

## *conclusion*

The exhibition/publication *the indeterminate precision of narrative* was the culmination of the research period. Multiple exhibitions were published through the research period (see Appendices 1 and 2). These exhibitions engaged with the various indeterminate, adaptable and yet simultaneously precise and truthful nature of story telling. The aim of the research was to respond to complex narrative structure's role in positioning visual images of the body. There is no particular story that can describe our lives exactly as they are. To begin a narrative we retell stories from the past in order to articulate our narrative present. The narrative structures the exhibitions explore, focuses on images and objects that speak to the body in all of its complexity.

The significance of the research lies in its response to and engagement with contemporary theoretic debates that currently surround images of the body. The body in contemporary art is represented variously as vulnerable, wounded, gendered, sexual, fragmented, horrific, uncanny, abject and excessive. It is important for artists to re-frame the role of self-portraiture, the body and the narrator in art as social constructs in order to subvert the traditional demand for mimetic truth by devising alternative forms of self-representation, which function outside the discourse of conventional, gendered art historical discourse. By performing the texts of everyday life, the body becomes not a product but a processor of everyday life.

The research conducted made use of traditional and contemporary image making tools such as oil painting juxtaposed with large format acrylic prints sourced through digital means and includes the design and development of a website that publishes the research outcomes. The research advances our general knowledge in the innovative use of materials that speak to conventional and contemporary accounts of the body. While oil paints on linen are conventional supports within a western patriarchal tradition digital technology allows new and different ways of revealing and processing imagery.

What was revealed through the research period that could not have been revealed through any other method of enquiry was the material thinking of the studio. Materials, methods and conceptual frameworks shape and determine the kind of knowledge that is produced through arts-practice-led research. Time spent in the studio performing the research has significant implications for arts-practice. The aim of the research was to consider how the methodologies employed impact on the lived body. This action is identified as performative. The methodologies identified for use in the research were arts-practice-led research and involved a process of information gathering; including non-linear systems that are inclusive, chaotic, and holistic; various visual and multi-media methods of selection, analysis, synthesis, presentation and communication including journals, digital photographs, proofs and drafts. Arts-practice-led research is pluralistic in approach; uses multi-method techniques tailored to the individual project; reflexivity is

acknowledged and the interaction of the researcher with research material is recognised. Within this field the researcher reflects-in-action and reflects-on-action and is adaptive. These systems explored how my ontological position and the methodologies outlined were catalysts for studio production.

In the installation space, the acrylic works reflected off each image surface, constantly interrupting and interrogating every other surface of the works; at once integrating and creating a schism between surfaces and patinas. This allows the viewer to arrive not at a single medium or image but at continual mediation between images producing stories that bridge the gap between the performative act and the artefact/object of that making. Process and material thinking are transformed in this way, due to the influence each has on the other. By constantly informing each other, meaning is continually relativised. We collude culturally and individually to make different meanings. The relationship between meanings, I structure here as a process, a becoming, a movement, constantly transforming through interaction.

Creative works according to the performative research paradigm are the outcome of the research. In this paradigm, the research process initiates movement and transformation. It is performative. My research was carried out using strategies carried out through arts-practice, using predominant methodologies and specific methods familiar to practitioners of practice-led<sup>119</sup> research. This affirms the primacy of practice in the research methods in their own right (see chapter 1, 2 and 3). While acknowledging that a performative research paradigm is not new, the potential for presenting documentation (exhibition, www and exegesis) in media rich outputs have taken the research findings into spaces that stand apart from other research paradigms while articulating the requirements of the research for transparency. It is becoming evident that while practice-led research builds directly out of a researcher's professional practice, it is more than an individual's professional practice alone. With its emergence, practice-led research promises to raise the level of critical practice and theorising around practice in a more rigorous and open way than professional practice alone is able to achieve. While material forms of practice as outcomes of performative research without doubt are used as evidence, the exegesis or thesis statement as an interpretation of the complexity of creative work contributes to knowledge in an emerging research paradigm.<sup>120</sup>

While arts-practice-led research is content to answer a question with another question. Practice as research is identified as a 'generating' instrument. Research processes are tailored to respond to practice and practice to research, continually re-orientating itself to refine the research question through reflexive processes. Meaning is never closed. The process I go through in making the works is the process of story telling. The dialogue with which I engage in the studio however is between images, materials and performative processes. This narrative is ongoing and opens up the potential for further research in this area ...

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119 Throughout this document, I have used arts-practice-led research when referring to my own research and practice-led research when referring to the emerging vocabulary of the performative research paradigm.

120 Brad Haseman, "Foucault's 'What is an Author': Towards a Critical Discourse of Practice as Research" in Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt. (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 145 – 157.

*The stories I tell are quite simple - or are they.*

*These stories speak to my life in regional NSW.*

*I watch my children and their friends play in the trees that run down to Lake Wooloweyah at the back of the family home.*

*The younger children watch the older children climb the trees, tie the ropes and then swing out into the sky.*

*They watch and learn so that when they are big enough they too will be able swing. They fall, laugh; argue about whose turn it is and how it should be done.*

*They are oblivious to my watching.*

*The games they play in that landscape are perhaps influenced by popular culture and ... perhaps not.*

*In play, we learn how to do things.*

*When I play, I am in the studio working out the world across various media.*

*When I watch them play – there are sticks ... sticks that stand in for guns, lightsabers, swords and knives and there are of course ... cubby houses and swings.*

*Patterns form in the landscape and around their small bodies.*

*I ask myself questions about the games we play as children that prepare us for the adult world ...*

*The stories I tell are structured around narratives that are likened to a rhizome; connected in all ways but always becoming, never arriving.*

*Within my arts-practice, I attempt to speak about the female body, the lived body that is determined and specific.*

*The images speak to the lively concerns of femininity, the day-to-day runnings of the lived body in a state of flux, defined and redefined by changing practices and discourses.*

*One of the ways I measure that state of flux is by the growth and activity of the children around me and by the more gradual changes in the landscape.*