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De-Colonising the Western Gaze: The Portrait as a Multi-Sensory Cultural Practice

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De-Colonising the Western Gaze:
The Portrait as a Multi-Sensory Cultural Practice

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Abstract

This art practice-based thesis addresses the ocularcentric approach inherent in Western representations of 'otherness' with a view to expanding notions of the 'portrait' as a culturally specific practice. Drawing on a selection of projects conducted over two decades across diverse cultural contexts, together with written publications, the thesis explores possible ways to identify and theorise alternative methodological and analytical frameworks through which the Other can be represented. Turning the gaze upon the artist/researcher in performative acts of mutual representation as a dialogical method, cross-cultural projects addressed in the thesis include the indigenous Sámi's yoik, the Aboriginal Australian's track reading and female veiling in Yemen. The thesis comprises Parts I and II, together with an introduction and conclusion, in addition to four appendices. Adopting a feminist research approach and attention to indigenous methodologies as points of departure, Part I provides a critical overview of relevant and intersecting literature on theories of othering and the Western notion of the portrait; it outlines the foundation on which the studied cultural practices were interpreted as practices of relating and attributing. While acknowledging the central role of the photograph as a critical tool of Western visual representation, focus is directed to multi-sensory cultural practices prevalent in non-Western and indigenous cultures. The primary concern of Part II is the role of the mediation of the artworks in postproduction, which draws on material collated during intersubjective field encounters, exhibited across contested sites of representation. Referencing both historically situated and contemporary art and anthropological research practices, alongside their modes of dissemination, Part II critically reflects on contested questions surrounding exhibition and curation, allied to the decolonisation of the anthropological museum.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis, which I now submit for examination for the award of PhD (doctor of philosophy) is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

This thesis was prepared according to the regulations for PhD of the Technological University Dublin and has not been submitted in whole or in part for an award in any other institute or university. The work reported on in this thesis conforms to the principles and requirements of the Institute's guidelines for ethics in research.

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Signature _____

Date _____

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Introduction

This thesis analyses a body of work based on two decades of practice and consisting of a number of performative interactions resulting in a series of exhibited/presented artworks and written publications. Together they constitute the basis of my thesis in which I exemplarily discuss three projects (*Seek Me*, 2005; *Track Me*, 2006; *Imagine Me*, 2007) as well as a previous project (*StillePost*, 1999) that underpinned my research, expanding on them in four appendices to situate the reader within the various field sites. I further discuss my written publications across both Parts I and II, and in the conclusion to the thesis, I provide a preview of how I intend to use the knowledge gained from writing this thesis over the course of a forthcoming residency related to the Museum of Cultures, Basel.

For twenty years I have been engaged in the role of an artist conveying intercultural encounters and mediations with otherness.[1] This builds on the cross-cultural asymmetry within power relationships and on the fact that social and political thought is 'hierarchical and reproaches the self-definitions of all cultures except the modern West' (Murphy, 2013: 5).

I further continued the endeavour of several artists, who together have, with their 'faceless' portraits, extended the boundaries of how we understand the notion of a portrait and a self-portrait (Boeck, 2013); for example, the work *Untitled (Portrait of Ross in L.A.)* (1991)[2] and Hans-Peter Feldmann's picture series *Alle Kleider einer Frau*

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[1] According to Jean-Francois Staszak, otherness, as it is constructed through othering, concerns the veneration of the other and women in exoticism (Staszak, 2009), in relation to the male Western self and vice versa, thereby reassuring superiority.

[2] In his work *Untitled (Portrait of Ross in L.A.*) (1991), Gonzalez-Torres allegorically represented his deceased partner Ross Laycock with a 175 pound-pile of candy. The candies are individually wrapped in

(All the Clothes of a Woman) (1974),[3] together with two corresponding artworks by Sophie Calle: *Suite vénitienne* (1980) and *The Shadow* (1981).[4]

My interest in the combination of the genres of portrait and self-portrait in contemporary art sparked the project, *StillePost* (1999) (see Appendix IV); this work resulted in the subsequent production of a corpus of interdisciplinary, cross-cultural arts practice interventions/experiments discussed in this thesis.[5] My aim was to challenge the historical hegemony of the colonial gaze from a gendered positionality, so as to represent and critically address this entangled relationship – a major aspect of contemporary art today. A dialogical art practice has emerged out of this intention, engaging with a series of interrelated questions: who is representing whom, and how can my empirical research method create reciprocity – unlike the traditional research hierarchy – so that the researcher is no longer perceived as researcher and the other as researched? [6]

In Part I, I trace the notion of the other, the concept of othering on which my arts practice and fieldwork methodologies are critically framed. I address the relevant historical and contemporary aspects of the portrait in relation to the Western gaze and

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multicolor cellophane. Whereas the ideal weight of the artwork is 175lbs, the installation's dimension varies. It can be interpreted as a generalised or approximated weight of a healthy individual, such as Ross Laycock before he died of an AIDS-related illness. Gonzalez-Torres used the same weight for *Untitled (Portrait of Dad),* a representation of his father that he created in the same year. While in an exhibition, viewers are given the choice to take a piece of candy; the authorised borrower (e.g. a gallery or museum) is free to decide whether to replenish the work or let it completely disappear (personal correspondence, Caitlin Burkhart, The Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation, 5 December 2017).

[3] For his work *Alle Kleider einer Frau* (1974), Feldmann framed black and white Polaroid photographs of the entire clothing stock of a friend, in what I have interpreted as a 'portrait'. Like many of the artist's snapshot series, the pictures of the woman's clothes are turned into art by Feldmann's grouping them together (Kranz, 2016).

[4] Whereas in *Suite vénitienne* (1980) Calle followed and covertly photographed a man on his journey from Paris to Venice, in *The Shadow* (1981*)* she asked her mother to hire a detective to report secretly on her daily activities in order, as she noted, to 'provide photographic evidence of my existence' (Calle, 2003).

[5] *StillePost* explored artists' self-representation in their portraits of others (Wilde, 1890; Hall, 2014) through a multiple copying process.

[6] So as to challenge the hierarchy that positions the researcher as an 'expert on the experiences of the other' (Hesse-Bieber, 2014: 56), turning it into a 'researcher-participant coproduction of knowledge' (Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessach, 2009: 279).

explain how I was trying to subvert this gaze to foreground multi-sensory practices of relating and addressing that are prevalent in non-Western cultures. I analyse the steps I undertook to interpret the cultural practices central to my research as forms of aesthetic representation, tracing my interactions with participants in the intercultural encounters, focusing on the power relations at play and thereby interrogating my own position within these relations of power. Indeed, I sought to explore my own prejudices and constraints, thus responding to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, who 'emphasized the limitations and blind spots of academic disciplinary discourse' (Morton, 2003: 20).[7]

In Part II, I focus on the mediation of the dialogical encounters in different arenas (gallery, anthropological museum, academic presentations). I discuss how the artworks finally enter the public realm, based on my own as well as other's observations, including audience feedback during artist talks and academic presentations. I analyse how my post-production (interpretive, creative, curatorial and mediatory) practice in regard to the contested space of the anthropological museum, as well as at a number of anthropological conferences, was productive in the endeavour to move the representation of otherness from a modernist history to a contemporary frame that begins to articulate a critical point of view.

Considering the dominant Western ocularcentric approach to representation, a key research question emerged across the projects discussed. Is it possible to identify and define alternative and multi-sensory methodological and analytical frameworks through which the other can be represented? Assuming that non-Western and indigenous methods provide new and further insights, thus adding to the visual information

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[7] Stephen Morton argued that by focusing on the 'rhetorical blind spots or grounding mistakes which stabilise conventional notions of truth and reality', it is possible to expose 'how the world is represented from the dominant perspective and geopolitical location of the 'First World' to the exclusion of other disenfranchised groups' (Morton, 2003: 4–5).

dominant in the West, this question is precisely what I set out to explore in my arts practice and in this thesis – constituting in and of itself a self-learning project.

I argue that the experimental methodology adopted in the *Portrait as Dialogue* projects, the name I gave to my methodology and to the resulting series of artworks, both reinforces and challenges dominant Western regimes of representation, creating an inherent ambiguity. This, I maintain, goes hand in hand with the idea that as practitioners/artists we are always inside the picture that we make of others, inasmuch as we can only perceive in the other what we can grasp about ourselves. My innovative methodology, which positions my vulnerable self at the centre of the research, provides a previously unseen possibility to foreground non-Western and indigenous multi-sensory ways of relating and addressing, thereby expanding on the conception and visual practice of the Western portrait. I, therefore, believe that my arts practice makes a significant contribution to the endeavour to achieve 'mental decolonisation' (Kebede, 2004; Hansen/Nielson, 2011; Tessagaye/Sewenet, 2017), especially as the artworks are mediated in the anthropological museum – currently a contested space and topic. Moreover, foregrounding culturally grounded methodologies and sensorially organized representational systems side by side with a Western vision-based approach, representing Western and non-Western people together, should be construed as a normative and equalising exhibitionary practice.

Since I did not plan from the outset to translate my arts practice into an academic format, I did not keep a research diary or formal field notes, central to ethnographic but not to artistic research.[8] Moreover, I did not produce any significant visual or auditory

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[8] Peter Pels considered the written diary account 'one of the most important Western technologies of the self', in line with the Puritan confession of sins (Pels, 2000: 184). 'Confession', or 'getting personal', anthropologist Anne Lovell argued, constitutes 'an essential part of data gathering' (Lovell, quoted in McLean/Leibing, 2011: 184) in social science research, fostering an 'intersubjectivity that, however

material to document my 'fieldwork' activities. Hence for the purpose of my thesis I have had to rely on my 'headnotes', as Simon Ottenberg has named 'remembered observations' (Ottenberg, 1990: 144). As Michael Jackson and Albert Piette (2015) remarked, these recollections, even if only a few years after the event, tend to be inaccurate. However, Shulamit Reinharz pointed out that even field notes do not reliably render field experience (Gergen and Gergen, 2000).[9]

Given that I occupy and embody a unifying principle across all research projects with participants whose practice I explored, I am committed to a reflexive approach to both the practice and the representation. As a feminist researcher, it is important for me to recognise my social positioning and acknowledge that my exploration is a personal interpretation 'within a particular discursive constellation', in which I, as much as participants, are 'both subjects of and subjected to social construction' (Alcoff, 1988: 431). According to Norman Denzin, '[i]nterpretive research begins and ends with the biography and self of the researcher' (Denzin, 1986: 12), whose identity is a multi-layered phenomenon (Montaigne, 1958).[10] Since our lives are in flux, so are our subject positions. In that regard we are always in a state of 'betweenness' (Nast 1994)[11] and 'becoming' (Lather, 2004).[12] I will therefore reveal my fluctuating self to the reader

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limited as a research tool, is nonetheless the best we have' (van den Geest, quoted in McLean/Leibing, 2011: 184).

[9] Reinharz, who revisited detailed field notes following a completed project, traced the way she referred to herself during the course of the year, remarking how different responses on her part became relevant over time (Gergen and Gergen, 2000).

[10] Michel de Montaigne wrote: 'We are entirely made up of bits and pieces, woven together so shapelessly that each of them pulls its own way at every moment. And there is as much difference between us and ourselves as between us and others' (Montaigne, 1958: 244).

[11] Nast argued that betweenness 'highlights the fact that we can never *not* work with "others" who are separate and different from ourselves', difference being an essential aspect of all social interactions, requiring that 'we are always everywhere in between or negotiating the worlds of me and not-me' (Nast, 1994: 57).

[12] This was also expressed by Kabbalist Samuel Avital: 'I am not simply a human being. I am human becoming' (Avital, cited in Ellis, 1988: xiv).

across this thesis through a questioning of positionality, thereby exploring the personal process of decolonisation and its location within my research.[13]

During the process of writing this thesis I came to understand that my research methodology has been deeply rooted in my subject formation. Yet I never had the courage to look at it so closely and candidly prior to the thesis writing and in doing so, I am subjecting myself and the arts practice itself, to questions of risk and scrutability beyond what I imagined. After all, it is possible that the unconscious working through of my personal conditions, which was the genesis of my work, will be needed for its continuation. Hence, in writing this thesis, I continued the vulnerable approach that is central to my work discussed in it.

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[13] According to Smith, Harré and Van Langenhove, identity is *phenomenological*, 'describing the inner stream of consciousness of the person in the social situation', the *material self,* 'consisting of all the person calls his or hers in a particular moment of time', the *ideological self*, which defines the individual in a particular social group in connection to the 'broader cultural and historical meaning that surrounds it' and the *self-as-desire,* which refers to 'that mode of self-experience which desires its own fulfillment through the flesh, sexuality and the bodily presence of the other' (Smith, Harré and Van Langenhove, 1995: 45).

Part I

When we women offer our experience as our truth, as human truth, all the maps change.

(Ursula K. Le Guin, 1989: 160)

This discussion explores how my interest in the genre of the portrait in historical and contemporary 'othering' became an aspect of research inquiry and how this has resulted in a dialogical arts practice which set out to subvert the Western gaze. In earlier writing, I remarked on how personal experience with my physically challenged twin sister gave rise to my awareness of sameness and difference; the entanglement between 'self' and 'other' became 'central themes in my work as an artist', feeding into my arts practice (Boeck, 2013: 490).[14] For me, my sister was both other and self.[15] However, whereas I was considered 'normal', she was not, despite her being normal for me, as she was for herself in her own daydreams.[16] At the same time we were dissimilar in that I felt unseen whereas she was visible. This experience informed our approaches to life as much as my art practice. While Bettina learned to ignore the visible (her physical challenge), concentrating on her invisible inner qualities, I tried to figure out what it felt like to be 'visible'. From there, my practice turned into an exploration of the 'other' recognised in Western culture versus the 'foreign person's' other, combined with an

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[14] Marjorie DeVault, in *Feminist Qualitative Research. Emerging Lines of Inquiry*, observed that the 'continuum of disability/ability' is 'a dimension of inequality' which is 'relatively unexplored by those working intersectionally to understand the simultaneous dynamics of gender, race, and class' (DeVault, 2018: 185).

[15] Here the 'mirror stage' (the perception of one's own self-image as an object one can view as the other, from outside) (Lacan, 1949) comes to mind. According to Lysanne Fauvel, this can be a confusing experience for twins, since the access to subjectivity occurs from the 'outside in' instead of from 'the inside out' (Fauvel, 2012: 453). Consequently, deep doubts about their identities can assail their young minds, calling forth questions such as 'Who am I?' and 'Is she me or am I her?' (Piontelli, 2002).

[16] My sister is bound to a wheelchair due to complications during the birth process. In 1967, in Munich, ultrasound equipment was not common in hospitals. The physicians realised that it was a complicated twin birth too late for a caesarean section. Bettina's resulting physiological damage was the result of a massive oxygen deficiency.

exploration of the senses and, along with this, fundamentally different practices of relating, thereby enabling better self-understanding.[17] These three topics are discussed in turn below.

My research began as an awareness of a paradox existing since the early modern era regarding assumptions about what makes a successful portrait: on the one hand, the firm belief in the invisible (or inner) qualities of a European individual; on the other hand, the assumption that a cultural other could be truly accessible by visual means. This, together with another paradox connected to the portrait's 'present absence' (being-there and being-away at the same time) (Marek, 2007), mirrored a personal experience: being seen versus being unseen with my physically-challenged twin sister.[18]

Following this up, I was attracted to indigenous and non-Western methodologies since, traditionally, they have been concerned with the question of the 'invisible' (Kovach, 2018: 221). Strangely, non-Western practitioners had never been consulted about the creation of a more complete 'portrait'. I assumed that exploring multi-sensory perceptions and related expressions of otherness – based on non-visual forms of aesthetic representation – might provide new, deeper insights that could contribute to the visual information prevalent in the West, thereby expanding our conception of the portrait. For I argue that, outside European culture, there are cultural practices that resort to a multitude of human senses. This will be illustrated in the thesis by three examples of more than a decade of art practice and associated publications: a particular aspect of the sense of vision, namely imagination, found in female veiling in Yemen

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[17] In the words of Siri Hustvedt: 'We become ourselves through others, and the self is a porous thing, not a sealed container'. Without the ability to convey the viewpoint of the other, she further argues, without our capacity 'to imagine being that other person', we 'would not be self-conscious', and without self-consciousness we would not construct 'the liable self we all have' (Hustvedt, 2012: 106, 108).
[18] Marek's quote (translated from German by Angelika Boeck) is taken from a lecture by Merz Akademie. Available from: bloghttps://www.merz-akademie.de/veranstaltungen/anwesende-abwesenheit/ [Accessed 22 June 2018].

(*Imagine Me,* 2007); the sense of seeing in combination with the sense of hearing, as experienced by the indigenous Sámi's yoik (*Seek Me*, 2005); and the sense of seeing in combination with the sense of vibration developed by Aboriginal Australians in track reading (*Track Me,* 2006)[19], exploring various forms of apprehension as they are privileged in different cultures (e.g. Stoller, 1989, 1997; Howes, 1991, 2005, 2017; Seremetakis, 2008; Pink, 2009). I further refer to an earlier project (*StillePost, 1999*), which is fundamental to understanding the durational aspect underpinning this thesis.

My methodology is derived from both Western and non-Western approaches, especially indigenous ones which recognise the 'exploration of identity', value 'interconnectivity' and honour the 'ability to be vulnerable' (Kovach, 2018: 220). Moreover, I sought to meet the requirement that indigenous research should contribute to the revaluation of indigenous societies (Smith, 1999; Atkinson, 2001; Andersen and O'Brien, 2017; Phillips, 2018; Kovach, 2018). Since indigenous researchers emphasise that epistemology and methodology must be considered together (Wilson, 2001; Kovach, 2018), I will discuss the theoretical and methodological aspects relevant for my arts practice at the same time. According to Weber-Pillwax (2001), one cannot perceive of something one does not know. Hence, I can never fully grasp the essence of indigenous epistemology and ontology. While I acknowledge that my cultural lens limits my awareness of other ways of knowing, I nevertheless attempted to do so the best I could.[20]

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[19] Vibration 'provides a basis for thinking about relations between the senses' (Trower, 2012: 5).
[20] Having lived for seven years (2010–2016) as a relative member of the Kelabit community, one of the smallest indigenous groups in Sarawak in central Borneo, I have had some experiences that go far beyond the usual level of research engagement. To expand on this, however, would exceed the scope of this thesis.

I.1 Making Use of Othering

In my journal contribution 'Portrait as Dialogue: Exercising the Dialogical Self' (2013), I explained that my use of the term 'other' was meant as a synonym for 'opponent' which then gives way to 'contributor' (Boeck, 2013a: 38). My starting point was that the other is what I am not, and that this is all I can tell about him or her, and vice versa. Or, to put it in the words of Cixous and Clément, 'if it is truly the "other" there is nothing to say' (Cixous /Clément, 1996: 71). It is also assumed that we need another to build up an idea of ourselves. And that if the other can only be realised in what Grant Hamilton calls 'Self-as-Other' (Hamilton, 2011: 158), it is impossible to disentangle 'self' from 'other'.

What resonates with my own experience as a twin corresponds to Martin Seel's philosophical model of *Zwischenmenschliche Begegnung* (Intersubjective Encounter) – that the other becomes co-author of our own self through 'dialogical action' (Seel, 1995: 86). With a cross-cultural focus, Edward Said described the entanglement as such:

> The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences' [...] European culture gained its strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self (Said, 1978: 9-11).[21]

According to Homi Bhabha the 'other' is never outside or beyond us; 'it emerges forcefully, within cultural discourse, when we *think* we speak most intimately and indigenously 'between ourselves'' (Bhabha, 1990: 4). Many feminist and postcolonial scholars have argued that colonial categories for representing the other were not only

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[21] John Clammer (2014) emphasised that although Edward Said's theory of *Orientalism* (1978) has located culture at its heart, *mutual representation* of the colonisers and colonised has so far been studied in literature rather than the visual arts.

constructing an image of the conquerable subaltern, but were also fundamental in shaping the conqueror's own identity (Berger, 2008 [1972]); Fabian, 1983; Spivak, 1985; Clifford, 1986; Lydon and Rizvi, (2016 [2010]). In line with Freud, who stressed that for the ego, the repressed is *inneres Ausland* (inner foreign territory) (Freud, 1969 [1933]), Foster argued that 'otherness was used to ward away others (women, death, the primitive) […] by which […] a crisis in phallocentric culture was turned into one of its first monuments' (Foster, 2016: 46).

Johannes Fabian acknowledged that Susan Sontag sparked the use of the term 'the Other' in anthropology. [22] The Other was considered stripped of the effects of civilisation, which served as a contrasting foil in a cultural process of 'self-fashioning' (Thomson, 2011: 7; Edwards, 2015: 242). [23] Human 'origin' in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, presupposed 'races' that could be characterised as superior or inferior (e.g. Moore 1993; Montagu 1974; Miles 1989; Rigney, 2001). For example, Aboriginal Australians were considered 'naturally inferior to Europeans' and 'serially prior to them' (Byrne, 1996: 90) due to a 'lack of clothing or shelter' (Banner, 2005: 107); Simek (2018) hypothesised that troll figures in Norse mythology stood for the Sámi. [24] Another strategy, observed by Gerhard Strohmaier, was deliberate neglect:

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[22] Sontag, quoted by Fabian: 'Europe seeks itself in the exotic [...] among preliterate peoples [...] The 'other' is experienced as a harsh purification of "self"' (Fabian, 2006: 140).

[23] Thompson argues that this is especially obvious in travel writing, which 'has often constituted a highly masculinised medium of self-expression and self-fashioning' (Thompson, 2011:7), adding that many women have also utilised the genre to their own ends. Another literary strategy was observed by Randi Gunzenhäuser, who concentrates on historical Modernism and on city sounds in American literature. She argues that, in social terms, 'literature makes us hear those whom we may refuse to see' (Gunzenhäuser, 2009: 8). Elizabeth Edwards recognised the 'self-fashioning' of the anthropologist especially in relation to photography (Edwards, 2015: 242).

[24] Interestingly, according to Simek, who researches the myths and languages of Scandinavia in Icelandic mythology, many heroes are the children of troll women.

Arab scholars were ignored in the West until the European sciences had far surpassed them (Strohmaier, 2001: 74).[25]

The implications of the processes of othering, which construct and secure one's own normality by understanding others as deviant (Feichtinger, 2015), were reason for the anthropologist Fabian 'to continue the struggle with alterity' (Fabian, 2006: 148). For my part, they inspired me to look 'at myself through the "eyes of the other"' as an artist (Boeck, 2013: 507).[26] To do so I overturned the 'role of the artist as the sole performer and the status of the researcher as an outside observer' (Boeck, 2015: 1). In order to achieve this 'overturning', I developed an innovative methodology. It was guided by the values and knowledge of indigenous people who value reciprocity, self-awareness, subjectivity, and relationality (Smith, 1999; Kovach, 2018). My intention concurred with a 'relational art' approach (Bourriaud et al., 2002), which 'seeks to establish intersubjective encounters' – be these literal or potential – 'in which meaning is elaborated collectively' (Bishop, 2004: 54).

Michael Jackson argued that 'the process of othering that places one's own agency in abeyance is a precondition for clearing one's head of confusing subjective preoccupations and returning to oneself as someone capable of taking a hand in determining their own fate' (Jackson, 2015: 10). Consequently, in feminist emancipation Gabriele Dietze found a historically consistent tendency to refer to an Oriental patriarch as a contrasting foil to the feminist programme with regard to the

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[25] Taking the example of one of the most important scholars of the Islamic Middle Ages, Abu r-Raihan Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Biruni (973-1048), Strohmeier showed that influential Western scholars, such as the French orientalist Joseph Toussaint Reinaud (1795-1867) and the German natural scientist Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859), had spread the word about him to Europe as early as the middle of the nineteenth century; in spite of this, he was only 'discovered' by modern Arabic philology (Strohmaier, 2001).
[26] According to Georges E. Marcus, many other topics and subjects 'have gained currency' since the 'crisis of representation', but the old subjects of anthropology, such as 'alterity and conditions of indigenous people, for which ethnographic method was devised historically […] have still held an ideological central compass' (Marcus, 2016: 3).

veiled woman (*Imagine Me*).[27] Dietze's term 'Feminist Orientalism' (Dietze, 2014: 243) was explicated by Craig Owens: 'In order to speak, to represent herself, a woman assumes a masculine position' (Owens, 1985: 59).[28]

Adjusting to a masculine position rather than taking a female perspective is in line with many women's everyday experiences; for me, this behaviour was learned at an early age. In order to connect with my father who, much to his regret, had two daughters, one of whom was physically challenged, instead of a wished-for son, I needed to pretend I was a boy.[29] This is especially relevant in the project *Imagine Me* (see Appendix III) and concerns my approach to representation across all research projects. I shifted from a feminist position in the intersubjective encounters to the dominant practice I learned culturally as well as through my own life experience. This not only applies to postproduction but also to my written publications, which I address in Part II.

I.2 Revisiting the Portrait: Turning to Aesthetic Representation

The research outlined in this thesis evolved gradually, combining the three main themes of my artistic work: portrait, dialogue and sensory perception.[30] It is based on the awareness of a contrast between the historical Western conception of the Other as inferior (Said, 1978; Hall, 1997) with the expectations of a successful portrait of a European individual. A portrait is commonly understood as a symbolic visual form associated with identification and recognition, allowing the viewer to distinguish one

[27] Dietze observed this tendency, especially in radical feminists (Dietze, 2014).

[28] This was demonstrated by Yemeni artist Boushra Almutawkel in her work, *What if* (2008). Available at: http://www.wbur.org/artery/2013/10/09/female-photographers-middle-east-boston-mfa [Accessed 14 October 2018].

[29] Maybe for him I had to be the child that he had forced my mother to abort before we twins were born.

[30] John Berger (1995) suggested that few artists had more than three main subjects in their work. James Reineking (1937–2018), my professor in sculpture at the Munich art academy, told me at the end of my second year of study that I was a voyeur and most probably would become a good portraitist. The two artworks on which he had based his assumption were *Sink* (1992), available from: http://www.angelika-boeck.de/en/works/all-works/single-page-all-works/sink/ and *Year* (1994), available from: http://www.angelika-boeck.de/en/works/all-works/single-page-all-works/year/ [Accessed 19 January 2018].

person from another (Kampmann, 2012). While the historical portrait had to 'underwrite and idealize the chosen social role of the sitter', the modern portrait sought to satisfy the desire to be recognised 'for what one really is' (Berger, 1972: 44). From the Renaissance onwards, a portrait was expected to render the key aspects of a person's physiognomy or external characteristics through different poses, such as full-face, three-quarter profile or silhouette. In addition, a portrait was to convey the person's invisible, 'innermost self', 'nature' and even 'self-conception' (Freeland, 2007: 107). The quest for these 'invisible' qualities in a portrait can still be observed in Roland Barthes' search for 'a just image' and not 'just an image' of his deceased mother (Barthes, 1981: 70) and in contemporary artists' 'faceless' representations.

As indicated in the introduction to this thesis, I aimed for mutual representation, or 'portrait as dialogue', borrowing the combination of portrait and self-portrait created by Sophie Calle (1980; 1981; see Calle, 2003) and Timm Ulrichs (1978; see Ulrichs, 1980), thereby bringing Hans-Peter Feldmann's and Felix Gonzalez-Torres' 'faceless' representations into dialogue with the quest for the 'invisible' in the Western portrait. While the way in which Calle faced the same procedure as she applied to others sparked my idea of 'mutual portrayal', the central element of all *Portrait as Dialogue* projects, Timm Ulrichs' work *Das getroffene Bild, das betroffene Ich* (1973/1978) (Ulrichs, 1980)[31], illustrating Susan Sontag's conception of the camera as a predatory weapon that is loaded, aimed and shot (Sontag, 1979)[32], inspired an oppositional form of reciprocity attempted in my *Portrait as Dialogue* series.

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[31] Ulrich's performance reacted to a newspaper photograph showing a Chilean soldier, the rifle pointed at the viewer. The image was the last picture in the camera of thirty-three-year-old photojournalist Leonardo Henrichsen, who was found shot dead on 29 June 1973. Ulrichs shot himself in effigy by firing a bullet at the lens of a running video camera (Ulrichs, 1980). Sixteen years later, in 1989, the Argentine Congress established 29 June as the *National Day of the Cameraman* in Henrichsen's memory.

[32] It is further inspired by a film editing technique which is used in dialogue situations. A conversation between two people is often shot with each person alone in the frame in three-quarter profile. These shots

Ruth Holliday observed that in the past anthropologists sought to 'evacuate self-representation' from their research, arguing that it would introduce 'bias'; in recent years, however, some anthropologists have given their participants cameras to produce anthropologies 'from within', and these accounts have been criticised for being more 'partial' than the anthropologists' representations (Holliday, 2012: 330). In my own research, I aimed to embed the idea that 'the researcher […] is, fundamentally, the primary research instrument' (Arendell, 1997: 343), and as such is always in the frame, in the same 'relationship that holds between an author and a text' (Foucault, 2001: 15). I sought to counterpose how I am contained in the way I see a cultural other to how s/he becomes identifiable by the way s/he sees me – each highlighting self-understanding, bias and worldviews. I further combined elements from art and anthropology with indigenous and non-Western methodologies concerned with expressing alterity in non-visual forms, such as the Sámi's yoik. In so doing, I adopted various lenses, seeking to 'see more deeply' and thereby coinciding with what Richardson and Adams St. Pierre called a 'social science art form' (Richardson and Adams St. Pierre, 2018: 824).

I.3 Aesthetic Forms of Representation: Between Individuality and Relationality

John Jeffries Martin, who concedes that it became possible to think in new ways about the 'self' in the Renaissance but believes that the birth of the individual at the end of the European Middle Ages must be considered a myth, has proposed the notion of 'relational self' (Martin, 2004). [33] This perspective corresponds to the perceptions of

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are typically close-ups, but the back of the other person may be visible. When the scene is edited, one person is looking right and the other looking left, so the viewer assumes that they are looking at each other and are engaged in direct conversation. This shooting-editing style is called '*shot/reverse shot*' or '*angle/reverse angle*' (Asher and Pincus, 2013: 323).

[33] The notion of modern individualism has long been located by traditional Renaissance scholarship in 'portraiture and biography and, even more strongly, in self-portraiture and autobiography' (Martin, 2004: 10). Following John Jeffries Martin's argument, Peter Chametzky argued that the influential historian of art and culture Jakob Burckhardt had projected Romantic notions of individualism on to Italian Renaissance artists, establishing a paradigm for art-historical studies (Chametzky, 2014).

many indigenous people, for whom identity as an individual is inseparably connected to the community to which those individuals belong (United Nations, 2017). Western individuality, one of the central notions of modern thought, emphasises the individual self. It is just one of three fundamental components of self-representation (the other two being relational self and collective self), which together form the self-concept (Sedikides/Brewer, 2016). In contrast, indigenous and non-Western cultures appear to prioritise or repress other components of fundamental self-representation and this, I suggest, finds expression in aesthetic forms of representation.[34] Similarly, the emphasis on the Western 'autonomous individual rather than the relations between individuals' (i.e. kinship, as in so-called traditional societies) can be linked to 'the separation of the senses' rather than their 'conjunction or interaction' (Howes, 2017: 163).

For example, in the past, Aboriginal people in Australia did not portray individuals through unique traits, but represented them through several interconnected forms. This, for example, could be an inherited totem design which equally represented the other individuals associated with the totem.[35] The totem was also associated with the mythological ancestor and the land connected to it, represented in painting.[36]

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[34] Sydney Walker (2004) remarked that systems of representation connote worldviews and paradigms, expressing how we understand the world.

[35] Howard Morphy (2008) explained that totem designs (for example, a kangaroo, rainbow serpent or mulgar seed) belong to clans and represent the group as a whole. Each clan is divided into two overarching groups, and each group has its own totems according to a matrilineal or patrilineal system, reflecting the male and female aspects of the creation (Lawlor, 1993). In general, indigenous Australians believed that women became pregnant not through sexual intercourse alone, but also because the man's spirit 'found' a child's spirit and directed it to his woman (Stanner, 2009). The place where the mother started to feel her pregnancy was declared as the location of spiritual conception and the child became connected to the land and totem. If the conception totem differed from the totem of a child's homeland s/he would be associated with both (Munn, 1986). The personal totem, which was applied in the form of body painting on the person's torso during initiation or in case of death (Berndt, 1974; Lawlor, 1993), was said to reside normally within the person's chest (Howitt, 1996[1904]). It marked the ancestral identity of that person with the power of that particular ancestral being (Morphy, 2008).

[36] Painting was previously a purely ceremonial and ephemeral act. Howard Morphy noted that Aboriginal Australian images constitute mythological maps that reveal the features that lie beneath the surface of the land and water. This should be considered a meditation on aspects of the ancestral creativity and environmental forces associated with a place (Morphy, 2008). In such paintings land is not shown as landscape (as in Euro-American images) but as a series of circles and lines, with circles standing in for wells and lines (and dots) for the ancestors' tracks that shaped the land (Jones, 1985). The entire

Additionally, an individual could be represented by a name and its phonetics, which usually corresponded to a feature of the totem (Lawlor, 1993), and by their own footprints (*Track Me*).[37]

Delving into a wide range of indigenous epistemologies (Liamputtong, 2010), I drew on performative artistic practices that are directed at self-learning and cultural enquiry. Shawn Wilson, a descendant of the Cree people, stressed that although certain aspects of Western and non-Western paradigms may be congruent, indigenous research paradigms 'are fundamentally different' (Wilson, 2001: 176).[38] The indigenous paradigm does not rest on the belief that knowledge is an individual entity, which can be 'gained' and 'individually owned'. Instead it comes from the fundamental belief that knowledge is 'relational' and 'shared with all creation' (Wilson, 2001: 176). Moreover, it is not the realities or objects in and of themselves that are important, Wilson explains, but the relationships with realities and objects.[39]

Similarly, in contemporary art, French art critic Nicolas Bourriaud elaborated on the importance of relationality. He views 'relational art' or 'relational aesthetics' as an artistic tendency that 'takes as [its] theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context', rather than an 'independent and private space' (Bourriaud et al., 2002: 113). Relationality can be observed, for example, in the work of Serbian artist Marina Abramović and British artist Marcus Coates. Whereas

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phenomenon of 'Aboriginal Australian Art' would, in fact, not exist but for a desire for it on the part of a white audience (Butler, 2002).

[37] The importance of sound and imprints is evidenced by the fact that in Central Australian languages, after a person's death, his/her footprints are removed and his/her name is taboo, including all other words with a similar sound (Kendon, 1989).

[38] Scientific Western research considers itself a superior knowledge system; other knowledge systems or self-understandings are excluded or not even considered (Jack and Westwood 2009). This is why Wilson endorsed research that derived from an Indigenous paradigm rather than one used in the Eurocentric way of doing research, or adopting an Indigenous perspective on these non-Indigenous paradigms (Wilson, 2001).

[39] Wilson emphasised that what counts for indigenous researchers is their relationship to an idea or concept, as in feminist research, but differing from the dominant perspective.

Coates travelled in trance within the animal kingdom, Abramović engaged physically and spiritually.[40] Most importantly in relation to my own practice, these artists placed themselves in a radically vulnerable position in order to gain and mediate direct experiences, to unravel for themselves and for an audience a source of inspiration which may function as a catalyst for change – something common in feminist art (Donovan, 2012). Whereas Abramović's self-exposition is at the centre of her existence (Walters, 2015),[41] Coates adopted the precarious role of the shaman (Coates, 2005) in his aim of 'becoming animal in order to see what humanness means', as he explained in a video interview (Coates, 2014).[42] *Rhythm 0,* a performance by Abramović (1979), is the work that had most influence on my own practice; for six hours she put her life and body completely in the hands of strangers, turning herself into an object to be used as one wished.[43]

I.4 Researcher and Researched as Subject and Object

For my part, my vulnerability entailed putting my body at the centre of my arts practice towards the cultural other, as advocated by feminist research methodology. From the outset, feminist art practice has been interested in challenging unequal power relations, arguing against the objectification of women by male (artistic) subjects (Berger, 2008/1972; Rosler, 2006). The activation of female experience through the body was often a key element, aiming to draw attention to women's lack of cultural and artistic

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[40] In the early 1980s Abramović and her partner Ulay journeyed across the Central Australian desert with members of the Pintupi which inspired their future work. Rose Lee Goldberg suggested that the artists' travels, which included 'profound introspection' and 'the ability to diffuse the pressure of their utterly consuming and potentially dangerous entanglement with one another', led them 'to new ideas for the structure of their performances and suggested quite different concerns' (Goldberg, 1995: 12).

[41] Abramović made her life, and especially her fears, the subject of her ritualised performances, under the motto: 'What you are afraid of is exactly what you are supposed to do' (Abramović, quoted in Goldberg, 1995: 11).

[42] Like a shaman Coates 'works on behalf of community by using the skill of becoming animal' (Coates, 2014). He performs entering in and out of his skin at will, something he cultivated during childhood when he suffered from eczema (Finlay, 2005).

[43] The artist agreed to remain completely passive until the experiment was over.

power and/or to address political ideas and principles (Deckel, 2013). At the same time, feminist artists have always been engaged in the struggle with visual representation, often including themselves in their work (for example, Lynda Benglis, Cindy Sherman, Martha Rosler, Gillian Wearing). Moreover, as Helena Reckitt argued, in performing and presenting themselves as others, feminist artists have provided insights into 'how people come to understand themselves in relation to other sexed bodies, simultaneously as objects and subjects' (Reckitt, 2013: 140).[44]

My arts practice corresponds to feminist research which emphasises the encounter between researchers and researched. As Haraway noted, 'feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge, not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object. It allows us to become answerable for what we learn how to see' (Haraway, 1988: 583).[45] Like other feminist researchers, I focused on 'the validity of personal experience in contrast to scientific method' (Hussain and Asad, 2012: 204) and on a 'researcher-participant coproduction of knowledge' (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009: 279), in which 'the division between researcher and subject is blurred, and control over representation is increasingly shared' (Gergen and Gergen, 2000: 1035).

I.5 From Objectification to Sensory Relation

Gillian Rose (2016), following Donna Haraway (1988) and John Tagg (1988), remarked that only a select few people and institutions – connected to the history of science, colonialism, militarism and male supremacy – have employed 'the mechanisms of sight

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[44] It is important to note that exposing my young female Western body as an object of research might not always have been perceived as a movement towards a more balanced power relationship between researcher and researched, even though this does not correspond to my actual experience with project participants.

[45] It is believed that the methodology of feminist research differs for three reasons from traditional research. Firstly, the 'exploration' and 'challenge' of the 'power imbalance between the researcher and the researched'; secondly, its research approach, which seeks to 'remove social inequalities'; and finally, it 'asks for the experience of women to guide the whole research process' (Hussain/Asad, 2012: 203), focusing on 'the validity of personal experience in contrast to scientific method' (ibid.: 204).

and its historical techniques' (Foster, 1988: IX), thereby establishing vision as the modus operandi and symbol for truth in capitalist states.[46] The English phrase *I see*, which is synonymous with *I understand*, hardly happened by chance (Hustvedt, 2006).[47]

By offering myself, the person behind the camera, to the scrutiny of the research objects, I attempted to reclaim the embodied presence of the researcher as a dialogical partner. I also aimed to experience new ways of relating, to train my own sensory faculties, to expand my artistic capacities and to gain additional knowledge about myself. In the course of the exploration recounted in this thesis, I even came to believe that I needed to reflect myself in the other in order to connect with myself.

By depicting my counterparts with the help of visual technology, however, I pursued a different, two-fold goal: it was simultaneously directed at a historical practice (portraiture), and at visual appropriation of the other by myself and other contemporary Western artists/researchers. In practical terms, I addressed the idea that, historically, documentary photography has tended to present the relatively powerless to the relatively powerful (Rosler, 1989; Rose, 2016), having reversed 'the political axis of representation' (Tagg, 1988: 7), turning the power and prestige to be recorded into 'a sign of subjection' (Tagg, 2009: XXXI).[48]

Photography, and later film and/or video, was both a symbol of technological superiority and unequal relationships, and a metaphor for 'rationalised observed truth'

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[46] Reflecting on Hans Jonas's essay *The Nobility of Sight: A Study in the Phenomenology of the Senses* (2001[1966]), Hanna Arendt observed that 'from the very outset, in formal philosophy, thinking has been thought in terms of *seeing,* and since thinking is the most fundamental and the most radical of mental activities, it is quite true that vision has tended to serve as the model of perception in general and thus as the measure of other senses' (Arendt, 1978: 110). Today, scientists on the whole agree that the senses are shaped by environmental, cultural and social circumstances rather than being solely innate and the question whether senses perceive the world, or make it for us by shaping our perceptions, remains unanswered (Di Bello/Koureas, 2010).

[47] In contrast, the Kisêdjê Indians of Brazil (formerly known as the Suyá) use the word for hearing, '*kumba',* both for '*hearing*' (a sound) and '*knowing*' or '*understanding*' (Howes, 2017: 161).

[48] At the same time the availability of photography allowed the middle class to have their 'portrait done' (Tagg, 1988: 13), which had only been possible for the upper class.

(Edwards, 1992: 6), namely the 'objective truth about the world' (Crary, 1988: 31). David Green has argued that anthropological photography emerged as a new technology objectifying the bodies of the subjected. In his eyes, photography became 'central and complicitous…[in]…the articulation of race and racial differences' (Green, 1984: 31).[49] This was most notable when photography was applied to the anthropological project of racial comparison and regional body morphology as practiced during the nineteenth century, using measuring systems proposed by Thomas Henry Huxley and John Lamprey.[50] If European subjects were included in these images at all, it was to provide – through their height, clothing and equipment – a foil against which the Other was used 'as an illustration of the European past' (Lydon/Rizvi, 2016 [2010]): 39). However, more often than not, the (male and superior) European subject against which the Other was staged remained invisible behind the camera.[51]

This unequal relationship was clearly depicted and challenged by the American artist Karen Knorr in her work *Hårleman's Anatomy* (1994) (Figure 1.1).[52] The work in her *Academies* series (1994–2005) successfully amounted to a 'small intervention within the classical canon of representation' reflecting 'on the nature of power and knowledge' and 'photography's position in the academy' (Knorr, 1997: 75).

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[49] Modes of (self-)representation were entangled in processes in which photographs of oneself and of others were translated and mediated in new ways, 'generating not only new visibilities, immediacies, and proximities, but also distances, ruptures, and withdrawal' (Behrend, 2013: 18).
[50] In 1869, Huxley suggested that all subjects be photographed naked, full-length in frontal and profile poses with a supplement of full face and profile of the subject's head, accompanied by a measuring scale placed at a fixed distance from the camera. Lamprey, in the same year, suggested the metrological grid that had long been used by artists to accurately capture body proportions (Spencer, 1992). The device often consisted of a wooden frame in which horizontal and vertical silk threads formed two-inch squares (Brown, 2005).
[51] As the indigenous scholar Marcia Langton has expressed: 'The problem with analysis of the visual representation of Aborigines lies in the positioning of us as objects, and the person behind the camera as subject' (Lydon, 2014: 2).
[52] The photograph, taken in the old premises of the Royal Academy of the Arts in Stockholm, Sweden, shows artist Angelica von Hausswolf framing curator Karl Frédéric Hårleman (personal correspondence, Karen Knorr, 24 October 2018).

Fig. 1.1: Karen Knorr, *Hårleman's Anatomy* (1994) from the series *Academies* (1994–2005), Ilfochrome ('Cibachrome'), 104.5 x 104.5 cm., courtesy of the artist and Filles du Calvaire Gallery, Paris.

Like Knorr, I sought to reframe and subvert the historical encounter and related forms of the representation of otherness from a 'lady's place' (Miller, 1985/86). By depicting a white female measuring a while male, Knorr critically emphasised that 'the first victims of Western colonization and industrialization' were the coloniser's own people, 'European and American women' (Nader, 2018: 71). This practice led to subjecting people 'to a scrutinizing (male Western) gaze, forced to emit signs, yet cut off from command of meaning' and representing them as 'passive' or 'feminised' objects of knowledge (Tagg, 1988: 11). In my own practice, the critical gesture consists of inviting my non-Western counterparts to scrutinise my body, its smell and marks, my bodily expressions and sounds, and to make assumptions about me: a white, middle-class, German female artist.

In my journal article titled 'Track Me – A Portrait as Dialogue' (2013b), I advocated a 'critique of Western perceptions of portraiture, and, therein, the constitution of identity and perception of self and others' by exploring an 'indexical, non-depictive, and non-pictorial means of constructing representation, which displace the primacy of the gaze and, in particular, the privileging of one gaze over another' (Boeck, 2013b: 2).

The Aristotelian schema of five senses, which 'seems so natural to us in the West that we scarcely question its arbitrariness […] was not so obvious at earlier points in Western history, nor self-evident across cultures', which suggests that 'senses are formed by culture, rather than simply given in nature' (Howes, 2017: 160).[53] Hence, a 'turn towards sensory integration greatly enriches our understanding of the varieties of aesthetic creation and reception', not only in a 'cross-modal' but also in a 'cross-cultural' sense (Howes, 2017: 165). Moreover, 'we become self-aware only through sensing' (Le Breton, 2017: Introduction).

I am receptive to this understanding, having been educated at a Waldorf school, which is based on the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925).[54] For me, humans have always commanded twelve senses rather than the five commonly believed.[55] Steiner divided a spectrum of twelve senses into conscious (day) and unconscious (night): touch, life, movement, balance, smell, taste, sight, warmth, hearing, speech, thinking, and the sense of the I (Steiner, 1990 [1916]).

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[53] In Javanese, David Howes identified five senses that do not coincide with the 'fugue of the five senses' (Levi-Strauss, 1964), which build a thousand bridges between human beings (Simmel, 2009[1985]): seeing, hearing, talking, smelling and feeling. The Cashinahua of Peru, for example, hold that there are six 'perceptive centres: the skin, the hands, the ears, the genitals, the liver and the eyes', whereas certain societies 'emphasize synaesthetic connections among the senses' (Howes, 2017: 160).

[54] John Clammer noted that the work of Steiner and other (Western and non-Western) cultural theorists, such as Bruno Bettelheim, C.G. Jung and Sri Aurobindo, 'has been marginalized' or 'entirely been ignored' in the social sciences, 'despite their profound insights into mythical and artistic thinking' (Clammer, 2014: 43).

[55] Other cultural traditions, as well as modern neuroscience, suggest that the human sensuous spectrum exceeds the five senses schema which goes back to Aristotle, as expounded by David Howes in *De Sensu*: the proper object of 'sight is color, that of hearing is sound, that of smell is odor and that of taste is flavor and that of touch is texture' (Howes, 2017: 160).

My artistic research methodology draws on Steiner's notion of the sense of the I which, he argued, evolves around the sense of touch. The sense of the I is directed at the other person's I, not at our own. For Steiner, self-knowledge is obtained thanks to the relation with the other; similarly, Merleau-Ponty posited a chiasmic relationship in which the other is always intertwined with the subject: 'I borrow myself from others; I create others from my own thoughts' (Merleau-Ponty, cited in Reynolds, 2004: 136).[56] I suggest that for Merleau-Ponty as much as for Steiner, self and other are relationally constituted by their potential 'reversibility' (Reynolds, 2004: 133), enabled by the simultaneously present qualities of activity and passivity.[57]

I.6 From Vision to Making Sense

For a long time, Western researchers ignored the fact that the anthropological gaze has 'generally travelled in only one direction (from the West to the East)' (Bandyopadhyay/Ganguly, 2015: 598), rarely considering 'that the objects of the gaze also have a tradition to make sense of their "others"' (Pack, 2010: 295). Tracey Moffatt, an indigenous Australian artist, addressed this in her fictitious video work *The White Ghosts Sailed In* (2017). Moffatt showed different sequences of Sydney Harbour as if seen from various campsites (Figure 1.2). Imagining that the scenes were taken from an

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[56] *Chiasm* has two senses in French and English: a physiological sense that refers to anatomical or genetic structures with a crossed arrangement (such as the optic nerves), and a literary sense referring to figures of speech that repeat structures in reverse order (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2016). Available from: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/merleau-ponty/ [Accessed 20 November 2017].

[57] Merleau-Ponty's observation, that 'the seer and the visible reciprocate one another and we no longer know who sees and which is seen' (Merlau-Ponty, 1968: 139), which he described as reversibility of perspectives. According to Clark and Holquist, this corresponds with Mikhail Bathkin's claim that we can see and experience things that others cannot within our sphere of self-activity. The reverse is equally true, in that the other can visualise and apprehend things that we cannot. Hence, the other has a 'surplus of seeing' with regard to ourselves, and vice versa (Clark and Holquist, 1984: 71). In this sense, Merleau-Ponty's chiasmic relationship describes the touching and the tangible as 'corporeal ontology', in which 'there is both the background of embodiment and the expressive body: expressive textures which cross over one another as two sides of the same corporeal coin' (McBlane, 2013:103). The Japanese philosopher Tetsuro Watsuji termed it 'giving and taking', as Michael Murphy showed (Murphy, 2013: 6). Pamela Baldacchino noted that 'the fact that we can touch and be touched' presents 'a sort of osmotic boundary' allowing and encouraging the 'empathic process' (Baldacchino, 2014:157). Unsurprisingly, many artists have had a strong interest in the theory of the French philosopher who claims that making and understanding art both require a combination of activity and passivity (Hacklin, 2012).

old celluloid film made by indigenous people in 1788, the artist reminds one that Aboriginal people saw the ships of the British First Fleet sailing into Sydney Harbour and watched the British delegates establish what is today the nation of Australia (Brett, 2017).[58]

Fig. 1.2: Tracey Moffatt, *The White Ghosts Sailed In* (2017), HD video, duration: 3 mins, courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney.

The gaze is a 'much maligned sensory system in feminist discourse' (Haraway, 1991: 188) through which social power relations were articulated and made available in Western Europe and in colonialist cultures (Tagg, 2009). In the claim that 'subjectivity had to pass by "visuality"'', Nicholas Mirzoeff acknowledged the contradictory source of 'visuality' as a keyword for visual culture, as both a mode of 'representing imperial culture and a means of resisting it by means of reverse appropriation' (Mirzoeff, 2006: 53), which 'implies an engagement with the politics of representation in transnatural and transcultural form' (ibid: 76).[59] To break with its dominance, Haraway insisted on the 'embodied nature of all vision' to 'reclaim the sensory system', which was turned

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[58] Moffat purportedly found the film in a former mission station. She alleged that the celluloid film was made from melted down pig's hooves by Aboriginal people in 1788 and maintained that the camera had once belonged to Sir Joseph Banks, a botanist who had accompanied Captain Cook on his first voyage of discovery and circumnavigation (1768–71) aboard the HMS *Endeavour* (Searle, 2017).

[59] Norman Bryson (1988) described visuality as the sum of discourses that inform how we see, explaining: 'Between the subject and the world is inserted the entire sum of discourses which make up visuality, the cultural construct; and makes visuality different from vision, the notion of unmediated visual experience' (Bryson, 1988: 91–2).

into 'a conquering gaze from nowhere', employed to 'represent while escaping representation' (Haraway, 1991: 188).

In Haraway's footsteps, I also challenge the historical refusal of mutuality (Pinney, 2007) represented by the gaze and its predator-prey relationship – 'to see and not be seen' (Haraway, 1991: 188; Thetmeyer and Kils, 1995).[60] By inviting the other to gaze not only at the camera's lens but also at myself, I reclaimed the position of the observer who has been historically 'disembodied' and reduced to one 'point of view' (Jay, 1988: 7).[61] In this sense my research responded to Howard Morphy's suggestion: vision is 'dialogical' if you approach it as a 'vehicle for communication between people' (Morphy, 2008: 104).

Drawing on *Rethinking Visual Anthropology* (Banks and Morphy, 1999), Schneider and Wright, discussing anthropological research, argued thus:

> The anthropologists' own representational system needs to be considered, as well as those of the cultures studied and the interrelationships between anthropological and indigenous practices needs to be taken into account without collapsing into the other (Schneider and Wright, 2006: 21).

This is precisely what I set out to do in the domain of art in turning my attention to the full spectrum of our human senses (Howes, 1991; Stoller, 1997; Classen, 1997; Pink, 2009; Ingold, 2011; Arantes and Rieger, 2014), especially in relation to indigenous theories of perception, which David Howes considered 'the most elucidating cultural studies of the senses' (Howes, 2005: 6). In this sense my research directly responds to

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[60] One of the first examples in which researcher and researched represented each other is a set of two photographs, which shows the foreign and local participants of the 1898 Cambridge Expedition to the Torres Strait in similar poses in front of the same background (Edwards, 2015).
[61] In the Western world, John Berger stressed 'seeing comes before words' (2008/1972: 7), modernity being 'ocularcentric' or 'dominated by vision', (Jay, 1993: 3). Donna Haraway (1991), John Tagg (1988) and Christopher Pinney (2007), among others, have showed that the power relations created through visuality produced a hierarchical order of race, gender, sexuality and so on. Photography, representing technological superiority, symbolises the 'insidious unequal relationships which permeated all facets of cultural confrontation' (Edwards, 1992: 6).

Stuart Hall's long posed question: 'Can a dominant regime of representation be challenged, contested or changed?' (Hall, 1997: 269).

I.7 Reversing the Gaze

My methodology drew also on methods of experimentation in contemporary art inspired by anthropological concerns surrounding how the Westerner is conceived as an object of study by the cultural Other (Wagner, 1981[1975]); how s/he is represented in artefacts (Lips, 1937); and how Western expressions and practices have been used as a means of empowerment through parody or mimesis (Stoller, 1989; Taussig, 1997).[62] My research thus stands in the tradition of 'inverse ethnology', a trend towards the 'primitive' as a reversed mirror image of the modern in a critical self-reflective turn (Uerlings, 2015).[63] It also follows in the footsteps of avant-garde artists' search for the 'primitive origin', which Uerlings assumed is the prerequisite for allowing other perceptions of alterity.[64]

My arts practice developed from an intense interest in culturally dominant aesthetic forms of representation favoured by non-Western and indigenous people. In this I anticipated Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright's call for 'more experimentation in the fields of practice between art and anthropology' (Schneider and Wright, 2010: 21) – two practices with a 'history of representing others' whose borders had 'never been

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[62] Anna Brus noted that the ethnologist Julius E. Lips' 1937 book, *The Savage Hits Back or the White Man Through Native Eyes*, which focuses on representation of Westerners by non-Western artists, was not only the first anti-colonial and anti-racist book on the art of 'others', but also presented this art as contemporary material for the first time (Brus, 2015).

[63] In a critical self-reflexive turn, the conditions of origin of the primitive come into view (Uerlings, 2015; translated by Angelika Boeck).

[64] This inverse ethnology suggests the primitive to be a false reflection of modernity, thus creating the conditions for allowing other perceptions of alterity (Uerlings, 2015). While Herbert Uerlings argues that primitivism transmits the contrast between own/foreign and present/past (Uerlings, 2015), Erhard Schüttpelz (2016) thinks that avant-garde artists search for the 'primitive origin' was art's quest for something superior to the modern system of the arts, something beyond the exclusivity of Eurocentric history.

completely or rigidly demarcated' (Schneider and Wright, 2006: 3).[65] Both traditions observe, describe and propose (Ingold, 2011: XI).[66] For Marcus and Myres, art and anthropology are 'rooted in a common tradition, both situated in a critical stance toward the modernity' (quoted in Sansi, 2015: 16) in which both take part. Roger Sansi argued that the deep affinities between artists and anthropologists not only had to do with their use of visual media, as Schneider and Wright saw it (Sansi, 2015: 5), but also with their common, theoretical concern with 'the visual' and 'images' as much as with 'the media and the senses' (Sansi, 2015: 6).

Paul Stoller positioned the anthropologist in the 'between' of 'languages', 'cultural traditions' and 'apprehensions of reality' (Stoller, 2009: 4), calling for ethnographies that would 'describe the sensual aspect of the field' to 'make us more critically aware of our sensual biases' (Stoller, 1989: 9). In the case of academically engaged artists whose practice is located in between art and anthropology, another layer 'between' is added: a visual art practice and academic text production. Here it is important to note that although my own research emphasises 'dialogue and experimentation [and improvisation] on this in-between-ness' (Oliver and Badham, 2013: 160), as an artist I started from a different place than I would have done as an anthropologist. During my individual experimental projects, I lacked the support and authority that an affiliation to a recognised institution grants to anthropologists in the field; yet I was not bound to accepted principles of anthropological investigation. Instead, I enjoyed the freedom to

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[65] Marilyn Starthern observed that artists and anthropologists encounter the world 'along similar grooves' in their ways of being 'with' the people they are with on the one hand and, on the other hand, in the 'relentless distribution of dissipation of agency' (Sansi and Starthern, 2016: 431).
[66] Anthropologist Billy Ehn investigated the similarities and divergences in the strategies of cultural researchers and artists by focusing on artistic research. He found that artistic working processes roughly mimicked those of cultural researchers: artists ask questions, choose methods, read theories, make observations, carry out interviews, participate in various social events, surf on the Internet, collate their material, get new ideas, and examine different analytical angles. They try, however, to see the ordinary as something out-of-the-ordinary and practice autoethnography, using their own experiences as basic data (Ehn, 2012).

combine components of both disciplines according to my artistic inspiration and female intuition, changing my approach during and across my research, thereby responding to local circumstances.

Moreover, across all projects, an intermediary was positioned 'between' participants and myself. Mediators played an important role, not only in establishing contact and overcoming language barriers, but also in the vitally important processes of encoding and decoding (Hall, 2006). For groups organise their shared (limited, distorted, and stereotypical) perceptions of the world within a framework of four perceptional filters (physiological, cultural, individual, and linguistic) and this is often based on silent, hidden or unconscious factors (Katan, 2004).[67] For example, in *Track Me,* Peter, a non-aboriginal, proposed replacing certain abstract expressions in the questionnaire I had given him, for example, 'portrait' or 'character', with questions about specific bodily features, certain qualities, and explicit actions. Later he transcribed and translated participants' responses that I had recorded on video. The women had responded both through spoken language and gestures. Sign languages are still used by many Australian groups, in their most elaborate form among the Walpiri (Kendon, 2015).

Although key aspects of my research methods remained constant across all interventions, each project encounter was performed according to my artistic ideas, responding to local conditions, thereby recognising the research principle of 'anything

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[67] I speculate whether perception of the same phenomenon flows across different culturally preferred perceptual channels? This idea came to me when I once noticed how Wilson, my Kelabit partner of seven years, reacted to a certain place in the jungle which was believed to be dangerous (due to reasons unknown to me). While I saw strange and somewhat scary shapes in the silhouettes of trees, Wilson felt something on his skin; more precisely, the hairs on his forearms 'stood up'. I may have visually processed my delusions, whereas Wilson favoured his bodily sensations. Monica Janowski noted the 'whole-body perception' of the Kelabit and Penan in relation to the spiritual world, which is assumed to be co-existent with the material world (Janowski, 2016: 183). More generally, Daniela Vávrová (2008) observed how 'skin' serves the Ambonwari in Papua New Guinea who, like the Kelabit, are counted among the Austronesian peoples, as 'eyes' and 'ears'.

goes' that Paul Feyerabend (1993) advocated.[68] Like Laura Nader, who discouraged a 'method obsession' (2018: 126), Feyerabend objected to the strict use of method on the grounds that it would limit the activities and progress of researchers, and with it the acquisition of new knowledge.[69] In his book *After Method* (2004), John Law proposed 'performativity' as a mode of knowing which includes emotionality or apprehension. He understood research activities in terms of 'metaphor' rather than of 'knowing' (Law, 2004: 3). According to Turid Markussen, Law's advice to subvert method hints at a dilemma inherent in theorising research or its methods, suggesting that 'it is not just about what we say we do, but also about what we actually *do*' (Markussen, 2005: 334). To consider all the components of an activity is an important aspect in art practice today and it is central to my analysis in this thesis. Since the middle of the twentieth century, artistic practices have increasingly turned to action and performance, in which 'moments of interaction and improvisation' can create new 'possibilities of interpretation and perspectives on the object' through 'multiperspectivity' and the 'juxtaposition of narrative strands' (Pfeiffer, 2012/2013).[70] Hence, in my own dialogical arts research practice, performativity and juxtaposition are used as new ways of 'looking at known phenomena – another way of responding to, experiencing, and thinking about them' (ibid.).

To make this happen, I opted for a large-scale series of research encounters in different cultural contexts. For this, I envisaged portraying participants in a similar way to enable later comparison – a practice I discuss further in Part II. Although it made me complicit

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[68] Referring to Arthur Efland, Sydney Walker (2004) has pointed out that whereas in well-structured knowledge areas, such as the sciences, knowledge accumulates through concepts which remain consistent from case to case, in the arts, a rather ill-structured knowledge area, knowledge aggregates on a case by case basis.

[69] Nader maintains that 'method obsession easily overshadows our reason for being – to think critically upon the nature of the human species, which requires tools that are both instrumental and expressive' (Nader, 2018: 126).

[70] Available at: https://www.kubi-online.de/artikel/performativitaet-kulturelle-bildung [Accessed 11 Jan 2018], translated from German by Angelika Boeck.

with a historical attitude that I rejected – objectification – it seemed important for me in regard to achieving my goal of counterposing Western and non-Western practices. This was emphasised by my aim of a future presentation of the 'body of work as a whole' (Boeck, 2013b: 4).[71]

As the artist Brook Andrew noted, much of our cultural experience and understanding is mediated through television or other media, framing our cultures and other worlds (Andrew, 2007). Therefore, acknowledging our personal biases and backgrounds, which are always implicated in the process of constructing and deconstructing our views of the world (Jackson and Piette, 2015), is essential. As an artist without any grounding in anthropology or cultural studies, at first I behaved in relation to anthropological research like people who are unfamiliar with contemporary art, to whom Picasso's name first comes to mind in that context and who therefore confuse modern and contemporary practices.[72] For the anthropological research model that I set out to critique – at the same time secretly envying the unique adventures of early explorers – had long become outdated.

However, like an anthropologist, I appropriated the Other through travelling and engaging in direct contact (Schneider and Wright, 2006) with indigenous people and non-Western participants 'who have been historically overtly constructed as "other" to my Western "self"'' (Boeck, 2013: 491). An outline of the history of colonialism, however, would exceed the scope of my thesis; moreover, scholarship in this field is widely available (see, for example, Wright, 1976; Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin et al., 1995; Pels, 1997; Sommer, 2011). Unlike anthropologists but like early explorers, I

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[71] Across all projects, participants were informed about the purpose of the research and agreed that I could take their photograph or video portraits. Yet it must be noted that the concept of 'art' was not always possible for me to convey; nor was the prospect of an exhibition of much interest for participants. In general, they did not care much about what would happen with their responses and photographs.

[72] Here I refer to a situation I have experienced a number of times.

travelled relatively uninformed, as I stated in earlier research: 'There is no question that I am an outsider, an unaffiliated roamer . . . I knew very little before my arrival at each site' (Boeck, 2013b: 6); this was both a conscious decision and a playful act.

I.8 Adopting a Vulnerable Research Position

Artistic exploration is often personally motivated, and such an approach acords with an artist's conception of life (Jappe, 1993). This 'playing in deadly earnest', as Siri Hustvedt (2012: 38) called it, is as much my art practice as it is my practised life.[73] Playing, according to Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805), is 'a free activity where people can afford to be themselves', something which should be 'at the centre of existence' (Sansi, 2015: 78).[74] Placing themselves in vulnerable, not-knowing positions (Behar, 1996; Lather, 2004; Ehn, 2012), artists, much like anthropologists, are situated right in the midst of things. In terms of scientific procedure, this 'breaks all the rules but should be celebrated' (Ingold, 2011: 15–16).

Across all projects, I consciously entered the research situations relatively uninformed in order to bring out my preconceptions and emphasise bias more authentically. This, however, meant that I did not standardise my method or create a safety net for myself, which added significantly to my vulnerability. For example, when my Yemeni assistant told me that she was soon to marry a German Muslim and move to Germany, I expressed my joy that we could visit each other easily in the future. There were two Yemeni men next to her, one of whom spoke very good German, and I literally felt the

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[73] Billy Ehn (2012) suggests that some characteristics of artistic practices could benefit scientific research: the capacity of artists to expose themselves to unusual circumstances and carry through extraordinary ideas; the willingness to live experimentally; the tangible approach to issues of materiality; the drive to produce actual experiences (to amuse, worry or provoke) rather than analyse emotional life; and the ability to find and communicate surprising meanings in ordinary life.

[74] For Schiller this was not just a proposal 'to educate good, responsible citizens, but also the utopian promise of a different form of life, in which what we do and who we are, work and life, are not separated' (Sansi, 2015: 78).

woman turn pale under her veil, while our companion flinched. He said, in German, 'Thank God you said that in German (the other man only understood English) because in a strictly traditional family, such a thing might be a good reason to kill you.' With my friendly reaction, I had unknowingly questioned my translator's honour (how well did she know the man she was about to marry?). It was not for me, an outsider, to say anything about such a highly private matter as marriage to third parties. My unsuccessful attempt to be polite and encourage a relationship by projecting future interactions, and my sharing of what was in my eyes an innocuous piece of personal information with those present, derived from my upbringing as a member of the white German middle-class.

The analysis of a researcher-researched relationship necessitates critical reflexivity, which is not possible without considering the positionality of researcher and researched.[75] This can be a catalyst not only for the audience to which the research is later presented, as I will discuss in Part II, but also for the research process itself. Critical reflexivity acknowledges that research is about representation (Clifford, 1986); that it is political and partial (Clifford, 1986; Haraway, 1988);[76] that it emerges from our subject positions while we continuously co-construct meaning (Geertz, 1973)[77] in a 'kind of performance' (Latham, 2003);[78] and, finally, that we occupy multiple subject

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[75] The *Dictionary of Human Geography* defines reflexivity as embracing a variety of factors: personal biography, social situation, political values, situation within the academic labour structure, personal relationship to research respondents, relations of authority within the research process and so on. Positionality concerns the researcher's social, cultural and subject positions (and other psychological processes), the questions they ask; how they frame them, their relations with those they research; what they base their interpretations on; access to data, institutions and outlets for research dissemination; and 'the likelihood that they will be listened to and heard' (Gregory et al., cited in Correia, 2012).

[76] For Clifford, this leads to the conclusion that 'it is impossible to know anything certain about other people' (1986: 7).

[77] Geertz highlighted that what anthropologists call 'our data' are really their 'own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to' (Geertz, 1973: 9).

[78] According to Latham, this reframing 'allows for a more experimental and more flexible attitude towards both the production and interpretation of research evidence. It also makes it easier to think of new ways of engaging with how individuals and groups inhabit their worlds through practical action' (Lanthan, 2003: 1993).

positions – in my case that of a white, European, feminist artist who, having no children and being financially independent, is free to work and travel according to her own preferences – as observer, participant or something in between.

Ruth Behar demonstrated how positionality can be acknowledged; she started to write ethnography in 'a vulnerable way', regretting that she had fled her beloved grandfather's dying in the US to carry out research around death and dying in a Spanish village, while at the same time realising that this specific situation had provided her with a profound 'empathy for the suffering of others' (Behar, 1996: 21–2). Like Behar's work, my art practice originated out of personal experience, both in a biographical sense and from the 'consciousness' that emerged from 'personal participation' in previous events (Foss and Foss, 1994: 39). Where Behar maintained that she was transformed by inserting her participating and observing self 'as embodied as' her subject Esperanza in her ethnography (Behar, 2007: 150), I have argued that participants' perspectives of me 'have shaped me over the course of time – some more, some less – but they all have left their mark on me' (Boeck, 2013: 497), adding significantly to my self-knowledge.

Patti Lather calls such a vulnerable research strategy a 'becoming with' in ways not already coded: a researcher welcomes a subject position not experienced before and describes this as 'getting lost', or 'not to be in control' (Lather, 2004: 1). This is echoed by Sarah Fotheringham: 'When a person exists in a space that is unfamiliar, where they are vulnerable and exposed – a place of not knowing, of surrender, of reduced power – perhaps this is when naturally, the opportunity to see or understand something different surfaces' (Fotheringham, 2013: 1). In my own practice this involved 'finding the right balance between opening and closing the body, between letting the world in or shutting the world out' (van de Port, 2015: 88), which was 'not an easy process' (Boeck, 2013: 496). It required of me a 'state of complete surrender; a forfeiting of the idea of the self,

and the willingness to allow the "other" to reinvigorate [me] with his/her own idea'
(Boeck, 2013: 496).

I.9 Portrait as a Cultural Practice

> You do not 'see a difference' – a difference is what makes you see.
>
> (Viveiros de Castro, cited in Curry, 2010: 4)

I was (and still am) interested in non-Western cultural practices 'capable of identifying, characterizing, representing and thus 'portraying' an individual' (Boeck, 2013: 494). Such practices, I argue, are important, since 'what we do, influences what we experience' (Coleman Burns, 2011: 65) and because cultures 'don't converse: people do, and their exchanges are conditioned by particular contact histories, relations of power, individual reciprocities, modes of travel, access, and understanding' (Clifford 2007: 16).[79]

However, neither anthropologists nor practitioners usually take a particular practice's representational aspect into account. Thus, the practices I explored were not easy to locate. For example, anthropologists who have studied Australian Aboriginal culture are likely – as do the Aborigines themselves – to classify track reading as part of hunting animals (Boeck, 2012). To identify suitable practices, I browsed through ethnography, travel and missionary reports, journals and magazines, newspaper articles, non-fiction and documentaries, rather than conducting a targeted search.[80] I was largely guided by

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[79] Cultural practices, that is 'shared perceptions of how people routinely behave in a certain culture', influence values, namely 'shared ideals of culture' (Frese, 2015: 1327). Tagg stressed that 'cultural practices have significance' because 'of their place in that non-unitary complex of social practices and systems of representation which do not express, but construct, inflect, maintain or subvert the relations of domination and subordination in which heterogenous social identities were produced' (1988: 30). Hence, Caroline Horwarth's suggestion that 'culture' is something we do 'through systems of presentation, rather than something we have' (Horwarth, 2011: 5).

[80] In addition, during my travels I always ask questions (to every person I happen to meet who has an intimate knowledge of other countries) about culturally specific modes of individual representation.

intuition, 'the ability to acquire knowledge without proof, evidence, or conscious reasoning: a feeling that guides a person to act in a certain way without fully understanding why' (Abramović, 2017), understood as a mode of 'sympathy', as Henri Bergson put it (Grosz, 2005: 8).[81] Since the early 2000s, I therefore explored every opportunity that presented itself. This resulted in nine projects, of which I discuss three as central to this thesis: Sámi yoik music; Aboriginal Australian track reading; and female veiling in Yemen.

Eurocentric philosophies and paradigms have introduced a strong bias in research concerning indigenous people (Liamputtong, 2010). Inevitably, my decision to explore indigenous, non-Western practices was based on and informed by my perspective as a white Western art practitioner. In particular, my keen interest in different modes of perception and representation related to recognition and remembrance as central concerns of the Western portrait. However, as emphasised earlier, 'In many indigenous societies the linguistic notion of the individual, and his/her representation in a portrait, does not exist' or, as in Islamic societies, is undesirable. My representations, making use of participants' own traditions, were therefore not 'seen as a method of "portraying" a human being' (Boeck, 2013: 498); my 'own assessment and classification' of the practices explored, both from an anthropological perspective and in the eyes of my contributors, 'may be considered a misinterpretation' (Boeck, 2013: 507).[82]

Although all projects occurred 'within a frame that [was] defined by me alone' (Boeck, 2013: 491), I chose the term 'dialogue' to highlight the defining aspect of my methodology: the co-creative, cross-cultural interpersonal relationships in which we

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[81] Our experience of 'sympathy' begins, according to Bergson, with putting ourselves in the place of others (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2016).
[82] 'Categorizing and misinterpreting local knowledge can be one of the ways in which participatory research reinscribes power inbalances', as Cindy Gaudet (2014: 81) noted.

perceived each other and expressed these momentary perceptions in different ways, defining ourselves by interpreting the other. In so doing, like many contemporary artists 'working with live events and people as privileged materials', I 'constructed situations' (Bishop, 2012: 4) to provoke a mutually constitutive exchange.[83] For the resulting art works, however, I combined participants' interpretations (audio-recordings, texts) and my material (photos, videos) in my arts practice works, as discussed in Part II.

Nevertheless, I situate my research within the 'expanded field of relational practice' (Bishop, 2006: 179) or 'post-studio practice' (Bishop, 2012: 1), albeit not in the sense in which art projects that 'intervene in actually existing contexts' (Sansi, 2015: 13) – be they termed 'participatory' (Bishop, 2006a)[84], 'contextual' (Ardenne, 2002), 'social practice' (Jackson, 2011), 'socially engaged' (Thomson, 2012), or 'situational' (Oliver and Badham, 2013) – are conventionally understood. My research is 'a creative inquiry' (Lowe, 2012) with participants and myself 'placed at the heart of the project', which is carried out in a 'spirit of provoking creative and collaborative reflection' (Tiller, 2014: 13).[85]

By way of bringing contradictory modes of relating and attributing into a practical dialogue (visual and Western as opposed to multi-sensory and non-Western), I tried to achieve as an artist what Sarah Pink demanded from an anthropologist: 'to access areas

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[83] This situation involves the problem that 'refusing a subject position is a privilege that is often unavailable to the local knower whose subject position and social identity are a requirement of participation' (Janes, 2016: 118).

[84] Bishop noted that 'The most important precursors for participatory art took place around 1920' (Bishop, 2006a:10).

[85] According to the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation review *Participatory Performing Arts* (2014), which set out 'to define participation in terms of "participatory" practice' (Tiller 2014: 7), my research fits in with what Pablo Helguera called *Creative Participation*, where participants 'make some real contribution to the work', but not with *Collaborative Participation*, where participants 'share responsibility for the structure and content' (ibid: 9); in both cases, authorship is affected. To some extent my arts practice combined what Brown and Novak-Leonard termed *Inventive* and *Interpretive* elements of participation, since participants were engaged 'in mind, body and spirit in an act of artistic creation that is unique and idiosyncratic' (Inventive), and in 'a creative act of self-expression that brings alive and adds value to pre-existing work of art, either individually or collaboratively' (Interpretive) (cited in Tiller, 2014: 10).

of embodied, emplaced knowing and to use these as basis from which to understand human perception, experience, action and meaning and to situate this culturally and biographically' (Pink, 2009: 47), further emphasising Stoller's argument for 'Sensuous Scholarship' (1997). Stoller called for embodiment to be taken seriously rather than merely regarding the body as a text that can be read and analysed. This attitude, he argued, is profoundly Eurocentric and unfit for anthropologists. In contrast, he considered it necessary to understand the sensory epistemologies of many non-Western societies so that we can better understand the societies themselves and what their epistemologies teach us about human experience in general.[86]

In this sense, *Portrait as Dialogue* is political in that it challenges boundaries, conceptions, and identity, and relational in that it seeks to provide 'an opportunity of "enabling" the voices of those who are marginalized by social inequalities' (Miles, 2012: 119).[87] Like many artists, I aimed for a 'relation of symmetry' between self and other that involves looking at issues from the point of view of others or putting ourselves in the place of others (Edwards/Mauthner, 2002: 23), as well as treating all beliefs, be they considered 'true' or 'false', on the same terms (Law/Lin, 2015). I longed for a 'transformative change' (Ledwith/Springett, 2010: 15) outside 'remedialism' (Matarasso, 2013:16) in a 'mutually humanizing process' (Shorrt, 2017: 9).

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[86] The senses 'provide a means of making sense' (Le Breton: 2017:1), since 'human flesh and the flesh of the world combine in a seamless fabric, an ever-present sensory continuity' (ibid: 12). Merleau-Ponty described our sensory grasping as such: 'My body is made of the same flesh as the world [...] this flesh of my body is shared by the world'; and 'The flesh (of the world or my own) is [...] a texture that returns to itself and conforms to itself' (Merleau Ponty quoted in Pallasmaa, 2014: 241). Siri Hustvedt argued that Merleau-Ponty's 'schéma corporel' concerns a knowing that 'comes in part from the body, rising up from a preverbal, rhythmic, motor place in the self' (Hustvedt, 2012: ebook pos. 625). This is very similar to how I would describe my feelings when a topic – in this case a cultural practice – appeals to my artistic practice.
[87] Claire Bishop argued that the participatory impulse concerned 'the desire to create an active subject, one who will be empowered by the experience of physical or symbolical participation' (Bishop, 2006a: 12).

However, rather than being directed at the transformation of participants, an approach that has become problematic and is regarded as a 'failure to transform and redistribute power relations' (Hammersley, 2012),[88] *Portrait as Dialogue* was directed at my own transformation and, by extension, at creating an awareness of oppressive structures in the Western world.[89] I wanted to mediate my experience of being assessed and evaluated by various cultural others to 'spectators who are active *as interpreters*' (Bishop, 2006a: 16) – an aspect which I elaborate upon in part II.

I.10 A Three-Pronged Artistic Practice: Interpersonal Encounters

For the purpose of mutual representation, I commissioned five Sámi men and women in Arctic Norway and Finland (*Seek Me,* 2005); four Aboriginal Australian (Pintupi and Walpiri) women near Alice Springs in the Northern Territories (*Track Me,* 2006); and thirty men and women in Sana'a, the capital of Yemen (*Imagine Me,* 2007). In all three projects I employed mediators, some of whom I had met before the research started – others I contacted at the research destination. While some were very interested in my project, others were less so, but all played a very important role.[90] For example, Johan Sara, Jr., who was also a participant of *Seek Me*, recruited three more musicians of his own choice. He also proposed to record the yoiks in his sound studio in Maze (Norway). In fact, *Seek Me* was the only project in which the participants were selected before my departure from Germany. Local intermediaries also helped, in varying degrees, to shape the research outcome with the culturally specific knowledge available to them.

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[88] Available at: http://acen.edu.au/2012conference/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/63_Community-based-service.pdf [Accessed 24 December 2018].

[89] Matarasso (2013) argues that the point of departure of participatory art has shifted from 'radicalism' to 'remedialism', which is often commissioned and deployed within social inclusion discourse.

[90] Mediators can play a crucial role in gaining access to participants; they can hamper the process of data collection and can function as catalysts in the process of reaching compromises; they can also help to take short-cuts and help provide opportunities for serendipitous occurrences (Walford, in Jones, 2001).

The encounters ranged from interactions lasting several days to brief contact without any communication and even without participants knowing that they evaluated my head and body shape (*Imagine Me*) and my footprints (*Track Me*), as represented in Figures 1.3 –1.5

Fig. 1.3: Lars Henrik Blind, Angelika Boeck and Johan Sara Jr. during fieldwork for *Seek Me* in Maze (2005). Photograph: Ole Larsen Gaino.

Fig. 1.4: Angelika Boeck during the fieldwork for *Imagine Me* in Sana'a, Yemen (2007). Photograph: Thomas Barnstein.

Fig. 1.5: Angelika's footprint, *Track Me* (2006). Video still: Angelika Boeck.

The attitude of letting things happen, something this setting required more than the two previous projects (*StillePost* and *Seek Me*), ran contrary to my position as an artist and initiator.[91] Whereas the terms commonly associated with artistic activities, such as 'action', 'production' or 'creation' corresponded to a significant part of my experimental projects (before, during and after the fieldwork), an attitude of 'openness', 'passivity' and 'confidence' was needed for interpersonal encounters.[92] According to the French philosopher Alain Badiou, these are the qualities required in the encounter and the experience itself for something new to happen, for life to change (Petitjean, 2014).[93]

My projects, in essence, were concerned with participants performing as objects of my inquiry and me performing as objects of theirs. My counterparts were asked to get a sensory impression of myself and to make something of it, focusing each time on a different bodily aspect.

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[91] It was not always easy for me to switch from one position to the other right away. While this transition happened almost imperceptibly in *Seek Me* due to the longer period of time spent together, it would have been scarcely possible in the much shorter but more complex follow-up projects without confidently handing over responsibility to my assistants.

[92] The combination of activity and passivity is also reflected in how I relate to my research in writing this thesis. Looking back, I return to the specific situation, projecting myself as if seen from the outside, simultaneously waiting for what the upcoming memories will do to me on an emotional level, what thoughts they will procure and how they will transform into ideas in combination with my reading of relevant literature.

[93] The 'passivity' Badiou talks about can be described as an eager expectancy or entering a flow, akin to surrendering to what is happening.

I.10.1 *Seek Me*: The Sámi's Yoik

The vocal tradition 'yoik' is practised exclusively by the indigenous population of the circumpolar Fennoscandia (Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Russian Kola peninsula) in both spiritual and everyday life (Moore, 2004) to acknowledge and recall people, places and special animals. [94] The 'original music of the Sami' (Turi, 1910: 9) is comparable with singing. Nevertheless, it differs in important aspects, since it refers to and symbolises an object/subject directly within a melodic and rhythmic organisation (Hämäläinen et al., 2017). A yoik referring to a particular person is a so-called 'person-yoik' (Hanssen, 2011)[95]; as Johan Sara Jr, a professional Sámi musician, participant and mediator in my project informed me, this can be used as a form of introduction. Ingrid Hanssen has suggested that yoik may even be a more powerful symbol of identity and connectedness than a person's name (ibid.), since it serves as a sign of lasting integration into the community (Angell, 2009) and as 'a means to remember loved ones' (Gaski, 2011: 33). [96] Both Johan and the publications I consulted confirmed my perspective: the yoik functions like a photo album with an auditory dimension. The Sámi scholar Veli-Pekka Lethola explained that the 'friend who is gone is brought back through a yoik' (Lethola, 2004: 106). Johan asserted that the creation of a yoik required the cultivation of a profoundly intimate perspective: 'I do not sing about the mountain, I

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[94] The Sámi's 'yoiking is one of the oldest musical styles still practised within European borders' (Plantenga, 2004: 103). Following Doris Stockmann, Plantenga explained the yoik as a textless, mnemonic technique that recalls certain situations, places and humans to the singer's mind; a kind of yodelling, it is characterised by improvisation, mainly in solo performance. He suggested that the practice was rooted in shamanic recitation.

[95] Available at: https://www.immi.se/intercultural/nr27/hanssen-ingrid.htm [Accessed 25 December 2017].

[96] In a recent study, Sole Hämäläinen et al. investigated yoik in a healthcare context, showing that yoik functions as emotion management: those who had personal yoiks felt deeply honoured and acknowledged; when someone yoiked them, it touched their innermost being. Yoik helped them to cope with difficult emotions such as loss, anger or sadness. The study suggested that yoik 'may have an underresearched potential as an intervention in culturally sensitive healthcare and health promotion work that deserves to be acknowledged and further investigated' (Hämäläinen et al., 2017). It may even serve as a powerful tool to help demented patients remember (Hanssen, 2011).

sing the mountain; I do not sing about the creek, I become the creek' (Johan Sara, cited in Boeck, 2013: 496).[97]

I decided to explore yoik as a tool in the co-creative process of identity construction. As Ola Graff notes:

> The others create the consciousness necessary to see oneself. The fact that others see me, makes me see myself […] Yoik functions as an instrument for identity-ascription. The referenced object is focused through this referencing function (Ola Graff, cited in Hanssen, 2011).[98]

Graff's statement expresses the quintessence of my method in regard to my self-learning endeavour.

Seek Me (see Appendix I) was the only project in which participants were fully informed about the experimental research situation and in which my positionality as both artist/researcher and researched/artist was clearly communicated. In my journal article 'Portrait as Dialogue: Exercising the Dialogical Self' (2013), I explained the interpersonal encounters across different places in Finmark:

> During the week I spent with them, we fished, cooked, and weeded together, we even visited their relatives. In other words, I shared much of their daily activities with them. All along, these yoik composers paid close attention to how I expressed myself, the vocal tonalities, laughter, pace of speech, my walking rhythms, and so on (Boeck, 2013a: 43).

For example, *Seek Me* (2005) brought me unexpectedly in contact with childhood memories, thereby enabling me to understand a central aspect of yoik, which was pointed out by Doris Stockmann: 'To sing yoik means deeply identifying yourself with someone or something' (Plantenga, 2004: 103). I experienced this resonance when I

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[97] Johan's assertion was confirmed in Harald Gaski's work, *The Secretive Text: Yoik Lyrics as Literature and Tradition* (1999*)*: 'It is not the one who composes a yoik who owns it, but rather that which is yoiked. The producer, in this sense, loses the right to his or her product, while the subject assumes domination over this same creation' (Gaski, 1999: 5).

[98] Available at: https://www.immi.se/intercultural/nr27/hanssen-ingrid.htm [Accessed 24 June 2018].

first heard Lars Henrik's yoik in the studio.[99] I immediately became very sad and cried, as did the performer himself. After he completed the recording, I asked him what he had sung, although I already knew. He said that he perceived in me something he profoundly knew himself, adding that this yoik was the hardest work he had ever done. My disabled twin sister reminded him of his drowned little brother who had entirely occupied his mother's attention. Thus, his yoik about me was about our shared experience of not being seen.[100] This experience touched a central concern of my endeavours – the exploration of the mutual entanglements of self and other in regard to perception and representation. The impossibility of conveying this insight through artwork alone ultimately led to my written publications.

For *Seek Me*, planning to combine and counterpose each recorded yoik with a photograph of its creator, I took photographs of the musicians alluding to historical anthropological-anthropometrical representations in which the anthropological object was often placed before a neutral backdrop (Figures 1.6 –1.10). Liam Buckley argued that these photographs 'are guilty objects' offering us 'the chance of innocence' (Buckley, 2002: 116).

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[99] Johan's studio consisted of a recording and a control room, separated by a large window. While from the control room we could hear Lars Henrik, he could not hear us on the other side.

[100] Compared to what I felt when I heard Lars Henrik's yoik, I did not particularly react to Ole's, Åsá's and Johan's yoiks, and was unable to make out why I emotionally responded more to Anna-Berit's composition and performance. When I asked the musicians what aspects they had focused on, Anna Berit and Åsá explained they had been inspired by the sound of my talking and laughing, and Johan explained that his yoik was an auditory projection of myself into the future.

Fig. 1.6: Ole Larsen Gaino, *Seek Me* (2005). Photograph: Angelika Boeck.

Fig. 1.7: Lars Henrik Blind, *Seek Me* (2005). Photograph: Angelika Boeck.

Fig. 1.8: Anna Berit Peltopera, *Seek Me* (2005). Photograph: Angelika Boeck.

Fig. 1.9: Åsá Margget Anti Holm, *Seek Me* (2005). Photograph: Angelika Boeck.

Fig. 1.10: Johan Sara Jr, *Seek Me* (2005). Photograph: Angelika Boeck.

Sámi artist Katharina Pirak Sikku later accentuated my critical gesture by measuring herself with an anthropometric instrument in her portrait *Suojehis ruoktu – Värnlöst hem* (2015) (Figure 1.11). Non-Sámi Finnish artist Jorma Puranen, in his site-specific installation *Imaginary Homecoming* (1991–6) returned a series of anthropological Sámi portrait photographs to their locations of origin; this can be understood as a gesture not only of critique but also of healing injustices inflicted in the past.[101] This, I suggest, is why contemporary art is highly valued by the curators of anthropological museums as a decolonising strategy; I discuss this later in relation to my curatorial practice in Part II.

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[101] Puranen's work is available at: http://gallerytaikpersons.com/artists/jorma-puranen/portfolio/imaginary-homecoming [Accessed 7 June 2018].

Fig. 1.11: Katharina Pirak Sikku, *Suojehis ruoktu – Värnlöst hem* (2015). Photograph: Máridjá Pirak Sikku, courtesy of Katharina Pirak Sikku.

I.10.2 *Track Me*: Aboriginal Australian Track Reading

The second non-Western practice I chose to explore was track reading. Robert Lawlor asserted that indigenous Australians were not only capable of distinguishing the footprints of two to three hundred clan members, but also perceived the imprint that every event left in the earth, including the vibrations emitted by footprints (Lawlor, 1993).[102] Vibrations, which are also responsible for the production of sounds, words or songs, have an enormous significance in the culture of Australian Aborigines (Berndt, 1974; Munn, 1986; Laudine, 2009; Dinham, 2014).[103] Indeed vibration 'crosses the sensory threshold in so far it can be simultaneously palpable and audible, visible and audible' and 'moving beyond the differences between the senses' (Trower, 2012: 5).[104]

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[102] Lawlor recalled how his Aboriginal friend Brian Syron told him that vibrations may be perceived in footprints (interview, 22 May 2016), adding that the complicated protocol that determines traditional Aboriginal life required knowing what is going on in one's own area at any moment, especially who is there and what their intention is.

[103] Drawing on Nancy D. Munn, Christine Watson (1999) noted that in Warlpiri conceptualisation 'the object world' is both 'verbally' and 'visually' constituted, in that visual marks are held to contain sonic 'information'– the same word means 'marks', 'names', or 'songs'.

[104] Sound, also 'known as vibratory or wave-like phenomenon' is a 'mode for other forms of vibration which normally escape consciousness, including light, heat, electricity, x-rays, and nerve impulses in the

From my perspective, there existed a visual similarity between dot paintings and Chladni figures, which visualise sound, and it struck me that in Aboriginal culture human tracks could stand in for the person, just as a signifier can in contemporary artists' 'faceless' portraits.[105] For example, according to Ronald and Catherine Berndt, a mother could punish her naughty child by beating its footprints with a twig (Lawlor, 1993); a person's footprints were swept away from the ground after her demise (Musharbash, 2008)[106]; and Kaidatcha slippers, made of emu feathers and hair strings, were used to disguise the wearer's identity (Akerman, 2005).[107]

Track Me was further inspired by work describing the exceptional nature of Aboriginal track-reading skills.[108] For example, Douglas Lockwood reported that the Aboriginal Waipuldanya had told him: 'The footprints of my wife, my six daughters, my brothers, and other relatives are as familiar to me as their faces' (Waipuldanya quoted in Lockwood, 1962: 77).[109] This still applied even if the person had disappeared for a long period of time, as reported elsewhere.[110] Since the footprints clearly served as a form of

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body' (Trower, 2012: 4). A similar view is held by physicist Michio Kaku who explained: the universe is 'a symphony of vibrating strings' and we are 'nothing but melodies, music played out on vibrating strings and membranes' (Kaku, 2011).

[105] Chladni Figures, named after the German physicist and musician Ernst Florens Friedrich Chladni (1756–1827), occur when particles (such as salt or sand) 'are scattered throughout a plate move upon an external harmonic force resonating with one of the natural frequencies of the plate' (Arango and Reyes, 2014). The phenomenon may, for example, be observed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wvJAgrUBF4w [Accessed 22 September 2017].

[106] Photography, therefore, may be problematic for Australian Aborigines. Many Australian television programmes and films, as well as exhibitions, include a warning about viewing a film that may contain images or voices of dead persons.

[107] Kaidatcha (or Kurdaitcha), as both shoes and ritual are called, are a special kind of Aboriginal sorcery (Rose, 1956).

[108] For example, Alice Monkton Duncan-Kemp (1901–88), who grew up as the daughter of a cattle station manager, wrote detailed reports of Aboriginal track reading in her memoir *Where Strange Paths Go Down* (1964), as did Pat Lowe (British wife of Aboriginal artist Jimmy Pike) in *Hunters and Trackers of the Australian Desert* (2002).

[109] This was later confirmed through his own observation: 'Nosepeg told us not only that aborigines had been in the camp the day before, but also their names.' When the Australian newspaperman asked Nosepeg how he had been able to identify the marks he was simply told: 'We just know'im – like reading book' (Lockwood, 1964: 112).

[110] A man who had been believed to be dead by his relatives was identified by his footprints more than twenty years after he left Warburton mission station (Castillo, 2014/15). In a parallel story, told by anthropologist Kim Akerman when I visited him in Hobart in 2016, an unpublished picture shows the footprint of a man followed by a dog. The man, identified by Akerman's Aboriginal companion, had

recognition and remembrance, I regarded them as a form of portrait which made track reading suitable for my research.

In the journal contribution 'Track Me – A Portrait as Dialogue' (2013), I described how the process of mutual perception and interpretation took place in the Central Australian desert:

> Mitjili, Ida, Judy and Noreen were asked to follow and read a track I laid out by walking barefoot in the Central Australian desert. The field interviewer, Peter Bartlet[t], challenged the respondents to say what they perceived through the traces while I portrayed them on video (Boeck, 2013b: 4).

For *Track Me* (see Appendix II) I had planned to work with both men and women, but changed my idea, noticing how differently Peter, my mediator, behaved with the two sexes. Realising that men and women usually stayed in same-sex groups, I asked him whether it was a good idea to involve both. He replied that it was not but he had wanted me to find out for myself. I had been ignorant of the 'widespread segregation between men and women in many facets of Aboriginal life' across Central Australia (Curran, 2017: 72). Being married to an Aboriginal woman, my mediator (who had grown up in a Western context and had studied fine art in his youth) had lived for more than twenty years in close contact with indigenous Australians – not only in town, but also in the bush. He spoke Pintupi and Walpiri fluently and was deeply immersed in all aspects of family and cultural life.

Positioned in between two cultures, Peter was, unlike myself at that time, able to bridge the gap between two world views: one *theoretical*, the other *practical,* or one *analytical*, the other *lived* (El Guindi, 2004). These modalities are, according to Bourdieu, responsible for distance in research contexts, more so than cultural traditions, different

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disappeared many years earlier due to a legal offence. Pat Lowe had reported on the incident in *Hunters and Trackers of the Australian Desert* (2002).

mentalities, or even relations of power (ibid.). Finally, my mediator suggested that we should work with women, because in his view they were the better trackers. However, he may have proposed this because it was easier for female participants to relate to me. After Mitjili Napanangka Gibson, Peter's mother-in-law (Figure 4.1) and a recognised elder among the Pintupi, had agreed to participate, it was relatively easy to find three women who were experienced subsistence hunters and, therefore, excellent track readers.

In Australia we could not disclose to the track-reading experts that the footprints they investigated were mine (Figure 1.12 – 1.13). I created a pretend situation where my mediator was directed to the footprints which I had made the previous day by walking barefoot on the desert sand. [111] I still appeared in the position of the researcher (operating the video camera and instructing the research assistant to ask a set of questions) in Australia.

Fig. 1.12: Noreen Nampijinpa Robertson, Judy Nampijinpa Granites and Ida Nangala Granites discussing Angelika's track, *Track Me* (2006). Video still: Angelika Boeck.

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[111] I chose the area because of the beautifully coloured sand. Since it was Aboriginal territory, I purchased a filming permit.

Fig. 1.13: Angelika's track, *Track Me* (2006). Video still: Angelika Boeck.

As for *Track Me*, it echoed my experience with *StillePost* – a project that had affected me as a woman. [112] During the collective interview (Figures 1.14 –1.15) all the Aboriginal track-reading experts correctly identified the time and day I had walked on the land, concurring that my footmarks were strange and unmotivated, suspecting them to belong to someone crazy or in search of water (they ruled out that the person was drunk or had run away), certainly someone lonely and homesick. They concluded that the track was that of a woman without any bad intentions, clearly unfamiliar with the area and not of Aboriginal origin, explaining that real people, as they call themselves, press their heels harder. In their eyes the footprints belonged to a thin European woman whose breasts had not dropped, meaning that she had not borne a child. I was thirty-eight years old at the time, and struggling with the fact that I had no children because of a previous illness.

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[112] Shortly after my return to Germany from the Republic of Ivory Coast I was diagnosed with breast cancer. The busts were still lined up in my studio as I had set them down on returning from Abidjan, when I came out of hospital. At first glance I detected something I hadn't noticed before: copy number four had a large, deep scratch on the bust's left breast. In position, size and shape it precisely resembled my operation scar. Had the artist detected, and thus depicted, something in me that I hadn't been aware of then? Had I become ill by means of black magic? Was it mere coincidence? Why hadn't I noticed the mark on the sculpture before, why not the knot that was growing in my breast? Had I unconsciously chosen the bust, an art form associated with the representation of the dead, at a time when a life-threatening tumour was growing in my body? Had the artwork's emphasis of the female breast saved my life by making me aware of it?

Fig. 1.14: Ida Nangala Granites, Mitjili Napanangka Gibson, Judy Nampijinpa Granites and Noreen Nampijinpa Robertson during the collective interview, *Track Me* (2006). Video still: Angelika Boeck.

Fig. 1.15: Judy Nampijinpa Granites during the collective interview, *Track Me* (2006). Video still: Angelika Boeck.

For *Track Me* (2006) I chose to adopt video instead of photography, since track reading is a practice in motion. This made the white background I had used in *Seek Me* (2005) obsolete.[113] Instead, I extended the scope of the two previous installations by collecting additional visual material without knowing if and how I would incorporate it in my artwork. Ultimately, I produced four different videos: the 'interview', in which the four track-reading experts (prompted by my mediator's questions) assessed my footprints collectively (Figure 1.14 – 1.15); the 'tracking', a video in which women followed my

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[113] In historical anthropological-anthropometrical representations, such as the photographs of an Ingessana man taken by Sir Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard in Sudan in 1926, the anthropological object was often depicted before a neutral backdrop, to which I explicitly referred in the projects *StillePost* and *Seek Me* (see Appendixces IV and I), omitting it in later projects.

track (Figure 1.12) and including my footprints (Figure 1.13), thus depicting both processes of seeing and being seen; and 'track reading', a series of video sequences showing how the experts excelled at hunting (Figures 1.16, 4.5 – 4.7) and how they taught children by drawing tracks in the sand (Figures 1.17). These last videos were shot individually with the interviewees over several other days, both before and after the interview (Boeck, 2013b).

Fig. 1.16: Judy Nampijinpa Granites digging for a lizard, *Track Me* (2006).
Video still: Angelika Boeck.

Fig. 1.17: Ida Nangala Granites drawing an emu's track into the sand, *Track Me* (2006).
Video still: Angelika Boeck.

By collapsing the dialogue of representation – my portrait of the four respondents and their evaluations of myself – into one video, I not only responded to participants' sensitivities, but also to the culturally important aspect of relationality. The latter was

expressed in their collective opinion-formation, a crucial part of indigenous methodology, which is 'relational', 'reflexive', and 'dialogic' (Kovach, 2018: 226). In addition, for the first time, I asked for a short biography of the women in order to be able to better introduce them in future writing. At that time, I was thinking not of an academic publication, but of an art catalogue.

I.10.3 *Imagine Me*: Veiling in Yemen

During a visit to Yemen two years prior to the research, my interest in the veil had been triggered by a man who had claimed: 'Among one hundred women I am able to recognize my sister!' (as narrated in a collection of personal essays on hijab and veiling, Boeck, 2017: 198). This baffled me all the more since it occurred shortly after I, awkwardly, had not recognised myself (unveiled) in an unexpected mirror.[114]

The experience reminded me of Iranian artist Mandana Moghaddam's installation *Chelgis I* (2002). In my view the work was concerned with the 'naked veil' that Western women wear, as pointed out by Christina von Braun and Bettina Mathes: 'Before the West allowed the woman to be naked, she had to learn to wear her bareness like a dress' (von Braun and Mathes 2007: 154).[115] The nakedness of the Western woman, highlighted in Moghaddam's work by a completely hair-covered bare female

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[114] In this strange incident, a woman suddenly appeared on the bend in an aisle at the Munich Art Archive. She wore a waisted black jacket, had a mouth painted bright red and smiled at me. Certainly an architect or artist, like me, I thought. I wanted her to go, while she gestured that I should walk past. She looked me straight in the eye. Then I realised that I was dealing with myself. I was standing in front of an unexpected room-high mirror (Boeck, 2014). Siri Hustvedt has argued that instead of actually seeing ourselves, 'we walk around with an idea about ourselves. We have a body image or body identity', which is 'the conscious notion of what we look like' (Hustvedt, 2012: ebook pos. 797).

[115] John Berger argues that 'she is not naked as she is. She is naked as the spectator sees her' (Berger, 2008 [1972]: 50).

body, is the result of cultural constraints and discipline.[116] Even if we Western women no longer perceive them, this does not mean that they no longer exist.[117]

Moreover, in her conception of 'Feminist Orientalism', Gabriele Dietze argued that whereas patriarchal domination is imagined to be cruel in the East, a positive male image has been constructed in the West (Dietze, 2014).[118] The female body is at the centre of this dispute since both 'East and West rationalize the position of their women and manage their relation to the 'other', at least as long as they can keep the fiction of the other in place' (Nader, 2018: 134).

Veiling is a de-identification procedure, an 'aesthetics of withdrawal'; it creates an 'outside' – hiding and protecting the 'inside' from view (Behrend, 2013: 21).[119] The veil's significance 'as a symbol of subordination for the Western observer' (Nader, 2018: 140) was consistent with my own experience during my first visit to Yemen. Nowhere else had I felt more 'other' than in the midst of veiled women. Without knowing them and their life situations, I generally considered them repressed by men – a viewpoint that has changed dramatically over the course of the past years as a result of closer contact with a number of Muslim women. As I understand it now, the veil is, among other things, a powerful tool of 'women's self-formation' by means of which the

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[116] Braun and Mathes (2007) argued that in the course of time, these controlling factors became like a second skin around the undressed body of the Western woman.

[117] The 'fight against the veil, so beautifully visible, is so vehement because it makes the oppression of the woman so difficult to grasp' (Oestrich, quoted in von Braun and Mathes, 2007: 154).

[118] Dietze referred to Joyce Zonana's claim: 'Feminist Orientalism is a rhetorical strategy (and form of thought) by which a speaker or writer neutralizes the threat inherent in feminist demands and makes them palatable to an audience that wishes to affirm occidental superiority' (Zonana, 1993: 594).

[119] Banu Gökariksel and Anna Secor explained the terms 'veil' and 'veiling' as an Islamic system of modesty in dress and argued that it is, in the West, usually understood as a system of control that removes women from the 'field of the gaze' (Gökariksel/Secor, 2014: 178). Christina von Braun and Bettina Matthes (2007) argue that segregation and its signifier, the female veil, hides the woman as a representative of the hidden aspects of God and the ability to reproduce, and must, therefore, be considered a prolongation of the protective harem instead of as a sign of submission, as it is usually perceived in non-Muslim societies. Von Braun and Matthes, building on Ludwig Ammann's (2004) interpretation of the segregation of women in Islam, the declaration of the female body as sacred space, further showed that the symbolic gender-order in Islam, which in religious and secular societies determine the life of men and women, concern the 'extracorporal' separation between the sexes and not a quasi-biological aspect, as is the case in the thinking of the West.

veiled subject 'maps herself within the field of the gaze' as 'being visibly Muslim' (Gökariksel and Secor, 2014: 179– 80).

I sought to challenge the practice in which non-Western people – especially 'Oriental' women – were visually represented according to European imaginative desires (Lydon, 2014). The veil also allowed me to engage with an aspect of representation very different from the other two projects. While the composition of a yoik and track reading both required participation – an intermediate area between subject and object and a movement towards the other, as well as the grasping of the other (Klöpping, 2004) – the evaluations of my veiled appearance called forth the participants' memories and their capacities to imagine and compare, addressing their expectations, projections and fictions (Boeck, 2014).[120]

In the journal publication *Looking at me, are you?* (2012), I described the experimental process for *Imagine Me* in Sana'a, the capital of Yemen:

> Arwa or Samah challenged the onlookers to observe me very carefully, and asked them later to describe my looks, character and personal circumstances. The interviews took place in private as well as in public, and were carried out in two different ways […] After the inquiry in private space I revealed my identity and requested to take a photo portrait of the interviewee. The picture of the men that have been contacted in the street was taken at a second meeting arranged by the interviewer at the end of the session (Boeck, 2012: 174).

Veronica Schlecht (a German intern of the German House), searched in public spaces in Sana'a for men willing to participate, before Arwa or Samah (my Yemeni translators who would not have approached male strangers on any condition) beckoned me to come closer so that respondents could get an impression of me. For interviews held in private (mostly with women), my assistants directed me through gestures.

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[120] Siri Hustvedt argued that '[m]emory and imagination cannot be separated. Remembering is always also a form of imagining' (Hustvedt, 2012: ebook pos. 633) and the poet Dschalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad ar-Rūmī (1207–73) 'long noted that the imagination and the image are central to human creativity', that 'the world of phantasy is broader than the world of concepts and of sensibilia. For all concepts are born in phantasy' (Clammer, 2014: 118).

Although I omitted the background in *Imagine Me* (2007*)*, I kept to a rigid frontality across all projects, critically referring to the 'full face' pose or 'head-on stare' (Tagg, 1988: 36) – a common practice in anthropological surveys of the nineteenth century – which framed individuals as objects of supervision and classification and 'social inferiority' (ibid: 37).[121]

For the design of *Imagine Me,* I needed sixteen responses. Assuming that a number of reactions would be similar and wanting to achieve a greater range of opinions, we contacted twice as many respondents as were needed. The interviews were conducted in Arabic and had to be translated into German for me to select contributors' quotes, which would then be translated back into Arabic for the bilingual artwork. This meant that I influenced the results to a degree previously unimaginable to me.

More than in all other projects, I depended on the interpretations of my mediator and my translator, unable to recognise the extent to which they – consciously or unconsciously – influenced the research. It is crucial, therefore, to acknowledge that perception also depends on expectations and is, as much as translation, an interpretive act. Meaning may get distorted or lost in the process. Furthermore, none of these acts were innocent, power being always at play, and misunderstandings or misinterpretations cropped up along the way. Also, my own interpretations and artistic choices for the installation's design 'performed' translation as a consequence of interaction, as do the media themselves, and the artworks as they are interpreted by the viewer. I will discuss the different layers of mediation further in Part II.

The participants' responses in *Imagine Me* brought little recognition, except when some respondents suspected a woman who was not a Yemeni or a Muslim, or even that a man

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[121] Jürgen Habermas asserted that 'everything gets frozen into an object under the eyes of a third person' (Habermas, cited in Levin, 1993: 4).

could be hiding under the veil. The reason for that, my assistants explained, was my usually vigorous step. Instead, I observed 'that the most detailed descriptions of the veiled 'me' came from 'educated' men, while 'educated' women were more likely to perceive a woman who had studied and housewives 'saw' an 'uneducated woman' (Boeck, 2012: 176-177). This is little wonder, since the veil, a visual means, is a practice of distanciation. It seemed to be encouraging memories, fantasies or ideals rather than allowing profound engagement with a counterpart. This fuelled my view that these responses amplify 'the interrelationship between imagination and representation' (Boeck, 2014: 162), thereby suggesting that imagination and representation are both culturally specific collective phenomena.

The counter-portraits for *Imagine Me* were taken for documentation purposes. My Yemeni assistants had arranged a second meeting with male respondents whom my German assistant had approached on the street, or at their homes, offices or shops (see selection of participants' portraits, Figures 1.18–1.22). After the interview, I immediately unveiled myself to the women we met in the respondents' homes, asking them if I could take their photo portrait. [122] Interestingly, out of all the female participants, only two university teachers, neither of whom wore a facial veil in public, refused to have their photographs shown at the exhibition in Sana'a.

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[122] Arwa Al-Gawmari and Samah Al-Amri had both studied German in Sana'a. Arwa was an employee of the German House and Samah translated German news for a Yemeni news agency.

Fig. 1.18: Participant, *Imagine Me* (2007). Photograph: Angelika Boeck.

Fig. 1.19: Participant, *Imagine Me* (2007). Photograph: Angelika Boeck.

Fig. 1.20: Participant *Imagine Me* (2007). Photograph: Angelika Boeck.

Fig. 1.21: Participant, *Imagine Me* (2007). Photograph: Angelika Boeck.

Fig. 1.22: Participant, *Imagine Me* (2007). Photograph: Angelika Boeck.

As I have previously discussed, *Imagine Me* 'challenge[d] the dealings with image and gaze' (Boeck, 2012: 174) in that my questions and instructions clearly ran against local sensitivities. When in Yemen participants were invited to describe their impressions and associated fantasies concerning the veiled me and when they were asked to have themselves photographically portrayed (Boeck, 2013), this was fundamentally opposed to the conventions in Islamic cultures, which favour aniconism and prescribe that a woman may not be seen by a man and he, in turn, is not supposed to look at her or talk about her because women are considered 'harim', as Christina von Braun and Bettina Mathes (2007) explain.[123]The Islamic jurist, philosopher, and mystic of Persian origin al-Ghazali (who died around 1111) declared that for a man to look at a strange woman can be a sinful act, since it may correspond to copulation with the eye (Braun and Mathes, 2007). The implications of the gaze which al-Ghazali addressed were taken up hundreds of years later and in a secularised form by the feminist film critic Laura Mulvey who termed it the 'male gaze' (Mulvey, 2016 [1975]).

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[123] Aniconism is the ban of creating images of living beings in Islam which, for stricter Muslims, can also include photography.

As foregrounded in earlier writing (Boeck, 2013), all my durational practice-led projects were based on the hypothesis that artists and practitioners are present in their creative representations of the 'other', as famously expressed by Oscar Wilde in his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray:* 'Every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter. The sitter is merely the accident, the occasion' (Wilde, 1890: 5). Wilde's observation was confirmed by *StillePost* (see Appendix IV) in that it shows how seeing becomes distorted by the artist's own experiences and affected by his/her self-perception in the act of re-interpretation. While seeing was at the centre of *StillePost*, subsequent research expanded my exploration of participants who foregrounded a variety of sensory impressions other than seeing.

With my original experimental interventions, I performed 'art as anthropology' (Sansi, 2015: 20),[124] doing research in a literal sense, namely 'searching again' by 'living curiously', thereby enabling 'knowing in being', because 'research is not just what we do, but what we undergo' (Ingold, 2018)[125] – a very important aspect in regard to my self-learning project.

By allowing myself to be vulnerable, by inviting my counterparts to represent me according to their own rules, I set out to experience 'other possibilities of being' (Ingold, 2011: 238), to widen my artistic spectrum and to bolster indigenous practices. On the other hand, my own visual portraits of participants emphasised that which I wanted to critique: a limited perspective based on colonial exploration, largely undertaken for exploitative reasons and concomitant subjugation to claim superiority over the people encountered – relegating their practices and beliefs to the realm of

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[124] Roger Sansi defined 'art as anthropology' as a 'form of art' in which artists engage 'with ideas and questions that anthropology has also been interested in' (Sansi, 2015: 20).
[125] The quotes are taken from Tim Ingold's keynote lecture 'Art and Anthropology for a Sustainable World' for the 'Art, Materiality and Representation' conference (British Museum & SOAS) on 1 June 2018.

primitivism. In this critical reference to the limitations of visual representation, I included my own artistic practice.

Significantly, the experimental nature of the projects drew attention to a rich trove of cultural practices existent outside the Western tradition of 'portrayal' – a potential resource, largely unperceived and therefore unexplored and theorised, which is a critical concern of this doctoral thesis. Moreover, during my arts practice projects, participants' interpretations of myself were constructed in dialogue and conjunction with me, much more so than my visual representations of them were. This directly points to what is at stake, that which I sought to address through artistic means and the innovative methodology developed for *Portrait as Dialogue*. I have, after all, travelled around the world to 'provoke an unsettling that arises from piercing the gaze', as Margaret Kovach demands from research that has decolonising aspirations and with it the potential to 'shake things up' (Kovach, 2018: 217).

Part II

My self-imposed task of directly experiencing human modes of perception and representation in as many cultural forms as possible, foregrounding and contrasting non-Western centred practices with the Western portrait as equivalent, is based on the avant-garde search for 'primitive' origin, that is, the pursuit of something superior to the modern system of the arts, beyond the exclusivity of Eurocentric history (Schüttpelz, 2016). [126] Furthermore, my arts practice is located in the tradition of comparative anthropology (see Radcliffe-Brown, 1951). The comparative method, a much critiqued approach (Boas, 1896; Abu-Lughod, 1991) has recently revived and been described as 'one of the most fundamental cognitive capabilities of humans' (Friedmann, cited in Schnegg, 2014: 58).

In the next phase of my research which, referring to Nicolas Bourriaud (2002), I call 'postproduction', I shifted emphasis to a more personal and subjective approach, sifting through the material and creating new meaning through interpretation.[127] My emphasis on the gaze created a dialectic between the Western gaze and non-Western methods, creating a tension between their similarities and differences and, in so doing, drawing attention to historical anthropological surveys. This juxtaposition, as it is brought forward through my vulnerable research position, is an original contribution of knowledge to the field.

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[126] In a lecture at the Chicago Arts Club, Jean Dubuffet stated the rationale for this quest: 'Art speaks to the mind, not to the eyes. This is how "primitive" societies have always understood it, and they are right' (Dubuffet, quoted in Clammer, 2014: 44).

[127] While 'Postproduction' is a technical term used in television, film and video to refer to the montage of the recorded (with or without other) material, the term 'Postproduction art' was coined by Nicolas Bourriaud in his book *Postproduction: Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World* (2002). It concerns specific artworks made of pre-existing works (or elements of them) in which the artist remixes what has already been produced, thereby expressing a new cultural configuration that speaks to contemporary culture as well as the source material that has been used.

II.1 Revisiting the Western Gaze

In Part I, I argued that my 'performative encounters [were] primarily about the act of relating to individuals, rather than the presentation of such encounters in exhibitions and publications' (Boeck, 2013a: 43). Indigenous methodologies, which are often performative in style, centring around processes rather than the end product, 'are not only significant as a methodological tool but also a unique form of expression, representing the act of engaging in relationships within a decolonising framework' (Chilisa, cited in Gaudet, 2014: 83). My endeavour was also a self-learning project. As discussed in this thesis, my re-interpretation of the material produced in the intersubjective encounters for the creation, mediation, curation and dissemination of my art practice works, was the inspiration for the various projects which I initiated either entirely or for the most part at my own expense. At this point, my noble ideas of co-creation clashed with my desire for freedom or, as Johannes Fabian noted, 'while co-presence is a condition of inquiry it makes limited sense to think of it as requirement of representation (Fabian, 2006: 145).[128]

My own cultural conditioning counteracted what I had achieved through adopting a vulnerable research position: a perspective of reciprocity. During postproduction, I retreated into an earlier tradition of making a distinction between non-artist and artist, between participants and myself. While I labelled my participants as practitioners, I was an artist. Unlike me, participants were not interested in the outcome of our joint project (which was actually mine). While they pursued a 'profane' goal, namely making money, I did not set out expecting to sell these artworks. As I had largely financed my research, fieldwork and subsequent art works myself, I felt confirmed in my self-

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[128] Margaret Kovach deplored the fact that representation is 'frequently marked by outsider research specialists representing indigenous people' (Kovach, 2018: 227).

entitlement to exercise sole control over the final output. On a more personal level, my sense of entitlement was related to my need for self-empowerment and my conviction, based on experience, that only through art was I really able to express myself in a way that made me feel 'seen'.

Kim Charnley (2011) demanded that artists should take their privilege into account when engaging in a dialogue with collaborators, as otherwise they risked colonising them under the aegis of the artwork.[129] Artists, I suggest, tend not to question their own privilege.[130] This is due to the unquestioned self-image of artists, which has existed since the Renaissance and emphasises values such as autonomy and freedom that were inscribed in me.[131] According to Erhard Schüttpelz, the aesthetic canon that developed from the technical canon of the nineteenth century is still valid today. Dividing utilitarian and non-utilitarian art from the eighteenth century onwards was institutionalised as a principle by all educational sectors (Schüttpelz, 2016), such as schools, libraries, academies and museums. Hence, for me, aesthetic education and appreciation were connected to the creation and appreciation of something 'purposive without attending to a purpose', as it was conceptualised by Kant (Coleman Burns, 2011: 10).

In fact, by consciously adopting the sole decision-making position, I did exactly what I originally wanted to avoid: I controlled representations of the Other. In so doing, I

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[129] Peggy McIntosh observed that, as a white person, 'I realized I had been taught about racism as something that puts others at a disadvantage but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage' (McIntosh, 1989: 10). Whites, she argues, 'are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege' (ibid., 1989: 10). The insidious thing about privilege, Nina Simon (2013) noted, is the lack of use of modifiers such as 'identity' or 'white', and the reference to one's own culture as canonical.

[130] Nikos Papastergiadis (2003) argues for Western artists to continue monopolising the position of full historical agency by defining their subjectivity through a break with tradition, elevating themselves to a universalist position and thus erasing their specific ethnic identity and assuming a meta-identity.

[131] Maruška Svašek reasoned that from the nineteenth century onwards, 'fine artists in Europe were idealized as the last bastions of freedom, imagined as independent individuals who, through their creative acts, had direct access to a realm of artistic transcendence' (Svašek, 2016: 17).

confirmed Patti Lather's argument that practices which seek to 'give voice to the voiceless' are often 'entangled in layers of returns and reversals and cannot be considered as innocent counter-practice' (Lather, 2015: 7).

II.2 Perspectives of a Dialogical Art Practice

I use the term 'dialogue', supported by the methodological and theoretical paradigms underpinning a text about *StillePost* by Reinhard Spieler (2004) and in sympathy with Grant Kester's understanding of a 'dialogical aesthetic' (Kester, 1999). 'Dialogue', in terms of my own work, concerns an interpretive and communicative exchange rather than a physical object (Kester, 2005), as discussed previously (Boeck, 2013). [132] However, this contrasted with a dialogical arts practice as advocated by Kester – a practice in which collaborators 'share decisions about the structural characteristics of the work of art' and, accordingly, 'authors' rights' (Beech, cited in Tiller, 2014: 22);[133] in my own projects, collaboration was limited to the central element, the moment of mutual interpretation and representation.

The cultural critics and theorists, Grant Kester and Claire Bishop, 'who have informed the socially engaged or participatory visual art debate' (Tiller, 2014: 14) for over a decade, have different views on the role of collaboration, participation, and authorship. On the one hand, my practice corresponds with Kester's (1999) concept of 'dialogical aesthetic', which advocates 'performative interactions' […] 'with collaborators outside the artistic context' (Boeck, 2013, 493), combining the ability 'for interaction with other areas of social practice', with an awareness of 'political and cultural meaning' (Kester, 1999: 4). On the other hand, in the sole interpretation of the co-created material, my

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[132] Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin, Kester (1999) defined 'dialogical aesthetics' as a process, which combines differing meanings, interpretations and points of view.

[133] Claire Bishop argued that 'the gesture of ceding some or all authorial control is conventionally regarded as more egalitarian and democratic than the creation of a work by a single artist' (Bishop, 2006a: 12).

practice is closer to Bishop's view which deplores participants often being used 'as the medium or material' (Bishop, 2012: 5) for the 'artists' single-authored work' (Tiller, 2014: 14).

II.3 Creating Art in Dialogue with the Cultural Other

Unlike other contemporary artists who engage with the cultural Other, I did not seek to master the Other's cultural practice. This is seen, for example, in the case of Swedish non-Sámi artist Lisa Vipola's practice, which involved her copying traditional Sámi handicraft in her work *Äkta Sameslöjd* (2013). Similarly, the non-Aboriginal Australian artist Imnants Tillers, in his work *The Nine Shots* (1985), worked with quotations from elements of the painting *Five Dreamings* (1984) by Aboriginal artist Michael Jagamara Nelson .[134] I did not include elements of other aesthetic practices in my work, as was done by American artist Susan Hiller, who reproduced Aboriginal Australian cave paintings in her work *NAMA-MA/mother* (1991), an element of her installation *From the Freud Museum* (1991–6).[135] Neither did I invite indigenous participants to a gallery, as was done by the German-Serbian artist couple Ulay and Marina Abramović in a performance of the series *Nightsea Crossing* (1981–7).[136] At first glance, I took an approach similar in some ways to that of British photographer Jimmy Nelson, who portrayed tribal cultures around the world between 2010 and 2014, although there are

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[134] Viapola wanted to challenge the question 'Who is a genuine Sami?' (cited from Viapola's Portrofolio *Äkta Sameslöjd,* personal correspondence 10.08.2017). Tillers, who works from reproductions and quotes, appropriated Nelson's dreaming unauthorised, combining elements from *Five Dreamings* with elements from Georg Baselitz's painting *D'alante viento* (1966). Since 2000, Tillers and Nelson have co-produced around fifteen images (information taken from YouTube video by Imnant Tillers, published on 1 March 2017). Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3f0hVohSWI [Accessed 15 January 2018].

[135] *NAMA-MA/mother*, one of the boxes from Hiller's work *From the Freud Museum*, 'holds a reproduction of aboriginal rock painting from Uluru cave (Ayers Rock, Australia), along with twelve transparent cosmetic cases. Each contains soil of a slightly different colour. 'Native earths' are used for painting and (as the cosmetic cases suggest) 'faces' (Clifford, 1997: 281).

[136] *Nightsea Crossing* is a series of twenty-two performances (preceding Abramović's work *The Artist is Present*) that took place between 1981 and 1987. In a 1983 session at the Fodor Museum in Holland, Abramović and Ulay invited two of their mentors, Charlie Taruru Tjungarrayi, an Aborigine who had been their guide among the Pintupi, and Ngawang Soepa Lueyar, a Tibetian Lama, to join them around a gold-leafed table where they sat for four days (Goldberg, 1995).

also significant differences between us. Whereas Nelson, who presented himself as a visual anthropologist in the foreword to his book, *Before They Pass Away* (2017), wanted to create an 'ambitious aesthetic photographic document that would stand the test of time' (Nelson, 2017: 2), thereby continuing, consciously or unconsciously, in the spirit of nineteenth-century anthropology, I sought to break with this tradition whilst simultaneously representing it.[137]

Like the early travellers who established the anthropological collections of the nineteenth century, I too travelled around the world in order to explore, map, compare and represent 'other' cultural and multi-sensory practices of relating and addressing. However, where the physical artefacts were brought back from the colonies with implicit (and sometimes explicit) cultural contempt for 'primitive' people from Africa and overseas (Metken, 1977), my aim was to bolster indigenous and multi-sensory practices with my own self-critical artefacts, to which they had contributed.

II.4 Mediating Sites of Interpretation

John Clammer noted that the 'comparative intent', which 'still lies at the heart of anthropology', implies, at least in principle, an intention 'to treat all cultures as equal in a philosophical if not in a material sense' (Clammer, 2014: 77). While these aspirations have, in his words, 'frequently been honoured more in the breach than in their fulfilment' of the 'declaration of human rights', Clammer suggested that a comparative endeavour, 'is extremely useful as a way of reminding people that such principles exist, even when they are not fully observed in practice' (ibid.). In a similar spirit, Tim Ingold called comparison 'a practice of observation grounded in participatory dialogue' which

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[137] Available from: https://artofthetimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/FALL-SEASON-2015.pdf [Accessed 6. December 2017]. An exhibition of Nelson's work was recently shown in MUCA Museum of Urban und Contemporary Art, München (22 November 2017–4 March 2018). Available from: http://www.muca.eu/ausstellungen/jimmy-nelson-fotoausstellung [Accessed 6 December 2017].

is why he suggested it be called 'correspondence' (Ingold, 2011: 241). His understanding is in line with the view of Laura Nader, who argued that comparison 'requires comparative consciousness', which steers away from comparisons that are only of a dichotomous nature – comparisons that draw on differences between us and them, evident in Eastern as well as Western discourses. We must endeavour 'to find points of convergence and commonality' (Nader, 2018: 141). The difference between the historical endeavour and my own becomes clearest when one considers that I myself was in the centre of comparison and that my own vulnerability is at the core of my arts practice.

This point was highlighted by Martin Zillinger, organiser of a colloquium at Cologne University (2017), who noted that artists are generally less critiqued than anthropologists because they work with the cultural other, even if they 'just go there, set up their camera and leave', asking: 'what is the privilege of art?'[138] He suggested that today anthropologists, together with anthropological museums and the past, represent colonial spaces, thereby relieving everyone else from blame. Zillinger conceded that my vulnerability does make the necessary difference. My method, which reverses the gaze that I subvert, is arguably what makes my arts practice radically critical. The advantage of art might therefore lie in what Elizabeth Edwards and Matt Mead pointed to by quoting a curator who argued in favour of photography as a means to address the colonial legacy in ethnographic museums. They write:

> If you have a problem with your terminology, if you're not sure what words you can use, if you're not linguistically very rich, having a photograph is a fabulous way of being able to talk about something without having to have words (Edwards and Mead, 2013: 26).

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[138] The colloquium 'Experimentalisierung und Klassifizierung von Wissen und Praxis (II)' (Experimentalisation and Classification of Knowledge and Practice) was hosted by Professor Martin Zillinger at a.r.t.e.s. Graduate School for the Humanities at Cologne University on 3 July 2017.

This example speaks for a non-linguistic criticism, offering an explanation as to why interventions by artists in anthropological museums are so much in vogue – a topic I address in the next section.

Nevertheless, the question of profit is also of critical concern in my arts practice, as was revealed in the context of my conference presentation of *StillePost* in Berlin (2006), mentioned here since it remains relevant to the artworks discussed in this thesis. A questioner from the audience, mainly anthropologists, asked whether I would sell my artwork for significantly more than the price I paid to the sculptors in the Republic of Ivory Coast, which I affirmed I would.[139] I explained that I had willingly paid, for each sculpture, many times the amount a local client would have had to pay, thus anticipating and intentionally counteracting the accusation of exploiting the sculptors if I should ever sell the artwork.[140] I further explained that the woodcarvers were not involved in creating the concept of *StillePost*, which, I insisted, was something more than five sculptures and five photo portraits.

I consider myself a conceptual artist, since in my work 'the idea is paramount' (Lippard, 1972: vii). Henry Flynt, who coined the term 'concept art' (1963), asserted that conceptual art often depends on language.[141] Although language is constitutive in most of my projects, it was important to me to mediate the intersubjective encounters non-linguistically – a topic I return to later. Moreover, the underlying concept for *StillePost* (as for all other projects) did not arise out of teamwork between artists/artist or

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[139] The Conference 'Kunst und Ethnographie: zum Verhältnis von visueller Kunst und ethnographischem Arbeiten' (Art and Ethnography: on the Relationship between Visual Art and Ethnographic Work) (17 November 2006) was organised by the Gesellschaft für Ethnographie eV, Berlin, in cooperation with the Institute for European Ethnology of the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, the Museum Europäischer Kulturen and the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.
[140] I never bargained about a price, although I was aware that the amount demanded was greater than the usual sum.
[141] Flynt (1963) defined 'concept art' as an art of which concepts are the material, as for example in music, where the material is sound.

artist/non-artist, as required in a collaborative practice. Although my works would not exist without the participants' contributions, I commissioned that participation, which should not be mistaken for full collaboration in the way John Roberts defines it: 'a mode of production through the subordination of the artist's individual will and identity to the group' (Roberts, 2004: 557). They are 'productive encounters', which 'have the potential' to 'amplify existing dynamics/conversations/debates/phenomena' (Marcus, 2016: 22). Roberts' definition, however, applies to the first phase of my research, to my surrender to the other's evaluation. In the second phase, postproduction, I reclaimed power by taking on my own identity as an artist, combining the participants' 'materials' and my own in a new composition, as discussed in more detail in what follows. [142]

Although the criticism of my work meant that I was not invited by the organisers of the conference to contribute to the publication that followed the event, as all the other contributors were, it was a very valuable experience for me. In particular, something a participant said to me in private after the discussion accompanied me across all future projects: 'Sometimes it is much more important to ask a question than to answer it and you have done that very convincingly'.

II.5 Sensory Dialogue with the Western Gaze

Critically referring to a historical practice, my own arts practice explores, combines and represents different contemporary approaches to otherness that are activated through a variety of sensory modalities. The artworks themselves may well be viewed as the extravagant portraits of a white European, middle-class, urban woman who enjoys the privilege of travel – as did other privileged women, such as the successful Austrian

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[142] Here I draw on Brian Eno, who argues that although the new ideas are usually attributed to individuals (with a common focus on the lone and typically male artist), they are often generated by a group of people. He therefore, proposes the neologism, 'scenius', in place of 'genius', to describe 'cooperative intelligence' (Eno, 2018). Video interview available at: http://www.openculture.com/2018/04/brian-enos-advice-for-those-who-want-to-do-their-best-creative-work-dont-get-a-job.html [Accessed 19 April 2018].

travel writer Ida Pfeiffer (1797–1858), in colonial times (see Pfeiffer, 1856). This is especially so because my installations are situated in what Tagg called 'the privileged "High Art" spaces of an ever more stratified and hierarchical culture' (Tagg, 1988: 13). 'To "have one's portrait done" was one of the symbolic acts by which individuals from the rising class made their ascent visible to themselves as well as to others and classed themselves among those who enjoyed social status' (ibid: 37). At the same time, I performed what I set out to critique: the historical practice of visually exploring otherness. However, I maintain that this double-edged approach exposes what is at stake: representing what the gaze really is, in contrast to non-Western and indigenous ways of relating and attributing.

Like Franz Gall (1758–1828), the founder of phrenology (which he developed together with Gaspar Spurzheim), the British polymath Galton dreamed of achieving a 'quintessentially empiricist generality' (Ambrosio 2015: 3).[143] Whereas Gall tried to achieve this with regard to mental functions and their cortical localisations (Dietz, 2007), Galton attempted to create a series of portraits 'that presents no man in particular, but portrays an imaginary figure possessing the average features of any given group of men' (Galton, 1878: 97).[144]

However, where Galton tried to reduce agency, I endeavoured to mobilise agency in the sense of 'active intentionality' (Curry 2010: 15), involving intervention in the world,

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[143] Phrenology was a doctrine that studied the shape and size of the cranium to trace back physiological determinants in order to assign mental and characteristic states to clearly defined brain regions (Dietz, 2007). Assuming a connection between the shape of the skull and the brain, the ideology aimed at the identification of persons who had a specific faculty or character (in particular, geniuses, artists, politicians, criminals and the mentally ill), and included a typologisation of individuals with the same geographical origin, with the aim of mapping and identifying national characters worldwide (ibid.). Dietz showed how this material, in spite of the disqualification of the discipline, was absorbed by anthropological collections after Gall's death; and Charles G. Gross (1987) demonstrated how Gall's ideas on the localisation of mental function had a deep and lasting influence on modern neuroscience, despite the absurdities of Gall's project.

[144] Galton explained his concept and photographic process in his book, *Composite Portraits, Made by Combining Those of Many Different Persons into a Single Resultant Figure* (1878).

thus producing definite outcomes in a series of reciprocal relationships. Where Galton sought to portray an idealised type derived from many different faces (Galton, 1878), subjecting different human races to the Western gaze, I had myself portrayed from different cultural perspectives that did not privilege vision. While Galton successively exposed a number of photographic portraits to a camera holding a single plate (ibid.), I successively presented myself to a number of individuals as 'a blank sheet of paper, which is written on and re-written on over and over again' (Boeck, 2013: 498). Where the *Composite Portraits* composed the faces of a group of women into one single portrait, taken together, the projects of *Portrait as Dialogue* constitute a 'composite portrait' of a single woman, recalling Lacan's words: 'The body in pieces finds its unity in the image of the other, which is its own anticipated image – a dual situation in which a polar, but non-symmetrical relation is sketched out' (Lacan, cited in Fauvel, 2012: 451).

Tony Bennett remarked that the statistical techniques of eugenics, pioneered by such as Karl Pearson and Francis Galton, created a 'formal grammar', which provided a template in the 1950s for sociological surveys that 'could have led to a cultural sociology based on habitus', further introducing this grammar to Bourdieu's concept of 'cultural capital' (Bennett, 2017: 103). My own arts practice touched upon what Pierre Bourdieu identified as 'embodied, objectified and institutionalized' (Bourdieu, 1986) dimensions. I incorporated the other's perceptions of me as 'part of my "embodied" knowledge of myself' (Boeck, 2013: 497) and objectified contributors' interpretations of me [...] as well as the photo or video portraits that I ma[d]e of them' (Boeck, 2013: 491) as material objects (the art practice works) and media (my written publications).[145]

Relatedly, Amelia Jones observed, that the institutional position of feminist art history

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[145] High art is a piece of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu/Darbel/Schnapper, 1990) used by the elite to mark their status and limit access by the non-elite (Tagg, 1988).

'has been articulated since the 1970s largely from a middle-class, urban, white, and heteronormative point of view' (Jones: 2016: 3).

II.6 *Portrait as Dialogue*: The Artworks

I selected the materials according to my artistic choice across all projects. However, in *Imagine Me* and *Track Me* this depended, to a significant degree, on my mediator's translations and transcripts. *Track Me w*as the most complex in this regard, since I had not only combined both perspectives on one and the same plane, the interview, but had also spontaneously collected additional material.[146] Although how the women checked if there was a lizard in a hole (Figure 1.16) and how they drew animal tracks in the sand (Figure 1.17) had nothing to do with the process of mutual representation, I included this material to reinforce their assessment of my own persona.[147] In addition, I integrated my own footprints (Figure 1.5, 1.13) and, together with them, an unprecedented layer of self-representation. Another aspect of self-representation emerged in *Seek Me*. Although the Sámi musicians had posed for me in their traditional costumes (Figures 2.1–2.5), in addition to the images I took of them in their everyday attire (Figures 1.6 – 1.10), I resisted using these traditional images, since it had become apparent to me that the musicians wanted to reinforce the expectations they had of me as a researcher, who would depict them as typically Sámi, and that they would in this way control their own self-representations.

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[146] For example, once, when I filmed the women as they hunted, a friend accompanied them. Since at that time I did not know if and how I would use the footage, I did not inform her about my project, but simply assumed that the other women had done so.

[147] The Aboriginal women were remunerated for their time and expertise by me. In general, participants showed no or little interest in the end result of the material that was the consequence of their participation.

Fig. 2.1: Ole Larsen Gaino in traditional costume as proposed by him, near Maze (Norway). Photograph: Angelika Boeck (2005).

Fig. 2.2: Anna Berit Peltopera in traditional costume as proposed by her, Karasjok (Norway). Photograph: Angelika Boeck (2005).

Fig. 2.3: Lars Henrik Blind in traditional costume as proposed by him, Maze (Norway). Photograph: Angelika Boeck (2005).

Fig. 2.4: Åsá Márgget Anti Holm in traditional costume as proposed by her, Utsjoki (Finland). Photograph: Angelika Boeck (2005).

Fig. 2.5: Johan Sara jr. in traditional costume as proposed by him, Maze (Norway).
Photograph: Angelika Boeck (2005).

Across all projects, the designs of the artworks were shaped by both my experience with participants and by the cultural practices they explored. For example, my initial idea for *Seek Me* was to have participants' portraits projected on to five surfaces, positioned in a circular area (Figure 2.6). Using highly specialised loudspeakers which make sound audible in a strictly circumscribed area, this arrangement would have allowed a visitor to hear each individual yoik (illustrated in Figures 2.7–2.11) directly in front of the photo-portrait, as well as a combination of all yoiks in the centre of the sound-installation. I considered this option before being yoiked, since I was interested in bringing out the resonances and dissonances in the interpretation of a person by five different individuals. Finally, I decided that the artwork should be conceptually responsive to the room in which it is shown, because site is also an important element of yoik. Ultimately, the participants' photographs are either printed or projected in adjustable sizes; the sound is emitted by loudspeakers or headphones as best fits the

spatial situation. This decision renders *Seek Me* very suitable for presentations in artist

talks and at conferences – a point taken up later in the discussion.
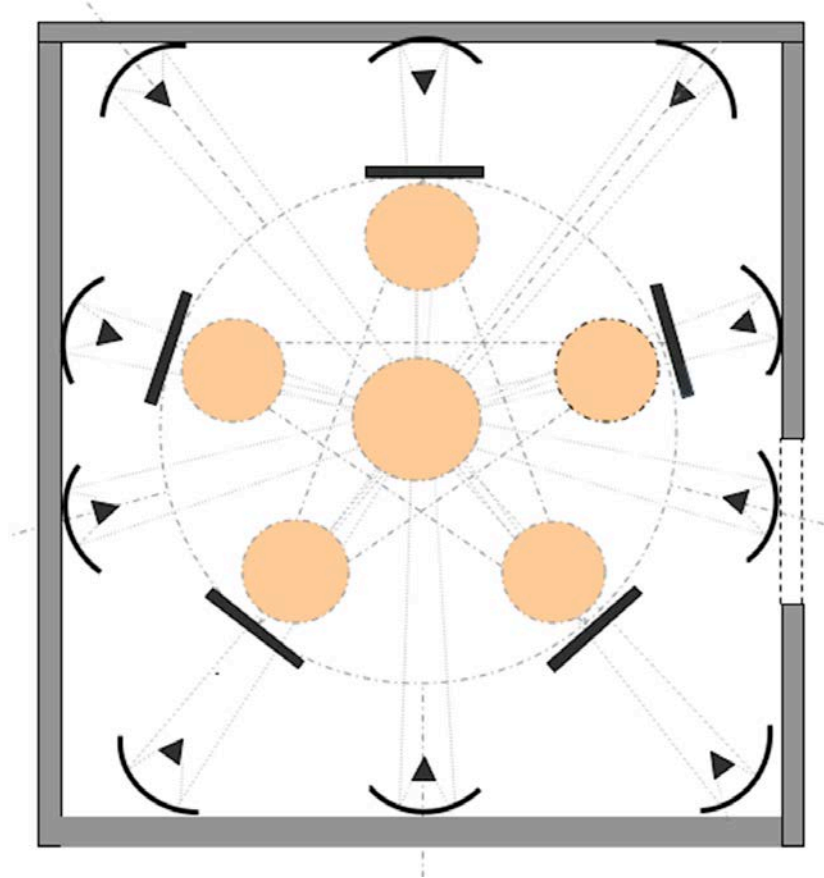
Fig. 2.6: Plan showing the initial idea for the installation *Seek Me* (2005).

Fig. 2.7: Sound diagram Ole Larsen Gaino, *Seek Me* (2005).

Fig. 2.8: Sound diagram Lars Henrik Blind, *Seek Me* (2005).

Fig. 2.9: Sound diagram Anna Berit Peltopera, *Seek Me* (2005).

Fig. 2.10: Sound diagram Åsá Márgget Anti Holm, *Seek Me* (2005).

Fig. 2.11: Sound diagram Johan Sara jr., *Seek Me* (2005).

After viewing all material for *Track Me*, I decided on a three-channel video installation (Figure 2.12) consisting of the following:

> [T]hree videos showing different aspects of track reading: the interview, the process of reading my traces before interpreting them and a series of shots showing the women hunting, and drawing traces in the sand; these last videos were produced individually with the interviewees over several other days (Boeck, 2013b: 4).

Fig. 2.12: *Track Me* (2006), Exhibition view Schafthof Freising (2017). Photograph: Eike Berg.

In contrast to *Seek Me* and *Track Me* (and *StillePost*), both of which emerged from a vague idea that came to me in the field and were only to be fully developed back in Munich,[148] I came to Yemen with a concrete idea for an exhibition in the German House in Sana'a.[149] This had been a precondition accompanying a small grant from the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations (ifa). My design was informed by the spectacular case of Gregor Schneider's work, *Cube Venice* (Figure 2.13) which he had been commissioned to show at the 51st Venice Biennale in 2005, as discussed in my journal article (Boeck, 2014). Schneider had planned to install his cube of aluminium scaffolding draped in black muslin in St. Mark's Square.[150]

What interested me the most about Schneider's project was that the black building became associated with the holy Kaaba only due to the surrounding Western architecture.
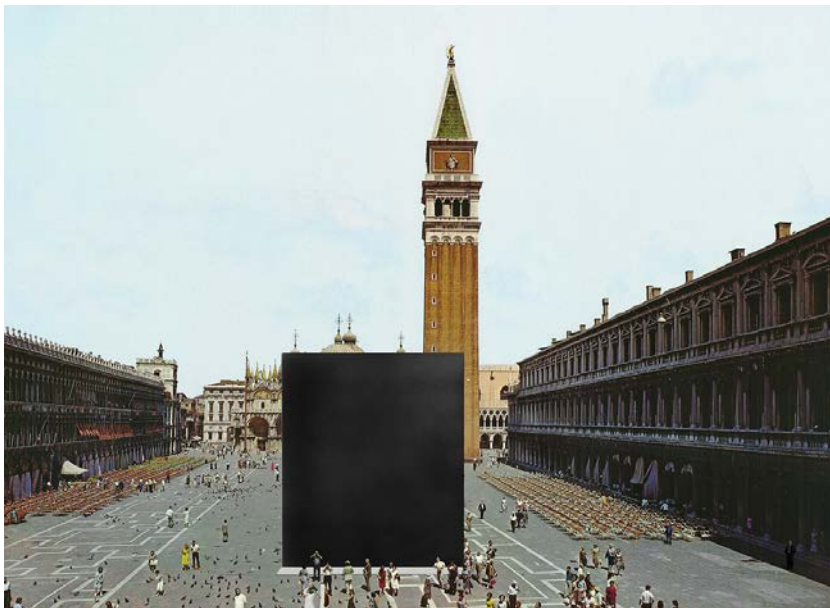
Fig. 2.13: Gregor Schneider, *Cube Venice*, 2005 (visualisation),
courtesy Gregor Schneider.

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[148] Usually this was done in my studio. For *Track Me* I was able to use the facilities of the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology at Ludwig Maximilians University (LMU).

[149] The German House is a cultural society that pursues the goal of cultural exchange between Germany and Yemen.

[150] Schneider, who had previously represented Germany at the 49th Venice Biennale in 2001, could not realise his project. It was rejected by city officials, who suggested the artwork might offend or provoke Muslims (Magill, 2007).

Correspondingly, I decided to have participants' evaluations of 'the imagined being who was behind the veil' (Boeck, 2017: 201) stitched into panels of black cloth, tacking them on to a cubic corpus surrounded by participants' photo portraits (Figures 1.18–1.22). The structure measured 2 x 2 x 2 metres, to accommodate the height of the person and the span of the outstretched arms (Figure 2.14). It could hold sixteen textile panels, each fifty centimetres across, corresponding to the width of a human body (Boeck, 2013c), thereby defining the number of participants needed for the project.[151]

Fig. 2.14: *Imagine Me*, Exhibition View, *German House*, Sana'a (2007). Photograph: Angelika Boeck.

For the embroidery, I originally thought of using white thread (inverting the design in books), but finally decided on golden thread as a reference to the golden jewellery (rings or bracelets), which allowed me to tell one woman from another when in public (Boeck, 2012). During my earlier visit to Yemen I had not worn any jewellery. When I visited a family in Sana'a, together with my male travelling companion, the women of the house ostentatiously collected silver trinkets for me and, from under their veils,

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[151] As described in Part I, I conducted thirty interviews although I only needed sixteen quotes, since I wanted to be able to make a selection. Correspondingly I had more quotes embroidered in fabric, so that I would be able to select them at the last moment or use different panels at different exhibitions.

instructing my friend (whom they mistakenly assumed to be my partner/husband), to buy gold for me.[152] In *Imagine Me,* for the first and, so far, the only time, I changed the most significant element of my continuous concept, the direct juxtaposition between a participant's portrait and his/her interpretation of me. Realising how difficult it was for women to participate in my project, I disguised the direct connection between the respondents' snapshot portraits and their statements by presenting the photographic portraits of all those who had consented to having their portrait taken juxtaposed with my selection of sixteen quotations.

II.7 Mediating an Experience of in-Betweenness

It can be claimed that direct experience and non-linguistic meaning-making are art's strengths.[153] Art practitioners have the potential to provide a viewer 'with a new, adequate space in which s/he can expand and question his/her own experiences through the offer of artistic work', a space in which s/he uses his/her 'entire sensorium' for new 'recognition possibilities' (Boeck, 2005: 177).[154] As Stephen Scrivener argued, 'artworks offer perspectives or ways of seeing' and 'ways of being', rather than controlling their meaning. This is because art evolves 'into emotions, human nature and relationships, and our place in the world, etc.' (Scrivener, 2002).[155]

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[152] In Yemen, social status is associated with two kinds of female bodies that correspond to the two fundamental sets of relationships in which women are classified: married couples and siblings. Bodily embellishment is where this difference is negotiated (vom Bruck, 1997). In Yemen, as in many Islamic societies, the female body may only be seen by male persons who are in a degree of consanguinity that precludes marriage and by other women. How women see other women, both from their own perspective and as a male agent (triggering male fantasy) is vitally important, as Gabriele vom Bruck has argued.

[153] A good example to illustrate this claim is Cuban artist Tania Bruguera's performance *Tatlin's Whisper #5*, which took place at Tate Modern, London in 2008. To reflect on the complex relationship between agents of authority and the people they aim to control, Bruguera engaged two mounted policemen in uniform (one on a white, the other on a black horse), manipulating and breaking up the audience into two distinct groups with lateral movements of the animals. Further information on Tania Bruguera's performance *Tatlin's Whisper #5* at Tate Modern in 2008 is available from: http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/bruguera-tatlins-whisper-5-t12989 [Accessed 18 May 2018].

[154] Translation from German by Angelika Boeck.

[155] Available at: https://www.herts.ac.uk/__data/.../WPIAAD_vol2_scrivener.pdf [Accessed 14 May 2018].

With regard to my own arts practice, this perspective was confirmed by literature scholar Barbara Naumann, a member of the audience at a convention on representation beyond portraiture in Cologne (2018), where I presented *Portrait as Dialogue* (in a joint presentation with Kristin Marek).[156] Naumann noted that my focus on senses other than vision allows recipients to enter a zone of contact that is normally reserved for intimacy. In this way, she said, the concerns of the viewer could be mirrored even in aspects that are impossible to express linguistically.

Correspondingly, I have noted elsewhere that '[a] work of art is not made to provide answers; it is created between the visitor to an exhibition and the thing being perceived' (Boeck, 2013: 507). As for myself, I am concerned not so much with answering questions as with understanding them (Bernstein, 1973) and I am more than happy when my artworks can cause the viewer to 'tr[y] to pause before the concept of perception, to get away from it, to avoid its obvious familiarity and to examine its personal and practical origins' (Boeck, 2005: 184) in order to question his/her own cultural conditioning.

Morphy argued that mediation in art 'is thematic', since 'art objects […] mediate between domains of existence', they mediate 'between artist and audience, and they mediate between an object that they are an index of and the person interacting with that object' (Morphy, 2009: 8). I have expressed this proposition in a similar way: 'the social bond of our culture is primarily linguistic, but it is not made of a single fiber'; there 'is a point where […] a person [is] unable to communicate what s/he perceives to others in such a way that the other person comes to a similar conclusion' (Boeck, 2005:

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[156] The convention at Internationales Kolleg Morphomata in Cologne (13–15 June 2018) was titled Revisionen des Porträts: Jenseits der Repräsentation (Revisions of the Portrait: Beyond representation).

184).[157] Also, depending on the situation, which may influence 'the observer's perception, s/he will classify and integrate the artwork that s/he has just seen differently into his/her own variable canon of experience' (ibid.).[158]

I consider an aesthetic and direct experience particularly appropriate in the surrounding discourse of multi-sensory perception and representation with the aim of juxtaposing other forms alongside a generally accepted Western viewpoint (Boeck, 2013). However, since I was unable to convey all of the experiences I had in the intercultural encounters through the artworks, I began to write about my practice – a commitment that has culminated in this thesis.[159] Another reason was that my presentations at art exhibitions did not afford me the opportunity of informing the viewer about the specificities of the cultural practices explored – something I found increasingly important to communicate to a predominantly Western audience.[160]

With regard to the artworks, my objective was the mediation of my experience of being 'seen' by the cultural other who had negotiated with, evaluated and re-interpreted me. I wanted to articulate the experience of in-betweenness 'characterized by a "reciprocal relationship" of giving and taking' (Murphy, 2013: 8). Michael Murphy argued that 'stressing the potentiality of the 'betweenness' of individuality and relationality,

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[157] Similarly, Margaret Kovach has pointed out that in academia 'we do not yet fully understand Indigenous holism or the possibility of an equalizing asymmetry as such philosophies were suppressed and left in the shadow through the force of Western science methodology, and the limitations of the language associated with it' (Kovach, 2018: 220).

[158] Translated from German by Angelika Boeck.

[159] My greater activity in this respect since 2010 was a result of my personal life circumstances in Bario (Sarawak/Borneo), where I mostly lived from 2010 to 2016. Helga Peskoller, with whom I gave a joint seminar about embodied research practices at Innsbruck's Leopold-Franzens University during this period (2009-2011), advised me to use my secluded situation to think about what I have done in the last ten years and to write that down. My first journal publication 'Imagine Me. Ein Doppelporträt' (2007) was no more than a short report about what I had done in Yemen, including an illustrated description of the art installation. Between 2007 and 2010 I wrote slightly elaborated versions of this article for an Austrian and an Italian journal. At the time I had not even identified a collective title for my research methodology and the resulting art practice works. The title which I used from 2012 onwards was taken from Reinhard Spieler's contribution to the catalogue *StillePost. Versuchanordnungen in Kunst und Wissenschaft* (2004). I introduced it in my article titled *Portrait as Dialogue* in in the journal *World Art* in 2012.

[160] During various artist talks and conference presentations, I noticed that I had spent much time answering questions about the culturally specific practices I had explored. I found it important to address this interest.

provides a framework for art 'to explore other conceptual frameworks of being' as a 'means of framing new forms of experience and sociability' (Murphy, 2013: 9). I endeavoured to create an 'awareness of different perspectives of perception', exploring how they reveal 'personal identity structures and socio-cultural patterns of perception' (Boeck, 2005: 177).[161] I sought to address the fact that only 'when we perceive our impressions as culturally conditioned, personal splinters of experience, do we experience them as narrowed and temporal', as every new moment is dependent on a decision and is 'definitely provisional' (Boeck, 2005: 185).[162]

In order to mediate this, I had to move away from my experience with participants, situating myself in the shoes of my imagined audience, which I quite naturally, and without further reflection, envisioned as being familiar, like myself, with a Western contemporary art discourse discussed later in relation to *Imagine Me*.[163] In so doing, I unconsciously added another layer of self-representation. Indeed, I am present throughout my assumptions about the viewer, in my adoption of visual representations as much as in participants' representations. This element confirmed the hypothesis that was the starting point of my creative work, namely, that artists portray themselves as they portray others, as Wilde observed.

For the artworks' design I opted for a juxtaposing setting since it was precisely by moving back and forth between self-perception and self-estrangement (for example, turning my attention to my diseased breast), which had led to a life-saving experience for me in my preliminary research of *StillePost.*

The artworks of the *Portrait as Dialogue* series arose out of a sense of gratitude and appreciation rather than from a desire to assess those represented in my work. I sought

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[161] Translated from German by Angelika Boeck.
[162] Translated from German by Angelika Boeck.
[163] An imagined audience is 'a person's mental conceptualization of the people or institutions whom s/he addresses' (O'Hear, 1995: 147).

to emphasise the multi-sensory practices and the associated aesthetic forms of representation, as previously formulated (Boeck, 2013), in contrast to ethnological collections of the early nineteenth century, which often foregrounded the 'cultural inferiority' of 'primitive' people encountered (Boeck, 2013: 499–500; discussed later).

In fact, the principle of juxtaposition was a natural result of my methodology, which aimed at keeping a tension between the object under investigation and the investigating subject, as Susanne von Falkenhausen (2015) suggested.[164] The 'crossover and reversal of the traditional roles' of artist/researcher and researched, cross-fertilising 'attitudes and transitions from the self to the other' (Boeck, 2013: 507), bore similarities to the anthropologist Paul Stoller's ethnography on sensory perception in Niger. Stoller juxtaposed his own perception of the Songhay with their perception of him to make the reader more critically aware of sensory biases (Stoller, 1989). Similarly, in my own research, I sought to mediate the realisation that we are not only seeing and being seen, as my previous research (*StillePost)* maintains, but 'consumed by the sensual world' (Stoller, 1997: 37). Stoller, who 'became the central character of his research experience' (Young, 2003: 66), together with a number of autoethnographic researchers (for example, Sparkes, 2000; Ellis, 2004; Ellis, Adams and Bochner, 2011; Chase, 2012; Krieger, 2015), who studied social phenome through the lens of their personal experiences (Stahlke Wall, 2016), mediated wider cultural, political, and social meanings and understandings through self-reflexive writing – an objective aspired to in the writing of this thesis.

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[164] Only a 'dialogical seeing', Falkenhausen urges, acknowledges the otherness of the opposite, enabling a dialogue which makes it possible to endure and keep alive the otherness of the other person – whether as object or subject (Falkenhausen, 2015: 241). This 'dialogical seeing', Falkenhausen explains, must recognise the desire to reduce or rewrite the otherness to what can be integrated into one's own identity construction (translation from German: Angelika Boeck).

II.8 Problems in Cross-Cultural Curation

While creating the artwork and setting up a show in Sana'a (Yemen), I did not inform the staff of the German House that my artwork would be associated with the holy Kaaba, the reference seeming all too obvious to me from my description of the installation's design (Figure 2.14). Moreover, the staff were involved in the process.[165] Nobody objected when I tacked the panels of cloth with their golden embroidered quotes and hung the images around them. However, at the exhibition's opening in Sana'a, the cultural institute's director expressed his relief that the artwork was to be exhibited for only two days.[166]

In personal correspondence, Guido Zebisch, who had invited me to exhibit, told me that he had been repeatedly asked by confused visitors 'why the object looked like the Kaaba'.[167] Zebisch, who appreciated the courage that led me 'to visualize the gender discourse in Yemeni society', suggested that this polite criticism had not been louder 'due to the wonderment and bias in dealing with the concept, perhaps also with the gender roles that have not been questioned habitually'. According to Zebisch, *Imagine Me* was not widely discussed during the exhibition and in the local media, because 'it would have been very difficult to convey that a Kaaba-like object would become an object of presentation and be linked to a gender discourse', adding that an analysis of the reception the installation received would probably have led to a 'political explosion'

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[165] One of my assistants, who worked as secretary in the cultural institution, helped me get participants' quotes machine-stitched in a local factory and the institute's janitor built the structure for the black corpus in the middle of the exhibition room.

[166] I personally invited most participants involved by either sending them an invitation or by handing it to them in person, including those who had been approached by chance on the street. As a result, many visitors who did not belong to the rather privileged population group that normally frequented the German House, came to attend the opening.

[167] Guido Zebisch was head of the cultural institution the German House in Sana'a and Aden between 2003 and 2011.

(personal correspondence, 17 April 2018).[168] His view was confirmed by Arwa Al-Gawmari, one of my Yemeni assistants, who said she never would have become involved in my project had she understood that the artwork's design would make onlookers think of Al-Kaaba (personal conversation, June 2016).

I did not realise that my secular artistic connection with the German artist Gregor Schneider's project, which was intended for one of the most important international art exhibitions of the Western world, was not only unknown to my participants, but also completely irrelevant to them. The religious connotation with a black cube, however, was much more serious than I was then able to imagine. Whereas such processes often go unnoticed by the researcher (or artist) who returns with his/her data (or material) to the academic context (or studio), I was made aware of the problem I had created because the artwork was exhibited in Sana'a. This experience, especially during the reconstruction of my research in the context of this thesis, made me understand how important it is to present my research in the cultural context to which it is connected. In addition to *Imagine Me,* I have done so only in selective written publications (Boeck, 2012; 2013a; Boeck, 2017) and public talks.[169]

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[168] In his evaluation of my work Zebisch further suggested that the real 'trick' of my concept was 'that a whole series of discourses can embed in it, but not [be] compellingly obvious', thereby hinting at the possibility that I could have added a 'superstructure' to the concept, which seemed almost 'like a psychological experiment'. He also reminded me that in 2007, before the widespread use of social media, the great majority in Yemen was not used to surveys and or to interest in one's own opinions and assessments that included documenting responses and images (translation from German: Angelika Boeck).

[169] I presented the art project *Name Me* (Boeck, 2015) (another work of the *Portrait as Dialogue* series that is beyond the scope of this thesis), which discussed the Kelabit's cultural practice of name-changing in Malaysia in 2015 and 2016; and *Track Me* in Australia in 2016.

II.9 Exhibiting in the Contested Space of the Anthropological Museum

I started my curatorial practice with *StillePost* (see Appendix IV) in an anthropological context, with two exhibitions, in Bayreuth and Munich, in 2004.[170] The curators of these institutions were interested in a combined presentation with a self-experiment by German anthropologist Hans Himmelheber (Eisenhofer and Boeck, 2004), given that both his independent portrait series and mine arose out of cooperation with West African sculptors and explored the relationship between portraiture and self-portraiture.[171] Exhibiting in these museums seemed to me very appropriate. After all, my artworks show a European, that is, a representative of that part of the world population that is not normally represented in these European collections (Leeb, 2013).[172] Represented by non-Europeans, I non-verbally posed the following questions (which I had previously implicity asked participants): 'How culture-specific are the ways in which humans perceive themselves and others? What is reality, what is fiction

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[170] The exhibition, entitled *Wahrnehmung und Differenz* (Perception and Difference), took place at Iwalewahaus in Bayreuth (a museum which was part of the University of Bayreuth), presenting changing examples of contemporary non-European art (especially contemporary art from Africa and the African Diaspora) and *StillePost. Versuchsanordnungen in Kunst und Wissenschaft. Angelika Boeck und Hans Himmelheber* (StillePost. Experimental arrangements in art and science. Angelika Boeck and Hans Himmelheber) (2004) was held at the State Museum of Ethnology (since 2014 named Museum Fünf Kontinente) in Munich, where the accompanying catalogue was also produced). Later in 2004 the same exhibition was shown at Kunstverein Aalen (Germany).

[171] Tobias Wend, who was director of Iwalewahaus in Bayreuth at the time, introduced Himmelheber's self-experiment to me during a visit to my studio. Himmelheber had commissioned four carved masks of himself in the Republic of Ivory Coast in 1971, publishing the results under the title *Das Porträt in der Negerkunst – Bericht über eine Versuchsreihe* (The Portrait in Negro Art – Report on a Series of Experiments) in a 1972 article. His masks, however, were publicly shown for the first time in connection with *StillePost*. The combined exhibition was later shown at the State Museum of Ethnology in Munich after Stefan Eisenhofer, the curator for Africa, had seen the installation as it was presented in Munich at the Artothek (one of about 150 art libraries in Germany) belonging to the Munich Cultural Department which had funded my project. Himmelheber, who died at the age of ninety-five shortly before the exhibition opened, had followed the preparation of our joint exhibition (Himmelheber, 2004).

[172] I was grateful for the opportunity to show *StillePost*, which I had packed away in my store, as I was only slowly reapproaching the artworks as a result of a growing confidence in my life expectancy. The exhibitions not only allowed me to return to my professional activities but, more importantly, to emotionally connect the sculptures with my healing process. The dissociation of the project from my physical condition was supported by the fact that the fifth and last sculpture, unlike the blemished number four, was immaculate. To me this seemed like a life promise which became more manifest by showing the artwork.

when we look at ourselves and others? To what extent do we project ourselves when we consider or represent our counterparts?' (Boeck, 2012a: 202).

In Germany, as in other European countries, museums gradually developed from art and natural history cabinets and research demands which 'supported the establishment and expansion of […] anthropological and ethnological collections' (Pancaldi, 2003: 551), these became 'important symbolic tools that helped to create and mark national identities' (Svašek, 2007: 135).[173] In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these collections, like school curricula, were mainly arranged according to 'typological' and 'geographical' modes or 'a combination of the two' (Chapman cited in Svašek, 2007: 129). This meant that a visitor walked through a physical dissection of the dominant narrative. [174] According to architect Korinna Thielen, this arrangement followed the method of loci, a mnemotechnic in oral rhetoric that uses spatialisation.[175] Interestingly, Simonides of Ceos, a pre-Socratic lyric poet credited with the invention of the 'art of memory', also discovered 'the superiority of the sense of sight over the other senses' (Yates, 1999[1966]: 28), which is equally privileged in museums, as will be addressed later. [176] This control of memory is linked to particular power relations (Bennett, 1995) and therefore now considered a 'theft of history' (Goody, 2006).[177]

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[173] The oldest museum in Germany, Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum (HAUM) in Brunswick opened in 1754 as the first public museum on the European continent, one year after the British Museum in London.

[174] In his discussion of museum spaces from a political perspective, Bennett, mainly following Foucault's theories on power, remarked that they were used in the attempt to civilise the lower classes, which he considered would be achieved by 'making museum space more voluminous and open so that visitors could see and be seen by others' (Bennett, cited in Simonsson, 2014: 37).

[175] Personal conversation, 27 July 2018.

[176] As Francis A. Yates noted: 'The vivid story of how Simonides invented the art of memory is told by Cicero in his *De oratore*, when he is discussing memory as one of the five parts of rhetoric; the story introduces a brief description of the mnemonic of places and images (loci and imagines) which was used by the Roman rhetors' (Yates, 1999[1966]: 2). In order to form a series of places in memory, 'a building is to be remembered' and 'then placed in imagination on the places which have been memorised in the building' (ibid: 3).

[177] To further engage in this discussion and the highly topical question of the repatriation of material culture would go beyond the scope of my doctoral thesis.

After the First World War, the primary 'bonds that linked academic disciplines to museums as sites of research and teaching began to erode' because the 'mother disciplines' in social and natural sciences 'moved away from direct study of artefacts and specimens' (Philipps, 2005: 84). Ruth Phillips argued that although 'under the combined momentum of post-colonial and post-structuralist critiques, in the academic community, the severed links between museums and universities regrew in the form of museum-based research'(Phillips, 2005: 85); only 'few museums appear to be informed or shaped by the intellectual energies unleashed during the past twenty years' (ibid.). One way to provide a 'truly exciting and innovative' possibility for 'socially responsible research and representation' (ibid.) within the 'second museum age', as Phillips calls it, is the incorporation of contemporary art into their programmes (Kravagna, 2015). A significant number of presenters at the conference 'Art, Materiality and Representation' (including Phillips, 2018; Morton, 2018; Levell, 2018) at the British Museum in London, where I presented *Portrait as Dialogue*, confirmed my view that generally great hope seems to have been placed in art in this respect.[178]

My arts practice, which foregrounds non-Western and multi-sensory perception and related forms of expression, meets, for example, David Howes's demand that museums be decolonised also in regard to the senses; in his view the 'visualist definition of the aesthetic […] is not tenable from the cross-cultural perspective' (Howes, 2014: 294). My various works argue that in many non-Western cultures the aesthetic 'does not constitute an autonomous realm', but is rather 'an aspect of everyday life', that 'the senses are not separated from each other but rather combine in specific ways to achieve

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[178] The conference, jointly organised by the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, the British Museum, Department of Africa, Oceania and the Americas, and the School of Oriental and African Studies, Department of Anthropology, took place 1–3 June, 2018.

specific purposes' (Howes and Classen, quoted in Howes, 2014: 289).[179] The concept of

the Aesthetic, as understood by German philosopher Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten

(1714–1762), concerned 'perfection of perception' rather than 'perception of perfection'

(Howes, 2014: 286). For Baumgarten, it was important that we increase sensitivity and

sensibility to the world, which would render us more suitable for social interaction

(Peres, 2011). This was what the Aboriginal women demonstrated in *Track Me*,

employing their senses to find out something.[180] In my view Baumgarten's emphasis on

the multi-sensory is an early anticipation of Paul Stoller's perspective of a 'sensuous

scholarship' (1997).

I admit to having a conflicted relationship with 'the most obviously politically charged'

institutions, which pose 'the immediate problem of "cultural property" and collective

ownership' (Bal, 2005 [1996]: 145). The more old-fashioned and dusty museums and

archives are, the more alluring they are to me.[181] Nevertheless, I agree with Elizabeth

Edwards and Matt Mead, who argue that museums must be able to articulate their

difficult history 'in a way that can account for complexity while remaining relevant'

(Edwards and Mead, 2013: 20).[182] Moreover, it is important to question 'which histories

are told and how, and which histories are not told and why', since colonialism 'rapidly

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[179] Referring to Constance Classen's observation, based on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century travellers' accounts of early public museums, David Howes noted that visitors were allowed to caress and smell exhibits or to put them to their ear (a seashell, for example) (Howes, 2014), since museums were 'far less tied to the visual than they are at present' (Howes, ibid: 285). This situation enabled visitors to get a 'clear, well-lit view of the objects on display' (Classen, cited in Howes, 2014: 289).

[180] This was remarked by German philosopher Wolfgang Welsch, a contributing philosopher to the conference in 'Aesthetic Thinking' in Bonn (2017), as a response to my installation *Track Me*.

[181][181] My preference for ethnographical museums, it could be argued, makes me complicit in upholding the colonial legacy. Therefore, it is important to note that my declared aim was to reverse the historical anthropological gaze by inviting the cultural other's gaze upon myself with the imagined audience in view. If the critique of the ethnographical institution itself had been my intention, I might have approached the museum in Fred Wilson's footsteps. In his seminal 1992 intervention at the Maryland Historical Society's *Mining the Museum*, Wilson successfully unsettled the museum's comfortably white, upper-class narrative through a new combination of its exhibits (Houston, 2017).

[182] Under conditions of postcolonial formality and globalisation, anthropological museums should take into account that 'objects from different and diverse cultures, taken from their former social and religious contexts and value systems, are displayed without considering the circumstances of acquisition, without considering adequate forms of restitution, without considering possibilities of shared heritage or recapturing, and without questioning which story or history is to be told to whom' (Leeb, 2013).

unfolds into the history of the modern world: modernity and globalization are intimately entangled with colonialism' (Pinney quoted in Edwards and Mead, 2013: 20). Nevertheless, I find value in resisting the current tendency towards an all-encompassing politically correct refashioning of anthropological museums (a tendency which can also be observed with politically motivated architecture in Germany).[183] Arguably, it is important to leave spaces in which one can experience (and not just read about) museums and other politically charged public spaces in their original state, since this is precisely what enables a self-critical position, together with an understanding of one's own history.

My argument is based on a personal experience connected to 'Erinnerungskultur' (remembrance culture) – a concept and neologism which emerged in the 1990s (Wünsch, 2013), and which increasingly replaced the tendency to forgetting in Germany (Assmann, 2016).[184] According to historian Aleida Assmann, the term refers to serious crimes in one's own history that demand self-criticism and historical research that includes testimony which serves to foster dialogue, in contrast to prevailing dominant monologues. I argue that that from the secure position of historical distance; we should never ever surrender to the assumption that, had we lived in the historical past, we would have assumed our present position. It is necessary to test one's own critical position over and over again and preserved exhibition rooms in a historical museum can

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[183] My argument is based on a personal experience: In 1988, my hometown of Munich restored the original neoclassical state of the central city square, Königsplatz, which Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) had transformed, through large-scale paving, into a parade ground and sanctuary of National Socialism after seizing power in 1933. Appalled by the deconstruction of a place that could have served as a critical visualisation of history, some of my fellow students in interior design (of which I was a student before studying art) and I visited Hitler's parade ground, Reichsparteitagsgelände, in Nürnberg. The 'biggest movie set ever created' (Tholl, 2018), immortalised in Leni Riefenstahl's propaganda film *Triumph des Willens* (1934), was designed as 'a means of overpowering' (ibid.) by Albert Speer, Adolf Hitler's star architect and later Minister of Defence. From 1933 to 1938 it hosted the Reichsparteitage of the NSDAP. Today, some of the colossal buildings on an area of over 16.5 km² are still either completely or partially present. Since 2001, a Documentation Centre provides information on the site.

[184] In Germany, Austria and many other countries, 'Erinnerungskultur' (remembrance culture) is essentially a synonym for the memory of the Holocaust and the victims of the National Socialist era. This includes attention to the social conditions and policies that made this situation possible.

offer spaces in which to do so.[185] This is not only because, as is usually held today, they represent the derogatory classification of other cultures, but also because they communicate in a unique and irrecoverable way the fascination, wonder and admiration of the early collectors and the public, thus providing an essential contribution to a comprehensive critical discussion. Drawing on my own experience, I hold that only by presenting the different, simultaneously present aspects of historical and contemporary conditions, worldviews and value systems comprehension beyond information can be achieved.

For this reason, architect Philipp Oswalt, one of the most vehement critics of the Berlin Humboldt Forum (an institution founded in 2009 to accommodate the Berlin ethnological collections and since 2019 in the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art), chose my work *StillePost* to visually underline his reasoning (Oswalt, 2008).[186] Oswalt wanted to contrast the Humboldt Forum's unwillingness to have a dialogue between European and non-European perspectives, as his observation that 'Europeans are separated from non-European collections' and 'cultures do not meet eye to eye' makes clear. *StillePost* (1999), in his view, promoted 'an interesting model of transcultural dialogue', illustrating 'how it could go instead' (Oswalt, personal correspondence, 22 June 2018).[187]

At the time of my exhibition at the State Museum of Ethnology in Munich, it was my firm belief that artworks 'speak for themselves' (Harrison and Wood, 1992: 6); this was

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[185] Märit Simonsson argues that museums are 'spaces of meaning and sensation on many different levels – tangible and intangible, concrete and symbolic' (Simonsson, 2014: 35).

[186] Oswalt criticised the Humboldt Forum for its politically correct legitimation of the desire for castle-style facades on the rebuilt Royal Palace (now the City Palace) in Berlin (Oswalt, 2008).

[187] The Humboldt Forum in Berlin is currently one of the world's most discussed and most controversial museum projects. The ethnological collections, most of whose contents arrived in Berlin during German colonial times (Kaschuba, 2014), will move into the reconstructed City Palace in Berlin. Erhard Schüttpelz criticised the fact that non-European collections 'are to outfit or result in a national museum', thereby reviving the spirit of nationalism and the Prussian cultural possession cult (see: https://blog.uni-koeln.de/gssc-humboldt/en/about-this-blog/ [Accessed 29 August 2018].

what I had learned in art school.[188] During the time of my studies in Germany, it was the responsibilty of experts – curators, art historians, art critics and journalists – to interpret and communicate artworks.[189] My commitment to talk and to write (which was even more frowned upon) about my work must be seen as a challenge to this rigid tradition. Concurring with Leonard Bernstein's conviction that 'the best way to know a thing is in the context of another discipline' (Bernstein, 1973),[190] I was keen to position my arts practice across different fields of study (for example, anthropology, gender studies, cultural studies and psychology).

In increasingly presenting my work outside traditional art contexts, I complied early on with a growing tendency in European and American art, visible in the number of exhibitions, symposiums and conferences engaging with the analogies and differences between scientific and artistic approaches since the 1990s (Witzgall, 2003).[191] On the one hand, it was my desire that artistic explorations 'be seen as equal to other academic disciplines' (Scrivener, 2002)[192] in their 'different [attempts] to document human query' (Boeck, 2005). On the other hand, by attending anthropological conferences, I also hoped to identify new practices I could explore in future research.

My arts practice of mutual 'portrayal' in the field of cross-cultural research, together with its reflexivity – both as a construct and process – provides an opportunity to

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[188] *StillePost* was created in 1999, a year after I completed my studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich.

[189] At exhibition openings, the curator or an invited art historian gave a speech. Artists could be invited for artist talks or an interview. For example, as a result of the exhibition at the State Museum of Ethnology in Munich, I was invited to give an artist talk about *StillePost* at the Anthropological Institute of the Ludwig Maximilians University (LMU) in Munich (2006), at the Institute of Arts Pedagogy (2008) and at a conference that dealt with the life and work of anthropologist couple Hans and Ulrike Himmelheber (2008).

[190] Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MB7ZOdp__gQ [Accessed 25 December 2018].

[191] Susanne Witzgall (2003, translated by Angelika Boeck) showed that in the last decade of the 20th century, art-science collaborations, or 'Art-Science', gave rise to new forms of research. Ultimately, today, there is an acknowledgement that societies' challenges require the combined insights of science and art/humanities (Muller/Bennett/Froggett/Bartlett, 2015).

[192] Available at: https://www.herts.ac.uk/__data/.../WPIAAD_vol2_scrivener.pdf [Accessed 14 May 2018].

engage with the vulnerabilities of both researcher and researched (Komisarof/Hua, 2015). In the course of writing this thesis, I understood that the distance between participants and myself during postproduction meant that I automatically resorted to the traditional researcher position. Hence, I might easily be accused of the 'quasi-anthropological model' (Foster, 1995: 302), a shift 'from collaboration to self-fashioning', from a decentring of the artist as cultural authority to a remaking of the other in neo-primitivist guise' (ibid: 302).[193]

Ironically, the mediation of certain sensory experiences (smell, for example, which I explored in *Smell Me* (2011), a project beyond the scope of this thesis) (Boeck, 2013), as is the combination of sensory filters, such as vision and vibration in *Track Me,* or vision and imagination in *Imagine Me*; the representation of these experienced sensory modalities is dependent on the use of language, as became evident in these projects, and further contributes to the practice of writing. The weight of sound and orality, which also affect the elements of interpretation and translation so important in my work, was observed by philosopher Thiemo Breyer in the aforementioned convention in Cologne (2018). The necessity of utilising different media across my research (for example, recording the yoiks and interviews) further sparked art historian Michael Lüthy's idea of writing the emerging history of the expansion of the portrait as media history. The concept of the portrait is therefore a crucial element in the task of decolonisation, since it offers the opportunity to compare European art practices with cultural practices that have developed very different concepts and terminology for ways of relating and attributing.

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[193] In a discussion of the project *Seek Me* during the 'Alterity and the Research Imagination' Conference at Universidade Católica Portuguesa in Lisbon (25–26 January 2018), Amani Maihoub, who had invited me for a conversation, asked me whether I had read Foster before I embarked on my endeavour, which I denied.

Whereas during the distribution of material I claimed ownership, and 'potentially disempower[ed] the participants who lack[ed] a sense of agency regarding their own representation in my artistic product', as I have remarked elsewhere (Boeck, 2013: 491), during the encounter the positions of both parties oscillate between 'the privilege of *producing'* (albeit not *possessing*) and 'the burden of *being* meaning' (Tagg, 1988: 6). Just as participants had no influence on how I interpreted the materials in my artworks, I had no control over how the Sámi interpreted my condition, how the trackers judged the traces of my activities, and what people compared me to in Yemen. Clearly, 'postproduction' (Bourriaud, 2002) for me was also an act of self-empowerment. Or, as Julia Kristeva writes: 'what is experienced gradually becomes what is represented' (Kristeva, cited in Hustvedt, 2012: 113).

However, this furthered my aim of keeping the resulting artworks open to a 'multiplicity of meanings' (Bishop, 2006a: 25). Like the work of Rineke Dijkstra, which also has a 'quasi-ethnographic strand' (Stallabrass, 2007: 3), my arts practice oscillates 'between identification and distancing, honouring and belittling, critical recognition and the enjoyment of spectacle, and access to the real and the critique of realist representation' (ibid: 15), thereby providing more openings for dialogue and helping to create more decolonising spaces (Denzin/Lincoln/Smith, 2008).

Conclusion

This critically reflexive thesis has argued that the aim of my dialogical art practice was to challenge the historical hegemony of the colonial gaze from a gendered positionality, so as to represent and critically address this entangled relationship. I endeavored to reveal the mutual entanglements of self and other in relation to questions of perception and representation. And to further explore and identify non-Western culturally specific modalities of representation with a view to expanding notions of the Western 'portrait'. The identification of the practices explored (the Sámi's yoik in Finmark, Aboriginal Australian's track reading and female veiling in Yemen) derived from my interest in different modes of perception and representation related to recognition and remembrance as central concerns of the Western portrait. I further wanted to mediate the experience of myself being represented by various cultural others, deploying modes of perception and identification, arguably unfamiliar and inaccessible to a Western audience. The innovative method I adopted in my art practice challenged the established solo role and agency of the artist, alongside the status of the researcher as an outside observer. Specifically, and across the projects, I asked participants to capture a sensory impression of myself, focusing on different bodily aspects. I not only invited the other to turn their gaze upon myself, but also to pose before the lens of my camera, thereby invoking and problematising anthropological surveys of the past. Analysis in the art practice and thesis addressed the following questions: Firstly, it asked in what ways is it possible to capture multi-sensory methodological and analytical frameworks through which the other can be represented? Secondly, it explored how the experimental methodology adopted in the *Portrait as Dialogue* series, reinforced or challenged dominant Western regimes of representation, or indeed both?

My thesis identified that my art practice is located in the field of 'art as anthropology', conceptualised by Sansi as a form of art in which artists engage with ideas and

questions central to the concerns of anthropology – namely, a common theoretical concern with 'the visual' and 'images' as much as with 'the media and the senses' (Sansi, 2015:6). In the domain of art, I explored what anthropologists Stoller (1989), Schneider, Wright (2006) and Pink (2009) demand from anthropological research: that is to become more critically aware of our sensual biases and to consider our own representational system as much as those of the cultures investigated. My artworks are further located within the expanded field of relational art practice. Like most relational aesthetic practices in this field, it accords attention to human relations and social settings and works with collaborators outside the artistic context. However, whereas collaborators of such works usually share decisions about the structural characteristics of the work of art and, accordingly, authors' rights – as Bourriaud (2002), Kester (1999) pointed out – in my own projects, collaboration was limited to the moment in which we perceived each other and expressed these momentary perceptions in different ways, defining ourselves by interpreting the other. I further identified that in the fieldwork intersubjective encounters, I favored a feminist research approach, alongside an attentiveness to the concerns of conducting indigenous research – both underscoring the value of subjectivity, self-awareness, reciprocity, and vulnerability. Moreover, I adopted a vulnerable research position as advocated by Lather (2004) and Behar (1996), interested in the exploration and challenge of the power discrepancy between researcher and researched, aiming to establish a researcher-participant co-production of knowledge and the sharing of control over representation. This objective is emphasised by the demands of a feminist research practice. Such concerns necessitated responding to the demands of indigenous research emphasized by indigenous researchers Wilson (2001) and Kovach (2018) in our common engagement with questions of the 'invisible', the interest in making a contribution to the revaluation of indigenous societies. During postproduction I chose to embrace a sole artistic decision-making position, mediating

representation of the co-produced material and participant's interpretations (audio-recordings and texts) and my material (photo/video). This move, I realized, was connected to my unquestioned self-image as a Western artist – a concept which has existed since the Renaissance, emphasising values such as autonomy and freedom, arguably inscribed in my art practice. This perspective is connected to the division of utilitarian and non-utilitarian art from the eighteenth century onwards as it was institutionalised as a principle by all educational sectors as noted by Schüttpelz (2016).

This thesis has further argued that my exploration of different modes of perception and related forms of aesthetic expression served to simultaneously reinforce and subvert dominant Western regimes of representing otherness. Across my research, power relations shifted together with my research position. I was sole presenter of the various interpersonal encounters and both researcher and researched, subject and object. While I controlled participants' representations in my arts practice works, extending my position of power in their public dissemination (the exhibitions, public talks and written publications), as discussed in Part II, I had little influence in the field over how participants represented me, as outlined in Part I. While I was (and continue to be) returning the Western gaze, I was (and still am) subverting it through my adoption of a vulnerable research position, allied to a critical framing of the Western gaze through the lens of non-Western cultural practices that do not privilege vision. Although it could be suggested that my instrumentalisation of the dominant perspective represents a significant weakness inherent in my art practice, placing myself in the frame (together with the Western gaze) constitutes a significant provocation, enabling a productive critical discourse surrounding the entanglements of 'self' and 'other'.

While my insistence on using Western visual methods to represent my counterparts resulted in a physiognomic representation, in that only the participants' outward

appearance was displayed, each individual project has contributed to providing an ever more complete portrait of myself. In that sense, I asked participants to indirectly represent the Western gaze. However, instead of collapsing into one another, the presentation of my artworks maintains a tension, both between the object under investigation and the investigating subject and between vision and the multi-sensory. In two cases (*Seek Me* and *Track Me*), participants' representations of me demonstrated the effectiveness of indigenous methodologies (the Aboriginal Australian's track reading and the Sámi's yoik) and their related forms of aesthetic expression in representing the 'invisible' aspects of 'self' and 'other', as compared to a Western vision-based perspective (photography, video) and the visual representation in what is understood as a conventional portrait, represented by my 'counterportraits'. *Imagine Me* emphasised more obviously than the other two projects how participants cast light on aspects of themselves that they saw mirrored by me, highlighting the fact that we are embedded in the representations of others, as argued by Oscar Wilde.

Essentially, my research draws attention to cultural practices that have the potential to expand the Western view of what constitutes a portrait. Moreover, by critically positioning the dominant Western gaze in contrast to the alternative and multi-sensory modes of addressing and relating prevalent in other cultures, my artworks contribute to the notion of 'mental decolonization' (Kebede, Hansen/Nielson, 2011; Tessagaye/Sewenet, 2017). Highlighting their culturally grounded methodologies and sensorially organised representational systems side by side with a Western vision-based approach helps to re-centre indigenous and non-Western people as 'ordinary' (Kovach, 2018: 227). This is increasingly demanded today by non-Western people, artists, anthropologists and the staff of anthropological museums.

This critical exploration of Western perceptual and representational systems alongside those of other cultural systems enables a methodology of *speaking about the other while s/he speaks about me,* which allows both sides to *speak in their proper terms.* My work thus adds to the polemic of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, who advocated in her seminal essay *Can the Subaltern speak?* a *speaking to* rather than speaking for or about the subaltern (Spivak, 1988), to the argument of Trinh Minh-Ha, who favoured a *speaking nearby* (cited in Chen, 1992: 87), and to the work of Linda Alcoff who recommended creating, whenever possible, the conditions for dialogue and the practice of *speaking with (*Alcoff, 1991: 23*).*[194] In so doing, *Portrait as Dialogue* promotes what Herbert Uerlings (2015) suggested, namely opening up space for a freer approach to otherness with aesthetic and theoretical procedures that lead out of the house of mirrors of primitivism and are, from today's point of view, relevant discourses surrounding alterity.[195] In order to promote this, one has to expose cultural differences, and to do so cross-cultural representation is necessary. That the artworks resulting from cross-cultural perception and representation are increasingly being presented, more than ten years after their completion, in academic publications and at international conferences, may serve as a testament to my original contribution to the field. Furthermore, the Rietberg Museum in Zurich, the only art museum for non-European cultures in Switzerland, has recently shown interest in acquiring *StillePost.*[196]

Lastly, I used the experience with participants across projects to mediate my simultaneous position of artist/researcher and object of negotiation as a catalyst in the

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[194] Arnd Schneider, in a recent journal article, discussed how the 'speaking terms' could be 'established as philosophical first principles in the 'contemporary', neither speaking to 'preconditioned meaning' nor implying 'a simple leveling position of speaking objects', that, in fact, they 'allow for difference between them' (Schneider, 2018, available at: http://field-journal.com/issue-11/between-uneven-hermeneutics-and-alterity-the-dialogical-principle-in-the-art-anthropology-encounter [Accessed 3 November 2018].

[195] Uerlings (2015), translated by Angelika Boeck.

[196] This interest has arisen from the Rietberg Museum's acquisition of Hans Himmelheber's collection of African art, including his self-experiment, with which *StillePost* corresponds.

quest to unlearn my 'own privilege and displac[e] the colonizing gaze' (Woodbrooks, cited in Lather, 1993: 680) for a predominantly Western audience. However, I differ from Takashi Murakami, for whom artists are 'machines that receive messages from space and then retransmit them' (Murakami, 2009); for me, the idea of a catalyst means taking seriously the simultaneous, inexorable and sometimes contradictory 'we-ness' through which the vulnerable approach to otherness is enacted. Hence, as Chua and Mathur suggested, I 'both unsettle[d] and [literally] flesh[ed] out that anthropological [and artistic] "I"' (Chua and Mathur, 2018: 3).

Summarising the contribution to knowledge, the thesis has argued that the *Portrait as Dialogue* series, constituting the central analytical component of this thesis, enabled a juxtaposition of different cultural practices, serving to challenge established anthropological representations of the other. This juxtaposition, as negotiated through my vulnerable research position, is an original contribution of knowledge to the field. *Portrait as Dialogue* turns attention to what the Western gaze really is – namely, a physiognomic representation. In contrast, each individual project, focusing on different aspects of sensory perception and modalities of aesthetic representation, has contributed to providing an ever more complete portrait of myself. My comparative cross-cultural art practice positions myself at the centre of comparison for the revaluation of non-Western people and their practices as opposed to the historical anthropological project of racial comparison.

This thesis furthers offers a previously unseen perspective of the cultural practices explored. It argues that these practices contribute to and expand upon the Western view of what constitutes a portrait – a potential that has remained largely unperceived as such, and therefore unexplored, as previously argued (Boeck, 2013: 505).

The presentation and mediation of my work across contested sites of representation (especially the anthropological museum) makes a significant contribution to the endeavor of 'mental decolonisation' – as called for by theorists and curators such as Kebede (2004) and Hansen and Nielsen (2011). In foregrounding culturally grounded methodologies and sensorial representational systems side by side with a Western vision-based approach, my artworks reveal a white, European female, not typically represented in European anthropological collections. Moreover, one not viewed from a non-Western perspective.

During the process of writing this thesis, it became clear that I have never critically engaged with the anthropological museum as an institution and site of representing and displaying the Other alongside its hegemonic narratives and withheld histories, as it becomes visible through modes of presentation (Leeb, 2013). Looking to the immediate future, I will therefore use my opportunity as Fellow of the Bartels Foundation in Basel (Switzerland), during a four-month residency (March–June) in 2019, to spend time in the nearby Museum of Cultures. Founded in 1893, this museum is one of the most important anthropological museums in Europe, with an extensive collection of historical photographs. I deliberately sought out this opportunity, since the transformation brought about by the process of reading, reflection and self-criticism that I have undergone in the past two years of writing this thesis seems to have fundamentally changed my view of my research approach.

I no longer envisage myself repeating versions of the *Portrait as Dialogue* projects in an increasing number of cultural contexts. Rather, I have come to understand that my arts practice of almost two decades, which is closely related to my body of experience, involves a responsibility to engage critically and creatively in the process of decolonisation, as it is represented in the anthropological museum. I wish to use my

previous works as a basis for future artworks and writing in which I consciously and outspokenly (rather than largely unconsciously and silently, as hitherto) promote this endeavour.

To this end I will endeavour to use the residency in Basel to locate my personal and culturally conditioned projections, unreconstructed celebrations and prejudices with regard to the anthropological museum, for which I have a long-cherished love-hate relationship.[197] Now that I am becoming a fully formed artist and am better able to master academic discourse, I can no longer separate these two subject formations. This, I hope, makes me much more open to engaging not only with academia, but also with the archive and the museum. This more open approach has led to my experiencing increasing confidence and a greater level of equality with other academics in various discussions during the conferences in which I have participated during the past two years.

I will further deploy some of the insights I have gained from writing this thesis to further develop an idea based on an observation I made during my stay at the University of Tasmania (2016). In the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG) in Hobart I saw two plaster busts, created by Benjamin Law in 1835 and 1836, of Wooreddy and Trucanini, two individuals whom I had previously seen depicted in drawings by Thomas Bock in the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in Launceston. Although both figures were prominently displayed in Launceston and appeared almost in a copy-and-paste mode as the subject of several artefacts in Hobart, the presentation of the

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[197] The Museum of Cultures in Basel is committed to the problematisation of the historical practice of the anthropological museum. The curators, for example, deal with the history of objects and organize guided tours in which they openly discuss controversial topics relating to obtaining, collecting, preserving and displaying.

Aborigines was not explained in either of the two museums.[198] From the TMAG Indigenous Cultures Officer, I learned that George Augustus Robinson, who had commissioned the busts of the Aborigines, had also commissioned a bust of himself in the same style and size from the same sculptor.[199] Unlike the busts of the natives, which were coloured brown, Robinson's bust was made in white plaster. After it had been long believed lost, Robinson's portrait was accidentally rediscovered in 2010 in the State Library of Victoria (Hansen, 2010), shortly after a copy of Trucanini's sculpture was banned in 2009 from a Sotheby auction in Melbourne due to Aboriginal protests.[200] Based on my experience with *StillePost*, my view was that the sculptures belonged together. Convinced that what I understand was a set of three busts needed to be reunited, I suggested to the TMAG that a cast copy of the bust should be returned to the museum as part of an art project. Robinson's bust was meant to serve as a projection screen for traditional (white) Aboriginal face paintings, with only that element of the bust visible in an otherwise darkened room. With this project in mind, I wanted to expand on *Portrait as Dialogue* by approaching the process of othering applied to artefacts in the anthropological museum from an inverted perspective.

The TMAG senior curator of art replied that, in her view, my proposal was 'raising a number of issues' including the 'cultural sensitivities relating to these artworks and the Indigenous people that they depict'. She made clear that the museum would not support my creation of the intended artwork/installation at TMAG or elsewhere.[201] Considering that my scheme did not involve the busts depicting the Aborigines, the response to my

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[198] Benjamin Dutterau's painting *The Conciliator* (1844), for example, used both figures as contrast to an idealised depiction of George Augustus Robinson (1791–1866).

[199] Georges Augustus Robinson was a colonial officer and Chief Protector of Aborigines in the Port Phillip District (now Victoria, Australia) from 1839 to 1849. On a 'friendly mission', he interned the last remaining Aborigines in Tasmania on Flinders Island. With the death of Trucanini (or Truganini) in 1867, the indigenous Tasmanian had disappeared.

[200] An interview with David Hansen is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kwQ50OfjfMY [Accessed 26th August 2017].

[201] Personal correspondence, Dr Mary Knights, 31 January 2017.

idea points directly to a fear of contact resulting from past conditions – something which in my opinion should be tackled with greater openness and more courage. While I am still interested in finding a way to inscribe an Aboriginal perspective on Robinson's bust, I will now approach the project differently. Instead of speaking to Western and usually non-indigenous museum staff about indigenous concerns, I will seek to cooperate with the Aborigines themselves. For example, I would want to ask them what they think of their ritualistic facial painting being projected on to the face of an oppressor before creating my own individual installation; in so doing, I will invite Aborigines to express their own ideas and I, in turn, will attempt to respond to them in my arts practice. Most importantly, I would want to explore together with them if and how – if one conceives of the sculptures as a set of three portraits – they may be read as a gesture of appreciation towards the Aborigines, in addition to the normatively perceived act of a depreciating objectification. My intuition tells me that in such an approach lies the seed that may over time develop into a new body of work. In writing this thesis, I have come to understand that my artistic intuition played a decisive role in my choice of subject matter even before I engaged with academic theoretical discourses. I will therefore continue to follow my artistic intuition in future works with even more self-confidence and trust than before, despite my formation as an academic. What inspired me to consider a thesis in the first place – finding a theoretically informed voice and a reflective criticality surrounding questions of methodology, flexible and dynamic enough to impact on my evolving arts practice – has been provisionally achieved.

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Appendix I *Seek Me*

Seek Me (2005) was conducted in Maze and Karsjok (Norway) and in Utsjoki (Finland) with five Sámi singers (two women and three men) in the summer 2005, during a six-week long sojourn. The Sámi, who have their own language and culture, are an indigenous Finno-Ugric population who inhabit an area that stretches over the regions now known as Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Russian Kola Peninsula.[202] The project focused on the Sámi's 'yoiking, one of the oldest musical styles still practised within European borders' (Plantenga, 2004: 103). Following Doris Stockmann, Plantenga explained the yoik as a textless, mnemonic technique that recalls certain situations, places and humans to the singer's mind; a kind of yodelling, it is characterised by improvisation, mainly in solo performance.

The project participants were Johan Sara Jr, a professional musician from Maze (Norway); Ole Larsen Gaino, a retired reindeer herder from Kautokeino (Norway); Lars Henrik Blind, a reindeer herder from Karesuando (Sweden); Anna Berit Peltopera, a tailor and taxi driver from Karasjok (Norway) and Åsá-Márgget Anti Holm, a journalist from Utsjoki (Finland). A Kunstfond work grant, actually meant for my maintenance for a whole year, covered the project's cost.

Seek Me was the only project for which, prior to my research, I had established contact with a mediator/participant, in this case, Johan Sara Jr, and another participant, Ole Larsen Gaino. Johan, who had studied classical guitar and music pedagogy at the Music

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[202] Øivind Fuglerud explained that in Norway Sámi people had been subjected to 'Norwegianization' following the Lapp-Foundation's (Finnefondet) aim to 'eradicate Sami language and culture' and that this policy changed from 1951 onwards when the Sámi population gained recognition as a distinct First Nation (Urbefolkening) and was granted specific rights within the territory of Norway (Fuglerud, 2016: 162).

Conservatory, considered it a coincidence that my name, Angelika (referring to the plant Angelica archangelica)*, Boska* in the Sámi language, was the title under which he had released a CD with the *Johan Sara Jr. Group* two years prior to my research in 2003 and thus a favourable sign for our cooperation. Johan also recruited Åsá Márgget Anti Holm, Anna Berit Peltopera and Lars Henrik Blind for my project. He further used the opportunity of my project and the time during which Ole Larsen Gaino, a senior yoiker, needed to get an impression of me, to record Ole's musical responses to the landscape (Figure 3.1) – an important aspect of yoik. At the same time this helped me to be able to understand the practice of yoik better. Lars Henrik Blind's yoik of me is based on his observations over a three-day long fishing trip we undertook together with Johan on a lake nearby Maze (Figure 3.2). These yoiks were created one after the other during individual interpersonal encounters in which Johan mediated.

Fig. 3.1: Johan Sara Jr recording Ole Larsen Gaino perform a yoik outside.
Photograph: Angelika Boeck (2005).

Fig. 3.2: Camping with Lars Henrik Blind and Johan Sara Jr.
Photograph: Angelika Boeck (2005).

Since it was easy for me to communicate in English with Anna Berit Peltopera (Figure 3.3) and Åsá-Márgget Anti Holm (Figure 3.4), I spent time with them alone in Karasjok (Norway) and Utsjoki (Finland).

Fig. 3.3: Anna Berit Peltopera, fishing near Karasjok.
Photograph: Angelika Boeck (2005).

Fig. 3.4: Åsá and I during a Sámi festival. Photograph: Kirsten Alette Anti (2005).

The final yoik was composed by Johan, who had observed me before and during some of the encounters, as well as during the process of recording in his studio (Figure 3.6). Some of the musicians had captured their compositions on their mobile phones or Dictaphones (Figure 3.5). We parted after a final dinner (Figure 3.7).

Fig. 3.5: Åsá and Anna Berit in Maze comparing my person yoiks.
Photograph: Angelika Boeck (2005).

Fig. 3.6: Johan and Anna Berit Peltopera in Johan's sound studio, preparing for Anna Berit's recording. Photograph: Angelika Boeck (2005).

Fig. 3.7: Post-recording with Ole, Åsá, Anna Berit and Johan in Johan's kitchen in Maze. Photograph: Angelika Boeck (2005).

The material of *Seek Me* consists of five photographs of the yoikers and five audio recordings (see images and explanation in Part I).

Appendix II *Track Me*

Track Me (2006) was an entirely self-funded project (except for my video camera, which was sponsored by the Landesbank für Aufbaufinanzierung) and carried out during six weeks in and around Alice Springs (Northern Territories, Central Australia). It involved four female Aboriginal track-reading experts: Mitjili Napanangka Gibson, Ida Nangala Granites, Judy Nampijinpa Granites, Noreen Nampijinpa Robertson and Peter Bartlett, a non-Aboriginal Australian and Mitjili's son-in-law who acted as my mediator and translator throughout this project (Figure 4.1).

After our unsuccessful search for both female and male trackers, as recounted in Part I, Peter proposed we include his mother-in-law, Mitjili, in my project. After she had agreed to participate, it was easy for him to persuade Ida, Judy and Noreen to join. Mitjili, who passed away in 2010, was one of the senior Indigenous artists in Australia and her excellent tracking skills were sought by geologists and biologists.

Fig. 4.1: Peter Bartlett and Mitjili Napanangka Gibson at their house in Alice Springs.
Photograph: Angelika Boeck (2006).

Unlike Mitjili and Judy, Ida and Noreen were quite conversant with English. However, for the central element of the project, the interview, Peter addressed the four track-reading experts in Walpiri and Pintupi, their native languages. Before we started this collective interview, we had been following the human track around the plain for more than an hour– a process I documented with my video camera.

Ida, Mitjili, Judy and Noreen did not know that the track they had investigated was mine. We had come in two cars an hour's drive from Alice Springs. Although I had identified the location and laid out the spoor by walking barefoot in the desert sand the day before our interview telling Peter where to find my tracks, he pretended to choose our destination. The trick had been necessary because of the experimental nature of my project. He further pretended to search for a human track while the women and I had a picnic (Figure 4.2). Finally, he returned with the good news that he had found a human track on which the experts could demonstrate their tracking skills (Figures 1.5, 1.13).

Fig. 4.2: Picnic during Peter's search for human tracks the women could investigate.
Photograph: Angelika Boeck (2006).

On several other days, both before and after the interview, I had followed the women with my video camera (Figure 4.3), documenting how they hunted and collected food –

the witchetty grub (or witjuti grub) for example, a large, white, wood-eating larvae of moths that feeds on the roots of the witchetty bush (named after the grubs) that is found in central Australia (Figure 4.4), a porcupine (Figure 4.5) or lizard (Figure 4.6).

Fig. 4.3: Angelika filming Mitjili as she digs for witchetty grubs.
Photograph: Iria Kuen (2006).

Fig. 4.4: Wittchety grub, *Track Me* (2006). Video still: Angelika Boeck.

Fig. 4.5: Porcupine hunted by Ida and her friend, *Track Me* (2006). Video still: Angelika Boeck.

Fig. 4.6: Mitjili holding a lizard she has dug out of an earth hole, *Track Me* (2006). Video still: Angelika Boeck.

I also asked the women to demonstrate how they teach their children to read tracks (Figures 4.7 – 4.8).

Fig. 4.7: Ida drawing tracks into the sand with her friend and Judy watching,
Track Me (2006). Video still: Angelika Boeck.

Fig. 4.8: Judy drawing dingo tracks into the sand, *Track Me* (2006).
Video still: Angelika Boeck.

From this material I created a 3-channel video installation. It features the central element of *Track Me,* the interview, on a large screen located between two monitors on which the additional material is shown in loose sequences, on both sides of the central screen (Figure 2.12).

Appendix III *Imagine Me*

Imagine Me (2007) was the only project which arose within an institutional context. It was created in close contact with the German House, a German cultural institution in Sana'a, Yemen, during a seven-week sojourn. Except for a small conveyor sum I received from the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa) (Institute for Foreign Relations), the project was self-funded. An exhibition in the German House in Sana'a was, however, a precondition of the financial support.

The research involved around thirty participants (see names listed in Figure 5.3), as well as several mediators and translators who established contact mostly with female respondents. Due to my association with the German House, contact with research assistants (mediators, translators) and project participants for *Imagine Me* was relatively easy, compared with other projects. All the assistants and some of the respondents came from this immediate or a slightly wider environment.

After I had recruited my project assistants, Veronika Schlecht (a German intern from te German House), Arwa-Al Gawmari (a German House employee) and Samah A. Al-Amri (a translator of German news for a Yemeni news agency), I needed to cover myself like an average Yemeni woman. Basmah Al-Iriani, a Yemeni intern at German House, whose father Hamied A-Iriani had advised me on how to best carry out my research in Sana'a, offered assistance. However, since she was a member of an upper-class family, she chose a shop to buy my abaja and veil rather than a market stall.

Whereas veiling may range from just covering one's hair with a headscarf to covering one's entire body, the attire Basmah chose for me consisted of a loose full-length black coat-like garment (abaja), a long narrow shawl of black material wrapped around my

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head in such a way that my hair and the upper part of my face were covered down to the eyebrows, and a rectangular piece of cloth in front of my face that also covered my breast, leaving only my eyes visible. A large piece of black double-layered semi-transparent material was pulled over my upper body, with the outer layer folded back over my head. The remaining layer, which covered my eyes, was as dense as 40 denier stockings, as I explained in my essay *Reflections on the Veil: An Art Work in Yemen and an Experiment in Germany* (2017). This measure was necessary, Basmah explained, to hide my green eyes, rare in Yemen, and to disguise my light skin, I wore black gloves and stockings. Being so strictly veiled meant I looked like only a minority of the women of Sana'a; the majority do not wear gloves and their eyes are visible.

Fig. 5.1: Angelika Boeck dressed up for the interviews. Photograph: Thomas Barnstein (2007).

In *Imagine Me* I was, for the project participants, completely absent as researcher. Moreover, participants were told it was an investigation into the perception of the veil and an artist would later come and take their photograph, a situation in stark contrast to my romanticist perspective on research as a 'human encounter'.

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Moreover, in Yemen, I often failed to adapt to the culturally specific circumstances, which may have influenced how I was perceived by helpers. This, in turn, may have affected the outcome of the research.

For the opening of the exhibition of *Imagine Me* (Figure 5.2), many participants were visiting the German House for the first time. I had hand-delivered most of the invitations myself. The exhibition was, therefore, not frequented only by the rather privileged audience who usually attended the cultural institute's events.

Fig. 5.2: Exhibition view, German House Sana'a (2007). Photograph: Angelika Boeck.

Fig. 5.3: Invitation for the exhibition in Sana'a (2007), including the names of all participants in the project.

Imagine Me was presented in the exhibition *Übertreten Geboten. Zeitgenössische Kunst im interreligiösen Dialog* (Broken Commandments. Contemporary Art in Interreligious Dialogue) (2010) organised by OCCURSO Institut für Interreligiöse und Interkulturelle Begegnung (Institute for Interreligious and Intercultural Encounter) at Ludwig Maximilians University (LMU) in Munich. Dr Martin Rötting, one of the two curators, later invited me to write a chapter on the connection between art and interreligious dialogue, which he published in 2016 together with Simone Sinn and Aykan Inan of Eos publishing house, under the title *Praxisbuch Interreligiöser Dialog. Begegnungen initiieren und begleiten* (Practical Book of Interreligious Dialogue. Initiating and Accompanying Encounters).

In addition to the conferences and conventions where I talked about *Portrait as Dialogue* in general (see List of Publications), *Imagine Me* was presented in the format of a set of two posters in connection with the project *Breaking the Stereotype* at Leopold Franzens Universität, Innsbruck, Austria (2009) and the Art Production Centre, Istanbul, Turkey (2010), as well as at the 'Transnational Islamic Feminism' conference

at the Leibniz University Hannover, Germany (2018). In all cases only one of the posters concerned *Imagine Me.*

The second poster documented a small series of interviews I had conducted in my home city of Munich in 2009, in response to a question I was asked and which interested me, namely how West European respondents might have interpreted a veiled appearance in a similar setting. As recounted in a *Collection of Personal Essays on Hijab and Veiling*, I quickly persuaded my mother to put on my Yemeni disguise. Together we went to Maximilianstrasse in Munich, where the veiled female body is a common sight, because many Arab women shop there.

Fig. 5.4: Marianne and Angelika Boeck in Maximilliansstrasse Munich.
Photograph: Thomas Barnstein (2009).

Fig. 5.5:Angelika asking a passer-by how she imagines Marianne under her veil.
Photograph: Thomas Barnstein (2009).

While my mother kept at a strict distance, so that respondents need not be afraid that she could hear their answers, I approached fifteen people with the same question posed by my assistants about me in Sana'a. What surprised me was not the result, but its consistency: 'Unlike the Yemeni interviewees, who seemed to have no difficulties in using their own senses and imagination', the German respondents' 'gazes seemed unable to capture an image beyond the veil.' Instead, most respondents commented – unasked – on the veil itself and the life veiled women supposedly led […]. In addition, their short comments 'often contained more or less politely formulated damnation, incomprehension, pity or mistrust'. To me it seemed that whereas, 'the Middle Eastern imagination was able to permeate the veil, the Westerners had no way around it' (Boeck, 2017: 2002-204).

Appendix IV *StillePost*

StillePost was inspired by two intersecting personal experiences – one during my schooldays (around 1985), the other during my first visit to several African countries in 1996. We were asked, in an art class, to model from memory a life-size human head made of clay. At the end of a process several weeks long our teacher proposed taking a group picture, everyone behind their sculpture. The similarities between the sculpture and the sculptor were remarkable. During a three-month long trip from Nairobi to Capetown (and unlike my European friend who had spent longer periods of time in Kenya and Uganda), I found myself incapable of recognising the faces of individual Africans we met during our travels. From the combination of both experiences, the question emerged as to whether our own features determine the way we perceive and depict others and ourselves.

StillePost (1999) was created in collaboration with Dramane Kolo-Zié Coulibaly (Senoufo), Amadou Coulibaly (Senoufo), Dosso N'Gouamué (Yarouba), Gboungué Louna Pascal (Yarouba) and Bidije Goure (Guoro). It explored how we perceive and incorporate our own facial features in the representation of others through a copying process. The project established a connection with and interest in anthropology; ultimately, this led to the content discussed in this thesis.

The five African male sculptors were asked to copy a wooden life-size bust of me that had previously been carved by an African colleague. Only the first sculpture was created from the living model (me) (Figure 6.4), which served as a prototype for the second sculpture (Figure 6.6). The second was a model for the third (Figure 6.8), and so forth (Figures 6.10, 6.12). Using the principle of Chinese Whispers (S*tillePost* in

German), a series of five portraits was established which, in their development, showed how the sculptors incorporated their own features into the portrait of me (Figure 6.1).

Fig. 6.1: *StillePost* (1999), portrait of Angelika Boeck and four subsequent copies of bust. Photograph: Wilfried Petzi (2004).

Fig. 6.2: S*tillePost* (1999), portraits of sculptors by Angelika Boeck Photograph: Wilfried Petzi (2004).

With my depictions of participants, I critically referred to historical anthropometrical representations in which the anthropological object was often captured in front of a neutral backdrop. This was highlighted by my decision to print the images on canvas, reminiscent of historical roll-up-maps (Figure 6.2). In a similar way to Sir Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard, who in 1926 had photographed an Ingessana man in Sudan in

front of a white background, I photographed participants from all four sides and from above (Figure 6.3), showing the sculptors' heads including shoulders and breasts, not knowing exactly how I might later use these images in my artwork.

Fig. 6.3: Bidije Gouré in Abidjan. Photographs: Angelika Boeck (1999).

I had chosen the sculptural format of the bust because it is typical for a European, but atypical in an African context. The bust is related to an enormous colonial project, that of Pierre-Marie Alexandre Dumontier, the administrator of the plaster cast collection of the Societe Phrénologique in Paris (founded in 1831). Fifty coloured plaster cast busts were produced with samples of hair taken from inhabitants from the majority of places reached by the French corvettes *l'Astrolabe* and *Zélée* on their voyages of discovery in the south and western Pacific, Australia, New Zealand and Antarctica under Captain Jules Dumont d'Urville between 1838 and 1840 (Nott/Gliddon et al., 1857). The project inspired similar comparative studies, for example, Eugène de Froberville's collection of around sixty masks and busts in plaster of people, all from different regions of Africa, in

Eastern Africa in the mid-1840s (Alpers, 1999). Systematically measured, photographed and lithographed following Emile Blanchard's demand for daguerreotypes taken of the busts from the same perspective (from above and from the same distance in the same illumination), Dumoutier's materials underpin the *Atlas Anthropologique* published in 1846 (Dietz, 2007). They denote the climax of pictorial representation for contemporary anthropologists, marking the peak of phrenology (ibid.).

The idea of basing my experiment on a copying process had a twofold goal: on the one hand, I assumed that it would allow for individual and culture-specific particularities (and ideals of beauty) to come to light, on the other, I wanted to address the different concepts associated with the portrait and the process of copying in African and Euro-American contexts.

Consistent with cultural conceptions of personhood and ideas about individualism, African portraits emphasise social rather than personal identity. In contrast to the literal naturalism of much Euro-American portraiture, representational African works of art generalise about their subjects (Borgatti, 1990). In the area of African portraiture, naturalism is merely one option among many, and the other options are much more frequently used (Wendl, 2004). Furthermore, Sweet Ufumwen Ebeigbe demonstrated, using the example of traditional Benin art, that African craftsmen were 'guided by an inviable set of parameters emphasising the depiction of an idealised beauty' (Ebeigbe, 2013:17). Thus, in creating their portraits, African craftsmen 'decisively preclude the emphasis on capturing the physiognomic resemblance of their subjects' (ibid.). The artists often achieved resemblance through other identifying elements, such as the use of emblems, regalia, symbols, names, costumes, pose, hairstyle, cultural marks and surroundings, in defining the individual. The aim of depicting and memorialising humans, Ebeigbe writes, is as crucial an impulse for the creation of portraiture art in

Africa as it is in other parts of the world, despite the tendency of Western research to overlook the genre of portraiture in African art.

While in the West the modern perception of an artwork as a genuine product created by an inspired individual developed in European art from the Enlightenment onwards, relegating the copy to the realm of 'forgery', reproductions have traditionally been seen differently in African cultures. However, research into the inspiration of the African sculptor describes two main sources of inspiration: dream and copying (Vangheluwe, 2001). Ben-Amos argues (1980) that 'copying' should not be conceptualised as a form of 'forgery' and Svašek holds that, in general, copying and reproduction 'should not be placed in opposition to creativity', but understood as 'central aspects of creative processes' (Svašek, 2016: 2-3). For example, it is customary in a sub-Saharan context for sculptors to be asked to replace an old sculpture, with the new artefact taking over the old object's ritual significance. In 1938/39, Jan Vandenhoute noticed that, among the Dan of Côte d'Ivoire, existing masks that inspired new ones could only be observed by the sculptor during their performance. The anthropologist found no evidence of models of masks being used (Vangheluwe, 2001).

Western artists have nevertheless incorporated the concept of copying, repetition and re-enactment in their work relating to art history. Nicolas Bourriaud (2002) identified a variety of artistic approaches that directly refer to or replicate the work of other artists, which he defines as an activity based on the collective ideal of sharing. Hence, the incorporation of pre-existing artistic elements into a new artwork that Bourriaud defined as a recent movement in contemporary art is nothing new when viewed in a traditional African context.

For my artwork I decided on the direct juxtaposition of the participants' portraits and their sculptures, thus requiring the use of the full-face portrait. This allows for the

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viewer, positioned between photo portraits and busts, to observe two things simultaneously: the transformation of my facial features into those of an African woman and the resemblance between the sculptors and the works they created.

Fig. 6.4: Portrait of Angelika Boeck by Dramane Kolo-Zié Coulibaly. Photograph: Wilfried Petzi (2004).
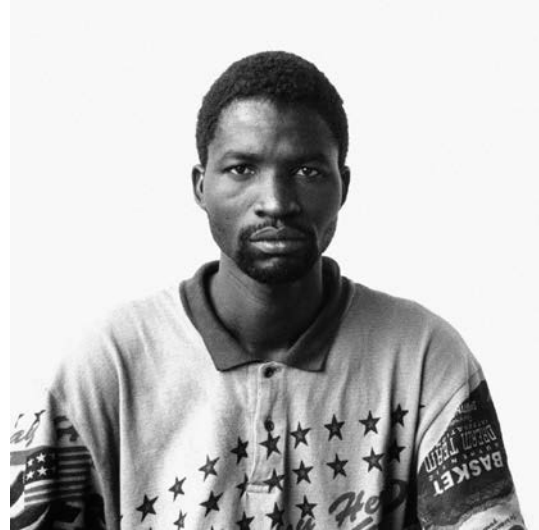

Fig. 6.5: Portrait of Dramane Kolo-Zié Coulibaly. Photograph: Angelika Boeck (1999).
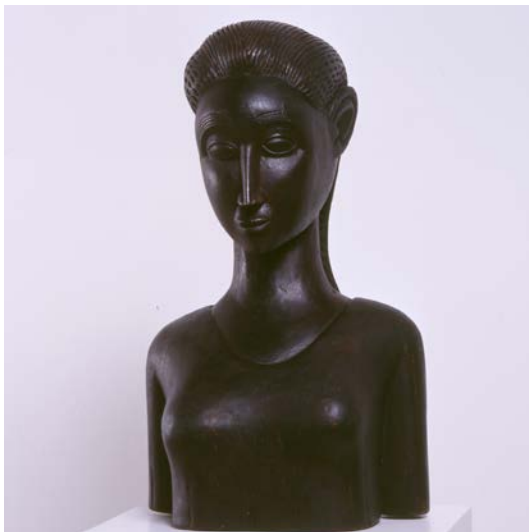

Fig. 6.6: Copy of Dramane Kolo-Zié Coulibaly's portrait of Angelika Boeck by Amadou Coulibaly. Photograph: Wilfried Petzi (2004).
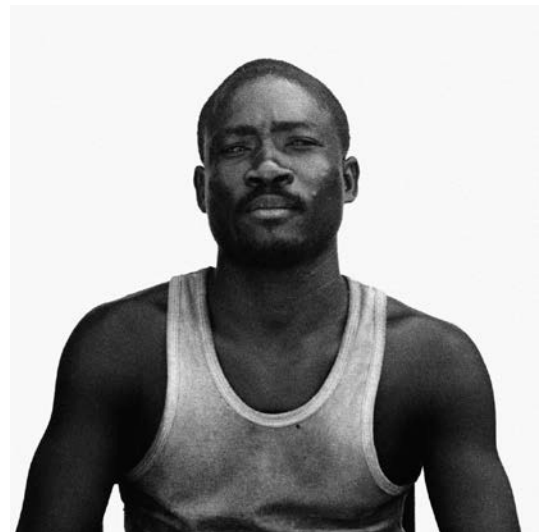

Fig. 6.7: Portrait of Amadou Coulibaly. Photograph: Angelika Boeck (1999).

Fig. 6.8: Copy of Amadou Coulibaly's bust by Dosso
N'Gouamué. Photograph: Wolfried Petzi (2004).

Fig. 6.9: Portrait of Dosso N'Gouamué. Photograph:
Angelika Boeck (1999).

Fig. 6.10: Copy of Dosso by N'Gouamué's bust by
Gboungué Louna Pascal. Photograph: Wolfried Petzi
(2004).

Fig. 6.11: Portrait of Gboungué Louna Pascal.
Photograph: Angelika Boeck (1999).

Fig. 6.12: Copy of Gboungué Louna Pascal's bust by Bidije Goure. Photograph: Wilfried Petzi (2004).

Fig. 6.13: Portrait of Bidije Goure. Photograph: Angelika Boeck (1999).

The project has been presented, both nationally and internationally, at academic conferences and during artist talks, together with the other *Portrait as Dialogue* projects (see List pf Publications). In addition, it has been the subject of academic seminars held by other researchers, for example, by Professor Frank Heidemann (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich), Professor Birgit Mersmann (then University Bremen), Professor Kristin Marek (then University of Fine Arts Braunschweig), Professor Ernst Rebel and Dr Stefan Eisenhofer (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich) and Professor Kerstin Pinther (Freie Universität Berlin).

List of Publications: *Portrait as Dialogue*

PR indicates a peer-reviewed journal or volume.
CiT indicates an artwork, exhibition, conference presentation or artist talk discussed and a journal or book chapter referenced in this thesis.
O original (English) texts in separate booklet attached.

Artworks

Help Me II (Yantra Tattoo) (2015). Thailand.

Smell Me (Tuva Greeting Ritual) (2011). Mongolia.

Tell Me (Palmreading) (2009). Malaysia.

Help Me I (Astrology, Numerology, Gemology and Feng Shui) (2009). Malaysia.

Name Me (Naming of the Kelabit) (2009). Malaysia.

Imagine Me (Female Veiling) (2007). Sana'a, Yemen. **CiT**

Track Me (Track Reading) (2006). Australia. **CiT**

Seek Me (Sámi's Yoiking) (2005). Fenoscandia. **CiT**

StillePost (Woodcarving) (1999). Republik Elfenbeinküste. **CiT**

Solo Exhibitions

Imagine Me (2007). Sana'a, Yemen: German House. **CiT**

*StillePost. Versuchsanordnungen in Kunst und Wissenschaft (*2004). Munich, Germany: State Museum of Ethnography. **CiT**

StillePost (2004). Munich, Germany: Artothek im Ignatz-Günther-Haus. **CiT**

Group Shows

Die Grenzen sind offen (2016). Freising, Germany: Schafhof. **CiT**

A Foreign Encounter (2015) [Photograph]. Munich, Germany: Galerie FOE 156.

Glücksfälle Störfälle. Facetten interkultureller Kommunikation (2012/13). Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Museum of Communication.

Glücksfälle Störfälle. Facetten interkultureller Kommunikation (2012), Berlin, Germany: Museum of Communication.

Festival delle Identitá (2012). Berceto, Parma, Italy.

Breaking the Stereotype (2010) [Poster]. Istanbul, Turkey: Art Production Center. **CiT**

Übertreten geboten – zeitgenössische Kunst im interreligiösen Dialog (2010). München, Germany: Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Katholische Hochschulgemeinde. **CiT**

Breaking the Stereotype (2009) [Poster]. Innsbruck (Austria): Leopold Franzens University. **CiT**

Bilder und Skulpturen des weißen Mannes in der Afrikanischen Skulptur (2008). Heidenheim, Germany: Kunstmuseum.

Afrika – der andere Blick (2007) Kaufbeuren, Germany: Kunsthaus.

Die obere Hälfte (2006). Appenzell, Switzerland: Museum Liner.

*Die obere Hälfte (*2005). Emden, Germany: Kunsthalle.

Die obere Hälfte (2005). Heidenheim, Germany: Kunst- und Skulpturenmuseum.

Angelika Boeck – Hans Himmelheber – Susanne Bürner (2004). Aalen, Germany: Kunstverein.

Wahrnehmung und Differenz. Angelika Boeck: StillePost; Hans Himmelheber: Maskenporträts (2004). Bayreuth, Germany: IWALEWA – Haus. **CiT**

Afrika works (2003). Berlin, Germany: Paul-Loebe Haus (Deutscher Bundesrat).

Berliner Konferenz (2001). Berlin, Germany: Galerie Peter Herrmann.

Exhibition Catalogues

Die obere Hälfte (2005). Heilbronn, Germany: Kunst- und Skulpturenmuseum.

StillePost. Versuchsanordnungen in Kunst und Wissenschaft (2004). Munich, Germany: Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde. **CiT, O**

Journal Publications

Boeck, A. (2015) 'Call my Name! A Portrait as Dialogue in the Context of the Kelabit's Name System', *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, 14, Oxford: Routledge, pp. 100–9. **PR, CiT, O**

Boeck, A. (2014). 'Name Me – ein Porträt als Dialog anhand des Namensystems der Kelabit', in Runge, A., and Tullney, M. (eds), *Querelles. Jahrbuch für Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung*, 17. http://dx.doi.org/10.15461/24 **PR**

Boeck, A. (2014) 'Track Me. A Portrait as Dialogue', *ART/E/FACT,* 3, pp. 1–6. **PR, CiT, O**

Boeck, A. (2013). 'Portrait as Dialogue: Exercising the Dialogical Self', in Cipriani, G. (ed), *Culture and Dialogue*, 3.2, pp. 37–51. **PR**, **CiT, O**

Boeck, A. (2013) 'Whose Portrait Is It?', *Critical Arts: South-North Cultural and Media Studies*, 27 (5), pp. 490–510. **PR, CiT, O**

Boeck, A. (2012) 'Looking at Me, Are You. Social Status and the Veil', *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 13 (5), pp. 170–9. **PR, CiT, O**

Boeck, A. (2012) 'Portrait as Dialogue', *World Art*, 2 (2), pp. 197–209. **PR, CiT, O**

Boeck, A. (2010) 'StillePost', *Borriolah-Gha – African Artzine*, 1, 4 pages.

Boeck, A. (2010) 'In the Mirror of Portrait', *TRICKSTER. Rivista del Master in Studi Interculturali*, [Online] 13 (5), 1 page. **PR**

Boeck, A. (2010) 'Imagine Me', *ÖZG-Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 1, pp. 201–9. **PR**

Boeck, A. (2007) 'Imagine Me. Ein Selbstporträt als Dialog', *SWS-Rundschau*, 3, pp.

284-291. **PR**

Boeck, A. (2007) 'Imagine Me. Ein Doppelporträt', *Jemen Report*, 2, pp. 28–9.

Book Chapters

Boeck, A. (2017) 'Reflections on the veil. An art work in Yemen and an experiment in Germany', in Pasha-Zaidi, N., Pasha, S. (eds), *Mirror on the Veil: A Collection of Personal Essays on Hijab and Veiling*. London: Critical, Cultural and Communications Press, pp. 197–204. **PR, CiT, O**

Boeck, A. (2014) 'Zuschreibungen. Versuch über den Assoziationsraum des weiblichen Körpers', in Fisch, M., Seiderer, U. (eds), *Hülle und Haut. Techniken des Verkleidens und Umschliessens*. Berlin: Rotbuch Verlag, pp. 226–34. **PR**

Boeck, A. (2014). 'Was bilden wir uns eigentlich ein?', in Hostettler, K., Vögele, S. (Hg.), *Diesseits der imperialen Geschlechterordnung*. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag für Kommunikation, Kultur und soziale Praxis, 159–82. **PR, CiT**

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Presentations at conferences, symposiums, conventions, and workshops

'Jenseits der Mimesis' (with Kristin Marek), Convention *'Revisionen des Porträts: Jenseits der Repräsentation'*. Cologne, Germany: Internationales Kolleg Morphomata (13–15 June 2018). **CiT**

'Portrait as Dialogue – A Transcultural Encounter', Conference *Art, Materiality and Representation.* London (UK): Royal Anthropological Institute, British Museum and SOAS (1–3 June 2018). **CiT**

'A Conversation with Artist Angelika Boeck' (with Amani Maihoub), *Alterity and the Research Imagination Conference*. Lisbon: Universidade Católica Portuguesa in Lisbon (25–26 January 2018). **CiT**

'Re-performing the Colonial Encounter from a Lady's Place', Workshop *Keeping an Eye on Photography – Towards a Critical Reading of Photography in a Global Context*, Heidelberg, Germany: Centre for Transcultural Studies, Karl Jaspers Centre (3–5 November 2017).

'Encounter & Representation', *Talking Bodies,* Third Biennal Conference. Chester, UK: University of Chester (19–22 April 2017).

'Transcultural Re-presentational Encounter', *East/West: Ruptures and Convergences,* International Conference. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: University of Malaya (1–2

December 2016). **CiT**

'Name Me – A Portrait as Dialogue in the Context of the Kelabit's Name Changing', Sunway University 4th South-East Asian Studies Symposium – Panel 'Art and Society in Southeast Asia'. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (20–24 March 2015). **CiT**

'Portrait as Dialogue', Conference *Sensual Landscape of Ethnography,* 3rd International Contemporary Ethnography Across the Disciplines – Panel 'Praxis and Advocacy'. Hamilton, NZ: University of Waikato (26–28 November 2014).

'Portrait as Dialogue', Convention *'Asia and Europe in a Global Context',* Annual Meeting on Cultural Mediation: Creativity, Performance, Display, Excellence; Panel 'Migrating Images as Transcultural Mediators'. Heidelberg, Germany: Universität Heidelberg (8–10 October 2014).

'Porträt als Dialog', Kolloquium zur Kunst Afrikas. Berlin, Germany: Freie Universität Berlin, Kunsthistorisches Institut (2014).

'Portrait as Dialogue', *8th International Conference on the Dialogical Self: Portrait as Dialogue.* The Hague, Netherlands: The Hague University of Applied Sciences (19–22 August 2014).

'Imagine Me', Convention *Yemen Panel Series*. University of Exeter, UK (4 June 2009).

'StillePost und Himmelhebers Masken Porträts', *Afrika Konferenz - Hans und Ulrike Himmelheber.* Munich, Germany: Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde (30 May–1 June 2008).

'StillePost', Conference *Kunst und Ethnographie: zum Verhältnis von visueller Kunst und ethnographischem Arbeiten.* Berlin, Germany: Gesellschaft für Ethnographie e.V., Berlin, in cooperation with the Institut für Europäische Ethnologie der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Museum Europäischer Kulturen, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (17 November 2006). **CiT**

'Die Macke oder der perfekte Eigensinn', Lecture Series *'Industrialisierung Technologisierung von Kunst und Wissenschaft', Sektion 'Wahrnehmen-Erkenntnis'*. Bremen, Germany: Hochschule für Künste Bremen (2003).

Conference Presentation of the Artwork or Poster

'Imagine Me, and artwork in Yemen and a corresponding experiment in Germany' [Poster Presentation], *Transnational Islamic Feminism.* Hannover, Germany: Leibniz University Hannover (26–9 January 2018). **CiT**

'Track Me', *Aesthetic Thinking: Philosophy and Art in Dialogue.* Bonn, Germany: Kunstmuseum Bonn (15–17 December 2017). **CiT**

Artist Talks

'Angelika Boeck: Werkvortrag'. Braunschweig, Germany: Hochschule der Bildenden Künste Braunschweig (25 July 2018).

'A Dialogical Art Practice', *Art Forum.* Launceston, Australia: University of Tasmania, Tasmanian College of the Arts (26 May 2016). **CiT**

'Every Portrait is a Portrait of the Artist?'. Bangkok, Thailand: Bangkok University

International College, Dept. of Graphic and Multimedia (14 October 2015).

'Exercising the Dialogical Self: Portrait as Dialogue'. Singapore: National University of Singapore, Dept. of Communications and New Media (25 March 2015).

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'StillePost und Himmelheber's Maskenporträts'. Munich, Germany: Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Fakulty of History and the Arts, Institute of Art Education (2008).

'Dialogische Porträts', Munich, Germany: Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Faculty of Arts, Institut of Ethnology, academic chair of Visual Anthropology (2006).