

Text for Liminal bodies

Performance work for me has always been about playing with absence and presence. as female, and mother I always felt invisible. It was a relief to discover what cultural, language and art theory had to say about this, and to devise ways of using ritual, narrative, hybridity, metamorphosis, and satire in performance to break through a threshold and feel I could be visible.

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Because of this event I have been thinking a great deal about liminality/thresholds/margins/borders between in my practice.

I often felt invisible as both mother and woman, and the first performative work that I made played with photography, text and video, was called HERE/NOT HERE.

The female rites of passage, menstruation, sex, and giving birth, I found were spaces for me to play with in subsequent performance practice. I have often used metamorphosis, hybridity, transition and ritual to work and play betwixt and between.

Research into the symbol of the mermaid revealed that as well as an allegory for hybridity and metamorphosis, freedom and enclosure, historically it could be linked to very construction of femininity. In developing performance using ritual and narrative, two performances came from the idea of the 'lifecycle of a mermaid'; .

In both *Sator* and *M/utter* the scores involved a set of tasks to be completed with legs bound, and then released after durational tasks are completed. Unlike many male myths of eternal endurance or punishment, the creator and nurturer is eventually delivered from her drudgery.

ON THE MARGIN was a video performance that had a life of its own. It was shown all sorts of places although I never had time or money to go and see it. In the space between land and sea, metaphors for conscious and unconscious elide and become a space in-between life and death, where allegorically the mothers body exists. In Kristevian terms this boundary between life and death is a margin that cannot be exceeded in phallogocentric discourse. I wanted to find ways of aesthetically and conceptually pushing language and discourse to its limit, and finding metaphors for pushing against stereotypes and theory.

It was a simple of action of what looked like mummification as I rolled myself up in a big sheet and then unraveled. I don't accept being 'bound' – here the material and the maternal was both shroud and cocoon. Escaping/emerging was like my own re-birth.

Additionally I have played 'pierrot' the trickster. According to Mallarme, he is 'antre" a go between, a phantasmic presence that joins past and present, an ambivalent contradiction of presence and absence, who uses humour to pass between spaces. This is one of the things that I have endeavoured to do in my performance practice, in using parody. In A walk with Jane Austen, the white face destroys the notion that I am a genuine tour guide, there is something sinister about the role, the dress and the ending is unexpected. No longer wanting to be visible my art performance practice has taken me to somewhere else, in –between.

Text:

The whiteness of her face is a phantom, a yet unwritten page, a reflexive shield, a translating page, I perform a solitary show whilst dreaming of others, her face is a blank, I am in-between, a dream of presence, this is a game of mirrors, we are lost in the abyss, appearance haunted by disappearances, a past without a present, a present permanently deferred, a future that will never arrive.