Sensing the Self: pathways of perception between visible incisions and vaporous boundaries

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements 1
Abstract 2
List of Illustrations 3

Introduction 5

Chapter One
Visible Incisions: reflections on the psychological body image 10

Chapter Two
Visions of Cleanliness and Invisible Olfactory Boundaries 29

Chapter Three
Vaporous Boundaries: aromas of the hyper-deodorised body 44

Conclusion 61

Reference List 66
Bibliography 68
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signature of candidate
Abstract

The dialectic about body and 'self' osculates between material and conceptual paradigms. The breaking down of the poles between mind and body has stimulated a range of debates about subjectivity, desire, and knowledge. The body viewed as an anatomical specimen in the history of Western culture fails to acknowledge the corporeal other, it also does not acknowledge the way in which it has been constructed in a framework based on masculine desire and knowledge. This dissertation explores the profile of the psychological 'body image' as a pathway to two different conceptual frameworks about the body. Firstly by using vision as a mode of investigating the relationship between the corporeal gendered 'self' and the anatomical other in Western culture. Then using the conceptual understanding of the 'body image' to extend beyond the limits of vision to a vaporous, more ethereal account of self. This concept blurs the edges of the corporeal self by using the olfactory as the basis for crossing the 'unseen' boundaries of body space and subjectivity.
List of Illustrations

Fig. 1  Deer, Laraine Fragrant habitue 1995 installation detail.  4

Fig. 2  Deer, Laraine Under the knife 1995.  10

Fig. 3  Rembrant, The anatomy lecture of Dr. Nicholas Tulp (1632). In (Schwartz 1985:145).  12

Fig. 4  Leonard, Zoe. Wax anatomical model with pretty face (1990). In (Kotz 1994).  16

Fig. 5  Leonard, Zoe. Seated anatomical model (1991-2) In (Kotz 1994).  16

Fig. 6  Drozdik, Orchi. Medical venus (1984) B&W photograph. In (Welchman, John C. 1995:43).  20

Fig. 7  Drozdik, Orchi. Manufacturing the self: Body self (1994) installation details. In (ibid 1995:44)  21

Fig. 8  Drozdik, Orchi. Manufacturing the self: The Medical erotic (1993). In (ibid 1995:46)  20

Fig. 9  Bernini, Saint theresa and the angel. In (Bataille, 1962:front cover)  23

Fig. 10  Deer, Laraine. Sensing the self (1997) installation detail.  29

Fig. 11  An Elizabethan pomander. In (McLaughlin 1972:81)  36

Fig. 12  Deer, Laraine. Sensing the self (1997) installation detail.  44

Fig. 13  DNA perfume advertisement, American Vogue. February 1993 (pp46).  53

Fig. 14  Escape perfume advertisement, (ibid pp65)  54

Fig. 15  Kum, Denise. Sauce Box (1997). In (Intra 1995:43)  55
Introduction

Sensing the Self: pathways of perception between visible incisions and vaporous boundaries

The positioning of psychological space between the internal and the external site of the body in recent times has undergone a range of interrogations that has loosened the strangle-hold of Cartesian dualistic principals. The rift of mind and body in Western philosophy is now viewed as an integral and important space for the investigation of subjectivity. The concept of the body, in contemporary thought is the site of a multitude of correlations and contradictions; of psychological space together with biological corporeality. The body is the site of interaction, by the inscription of knowledge and desire in it's historical, social and cultural context. Sensing the Self: pathways of perception explores the interaction between the psychological and the biological in our 'embodied' or 'lived' experiences of the self, and critiques some of the ways in which it is represented in visual arts practice. In this investigation I have asked a range questions that are central to my art practice and proposed a framework that explores psychological issues of the 'ways of seeing' and the anatomical body, which foregrounds the

1Elizabeth Grosz cites in Freud's writing about subjectivity, that he finds there is an interaction that 'already exists' between the mind and body. When he discusses the psychic topography of the body he brings together the psychological and the biological in the moment of 'perception' as being the breech that already exists between the internal and external or the mind and the body. For more information refer to (Grosz, 1994:28).
latter paradigm of the non-visible, vaporous sense of smell; both being ways of understanding the self.

The concept of sensing the self through visible means, indicates inspection, surveillance, voyeurism and objectification. While the implication of the visible incision investigates the idea of cutting into; to view or expose for viewing. The anatomical dissection makes visible the corporeal existence of the interior. What we 'see' when looking at the body depends on the purpose of viewing, moreover how we understand the 'corporeal tissue' has confounded, as well as benefited understanding the body. With this in mind the understanding of self through visuality, the materiality of the body and it's connection with the psychological 'body image' is the focus of the first section. This is also the grounding for the second section which moves to a conceptual understanding of self that blurs the edges of corporeal vision redefining body space to include a vaporous continuum that moves in and around the body.

Understanding the self through visuality uses the ocular sense while the idea of understanding the self through 'the vaporous' expands the discourse to include what can not be seen but is sensed by other means. To speak about vapour is to propose a discourse that has a gaseous or less constrictive form. Vapour is literally a substance suspended in the air that remains unseen to the naked eye. Vapours are usually perceived by our sense of smell which can happen before we come in visual contact with something. Our perception of smells can stimulate presences of things or places that go beyond the visual and connect with our perception of self on a psychological level (which includes a strong link to memory). The idea of sensing the self by means of a vaporous
modality promotes a concept of subjectivity that is less dependent on surface, visual image and object and more involved with a wholeness that includes the internalisation of self. By internalisation I mean the psychological body schema or image which is not the reflection of the 'mirror image' but an internal projection of self that is constantly changing, fragmented and multiple.

In the first chapter I begin by looking at the image of the 'rational' Cartesian individual in Dutch portrait paintings at the beginning of Enlightenment. 'Rational' thinking belies self-doubt and changes in consciousness and promotes the construction of the individual as the centre of knowledge. Chapter one will start with the critique of a group portrait by Rembrandt, questioning the construction of self which denies the 'corporeal' embodiment of self. The group portrait is in the guise of an anatomical dissection being viewed by medical scholars. The layering of ideas in this work also brings about questions of the construction of self with the anatomical body. How does the paradox of fascination and horror of seeing a dissected corpse affect the self and how does this view of the body affect the gendered self in the western patriarchal system of knowledge? In contrast to the group portrait by Rembrandt, two contemporary women artists are critiqued, who have both viewed in museums in Europe the wax female anatomical models produced in the 18th century for medical instruction. Their ambivalent reactions to the gendering of the wax models adds yet another layer to the complexity of the paradox. I am interested in the ways in which each artist questions the objectification of women's bodies in connection with the gendering of the wax anatomical sculptures of the 18th century and how the masculine corpse in 'The Anatomy Lecture' is also read as feminine. This first chapter explores how the psychological
'body image' is constructed and how prominent the lived and experiencing self is, as a part of that construction.

In chapter two the focus moves from the limitations of vision to a non-visual, more ethereal paradigm by investigating the concept of the olfactory in 18th century France. In this unique perspective the centred self of rational thought in the beginning of the Enlightenment is less rigidly defined than with visual paradigms. This gives rise to questions of how the tropes of cultural and moral standards protected the fragility of the body. Questioning too, the olfactory in association with the concepts of health and cleanliness that parodies both Medieval belief and new scientific investigations. The continual downgrading of the sense of smell by the Enlightenment thinkers has repressed the olfactory as having no benefit for understanding the self, but there are undeniable associations between the embodied experiences of smell that can not be dismissed so easily, in the area of memory and emotions. If the olfactory is connected with memory and emotions then what or how does this affect the psychological 'body image' of the self?

In the final chapter the discussion turns to the 20th century, with the continual lowering of the threshold of tolerance the olfactory body is radically transformed from the smelly vaporous barrier of previous centuries to a hyper-deodorised body. By the late 20th century with the convergence of the global village the idea of crossing boundaries is a prominent part of cultural and theoretical paradigms. Therefore I have proposed the concept of the olfactory being a vaporous marauder crossing the boundaries of identity and understanding of self. The rise of the deodorised body co-coincides with the development of capitalism, with the manufacturers of consumer goods in the form of perfumes and
deodorants recognising the potential of the olfactory as a commodity. The collapsing of boundaries also means that the commodity and the aesthetic in art are no longer mutually opposed and therefore questions arise as to how the aesthetic and perfume products sell the concept of an ideal self. In contrast to the consumer paradise of the deodorised body I introduce the work of a contemporary artist whose art practice includes the production of aromas in the public space of the gallery.

This investigation profiles the development of the psychological 'body image' as an 'embodied' perception of self. Using the concept of the olfactory as something beyond the paradigm of the mind/body or external/internal. However before we proceed to a vaporous destination the investigation starts with material substance of the anatomical body and its basis in Western 'rational' thought.
Chapter 1

Visible Incisions: reflections on the psychological body image

...one should not think that desire is repressed, for the simple reason that the law is what constitutes desire and the lack on which it is predicated. Where there is desire, the power relation is already present.

(Gould 1978:81)
The anatomical body has been the focus for knowledge in the paradigms of science and medicine since public dissections began in the early Enlightenment\(^2\). The anatomy lecture of the dissected body was a public spectacle of a highly respected and religious nature. Exhaustive exploration of the anatomical body has produced a vast amount of knowledge, which is one of the advancements through the logic of 'reason' that has emerged from the Enlightenment. However, contemporary thought questions the purely objective paradigm of knowledge invested in the body. Research into the area of psychoanalysis and the psychological 'body image' gives a deeper understanding of how we view the body of the other, and identify with the self. The psychological 'body image' is not a fixed mirror image of self but a veneer onto which multiple images of the self are in continual flux. Psychoanalysis gives us the opportunity for questioning how subjectivity constructs the 'body image' and how viewing the anatomical body, how the dichotomy of horror and fascination affects the body image.

This chapter will investigate the construction of self by looking at the psychological body image in relation to the anatomical or dissected body. I will also highlight the invisibility of women as subjects and the concomitance of women's bodies with the objectification of the anatomical body. The discussion will begin with a painting titled 'The Anatomy Lecture of Dr Nicholas Tulp' (1632) (Fig. 3) by Rembrandt, an artist of the Enlightenment period, followed by an analysis of the work of two contemporary artists involved with concepts of the Post-

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\(^2\)The Enlightenment being the period of time between the 15th and the 17th centuries when there was the emergence of the individual, autonomous human being whose confidence and scepticism encouraged intensive scrutiny and rationalisation of knowledge based on the human mind
Enlightened medical body and the construction of gender in relation to the 'imaginary' self.
Our own bias in a post-Freudian age is towards portraits that show a 'truth' about the sitter that the sitter was not willing to admit. But that is not how the portraitist of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw their work. (Hughes, 1990:41)

I have chosen the portrait painting of 'The Anatomy Lecture' for this discussion because of its significance in representing the principle themes significant to the body in the Enlightenment period. The setting of the painting is an anatomical demonstration by the guild prelector of a Dutch town called Leiden. The scholarly surgeons in the painting are some of the wealthier guild members. They are studiously listening to and concentrating on the lecturer Dr Tulp, who has a corpse on display. Light radiating from the pale white skin of the corpse focuses the attention directly on the open wound. The flayed forearm is held open by Dr Tulp with his surgical instrument while his other hand expresses the intensity of the moment, and his face especially the eyes, look off to some distant place as if he is drawing his knowledge not from the body in front of him but from a memorised text.

The theatrical construction of the portraits is evident in the warm glow of light falling on the head of each man. The contrast of the head and collar bathed in light effectively severs the head, leaving the body engulfed in darkness. The ruff collar serves as the frame for the head or even a prosthetic devise truncating the body, rendering the body unworthy of representation in the same light. This singular item of clothing is a signifier for the paradigm of the mind/body split. The white collar also symbolises 'purity' and good moral character ratifying
the scholars position as members of the academy, and also their class and wealth in society. The illumination of each head in Rembrandt's painting makes it the most important part of the body which supports one of the major lines of investigation in the Enlightenment, that being the mind and 'reason' being the highest form of intellect.

In Gary Schwartz's book, Rembrandt he writes that the setting of the painting in an auditorium with the guild members gathered around Dr Tulp and the dissected body, is less about the intensity of a group portrait and more relating 'to the characters of a divine drama'.

This concept creates an theme of divinity for the painting which also ratifies the acquisition of knowledge about the body depicted in the image. About the same time as this painting was being produced the wisdom of the church was being questioned by philosophers such as Rene Decartes. Decartes a scientist as well as a philosopher did much to promote the split between religion and science as incompatible. This painting reflects both the old metaphysical view as well as the new approach to knowledge through science.

The overwhelming patriarchal subjects and subject matter of this artwork masks what is at first not so evident; questions of gender. The silence of the text in relation to the feminine can be discussed in terms of the object of the gaze. The corpse being the passive element, the object of the scholars gaze and the focus of knowledge via the

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3 The reference to 'the characters of a divine drama' in the painting relates to 'the intensity and sense of purpose' cites Schwartz. The public dissection in C17th was considered to be 'a demonstration...of the sympathy between the body and soul' between human clay and the spark of divinity in man'. This gives an understanding of how it is that man and god are connected through the soul. God's presence in the painting is a reflection of nature itself in the dissected body. Schwartz also refers to a poem (1633) as understanding the deeper meaning of the dissection of the body. In the words: 'Know Thyself' were words engraved...As enlightenment divine...To know himself and then proceed to knowledge of God's nature too'. (Schwartz 1985:143/4).
sexualisation of the body. The viewer is compelled to take part in the theatre of the painting where the flesh of the arm is folded back to expose the wound. The parody of fascination and horror is revealed in the experience of corporeal materiality. It is the self who looks, as well as the self who denies the parody complicit in the wound and it is the feminisation of the wound that displaces gaping flesh with eroticised female genitalia. The parody of 'dissected body' (in particular the female body) has been re-contextualised in the photographic work of Zoe Leonard in a series of images of 18th century anatomical female models from a medical history museum in Venice, Italy.

One photograph in particular, discussed by Liz Kotz in a paper called 'The Vivisector (1994) is that of a wax female figure titled Wax Anatomical Model with Pretty Face (1990) (Fig. 4) Kotz describes the model as 'rest[ing] languidly with a string of pearls around her neck and long, flowing blond hair'. Here the model has been fetishised to promote the both the 'queasy status as biological specimen and erotic object'. Leonard tells of her own intense fascination at first seeing the model in a Viennese guide book and finding herself caught by the moment: 'about feeling gutted, [and] displayed. Caught as an object of desire and horror at the same time' (1994).
Leonard identifies with the objectification of the female figure in the museum case. She is caught in the parody of viewing, and being viewed as a sexual object by the male gaze. In another image, *Seated Anatomical Model (1991-92)* (Fig. 5) we see a seated figure with her abdomen open for display, one of the model's hands is raised in front of her face. Kotz suggests that the gesture is one of fear 'as if warding of an attack' (1994 page). With this suggestion I am reminded of films, where the female protagonist is faced by a dangerous attacker. However a further reading of the model is that she is hiding her face with her hand, this is a gesture of 'self' realisation, reflecting the moment of horror and fascination back at the viewer. A self conscious gesture to hide the facial expression of embarrassment at being the object that is 'gutted' and 'displayed'.

Leonard's photographs of the biological and erotic specimen engages as a mirror image identifying with the self/viewer. Setting up a psychological imprint of identification between the viewer and the image. What is implicit in this work is the internalised psychological space, the site of subjectivity; where one is reminded of the corporeal status of one's own body. In this way the viewer becomes the viewed in terms of psychological and corporeal space of subjectivity. Images like these must affect how we view our own self through the psychological 'body image'. But how does the 'body image' affect the self? Elizabeth Grosz, in *Volatile Bodies* investigates how the body functions not just on a biological level but as a lived and experiencing self and the ways in which 'the psychic is the projection of the body's form'.(Grosz 1994:27)

The 'body image' involves the psychological construction of subjectivity. Grosz cites that any concept of body image has to take into
account the supposition of there being a 'radical correspondence' between the forms of the body and forms of the mind or psyche (1994:27). She goes on the say, according to Freud's understanding of the development of 'psychic body image' the subject only acquires a sense of self (unity and identity) over and above the disparate heterogeneous sensory experiences that the subject is beset by. Further to this, it is in the perception of these experiences that builds the psychological body image and that is what Freud calls the breach between mind and body, perception is what links the two so called separate areas together. The other significant point, in Freud's investigations is that the body's libidinal energies formulate the construction of the psychic map on which the genesis of the ego is dependent. The ego is something like an internal veneer onto which the multiple and disparate images of the body's outer surface can be projected. Therefore the 'body image' is not a solid and fixed entity but in constant adjustment as the ego encounters new bodily representations of the self and others. This is the reason why Lenard’s photographs of the anatomical wax figures are so powerful because it makes the viewer confront their own corporeal body. The experience of confronting other bodies (especially those on view as instructional models) would have an affect on our own 'body image', in other words our perception and construction of self.

John C Welchman critiques the work of artist, Orshi Drozdik, who has been working on a series of installation projects titled 'Manufacturing the Self' (1995:43). The body/self series has developed around the themes

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4 Grosz cites: one of Freud's contemporaries Jacques Lacan who discusses the ego as developing in the mirror stage. The child's developmental formation of subjectivity begins with the ego's identification with the externalised mirror images of the child. For Lacan the ego is not involved with 'real' images of the body but an 'imagined' projection of the body. "the ego is not an outline or projection of the real anatomical and physiological body but is an imaginary outline of the body, the body in so far as it is imagined and represented for the subject by the image of others (including it's own reflection in a mirror) (Grosz 1994:28,39).
of desire, power and knowledge, with five different selves emerging in the series from 1991 to 1994. (Fig. 7 & 8) This follows a decade long inquiry titled 'Adventures in Technos Dystopium' (1995) which investigates medical, historical and scientific paradigms of the period of Enlightenment. Drozdik constructs her own narrative by inventing The Natural Philosophy of Edith Simpson, the pseudo-persona of an eighteenth century women scientist who was Benjamin Franklin's illegitimate daughter born in a whore house. (1995) Franklin a real character of history represented to Europe in that period the spirit of the Enlightenment in America. These adventures into the medical body have developed after Drozdik's own encounter with the 18th century anatomical wax sculpture by Clemente Susini.5 (Fig. 6) Notably one of the same in the series of sculptures produced by Susini that Leonard had found in the Viennese guide book. These sensuous and erotic monuments of the Enlightenment have gained much notoriety as fetishised and sensualised objects. The psychological connection between object and self can not be explained purely as terms of scientific or anatomical objectives. The overt use of female sexuality is a significant factor in this analysis and tips the scales from pure positive scientific discourse into areas of ethics and morality. If the anatomical sculptures are seen as not neutral (tablue rastus) but indeed sexually specific then they can be discussed in terms of gender. The fact that these sculptures have long hair, made up faces and in one a set of pearls around the neck is evidence to support the anatomical representation of the female body. There can be no mistake in recognising the intended sexual identity of these wax sculptures.

The symbolic adornments of feminine sexuality such as pearls on the sculpture have another purpose in the construction of the anatomical figure. The pearls sit closely around the neck of the model and act as a point of separation between the head which is complete with made-up face and a long flowing wig and the dissected body. This visual metaphor works in the same way as the ruff collar in the portrait painting discussed earlier, while the body is cut open like a large wound to display its anatomical contents. The paradox being the head is representational of a living sexual being while the body is an object of science. Here again is another image of the wax sculpture (like Leonard's photographic response) showing the resting languid pose belying its opened abdomen, the contents of which displays the spectacle of nature. So why the pearls, the long hair and made up faces and how does this affect the way in which the anatomical figures are viewed? Before attempting an answer to this question it is necessary to return again to psychoanalytic theory. Women's place in a psycho/sexual world is identified by feminist writers as part of the phallocentric paradigm, meaning that women's specificity has always been measured against patriarchal phallocentric discourse. Grosz explains in simple terms 'the male/female opposition as been closely allied with the mind/body opposition'(1994:14) The male plays the dominant signifier and the model for normal while the female becomes the 'other' passive sign, also she becomes the other of the normal/non normal binary oppositions. Having said this the female models for anatomy are a weaker, non-normal model of the male anatomical figure and therefore have to be immediately identified as such. For the male gaze the anatomical body can be viewed as object, in these examples clearly being identified as female and therefore the body of the 'other'. Therefore creating a safe (psychological) distance for the male viewer
away from an embodied experience of self and keeping intact the separation of the mind and body. In the 'Anatomy Lecture of Dr Nicholas Tulp' the representation of the anatomical figure is male. The bare chest openly displayed is that of a male, the only part of the body that is covered is the genitals, in much the same fashion as the sacrificial body of Christ is covered only at the point of modesty. This corpse is not represented as gender specific by any adornments to the body. However the male subject and his identity is symbolically sacrificed for science. The head is partially obscured from the viewers sight by the body. It can therefore be assumed that it is an unnecessary element in the construction of the image and only the minds of the living are important here. The glow of light on the corpse matches the glow on the heads of the scholars and the lecturer to reveal the importance of these elements in the image. The glow on the corpse is reminiscent of a romanticised sacrificial lamb or even the body of Christ himself creating an impression that what is unfolding here is for the good of all human kind in the pursuit of truth, knowledge and divine reason. The incision and the parting of the flesh of the arm are like the wounds of Christ. The face of the corpse, although partly shaded shows the eyes closed and the mouth parted similarly to Bernini's sculpture of St Theresa. (Fig. 9) One is remined of the ecstasy of St Theresa in the famous 'transverberation' where she speaks of the spear with the point of fire that pierces her heart. The fire leaves a pain so sharp, mixed to excess with sweetness, that she does not want to loose it.\(^6\) This can also be read as a feminisation of the corpse. The feminine being that which has lost control in the way that woman is said to loose control in sexual pleasure. Just as St Theresa's orgasmic encounter with god is a

\(^6\) For a full account of St Theresa's transverberation see Bataille (1957:224)
surrendering of the body, the corpse is surrendered in the moment of
the dissection to all human kind.

The corpse is viewed as passive and willing to give over it's secrets in
the same fashion as the female body is viewed by the voyeurism of the
male gaze. In this sense the dissected body in 'The Anatomy Lecture' is
constructed as a desirable object, which in itself assists with overcoming
the identification with self. The emotions of disgust and repulsion are
replaced with fascination and the desire for knowledge of the scientific
and medical body, and through the construct of masculine desires the
corpse is viewed as a sexualised body. The phenomena of the anatomical
wax female figures being canonised as museum pieces can also be
understood as sexualised objects of masculine desire. Also the concept of
the sacrificial is embodied in the feminine wax figures, on display as
objects of truth and knowledge.

In the series titled 'Manufacturing the Self' Drozdik sets up another kind
of museum piece for exhibition in the modernist art museum. She
brings to her displays some of the elements of the 18th century museum.
The photographs on display are representations purloined from the
vitrines of the European medical and natural history museums in
Vienna, Florence and in Budapest. These have been placed on one wall
of the installation as visual signifiers re-collecting the ways in which
the body has been identified with knowledge and truth. The love letters
found engraved on silver plates are written to the desired object; the
wax anatomical figures first seen in the Viennese guide book. In
Drozdik's installation the rubber figure of the a woman (lying on a steel
table) is completely intact, any promise of truth/knowledge via the
dissected body is not available. John C. Welchman asks is this an
exquisite corpse or a cadaver fantasy? Is it an information booth turned inside out? (1995:45) The essentialist body reveals nothing from the internal, it is a seductive glistening body laid before the viewer complete with a white wig and pearls. The face has no-make up, however is does wear the impression of a mask, much like a death mask. The body with it's minimal facade tells us little outside it's desiring and desired self. "Was there a seduction here? or will there be?" (1995:45) Welchman poses the question The density of Welchman's criticism indicates a layering of ideas however it is the psychological dialectic that is of interest here. He refers to the subject and the link between the object of desire and medical discourse, what he calls The Medical Venus (1995:43) He also writes about the limitation of scientific and medical paradigms in connection with self-identity and sexual specificity. In his words 'the self-body [in the installation] ... is not simply trussed up in a "technology of gender" it is imagined and imagining' (1995:43) It is the imaginary body of the psychic that goes beyond the rigid limitations of empirical scientific and medical discourse. Drozdik displaces the scientific paradigm with the imaginary body which addresses sexuality and desire in the formulation of the knowledge constructed by the self.

Conclusion

The investigation of what the psychological 'body image' means together with subjectivity, can give a fuller understanding of how knowledge has been constructed not by 'neutral' information but by masculine sexuality and desire. In 'The Anatomy Lecture' Rembrandt has created an image that refers to a divine drama, disguising the feminisation of the gaze with the religious theme. The dissected corpse is invested with a sacrificial role much like the body of Christ in religious paintings. This infers that the presence of the divine through
the sacrificial corpse can teach 'man' about himself and that through vision the mind acquires knowledge of body and world. This way of thinking about the body works on binary oppositions that construct the mind/body split. The eyes and the mind are doing the observing of a separate object; the body. It works on a system of denial, therefore one's own body does not enter into the paradigm. This displaces the anxiety (or horror) of identifying one's own corporeal body with the object of science which is on view.

The anxiety of being objectified is revealed in the work of the two contemporary artists, Leonard and Drozdik who address the mind/body split by looking at the 'neutral' (masculine) space in which the system of observation has been positioned. Leonard's photographs confront the 'biological specimen' as corporeal space and the 'erotic object' as gendered space. While Drozdik reinvents the body as 'imaginary body', constructing her own narrative around themes of desire and knowledge. The love letters in Drozdik's installation re-inscribes the narcissistic framework directed towards to the love objects; the wax female sculptures, displayed as both feminine sexuality and scientific object. The body in Drozdik's installation is not available for anatomical observation, it is available as an imagined and imaginary self. The glistening body poses with one knee lifted slightly sensing her self as a desiring and corporeal subject.

In looking at art work from two different paradigms; one the beginning of the Enlightenment and the concept of 'reason' and the other, contemporary feminist art practice it is possible to see how the construction of self was formulated in painting in the 18th century and how contemporary art is now criticizing the construction of that
paradigm. In the Anatomy Lecture the construction of identity relies on binary oppositions; in other words the denial of one term such as body is to promote the other term, mind. The denial or repression of subject promotes object and repression of feminine promotes the masculine. It has side stepped the aspect of horror by inventing an image of the divine drama. However the dichotomy of horror and fascination is addressed as the basis of art practice by two contemporary artists. The flushing out of the relationship between subjectivity and the materiality of the corporeal body exposes the conditions of paradox, plurality of body image and desire in which the construction of self is more fully understood.\footnote{The 'body image' and the construction of self has been an important area of investigation for my art practice in understanding \textit{how} the experience of self affects the materials that I work with and the space that I work in. Further to this is \textit{how} I relate the psychic interior to the external world, with an understanding of the psychological body space that is conceptually different to the material body.}

The next chapter involves a change from the visual framework that has explored both the objective and subjective response to the incision (the view of the corporeal interior of the body) and the self, through the psychological 'body image' to a framework that is non-visual. The 'body image', the construction of self and an understanding of the 'incision' lays the groundwork for the investigation that follows. To a body image that does not 'see' directly through the sense of vision but indirectly or obtusely through the sense of smell or the olfactory.
Chapter 2

Visions of Cleanliness and Invisible Olfactory Boundaries

Special care was taken when entering a sickroom. One London physician recommended that the sickroom have herbs at the windows, an aromatic fire burning in the fireplace, and rosewater and vinegar sprinkled on the floor, when visitors were to be received. Visitors were advised to wash themselves with rose water before entering, to keep a piece of cinnamon or other spice in their mouths, and to carry a pomander to smell.

(Classen, Howes & Symnott 1994:60)
In a world that places such an enormous value on the visual it is not surprising to find the sense of smell seems to hold little importance in our sensory experience of the self. This is the time of a heightened visuality; the emphasis being placed on the external rather than the internal, surfaces instead of depth and appearance over substance, this focus of vision is deeply rooted in the development of Western culture\(^8\). So much focus being placed on the 'visible' is one of the major problems of understanding the olfactory sensory experience. The fact that we are dealing with something that can not be seen causes a great deal of anxiety. However instead of thinking of this as a legacy, in this chapter the absence of something to see will be the genesis of the olfactory. As a non-visual sense the olfactory is re-positioned in a vaporous paradigm. However marginalised the sense of smell may seem, it's ethereal quality can lead to quite a different understanding of the body and subjectivity\(^9\). In 18th century France the olfactory was part of a unique process, being both barrier and protector of the body. This chapter uncovers an unusual relationship between standards of health, and the cleanliness of the olfactory body in the 18th century, in a cultural climate still locked in to Medieval times, wisdom of the church as well as the new scientific approach to the world.

In this section the emphasis is on moving the conceptual framework from a purely visual way of seeing the pyschological 'body image' to encorporate a vaporous concept of body image. This section asks

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\(^8\) Walter Ong (cited in Classen 1993:16) writes: 'Sight reveals only surfaces. It can never get to an interior as an interior...' he goes on to say 'this mode of apprehending the world' is characteristic of Western sensory values.

\(^9\) Ong (cited in Classen 1993:16) writes that the nature of smell is concerned with 'essences, with the life-giving breath which unites interiors and exteriors in a dynamic interchange, and thus provides the basis for a very different conceptual model than sight'.
questions of how the somatic interior plays a part in the embodiment of
smells and their associated memories, and in turn how this affects the
body image. Moreover how does the sense of smell and it's temporal and
ethereal qualities affect the understanding of an 'embodied' or 'lived'
experience of self as an aspect of Western culture.

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Ring-o-ring o'roses
A pocket full of posies
A tishoo! A tishoo!
we all fall down

(Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes p364) 10

10 Nursery rhymes are a part of an oral history, they can vary as with this rhyme
there are as many as 12 versions in existence. It is written in the Oxford dictionary
that the origins date back to the Great Plague: 'the rosy rash, they allege, was a
symptom of the plague, posies of herbs were carried as protection, sneezing was a
final fatal symptom, and 'all fall down' was exactly what happened.' (Oxford
Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes p365).
The decline in the importance of olfaction is pejoratively connected with the advancement of Western philosophy with theorists such as Plato and Aristotle placing the greatest importance on 'sight'. It seems that no other sense has suffered the polemic reversal of status than that of the sense of smell. In fact as Constance Classen suggests in *Worlds of Sense* it has been completely re-invented from a time of supposedly having heightened spiritual and medicinal powers in pre-modern Western and Non-Western cultures to its present spurious situation. (Classen et al 1993:16)

Throughout Western history it has always been 'vision' that has been recognised as arguably having the highest faculty of mental reasoning leading to the 'illumination' of knowledge, and leaving the other senses such as the olfactory relegated as secondary. The issue of vision is widely debated in a number of texts including Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies* were she asserts that knowledge operates through metaphors that are derived from vision and optics. Furthermore Grosz writes: 'thus [vision] has tended to function not only as the model for knowledge but also representative of all the other senses'. (Grosz 1994:97) This supports the notion of there being a hierarchy of the senses and it's implication in the process of acquiring knowledge. If vision plays such an important part in our perception of things then the status of 'invisibility' must be acknowledged as a significant factor in the continual downgrading of the olfactory. The difficulty of not being able to see what one is smelling only adds to the problems of scientific empiricism as a method of 'knowing' and measuring the world. With our

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11 Synnott: (cited in Howes 1991) notes that Plato who generally disregarded the senses as unworthy does attempt to explain the origin of the senses, which he describes the primary sense being sight. Synnott says: 'he accords the sense of sight as the foundation of philosophy and hence the sense that leads to God and Truth'.
sense of smell we can interpret the aromas of our environment be they pleasant or repulsive, it is an experience that affects us bodily.

In order to discuss the olfactory at an interpretive level it must be explored as a bodily experience. This investigation will differentiate the olfactory from other sensory experiences; mainly vision, but it must be stressed that the focus is not to stimulate melancholia at the loss of the olfactory, but to contextualise it as a concept of western cultural values. To investigate further I turn now to the social and cultural histories of France in the 18th century. According to Alan Corbin in the book titled 'The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination' there was for a time in the 18th century an unprecedented use of the olfactory as a method of registering knowledge about their French world. In particular the belief that putrid odors were a major source of disease. Corbin's documentation of an olfactory France was a totally different experience to anything that could be imagined in late 20th century Australia. Corbin's description of walking along the banks of the Seine River and through the city of France; Sulfur, stinking emanations, and noxious vapors were among the olfactory experiences. Apart from the olfactory being used to measure and identify the contents of the air in the city, it was also considered as a method for doctors to diagnose the sickness of their patients. Corbin's book documents the use of the olfactory as a cognitive measure of the world which highlights the new scientific approach at the beginning of the Enlightenment. This was however an age when the old medieval fear of plague and disease, mysticism and ritual co-existed with the introduction of the concept of 'reason' as a method of understanding the world through the human mind.
Not only is the concept of olfactory experiences in 18th century France very different to our own but also the conditions which instigate these experiences, can be seen as symptomatic of the different attitude towards health and cleanliness. The canons of 'polite behaviour' in the French courts were equally as important as that of cleanliness, and had it's place along side good taste and good manners at court. This was the time of pre-Pasturian scientific and medical exploration where theories developed as much on hearsay and the reputation of the speaker as it did on any medical or scientific methods. As to the health of the body there were many inaccuracies born from hearsay that did more harm than good. This period is remembered for fatal plagues of epidemic proportions, little knowledge of the effectiveness of medicine which meant that the powers of mystics and ritual still played an important role in attempting to cure disease, therefore the vulnerability of the body had to be protected by whatever means were available. Many unorthodox potions were used to protect the body, some of which did have effective medicinal properties, one of these being lemons and oranges studded cloves known as pomanders. These were thought to have a powerful odorous effect which helped to overcome the harmful miasma's and contagion's, so as not to let the diseased particles enter the body. The body was considered to be the 'tomb' of the soul, making it a fragile and susceptible site. The use of pomanders as an antiseptic was common place, used by the aristocracy in the 'ancient regime'. Pomanders (Fig. 11) were used to mask out one's own perspiration and body odor, and to create a barrier of protection from those around them;

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12 From this text it can be ascertained that there is a distinction between aristocrats and royalty as having a different attitude to cleanliness than the peasants. The poorer class having no opportunity to join in the rituals of the ruling class, lived with dirty conditions in every day life. (Vigarello 1988 page)

13 Pomanders are lemons or oranges studded with cloves and left to dry for several months. In this time a chemical change cements the two elements together to give of an unusual smell. (Corbin Foul and the Fragrant p63)
the stronger the pomander the better the barrier that the body had to
protect itself. This practice now seems archaic nevertheless it was
symptomatic of the transformation from Medieval Europe to the
beginnings of the Enlightenment. This being the integration of social
and cultural practices with new scientific based knowledge. Measuring
the world through the olfactory sense was using 'reason' for measuring
and acquiring knowledge, meanwhile using objects such as lemons and
cloves as an olfactory antiseptic had evolved from the cultural aspect of
history. This reflects the contradictory nature by which the
effectiveness of curing illness was being tested, and how a variety of
methods of developing cures for disease could co-exist in society.

Cleanliness of the body in the 18th century Western culture would be
very different to the way in which it would be interpreted in the 20th
century. So little fact and so much fiction lead to a cultural practice of
bodily cleanliness that had little to do with hygiene. For a period of time
between the sixteenth and 18th centuries the body was rarely bathed
with water, and if it was it was purely for a sensuous and pleasurable
experience. It was thought that the skin was weakened by water,
which meant it became porous leading to infection and disease.
Therefore common practice was to not let water or foul air enter the
body, in order to keep the body protected at all times. The use of
pomanders helped to protect the body. These smell balls would be carried
around and smelled whenever foul odors appeared. Doctors would use
nose gays when visiting patients. All of the measures

14 See C. Classen, D. Howes, A. Synnoit, Aroma p 70.
(Vigarello 1988 p17-20) he makes reference to 16th century books that pertain to
the removal of certain bodily smells by methods of friction and perfume, not
washing 'the skin should be rubbed with scented linen' p 17
15 Nose gays are bags filled with herbs attached to the doctors nose when visiting
patients (Truman 1975:40)
a. An Elizabethan pomander, made to open out into segments.

Fig. 11
created a barrier between the body and the world. Albeit this was an invisible barrier, a barrier created exclusively for the register of the olfactory and in turn the strong smelling prophylaxis was though to protect the body. It is now known that pomanders do have some antiseptic qualities however their use did nothing towards the protection against fatal diseases such as the 'black death'. If this barrier was of little use to the real problems then perhaps its effectiveness could be measured in terms of psychological affects. If the individual though that they had created a barrier by the use of the pomanders they carried, then they could go about their daily activities with a sense of security for the protection of the embodied self.

In the creation of the barrier between body and world the olfactory functioned as a complex register of smelling and surveillance, warning the subject whenever dangerous odors were present. The aroma of the pomander would create a safe haven for the proximity of the body. The olfactory was then the privileged organ, acting as an arbitrator between the external world and the internal spaces of the body. In this sense the olfactory transgressed the boundaries of the corporeal experiences of self. The olfactory pays little regard to divisions between external (that being the public space) and the internal or personal space. Therefore in a metaphorical sense the olfactory creates an area that is indefinable as either external or internal but operates as a mediator of both, disassembling the polemic distinctions that construct binary oppositions.

If the olfactory does work on such a level of metaphor then how would this affect the embodied experiences of subjectivity? If there is no clear distinctions between external and internal it becomes indefinable
within the parameters of those terms. Further to this idea David Howes in his paper titled *Olfaction and Transition* explains that the smell of something may come prior to seeing the object eg aromas from cooking can be smelt before being seen. Therefore Howes says 'It is more like a concept than it is like a thing in the usual sense'. (Howes 1991, 131) What he is saying is the smell of the object is not attached in the same way as for example the colour is attached the object. The linguistic association of the olfactory to particular words is more free floating than it is with visual meaning. The association between smell and its meaning is less rigid and defined, in a sense more able to move between meanings, or from one idea to another idea. Howes goes on to say: 'it is really quite appropriate that the olfactory sense should play its greatest role at junctures' (Howes 1991, 131). In other words smells are more apparent 'in between' rational and concrete thought or categories and does not function in pairs like the binary oppositions of external/internal or mind/body. This also means that the olfactory could operate successfully as an invisible barrier or a blurred, indefinable boundary warning the corporeal self of impending dangerous odours and disease, creating invisible boundaries where none really exist, except in the mind.

In Vicky Kirby’s paper 'Corpus Delicti' she asks 'how do we think this corporeal place, this envelope of imminence that our disembodied speculations [traditionally] would render separable and other?' (Kirby 1991:98). In effect she is asking how do we go beyond the mind/body split that western philosophy has constructed. Kirby's question strikes at the centre of how we understand corporeal and subjective life. How do we bridge the gap between our inner selves and our external experiences? If one thinks in terms of the olfactory, it may open new
ways of thinking 'beyond the mind/body split'. As I have already outlined the olfactory is the sense that least fits neatly into the mind/body or the external/internal paradigm. Perhaps a different approach (that doesn't rely on binary terms) to the olfactory would give a more lucid account of the embodied self, and the other.

Returning again to the 18th century France, the interpretive powers assigned to the olfactory for medicinal and scientific purposes would soon come to an end due to it's indefinable and ambiguous nature. By the late 19th century the discovery of bacteria by Pasteur, as the cause of disease revolutionised medical and scientific discourse. This new discovery rendered odors of disease as merely by products and not as previously thought of as central to the carrying and spreading of disease. Smell had failed as a measure of reality. Smell was to take a further fall from grace in philosophic paradigms. It could neither provide cognitive measures of acquiring knowledge or aesthetic pleasures. In fact the 19th century writer Condillac and his contemporary Kant both displayed nothing but contempt for the sense that "is the one that seems to contribute the least to the operations of the human mind". Further to this it seems that all the major thinkers of the Enlightenment including Darwin had concluded that the repression of the acuity of smell could be characterised as part of the evolutionary process of civilised humans. It seems as humanity moves further away from it's animal origins the less smell figures as a vital function and the more it is seen as a construction of a cultural artifice. As I have already elaborated earlier in the 18th century the olfactory functioned as an invisible barrier or a buffer zone around the body. But the barrier or invisible boundary operated as an elaborate psychological effect which

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16 This is a continuance of the ideas of Plato and Aristotle who placed the greatest importance on sight.
proved to keep the population mobile and somewhat alert the dangers of contagious disease.

Pomanders are associated in contemporary life with little more than nostalgia, memorabilia and craft work. The use of lemons in relation to medicine exists mainly as a link to natural and herbal remedies. Many people still using lemon and honey for the relief of the symptoms of colds and flu. Moreover with the commodification of medicine, advertisers have taken advantage of packaging to enhance the psychological link to the natural (for example using images of lemons for cleaning products) the real benefit coming from the powerful drugs which make up the medicine. This implies the need for some nostalgic link to the cultural aspect of the way in which we deal with sickness and the use of herbal remedies. Moreover cloves are know more as a spice, for it's preserving qualities and for taste. Cloves do however have some medicinal purposes as an aromatic. Lemons and cloves together create a powerful aromatic smell which stimulates the senses. It accentuates an embodied experience of both presence and immanence for the self.

Momentarily, the temporal and mysterious nature of an aroma can affect memory. The olfactory and it's connection to memory and emotion, does have a powerful psychological aspect, for instance one whiff of a particular smell instantly recall images or passages of time and memories long buried. As the poet Baudelaire wrote 'back to the event with which it was originally associated'. (Baudelaire 1975:42) In terms of the physiological body the olfactory nerve centers in the brain are located in the limbic region, the centre of long term memory and emotions which is the reason why and how these two functions work in tandem. The significance here lies not so much in the scientific data but
in the ability of an olfactory experience to revive specific fragments of memory and bring it to the forefront of conscious thought. In other words somatic messages locked away in the body's nervous system are transmitted back to memory and consciousness. Freud connects the corporeal experiences of memory and consciousness via perception, as an avenue of 'coming into consciousness'. In the first chapter I have already discussed the psychological 'body image' and Freud's account of how we acquire a sense of self via disparate sensory experiences. Moreover it is in the perception of these experiences that develops the psychological 'body image'. If memory and smell are strongly associated then it goes to say that the perception of smells that are locked in our memory must have an affect on the psychological 'body image'. Memory stimulated by smell could easily include smells of things, events or people in our distant and not so distant past that can influence our 'body image'. However because of the difficulties of naming smell experiences other than in metaphors of visual language it is not so easily to define how the olfactory affects our sense of self.

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Conclusion
Sensing the self has moved from the visual concept of the approach to viewing the medical body in chapter one to a vaporous and less defined understanding of self. The concept of an olfactory body in 18th century France has a particular set of cultural values which highlights not only the intensity of smell that beset the self but the attitude to health and medicine. Although it is not within the reach of this paper to say what the psychological body image of a person in that century would be. What we can ascertain is that cleanliness had little to do with hygiene
and more to do with cultural values in the French courts. In this paper I have proposed a conceptual olfactory boundary for the aristocrat; a boundary created by the pomander which constructed an invisible barrier, a prophylactic envelope to ensure the health and cleanliness of the body which had nothing to do with washing for the sake of hygiene. These ideas used cultural and moral values to promote a sense of order and containment over the individual body and groups of bodies in public places.

The olfactory can be interpreted as a private space for the body, an invisible and sacred space that acted as a barrier to keep the body safe. The appearance of an olfactory barrier may have been given prominence at that time as a symptom of the changing paradigms from Medieval Europe to the period of Enlightenment. As Howes suggests the olfactory plays its greatest role at 'junctures' where no clear boundaries are set. In other words in times of change, between paradigms and changes of thought and knowledge gives rise to less structured ways of knowing, opening up possibilities for change to take place. With the passing fully into the new Enlightenment period the value of the olfactory diminished leaving it as a secondary sense once again.

One of the olfactory's greatest values is in perception and memory, one can not experience a smell without a memory of that smell being recalled. This also strengthens the conceptual level in which the olfactory operates. Memory is perceived through 'coming into consciousness', memory is also an important part of recalling the disparate 'body images' of the self, one can conclude that the memory of a smell must also be locked into the somatic interior of the body. The images associated with smells must play a part in the assorted sensory
information projected onto the psychological 'body image'. If smell memories are more conceptual then real, in other words the association is in perception as personal experience rather than an 'absolute' connection with a particular linguistic meaning, then the conceptual framework for an vaporous envelope will be less about the objective paradigm of vision and more about an ethereal, subjective body space.

The historical perspective of an olfactory barrier in 18th century France gives the opportunity to think about the olfactory from a socio-cultural perspective. The concept of an invisible barrier in that time prompted the vaporous paradigm in which this line of investigation has taken, highlighting the 'unseen' as a different perspective of understanding and experiencing the self. In the next chapter the odorous olfactory model of the eighteenth century has undergone a radical deodorisation that now defines the body by extinguishing the natural and re-inventing a fragrant imaginary body.
Chapter 3

Vaporous Boundaries: aromas of the hyper-deodorised body

Being does not see itself. Perhaps it listens to itself. It does not stand out; it weaves bordered by nothingness: one is never sure of finding it, or of finding it solely.

(Bachelard 1958:215)
Our sense of smell is so fleeting and temporal in its connection with the body that its absence has been barely missed in the modern world. It seems that the acuity of the olfactory will disappear as we evolve from our primitive human state. The sense of smell has been devalued by its mere association with essentialism as an 'animal instinct' and therefore biologically determined. However I hasten to add that the use of the olfactory in post modernity has not disappeared but transformed to a more complex modality. The characteristic cover-up or masking of strong odor which happened in previous centuries now comes in the form of less odor, not more in the 'coding' of olfactory body. The sexual body moves further from its ancestral odorous past by desiring the erotica of the hyper-deodorised body. The aesthetics of the perfumed body and its re-invention in terms of sexuality remains marginalised as far as critics and theorists on the body in Western culture are concerned.

The one area that does acknowledge the olfactory is the manufacturers of consumer goods in the form of perfumes and deodorants of which there is a notable emphasis on 'Feminine' hygiene products. This investigation takes into account the specificity of bodies in the construction of both feminine and masculine. In the schema of body aesthetics consumers are led to think of the olfactory in terms of fragrance or perfume to enhance and even mystify the body. In contrast to this is the discussion of the work by a contemporary artist, Denise Kum who re-contextualises the deodorisation of self and vaporous boundaries, by using the olfactory to transport an embodied experience of self out of the gallery space.
In the capitalist Western world of the nineties the notion of an olfactory body has taken on enormous proportions in affecting desires and subjectivity. Classen et al writes about olfactory consumerism as being directed towards the 'gap' between body and self (1994:186). Although they go no further in stating what kind of gap they are discussing I would suggest it is the psychological space of the imaginary self.

In order to talk about the olfactory and the imaginary self it is first necessary to discuss the olfactory as a construction of consumerist western capitalist culture that goes beyond the purely functional aspects of smell. Classen et al cites Alan Tomlinson, 'Consumer Culture and the Aura of the Commodity' that advertisers have constructed for the product an 'aura' or a fantasy life that 'goes beyond' the function of the product (Classen et al 1994:180). In other words we acquire items for their style and perceived fantasy rather than for their generic function. One of the signifying paradigms of the western world is the control exerted over body odor and hygiene and as Classen et al describes 'this has become a billion dollar business in the U.S.A.' in the marketing of deodorants and perfumes. They also highlight the paradox of firstly suppressing natural body odor only to be invested with synthetic body odor (1994:183). This is part of the genesis of re-inventing the self, a common practice in post modernity. It is through the consumer paradise or fantasy world that the individual approaches the realms of the imaginary and ideal self.
In a post modern society the olfactory body extends past its own materiality into the domain of the private spaces of the home. All kinds of products for the household can have artificial smells in order to enhance the products function, for example lemon dish washing detergent, aloe vera body lotion or reef sea spray hair conditioner to name just a few. The artificial has also infiltrated to the level of smell and taste with many foods and beverages being artificially enhanced to boost productivity and consumer value. The advancement of mass production and tele-communications at all levels of social class, not only the wealthy, means consumers can actively engage in the artifice of deodorising and perfume.

The idea that the olfactory has no language of its own nor is it easily classified plays an important part in the promotion of certain levels of paranoia. Classens et al cite that advertising campaigns based on 'olfactory paranoias' are very effective because they act on 'nameless fears' affirming the idea that the individual can not smell their own body odor. It is not something that can be sought in the mirror image, and social etiquette decrees that no one will tell you that you have body odor (1994:183). Advertisers seem to understand the psychological implications of the 'unspoken' and how it can affect the social aspects of human life. The idea of unnameable or invisible anxieties threatens the self and our relationship with others. Body odor is a material aspect of our lives it can be felt in the form of perspiration, and it can be seen as stains on clothing however it is the invisible aspect of body odor that can affect our relationship with other people. Moreover is an embodied response through being the one who has the body odor or being the receiver of another's body odor. The corporeal or material affects of body odor it is said can stimulate sexual responses in some while for
others it is repulsive. What ever the response is, odor touches us in a very personal way that vision alone can not do.

If the olfactory has the ability to touch us at a personal level, then it can also affect the somatic or the sensibilities of experience. This is more commonly understood as the realms of aesthetics. In a very general sense the concept of aesthetics is about the 'philosophical study of art' (Bullock, StallyBrass, Trombley 1977:12) which takes the same attitude towards art as it does with nature. In other words aesthetics uses the same literary and critical mechanisms to discuss art as it does nature. The aesthetic is about the experience of a thing perceived, rather than it's use or functional value. The term aesthetic is usually assigned to the discourse of objects, this could be the human body, nature or objects of human production. As a philosophical study it also brings into play such notions as value judgments and morality (Bullock et al 1977:12) From its inception as a discipline by the German philosopher Alexander Baumgarten it has been given a gendered role. Terry Eggleton in the book titled 'The Ideology of the Aesthetic' tells us that Baumgarten writes that aesthetics 'is the sister of logic, a kind of inferior or feminine analogue of reason at the lower level of sensational life'. This quote, addressing the origin of aesthetics and gender I will look at later, he continues; 'Aesthetic is born of the recognition that the world of perception and experience cannot simply be derived from abstract universal laws, but demands its own appropriate discourse and displays its own inner...logic' (1990:16) The modern sense of the word aesthetics has developed from the rise of the middle class or bourgeoisie in the 18th century in western culture. They were a force emerging from the feudal systems of 'absolutism' to the rise of the 'freedom of the individual'.(1990:16) Their new found wealth
was not enough to enter into the higher and more powerful class of royalty or aristocrats. So their fiscal economies where directed elsewhere, towards improving the social and cultural aspects of their world that would differentiate them from the poor. It is Eggleton's view that 'the binding force of the bourgeoisie social order ... will be [in the form of] habits, pieties, sentiments and affections'.(1990) He is suggesting it is the cultural and social order that is 'built in' as part of the routine of daily life that is the basis of aesthetic values. This basis has undergone complex and multiple changes to reach the period of late capitalist society that we now live in.

Aesthetics is still one of the driving forces of late capitalism and has major implications for the arts. With the breaking down of cultural and social boundaries in today's post modern world means that the use of the aesthetic has crossed into the world of consumers. Advertisers now work with the idea of making a product have a quasi-religious aura of desirability.(Classen et al 1994) The desirability of the product also creates the fantasy world for the consumer. The manufacturers of perfume recognise the potential of advertising campaigns to create the illusion appropriate to the olfactory experience. This is the second phase in the re-invention of self (after deodorising), enhancing the body with perfume. The problem of not having an appropriate language for the olfactory has been overcome by using the suggestive descriptions arising from the 'immanence' of the substance itself. In other words creating an aesthetic appropriate to the product. Images of romance, erotica and sexual power are probably the first impressions that one receives from an advertisement for perfume. These are linked with the brand name and the style of bottle to give a more complete concept. However unlike other products it is not until the consumer
comes into contact with the perfume (in some form or other) that the embodied experience is complete and the imaginary self engages in a fulfilment of the advertisers promised fantasy.

In the modern west Classen et al cites that the idea of a perfumed body is associated with women, and by the middle of this century fragrance had lost all its 'premodern' functions and was directed at one concept that 'of enhancing women's desirability for men'. (Classen et al 1994:162) What she is saying here is that women wear perfume not for their own satisfaction but to be sexually attractive to men. In other words women's specificity is intricately linked by the desires of men. In this sense men are the standard or deodorised normal by which women accommodate a peripheral position. Men need not wear scent as they are already the centre by which their gaze and their natural scent mediates the position of all others.\textsuperscript{17} Therefore man and woman do not experience subjectivities as equals but rather 'man' becomes the dominant model by which woman can identify. I now refer back to Baumgarten and his philosophical text quoting 'aesthetics and feminine as inferior' these words now have some resonance and can be argued as an example of philosophy's complicity with constructing and at the same time undermining the feminine body in favour of the masculine body. Furthermore psychoanalytic theory is based not on any reference to the anatomical body or 'real' body but on the body image or imaginary body. By looking at the two sexes in the symbolic and linguistic sense we enter into the economy of the patriarch where the phallus takes the central position or the standard by which all else is set, while 'woman' is the inverted other of the phallus and this is represented by a lack. This is a post-oedipal representation of man and woman that has fully

\textsuperscript{17} By using the term men I would like to qualify that it is white middle class male who is at the centre of the Patriarchal system.
entered into the socio-cultural milieu. The body image or imaginary body is part of our 'lived' corporeal bodies. The term 'feminine' makes implicit the connection that consumerism makes between woman and the perfumed body that she represents. However using the terms masculine and feminine also have their own set of problems in terms of accounting for the division between the sexes. In the paper 'Woman and her double(s)' Moira Gatens comments that different terminology can affect how we understand the structures of man and woman. She cites that there is increasingly problematic relation between sex (man, woman) and gender (masculine and feminine). She says:

...connections between being a female and exhibiting feminine qualities or being a male and being masculine, have been characterised as anything from necessary, natural connections to social arbitrary connections, or as some mixture between these two connections.

(Gatens 1996:29)

The use of terminology such as masculine and feminine tend to bring up notions of stereotypes. The problems of using feminine are also cited by Classens et al 'when we examine the myth of the perfumed sex more closely...we find that it breaks down into stereotypical olfactory and feminine categories'. (Classen et al 1994) These categories include prostitutes, who score badly on the feminine scale, or on the other hand maidens who are fragrant and therefore feminine. The list from Classen et al cites numerous classifications which center around the phallus being the deodorised neutral by which all else is marked.
Returning again to Gatens's paper 'Woman and her double's', she seems resigned to the fact that 'we are historically and culturally situated in a society that is divided and organised in terms of sex' (Gatens 1996:11). But to put this comment into context what she is saying here is that 'sex' is a ubiquitous term and it should not be defined as fixed or biologically determined. Gatens explains further down the paragraph that in fact she is referring to 'the situated body' or the 'lived' body. (Gatens 1996:11) This identifies the crucial point of this investigation that the body is 'lived' and is always an experiencing subject whose feminine or/and masculine specificities are produced by desires, implicit with cultural/sociological and historical systems.18 With this in mind the olfactory body in Western society is experienced and lived within the social and cultural boundaries that are organised around the phallus within the patriarchal system.

The statement by Classen et al that fragrance had one concept 'of enhancing women's desirability for men' was published in 1940. The text itself is out of date however I chose this text to highlight the ongoing problems that arise from using the terms of feminine and masculine. These terms are still frequently in use, especially by retailers of consumer goods. In the nineties perfume products have become more sophisticated, Classen et al cites these changes to include less language and more images to promote essential qualities of perfume. More ambiguity is generated firstly between the division of feminine and masculine and secondly to whom the advertising is directed. The other significant point is the suggestion of a perfume for 'self fulfillment' in which a woman caresses a perfume bottle meaning

18 refer to Imaginary Bodies p30 for a more comprehensive understanding of how masculine and feminine can appear in one body at different times and in differing amounts, also their social ramifications of this.
April 4th...

DNA

PERFUME

by Bijan

DNA...

it's the reason you have your father's eyes, your mother's smile, and...Bijan's perfume.
the fantasy is between the women and the scent. There is also a contemporary range of scent for men. One being in a bottle shaped like a DNA gene (Fig. 13), another is called 'skinscent' which neatly avoids the word perfume and men. (Classen 1994) A recent television advertisement for Calvin Klein perfume of a heterosexual couple in a sensual setting gave no clues as to who was wearing the perfume (Fig. 14). The message now is about experiencing desires and passions with no orientation to male or female. The range of fragrances available is now directed at a multiplicity of body types.\(^1\)\(^9\) No longer is feminine and masculine the only issue although I would suggest it is still there only in more covert modes. By this I mean the signs are coded so deeply in our social order that there is only a very subtle indication of whom the product is really directed at. Terms such as feminine and masculine express a very limited way of understanding the multi-dimensional bodies that we live in. The olfactory is one of many areas where gender stereotypes are being re-assessed on the basis that these terms are not adequate to categorise bodies.

If we return to the concept of the olfactory as a vaporous marauder crossing cultural boundaries, and stimulating embodied experiences. In contemporary art practice many artists have been exploring ways to re-assess the conceptual boundaries of the body. The perception and experience of a variety of spacial and object related installations which activate the viewer as a somatic and sensory experience can offer a variety of visual and non-visual experiences. Sensory experiences such as stimulating the olfactory gives an immediate bodily response to a work, adding another layer to the dimension of the installation. The temptation to create sculptural installations that stimulate the olfactory

\(^{19}\) Ibid p56
is evident in the work of Denise Kum. She uses smell in conjunction with heat and movement producing installations that lie somewhere between a scientific experiment turned nightmare and the aesthetics of nature's own 'potlatch'. She uses both food and chemicals in her concoctions that grow inside glass cases. Giovanni Intra describes her work as:

A sensory encyclopedia, the tactile and olfactory delicacies she offers are considerable. Lotus leaves, for instance, simmer under hot lamps: dried salted octopuses cast out wretched odors, and gallons of soy sauce are left to develop lacy islands of turquoise mould. (Intra 1995:42)

Kum's work stimulates a bodily experience; a multi-layered sensory response. Although the objects that hold the goo are placed in an ordered and symmetrical fashion, the smells themselves are not contained, the odors leak out polluting the surrounding environment creating a vaporous pocket in which the installation exists. In Sauce Box 1994 (Fig. 15) exhibited in 'Localities of Desire' in the Sydney Museum of Contemporary Art, the contents of a recipe for Peking duck is on display. Food is separated into glass containers and laid out on two hospital trolleys like specimens contained for a later experiment or museum pieces on display stored safely glass containers. The viewing of this sculpture is not so out of the ordinary, as the critique of the museum is a project of much contemporary thought however what makes this work stand out is the uncontainable; the inescapable odor of soy sauce, duck marinade and salted preserved duck. The vapour twitches at the nostrils, the perception of such smells is usually (depending on the viewers cultural background) at a Chinese restaurant or for some at home. Memories of a Peking duck dinner mingle with the science display of glass containers.
The aromas drifting off Kum's installation can be read as vaporous marauders lingering and polluting the environment. But the glass cases full of substances have an aesthetic value relating to the presence of objects; a quasi-beauty of nature, much as we find beauty in crystals and other natural formations. On the other hand the dried duck sits suspended from a hook similar to those found in the front windows of Chinese restaurants. The glass containers may be read as invisible cubes of a minimalist art practice, but they are not! They are indeed as implicated as the substances they hold. The glass cases belie the vaporous substances that surround them, however as transparent containers they still hold the material that science and technology calls the 'wonder of life'. Kum creates her own perfumes for gallery spaces out of food stuffs and petrochemicals reminding us of how 'neutral' public spaces have been deodorised as much as the body itself has undergone the deodorising process.

Conclusion

The perception of vaporous boundaries in contemporary life gives quite a different and unique perspective of sensing the self. An oblique view that sidetracks vision to investigate the unseen sensory experiences of self through the olfactory. In a society based on capitalist consumerism the concept of deodorising and perfuming the body operates on the imaginary body. The lack of language works like a loophole which advertisers use to create an 'aura' for the perfume products that goes beyond words. The bodily response to perfumes easily transforms the self to the ideal fantasy world created for the perfume. Advertisers also work on the psychological response of 'nameless fears' associated with body odor and the social ramifications of such problems.
The response to any odors, works in a very personal way which affects our sensibilities of experience. The aesthetic experience of an object is connected with the way we experience the perfumed body, only the boundaries of the perfumed body (as object) are less defined than looking at the purely visual aspect of an object. With the breaking down of cultural and social barriers in post modernity meant that consumerism and the aesthetic in art is no longer in separate spheres. The aesthetic value of a product enters into the consumer world to enhance advertisers ideal concept about their product. In the 1950s perfume was directed at 'enhancing women's desirability for men', therefore perfume and deodorising products were directly involved in the construction of women's psychological 'body image'. In this sense we enter in the symbolic dialectic where the phallus mediates the centre, while women's femininity is the inverted other. Therefore terms such as feminine and masculine need to be re-contextualised outside psychoanalytic theory of the phallus.

In the areas of contemporary art, artists are working in a variety of ways to re-invent the 'body image' through experiences of self. The sculptural installations of Denise Kum investigate the possibilities of producing aromas outside the idealistic consumer paradise. She recreates her aromatic science projects in the deodorised public spaces of galleries, infiltrating not only the visual space with her pseudo-scientific food experiments but also the unseen vaporous spaces. The displaced smells of these socio-cultural food sculptures waft around unchecked, breaking the boundaries of the deodorised world and for the individual giving a embodied experience of self different to the central focus of vision.
The breaking down or crossing of boundaries is common practice in the post modern world we live in. The phenomena of the perfumed body can be viewed as a construction of a consumer fantasy. The less defined by language the olfactory becomes the more advertisers move to fill the gap with fantasy. In contemporary art there is also a rise of less orthodox materials some of which produce aromas that transport the viewer outside the framework of the gallery space. These cross cultural experiences and consumer fantasies through smell underline the shift of consciousness that we now live in a world where the repression of smell has deodorised and re-contextualised our existence far beyond any concern for health and hygiene but as a continual re-invention of self.
Conclusion

Sensing the Self: pathways of perception between visible incisions and vaporous boundaries

Sensing the self through pathways of perception is an investigation connecting two separate ideas about the body, each dependant on the other. In my investigation both ways of thinking about the body are equally as important and support each other, one taking the psychological line of thought while the other looks at the physiological or biological interpretation. Sensing the self explores the notions of the body that goes beyond the dualistic principals of the mind/body split in Western philosophy to investigate the dynamics of the lived and experiencing body through the ideas of the psychological body image and how it relates to the sense of smell (olfactory). This concept fuses the inter-relatedness of all the parts as a unified, sexually specific, socio-cultural body.

The argument on which this paper is based on is how can the olfactory experience be shown as corporeal; as part of the embodied and lived experience of self in a construct of western culture. More over how can it contribute to the construction of subjectivity in it's invisible and ephemeral state. I have put forward the concept of understanding the self by investigating the psychological body image from the perception of the olfactory experience. These two concepts are at first glance an oxymoron; body image and the smelling of invisible substances as a way of understanding the embodied self. However this paper has identified the body image as more than just a projection of disparate body images,
the body image that has been conceptualised here is one concentrated on an olfactory sensory experience that is not to be understood as an alternative to vision but is part of the overall variety disparate sensory experiences perceived by the body.

Throughout this paper I have put forward 'the senses' as a system of hierarchy where the olfactory for the most part takes second place to vision. This hierarchy is prevalent as a construction of western cultural values that has depended on the system of knowledge that uses 'rational' thought; the logic of 'reason'. In the first chapter I have discussed aspects of the psychological body image as a way of knowing the self through the anatomical or medical body. Then looking at the works of firstly a 17th century painting and then two contemporary artists to explore the construction of the body image in conjunction with the paradox of horror and fascination one feels when looking at an anatomical dissection of a body. In the first instance Rembrandt avoids the horror aspect with the displacement to a theme the devine, keeping in tact the mind/body split. In the second instance the two contemporary artists concentrate on the notion of subjectivity by confronting the horror of the 'visceral' that is an emotional and embodied experience. Further to this their experience adds another layer to the critique in the confrontation of the sexualised anatomical body.

The first chapter explores the understanding of self through the sense of vision by literally cutting and opening the body for inspection. The contradictory constructions of identity in the artworks by artists of different centuries shows the former portraits of the 18th century as
being the centre, of a singular visual subject that relies on the mind/body split as the conceptual premise for the paradigm of knowledge. While in the latter two artists the understanding of self is an emotional as well as intellectual response to the anatomical dissection which involves the pluralism of identity and body image, that also responds to the sexually specific construction of the subject. This chapter is dedicated to the optical organ for sensing the self through a visual paradigm while the next chapter shifts from a visual to a non-visual or vaporous concept.

The concept of a vaporous framework pursues an understanding of the body from an oblique perspective. Ethereal, amorphous and temporal are the concerns that construct the vaporous boundary of the body. This concept investigates the blurred edges of corporeality, where the somatic interior and the outside edges of the body are less defined. The olfactory extends and confuses the boundaries of the anatomical body, however to explore the psychic interior creates a multitude of body images more able to reflect the construction of an olfactory body. In 18th century France an anomaly appears in history where for a short while the olfactory takes precedence over the visual. An olfactory barrier is constructed to protect the fragile 'tomb' of the body. This is a personal and sacred space that acts as a prophylactic to keep the body from harmful disease. However this vaporous olfactory boundary had little to do with hygiene and more to do with aristocratic habitude and morality. Howes even suggests that this anomaly appears at that particular time because of the shifting paradigms between Medieval period and the Enlightenment; a 'crossing of boundaries' from the power and wisdom of the church to a radically different, scientific way of understanding the world. To think in terms of vaporous relies on a
certain amount of unity within the disparate sensations of self, this is a wholeness that comes together from all the parts of the psychic instead of the binaries of mind and body.

In the coming together of the disparate parts of the psychic Grosz cites Freud who proposes that the mind/body spilt functions together in 'perception'. It is in the perception of smell and it's strong association memory that the olfactory plays an active part in the construction of the body image. In the final chapter the olfactory boundary is investigated as an invention of hyper-deodorised space. The repression of smell in western culture has infiltrated the mechanisms of the consumer world where advertisers are vying for the vaporous space of the imaginary body. The identity of the perfumed body in the middle of the 20th century pushed the sexuality of the 'feminine', where as in the post modern world there is a push towards a multitude of sexual orientations that are less defined by feminine and masculine. The aesthetic of an olfactory experience is immediate, if it is perfume it can be a pleasurable experience which relates the memories associated with that perfume. This is enforced by advertisers that act on the non-linguistic 'aura' of a perfume in order to sell an ideal fantasy of the concept of the perfume.

In contrast to the consumers understanding of the deodorised body there is a rise in the use of sensory experiences in contemporary art practice. In the work of Denise Kum there is an emphasis placed on the smell of the sculptural installation, which exceeds the boundaries placed on the visual aspects of the work. The perception of smells in her work transport the self out of the gallery space, diffusing and bewildering the viewer from the visual aspect of glass containers full of food specimens.
to the smells that intermingle with and overlay the presence of a sensual feast of Peking duck in a Chinese banquet.

This dissertation brings together some key issues in contemporary thought, that focus on 'perception' and 'ways of knowing'. I have highlighted the visual paradigm and then introduced a non-visual way of sensing the self via the olfactory. The edges of the body are replaced with the conceptual vaporous boundary to give a unique understanding of sexuality, desire and knowledge through the olfactory, this being one of the disparate parts that incorporates the embodiment of sensing the self.
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