Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

# **beyond the surface** Anja Kutsch



## 2015

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Massey University Wellington, New Zealand.

## beyond the surface

#### abstract

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

**acknowledgement** Thank you to my supervisors Cassandra Barnett and Kingsley Baird for providing me with invaluable knowledge, guidance and encouragement. Thank you to Heather Galbraith for her thorough first edit. Thank you to Onno and Meret and thank you to my friends Eileen and Erina for their support and patience. This project would not have been possible without you.

## beyond the surface

anja kutsch

#### remember

no calling of their names keep deaths' anonymous heralded not vital and still haunting. don't trace me by my name for I am still alive in your ideas.

### table of contents

#### page

vii <b>list</b>	of	images
-----------------	----	--------

## part one – background

1	introduction
2	my heritage and hollow letters
3	reach of memory
5	the past in my guts
6	spirited substance and contemporary sculpture
7	primitive primitivist
9	embodiments of energy and mnemonic legacies
11	how to put the dilemma into a nutshell
	part two – studio
14	practice
18	others' memories and emotions
20	falling short of a synergetic accounter
22	material decay and the ravages of time
27	provocation and disturbance
33	conclusion
36	appendix – boli
37	references

- 38 bibliography
- 39 declaration

## list of images

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