorous shoes and designer nail polish on extravagant shopping forays. Seduced by advertising and packaging, she covets, indulges and subsumes herself in the consumerist experience. She represents this experience of desire in whimsical, clever and attractive artworks.

Pleasures (1998) and Insolence (2007) are typical of her practice and define her 'signature' style. Insolence comprises sumptuous designer shopping bags placed in an elegant cluster-formation in a gallery setting. Some bags reveal a glimpse of their lavish contents or tissue paper, others remain sealed and mysteriously circumspect. The bags

boast exclusive names like Chanel or Prada, hinting at the bourgeois aspirations which fuel her work.

*Pleasures* was an installation in which Fleury replicated the seductive effect of an exclusive boutique environment (Figure 49). Candy pink and black striped walls formed a frame for a soft pink mat and white footstool, which were strewn with a selection of designer shoes. The word 'pleasures' was replicated in flowing script in multiples upon the wall, alluding to Fleury's hedonistic perception of consumerist experience. *Insolence* and *Pleasures* demonstrate that Fleury operates at the nexus between art, fashion and commodity and for this reason her work evokes comparisons with Jeff Koons and pop artist Andy Warhol. However the content of Fleury's work is explicitly feminine and her selection of objects based upon sexuality and desire.



Figure 49: Sylvie Fleury, *Pleasures* (1998)

Of specific interest to this research project is Fleury's installation and sculptural work in which she venerates hyper-femme accoutrements. She returns to themes of appearance and body image repeatedly throughout her career with works such as *Revolver* (2009) (a hybrid hair-dryer/revolver complete with cord and ornate western-gun detailing) (Figure 50); *Vanity Case* (1998) (a chromed silver/bronze replica) and *Prada Boots* (2003) (a pair of chromed bronze knee-high boots). These works are highly manufactured, again bearing comparison with Koons' methodology, and are lustrous, luxurious and implicitly comedic.

The element of humour in Fleury's oeuvre is attractive and I submit that in this way she achieves superior communication. By focusing upon the superficial (i.e. luxury consumer goods: an element she acknowledges and deliberately cultivates) her works tap into a universal language of desire.



Figure 50: Sylvie Fleury, *Revolver* (2009)

Fleury deliberately fosters associations with glamour, luxury and leisure, as testified to by her website ([www.sylviefleury.com/](http://www.sylviefleury.com/)) which at time of writing featured a flickering montage called YES TO ALL. This simple declaration of affirmation serves to encapsulate the consumerist sentiment and concepts which drive Fleury's practice. The website pays homage to capitalism and decadence, with a series of images moving so rapidly they create a hallucinatory visual blur of cars, shoes, gold, sex, spacesuits, erotic pinkness, shininess, neon signage, perfumes, fur, duco-flames and alien forms.

Fleury continually blurs the line between artist, art product and brand. This is exemplified by one of her most successful projects, a 2008 collaboration called Stolen Kisses with Dom Perignon Rose (Figure 51). She designed champagne glasses replete with red lipstick marks printed upon the rim. The limited edition crystal flutes were gift boxed in pairs together with a bottle of vintage Dom Perignon 1988 rosé. The exchange between

commodity and art is also clearly demonstrated by a glamorous provocation Fleury made for the 1991 Cologne Art Fair. Her entire show was stolen on the first night, as it consisted of a hundred bottles of Egoiste perfume in little Chanel bags displayed upon a table.



Figure 51: Sylvie Fleury, *Stolen Kisses for Dom Perignon Rosé*

Fleury employs a quasi-divine language to enhance her worldly pleasures, literally elevating, veneering or gilding existing ever-present forms such as shopping trolleys, magazines or cars. In this way her multi-media works achieve preciousness, as demonstrated by the sculpture *Ladder* (2007). *Ladder* is made from bronze, has a 23.5carat gold layer patina, is signed, numbered, hand engraved in metal, and comes in an edition of eight. *Ladder* has been transformed from banal object to celestial portal, representing a luxury consumer item and aesthetic ascension. *Fountain, PKW* (2008) (Figure 52) is similarly evocative. Fleury has gilded and mounted a car tyre upon a clear Perspex plinth. The tyre is both font and shrine, spouting water from the centre in celebration and adulation of hot-rod culture. As an artwork it is also a commodity, an idea which Fleury cultivates. *Fountain, PKW* is currently advertised on the Hometone home and lifestyle website (<http://www.hometone.com/commentry/luxuriously-glamorous-gold-fountain-lkw-pkw/>) as a 'luxuriously glamorous ... freestanding water fountain and bubbles ... suitable for garden or balcony'.





Figure 52: Sylvie Fleury, *Gold Fountain PKW* (2008)

Fleury is committed to the creation of glamorous provocations redolent with desire. Fast cars, nail polish finishes, exotic spaceships, erotic footwear, feminine accessories, cosmetics and advertising slogans from women's magazines comprise the content of her seductive installations. Fleury uses this intimate feminine content and sumptuous style to create enchanted visions.

### **Mariko Mori b. 1967 – Japan**

The intimation of physical and spiritual transformation in concert with enlightenment and femininity were initially what attracted me to the work of Mariko Mori. Her oeuvre represents a restless and persistent quest for identity. Unlike Sylvie Fleury, she places herself squarely at the centre of her artworks, and is constantly reincarnated in an array of guises. Mori typically makes large scale, glossy digital prints or film works in which geography, time zones and cultures morph. Her practice incorporates an eclectic blend of mystical symbolism, cyber technology and popular culture. The subject matter centres

upon her desire to reconcile her traditional Japanese ancestry and the highly civilized consumerist society she lives in.

*Pratimba 1* (1998) (Figure 53) is part of a triptych and is a richly coloured circular print behind glass with a mirror finish. The work portrays Mori in a traditional Japanese kimono, backlit against a surreal blue background. Her hair is sculpted into a cyber-punk hairstyle upon which a metallic high-rise headdress is balanced. Gold glitter sparkles on her eyelids and her skin is very white. The circular design of the print suggests a kaleidoscope view which blends past, present and future. This effect is heightened by the composition of the circle, in which a strong vertical handlebar shaped rod crosses with the headdress to segment the image. Strands of shiny beads assist in a romantic view of Mori as a 'virtual' geisha or other-worldly being who has been crystallised between two worlds.



Figure 53: Mariko Mori, *Pratibimba* (1998)

A distinctive feature of Mori's oeuvre is her innovative use of an array of multi-media technologies. She uses these to create alluring and sensually immersive works which allude to femininity, such as *Nirvana* (1997) (Figure 54). This luminous film coalesces



sophisticated technologies, Buddhist symbolism and secularised elements of popular culture. Using 3D glasses, the viewer enters a virtual environment populated with diminutive musical creatures. These ‘tunes’-beings float in a glowing landscape composed from expansive washes of translucent blush-pink colours. A fecund lotus flower and bubble-like clouds surround Mori as she hovers blissfully in a celestial fantasy. She is clad demurely in a shiny kimono and enormous jewelled headpiece decked with ribbons and jewels. She is implacably beautiful and aloof, this effect enhanced by the use of 3D glasses. The artist has created an elegant fiction of intimacy which articulates her desire for harmony. She is a sentient being set in a landscape of feminine desire meditating upon the nature of consciousness.



Figure 54: Mariko Mori, *Nirvana* (1996-1997)

Mori's practice is diverse, ranging from glossy photographs printed upon glass and shiny metals, to video and cinematic projections, and installations made from light, glass and steel. She tempers the cool sci-fi sleekness of her work with a delicate subliminal quality, achieved through meticulous execution and refined finish. Her practice also incorporates sophisticated manipulation of light, which she equates with enlightenment.

A final example of the artist's consummate creative methodology is *Dream Temple* (1997-1999) (Figure 55) from the exhibition *Miracle* at Gallery Koyanagi in Japan in 2001. Based

upon a Japanese temple from the early Nara period (Temple of Dreams in Horyuji, dating from 739AD), it is constructed from dichroic glass which changes colour according to the location of the viewer. Miracle was comprised of an installation in salt, a limited edition lithograph and eight photographic works derived from the kernel of the *Dream Temple*.



Figure 55: Mariko Mori, *Dream Temple* (1997-1999)

The concept of *gesamtkunstwerk* is a recurring motif of Mori's practice and is visibly demonstrated in *Dream Temple* which stimulates a perceptive response in viewers. Mori achieves this through inviting each viewer to enter the shrine one at a time. Once inside, the person is immersed in a 3D (VisionDome) audiovisual experience of moving imagery based upon human foetuses. From this poignant film, Mori extrapolated a series of eight images which she gave titles such as *Bubbles*, *Galaxy* and *Cosmic* (Figure 56). Spherical forms dominate in Mori's practice, and the presentation of the suite evokes circular cosmic petri-dishes. Mori's recurring use of circular motifs, together with the new-age mystical titles used in the images establishes a link with psychedelic style, which similarly advocated globular, free-wheeling and circular form. Mori's claim that she 'wanted to create something which transcended time and space' also evokes comparison with

psychedelic ideas concerning achieving an altered state. The transient nature of psychedelic experience is in some way replicated in this suite of works, which appear equally as ephemeral. In this work Mori has created a hallucinatory, feminised and evocative enchantment.

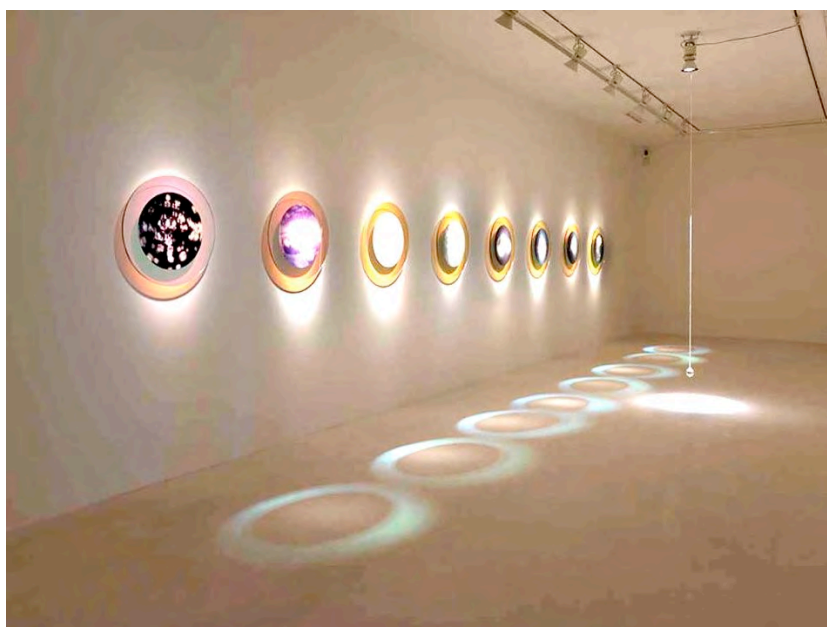


Figure 56: Mariko Mori, *Dream Temple* (1997-1999)

### **Pierre b. 1950 et Gilles<sup>15</sup> b. 1953 – France**

The artists who most poignantly inform this research are French artists Pierre et Gilles (Figure 57). In their painted photographic portraits of friends, celebrities and themselves, they flirt deliciously with idealised perceptions of beauty, body image, glamour, mythology, sexuality, romance, culture, pleasure and love. Reality and artifice morph conspicuously within their contrived and blissfully erotic images. Each portrait resonates with luminous colour, meticulous detailing and elaborate construction. The importance of

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<sup>15</sup> I here use the French conjunction 'et' instead of 'and' when referring to Pierre et Gilles as this is how they are commonly denoted. They use only their Christian names and operate as a single entity; hence the moniker Pierre et Gilles.



the arduous process Pierre and Gilles undertake to construct each image highlights their pleasure in the process of fabrication. As Gallery Director Lisa Phillips writes:

It is virtually impossible to look at the work of Pierre et Gilles without smiling. Their obvious pleasure in making art reminds the viewer of the pleasure in looking at art (Phillips 2000, p. 9).

Pierre et Gilles methodology is typically theatrical as it involves extravagant sets, makeup, decorative costuming, props and lighting. They sample from numerous cultural genres, such as theatre, photography, cinema, television, painting, graphics, fashion, and transmedia forms. This results in artwork which resides comfortably in mass culture such as the internet, CD's or in magazines as well as art galleries.



Figure 57: Pierre et Gilles, *Les Cosmonautes* (1991)

I am attracted in particular to their lush and exotic images of beautiful women. Ruth Gallardo (1988) is implacably beautiful as Sarasvati (Figure 58). She is posed within a frame of gold lattice inset with colourful flowers. Adorned with masses of jewellery and strumming a mandolin, she is portrayed as strikingly exotic. Catherine Deneuve (1991)

(Figure 59) appears to assimilate into a backdrop of blue sky and fluffy clouds as she sits amidst the froth of her voluminous skirts and gazes out dreamily. The Ice Lady, Sylvie Vartan (1994) (Figure 59) seduces sweetly, clad in a skin-tight red latex dress. She is posed against a glistening background of radiating bubbles framed by phallic icicles. These images pasteurise their highly sexualised content, representing a romantic vision of enchantment. As Pierre and Gilles explain: 'We speak about life with a gentle tongue, like the language used in poetry or love songs' (Turner 1994, p. 54). This is illustrated by their portrayals of women, in which they coalesce kitsch and the sublime with beauty and glamour.



Figure 58: Pierre et Gilles, *Sarasvati* (1988)





Figure 59: Pierre et Gilles: [left] *La Reine Blanche* (1991); [right] *Ice Lady* (1994)

Of specific interest to this research is the portrait of Radha (2000) (Figure 60) because the artists attain a heightened hyper-real aspect. Radha swims amid an effervescent *Swirl* of bubbles and myriad of coral-like clearly sexual organic forms. A trail of stars emanates from the sweep of her uplifted arm. Her perfect blond tresses frame an obviously 'enhanced' body which Pierre et Gilles have demurely covered in rubies, diamonds and gold. The luminous colour, staged backlighting, intense decorative quality and lavish imagery immediately evoke comparisons with Fragonard's *Girl on a Swing*. The joyous environs Pierre and Gilles replicate testify to their hedonistic intent and self-conscious preoccupation with illusion, transformation and desire.

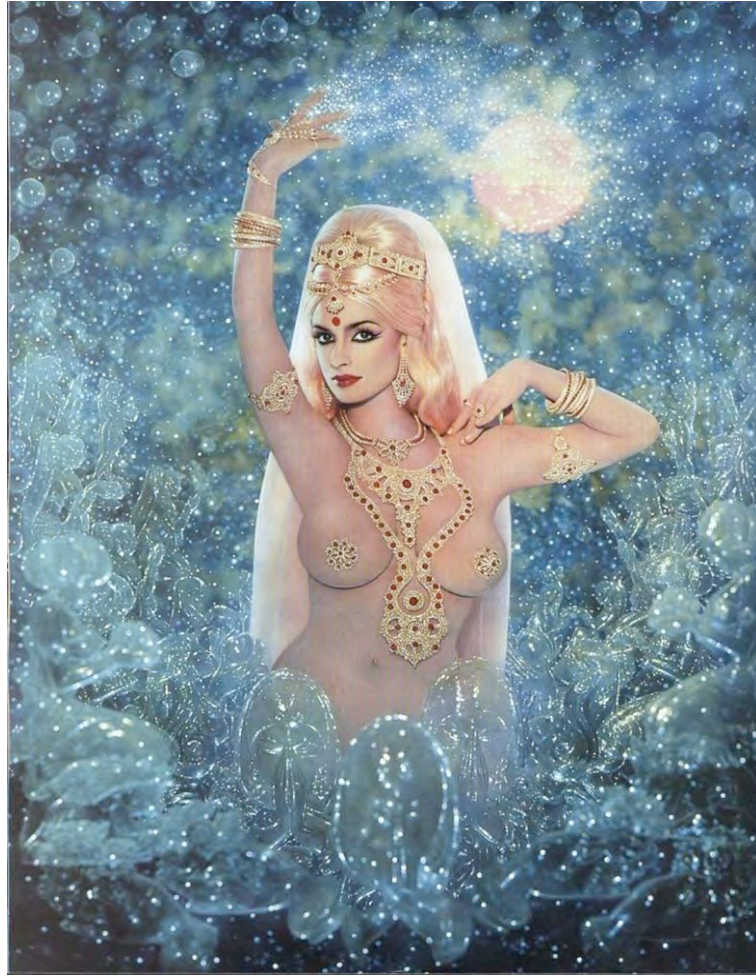


Figure 60: Pierre et Gilles, *Radha* (2000)

Pierre and Gilles' portraits of women reify their subject through the use of excessive artifice. Hyper enhanced and exquisitely perfected, the sitter is cleansed of individual traits and emerges transformed, from pupa to butterfly. These preternaturally beautiful human beings hover in a sumptuous milieu redolent with erotic and exotic flora, testimony to the divine creative intervention of Pierre and Gilles.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> **Related Art Practices:** Other related arts practitioners are listed below with a brief précis explaining why they are considered of interest to this project. Often there is a single aspect of the practice which appeals to theories of enchantment but does not sustain deeper scrutiny. Though the work does not sit within the parameters of the enquiry, these artists have been included in order to demonstrate that the scope of this enquiry has been broad, and that the artists selected in chapter 2:2 were chosen with due consideration.

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**Audrey Flack:** Luscious surfaces, rich colours and feminine accoutrements feature in the evocative paintings of Audrey Flack. Following on in the Dutch still-life tradition, the intimate clutter of Flack's life proliferates upon verdant canvases which employ a personal symbolic narrative. Flack's works are intensely enchanting, yet reverberate with deep melancholy. Pleasure is tempered with the inviolable presence of death, represented in imagery featuring skulls and vanitas.

**Liza Lou:** Utilises copious quantities of beads to completely coat entire environments and transforming them into sparkling idylls. Beer cans, flowers, grass, sinks and lawnmowers submit to complete enhancement. However her intent is to undermine their beauty with both the obsessive quality of the process and strategically placed motifs. These allude to the potential for violence and unhappiness in suburbia. Domesticity and banality mask a simmering dark underworld.

**Takashi Murakami:** Murakami's work has much to offer formally to this project. His colourful and abundant installations are breathtakingly ambitious in scale, finish and profligacy. Much of his imagery is inspired by manga and comic book culture and is obviously considered in terms of identity. In interviews he says 'I express hopelessness', yet his work gives an impression of irrepressible joy. I am therefore conflicted in regard to his practice; I respond to the escapist, exuberant and 'Superflat' aesthetic he adheres to, yet cannot reconcile this with his entirely bleak and existentialist rhetoric. For this reason I did not include him in the contemporary artists who comprise section 2:2

**Yayoi Kusama:** Although Kusama's installations are visually stunning, her spectacular and excessive works demonstrate hysteria akin to nausea. The level of angst and trauma in the work is palpable and distressing. Parts of the formal aspects of her work are admirable, such as the disorienting multiple reflective surfaces and scale, however this is not a pleasurable experience, but rather a compulsive form of self-obliteration.

**Gerder Steiner and Jorg Lenzlinger:** These artists make elegant and entrancing enchantments usually constructed from the debris of society. This is demonstrated by *The Water Hole* (2009) which I viewed while it was exhibited at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art in Melbourne. The work was seductive and served to charm, delight and captivate. However the display of intimacy identified as central to this project was not present in the work. I speculate that this is because the content stemmed from political, social and environmental issues.

**Australian artists:** It is relevant to articulate that contemporary Australian artists such as Kate Rhode, Louise Weaver, Julie Rrap, Louise Paramor and Mikala Dwyer were all of interest at various points during the research project. It is notable that these female practitioners often work with large-scale installation and with feminised content. Formally however their practices did not sit within the parameters of this project.



## CHAPTER 2:3 ENCHANTED

Section 3 considers other creative forms of contemporary enchantments within popular culture. This component of the study is wide-ranging and incorporates elements of music, cinema, fashion and design.

The referents were selected because they demonstrate tenets central to the research project, including superartifice, fiction, conspicuous stylisation, intimate thematic or gendered content. This part of the exegesis includes critiques of cinematic works such as *Moulin Rouge*, *Enchanted* and Disney's DVD Princess Barbie series, Haute Couture featuring John Galliano, the Re- enchantment Transmedia Project, and music video clips featuring celebrities Gwen Stefani and Katy Perry. These collective snapshots inform the research and provide a broader cultural context concerning contemporary visions of enchantment.

Of the many forms secular enchantment adopts in contemporary culture, cinema is perhaps the most effective. This is because the media of cinema is capable of creating multiple layers of meaning and providing synaesthetic and sophisticated experience. Technological advances have also benefitted cinema leading to more evolved forms of the medium. For this reason I have included several examples of successful cinematic fantasy in contemporary cinema and video.

### ***Enchanted* (The Film)**

The 2007 fantasy-musical *Enchanted* is a sophisticated and transcendent hyper-real experience targeted at 'tweens'. It is a cleverly composed production, which successfully integrates actual characters, animation and virtual reality. The film is a multi-faceted, colourful *Swirl* of imagery, music and dance which at times achieves the hallucinogenic.

Its hybrid form playfully elucidates the gap between the 'real' world of fiction, the construed world of cinema and the imagined world of fairytales.



Figure 61: *Enchanted* (2007)

The plot is based upon the archetypal Cinderella fairytale and begins once- upon-a-time in the land of Andalasia. Here, a simulated Princess Giselle flits about an enchanted, animated fairytale world, cherished by a cast of twittering birds and chirruping animals. In line with the original fairytale narrative, the Disney Princess falls prey to an evil stepmother. The malevolent woman pushes her into a fountain, which acts as a portal in which Giselle is transformed into corporeal form and arrives in a 'real' American city.

Giselle's virtual Prince follows her, similarly transitioning into human form. While intent on saving her, he encounters a distinct lack of chivalry in the real world, while his outfit is a continual cause of amusement. The melodrama continues with extravagant musical

numbers and inappropriately saccharine behaviour. Perhaps the most memorable aspect is the Princess' disconcerting predisposition to burst into cheerful song and dance. The story resolves delightfully with the mortal Giselle choosing to relinquish her animated Princess status and remain in America to marry her true love who 'ticks all the boxes' as a divorced lawyer and father of one. Her first Prince re-focuses and betroths another mortal, spinning back through the portal to live happily ever after in Virtual land.

Despite the cheesy and frivolous aspects of this movie, *Enchanted* navigates innovative territory, traversing wildly between computer generated imagery, live action film making and traditional cinematic techniques. The fluid and amorphous exchanges between fiction and fantasy are so seamless that the viewer negotiates them with avid awareness and delight. Cinema as fiction is overtly acknowledged and is implicit to enjoyment of the movie. I contend that *Enchanted* is consequently a refined form of contemporary fantasy.

### **Princess Barbie DVDs**

There is an intriguing hypnotic 'bubble effect' evident in a series of recent cinematic fictions designed for young girls. This extensive collection features Barbie in various 'Princess roles' such as *Rapunzel* (2002), *the Sugar Plum Fairy* (2001), *the Princess and the Pauper* (2004), *Swan Lake* (2003) and *Fairytopia* (2005). Barbie was 'commissioned' by Mattel to star in the series which is comprised of eighteen DVDs produced between 2001 and 2010.

Barbie, already a fabricated icon, receives top billing as the 'star' of these animations, evidencing a bizarre hyper-real genre. Barbie mutates from an idealised hyper-adult figured doll, into an animated girl, who plays a fairytale Princess role. There is nothing 'pure' about these fantasies.



Figure 62: Barbie (2001-2010) video series. Three DVD covers from the series: *Barbie and the Nutcracker* (2001), *Barbie as the Princess and the Pauper* (2004) and *Barbie: Fairytopia* (2005).

Barbie is an artificial phenomenon whose assumed identity has been informed by social doctrines concerning desirable femininity. She is a superb cliché, her impossible ‘perfection’ attested to by her unattainable body proportions. In addition, beautiful Princess Barbie also paints beautifully and is an accomplished practitioner of the arts. Historically, romantic notions of femininity and the arts have often been fused; the illusion innate to both is central to this investigation. Both creator and creation, doll and virtual actress, vision and visionary, Barbie’s inflated persona in these video animated enchantments embodies the ultimate hyper-real logic.

### **Moulin Rouge (The Film)**

Director Baz Luhrmann’s cinematic work *Moulin Rouge* (2001) contributes a quixotic dimension to the pursuit of pleasure. It is a sophisticated amalgam of fantasy and reality that successfully invokes a dizzying frenetic state. Luhrmann creates a *Swirling* alternate world which is divinely indulgent and blissfully devoid of substance. He achieves this by parodying the musical genre and the cinematic process simultaneously. Close-ups are too close; pores glisten with sweat and lipstick runs outside its parameters. Image frames are sliced into a flickering frenzy as an eclectic music score melds rock, opera, disco and divas. Lavish sets are belied by their cardboard cut- out appearance and a sentimental

narrative of love is continually parodied within sumptuous backdrops inset with glamorous characters and extravagant hybridised costumes.



Figure 63: *Moulin Rouge* (2001)

The story is universal and concerns an impoverished young writer called Christian (played by Ewan McGregor) who falls madly in love with the terminally ill courtesan and star of the Moulin Rouge cabaret, Satine (Nicole Kidman). Luhrmann cleverly integrates multiple entertainment forms such as melodrama, musical, love story and theatre, to create a burlesque spectacle. Luhrmann's seduction and engagement with the cinematic process is paramount, exemplified by the sophisticated style, flawless production and lush finish of the film. *Moulin Rouge* is a whirling and sensual spectacle which pays flamboyant homage to idealistic 1970s psychedelic ideals of peace, love, freedom, truth and beauty.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> There are many more examples of cinematic enchantment continually being released. The cinema scrutinised here has been selected as it has hyper-femme subject matter, demonstrates sentiment, love or an explicitly "high-keyed" aesthetic (i.e. extravagant, hedonistic, hyper-real). The films have also been produced and marketed exclusively to appeal to girls and women, or display markedly feminine characteristics.

## **Re-enchantment (Transmedia Documentary Project)**

The recent establishment of a cross-media project called Re-enchantment indicates recognition of the value of fairytales and fantasy in contemporary culture. The project is devised for adults and functions through social networking sites, television, radio and a sophisticated interactive website which provides an on-line gallery space for visual artists and others to participate. The emergence of the Re-enchantment project at this particular time in history provides persuasive and salient evidence for Saler and Landy's argument that paralleling the continuous disenchantment of the world is a compelling and continual counter-tendency for magical re- enchantment (2009, p. 3).

The director of the Re-enchantment project Sarah Gibson stresses the continuing relevance of fairytales for contemporary adult audiences, saying that fairytales persist to concomitantly entertain, fascinate, horrify and mystify. These intrinsic qualities provide a forum for examining topical questions concerning social issues such as the princess fantasy, cosmetic foot surgery, the demonisation of older women and death (Gibson in Krauth 2011, p. 27).

The Re-enchantment transmedia project is an innovative interface and navigates pluralistic platforms for interaction by embracing new technologies and media. It is also incorporates many creative disciplines including literature, music and art within a single site. The Re-enchantment transmedia documentary project assists to validate the form of fantasy within a contemporary milieu. I submit that its primary value lies in facilitating critical appraisal.

## **Haute Couture**

Nowhere are enchantments so quixotic and sumptuously purveyed in popular culture than in haute couture. Moving beyond the merely prosaic (i.e. fashion), haute couture is an abundant area of enchantment as it engages sensuously with feminine bodies,

appurtenances and desire. Couched as entertainment, haute couture manifests as glorious fiction related in lavish, spectacular and theatrical settings. In an article for Vogue Australia Tim Banks clearly elucidates this point:

Fashion's fairytale is haute couture, the yearly parade in Paris of outfits that have as much to do with the practical concerns of everyday dressing as a chinchilla in a sauna (Oct 2010, p. 44).

He goes on to assess the relevance and longevity of haute couture in relation to contemporary culture, claiming that it is adapting to a different milieu which will see it endure because the central focus of haute couture is individuality. He writes that audiences seek authenticity and the bespoke - 'the truly informed, special and personal'- and that despite the affluence and privilege innate to haute couture that it will never be 'the end', but rather a reincarnation of desire. Part of his argument rests upon the conspicuous investment of tradition, labour, craftsmanship and time devoted to haute couture garments. Banks sees the association of glamour and luxury as important for desire and durability, conveyed by names like Chanel, Lacroix, Dior, Valentino and Givenchy. Most importantly he stresses the importance of the creative process in the provision of haute couture (2010, p.44).

Designer John Galliano has for many decades encapsulated the spirit of haute couture. He creates spectacular visions of love that star himself as the grand couturier. The fashion shows that Galliano has designed for Dior are bizarre installations which operate at the nexus between fashion, art and theatre. Both graphic and cinematic, these extravaganzas function to transport the audience to mad fantasy lands resplendent with florals, lace, tulle, linen and washed silks. Galliano's show themes have ranged from 'drowned worlds' of whiteness and pearls, to 'geisha gardens' that blossom with exotic origami- inspired paper-costumes. His influences are diverse, ranging from eighteenth century cartoon-satirist James Gillray to artists Constantin Brancusi and Amedeo Clemente Modigliani. Galliano interprets and transforms these influences into the unique vision widely known as 'Gallianoland' in the fashion world.





Figure 64: Models present creations by British designer John Galliano as part his Fall/Winter 2010 - 2011, July 5 2010; and Spring 2007 collections

The Dior runway show for 2005 was typically enthralling and featured a host of frothily-attired, mock-Louis XIV sexy models. Appearing to emerge from beneath a grey apocalyptic sky, they glided through an open gothic gateway to freeze in dramatic poses. Wearing capricious dresses, profligate headwear and sky-high heels, the models struck poses between urns and statues, slowly building up into a delicate visual collage of romantic femininity. The climax was presaged by a bolt of lightning, bells tolling and the sound of running horses. Galliano himself finally arrived, alighting from a coach in a clap of thunder before proceeding to the front of his feminine guard of honour. Giddily excessive, this extravagant form of entertainment has typified Galliano's haute couture shows for Dior. His playful enchantments conflate passion, sweetness and desire. Galliano's divinations explicate a unique and compelling vision assiduously dedicated to femininity and narcissism.

### **Music Video Clips: Gwen Stefani and Katy Perry**

Diva and pop culture icon Gwen Stefani has made two extraordinary video clips which accompany her songs *What you waiting for?* (2004) and *The Sweet Escape* (2006). Stefani has poetically re-envisioned two classic fairytale narratives, resulting in highly personalised and innovative interpretations of enchantment.



*What you waiting for?* (2004) begins innocuously with Stefani in modern guise seated at a piano in her studio and contemplating a large fobwatch which monotonously intones 'tick tock tick tock.' The scene fragments into a series of images of the fobwatch tumbling through space, intertwined with images of Stefani-as-Alice plummeting into a wonderland, portrayed here as a gracious, formal European maze-garden. Stefani's prosaic pop music is accompanied by dizzying camera angles and dazzling images inset with curvaceous swans, weird creatures, gorgeous costumes, lush scenery and super-synthetic backdrops. The viewer follows Alice's evolution through wonderland, pursuing her up, around and down narrow hedges. The effect is vertiginous as the audience replicates Alice's experiences of being transformed from miniscule to gigantic, fragile to bold, imprisoned to free- falling and incessant movement to stasis. The film clip ends by looping back to the beginning, using a metafictional device to reconcile past, present and future.



Figure 65: Gwen Stefani (2004) in *What you waiting for?* film still

This clip is distinguished by the way it has been produced. Each frame has been attentively drafted. The images have then been shot, shuffled and spliced in such a way as to disrupt the narrative sequence and timing. The frames move quickly and form a flickering mirage effect similar to that of old super eight cinema. Despite this editing, the

film clip has been composed in such a way that the clip retains a rational flow, achieving a sophisticated form of technological alchemy.



Figure 66: Gwen Stefani (2004) film stills from *What you waiting for?*

*What you waiting for?* is a clever interpretation of the Alice in Wonderland tale in which Stefani infuses the same delight and wonder which characterises the original written story into a visual musical art form. Throughout the clip Stefani re-invents herself, in a manner comparable with contemporaries Madonna and Kylie Minogue. Like chameleons, all three frequently change appearance, their extraordinary evolution indicative of feminine dream-fantasy states. Although *What you waiting for?* is brought to an abrupt finish with 'The End' emblazoned upon the screen, 'the ending is actually the beginning' (Zipes 1991, p. xiii). Stefani has used the classic fairytale paradigm as a tool to connote that the end is really not an end at all.

*The Sweet Escape* is from Stefani's album of the same name and has its origin in the fairytale Rapunzel. In it, she continues the theme of re-invention although the music filmclip is not so feverishly composed as in *What you waiting for?* The narrative begins with Stefani exemplifying a fashionable prisoner. Resplendent in a black and white striped body suit, she is confined in a gilded cell perched atop a high-rise building. The narrative emulates the original Rapunzel tale as Stefani uses her fake blond tresses to descend to an awaiting car in which she makes good her escape. She is assisted in her flight by two

space-age Japanese harajuku girls<sup>18</sup> and an impressively large genie- like African-American man.



Figure 67: Gwen Stefani, (2006) album cover for *The Sweet Escape*

The clip abounds with symbols and stereotypes referring to freedom and eroticism: a large gold key to liberation, gilded birds in a golden cage, a caged bedroom replete with drawbridge-like chained bed, and the inclusion of assistants from differing cultural backgrounds. The soundtrack is a perky take upon ‘bad girls’, skewing the expectation of a neat moralistic conclusion.

In complete contrast, Katy Perry’s music clip *California Gurls* from the album *Teenage Dream* (2010) can only be described as first-class eye candy. Perry enters a celestial land of candy upon opening up a pink bonbon box and is immediately transformed into a hyper-feminised being. Clad in scanty, lurid outfits or nothing at all, she sports outrageous

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<sup>18</sup> Harajuku is a vibrant youth street style of fashion and is a mesh of many styles including cosplay, decora, visual kei, gothic and Lolita. Harajuku girls are a fashion phenomenon unique to the Shibuya ward of Tokyo in Japan. Each girl makes their own outfit with the intention of an intensely personalised, hand -tailored and eclectic outcome.

rainbow-coloured hair and garish makeup. Throughout the clip, Perry is re-incarnated in a host of erotically-charged guises. Inside this lolly heaven she is joined by a chorus line of dizzy divas who gyrate upon ice-cream beaches and bounce up against sticky jellies. Meanwhile, Perry floats nude upon a miasmic cloud of fairy floss, licks lollypops, and squirts cream from her pointy nipple-bra, in a series of images dedicated to saccharine indulgence. There are entire candy landscapes upon which to gorge, inlaid with the delectable Katy and offset by explicit and salacious content.



Figure 68: Katy Perry (2010) still from *California Gurls* music video clip and single

The soundtrack too is completely vacuous. Repetitive murmurs of desire are overlaid with feature male-artist Snoop Dog's resonant bass. He also appears in the clip, a type of cool dark royalty dressed in a white lolly-print suit with cane. The subject matter alludes to Willy Wonka's chocolate factory but in comparison is assiduously inane as it has none of the foreboding subtext of the movie. *California Gurls* (featuring Snoop Dog) is a celebration of pleasure, eroticism, femininity, gluttony and decadence. The audience is enticed to pursue Perry into a weightless world of sticky delight.

## CHAPTER 3 PREFACE

Chapter 3 describes the process of design, creation and fabrication of the exhibition *La Galaxie de Joy*. The sculptural practice and artwork represents the culmination of the research conducted on the subject Visions of Enchantment: Fictions of Intimacy within Contemporary Art. Chapter 3 is divided into subsections which chronicle major developments in the methodology.

### CHAPTER 3:2 THE PLAN

The aim was to create a celestial fiction and fabricate a hedonistic counter cosmos within a gallery space. Initially, the artwork was conceived as an installation entitled Planet Joybelle which centred upon the creation of a three dimensional and synaesthetic stellar space. Inspired by perfume bottles, the intention was to coalesce key features of flacon design within a romantic celestial milieu in order to create a quasi-mystical and magical enchantment. The plan was to fabricate a suite of 'genie bottle' sculptural forms which variously replicated the evocative qualities implicit to perfume bottles.

To further the research involved extrapolating and articulating a set of sculptural strategies able to facilitate a profound experience of enchantment. This process was speculative, but conducted logically, resulting in a novel formal methodology designated as superstyle. Precisely what formal elements comprise superstyle are itemised in Chapter 1:6, and these developed responsively in concert with the technical construction of the work as detailed below.

A key research aim was to create an innovative, individualised and feminised experience of enchantment. To achieve this it was necessary to experiment with representation of femininity within art and how to formulate and communicate a specifically feminised

visual language. It was important that the outcome reflect the apolitical, expressive, intimate and emphasis upon diversity focus of the research and not be prescriptive. Therefore a significant part of chapter 3 comprises experimentation with the idea of developing an identifiably feminine aesthetic. This was explored during the making of a suite of nine figurative sculptures which incorporated primary tenets of superstyle together with multiple variances in scale, colour, surface ornamentation, materials, design etc.

My research contends that to successfully construct an enchantment articulating a narrative of intimacy the process of making must be a self- fulfilling prophecy of desire. This requires some form of physical investment in the method which, in this practice, was intentionally amplified to not only express veneration but also to articulate a point of difference with related contemporary art practitioner's working with themes of enchantment. The hypothesis is that the outcome would be more profound given the commitment to bodily duress, intimate genesis and absolute investment in the creative process.

## CHAPTER 3:3 PROGRESSING THE PRACTICE

### STEP 1: COLLECTING

In line with the conceptual concerns outlined in previous chapters of this exegesis my initial response was to collect attractive objects. The focus for the collecting was perfume bottles and I was fortunate to amass hundreds of mainly contemporary perfume bottles, often acquired as donations. This element was important as, not only did I then work in a heavily scented environment, I was also privy to confidences concerning the circumstances of the perfume which further informed the research I was conducting.

Occasionally a perfume was a 'signature' perfume, in which case I would get multiples in different sizes; sometimes I received 'outsider' scents including masculine bottles. There was the surprise of anonymous donations left surreptitiously outside the studio door; or



once an elegant bottle was left outside the studio window, like an offering by a member of the public with no access to the building. At times I was given full bottles which had been given as gifts to a recipient who disliked the scent upon their skin – i.e. it did not align with their sense of identity. One contributor gave me at least eight empty Chanel bottles in various sizes and told me that it was the only perfume she had ever used, and that she would never use anything else as long as it was in production. Chanel defined her.

I was often intoxicated and dazed by the contrasting fragrances as I worked. The names on the bottles were redolent of luxury, beauty, exoticism and intrigue: Fragile, Joy, Bliss, Innocence, Black Pearls, Angel, Euphoria, j'Adore, Magic, Fantasy, Lovely, Pleasures, Chance, Volupte, Forbidden Fruit, Sheer Obsession, Baby Doll, Dolce Vita, Envy, Miracle, Beautiful, Bright Crystal, Kiss.



Figure 69: Perfume bottles amassed in studio , (2008-2012), photographs taken by artist<sup>19</sup>

Alluring names like Elizabeth Arden, Shiseido, Galliano, Miyake, Versace, Givench, Helena Rubenstein, Kenzo, Yves St Laurent, Bulgari and Jean Patou were discreetly applied to the bottles. Almost universally, each bottle was inscribed with 'Paris', a moniker equating to sophistication, seduction, romanticism and fervent desire. The studio

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<sup>19</sup> The images in this chapter are a narrative of process. They are photographs which have been taken by the artist. There are no sizes supplied as the photographs have been cropped to accommodate the format of the exegesis.

was perennially transformed by their presence in the evanescent flux of day and night light filtering through glass.

As well as the perfume bottles, I continued to add to an already large 'wardrobe' stock of feminised collectibles. From beads, glitters, stencils, ribbons, fabrics, laces, sequins, feathers, lighting accessories, mirror pieces, pipe cleaners, pearl strands, scrapbooking accessories, girly stencils with flower/heart motifs, baubles to feminine accoutrements such as hair curlers, butterfly clips, and broken jewellery. These artefacts comprise the palette for the work and proliferate in the final installation.

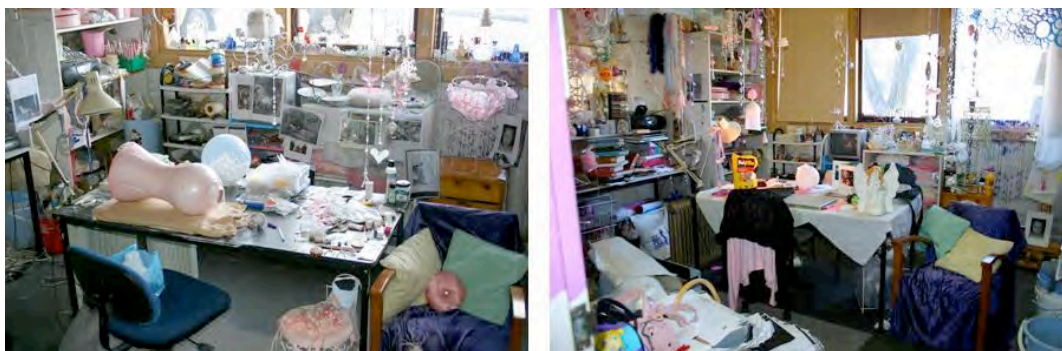


Figure 70: Studio Interior, Jan & Dec 2011

I also accumulated an assemblage of various sized light shades, light casings, scrolled metalwork bowls, metal stands, tubing, Perspex rings, mirrors, circular 'connectors' and industrial cardboard which I cut in circular rings. The rationale for collecting was intuitive yet there were some commonalities, such as a commitment to voluptuous shapes, vessels which function to contain light, metal lacework and decorative surfaces. I piled up these various elements to create clumsy, curvy forms. The process from here became a dialogue between the assemblages, the forms of the perfume bottles forms I was studying and drawing.



## STEP 2: DESIGN OF THE SPACE

The installation design was complex due to the diversity and array of requisite elements, mandating intense detailing to ensure a successful ‘enchanted’ outcome. The varying elements had to collude in order to delight, so required a common aesthetic mode. Yet, in consideration of the highly feminised content, the emphasis upon diversity was also paramount as I did not want to advocate a single view of femininity. Affording multiple viewing points in the space was a primary consideration, together with a desire to invoke a theatrical and dramatic encounter while heightening the immersive nature of the experience.



Figure 71: Concept drawing for *Planet Joybelle*; pen drawing on black paper, 2008

It is interesting to note that despite many experiments, reassessments, revisions and interrogation of the early design for Planet Joybelle that the initial vision remained strongly intact. The only alterations to the design made during the duration of the research project have been in relation to the scale of the purchases and degree of embellishment, and

these were made for utilitarian reasons such as availability of certain materials in bulk and restrictions upon time. There were also a number of additional elements such as the portals (see Step 4:iv) which were fully evolved as prototypes but omitted for a number of reasons as detailed in the Further Experiments section below. Of most significance is the change of the name from Planet Joybelle to *La Galaxie de Joy*, which occurred as part of the evolutionary process of the practice. The reason for this development is described later in this chapter.



Figure 72: Initial concept drawing of floor plan for *Planet Joybelle*; pastels on black paper, 2008

The following five elements comprise the nexus of the installation:

- The Planets: nine sculptural forms of varying scale incorporating independent ambient light sources.

- The Eiffel Tower: a sculptural 'centrepiece', heart or altar as the focal point of the space.
- Making an Entrance: an ante-chamber, vestibule, portal or dedicated entrance envisaged as a transitional space.
- Celestial space: the creation of a meditative and magical environment via blue wall colouration and specialised lighting effects. The wall corners to be softened and effectively curved by cascades of blue fabric.
- Stellar floor: an intricately patterned cloud floor to infer stellar space and the effect of walking upon clouds. The floor to be painted to provide a shimmering, star-scattered surface for the sculptures to 'float' upon.

### **i. The Planets**

Nine sculptural forms, nominally assigned as planets form the nucleus of the installation. There was significant investment of time in the formation of the sculptures due to intensive experimentation during the construction phase and the complexity, ambition and scale of the construction process. The intention is that the sculptures collude within the installation space to inspire enchantment. Therefore the identification of a discrete methodology aimed at instigating magic, alchemy, transformation and sensations of wonder and delight form the greater part of this chapter and comprise the primary research outcome for the project.

### **ii. The Eiffel Tower**

*Eiffel Tower* (Figure 74) is a fragile work conceived as the frail 'centrepiece' or heart of the installation space. Explicitly alluding to Paris and perfume, the tower comprises the delicate focal point of the firmament. In comparison to the opaque and weighty sculptural forms of the planets, the tower is semi-translucent and is intended to shimmer tentatively in air currents when there is presence.

Each of the four legs comprises 12 clear Perspex balls, the 48 transparent orbs correlating to my age then further cosseted inside intricate crocheted pods. Threaded together in single strands and hung in 4 clusters, the pods become teardrop nets and loop gently to a central pivot. Each 'bubble' contains a coloured transparency derived from close-up photographs of my sculptural surfaces. These in turn are delicately beaded with my favourite perfume names, such as joy, fragile and kiss.



Figure 73: Detail of the *Eiffel Tower* under construction in candidate's studio.

### **iii: Décor (Making an Entrance, Celestial Space and Stellar Floor)**

I have conflated these three elements as they are essentially décor aimed at defining and stylising the space. This is a typical feature of my practice. The term décor is here used to denote style and is intended as an integral part of the outcome.

The décor is intended to create a sympathetic setting for the sculptural elements which are interspersed over the entire exhibition space. Lighting is key to achieving a romanticised



and mesmerising atmospheric effect, with theatre lights employed to cast a subtle pink blush of colour throughout the space. Given that there are many sculptures, each one is autonomous yet situated in proximity to another, meaning that each form functions in a reciprocal relationship with the others. Initial plans included a Pathway to Joy, which was to comprise a stylised design version of Joy upon the floor. It was envisaged that this would link the sculptural elements, but was abandoned as an unnecessary adjunct given the busyness of the space and that this could function to disable choice by effectively dictating a particular path.

### STEP 3: MANUFACTURING THE SCULPTURES

#### **i. Experimentation with Process**

There was substantive experimentation conducted prior to beginning the first sculptural form. There were also a number of 'white rabbit diversions' where I got some way towards devising a new process or artwork and then abandoned this in consideration of the totality of the installation. For example, the works had merit but assumed the potential to be a whole new body of work and therefore had to be abandoned in order to facilitate the installation in its entirety.

It would be easy to dismiss these diversions as a waste of time and resources, but this is a practice based enquiry and these experiments were valuable in terms of (i) increasing my skill base, (ii) inspiring new avenues of enquiry for future practice and (iii) assisting to define boundaries of the research. The process of making artwork is often not linear or even logical; accident and unexpected disjunctions often create exciting new developments and knowledge is gained circuitously and sensually via the process of experimentation. A brief description of other experiments and prototypes conducted during the term of this doctorate is included at the conclusion of Step 3.

Preparation for the construction of the sculptures was initiated with a series of drawings methodically investigating the solar system. These drawings informed the installation design of nine curvaceous sculptural forms of varying sizes. I considered re-interpreting identifiable characteristics of particular orbs such as the cloudy petulant face of Venus, turning its face away from the rest of the solar system; the diminutive status of Mercury; the immensity and tenuous rings of Jupiter; the distinctive red colouring and barren surface of Mars; the raw energy of the sun; the thin oscillating rings of Saturn; the featureless white blur of Uranus and finally the vibrant submarine blue of Neptune. I surveyed the sizes of the planets and their relationship to each other, using a kinetic mobile of the universe.



Figure 74: Perfume bottle drawings, 2006-08; Silver ink on black paper

During this exploration I identified that the actuality of astronomy was not significant and that the planets were nominal ones – that the galaxy of joy was a metaphor for an idealised interpretive construct and personalised universe informed by what I loved: the evocative shapes of perfume bottles. This discovery was immensely liberating, meaning the planets could be anything I wanted them to be, so I embarked on a hedonistic odyssey.

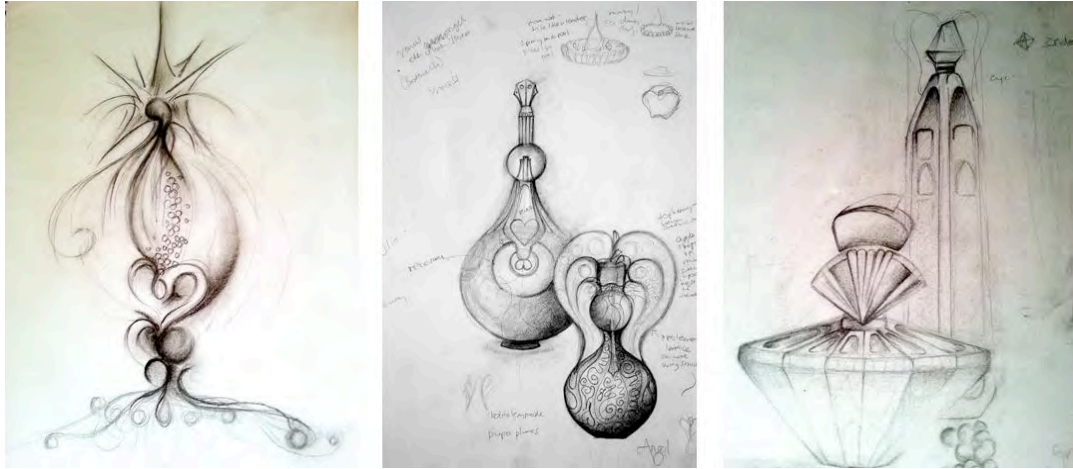


Figure 75: Perfume bottle drawings, 2006-08; Pencil, ink and pastel on paper. Images taken from assorted sketchbooks

A major development in methodology occurred when the collection, observation, research and drawings of perfume bottles and planets began to coalesce with fabrication of the sculptural shapes. There was a fluid process of exchange between the drawings of the flacons and the sculptural assemblages already evolving in the studio. As the focus for making was the creation of sculptural forms, each shape evolved organically. Some remained faithful to a drawing, others responded to the collected materials which comprised their armature as the contour was suggested by an existing shape, then manipulated with the addition or subtraction of other plates or pieces.

As the sculptures took shape, I began to ascribe them angelic desirable feminised qualities such as beauty, grace and elegance. They became at once angels, stars, planets and genie bottles. I attributed them descriptive monikers informed by dominant characteristics, such as *Mushroom*, *Shell*, *Flame*, *Wave*, *Swirl*, *Teardrop*, *Folly*, *Bulb* and *Lily*. Like perfume, lipstick or nail polish, each genie bottle began to assume an individual signature, typically stereotypical and highly stylised, yet intensely evocative. I have used these names as sub-headings in the following discussion on process in order to distinguish particular stages in the fabrication process.



Direct engagement with the armatures resulted in a flux between the feminised flacon forms and stellar imagery. Integral to this was consideration of how the sculptures related to each other and the experience of the space. The vision became whole, the project not about negotiating a series of autonomous planets but rather engaging in actual space with a collective of fictional orbs hovering within a private universe. The name of the installation was reconsidered and changed to *La Galaxie de Joy*, an allusion to gendered celestial space and in recognition of the centrality of France to perfume bottles.

## **ii. Teardrop**

*Teardrop* functioned as a prototype to establish protocols for the following sculptures. There is a marked difference in construction between this first sculpture and the following eight.

Progressing directly from a drawing to the workshop, a very literal interpretation of a particular flacon shape occurred. The proportions of the drawing were faithfully reproduced by cutting out and threading a series of circular wooden ply discs of varying sizes onto a central pivot point. Thin plywood strips were then bent, manipulated and stapled to the outside of the discs to form a strong armature, upon which was glued multiple layers of printmaker's gauze to form a strong and impervious stratum (see Figure 77). The central support column of wooden support discs was consequently chiselled out, leaving a hollow teardrop armature able to accommodate wiring and electrical work (Figure 77).



Figure 77: Details of construction stages of *Teardrop*

Several layers of plaster were applied to the existing armature, building up from a gritty polyfilla through potting plaster, cornice plaster, surface plaster and fine skim coats. Each application was refined through an exhaustive sanding process. For *Teardrop* I used only sheets of various grit sandpapers, but with the following sculptures I became more efficient, using an angle grinder and palm sander in the initial stages to carve out a voluptuous form which I would then continue to refine to a state of superior smoothness.

The decision to use plaster for the surface of the sculptures was made because it provided a resilient yet smooth surface. Able to be constantly modified and moulded wet or dry, plaster was receptive to nuance.

Experiments with various papers and additives were conducted to see if a lighter substrate could be obtained, but these surfaces tended to crumble and not build well upon one another without cracking. The use of plaster was also conceptually satisfying, given the long association of plaster as a sculptural medium and as a contemporary surface application in domestic housing.

Most importantly for this research, plaster allowed for sensuous engagement with the surface, my hands able to sense inconsistencies in the surface and remedy them, as well as define and accentuate the sinuous curves I was aiming to achieve. It was a source of pleasure shaping 'responsive' curves that took their form from the unique proportions of my hand.

In the quest for intimacy, I assuaged my desire with literal engagement in the process. I considered the possibility of casting the next sculpture in the series but chose to continue with sculpting the works individually. I proceeded with this more laborious, obsessive, cumbersome and undoubtedly expensive option because I recognised that there was a performative element to the making; the frisson and engagement of my body with the work and the requisite satisfaction of that commitment was important. The result was a form of exquisite frustration; a compromise between the desire to make pristine and symmetrical sculptures and the implicit imperfection, unbalance and sensuous nature of the encounter.

Conducting experiments into surface applications was a significant next step in developing the first prototype. *Teardrop* was coated with several layers of *Shellac* to seal the surface, and then spray painted with pearlescent automotive paint to ensure a sleek, dense and enduring surface. Pearlescent autopaunts are very difficult to use and streak easily, but this part of the process was relatively successful with a rich cream pearl finish resulting.

Electrical work was then contracted and a blue light installed into the bottom cavity with the aim being to flood blue colouring out of the base onto the floor to imply a state of celestial suspension. Initially a perspex hoop was commissioned in order to achieve elevation and allow the flow of light to play upon the floor surface. Elevating and supporting each subsequent sculpture was a major consideration in the design process and for each a different solution was prescribed.

A significant part of the making process involved deciding how to re-interpret the highly ornate lids typical of perfume bottles. The stopper for *Teardrop* was formed from an assemblage of collected items. It comprises a heavily beaded and glittered lace metal fruit basket upon which rests a spherical frosted light fitting. Florists' beads upon wires are twisted inside the sphere, and masses of miniature mirror pieces and hanging beads are glued to the outside neck. Stencilled glittered floral and heart motifs were dusted onto the 'shoulders' of the sculpture, despite problems encountered working on the silky smooth automotive surface. The whole was intensely embellished with beading and pearls. I developed a beading process which entailed obtaining customised adhesives on-line from America that did not bleed, frost or run upon perpendicular or curved surfaces. The process of beading upon sculptures was relentless and difficult with the bodies having to be slowly moved as each part was bejewelled.

A pink light was inserted into the neck cavity of *Teardrop*, with a diffuser slotted over the top. This soft pink light emanating from inside the form lit up the frilly beaded *Bulb* 'stopper', also casting lacy patterns on the outer neck of the vessel. The creation of pastel pink light proved challenging. Although many colours are readily available such as blue and red, pink is an anomaly and must be created by the addition of specialised pink or red gels over white lights. The addition of the lights was a definitive moment, as when lit the sculpture assumed the envisaged magical aura.



Figure 78: Completed *Teardrop* prototype in situ at Long Gallery, Hobart 2011 (L); and Detail of orb with lighting and eye-piece hole (R).

Incorporated into the original design for *Teardrop* is a 'miniature world' able to be viewed from an eye-piece inserted into the upper shoulders of the form. This diminutive hidden world is attached to the inside of the armature, and assembled from a spherical frosted light fitting, into which was nestled a luxurious miniature perfume bottle upon a bed of soft makeup pads and feathers. Necessarily, this 'secret world' is backlit from within the form and to see it a viewer must approach the sculpture, bend slightly and place their eye adjacent to the eyepiece (see Figure 78). This was a difficult part of the construction process but the result was highly effective, the result being an intimate and voyeuristic encounter.

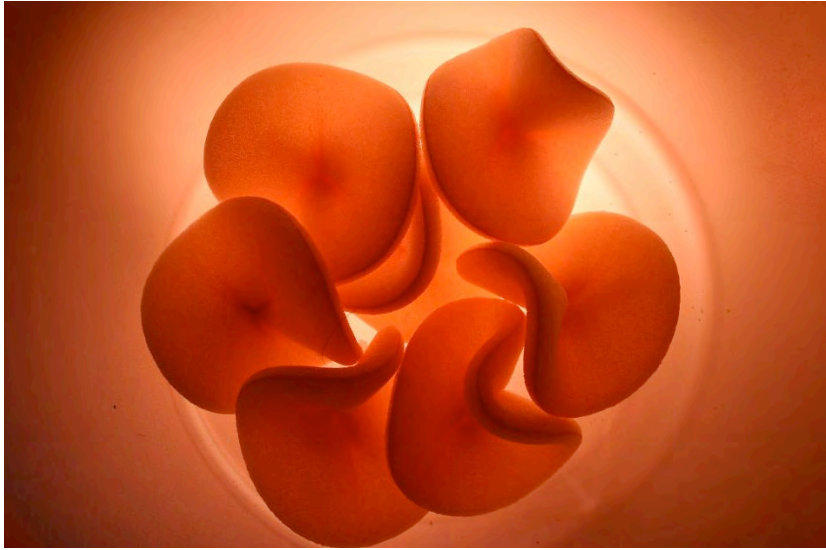


Figure 79: Detail of discrete interior compartment for *Teardrop*, viewed through eyeglass and assembled from makeup pads.

Upon analysis the first sculpture was not only extremely time intensive in the development phase, but was also only partly successful in capturing the aesthetic vision I wished to convey. It lacked whimsy and lightness. This sensation extended to the surface skin which proved unable to accommodate some of the capricious bead and colouring applications I envisaged. My hypothesis was that the methodology I adopted for *Teardrop* did not suit my way of working as the process was essentially industrial. Although the sculptural outcome was professional, I wanted to attain a more fluid and sinuous silhouette, which I contemplated as I began formation of the next form. The time invested in constructing the initial sculpture prototype was a positive investment in terms of acquisition of knowledge, and facilitated the rapid succession of the next eight forms.

### **iii. *Folly***

The remaining sculptures progressed in a more organic and intuitive fashion, the armature being formulated slowly rather than designed and executed.



*Folly*, which is smaller in scale, is the second sculpture in the series. From conception, the sculpture was intended to pay homage to Fragonard and therefore pink, frivolous, and gratuitously ornamented. Designed to perch upon a rococo-style frame (which had once been a birdcage base), *Folly* assumed a feminine silhouette and resembled a miniature dressmakers model. The sculpture was initiated by tentatively piling up varying sizes of thick cardboard rings until a pleasing symmetry and curvaceous appearance was achieved (see Figure 80).



Figure 80: Stages in the construction of *Folly*

Once the form had evolved, the discs were glued together ensuring there was an adequate central cavity in order to accommodate lighting. I simplified the original process used upon *Teardrop*, and after fabricating an armature comprising several layers of printmaker's gauze onto the outside of the discs, applied plaster directly to the surface. Multiple applications of different types of plaster were then repeatedly shaped, sanded, re-coated and refined, until a smooth and seductive form was accomplished. This skin was then further shellaced and buffed in preparation for painting.

I chose to employ a different surface application upon *Folly*, using good quality artists' paints so that I could experiment more widely with nuanced gradations of colour using an airbrush. This also meant I maintained greater control concerning the layering and build-



up of colours and I tested widely with incorporating pearlescent paints and inks used in fibreglass moulding.

By thinning the paint pigments for application through the airbrush and then applying layers of pearlescent fibreglass pigments mixed with white paint and varnish, I discovered I could achieve a refined surface.

*Folly* did not achieve the superior surface I realised in future sculptures, but the result was greatly improved upon the first prototype. I then applied multiple layers of gloss to the surface of this second sculpture, which I did not continue to do upon later forms. This was because the gloss tended to homogenise the surface, dissipating the subtlety of tone I had achieved earlier before gloss was applied.

A jaunty 'crown' assemblage was constructed to complete *Folly*. A found metal decorative light base was painted and bejewelled heavily with pink and white pearls and crystals. Onto this ornate base a circular plastic pin- holder (transformed and liberated by the application of delicate miniature pink embroidery beads and fine glitter) was placed.

In turn an eye-piece was inserted into the circular hole in the centre of the pin-holder disc, allowing 'inner vision' into a second miniaturised sculpture. On top of the eye-piece an authentic perfume bottle lid from a found flacon was balanced carefully, concealing the eye-piece so that all but the initiated are unaware that its removal promises a glimpse of a miniscule glittering vision. The vision itself is remarkably simple as the eye-piece distorts the inner cavity so much that a small perfume bottle stopper and doll-house light create a delicate and jewel-like, magical encounter.

In an attempt to establish greater control and reduce the complexity of the lighting, I incorporated children's doll-house lights. These were effective and economical but eventually proved too delicate for the heavy plaster forms. Diminutive bulbs were inserted into the neck cavity, which served to give a warm yellow glow to the crown. Around the base of *Folly* a string of baby white LED lights were intertwined into the metal stand to give a gently festive impression.

The decoration and painting of the metal stand for *Folly* proved almost as intensive as the form itself. Painted the same pink as the sculpture, the intention was to establish unity and a harmonious single form through the flowing sinuous lines of the form and plinth. To ensure continuity, strands of hanging beads, silver leafwork and multiple reflective surfaces were applied to the stand. The effect was as envisaged and the second sculpture was a true *Folly* in terms of its eccentric, over-elaborate, and highly decorative outcome. The sculpture also appears precarious, its solid ornate form quivering slightly on the fine metal legs.



Figure 81: Detail of the beading on *Folly*

*Folly* was a transitional sculpture, allowing me to develop a more flexible construction methodology, while experimenting frenetically with surface beading, textures, design, airbrushing colour, pearlescent inks, gloss varnish and glitter (Figure 81). An intense hyper-femme vocabulary emerged in the application of the surface ornamentation. Butterflies, flowers, stars, fine-veined leaves, sequins, and sinuous scrollwork articulated in pearls and glitter spots writhe across the surface, elaborated in various shades of soft pink and translucent glitter (Figure 82). The butterflies I collaged on a computer then tinted pink and cut out. I discovered that only the smallest appliqué beads were appropriate as larger beads desecrated the sinuous lines of the form, distressing the flow. I also discovered that the materials I was using – scrapbooking embellishments, cake making accessories, needlework beads, fabric stencils and sequins – were often sourced from craft sources traditionally denoted feminine.



Figure 82: *Folly* having lighting installed in the studio

In the final analysis, *Folly* was successful in view of elaborating the themes of enchantment I had been considering to date. There were still practical issues such as structural vulnerability, inconspicuous lighting, and particularly refinement of surface treatment to be resolved in order to achieve the sophistication I desired for future sculptures.

#### **iv. *Mushroom, Shell and Flame***

Work upon *Mushroom, Shell* and *Flame* progressed concurrently. This was because a working methodology for construction of the armature, substrate and surface colouration techniques had been tested and proven viable. A large body of drawings and collectibles had also been amassed, these now familiar images and shapes being continually modified during the design phase until I was satisfied with the form.

*Shell* began quite simply and was created from the frame of a large flower- like light shade (see Figure 83). Inspired by Ariel (Disney's princess mermaid), it enunciates a stylised version of a pearl in an oyster *Shell* with an undulating form and a rippling scallop lip. An enormous bountiful pearl refuses to be contained within the confines of *Shell*, blossoming from the hub. The bulbous orb which forms the pearl was transformed from a shabby found object by many hours of fine sanding (Figure 84).



Figure 83: Detail of the construction of the base for *Shell*



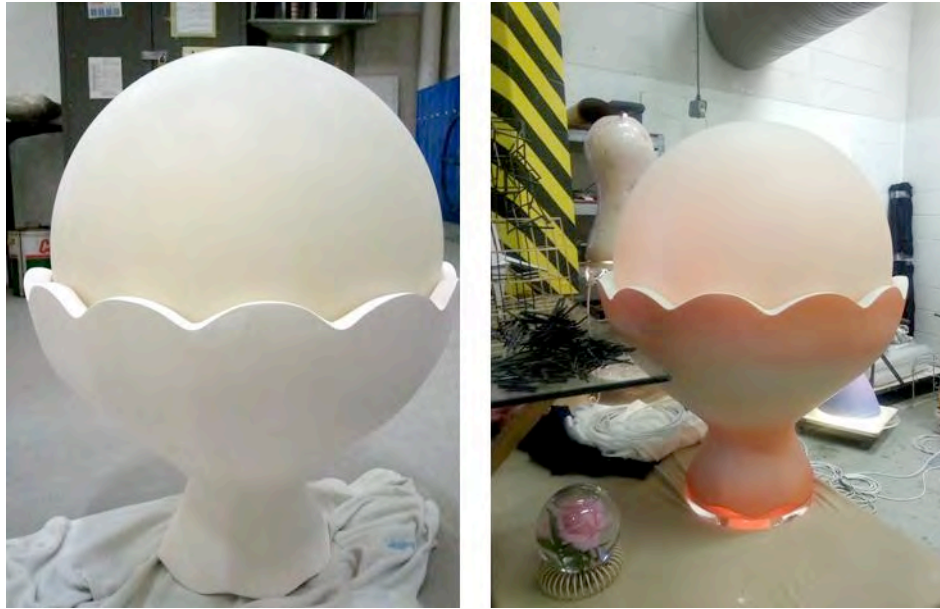


Figure 84: Building up of plaster armature, paint surface and lighting on *Shell*

Similarly *Mushroom* grew from a charming little light frame subsequently elongated and sculpted to fungal perfection using cardboard discs. Informed by Gwen Stefani's *What you waiting for?* filmclip (which is based upon the fairytale *Alice in Wonderland*), I aspired to create a weird diminutive glowing magic *Mushroom* form (Figure 85).



Figure 85: Moulding armature, smooth plaster surface and blue colouring upon *Mushroom*

*Flame* (Figure 86) had the most complex structure of all the sculptures due to an asymmetrical skeleton and a hooded feature that presented challenges in the fabrication mode. The armature became an adolescent assemblage of cardboard discs, twisted chicken wiring and pins which took many months to refine. The structure for *Flame* was inspired by a perfume advertisement featuring a hyper-real photograph of a stylised flower on a vine. Shiny, red and erotic, the form was sinuous and plastic and it was this aspect I focused upon in the creation of the sculpture. *Flame* was designed to cosset a moon-like orb within its hood, illuminating the internal firmament to create a mystical glow.



Figure 86: Production sequence in workshop and spray booth for *Flame*



Figure 87: Detail of completed sculpture with light turned on; *Flame*

The repetitive, messy and arduous process of plastering progressed concurrently with *Shell*, *Flame* and *Mushroom*. Working on each form in turn and gradually building up layer after layer of plaster, the unique entities of the forms became evident. The process, though intensive, physically exhausting and possibly lethal, was intensely enjoyable. There is a rhythm and pleasure in the continual refinement of surface, wet, creamy plaster and process of evolution.

Each form had unique challenges. *Shell* in particular required multiple layering of fine plaster and sanding to achieve formation of the undulating subtle sweeps and scalloped chiselled edges of the *Shell*. Achieving a fine lip was important and difficult and the form sat for months upon foam, requiring repeated reapplications of plaster due to erosion. The smaller scale of *Mushroom* meant it was difficult to shape into a visual symmetry. *Flame* rested flush with the bench, meaning each move or vibration would incur chips to the base edge which then had to be repaired. *Flame* was reincarnated numerous times, more than any of the other sculptures.

At this point the primary focus of concern became how to attain a superior smooth and resilient surface which would be receptive to multiple layers of spray-paint and beading. It was also important to retain the ability to tint the sculptures myself so I could pursue individualised palettes. Investigation began into ways to have the work professionally coated with a hardy polyurethane surface that would seal the chalky, porous plaster while building up a durable surface able to sustain multiple light sandings and paint glazes.

I sourced a professional surfacing business aligned to industrial kitchen building. As the requirements for this project were outside the firm's usual brief they developed a unique composition of polyurethane blend fill. This customised finish was able to eliminate blemishes and pocks on the skin of the sculptures while sealing the surface to provide a superior white creamy skin able to further be worked upon with paint and other mediums. The polyurethane medium was sprayed on to each sculpture and proved vastly forgiving



as it could be repeatedly sanded. Spraying on the coating required multiple applications in an industrial workshop, which meant transporting the sculptures both before and after their resurfacing. It also involved long drying times to avoid cracking and friction between the surfaces, meaning this part of the process was time intensive and bodily strenuous.

Colouration was the final step requiring refinement. I wanted to achieve subtle gradations in tone and variation of tints upon the undulating and smooth surfaces of the forms. I determinedly pursued unnatural colours and lurid hues, spending many hours in the spray booth with an airbrush and different paint colours in order to achieve this. *Teardrop* emerged iridescent cream, *Folly* gloss pink, *Mushroom* a vivid magic blue, *Shell* an opalescent champagne, *Flame* an irreal mauve, *Lily* a gentle mint green, *Swirl* a viscous morphing pink, *Bulb* an unnatural green, and *Wave* a deep, trippy purple. These unreal colours were cultivated as a glowing collective in order to facilitate a hallucinatory rainbow experience and to draw attention to the implicit artificiality of the creative process.

It is important here to articulate that I did not refer to particular perfume bottles for each sculpture. Instead, I aimed to coalesce in a sentient and visceral way much of the complex visual information concerning perfume vessels I had absorbed. The aim was to create innovative and individualised forms which alluded to their scented genesis. Certain repetitive and prevalent motifs were incorporated in stylised, symbolic form, including shells, flames, magical referents, skirts, flowers, hearts, birds and waves.

My veneration of the intimate content which comprises the subject matter of the practice resulted in the practice assuming a droll, new-age, quasi- mystical aspect. As a corollary, I identified a language for enchantment predicated upon the creation of an aura of sanctity, deliberately re- envisaging and camping up a series of aesthetic strategies prevalent within the tradition of the church in order to heighten theatricality. These were realised in a series of trials incorporating actual and symbolic devices such as embellishment,

elevation, ambient lighting, excessive gilt, iconography, centrifugal design, scaling up, elemental references (such as water and flame) and mist upon the sculptures. The idea was to go beyond conventional or acceptable limits of expression and deliberately make everything absolutely too much. The conflation of eroticism and exoticism derived from the perfume bottles, and the compelling legitimising effect of divinity resulted in the creation of a powerful methodology and synthetic style able to potentially create enchantment.

Surveying the practice at this point it was clear that a number of discrete techniques were discernible. In tandem with those previously identified, a primary strategy was to enhance, multiply, inflate, augment, increase and generally exaggerate the practice as much as could be considered viable. This was realised in the scale of the sculptures, which manifested in an array of sizes with the idea of facilitating sensuous encounter.

Extending this policy of excess in the practice to the archetypal feminine content initiates an intense transformation. As these peculiarly feminine artefacts cloud en masse they infer a complete lack of restraint which appears to inflame the issue of appropriate expressions of femininity. The explicit veneration of customary signifiers of femininity as exemplified in past practice has often inspired vehement and negative commentary. To be overdressed is indeed a humiliating condition! I hypothesise that the level of antagonism observed is similar to that reserved for the radical minority, further demonstrated by gay culture which adopts customary appurtenances of femininity as a form of social protest, symbolically indicative of sexuality and identity.

#### ***v. Lily, Swirl, Wave, Bulb***

The last four sculptures developed in sync and with relative ease as the process of fabrication had been refined.

*Lily* (Figure 88) and *Swirl* (Figure 89) were informed by wedding fashion imagery. *Lily* strikes an elongated pose, exhibiting a striking concave line and silky smooth façade, while *Swirl* twirls to a blur like a taffeta-and-tulle ballerina skirt. *Lily* was particularly difficult to compose given the height of the final structure, with extra reinforcing added during the binding stage. The shape developed by stacking and gluing a series of rectangular cardboard pieces, with a flowering light shade perched upon the top. The result was a determinedly asymmetrical form redolent of a *Lily*.



Figure 88: Images taken during the construction of *Lily*

*Swirl* radiated strongly from a central axis, positioned upon an enormous wooden plate base which, although cumbersome, was eminently stable. The aim was to create an excessively voluptuous hourglass shape that implied both fragility and sensuality. Subsequently, the form curves into a tapered fine edge upon the base and the waist is comparatively small. This was achieved during the process of sculpting in plaster. At times the act of working on these two large sculptures became both performance and endurance, given the repetitive, obsessive and physically demanding nature of the activity.

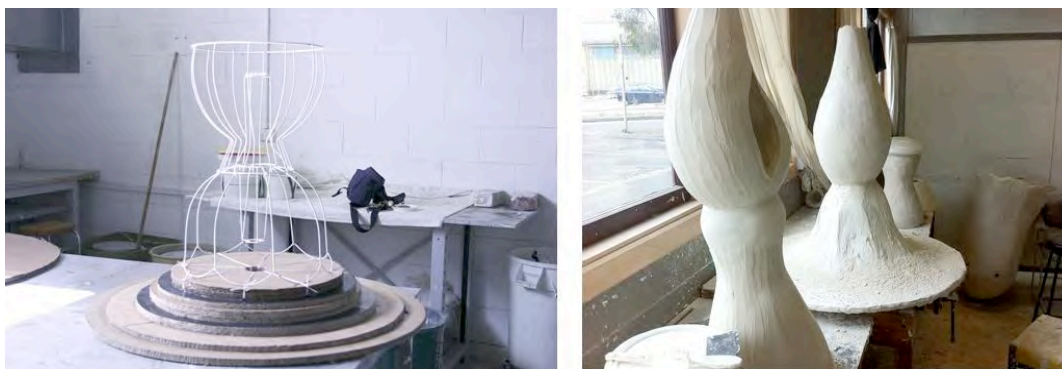


Figure 89: Initial stages in the making of armature and plaster surface for *Swirl*

*Wave* was informed by the psychedelic interior of the inside of Barbara Eden's genie bottle in the 1960s television series *I Dream of Jeannie*. To fuel my own fantasy, the idea was to etch an irregular lava lamp *Wave* pattern around the lip of the form and inset a frothy mist maker to infer a mystical inner space (Figure 90). The structure of *Wave* was the simplest of all the sculptures although carving out the patterning and achieving finesse of surface was difficult given the thickness of the plaster and its tendency to crumble.



Figure 90: Detail of the mist maker and lighting incorporated into *Wave*

During the design stage there was considerable time allocated to testing the various components required for the interior of the sculpture. This concluded with a mist maker and a tailored crystal vessel with dome top being positioned inside a lacework basket and placed into the neck of the vessel. There were also utilitarian concerns to allay at this point, given the presence of water and mist in conjunction with plaster and paint. A customised pool light was sourced to accompany the mist-maker in order to illuminate the lacework and throw hallucinatory shadows.

To conclude the series, I wanted to sculpt a more organic and irregular form. *Bulb* (Figure 91) was originally designed to sit upon a scroll-work base, but this was abandoned as the form appeared too static. Assembled from two bulbous light frames, *Bulb* was intended to intimate the adolescent fecundity of a bud.



Figure 91: Early stages in the construction of *Bulb*

The surfaces of the final four sculptures were attained adroitly. Each form was assigned a lurid unreal colour and laboriously coated with multiple layers of opalescent fibreglass

paints, pearlescent inks and artists' colours. If an error occurred, the entire form was sanded back and the process re-initiated. I was rewarded by almost flawless surfaces, upon which I chose to continue to embellish, bejewel or add glitter. *Swirl* was completed with the addition of a glamorous and intensely beaded neck piece into which an amber-coloured, crystal domed light fitting was placed. Lighting was subsequently positioned inside the crystal dome, resulting in a translucent and faceted illumination. A glittering glass teardrop decoration and spout placed in the neck of *Bulb* completed the work.

The incorporation of lights into the base of each sculpture was aimed at achieving a floating sensation so that as a collective the planets appear to float. To do this, an array of lighting was used including LEDs, strip LEDs, coloured magic bulbs and standard bulbs. Six out of the nine sculptures have Magic Bulbs, which allow flexibility concerning selection of colour and density of their output. Technically, the addition of lighting into the sculptures was difficult as each form posed different issues which had to be addressed and resolved individually. Most required transformers and there were also practical issues such as long extension cords and how these would be accommodated and working in the small confines of the inner cavities.

All the sculptures have dual internal light sources installed. This was to achieve a pulsing glow effect as the interior radiance illuminates the stoppers, adding yet another frenetic refracted lighting effect. The lighting for *Lily* was particularly important, because the height of the sculpture meant no stopper was required and so a diffused pure white light was inserted to cast illumination upon an adjacent wall. In the case of *Shell* two pinspots with pink gel were placed inside the pearl to facilitate a glowing pink aura.

The base, support, plinth or method of display was a major consideration in the experiment and design phase of each work. As the sculptures required elevation due to the emanating floor lighting, each one required a tailored solution. After many trials and failures using perspex hoops, chocs, box plinths and other devices, I devised a base made



from thick solid Perspex (in various depths) which I had cut out and sized for each form, to exciting effect. As light is conducted through solid Perspex, it fans out in various ways, reflecting and spilling out the colour of the internal lighting to induce a shimmering, refracted and mystical effect. The forms use different supports. for example *Folly* has its own metal scroll frame; *Lily* rests upon a custom built dolly; *Bulb* has no support at all as it lies at an angle; *Swirl* has an elevated solid piece of circular MDF built in; and *Wave* is placed upon a custom built opaque column of perspex, commissioned in order to conduct the light throughout to extend the illusion of elevation.

## STEP 4: FURTHER EXPERIMENTS

During this research project there were a series of other methodological investigations not utilised in the final exhibition outcome. I consider these experiments valuable as they clarified ideas and defined the parameters of the project. Importantly, they testify to the evolutionary nature of creative practice which develops in concert with the artwork. This process also entertains failure as a possible outcome, stimulating both fear and innovation. None of the following experiments failed per se and all demonstrate potential for new iterations in future practice. However, as this research project is exclusively focused on perfume bottles, the outcome similarly privileges sculptural objects or artefacts. Therefore the following experiments were considered adjuncts to the research rather than primary components.

The following is a brief summary.

### **i. Precious Castings**

I experimented with casting different feminised items with the idea that they might be able to be incorporated onto the surface of the sculptures or comprise decoration upon the stoppers. I cast a series of rubber moulds from Pinkysil, shaping cake decorations, large diamond-shaped jewels, perfume bottle lids, toenail separators and various other items

into moulds. I consequently conducted further trials with the pouring of synthetic resins incorporating pearlescent fibreglass tints in order to get opalescent pink and white colourings, both gloss and white. While the colours were captivating and the forms attractive, the cast forms were large and inflexible, unable to be applied to the curved surfaces of sculptures. The precious castings demonstrated potential as diminutive feminine artefacts able to be replicated in multiples, possibly incorporating beads and tints. The cast objects were also light and transparent and could easily have holes inserted to facilitate hanging. Given the investment of time required to realise this series, it was unfeasible for this project.

## **ii. Wishbones**

The wishbone has been a recurring motif in past work, given its evocative associations with femininity, weddings and desire. I initially planned to make either a series or one large-scale kinetic work of translucent, pink-tinged or minutely beaded wishbones. To achieve this, I made two casts of wishbones (a very difficult form to cast given its delicacy) and conducted trials of colouration, beadings and finishes. If time had permitted for this installation, it would have made an interesting additional feature or centrepiece. The wishbones may be pursued in future work, possibly in large chandelier form.

## **iii. Bead landscapes**

Given the super-embellished surfaces of my artwork and my fascination with the 'vicious loop' of hyper-reality, I took a series of close-up photographs of some past sculptural skins with a high resolution camera and a macro-lens. I then printed these on superior stock and worked back into the images, completely saturating them in beads, sequins, scrapbooking symbols and glitter. When they were completely encrusted, I re-photographed the bead landscapes from a side view in order to articulate their artificial topography. The resulting images were beautiful and entrancing, appearing as glittering undulating landscapes of desire.



Figure 92: Experiments: castings; wishbones; beaded landscapes

I was particularly attracted to the bead landscape series, but in *La Galaxie de Joy* they would have assumed the role of decor, possibly detracting from the already evolving planetary sculptures. I concluded that the bead landscapes were already a cohesive and discrete work, able to be explored further in future practice.

#### iv. Portals

A primary part of the research methodology has focused upon transformation and how to achieve that within an enchantment. Pivotal to effecting metamorphosis in fantasy is the point of crossover, transition or portal, so I embarked on a series of miniature portals which I envisaged as a large sculptural wall piece. I purchased hundreds of costly curved scientific petrie dishes of varying diameters and experimented with ways of framing those through either casting in porcelain, replicating in wood, or professionally casting. This was difficult given the circular frame and having to allow for shrinkage. The initial trials proved untenable.

Inside the curved eclipse of each portal, I experimented with locating coloured transparencies comprising images taken from the bead landscape series. There were many technical difficulties to overcome with this mini- series, including how the frames would be attached to the wall and how the portals could be accommodated within the circular frames. Initial results were promising as due to their curved surface the portals appeared at once convex and concave. Depending upon what surface they were situated upon, they created an illusionary space, appearing to simultaneously come out or recede into the wall. This series will be pursued.

## STEP 5: PREPARING FOR INSTALL

### i. Lighting

Lighting is a key element of *La Galaxie de Joy* and has been a primary consideration from the design and planning stages. I have included it at this point in the exegesis as lighting is primarily an atmospheric device able to facilitate a state of enchantment.



Figure 93: Example of complex lighting plan used in previous work

In preparation for the installation, a comprehensive gallery lighting plan was essential. This was devised in association with a professional theatre lighting technician, whose expertise was critical for establishing the transformative experience key to creating enchantment.

The gallery lighting plan for *La Galaxie de Joy* incorporates 12 pinspots with pink gels aimed at establishing a warm, flesh-pink, pastel blush of colour over the entire space. Illuminating the space between the sculptures, the intention is to emphasise their silhouettes. As each sculpture has an interior light source, external lighting will need to be sympathetic to prevent flare or loss of colour. The aim is to incorporate multiple light sources in order to create a surfeit of colour and reflective surfaces. This frenetic, shimmering milieu is important as an intentionally disorientating device aimed at altering perception.

The antechamber is lit with professional theatre lights in such a way as to facilitate a portal or transitional space between the hard light of the foyer and the ambient internal glow of the enchantment. Playing upon the soft fabric wall of the antechamber is the kinetic flickering pattern of a wave machine, illuminating the script lettering of the title and envisaged as inciting joy.

## **ii. Froufrou**

Preparation for setting up a complex and multifaceted installation, such as *La Galaxie de Joy*, involves a plethora of tedious administrative and logistical functions. Experiments are conducted, purchases of paint and other stock are made and storage located. The process becomes one of acquisition and accumulation.

Due to the number and scale of sculptures, I was successful in commandeering an extra studio space. This became redolent of a theatrical dressing room, the sculptures

establishing a ghostly presence beneath drapes and located amongst painting accessories, trolleys, theatre lights, rolls of fabric, shiny perspex and instructional diagrams. I entertained romantic notions of this studio as a magical catalyst for enchantment, emanating an aura of anticipation, and awaiting the blazing lights and excitement of opening night.

As the existing gallery has dark matted carpet tiles I decided to lift these and paint directly upon the floor. This was to ensure a semi-matt, resilient and smooth surface upon which the sculptures would be placed. The aim was to create a sympathetic surface so that the light emanating from the sculptures could pool and refract upon the plane. I conducted many trials in order to identify the most suitable floor application and design.

A discrete flooring paint was purchased, which had a high grit content to facilitate a non-slip surface. This also established a good matt tooth for working on. I concluded the floor texture trials with several gloss and matt varnishes, which I eventually rejected because the gloss made the surface so reflective that all colour was flattened out to create a homogenised effect. The final result was a light grey base of differing tonalities, with a sponged on and marbled cloud pattern, feathered with brushes, interspersed with stencilled glittered stars and finished with a light matt sealant.

Palettes for the wall colours were similarly tested, with several shades of blue painted upon sample boards and assessed in the gallery space. The aim was to achieve a deep midnight blue wall against which the silhouettes of the sculptures would be articulated. A tint was decided and quantities prepared. At the same time, bolts of blue crushed velvet fabric were ordered and acquired, with the intention of using this to cascade over the corners.



To see how the sculptures would fit in the space, I measured and cut out accurate floor stencils of the forms. I placed these templates in the gallery to envision how the sculptures would potentially align and to make sure they were close enough to provide the intimacy of experience central to the study. I tried working with a gallery floor plan, but the templates proved to be the most effective way of visualising the outcome.

The final preparation is primarily logistical, involving co-ordinating assistants, liaising with gallery staff, invitation printing and design, moving the sculptures and so forth. An element of performance planned for the Exhibition Opening Night aims to extend the experience of enchantment to the foyer space, to further incite joy and delight. This will be attained via an abundance of vicarious pleasures aimed at sensual overload. I should like the evening to include an evening dress requirement, bubbles (machine), marshmallow aperitifs, champagne cocktails, scented abstract sheets, piped music and amusing speeches from notaries such as my hairdresser. However, as there are protocols to be followed for doctorate submissions some of these ideas may be rendered impracticable. Ultimately, the intention is to celebrate sexuality, desire and difference within contemporary art, exploiting the self-deluded yet lucid nature of the encounter.

## CHAPTER 3:5 SYNOPSIS

*La Galaxie de Joy* represents the culmination and articulation of the research conducted during the term of this doctorate. The exhibition demonstrates a speculative paradigm for enchantment within contemporary art. To measure whether the concepts articulated in the research were realised in the practice and communicated in the installation comprises a valuable final stage of the project. This cannot be wholly assessed until the installation has been set up and viewed. As this document was submitted for examination prior to the exhibition viewing of *La Galaxie de Joy* I was not able to document responses or formulate an appraisal. However, the examination already has a distinct outcome in that as a practice-based research project the research has been quantified, with the project claiming to function as a provocative paradigm for enchantment within contemporary art.

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: *L'Air Du Temps* by Nina Ricci, 1948. Display at Galeries Lafayette, Paris, August 2011

Figure 2: *Screenprint of Chanel No. 5* (1921) by Andy Warhol 1980 (one of nine)

Figure 3: *Joy* by Jean Patou, 1930

Figure 4: *Anais Anais* by Cacharel, 1978

Figure 5: *Loulou* by Cacharel, 1987

Figure 6: *Princess* by Vera Wang, 2006

Figure 7: *Cabochard* by Parfum (Mme) Gres, 1959

Figure 8: *Couture Couture* by Juicy Couture, 2009. Photo taken at Galeries Lafayette, Paris August 2011

Figure 9: *Baby Doll* by Yves St Laurent, 1999

Figure 10: *Angel* by Thierry Mugler, 1992

Figure 11: [left] *Lolita Lempicka Le Premier Parfum*, 2012; [right] *Lolita Lempicka Si Lolita*, 2009. Photo taken at Galeries Lafayette, Paris, August 2011

Figure 12: [left] *Selena Gomez* by Selena Gomez, 2012, [right] Selena Gomez, publicity image from website, 2012

Figure 13: Display of perfumes at Galeries Lafayette, Paris, August 2011

Figure 14: [from right to left] Advertisement for *Angel* by Thierry Mugler, 1992 featuring model Jerry Hall; advertisement for *Chance* by Chanel, 2002; advertisement for *Femme* by Rochas, 1944

Figure 15: Jackson Pollock, *Untitled (Scent)*, c.1953-1955, oil and enamel on canvas

Figure 16: Pierre Bonnard, *Nude Against the Light (Nu a contrejour)*, 1908, oil on canvas

Figure 17: Louise Bourgeois, *Cell II*, 1991, mixed media

Figure 18: Lee Miller, *Scent Bottles*, 1933, photograph

Figure 19: Audrey Flack, *Marilyn (Vanitas)*, 1977, oil over acrylic on canvas, 96 x 96 inches

Figure 20: *Le Roy Soleil for Schiapelli*, bottle by Salvador Dali, 1946

Figure 21: *Coeur Joie* bottle by Rene Lalique, 1946

Figure 22: *Leurs Armes* by d'Orsay, bottle by Rene Lalique, 1913

Figure 23: *Paloma Picasso* by Paloma Picasso, 1984

Figure 24: *Belle Haleine eau de Voilette*, 1921, bottle featuring Marcel Duchamp as Rose Selavy, photographed by Man Ray

Figure 25: 'Knock 'em out with your intellect but get their attention first', advertisement published in Marie Claire [Australia Magazine] in 2004, July, no page no

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Figure 76: Perfume Bottle Drawings, 2006-08, pencil and pen on black and/or white paper. Taken from assorted sketchbooks.

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