the contrived self(ie)

Andrea McSweeney

This exegesis is submitted to the Auckland University of Technology for the degree of Masters of Philosophy (Art and Design), January 2020.

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#attestation of authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person except that which appears in the citations and acknowledgements. Nor does it contain material which to a substantial extent I have submitted for the qualification of any other degree for another university or other institution of higher learning. *Andrea McSweeney.*

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This project is dedicated to GBFS.

#abstract

The *Contrived Self(ie)* is a body of work that engages with the selfie genre as a starting point from which to explore, via a kitchen-table engagement with art-making, the fabrication of self-presentation, self-identity and self-narrative. It does so by making and exhibiting a range of '*self(ie) machines*' that are a creative response to the ordinary materiality of extraordinary self-presentation within the everyday genre of the selfie. These machines create new identities and narratives from appropriated imagery and collaged fragments of existing, familiar and generic images of self. This presentation of fictitious self-identities and self-narratives is explored in the research; a fiction based on the familiar and ordinary that leads to the selfie machines, becoming mini manufactures of contemporary physical versions of generic selfie images.

This exegesis is submitted to the Auckland University of Technology for the degree of Masters of Philosophy (Art and Design), January 2020.

#positioning the researcher

My practice is a kitchen table engagement with art making. It is studio-less, a project-based response to the ordinary that engages with common technologies and processes. The familiar contained within the everyday has always been of interest to me and is used to create works that initially appear frivolous, before revealing their serious core. As a teacher, my daily engagement with art involves posing questions, presenting problems and promoting critical thinking in young people. It is their confusion, wonder and astonishment that art has, shares and creates meaning that this thesis aims to capture.

This is a project about the fabrication of identities and narratives. It tells of everyday engagement with artmaking via ubiquitous technology. It taps into a desire to control how others may view, review and validate our image of self. It employs humour, the pre-made and pre-existing to create a reflection on an art-making practice as complex and fascinating as it is banal and ordinary.

#introduction

The *contrived self(ie)* is a body of work that employs the ubiquitous and ever-present selfie genre to explore the everyday construction of self-identities and self-narratives. This exegesis contextualises and explains the works created for the *contrived self(ie)*. It is divided into seven chapters and a conclusion.

Chapter one outlines the nature of the project, explaining the title and the specific definition of the term selfie that underpins the project.

Chapter two explains the research methodology used for the project. The selection of an heuristic model allows for a reflexive, open-ended, art-as-research framework, in which the exegesis and studio informed and responded to each other.

Chapter three contextualises Vicente Verdu's theory of fictional capitalism, with reference to artist Amalia Ulman, in relation to the construction and consumption of spectacular images of self-identity and self-narrative.

Chapter four applies Foucault's theory of heterotopic spaces to the selfie genre resulting in the idea of a heterotopia of identity.

Chapter five contextualises the project's use of appropriation and parody in creating the playful, allegorical self(ie) machines.

Chapter six considers theories of time and space in relation to the construction of the *self(ie) machines* and the different types of movement within the works.

Chapter seven links Lefebvre's theory of the everyday with Hannah Höch's use of collage, exploring ways in which a selfie taker can escape from the everyday into an uncanny constructed world. This risk-embracing project moved beyond the selfie genres notion of self-identity and self-narrative as digital images of self, arriving at the creation of three-dimensional *self(ie) machines*. These playful and energetic machines emerged via a collaboration between reflective and experimental processes and aesthetic and conceptual art theories celebrating the construction and fabrication of other self(ie)s, of self(ie)s within self(ie)s and of contrived self(ie)s.

#chapter one: selfies

#contrived self(ie) & machines

When the past is always with you, it may as well be present; and if it is present, it will be future as well.

William Gibson, *Neuromancer*

The title of this project is derived from the selfie genre's presentation of deliberately created images of self-identity and self-narrative. The term 'contrived' has been selected as it encompasses the artificial and manufactured nature of images created within the selfie genre.

With a starting point that explored traditional studio portraiture, this project has arrived at appropriated, three-dimensional, heterotopias called *self(ie) machines*. The term *self(ie) machine* has been coined to reinforce the notion of selfies as constructed and fabricated images, generated via machines that operate with an intended action and outcome. These machines present a visual response to Foucault's notion of heterotopia (discussed further in chapter four) in relation to social, cultural, and political constructs of *worlds within worlds* and *otherness* (Foucault, 1984), while encompassing newer evolving concepts and theories of complex online spaces as virtual and dynamic heterotopian worlds (Dalton, 2014). The *self(ie) machines* create a world within worlds, combining images from the past and the present to construct fictitious self-identities and self-narratives, employing an interplay of stillness and movement, the familiar and the other, the automatic and the crafted, the banal and the uncanny.

#self(ie) & the portraiture genre

The word *selfie* is a hypocorism, the phenomenon of turning words into diminutives by adding the *ie* sound to the end of the word. The use of the diminutive *ie* suffix supports the Australian origins[1] of the term and reduces, in part, the often cited "narcissistic enterprise" of taking and sharing images of self into something more endearing and banal (Pearlman, 2013).

The *contrived self(ie)* acknowledges the co-dependent relationship between the physical self and digital selfie in creating self-identity and self-narrative with the use of the bracket within the title of this project. One does not exist without the other, however fragmented they may be from each other.

The term *selfie genre* is used throughout the project to encompass the cultural, historical and technological factors that have given rise to selfies. It is a vernacular genre that does not separate aesthetic, cultural and historic notions of self-portraiture from ubiquitous and everyday technology. Alise Tifentale suggests the use of one device as an “image-making, image-sharing and image-viewing” platform is a significant factor that makes a selfie more than just “a new type of self-portrait” (Tifentale, 2016, p.1).

This project considers selfies as a new branch in the photographic self-portrait genre with the initial artworks exploring traditional portrait photography while acknowledging that the selfie genre has its own rapidly “shifting, aesthetic parameters of posing and composition” (Shipley, 2015, p.404). The experimental *#snapseries* stems from an investigation into the technological and social parallels between the selfie genre and 1850s cartes-de-visite[2]. As with selfies, it was a technological invention that led to cartes-de-visite. André Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri's 1854 invention of a glass plate negative that created multiple exposures at once allowed for inexpensive, mass manufacture of images (Frizot, 1999, p.110). This technological shift moved photographic portraiture beyond the realm of the upper-class and was criticised for appealing “to the narcissistic desire of a new middle class to see itself" (Doherty & Waldheim, 2016, p.77).



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Figure 1. Baily, H. (1865-1897)
No title, Woman with elaborate hairstyle & frilly collar
(Left) carte-de-visite, albumen silver photograph.
Retrieved from https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/73784/ a

Figure 2. Jenner, K. (2016)
No title, Image of dog filter on woman's face
(Middle) digital image.
Retrieved from https://twitter.codogfiltericons?lang=en

Figure 3. McSweeney, A. (2018)
#snapseries, paper dog
(Right) digital image.

1. An Australian university student calling himself “Hopey” posted an image of himself in September 2002 with the accompanying text, “I had a hole about 1cm long right through my bottom lip. And sorry about the focus, it was a selfie". While the term had existed prior to this date he is often credited with the invention of the word. Supporting this theory is the Australian tendency to shorten words and end them with “ie” to make cute, slangy words, for example “barbie” for barbecue, and “tinnie” for a can of beer. Therefore, self-portraiture, becomes self and then becomes slang with selfie (Pearlman, 2013).
2. Carte-de-visite is French for visiting card, a small photographic portrait that was shared and traded among friends and visitors.

Cultural parallels are found between the selfie genre and cartes-de-visite with their shared construction of self-identity and self-narrative. Cartes-de-visite embraced a fabrication of identity, with suggestions of wealth and status implied though painted backdrops of grand gardens and interiors and the use of ornate props. Having a carte-de-visite taken was seen as a social leveller and an escape for the sitter into a moment of an imagined life. Carte-de-visites opened portraiture to many not just the privileged, so a "poor man that possesses but a few shillings can command as perfect a life-like portrait of his wife or child as Sir Thomas Lawrence painted for the most distinguished sovereigns of Europe" (Gernsheim, 1986, p.56). The selfie genre's ubiquitous technology, tropes and trends operate similarly, with numerous online tutorials on *how to take a selfie like a celebrity*, suggesting the same type of social and cultural levelling is possible.The *#snapseries* combines selected aesthetic tropes of carte-de-visite portraiture, static bust pose and oval vignette framing, with the selfie genre's digital editing and manipulation capacity. Paper versions of digital selfie Snapchat animal filters are playfully used to create a tension in these works between the physical and digital. The intent is to place selfies and the *contrived self(ie)* project within the continuum of photographic portraiture. These images experiment with combining past photographic aesthetics with present digital and selfie trends. This combining of past with present is a recurring motif throughout the project, suggesting possibilities for future self-identities and self-narratives.



Figure 4. McSweeney, A. (2018)
#snapseries. (Above, left to right), #snaprabbit, #snapdeer, #snapcat, #snapdog (Above) digital image.



Figure 5. Lane, W. (1864)
No title, seated woman posed in front of a painted backdrop
(Left) carte-de-visite
Retrieved from https://www.photohistory-sussex.co.uk/BTN LaneWm2.htm

#extended self(ie)

The term *selfie* is understood to be a shorthand term for a self-portrait that is uploaded and shared on a social networking site. *Selfie* became the online Oxford English Dictionary's word of the year in 2013. According to this definition, a selfie is "a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically with a smartphone or webcam and uploaded to a social media website" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2013).

More recent definitions of selfie extend the cache of the subject matter to include any and all images that may be viewed as an image of self-identity and self- narrative. Kozinets, Gretzel and Dinhopl have developed a broader definition that acknowledges the genre's evolving nature, seeing a selfie as an image that is a "public reflection of the way we view and present ourselves" (Kozinets, Gretzel & Dinhopl, 2017, p.2). Their definition aligns with William James' notion of identity and experience of self from his 1890 *The Principles of Psychology*.

James stated of the material self;

> "In its widest possible sense, however, a man's Self is the sum total of all that he CAN call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his lands and horses, and yacht and bank-account." (James, 1890, p.29).

Replacing *a man's Self* with *a person's Selfie,* James' words gives us a rich and wide-reaching definition of what could be considered a selfie. Belk has expanded on James' concept of self, updating it to include the "phenomena of extended self in the context of current digital worlds" (Belk, 2014, p.50). It is in the digital world that the "traditional boundaries between self/not-self", the private and public, the real and the imagined are blurred, creating wider understandings of self-identity and self-narrative (Sheth & Solomon, 2014, p.126).

The digital images *#softselfie* and *#spineselfie* explore concepts of an extended self through combining objects and figure, referencing photographer Laurie Simmons' 1989 *Walking House* series, a witty and eerie body of work that critiques representations of women and consumerism. Simmons' hybrid object/figure tableaux narratives question a consumer society in which the "way a person lives is so identified with who that person is" (Steinberg, 2018). *#softselfie* and *#spineselfie* are also staged tableaux narratives. A seated figure is a platform for the wonky vertical stacking of domestic objects that obscure the face with only arms and legs visible. These images are anti-selfies, gently mocking the endless selfie sub-genres[3] in which images of contemporary consumer society, *our stuff,* are shared to create and curate a self-identity and self-narrative that extend beyond an image of our face.

3. Selfie sub-genres include the belfie -bottom selfie, the relfie -relationship selfie, the helfie -hair selfie, the welfie -workout selfie and the felfie-farmer selfie (Bates, 2016).









Figure 6. McSweeney, A. (2018)
#softselfie
(Above left) digital images
Studio experiments.

Figure 7. McSweeney, A. (2018)
#spineselfie
(Above right) digital images
Studio experiments.

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Figure 8. Simmons, L. (1989)
The Walking House
(Right) cibachrome photograph.
Retreived from https://blog.nmwa.org/tag/laurie-simmons/

In the late 1970s, Warhol referred to a type of expansion of the self in relationship to new media, stating that "before media there used to be a physical limit on how much space one person could take up themselves….because of media you can sit back and let yourself fill up space" (Warhol, 1977, p.147). The *contrived self(ie)* project extends self-identity and self-narrative beyond two- dimensional images to three-dimensional *self(ie) machines*. These machines, mounted on small brackets or stage-like platforms, physically extend from the wall, while movement and mirrors add a visual extension through the extra space they require to move and the depth created through reflected surfaces. However, it is the use of sound that provides the *self(ie) machines* with the ability to expand into space. Sound ensures their presence is evident even when the viewer closes their eyes. The video below is of two *self(ie) machines*. These machines expand visually and aurally, visibly and invisibly into the space that the work inhabits. The movement and sound generated by the inner mechanism fills the space beyond the physical dimensions of the machine, a Warholian expansion of self-identity and self-narrative.

Figure 9. McSweeney, A. (2019)
Self(ie) machines
Card, foamboard, digital images, wire, clock and beckoning cat mechanisms.



#chapter two: methodology

#reflexive_open_experiment

The reflexive, open-ended and experiment-based research process of heuristics, with action-present and arts-informed research, has been used throughout the creative process of developing and refining the visual language for this project.

#heuristics

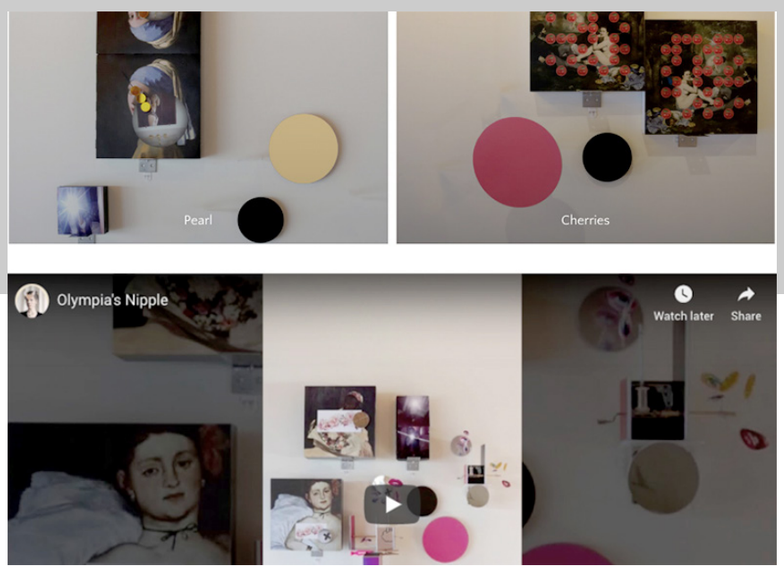
The endpoint of this project is the result of employing an heuristic research methodology. The open-ended and non-prescribed research framework has led to an endpoint attesting to Sandy Sela-Smith's description of heuristics, "what works" becomes the "right thing" (Sela-Smith, 2002, p.58). From the starting point of immersion, through acquisition and realisation, the heuristic cycle has been complemented with concepts of phenomenology[4], reflective learning (including self and external critique) and arts-informed research.

The open-ended, trial and error, explorative discovery mode of heuristics has allowed for embedded and integrated self-knowledge to be an explicit and implicit guide throughout this project (Smith, 2018), while the "intrinsic flexibility" of heuristic process allows this project to be a continuation of my engagement and interest in the everyday as art (Ings, 2011, p.228).

#reflection

Donald Schön's "action-present" sits within the heuristic approach, with this type of reflection employed throughout this project to "critique the tacit understandings" leading to and allowing for a "new sense of the situations of uncertainty or uniqueness" to be experienced (Schön, 1983, p. 61).

Self-reflective intuition has been coupled with external critique and feedback, to avoid the "deceptively sheltered environment" that heuristics can create (Ings, 2011, p. 231). This project has actively sought external critique with on-going studio-based practice exhibited regularly over the project's timeline. Guests from a wide range of people who engage with the Arts, from academics to Art educators and artists, were invited to critique exhibitions with the sole intention of collecting feedback. These events were supported with an on-going social media presence and website[5] platform that shared experiments, trials and resolved works. These online platforms provided a wider range of informal responses from viewers who may or may not have been aware of the context of the works. In all instances the feedback received underwent a self-reflective questioning, via workbook annotations and planning, ensuring the intention of the project retained its "integrity and idiosyncratic voice" (Ings, 2011, p.321).



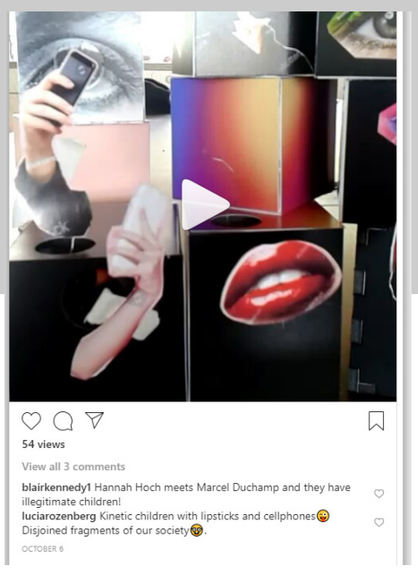


Figure 10. McSweeney, A. (2019).
(Far left) *detail from personal MPHI website*
Image screen capture
Retrieved from https://anmmna.weebly.com/2019.html

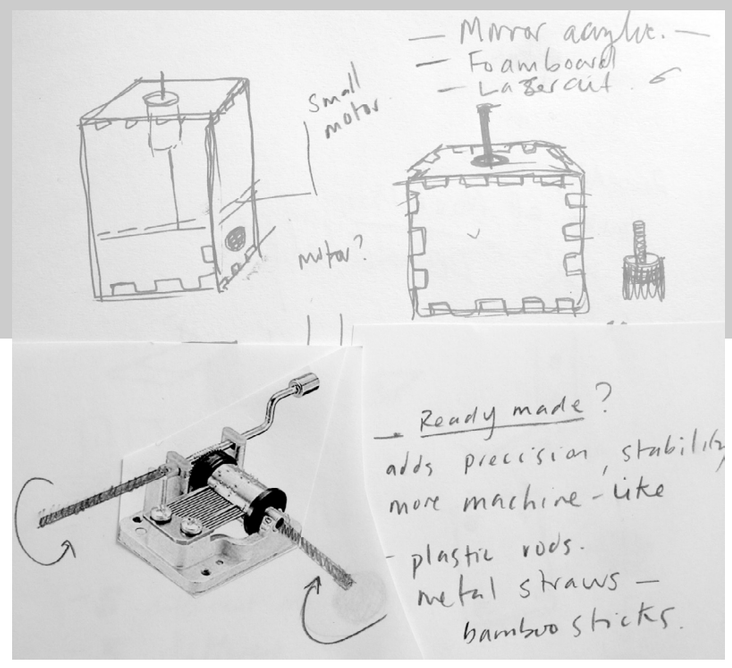
Figure 11. McSweeney, A. (2019)
(Left) *detail from personal Instagram account*
Image screen capture
Retrieved from https://desktop-for-ig.devanco.com/app3

4. Phenomenology has informed the research of the selfie genre as a phenomenon. A subjective, first person study of the appearances and experience of things or "the ways we experience things, thus the meanings things have in our experience" (Smith, 2018).
5. Website link is https://anmmna.weebly.com/2019.html

Self-critiquing processes such as reflecting-in-action, defined by Schön as "reflecting on action" as well as "in action", have been used throughout this project (Schön, 1983, p. 55). The term "action-present" covers both reflecting *on* and *in* action, with the duration of the reflection lasting seconds or months depending on the importance and nature of the decision. Many of the problems presented around the construction and presentation of the selfie machines have been solved through a process of "action-present reflection" with "learning by doing" encouraging improvisation and intuitiveness that cannot be planned (Schön, 1983, p.54). The open nature of heuristics and the Schön action-present methodology are supported by Knowles and Cole's arts-informed research. This methodology is based on "a commitment to a particular art form or forms", in which a natural, serendipitous "creative inquiry process" is combined with an "explicit intention" for the research to reach an audience (Knowles & Cole, 2008, p. 61). Their theory follows that of Bresler, who considers that the communication aspect within an arts-informed research project allows for "the discovery and shaping of meaning for oneself as well as for others" (Knowles & Cole, 2008, p. 229).

The three images below illustrate the methodologies used throughout this project. The image on the left is the result of an art-in-action response to developing a *self(ie) machine*. This rough and ready maquette was created through *doing*, using an open-ended approach in which intuitive decisions were made as the machine was being constructed. The centre image of written and visual reflections shows the type of critiquing, (self and external reflections) that informed new outcomes. The third image, of a new maquette, shows the result of a more carefully considered but still serendipitous process. This maquette is created in response to the reflective critiquing, with the endpoint arising when the outcomes feel like the *right thing*.





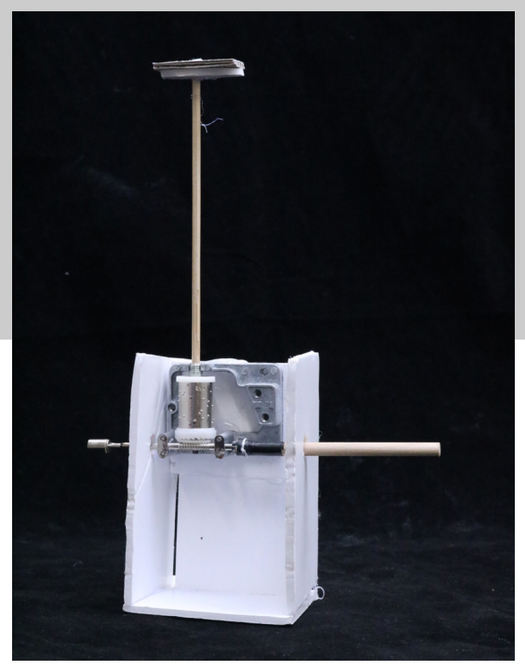


Figure 12 . McSweeney, A. (2019)
(Left) maquette for *self(ie) machine*
Card, straw, foamboard.

Figure 13. McSweeney, A. (2019)
(Middle) workbook pages.

Figure 14. McSweeney, A. (2019)
(Right) maquette for *self(ie) machine*
Foamboard, wood, music box mechanism.

#chapter three: fictional capitalism

spectacular images

This chapter explores how the selfie genre portrays ideas of truth, fiction, identity and narrative within the context of fictional capitalism. Positioning selfies in this context opens new understandings for how and why selfies appear familiar and uncanny, as they are inherently constructed and contrived images of self-identity and self-narrative.

Vicente Verdu's theory of fictional capitalism is based on the consumption of images that sell ideas by evoking the desire for the constructed concepts they offer (De Blas, 2013). Fictional capitalism is based on distraction from the physical world, on the quest for happiness, on the image and on the individual, offering us "the world as a spectacle" in which nothing is as it seems (Mazal & Teran, 2007). It is capitalism based on the fabrication of a reality, described by Verdu as being a "fiction with the appearance of an authentic improved nature" (Mazal & Teran, 2007). The fabrication of realities is a keystone of the selfie genre. As a practice, the genre shares images of self-identity that explore fictions, 'multiple identities' and 'constructed realities' (Westley, 2016, p.377), allowing creators and viewers of selfies to construct 'authentic fictitious' self–identity and self-narratives that become a version of reality.

#constructed&contrived-images

Verdu's theory has influenced both the construction of images for this project and the contextualisation of the work. His theories sanction the idea of fabricated fictitious images being a type of authentic self-presentation. It is his theory that has led to the presentation of works that are overtly constructed to suggest a familiar self-identity and a curious self-narrative.

A secondary influence is seen in the construction of selfies from multiple fragmented, appropriated images. This decision guides the viewer to consider diverse readings of identity, as there is no likeness to a single physical self represented. Instead, images have been selected through keyword searches such as *beautiful eye, pretty legs*, and *famous selfies*, terms that imply an improvement on and escape from reality. These fragments come together to create a spectacle, a fantasy selfie that is at least a distraction, if not an escape from the physical world. Artist Simon Fox creates artworks that question self-expression and the parameters of individuality. For him "a selfie blurs the line between 'reality' and the performance of a fantasy self" (Day, 2013). This performative nature of selfies, in which the real and digital selves collide, is often condemned. Selfies are labelled as inauthentic and unrealistic, criticised for presenting edited ideals of self that foster "body dissatisfaction" and threaten self-esteem (Diefenbach & Christoforakos, 2017, p.2).

Re-framing selfies within the theoretical construct of fictional capitalism creates new understandings of reality, and in turn of self-identity and self-narrative. Robert Horning places selfies within an aesthetic culture that relies on the "ideological fiction that self-expression brings personal fulfilment", in which the "self is articulated through branded commodities" (Ulman, Farkas, Stagg, Steyerl, & Horning, 2018, p.25). This notion of self-identity is based not on what one expresses but on how one's image is viewed and consumed. Selfies, therefore, become a different type of daily autobiographical narrative discourse. They are constructs of self-identity through self-narrative, in which spectacle, branding and alternative realities are expected (Eakin, 2001). Horning speaks directly about truth, fiction and selfies in posing the question, "what kind of person would you have to be to believe that your own social media presence was 'authentic'?" (Horning & Ulman, 2014). As altered, edited and constructed images, selfies create multiple self-narratives that become 'real' versions of self-identity when shared (Hedges, 2010). Eakin refers to this as "narrative constitutive of identity", locating self-narrative as a daily practice in which we are "made up of stories we tell about ourselves, to ourselves and others" (Westley, 2016, p. 375). He argues that self-narrative is not "merely about identity" but constitutes "part of our identity" and that we are in "some kind of story" (Eakin, 2001, p.115). Oliver Sack offers a similar observation, in that "it might be said that each of us constructs and lives a narrative and that this narrative is us, our identities" (Eakin, 2006, p.180). As a product of fictional capitalism, a selfie presents notions of self-narrative that create new realities, in which images of self-identity can be as spectacular and fabricated as the creator desires.

#selfie_as_spectacle

As Horning explains, social media (including the selfie) runs on the premise that "everyone wants to be the centre of attention", to be a spectacular image of their own making (Horning, 2016, p.24). As an image of spectacle and performance, a selfie aims to look effortless and unforced; the image aims to "represent the fake as true" (Horning, 2016, p.25). The works for the *contrived self(ie)* explore representing fake as fake with the *self(ie) machines*; artificial constructs, in which images are juxtaposed, reflected and moveable. The machines exaggerate the performance nature of the selfie genre, playfully constructing and undermining notions of self-identity and self-narrative. The *self(ie) machine* below (Figure 15) combines stock and social media images with reflective surfaces creating a moment of spectacle as it demands the viewers' attention through bright colour and movement.

The concept of spectacle in relation to image, identity, and reality has a critical and theoretical lineage within mass and popular media. Guy Debord's 1967 *The Society of the Spectacle* focuses on film and television and sees him lament that with large mass media audiences, "all that once was directly lived has become mere representation" (Debord & Nicholson-Smith, 1995, p.12). The private and public life of an individual has become "a capital to be shared" in contemporary society, with social recognition acquired through visibility of the self as a spectacular image (Baroncelli & Freitas, 2011). Selfies merge the boundaries between private moments and public sharing, often blurring together a 'real' and spectacular constructed image of self. While Debord's aim was to wake up the "spectator who has been drugged by spectacular images" (Akil, 2016, p. 40), the spectacular selfie is created and shared by the individual who creates and shares it, positioning the spectator as the administrant of their own drugging.

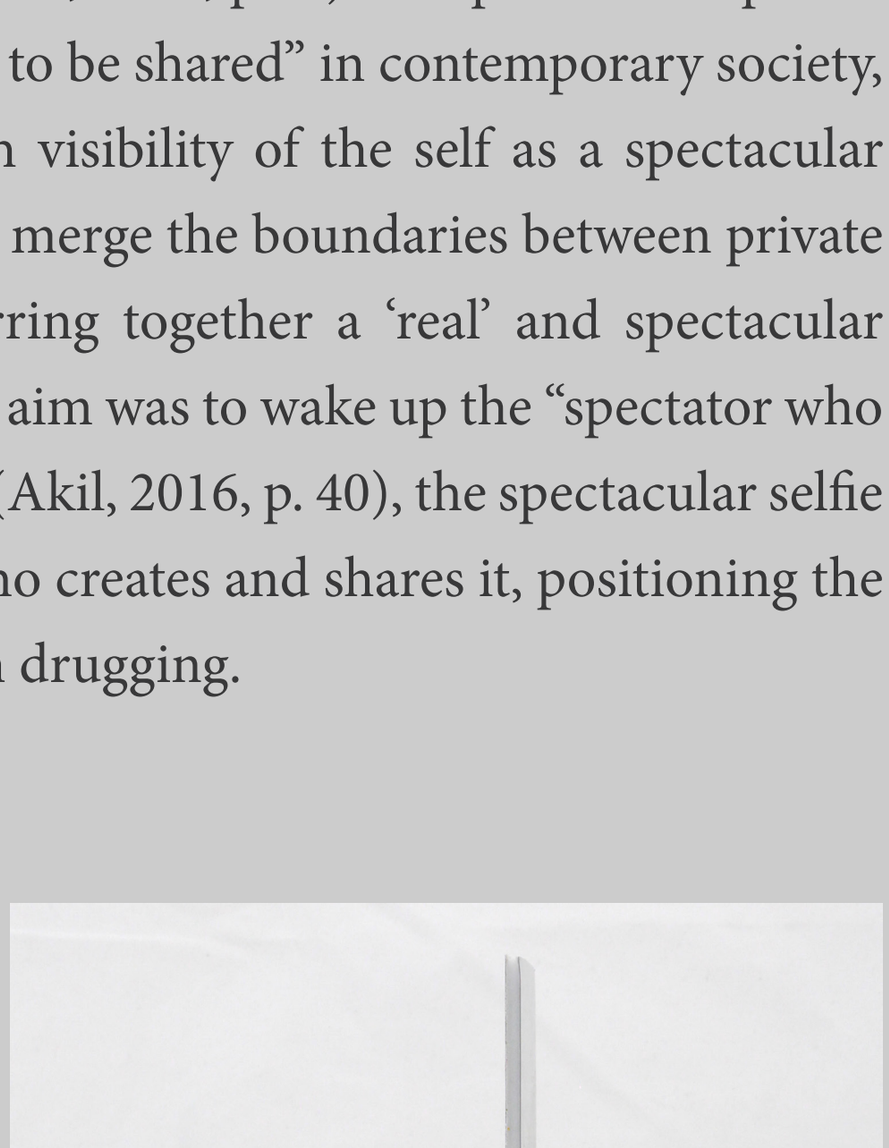


Figure 15. McSweeney, A. (2019).
#self(ie) machine
Foamboard, digital images, mirror, glitter foam, clock mechanism and music box mechanism.

#validated fiction

The selfie genre's idioms of practice, banal imaging, media stereotypes and selfie validation merchandise are used by artist Amalia Ulman in her 2014 *Excellence and Perfection* series. Over a five-month period, she created a scripted and staged series of selfies as a three-part narrative of self-identity. This series deliberately blurs the boundaries of reality and fiction, while employing extremes of stereotypes and banal imaging to comment on the "power of aesthetics and power in general" (Koke, 2016). Ulman was "inspired by stereotypes of how young women present themselves online", creating work that is familiar, accessible and banal (Sooke, 2016). Once the nature of the project is revealed, a sense of unease and confusion is felt. So convincing was her use of the idioms of practice, that she led friends to believe she had succumbed "to the narcissism of social media" and was no longer a serious artist (Sooke, 2016). Ulman's intention was to stage a satire that comments on femininity as a fictional construct, documenting a fictitious self-narrative of naive-girl-goes-bad-sugar-baby followed by a yoga-juice-redemption-happy ending, through a series of intimate and mundane images (Sooke, 2016). The audience, who in the first instance are Ulman's followers, engage and interact with likes, comments and emoji, asking questions that validate the presented self-identity and self-narrative. This validation of the narrative makes the self-identity convincing, while the true nature of the project leads us to a feeling of unease about how we have been manipulated.

The *self(ie) machine Pearl,* uses Ulman's 2014 image *#itsjust-different* with Vermeer's c.1665 painting *Girl with a Pearl Earring*. The aesthetic similarities between the appropriated images are evident; the intimate setting, framing, the figure's awareness of the viewer, use of soft light, a limited colour palette and the gentle turn of the head. However, it is that both images are tronies[6] not portraits that is significant for this project. Combining these appropriated historic and contemporary 'pretty girl' tronies, creates an authentic, fictitious, constructed identity and narrative. *Pearl* is a playful work that celebrates the selfie genres capacity to validate a person's multiple, fictitious and constructed self-identity and self-narrative into spectacular version of reality.

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Figure 16. Ulman, A. (2014)
(Above) Excellences & Perfections; #itsjust-different
C-type print dry mounted on aluminium. Retrieved from https://ocula.com/magazine/conversations/amalia-ulman/

Figure 17. Vermeer, J. (c. 1665)
(Above left) Girl with a Pearl Earring
Oil on Canvas
Retrieved from
https://www.britannica.com/topic/Girl-with-a-Pearl-Earring-by-Vermeer.



Figure 18. McSweeney, A. (2019)
(Right) Pearl
Digital drawing.

6. A tronie, from the 17th century Dutch word for "face", are drawing and painting based upon models but were not intended as portraits. Rather, they were meant as studies of expression, type, physiognomy, or any kind of interesting character, with Girl with a Pearl Earring being considered a tronie. Now a defunct term tronie it is applied to Ulman's 2014 image #itsjust-different to indicate that rather than a self-portrait Ulman's work indicates a stereotype rather than an image of an individual. Retrieved from http://www.girl-with-a-pearl-earring.info/tronie.htm

#hashtag

Within the *contrived self(ie)* project, selfies, tronies, stereotypes and idioms of practice have been employed to construct banal and uncanny images of self-narrative and self-identity. Artworks created for the hashtag series use the selfie genre's image and text idioms with Dada-inspired collages to create images that manipulate the familiar and banal practices of the selfie genre. The two images below *hashtag#squadgoals* and *hashtag#$$$girlhair* are not intended to present a true or believable self-identity or self-narrative. Over-sized paper collaged features, sourced from social media and stock photography sites, are printed on cheap photocopy paper and taped to the face. The scale and lifting of the edges of the printed paper features make the construction of the image obvious and the idea of them being a selfie somewhat ridiculous. The obvious fabrication is a visible reference to the works of Jeanson and Metra. Collaborating under the name Metra-Jeanson, their portraits deal with the concepts of "identity, beauty and otherness". Using cut-outs of facial features from glossy magazines on the model face, Metra-Jeanson images are a visual juxtaposition between ordinary humans and perfect images seen in advertisements, drawing aesthetic and conceptual notions of constructed identity to the viewer's attention. There is no intention for their images to be seen as a single identity and they are celebrated for their visible artificial construction of the face, as demonstrated with the work *Zoe B*, below (Figure 21).



Figure 19. McSweeney, A. (2018)
(Above left) *hashtag#squadgoals*
Digital image

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Figure 2. McSweeney, A. (2018)
(Above right) *hashtag#$$$girlhair.*
Digital image .

Figure 21. Jeanson, L & Metra, B. (2013)
(Left) *Zoe B*
Lambda print, Dibond, plexi
Retrieved from https://slash-paris.com/en/evenements/id/sous.

The work *#fivedaysofunseenselfies* is part of the *hashtag* series. Like all works created within this series, this image allows for an aesthetic ordinariness and familiarity to create a moment of humour, before giving way to a sense of unease, and in this instance, confusion. A suggestion of time is indicated with the title of the work and made explicit with the linear presentation of five individual black and white images. The formal repetitive composition of the pose, cropped from the shoulders, and the simple background, creates a typology. This is a photographic tronie, in which the differences between the physical characteristics of the images, the light, pose and costume, is obvious, highlighting the repetition of one set of enlarged paper eyes. The use of paper eyes forces the 'unseen' aspect of the title of this work. These are blinkered selfies, taken blind by the photographer/subject whose eyes are covered by the paper eyes, while the oversized and overly-alert unseeing paper features stare out at the viewer with an uncanny and uncomfortable gaze. These images have a disturbing element to them, created through the process that exaggerates the constructed nature of selfies as images of self-identity and self-narrative.



Figure 22. McSweeney, A. (2018)
#fivedaysofunseenselfies
Digital images.

#chapter four: heterotopia

#heterotopia of space and identity

To me my face in the mirror looked like a virtual fragment of my self that had been split in two. The self there was the one I hadn't chosen. It wasn't even a physical reflection.

Haruki Murakami, *Killing Commendatore*

The *contrived self(ie)* project considers the selfie genre as a heterotopia of space and identity following Foucault's concept of heterotopia of space as "worlds within worlds", in which "other" and "ordinary" spaces are juxtaposed and merged, creating new places that are "disturbing, intense, transforming and contradicting" (Foucault, 1997, p.4). The *contrived self(ie)* project has created machines that are heterotopias of identity, blending appropriated images to create other self-identies and self-narratives, *a self within a self*.

#worlds within worlds#

The *contrived self(ie)* project contextualises the space of social media as an 'other space', a separate place or *topia* from the physical world. This topia represents, inverts and distorts images of self-identity and self-narrative resulting in a heterotopia of identity; *a self within a self*, which is essentially unreal, but in which the ordinary and the other are merged into a believable illusion of reality. Selfies indulge the notion of perfection through carefully arranged images that are counter to the disorder of physical life. The selfie genre readily manufactures self-identities and self-narratives that contradict the physical world self-identities or narratives; however, this illusion of perfection can become the believed, desired or preferred self-identity and self-narrative[7]. Illusion and perfection have been explored in this project, resulting in the shift from two-dimensional digital works to three-dimensional selfie machines. The juxtaposition of appropriated social media and commercial stock photography, with its implied perfection, and the visual functionality and the obvious construction of three-dimensional machines exaggerates the constructed and illusionary nature of the *self(ie) machines*. The manufacture of the *self(ie) machines* is deliberately left exposed, with visible glued edges, hand-cut finger joints and modified mechanisms. These machines are proudly and overtly constructed spaces. They are created to do something, to create a heterotopia of identity, in which the viewer engages with the ordinary and the other through images, movement, space and time.

The presentation of a world made up of smaller worlds has driven the layout of the examination show. Designed to be viewed right to left and then as a whole, the *contrived self(ie)* starts with evenly spaced works that have a compositional order and spaces between the works mimicking the scrolling through a social media account. Floating circular black mirrors echo an inactive digital screen while guiding the pace of the exhibition viewing. Mirrors used within the *self(ie) machines* create another heterotopia of space. A mirror reflects what exists, but the image in the mirror is unreal, making mirrors the ultimate link between the actual and the virtual, or a *a self within a self,* through illusion and reality. As the works move to the corner of the exhibition space, there is a shift from the pairing of similar images to a more fragmented, multiple *self(ie) machine* cluster composition.

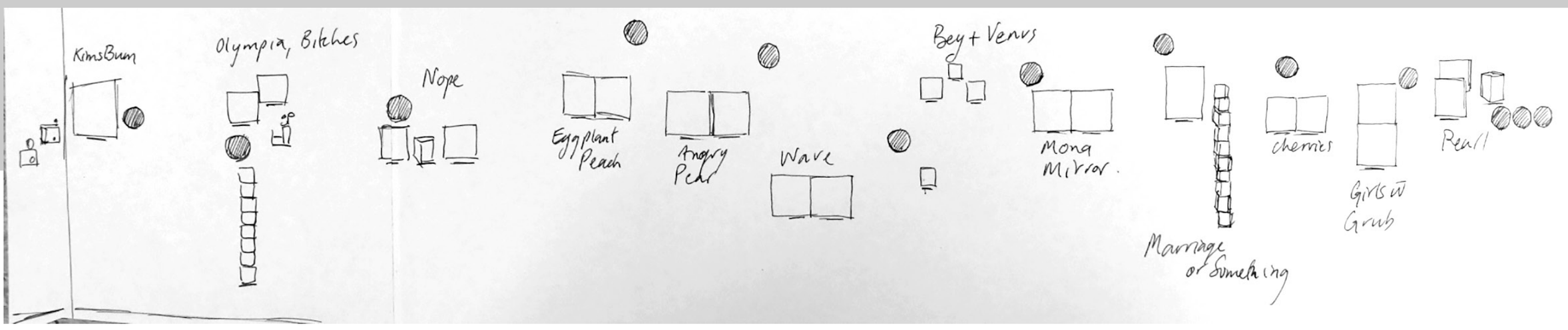

Figure 23. McSweeney, A. (2019)
Planning drawing for the Contrived Self(ie) exhibition.

7. According to a report by the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, cosmetic surgery procedures have increased 137 percent since 2000, with young people contributing to the rise significantly. In what scientists have called "Snapchat dysmorphia," young people are increasingly getting plastic surgery to look like the versions of themselves they see in social media filters (Vice, 2018).

The corner work titled *KimsBum* marks this more fragmented and dynamic shift in the compositional arrangement of the exhibition. *KimsBum* is the most layered and humorous of all the *self(ie) machines*. Bringing together blurred appropriated images of Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, c.1503-c.1519, social media moustache stickers, Duchamp's 1919 *L.H.O.O.Q* and Goode's recreated self-appropriated Kardashian West *Paper Magazine* cover. In 1919 Duchamp appropriated and modified a postcard of the *Mona Lisa*. His addition of a moustache and a beard to her face is an example of layered meanings within an appropriated image. Titled *L.H.O.O.Q*, this work mocks what is considered one of the "greatest masterpieces in Western Art", capturing a pre-Dada hostility towards traditional and established notions of art and culture (Lunday, 2013, p.71). Hostility is blended with humour in the punny title *L.H.O.O.Q.* Pronounced in French, these letters sound like the phrase, "Elle a chaud au cul", meaning "she has a hot ass" (Lunday, 2013, p.71). Within the context of the selfie genre the term 'hot ass' leads to one arse and one specific image, Kim Kardashian West's 2014 *Paper Magazine* cover. Kim Kardashian West, "famous for doing nothing", is part of a family that has built a brand and a "multimillion dollar, multimodal, cross-platform merchandise empire, around a well-known name and a carefully crafted performance of self" (McDonnell, 2016, p.105). According to *Paper Magazine's* website, the aim with this cover was to "Break The Internet" with the only person "up to the task" being "Kim Kardashian West" citing that "Kim is what makes the web tick" (Paper, 2014). The internet did not break with either of the two cover shots by Jean-Paul Goode, a re-enactment of his 1976 image *Carolina Beaumont*, *New York*. It did, however, generate a range of memes which appropriate and parody the image, the digital media version of a modified postcard.

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Figure 24. Duchamp, M. (1919)
(Above left) L.H.O.O.Q.
Modified postcard
Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L.H.O.O.Q.#/media/File:Marcel_Duchamp,_1919,_L.H.O.O.Q.jpg

Figure 25. Goode, J-P. (2014)
(Middle left) Jean-Paul Goode image of Kim Kardashian for Paper Magazine
Retrieved from https://www.complex.com/style/2014/11/jean-paul-goode-paper-magazine-original-images

Figure 26. Goode, J-P. (1976)
(Middle right) Carolina Beaumont, New York
Retrieved from https://www.complex.com/style/2014/11/jean-paul-goode-paper-magazine-original-images

Figure 27. Goode, J-P. (2014)
(Above right) Jean-Paul Goode image of Kim Kardashian for Paper Magazine
Retrieved from https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-2831399/The-Internet-parodies-Kim-Kardashian-s-outrageous-bare-bottomed-magazine-cover-hilarious-memes.html

Figure 28. TAI-MA @TWY69 (2014, November 12)
(Above far right) Meme of the Kim Kardashian Paper Magazine Cover
Retrieved from https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-2831399/The-Internet-parodies-Kim-Kardashian-s-outrageous-bare-bottomed-magazine-cover-hilarious-memes.html

The aesthetic and conceptual links between *L.H.O.O.Q* and the Kardashian West *Paper Magazine* cover led to the decision to place this work in the corner of the gallery space. Corners are quiet, inactive and symbolically negative places. To be backed into a corner is to find oneself in an unpleasant or difficult situation. To be sent to the corner is a punishment and to retreat into a corner suggest an emotion or physical defeat. Bachelard notes that corners are a“symbol of solitude” that “reject and restrain” or “even hide, life” (Bachelard, 1994, p.136). Placing the *self(ie) machine, KimsBum,* in the corner activates it as heterotopia of space. *KimsBum* is a visually loud work, due to the selection and juxtaposition of readily recognisable appropriated images that invert the corner's physical and symbolic obscurity.

Heterotopia of identity, a self within a self, is made visually explicit with the layering of appropriated images. From an art history perspective, the Kardashian West *Paper Magazine* cover is no rival to the *Mona Lisa* yet, two months after its publication the cover had been viewed by *11 million* unique visitors to the *Paper Magazine* website (Butler, 2014),while in 2014, *9.3 million* people visited the Louvre, with an estimated 80% viewing the *Mona Lisa* (The French Ministry of Foreign affairs, 2015). Both images command attention and in juxtaposing them a fictitious narrative starts to emerge. *KimsBum* suggest a layering of identity, with the *Mona Lisa* both a masterpiece and a crudely altered 1919 postcard image with the *L.H.O.O.Q*, ‘hot ass’ pun, a layering made visual by an arse can be made visual by an arse in a corner, twitching and quivering, demanding our gaze.

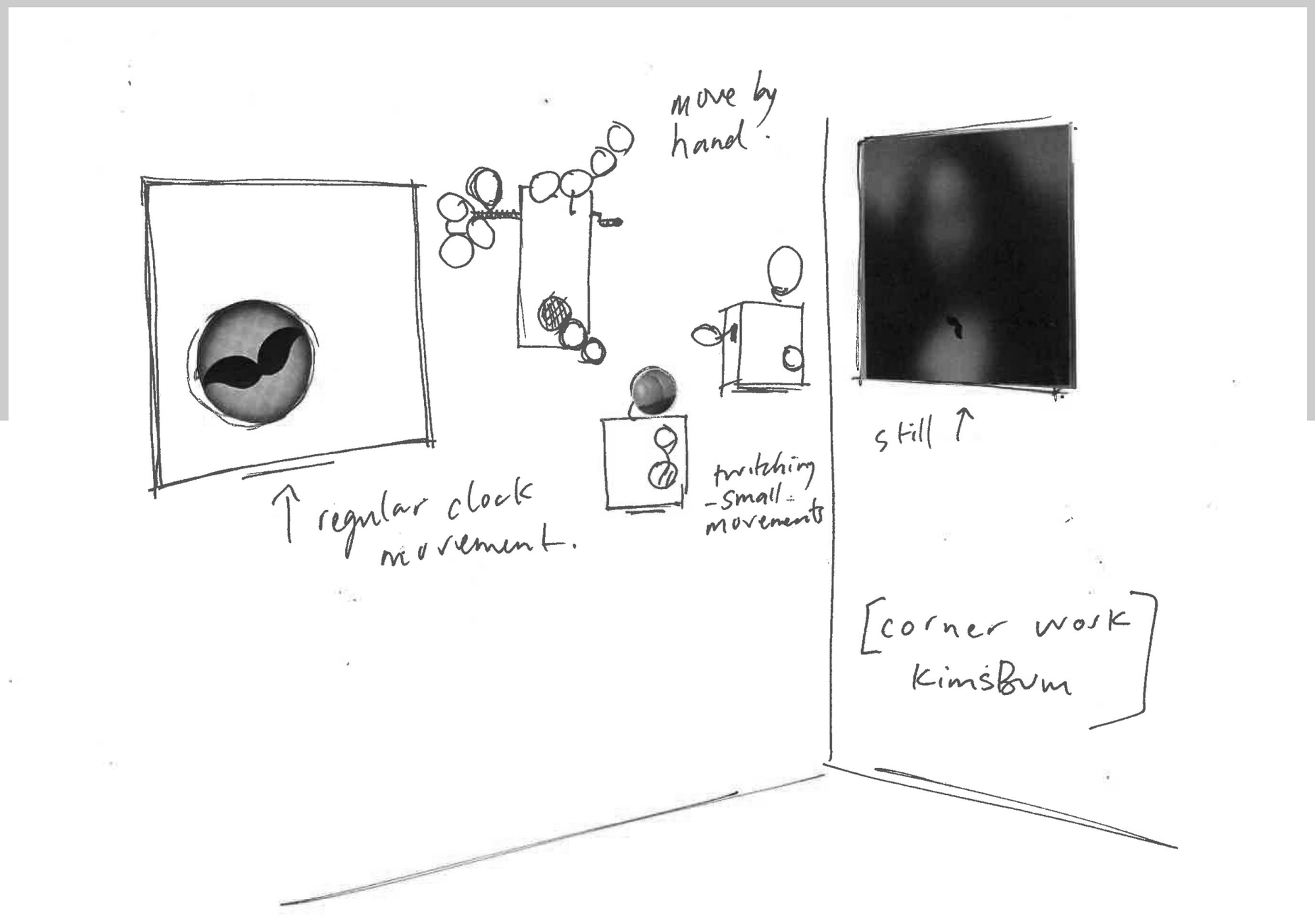

Figure 29. McSweeney, A. (2019)
Planning for corner work of the exhibition.

#chapter five: #appropriation_&parody

#the allegorical image

Concepts of appropriation and allegory are influential in the aesthetic decisions of this project. The repetition of generic idioms, banal and familiar subject matter and already seen images are an inherent part of the selfie genre. It is Michael Newman's notion of appropriation as allegory that provides a postmodern aesthetic and conceptual framework, with already seen images, found images, used exclusively within this project (Newman & Appignanesi, 1993). Newman's discussion of the work of photographer Richard Prince forms a base from which the project generates works. Specifically of value is Prince's use of appropriation as allegory, testing notions of originality and authenticity within photography, and his "fictionalisation of the photographic image" (Newman, 2006, p.90).

From his 1977 *Untitled Couple* series to the 2015 *New Portraits*, Prince's method of rephotography explicitly exploits the factual medium of photography, while creating fictitious images from appropriated mass and social media (Heiferman, 1988). In using appropriated imagery and rephotography there is a shift in the register of photography's indexicality and mimesis. Newman states that "if photography is the medium of reality" then it follows that rephotography is the "medium of fiction" (Newman, 2006, p.102). Using appropriated imagery as allegorical imagery challenges "the distinction between truth and fiction", raising questions and critiquing the notions of authentic self-identity and self-narrative (Nahmad Contemporary, 2015).

#the self(ie) is an imaginary construct

The images used for the *self(ie) machines* are not selfies. They are found, fragmented, appropriated images that become allegorical as they re-contextualise ideas of self-identity and self-narrative. The *self(ie) machines* present new realities, as new worlds emerge from these appropriated images. The images selected range from the familiar, to the historic, from the fine arts to contemporary social media culture. The machines are constructed to expose and mock the notion that a selfie is an image of self-presentation. Instead, these works become a visual form of Jacques Lacan's fundamental principle that "the self is an imaginary construct" (Owens, 1980, p. 78). The project looks to integrate Lacan's tension between an "imagined self-identity" and the ego of the self, to assign a "false reality" (Heaton, 1978, p.204). This echoes Deleuze's theory of the virtual, in which "the virtual is not opposed to the real; it possesses a full reality by itself "(Deleuze, 1994, p.211). Using appropriated images to present constructs of self-identity that can be viewed as "actualisation[s] of the virtual" is akin to Richard Prince's use of appropriation to present an "imagined reality", rather than "representing a reality" (Deleuze, 1994, p.212).

#no reality must be hyperreal

The use of appropriation and rephotography illustrates Baudrillard's theory of simulacra, in that there are no differences between the signifier (copy) and the referent (original). When applied to Prince's rephotography, these images become copies "without any origin or reality", images of a "hyperreal" (Baudrillard & Glaser, 1994, p.1). Applying Baudrillard's theory of the hyperreal to the selfie genre, the presented image of self becomes a substitution for reality. Prince's 2015 *New Portraits* exhibition presents a realisation of the notion of a "Baudrillardian substitution", as his rephotographs of appropriation and already consumed social media images are in themselves substitutions for reality. Baudrillard's position that mass media has "neutralised reality in a series of stages, at first reflecting, then masking, and finally substituting itself for reality", is visually represented.

In the exhibition *New Portraits*, the rephotography of a "stolen selfie" reflects a construction of self-identity, becoming a substitution for reality (Black, 2015). The *contrived self(ie)* presents works that dwell in the hyperreal use of appropriated imagery from mass and social media, works that can be nothing but a substitution for reality as they are formed from a place without an origin or reality.

#postmodern parody

Linda Hutcheon coined the term “postmodern parody”, defining it as a “paradoxical conviction of the remoteness of the past and the need to deal with it in the present” (Hutcheon, 1993, p.95). She argues that there is nothing in postmodern parody that supports the previously compulsory inclusion of a concept of ridicule, as with 19th-century notions of parody; postmodern parody depends on “the ironic rather than upon the comic" (Salomon, 2006, p.70). It is the notion of postmodern parody that “does not disregard the context of the past representation but cites it”, that informs works for this project (Hutcheon, 1993, p. 94). The *contrived self(ie)* uses this double code of parody to construct works to both “legitimize[s] and subvert[s] that which it parodies” (Hutcheon, 1993 p.101), while also engaging with postmodern parody that highlights “repetition with a critical difference, which marks difference rather than similarity” (Newman & Appignanesi, 1993, p.140).

This theory is composed of two frames; structural and pragmatic. The structural frame has two levels, the first “a primary, surface, or foreground; and a secondary, implied, or background one” (Kostka, 2016, p.68). The obvious artificiality and constructed nature of the self(ie) machines operate at Hutcheon’s structural level of postmodern parody, with the surface presentation of already seen images creating a sense of the familiar for the viewer, while on the implied level, the use of appropriated images invites reflection on the images of self-presentation. The pragmatic level sees appropriated images undermine the “text” or original intention (Hutcheon, 1993, p.55).

The s*elf(ie) machine NOPE* is layered with visual irony and parody. Manet's 1882 *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* is appropriated in this work which includes social media stickers and a small convex mirror. The surface level parody of *NOPE* stems from the bartender's disinterested gaze, her detached melancholy as she stares out from behind the bar into a busy cafe-concert crowd reflected in the mirror behind her. Her gaze suggests she would rather be elsewhere and she is deliberately dislocated from the crowd, being the only person who is not reflected in the mirror. Considering her reality, defined by her work and being unhappy with it, the imagined response if asked to smile could well have been a sassy *nope*.[8]

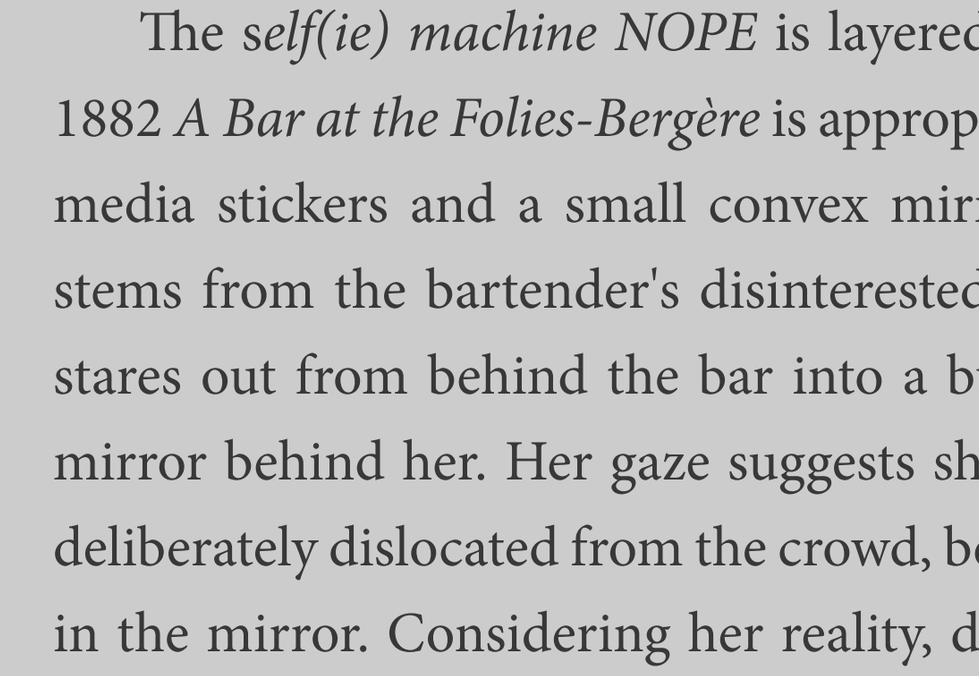

Figure 30. McSweeney, A. (2019)
NOPE
Digital image, wire, beckoning cat mechanism, foamboard & mirror.

8. The model for *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* was a bartender at Folies-Bergère called Suzon with many texts suggest that she was also a prostitute. This theory is based on Manet’s selection of venue being one where "prostitutes plied their trade and barmaids moonlighted, turning tricks on the side" (Grovier, 2019). Other theorists cite her “blue clothes and whole demeanour” as an indication that she is strictly a bartender (Jones, 2000). Whatever the truth, this project sees Suzon as a bored and unhappy hospitality worker who would have a series of quick and sassy one liners to keep customers at arm's length.

Beyond this surface reading, *NOPE* also draws on Manet's critique of the idealised beauty of classical painting by denying the illusion of reality with his painterly fabrications. The flat, soft and visible brushstrokes and delibrate distortion of perspective highlight that this is "paint on a canvas" (Harris & Zucker, 2017, 4.57). *NOPE*'s fabrication is also evident. The machine is handmade, the edges of the frames hand-cut, the convex mirror that adds the viewer to the composition is glued on and the internal mechanism is visible through punched holes. At the pragmatic level, *NOPE* does not undermine the intended reading of *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* but joins it in undermining the slick idealised representations of reality that it was referencing. The *self(ie) machine* titled *Olympia, Bitches* follows a similar approach with the appropriation of Manet's 1863 *Olympia*. Manet was inspired by Titian's 1538 *Venus of Urbino* but stripped Olympia of "the comforting classical illusions in which Titian wraps his Venus" (Spence, 2013). By combining *Olympia* with an Instagram filter and *Free the Nipple* logo, *Olympia, Bitches* extends an ongoing conversation of idealised beauty illusion and reality[9]. Manet's ethos is used throughout the *self(ie) machines* to undermine the notion of idealised self-presentation, through works that are clearly fabricated. The *self(ie) machines* use appropriated images to parody the selfie genre's implied authority to present images of self-identity and self-narrative.

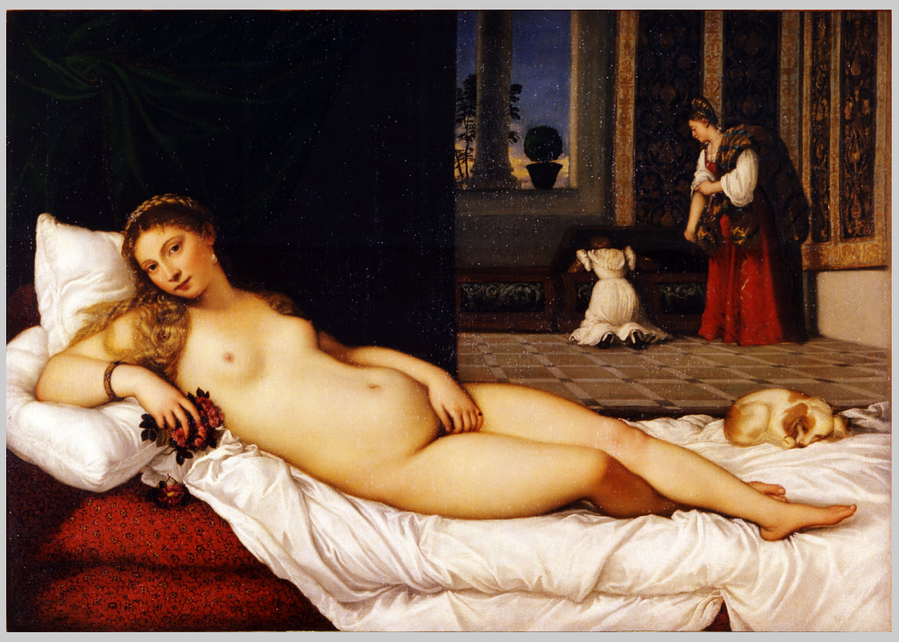

Figure 31. Titian (1538)
(Above) Venus of Urbino
Oil on canvas
Retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tiziano_-_Venere_di_Urbino_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg



Figure 33. Manet (1863)
(Above) Olympia
Oil on canvas
Retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Edouard_Manet_-_Olympia_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg

Figure 32. (2014)
(Below) Detail from *Free the Nipple* movie poster
Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_the_Nipple_(film)

Figure 34. McSweeney, A. (2019)
(Below) Olympia, Bitches
Digital plan.

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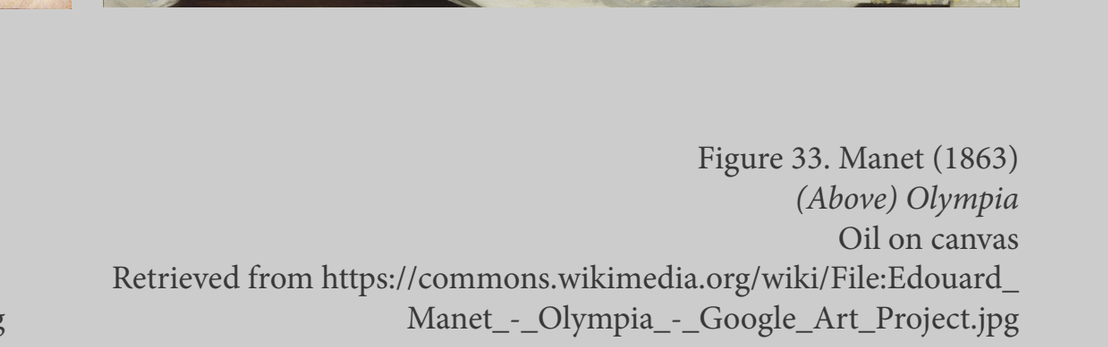

9. Lisa Esco is the founder of the *Free the Nipple* movement which aims to normalise the female nipple and highlight inconsistencies for females in which "you can pay to see women topless in porn videos and strip clubs, but the moment a woman owns her body, it's shameful" (Esco, 2015).

#déja vu a mild case of the uncanny

Within this project, the phenomena of déja vu and the uncanny are linked to the use of appropriated familiar imagery. The use of appropriated images that are familiar, mundane, and already seen causes a sense of déja vu and the uncanny. Freud stated that the uncanny is "nothing new or foreign, but something familiar and old" (Freud, 1919, p.13). It is this thinking that has guided the use of generic stock photographic images, the recurring Instagram rainbow wallpaper, the social media circle motif and images of famous paintings and appropriated selfie images. The Texas Survey[10] found that déja vu occurs during moments of "hyper familiarity", at times when ordinary mundane tasks and actions are being completed (Brown, 2004, p.188). The most predominant emotional reactions to déja vu are variations of the uncanny "eerie; strange, confused, odd, scary, unnerving and awkward" (Brown, 2004, p.55). This project layers appropriated imagery with familiar and repetitive images, colours, shapes, movements and sounds, drawing out the uncanny via a sense of the familiar. Duchamp's ready mades and Man Ray's *Indestructible Object* have influenced the use of prefabricated mechanisms to add movement to the *self(ie) machines*. The clocks, music boxes and beckoning cat movements are familiar to the viewer allowing for a greater sense of unease to be created. The repetition of familiar appropriated imagery, such as the circle motif and colours from social media, is used to create and disrupt pattern and order. The use of mirrors and mirrored surfaces adds an additional layer of repetition and depth through reflection, further estranging the selected imagery from its everyday context, intensifying the feeling of the uncanny and déja vu. *Indestructible Object* with its implied temporal existence links to the fleeting viewing of selfies, viewed and quickly replaced with more of the same. The metronome movement creates a "blinking back-and-forth, tick-tock, of the rhythmic arm suggests a seeing eye, but at the same time it blurs vision" (Mileasf, 2004). Selfies are shared with the same hypnotic movement and at a volume and frequency that renders self-identity and self-narrative as a blur of generic images.

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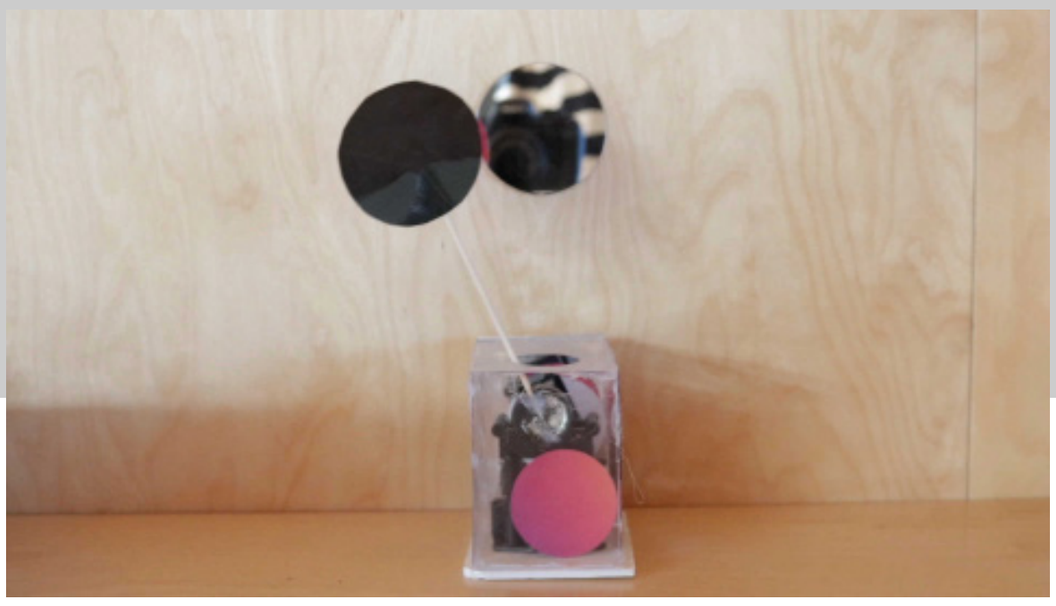

Figure 35. Ray, M. (1965)
(Above) *Indestructible Object*
Wood, fiber, metal, and paper on cardboard
Retrieved from https://americanart.si.edu/artwork/indestructible-object-33672

Figure 36. McSweeney, A. (2019)
(Above right) *Maquettes*
Plastic, card, stick, mirror and inner mechanism of a beckoning cat.

10.The Texas Survey refers to responses from 343 students attending introductory classes in Psychology at the Southern Methodist University and the University of Texas. This open-ended survey has participants respond to the simple instruction of "provide a detailed description" of an experience of déja vu (Brown, 2014, p.45).

#chapter six: #time&_movement_&space

#tocktick

Concepts of time are explored throughout this project, specifically the selfie genre's ability to collapse and blend different chronologies and experiences of time. Supporting this notion is measurable time and experienced time, framed by Bergson's theory of time and duration and Deleuze's theory of the crystal image as the coexistence of the past and present.

#crystal_images & plastic time

Deleuze's crystal image theory is that of a fragmented image, in which "time has to split itself in two", showing both the present and past, the virtual and actual image (Deleuze, Tomlinson, & Galeta, 2005, p.79). Deleuze's virtual images are somewhere in the temporal past, still alive and ready to be recalled by an actual image, while the actual image is objective, in the present, and perceived. Reworking Deleuze's theory of the virtual within the context of the selfie genre, the virtual self, the past self, becomes the actual with the passing or posting of the moment. Coupled with the concept of the coexistence of the actual and virtual, Deleuze sees the two in "tight circuits which are continually retracing from one to the other" (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p.114). The virtual and the actual self(ie) therefore exist in a similar tight circuit, "a complex, changing, emplacement of social interaction, and communication" (Hess, 2015, p.1631).

This coexistence of the virtual image and the actual image is what Bergson calls "memory of the present". In *Matter and Memory* Bergson theorises that every moment of our lives "presents two aspects, an actual and a virtual, perception on the one side and memory on the other" (Bergson, 1962, p.165). Barthes in *Camera Lucida* considers a similar notion, with all photographic images a document of the past without being real. Rather, they are what Barthes calls a "counter-memory". Barthes states that a "photograph is never, in essence, a memory... but blocks memory", becoming a "counter-memory" (Barthes, 2010, p.91). Selfies as photographic images, encapsulate and at times overstate the notion of afterimages, echoes and memory. The duality of Bergson's theories, when applied to the selfie genre, shows a similar binary relationship. To capture a selfie is to record the actual and present moment. In sharing a selfie, the moment, as an image, becomes a virtual and visual memory. The commonalities of Deleuze, Bergson and Barthe lead to a heterotopia of time. As discussed in Chapter Four, heterotopias are topias, spaces and places which fluctuate between the real and unreal. Time operates differently in a heterotopic space or heterochrony[11] and is divided into two types, the "indefinitely accumulating time" and the "absolutely temporal"(Foucault, 1986, p.26). Selfies and social media create a variety of diverse chronologies bringing together these two types of heterochrony. The selfie genre encourages active and ongoing engagement in sharing images of self-identity and self-narrative. It allows for the editing of the past through the removal of images and the ongoing curation of images of self-presentation. This "plasticity of time" within social media and the selfie genre "removes the temporal boundaries of the actual world" (Rymarczuk & Derksen, 2014, p.5).

Heterochrony acknowledges the coexisting dualisms of time in the heterotopia of social media and the selfie genre in which time can be collapsed and manipulated adding to the fabrication and construction of self-identity and self-narrative.

11. Heterochrony; from the Greek *hetero* meaning other and *chronos* meaning time.

#magnitudes

In *Time and Free Will*, Bergson draws a line between two categories of experienced phenomenon, "extensive magnitudes" and "intensive magnitudes" (Bergson, 1960, p.3). Extensive magnitudes include the features of the world that are measurable, comparable and can be thought of as space, such as clock-time (Guerlac, 2006, p.63). Bergson refers to his notion of intensive magnitudes as Real Duration; phenomena and experiences that are neither measurable, nor comparable and are "radically independent of space", such as the internal experience of time (Guerlac, 2006, p.63). Throughout this project, time has been explored visually through movement, as both measurable units (extensive magnitudes) and as an internal experience (internal magnitudes).

The digital working drawing, *Google Art Eyes* (Figure 37) uses the spatial representation of a second as a unit of time to move part of the eyes. As an extensive magnitude, these movements are measurable and uniform, familiar and banal. An experience of intensive magnitude is created by the actual movement, a moment of Bergson's Real Duration that is experienced differently for each viewer. Comments from a critique of this work give emotive descriptions that are not measurable or bound by space, ranging from *amusing* and *funny* to *unsettling* and *disturbing*.



Figure 37. McSweeney, A. (2018)
Google Art Eyes
Animation experiment.

#collapsing time

#LTFOTTFPOFPOS (Figure 38) is a second experimental work that explores time and movement by juxtaposing measurable and internal experiences of time while also collapsing accumulated and temporal time. The extended title of this work *Last Tuesday's Features on this Tuesday's face photographed on Friday, posted on Sunday,* references heterotopia of time or heterochrony. This work explores the selfie genre's ability to create bi-directional time, in which the past and the present collapse into each other as a fluid and flexible chronology. Each portrait in *#LTFOTTFPOFPOS* is contained within a separate space that, when still, is viewed as a homogeneous image. As the animation begins, the circular sections of the faces start to move in-sync with the audible second unit measure of a clock ticking. At this point, the work becomes a visible representation of heterochrony, creating a Real Duration experience that is pronounced and undeniable, with a sense of relief as the pieces return to their correct position, visible, but not measurable, on the viewer's face.



Figure 38. McSweeney, A. (2018)
#LTFOTTFPOFPOS
Digital moving image.

#chapter seven: Lefebvre and Höch

#every_day_dada

This chapter links the selfie genre's construction of self-identity and self-narrative with the Dada movement, and Lefebvre's theories from his 1947 essay *The Critique of Everyday Life*. Dada artist Hannah Höch's use of mass media images has informed the theoretical concepts and aesthetic works throughout several stages of the investigation, along with Lefebvre's discussion of the importance of the everyday for self-realisation, and by extension, self-identity and self-narrative.

#REALisation_and_alienation

Lefebvre describes daily life as the place in which "man realises his humanity", while the obstacles to this realisation, such as work, are referred to as "alienation" resulting in the production of a "fictitious being" (Sheringham, 2006, p.135). Lefebvre's theory has been applied to this project in the consideration of selfies as a daily act of realisation, through the production of fictitious and constructed images of self-identity and self-narrative. Lefebvre describes the everyday through opposites; realization and alienation, ordinary and extraordinary, work and leisure, the trivial and the monumental. In applying these binaries, Lefebvre draws the conclusion that there is a "consolidation of capitalism and bourgeois society", in which the individual becomes a "public and private self" that is "constrained and defined by rigid, immobile social roles" (Gardiner, 2000, p. 76).

It is from these constraints that there is a need "to have the illusion of escape as near to hand as possible" (Lefebvre, p 40). Lefebvre's illusion of escape is similar to the previous discussion on heterotopias (Chapter 4), in that it may not be entirely illusory but constitutes "a world both apparent and real" that is "closely dovetailed into the everyday" (Lefebvre, 1991, p.40). Lefebvre's example of watching a film could apply to creating or viewing selfies in which the "spectator is uprooted from his everyday world by an everyday world other than his own" (Lefebvre, 1991, p.10). The selfie genre offers an escape by making the everyday illusionary, creating a place in which to daydream, a heterotopic space that is better than reality, but ultimately contrived and unreal. In a specific consideration of art, Lefebvre's *Critique of the Everyday* was responding to and rejecting the surrealist focus on the "exceptional and the extraordinary", which he claimed was undermining the importance of daily existence (Sheringham, 2006, p.135). Lefebvre found fault with the surrealist use of the irrational and marvellous to escape or transcend the everyday, stating that the surrealists "tried to live outside of the real world, without it, against it" (Lefebvre, 1991, p.112). However, the surrealist notion of the everyday as outlined by Breton in his 1924 *Surrealist Manifesto* states that the surreal is part of and not separate from the everyday (Sheringham, 2006). Rimbaud, influenced by Baudelaire, urged artists to recognise the "epic side of modern life" claiming that surrealism is "in the practice of life and everywhere" (Sheringham, 2006, p. 61). Dada as a precursor to surrealism aimed to abolish the divide between art and life entirely. Dada art and anti-art statements, realised in the media of performance, ready-mades and collage, were pieces "designed to intervene directly in lived experience" (Sheringham, 2006, p.65).

The Dada and Surrealist movements shared goal to "intervene directly in lived experience" is directly referenced within this project, with the *contrived self(ie)* works being a visual escape from the everyday into a fictitious appropriated world, in which a fabricated self-identity and self-narrative is ordinary and banal (Sheringham, 2006, p. 65).

Dada's use of collage, construction, assemblage, and ready-mades has been utilised throughout this project. It is seen in the fragmented appropriated images used for the *self(ie) machines* that reference Höch's photomontages of mass media print images, which marked a "shift from Duchamp's ready-mades to the already seen" (Boswell, Makela, Lanchner, & Höch, 1996, p.130). Höch's 1969 work (Figure 39) *Little Sun*, directly informs the early digital drawing and art informed research of *#littlesunwinkyface*. This investigation looks at ways of combining traditional paper collage with an electronic component via a cellphone screen. *#littlesunwinkyface* moves beyond the use of appropriated paper media to include appropriated electronic media, a collage upgrade tin line with the ethos of Höch's process of using the already-made/already-seen to construct "new fantastical realities" (Coombs, 2014). The digital working drawings below (Figure 41 and 42) borrow Höch's use of "fragments of photographs...from mass-circulation media" along with juxtaposition and scale to configure visual relationships between the imagined and the real (Hemus, 2009, p.97). *Kimmy*, a gif work, and *Face*, an early trial selfie machine, embrace the collage aesthetic. In Höch's *Little Sun*, 1960, the use of the eye of a bird of prey endowed "her women with a sense of the feral" (Boswell, Makela, Lanchner, & Höch, 1996, p.175).

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Figure 39. Höch, H. (1969)
Little Sun
Collage
Retrieved from https://www.artsy.net/artwork/hannah-hoch-kleine-sonne-little-sun

Figure 40. McSweeney, A. (2019)
#littlesunwinkyface
Collage with digital screen.



Figure 41. McSweeney, A. (2019)
(Left) *#kimmy*
GIF still.

Figure 42. McSweeney, A. (2018)
(Below) *Face*
Digital moving image drawing.



(

The juxtaposition of mass media images is explicitly referenced in the work *#wokeuplikethis*. Collage is used in this series to parody selfies, with images that on the one hand imply a notion of self-identity and self-narrative, while on the other, highlight the fictitious and contrived nature of selfie images. The somewhat feral and oddly sensual parted lips and gaping mouth suggests an identity that is familiar, yet not quite right, not quite human. The most artificial aspect of these images is influenced by Höch, by photographing paper features stuck covering physical ones, literally concealing and changing the pictorial evidence of self-identity. This process calls on the photomontage practice of using collage as a means of "altering and assuming" an identity (Boswell, Makela, Lanchner, & Höch, 1996, p.142). Höch's use of ordinary mass-circulation media images has informed the use of stock photography paper features for the collages. The paper features in this series are free-to-preview downloads with watermarks and copyright stamps from stock photography sites. Höch's *The Eternal Feminine II*, 1967, has provided a reference for the selection of collage images. The deliberate mismatching of features and the focus on the sensual parts of the face, the eyes and lips were often found in Höch's photomontages from the late 1960s. The paper features for *#wokeuplikethis* are selected for their unnatural and extreme makeup; bedazzled, glittery and boldly painted features combine with a series of hashtag text statements to construct a self-identity that is obviously alienated from an actual self-identity and how anyone may actually look when waking up.



Figure 43. McSweeney, A. (2019)
(Above) *#wokeuplikethis*
Digital image.

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Figure 44. Höch, H. (1967)
(Left) detail from *The Eternally Feminine II*
Collage.
Retrieved from https://mronline.org/2017/08/01/transition-and-abolition-notes-on-marxism-and-trans-politics/

The composition for *#wokeuplikethis* is based on Fred Holland Day's, *The Seven Words*, 1898. Day's image is made up of a "sequence of seven photographs that narrate Christ's Passion ….with each image inscribed with the phrases spoken by Jesus in the four Gospel account" (Schwain, 2005, p.37). Day's work, a tableaux narrative, employs cinematic conventions with an overarching narrative that is followed via separate scenes, close-up framing and dissolving-views (Schwain, 2005, p.43). His works "privilege imagination….the photograph's ability to suggest over its ability to record" (Schwain, 2005, p.51). The theatrics and specular aspects of Day's work, his attention to detail, remind the viewer of the "original—the historical Christ—which, in turn, calls attention to the picture's artificiality" (Schwain, 2005, p.49). *#wokeuplikethis* employs the same overt production methods and cinematic conventions to mock the supposed casualness of the selfie sub-genre, 'woke up like this'[9]. The work also draws on the Dada collage processes enabling the viewer to construct a narrative of their own imagining, informing an escape from the everyday into an illusory world that is as familiar as it is uncanny.



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Figure 45. Holland Day, F. (1898)
(Above) The Seven Words
Platinum print
Retrieved from https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/269347

Figure 46. Kardashian, K. (2015)
Ugh I hate falling sleep with all of my make up on
Digital image
Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/zfZnfNuS-g/?modal=true

9. A phrase that someone uses when they wake up looking good, typically associated with a selfie of themselves.

#conclusion

This project uses the ubiquitous nature of the selfie genre to explore a range of theoretical and aesthetic ideas, investigating ways in which self-identity and self-narrative is created, edited, and validated.

Selfies and the selfie genre have a seemingly simple premise; to share images of oneself with others. However, this exegesis, informing a practice-led project, has presented a reflective and reflexive inquiry into the complex and nuanced approaches and representation of self-presentation via the selfie genre; arriving at the conclusion that there is nothing simple about a selfie image.

The end-point artworks, the three-dimensional *self(ie) machines*, are visual heteropias of space and identity, creating worlds within worlds and self(ie) within self(ies). These *self(ie) machines* echo the layered, dynamic and complex findings of the theoretical and conceptual research. They are dense with appropriated, juxtaposed, paradoxical images, energetic as they twitch and tick, wobble and reflect, inviting the viewer to engage with the seemingly playful forms before revealing what are carefully considered ideas about self-identity and self-narrative.

The *contrived self(ie)* project creates artworks that combine images from the past and the present, from fine art and from social media, constructing self-identities and self-narratives reminding the viewer that they are ultimately in control of their own heterotopia of identity, with the ability to craft and create self(ie) within self(ie) that can be as banal or as spectacular as they choose.

One intention of this course of study has been to strengthen and reinvigorate my practice through a formal framework. This project is the first step to the next body of work, with a new potential project already starting to form. This new work would look to use the obvious construction methods to contrive a narrative-based work that creates a fictitious journey to Aoteraroa by Katsushika Hokusai. Using paper cut outs and analogue photography, this fictitious narrative would combine collaged appropriated images from Hokusai's *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji* series, with historic and contemporary images of Dunedin's Hereweka, or 'Harbour Cone'. The artworks would suggest a previously undiscovered body of Hokusai's work, despite the obvious construction and manufacture of its images.





Figure 47. Hokusai, K. (c.1830)
(Above) South Wind, Clear Sky. Part of the series Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji, no. 33
Woodblock colour print
Retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Red_Fuji_southern_wind_clear_morning.jpg

Figure 48. McSweeney, A. (2019)
(Right) Hereweka
Digital image.

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