

## *introduction*

The exhibition *the indeterminate precision of narrative* is the result of numerous research publications that investigate the tentative, flexible though concurrently exact and frank qualities of story telling. This is not a single narrative as there is no single narrative that can explain our historic present. To tell a story is to retell stories from the past in order to create coherent narratives in the present. The narrative structures that the research publications enquire into focus on images and objects that speak to the body in hybrid forms. The aim of the research is to respond to complex narrative structures role in positioning visual images of the body.

The significance of the research lies in its response to and engagement with contemporary theoretic debates that currently surround images and narratives of the body. By enacting the text 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 interfaced with embedded plexiglass imagery sourced though digital means. While the innovative use of materials advances, our general knowledge in the area of new media they also speak to conventional and contemporary accounts of the body.

Chapter 1, *terms of reference* presents the background for a number of contemporary theoretical debates that have contributed to my arts-practice-led research. Theoreticians and contemporary artists are discussed in light of the diversity of contemporary interest in the theorisation of the body. No essential theme encompasses all of these practices and theorists in some kind of 'grand narrative' of the body. They all play a part in different ways and for various purposes in repositioning established thinking of the body as a coherent and unified entity. We need to understand not only how culture inscribes bodies but also what these bodies are that makes inscription possible. What is it in the *nature* of bodies that opens them up to political, cultural and conceptual evolution?

My enquiry relates to feminist philosophic work that explores beyond mind-body dualism to suggest a logic beyond representation, a logic beyond the mirroring. I want to suggest that there might be strategies which move in that direction and that these strategies would mean that subjects, in their difference, might take place as processes rather than as objects. The question of how useful is it to think of myself as an artist in terms of "feminisms" is explored (given that "feminism" itself can be a dangerously mocking phrase that at once categorises and circumscribe an audience's expectation) and has motivated much of my recent research. The influence of an interface between post-structuralist and feminist thinking has filtered through much art-practice and debate, especially in the last decade. This led to a problematisation of representation itself and some absolute stances in relation to it, for example, in the case of Mary Kelly who refuses to depict the female form in her work as being an image that is too ideologically over-determined.

A similar set of problems are found in theoretical debates, which attempt to address patriarchal, or phallogocentric oppression. This is the double bind of a deconstructive critique: how is it possible to undermine phallogocentric representation without resorting to the

languages and logics of the very structures that one wishes to overturn? The difficulty with certain aspects of post-structuralist thinking is that language is, at times, over-determined as the source of understanding gendered subject positions and their meanings.

Chapter 2, *the impact of serendipity* teases out methodologies applied by arts-practice-led research. Methodologies engaged by arts-practice-led research involve 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 are engaged under the paradigm of performative research. 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. This chapter elaborates on these systems and explores how my ontological position and the methodologies outlined are catalysts for studio production.

Chapter 3, *the lived body* expands on the impact of the lived body on arts-practice-led research. My arts-practice attempts to articulate the female body, the lived body that is determined and specific. It speaks of tension between the transcendent and the corporeal, between the available tools of arts-practice and the desire to present the lived body in all of its specificity. I locate that specificity in the performative aspects of painting as tracing our bodies in the world; the performance of making; my emersion in the process of making and the integration of issues surrounding embodiment.

In this chapter, feminist cultural critics and artists are discussed in relation to phenomenology and particularly the writings of Merleau-Ponty, in order to explore issues of embodiment, tactility and the relations of being in the world. Performative research is definition as a material form of practice. Materiality, on the other hand, is the insistence of the medium within the operation of the work's meaning. It is the operation of matter that causes the disruption of the traditional categories of interpretation. Materiality produces the means by which visual language and visual narrative are disrupted.

The epistemological implications for the process of making are outlined separately in chapters 4 & 5 under the disciplines of painting, drawing, printmaking and web design. This separation is for convenience and the logic of writing only and should not be read as any hierarchical ranking on my part. I mark the boundaries between disciplines as false. The material thinking associated with making is conflated. I hope that the viewer arrives not at any particular medium but at continual mediation between: mediums, images, content, concepts and anticipates the different narrative imperatives, spatially fusing the materials.

Chapter 4, *the indeterminate precision of narrative* discussed the multiple exhibitions/research publications that have emerged as artefacts/objects of the research. The narrative structures the exhibitions/research publications enquire into focus on images and objects that speak to the body in hybrid forms. The research for my master thesis *not so blind reverence*<sup>1</sup> focused on dialogic imperatives. Narrative structures were defined as rhizomic in structure I concluded, connected in all ways but always and/both, becoming, never arriving. The research since then has continued on this meandering path of becoming. If becoming and unpacking

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1 Lyndall Adams, *not so blind reverence*, Lismore: Southern Cross University, 2000.

are joined then we are constantly unpacking. The image this conjures is one of a constant Diaspora, constantly moving and changing. This thesis looks at points along the way, marking moments in a constantly moving stream that is rhizomic in structure, multiple in direction, assigning to the story a performative status. The narrator is that multiplicity or act performed in both studio process and installation space.

This chapter also relates the development of the imagery using family snap shots, which were digitally manipulation and cropped. The processes were developed during the research period through small collage preliminary works that were scanned into digital files, manipulated and projected at a larger scale onto prepared grounds. The techniques developed in the studio through this process were between images, materials and performative processes and elaborates on the narratives of studio production.

Chapter 5, *packaging technologies and potentials* discusses the sequential development of the digital prints and the website [lyndalladams.com](http://www.lyndalladams.com) as integral element within my arts-practice-led research. The research methodology associated with this area necessitates the interaction of the researcher with collaborating industry partners. *lyndalladams.com* focuses on the world-wide-web as a marker that explores rhizomic story telling structures at work allowing characters to migrate, change identities, and communicate. The questions I asked of this facet of the research initially involved producing a digital gallery that could alter the way research publications/exhibitions were experienced, appreciated and understood. The outcome of this element of research is the web site <http://www.lyndalladams.com/>.