

POINTURE: POINTING, PUNCTURING, WEAVING AND LACING IN ART PRACTICE AND TEXTUAL DISCOURSE

A COLLOQUIUM CONVENED BY THE RESEARCH CENTRE

Visual Identities in Art and Design Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture University of Johannesburg

15 AUGUST 2012

SCHOOL OF TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY, BUNTING ROAD CAMPUS, UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

THE COLLOQUIUM IS ACCOMPANIED BY

LICHTENBERG FLOWER AND MEDUSA

A solo exhibition by Bracha L. Ettinger
NIROXprojects, Arts on Main
Maboneng Precinct
249 Fox Street cnr Main Road
For directions please visit www.mabonengprecinct.com/

13-29 AUGUST 2012

OPENING: 13 AUGUST 6.30pm

Artist Prof. Bracha Ettinger will give a presentation on the exhibition at the opening, followed by drinks

POINTURE

An exhibition curated by Ann-Marie Tully & Jennifer Kopping UJ Gallery, Kingsway Campus, Auckland Park, Johannesburg

8-29 AUGUST 2012 14 AUGUST 2-5pm

Ann-Marie Tully & Jennifer Kopping will lead a walkabout and discussion on the exhibition.



COLLOQUIUM PROGRAMME

15 AUGUST 2012

Tea & registration: 8.30-9.00Outside the STH conference room

9.00 Opening address:

Marian Sauthoff

Executive Dean, Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, University of Johannesburg

.....

SESSION 1: 9.00-11.30

Chaired by: Gavin Younge

9.10-10.00

Keynote speaker:

Jane Taylor

40 minute presentation

followed by 10 minute discussion

10.00-11.30

Myer Taub

Jennifer Kopping

Andrea Thoma

Michelle Fuller

4 x 20 minute presentations

followed by 10 minute discussion

11.30-11.50 TEA

.....

SESSION 2: 11.50-1.00

Chaired by: James Sey

11.50-1.00

Keynote speaker:

Bracha L. Ettinger

45 minute presentation

followed by 20 minute discussion

.....

1.00-2.00 LUNCH

The Bistro, STH building

SESSION 3: 2.00-4.00

Chaired by: Leora Farber

2.00-2.40

Keynote speaker: Meredith Jones

40 minute presentation

2.40-4.00

Ann-Marie Tully

Gerhard Schoeman

Josie Grindrod

Mary Corrigall

4 x 20 minute presentations

4.00-4.15

15 min discussion on the session

4.15-4.30 TEA

•••••

SESSION 4: 4.30-5.30

Chaired by: Ann-Marie Tully

4.30-5.20

Erica de Greef

40 minute presentation

followed by 10 minute discussion

5.20-5.30

Group discussion:

interweaving the threads.

POINTURE: POINTING, PUNCTURING, WEAVING AND LACING IN ART PRACTICE AND TEXTUAL DISCOURSE

In 'Restitutions of the truth in pointing' (pointure) (2009 [1978]), Jacques Derrida explores his prevailing discursive theme of the inside and the outside of a text in relation to Martin Heidegger's 'Origin of the work of art' (1935): a philosophical exploration of etymological themes of presence in application to Vincent van Gogh's painting, Oude Schòenen (Old Shoes) (1886) (Payne 1993:220, 221). 'Restitutions' takes the form of a polylogue of selfreflexive voices, including those of Heidegger and Meyer Shapiro, who later wrote a reflective piece on Heidegger's theses, entitled 'The still life as personal object: a note on Heidegger and Van Gogh' (1968) (Payne 1993:224). In this divisive manner, 'Restitutions' operates through a set of metaphors: pointure is a key metaphor relating to printing in terms of the "small iron blade with a point, used to fix the page to be printed on to the tympan" as well as "the hole which it makes in the paper" (Payne 1993:228). The work of shoemaking, Derrida (cited by Payne 1993:228) notes, is also a practice synonymous with the term 'pointure', referring to the stitching of the shoe. Derrida ties this term to both texts and the represented shoes in Vincent van Gogh's painting; and in so doing, 'cobbles' together a complex critique and discussion of the act of reading paintings. He further connects the act of painting (and, by extension, visual representation and visual culture) to his textual mode of pointing at and through a text - in the sense that the painting 'punctures' and 'penetrates' the canvas with meaning. Derrida draws on van Gogh's assertion that, "truth is so dear to me, and so is the seeking to make true, that indeed I believe ... I would rather be a cobbler ... than a musician with colours" (Derrida's citation of van Gogh, cited by Payne 1993:228, emphasis in Derrida). Van Gogh's Old Shoes lingers as a potent image and thread in this multivalent discourse.

In his reading of Derrida's notion of pointure, Michael Payne (1993:229) notes that, "language in its search for truth punctures the painting, not as one might take a knife to a canvas but as one might lace a shoe". In this sense the humble

shoelace becomes a related dimension of the master metaphor, pointure - pointing to the further dimensions of this action: 'relation' and 'restitution' of things otherwise separate (painting and language, cutting and sewing disparate elements together). In addition to these two poignant metaphors, Derrida (2009) points to a further meaning in the word 'lace'. The French word for lace, le lacet, can also mean 'trap' or 'snare' (Payne 1993:229). In this sense, van Gogh's empty shoes with open laces represent an empty trap, a vacuum of presence to delve into – where only ghosts can be found. 'Ghost' is the last metaphor in Derrida's 'Restitutions'. For Heidegger, the empty shoes resonate with the ghost of a peasant woman, and in their 'unfilled' presence point to the ontology of all beings - non-being, while for Shapiro the same shoes remain an indexical portrait of van Gogh (Payne 1993:230). In a sense, Derrida's (2009) textual voices embody these present and past ghosts connected (laced) to van Gogh's shoes, as well as more recent spirits.

Further to the narrative dimension of pointure are the notions of women's work, fabrication and fable; folded and unfurling palimpsests of narrative and memory; tapestries (inter)laced with threads that bind. Intertex(tile) is another neologism to consider: of intertextuality and reading between warp and weft; tufts and bunches dyed in sameness and otherness; alchemic metamorphosis; traditions put to the test; of (re)patterning and serial repetition; chirosophy (hand-wisdom) and mechanical reproduction; moulded conversations; seamless, seamstress, sea(mistress).

Pointure has been framed here as a less reductive way to discuss complexes of visual culture involving mediums and approaches, too often oversimplified in terms of art/craft binaries. That said, it can also be argued that pointure has limitations in terms of addressing a field of visual practice strongly allied with notions of 'women's work' and 'femininity'. Being that the conception of pointure emerges out of the responses (set apart by time) of three male scholars of literary theory, metaphysics and art history, this concept may be understood as an idea more aligned with the figure of masculinity and western hegemonic conceptions of philosophy and aesthetics. Nevertheless, pointure must be considered in close association with a further theoretical model, namely, Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger's 'matrixial' theory. Ettinger has applied her conception of matrixial theory, which stems from the feminist critique

psychoanalysis and the deconstructive impulse to revision academic discourse, to her art practice. In this leaning towards aesthetic application and revisionist thinking, matrixial theory and Derridian pointure share a common zeitgeist.

Ettinger's far reaching practice (an interstitial relationship between artmaking and academic writing) challenges the phallic structure of the symbolic realm of western aesthetics and the male gaze (Giffney, Mulhall & O'Rourke 2009:1). Her conception of matrixial theory addresses the taboo 'maternal-feminine' in frank and startling clarity. Notions of 'femininity' and especially that of 'maternal-femininity' have, to a large extent, been relegated to the so-called undesirable outside of gender politics and discourse (Pollock 2009:10). Considering the physiological conceits of early twentieth-century thinking around mental illness, such as Charcot's theory of hysteria which proposed abnormal psychopathologies derived from the womb, it is not difficult to imagine why the 'maternal feminine' has been an absent figure of discomfort in gender theory. Ettinger's term 'matrix', derived from the Latin word for womb, is a play on the dark phallic, symbolic and hysteric past of the phenomenon womb. As Griselda Pollock (2009:13) points out, Ettinger employs the idea of the womb in a non-anatomical manner notionally, intellectually and metaphorically; in Ettinger's theses the womb is mobilised as an intellectual potential.

Ettinger's 'matrix' is a prenatal, 'maternal-feminine' for human experience, "psychically, imaginatively and symbolically built upon a primordial, ethical/aesthetical situation of human becoming" (Pollock 2009:5). Matrixial theory is also notion, resisting gender "transsubjective" specificity in the logic that both male and female subjects have once shared in this borderline 'becoming-human' experience of pre-natality (Pollock 2009:8, 9). Pollock (2009:13, 28) proposes that in its intrauterine web of subtle and fragile relations, matrixial theory presents a structure to 're-think' social interaction, aesthetics and ethics, without avoiding or disavowing feminine, histories, presence or relations. In terms of revising the articulation of 'pointure-type' visual practices, often associated with 'women's work', matrixial theory offers significant possibilities, as it is not premised on the disavowal of the feminine, and allows for a complex 'weave' of subjectivities within visual representation: art-maker, woman, man, infant, mother, viewer, histories and futures of the medium; as well as the further ethical and social significance of the feminine in contemporary visual culture.

Sources cited

Derrida, J. 2009 [1978]. Restitutions of the truth in pointing, in *The art of art history: a critical anthology*, edited by D Preziosi. New York: Oxford University Press:301-315.

Giffney, N, Mulhall, A & O'Rourke, M. 2009. Seduction into reading: Bracha L. Ettinger's The matrixial borderspace. *Studies in the Maternal* 1(2):1-15.

Heidegger, M. 2009 [1935]. The origin of the work of art, in *The art of art history: a critical anthology*, edited by D Preziosi. New York: Oxford University Press:284-295.

Payne, M. 1993. Reading paintings: reading theory: an introduction to Lacan, Derrida and Kristeva. Oxford: Blackwell:121-233.

Pollock, G. 2009. Mother trouble: the maternal-feminine in phallic and feminist theory in relation to Bracha Ettinger's elaboration of matrixial ethics/aesthetics. *Studies in the maternal* 1(1):13.

ABSTRACTS AND BIOS

••••••



She is weaving. She is being woven. ... It takes a special kind of weaving to create the feminine relation from/on the side of the woman. It takes borderswerving borderlinking ... She exhibits an intersection of knots in a trans-psychic web. 'Woman' is therefore not a radical Other but a borderother that can be encountered if we follow up on her threads in the texture and the textile of the web ... She is weaving and being woven. She bears witness in the woven textile and texture of psychic trans-subjectivity. Wit(h) nessing makes an-other sense – sense of the nameless Thing, the immemorial, the originarily repressed – if taken as Event-Encounter-Thing. She is becoming in-ter-with the Other, she is an im-pue becomingbetween in jointness, weaving the Event-Encounter-Thing with-in a texture, inviting another Other to follow its threads so that the immemorial will filter into with-in-visibility ...

Ettinger, BL. 2004. Weaving a woman artist with-in the matrixial encounter-event. *Theory, Culture & Society* 21 (1):69-94.

BRACHA L. ETTINGER

Bracha L. Ettinger is a prominent Israeli/French/British visual artist who divides her time between Paris and Tel Aviv. She holds the Marcel Duchamp Chair & Professor of Psychoanalysis and Art at the European Graduate School, Saas-Fee, is a senior clinical psychologist, a practicing psychoanalyst, and a theoretician working at the juncture between feminine sexuality, psychoanalysis, and aesthetics.

Ettinger's enmeshed theoretical and artistic practice over 30 years and her engagement with the articulation of the 'proto-ethical potentiality of art', as well as her re-thinking of subjectivity, feminine difference, artworking and art's object and transject, beauty and sublimity, have made a significant impact in the fields of art, film and literary studies, as well as psychoanalysis, queer, and gender studies. Working across the fields of art, aesthetics, philosophy and psychoanalysis, she has introduced concepts such as the matrixial bordersphere, wit(h)nessing, copoiesis, feminine-maternal-matrixial Eros of borderlinking, transjectivity, metramorphosis, fascinance, compassion of I and non-I, matrixial touching-gaze, touching-sound and borderspace.

In her 'matrixial' theory and language, Ettinger extends upon the work of contemporary philosophers and psychoanalysts such Emmanuel Levinas, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari and Jacques Lacan; and, although she is associated with contemporary French psychoanalytical feminism, in her work, she challenges Julia Kristeva's and Luce Irigaray's abject formulation of the feminine, rearticulating this maligned genus as a model for thought and discourse. As an artist/psychoanalyst and artist/ philosopher, Ettinger is an author of numerous articles and books on psychoanalysis, aesthetics and ethics, including the seminal volume The matrixial borderspace (collected essays from 1994 to 1999 with introductions by Judith Butler, Griselda Pollock and Brian Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

Ettinger's art practice is primarily as a painter, working in an interdisciplinary manner that incorporates painting, drawing, poetic notebooks, writing-drawing, photography, conversation, lecturing-performances and encounter-events. Her figural-abstract paintings, artist's notebooks and other artistic works have had a significant influence

on global contemporary art, art criticism and art history over the past decade. Two books dedicated to her artwork, namely *Art as compassion. Bracha L. Ettinger* (eds. Catherine de Zegher & Griselda Pollock) and *Le cabinet de Bracha* (ed. Patrick le Nouene) were published in 2011.

Ettinger has held solo exhibitions at MoMA, Oxford (1993); Israel Museum, Jerusalem (1995); Palais des Beaux-arts, Brussels (2000); the Drawing Center, New York (2001); the Freud Museum, London (2009); the Musée des Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona (2010); Beaux-Arts d'Angers (2011) and Casco, Utrecht (2012). Recent performance/installation and lecturing 'encounter-events' have taken place at the ICI, Berlin (2010), Poznańskie Towarzystwo Przykaciół Nauk, Poznań (2011) and the Arts Nova Museum, Turku (2011).

She has participated in major international group exhibitions including *Feminine Presence* (Tel Aviv Museum, 1990); *Face a L'Histoire* (Centre Pompidou, Paris, 1996); *Kabinet* (Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1997); *Inside the Visible* (ICA, Boston, Whitechapel, London and Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, 1996-1997); *Aletheia* (Konstmuseum, Göteborg, 2003); *ARS 06 Biennale* (KIASMA, Helsinki, 2006) and *Gorge(1)* (The Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp, 2006-2007).

LICHTENBERG FLOWER AND MEDUSA

The exhibition LICHTENBURG FLOWER AND MEDUSA (2012) provides a fascinating insight into Ettinger's pioneering and complex practice and her engagement with the articulation of the 'protoethical' potential of art, her re-thinking of subjectivity and feminine difference, artworking and art's object, beauty and sublimity. The viewer is introduced through this exhibition to the porous theoretical and media-devices employed by Ettinger in her art practice: notions of trace and inscription in the face of digital anonymity; the mechanisation interplay of and ('reprographic' means) staged alongside the iconography of ghostly and traumatic apparitions 'becoming' effaced and palempsestual; the detritus of the unconscious, the prosaic, the unsightly and the unvalourised subject; the notebook as an intersection between analyst/artist's and the residual dialogue with an[Other]; the employment of the photographic image/object as a ground that is diluted through process to that of a fading spectre; a sense of disembodied relations aesthetics where classical distance and intimacy implode.¹ Ettinger's luminous paintings mine the physics of light and colour, a liminal terrain where the insubstantial force becomes a rendered and allegorical gesture.²



Bracha Ettinger, detail of artist's notebooks.

Collated with reference to Bourriaud, N. 2012. Bracha Ettinger: figures of out-off (Hors), translation by Tali Bogen & Joseph Mulligan (ed). Paris. Unpublished.

Manning, E. 2010. Vertiginous before the light. The form of force, in *Art as compassion: Bracha L. Ettinger*, edited by Catherine De Zegher & Griselda Pollock. Brussels: ASP (Academic & Scientific Publishers):173-189.

MEREDITH JONES



Meredith Jones is a media and cultural studies scholar at the University of Technology, Sydney. Her research is based around the intersections between culture and technology, gender, popular media studies and feminist theories of the body. particularly interested modifications and beautification practices, and as one of the pioneers of Cosmetic Surgery studies, is the author of Skintight: an anatomy of cosmetic surgery (Berg, 2008) and Cosmetic surgery: a feminist primer (with Cressida Heyes. Ashgate, 2009). She is currently working on a multi-site, multi-disciplinary project about cosmetic surgery tourism funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (UK). Jones is the co-founder (with award-winning designer Suzanne Boccalatte) of the innovative Trunk books series, the first of which, HAIR (Boccalatte, 2009) was launched at the 2009 Sydney Writers' Festival. The second volume, BLOOD, will be released in late 2012.

ABSTRACT

Embroidering body and self: cosmetic surgery, gender and transformation

Cosmetic Surgery has grown out of technomedical areas that are traditionally seen as masculine, in which surgical practices are used to control and re-shape unsatisfactory bodies and selves. Those bodies and selves are usually feminine (nine out of ten cosmetic surgery recipients are women), and operating theatres are highly gendered (nine out of ten cosmetic surgeons are men). But cosmetic surgery also owes much to the domestic arts that are traditionally seen as feminine, such as invisible stitching, embroidery, quilting, stuffing and ironing.

This paper presents an intimate and emotional narrative about a gender reassignment operation that the presenter witnessed in Thailand. It considers three bodies – the surgeon's, the patient's and the researcher's – and processes of smoothing, filling, suturing and wounding. It examines assemblages of gender, transformation and alterity in the operating theatre and in the wider world of contemporary cosmetic surgery.

JANE TAYLOR



Jane Taylor is a writer, scholar and curator from South Africa. For the past several decades she has been involved in cultural critique and public scholarship as well as creative writing. She coedited From South Africa (TriQuarterly Magazine and University of Chicago Press, 1987) with David Bunn. In 1996, she designed and curated FAULT LINES, a series of cultural responses to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that followed the end of apartheid in South Africa. In 2000, she wrote the libretto for a new opera by William Kentridge titled The Confessions of Zeno that was performed at the Lincoln Centre in New York and the MCA in Chicago. She has two published novels, Of wild dogs (Double Storey, 2005), which won the prestigious Olive Schreiner Prize for new fiction in South Africa, and The transplant men (Jacana Media, 2010). She is currently of the Board of Advisors for Dokumenta 2012. Taylor is presently writing a book on Kentridge, as well as a scholarly work on the history and theory of Sincerity in the early modern era in the west. From 2000 to 2009, Taylor held the Skye Chair of Dramatic Art at the University of the Witwatersrand. She has been a Visiting Professor at the University Johannesburg, a Visiting Fellow at Oxford and at Cambridge Universities in the United Kingdom (UK) and a recipient of Mellon and Rockefeller Fellowships. Taylor is currently a Mellon Senior Research Advisor at the University of the Western Cape, Dramaturge for Handspring Trust and Visiting Professor at the University of Chicago.

ABSTRACT

Voice/Box

William Butler Yeats, in *Sailing to Byzantium* describes the soul as "fastened to a dying animal". This rather brutal verbal sketch of the dualistic human being provides my way in to thinking about pointure. For the purposes of my paper I consider the figure of 'stitching' as emblematic of our preoccupation with retaining unity across the fundamental split between the material and immaterial, the temporal and the infinite, the corporeal and the spiritual.

My discussion considers two distinct fields of representation. In the first case I think aloud about the foundational image of the Trinity as a trope of pointure within the western tradition. Body and spirit, the Mover and the moved, are stitched together through conventional constraints that point to the longing for eternity and time to reconcile.

My second case is a consideration of Voice. Here I also draw on Martin Heidegger and Jacques Lacan in thinking about Voice and its uncanny passage from inside to outside. Both of these instances point to an abiding disquiet over mortality and finitude; and in this sense the work of pointure grafts together fundamentally incompatible elements. In citing Heidegger I am also invoking Jacques Derrida's key discussion of pointure.

The twentieth century, marked by a turn away from the Cartesian dualism that has dominated western philosophy, has seen a flowering of the arts of reparation, in which stitching and suture make a particular kind of claim. The postcolonial context, too, has disruptured 'natural' boundaries and thresholds, giving pointure a particular aesthetic significance as a trope of complexity, multiplicity and hybridity.

MARY CORRIGALL

University of Johannesburg

Redressing: dance and dress activating performative and performance states in Nandipha Mntambo's *Paso Doble*

As Jacques Derrida (2009 [1978]) observes, Martin Heidegger's attempt to trace the "origin of the work of art" in an essay³ of the same name diverges into an analysis of the "being product" – a pair of shoes – as depicted in Van Gogh's painting(s)⁴ rather than the nature of the work of art. In this way the 'inside' of the artwork eclipses it's 'outside' status.

This actuality can partly be attributed to the fact that this 'useful product' is an article of clothing which innately evokes a relationship to the body. Through the study of garments/ensembles – a red dress appearing in Nandipha Mntambo's video artwork *Paso Doble* (2011) – and gestures that activate them, this paper presents an exploration of their different modes or functions in determining both the 'internal' and 'external' significance of this filmic artwork.

The intention is not to advance Heidegger or Derrida's positions on the ontological significance of art; rather, the collapsing of the boundaries between the 'being product' and art object simply clears the path to read a garment as an artwork while simultaneously allowing it to function as part of a vocabulary mobilised by artists within an artwork.

In this paper I attempt to 'interlace' these conditions while 'interweaving' a discourse on the role dress and the *paso doble* dance in this artwork plays in establishing performative and performance states and how these collapse in the context of this filmed dance artwork. The red dress and the traditional dance sequence in *Paso Doble* is a deliberate act – a performance – though it is part of a citational code in the sense that it conforms to acts that have existed before thus it also mobilises a performative action, as per Judith Butler's (1993:7) definition.

The title of an article Heidegger drafted between 1935 and 1937. It was reworked for publication in 1950 and again in 1960.

Sources cited

Butler, J. 1993. Bodies that matter: on the discursive limits of sex. New York: Routlege.

Derrida, J. 2009 [1978]. Restitutions of the truth in pointing (pointure), in *The art of art history: a critical anthology*, edited by D Preziosi. New York: Oxford University Press:301-315.

Preziosi, D (ed). 2009. *The art of art history: a critical anthology.* New York: Oxford University Press.

MICHELLE FULLER

Independent researcher

Metramorphic swerving in the matrixial borderspace: reviewing medium, paint as flesh

This paper reviews conventional notions of craftsmanship and the use of the specific medium of oil paint in art practice and textual discourse framed by the matrixial theory of Bracha L. Ettinger. The subject matter is flesh. The study foregrounds the involvement and acknowledgment of the corporeal body, the hand of the artist, and of the organic material reality of our existence and the objects that surround us.

The oil paintings to be discussed reflect a series of interventions that resulted in abstracted images based on photographs of meat. The photographs are of animals taken in the local abattoir where the artist was not just an observer of an event or objects, but became a participant in the unfolding slaughtering process through a shared wit(h) nessing (Ettinger 2005:706).⁵ Through transformational process, the artist found herself swerving in dangerous proximity to this sensorial affective experience that was concurrently threatening, yet enticing through its demand to experience a sense of 'beauty'. This Ettinger (1998) describes as "fragalizing yourself since this beauty is the effect of borderlinking to a wound and coemerging with an-other".

This co-merging with an-other, a particular understanding of a collective visceral reality, is

Heidegger moves from reflecting on a specific painting of shoes to a body depicting this subject-matter.

Wit(h)nessing: "This very psychic coemergence also depends upon the capacity and quality of witnessing of the non-I in jointness: on that particular quality I have named wit(h)nessing, witnessing while sharing in the distribution and reabsorption of traces of the event and participating in trans-subjective transmission via unconscious strings and threads (Ettinger 2005:707).

explored in a series of oil paintings reflected in the paintings where the intentional choice of oil-paint is used to comment on the use of medium as a recursive medium in contemporary art practice. This is that a medium must have a supporting structure, generative of a set of conventions, some of which, in assuming the medium itself as subject, will be wholly "specific" to it, thus producing an experience of their own necessity (Krauss 2000:26). The artist's intention in this series of paintings was to create a space for, as Ettinger (1988) describes, the matrixial affects of wonder, awe, solace and horror - responses that allow transformation in the borderspace and testify that a new thread of anxiety and fragility has been added and plaited. The gaze appeals the viewer to follow it into a space beyond yet inside the visible to abandon defences and become fragmented and fragile, to share, absorb and further redistribute fragments of trauma, on condition of pleating into the tableau one's own matrixial threads and letting it penetrate one's own borderspace of severality.

Sources cited

Ettinger, BL. 1998. Beauty and trauma. <eyebeam> <blast> with extracts from 'Beauty and wound: trans-subjectivity in art' (colloque 'Art et Clinique', MAC - Musée de Marseille, BLE Atelier, 1998). Atelier/X Art Foundation. [O]. Available: eyebeam@list.thing.net. Subject: <eyebeam> <blast> Beauty and trauma http://www.thing.net/eyebeam/msg00403.htm Accessed 30 March 2012.

Ettinger, BL. 2005. Copoiesis. *emphemera. Theory and politics in organization. The jump. Or, what is art?* 5(X): 703-713. [O]. Available:

www.ephemeraweb.org/journal/5-X/5-Xettinger.pdf [PDF] Accessed 30 March 2012.

Ettinger, BL. 2006. *The matrixial borderspace*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Krauss, R. 2000. A voyage on the North Sea: art in the age of the post-medium condition. London: Thames & Hudson.

JENNIFER KOPPING

Design Centre, Greenside

Tenuous threads the ties that bind: *Pointure* as Jewish identity and hauntological manifestation in contemporary art praxis

I have on my wall ornaments; wooden embroidery hoops that belonged to my grandmother. I have them as curiosities and decoration, which belies and even diminishes their profound importance to me, both on an emotional and intellectual level. What stories do they hold, embedded in the worn varnish of the wood and the tarnished metal? I try to imagine what they witnessed and their origins. Where they were carved? How did they enter into my grandmother's life; as a young Polish woman at the threshold of marriage preparing her dowry or perhaps they kept her company during the cold winters? Where they witness and comfort, a balm for the cruelty of the pogroms as the Cossacks raided the village of her birth? Or perhaps unbeknownst to her the products of her labours were the threads that tied her to her past and her traditions, to hopeful futures in a world that held little hope. Tenuous threads.

Pointure takes on a deeply personal resonance as a rupture and penetration into family mythology, history, identity, language and loss. It is perhaps a kind of Romanticism and nostalgic vision of another time and place. The hoops, like Van Gogh's peasant shoes as described by Martin Heidegger, are subject and witness to the hardships of life and all its miseries. The hoops hold secrets of the ghosts that linger and loom in the shadows of the Shoah. 6 They dwell in an almost forgotten place of the shtetl; the small villages and ultimate killing fields of Eastern Europe. As the fabric stretches over the hoop and my grandmother threads her yarn, to prick the surface, she carries the narratives of an age long past and almost forgotten, of pogroms and partisans of forests and beasts ...

As a member of a family that was scorched by the horrors of the Holocaust, I carry the moral dilemma of how one articulates as a second generation bystander, the unspeakable. While recalling Adorno's (1967:34) dictum, "Nach Auschwitzein gedicht zu schreiben ist barbarisch" [It is barbaric to write poetry after Auschwitz], I however feel an obligation and moral imperative through a body of artwork, to tell the story of shadowed lost voices and smothered screams as I carry that legacy through my name and Jewishness. Like the tailor and the seamstress of the shtetl, I try to stitch the remnants of memory that are not my own but that are sewn like diasporic threads permeating the fibre of my identity. It is no co-incidence that Jacques Derrida, himself a Jew, should articulate the notion of pointure perhaps as a subconscious wound and as a psychological discourse on Jewish identity, of belonging, non-belonging otherness. Hélène Cixous (2005 [1998]), a Jewess herself, refers to stigmata as Derrida's pointure

...

Hebrew word meaning 'destruction' that names the Holocaust.

refers to wounds.⁷ Perhaps it is embedded in the Jewish psyche, like the tympanum strikes the metal surface, forever traced and scarred? Wanderers, tinkers and tailors crossing boundaries exorcising their demons, escaping the demons.

This presentation explores my interpretation of the Derridean notion of pointure as a metaphoric wound that threads, laces, ties and binds the concepts of Jewish identity, history, memory, language and loss as a mythical nostalgia and yearning for place and belonging. These notions further extend to hauntological manifestations in both my recent body of artwork and within wider contemporary art praxis, specifically in the use of stitch, painting and photography.

Sources cited

Cixous, H. 2005 [1998]. *Stigmata: escaping texts*. With a foreword by Jacques Derrida. London/New York: Routledge.

Adorno, TW. 1967 [1995]. Translated by S Weber & S Weber. London: Neville Spearman.

..........

GERHARD SCHOEMAN

Art historian

Time slows and expands: interlacing black and gold in Berni Searle's *Shimmer*

This paper explores the interlacing of black and gold, life and death, and light and darkness in Berni Searle's neo-Baroque exhibition *Shimmer* (2011). Historian Michel Pastoureau recently devoted a book to the social history of the colour black in Europe in which he shows that black has always stood for powerfully opposing ideas, including good and bad. In the beginning was black, and black illuminates the sun (symbolised by the colour gold) and the light, which are the source of life.

Black and gold mutually illuminate and focalise each other, like the light and darkness in Caravaggio's paintings of resurrection and death, beauty and decay, transcendence and fallenness. The heart of the sun is black and, in alchemical terms, black (the colour of mud and excrement) is the *materia prima* of gold – "an ancient symbol of the life force, perhaps its innermost emblem, seemingly substantialising the light which is its

In his foreword to Cixous's (2005 [1998]) text, Derrida states: "Sublimity of a book in twelve songs on the wound".

body", to quote critic Donald Kuspit (1993:177). The evocation of creative and spiritual alchemy in *Shimmer*, casts the history of the 'black gold' of the slave trade and, concomitantly, art as 'filthy lucre' in a different light.

Shimmer alchemically interlaces opposites – such as home and homelessness, ground and groundlessness, form and formlessness, inspiration and debilitation, veiling and unveiling. The one grows out of and transforms the other. In the heterogeneous process of transformation and transmutation, which acts in both directions (from nothing to something and back again), time slows and expands. Yet, time, like gold, always slips through our fingers. Time runs out, in the exact moment of re-cognition.

Source cited

Kuspit, D. 1993. Alive in the alchemical emptiness: Jannis Kounellis's art, in *The new subjectivisim: art in the 1980s*. New York: Da Capo:173-183.

.....

MYER TAUB

University of Pretoria

From The Dybbuk to 'Die Book': proposing an act of adaptation

Why, for the highest height to the deepest depth below, has the soul fallen? Within itself, the Fall contains the Resurrection (Ansky 1926:25).

S. Ansky's play The Dybbuk is regarded as an example of traditional Yiddish theatre. Based on Jewish folklore, the play tells the story of a discontented spirit that crosses the barrier between the real and non-real, to enter and possess the body of young girl. For my first creative output for the Drama Department of the University of Pretoria in 2012, I have proposed an adaptation of the text of the play. My proposal includes weaving notions of the spectre into the traditional Yiddish text. This act is to be done in terms of a performative interpretation made through image, body and space. Performative, in this context, is understood in a manner similar to Jacques Derrida's conception of it as a "dimension of performative interpretation that is of an interpretation that transforms the very thing it interprets" (Derrida cited by Bell 2007:89). In this case the ghost emerges not only out of folklore, but also as a result of the intersection between time frames and their resultant fissure – and transformation of the text begins. My proposed adaptation of *The Dybbuk* is called 'Die Book' and is set in a rural town in South Africa at the turn of the twentieth century. The paper is a presentation of this proposed adaptation in both theoretical and practical terms. In this case, the adaptation is considered as a perforation of text, to the point of rupture. It includes fragmentation and assemblage, forming a palimpsest of traces of memories, traditions, identities, language and utterances, all manipulated into a presentation of images, written and found, constituting an adaptation of the original text – from ghost to book and from demon to text.

Sources cited

Ansky, S. 1926. *The Dybbuk*. Translated by HG Alsberg & W Katzin. New York: Liveright.

Bell, V. 2007. Culture and performance: the challenge of ethics, politics and feminist theory. Oxford/New York: Berg.

.....

ANDREA THOMA

University of Leeds

The lining – invisibility and visibility in a visual and textual exploration of the cinematic in art

This paper reflects on a body of work, Thought Dwellings (Thoma 2011), which comprises painting, photography and video organised as floating signifiers in an open-ended 'rhizomatic' structure to explore 'nomadic dwelling' - where the idea of place fluctuates between the proximity of the haptic visuality of 'smooth space' and the longdistance vistas of 'striated space' (Deleuze & Guattari 1988). I refer to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's The visible and the invisible (Merleau-Ponty & Lefort 1968), Bracha Ettinger's theory of the Matrix (Ettinger & Museum of Modern Art 1993), Giles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's (1988) notion of the rhizome and Luce Irigaray's reading of Merleau-Ponty's notion of vision as touch (Vasseleu 1998) to discuss my visual exploration of presence and absence of the figure, where the indexical aspect of photography and video is met by the iconic abstraction of painting to engage with ideas of the cinematic.

Ettinger's matrixial space is seen as an opportunity to allow for a reading of the multiple in relation to embodiment, where presence and absence co-exist in metramorphosis (Ettinger & Museum of Modern Art 1993:13) rather than excluding or assimilating one another. I am particularly interested how the juxtaposition of diverse visual media informs the reading of each where it is not an either/or situation but a 'this as well as that', which is as posited by Ettinger where I and non-I come together.

Sources cited

Deleuze, G & Guattari, F. 1988. A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia. London: Athlone.

Ettinger, B & the Museum of Modern Art. 1993. *Matrix - borderlines: 4 April-20 June, 1993: Museum of Modern Art, Oxford.* Oxford: Museum of Modern Art.

Merleau-Ponty, M & Lefort, C. 1968. *The visible and the invisible: followed by working notes.* Evanston: Northwestern University Press

Thoma, A. 2011. Moving between images: the orchestration of diverse time-space constructs in Fine Art practice. *International Journal of the Image* 1(2).

Vasseleu, C. 1998. Textures of light: vision and touch in Irigaray, Levinas, and Merleau-Ponty. London: New York, Routledge.

ANN-MARIE TULLY

University of Johannesburg

The shamanic seam: transnatured humanities and sutured animal bodies in contemporary visual practice

Clothing is a ghost that, even when discarded, still has the power to haunt (Jones & Stallybass 2007:4).

Jacques Derrida's notion of pointure, developed in 'Restitutions of the truth in pointing' (pointure) (1978) is peppered with the metaphoric language of sympathetic magic. In noting that language punctures the painting more in the manner that one laces a shoe, Derrida suggests relational alliances between separate bodies, particular invokes the complicity of dress in "magical" modes (Payne 1993:229). In this paper I consider this anomalous, co-mingling, and material sensibility in relation to the ancient human trope of shamanic animal costume and textile generation. This ubiquitously anthropocentric involving modes of 'supernatural dress' evidenced in a plethora of global variety; and often involves the combining of the disparate poles of human and animal identity through the 'suturing'

of animal and human substrate.8 In considering the application of this originary textile based practice to contemporary visual culture, I look at examples drawn from art and fashion with reference to cultural theory that incorporates notions of sympathetic magic: Giles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's (1988:241-246) analogous use of sorcery in the exposition of their concept of "becoming animal" is consulted. Reference is also made to fetishistic notions of the 'transnaturing' potential of dress, and by extension the material production of sewing, stitching and embroidering - the ghost in the stitch (Jones & Stallybass 2007:4). In this proposition I theorise a sympathetic magic in textile devices - a desirous, violent and 'transmogrifying' medium.

This latent material phenomenon is discussed in relation to a series of selected instances ranging from the incorporation of 'magical' animal signifiers in the illustrious fashion practice of the Alexander McQueen; to anachronistic costumed performances of the contemporary artists, Marcus Coates and Nandipha Nthambo; as well as Walter Oltmann's woven-metal 'insectile' armored suits for human dimensions. I also make reference to selected artworks from my artistic practice in which I employ textile devices or iconography to generate deviant counter-humanist notions of ontological being.

Sources cited

Deleuze, G & Guattari, F. 1988. Becoming intense, becominganimal, becoming imperceptible, in *A thousand plateaus*: *capitalism and schizophrenia*. London: Continuum:241-246.

Jones, R & Stallybrass, P. 2007. Renaissance clothing and the materials of memory. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Payne, M. 1993. Reading paintings, in *Reading theory: an introduction to Lacan, Derrida and Kristeva*. Oxford: Blackwell.

..........

JOSIE GRINDROD

University of Cape Town

Unstitching ties that bind

In contrast to Jacques Lacan's notion of the 'fascinum' as that unconscious element in an image which arrests life, psychoanalyst/artist Bracha

I employ this term with emphasis in this paper to point to the violence of the 'shamanic stitch' – the closing of a 'wound' of visceral and archetypal difference. Ettinger (2006:60-61) articulates 'fascinance' as another way of conceptualising the gaze. She asserts that fascinance is an aesthetic mode of relatedness arising from 'the matrixial sphere', one which has as its precondition the subject being met with 'compassionate hospitality'. In this paper I use my recent artwork *Ties that bind* (2010-2012) as an object of enquiry to explore Ettinger's notion of fascinance and its implication for what she terms 'transformational subjectivising'. I suggest that the artwork, as site where these registers may be reworked, results in a new relation of co-existence with, and alternation between (Pollock 2003:153), fascinum and fascinance.

Ties that bind is comprised of an installation with two elements. The first, Substrate, is a vitrine in which a re-created, de-constructed family album, evoked through painted facsimiles of photographs, 'ghosts' from monoprints on tissue and other papers, found and built objects and stitched fabric scraps, was made to narrate and memorialise an intergenerational experience of trauma. The second element, Mother I-VI, is a cycle of six paintings of an infant and mother/caretaker and a textual sign. The images hang above the vitrine and pay homage to three different maternal caretakers; in so doing the work acknowledges the ghost of 'Nanny', an oft-disavowed experience of maternal care in the South African context. The use of cloth as metaphor for 'interweaving' (Ettinger 2006:77); materiality and its relationship to the maternal body (Wollheim 1987:348-50; Pollock 2003:151); the vitrine as trap/container for 'inside and outside' (Nixon 2005:180) and painting as a form of 'thinking in' (Elkins 2000:5) the medium in a manner analogous to the relationship between baby and mother, are explored in this presentation through textual and visual analysis.

Sources cited:

Elkins, J. 2000. What painting is: how to think about oil painting using the language of alchemy. London: Routledge.

Ettinger, BL. 1997. The feminine/prenatal weaving in the matrixial subjectivity-as-encounter. *Psychoanalytic dialogues VII* (3):363-405.

Ettinger, BL. 2006. Fascinance. The woman-to-woman (girl-to-m/other) matrixial feminine difference, in *Psychoanalysis and the image*, edited by G Pollock. Oxford: Blackwell:60-93.

Nixon, M. 2005. Fantastic reality: Louise Bourgeois and a story of modern art. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Pollock, G. 2003. Does art think: how can we think the feminine aesthetically?, in $Art\ and\ thought$, edited by D Arnold & M

Wollheim, R. 1987. Painting as an art. London: Thames & Hudson.

..........

ERICA DE GREEF

LISOF

Interrogating the point de capiton of fashion film:9 discourse and a search for meaning in local, contemporary fashion film

This group paper¹⁰ reflects on the *punctum* of the fashion film, in an attempt to explore a series of questions raised in relation to the filmic, visual and narrative offerings of the medium, and in response to broader questions regarding key nodal points or signifiers that act as Jacques Lacan's point de capiton ('quilting point' or 'anchoring point'). In it, we interrogate the particular signifiers that seem to stitch subjects into signifying chains in these contemporary fashion films.

Furthermore, our aims are to interrogate which meanings (if any) seem to puncture or rupture the surfaces of these fashion films; whether these key signifiers interpolate these films into particular subject positions, and whether these act as Jacques Ranciere's (2007) future images, reflecting ghostly, fragmented or partial narratives, and how these act as metaphors of instability of modern life.

We consider how local, contemporary fashion films articulate Ranciere's collapse of a common measure in terms of their sentence, image and history, through in-depth observations and analyses, while contextualising this enquiry in a theoretical framework within the discourse of contemporary fashion. The purpose of the paper is to position the critical signifiers which, as signifiers, unify a given field and constitute its identity: it is the interrogation of these nodal points, points de capiton, that currently (in)form the ideological structure of meanings in contemporary fashion.

Barthes, R. 1967. The fashion system. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Evans, C. 2003. Fashion at the edge: spectacle, modernity, and deathliness, New Haven/London: Yale University Press.

Ranciere, J. 2007. The future of the image. London/New York:

Žižek, S. 1989. The sublime object of ideology. London/New York: Verso.

Žižek, S. 1991. Looking awry: an introduction to Jacques Lacan through popular culture, Cambridge, Massachusetts/London: MIT Press.

Sources cited

The Fashion Film: a short film constructed as 'narrative in movement' first entered the fashion field through the work ShowStudio (2000). These films often present a conceptual thought, an aesthetic glimpse or a thematic discourse in a fragmented, disconnected and random form.

As part of the first Honours Degree in Fashion at LISOF, this essay is a result of collective research and application of coursework.

NOTES