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# beyond the surface

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## **beyond the surface**

### **abstract**

It was the encounter with a mythical tribal object that inspired me to test sculpture as a process for transformation. Not everyone trusts that material things contain an inherent spirit of substance, yet most of us are familiar with some kind of folk belief about mythical objects. To explore modern semblances of the mythical object, I work with keepsakes, found objects and paraphernalia and their emotive potential. Backing away from the 'everlasting monumental' approach of having to leave a colossal impression for the cultural visitant, I affirm the capacity of sculpture to operate as a transitory social practice.



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# **beyond the surface**

*anja kutsch*

## ***remember***

*no calling of their names keep deaths' anonymous heralded -*

*not vital and still haunting.*

*don't trace me by my name*

*for I am still alive in your ideas.*



## **table of contents**

page

vii **list of images**

### **part one – background**

1 **introduction**

2 **my heritage and hollow letters**

3 **reach of memory**

5 **the past in my guts**

6 **spirited substance and contemporary sculpture**

7 **primitive primitivist**

9 **embodiments of energy and mnemonic legacies**

11 **how to put the dilemma into a nutshell**

### **part two – studio**

14 **practice**

18 **others' memories and emotions**

20 **falling short of a synergetic accouter**

22 **material decay and the ravages of time**

27 **provocation and disturbance**

33 **conclusion**

36 **appendix – boli**

37 **references**

38 **bibliography**

39 **declaration**



## list of images

page	title
	<b>mamilla/nipple (detail)</b>
2	<b>1 warrior Memorial in Marxen, Lower Saxony, Germany</b>
8	<b>2 7000 Oaks (detail), a Social Sculpture by Joseph Beuys</b>
10	<b>3 tribal Bamana boli</b>
13	<b>4 burial site for sculpture, Opoutere, Coromandel</b>
16	<b>5 Venus de Milo</b>
17	<b>6 birdman</b>
18	<b>7 epiphyte alien</b>
19	<b>8 common grief (detail)</b>
21	<b>9 somewhere - stretcher</b>
22	<b>10 if you were blind - memory-box</b>
24	<b>11 mamilla/nipple</b>
25	<b>12 - 14 to the bone</b>
27	<b>15 darkcamp 2015 – poem for sculpture in its natural habitat</b>
28	<b>16 Miss Germany</b>
29	<b>17 Miss Germany (detail)</b>
30	<b>18 Miss Germany (detail)</b>
32	<b>19 Schlagbaum/barrier</b>
34	<b>20 Schlagbaum/barrier (detail)</b>





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## beyond the surface

### introduction

This is about that of which things consist, about appearances and their departure. It is about confessions and letting go. It is not about the spiritual in art but it is about spirit. By 'spirit' I mean the inherent non-human vitality or power that is illustrated through humans but not because of them. In my research I focus on the role of 'spirited substance' in contemporary sculpture and how its engagement in social processes can have an impact on beliefs and transformations. I utilise various perceptions of spirited objects, lived experiences and the remedy of confession to compose 'process-focussed' sculpture. With 'process' I address the total 'activity' of an object's being – beginning when its emotional charge comes into existence, followed by the reprocessing of its constructed identity and concluding with the decomposition and transformation of its substance.

In part one I talk about the background of my practice. I contemplate the traditional construction of memorials. Moving from a place of certainty to undoing, I look for forms of energy outside my own educational experience, mnemonic legacies and assumptions. I explain why I have opened my methodological approach to procedures of a different culture from West Africa and assess how the foreign can translate to individual projections of ritual, sacrifice and social processes. I look at the emotive potential of 'spirited' objects and at 'Social Sculpture' in a contemporary Beuysian context and how embodiments of energy can become the 'spirited' substance for transformation. I conclude with what has kindled my practice.

Part two introduces my studio work and methodology. I test how the material object can become a transformative process and illustrate the subject of my sculptures. I look at the importance of material decay and the qualities the processed substance. I elaborate why a synergetic work did not meet my expectations and put things to a halt. Then, due to time constraints I had to modify my practice and in the final section I outline how this approach led me to a conceptual shift that now generates a wider relevance for my work.

## part one – background

### my heritage and hollow letters

For many thousand mornings a handful of pupils pressed their ductile little spines against the stony surface of a warrior memorial. It carried the names of men they had no memory of. What, following the fall and passing of their era, was to remain but hollow letters felt by skimpy little fingers while waiting for the school bus? For us children it was a place of significance insofar as we were drawn to it by force of monumentality. Besides my tactile experimentation with the hollow names I still recall the feeling of swinging on the heavy iron chains anchored into surrounding lithic posts.



Image 1. Warrior Memorial in Marxen, Lower Saxony, Germany (n.d.).  
Retrieved from: [www.geimeinde-marxen.de/2012\\_03\\_22\\_protokoll\\_4\\_ak\\_geschichte\\_und\\_siedlungsentwicklung-2.pdf](http://www.geimeinde-marxen.de/2012_03_22_protokoll_4_ak_geschichte_und_siedlungsentwicklung-2.pdf)

Despite practicability, because of its stationary character, the memorial did not inspire me to contemplate loss, bear someone or something in memento or talk about reconciliation (which is not to say that I do not hold my time in thought). Truly, it felt too ancient and removed - belonging to a long gone era - like the remnants of many megalithic graves you can find in the heath and woodlands of Lower Saxony; gravestones of someone unacquainted. Having said this, it changed the instant the memorial was moved. This colossus of hewn stone was officially shunted to a different time as it was denied its birthplace and moved back a mere hundred metres into the hidden shade of time-honouring oak trees. The vacuum it left was compensated with a proper bus stop which seemed to be more practical at that time.<sup>1</sup> To me, this sudden removal represented a greater sense of loss than the whole memorial ever had before. It was not the ongoing that supplied the connection but the change, or in this case, the displacement. To unceremoniously move and relocate a memorial that was purposed to be venerated, I found an interesting aspect in itself. I remember vividly that I had imagined how special it would have been if we all had turned the warrior memorial into something else for us, because of its social significance.

### **reach of memory**

In the late 1970s Rosalind Krauss in *Sculpture in the Expanded Field* critically evaluates the immanent danger of sculpture collapsing in its conventional logic and virtue of commemorative representation. Failing to transport an encoded structure of historicism, modern sculpture had become self-referential and moved onto a new reality of given space. The base was absorbed, sculpture became transportable and radically abstract, temporal and spatial. "*For, within the situation of posts-modernism, practice is not defined in relation to a given medium – sculpture – but rather in relation to the logical operations on a set of cultural terms, for which any medium (...) or sculpture itself might be used.*"<sup>2</sup>

When I think about the colossal erections of remembrance like the warrior memorial from my childhood, I question their everlasting features substituting the reach of memory. Sometimes I have the feeling they are a betrayal of our memories. On grounds of representation we focus on what has passed and re-harness this energy of loss, but this representation betrays us of the very experience of difference. Gilles Deleuze states "*Representation has only a single centre, a*

<sup>1</sup> I recall an anecdote about some youths, skateboarding on the surface of a warrior memorial in lieu of an athletic ground. Questioned about due respect towards the site, it was contested that now it was put to a much better use!

<sup>2</sup> Krauss, R. (1979, p. 44). *Sculpture in the Expanded Field*. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/778224>

*unique and receding perspective, and in consequence a false depth. It mediates everything but mobilises nothing.*"<sup>3</sup> I agree, and also think memorials could bear an undertow of oblivion as they provide a lack of exchange or participation. To me, the process of reciprocity is different than the traditional reappraisal of mementos' phallic symbols; of what represents intelligent blood flow. We are presented with a reminder, but is it a statement of facts we want rather than an 'active completion'? I want to consider a memorial contrary to another time's viscosity hewn in stone. Regarding representation I include Paul Connerton, who, in *Cultural Memory*, stresses the political controversies that evolve around publicly utilised or specifically shared or withheld information and documentation. Silencing injustice, public humiliation, arbitrary and judicial discrimination, nationalised commemoration and ceremonies for example, all are intentional means to forming the representation of a cultural history and thus form the basis for mnemonisation.<sup>4</sup> It remains the question: what is authentic? I keep finding shifts of a 'critical' conceptualisation of the 'past' not only in politics, but also within social sciences. Metaphorically speaking, my cultural past could be seen as authorised.<sup>5</sup> This rings true to me when I am reminded that I carry around a historical legacy which does not seem to be affected by migration.<sup>6</sup> Although I am now a local inhabitant, I remain the resident alien.

Honouring and dealing with a past for me is a rather private and sensitive process. I do not look for guidance on how to commemorate. For me, venerating a symbol is not the same as remembering a person. To me it is crucial, that an act of remembrance can impede on future intentions, however, it is needed to change perspective. Sometimes, the memory of someone or something makes me grapple with my senses. Incidentally, I have experienced the agony of trauma ... "a 'sense' memory is the physical imprint of a traumatic experience that lingers on, casting aside any understanding of memory as based on a temporal division between past and present."<sup>7</sup> If my memories constitute the background of projections, then their mementos can become vital actants.<sup>8</sup> In my practice I address the transformation of lived experiences, lastly to reinvent myself.

<sup>3</sup> *Deleuze and space*. (2005, p. 176). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

<sup>4</sup> Connerton, P. (2006, pp. 315-324). *Cultural Memory. Handbook of Material Culture*.

<sup>5</sup> See also Butler, B. (2006, pp. 463-479). *Heritage and the Present Past. Handbook of Material Culture*.

<sup>6</sup> I think reality is a notion that could be contested, and that recognition becomes problematic when populist. Recognition should neither be fixed nor prescribed.

<sup>7</sup> Bennett, J. (2005, p. 25). *Empathic vision : affect, trauma, and contemporary art*.

<sup>8</sup> See also, for example, Bal, M. (2010, 210 ff.) *Of what we cannot speak: Doris Salcedo's political art*. Here, Salcedo speaks about perception and the memory for witnessing. She points out the *therapeutic* significance of the theatrical act of memory and that perception is only an *occasion of memory*. She, then continues on the artist's act of memory within which trauma could be addressed.

## the past in my guts

I am living in a society where the concept of 'God' as the creator seems to be superseded by the gadgets of prosperity and the media, and ceremonies or rituals seem to become more or less sophisticated. I am fortunate enough to profit from spiritual choice and freedom. So I am focussing on the things that speak to me, address my feelings and my senses. Tim Ingold said in *Making*

*"the only way one can really know things – that is, from the very inside of one's being – is through a process of self-discovery. To know things you have to grow into them, and let them grow in you, so that they become part of what you are,"* and *"it is, in short, by watching, listening and feeling – by paying attention to what the world has to tell us – that we learn."*<sup>9</sup>

And so I grow. My memory does not exist solely in my head, it lingers in my guts and effects my somatic functions. It is personal and intimate. I remember faces, feelings, events, and sometimes my memory is bereft of an image. At other times there waits a pigeon-holed sensation or glimpses of the past embellished with figments of my imagination. I learn how to listen, learn how to see. I learn that remembrance and memory can be constructed and that they can change. Remembrance is a digestive process to me; the memory and the idea of a memory can be put to new uses. A shifting of the elements is the germination of my work. It starts with a feeling that can't be controlled and an inner dialogue begins to evolve. I focus on the vital energy of a specific memory – for me the spirit within the substance; contained in the mementos I work with and process. This is the base for my practice: all works are process-focussed; an incident of the past or a lingering sensation give the backdrop for transformation. The actants come from my collection of mementos and for a moment the division between past and present ceases and something new appears.

I am an emotional art lover, not a brainy one. In my practice, I see the response as an energetic experience or exchange, and two aspects drive me: I want to feel it and I want it to move me – and correspondingly I want the viewer to feel it and I want it to move the viewer. The significance of a sculpture I find in the 'human' connection, like the ephemeral touch of two beings walking together a part of the same way. I guess it is a matter of beliefs.

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<sup>9</sup> Ingold, T. (2013)(xii, 163 p.). *Making anthropology, archaeology, art and architecture*.

## spirited substance and contemporary sculpture

In modern society many people do not expect that matter is animated or that material things contain an inherent spirit, although most of us are familiar with some kind of folk belief about mythical objects.<sup>10</sup> Some of us (including myself) unashamedly deal with emotion and sensuality, and often we harbour a collection of keepsakes more or less hidden in our private surroundings. For many, these keepsakes represent other times that are never again accessible, and for that very reason longed for. Perhaps we tend a mythical object to behold or see another life, or even to offer a source for transformation - possibly an apparent semblance of spirit we can relate to. Laden with a sentimental charge or aspects of our own biographies, these relics might be ambitious or daring, provocative or rigorous; their affect is as interpretative as their inherent spirit is palpable. "*In-animate things have a life, that deep within is an inexplicable vitality or energy, a moment of independence from and resistance to us and other bodies*"<sup>11</sup> says Jane Bennett. I take on the concept of animism that also non-human entities possess a spirited essence. In *Matter and Memory* Henri Bergson writes "*spirit borrows from matter the perceptions on which it feeds and restores them to matter in the form of movements which it has stamped with its own freedom.*"<sup>12</sup> I believe all animate or manmade material is drawn from the same source of creation, whether endorsing animism in an art-historical context or looking at spirit in our materialist world.<sup>13</sup> My understanding of spirited matter is that biography, spirit and the capability to act are not limited to animate things. The confines of subject and object often dissolve or are interchangeable when it comes to recalling the past, and the chronicle of events might as well be conducted by a ritual or art object.<sup>14</sup> From an anthropological point of view, Alfred Gell states in *Art and Agency* that art is a system of action, intended to change the world rather than encode symbolic propositions about it. It 'does' rather than 'is'.<sup>15</sup> And from sociocultural perspective Laura Ahern suggests in *Language and Agency* that the capacity to act is not restricted to persons and may include spirits, machines, signs and collective entities.<sup>16</sup> However, within an institutional 'art world' context I like to define my stance and regard myself, perhaps closest described by Jane Bennet in *Vibrant*

<sup>10</sup> Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (1965). *Theories of primitive religion*.

<sup>11</sup> Bennett, J. (2010, p. 18). *Vibrant matter : a political ecology of things*.

<sup>12</sup> Bergson, Henri (1988). *Matter and memory: 'Summary and Conclusion'*.

<sup>13</sup> Maoilearca, J. Ó. (2014). *Spirit in the materialist world*.

<sup>14</sup> See Tilley, C. Y. (Ed.) (2005). *Handbook of material culture*.

<sup>15</sup> Gell, A. (1998). *Art and agency : an anthropological theory*.

<sup>16</sup> Ahern, Laura (2001). *Language and Agency*. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 30: p. 109-37. See also Hoskins, J. : *Agency, Biography and Objects*. In Tilley, C. Y. (Ed.) (2005, p. 74). *Handbook of material culture*.

*Matter*, as a "naively ambitioned vital materialist", because I make 'spirited sculpture'.<sup>17</sup>

Although I do not discuss many contemporary artists, I am obviously interested in contemporary practice. However, for the purpose of this project I am only focussing on those artists who I have identified as having direct relevance.<sup>18</sup>

### **primitive primitivist**

Sculpture and artifact both bespeak any given moment in time; past, present or future. One and the other solely exist on the merit of our experience and echo a state of being, addressing a factual concern, or deliberately exhibiting what we have arrived at. Both are made by human beings, however, their main distinction being perhaps that the artifact was produced especially with a view of subsequent 'use' or a particular vocation. Both their function is to grasp us in a moment of presence and affirming the temporality, artifact and sculpture take us on a sensitive momentum. Henry David Thoreau corresponded with an accordant quote:

*"The question is not what you look at, but what you see. It is only necessary to behold the least fact or phenomenon, however familiar, from a point a hair's breadth aside from our habitual path or routine, to be overcome, enchanted by its beauty and significance."*<sup>19</sup>

It is different if I perceive an artwork in a museological or ethnographic context. To me it is significant, that usability and vocation place an artwork into a cultural context. Even from a western world view the "vast foreign sectors" of the world that brought us "primitive art" are becoming familiar. It seems to me that ethnocentric sculptures are leaving their pigeon-holes, and their implications in the modern primitivist movement have been absorbed within contemporary art.

*"There are in fact contemporary artists whose intentionalities involve falling away from Western civilisation and literally forgetting its values. These are the more nearly primitive primitivists; they are edited out of the show and the book altogether. The furthest the Museum is willing to go is Joseph Beuys"*

wrote Thomas McEvilley and continues, that *the primitive* is being censored out for the sake of

<sup>17</sup> Bennett, J. (2010, p.17 ff). *Vibrant matter : a political ecology of things*.

<sup>18</sup> See e.g. Anja Gallaccio, who takes people out of their comfort zone with her minimalist approach to reveal the sublime, and Berlinde de Bruyckere whose works go deep beyond substance.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/liminal>



western civilisation, the appropriateness of *the primitive* in its sometimes raw realness remains being questioned and thus denied presence.<sup>20</sup> It is this rawness that grabs me, because it can touch so deep inside.



Image 2. „7000 Eichen – Stadtverwaltung statt Stadtverwaltung“, eine soziale Plastik von Joseph Beuys. Foto: 7000eichen.de. Retrieved from: [www.umbauwerkstatt.at/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/116\\_7000Eichen\\_image\\_main.jpg](http://www.umbauwerkstatt.at/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/116_7000Eichen_image_main.jpg)

I understand sculpture as a social process in a Beuysian context: to practice “art as a science of freedom” (and I like to add liberation). He saw his objects as a stimulant for transformation of the idea of sculpture (and of art in general) and extended to invisible materials; thought, spoken and shaped, they should provoke an evolutionary process. “*Social Sculpture*’ is how we mold and shape the world in which we live: everyone is an artist”.<sup>21</sup> We participate, involuntarily perhaps, but a connection with the process-focused force can hardly be avoided. We are visitant and participant, describes Jane Bennet in *Vibrant Matter*, “... we are subjected to an agentic power irreducible to the purposive energies invested by us.”<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> McEvilley, T., & Denson, G.R. (1996, p.105). *Capacity: history, the world, and the self in contemporary art...*

<sup>21</sup> Beuys, J., & Harlan, V. (2004). *What is art?: conversation with Joseph Beuys.*

<sup>22</sup> Bennett, J. (2010, p.69). *Vibrant matter : a political ecology of things.*

## embodiments of energy and mnemonic legacies

In my practice, working with keepsakes and paraphernalia, I explore embodiments of energy. Once, I had a memorable encounter with a dozen relics from West Africa: "*Boliw*", *shrine figures of the Bamana*."<sup>23</sup> The Peter Blum Gallery in New York had featured a collection of mythical sculpture. Viewing the work, I experienced this surge of vibrancy ... you feel this ... the work that excites ... and resonates!<sup>24</sup> The forms did not startle me at first, rather the mysteries they bore inside. These 'objects of power' had been composed to wield an inherent energy to be used in rituals of secret associations. Although I could not comprehend their capabilities, I felt the boliw emitted an almost tangible, intense amount of energy. Their forms were ambiguous, some disturbing, suggesting the facets of living beings. While they remained opaque to me, I did not question their power. Inspired, I wanted to understand such objects 'through the making'. To me, they promised some kind of remedy. My approach would be to juxtapose and modify my heritage of 'western civilised traditions' and the concepts of cultural 'primitivism'.

Plainly, I feed the matter-spirit relationship off the evocative possibilities I attribute to an object of power, like the boli.<sup>25</sup> In my practice I touch on a western non-ethnocentric primitivism, on what Thomas McEvelley has called *primitive primitivist*.<sup>26</sup> I rely on artistic imagination, instinct and emotive involvement as part of a metamorphosing development. I appreciate the contemporary reevaluation of 'civilised' and 'primitive' art. It seems to chime with Felix Guttari's defining art as a "*construction of concepts with the help of percepts and affects, aimed at a knowledge of the world*."<sup>27</sup> I think this *knowledge of the world* applies to all our artistic knowledge, be it imaginary, instinctive or emotive. From a psychological point of view Mircea Eliade reasons that the mythologies of the unconscious fulfill the same functions as in the known mythologies, their symbolism and communication deal with their values alike when they communicate with the modern world. Only mythical values and other (cultural) values differ insofar as the myth is concerned with "*the purest manifestation of reality even amidst a process of perpetual transformation*." The myth constitutes our knowledge, and when it comes to creating new perspectives, sacred and profane are two modes of being in the world, two

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<sup>23</sup> Please see *appendix boli*.

<sup>24</sup> S Cotter, H.: Art in Review (1996). NYT. *Boliw: Shrine Figures of the Bamana, Mali. Mysterious Sculptures*.

<sup>25</sup> Boli (sing.), boliw (plural).

<sup>26</sup> McEvelley, T., & Denson, G.R. (1996). McEvelley, T. : *Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief. Capacity : history, the world, and the self in contemporary art and criticism*.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted from Nicolas Bourriaud, p.101. Bourriaud, N. (2002). *Relational aesthetics*.

existential situations assumed by man in the course of his history.<sup>28</sup>



Image 3. Tribal Bamana Boli. Retrieved from: [www.randtribal.com/images/Bamana\\_Boli\\_figure\\_2\\_horns\\_14.jpg](http://www.randtribal.com/images/Bamana_Boli_figure_2_horns_14.jpg)

In my practice I look for a synthesis of a foreign cultural legacy and the revelation of 'commonly' known traditions. I am interested in a vivacious experience of 'spirited' objects, although I lack the knowledge and education of a sangoma<sup>29</sup> or shaman. My spirit-matter understanding and methodology revolve around emotional keepsakes; paraphernalia; remnants of human relationships; all accounts of long gone moments, thoughts, feelings, and perceptions that may not be understood verbally. I think that 'spirited sculpture' is best be approached 'holistically', as the impact of our mementos can literally consume us as a whole being.

I am far away from my childhood and have been away from my native country for decades. I confess that I am a nostalgic, even a melancholic nostalgic. Dreaming of a romantic childhood,

<sup>28</sup> See Eliade, M. (Ed.) (1976, p.88 ff., p. 139 – 143). *Myths, rites, symbols*.

<sup>29</sup> (Anthropology & Ethnology) South African a witch doctor, healer, or herbalist [from Zulu isangoma] sangoma. (n.d.) Collins English Dictionary [www.thefreedictionary.com/sangoma](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/sangoma)

I always had the desire to return to the roots of innocence: an imaginary refuge beyond trauma, away from the physical and emotional violations I have witnessed. In my practice I reprocess and account of this past. It is the ongoing result of lived experience. 'Remedial' confessions and acknowledgement of my biography provide for my work.

I am from the post-post WWII generation, as a German expatriate I started to reconsider my 'German-ness' in regard to the historic legacy and find a more conciliatory past. I look at Anselm Kiefer; the German post WWII born artist addresses issues of denial and memory of a war stricken nation to initiate acceptance and reprocess the historical bequest. In his oeuvre 'Besetzungen' (Occupations), are works that show Kiefer in various settings performing a Nazi salute. The art historian Benjamin Buchloh said in his defense "... *it might mean to 'involve the artist' in supposedly seductive evil being worked through... you have to inhabit it to overcome it.*"<sup>30</sup> There is something in that process I find valuable and although Kiefer's gesture is brazen, I can see that it activates all senses in order to wholly process the debatable discharge.

### **how to put the dilemma into a nutshell**

My image of humans is both factual and subjective. I see my work as uneasy and affecting at the same time, a bit like silent prayer: a pursuit that has fallen out of time. I recall the phenomena of my senses and engage in a self-referential myth. Intentionally, the inconvenient forms of my work are ambiguous in their translation, like the reconstruction of the past. There are things of which I cannot speak; violent memories. There are traumata that tell of interpersonal relationships, abuse, of loss and of disaster. And there are things from persons; things laden with energy and 'vital' as long as I think about them. "*Vitality [as] the capacity of things – [...] – not only to impede or block the will and designs of humans but also to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own*" writes Jane Bennet in *Vibrant Matter*.<sup>31</sup> In my practice, the vital object has an emotive biography - the spirit is implicit. I can enter a virtual dimension and experiment with how the 'substance spirit' can be linked to the viewer, and cause a resonance. It is a bit like a confession, only that the object does the 'talking'. The approach has its merits – once I have figured out how to put the dilemma into a nutshell.

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<sup>30</sup> Widrich, M. (2014). *Performative monuments : the rematerialisation of public art*.  
See also *Anselm Kiefer: memorabilia*.

<sup>31</sup> Bennett, J. (2010), viii.. *Vibrant matter : a political ecology of things*.

My first 'spirited' sculptures were birthed in a fast, expedient process and 'happened' rather intuitively. They brought back some quietude after a torrent of discordant episodes and horrendous events. I will spare you the details, but it was a catalytic time in my life. It was the practical bemoaning of loved souls when I worked my memories into sculpture; it was the only remedy at hand. The sculpted objects were a gathering of remnants and keepsakes of an era that had come to a raucous end. Carefully, I layered my mementos around each other and their vibrant sanctums. Substance embraced substance, attributed with an emotional charge and vital in its own right, until it resembled the cocoon that provided the pod for its metamorphoses. I made sure that the encasement was pervious and its preservation time-bound by using degradable materials. I manipulated some of the ingredients' mode of matter to literally change their energy. Even the help of nature's mycological<sup>32</sup> adjustment was a welcome contributor. The sculptures embarked on an independent existence with their characteristics of withering life.

In the era of communication media, I practice a concept of resolution that is situated between the poles of 'primitive' ritual sculpture and primitivism. My attempt to harness the objects' own inherent or biographic potential I have construed from my encounter with the mythical and tribal West-African artifact, the 'boli'.<sup>33</sup> Boliw are also worked in layers, concealing their powerful ingredients. They appear inaccessible and their potent forces are obscured. Each artifact I had seen in the exhibition displayed a clear attention to material and detail, which is also true to my own practice, as I place a great deal of thought and time into crafting my objects. Boliw could be assembled from a wide range of organic and inorganic materials among which were found wood, bark, stones, roots, hair, animal tails, claws, teeth, blood, as well as human ingredients such as placenta, excrement or even pieces of corpses. I realised that I could translate these material choices to personal keepsakes, like, for example, a lock of hair or a piece of fabric, and adopted the concept that form and materials 'have a life of their own'. Immediate transparency was not required and the emotive content would be implicit in the process-focussed sculpture. I conceded that underlying emotions progress and transcend substance matter. The detritus of memories swept up - I could include every bit and morsel of our being and attachments, reprocess and transform it into something new, as long as I do not venerate a manifestation as something solid and eternal. The focus is on the emotive progress

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<sup>32</sup> Mycology is the study of fungi.

<sup>33</sup> See appendix boli



and the appearance of shape, material and semblance suggest the subject. I rely on the concepts that act and agency are deed and backdrop withal.



Image 4. Burial site for sculpture. Opoutere Estuary, Coromandel, 2013. Photo: Anja Kutsch

Being 'ousted' of mementos and keepsakes is part of the experience. Part of the discharge is, that I intentionally refrain from recording the work and usually keep no record other than the calculated process itself.<sup>34</sup> I feel that a documented account of proceeding has counteractive forces and could hinder the progressing essence. I leave the sculpted cocoon to do its transformation or literally lay it to rest. An earlier work, for example, evolving around pregnancy, I buried in the grounds of a place I had carefully chosen for its potential in stimulus and reflection; the rise above the estuary in Opoutere, which I relate to the ebb and flow of the lunar cycle, to motherhood and the relevance of being in the moment.

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<sup>34</sup> See also Skowranek, H. Tate Papers (8), 32. (2007). *Should We Reproduce the Beauty of Decay? A Museumsleben in the work of Dieter Roth.*

A photographic image of a work could capture a fixed point of reference and belies the experience of varied sensations that arise from the actual encounter with the work. I believe, that photos are possessive or try to reclaim something I intend to let go. For this reason the photographic representation of my work is comparatively withheld.

## **part two – studio**

### **practice**

Over the past to years I have explored how to process emotive subjects with 'spirited sculpture'. Theme and variations of my work are often sensitive and sore. Subject matter and keepsakes come from experience and relate to my immediate surroundings. Often, my work is self-referential, there is an autobiographical account to it. When I started my studies at Massey University, in the early postgraduate-studio paper of 2014, I centred my works around pieces of 'sexual appeal' and 'sexual peculiarities'. Conflicting themes of sexuality are recurring themes. I involve myself in personal and inter-personal themes and I prefer to work seclusively when I form and sculpt the vital matter. One artist's stance that keeps me captivated with her work is Louise Bourgeois. The way she deals with her childhood, trauma and sexuality, though autobiographical, I find appealing in a universal way. Her sculptures are not 'ephemeral' but



there is a spirited lightness to them and I find her archaic references and recognisable shapes almost erupting with emotion. Thomas McEvilley points out that it can be problematic if the work is strictly autobiographical as the viewer could be left with only a formal appreciation of the work. However, others do derive a sense of meaning that goes beyond the personal and share that "Bourgeois's work has a certain claim to universality, to dealing with a level of reality so fundamental that any human can recognise it."<sup>35</sup> I think that is something to aspire to.

An early postgrad-studio work was 'Venus de Milo' and is concerned with the commercialisation of feminine traits and beauty. A subsequent work 'birdman' was derived from closely observing a man who had a kind of intimate relationship with a feathered creature. Both objects are worked over time and in layers that are slowly aging. Especially with 'birdman', the ingredients are manipulated and obscured to a point that they leave the viewer puzzled about the contents.

**Venus de Milo** - The original 'Venus de Milo' (also Aphrodite of Milo) is a classical Greek statue; bereaved of her arms and timelessly hewn in marble she stands on display in the Paris Louvre. The goddess 'Venus' is the personification of love and beauty, but also of sexual desire. She embodies enticement and seduction. My work is an uncomfortable allusion to a modern perception and exploitation of beauty and feminine traits. It questions our ethics. The limb-less body is formed from bedding, the 'skin' covered in a thick layer of makeup. In her ambiguous folds vanishes a shock of youthful hair. Her insides are concealed. Her mound of venus is stitched closed with a fashion label. It reads "*Venus de Milo*" and shows that she is has a marketability and could be replaced or disposed of. Her appeal is one of unease, camouflage and at last aging. The work is a concoction of of keepsakes I have attributed to the subject and accumulated over the course of several years. I recognize that this work could be seen in relation to the surrealist works of, for example, Louise Bourgeois. I do acknowledge her narrative and her transference of feminism, but like to distinguish my practice as I do not focus on the unconscious conditions of dream or reality. Any surreal similarities with my work are only coincidental.

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<sup>35</sup> McEvilley, T p. 236 ff.): *Sculpture in the Age of Doubt*.



Image 5 : Venus de Milo. Photo: Celia Walmsley

**birdman** - Birdman is a mouldy erection with an attached umbilical cord resting in a bird's nest. The narrative is multilayered. The core of this work is about a man that has a rather peculiar relationship with a captive bird in lieu of human interactions. The nesting member is symbolic of the placement of his potential, and 'his' inability to become full-fledged.



Image 6 : Birdman. Photo: Maddie Leach

**epiphyte alien** - Both of the above works, together with a third sculpture 'epiphyte alien', a smaller self-portrait concerned with the act of my immigration, were exhibited in the M1.3 exhibition "Matter of Presence" from the first year of the Master of Fine Arts programme in the Engine Room in October 2014. In my final critique, the first two were well received, however, 'epiphyte alien' was commented on as an 'undergraduate' level work. A lengthy part of the discussion reflected on my specific use of plinths, which I had deliberately chosen for their plain character of display. It was criticised that I had neglected their permeative importance.



Image 7: 'Alien Epiphyte'. \_M1. The Engine Room. Massey University (10/2014). Photo: Jude Robertson

### **others' memories and emotions**

**common grief** - I had expected that it was easier to work on my own agenda when I considered to engender a 'synergic work'. Encouraged by my 'individual successes', I petitioned for emotion-laden contributions from others to assemble a spirited sculpture that went beyond my previous approaches. Instead of harvesting my own archives, I requested sensitive mementos 'laden' with grief. Those should still be vitally relevant and yet dispensable. What started out as a humble encounter should take me through a frail stage: I had not anticipated the effect of the emotional dilemmas - a 'weight' of energy I had not previously owned. Soon, I felt it was a naive attempt. I tried to be above pretense and judgment and put myself under pressure, at the least out of respect for the contributions and their owners. I became even more aware of the energies I surround myself with. Yet, the question remains: in my free will of remembrance and oblivion, can I really be propelled into someone else's mnemonic process? The answer is 'perhaps' - but the 'common grief', unadorned and ominous, still hovers in the corner of my studio.



Image 8. Common grief (Detail). Photo: Anja Kutsch

I had set out to show that sculpture can be catalyst or chance for transformation in a social process when I expanded my practice to the 'synergic grief project'. I admit that I have not yet adequately resolved what I had attempted. The execution of my idea, that I was the 'passive recipient' of others' 'biographic keepsakes' which I would sculpt into a 'shared process of transformation' - one that could be acknowledged and experienced mutually, did not meet my assumptions. The base for the sculpture, which would also build the later 'cocoon' for transformation, contained the various keepsakes. Their spirited substance was implicit, however, it was affecting me to a point of overwhelming irritation. In fact, my approach literally fell to grief. I needed an approach expressing others' sensation without 'owning' them, perhaps by focussing more on the role of the viewer. Nevertheless, my approach confirmed that sculpture 'is' in a state of flux and can provide an immediate and intense transformation. This was not the only challenge I came across; the decision to show 'common grief' for critique as 'a work in progress' (still unresolved) left me more trialled than wished for. Instead of grief, the main sentiment that came across was violence! In retrospect I can see the concerns the 'spirited object' had raised: the downy hull's fabric was soaked red on one side and the other had marked incisions behind which the others' grief mementos lay concealed. The associations 'rape' and 'birthing' were made. I can see that in situations like this it can be beneficiary to work in a shared studio on Campus grounds. I definitely wanted to think this through more before I gave it its final hull and shape. 'Common grief', although unfinished, entertained sensory participation and interaction by others. This conceptual and spatial acuity was a new element in my practice and would definitely be interesting to expand in size.

## falling short on a synergetic encounter

My approach for the synergetic compilation for 'common grief' was spurred by Joseph Beuys' definition of "*Social or Invisible Sculpture*", and to see sculpture as an experiential process.<sup>36</sup> It is the essence of interpretation directed to an audience – and I am trying to grasp (Beuys) from an emotional perspective. Joseph Beuys' public practice, his shamanistic or spiritual approach of actionism provokes a shift towards the perception of material things and commodities and inspired my experimentation with process-focussed sculpture.<sup>37</sup> Beuys concept of "*Soziale Plastik/Social Sculpture*" spanned human activities from breathing, thinking and political action to traditional art production and the hyperactive emission of ephemera in the manner of Fluxus, all seen as means of shaping the environment to social ends.<sup>38</sup> (Another contemporary artist and in my regard a subsequent touchstone in relation to social sculpture I find in Marina Abramović, who also takes sculpture to an extreme. Her approach to 'resonate' with reality and pointing out dissonances and limits becomes more and more specific; in being her own actant she becomes the metamorphoses herself.<sup>39</sup>)

With a gut feeling and rashly I had set out to make a process-focussed sculpture according to in my own interpretation of 'social'. I encountered substantial difficulties, perhaps it was inevitable that the grief project came to a halt, the more so as it really was not a reciprocative process. Recapitulating this synergetic work I admit that I have been singled, by the specific parameters of my practice. There surely are pitfalls when transforming vulnerabilities and reminiscences, processing and reembodying them – and at the same time they are part of the process.

**somewhere/stretcher** and **if you were blind/memory-box** - After 'common grief', I was absorbed by the WWI commemorations. I experimented with my 'anti-memorial' concept in the shade of the Wellington War Memorial. It was a good exercise on displaying on location and time-wise. The objects were a worn and soiled military stretcher and a memory-box, both accompanied by a literary quotation I had derived from Zen paradoxes for their allusions. But the 'mementos of truth' seemed too contrived at the time. The stretcher was placed under a canopy of trees and embellished with the words:

<sup>36</sup> Beuys, J., & Harlan, V. (2004). *What is art?: conversation with Joseph Beuys*.

<sup>37</sup> See also regarding sacred readings of Beuys' art: Holland, A. (2007). *Joseph Beuys & Rudolph Steiner: imagination, inspiration, intuition*. Mesch, C., & Michely, V. M. (2007). *Joseph Beuys : the reader*.

<sup>38</sup> Widrich, M. (2014, p. 153). *Performative monuments : the rematerialisation of public art*.

<sup>39</sup> Marina Abramović: *The Artist Is Present*. MoMA, New York 2010.



*somewhere, up behind the blind cover of the leaves, the chirp, chirp, chirping of birds  
stops suddenly*



Image 9. Somewhere/Stretcher. Photo: Elspeth Preddey

The memory-box was a recycled ammunition container, the military camouflage covered by a skin-coloured hue. Upon opening the viewer looked a mirror and there was a clown's nose to avail. The box also contained remnants of charcoal and hay. Behind a second lid there was an original photo that was taken on the exact date of display, but during WWI. It showed a site that was blazing fiercely amidst the winter-barren country. Seeing themselves in the mirror, I wanted the viewer to question their own willingness and capability to participate in the misconducts of wartime.



*if you were blind, the object you now think you see would not be*



Image 10. If you were blind/Memory box. Photo. Elspeth Preddey

I have often included and experimented with poetry in my work. I find that poetry can add a valuable layer to the work. After the commemorative pieces, I set out to work on a script for a play "Act for Sculpture" which I intended to use in a performance for – and with - sculpture. But to no avail. I felt the project needed more clarification: my 'test sculpture' literally needed to communicate more before they could communicate! In the end this work led me to develop 'poems for sculpture' – to be read on location (see darkcamp 2015).

### **material decay and the ravages of time**

Base components of my sculptural concoctions, besides keepsakes and memorabilia, are wooden or plant elements for their withering qualities. Vegetable or bees wax, one of the oldest binders known in history, I use for its plastic abilities and as a colouring agent. Wax can provide temporary hull and cohesion, be opaque or translucent and hide or reveal just enough of the core of a sculpture. Its olfactory quality can stimulate another layer of sensory encounter. I like the way an odour emphasises a memory's haunting touch - like an intense scent or the sweet obsessive smell of ripened fruit. I use plant fibre; it is firm but pervious. Wool is warm and tender, feathers symbolise spiritual transformation, earth and ashes refer to specific locations.

It is in the nature of the process that my sculpture 'takes time' but for the postgrad-studio paper I had to alter my approach due to time constraints. Instead of working whole collections of vibrant mementos into a project, I decided to arbitrarily constrain myself and minimise the contents. I was looking for a fresh way to engage with belief and imagination and concentrated on suggestive semblances as possible triggers. I experimented with a more playful exchange of energy and with inviting farce and fun into my repertoire. A refreshed material coherence would formally refine my visual language. Where I had worked mostly with a sombre palette and the subdued hues of skin tone, I yearned for colour not devoid of banter.

**going on a rampage with nature spirit** - With an outward semblance or exposure of the vital matter and the spirit beyond the palpable surface I call upon an archaic common and innate consciousness. Catalyst more than evocator, I intend to stir connections with the hidden. The inelegant human-like facets of the work almost paradoxically make their unnaturalness even more obvious. They are bewildering or uncomfortable. The materials are subjected to narrativity, sometimes abstracted or symbolic, and depend on the mood I intend to provoke. Like the passing of a scent that carries a memory, the process of material decay is part of my concept: a 'living' artwork that expires. I find the changing surfaces eloquently demonstrate transience. The artist Dieter Roth, for example, has driven this concept of transience to a maximum with his biodegradable art. He incorporated edibles that were subject to decomposition and where he did not distinguish between life and work, self-portraiture and landscape, this conflation was an important strategy.<sup>40</sup>

I find myself in a boundless world of fleeting moments. Uneasy encounters take time. Enjoyment seems to pass faster. We will find the personal key-points that trigger emotive surges and take note of them. I believe I do not need to explain my sculptures in detail for others to understand their essence. Their spirit is implicit.

**mamilla/nipple** - A work from 'Going on a rampage with nature spirit', 'mamilla/nipple' has a similar positioning to 'Venus de Milo', which was exhibited and placed above eye level to cause the viewer to look up in an 'dedicated' posture. I am referring to a worshipped content but this time it is a merry allusion, in the widest sense to a 'Madonna Lactans'; the mother that gives

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<sup>40</sup> See Dieter Roth's biodegradable art: Dobke, D., Roth, D. Vischer, T., Walter, B., Garrels, G., Museum of Modern Art (NY, N.Y.), & P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center. (Eds.). (2003). *Roth time : a Dieter Roth retrospective*

the milk of nurture and wisdom. Again, it is an allusion to question the contents of modern veneration, the irreversibility of time and a modern image of nurture and motherhood.



Image 11. Mamilla/nipple (Detail). Photo: Celia Walmsley

**to the bone** - This was one of my first works in a refined manner. For the most part self-referential, it mirrors the situation I found myself in after my studies, due to unforeseeable circumstances, almost came to a halt. The cut-off is symbolic. Swathed in bedding and dressing, the memento lies concealed, all covered by a fading waxen hull.



Images 12, 13, 14. To the bone (Details). Photos: Celia Walmsley

It is intentional, that the sculptural incarnation becomes its own image of the past. It has an advancing viewpoint. The natural mutation of things is a shaping element in the creational process but initiating decay also demands consideration as not all substance alike expire within a timely manner. Light and heat sensitive, the work with pigments and wax for example, is changing rapidly. I have tested natural pigments and wax, buried mixtures – and exhumed them again, to see how well wax can preserve and keep its pigments in the dark. I am reminded of Franz Kafka, who literally dramatises the attempts to grasp an artifact whose purpose is obscure:

*"One is tempted to believe that the creature once had some sort of intelligible shape and is now only a broken-down remnant. Yet this does not seem to be the case; ...nowhere is there an unfinished or unbroken surface to suggest anything of the kind: the whole thing looks senseless enough, but in its own way perfectly finished."*<sup>41</sup>

The gain lies in the 'wither' and the sculpture remains its own entity, however, it inevitably relates to different locations and settings. How do I position and display an object that is meant to be a process of memory rather than a display of remembrance? Emphasis and allusions do change with different settings. I have to consider how the time-space construct hovers over the spirited output and the refrain will differ. I am still reluctant to incorporate a plinth into the equation, because it contradicts what I want to achieve. A plinth can be a distracting support or too clinical. I sense the work shouldn't crown or crest on an imported sculptural support but be placed and situated 'in the world'. 'Birdman', for example, was taken and located on a rock by the sea and acknowledged with a poem.

***poem for sculpture in its natural habitat***

*in situ – birdman in a global world*

*bird, man*

*going off-line*

*imbecile and slowly*

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<sup>41</sup> Kafka, F., & Glatzer, N. N. (Eds.). (1971, p. 428 ). *Kafka. The complete stories*. Here: on 'Odradek'.



Image 15. Poem for sculpture in its natural habitat. Darkcamp June 2015. Photo: Marion McMillan

My oral presentation at Dark Camp and the the 'poem for sculpture in its natural habitat' were well received. A concern was that the work could not be experienced in isolation from the rock-plinth in its romantic surroundings. I had a similar discussion when I had displayed the stretcher and the memory-box near the National War Memorial. Still, I felt it was an opportunity to add to the experience as the rock was more tribute than pedestal and the sculpture was more clandestine and absorbed by its environment than it was sanctioned. I like to employ the plinth as a carrier, or an altar perhaps but separated from the ferried object and its permeative dimension. I want to believe that for my work its bit part of a mediator does not outweigh the emotive intention. (Perhaps I had a lucky escape on that occasion at Worsler Bay.)

### **Provocation and disturbance**

Prompting emotions, arousing sensations – in a combination of subjects my practice refers to interpersonal themes. I enjoy the balancing act to show that provocation and disturbance lie close. I focus on the subject's unease to leave the viewer with agitation and shapes that engender carnal apprehension or resonate, for example, with sexual relationships, social situations or a historical background. For almost two years I have studied in the periphery of Wellington's centennial commemorative celebrations and acted in a self-advised play that acknowledges the role of women in WWI. The play "*He Aha Te Utu – The True Cost*" is based



on true stories. I portrayed the 'enemy': after half a lifetime due to her origins, my character was 'denaturalised'.<sup>42</sup> The German legacy - my heritage – was unmentioned during my late immigration to New Zealand but concerned me during my recent practice.

**Miss Germany** - When I changed my colour scheme I started to experiment with the traditional colours of my birth country. That also placed my work into context that is not independent of current affairs, such as the stream of refugees in Europe. I had sculpted 'a memory' that referred to an injustice I had experienced as a girl by the doings of a 'foreigner' back in Germany. The colours attend to the crude exposure of an unbalanced 'Miss Germany' (the name was derived from the tormentor's broken German). 'Miss Germany's shape alludes to an effeminate back, graceless and adversely exposed, implying an 'foreign intrusion'. To me the colours black, red and gold so poignantly signify the sorrow, the crude violence, and the awakening moment.<sup>43</sup> I am inquisitive about vulnerability and exposure. When I think about the rawness of despair now happening at German and many other European borders, I find an ambiguous connection.



Image 16. Miss Germany. Photo: Celia Walmsley

<sup>42</sup> "He Aha Te Utu - The True Cost" is a theatre performance that honours the often unacknowledged roles of women in WW1. Devised by six Wellington women under the direction of Voice Arts Trust, in a project funded by the British Council and the Goethe Institut, each woman explores her own personal, historical and emotional connections to the great war. It was first performed in the Wellington Parliament on Armistice Day 2014.

<sup>43</sup> This is but one 'poetic' interpretation of the tricolour, which origins go back to imperial colours of the Roman Emperors of the 12th century. During the Liberation wars in the 19th century the tricolour resembled the colours of the uniforms: "gunpowder is black, blood is red, golden flares the flame!". Literally, black symbolised the darkness of night during occupation. The golden light of dawn (also the bright light of truth) indicated gained liberty, and red stood for the life-blood of battle and the flaring red of embers.



Image 17. Miss Germany (Detail). Photo: Celia Walmsley



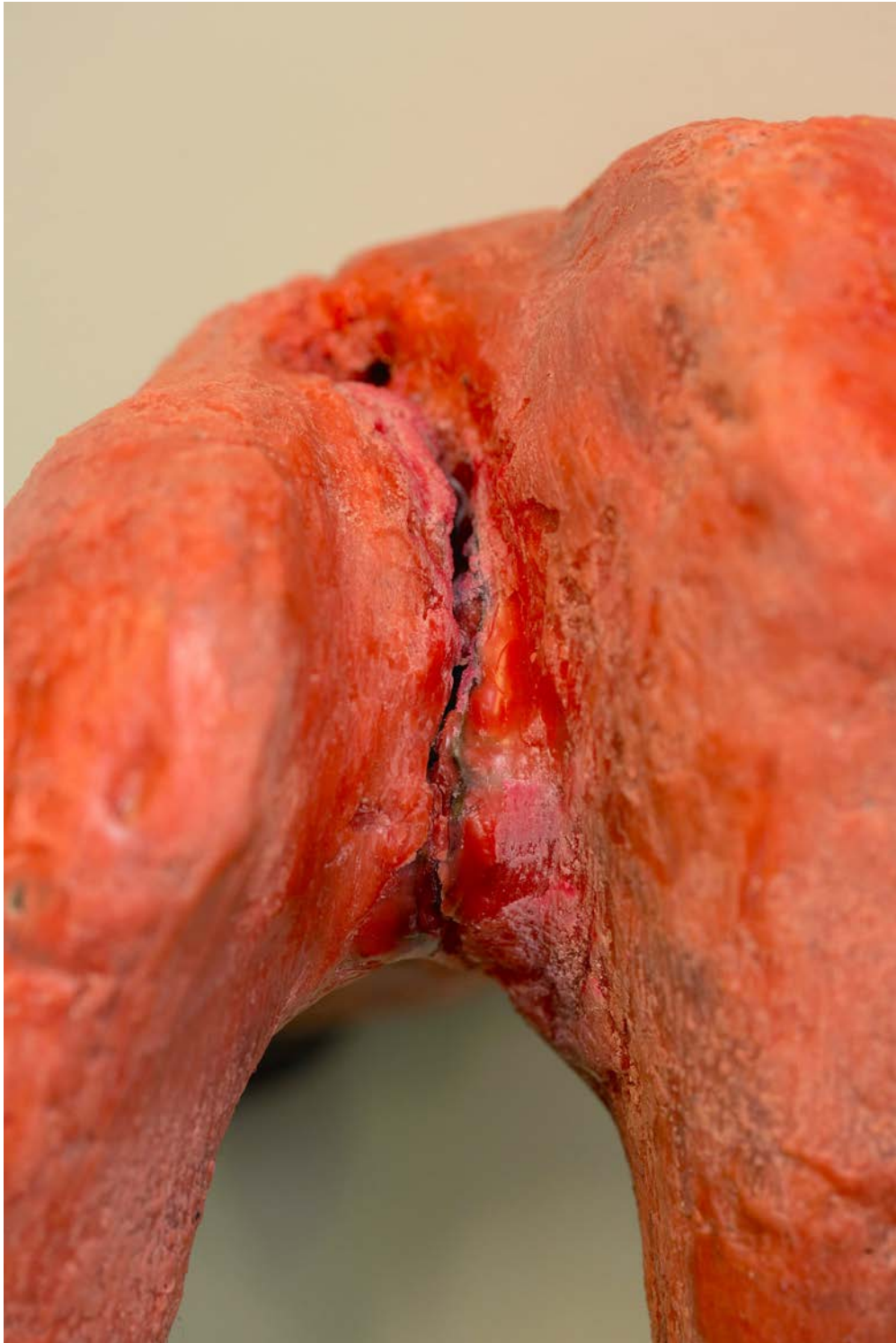


Image 18. Miss Germany (Detail). Photo: Celia Walmsley

It is always 'now' (Jetztzeit)<sup>44</sup>, history repeats itself and it seems to me only the numbers progress. I find myself on uneasy ground of a theoretical debate. My sculpture too is exposed. Similarities are more alarming than I anticipated. Later, challenging the certainties on all levels, the familiar only, is what the viewer will soak up.

Although my works are process-focussed, they appear to arrive as a finished piece that is complete and seems unalterable. There is an iterative development in my work. The experimental side of my practice has gained momentum after I abandoned 'common grief' and reviewed my methodology. I 'opened up' more and now I am exploring a more minimal approach by refining the process. Without abandoning the qualities around my visual and material aesthetics, the intimate and private narrative remains, however, it adds a more general-purpose aspect, such as 'Schlagbaum/barrier'.

**Schlagbaum/barrier** – An uprooted, split-off tree segment, now exhausted jetsam has been coated with the German national colours, obscuring a small memento. In this work I deal with my own immigration and the reality of living in a country where I have no roots. But, like Miss Germany, this work is not entirely self-referential. Only this time worn barrier comes from my birth country, and the exhausted jetsam refers to the tide of refugees floating into Europe.

The crucial shift in my practice came only with the last two works, 'Miss Germany' and 'Schlagbaum/ barrier', as I could move the attention to a more universal approach. My work has become more bare, and although I show less I think the objects have gained more depth. My internalised items are shifting to the surface, becoming more visible, less hidden and tightly held onto. At the same time the emotional-transformational process becomes 'public' and evolves in its sharing social aspects. When I had started with 'common grief' – a concoction that held a large number of ingredients, I failed to share the social aspect because I was overwhelmed by energetic weight of the others' mementos. I believe my spirit matter relationship is more refined now and I have noticed that a complex concoction is not compulsory to process and communicate a subject.

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<sup>44</sup> German. Present time. Compound of jetzt "now" + Zeit "time".



Image 19. Schlagbaum/barrier. Photo: Celia Walmsley

## conclusion

When I started working with spirited sculpture, I received a few comments that I might not be taken seriously. After all, not everyone believes that manmade things contain an inherent spirit. This concern only heightened my determination to continue with my practice. My interest had begun, when I started to process traumatic experiences and manipulated keepsakes and paraphernalia that I attributed with an emotional charge. The emotive involvement is part of a transformative process. This process was inspired after I 'experienced' an exhibition of tribal power objects from western Africa, which I saw as a promise for remedy and transformation.

Based on my cultural background, I looked at the reach of memory and how our personal past holds on to an umbilical narrative that is now expired. I have pointed out how spirited substance in contemporary sculpture can be a combination of different mnemonic legacies. I believe that history and reality cannot be 'owned' or reflected under a common denominator, however, they can be seen as the essence of a progressive practice. Without aesthetic judgement, I object to the importance of sculpture in its stagnant appearance and suggest that is not only the representation that determines the spirited art object but its transformative content; the 'uncollectible'.

I feed off the evocative potential of my subjects, which could be related to a non-ethnocentric 'primitivism'. My practice exhibits sculpture enveloping matter of spirit without being spiritual. I experience art as both self-referential and synergetic. I believe the crisis we experience - away from critical and ethical demands, self exploitation and pity, is necessary for transformation. A narrative evolves as I bury the afterbirth of my memories in my work – it is the link to the past, the present and the future. It moves on. It does something. There is nothing to uphold, but everything to outlive.



Image 20. Schlagbaum/barrier (Detail). Photo: Celia Walmsley

**I**  
**cocoon**  
substance  
matter to me  
enfold the hidden  
you matter me  
**and I surrender**  
I'm no sybil but  
I cocoon  
the brace of change  
the sound of harpy  
exhaled into my ear  
the poise of spirit  
**I cocoon**  
matter touches unseen

and so we meet again  
**and milk the essence**



## appendix boli

Boliw (sing.: boli) are mystical objects of power or portable altars and used by the West-African Bamana in secret associations to unleash a transcendent process, remedy ailments or resolve a specific need. Boliw were composed by initiated persons to wield and harness the inherent life force called 'nyama'.<sup>45</sup> This life force or *nyama* is similar to the Western notion of the soul, *mauri* in Māori<sup>46</sup> and *mana* in Polynesian cultures<sup>47</sup>, Qi<sup>48</sup> or prana<sup>49</sup> in the East. Boliw vary in size and shape, reflecting the knowledge and skill of the individual who built them. They ambiguous forms are sometimes impossible to identify, but many of these objects remind of a bovine or human shape. Their sculptured bodies appear inaccessible, their powerful ingredients are well concealed, because the potent forces used in rituals or sacrifices could unleash destruction when mismanaged. The people who made them were trained and had studied the unique properties inherent in flora and fauna and other elements and combined them in infinite ways. For example the inherent power of minerals could be released when its form was changed as with fire or heat, or, as the life force and power animals possess is retained in their hide, with the manipulation of leather. A boli could be assembled from a wide range of organic and inorganic material among which were found wood, bark, stones, roots, hair, animal tails, claws, teeth, blood, as well as human ingredients such as placenta, excrement or even pieces of corpses.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Wise, C. (2006). Nyama and Heka: African Concepts of the Word. *Comparative Literature Studies*, (1), 19.

<sup>46</sup> Marsden, M., & Royal, C. (2003). *The woven universe : selected writings of Rev. Māori Marsden*. Otaki, N.Z. : Estate of Rev. Māori Marsden, 2003.

<sup>47</sup> Mauss, M. (1972). *A general theory of magic*; London, Boston, Routledge and K. Paul, 1972.

<sup>48</sup> Kaibara, E., & Tucker, M. E. (2007). *The Philosophy of Qi : The Record of Great Doubts*. New York: Columbia University Press.

<sup>49</sup> Williams, G. M. (2003). *Handbook of Hindu mythology*. Santa Barbara, Calif. : ABC-CLIO, c2003.

<sup>50</sup> Colleyn, J. P., & Arnoldi, M. J. (2001). *Bamana : the art of existence in Mali / edited by Jean-Paul Colleyn ; with contributions by Mary Jo Arnoldi ... [et al.] ; field photographs by Catherine De Clippel ; selection of the artworks by Frank Herreman and Lorenz Homberger*. New York : Museum for African Art ; Zürich : Museum Rietberg ; Gent [Belgium] : Snoek-Ducaju & Zoon, c2001.

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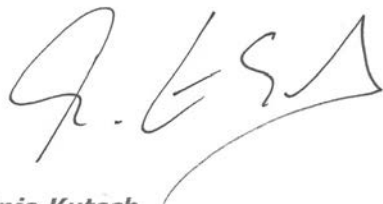
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*Anja Kutsch*

October 20, 2015