



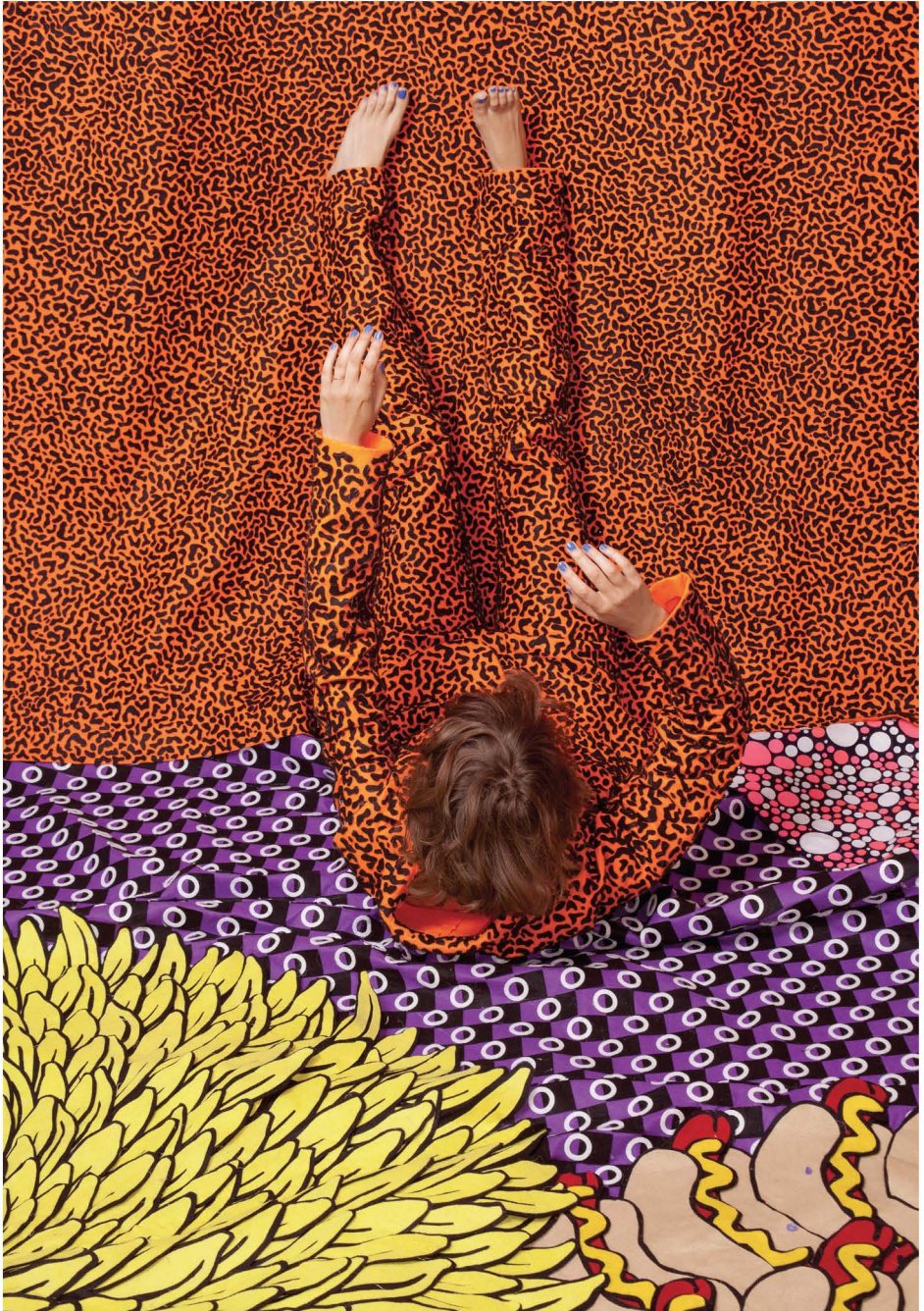
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WHAT YOU WANT WHENEVER YOU WANT IT

JODY PAULSEN



STUDIO HAPPENING  
(photo by Nico Krijno)

## WHAT YOU WANT WHENEVER YOU WANT IT

“Nothing in the modern consumer society is consumed with more relish as criticism of consumption. Merely to consume appears to be morally reprehensible – one should produce, make, be creative.”<sup>1</sup>

What You Want Whenever You Want It is a project that reflects on contemporary culture, including movements of taste, tempo and style. It embraces the rich and varied iconography of popular culture – films, advertising, images, packaging, fashion and music. By seeking, absorbing and emulating the content of these cultural iconography and collaging them together, i have developed my own idiosyncratic view on consumerism, specifically in relation to Western popular culture.

According to Boris Groys, the act of shopping may often be misconstrued as a frivolous or meaningless activity. Wandering idly, touching, selecting and consuming are generally viewed as the primary urban leisure occupation of affluent Western society. Purchasing goods is an activity that does more than just satisfies one's general needs or desires. Rather, shopping is a communal and public ritual through which identity is created and altered (Hollein, M. 2002: 14).

What You Want Whenever You Want It Whenever you want it is a mixed media body of artworks. The primary material is 'fuzzy' felt fabric. The felt used throughout my body of work is prepared using artificial fibres. Synthetic felt is available in a reasonably wide variety of loud and vibrant colours. The highly absorbent and dense texture of felt permits intense colour that is both bold and eye-catching. I have used the plasticity of the synthetic felt to create conceptual ties to the superficial and theatrical nature of Western contemporary culture, because this synthetic material allows me to emulate the striking and mesmerizing nature of my content.

Each work in What You Want Whenever You Want It uses modes of art-making that involve collage and appropriation. The project customizes and recombines various existing elements of the commercial world. These modes of art making have enabled me to explore materiality through the juxtaposition of existing media. Collage as a fine arts medium has been significant in reflecting the social, political and cultural climate of the world throughout various movements in modern art (Waldman, D. 1992: 8). This body of work engages with collage as a medium as it allows me to re-contextualize existing fragments of media and make it into a new product on its own. In the recombination of these fragments, I aim to communicate new viewpoints on consumerism and Western popular culture.

This thesis paper works to explicate my process and my artwork. It proceeds in sections titled 'The Materiality of Felt', 'Felt Suit (After Beuys)', 'On Form, (Robert Morris)', 'Experience (Mike Kelley)', 'The Impact of Collage' and notes on individual artworks. Firstly, The Materiality of Felt explains and explores the materiality of felt, focusing on its relevance to my artwork. Secondly, I discuss the artists that influence my work. Thirdly, I explore the history, impact and meaning of collage in terms of my art-making process. The fourth section focuses on individual artworks and content. Both the work and production process is described.

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<sup>1</sup> Groys, B. 1992. 'Der Wille zur totalen Produktion', Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Bilder und Zeiten, no, 114. 16 May 1992

## THE MATERIALITY OF FELT

The dominant material that I have chosen to use in my body of work is felt. I was initially drawn to felt through its inherent quality to appear youthful and childlike. I associate felt with my own youth as it was given to me as a child to make 'Fuzzy Felt' collages. Felt is made through a process of matting, condensing and pressing woolen fibers. This non-woven fabric is made in a number of ways ranging from soft and delicate (for craft purposes) to strong and industrial (for construction use). In this essay I aim to explore the materiality of felt, with particular focus on its relevance to my body of work.

My body of work combines various themes relating to consumption prevalent in Western popular media, such as fashion, gay tourism, online dating and shopping. These seemingly disparate themes all find common ground under the umbrella of instant gratification and desire evident in consumerism and Western contemporary popular culture. In this essay, I also look at how felt has been used in modern and contemporary art through interrogating the use of felt in the work of Joseph Beuys, Robert Morris and Mike Kelly. The following essay aims to unravel why I have chosen the medium of felt to communicate my ideas.

As a student I recall walls of bulletin boards covered in felt. Felt unavoidably takes on a naïve form, even though the way I manipulate this fabric is not particularly naïve or childlike. There is a practical easiness in using this fabric, which suggests why it is usually associated with child's play. Felt is easy to cut, tacks reasonably well to its own surface and is available in a variety of loud and vibrant colours. This, in many respects, is the reason why 'Fuzzy Felt'<sup>2</sup> became synonymous in children craft in the late 1970s<sup>3</sup>.

My process entails hand cutting, and sometimes laser cutting, felt into text, shapes, patterns or various other graphic silhouettes. I arrange, compose and glue these separate pieces together to create a felt collage. I am drawn to felt because it allows me to cut clean graphic images in a variety of colours, which are readily available in most fabric stores. Felt fabric does not have to be hemmed or stitched together to achieve clean lines. The process of gluing my posters, as opposed to stitching it together, brings my work closer to the papier colle collage technique in contrast to the way felt is embraced by woman's decorative craft.<sup>4</sup> This, in many respects, is why I refer to most of my felt works as felt collages or felt posters.

Felt, particularly in terms of its early history with clothing, is usually made using natural fibers that are suitable to be worn on ones body. However, I am invested in the synthetic qualities of felt and the ways in which it intersects with the content of my collages. The felt I have used throughout my body of work is prepared artificially, which gives this material a plastic feel. A characteristic of artificially

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<sup>2</sup> Fuzzy Felt emerged as an activity associated with child's play in the 1970s. This activity involves cutting out various graphic shapes in felt and then collaging them onto a felt surface.

<sup>3</sup> Leo Benedictus. 2010. Fuzzy-Felt is 60. Celebrate!. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2010/aug/29/fuzzy-felt-60>. [Accessed 14 November 13].

<sup>4</sup> Felt fabric is frequently used in the decorative crafts. I specifically noticed that craft artists would use various hand-stitching techniques in order to tact felt together. Personally, I found the look and feel created by the hand-stitched felt object carries an almost derivative of decorative woman's craft aesthetic.

produced felt is the range of loud and vibrant colours that are readily available. These colours range from primary to secondary to neon. The highly absorbent and dense texture of synthetic felt gives each colour an intensity that is both bold and eye-catching. The plasticity of synthetic felt has a connection to the content I have applied to my collages, which reference the superficial and theatrical world of advertising, consumerism, fashion and online dating.

Posters titled 'Manhunt' and 'Gaydar' address themes of instant gratification and desire in the way gay men experience sexual encounters orchestrated by social networking websites. In these screenshots of homepages taken from gay online dating websites, I merely recompose and render existing information in the infantile medium of felt. The premise of these websites is to facilitate homosexual dating as well as sexual encounters. In subscribing to this website, one is able to find a partner without having to engage with the physical world. Both websites require a subscription and user fee to enable full access to the content of each respective website. At its essence, these websites allow gay men, with credit cards, to find a partner in a manner that is quick, easy and hassle free.

Both websites have induced a sense of instant gratification towards dates that are orchestrated on the Internet. The sexually explicit nature of the user profiles featured in my collage represents gay men as humans who do not have the ability to mediate their own desires. The inability to navigate or mediate your wants and needs is a trait often found in children and their relationship toward being in the world. Here, the content presents an explicit need for instant gratification whether it is love or sex. An immediate tension is created between the embedded childlike associations of felt fabric and my own subjectivity regarding these websites.

For centuries felt has also been inextricably linked to the first means of body coverings as well as fashion in the Western world. I have used felt as a means to reflect on contemporary fashion in works such as Kusama X Vuitton, The Mickey Marni and Feeling International. These works are appropriations of trendy prints made by major fashion houses. In recreating these patterns through an obsessive process of hand applique, my intention is to mimic the surface of luxury and painstaking quality for which these fashion brands are renowned.

Many cultures around the world have numerous associations with the origin of felt. Felt is still regularly used to make rugs, tents and clothing by the nomadic peoples of Central and East Asia. In the Western world, felt's significance as an ecological textile is evident in a process called 'carroting'. Carroting is a process that was developed between the mid 17th and mid 20th century to manufacture men's hats. Hats known as fedoras, trilbies and homburgs emerged in the 20th century (Breward, C. 1995). Men in the Western world still wear felt hats, particularly men who are conscious of trends in fashion.



## FELT SUIT (AFTER BEUYS)

The work of Joseph Beuys intrigued me to make three-dimensional works using felt. I started this process by creating a felt suit inspired by the work of Joseph Beuys.

Beuys is widely acclaimed for using materials such as felt, fat and metal as a means to explore themes of insulation, conduction and protection. In 1970 Beuys made the Felt Suit, during a period in which Beuys introduced the notion of multiples in his work. "The felt suit was an extension of Beuys's concern with the idea of warmth sculpture" (Stachelhaus, H. 1987: 158). The use of felt intended to evoke individual insulation and protection from the world. The universally recognizable symbol of the suit also spoke to Beuys's concern with addressing a wider public audience, as opposed to the art world. Beuys was deeply concerned about the availability, role and social function of the art object, which subsequently urged him to make a range of editioned pieces throughout his career (Stachelhaus, H. 1987: 158).

In making these felt suits I have considered Beuys's preoccupation with the physical qualities of the material and the Pop aesthetics of artists such as Roy Lichtenstein, who produced his own renditions of famous and historical artworks. In *Every Kind Of Mood*, I display a rail of 16 felt suits in a spectrum of colours. The repetition of my felt suit alludes to Beuys's concerns with multiples as well as my own interest in methods of display that are distinct to fashion retail.

In *Every Kind of Mood*, I have chosen to display my felt suits on a clothing rail that one would usually find in a clothing store. In attempting to mimic merchandising techniques that are employed in retail environments I aim to equate my suits to commodity items that are usually found in a shop environment. The title *Every Kind Of Mood* refers to the indulgence and luxury of having a suit in every available colour in order to suit one's mood. Notions of frivolity and excess that are suggested in my chosen title relate to one's desire for more, which is a common trait of modern day consumer culture.

The colour scheme of the felt suits was selected according to the variety of felt fabric available in my local fabric store. In an attempt to mimic the rainbow flag, I displayed these suits through means of colour degradation. I have attempted to evoke the embedded meanings of the rainbow flag as a popularized international symbol of gay pride. Gay social, recreational and cultural sites often use this flag as a public sign to demarcate specific gay venues. This symbol of gay pride is particularly common in gay districts of larger hetero-normative metropolitan cities. In referring to rainbow flag I aim to create a conceptual tie to another work titled *The Universal Fag Map*, which is a map that demarcates the world's most popular gay sites.

TOP IMAGE:

Felt Suit 1970  
Joseph Beuys

BOTTOM IMAGE:

*Every Kind of Mood* 2013  
Jody Paulsen



Robert Morris  
Untitled 1969

## ON FORM (ROBERT MORRIS)

Robert Morris is regarded as one of the foremost American Minimalist artists working in sculpture. By the 1960s, Morris was known for his use of rigid industrial materials such as plywood and steel. In 1967, Morris started using felt as means to go against his geometrical and pre-conceived approach to sculpture. In his 1968 essay called 'anti form' Morris criticizes the rational idea of the 'well built' in favour of a more contingent aesthetic (Morris, R. 1968: 41). He praises the work of Jackson Pollock and Claes Oldenburg for their use of gravity as examples of how material can determine form. Morris used felt in a similar haphazard fashion that is reminiscent of Pollock's signature brushstrokes, in using dropping, hanging and leaning as suitable devices of making (Morris, R. 1968: 43)

Although Morris's work has no clear formal or theoretical links to my body of work, I have been particularly intrigued by the ways in which he has used felt to communicate his concerns. In Untitled 1969, Morris examines the process of form "making itself". This sculpture contains various pieces of felt that are hung and leaned against a wall. These pieces spill onto the floor into scattered heaps of felt that have no imposed ordering system. This particular piece has multiple positions as it is sometimes thrown on the floor or hung on the wall. There is no fixed composition in which Morris displays the work, allowing it to exist in numerous ways each time the work has been exhibited. Therefore, Morris adopts the soft pliable nature of felt as his method of making.

Morris also likens felt's materiality to the human body. In a 1983 interview, the artist mentions that felt has anatomical associations and refers to felt as "skin like"<sup>5</sup>. These works mark an obvious shift from the rigidity of minimalism through exploring the idea of artistic contingency. A more oblique reading of this work suggests the nature and experience of the body. The presence of the human body is not only present in the artists intervention but in the viewers movement into the experience of the work. Here, Morris references the material quality of the viewer's body in evoking the intimacy of clothing that is worn by the body as well as the "sagging, gravity bound destination of all flesh"<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Oral history interview with Robert Morris, 1968 Mar. 10 - Oral Histories | Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-robert-morris-13065>. [Accessed 11 November 2013].

<sup>6</sup> Oral history interview with Robert Morris, 1968 Mar. 10 - Oral Histories | Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-robert-morris-13065>. [Accessed 11 November 2013].



Felt Banners  
Mike Kelley

## EXPERIENCE (MIKE KELLEY)

While visiting a church last year, I noticed a series of felt banners. The Anglican Youth Club of a suburb called Diep River, in Cape Town, made these banners. Each poster used the colourful and graphic qualities of felt to transform the church environment. These text and image posters used proverbs and religious exclamations such as 'Grow in Love', 'Come Unto Me' and 'This is My Body' along with cut out biblical illustrations. I was inspired by the way these posters uplifted and elevated the experience of the church space. I was also particularly drawn to the use of text and image, something I have been trying to resolve in my own practice.

Similarly, American artist Mike Kelly discovered the craft of making felt banners through his Catholic school upbringing. Kelly's felt banners are strikingly similar in material and execution to those deployed by contemporary churches. Kelly's use of material, which includes discarded teddy bears, fuzzy felt and afghan assemblages are all predominantly effeminate art-making processes usually associated with craft and the home. In reaction against 'heroic and seemingly masculinist' traditions in painting, Kelly adopted the cut and glue techniques of poster making (Sussman, E. 2001: 162).

Themes of failure, transgression and degradation are explored in a series of felt banners developed for his 1991 body of work titled Half a Man. A felt banner featured in this series titled Trash Picker transforms the innocuous medium of felt with humor and subversive content. Kelly's felt banners use both image and text to parody religion and ideas of social hierarchy. The catechistic phrase 'I am useless to culture, but God loves me' is juxtaposed against hot psychedelic colours. In Kelley subverting the foundational teachings and inspirational texts of catechism, he seeks to critique organized religions and make the underdog the hero (Sussman, E. 2001:161).

## THE IMPACT OF COLLAGE

This section explores the history, impact and meaning of collage in terms of my art-making process. Collage is a medium that has been used to reflect on social, political and cultural circumstances throughout various movements in modern art (Waldman, D. 1992: 8). By investigating collage's significance to my body of work, I aim to discuss and determine how my art-making process and body of work is historically situated in modern art.

Collage, in its broadest sense, is the process of selecting one sign from its original context and then juxtaposing it against another sign to create a new entirety<sup>1</sup>. In the act of changing the original sign, through juxtaposition, meaning is added to the original sign. Collage does not remove the coding embedded in the original appearance of the sign. Rather, it allows the sign to hold onto its original significance without altering or eradicating the embedded coding of its source. In other words, the practice of collage is built on filtering, juxtaposing and distorting fragments of what already exists in the world.

The subsequent meaning of the artwork is made through the re-presentation of media that is configured through the artist's hand. The process of extracting and re-combining already existing elements of the world to create a new singular plane has long existed as a mode of artistic expression in various cultures around the world. For centuries, techniques intrinsic to collage have been used to illustrate religious and cultural traditions. This long history dates back to 10th century collage poetry made by Japanese poets and calligraphers. These depictions of embellished landscapes and delicately cut out animals are known as some of the first traces of collage. Similarly, 13th century Persian bookbinders employed cutouts as a decorative motif. Turkish artists of the 16th century created illuminated text pieces using similar techniques. Simultaneously in Western Europe, illustrations of heraldic coats of arms made out of cut out elements were pasted onto painted backgrounds. Around the 18th century, aristocratic women incorporated items such as beetles, coffee beans, butterflies, fruit stones, feathers, lace, and other types of cloth into the gentle art of collage. Between the 17th – 18th centuries, paper collages depicting saints became a popular motif used for page-markers, prayer books and other religious ephemera. These mainly decorative uses of collage are all strongly rooted in the culture of its origin and, simultaneously, provide a compelling record of aesthetics during these various periods in history. However, it was not until the twentieth century that collage came into its own as an independent medium of the fine arts. (Waldman, D. 1992: 8)

"Modernity's fragments, some collages suggest, are its history, its residue; they are what is left over when the great feast of consumption has ended for the day, when trading and exchange have ceased and the people have gone home for a rest" (Taylor, B. 2004: 9). Brandon Taylor highlights the profound impact that collage has

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<sup>1</sup> Collage, Montage and Assemblage originate from the French language. Collage comes from *coller* (to stick), montage comes from *monter* (to mount) and assemblage from *assembler* (to bring together). I mention all three techniques, as they are naturally associated with one another in contemporary art practice. These techniques often collide in a single image allowing these distinct mediums to become blurred. (Larbalestier, S. 1990. *The Art and Craft of Collage*. Chronicle Books: San Francisco)

had on the expression of modern sensibility: a sensibility attuned to urban environments under the regime of capitalism (Taylor, B. 2004: 8). Taylor expresses that collage came to prominence in the early twentieth century due to an abundance of printed commercial matter as a result of advances of mechanical reproduction in print. In engaging with the commercial excess of the modern city, one is forced to unravel the biography of these selected fragments. This anthropological take on the discarded, overlooked and the unwanted as markers of modernity, in turn emphasizes the material existence of the selected matter. Collage as used in fine art is highly pertinent to the creation of an image that is both reflective and experiential of the world we live in.

For example, the Parisian urban landscape had shifted since the Industrial Revolution. In the early twentieth century, European cities were covered in printed ephemera such as billboards, entertainment posters, commercial handbills and political messages. These signs confronted citizens similarly to the jarring medley of texts carried by newspapers. It was during this time (1912) that artists Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque applied the technique of collage to the principles of Cubism. Tobacco wrappers, newspaper clippings, wallpapers and coloured paper were fragmented and embellished with painted details, combining surfaces that did not particularly belong. The combination of what was considered to be 'low' culture (found materials/objects) and 'high' culture (traditions in painting) were inappropriately jarring, yet interestingly so (Taylor, B, 2004: 8).

The technological triumphs of mechanical reproduction have resonance in the collage works of Picasso and Braque during the Cubist period. Traditional still-life paintings prior to the Cubist period characteristically featured objects such as earthenware jugs, generic wineglasses and seasonal fruits.<sup>2</sup> Picasso and Braque disrupted these traditional still life components with the addition of found printed ephemera, which were juxtaposed into their paintings. In *Bottle and Glass* (1912), Picasso had pasted a newspaper advertisement for an electrical bulb in his still life drawing. This symbol of modern urban life is depicted through the impersonal hand of the machine. This juxtaposition, between found matter and painting, marked a shift in the conventional representation of the still life as well as the development of collage into the fine arts arena (Rosenblum, R. 1990: 112).

A similar point can be made with Braque's *Still Life on a Table: Gillette* (1914). This charcoal and gouache drawing is disrupted with a newspaper clipping featuring a graphic advertisement for Gillette safety razors, a new American product that was first patented in 1901. Braque's representation of this advertisement is cropped in a way that refers to the actual packaging of the razor blade. This excerpt, being focal point of this collage, highlights the new presence of artifacts and inventions of the modern world (Rosenblum, R. 1990. 114). Both Picasso and Braque use collage

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<sup>2</sup> For example, these still-life components were typically seen in the works of Paul Gauguin and Paul Cezanne.

as their primary medium to discuss the revelations of technological modernity.

German philosopher Walter Benjamin's essay 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' signaled a shift in what was considered to be 'low art' and 'high art' as a result of technological advances that occurred during the turn of the 20th century. Benjamin explains that the 'aura' of the artwork gets lost through mechanical reproduction (Benjamin, W. 1936: 20). Benjamin states that 'aura' is characterized by 'ritual', which can only be produced by a singular authority (Benjamin, W. 1936: 21). Therefore, 'aura' is a quality that can only exist outside of the commodity and its technological reproduction.

Picasso and Braque's Cubist collages combined fragments of technologically reproduced matter with traditions associated with 'ritual' such as painting and drawing. In filtering and distorting mechanically printed ephemera through the artist's hand, the 'aura' of the artwork was maintained through the process of 'ritual'. Therefore, Cubism demonstrated methods of employing collage as a medium that preserved the 'aura' of the artwork.

The artists and movements that followed Cubism saw the potential of collage as a contemporary medium that had the faculty to express social, cultural and political change. Successive generations of artists such as the Futurists and Dadaists have both used collage as a medium to express these shifts in their respective periods. In Italy, Futurists employed collage to convey the ideals of the machine age such as speed, dynamism and mechanization. The pace of collage, unlike more elaborate procedures usually employed in painting and sculpture, lent itself to the noise, speed and time of the urban industrial experience (Waldman, D. 1992: 13).

Similarly to the principles of Futurism, since the advent of the Internet, the speed at which information has become accessible and available has revolutionized the way we, as human beings, experience the world. The pace of the Internet has strong parallels to the birth of mechanical reproduction, which in turn has had an impact on the expansive amounts of information and material that I have been able to gather in the process of making my collages. Art forms such as painting and sculpture usually include a process of re-interpreting the original sign through the artist's hand. In merely appropriating and combining provided signs sourced from the Internet, I have been able to produce media for my collages at an extra-ordinarily fast pace. This has resulted in my collages becoming incredibly abundant and dense compositions of media, which demonstrates a vast multitude of readily available material. The speed of both collage and the Internet has allowed me to reflect on the ideas that have been presented by our current technological age.

The Dada movement was highly instrumental in the expansion of collage. Angst ridden by the First World War as well as pre-existing conventions in art and society, Dadaists used collage in opposition to accepted societal attitudes. Dadaist Hannah Hoch's *Cut with a Kitchen Knife Dada Through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch in Germany* 1919 are fragmentations of a society experiencing the beginnings of Industrialization as well as the aftermath of World War 1. Hoch's collection of images and text were sourced from magazines, advertisements, newspapers and

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journals reflect on the social and political temperament of the era. Terms used in the title, such as 'beer belly' and 'kitchen knife' are references to gender issues, which were prevalent in the male-dominated Weimar Republic (Elger, D. 2004: 44).

Hoch's collage enraptures the spirit of 1919 in an image that seems like a snapshot of the time. Her interwoven imagery of machines, portraits, cityscapes and dancing figures depict chaos, contradictions and socio-political upheaval (Elger, D. 2004: 44). Her nonsensical composition creates a whimsical circus-like environment that sets the entire tableau in motion. Exploding machine parts unravel across the collage, in reference to the rapid boom technological modernity. Common Dada slogans are integrated into the collage reading 'Invest your money in Dada!' and 'Join Dada'. These exclamations further highlight Dada's opposition to the political chaos of the time period. Instead of marveling at a period of revolutionary progress, Hoch uses collage to critique a male-dominated culture driven by excess and war.

Similarly to Hoch's gendered critique of consumption, Korean Boyz is an amalgamation of contemporary imagery associated with masculinity such as car logos, drag racing and gay porn. These symbols of masculinity are juxtaposed next to American style fast foods, reiterating notions of speed and instant gratification that are inherent in man's stereotypical relationship to cars and sex. Like Hoch's collage, Korean Boyz is dense and seemingly chaotic, as various components overlap and spill off its surface. The underlying text, which sits on the bottom of the poster, reads 'fast cars, fast money, fast love'. Here, I aim to critique stereotypes of masculinity inherent in consumer cultures driven by desire, excess and speed.

Another characteristic of collage that is embedded in the way I have approached this medium is its accessibility. Collage is a creative activity that one is usually acquainted with as early as pre-school. The activity of cutting and gluing is an ordinary domestic skill that nearly anyone is capable of doing. 'On yet another level, collage deliberately evoked the cognitive and technical standards of the child, the playful, or the mad – suggesting that anyone can shape material this way, that anyone can practice in the field of fine arts' (Taylor, B. 2001. 9). My dominant material is 'fuzzy felt', a forgiving material that is easy to manipulate through means of cut and paste. The way in which I have combined fuzzy felt with the basic cut and paste principle of collage further demonstrates the accessibility that is fundamental to collage as a mode of art making.

The generation of Pop Art has had the biggest impact on my approach to collage. Pop Art<sup>3</sup> first appeared in the United Kingdom in 1956 and then later emerged in America as a response to the affluence and vitality of post-war consumer culture. Pop Art's acceptance of materialism and willingness to engage with media as its message makes it the most relevant modern art movement to my practice. Advertisements, celebrity, cinema, fashion, music, newspapers and television - all provided a plethora of material for artists to create powerful commentary on consumer-orientated Western society. Pop artists were concerned with scrutinizing this strange new language through revealing a new set of signs outside of its original context,

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<sup>3</sup> Pop art is an abbreviation for Popular Art.

*Riding In Cars With*

**KOREAN BOYZ**

**NEW AND USED**

INTERRACIAL  
**BFS**

THE  
**SPERMINATOR**



**Steers**

PEUGEOT

RENAULT



**KIA**

**HYUNDAI**



McDonald's



BOYFRIEND TV



**FAST CARS**

**FAST MONEY**

**FAST LOVE**

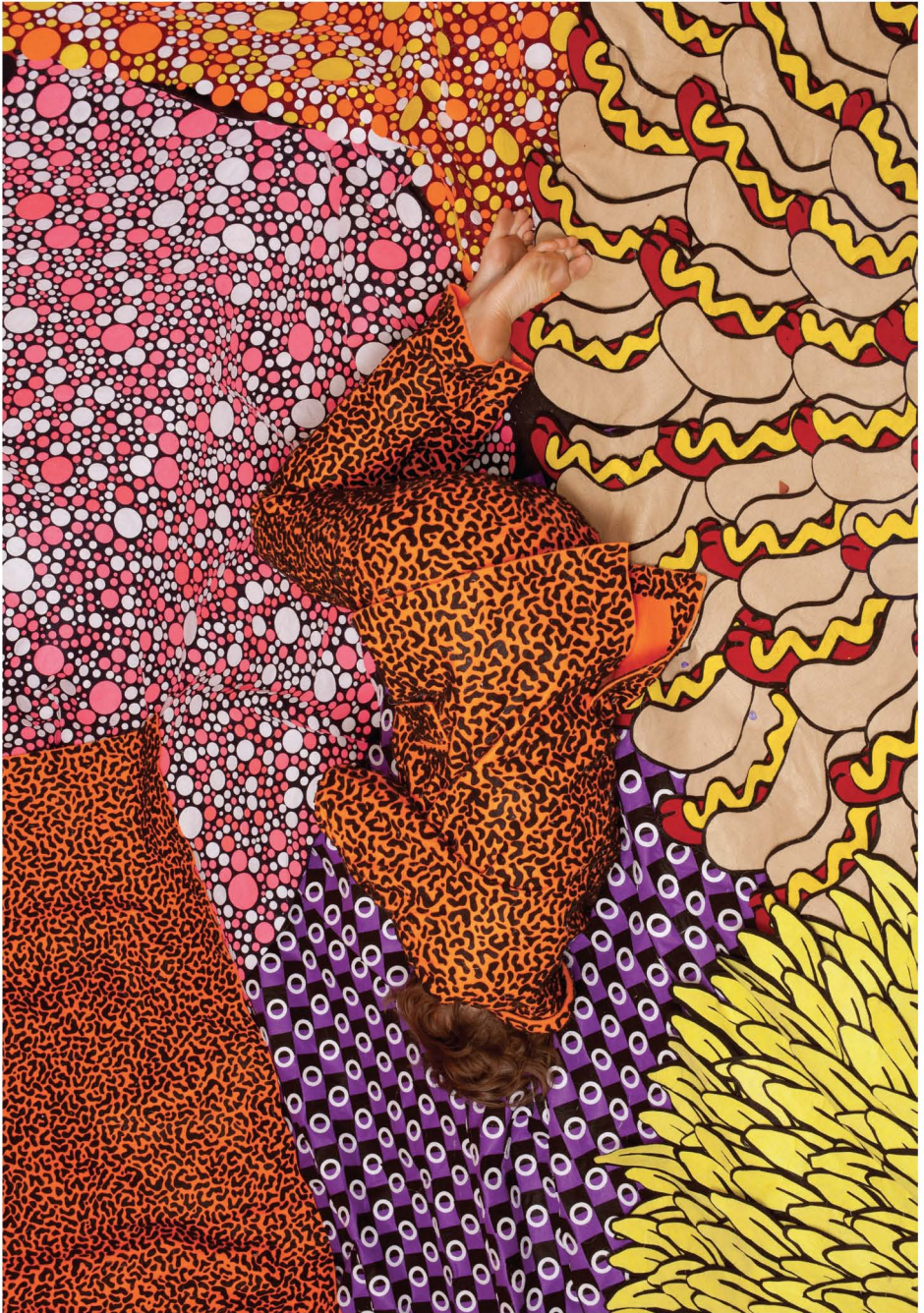
transforming it and elevating it to the level of 'fine art' (Amaya, M. 1963. P. 45).

Richard Hamilton's 'Just What Is It That Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?' is an historical image that is widely regarded as the birth of Pop Art. This collage featuring various excerpts of mass media recomposed into the setting of a domestic living room defined the imagination of 1950s English mass culture. Hamilton's portrayal of the epitome of middle-class life was made when Europe had been saturated with emblems of modern American culture. This animated and humorous mix of aspirational signs and symbols of the typical middle class English home became fundamental in representing cultural change. This work is not only a critique on consumption but reflects on the inundation of signs that the consumer had become bombarded with during the 1950s.

Hamilton's collage has been instrumental to my practice as he recombines a cluster of seemingly disparate images to discuss the tenor of contemporary urban life. Similarly, the impetus of my collages represents an assault of graphic advertisements and logos, which have been set in my own subconscious. These striking conglomerations of information hints at the bombardment of images sourced from contemporary culture, which Hamilton alludes to in 'What Is It, That Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?' (Taylor, B. 2004: 163).

The history of collage is largely intertwined with the medium of painting and sculpture. Its prominence throughout the twentieth century has considerably shifted the way in which we think about art. 'The inception of collage as a fine art medium also signaled a radical shift in art, not only in conception but also in perception, process, and end product' (Waldman, D. 1992: 12). The medium of collage has had an impact on my work that goes beyond the formal cut and paste characteristics of my work. Collage is also the model in which I have conceptualized my body of work through combining various non-linear themes to create a new totality. My body of work in its entirety references a wide range of topics, largely relating to means of consumption in accordance to Western contemporary culture. These themes ranging from online dating, gay tourism, fashion, textile design, the history of modern art, shopping, contemporary magazines and yoga are all rendered and brought together through the mode of collage.

OPPOSITE IMAGE:  
Korean Boyz 2013  
Jody Paulsen



STUDIO HAPPENING  
(photo by Nico Krijno)

## INDIVIDUAL WORKS

# MAN HUNT

CruiseChatConnect

72,645 MEMBERS ONLINE

BIG BEAR DEN

hot and hansum

madmancpt

HOTOKE

Male247

sean cody.com

supaf0xx05

HARDN

testosterone44

soofy and wife

HOLD

felix\_za

FITPROF

ZERO

COMBAT ZONE

arab\_ct

str8\_looking

SOFRESH

TOLERANCE



digit101

str8\_looking

SOFRESH

suburbslad

twinklight

tamboerskloofbuy

hotwetCock

twinklight

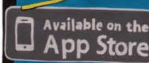
rattleme

tobx2012



Bel Ami

IF HE IS OUT THERE



HE IS ON HERE

FALCON



See uncensored pics & hook up on the go!

## MANHUNT, GAYDAR

Manhunt and Gaydar (Felt and glue 1.8m x 1.5m) are the first two felt collages that were made for this body of work. Both works are appropriations of the existing homepages of two popular gay online dating websites.

Manhunt and Gaydar are both international profile based social networking websites. These websites facilitate homosexual dating as well as sexual encounters. Both websites emerged as a means for gay men in urban environments to find partners, whether sexual or long-term. Although most profiles and functions are publically accessible on the Internet, one needs to register and pay a fee to gain full access to the facilities these websites have to offer. I am particularly drawn to the way in which these websites have turned the pursuit of finding partner into a lucrative commodity. Both social networking websites have had a major impact on the gay community. The rise in popularity of these websites suggests that gay cruising grounds have moved from public spaces to the Internet<sup>11</sup>. This shift has impacted the ways in which gay men interact with one another on the Internet. Both websites have induced a sense of instant gratification towards sexual activity orchestrated on the Internet.

Manhunt and Gaydar are accessed by millions of homosexual users around the world. I have chosen to re-appropriate both webpages by cutting the content out of felt and re-composing it in a way that was still visually recognizable as a webpage. In re-interpreting these images in felt fabric, I aimed to enhance minor details of the website such as advertisements, sponsors and instructions on how to purchase online. Although these details are usually missed while using the website, it is representative of a consumer culture driven by easiness, speed and instant gratification. My intention in highlighting this information is to bring light to the commodification of homosexual dating and sex on the Internet.

Benjamin Barber is the author of the essay *Infantilizing Consumers: The Coming of Kidults*. The essay explains how markets have generated a set of habits, preferences and attitudes that encourages and legitimates childishness in consumer citizens through three archetypical dualisms that capture infantilism: 'easy over hard, simple over complex and fast over slow' (Barber, B. 2007: 82). The content of Gaydar and Manhunt highlights all three of the mentioned dualisms in its representation of romance and sex on the Internet.

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<sup>11</sup> Gay cruising is the act of pursuing sexual activities with strangers in public spaces with no monetary exchange. This came about due to past laws against homosexuality.

English Français Deutsch Español Italiano Portuges Nederlands 日本語 Ελληνικά



# GAYDAR

METROPOLITANMAN

5945+ users online now

*What You Want  
Whenever You Want It*

Blog

Terms of Use

Listen to GaydarRadio

Facebook

Twitter

Contact

Privacy Policy

Help

Available on the  
App Store

Available on the  
Android Market



HOME TO MILLIONS OF MEN



## MANZONE

Log In

Password

CORPORATE SPONSOR  
**ASACP**  
PROTECT CHILDREN

30 Day  
MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE

Take a look inside



The first thing I noticed was how readily available these websites made finding a partner. The sexually explicit content of these websites suggests that most single gay men are looking for a sexual partner, as opposed to a steady relationship. Overtly sexualized user profiles were juxtaposed next to romantic promises maybe by the website proclaiming that 'he is out there'<sup>12</sup>. This website arguably stereotypes the identity of gay men who use this site. The site represents gay men as humans who do not have the ability to mediate their own desires. The inability to navigate or mediate your wants and needs is a trait often found in children and their relationship towards being in the world (Barber, B. 2007: 85). Here the content presents an explicit need for instant gratification whether it is love or sex, without taking the time to meet or get to know a partner under the circumstances of physical interaction. An immediate tension is created between the embedded childlike associations of felt fabric and my subjectivity regarding these websites.

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<sup>12</sup> The slogan of the Manhunt website reads "If he is out there, he is on here".

## THE UNIVERSAL FAG MAP (I SEARCH THE WORLD FOR YOU)

The Universal Fag Map is an aptly titled large scale (2.5m X 1.8m) felt collage. It maps out several gay capitals<sup>13</sup>, which include all six continents of the world, featuring gay social, recreational and cultural sites. In creating the content for this map I used BUTT<sup>14</sup> magazine's 'Fag Map'<sup>15</sup> as my starting point.

On my first trip to Berlin, like many people, I travelled alone without knowing anyone in the city. A friend of mine emailed a 'Fag Map' to me as a means to navigate my way around the gay areas of the city and potentially meet new people. The map consisted of numerous social spaces that were made available to various groups of homosexual men, who usually defined themselves according to their sexual preference. The extensive list of recreational sites and social groups included bear dens, a gay film society, S&M bars and watersports parties, it seemed to have a coded language of its own that I was intrigued to discover. Being a tourist from Cape Town, I was astounded by how visible and integrated the presence of gay men were in Berlin. The homosexual culture was far more advanced than it is in Cape Town. I particularly noticed how outwardly blatant gay men were about their sexual identity, as nearly the entire marketing strategy for gay tourism in Berlin was determined by these preferences. It is as though each point I found on my fag map used its sexual disposition as a commodity, in a scheme to sell gay sex to gay tourists.

Amongst the earliest documented examples of gay tourism is the Victorian era, a period, when homosexual Northern European men visited Mediterranean countries in the summer. It was here, away from strict northern familial and societal values, that gay men's sexuality could be more freely expressed. However travel of this nature was only available to the wealthy and elite and remained aspirational to the men who could not afford it (Clift, S. 2002: 1).

Throughout the twentieth century gay subcultures emerged in cities such as New York and Berlin. New York bred popular gay venues in neighbourhoods such as Greenwich Village and Harlem. Berlin had a more advanced homosexual culture during the twentieth century. Berlin's famous Schwule Museum (Gay Men's Museum) indicates that there were numerous institutions and publications apart from café, cabarets and other leisurely spaces that were available to gay men prior to the Nazi invasion.

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<sup>13</sup> Gay capitals are major cities around the world where homosexuality is accepted and freely expressed in public. These capitals usually have special areas, districts and events that are dedicated and marketed toward gay tourism.

<sup>14</sup> BUTT magazine is a gay subcultural quarterly magazine started by Jop van Bennekom and Gert Jonkers in 2001. The magazine, which originated in Netherlands, is internationally known for its portrayals of men, both non-sexual and unabashed sexual, which emphasize equal opportunity in depictions of all peoples in print.

<sup>15</sup> Fag Maps are maps that can be found on BUTT magazine's website. They are essentially used to demarcate gay areas in major cities in America and Europe. It is a useful source of social, cultural and recreational sites that are exclusive to homosexual men. Each site on each respective city map is accompanied with a informative and often humorous personal anecdote written by the author of the map.

Toward the latter part of the twentieth century, subcultures that had previously emerged developed into important communities after several gay milestones were reached, that ensued sexual liberation. In America, by the late 1960s, major cities such as Miami, New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco were home to popular gay districts that were seen as legendary to gay travellers<sup>16</sup>. This allowed gay tourists to visit or reside in gay-safe spaces that were part of a larger hetero-normative urban environment<sup>17</sup>, a living environment that is not usually available in most cities. These cities remain aspirational to many gay men in smaller towns and surrounding cities as they represent an escape from the homophobia experienced outside of more developed metropolitan areas.

Most of the cities I have included in my map have been romanticized in Western Contemporary Culture, in a variety of media such as magazines, film, music and books etc., as the center of the world. Cities such as Paris and New York are often represented in media as cities that are open-minded, free-spirited, and spontaneous. These cities represent a space where protagonists in film and television go to in order to find themselves or be themselves. Artists are known to find inspiration here while musicians have written countless songs about these cities over the passed century. Contemporary culture has embedded the metropolitan with the promise of success and the feeling that anything is possible. This idea of instant gratification has particularly an impact in inspiring the ambition and desire to travel of my generation.

Famous metropolitan districts are quite frequently referenced throughout my body of work, particularly in my felt works. In *Manhunt*, *Gaydar* (*Your passport to millions of men*) and *Feeling International*, I decided to juxtapose the theme of finding love with international travel. This not only indicates that pursuits for love or the ideal sexual partner are of universal concern, but that these cities become iconic backdrops for the experience of love and sexual gratification. Since the end of nineteenth century, the notion of romance, which entails exiting your everyday geography and experiencing something exciting, intense and new has long been demonstrated in American mass culture since the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> These cities had districts such as Greenwich Village (New York), West Hollywood (Los Angeles,) Castro (San Francisco) and South Beach (Miami), which inhabit a strong gay community and industry. (Clift, S. 2002)

<sup>17</sup> A common thread that I have realized in my research on Queer studies argues that homosexuality remains marginal to heterosexuality in Euro-American cultural regimes. 'The feeling of being out of place is directly related to how place is produced within hetero-normative regimes, which aim to keep locations heterosexual by suppressing displays of same sex practices.

<sup>18</sup>The idea that romance exists outside of the familiar and everyday. It even has the potency to make you feel somewhere else. Illouz, E. 1997. *Consuming the Romantic Utopia: Love and the Cultural Contradiction*. University of CA Press: Los Angeles

PET SHOP BEARS New York San Francisco Mexico City Sao Paulo  
**THE UNIVER**

**UPGRADE**  
Club  
Generacion  
Cabaretito

SOITTE TE LANCEMENT TU BLOG

PER  
FORM  
ANCE  
SPACE  
122

MASCARA DISORD  
*Cafe Flore*

**BEAR** in  
VO

**PARADISE CLUB**

ANTHOLOGY  
FILM  
ARCHIVES

The  
Midnight  
Shift

WORN  
OUT  
WEST

**Amsterdam**  
action bar

**AA**

**La Casita**

**24**

BJ's  
**White Swan**

**AA**

**greenhouse**

**INDUSTRIAL**

**MANZONE**

**TOM'S BAR**  
DADDY'S DAY  
MULTI-MEDIA LOU PART

**ELECTRO**  
**SEXUAL**

**FickstutenMarkt**

**How**  
Kom  
**Pat**

London Paris Berlin Tokyo Cape Town Sydney

# SAL FAG MAP RVT



INTRUSION  
Teyfelssee  
THE JOINERS ARMS  
OGUE  
Fabrics  
spartacus

Mini GBU  
DISCO QUEER

Wild  
Thermas  
Club

[o] BERGHAIN  
Paranormalour

livraria  
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HORSE  
MEAT  
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bb CHARIOTS

BEARMEK

FLASH COCOTTE

Beefcakes

STUD

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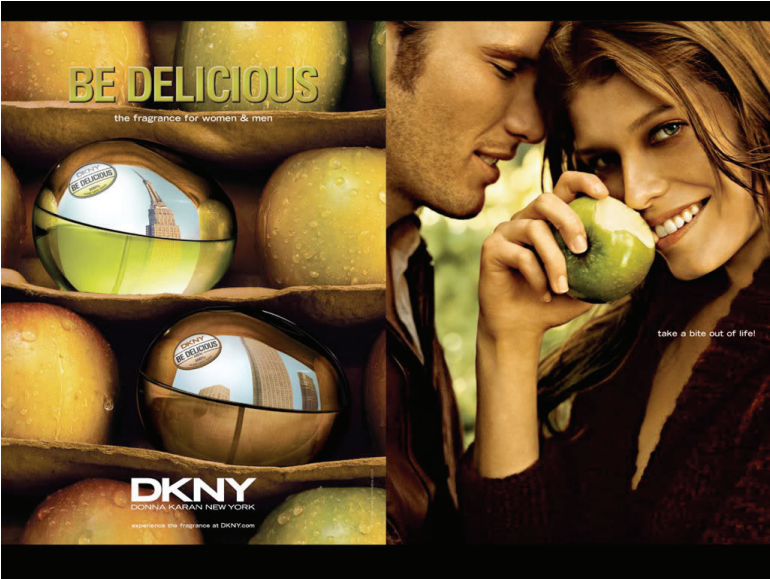
Parque de la Raposa

ORIGINAL  
AMATEUR  
STRIP

SHATTER  
JAPAN

Anti-Catlic's  
Lounge





# BE DELICIOUS

the fragrance for women & men

**DKNY**  
DONNA KARAN NEW YORK

experience the fragrance at [DKNY.com](http://DKNY.com)

take a bite out of life!

## BE DELICIOUS

Be Delicious is a 2 meter long apple green neon light work. The term Be Delicious is taken from an international unisex fragrance campaign by Donna Karan New York, also known as DKNY<sup>19</sup>. The green fragrance bottle is shaped like an apple. The print campaign features a female model smiling while intimately eating an apple next to a male model with a small subtext, which reads 'take a bite out of life'. This advertisement was launched in 2004 and still runs in most South African magazines today.

At first glance, the term Be Delicious reads as optimistic. The proclamation is asking its reader to take care. The intent in the message of this campaign is to be your best self or your best aspirational self through the purchase of this fragrance. The two models create an idealistic picture of health, beauty and being in love, which subsequently reiterates the notion of buying into happiness. The beauty industry often plays on looking ugly as much as it does on the pleasure of being beautiful. An inferiority complex is always solvable with the right moisturizer or, in this case, the right fragrance. It plays on the buyer's vanity through suggesting that perfection is possible and worth striving for.

The phrase Be Delicious encapsulates Gee Thomson's concept of lookism<sup>20</sup>. Thomson explains that we are living in a society that rewards beauty and is prejudiced to those who are not beautiful. Those who look good or look young are often chosen over those who do not. This is often as true for jobs as it is for relationships. In the case of Thomson's notion on lookism, the fragrance campaign plays on the idea of being edible, demanding its reader to be beautiful, be desirable and be happy.

In the context of my body of work, the meaning of Be Delicious is intended to be ambiguous. It not only encourages and celebrates the aspirational and problematic world of beauty advertising, but exposes its problematic rationale. There is an inherent sense of humour in the literal meaning of "Be Delicious". In extracting the phrase outside of its context, "Be Delicious" lapses into ridiculousness.

The often humorous juxtaposition of the ephemerality of fashion and beauty trends against the immortality of fine art is explored in Swiss contemporary Pop Artist Sylvie Fleury's work. Fleury's work is often regarded as the superficial self-representation of a glamour-girl who restages her shopping moods under the auspices of the art world. Fleury's mural and neon text works stem from the issues of shopping and the paradigm of the new age. Her signature texts range from witty proclamations such as "Yes to All" or "Miniskirts are Back!" to cleverly composed satires of major fashion and beauty houses such as 'Miracle', 'Pleasures' and "Egoiste".

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<sup>19</sup> DKNY is an international fashion house that was launched in New York by Donna Karan. Since the 1980s the brand has expanded into a lifestyle through introducing homeware, fragrances and a diffused collection for younger customers sold at a lower price point.

<sup>20</sup> Thomson, Gee. 2008. *Mesmerization: Why we are losing our minds to Global Culture*. Thames and Hudson: London



Pleasures 2001  
Sylvie Fleury

My initial decision to use the language of neon signage<sup>21</sup> was to include a recognizable form of branding, which readily exists in the landscape of the consumer world. I was intrigued to use this particular material after paying close attention to the translucent colours and variety of fonts in neon signage around the city centre. I made use of neon signage to create a large highly visible work that can be viewed in relation to other works in the space. The luminous green colour of this work is seductive and eye-catching and is intended to add layers of potential meaning to other works. For example, *Gaydar* and *Manhunt* are two posters dealing with the pursuit for homosexual love and the idiosyncrasies of online gay sex. The term *Be Delicious* has a very different connotation when viewing it in the context of these two works. The reading instantly shifts from aspirational beauty to overtly sexual.

The synthetic nature of felt emits lurid colour quite similarly to the way neon lights are used for its eye-catching nature. After creating several felt collages using bold graphic fonts and appropriations of popular logos, I intuitively felt that there was a strong formal link in the way I have employed these two disparate yet similar mediums. Fluorescent vibrating colour is often carefully used to aesthetically tie many works together as much it is used to reference the jarring colourful world of Mainstream Culture.

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<sup>21</sup> French Physicist and Chemist Georges Claude made the first neon tube in 1912 and subsequently unveiled it at the Paris World Fair. In 1923 the neon sign rapidly grew in popularity when Claude filed a patent in the United States of America and sold his first two neon signs to a car dealership. Since then, neon signage has become synonymous with branding and advertising. New York City's iconic Times Square has become an historical landmark for its elaborate and extravagant neon displays that begun to plague this area during the mid 20th century.

## KUSAMA X VUITTON

Kusama X Vuitton (1.8m x 1.5m) is a triptych of felt collages, which feature three variations of Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama's famous Infinity Dot pattern paintings. My version of these iconic patterns are slightly more dense and use a colour scheme selected according to colours that were readily available in my local fabric store.

This work addresses Yayoi Kusama's impact on the fashion world, which was highly visible in 2012. Her highly coveted collaboration with Louis Vuitton<sup>22</sup> resulted in a vast range of fashionable clothing and accessories being covered in Kusama's signature dots. These items were subsequently copied by mass retailers around the globe resulting in masses of people unknowingly wearing motifs that are central to Kusama's art practice.

Kusama's started working with the language of fashion in New York during the 1960s. It was during this time that Kusama became known for her self proclaimed 'happenings', which can loosely be described as public events similar to performance art. These 'happenings', which involved Kusama and various other participants, were in protest to the American Elections, the Vietnam War and other societal injustices. Kusama and participants would appear naked and covered polka dots as well as wearing clothes with strategically placed holes. For example, holes in the rear end of the garment would function as a political statement against homosexuality.

Kusama referred to herself as a dot: a single particle amongst billions and that in covering naked bodies in these dots, it allowed "the person's self to be obliterated and returned him or her to the natural universe."<sup>23</sup> As a result of these 'happenings', Kusama started selling her avant-garde garments to retailers across America as well as her own pop-up shop called 'Kusama Corner'.

In appropriating the commodification of her work, my intention is to unravel the implications of wearing her work today. Kusama has demonstrated modes of creating fashion that is both radical and reflective of the socio-political climate of her time. As seen in her self-titled Tate Museum retrospective, Kusama's work continues to have a prolific impact on the history of art, yet today this impact has extended itself to mass culture and what we view as a desirable commodity.

In the last year, there was a noticeable surge of numerous contemporary fashion and art collaborations, which re-awakened long-standing debates on whether fashion is art or vice versa. German artist Anselm Reyle allowed French fashion house Christian Dior to transform his neon camouflage paintings into bag linings. Olaf Breuning's collaboration with Bally introduced punchy colours to their usually conservative accessories, as well as an advertisement campaign in reference to his

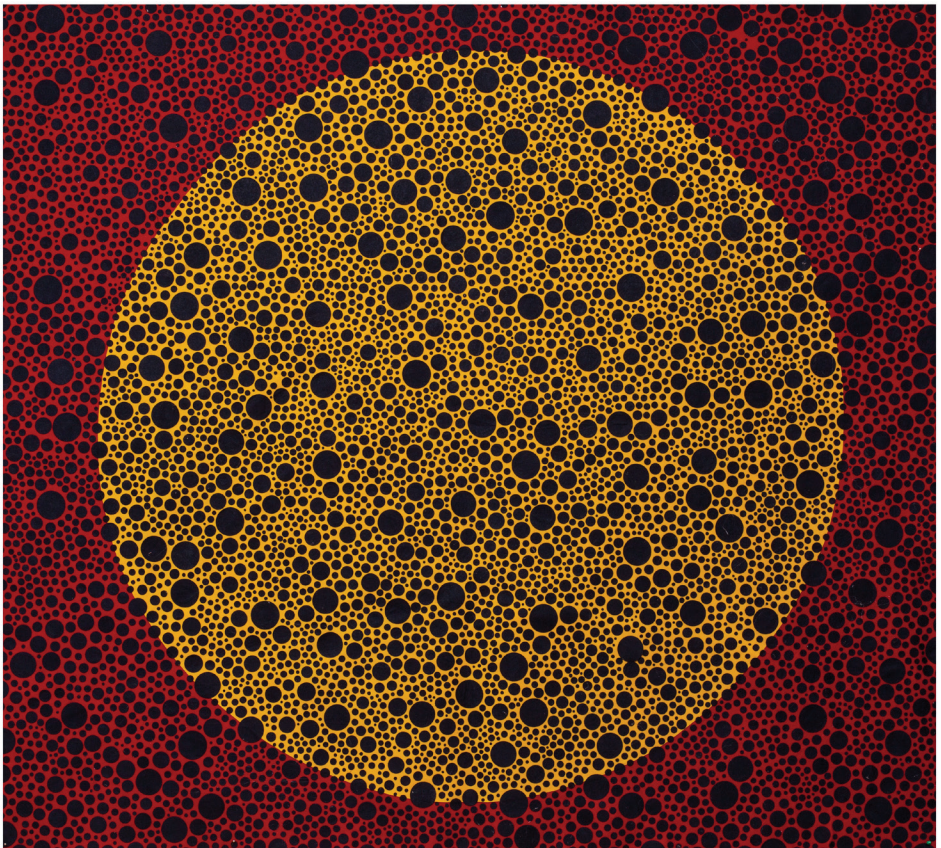
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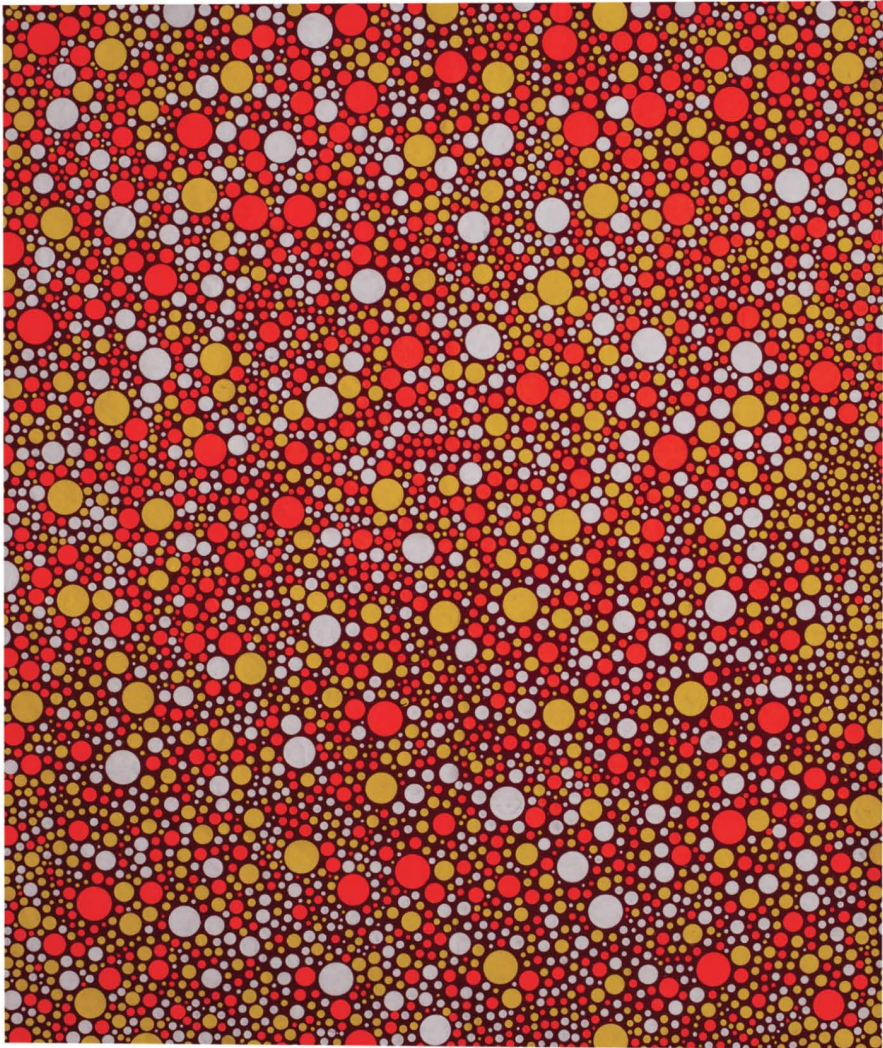
<sup>22</sup> Louis Vuitton, commonly shortened as LV, is a French fashion house that was founded in 1854 by Louis Vuitton himself. Louis Vuitton is regarded as one of the most valuable luxury brands selling quality leather goods; ready to wear clothing and quality fashion accessories made in France.

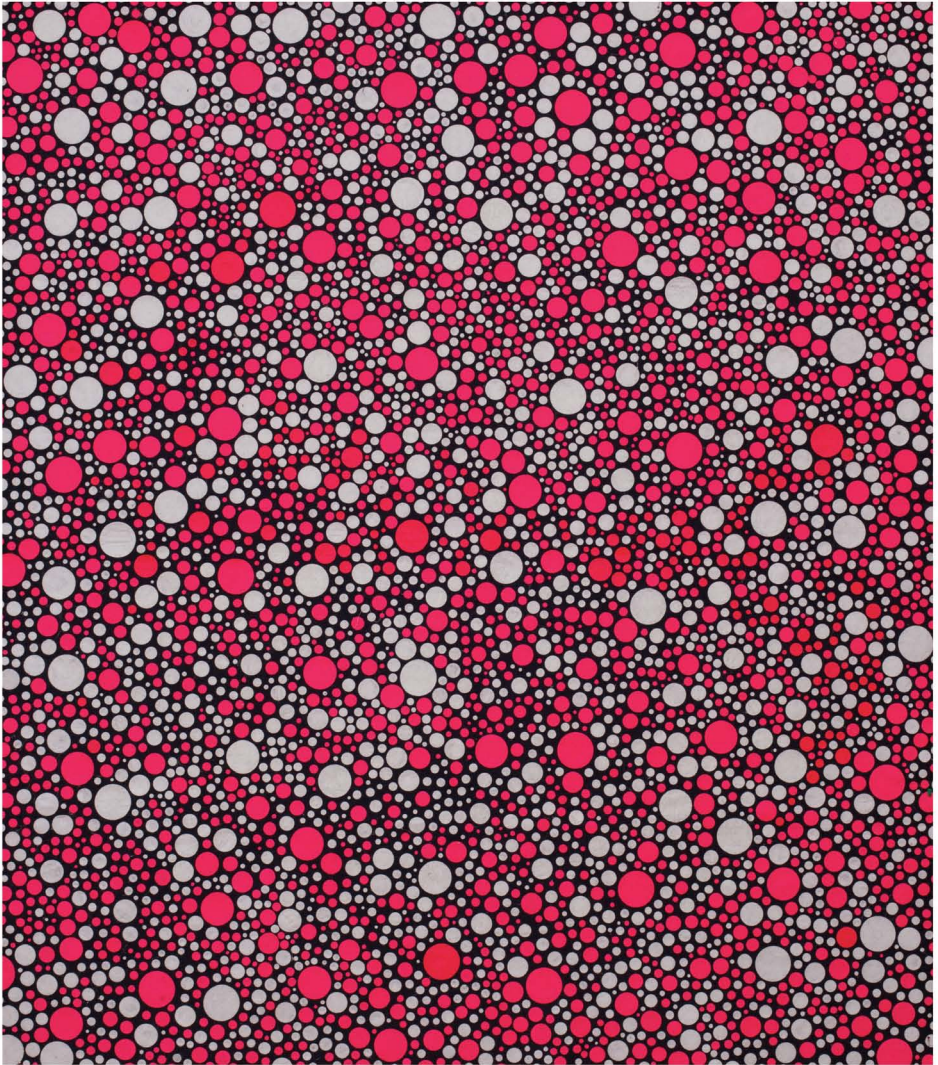
<sup>23</sup> Kusama, Yayoi. *Infinity Net: the Autobiography of Yayoi Kusama*. Translated by Ralph McCarthy. London: Tate Publishing, 2011. Page 24 and page 104

2011 Art Freaks series. British artist Liam Gillick placed his darting lines on Pringle of Scotland knitwear while Maurizio Cattelan art directed Kenzo's spring summer advertisement campaign with striking surrealist and pop art imagery.

It is not unusual for fashion and art to live symbiotically. However, the vast number of collaborations between high-end fashion houses and contemporary artists in the last year suggests that both industries are looking at one another to create a commodity that is both contemporary and desirable. Kusama x Vuitton discusses the surface of a commodity that is desirable to the masses and that subsequently blurs the traditionally hierarchal lines between fashion and art.







## THE WORLD'S MOST ELIGIBLE BACHELORS

The World's Most Eligible Bachelors is a felt collage featuring the names of various celebrity bachelors around the world. These names were obtained from a variety of lists dedicated to the most eligible bachelors of the year in 2012 and 2013. I encountered these lists through the Google search engine as well as articles sourced from numerous contemporary fanzines.

Lists of transient pop-cultural information are a common attribute to entertainment television, radio and magazines. Lists and charts are featured daily, weekly and annually as a means to both guide and reflect on the tastes, tempo and style of mass culture. My list is an attempt to locate the world's most eligible celebrity bachelor according to these numerous popular cultural references.

'The audience continues to interpret the meaning of the celebrity in a grand narrative on the dimensions of individuality and identity in contemporary culture where comparisons between the self and the celebrity are continuously made and cultural norms are supported, altered, or dismantled.'<sup>24</sup>

In works such as *Manhunt* and *Gaydar*, I have chosen to work with the identities of homosexual men who are not famous or in the public eye. The men featured in *The World's Most Eligible Bachelors* are foregrounded in accordance to their wealth, celebrity and success. In doing so, I aim to unravel the ways in which we measure ourselves in accordance to the constructs of celebrity culture.

David Marshall explains that 'Celebrities are hyper-versions that express the potential and possibilities of the individual under the rubrics of capitalist democracy.'<sup>25</sup> Therefore, the construction of the celebrity's image is representative of consumer identities and the articulation of consumer individuality. In *The World's Most Eligible Bachelors* I have juxtaposed the names of celebrity bachelors next to popular logos such as Revlon, Forbes, Chrysler and Vanity Fair. These logos for cosmetics, cars and magazines are associated with desirable commodities that reflect on ideas inherent to aspirational consumption. This juxtaposition aims to draw conceptual ties between commodity culture and the image of the celebrity.

Furthermore, this collage suggests that the celebrity's image is centered on notions of love in contemporary culture. This is partly demonstrated in the representation of the celebrity in cinema and fan magazines. Here we witness the celebrity's romantic life as a world in which 'material problems have been settled and all that is left is relationships'<sup>26</sup>. In *The World's Most Eligible Bachelors*, I aim to perpetuate the romantic ideals surrounding the persona of the celebrity, which imply that life is about love.

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<sup>24</sup> Marshall, P.D. 2006. *The Celebrity Culture Reader*. Routledge: New York

<sup>24</sup> Marshall, P.D. 1997. *Celebrity and Power*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press

<sup>26</sup> Dyer, R. 2006. *Stars as Images: The Celebrity Culture Reader*. Routledge: New York

The phallic bananas, which dangle on both sides of my poster, are intended to be symbolic of the surplus of desirable men featured in this collage. In correlating these men to symbols of the phallus, I aim to expose the phallus as a symbol of desire. This aesthetic motif is used in dialogue to other works such as Eat Me (Hot Dogs), Eat Me (Bananas) and Korean Boyz, which similarly use phallic symbols as metaphors for desire.





## EAT ME (BANANAS), EAT ME (HOT DOGS)

Eat Me (Bananas) is a circular felt collage made up of a collection of bananas, which are paired in sets of three. The rendering of my bananas is done graphically, in an attempt to use as little detail as possible. In doing so, I intended to enhance the banana's similarities to that of a phallus.

Eat Me (Hot Dogs) (1.8m diameter) is a conglomeration of repetitive traditional American hot dogs composed in a circular fashion. Each hot dog is reduced to four colours containing a bun, a seemingly phallic sausage and a squirt of mustard. Like the banana piece, each hot dog is reduced to its most basic form implying its similarity to a phallus.

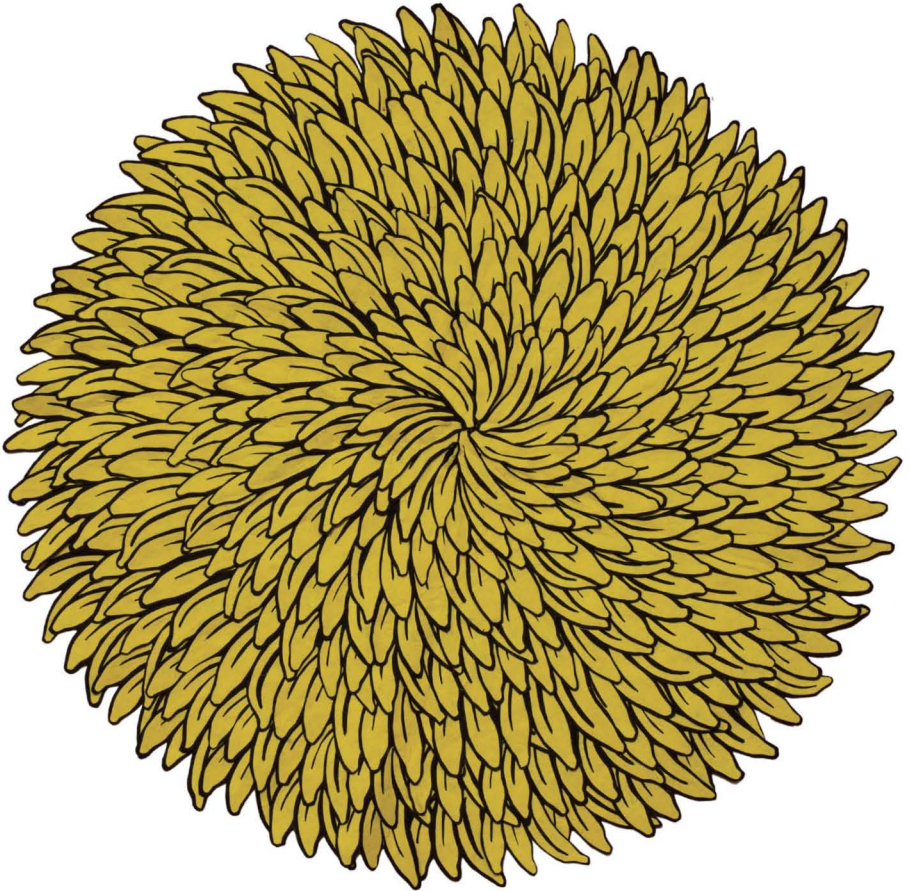
I was particularly drawn to the juvenility of this association. Upon starting this work, I had a strong childhood memory of children using bananas, usually found in their lunchboxes, as pretend phalluses. The infantile humor and innocent folly of this memory intrigued me to create fuzzy felt bananas that mimic a phallus in shape and scale. The tension between the highly sexualized phallic forms made in a craft generally associated with child's play became a logical transition from the Gaydar and Manhunt collages, which dealt with the subject matter of gay sex in a more literal way.

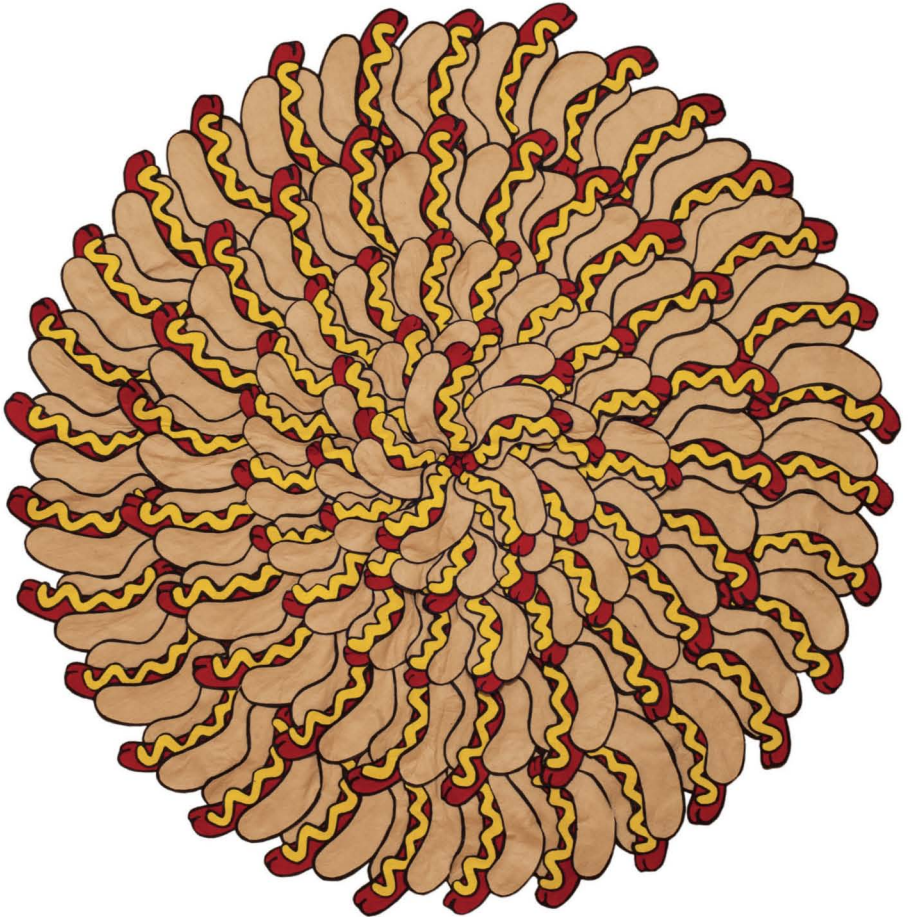
Similarly to the bananas, the hot dogs are an extension of another work in this series called Korean Boyz. This poster, which reads 'fast cars, fast money, fast love', uses icons representing fast food chains as a metaphor for the speed associated with contemporary culture. After completing Eat Me (hot dogs), the ambiguity inherent in the 'fuzzy' felt representation of the hot dogs seemed to inherit the same naïve humour present in Eat Me (bananas).

Bananas have had an impact on the landscape of popular culture. The Prada banana print debuted in a spring summer collection in 2011. The Prada fashion house is internationally recognized for luxury leather goods and quality Milanese style tailoring. Inspired by the slapstick humor and whimsy of the banana, these prints became a hit with critics and consumers who applauded the juxtaposition of frivolous print with strict and expensive tailoring. This specific collection started an international fashion trend with fruit prints, which have contributed to my aesthetic sensibility in creating my own pattern works.

Both Eat Me works use repetition to create an aesthetically jarring visual effect. In creating a repetitive pattern of hot dogs and bananas, I intended to depict these banal artifacts as objects of desire. In both Manhunt and Gaydar, the need for same sex physicality is explicit in the text on each collage. In Eat Me, such desires are addressed metaphorically through the ambiguity of each repeated form.

The en masse use of the phallus is perhaps most prevalent and recognizable in the work of Yayoi Kusama. In the early 1960s, marking a brief departure from her famous Infinity Net paintings, Kusama created a series of installations titled Accumulations. Humorous and frankly sexual, Kusama's phalluses, whether depicted flaccid or erect, were juxtaposed with symbols of feminine domesticity and fashion. Here we see the phallus spilling off paintings and growing out the crevices of irons, baking pans, ladles, shopping bags and shoes. As playful as these forms may appear,







*Andy Warhol*



*Andy Warhol*

they are also unobtrusive reminders of a suffocating male dominated world.<sup>27</sup>

Andy Warhol's iconic print of a banana, which appeared on The Velvet Underground & Nico 1967 record, has made the Warhol brand synonymous with the symbol of the banana. The screen-printed graphic black and yellow image became laden with Warhol's critical eye to the consumer culture and mass media of contemporary society. This phallic representation of a peeled banana inherited the notoriety and controversy of the band's music and experimentalist performance sensibilities<sup>28</sup>.

Pop artist Roy Lichtenstein painted Hot Dog (1964) in his signature cartoon inspired style. The bold outlines and ben-day dots allude to an image that has been photographically reproduced from a magazine. Here, Lichtenstein's two-dimensional painting uses lowbrow popularized forms of communication language to illustrate banal artifacts present contemporary mass culture.

Both Warhol and Lichtenstein are regarded as seminal artists to the canon of Pop Art. Both artists have been influential to my practice in their use of popularized and two-dimensional imagery. In adopting language codes usually associated with advertising and mass reproduction, both artists aimed to reflect on the artificial world of consumerism. In referencing both artists' arguably phallic works, I intend to recognize the impact that the genre of Pop Art has had on my practice.

The title 'Eat Me' was taken from a t-shirt made by a Scandinavian retailer called Weekday. There are both humorous and sexual connotations to this colloquial phrase. Eat Me is both an insult (an expression of disgust) as well as a sexual proposition (proposing oral sex) used in Western Popular Culture. I was particularly intrigued by the way this phrase spoke to other works, more particularly the neon work titled 'Be Delicious', which refers to the physical body as being edible.

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<sup>27</sup> These sculptures have frequently been discussed in relation to Kusama's continual personal frustrations as a struggling female artist in a chauvinistic and tightly circumscribed art community. (Hopton, L. 2000. Yayoi Kusama. Phaidon: London)

<sup>28</sup> Warhol, mentor and manager of The Velvet Underground released a limited edition release of their debut LP in 1967. The limited edition LP contained the image of the famous banana as a peel off sticker. Upon peeling off the image (skin) of the banana, the inside of the banana was revealed in human flesh tones. This suggestive visual metaphor was seen as profane and highly risqué upon the LP's release.



## SHOPPING BAGS

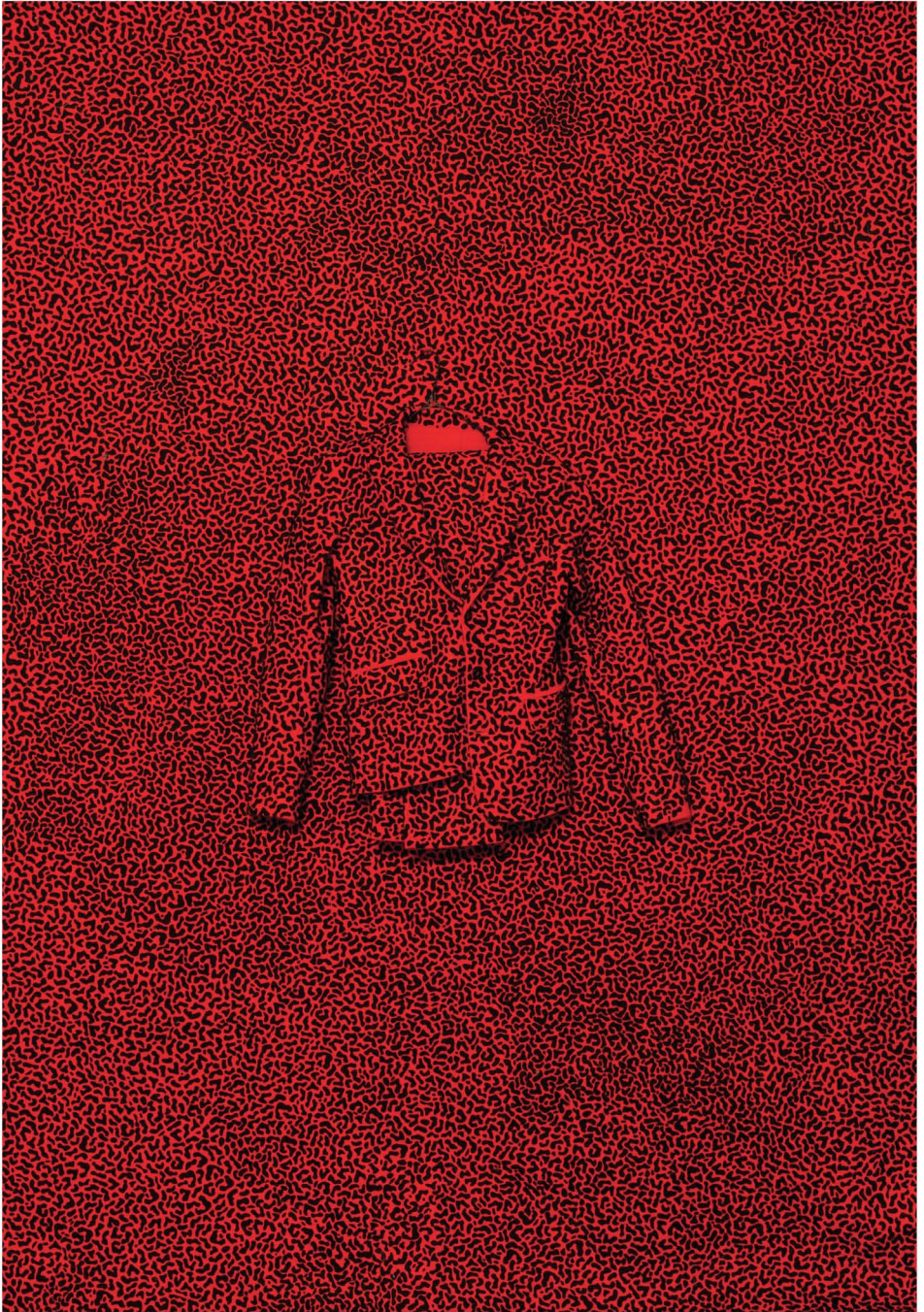
Eight beige, black and navy blue mono-colored shopping bags are grouped together on a shelf. Each shopping bag is a mold of a luxury designer shopping bag that I had previously collected for an installation. They are molded in resin and subsequently sprayed by a panel beater in a high gloss finish. These sculptures of shopping bags are intended to be replicas of actual shopping bags. Each bag contains a visible logo embossing of its respective brand.

The colour of each shopping bag was selected according to a fall winter Celine<sup>29</sup> collection, which debuted at Paris Fashion Week earlier this year. I have chosen to use the colour scheme of the Celine brand to highlight the embedded notion of brand fetishism that is inherent in the replication these bags. In selecting colours dictated by a major fashion house, I aim to index my work in accordance to the glamorous and desirable world of trends and commodities offered by fashion magazines.

My Shopping Bags are an extension of a previous work that I had made during the final year of my Bachelor's Degree. I Love Me is a collection of empty shopping bags that were displayed in a seemingly large heap in the corner of the gallery. The emptiness of these shopping bags were emphasized in an installation that contrasted consumerism and superficial desire with the global financial crisis of 2009.

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<sup>29</sup> Celine is a French luxury ready-to-wear and leather goods fashion house founded in 1945 by Celine Vipiana.



## PERFECT LOVERS

Perfect Lovers (2.5m X 1.8m) is a three-dimensional work consisting of two suits that are juxtaposed against a banner. All three components are composed in hand applied leopard print and are, subsequently used to create the visual effect of camouflage<sup>30</sup>.

The two felt suits were made in response to the artistic practice of Felix Gonzalez-Torres. Perfect Lovers 1991 is a pair of two commercially produced clocks displayed as an allegory for love as well as a visual metaphor for homosexual coupling. I have used identical suits in a comparable way to signify a similar intent.

The aesthetic of camouflage is loaded with numerous pop cultural connotations. My use of camouflage is intended to be referential to modes of retail display found in clothing stores. For example, the autumn winter Prada shop window (see image) displays mannequins, wallpaper and accessories are matched to clothing in the same print. Similarly, I am drawn to Yayoi Kusama's use of camouflage in her self-portrait works.

In gay popular culture originating in San Francisco and New York, wearing camouflage-patterned clothing was a 'macho look' commonly worn in nightclubs. Here, camouflage is associated with sexual fetishism as it is used to exemplify the masculine coding inherent in its military connotation (Newark, T. 2007. 168).



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<sup>30</sup> 'Camouflage has become a global cult in today's fashion and design world. Its fascinating story tells of the interplay between military developments on the one hand, and the worlds of art, design and popular culture on the other. (Newark, T. 2007. 168)



THE NEW

BLACK

## THE NEW BLACK

The New Black is a black and white felt collage depicting a reduced representation of a typical West African Mask. The collage reads 'The New Black', a phrase that is commonly used in fashion magazines to express shifts in trends. In my graphic juxtaposition of text and image, I intended to create an image that is reminiscent of a fashion magazine cover.

Due to the arrival of African cultural objects in ethnographical museums in Paris, the term 'Primitive Art' had emerged in Europe. Although Picasso knew very little about Africa, he appropriated African art motifs that he witnessed in these museums to challenge European traditions in painting (Hobbs, P. 2006. 1). In 1907, Artist Pablo Picasso painted *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. Version O)* using masks and carved figures from Central and West Africa as inspiration to express new forms of figuration. Consequently, Picasso's painting has become an example of the ways in which the West has borrowed from Africa to develop their own aesthetic language.

The New Black was made in reference to the resurgence of African inspired prints and motifs in Western fashion. It humorously suggests how Western fashion borrows from traditional African craft to create new consumer trends. This creative dialogue, between the West and Africa, is an idea that has been perpetuated since Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. Version O)*.



## THE TRIBAL COMEBACK

The Tribal Comeback (2m X 1.6m) was made in relation to The New Black. This collage was developed out of my fascination with animal prints and its inclination to appear distinctly 'African' or 'tribal'. I have collaged numerous wildlife animals that one would usually associate with the African landscape. In this dense composition of colorful animals I have inserted the title of the work in a bold tribal font.

This collage sits closest to the language of 'fuzzy felt', the children's craft hobby, than any other collage in this series. Traditional 'fuzzy felt' sets come with themes such as Ballet, Farmyard, Circus and Hospital. The Tribal Comeback is reminiscent of the Safari themed fuzzy felt pack.

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