AN EXPLORATION OF ABSENCE AND PRESENCE THROUGH THE MEDIUMS OF BRONZE, GLASS AND RESIN FIGURATIVE SCULPTURE, WITHIN A NARRATIVE OF MEMORY

BY

SARAH WALMSLEY

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree, Magister Technologiae: Fine Arts in the Department of Visual Arts, School of Music, Art and Design, Faculty of Arts, Nelson Mandela University

APRIL 2018

Supervisor: David Jones MTech FA (PET)

Declaration

I, Sarah-Anne Walmsley (211135755), hereby declare that the dissertation for Master of Technology Fine Arts is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment of completion of any postgraduate qualification to another university or for another qualification.

……………………………………………..

Sarah-Anne Walmsley

Official use:

In accordance with Rule G 5.6.3,

5.6.3 A treatise/dissertation/thesis must be accompanied by a written declaration on the part of the candidate to the effect that it is his/her own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another university or for another qualification. However, material from publications by the candidate may be embodied in a treatise/dissertation/thesis.

Editing and Translation Services

Renée van der Merwe

B A Hons (Applied Linguistics)

SATI Accredited (1998)

8 Weymouth Place

Beethoven Avenue

Walmer Heights

Port Elizabeth

6070

Mobile: 083 415 4570

E-mail: renvandm@gmail.com

04 December 2017

Dear Mr Jones

This serves to confirm that the MTech thesis by Sarah Walmsley has been submitted to me for language editing.

While I have suggested various changes, I cannot guarantee that these have been implemented nor can I take responsibility for any other subsequent changes or additions that may have been made.

Yours faithfully

Renée van der Merwe

Dedications

This dissertation and body of work would not be possible if it were not for the following people:

Firstly, my partner Jonathan van der Walt, for the endless hours he has devoted to being there for me, and for being patient, understanding and supportive. I appreciate his love and unwavering support more than I can say.

My close family, especially Tamara, my extended family and friends, for being so understanding, loving and supportive throughout the long journey.

And most importantly, this document is dedicated to the kindest, most caring and creative person I know, my precious Grandmother Marie Dalziel, who has been my rock, and my guiding light my entire life. If not for her, I would not be who I am today and none of this would have been possible.

And finally, I hope that this dissertation and body of work honours the memory of my mother, Kathrine.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to acknowledge the following people/groups for their indispensable roles in the completion of this dissertation:

My supervisor, Mr David Jones, who has been an excellent example as a sculptor, academic and educator as well as an excellent mentor and who has provided the guidance and support which has been necessary for me to complete this emotional undertaking. And Mrs Andrieta Wentzel, for her unwavering support and kind presence in my life.

Dr Pieter Binsbergen for the invaluable guidance in research methodologies and MTech structure.

The National Research Foundation for awarding me the Innovation Master's scholarship, the Nelson Mandela University, and the Research Capacity Development (RCD) and Postgraduate Research Scholarship (PGRS) and Faculty of Arts Research Technology and Innovation (FRTI) for continued financial support throughout my MTech, placing the research undertaking at the forefront of my concern and making it possible for me to achieve my academic goals as a full-time student.

The sculpture department for being a home away from home and extended family of support, assisting wherever they can so that I may meet my deadlines. I really appreciate it.

Abstract

This research study was based upon three critical components. These include absence and presence, memory and the female nude. The problem statement aimed to determine how compositionally sound pairings and groupings of bronze, glass and resin figurative sculptures may be manipulated to create visual equilibrium in a work and communicate an inherent conceptual element. This necessitated the following research question which explored what the role of memory and the imago is within dualistic representations of the absent and present, as represented in the mediums of bronze, glass and resin.

The creative and research processes culminate in the body of artwork, entitled *Absence and Presence: in Search of Memory and the Imago*, which is presented as a narrative installation and exhibition of sculptural work. This body of work was driven by the creation of a signifier and allegory for an absent presence or present absence which will always evoke the contemplation of this interplay between these two terms and the ways in which they define and become one another within the narrative of personal memory. Personal memories will always collide with the present and bring with them the memories of absence, but encourage the subject to make tangible this absence in order to confront it and in doing so, realise that it cannot be addressed separately from the presence which defines it.

List of Figures

Figure	Details	Page
Figure 1.1	Christina Bothwell. *When the Body Sleeps, the Spirit* Travels. Cast glass, raku clay, oil paint. 2003-2006. 61 x 74 cm (Christina Bothwell, 2003-2006) http://christinabothwell.com/portfolio-2003-2006/	19
Figure 1.2	Christina Bothwell. *Sometimes When She Sleeps*. Cast glass, raku clay, oil paint. 2009. 23 x 48 x 20 cm (Shanghai Museum of Glass, 2017) http://www.shmog.org/portfolio/sometimes-when-she-sleeps/	20
Figure 1.3	Leah Wingfield & Steve Clements. *Conversation… 31*. Cast glass, steel. 2014. 196 x 51 x 36 cm (Leah Wingfield / Steve Clements, 2014) http://wingfield-clements-glass.com/#/conversation31/	21
Figure 1.4	Leah Wingfield & Steve Clements. *Conversation… 30*. Cast glass, steel. 2014. 196 x 51 x 36 cm (Leah Wingfield / Steve Clements, 2014) http://wingfield-clements-glass.com/#/conversation30/	21
Figure 1.5	Peter Mandl. *Kallipygos*. Cast glass. N.d. 66 x 26 x 22 cm (Peter Mandl Sculptures, n.d.) http://www.petermandl.com/glass-scultures?lightbox=image144j	22
Figure 1.6	Peter Mandl. *Rusalka*. Cast glass. N.d. 67 x 26 x 22 cm (Peter Mandl Sculptures, n.d.) http://www.petermandl.com/bronze-sculptures?lightbox=imageww5	22
Figure 1.7	Sandy Jackson. *Descent.* Bronze and glass. N.d. (Sandy Jackson Fine Art, 2013) https://www.sandyjacksonfineart.com/bronzes	23
Figure 1.8	Medardo Rosso. *Madame Noblet*. Gesso. 1879. (Museo Medardo Rosso, n.d.) http://www.medardorosso.org/index_tabs_en.html	24
Figure 1.9	Medardo Rosso. *Aetas Aurea*. Wax on Plaster. 1904-1908. 45 x 45 x 34 cm (Google Arts & Culture, n.d.) https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/asset/aetas-aurea/GgE1CmZZ-Zi3VQ	25
Figure 1.10	Medardo Rosso. *La Conversazione*. Gesso. 1899. (Museo Medardo Rosso, n.d.) http://www.medardorosso.org/index_tabs_en.html	25
Figure 1.11	Medardo Rosso. *Bambino al Sole*. Gesso Patinato. 1891-1892. (Museo Medardo Rosso, n.d.) http://www.medardorosso.org/index_tabs_en.html	26

Figure 1.12	Vivienne Roche. *August*. Stainless steel and glass. 2013. (Vivienne Roche, 2016) http://www.vivienneroche.com/index.php/works/18-2013-spirit-and-light	27
Figure 1.13	Vivienne Roche. *October*. Fused glass, photograph, wood. 2013. (Vivienne Roche, 2016) http://www.vivienneroche.com/index.php/works/18-2013-spirit-and-light	28
Figure 1.14	A collecting machine for *Les Archives du Coeur* by Christian Boltanski at Jupiter Artland. (Jupiter Artland, 2014-2017) https://www.jupiterartland.org/artwork/les-archives-du-coeur	29
Figure 1.15	The Listening Room at *Les Archives du Coeur* at Teshima Museum. (Benesse Art Site Naoshima, n.d.) http://benesse-artsite.jp/en/art/boltanski.html	30
Figure 1.16	Nandipha Mntambo. *The Fighters*. Cowhide, resin, polyester mesh, waxed cord. 2006. (McIntosh, 2008) http://artthrob.co.za/08sept/artbio.html	31
Figure 1.17	Nandipha Mntambo. *Titfunti Emkhatsini Wetfu (The Shadows Between Us)*. Cowhide, resin, polyester mesh, waxed cord. 2013. Left: 125 x 132 x 29, Right: 145 x 152 x 25 cm (Photograph by Jean-Baptiste Beranger) (Moret, n.d.) http://installationmag.com/nandipha-mntambo-in-her-skin/	32
Figure 1.18	Karen LaMonte. *Reclining Dress Impression with Drapery*. Cast glass. 2009. 48.3 x 154.9 x 57.2 cm. (Smithsonian American Art Museum, n.d.) https://americanart.si.edu/artwork/reclining-dress-impression-drapery-77533	34
Figure 1.19	Karen LaMonte. *Dress Impression with Shawl*. Cast glass. 2006. 145 x 69 x 43 cm. (LaMonte, n.d.) http://www.karenlamonte.com/Contemporary-Scultpures-Prints/Dresses-Contemporary-Sculpture/	34
Figure 3.1	Lotte Laserstein. *Morning Toilette*. Oil on panel. 1930.(Borzello, 2012: 63) https://za.pinterest.com/pin/139048707218298645/	62
Figure 3.2	Rineke Djkstra. *Tecla, Amsterdam, Netherlands, May 16 1994.* Photograph on paper. 1994. 117,5 x 94,5 cm. () http://www.tate.org.uk/art/images/work/P/P78/P78098_10.jpg	63
Figure 3.3	Kiki Smith. *Pee Body*. Wax and glass beads. 1992. 68.6 x 71.1 x 71.1 cm. () https://www.harvardartmuseums.org/art/220259	65
Figure 3.4	A photograph of Marina Abramović during her *Rhythm O* performance. 1974. (Photograph by Donatelli Sbarra) (O'Reilly,	66

	2014) https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/marina-abramovic-three-of-the-best	
Figure 4.1	Sarah Walmsley. Photograph of study in watercolour and pencil for *Serendipity I* sculpture.	74
Figure 4.2	Sarah Walmsley. Photograph of the feet of the *Serendipity I* sculpture in microcrystalline wax.	75
Figure 4.3	Sarah Walmsley. Photograph of study in pencil for *Searching II* sculpture.	75
Figure 4.4	Sarah Walmsley. Photograph of *Searching I* and *Searching II* in microcrystalline wax during the formation of *Searching II*.	76
Figure 4.5	Sarah Walmsley. Photograph of *Searching II* embedded in clay after the application of the first layer of RTV silicone rubber.	77
Figure 4.6	Sarah Walmsley. The demoulding of the *Serendipity I* wax sculpture showing the two-piece rubber mould and plaster of Paris rigid support 'cap'.	78
Figure 4.7	Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity III Installation*. Bronze, resin and kiln-formed glass. 2018. Approximately 300 x 183 cm	82
Figure 4.8	Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity I*. Bronze. 2018. 17 x 16 x 165cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	83
Figure 4.9	Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity II*. Resin. 2018. 16 x 16 x 175cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	84
Figure 4.10	Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity III*. Resin. 2018. 16 x 16 x 182cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	85
Figure 4.11	Sarah Walmsley. *Searching I*. Resin. 2018. 16 x 18 x 91cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	87
Figure 4.12	Sarah Walmsley. Detail of *Searching II* in microcrystalline wax.	88
Figure 4.13	Sarah Walmsley. *Searching I& II*. Resin. 2018. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	89
Figure 4.14	Sarah Walmsley. *Searching I*. Bronze. 2018.	91
Figure 4.15	Sarah Walmsley. *Being*. Resin. 2018. 20 x 20 x 90 cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	92
Figure 4.16	The photograph of my mother which inspired the *Morning* sculpture.	94

Figure 4.17	Sarah Walmsley. *Morning.* Bronze. 2018. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	95
Figure 4.18	One of the rough sketches of the exhibition layout.	97
Figure 4.19	The view of the exhibition from the entry point between the two white dividing partitions.	98
Figure 4.20	The view of the exhibition from the *Morning* sculpture.	99
	APPENDIX A	
Figure 1.1	Image depicting an illustration of the *Venus of Berekhat Ram* alongside the original. (Kaushik, 2016) http://www.amusingplanet.com/2016/10/venus-of-berekhat-ram-worlds-oldest.html	121
Figure 1.2	Image depicting an illustration of the *Venus of Tan-Tan* alongside the original. (Kaushik, 2016) http://www.amusingplanet.com/2016/10/venus-of-berekhat-ram-worlds-oldest.html	122
Figure 1.3	*Venus of Hohle Fels*. Ivory. 40 000 BCE. 23 x 22 x 13 mm. Prehistory Museum Blaubeuren, Germany. (Curry, 2012) http://www.amusingplanet.com/2016/10/venus-of-berekhat-ram-worlds-oldest.html	123
Figure 1.4	*Venus of Willendorf*. Limestone. 28000 – 25000 BCE. 11.1 cm. Vienna Museum of Natural History, Austria. (Trivium Art History, 2017) https://arthistoryproject.com/timeline/prehistory/venus-of-willendorf/	124
Figure 2.1	*Kouros*. Marble. ca. 590-580 BCE. 194.6 x 51.6 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. (Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, 2017) https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/32.11.1/	127
Figure 2.2	*Peplos Kore*. Marble. ca. 530 BCE. 122cm. Acropolis Museum, Athens, Greece. (Kleiner, 2009: 108) http://cf.ydcdn.net/1.0.1.82/images/main/A5kore.jpg	127
Figure 2.3	Polykleitos. *Doryphoros*. Marble. Roman copy after Greek bronze original. 450-440 BCE. 2 m. National Archaeological Museum, Naples. (Polyclitus's *Canon* and the Idea of *Symmetria*, n.d.) http://employees.oneonta.edu/farberas/arth/ARTH209/Doyphoros.html	129
Figure 2.4	Praxiteles. *Aphrodite of Knidos*. Marble. Roman copy of Greek original. 450-440 BCE. 168 x 57 x 42 cm. Roman National Musem, Rome. (Photograph by Sosnovskiy) (Ancient Rome, 2008)	130

	http://ancientrome.ru/art/artwork/sculp/mythology/gr/aphrodite/aph035.jpg	
Figure 2.5	Alexandro of Antioch-on-the-Meander. *Venus de Milo*. Marble. 150 – 125 BCE. 203 cm. Louvre Museum, Paris. (The British Museum, 2017) http://www.britishmuseumshoponline.org/sculpture/venus-de-milo-large-replica/invt/cmcn450430	131
Figure 2.6	*Crouching Aphrodite*. Marble. Roman copy of Greek original. 3rd Century BCE. 71cm. Louvre Museum, Paris. (WikiMedia Commons; 2015) https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Crouching_Aphrodite_Louvre_Ma5.jpg	132
Figure 3.1	Giorgione. *Sleeping Venus*. Oil on Canvas. 1508-1510. 175 x 108.5 cm. Old Masters Picture Gallery, Dresden, Germany. (WikiArt, n.d.) https://www.wikiart.org/en/giorgione/the-sleeping-venus-1510	133
Figure 3.2	Titian. *Venus of Urbino*. Oil on canvas. 1538. 165 x 119 cm. Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy. (WikiArt, n.d.) https://www.wikiart.org/en/titian/venus-of-urbino-1538	134
Figure 3.3	Velázquez. *The Toilet of Venus (Rokeby Venus)*. Oil on canvas. 1647-1651. 122.5 x 177 cm. The National Gallery, London. (WikiMedia Commons, 2016) https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Diego_Vel%C3%A1zquez_-_Venus_at_her_Mirror_(The_Rokeby_Venus)_-_WGA24446.jpg	135
Figure 3.4	Édouard Manet, *Olympia*. Oil on canvas. 1863. 130 x 190 cm. Museé d'Orsay, Paris. (Museé d'Orsay, 2006) http://www.musee-orsay.fr/index.php?id=851&L=1&tx_commentaire_pi1[showUid]=7087	136
Figure 3.5	Bernini, *Apollo and Daphne*. Marble. 1622 – 1625. 243cm. Galleria Borghese, Rome. (WikiMedia Commons, 2015) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apollo_and_Daphne_(Bernini)#/media/File:Apollo_%26_Daphne_September_2a.jpg	137
Figure 4.1	Edgar Degas. *Woman Bathing in a Shallow Tub*. Charcoal and pastel on light green wove paper, now discoloured to warm grey, laid down on silk bolting. 1885. 81.3 x 56.2 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. (Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, 2017) https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/29.100.41/	139
Figure 4.2	Gustave Courbet, *The Origin of the World*. Oil on canvas. 1886.46 x 55 cm. Museé d'Orsay, Paris. (Museé d'Orsay, 2006) http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/works-in-focus/search/commentaire.html?no_cache=1&zoom=1&tx_damzoom_pi1%5BshowUid%5D=2406	141

	APPENDIX B	
Figure 1.1	Molecular structure of a solid, glass and liquid depicting the molecular structure of the stationary matter and the molecular structure after a fraction of a second has elapsed. (Clear Up, 1991) http://www.genuineideas.com/ArtandScience/ScienceQA/march91clearup.html	143
Figure 3.1	Sarah Walmsley. *Searching II* in microcrystalline wax prepared with aperture and vents to be moulded in plaster and silica for casting in glass.	147
Figure 5.1	Crucible (unglazed flower pot) filled with pieces of Spectrum glass	152
Figure 5.2	Prepared mould on kiln shelf within the kiln.	153
Figure 7.1	Sarah Walmsley. Photograph *Serendipity III* cast in polyester resin and kulu powder.	156
Figure 7.2	Sarah Walmsley. Photograph of *Searching I* cast in polylite resin which depicts the surface texture.	157
Figure 7.3	Sarah Walmsley. Photograph of preliminary version of *Searching I* cast in Sicomin SR 1670 clear casting epoxy resin which depicts the smooth surface texture, clarity and lack of bubbles.	159
	APPENDIX C	
Figure 1.1	Sarah Walmsley. *Searching I*. Clear resin. 2018. 21 x 16 x 80cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	160
Figure 1.2	Sarah Walmsley. *Searching II*. Bronze. 2018. 22 x 16 x 82cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	161
Figure 1.3	Sarah Walmsley. *Searching I & II*. Clear resin & Bronze. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	162
Figure 1.4	Sarah Walmsley. *Searching I & II*. Clear resin & Bronze. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	163
Figure 1.5	Sarah Walmsley. *Searching I & II*. Clear resin & Bronze. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	163
Figure 1.6	Sarah Walmsley. *Searching I*. Resin. 2018. 16 x 18 x 91cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	164
Figure 1.7	Sarah Walmsley. *Searching II*. Resin. 2018. 23 x 16 x 83cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	165

Figure 1.8	Sarah Walmsley. *Searching I& II*. Resin. 2018. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	166
Figure 1.9	Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity Installation*. Bronze, kiln-formed glass and resin. 2018. (Photograph by Jonathan van der Walt)	167
Figure 1.10	Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity Installation*. Bronze, kiln-formed glass and resin. 2018. (Photograph by Jonathan van der Walt)	167
Figure 1.11	Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity I*. Bronze. 2018. 17 x 16 x 165cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	168
Figure 1.12	Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity II*. Bronze. 2018. 16 x 16 x 137cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	169
Figure 1.13	Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity III*. Bronze. 2018. 16 x 16 x 148cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	170
Figure 1.14	Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity I*. Resin. 2018. 17 x 16 x 165cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	171
Figure 1.15	Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity II*. Resin. 2018. 16 x 16 x 175cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	172
Figure 1.16	Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity III*. Resin. 2018. 16 x 16 x 182cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	173
Figure 1.17	Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity I*. Clear resin. 2018. 17 x 16 x 140cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	174
Figure 1.18	Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity II*. Kiln-formed glass. 2018. 16 x 16 x 165cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	175
Figure 1.19	Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity III*. Clear resin. 2018. 16 x 16 x 142cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	176
Figure 1.20	Sarah Walmsley. *Being*. Resin. 2018. 20 x 20 x 90 cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	177
Figure 1.21	Sarah Walmsley. *Being*. Resin. 2018. 20 x 20 x 90 cm. (Photograph by Jonathan van der Walt)	178
Figure 1.22	Sarah Walmsley. *Being*. Bronze. 2018. 18 x 18 x 108cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	179
Figure 1.23	Sarah Walmsley. *Being*. Bronze. 2018. 18 x 18 x 108cm. (Photograph by Jonathan van der Walt)	180
Figure 1.24	Sarah Walmsley. *Searching (inset)*. Kiln-formed glass and resin. 2018. 28 x 20 x 69cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	181

Figure 1.25	Sarah Walmsley. *Searching (inset)*. Kiln-formed glass and resin. 2018. 28 x 20 x 69cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	182
Figure 1.26	Sarah Walmsley. *Morning*. Bronze. 2018. 16 x 73 x 31cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	183
Figure 1.27	Sarah Walmsley. *Morning*. Bronze. 2018. 16 x 73 x 31cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	183
Figure 1.28	Sarah Walmsley. *Morning*. Bronze. 2018. 16 x 73 x 31cm. (Photograph by Erin DeSwardt)	184

Table of Contents

Declaration - 2 -
Editing and Translation Services - 3 -
Dedications - 4 -
Acknowledgements: - 5 -
Abstract - 6 -
List of Figures - 7 -
Table of Contents - 15 -
1 Chapter 1 - 18 -
1.1. Purpose - 18 -
1.2. Rationale - 18 -
1.2.1. Background, origins and developments in the research area: - 18 -
1.2.2. Personal Triggers - 20 -
1.3. Previous Research - 22 -
1.4. Problem Statement - 38 -
1.5. Research Question - 38 -
1.5.1. Main Question - 38 -
1.5.2. Sub-questions - 38 -
1.6. Aim - 39 -
1.7. Research Objectives - 39 -
2. Chapter 2: Research Design and Methodology - 40 -
2.1. Philosophical World View - 40 -
2.2. Research Strategy - 41 -
2.3. Research Design - 41 -
2.4. Methods of Sampling and Data Gathering - 43 -
2.5. Quality Control and Strategies of Validation - 43 -
2.6. Ethical Consideration - 44 -
3. Chapter 3: Theoretical Component - 45 -
3.1. Absence and Presence as a Dualism - 45 -
3.2. Lacan's Mirror Stage: Absence as a result of the separation from the Mother and the development of the imago - 48 -
3.3. The Absent Mother - 51 -
3.4. Lacan's 'object a' - 52 -
3.5. Extimacy - 53 -
3.6. Kristeva, the mirror stage, and abjection - 54 -

3.7. Memory and Sculpture - 57 -
3.8. Photography, Memory and Identity - 58 -
3.9. The Trace - 59 -
3.10. The Female Nude - 61 -
3.11. The relevance and the use of the female body to create a visual narrative and personal vocabulary - 62 -
4. Chapter 4: Practical Component - 71 -
4.1. My Creative Process - 73 -
4.2. The Technical Process - 75 -
4.2.1. Rubber Moulds - 77 -
4.2.2. Glass Casting - 79 -
4.3 My body of work: Absence and Presence: in Search of Memory and the Imago - 80 -
4.3.1.1 Sculptures - 80 -
4.3.2 Bases, layout and curating - 96 -
5. Chapter 5 - 100 -
5.1 Conclusion - 100 -
5.2. Further Research Recommendations - 105 -
APPENDIX A - 121 -
1. Ancient Venuses - 121 -
2. The progression of the nude in ancient Greece - 126 -
3. The popularisation of the ideal nude as a subject - 133 -
4. The naked and the nude - 138 -
APPENDIX B - 142 -
1. Technical Aspects of Glass - 142 -
2. Glass Casting Techniques - 144 -
a. Drip Casting - 144 -
b. Crucible Pouring - 145 -
3. Plaster and Silica Mould Making Techniques and Recipes - 146 -
a. Preparing the piece for moulding - 146 -
b. Making the mould - 148 -
c. Removing (losing) the wax - 149 -
4. Drying the mould - 151 -
5. Firing - 152 -
6. The Bronze Casting Process - 154 -
7. Types of Resin Used - 155 -
a. Polyester resin - 155 -

b. Polylite resin .... - 157 -
c. Sicomin SR 1670 Epoxy resin.. - 158 -
APPENDIX C .... - 160 -

1 Chapter 1

1.1. Purpose

The purpose of the research is to explore the philosophical concept of absence and presence as a dualism through the creation of small scale figurative sculptures in the mediums of bronze, cast glass and resin. This exploration of absence and presence will be conducted within a narrative of memory, and as influenced by the respective mediums. I will be examining the visual dialogues which exist when pairs or groups of figurative sculptures interact as well as the way in which the materiality of the medium used enhances the conceptual underpinning. Within these pairings and groupings of figures there is often a binary or dualistic relationship between mediums used, for example, the bronze figures are in a way representative of the ‘present’ and the glass of the ‘absent’, within the paradigm of my research. Within this exploration, I will examine the ways in which memory, representing the absent, is an inseparable part of the present.

1.2. Rationale

1.2.1. Background, origins and developments in the research area:

The exploration of dualisms and visual harmony between pairings of figures finds its origins with Heraclitus and the early Pythagoreans (Eco, 2004: 72). Heraclitus posited that harmony is realised by allowing opposites to exist in a state of equilibrium, and not by annulling one of them as was believed by the Pythagoreans (Eco, 2004: 72). This equilibrium and state of tension between opposites is the core element of a dualism, as understood by Umberto Eco (2004: 72). This concept of harmony was accepted by later Pythagoreans Philolaus and Architas, who then introduced it into their doctrines (Eco, 2004: 72). Specifically, they explored harmony in relation to the cosmos, music and mathematics (Huffman, 2011; 2012).

> This marks the birth of an idea of equilibrium between opposed entities that neutralise each other, a polarity between two apparently contradictory aspects that become harmonious only because they are in opposition to each other. And, once these aspects are transported to the level of visual relationships, the result is symmetry.
>
> (Eco, 2004: 72)

This drive for symmetry expressed in Pythagorean speculation is one that has always been alive in Greek art and went on to inform Polykleitos' sculptural canon in the art of ancient Greece (Eco, 2004: 72). The visual harmony and symmetry described by Eco (2004: 72) extends to my sculptures in a literal sense through their symmetrical appearances and through the dualisms and opposites which are embodied and communicated through the deliberate opposing mediums of bronze and cast glass. These mediums further extend to represent the present and the absent, and therefore to convey the equilibrium and state of tension which exists within the dualism of presence and absence.

The term 'dualism' has been applied to a number of concepts and theories which include Descartes's mind-body dualism or Cartesian dualism (Robinson, 2011: 19). In this theory, Descartes posits that the mind exists as a separate entity to the body and each is responsible for certain actions that can exclusively be performed by each (Skirry, 2006: 15). He also states that one entity can exist without the other (Skirry, 2006: 18). Another key application of the term dualism is the one which describes theological dualisms (Robinson, 2011: 1). In theology, a 'dualist' is a person who believes that Good and Evil are two independent and seemingly equal forces in the world, embodied by God and the Devil (Robinson, 2011: 1). Essentially, a dualism refers to "the quality or state of having two different or opposite parts or elements", which are ascribed opposing characteristics, and work in conjunction with each other in order to define each other (Bianchi, 2015: 1; Merriam-Webster, 2015: 2; Skirry, 2006: 15).

Absence and presence as a dualism can be traced through its examination in literature from Plato's discussion of speech and writing to Deleuze's study of copy and simulacrum (Bell, 2015). I will be exploring this dualism with specific focus on the way it has been defined by Derrida and Deleuze.

1.2.2. Personal Triggers

I have always had a fascination and preoccupation with the concept of memory and the problematic space between definitive memories, constructed memories and the space which deals with a memory becoming 'more' than/ carrying more weight than the person.

Essentially, my work originates from a place of processing the experience of losing my mother to cancer when I was nine years old. The experience of watching her suffer through the chemotherapy, mastectomy (it began as breast cancer), and two years of remission; coupled with the effects of suppressing my grieving as encouraged by a very difficult father, has resulted in a lack of closure.

This has also been instrumental in the way that I have formed as a person: I grew as my mother faded. It is something very difficult to deal with; and as my life progresses, the memories and essence of her that I cling to seem to fade as well. I am often told by family how alike my mother I am, which is challenging because many of the memories I have of my mother are from when she was ill.

This relationship I have with the memories of my mother has created a sense of absence which collides with my presence on a daily basis. The models and roles of absence and presence are greatly exaggerated in the sense that the space that was once strongly occupied by my mother's presence is now a notable hollow space of absence which has been inadvertently trimmed with memory fragments and

incoherent visualisations. This disparity between the absent and present as well as questions and representations of the soul and examinations of the self, has greatly influenced and formed the art that I create. In a sense, the medium of glass is attractive because of its ability to occupy a space and be transparent/ ethereal/ apparently weightless at the same time. When paired with the solidity of bronze, the transparency of glass can represent this space of memory and how it interacts with, imposes upon and informs the present. In a direct sense, the absent is represented by the glass and the present is represented by the bronze. My tendency to create pairings of duplicated figures which are posed slightly differently from one another can be understood in the way that the exploration into memory, absence and presence originates with the self (myself) and my own examination of the dualism. The figures are not perfectly mirrored, but are each depicted as engaging in a pose which varies slightly from their counterpart.

The act of remembering is a reflective exercise and involves one's looking into one's own record of experiences, based on one's own perceptions, emotional ties and recollections. This is reflected in the ways in which the figures appear to be engaging with their counterpart selves in some way, in a sort of quiet reflection or physical dialogue. My primary underpinning for these figures and their counterparts is based on Lacan's (1949: 503) "imago", which is defined as an image or concept of the self which is initially formed during the "mirror-stage" of the infant's development – as will be further discussed in Chapter 3. The duplication of figures is also linked to Deleuze's (1983) definition of the copy and simulacrum. The simulacrum, "because of its absence of resemblance, becomes an entity possessing a different kind of presence" which in fact merges absence and presence (Bell, 2015: 6). This is a notion that I aim to embody through the repetition of sculptural figures within a pair. As the simulacrum is an image that is without resemblance, and without resemblance it cannot embody an absolute truth (as per Plato's definition of truth), therefore it cannot possess the essence of an individual identity. It can then be said that both versions of the figure are simulacra, neither of which embody the true essence of the person from which they were modelled, but explore ever-changing versions and facets of the identity of the person, both absent and present (Deleuze, 1983: 53). These concepts are further conveyed by the mediums through which the figures are represented, and are influenced by the exploration of memory.

1.3. Previous Research

In the field of cast glass sculpture, artists who work within a similar subject matter include Christina Bothwell, Leah Wingfield and Steve Clements, Peter Mandl, Sandy Jackson and Karen LaMonte.

Christina Bothwell's cast glass and pit-fired clay figures convey a certain duality between the seemingly fragile medium of glass and the contrasting, more imposing

Figure 1.1: Christina Bothwell. *When the Body Sleeps, the Spirit* Travels. Cast glass, raku clay, oil paint. 2003-2006. 61 x 74 cm

Figure 1.2: Christina Bothwell. *Sometimes When She Sleeps*.
Cast glass, raku clay, oil paint. 2009. 23 x 48 x 20 cm.

medium of clay (Lovelace, 2014: 6). This is apparent in her work *When the Body Sleeps, the Spirit Travels* (as seen in figure 1.1) and *Sometimes When She Sleeps* (figure 1.2). In a similar manner, I explore this duality and extend it to my own work through the pairing of glass and bronze.

Leah Wingfield and Steve Clements work together to create singular, pairings and groupings of cast glass figures. Their figures often appear to be suspended in a state of communication or dialogue with each other, or appear to engaging in some way. This is specifically evident in their *Conversations* series (as seen in figures 1.3 &

Figure 1.3: Leah Wingfield & Steve Clements. *Conversation… 31*. Cast glass, steel. 2014. 196 x 51 x 36 cm

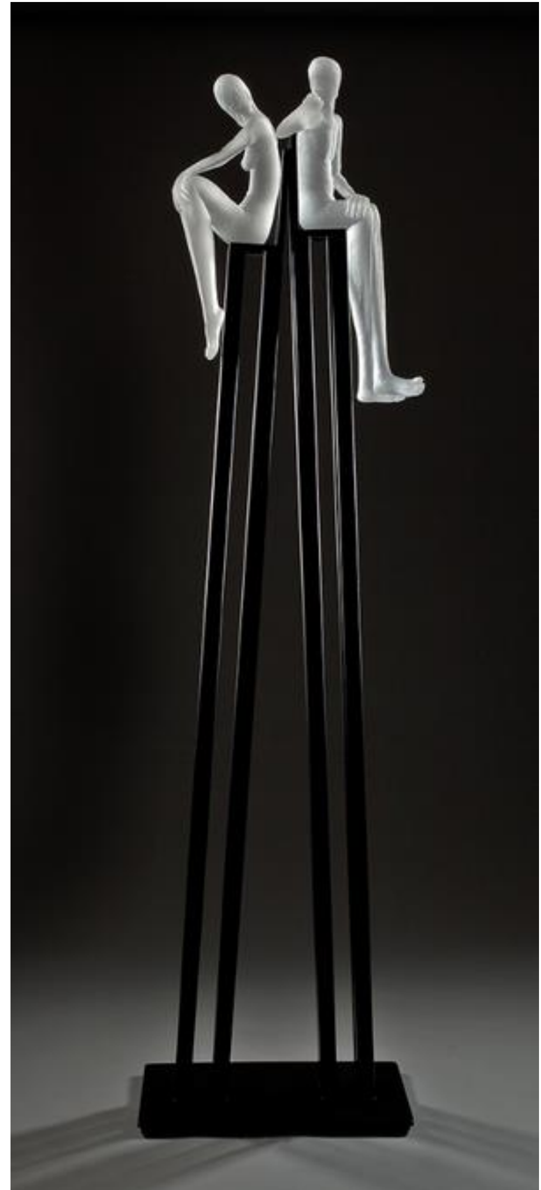

Figure 1.4: Leah Wingfield & Steve Clements. *Conversation… 30*. Cast glass, steel. 2014. 196 x 51 x 36 cm

1.4), which represents their aims to “freeze a moment… [and] capture gestures that inspire stories created by each individual viewer” (Clements & Wingfield, 2012).

Artists who work across the mediums of bronze and glass include Peter Mandl and Sandy Jackson. Mandl creates abstracted female forms, which are often repeated as a separate work in each medium (Peter Mandl Sculptures, n.d.). Mandl’s sculptures present a “combination of feeling, fascination, and the clear formulation of the dominating form” (Vavruch, n.d.). Mandl’s work is beautifully executed and

presented, and the medium enhances the subject matter in the cases of both the highly polished glass and bronze figures. There are no sections of the abstracted female forms which exhibit areas of fine detail, and there are no extended limbs or major extremities. The figures are generally contained in one solid and fluid form and are highly polished. Although Mandl produces these figures in both cast glass and

Figure 1.5: Peter Mandl. *Kallipygos*. Cast glass. N.d. 66 x 26 x 22 cm

Figure 1.6: Peter Mandl. *Rusalka*. Cast glass. N.d. 67 x 26 x 22 cm

bronze, he does not combine the two mediums in a single work: the figures in these respective mediums act as stand-alone artworks in either glass or bronze.

Sandy Jackson’s sculptures are an example of the compositional combination of glass and bronze. Jackson created a series of bronze sculptures of figures which appeared to be diving into, out of, or swimming on top of an implied body of water (Sandy Jackson Fine Art, 2013). The ‘water’ is represented by a sheet of kiln-formed glass which spreads out in a circular shape around the figure (Sandy Jackson Fine Art, 2013). The glass functions as support to the bronze in the composition and enhances the communication of the subject matter.

Figure 1.7: Sandy Jackson. *Descent.* Bronze and glass. N.d.

Moving back into the realm of sculpture and memory, there are a number of artists who have worked with this theme. These include Medardo Rosso, Vivienne Roche and Christian Boltanski. Medardo Rosso created sculptures which attempted “to recreate the quality of a memory in three dimensions”, as seen in figures 1.8, 1.9, 1.10 & 1.11 (Graham-Dixon 1994: 5). Rosso’s sculptures aimed to express:

[the] fluctuant nature of experience: true to the fact that no one and nothing ever looks the same twice; and true, too, to the way in which experience is always refracted and altered by the distortions of memory

(Graham-Dixon 1994: 5).

Figure 1.8: Medardo Rosso. *Madame Noblet*. Gesso. 1879.

Almost completely devoid of facial features, this sculpture shows that Rosso has surpassed the simple intention of a realistic rendering of the subject's face. The figure preserves only a vague memory of the subject's appearance, but instead has a psychological depth that goes beyond the physical appearance.

(Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums, 2014: 11).

Figure 1.9: Medardo Rosso. *Aetas Aurea*. Wax on Plaster.
1904-1908. 45 x 45 x 34 cm

Figure 1.10: Medardo Rosso. *La Conversazione*. Gesso.
1899.

His work did not aim to capture an exact portrait or rendering of a person's image, but instead aimed to encapsulate how a person appeared in another's memory or experience of them (Graham-Dixon 1994: 5). Rosso once remarked that "[w]e are nothing but a play of light [and] nothing is material" (Rosso, n.d., cited in Graham-Dixon 1994: 8). He worked mainly in the mediums of wax sculpture over clay and plaster of Paris and photography.

Figure 1.11: Medardo Rosso. *Bambino al Sole*. Gesso Patinato. 1891-1892.

Moving toward a more abstract exploration of memory, Vivienne Roche worked with glass, light, and memory in her exhibition *Spirit and Light* (Roche, 2013: 10). Her *Quiet Monuments* series acted as a commemoration of the lives of five loved ones whom she "knew or knew about" who had passed away (Roche, 2013: 10). Each work in the series was titled by the name of the month in which they had died (Roche, 2013: 10).

> Their stories are not my stories but I wanted to mark their lives and deaths for different reasons. Every life remembered is an act of commemoration. It's the spirit of someone's life that is held in other people's memory.

(Roche 2013: 10)

Figure 1.12: Vivienne Roche. *August*. Stainless steel and glass. 2013.

Roche works mainly in the mediums of stainless steel and glass and does not consider herself to be an "object-maker", but rather works with "place and change" (Roche, cited in McAvera, 2013: 1). Her work is inspired by architecture and engineering and she has a preference for large scale public sculpture rather than sculpture designed for a gallery space and states that she sees herself "rooted in the built environment" (Roche, cited in McAvera, 2013: 10). McAvera (2013: 10) describes Roche's work as possessing a "machined aesthetic" in its abstraction, which draws inspiration from her environment. This is specifically notable in the ways in which the polished stainless steel alludes to the city and built environment, whereas the use of wood echoes the natural environment, and the colours and textures in the glass cube seen in *October*, in figure 1.14, are reminiscent of water.

Figure 1.13: Vivienne Roche. *October*. Fused glass, photograph, wood. 2013.

Christian Boltanski explores both personal and cultural memory through his work (Duggan, 2010: 1). Beginning his career as a painter in the 1960's, Boltanski now works across the mediums of sculpture, photography, installation, painting and film-making (Phaidon, 2012: 4; Tate, n.d.: 1). In his works, the line between reality and fiction is often blurred (Bonham-Carter & Hodge, 2013: 50). Similarly to Rosso, Boltanski is "fascinated with the fleeting nature of human experience" and specifically states that he is interested in what he calls "little memory", which is an "emotional memory, an everyday knowledge, the contrary of Memory with a capital M that is preserved in history books" (Serpentine Galleries, 2010: 2). He believes that this

“little memory”, which “makes us unique, is extremely fragile and it disappears with death” (Serpentine Galleries, 2010: 2).

This is echoed in one of Boltanski’s latest projects *Les Archives du Coeur* (*The Heart Archive*). Inspired by his feeling that “painting isn’t provocative or moving, only life is moving”, *The Heart Archive* is an ongoing project in which he has preserved the

Figure 1.14: A collecting machine for *Les Archives du Coeur* by Christian Boltanski at Jupiter Artland.

heartbeats of people from all around the world, which he has been recording since 2008 (Phaidon, 2012: 1; Benesse Art Site Naoshima, n.d.: 1). These archived heartbeats are housed in the Teshima Museum on the uninhabited island of Teshima off the coast of Japan, and visitors to *The Heart Archive* can listen to them in a “specially designed touring booth”, as seen in figure 1.15, and then “contribute a

recording of their own", as depicted in figure 1.13, for a fee (Phaidon, 2012: 2). Archives have been an intrinsic part of Boltanski's work for over 50 years. The collecting of heartbeats for *The Heart Archive* "is a continuation of his career-long examination of the issues of death, memory, disappearance and loss" (Kunst Aspekte, 2010: 3). In this work Boltanski assumes "the role of ethnographer, establishing a record of humanity, offering to immortalise all of us equally whilst collecting proof of the fragility of the human condition" (Kunst Aspekte, 2010: 3). Boltanski (cited in Lubbock, 1994: 1) has stated that he is "for an art that is sentimental", what he aims "to do is make people cry" and that his job is "to find the means to do it.". In response to this work, Boltanski (cited in Phaidon, 2012: 6) adds that:

> Each time you try to preserve something, in fact you see more the absence than the presence, in the way you look at an old photo you always see the absence not the presence. If you go to the island in a few years and you want to hear the heartbeat of your mother, you are not going to feel the presence but the absence of your mother.

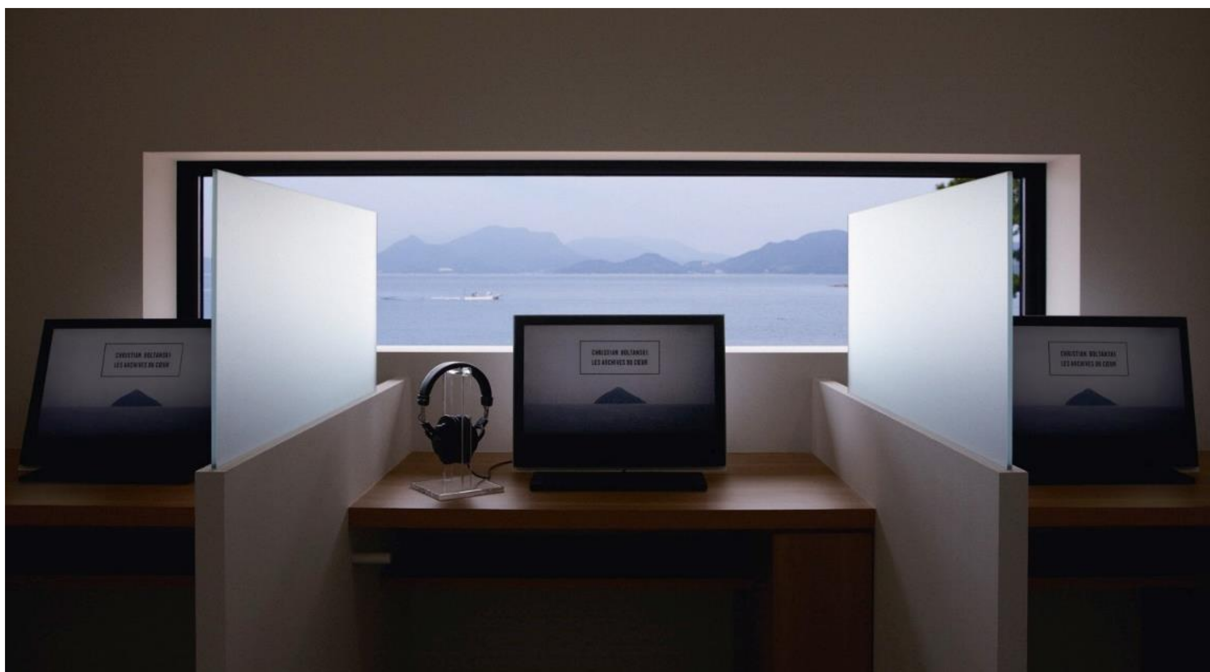

Figure 1.15: The Listening Room at *Les Archives du Coeur* at Teshima Museum by Christian Boltanski.

It is this discussion of absence and presence that is most relevant to my work, and the ways in which it could be said that an attempt to preserve something emphasises the absence of that thing rather than its presence.

Two artists who have similarly explored the female form as well as absence and presence, include Nandipha Mntambo and Karen LaMonte. Mntambo works across the mediums of sculpture, photography, performance and video (Altschuler, 2011:

Figure 1.16: Nandipha Mntambo. *The Fighters*.
Cowhide, resin, polyester mesh, waxed cord. 2006.

28). Her cow-hide artworks walk the line between a number of dualisms; the medium of cow-hide is “conceptually compatible” with the issues she interrogates such as “beauty and ugliness, the intriguing and the disgusting and the absence/presence of life” (Altschuler, 2011: 29).

Figure 1.17: Nandipha Mntambo. *Titfunti Emkhatsini Wetfu (The Shadows Between Us)*. Cowhide, resin, polyester mesh, waxed cord. 2013.

Mntambo’s cow hide works appear as floating, graceful female bodies in the forms of what appear to be dresses. The forms are “moulded upon casts of her own body as well as her mother’s” and they “portray an extraordinary level of sensibility of the inner traces of human form and presence” while still demonstrating the traces of the animal that once occupied the hide (Altschuler, 2011: 31). Mntambo states that the hide retains a “certain ‘memory’ of its original capacity and form”, this “material memory” that lives within the cells of the hide allows the medium to “be seen as one that physically engages with the concept of recollection, both on a cellular and physical level” (Altschuler, 2011: 31). This concept of recollection extends to a theme of memory, as memory exists through recollection. This links to my work in the ways in which Mntambo’s cow hide female forms exhibit the suggestion and shape of the female body without entirely representing it, while at the same time presenting the

cow through its hide. Neither the woman nor the animal is totally present or totally absent in their manifestations in these works, so I believe that these works could be said to exist between the spaces of the absent and the present.

Karen LaMonte is perhaps best known for her life-sized cast glass dresses and formal gowns which present subtle impressions of the female form. Like Mntambo's cow-hide forms, LaMonte's dresses never provide a full representation of a female body, although they do present a complete garment, occupying space as though a person is wearing it. There are traces of the figure such as the shapes of the breasts, curve of the spine and indent of the navel; however, the dress and these allusions to the figure have become one (Bailer, 2006: 18). It has been suggested that there is an "overtone of death" communicated through the absent figures, to which LaMonte (2013: 6) responded that when "working with figurative sculpture, it's about people and that's about life and life is bracketed by birth and death". LaMonte's frozen forms allow the "private anxieties about life and death (presence and absence) to commingle with romantic and elegiac beauty" (Bailer, 2006: 21):

> In their ghostly, translucent forms, there is something of a reminder of the ephemeral quality of our corporeal selves and the fragility of the human condition. By transforming negative space into undulations of curves that allude to both the beauty and evanescence of life, LaMonte does not simply bestow presence on an absence — she adorns it.

(Bailer, 2006: 21)

Figure 1.18: Karen LaMonte. *Reclining Dress Impression with Drapery*. Cast glass. 2009. 48.3 x 154.9 x 57.2 cm.

LaMonte (cited in Danto, 2006: 10) creates clothing in glass “to represent animated yet absent beings, a human form without a body”. Her cast dresses express notions of the absent and present through the ways in which the imprinted cavity within the dress communicates with the adorned outer surface of the dress as well as the ways in which these become one through the translucency of the medium.

Figure 1.19: Karen LaMonte. *Dress Impression with Shawl*. Cast glass. 2006. 145 x 69 x 43 cm.

1.4. Problem Statement

How may compositionally sound pairings and groupings of bronze, glass and resin figurative sculptures be manipulated to create visual equilibrium in a work and communicate an inherent conceptual element?

1.5. Research Question

1.5.1. Main Question

What is the role of memory and the imago within dualistic representations of the absent and present, as represented in the mediums of bronze, glass and resin?

1.5.2. Sub-questions

- How can the duplication of a figure be used to investigate the relationship between absence and presence?
- How may the mediums of bronze, glass and resin be manipulated to explore the mutual definitiveness and merging of absence and presence?
- How does my personal memory contribute to the creation of figurative sculptures in the representation of absence and presence?
- How does this explore the concept of the imago?

1.6. Aim

The aim of the research is to investigate the pairing and grouping of bronze, glass and resin figurative sculptures in order to extend the concepts of absence and presence within the paradigm of the imago, personal memory and loss.

1.7. Research Objectives

The objectives of the research enquiry are to produce a body of work, which further explores:

- the conceptual and visual relationship between bronze, cast glass and resin sculpture;
- the visual recreation and exploration of the imago, within the paradigm of memory and loss;
- the aesthetic result of the compositional combination of these mediums;
- the space between the absent and the present; and
- memory as an element of the past which collides with the present in an unidentifiable way.

2. Chapter 2: Research Design and Methodology

2.1. Philosophical World View

The philosophical world view/ paradigm within which I will be working is the Constructivist/ Interpretivist world view. The constructivist worldview/paradigm is one in which understanding and meaning are created subjectively, based on the individual's experiences and the meanings generated from these experiences (Creswell, 2009: 8). These meanings, which are multiple and varied, are directed towards objects and things and lead the researcher towards a variety of connected views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas (Creswell, 2009: 8). Meanings are constructed and created through social interactions with other people (Creswell, 2009: 8). Constructivism posits that "learning is an active, contextualized process of constructing knowledge rather than acquiring it" (Learning Theories, 2015: 3).

Interpretivism within the social sciences developed as a critique of positivism (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006: 1). Interpretivism posits a reality that cannot be separate from our knowledge of it. Within this paradigm the researcher's values are inherent throughout all phases of the research process and truth is determined and negotiated or constructed through dialogue (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006: 4). This is consistent with the world view of the artist and the art researcher, namely that "reality is mediated by the way in which he/she makes personal sense of a multiplicity of societal circumstances" (Creswell, 2009: 6). Interpretivism argues that we cannot understand why people do what they do without understanding how they interpret and make sense of their world (The Open University, 2013: 13).

2.2. Research Strategy

My research strategy is practice related and falls specifically within the practice-led structure as "[t]he primary focus of the research is to advance knowledge about practice, or to advance knowledge within practice" (Candy, 2006: 1). Practice is an integral part of the research method and it informs the research just as much as the research informs it, in a continuous cycle: this falls within the area of action research (Candy, 2006: 1). My practice is embedded within the field of Fine Art, with the area of focus being sculpture; and within sculpture it narrows to the field of figurative sculpture, further focusing on the paring of 'realistic' figures with a specific and constructed environment.

2.3. Research Design

The methods of data collection I have employed are qualitative data collection methods. This is because my data is not dominantly empirical, numeric or collected from a broad range of samples. The idea was to purposefully select documents, topics, visual material and individuals to inform the proposed study and that would best help the researcher to understand the problem and the proposed study (Creswell, 2009: 178).Thus I have purposively selected the work of Mntambo, Bothwell, LaMonte, Boltanski and Rosso and the ideas of Derrida, Deleuze and Guatarri, Klein, Lacan, Kristeva and Merleau-Ponty because of the shared themes which examine the female body, memory, and absence and presence that are pervasive amongst these references.

Barone (1997, cited in O'Farell and Meban, 2003: 8) motivated that "qualitative methods focused specifically on the interpersonal and aesthetic experience of the arts" and furthermore, encouraged researchers to "imagine a research program that is not guided exclusively by scientific premises, principles and procedures but

sometimes built upon a real appreciation of what art itself can provide". A broad range of instruments is used when engaging in qualitative research on art-making and art education, such as filed notes, interviews, audio and visual recordings, still photographs, focus group discussions and the review of printed and non-printed resources (O'Farell & Meban, 2003, cited in Binsbergen, 2015: 19). I specifically made use of filed notes, visual recordings, still photographs, focus group discussions, drawings, notebooks as well as the review of printed and non-printed resources. My practice is part of this cycle through the subject matter that I am drawn to create, which is largely centred on images of my mother and myself. This has led me to explore absence and presence; research which continues to inform my practice as reflecting critically on my practice in dialogue with others has, and will continue to, inform my theoretical research in turn.

Qualitative research is "interpretive in nature as the researcher interprets what he/she sees, hears and understands" (Creswell, 2009, cited in Binsbergen, 2015: 19). It is a form of interpretive inquiry in which researchers cannot separate their interpretations from their own backgrounds, history, contexts, and prior understandings (Creswell, 2009: 176). Qualitative research creates multiple views of the problem as, upon review, the readers produce their own interpretations of the study which may or may not be different from the researcher's (Creswell, 2009: 176). Qualitative researchers make use of inductive methods of data analysis, which "illustrates working back and forth between themes and the database until the researchers have established a comprehensive set of themes". In this case, I have worked back and forth between my research themes and my practical work to establish refined themes (Creswell, 2009: 175). Qualitative data makes use of textual data formats and seeks to explore phenomena, describe variations and it is open ended, whereas quantitative data makes use of numerical data formats and seeks to prove or disprove hypotheses, quantify data and is closed ended (Family Health International, n.d.: 3).The data to which I make reference cannot necessarily be quantified as I work with abstract references such as personal memories, as well as multiple open-ended textual sources such as Plato, Heidegger, Freud, Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari. For example, these sources describe variations in the ways

that terms such as ‘absence’, ‘presence’ and ‘simulacrum’ are understood, defined, and in most cases, redefined.

2.4. Methods of Sampling and Data Gathering

Within the constructivist paradigm, the methods of sampling which can be made use of include non-random, purposive, theoretical and snowball. The preferred method which is applied to the area of visual arts - based research is purposive sampling. This describes the method of sampling which is utilized based on one’s judgement and the preconceived purpose of one’s study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 166). Purposive sampling is a non-random method and is used in field research or in exploratory research and aims at cases which are especially informative (Neuman, 2011: 267). The purposive researcher is direct and acts with a specific purpose in mind. It is not appropriate for research which aims to have a representative sample, average or typical case (Neuman, 2011: 268).

2.5. Quality Control and Strategies of Validation

I have made use of the triangulation of data method which includes the triangulation of sources as well as theory/perspective triangulation, as outlined by Denzin (1978) and Patton (1999) (cited in Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). This is centred around specific points of reference which are interconnected. Specifically, my points of triangulation include absence and presence, my mother and personal memories, and my sculptural representations of these. These points are fortified by research which informs my ‘making’ and expands my conceptual underpinning.

2.6. Ethical Consideration

My research does not require ethics clearance because the subject of my practical study is comprised of myself and my own memories. The theoretical component is based on the reading of texts and the study does not involve interviews or contact with vulnerable individuals or groups. Thus, no ethical clearance was required for this study.

3. Chapter 3: Theoretical Component

3.1. Absence and Presence as a Dualism

The examination of binary opposition was extended by Plato's study of the philosophical idea of presence (Klages, 2012: 4). Themes of absence and presence can be traced in Plato's studies of speech and writing. Plato "associated speech and speaking with presence and writing with absence" as the written text "exists separately from its writer, who need not be present for the writing to exist or be read" (Klages, 2012: 4). According to Plato, the "unmediated truth of speech comes from the presence of the speaker, while the writing mediates this presence" (Bell, 2015: 1). According to Bell (2015: 2), discourse centred on the terms 'absence' and 'presence' engages with the judgement of images and representations, linking to the questions raised by Plato and Aristotle about "the valuation of the proximate imitation or mimesis of representations". Plato, emphasising the "false quality of appearances" and that "the false quality of appearances draws the mind away from the contemplation of 'true being'", states that "'true being' is the ultimate form of presence" (Bell, 2015: 2). Aristotle, however, affirms representation by denouncing this notion of 'true being' and posits that there can be no unmediated forms, "but rather that being cannot be extracted from representations" (Bell, 2015: 2).

The terms 'absence' and 'presence' can both be defined as states of being: either "the state of being absent or away" or "the state or fact of being present" (dictionary.com, 2015: 1). And 'being' can be defined as "existing, occupying a space or the nature/essence of a person" (dictionary.com, 2015: 1). According to Heidegger, the term 'presence' was elevated to a position alongside and equal to the term 'being' without questioning the "conditions of being that implicate its presence" (Bell, 2015: 3). To rectify this, Heidegger formulated "three ontological categories of being that attempt to recognize the conditions of being" (Bell, 2015: 3). These three categories, namely 'falling', 'thrownness' and 'findingness' are described as follows. 'Falling' "explains the being's understanding of itself", 'thrownness' "acknowledge[s]

the linearity of time, where being can only go forward" and 'findingness' "describes the state of being as always already in some current situation" (Bell, 2015: 3). For Heidegger, it is these three categories that "explain the conditions through which being maintains and makes possible its presence" (Bell, 2015: 3).

Lacan's discussion of signs and what they stand for or signify elevates Plato's theory, which posits that speech denotes presence and writing denotes absence, into a more complex space. He states that language is a system of signs which are equivalents of what they signify, but not the things themselves (Rocha Watt, 2013: 24). He extends this to say that the signifiers denote presence and the signifieds denote absence, and that "language reinforces the absence of the original object, which has been substituted for the sign" (Rocha Watt, 2008: 8). But through this, language and text can be seen as absence in presence, because the signs which language employs are equivalents of what they signify: language represents both, and through the referral to the absent signified object, the sign (language) is made present (Rocha Watt, 2013: 25). In *An Allegory of Being*, Rocha Watt (2008: 8) offers the following explanation of Lacan's discussion of signification:

> What Lacan is saying, it seems, is that language reinforces the absence of the original object, which has been substituted by the symbol. Since the symbol is 'presence in absence and absence in presence', this leads back to representation, which may contain this memory of loss, of absence. (Rocha Watt, 2008: 8)

Absence and presence is one of the primary binaries analysed by Derrida in *Of Grammatology* (Klages, 2012: 4). Jayant Prasad (2007: 2) explains that "binary opposition is the structuralist idea that acknowledges the human tendency to think in terms of opposition"; whereas deconstruction rejects these binary oppositions. This rejection exists on the premise "that such oppositions always privilege one term over the other" (Prasad, 2007: 2). According to Derrida, Western metaphysics "favours presence and wants to subordinate absence to it" (Klages, 2012: 4). Derrida "relies heavily on Heidegger's re-evaluation of the metaphysics of presence" and theorises

that speech is mediated by language to the same degree as writing (Bell, 2015: 4). He introduces a play of absence and presence and states "that it is impossible for signification to be absolutely present": "[i]n doing so, he proves that only through mediated forms like language can one access signification and "[i]mportantly, for media theory, representational absence becomes a form of presence" (Bell, 2015: 4).

Following on from Plato's allusion to presence existing through speech and absence existing through writing or mediation, theorists such as Deleuze have attempted to explore this emphasis placed on absence as defined through mediation (Bell, 2015: 6). In *Plato and the Simulacrum*, Deleuze "recognizes the desire to 'distinguish essence from appearance…original from copy…and model from simulacrum'" in a manner similar to the way in which Plato stressed the separation of the 'truth of speech' from the mediation of writing (Deleuze, 1983: 47; Bell, 2015: 6). Although he does not use the terms 'absence and presence', "in each of these binaries the first term refers to some sort of presence or truth, while the second recognizes their embodiment from that presence", with focus on the "concepts of resemblance, copy and simulacrum" (Bell, 2015: 6). And, according to Bell (2015: 6), "his use of the term resemblance is allied to the notion of presence" and as an extension of Plato's study, Deleuze's use of the terms 'copy' and 'simulacrum' question their relationship to presence and absence. According to Deleuze (1983: 48), the copy and simulacrum form the two halves of a division that is defined by resemblance. Deleuze (1983: 47) goes on to explain that the copy and the simulacrum have their distinguishing factors; he states that "[c]opies are second-hand possessors, well-grounded claimants, authorised by resemblance", whereas "simulacra are like false claimants, built on a dissimilitude, implying a perversion, an essential turning away". He elaborates by explaining that "a copy truly resembles something only to the extent that it resembles the idea of the thing", and that "the claimant only conforms to the object insofar as it is modelled (internally and spiritually) on the idea" (Deleuze, 1983: 48). In motivating the integrity of the copy, Deleuze (1983: 48) states that it would "[merit] a quality (for example, the quality of justness) only insofar as it is founded on essence". This notion of the copy being modelled on the idea is further posited by Deleuze (1983: 48) who states that "it is the superior identity of the idea

that grounds the good claim of the copies, grounding it on an internal or derived resemblance". Alternately, Deleuze (1983: 48) perceives the simulacrum to be based on a model different to that of the copy. He explains that this "other type of image, the simulacra" makes its claim "to the object" through "means of an aggression, an insinuation, a subversion" and "without passing through the idea" (Deleuze, 1983: 48). Although he explains that the copy and the simulacrum "form two halves of a division", he asserts that "[t[he simulacrum is not a degraded copy, rather it contains a positive power which negates both original and copy, both model and reproduction" and that of "at least two divergent series interiorized in the simulacrum, neither can be assigned as original or copy" (Deleuze, 1983: 48,53).

> Resemblance continues, but it is produced as the external effect of the simulacrum insofar as this is constructed on the divergent series and makes them resonate. Identity persists, but it is produced as the law that complicates all series, causing them to return within each one as the course of compulsion. (Deleuze, 1983: 53)

To further elaborate on resemblance, Deleuze (1983: 53) explains that "[s]imilarity and resemblance now have as their essence only the condition of being simulated, that is, of expressing the operation of the simulacrum". The simulacrum, "because of its absence of resemblance, becomes an entity possessing a different kind of presence" which in fact merges absence and presence (Bell, 2015: 6). The terms 'absence' and 'presence', as a result of the musings of Deleuze and Derrida, have lost their binary distinction and it can now be said that absence can be thought of as a kind of presence, and presence as a kind of absence (Bell, 2015: 7).

3.2. Lacan's Mirror Stage: Absence as a result of the separation from the Mother and the development of the imago

Lacan links his discussions of absence and presence to the relationship between the mother and infant, and the development of the infant's self-image. Within this phase of development, Lacan has defined three key divisions or realms of the subject and

development of its psyche. These include the real, the imaginary and the symbolic (Felluga, 2015: 1). He describes the imaginary as including images and the imagination, the symbolic, as being comprised of the linguistic dimension and language, and the real, as the world of things (Rocha Watt, 2008: 8).

In *The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience,* Lacan (1949: 503) specifically focuses on what he describes as the "mirror-stage", which occurs between the ages of six to 18 months and during the phase of the "imaginary", in which the infant or subject recognises the mirror image of itself (Felluga, 2015: 3). It is during this stage that the infant "assumes an image" of itself, "in order to compensate for its sense of lack or loss" which is generated by the realisation "that its body is separate from the world and its mother", which causes anxiety as a result of the "sense of something lost" (Felluga, 2015: 3; Lacan, 1946:503). Lacan believes that the idea of absence or "lack" is "central to this formation of the self and the ego", "which is an illusion of presence formed to relieve the anxiety of absence" (Klages, 2012: 4; LacanOnline, 2014: 8). Lacan (1949:503-505) refers to this image that has formed as an 'imago', which is the misrecognised and idealised concept of the mental image of the self as "stable, coherent, and whole"; and according to Lacan, the function of the imago or 'ideal-I' is to establish a relation between the subject and its reality (Merriam-Webster, 2017: 1) The imago is significant "because it represents to the subject a simplified, bounded form of the self, as opposed to the turbulent chaotic perceptions, feelings and needs felt by the infant" (Felluga, 2015: 4). Lacan (1949: 504) further explains that:

> [T]he imago of one's own body presents in hallucinations or dreams, whether it concerns its individual features, or even its infirmities, or its object-projections; or if we observe the role of the mirror apparatus in the appearances of the double, in which psychical realities, however heterogenous, are manifested.

Lacan (1949: 505) regards the "function of the mirror-stage as a particular case of the function of the imago", which enables the subject to establish an understanding of its reality.

Prior to this development, Lacan describes the infant as viewing itself in “fragments”, with a focus on nothing but “need” and the desire to satisfy these needs and “with no sense for any separation between itself and the external world or the world of others” (Felluga, 2015: 2; Sharpe, n.d.: 9). This is while the infant occupies the phase of the “real” (Felluga, 2015: 2; Sharpe, n.d.: 9). According to Lacan (cited in Klages, 2012: 4), “full presence is possible only in this stage of early infancy, which he calls the realm of the Real, where the infant does not know any separation between itself and the rest of the world” and between itself and “that which satisfies its needs”. It is only once the infant enters the realm of the Imaginary that it realises the state of ‘otherness’ and separation. It is at this point that a “fundamental sense of lack, or absence of wholeness” is experienced which continues to cause it to strive for a return to presence (Klages, 2012: 4). It is this sense of lack that Lacan states “creates our structures of desire, and which language [represented in the realm of the symbolic] tries, unsuccessfully, to fulfil” (Klages, 2012: 4).

The progression into the phase of the symbolic, which is comprised of the linguistic dimension, language and the narrative, extends this sense of otherness that developed in the phase of the imaginary (Felluga, 2015: 3; Rocha Watt, 2008:8). According to Felluga (2011: 3), “boundaries between self and other…must be in place before the entrance into language”. The recognition of the image of the self, and the acknowledgment of the self as other “precedes the entrance into language” and the realm of the symbolic (Felluga, 2015: 4). This recognition enables the subject to “understand the place of the image of the self within a larger social order, in which the subject must negotiate his or her relationship with others” (Felluga, 2015: 4). Language creates a link and entry point in the social realm.

3.3. The Absent Mother

Freud and Lacan have both addressed the way that ‘absent mother’ is represented through binary signifiers (LacanOnline, 2014: 10). Freud provided us with an example of a signifier of the absent mother through describing a game his young nephew was playing (LacanOnline, 2014: 10). The young boy was playing with a “’wooden reel with a piece of string tied around it’”, and was repeatedly throwing this reel over the edge of his “’curtained cot, so that it disappeared into it’”, whilst holding on to the string and “’at the same time uttering [what] …Freud and the boy’s mother interpret as ‘*fort’* [‘gone’]” (Freud, cited in LacanOnline, 2014: 10). The child would then pull “’the reel out of the cot again by the string and [hail] at its reappearance with a joyful ‘*da’* [‘there’]’” (Freud, cited in LacanOnline, 2014: 10). Freud interpreted this repeated action as the child staging “the disappearance and return of the objects within his reach”, which represented the experience of the infant’s mother going away and returning (LacanOnline, 2014: 10). Freud (cited in LacanOnline, 2014: 11) asserts that what began as a “’passive situation’” in which the boy was “’overpowered by the experience’” of his mother’s absence, has transformed, through the repetition of the signified absence of the mother through the game, into an experience in which the child “took an active part”.

Lacan, initially in accordance with Freud, proposed a different interpretation of this (LacanOnline, 2014: 12). He explains that the reel does not represent the mother directly, but rather represents a “’small part *of the subject* that detaches itself from him *while still remaining his*’” (Lacan, cited in LacanOnline, 2014: 12). Lacan states that “[t]he child is symbolising through repetition”, and that this repetition is not an enactment of the “disappearance/reappearance of the mother, but her disappearance/ reappearance *as the cause of the subject’s split*” which occurs when this part of him is detached while still remaining his (LacanOnline, 2014: 13). This is explained as the establishing of the presence of the subject, rather than the mastering of absence (LacanOnline, 2014: 13). Although the absence is not mastered, it is still pivotal to the establishing of the presence of the subject, as well

as the split of the subject, whereby the absent object, although detached, still remains an extension of the subject.

In terms of representation, this raises the question of how “absence itself [can] be represented”, how it is possible to “represent something that isn’t there?” (LacanOnline, 2014: 14). According to Lacanian theory, the problematic quest to represent absence is resolved through the use of signifiers, which are capable of representing or “stand[ing] in the place of an absence”, as seen in the child’s game of *fort* and *da* (LacanOnline, 2014: 14): “*Fort* and *Da* are thus a minimal binary signifying system for the child”.

3.4. Lacan’s ‘object a’

However, with this considered, Lacan establishes that “assigning a signifier to represent this absence…isn’t enough” and cannot “bridge the gap of the lost object” (LacanOnline, 2014: 15). And this is where the reel that the child played with becomes an important factor. Although there are several terms used to describe such an object, Lacan refers to this metaphorical reel as “‘object a’” (Lacan cited in LacanOnline, 2014: 16). This “object a” is a “partial object” and acts as a signifier for the “process of separation from the mother” (LacanOnline, 2014: 17). The object is referred to as partial because it belongs “neither to the subject nor to the object – neither to the child nor its mother”, but instead acts as a bridge between the two (LacanOnline, 2014: 17).

Lacan’s “object a” is described as being “a remnant of the process of separation from the mother” (LacanOnline, 2014: 17). And as it is something which belongs “neither to the child nor its mother”, it exists in the space between the two, in the “excluded intersection of the two sets” (Zizek cited in LacanOnline, 2014: 17). This links to

Lacan's "notion of 'extimacy'", which is referred to as something that is "both external and intimate at the same time". My sculptures are intimate examples of Lacan's 'object a' and embody this notion of extimacy; they are separate objects which originate from a space within my emotional psyche and represent both absence and presence. They are both external and intimate at the same time while signifying both myself and my mother, as well as myself, loss, and the memories of my mother. Although complex and overlapping, these signifiers originate from the "sense of emptiness [which accompanies a loss] that disrupts the experience not just of one's identity, but of one's own body" (LacanOnline, 2014: 18). In addition, these signifiers function as an extension of Lacan's interpretation of the enactment described by Freud in his analogy of the child playing with the reel and the string in the repetitive game of *fort* and *da*. This repetition, which represents the disappearance/ reappearance of the mother as the cause of the subjects split, emphasises that the objects produced by the split, although detached from the subject, remain an extended part of it.

3.5. Extimacy

The notion of extimacy moves beyond the traditional psychological distinctions of "exteriority and psychic interiority or intimacy" (Pavón-Cuéllar, 2014: 1). Extimacy, a term coined by Lacan, "indicates the non-distinction and the essential identity between the dual terms of the outside and the deepest inside" (Pavón-Cuéllar, 2014: 1).

> All expressions of the duality exteriority-intimacy would be hypothetically replaceable by the notion of 'extimacy', which precisely joins ex-teriority with in-timacy, and states explicitly the interpenetration and mutual transformation of both spheres. These spheres are no longer what they were in conventional psychology. They actually fade away. Exteriority is rather intimacy, but intimacy, as exteriority, is rather an "extimacy" that is no longer either intimacy or exteriority.

(Pavón-Cuéllar, 2014: 1)

In Lacanian theory, the term could be used to describe “the human desire to show or exteriorise the intimate life” (Pavón-Cuéllar, 2014: 1). Lacan “identifies extimacy with the ‘Thing’”, which comes across as an enigmatic “landmark” or point of reference for the subject to orient themselves (Pavón-Cuéllar, 2014: 2). This ‘Thing’ is “extimate, which means that it is intimate to us while being exterior at the same time” (Pavón-Cuéllar, 2014: 2). It is defined as being “extimate” as it “constitutes the subject’s intimate experience” which “gives meaning and existence to the external things” (Pavón-Cuéllar, 2014: 2). In my understanding, these external things can manifest as sentimental objects, memorabilia, or in my case, the sculptures which I create. An interesting explanation of the ‘Thing’ is what Lacan (1959-1960 cited in Pavón-Cuéllar, 2014: 2) explains to be “the ‘mythical mother’s body’ that is ‘always searched for’. He offers another explanation of it “as the ‘first thing that separates from that which is named and articulated, the primordial real which suffers the signifier, but also ‘the signifier’ itself and ‘the emptiness’ inherent in the signifier” (Lacan, 1959-1960 cited in Pavón-Cuéllar, 2014: 2).

3.6. Kristeva, the mirror stage, and abjection

Kristeva follows Lacan’s model of psychosexual development but “offers a more central place for the maternal and the feminine in the subject's psychosexual development” (Felluga, 2011: 1). Similarly to Lacan, Kristeva offers a discussion on the period during which the infant realises the separation between itself and its mother, and the rest of the world. Kristeva describes this based on certain life stages of the infant, from the *chora* (0-6 months) in which the infant cannot distinguish between itself, its mother and the world which it occupies, to the *mirror stage* (6-18 months) in which the infant identifies with its own image (Felluga, 2011: 3, 5). According to Felluga (2011: 4), Kristeva identifies a crucial stage of development between the *chora* and *mirror* stages in which this realisation of separation occurs, which she links to the abject. Felluga (2011: 2) explains that “the abject marks the

moment when we [separate] ourselves from the mother, when we began to recognize a boundary between "me" and other, between "me" and "(m)other". It is during this phase that the mother is “left behind” or “abjected” as the child realises its place in the realm of rest of the world (State University of New York, 2004: 21). Kristeva offers an interpretation of the progression into the mirror stage which is alternative to Lacan’s by asserting “that this stage is preceded and troubled by the subject's relation to the abject” (Felluga 2011: 4). Kristeva explains the experience of the self separating from the self, and in the process, forming what Lacan describes as the imago:

> One does not know it, one does not desire it, one joys in it [*on en jouit*]. Violently and painfully. A passion. And, as in *jouissance* where the object of desire… bursts with the shattered mirror where the ego gives us its image in order to contemplate itself in the Other, there is nothing either objective or objectal to the abject. It is simply a frontier, a repulsive gift that the Other, having become *alter ego,* drops so that “I” does not disappear in it but finds, in that sublime alienation, a forfeited existence.
>
> (Kristeva, 1982: 9)

In terms of the way in which this manifests through the use of the body in art, Leisha Jones (2007: 62), in her article entitled *Women and Abjection: Margins of Difference, Bodies of Art*, explains that interfaces such as “me/not me, inside/outside become existential dichotomies for abjection to propagate”. This echoes Lacan’s discussions on the imago and alternative images of the self, and Lacan and Pavón-Cuéllar’s formulations of extimacy.

Kristeva, in *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1982, cited in Jones, 2007: 64), explores the “connections between language, the maternal body and abjection”. According to Kristeva (1982, cited in Jones, 2007: 64), “abjection preserves and signifies what may have existed in the pre-symbolic period”. This refers to the phase of the imaginary, which is comprised of images and their associations, whereas the symbolic includes language. She goes on to explain that the “search for an origin of

completeness and a way to exhume this never ends, as the inside of the maternal body has always already been lost" (Kristeva, 1982, cited in Jones, 2007: 64). However, although this search may never conclude, Jones (2007: 64) asserts that "it is in seeking the abject that jouissance may arise. For Kristeva, jouissance is a state of joy and ecstasy that is the payoff of the search for the pseudo-(ab)object of desire".

Jones (2007: 65) poses the question of whether it is possible to create a "feminist model for the conceptualization and deployment of the abject", which "relies less on mother as symbolic lack and more on women's embodied multiplicities". This is in response to Kristeva and Lacan's model of the development of the ego or other which is based on the infant's separation from the mother and the realisation of this absence (Jones, 2007: 65). Jones (2007: 64) suggests that Kristeva's "psychoanalytic model" may "limit the possibility for conceptualizing abject bodies and identity constructions" and as a result of Kristeva's reference to the Oedipal developments of the boy and girl child reduces them "to culturally-coded transgressive rituals still connected to the primacy of the phallus". Although, according to Kristeva (cited in Jones 2007: 65), "women as a constituency of the margins are in the best position to transgress boundaries". When describing the use of the body in art, Christine Ross (1997: 154, cited in Jones, 2007: 65) identifies a redefining of subjectivity which seeks to "displace the conception of the subject as presence to the detriment of the abjected female body, which represents lack and absence, to a conception of the subject as both presence and absence, pattern and randomness".

This is something which relates directly to my sculptures in the sense that, although they represent a contemplation of the return to the abject in the moment of separation from the mother, they, too, strive to represent a presence which negates this absence or lack which has typically been associated with the abjected female body. They do not, however, encompass the abject in the way that it has been described as embodying the unpleasant and repulsive (Kristeva, 1982: 9). My sculptures portray an ongoing dialogue between the 'me' of the present and the 'me' who might be or has been, along with multiple versions of both the prior and the

latter, as represented through the representation of the self as both the subject and the other.

3.7. Memory and Sculpture

Hilda Doolittle underwent psychoanalytic sessions with Sigmund Freud in 1893, and during these sessions, sculpture was used in order to represent memory. Doolittle said “that the realness of the sculptures are like the realness of memory, but also that they are like the realness of Freud’s constructions of past events” (Doolittle 1956, cited in Martin, 2008: 189). It was also stated that “the sculptures were Freud’s reconstructions of past events, like excavated memories” (Martin, 2008: 190). At the time of his death, Freud owned “over 2000 sculptures”, mostly comprised of “figurative sculpture” (Martin, 2008: 184). These were displayed in his consulting room, which suggests that they were an “active part of the clinical experience” (Martin, 2008: 184). In utilising sculptures to activate or trigger memories or experiences of trauma, Freud conceived of “sculpture as an appropriate analogue for the ‘foreign body’ of psychical trauma” (Martin, 2008: 188). Freud applied an archaeological metaphor to this excavation of memories, which he linked specifically to the sculptural objects he collected for use in his psychoanalysis, which were “delicate archaeological artefacts”. As archaeologists carefully source artefacts which provide insight into our civilisation’s past, so the “[psycho]analyst digs into memory to find artefacts of lost events” (Martin, 2008: 189).

In her dissertation, *An Allegory of Being*, Dionea Rocha Watt (2008: 1) explored the ways in which “artists use a visual language to represent human experiences and emotions as images, objects or installations” through the use of allegory and fragmentation. She also looked at the role of the body in this representation. She discusses the notion of representation through the parallels between the construction of verbal and visual language as well as the role of symbols used in the artist’s creation of narrative and meaning (Rocha Watt, 2008: 3). This links to Ferdinand De

Saussere's definition of language as a "system of signs that express ideas" and can be extended to the ways in which signs are used to express ideas in visual art, in my case the signs or signifiers are the relatable human forms (De Saussere cited in Rocha Watt, 2008: 4).

De Saussere's ideas were transposed by Claude Lévi-Strauss, who expressed the view that language produces meaning through oppositions, and that, "in the construction of a visual language, artists contrast elements as a way of producing meaning of the signs" (Rocha Watt, 2008: 4, 6). As an extension of this, Rocha Watt (2008: 6) explains that "if visual symbols escape the immediate confines of their appearance, the inescapable reality of matter is used by artists to create a material language to reinforce a visual narrative". This links to the material language expressed through the mediums of my sculptures. The meanings and themes communicated by the sculptures extend beyond their immediate signifiers and physical forms, as the materiality of the bronze and glass expresses another dimension within the ways in which they can be read. The material becomes an intrinsic part of the meaning of the work. According to Melanie Klein (cited in Rocha Watt, 2008: 9), "the 'work of mourning' was a work of reparation, and these formed the basis of creativity" and for the artist, "the desire to represent, to use a symbolic language is linked to the memory of loss and the desire to repair this loss".

3.8. Photography, Memory and Identity

As I work predominantly from photographic self-portraits, I feel that it is vital to address the effect that the presence of the camera and the awareness of the image it will generate has on the authenticity and intrinsic essence of my reference photographs. In addition, it is important to address whether the awareness of being photographed, coupled with the conscious or sub-conscious generation of a pose, affects the integrity of the emotions being represented, and leads to the question of what the relevancy is of memory in this process. Julia Espinosa (2010: 1) addressed

the “relationship of photographic technology to organic memory” in her article entitled *The Advent of Myself as Other: Photography, Memory and Identity Creation* (2010). Espinosa (2010: 1) specifically makes reference to the photographic self-portrait and the way in which it “does not overwrite an original memory of one’s self, but instead facilitates transformative acts of self-construction”. She goes on to explain that this process contributes “to a subjective self-identity and [is] therefore productive rather than destructive to an individual’s authentic memory” Espinosa, 2010: 1). She explores what is described as the “momentary performance of the self” (Espinosa, 2010: 9). This is contrary to what Roland Barthes asserts in his book *Camera Lucida* (1980). Barthes (cited in Espinosa, 2010: 3) “positions photography squarely in opposition to memory” and states that:

> Not only is the Photograph never, in essence, a memory…but it actually blocks memory, [and] quickly becomes a counter-memory.

This perception is shared by Nancy M. Shawcross (2007, cited in Espinosa, 2010: 4) who, in response to Barthes’ *Camera Lucida*, wrote that “the photograph (even a series of photographs) is not a narrative (although an image may prompt speculation) and phenomenologically speaking – does not belong to the realm of memory”. This notion that photographs or “images are incompatible with memory persists today”; although photography has commonly been perceived as a medium whose function included documentation and truth-telling because of its ability to accurately capture reality (Espinosa, 2010: 3). I share the views of Espinosa and Shawcross and believe that the manner in which I make use of the photographic self-portrait contributes to the subjective construction of myself through facilitating the creation of my sculptures.

3.9. The Trace

In his writing on deconstruction, Jacques Derrida discusses the term *differance*, and uses this term “to describe the origin of presence and absence” (Prasad, 2007: 3, 4):

> Derrida explains that difference is the condition for the opposition of presence and absence. *Differance* is also the "hinge" between speech and writing, and between inner meaning and outer representation. As soon as there is meaning, there is difference.

This links to where the discussion of absence and presence originated in Plato's summations of speech and writing, as well as Lacan's notion of extimacy, linking to inner meaning and outer representation. The trace originates from *differance* and can be described by its ambiguities. This quality of the trace is one which particularly resonates with my research. As I explore the mark that absence and loss leaves on the being, the trace gives a name to this mark. It acknowledges its presence within the absence which defines it. The trace embodies the absence within presence and the presence which absence creates. For Levinas (cited in Bergo, 2005: 2), the trace refers to that which "cannot appear", which includes "the face of the other" and is linked intrinsically to "the complex of memory, affectivity, and the birth of signification". Signification attempts to transpose that which 'cannot appear' through the use of signifiers, which are the (present) objects that are represented by (absent) signifieds. Again, there is an interplay of absence and presence, although, there is a disconnect within the originating signifier; if the trace cannot appear, how can it be signified? It is this disconnect which I aim to unify through a platform and mode of expression which combines representation, materiality and the body.

When considering the trace and repetition, Levinas also discusses and identifies "human sensuous vulnerability" as a preferred disposition for the trace; "the question of repetition, enormously difficult for phenomenology, implies a relationship between traces, a memory of the flesh that can be forgotten, and the con scious-unconscious structure of sensibility" (Bergo 2005: 4). Bergo (2005: 5) draws attention to the manners in which "bodily memories congeal into dynamic states, with or without the *de facto* presence of the other person and thanks to the strange effectivity of traces". Levinas' repetitions are made possible by traces, and "whether these traces are inscribed in the flesh, or in some kind of memory" are immaterial to him; as long as they are enacted out of "sincerity", from a position that is "neither conscious nor precisely unconscious" (Bergo 2005: 5).

> In this enactment, expressed as ‘here I am’, the self becomes a signifier, [Levinas] says. Contrasted with the ego or representation, the self thus exists originally as repeating, non-identical signification. The self is passive production of difference, thanks to what inhabits it but is not it.
>
> (Bergo 2005: 5)

As visual modes of expression, which can be ‘read’ or related to without the presence of speech or writing, my sculptures embody the trace in a way which aligns with Derrida’s opinion that traces can be ‘read’ and understood without the necessity of an accompanying literary explanation (Bergo 2005: 8). And it is this enactment of signification, expressed by Levinas (cited in Bergo 2005: 5) as “here I am”, which is intrinsic to the way in which my sculptures exist as signifiers of the self through their repeating representations of each other.

> Through crying and through writing Augustine can express his loss, and remember his mother. To speak and to cry through the text, to allow tears and words to flow, to carry and to leave traces. A trail of tears inscribed on the face, words inscribed on the page. In tears and in the text there is a trace of the other, the absent other, the one who has been lost. “*mater defuncta est.*”
>
> (Rocha Watt, 2013: 5)

3.10. The Female Nude

As I favour the female nude as the subject for my sculptures and drawings, I must address the associations and history of this subject matter in art, and particularly, sculpture (see Appendix A). I choose to represent my figures nude because through this process of exploration and representation I find that clothing has too many connotations and masks what I aim to convey or represent. There is a very specific feeling of honesty about the nude body that expresses emotions that can so often be concealed or clouded by clothing. I believe that our bodies are our first reference

points for understanding the rest of the world and that the body is a universal medium that all can relate to. My frame of reference for my experiences is myself, and by extension, my body. I aim to reclaim the subject matter of the nude in order to give a visual, tangible existence to my emotional journey through my memories and experience of the loss of my mother.

3.11. The relevance and the use of the female body to create a visual narrative and personal vocabulary

> My body is the location of my being,…I turn to the body in an attempt to find a language that will transcend the limitations of race, creed, and language, but will still be about the rootedness of identity.
>
> (Gormley cited in Flynn 1998: 160)

My work exists as a personal narrative of my experiences, memories and previous self/selves. My work as a whole functions as a personal account and negotiation of my own being, which is anchored in my history and subjective journey. The body is the most relatable subject, while also existing as a mediator between the private self and the world. Merleau-Ponty (1964: 163), when discussing the relationship between things, the world and the body, explained the following:

> Visible and mobile, my body is a thing among things; it is one of them. It is caught in the fabric of the world, and its cohesion is that of a thing. But because it sees and moves itself, it holds things in a circle around itself. Things are an annex or prolongation of the body; they are encrusted in its flesh, they are part of its full definition; the world is made of the very stuff of the body.

Rocha Watt (2008: 11), in her dissertation entitled *An Allegory of Being*, references Merleau-Ponty by explaining that “things are the prolongation of my body and my

body is the prolongation of the world", and in doing so, "places the body in a central position to understanding the world" from a phenomenological perspective (Smith, 2013: 4). Rocha Watt (2008: 1) discusses the difficulties with which artists are confronted in their efforts to represent "experience and emotions". She asserts that these artists overcome these "difficulties of representation" by means of "using allegory and fragmentation as strategies" (Rocha Watt, 2008: 1). Rocha Watt (2008:1) explores the ways in which these strategies enable artists to "convey – and [the viewers] to understand – pain and suffering, anxiety about mortality, memory and childhood", and what the relevance is "of the body in all of this". She asserts that in order to convey and explore these themes, an artist must "devise a visual language that enables him or her to create a narrative"; and through this narrative create a "representation of the self and the experience of being in the world; in other words, an allegory of being" (Rocha Watt, 2008: 1).

More specifically, and relating to my work, the female body as represented by the female artist has gained traction and power as a subject of art. In classical art, the female nude body was often depicted by male artists as a subject of voyeurism. In response to this pattern of voyeurism and objectification, there has been a movement to reclaim the female body as a subject of expression for female artists; by "1970 new attitudes to women both as makers and subjects of art were infiltrating the art world" (Borzello, 2012: 54). This reclamation coincided with the "social upheavals" in Europe and America during the 1960's and 70's. These included fights for "equality for women with regard to sexuality, reproductive rights, the family, and the workplace" (MoMA Learning, n.d.: 2). MoMA Learning (n.d.: 2) explains that:

> Artists and art historians began to investigate how images in Western art and the media—more often than not produced by men—perpetuated idealizations of the female form. Feminist artists reclaimed the female body and depicted it through a variety of lenses.
>
> (MoMA Learning, n.d.: 2)

According to Borzello (2012: 54), “some of the most exciting changes in the presentation of the female nude in the last hundred years have been introduced by women artists”. These changes emerged from women entering the “art world as professionals, the recipients for the first time of the academic training that had been denied them until art schools accepted them as art students at the end of the 19th century” (Borzello, 2012: 54). As a result of this academic training, most women adhered to the “conventional” manner of producing the female nude in art (Borzello, 2012: 57). However, there were a number of progressive female artists who “offered

Figure 3.1: Lotte Laserstein. *Morning Toilette*. Oil on panel. 1930.

a surprisingly different view of the nude", which spanned from self-portraits to a new take on the mother and child as well as a purposeful and "determinedly non-ideal" nude which spanned to include the representation of bodily functions (Borzello, 2012: 64, 81). This reformation of the naked female body, can be seen in the art of Lotte Laserstein, Rineke Dijkstra, and Kiki Smith.

Figure 3.2: Rineke Djkstra. *Tecla, Amsterdam, Netherlands, May 16 1994.* Photograph on paper. 1994. 117,5 x 94,5 cm.

Lotte Laserstein's painting entitled *Morning Toilette* (figure 3.18), an oil on panel painted in 1930, offers an alternative to the classical depiction of a woman bathing. Laserstein's depiction of her model washing her body with a sponge "suggest[s] strength and purpose" and is far removed from the reclining nudes discussed above. The model's body is also not overtly arranged in a pose which would please male viewers.

An artist who provides an alternative take on the representation of the mother and child is Rineke Dijkstra. Her photograph of a woman with her day-old baby, entitled *Tecla, Amsterdam, Netherlands, May 16 1994* (figure 3.19), provides a real account of the woman's body, which possesses traces of her "recent ordeal" and adds a sense of "intimacy and realism foreign to earlier art" (Borzello, 2012: 79; Tate, n.d.: 1). An artist who has subverted the perception of the female nude by introducing previously taboo aspects of the female body to art is Kiki Smith. Smith has brought bodily functions to the platform of the female nude in art, "the turning away from which is what the traditional nude [has been] all about" (Borzello, 2010: 81). Her sculptures *Pee Body* and *Train* are examples of this bold introduction. *Pee Body* (1992), features a "crouching female relieving herself in a stream of yellow beads, as seen in figure 3.20. *Train* (1993) depicts menstruation "through metaphorical red beads that flow from between the legs of the sculptured female nude" (Borzello, 2012: 81). These works bring what is intimate and private into the public space and remove the eroticism typically assigned to the unclothed female body. Smith explains that "Art is something that moves from your insides into the physical world" and strives to show "the body as it endures the realities of existence" (Palisay, 2016: 7). Smith's sculptures confront the viewer in a manner which echoes Kristeva's abject spaces of shock, horror and repulsion, but when combined with the shining fragility of the glass beads and the wax forms the result is something beautiful.

The boldest of these new embodiments of the female nude, however, is the "naked female self-portrait", which emerged at the "start of the 20th century" (Borzello, 2012: 64). Borzello (2012: 64) describes these bold self-portraits as "naked nudes", which have been produced from a "woman's eye, a woman's experience and a woman's

Figure 3.3: Kiki Smith. *Pee Body*. Wax and glass beads. 1992.
68.6 x 71.1 x 71.1 cm.

point of view". This led to a significant shift in the monopoly and control of female nudity, moving from the locus created by male artists which "had presented them as passive in their paintings and sculptures, paragons to be examined and admired for their beauty", towards "a new imagery that told a female truth" from the position of the subjective female experience (Borzello, 2012: 68). This new imagery sought to reclaim the territory of the naked female body, as explained by Borzello (2012: 68):

> This is my body, the feminists said, and I am presenting it to you as I want and as I experience it, not as the male artist or spectator expects to see it.

Moving further toward the reclamation of the nude, "female Body artists brought huge changes into the art world by updating the image of the classic female reclining

nude to that of the contemporary female body" (Borzello, 2012: 76). This platform progressed far beyond the traditional concept of the female nude, leaving in its wake the concept of the "blank and non-threateningly seductive" passive nude, and presenting an "autobiographical" extension of Body art, which is perceived as "an extension of self-portraiture" (Borzello, 2012: 76). Although autobiographical, these artists were also using Body art as a platform for expressing issues using their bodies in often outspoken, performative and significantly brave ways; and "by the end of the 1960's, Body art had established itself as a branch of visual art" (Borzello, 2012: 41, 76). The issues they addressed spanned the landscape of the self, emotions, sexuality, the existential experience and being (Borzello, 2012: 41). Body art referred to art which "took as its subject the human body as it related to the world around it in emotional or physical terms", different to Performance art through its "personal, private and autobiographical" qualities. Borzello (2012: 41) explains that "nakedness was an element in the practise of many Body artists, as the nude had been an element in the art of the past".

Figure 3.4: A photograph of Marina Abramović during her *Rhythm O* performance. 1974. (Photograph by Donatelli Sbarra)

Artists who revolutionised this platform include Marina Abramović, who embarked on her life-long commitment to "testing the limits of her body in the 1960's" (Borzello, 2012: 44). The objective of her art has always been "audience reaction and involvement, not appreciation", and she has substituted the art object for herself and her body, often enduring hours of subjection to physical strain at her own hand or at the hands of the audience

(Borzello, 2012: 47). Her *Rhythm O* work of 1974, which she has described as the “heaviest piece” she had ever participated in because she relinquished all control to the audience, allowing them to use any of the “seventy-two objects” provided on her as they pleased (Borzello, 2012: 47).

In the decades that followed, female artists have continued to make use of the nude to explore a number of intrinsically female issues and experiences. And subsequently, “just as the early theories have been tested and rethought, so the work of women artists has expanded to become more subtle and more complex” (Borzello, 2012: 77). The body is the most accessible subject for the artist and one with which we are most familiar. Our perceptions of our world and surroundings are largely influenced by the definitive characteristics of our body. The body as a platform or mode of expression in art is one that any person can engage with and relate to, as explained by Borzello (2012: 182):

> Artists who take the body as their subject involve us all by offering a way out of contemporary art’s tendency to speak only to the converted. It may be bewildering or uncomfortable, but their use of the body offers the viewer a point of contact. By using an imagery with which we can all identify, artists extend the spectator a hand in to the art they have created. By replacing the ideal nude with the naked nude, recycling it for our times, they have brought the heart back to art, the blood in its arteries and ideas back into its brain.

I have realised that within my own creative philosophy I have adopted the 20th century approach to figurative sculpture, where as a female artist I am making ‘Naked Nudes’, as described by Borzello. I am thus adding another layer of meaning to the reading of my artworks, which I will discuss in the following chapter.

In the discussion of my own work in the following chapter, I will reference Freud, Lacan and Kristeva’s discussion of an infant’s progression from the phases of the real to the imaginary and the symbolic, in addition to Derrida’s and Deleuze and

Guattari's discussion of absence and presence as interdependent terms, as well as Heidegger's phases of being which justify its presence. I will also draw on Klein's discussion of mourning and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological approach.

4. Chapter 4: Practical Component

I refer to the human body, or more specifically the female body, in my work as a means of reflecting on and understanding my memories and experiences. I place my body in a central position to understanding the memories I have of my mother. I have created a series of personal symbols which form the foundation of my sculptural vocabulary. These symbols extend to the mediums I work with as well as the poses I employ and the repetition of subject matter. The duplication of the same figure as it engages in a dialogue with itself links to a process of self-reflection and exploration; as well as to Lacan's discussion on the formation of the image of the self, which he defines as the "imago" (Lacan, 1949:503). Although I describe these figures as duplications, they are not exact copies of each other, but each is slightly altered to create the sense that they are engaging with each other or with themselves in introspection. In some cases, the altered counterparts appear to capture fleeting movements of dynamism, while the figure engages in a certain action. These counterpart sculptures act as imagos as described by Lacan (1949: 503), which are expressed as outlines of my daily experience, or an attempt to express a balance of reflection, acceptance and pensiveness.

The figures that I create function as an allegory for the expression of absence and presence, within a narrative of memory. This allegory is expressed through the mediums which I use to create my sculptures. These mediums include bronze, kiln-formed glass and resin. I pair these mediums in certain ways in my works in order to represent absence and presence as a dualism, but also to represent various stages of absence and presence and the ways in which the two may overlap or merge. For example, in terms of the pairing of bronze and glass, the bronze serves as an expression or representation of 'presence' and the glass represents 'absence'. When these two mediums are paired in my work, they express the binary qualities of absence and presence. In the same way, the combinations of the resin, glass, or resin combined with glass broadly represent the opposite other.

My creative process is one that I would liken to a therapeutic mode of expression. I say this because often, while beginning or working on a sculpture, I am not entirely certain of what I am aiming to express or represent through the pose or body language. However, upon completion, the sculpture takes on a new meaning for me and I become aware of something that I may have been subconsciously expressing through its creative process. Whether this translates through the posture, expression or global body language, there is always a new element or layer of interpretation with which I had not intentionally imbued the work. The postures and positioning of the figures featured in my works are based on intuitively selected poses which originate from my being photographed while sitting or standing in certain ways. Although I have a general starting point for these poses before photographing them, there are specific ways in which they are transposed through my mannerisms or tendencies of movement which make them unique and characteristic expressions of my persona.

As my master's body of work and research are inspired by a personal and psychological journey through the memories I have of my mother and my experiences of this loss, there is a sense of connection between this and my creative process. In addition to this, I find that I am unavoidably influenced by the sense of isolation I feel due to an unstable relationship with my father, and, moreover, that as my mother disappeared, so it was required that almost all reminders of her were to be removed along with her and she was not spoken of. I believe that this sudden snuffing out of a presence which had amounted to half of my being, combined with an insufficient process of grieving, has led to this delayed process of introspection, acceptance of the loss and ongoing sense of absence it has created. It is for this reason that I describe my creative process as therapeutic because I am not only giving tangible form to the emotions associated with, and experiences of searching for and recalling these memories, but I am also, in a way, attempting to understand my emotional capacity and accept and appreciate who I am as a result of these memories.

Although this loss of my mother occurred when I was nine years old, I am exploring the experience of this as an adult; which I think has equipped me with the ability to

reflect on and come to terms with the experience. I am examining this from a life comprised of more years lived without my mother than with her. After the period of her being treated for cancer, she was in remission for two years. This was a blissful period, and although it was flanked by the chemotherapy, mastectomy, weight loss, hair loss, constant illness and the sense of defeat that threatens to overcome one, she was almost never caught without her bravest and strongest face. Although much of what was occurring was beyond my level of understanding, I still wanted to know what was happening to her. She always met my indignant questions with patience and the most appropriate answers she could muster, followed by assurances of all that we would do once she was better. She had an unconquerable optimism and always tried to see and bring out the best in every situation, with her bubbly humour and loving outlook. It is for these reasons that I choose not to explore the darker, morbid side of death and an illness such as cancer. As my work originates from the memories I have of my mother, I aim to make every effort to display the light, purity, positivity and ethereal beauty she embodied. This introspection is multi-layered owing to all of these factors.

4.1. My Creative Process

The subject matter for my sculptures, as mentioned above, is intuitively selected based on a creative process. My creative process includes drawing and sculpting from live models and myself, as well as photographing (predominantly) myself for references from which to sculpt.

Once I am satisfied with the investigation I have made of the body and pose from which I will be working, I begin the sculpting of the body's frame using micro-crystalline wax. From this point, and once I feel that I have mapped out the proportions in an accurate way, I begin to build up the musculature and form of the figure by adding and removing wax, while also making any required adjustments to the pose. I then move on to the details of the figure, such as the ankles, knees,

wrists, shoulders and collar bones, and breasts, stomach and other textural details. This is followed by the adding of hair, facial features, toes and fingers.

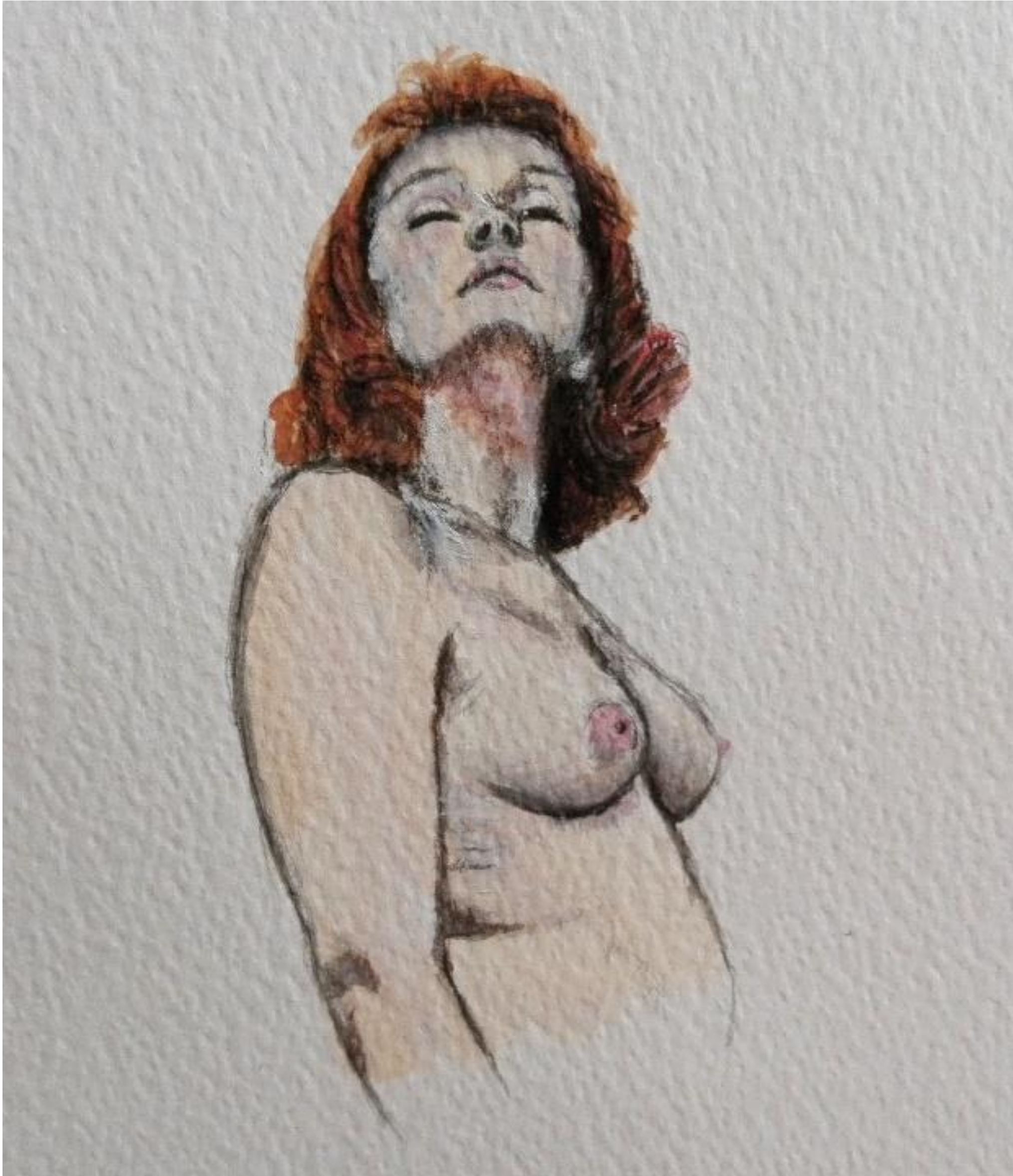

Figure 4.1: Sarah Walmsley. Study in watercolour and pencil for *Serendipity I* sculpture.

Throughout the process of creating the sculpture, I make drawings of details of the form, such as the hands, feet, hair, head and facial features. These, along with examinations of and references to my own body while sculpting, supplement my investigation of the body from which I am sculpting. I spend the most amount of time working on the final details of the sculpture, from the direction in which the eyes appear to be looking to the shapes of the fingernails and styling of the hair. These last stages often also include adjustments to the pose or posture, the correcting of proportions and the length of limbs and other elements. I occasionally use paraffin in conjunction with my fingers, some paper towels or earbuds to aid in smoothing the surface of the micro-crystalline wax sculpture.

Figure 4.2: Sarah Walmsley. Photograph of the feet of the *Serendipity I* sculpture in microcrystalline wax.

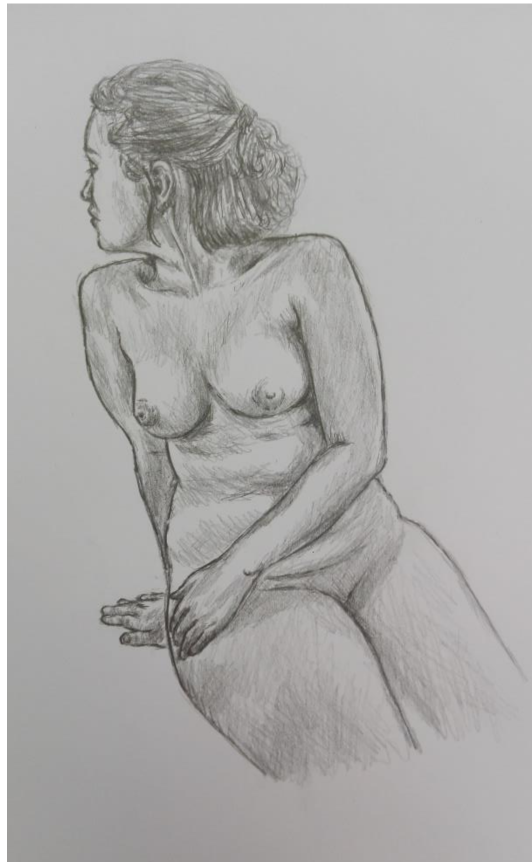

Figure 4.3: Sarah Walmsley. Study in pencil for *Searching II* sculpture.

4.2. The Technical Process

Once I am at a point where I feel that the sculpture is ready to be transposed into another medium, I begin preparing it to be moulded with RTV silicone rubber. The silicone rubber mould enables the casting of wax replicas of the sculpture which will be invested in a ceramic shell mould and cast in

bronze or invested into a plaster and silica mould and cast in glass. These are processes that will be expanded on later in this chapter.

Figure 4.4: Sarah Walmsley. Photograph of *Searching I* and *Searching II* in microcrystalline wax during the formation of *Searching II*.

The silicone rubber mould also enables the making of multiple casts of the sculpture in resin, which will also be expanded on in this chapter. My sculptures function as pairs or groups of the same figures which interact with or complement each other. This resemblance is achieved and maintained by allocating the first figure of the set to form the basis from which the other one or two figures will be created. Once the original figure has been rubber moulded, a wax duplicate is cast and altered accordingly to form the second figure of the set of sculptures. A rubber mould of this figure is then made and, depending on the intended pose or effect, the same is done for the third figure in the set. It is always necessary to have the original sculpture present when working on its counterpart in order to ensure that the proportions, facial features and body are consistent and maintain the effect that they are slightly different versions of the same figure.

Once the figures have been completed, the wax versions of the figures are considered in order to determine which figures to cast in which mediums. This is based on the way the figures interact with each other and on the essence and atmosphere of each figure. The core mediums I work with are bronze and glass, but I also achieve my desired effect by juxtaposing as well as combining resin and glass. In some of my compositions or pairings of figures I will juxtapose bronze resin and glass. I have experienced that in some cases the clear Spectrum glass casts and clear Polylite resin casts have been mistaken for each other. This is something I will interplay within the sets as well. The combination and juxtaposition of these mediums represents absence and presence as a binary, as well as the overlapping intersections between the two.

4.2.1. Rubber Moulds

Figure 4.5: Sarah Walmsley. Photograph of *Searching II* embedded in clay after the application of the first layer of RTV silicone rubber.

RTV silicone rubber moulds of each of the completed wax figures have been made. As mentioned above, these rubber moulds facilitate the casting of multiple copies of the original figure in mediums such as microcrystalline wax, polyester and epoxy resin, and also produce cold bronze, copper and other cold metal casts. The RTV silicone rubber that has been utilised is white in appearance and requires a catalyst to be added to the rubber in order for it to cure. It must be mixed extremely well to ensure that it catalyses correctly and a thixotropic agent can be added to thicken the mixture. Application begins with a layer of rubber that does not contain the thixotropic: this is the layer that captures the surface detail, therefore great care should be taken during this application.

The following layers can be mixed with thixotropic to aid the spreading of the rubber and allow the mould to be built up more easily. There are a number of approaches that can be taken to making a rubber mould. The two methods that I use include the method in which the cap is made first and the rubber is poured into the area which has been allocated between the cap and the sculpture; and the 'bed' mould-making method in which the rubber is applied prior to the construction of the cap. These

Figure 4.6: The demoulding of the *Serendipity I* wax sculpture showing the two-piece rubber mould and plaster of Paris rigid support 'cap'.

mould-making methods produce a two-part rubber mould and cap, in which the two sides are held in place by an interlocking key which is modelled into the clay bed.

4.2.2. Glass Casting

The *cire perdue* or lost-wax method of casting is preferred for the glass casts (see Appendix B). The *cire perdue* method of casting involves the wax positive being prepared in the method according to the material which will be cast, and thereafter being covered with the refractory moulding material. The wax will then be 'lost' from the refractory mould by means of heating or in this case, steaming, leaving the mould cavity vacant and ready to be filled with the molten casting material (Mills, 2001: 118). It is necessary to apply this method to the glass casting because the figures are three-dimensional and have undercuts, requiring an encompassing mould with an opening through which the wax can be melted out, and the glass can enter (Watkins-Baker, 2010: 140). The quantity of glass necessary to fill the cavity of the mould is calculated using the water displacement method (Watkins-Baker, 2010: 128), and this glass is held in a reservoir positioned above the cavity of the mould. "A reservoir is essential for any mould which is partially or almost completely enclosed... This is because it is often not possible to get the glass pieces into the cavity as they are too large to fit through the opening in the mould" (Watkins-Baker, 2010: 148).

There are certain challenges which accompany the glass casting process. These challenges include difficulty regarding the casting of limbs and extremities forming part of the figure. Assuming those parts cast successfully, they could be damaged through the removal of the refractory mould. It is also possible that air could be trapped in the mould during the firing process: this will create visible air bubbles in the completed cast. In order to prevent this, a system of risers, or air vents, need to be added to some wax forms. A comparison could be drawn to the gating process we utilize in preparation to casting pieces in bronze. There are similarities between

these two processes, namely bronze casting and glass casting, and I am continuously learning how much the prior can inform the latter.

4.3 My body of work: Absence and Presence: in Search of Memory and the Imago

My body of work is comprised of seven fundamental sculptures made from bronze, glass and resin. These seven sculptures form the basis of the pairings and groupings of figures which include following (See Appendix C for images of my completed sculptures):

1. *Serendipity I*
2. *Serendipity II*
3. *Serendipity III*
4. *Searching I*
5. *Searching II*
6. *Being I*
7. *Morning*

4.3.1.1 Sculptures

1. *Serendipity I, II & III*

Merleau-Ponty (1964: 163), when discussing the relationship between things, the world and the body, explained the following:

> Visible and mobile, my body is a thing among things; it is one of them. It is caught in the fabric of the world, and its cohesion is that of a thing. But because it sees and moves itself, it holds things in a circle around itself.

> Things are an annex or prolongation of the body; they are encrusted in its flesh, they are part of its full definition; the world is made of the very stuff of the body.

What Merleau-Ponty describes as ‘things’, translate as my sculptures in my frame of reference. And through creating my body in sculpture, my body becomes this “visible and mobile”, “thing among things”. Whereas, rather than the body discussed by Merleau-Ponty becoming a cohesion of the ‘thing, it is the ‘thing’, or my sculptures which represent a cohesion of my body. The world and visual narrative I have created are made up of my body, and therefore, as these sculptures stand in their circle, they are a prolongation of my body and echo the fibre of my being, my memories, my essence and my presence/absence.

The *Serendipity* series is an installation comprised of nine sculptures which are iterations of the *Serendipity I, II & III* (refer to figure 4.7) nude female figures. These nine sculptures are reproduced in the mediums of bronze, glass, resin and ceramic and are arranged in a circular formation, each figure facing outwards, and each mounted on its own wooden base. The nine figures of the installation are intended to be observed/experienced holistically, but could also be observed in their micro-groupings as well as individual works.

This installation is grounded in the formation of the subjective self-identity and *imago*, which manifests as a ‘performance’ of the self through the sculptural representation of three differently posed versions of the same figure, which functions as a self-portrait. These explore the realisations of previous, current and constructed versions of the self which exist parallel to absence, presence and the intersections in between. Furthermore, the sculptures link to the first of Heidegger’s three ontological categories of being which justify its presence (as discussed in Chapter 3). The first category is ‘falling’, which “explains the being’s understanding of itself” (Bell, 2015: 3). As each figure engages with itself, it echoes this acknowledgement and understanding of the self through its pose, and aims to convey the serendipity of this

process. As much as one tries to coax it or trigger it, this process needs to happen by itself, which at times may seem serendipitous.

Figure 4.7: Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity III Installation*. Bronze, resin and kiln-formed glass. 2018. Approximately 300 x 183 cm

When I recall memories of myself and my mother, the version of myself that is with my mother in the memory is not the self I am now; it is another self. I look on these memories as though I am entering a tender moment shared by an alternate version of myself; here I am not quite a stranger, but the imago. It is perhaps my way of reminiscing without inciting too much of an emotional response. This other version of myself is one which exists independently within each memory, and this is what I explore in my sculptural self-portraits. The sculptures are representative of my "object a", which exists as an attempt to assign a signifier to the space in between

myself and my mother, or to function as a “remnant of the process of separation from the mother” (LacanOnline, 2014: 17).

Figure 4.8: Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity I*. Bronze. 17 x 16 x 165cm.

Each figure engages with the other in a way which is intrinsically linked to the medium in which it is created. The mediums of each work elevate the lines of communication between each sculpture. And the base of each sculpture is integral to the manner in which it engages with its surroundings and the way each sculpture is read as a whole.

The first sculpture of the series, *Serendipity I* (figure 4.8), stands with its body facing forward, head looking to its right, chin tilted slightly upwards, and hands activated in a pose which could be perceived as conveying trepidation or an attitude of defiance.

Serendipity II interacts differently with *Serendipity I* whether it is on the right or left-hand side of it. Its body and feet face forward, and its head looks to its left, with its left arm raised to comb its hair away from its face. Its right arm hangs loosely at its side, but its hand is activated through the slight bending of its fingers as though it is about to clench a fist. Its more casual demeanour highlights the sharper and more purposeful body language of *Serendipity I*.

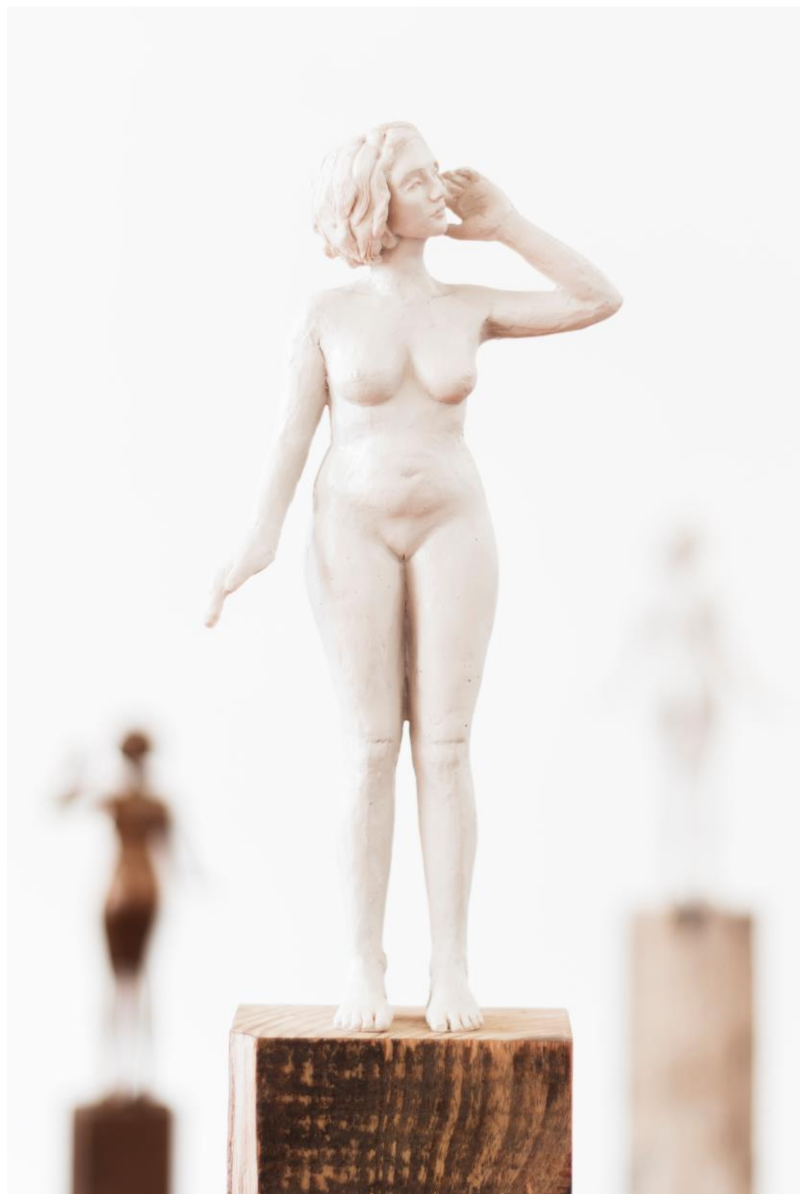

Figure 4.9: Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity II*. Resin. 2018. 16 x 16 x 175cm

Figure 4.10: Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity III*. 2018. 16 x 16 x 182cm

The third figure of the series, *Serendipity III*, is more dynamic than its two predecessors (I refer to *Serendipity I & II* as predecessors as their numbering is the order in which they were made). The dynamism in this figure is anchored by a face which looks forward and directly at the viewer, as though something caught its attention and froze it in its tracks. Its body and feet face forward as the other two do, and its right arm is at its side, slightly bent as the hand appears to be reaching slightly forward. Its left arm is raised and bent, enabling its left hand to hover alongside its face with the palm facing the viewer, and fingers slightly bent. It reaches out slightly as though the path of movement for the right arm was to reach towards or grasp something.

The figures in this series are created in alternating mediums of polyester resin with kulu powder, clear epoxy resin, bronze, and cast spectrum glass (crystal clear and iridescent clear). They are arranged in three groupings of three figures which from left to right move from *Serendipity II*, to *Serendipity III*, to *Serendipity I*. The mediums in which each sculpture is created play a vital role in communicating the conceptual underpinning. This conceptual underpinning is both enhanced by and enhances the materiality of each.

Essentially, the cast glass and clear resin versions of the sculptures represent 'absence', whereas the bronze and white resin versions of the sculptures embody 'presence'. Within each triptych of figures, the medium of each figure serves a function which both relies upon and justifies the mediums used for the other two figures. This mutual reliance/symbiotic relationship creates balance between the mediums as well as the figures, which echoes the dualistic or binary relationship of absence and presence. Some of the figures also represent or attempt to encapsulate the space between absence and presence, or the merging of absence and presence /absence in presence and presence in absence. This is evident in the figures which contain both resin and glass or which are comprised of both white and clear resin.

2. *Searching I & II*

Dionea Rocha Watt (2008: 8), examined allegorical representation in her exploration of the ways in which artists express their experiences "and emotions as images, objects or installations". She also looked at the role of the body in this expression

Figure 4.11: Sarah Walmsley. *Searching I*. Resin. 2018. 16 x 18 x 91cm.

and discussed the notion of representation through the use of symbols used in the artist's creation of narrative and meaning (Rocha Watt, 2008: 3). Rocha Watt (2008: 8) explains that the symbol functions as "presence in absence and absence in presence" which is extended to representation, and within my own work retains this memory of loss and of absence. She asserts that in order to convey and explore these themes, an artist must "devise a visual language that enables him or her to create a narrative"; and through this narrative create a "representation of the self and the experience of being in the world; in other words, an allegory of being" (Rocha Watt, 2008: 1). This 'allegory of being' is what is conveyed in the representations of my self in these sculptures, specifically communicated by *Searching I & II* as they elaborate on my experiences and function as allegories for absence and presence. This artwork is comprised of a pair of figures which have been created to interact with each other, but could also be interpreted as individual works. The first sculpture of the pair, *Searching I*, is a figure that is seated upon the edge of a wooden base, as though it is about to climb off the base. Its

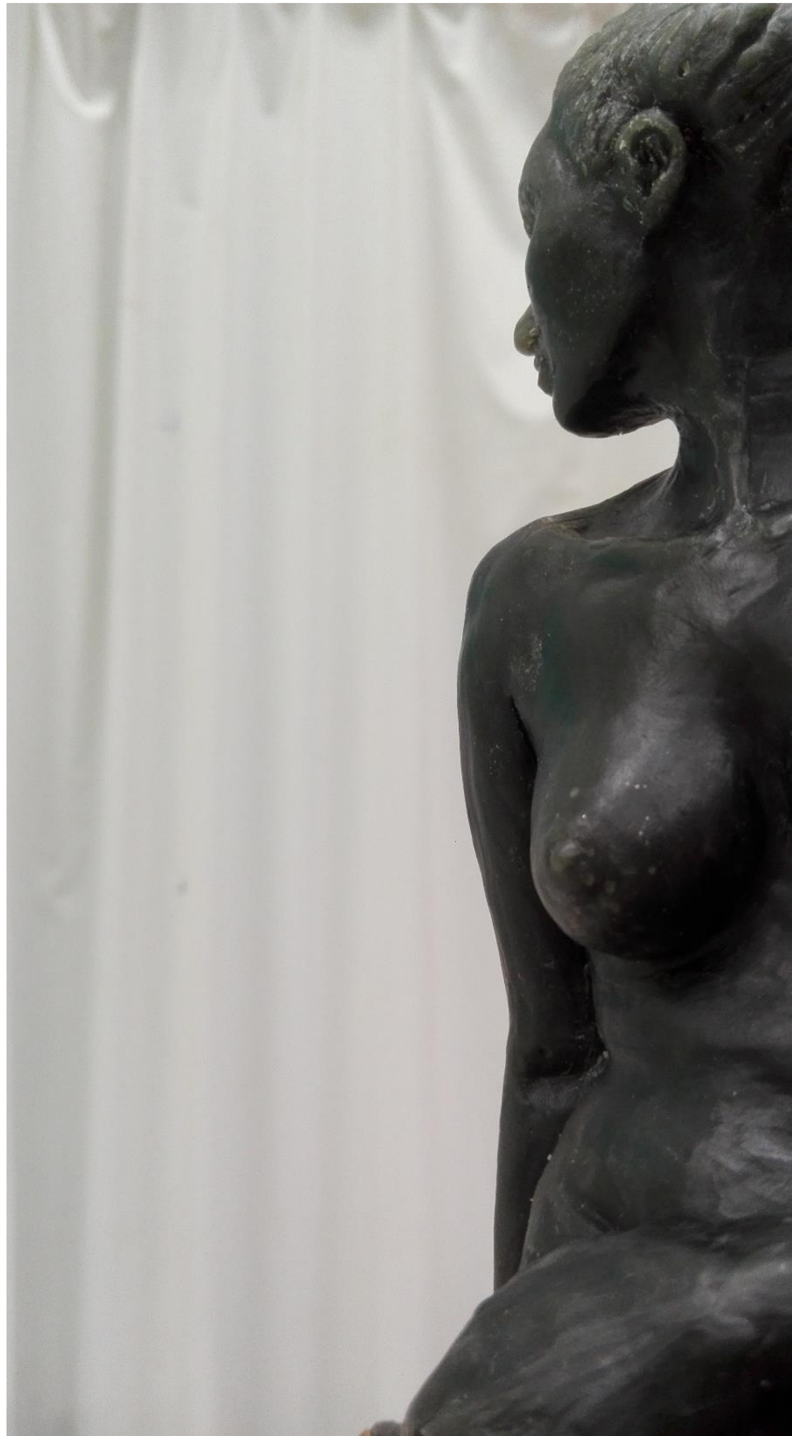

Figure 4.12: Detail of *Searching II* in microcrystalline wax

head is angled downward to follow its pensive gaze, and its arms are fixed alongside its body, as its right hand clasps the base to anchor it to its perch while its left hand is spread out firmly to balance the weight of the form. Its shoulders are tensioned to support the posture, while the body begins its descent from the base. The figure's right leg hangs off the base like a pendulum while its left leg is bent, its foot resting against the base to stabilise the figure in its movement.

Figure 4.13: Sarah Walmsley. *Searching I& II*. Resin. 2018.

Searching II, the counterpart of *Searching I*, bears similarities in the pose of the legs and feet, but the upper half of the body is significantly different. The upper body of *Searching II* is more relaxed and has a slight curve in the way that the abdomen is compressed by the arching of the back. The figure's left arm rests across the left hip and lower abdomen. The right arm stabilises the torso as the head looks over the right shoulder, creating slight torsion in the upper body. The right leg hangs loosely off the edge of the base, and the left leg is bent with the left foot resting against the base, balancing the figure.

As seen in figure 4.10, *Searching I* & *II* are reproduced in polyester resin with kulu powder, which is white in appearance. In addition, they are also cast in bronze and glass, in which *Searching I* is in bronze, and *Searching II* is cast in glass, and they are each mounted on their own base and placed about one metre apart from one another. The juxtaposition of the bronze and glass in the work is a visual representation of absence and presence, whereas the poses and body language of the sculptures allude to absence, and their physical presence on their bases communicates their presence. The body language and pose of the *Searching I* sculpture create an impression that the figure is about to step off the podium; it presents the moment before the moment of departure from the seated position. This alludes more to absence than presence as the focus is placed on the motion towards departure. On the other hand, the *Searching II* sculpture appears to be looking back in a moment of recall or in order to communicate with or observe *Searching I*. This conveys the sense that, although the sculpture is physically present, its absence is indicated by the gesture of 'searching' and looking to something which could not or will soon not or ever be present.

Searching I conveys an atmosphere of acceptance and pensiveness in the way in which its head is bowed. This, in conjunction with the activated and dynamic legs, communicates a quiet absorption of the state in which it finds itself; it accepts the situation while making the conscious choice of movement. Although we are not yet sure of whether this progression will be positive or negative, it is clear that the figure's next movement will be off of the base on which it sits and not stasis. In some ways this could be described as the 'fight or flight instinct.

Searching II, however, remains comfortably seated on its base, while looking toward *Searching I* with an expression which could be a representation of saying goodbye to its counterpart. Like a snake looking upon the skin it has just shed, it embodies an acceptance of this process of loss, renewal and progression. The expression on its face is not one of sadness or grief, and the hand which rests across its hip does not convey tension or anxiety in response to what it sees. Its mouth is not frozen in the

shape of a plea for its counterpart to stay, but poised in the certainty of its new direction.

Figure 4.14: Sarah Walmsley. *Searching II*. Bronze. 2018. 22 x 16 x 82cm.

3. *Being*

This artwork is comprised of versions of the same sculpture, *Being* in resin and in bronze. The largest sculptures in my body of work, these boldly proportioned figures subtly convey a sense of dynamism, while firmly expressing a sense of confidence in their position. This dynamism alludes to the figure's journey and development, and links to the second of Heidegger's categories which recognise the conditions of being which validate its presence - 'thrownness' (Bell, 2015: 3). Thrownness

categorises the being's ability to recognise the "linearity of time", in which the being can only move forward (Bell, 2015: 3). The figure represented in *Being* appears to be frozen in a gesture of moving forward, while its head turns to the right as if it is about to look back over its shoulder.

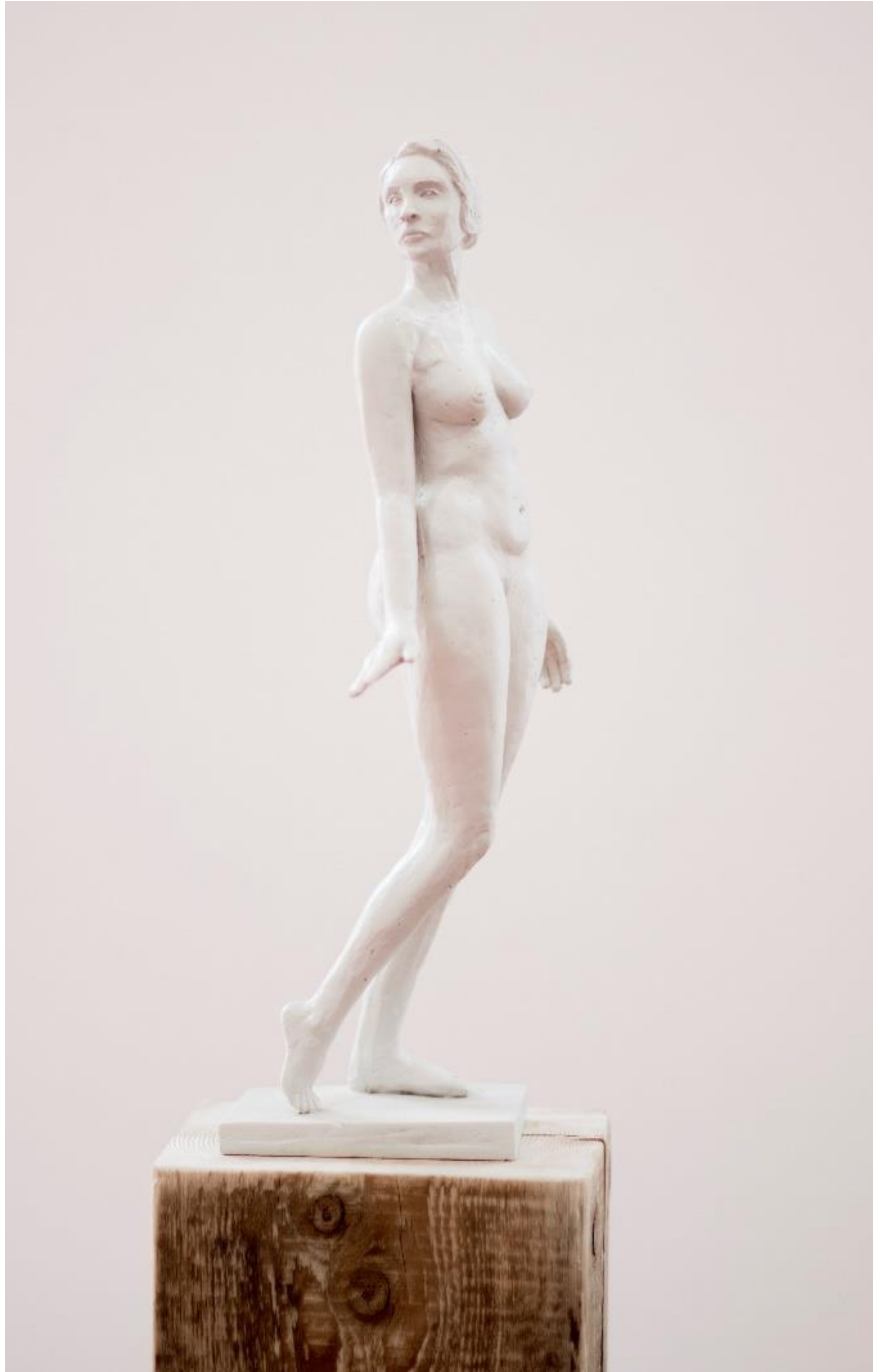

Figure 4.15: Sarah Walmsley. *Being*. Resin. 2018.
20 x 20 x 90cm.

Through recognising the linearity of time, the being understands that it cannot move backwards and re-enter the past, or re-enter memories, although this does not prevent it from trying to. While it is committed to its journey of moving forward, it longs for that which lies in the wake of its experience.

The two sculptures are created in different mediums and are not displayed as close in proximity to one another as *Searching I & II. Being* is cast in bronze and in resin mixd with kulu powder. *Being* stands upright and tall, with both arms at its sides and one leg slightly raised off the grown as it prepares to take another step forward. Its shoulders are squared and strong, supporting its head and neck as it turns to look back over its right shoulder as its body faces forward. Although the figure's head turns to looks back, its gaze does not quite meet anything and appears to be thoughtfully considering something which it has passed. The sculpture functions as a snapshot or frozen moment of the figure in a previous stage of its motion forward, along the journey of time.

4. *Morning*

The final sculpture in my body of work is entitled *Morning* (refer to figure 4.13). It embodies my journey through my research, and my realisation of and acceptance of the ways in which I have dealt with and am continuously dealing with the loss of my mother. In essence, it acts as a tribute to my mother. The pose is inspired by a photograph I have of my mother, and which I sculpted, referencing photographs of myself in the pose. It is the only sculpture in my body of work which embodies my mother more than it embodies myself, or a combination of myself and my mother.

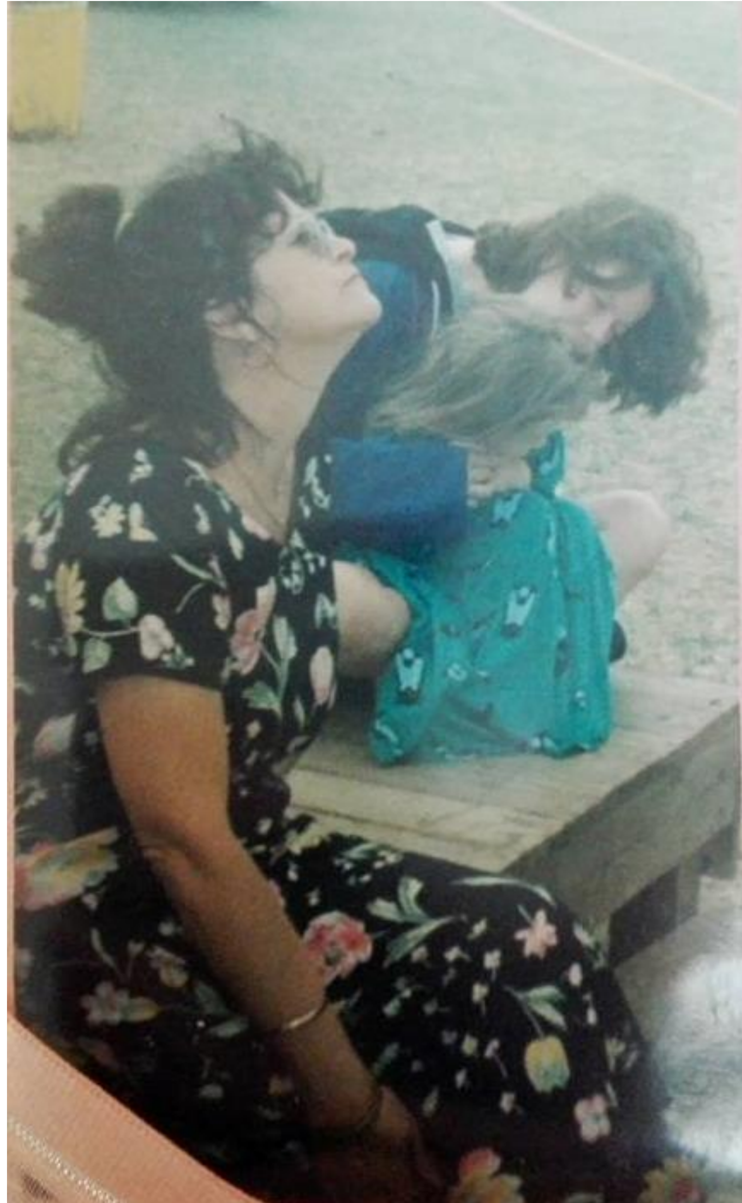

Figure 4.16: The photograph of my mother which inspired the *Morning* sculpture. My mother is in the floral dress in the foreground. I am the little girl in the green dress, seated on my cousin's lap.

The sculpture is the only one in my body of work which exists as a singular work rather than as a pair or series and serves to 'conclude' the body of work. The sculpture features a nude female figure, which is cast in bronze, seated upon the edge of long wooden plank. The figure rests comfortably, with its legs hanging over the edge of the base and its arms against either side of its body, hands resting on either side of its thighs on the wooden base. Its gently sloping shoulders create a

relaxed impression, as though the figure has just exhaled a deep breath and is now basking in the stillness and peace that comes with the silencing of inner turmoil. The face is tilted upwards as though the figure is gazing up into the sky, with its hair

Figure 4.17: Sarah Walmsley. *Morning*. Bronze. 2018. 16 x 73 x 31cm.

slightly windswept. This sculpture embodies the beacon of acceptance and grasping of absence, and the final stage in the evolution of the self which was required to transform in order to 'make peace' with the journey through the loss of my mother, and to rise above the influence of my abusive father. It is entirely where it needs to be and is taking comfort in the solitary space in which it finds itself.

The sculpture is cast in both glass and bronze and through the relationship between the two mediums represents the finality of absence and the fleeting nature of presence and the rootedness in its self and memory simultaneously.

4.3.2 Bases, layout and curating

Each sculpture is mounted on its own unique, carefully selected and hand finished base wooden base. I selected these bases from a collection which I had gathered throughout my Masters. These wooden bases are comprised of a variety of types of wood which vary from Japanese and Oregon pine, to teak, iron wood, and marmalade wood, as well as other unidentified pieces. Most of the pieces were weathered which told of their age, origins, repurposing and/or exposure to the elements. My aim was to treat the wood in a manner which would both highlight the grain, colour and history of each individual piece, but also altered it so that it would optimally enhance and elevate the sculpture it would be paired with.

The wooden bases, which were carefully selected for the *Serendipity* installation, had to meet specific height and aesthetic requirements for the circle in order to create a curated visual equilibrium, although each base has a different height, colour, shape and surface finish. The four facets of each base were considered, sanded and waxed differently. Three out of the four sides were sanded lightly with an orbital sander to maintain most of their ‘rough’ and weathered surface, and the fourth side was sanded until smooth to the touch with a belt sander and varying degrees of sand paper. On selected bases, the surface was embedded with titanium pigment to achieve a white hue which either emphasised the grain, specific texture or lightened the colour. The white colour on the bases was used as a unifying factor, in some cases drawing attention to one particular side of the base, as well as relating to the sculpture placed on it. In the *Serendipity* installation, the sides of each base which are the smoothest or which have been treated with the white titanium pigment align with and emphasise the direction of the sculpture’s gaze. With references to the rest of the body of work, the wooden bases for the *Searching*, *Being*, and *Morning* figures were also considered and customised as described above, with the exception being the wooden base for the *Morning* sculpture, which was suspended to create the illusion of it protruding from the wall.

Each of the bases was provided with a steel base plate which had a rod welded into it, these base plates were laser cut to size, drilled, welded, sandblasted, wire brushed and painted with a clear sealant to prevent corrosion. Each one of the wooden bases were drilled from below to have the base plate with its attached rod fit securely into it in order to make sure the sculptures would be as stable as possible. This allowed each base to stand on the floor of the gallery or on the carefully crafted and constructed sculpture stand (upon which the base, holding its figure, would stand). Each of the artworks (excluding the *Serendipity installation*) is displayed upon precisely made white podium or sculpture stand which was made to ensure that each sculpture engages with both the viewer and with their sculptural counterparts at specific levels.

In terms of the exhibition layout and curating, I carefully planned how and where each artwork should be displayed in the allocated gallery space and how best to convey the narrative. This was especially necessary because all but one of the artworks exist as a pair or grouping and should engage with other in a specific manner within the exhibition space. Furthermore, as there were going to be overlapping lines of communication between all of the figures in the exhibition, it was necessary to pay careful attention to the layout to avoid any disruptions in these

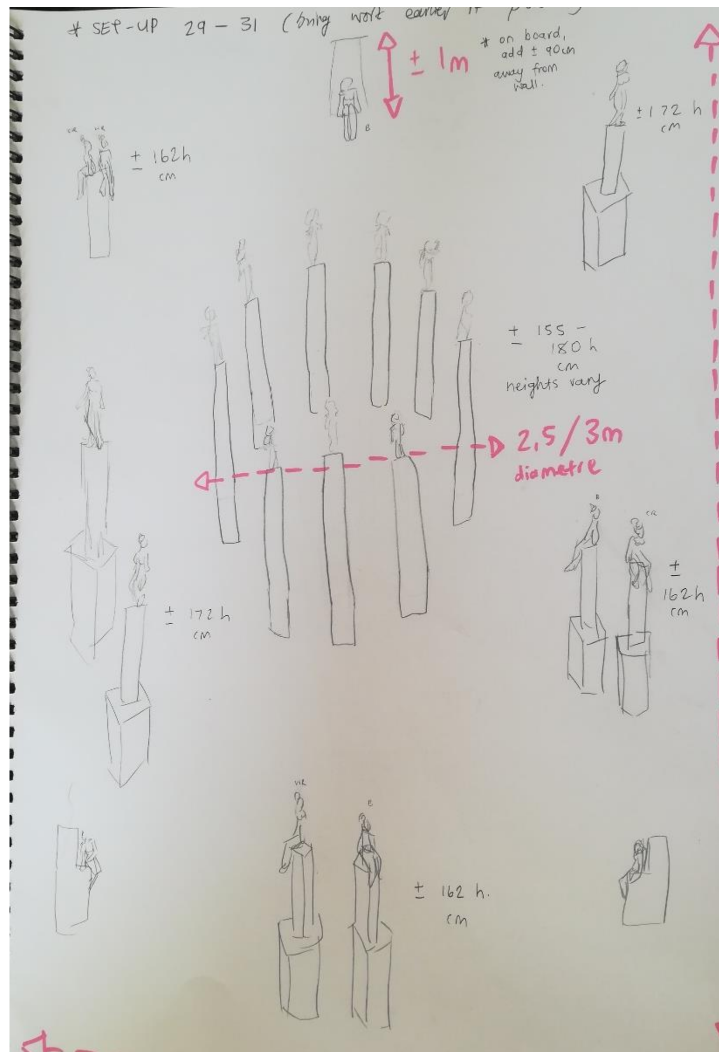

Figure 4.18: One of my rough sketches of the exhibition layout.

lines of communication while maintaining visual equilibrium throughout the body of work as a whole.

As mentioned above, the sculptures have been arranged in a way which creates a visual narrative. The viewer enters the exhibition space between two clean, empty white walls; flanking the entrance to the viewers right and left are a pair of figures - *Searching I* in clear resin and *Searching II* in bronze - quiet and introspective.

Figure 4.19: The view of the exhibition from the entry point between the two white dividing partitions.

These figures lead the eye to a circle of beams, of irregular height, but balanced and perpendicular (the *Serendipity installation*). Atop each one of the beams, a naked female figure is standing, facing outward and each engaging with either their counterparts on their left or right hand sides, with a figure across the room, or with the viewer. Three groupings of three figures (nine in total), in three different materials, communicating, observing, listening and engaging – but silent.

Surrounding the viewer to the left and to the right, are four more compositions of duality (*Searching I & II* in resin, *Searching (inset)* in kiln-formed glass and resin and *Being* in bronze and resin), each of which appear to be gradually transforming as they interact with each other in an endless circle of memory, introspection and time. *Morning,* the final work, in the stillness of the moment, merges mother and daughter and concludes the journey and narrative.

Figure 4.20: The view of the exhibition from the *Morning* sculpture.

5. Chapter 5

5.1 Conclusion

This research study was based upon three critical components. These include absence and presence, memory and the female nude. The problem statement was as follows: How may compositionally sound pairings and groupings of bronze, glass and resin figurative sculptures be manipulated to create visual equilibrium in a work and communicate an inherent conceptual element? This necessitated the following research question and sub-questions, with the main question being: What is the role of memory and the imago within dualistic representations of the absent and present, as represented in the mediums of bronze, glass and resin? The sub-questions included the following:

- How can the duplication of a figure be used to investigate the relationship between absence and presence?
- How may the mediums of bronze, glass and resin be manipulated to explore the mutual definitiveness and merging of absence and presence?
- How does my personal memory contribute to the creation of figurative sculptures in the representation of absence and presence?
- How does this explore the concept of the imago?

The aim of the research has been to investigate the pairing and grouping of bronze, glass and resin figurative sculptures in order to extend the concepts of absence and presence within the paradigm of the imago, personal memory and loss. This was investigated using the research methodology which is embedded within the Constructivist/ Interpretivist philosophical world view. My research strategy falls within the practice-led structure, the methods of data collection are qualitative and purposive sampling has been employed. The quality control and strategy of validation which has been utilised is the triangulation of data method, which is centred around specific interconnected points of reference. In this case these include

absence/presence, my personal memories of my mother and my sculptural representations of these.

I began this study with the desire to explore absence and presence and their role in the memories I have of my mother. My aim was to understand and make tangible the absence that I felt as a result of this loss, while at the same time make sense of the ways in which absence and presence overlap and interchange within my personal memories. My chosen platform for this exploration was through a visual narrative created by the personal vocabulary of my sculptures, as these sculptures take the form of female nudes, or more specifically naked/nude self-portraits.

I created the sculptures, which form my visual narrative, in the mediums of bronze, cast glass and resin. These mediums are representations of absence, presence and the intersections between the two spaces. The glass and clear resin refer to the absent, the bronze refers to the present and the resin combinations refer to the intersections between the two. These mediums, when combined with the body language of the figures, often create a contrast in the sense that the figure may represent presence through its pose whereas it may be cast in glass or clear resin which embodies absence.

In order to situate myself within the context of artists who work with glass sculpture, I have analysed the work of Christina Bothwell, Leah Wingfield and Steve Clements, Peter Mandl, Sandy Jackson and Karen LaMonte. These artists have created glass sculpture in both figurative and abstract forms. I have also explored the work of artists who have worked within the realm of sculpture and memory. These include Medardo Rosso, Vivienne Roche and Christian Boltanski. For the most part these artists have worked with abstracted expressions of memory. After examining the work of these artists, I am able to situate myself as an artist who does not work with fragmentation or abstraction, but rather with bronze, kiln-formed glass and resin figurative sculpture which uses the body and the self-portrait as a metaphor for and signifier of the exploration and representation of memory, absence and presence.

In order to understand and comprehend absence and presence it was necessary to trace the ways in which it has been written about, understood and reinterpreted over centuries by theorists such as Heraclitus, Plato, Aristotle, Eco, Descartes, Heidegger, Lacan, Derrida and Deleuze. This exploration began with the writing and theories of Heraclitus, cited in Eco (2004: 72) who maintained that harmony between opposites is achieved not by annulling one or the other, but rather by allowing both to exist in a state of equilibrium. Eco then explained that this state of equilibrium and tension between opposites is the core state of a dualism. This theory was transposed to the sphere of visual art by Eco (2004: 72), and Descartes condensed dualism into his concept of the mind-body dualism (Robinson, 2011: 19; Skirry, 2006: 15).

Plato expanded the examination of binary opposition to his studies of speech and writing, in which speech and speaking are associated with presence and writing is associated with absence (Klages, 2012: 4). This was extended to Plato and Aristotle's discussion of mediation and the mimesis of representations (Bell, 2015: 2). Heidegger expanded upon this discussion of being, absence and presence through his assertion that the term 'presence' had been elevated to a position equal to the term 'being' without the motivation of the conditions of being which implicate its presence (Bell, 2015: 3). He proceeded to formulate three ontological categories of being which justified its presence, namely 'falling', 'thrownness' and 'findingness'.

Moving from Lacan and Derrida's discussions of the signifier the signified and the trace within language and text we arrive at the pivotal point which emphasises that language and text equate to absence *in* presence as they represent both the absence and the presence of that which it signifies. This opened up the exploration of the ways in which absence exists within presence, and presence within absence. Following on from this, Deleuze introduces the simulacrum, which bears a positive power which negates both the original and the copy and that similarity and resemblance now have as their essence only the condition of being simulated: of expressing the operation of the simulacrum (Deleuze: 1983: 53).

Subsequently, this exploration shifted its focus to absence and presence as it manifests through the establishment of the self as other and the 'loss' of the mother during the mirror-phase of an infant's development. This focused on the writing of Lacan, Freud and Kristeva. This process of separating from the mother and establishing an image of the self has been linked to the abject by Kristeva and to the formation of the imago by Lacan. In a sense, my work is a metaphor for this sudden progression of the infant moving from the realm of the real into the imaginary through the mirror-phase. This forms a significant part of my sculptural work. Lacan explains that the child is symbolising through repetition, and that this repetition is not an enactment of the "disappearance/reappearance of the mother, but her disappearance/reappearance *as the cause of the subject's split*" in which the absent object, although detached, still remains an extension of the subject (LacanOnline, 2014: 13). This, in terms of representation, leads to the question of how absence can be represented and how it is possible to represent something that is not physically there (LacanOnline, 2014: 14). According to Lacan, the solution to this is to represent absence through the use of signifiers (LacanOnline, 2014: 14).

In order to explore the ways in which signifiers can be used to represent absence, Rocha Watt (2008:1) examined the ways in which artists "use a visual language to represent human experiences and emotions as images, objects or installations". These ways culminated in the use of allegory, with specific focus on the role of the body in this representation, focusing on the parallels between the construct of both verbal and visual language, as well as the role of symbols and materials which are utilised by the artist in their creation of narrative and meaning (Rocha Watt, 2008: 3). In the case of my sculptures, the meanings and concepts communicated are extended beyond their immediate signifiers by the mediums in which they are created as well as the poses, gestures and gazes, which become an intrinsic part of the meaning of the work.

My sculptures function simultaneously as signifiers of myself, the imago of myself and versions of myself which exist through memories of my mother. I created a body of work entitled: *Absence and Presence: in Search of Memory and the Imago*, which is presented as a narrative installation and exhibition of my sculptural work. The

body of work is comprised of seven fundamental sculptures which are made in the mediums of bronze, glass and resin. These seven sculptures have been duplicated and cast in different mediums to form pairs and groups which work together to enhance and convey the meaning of each work, based on my preconceptions or based on the ways in which they will be perceived by the viewers. As each of the figures engage with themselves, an acknowledgement and understanding of itself occurs, which is echoed in the body language of their poses.

The sculptures work together to form a single narrative which culminates with the final sculpture in the body work, entitled *Morning*, and epitomises my journey through my research as well as my realisation and acceptance of the ways in which I have dealt with and am continuously dealing with the loss of my mother. In essence, this work acts as a tribute to my mother. *Morning* serves to 'conclude' the body of work, but in a way also represents the beginning of this undertaking as it in itself is the signifier *of* a signifier, namely: the photograph of my mother, the original 'trace' and signifier of the presence of absence. The original photograph represents, in its simplicity, the attempt at capturing and preserving the memory and essence of a person or experience and is kept so that this experience and memory may be recalled at will. It does not, however, justifiably preserve or capture the memory or presence of the person, but rather highlights their absence, especially when they have moved on or are no longer living. This final sculpture is the signifier and allegory of an absent presence or present absence and will always evoke the contemplation of this interplay between these two terms and the ways in which they define and become one another within the narrative of personal memory. These memories will always collide with the present and bring with them the memories of absence, but encourage the subject to make tangible this absence in order to confront it and in doing so, realise that it cannot be addressed separately from the presence which defines it.

5.2. Further Research Recommendations

I would further explore absence, presence, and memory as concepts and the ways in which these intangible concepts can be made tangible and explored through the medium of sculpture. I believe that the process of creating sculpture is extremely intuitive and unavoidably reflects the subconscious tendencies of the artist. I believe that there is potential for the reparation of psychological trauma through the process of creating sculpture which takes as its subject the self. A person is able to understand and reflect on their own emotional state through introspection and examination of the self and the ways in which the self is constructed in response to loss, absence and emotional ties to personal memory and circumstances. I feel as though I have been able to conquer so many elements of the overwhelming feelings associated with the loss of a loved one through the practice-led research undertaken in my Masters. The most valuable experience that I have gained has been through learning the power of celebrating the life that was lost through the creation of beautiful and meaningful objects which represent this person who has passed on. Further research will engage with the medium of sculpture from a more psychological perspective in order to understand the potential therapeutic benefits of creating sculpture that references the self. Furthermore, the research will work in an inter-disciplinary mode which extends the links which have been forged between psychology and the visual arts which span loss, absence, sociology and identity studies. The researcher could potentially work with a psychologist to assist in determining the therapeutic benefits mentioned above. Often, research which is personal in nature could be diminished by or subordinated to that which is quantitative. However, it is important to create a database of studies such as these which function as relatable explorations into the intersectional human experience, and contribute to personal psychological reparation.

REFERENCE LIST

Altschuler. 2011. Nandipha Mntambo. *SA Art Times*, 28-31, October.

Ancient Greece. 2017. *Ancient Greece*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.ancientgreece.com/s/Culture/ [Accessed: 13 November 2017].

Answers, 2014, *What is the definition of amorphous in chemistry?* [ONLINE] Available at: http://chem.answers.com/definitions/what-is-the-definition-of-amorphous-in-chemistry [Accessed: 10 November 2014].

Art Deco Sculpture. N.d. *Art Deco sculpture*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.stamati.com/FineArt/decosculpture.htm [Accessed: 28 September 2015].

Babbie, E & Mouton, J. 2001. *The practice of social research*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Bailer, J, Callan, J & Danto, A. 2006. *Karen LaMonte: Absence adorned.* [ONLINE] Available at: http://media.karenlamonte.com/Absence_Adorned_Catalogue.pdf [Accessed: 29 September 2015].

Bell, A. 2015. *Absence/Presence*. [ONLINE] Available at: https://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/mediatheory/keywords/absence-presence/ [Accessed: 15 June 2015].

Benesse Art Site Naoshima. N.d. *Les Archives du Cœur*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://benesse-artsite.jp/en/art/boltanski.html [Accessed: 12 November 2017].

Bergo, B. 2005. *The Trace in Derrida and Levinas*. [ONLINE] Available at: https://www.academia.edu/1705190/The_Trace_in_Derrida_and_Levinas [Accessed: 03 August 2017].

Beveridge, P, Doménech, I & Pascual, E. 2005. *Warm glass: A complete guide to kiln-forming techniques.* New York: Lark Books.

Bianchi, U. 2015. *Dualism*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://global.britannica.com/topic/dualism-religion [Accessed: 24 September 2015].

Binsbergen, P. 2015. *Outline for proposals and dissertations: Post-graduate research (Studio Arts).* [Class Notes]. Port Elizabeth: Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

Biography, n.d. *Biography*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.karenlamonte.com/Biography-Artist [Accessed: 24 January 2016].

Bonham-Carter, C. & Hodge, D. 2013. *Contemporary art: The essential guide to 200 groundbreaking artists*. London: Goodman.

Borzello, F. 2012. *The naked nude*. London: Thames & Hudson.

Bothwell, C. (2012). Christina Bothwell, sculptures in glass and stone. Interview: Deanna Elaine Piowaty, *Combustus*, 2013. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.combustus.com/13/christina-bothwell-sculptures-in-glass-and-stone/ [Accessed: 20 April 2015].

Candy, L. 2006. *Practice based research: A guide*. November. Sydney: University of Technology.

Cartwright, M. 2016. *Women in Ancient Greece*. [ONLINE] Available at: https://www.ancient.eu/article/927/women-in-ancient-greece/ [Accessed: 13 November 2017].

Clear Up. 1991. *Clear Up*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.genuineideas.com/ArtandScience/ScienceQA/march91clearup.html [Accessed: 13 September 2017].

Clements, S. & Wingfield, L. 2007. About the 'Conversations' series…. December 2012. *Leah Wingfield/ Steve Clements: Blog*. Available at: http://wingfield-clements-glass.com/blog/. [Accessed: 23 May 2015].

Cohen, D., & Crabtree, B. 2006. *Qualitative research guidelines project*. [Online] Available at: http://www.qualres.org/HomeInte-3516.html [Accessed: 1 April 2015].

Creswell, J. 2009. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approaches* 3rd ed. California: Sage Publications.

Cummings, K. 2007. *Techniques of kiln-formed glass.* London: A&C Black Publishers.

Curry, A. 2012. *The cave art debate*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-cave-art-debate-100617099/ [Accessed: 10 July 17].

Deleuze, G. 1997. *'Plato and the simulacrum'* October 27, pp. 45-56, Academic Search Complete, JSTOR. Available at: http://links.jstor.org/sici=0162-28198324%28198324%2927%3C45%3APATS%E2.0.CO%3B2-B [Viewed: 26 January 2016]

Dictionary.com. 2014, *Vitreous.* [ONLINE] Available at: http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/vitreous [Accessed: 10 November 2014).

Duggan, B. 2010. *The persistence of memory: Christian Boltanski and memory*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://bigthink.com/Picture-This/the-persistence-of-memory-christian-boltanski-and-memory [Accessed: 23 May 2015].

Eco, U. 2004. *On beauty: A history of a western idea*. London: Secker & Warburg.

Ellicott, C. 2009. *Carved figurine dating back 35,000 years oldest-known sculpture (... and yes it is of a naked woman)*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1181357/Carved-figurine-dating-35-000-years-mans-oldest-known-sculpture---yes-naked-woman.html [Accessed: 12 July 2017].

Encyclopedia of Art, 2017. *History of sculpture*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/sculpture-history.htm [Accessed: 10 July 2017]

Espinosa, J. 2010. *The advent of myself as other: Photography, memory and identity creation*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.gnovisjournal.org/2010/04/27/advent-myself-other-photography-memory-and-identity-creation/ [Accessed: 17 July 2017].

Felluga, D. 2011. *Modules on Kristeva: On the abject.* [ONLINE] Available at: https://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/psychoanalysis/kristevaabject.html [Accessed: 30 September 2015].

Felluga, D. 2011. *Modules on Kristeva: On psychosexual development.* [ONLINE] Available at: https://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/psychoanalysis/kristevadevelop.html [Accessed: 24 July 2017].

Felluga, D. 2011. *Modules on Lacan: On psychosexual development.* [ONLINE] Available at: https://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/psychoanalysis/lacandevelop.html [Accessed: 24 July 2017].

Gualdoni, F. 2012. *The history of the nude.* Milano: Skira Editore

Guba, E. G. & Lincoln, Y. S. 1994. Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105-117). London: Sage.

Graham-Dixon, A., 1994, *The texture of memory*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/sculpture--the-texture-of-memory-andrew-grahamdixon-on-the-ghostly-memory-sculptures-of-medardo-rosso-on-show-at-the-whitechapel-gallery-in-london-1426303.html [Accessed: 22 April 2015].

Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. 2017. *Woman bathing in a shallow tub*. [ONLINE] Available at: https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/29.100.41/ [Accessed: 13 November 2017].

Hemingway, C. & Hemingway, S. 2008. *The technique of bronze statuary in ancient greece*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/grbr/hd_grbr.htm [Accessed: 21 August 2017].

Honour, H. & Fleming, J. 2005. *A world history of art* 7th ed. London: Lawrence King Publishing.

Jones, D. 1991. *The Casting of Art Bronzes in South Africa. Towards the Identification and Development of Formulae or Combinations of Formulae and Related Methodologies which may be Employed to Create Cost Effective and Efficient Lost Wax Refractory Moulds for the Casting of Art Bronzes in the South African Context*. Dissertation for the award of an MTech: Fine Art. Port Elizabeth: PE Technikon.

Jones, L. 2007. Women and abjection: Margins of difference, bodies of art. *Visual Culture and Gender*, 2: 62-71. [ONLINE] Available at: https://www.google.co.za/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwi1k8itrLfXAhUBKcAKHT6oDAYQFgguMAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.vcg.emitto.net%2Findex.php%2Fvcg%2Farticle%2Fdownload%2F20%2F18%2F&usg=AOvVaw13MN_IkhDD6i2p7V1AzRnU [Accessed: 24 July 2017].

Kaushik. 2016. *Venus of Berekhat Ram: The world's oldest piece of art that predates humans.* [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.amusingplanet.com/2016/10/venus-of-berekhat-ram-worlds-oldest.html#comment-form [Accessed: 19 July 2017].

Klages, M. 2012. *Key terms in literary theory*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Kleiner, F. 2009. *Gardner's art through the ages: A global history* 13th ed. Boston: Thompson Wadsworth.

Kleiner, F. 2011. *Gardner's art through the ages: A global history* Enhanced 13th ed., Vol. 1. Boston: Wadsworth

Kristeva, J. 1982. *Powers of horror: An essay on abjection* (L. Roudiez, Translated from the French original *Editions du Seuil, 1980*). New York: Columbia University Press.

Kunst Aspekte. 2010. *Christian Boltanski: Les archives du coeur (The Heart Archive)*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://kunstaspekte.art/event/christian-boltanski-les-archives-du-coeur-the-2010-07 [Accessed: 12 November 2017].

LacanOnline. 2014. *On absent mothers*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.lacanonline.com/index/2014/11/on-absent-mothers/ [Accessed: 30 September 2015].

LaMonte, K. (2013). A short chat with Karen LaMonte. Interview by Linda DeBerry: *Crystal Bridges: Museum of American Art,* 2015. [ONLINE] Available at: http://crystalbridges.org/blog/a-short-chat-with-karen-lamonte/ [Accessed: 29 September 2015].

LaMonte, K. n.d., *Karen LaMonte*. [ONLINE] Available: http://www.karenlamonte.com/ [Accessed: 29 September 2015].

Lovelace, J. 2014. *Divining her mediums*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://craftcouncil.org/magazine/article/divining-her-mediums [Accessed: 23 January 2016].

Lubbock, T. 1994. *Remembrance of things past: Christian Boltanski is a multi-media artist: there's the book, the triple touring exhibition, the 'South Bank Show' . . . Tom Lubbock explains why he's worth it. Overleaf, another art-form, another way of remembering***.** [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/remembrance-of-things-past-christian-boltanski-is-a-multi-media-artist-theres-the-book-the-triple-1434581.html [Accessed: 14 May 2015].

Marsh, D. & Furlong, P. 2002. *Theory and methods in political science* 2nd ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Martin, T. 2008. From cabinet to couch: Freud's clinical use of sculpture. *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, 24 (2): 184-196. Available at: (http://web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=256447cb-9ee3-4f9c-9261-7753abe08986%40sessionmgr113&vid=1&hid=102) [Viewed: 22 April 2015].

McAvera, B. 2013. *Spirit and light*. [ONLINE] Available at: https://www.irishartsreview.com/spirit-and-light/ [Accessed: 09 November 2017].

McDermott, L. 1996. Self-representation in upper paleolithic female figurines. *Current Anthropology*, April, 27(2): 227-275.

Merleau-Ponty, M. 1964. *The primacy of perception*. (Edie, J.M. [Ed.]. trans. Carlton Dallery). Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Merriam-Webster. 2015. *Dualism*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dualism [Accessed: 23 March 2015].

Mills, J. 2001. *Encyclopedia of sculpture techniques*. London: B.T. Batsford.

Mntambo, N. 2013. Nandipha Mntambo: In her skin. Interview: A. Moret, *Installation*, 2013. [ONLINE] Available at: http://installationmag.com/nandipha-mntambo-in-her-skin/ [Accessed: 23 July 2015].

Museé d'Orsay. 2006. *Gustave Courbet: The origin of the world*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/works-in-focus/search/commentaire/commentaire_id/the-origin-of-the-world-3122.html [Accessed: 13 November 2017].

National Geographic. 2015. *The birth of art*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2015/01/first-artists/art-origins-graphic [Accessed: 10 July 2017].

Neuman, W.L. 2011. *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* 7th ed. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

O'Farrell, L. & Meban, M. 2003. *Arts education and instrumental outcomes: An introduction to research, methods and indicators*. UNESCO.

Ovid. 1st Century BCE – 1st Century CE. (trans. More, B 1992). *Metamorphoses I*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.theoi.com/Text/OvidMetamorphoses1.html#6 [Accessed: 13 November 2017].

Palisay, K. 2016. *Kiki Smith: Art by intuition*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.passerbuys.com/blog/culture/kiki-smith-art-by-intuition [Accessed: 14 November 2017].

Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums. 2014. *Two sculptures by Medardo Rosso*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.vatican-patrons.org/two-sculptures-by-medardo-rosso-2122 [Accessed: 17 July 2017].

Pavón-Cuéllar, D. 2014. Extimacy. In Teo, T. (Ed.). *Encyclopaedia of critical psychology*. New York: Springer.

Peter Mandl Sculpture, n.d. *Sculptures*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.petermandl.com/#!sculptures/cee5 [Accessed: 13 May 2015].

Phaidon. 2012. *Christian Boltanski's island of death.* [ONLINE] Available at: http://au.phaidon.com/agenda/art/events/2012/march/12/christian-boltanskis-island-of-death/ [Accessed: 4 May 2015].

Prasad, J. 2007. *Some key terms*. [ONLINE] Available at: https://newderrida.wordpress.com/2007/11/19/some-key-terms/ [Accessed: 03 August 2017].

Robinson, H. 2012. *Dualism.* [ONLINE] Available at: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/dualism/ [Accessed: 14 May 2015].

Rocha Watt, D. 2008. *An allegory of being*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://folio.rca.ac.uk/artefact/file/download.php?file=21714&view=856 [Accessed: 30 September 2015].

Rocha Watt, D. 2013. *Short tales of loss and memory*. [ONLINE] Available at: https://oniondiscussions.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/drw_performing-memory.pdf [Accessed: 30 September 2015].

Rocha Watt, D. 2015. *The presence of writing and the absence of things*. [ONLINE] Availaible at: https://www.academia.edu/4959242/The_Presence_of_Writing_and_the_Absence_of_Things [Accessed: 30 September 2015].

Roche, V. 2013. Spirit and light. *Irish Arts Review*, March – May, 30(1): 76-81. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/23610331 [Accessed: 4 May 2015].

Ruzsa, F. n.d. *Sankhya*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.iep.utm.edu/sankhya/ [Accessed: 23 June 2015].

Serpentine Galleries. 2010. *The heart archive*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.serpentinegalleries.org/exhibitions-events/christian-boltanski-les-archives-du-coeur [Accessed: 17 November 2017]

Skirry, J. 2006. *Rene Descartes: The mind-body distinction.* [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.iep.utm.edu/descmind/ [Accessed: 14 May 2015]

Smith, D. 2013. Phenomenology. In: Zalta, E. N. (Ed.). *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2013 ed). [ONLINE] Available at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2013/entries/phenomenology/>. [Accessed: 20 April 2015]

State University of New York. 2004. *Abjection.* [ONLINE] Available at: https://www.sunypress.edu/pdf/61009.pdf [Accessed: 13 November 2017].

Swoyer, C. 2014. Relativism. In: Zalta, E. N. (Ed.). *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2014 ed) [ONLINE] Available at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/relativism/>. [Accessed: 20 April 2015].

Tate. n.d. *Christian Boltanski*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/christian-boltanski-2305 [Accessed 4 May 2015].

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 1981. *For spirits and kings: African art from the Tishman collection*. Vogel, S. (Ed.). (Trans. Ezra, K.) New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 2017. *Marble statue of a crouching aphrodite*. [ONLINE] Available at: https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/248138 [Accessed: 13 November 2017].

Thwaites, A. 2011. *Mould making for glass*. London: Bloomsbury.

Walmsley, S. 2014. *Casting small scale figures in glass using the lost wax method and pairing them with figures cast in bronze to support a theoretical investigation into the physical and digital interactions present in contemporary society.* Dissertation for the award of a BTech: Fine Art. Port Elizabeth: Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

Watkins-Baker, H. 2010. *Kiln forming glass*. Ramsbury: Crowood.

APPENDIX A

1. Ancient Venuses

The unclothed female body has held significance as a subject of art for hundreds of thousands of years. This has become evident through the discoveries of "primitive stone effigies" which depict the female form, or at least key symbolism which acts as a clear reference to the female form (Encyclopedia of Art, 2017: 2). They have been collectively referred to as Venuses, with reference to the term *Venus*, originating from the "Medieval Latin *Uenus*", which "is a de-sacralized/de-sanctified term for goddess or ancestral matrix" (Joan, 2016: 2). These figures, which are among "the earliest depictions of the human form", include the *Venus of Berekhat Ram* (refer to figure 1.1), which was discovered in Israel and is estimated to have been created between 700 000 and 230 000 years ago; and the *Venus of Tan-Tan* (refer to figure 1.2), found in Morocco and created between 500 000 and 200 000 years ago, according to the analysis of surrounding sediments (National Geographic, 2015: 1; Encyclopedia of Art, 2017: 2; Kaushik, 2016: 2). The *Venus of Berekhat Ram* is

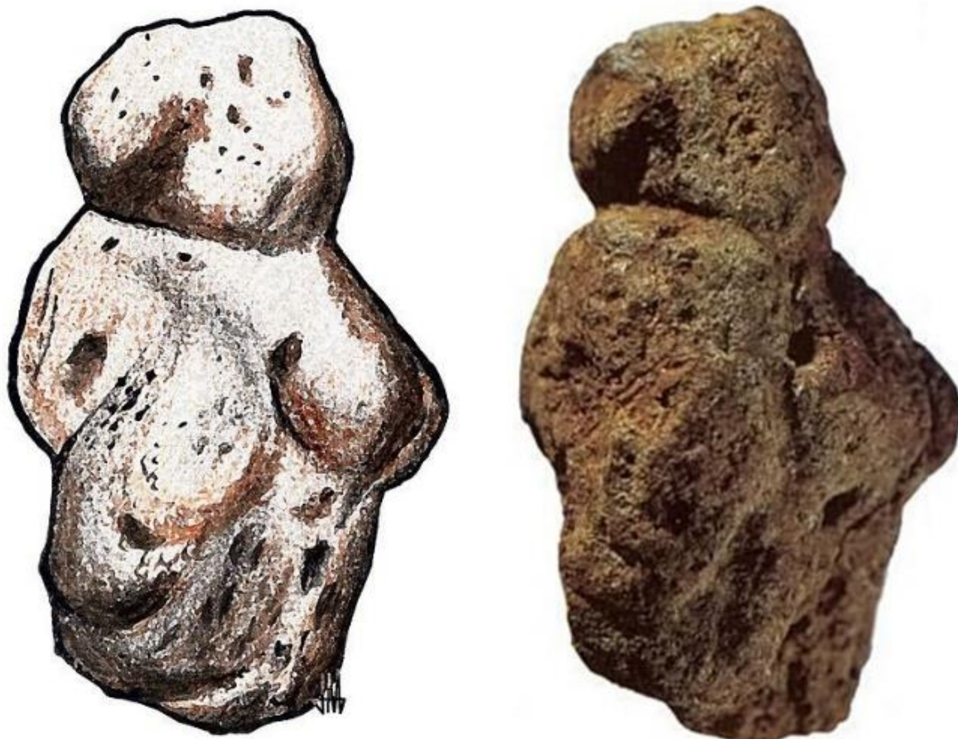

Figure 1.1: Image depicting an illustration of the *Venus of Berekhat Ram* alongside the original.

controversially considered to be the oldest piece of art, which predates even our "species", the "homo sapiens", although is considered by many "palaeontologists" to be "a product of erosion rather than a deliberate act of creativity" (Kaushik, 2016: 2). The *Venus of Tan-Tan*, however, has also been awarded the title of the oldest artwork, and is also suggested to be the oldest example of "pigment application" in the form of ochre, according to Bednarik (2003, cited in Joan, 2016: 1). Following a little way down the line from these two is the unmistakably female *Venus of Hohle Fels* (as seen in figure 1.3), created approximately 40 000 years ago, and discovered in Germany (Curry, 2012: 1). Upon its discovery in 2008, the *Venus of Hohle Fels* was considered to be the "world's oldest reproduction of a human" (Ellicott, 2009, image caption). In addition to these, there is the more commonly known *Venus of Willendorf* (refer to figure 1.4), which dates back to 28 000-25 000 years ago and the most recognisable of around 40 similar figures discovered around this time (Kuiper, 2017: 1).

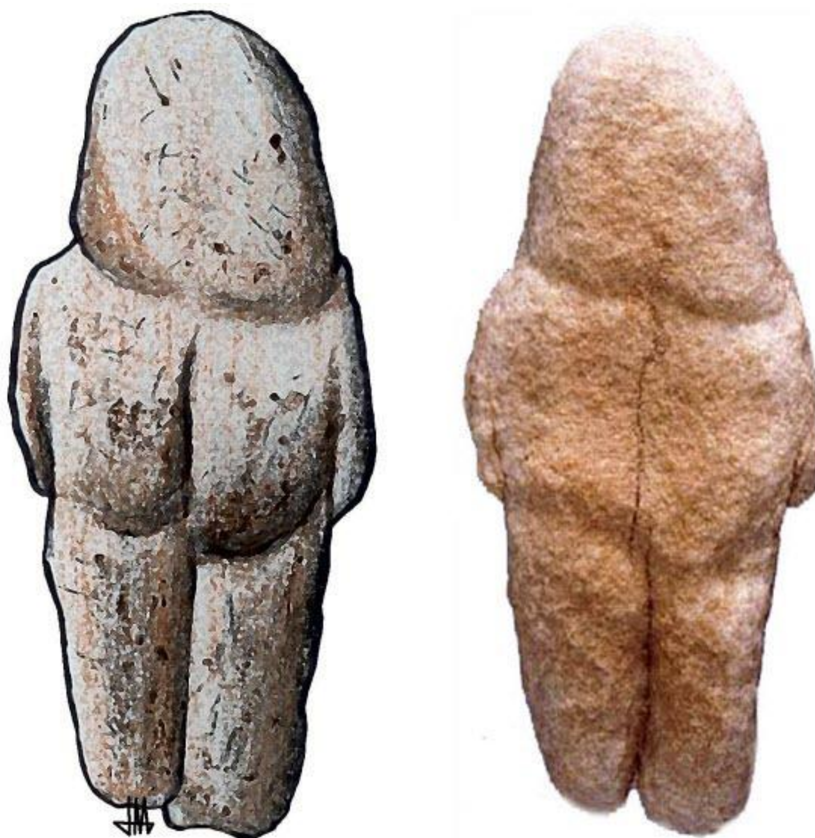

Figure 1.2: Image depicting an illustration of the *Venus of Tan-Tan* alongside the original.

Most of the above-mentioned figures are small in scale, portable, and would fit comfortably into your hand. They were most likely created to be carried around rather than "contemplated" as fine-art objects (Gualdoni, 2012: 12). There are a number of stylistic characteristics which unite these figures. These characteristics include their nudity, oversized abdominal regions, breasts, buttocks and genitalia, and minimal to non-existent limbs and faces. Their nudity, however, is not their primary reason or justification for being or for their existence: "our own cultural codes have projected this trait upon them". They were created in a way which embodies "a system of highly intentional schematic signs (Gualdoni, 2012: 12). Although, the intentions of their creation remains a topic of "endless hypothesis and discussions", one certainty, however, is that these figures all represent a version of the human

Figure 1.3: *Venus of Hohle Fels*. Ivory. 40 000 BCE. 23 x 22 x 13 mm.
Prehistory Museum Blaubeuren, Germany.

body reduced to minimal features which, even if they are without limbs or a head, seem to include recognisable and over-emphasised sexual organs which are often accompanied by an enlarged abdominal region or belly (Gualdoni, 2012: 12). This could be a reference to or celebration of pregnancy, especially because most of the "Venuses" are believed to be symbols of fertility; but from a symbolic perspective, they are unequivocally sexualised images (Gualdoni, 2012: 13).

As a result of these symbols of fertility, these Venuses are commonly understood to be votive figures which honour or symbolise a “Great Mother Goddess” which “personifies the eternally renewing life cycle of life in all of its forms and manifestations” (Gimbutas, 1991, cited in Gualdoni, 2012: 13). This has been justified as a possible function of some of the figures by the identification of a “Neolithic cult of a female deity” which was traceable in Malta and Sardinia (Gualdoni, 2012: 14). Carl Gustav Jung (cited in Gualdoni, 2012: 14) has asserted that the hypothesis of these Venuses existing as an extension of or as an object which serves a cultural practice or religion that is centred around a Great Mother Goddess is “obviously a derivative of the *mother archetype*”.

Figure 1.4: *Venus of Willendorf*. Limestone. 28000 – 25000 BCE. 11.1 cm. Vienna Museum of Natural History, Austria.

There is an alternative opinion, such as that of LeRoy McDermott (1996, cited in Gualdoni, 2012: 13), which asserts that these Venuses are representations of women created by women for “purposes of ‘self-inspection’”, and “the transmission of their own primary bodily identity, for magic/sacred reasons or didactic ones”. This moves beyond the “classical schemes according to which ‘images of the human figure were first created from the point of view of other human beings’” and progresses, instead, toward the hypothesis that “the art of representing the human body originated with visual information derived primarily from the physical point of view of *self*” (McDermott, 1996, cited in Gualdoni, 2012: 13). According to Gualdoni (2012: 13), “seeing oneself” is “first and foremost thinking about oneself” and

precedes the process of considering oneself in relation to others, which "links individuals to one another and to their experience of the world". This is supported by Leroi-Gourhan (1964, cited in Gualdoni, 2012: 13), who stated that humans have an "aptitude to use symbols to translate the materiality of the world". This process is one that is both "representative and symbolic" and links to symbolic vocabulary which I utilise in my sculptures (Gualdoni, 2012: 13).

It would be a good few thousand years before the sculptural female nude began to take on the aesthetic evident in my sculptures, which is one that is for the most part representational and naturalistic. This is an aesthetic that has been formed largely through the journey of Western art, which arguably began with the quest to sate sexual desire and fuel voyeurism through artistic renderings of the female nude, under the pretence of mythological subject matter. Kenneth Clark (1956, cited in Gualdoni, 2012: 11), expresses this in stating that:

> Since the earliest times the obsessive, unreasonable nature of physical desire has sought relief in images, and to give these images a form by which Venus may cease to be vulgar and become celestial has been one of the recurring aims of European art.

As it was long considered indecent to portray the naked female body in Western art, Gualdoni (2012: 11) maintains that "the nude as an artistic genre of representation was" introduced for the purpose of "distinguishing between the naked and the nude" and that "the beauty of art" was utilised to extricate that which "could not be eliminated from the beauty of the physical body, that is, the seductive rapture of the gaze". This seductive rapture of the gaze, which has arguably been the driving force behind the most recognisable and objectified representations of the female nude in classical art, is something that has been explored by John Berger in *Ways of Seeing* (1972); which I will refer to at a later stage.

It is, however, necessary to explore the history and journey of the unclothed female body as a subject of art from a broader perspective, in order to achieve a fuller understanding of its uses as a subject matter and mode of expression. Ancient

African sculptures display a number of iconic aesthetic explorations of the nude body. The body was employed in ways which became extensions and expressions of the values and belief systems of the societies in which they were produced (Vogel, 1981: 6). These aesthetic explorations of the body spanned from deliberately exaggerated or simplified features to highly naturalistic representations, all of which were executed with great skill in a variety of mediums including terracotta, wood, and cast metals (Vogel, 1981: 6).

2. The progression of the nude in ancient Greece

The emergence of the female nude as a favoured subject matter in fine art reached new heights in the art of Ancient Greece. However, for the most part, it was the physically perfected male nude which dominated the aesthetic tradition. This progression began with the *kouros* figure (as seen in figure 2.1) of the Archaic period, a life-sized statue depicting an unclothed male figure, which was based in the Egyptian canonical format (Kleiner, 2011: 106). The *kore* (as seen in figure 2.2), which is the female counterpart of the *kouros*, was always depicted clothed (Kleiner, 2011: 108). In ancient Greece, man was considered to be the “measure of all things”, and their art, specifically their sculptures as these are what have been the best preserved, reflects these humanist notions (Kleiner, 2011: 99). The male body was elevated to godly status through the creation of larger-than-life-sized sculptures, which were often made to be based on some of their gods; furthermore, “it has been said that the Greeks made their gods into humans and their humans into gods”, with the only distinguishing factor being that the gods were immortal (Kleiner, 2011: 99). It was believed that physical perfection brought one closer to godliness. It was during this time that the sculptor Polykleitos developed a set of rules or guidelines for the creation of a perfectly proportional sculpture of the male body, which became known as the *canon* which referred to “the standard of perfection” (Kleiner, 2011: 124). This is evident in his slightly larger than life-sized marble sculpture entitled *Doryphoros* or *Spear- Bearer*, of which only the Roman copy of the bronze original remains and was created in *circa* 450-440 BCE (Kleiner, 2011: 124). There was an “equilibrium

Figure 2.1: *Kouros*. Marble. ca. 590-580 BCE. 194.6 x 51.6 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Figure 2.2: *Peplos Kore*. Marble. ca. 530 BCE. 122cm. Acropolis Museum, Athens, Greece.

between the realistic representation of beauty… and the adherence to a specific canon (*kanon*)" (Eco, 2004: 45). And, according to Eco (2004: 45), Greek sculpture "sought for an ideal beauty through a synthesis of living bodies, which was the vehicle for the expression of a psychophysical beauty that harmonised body and soul". A prime example of this can be seen in the *Doryphoros* figure (figure 2.3).

Although the ancient Greek aesthetic was dominated by unclothed male bodies of god-like perfection, the female body was depicted clothed or partially obscured by drapery, as it was considered indecent to do otherwise. This was the norm until the

sculptor Praxiteles, one of “the great masters of the fourth century BCE”, created the first nude sculpture of a female body (Kleiner, 2009: 137). The sculpture, based on the goddess Aphrodite, and aptly named the *Aphrodite of Knidos,* caused an absolute “sensation in its time because Praxiteles took the unprecedented step of representing the goddess of love completely nude” (Kleiner, 2009: 137). Praxiteles was also known for his unique style of representing the gods and goddesses. Although these subjects “retained their superhuman beauty”, the sculptor rendered them in a way which gave them a softer, more human feel in which they “took on a worldly sensuousness” in the context of Greek thought and art which “began to focus more on the individual and on the real world of appearances” (Kleiner, 2009: 137). Before this bold step, female nudity “had been confined almost exclusively to paintings on vases designed for household use” and, moreover, the women who were depicted in the paintings on these vases “tended to be courtesans or slave girls, not noblewomen or goddesses” (Kleiner, 2009: 137). In the wake of the representational break-through achieved by Praxiteles’ *Aphrodite of Knidos*, sculptors of the Hellenistic period followed “his lead” by continuing to “[undress] Aphrodite” (Kleiner, 2011: 150). Their renditions, however, began to “openly [explore] the eroticism of the nude female form” (Kleiner, 2011: 150). An example of this can be seen in the *Venus de Milo*, a larger-than-life- sized marble statue of the goddess Aphrodite by the sculptor Alexandro of the Antioch-on-the-Meander (Kleiner, 2011: 150). Although the sculpture is partially covered by drapery, it is more “overtly sexual” (Kleiner, 2011: 150). Her left arm, which is absent from her body along with her right arm, has been “separately preserved”; the absence of her arms have contributed to this sculpture’s iconic presence (Kleiner, 2011: 150). It is believed that her left hand held an apple, which is symbolic of the apple awarded to her by Paris upon the mythical judgement of the beauty of the goddesses, of which she was deemed most beautiful (Kleiner, 2011: 150).

Figure 2.3: Polykleitos. *Doryphoros*. Marble. Roman copy after Greek bronze original. 450-440 BCE. 2 m. National Archaeological Museum, Naples.

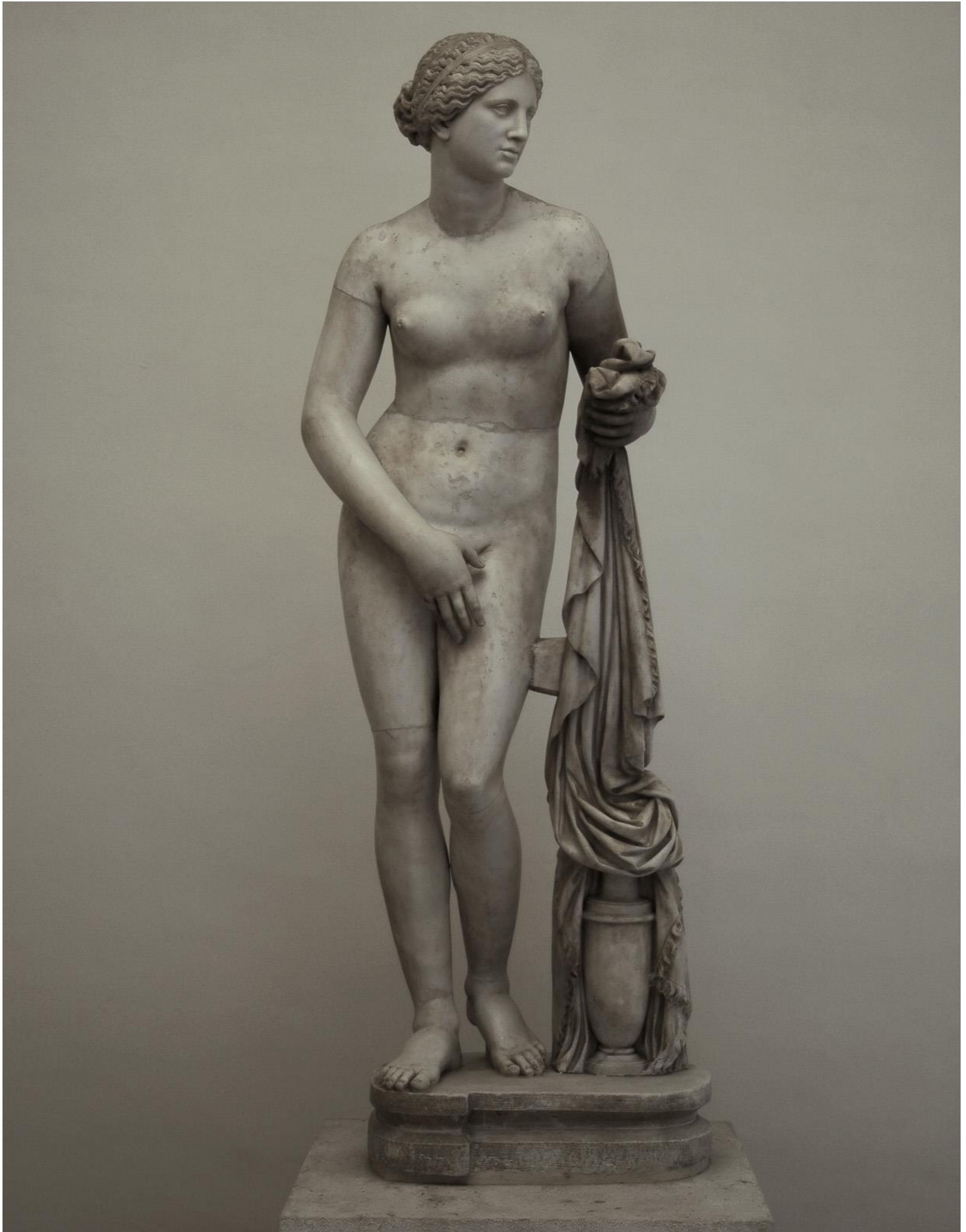

Figure 2.4: Praxiteles. *Aphrodite of Knidos*. Marble. Roman copy of Greek original. 450-440 BCE. 168 x 57 x 42 cm. Roman National Musem, Rome.

According to Kleiner (2011: 150), the "sculptor intentionally designed the work to tease the spectator". This teasing is emphasised by the way in which her garment appears to be in the process of slipping off her body, having already revealed her breasts. This enticement is echoed in the way in which the medium was handled during the sculpting, the marble seems to "have been caressed rather than chiselled and rasped into the texture of the soft, warm flesh, complementing an air of rather precious worldly elegance and sophisticated self-awareness" (Honour & Fleming, 2005: 169).

Figure 2.5: Alexandro of Antioch-on-the-Meander. *Venus de Milo*. Marble. 150 – 125 BCE. 203 cm. Louvre Museum, Paris. BCE

Although they are elegant, these renditions of Aphrodite retain a sexualisation that is presented through a veil of coyness; there is detached sense of vulnerability associated with a representation that was not elected by the subject herself. Her nudity functions for nothing other than to show the unclothed female body in a way which was previously unpermitted. This is hinted at through her feeble attempts to conceal herself, which could be the sculptor's method of preserving the virtue or elegance of the sculpture, even though the areas she attempts to conceal are clearly visible to the viewer through moving to another vantage point without much effort at all. It is possibly this effortless access to the nude female body, combined with the coyness and sensuality of their poses that leads one to draw a comparison with the male equivalent of the period. It is at once clear that there is an air of pride and purpose in the representations of the unclothed male body. Whether the male nude

functions to embody the youthfulness of the god Apollo, or the quiet power and maturity of Zeus, they are presented as “unashamedly naked” (Borzello, 2012: 15). This is echoed in their posture of strong, squarely held shoulders and slightly upwardly tilted head atop a visible and muscular neck, with eyes gazing proudly off into the distance. This reinforces their claim over and ownership of their body’s pose and representation, which was generally in service of a god-like aesthetic and idealism. In contrast, the sculptures of the nude female body which take the form of Aphrodite (as discussed above), exude a far softer and almost submissive aesthetic, one which, as a product of the ancient Greek society, placed women at a lower or non-existent level on the social hierarchy (Ancient Greece, 2017: 4; Cartwright, 2016: 1). This is reinforced by the figures’ slightly downturned head, accompanied by a lowered gaze, and softened shoulders, possibly indicative of respect or as an acknowledgment or reinforcement of the status quo. The angles of their bodies are adjusted to emphasise and complement their shapely forms and trace the gentle variation of curves in the landscape of their bodies.

Figure 2.6: *Crouching Aphrodite*. Marble. Roman copy of Greek original. 3rd Century BCE. 71cm. Louvre Museum, Paris. 3rd Century BCE

A considerable shift in the pose and atmosphere of the Aphrodite or Venus figures can be seen in the Hellenistic *Crouching Aphrodite*, a marble figure created in *circa* 250 BCE. This sculpture features the nude figure of Aphrodite engaging in a more dynamic, “twisting pose, crouching at her bath” and

turning to look behind her (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2017: 1). This offers an alternative to the composed, serene postures of her predecessors.

3. The popularisation of the ideal nude as a subject

> It was not until the start of the early 16th century that the ideal nude changed sex. In Venice in 1510 Giorgione's glorious invention, the *Sleeping Venus*, opened the door to the unapologetic and ideal female nude, a reclining woman, a beautiful and passive vision of perfection, lying there almost as large as life and needing no moralizing tale beyond the name of Venus to explain her presence.
>
> (Borzello, 2012: 15)

Figure 3.1: Giorgione. *Sleeping Venus*. Oil on Canvas. 1508-1510. 175 x 108.5 cm. Old Masters Picture Gallery, Dresden, Germany.

Figure 3.2: Titian. *Venus of Urbino*. Oil on canvas. 1538. 165 x 119 cm.
Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy.

The Renaissance established the “standard for representations of the reclining female nude, whether divine or moral” (Kleiner, 2011: 610). This was spearheaded by Giorgione’s *Sleeping Venus* (1508-10), an oil on canvas which was completed by Titian after Giorgione’s death. According to Borzello (2012: 17), the “passive and perfect” representation, in which “the curves of her body [echoed] the lines of the soft landscape” in the background, was the first of a renewed standard of depiction for the reclining female nude “made respectable for viewing”. Her hand, reminiscent of the *Aphrodite of Knidos*, gently rests upon her pelvic area in a way which “both suggests and veils her sexuality”, while her breasts are unobscured (Borzello, 2012: 17). Her title also alludes to her “identification as the goddess Venus” or her equivalent Aphrodite, and “adds respectability to her nudity” while also elevating her above the social implications that would accompany an identifiable or individualised woman (Borzello, 2012: 17). A distinctive element of this version of the Venus figure is that her eyes are closed. This seemingly placid inclusion remarkably alters the way in which the viewer engages with her unclothed body. Whether her closed eyes allude to her being asleep or resting, they carry the impression that she is ignorant of where the viewers’ eyes may be travelling to and how they are receiving her nudity (Borzello, 2012: 17).

Another work which illustrates this is the *Venus of Urbino*, an oil painting commissioned by Guidobaldo II in 1538 (Kleiner, 2011: 610). The painting features a nude woman, reclining on a bed in her bed chamber, gently tilting her head while making eye contact with the viewer. According to Kleiner (2011: 610), the commission was created for Guidobaldo for the purpose of acting as nothing “more than a female nude for his private enjoyment”, while also representing “the embodiment of womanly beauty and of the qualities he sought in a bride”. A commonality shared by these two Venuses is, of course, that both have been created by male painters for male patrons or viewers.

Figure 3.3: Velázquez. *The Toilet of Venus (Rokeby Venus)*. Oil on canvas. 1647-1651. 122.5 x 177 cm. The National Gallery, London.

These iconic nudes form the foundation of the popularised, typical, reclining nude as a subject. Almost always functioning as an “idea”, “an ideal, and “a generalized presentation of perfection”, these representations follow the accepted rule that the face should not represent an individual or be too specific, “in order to sustain the illusion” (Borzello, 2012: 113). We see an example of this in Diego Velázquez’s oil on

canvas entitled *The Toilet of Venus* or *Rokeby Venus*, which was painted in 1647-51 (figure 3.3). The paining features a nude woman, reclining with her back to us, gazing upon her reflection in the mirror. The face of the woman is visible in the mirror, which is held by cupid, and reflects the "slightly blurred impression of pretty round-faced youth" (Borzello, 2012: 113). The presence of the mirror serves as a justification for the nudity of the *Rokeby Venus*, as it implies that the woman is admiring her own beauty, and therefore encourages onlookers to do the same. According to Borzello (2012: 113), "some of the greatest visual shocks in art have come from the uniting of a highly individual face with an unclothed body". This is evident in Édouard Manet's controversial *Olympia* (1863), as seen in figure 3.4. The oil painting, which at first appears to be a conventional reclining nude, but as the viewers' eyes move to the face of the woman, they are met by uniquely individualised features and eyes which confront the viewer. Manet converted the "traditional ideal nude into an image of a prostitute", which destabilised the "viewing code of the day by making it clear that not only did this body belong to the face above it, but that its owner was totally comfortable with it" (Borzello, 2012: 112, 113). This was met by much aversion from its viewers. Not only did it feature a precise and

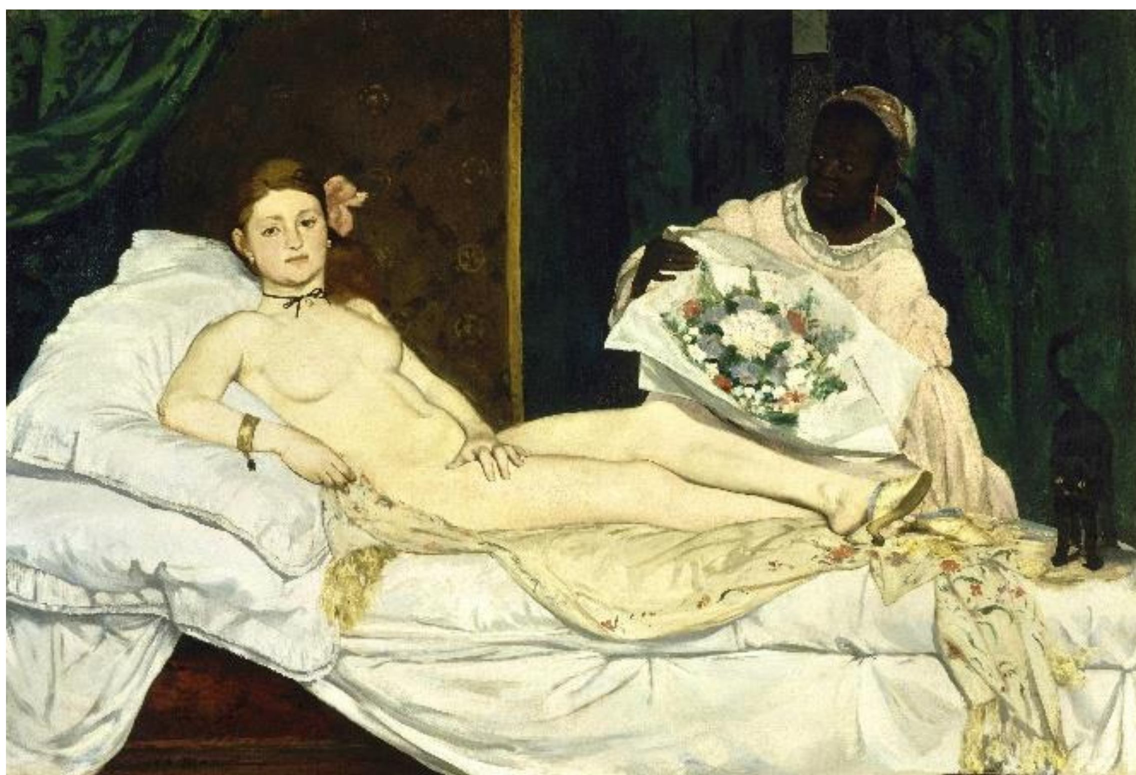

Figure 3.4: Édouard Manet, *Olympia*. Oil on canvas. 1863. 130 x 190 cm. Museé d'Orsay, Paris.

recognisable subject, but also purposeful and pert upright body language which was vastly different from the coy, passive and "undulating ideal nudes they were familiar with, and the way the eyes of this contemporary little face met theirs denied them their customary visual stroking of the image" (Borzello, 2012: 113). This breaking of conventions gave way to the nude self-portraits which emerged in the early 20th century.

What is interesting, however, is that there are little to no sculptural equivalents to the reclining nudes iconised in the paintings discussed above. During the 1500s, sculptural depictions of the unclothed female body were seemingly limited to two-dimensions, and generally embedded in mythological subject matter in order to justify the nudity. An example of this is seen in Bernini's *Apollo and Daphne* (figure 3.5), which depicts the apex of the god Apollo's relentless pursuit of the nymph Daphne - the moment Daphne was no longer able to flee, and was transformed by her father into a tree in order to escape his grasp. The poet, Ovid, likened Apollo to a greyhound chasing a hare in his volume *Metamorphoses 1* (100 BCE – 100 CE), translated by More (1922). Daphne became more enticing to Apollo as she fled, and "borne on wings of love" he "gained upon her, until his warm breath mingled in her hair" (More, 1922: 35). "Pale and faint", with her "strength spent", she implored

Figure 3.5: Bernini, *Apollo and Daphne*. Marble. 1622 – 1625. Galleria Borghese, Rome. 243cm.

her father, a river god, to “destroy the beauty that has injured [her], or change the body that destroys [her] life” (More, 1922: 35). Before her plea had ended,

> torpor seized on all her body, and a thin bark closed around her gentle bosom, and her hair became as moving leaves; her arms were changed to waving branches, and her active feet as clinging roots were fastened to the ground - her face was hidden with encircling leaves.
>
> (More, 1922: 35)

Although this sculpture carries a mythological overtone, it is sculpted in a manner which amplifies the theme of male dominance and female allure and objectification.

4. The naked and the nude

It is because of artworks such as these that writers, including John Berger (1972, cited in McDonald, 2001: 8), have expressed their views on the ways in which women have been represented in art. Berger (cited in McDonald, 2001: 8) presents an interesting perspective when he reverses “the value of the terms Naked/nude”. The ‘nude’ is a term which has traditionally carried artistic and sophisticated connotations; whereas the ‘naked’ denotes a vulnerable, shameful or crude state of being. As mentioned above, the nude was separated from the naked by elevating it to the realm of art, whereby the model became a muse or foundation for the embodiment of a goddess or sublime being representing the epitome of female beauty. This is supported by Borzello (2012: 18), who explains that “fine art was superior to life and by extension nudity in art was purer that nudity in life”. In addition, the word “nude”, carries “no uncomfortable overtone” (Clark, 1973: 1). According to Clark (1973: 1), the nude is “an art form invented by the Greeks in the 5th century” BCE. The term, however, was “forced into our vocabulary by critics of the early 18th century”; and Clark (1973: 3) asserts that “the nude is not the subject of art, but a form of art”. Either way, the nude has been an accepted and commonplace subject

matter for art (Clark, 1973: 1). Berger has explained that “nakedness” – which refers to being “without disguise” – should be favoured over “nudity” – which represents “’a form of dress’ that objectifies ‘woman’ according to male-dominated, capitalist ‘ways of seeing’” (Berger, 1972, cited in McDonald 2012: 8).

Figure 4.1: Edgar Degas. *Woman Bathing in a Shallow Tub*. Charcoal and pastel on light green wove paper, now discoloured to warm grey, laid down on silk bolting. 1885. 81.3 x 56.2 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

This definitive sort of nudity outlined by Berger required that the body and limbs be arranged in a visually pleasing way, one that was both modest and revealing, graceful and submissive. This was challenged, however subtly, by a series of charcoal and pastel on paper drawings of bathers by Degas. The series received negative attention from critics who were offended by his representation of these unclothed women in “ungainly poses” (Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, 2017: 1). As seen in figure 4.1, *Woman Bathing in a Shallow Tub* (1885) features a woman crouching over, legs bent, and her right arm reaching to soak her sponge in the shallow water in the circular tub she stands in. As seen from the side-angle, her left arm is bent and resting on her knee to support her upper body which is almost parallel to the floor. Remarkably ordinary in its clumsiness, the drawing acts as an account of exactly what Degas saw, and not a representation of what he deemed this process should look like or how graceful or attractive it should be.

An artist who destabilises the construct of the way in which a nude female body should be represented is Gustave Courbet. His oil painting entitled *The Origin of the World* makes no attempt to modestly conceal the naked body or convert it to the domain of the nude. The isolated and almost anatomical representation of the female sex organ does its best to incite discomfort in the viewer. The painting was originally commissioned by a Turkish-Egyptian diplomat for the purpose of celebrating the female body (Museé d’Orsay, 2006: 1). What is troubling about this work, however, is that it still raises the question of voyeurism in the sense that all that is shown of the woman is her torso, from just below her breasts to her buttocks, and her genitalia and pubic hair which are the focal point, emphasised by what is visible of her splayed legs (Museé d’Orsay, 2006: 3). The rest of her body is either cropped from the composition or concealed by what appear to be folds of white fabric.

In the contemporary art world, however, this binary of nude/naked has been deconstructed. Borzello (2012: 137) states that the “nude/naked line” introduced by Clark is “powerless today because the art world has moved on”. Much like the naked and the nude, other binary or dualistic terms have begun to dissolve to make way for contemporary perceptions and applications. This is evident in my earlier discussion of absence and presence.

Figure 4.2: Gustave Courbet, *The Origin of the World*. Oil on canvas. 1886.46 x 55 cm. Museé d’Orsay, Paris.

APPENDIX B

1. Technical Aspects of Glass [1]

Definitions of Terms:

Crystalline: This term refers to the molecular structure of a solid, and the precise arrangement of the atoms of which the molecules are comprised (Clear Up, 1991). This is illustrated in figure 1.1 below.

Non-crystalline: This term refers to the disorganised molecular structure of amorphous materials such as glass (Beveridge et al, 2005: 24).

Amorphous: “In any solid, atoms, molecules, or ions will arrange in a three-dimensional pattern. Most commonly, these particles arrange themselves in a predictable pattern that repeats over and over again...You recognize this as a crystalline structure with a distinctive shape. In some cases, however, the arrangement of the particles doesn't follow any predictable pattern. ‘Amorphous’ very generally means lacking form or shape, but in chemistry it more specifically refers to the solids with this kind of random particle arrangement; that is, non-crystalline solids” (Answers, 2014).

Vitreous: This means “of or pertaining to glass...obtained from or containing glass” (Dictionary.com, 2014)

Below is a diagram illustrating the molecular structure of a solid, glass and liquid. The first column illustrates the molecular structure of the stationary matter at a given time, and the second column illustrates the molecular structure of the stationary matter after a fraction of a second has elapsed.

[1] Note: The following section was first included in my BTech document. I have borrowed from and modified the writing so, although, I am referencing my previous writing and research, I confirm that I am the author of the work which has otherwise been referenced accordingly. (Walmsley, 2014)

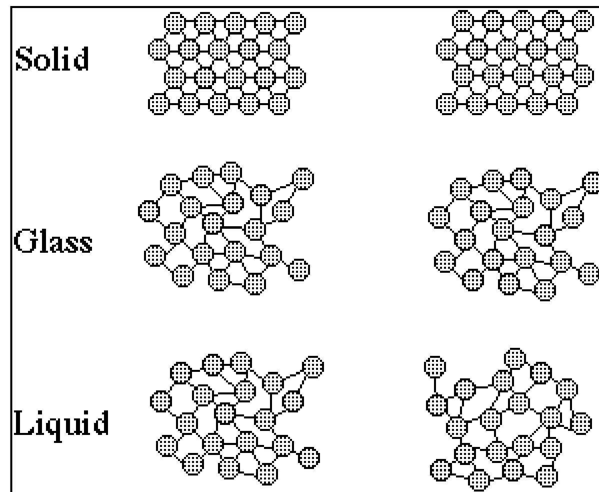

Figure 1.1: Molecular structure of a solid, glass and liquid depicting the molecular structure of the stationary matter and the molecular structure after a fraction of a second has elapsed.

Understanding the properties of glass is a prerequisite to understanding how the medium behaves during the casting process. Glass is a unique solid material: it is an “inorganic product of fusing various materials, cooled to a solid condition without crystallising” (Watkins-Baker, 2010: 27). Although glass appears to be and is widely recognised as a solid material, in some regards it is actually considered to be a “liquid because of its amorphous or non-crystalline structure” (Beveridge et al, 2005: 24). However, in contrast to liquids, the atoms of glass cannot move, they vibrate only around fixed positions (Beveridge et al, 2005: 25)

This can be explained by examining the molecular structure of glass. All matter can be categorised as one of three states: solid, liquid, or gas. Glass, however, falls under another classification – as a vitreous material (Beveridge et al, 2005: 24). It is a vitreous material which has a structural disorder which is reminiscent of a liquid, rather than a solid, although it cannot technically be referred to as a liquid (Beveridge et al, 2005: 24).

As a result of the amorphous structure of glass, it does not have a set melting point (Answers, 2014). Because, unlike in a crystalline solid, the distance between each particle and the number of particles in close proximity to one another is not predictable; therefore different amounts of energy must be applied to different areas of the solid in order for the solid to melt fully as a result (Answers, 2014).

The three components of glass include a vitrifier, flux and stabilizer (Beveridge et al, 2005: 25). The element functioning as the vitrifier is the silica, comprising approximately “60-80% of most glass by weight” (Beveridge et al, 2005: 25) and is the main component of glass. The non-crystalline structure of silica is responsible for the transparency of glass (Beveridge et al, 2005: 25). When silica is heated to about “1704°C it becomes a viscous liquid that is difficult to mould before is solidifies...[and] melting it alone in the form of sand to produce glass results in a fragile, brittle material that is useless for making any shape or object” (Beveridge et al, 2005: 25). As a result of this, it is necessary to add other compounds to the silica to lower the melting point and add the rigidity and hardness necessary for the glass to become workable (Beveridge et al, 2005: 25). These compounds are the flux and stabilizer. Fluxes are the materials added to the silica to “facilitate melting at a lower temperature” (Beveridge et al, 2005: 25). Broadly, the two basic types of glass are classified according to the flux that is used, which is either sodium or potassium, producing either a sodium or potassium glass (Beveridge et al, 2005: 25). The stabilizer is present in the form of a calcic substance such as lime, which is added to the glass mixture to provide rigidity: without the presence of the stabilizer, the glass would be soluble, even in water (Beveridge et al, 2005: 25).

2. Glass Casting Techniques

a. Drip Casting

The casting method being employed is a drip cast. This is the type of cast whereby "an empty mould is placed in the kiln with its filling aperture uppermost" (Cummings, 2007: 89), and a kiln-proof reservoir with a hole in the bottom (something similar to a ceramic flowerpot or crucible) is used to retain/house the glass pieces that will, upon "heating the kiln past the flow point of the glass, usually in excess of 850°C" (Cummings, 2007: 77), liquidise and drip through the hole and fill the mould cavity. There are a number of limitations and factors to consider with drip casting. These include "the size and shape of the hole(s) in the base of the reservoir, which affect the shape and size of the glass flow; the distance the molten stream of glass has to travel before entering the aperture; the exact size, shape and number of apertures; the form the glass takes; and the precise shape of the desired glass cast." (Cummings, 2007: 90). Drip casts are only suited to "casts whose moulds and especially apertures allow the entering stream of glass to travel into the void without interruption and run right through the void until it encounters the bottom" (Cummings, 2007: 92). This allows the glass to travel through the volume of the mould cavity and fill it from the bottom upwards to avoid any glass overflowing or blocking entry prematurely.

b. Crucible Pouring

Another method that could be used to fill the mould with glass is one where the glass is melted in a crucible, usually in a kiln (Cummings, 2007: 78), and poured into the mould. When the glass has reached the appropriate temperature and is molten, the kiln is opened and the crucible manipulated from outside the kiln with tongs (Cummings, 2007: 78). This can be likened to the process in which molten bronze is poured into the ceramic shell moulds. This method is referred to as "crucible pouring" (Cummings, 2007: 78).

This is a method that I plan to experiment with at some point. A challenge I expect to encounter is the annealing of the glass once it has been cast into the mould. The annealing process takes place once the molten glass has filled the mould cavity and begins to cool. It is essential that the volume of glass remains at a constant

temperature throughout the entire mass and that this temperature is lowered constantly and evenly: if one area decreases or increases in temperature separately from the rest the glass will crack (Cummings, 2007: 162). The limbs and head are areas that are less dense than the torso: the less dense areas will cool more quickly and crack if the glass does not anneal correctly. These variations in thickness and density make it a difficult shape to anneal as the variation between the hottest and coldest points in the glass mass must not exceed 3°- 4° (Cummings, 2007: 163). Once the mould has been filled with molten glass, the mould can then be placed in a preheated kiln to begin the annealing.

3. Plaster and Silica Mould Making Techniques and Recipes

The mould-making process entails the following (This is a one-piece mould):

a. Preparing the piece for moulding

As stated above, before beginning the mould-making, one needs to consider the wax piece and prepare it for moulding accordingly. This includes the attachment of sprues or air vents to the wax piece, which allow air to escape as a mould cavity fills with glass – they become exit routes for releasing the displaced air (Cummings, 2007: 99). These vents can be made from wax strips, toothpicks or *sosatie* sticks, as depicted in Figure 3.1. As the toothpicks or *sosatie* sticks are made from wood and are therefore porous, they need to be coated with a thick layer of barrier cream or a release agent, such as Vaseline. If this is not done, they will bond with the mould material and it will not be possible to release them from the mould. The function of

these sprues is similar to that of the ones attached to the wax pieces that are prepared for bronze casting. The molten glass, however, enters the mould at a far slower pace than the molten bronze, as glass has a higher resistance to flow

Figure 3.1: *Searching II* in microcrystalline wax prepared with aperture and vents to be moulded in plaster and silica for casting in glass.

(viscosity). This means that the air within the mould cavity is not displaced as suddenly, therefore the waxes prepared for glass casting do not require a gating system as complex as those prepared for bronze casting.

Once there is satisfaction with the sprues that have been added, the volume of the wax needs to be calculated in order to determine the volume of glass that will be needed. The simplest way to do this is using the water displacement method (Watkins-Baker, 2010: 128). This process requires a measuring jug or similar vessel to retain water and that is large enough to submerge the entire wax piece (a calibrated container would be better for more accurate measurements). A waterproof marker will also be necessary. Fill the container to a point that will ensure full submersion of the wax and mark the water level on the side of the container using the marker. It is advisable to use a clear or semi-translucent jug so that the water level will be visible from the outside and so that the outside of the vessel can be marked rather than the inside of a non-translucent vessel. Submerge the wax

(making sure that it is completely covered by the water – a toothpick or *sosatie* stick can be used to hold the piece down) and mark the water level again at the point to which it has risen. Remove the wax and add the glass pieces to the initial volume of water until the water level rises to the point marked after the wax had been added. This will be the amount of glass necessary to fill the mould cavity.

b. Making the mould

It is important to take note that when making one's mould, the mould must ideally be completed with one batch of mould mixture. If the mould is completed using two or more mixtures, this will cause weakness and compromise the strength of the mould. The mould mixture cures rapidly and because of this factor, the differing mixtures will cure at different points, also causing an inconsistency in the overall strength of the mould. The seam lines, however faint they may be, that are created in between the different layers of mould mixture may trap air and cause cracking; these are also areas that are likely to develop into cracks when the mould is heated.

Mould-making materials:

- Silica powder (325 mesh)
- Plaster of Paris
- water
- mixing bowl (proportional to the volume of mould mixture you are planning on making)
- three measuring cups
- a large sieve
- a mixing implement such as an agitator or paint mixing drill attachment (for small quantities of mould mixture a whisk or electric stick blender is ideal)
- shim or boards that will contain the mould material

- a plastic-covered board large enough on which the mould can be made

Position the form on the surface on which it will be moulded, stabilised on its feeding sprue. Build a shim wall around the entire piece, allowing for a distance of at least 3cm from the point where the wax form is closest to the shim and about a 5cm distance from the highest point (the shim should be at least 5cm higher than the figure). Ensure that the wax form is completely stable and that the shim is stable and will not buckle or move. Mix the dry ingredients first: this is very important. The ratio is 1x1x1: one (1) part silica powder, one (1) part plaster of Paris, one (1) part water. When measuring the silica powder and plaster of Paris, use a different measuring container/cup for each so as not to contaminate the one with the other. Try to estimate how much mould mixture will be needed to make the mould; if the first batch does not cover the whole wax form, it will be necessary to mix another one immediately: do not allow it to cure before adding the next layer. This could trap air in the mould and it will not be one solid mass. The required amount of mould mixture could also be calculate based on the volume of the area which is demarcated by the shim walls. If you begin with three (3) cups of silica powder, then three (3) cups of plaster of Paris and three (3) cups of water will be used/required. When mixing the dry ingredients, sieve the two ingredients very well and then add the water and mix very well. Mix the mould mixture with an agitator to ensure that is mixed properly. If the mixture is not mixed well enough, the strength and integrity of the mould will be compromised as the mould will heat and cool unevenly. This causes a weakness in your mould which will cause it to crack and the cast will not be successful. Once the mould has been completed, it needs to allow it to cure entirely before steaming the wax out.

c. Removing (losing) the wax

Once the mould has cured properly, the wax can be prepared to be removed. This process needs to be executed carefully: the wax needs to be removed “cleanly and

completely with as little disturbance to the mould as possible” (Cummings, 2007: 102). The difference between the lost wax process for bronze casting and for glass casting can again be noted. During the removal of wax from the ceramic shell moulds used for bronze casting, the entire mould is placed in a pre-heated kiln and the wax is ‘flash melted’ out of the mould at a very high temperature (above 500° C). The same cannot be done to remove the wax from a plaster and silica mould.

Any attempt to remove this wax by heating the mould would result in some of the wax melting into the mould mixture via the vulnerable surfaces. This damages these important parts of the mould and leaves a wax residue in the mould which will contaminate the cast glass during firing. Steaming the wax from the mould, if carried out with care, should leave the surfaces clean and in good condition (Cummings, 2007: 102-103).

I steamed the wax from my moulds using a makeshift steaming system including the following:

Tools and materials:

- A framework or stable support system on which to rest the mould during the wax removal. This support system needs to allow the mould to rest on it securely, but it must structured in a way that allows the steaming system to occupy the space directly beneath the mould (the mould will be turned upside down during this process with the aperture facing the bottom).
- A metal grid that can be placed on top of the framework to support the mould.
- A portable hotplate (to boil water)
- A pot or similar metal vessel to be used for boiling water. This vessel must be the correct size to fit a large funnel.
- A large funnel, preferably with a flexible nozzle. A piece of hose could be attached to a funnel to substitute the flexible nozzle.

- Something needs to be put in place to catch the wax that drips from the mould cavity, such as a water-filled container or plastic packet.

Securely place the mould (with the aperture facing downwards) on the support framework, either on the metal grid which will then rest on top of the support framework, or directly onto the framework. Set up the hot plate alongside the framework and begin boiling the water in the pot or water boiling vessel (filled between half and three quarters with water to prevent boiling over). Secure the funnel to the pot or vessel and wait for steam to visibly exit the nozzle. Once the steam becomes visible, direct the nozzle to below the aperture and observe that the wax begins to soften and drip from the aperture. As the wax drips out, and more space becomes available, move the nozzle of the funnel deeper into the aperture to direct all of the steam deeper into the mould. Do this until you are certain that all of the wax has left the mould. At intervals, replace the water in the boiling vessel: do not allow the water to run out. If the boiling vessel and funnel remain on the hot plate once all of the water has evaporated, the funnel will begin to melt into the vessel and burn. You should be able to get an idea of how much wax has come out by looking at the wax that has dripped into the water-filled container or onto the plastic packet. Continue steaming until there is absolutely no more wax leaving the mould cavity.

4. Drying the mould

Once the wax mass has been steamed out of (lost from) the mould cavity, the mould needs to be dried. It is advisable to allow the mould to dry with natural heat by leaving it in direct sunlight for as many consecutive days as required until it is completely and chemically dry. This is, of course, not always possible as weather conditions and time constraints are not always ideal. The drying process can also be supplemented by placing the mould in a kiln or household oven. The most crucial factor, however, is that the mould cannot be raised to a temperature above 100◦ C while it still moist; as water boils at 100◦C and the water in the mould will begin to

boil which will result in the mould cracking in numerous places. A cracked or damaged mould compromises the resultant cast, interferes with the surface detail and texture of the cast and, depending on the severity of the damage to the mould, could render the mould unusable. A mould that is not completely dry cannot be placed in the kiln for casting as any steam that will be released from the evaporation of residual moisture may damage the kiln. A moist mould that is placed into the kiln for casting also carries the likelihood of cracking very badly or exploding.

5. Firing

Once the mould is dry and ready, ensure that the amount of glass necessary (calculated using the water-displacement method) has been cut into small pieces of approximately the same size, and that these pieces have been cleaned with soap

Figure 5.1: Crucible (unglazed flower pot) filled with pieces of Spectrum glass

(dishwashing liquid works very well) and have been wiped with methylated spirits. This is done to remove all dust particles and traces of oil or grease from fingerprints. If the glass is not cleaned, it will affect the resultant cast. Carefully pack the glass pieces into the crucible, taking care to avoid touching the glass surface.

My figures are cast using crystal clear as well as iridescent Spectrum glass. This glass is ideal for casting as it produces a clear cast with little or no tint, and the iridescent glass provides a subtle flecking of multi-coloured light in areas on the surface of the glass. Spectrum can also be re-melted once it is cast, which is ideal for test pieces or for the re-use of cast apertures or overflow.

Figure 5.2: Prepared mould on kiln shelf within the kiln

With moulds of this size and the method in which the glass is being cast, certain precautions are taken to prevent damage to the kiln in the event that the glass overflows or the mould collapses or cracks. A kiln shelf large enough to support the

entire mould is placed on the floor of the kiln; this prevents molten glass from flowing onto and damaging the elements of the kiln. A smaller kiln shelf is placed on top of the larger one for additional protection. The mould is placed on top of the smaller kiln shelf, and aluminium carbonate powder is packed tightly around the base of the mould. This is prevents any glass from escaping. The crucible (or flower pot) is carefully placed on top of the mould, resting on kiln bricks. The opening in the base of the crucible must be aligned with the aperture in the mould.

6. The Bronze Casting Process

The bronze casting process that I utilise is the traditional *ciré perdue* or lost wax method, which makes use of the ceramic shell moulding technique.

The lost wax method of bronze casting originated about 5000 years ago in Mesopotamia, Greece and China (Hemingway & Hemingway, 2008: 1; History of Casting, n.d.: 1; Sturgis, 2017: 1). Preceded by the use of copper, the ancient Greeks discovered that bronze yielded better results for the casting of statuary and sculptural forms owing to its "lower melting point: and "superior tensile strength" (Hemingway & Hemingway, 2008: 2). These factors can be attributed to bronze being an alloy of copper and tin in various proportions, depending on the type of bronze (Jones, 1979: 44). The tin, lead and zinc function as eutectics, which lower the overall melting point of the bronze. The bronze we use for casting is in the form of ingots, and is called Leaded Gun Metal (LG 2), also traditionally statutory bronze (comprised of approximately 85% copper, 5% tin, 5% lead and 5% zinc) (Jones, 1979: 44, 45).

When preparing the wax form to be cast in bronze, it is essential to assess the sculpture and determine the point at which the bronze should enter the form, which angle to suspend it from the pouring cup, and which areas are most likely to trap bubbles (Jones, 1979: 74). This analysis will enable the execution of the gating in the best possible way. During this vital stage of the process, under the guidance of my

supervisor, the sculpture is attached to a pouring cup which has been prepared. Once it is secure, the air vents or 'risers' are added; these are long, thin strips of wax which are attached from the figure to the top of the pouring cup. The function of these is to guide the trapped air and gases which are created when the bronze rushes into the mould cavity (Jones, 1979: 74). Once the gating is complete, the ceramic shell moulds are made using the 14-step process of dipping the gated sculpture and pouring cup into the colloidal silica and chamotte-based 'slurry' and sprinkling it with layers of calcined alumina, zircon, and fine and coarse chamotte sand. Once the moulds are complete, the tops of the pouring cups have been cut off and the polystyrene cups removed, the moulds are packed into the kiln to melt the wax out and vitrify the moulds. Once this has happened, the moulds are removed from the kiln, secured in chamotte sand, and the prepared bronze is poured it into the hot moulds. Once the bronze has been successfully poured, the moulds must cool down before the sculptures are knocked out in order to begin the fettling and working-off processes.

7. Types of Resin Used

I make use of various polyester resins and gelcoats for the casting of both white and clear figures, because resin is a suitable looking substitute, one the one hand for clear glass (with the polylite and Sicomin clear casting epoxy resin), and on the other, with the addition of kulu powder (calcium carbonate) and/or white pigment (with polyester resin and gelgoat), it simulates the traditional material of marble. Polyester and Polylite resin are both polyester based but are formulated to give a different surface finish, clarity and application.

a. Polyester resin

The … polyester resin is the resin which I utilise the most, as it is more user-friendly than the polylite and epoxy resins. As seen in figure 7.1 below, this resin is mixed

with kulu powder to achieve an aesthetic similar to that of marble. To begin, the gelcoat layer (which has been mixed with catalyst and kulu powder) is carefully applied to the surface of the rubber of each half of the two-piece mould. This is to aid the capturing of detail and to avoid the formation of bubbles against what will be the surface of the sculpture. Once this has begun to cure and is ‘tacky’ to the touch, the two halves of the mould are swiftly and cautiously fitted together and bound with bungee cord and the ‘runny’ resin or polyester resin is mixed with catalyst and kulu powder and poured in to fill the mould cavity.

Figure 7.1: Photograph of *Serendipity III* cast in polyester resin and kulu powder.

b. Polylite resin

This is the resin I initially used to cast the clear sculptures as seen in figure 7.2. Although the resin provided the clarity and translucency I was hoping for, it posed a number of challenges in terms of its surface finish and texture. The surface of each cast has yielded an uneven and strangely textured surface texture which

Figure 7.2: Photograph of *Searching I* cast in Polylite resin which depicts the surface texture

compromises the integrity of the original sculpture. It was possible to resolve this by reworking the surface with various grades of sandpaper and a Dremel multitool. This was the solution which was reached after attempting many different techniques to avoid this reaction. These included heating the mould to draw out any moisture which may be present and thus react with the resin, making use of release agents, casting the sculpture in multiple pieces and with the mould open (the resin was cast in each half of the two-piece rubber mould before the mould was joined).

c. Sicomin SR 1670 Epoxy resin

I experimented with the Sicomin SR 1670 clear casting epoxy resin as an alternative to the polylite resin for the casting of the clear figures. This resin is specifically formulated for being cast in larger quantities without a change of colour of the cast, owing to its low reactivity. This resin yielded a much better surface texture, which was an accurate impression of the original sculpture. The resin retained excellent clarity and refraction of light. The resultant cast is also without any bubbles, as seen in the image below.

Figure 7.3: Photograph of preliminary version of *Searching I* cast in Sicomin SR 1670 clear casting epoxy resin which depicts the smooth surface texture, clarity and lack of bubbles

APPENDIX C

Figure 1.1: Sarah Walmsley. *Searching I*. Clear resin. 2018. 21 x 16 x 80cm.

Figure 1.2: Sarah Walmsley. *Searching II*. Bronze. 2018. 22 x 16 x 82cm.

Figure 1.3: Sarah Walmsley. *Searching I & II*. Clear resin & Bronze.

Figure 1.4: Sarah Walmsley. *Searching I & II*. Clear resin & Bronze.

Figure 1.5: Sarah Walmsley. *Searching I & II*. Clear resin & Bronze.

Figure 1.6: Sarah Walmsley. *Searching I*. Resin. 2018. 16 x 18 x 91cm.

Figure 1.7: Sarah Walmsley. *Searching II*. Resin. 2018. 23 x 16 x 83cm.

Figure 1.8: Sarah Walmsley. *Searching I & II*. Resin. 2018.

Figure 1.9 & 1.10: Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity Installation*. Bronze, kiln-formed glass and white and clear resin. 2018.

Figure 1.11: Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity I*. Bronze. 2018. 17 x 16 x 165cm.

Figure 1.12: Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity II*. Bronze. 2018. 16 x 16 x 137cm.

Figure 1.13: Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity III*. Bronze. 2018. 16 x 16 x 148cm.

Figure 1.14: Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity I*. Resin. 2018. 17 x 16 x 165cm.

Figure 1.15: Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity II*. Resin. 2018. 16 x 16 x 175cm.

Figure 1.16: Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity III*. Resin. 2018. 16 x 16 x 182cm.

Figure 1.17: Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity I*. Clear resin. 2018. 17 x 16 x 140cm.

Figure 1.18: Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity II*. Kiln-formed glass. 2018. 16 x 16 x 165cm.

Figure 1.19: Sarah Walmsley. *Serendipity III*. Clear resin. 2018. 16 x 16 x 142cm.

Figure 1.20: Sarah Walmsley. *Being*. Resin. 2018. 20 x 20 x 90 cm.

Figure 1.21: Sarah Walmsley. *Being*. Resin. 2018. 20 x 20 x 90cm.

Figure 1.22: Sarah Walmsley. *Being*. Bronze. 2018. 18 x 18 x 108cm.

Figure 1.23: Sarah Walmsley. *Being*. Bronze. 2018. 18 x 18 x 108cm.

Figure 1.24: Sarah Walmsley. *Searching (inset)*. Kiln-formed glass and resin. 2018. 28 x 20 x 69cm.

Figure 1.25: Sarah Walmsley. *Searching (inset)*. Kiln-formed glass and resin. 2018. 28 x 20 x 69cm.

Figure 1.26 & 1.27: Sarah Walmsley. *Morning*. Bronze. 2018. 16 x 73 x 31cm.

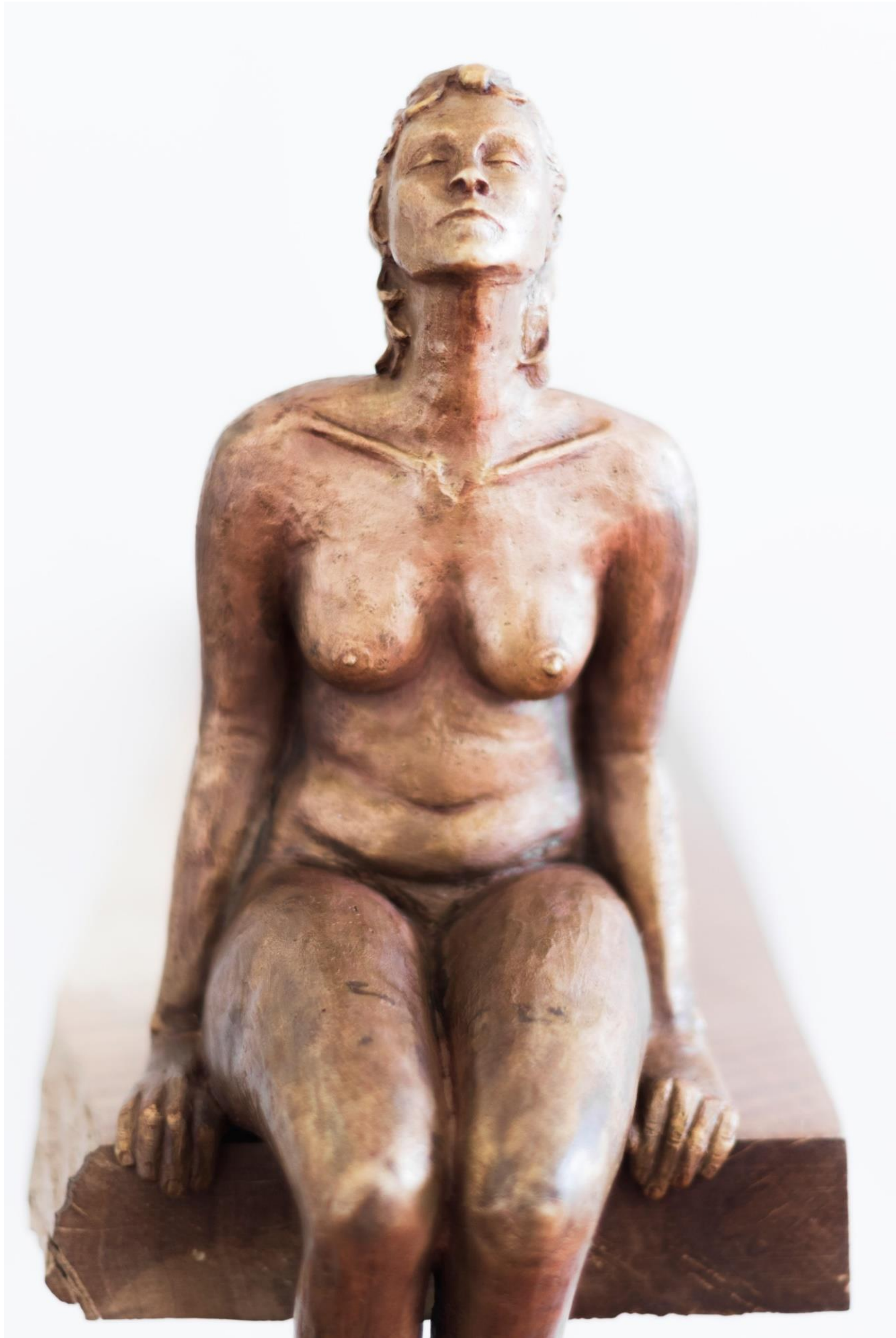

Figure 1.28: Sarah Walmsley. *Morning*. Bronze. 2018.