

# As normal: An art exploration of the gendered self

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This exegesis is submitted to AUT University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master of Art & Design (Visual Arts)

## **Attestation of Authorship**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of another degree or diploma or a university or institution of higher learning.



Colin James Nairn

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***“Be yourself; everyone else is already taken.”***

Oscar Wilde

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# Abstract

This art project explores the socio-cultural construction of gendered identity, in particular it examines how the norm provides models for performance that can undo as much as construct identity.

By using lens-based approaches including moving image, this project explores how the developing identity of a subject is constructed in interaction with socio-cultural forces and their signs; allowing both the individual and society to change, merge together and interact.

For this project gender is then examined as a normalizing tendency, where identity is performed rather than given, and where the repeated presentation of certain behaviours serves to reinforce the signs that come to construct and represent gender.

This project critically investigates the attraction towards the norm, and how the tendency to mask non-conforming behaviours, undoes identity, and undoes society.



Figure 1. As normal: Private posturing, (2014), video still

## Introduction

Within this exegesis, I will explore issues of gender, gender construction, and the binary and socially excepted norms. I will also explore ideas around gender performance and the masking of natural behaviours to conceal imagined non-normative gender behaviours. In order to document the journey of the project and its development, I have included stills from early text videos, together with the private performance videos that I have used to expand and clarify my ideas.

# 1 Sex: Biology<sup>1</sup>

Judith Lorber informs us that gender construction starts before birth with assignment to a sex category of either male or female depending upon the visual genitals or chromosomal tests.”<sup>2</sup> This utilitarian approach is undertaken regardless of its suitability to the subject. This has always been problematic as it is too simplistic to accommodate variations from the norm. Assigning sex at birth may work for most subjects but it is unable to predict any future sex developments, or take into account any internal biological differences. Any differences from the norm may not begin to appear until at least puberty. The assignment of either the male or female binary is focussed on reproduction and the need for people within societies to reproduce.

The nature of the body determines the assignment of sex and thereafter the attachment of gender; it is this identifying label of gender that demands the subject conform to social norms. Lorber informs us that ... *“for human beings there is no essential femaleness or maleness, femininity or masculinity, womanhood or manhood, but once gender is ascribed, the social order constructs and holds individuals to strongly gendered norms and expectations.”*<sup>3</sup>

These strongly gendered norms and expectations are problematic as they are just as likely to unmask those who are unable to conform to social expectations, as they are to mask a subject who feels the need to hide their true gender identity. This is Problematic because it can result in a subject being disconnected from their true self and society.

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<sup>1</sup> Judith Lorber’s explanation of gender categories have been used to inform this exegesis in regards to gender, sex, and sexuality. Each component of the gender categories are described by Lorber as being the result of socio-cultural construction, though they are all constructed differently. (Lorber, 1994)

<sup>2</sup> (Lorber, 1994)

<sup>3</sup> (Lorber, 1994, p. 56)

## 2 Gender: Social

Parents and family are the first to expose a subject to accepted gendered norms. Their own socio-cultural construction and interaction will determine a subject's first social contacts and experiences that will further endorse the gendered norms and behaviours.<sup>4</sup> According to Lorber, children of different genders are treated differently and their response is to behave and feel differently.<sup>5</sup> Awareness of gender differences happen at an early age and children experience firsthand the codes and conventions attached to their gender.

*The pervasiveness of gender as a way of structuring social life demands that gender statuses be clearly differentiated. Varied talents, sexual preferences, identities, personalities, interests, and ways of interacting fragment the individual's bodily and social experiences. Nonetheless, these are organized in Western cultures into two and only two socially and legally recognized gender statuses, 'man', and 'woman'.<sup>67</sup>*

Is Lorber suggesting that society is structured the way it is because gender demands a separation from the other? Would the structure change if there were more genders? The current Western structure is based upon the gender binary of two genders, male and female. This limitation of genders is not inclusive of all identities.

It could also be argued that society is the inflexible component in the inclusiveness of gender identity. Gender construction is constrained when using the limitations of the gender binary, and because of this, that which is not part of the gendered norm of heterosexuality is considered an alternative. To 'come out'<sup>8</sup> as having an alternative sexuality or gender identity, is still problematic as one can never be sure of the outcome and how 'coming out' will affect the subject's relationship with family, friends and co-workers.

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<sup>4</sup> Gendered patterns of interaction acquire additional layers of gendered sexuality, parenting, and work behaviours in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Gendered norms and expectations are enforced through informal sanctions of gender-inappropriate behaviour by peers and by formal punishment or threat of punishment by those in authority should behaviour deviate too far from socially imposed standards for women and men ....(Lorber, 1994)

<sup>5</sup> (Lorber, 1994)

<sup>6</sup> (Lorber, 1994, p. 58)

<sup>7</sup> Some societies have three genders, men, women, and berdaches or hijras or xaniths. Berdaches, hijras and xaniths are biological males who behave, dress, work, and are treated in most respects as social women; they are therefore not men, nor are they female women; ..., 'male woman.' There is also the Samoan Fa'afafine who is also considered a third gender.

<sup>8</sup> Come out: a term used to make it known to others that you are LGBTQ.



Figure 2. As normal: Private posturing, (2014), video stills

## 2.1 Normalising gender

Normalising gender comes with “no formal rules or standards”.<sup>9</sup> What is considered normal covers a board spectrum of different categories that are grouped together, some intermingling and changing, and others unmoving but still affected by changes.

Lorber informs us “*Individuals may vary on many of the components of gender and may shift genders temporarily or permanently, but they must fit into the limited number of gender statuses their society recognizes. In the process, they re-create their society's version of women and men.*”<sup>10</sup> Society and the binary does allow freedom within gender. However the freedom is dependent on societal codes and conventions which still hold the power of defining gender identities. This is problematic as not only does it limit a subject who finds their biological body and gender do not match, but also those whose sexuality is not heterosexual. It also excludes the subject whose gender performance is seen as displaying the characteristics of the opposite gender or not meeting the criteria of their gender.

## 2.2 Gender inequality

The socio-cultural construction of gender purposefully creates imbalances between the sexes, often reinforced by popular culture. Lorber states,

*Gender inequality-the devaluation of ‘women’ and the social domination of ‘men’ - has social functions and a social history. It is not the result of sex, procreation, physiology, anatomy, hormones, or genetic predispositions. It is produced and maintained by identifiable social processes and built into the general social structure and individual identities deliberately and purposefully. The social order as we know it in Western societies is organized around racial ethnic, class, and gender inequality.*<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, it appears that the socio-cultural construction of gender is not natural. Why then can those who do not fit into the gender binary or have a different sexual identity to the norm find themselves viewed as unnatural? As Lorber stated our gender, identity does not appear to be something that we carry inside of us but rather an external influence.

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<sup>9</sup> (Horwitz, 2008, p. 70)

<sup>10</sup> (Lorber, 1994, p. 56)

<sup>11</sup> (Lorber, 1994, p. 5)

### 3 Cultural shaping of gender

Judith Butler argues that gender is a socio-cultural construction that a subject learns, performs, and develops over a lifetime. It is an undertaking by the subject that is so fluid, and supposedly natural, that they believe it is being produced within themselves, rather than a learnt behaviour.

*Gender is not exactly what one 'is' nor is it precisely what one 'has'. Gender is the apparatus by which the production and normalization of masculine and feminine take place along with the interstitial forms of hormonal, chromosomal, psychic, and performative that gender assumes.*<sup>12</sup>

If gender is the apparatus to normalize masculine and feminine, it seems straightforward to argue that gender has an original state pre-regulations. It is the social-cultural constructs that have been enforced upon gender and the gendered subject, if those regulations were altered or changed gender would change and perhaps allow for more fluidness of masculine and feminine behaviours.

Butler views it from a different position which is; gender does not exist prior to its regulation. That it is the regulation that produces gender, or as Butler sees it, *in being subject to regulation; the gendered subject emerges, produced in and through that particular form of subjection.*<sup>13</sup>



Figure 3. As normal: Private posturing, (2014), missing photo from video shoot 25 secs

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<sup>12</sup> (Butler, 2004, p. 42)

<sup>13</sup>(Butler, 2004, p. 21)

### 3.1 Gender expectations

Lorber tells us *“In a gender-stratified society, what men do is usually valued more highly than what women do, even when their activities are very similar or the same.”*<sup>14</sup><sup>15</sup> There are expectations by society that each will do their part to fit in and abide by its codes and conventions. It is obvious from the construct of the gender binary that society has different expectations, roles and status for the male and female. According to Butler, you can see the difference of male and female roles and their social status from, *“the meaning of the word ‘gender’ as having evolved as differentiated from the word ‘sex’ to express the reality that women’s and men’s roles and status are socially constructed and subject to change.”*<sup>16</sup>

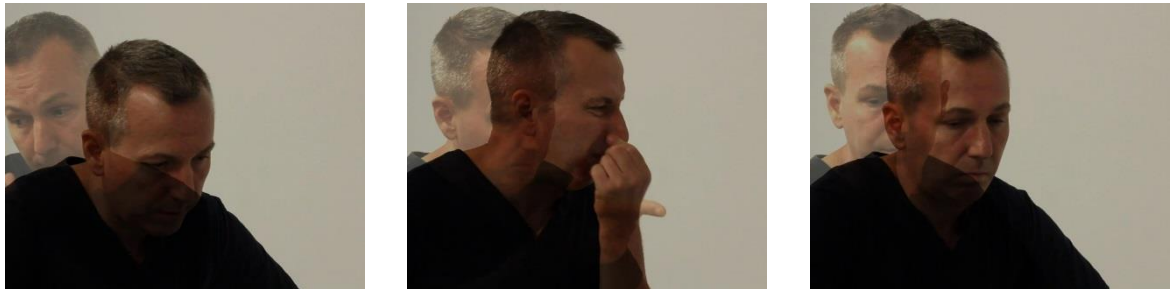


Figure 4. As normal: Double self-mirror interview, (2014), video, 6.29 secs

### 3.2 The norm

Howitz states true normality is unobtainable. Statistics say woman in the United States have 2.09 children, which is not possible.<sup>17</sup> Those wanting to be different base their differences against *“a conception of the normal”*<sup>18</sup>; those who are different may use the same conception of the normal as a ploy to be seen as normal. The norm offers a place of safety for those on the outside of it. A subject may fabricate part of their lives to be accepted as part of the norm. This would not be possible in regards to something like height but other tactics could be used to misrepresent a subject’s status. Michel Foucault alerts us to the world around us watching a subject’s compliance to social norms. This may sound extreme in 21st Century New Zealand but it has not been too far in a recent past that it was illegal to indulge in homosexual acts.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> (Lorber, 1994, p. 61)

<sup>15</sup> We only need to look to sport for an example of a male activity being more valued than its female counterpart. For instant The Black Ferns, New Zealand’s senior women’s rugby team are the current world champions and have won every world cup since 1998. It is the men’s rugby team, The All Blacks that are considered the countries, if not the world, number one rugby sports team, they have only won two rugby world cups, both on home soil.

<sup>16</sup> (Butler, 2004, p. 182)

<sup>17</sup> (Horwitz, 2008)

<sup>18</sup> (Horwitz, 2008, p. 70)

<sup>19</sup> In 1986, the homosexual law reform act came into effect in New Zealand which decriminalised sexual relations between men aged 16 and over. Homosexuality was illegal no longer. <sup>19</sup>



*“The judges of normality are present everywhere. We are in the society of the teacher-judge, the doctor-judge, the educator-judge, the social worker -judge.” judge; it is on them that the universal reign of the normative is based; and each individual, wherever he may find himself, subjects to it his body, his gestures, his behaviour, his aptitudes, his achievements.<sup>20</sup>*

Socio-cultural construction of gender is constructed around social norms. Subjects are expected to conform, and they are judged against a background of normality. The quote below by Foucault further alerts us to how groups or subjects who are not thought of as fitting the norm are viewed. Societies not only reward those who are considered “normal” but it can also disadvantage those who are not.

*...if you are not like everybody else, then you are abnormal, if you are abnormal, then you are sick. These three categories, not being like everybody else, not being normal and being sick are in fact very different but have been reduced to the same thing.<sup>21</sup>*

When different parts of society have different views, the stereotype we see in popular culture is used often against those not fitting within the expected social norms. According to Horwitz, one predicament in the analysis of what is normal is that there is no stringent guidelines to signpost what “*conditions are normal*”<sup>22</sup>. To call a person normal is to accept that they may present themselves in a way that equals others in numerous situations. They may be different from others in many ways but nonetheless are considered normal if they ‘fit in’ to the majority. There are circumstances that society is much more sensitive towards which will set a subject apart from others. Deviations from a normal heterosexual gender identity is an area of concern for society and will be viewed as not normal and be detrimental to the subject’s wellbeing.

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<sup>20</sup> (Foucault, 1977, p. 304)

<sup>21</sup> (Foucault, 1977)

<sup>22</sup> (Horwitz, 2008)

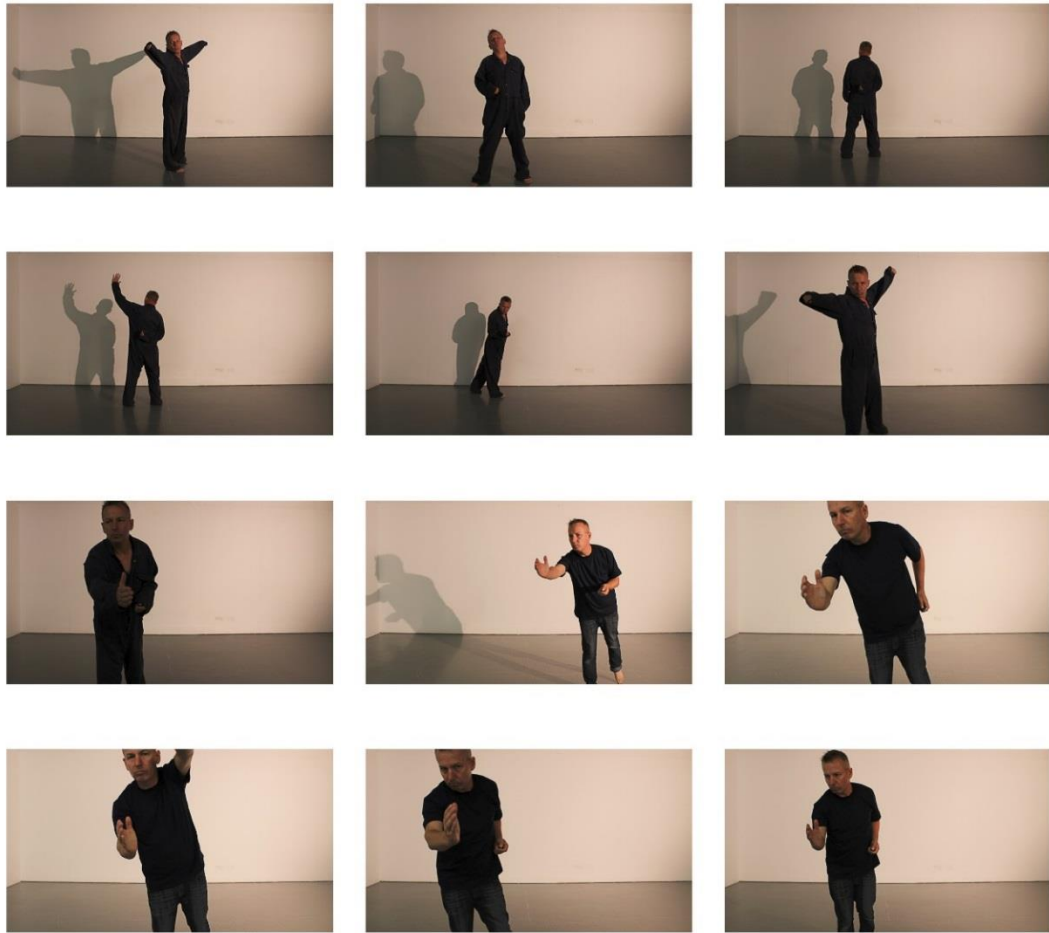


Figure 5. As normal: Practising handshake and overalls, (2014)



Figure 6. As normal: 9 lives, (2014), video 25 secs

### 3.3 The normal curve

One-way society has gauged what is normal is by the use of a normal curve. I is able to provide a visual guide of the highest concentration of occurrences of what is being measured. The curve can show the “standard of normal behaviour in which average is the same as desirable”.<sup>23</sup> Horwitz claims that, “*normality has an extraordinarily powerful effect on how people behave, even those wanting to be different*”.<sup>24</sup> “*There is a widespread belief that things of the world distribute themselves according to a model depicted by the normal curve.*”<sup>25</sup> The centre of the curve represents the highest concentration of occurrences amongst the data being monitored. For test results this can indicate the average score, for humans it locates a subject in the range of world is to be considered normal.



Figure 7. As normal: The ideal couple without masks, (2014), video stills

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<sup>23</sup> (Fendler & Muzaffar, 2008, p. 65)

<sup>24</sup> (Horwitz, 2008, p. 70)

<sup>25</sup> (Fendler & Muzaffar, 2008, p. 63)

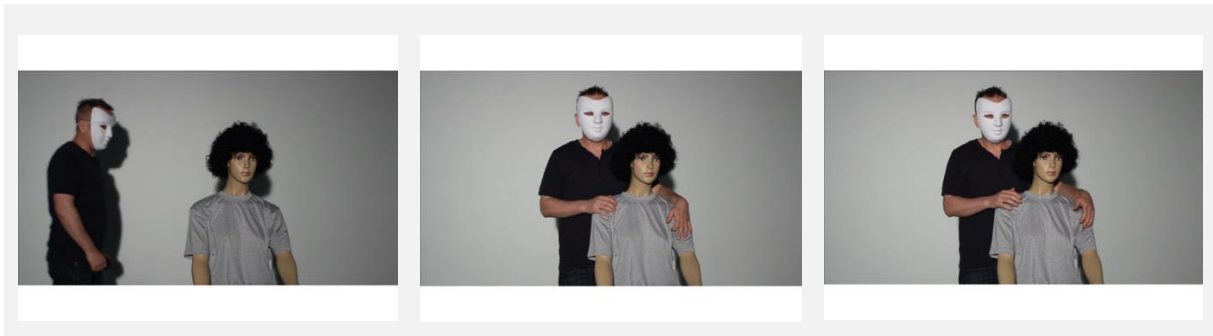


Figure 8. As normal: The ideal couple, (2014), video 25 secs

### 3.4 The ideal

Popular culture and the Hollywood blockbuster deliver a platitude of two-dimensional heroes that is both unobtainable and difficult to resist. Stereotypes and biases displayed in films are dismissed as “*mere escapism*” and entertainment,<sup>26</sup> not to mention the inaccurate portrayal of those from “*different background or cultures*”.<sup>27</sup> There are male super heroes saving the world (and the girl), and stereotypes of women mostly focus on their sex appeal – regardless of what they are doing they must look good. These larger than life figures of perfection are delivered to the public as the ideal life to be achieved, the ideal couple with their successful jobs, living in an ideal home. Picture the super model whose airbrushed face and body appears all over advertisements and magazines. The prowess of sports stars, the six-pack of the male model and the copious amounts of alcohol you can drink on a Friday and Saturday night. In the quote below, Connell alerts us that the socio-cultural construct of masculinity is dependent upon many factors. While there is no universal standard for either masculine or feminine behaviour Connell tells us,

*In pop psychology, and a lot of popular belief, masculinity is set in concrete, fixed by the genes or by God, and impossible for women to influence. 'Boys will be boys'; 'all men are like that'. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is abundant evidence that boys differ widely, masculinities are multiple, masculinities change in history - and that women have a considerable role in making them, in interaction with boys and men.*<sup>28</sup>

Society is filled with falsehoods about males such as the few listed above but subjects of both sexes are inundated with phrases and expressions which are problematic. They serve only to reinforce constructed, idealistic two-dimensional views of normality. From phrases like, to separate the men from the boys, A good man is hard to find, Give a man a long enough rope and he will hang himself, be a man, take it like a man, don't be a big girl's blouse, don't be such a wuss, big boys don't cry, are you man or mouse?, Man up, a dirty old man, a man's man, and I am sure there are more.

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<sup>26</sup> (Jones, 2011)

<sup>27</sup> (Jones, 2011)

<sup>28</sup> (R. Connell, 2005)



Figure 9. As normal: Private posturing, (2013), photographs

### 3.5 The body

Butler states, “*It is through our bodies that our gender and sexuality is exposed to others, implicated in social processes, inscribed by cultural norms, and apprehended in their social meanings.*”<sup>29</sup> In a sense, to be a body is to be given over to others even as a body is, emphatically, ‘one’s own’, that over which we must claim rights of autonomy.

*The body implies mortality, vulnerability, and agency: the skin and the flesh exposes us to the gaze of others but also to touch and to violence. The body can be the agency and instrument of all these as well, or the site where “doing” and “being done to” become equivocal. Although we struggle for rights over our own bodies, the very bodies for which we struggle are not quite ever only our own.*<sup>30</sup>

The body, the subject’s body is imprinted upon from the moment sex and gender are assigned. Others take claim to what a subject is able to do with their body. It can however be a friend or foe, with body image being the greatest preoccupation of all. There are many decisions to be made daily, what should I wear? Does my stomach stick out? Butler also talks about our choice of personal space or lack of it on public transport. Goffman tells us the body may not respond as we would hope, the subject may trip up, yawn, momentarily lose muscle control,

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<sup>29</sup> (Butler, 2004, p. 21)

<sup>30</sup> (Butler, 2004)

thereby disrupting the performance or impression the subject is trying to present, all of these situations could also be manufactured by the subject as a way of masking other behaviours.

### 3.6 Performing gender

Butler holds the theoretical view that since gender is a result of socio-cultural construction, it is then something a subject performs rather than something that happens naturally.<sup>31</sup> Butler interprets gender as performative, something we do over, and over, so much so that we even spend time thinking about it.<sup>32</sup> Gender does not create the performance, but rather the performance creates the gender.<sup>33</sup>

That is it not to say it is an original performance by a subject, as they have learnt to perform their gender from a young age through their contact with others and socio-cultural construction. The subject adds his or her own individuality to the performance. Butler theorises the performance is influenced habitually by socio-cultural codes, and is a sort of reaffirming and repeating of the gendered self.<sup>34</sup> The performance is a repetition of what the subject has done previously, it will have altered and “*can only ever achieve an approximation of the gendered ideal*”.<sup>35 36</sup>



Figure 10. As normal: Private posturing, (2014), missing photo from video shoot 25 secs

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<sup>31</sup> (Butler, 1990)

<sup>32</sup> (Butler, 2003)

<sup>33</sup> (Butler, 2003)

<sup>34</sup> (Butler, 1993)

<sup>35</sup> (Butler, 1993)

<sup>36</sup> Like an actor in a long running stage, play having to perform the same role day after day. The actor will know the role well but can never re-perform it exactly as it has been performed before.

According to Butler, for the most part we are unaware of the performance we are constantly re-enacting.<sup>37</sup> This may be true for subjects who are comfortable with their gender performance. Those who are not will be keenly aware of their actions, both in public and private. They may even spend time privately practising the performing of gender.

*To assume that gender always and exclusively means the matrix of the "masculine" and "feminine" is precisely to miss the critical point that the production of that coherent binary is contingent, that it comes at a cost, and that those permutations of gender which do not fit the binary are as much a part of gender as its most normative instance."*<sup>38</sup>

Butler is speaking about what is currently outside the realm of socio-cultural normative behaviours. It is the 'permutations' of gender expression that are most likely to be shunned by society and excluded as they do not fit nicely into society's conception of a normal gendered behaviour. These identities with their binary constraints are then promoted as social norms.

Therefore, although the gender apparatus allows for the installation of masculine and feminine identities, it also "*deconstructs and denaturalizes*".<sup>39</sup> This makes it problematic for subjects; some having to conform to socio-cultural standards of masculine or feminine standards of behaviours that they find unnatural. However, humans are good at adapting how they present themselves. Erving Goffman states that the subject will present their self to the world but does so differently under different circumstances, they will give off information that will allow their observers to recognise them<sup>40</sup>. The subject sets out to manipulate those in their company so they can be viewed as they intended<sup>41</sup>. Still, this must be most difficult for those needing to hide behaviours that may alert others to their difference.

### 3.7 Acceptance

In New Zealand, attitudes towards those communities outside of the normal heterosexual life style have changed over a number of years. In 1986 the Homosexual Law Reform Act 1986 came into effect in New Zealand which decriminalised sexual relations between men aged 16 and over. Homosexuality was no longer illegal<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> (Butler, 2003)

<sup>38</sup> (Butler, 2004, p. 42)

<sup>39</sup> (Butler, 2004, p. 42)

<sup>40</sup> (Erving, 1959, p. 1)

<sup>41</sup> (Erving, 1959)

<sup>42</sup> To some extent the law reform was past so gay men could access medical health in relation to the HIV AIDS epidemic that was threatening to infect the gay population and as was feared the heterosexual population. It was at a time that tolerance towards homosexuals was low, partly in relation to the outbreak of HIV/AIDS. Comedians made joke about AIDS and gays and many lived a double live trying to hide their homosexuality. The stereotype of the Homosexuals in popular culture was flamboyant and unmanly.

Social change may be brought about by protest and challenge by those groups viewed as not normal as has been happening over many years in New Zealand with regards to gay equality. Awareness and visibility strengthens the rights of the community and empathy from the larger community has followed. Raewyn Connell informs us that it is just not only gay men that have benefited from their increased visibility, heterosexual men have been able to borrow “*bits and pieces of gay men’s style and practices*”.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> (R. W. Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 845)



## Part Two

*“Let's face it. We are undone by each other. And if we're not, we're missing something.”*

*Judith Butler*

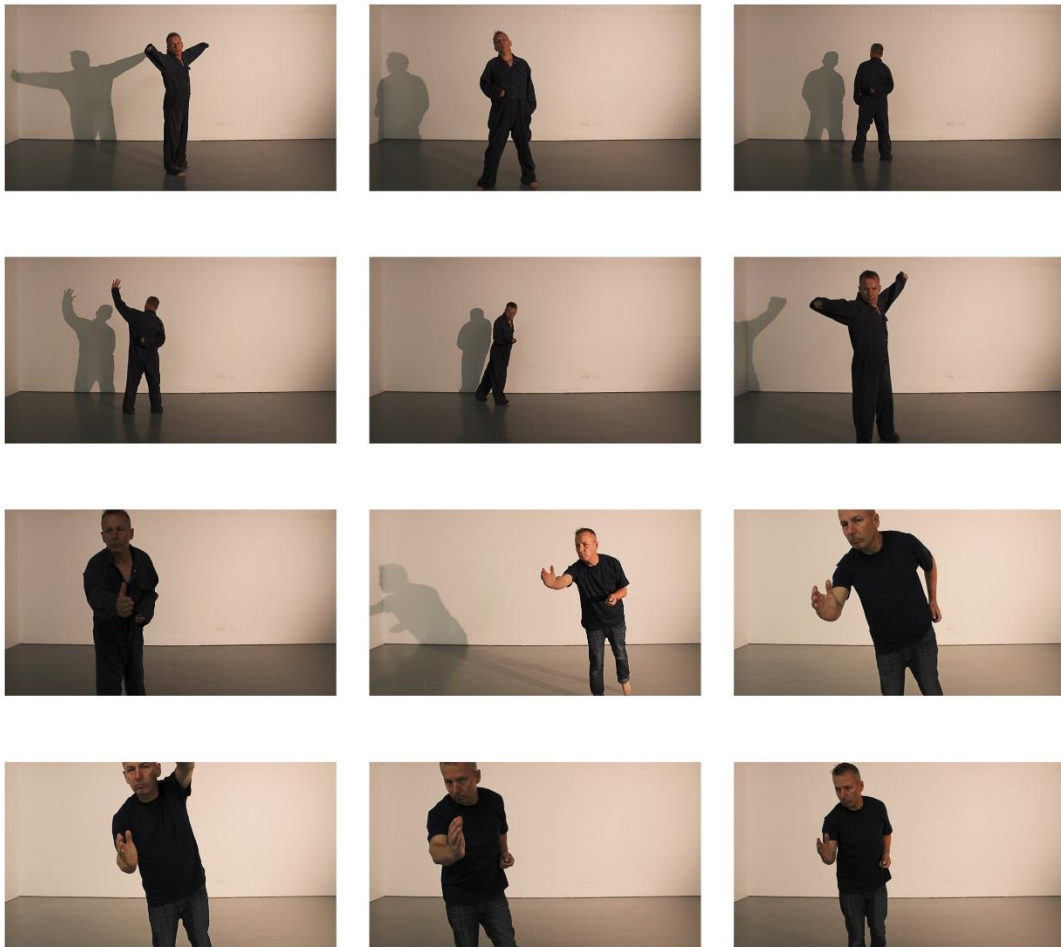


Figure 11. Practise/perform, (2014), video stills

## 4 Method and work



Figure 12. Practice preform (2014) video stills.

### 4.1 The way I work

I am interested in reusing footage I have filmed so as to discover new meaning from what is on the screen. I am not looking for perfection in the filming, the lighting does not have to be perfect, nor does the location, perhaps it will come later. I work with as little assistance as possible, although this can lead to unnecessary mistakes. Some of my favourite work I have produced has been the result of happenstance.

### 4.2 Gender altering

The idea was to make work that included a male subject who is of middle to late forties. He identifies with being male. Someone who grew up before the law and attitudes had changed, though it is still the same in many ways depending where you are located in society or the world. There is a wider acceptance of difference but this is not always embraced by those who are gender-different.

Butler says we are always doing gender for someone even if that someone is imaginary. The repeated acts of stereotypical masculine poses alert the viewer to a conflict, in contrast to our more open society of being yourself. All posturing and poses are done privately; this is not a public display of masculine dominance.

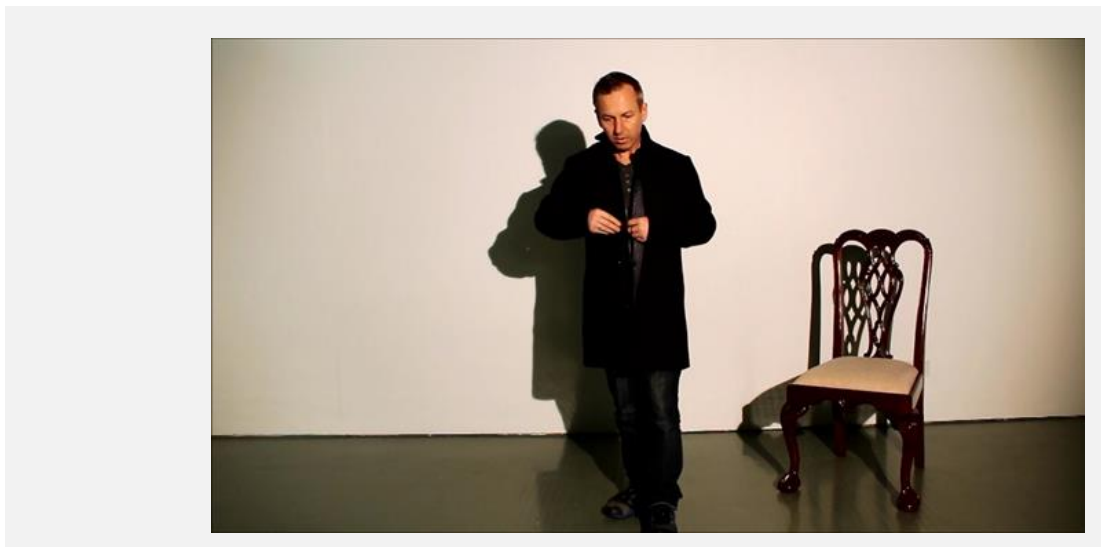


Figure 13. Clothes maketh the man, (2013), video, 7 mins

### 4.3 Inspiration

I was often inspired by quotes I had seen during this project, far too many to include in this body of writing. Often they would sum up a particular slant or place of discomfort I felt needed to be explored in the work. The quote below by Erving Goffman is an example.

*“...the issue becomes not whether a person has experience with a stigma of his own, because he has, but rather how many varieties he has had his own experience with.”<sup>44</sup>*

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<sup>44</sup> (Goffman, 1968, p. 153)

## 4.4 Bruce Nauman

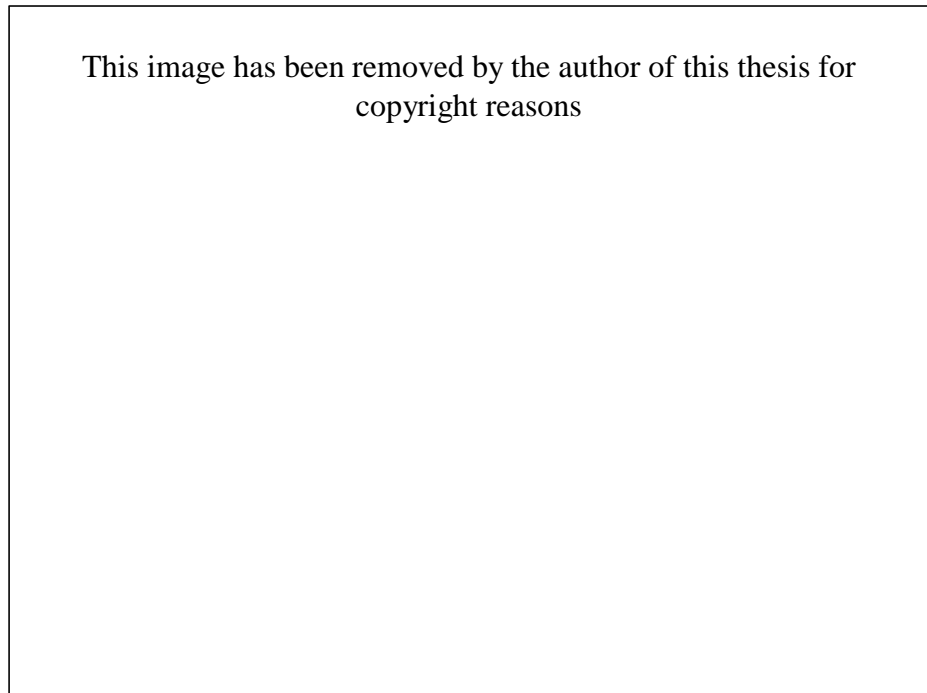


Figure 14. Bruce Nauman, Walking in an Exaggerated Manner around the Perimeter of a Square, (1968) video, 10 mins

*“My work comes out of being frustrated about the human condition. And about how people refuse to understand other people. And about How people can be cruel to each other. It is not that I think I can change That, but it’s such a frustrating part of human history”.*<sup>45</sup>

Nauman’s video work has influenced the aesthetics of my videos. Before that, there was a connection with the text work .His simplistic use of video and filming technique work best with the project.

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<sup>45</sup> (Nauman & Kraynak, 2005, p. 332)

This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons

Figure 15. Hal Fischer, (1977), Street fashion, photography

#### 4.5 Gay fashion as semiotics

Gay men have a rich history of masculinity and to be fair so do some lesbians, during the 1970's in big cities with a large gay population, the dress code for some was masculine and visual rather than low key. The use of a coloured hankie was worn by some to alert other gay men of their particular sexual preference.<sup>46</sup> In 1977 Hal Fischer documented gay fashion in New York as a project to highlight gay semiotics, these models are not unlike those you may still find today in larger cities (the fashion may change but the advertising message may be as strong), where it is perhaps safer to stand out rather than needing to fit in.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> The handkerchief code is a colour-coded system, employed usually among the gay male casual-sex seekers or BDSM practitioners in the United States, Canada, and Europe, to indicate preferred sexual fetishes, what kind of sex they are seeking, and whether they are a top/dominant or bottom/submissive. The hanky code was widely used in the 1970s by gay and bisexual men, and grew from there to include all genders and orientations. (*Handkerchief code*, 2012)

<sup>47</sup> (Fischer, 1977)

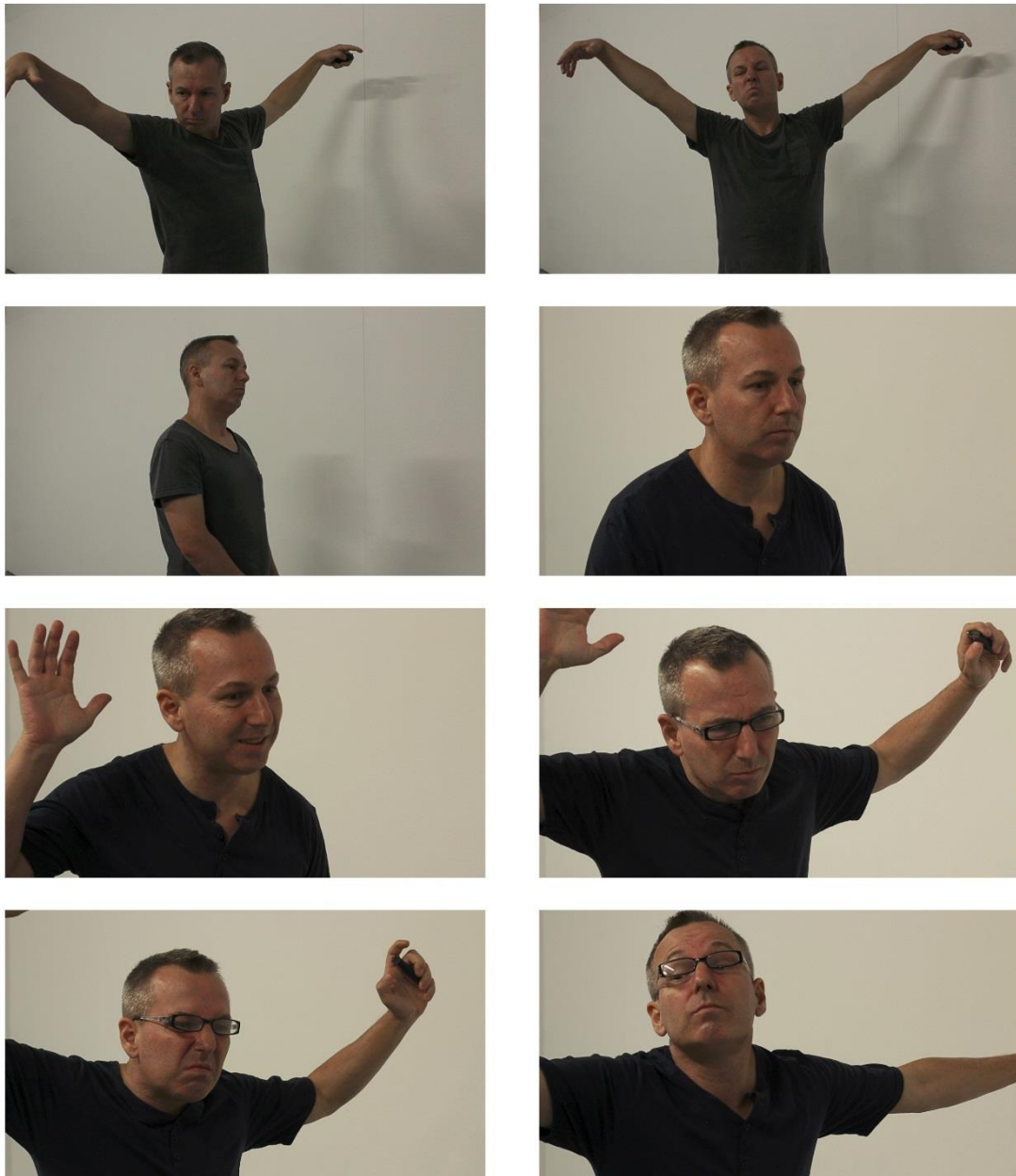


Figure 16. As normal: Subject engaging with his image, private practise, (2014), photographs

## 4.6 Shadows and the mirror

The subject seeks to find his identity in the image, but this identity with himself is, in some fashion, his “other” and this other is the privileged member of the couple “since it will serve as the norm, the *imago*, of that which I must become in order to be.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> (Muller, 1985, p. 248)



Figure 17. Single shot shadow exploration, (2014), photograph

In accessing why the mirror needed to be an element of the work, albeit out of sight most of the time, I was presented with a number of options that I felt fitted well with the intentions of the project.

The inclusion of the mirror and shadows within the work allow an opposite to be present. Both present a different view of what is happening. The extra dimension, the presence of another self feels important to the project as a way to understand and explore the self-reflective nature of the work.

# Works

2014

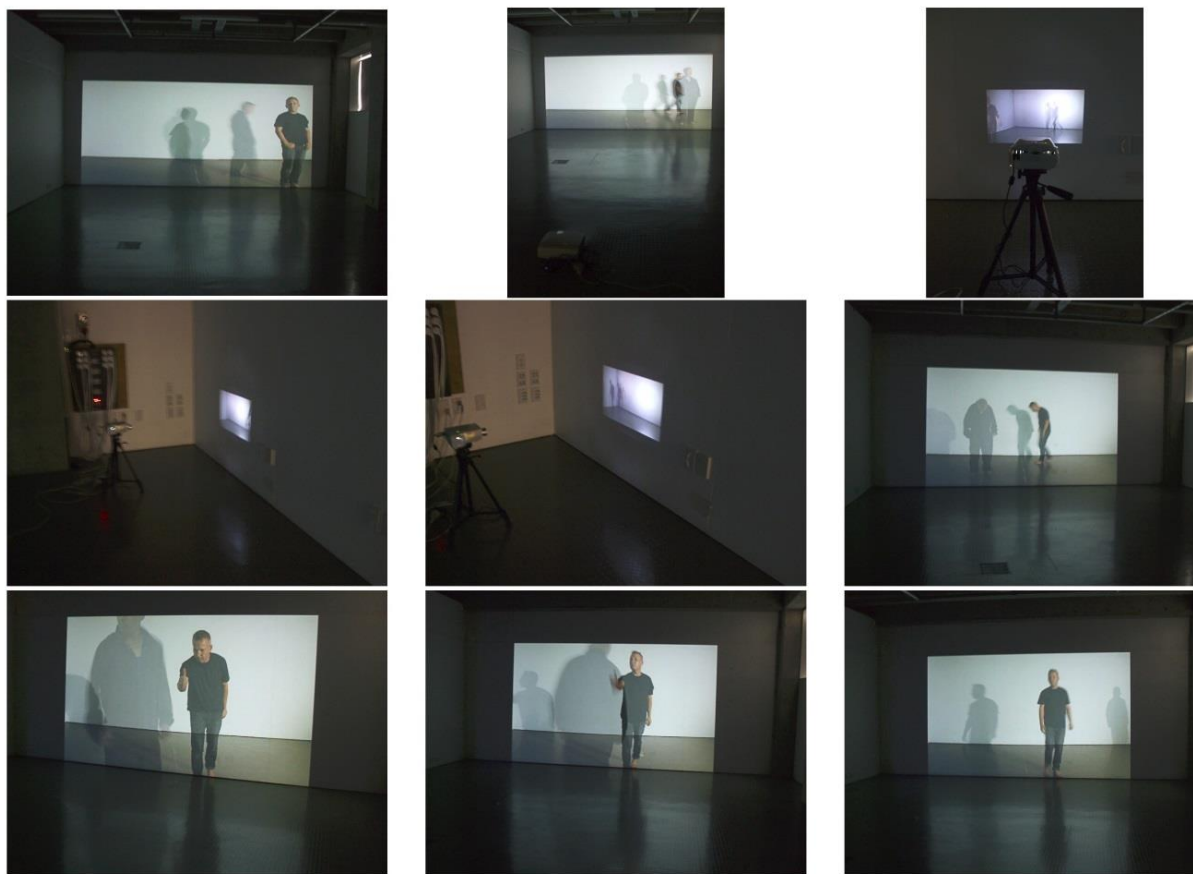


Figure 18. As normal: Practise/perform/installation, (2014), multimedia various lengths



Figure 19. Practise/perform, (2014), video, 11.41 secs



This video work involves the blending of two digital films together. You can view both film playing together. One subject is walking around practising shaking hands and greeting people. The other subject is trying on a pair of old overalls and practising being a different persona, as well as interacting with his shadow. There are moments when the subjects interact as though it has been planned.

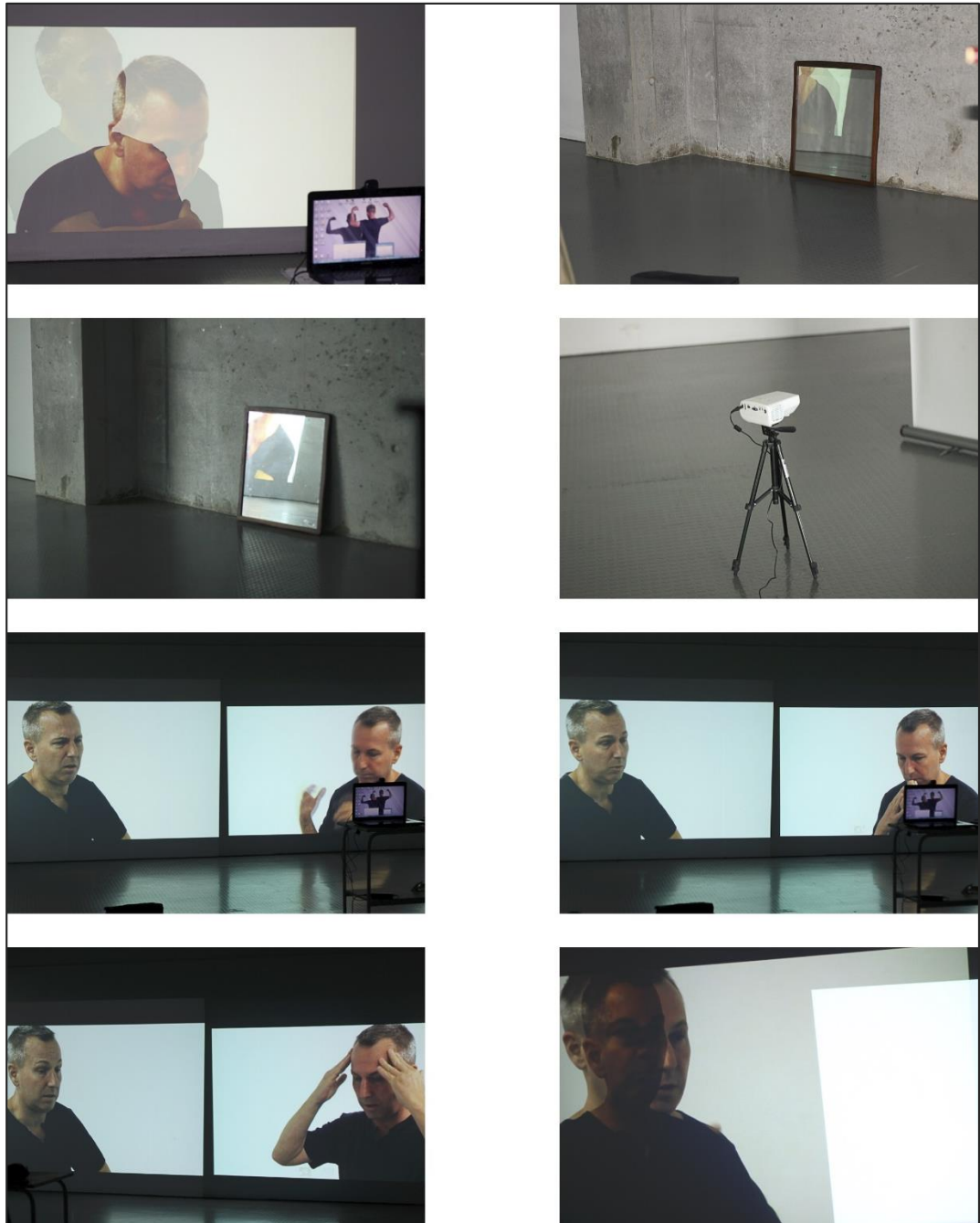


Figure 20. Install/testing, (2014)



Figure 21. As normal: The ideal couple with mask, (2014), video, 25 secs.

'Go back into the sewers where you come from ... as far as I'm concerned you can stay in the gutter. 'Turn around and look at them ... gaze upon them ... you're looking into Hades ... don't look too long – you might catch AIDS.'<sup>49</sup>

**2013**



Figure 222. Grooming, (2013), video, 10 mins

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<sup>49</sup> ("Homosexual Law Reform Act 1986 (New Zealand)," 1987)



Figure 23. Unease Aug, (2013), video stills, 10 mins

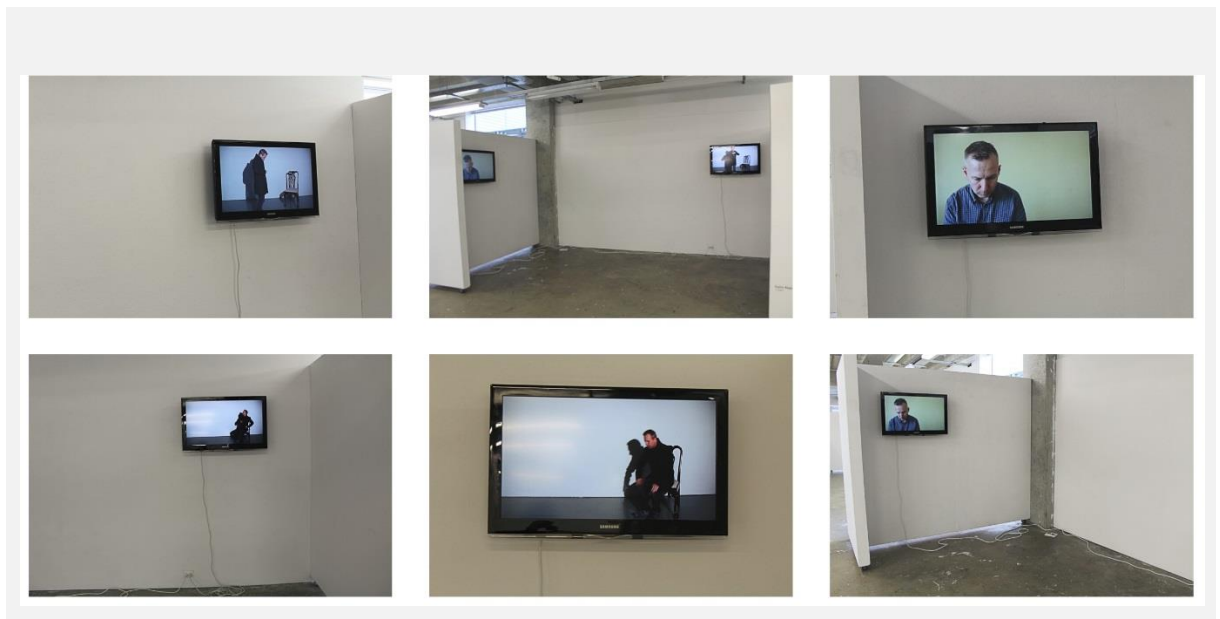


Figure 23. Dis-ease, (2013), End of year work, video, 10 mins.

2012

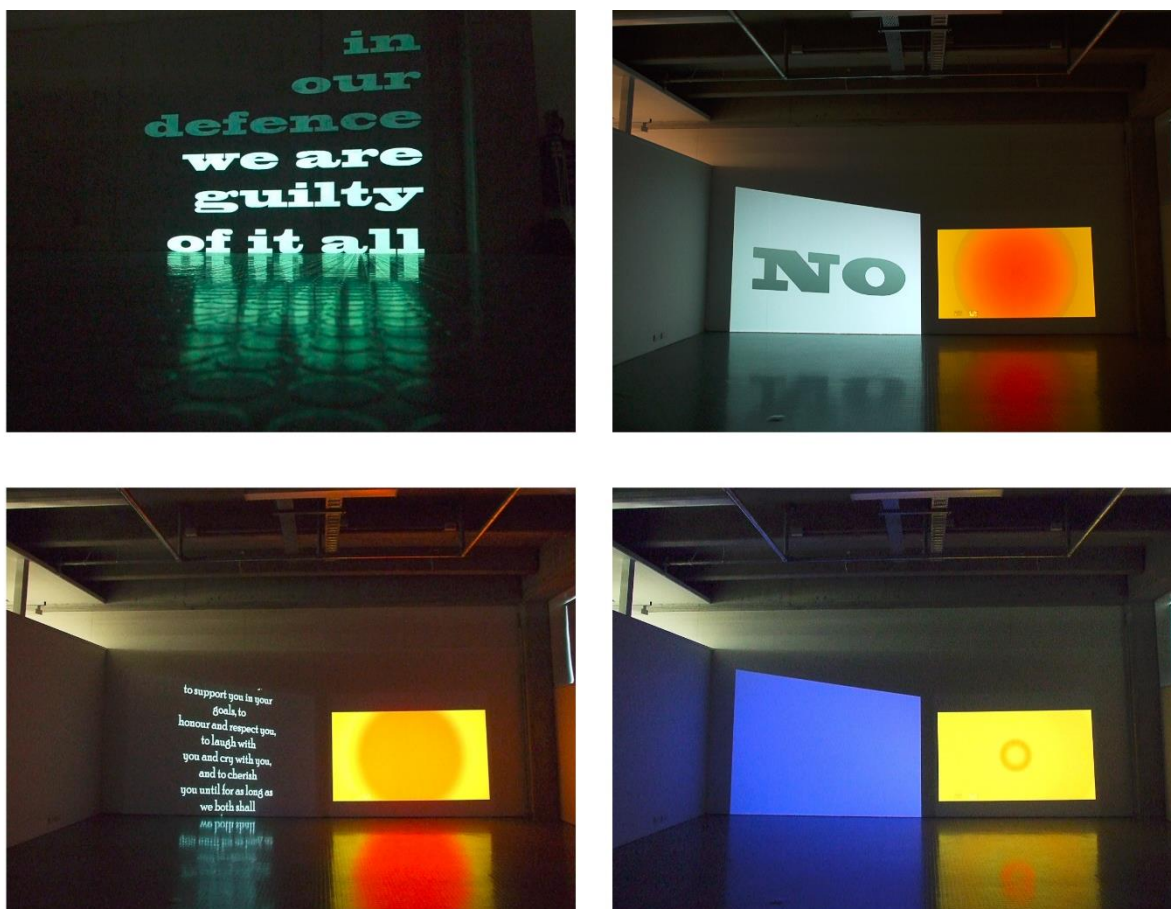


Figure 24. Text-based work, (2012), multimedia projection, various lengths

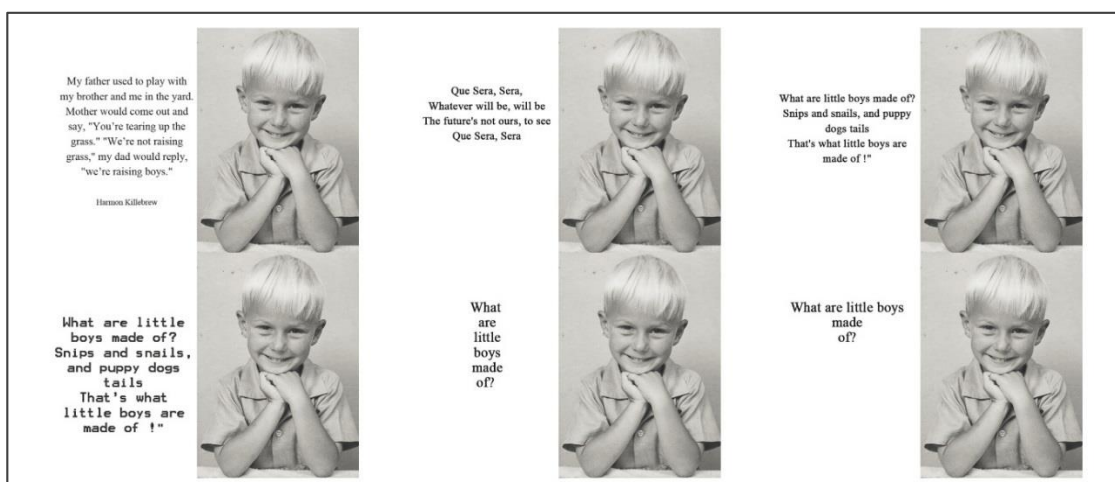


Figure 25. What is a boy, (2012), test works, photography and text.





Figure 26. Final installation for PgDip Exhibition, 2012

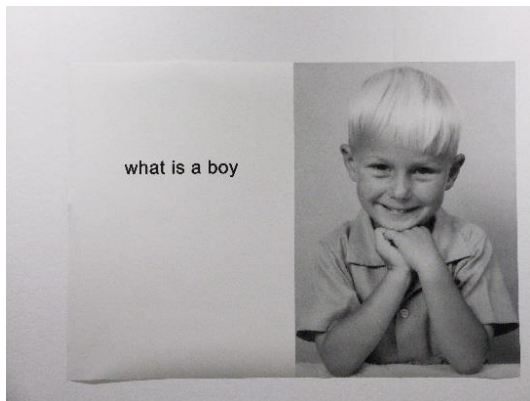


Figure 27. What is a boy, (2012), Detail



Figure 28. Boys don't cry, (2012), Multimedia projection, loop

<b>fagrol</b>	<b>lezzie</b>	<b>pooff</b> <b>pooff</b>	<b>cock</b> <b>suck</b>
<b>poofers</b>	<b>butt</b> <b>fuckers</b>	<b>pan</b> <b>sies</b>	<b>homo</b> <b>boy</b>
<b>fagro</b> <b>ck</b> <b>et</b>	<b>emo</b> <b>fags</b>	<b>WARNING</b>	<b>Stand with your backs</b> <b>against the wall</b>

Figure 29. Condemnation, (2012), mixed media video projection, 472 slides.

## Conculsion

In this exegesis, I have explored ideas around the assignment of sex and gender by means of visual examination and its problematic effect upon a subject later in life. I have questioned the usefulness of a gender binary that is controlled by socio-cultural codes and conventions. I have also questioned how these are problematic to those not fitting within gender norms. The exegesis also explored ideas around popular culture, the body, and performance of gender. Through the work I explored the idea of the male stance or pose. I feel the work becomes complete not when the subject performs a masculine pose of gender but rather when he appears on the screen. Without thinking the subject gives away the constructed gender they have learnt and projects through body language. A consciously performed gender may not hide the original lessons learnt.

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## Exhibition

The final installation involved three works shown on individual 40-inch monitors. Each monitor was connected to the wall socket using heavy black extension power cables. The length or loop of each video was different and the works were not synchronised.



Figure 30. Final show installation, As normal, various.

The titles of the collected works are *As Normal* with each work having a subtitle of A, B, or C. *As normal: A*, is of a subject posturing and interacting with his own shadow. The repeat of the loop is 60 seconds approximately.

*As normal: B*, Is a multi-image screen containing nine short 25 second loop of the subject(s), depending on how you view the work. Each is taken from separate recordings.

*As normal: C*, 3 minutes of posturing and looking at a mirror, single image.

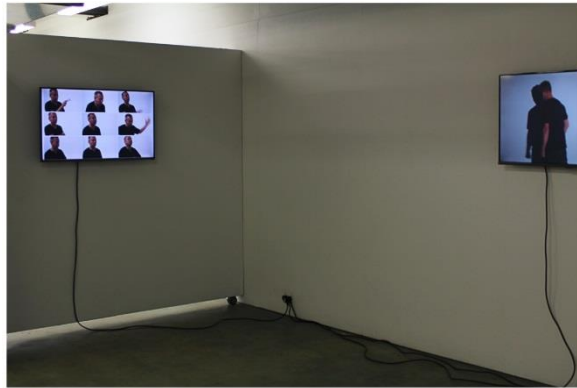
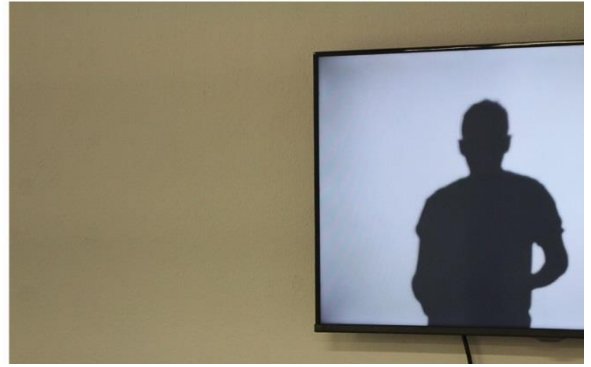
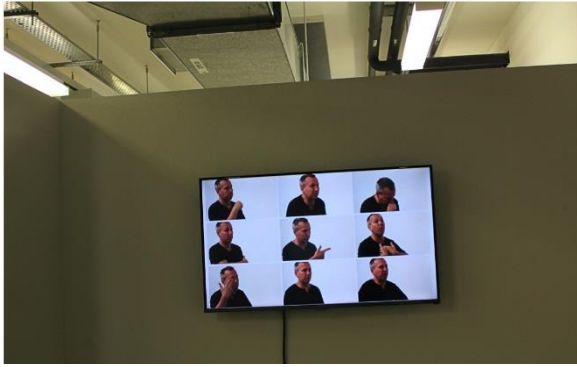


Figure 31. Final show installation, As normal, various

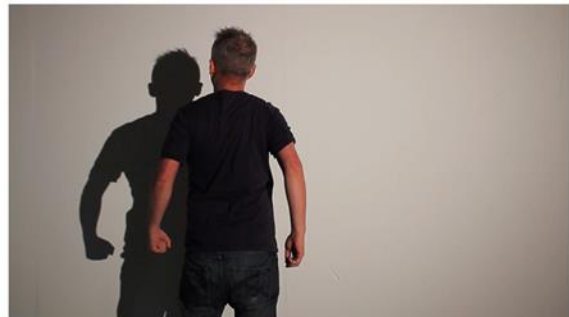
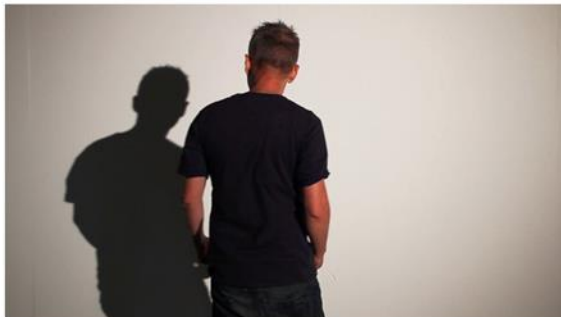


Figure 32. As normal: A, Shadow posturing, (2014) 60 secs, loop



Figure 33. As normal: B, 9 multi-image, (2014), 25 secs, loop



Figure 34. As normal: C, 3 minutes posturing and looking at mirror, (2014)

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