



own

echoes

painterly repetitions and
revisions in an age of
digitally mediated images

jake aikman

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Fine Art.
Michaelis School of Fine Art
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this approach to depiction, that thematicizes its process, is essential in creating an awareness of the mediation of images.

The mediation of landscape in painting is explored by looking at a specific case in the Romantic tradition (Caspar David Friedrich) in relation to contemporary painting, which highlights a shift from a view of a utopian unmediated landscape to our present reconfigurations of fragmented past, sourced from mediated images.

In section two a theoretical and historical context for situating my practice is discussed. Examples of repetition from early Modernism through to the Pop Art movement highlight the differences and similarities of my intentions in the practical work. In addition, the thematic component of the project is discussed specifically with regard to the prevalence of affinities with the thematic interests from the movement referred to as Romanticism. For the purposes of explicating an historical framing of my project, the focus on Romanticism is restricted to the paintings of Caspar David Friedrich as opposed to providing a survey of an entire movement. The return of romantic themes in my own practice and within a broader contemporary practice is argued to be another form of repetition, thus expanding the scope of repetition rather than dividing the project into separate components.

Section three discusses contemporary examples of artists who have influenced my research project and specific works relating to the topic of repetition are examined. This section also links the earlier discussion of Friedrich's romantic painting with contemporary artists, namely Peter Doig and Christopher Orr, associated with the current resurgence of artists adopting and adapting the spirit and thematic concerns of Romanticism in contemporary practice.

Section four examines the methodology and process of my research project. I start by framing the context for the practical processes employed and how they developed. I discuss how, through the process of implicating these methods, a dialogue between technical strategy and content arose.

Section five illustrates and provides a detailed discussion of the individual works produced for the exhibition.

Varnedoe suggests, with regard to Rodin's sculptures, exposing the means is an act of modesty (Varnedoe 1990: 127).

By showing these processes in the partial figures and modular recurrences of his exhibited work, he undercut his own virtuosity as a conjurer of stories in flesh and bone, and introduced an evident self-consciousness about the artificiality of art's means (Varnedoe 1990: 127).

Exposing a painting's construction is vitally important to the reading of the work in my project. By exposing rather than concealing the hand's role (evident in painting that valorises pictorial illusionism), not only is the viewer's attention drawn to the means of the image's construction, but it is also drawn to the uniqueness of painterly values in image production.

Repetition in the twentieth century appears in the work of the 1960s Minimalist artists Donald Judd, Carl Andre, and Sol Lewitt, who in Varnedoe's account inherit the possibilities of repetition from Brancusi. (Varnedoe 1990: 169).

The concerns of these Minimalist artists were very different to those of Rodin's. In my view his will to expose the means of production brings into focus the link of the artist and the work as a means to demystify the artist's role. These Minimalist artists, according to Varnedoe were



Fig.1 Auguste Rodin, *The Three Shades*, 1880.

[A]esthetically sceptical about the possibilities of art's communication, they argued that wilful voiding of any metaphor or associative meaning in their forms would focus the viewer, with therapeutic cleansing effect, on the realities of present-tense experience of the work, and the clean rigors of its structural logic (Varnedoe 1990: 169).

In my understanding of Varnedoe's projection of the Minimalist concerns, evidence of the artist's hand would jeopardise a non-associative reading of their work. In this regard the intended reading of repetition and serial production in Minimalism is very different to the repetitions in my project, which are representational, and therefore loaded with associative content. But similarly the representations in the work are designed to

Rauschenberg's interest in repetition, evident in *Factum I and II*, may have developed more as a result of his dyslexia, as opposed to projecting onto him a shared interest in repetition.

The reiteration of the image could be seen as a key to eliciting from the viewer a pause, a moment of reflection. As I have already indicated in relation to my practice, oil painting is a slow, anachronistic process whilst digital media, particularly in advertising, is ubiquitous, gaudy and repetitive. The capacity of the mind to retain so much useless information, which bombards the senses daily is an appalling notion to me. Sports stadia were traditionally simply the venue for hosting sporting events, but now they have, at least in the case of professional sport, become sites for a bizarre new media phenomenon. The now outdated advertising boards on the sidelines, which used to show printed advertisements, have been replaced with high speed, high resolution, 3-D animated advertising that literally competes for attention with the action on the field.

My point is not that paintings are competing with this kind of digital proliferation, but that the high speed and rapid change in the flow of visual material has a bearing on the time afforded to looking at images in general. One of the strategies I am trying to achieve in my paintings is to delay immediate perceptual interpretation. The production of repetitions is by no means

a new strategy, but the concerns that underpin my strategies in the employment of repetition are undeniably contemporary.

painter?" His response is that Friedrich shared the following attitudes associated with the movement he refers to as German Romanticism, which portrayed:

[A] heightened sensitivity to the natural world, combined with a belief in nature's correspondence to the mind; a passion for the equivocal, the indeterminate, the obscure and the faraway...; a celebration of subjectivity bordering on solipsism, often coupled with a morbid desire that self be lost in nature's various infinities; an infatuation with death; valorisation of night over day, emblematising a reaction against Enlightenment and rationalism; a nebulous but all-pervading mysticism; and a melancholy, sentimental longing or nostalgia which can border on kitsch. (Koerner 1990: 23)

The above quotation sums up a pervasive attitude informing the thematic choices in my project. Arguably, the employment of repetition as a device in the multiple portrait works, which is an attempt to slow down the viewing process of the painting, is a Romantic ideal. The desire to delay or engage the viewer with the image is not solely a reaction to the speed of the flow of digital media, but is coupled with a desire for a reciprocal reflection on the subject within, and its deflection beyond the paintings. My emphasis on the importance of this engagement with the painted images in this project simultaneously is and isn't reflected in Koerner's suggestion that the German Romantic painters celebrated subjectivity

"bordering on solipsism" (Koerner. 1990: 23). Simultaneously there is the inevitable subjectivity in paintings (in the project) where the meaning is deliberately deferred, coupled with a desire to expose the solipsistic dialogue between painter and subject.

This desire for silent dialogue, which is in part the negotiation of the physical/practical act of painting and the content which informs the nature of that act, is linked to a belief in the ability of the interpretation to breach both the two-dimensional physical constraints of the painting and three-dimensional illusionistic representation. In other words it is important to the project's success that via a painterly approach to image making the content can potentially project a symbolic meaning. This approach is less apparent in the multiple portrait works that lean more towards a naturalistic handling of the subject, although symbolically through the literal repetition of the individual, reference is made to the construction of identity. The two subjects in my multiple portraits were chosen because of an interest in their construction of identity respectively. Stuart Pearson Wright, the subject of 36 *Stuart Pearson Wright*, (2006-7) is an artist who engages with his lack of knowledge regarding his father, due to the fact that his mother was artificially inseminated. In *Superstar (Ed Young)* (2007-8) the artist Ed Young's presence in

Symbolic figuration, understood through Clay and Goethe, underpins the conceptual aims of the project whether it is in the repetition of the multiple-portraits, singular figures, or series of prints.

In Friedrich's *Wanderer above a Sea of Fog* (c 1818), the aforementioned emphasis on the importance of painterly representation is not strongly evident, but its inclusion serves to anchor similar thematic tendencies (in my project) within an historic tradition. The image of the lone figure in the landscape has become synonymous with Romantic painting. Lone figures make appearances in five of my large canvases, and the subject is explored unconventionally in the multiple-portraits. In the singular paintings the figure is surrounded by large expanses of ocean, whereas in the portraits, which are restricted to the head and shoulders of a subject, there is a forced intimacy that is paradoxically negated through fracturing and repetition. Friedrich overtly denies intimacy by turning the figures back on the viewer, "rendering him subtly anonymous, or perhaps universalizing his cause; and although we cannot see his face we can share in the substance of his vision" (Koerner 1990: 179).

The characteristically Romantic lone figure in the landscape, and more fitting to my project, the lone figure in the sea, are revised and explored in Peter Doig's oeuvre. Doig is a contemporary painter whose practice is firmly rooted in the



Fig. 4 Peter Doig, *Figure in Mountain Landscape*, 1997-8.

Romantic painting tradition. His painterly treatment, thematic interests, and working method make him particularly relevant to a contextual explication of my project, and in introducing contemporary romantic painting.

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Informing the paintings in this project is an irresistible desire to create images that counter the frenzied flow of media imagery burdened with news of war and human suffering. The technological networks that condense the globe allow the 'bad' news of the world to be easily accessed wherever one happens to be. The unsettling nature of this media bombardment fuels 'the yearning for an intact world' (Hollein. 2005:17)

peter doig

The renewed interest in romanticism in contemporary painting, I suggest, stems from a tide of environmental and global social uncertainty. These circumstances have stimulated artists to address their surrounds and engage with the individual, overwhelmed by environmental and social instability. An iconic signifier of Romanticism, and a common motif in Doig's oeuvre, is the lone figure in the landscape (or seascape). The lone men in Doig's paintings often appear to be caught in a moment of transition. Occasionally the figure is on foot in the land, but the most frequent visual device that describes that frozen transitional moment is a canoe. Doig's men reinforce a passive journey by being depicted without paddles to control their journey; they are mere passengers at the mercy of the elements.

Boats have long been connected with transition - from one country or continent to another; from this life to the next. As if offering transport across the river Styx as Charon provided for the Greeks or the ferryman Mahaf offered ancient Egyptians as they moved to the afterlife [...](Mullins. 2006: 83-4)



Fig. 5 Peter Doig, *100 Years Ago*, 2001.



Fig. 6 Peter Doig, *100 Years Ago*, 2001.

a rock group that split up in the mid-1970s after the death of one of its founding members. (Grenier 2007: 107).

Doig's methodology in the construction of his paintings has a resonance with my own production. Firstly, he has started with a found image that he has stripped of its



Fig.8 Peter Doig, *Metropolitan (House of Pictures)*, 2003-4.

original context, by positioning the figure in the canoe in a seascape with an island from one of his own photographs of an island off the coast of his adopted home of Trinidad

Similarly my work *Soliloquy* (2008), which I discuss in detail later on, was developed in much the same way, with similar intentions. The paring away of contextual references and accompanying figures is a strategy to evoke one of the characterizing features of romanticism. Another aspect of Doig's paintings is his use of repetition, not in the ways that I explore it in my project, but rather as a means to explore difference through a variation in colour and/or composition.

[T]he characteristic quality of Romantic painting lies precisely in this tension, in the rescinding of the immediate perception that the structure of the depiction promises as an event. In recent painting this rescinding is made manifest by exhibiting the media of the depiction, of images, and apparatuses, and in the use of preexisting images. (Söntgen 2005: 80)

In some of the works in my project the promise of spatial illusion is deliberately undermined through a painterly approach that reveals the two-dimensional surface. Very thin paint that drips down (in some cases upward) fails to conceal the means of production, and in doing so nullifies the expectation of spatial illusion. This is one way to embed the tension that Söntgen refers to as being a 'characteristic quality of Romantic painting' (Söntgen 2005: 80).

denying immediate access to the landscape (Söntgen 2005: 79). Söntgen suggests that these examples actively emphasize that the observer of the image of nature is denied

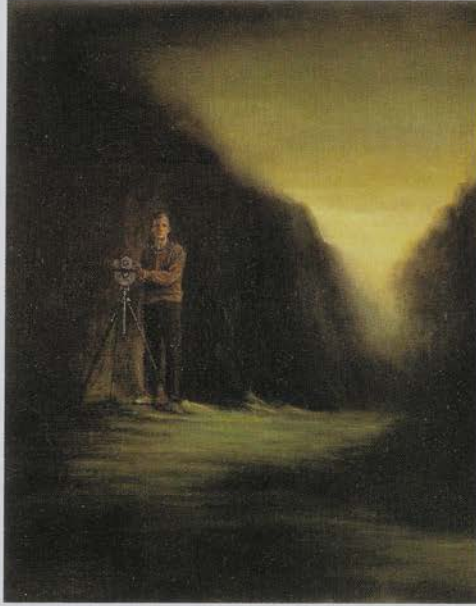


Fig. 11 Christopher Orr, *Field Trip*, 2004.

its immediacy or fusion with it, because what they are observing is a history of mediated images of nature, reworked. But Orr and Doig are not necessarily subverting the possibility of a Romantic landscape (landscape perceived directly) by denying its immediacy, as Joseph Koerner demonstrates with Friedrich's *Wanderer above a Sea of Fog* (c. 1818) there is a 'wilful obscurity in the representation of landscape', and this mode of representation has its roots in the

aesthetics of the sublime, associated with Edmund Burke. Burke viewed the obscuring of nature as key to evoking the sublime (Koerner 1990: 180).



Fig. 12 Christopher Orr, *Smoke*, 2004.

In Christopher Orr's painting *Smoke* (2004) the disinterestedness of the subject who is releasing what appears to be a smoke distress signal creates an unaffected engagement with what could be a life-threatening situation. His subject, although up to his knees in water and in the foreground of a portentous night sky, appears calm, and as a result the viewer is lulled into the aestheticized representation of his distress signal. The power of the

contemporary repetitions, revisions, and multiples

Under this heading two artists, namely Cecilia Edefalke and Marlene Dumas are discussed with reference to specific works that, in the case of Edefalke, strongly engage with repetition of the same subject, and in Dumas' case, that specific examples of revisions or quotations of paintings are examined to reveal methodological affinities that correspond with my project.

cecilia edefalke

In this new form of culture, which one might call a culture of use or a culture of activity, the artwork functions as the temporary terminal of a network of interconnected elements, like a narrative that extends and reinterprets preceding narratives. Each exhibition encloses within it the script of another; each work may be inserted into

different programs and used for multiple scenarios. The artwork is no longer an end point but a simple moment in an infinite chain of contributions (Bourriaud. 2002: 13-14).

In Edefalke's practice an exhibition has literally been enclosed 'within it the script of another' (Bourriaud 2002: 13-14). In 1999 Edefalke reproduced her entire first gallery show, *Another Movement* (1990), in the same space and arranged identically.

Edefalke's *Echo* series is of particular interest to my practical work that engages with repetition of the same. In one sense this has proven to be a futile pursuit as the medium of paint, transmuted through the painter's hand, has an inevitable degree of inconsistency. Therefore, repetition in painting, unlike other mechanical processes such as printing, can never be a perfect copy, and as such there can be no original.

Fig. 13 (left) Cecilia Edefalk, detail of *Echo*, 1992-4

Fig. 14 (right) Cecilia Edefalk *Echo*, 1992-4 (part of the "Self-Portrait" series)



of found images from various media. She also quotes or makes revisionist works of iconic paintings. In fact, Dumas and Richter have painted from the same source. In 1988, Richter painted a series titled *18 October 1976* (1988) depicting the deaths of Red Army Faction terrorists (The Baader Meinhof gang). He painted three versions of Ulrike Meinhof, in his characteristically blurred photographic manner. She had hanged herself in her German prison cell in 1976. In both Richter's *Dead [Tote]* (1988) and Dumas' *Stern* (2004) the marks from the noose are clear, and there is not much to separate the images compositionally, except that in Dumas' painting the drama is heightened via a more closely cropped version, stronger contrast, and deliberate mark making, whereas Richter's version is softer and receding.

Dumas evokes Gustave Courbet's *L'Origine du Monde* (1866) in *Immaculate* (2003). The title *Immaculate* suggesting, as the painter

is a woman, an unmediated image (by a man), to offset the male gaze. In *Against History* (2002) Dumas interprets Jacques-Louis David's *The Death of Marat* (1793), the story of the writer and politician who was stabbed by Charlotte Corday. In Dumas' version the title suggests that despite the layers of paint that appear to have been scraped away, uncovering and recovering history, 'no matter how wraithlike the image may be, it has not disappeared' (Van Den Boogerd. 2003: 27).

The relevance of Dumas as a contemporary influence in my project becomes particularly significant in relation to my work *Solidarity* (2008). Dumas has repeated many images of blindfolded men sourced from press photography, which represent captured individuals that although displayed in groupings do not necessarily share the same fate or ideologies. Their individualizing is furthered by the separate canvases or paper they are rendered on and inconsistent



Fig. 15 Marlene Dumas, *The Blindfolded*, 2002.



Fig. 22 Source image for Marlene Dumas, *The Blindfolded*, 2001.

backgrounds. In *Solidarity* the soldiers that are swearing their oath of citizenship for the United States army in Iraq are unified by the single canvas, but simultaneously through a reductive treatment not dissimilar to Dumas' they become contained within themselves. Dumas' blindfolded men contained by their



Fig. 23 Jake Aikman, *Solidarity* (detail), 2008.

visual restrictions and the soldiers in *Solidarity*, by their solemn faces (most with their eyes).



Fig. 24 source image for Jake Aikman, *Solidarity*, 2008.

⁵ *Fresh Meat* was a group exhibition at Whatiftheworld gallery in Cape Town held in January-February 2008

format was influenced by Richter, but it was also a format that I had little experience working with, offering fresh compositional challenges.

revisions: reductions and repetitions

Under this heading I discuss works that have been part of the scope of my research, but that were not included as part of my submission. They are works that directly engage with a postmodern debate surrounding notions of originality and creation, as outlined in the following quotation.

Repetition is the inscription of difference or otherness within identity. The postmodern conception of repetition is best understood as part of a general critique of the traditional Western assumption that identity is always stable, complete, and atemporal. It is most closely associated with the philosophies of Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida, although its notions of originality (being at the origin of) and even of creation (making something from nothing) are slowly blurred in this new cultural landscape marked by the twin figures of the DJ and the programmer, both of whom have the task of selecting cultural objects and inserting them into new contexts (Bourriaud 2002: 7)

A series of paintings (not included in submission of practical work) that I produced for the group exhibition titled *Fresh Meat*,⁵ of nurses titled *ICU*, were influenced by



Fig. 25 Jake Aikman, *ICU II*, 2008.



Fig. 26 Richard Prince, *Country Nurse*, 2003.

6

The combination of cold and warm colour in the production (in this project), of the what may appear to be black, has proved to be useful in controlling tonal contrasts with colour.

As I have mentioned in the previous section, the square format 2m x 2m canvases that structurally link my practical work were inspired by the dimensions of a series of works by Gerhard Richter, particularly his painting *Seascape (Sea-Sea)*. My attraction to seascapes combined with my interest in paying homage to influential artists led to a revision of Richter's painting. In *Sea-Sea after Richter* the original composition was disrupted toward the foreground where the disintegration of the painted illusionism reveals the method of its construction. In the foreground of my revision of Richter's work the drips that bleed and disrupt the spacial illusion reveal the colour combination of Burnt Sienna and French Ultramarine pigments, that were used to produce what may appear to be black⁶. When diluted these colours have a tendency to separate.



Fig. 29 Gerhard Richter, *Seascape (Sea-Sea)*, 1970.

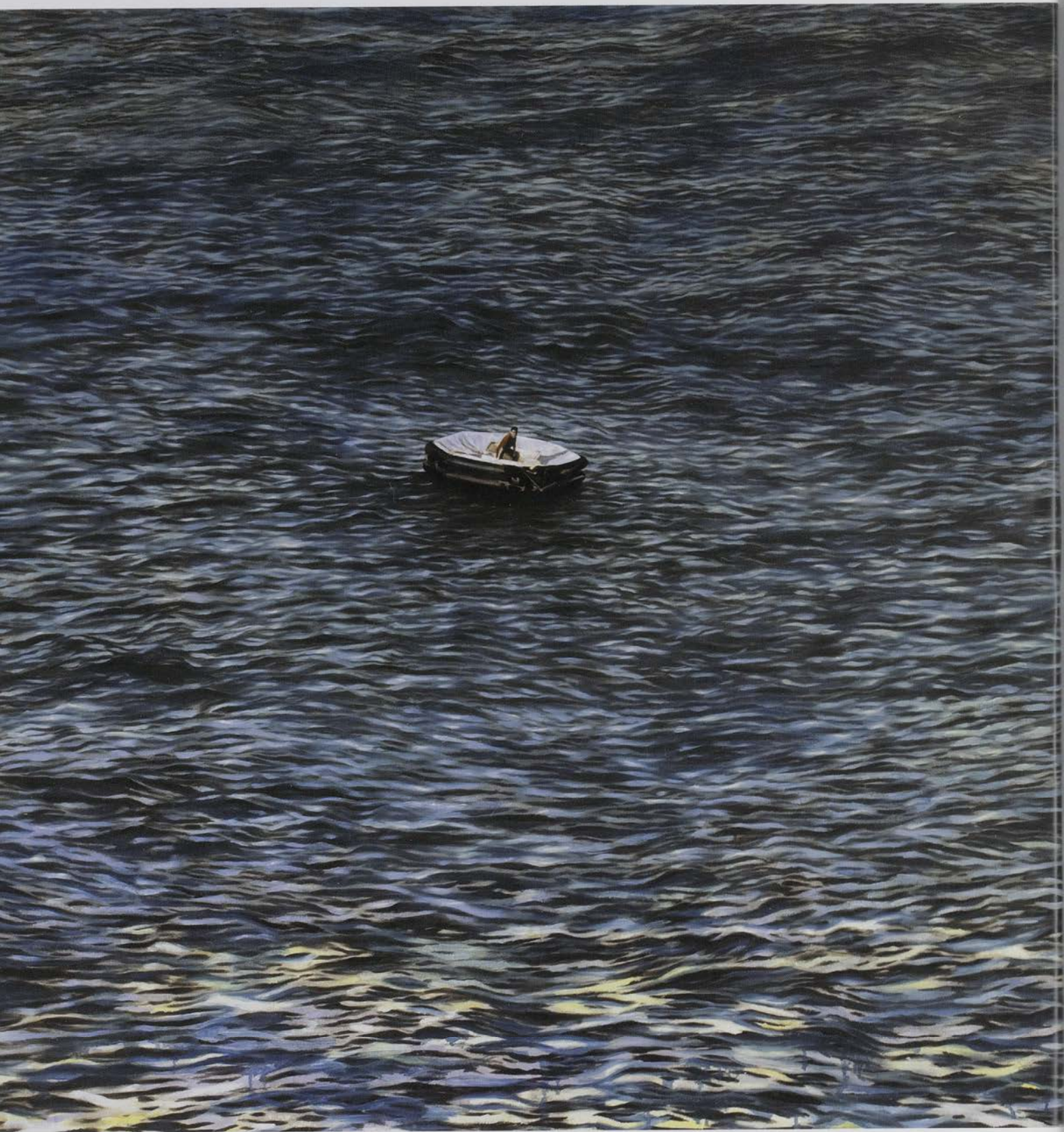
generating equivalents in paint

If perspective was linear and theatrical before becoming aerial and sculptural, it is because painting first of all had to demonstrate its capacity for poetry – its ability to tell stories, to represent speaking, acting bodies. The bond between painting and the poetic power of words and fables. What can undo this bond, assign painting a privileged relationship not only to the use of flat surface but also the affirmation of flatness, is a different type of relationship between what painting does and what words make visible on its surface. For painting to be destined for flatness, it must be made to be seen flat, the links that connect its images in the hierarchies of representation have to be loosened. (Rancière 2007: 75)

In my body of work the practical subject matter of the sea functions as the primary contextualising element. Its visual representation became increasingly important relative to an increased interest in how a painted representation can differentiate itself from causal photographic recordings of it. In all the representations of water in the works the references were limited to badly printed found newspaper images. This self-imposed hindrance was an effective method of developing an equivalent approximation rather than an accurate representation of water. This is important to the theoretical aims of the

the individual works

Repetition is a strategy I have employed to focus an awareness or interest in the paintings method of construction, a 'thematization' of painting's own process. (Söntgen 2005: 80). In other words, as Virginia MacKenny (2007: 4) acknowledged in her catalogue essay for *Come*, I am interested in the act of translation becoming the content of the work. In addition to this I am interested in the subject's ability to deny a logical narrative through its repetition. In other words a suspension of closure.



36 stuart pearson wright
(2006-7) 36 units, 30 x 30cm each, oil
on canvas

Repetition can generally suggest biological patterns, while replication, another kind of repetition, can share in this organic association or can imply the opposite, namely industrial standardization. (Levy 1996: 79)

Stuart Pearson Wright, former winner of the BP Portrait Award, was born in 1975 as the result of artificial insemination. The mystery of his paternity fuels an obsession with identity that permeates his work. The image of the artist and his biographical information appeared in an article in the British newspaper *The Saturday Guardian* (20.05.06).

My relationship to Pearson Wright as subject matter has been limited to the mediated newspaper photograph and the information contained within the article. The visual and textual limitations of the primary source material have allowed for a stronger engagement with the process of painting 36 similar faces. An absence of an interpersonal relationship with the subject removed any pressure to make an accurate likeness of a subject restricted to the aforementioned information.



Fig. 36 Andy Warhol, *Marilyn Monroe (Twenty Times)*, 1962.

36 Stuart Pearson Wright (2006-7), like the example of Andy Warhol's serial portraits, makes use of repetition, but unlike the replication of Warhol, which draws our attention to mechanized standardization, the intention here is to point to difference. Although the subject of my multiple portrait appeared in the newspaper, he does not have the instantly recognizable iconic fame Warhol's celebrity subjects have. As Donald Kuspit suggests:

People are nothing but their social identity for Warhol. They are not persons, but occupy a social place. Apart from their social roles, they are human blanks. They are all social surface, which is what Warhol

⁸ Donald Kuspit, 2004.
The End of Art. Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press

⁹ Barthes elaborates on this in
Camera Lucida (1980)

acknowledged he was. Like him, they have no inner lives, and they deny that inner life exists. His art devalues and discards inner life, for it seems meaningless compared to social life. This is why we feel no empathy for Warhol's figures. (Kuspit 2004: 164)

It seemed easy to set up Warhol's portraits in opposition to mine with the help of Kuspit's condemnation of Warhol, but this negativity towards Warhol is symptomatic of the image Warhol projected of himself, and in my opinion Kuspit aims to support his argument that positions Warhol and Bruce Nauman as chief perpetrators in *The End of Art*. Foster,⁸ in *The Return Of The Real* (1996) makes a far more convincing argument for a

more objective and comprehensive reading of Warhol that brought to my attention the differentiations within the repetitive mechanisation of Warhol's prints. Foster likens the tears, slipping and streaking in Warhol's silkscreen prints to a Barthesian punctum⁹, and in *36 Stuart Pearson Wright* (2006-7) the differences in expression are intended to function similarly (Foster 1996: 130-134).

With the potential depth that lies behind the projected shallowness of Warhol, it becomes increasingly difficult to support Kuspit's position.



Fig. 38 Jake Aikman, *36 Stuart Pearson Wright* (detail), 2006-7.

It was made
black and white
some of it was
film and some of it
was black

It was obviously
used that he
was inconsistent

It looked like the
usual sort of man-
grothic and historic
with a bit of
wilderness restoration
added in

At the moment
was clearly derived
from pleasure or other
secondary sources

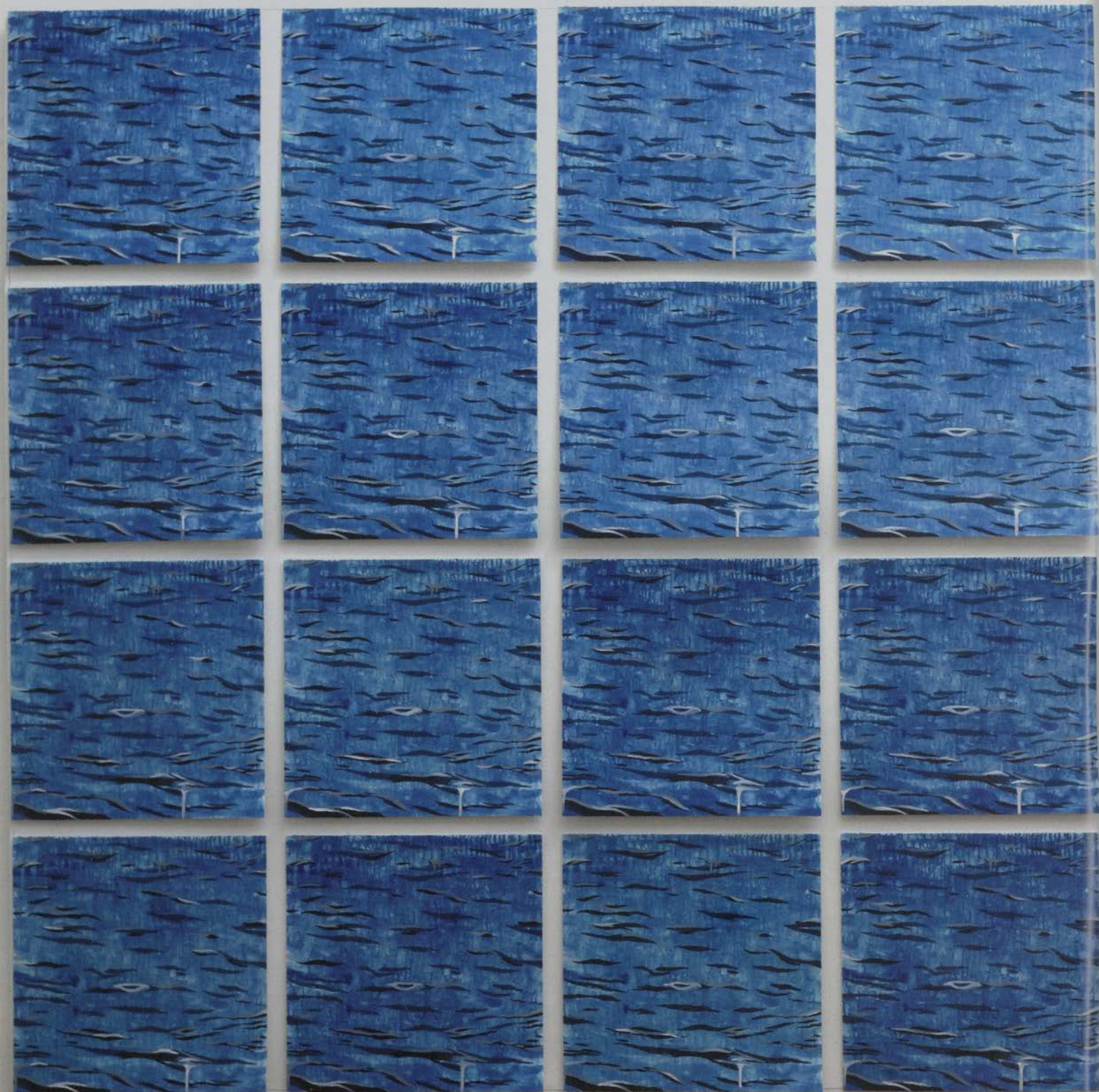
When people wouldn't
see anything there
anyway because of
the lack of anything
substantial to
put them in

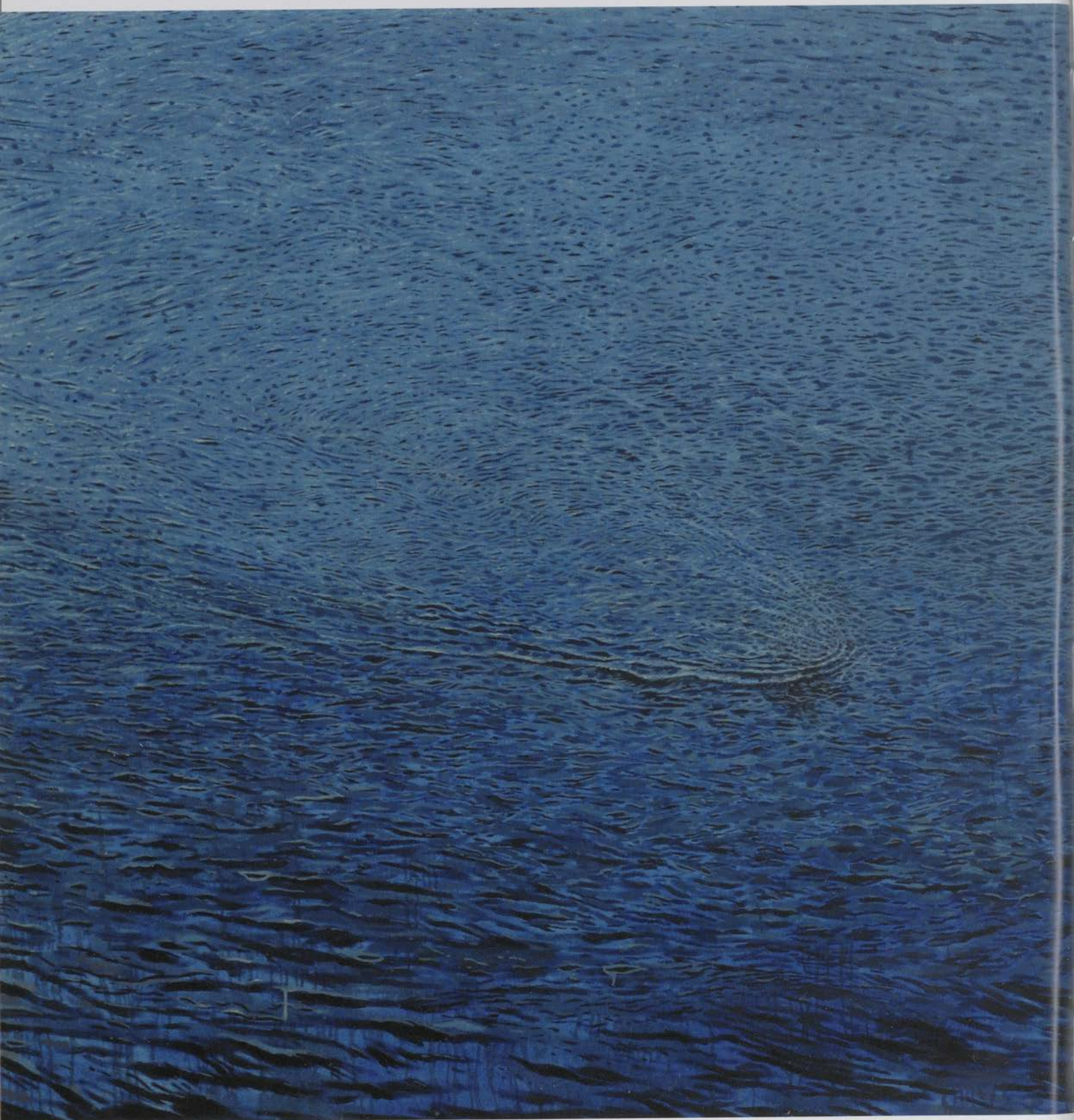
He knew in
the previous
piece of work

The museum didn't
have a lot of things
you could tell what
the thing was that
was literally represented,
but you couldn't tell
the meaning

It's not looked at
anything for more
than a few seconds
They don't keep
going back to
look again

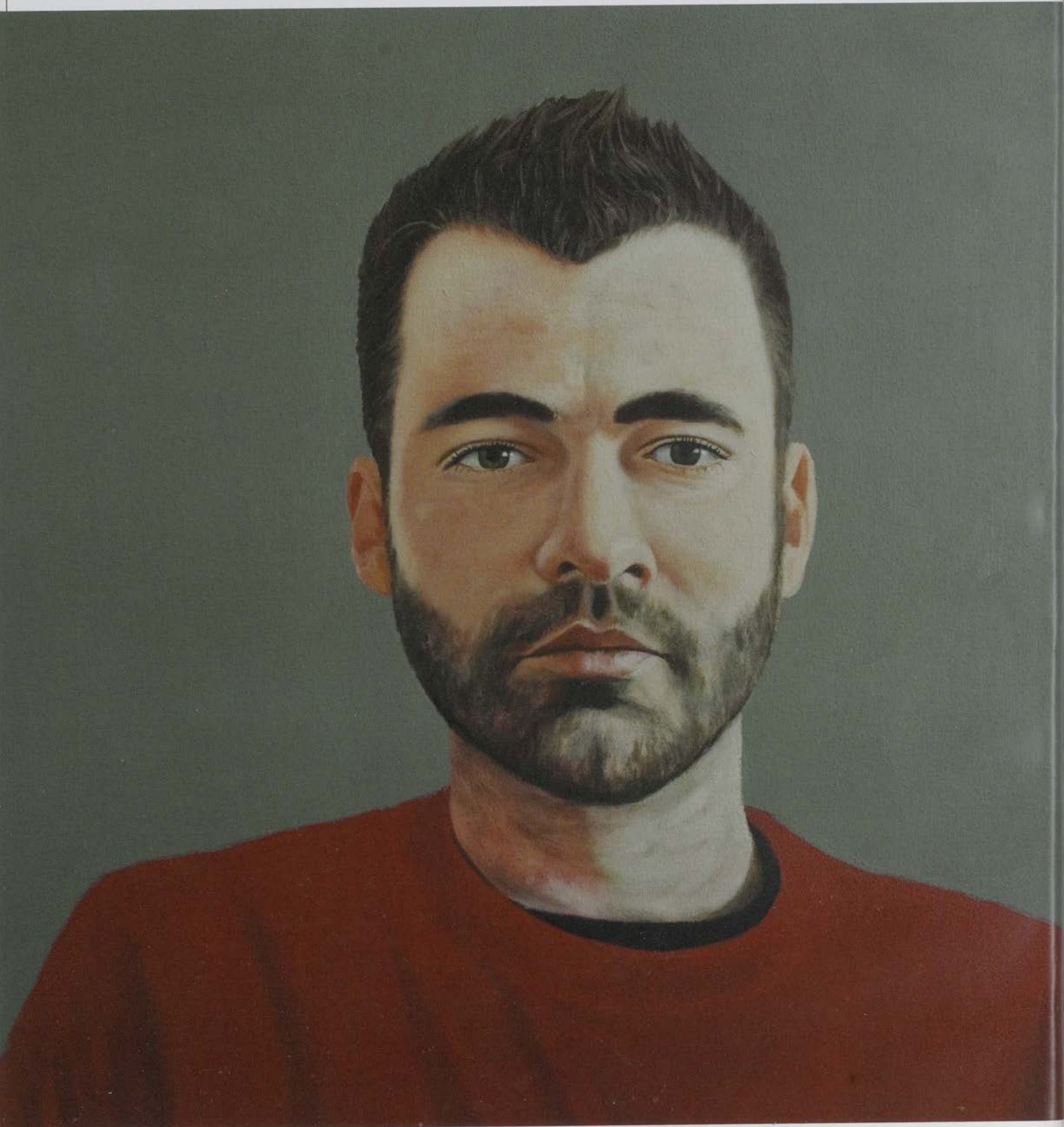
The curators and
collectors all changed
and chronic
Everyone was
happy





echo II (2007-8), 2 x 2m, oil on
canvas

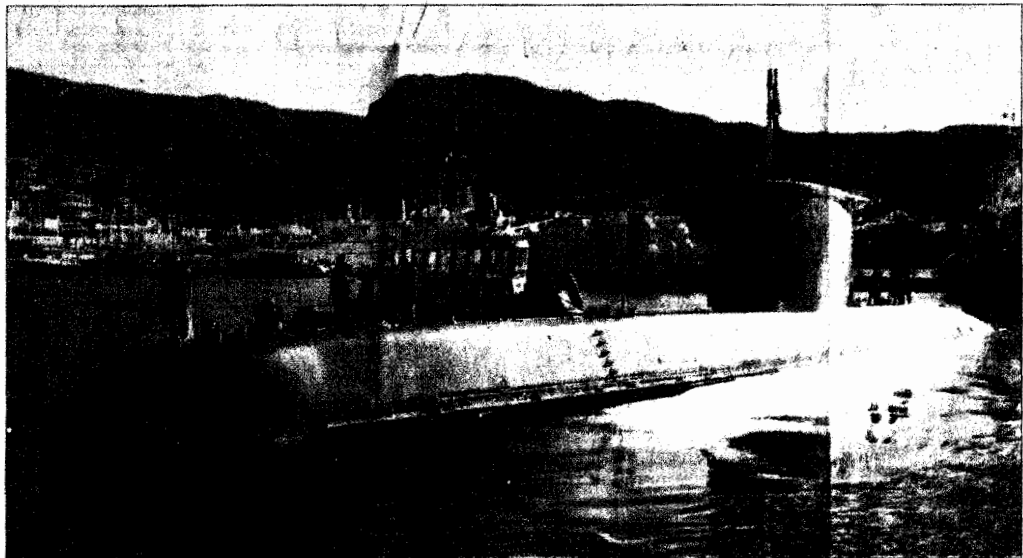
Echo II was originally part of a set made up of the oil painting half of the diptych *Echo*. The display configuration of the three works that make up this series is not fixed. The two oil paintings were initially envisaged as a set, but are not strictly a diptych.



soliloquy (2008) 200 x 200cm.
oil on canvas.

The source image for this work was a local newspaper photograph taken in Simon's Town harbour of a South African Navy submarine that had just returned from a top secret mission. In the picture the crew are on the deck of the vessel about to dock alongside the harbour wall. In my interpretation of the image the other crew members of the submarine have been removed along with the setting of the harbour and the bay of Simon's Town. The romantic associations of the lone figure in the vastness of the seascape has the potential to allude to any number of interpretations, but my primary intention

with this image was to elicit a response to the individual sailor's pensive stance. It is this moment of reflection, a moment when this individual appears to be in a cogitative state that appeals to my thematic concerns with this project. The title *Soliloquy* is meant to reinforce the idea of this individual's solitude, but at the same time a desire to communicate with the viewer.



HEAVY METAL: The SAS Charlotte Maxeke returned to Simon's Town yesterday following a historic and secret voyage of 2 500 nautical miles to patrol South Africa's exclusive economic zone off Prince Edward Islands. *Picture: CHAD CHAPMAN*

Fig. 46 Source image for Jake Aikman, *Soliloquy* (2008) (*Artist's archive*)

solidarity (oath of citizenship)
(2008) 2x2m. oil on canvas

In *Solidarity (Oath of Citizenship)* the multiple portrait subject is revisited, but unlike the other two multiples in the body of work that repeat the same individual on separate canvas units, here the format is informed by the content. This painting is based on a press photograph of soldiers that are taking their oath of citizenship to fight for the United States in Iraq.

With this information in mind it seems an appropriate, albeit a cynical view, that these individuals are forced together as a single unit, as they literally will be in the war zone they go to. The idea that these soldiers who may well be signing up for citizenship or economic reasons, may well not survive to reap the rewards of their commitment to their new country, undermines the heroic image of this role.

It was necessary to generate several more soldiers to suit the compositional needs of the work, and in a logical progression from the other works the uniforms that were for ground troops have been altered to reflect the watery elements in the other works. This watery camouflage begins to decontextualize the painting from

its original source, but proves to be effective in linking the seascapes and portrait works.

conclusion

The processes of repeating, copying, quoting, and appropriating are strategies for examining visual engagement as well as a means to interrogate representation and identity. These structural elements create a platform for deferral and dialogue rather than originary meaning.

This body of work has been produced around a technical framework of devices that have been employed primarily to promote engagement with painted images. This strategy as a point of departure has had a profound effect on the choices regarding content. The overarching theoretical theme of repetition in all its complexity has allowed for an equally varied number of aesthetic choices. These two aspects of the work have proved to be mutually beneficial, and as a result have proved to be vital in enriching the scope of this project.

It is the stability in a still image that settles us. Stability in terms of formal qualities such as composition, colour relationships and subject. Once we've been able to read these constituent elements and determine on some level an understanding of content, a reading or closure, we move on to the next image. Repetition in its various forms is a strategy to suspend closure and a way of

reinforcing the unique features of painting and the unique in repetition. The repeated painting can act as a device to draw attention to the hand-made and the inevitable inconsistencies of this human process and hence an awareness of the activity of painting. It is this humanising activity in painting that for me is so attractive. In the repetition of a work lies the ability to re-enact and remind oneself of the previous performance, a form of self-recognition or a way to acknowledge difference in identity.

The rate at which we receive visual information seems to be accelerating at an ever increasing pace that in my opinion increases the efficacy of the slow medium of painting. Recognition of time invested in the construction of a painted image demands a certain level of reciprocity in the time given to viewing. This is an ideal situation that relies on an appreciation of the craft and it is with this ideal audience in mind that i am motivated to make paintings.

Painting is the process, wherein the work, as Baudelaire phrased it, "comes into the world," whole, complete, and integral throughout all its parts, this organic 'holism' generated through an active, feverish engagement of the artist's body submitting utterly to compulsion. When a work thus realised evinces the hand and activity that produced it, the viewer's response cannot but be both sympathetic and emphatic (Clay 1981: 7)

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Figure 5. Peter Doig, *100 Years Ago* (2001) (Source: Peter Doig, 2007. London: Phaidon. p 108)

Figure 6. Peter Doig, *100 Years Ago* (2001) (Source: Peter Doig, 2007. London: Phaidon. p 108)

Figure 7. Peter Doig, *100 Years Ago* (2000) (Source: Peter Doig, 2007. London: Phaidon. p 106)

Figure 8. Peter Doig, *Metropolitan (House of Pictures)* (2003-4) (Source: Peter Doig, 2007. London: Phaidon. p 38)

Figure 9. Peter Doig, *After Daumier* (2004) (Source: Peter Doig, 2007. London: Phaidon p 39)

Figure 10. Honore Daumier, *The Print Collector* (1857-63) (Source: Peter Doig, 2007. London: Phaidon. p 39)

Figure 11. Christopher Orr, *Field Trip* (2004) (Source: Ideal Worlds. Germany: Hatje Cantz. p 223)

Figure 12. Christopher Orr, *Smoke* (2004) (Source: Ideal Worlds. Germany: Hatje Cantz. p 225)

Figure 13. Cecilia Edefalke, detail *Echo*, (1992-4) (Source: *Painting at the Edge of the World*. Minneapolis: Walker Art Center. p 82)

Figure 14 Cecilia Edefalke, detail *Echo*, (1992-4) (Source: *Painting at the Edge of the World*. Minneapolis: Walker Art Center. p 83)

Figure 15 Marlene Dumas, *The Blindfolded* (2002) (Source: Mullins, C. 2006. *Painting People*. London: Thames and Hudson. p 44)

Figure 16 Gerhard Richter, *Dead [Total]*, (1988) (Source: Storr, R. 2002. New York: Museum Of Modern Art. p 218)

Figure 17 Marlene Dumas, *Stern* (2004) (Source: Mullins, C. 2006. *Painting People*. London: Thames and Hudson. p 45)

Figure 18 Marlene Dumas, *Immaculate* (2003) (Source: Dumas, M. 2003. *Suspect*. Milan: Skira. p 71)

Figure 19 Gustave Courbet's *L'Origine du Monde* (1866) (Source: <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/3f/Origin-of-the-World.jpg> Wikipaedia)

Figure 20 Marlene Dumas, *Against History* (2001) (Source: Dumas, M. 2003. *Suspect*. Milan: Skira. p 28)

Figure 21 Figure 22 Source image for Marlene Dumas, *The Blindfolded* (2002) (Source: *The Painting of Modern Life*. 2007. London: Hayward. p 37)

Figure 23 Jake Aikman, (detail) *Solidarity* (2008)

