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**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 thankyou 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.*

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## **'Bloodlust'<sup>1</sup>**

### *Introduction.*

'Immortal Diamonds by Vamp'<sup>2</sup> presents viewers with an exclusive suite of virtual engagement rings along with a series of videos, which reflect the structures used to depict a romance story in contemporary vampire fiction. The project has been designed 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.

I am drawn to the specific love stories that are portrayed within popular cinematic fictions such as 'The Vampire Diaries',<sup>3</sup> the 'Twilight saga',<sup>4</sup> and 'True Blood' (fig. 1, 2 & 3).<sup>5</sup> What I find so compelling about these romantic storylines is the conflicting reality; the vampire holds an elite status and is presented as a highly desirable and glamorous figure, yet at the same time, is inherently repulsive.<sup>6</sup> The vampire poses a threat to human life through their unnatural desire to feed on human blood.<sup>7</sup> Despite this threat, this fundamental difference between humans and vampires, these fictional storylines still manage to portray a love story. The key characters are isolated as an exception, their union depicted as one that conquers something seemingly improbable (a romantic ideal in itself).<sup>8</sup> Relationships such as these built on

"poisonous" foundations, have become a prominent world-wide phenomenon within popular culture.<sup>9</sup> For example, if we are to take a closer look into the romance that exists between characters Bella Swan and Edward Cullen in the successful franchise the 'Twilight Saga', vampire Edward is besotted with Bella, on meeting her, possessing a deep desire to drink her blood.<sup>10</sup> This repulsive, toxic threat to Bella's life is overshadowed by their eventual love for one another (and his own resistance to cause her harm). One could say this perilous romance is being promoted, with a necessary level of sanitisation, allowing for this fine balance between desire and repulsion to occur.

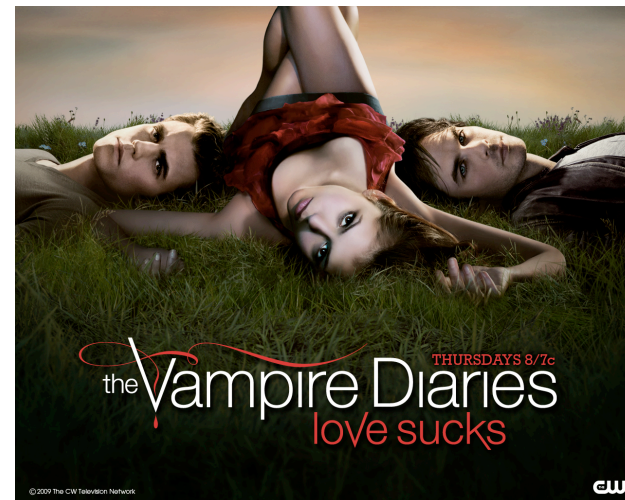


Figure 1. *The Vampire Diaries* [season one]. The CW Television Network. 2009.



Figure 2. *The Twilight saga: Breaking Dawn part 2*. Summit Entertainment. 2012.



Figure 3. *True Blood* [season three]. HBO. 2010.

My fascination with vampire romance fiction lies within this push-pull quality seen in many vampire characters, whereby something beautiful and desirable also holds a conflicting negative or poisonous quality.<sup>11</sup> This project draws light to notions of toxicity within romance fiction and how these can be either glorified or masked within such pop cultural genres. This term toxicity particularly resonates with me as it denotes a sense of varying levels or degrees to which something might be toxic. It is this, within toxicity, which alludes to a certain push and pull quality within vampire romance. Something may hold toxicity, but to what degree? At what point does it become unacceptable, what level of exposure to something toxic is too much?

Given the long history of vampire fiction, I feel it necessary to clarify that whilst the origins of the genre, including Bram's Stokers 'Dracula',<sup>12</sup> have informed my enquiry, the project is primarily concerned with contemporary vampire romance fiction.<sup>13</sup> My interest arising from an awareness of the popularity of these recent examples such as the 'Twilight saga', which seems to have opened doors for other filmic outlets such as 'The Vampire Diaries', 'True Blood' and even the latest non-vampiric phenomenon, 'Fifty Shades of Grey'.<sup>14</sup> A further analysis of the development of vampire fiction would create a compelling but separate text. It is also important to note that this project is rooted in a genuine interest of the current

vampire romance phenomenon<sup>15</sup> as an engaged viewer. Aside from operating as a critique of the genre, my work also maintains a particular obsessional quality whilst I attempt to re-contextualise the love stories played out in contemporary vampire fiction. There is a desire to critique in order to create a certain level of understanding and also ownership of the desire that resides within the romance of these love stories.

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter title from the 'Twilight saga' book series, 'Breaking Dawn,' Chapter 36.

<sup>2</sup> 'Vamp' is a constructed brand name associated with this project as well as other previous projects following popular culture's present obsession with vampire fiction; see [www.jonathan-cameron.com](http://www.jonathan-cameron.com) for past projects.

See pages 37-52 for visual documentation of this project, 'Immortal Diamonds by Vamp.'

See DVD on back cover for the video works.

<sup>3</sup> Williamson, K. & Plec, J. (Head Writers & Executive Producers). *The Vampire Diaries: Season One (2009-2010)* [Television Series]. The CW Television Network.

Williamson, K. & Plec, J. (Head Writers & Executive Producers). *The Vampire Diaries: Season Two (2010-2011)* [Television Series]. The CW Television Network.

Williamson, K.; Plec, J.; Morgenstein, L. & Levy, B. (Executive Produces). *The Vampire Diaries: Season Three (2011-2012)* [Television Series]. The CW Television Network.

Williamson, K.; Plec, J.; Morgenstein, L. & Levy, B. (Executive Produces). *The Vampire Diaries: Season Four (2012-2013)* [Television Series]. The CW Television Network.

<sup>4</sup> Condon, B. (Director). (2011). *Breaking Dawn: Part One*. Summit Entertainment.

Condon, B. (Director). (2012). *Breaking Dawn: Part Two*. Summit Entertainment.

Hardwicke, C. (Director). (2008). *Twilight*. Summit Entertainment.

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Meyer, S. (2005). *Twilight*. Great Britain: Atom, an imprint of Little, Brown Book Group.

Meyer, S. (2006). *New Moon*. Great Britain: Atom, an imprint of Little, Brown Book Group.

Meyer, S. (2007). *Eclipse*. Great Britain: Atom, an imprint of Little, Brown Book Group.

Meyer, S. (2008). *Breaking Dawn*. Great Britain: Atom, an imprint of Little, Brown Book Group.

Slade, D. (Director). (2010). *Eclipse*. Summit Entertainment.

Weitz, C. (Director). (2009). *New Moon*. Summit Entertainment.

<sup>5</sup> Ball, A. (Executive Producer). (2008). *True Blood: Season One*. [Television series]. HBO Home Entertainment.

Ball, A. & Fienberg, G. (Executive Producers). (2009). *True Blood: Season Two* [Television series]. HBO Home Entertainment.

Ball, A. (Executive Producer). (2010). *True Blood: Season Three* [Television series]. HBO Home Entertainment.

Ball, A. (Executive Producer). (2011). *True Blood: Season Four* [Television series]. HBO Home Entertainment.

Ball, A. (Executive Producer). (2012). *True Blood: Season Five* [Television series]. HBO Home Entertainment.

<sup>6</sup> Click, M., A.; Aubrey, J., S. & Behm-Morawitz, E. (Eds.). (2010). *Bitten by Twilight: Youth Culture, Media, & the Vampire Franchise*. United States of America: New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

Meyer, S. (2005). *Twilight*. Great Britain: Atom, an imprint of Little, Brown Book Group.

R. Greene & K. Silem-Mohammad (Eds.). (2006). *The Undead and Philosophy: Chicken Soup for the Soulless (Volume 22 in the series, 'Popular Culture and Philosophy')*. United States of America: Carus Publishing Company.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

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<sup>8</sup> Christian-Smith, L., K. (1990). *Becoming a Woman Through Romance (Critical Social Thought)*. Routledge.

<sup>9</sup> Christian-Smith, L., K. (1990). *Becoming a Woman Through Romance (Critical Social Thought)*. Routledge.

Click, M., A.; Aubrey, J., S. & Behm-Morawitz, E. (Eds). (2010). *Bitten by Twilight: Youth Culture, Media, & the Vampire Franchise*. United States of America: New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

<sup>10</sup> Meyer, S. (2005). *Twilight*. Great Britain: Atom, an imprint of Little, Brown Book Group.

Edward Cullen also expresses this desire clearly within the bonus chapter of 'Twilight,' 'Introducing Midnight Sun' – a recollection of the 'Twilight' novel from Edward's perspective ('Midnight Sun' currently remains an unfinished text):

Meyer, S. (2008 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). 'Introducing Midnight Sun: First Sight'. In *Twilight (2005)* (pp. 437-465). Great Britain: Atom, an imprint of Little, Brown Book Group.

<sup>11</sup> Clarke, A. & Osborn, M. J. (Eds). (2010). *The Twilight Mystique: Critical Essays on the Novels and Films*. North Carolina, and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers.

Click, M., A.; Aubrey, J., S. & Behm-Morawitz, E. (Eds). (2010). *Bitten by Twilight: Youth Culture, Media, & the Vampire Franchise*. United States of America: New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

Creed, B. (1986). *Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine: An Imaginary Abjection*. Retrieved, January 3, 2013, from <http://screen.oxfordjournals.org/content/27/1/44.extract>

<sup>12</sup> Stoker, B. (1897). *Dracula*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

<sup>13</sup> It is noteworthy that the vampire figure has not always been depicted in such a favourable light as that of contemporary fictions such as the 'Twilight saga'. Stephanie L. Dowdle explains that they have developed from "hairy and menacing" creatures such as the likes of Dracula, to "glamorous and sexy like Edward," from Twilight. See:

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Dowdle, S., L. (2010). 'Why We Like Our Vampires Sexy'. In A. Clarke & M. J., Osborn (Eds), *The Twilight Mystique: Critical Essays on the Novels and Films* (pp. 179-188). North Carolina, and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers.

Kisor, Y. (2010). 'Narrative Layering and "High-Culture" Romance'. In A. Clarke & M. J., Osborn (Eds), *The Twilight Mystique: Critical Essays on the Novels and Films* (pp. 35-55). North Carolina, and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers.

<sup>14</sup> James, E., L. (2011). *Fifty Shades of Grey*. United Kingdom: Vintage Books.

Some consider 'Fifty Shades of Grey' owing its success more to the feminisation of the book and its ties to a broader more controversial discussion around a rise in woman's erotica. The relevance of Fifty Shades of Grey to my own study is explained later in this exegesis (Chapter 'You'll Be The Death Of Me').

Baker, K., J., M. (2012). *Fifty Shades of Grey's success has nothing to do with repressed feminist fantasies*. Retrieved January 4, 2013, from <http://jezebel.com/5902258/fifty-shades-of-greys-success-has-nothing-to-do-with-repressed-feminist-fantasies>

<sup>15</sup> The "current vampire romance phenomenon" referring to the period of 2008-2013 and including the filmic fictions 'True Blood', the 'Twilight Saga' & 'The Vampire Diaries,' which coincide with my engagement of this genre.

### **My Heart Stops For You**

*Grounding romance with a sense of verisimilitude within contemporary vampire fiction.*

In order to create a sense of ownership of the narrative I have created within 'Immortal Diamonds by Vamp', I chose to explore some of the key ways in which the makers of vampire romance fiction might mask the poisonous or repulsive qualities associated with the vampire character, and how they present this as a more alluring package. Not only does this give me a deeper understanding of how these fictions operate, this project is also designed to unpack the meticulous level of detail and staging that goes into the way in which the vampiric love story is often portrayed and even marketed.<sup>16</sup> I am striving to adhere to some of the formal, visual and structural conventions and techniques used within the genre, as I obsessively recreate my own narrative and version of the toxic relationships played out on screen.

A crucial scene from 'Twilight: Breaking Dawn (Part One)',<sup>17</sup> which has greatly informed this project, is where Bella Swan has a dream of her wedding day the night before it is due to take place.<sup>18</sup> The scene begins with Bella wearing a stereotypically sexy white wedding dress, her hair down (with no veil) and a bouquet of red

roses. She is surrounded by thousands of falling red rose petals. We then see a group of guests also immaculately dressed in white; and standing at the end of the aisle is her husband-to-be, white-suited vampire Edward (fig.4). It is soon apparent that this dream is in fact a nightmare, as when Bella reaches Edward at the end of the aisle, she turns around to notice that the guests are no longer present. The falling rose petals begin to form a pile in the centre of the aisle, in between the empty chairs, and as the red mass becomes dense the petals transform into a red liquid-blood. Bella turns to Edward, finding him looking back at her but no longer a pure depiction in white – his suit is stained with a dramatic smear of blood coming from his mouth. Bella's white dress now has blood on it too, and as she looks down she realises that the vanished guests are dead and piled up underneath their feet (fig.5). She wakes up abruptly, ending that scene. As her actual wedding takes place the next morning, one can't help but notice an absence of the colour red, which was so over-bearing in her dream.

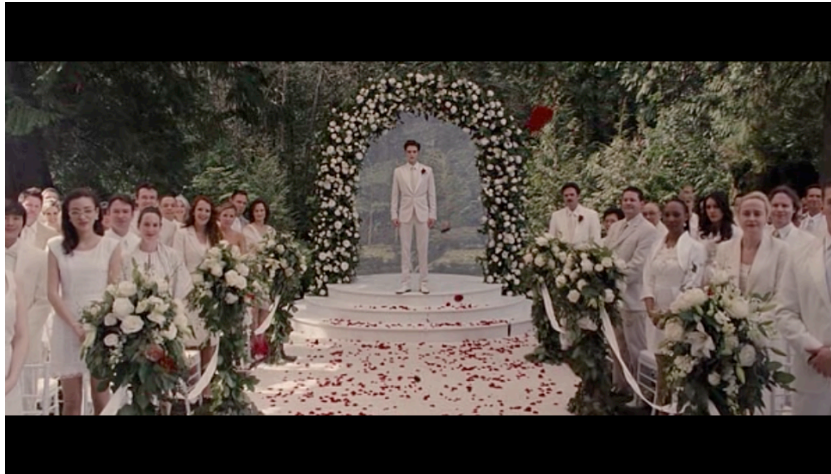


Figure 4. *Bella Swan's wedding dream* [Image still from 'Breaking Dawn: Part One']. Summit Entertainment. 2011.



Figure 5 *Bella Swan's wedding dream* [Image still from 'Breaking Dawn: Part One']. Summit Entertainment. 2011.

In *Twilight* I have observed the colour red is often used as a visual signifier to convey the idea of something impure or an impure desire. The video works<sup>19</sup> in 'Immortal Diamonds by Vamp' make direct reference to this scene through the falling rose petals and use of roses in the background (fig.6). My use of the contrasting colours red and white also utilises strong visual symbolism. In this sense white symbolises purity and in the case of 'Twilight' red stands for impurity. The video work intentionally references romance in this highly cliché manner. It was important to present the flowers in a way that references a wedding bouquet, but adheres to the same colour palette of red and white.



Figure 6. *Death Unto Thee* [*Avalanche, Bianca & Prestige with Early Cheer, Pieris & White Freesia*][Image still]. Jonathan Cameron. 2013.

It was also important to capture or recreate a certain sense of “elite” beauty in the videos. There is something untouchable about the way in which vampires are portrayed – they possess inhuman speed and strength, appear flawless holding eternal youthfulness, and have an excess of accumulated wealth and wisdom due to their many years of existence.<sup>20</sup> April Alliston writes in her thesis titled, ‘Female Quixotism and the Novel: Character and Plausibility, Honesty and Fidelity,’<sup>21</sup> that verisimilitude is a vital feature within novels to create a sense of plausibility in a character, including the most quixotic personas. Vampire characters such as Edward Cullen from the ‘Twilight saga’ can be considered as quixotic as they hold qualities that are generally unattainable to the average person, and qualities that many can identify with as being desirable.<sup>22</sup> However, it is the vampire’s weakness for a human and desire for romance, both of which conflict with their innate drives, that allows the audience to better relate to the vampire character through an emphasised plausibility. Edward’s weakness and love for Bella is in direct conflict with his toxic nature as a vampire as they are not intended to have or show such weakness.

Alliston explains that romance literature in its very true sense is about portraying the ideal, but that in order for romance literature to become a romance novel (which calls for a certain degree of

realism or plausibility within characters), verisimilitude within characters is required, as this allows readers or viewers to identify with the narrating character, who themselves over-identifies with the ideal (or simply unlikely situation).<sup>23</sup>

The central feature of the project is the formation of a suite of rings along with their own catalogue (fig.7) and accompanying videos.<sup>24</sup> The concept behind the project generates a new vampire romance narrative responding to the pop-culture examples I have studied. Embracing a fanatical attitude toward the vampire/human romance genre, I have designed each ring to encompass a small amount of human blood, preserved inside the platinum band as a reminder to the couple of where their love originated and the newly *transformed* vampire’s prior human form.<sup>25</sup> The rings have also been designed to reference blood-letting through the inclusion of sharp thorns or spikes which would make them only wearable by a vampire as they would surely pierce and rip human flesh (the vampire would be immune from this with their rock hard, diamond-like skin).<sup>26</sup>

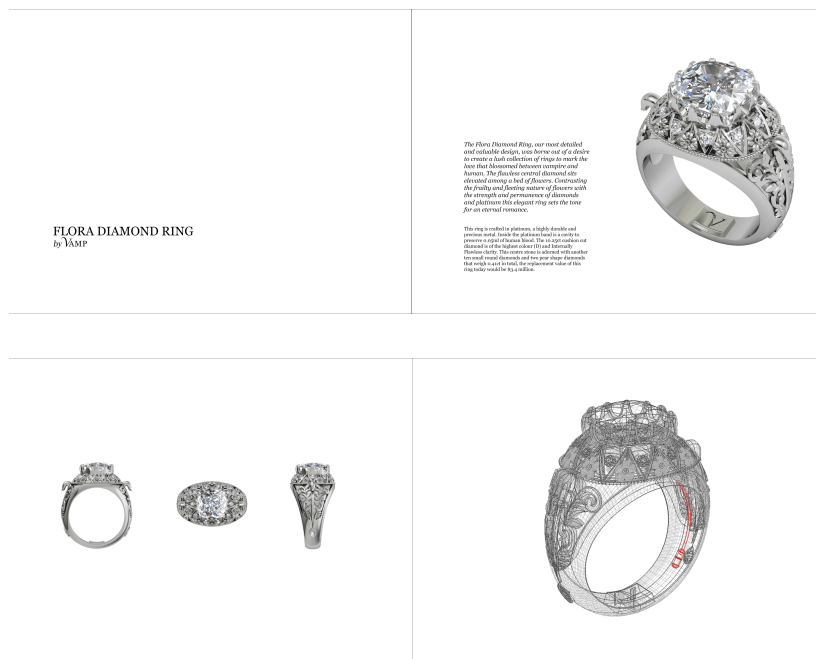


Figure 7. *Flora Diamond Ring* [pages from catalogue]. Jonathan Cameron. 2013.

Romance fiction writers must inject plausibility into an unrealistic or idealistic situation, which is something I find highly intriguing—hence my wish to generate and work my own sense of verisimilitude into the creation of the rings. The virtual rings have been co-designed<sup>27</sup> by myself along with jewellery designer Ian Douglas.<sup>28</sup> Working with an experienced designer enabled me access to specialist knowledge of various historical periods particularly with respect to ring styles and designs often pitched at

affluent buyers. It allows me to inject a greater level of plausibility into my own narrative, to make it believable through a legitimate means of commercially informed design and production.

I have developed a detailed backstory to the rings that I have shared with the jewellery designer, and have directed the designer in terms of key aesthetic and historical decisions, for example that the rings have been remodelled from original Victorian/Edwardian styles. The platinum band, which contains the blood cavity, has been redesigned and the diamonds from a supposed existing ring re-used in the new design. Each ring embodies a degree of integrity thus making an otherwise idealised depiction more believable. The virtual rings would be, in reality, exceptionally expensive to create,<sup>29</sup> which is in keeping with the contemporary vampire being notorious for his<sup>30</sup> accumulated wealth. The virtual ring’s bespoke status speaks of an extravagance and uniqueness, and its unattainability (to most)—a reference to the way in which the vampire is also out of reach, which can further inflame desire. The rings transcend the everyday, and represent that which we cannot obtain. It reflects this common notion of desiring that which we cannot have, or perhaps, in the case of the vampire, what we should not have.<sup>31</sup> The rings act as both marital or engagement rings but could also be seen as betrothal rings, operating as a promise or visual expression of ones’ love. Historically an engagement ring was

given under the title of a “betrothal” ring, a promise of marriage to the bride (and her family) from the groom – this promise was later confirmed through a public ceremony which usually involved the couple publically joining hands before retreating to private quarters where it was expected that the couple would seal their union through sexual intercourse.<sup>32</sup> Edwin Hall explains in his book, ‘The Arnolfini Betrothal’ that this was reinforced by the early Catholic church as couples entering their first marriage (usually suggesting they were both virgins) would be adorned with crowns to symbolise their virginal status as a couple (again this idea that their marriage was to be made official through intercourse).<sup>33 34</sup> In these commonly referenced time periods there were clear rules and ideas on how men and women should interact, and how a relationship or martial union should be structured.

The contemporary examples of vampire fiction I am concerned with appear to have a romantic soft-spot for the Edwardian/Victorian time period (often the key male vampire character has originated from this era).<sup>35</sup> Perhaps this is due to the concept of a stricter period in history, when “breaking the rules” so-to-speak, was a lot more frowned upon. The design of my rings, with their inclusion of human blood, can also be viewed as a means of representing the human’s transformation to vampire, effectively consummating the marriage or union. It is vital that the human character transform

into a vampire in order to stay in a romantic relationship with the vampire. The fact that the rings bare sharp thorns only really make it possible for the character to wear the ring once the transformation has taken place, again acting as a visual signification of their marriage.

The ring boxes in the video pieces have also been selected to suggest an earlier time period; they are intended to match the rings, or at least the original rings that the designs have been reconstructed from. I have been quite deliberate about selecting each particular ring box, searching the pages of Ebay for the ones that I felt most representative of this Edwardian/Victorian time period. Each ring box had to contain packaging or jeweller’s information on the inside of the lid – therefore offering visual recognition of the time period I am referencing. This helps lend a further sense of legitimacy to the selected antique boxes. I’m not claiming that the ring boxes are legitimate or “right,” but there is a process in the sourcing of these materials that is indicative of my interpretation of this genre. I am trying to suggest that these newly designed rings do indeed have a past. The central placement of the ring boxes aims to direct ones reading in a particular way, seemingly offering the box to the viewer. The work uses the visual language of a marketing campaign for a product – I’m not creating one singular story, but a suite of stories.

The reasoning for having multiple rings was to reference that love takes many forms; which is evident within contemporary vampire fiction.<sup>36</sup> Each one designed to appeal to a slightly different audience but belonging to the same series. This idea of a “product” enabled the development of a completely fictional storyline and meant that I could draw on styles and tropes across advertising, cinema and literature. The fictional product becomes a tool to achieve (or convey) verisimilitude, purpose or plausibility. The unrealistic storyline is grounded in the way it is presented as a series to sell, rather than a single product. Furthermore there is a price for the ring to be re-made, but the original ring is not intended for sale. Whilst the rings could have been physically constructed as products of this fictional narrative, it is important for me that they remain in a purely fictional (depicted) or virtual sense. Existing as physical objects would take away the viewers ability to indulge in the fictional quality of the work and speculate about the possible owners of the rings (this is not to say that someone couldn't technically *produce* the design).

An influential artist operating in a similar manner is New Zealand artist Yvonne Todd (fig.8). Todd is well known for going to great lengths in order to create a very self-directed level of legitimacy within her photographically constructed characters. In an interview with ArtNews, Todd speaks about her work saying that, “I’ve

always looked for interesting articles of clothing...the clothes I’m gravitating towards are becoming more and more expensive. I can’t compromise; I become obsessed and can’t conceive doing the photo any other way”.<sup>37</sup> One key example of this is seen in the work ‘Female Study (gold)’ (fig.9), where Todd sourced a dress that had once belonged to singer Whitney Houston.<sup>38</sup> In relation to this comment from Todd, my work assumes a similar attitude. The construction of the set is equally important as the output itself (however the outcome documents the process). In having the rings designed, I went to a range of other designers before deciding to work exclusively with Ian. I found Ian to be the only designer that had the ability to listen to what I wanted and become equally engaged with the storyline that I was directing. Other designers appreciated my concept, but wanted to take my ideas in a different direction – I was surprised at how possessive I was over my storyline. To illustrate this, I have included a working prototype of an earlier ring design - see figure.10. This particular designer decided to base the stone colour on the eye colour of the wearer before her<sup>39</sup> transformation to vampire, however this was inconsistent with my narrative as the original rings and re-fitted stones were supposed to be from a much earlier era, well before the human was born. It was essential, for me, that the ring designs fit in with the narrative and that the co-designer embrace the fiction and

its accuracy prescribed by me.



Figure 8. *Self Portrait as The Corpse of Sandra West*. Yvonne Todd. 2008.



Figure 9. *Female Study (gold)*. Yvonne Todd. 2007.



Figure 10. *Working prototype – green emerald*. Anonymous Designer. 2012.

Martin Patrick also writes in his recent essay for Eye Contact blog<sup>40</sup> about the presence of sweat in some of Todd's images, and how this minute detail is a much considered intentional feature, relating this to the depiction of cinematic examples, such as a roman battle scene where close-ups of sweat were used as a symbol of the characters dedication. It is these seemingly insignificant details that become of interest and require much attention and accuracy in order to fit in with the concept or narrative. These, once again, draw light to the importance of verisimilitude, as without this the illusion would be broken or the narrative flawed.

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<sup>16</sup> Click, M., A.; Aubrey, J., S. & Behm-Morawitz, E. (Eds). (2010). *Bitten by Twilight: Youth Culture, Media, & the Vampire Franchise*. United States of America: New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

<sup>17</sup> Condon, B. (Director). (2011). *Breaking Dawn: Part One*. Summit Entertainment.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* [chapter 2].

<sup>19</sup> See pages 37-52.

<sup>20</sup> Each depiction of the vampire character within fiction varies slightly. Stephanie Meyer's construction of the vampire figure particularly resonated with me and this was the fictional outlet where my interest in vampire fiction first began:

Hardwicke, C. (Director). (2008). *Twilight*. Summit Entertainment.

Meyer, S. *Twilight* (2005). Great Britain: Atom, an imprint of Little, Brown Book Group.

<sup>21</sup> Alliston, A. (2011). 'Female Quixotism and the Novel: Character and Plausibility, Honesty and Fidelity'. In *The Eighteenth Century* 52(3), (pp. 249-269). University of Pennsylvania Press. Retrieved January 3, 2013, from Project MUSE database.

<sup>22</sup> Click, M., A.; Aubrey, J., S. & Behm-Morawitz, E. (Eds). (2010). *Bitten by Twilight: Youth Culture, Media, & the Vampire Franchise*. United States of America: New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc,

<sup>23</sup> Alliston, A. (2011). 'Female Quixotism and the Novel: Character and Plausibility, Honesty and Fidelity'. In *The Eighteenth Century* 52(3), (pp. 249-269). University of Pennsylvania Press. Retrieved January 3, 2013, from Project MUSE database.

<sup>24</sup> See pages 37-52.

<sup>25</sup> In the 'Twilight saga' it is established that due to the highly painful experience of becoming a vampire one would usually have a very faded memory of their human life – and for some vampires, their human memory would vanish altogether (this is the case with vampire character Alice Cullen whom has no recollection of her human life). The blood would therefore act as a constant reminder to the newly transformed vampire of her human self and where her romance with male vampire lover originated. As the vampire has a heightened sense of smell (and natural heightened awareness of human blood) this sentiment would be forever present:

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Meyer, S. (2005). *Twilight*. Great Britain: Atom, an imprint of Little, Brown Book Group.

Meyer, S. (2006). *New Moon*. Great Britain: Atom, an imprint of Little, Brown Book Group.

Meyer, S. (2007). *Eclipse*. Great Britain: Atom, an imprint of Little, Brown Book Group.

Meyer, S. (2008). *Breaking Dawn*. Great Britain: Atom, an imprint of Little, Brown Book Group.

<sup>26</sup> Whilst some examples of vampire fiction suggest the vampire's skin can be penetrated, such as, with a wooden stake, I am once again swayed by Stephanie Meyer's construction of the vampire figure. For example, in her final novel 'Breaking Dawn,' Edward is forced to use his teeth to cut into Bella's womb and remove their unborn child as vampire teeth are the only material strong enough to do so.

Meyer, S. *Breaking Dawn* (2008). Great Britain: Atom, an imprint of Little, Brown Book Group.

<sup>27</sup> Within the catalogue I refer to Ian as a collaborator – however it is important to clarify the use of this term is not indicative of his involvement in the project from an art context. Ian was a key contributor and ultimately a commissioned designer, however the work and concept was directed and managed by myself as the artist.

<sup>28</sup> Ian Douglas is a Wellington based jewellery designer (New Zealand), and is the owner of the Village Goldsmith: [www.thevillagegoldsmith.co.nz](http://www.thevillagegoldsmith.co.nz) & [www.theinspiredcollection.com](http://www.theinspiredcollection.com)

<sup>29</sup> See pages 37-52.

<sup>30</sup> For the sake of this project, it is assumed that males and females maintain certain roles - this will be unpacked a little further in the chapter "You'll Be The Death Of Me."

<sup>31</sup> Christian-Smith, L., K. (1990). *Becoming a Woman Through Romance (Critical Social Thought)*. Routledge.

Lacan, J. (1977). *Jacques Lacan: Ecrits, A Selection, Translated from the French by Alan Sheridan*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

<sup>32</sup> Hall, E. (1997). 'On Marriage Law and Ceremony'. In *The Arnolfini Betrothal: Medieval Marriage and the Enigma of Van Eyck's Double Portrait* (pp. 13-48). University of California Press.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

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<sup>34</sup> There is also a parallel through abjection and blood as symbolic of lost purity here too. There is loss of blood in the union between vampire and human through the human's transformation to vampire – an interesting parallel to the presence of blood in the act of losing one's virginity.

<sup>35</sup> Ball, A. (Executive Producer). *True Blood: Season One (2008)* [Television series]. HBO Home Entertainment.

Meyer, S. *Twilight (2005)*. Great Britain: Atom, an imprint of Little, Brown Book Group.

Williamson, K. & Plec, J. (Head Writers & Executive Producers). *The Vampire Diaries: Season One (2009-2010), Season Two (2010-2011)* [Television Series]. The CW Television Network.

<sup>36</sup> Ball, A. (Executive Producer). (2008). *True Blood: Season One*. [Television series]. HBO Home Entertainment.

Ball, A. & Fienberg, G. (Executive Producers). (2009). *True Blood: Season Two* [Television series]. HBO Home Entertainment.

Ball, A. (Executive Producer). (2010). *True Blood: Season Three* [Television series]. HBO Home Entertainment.

Ball, A. (Executive Producer). (2011). *True Blood: Season Four* [Television series]. HBO Home Entertainment.

Ball, A. (Executive Producer). (2012). *True Blood: Season Five* [Television series]. HBO Home Entertainment.

Condon, B. (Director). (2011). *Breaking Dawn: Part One*. Summit Entertainment.

Condon, B. (Director). (2012). *Breaking Dawn: Part Two*. Summit Entertainment.

Clarke, A. & Osborn, M. J. (Eds). (2010). *The Twilight Mystique: Critical Essays on the Novels and Films*. North Carolina, and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers.

Click, M., A.; Aubrey, J., S. & Behm-Morawitz, E. (Eds). (2010). *Bitten by Twilight: Youth Culture, Media, & the Vampire Franchise*. United States of America: New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

Hardwicke, C. (Director). (2008). *Twilight*. Summit Entertainment.

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Meyer, S. (2005). *Twilight*. Great Britain: Atom, an imprint of Little, Brown Book Group.

Meyer, S. (2006). *New Moon*. Great Britain: Atom, an imprint of Little, Brown Book Group.

Meyer, S. (2007). *Eclipse*. Great Britain: Atom, an imprint of Little, Brown Book Group.

Meyer, S. (2008). *Breaking Dawn*. Great Britain: Atom, an imprint of Little, Brown Book Group.

Slade, D. (Director). (2010). *Eclipse*. Summit Entertainment.

Weitz, C. (Director). (2009). *New Moon*. Summit Entertainment.

Williamson, K. & Plec, J. (Head Writers & Executive Producers). *The Vampire Diaries: Season One (2009-2010)* [Television Series]. The CW Television Network.

Williamson, K. & Plec, J. (Head Writers & Executive Producers). *The Vampire Diaries: Season Two (2010-2011)* [Television Series]. The CW Television Network.

Williamson, K.; Plec, J.; Morgenstein, L. & Levy, B. (Executive Producers). *The Vampire Diaries: Season Three (2011-2012)* [Television Series]. The CW Television Network.

Williamson, K.; Plec, J.; Morgenstein, L. & Levy, B. (Executive Producers). *The Vampire Diaries: Season Four (2012-2013)* [Television Series]. The CW Television Network.

<sup>37</sup> Were, V. (2010). *Disturbing Perfection*. Retrieved January 3, 2013, from <http://www.artnews.co.nz/previous/28-1/28-1-profile.html>

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> For the sake of this project, it is assumed that the rings have been designed with a female in mind, which I will explain a little further in the chapter "You'll Be The Death Of Me."

<sup>40</sup> Patrick, M. (2012). *Talking around (and around) Yvonne Todd*. Retrieved January 3, 2013, from <http://eyecontactsite.com/2012/10/talking-around-and-around-yvonne-todd>

### **'Friday Night Bites'**<sup>41</sup>

*A bittersweet reality.*

Another core component of my project is the presence of blood and blood imagery. Whilst blood is present on the floor of the scenes, it is not intended to be immediately apparent, and its viscosity varies subtly across the videos. The impact of falling rose petals hitting the pool of blood was designed to draw the viewers attention to its presence, particularly as it splatters the surrounding flowers and ring boxes.<sup>42</sup> This is intended to create a feeling of unease about the video works. A number of elements within the works are uncanny.<sup>43</sup> At times where there is little movement, the video may be viewed as a still image. The interaction of the falling petals cause the blood base to ripple for a split second before becoming still once again. If the red base were water then the rippling from the rose petals would be almost continuous and take a lot longer to settle. The work aims to provoke a slow realisation that the fluid is blood or blood-like, resulting in a heightened state of unease.

Despite this, lovers of the horror genre would possibly find the use of blood within the works rather tame. Everything is carefully composed and appears formal. Some of the videos are designed to appear more sexually charged with red being more prominent

within these sets (fig.11), and others seemingly more “innocent” with soft pink or white flowers and old fashioned floral backdrops (fig.12).



Figure 11. *Death Unto Thee* [*Prestige, Red Naomi & Grand Prix with Berzelia, Early Cheer & Red Alstroemeria*] [Image still]. Jonathan Cameron. 2013.



Figure 12. *Death Unto Thee* [*Sweet Avalanche, Something Special & Akito with Pink Erica & White Button Chrysanthemums*] [Image still]. Jonathan Cameron. 2013.

Eventually each film, one by one, nears the end with the setting overwhelmed with a mass of petals, even obscuring our view of the ring boxes, before starting the process again from the beginning.

Whilst a set-up depicting marriage was initially the primary concern, it quickly became apparent, through the way in which the wedding bouquet flowers had been arranged, that I was equally dealing with a depiction that had ties to funeral traditions.

Interestingly, this strong intersect of visual symbolism brings us back to the reality that a vampire is literally a living corpse and is often described as the 'living dead'.<sup>44</sup> The bittersweet reality being, that to transform from human to vampire in order to live out eternity with her beloved vampire, the female human must also surrender her life.

Karen Hershe discusses in her text 'The Roman Wedding: Ritual and Meaning in Antiquity',<sup>45</sup> the origins of various symbolism or meanings associated with flowers. She focuses on traditional weddings in ancient Roman times<sup>46</sup> as a period of origin for these symbols, explaining that flowers' organic and non-permanent nature made their use or presence in attire a symbol of a one-off event – i.e. a wedding party. She discusses the mythological god 'Flora's' (Mother of flowers and fields) connection to flowers, writing that Flora would create flowers from the blood of the

dead,<sup>47</sup> and often created flowers with certain magical powers that would aid in such things as human fertility and life. This connection with the dead, blood and flowers can be seen as an expression of the brevity of human life, and acts as an interesting parallel to my own arrangements of flowers with blood in reference to the vampire romance story. Marriage can be viewed as binding and acknowledging their union; and death ironically is the only way for this particular union to be lasting and perhaps more equal between the characters.

Interestingly, flowers also served a practical purpose in funeral ceremonies as illustrated by Susan Dury in her text 'Funeral Plants and Flowers in England: Some Examples',<sup>48</sup> who explains that one use of flowers was to mask the smell of a decaying corpse (particularly in times before embalming practices became common). She unpacks, in detail, some of the symbolic reasons behind the presence of particular flowers used in funerals. Dury writes that "evergreens" (i.e. rosemary) were commonly used as a reference to the bodies' immortal soul due to the fact they are not seasonal as other plants or flowers might be. Alongside this point, she also highlights that roses (the most prominently featured flower within my suite of video works) were also used in funerary practices (despite being seasonal),<sup>49</sup> particularly when one's partner died before the wedding day. In this context, red roses symbolised

the deceased's good nature, and white roses were used to mark a virgins grave.

Not only does my own narrative therefore make use of the strong symbolism associated with the rose and draw light to the vulnerability of human life, but the very concept of masking something otherwise repulsive is also a central theme to my work and how it operates. How is it that the vampire, an inherently grotesque and abject creature can be associated with romance and have the ability to seduce and lure various human characters—as well as human viewers or readers—despite possessing this repulsive nature? What causes popular cultures' present fascination with vampire romance fiction?

Julia Kristeva's theory around the abject<sup>50</sup> has proven to be a crucial undertone to my current work, and it is important to understand her work in order to analyse the way in which vampire romance fiction has been tailored to succeed within the realms of mainstream culture. The abject can be defined as a moment of mental or physical reaction when threatened with the unacceptable.<sup>51</sup> Kristeva writes that the abject is not an object that can be named or imagined, nor is it a form of otherness that can generate desire. The abject cannot be controlled by the self, and is

in constant opposition. It threatens life and must be both rejected, as well as accepted.

Kristeva describes the abject as being a definitive moment where one's own physical or mental boundaries or boarder are defined, "primers of my culture;" a force of sorts that is meaningless, but crushing in its weight and power. She uses a personal example of her involuntary gagging reflex when presented with fresh cows-milk. She explains that it is not the cows milk itself that is abject, but rather that it becomes defined as an example of the abject through her bodies natural disapproving reflex.<sup>52</sup>

To specifically address where the vampire character fits in with this term I want to make mention of Barbara Creed, a key theorist who looks at Kristeva's abject theory specifically in relation to the horror genre.<sup>53</sup> She suggests that one of the most potent examples of the abject in this sense is the corpse. The vampire comes into play here existing as a living corpse whom literally lives beyond the boundaries of human life.

Barbara Creed writes that "...within the biblical context, the corpse is also utterly abject. It signifies one of the most basic forms of pollution – the body without a soul."<sup>54</sup> She goes on to highlight that through horror fiction this idea of the soulless, living-corpse as abject is played upon – writing that, "Thus abject things are those

which highlight the ‘fragility of the law’, and which exist on the other side of the border....”<sup>55</sup>

Existing as a soulless living corpse, however, a technicality that comes with this is the need for blood in order for the vampire to remain. Vampires’ inbuilt desire or craving for human blood is another manifestation of how the vampires’ threat to human life registers as an abject charge. The thought of drinking another’s blood to survive highlights the constructed limits of human life – as without blood there would be death – a clear point of difference concerning diet between human and vampire.<sup>56</sup>

Kristeva and Creed highlight that the abject, whilst repulsive and simply “not right”, is at the same time ambiguous and compelling.<sup>57</sup> Striking this balance between the contrasting elements of repulsion and ambiguity is key to vampire fiction. Despite their abject qualities, the vampire remains seductive, charming and alluring.<sup>58</sup>

My work attempts to explore the way in which this manifests within contemporary vampire romance and is presented simultaneously. The vampire’s toxicity can be viewed through an inbuilt desire or craving for human blood, a threat to human life, but this toxic nature can still be accepted.<sup>59</sup> In the case of contemporary vampire romance this is in part due to the promise of eternal life or the desire to live out a “happily-ever-after” with a

vampire despite their toxic or poisonous nature, as in vampire romance.

Looking at my project through the framework of toxicity allows me to further understand some of the more intricate languages that are being silently expressed within the work. Toxicity brings us back to this moment of choice concerning vampire fiction, of how or why someone might be able to accept the abject vampire. The work has been designed to invite the viewer to indulge in something that is toxic, therefore toxicity in this sense can be seen to hold the promise of both danger and reward, repulsion and beauty, and in vampire fiction inviting death is rewarded with eternal life.

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<sup>41</sup> Chapter title from ‘The Vampire Diaries,’ television series, Season one, Episode three.

<sup>42</sup> See pages 37-52 & DVD on back cover for the video works.

<sup>43</sup> For further reading on the “uncanny” see:

Freud, S. (1919). *The “Uncanny”*. Retrieved January 3, 2013, from <http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/freud1.pdf>

Royle, N. (2003). *The Uncanny*. Manchester University Press.

<sup>44</sup> This term, ‘living dead,’ will be unpacked later on within this chapter.

<sup>45</sup> Hersch, K., K. (2010). ‘At the House of the Bride’. In *The Roman Wedding: Ritual and Meaning in Antiquity* (pp. 61-131). United States of America: New York: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>46</sup> Circa: 200 BCE to 200 CE:

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Hersch, K. K. (2010). *The Roman Wedding: Ritual and Meaning in Antiquity*. United States of America: New York: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>47</sup> It's interesting to note the ties that this has to the fact that flowers naturally thrive on blood and bone as fertilizers.

<sup>48</sup> Drury, S. (1994). 'Funeral Plants and Flowers in England: Some Examples'. In *Folklore*, Vol. 105, (1994) (pp. 101-103). Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd. on behalf of Folklore Enterprises, Ltd. Retrieved January 3, 2013, from <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/stable/1260637>

<sup>49</sup> Interestingly the roses I have sourced for the video works are from a wholesaler whom can supply a typically seasonal flower (such as a rose) all year round due to modern, artificial hothouse techniques.

<sup>50</sup> Kristeva, J. (1982). 'Approaching Abjection'. In Leon S. Roudiez (Translator), *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, (pp. 1-31). New York: Columbia University Press.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*. pp. 2-3

<sup>53</sup> Creed, B. (1986). *Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine: An Imaginary Abjection*. Retrieved, January 3, 2013, from <http://screen.oxfordjournals.org/content/27/1/44.extract>

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, p. 47.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, p 48.

<sup>56</sup> Yuen, W. (2006). 'The Bloody Connection Between Vampires and Vegetarians'. In R. Greene & K. Silem-Mohammad (Eds.), *The Undead and Philosophy: Chicken Soup for the Soulless (Volume 22 in the series, 'Popular Culture and Philosophy')*(pp. 129-142). United States of America: Carus Publishing Company.

<sup>57</sup> Creed, B. (1986). *Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine: An Imaginary Abjection*. Retrieved, January 3, 2013, from <http://screen.oxfordjournals.org/content/27/1/44.extract>

Kristeva, J. (1982). 'Approaching Abjection'. In Leon S. Roudiez (Translator), *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, (pp. 1-31). New York: Columbia University Press.

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<sup>58</sup> Dowdle, S., L. (2010). 'Why We Like Our Vampires Sexy'. In A. Clarke & M. J., Osborn (Eds), *The Twilight Mystique: Critical Essays on the Novels and Films* (pp. 179-188). North Carolina, and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers.

<sup>59</sup> Bloodlust within vampire romance fiction is *managed* through a series of elaborate mechanisms, which help to neuter the threat of the vampire (along with their own methods of self-control) to varying degrees of success. For example, in the 'Twilight saga,' 'The Vampire Diaries' and 'True Blood' the key male vampire characters are either considered "vegetarian vampires" (they only drink animal blood, therefore posing no threat to humans), or in the case of 'True Blood,' suggest that they only feed from willing human-beings, or consume a scientifically engineered, synthetic blood known as "True Blood."

### **Charming Yet Alarming**

*Sublimation and justification within vampire romance.*

How is it that these toxic themes present within vampire fiction have become socially acceptable (socially acceptable in the sense of mass-popularity in a “mainstream” context). Viewer responses to my own work have included calls for more blood, more gore, perhaps indicative of current comfort levels with explicit depictions of bloodletting in television, cinema and literature. I have made an intentional decision to not “go for the jugular” in this respect because I was looking to have people first experience the romance before being presented with the underlying presence of toxicity.

I have sought to unpack the idea of sublimation of the toxic or repulsive vampire, through the presence of blood within my videos. Blood seems to be the primary signifier of toxicity within vampire romance fiction, and looking back at an earlier discussion on visual cliché’s within the dream-wedding scene from the ‘Twilight saga’ (‘Breaking Dawn: Part One’ the movie),<sup>60</sup> this is evidenced. Despite the fact that a little over a third of each video frame within my series is filled with the presence of blood (a blood base), the viewer is not necessarily consciously aware of the blood from the beginning. In the case of one of the videos (fig.13) there is an

intentional oversaturation of the colour red, designed to detract from an awareness of the presence of blood within the scene – it could simply be a red cast or reflection onto clear liquid. The blood base was purposely designed to mirror the slick glossy layer of perspex often used in product or advertorial imagery (fig.14). In the case of my work, this is designed to further explore more subliminal or veiled blood symbolism.



Figure 13. *Death Unto Thee* [Prestige, Red Naomi & Grand Prix with Berzelia, Early Cheer & Red Alstroemeria] [Image still]. Jonathan Cameron. 2013.



Figure 14. *Gucci Shoe*. Magnus Svensson. n.d.

Australian artist Petrina Hick's video 'The Crysalis' (fig.15) from her 2011 body of work titled 'Beautiful Creatures' functions in a similar manner to my video pieces.<sup>61</sup> The presence of saliva from her model licking a bunch of flowers is out of place and rather repulsive looking. Whilst not repulsive in a life threatening sense, the slow-motion filming of the scene depicts the saliva as an odd, abject secretion. At the same time, the clean, mint green background compliments the pastel orange tones of the flowers. The colour of the models' skin blends with the colour of the flowers, imbuing the flowers with a flesh-like appearance. This, combined with the

strategic cropping of the models face to isolate and feature her mouth, gives a strong impression of a sexual act. This particular consideration of colour, framing and "advertorial" aesthetic subverts the what-should-be a displeasing scene into something visually pleasing, where the viewer is unsure whether to be attracted or repelled.



Figure 15. *The Crysalis*. Petrina Hicks. 2011.

This blurring of boundaries between attraction and repulsion is also strengthened through the considered way that Hicks deals with time within her film. Hicks has made use of a slow-motion camera, slowing down the act of licking the flowers to an unsettling and unnatural motion. In this way, the speed heightens the

anticipation of the act, and also draws further attention to every detail of the extremely cropped subject.<sup>62</sup> There is also no escaping the sexually charged tone of the model's interaction with the flower.

My work makes use of time in a similar way. Whilst not working with a slow motion camera (as this would have meant that the petals would not hit the blood so abruptly) they do fall at intervals with periods of calm. It was not intended for the petals to gracefully fall onto the surface. This action being the only element of movement within the video works also creates a heightened tension between a seemingly still-image and moving image. Again, there is a feeling of anticipation but not in a predictable sense. I was intending to create a somewhat disjointed, unsettling feeling through the erratic movement.

Like Hick's work, my videos utilise an aesthetic drawing on traditions of commercial photography and advertising. The ring boxes and their commercialised appearance and the central positioning of the ring box (as if it were a product) suggests the depiction of a proposal. The romance narrative provides a necessary attraction or distraction from the horror. Teen vampire fiction takes a similar approach, presenting some rather questionable morals or activities that are made to appear normal or

acceptable on the surface. Within these contemporary vampire fictions one of the key human characters is effectively dating a monster,<sup>63</sup> but they are also often portrayed as having greater freedom than the typical teen. In essence, the teen within the fiction is glamorised and their actions are justified or masked.<sup>64</sup>

Teen fiction deals with adult themes but has this pretence of offering a more wholesome perspective, one that's more acceptable and accessible to a wider audience. For example, Elaina in 'The Vampire Diaries' is presented as a young teenage girl whom is depicted as a victim of tragedy through the recent death of her parents. This tragedy that Elaina is facing is used to normalise or even justify her newfound freedom and adult-like behaviour. Freedoms which under "normal" circumstances wouldn't usually be granted to a teenager. For example, she lives without any clear boundaries. Elaina is often out late, drinking under-age and skipping school, all of which seem to be rationalised within the fiction. The absence of her parents has lifted a typical boundary that most teenagers would have.<sup>65</sup> This type of teen-fiction seems to find logical ways of offering teenagers adult freedoms. Ultimately it is this progression, which allows the audience to accept Elaina's choice to date a vampire and eventually become one herself.<sup>66</sup>

Whilst my work originates from an interest in teen vampire fictions, it too takes on an adult persona, visually, through its strategic high-end advertorial appearance (usually targeting a wealthy or adult market). The teen-romance story behind is therefore masked. One of the key reasons I have chosen not to include the presence of a person or 'vampire' is that I want the audience or viewer to engage with the films in their own way. Each viewer may respond differently to each of the films and ring designs. It also is in keeping with the general approach advertisers take when marketing engagement rings. The focus is often kept on the ring itself and it appears less common to see a model bearing the ring, as this potentially makes it harder for the viewer to imagine themselves wearing it, or having it belong to them. Whilst I have a very specific narrative in mind, I wanted the work to still maintain mystery in order for it to create a space for the viewer to project themselves into the scenario; the offer, the promise is aimed at them rather than an "other", a named protagonist. Here it may be also useful to explain why the work has been designed for display within a gallery context (rather than, say, publically in the form of a billboard). Whilst the design of the video pieces and photographs are intended to reflect that of a marketing campaign, I felt that presentation within a gallery context still allowed for a more individual or intimate viewing of the work and thus a better, more

thought-provoking connection with the romance narrative. It is important to remember that the work was conceived as an artwork that engages advertising languages to discuss the role of vampire fiction in contemporary society and not as an advertising campaign in itself.

There is also a subtle reference through the way in which the videos are constructed, bearing resemblance to early Dutch/Flemish *vanitas* still life paintings.<sup>67</sup> These *vanitas* works would often allude to the "vanity of worldly pleasures" and "life's transient nature," frequently exploring signs of elapsing time and decay.<sup>68</sup> Contemporary British artist Sam Taylor-Wood explores this within her 2001 video titled 'Still Life' (fig.16) where she continuously films a bowl of fruit to the point where it has completely rotted.<sup>69</sup> In an interview on her work, Taylor-Wood points out how video functions differently to painting, as she is able to greater depict a sense of time through moving image.<sup>70</sup> The fruit becomes a metaphor for the human body and this illustrated sense of time passing reminds us of the very fact that we are mortal and our time on earth is limited.



Figure 16. *Still Life*. Sam Taylor-Wood. 2001.

Prominent New Zealand artist Fiona Pardington has recently created an extensive series of works based on *vanitas* still life paintings (2011-2012) (fig.17 & 18). Her photographic images reflect the paintings in such a way that creates an uncertainty as to whether she is in fact presenting a painting or a photograph. I find this series of *vanitas*-styled photographs more compelling than the original paintings her works reference; this blur between painting and photography or deception is what fascinates me. What is so gripping is the controlled manner in which she has been able to manipulate the lighting, angles and composition to the point where

it could easily be confused with one of the original *vanitas* paintings. She has even managed to flatten the perspective of the objects photographed to render the look of a 2-dimensional, painted object.



Figure 17. *Still Life with Wild Wheat and Freesias*. Fiona Pardington. 2011.



Figure 18. *Still Life with Freud and Puriri*. Fiona Pardington. 2012.

Directly prior to this latest series within Pardington's practice, she had been looking at various specimens found in French museums (fig.19). In a short essay on Pardington's still life photographs of fungi from French museums, John Hurrell enthusiastically writes "there is a chromatic otherworldly sweetness that would appeal to children, a perverse joke on Pardington's part seeing [as] many of the fungi represented are notoriously toxic."<sup>71</sup> This use of irony or humour is yet another demonstration of the way in which something unpleasant or toxic can be shifted to be something of interest or pleasure. Pardington's approach echoes my own choice

to deliberately subvert the presence or severity of blood within my work.



Figure 19. *Phallus Impudicus, Molient 1858* from *The Champignons Barla*. Fiona Pardington. 2011.

Both Sam Taylor-Wood and Fiona Pardington (particularly in her latest still-life photographs) appear to deliberately generate a sense of an old world perspective. In Taylor-Wood's still life video we are only brought into a contemporary or 21<sup>st</sup> century realisation through the presence of the blue Bic pen.<sup>72</sup> In my video works I am not seeking to directly address *vanitas* paintings in a deliberate sense, although I am well aware of similarities in composition and style or references my work makes to this period.

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<sup>60</sup> Condon, B. (Director). (2011). *Breaking Dawn: Part One*. Summit Entertainment.

<sup>61</sup> For video footage of Petrina Hicks' work see:  
<http://www.petrinahicks.com/creatures/1.html>

<sup>62</sup> This filmic technique is also quite commonly seen in nature documentaries – for example, an obvious parallel being a hummingbird drinking nectar from a flower.

<sup>63</sup> This is a common theme within the romance genre in general. Often romance fiction contains themes of forbidden love or one of the characters is viewed as 'other' or an outsider and their union considered socially unacceptable. Perhaps in this sense the vampire is simply the new 'other' as a means of television networks and fiction writers not wanting to be seen as racist, classists, or bigoted:

Christian-Smith, L., K. (1990). *Becoming a Woman Through Romance (Critical Social Thought)*. Routledge.

Goddu, T., A. (1999). Vampire Gothic. In *America Literary History, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Spring, 1999)*, (pp. 125-141). Published by: Oxford University Press.

<sup>64</sup> For further reading around the glamorisation of teenage characters holding adult-like personas within teen fiction see:

Davis, G. & Dickinson, K. (Eds). (2004). *Teen TV: Genre, Consumption and Identity*. London: British Film Institute.

Ross, S., M. & Stein, L., E. (2008). *Essays on Programming and Fandom: Teen Television*. North Carolina: Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers.

Wee, V. (2008). 'Teen Television and the WB Television Network'. In S. M. Ross & L. E. Stein (Eds), *Essays on Programming and Fandom: Teen Television* (pp. 43-60). North Carolina: Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers. .

<sup>65</sup> Williamson, K. & Plec, J. (Head Writers & Executive Producers). *The Vampire Diaries: Season One (2009-2010)* [Television Series]. The CW Television Network.

<sup>66</sup> By season four of 'The Vampire Diaries' all of Elaina's family (apart from her younger brother) have been killed off, leaving Elaina (being the eldest of the two siblings) in charge of

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their parents estate – she is completely free from any restrictive boundaries. This "progression" can also be likened to the notion of an increasing tolerance to something toxic or a growing desensitization to something graphic:

Williamson, K.; Plec, J.; Morgenstein, L. & Levy, B. (Executive Producers). *The Vampire Diaries: Season Four (2012-2013)* [Television Series]. The CW Television Network.

<sup>67</sup> 17<sup>th</sup> Century:

Britannica Encyclopaedia. [n.d.]. *Vanitas*. Retrieved December 3, 2012, from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/623056/vanitas>

<sup>68</sup> Maurer, S. (2009). *Audrey Flack's Marilyn: Still Life, Vanitas, Trompe L'Oeil*. Retrieved December 3, 2012, from [http://artmuseum.arizona.edu/exhibitions/flack\\_marilyn.shtml](http://artmuseum.arizona.edu/exhibitions/flack_marilyn.shtml)

<sup>69</sup> For video footage of Sam Taylor-Wood's work see:  
<http://www.popscreen.com/v/5X3XT/Sam-TaylorWood-Still-Life-2001>

<sup>70</sup> Wendt, S. & Barragán, P. (eds). (2011). *When a Painting Moves...Something Must be Rotten!*. Milan: Edizione CHARTA, April 2011, (pp. 36-40). Retrieved January 3, 2013, from <http://artpulsemagazine.com/breaking-the-medium-of-painting-down>

<sup>71</sup> Hurrell, J. (2011). *A New Museological series from Fiona Pardington*. Retrieved January 3, 2013, from <http://eyecontactsite.com/2011/10/a-new-museological-series-from-pardington>

<sup>72</sup> Wendt, S. & Barragán, P. (eds). (2011). *When a Painting Moves...Something Must be Rotten!*. Milan: Edizione CHARTA, April 2011, (pp. 36-40). Retrieved January 3, 2013, from <http://artpulsemagazine.com/breaking-the-medium-of-painting-down>

### **'You'll Be The Death Of Me'<sup>73</sup>**

*Love as sacrifice; depictions of love and gender in vampire fiction.*

Whilst my work embodies a reference to the past, through its use of traditional ring boxes and styling, I wanted my narrative to reflect romance both old and current. Does the toxic nature of the vampire become a metaphor for something that resides in other forms of love, both past and present? Many romance fictions present love stories with a set of challenges or conflicts that must first be overcome.<sup>74</sup> Therefore it is not solely the toxic relationships or characters within vampire romance fiction that is being explored in my project, but it involves an expanded investigation into the depictions of romantic relationships within society as a whole. It becomes a platform against which a range of critical issues surrounding love and humanity is brought forward. It also locates a range of love stories to be identified with by the viewer.

A key consideration that has arisen from my study of contemporary vampire fiction that is relevant to relationships of any kind, is that of gender roles. My work addresses this through the way in which I have consciously chosen to design the rings with women in mind. My choice to create a series of rings specifically targeted to a female wearer is also commenting on the demographic that romance

fiction in general is targeted towards – a prominently female audience. Linda K. Christian-Smith explains in her book, 'Becoming A Woman Through Romance,' that whilst romance fiction is not something that is exclusively engaged with by women, it is however, an area of fiction that is targeted to a female audience.<sup>75</sup> She explores the various gender roles within romance fiction, and illustrates how male characters are often portrayed to "make" or "complete" a woman. Despite an ever increasing strong demographic of independent woman (independent from say, a man's financial or romantic support), it is interesting to consider how current and very popular romance fictions, such as vampire romance, still adhere to gender roles prescribed by tradition.<sup>76</sup>

The 'Twilight saga' is perhaps the best example from the current vampire fictions that substantiates this idea. This is possibly due to the fact that unlike televisual series that go on for some time without the need to conclude with an eventual "happily ever after" (or otherwise), the 'Twilight Saga' as a movie or book series, is working with a clear end in sight. To use terms prescribed by the latest fictional sensation 'Fifty Shades of Grey',<sup>77</sup> Bella Swan holds the submissive role and Edward Cullen maintains the dominant role. An interesting parallel being that Bella is vulnerable in her human form, and Edward has sworn to protect her, despite his own threat to her life as a vampire.<sup>78</sup> This idea of male domination, or female

dependance, is perhaps best evidenced through the recent fictional outlet which despite not being about vampires, has originated from the authors own obsession with the 'Twilight saga', titled 'Fifty Shades of Grey'.

The author, E. L. James, began writing these erotic novels in response to her excitement over the 'Twilight saga'.<sup>79</sup> In 'Fifty Shades of Grey', the central couple, Christian Grey and Ana Steele, form a relationship under the rules of BDSM,<sup>80</sup> where Ana is Christian's "submissive", and Christian is Ana's "dominant". Despite the fact that this initial BDSM structured relationship does go through somewhat of a break-down, through Ana's persistence (or "defiance" as Christian terms it), the couple essentially end up in a relationship where the male character is still clearly the dominant one (and also the one with the most 'baggage').<sup>81</sup>

In 'Fifty Shades of Grey' there are many times where Ana feels extremely threatened, restricted and de-graded by Christian in an unforgivable sense; this is, however excused through his admittedly traumatic childhood and fear of being touched. Christian's flawed character is in close resemblance to the character or role of the vampire within vampire romance fiction.

The very production of a catalogue of engagement/betrothal rings demonstrates certain promises and compromises one may have to

make in the formation of a relationship or marriage. From a traditional promise to bare children, provide financial support or commitment, to even a symbol of ownership or possession.<sup>82</sup> Whilst my rings act as a symbol of romantic union, the presence of the spikes and blood allude to a certain danger or sacrifice. This contrasts with the desire promoted through the other aspects of the ring designs and their presentation.

Being romanced by a man (or vampire), according to Christian-Smith, gives a woman importance and meaning.<sup>83</sup> In the 'Twilight saga', Bella's unreadable mind makes her exceptionally endearing to Edward. Christian-Smith also explains that within most romance-novels the "heroine" (main female character) is usually made to feel special by the key male character in question. This idea of 'singling out' a woman is played upon within my work through this idea of offering up the rings to the viewer. This is interesting as whilst the rings indicate that the woman is being pursued (which might generate a feeling of flattery), the presence of spikes within the design signify a trap or *catch* to the offer at hand. In order to be with a vampire one must hand over her life.

My intention was to locate the enquiry within this dominant-trope present in romance fiction. Not only is the vampire character toxic or repulsive by his very nature but within the romance fiction

context he is also toxic through the way in which he asserts a certain position of control over the female. In 'True Blood' when a human drinks blood from a vampire's vein a certain chemical connection or bond is formed meaning that the human will start to experience sexual and romantic feelings towards the vampire, thus the vampire attracting his prey.<sup>84</sup> This form of love, which as I am about to define in further detail, is an example of erotic love.

Christian-Smith suggests that romance fiction is inclined to focus more on the portrayal of a love story as opposed to a concentration on erotic love or sex.<sup>85</sup> Even in 'Fifty Shades of Grey', essentially an erotic novel, the characters relationship transforms from an earlier purely sexual relationship to a much deeper form of love.<sup>86</sup> My series of rings was intended to bring forth the concept of a "romance" rather than be centred in lust impulses.<sup>87</sup>

In Linnell Secomb's text, 'Levinas: Love, Justice and Responsibility' the notion of an all-conquering love is presented.<sup>88</sup> Secomb references Levinas's famed "face-to-face relation" philosophy concerning love. This type of relationship reveals a call within the self to take responsibility for another, even before ourselves. Secomb presents two forms of love, one being ethical love, and the other being erotic love – which itself evolves from ethical love with the addition of a fulfilment of sexual, amorous desire. Secomb

explores this idea of erotic love (with its ethical connotations) in a depiction of a young girl who falls in love with an enemy soldier. When her lover is shot, she risks her reputation by running to his aid and comforting him as he dies in her arms. She is consequently labelled a "traitor" and marked as such when her head is shaven to show others of the "crime" she has committed. The point that Secomb is making here is that this is a depiction of true love where both ethical and erotic forms of love work in conjunction with one another; "the young woman's ethical refusal of the unethical requirements of war is motivated by an erotic love that 'fear[s] for another...[and] come[s] to the assistance of his frailty'.<sup>89</sup> This romance story clearly illustrates the way in which a character (and audience) might be moved to break set boundaries (both societal or mental boundaries – ie. the abject) for the sake of love. Once again, this couple could be viewed as an exception, their union inconceivable.

This story, as with vampire romance, again brings forth a definitive moment of choice. The woman in this story, as with the female in love with the vampire, chose to put herself at risk for the sake of being with the one she loves. This could be viewed as the ultimate act of sacrificial love. To put oneself in harms way in the name of love is the ultimate declaration of their commitment. 'Immortal Diamonds by Vamp' was designed to reflect this predicament. Just

as these relationships have been set upon a poisonous foundation, the ring boxes have been presented lying in a pool of blood. Unsure of whether to find this attractive or repulsive the viewer is presented with a similar conflicting choice.

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<sup>73</sup> Chapter title from television series 'True Blood', Season one, Episode eleven.

<sup>74</sup> Alliston, A. (2011). 'Female Quixotism and the Novel: Character and Plausibility, Honesty and Fidelity'. In *The Eighteenth Century* 52(3), (pp. 249-269). University of Pennsylvania Press. Retrieved January 3, 2013, from Project MUSE database.

Christian-Smith, L., K. (1990). *Becoming a Woman Through Romance (Critical Social Thought)*. Routledge.

<sup>75</sup> Christian-Smith, L., K. (1990). *Becoming a Woman Through Romance (Critical Social Thought)*. Routledge.

Click, M., A.; Aubrey, J., S. & Behm-Morawitz, E. (Eds). (2010). *Bitten by Twilight: Youth Culture, Media, & the Vampire Franchise*. United States of America: New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc,

<sup>76</sup> Even in the more sexually explicit and taboo-friendly television series, 'True Blood,' (which depicts numerous one-night stands and homosexual relationships) the key heterosexual couple, Sookie Stackhouse and Bill Compton, still fit somewhat traditional gender roles even including a brief "courting" phase (at least in the very beginning):

Ball, A. (Executive Producer). *True Blood: Season One (2008)* [Television series]. HBO Home Entertainment.

<sup>77</sup> James, E., L. (2011). *Fifty Shades of Grey*. United Kingdom: Vintage Books.

James, E., L. (2012). *Fifty Shades Darker*. United Kingdom: Vintage Books.

James, E., L. (2012). *Fifty Shades Freed*. United Kingdom: Vintage Books.

<sup>78</sup> Meyer, S. (2005). *Twilight*. Great Britain: Atom, an imprint of Little, Brown Book Group.

Meyer, S. (2006). *New Moon*. Great Britain: Atom, an imprint of Little, Brown Book Group.

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Meyer, S. (2007). *Eclipse*. Great Britain: Atom, an imprint of Little, Brown Book Group.

Meyer, S. (2008). *Breaking Dawn*. Great Britain: Atom, an imprint of Little, Brown Book Group.

<sup>79</sup> ABCNews. (April 20, 2012). *20/20 from ABC News: Fifty Shades of Grey: Author Speaks*. Retrieved January 3, 2013, from [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fpm\\_1iERYoU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fpm_1iERYoU)

<sup>80</sup> A form of role-play, BDSM: Bondage and Discipline; Dominance and Submission; Sadism and Masochism:

Violet, A. [n.d.]. *BDSM: What is it?*. Retrieved January 3, 2013, from <http://www.mibba.com/Articles/People/3810/BDSM-What-is-it/>

<sup>81</sup> James, E., L. (2011). *Fifty Shades of Grey*. United Kingdom: Vintage Books.

<sup>82</sup> Hall, E. (1997). 'On Marriage Law and Ceremony'. In *The Arnolfini Betrothal: Medieval Marriage and the Enigma of Van Eyck's Double Portrait* (pp. 13-48). University of California Press.

Hersch, K., K. (2010). *The Roman Wedding: Ritual and Meaning in*. United States of America: New York: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>83</sup> Christian-Smith, L., K. (1990). *Becoming a Woman Through Romance (Critical Social Thought)*. Routledge.

<sup>84</sup> In season two of 'True Blood', Sookie Stackhouse drinks from the blood of vampire Eric Northman and therefore experiences sexual feelings for him despite being in a relationship with vampire Bill Compton:

Ball, A. & Fienberg, G. (Executive Producers). (2009). *True Blood: Season Two* [Television series]. HBO Home Entertainment.

A similar version of this can be seen in the latest season of 'The Vampire Diaries', where it is revealed that key character (and now vampire) Elaina Gilbert is "sired" to Damon Salvatore after drinking his blood. In the episode 'My Brother's Keeper,' Elaina has recently broken off her long term relationship with boyfriend (and brother to Damon) Stefan Salvatore, who in turn realises the situation:

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Hunt, J. (November 29, 2012). 'My Brother's Keeper' [Television Episode No. 7]. In Williamson, K.; Plec, J.; Morgenstein, L. & Levy, B. (Executive Producers), *The Vampire Diaries: Season Four (2012-2013)* [Television Series]. The CW Television Network.

<sup>85</sup> Christian-Smith, L., K. (1990). *Becoming a Woman Through Romance (Critical Social Thought)*. Routledge.

<sup>86</sup> The characters Christian Grey and Ana Steele marry in the final book, titled 'Fifty Shades Freed' and as the title suggests, Christian has proven to himself that he can open up to (and love) someone:

James, E., L. (2012). *Fifty Shades Freed*. United Kingdom: Vintage Books.

<sup>87</sup> This is certainly not to say that lustful impulses do not play a significant part in the key relationships present in such fictions.

<sup>88</sup> Secomb, L. (2007). 'Levinas: Love, Justice and Responsibility'. In L. Secomb (Ed.), *Philosophy and Love: From Plato to Popular Culture* (pp. 58-74). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, p. 75.

## 'As I Lay Dying'<sup>90</sup>

### *Conclusion.*

As this enquiry has illustrated, vampire romance fiction presents us with love and death simultaneously. In vampire fiction inviting death is rewarded with eternal life, and my project, 'Immortal Diamonds by Vamp', deliberately speaks of both danger and reward. The project was designed to unpack notions of toxicity and the delicate balance between desire and threat. Despite a significant amount of blood being visually present within the project, its effect is destabilized through its highly advertorial aesthetic and rather cliché reference to romance. In the style of *vantitas* painting, it is perhaps even injected with a feeling of celebration towards the toxic vampire. Its use of strong symbolism was designed to draw light to such notions of toxicity within romance fiction and explore ways which its representation within popular culture is sublimated, glorified and masked.

My own engagement with the project is also crucial to the understanding of the work, reflected in its construction. The work is grounded in my own sense of desire and the obsessional manner in which the work was conceived and controlled. Whilst there may have been many different ways to depict this fictional narrative,

there was only one way, one particular storyline that *I* could conceive as being logical. This reflects April Alliston's suggestion that there is a need for the quixotic love story within romance fiction to be imbued with a sense of legitimacy or realism.<sup>91</sup> Vampire fiction was an outlet for which my inquiry surrounding toxicity within romance could be located.

The hold that vampire fiction has over me, and the space it occupies within popular culture, speaks powerfully of societies values and tolerance with respect to toxicity in romance; fictional or otherwise. There appeared to be an in-balance within vampire romance fiction where the female is expected to sacrifice more than the male and is the most vulnerable – this was of great significance given the fact that romance fiction is primarily targeted towards a female audience and often written by female authors.<sup>92</sup> This process revealed to me the ways in which certain traditional romance ideals are upheld, such as certain gender roles, and the significance of consummating a romantic union.

The rings and video works in the case of the vampire narrative at play are not just a symbol of a marital union, but also speak of funeral practices; the female character having to die in order to become immortal and lead out a lasting relationship with her vampire lover. The presence of her remaining human blood held

within the ring alludes to the fact that it will be a romance forever haunted by the spectre of her stolen humanity.

As an artwork the presentation of the narrative through a catalogue or suite of rings intended for sale (but not actually available as physical objects) allow for my position to be maintained as both indulger and critic. This series of marketed products calls the viewer to initially engage with the narrative as an appealing product before a further understanding of the storyline can take place; and a possible reflection of the wider issues that the vampiric narrative speaks to.

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<sup>90</sup> Chapter title from television series 'The Vampire Diaries', Season two, Episode twenty-two.

<sup>91</sup> Alliston, A. (2011). 'Female Quixotism and the Novel: Character and Plausibility, Honesty and Fidelity'. In *The Eighteenth Century* 52(3), (pp. 249-269). University of Pennsylvania Press. Retrieved January 3, 2013, from Project MUSE database.

<sup>92</sup> Christian-Smith, L., K. (1990). *Becoming a Woman Through Romance (Critical Social Thought)*. Routledge.

**Images Of The Final Project:**



Figure 1. Jonathan Cameron. 2013. Installation view. The Engine Room, Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand.



Figure 2. Jonathan Cameron. 2013. Immortal Diamonds catalogue.



Figure 3. Jonathan Cameron. 2013. *Death Unto Thee* [*Avalanche, Bianca & Prestige with Early Cheer, Pieris & White Freesia*] [Image still]. Single-channel high definition video, 8:28min, looped, edition of 5.



Figure 4. Jonathan Cameron. 2013. *Death Unto Thee* [*Sweet Avalanche, Something Special, Akito & Red Naomi with White Freesia, Flowering White Pieris & Pink Erica*] [Image still]. Single-channel high definition video, 11:17min, looped, edition of 5.



Figure 5. Jonathan Cameron. 2013. *Death Unto Thee* [*Prestige, Red Naomi & Grand Prix with Berzelia, Early Cheer & Red Alstroemeria*] [Image still]. Single-channel high definition video, 12:15min, looped, edition of 5.



Figure 6. Jonathan Cameron. 2013. *Death Unto Thee [Sweet Avalanche, Something Special & Akito with Pink Erica & White Button Chrysanthemums]* [Image still]. Single-channel high definition video, 12:29min, looped, edition of 5.



Figure 7. Jonathan Cameron. 2013. *Death Unto Thee [Akito, Grand Prix & Avalanche, with Early Cheer]* [Image still]. Single-channel high definition video, 9:35min, looped, edition of 5.

*The Story*

*Immortal Diamonds by Vamp presents an exclusive suite of charming Edwardian inspired diamond rings. The diamonds have been sourced from this period and re-crafted into a platinum setting for a new wearer. This lavish collection captures the fragility of human life with a secret cavity inside each band to preserve a single drop of human blood, a symbol of the bride's prior form. Each embellished platinum band also bares sharp thorns like that of a rose, allowing only a true vampire bride to be adorned with such beauty.*

Figure 8. Jonathan Cameron. 2013. *Immortal Diamonds [The Story]*. Catalogue excerpt.

FLORA DIAMOND RING  
by VAMP

*The Flora Diamond Ring, our most detailed and valuable design, was borne out of a desire to create a lush collection of rings to mark the love that blossomed between vampire and human. The flawless central diamond sits elevated among a bed of flowers. Contrasting the frailty and fleeting nature of flowers with the strength and permanence of diamonds and platinum this elegant ring sets the tone for an eternal romance.*

This ring is crafted in platinum, a highly durable and precious metal. Inside the platinum band is a cavity to preserve 0.05ml of human blood. The 10.25ct cushion cut diamond is of the highest colour (D) and Internally Flawless clarity. This centre stone is adorned with another ten small round diamonds and two pear shape diamonds that weigh 0.41ct in total, the replacement value of this ring today would be \$3.4 million.



Figure 9. Jonathan Cameron. 2013. *Immortal Diamonds [Flora Diamond Ring]*. Catalogue excerpt.

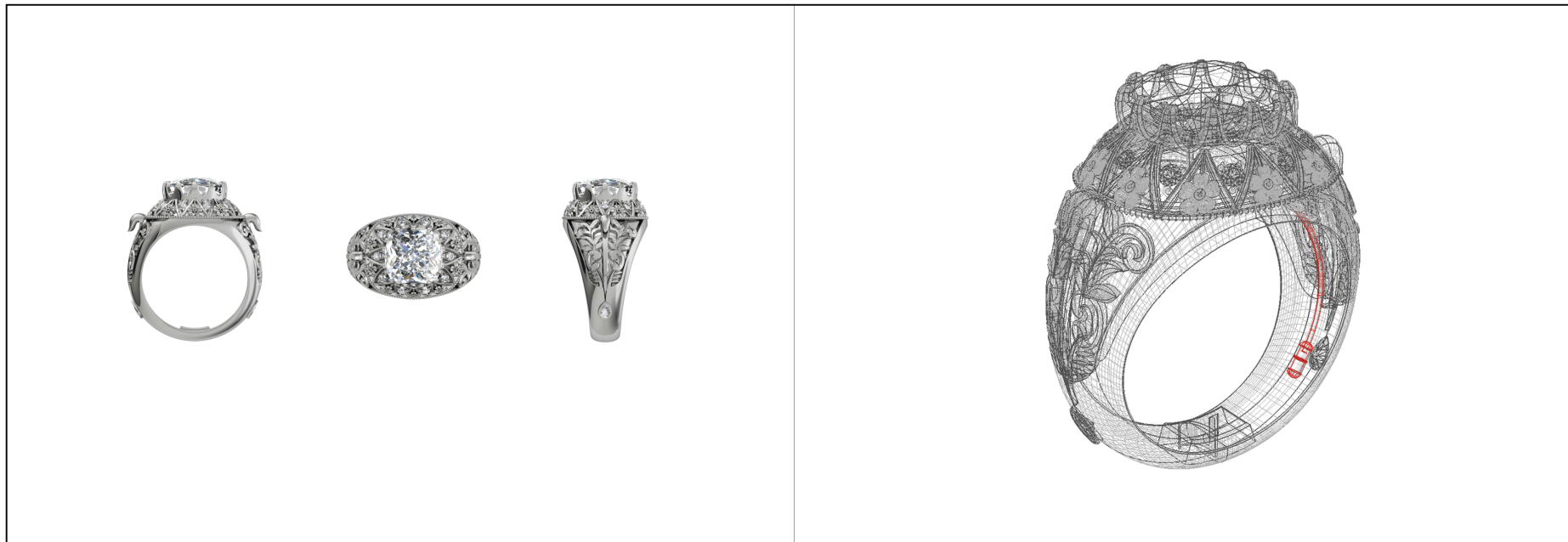


Figure 10. Jonathan Cameron. 2013. *Immortal Diamonds [Flora Diamond Ring]*. Catalogue excerpt.

EFFLORESCE DIAMOND RING  
by VAMP

*The Effloresce Diamond Ring speaks of luminosity and sheer beauty. The rings delicate structure is laced with intricate beading and clustered diamonds. The intimate detailing spans upward, flourishing at its crest. Fitted with long flowing spikes tracing the band with razor sharp precision, this ring is complete.*

This ring is crafted in platinum, a highly durable and precious metal. Inside the platinum band is a cavity to preserve 0.05ml of human blood. The ring features a central round 6.80ct diamond of the highest colour (D) and Internally Flawless clarity. Embellished with another sixty-five small diamonds that total 0.40ct, the replacement value of this ring today would be \$1.8 million.



Figure 11. Jonathan Cameron. 2013. *Immortal Diamonds [Effloresce Diamond Ring]*. Catalogue excerpt.



Figure 12. Jonathan Cameron. 2013. *Immortal Diamonds [Effloresce Diamond Ring]*. Catalogue excerpt.

ETHEREAL DIAMOND RING  
by VAMP

*The Ethereal Diamond Ring consists of a highly decorative weave of creeping vines spiraling across the platinum band and delicately clutching the centre stone. The organic structure is embedded with gleaming diamonds and small thorn-like spikes, blending and twisting together in harmonic fluidity. This ring is an everlasting symbol of the moment when two fates are inextricably entwined.*

This ring is crafted in platinum, a highly durable and precious metal. Inside the platinum band is a cavity to preserve 0.05ml of human blood. The ring features an 8.70ct round diamond of the highest colour (D) and Internally Flawless clarity. Set with another twelve small round diamonds and two pear shape diamonds that total 0.26ct, the replacement value of this ring today would be \$2.2 million.



Figure 13. Jonathan Cameron. 2013. *Immortal Diamonds [Ethereal Diamond Ring]*. Catalogue excerpt.



Figure 14. Jonathan Cameron. 2013. *Immortal Diamonds [Ethereal Diamond Ring]*. Catalogue excerpt.

AMARANTHINE DIAMOND RING  
by VAMP

*The Amaranthine Diamond Ring features a unique hexagonal setting, which acts as a platform to showcase and lend greater emphasis to the central diamond. This ring celebrates the distinctive qualities of platinum; its fortitude, rarity and purity, a perfect match for the diamond held within. The distinctive and dangerous shoulder pattern contrasts with the delicate Edwardian inspired floral embellishments, which echoes a love that defies all others.*

This ring is crafted in platinum, a highly durable and precious metal. Inside the platinum band is a cavity to preserve 0.05ml of human blood. The ring exhibits a 5.30ct round diamond of the highest colour (D) and Internally Flawless clarity. This ring would have a replacement value today of \$1.2 million.



Figure 15. Jonathan Cameron. 2013. *Immortal Diamonds [Amaranthine Diamond Ring]*. Catalogue excerpt.



Figure 16. Jonathan Cameron. 2013. *Immortal Diamonds [Amaranthine Diamond Ring]*. Catalogue excerpt.

INAMORATA DIAMOND RING  
by VAMP

*The Inamorata Diamond Ring has been designed to embody the characteristics of the newly transformed vampire bride. The oval cut of the central diamond maximizes its presence due to its multitude of facets. The ring is complete with platinum hearts on each side; serving as a visual reminder of her heart, which was once beating. Strategically placed spikes, barely visible to the human eye, portray the beautiful yet deadly characteristics of the vampire.*

This ring is crafted in platinum, a highly durable and precious metal. Inside the platinum band is a cavity to preserve 0.05ml of human blood. The main diamond is an oval cut, weighs 8.20ct and is of the highest colour (D) and Internally Flawless clarity. This ring would have a replacement value today of \$2.3 million.



Figure 17. Jonathan Cameron. 2013. *Immortal Diamonds [Inamorata Diamond Ring]*. Catalogue excerpt.

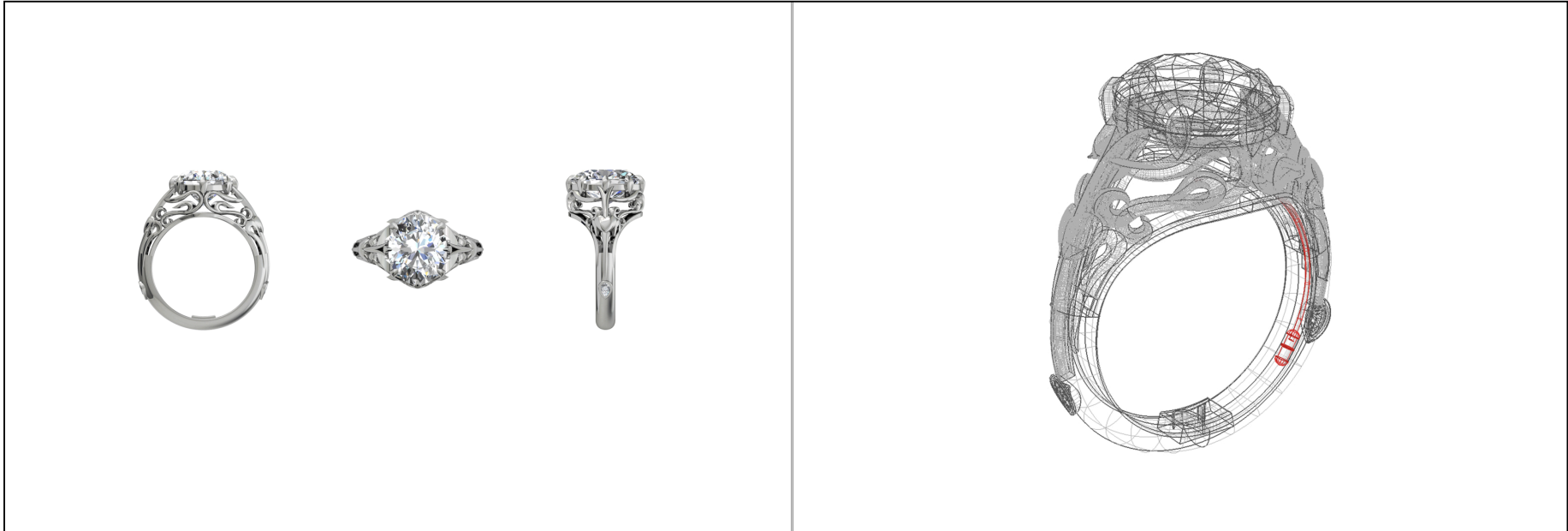


Figure 18. Jonathan Cameron. 2013. *Immortal Diamonds* [*Inamorata Diamond Ring*]. Catalogue excerpt.

## Illustration List

Figure 1. The CW Television Network. 2009. *The Vampire Diaries* [season one]. Retrieved January 18, 2013, from <http://aparoo.com/2011/09/08/the-vampire-diaries-tv-nina-dobrev/>

Figure 2. Summit Entertainment. 2012. *The Twilight saga: Breaking Dawn part 2*. Retrieved January 18, 2013, from <http://breakingdawnthesoundtrack.com>

Figure 3. HBO. 2010. *True Blood* [season three]. Retrieved January 18, 2013, from <http://www.shockya.com/news/2011/05/29/dvd-review-true-blood-season-3/>

Figure 4. Condon, B. (Director). 2011. *Bella Swan's wedding dream*. Image still from 'Breaking Dawn: Part One'. Summit Entertainment.

Figure 5. Condon, B. (Director). 2011. *Bella Swan's wedding dream*. Image still from 'Breaking Dawn: Part One'. Summit Entertainment.

Figure 6. Jonathan Cameron. 2013. *Death Unto Thee [Avalanche, Bianca & Prestige with Early Cheer, Pieris & White Freesia]* [Image still]. Single-channel high definition video, 8:28min, looped, edition of 5.

Figure 7. *Flora Diamond Ring* [pages from catalogue]. Jonathan Cameron. 2013.

Figure 8. Yvonne Todd. 2008. *Self Portrait as The Corpse of Sandra West*. Lightjet print, 76 x 62cm, edition of 3 + 1 ap. Retrieved January 18, 2013, from <http://www.ervon.com/photographs/mauve-reaction/>

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Figure 11. Jonathan Cameron. 2013. *Death Unto Thee [Prestige, Red Naomi & Grand Prix with Berzelia, Early Cheer & Red Alstroemeria]* [Image still]. Single-channel high definition video, 12:15min, looped, edition of 5.

Figure 12. Jonathan Cameron. 2013. *Death Unto Thee [Sweet Avalanche, Something Special & Akito with Pink Erica & White Button Chrysanthemums]* [Image still]. Single-channel high definition video, 12:29min, looped, edition of 5.

Figure 13. Jonathan Cameron. 2013. *Death Unto Thee [Prestige, Red Naomi & Grand Prix with Berzelia, Early Cheer & Red Alstroemeria]* [Image still]. Single-channel high definition video, 12:15min, looped, edition of 5.

Figure 14. . Magnus Svensson. n.d. *Gucci Shoe*. Retrieved January 18, 2013, from <http://www.mazstudios.com/portfolio/product/>

Figure 15. Petrina Hicks. 2011. *The Crysalis*. Single-channel high definition phantom video, 6:00 minutes, seamless lopp, edition of 5 + 2 ap. Retrieved January 1, 2013, from <http://www.petrinahicks.com/creatures/1.html>

Figure 16. Sam Taylor-Wood. 2001. *Still Life*. 35mm film/DVD, duration: 3'18'. Retrieved January 1, 2013, from <http://www.popscreen.com/v/5X3XT/Sam-TaylorWood-Still-Life-2001>

Figure 17. Fiona Pardington. 2011. *Still Life with Wild Wheat and Freesias*. Pigment inks on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag 308gsm. Retrieved January 1, 2013, from [http://ocula.com/art-galleries/two-rooms/artworks/still-life-with-wild-wheat-a-\(1\)/](http://ocula.com/art-galleries/two-rooms/artworks/still-life-with-wild-wheat-a-(1)/)

Figure 18. Fiona Pardington. 2012. *Still Life with Freud and Puriri*. Pigment inks on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag 308gsm. Retrieved January 1, 2013, from <http://ocula.com/art-galleries/two-rooms/artworks/>

Figure 19. Fiona Pardington. 2011. *Phallus Impudicus, Molient 1858 from The Champignons Barla*. Pigment inks on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag 308gsm. Retrieved January 1, 2013, from <http://ocula.com/art-galleries/jonathan-smart-gallery/artworks/phallus-impudicus--molient-1/>

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