Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.
My Heart Stops for You: Toxic Romance within Contemporary Vampire Fiction.

An exegesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand.

Master of Fine Arts

at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand.

Jonathan Cameron
2013
Abstract

This thesis is motivated by popular cultures’ present fascination with vampire fiction and located through a contemporary art practice. My art practice has become increasingly interested in the complex relationships between romance and toxicity, and the depth at which these are played out within contemporary vampire fiction. In order to further unpack the hypnotic yet toxic nature of the vampire figure and how they have such a hold on characters and audience alike, I have constructed my own narrative adopting similar techniques used by the makers and promoters of the genre. Through this narrative, consisting of a series of films and a promotional catalogue of vampire inspired engagement rings, I am attempting to critically engage with and explore the kinds of love present within current examples of vampire fiction and the critical questions arising from this study.
Acknowledgements

Firstly I would like to acknowledge the generous and invaluable contribution Ian Douglas and his team at the ‘Inspired Collection’ have made to this project. Ian’s ability to interpret and translate my vision, whilst bringing his own wealth of knowledge and specialist skills have indeed shaped the very outcome of this project.

I cannot thank enough, my supervisors Heather Galbraith and Eugene Hansen, for sharing their time, insightful wisdom and for challenging me in all the right ways. A huge thank you also to David Cross and Anne Noble for their valuable input.

I would like to thank the entire team making up the fine arts department at Massey University, for without them none of this would be made possible. I could easily go through and acknowledge each and every person making up the fine arts department as each offered crucial advice and support throughout the formation of my practice and my time at Massey University.

A special thanks for all the love and ongoing support of my family; my parents Brent and Brenda Cameron, my brother and sister Michael and Jessica, and my very supportive grandparents Gary and Mabel Cameron.

Finally, a massive thank you to my number one supporter and partner-in-crime Michelle Knowles for her constant support, encouragement and incredible editing skills.
Table of Contents:

'Bloodlust': Introduction ........................................................................................................................................... 5

My Heart Stops For You: Grounding romance with a sense of verisimilitude within contemporary vampire fiction ............ 9

'Friday Night Bites': A bittersweet reality ........................................................................................................................ 18

Charming Yet Alarming: Sublimation and justification within vampire romance. .............................................................. 23

'You'll Be The Death Of Me': Love as sacrifice; depictions of love and gender in vampire fiction. ...................................... 30

'As I Lay Dying': Conclusion ........................................................................................................................................... 35

Images Of The Final Project. ........................................................................................................................................... 37

Illustration List .................................................................................................................................................................. 55

Bibliography ........................................................................................................................................................................... 56