Perversion of the Reel

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For Miles x

Abstract

Through the use of masculinity as a visual language this research aims to unravel the divide between the role of the act and the acted. French actor Julien Boisselier operates as the male manifestation of the actor in question and functions on multiple levels of performance, both as male and as an actor. Boisseliers depictions of major, medium and minor acted characters offer another level to the performance variable.
The aim to highlight the visible triggers of a 'pure performance' (a performance where the actor may slip or falter out of acted character and into default human performance) as shown through the choreography of his physiognomy is the experience underpinning this thesis.

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Acknowledgements

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Thank you.

This research situates itself within an area of complex overlapping histories of the relationship between Contemporary Art practice and the cinematic medium. These histories have provided a catalytic platform from which the work has evolved. The conventions of each visual medium enable me to use a versatile research language, one that can facilitate the area in question with a degree of fluidity and in turn offers both conceptually and aesthetically the diversity that I require as an artist.

Interconnected partnerships have heavily prevailed throughout Cinematic history, such as the man and his relationship to the city. My research focus began with this as its focus. After realising that the intention had been blinded by the dominance of such a partnership, its focus was too narrow, my research shifted towards the simplicity of movement and form found within the visual language of masculinity within cinema, where I found my true interest lay.

Through the opening of new, or reinventing discourses founded within the cinematic realm has enabled me to map out new and engaging terrain within the medium of contemporary video art. Video art has long drawn on other time-based influences such as television (initially anyway). Over time the prominent nature of cinema within a cultural framework has influenced all areas of contemporary art practice. The prevalence of the entertainment quality of the medium has nurtured the nature of the celebrity within the industry. Both areas of entertainment and celebrity mythology are evident within this research offering a degree of diverse rhetoric on the subject. It is this area or point of conflict that enables the research to unpack the liminal areas situated between what I consider to be real of the reel.

When appropriating from another mediums history you appropriate the standardised conventions of that particular medium. It was from doing earlier research into historical partnerships between the male, cinema and the city, that my research was able to mature into this area of intrigue.

This research is specific to that of contemporary French cinema and the ways in which I can perhaps offer a differing perspective on both contemporary French cinema and French actors and how they can offer insight into the Eurocentric variables of male physiognomy. I am interested in provoking Francophilia as a subject in New Zealand contemporary art scene. The tough sourcing of the resources, directly from France has enabled me to question more acutely and look more pertinently for the moments of pure performance, through the use of an emerging (or perhaps more simply B-Grade) French actor, Julien Boisselier. Although my research may have a somewhat modernist desire in place within it (a search for purity of vision), the postmodern aesthetic re-evokes this purist methodology within a conceptual framework.

Perversion of the Reel as research is placed in the arena of feminist critique of film theory or as an illustration critiquing Mulvey's arguments on the gaze. Notions of female desire toward the male body are addressed yet are not the exclusive path of this research.

My work operates as filmic still life using masculinity as a visual material that explores major/minor character discrepancies. Also, and how an actor can become an autonomous character devoid of traditional cinematic character hierarchies is a crucial component of this thesis.
The key concepts of this research are elements of confrontation, containment of imagery and the components of self-reflexivity within notions of the idealized male. Focus is also placed on the qualities that aid the 'grey areas' of male characters fabrication within cinema.

Fig 1. Hannah Edmunds, Supporting Act, 2009, Installation image

1. THE ACT AND THE ACTED- THE MALE AS ACTOR AND SOCIAL PERFORMER

As a female artist working with the materiality of masculinity, I have to address significant areas of contemporary theory with which either to align myself or to disregard. By materiality of masculinity I mean the physical nature and tangible qualities of the male body, particularly the qualities of the face also known as physiognomy. The materiality of masculinity enforces an area of alienation and otherness to my practice. This sense of alienation is found within the area between what it is to be female and what it is to be male. This allows me, aesthetically, to physically and digitally, under the gauze of an appropriated cinematic surrogate, operate within the male dominated (historically at least) world of filmmakers.

The precedent of Laura Mulvey's key text "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (written in 1973) enabled a fresh focus on the reinterpretation of the dominant gaze. The dominant gaze existed prior to this predominantly as a male observing a female object through a controlling visual mechanism. Mulvey cites this idea of the privileged cinematic male and revalues traditional binary relationships created between the on screen actor and his viewer.

Mulvey argues the practice of looking at the male actor within the cinematic image arises from three differing ways of looking, or types of spectatorship. These include the eye of the cinematic camera and its roaming path over the observed, the voyeuristic nature of the viewer of the film upon the characters inhabiting the scene and finally the manner in which the characters engage with each other. In exposing the binary relationships of male observing female through both voyeurism and fetishism provides us, the audience, with limited resource to engage with the activity of looking.

"Mens bodies, it has been argued, are now coded like womens- as to be looked at." (Squire, p 100, 2000)

Mulvey explores the cinematic male as an object of desire- a mobile, fluid, and yet transgressive identity. After reading Mulvey's arguments, I question within these binary relationships the act of self- reflexivity and the unpacking of the area between the portrayal of an act and the actor.

Mulvey points to the difference in the roles of the voyeur and the fetish. She cites these binary roles as follows: voyeurism revolves around the controlling power of the subjective gaze. Comparatively to this fetishism is viewed as such through the turning of the represented figure into that of a fetish. This is done so as to alleviate elements of danger from the unknown and

make the figure seem reassuring to its audience.

" It represents the opposite tendency to that of voyeurism... fetishtic looking implies the direct acknowledgment and participation of the object viewed... with the fetishtic attitude, the look of the character towards the viewer is a central feature... the fetishtic gaze is captivated by what it sees, does not wish to enquire further, to see more, to find out. The fetishtic look has much to do with display and the spectacular." (Ibid, p 17, 200) (Ellis 1982:47)

I view Mulvey's conclusions as being drawn with little attention to intertextal character relationships, glances and everyday gestures. With little emphasis on the beauty of bodily physicality, Mulvey argues that the body in contemporary society is inherently sexualised. In her later writings such as *Death 24x a Second,* Mulvey realizes the importance of the freeze frame and of the cinematic still and how the upgrade in technology has widened the accessibility of audience control over narrative structures. The elite quality of traditional cinema reception has been reduced down to a more Beuysian (as in Joseph Beuys) everyone is everything attitude. Mulvey's argument sways between voyeurism and fetishism; I argue for the existence of other variables of Scopophilia, variables that co- function within a cyclical conceptual and installation arrangement. It is these idiosyncratic variables, which are of interest to me in my research.

The essence of voyeurism is evident within my recreated cinematic structures, yet is not in Mulvey's transaction from viewer to the viewed but from one character to another. I situate myself as more of a facilitator, or perhaps as a curator of the actor's fetishistic and voyeuristic behaviour, a behaviour that he places inwardly on himself. I facilitate him, yet he controls himself as the subject, the gaze and the power. The differing representations of his characters spectacularise and mutually inform each other.

Through the digital manifestation of the male stand in, (appropriated from pre- existing film) I position myself somewhere between the chosen actor and the many characters in which he plays spanning his career. Situating myself within the grey area between an act and an actor. I make a non-real acted character shift into the physical/ realist realm of everyday non cinematic life and then back into a constructed cinematic world. A go between that operates between fact and fiction.

Although somewhat out dated within contemporary readings of masculinity, the ideas housed with psychoanalysis still hold some resonance within this researches language of investigation. According to Lacanian principles an actor is seen as a physical object.

Act- *"lacan draws a distinction between mere 'behaviour', which all animals engage in, and 'acts' which are symbolic and which can only be ascribed to human subjects. A fundamental quality of an act is that the actor can be held responsible for it, the concept of the act is thus an ethical concept."* (Evans, p 1, 1996)

This marks the shifts between the mapping out of facial physicality/ physiognomy and the banal and somewhat ubiquitous gestures that he displays within his surroundings.

The lacanian idea of the act and the acted is referenced within Claire Denis films as well as more recently in the films of Charlie Kaufman, for example within the film Synecdoche New York, 2008. The doubling of performance layers exaggerates the divide between the real and the acted representations of a character. This idea of a synecdoche is similar to the appropriated 'floating head' of Julien Boissiler within my own work. He borrows from and is informed by who he is both as an actor as well as the perception of the character. He is representative of the whole, a general indication of the specific.

Fig 2.*Synecdoche, New York*

Production year: 2008 Country: USA Cert (UK): 15 Runtime: 124 mins Directors: Charlie Kaufman Cast: Catherine Keener, Emily Mortimer, Emily Watson, Michelle Williams, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Phillip Seymour Hoffman, Samantha Morton

Traditionally cinema was one of the few ways in which to critically engage in actively looking at the male as a subject. The image of the male in contemporary cinema is still molded by such representations of the male devised in earlier cinema and literature. I began to consider if the notion of the male has ever really been critiqued or looked at from an objective/alternate point of view, one that can anaylse and unpack the various idiosyncratic variables that it takes to make up the cinematic male.

" While mainstream cinema in its assumption of a male norm, perspective and look, can constantly take women and the female image as its objective of investigation, it has rarely investigated men and the male image in the same way: women are a problem, a source of anxiety, of obsessive enquiry, men are not." (Neale, 1983:15-16)

For example, the range of attributes and characteristics that have been applied to the differing male representations within cinema through out history still prevail and have seldom challenged the manner in which the male is received by the audience. The reversal of the male dominated gaze as sighted by Mulvey, acts as a historical critique on the standardised representation of the gaze. My research performs in a more inward , cyclical and self-reactionary (on behalf of the actor) manner to that of Mulvey's, specifically shown within my work entitled *Give me the protagony*.

The relationship created by the work focuses more on the characters inward self-assessment rather than the usual standard viewer and the viewed partnership. I am challenging this standard representation through visual elements of self-reflexivity (on behalf of the male). The installation of the work is structured to operate cyclically, promoting a continuous point of speculation. Such a sideways direction shift in the gaze has enabled an exposé of the pure flaccidity of the chosen filmic character depictions. This flaccidity is created through editing strategies such as speed reduction honoring the removal of the action that increases the tranquilised and passive nature of the imagery and of the character. The strength or masculine nature of the character is reduced down through repetition of facial gesticulation. His original intention becomes unimportant. Such pliability is moved into a transitional space when installation stimulates a confrontational component of the work. Dominance has been ascribed to the covert and subtleties implicit to the work. The actor's execution of minor, medium and major character portrayals are forced into a state of relationship and a degree of dependency. The characters that have never met within the filmic realm previously, now spatially co-exist.

Fig 3. Hannah Edmunds, *B Grade*, installation image, Print Factory show, 2009

By focusing on such flaccidity does this intentionally damn the role of the French actor or highlight the fact that their physical representation of masculinity is generally insipid? This insipid nature derives from the general lack of genre in contemporary French cinema, originating from their continuation of romantic comedies as a means of exposing modern French culture. The French film industry's main export is romantic comedy. I have regenerated a genre that has been fabricated form the origins of the romantic comedy with an intention to steer far away from it.

The role of the male filmmaker and his relationship to cinema has enabled a characterised referral of the male protagonist throughout cinematic history. I view this term 'characterised referral' as being the legacy created through the male filmmaker acting as the first male protagonist.The male has dominated. The male is no longer only as rendered through another males eyes or more predominantly through the society from which the male originates, but as I view it, offering a more suggestive, yet non overtly sexual system of viewing. Through a socially constructed viewing mechanism, he is a spectacle through both my doing as well as his own. He views himself. He exists as a physical representation of a socially originated performance. Masculinity functions as a social ideal and is thought to be implicitly known by every male from birth. This premise of it being known or understood is a historically and socially acquired myth, one accustomed within Western culture.

2. IDEALISED MALE

The cinematised construction of the male has often depicted the idealised man, a man nearly real but with gauze masking his true identity, to an unquestioning audience. Through reproduction, the action, scene or components of a character are re-interpretated and forced into a new context. Within this context I have shifted into a more artistic critical platform; the original focus of entertainment that was present in the origins of the chosen film has been blurred through the loss of narrative structure.

The character achieves a level of representative autonomy, whole and complete within the realm of his own portrayal. He becomes an image relating to that of the previous and of the past. I expose and reposition the actor within a spatial limbo- I have viewed him previously, in the past and yet in the present he is revealed as somewhat of a memory, a glimpse, a taste of

what you may have seen or indeed intend to see.

When existing within this liminal space he wears the social mask of maleness- the mask that every man has, regardless of race or sexuality. Maleness exists as an act, another level or dimension of a performance with the appearance of reality, one that can delude the viewer into an incorrect perception of either the actor or the character. The male operates as a cipher, acting both as nobody and everybody.

This spatial liminality operates similarly to that of a pause in a conversation. The conversation still exists on either side of the pause, yet often the pause is imperative. Boisselier is representative of such a pause; this pause is heightened by the lack of sound within the work. Focus is directed solely on the visual. Operating within this liminal sphere, similarly to that of Julien Boisseliers acted characters, contemporary art has appropriated the language of the cinema from within the entertainment industry, especially that of the idealised male, thus questioning the role and function of that language.

The relationship between the "*representation of masculinity and how it relates to the basic characteristics and conventions of the cinematic institution"* (Cohan and Rae Hark, p 10, 1993) provides a platform upon which to disrupt such a formal and traditional connection. The hierarchical qualities attributed to the institutions of masculinity and cinema aligns them. The combination of the pair has become an image of institutional iconography based upon demigod status attributes to the male.

Through the examination of the 'other' or the 'alien' physicality, I query the representation of 'all' within the realm of the male and what 'he' stands for. The dominance of the male and his sub sequential masculinity, which is socially imposed, is interrogated. If as mentioned earlier, that masculinity is based upon social performance, does indeed the 'all' that is encompassed within the male represent the whole of society from which he derives? Again this refers to ideas of display.

On Deleuze, Claire Colebrook states that

"Man is the subject: the point of view or ground from which all other beings or becomings are supposedly determined. Man is 'majoritarian'[1] not because he outnumbers other beings, but because any being can be included within the measure of man." (Colebrook, p. 139, 2002)

In questioning Colebrooks majoritarian view of the all-encompassing scope of masculinity as well as opposing that of Mulvey's determined binary associations between male and female, I prefer the more interlinking and interlocked perception of gender and its subsequent effect on society.

Masculinity does not operate in isolation. It is at any given point joined to how femininity is perceived at the same time. The male is only defined as what he is, by what he is not. A 'true' or 'pure' masculinity cannot be expressed without expressing its antithesis. Masculinities must adhere to elements of femininity in order to truly express contemporary masculinisms; therefore through its social construction 'gender' becomes an active word.
Gender theory equates maleness and masculinity as being 'active' subjects in comparison to that of the 'passive' objectness of the female and therefore femininity. (Mulvey, p.27, 1992)

The subtle variables which exist between that of the female and of the male are perhaps more evident within my research due to the fact that the chosen actor is European, and more importantly French. A more effeminized male is depicted, yet gender ambiguity and androgyny is not an area specific in the understanding of socially based gender construction. Julien Boisselier becomes simultaneously active and passive; he takes on another acting dimension, acting as a cipher of myself; a new place between that of life and the cinema screen.

   The works of Matthew Barney, specifically that of the Cremaster series, show Barney undertaking a fleet of ambiguous feature length films staring himself predominantly as the actor, based upon the construction of personal identities. He uses the series as a metaphor for the turmoil found within the creative process. I question Barney's intention. Barney indeed uses the series and the character that he plays within the films as a not so clever cipher to either reveal or conceal his own inadequacies;

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[1] Majoritarian meaning to be of the majority, the norm.

aesthetically exploiting the source of the imagery, albeit himself or his then wife, Bjork. Barneys visual material therefore appropriates from a variety of sources, similarly to that of my own. His overt and obscure visual language clouds whether Barney is questioning his male role as artist or his maleness within society.

In a similar binary vein to that of Mulvey, I question what it is when a male is not masculine; does he become what he is not, feminine? Through the repetition of a specific actor executing parts of his acting oeuvre, both the character and the actor remain simply male; 'maleness' has not been achieved due to the lack of external socialization. I have removed all exposure to mise –en- scene and classical narrative construction therefore containing his physicality and in turn his maleness. This containment and segregation of image occurred through built structures that aimed to talk of 'transitional' and 'void breaks' within a spatial environment. By providing a physical pause in the exhibition space it allowed the imagery to perform freely.

"Gender always rests on a theory of socialisation whereby males become masculine. Masculinity is attributed from one person to another. In my removal of context and elements of the social and therefore socialisation, the male remains as male and not as masculine." (MacInnes, p. 100, 1998)

 Masculinity is fluid, ever morphing and changing as well as being culturally fabricated. The 'packaging' of these masculinities alters through time; representation of the male is continuously being re invented. The components of the male therefore are ephemeral; he (the male) is fleeting.

The 'crisis' of masculinity emerges not through the evolution of gender binaries but by the subversion of traditional roles of maleness; roles of protector, hunter, gatherer and controller are sublimated. Such roles are devoid of purpose within western contemporary society; depictions of such realities as processed by cinema are therefore seen as idealistic and out dated yet are still advertised as being the socially accepted norm. This crisis is evident within standard gendered roles, but is seen as a dominant masculinity crisis. Masculinity will never be able offer a concrete concept or tangible entity that can be easily accessed and then applied to individuals. Masculinity as a term has therefore been stereotyped similarly to the ways in which it is viewed.

The social construction of masculinity raises the issues of illusion of gender and social performance. Masculinity acts as a role of *"public performance.*" (Sweetman, p. 17, 1997) This idea of *"public performance*" (ibid) resonates well within the captive cinema and art audience, especially when considering the space between the space of the 'act' and the 'acted'.

"As changing and competing forms, types allow us to understand gender in Foucauldian terms, as a cultural 'performance', which does not reflect 'reality' but is a discursive construct, the product of variable and historically specific sets of relations within particular contexts, and within a complex relationship to social change." (Spicer, p. 2, 2003)

If gendered characteristics are defined and formed within the society that they exist, I question the possibility of the reception of such characteristics devoid from socially prescribed barriers. Raising the question of whether a pure 'humanism' ever prevails is important within my research; perhaps societal bounds have restricted the integrity of gender to such a degree that a persons individual elegances are subdued. I see 'humanism' as being something personally individual; a component of a persons being which is created without external interference; specific to each individual but something that all individuals have.

I aim to unravel this idea through the use of repetivitive imagery of the same male figure. Due to the varying components of Julien Boisselier both as an individual as well as an actor playing a character his maleness may be unredeemable. The double layer of performance over rides any visible physical ties that refer to Boisselier's characters level of participation from within the film, which he is selected. Such double layering consists of masculinity as a social performance as well as the 'acted' actors performance. I aim to find, or be content looking for, the 'pure' or micro performance examining the self-conscious impulse that displays itself through the layers of the performance. I wish to expose the point when the audience visually sees the actor or character's confessional of their human element; when the male announces his humanism. When a glimpse of realness is exposed through the acting. The elements housed within such areas of performativity and theatricality is crucial to how my work is received.

Men suffer from the refined norms of maleness and masculinity that is aligned to them, similarly to that of male cinematic characters. This makes me question the actor's relationship to the characters that he plays. Standard acting protocol allows one to presume a united bond between actor and his character allowing the assumption of the actor attaching his own male inadequacies onto his filmic character role similarly to that of Matthew Barney as mentioned previously. The deviation outside of these prescribed normalities happens rarely, yet it is this idea of there not being a continuous visible divide between the actor and his character, as happens within the language of cinema, that is so exciting. I want to activate this grey area. Although Barney and Boisselier function in different terrains, contemporary art and cinema, the roles which they play align them.

3. CHOREOGRAPHY OF MOVEMENT- CATHERINE SULLIVAN

This stripping back and pairing down of the 'maleness' and all of the archetypal ideals of what it means to be a cinematic male, reduces the visual into a choreographed dance where the focus is on movement in space.

The expressive quality of choreography and the use of role-playing are evident within the works of artist Catherine Sullivan. With attention paid to the ideas of the act and the acted, Sullivan located herself somewhere between theatrical and cinematic conventions, conflating the two to infuse her performances with grace and ease. Appropriating story lines and narrative from pre existing plays or theatre productions allows Sullivan to distill traditional modes of theatrical execution. Working predominantly interdisciplinary, Sullivan breaks the boundaries of theatrical performance, stage acting, dance and historical drama alongside conventions of Fluxus performance Art, doing so with ease and fluidity of image. I view Sullivan's interaction with the human body, as a way of exposing the difference between aesthetising choreographed voyeurism and sexualized, ravishing aspects of viewing.

As an example

"Sullivan always works with many other creative minds and skill sets for her projects, and during her Minneapolis residency, she partnered with local choreographer Dylan Skybrook and two dancers to develop specific movements of the imagined species, which were based on research on Neanderthal physiognomy" (Chong, 2007)

Sullivan, like myself is drawn to the power held within physiognomy and how it can offer insight into characteristics of a persona. The theatricality held within the human facial make up presents the viewer with life; physically expressing elements of the cinematic dramatisation of life. In doing so exposes the blurred boundaries between cinema and life. This is achieved through the use of melodrama, acting pretending to be representative of real life.

By completely removing context and mise- en -scene the character is self sufficient, unable to be distracted from his emotion by external forces. He is himself, the act and the actor blurring the lines between fact and fiction once again. He is no longer acting but mimicking his own personal facial actions.

Gilles Deleuze's discusses the relationship and differing representations of the actual and the virtual within modern cinema. "*The actor*" he writes, "*is bracketed with his public role: he makes the virtual image of the role actual, so that the role becomes*

visible and luminous." (Deleuze, p.70, 2005) In saying this, the male may well be stifled within a loop of perpetual performance and act.

A Mexican stand off, an observer of himself and his emotional banality; my installation *Give me the protagony* forces a relationship between the viewer and the viewed, the real and the virtual. You engage in this relationship perhaps unwillingly, but inevitably you engage with the male subject. He appears non aggressive, subdued, alone yet surrounded by oneself, increasing the feelings of being solitary.
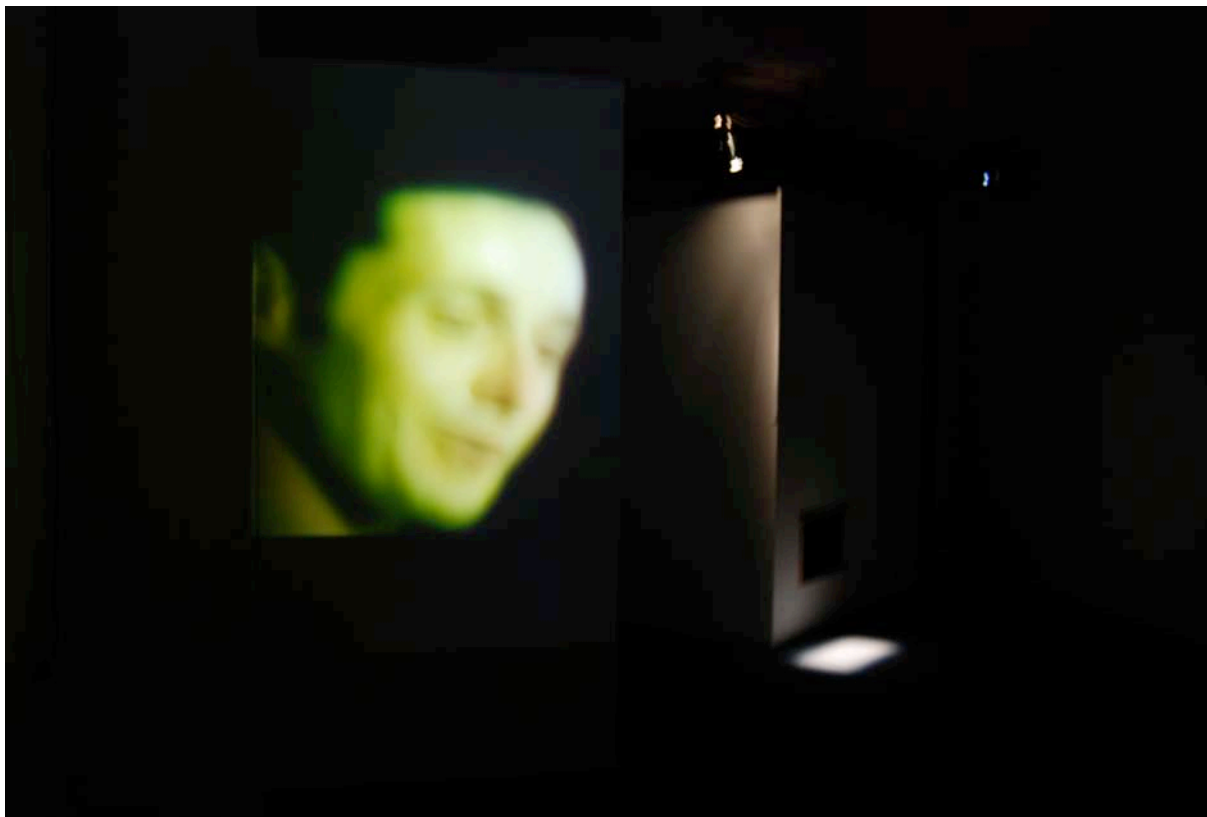

Fig 5. Hannah Edmunds, *Give me the protagony*, Installation image, 2009

The forced relationship between the viewer and the spectated is a classical filmic consideration. The space created between the screen and the audience is known as the cinema dispositive, another grey area within my research yet an area which I have tried to penetrate through the variables of cinematic installation.

"Drawing on decades of film theory, we can map how techniques of projection offer ways of joining a space, an image and a subject. These relationships are curiously intertwined: not only does the fixed position of the viewer seem to stabilize a system of visual relations, but theorists have been at pains to argue that the apparent unity and stability of this subject is itself a property of the optical system. Cinema, of course, most visibly demonstrates the power of this orchestration, but its effects are everywhere in our culture." (Kotz, p. 186, 2004)

Similarly to that of Sullivan, the extraction of pre-existing characters, knowledge of theatrical performance or cinematic footage (as in my case) I can align the ideas of the remake and the reproduced. Performativity and re representation of an existing reality, in this case a filmic reality, allows the work to function within the emphasis of timelessness and non-genre specific. By making the work non-genre specific allows the work the luxury of being non-time specific also. Margarte Sundell of Artforum magazine wrote on Catherine Sullivans work, it is *"entirely immersed in the moment of performance, the actors appear to inhabit a kind of pure present tense."* (Sundell, p.1, 2003) This idea of operating within a present tense offers clarity of both vision on behalf of both myself as well as the viewer. The essence of a pure present tense similarly to that of limbo, enters the act into an almost mythological state.

4. MYTHOLOGICAL MALE TEMPLATES: Jesper Just and Francesco Vezzoli

I focus my attention on an open-ended idea of masculinity and maleness. Both the liminality of filmic language and identification of what is male, allows me to focus on the areas between character classifications, the moments when protagony is not overtly represented or redeemable by the audience (when you cant tell whether the actor was playing the lead, medium

or minor role.)The opening up of the parts in-between the character and the actor. This prescribed nature of acceptable 'maleness' and what is considered acceptable and unacceptable is under question through this distilling of actor and character.

Artist Jesper Justs work puts together the ideas of creating male 'templates'- ones that are easily recognised and received by the viewer. This idea of a 'template' is achieved through the stereotyped application of fashion and behaviour patterns in order to produce a recognisable male. I view this notion of the template similarly to that of the appropriation language with which I work. The use of 'filmic ready-mades' can be linked and integrated into the prepackaged ideals of contemporary western masculinity. Masculinity can be viewed as a version of a cultural readymade, a template as is the case for Just; a male ready to go, and already operating in the manner society has seen it to be accustomed. The audiences perception of the same male readymade when he is re- contextualized will alert me to the level and standard of audience engagement with the selected imagery.
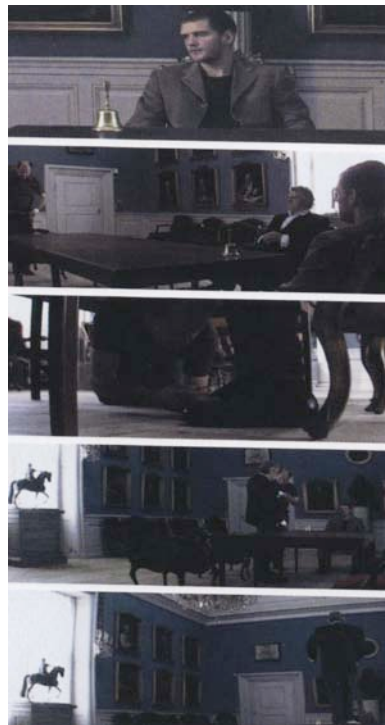

Fig 6.Jesper Just, *Invitation to Love,* 2003 8:00 min DVCAM

Just applies the idea of "*intermale*" (www.jesperjust.com) relations as being a way with which to read and address notions of masculinity. Devoid of sexual overture, Just comments on the banal occasion of male interactivity as a way of informing character and gender developments. This banality of interaction is embodied within my own work and how they exude such representations of physical masculinity. By using only one actor playing a variety of characters all devoid of narrative structure the interaction is enforced by simple stylistic concerns rather than linguistically as an example. The banality of occasion is the fact that there is no occasion. The occasion is fabricated similarly to that of all other cinematic conventions, differing though in this case as the fabrication is a physical interaction in real space rather than within the cinematic screen.

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The re mapping of cinematic conventions and the exposure of the large role of celebrities and in turn film makers/ artists muse, is addressed with a massive degree of personal irony by Italian artist Francesco Vezzoli. Vezzolis work operates in the realm of the remake while also focusing on the language of appropriation. Remaking or appropriating suggests movement away from the original, an element of critique a re-contextualisation of the original form, in this case blurring entertainment and contemporary art. Re contextualization of imagery prevails within this research. The imagery is non-medium specific and the inter change between original intent and image potential is the area within which this research functions.

Vezzoli's practice combines insights into the idea of the celebrity, an idea originating from Warhol's legacy, with areas ranging from fashion and advertising to needlework embroidery. His view of celebrity rivals my own perception on the potency of the celebritised imagery and the subsequent impact it can have on an audience.
Vezzoli sees them as

"*creatures imbued with an allure that pertains to another dimension. Thus each video becomes the staging of an encounter between two realms that, in reality, never overlap. The actors speak to us; it is true, but only through the screen. The idea of being able to participate in this dialogue in an active fashion can belong to the structure of theatre, and increasingly to that of television, but never to cinema. Vezzoli is therefore mute, a true spectator prevented from joining in the conversation.*" (Rimanelli, Maraniello, Burke, and Vezzoli, p. 14, 2009)

Fig 7. Francesco Vezzoli, *Marlene redux: A True Hollywood Story!* , 2006. (Selected Stills), DVD, 15 minutes.
Fig 8. Francesco Vezzoli, *Trailer for the Remake of Gore Vidal's Caligula*, 2005. 35 mm film transferred to video, approximately 5 minutes, edition 2/3.

In contrast to Vezzoli I believe such a participation and engagement does occur in that of cinema, both classically (audience and actor), as well as in a reflective manner (actor to actor). I participate in the conversation I have made: spectator, facilitator and participator.

Compared to that of Vezzoli, Just's work enables the audience a level of engagement more attune to that of real life interactions. By using a b grade actor, or just unknown actors, Just evokes a more personable relationship, similarly to the reaction between my audience and Boisselier. He operates within the liminal in-between space of celebrity and fame, such direct affiliations would not occur in the same way if the actor was Brad Pitt for example. Boisselier then stands in as the every man.

This lends me back to how both Barney and Vezzoli have performed/acted in some of their own works. Again this references the borders of socially acquired performer and the interchange between celebrity and contemporary art.

The myth of the celebrity and the recreation of classical and traditional cinematography moments exposing the myth of the cinematic moment align Vezzoli with Roland Barthes ideas on social created myths through the language of appropriation. Through the language of appropriation and its relationship to Barthes, the idea of the *myth* and the construction of male as a social based mythology is observed. This mythology is a symbolic order. I am demythologizing the male; he is removed from all elements that have aided in his construction. He becomes a participator and a watcher denied of a voice, a narrative intent, a purpose or position.

5.THE CLOSE UP: Claire Denis

The relationship that can be created between ideas of liminality and that of the close up are important to the research I am undertaking. In creating a physical yet ephemeral space, one that provokes notions of intimacy and levels of engagement with types of realisms, enables the work to be both slightly confrontational whilst also remaining passive. The ephemeral nature of the work is created through the transitory nature of the video medium, whilst the physicality of the architectural structures upon which the video is projected enables the work to perform spatially (predominately cyclically) whilst referencing the staging of containment of both character and actor within the constructed (cinematically and physically) spatial void.

Fig 9.Hannah Edmunds, *Give me the protagony*, Installation image (detail), 2009

Through the realisation of a permanent suspension of a given moment, I am able to puncture the surface of the image to reveal what I view as a more pure level of integrity that the image offers. This integrity is both owned and disowned by the actor. The 'close up' offers a sense of reality, but beyond reality, providing the viewer with a glimpse of the purity of the filmic essence. These being the unknown elements that makes up the complexities of a character. When engaging with an increase or decrease of scale from that of standard human representation, the figure operates as in more than human in a n unobtainable, un-realistic filmic territory. He becomes real and hyper real.

The figure operates in a formal capacity, one that focuses on the choreography of movement and banal facial gestures to create new context and non-linear narrative, detracting from the original and opposing the traditions of a more 'everyday' Hollywood composition. Texture and slight movements are emphasised through devices such as the close up, and highlighted through installation strategies and viewing mechanisms. Although the content of the work may be passive, this passivity is re- asserted into the confrontational realm through its installation. The projections offer the illusion of scale even though they may not be large in size. The structural elements dominate within the space exposing clearly and vividly the variables of each characters physical representation. The banality of movement is forcibly lyrical and the image rejoices in the freedom and space in which it has now been situated. Forced lyricism is created through lack of overt content, so the eye is forced to render movement and choreography as the primary consideration.

French filmmaker Claire Denis' work functions in a similar sphere to that of my research. Emphasis is based on choreography, dance and lyrical movement that are based on banal gestures and everyday facial shifts. In highlighting the subtleties of movement and the performative nature of physical work, Denis works with the stereotyped coding and readings of the generic male. Denis work is fundamental to the basis of my own key concepts surrounding the ideas of choreography of movement and the idea of the male as social performer (the act and the acted.)

The simplicity of the everyday and the beauty that is inherent within such banal structures is where Denis' focus remains. The unfolding of imagery occurs in the format of theatrical 'acts'.

"Its structure (Beau Travail) is like that of a musical, is built around a series of 'numbers' or 'dances'. These are traditionally 'self contained' 'show stopping' elements that emphasise exhibition rather than the narrative progression, bodily display rather than character psychology". (Hallam with Marshment 2000:72) BK- Contemporary French cinema second edition- an introduction by Guy Austin.)

Fig 10. Claire Denis, *Beau Travail,* France 1998,Colour
French with English subtitles
16:9 letterbox/compatible with 4:3
Dolby Digital 2.0
DVD-5 single layer disc
90 mins. approx.

The quietness, both audibly and compositionally within *Beau Travail,* accented by an almost painterly sensibility, allows focus to remain on visual content. Emphasis is placed on colour, line and form, allowing the visual imagery to communicate purely devoid of a linguistic narrative complication.

Similar to the focus of my research, Denis' artistic interest is with the engagement of the physical nature of the 'other'. She says *"all my films (Denis) function as a movement toward an unknown 'other' and toward the unknown in relation to other people."* (Beugnet, p.4, 2004) This other is the other to female (both Denis and myself being female), therefore being male and the unknown physicality of what it would mean to be the opposite sex.

A close up acts as a magnification of the object in question, not just a physical enlargement. This magnification allows the object to be examined and interrogated to reveal elements unknown by the naked eye. Cinema enables this magnification as it operates within a time frame unknown to human observational skills.

 "the close up shot is a motivated device in that it usually serves and is subordinate to a narrative function." (Needham, p. 132, 2009) This relates to the dislocation both on behalf of the audience and character of the close up. By elevating the power of the close up to primary status, an acute observation of the object occurs. It serves itself and not as an exclamation of linguistic inadequacies. The close up is often used when the narrative

does not offer the viewer with enough information to aid the structure of the plot. In my case the magnification of image is used solely as is, not indeed as a replacement for a non audible narrative, but so as to focus on physical and bodily potency.

The close up is used as a way of delinking narrative structures and flow as demonstrated within Candice Breitz's *Him* emphasis is placed on the formal facial physicality of the character in question. The idea of the close up of an image being the "*affection image,*"(Deleuze, p. 89, 2005). An image which not only stands as a magnification of a chosen face, but also as a type of image and a component of all things. Deleuze suggested that the affection image "*gave an affective reading of the whole film*" (ibid) similarly to the idea of the synecdoche.

The Warholian precedent of the video portrait links itself well to the banal gestural movements exaggerated within my work. The pause provide by a distinctive moment in time or even a freeze frame, acts as another mechanism to advert away from narrative constraints and in doing so "*ruptured the average motion of cinema and hence interrupted its narrative flow.*" (Païni p. 174, 2008)

The effect of the close up on both an audience and the character whose close up is depicted is intriguing. The magnification of a particular physiognomy speaks both about the particular culture from which it originates as well as the individual.

6.DEINDIVIDUALISATION OF BOTH CHARACTER AND ACTOR

Deindividualisation of character occurs by freeing the character I am reintroducing him as male, and moving him away from acting out masculinity. Returning the male character that is acted out, back into the maleness of the actor and not the character he plays.

The archetypal male is informed and created through the actor playing a role, within a narrative structure. The narrative enforces the components of his acted character and helps to make up the elements that point to the archetype (male). Without the prominent relationship between mise en scene and narrative purpose the character is refined down into a body based on physicality. This fragmentation of narrative acts as a means of de- individualization.

Fig 11. Candice Breitz *Him* 1968 - 2008 Seven-Channel installation Duration - 28 minutes, 49 seconds Installation View: Kunsthalle Berlin Photograph: Jens Ziehe, Berlin Ed. 3 + A.P.

The work of Candice Breitz, specifically *Him* uses the conventions of Hollywood cinema to re examine the potency of actors' performances onto an audience's cultural psyche. The accumulation of imagery spanning over a thirty-year time frame, enables Breitz to fully re-contextualise the imagery into that of a different medium and open the visual language to a changed audience. Like that of Breitz, by using filmic ready-mades I am able to talk within a visual language which places the viewer on a confusing platform of both unique and un- unique imagery, imagery which reiterates one another, imagery well known to that of the viewer whether the exact footage is known or it is merely the style of footage that is recognisable. Yet in using such non-unique imagery, through appropriation into a different visual field , cinema into art, its unique nature is reinstated through recontextualisation and cross referencing of imagery under a new focused umbrella and allowing the imagery to be viewed as though fresh yet again.

This idea of de- individualisation is evident for example with Chantal Akermans *Je Tu Il Elle* where Akerman enables the neutralization of the persona and in doing so uses the visual imagery of a human body as a language of engagement for the audience, similarly to the intention of my research. Such a language of engagement is readily accessible to a wide audience,

and aims to reduce the hierarchical prestige of art production and art language. Ivone Marguiles describes this idea of de-individualisation as being "*individuals are thus ground down into the sort of homogenous social matter*". (Marguiles, p.111, 1996)

Through this process of de- individualisation which is achieved through editing strategies, the character is reduced down into formal elements which can then in turn be used to re- establish the relationship between the person and their surroundings, or as it is within my practice the depicted character and himself. The editing strategies consist mainly of splicing footage together thematically, through movement and action, and in doing so acts as a method of grinding down the male into a unified figure. Physicality and facicality are the main focus where

 "the film actor will be dependant upon his physique, and his real appearance will be symptomatic of his character." (Wojcik, p.15, 2004)

By using pre existing films I can extract the 'star' or the narrative quality from the chosen filmic readymade and deindividualise the personal characteristics of that character until they become almost a formal element.

7.CURATING AND FACILITATING MASCULINE MOMENTS

This research operates as means of curating a moment of masculinity- transitional representations of cinematic masculinity- how they are complex, ambiguous and transitional in nature. Although I am in the position of the facilitator or curator the subjects chosen undergo a position of self-reflectivity and elements of active analysis. I intend to capture a glimpse into the oeuvre of Julien Boisselier both for the viewer and myself.

As an actor Boisselier offers a less overt expression of populace French cinematic maleness. He is not 'alpha male' or vastly over attractive, yet still remains to redeem himself to me more than the popular actors of his age coming through French cinema at present. He seems to offer little ego enabling him to facilitate transitional spaces successfully. He does not become concreted to one film or another, becoming a carbon copy of himself.

Even though Julien Boisselier is not yet a Hollywood actor 'star' he engages with the tradition and the limitations of famous actors. By using an unknown (predominantly within an New Zealand context) actor the image is unlimited for the

audiences reading of that fictional character. They are not blinded by the fame of the actor or from over processed trivia of his real life. He remains sedated within the framework of a man who happens to be an actor. I question whether from over repetitive visual imagery and lack of narrative or dialogue whether the audience learns to identify with the actor anyway.

8.INSTALLATION

Modular and secular video projection enables the spatialisation of the integrated characters, allowing new bonds and inter-narrative relationships to occur, as well as provoking character / audience reflectivity. Evidence of modernist modular repetition along with the classicism of formalism is seen within the video installation *B- Grade* which was exhibited within the Place in Space exhibition in the Print Factory in Wellington, in November 2009.

This style of cinematic installation acts as a catalyst for audience engagement, one that conceptually heightens the relationship between the viewed and the viewer. The navigation of a filmic scene is shared both by the viewer and the character and the manner in which this is done through installation strategies. This social commentary or critique on the existing cinematic male and the conventions upon which he is based acts as the underlying support of this research. This raises the question whether I am trying to reexamine the effect of the cinematic male on the audience or using the structure infused in cinematic masculinity as a means of enlightening such modes back into film.

Fig 12. Hannah Edmunds, *B- Grade,* Place in Space, Installation image, 2009

This idea of display links back into the ideas of masculinity as social performance, not unlike a male peacock splaying out his tale feathers to attract attention for the nearest viewer. I am constructing a scenario of overt spectatorship and the creation of a dislodged and somewhat dislocated narrative due to the simple fact of being female.

He shifts between lead protagonist and underdog, unsure of his cinematized terrain due to the defragmentation of mise- en- scene and narrative form and the internalized socialization of himself faced with interaction with him. He becomes purely about display of the male form. Display lends itself back into the ideas of deindividualisation. He becomes demasculinated through his own perversion. Can self-reflection be erotic? Does self-eroticism indeed exist? Similarly to my position within a curatorial mode, I question the forced relationship that the characters now have; it may be viewed as selfish idealized perversion whilst simultaneously being an isolated and lonely existence. After all there is no guarantee that characters played by the same actor would wish to co-habitate.

Using the gaze and linear eye line as a visual methodology of making, I am able to suggest the incorporation of another person through the use of video installation. This leads me back to Denis ideas of the other. I question whether indeed the 'other' is a manifestation of myself or the engagement of the viewer in a spectator and participatory role. This then may become a reductive method in which to view the character and his physicality, yet one that cannot go by unnoticed.

"Indeed in certain cases, a violation of the prohibition becomes obligatory, as when the spectator must be convinced that it is precisely he or she being addressed or when the need for contact with the spectator exceeds the potential risks." (Casetti, p.17, 1999)

The character himself places him at risk from others, others in this case being the viewer. He craves contact not only as in terms of observation form an external party but as well as, and more importantly he craves spectatorship from himself. The protagonist, is turned in on himself, he is the observer and the observed.

So by the recognition of self within the male hero, and the narrative within which he is located he becomes my minion- acting on behalf of me and for me. Myself as female (traditionally the passive subject) is made active through not only this recognition of self but as filmmaker and selector. Through the use of a mixture of major and minor characters from conventional narrative structures, I apply activity to a conventionally passive subject (a minor character) as well as to myself.
The power relations that are implied through the installation strategies that I have employed provokes this shift; a definitive boundary between viewer and viewed is non-present. The installation acts in place of the silent voice of the character. A picture can say a thousand words.

Fig 13. Hannah Edmunds, Author, *Perversion of the Reel*, Installation image, 2010

The male stands outside of each original location and observes (a combination of both metaphorically and physically) the unfolding scenario. Within the installation is enclosed and contained aligned with the reception of all cinematic characters. He is as well as being an integral part of the scene both the subsidiary participator and the watcher.

"As the spectator identifies with the main male protagonist, he projects his look onto that of his like, his screen surrogate, so that the power of the male protagonist as he controls events coincides with the active power of the erotic look, both giving a satisfying sense of omnipotence. A male movie star's glamorous characteristics are thus not those of erotic object of his gaze, but those of the more perfect, more complete, more powerful ideal ego conceived in the original moment of recognition in front of the mirror." (Mulvey, p. 20, 1989)

By positioning myself as facilitator I view my audience as aligned characters alongside the physically depicted one. This creates a forced engagement and constructs a complex visual narrative, a narrative created through audience engagement. This relocation of narrative within the research from within the films structure to the physical installation space has aided the progression both formally and conceptually.

My installation practice throughout this research period has allowed me to provoke the tension and relationship created through the male as object, female as voyeur/ fetishistic viewer and male as spectator. I suggest within this research that a conflation of roles as occurred and the protagonist begins to take on all of these roles on his own. The roles converge to become unified and then in turn obsolete.

The experience of the video imagery is imperative in this research. Installation practice has enabled me to provoke both the imagery and the viewer into a different mode of art reception. The viewing methodology is unforgiving and made to heighten the engagement between the actor and his audience. The two simultaneously become lead and supporting actor to each other, similarly to that of any traditional art reception, neither one is good without the other.

My installation strategies provide the audience with differing viewing mechanisms that highlight their engagement in the overall experience of the work. Now the audience is no longer a passive attendant, but as I am a facilitator of a viewing experience. As shown in the previous image, the sculptural elements have turned into that of a void, an entity housed within space assisting the visual language in its desired encounter with the viewer.

9. APPROPRIAITION AND CINEMATIC READYMADES- Pierre Huyghe

The political nature of my work can therefore not be ignored. Appropriation becomes politically charged, in many ways through how it operates within a realm of institutional critique of both cinema and film considerations. It is not a passive act of reconfiguration, it is a violent affirmation of concept over mass produced narrative, therefore aligning conceptually my research to the origins of the language of appropriation.

Appropriation is a language made up of evidently post medium processes. It extracts, pulls apart the complex conventions of other visual languages in this case cinema, and is applied like that of a band aid to hold in, or keep out which ever way you may wish to see it, the visceral makeup of its original contents; the cinematic.

I reappropriate to aid my aesthetic and technical choices and as a means to engage in "*reproducing the time of a filmed action*" (Campany, p 74, 2007)

Appropriation of the cinematic seems conceptually sound due to the format of cinematic presentation. Through continuous reproduction and mass production of imagery, it seems in some ways to replace some of the dignity and purity back into the content of the image. The creation of a cinematic situation where the character fulfills all character levels. Through the re-editing of Julien Boisselier films allows the work to function as a character study. He is a performed character study, not one representation of a true identity.

Works based on the cinematic by artists such as Pierre Huyghe have focused more on the reinvention of existing films and the rewriting of their filmic systems. The process of the remake for example, talks openly about the theories that underpin cinema, whilst also aiming to somewhat demystifying the complexities of the medium. For example, the histories of the moving image are referred to in Douglas Gordon's *24 hour Psycho.* In both cases, Gordon and Huyghe, narrative or the reinvention of narrative is still evident; contained within the appearance of homage. By focusing on character and the exchange between the character and another character depiction played by the same actor, through filmic readymade, I avoid paying tribute to the institution of cinema and simply work inside of it. Works by the likes of Stan Douglas and Douglas Gordon have set up a framework from which they have informed audiences on the possibilities of critiquing feature films.
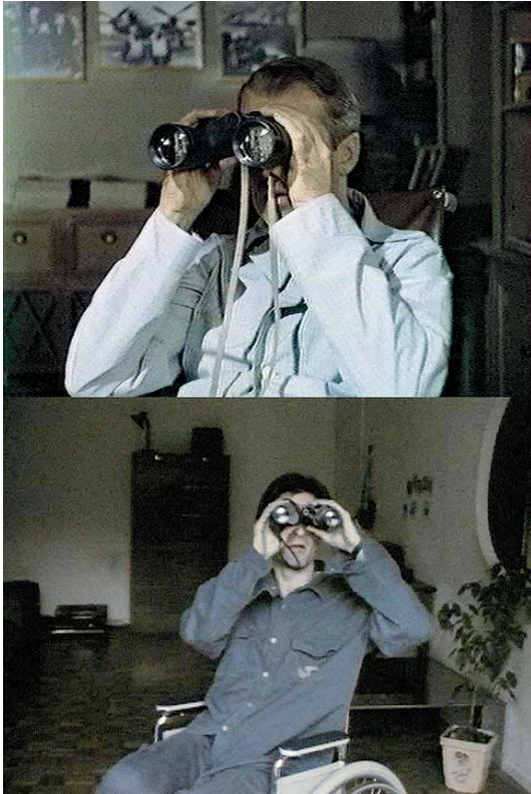
Fig 14. Pierre Huyghe

"Remake," video stills
1994-95
Video projection, Hi8 Master/DigiBeta video, 100 minutes, color, sound.
© Pierre Huyghe, courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris/New York.

Huyghe examines time in relation to that of movement, focusing on the correlation between the two. Through the language of the remake, mapping out pre existing time paths, he exposes the interface between past, present and future time. This realisation of the suspension of time stimulates the audience perception and talks significantly about the exact point of reception of the image.

I view both the ideas of cinematic appropriation as well as the notion of appropriating a cultural masculinity instead of individual masculinity, within this research. I have considered whether gender is used as a means of viewing cultural mechanism vs. viewing the individualized nature of the chosen actor. Has gender just been appropriated and pasted onto each individual regardless?

Appropriation as a post- production methodology opens up the liminality of cinematic exhibition and the immediacy of video art production. The materiality of appropriated footage allows for a degree of sophistication only achieved through high production standards fabricated by a large team of professionals. The transition that the footage has made by my hand, from film format to digital has enabled a degendering of the process; the digital realm requires no gender requirements. The digitatility also too then becomes a cipher, a cipher of me, by me.

10. PERFORMATIVITY WITHIN CINEMATIC IMAGERY

This use of appropriated footage ties into the visual methodology of my practice. The overt use of repetition and simple movement is based within the reoccurrence of a performative action. This can be seen as originating from within the original ideals of the readymade and its mass produced qualities. When using repetition as a mode of narrative deconstruction, emphasis is reinstated on banal action and physical movement that has become the focal plane of the visual language.

"Artists today practice postproduction as a neutral, zero sum process, whereas the situationists aimed to corrupt the value of the diverted work." (Bourriaud & Herman, p. 18, 2005)

In doing so, the spatial consideration of the work becomes a cinematic situation. The structure and editing formation of the filmic clips allows elements of cinematic production to be exposed. I have used linguistic sensibilities, the manner in which visual imagery is used in correlation to that of sentence structures, or grammar and syntax, allowing for the breaking down of these structures which recontextualised and re- represented within Contemporary Art practice. The defragmentation of imagery and the use of internal repetition and installationally based repetition opens up the work again to more finely tuned reading; one not merely based on narrative and character development as has always been the case in popular cinema.

The idea of a continuous stream of imagery creating narrative and the perceived idea that cinema is a *"depiction of ongoing moments."* (Campany, p.11, 2007) Through editing structure and the ordering of these ' on going moments' they become distilled and reduced back into a almost primitive style of film. Making and ordering of visual elements is based mainly on the exploitation of movement and the Deleuzian idea of the *"instantaneous section"* being the focus on a single filmic image. (Ibid, p. 68) In comparison to this ideal continuous moment, the simplistic method of production in my work offers the audience short moments of quiet reflection and reflection created through the breaks in the structured editing. Although remaining

harmonious in rhythm and delivery the staccato production allows the viewer to participate and almost interact with the scenario and unfolding movement held within the imagery.

Although I have stripped and paired back the classical narrative structure, I have still enforced narrative through installation placement. When situating works together within a confined space, relationships are automatically coded between them. It is therefore not only the origin of the films that contain elements of performativity and performative acts, but the manner in which the space as installation performs to the viewer. The account of the work in turn lends itself to that of an experiential occurrence. Me as the director of the film, as an artist going through similar processes to that originally undertaking within the production of the films from which I appropriated.

Cinema operates within the creation of illusion and offering diverse realities; this is achieved through the constructing of imaginary space. This imaginary space is underpinned with the complexities of conveying realism, through plot, narrative and conventional directional gaze. By dismantling the desire to produce elements of realism, the illusionary and psychoanalytical nature of character development or character analysis is enabled.

Film limits real performativity due to the mechanics in which film physically unfolds and in the same manner the way performativity evolves between the spectator and that spectators position within society. Similarly to performance, the construction of cinema, characters and masculinity align themselves within this neo- realistic framework. The main focus of performativity stems from the notion of the watched and the watcher and whether such traditional modes of viewing are adhered to. If the space between these two ideal binaries is reduced, or completely eradicated the hierarchical modes of character interpretation becomes performative cinematic matter. He, (the actor) watches and observes his differing executions of character; unraveling their representations of physical masculinity- disentangling the stability of both cinematic imagery, acting ability and attributed and inherent masculine tropes.

 In exposing the lack of his (the character and the actors) physical and acting dexterity it becomes evident that character autonomy is not prevalent. There is in essence a sense of doubt or uncertainty in the physical portrayal of the individual.

This questions the worth of the original film through its deconstruction and reconceptualisation. Its worth may or may not increase due to its ability to alter physical states and then, in turn, does the intention of the work operate more independently than it does within the original context of the film? Does it in turn become homage or celebratory of that particular film or genre of film?

Through my creation of a Julien Boisselier contemporary cinematic repertory, I operate within the mainstream construction of prescribed maleness in order to question it as an institution. I compose an element of critique in the carbon copy nature of the contemporary Eurocentric male. It is the physiognomic specifics of Boisselier that catergorise him, through my eyes as the "European everyman". His face is structured similarly to many, yet it is lack of ability to express performativity simply through his face that is appealing. Simplistically, his face is a draw card, both a blank sheet, not too attractive and yet not too unattractive. The male actor I needed, needed to be unrecognizable to a predominantly New Zealand audience. Using Eurocentric physical masculinity as a visual veneer for the appraisal of a particular actor and the characters that he plays.

The idea of place and belonging is important in my work and raises the question, what is it about certain cinematic male characteristics that allows him to appear as if he belongs in his filmic environment. For example, the male hero protagonist never gets lost. He is not an 'alien' to the location. He is of his domain. This enables me to create a disruption and essence of disorientation within the filmic frame, one that in essence frees him from the environmental concerns that are typically placed on the male through construction of narrative. Is the sense of belonging felt by the male a transferable feeling that can be issued to the viewer? Can the audience feel like they too inhabit the physical space or assist with the infusion of emotive qualities onto that of the character?

Boissilier is of his domain within the film structure even across a variety of films, yet he is physically and geographically miss-placed within a New Zealand Art context. It enabled me to confuse the prescribed order of reception; both audience and actor dislodged from their comfort zones.

11.Summary so far...

Referring back to Mulvey, the makeup of the male protagonist is created through the narcissistic viewfinder of the observer. Through this reversal and realignment of the male gaze the male is activated as an object, operating both as a referral of emotive considerations by myself as the artist, and as female, as well as the general audience member.

By shifting the dominance and degree of control that is classically aligned to the male, I become the victor; the male protagonist is defeated. Masculinity has been reformed through the reconsideration of who I am. His reign of protagony has been diverted through the positioning of characters, although played by the same actor, who have never met within the fictional realm, so there is no hierarchical order within which to position them. By breaking down and aiming to pull apart the representational and clichéd nature of what it means to be male, I can destabilise the institution of masculinity.

The ephemeral nature of performance demands that in all areas (both social and acted) performance is constantly a non-tangable thing. The search for what I term, 'pure performance' is therefore only ever subjective, subjective on behalf of the viewer and the viewed. Although the parts that make up the whole of this research are concrete in their approach and in their status as appropriate theoretical information, they can never assume conclusive stature. For example, the containment of imagery evident both within the appropriated imagery and the installation strategies is a fundamental element in the unpacking of a cinematic repertory of Julien Boisselier. Operating as multiple fictional characters as well as being an actor, containment within the scene occurs. The fictional character is contained within the hierarchical order of character prominence, rarely shifting away from the stereotyped genre and placement apposed upon them by the society from within the film. Similarly the actor himself is placed and contained within the confines of real societal and industry based demands.

Whether In terms of the final installation, *Perversion of the Reel* managed to convey the relationships between the character depictions is still uncertain. A finite conclusive answer to a research body such as this seems inappropriate. The way in which elements of the final installation played out did not function in the manner in which I envisaged, for example the spatial and lighting consideration within the room in which the final installation was installed, did not offer the 'void' type blackness that I intended.

In retrospect the research may have concluded more effectively by less dramatic installation changes everytime I wished to explore the relationship between the character depictions. I think the trade off is between the clarity of focus and intention Vs.

spectacularisation.

The idea of containment is redeemable within traditional cinematic presentation where little physical audience engagement occurs. Whether indeed any indications of pure performance are obvious to the viewer or either if audience interaction with the reception of the work has aided this is still questionable. In offering a critique of cinematic imagery which questions the divide line between acted performance and social male performance allows me to open up an area that remains unquestioned. The experience of the work is worthy in the questions raised within this research and allows for this research to remain open ended whilst also signing out the indicators to an unmarked territory. The idea of a pure performance is available to us as an audience in the vast trajectory of cinematic imagery, yet it is whether the imagery can be distilled and appreciated in such a manner that it becomes visible.

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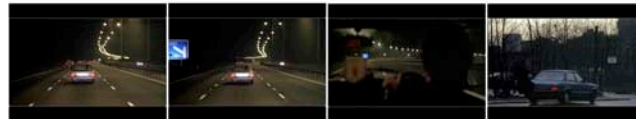Ziehe, Berlin Ed. 3 + A.P.
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Hannah Edmunds, *Demasculinated Man*, Installation still, 2009

Hannah Edmunds, *Singing Bruiser*, Installation Still, 2009

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