ZAKKAART: THE NEXUS & REMIXING OF ART, DESIGN AND CONSUMERISM

Minaxi May

This dissertation is presented for the degree of

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I declare that this dissertation is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work, which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

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Minaxi May
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Abstract

This thesis/exegesis and practical project component focuses on the impact and development of key aspects of cultural production that changed the making, viewing and textual reading of art. It explores the context and the legacy of two significant artistic innovations. Firstly, Marcel Duchamp’s introduction of the “readymades” as objects taken from the “everyday” environment and redefined as “art”. Secondly, Pop art is investigated in relation to the movement’s embrace of commodity and consumerism. Combined, these related movements not only dismantled notions of what art might be but also served as precursors to the complex and overarching concepts of “Postmodernism” and “Post-Postmodernism”.

Recent developments in art, popular media, technology, design and critical theory are analysed to demonstrate the continued relevance and legacy of the readymades and Pop art. Drawing from the work of Nicholas Bourriaud, in particular, this exegesis foregrounds the cultural influence of design and how it continues to shape contemporary art and its impact upon my own visual arts practice.

The use of objects from the everyday are, by their very nature, manufactured and designed, thus embedded within commodity culture. Artists like myself who utilise these products are fusing elements popularised by the readymades and Pop art to re-create the materials into aesthetic and thematic objects and installations. These generative artworks implicitly interpret the fabricated world in which we live.

The project component consists of two solo exhibitions, *Kaleidoscope* (2009) and *Zakka♥* (2012), and the duo showing (with artist Dawn Gamblen) of *Plasticity* (2010) which then developed into *Synthetic* (2011). Each exhibition explored ideas related to Pop art and the readymade by manipulating everyday items such as paper and plastic objects. The works have a “zakka” (Japanese for “many things”) aesthetic which emphasises the everyday through the use of products to create wall works, site-specific and sculptural installations. These pieces demonstrate zakka — the beauty and significance of the manufactured — together with the relational dynamics of collaboration and the context of architectural space. Each exhibition utilised product multiples, echoing the manufactured and utilitarian nature of consumer goods as media for art-making. Collectively, the works of the artists I investigate in this thesis, alongside my own production component, can be considered “ZakkaART” — art that remixes industrial culture and its influences.
# Table of Contents

## INTRODUCTION

## CHAPTER ONE, ART, DESIGN AND CONSUMERISM — A LASTING CONNECTION

- **Modernism** ........................................... 31
- **Interlinking of Art, Design and Consumerism in Pop Art** ........... 35
- **Changing Society and Art Through Creativity, Design and Manufacturing** ........... 37
- **Pop Art** ........................................... 40
- **An Ironic Mimicry of Design and Consumerism by Post Pop Artists** ........... 52
- **Conceptual and Minimal Artists** ........................................... 58
- **The Neo-Pop Creative Union of Art, Design and Consumerism** ........... 61
- **Design** ........................................... 67
- **Neo–Pop and Consumerism** ........................................... 70
- **Post Neo-Pop and the Blurring of Art, Design and Consumerism** ........... 72
- **Urban Art and Art that Engages and Connects Community** ........... 88
- **Contemporary Art** ........................................... 90
- **Post–Postmodernism** ........................................... 92
- **Altermodern (Globalisation)** ........................................... 101
- **Semionaut (Remixing/Connecting)** ........................................... 103
- **Postproduction (Montage/Detourage – Remix)** ........................................... 103
- **Mis-Design** ........................................... 104
- **Designart** ........................................... 106
- **Micropop** ........................................... 107
- **Minimalism / Maximalism** ........................................... 108

## CHAPTER TWO, THE EXHIBITIONS — **KALEIDOSCOPE, PLASTICITY, SYNTHETIC** AND **ZAKKA♥**, CONTEMPORARY ART THAT DIALOGUES WITH DESIGN AND CONSUMERISM

- **Zakkaart Production Components** ........................................... 110
- **Kaleidoscope (2009)** ........................................... 113
- **Plasticity (2010) and Synthetic (2011)** ........................................... 133
- **Zakka♥ (2012)** ........................................... 163
- **Contemporary Art that Dialogues with Design and Consumerism** ........... 187

## CONCLUSION

## APPENDICES

## IMAGE LIST

## REFERENCES
INTRODUCTION

In *Craft and Contemporary Theory*, author Sue Rowley discusses the differences between art, craft and design, which assist in clarifying the discourse around these aspects and the relationship to consumerism — the era of consumerism. She states that craft did not die in Australia but simply existed in culture, for a time replaced by industrialisation (the designed). Craft was seen as being inferior or different to art — the maker’s relationship to materials, composition, purpose and the viewers’ reception as haptic, optic or cognitive. For a time hand-making could be seen as being replaced by techniques such as installation which is often composed of collected elements which Rowley labelled “de-skilling” due to the shorter time commitment and flexibility in presentation.

Whilst Robert Bell writes about Australian contemporary craft and design locating it in a material culture which takes from the ‘planned as much as from the spontaneous, the banal as much as the enlightened, the local and the global’. This material culture of objects changes according to time, technology and artistic accomplishments. Thus, Australian art, craft and design are located within a synthesis of overseas and local influences. Art, craft and design objects show the technical manipulation of materials as well as variations in worth and importance dependent on social and environmental changes. Rowley and Bell’s opinions give a context to the production component of this exegesis — Rowley to making, Bell to the relevance of the designed. Both emphasise the shifting placement and responses to art, craft and design in relation to changing times.

If art is a reflection of the times, then much of twentieth and twenty-first century art is intertwined in a relationship with the continually developing industrial world (technology) and popular culture. The questions asked in this exegesis are: if we are all producers and consumers, then as artists what are we consuming and producing? What is art when made from the manufactured and where does art sit in the scheme of cultural creativity? Ultimately, I am finding the location where my design influenced art practice, a celebratory exploration and remixing of consumer desire, childhood and play, sits within constant fleeting, hybridised cultural

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1. From 1950s onwards Australia, as in other western countries went from a producer economy to a consumer economy. The
2. Ibid., 4-5.
4. Ibid.
moments. I anticipate that this finding will give me continued self-assurance in making art, develop my relationship to the designed and help me develop a sounder understanding of the relevance and original contribution of my art practice within arts and culture.

Throughout this exegesis I mainly focus on a Eurocentric viewpoint as this is the dominant culture within which in Australia I have been raised. However, intermixed with this are other multi-cultural influences such as that of Japan that cross-fertilise and become embedded into the popular. Although my ancestry is East Indian, my life has been European. The diaspora of my ancestors includes, India, Myanmar (Burma), Africa, England, Europe, Australia and USA. I am a migrant to Australia (from England), but I do not intentionally make art about this. I see myself as a hybrid, at the very least like an Ango-Indian / Eurasian. I identify as an Australian with an intermix of influences, living in a hybridised post-colonial society. Even though my extraction is different to European, it is incorrect to assume that I am drawn to make art about traditional culture, country or being the “other”. That is an archaic viewpoint supported by the fact that I have never experienced my ancestors “homeland”. Despite my genes, I am an amalgamation of many influences, so my art reflects that. Although I do acknowledge that my sense of colour and decoration could be viewed as being a traditional aesthetic trait, it could just as easily be an impact of my relationship to my Australian environment, popular media influences and my understandings of design and art.

Artists and authors such as Terry Blake and John Young contextualise Australian art by questioning the notions of: What is Australian art — Is it Aboriginal art? Is it European influenced? Or is it something else? As can be deciphered by the following examples contemporary Australian art is varied and complex, reflecting on cultural heterogeneity but also on, diversity, cultural identity and ethnicity, often with a relationship to the popular and to objects. Artist Hossein Valamanesh intersects the discourses ‘of place, identity and otherness in postcolonial Australia… [exploring] a sense of place as both an insider and an outsider’. Influenced by his experiences of Aboriginal Australia and his Iranian culture he creates a universal language and a ‘visual poetry [through the use of] ordinary

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7 This relationship to desire and the manufactured also includes refuse or waste from consumption and over-consumption.
8 I have had a keen affinity for Japanese culture ever since I discovered the animated characters Kimba and Astroboy as a child – this connection is based on their aesthetics/design, the decorative (patterns), Wabi-Sabi, Buddhist/Shinto principles, harmony with nature and animals, anime/Manga, liking for objects including Zakka and their sense of kitsch, cute (Kawaii), reusing (Mottainai) whimsy, beauty, to name a few.
objects and natural materials’. Artist Ah Xian is known for his *China China* series (1998–2004) which interlinks his past and present cultures through the creation of porcelain sculptures that marry aspects of Orientalism and traditional craft. Multidisciplinary artist Olga Cironis intentionally uses her Czech and Greek background to create installations and sculptures using the collected. She engages with memory and history to navigate and dissect dialogues around belonging in Australia. These artists purposefully illustrate a connection to their ancestral identity or Homeland as a significant foundation in their art practices.

Many contemporary artists who identify as Aboriginal also reflect on cultural identity through their use of popular culture. Richard Bell uses appropriated image/text paintings from media and art history to comment on politics and identity. Brenda Croft creates photographic portraits and new media to investigate Indigenous issues and colonisation. Reko Rennie has an interdisciplinary practice that combines ancestral symbols with the language of graffiti. These artists have practices that connect them to heritage, their own diaspora and sense of being “Australian” as well as to popular culture. These migrant and Aboriginal examples acknowledge the impact of popular culture on Australia and demonstrate the local and national context within which Australian artists, including myself work.

Although my art is not purposefully ethnicised as evidenced in some of the previous artist examples, my art is a reflection of who I am. I should not be asked where am I from but what are my influences. These influences like the globalised world I live in, are manifold and include not only my past experiences and memories but also a myriad of prompts from media saturated environments within which I exist — what I read, see, experience, feel — these are dynamic and ever-changing. Having a aspects of attention deficit, I do not have a propensity towards passion, for one material or one theme that will engage me for life. Even though I do have a penchant for certain things such as beads, coloured papers, toys, waste and other objects, the crux of my art practice could be described as being experimental — responding to influences and my perceptions of the changes around me. As a

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contemporary artist, it is somewhat accepted that I may diversify in mediums and alter conceptual foci. It is a unique vocation that allows a certain sense of freedom – that is why I am an artist. Yet, this freedom can also be perplexing as what is art, is in a constant state of flux. However, there is a core style — colour, design, beauty and pattern, (repetition, the decorative, multiplication) that are emphasised in in my art. Materiality and craft, with a relationship to objects lie at the core with conceptuality being accentuated or understated dependent on the intention within the work.

My location, Perth, Western Australia, impacts on what I experience, collect and am influenced by, but the degree of this sense of place is in a constant flux, changing with technological, global and media influences — popular culture in Australia. Perth is regarded as one of the most isolated cities in the world, which is experienced as the lack of close proximity and quick accessibility to other cities and countries. This, combined with the vastness of space, hot climate and stark brightness, which Perth is known for, although providing inspiration for many artists, is in contrast to my preference for a cool, green, more accessible and urban cosmopolitan environment like New York City, Tokyo, Melbourne or places in Europe. This is perhaps why I am drawn to make art using universal or cultural everyday materials that are not unique to Perth but help me connect to the world, giving me a greater sense of place than my locality.

I relate to popular culture that is constantly changing through mass media and technology — local Indigenous/post-colonial and international effects persuade my immediate culture. This exegesis is an autoethnographical study. I am contributing knowledge through my personal interpretation of influences embedded in my creative arts practice. The praxis relationships in this exegesis can be seen as two-way relationships between the historical and cultural research — culturally, geographically, ethically as well as practically in its outcomes (the art). The impact of this research is to contribute knowledge relating to the ways that contemporary artists are continually engaging with the material world through reworking and remixing our relationships to the designed. Many writers emphasise the importance of personal research — George Marcus (1986) and Morwenna Griffiths (2012).
write about the idea of multiple languages. Nikos Papastergiadis (2003) and Ian Mclean (2004), relate to postcolonial discourse. Marcus argues that the personal experience is often seen as ‘self-indulgent, trivial, or heretical [but when used formally] counts as professional capital and as an authoritative representation… [it is] personal fieldwork’ and a recognisable component of ethnographical studies.\\(^{19}\)

Griffiths further clarifies that personal research is important in the arts as it gives the viewer/reader an understanding of the sociology of practising and knowing as an artist. She determines three important factors: how materials are technically used; how that is achieved (materially); and the embedded relationship to the social.\\(^{20}\) These aspects give insights into how ‘practice becomes knowing’ and relates to our relationships to material culture, showing the relevance of ethnographical studies.\\(^{21}\) This exegesis, although personal and relating to Griffiths’ three principles, also contributes to the greater knowledge of art through practice (fieldwork) and critical engagement (research), emphasising the impact of creativity on society.

Papastergiadis emphasises the importance of creativity as a way of Australia rethinking and re-negotiating what is culture and diversity.\\(^{22}\) In agreement with Papastergiadis, I believe that artists should have platforms that are inclusive of the global, but also reflect our hybridised cultural identity — a heterogeneous and multicultural Australia.\\(^{23}\) Mclean suggests an example of this hybridisation. He looks at the complexity of our Australian culture through the lens of Gordon Bennett’s art practice. Bennett visualised his struggles with his personal and Australian identity resulting from his European and Aboriginal heritage. As stated earlier, I do not intentionally look at my heritage but like some of the artists mentioned, my experience of culture is complex and thus my art is embedded within a multitude of influences locally, globally and in the popular domain. Art implicates the artist’s hand and thoughts — and is embedded with the personal, reflexivity and subjectivity. Whether the artist emphasises or focuses on these aspects or not, they are there, placing it within the realm of ethnographic studies.

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\\(^{20}\) These three factors are important in evaluating my production component, although I will also include an emphasis on conceptual engagement.
\\(^{22}\) Nikos Papastergiadis, *Complex Entanglements: Art, Globalisation and Cultural Difference* (London: Rivers Oram, 2005), x
\\(^{23}\) Ibid., 198
With regard to the creative work in this dissertation the starting point is on that part of a practice that could be described as “function follows form” namely where the materiality and experimentation with techniques, materials and objects is of prime importance. But this is not absolute. Often in my art practice I start with ideas and the conceptual themes so that “form follows function”, especially when in a group exhibition, curated in, to create something thematically specific. I tend to oscillate between the two, materiality (process) and conceptuality (ideas), together with specific techniques (making), but with a strong sense of play, process and experimentation (which allow for failure and chance). Spontaneity enables serendipity, chance, risk, experimentation and ephemerality. Depending on the intended outcome of my artwork, one way of working will be more emphasised than the other.

The contemporary methodological and praxis approaches in relation to the creative arts have significance and impact on this research. Examples include: embodied/tacit knowledge, subjectivity, risk and reflexivity rather than assumption. As stated by Polanyi, tacit knowledge is difficult to explain in words, as it is knowledge we have but is seen through action.24 In relation to art:

Rules of art can be useful, but they do not determine the practice of an art; they are maxims which can serve as a guide to the art only if they can be integrated into the practical knowledge of the art. They cannot replace this knowledge.25

An example of this is that through my studies of art and design I have been taught the principles of colour, but the imbued sense of and fondness for colour I have is accumulative and ingrained as a natural part of who I am — this knowledge is not explicit and yet is assimilated within my art practice. This knowledge is embodied or personal, it is as valuable as learnt skills and contributes to the art outcomes produced.26 My aesthetic sense is ingrained, is cultivated through experience and affects my worldview.

As argued by O’Connor (2009):

… artists embody their art practice due to repetition of movement, familiarity with tools and increased confidence in the nature of their practice. Artists not only

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26 London School of Economics & Political Science, “Tacit Knowledge”, 5.
embody their practice in a physical sense but also in terms of the insider language and culture developed and used amongst practitioners.27

Thus this research has an amount of reflexivity, as although there are histories and theories around art, by its nature the making of fine art embodies the maker’s passed on learnings, personal tastes, opinions and feelings — it is in many ways subjective.

With the move of culture towards a focus on the created environment, art has focused on the popular and everyday — the designed and mediated as culture. It is common for artists to use and explore the designed in the production of artworks. The overlaps between the manufactured, popular culture, design and art have also morphed into the mass-production of artistic identity. In the digital design-focused world anyone can make a claim to be an artist: reworking, reusing, remaking the endless consumed objects and purging them out in slightly altered forms. Stinati and Wagg affirm this position, whereby art and the popular overlap:

Culturally, it is increasingly difficult to distinguish satisfactorily between serious and trivial culture, between high and low culture, between popular and mass culture, between authentic and inauthentic culture, or between popular culture and art.28

In effect, the pre-modernist separations of art and design coexist in contemporary culture. This separation is still prevalent as ‘Art is not Design’ — art is predominantly about personal ideas and interest whilst design is often for a client, an exercise in branded communication.29 This culture is that of the popular and the everyday — ‘modern, urban culture’.30 Yet this brings confusion or uncertainty as to what are art and artists, questions further investigated in this exegesis. In modern industrial society, “everything”, including art, uses and explores the designed (mass-produced), and the popular. These simulacrum are of the already produced. These are mediated messages and images or what Debord labeled as “spectacle”. ‘Society of the spectacle’ is what much of art has become, whereby all is based on capitalism and art becomes a commentary and relationship with the created world or art about art.

The context of this exegesis is predominantly that of the visual arts, examining the work of practicing artists, although the designed (from the manufactured) is also discussed in relation to specific designers. Since the main foci of this exegesis are on the created — art and design — for clarity I define that all ‘artificial things are designed’.31 The designer’s role is to solve problems and to organise and effectively communicate the solution (the design piece) to the client, audience and/or buyer.32 When relating to the manufactured, the everyday or the popular, these are those aspects that are designed and constructed and are specifically related to industrial societies.33 The design fields, therefore, are those creative professions that focus on practical, functional and or commercial products, whereby the prime intentions are to focus on briefs and sell to the buying public. Art also expresses personal ideas, emotions and attitudes as communication.

This exegesis, is both practice-based and practice-led. The creative component (exhibitions) are integral to the contribution of this exegesis as well as to the contextualisation of my original creative work within contemporary art. Although the starting point was the exhibition Kaleidoscope, previous to that the use of all digital media for the exhibition Tagged: Celebrity. Change. Commodity, prompted a detachment from materiality and led to the refocussing on the handmade — manipulation of materials as a preferred way of creating.

Even though this exegesis started out as response to my art practice, I was aware of a broad topic and conceptual basis as well as the exhibition outcomes before its commencement. Both the practice (production component) and dialogue (research) however, inform each other. This exegesis also has integral sections dedicated to practice-led research — where I, the artist, am understood as researcher of action, with a particular focus on how artists (other than myself) continue to practice in a relationship with the designed and with the use of the term “ZakkaART”.34

There are varied methods in approaching praxis: Gray & Pirie (1995) discuss a multi-method; Milech & Schilo a Context Model; Andrew McNamara — auto ethnographic and epistemic models; and Barbara Bolt & Estelle Barrett — exegesis

33 Design elements are different from design as a profession. These fundamentals are ‘tools’ used to make art and design by arranging to generate particular effects — line, shape, colour, value, form, texture and space. These tools are utilised for the creation of art/design via the principles of contrast, emphasis, balance, repetition/pattern, proportion/scale, rhythm/movement and/or harmony/unity. These elements and principles are used to create unified art or design pieces.
by Meme. As stated earlier, this exegesis has aspects of auto ethnography in that it is takes into account personal experience, but it is also practical due to the project component. Gray & Pirie describe a method of multiplicity whereby eclecticism is indicative of the ‘approach to information gathering, selection, structuring, analysis, evaluation, presentation and communication’.35 This has been a non-linear process of research, utilising ‘varied visual and multimedia methods’ from the technological, and visual to the written and verbal.36 The reflexive approach enabled me to move between the research and the praxis or practical components allowing an adaptive approach to the process and outcome. In Kaleidoscope for example, there was a process of experimentation with Sticky Note Rolls. This changed from being many spiralled layers of paper in varied colours moving on a record player (Figure 39), which moved inelegantly, to finally being reduced to two to three colours per roll, creating a repetition, pattern and gradation in the work as a whole. The use of toilet roll holders came about as a humorous idea, questioning the design and function of everyday common objects we become accustom to. The allowance for experimentation and remodelling helped to create a resolved outcome that worked on many levels of concept and aesthetics. The production component adds to and helps to decipher the written content of this exegesis and vice-versa. As described by Milech and Schilo (2009) I have utilised a Context Model whereby the written component (theory) gives a ‘historical, social and/or disciplinary context’ to the creative (practical) component.37

I position art in this exegesis as differentiated from the design-based creative occupations such as fashion, product and graphic design, although at times art does becomes more like design in its content, approach and outcome. Art is emphasised as visual communication, which for the most part is about self-expression.38 Art is often produced as a limited edition, or for a limited time, work that is conceptual or materially based, i.e. made by the artist’s hand or directive, with fine art media, collected objects, the manufactured or made with manufacturing processes.39 The main difference between the art discussed in this exegesis that interlinks with the manufactured and design, is that art is not necessarily utilitarian, for the sole purpose of making money, or replicated — but has a unique place within culture as

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36 Ibid. 10.
39 Art also encompasses video, digital and performative aspects but for the most part in this exegesis the focus is on tangible objects such as wall works, sculpture and installation.
a particular form of visual communication. Art is often displayed in “white walled cubes” — the gallery environment; although, increasingly, artworks are shown in alternative spaces such as shop windows, vacant buildings and outdoor environments.\textsuperscript{40} The traditional capitalist perspective was that ‘production and consumption, work and leisure and investment and spending’ are all equal.\textsuperscript{41} However, consumerism is the belief increasingly encouraged by capitalism, that engagement with the buying of objects and services are more important than anything else.\textsuperscript{42} \textsuperscript{43} Yet, consumerism is also an illusion of aesthetics, as Harris states, stirring up dissatisfaction... provoking restless longings that cannot be fulfilled... actively instilling anxiety and discontentment with our lot, reinforcing the conviction that others are living lives happier and more interesting than our own...\textsuperscript{44}

Consumerism is intrinsically related to design as is evident through its symbiotic relationship to advertising. Consequently design is consumption. Whilst art has similarities with design, is interwoven with and also has a relationship with consumerism, this is not at the level of spending that is associated with products. Increasingly, art is becoming more design-like. As an “industry”, art depends on profit, marketing and patronage. Artists need consumers to sell to and uses the methods of design such as branding as art. As an industry, art increasingly becomes like the design profession, a competitive, commercial and sometimes inauthentic activity that reconstitutes fashions. In this exegesis, the interrelationship between design and consumerism is considered from the perspectives of both the art industry and the artist. The visual creations discussed throughout exemplify artistic skill, arrangement, ideas and/or an emphasis on the design fundamentals. Artists are increasingly creating to curators, or towards the art industry decision makers, to what is fashionable (contemporary) or what they expect may gain them recognition. This, like design, is to follow an intended or expected outcome for a “client”. In this case though, the direction is to the arts industry decision makers such as curators, collectors, philanthropists and government grant givers.

I approach culture in this dissertation drawing from Karl Marx’s key interpretation of culture as those experiences, objects and practices that help us to make meaning.

\textsuperscript{40} Examples of art in alternative spaces include the works of artists: Yayoi Kusama and Takashi Murakami’s collaborations with fashion label Louis Vuitton, Florentijn Hofman, Friends With You and events such as ReMap 2, Frieze Projects and Venice Biennale Off-Site.
\textsuperscript{41} John F. Barber, “Digital Technology and Culture”, Leonardo, 41, no. 2 (Vancouver: Washington State University, 2008), 34.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid. 34.
\textsuperscript{43} This period refers to about 1945 onwards. “Late capitalism” is a term promoted by the Frankfurt school including theorist Theodor Adorno as well as new Marxist theories.
\textsuperscript{44} Daniel Harris, Cute, Quaint, Hungry And Romantic: The Aesthetics Of Consumerism (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2001), xix.
Culture helps us to interpret our ordinary everyday existence personally and on a global level. Culture gives our lives meaning by giving us ways to interact and share with the world. However, culture is not static but forever changing as meanings are based on context and circumstance that cannot necessarily be predicted as well as power relations. Thus my culture is that of my mediated pop cultured environments. Culture is not necessarily traditions. Culture is those experiences, objects and practices that help us to make meaning. Culture helps us to interpret our ordinary everyday existence personally and on a global level. Culture gives our lives meaning by giving us ways to interact and share with the world. Culture is not static; meanings change as context, circumstance and power relations do.

Since the Modernist period and after 1979 there has been a dichotomous and antagonistic positioning of “high art”, “high culture” versus “low culture”. This art was seen as requiring intellectual competence to understand which was only available to the educated. “Low culture” was associated with the popular, the general public, including the mass media or graffiti art which usually exists in public spaces. This differentiation between “high” and “low” art still exist but is no longer as prevalent in the twenty-first century. It is constantly amended with cultural change, such that graffiti art is fine art and painting can become street art. A key distinction that remains fraught and contested is the relationship between art, and the designed.

The paradigms of popular and material culture also constantly change, as they are dependent on discursive interpretations. Throughout this exegesis I focus on culture as the popular, defined as culture for the masses, symbiotically linked with mass media such as film, magazines, the Internet and social media, alongside material culture. Popular or “mass” material culture affects industrial societies by constantly infiltrating our lives with the created, not as an adjunct to folk, art and craft but usually as the dominant culture. Therefore, although material culture is related to all “things” we create, I specifically relate this materiality to that which is

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47 Storey, Inventing Popular Culture, x.
48 Ibid. x.
49 Ibid. 46.
51 Ibid. ix.
52 For example, handicrafts or folk art have become a form of popular culture.
54 Ibid. ix.
created within capitalist societies as the manufactured, “designed”. As materialism based Australian artist Sarah Goffman states in relation to her exhibition *I Am a 3D Printer*:

“[by focusing on] trash as artefact and trash as treasure... we can re-value the commodity and draw attention to an alternative consumerism which values the packaging as much as what it used to contain.”

That is, art that incorporates the designed (new or used), from consumer society, engages with the popular and everyday, reinterpreting our perceptions of objects, like Goffman, my work attempts to do also.

I am a child of “pop”. I have always had a connection to designed objects, and this has manifested my fondness for gift giving, art-making and my love-hate relationship with accumulating, collecting, waste and buying “things”. As a child, when purchasing something “new”, despite our low income, my family strived for the latest trends and most visually appealing functional items or we recycled “old” ones. We had immense joy in perusing fashion magazines, television, film and all things popular culture and artistic. From a young age, my culture was the popular and industrialised or quirky. It is not surprising that I would take an interest in objects — material culture and art-making.

Research and investigation into the relationships between art, design and consumerism, as well as popular culture, is not new. What I offer in this exegesis is my use of the already created in my production component. In effect, I connect design and consumerism to my influences and choices of themes, materials and styles in my art praxis overall. My questioning of art and industry has occurred especially over the last ten years, as I have increasingly used aspects of design in my art practice and experienced the changes in the art world to a commercial endeavour as a creative industry. These changes, have cultivated a questioning of the limitations and convergence of art, design, consumerism and creativity and how these coincide with creativity, originality and individuality as identified in Figure 1.

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In addition to my interest in the designed and popular, my questioning of my experiences and emotions related to consumer-driven environments and my relationships to art and design provoked this exegesis. Art has in some ways become industry and product, thus if art is interlinked with design then it is also reliant on “popular culture”.\(^{56}\)

As the crossover between design and consumerism, for the most part, has become embedded in visual arts practice, it has become more challenging as an artist to be unique. This hybridisation can result in a diluted distinction between art and the everyday, and art as a part of material popular culture. By using the imagery, objects and techniques of popular culture or by critiquing our manufactured environments, art becomes product and product becomes art, as revivals overlap and reproduce themselves, we're heading into a cultural spiral… At this rate, we’ll reach a point pretty soon where everything in history will be cool, all at the same time.\(^{57,58}\)

This quote initially made me consider my close relationships with both art and design. Also I questioned my conflicted relationship with “things” (both wanting

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\(^{56}\) Henceforth in this exegesis design and consumerism are positioned as inexplicably linked with popular culture.

\(^{57}\) Miucci Prada, “The Revival Spiral”, The Face, 68, September, 2002, 87

\(^{58}\) Although not a theoretical quote, I felt this quote was important as it comes from a magazine (mass media), one aspect of popular culture, which this exegesis is based upon and was an initial inspiration for this exegesis.
and not wanting) and how art has become closely aligned with the designed and popular (fashion). As I explore here, these connections have been evident since Pop art and continue into contemporary art. As this interrelationship increases it sometimes becomes difficult to differentiate art from the created mass of design, or to even know what “art” is. In my research journey it seems that, as the great modernist poet T. S. Eliot (1942) said, ‘the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time’ — a constant revival or “remix”. In this exploration, the question of what art is has continued to expand. Art is a cyclical process of trends, whereby contemporary art is developed and nurtured from what existed before — montage, appropriation, eclecticism, hybridisation, the popular. Thus art either becomes the designed through standardisation and replication as brand e.g. contemporary artist Takashi Murakami, or art has to stand out by being more innovative than ever before, e.g. artist Damien Hirst’s earlier works. For these reasons I examine the crossover between art, design and consumerism through a perspective of one such “new” and innovative trend — the ‘zakka design movement’.59

Zakka is an ambiguous Japanese term meaning “many things” from the first compound of Zakka “zatsu” — things that are difficult to classify or a plenitude of variety mixed together.61 Loosely defined, zakka is ‘everything and anything that improves your home, life and outlook’.62 Originally this term referred to household items like ‘kettles, brooms, buckets, and other utensils… but it now includes’ drinking glasses, knives, dishes, brushes, stools… foods and cosmetics… things that [add an] element of decoration [and] joy to our lives…” [usually found in] Zakkaya or miscellaneous goods stores (see Figure 2).63 Zakka refers to ‘bright, kitsch objects with a pop aesthetic’, [which could also be used as a descriptor for my art].64 More specifically, zakka is related to the handmade, which includes the natural — materials, animals and flowers, as well as buildings, houses, sewing, characters, e.g. ‘from children’s books’ and inspired by cultures including ‘French country, Scandinavian natural style, Eastern European folk art, American vintage,

63 21_21 Design Sight, “Zakka”.
and Asian ethnic’. Initially a Japanese fashion and design phenomenon, it is a relatively broad and new concept in the West, and zakka has spread into popular culture. Zakka is a culture of designed utilitarian objects made to appeal to the aesthetic senses. Thus zakka expresses the designed in a sense that ‘function follows form’, as is already addressed in the methodology, rather than ‘form follows function’. So, although the functionality e.g. of a kettle is essential, materiality, craft and aesthetics are important aspects as they give the objects an extended character and purpose which make them “zakka” — fun, unique, decorative. By aesthetically customising for particular customer tastes, designers and manufacturers appeal to niche markets, encouraging the love of objects and spending (consumerism). These zakka attributes and effects are evident in the artists’ works that I investigate in this exegesis, and in my art practice as alterations, use and depictions of the commercial/ designed.

In this exegesis the concept of “zakka” is not strictly limited to the questioning and use of specifically designed zakka objects that are cute, kitsch or inspired by the foreign or handcrafted, but extends to the generalised definition of zakka as ‘miscellaneous goods [or] things that cannot be categorised’ that highlight a sense of delight. The integration of aspects of zakka, such as the objects, colour, cute and Scandinavian influences into art practice is what I term “ZakkaART”. This idea of Zakka + Art can be seen in Figure 3 which visualises the relationship and interconnections that make “ZakkaART”. In response to 21_21 Design Sight’s exhibition Zakka – Goods and Things (2016) curator and industrial designer Naoto Fukasawa states that although zakka are objects that may be useless everyday items, people are drawn to them. Like antiques, ‘there is a strong desire to collect them… as they ‘exude a sense of how the people that use them live’. Translated then, ZakkaART is essentially art made from a diversity of everyday new and used

66 Coleman-Hale, Zakka Style, 6.
67 Such as a toaster differentiated by a “regular” functional toaster, by for example being visually designed with colours, patterns, icons that appeal to specific personal tastes e.g. the Hello Kitty characterised toaster (Japan). A Western example is Italian company Alessi’s visually experimental designs or Lotta Jansdotter’s patterned products. Jonathan Cagan and Craig M. Vogel, Creating Breakthrough Products: Innovation from Product Planning to Program Approval (Upper Saddle River, NJ: FT Press, 2002), 45.
70 Coleman-Hale, Zakka Style, 6.
designed ephemera — collected, collated and/or interpreted with a feeling of play, reflecting the artist’s adapted and perhaps ever-changing cultural influences. Art that, like zakka objects, aims to be captivating through a link with the designed and the changing mediated world.

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In Japan, Zakka is forever changing as influences from the East, West and popular are intermixed.
Henceforth ZakkaART refers to art about, of, or made from the designed, the commercial and the mediated — miscellaneous objects and influences used by artists as source material to enhance our lives with a sense of creative flair. The function of ZakkaART is to add to our understanding and experience of manufactured material culture as a medium for conceptual discussion, enjoyment and alternative perspectives, as is evident in the practice of the artists discussed in this exegesis. ZakkaART comprises reinterpretations of manufactured objects, ideas and materials that explore, copy or use the designed, which are then re-contributed as “new” objects to everyday culture as “art”. As a result, ZakkaART amalgamates the designed and accordingly the popular and consumerism with a zakka style and an experience of the manufactured and made. ZakkaART may include principles as outlined below in Figure 4 which combine ideas of art and design though a Zakka aesthetic.
1. Is a nexus of art, design and consumerism by its very nature thus is “pop”, our everyday culture (in industrialised/mass media/digital society).

2. Uses the designed (but not necessarily Zakka designs) – utilitarian, manufactured “products” (new and/or used).

3. Conceptualises the designed and/or our hybrid industrial culture without being over-the-top intellectualised, so can be understood by many.

4. Remixed “many things” so is naturally Post Postmodernist, hybridised/globalised. This mixology especially includes a connection to “zakka” e.g. the retro, Scandinavian and Japanese aesthetics.

5. Is most often “cute, kitsch, cool or kooky” with a sense of play.

6. Has a sense of humour (irony), playful process and the childlike which often makes the work entertaining, enchanting or intelligent.

7. Focuses on the design principles and elements especially i) colour mostly candy, pop, neon and bright “happy” pigments; ii) Replication, ornamentation, rhythm and harmony.

8. Apart from any additional investigations, themes are already embedded in the art as there is a connection to everyday culture. The manufactured have already been designed and created with a specific function and place in society — therefore is imbued with meaning.

9. Enhances our lives with the everyday as “eye-candy” or art that give a sense of the spectacular or wonderment.

10. May be minimal or maximal but aims to hybridise the two.

11. The “art” is mostly handmade with attention to craft and detail in the artistic construction as opposed to being factory made.

12. May be multi/interdisciplinary, video, performance or other forms of art but has aspects of the above.

Figure 4: ZakkaART Proposed Manifesto / Principles

In Chapter One, this exegesis explores how Pop art and other relevant art periods have infiltrated and influenced the culture of art as well as the methods and content of mass/online media and the designed. Also discussed is how “pop” is embedded in post Pop art contemporary culture.

What defines art is discussed via the writings of cultural philosopher Walter Benjamin. Theorist Marshall McLuhan confirms my understanding of culture as mass media (the mediated) and Nigel Whitely and William H. Young are considered regarding the rise and influence of capitalist society through consumerism and production from the 1950s and 1960s. Pop art is defined as significantly changing how art is made, discussed, and perceived by critics, especially Lucy Lippard, Suzi Gablik and Lawrence Alloway. I argue that although the readymades already existed through the art of artist Marcel Duchamp, Pop art significantly broadened the appeal of the culture of consumption thematically and materially — the designed as art. Throughout this exegesis I consider how the infiltration of the designed object into art, makes it a primary resource material for
art-making. I question whether the use of and concerns with the manufactured lead to an expansion in the definition of art. Did social and cultural shifts change the relationship to the object and mass communications in art-making? How did artists in each art period consider and contextualise their connections with the manufactured in their art? What is the experience of art that uses or connects to the designed? In answer to these questions this exegesis verifies that the environment including the social, cultural and mass communication changed and continually impacts on the way that art is understood, made and identified in relation to the designed (objects). As stated earlier in this Introduction, artists throughout history have had a relationship to the constructed, but it was predominantly during industrialisation that the manufactured became a key component in art. Resulting from environmentalism, even though there is an increasing return to considering nature in/as art, due to the ubiquitousness of the designed, objects have continued to impact on artists and art-making. Art’s relationship to the designed is in a perpetual state of flux, both being an embracing and acknowledgement of the manufactured and a critique on the impact of technological and industrial advancement everywhere and on “everything”. Artists increasingly use the designed as physical components in their art-making and as a commentary on art/design — the way we live and the world. This art design relationship thus becomes interrelated and sometimes ambiguous as to what is art, what is design and what is the space between.

Andy Warhol is predominantly positioned as the most famous and influential artist in the Pop art movement.74 Also included are Roy Lichtenstein and Claes Oldenburg, in relation to their use and influences from the popular and manufactured. The Pop artists revelled in design, consumerism and popular culture. By recycling products and images, ‘the visual codes of consumer culture’, they were acknowledging the impact of mechanisation and industrialisation on their daily lives as determined by influential systems of automation.75 These artists, like their culture are “machines” controlled by a dependence on consumerism. They led the path for the continuation and crossover of art, design and consumerism. I ask how did Pop art use the manufactured and themes from the commercial to change art?

How did this significantly impact on future definitions of art that drew from the manufactured such as Post Pop, Neo-Pop and post Neo-Pop?

Post Pop art (late 1960s–1980s), is investigated using the concepts of John Storey, William E. Leuchtenburg, Tim Delaney and Jean Baudrillard, to discuss the power of the mass media — which caused choice and homogeneity, and the popularisation of design through a Do It Yourself (DIY) aesthetic, communal work habits and the increasing impact of the computer. Post-structuralism including the writings of Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Jean-François Lyotard and Richard E. Caves, are referenced in relation to artists and artistic changes. Post Pop continued to use the manufactured as material and conceptual resources. The writings of Charles Jencks, and the dissolving of the confines of high and low art are investigated through Postmodernism’s attitude of “anything goes”. Consumerist influences in the modes of art are visible through appropriation. The continued and expanded interest in consumption as a thematic and material resource in art, further linking art with design is also continued Post Pop. The breaking down of art conventions and modes of art expression are visible in the works of four grouped examples of artists: conceptual, postmodern, graffiti/street and the Young British Artists (YBAs). The YBAs include Damien Hirst and Tracey Emin, who emphasised themes and materials related to Postmodernism, urbanity and daily life through the banal. The artists discussed placed the designed in gallery spaces and “art” in public spaces. They tackled concepts of the everyday with ideas that stretched the limits of art to the extremes of convention. They supported postmodernist principles, challenging everyday standardisation by using the standardised — appropriating the mass-produced from the city and suburban streets.

I explore how sociopolitical and economic changes, and an amplified disposability of money and products emphasised an increased focus on materiality and hedonism in the period of Neo-Pop (late 1980s–early 1990s). Of most impact were the rise of globalisation and the impact of the Information Age. Technology, especially the Internet as discussed by Manuel Castells, Janet Abbate and Daniel Bell, changed work and communication forever. Theorists such as Theodor Adorno and Richard Florida argue that creative industries developed, becoming powerful initiators of innovation whilst changing the context of art within the wider gamut of creative occupations. Artists such as Jeff Koons took to working like designers by using

Post Pop is not actually an art period but used as a descriptor.
industrial processes or by becoming directors rather than makers of art. This bridging of art and design is also examined from the designer’s perspective, where global leaders such as IDEO changed design by incorporating art techniques.

Neo-Pop featured over-the-top colour, gigantic scale, self-indulgence, mimicry and affluence. Changes in communication and globalisation led to the availability of more materials. Manufacturing became all-important in making art and access to marketing enabled the artist to achieve celebrity status, as emphasised by Koons, as well as Katharina Fritsch, Daniel Edwards and Haim Steinbach. In this period, art that related to design and consumerism significantly changed from the emphasis of Post Pop on the ordinary in the everyday, to that of sensationalism and exaggeration of the iconic. Art became “the designed” — the manufactured. By replicating the ordinary into the extraordinary through scale, detailed hand crafting, artistic directing or manufacturing methods with themes that focused on the celebrated such as objects, Neo-Pop artists challenged capitalist notions of power by embodying the very methods and materials that consumer society employed. They became artists as manufacturers, designers and marketers who exemplified a sense of dominion. I ask: as manufacturing became all-important how did this change the art and artists in this period in relation to ZakkaART — art and design? How did this change and influence art-making and the connection to design and consumerism post Neo-Pop? Due to the infiltration into, and reliance on mass media and the manufactured, the industrialised increasingly replaced the natural in art. Daily lives have become impacted on by the designed more and more than the biological and ephemeral (nature). Art reflects this.

Realism (1840s – 1880s), in the wake of the Industrial Revolution and the Enlightenment, transformed traditional expectations of art by including real everyday life, thus merging ‘art and life’. Early images such as Claude Monet’s Gare Saint-Lazare (1877) demonstrates the impact and romanticisation of industry. Art movements including The Arts & Crafts Movement, Russian Constructivism, Deutscher Werkbund, Futurism and overall, Modernism, exemplified the impact of

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modernisation. Art developments such as the Readymades, Pop Art, Trash/Recycled Art e.g. HA Schult and Environmental Art e.g. Andy Goldsworthy have imitated life by replicating, using, critiquing or reacting against the manufactured. Post Neo-Pop, ZakkaART is one way of demonstrating how art continues to be impacted on by the manufactured, symbolising industrialised society’s predominant relationship to the everyday — the limitless overwhelming mass produced, dominated by consumerism rather than a connection to reuse and nature.

Following on from Neo-Pop, the post–Neo-Pop development and contemporary art, from the mid-1990s to 2014 is studied. This is a period characterised by the changing role of art as discussed by Norris and Entman, and Frey and Figenshou — when technology and globalisation further impacted on society and innovation is popularised. Art and design are definitely linked as these fields merged due to cultural hybridity, boundary blurring through the Internet and the increase in interactivity due to social media platforms. Technology also impacted through new methods such as 3D printing. Innovation is discussed as all-important in competing in the homogenisation where artists and designers use methods from each other’s professions such as the duo Confettisystem. In this period aspects of mass media are reflected back at society as thought provoking statements in art, e.g. Banksy, and Design Anarchy.

Post–Neo-Pop is a time of contradictory and overwhelming influences and choices such as individual uniqueness, collective and public interactivity; commercialism versus sustainability and the environment; the Outsider (untrained) artist as opposed to the trained; interdisciplinary and traditional practice; and the increasing influence of non-western artists who carry on the traditions of using the everyday as championed by Pop art. A leading Pop-influenced artist from this period is Takashi Murakami who, with his theory of “Superflat”, East and Western cultural influences and integration of fine art and design, has managed to bridge a gap between multidisciplinary art and the manufactured. The artists discussed created art that used locally familiar items and concepts together with the popular to exemplify the widening supremacy of globalisation as a mass of influences. Also, through collectivity, they emphasised the growing need for “live” audience interactivity responding to social media’s online sway towards virtual communication. I ask: How have and how will artists continue to consolidate the designed and consumerism with art? This use of the everyday and its relevant
peripheries are further explored in the next chapter, which turns the focus to my own creative work.

In Chapter Two I critically examine my own body of art, from my production component, in relation to “ZakkaART”, pre–Pop, to post–Neo–Pop influences, and current cultural theories to better understand how my art praxis is placed and how it relates to ideas of “zakka” — art and design. Through these considerations, also learning about our relationship to things.

Four of my exhibitions are discussed: Kaleidoscope (2009), Plasticity (2010), a development from Plasticity — Synthetic (2011), and Zakka♥ (2012). Aspects of the commonplace, as utilised by selected artists post–Pop, including Meret Oppenheim, are analysed to discover the connections with the everyday, popular or mass media. The use of manufactured materials exemplifies a nostalgia for objects and the continual impact of the designed as material for art-making. Marius Kwint states that in Western history objects serve three purposes:

… they furnish recollections; they constitute our picture of the past. … Secondly, objects stimulate remembering. … Thirdly, objects form records; analogies to living memory, storing memory beyond individual experience.\(^8\)

As Kwint identifies, the use of objects (the designed) by artists as demonstrated in my project component have allowed a connection to life experiences. In Chapter Two, specific art pieces are critiqued, in the process Kwint’s three factors are validated. One example is the use of the battery operated toy dog “Toto” hidden in Confetti & Pom Poms, which exemplified my sentimentality for a toy I had as a child, and the dog in film The Wizard of Oz (1940). As supported by author Sue Rowley, semiotically, objects serve as representations and codes for specific meanings according to their name and how they are referenced.\(^9\) Rowley communicates the relationship between art, craft & design in relation to contextual discourse around popular consumerism in Australia.

The material environment, as stated earlier, in many ways engulfs daily life and as might be expected extends into art-making and conceptual ideas. As much as I like flora and fauna and enjoy the natural in art pieces such as the botanical sculptures of artist Azuma Makoyo and the use of the natural in Lauren Berkowitz’s art, so far, my art has mostly represented a relationship to the commercial — a ZakkaART


aesthetic of collecting, curating and interpreting a range of cultural influences through objects. However, the natural can be seen in my use of foods and food products that are played with, celebrated and critiqued within my art-making.

My art is a remix — an example of eclecticism and nostalgia. Mine is a hybridised cultural experience indicating connections to diaspora, localisation, globalisation and the popular I have an affinity with, and the designed — the functions and meanings they convey. Therefore I use these objects in my art practice. This use, like Duchamp and the Pop artists did, links me with the environment around me — the everyday and consumption, resulting in a constant interrelationship with already created things — the designed and manufactured.

The sensationalist, bold aesthetics of Neo-Pop art and the use of mechanisms of industry are realised in the production of some previous artworks that are included as examples. These are in addition to my production component for this exegesis. Although I state “I” in relation to the production component, it is important to note that both Plasticiity and Synthetic were duo exhibitions in collaboration with artist Dawn Gamblen.82

Finally, my artworks are considered in relation to current Pop influences, selected theorists, and where my practice may develop in the future. Art and design hybridity ensues in Post–Postmodernism as both professions are commercialised, creative and encourage innovation. Art is pluralistic in what it constitutes both aesthetically and conceptually — “anything goes”, continues but within the amplified constraints of capitalism and post industrialisation. Bourriaud’s theories are discussed as they relate to the changing impact of technology, globalisation, art and design. Also included are theorists who specifically configure and make sense of art and design’s interrelationship, including Grace McQuilten, Alex Coles and Midori Matsui. I analyse the influences of the previously discussed art movements in addition to these theorists’ ideas in relation to my praxis, to understand where I stand as an artist of the twenty-first century. I also consider how, if the material environment is my influence, what directions my art can take materially, technically and conceptually, as I explore the continued and expanded love-hate relationship with and interest in consumption as a thematic and material resource in art. Socialigist Sharon Zukin clearly summarises my relationship with consumerism:

82 Dawn Gamblen is a sculptor, installation and public artist, based in Perth. We met whilst in our awarded Old Customs House studios, Fremantle, where for five years (1999–2004) we were neighbours. We had previously collaborated on 3x3 Urban Art Project Temporary Installation project (2004) for the City of Perth.
shopping is … [seen] as normalcy — and defines the spiritual territory of our lives… shopping is both a tedious chore and a moral preoccupation. It is no wonder that objects are at the crux of my production component.

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Chapter One

Art, design and consumerism — a Lasting connection

A main consideration in this exegesis is the movement of the manufactured into the realm of art. In this chapter this development is outlined and discussed, placing my art within context and giving a foundation to the exegesis (see Appendices: 1. Art History and Art/Cultural Theory Timeline — 1890–2015). Beginning in the early 1900s and since, the interrelationship of art, design, craft and consumerism has led to a broader definition of art. At the same time the collecting and display of found objects for their aesthetic qualities occurred as early as the sixteenth century, with private “cabinets of curiosities” (Wunderkammer). Philosopher Victor Cousin coined the phrase “anything goes” or “art for art’s sake” in the early nineteenth century. This phrase expresses the belief held by many writers and artists, especially those associated with Aestheticism, that art needs no justification, that it need serve no political, didactic, or other end. Yet, it was not until the Modernist period that artists earnestly incorporated found objects as “art”. “Found object” is translated from French objet trouvé — objects or products with non-art functions that are placed into an art context and made part of an artwork.

Modernism

Modernism (1930–1958) was a significant theoretical movement that impacted on art and culture. Modernism was symbolised by clear boundaries and classification systems, opinions defined by class distinctions, rejection of tradition and freedom of expression, experimentation, scientific and logical thought, and homogenisation of society, as ‘a world view’ or grand narratives (see Appendices: 2. Table of Art/Cultural Theory Comparisons and Transitions). Modernism was a major historical turning point. The development of urbanisation, the impact and changes expected by the use of machinery, free enterprise and consumerist ideals, as well as the questioning of the purpose of art became all important. Modernism was a response to a rapidly changing world in which traditions were being diluted and

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84 It is also important to note that in general art movements do not occur historically in succession but often intersect and/or overlap with each other.
were disappearing. One response in art was to embrace change and actively seek to overthrow traditions. This was a response to search for a ‘political ideology, aesthetic innovation, an economic model or a social plan’ that would give people a sense of purpose in a rapidly changing world.89

One instigating Modernist/Avant-garde art movement, Dadaism (1915–1922), positioned art as conceptual expression and political activity. Dada opened a path in the modernist approach of considering art as being anything artists chose it to be, an artistic leeway and a conceptual stronghold.90 91 Dada used play, together with an “anti-art”, “anti-sense”, “anti-war” stance… by taking a delight in protest, bringing a different approach to political protest against WWI.92

Dada artist, Marcel Duchamp, instigated two key advancements in sculpture in the twentieth century.93 Firstly, he developed the mobile-sculpture.94 Secondly, the readymade — sculptures made from found materials or ordinary items from the domestic and consumer environments that had only slight or absolutely no alterations by the artist, and were simply displayed or “assisted” as “rectified readymades”.95 He turned found items into a prevailing method and constituent of art.96 97

Duchamp's work caught the imagination of the period and led to an expansion into 'Dada, Surrealism, kinetic sculpture, “junk” sculpture, and Pop’ art.98 He believed that already made objects from the household inherently facilitated an examination of the significance of art in culture.99 These readymades were unlike “objets trouvés” (found objects) as they were not

… chosen for their aesthetic or creative attributes - a "readymade" is one - any one - of a set of mass-produced items which are largely indistinguishable from each other. It is not therefore the object's individual qualities that make it a piece of art, but the artist's decision to call it art. He himself should be aesthetically indifferent

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91 "Dada" is French for “hobbyhorse”.
94 A mobile sculpture is a kinetic form, which through movement demonstrates energy as a path of motion e.g. rotation about an axis or vibration.
97 Cubist artist Pablo Picasso had already used the manufactured in his art before Duchamp had named the term “readymade”.
99 Ibid.
to the object: indeed, he may even employ methods of chance to make his decision.\textsuperscript{100}

By placing the everyday within a gallery setting and positioning it as art, Duchamp challenged both the definition of art and the definition of the commonplace.\textsuperscript{101} \textsuperscript{102} If ‘manufactured objects [are] raised to the dignity of works of art through the choice of the artist’, this emphasis on utilising everyday objects as art makes apparent the question of, who has authority to determine what is considered art?\textsuperscript{103} Throughout the twentieth century ‘anything that comes to hand’ came to be considered art, diversifying art to the extremes of definition.\textsuperscript{104} Mass-reproduced work from everyday materials, the designed and invented, replaced traditional concepts, which emphasised hand-making and originality in art. Artists like Duchamp employed de-skilling, which became the characteristic feature of originality — replacing craftsmanship with ‘calculated abstraction, simplification and abandonment’ of fine art as it existed.\textsuperscript{105} Continued by contemporary artists such as performance artist Mike Parr, this de-skilling can lead to interpretations of misunderstanding, mediocrity and enigma due to this convention being seen to be without distinguishable techniques or expanded beyond recognisable conventions.\textsuperscript{106} Art came to explore, was inclusive of, and created with objects taken from the surrounding material environment. Artists became transformers of everyday objects as they appropriated and reused or “remixed” materials. The Modern, Surrealist (1924–1941) art movement also transmuted these novel approaches of conceptuality and the everyday. Although not directly linked to external foci, as was Pop art, one art piece by Surrealist, Swiss sculptor and painter Meret Oppenheim (1913–1985) is critiqued because of her use of the everyday. She challenged notions of art by reconfiguring commonplace, practical items, to explore Surrealism’s ‘objects with symbolic function’.\textsuperscript{107}

Surrealism (1917–1950) was an amalgamation of the ‘collage and constructivist aspects of Cubism and the nihilism of Dada’, but with a focus on internal


\textsuperscript{101} Arnason and Prather, History of Modern Art, Art. 16.

\textsuperscript{102} Readymades include Duchamp’s Bicycle Wheel (1913) and The Fountain (1917), which epitomise Dadaist principles. Arnason and Prather. History of Modern Art. 563.


\textsuperscript{104} Murray and Murray, The Penguin Dictionary, 119.

\textsuperscript{105} Howley, Craft and Contemporary Theory, 21-22.

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid. 8.

motivations, dreams and the unconscious.\textsuperscript{108} Surrealism was a stimulus for the later Abstract Expressionist movement, both movements exploring and presenting emotion and feeling states.

Abstract Expressionism (1940–1960) signified expressiveness and emotion through non-representational abstraction. Loose brushstrokes transformed realistic imagery into colour and shapes.\textsuperscript{109} Emotion-laden Abstract Expressionism contrasted with Pop art.\textsuperscript{110} One form, Colour Field Painting (1948–1968), used straightforward compositions of colour, shape and optical elements to cause the viewer to imagine and reflect.\textsuperscript{111} These elements were used to accentuate hope after WWII, emphasising youth and positivity.\textsuperscript{112} Colour is an integral aspect of Pop graphics, which can partially be traced from Colour Field Painting, a movement that was steeped in the present. As founding painter, Barnett Newman surmised, the art of the Colour Field was not esoteric or historic but clearly transparent and understandable for the viewer.\textsuperscript{113} Pop art was a direct reaction to Abstract Expressionism, objecting to explorations of the interior (mind) — instead focussing on the external consumer culture world of industrialisation.

The art movement chronology discussed in this exegesis shows a lasting connection throughout the twentieth century between art, design and consumerism. All of these art movements directly influenced the Pop artists’ reactions to Modernism.

Whilst Duchamp’s work was conceptually challenging, his use of the manufactured was ironic rather than a glorification of commodification. Many later Pop artists shifted to outright celebration (1950s–1970s):

\begin{quote}
In Pop art, the epic was replaced with the everyday and the mass-produced awarded the same significance as the unique; the gulf between “high art” and “low art” was eroded away.\textsuperscript{114}
\end{quote}

The Pop artists completely transformed art by focusing on the manufactured — “already made”. They celebrated consumer society, often however with an ironic

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[108]{Murray and Murray, \textit{The Penguin Dictionary}, 401.}
\footnotetext[110]{Emphasising colour directly links to Pop art as the popular, manufactured and how objects are marketed through advertising – colour creates an emotional reaction encouraging people to consume such as the advertising of products.}
\footnotetext[111]{Pieter Jacobus Fourie, Media Studies: Content, audiences, and production (Lansdowne, South Africa: Juta and Company Ltd, 2001), 18.}
\end{footnotes}
emphasis. Pop art is based on the popular as in the predominant, influential culture of urban Westernised society. The permeation of the “everyday” and its intersection with art — in techniques, material choices and conceptual ideas in the twenty-first century was predicted by the iconic Pop artist of the sixties Andy Warhol whose

... work anticipated a world where consumer-driven culture came to value the brand name and iconic item above individuality. This “branding” is also clearly seen in contemporary art’s focus on the marketing and fashionability of artists with their specific name and style. What is distinctive from the everyday and what is branded becomes what is identifiable in popular culture. Design and consumerism, like popular culture and mass/online and social media are now dependent on each other and are essentially interlinked.

**Interlinking of Art, Design and Consumerism in Pop Art**

While art and design today often occupy an overlapping position, traditionally they were different. Design historically was considered to be industry-led to meet a particular function and objective for consumers to purchase or glean information from. Art is often studio-based, an expression of the artist’s own rules and vision or message to inspire feelings in the viewer. As Brady elaborates, the main difference between design and art is not so much in their visual presentation but in their function:

Design is meant to be looked away from and art to be looked at and into. Design graces our lives with the aesthetic presentation of useful and beneficial things, and art graces us with representations of things to ponder and perceive. Art and design are closely related but nonetheless separate.

Continuing on from Brady, Designer Milton Glaser famously stated in 1974 that design has to convey specific information whereas 'the “essential function” of art is to “intensify one's perception of reality”’. Even so, as design becomes increasingly marketed and desired and art is commercialised, and the lines between art and design meld — the relationships remain in constant flux.

The connection between art, design and consumerism developed in a particular way in twentieth century Western art, specifically in the use of everyday and popular

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118 Ibid. 10.
objects as primary components of conceptuality and art-making. The increasing focus on objects led to an ever-narrowing gap between the designed, the consumed and art. In part the broadened interest in objects resulted in the emergence of Pop art’s celebration of industrial manufactured mass-produced objects for consumption. This exegesis argues that specific changes in art, including the founding of Pop art, were inherently linked to a culture developed through mass-production created by mechanisation. At this point art and design became blurred or confused. This interlinking has also created mass consumption of digital art influenced or created by video, bio and scientific art by pioneering artists such as Nam June Paik, Wolf Vostell and Bill Viola. There are numerous contemporary artists who investigate and use technology including Mariko Mori, Matthew Barney, Symbiotica, Joshua Davis and Byoungho Kim. Many artists however, do not challenge technology but instead simply employ the manufactured, created from mechanical and technological processes. These artists include a substantial and increasing number too large to list, but some examples include the likes of Tara Donovan, Friends With You (FWY), Florentijn Hoffman, We Make Carpets and Sara Sze. They are also examples of using materiality:

Each medium, independent of the content it mediates, has its own intrinsic effects which are its unique message. The message of any medium or technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs.120

These artists have an artistic connection to the readymade concept in their use of objects. An exemplar is Donovan’s collection of ubiquitous manufactured plastic cups used in repetition on a grandiose architectural scale. Also they connect to Pop art through ideas generated from or by critiquing the “popular”, manufactured or replication.

Certain key social and cultural shifts that took place in the 1950s and 1960s, impacted on the progression of Pop art too. The culture of the everyday after WWII, especially in the USA was focused on commercial mass media. Media for the masses such as television, magazines and newspapers became highly influential upon daily life with the mass consumption of entertainment, movies and peripherals such as the construction of celebrity. Media theorist Marshal McLuhan states ‘automation brings in real “mass-production”, not in terms of size, but of an instant

inclusive embrace'. So too, culture became mass media and audiences became involved simultaneously in production:

Thus commodity industries under automation share the same structural character of the entertainment industries in the degree that both approximate the condition of instant information. Automation affects not just production, but every phase of consumption and marketing; for the consumer becomes producer in the automation circuit, quite as much as the reader of the mosaic telegraph press makes his own news, or just is his own news.

McLuhan's statement is key to understanding how the popular culture of consumerism and mass media are in a symbiotic relationship. The public is thus subjected by these affects on society — affects that Pop art visualised through replication and automation. Key signifiers of cultural shifts in this period, such as those identified by McLuhan, need to be understood in order to appreciate the response of artists of this time.

Changing Society and Art through Creativity, Design and Manufacturing

In a backlash against Abstract Expressionism, Pop artists fought vehemently against the use of personal, self-focused or illusory imagery that incorporated and used the mechanisation of mass-production. Instead Pop artists sought to create art about detachment from emotions, and a welcoming of exterior and social influences. In the West a widespread adherence to standard norms of a suburban lifestyle existed in the 1950s and early 1960s. Encapsulated by the statement 'keeping up with the Joneses', conformity reigned. However, in contrast to the conservative attitudes, rock and roll music encompassed a questioning of traditional American values — ‘good times, sex, and freedom’. Concurrently, the ‘rising postwar generation of creatives including... Jackson Pollock, Marlon Brando, Elvis Presley, and Jack Kerouac’ challenged and rebelled against conservative attitudes. These artists, actors, musicians and writers became part of popular culture and consumerism. While there is a long history of consumerism, at this time the focus on material wealth led to complacency, and a sense that satisfaction was

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121 Ibid.
122 Ibid.
123 Ibid.
124 Ibid.
125 It should be acknowledged that McLuhan’s statement in 1964, predates today’s social media.
130 Ibid.
guaranteed through owning the objects of mass-production, and the brands and lifestyles associated with these commodities. Products became more readily available and accessible so that every person who could afford goods could conform to trends.

A large part of the fostering of consumerism in the 1950s was manufacturers focusing on and rationalising "style obsolescence". They created objects that were easily out of date — became unfashionable, disposable or forgotten, thus increasing spending. The designer became all-important in the USA from the 1920s onwards. Styling an object gave “added value” by making the ‘product more appealing, more desirable, and so more likely to be purchased than its competition’. Designers utilised common identifiable symbols for example ‘from transport and fast travel’, leading to streamlined products, signalling planned precision such as in the toasters and cash registers of the day. Industrial designers including Norman Bel Geddes and Raymond Loewy fashioned the appearance of products, ‘guaranteeing [that] would look old fashioned in two or three years time, and so… building-in style obsolescence’. Loewy’s Coldspot refrigerator, for example, was first designed in 1935 and then from 1936–1938 was followed by yearly redesigns with a new “look”:

People became habituated to a constant cycle of collecting objects, consuming, throwing away and replacing, reflecting the belief in the Modern age…. This even further embedded the designed into people’s lives and continued throughout the following periods. The 1960s are often thought of as the decade of disposability. Expendability was indeed a central aspect of much of the culture of the 1960s: it was both a physical fact of many products, and a symbol of belief in the modern age.

The throwaway culture had begun. Manufacturers used the excuse of the consumer initiating this demand for “newness”. Although the ‘real motivation for consumers was social [“keeping up with the Jones’s”] and the means were technical and visual’. The public were being manipulated to consume through both government policies and the advertising of the mass media. These aspects of consumption and disposability were mirrored in the replication, processes and themes seen in art of the time.

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131 Ibid.


133 Whitely, “Throw-Away Culture”, 3.


135 Ibid. 6–7.
In the capitalist West consumption drove the economy. The USA was concentrating on building a global market economy and enhancing its role as a military superpower. Politics and industry emphasised manufacturing and consumerism. During the 1950s President Eisenhower’s targeted aspects of American life to a climate of prosperity, by limiting governmental spending.\textsuperscript{136} Following on from the Depression and WWII’s focus on thrift, consumption increased.\textsuperscript{137} A “baby boom” resulted, following the return of American troops — necessitating an increase in available real estate. Credit cards were popularised, consumerism marketed in new ways, shopping malls established and women increasingly joined the workforce. Malls as shopping hubs were also popular for the fast food restaurants and casinos they contained\textsuperscript{138}

... relentless advertising instead urged people to buy, buy, buy. Easy credit, time purchases, and a bursting cornucopia of goods replaces restraint and shortages of previous decades. Instant gratification of all wants and needs became rule, and popular culture based much of its content on this promise of fulfillment... daily lives resonated with the expectation that at last the American Dream could become reality.\textsuperscript{139}

Following the developments of industry in the 1950s Eisenhower era, American Pop art exploded. Post-war prosperity continued into the 1960s under the Kennedy and Johnston administrations. The Vietnam War had propelled industrial and commercial production and the Cold War accelerated production and consumerism under Eisenhower.\textsuperscript{140} Kennedy embraced the ethics of consumerist culture based on Keynesian economics. Consumption rather than production was wholeheartedly accepted, integrated and used to encourage people to buy, as outlined both in his domestic and foreign policies.\textsuperscript{141} Post-war America was in the ‘high mass-consumption stage’.\textsuperscript{142}

... on a macroeconomic level, politicians, economic leaders and business people alike were preoccupied with strategies to encourage mass consumption... account[ing] for the characterization of the 1960s as consumer orientated.\textsuperscript{143}

Consumption was all-persuasive and pervasive. The persistent onslaught of advertisements also influenced American families by creating dissatisfaction. They became increasingly caught up in the attainment of material possessions. Lippard (1966) argues that the government reinforced this dependence on consumption by

\textsuperscript{136} William McClenahan, Jr. and William H. Becker, Eisenhower and the Cold War Economy (Maryland: JHU Press, 2011), 79.

\textsuperscript{137} Young, The 1950s, xii.

\textsuperscript{138} David Goldfield et al., The American Journey (Belmont, Australia: Pearson Education, 2013), 885–887.

\textsuperscript{139} Young, The 1950s, xii.

\textsuperscript{140} Lippard, Pop Art, 2.

\textsuperscript{141} Mamiya, American Super Market, 2.

\textsuperscript{142} William E. Leuchtenburg, A Troubled Feast: American Society Since 1945 (Boston, MA: Little Brown, 1983), 58.

\textsuperscript{143} Lippard, Pop Art, 3.
linking aims and goals of departments and policies to that of economics. As a wealthy suburbanised society, with high levels of manufacturing, a large domestic market and well-developed mass media the USA epitomised the culture of consumption.\(^\text{144}\) Consumer spending post-war boosted the economy and as James (1996) emphasises America “boomed” partially as it was unaffected by the physical destruction of WWII. Consequently there was rapid economic development with increasing affluence and technology that bolstered a very active popular culture.\(^\text{145}\)

With so much emphasis on the consumption of objects, design became as much about community — the shared experience around the object — as it was about practicality.\(^\text{146}\) In the 1960s, while the USA was important in design, Britain was at the fore, as London was steeped in the “Swinging Sixties”, a time of fashionability and grooviness. Key designers of the 1950s and 1960s whose works epitomised the look of these decades included Mary Quant, Terence Conran, Verner Panton, and Eero.\(^\text{147}\) Iconic designer Giulio Castelli encompassed the colours, versatility and diversity of the material of the age, plastics. He transformed the contours and purpose of objects by using humour, sensual celebration, translucency and unusual forms previously unseen. These designs reflected the ‘space age’ and the Pop aesthetics of the 1950s and 1960s — object mania.\(^\text{148}\) \(^\text{149}\)

**Pop Art**

Pop art appropriately followed on from Abstract Expressionism, and began in the USA just after WWII.\(^\text{150}\) Like Expressionism, Pop art emphasised colour, but rather than emotions, focused on the commercialised present. Artist Pablo Picasso focused on ‘visual qualities’; Rauschenberg on ‘combine paintings’ and Kurt Schwitters on his ‘merz’ (refuse) works.\(^\text{151}\) They simply added objects to their fine art. The Pop artists continued, “object adding” by using “appropriation”, a strategy common to Pop, Postmodernism and contemporary art:

> Appropriation is the intentional borrowing, copying, and alteration of preexisting images and objects. It is a strategy that has been used by artists for millennia, but took on new significance in mid-20th-century America and Britain with the rise of

\(^{144}\) Ibid.
consumerism and the proliferation of popular images through mass media outlets from magazines to television.\textsuperscript{152}

The reaction in the USA against Abstract Expressionism’s emotive gestural work and European formalism, led Pop artists to seek inspiration from their surrounding environments.

Pop art started in Britain in the mid 1950s, grew in the latter part of that decade in the USA and peaked in the 1960s.\textsuperscript{153} It signified a commonality of thinking amongst artists who derived inspiration from popular culture and mainstream media (Independent Group), in the process defining and creating an entire art movement.

Although Pop art can be said to have had two beginnings in the 1950s and 1960s, one British - London and one American - New York City and California, Alloway asserts that it had three initial stages. In the UK, Pop art coincided with the youthful, pop music experience of the ‘swinging 60s’, exemplified in trendy London.\textsuperscript{154} This art that emerged firstly from the UK (mid 1950s) was a way for ‘high art [painting and sculpture] to mimick low art [designed mass culture]’\textsuperscript{155}

Here, there were three waves of artists. Painters Eduardo Paolozzi, Magda Cordell McHale and Richard Hamilton, photographer Nigel Henderson, critics Lawrence Alloway and Reyner Banham and architects Alison and Peter Smithson who all met at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London. They formed the academic set known as The Independent Group (IG).\textsuperscript{156} As a collective and individually, they went about challenging Dadaist perceptions of art as high status and instead ‘revelled in the visual excitement and visceral energy of the popular culture emanating from the United States’.\textsuperscript{158} Most notable was their ground-breaking exhibition This is Tomorrow (1956) which was partially cultural and satirical, whilst being a wholehearted look at ‘mass imagery of the early electronic age’.\textsuperscript{159} The second UK wave consisted of artists including Roger Coleman, Richard Smith and Denny and Peter Blake.\textsuperscript{160} Peter Blake’s art is an example of nostalgia and kitsch that exists within found and collected objects as seen in his figurative paintings of ‘pinup girls, professional wrestlers, circus performers, burlesque queens, and pop

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\textsuperscript{152} Amy Boyle et al, “Pop Art”, Moma Learning, http://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/themes/pop-art/appropriation&sa=U&ei=AGS8U5O6Gc2GuAT_goCgDg&ved=0CIADEBYwThk&usg=AFQjCNE0IbNFDeXe-cU3x5F688Lg9jw (2013).


\textsuperscript{154} James, Pop Art, 5.

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{158} James Pop Art, 5.

\textsuperscript{159} Hughes, Shock of the New, 342.

stars… which he embellished… with kitsch’.\textsuperscript{161} His use of nostalgia made him an obvious choice in designing the \textit{Sergeant Pepper Lonely Hearts Club Band} album cover for the in demand band, the Beatles (1967). This album cover epitomises Pop combined with a collage aesthetic, bright colours and a who’s who of celebrities, spiritualists and intellectuals.\textsuperscript{162} This relationship with the Beatles not only connected Blake with Pop and the commercial but also with spirituality as the Beatles were heavily into eastern religion at the time. This mysticism transcended into popular culture as reflected in the \textit{Sergeant Pepper} record cover ‘optimism of psychedelia… instantly spread[ing] the gospel of love, acid, Eastern spirituality and electric guitars around the globe’ — prevailing ideas permeating into Pop music, Pop design and Pop art.\textsuperscript{163}

Alloway, described a third phase of British Pop ‘with the \textit{Young Contemporaries} exhibition in 1961, consisting of artists from the Royal College of Art’.\textsuperscript{164} This phase included artists such as David Hockney, Peter Phillips, Derek Boshier, Allen Jones, R. B. Kitaj, and Peter Phillips who were regarded as being more ‘figurative’ (in their use of forms, metaphors) as opposed to the more ‘abstract art,’ non-representational coming from America.\textsuperscript{165} In this phase of the development of British Pop art, artists looked at the objects that were consumed by society and the growing American pop culture — which was influential and more advanced and dynamic than that in Britain at the time. In zeitgeist, the Americanisation of culture as a superpower was starting to happen not only in the USA itself but also in far reaching corners of the globe including the UK, impacting on what was collectively considered to be popular or standardised representations of conventions in society.\textsuperscript{166} What all these British artists had in common was ‘a fascination with American mass culture and post-WWII technologies’.\textsuperscript{167}

The second incarnation was the American Pop movement which was mostly focused in New York City then later in California. In the USA the movement flourished and gained its most celebrated recognition. As a developed society, the USA was a society that utilised industrialised technology, existed within or adopted mass media, and consumed manufactured goods as well as whole-heartedly

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[162] Ibid., 392-393.
\item[164] Lippard, \textit{Pop Art}, 53.
\item[165] Lippard, \textit{Pop Art}, 53.
\item[166] Ibid.
\end{itemize}
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marketing it as the predominant and popularised way to live. This was a culture of consumption that was both encouraged and confirmed by the democratic government. At the time the administration was intent on encouraging people to spend after the WWII to boost the economy by increasing the need for the manufacture of goods and services.\(^{168}\)

An important group, who Lippard labels as the ‘New York Five’, were committed to Pop art principles.\(^{169}\) This group consisted of Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Tom Wesselmann, James Rosenquist, and Claus Oldenburg, all closely linked through their art being understood as a response to consumer culture.\(^{170} \) \(^{171}\) Warhol described this connection to consumption, to Pop as ‘liking things’.\(^{172}\) Wesselmann and Rosenquist are not discussed, even though their work relates to popular culture and consumerism, and on occasion does include three-dimensionality. Their work is predominantly two-dimensional painting and collage.\(^{173}\) Also, their art does not significantly impact aesthetically on the production component of this research. Warhol captured the link between art and manufacturing through popular culture methods and themes, especially replication and mechanisation. Lichtenstein exploited familiar cartoons and repetitive Ben-day dot motifs to express grand narrative themes of love and war. Oldenburg used commonplace objects as inspirations for large-scale sculptures, highlighting our affection and dependence on objects. All of these practices link to my production component.

Photographic improvements also made this consumer culture approach of Pop more acceptable in art, as used by Warhol in his silkscreen works e.g. *Ambulance Disaster* (1963).\(^{174}\) Thus, Pop artists had a different focus and scope to previous artists, as influences such as consumerism, manufacturing methods and technology become instrumental themes and approaches in the construction of art. In order, therefore, for art to be labelled “pop” it needed to offer ‘instant meaning; be made from

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\(^{169}\) Lippard, *Pop Art*, 69.


\(^{171}\) Lippard, *Pop Art*, 69.

\(^{172}\) Ibid.

\(^{173}\) 2D, such as Rosenquist’s depictions of images from printed media e.g. President Elect (1964); 3D e.g. objects in Wessledmann’s *Great American Nude* (begun 1961) series, works such as his *Tiny Dropped Bra* studies (1980) and *Dropped Bra* public art piece (1980).

\(^{174}\) Photography was further validated and developed in the 1970s by artists including Barbara Kruger. Mike Kelley and John C. Welchman, *Foul Perfection: Essays and Criticism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 9-10.
anything; … be a more inclusive and more relevant style of art; … hold up a mirror to society’ and be idea focused.\textsuperscript{175}

The Pop artists emphasised the increasingly materialistic aspects in society, not by just using them

\[\ldots\text{but these ordinary objects became subjects in a more direct way — unabashed reflections of a consumer society. With ironic detachment, pop artists put the mass culture of mid-century America in the spotlight, replacing the high seriousness of abstract expressionism with deadpan coolness.}\textsuperscript{176}\]

The Pop artists shared a commonality in their subject matter, making art entertaining, detached and “now” rather than emotional like the Abstract expressionists did. Pop writer Suzi Gablik in discussing the connections between the British and American Pop movement, provides a generalised distinction between Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism and Pop art’s take on the exploitation of popular and generic subject matter:

\[\text{There are… a number of thematic unities… a shared and recurrent iconography, based upon real things, which are part of everybody’s world, and not just a private world of the artist’s. These images are a part of popular culture as presented through the surrogate worlds of mass media.}\textsuperscript{177}\]

By using the common and popular from mass media the artist was engaged in ideas and materials that were instantly recognisable, familiar to the public — from their mediated culture, which Pop art fully engaged. As Pioch states:

\[\text{Pop art brought art back to the material realities of everyday life, to popular culture (hence “pop”), in which ordinary people derived most of their visual pleasure from television, magazines and comics.}\textsuperscript{178}\]

Pop artists purposely changed the hierarchy of art viewing — from being only for the elite, to being art for the community by engaging with the popular. Thus the viewer’s connection to art was enabled, allowing them to engage intimately with the created. However, the similitude between commercial objects and Pop art pieces, made them both affective and relatable but also, potentially confusing to the public. At times, art seemed to be merely a design(ed) replica, — as in Warhol’s use of Campbell’s soup cans and Brillo boxes in his graphic works.
The infatuation with products that defined this period, was when industrialisation, the manufactured, commercialisation, consumerism and associated peripherals emphasising these aspects such as mass media and advertising, became society’s focus. This was when Pop art was at its most influential. Critic, curator and Independent Group (IG) member Lawrence Alloway coined the term “Pop art” in 1954. The term originally denoted artworks that referenced merchandise from widespread broadcasting, popular communication sources such as newspapers, (mass media), not artworks that developed from popular culture, as the term became known.\textsuperscript{179} The IG collective discovered and captured the essence of Pop art through investigative meetings, conversations and guest presentations, whilst challenging perceptions of art as high status. They ‘revelled in the visual excitement and visceral energy of the popular culture emanating from the United States’.\textsuperscript{180} The commonality that existed between the IG helped to define Pop art as:

\begin{quote}
[\textit{a}] vernacular culture that persisted beyond any special interest or skills in art, architecture, design, or art criticism that any of us might possess. The area of contact was mass-produced urban culture: movies, advertising, science fiction, Pop music. We felt none of the dislike of commercial culture standard among most intellectuals, but accepted it as a fact, discussed it in detail, and consumed it enthusiastically. One result of our discussions was to take Pop culture out of the realm of ‘escapism’, ‘sheer entertainment’ ‘relaxation’, and to treat it with the seriousness of art.\textsuperscript{181}
\end{quote}

So “pop” was a new, exciting perspective, positioning the commercialised as “art”. Naming this movement “Pop art” signified cohesive thinking for practising artists, such as the IG, who were inspired by popular culture and mainstream media. Legitimisation of “low art” (design) or designed mass-culture was achieved by imitating commercial designs through “high art” — fine art such as sculpture and painting.\textsuperscript{182} Pop art and mass media existed in a logical relationship whereby Pop appropriated from mass culture, and the latter benefited from Pop’s artistic innovations.\textsuperscript{183}

By accepting the emergent commercial cultural changes, the Pop artists defined and created an entire art movement. The 1960s was a time of immense change. Pop art employed all the media attention given to these changes. The Pop artists swallowed then regurgitated media as serious art. They resolved to transform perceptions of
what was regarded as art by the art world, artists and the viewing public. Simultaneously, together with commercialism, consumerism, mass-production and communication media, Pop artists crossed the boundaries of art with design. They marketed and reframed art as a product — a moneymaking extension of mass media and culture. Thus creating an art movement with its own identifiable themes, style and ethos and most art no longer looked to nature for inspiration:

In the 1950s and 1960s the mass media became the subject of an aesthetic critique of varying quality through what is now known as Pop Art... The subject of painting [for example], which once had been either nature, or perhaps the pursuit of pure aesthetic experience, now looked at the imagery of the mass media... culture, had become nature.\(^{184}\)

Inspiration for art was provided by the seemingly boundless resources in the form of factory-made objects — a substitution for the biological. Regularity and symmetry in nature once inspired an aesthetic response. Now the regularity and symmetry of the manufactured were celebrated. Pop artists highlighted themes of multiplicity, as inspiration, and as an ironic commentary on artificial replication. Mass-production techniques, applied to accurately repeatable words, pictures and music resulted in a multitude of artistic and cultural artefacts, which subsequently extended art. To approach this exploding field with Renaissance-based ideas of art as unique was crippling. Acceptance of mass media meant that what constituted culture shifted from the domain of a few to the playing field of many. Art became about ‘what society does’.\(^{185}\) ‘In Pop Art, the epic was replaced with the everyday and the mass-produced awarded the same significance as the unique, the gulf between “high art” and “low art” was eroded away’.\(^{186}\) For art to be defined as “pop” it had to have been developed with a particular range of ideas in mind, a ‘serious taste for popular culture, a belief in multi-evocative imagery, and a sense of the interplay of technology and man’.\(^{187}\) Pop artists also challenged definitions of art by, on occasion, placing art in untraditional “galleries” — into public places such as shops and the urban environment.

Pop art focused on aspects of society, such as consumerism, that previously the art world had not fully captured in its visual imagery, creating a unique set of rules and recognisable artists. Consequently, Pop art became one of the most predominant art

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\(^{186}\) Pioch, “Pop Art”.

\(^{187}\) Lippard, *Pop Art*, 36.
periods of the late twentieth century, aligned with consumerism. Many art forms became about the already created or used the designed. As Benjamin states:

One of the foremost tasks of art has always been the creation of a demand, which could be fully satisfied only later. The history of every art form shows critical epochs in which a certain art form aspires to effects, which could be fully obtained only with a changed technical standard, that is to say, in a new art form. The extravagances and crudities of art, which thus appear, particularly in the so-called decadent epochs, actually arise from the nucleus of its richest historical energies.

So like many art movements, Pop art occurred in response to the changing times in a ‘decadent epoch’. The movement reacted against ideas and methods of working that inadequately conveyed meaning. Artists strove to develop new conceptual ways of responding to the world and with that a particular recognisable “style” developed.

Writing at the time, Gablik (1969) explained that the style that linked British and American Pop was the use of repetitive, fashionable symbols and images, shared with and recognised by the public. These visualisations of actual objects were part of the everyday environments in which people lived and identified. Mass broadcasting familiarised popular culture imagery. This differed greatly from Abstract Expressionism’s removal of representational and personal imagery. Images from popular media were universal in respect to being connected to industrialised consumer society. Gablik defines and classifies the “aesthetics of Pop” in terms of five major characteristics:

(1) the breakdown of conventions of the picture plane and the use of three-dimensional extensions into the surrounding space, incorporating elements of the actual environment, (2) the substitution of industrial techniques and materials for oil paints and a pre-occupation with man-made objects as far removed from nature as possible, (3) the erosion of a previously established hierarchy of subject matter (Mondrian and Mickey Mouse are now equally relevant) and the expansion of art’s frame of reference to include elements considered until now as outside its range, such as technology, kitsch, and humour, (4) the move away from the private mythologies of Surrealism and the interior monologues of Abstract-expressionism to a more extroverted and impersonal subject matter associated with the urban environment, and (5) a greater mobility and flexibility toward art in general, whereby every art situation is more total and inclusive of the simultaneous levels which occur in actual experience.

Gablik’s words make explicit the overwhelming change from a fixed artistic base to a flexible viewpoint in which an “anything goes” attitude was encouraged, an
attitude that in some ways continues to define art today. Practicing artists at the time articulated their vision of Pop art. For example, in 1957 Pop artist Richard Hamilton stated that his purpose was to 'search for what is epic in everyday objects and everyday attitudes'. This idea of the “everyday” long existed in art prior to the twentieth century, for example in still lifes of food, house furnishings and objects. But it was not until the early 1900s that the everyday was elevated to significant status. The engagement changed from the natural, which art periods like Romanticism expressed, to the increasingly manufactured world of objects.

In 1957, Hamilton proposed Eleven Commandments of Pop Art as:

1. Popular (designed for a mass audience), transient (short-term solution),
2. Expendable (easily forgotten), low cost, mass-produced, young (aimed at youth),
3. Witty, sexy, gimmicky (attention grabbing), glamorous, and big business.

Although Hamilton’s Commandments are easily mistaken as a manifesto, Shanes claims, they were not, as his list was a private letter and only publicised long after Pop art developed. His commandments were directed to the audience not to artists, and the Pop artists contributions to the movement developed further than Hamilton’s rules. For example, Warhol’s works encompassed the commandments but also included heroism, religion, banality, cynicism, inertia and death, which were not in Hamilton’s ‘shopping list’.

Warhol also sought to champion popular culture with his book The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again); Lichtenstein and Oldenburg stood for Pop art too, the former in his painting Whaam (1963) and the latter with his poem I am for an art (1967). However, Pop art had no succinct statement that introduced the movement to the world. As Frost suggests, since the beginning of Pop art, the artists had an understanding of what “pop” constituted: irony, mass media, cultural critique, shock and the inclusion of mechanisation. Thus, what the artists identified as “pop” was loosely based on media, popular and consumer culture.

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196 Ibid.
198 “Pop” was significant in music as Thompson argues Pop themes were intrinsic in particular songs of the day including: Rolling Stones “(I Can’t Get No) Satisfaction” (1965); The Who’s “Anyway Anyhow Anywhere” (1965), which challenged middle-class post war values into Pop art rebellion and a sense of anything is possible; and Roxy Music’s “Do the Strand” (1973) or “Dance Away” (1975) which included lines form Oldenburg’s poem. Shanes, Pop Art. 115 & 253. Thompson, Please Please Me. Sixties British Pop, Inside Out (London: Oxford University Press, 2008), 228.
Richard Hamilton’s collage *Just What Is It That Makes Today’s Homes So Different, So Appealing?* (1956) incorporates all that he listed as Pop art. The collage integrates the word “Pop,” whilst including elements of the culture of the time. Such elements as the logo of the auto company Ford, a tape recorder, television, cinema, vacuum cleaner and health and beauty references. Perceptively he also considered components which became features or inspirations in the work of other Pop artists, comics referenced by Lichtenstein (*Young Romance* comic) — *Oh, Jeff... I Love You, Too... But* (1964), tinned ham referenced by Rosenquist — *I Love You with My Ford* (1961) and a motel bed used by Oldenburg — *Bedroom Ensemble, Replica 1* (1969).

Robert Hughes cites Hamilton’s commandments as referring to art that was not made by just anyone, not ‘traditional or conventional art’ but rather ‘a new landscape of secondary, filtered material’. Skilled professionals, many of whom were initially graphic designers, made Pop art for a mass audience. The fact that these Pop artists drew on and were drawn from the graphic and advertising industry meant that it ‘was done to the people’, derived and generated from the “created” media culture. These understandings of Pop art also align with manufacturing and especially the ways that products were (and are) marketed to influence the consumer to buy. Heath and Potter state that when consumers are influenced by advertising to be competitive, envious and seek status, even when just buying to represent taste and style, they are in “competitive consumption”. This is not about people’s desires but is ‘imposed by the very nature of the goods that are sought’. Pop art significantly played into this system of consumerism:

Pop art was the first intersection with a mass-market culture that reached maturation in the decades following the second World War — and it offered neither a critique of mass-consumer culture nor a celebration, but a symbiotic system.

Pop art signified an intersection with mass culture. Marketing methods like humour, sexual innuendos, pricing and gimmickry play a prominent role in influencing people’s buying choices. These aspects encouraged the cycle of buying

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200 Ibid. 344.
201 Frost, “Pop to Popism review”.
202 Ibid.
204 Ibid. 120.
(and selling) through the transience and expendability of products. These are also methods that some Pop artists including Hamilton and Warhol used.

Pop art was an extroverted visual commentary utilising bold colours, larger than life installations, text from advertising and imagery gained directly from industrialised culture. A culture rooted in the created — planned high-rise buildings, concrete footpaths, manicured gardens, commercial outlets and suburban estates of “brick and tile” residences. Pop art is a direct exaggeration and exploitation of society and its obsession with mass media and consumerism. Pop artists were both ingenious in their use of content from the commercialised exterior world and playful in their instigation. As Lippard states:

> Pop was not a grass-roots movement in any country, nor was it an international fusion of style … its standards were not determined by regionalism so much as by a widespread decision to approach the contemporary world with a positive rather than a negative attitude.\footnote{Lippard, Pop. Art, 9.}

This optimism was displayed through Pop’s use of oversized scale (enlargement) and the movement’s unrestrained use of colour — Pop art appeared celebratory and positive, differing greatly from abstractionist priorities of emotion and technique. Pop was straight to the point and unrefined. Like the youth of the 1960s (its prime supporters) Pop art symbolised unconventional attitudes, dissatisfaction with society, and an antagonism towards the widely accepted values of the time. This oppositional nature was quintessential to Pop art, making it a movement that also challenged what was accepted as art.

Pop artists captured anything and everything. They appropriated imagery from the culture from which they lived and believed in, and from a future, which they could not see. Pop art transferred its attention onto all parts of:

> … advertising, magazine and newspaper illustration, Times Square jokes, tasteless bric-a-brac and gaudy furnishings, ordinary clothes and foods, film stars, pin-ups, cartoons. They sought out the appalling, the inexpensive, revering nothing.\footnote{Ibid. 82.}

All things manufactured could be labelled as “pop”. To illustrate, \textit{Life} magazine (1965) ran a spread on ‘Pop fashion, home appliances, and advertising with a dress based on Warhol’s silkscreens of Campbell’s soup cans’.\footnote{Life magazine, “Pop Art in Fashions”, February, 26 (New York: Time Inc, 1965). 64.} The concept of “pop” was broadcast rather than Pop art. The “popular” included artistic methods that
interlinked high art and the culture of consumption, whilst highlighting what was “cool”, amusing and youthful or ‘commercial objects’.

Pop was ‘an aesthetic playfulness’. For example, the themes that Warhol employed included a focus on, celebrity and glamour and the everyday or banal. Warhol’s work was exaggerated and dramatic. His work mutually encompassed the dissimilarities between minimalism and flamboyance as a contradictory, odd “new” combination in the field of art. He liberated the banal with his obsessive commitment, playfulness, immoderation and indulgence, and with a keen sense of “dandyism”. This campiness was a rejection of modernist ideals of good taste and humourless honesty. Instead his work incorporated aesthetics of exaggeration and kitsch, furthering a dramatic or perhaps artificial replication or interpretation of daily life.

The impact of artists such as Oldenburg, Lichtenstein and Warhol continues today as contemporary artists extend the conceptualisation and use of materials, techniques and objects from the commercial world together with traditional art materials. Mass media, technology and design are increasingly influential. There is enormous diversity in current art-making processes and materials. While the fine arts in painting, drawing or ceramics continue, industrial commercial objects and materials that inhabit everyday lives filter into many aspects of contemporary art as materials, processes, arrangements and conceptual critiques of the modern world. There is an ever-growing manufactured and technological culture. Thus, unsurprisingly, contemporary art consists increasingly of art practices that utilise manufactured objects and processes.

Art is also marketed as a commercialised profession, a creative industry. The arts have become part of popular media culture. A symbiotic relationship has been created between that which is ordinary, banal, manufactured and that, which is traditionally considered to be art — unique, one off, fine art often crafted by hand. Readymade and Pop art ideas, processes and materials have been a major influence on the production component of this exegesis which created “new” versions of the everyday in art and “pop” to reflect on current issues.

211 Wollen, Raiding the Icebox, 158 & 161.
212 Ibid.
An Ironic Mimicry of Design and Consumerism by Post Pop Artists

Post Pop art of the late 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s, was strongly influenced by emerging aspects of Postmodernism. Postmodernism is not a movement but rather a term used to explain ideas and reflect on specific cultural changes. It was a way of describing a new type of society, as well as labelling Post-structuralism in the arts.213 Post-structuralism links in with Postmodernism as both disassembled the overarching beliefs of western cultural history as an unambiguous story of progression. (Metanarratives or grand narratives).214 Through the collapsing of conventions, for example in music, literature and culture, Post Pop artists further questioned what is defined as art and the artist’s role in society.215 Key artists who aesthetically represent the overarching significance of postmodernist trends, such as appropriation, eclecticism, deconstruction and breaking boundaries, include Matthew Barney, Felix Gonzalez-Torres and Barbara Kruger. Postmodernism was seen as ‘unlimited or ambiguous … “irrational” or transformational’ with unclear boundaries and with infinite space and edges.216

Artists such as Jean Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring and Kenny Scharf demonstrate a Pop graphic aesthetic and capture the “anything goes” attitude when they literally took art to the streets. Art can change boundaries such as the work of Basquiat, Haring and Scharf’s did. They utilised graffiti or street art. This was

[A] post-1960s craze for decorating/defacing the urban environment [such as buildings and public transport] through the use of aerosol spray paint and markers … industrial spray paint, acrylics and stencils217

often with ornamental imagery and lettering. Graffiti or street art emerged around 1968 in Paris and Berlin, then re-emerged in Philadelphia and New York where it eventually became considered contemporary art.218 Graffiti art has strong links with hip hop culture and B-boys who utilise graffiti art to express their dissatisfactions with life. Due to a lack of funds to remove street art in New York in

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214 Sharlene Sayegh, “Post-structuralism”, California State University, http://www.csulb.edu/~ssayeghc/theory/poststructuralism.htm (2007). It is a radical way of thinking about individuation and singularities… Each individual is the whole of the world under a singular perspective… Thinking was changed to an acceptance and celebration of ambiguity, unpredictability, endings and pluralism. James Williams, Understanding Poststructuralism (London & New York: Routledge, 2014), 69.
the 1970s, graffiti art proliferated. This illegal art was painted on the ‘surfaces of walls, side-walks and the subway trains’. Graffiti is most common in literate cross-cultural societies as a form of “art” that: varies in production; customizes and transforms public space into the private, emblazoned with artists’ trademarks; and promotes togetherness and difference. Graffiti expresses both individual and collective belief systems into often visually striking, provocative and assertive works. Moving art into the city streets, this was ‘art for anyone and everyone’. Graffiti art was a new way of questioning art's potential using non-traditional materials and non-gallery situations.

In the 1980s artists, such as Jean Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring, crossed over from the streets to art galleries. Haring, Basquiat and Kenny Scharf were inspired by the approaches of graffiti art to image making — especially the idea of placing art with bold graphics on the streets. These artists were not Pop artists per se. But, Warhol’s use of non-art materials content, style and ideas, influenced the advent of graffiti art, especially into “fine” art. Also, Pop’s style can be seen in Haring’s use of script, fluorescent colours and markers. Both Haring and Scharf used cartoons informed by mass media and Pop art. For example, Haring’s symbols are reminiscent of comic strips and cartoons from his childhood such as The Flintstones. These artists marked a re-emergence of Pop art through reproduction and replication. Their art was not just about being territorial on the streets, but about making for the masses — ‘art that wasn’t a monument to a war hero, or an abstract sculpture funded by a bank, but post-pop popular art’. Graffiti artists related to Pop but also to postmodernist ideas of breaking boundaries and making new meanings for the popular culture references they included in their canvases.

At the same time, in 1988, a group of artists including Billy Childish, Tracey Emin

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219 James, Pop Art, 24.
220 Ibid.
221 Ibid.
223 Ibid.
224 Ibid.
225 Ibid.
228 Similar to Lichtenstein’s use of popular comics.
and Damien Hirst from London’s Goldsmiths College — the Young British Artists (YBAs) — created what was referred to as the Brit-Pack or Brit Art. Members such as Hirst and Emin further developed the use of the “commonplace”. They integrated banal elements not just as objects in gallery spaces but also as essential components in realising artworks. These artists used the personal and reflective conceptual themes they investigated and the extremes of ordinariness via consumer objects.

Influential in the 1990s the YBAs became renowned through their eponymous exhibition at the Saatchi Gallery and, even more significantly well-known after their exhibition Freeze, held in three parts in a vacant building in 1988. These artists were highly influenced by their lecturer and artist Michael Craig-Martin who was concerned with conceptuality, ‘direct expression and mundane objects’.228 The YBAs were known for an all-embracing honesty and extreme use of materials and processes in regards to the making and the appearance of art.229 Opportunistic, business minded, scandalous ideas and tasteless or crude art epitomise the YBAs’ work.230

The YBAs are a prime example of a time when theorist Marshall McLuhan’s quote (later adopted by Warhol) ‘art is anything you can get away with’ was fully realised.231 This quote coincides with McLuhan’s widely appropriated phrase the ‘medium is the message’, that the media and message are interrelated both affecting each other — the reading and perception of the art. This saying extended from Duchamp’s idea “anything goes”.232 The YBAs focused on conceptuality (the message) used with a multitude of found and everyday objects. They used photography, video, film and printmaking extensively, developed and challenged what installation was, and enlivened painting.233

While these artists did not have a manifesto they had distinct commonalities within their art practices. The YBAs were characterised by: a contemporary “look” that attracted an international audience; a distinctive relationship to mass media and

230 Collins, “Pop Art”.
culture from which they sourced material; and work that was conceptually driven yet aesthetically distinctive and relatable.\textsuperscript{234} As Stallabrass indicates:

\begin{quote}
Leading artists have preserved dead animals (Damien Hirst), crushed found objects with a steamroller (Cornelia Parker), appropriated objects from medical history (Christine Borland), presented her own bed as art (Tracey Emin) \textit{[and]} made sculpture from fresh food, cigarettes, or women’s tights (Sarah Lucas).\textsuperscript{235}
\end{quote}

The overlooked or mundane examples exhibit that the YBAs were shamelessly fearless. They created controversy and stood out as artists and celebrities. The work of the Post Pop artists is embedded in the banality of the everyday — by commenting on or using utilitarian objects such as Emin’s use of her bed. The use of the ordinary becomes a crucial aspect of their art — art hybridised with the designed. This use of the everyday and aspects from commercialism in art, key aspects of Postmodernism, have continued through to present day, as outlined in this exegesis through the many artist examples and in my production component. As stated in the introduction in the current use of the everyday, prevalent in the artists’ practices in this exegesis and to capture my art, the term I have conceived is “zakkaART”, a concept I have elaborated on in Chapter Two — the exegesis.

There are aspects of kitsch and fashions in the work of Barney’s \textit{Cremaster} series (1994–2002); elements of kawaii (cute) in the graffiti artists’ paintings such as Keith Haring’s cartoon figures and Kenny Scharf’s use of familiar cartoons; a questioning of lifestyle in Michael Landy’s installation works and Rachel Whiteread’s cement buildings; handicrafts for example in Emin’s appliqued wall pieces such as \textit{Mad Tracey From Margate — Everyone's Been There} (1997) and graphics in Barbara Kruger’s slogan works, the graffiti artists’ wall images and Hirst’s spin paintings (2012). The minimalist design aesthetic in the works of the Conceptual/Minimal and YBAs could be read as being closely related to Scandinavian ‘simplistic forms’ often with a sense of colour such as Dan Flavin’s neon works.\textsuperscript{236}

What Brit Art conveys is that there is a lasting connection that exists between art, design and consumerism. These artists combined fine art and Minimalism with spectacle and themes from popular culture.\textsuperscript{237} Hirst and Emin, extended their art into celebrity and celebrity associations (like Warhol). What these artists did by

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{234} Julian Stallabrass, \textit{High Art Life}, 4. \\
\textsuperscript{235} TATE, "Young British Artists". \\
\end{footnotesize}
using branding, philanthropy and mass media has resulted in contemporary British Art being elevated and identified as a ‘branded consumer spectacle’.\textsuperscript{238}

Conditions of cultural change in the postmodern era, where industrialisation and media monopolies persistently influence people’s everyday living, enabled the continuation, and in fact boosted, the use of the readymades and Pop art through providing a focus on the designed as material for art-making. As society became progressively urbanised and commercialised, popular culture became the focus of art. This emphasis from interior (thoughts and feelings) to exterior (environment and society) foci led to art becoming increasingly intellectualised. The more externally focused the culture becomes, so the balance between the internal and the external is reoriented. This is perhaps a reaction in order to understand and differentiate between the created (designed) and what is deemed “fine art”. The inclusion of the already made into art thus created a lasting change.

Pop art continued to be produced in the 1970s, but in a slightly different form as the postmodernist tendency of appropriation was integrated with low art — the designed.\textsuperscript{239} Postmodernism’s deconstruction of social constructs was reflected in the emphasis within art on pastiche, parody, eclecticism, bricolage, remixing and appropriation. Jameson (1998) defines the increasing dependence on appropriation as an ‘aesthetic dilemma’ whereby

\begin{quote}
... the writers and artists of the present day will no longer be able to invent new styles and worlds - they’ve already been invented; only a limited number of combinations are possible; the most unique ones have been thought of already.\textsuperscript{240}
\end{quote}

There are only so many creative possibilities yet appropriation is at the core of Postmodernism and contemporary art. Taking ownership for the personal was in opposition to modernism’s focus on conformity and idealisation. Yet, at the same time appropriation’s disjunction is that we source from others (Postmodernism) in order to be unique or exclusive (modernist).\textsuperscript{241} Whilst Pop art focused on consumerism and the influence of mass media, the use of the readymade acknowledged the everyday, Postmodernism [further] ‘broke down the barriers between art and everyday life’.\textsuperscript{242} This was done through an “anything goes” attitude of ‘a triad of notions: attitude-practice-deconstruction’ which rather than
replacing the ‘Bauhaus model’ creativity-medium-invention [Modernism], De Duve acknowledges it as the same paradigm ‘minus faith plus suspicion’, whereby additionally the artist’s concept dominated.\textsuperscript{245}

During the 1960s–1970s increasing opportunities existed in Western culture for people to express their individuality. Culture was celebrated as ‘a reaction against the norms of high modernism… which conquered the university, the museum, the art gallery network and the foundations’.\textsuperscript{244} Art, and the very designs that artists were reflecting upon became juxtaposed and the realm of what art was considered to be, expanded to everything. ‘Art for art’s sake’ or ‘L’art pour l’art’ originated in Germany, but gained prominence in France as a term with ‘its resistance to, or defiance of, social values… [offending] Victorian morality in the 1890s’.\textsuperscript{245} It could be argued that art in this period bordered on the kitsch, existing as an indulgence of the ‘chattering classes’, — the audience ‘artists, gallery owners, critics and public wallow in the “anything goes”’.\textsuperscript{246} Lyotard describe this as a fragmentation, whereby ‘art, morality and science (the beautiful, the good and the true) are separated and [become] autonomous’.\textsuperscript{247} As a consequence of the innumerable definitions of what art could be, the question of aesthetics also changed to: ‘What can be said to be art (and literature)? [rather than] What is beautiful?’\textsuperscript{248}

Beauty took a back seat to intellectualisation (Conceptualism).

Popular culture, art and aesthetics blur.\textsuperscript{249} As stated by Featherstone, art and the commercial become part of the ‘aestheticisation of everyday life’ exemplified by: i) art subcultures including Dada, avant-garde, Surrealism and theories of Postmodernism, which sought to eliminate the borders within life; ii) life itself is aestheticised (or becomes an artistic practice/style); and iii) modern life becomes visually and symbolically saturated through commercialisation and commodification.\textsuperscript{250} As boundaries become indistinct, the definition of what art is understood to be, becomes ever more amorphous and unreliable.

\textsuperscript{245} Frederick Burwick, Mimesis and Its Romantic Reflections (London: Penn State Press, 2010), 17.
\textsuperscript{247} Sarup, Post-Structuralism and Postmodernism, 148
\textsuperscript{248} Thierry De Duve in Nigel Wood and David Lodge, Modern Criticism and Theory (London & New York: Routledge 2013), 415.
The difficulty in defining these boundaries is central to the work of Post Pop artists: with the question of why art has to have certain credentials for it to be considered to be art rather than craft or design underpinning their work. This tension between art and “not” art (or design) is investigated, by considering how a number of key artists use concepts, techniques, materials, collected objects and/or replication or reproduction of familiar objects and mass media to reflect and critique popular influences. These artists differ from those of Pop art as they are not championing and replicating society’s culture but are instead using the ordinary to decipher the depths of cultural paradigms through the use of banal or everyday (and personal) objects or settings.

**Conceptual and Minimal Artists**

Minimalism and Pop art paved the way for later artists to explore questions about the conceptual nature of art, its form, its production, and its ability to communicate in different ways. In the late 1960s and 1970s, these ideas led to a “dematerialization of art”, when artists turned away from painting and sculpture to experiment with new formats including photography, film and video, performance art, large-scale installations and earth works.251

As noted by Spivey, the 1960s and 1970s were significant in helping to transform not only the physicality of but also the philosophy behind artworks, that is, how art is seen and interacted with. Art no longer consisted of just sculpture and painting. Objects in the gallery space were placed in collaboration with other elements, such as sculptures and installations to replicate the events and systems of society.

Essentially the art is usually more important than the space, however, installation art changed that model. The space and arrangements of components are united as one, creating a total experience. Thus, installation art makes the presence of a viewer in the space a considered component of the work.252 This seduction of or interaction with the audience through installation art is explicit in the work of an innumerable number of artists including: Ai Weiwei’s socially engaged installations that involve or employ community to make components and artist Motoi Yamamoto’s temporary large-scale salt installations.253 254

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Given the ‘sanctity of the church’, art is shown in gallery spaces embedded in Modernism’s framing of the “space”.255 The traditional model of the gallery space, which also exists, is the incubatory place for audiences to see art but also, a room for display is created to look like a space where every piece contained in the showing can exist with enough breathing space.256 This is a place that has sometimes become more important than the art it cradles; a white space, as ‘the archetypal image of twentieth century art’.257 The object frames the space, influencing all aspects of the place which is always extremist in its minimalist aesthetic, so as not to detract from the actual “art”.258

Conceptuality is art that evolves around “the word” or language, and formulated and responded to by curators and critics.259 The didactic and catalogue essay by the artist and writer articulating and theorising the intentions evident in the artwork become all-important to help the intellectuals and audience understand the art pieces. The viewer is required to work harder to understand the artwork, as art becomes increasingly diverse, designed and removed from what it may traditionally, have been seen to be. The concept or idea is what is used to navigate the strategies and choices. The production process is most often secondary. The idea becomes an all-important device essential to creating art and to engage the viewer.260 Yet, conceptualism is contradictory as it is also seen as being an art that

... substitutes the object-like ... final work by creative process ... Art does without its traditional finalized form and, therefore, assigns a new role not only to the artist, but also the viewer.261

This process of conceptuality in its purest form becomes art as ideas. Key to Conceptual art is its relationship with Duchamp and the use of the ‘everyday’ as his readymade challenged the very definition of art but also that “all art of consequence made at any time anywhere is ipso facto conceptual”.262 Like Duchamp, conceptual

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257 Ibid.

258 Ibid.

259 This relates back to Roland Barthes, “Death of the Author / Mort de l’auteur” in that less emphasis is placed on the author or artist and more upon the audience. Interpretation, reaction and commentary are given more credibility than the maker’s creativity or intention. The language focus lead to an emphasis on the actions of the reader/viewer as inquirer and interpreter of all text, literature, film and art Roland Barthes, “Death of the Author / Mort de l’auteur”. Stephen Heath Farrar (ed & trans.), Image, Music, Text (New York, NY: Straus and Giroux, 1978), 142 & 2-6.


263 Smith, “One and Three Ideas”.

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artists devalued taste, aesthetics, craftsmanship and innovation as art. Instead, they attempted to get closer to the everyday, to “reality” by becoming that which they were pursuing in their art practice such as “gardener, scientist, sociologist, philosopher, storyteller, chemist, sportsman”.

Kosuth’s renowned quote (1969): ‘All art (after Duchamp) is conceptual (in nature) because art only exists conceptually’, confirms the essence of Conceptualism. Thus, only art that concerns itself with Duchampian philosophy is considered to be the “true art” and that any other art is not “art” as it does not challenge or outline new approaches as art or in response to art. This sense of elitism of ideas over beauty is one of the fundamental changes that transformed Western art in the late twentieth century and increased the hierarchical levels of what is considered “good” art. The manufactured used in art becomes “another thing” heightened to the function of “art” and “ideas”. As Kosuth sees it:

When objects are presented within the context of art they are as eligible for aesthetic consideration as are any objects in the world, and an aesthetic consideration of an object existing in the realm of art means that the object’s existence or functioning in an art context is irrelevant to the aesthetic judgment.

Art is essentially “art” because the artist deems it so. During this period many artists sought to be “controversial” by focusing on debating the very foundations of art. They questioned their own assumptions about whether their work was art, what their role was as artists, as well as what their expectations as viewers encompassed. Conceptual artists rejected conventional fine art, such as painting and sculpture in favour of “other” materials and forms as these traditional art forms were thought to, according to Kosuth, limit the anarchist questioning of art.

Conceptual artists were also concerned with where their art was exhibited — the context and location — producing works “in situ” or as “site-specific”. Artist Daniel Buren created ‘only striped paintings to focus the viewer’s attention on their specific location rather than on their physical attributes’. For example, his Photosouvenir: Peinture-Sculpture (1971) transformed the entrance of the Guggenheim

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266 Ibid.
Museum, New York, with a huge hanging banner of pinstripes.\textsuperscript{271} \textsuperscript{272} The height of Conceptualism was 1962–1977.\textsuperscript{273} During this period art could be considered as being ‘anti-establishment and anti-consumerist [as the focus was taken away from the] consumerist conception of art and artists.’\textsuperscript{274} Artists rejected the commodification of art so that art could no longer be an objectified “product” purely for buying and collecting.\textsuperscript{275} Art diversified further into using the everyday and collected as well as more experiential events that were time–based “happenings”, ephemeral, performative or short–lived installations.\textsuperscript{276}

Felix Gonzalez-Torres and Barbara Kruger are examples of artists interpreting and commenting on materialism, by visually emphasising ideas rather than aesthetics. Using the designed, they demonstrated an adherence to postmodernist principles of multiplicity or plurality rather than modernism's focus on “innovation”.\textsuperscript{277} In response to contemporary art-making these summarised principles are: appropriation; juxtaposition; recontextualisation; layering; interaction of text and image; hybridity, gazing and representing.\textsuperscript{278}

The most reputable of these artists is Damien Hirst. But also, Tracey Emin, Michael Landy, Cornelia Parker and Rachel Whitehead are worth mentioning as they had a clear link to the everyday and popular culture of the time.

The Neo-Pop Creative Union of Art, Design and Consumerism

In the period termed Neo-Pop (late 1980s to early 1990s) — the relationship between art and design moved from interlinking, to new expressions of art as design. Two separate aspects caused this development. First was the growth of the artist as design director sending works to be manufactured as if they were commercial objects. Second, the explosion of the creative industries via emerging digital technologies, contributed to a greater focus on design and creativity via
manufacturing, mass and online media. Neo-Pop utilised shock to reflect on the increase of these digital technologies, on design, mobility and consumer oriented culture.

During the 1980s and 1990s the USA was the strongest democratic nation, and with the end of the Cold War the main global superpower. It is argued that ‘American power faced no peer, no rival, no threat’. However, at the same time, other countries slowly emerged to become culturally influential led by German reunification and the establishment (1990) of the Eurozone. American cultural imperialism of the previous decades was slowly reduced as the 1980s signified the start of cultural pluralism. Communication could be transmitted more easily on an international level through the growth of technology and the Internet. Society was no longer homogenised by the media but became heterogenised, diversified by many dissimilar attributes either consecutively or concurrently.

The concept of a “creative industry” situated art as a profession that could contribute to the cultural economy. Cultural industries and creative industries overlapped in sectors and classification but were actually different. The cultural industries included those that reached mass audiences such as television and the creative industries included computer services and were without heritage classifications. The creative industries were those that included ‘new labour’, and the cultural industries were those of the establishment. But most recently, the idea of cultural industries has shrunk and been overtaken by the term “creative industry”. Creative industries are defined as those industries that have both intellectual property and potential for commercialisation. They include

... music and performing arts: film, television and radio; advertising and marketing; software development and interactive content; writing, publishing and print media; and architecture, design and visual arts.

The focus on the commercialisation of art signified opportunities for the entrepreneurism of creativity through commercialisation. Design was

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fundamentally associated with art in relation to themes and a relationship to objects from the everyday and consumerism. Artists exploited these aspects in the form of reconstructed, larger than life reproductions of industrial products and themes. These creations were often related to the 1980s and 1990s focus on consumer culture as pleasure seeking, self-indulgent, greedy and sensationalist.

One way that “art” can be further valued by society, as suggested by O’Connor, Cunningham and Jaaniste is by structuring the creative industry ‘around art-media-design’, making consumerism, art and design directly connected.\textsuperscript{286} Design had moved so far into Neo-Pop art that new roles emerged between the primary artist as designer and the interns, or outsourced workers, who physically made the object. Warhol initially challenged the art world and the notion of the artist as an individual working alone by introducing a model, overcrowded with assistants willing to “work”.\textsuperscript{287, 288}

Like [film producers Irving] Thalberg and Walt Disney, Warhol conjured a market for his own work through savvy farming of talent, business instinct, and relentless oversight.\textsuperscript{289}

Much like the ‘studio system’ of Thalberg, Warhol’s mass-production model which had been ironically celebrated in Warhol’s “Factory” has since become both mainstream and invisible, carrying with it all of the social and economic baggage of an underclass of unacknowledged and underpaid workers.\textsuperscript{290} Having assistants was a regular practice initiated by the Old Masters. However, they tended to recognise the assistants and mentored them to continue their work, a transparency that rarely exists in the artist–assistant relationship today.\textsuperscript{290, 294} Old Masters viewed their assistants as pupils — a point of pride — whereas Hirst and others view their assistants as mere employees’.\textsuperscript{295} The artist became an artistic director designing

\textsuperscript{288} One of Andy’s great innovations was realising that the idea of the artist alone in his studio was not a particularly modern one, and that an artist could have a team. Glenn O’Brien, Quoted in Alex Needham, “Andy Warhol’s Legacy Lives on in the Factory of Fame”, \textit{The Guardian} February 22http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2012/feb/22/andy-warhol-legacy-lives-on (2012).
\textsuperscript{295} Even so, international artist Kiki Smith is known for her more considerate treatment of her assistants. She thinks of them as family, taking a keen interest in their art practices and mentoring them to become better in their own careers. Kiki Smith, in Stan Sesser, “The Art Assembly Line”, \textit{The Wall Street Journal}, June 3, http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB100014240527023057453045576357681741418282 (2011).
works to be manufactured as if they were commercial objects.  

Examples include artists Ryan McGuiness, the Chapman Brothers and Jeff Koons who all took the idea of the “factory” and varied it to suit their own creative agendas. The use of banal resource material during this period was developed further into sensationalist portrayals of popular icons and objects in art that reflected not only the exuberance of the era, but also its affluence, greed and indulgence. Especially evident was the move to a culture whereby the image and its manipulations became all important examples of ‘manufactured fictions’. Thus people become ‘the “buy-product” of representation’, disrupting established art and society. These aspects defined Neo or New Pop in the 1980s. Bankowsky (2004) identifies four key elements of Neo-Pop which were clearly embedded in Pop art and the readymade, but taken in new directions in the Neo or New Pop period:

[1] Duchamp's discovery that anything can be art if it is so designated; [2] Beuys's proclamation that everyone is an artist; [3] Warhol's assertion that making art is the same as making any other commercial product; [4] and finally (also from Warhol) the idea that, since there is no essential difference between creating art and creating anything else, artists can share in the wider recognition that other makers have enjoyed and do not have to be restricted to the esteem of an elite.

Neo-Pop expanded from the readymades and Pop aesthetics into “anything” by engaging in conversations about meaning as the first and second appearance of things — the first as some mass-cultural event, like a news photo of a car accident, and the second as that photo as a painting by Andy Warhol’, that is the actual event and then the interpretation.

An example of this was Emin’s used bed in her own house and the associated events. The gallery presentation of the same bed as The Bed (1998), gave the work an additional meaning and context.

The work of artists Katharina Fritsch and Daniel Edwards are examples of Neo-Pop styles that emphasise original Pop aesthetics with a focus on large plastic moulded sculptures and possessing a similar “bold” approach to themes and objects. These artists emphasise the manufactured and/or the glamorous in the use of larger than life scale, vivid colour, popular icons and aspects of the everyday.

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294 As revealed in the video (and book), The Art of Not Making, artists conceptually designed their art. To fully realise their projects craftspeople or manufacturers were employed to work with the materials and do the actual constructing. Michael Petry, The Art of Not Making: The New Artist/Artisan Relationship (London: Thames & Hudson, 2011), 1.


296 Ibid.

297 Ibid.

298 Ibid.

299 Ibid.

300 Ibid.
Many significant artists considered to be Neo-Pop engage with the familiar. Key works include Allan McCollum’s painstakingly laborious *The Shapes Project* (2006), unusual two-dimensional forms created from Adobe Illustrator vector files to represent each individual on earth, and to be continued even after his death;301 Yngvar Larsen’s *Maria Coins* (2008) and *Heavy Breath* (2009) are representative of his small tin, pewter and lead casts of objects including rubber bands, lighters and apple cores. Larsen ‘shows... the world as it is and is not... by addressing the most everyday things and giving them a new meaning’.302303 Ideas associated with the truth and lies behind a “free” democratic American society, ‘the underbelly of the American psyche, specifically our fascination with celebrities, violence, and psychopathological behavior... strategies historically associated with Pop art, Minimalism, and Post-Minimalism’ are seen in Cady Noland’s *Mutated Pipe* (1989).304 Whilst Gavin Turk’s appropriation and replication as represented in *Fitzy* (1995), exemplifies ideas about production, legitimacy and individuality.305 Designers who have had an influence on the changing role of art, design, creativity and consumerism are groups/people such as IDEO, Karim Rashid, Marc Jacobs, Romance was Born, and the manufacturers, Kartell, Apple, MUJI and IKEA. These design industries also signify the relevance of objects and thus zakka in the mundane through the attention to detail, function and unusual or well-designed aesthetics in the designed.

The impact of creative industry policies that are embedded in industries such as art and design helped to foster what Florida in 2003 termed the “creative class”.306 This is a broad concept to define a ‘new social class’ of people who are involved in creative industry.307 Florida was convinced that social change was due not only to technology but that predominant transformations were to do with the way we work and live.308 Many aspects of lifestyle, time and communication were changing, and

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303 My practice, like Larsen’s, is indicative of ‘a pragmatic and practical relationship to the techniques and materials I use. Often it has been directed by time, money and the access I have had to different resources’. Yngvar Larsen, Quoted in Måg. "Features/Interviews: Yngvar Larsen", Mag. Iss. 3, 90-103 (London: Naborad, 2011), 96-97.
308 Such as leisure pursuits, places of employment, daily lives and communities.
creativity was a shared link. Florida considered these aspects a source of economic development and influential in the growth of the Creative Class.309

This rise in creative professions included an increasing acceptance of the arts and creativity as a valued extension of each individual. Creativity in education became a more integrated part of learning and the availability of cheap personal computers and diverse software allowed people to increasingly create for themselves. “Innovation” and “interactivity” became common buzzwords in the never-ending search for originality.310 Interactivity and participation defined a user-generated society, allowing consumers to have an increased and acknowledged participation in the development of popular culture and media. As these factors emerged the crossover between art and design came to the fore. As a result of art’s inclusion as an industry, art has been forced to commercialise and find ways to survive through a focus on finances and commercialism. Neo-Pop, for the most part, reflects on this culture of the designed and popular — mediated culture that became an accustomed part of daily life.

Art became more diversified in its approach and use of materials, drawing from the innovative capacities of digitisation and manufacturing in art-making. As an increasingly money making profession, contemporary art is, for example, more readily collected by corporations and auctioned to private buyers. So too art has become accepted in the same realm as architecture and design.311 Thus, art has been further embedded into commercial and consumerist culture, and consequently into many aspects of the popular and mass media. As concluded by Adorno and Horkheimer, if industrialisation is homogenisation as replication and “mass culture”, then art like the rest of manufacturing, has been reduced to simply being a “unit” of conformity for buying and selling.312 Art is then merchandise, like the designed.313 Thus, O’Connor, Cunningham and Jaaniste’s proposal as previously stated, is evident — art, media, design and consumerism are intrinsically interlinked.

309 Florida, Rise of the Creative Class, xvii.
Nevertheless, art does still remain distinct, differentiated as a medium about meaning, not predominantly about functionality.  

Design

Design had an ever-increasing impact on media and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Product design and graphic design became two of the most important creative industries, as culture demanded “sophisticated” design in a competitive design market. The manufactured environments were continually being recreated with new plans. Leading designer Bruce Mau

... presented the concept that the future will hold a one world ecology with a one world economy where design will have to be responsible for its actions and its outcomes in a time of massive change.

As stated by Mau, design has become all-important. Computer technology also revolutionised graphic design through programs such as the Adobe Suite. These changes were especially seen in layout and text such as experimental typography in magazines. Software continually improved, allowing new occasions for playing and experimenting with typography — design principles and filter effects permitted innovative possibilities not previously achievable due to the limitations of hand-making media.

These programs revolutionised design but, most importantly, also enabled people with computers and the program to create for themselves. The ability of non-specialists to self-create through programs such as PageMaker, Illustrator, Photoshop and Quark (InDesign) enabled the everyday consumer to creatively contribute design within industry as small businesses, as employees in the growing fields of creative industries, and as hobbyists. There was an onslaught of visual imagery enabled through digitisation. Generations of people thus became more visually literate — understanding and demanding from industry or personally creating the aesthetics they desired through art, design and media production. The impact of design was increasing. The 1960s and 1970s were about excesses and compromise, the 1980s and 1990s exemplified ‘that through design people could

314 Ibid., 8.
have it all, all of the time". The link between design and commercialism were catapulted through the availability of mass produced products and the “need” to spend. Although either loved or hated at the time, an example of design that epitomized the 1980s

… more-is-more [like commercialism] aesthetic… extravagant colors, accentuated shapes and pedimented detailing… was the Memphis group (1981–1987). Their work was influential… and polarizing. Memphis was inspired by a few converging, if not particularly similar movements: Art Deco, Pop Art and the emerging postmodernism (PoMo) which would come to pervade everything from furniture to film to music.

The 1980s were about commercialisation, money and spending — extreme hedonism and materialism.

If both the designed and art are increasingly available, then what are the differences? These industries have existed as separate entities but also on occasion have hybridised such as in the Arts and Crafts Movement, Bauhaus and also Constructivism. A constant questioning and uncertainty as to where the boundaries exist continues today. Mackenzie tackled this subject in Artguide suggesting that the fine artists’ skills are not what separates artists from designers since many such as Koons’s and his creation of shiny sculptures and intricate paintings are outsourced to manufacturers and/or a factory of assistants that make their “products”.

He questions:

Is it to do with the capacity to provoke and comment on culture? While artists may have the lead on this, designers are moving in droves to change culture, when it comes to consumption and sustainability. True, design can be overly concerned with sensual matters such as touch, sound, smell and sight. They often care a little too much for that catch-all quality called ‘the finish’ of an object, but lets not forget the immaculate finish of Patricia Piccininni car nugget, or a sculpture by Ricky Swallow.

As Mackenzie claims, the key links of art to design are the utilisation of design industry methods including resolving works, the use of manufacturing methods and working in teams or with studio assistants. Neo-Pop artists, again spearheaded by Koons but also including Fritsch and Edwards, welcomed the model of utilising design to make art. Design is seen in their slick often huge sculptures that copy products and are made with the same manufacturing methods. Thus, the impact of

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318 Ibid.
321 Ibid.
this focus on the manufactured object and industrialisation has affected the art industry through an imitative factory-like model as a way of creating large pieces and a considerable supply of art; to keep up with consumer’s demand for buying and owning particular artworks.

Many artists continue the artist-assistant relationship whereby employees create their art. Although not all classified as Neo-Pop, these artists include, Ryan McGuiness and The Chapman Brothers as stated earlier and Julian Opie, Olafur Eliasson, Tara Donovan, the YBAs and Jeff Koons. In fact YBA Hirst is famous for his belief that the idea is important not the act of making the art (Conceptualism), although when viewing his art, his material playfulness is clearly evident. Willett states:

As the progenitor of the idea, he is therefore the artist. Of course, he’s not the only artist who feels this way. Andy Warhol had a factory. Mr. Brainwash has a factory. Jeff Koons has a team of assistants, too. Virtually all of these men admit to little talent and a bunch of ideas.

There are many artists whose careers are successful due to ideas rather than an inherent aptitude for art-making. These artists profess to have assistants to keep up with the increasing commercial demands of being an “ideas generator” and a “successful” artist. However, it should be noted that in contrast Hirst’s art is incredibly visual and professional — with a strong sense of the design elements e.g. colour, line, and composition. Thus, his art appeals to buyers not only for this sense of style, and concept but also for his signature and collectability. Through ideas generation and the use of mass production these artists become directors, manufacturers and celebrities.

The 1980s and 1990s signalled a time of tackiness and excess with over-the-top consumerism, fashions and mass media. The work of Koons exemplified the changing outlook on wealth and success, and reflected, celebrated and exposed the overwhelming affect of monetary material indulgence. It is because of these factors, and especially as a result of his larger-than-life kitsch sculptural series Banality

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323 Ibid.
(1988) that was concurrently shown in three galleries, that Koons’s art became so “fashionable” and made him into ‘the neo-Pop god that he is today’.324

Neo–Pop and Consumerism

While Neo-Pop can be regarded as a resurgence of its predecessor, and an expansion of the aesthetics of the readymades of Pop art, it is important to note that New York art critic, John Perreault, prefixed Pop with “Neo” referencing Pop art’s initial name, Neo-Dada, Neo meaning “new” or “recent”; claiming Pop art was always “alive”.325 Neo-Pop signified the acceptance of pop elements as a popularised trend, again as a fashionable form of artistic styling. Neo was Post Pop, a postmodern expansion of Pop art. Drawing also from Dada’s readymades and Conceptual art, Neo-Pop borrowed from popular culture images, signs and familiar objects to create art that questioned society’s standards.326 Neo-Pop is a classification system describing artists with a distinct Pop art influence, especially in relation to the work of Warhol.327 These artists opposed Minimalism and Conceptualism’s focus on design that was ‘simplified and without ornamentation’.328 Aspects of Photorealism, installation and performance art are also evident in Neo-Pop. These works were often replicas of objects, like Warhol’s Brillo Box copies, rather than actual manufactured objects placed in gallery spaces. Many works were life-size or gigantic in scale, challenging the tradition of the white cube gallery as they were often installed in outdoor environments. This reiteration of Pop art often included the use of readymades, everyday objects and the imagery of a new generation of celebrities such as Michael Jackson, Britney Spears, Madonna, and Paris Hilton.329 Unlike some of their more political contemporaries (e.g. Kruger and Haring) this 1980s movement was regarded as devoid of socio-political objectives as it was focused on sensationalism.330

Neo-Pop was a ‘more extreme version of Warhol, Oldenburg and Rauschenberg’, as it did not just celebrate the commercial but instead assessed and criticised Western

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329 Collins, “Neo-Pop Art”.
standards, communications and relationships. These artists made fun of celebrities and welcomed confrontational and provocative ideas. Neo-Pop art used common themes such as animals and embedded their works with emotional and intellectual assessments such as:

Charles Ray and Jeff Koons succeed at disguising their intentions, Damien Hirst and Katharina Fritsch proclaim their intentions. Hirst uses disturbing subject matter and pessimistic titles, while Fritsch uses anxiety and fear provoking sculptures.

The Neo-Pop artists brought to attention the almost disturbing attitude to be found in culture’s mass obsessions and fears. They reflected on the increased awareness of the ever-increasing stronghold of consumerism and the environmental cost associated with it.

From the 1980s to the new millennium, art that related to design and consumerism significantly changed from the emphasis of Post Pop on the ordinary in the everyday, to that of sensationalism and exaggeration of the iconic. Rather than utilising industrial products to create from or add to, like Duchamp did with his Readymades, or replicate industrial processes such as screen printing like Warhol did, the Neo-Pop artists mostly created art that was designed by the very same processes as the manufactured. The increased use of technology and emphasis on creativity as a driving force in industry necessitated the need to “stand out” as innovation greatly impacted both art and design — creative industry. Neo-Pop artists used banality and grand scale to create sculptures, installations and paintings that had the slick finish of products with the conceptual investigation of consumer and media culture, making the latest type of Pop art. In doing this, a new “industry” was created of employed assistants, similar to Warhol’s factory of helpers but without the notoriety. They were purely an assembly of workers. As commerce and exchange became of paramount importance to society’s cash flow, the artists researched created works that highlighted these preoccupations with advertising, fame, product designs and branding by grossly exaggerating the popular, further accentuating the art/design link. My production component is not larger-than-life like Neo-Pop, although there are some similarities in the use of kitsch, the iconic, the everyday and a connection to themes related to consumer culture. However, I created my pieces alone (apart from the collaborations with

331 Collins, "Neo-Pop Art".
332 Lilith Gallery, "Neo-Pop Art".
333 Ibid.
334 Ibid.
Gamblen), without the assistance of multiple helpers.

Post Neo-Pop And The Blurring of Art, Design and Consumerism

There can be no return to a world where artist and designer occupy separate spheres. The blurring of art and design is especially evident in the first world, including countries that have similar politics and economies: industrialised and capitalist states such as North America, Western Europe, Japan and Australia. Much art today is interrelated with design, and is connected through the use of: similar conventions, commercialism and inspirations from the cultures of online, digital and mass media. Examples include: collectives based in studios, marketing strategies, branding campaigns, fashions and outsourced manufacturing. The distinction between art and design has moved from an overlap, to ironic mimicry, as a method of questioning our relationships with the consumer world, towards a creative marriage, to finally a blurred distinction that is now in itself, sometimes indistinguishable, in an “anything goes” paradigm. An example of this is Superflat founded by Japanese artist Takashi Murakami.

Murakami has become globally famous and influential in art and design with his use of animation-like, childish imagery and bold colours. He termed the concept “superflat,” and runs the leading Hiropon Factory stable of sought-after artists. He is one of the most celebrated contemporary artists in the evolutionary league of Warhol (Pop), Hirst (YBAs) and Koons (Neo-Pop). The London TATE Modern exhibition Pop Life (2009–2010), recognised these connections by bringing:

Andy Warhol, Damien Hirst, Jeff Koons, Takashi Murakami and more [“together to see”] the various ways that artists since the 1980s have engaged with mass media and cultivated artistic personas creating their own signature “brands”.

Although regarded as Neo-Pop, Murakami is the most recent successor in the Pop art continuum. His work predominantly draws from Japan’s anime (animation films), manga (graphic novels/cartoons) and otaku (video games). His art integrates aspects of hentai (anime/Manga pornography) and is influenced by Japanese ukiyo-e woodblock paintings, with a focus on kawaii (cute) and entertainment.

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These popular culture connections link him to Warhol, Pop art and his Superflat manifesto.  

Murakami integrates art and designed consumer products, as well as art as business. He focuses on conceptual ideas of materialism and art’s role in popular culture. He also critiques ‘capitalism and globalisation’ and techniques from the manufacturing realm to create paintings and sculptures that are decorative, childlike (character design/ anime), kitsch and folk.  

Murakami is considered to be ‘Japan’s most successful contemporary artist and also the art world’s best art investment’.  

Within ten years his art has risen twenty times over in price. His art can be said to be that of contemporary ‘super-sized toys and cartoons, [from] massive paintings on canvas to finely crafted figurative sculptures, [and] giant inflatable balloons’ created by manufacturing processes and studios of assistants in New York and Japan.

Described as ‘Japan's Andy Warhol’ — Murakami, has created an art empire and a legion of fans. He has blended high art for the elite and the galleries and low art or commercial products for the consumer, combined Eastern and Western aesthetics, colour, kitsch, ornamentation and used the key feature of cuteness together with his select team of artists at the Hiropon Factory. By intermixing, Murakami has amplified the depths of Pop Art, bringing Pop artistry to new audiences. Even greater than the Pop artists before him, Murakami, has made the link between art and commerce by creating consumer objects from his art, rather than making ‘consumerism into art’ as Warhol set out to do by drawing from the manufacturing realm, Murakami has surpassed this goal:

In the context of early Postmodernism, Warhol’s work presented a direct challenge to the elevation of fine art above everyday life. In a contemporary setting, Murakami’s work does not challenge, but rather profits from and reinforces the elevation of his artistic practice in a lucrative market.

Murakami has managed to not only mimic the designed, but to create a business out of connecting art and design through the creation of fine art and designer

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337 Ben Lewis, “Takashi Murakami: Toying With Art”, Art Safari television program, August 8, Series 2 episode 1, (ABC TV, 2006).
338 Ibid.
339 Michael Darling, "Plumbing the Depths of Superflatness", Art Journal, Fall 60, 3, (ProQuest Arts, 2001), 76.
objects. Warhol identified with mechanisation and replication. The YBAs, especially Hirst took the natural and banal to comment on themes such as life and death. Koons played the role of an artistic director bringing attention to the popular through kitsch and sensationalised replication. Murakami continues with the factory methods, replication and Pop aesthetic but delivers these with attention to East-West (Japanese-American) influences and an emphasis on the superflat, which shows a relationship to the globalisation.

Murakami’s East-West focus mirrors the heightened impact of developing Asian or non-English speaking countries — such as the BRICs. These countries have influenced countries like the USA, Australia and those in Europe, through global popular culture. Relevant contemporary non-Western artists include Murakami’s Kaikai Kiki, Yoshitomo Nara and Gonkar Gyatso, who combine a Pop and everyday aesthetic with an often keen sense of colour and the decorative. These artists signify the diversity of art-making, the boundary blurring of art and design, the influx of creatives as an adjunct to innovation and the integration of the popular and common as cultural practice.

Murakami’s theory of “superflat” is a way to describe his entire art practice and in fact the art of many Japanese contemporary artists as ‘characterized by a lack of perspective, an extreme planarity, and an interest in particular kinds of movement, expressed graphically’. The four main tenants of Superflat are: i) literal flatness; ii) high art and low art; iii) mainstream culture and subculture and; iv) past and present. The approach focuses on diminishing hierarchies so that everything becomes of equal value. Superflat is a discourse about the layering of culture, such as the amalgamation of “pop”, reflecting the globalisation and therefore equalisation of all traditions. Murakami believes that Japan needs to transcend the flatness, (the surface, and the two-dimensionality), to gain more respect as a culture, as different from the West. Superflat states that urban, Westernised culture becomes more and more superficial (homogenised) due to aspects such as commercialisation, thus “one-dimensional”.

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344 Ibid.
347 Ibid.
In this period individual uniqueness and collective and public interactivity are brought together. The practices of artists, including Murakami, who utilise the merchandising and marketing strategies of design and the commercial creative realms, such as advertising, exemplify the continual focus on the manufactured. There is also an increasing emphasis on environmental and global concerns, as demonstrated by urban artist Banksy in his political works such as *If You Repeat a Lie Enough, It Becomes Truth Politics*. Globally there is a conflict between the excesses of consumerism and the increasing need for a sustainable society and economy, facing the desecration of natural resources. Cultural resources for art-making have continued to grow, especially through technology and the Internet. Also, the privileging of Western thought over others has become blurred, due to globalisation. In the twenty-first century world, consumerist Western values dominate over and above other cultural practices, blending into one accepted or ‘popular’ way of being — “consumerism”, often is ‘dominating the cultures of the developing countries’.

Increasingly, however, as Asian and non-Western countries become more powerful, their culture infiltrates the West. Differing opinions and discussions around the themes of homogenisation and heterogenisation of culture have become central to how globalisation is theorised. Figenshou points out that homogenisation consists of ‘nationalism/national media’ and that what is regarded as homogenisation for one, is experienced as heterogenisation by another person. Due to globalisation both exist ‘simultaneously and sequentially’. Globalisation is polarising. It is seen as a uniting power or ‘Americanisation’, whilst also reinforcing localisation or ‘indigenization, i.e. ‘the resurgence of native cultures and local social practices’. Perceptively, Pieterse argues that ‘globalization brings about diverse trends, namely cultural differentiation, cultural convergence and cultural hybridization’. Both cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenisation, and these two processes overlap and set up a global culture or what he terms “glocalisation” where

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local and global converge.\(^{355}\) As Robertson suggests, culture has become an enmeshment of the global and local influenced by popular, interactive and increasingly social media.

The impact of different cultures on the production of media has created an expansion of the “artistic models” available to artists — there is more variety in tools, media and ideas as a result of cultural hybridisation. Some influences are accommodated, others are merged and still others are disregarded and simply disappear. This hybridity of influences is accepted in contemporary art as seen in the work of artists including: Beatriz Milhaze, Fabian Marcaccio, Anish Kapoor and Rachael Whiteread. Milhaze combines many art styles including Neo Baroque and Abstraction with folk and Pop art to create her paintings such as Mariposa (2004). Marcaccio amalgamates painting and sculpture, as in Paintant Stories (2000). Kapoor and Whiteread challenge the idea of art and space by creating large ‘hybrid installations’ such as Marsyas (2002–2003) and Embankment (2005–2006) which take over entire locations.\(^{356}\) These artists have embedded in their practices a relationship to the mixology of cultural influences through the use of varied global influences.

Theorist Pierre Bourdieu relates these aspects to power and cultural constraints:

> The habitus \([\text{established social structures}]\), the product of history, produces individual and collective practices, and hence history, in accordance with the schemas engendered by history... Since the history of the individual is never anything other than a certain specification of the collective history of his [\(/\text{her}\)] class or group...\(^{357}\)

As stated by Bourdieu, habitus are the structures we all learn as individuals based on aspects such as our class and education, as well as collectively with family and as part of the cultures we engage in — the individual and collective. Examples such as love/hate, war/peace, individual/collective, and authority versus utopian ideals of democracy, are binaries.\(^ {358}\) These binaries always exist and the relationship of these oppositions causes cohesion (utopia) or destruction (dystopia).\(^ {359} \) \(^ {360}\) Bourdieu argues that people classify themselves according to their taste and understanding of

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\(^{355}\) Frey, “Culture is Not a Luxury Culture”, 10 & 13.


\(^{358}\) Taiwanese novel Zero no Tsukaima (The Familiar of Zero) (2004-2011) by Noboru Yamaguchi and George Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four (1949) are examples of utopia/dystopia. Huang, *Zero and Other Fictions*, x.

\(^{359} \) Ibid.

\(^{360} \) Ibid.
culture, which has become ‘cultural consumption [and] social positions’. Thus, individuals can help to break down or change accepted collective boundaries and histories, through their habitus. Artists search for how they can translate ‘the cultural values of cultural groups and connect them to the world network’. One of the changes that some artists, drawing on the tradition of the “readymade” are seeking to create, is reducing human impact on the environment.

Sustainability and environmental concerns largely related to the impact of industrialisation and climate change, have become embedded in cultural discourse in the twenty-first century. The company, Apple is one of the international leaders in innovation, technology, creativity and digital products, yet even though they are reluctant environmentally, they are making some efforts. As stated on their website Apple aims to create products that are the “best” — powerful, functional and beautiful. They state that this same passion is focused upon environmental responsibility. Thus they concentrate on renewable resources to counteract the impact of their production line. ‘We have one planet with a finite amount of resources on it... So our resource conversation starts right from the beginning — the design stage’. They continue by describing the recycled and recyclable materials that they use and how the electronics industry can use ‘green chemistry’. Whether this is a marketing ploy or truth is uncertain and debatable. However, as stated by Apple, the environment has become, at least theoretically, a priority issue for many organisations.

The use of the world’s resources has become a global concern that has impacted culturally on the way we live, for example the concepts of “reduce, reuse, recycle”, ‘reduce consumptions, reuse consumer goods, and recycle and compost the rest’. Or ‘the 5R’s of green computing which includes computer reuse, recycling, reduction, reconstitution and rethinking’ as ways of minimising the impact of technology on the environment.
Recycling in art is not a new concept. Neither did Duchamp invent the idea with his readymades. Ancient civilisations such as the Greeks and Romans remodelled or re-carved sculptures. The *Deutscher Werkbund* (1907) (German Association of Craftsmen) aimed to ‘marry art and technology’.\(^{367}\) At the same time they were informing people about ‘the beauty of well-designed objects’ as an alternative to the mass-produced.\(^{368}\) In some cases, they reused ‘war materials [such as] gas masks refashioned into candlestick holders and helmets that have been enamelled and turned into cooking pots’.\(^{369}\) The Steampunk movement of the 1980s reutilised mostly mechanical parts to associate to the 1800s use of steam power.\(^{370}\) Many ancient Japanese wabi-sabi techniques rekindle the use of objects by creatively mending, saving them from being discarded. Examples include Kintsugi, which incorporates resin, gold powder, gold leaf and lacquer to repair utilitarian ceramic objects or Boro mending clothes and textiles with decorative functional stitches such as Sashiko. This mending gives them a “new” aesthetic and “life”. What is different with contemporary reuse is that it is not an optional tool for creativity but a method for recontextualising objects as products of sustainable or “greener” environmental solutions, that challenge our relationships to consumption and waste.

Art that uses the reusable or discarded has come to reflect the critical concern for the environment and limited resources. Sustainable development is a powerful theme, whereby ecological balance is kept by balancing what is used from and what is returned to the earth. The art of recycling is inextricably linked to consumerism as products. Therefore, the readymade and Pop art now relate to our contemporary complex relationships with products, as the main focus slowly moves to the use of already designed as well as used objects from the manufactured environment.

Many artists and designers have embraced the ‘green movement’ by including recycling and upcycling (old into new), or the use of found, and reused materials in the making of their work.\(^{371}\) These makers are thus using the principles of “sustainability” as a core theme in their pieces and highlighting this to their viewers and buyers.\(^{372}\) As described by global organisation The Natural Step, these principles are: i) less build-up of substances from the earth e.g. fossil fuels; ii) less build-up of compounds and chemicals by society, for example PCBs; iii) less

\(^{369}\) Ibid.  
\(^{370}\) Ibid. 8.  
\(^{372}\) Ibid.
degradation of nature and natural resources and processes, for example over harvesting forests; and iv) less inhumane and rudimentary conditions, for example unsafe workplaces/conditions. Examples of recycling in art, such as *Plastic Arts* (2009) an instance of artist Sarah Goffman’s found object practice, demonstrates an attempt by these artists to utilise processes that primarily relate to i–iii of the above sustainable principles.

Their art exemplifies the depth at which the reuse of the designed has developed and is relevant in contemporary art. These themes and use of objects connect not only the manufactured but also the craft of making with conceptual ideas in art such as the environmental impact of industrialisation and manufacturing. This impact includes the overabundance of mass-produced refuse which is repurposed in the *Peep* (cardboard) (2001), *Contained* (plastics) (2010) and *Trapped* (fishing nets) (2015) exhibitions by artist Cecile Williams.

In the twenty-first century electronic communications through websites, social networking and microblogging have become places to develop online communities, share information, personal messages, ideas and content such as videos. These methods of communication have enabled a cross-over between art and design. Examples are niche groups, blogging and teaching resources like the *Skillshare* community. In this cultural landscape, artists are designers and designers are artists, as the lines between both types of creativity are increasingly shaped by each other.

In the digital age not only have the distinctions between artist and designer blurred, but the very concept of a “traditional” artist, even though still present, is impacted by the Internet, digital software and increasingly social networking services (SNS) such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinit, Instagram, Snapchat and Flickr. As media for making art and ideas, these technological shifts, enable anyone to become an artist. These sites allow interrelationships via user generated content and the uploading of comments, images, and videos; allowing conversations to take place. As a result of so much accessibility to knowledge and sharing, such as self-learning through the Internet and computer programs, there has been a proliferation of people identifying as “artists”. Whilst these changes are mainly in the West, where

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374 Such examples of artists who “reduce, reuse or recycle” or almost anything with “re” prefixed such as “restyle” from the 1990s to 2000s are numerous and growing. E.g. International artists: Chu Enoki, Yuken Teruya, Wim Delvoye, Tariq Alvi, Aurora Robson, Choi Jeong-Hwa, Soheid Gupta, Hiroshi Fuji, Robert Bradford; and Pascale Marthine Tayou, Sue Webster and Tim Noble, Guerra de la Paz (Alain Guerra and Neraldo de la Paz), Cuitlind R.C. Brown and Wayne Garrett, Australian artists: Lauren Berkowitz, Cecile Williams, David Sequeira, Olga Cironis, Sarah Goffman, Leah Tarlo, Theo Koning, Claire Healy and Sean Cordeir and Nicholas Folland.

375 Painters, sculptors, printmakers etc. who use “traditional” media such as paint, and clay as opposed to e.g. the manufactured.
the Internet is easily accessible, as other countries develop, such as the BRIC economies, the Internet becomes progressively more available “everywhere”, changing the arts.

Art, design, craft, and technological transformations in media production and consumption in the twenty-first century, mean that the consumer has more initiative in their choices, allowing art to expand in areas never previously considered. The advent of the “prosumer” — producer–consumer has enabled additional interactivity, largely due to the increase in user–generated content on the Internet. This interactivity fashioned by Web 2.0 and gaming culture, has aided innovations in artistic creations from a passive viewing experience (sit-back — relax) by the public, to an increase in proactivity (sit-forward — active). The user is assumed to have choices, similar to the interactivity in electronic games. This allows varied experiences dependent on the course of action and routes taken.376 This emphasis on the user has integrated into contemporary art as installation art, whereby the audience experience is paramount.

As stated earlier, computer programs allow almost anyone to construct collaged imagery, edit photos and layout pages. The advent of this computer technology has created a culture of availability, through programs such as the Adobe Suite. These programs have allowed many people to master techniques previously only available to those formally taught, e.g. in a classroom situation at university or school. To the individual, the ability to use programs such as Adobe Photoshop to create may give a sense of accomplishment and reassurance that they can craft something from limited resources. By having programs available, anyone can become a creator and, for example, create their own cards, digital pictures or artwork. Also, the Internet provides the ability to self-educate, or to learn from citizens around the world. For instance, the international platform YouTube presents some videos which enable step-by-step learning, such as how to paint, make installations or understand contemporary art. Utilising these tools does not mean that the user will automatically have a sense of aesthetics or know the fundamentals of design, yet they potentially have the knowledge available to create.

“Artists” without normal academic training, who are self-taught, are loosely termed “Outsider Artists”. However, in contemporary times this term has progressively extended to encompass the notion of the untrained artist. These are

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“artists” who have not necessarily grown through the ranks of the traditional art establishment — galleries and institutions. Boxer describes the outsider artist group to include ‘visionary, schizophrenic, primitive, psychotic, obsessive, compulsive, untutored, vernacular, self-taught, naive, brut, rough, raw [etc.]’ artists.377 Examples of these “outsiders” were included in a section of the 2013 Venice Biennale named Il Palazzo Enciclopedico (The Encyclopedic Palace) in response to a work by self-taught artist Marino Auriti’s (1891–1980) Enciclopedico Palazzo del Mondo (Encyclopedic Palace of the World) (1955). In the Biennale’s version of the palace, the focus was on ‘deceased artists, hobbyists, enthusiasts, or so-called “outsider” artists’ rather than current trends, presented as a sophisticated and exacting exhibit.378 379 But the chosen Outsider artists exhibited in the 2013 Venice Biennale ‘Palace exhibit were self-taught in more traditional ways such as from books, as opposed to the digital, or Internet as learning tools which have enabled a contemporary proliferation of creativity. In future Biennales there may be a recognition and acknowledgement of the new “outsider digital” or self-created artists. This will again further diversify who is labeled an “artist”.

The digital age has been at the forefront of helping to establish celebrated designs and change multifaceted and elaborate technologies into solutions accessible to mass populations.380 Yet, contemporary society appears conflicted. On the one hand, it seems we are in love with all our creations. On the other hand, we are resistant to the constant bombardment of media driven culture that invades our daily lives and the lack of a coherent sustainability between the natural and the human created worlds. Designer, Kalle Lasn uses the example of the cultural environment of the Netherlands, which he claims is so over–designed and beautified that it has become a boring vision of sameness.381 He asserts:

Our global consumer culture is the greatest example of over-design — every car, every house; every tube of lipstick, every product right down to your disposable razor is preened and pruned by teams of designers until it glistens and sparkles cool desire.382

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379 Curated by Massimiliano Gioni, the 55th Venice Biennale curator.
382 Ibid.
There is an insatiable appetite to create and an influx and predominance of design in our surroundings. Today, there is an array of criteria to create good, sensitive design based on:

... human experience, social behaviours, global, economic and political issues, physical and mental interaction, form, vision, and a rigorous understanding and desire for contemporary culture.

This is the opinion of product designer Karim Rashid, and is a perspective that highlights the complexity and diversity of requirements needed to have an impact in today’s creative industries. Rashid describes the industrial realm as being based on ‘capital investment, market share, production ease, dissemination, growth, distribution, maintenance, service, performance, quality, ecological issues and sustainability’. The mixture of all these attributes helps to form new objects. Materiality is not just the seen physical object, but all that is instilled within it from start to finish; including the relationship that people form with the object. The objects we consume, the appearance of our structures, the material environment that surrounds us, visual traditions and our modern, everyday collective and individual understanding and feeling of the world in which we live is thus formed.

Design allows us to create a world that we are more comfortable to inhabit. As Rashid proposes: ‘Design is about the betterment of our lives poetically, aesthetically, experientially, sensorially, and emotionally’. We live in a state of exterior focus, of false-hood or simulation, in a culture that is increasingly manufactured by creative will. Many contemporary artists, such as Kruger, who use mass media as their source, use these modes to alter the intended meaning using the original medium, statements and attributes from the commercial and media realm to comment upon, dissect and regurgitate as art.

As environments are increasingly designed, the need for innovation increases the opportunity for creative industry expansion, allowing for more artistry in the workforce. Yet as the world becomes more and more designed so too the artist’s role as a unique, creative becomes diluted, competing with an oversaturation of familiar creative and created stimuli — media and design. The artist’s role changes, or they are forced to become more innovative, conceptual, shocking or to create

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383 Ibid.
385 Ibid.
387 Florida, Rise of the Creative Class, xvii.
maximum impact, all three, as Hirst does. Yet, graphic designer and critic Jessica Helfand defines ‘Graphic design [as] a popular art and a practical art, an applied art and an ancient art. Simply put, it is the art of visualizing ideas’, which is also what art is described as. These broad statements are what creates the confusion between what is design and what is art.

The blurring between art and design today is, in part, occurring because ever-increasing industrialisation makes the “already created” unavoidable. There are no longer just one or two groups of artists, as in the Pop art period, relating to mass media. Most artists today touch on these aspects in some way, as the produced is predominant cultural experience. In the time of Pop art, industrialisation and the commercial was glorified as the “new”. In contemporary times more often than not, the relationship between artists and the consumer world is more of a social commentary — on how the manufactured can be used as media for materiality or on how the manufactured affects the environment and personal lives, and removes us more from the natural.

Sheldon and Arens eloquently summarise Pop’s influence on our lives:

Pop is now so basic to the way we live, and the world we live in, that to be with it, to dig the Pop scene, does not commit anyone to Left or Right, nor to protest or acceptance of the society we live in. It has become the common language, musical, visual and (increasingly) literary, by which members of the mechanised urban culture of the Westernised countries can communicate with one another in the most direct, lively and meaningful manner.

Pop art and the affect of the readymades are ingrained in much of contemporary art. However, ideas of what is “pop” are now so broad because the popular is a culturally mediated experience, familiarised by our dependence on manufacturing and industrialisation. The use of mass-produced materials by artists and designers and the culture of constructed media is encompassing. In many ways the created and constructed are an unavoidable result of the designer, and the artist fabricating our environments.

As the processes of art and design have enmeshed designers, creatives have exploded into the art world with a business savvy that has perhaps not been seen before. Many artists are also increasingly commercialising their approaches and work — the buying and selling of ideas to create tangible products. Artists who

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may be considered to have “sold out” to commercialism in that their work becomes
designed as replicated objects (manufactured) include: Jeff Koons, Takashi
Murakami and Thierry Guetta a.k.a Mr Brainwash (MBW).

Contemporary art as a profession is mostly unregulated, existing without
guarantees, supervision, ‘measures of value’ or even a clear definition. This
unequivocal freedom is often bound by the critic or the curator. An example of
boundary formations around what can be called “art” was the ethical uproar that
occurred in relation to children and nudity, and how this relates to
pornography/paedophilia in artist Bill Henson’s works including Untitled #30
(2009–10). Another valid example is the art piece Currency (2011) by artist Denis
Beaubois that was initiated by a $20,000 grant from the Australia Council for the
Arts. This piece, looked at ‘money as an architecture of possibility — one
hundred dollar notes with recorded serial numbers, unaltered in any way were
presented as sculptural stack for ‘financial transaction’ at auction. Although both
these examples are diverse, they were met with equally conflicting reactions as to
their artistic worthiness.

Artists become designers — as a way to stay creative while at the same time earn a
reliable income. This symbiosis, most importantly, exemplifies that the affiliation
between these professions is not only the creative impulse and innovation, but also
increasingly consumerism. Art and design suggest that aspects such as marketing,
branding, social media and Internet presence are already well established within
both professions. As the art profession grows, it becomes more commercialised, and
for a small percentage, a viable money-making industry. A significant quantity of
art is becoming increasingly indistinguishable from design, by using the operating
methods of creative industries. Artists are becoming marketing savvy, advancing
themselves and their individual stylistic uniqueness, which is then rehashed and
promoted. Murakami and the artists he promotes are typical examples of this
promotion as are the YBAs and Koons.

According to several Internet polls from 2012–2014 Highnobiety, Artpromotivate
and InsiderMonkey evaluators, the same living artists are considered to be the

392 In 2008, the Bill Henson art controversy was front-page news for several weeks in Australian papers, further heightening
the questioning of “what is art?” and “what is okay”? As featured in: Helen McDonald, “It’s Rude to Stare: Bill Henson
to-stare-bill-henson-revisited/.
393 Ashleigh Wilson, “$20,000 cash artwork sells for $21,350”, The Australian - The Arts, August 31, 2011,
richest, adding to their notoriety within popular culture. The most recent Design Museum (2014) assessment considered ten artists: the most affluent ranging from Pop influenced, 1 billion Damien Hirst (UK), Jeff Koons (USA) (2nd), Takashi Murakami (Japan) (6th), to Anish Kapoor (UK) (7th) and lastly at 40 million one of the original British Pop artists, David Hockney (UK).

What is interesting to note is that all these artists are primarily sculptors or painters, and they are all male. These artists represent the hierarchies that make up the art world according to medium, gender, location and monetary value. The closest “top” females, according to the selling price of their art, but earning much less than their male counterparts (as in many industries), include 6.6 million for artist Cady Nolan (USA) (1st), Yayoi Kusama (Japan) (3rd), photographer Cindy Sherman (USA) (6th) to 1 million in ninth position Beatriz Milhazes (Brazil). Interestingly most of these artists work with Pop aesthetics or themes, branding their works with distinct personal styles. As Thompson states: ‘You are no one in contemporary art until you have been branded’, again taking from the designed.
design so that ‘aesthetics was put in the service of commerce’. As part of the modern Japanese Design Movement, artists with their acute visual skills were used to develop the design professions such as in the aesthetics for example of packaging design. Artists such as Murakami and companies including Artware Editions, and Third Drawer Down are small-run enterprises that create limited edition products, and have continued to contribute to the culture of both professions. Whereas FriendsWithYou (FWY) (Samuel Borkson and Arturo Sandoval III), Horse on Toast (Amy Perejuan-Capone), and Beci Orpin are examples of artist-designer, designer-artists who comfortably experiment and create in both the realms of art and design.

Craft is not accidental. However, in experimenting and allowing the process of creating to unfold, there are accidents that happen along the way that can be beneficial surprises. If there is only a constant focus on a specifically determined final product, there is no room for inspiration. In design the process of developing an idea in consultation with the client allows the message/outcome of the design to become clearer.

Craft has recently had a revival. There are a few reasons for this: i) the advent of digital technologies has allowed resources, programs and educational materials via platforms such as YouTube, to be widely available; ii) as technology and digitisation, such as video art, infiltrated the art world, there was a reaction towards traditional craft practices such as knitting, basketry and woodworking and; iii) the focus on intellectualising and conceptualising led to a craft resurgence. This does not refer to the craft of functionality as in utilitarian objects, but rather the craft of hand-making. The craft becomes important as it highlights and shows a human relationship with objects.

The rise of hands-on “craft” art, and commercial cottage industries whereby the computer is disregarded, signifies a noticeable backlash that has come to exist in response to technological advancements. Craft was recognised by the 2011 exhibition The Power of Making (V&A, London). For example, in the work of McGinness, silk-screening is employed rather than digital printing. In the work of Ron Muek hand moulded and constructed sculptures are created rather than

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803 Elise K. Tipton and John Clark eds., Being Modern in Japan: Culture and Society from the 1910s to the 1930s, (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press 2000), 76.
804 Ibid.
produced by factory processes. Also, objects are created using hands-on craft skills, such as in the work of Ricky Swallow, Ai Weiwei, Takashi Iwasaki, Jen Stark, Kate Rohnde, Penny Byrne, Hiromi Tango, Fiona Hall, Sarah Contos and Kathy Temin. Other examples are *The Unilever Series* video in which Tacita Dean’s *Film* (2012) celebrates analogue over digital filmmaking techniques, and director Michel Gondry’s romanticism of “low-fi” techniques in his films *The Science of Sleep* (2006) and *Be Kind Rewind* (2008).  

These artists are examples of the move to reconnect with materiality, human tactility and with ordinary materials, within a world where the applied arts (craft) and fine arts have historically been separate, and an industrialised world that focuses on information and technology (and manufacturing). This impetus is not new, as was illustrated by designer William Morris’s focus on craft in the nineteenth century. Often when technology rampantly develops there is a backlash to manual dexterity. The reaction to digitisation and the prevalence of digital technologies leading to a resurrection of craft and an emphasis on the hand-made or limited editions is seen not only in art but also in professions like graphic design. Designers such as Orpin, Adam France, The Hungry Workshop, Georgia Perry, Enemies Yay and One Little Studio/The Belljar show that techniques such as physically cutting and pasting, or hands-on skill, can still be utilised or mixed with digital technologies to perhaps give an edge that is different from the more familiar digital portfolio. There has also long existed, debates between the fields of craft and art, art and design, and craft and design. Hung and Magliaro emphasise a return to the handmade by:

> Individuals who have grown up surfing the Internet and mastering computer programs are now impassioned by the ideals of the “do-it-yourself” generation influenced by artists such as Kiki Smith whose fabrications emphasise the physical process of creating and the imperfections of the handmade.

Indeed there would be no visual art without making, especially before the readymade use of the manufactured and the focus on conceptualism was considered art. The ‘Make Do and Mend’ mentality and way of creating affects the culture of craft and art by the cross fertilisation of techniques and materials. The expansion

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407 Gondry has also collaborated with musician Bjork on her music videos, from 1993’s *Human Behaviour* to *Chrysalis* (2011). Gondry’s prop-like scenic style similar to *The Science of Sleep* is most noticeable in his award-winning clip for *Bachelorette* (1997).


and questioning of what art can be is seen in urban art and art that engages and connects community.

Urban Art and Art that Engages and Connects Community

Urban Art or Urban Guerrilla art is frequently transitory, in the public environment, usually outdoors and sometimes illegal. It often aims to add to sense of place and connection. Guerrilla art is ‘politically conscious popular culture and rebellion against conventions of middle class life’, nonconformist and even criminal due to this art form's ability to instigate opinions and challenge normalcy by using honesty and provocation in their often textual images.411 Guerrilla art is also sometimes feminist, especially in relation to the Guerrilla Girls, who, as described on their website, are a group of women with the aim to ‘expose sexism, racism and corruption in politics, art, film and pop culture’ (2014).412 Keri Smith provides a definition of Guerrilla art as being:

> Any anonymous work (including but not limited to graffiti, signage, performance, additions, and decoration) installed, performed, or attached in public spaces, with the distinct purpose of affecting the world in a creative or thought-provoking way... Guerrilla art is for everyone. It engages viewers who may never step foot in a gallery. It is free and accessible.413

Early examples of graffiti art included Keith Haring who was mentioned earlier in relation to Pop art. His imagery was almost everywhere in NYC in the 1980s influencing much of the popular culture at the time and contemporary design. This art can be made of almost anything as long as it is part of the public environment: bus stops, buildings, parks and streets. The field is rapidly growing and changing in the artists’ use of materiality and content. Materials have developed from spray paint as in the work of artist Maya Hayuk to include tiles, fabrics, wool, tape, paint, toys and even foods. These artists utilise everyday materials and include artists that I think of as: i) rebuilders; ii) transformers; iii) enhancers; iv) environmentalists and v) emphemeralists. These contemporary urban artists include Juliana Santacruz Herrera (yarn), Jan Vormann (Lego), Kurt Perschke RedBall Project (2013) (giant ball), Andy Moss and Jamie Wardley’s The Fallen (2013) (sand drawings), Slinkachu’s Little People Project (since 2006) (miniture scenes), Kelly Goeller (pixels), Shelley Miller Sugar Coating and Cargo (iced tiles and sugar) (2009), Mademoiselle

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Maurice (thread and paper), Azuma Makoto (ice), Invader *Space Invaders* series (tiles) and Chinagirl *The Queen of Beasts*, (2014) (tiles). These works are often ongoing, in that timing is only determined by where in the world the artist is and where they decide to place the intervention. Guerrilla urban artists are important as they demonstrate the changing way that art and intervention can be integrated, not to make money but rather to visually augment, challenge and amass community interaction.

An underlying tension exists in all artistic expression between, what art historian Nobuo Tsuji describes as standing out due to an “‘eccentric’ streak, a penchant for the playful, the fantastic and the decorative’ and creating work that meets the demands for conformity and industry. For example, as stated by artist Takashi Murakami’s *Superflat*, he describes “novelty” as a connection to capturing a historical pattern possessed by many of Japan’s most famous old master painters as a shared “‘eccentric’ streak, a penchant for the playful, the fantastic and the decorative’. Artists who create by matching current trends, and have therefore a stylised recognisable approach as part of “the tribe”, may find an easier and more profitable pathway. However, they may also be swallowed up by the voracity of passing fashion and trends and become “branded” styles. Their art may become merely the designed. In one instance this is commercial recognition, alternatively, potential loss of authenticity and individuality.

In the twenty-first century constantly new, altered and diversified creative types and methods of art have led to the spread of artistic ideas and movements quickly and extensively. Such examples as site-specific installation, digital art, urban object and bio art, as well as ways of making art including 3D printing have contributed to a world that is in constantly adapting. A flux that theorist Paul Virilio articulates as a world turning into a globalised monoculture, monotime, in which there is a continual race with time and functioning 24/7 as an automation.

Some resistance to this can be found in art that creates community, even for a short time. David Gauntlett’s aspirational Make and Connect Agenda focuses on this idea of linking making and creativity with connecting to the public and the environment.

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415 Nobuo Tsuji, Quoted in Murakami, *Superflat*, 5.


He refers to our contemporary Web 2.0 user-generated culture as being a move from a “sit-back-and-be-told culture’ to more of a 'making-and-doing culture’”. Such instances include when the public is encouraged to contribute or be involved in art pieces. Interactivity becomes important and the “non-art trained” become artists. Examples include Caitlind R.C. Brown and Wayne Garrett’s Cloud (2012) artwork, made by utilising cheap, throwaway materials. This work requires the involvement of the community both by contributing light bulbs and by their interactivity with the work. Cloud requires:

... the audience to surrender their inhibitions, unlearning the “Please Do Not Touch” policy of traditional gallery spaces. People are necessary to complete the piece. By standing beneath the raincloud, pulling its chains, viewers cause lightning to flicker on the surface of the sculpture, unwittingly staging an electrical storm for the audience beyond the periphery of the rainfall. Without people, CLOUD is only half complete.

This artwork by Brown and Garrett is also a fitting example of how sustainability can be built into art pieces as well as the changing role of art such as community events, whereby people are involved in “making” the artist’s art. Alternatively, as clarified previously non-trained artists are becoming artists due to the accessibility of knowledge and an “anything goes” attitude of acceptance.

Contemporary Art

Contemporary art is different to design when it includes a conceptual idea that sustains the work past pure aesthetics. Curators, artists and administrators consider contemporary art as ‘that which engages with contemporary theory; that is, the sort of basically French cultural theory taught in university humanities departments under the broad ruberic of Postmodernism’ — theorists such as: Lampriére, Foucault, Baudrillard and Bourdieu. Lampriére wanted art to be considered in regard to ‘its location, and its time and social impact and its politic’. These theorists:

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421 Peter Timms. What’s Wrong with Contemporary Art? (Sydney, Aust.: University of New South Wales Press, 2004), 15.
have a global and inclusive approach to their investigations [looking] at art intellectually, tying it into social conditions, institutional structures and history, and not trying to specialise it.

The theorists consider art as originating in Bourdieu’s “habitus”. Habitus as indicated earlier is our learned cultural habits that are ever-changing yet shape our individual character.

Contemporary art consequently exists within diverse definitions — “nowness” and conceptual based investigations. Non-profit contemporary art organisation Art21 summarises contemporary art into identifiable modes, applying practical, employable classifications that can be used to define both other artists and my own practice within the convoluted realm of art today. Contemporary art can

... be produced using many different working methods and processes... serve as a form of critique... often references or appropriates elements from multiple disciplines and sources... often integrates new technologies... or unconventional materials... often blurs the boundaries between art and everyday life... exist outside of traditional exhibition forums... [and] can unfold over time.

Considering Art21’s definition it is unsurprising that readymades and Pop continue to be used in contemporary art as boundaries are increasingly transgressed. Artists’ techniques and skills diversify, manufacturing processes are increasingly utilised, artists work as art directors, and with teams of people to do their work, to create art that is often conceptually discursive, is cross or multidisciplinary focussed and emphasises innovation. Digital and material cultures, traditionally marking the line between art and design, are now gradually more interlinked as art unfolds and places itself outside the realm of the gallery space. Contemporary art is as diverse as the cultures it emanates from. This contemporary art described by Art21, consisting of attributes such as urban guerrilla art that respond to the everyday and the mediated is the culture that I exist within. So it is somewhat inevitable that my art practice and the term I coined ZakkaART is as diverse as the multiplicity that contemporary art is noticeable for. I exist in Bourdieu’s “habitus”.

Since the early 1990s artists have relied ‘more on institutional funding, grants, funded shows and festivals, museum purchases’ as a result of the art market

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423 Ibid.
424 Ibid.
425 Ibid.
Professional artists benefit from government and private funding which allows them the opportunity to continue with a studio art practice or create large artworks/installations which otherwise would not be affordable. This also can drive them to not only reach audiences with their art, but also perhaps inspire people to think and change. The focus on conceptuality and the collection of mostly figurative painting by private collectors in the 1980s changed to a focus on commercial galleries being increasingly inclusive of the “newer” art — video, installation and experimental art. The hierarchy of art from auction houses to commercial galleries was re-established, from the latter part of the 1990s until about 2003 when the

... international artworld achieves self-awareness. Big festivals and biennials drive market value. Commercial and museum-institutional sectors become closely aligned.

Thus the art world is both global and local, emphasised by personal narratives that are based on ‘identity politics, media, space and identity’. These stories are rooted in popular interpretations that may be represented by photography, video or installations rather than the more traditional art methods of sculpture and painting (although these have gained in popularity), such as expanded painting. Artists have as stated above become savvy and autonomous with the help of grants, building media presence, gallery and museum exhibitions, collectors and sales, and in what artists and the art establishment define as art. Artists increasingly utilise performance and interactivity, together with the continued use of postmodernist assemblage as well as new material experimentation, differing contexts, a cross-disciplinary approach and experimentation with scale. This results in a boundary blurring such as in art institutions, urban art and culture jamming.

Post–Postmodernism

Movements like Postmodernism do not simply “end”. Post–Postmodernism (Po–PoMo) is not passé, although it may have become unpopular as new concepts replace the old. According to Jeffrey Nealon, Post–Postmodernism is used to describe, “super-postmodernism”, hyper-postmodernism, or maybe a “late

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429 Irvine, “Art Theory Contexts”.
430 Ibid.
431 Ibid.
postmodernism” rather than the idea that Postmodernism ended and something new started. Postmodernism and Post–Postmodernism are difficult to distinguish as they seem so similar. Theorist and artist Anatoly Osmolovsky likens this new model to a revival of aspects of art of the 1980s: i) innovation, resulting in commodification of art/art industry; ii) dependence on marketing as a reliable system for the continual creation and distribution of art, resulting in distinctive “art products”; and iii) institutions advancing to museum status as an essential qualification to gain historical significance. These are all aspects that are familiar in the contemporary art scene. Po–PoMo is discussed here because this ideology situates the theories described in relation to contemporary art. My production component is also influenced by Po–PoMo.

Post–Postmodernism has been identified as developing from 1994 onwards. Post–Postmodernism’s inescapable mixology, cultural pluralism and globalisation are essentially a paralleling or continuation from Postmodernism’s eclecticism. Post–Postmodernism is a term that relates to ideas such as “new economies” of globalisation, market economies, post-Fordism, surveillance, the war on terrorism and how these aspects affect ‘cultural production’ and capitalism.

Hartness defines Post–Postmodernism and makes identifiable links to what is occurring in contemporary arts practice. According to Hartness the six key differences from Postmodernism to Post–Postmodernism are:

- The rise of art as commodity and artist stars,
- a focus on galleries,
- globalization and an increased dissemination of information,
- a focus on intermedial artistic practices,
- the overwhelming meta-mentality of artists, and
- a reemergence of traditional painting and photography.

Po–PoMo is a result of previous developments in art and culture. The shift from Modernism to Postmodernism (PoMo) was emphasised by low art or what critic Clement Greenberg refers to as “kitsch” moving into the high art realm through the use of popular cultural influences such as the Pop artists did. Dominant
“metanarratives” or “grand narratives” such as “universal truths” were broken down in favour of a more subjective experience that celebrated difference, and art critiques based on philosophy as opposed to art history. Hartness, foregrounds Andy Warhol as being a profound instigator of changes that led to contemporary art, especially his merging of commercial and fine art together. Warhol mimicked the designed, used aspects of manufacturing, created a factory, behaved like an object, worked like a machine, branded himself and in the process became a superstar (like his subjects) and posthumously is still one of the biggest selling artists in the world. Warhol’s model is an example of art as industry and what he described as ‘business art’. Art is like the designed, not necessarily in content but in how the profession of art behaves like design to give service and attain monetary benefit. Yet, this is not a Warholian time but one built by artists such as Hirst, Koons and Murakami who themselves build on the past artists successes. These artists model their careers on Warhol, and like he did become like the very commodities they manufacture, their art and themselves as designed, marketed and celebrated. As Weintraub (2003) suggests, art is delineated by freedom. Yet at the same time, there are clear boundaries as to what the professionals and intellectuals decide is contemporary art, such as Australian Art Collector’s annual list of most collectible artists. This list is determined by asking important art industry contributors such as curators. This freedom of expression and open disciplinary nature can be seen in the work of some rising contemporary artists including Felix Kiessling Cornelia Baltes Julian Charrière and Takahiro Iwasaki.

I agree with most of Hartness’s interpretations, especially seeing points iv) and v) in my art practice. But point ii) is problematic. I have seen galleries both becoming more institutionalised, focused on profit, and at the same time closing, resulting from a lack of financial stability. Although art is an industry, in some respects contemporary art is failing to survive within the exhibition gallery model that emerged once the Salon was dissolved. The elitism of the “closed space” white cube exhibition is not necessarily fostering more or new viewers, or for commercial galleries, buyers into the spaces, but what this model continues to encourage is the fantasy of being an “artist” due to the fame associated with “successful” practitioners.

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440 Hartness, “Po Pomo”, 4-6 & 8.
441 Ibid. 8.
443 Maria A. Slowinska, Art/Commerce: The Convergence of Art and Marketing in Contemporary Culture (Bielefeld, Germany: Transcript Verlag, 2014), 250.
So, even though galleries do exist and new galleries continually form, well respected public galleries, museums, institutions and private galleries such as Museums of Modern and Contemporary Art are forced to consider “new” ways of staying established. As funding and government grants decrease, the dependence on these sources of income are reconsidered. Institutions increasingly look to innovative forms of marketing and promotion to facilitate diversity in patronage, viewer numbers and continue programming. Such examples include philanthropy, encouraging the affluent to supply money as valuable donors and benefactors. All of this in turn affects the artist’s place in the art/gallery culture in how they integrate their practices, display, promote and sell their work (product) and leads to new ways of exhibiting art such as in public spaces.

As Thompson suggests, this reliance on business models is because the art world is a ‘market economy’, thus galleries like artists are dependent on receiving cash flow to survive (creative industry). There are many examples of galleries closing such as in my hometown Perth. Five established commercial galleries have stopped operating since 2011. This included Gallery East, open for more than twenty years, and then the surprising closure of Venn Gallery (2014). In some ways this is unanticipated in an economy, which at the time was at the height of prosperity, due to the Western Australian mining boom. However, most of this money was not going to the Arts.

The impact of globalisation and technology on contemporary art has been manyfold. There are no longer singular definitions for art. Nor does New York represent the epitome of success. Exhibition spaces have diversified, as increasingly art fairs and the outdoor environment become usable spaces. Neither is there only one way of making art.

Robert Atkins argues that, galleries since the 1980s have become a global network from New York, to Europe to emerging art centres including China. The art system has truly become international. China, for example, virtually overnight transformed from having no commercial galleries to hosting some of the leading artists of today.
In this globalised art world the phrase “cultural pluralism” (coined in 1924 by Horace Meyer Kallen) is useful. It describes the changing of cultural superpowers from a focus on the USA to other world leaders. Simultaneously countries influence each other creating a multiplicity of perspectives in art. These changes have enabled other cultural influences to affect what was previously a Eurocentric art standard. This is epitomised by regular events such as the Gallery of Modern Art, Queensland Art Gallery’s Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT).

Globalisation and glocalisation emphasise the power of the availability of data. Digitisation enables accessibility to the world from almost anywhere. Almost anywhere, anytime, mobile devices allow accessibility to knowledge, information and products. These changes have enabled many other non-Western or non-Capitalist artists to come into prominence. Online media, accessibility to technological resources and globalisation have helped to equalise opportunities for nations other than the USA, to develop and export their art industries. Access to knowledge about international artists, artists spreading their art rapidly to other continents and diversified possibilities for places to show contemporary art are some familiar embedded ways that these changes have impacted on the art profession. Artists affected by these changes include those that focus on popular culture and media from their countries’ mass media and internationally through Internet influences or designed objects that are predominant in their cultures. Artists include: Osamu Watanabe and Yayoi Kusama (Japan); Ai Weiwei and Luo Brothers (China); Thukral and Tagra (India); and Isabel and Alfredo Aquilizan (Philippines). This list of artists illustrates the increasing influence of the East on the West as well as the continued impact of Western art paradigms of design, the popular and cultural notions of beauty in the modern and global age.

Some of the artists mentioned above work in partnerships. This partnering highlights the increasing collaborative potential of artists working together as a unit — under a unifying process of making and thinking about art. Many of these artists are globally influenced and influential, making contemporary art that is hybridised with materials, disciplines and ideas from many different persuasions. Some of these non-Western artists have successfully combined aspects of the everyday (the designed) and consumerism (marketing and brand) with a distinct

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style of art-making. These artists include an intermix of cultural influences with the culture of industrialisation and consumerism. They exemplify the use of what I call a ZakkaART aesthetic in their use of everyday object inclusion of “many things”. In many cases they also utilise handicrafts, a keen sense of design principles, collecting and colour. The use of the decorative in many of these artists’ works also indicates a Maximalist persuasion.

Central to Postmodernism is the concept of remixing, often specifically in relation to capitalism. Production and consumption and an excess of “signs and images” gives rise to both a Disneyland simulation culture and “a stylish promiscuity” which overloaded the traditional cultural sphere of literary and artistic production.451 Today we live in constant simulation through our personal screens such as mobile phones, tablets, computers and televisions. We are surrounded by imitations, replications of things — for example toy teddies that cutely mimic bears or digital pets as Tamagochi. Increasingly popular forms of simulacrum are video games that depict real life possibilities.452 Augmented reality experiences now enable the layering of simulation through a screen into “live” versions of life. Our lives are reinterpretations of past, present and imagined surroundings.453 Whilst Postmodernism sought to hybridise, now we are embedded in mixology — this way of being is normal as Post-Postmodernism.

Most theorists such as Featherstone, Nealon and Irvine agree that Po–PoMo relates to remix culture. However, Po–PoMo is not a reaction to abstractions, as Postmodernism encouraged, but in positioning everything as always derivative of something. This eclecticism is a given part of contemporary industrialised cultures. Everything is already mixed.454 As Irvine proposes:

The metaphors of “network” and “convergence” in creative subcultures (e.g. musicians, artists, designers, writers) are seen to be live operations or conditions received and re-performed, not just abstractions. From this more recent perspective, living in remixed hybridity is thus obligatory, not a choice, since it is the foundation for participating in a living, networked, globally connected culture.455

451 Featherstone, Consumer Culture and Postmodernism, xxi.
452 Two contrasting examples are Rockstar North’s Grand Theft Auto (1997–) and Flower (Thatgamecompany) (2009–). The former allows the player to be a rising criminal whilst in the latter the gamer is the wind moving petals and transforming the environment.
454 Irvine, “The Postmodern”.
455 Ibid.
Accordingly, as an artist myself working in the period of Po–PoMo, eclecticism and remix are not sought — they are embedded as my culture.

Po–PoMo is an intermix. At once there is increasing art institutionalisation, plus “anything goes” attitude, as well as the commodification of art. In addition there are, traditional and digital practices. These elements confusingly coexist. With my ever-changing art practice, for example using diversified materials, techniques and concepts, I have attempted what Stephens and Mateer identify as an ever-changing art practice — experimental. It is difficult to know where one stands as an artist when there are so many mixed messages within the profession, due to the normalcy of a mixology of culture. Culture is that of the mediated. Post–Postmodernism is about synthesis and intertextuality, the impact of predisposed texts on each other. All ‘creative work builds on what came before. Nothing is completely original... Every new idea is just a mashup or a remix of one or more previous ideas’.

Artists are primarily working as regurgitators, “remixers” of the past, recreating fashions for new audiences. They are working across a variety of materials and techniques that move from traditional media to the digital. Artists have to continually innovate by reinventing and introducing the “new” with passion, dedication and endurance over many years. Contemporary artists ‘seek to arrest the immediate, to grasp the changing nature of time, place, media, and mood today’ — the remix. As stated by Navas:

The contemporary artwork, as well as any new media product, is a conceptual and formal collage of previous ideologies, critical philosophies, and formal artistic investigations extended to new media.

In this mash-up of mash-ups, the artist may think — why bother? However, being an artist involves persistence, commitment, acknowledging influences, learning and experimentation combined with the inclusion of powerful conceptual themes that then lead to originality. To be an artist in today’s industrial, global societies, is to sieve through the influences, collect what holds true and remix these with intense testings to give a personal account or critique and hopefully add something

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469 Kleon, *Steal Like an Artist*, 52.
different to the world. As stated by curator Lisa Slade, the ‘reason people love contemporary art is because of the risk involved… It has to have an edge; a frisson’.\textsuperscript{462} So artists need to be engaged whilst also capturing audiences’ learning and curiosity. That is to enliven a sense of “wonderment” like existed in the wunderkammer.\textsuperscript{463}

Using the popular and familiar is one way of initially connecting with audiences before transforming the designed into art. It is as curators Bankowsky and Gingeras suggest, in response to the art in the \textit{Pop Life} (2009–2010) exhibition ‘to cross the line between commerce and culture is nothing less than to ‘engage with modern life on its own terms’’.\textsuperscript{464} As I demonstrate when discussing my production pieces in the next chapter, my work has a commitment to process and morality related to my own sense of aesthetics that I have followed throughout my life and in my work as an artist.

Post–Postmodernism relates to contemporary art and artists including my interpretations of this globalised, seculised, hybrid culture in what has become “natural” eclecticism — everything all at once. Hartness describes the current art world as having a ‘multiple personality disorder’ whereby art history is not enough to decipher what art is.\textsuperscript{465} In addition to the uncertainty of art’s definition, artists are also subverting and changing the very objects they are using in their practices, as with Hirst, and those like him. Historical ideas, theories, art and philosophies are inspirations that are embedded in the artist’s toolbox. They are a given. ‘Hybridity of thought, action, and artistic practice further intensify Post-Postmodern work, to the bewilderment of many audiences’ as everything is mixed up all the time, without clear definitional boundaries as to what is what.\textsuperscript{466}

Today there are also fewer evolving art movements than there were under Modernism. Yet, in the Post–postmodern world an excess of art styles, ways of making, thinking and new art groups/collaborations exist. These perpetual changes are short lived or grow to become enmeshed into the culture that already exists, further enhancing a multi-disciplined cross-platform approach to art-making.\textsuperscript{467} To


\textsuperscript{463} In German, literally meaning ‘a room of wonders’. A wide-ranging collection of curated objects or wonder–rooms during the Renaissance, which could be seen as a precursor to modern museums. TATE, "History of the Wunderkammern (cabinet of curiosities)", http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/mark-dion-tate-thames-dig/wunderkammen (2003).

\textsuperscript{464} Kastner, "Pop Life" In \textit{It To Win It}, 138.

\textsuperscript{465} Hartness, "Po Pomo", 8.

\textsuperscript{466} Ibid.

a greater extent there is a concern with the theoretical, occasionally impacted on by fashionable terms such as Altermodernism. Cultural change is also reflected by a shift in art education from a previous emphasis on art history to a more recent focus on cultural theory.\textsuperscript{468} Art as a language relates to an audience (the viewer) and communicates a voice (the artist’s).\textsuperscript{469} As a result of so many diverging influences, theorists continue to grapple with making sense of the confusions and changes in society and culture. To decipher is “art speak” — the way we are talking about the complexities of contemporary art.

Nicolas Bourriaud is perhaps one of the more successful theorists who has been able to effectively condense many cultural influences into relevant critiques on the arts. Among his philosophies are Relational Aesthetics (relating to Play Art) or art that is more interactive and inclusive of public involvement: Postproduction, the idea of the Semionaut and Altermodernism.\textsuperscript{470} Bourriaud’s theories help me to situate my art practice as/and ZakkaART.

The development of Relational Aesthetics coincided with the ‘service economy’.\textsuperscript{471} Some aspects of art moved from the object (industrial) to immateriality (service).\textsuperscript{472} These “new” works focused on the process of making and aimed to create a sense of community, by appropriating the ‘public sphere’ through the interaction that ensued.\textsuperscript{473} Relational Aesthetics is a term that Bourriaud used to group together artists including Vanessa Beecroft, Maurizio Cattelan, Gabriel Orozco and Rirkrit Tiravanija in Bourriaud’s curated exhibition \textit{Traffic} (1996). These artists create art about ‘relationships between people, communities, individuals, groups, social networks, interactivity’.\textsuperscript{475} Bourriaud compares the 1990’s presence of Relational Aesthetics with ideas of collectivity to Pop art’s interconnectedness to mass production and marketing — consumption.\textsuperscript{476} Today’s connectivity is a direct result of the Internet as a tool for interactivity. This is not only about information gathering but also attention to buying and selling as the

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\textsuperscript{468} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{469} Atkins, \textit{ArtSpeak}, 10–13.
\textsuperscript{471} When service e.g. selling, is more important to the growth of (or emphasised by) an economy than products i.e. production and manufacturing.
\textsuperscript{473} Or labour which means ‘the labour that produces the information and cultural content of the commodity’. Maurizio Lazzarato, “Immaterial Labor”, in Paulo Virno and Michael Hardt eds., \textit{Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics}. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 133.
\textsuperscript{474} Slaven, “Relational Art”, 617.
\textsuperscript{476} Ibid.
web quickly became a place of commerce. Thus, when considering the designed and consumerism in relation to art and art-making there is a relationship not only to the retail environment, as in the time of Pop art, but also the virtual as author and theorist Gauntlett emphasises in his book *Making is Connecting* (2013).

Bourriaud’s theory is relevant to a number of collaborations and interactive artworks that are evident in contemporary art. As detailed in *Play Matters*, Rirkrit Tiravanija’s art is an important example of Bourriaud’s theory and its connection to play. Tiravanija’s work *Untitled (Free/Still)* (1992) is an installation in which his art was cooking food for people. This work challenges notions about the tangibility of objects, to focus instead on interaction and social context. Bourriaud understands this piece to be primarily about what the work is intentionally questioning through activity, that is, the social conditions of refugees.\(^{477}\)\(^{478}\) This and many of Tiravanija’s works are interactive. As MOMA Curator Laura Hoptman asserts, his art is conceptual. *Untitled* explores sociability — eating rice and curry with friends and strangers. He takes Duchamp’s ‘art is a work of art if the artist says it is’ literally.\(^{479}\) Tiravanija states that by placing elements together, ‘the distance between the artist, and the art and the audience gets a bit blurred’.\(^{480}\) Thus there is an increased relationship to the viewer experiencing the work, more so than when looking at a sculpture or wall work.\(^{481}\)

The following Post-Postmodern art theories represent trends in relation to the diverse ways that artists engage in contemporary remix culture. Also demonstrated is that this culture is now a culture of disassociation, separations influenced by an inundation of mass media, user generated content and a retraction from nature.

**Altermodern (globalisation)**

Altermodernism is a movement connected to the creolisation of cultures and the fight for autonomy, but also the possibility of producing singularities in an increasingly standardised world. Artists today create in a hypermodern world with themes related to our dependence on modernity and our intense association with


\(^{478}\) This is one direction I would like my work to go — more interactivity with the viewer.


\(^{481}\) Most of my pieces in the production component are still apart from a few kinetic pieces, as an onlooker I was able to see that these moving pieces did bridge a gap to increased relating of the viewer with the art. There were two artworks in Kaleidoscope and one in Plasticity that were kinetic (moving). In Kaleidoscope there was also an interactive sticker wall piece Collective Play (2009).
technology. As stated by Ryan, “altermodern” is a word used to define the current time that we live in, where culture, politics, and economics are influenced by the merging of our modern world through globalisation. The art world is also decentralised, whereby there is not one monocultural centre such as New York, but many centres of arts and culture that are epicentres of art:

The use of the prefix “alter” suggests, there are alternatives and many possibilities within contemporary art, largely brought on by globalisation. Alter ‘means that the historical period defined by postmodernism is coming to an end, and alludes to the local struggles against standardization.

Bourriaud’s term Altermodern is a way of describing twenty-first century art after the modern and postmodern. This new Modernism describes ‘mass cultural movements’ and the continental mix that ensues. Thus, Altermodernism is about “otherness”, difference, multiplicity and diversity, opposing fundamentalism, uniformity through consumerism, the threat of mass influences (globalisation) and the loss of individuality. Bourriaud calls for an art movement that is international with a ‘global dialogue’ that is neither cyclical (Postmodernism) nor linear (Modernism) but instead embraces the multidimensionality and cross — referencing that is available in today’s ‘time and space’. From this perspective the … artist turns cultural nomad: what remains of the Baudelairian model of modernism is no doubt this flânerie, transformed into a technique for generating creativeness and deriving knowledge… nomadism… the term enshrines specific forms, processes of visualisations particular to our own epoch… contemporary art gives the impression of being uplifted by an immense wave of displacements, voyages, translations, migrations of objects and beings, to the point that we could state that the works presented in Altermodern [exhibition] unravel themselves along receding lines of perspective, the course they follow eclipsing the static forms through which they initially manifest themselves.

As described by Bourriaud, the ‘core of this new modernity is… the experience of wandering — in time, space and mediums’, nothing is fixed, it is all about the journey. This wandering and experimentation is seen in the production component — a response to fleeting influences and moments.

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483 Ibid.
484 Ibid.
485 Ibid.
486 Ryan, "Altermodern".
Semionaut (remixing/connecting)

Bourriaud believes that in a culture of interconnectedness, the Semionaut plays a fundamental role. This is the person who links many disparate elements together — a remixer. Semionauts create possibilities and meaning through language and symbols (semiotics). Examples of a Semionaut may include the DJ who takes genres, different eras, and media formats of music to remix together or the web surfer. The Semionaut is Po–PoMo; remixers are no longer only the DJ but everyone who is part of modern urban culture and have an online presence. Hence, my future move is to further align my eclecticism into my art practice, to show all of my influences and my capabilities as a “(re)mixer” of “many things” and ideas and especially as a amalgamation of ideas and forms — postproduction.

Postproduction (montage/detourage – remix)

In Postproduction: Culture as a Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World Bourriaud states both Altermodern and Postmodern describe the ‘same artistic scene, [hence] art of the twentieth century is an art of montage (the succession of images) and détourage (the superimposition of images)’. In his Remix the Book, Mark Amerika best summarises the essential points of Bourriaud’s Postproduction and its relationship to remix culture as: i) starting with Duchamp, Postproduction has become the methodology of praxis for the majority of contemporary artists; ii) DJ and programmer represent remix culture which came out of the 1980s accessibility to computers and sampling; iii) Postproduction is influenced by Duchamp but also the Letterists and Situationist’s practice of “détournement”; iv) Postproduction artists transform doctrines and histories by adding components to make the readings of the storyline different; and v) Postproduction artists see the gallery as a place of interaction and “cohabitation,” ‘somewhere between decor, film set, and information center’. Thus,

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Colin Davies and Monika Parrinder, Limited Language: Rewriting Design: Responding To A Feedback Culture. (Berlin, Germany: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 60.

Ibid.

An appropriate example of the “remix” or “mash-up” is the musician Girl Talk, USA DJ Gregg Michael Gillis, who digitally samples from other artists. His tune Night Ripper includes ‘between 200 and 250 samples from 167 artists’. Lawrence Lessig, Remix: Making art and commerce thrive in the hybrid economy (London: Penguin Books, 2009), 11.

Bourriaud, Postproduction Culture As Screenplay, 37.

The two theories are linked by analysing contemporary art in relation to shifts in society including ‘economic, or sociological’. Ibid., 8.


Détournement was created by adding to work that already existed, or by using a mix of different works and combining them together to create the innovative ‘new’. Ian Buchanan, A Dictionary of Critical Theory (London: Oxford University Press, 2010), 127.
Postproduction describes contemporary remix culture. This globalised culture is not only one of histories but also a constantly updated present, ever changing through technology and interactive media. Borriaud defines Postproduction by several key factors: i) reprogramming existing works; ii) inhabiting historicized styles and forms; iii) making use of images; iv) using society as a catalogue of forms and; v) investing in fashion and media.\textsuperscript{497}

Although Bourriaud is significant in relation to contemporary art and social theories, there are other scholar-practitioners important to mention in relation to my work. The concepts of “Mis-design”, DesignArt, Micropop and Minimalism / Maximalism are particularly important as they relate specifically to my production component — ZakkaART “many things” remixed. These concepts also link in with what Post–Postmodernism postulates, that culture is now hybridised, as is art — hybridity ‘of thought, action, and artistic practice’.\textsuperscript{498, 499} As McQuilten clarifies:

**Mis-Design**

Mis-design will not tell you how to think, how to shop, how to behave, how to design, or how to locate “art” in consumer culture. Instead, it creates a critical space where we can think about the influence and dominance of design in our lives, and how we might locate experiences and interactions that are more human and spontaneous. This project has evolved from several years of research exploring the relationship between art, design, consumer culture and social change.\textsuperscript{500}

Grace McQuilten’s thesis, book and exhibition all allude to cross-fertilisation as “mis-design”. Art now sits ‘within the complex socio-economic and cultural predicament of late capitalism’.\textsuperscript{501} This is art as an interface with design. McQuilten’s *Art in Consumer Culture: Mis-Design* investigates the collision of art and design and the impact and interaction of art with commercialism. Mis-design aligns with the theory and praxis of my exegesis. But McQuilten’s theory is mostly from a design perspective, in that she argues that design could focus less on the commercial product (end result) and more on the process to benefit from unique insights and mistakes as ‘consumer desire only produces lack’.\textsuperscript{502}

Unlike McQuilten my approach considers the art-design connection, mostly through an art perspective. This includes the use and commentary on the everyday, the art/design industry’s relationship to commercialisation, and the impact of this

\textsuperscript{497} Bourriaud, Postproduction Culture As Screenplay, 14–16.
\textsuperscript{498} Hartness, “Po Pomo”, 8.
\textsuperscript{499} Grace Quilten is known for “Mis-design”, Alex Coles — DesignArt and Midori Matsui for Micropop.
\textsuperscript{500} McQuilten, *Art in Consumer Culture*, 28.
\textsuperscript{501} Grace McQuilten, *Mis-design: Art in a Consumer Landscape*, School of Culture and Communication, November, (Melbourne, Aust: The University of Melbourne, 2007), 5.
\textsuperscript{502} Ibid. 60 & 210.
connection on how art and my practice are situated. Hence what I am discussing is, more accurately, a “Mis-art”. Nevertheless my production component as discussed in the next chapter shows elements of Mis-Design throughout, by focusing on process and using the designed. The use of the everyday may trigger viewer responses of familiarity and intrigue as manufactured materials and objects, such as Post-It Notes, used to reinvent or sensationalise the ordinary. This series of my work is based on materiality, as is the work of artists such as Amy Joy Watson who uses finely cut balsawood, stitch and watercolour to create unique geometric sculptures that often float with helium balloons. Made visible is a dedicated, detail-orientated praxis that is often required in transforming or replicating materials and techniques.

The exhibition Mis-Design, curated by McQuilton, was a six-part show at the Ian Potter Museum, Melbourne in 2011, looking at the place of art in a world that is overemphasised by design. Mis-Design attempted to convey that art in the future will exist ‘outside of the art world — as a parasite in the complex machinery of consumer culture’. Artworks that represented and interrogate these intersections included Adam Kalkin’s Pop-Up Pirate Radio Tower and Tennis Academy (AKTA) (2011); Andrea Zittel Smockshop (USA) (2007); Flatland Ok; Slow Art Collective Shelter (2011) and Pacific Women’s Weaving Circle Occupation (Aust.) (2011). These artists responded to Mis-design by presenting ‘new works created in a spirit of creative and critical freedom… in the context of their urban, Western Landscapes’. These are artists who challenge the commercial worlds in which we live.

One example used by McQuilten is artist Murakami, as he has crossed both disciplines with his “high” and “low” art, by deliberately combining and exploring ‘art, design and commerce’ and branding his practice with noticeable symbols including his characters Mr Dob and Kaikai Kiki and symbols such as flowers, mushrooms and jellyfish eyes. As emphasised by McQuilten through his creation of a factory and products, Murakami accentuates buying and selling. Three other artists considered by McQuilten, Zittel, Kalkin and Vito Acconci, are also examples

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505 Ibid. 1
506 Ibid.
507 Ibid. 9
of Mis-design. Yet, they all are said to be working in ‘commercial design’ rather than ‘artistic practice’, that is, they are questioning production, desire and lack. They use art:

... for its capacity to reactivate the critical practice of art in a more direct engagement with commerce... work that emerges from within commercial systems. Contemporary art, in this context, is considered as a critical engagement with capitalist systems of production, misdirecting the product-based methodology of commercial design.

Acconci’s works have moved from a critical dialogue as art to linking with architecture, in the form of the Acconci Studio — critical design with artistic production. His agenda is to make society question the impact of design and the systems that support it. Works such as Swarm Street (2012) show the complexity and affect that can take place within architecture and the public environment. This piece is a passageway through an architectural site with LED-lights above and below. Movement such as cycling or walking activates these sensor lights causing a spectacle of spots that collect around the person. As someone else approaches and passes the first person, multidirectional flecks veer off creating a new swarm of effervescence. As McQuilten states, he ‘misdirects its [design’s] function, creating a critical space from which to affirm a future for art’ — combining art and design.

**DesignArt**

In 2005 the critic Alex Coles identified ways in which art and design were merging, arguing that art included many themes related to design. His book *DesignArt* (2005) relates this preoccupation historically to the avant-garde’s use of design. Coles emphasises a focus on design in art and art in design that has become significantly more noticeable from the 1990s onwards. The crossover is inescapable.

The 2011 exhibition *Loaded* included works by Hussein Chalayan, Jaime Haon and Nienke Klunder, Studio Makkink and Bey, Karen Ryan, and El Ultimo Grito. The Spring Projects exhibition was focused on artists and works that crossed both art

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508 McQuilten, “Mis-design”, 10.
509 Ibid. 1
511 McQuilten, Art in Consumer Culture, 211.
and design and thematically included 'Imaginary Landscape; Cultural Morphing and Modified Utilities'. In his response to the exhibition Coles wrote:

The sculptures, installations and photographs generated as a result of the ongoing dialogue between design and art today constitutes more than just a passing style. All of it is loaded: loaded with content, loaded with meaning, loaded with history, and loaded with innovation.

For Coles, objects that are designed are by their very nature embedded with underlying contexts. This includes the materials, the manufacturing, the functionality and the history and cultural significance of the object. You just have to go into museums to see how design and craft have impacted on social progression. The example of the Apple iPhone is not just what you see, but all the parts, materials, labour, thoughts, designing and history that have gone into the materialisation as product. This is not dissimilar to art's materiality. Often when utilitarian objects are used in art there is not always the functional aspect of use, e.g. the iPhone as a multiplatform device for communication (unless being used as devices to show audio/video art), but it may be reduced to simply being an object. *DesignArt* is closely linked in with my work in that the interrelationship of art, design and consumerism are critiqued in relation to the changing definitions of art and my production component which includes objects with an embedded design history.

**Micropop**

Micropop is a theory founded in 2007 by curator and critic Midori Matsui, similar to Murakami’s “Superflat” (2000) in that many of the artists look at *Anime*, Japanese Pop influences and the childlike for popular influences. Matsui’s theory is concerned with the personal, and how these artists are impacted by global trends. Micropop includes Superflat. Micropop focuses on the hybridisation that has occurred in Japan through globalisation. The artists that are included in this hybrid “Pop” create works that are uniquely engaged in creativity, unconstrained and unlabelled as “Japanese art”.

This theory is akin to philosopher Giles Deleuze’s critique that future creativity will transcend:

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... the limits of existing forms of expression — those of major languages that one is forced to use — recombining them through original deviations (wanderings), rephrasing, and codes of expression, to develop a new kind of expression.517

There is sometimes confusion between what is personal or local and what is global, so the artist can choose what to take and use. Although Micropop is a Japanese phenomenon, the attributes that Matsui considers are not limited to the East but appear almost everywhere due to globalisation. What Murakami describes as the flattening or amalgamation of traditional and media cultures as Superflat, is Micropop. Matsui’s theory ‘refers to the unique worldview of artists who rearrange diverse fragments of information and knowledge to give new meanings and uses to things that are outdated and commonplace’, like I do.518

The use of the decorative, is also a common aspect of Murakami’s and some non-Western artists’ works — a move towards the ornamental or maximalist.

**Minimalism / Maximalism**

Maximalism is not greatly encouraged in Western art, especially since Minimalism and Conceptualism remain dominant modes of artistic expression.519 Although, there are exceptions. International artist Yayoi Kusama is an outstanding example. Also, Australian installation sculptors Pam Gaunt, Zoe Kirkwood and Kate Rhonde or the two dimensional drawings and paintings of Andrew Nicholls, Kate Shaw and Kirra Jamison show a strong sense of and focus on ornamentation and/or colour, like visible in my production component. But aesthetics as pattern, decoration and colour are more prevalent in traditional or ethnic cultures, embedded in their cultural aesthetics of ornamentation. Maximalism is original, eclectic and elaborate, giving rise to a multi-disciplinary approach to creating.520 Maximalism may include ornamentation, pattern, repetition and high key colours to emphasise the decorative. These are all aspects that I have embraced (in varied amounts) in my production component. Maximalism is a convention that is not dissimilar to the bombardment of consumer and media influences we experience everyday — maximal exposure.521

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519 Although, noticeably the decorative has increased which can be seen in the manufactured through the wave of designers such as Florence Broadhurst, Marimekko, Orla Kiely, Gorman, Dumpling Dynasty and Romance Was Born who create highly embellished wallpaper, fabrics, and/or home wares.


521 It is interesting to note that the duality that I have using the "maximal" and "minimal" are words that happen to exist in my name and nicknames “Minaxi” (Maxx, Maxxi and Mini).
The philosophy of ‘more is more’ may leave the viewer overwhelmed by sensory overload, or entice them to look closer, deeper into the artwork.22

This chapter provides the historical and contemporary context, placing and specifying a framework for my art practice within the discourse of art history, cultural theory, and the diversity and ever changing disciplines of art and design. The contextual foci have been on discourse that engages, remixes and uses the manufactured and popular culture as inspiration for art-making and ideas — the mass produced has had a profound impact on art. This exegesis is an ethnographic study, praxical writing based on research and experiential evidence. This first chapter forms a foundation for the next chapter, which provides a context for the ways in which my overall art practice is situated within the current contemporary art paradigm and how my production component relates to relevant contemporary art theories, techniques and process

\[\text{Rachel Thornton, “Maximalist Painting “More is More”” (Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University, 2007), 6.}\]
\[\text{http://mofa.fsu.edu/resources/archive/pages/learning/resources/moreismore.pdf.}\]
Chapter Two

The Exhibitions — Kaleidoscope, Plasticity, Synthetic and Zakka♥: Contemporary Art that Dialogues with Design and Consumerism

Because it is based on personal praxis the production component of this thesis is an original body of work that contributes, intrinsically, to an understanding of the “new”. This chapter demonstrates links to art periods and theories discussed in Chapter One, the uniqueness of my art, as well as the connections and contributions it makes to art history, popular culture and contemporary art. Art examples, indicative of my practice, are analysed, indicating design influences (the manufactured), a representation of ZakkaART and a connection to the material memories embedded in objects.

All four production pieces self-critiqued for this exegesis, Kaleidoscope (2009), Plasticity (2010), Synthetic (2011) and Zakka♥ (2012), are visual art exhibits, that demonstrate my connection to objects — past, memories, and recordings of personal choices indicative of who I am and my tastes as specified earlier by Kwint.

The way I combine materials and my unique perspective exemplifies a Western, eclectic expression of Zakka — everyday things, such as colourful, kitsch, cute and beautiful objects that define me through a ZakkaART aesthetic of combining art, craft and design. These exhibitions are critically analysed within this chapter to demonstrate a process of ideas and intention based on design and the use of the designed as two and three-dimensional elements from the manufactured such as objects and foods. The works were created as “art”. They were not purely for sale, and profit, functionality or to meet the demands of a prearranged brief from a client that the designer is obliged to follow. Whilst I set parameters for each exhibition, akin to a design brief or project, this was self-generated and self-imposed. If the role of an exhibition is to show an artist’s works to the public, community and arts professionals, then my production component is a “public performance” of my ability to think and create. All of my exhibitions were shown in public galleries. Unlike a private gallery, the focus was not on sales but rather on the conversation

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generated through the presentation of specific bodies of work. Many of these works are installation-based, which are traditionally not sellable.

As expressed in the Introduction, this exegesis is based on a reflexive stance in which knowledge and practice are interdependent. My practice does foster “form follows idea” (conceptuality), however, many of the works produced for this exegesis have a tendency towards the concept that “idea follows form”. This is a position that can be likened to the catalogue essay by Sheridan Coleman accompanying Perth artist Tom Freeman’s materially playful exhibition Small Time: ‘manual and open-ended experimentation, un-shy of... colours or cheap hobbyish materials... With manual play... ability to abstract materials material qualities from the material themselves’. Like Freeman’s art, my pieces are embedded in a sense of materiality. Yet, they are “contemporary”. To be called “contemporary art” by the art scholars and intellectuals,

...t usually has to be realistic and allegorical rather than romantic and metaphorical. Hence a ceramic object that is intended as a subsersive comment on the nature of beauty is more likely to fit the definition of contemporary art than one that is simply beautiful.

In much of contemporary art one is required to search through the corresponding text. Also, to closely analyse the art piece’s many clues to find the hidden meaning and value of each and every component to ascertain the whole story. The use of idealisation, sentimentality or a single symbolic representation for example, a “one-liner” or a heart to represent love or even ornamentation, are often not regarded as being “contemporary”. These aspects are also thought to not contain enough rhetoric to be considered innovative and challenging although, as discerned by Rowley and in my experience, contemporary art can have a tendency to negate past traditions of making art as being too nostalgic or materially focused, instead emphasising theory.

The evolving and complex interconnected relationships between art, design and consumerism have been reviewed earlier. I now extend this discussion to my production component, and my art practice overall. As I have argued, in the

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524 Ibid.
527 Timms, What’s Wrong with Contemporary Art?, 17.
529 This is not a rule, and is starting to change.
twenty-first century it is natural for an artist to use aspects such as the designed and converse about products. If art reflects on the times then much of twentieth and twenty-first century art is embedded in a relationship to the industrial world and its impact. In this chapter I look at my production components and the impact and influence on my work by various art movements and theories. The aesthetics of using and commenting on the designed are considered in relation to ZakkaART — an overarching term for the art that I have created. Overall, I have conceptualised all aspects in my production component as being “ZakkaART”. Zakka is surmised as the extraordinary in the ordinary, related to design and lifestyle. ZakkaART describes art, such as mine, that draws from and uses the everyday as the sensational. Zakka is predominantly explored in relation to the third project component Zakka♥.

Like zakka, “ZakkaART” also has a relationship to some of the aesthetics of the past, especially to the period 1950s to 1970s, and to the designed such as Japanese and Scandinavian concepts of beauty, kitsch, cute and slick. ZakkaART is also a remix. It is a mix of art, design and consumerism. This is art that is often made with ideas but also with a sense of the childlike, humour or irony. Thus ZakkaART is art about, of, or made from the designed, the commercial and the mediated — those miscellaneous objects and influences that are used as source material to enhance our lives with a sense of creative flair (the art). My production components strive to do just that.

I also reflect on how pre–Pop and Pop inform contemporary art, my own artwork, and the conceptual design decisions that I make. In relation to art, design and the relevance to my practice, some earlier, influential artists (already mentioned) are revisited; including the Surrealist Meret Oppenheim (1913–1985) and Colour Field painting (1947 to mid–1960s). Oppenheim is particularly relevant as one of her pieces shows the early development of the utilitarian in art and links with some of my project component Colour Field, shows the relevance of colour as an integral component in my style.

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530 A great deal of Modern and Contemporary Art is ironic or a pastiche as is alluded to in Chapters One. By using and placing the designed in the gallery space or calling it “art” that is already a paradoxical statement as the expectation of what the object is, has been changed in concept, function and aesthetics. An example is Tracey Emin’s My Bed (1998). Arthur Danto used Warhol’s Brillo Boxes as an example when questioning “art from nonart, the readymade from the commodity… in the late fifties and early sixties, when the art critical rhetoric of “art into life” was finding a captive audience… Danto encountered a brave new world of objects in which the experiments of pop, assemblage, and the happenings seemed to challenge the very meaning of art’. Pamela M. Lee, Forgetting the Art World (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), 17-18.

531 I have not necessarily used objects that are manufactured to be “zakka” or described as “zakka” but I have used the everyday to create a zakka-like aesthetic as ZakkaART.
In my art practice I highlight the beauty in the ordinary. All my exhibitions are partial to the popular concepts of the readymades, and Pop art. Post–Pop influences can be seen in my use of the graphics and colours of street art, and ironic commentary, alongside the multitude of banal objects used and the way consumerism with sensationalism is integrated — the popular and consumerism as my culture.\textsuperscript{532}

There are multiple possible reasons for this attraction to objects.\textsuperscript{533} One is a consumer fascination with technological change in relation to functionality and another is the interest in objects as tangible examples of human creativity — material culture. On another level products are invested emotionally by advertising and designer labelling as being ‘signifiers of status’.\textsuperscript{534} From the 1950s onwards we have been in a perpetual state of “keeping up with the Joneses” in a competition of conspicuous consumption. Thus, these connections psychologically and emotionally link us to a fetishising of the everyday — an anthropomorphic relationship to the inanimate.

**ZakkaART Production Components\textsuperscript{535}**

Many art exhibitions explore colour, the decorative and materiality whilst conceptually linking to relationships with consumer objects and popular culture. My projects do not stand alone, as did Duchamp’s readymades, as manufactured objects placed in the gallery space, labelled “art”. Unlike Duchamp, simply scribbling a signature onto the surface, of his *Fountain*, my works are sculptures and arrangements made from the mass-produced. *Kaleidoscope* engages with the plethora of contemporary paper products available. *Plasticity* identifies with the material of plastic, the “look” of the 1970s — ‘the mutable material of the imagination’ — that is change.\textsuperscript{536} The decade of the 1970s also links to the style of Pop art based on an inundation of advertising which encouraged a culture of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[532] This adoration for the manufactured is yet another contradiction in my character. I am very committed to consuming natural, plant based and organic foods wherever possible following my vegan ethics. Yet I do not necessarily buy organic, cotton, wood or “natural” material-based objects. I have a love of nature but am drawn to the artificial. I have a passion for objects that include books, music and technological devices, clothing, shoes and chunky plastic jewellery to lifestyle products such as kitchen gadgets and stationery. I often use ubiquitous materials such as plastics in my art. This is like Duchamp who only used the manufactured, seeing ‘art… in the stuff of everyday life… Anthropology… and… totems of mass production… [finding] magic in the modern world…’. Jonathan Jones, “Reinventing the Wheel”, *The Guardian*, February 9, (London: Guardian News and Media Limited, 2008). http://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/feb/09/art.
\item[535] Some of my previous works are also discussed in this section including *Tagged* C. C. C. (2004) and *Good Luck Fishy* (2009).
\end{footnotes}
consumption. ‘People were being persuaded to buy, rather than think’.537 Yet, the Pop artists’ identification with the manufactured, like my artworks, demonstrated art which had a sense of ‘fun and funky, even if referred to a serious issue [and] eye catching in its use of colour’.538 Plasticity mimics or makes ironic statements about the popular, industrialised and replicated, using techniques, themes and materials from the everyday, which like Pop art, encourages people to think critically about their world, our ‘plastic culture’.540 My Synthetic exhibition re-employs the plastic straw component of Plasticity and developed it as interstate installation, together with collaborator Dawn Gamblen. These materials were used indoors as a site-specific installation exhibition as well as outdoors in various city streets of the Melbourne CBD. This art intervention was an outdoor form of urban art. These street works are postmodernist “anything goes”, situationalist “anywhere art”, about interaction and dialogue.540 By being on the street rather than in a gallery space a greater circulation of imagery, objects or text are enabled.541 Synthetic added fragments of unsustainable objects (plastic) and colour to the city. Zakka♥ (read as “Zakka Love”, “Zakka Heart” or “I Heart Zakka”) engaged with everyday materials from cotton wool balls to utensils, food, and stationery. These materials were converted into sculptures and installations, investigating the cultural excessiveness of superfluous consumer objects. Zakka♥ is an investigation into the term “zakka”. But, alternatively, this exhibition could also be reviewed as an example of “affluenza” and our ‘addiction to stuff’.542 543 This is a confused state that can develop from so much product choice. The consequent sorting and cataloguing of so many objects as examples of over-consumption and the constant need to deal with “stuff” was an impetus for Zakka♥. I struggle with aspects of affluenza and “mottainai” — the knowledge that there is an inescapable ‘interdependence and impermanence’ of things and a regret over waste, my love of “stuff” and art as the creation of more objects.544 545 Yet, what mottainai suggests creates a sense of hope in encouraging the full use of objects for the entirety of their lifespan as all things have a unique

538 Ibid.
543 affluenza, n. a painful, contagious, socially transmitted condition of overload, debt, anxiety, and waste resulting from the dogged pursuit of more’. De Graaf et al. Affluenza, 1.
545 This want/need incongruence and confusion is described as ‘confating what we want with what we truly need. Having with Being’. Oliver James, Affluenza How to be Successful and Stay Sane (New York, NY: Random House, 2007), xvi.
spark or “Kami” (spirit).\textsuperscript{546} Thus by using objects as art, I am often using the ‘reduce, reuse and recycle’ model but also adding the fourth mottainai “R” — having a sense of “respect” for the designed and created.\textsuperscript{547}

The question over boundaries between art, design and creativity, plays into my own uncertainty and constant questioning of the parameters of whether what I create is “art” because it truly is, because I or someone else has claimed it is so, or because the pieces are in a gallery space. I often wonder, “when does art become just another designed object, something that is made for functionality and commercial endeavour”? Artists have to be attentive of opportunities to present and sell their work, especially in the Southern Hemisphere, where there can be a feeling of seclusion from the Northern creative hubs.\textsuperscript{548} There is a constant pull to commercialise, to earn a living and attain “success” rather than make art for art’s sake. I am also confronted by locating my art practice within the expansiveness of what can be termed “art” as well as in my close relationship with art as design. However, I consider that my works are somewhat innovative. Popular culture is ingrained in my practice through the use of familiar mass-produced objects and themes. Most objects I incorporate have been manipulated in some way.\textsuperscript{549} Examples include the use of plastic cups in Plasticity handled to look like bubble wrap or disparate objects in Zakka♥ assembled as groupings.

The exhibitions discussed in this chapter show the development of my practice through the use of, and thinking about, materiality and conceptually questioning the impact of products. The utilitarian and embedded popular cultures are source material for art-making, linking with design and consumerism. My use of “ZakkaART” is to take the idea of the designed as contributing to the everyday environments in which we live, work and socialise and changes the manufactured to objects that contribute to art-making as a “remix”. These mundane or functional objects are transformed into “art” ideas, returned to life as conceptually and aesthetically treated sculptures, installations or two-dimensional pieces. By adopting the familiar and manufactured I am constantly challenging myself to retain a sense of originality as I am using the mass-produced, the mass consumed — the popular. For my work to be “contemporary art” it needs to differentiate itself from what is ordinary and everyday, through physical change and manipulation.

\textsuperscript{546} Taylor, “Avoiding Waste”.
\textsuperscript{547} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{548} Stephens and Mateer, Yonder, n.p.
\textsuperscript{549} Plasticity and Synthetic were made as collaborations with artist Dawn Gamblen, however when discussing these works I use the first-person ‘I’, simply to align with the grammatical flow of the writing.
(materiality) and ideas development (conceptuality). This is implicit in the notion of ZakkaART.

The conceptual themes of my exhibitions relate to consumerism and how to engage with ways to alter the experience of objects. This is to bring to the surface the materiality of different histories and meanings buried within an object. As described by Christina Mills (1991), materiality extends beyond what the object is made of to include all that is related to the actual existence of the work. This includes

… the work’s production date and provenance, its history and condition, the artist’s personal history as it pertains to the origin of the work and the work’s place in the canon of art history.

All the aspects listed by Mills are part of the ‘visual experience’. The composed elements that make up the physicality of the art are what is first experienced by the viewer. The tangible is consequential to the meaning that is gleaned. Any material that is used in art production is, therefore, full of meaning. When the designed is utilised, the artist is incorporating objects that have already been driven by thoughts, ideas and design elements to make into tangible form. There is an entire process in a manufactured object from designer, manufacturer, and shop to consumer as well as a history connected to the evolution of the object.

As important as materiality is within contemporary art, the material quality needs to be discussed in relation to conceptuality, as they exist together. As Christian Scheidemann suggests:

Contemporary works of art decipher their meaning through the use of materials. Much valuable information can be gained about the intention and the mind of an artist by investigating the contextual significance of the materials at hand and the fabrication or technique of the piece.

Conceptualism significantly influenced the transition from movements, mediums and specific techniques to variety, multidisciplinary and experimentation — reinforcing ideas. In fact, since the focus upon conceptuality in the 1970s ‘artists have increasingly worked in varied media and styles’. Atkins labels these

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551 Ibid.
553 Ibid.
555 Atkins, ArtSpeak, 11.
reworkings as moving from ‘signature style’ (materials) to ‘signature thinking’ (ideas).556

Conceptuality is always present in art-making, whether the artist overtly chooses to focus on this or not. Ideas happen and fuel the creative output. ‘Conceptual artists… pursue artistic originality and representation in every possible way’ at whatever cost.557 Conceptual art has continued into the twenty-first century with works such as those by Damien Hirst and Tracey Emin. Conceptual art is there to challenge the viewer.558 Even more recently, contemporary conceptual art includes the likes of Cornelia Parker, Jeppe Hein, Bill Viola, Amalia Pica, Ai Weiwei whose works when

… compared to historical Conceptual Art, contemporary conceptual works more often embrace interdisciplinary approaches, audience participation, or the critique of institutions, political systems, and social and cultural hierarchies. Conceptual works can also often easily be identified with other broad categories, particularly performance art, new media, and installation.559

Art movements such as Dada, and especially Duchamp enabled Conceptual art. Art as tangible objects becomes reduced to or driven by ‘ideas, or with concepts, as the medium, and not with shapes, colours, or materials’.560 Thus, making conceptual art is fundamentally unlike traditional concepts of art. There is a ‘dematerialization’ of the artwork.561 The intention within the work and suitable ways of engaging and appreciating the work become more important than the aesthetic experience.562

Mills and Scheidemann argue that it is important to acknowledge materiality as central to contemporary art, and that material should be considered as important as the concept. Often in contemporary art the idea and discursive context of the work can tend to overpower the actual artistic outcome. However, this intellectualisation is not necessarily the case with the pieces I have produced. The tangible aesthetics are as important to me as the initial idea and the interpretation of the artwork. An over emphasis on the context of artworks is a result of the dominating power of Conceptual art (and Minimal art).

Conceptual art sought to consider all components of an artwork as equal whilst questioning originality and quality, although this does not seem to be the case.

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556 ibid.
557 Schellekens, “Conceptual Art”.
560 Goldie and Schellekens, *Who’s Afraid of Conceptual Art?*, 60.
Instead, in Conceptual art there is a “dematerialization” of art as “reductivism”.\(^{563}\) Art as “object” is negated in favour of text and contextuality. Information becomes all-important. This leads to an “anti-traditional” art aesthetic, art as ‘communication and display’.\(^{564}\) Thus, site-specific art develops which uses architectural, environmental and public space, and installation art is popularised.\(^{565}\)

Conceptual art is referenced throughout this chapter as it remains predominant in contemporary art, and thus is important to discuss in relation to my production component. As stated by Alberro and also key in Lucy Lippard’s writings, the late twentieth century saw ‘a de-emphasis on material aspects (uniqueness, permanence, decorative attractiveness)’.\(^{566}\) This disregard for aesthetic concerns resulted from a focus on the intangible as intellectual analysis.

This priority on ideas does not mean that the art object has no value, but that the study and philosophising of culture, art and the artists’ ideas becomes the primary focus, rather than the art piece itself. Notes and text, such as the didactic panels in exhibitions and catalogue essays, highlight this focus on concepts and almost overpowers the actual art. These written descriptors can also be seen as a legacy of French Realist painter Gustave Courbet’s (1819–1877) six points which challenged the art system of his day, changing the art model forever. In particular, he created supporting documentation for his exhibition in the form of an exegesis within a catalogue — written text became an adjunct to art.\(^{567}\) The construction of the work is not as important and in some instances irrelevant.\(^{568}\) The object is reduced to being a vehicle and communicator for an important concept so that ‘the medium or matter of art was dismissed as being of no real consequence’.\(^{569}\) However, in order for art to be art, the visual needs to be of importance. Materiality did not completely disappear though. Whilst conceptualism (and Minimalism) became a lasting trend, there were parallel movements with artists such as Jen Stark, Sarah Sze, Tara Donovan and Australian artists such as Theo Koning and Leah Tarlo who continued to emphasise an engagement with actual physical matter and play as their primary focus — i.e., process-based making.

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\(^{563}\) Alberro and Stimson, *Conceptual Art*, xvii.

\(^{564}\) Ibid.

\(^{565}\) Ibid.


\(^{567}\) Snell, “The Role of the Visual Work”.


My production pieces relate to Object Art or Objet trouvé (found object). The object artist, uses the already made as ‘raw materials’. This is unlike Duchamp’s readymades — simply displayed without intervention. Objet trouvé are collected and reconfigured materials used in ‘Assemblage[s]’, with juxtaposition as a guiding principle. The process thus entails sorting, organising and decision-making. To reiterate, the focus in my exhibitions are on materialism — the making and construction are what makes the work “visual art”. But, each production piece also developed from ideas — the making and ideas thus often work in conjunction with each other. The exhibitions reiterate and support the argument that the concepts of the readymade, Pop art and zakka as ZakkaART perpetuate art’s connection with the designed, commercialism and the intermixing of these aspects. These pieces also exemplify my relationship to objects.

Both art and design involve planning. In making art there often needs to be some degree of planning to determine what the finished object may look like and whether it will “work” or not. Although my project component is extensively discussed in this chapter, the processes that led to the final exhibitions are appropriate to discuss here. An example of an unresolved experiment from the project component of this research is Kaleidoscope spheres (2009). Pages from my visual diary showed stickered spheres and an attempted spherical cardboard cutting technique. I did not end up using the balls and while the cardboard piece functioned as a small-scale maquette it did not work large-scale, as the card was too heavy. Thus these works were incomplete and not exhibited. Planning, as suggested in the above example, is generally in the form of drawings, designs and experiments using the materials that may be used for the final piece.

Often my ideas came from spontaneous thoughts and the reflective work undertaken in my visual diary explorations, as opposed to researching an academic topic or a particular interest. Planning and ideas as “process” could be seen through visual diary examples, maquettes and vision boards such as pages of my visual diary. These pages, although not a part of this Chapter, show the development of the project component, displaying and considering aesthetics and concepts though the development of ideas, designs, drawings and experiments with materials towards
exhibition-ready resolution. This is the process from idea, experiments to resolution.

In my production pieces the aesthetic, that is, the experience of beauty, is not negated as an unnecessary or superfluous as Conceptual and Minimal art may strive to do. These art pieces are also not Minimal and reduced to their bare essence. However, elements of both conception and minimisation do exist, as there is some visible paring back within the pieces. Also, my exhibitions are not overtly decorative or eclectic in their use of combinations of materials (hybridised/maximal), and are restrained in their final aesthetic resolutions. The aims of these bodies of work are not to be controversial, or challenge people to probe the depths of what art is by causing debate or argument. These works do not ask ‘difficult and sometimes even annoying questions [as] conceptual art in general aspires to do’. The production pieces are about my artistic process in engaging with materials, as well as inciting an experience for the viewer in seeing the banal with a fresh perspective. As this chapter reveals, all of my exhibitions use “the designed” as art-making media and are about my relationship to abundant objects and the relationship to these — materialism.

Figure 5: Tagged: Celebrity. Change. Commodity

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574 Schellekens, “Conceptual Art”. 574
Figure 6: Now You See Me

Figure 7: Multiple Choice
Figure 8: Sil-who-uette – Bjaxx ans Elvin

Figure 9: Trading Places, Staging Faces (wall) & Trance-formed Bjaxx, Elvin, Maddi & Michi (videos)
In retrospect, these works are also a reaction to my previous solo exhibition *Tagged: Celebrity. Change. Commodity (Tagged: C. C. C.)* (2004) (Figures 5-12), initially shown as part of the Artrage Festival at Fremantle Arts Centre, W.A (See Appendices: 6. *Tagged: C. C. C. Education Notes* and 7. *Tagged: C. C. C. Catalogue*). This exhibition was more overtly conceptual than the production component of this exegesis. It was closely related to Pop art, like Warhol, specifically exploring a fixation on celebrity. Tagged: C. C. C. hypothesised that “tagging” was an instance of branding or signature. This exhibition was linked to theorists including David Gauntlett’s proposal that since communications and media are at the core of modern-day life, then the overwhelming mass and digital media are bound to impact on self-identity. Michel Foucault and Anthony Giddens also made connections between media culture and identity. Foucault believed that media influenced our forever-changing identity and sense of self. He also understood identity as based on multiple lifestyle choices and decisions. In *Tagged: C. C. C.* I explored the insights of Gauntlett and Foucault’s observations on identity through

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575 Even though the themes and processes used in *Tagged: C. C. C.* continued in several other works including *Access All Hours* (2005) and *Morphology* (2009), these were more focused on mass media so less relevant to this exegesis.
the hybridised visualisations of musicians Madonna, Elvis, Bjork, Jacko (Michael Jackson) and myself into “new” designed and branded identities.

My focus was on celebrity as brand, the infatuation of our culture with these celebrities and their lifestyles. The exhibition also looked at personal identity, dissatisfaction and my occasional yearning to be facially different. The “morphed” individual was merchandised and packaged like the famous are, especially in relation to music concert collectables. In relating to mass media and popular culture themes, I responded to the emphasis in contemporary art upon interpretation, definition, and intellectualisation. Tagged: C. C. C. was well received, with government funding, several critical reviews, and toured throughout Western Australia with aspects exhibited in Sydney and becoming part of the W.A. art curriculum. However, I still felt disconnected from the material component. Tagged: C. C. C. is both a celebration of and ironic commentary on mechanisation and systems of streamlining. This exhibition was predominantly designed through the use of audio-visual computer software — technology and/or computer generation. The digital files were then manufactured by companies into objects, in the style of artists such as Hirst, Koons and Murakami. The “tagged” works were a result of industrial processes — Neo-Pop. In many respects for this exhibition I was an artistic director, a postmodern artist who took my ideas and digital files to manufacturers.

The essence of this exhibition was about merchandising, so all of the artworks were actual products that would usually be sold in the consumer environment:

These fabricated personalities are objectified, marketed and packaged, imitating real-life branding to create an installation of life-size cut-out acrylic figures, digital videos and wall works.579

Tagged: C. C. C. relied on manufacturers to replicate morphed celebrities into real-life objects such as posters, badges, acrylic silhouettes (like cardboard stands), lenticular postcards, a billboard and videos. The merchandising concept ingrained in this exhibition was a replication, thus, manufacturers had to be sought in order to create works that looked like commodities. By using these processes there is a direct connection to industry.

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These pieces are an ironic statement about the value-added to celebrity personalities through the extension of their name and professional activity, e.g. music into memorabilia. This commodification continues the process of consuming. Like Warhol, Tagged: C. C. C. appropriates its subject matter from the commercialised. While the works are not exact replicas, they use actual photos of celebrities blended (morphed) together with my face to create new people. These personalities are then merchandised through popular manufacturing methods conceptualising and materialising the designed, such as the magazine-like catalogue (insert image). These works accentuate the branding of personalities (celebrity culture) as products (mass media/advertising).
For example, in *Tagged: C. C. C.* musicians are marketed by the simulation of the actual processes of merchandising (popular) or product extension, which extends their lives beyond their music. These aspects are visible in *Tagged: C. C. C.* in representations including badges, posters, videos and a magazine-type catalogue. Catalogue writer, Paul O’Connor sums up the influence of mass media, celebrity and the popular in this exhibition:

“Pinned on, stuck to walls, crucified on bedroom doors — the cult of celebrity, the cut out celebrity. From life size to super size my image has been captured, shrunk, stretched and pixilated. I’m collectable, I’m endorsable. Copyrighted."^{580}

As indicated here, then, my exhibition explored the cult of celebrity, specifically musicians and, the branding and merchandising of these personalities, together with

... the impact of celebrity and consumerism on individuality... Images of pop culture celebrities: Elvis; Michael Jackson; Madonna and Bjork together with photographs of Minaxi are enmeshed together using digital morphing techniques, creating new celebrities which are subsequently rebranded into commodities."^{581}

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581 May, “Tagged”.
The material relies on popular culture for both content and meaning. Once again my art reflects on the mass media. The artificial impacts my lifestyle with more tangible, emotionally connected “stuff”.

Other previous works also demonstrate this interest — such as the commission, *Good Luck Fishy* (2009) (Figure 13), which highlights mechanical processes and industry. *Good Luck Fishy* is a large sculpture replication of a manufactured small wooden model kit that was scaled up in size and coloured by myself on a computer, before being produced by a laser cutting company. This work was copied to show an up-scaled version that was no longer hand-holding size but larger than life, at eye and body level. The work temporarily altered public space, adding something new and novel as a sculptural form to the urban environment. The aim of *Good Luck Fishy* and other art objects placed in Perth’s central business district (CBD) were to allow commuters a reprieve from their usual interactions. Thus, the work no longer exists as a toy model but rather as a public sculptural object. The emphasis was on the design, adaptation and manufacture of a sculpture, as opposed to the leisurely construction of the original hobby model.
Good Luck Fishy is in the style of Warhol’s replications and Oldenburg’s enlargements. Consequently, the work represents the everyday or an activity such as construction as a representation of aesthetics, exaggeration and spectacle. The increasing focus and idea of spectacle in contemporary art is due to the aspects I have discussed such as the use of popular culture references, the designed as art media and the resources available that enable people to so easily become artists. Consequently pieces like Good Luck Fishy, intended to create feelings of enchantment or stimulation (which is often seen as gigantic sculptures) related to ideas of the popular as ‘entirely dominated by pleasure, spectacle, consumption, parody, pastiche, difference, fragmentation and irony’.\(^5\) As boundaries diminish between culture, art, science, popular culture and mass/online media, these aspects become the keys to intellectual and cultural life and all meaning in the present as Debord’s “society of the spectacle”:\(^5\)

\[\text{“It’s the buzz we’re after nowadays, the emotional wallop, the intrigue, the fun, the shock. Art must be entertaining and diverting. We demand an experience and, frankly, we don’t want to be burdened with details.”}\(^5\)

Postmodernism set out to question overarching themes. Although, at the crux of Postmodernism is the relevance of an increasingly imposed convention — that of a media generated society, a popular culture dependent on consumerism. Postmodernism and culture have become identical.\(^5\) Society is a jumble of cultural flotsam and jetsam from many diverse directions all converging together as simulation in the urban marketplace. Thus, Good Luck Fishy is embedded with the origins of the bought kit as well as the sculpture that has been replicated: consumption (kit), pleasure (hobby), spectacle (larger than life and coloured) and pastiche (imitation). In the process of making, this artwork was like an amusing representation of an IKEA furniture package (many pieces to find, fit and assemble). This outcome is not the original kit, nor an actual fish, but a simulation.

Both the Tagged: C. C. C. components including the badges and posters and my acrylic fish were created by manufacturers. I simply produced the design and gave art direction. This choice was due to the digital processes and laser cutting required. As an artist I did not have access to or competence in these industrial techniques. By necessity this has created in some instances, an artist-manufacturer

collaboration whereby industry has become intrinsic to the conception of particular art pieces.

Following the intensity of working on the computer, I wanted to create some tangible artworks, to be hands-on. Tagged: C. C. C. was without my usual connection to colour, pattern, play and “the childlike”. The lack of physical engagement in the process of making the works for this exhibition, led me back to the craft of creating, to the manipulation of materials. This change can be likened to the resurgence of the Art and Crafts movement in response to increasing digitisation. As a result, my practice changed to the use of ‘everyday materials particularly sticky dots that you find at stationery shops’. With an increased concentration upon the everyday, the decision was made to focus on materiality and conceptuality as present in objects. This change in direction led to the works for my production component — the everyday, manufactured and handmade as ZakkaART.

The production component is dependent on manual dexterity and myself as a maker rather than director. The construction was a conscious choice. The objects used are already manufactured and not reproduced or manipulated to create “art” through industrial processes in the way that artists including Koons and Murakami do.

The exhibited pieces I created for this exegesis, Kaleidoscope, Plasticity, Synthetic and Zakka♥ are mainly installation art (displayed or arranged to alter space, creating a sensory experience) such as the straw walls in Synthetic (Figure 14). Plasticity and Synthetic are mostly site-specific, i.e. made specifically for the space they are exhibited in. Like Objet trouvé I also use the manufactured, as the raw materials for making art, akin to using paint for a painting or clay for a sculpture. Thus, influences such as the readymade from Dadaism and Pop art elements are ingrained in the very nature of the production component — interlinking art, design and consumerism, the “many things” of zakka.

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Dada, specifically Duchamp’s creation of the readymade remains an integral component of this exegesis. The readymades are ‘manufactured objects promoted to the dignity of art through the choice of the artist’.\textsuperscript{587} Although generally not “readymades”, at the core of each exhibition is the use of found and collected materials either purchased or amassed — the everyday. These objects are not necessarily produced as multiple pieces of sameness such as the Pop artists did, especially Warhol with his amassed replications (e.g. Brillo Boxes). However, like the Pop artists, my production component favours ‘realism, everyday (and even mundane) imagery, and heavy doses of irony and wit’.\textsuperscript{588} Gablik’s definition of Pop’s characteristics highlight how the key to this movement is the overwhelming change from a fixed base to an unstable viewpoint, whereby an “anything goes” attitude is encouraged. This characteristic included transforming two and three-dimensional picture planes, employing manufacturing processes, using popular themes, urban environmental motivations and the questioning of art. These are all aspects that are included in my exhibits.\textsuperscript{589} Although I do not simulate industrial processes, like Warhol did with his silkscreen printing, the material resources I have employed in the production of these exhibitions are all manufactured substances and objects.

\textsuperscript{589} Gablik and Russell, \textit{Pop Art Redefined}, 13-14.
There are few aspects of mass media in my production component, but there is a
strong relationship with the popular as represented by the use of everyday and
branded materials. My production component features humour and parody, the
artificial, the banal, and the duality of Minimalism and camp or kitsch. Inherently
there is a playfulness or indulgence with materials and processes, representative of
aspects of Pop art.

These elements were adopted to effect in Pop art. Where my work differs is with
the strong connection to the child-like, as with the artworks of Koons. Objects are
used to communicate themes in the space between childhood and adulthood. These
aspects relate to feelings of delight and surprise, and are similar to the oddness of
some zakka objects. Objects are comic, and juxtaposed to encourage different
perceptions of reality and expand the viewer’s awareness. Hence, the production
component is ZakkaART and yet exemplifies the effects of the readymade and Pop
art as the everyday in art and culture.

By using the designed in making art, the functionality is removed from the object
and the already made simply becomes another material for art-making. So although
using objects in art is not new, I am intervening by using my personal take on art,
design and consumerism through a “zakka” aesthetic — a beauty that looks to
“many things”, to create handmade art. The themes, methods, and materials that I
refashioned together with my personal style contribute to the making process
altering the functional object (designed) to become a conceptual and aesthetic
experience. The conceptual themes relate directly to the objects used, not to
question my practice or alienate the viewer but to bring to attention the multiple
possibilities of the everyday and our dependence on objects. Namely, the hybridity
and relationships to time, place, space and light that commonly exist in Post–
postmodern contemporary art. That is, what Smith describes as ‘existing in the
conditions of contemporaneity’ — questioning the nature of being in the present
rather than using the terms “Modernism” or “Postmodernism” as descriptors.590591
Hence, these exhibits are about consumerism and designed culture — Post–
postmodernist influences and the continued influences of Pop aesthetics on art
encompassed by the theories elaborated on in this exegesis.

590 Contemporaneity includes: interrelationships between peoples and with the planet, cultural multiplicity, international
political ideologies to individual feelings and ideas shaped by i) Globalisation – power and cultural contrast; ii) Increased
inequities in society which threatens e.g. ideologies; and iii) “Infoscape” immersion by all as visual overload, simulacrum and
591 Ibid. 3.
Contemporary art has become all about extensive questioning and investigation into the everyday. Art today commonly consists of controversial experiments, apprehension towards universal signs, the creation of obscure or perplexing objects, or exploratory projections that are either modest assertions or optimistic in their expectations. Directly suggestive of the artwork itself, contemporary art can also be comparative to the work of peers with a keen examination of “nowness”.

Thus, underlying my works are my intrinsic relationships with objects, materials, culture and consumption. This dependence on the external and artificial is both comforting and celebratory, such as the delight in seeing and experiencing zakka objects. Contrary to this, my relationship to materialism is stressful, especially in a time of overabundant consumerism, excessive advertising, information and continual change — affluenza. Consequently a frisson of emotion exists in relation to the mediated and consumed. There is my positive delight in things that connect with everyday interactions and narratives to the made. Alternatively these bought objects draw me into multilayered systems of production, advertising and capitalism. As consumers we are sometimes placed in ethically questionable relationships with producers. To buy an object is to buy the underlying history that the object is permeated with. In using these materials and themes in my art I am making (an ironic) comment on not only my connection with consumerism but our associations to the manufactured — reliance, commerce, greed, impulsivity, delight and many other conflicting emotions. Thus, my production exhibitions are connected to questioning my relationship to the everyday and my contradictory relationships with objects — wanting and collecting as well as a fear of accumulation, often leading to ‘emotional distress’. My objects are fetishised to the extremes of objectophilia (‘attraction to objects’), which may give me the same, or more, pleasure and love as do people.

Popular culture is different from “folk culture” which commonly refers to traditional practices and conventions that are usually localised, uncommercial and less changeable. However, like the popular, folk includes ‘mass participation’. Traditional objects are also fetishised and marketed like the popular — aspects that are in the symbolic realm in which values are traded and exchanged through

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592 Ibid. 2.
593 James, Affluenza, xvii.
behaviours and practices.\textsuperscript{596} The object becomes a replacement for emotional contact as a transitional object is to a child.\textsuperscript{597} Although these objects can be emotionally transitory due to style obsolescence of products created by the design, manufacturing and advertising industries; at the other extreme objects become permanent fixations and examples of hoarding, collecting, objectophilia and fetishisation and the anthropomorphising of objects as a “real” friend.

If “culture” is a cultivation of the arts, intelligence, learned habits, traditions and customs of groups of people, then my culture is not my ancestry but rather that of fabricated industrial society. So it is not surprising that the popular is increasingly looked to for inspiration and reflection. Product becomes art. Art becomes product. Whether these new types of art are “art” is still disputed. ‘The avant-garde conceptualists say, “Yes”, the traditionalists say “No”’.\textsuperscript{598} The contentions between Modernism and Postmodernism continue, questioning which is the most important, function or concept/creativity.\textsuperscript{599} So too my art objects are possibly contested as art by the viewing public, but link with the postmodern position of “anything goes” and Post–Postmodernism in that hybridisation is not “new” but is culture in practice. My artwork is postmodernist in its pluralism.\textsuperscript{600} It is an acknowledgement of popular culture in disseminating and questioning “high” and “low” art and Po–PoMo.\textsuperscript{601} Assemblage, collage and sculpture are used with a diversity of materials and products to express ideas related to consumerism and the popular through material mash-ups.

\textbf{Kaleidoscope (2009)}

The exhibition \textit{Kaleidoscope} ventured back to my love of colour, design and form in a show of wall works, sculptures and installations (See Appendices: 3. \textit{Kaleidoscope} Roomsheet and 8. \textit{Kaleidoscope} Catalogue) – an exhibition of works that illustrates an honesty with regard to materials and referencing of popular culture in titles such as \textit{Taking the Spot for a Walk} (Paul Klee ‘taking a line for a walk’), \textit{Baker’s Delight} (Bakery franchise), \textit{Random Acts of Colour and Form} (Book: Danny Wallace, Random Acts of Kindness) and \textit{Slinky} (Toy invented by Richard James in the 1940s). The use of everyday paper materials including sticky dots foraged from stationery shops;
streamers, confetti and coloured card form the basis for an explosion of playful objects. Fans spinning colour disks show a myriad of shades whilst sticky notes are used to capture household necessities in humorous and bold ways.

The name signals to the kaleidoscope as a childhood toy. This plaything is shaken or spun and looked through to see visions of moving colours created by fragments of coloured beads, paper or other objects. It is a Greek word, for ‘beautiful, form, view’ and this is indicative of what was exhibited.\textsuperscript{602}

Glossy, bright, tactile things: like the Pop artists before her, May exalts in the materiality of the manufactured world around her, simultaneously exploring its tightly sprung symbology, and the drives and desires that underpin our relationship with it. Her tangible pleasure in the colour and form surrounding her is reworked, shaken… with the world emerging as new.\textsuperscript{603}

The exhibition examined and recontextualised everyday manufactured paper as being ubiquitous. This overabundance was achieved through binaries I applied: including minimal versus decorative aesthetics; kinetic or interactive elements versus still objects; and the hand-made versus the manufactured. Everyday industrial products that create art return back the work to the individual, the hand-made, the personal and the precious. \textit{Kaleidoscope} is a discovery in finding different uses for everyday materials — DIY and CIY.\textsuperscript{604} To DIY is to be a creative just like the artist or the creative industry, although with significant differences as seen in the comparisons I have made in Figure 15: Three Types of Creatives.

\textit{Kaleidoscope} attempts to be an art-design-DIY hybrid by remixing and recontextualising the manufactured (designed). These objects are transformed into something they are not intended to be through a playful creative process resulting in some humorous pieces used to amass attention to ZakkaART.

\textsuperscript{602} Nyanda Smith, "\textit{Kaleidoscope}”, in Minaxi May, \textit{Kaleidoscope}, Exhibition catalogue. (South Fremantle: Earlywork Art Gallery, 2009), 1.

\textsuperscript{603} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{604} Do-It-Yourself and Create-It-Yourself.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Three Types of Creatives</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Creative Industry</th>
<th>Customising</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>FOR</td>
<td>Art-making for exhibition/commentary and for the collector</td>
<td>Creative output/product</td>
<td>Changing of bought/found/collection</td>
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<td>WHAT</td>
<td>Objects/experiences for exhibition/commentary</td>
<td>Service/objects for consuming</td>
<td>Objects for the self/individuality</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>Creator / Artist</td>
<td>Creative / Designer</td>
<td>Customiser / Anyone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTENT</td>
<td>Individuality</td>
<td>Consumerism</td>
<td>Identity</td>
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<td>POP</td>
<td>Pop art</td>
<td>Popular culture</td>
<td>Punk Popism</td>
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<tr>
<td>OUTPUT</td>
<td>Sensory experience</td>
<td>Choice/lack</td>
<td>Difference from mass-manufactured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUDIENCE</td>
<td>Exclusive audience</td>
<td>Commercial-all (population)</td>
<td>Personal-individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPANS</td>
<td>Everydayness &gt; Eliteness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHANGE</td>
<td>Constant reinvention</td>
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Figure 15: Three Types of Creatives – Minaxi May

One of the influences of Duchamp on my work apart from his readymades, is his use of Kinetic art. Kinetic art is movement within an artwork. It adds an element of ‘space and time’.[605] Duchamp’s Bicycle Wheel (1913) is considered kinetic due to the addition of the spinning wheel attached to a stool.[606] Although not actually a kinetic artist, Duchamp did briefly experiment with ‘mechanical motion’ especially seen in Rotative Plaques (1920) and Roto-reliefs (1935).[607] Both of these Duchampian pieces relate to my work in their rotational capabilities and in the use of everyday materials.[608]

Kinetics is increasingly an interest and component of my works due to the possibilities of change and interaction that occurs from a moving object as opposed to a still artwork. Spin Me Lollipops of Delectable Colour (2009) (Figure 16), illustrates the commonplace together with kinetics. This artwork developed from the two-dimensional kaleidoscopic sticker collage wall works in Kaleidoscope. Spin Me Lollipops of Delectable Colour (Figure 17) is made of small battery operated electrical fans made from DIY kits that are covered with recycled CDs decorated with sticky dot patterns replicated from the Kaleidoscope series of wall works. This piece was created to show how simple movements could disperse or fragment

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[606] Ibid. 5.
[608] However the most significant artists related to Kinetic art are Alexander Calder and Jean Tinguely. Rickey. Selz. Directions in Kinetic Sculpture, 14.
pigments, whiten them, and to show the intrinsic relationship that vision and light plays in forming colour.

This work changes a still sculpture into moving art, adding an element of intrigue or childlike wonder. Spin Me Lollipops of Delectable Colour is comparable to Duchamp’s Rotoreliefs (1935) ‘spinning circular geometric patterns’ which exemplified his keen interests in mathematics and science through the illusionary technique of kinetics.609 My kinetic piece is an example of everyday industrial items used to create objects that are no longer functional as fans for cooling but are now ‘playful, undermining of deterministic thinking’, much like the Rotoreliefs.610 611 Although not a hanging sculpture, this work demonstrates the rotation on an axis derivative of what Duchamp coined as ‘mobiles’.612 613

Figure 16: Spin Me Lollipops of Delectable Colour

610 Ibid. 239.
611 Spin Me Lollipops of Delectable Colour was developed into an entire kinetic exhibition using ceiling, pedestal and small fans for A Spin on Fandom, (exhibition, residency and workshops) St Hildas Anglican School for Girls Gallery, Perth (2011).
612 Alexander Calder (1898–1976) is an artist who was known for his development of the mobile, whilst Jean Tinguely (1925–1991) extended this idea of ‘technological shift’, through the inclusion of mechanics, thus advancing the idea of mobiles and kinetics.
613 This piece was further developed in 2011 for my solo exhibition A Spin on Fandom, St Hildas Anglican School for Girls Gallery, Perth. I created large standing fan works like Spin Me… and ceiling fan interactive pieces including a balloon piece and an aerial drawing machine.
My practice draws from a strong sense and use of colour and flat picture planes related to Murakami’s Superflat tradition and Abstract Expressionism’s Colour Field painting — a lack of three-dimensional perspective and an inclination to use shapes. Flat areas of colour are embedded in the Kaleidoscope exhibition, an exploration of readily available coloured paper products, which create varied spans of colour and shape. Examples such as Sticky Note Rolls (2009), Baker’s Delight (2009) (Figure 18) and Slinky (2009) (Figure 19) exemplify the breadth of what can be created from limited manufactured colour palettes as sculptures and installation.

Sticky Note Rolls is comprised of Post-It notes. The coloured sheets of paper are a phenomenon that revolutionised stationery in the area of note taking — notepaper with ‘repositionable adhesive’ that can be attached to objects as reminders. The pieces in Kaleidoscope, including Sticky Note Rolls, not only celebrate objects that are retailed but also the possibilities of commercially available colour systems epitomised by manufacturing. Examples include the palette of neon colours used in

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614 This challenges the dualities between commerce and art, the aesthetics of the West and Japan and Japanese painting tradition and popular culture through a strong emphasis on two-dimensionality, colour and the cute. Sharp, Superflat Worlds, 1, 3 & 5.

Post-It notes from their distinct range of thirty-four colours.\textsuperscript{616} These colour systems are created by industry, based predominantly on the Colour Index — the ‘unique and definitive classification system for dyes and pigments used globally by manufacturers, researchers and users of dyes and pigments’.\textsuperscript{617} Whilst consumers may think there is a choice, there is only a ‘standard language for color communication from designer to manufacturer to retailer to customer’.\textsuperscript{618}

\textit{Bakers Delight} also emphasises colour through paper work. These are arranged into a circular form like a garland — a wreath of flowers and leaves, worn on the head or neck or hung as a decoration. \textit{Bakers Delight} is composed of cupcake patty pans used for holding and making baked cupcakes. These patty pans are simply held by gravity holding their layered vessel like forms together. In this work I play with the artfulness of form in space. The materiality of patty pans is made visible through the qualities of the paper — the ability of the cupcake holders to stack, interlink and stay together due to the paper kinks. I am able to mediate the material and in a sense change and hopefully enhance or create a new perception of an

\textsuperscript{616} Ruecian, “Post-it Art: Productivity in Many Wonderful Colors”, August 31 (Creative Market Labs, Inc. 2007).
everyday object such as paper moulded to en case single-sized cakes. Catalogue essayist, Smith further observes that this layering together with the zigzag edging of the patty pans creates a series of elaborate patterns of fragile edges that form a rainbow of flowing colours a conceptual and decorative abstraction, reworking the realism of the everyday.\textsuperscript{619}

crinkly edges of hundreds of patty cake pans stacked together (a nod to May’s obsession with cooking) fuse into each other, bleeding colour into a vast tonal range, created from an original combination of five basic colours red, yellow, blue, green and pink.\textsuperscript{620}

The colours limited in their manufactured content, give the illusion of plenty, a deception of more colours than are used due to the organisation of these paper stratums. For example, orange is created where the red and yellow meet. These colour optics emphasise how our visual perceptions and the light spectrum interact to visualise colour, thus again emphasising not only my innate interest in colours, but also the impact of colour in general.

\textsuperscript{619} Smith, \textit{Kaleidoscope}, 1.
\textsuperscript{620} Ibid.
*Slinky* is derived from James Industry’s Slinky® (1945), a children’s toy based on a moving ‘tensioned spring,’ that can tumble due to gravity.\(^6\) My piece replicates Slinky® in name and partially in construction, as although it can move, it is tensioned to the top of the ceiling. The artwork is composed of hand-cut card interlinked together with foam tape and fishing wire to form an elongated structure of circular disks. When not hanging taut, this work slightly springs into movement, it ‘veers into the air, layered spheres causing tiny individual spatial inversions… each circle repeats itself in different shades, shadows fall upon neighbours, and the effect is one of rich composite colour zones.'\(^6\)

Again, as with *Sticky Note Rolls*, *Slinky* contains a limited, yet diverse factory-made colour palette and connects to the familiar through an iconic childhood toy. *Slinky* is a symbol of an object for play, which I myself adored as a child — existing as a memory of happiness and recreation. As an artwork *Slinky* nostalgically reconnects to early years, play, ideas of immaturity, and a longing for the simpler state of being a child. This is exemplified through the use of a bright range of indexed colours and the associations with the actual mass-produced toy recopied with mass-produced card.

Like *Sticky Note Rolls* and *Baker’s Delight*, *Slinky* exemplifies the Colour Field painters, being most related to Ellsworth Kelly, Morris Louis and Kenneth Noland’s paintings of hard edged colour areas that emphasise colouration as an expressive source for art-making. By layering colour what is created is an amusing reminiscing of the familiar through chromatic uplift — my natural style to aestheticise.

All of these pieces are three-dimensionally created from already made objects. But like Colour Field painting, these colour focused works spotlight blocks of colour and colour as the subject. As surmised by Smith, *Kaleidoscope*, by its very nature is made of:

> [C]olour in ready-made tones and everyday items manufactured from paper, purchased off the shelf. What is left is a low-fi experimentation with form, colour and pattern, with material left largely raw. Conjuring the historical methodologies of Colour Field and Op Art movements or contemporary artists Cathy

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Blanchflower, John Nixon and Matthew Johnson, the meditation deliberates the power of colour phenomena and pattern, with simple rules of reduction and composition.  

Connections to the manufactured, popular, iconic and the use of humour and mimicry are featured in *Kaleidoscope*. Also, colour relates to the Pop artist’s use of readymade materials, not only as manufactured objects but equally in the investigation and interpretation of the commercial aspects of colour in their art — colour as a tool to entice buying. Roland Barthes links colour with the value of the artwork and relates the worth to how Pop art perverts its own artistic status. That is, the work is “art” because of the intentional focus on colour (a design principle), which Albers proposed as the most important ‘medium of pictorial language’. Barthes connects colour to the “chemical”, namely colour is a signifier of Pop art — bright, bold and noticeable, an indicator of the artificial. Pop art is about the manufactured and commercialised and so are the colours used. Akin to Pop art, this exhibition is also concerned with the manufactured. The materiality and colourations of paper products exemplify the multitude and the limitations of

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626 Falconer, “Josef Albers".
materials that are not ordinary white, which the artist can add colour media to, but are "instants", already pigmented. *Bakers Delight, Shrooming It* (2009) (Figure 20), *Confetti and Pom Poms* (2009) (Figure 21) and *Bright Bright Rainbow Tent* (2009) (Figure 22) all use mostly bold colours, whilst *Anemones* (2009) (Figure 23) uses pastel, lightened shades and *Slinky* (Figure 25), *Random Acts of Colour and Form* (Figure 24) and the sticker works use a combination of pastels, bright and neon colours. In *Taking the Spot for a Walk* (2008) (Figure 26), the white sticker dots provide this “painting” varied manufactured shades of white. On close inspection some circles look “cooler” and others “warmer”. *Slinky* and the leftover card as *Random Acts of Colour and Form* (2010) are made from a multitude of colours, tints and hues, e.g. more than one shade of orange from lemon-orange to red-orange. *Sticky Note Rolls* is significantly different to the other art pieces as all of these colours are neon or “fluorescence” — absorbers of ultraviolet light. The Post-It note colours are my favourite as they “glow” more than the familiar colour spectrum. The focus on colour in these works is similar to Pop art. But unlike this movement, colour is used as an integral part of my style, not just as mimicry of manufactured objects, as in Warhol’s *Brillo Boxes* (1964) or Lichtenstein’s dot cartoon-like pieces.

Also obvious in my work are aspects employed by Warhol and the Pop artists. One example is the interlinking of art, design and consumerism in the reductive style they utilised to imitate mass media, the popular and celebrity, both in composition and by using manufacturing processes. The nature of simplification is apparent in my production component, aligning with the way that Warhol produced pieces. His work was not Minimalist, but shared the making of art that used ‘extreme economy of means… reduced to the essentials of geometric abstraction’.

627 This can be seen in my piece, *Taking the Spot for a Walk*. Although this title purposefully references pre–Pop artist Klee’s quote that a ‘line is a dot that went for a walk’, *Taking the Spot for a Walk* is an intertextual piece referencing Klee, Colour Field and the “Popesque”.

628 Composed of one type of material, white stickers on white painted plywood, it is a minimal wash of white from a distance and a maximal plethora of circles on closer inspection. *Taking the Spot for a Walk* is reductive as it is minimal in the manipulation of materials, colour and content.

Figure 21: Confetti and Pom Poms

Figure 22: Bright Bright Rainbow Tent
Kaleidoscope demonstrates a connection to Lichtenstein in the use of dots. Similar to Lichtenstein’s Ben-day dots, I used dots as a main component of Kaleidoscope. My sticky dot works refer to contemporary computer pixilation. Pixels are the encoded bits of information — light from a screen that makes up a digital image. When digital images are enlarged they pixelate showing coded bits of information as squares of colour. These squares are similar to the Ben-day dots that occur when a newsprint cartoon is blown up in size, that Lichtenstein copied. Lichtenstein’s use of mechanical and cartoonish expression through dots relates to my sticker dot works, not in theme but more in graphic elements. As seen in Kaleidoscope I have concentrated on using paper products from the consumer environment in the form of sticky dots (and shapes) to create colourful forms. Although relating to colour and shape, unlike Lichtenstein, my use of dots are not mimicking popular culture or pictures, but are spontaneous patterns that glorify the everyday coding sticker as a “drawing” medium.
Figure 24: Random Acts of Colour and Form

Figure 25: Slinky – detail
The *Kaleidoscope* series of wall works on paper are further abstracted to create *Spin Me Lollipops of Delectable Colour*. Although as mentioned this artwork relates to Duchamp’s kinetics, there is also a relationship to other art movements including Pop art. *Spin Me Lollipops of Delectable Colour* echoes Lichtenstein’s use of spots, Duchamp’s readymades and kinetics, an emphasis on colour akin to Colour Field painting and elements of Op art as a play on light, dark and colour through movement. The use of stationery, stickers as material for art-making, accesses everyday common items.

Postmodern art tends to the decorative and the varied, or eclectic, especially in response to architecture. In relation to design Modernism focused on functionality ‘stylelessness [and Minimalism or a] reductive style’ — reflecting the emphasis on

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629 In addition to the exhibition’s title being “Kaleidoscope”, there is a series of works on paper (discussed later) named “Kaleidoscope” with an additional titling e.g. *Kaleidoscope Merry-Go-Round.*
monoculture. In contrast Postmodernism promotes diversification through cultural multiplicity. Modernism and Postmodernism effectively had oppositional approaches to design. The former positioning design as an industry to create the mass manufactured object. The latter as “art”, appreciating the aesthetics and concept as seen in the early design groups Alchymia and Memphis.

The contemporary plethora of information in wealthy postmodern societies, and the multiplicity of different cultural forms available to us, means that it is more difficult than previously to break cultural paradigms. The artist and designer have an increasing range of cultural forms from which to choose. If all are valued equally then a culture of multiple choices negates the early twentieth century model of cultural and social transformation. How is it possible to transgress when everything is permissible?

If Postmodernism sought to extend the ‘decorative, historicizing tradition(s)’, it is surprising that contemporary art consists of so much pared back work. There is much art that is anti-Maximalist — against the decorative and focused on the idea rather than the visualised outcome. But, post-war architects re-established the use of ornamentation and helped to contribute to the decorative renaissance in art. Embellishment was seen as an embedded cultural instinct and as a tool for capturing society's interest in form. Pop art also enabled the reintegration of the decorative or what was labelled as “the feminine”.

Postmodernism integrates mass media and culture of the masses culminating as ‘fashion, colour, decoration, symbolism, irrationality, spontaneity and sensorial experiences’, traditionally associated as women’s work. That is to say, the decorative is associated with handicrafts and “frou frou” — frilly excessive extras that are superfluous to the form.

These elements of the decorative are undoubtedly present in my production component. There is a natural use of ornamentation, which is especially evident in the sticker dot paper series Kaleidoscope (2009) (Figure 27). These pictures are a series that continue the use of easily obtainable sticker dots and shapes that are usually used as stationery for colour coding files. Developed from my studio residency exhibition, Playtime (2006) (Figure 28) at Artspace, the sequence with subtitles such as Merry-Go-Round (2009) (Figure 29), Chroma (2009) (Figure 30), CMYK (2009) (Figure 31) and Spacey (2009) (Figure 32), epitomize a variety of

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630 Crouch, Modernism in Art, 165.
632 Crouch, Modernism in Art, 8.
634 Gaunt, “The Decorative In Twentieth Century Art”, 73.
creative and spontaneous ways that an often overlooked, practical material can be (re)used as a resource for collage.

Figure 27: Kaleidoscope – series

Figure 28: Playtime
Figure 29: Kaleidoscope Merry-Go-Round

Figure 30: Kaleidoscope Chroma
Figure 31: Kaleidoscope CMYK

Figure 32: Kaleidoscope Spacey
Some of my production pieces follow more closely the idea of fetishising everyday objects as art. For example, the artwork *Confetti and Pom Poms* (Figure 33) is made from confetti — usually small bits of coloured paper. In this case I utilised the traditional one centimetre diameter coloured tissue paper circles. Like the works of the art/design duo Confettisystem my idea for using confetti was in the spirit of festivity. Also, similar to the mound of candy in *Untitled* (Portrait of Ross in L.A.) (1991) by postmodern artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres, my piece is placed in the corner of the room in a pile to represent not only the materiality of fine tissue paper, but also the colours and sheer volume of “product”. This idea of surplus is especially predominant, as confetti is often no longer used in weddings due to the mess it creates and the cleaning that is required afterwards. So confetti has become a passing fad, yet remains an iconic material representing celebration in my twenty-kilo pile of a ‘burgeoning swell of confetti settling in a corner’.

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637 Confettisystem, described as ‘New York based cult crafters’. Lucy Feagins ed., ‘Interview · Nicholas Andersen & Julie Ho of CONFETTISYSTEM’, June 21, 2013, http://thedesignfiles.net/2013/06/interview-nicholas-andersen-and-julie-ho-of-confettisystem/. This duo of Nicholas Andersen and Julie Ho have been collaborating since 2008. They have exhibited, art directed, created installations, worked as creative consultants, made ‘custom design work’ and decorated for celebrations as well as making objects to sell. Nicholas Andersen and Julie Ho. “About Confetti System”. 2014. http://www.confettisystem.com/about. Since their work is made up of one-off and short run site-specific installations and objects, Confettisystem have been able to easily tread the line between art and design. They have created a successful business that marries art, design and a consumer focus.
Confetti and Pom Poms is relatable to Bourriaud’s theory of Relational Aesthetics. Confetti conjures the celebratory symbolism that simple paper cut-outs, slightly moving, can instil as a pile of readymade fragments. This work occupies ‘the space between the ephemeral and the permanent, evoking a sense of nostalgia and lighthearted fun’.\footnote{Andersen and Ho, “About Confetti System”}

The heap of confetti has no alteration other than having a battery operated doggy toy hidden within the mound that ‘visually buzzes and hums like the end of a big night’.\footnote{Smith, Kaleidoscope, 2}

The toy creates subtle but noticeable movement. An element of surprise! Objects that are designed from the commercial world used as art through ‘fetish, nostalgia or sensibility’ can carry a symbolic meaning that is imposed, giving them a “new” significance - changing their intended purpose. These objects may also have memory, personal attachment or other fleeting connections, which contributes to our reading of the objects.\footnote{A. Dawn Chatoney, “Objects of Nostalgia”, M.F.A. thesis (Nacogdoches, Texas: Stephen F. Austin State University, 2010), 1.}

The dog for example, although unrelated to the confetti, was a reference to my childhood. I have very little memory of my early years or my toys, but recall having a battery operated small honey-coloured dog I named Toto.\footnote{Named after the fictional dog in the Hollywood film The Wizard of Oz (1939) and L. Frank Baum's children books series Oz (1900-1920).}

Memory, like Toto, from my childhood and its reference to popular culture enables us to ‘identify, understand, and accept most things new or familiar’.\footnote{Chatoney, “Objects of Nostalgia”, 1.}

The designed as art as expressed throughout this exegesis is embedded with meanings, by the manufacturer, the artist and the viewer. Thus, the pile was not just a mass of paper but created a moving connection to the viewer as a celebratory murmuring within the pile (the unexpected), but also a sense of amusement, triggered by my relationship to childhood memories of play, pets and the popular.
Even more appropriate as a Relational Aesthetic is my work *Collective Play* (2009) (Figure 34 & 35). This piece began with a few sticker dots patterns that I had stuck to the wall. From the opening night of the exhibition onwards *Collective Play* grew and evolved as the public added to it, using a range of stickers available next to the wall. This piece developed into a range of patterns and images, a collage of influences that were surprising and inspiring, different to what I may have created. The exhibition and my starting of the “drawing” acted as a catalyst for visitors to creatively respond. Thus, this work is user-focused. It is “unfinished” or ongoing as a process based artwork that can continue. *Collective Play* is relational — dependent on collaboration with the audience and the artwork.\(^{644}\)

*Kaleidoscope* is centrally an exhibition about the everyday material of paper, and uses these with a collage style similar to the ideas of Postproduction. The objects are created mostly from office supplies including sticky Post-It notes, sticker dots, coloured card and memo pads, but also the celebratory such as confetti and patty pans, related to my penchant for baking. They are manufactured objects selected to create new readings through the objects and installations created for *Kaleidoscope*, with a focus on remixing the pattern and form created from colours. In her opening address to the exhibition, Pam Gaunt referenced my work to the 1970s artists collectively known as the Pattern Painters (Miriam Schapiro, Valerie Jaudon and Joy Kosloff).\(^{645}\) Artists such as Shapiro, although not highly acknowledged at the time, were responsible for the ‘return of the decorative more than any other movement in this period... incorporating the decorative and other craft techniques into their work’.\(^{646}\) The decorative in my paper-based *Kaleidoscope* image series are akin to circular symbolism identified by psychologist Carl Jung as being about unity or “mandalas”. Jung recognised that these circular forms can be contradictory — appearing in a state of progress, towards integration or as conflict, yearning for the wholeness that was once experienced.\(^{647}\) This duality is seen in the obsessive dot artworks of Yayoi Kusama, who sees these shapes within a psychotic episode and also uses spots in her art to ease the effects of her mental illness. The dots in my works are examples of “combines” and “aggregates”.\(^{648}\) These pieces are a

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\(^{644}\) Claire Bishop, “Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics”, No. 110: Fall, October, (New York: City University of New Work, CUNY, 2004), 54.


\(^{646}\) Gaunt, “The Decorative In Twentieth Century Art”, 80.


\(^{648}\) Mandalas are an example of what Rhoda Kellogg analyses, as “combines” and “aggregates”. These are the combination and layering of images (2 in the former and 3 or more in the latter), seen in the developmental art of children. By age three or four years, these drawings start to look like circles divided into quadrants — ‘lines radiating from a small area’ as mandalas, “radials", for example, the sun. Maralynn M. Hagood and Marian Liebmann, *The Use of Art in Counselling Child and Adult*
movement towards unity, integration and self-fulfilment. The ‘tensions of form and space’ are expressed through reordering stickers, shape, colour and patterns — examples of creating art as harmonious, balanced compositions.  

The dots also resemble the symmetry or mandala (circle) visible in kaleidoscopic arrangements (hence, the title) or mandala as representations of the universe.  

Starting from a central point the designs were created from the interior to the exterior of the page to form a patterning of coloured shapes on the picture plane. The everyday stickers are used as a divisive tool for patternmaking, colour and mirroring. These kaleidoscopes show ‘continually shifting pattern[s]’ through a series of nine paper works.  

With names like Kaleidoscope Merry-Go-Round, Petite Flora (Figure 36) and Spacey, these pieces connect to the multifaceted mix of colours and elements remembered in relation to diverse themes as amusement parks, nature

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Survivors of Sexual Abuse (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000), 61. That is, the lines start becoming objects — pictures.


Hindu and Buddhist mandalas for spirituality.

and space. Similarly, all the exhibitions relate to ‘fads and fashions’, of marketed products, variable style and my changing tastes.\textsuperscript{652}

Through the use of everyday stationery products this exhibition is automatically linked to the everyday — readymade, Object art and Postproduction. However, most materials have been altered, even if minimally, like \textit{Anemones} (Figure 37), \textit{Baker’s Delight} and \textit{Shrooming It} which are simply cut or assembled. Also, as stated earlier, by using connections to art history such as artist Paul Klee’s quote relating to dots, lines and walking in the title of my piece \textit{Taking the Spot for a Walk} I have reinterpreted and remixed this cultural reference.

In many instances my works are ephemeral — short-lived. Sea creatures or flowering plants are conjured by the \textit{Anemone} pieces. These repack as memo pads, but with sections missing, thus modifying the pad’s writing and reporting role. \textit{Random Acts of Colour and Form} — hand-cut confetti and \textit{Baker’s Delight}, respectively become bits of useless card and cupcake patty pans no longer practical

for baking due to their use and handling as gallery objects. They are now unhygienic.

These art objects are all copies, or rather refer to familiar objects — anemones, confetti and the name of a franchised Australian bakery, Baker’s Delight. The titles of these works make connections to my popular culture, to the familiar. Yet they also identify relationships that the viewer can understand, perhaps helping them to engage with the works. For instance, the artwork Anemone is like the flower of the same name — perennial, meaning it can grow back for several years. That is, the cut memos can simply be folded up, packed away then re-exhibited when required. They are colourful, pastel shades of greens, blues, yellows, oranges and pinks with wide-open, bowl-shaped structures, formed in a cluster on the floor. Like the sea creature, Sea Anemone, the paper works are in a spectrum of colours, are circular and vary in sizes. They also have a sticky component (the binding) like the anemone’s ‘adhesive pedal disc’ there to capture prey. The handmade Anemone is a paradoxical, artificial representation, a remix of the natural. In this way I work as a “semionaut” which Bourriaud addresses as a fundamental role of interconnectedness in his definition of the Semionaut, described earlier as a “remixer”.

The Semionaut is what I increasingly aim to be. Elements of hybridisation and remixing can mostly be seen in my exhibition Zakka♥ where I have placed a plenitude of collected objects together to create sculptures and installations. Kaleidoscope also taps into the theory of Mis–design by its use of utilitarian paper products. McQuilten suggests that paradox is inherent in design. Plan versus process is what Mis-design uses as a starting point to explore the “designed” ‘contemporary consumer culture, and its impact on visual arts practice’. The questions raised by McQuilten relate to whether design can also exist as a conceptual practice and how art is negotiated in the prevailing context of creative industry.

The dichotomy is that the Kaleidoscope exhibition scrutinises the grouping of art as a creative industry, and its manipulation by commercialism. As McQuilten states, the ‘problem is no longer the difference between art and design, but rather the collusion of art, design and commerce’. This overlap is nothing new. Warhol had

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454 Davies and Parrinder, Limited, 99.
455 McQuilten, Art in Consumer Culture, 9.
456 Ibid. 6.
already started by ‘showing the disappearing distinction between art and commerce in spectacle culture’. What makes these themes prevalent is that they are continually overlapping and need to be frequently re-questioned. Kaleidoscope shows that there is definitely a connection between ‘art, design, consumer culture and social change’. Manufactured paper products from coloured card, stationery (Post-It notes, CDs and stickers), DIY kits (fans) and baking supplies (cupcake liners) have the potential to be altered in form and placed out of their usual context as “art”.

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657 Ibid. 22.
658 Ibid.
659 Ibid.
660 Ibid.
Figure 38: Sticky Note Rolls – close-up

Figure 39: Sticky Note Rolls – design development/initial tests
The piece *Sticky Note Rolls* (Figure 38) was an example of Mis-design as it is derived from an ironic questioning of product design and lifestyle products, such as toilet paper standardised as white rolls of soft tissue. This was generated from thinking about the designed world — that someone, somewhere has designed, made and decided what the toilet roll should be, making lifestyle decisions for the billions. My original interpretation was rolled paper that spun on a record player (Figure 39). This developed into my finished adaptation, which is a variant of toilet rolls. My rendering is no longer functional as the rolls are made from stationery, coarse and irregular shaped Post-It notes. These are stuck together with extra glue making the paper permanent rather than repositionable notes and ranging from large sheets against the cardboard paper roll, to smaller sheets on the outside in a mix ‘n’ match range of mass-produced neon colours. The rolls are horizontally spaced and attached to a backing of white painted plywood. On side or front view these sculptural pieces look like colour abstractions not only referencing Colour Field painting but also ‘early Modernist artists such as Henri Matisse’s… late papier découpes’ (paper cut-outs). Sticky Note Rolls like in the art of many of the artists discussed in this exegesis including Warhol and Koons shows a sense of humour that is also evident in a majority of my art practice. The designed is questioned. Toilet rolls — rolls of tissue are parodied by a construction that is similar in form, yet totally absurd in functionality. This amusement and derision is evident in Dada art and the crazy zakka-like Japanese inventions catalogued in many books including *101 Unuseless Japanese Inventions: The Art of Chindogu* by Kenji Kawakami.

The kaleidoscopic artworks also mimic or create the familiar through the use of identifiable popular paper products — a ubiquitous material that is depended on as a necessary invention in contemporary industrial society. As well as colour, these pieces relate to, and were influenced by, the creation of illusion through the manufactured and on occasion, overlapping, held together by gravity. For example, *Baker’s Delight* (Figure 40) related to artists Tara Donovan’s crinkle-edged plate pieces in *Untitled (Paper Plates)* (2003), and Tom Friedman’s *Untitled (Plastic Cups)* (1993) in the interconnecting, layering and scalloped edges of the patty pans. Although most of my works do not extend to the level of containing a huge mass of

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660 Gaunt, “Opening”.
661 “Chindogu” is a word that describes an invention, usually a utilitarian, everyday object that is unusual, bizarre or distorted and unresolved but made as a convenience to ‘make life a lot easier, but doesn’t’. They are contradictory and fail at their function of satisfying a “want” as they are unintentionally so hilarious in outcome. For example the toilet paper roll hat for wiping your runny nose. Kenji Kawakam, *101 Unuseless Japanese Inventions*, Translated by Dan Papia, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall ed., (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995), 6-7.
the manufactured, as Donovan’s do, they are still concerned with and interrogate ideas about the everyday. For example, in *Baker’s Delight* there is a questioning and pleasure in the variety of colours available. Although so many choices are not needed, there are decisions to be made when using the manufactured. This enables spending by acknowledging personal style, fads and individuality.

![Baker’s Delight – detail](image)

My *Kaleidoscope* works are DesignArt, and ZakkaART — art influenced and resourced from the world of many designed materials remade and hybridised into “new” sculptures and textual interpretations. Micropop/Superflat elements also exist in this exhibition, especially through the influence of the child-like, e.g. doggy, colours, a sense of play and entertainment but also by using the common and revitalising it with a new perspective. From Mis-design to DesignArt, what is evident is that the contents of the *Kaleidoscope* exhibition are all concerned with the importance of the designed. The colours, paper, and resultant art have emerged from an interaction with manufactured products as source materials instead of traditional materials such as paint. The merging of design and art is akin to Micropop — an intermixing of boundaries, thus flattening or hybridisation.
Maximalism is not so present in *Kaleidoscope*, as the pieces are often created just with one or two materials and techniques such as *Baker’s Delight* and *Sticky Note Rolls*. But, there is potential to further mix my streamlined artworks — such as the cup cake wrappers, Post–It Notes and sticky dots all together to create a ZakkaART aesthetic which engages a sense of play and remixing. Examples such as *Taking the Spot for a Walk* are a slight gesture towards the decorative, as it is composed of hundreds of white stickers, so is highly detailed. Although this piece is not maximalist as it is not composed of many different elements, ideas or materials, it is not overly eclectic. Visually, from a distance, *Taking the Spot for a Walk* is simply a picture of whiteness. Only in close observation are the layers seen clearly. Pieces such as *Spaced Out Confetti Spectrum* (2009) (Figure 41) and *Collective Play* hint at Maximalism by way of colour, repetition, pattern and play, but without
Maximalism’s eclecticism or material variety. All of these works only use stickers and are not over-the-top in their use of materials or composition. *Kaleidoscope* as a whole demonstrates an approach of reservation; a concentration on the processes of manipulating colour and paper products rather than on the excessive. This exhibition is not like Bourriaud’s Semionaut whereby the disparate are linked together: instead, it engages only with one type of material (paper) in several forms, utilised to make a ZakkaART entertaining, decorative and colourful take on the art of paper. *Kaleidoscope* is tackled in a more understated way than artist Jen Stark’s fabulous paper creations.

**Plasticity (2010) and Synthetic (2011)**

Both *Plasticity* and *Synthetic* connect art, design and consumerism through artist Dawn Gamblen and my collaborative sense of design, colour and ethical dilemmas related to medium of plastic. The exhibition *Plasticity* initially came from a desire to have a collaborative site-specific installation exhibition with Gamblen at Heathcote Museum and Gallery (See Appendices: 4. *Plasticity* Roomsheet and 9. *Plasticity* and 10. *Synthetic* (Linden Innovators 2, 2011) Catalogues (EXTRACT)). We had:

... a kind regard for each other’s ways of working including the use of “everyday” common household objects or “readymades”. We sought to combine our differences, my passion for the sublime and fantastical through the use of colour and Dawn’s concentration and affinity with sculpted structures.

Our similarities included our likeness and skills with design, assemblage and arrangement, which were processed through the interactive collaborative process. As established in our artists’ statement:

Centering on ideas around collecting, artful display, consumerism, playful process and the experiential nature of art, we created sculptural site-specific arrangements using easily identifiable, yet banal, purposeful “readymades.” As stated by Marcel Duchamp himself, we “have taken the readymades and found aesthetic beauty in them” in the form of synthetic materials including straws, cups and spray can lids. In Plasticity sometimes these materials mimic other products, other times substances are repurposed to create unique sculptures that capture the inherent qualities of the products — stacked, stretched, joined and generated into ‘new’ forms or arrangements.

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662 They only use stickers not a variety of materials, thus are not strictly Maximalist as these works would need to have more of a combination of materials and techniques to truly qualify.
663 A material like plastic that has the ability to be manipulated or formed into varied shapes.
664 Gamblen and May, "Plasticity: Artist's Statement" (Melville, Aust.: Heathcote Museum and Gallery, 2010), 1.
665 Ibid.
666 Gamblen and May, “Plasticity”, 1.
668 Gamblen and May, “Plasticity”, 1
We wished to capture a sense of beauty through the ideas of the readymade and site-specific installation art. The medium we chose was plastic. We had both previously worked with this versatile material. We were also fascinated by its “everydayness”, durability, and symbolism as an omnipresent material that in today’s industrial culture is almost unavoidable. However, Gamblen and I were still concerned about the negative impact of plastic as a non-biodegradable material.

The extent of our everyday reliance on crude oil in the form of plastic is almost impossible to comprehend in our modern day-to-day living. Plasticity and Synthetic comment on our use of plastic, a material that was new and exciting in the 1960s and 1970s but is now ubiquitous. The growth and reliance on fossil fuels drove the expansion of ‘modern plastics in industry’, even though only about 8% of gas and oil are used as plastic feedstock and for plastic production. There is a direct link between the production of plastic and our reliance on throwaways e.g. disposable lighters and thus environmental pollution. Today plastic is so entrenched in the everyday that it is, in a sense, no longer seen as something “other”. Plastic is indispensable and diverse in its applications and has ‘a near limitless variety in dimension, an elastic power to assume any size or shape’. It is a durable material with ‘ultimate fidelity to impossible shape and unreal color—permanent, unscratchable, and resistant to water or sunlight’. Yet, the impact of drilling for oil to make plastic depletes many natural resources and plastic is non-biodegradable. It does not breakdown naturally, leaving its imprint on culture as a refuse of obsolete remnants. These remnants have the potential to be repurposed as art that can be regarded as artefact and re-valued as useful, rather than rubbish (landfill). As an artist and as a consumer my relationship with plastic is contradictory. Plastic is at once irresistible for its malleability, translucency and stunning array of colours and to be shunned for its negative impacts on the environment. Again, as an artist, I am attempting to express my competing desire for and the abhorrence of these materials embedded in our culture by making plastic into conceptual aesthetics. They are no longer functional objects but “art” that questions my relationship to the industrial world.

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669 An example of this is China’s dependence on the importation of crude oil which has increased from 2010, 50%, 2011 56.3% to an expected 65% by 2020 or more than 80% by 2030. China, after the USA is the second biggest importer of crude oil. Gilbert Van Kerckhove, Toxic Capitalism: The orgy of consumerism and waste. Are we the last generation on earth? (Indiana: AuthorHouse, 2012), 115 & 120.


672 Ibid.

673 Ibid.
Plastic is, smooth and slick — it has the ability to show reflections — it is a human-made product of modernity. Plastic resembles the contemporary, created world. A world that is shiny, unreal, falsely coloured, a veneer like our modern culture — a whole lot of smooth, in which we can see our reflection. Money is plastic (in Australia and elsewhere), it buys plastic, we purchase with plastic (cards), we store our food in plastic (containers, bags) we plasticise ourselves through plastic surgery and we throwaway plastic in immeasurable amounts. I enjoy the look of plastic, but dislike its unsustainable imprint on the planet.

*Synthetic* was an exhibition that we applied to undertake as part of Linden New Art (Melbourne) Innovator’s program.\footnote{Innovators 2, (2011) brought together a selection of artists (as solo shows in the one building) who explored colour, ideas of excess and intricate detail as their inspiration.} In our pieces:

> material becomes subject. Comprised of hundreds of rainbow coloured bendy straws, we had assembled an installation from readily available materials. [Proving that] art objects need not be made, rather just recognised (a la Duchamp readymades).\footnote{Ibid.}

Created in 2011, *Synthetic* was composed of two installation components: an entire wall piece, which I will call *Synthetic mural* (Figure 42) from now on, to differentiate from the second part, a circular shape on the opposite wall *Synthetic dot* (Figure 43). Also included were wall works at Theatre Works which were two smaller installations: *Theatre Works Curve Ball* (Figure 44) and *Exclamation* (Figure 45) and some urban interventions in the Melbourne CBD, *Straw Bombing*. All works were made only of bendy straws and tack.\footnote{Tack is also a plastic like the straws. We used two brands of white tack, which we tested for their “plasticity” — pliability and adherence. This is because the straw works needed to be attached to the walls for a month, thus we required tack that held the weight of the straws whilst keeping them in place.}

*Plasticity* and *Synthetic* both relate to the use of manufactured materials with a zakka aesthetic added to the designed — straws, cups, take-way containers, files, spray can lids, PVC tape and shredded plastic bags. These objects show the nature of plastics whilst having been manipulated into charming ZakkaART, a take on the simplistic and beautiful in plastics by Gamblen and myself.\footnote{From here on the word “I” is used in relation to the exhibitions in this section. This is not to undermine the partnership with Gamblen, only to make the associations with the overall exegesis and production component, which is centred on my practice. As stated the main differences between our practices is that I tend towards the decorative and colour.}
All materials in these shows are artificial. As Ellen Lupton explains, if ornament is natural to us, to our daily lives and ‘is where nature and artifice meet’ then my work sits within the “space between”.679 My art is stylistically “full” with colour, pattern

and the decorative. Like Warhol’s foregrounding of consumerism, manufacture and design, and Duchamp’s readymades, I use bought and collected products that originated in retail outlets. Also, many of the pieces in Plasticity and Synthetic are replications of nature or the artificial such as straw as bamboo and cups as bubble wrap. Although the exhibitions Plasticity and Synthetic do typify the use of the everyday in visual art, these contain constructed pieces — sculptural objects. These artworks are not readymades as objects placed in the gallery. But like the pieces in Kaleidoscope the materials are units for making sculptures and installations as Objet trouvé (manipulated objects).
Figure 44: Curve Ball

Figure 45: Exclamation
Figure 46: Synthetic Symphony

Figure 47: Crazy Suckers
In both Plasticity and Synthetic plastic objects are used as media for replication such as Synthetic Symphony (2010) (Figure 46) and Crazy Suckers (2010) (Figure 47). These works all relate to the abundance of manufactured plastics. The first being fat bubble-tea straws that are simply interlocked and the latter being bendy straws that are shortened and simply tacked onto the wall. The works are already made, in the sense that there is very little intervention or manipulation with the physicality of the original mass-produced objects. A straw placed on a plinth and signed or framed with our signatures would have sufficed, as being Duchampian. However, we manipulated the made into new constructs. This “making” is the handmade in ZakkaART.

Plasticity includes some relevant aspects of Pop art. The Minimalist aesthetic, particularly from Warhol, can be seen in Poly Saturate (2010) (Figure 48), a yellow tape work. Although I am not a huge fan of the extremes of Minimalism as I find it empty and too void of anything to hold my attention, I have included some elements of this method of working in my art, especially the use of limited materials. I am unsure if this is my style or the infiltration of art “trends”. Poly Saturate is only composed of one material, PVC electrical tape — insulation tape usually for covering electrical wiring and found in hardware stores. This tape is specifically used due to the colours, affordability and its constructed flexibility. On experimentation the elastic quality due to “plasticity” was discovered to enable a variety of sculptural possibilities.

The floor setting of Poly Saturate is detailed in its coral-like composition — densely patterned. But the Minimalism is more intently displayed in the lines of yellow tape that simply turn the walls of the main room into silhouettes, emphasising the different planes:

Poly Saturate is a beautiful and thoughtful work. At once architectural, topographical and of the body, the yellow electrical tape in Poly Saturate cleverly enables a two-dimensional drawing to become a three-dimensional installation while it also provokes the viewer into considering the role of plastic in formulating our lifestyles and the ease with which we have given in to it.

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Figure 48: Poly Saturate

Figure 49: Wrap N Roll
Another piece that also relates to Pop art is *Wrap N Roll* (2010) (Figure 49) which scales and copies bubble wrap extended into an Oldenburg-like larger-than-life sculpture. *Wrap N Roll* references and imitates the source. Manufactured bubble wrap is

a flexible plastic sheeting containing numerous small air pockets, used in cushioning items during shipment… average bubble diameter is 6.0–25.4mm and height about 4mm.\(^682\)

The piece made by Gamblen and myself, ‘is an oversized roll of “Bubble Wrap” created from crushed plastic drinking cups’ and thin plastic sheeting usually used as painter’s drop sheets.\(^683\) These materials are combined to create a clearly identifiable replication of a gigantic roll of bubble wrap — the cups as the bubbles, mimicking Oldenburg’s techniques of enlarging and as a replication of an object.

Like the works of Oldenburg, *Wrap N Roll* may be considered to be a pastiche, or simply a replication. But there is a depth of meaning behind enlargement and re-sculpting an object. *Wrap N Roll* like the real bubble wrap, as Nicholls states ‘confounds readings of protection and destruction, practicality and waste’.\(^684\)

Although produced by hand, this piece was like a machine’s mass production or a factory line made within a repetitive process of crushing and sticking plastic cups on plastic sheeting in rows and rows of bubbles. We were like Warhol — a machine. *Wrap N Roll* was initially inspired by rubbish found on the streets including squashed plastic cups, the functional destroyed and turned into waste. Paradoxically bubble wrap used in packaging to protect objects such as paintings or fine china during mail transit is also a throw-away. Our creation although protective wrapping in human scale, also became rubbish once the exhibition was finished rather than a collectible. This was not intentional, but a result of the “art”, once dismantled becoming an object deemed for storage — a pastiche and commentary on plastic, the manufactured, waste, art and not-art.

*Synthetic* was composed of Post–Pop influences through the connection to urban art. This exhibition extended from *Plasticity* in the use of fluoro bendy straws to create intensely detailed three-dimensional wall murals. As a development to *Synthetic*, whilst in Melbourne, Gamblen and I took to the streets not as graffiti artists but as “urban artists”.

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\(^684\) Ibid.
Art in the street challenges ideas about location, art display, what art is and brings art directly to the people. Gamblen and I followed in the path of object interventions and installations by adding fragments of colour to the city through non-art materials, developed from Synthetic Mural (Figure 50). With straws and tack we transformed light poles, tree trunks, walls, passageways and holes from metal, cement, clay and bricks into urban art with the juxtaposition of drinking utensils as Straw Bombing (2011) (Figures 51 - 54). Mass-produced straws carefully positioned in the streets could be seen as graffiti, defacing the public space, vandalism, as low art that has little value since it is not in a gallery, or a littering of plastic — ecologically indestructible. In hindsight, perhaps we did litter. But at the time, our ideas were to create a playful intervention that would light up the streets with fluorescence and the unusual. We wanted to create street art “bombings” much like artists such as Juliana Santacruz Herrera’s use of yarn, Jim Bachor’s use of mosaicked lollipops, Steve Wheen’s Pothole Gardener and Jan Vormann’s Lego works that fill in cracks and holes in the urban environment.
Figure 51: Straw Bombing pole

Figure 52: Straw Bombing pole – detail
Figure 53: Straw Bombing tree

Figure 54: Straw Bombing tiles – detail
However, as aware as we were of the indestructible nature of plastic, its non-biodegradable nature, we went ahead and sprawled the city streets anyway. Still, our hope and intent at the time was that this work would be seen as offering surprise and delight, a distinctive experience, yet part of the everyday surroundings. The straws were vibrantly visible like the bold colours used in the painted street art of urban artists such as Haring, but neon. The work was also impermanent. These straws were visible as an oddity, fluoro fragments in surprising locations, without the connection to mass media that some graffiti/urban art may have in text and imagery such as Banksy. The straw bombings were impersonating or sending-up the utilitarian through urban art, by juxtaposing the banal yet utilitarian normally seen in glasses in a bar, restaurant or kitchen for sipping drinks, against the architecture of bricks, cement and steel as “plants”. Plastic was secured onto the natural and constructed, making them suddenly appear like secret service undercover “plants”, referencing growth as flora and plastic as ever-present. Postmodernism sought to breakdown boundaries. The new “post-post” saw boundaries as non-existent due to globalisation, culture as hybridised and universal, challenging the absolute assumptions of time and space. This is a time of rupture ‘not just peak oil, peak water and peak food, but peak everything… even peak nature, peak sanity and peak TIME”!

We are at a crisis point with our planet, where there is a confusing mass of influences and global concerns. Although I have not addressed the idea of “peak” in detail in my art practice, the Plasticity and Synthetic exhibitions in their materiality are inherently linked to ideas of limited/superfluous resources. Plastic is related to so many environmental and sustainability concerns, one being the depletion of oil and the lack of plastic’s biodegradability — that it is a virtually indestructible, inorganic substance. As Ric Spencer writes in his review of Plasticity ‘plastic is so much part of our everyday life (and many of its ecological problems) that it is confronting to see it presented in such decorative forms’.

Also, by using the manufactured and repetition my work addresses industry and the common problem of over-consumption (affluenza). These aspects are especially seen in the myriad of both useful and useless and cheap objects in the next project component discussed, Zakka♥, but are also evident in Plasticity.

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Spencer, “The plastic world”.

176
Mis-design attempts to interrupt, to question and consider the impact of the
market’s influence on our daily lives. They are a Mis-Design not a design work. Thus, the pieces in Plasticity and Synthetic illustrate how designed objects through the practice of process can be altered, showing the inherent and varied capacities of bought items. My design decision in this production can be understood as aesthetic choices. Works such as Mixtape Rewind (2010) (Figure 55 & 56), Contoured (2010) (Figure 57) and Poly Saturate (Figure 58) reuse PVC electrical tape as a decorative, sculptural medium that makes them blatantly visible as objects and materials to be critiqued. In this way my work re-configures, and questions everyday items, similar to Mis-design.

The PVC tape works were influenced by the Untitled (1994) masking tape work of artist, Tom Friedman, whereby he adheres tape onto itself. We were inspired to attempt a similar tactic. Electrical tape was rerolled without the cardboard “framing” centre. The electrical tape pieces relate to contemporary themes of time and space as days passed they would magically grow, ripple and change shape from flat scrolls to conical three-dimensional forms. We worked with this design quality for the Mixtape series and Contoured, which takes the flexibility and stickiness of the tape into stripy floor sculptures. These pieces are attempts to ‘re-map the potential of contemporary art in a culture overwhelmed by design’.  

In the article “Please, Eat the Daises” (2001) artist Joe Scanlan and economist Neal Jackson define DesignArt as: ‘any artwork that attempts to play with the place, function and style of art by commingling it with architecture, furniture and graphic design’. This broad definition could be applied to much contemporary art. Art that is not focused on traditional depictions such as natural landscapes, or the exclusive use of fine art mediums like paint are frequently connected to design. These “untraditional” contemporary works often use the already made or comment on manufactured culture. Work such as Jaime Hayon and Nienke Klunder’s Limosine Table (2009) is an example of this hybridity. The top appears like a glossy limousine and the leg’s in the shape of the McDonalds infamous “M” logs. Andrea Zittel, Jorge Pardo, Liam Gillick, Atelier Van Lieshout, Tobias Rehberger and Angela Bullock are other artist examples of a DesignArt focus.

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687 McQuilten, Art in Consumer Culture, 3.
688 These works are a Mis-design not a design work.
689 McQuilten, ‘Mis-design’.
690 McQuilten, “Mis-design”.
Figure 57: Contoured

Figure 58: Poly Saturate – detail
Yet, Wynne-Jones sees DesignArt as a link to product design — those products that are highly decorative or beautified so that this aspect almost overpowers the functionality. The concept or idea may also be more important. Wynne-Jones focuses on the designers Studio Job, Mattia Bonetti and Maarten Baas, such as his *Clay Furniture: dining chair* and contemporary designers Campana Brothers, Zaha Hadid, Marc Newson and Makkink and Bey.\(^693\) These designers create design that sits on the periphery, aligning with aesthetics — beautiful objects that challenge design away from functionality towards “function follows form”. Examples include the Campana Brothers series of chairs such as the Sushi, Stuffed Toys and Blow Up collections and Marc Newson’s Lockheed Lounge have revolutionised design’s relationship to art by challenging how far products can be played with and aestheticised, yet still retain their functionality. The connection of design and art is obvious, but the degree of these influences and the slant, whether more towards art or to design, is what embeds the resultant works in the relevant industries. Campana Brothers are clearly working in design as their form is a chair that functions as a seating device and is promoted as such, yet Hayon and Klunder’s *Limousine Table* is marketed as a commentary on the designed, that is, the car (Limousine) and symbolism (McDonalds). Thus Cole’s DesignArt is relevant to contemporary crossovers between art, design and consumerism, yet diverse in its reading depending on which perspective the maker and viewer take. In *Plasticity*, my pieces are not functional designed objects, however *Poly Saturate* relates to the commercial objects of the Campana Brothers. The piece has a similar texture, although more circular in shape, to their tangled pieces such as the steel wire bed base for *Erda* (2013) and the Corallo and Tangled bag series of products.\(^694\)


\(^{694}\) In collaboration with the company Melissa Shoes.
**Plasticity** and **Synthetic** are DesignArt, as Coles proposes: ‘all art is designed even if it endeavours to appear otherwise’.\(^6\)\(^9\) Even though our work came through a process of experimentation, the works are still planned to fit into the space, together as “art” and utilise design elements and principles.\(^6\)\(^9\) \(^5\) \(^6\)\(^9\) \(^5\) \(^6\)\(^9\) \(^5\) Ooze (2010) (Figure 59), Seep (2010) (Figure 60), Spray of Light (2010) (Figure 61), Into the Groove (2010) (Figure 62) and Window Dressing (2010) (Figure 63), all in Plasticity, are immediate examples of the crossover between design and art. They are all site-specific, made to fit into the distinct openings, recesses and corners that are particular to the interior architecture of the exhibition space using manufactured materials including collected spray can lids, plastic cups, and transparent plastic contact. Ooze and Seep ‘bubble out of gaps in the architecture [and] seep insidiously over the floor’, whilst Spray of Light and Into the Groove “plug-up” ‘voids in the exhibition space’, a doorway, window and an indent in the wall.\(^6\)\(^9\) \(^5\) \(^6\)\(^9\) \(^5\) Window Dressing adds to the windowpanes using the sunlight as a projector lighting up the coloured plastics.

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\(^6\)\(^9\) Coles, *DesignArt*, 8.
\(^5\)\(^6\)\(^9\) Our experimentation was developed ‘during a seven-month residency at the Fremantle Arts Centre’. Spencer, “The plastic world”.
\(^5\)\(^6\)\(^9\) \(^5\) Nicholls, “Plasticity”, 2.
Figure 62: Into the Goove

Figure 63: Window Dressing (pm)
As stated earlier, when creating *Plasticity*, Gamblen and I were aware of the harmful effects of plastic but wanted to show the beauty and versatility that is inherent in this material. These productions demonstrate the saturation and commodification of plastics. Different types of plastics bought and reused are treated with glue, sticking, puncturing and placing to create on-site arrangements and sculptures, like Micropop, to revitalize the commonplace as aesthetically new, beautiful or questionable sculpture and installations.

Straws used for drinking bubble tea were interlinked to represent bamboo in an array of vertical pastel shades. The manufactured, is used to represent the natural. The straws were experimented with and within this period of process — mimicry was seen and thus “bamboo” was made as *Into the Groove* and *Synthetic Symphony*. Bamboo is the largest of the grasses. In the piece *Into the Groove* the bubble tea straws are connected together in colours to make long strips of “bamboo”. This piece uses layers to illustrate the translucency of this type of plastic, by forming new colours where the sections overlap. In choosing plastic to replicate bamboo, we are showing the cultural reliance on this material. This dependency is similar to the reliance on bamboo in other parts of the world where it is used to construct houses, floors furniture and scaffolding. Also, bamboo is the fastest growing plant in the world and has many attributes such as ‘versatility, lightweight, strength, ease in working with simple tools [and] striking beauty’. Because of these aspects, paradoxically, plastic can almost be seen as the “artificial bamboo”, being equally ubiquitous (and growing) and diverse in its composition, and uses. Bamboo is grown in Asia, including Taiwan, where bubble tea straws come from. Bamboo is also highly elastic, light yet strong, like plastic. It is used as a “filler” cellulose powder to make some plastics — bamboo-plastic-composites (BPC). This mixture of the natural and chemical is one way of reducing plastic consumption. Consequently, conceptually, *Synthetic Symphony* is a work that depicts the ambiguous relationships between bamboo and plastic as well as culture — Taiwan, mass plastic manufacturing, bubble tea, straws, drinking, consumption, trends, flora, straw, resources and the social, industrial and natural environments. But this work, also links to the colours and translucency of plastics, used to create arranged patterns and colour fields. The play with colourations, here, with objects in these straw works, could loosely be compared to the idea of Expanded Painting —

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698 Bubble tea is a Taiwanese cold tea drink that has become Westernised and mainstream.
painting inclusive of installation and sculpture interacting with the space, extending the definition of painting as two dimensional.

Plastic in this case as straws are everyday, banal items that are ubiquitous in the scale of their availability. Yet, straws are not a necessary item, unlike the many uses for bamboo. Thus, “plastic bamboo” is contradictory, an oxymoron. It is an unnecessary item that does not have a function in these pieces other than the contextual meaning as “art”, through the aesthetics created from the colour variants and the elongated forms of mass. The artwork Synthetic Symphony is both a copy of the real bamboo and a deliberate contradiction, signifying plastics — the artificial over the natural. Additional works also used straws. These production components show their postmodernist heritage as they duplicated or remade the familiar, strengthening ‘the logic of consumer capitalism’.701 By using the already made, like Duchamp and artists who use products, I am questioning or stretching the ideas of what art can be through the very concept of using straws. The titling and exhibited sculptural installations are embedded with a relationship to the process of making these works as ‘art-as-idea or art-as-knowledge’.702 These artworks are also humorous. Into the Groove was titled with a sense of witiness, mostly because the title reflects the placement of the straw form but also the sprightliness of the colours. This piece was made to fit into a tiny indentation in the wall. So “the groove” is the space (hollow). But the title also suggest the idea of the “humdrum”, straws as being so “everyday”, the routine/repetition as the process of cutting and layering the plastic pieces and the colloquialism of being groovy or fashionable, such as the trend of consuming bubble tea. The idea of beats in music and dancing as a groove of process, patterns, colours and plastics — the rhythm of these aspects altogether resulted in Into the Groove, layered and patterned shades and shapes of straws.

These exhibitions make visible the Post–postmodern in their mixology of art, design and consumerism. We are all manufactured and replicated and in Plasticity the materials used, patterned and replicated, are representative of bulk buying power. They show that the reproduction of the manufacturing system (that produces all these plastic objects) is repeated in each of our individual buying choices. Plasticity and Synthetic demonstrate the gross manufacture of plastic products, and paradoxically, the beauty in some of these forms. But at the same time

embedded in the use of the mass collected objects as “art”, is the symbiotic relationship that exists between the public as consumer and the designed as product. They are dependent on each other. As Miles describes, consumerism is a psychosocial experience linking each person to society, and influencing our everyday experience. Especially from the latter part of the twentieth century, consumption has become a way of life. Thus, design is important in creating desirable products but is also essential in making consumerism into a modern lifestyle. The consumer is accordingly linked to aspects including identity, style, human creativity, social status and symbolic meaning that is present in consumption. Consumption is desire and repulsion, ‘illusion and reality’ between what is perceived about objects and what is actually experienced. Consequently, exhibitions such as Plasticity and Synthetic are not only about the manufactured products such as straws, cups and tapes but our relationships to these objects — Gamblen and I, the audience, the retailers, wholesalers and manufacturers — all play a part in what the object has become. Each of us has a cultural understanding and relationship to these materials. Yet we also experience our own connections according to the significance, use and subsequent stories we have in relation to these objects, such as straws and their place in our lives.

In Plasticity there are an array of materials that have been altered to become a medium for art-making e.g. sculptures. In essence all of these pieces have a ZakkaART aesthetic. They incorporate the designed with colour, pattern, irony or humour. They reflect on the everyday and functionality — the spectacular in the ordinary, for example Take-away Totem (2010) which combines light, shredded plastic and plastic containers.

In Synthetic, ZakkaART can be seen in the main piece — Synthetic mural. This is a site-specific wall work that invokes surface designs of the 1960s to 1970s and Scandinavian style. The straw “wallpaper” forms patterns that feature a fluidity of line, curves and colour. Although Synthetic mural was not derived by researching and replicating specific flora and fauna, as Scandinavian designers often do, this piece does have purposeful cell-like shapes. Synthetic mural was developed from looking at our affinity for retro patterns such as designer Marimekko’s Small Melon

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704 Ibid. 49.
705 Ibid. 29.
707 Also is similar to the stylised tastes of designer Karim Rashid.
(Pieni Melooni) design (1963) and the French fleur-de-lys, lilly/iris flower symbol (as surface decoration) and wallpaper. We also thought about contrasting the organic, abstract and patterned with the manufactured, material and structured, evident in the straws. We considered creating droplets and puddles made by water and bending the straws directionally to mimic the distinct tracks seen in animal or fake fur. However, the final piece is composed of a mixology of familiar shapes and ideas represented by semi-circles, teardrop/paisley, amoebic forms, almond/eyes, quarter moon, squiggles, circles, donuts and squircles. Synthetic is ZakkaART combining elements of the everyday and designed together as a unique wall covering. Synthetic dot follows on from Synthetic mural by taking the circular form and the directional bend of the straws into a cyclical motion. The spot in its form and mixed speckles of colour echoes the Freckle — a chocolate button topped with 100s & 1000s. So this piece also links back to the familiar — a mass-produced edible candy associated with my childhood memory of sweets of dotted fluoro colours. These art pieces show an undeniable link between art, design and consumerism with a ZakkaART aesthetic that extends from everyday items to patterns influenced by Scandinavian design. This ZakkaART connection and the focus on experimentation using disparate influences are especially evident in Zakka♥.

**Zakka♥ (2012)**

Zakka♥, is an example of Relational Aesthetics, combining the aesthetic connections and experiences that exist in mind (intellectual/emotional) and body (physical/tactile). The spectacular is emphasised though the use of a candy colour palette and collected items from consumer and media culture. By using the everyday and childlike, this exhibition interacts with the audience/viewer by mentally evoking memories of the past — play, toys and stories — and physically enticing the viewers’ senses through the use of edible products including candy and biscuits. The use of the familiar and playful bridges the gap between Conceptual, intellectualised art and materiality by engaging the viewer in an immediate response unimpeded by contextual jargon. Utilising everyday materials, colour and a Pop, readymade, surrealist aesthetic, Zakka♥ was an invitational solo exhibition that included sculpture and wall works (See Appendices: 5. Zakka♥ Roomsheet and 11. Zakka♥ Catalogue).

The main series, Handpicked & Sorted (2012) (Figure 65) continued on from a piece I did for the exhibition Conservatorium (2012) — Twelve Green Bottles (2012) as seen
in Figure 64. The artworks in *Zakka* were mostly small-scale sculptures and assemblages. The colours were limited to a palette inspired by 20kg of 100s & 1000s candy I had left over from a previous artwork called *Always Look on the Bright Side of Life* (2010) (Figure 66). Printed works, including *Candy Cosmos* (2012), were developed from a collection of experiments already created but not shown to the public. Hence *Zakka* included recycled and manufactured materials that were used before, both as a continuation of previous pieces and as a “new” take on zakka.

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708 This exhibition was held at artist run initiative as part of the Fringe World Festival, Perth. This exhibition featured over eighty invited artists who responded to make artworks in or including jars. Renae Coles, “Pozible Poject 4718”, http://www.pozible.com/project/4718 (2012).

709 This was a one night only installation for the Perth Institute of Contemporary Art (PICA), consisting of a W7300 mm x D5030 mm “carpet” of 100s and 1000s.
I have previously defined “zakka” in relation to ZakkaART. However a couple of points are worth reiterating in relation to the exhibition Zakka♥. “Zakka” has a very broad definition. It includes a strong sense of graphics and is inherently embedded
with themes. In regards to design, zakka may be small and practical, as can be seen in this exhibition. This term, although extensive, tends to cover my visual tastes. I am interested in the potential of objects as “art” and “experiences” (when do they remain a designed object or when do they become art?) and playing with the designed to create something “new”. Although a design phenomenon related to “creative living”, zakka also relates to art and craft, bringing them together. Thus, as Li states in *The Japanese Art of Zakka*, I have proposed that “ZakkaART” is ‘turning everyday items into handcrafted [artistic] eye candy’, using a relationship to the designed and consumed as resources for art.

**Zakka** was my first foray into publicly employing the term “zakka” that conjures a love, appreciation and fetishisation of objects — the manufactured — which comes with the emotional baggage of our shopping, collecting, throw-away, advertising, popular culture. Like the objects I consume, I have become a product, styled by my infatuations.

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Figure 67: Handpicked & Sorted (pinks)

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Figure 68: Elizabeth Arden Splendor (#10)

Figure 69: JPG’s “Classique Femme” (#28)
All the pieces in Zakka♥ are related to the readymade in that they are included as “art” as already made objects placed in the gallery space or slightly altered. However, there are a few objects that were included that are actually “readymades”. These “designed” objects were included as an addition to the colour ranges and glassware of the Handpicked & Sorted series such as in Figure 67 (pinks). The unaltered objects are classified as “readymades” due to their inclusion in a gallery space. But in my mind they are only part of a collection and not necessarily “art” as I have not altered them in any way, only installed them. Of the Handpicked & Sorted series of seventy-seven works, the readymades are Elizabeth Arden Splendor (#10) (Figure 68) and JPG’s “Classique Femme” (#28) (Figure 69) as these are perfume bottles that are unaltered and placed to work within a chosen the colour range and then give back to the lender. They are used to fit the medium of glass, the theme of collected objects and the graduated colour palette. Other objects are assembled with minimal interference. There are about seventeen such works that have only the glass component plus one other inclusion, thus essentially a readymade with another substance. Macaron Gaultier (#29) (2012) (Figure 70) was the first piece I made. Macaron Gaultier is made of two glass pointy beads, joined together using coloured tack, a ‘reusable adhesive’ that is permanently ‘plastic and pliable’ and reusable.713 This piece is a direct reference to fashion designer Jean Paul Gaultier’s “conical corset” worn by Madonna, “Pop Queen” of the ‘1990s during her Blonde Ambition tour’.714 Together with the clothing and music reference in this artwork, there is also the fashionable craze for eating macarons. Macarons are a colourful French meringue filled with cream, a ‘sandwich cookie gone to finishing school’.715

Self-titled Australian television pâtissier Adriano Zumbo’s Zumbarons, has in recent years made macarons trendy.716 Macaron Gaultier marries my passions for fashion, music and food together with the design and materiality of fluoro colour, translucency, beads and popular culture using two plastic products — beads and tack (miscellaneous objects). This ZakkaART, results from very minimal alteration to the original objects, humorously referencing culinary and couture cultures.

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The use of food as art connects to the necessity of eating, the action and process of consumption both external to and internal to the body (the senses), but also to the social, scientific, natural, psychological, cultural, and material and aspects of food.\(^7^{17}\) In this exhibition, synthesized food is played with. As stated by Mark Johnson, food relates to the internalised body, the mind/body relationship whereby we are constantly in a living state of bodily processes.\(^7^{18}\) Consequently the use of food in art such as: *Truth* (2005), showing a series of melting apples by Yosuke Amemiya; Jennifer Rubell’s 2009 piece *Old fashioned*, a wall of authentic donuts; Scott Hove’s continuing synthetic cake sculptural installation *Cakeland* (2014); or Erno-Erik Raitanen’s interactive eating and tasting spun sugar work *Cotton Candy* (2013) can be seen as connecting the physical, sensational and imaginary, touching on ‘sensitive issues, and help sensitize’ us to the subject of food such as the value of synthesized foods (100s & 1000s) used in *Zakka\(^7^{19}\).* This use of food or the rituals and objects that relate to food are universal and often in vogue themes in popular culture and art.


\(^{719}\) Sonia Verguet, in *Food Player*, 7.
The surrealist art piece *Object* (1936) by Meret Oppenheim was purposefully mimicked and re-fashioned in *Velcroed Tea Party* (2012) (Figure 71). A cup and saucer are playfully covered in Velcro and small pompoms, balls made of a fluffy synthetic substance. Based on the naturally occurring rough edge (burr) formed from the seed-sacs of plants, Velcro is nylon ‘hooked velvet’, a hook and loop fastening system used liberally for temporary bonding. No longer functional as domestic objects, the cup and saucer in *Velcroed Tea Party* are manipulated to become mechanisms for attachment, detachment and display. This piece humorously plays with an unlikely combination of manufactured materials with the use of the artificial on the mass-produced (Velcro on porcelain). Oppenheim’s piece has inspired various incarnations in contemporary art including Ray Beldner’s *Object of Currency (after Meret Oppenheim’s Object, Le Déjeuner en Fourrure, 1936)*, 2010, constructed from collaged US currency. Oppenheim’s piece might now be considered distasteful with its use of fur, which is regarded by some organisations such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) as being ethically “wrong” since fur is animal skin. In agreement with PETA and unlike in

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Oppenheim’s piece, fur is a material I decline to use, due to my orientation towards using non-animal derived products and my vegan ethics. Thus, my works are mostly synthetic or plant-based.

*Velcroed Tea Party* is directly linked to the familiar. Velcro is a modern material that is ubiquitous in its use in manufactured items such as sneakers, bags, sports equipment and clothes. Oppenheim’s cup, saucer and spoon ‘transformed genteel items traditionally associated with feminine decorum into sensuous, sexually punning tableware’. My take is frivolous and humorous.

Pop elements can be seen throughout my production component. My practice is influenced by Pop art in that it often uses humour and encompasses mass consumerism — a plethora of disparate influences from the physical world. Many works in Zakka♥ are pertinent examples, such as the entire *Handpicked & Sorted* series (Figure 65). These works include materials and processes from popular urban and digital environments including cheap objects such as kitchenware, toys, fabric, glass jars and food.

Figure 72: Lolly Discs

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722 Some of the glass vessels were borrowed from a school art department. They were from their church, so this could be interpreted as a connection to Warhol’s religious art pieces.
Following Warhol, in the context of challenging what art can encompass, my work comprises both art and culture through the designed and our relationships to objects. I have mostly used manufactured objects (already made) as materials for
art-making. But like Warhol’s parodying of packaging, e.g. Campbell’s Soup, some specific products have been copied. *Lolly Discs (2012)* (Figure 72), *Iced Tile (2012)* (Figure 73) and *Candy Coasters (2012)* (Figure 74), utilise 100s & 1000s candy, a sugar and dye food product used for cake decorating. All three pieces are tiles that, like Warhol’s *Brillo Boxes* and *Campbell Soup Cans (1962)* and the 2012 interactive sculptural, amusement ride with gigantic replications of packaged sweets *Sugar & Gomorrah* by Peter Anton, mimic the manufactured. In this instance, Arnott’s factory Hundred and Thousands biscuits are used. In my work biscuits are imitated but not as a screenprint or painting as in the case of Warhol, but with actual “sculpting” materials — icing sugar, candy, glue and resin.

![Figure 75: Colour Candy Trail](image)
Figure 76: Sweet Kicks Candy Carpet

Figure 77: Candy Cosmos
Oldenburg often utilised or commented on food, as do I. In the exhibition *Zakka♥* I used candy and biscuits. The candy was the impetus for the colour scheme of the exhibition. Examples of this schema are visible in: the print work *Candy Cosmos* (Figure 77) made from the actual sweet sugar pearls and the dye they contain; a carpet installation made from the sweet edibles entitled *Sweet Kicks Candy Carpet* (2012) in Figure 76; a trail of biscuits *Colour Candy Trail* (2012), (Figure 75) and *Fading Castle and Lonely Rook* in Figure 78 — domes filled with objects and candy instead of the usual fake snow. *Zakka♥* was similar to Oldenburg’s *The Store* (1961), an exhibition that used ‘a startling variety of textures and substances’. These “exhibitions” embroiled ‘[themselves] with… everyday crap’ repurposing the collected as art. *The Store* was a fake shop ‘which was filled with funky plaster versions of his neighbourhood’s everyday goods: bow ties, a bra and dresses, a cash register, even two cheeseburgers’. Like Oldenburg’s store exhibition, *Zakka♥* embodied the use and sheer volume of everyday materials, especially in *Handpicked & Sorted* — a shop of assemblages, objects and wall decorations. However, what differentiates my work from Warhol, Lichtenstein and Oldenburg is that the work is not identical replications of familiar objects. Rather mine are manufactured and

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everyday objects actually used in the making of sculptures and assemblages, ZakkaART.

Although many of the art pieces in Zakka♥, have a relationship to Post Pop due to their use of consumer objects, this exhibition is also equated with contemporary contexts of art that present an interconnection with the designed. Zakka♥ represents eclecticism, commercialism and consumerism, different takes on racial identity through the use of toys (Cowboys & Indians), symbolism, animalisation and anthropomorphism such as the cat, Hello Kitty. Like inspirational and influential artist Fiona Hall, my hybridised perspective is to engage with contemporary life - to make ‘[my] choice of everyday materials and ways of using them… critical to [my] exploration… to [help make] sense of modern life’. The selection of objects thus relay a sense of identity formed from an encyclopedic collection of objects arranged in a coded gradation of colours and random yet specific associations. In a contemporary art context my art is considered to be multidisciplinary with an emphasis on sculpture, installation, paper works and in particular Zakka♥ has a strong emphasis on assemblage.

As stated, my art practice innately challenges notions of art as I often use materials that are designed objects from the consumer environment. Works including the Handpicked & Sorted series, Colour Candy Trail, Iced Tile and Candy Cosmos show the depth of materials that can be used for art-making. In Handpicked & Sorted I have extended this series of work to include a colour palette taken from 100s & 1000s candy: white, yellow, orange, red, pink, blue and green... 76 assemblages [that] stretch along the gallery’s existing ledge.

These works include a diversity of materials and objects including plastics, paper, metal and glass as toys, beauty products such as body scrubbers and cotton wool, kitchen utensils, stationery including erasers and ornaments. These were not typical art materials, in the time of Warhol, but more and more today they are as seen in the work of artists such as Haim Steinbach. These materials show a connection to rampant consumerism and the availability of ubiquitous objects.

The pieces in Zakka♥ do not sensationalise, but they do surprise in the context of what art can encompass, thus evoking like Warhol, both art and culture through the designed and our contemporary relationships to objects.

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727 Dunnill, “The ARI Experiment”, 52.
At first glance, the foregrounding of everyday objects and their enlargement to grand scale are not clearly apparent in my project component, as most works are like zakka, small. On closer inspection though, works such as *Sweet Kicks Candy Carpet* are interpretations that imitate familiar objects, as in the works of Oldenburg. This is ‘a floor installation resembling a hall runner, made of 100s & 1000s candy, and edged in 100s & 1000s biscuits’. Again, although not exactly replicating a familiar object, as Oldenburg did with his ‘huge, soft versions of an ice cream cone, a hamburger and a slice of fudge cake’, this work attempts to create a recollection of the familiar (a carpet) through enlargement. This floor runner is zakka, a quirky version of a carpet, yet impractical as it is made up of candy that is placed together but not stuck and formed into complete three-dimensional object. This floor installation can be compared to the carpet derivative improvised artworks created by contemporary trio, We Make Carpets, or the ephemeral floor works of colourful ‘crystal, chrome-plated metal, precious stones, mirrors and optical glass’ pieces by artist Suzan or the work *Echoes-Infinity* by Shinji Ohmaki.

Figure 79: Light Bulb (r7)

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728 Ibid.
729 Gopnik, “Art & Design Dark Roots”.
Zakka♥ also demonstrates a tendency towards Minimalism.\textsuperscript{731} My exhibition is fashioned ‘with an objective asceticism in creating symmetrical formations using materials that are mechanically — manufactured’\textsuperscript{732} Many works including \textit{Light Bulb} (#7) (2012) (Figure 79), \textit{Polished Orange} (#26) (2012) (Figure 80), and \textit{Meshed Up} (Red) (#36) (2012) (Figure 81) are negligible in their crafting as art, in that they only have the slightest alterations to the original objects or are composed of just a few elements. \textit{Light Bulb}, consists of pearl beads stuck vertically to follow the bulbous form of a glass bottle with an unusual bulb shaped base, making it kitsch and ornamental. The plastic pearl beads contrast with the glass, imitating and setting up the pretence of the precious.\textsuperscript{733} The “beads only make the slightest change. Yet, this piece, like many of the other project component works, shows a contradiction in materials such as glass which is unusually decorated with pearls (plastic). Another example is \textit{Polished Orange} (#26). This piece is nail polish set in a glass with an orange plastic bead as lid, and \textit{Meshed Up} (Red) (#36), wrapping presents, concealing and dressing a milk bottle wrapped in red mesh fabric. These works are not intentionally based on packaging or mass media nor are my project components manufactured, that is, sent to industry to be made into art pieces. Rather their sculptural construction is reductive in both their content and appearance — assemblages made from collected components.

\textsuperscript{732} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{733} The pearl beads are used for scrapbooking (text, and visual diarising including the use of e.g. collage and stickers to conserve memories and express creativity). Rebecca Ludens, “What is Scrapbooking?”, \textit{About.com}, http://scrapbooking.about.com/cs/gshowtos/g/scrapbooking101.htm (2014).
Figure 80: Polished Orange (#26)

Figure 81: Meshed Up (#36)
As stated earlier regarding pieces in *Plasticity*, I find it interesting that I chose to use a minimalist aesthetic since I am not always an admirer of this technique. There are several reasons why I choose this simplicity: i) I can be easily swayed by fashions or the influences around me; ii) I create timidly, not fully expanding my ideas and process with conviction or not knowing what I truly like, making my art restrained; and iii) slightly changing and organising is one instinctive element in my practice. For example, whilst I like to collect, these collections also need to be organised and catalogued like museum pieces. These aspects can be seen in (and are alluded to by the title) *Handpicked & Sorted* — objects that are specifically chosen and only slightly altered, some with the “fashionable” (and my partiality towards) neon/fluoro colours, are coordinated and ordered along the breadth of the room.

I tend to vacillate between Minimalism’s simplified shapes and sculptures and a tendency towards Maximalism. I am often paradoxically moving between opposing sides, e.g. black and white and colour, eccentricity and conservatism. I am attracted to both streamline design (but not overtly minimal) and ornamentation, kitsch and cute, the latter being my preference for the offbeat or eccentric. This relates back to historian Tsuji’s explanation of eccentricity in Chapter One — decoration, play and the sensational. Warhol also made art that used ‘extreme economy of means [that was] reduced to the essentials of geometric abstraction’. More and more, I am gravitating back towards over-the-top, dense imagery (as I did originally at university), and an eclectic use of materials and themes, whereby the viewer needs to look into the image or object to find more detail, and surprises enticing them into repeated viewings and experiences. Pieces such as *Printed Matter* (2011) (Figure 82) hint at such Maximalism, characterised by a sense of decoration as in the work of contemporary Maximalist artist Gu Dexin’s immense real food and object installations, such as the *The Important Thing is Not the Meat* exhibition (2012).

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735 Works that draw the viewer in, that look like solid form from a distance but are made of tiny elements of detail that can be seen on closer inspection, such as artist Gonkar Gyatso’s sticker pieces.
736 Or Spaced Out Confetti Spectrum and Collective Play from Kaleidoscope.
My exhibited production component, *Zakka♥*, is most influenced by Neo-Pop. The work *Handpicked & Sorted* includes infamous, humanlike *anime* characters such as Hello Kitty. The array of materials and ideas in *Zakka♥* tempt the viewer to look closer into the art pieces to ascertain the familiar associations of these objects — which include historical and cultural references. These inclusions echo human and animal forms. Such examples include: Belle, the lead starlet from Walt Disney Company’s 1991 animation Beauty and the Beast, *Bella on Top (#18)* (Figure 83), Japanese male and female plastic figurines, plastic babies, toy cowboys and Indians, a plastic chicken, My Little Pony, a rabbit, dinosaurs, rubber duckies, a piggy bank, cute kitten-like erasers and stickers in the form of Miffy.
Figure 83: Bella on Top (#18)

Figure 84: My Little Prissy Unicorn (#41)
Miffy is a cute anthropomorphic rabbit from Dick Bruna’s picture books.\textsuperscript{737} Characters such as Miffy are recognisable mascots. These fictitious personalities are used for merchandising and collecting as a way of selling as “character goods”. Animated personas are used to ‘represent their [company’s] brand and attract the attention and affection of the general public’ and are particularly accepted in Japan’s mainstream culture.\textsuperscript{738} Fictional mascots created specifically for merchandising consumer products include My Little Pony. These are a series of overtly cute sweet scented plastic ponies originally from the 1980s and created for girls by the toy company Hasbro.\textsuperscript{739} My Little Pony is seen in #41 from Handpicked & Sorted, with one of its front legs in a tiny bottle and a pen lid attached to the forehead, the pony is humorously converted into My Little Prissy Unicorn (2012) (Figure 84). By changing the pony into a mythological unicorn this object plays into the magical power of mascots in consumerist culture.

Figure 85: Kitty Can Can (#39)

Figure 86: Piggy in the Middle (#40)
Kawaii, like My Little Pony is characterised by cuteness, ‘playful designs in ice cream colors such as cherry-blossom pink and tea green’ increasingly popular around the world. French pâtissier Pierre Hermé is an example of a Westerner influenced by this Asian version of “Americana”. He used kawaii as a theme for his fall/winter collection (2003–04) — ‘pastries in the soft, silky hues of kimonos and anime’.

In his 1994 book Kawaii Shōkōgun (Cute Syndrome), Sōichi Mabuchi lists seven aspects to kawaii: i) smallness; ii) naiveté and innocence; iii) youth (especially the very young); iv) amae (dependency); v) roundness; vi) pastel colours; and vii) animal-like qualities, which have now become part of mainstream popular global culture. The virtual pet Tamagotchi (1990s) is an instance of this this type of cuteness related to the taming of the wild (think cute pets). Kawaii is an irresistible cuteness that draws you in, and is foregrounded by my exhibition Zakka♥. Sanrio’s character Hello Kitty is the epitome of Japan’s “kawaii” phenomenon, a feature that is at the core of artist Murakami’s work and also familiar in aspects of my work Handpicked & Sorted. An empty plastic candy container in the form of Hello Kitty sits atop a jar as Kitty Can Can (#39) (2012) (Figure 85). This kitty looks like a white cat, but is a young friendly, heartfelt girl created to add kawaii (cute) to items such as coin purses. She is a Japanese fictional phenomenon.

Other “cute” examples include, Piggy in the Middle (#40) (2012) (Figure 86), a glass jar which encases a ceramic piggy bank with an animal pig-shaped rubber band sitting upon the ledge of the glass rim, echoing the piggy inside. This piggy is particularly appropriate to mention as it is also reminiscent of Koons’s art, especially his series of large sculptures such as the stainless steel Rabbit (1986) and porcelain Balloon Dog (Blue) and (Red) (2002), artworks that have been reappropriated into consumer culture (or been copied from the original balloon) as Balloon Dog kitsch designed replications as Art-Design, such as book ends, pencil holders and lights. Also his most recent sculptures mainly utilise ‘mirror polished stainless steel with transparent color coating’ such as Balloon Swan (Magenta)

741 Ibid.
742 Ibid.
743 Jeffrey Goldstein, David Buckingham, and Gilles Brougere, Toys, Games, and Media (Mahwah NJ: Erlbaum, Lawrence Associates, Inc. 2004), 57.
745 Hello Kitty also resembles a contemporary version of the infamous icon Maeki Neko nicknamed Lucky Cat. At least 150 years old, originally from Japan and a representation of luck, prosperity and fortune, Lucky Cat is now embedded in international popular culture.
The piggy is small but similarly metallic, mirrored and coloured in surface. This is a design-ready bought object not a re-creation, as Koons might produce with his factory of assistants and huge budget.

*Brellacocktialasaurus* (#62) (2012) (Figure 88), is made of manufactured materials including a glass tealight holder, Styrofoam ball, paper sticky dots, eraser dinosaurs and a paper cocktail umbrella. This is one example of a combination of the designed, assembled together to make a work of art. Although not a large piece like most Neo–Pop art, *Brellacocktialasaurus*, like Figure 87 *Dinos Toppled Over* (#62) could also be considered as prototypes that could be magnified to become gigantic, like Koons, Fritsch and Edward’s sculptures. These assemblages could be compared to the use of layered and modulated objects by contemporary artist Louise Paramor’s *Boomtown* exhibition pieces.

*Zakka* focuses on impermanent works that reflect on a Neo–Pop aesthetic through the use of a plethora of amassed cheap, often banal, objects and artificial foods such as candy/lollies. These kitsch assemblages reflect and connect disparate objects through art, design and consumerism.

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Figure 88: Brillacocktailasaurus (#22)

Figure 89: Heart You (#3)
In relation to the figurative Neo-Pop elements such as present in the art of Koons and Edwards, *I Heart You* (#3) (2012) (Figure 88) in the white coloured pieces of the *Handpicked & Sorted* series is an example. A glass jar, plastic toys, Styrofoam heart, plastic lid and paper towel, the piece *I Heart You*, shows a traditionally dressed Japanese-looking pair of toys, partially facing each other, in front of a large white heart. Both are atop a platform (white lid) that covers a glass jar filled with crushed paper towels. This is an example of the odd assortment of “ingredients”, a collection of flotsam and jetsam that has gone into *Handpicked & Sorted*. Even though these art pieces are similar to Neo–Pop in the use of human and fauna representations, they are neither larger versions, sculpted replications nor are they used to create conceptual sculpted or larger-than-life installed scenes. Unlike the art of Koons or Edwards these works do not exemplify my craft in making, or my ability to replicate into impressive sculptures. Instead, they manifest a relationship to the collecting and assemblage of varied mass-produced and perhaps mundane items like the exhibition *Collector Items* exhibition (2002) for which I created *Gloss Array* (kinetic installation) out of hundreds of magazine cut-outs or the work of other contemporary artists who collect and use their collections to make art such as displayed in the 2015 Barbican exhibition *Magnificent Obsessions: The Artist as Collector*. 
Figure 90: Banded Green (#72)

Figure 91: Reddy or Not (#34)
Toys are essentially examples of playing yet are also representations of the world as used by children and in play therapy. Thus representations of my psyche, my interaction and relationship to things may be seen in my assemblages. There are toys played with by generations of children that remain familiar components of culture. Role playing figures such as Cowboys and Indians are examples. In *Handpicked & Sorted* there are two works, one with red and the other green figures, stacked in and atop glass jars, *Banded Green* (#72) (Figure 89) and *Reddy or Not* (#34) (Figure 90). Green figures — “Red Indians” dressed in a combination of Native American paraphernalia and cowboy gear are stacked, and in another piece, there are red effigies combining Cowboys and Indians. Since the 1930s the meaning of these characterisations has changed, reflecting cultural shifts in thinking and representations of the “other”. Historically, in American culture, the game of cowboys and Indians demonstrated ‘discipline and punishment’. For children playing the non-white Indian would symbolically mean losing the game, as the cowboy was the symbol of winning and superiority, white and male. In an Australian context, Nikos Papastergiadis (2012) looks to an example of cultural translation whereby Geoffrey Bardon from Papunya engaged with children in his small Northern Territory, Indigenous community to incorporate Western symbolism, only to find that the children in classrooms were already play acting with cowboys and Indians in a Western mode of interaction. Outside in the sand they played with traditional symbolism. The children existed in two worlds: and in a globalised cosmopolitan culture. These examples indicate that toys can be suggestive in indoctrinating children from an early age into certain perspectives in politics and race such as in the case of cowboys and Indians. In making *Banded Green* and *Reddy or Not*, I was aware of the connotations of these toys, but my intention was not to create a negative racial innuendo. Although these toys are culturally imbued with meaning as all objects are, my perspective like Papastergiadis’s Papunya scenario is that these toys are culturally accepted as a part of the popular vernacular, whilst engaging in the dialogue by critiquing and empowering.

In these artworks the Indians are either solitarily banded together (green) or in an empowering position standing atop of the Cowboy (reds). This analogy is contrary to the popular use of these ubiquitous toys that, according to Pitcher (2014) have

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748 Ibid. 26.
long connoted racism. The Indian was likely “killed” in childhood war games, but by around the 1970s these toys represented changing attitudes to racial colour stereotypes — the whiteness and non-whiteness of people.\textsuperscript{750} Toys are symbolic of emotional connections to childhood and personal expressions of secrets, wishes and reinventions conjured through play-acting.\textsuperscript{751} Art taps into our cultural fascination with plasticity and adaptability, which by giving personality to products encourages both children and adults to identify and consume. Toys imbue an already predetermined meaning and association to childhood and play. Toys are most often imitations of the “real” — living creatures. Hence, utilising toys, illustrates my associations to popular culture, the child-like, play and the manufactured. The designed and art are once again interconnected. The manufactured is interconnecting the designed with art.

Apart from the obvious use of the designed, \textit{Zakka}\textsuperscript{♥} appropriates visibly familiar icons, stacks layers, and places them inside and outside glass to form new assemblages with a montage/remix aesthetic. The collected materials in their placed and sculpted relationship to each other are not only made redundant in their practicality, but are outside their usual setting, such as the domestic environment. For example, the glass jars utilised as containers for food storage in the kitchen, jars for candles (from a school chapel), perfumes, juices and condiments or the curved bowl as a fishbowl, have all been re-contextualised. Jars are transformed into components for a multitude of objects, assembled as a chromatic, shaded array of ornaments. For instance, the fish bowl, inversed and incorporated with a plastic lid, 100s & 1000s, resin and glue, has become a waterless, snowless but sweet filled snow dome, \textit{Fading Castle}. This work is comparable to the artwork of Walter Martin and Paloma Muñoz’s \textit{Travelers} — Snow Globes (2008–2012). Glass was chosen due to its transparency, as a medium that can be seen through. The glass objects are also mechanisms for layering and arranging. Glass highlights the manufactured artificial. Yet glass is also embedded with the natural and chemical. To form this non-crystalline substance, silica, soda and oxides such as lime from limestone are required.\textsuperscript{752} These glass bottles and assemblages are pertinent examples of the connections between Postmodernism, new materialism and material ecocriticism.\textsuperscript{753} As stated by Ajkanat, these connections relate to

\textsuperscript{751} Phoenix, How Japanese Toys Conquered the World, 9.
\textsuperscript{753} ‘Environmentally oriented literary and cultural studies’. Ursula K. Heise, ‘Ecocriticism and the
… language and reality, nature and culture, discursive practices and the material worlds as complexly intertwined, and it proposes a new worldview in which nature is fundamentally reanimated based on the recognition of the vitality of things in all natural-cultural processes.754

Thus, there is an inherent relationship between glass and all other materials in that they are both symbolic of natural and cultural objects and process. Each glass object, together with the other additions used in Zakka♥ remains inherently intact, but have become aestheticised in their use and origins, their connection to other objects and their placement within a gallery space.

As Bourriaud asserts, wandering is part of the relationship we now have to an unstable world where “everything” is constantly changing.755 This “newness” or “uniqueness”, although it is what artists, and I strive for, is not so spectacularly evident in my art so far, which is interesting but not significantly innovative. Yet my production component, Zakka♥, does include elements of the “remix”, such as varied mascots from around the globe including Hello Kitty (Japan), Miffy (Holland), labels and icons Gaultier, and Piggies, rubber Duckies and Cowboys and Indians. Zakka♥ thus taps into society’s increasing need for “instant gratification” and its repercussions on art. ‘Modern consumers want novelty.

They also want entertainment’.756 Thus, leisure time, and the daily “grind” of the working day can be filled with creative inputs that jolt people’s everyday experiences. Art can play a niche role in changing the day-to-day as seen in the work of artists such as FriendsWithYou (FWY). Although Zakka♥ does achieve a certain state of the whimsical and quirky, which creates a sense of happiness, these pieces are not “life changing” experiences. For example scaled “larger than life”, participatory, or disrupting, juxtaposing or challenging the expected could be considered to be a heightened and memorable experience, like witnessing FWY’s Sky Walkers parade art piece (2006). In order for my works to be appealing to a larger audience they would need to be larger, interactive or relational, more sensory, and definitely more sensational. Like FWY’s practice and since the development and inclusion of installation in contemporary arts practice, I have been increasingly inspired to move more in a site-specific, installation-based, interactive/participatory, performative and cross-disciplinary experiential direction.

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755 Ryan, “Altermodern: A Conversation with Nicolas Bourriaud”.
According to Jenck’s analysis of pluralism, new objects of desire are created through a montage of items.\(^757\) These original works allow the viewer to experience both a sense of the popular and the ordinary as spectacular. This experience is achieved through the display of the amassed, eclectic collection. The collected becomes saturation, not only of forms, but also of colours and replication, much like shop product displays. According to Danto, in the end it does not matter what you make as there is indifference in contemporary art. Not only an array and juxtaposition of materials, but “pluralism” is also self-defining what an artist is and an “anything goes” reaction to art possibilities and institutionalisation.\(^758\) Although, as Bourriaud has suggested, another alternative is that artists become creators who resource and comment on the globalised, displaced, fragmented and multifaceted intermix of influences. This is an art that has no boundaries and is about the many networks we interact with. These are works that structurally consist of many diverse components and influences all combined together as mine do. There are many examples, Subodh Gupta’s work crosses cultural divides by exporting everyday objects into huge sculptures such as \textit{Line of Control (I)} (2008).\(^759\) Franz Ackermann interprets events as ‘paintings and installations centred on themes of travel, tourism, globalisation and urbanism’.\(^760\) Spartacus Chetwynd’s \textit{Odd Man Out} (2011), for which she was nominated for a Turner Prize, combines history and popular culture. Peter Coffin’s silhouette series including \textit{Around, About Expanded Field Sculpture Silhouette Props} (J. Koons ’Rabbit’ 1986) (2007) exemplifies his reinterpretations of existing images. Gustav Metzger used technology to create patterned colours in \textit{Liquid Crystal Environment} (1965; 2005). Whilst Matthew Darbyshire created his fictitious \textit{Blades House} (2008) by repackaging the manufactured and in the process questioning design to ‘define just what it is that makes candy-coloured plastic so modern, so appealing’.\(^761\) These artists are all examples of a global Post–postmodern culture which is no longer just appropriating, but reusing, recontextualising and remixing.

\(^{757}\) Jencks, What is Post-modernism? 7.
Figure 92: Gloss Array

Figure 93: Access All Hours
Figure 94: Minaxi May's Lip-smacking Foods for Life – close-up

Figure 95: Celebrity $55's
Figure 96: Rapidly Growing Consumer(ism)

Figure 97: For Sale
Figure 98: Maan Flora – detail

Figure 99: Maan Flora – room detail
Altermodern focuses on globalisation through networks, which are the predominant themes of time and/or space (as Post–Postmodernism acknowledges). Montage and détourage are not clearly visible in my production component in the form of magazine images from culture like they are in earlier works. Such examples include figurative/portrait focused art including: *Gloss Array* (2002) (Figure 91); *Tagged:C.C.C* (2004); and *Access All Hours* (2005) (Figure 92); or sticker and magazine/digital collage pieces such as *Minaxi May’s Lip-smacking Foods for Life* (2003) (Figure 93); *Celebrity $$$’s*, made in collaboration with Jacqueline Baker (2004) (Figure 94); *Rapidly Growing Consumer(ism)* (2006) (Figure 95); *For Sale* (2007) (Figure 96); and *Maan Flora* (2008) (Figure 97 & 98). However, these aspects are represented in *Zakka♥’s Handpicked & Sorted* series (blues) (Figure 99) in the use of an abundance of different objects. All materials are, or become, equal. As discussed, *Zakka♥* is particularly eclectic in its use of materials. Following Jencks, this production piece exemplifies the variety of practical and banal consumer products available as resources for art-making:

The Post-Modern Age is a time of incessant choosing... It is not only the rich who become collectors, eclectic travellers in time with a superabundance of choice, but almost every urban dweller. Pluralism, the ‘ism’ of our time, is both the great problem, and the great opportunity.\[763\]

*Zakka♥* illustrates abundance and the pop elements of cheap mass-produced materials with a sense of childishness and impermanence. Made from anything, these works are a (Post)–Postmodern reflection on society’s glorification of the artificial, through the use of the familiar.\[764\]

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762 Ryan, “Altermodern: A Conversation with Nicolas Bourriaud”.
763 Jencks, What is Post-modernism?, 7.
Postproduction has recently reenergised the historic question of “What is art?” Contemporary art is no longer just appropriation, but instead is now questioning the sense of ownership, and asking “can this pushing boundaries be removed from the idea of individuality”? Signs are shared and can be used by anybody. The use of culture and the manufactured as materials and themes in art is almost automated and unavoidable.\footnote{Bourriaud, Postproduction Culture As Screenplay, 9.} Since the 1990s more and more art is based on what already exists — ‘artists interpret, reproduce, re-exhibit, or use works made by others or available cultural products’.\footnote{Ibid. 13.} Collectivity can be seen in my joint exhibits \textit{Plasticity} and \textit{Synthetic}. Postproduction — the art of penetrating and decoding the chaotic bombardment of information, global influences, proliferation of objects and the ever-increasing arts industry — is in the amassed collection of disparate objects assembled together as \textit{ZakkaART} in \textit{Zakka♥}. Postproduction is especially visible in the seventy-seven pieces in the \textit{Handpicked & Sorted} art series.

The Internet has contributed to this dissemination of information whereby everything has the potential to become a remix. If Relational Aesthetics was about interactivity resulting from technology, then Postproduction is about how to negotiate within this chaos and create the “new”. This is generally achieved by using that which preexists to create different relationships with people and to
culture and the tools and objects we use.\textsuperscript{767} An example of this is Swetlana Heger and Plamen Dejanov’s *Objects of Desire* ‘exhibited artworks and design objects, which they had purchased, [presented] on minimalist platforms’.\textsuperscript{768} In a similar way, *Handpicked & Sorted* is one way of using my many object influences, mixing them up and re-cataloguing them as arrangements to create something different, post Dejanov’s exhibition (2013).

*Zakka* and *Handpicked & Sorted* change the already existing by using connections to assemblage, installation, Minimalism and Pop aesthetics. The art objects are formatted in a linear arrangement similar to supermarket displays whilst utilising and commenting on icons, mascots, fashions and the familiar through the use of the designed, such as characters, labels and familiar forms. As suggested by Bourriaud, although all of my examples are diverse, they share the commonality of the pre-existing, thus the artworks become a part of the semiotics of language.\textsuperscript{769} These artworks do not exist by themselves, but are “already” and also become part of the culture as new variations of old forms. My art takes from culture the manufactured and ideas about the industrial, social, narrative and familiar and then reintegrates them as ZakkaART into the cultural landscape as “new products”.

Although I would not regard my art as successful “art as business” a ‘la Warhol, I do on occasion make sales, such as from *Zakka*. Many of the *Handpicked & Sorted* series, *Lonely Rook*, a snow dome-like glass and resin sculpted piece filled with candy bits and the prints (*Candy Cosmos* and *Printed Matter*) and “iced” tiles (*Candy Coasters*) all sold. Thus, the art pieces I have made return to the consumer (buyer) as “new” interpretations of the already seen (products) As with “Postproduction” the artworks from *Zakka* as Bourriaud suggests, are the designed that have been redesigned into interpretations that exist anew.

The *Candy Coasters* and *Iced Tile* replicate the hundreds and thousands biscuits that are displayed as *Coloured Candy Trail* creating a more permanent objectification of the biscuits as handcrafted wall works. These are created simply to see if the impermanent (foods) can be made permanent. Also, I reference a kind of food that is related mostly to childhood — the Arnott’s brand iced *Hundred and Thousands*. There is an “identity” in commercial products, in each substance and object, related to its history, functionality and composition. My iced artworks recollect memories

\textsuperscript{767} Ibid. 14.
\textsuperscript{768} Ibid. 14-15.
\textsuperscript{769} Bourriaud, *Postproduction Culture As Screenplay*, 16.
of the original edible biscuits from my childhood and are a memorable aesthetic of a specific pink with coloured dots. Also, the objects that utilise 100s & 1000s of candy bits in Zakka♥ connect the viewer to memories of celebration but also trigger thoughts of decay and the transitory — questioning sugar as confectionery and as food that has little nutritional value, but celebrating the balls of sweetness, like plastics in Plasticity and Synthetic, for all their enjoyable colours and diversity in texture and form.

Candy Cosmos and Printed Matter are not parodies, but are actual prints of the candy. Nevertheless, these prints could be seen as questioning the nature of printing techniques and ideas related to synthesized food colours. The prints are mirrors, copies of the spacing of the original pearls of colour when they are laid out. The replication, printing the colours and shapes from the actual “food” is what Baudrillard would call simulacra — a copy without original. Although in this case the original source has been placed in the gallery separate from the print as Sweet Kicks Candy Carpet. The prints become a representation not only of the cosmos (ordered harmonious system) as titled, but more potently of the colour and form of the confectionery. The print represents the lollies, which connote desire, sweetness, mass dots, candy colours and functional associations such as cake decorating, fairy bread and parties. These artworks are two-dimensional representations of the 100s & 1000s that could be replicated for example by using digital software and 3D printing to make the actual balls of sugar or sculptural forms made from the tiny bits of sweetness.

The prints are not typical monoprints or monotypes — a printing technique whereby an image is made on a flat surface with ink, then fabric or paper are pressed onto the image to achieve an imprint.770 These prints do not use inks but rather are made from the actual 100s & 1000s, the dye they contain and water as a printing medium. The title Candy Cosmos reflects on the abundance of this candy, in fact all candy. It represents an infinite supply of sugar treats that bombard our societies with sweetness and an array of “fun” colours but also food extracted to become the artificial and the oversupply of the “bad” food.771 However, these works do not aim to sensationalise, they are a novel surprise.

771 Sugar is known to decay the teeth. Even though confectionery is a food it is mostly considered to be the “artificial” since there is very little nutritional value. Lollies also contain further additives such as food colourings and chemicals which are not “natural” as well as animal based substances such as gelatin.
Items I chose that represent the familiar from popular designed culture include fashion designer Jean Paul Gaultier’s perfume with the signature bust shaped bottle JPG’s “Classique Femme” (#28) and a container for saving coins, a stylised pig shaped Piggy bank, in this case a metallic pink, Piggy in the Middle (#40). These two “artworks” epitomise the designer haute couture branding and a coin container popularised in media such as the Disney/Pixar film franchise Toy Story. The Gaultier bottle and piggy relate to the factory-line objects that are replicated in abundance but at the same time are given cultural significance through marketing, which then elevates them into collectibles.

However, many of my unsold works after exhibition were not collected but were dismantled or thrown out, ironically (and distressingly) contributing to the incessant cycle of consumerism and disposability on which I was commenting. In relation to mottainai as discussed earlier, there is then a sense of regret — “what a waste” — which is in opposition to the ideas of spirit and respect for objects. This waste is a disturbing metaphor for how society values, exploits and so easily dispose of things which is slowly changing to an emphasis on recycling and reuse but often fails short of the goal. Here the ethics and connections between art, design and consumerism is expressed visually by the art and experientially by the action of disposability.

This is perhaps because the elements were not attached together as a “new” sculpture, as well as being so banal, and of little value. My practice often encompasses cheap manufactured materials from thrift and discount stores. These are mass-produced and affordable, for collecting and making sculptures and installations, and are based on replicated components. Bought materials represent the breadth of products available that are inexpensive yet their materiality is crudely imbued with notions of mass-production and globalisation. “Cheap” goods can often be replications of popular designer items that are too expensive for the average person. These “copies” illustrate the superfluous spending that can occur when “dirt-cheap” goods are available. I do not necessarily agree with the content of these bought objects or readily support these ideas, but like other consumers, I have to think about the affordability of purchasing products, especially for my art. Whilst culture frees industry to create both economical and costly priced items to cater to cross-sections of society, I use these objects to present a different viewpoint, the superfluous as unique and quirky — ZakkaART.

Toy Story (1995); Toy Story 2 (1999); and Toy Story 3 (2010).
The installation photo from Zakka♥ (Figure 100) captures how closely these pieces are interlinked, showing a fixation with the artificial or fabricated objects.\textsuperscript{773} The emphasis on the “made” as opposed to the “natural” is my instinctive inclination, a reflection on industrial society’s move away from that which is the sentient, living world to the inanimate and constructed.\textsuperscript{774} As Sconce (2000) articulates, electronic media, becomes technologically “alive”, changeable or interactive, so that the material and non–material become interdependent on each other.\textsuperscript{775} This is not a new concept as in 1834 Prothero wrote about the transitional object, or synaesthesia: \textsuperscript{776}

... sensation is attributed to inanimate objects — the particular feeling which they excite in the spectator being ascribed to themselves, as if they were sentient beings... the theory that there is no such thing as inanimate nature, and that every visible particle of matter is a congeries of animalculae.\textsuperscript{777}

\textsuperscript{774} However, Zakka♥ (and the rest of my production components) do show snippets of “natural” themes through the use of bought and used objects that replicate flora and fauna e.g. Hello Kitty lolly holder, sugar butterflies, a Post-It note origami flower, synthetic flowers or rubber duckies.
\textsuperscript{776} The transitional object is rather than feeling alone and possibly lonely the child transfers their emotional attachment and longing for the mother figure to their favourite toy — a ‘mother-substitute’. Donald W. Winnicott, \textit{Playing and Reality} (London & New York: Routledge, 1990), 30.

Synaesthesia is when the senses are crossed-over such as the intermix of visual and aural as hearing colour. Mary Butterton, \textit{Music and Meaning: Opening Minds in the Caring and Healing Professions} (Milton Keynes, UK: Radcliffe Publishing, 2004), 162.
Almost two hundred years later my urban culture has even less affinity with nature. My culture is that of the designed, the popular, and the manufactured object and so it simply does not occur to me to use “the natural” or organic e.g. leaves, twigs and bones. As emphasized by Baudrillard when referencing Warhol’s work:

All modern, industrial artifacts — an image of Marilyn, a can of Campbell’s soup or an electric chair — tend to become natural for us, to lose their artificiality. The artificial has become the “natural”.

Like an ecology of the artificial, Micropop art allows for multiple fragments of themes, ideas and materials. This is seen in my creation of Zakka♥. This work relates to what Liddell conceptualises as ‘a kind of lo-fi, fuzzy, cute approach [and] invokes the banal and mundane’.

To reiterate, Micropop represents ‘Japanese artists who reinvent everyday life to give new meaning to commonplace things’. The exhibitions The Door in the Summer (2007) and Winter Garden (2013) are examples of this practice. Artists include Aya Takano’s illustrations, Koki Tanaka’s videos that challenge notions of everyday objects (2013 Japanese Venice Biennale artist), Masanori Handa’s installations and Lyota Yagi’s found object art. These exhibitors respond to: i) globalisation and its impact such as uniformity; and ii) a place for diversity and layering e.g. artificial and natural environments. Matsui’s Micropop suggests that originality exists in creating from many fragments, from various influences and places without a reliance on what the art institutions deem as “art”. As Matsui summarises, these artists:

... glean their information from various sources, enjoying both high culture and popular culture, and treating them as equals. The sensibility of “minor pop” takes the manufactured objects of popular culture and reads into them allegorical symbolism of human dreams and desires, finding philosophical meaning in the “insignificant” events of everyday life as well as hints for action leading toward freedom.

This is “new”, late–postmodernist art that enables the artists to survive by paying attention to different ways of thinking and living. Based on “minor literature”,

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781 Ibid.
transformation takes place. Micropop is not related to Pop art or strictly to popular culture, but more to a sense of place in relation to a mixture of urban, pop and cultural influences. The idea of Micropop can be seen in the influx of not only Japanese contemporary art but also other non-western art and influences, such as the word “zakka” and my term “ZakkaART” given to the art described in this exegesis. My work can be classified as Micropop. It is based on hybrid cultural influences including aspects from many global influences and the child-like or themes of childhood such as the use of toys, Mascots such as Hello Kitty from Japan and themes of the celebratory, playful and colourful.

Since all the Zakka works are developed from the non-perishable, that is the manufactured or sugar “food” such as candy 100s & 1000s, there is a link present between them. As discussed earlier, the work titled Sweet Kicks Candy Carpet (Figure 101), mimics the look of a retro mottled rug, with a fringing of biscuits. Like most of the works in this exhibition, the rug is a reference to the home and the everyday and, like Micropop and zakka, the everyday as childlike, and revitalised into something eye-catching as well as to my aesthetics for the retro, kitsch, childlike and vibrant.

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783 Gilles Deleuze, Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 16.
784 Matsui, “What Is Micropop?”
The other specific examples of the childlike are *Velcroed Tea Party*, *Fading Castle* and *Lonely Rook*. As mentioned in relation to Post–Pop art and Surrealism, *Velcroed Tea Party* is an interpretation of Oppenheim’s *Object* (1936). My example is a playful and childlike take on the love of everyday objects, (not necessarily feminine), the manufactured and the handmade. Colour and design are used to create the ornamental and childlike — an Alice in Wonderland Tea Party fairy tale kind of aesthetic. The connotation is of a tea party — festivity in the afternoon of teas, sweets and people, although this one is Velcroed, being a part of (attached as in people Velcroed together) but also able to be removed from (detached and isolated). Again, like many of my works the manufactured is used to create associations, this time to childhood through a popular storybook and to art through the work of Oppenheim. My work thus links to a mix of emotions through these associations, both of happiness and fear; connection and isolation. This piece is also mocking the attributes of attaching and detaching, functional design and object as “art” or ornament. Like the tea party in *Alice in Wonderland* the velcroed cup and saucer is “curious” as it no longer functions in its original state — wrapped in an offbeat ornamentation and labelled as “art”.

I have used objects to create sculptures and re-exhibited as art, but once taken apart, they are again utilitarian objects with a specific function. By the time Zakka♥ was created in 2012, my art had moved beyond one or two materials to an assembled assortment. These works encompass a plethora of merchandise that are given the significance of art, mainly through the dissolution of functionality, allowing the viewer to focus on the aesthetic, sculptural qualities of the objects. This does not mean that only the impractical is art. Rather, the designed products are given a different context and thus alter our interpretation when placed in the context of fine art — celebrating the zakka in design and art as ZakkaART. As Dunnill surmises, Zakka♥ is: Absurd and beautiful, these works drift between art, design and utility, taking in all three, settling on none... These objects are reinvented, made new. Linked unexpectedly with things they’d never normally sit beside. Telling new stories.

ZakkaART is most clearly evident in *Zakka♥* as this exhibition was deliberately made with the intention to focus on “zakka”. However, as stated earlier, the initial

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784 Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (UK:MacMillan, 1865) is the original story which features a mad tea party. *Alice in Wonderland* is the name of the Walt Disney animated film version or an annotated reference to the novel.

785 Dunnill, “The ARI Experiment”, 52.
objects collected are not zakka but their use as art is conceptualised as such. The manufactured is remixed and re-established as ZakkaART. All the pieces in this exhibition were created with a sense of play to highlight and give a fresh look to the everyday materials used. The use of toys, together with randomly selected lifestyle products, was developed from a palette of candy colours that contributed greatly to the childlike, humorous approaches. More than any other pieces in the production component, this series encompasses mixology. Hordes of products are used with an Art deejaying approach — Seminaut.

![Figure 103: Sweet Singles](image)

All the other pieces in *Zakka♥*, including the prints, “sugar” domes, cup and saucer, candy works and mimicked biscuits can be grouped together as replications of everyday objects, the familiar in “pop” culture or simulacra. These pieces are more closely related to the 100s & 1000s confectionary than *Handpicked & Sorted* as they directly use, comment on, or copy, the candy. One piece that is slightly different is *Sweet Singles* (2012) (Figure 102) as this consists of the actual balls of coloured candy separated, and stuck on a wall. This work is extreme Minimalism and almost unseen as they are tiny, pin–sized dots enmeshed into the wall. *Sweet Singles* individualises the colours, ingredients and form from the mass of 100s & 1000s to both comment on the mass of manufactured and to ridicule the miniscule particles
of sugar. This work came about as a result of experimenting with separating the 100s & 1000s colours into individual pigments in different miniature glass vessels. This sorting was an absurdist activity in obsessive compulsiveness and commenting on the infinite replication possibilities of the manufactured — there are too many 100s & 1000s to catalogue. In essence Zakka♥, could be seen as two exhibitions: the 100s & 1000s works and the Handpicked & Sorted series. But collectively the entire exhibition deploys ideas of zakka to create ZakkaART.

Zakka♥ focused on impermanent art works that reflect on Pop and mass consumerism through the use of a plethora of cheap objects and candies. The move towards more kinetic, interactive, ephemeral pieces and a mish-mash of materials is where I would like to see my art evolving. This remixing would reflect the way I see the world and my inherent eclecticism. At times artworks are ephemeral and fleeting in their influence (like fashions). But I am also drawn to creating permanent sculptural works as these become objects that are significantly present in the moment as solid forms. They can be kept and valued. As the profession of art moves more towards installation, galleries are commissioning artists to make location-based works. I create installations, as this is something that engages with space and audiences as a contemporary art mode.

Installation allows the freedom for arrangement, site-specificity (to create in-situ using the architectural nuances of the spaces) and play with ephemerality. Collected and bought objects are used within spaces and displayed as “art”. When de-installed these things are no longer “art” but return to being the designed again. This association between art and design can be perplexing, yet simultaneously connects with consumerism. Thus a dichotomy is always present between: “made to last” and the fleeting or replaceable. These conflicts are the ever-present binaries that exist in life. As contemporary consumers we are easily changeable, we move from desire to indifference. This changeability is seen in the art of installations which use the manufactured — they are in one moment “art” as arranged, and the next “design”, when the work is disassembled. This disjunction when using collected objects in art, signifies the sometimes problematic relationship between art and design.

Each of my exhibitions explore the notion of materiality, and the materialism of our culture as more than just a design issue. Materialism includes both how we ‘make, exchange and consume the material world, but equally with how material forms and
visual images are central to the socialisation of human beings into culture.\textsuperscript{787} Materials are fundamental to our socialisation. In an urbanised society these objects come from our dependence on the manufactured. My work reflects both a paradoxical and ambiguous relationship with consumerism and art-making. As an artist who uses the manufactured I am a consumer and collector, as the accumulation of materials form the basis or inspiration for my works. I own a multitude of small objects awaiting use. My works both accept consumer products as stuff for making but also are used to make critical commentary on consumerism. Meaning and content is already present within the designed. By using these objects in art, the intrinsic meaning becomes compounded with the artist’s intentions, often for ironic effect. My intention is to create work that extracts the spectacular and the banal in the everyday.

The themes I employ are related to my contradictory relationship with objects that at once makes me happy, with their beauty and then unsatisfied by the need to consume. These contradictory feelings are evident when object “art” is no longer in the gallery but is returned home, dismantled and stored. In the gallery the work was “art” and embedded with a sense of worth by myself and possibly by the gallery and viewers. At home I have piles of “worthless” objects, which possibly could be reused. In the twenty-first century these piles are now also virtual. If Pop art was about consumption, supermarkets and seriality based on media and consumer culture then many current practices are reflecting the shareware nature of the Internet and social media.\textsuperscript{788} Bourriaud calls this appropriation of film and music from culture as ‘time readymades’.\textsuperscript{789} Thus the materials I use and ideas I experience, according to Bourriaud, are a mixology that is at once constantly expanding and forever changing due to my culture of rapid technological advancement and creative innovation. The concept of no distinct branding resonates with me in that my ideas and art are constantly changing.\textsuperscript{790} I work with ideas and projects similar to how a designer does briefs, or how a fashion designer creates collections, each with its own unique researched themes, materials, experiments and results, with each collection building on the last.

Artists are also mimicking this trend by branding themselves with names that are


\textsuperscript{788} Bourriaud, \textit{Postproduction Culture As Screenplay}, 85.

\textsuperscript{789} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{790} Ibid. 86-87.
abbreviated or not their own, but rather as identifiable as business practices, such as
the names of the partnerships, Thukral and Tagra or Isabel and Alfredo Aquilizan
or collaborations such as FWY or The Atlas Group, a fictional collective created by
artist Walid Raad or new Perth creators of novelty, outfit Snapcat.\textsuperscript{791}

More than a physical person, a name now designates a mode of appearance or
production, a line, a fiction. This logic is also that of multinationals, which present
product lines as if they emanated from autonomous firms: based on the nature of
his products, a musician such as Roni Size will call himself “Breakbeat Era” or
“Reprazent,” just as Coca-Cola or Vivendi Universal owns a dozen or so distinct
brands which the public does not think to connect … Global culture today is a
giant anamnesis, an enormous mixture whose principles of selection are very
difficult to identify.\textsuperscript{792}

As Bourriaud testifies, there is an unlimited supply of inspiration fuelling an
industrialised world that is dependent on identifiable signifiers. Thus the
importance of branding, even for artists.

Bourriaud’s theories, especially that of Postproduction’s adding to the designed in
the name of art are aspects that I have increasingly witnessed. The premise of this
theory of practice is visible and consolidated in the production component for this
exegesis.

All exhibitions in my production component utilise manufactured items. By using
these designed objects from the consumer environment I bring to the viewer’s
attention ideas concerning art, design and consumerism. Art is extended into the
everyday and familiar through objects with innate popular and personal meanings.
So, I do challenge definitions of what art is, especially through the use of everyday
materials, most evident in the mix of substances and objects in the exhibition
\textit{Zakka♥}. Whilst I struggle with where my art sits within “art”, or the “anything
goes” attitude of the artists I have explored, my production component shows a
clear link with the designed as manufactured objects are exhaustively employed.

From my production component it is obvious that I am a buyer of goods that
become part of my trade. The toyshop, op shop, stationery shop, in fact many
different retail outlets are my art materials stores. I am a provider of art and culture
moving from and oscillating between that which is conventional and fashionable,
material and conceptual, art and design, creating ZakkaART — art that glorifies

\textsuperscript{791} Renae Coles and Anna Dunnill who make ‘art: drawings, performance, sculpture, film and fancy articles’. Renae Coles and
\textsuperscript{792} Bourriaud, Postproduction Culture As Screenplay, 87 & 89.
and looks to the spectacular in the everyday. Essentially I am a “maker” — constantly relating to ‘our social and physical environments’.793

I see my art developing to be more multi and interdisciplinary crossing paths with for example the art of food plating as installation. I can imagine my art developing through an absorption in the process, creating works that are intensely detailed, marrying ‘the conceptual with the physical’.794 Overall, I believe that process is important and that ZakkaART is about the processes of making, using and remixing art, design and consumerism in connectivity, as they inhabit the world all at the same time.795 I hope my art will move into a more sustainable direction whereby materials are not haphazardly used to create art or invaluable “stuff”, but contribute to an enriching, viable and environmentally sound and sustainable experience. My art demonstrates a trajectory from the readymades to Pop art to contemporary art that responds to and uses the already created in critiquing our everyday and global encounters. As ZakkaART these exhibitions demonstrate a connection to the designed with a process of play and aesthetics of design, colour and arrangement that make miscellaneous everyday goods become other than their functionality as do the works of many contemporary artists.

Contemporary Art that Dialogues with Design and Consumerism

The readymade, as discussed earlier, was a forerunner in understanding art’s connections with design and consumption and has been the focus of a number of recent exhibitions. 2013 marked a century of the introduction of the original readymade by Duchamp.796 A key exhibition was the Museum of Contemporary Craft (MoCC), Portland, USA showed, Manufactured: The Conspicuous Transformation of Everyday Objects (2009). This exhibition included objects that sat in the intersection of craft, design and art. Fifteen international artists appropriate manufactured products to create sculptural works and installations of all sizes and scales. Rather than transform a single natural material, the artists on view employ a variety of pristine goods culled directly from manufacturers and

795 Ibid. This “process” methodology is based on my art studio experience but also on Process art which developed from the 1960s: ‘not art for the pedestal, but rather for the floor, the corner, or, hanging droopily, from the wall; art that evolves (like mine does); uses unusual materials; and often includes audience interaction within the piece.
store shelves as their raw materials. Nevertheless, each piece exhibits craft’s time-honored, labor-intensive repetitive processes as a strategy for object-making.\textsuperscript{797}

*Manuf*\textsuperscript{acted}ured was an exhibition that combined craft with the conceptual to create highly intricate works. In this way these works were different from the minimalist, placement works of Duchamp. These designers, artists and craftspeople showed ‘promiscuity with materials, techniques and concepts… working with rather than against industrialization and globalization’.\textsuperscript{798} They aimed to counteract the homogeneity of the manufactured by creating these critically engaged works.\textsuperscript{799} Thus in using the already made, consumption is inherent in the work and like the designing by designed and making of the mass-produced by manufacturers, these artists, like myself are making design decisions.

Held by Blain/Southern Gallery London, *Tell Me Whom You Haunt: Marcel Duchamp and the Contemporary Readymade* (Apr. – May 2013), presented a dialogue between the readymades and a selection of contemporary artists including David Batchelor and Sislej Xhafa.\textsuperscript{800} The idea of “haunting” was the focus, whereby ‘found or “readymade” objects relinquish their previous signification and assume a shifting identity whenever recontextualised; they cease to be one thing in order to become another’.\textsuperscript{801} These objects evoke meaning for the artists and the viewer, readings that include the personal memory associations.\textsuperscript{802} This exhibition as well as the following examples illustrate the continued impact of Duchamp and the readymade — significant in contemporary art discourse and the making of art. Contemporary Art Museum (CAM) Houston’s, *It is what it is. Or is it?* (May – July 2012) included a diversity of artists exhibiting the complexity of readymades and the meaning of objects.\textsuperscript{803} Other exhibitions included: Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, Aust. *Magic Object* (Feb. – May. 2016); The Barbican, London’s *Magnificent Obsessions: The Artist as Collector* (Feb. – May 2015); The American University Museum, Katzen Arts Center, Washington DC, USA’s *Readymade@100* (Sept. – Oct. 2014); Haifa Museum of Art, Haifa, Israel’s, *The Ready Made Centennial* (Aug. 2013 – July 2014); Monash University Museum of Art (MUMA), Victoria, Aust.

\textsuperscript{797} Museum of Contemporary Craft (Portland), “Manuf\textsuperscript{acted}ured: About the Exhibition”, *Museum of Contemporary Craft*, http://www.museumofcontemporarycraft.org/manuf\textsuperscript{acted}ured/about.html (2009).

\textsuperscript{798} Namita Gupta Wiggers, *MANUF\textsuperscript{acted}ured: The conspicuous transformation of everyday objects* (Portland, OR: Museum of Contemporary Craft, 2009), 2. http://www.museumofcontemporarycraft.org/manuf\textsuperscript{acted}ured/2008\_08\_Manuf\textsuperscript{acted}ured.pdf.

\textsuperscript{799} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{801} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{802} Ibid.


Although this situating of design as art was revolutionary, I argued against Duchamp’s claim that anything could be art by simple placement. Just because something is labelled art, does not mean people may see or question it as art, and the authenticity of what the object is, still remains for viewers to negotiate. A chair placed in the middle of a gallery is still a chair. What this relocation of an object does do though, is place doubt in the observer’s mind, including the art worlds’, as to what art is, due to the nature of using the already created. The utilitarian is questioned beyond its use, for its meaning and beauty — what the object represents culturally, in time and space within the gallery location. In doing so, the viewer is offered various possibilities of what art can be. What Duchamp did was to broaden the capacity of art conceptually and aesthetically, ‘specifically [from] the capitalist industrialised world’ as well as place the manufactured into the realm of art, which Pop art continued.804

In recent years, Pop art has also been a contemporary focus throughout international art institutions. These include: The Tate Modern, London’s The World Goes Pop (Sept. 2015 – Jan. 2016) which presented a global perspective of Pop from the 1960s and 1970s;805 The Art Gallery of NSW’s Pop to Popism (Nov. 2015 – Mar. 2015); Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Los Angeles’s Andy Warhol: Shadows (Sept. 2014 – Feb. 2015); Seattle Art Museum (SAM), USA’s Pop Departures (Oct. 2014 – Jan. 15), which explores the breadth of Pop from 1960s to Neo-Pop and through to the 2000s;806 The Tate Modern’s Richard Hamilton Retrospective (Feb. – May, 2014); Richard Hamilton at the ICA (Feb – Apr. 2014); The Barbican Art Gallery, London, Pop Art Design (Oct. 2013 – Feb. 14); Vitra Design Museum, Pop Art Design (Oct. 2012- Feb. 2013) and The Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET), New York’s Regarding Warhol: Sixty Artists, Fifty Years (Sept. – Dec. 2012). These institutionally embedded exhibitions represent the ongoing impact of design, media, Pop and the commercialised from the readymades. Today contemporary artists, including Murakami with his Superflat manifesto and Kaikai Kiki, are continuing to show the effects of these earlier art movements by crossing

804 Jones, “Reinventing the Wheel”.
the previously held boundaries between art, design and consumerism and instead encapsulating them as does ZakkaART.

The impact of the readymades and Pop art exists beyond contemporary art and has infiltrated back into popular culture — the manufactured. These influences can be seen in examples such as the bold Pop colours and fonts in some typography and graphic design and in objects that include Pop imagery such as stick-on fingernails, clothes, kitchen china and sneakers. Therefore, like the exhibition examples demonstrate, the readymades and Pop art still exist in contemporary art, perhaps in varied incarnations, but also have circulated from the very culture the movements were initiated from — the designed. There is a significant remix between art, design and consumerism that is persuasive as encapsulated in the Conclusion.

The conclusion offers a summation and reflection on a process that has taken ten years to process and prepare. The language throughout this exegesis may differ due to the time frame it has taken to complete and the very personal methodology I have undertaken, giving some areas a self-critical, discursive style. The tone is auto ethnographical and the work experimental and so finite conclusions are absent from my discourse — my art praxis is an ongoing process. What I have offered is a brief overview of the salient points addressed in this exegesis and a conclusion as to where the subject of my work stands, presently, as ZakkaART; where it may develop; and how this contributes to contemporary art discourse.
CONCLUSION

The creative act relates to both art and life. Neither can be made without the other...\(^{807}\) Blurring the two (art and life) the artist/medium selectively combines and/or remixes the Source Material Everywhere as part of an ongoing lifestyle practice.\(^{808}\)

In response to the Duchamp and Amerika quotes, in the epigraph to this Conclusion, if anything, my work shows a relationship to life, to things created through choices and my art practice — I intuitively make myself up in the blur between the two — a remix. There is a dichotomy between the pop mass consumerism influences used in my practice and the relegation of these ubiquitous products into the often, exclusive environments of gallery spaces. As referred to in Chapter One, art in many ways is a creative industry that is accessed by privileged people who have an affinity for fine art — collectors and collections. In the current gallery (white cube) model, contemporary art is still not marketed to or appreciated by everyone, as another popular art form, music, tends to be. By placing the everyday in the gallery the engagement is changed from being designed products on shelves and in homes to that of objects that have inherent yet critical meanings that are commented on or interrogated by the artist. The reading requires visual literacy and an interest in art, which may differ from the everyday relationship with the functional and designed. The viewer engages with art that uses the designed with social assumptions, political references, personal associations and aesthetic preferences which affects their bias and their interpretation of ZakkaART.

Although the readymade conjured notions of “anything as art”, unlike Duchamp, most often my art, other than a few pieces in the *Handpicked & Sorted* series in Zakka\(^\bullet\), are manipulated, arranged, assembled or crafted. I prefer to delve into the background of the object, as part of a theoretical, experimental and aesthetic engagement. By thinking of the objects’ relationship to me as the subject in the intermix of cultural moments I live within, I am constantly redefining my relationship to the constructed environment and the designed products that surround me.

Historically, the moment the readymade was created, Duchamp compromised or invalidated the difference between “genuine” art and societal traditions and the commoditised into that which is homogenised through mass mechanical

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\(^{808}\) Amerika, *Remix*, 146.
Duchamp’s principle was that ‘consumption was also a mode of production’ as the living are reliant on nature and we need to consume to exist thus we are lesser than nature. Yet, we are consumers and dependent as cited by Zukin in the Introduction. There is a dichotomy here as nature is the source for the animate and inanimate. As Fatma Aykanat indicates:

“Postmodernism in the discourse of material ecocriticism and its new materialist approach regards language and reality, nature and culture, discursive practices and the material worlds as complexly intertwined, and it proposes a new worldview in which nature is fundamentally reanimated based on the recognition of the vitality of things in all natural-cultural processes.”

Thus, even though consumption creates the need for new production, consumption is both its motor and motive. This is the primary virtue of the readymade: establishing equivalence between choosing and fabricating, consuming and producing. Yet at the same time there is an increasing re–acknowledgement of the nature of things and the complex relationships that exist between life, culture, nature, art, design and consumerism.

Through the appropriation of imagery, Pop concerned itself with beliefs in consumerism, self-fulfilment and instant gratification. Through these consumerist foci, Pop also had an undeniable impact on the core institutions and professions that are associated with the arts including critics, dealers and collectors. These art personnel also moved towards a more commercial outlook.

Pop art not only represented and replicated consumption but also used the methods and approaches of the commercial world. By extracting and mimicking directly from this corporate world, the Pop art movement in turn successfully marketed itself and absorbed itself into the core of consumer culture. While the Pop artists did include negative or more serious concepts or themes, e.g. Warhol’s *Death and Disaster* series (1962 and 1963), their concern was more with the superficial level — the popularised media and manufactured — much like the focus of my project component which is materially based.

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811 Aykanat, “How to Recycle Ourselves through Art”, 15.
813 Lippard, *Pop Art*, 1.
814 Pop artists did not attempt to encapsulate the entire mood of the moment, leaving out significant events that captured the political unrest in regards to civil rights e.g. the Ku Klux Clan and the happenings that were occurring with minority groups. An artist is not necessarily there to document every event, or be radically political, but really to use what is there, what stimulates them to make a commentary on society and/or in essence relay some aspects of themselves.
With Pop art, design became subject matter for art as a celebratory reflection on change — mechanisation and commercialisation were the “real”. The abstraction of imagery from society infiltrated much of art, as culture became that of the urbanised world. The mass-produced populated the everyday. A symbiotic relationship formed whereby each influenced the other — art, creativity and culture enmeshed.

With Post–Pop, the Young British Artists (YBAs) including Hirst and Tracy Emin, demonstrated that design and art could be integrated even further. Instead of simply replicating, the manufactured could be the actual “art”. Readymades and objects were manipulated to become tools and media for art-making. The manufactured was used to conceptualise and comment on society as well as to break boundaries in relation to art, the artist and the art world (Postmodernism). By learning from mass media and advertising signage, notions of art display were challenged by exhibiting art outside of the traditions of the gallery, such as Graffiti art.

As industrialisation became evermore present in capitalist systems, art became increasingly aligned with creative industries — that of the designed. However, art still retained some uniqueness, tapping into new possibilities of technology and globalisation, whilst concurrently becoming commercialised. Art as a profession still held some distance from the consumer world due to price (affordability). Art was not multiplied to the extent of the manufactured, generally remaining as one-off or limited edition works. There also still existed the elitism of galleries, intellectuals, curators and some artists who created art for the benefit of the hierarchical system of curators and scholars, work that may be only understood by them as “intellectual art”.

Pop redeveloped into Neo-Pop. Artists like Koons, Katharina Fritsch and the Chapman Brothers signified the object as “art” by exaggeration — scale, used manufacturing techniques or highly skilled detail which required specialisation or assistants as workers, and became entrepreneurs as directors rather than makers. The artist still retained a distance and differentiation from manufacturers and hobbyists by their intention, inquiry, conceptual engagement and the “limited edition” availability of their pieces. Many artists, especially Koons, followed the processes of creative industries, such as design, as they complied with the demand
for their art, whilst simultaneously showing the sheer magnitude and impact of capitalism and consumer culture.

At the same time design increased in value as technology, especially the Internet allowed accessibility to and a new understanding of visual communication. Designers such as IDEO used this knowledge to take from art the ability to conceptualise and use it to give design more substance beyond functionality and form. As the Internet and technologies continued to make the world more accessible and sometimes confusing due to so much information: through rapidly changing information, art continually questioned its place and was bombarded with an influx of possibilities as “anything goes”:

The discussion then moved to how the professions of design and art enmeshed. Design appropriated from art, such as customisation and a DIY aesthetic and in some cases the use of conceptual ideas or art appropriation. Art used the designed, and familiar to re-infiltrate the system of signs like Banksy does, and the use of design objects as resource materials for art-making. As stated by McQuilten: a shift in focus away from the question of what distinguishes the fields of design and art toward a more critical examination of how this landscape, where design morphs into art and art morphs into design, is providing the ground for unexpected, engaged and reflective forms of social production.815

As a result, art and design married in “new” and innovative ways such as in the work of collectives including FriendsWithYou and the resurgence of a Warholian lineage through Murakami. Artists were used to make limited editions into the designed, e.g. Andrew Nicholls for Third Drawer Down. Craft became a making/craft and “art” trend again as a backlash to technology. Certain designers continued to conceptualise design to generate questioning as to the role and commercial tactics of design and its relationship to art, e.g. Design Anarchy. Art re-determined time, place and space by relocating to the streets and urban environment as urban art and artists worked in many capacities from individually, collectively to inter–and multidisciplinary.

As accessibility to technologies became convention, artists could access programs, websites, blogs and materials for their own benefits whilst the outsider artist moved from amateur to professional. Art became about developing procedures and ways of operating that allowed accountability whereby proactivity is recognised by peers, valued and made visible — a movement away from ‘consumer culture to a culture of activity’.816 Signs had become ‘collective imagery’, selected and downloaded as

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815 McQuilten, Art in Consumer Culture, 212.
816 Bourriaud, Postproduction Culture As Screenplay, 92.
samples to remix by considering ‘global culture as a toolbox, an open narrative space rather than a uni-vocal narrative and a product line’. As stated by Bourriaud, globalisation enabled a diversity of paraphernalia from around the globe, becoming a universal language system. Artists from developing “power” countries such as Ai Weiwei from China used this “new” language with their own “local” signs to interlink consumerism, design and mass media. This habitus and glocalisation is also evident in my production component.

**ZakkaART and the Production Component Overview**

When critiquing my own praxis, the impact of the popular as “culture” has a diverse influence. This multiplicity is evident in Post–Postmodernism, a time when eclecticism and breaking boundaries was no longer something to work towards but became embedded in culture. Art became “anything” and “everything”. Yet, at the same time art as a hierarchical system was determined by changeable industry directives led by a need to survive as business. If everything is just a reconfiguration or regurgitation of what is embedded in popular culture, then following Baudrillard, to be innovative is to be more unique than ever before. Artists such as Marcel Duchamp (who impacted on Postproduction) and Warhol through to Damien Hirst, Jeff Koons and Takashi Murakami are examples of the latter, artists with a niche and a claim to “success”.

Theorists including Nicolas Bourriaud, Grace McQuilten, Alex Coles and Midori Matsui postulated as to what contemporary art had become within a world of so much rapid change and where art and design were symbiotic. Bourriaud suggested that artists no longer needed to simply look to the past but could instead use the past to change our perceptions of the world. He positioned the viewer as having power to determine their own meaning from what they saw and experienced, because ‘art is an activity that produces relationships to the world and in one form or another makes its relationships to space and time material’.

The historical overview and research into specific contemporary art theorists in Chapter One gave a context to ZakkaART and my production component critiqued in Chapter Two. My production component of four exhibitions made visible the somewhat inescapable (Postproduction) and interrelated remix of art, design and

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817 Ibid. 93.
818 Bourriaud, Postproduction Culture As Screenplay, 93.
consumerism as ZakkaART. These exhibitions revealed a development from paper and plastic (*Kaleidoscope*, *Plasticity* and *Synthetic*) to Zakka♥, which fully articulated the “zakka” aesthetic whilst identifying the sheer volume and impact of the everyday on art. Through analysing relationships from the readymade, Pop art, through to cultural aspects of the popular and designed within contemporary art today, as well as the theorists mentioned above I claim my exhibition components are indicative of a ZakkaART aesthetic.

I have discovered that my art can be contradictory — Minimalist and Maximalist. Often it is emphasised by a focus on colour, repetition and the graphic qualities of design, leaning towards Maximalism. As seen in the production component, this way of working is accentuated by materially using the manufactured, collected and popular. At other times my work tends to be Minimalist and conceptual in content like the exhibition *Tagged: C. C. C.* However, the commonality is the industrial and popular — the created and commodified, coming from the city, my (un)tamed jungle. I intermix elements of the designed, with a strong adherence to the design fundamentals, much like many of the artists I researched or admire.

In a sense I am a freestyler of ideas, letting my ideas flow before I decide on a way to work. As Bourriaud describes, I am a “wanderer” and influenced by the Altermodern. I am experimental. My processes, materials and techniques respond to and are influenced by my constantly changing virtual/online and real-life surroundings. These influences help to create my installation art based practice — my narrative. I work both conceptually and materially, but the problem is, my art is comparable to a multiple personality disorder: maximalist — decorative and full of colour, or minimalist, e.g. *Kaleidoscope* compared to *Tagged: C. C. C.* Where I feel one of my challenges lie is in linking the divergent aspects of minimal/maximal and materiality/conceptuality. For example, *Kaleidoscope* is primarily an experimentation of colour and paper, but there is not much of a conceptual stance or argument, other than questioning, in a celebratory manner, the intended use of paper products and the vast array/dependence on these products. It is fine for an artist to primarily work materially. But my production components could be further developed, in the way that Tara Donovan or Motoi Yamamoto use mass collecting or narrative with intense detail for process-focused pieces that often fill entire spaces. They articulate an elaborate materiality that conveys notions about industrialised culture such as collecting, waste, abundance, banality and dependence — a conceptual engagement or a narrative. As discussed in this exegesis what my
work does, to some level, is help to make audiences aware of their personal and changeable connections to industrialisation and capitalism as powerful mechanised systems of culture and the ever-present influence of design.

This exegesis has closely aligned with and perhaps refocused contemporary art back to the Marxist concepts of “Alienation” and “Objectification”. These ideas resonate as our constantly changing relationships with nature, are instead made manifest in objects. Marx sees forms that are made not manufactured ‘as mirrors for self-understanding through contemplation and reflection’, thus objectifying our abilities to create.819 The handmade (and art) are an expression of the maker, embedded in the product and thus can be recognised by others as distinctive styles.820

Our culture is about the already created. As an artist I can bridge the gaps between art and design through critically analysing commerce and design through art.821 I am not the only artist who does this. As demonstrated in the relatively small (but pertinent) selection of examples throughout this exegesis, many artists continue to and increasingly comment on their everyday experience, and the environment around them. These surroundings are most often impacted on by commercial, popular and mediated global cultures. The world is increasingly designed and a place of consumption, impacting on the ideas and materials that artists employ and critique. Through making art that reflects on design (new and used) and consumerism, as an artist I am able to incite conversation, critique and contemplation about the constantly fleeting, hybridised cultural moments we are becoming more and more accustomed to. Zakka as illustrated in Figures 102 and 103 is a way that art, design and consumerism are linked through contemporary design. As seen in Figure 2, the term I coined, “ZakkaART” is used in an attempt to contextualise my practice and contemporary art that references the designed in a process usually from shop (source) to gallery (outcome): Zakkaya - bought, received; Zakka - collected, collated; and ZakkaART - interpreted, used and made into art. Consequently, the branding of my work as ZakkaART was one attempt at cohesion within the mass of influences. Although like the art I create, ZakkaART is a somewhat broad term.

821 McQuilten, Art in Consumer Culture, 209.
Researching a key selection of contemporary artists within this exegesis, gave me an understanding of why they have had global success, ideas which are articulated further in this Chapter. Success is objective, can be based on personal values and is not answerable to one particular way of working. However, success could be considered an important value as an artist because art is a profession, a creative industry whereby recognition can fuel a fulltime creative career — grants, commissions, residencies and exhibitions which all contribute to the sustainability of being a professional practitioner. Artists like Murakami and Hirst, as stated in Chapter One, use popular themes, designed materials and often manufacturing techniques together with savvy tools used in the design and consumer cultures such as marketing and consistent style to create art that is successful — artists and artworks that are popular and recognisable by the public due to their content and recognisable design influenced visuals. This success has enabled them to be professional career artists, many with a “factory” of assistants, trend setters like Warhol and collaborators with design industries, bringing their art to new or a more diverse audience. Knowing what is recognised and what has triumphed in the arts industry enables artists to find their position within the field, their direction and what they are willing to be authentic to their unique approach and to sustain their practice.

I identified a mixture of uniqueness (or “eccentricity”), commitment, confidence, talent, sheer determination and audacity to succeed no matter what. Although the artists’ work I referenced may not be completely “unique” or “new”, they still continue making it — even if it is similar to someone else’s work. They stake the claim to their difference, their right to create, as even a slight difference may be considered enough from an aesthetic point of view. Established artists such as Hirst proclaim their value, individuality and artistry by continual commitment — by doing and persevering and often by the regurgitation of visual motifs popularised through their art. Hirst’s practice, like that of many contemporary artists is happening within a Post-Postmodern epoch when there is a global interpretation of art, materials and ideas. A time when Borriau’s theories of Altermodern, Semionaut and Postproduction are validated through what is seen in contemporary art. It is increasingly difficult to be completely original as there is a long history of art and creativity to be influenced by — the Semionaut (remixing). These “new” renditions or appropriation (simulacrum) by artists (including myself) can be compared to *The Emperor’s New Clothes* (1837), the fictional story by Hans Christian
Anderson — where the viewer is led to believe that the art is real (genuine) or “new”\textsuperscript{822} Such examples include:

> contexts where people are widely acclaimed and admired but where others question whether what they have created is of any value. Modern-day examples might be the highly priced work of conceptual artists or the more avant-guard products of fashion designers.\textsuperscript{823}

Stripped of their intellectualisation (or rhetoric) some contemporary conceptual based artworks may not be considered authentic and may, as a result, be regarded as mere masquerading by the general public.\textsuperscript{824} Also, there is much hype and sensationalism created around artists such as the YBAs which adds to the allure and their long-standing success. The popular (or mediated), especially in the age of social media, is inescapable in the modern world.

But, as this exegesis has discussed, in contemporary life, we are mostly dependent on the manufactured, so we are not necessarily doing the objectifying. We are instead producing within the capacity of what we gather and consume from the designed. This results in what may be described as ‘aura-less objects’ — objects that are mass-produced by industry.\textsuperscript{825} Yet these same objects are given significance by our media saturated culture communicating to us, certain values — an attempt to humanise the manufactured, as the zakka aesthetic does.

So perhaps, by making from the manufactured, making with a ZakkaART style, artists such as myself are not only commenting on our culture of the mediated and manufactured but also we are attempting to rectify: ‘the Alienation, and the ‘Fetishism of Commodities’.\textsuperscript{826} Artists who use the manufactured are thus humanising the object, transforming our relationship with the world. We are attempting to re-individualise the homogeneity that exists in the material world. ZakkaART is one way of enhancing and changing our connections to the manufactured — through the use of new and used objects transforming the everyday (designed) into collected or collectable art.

\textsuperscript{826} MIA, “Encyclopedia of Marxism”.

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247
Gardner associates three virtues to the contemporary era: truth, beauty and goodness. Most appropriate in relation to this exegesis is beauty — an experience of the created, that is nature and the arts. But since our perceptions of beauty have astoundingly changed over time and as technology expands, it is increasingly difficult to have an idealisation of beauty. The sublime is illusive and the ‘young are “unshockable” and become immune to judgement… because they are unable to be alone’. Gardner explains three keys to experiencing beauty, which also could be used in relation to aesthetics and art: 1. Interestingness — must be novel and immediate, not too complicated so it is remembered; 2. Memorable form — something that is remembered and 3. Creates a desire to revisit, giving a pleasant “tingle” — either so amazing or disgusting, but makes you keep on coming back for more.

I have listed Gardner’s ideas on beauty as following on from this exegesis these will help in my art-making progression. To be a “successful” artist I need to create work that stands out from the objects that surround our daily lives, all that is designed and consumed. To summarise, ‘intentionality is the key to being an artist… [the] original not only has to look good but has to embody a new idea.

As with some of the contemporary artists I have discussed, I also comment on or use consumerism in my work and the impacts of an over-abundance of superfluous products (waste). Yet at the same time, I am aware that artists contribute to the culture of consuming. Even though my work is not a production-line product like Koons’s large sculptures, I too encourage the commodification of my art by having it for sale. I am thus asking people to consume, to own artworks, to be used to adorn their environments. I become a part of the art, design, consumerist system, hopefully being authentic enough to avoid the fleeting fashions that are often emphasised in contemporary art.

As an artist, then I am part of a consuming culture, contributing art as commodities. Our material culture contributes to the understanding of the way we live and interact with our world. The individual artist is like an industry, competing with the art that already exists, the next big “thing”, and the hope of finding a viable niche. Constant “newness” or revivals marketed as “new” over-stimulate to the

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828 Ibid.
829 Ibid.
point of saturation, sometimes leaving me paralysed, unable to create.\textsuperscript{831} I interpret art according to the status of artefact, limited editions, where it can be valued and preserved.\textsuperscript{832} Alternatively, I have a fondness for the ephemeral such as food as a material, because this is what I want to repursue in the future, connecting my experiential interests with my art-making and relating these to my interest in sustainability and the nature of objects as different value structures. This can be art that dissolves, disappears, is consumed or disassembled and placed back to where it was collected. This taking, placing and reintegrating can be seen in the salt works of Motio Yamamoto, which once completed and shown are disassembled with the salt being returned to the ocean by the viewers.\textsuperscript{833} That is, to create work that is of little value as an object but of great value as an experience as evident in temporarily placed art such as Tara Donovan’s. Yamamoto and Donovan succeed in giving art as experience — heightened, out of the ordinary experiences, different from daily rituals. I am changeable like the popular consumerist culture I live in — a “nomad / wanderer”.\textsuperscript{834} Ultimately I am working towards giving both a spectacular experience — kinetic art like Ryota Kuwakubo’s art practice or as gesamtwerk and the possibility of generating artefacts to collect — combining my interests into one.

I also question if I can contribute something truly innovative when there is so much creativity and design already. Our culture is excessive. Which idea to follow, which style to embrace? What I can immediately include in my practice are: 1. A reduction in the use of plastic unless reused — align with my values in sustainability and the environment; 2. An increase in the use of waste or the used — upcycling and recycling, mottanai and sustainability; 3. Draw from my lifestyle more to align with my Vegan ethics and 4. Use the principles of ZakkaART.

Many of us now live in cities, urban global societies, constantly bombarded with “stuff” from our consumer environment — there is too much to sieve through. Artists exist who have already done what I may plan to do, but as an artist (in fact as a person in this global media informed culture) I am not going to know every artist in the international community. So like Martin Creed, I continue to make because I have to:

\textsuperscript{831} Also by so much art and creativity being available — visual stimuli from art to advertising, mass media and the Internet.
\textsuperscript{832} I am keenly reminded of the film Summer Hours by Olivier Assayas whereby heirlooms become a burden for following generations whose meaning and relationship to the objects is without nostalgia - whether to throwaway or preserve as artifacts in a museum, away from the context of home and family. Chris Knipp, "Summer Hours", Cinescene, http://www.cinescene.com/knipp/summerhours.htm (2008).
\textsuperscript{834} I am a consumer and an artist and yet it is easier for me to buy a designed commercial object than it is to buy a one-off art piece. This buying comes down to affordability and most often I cannot imagine living with or treasuring something so much so that I will want to keep it forever.
The only thing I feel like I know is that I want to make things... I want to make things because I want to communicate with people, because I want to be loved, because I want to express myself... To me it's emotional... I recognise that I want to make something, and so I try to make something. But then you get to thinking about it and that's where the problems start because you can't help thinking about it, wondering whether it's good or bad... I can't separate the object from the idea and I wouldn't. I find it difficult to separate anything in my head, you know, feelings from thoughts, sensations, you know, it's all just a blur.

Like Creed, as I indicate, it is in my nature to want to create. Whilst I am in the process of making, I am enjoying what I am doing, the materiality, the thinking and being in the present or a sense of experiencing the “zone”. But, at the same time, there is a constant battle and pursuit, deciphering between becoming preoccupied with the art world and knowing whom you are and what you like to do. Ryan McGinness articulates perfectly what I have done and continually need to do:

I went through a process of becoming comfortable with who I am and simply recognising what I like to do. I made a conscious decision to stop trying to make art and to just make the kinds of things I like making and am good at making... I have to constantly remind myself to create the work I like to make, that I'm good at making, and that makes me unique. I have to constantly struggle against falling into any preconceived ideas about what a fine art aesthetic is, and struggle against making stuff that I think looks like art. Instead I struggle to make things that are honest. I'm always trying to pull myself back to me.

I can only conclude that as an artist driven by my industrial environment, by experiences, narratives and by popular culture I am not only critiquing my surroundings but also critiquing designers and their own responses to the created world, that has become the culture of the everyday. I am critiquing myself, my interaction with things and my mediated experiences such as films and music.

Each artist has a style determined by their natural propensity to certain materials and techniques and ways of working together with specific interests. I find it difficult to identify a style in my own work as I have developed a practice that is adaptable and changeable — it is eclectic, like our Post-postmodern world. I am a Semionaut. There is a lack of consistency, or in designer terms, “branding” (which is increasingly prevalent in art like in Koons’s practice, as “marketability”). One question for me is whether to brand or not to brand? I have been considering how to “be” an “artist” for my entire art practice. A pseudonym, or acronym that more succinctly relates to or takes from culture than simply using my name, such as the

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836 The “zone” describes as state of mind whereby everything becomes easy, ‘your actions are effortless, and when your results are up to or even exceed your previous expectations... it is being in the perfect state of mind for a given performing situation, resulting in an optimal level of performance’. Jon Gorrie, Performing in the Zone (Raleigh, NC: Lulu.com: Lulu Press Inc., 2009), 21.
artist duo Snapcat like Snapchat or FriendsWithYou as FWY (freeway), is a prospective consideration that I have had for almost my entire career. Whichever path is taken, I need still to be true to myself. At the same time, I need to ensure that my work is distinguishable from others and that I see it as “art”, whilst including my propensity towards: retro; irony ‘no matter how mass cultural or banal’; being heartfelt, quirky, unusual, contemporary, handmade and nostalgic (“traceability”); having a DIY sensibility; committing to sustainability; telling stories; but most of all demonstrating authenticity in ‘curat[ing] — collect[ing] and gather[ing] objects into museums of curiosities’

This is ZakkaART, art that remixes, comments on and utilises the manufactured, uniting art, design and consumerism to create work that is relatable to by the populace, yet is playful.

In order to gain some momentum I have used the term “ZakkaART” in this exegesis to encompass my interests and style. As identified in the exegesis, my work is in congruence with the Post–postmodern and Altermodern. I have a natural eclecticism and multiplicity (Mis-Design, DesignArt and Micropop), influenced by the local and global (glocalisation) and hybridisation and thus what I aim to take from design and the creative industry for the future is to embrace my diversity, while simultaneously containing it. One way I propose to do this is to treat each exhibition like a collection whereby themes, ideas, materials and methods are brought together to experiment, develop and present pieces before initiating a new series or to use these aspects as a continuation into the next work. I innately work like a designer and a cataloguer — collection by collection.

In recent years I have moved back towards making installation and site-specific works, requiring a materially-based process of experimentation and manipulation of materials, and dependent on the specifics of the surroundings as seen in Bright Bright Rainbow Tent (2007) from Kaleidoscope. My work is an extension of myself — a remixing generalist. By this, I mean it is comprehensive. I am not relegated to working with one medium, technique, distinct style, themes or concept, although some obvious style distinctions and preferences do exist: I remix (eclecticism). My practice includes key visual and aesthetic elements that link, a clear affinity with Pop art and “pop” as play, together with the use of techniques both new and old including technologies and crafts. I am also usually drawn to the readymade, or the

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839 Due to the nature of installation art and site specificity, the way I create has changed to doing scale models or experiments, which are then carried out in the space. This can be highly challenging as a space can change the look of a work. If one is using duplicates of materials, then this all needs to be planned beforehand.
manufactured (as opposed to organic materials), whether bought or collected, new or used. But the way I create is a fluid, experimental, ever-changing process, based on what sways me at the time. These materials influence and help create my style. Also, these aspects relate to ZakkaART and have been formulated into a manifesto or set of general principles for myself as articulated in the Introduction — Figure 4: ZakkaART Proposed Manifesto/Principles may be used as a way of guiding and aiding me to continue in the practice of art-making.

Increasingly I am drawn to installation, kinetic or Relational Aesthetics — work that engages the viewer experientially such as The Tenth Sentiment (2010) by Ryota Kuwakubo, into an experience of the everyday, movement and light. Or art that physically includes the audience in the making, experience or contribution such as Ai Weiwei’s works, the exhibition in the Grand Palais, Paris — Dynamo: A Century of Light and Motion in Art, 1913–2013 (April - July 2013), Hiromi Tango’s art that combines collecting and community as a type of Art Therapy and kinetic pieces such as Clinamen by Celeste Boursier-Mougenot. I enjoy immersive (large-scale) gesamtwurk pieces that transform space with a sense of the spectacular, capturing one’s attention, where the viewer is tempted to interact and is drawn closer to explore the intricacies, experience with many senses. The enchanting works of artists who create entire room experiences include Nike Savvas’s Atomic: Full of Love, Full of Wonder (2005), Yayoi Kusama’s Infinity Mirror Room (2013), Paramodel’s Paramodelic Graffiti (2012), and Jim Lambie’s Zobop (2014). Alternately, I admire work that really challenges one’s perception of the world or the normalcy of the everyday with a sense of play, such as the installation Chromosaturation (1965–2013) by Carlos Cruz-Diez.

I recognise that although my practice does foster “form follows idea” (conceptuality), many of the works produced for this exegesis are more evident of the “idea follows form” variety. That is, these pieces are embedded in a sense of materiality and technique.
To be defined as “contemporary art” as Timms quoted earlier, contemporary art is symbolic and embedded with meaning; for much of contemporary art one has to search through the corresponding text or really analyse the art’s many clues to find the hidden meaning and value of each and every component to ascertain the whole story of the piece. A sense of idealisation, sentimentality or a single symbolic representation as in a “one-liner” or a heart to represent love or even ornamentation is not always highly regarded as being contemporary or having enough rhetoric to be considered innovative and challenging.

Therefore, the change from idea to form in my production component does not only result from previous conceptually based works I have made (a questioning of Duchamp’s idea of “anything goes” or Conceptual art) but also a reaction to contemporary art’s dependence on “the word”. Language as descriptors has become the art rather than the actual artwork itself, as exemplified in the didactic or catalogue essay. Thus, my production component was created to allow the art-making to be as important as the concept but with a sense of wittiness, novelty and transparency.

As alluded to in my Introduction, the questions of authenticity, appropriation, sharing, uniqueness and how to decipher “what is what” from the mass of cultural influences has, for me, created a sense of numbness and confusion, causing a hypersensitivity and constant questioning of: What is art? Where do I fit, if I am an artist? Compounding my thinking is Bourriaud’s statement, that global ‘culture today is a giant anamnesis, an enormous mixture whose principles of selection are very difficult to identify’. Consequently the making of art can be a way of deciphering and sieving through all the influences that we are constantly bombarded with on a daily basis. The exhibitions in my production component show some aspects of my filtering of ideas and cataloguing of materials, creating works that embody my relationship to my globalised and industrialised culture.

There is a pronounced association to zakka, hence I proposed the name “ZakkaART” to underlie the title of this exegesis. Normally used to describe the manufactured, zakka qualities are intrinsic to art such as mine — ‘seeing the savvy in the ordinary and mundane’. Thus ZakkaART — the nexus and remix of art, design and consumerism — suggests art as instilled with meaning, made from or, commenting

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844 The dichotomy here is I am doing the same by writing this exegesis, intellectualizing my practice.
845 Bourriaud, Postproduction Culture As Screenplay, 89.
846 Shoji, "More Than a Consumer Fad".
to the everyday as diagrammatically represented in Figure 104: Connections Between Pop / Mediated Culture, Art, Design and the Everyday (Zakka).

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 104: Connections Between Pop / Mediated Culture, Art, Design and the Everyday (Zakka)**

Binary opposites are over-simplistic. My work is maximal and minimal. It is Pop and Neo–Pop. It is ephemeral and permanent. It is consumption and production. It refers to the natural world and the manufactured world. It is many things. Boundaries overlap and break down. It is a mix of both art and design. My work refers to art that has already taken place, that has become a referential point to validate my work, to make connections and make sure my work is befitting to be labelled “art”. Yet, as an artist of the twenty-first century I am naturally eclectic, not a DJ (music) or video jockey (moving image) but I am an AJ or CJ (art or creative jockey) — a “remixer” of an augmented society (Semionaut in a Postproduction world). I am responsive to an urban, mash-up culture that is recreated in a media-dominated, fashion driven world of objects. We live in a world in which the remix plays a dominant role especially as globalisation continues. My research also shows that remixing can help to develop a world (and art) that progresses beyond Eurocentrism and standardisation (Altermodern). The remix takes from the ‘preexisting’ and reinterprets it for the now as ‘free expression,
dissent and dematerialisation. This is an art world that is contradictory, an industry in which any object defined as “art” can be added to the plethora of stuff already existing. All added into a culture of participation and interactivity. As Andy Warhol once surmised, an ‘artist is somebody who produces things that people don’t need to have’, but makes a difference to how we see and experience the world.

Yet, this remix or “free culture” that I create from and for, is based on cultural layering, on the sharing of stories passed down for generations and altered one after another. Thus even if the artist is not blatantly “copying” or drawing from existing cultural artefacts, as artist Candice Breitz does in her use of music footage, we all take from somewhere. Breitz states, ‘No artist works in a vacuum. Every artist reflects — consciously or not — on what has come before and what is happening parallel to his or her practice’. Thus revision and eclecticism is cyclical and in many ways unavoidable, especially in today’s digital culture which fosters remixing and the acceptance of Postproduction as the composite, a process through which makers use banal and abundant industrially-produced objects as their raw materials, seamlessly merging techniques and processes drawn from art, craft and design to create uniquely hand-made work.

I do not claim to be an expert in defining art and design, but I am aware that, historically, a very clear line existed between the two. It was considered that an artist created with their emotions and soul dictating their hands and the impulses for the usage of the medium to create something unique, not necessarily to sell but to express themselves and possibly add to culture. Yet, today, the art profession has become a multilayered hierarchical system, whereby artists are unknowingly grouped into subgroups or trends, e.g. painters, craftspeople or conceptualists. It is quite easy to move from amateur to professional — a rapid advance that does not tend to happen in many other professions, whereby a proclamation can lead to success.

Art continues to be a highly subjective field and the art world is a complex and captivating system, both ‘escalating and accelerating, appearing to turn so fast —

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849 Navas, Gallagher and Burrough, *Remix Studies*, 70.
850 Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*, 144.
852 Wiggers, *MANUFractured*, 3
853 Elimeliah, “Art vs. Design”
always on the brink of its next obsolescence’ like the globalised culture it is a part of.\textsuperscript{854} The art world is both of the past that was historically bound and established and has given way to socially accepted ‘norms and procedures’ such as that of the creative (and commercial) industries.\textsuperscript{855}

When contemporary experience is ever rationalized through the logic of design; when the word “creativity” is taken as a cognate to the “market”; and when social relations are relentlessly mediated by a formidable visual culture — a culture of the image written large through the peregrinations of global media — the art world as we once knew it begins to lose its singularity and focus, to say little of its exclusivity. From Benjamin to Adorno, Debord to Jameson, we’ve been told of both the promise and the threat of this culture… contemporary art has been increasingly recruited in the service of politics, economics, and civil society… it all seems like so much old-school pluralism, the bad dream of the postmodern that Hal Foster presciently warned against… globalization is materialized within and by contemporary art.\textsuperscript{856}

As Lee suggests, art is increasingly aligned with the commercial, not only in the materials that artists like myself utilise in the making of “art” but also art as an industry. Yet at the same time we acknowledge the mediation between the art world and the “real” world.\textsuperscript{857} As argued in this exegesis and evident in my production component, art, design and consumerism continue to impact on each other as I have sought to demonstrate. These aspects can be seen as being interdependent and cyclical in their relationships as seen in Figure 105: Art, Design & Consumerism, Connections & Cycles. ZakkaART is one such convention that binds and remixes my culture of the popular and everyday.

\textsuperscript{854} Lee, Forgetting the Art World, 2.
\textsuperscript{855} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{856} Ibid. 2-4.
\textsuperscript{857} Ibid. 186
Since this exegesis has taken around ten years to produce, it is self-evident that over that duration my opinions, thinking and responses to my production component and my art practice have changed. This exegesis has done the very thing that I argue that conceptualism is to blame for — the theorising of art into the realm of “intellectual” art whereby the word has become more important than the artwork itself. Although, in my defence, deciphering one’s own art can only help to better connect with one’s art practice — which was the initial intention of this exegesis — as well as to place my practice within the context of contemporary art and cultural theory. Even though this theorising has been done, I am left with a sense of frisson, neither knowing any more clearly what my art is or can be, (as it is constantly changing and since I did the production components so long ago), nor knowing whether to continue to create and contribute to an industry and practice that is so difficult to decipher. I am disillusioned. But this dissatisfaction is also due to my time being preoccupied as an arts professional and educator rather than as a studio practitioner, as is the situation for many artists who must earn a living; and which is only exacerbated by my hesitation in creating more “stuff”.

858 This may be changing though as the art world continues to be heterogeneous and transform at an astounding rate.
To be a successful artist I need not only be creative, innovative and ‘taking advantage of the network(s)’ but also, to be diligent and self-disciplined. So, if I choose to continue as an “artist” then most importantly I need to treat art-making as ‘a way of operating’. That is to be childlike and to “play” — to ‘play with ideas… to explore them’. I need to focus on getting good at what I do and then at some point share and ‘show [the] work’. As Lee states above, I need to be aware of the interlinked relationship of art and life or art, design and consumerism and use the appropriate advantage, whilst focussing on ‘Forgetting the Art World’ and instead getting back to the important activity — creating.

Even though this exegesis has contributed ZakkaART, I still feel I may need to think about what I truly love and narrow down or consolidate my eclectic foci to reflect my inner core values and interests. In doing so I will make the most of my experimental approach, influenced by “everything” around me — where I engage with anything as inspiration for my art. As the artist Nathalie Djurberg helpfully suggests:

… you can do what you want and be completely radical... [use art] as a way of making sense or to understand something... make art for [you] to understand... and looking inwards

It is a way of making art that directs the artist inward to his/her own conceptual and reflective understanding rather than feeling compelled to remain so exteriorly focused on the artwork. This, I believe, is a path to uniqueness and being a “true” uninhibited artist. And, in this context, and as articulated in this exegesis, the nexus of art, design and consumerism has had an empowering effect on the art world. Much contemporary art is, in fact, ‘zakkaART’ or art that is of the everyday and everything; art that has no boundaries but only those wavering ones articulated by the artworld and artists themselves. In the end ‘the winners… are those who can create and can keep creating’ as I hope to do.

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860 John Cleese, Quoted in ibid. 1.
861 Donald Wallace MacKinnon, Quoted in John Cleese, “How to be Creative”, Video. 36mins., April 30, 2015, Uploaded by Justin Halliday. https://youtu.be/PQ0cck7oo4A.
862 Kleon, Show Your Work, 41.
863 Lee, Forgetting the Art World, 2
865 Florida, Rise of the Creative Class, 5.
## Appendices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>PAGE #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art History and Art/Cultural Theory Timeline — 1890–2015</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Art/Cultural Theory Comparisons and Transitions</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kaleidoscope</em> Roomsheet</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Plasticity</em> Roomsheet</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Zakka</em> Roomsheet</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tagged: Celebrity. Change. Commodity.</em> Education Notes</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kaleidoscope</em> Catalogue</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Plasticity</em> Catalogue</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthetic (Linden Innovators 2, 2011) Catalogue (EXTRACT)</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Zakka</em> Catalogue</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# ART HISTORY AND ART/CULTURAL THEORY TIMELINE 1800–2015

**Contemporary Art Theories**
- Minimalism
- Neo-expressionism
- Postmodernism
- Super-flat
- Postproduction
- Semiotics
- Urban art
- Relational Aesthetics

## Post Postmodernism
**1994–**
- **1990's**
  - Neo Pop art

## Postmodernism
**1962–1988**
- **1970’s**
  - Post Pop art
    - Minimal art
    - Conceptual art
  - Pop art
    - Kinetic art
    - Color Field Painting
    - Abstract Expressionism
    - Art Brut (Raw Art)

## Modernism
**1930–1958**
- **1920’s**
  - Pre Pop art
    - Surrealism
    - Constructivism (International)
    - Bauhaus
    - Constructivism (Russian)
    - De Stijl
    - DADA
    - Appropriation art
    - Art Brut
    - Cubism
    - Bloomsbury Group
    - Fauvism
    - Vienna Secession
    - Art Nouveau (1890–1940)
    - Expressionism (1890–1939)
    - Arts & Crafts movement (1882–1914)
    - Romanticism (1800–1830)

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**Note:** These dates may vary slightly depending on which sources are used.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modern (1930s-1950s)</th>
<th>Postmodern (1960s-80s)</th>
<th>Post Postmodern (early 1990s-today)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economics: art market a small scene, few artists, known channels.</td>
<td>Economics: art market expands with growth in demographics in artworld players and growth of commercial art market. More aspiring artists entering the scene, colleges churning out thousands of BFAs/MFAs looking for market validation.</td>
<td>Economics: art market expansion meets decline in recession of the early 90s. Artists relying more on institutional funding, grants, funded shows and festivals, museum purchases. Hierarchy re-established in art market auction business and upper tier galleries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art as heroical struggle with tradition, overcoming tradition but new work understood in context of grand narrative of art and cultural history.</td>
<td>Distrust of metanarratives (Lyotard); suspicion of ideological agendas in &quot;Western Art&quot; paradigms; deconstruction of traditional art media and genres. Rise of feminism and identity politics as challenge to artworld roles and functions of art.</td>
<td>Internationalization and globalization of artworld &quot;industry&quot; also brings global localization, self-inscribed narratives, unresolved identity politics. National and ethnic identity tensions in achieving international standing and market value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of triumphalism in modernism: Greenberg's Hegelian narrative of end-point of art in self-aware, self-critical art genres (painting, sculpture). Supreme goals of painting and sculpture believed to be achieved in modern, self-critical works.</td>
<td>Rejection of old triumphalism and signs of a new triumphalism of movements seen to destroy the illusions of modernism (Pop, minimalism, conceptual art, feminist art, outside art, graffiti art).</td>
<td>An anti-triumphalism triumphalism, a sense of relief or release from grand art-historical problems and struggles, with continuing distrust, and need to ignore, dominant cultures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art as &quot;about&quot; the formal and material problems of a medium (painting, sculpting, etc.) and a commentary on the making and limits of art in a specific medium. Abstraction privileged over representational art.</td>
<td>Adoption of mechanical techniques and commercial image styles, removal of visible artist's &quot;hand,&quot; use of industrial materials. Rise in acceptance of photography and video in &quot;high art&quot; contexts. &quot;Death of painting.&quot;</td>
<td>Continuation of art as embedded in social critique, works that question position and identities, multiplying of media and spaces. Photography, video, installations over painting and traditional sculpture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artists as visionary outsiders needing the art business world for survival and communication of ideas.</td>
<td>Cynical/ironic embrace of art business machine (Warhol), artists as pop stars and celebrities.</td>
<td>Artists as court jesters in the artworld, getting grants, media attention, gallery shows, art buyers, museum exhibitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artists and art begin taking role of religion and myth in secular, materialist world. Many artists identifying with the spiritual or transcendental. Other engaged in political resistance to capitalist economics and class system.</td>
<td>Self-conscious ironization or parody of modernism and accumulated cultural &quot;givens.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clash of discourses and movements in establishing the identity and goals of art and artists. Fragmentation and pluralism.</td>
<td>Art becoming seen as performative acts by artists more than finished objects for business transactions.</td>
<td>End of trajectory of artist as autonomous agent against dominant culture (avant-garde): artists becoming positioned as autonomous and outside critique or accountability to public or marketplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of implicit, recognizable qualities of artworks that distinguish them from non-art objects. Greenberg's sense of modernism, &quot;avant-garde&quot; vs. &quot;kitsch.&quot;</td>
<td>Discourses on &quot;death of art,&quot; &quot;death of painting&quot; etc., as conceived in modernist categories or in grand narratives of cultural history.</td>
<td>Art as institutional flat: what gets positioned as art in the artworld.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inherited faith in content of art, art's values and mission in culture. Surface and depth categories retained.</td>
<td>Style over substance, denial of substance/content, celebration of surface over depth of commercial art market. More aspiring artists entering the scene, colleges churning out thousands of BFAs/MFAs looking for market validation.</td>
<td>Art as performance by artist, not art objects themselves or properties distinguishable in objects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postmodern stylization: pastiche, parody, recombinant styles, use of styles detached from historical or cultural contexts and associations.</td>
<td>Recombinant art from styles and signs of art. Experimentation with new materials, contexts, hybrids, scale.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kaleidoscope Roomsheet

Colour and paper works by Minaxi May
Saturday 27 June to Sunday 12 July 2009, EARLYWORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Confetti and Pom Poms</td>
<td>20kg confetti, jac paper</td>
<td>H302cm x W127cm x D127cm</td>
<td>$5 per small bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Kaleidoscope CMYK</td>
<td>Sticky dots/shapes, glue, Archers Smooth paper</td>
<td>H76cm x W56cm</td>
<td>$275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Kaleidoscope Fluoro Flower</td>
<td>Sticky dots/shapes, glue, Archers Smooth paper</td>
<td>H76cm x W56cm</td>
<td>$275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Kaleidoscope Spin</td>
<td>Sticky dots/shapes, glue, Archers Smooth paper</td>
<td>H76cm x W56cm</td>
<td>$275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Kaleidoscope Sprouting Out</td>
<td>Archers Smooth paper</td>
<td>H76cm x W56cm</td>
<td>$275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Kaleidoscope Merry-Go-Round</td>
<td>Archers Smooth paper</td>
<td>H76cm x W56cm</td>
<td>$275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Kaleidoscope Chroma</td>
<td>Archers Smooth paper</td>
<td>H76cm x W56cm</td>
<td>$275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Kaleidoscope Petite Flora</td>
<td>Archers Smooth paper</td>
<td>H76cm x W56cm</td>
<td>$275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Kaleidoscope Spacey</td>
<td>Archers Smooth paper</td>
<td>H76cm x W56cm</td>
<td>$275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Kaleidoscope Expansion</td>
<td>Archers Smooth paper</td>
<td>H76cm x W56cm</td>
<td>$275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There are more Kaleidoscope works, please ask at front desk.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Taking the Spot for a Walk</td>
<td>MDF, glue, Gesso. Acrylic paint, Sticky dots, Boncrete, Sealer</td>
<td>H96cm x W101cm x D5cm</td>
<td>$1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Spin Me Lollipops of Delectable Colour</td>
<td>Fans + parts, transformer + electricity, recycled CDs, stickers, sticky dots/shapes, glue paste, sealer, wood, glue, paint</td>
<td>H21cm x W215cm x D15cm</td>
<td>$850 set (This work includes the case/shelf, a transformer &amp; 2 extra fan parts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Baker’s Delight</td>
<td>Large patty pans</td>
<td>H8cm x W64cm x D64cm</td>
<td>$180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Sticky Note Rolls</td>
<td>Sticky note paper, glue, recycled card toilet rolls, stainless steel roll holders</td>
<td>H8cm x W16.8cm x D12cm</td>
<td>$125 ea ($750 set of 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Shrooming It</td>
<td>Large &amp; small patty pans</td>
<td>H27.5cm x W43.5cm x D36.5cm</td>
<td>$180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Bright Bright Rainbow Tent</td>
<td>Streamers, foam tape, electric lamp-light</td>
<td>H40cm x W43cm x D43cm</td>
<td>NFS (installation &amp; POA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Spaced Out Confetti Spectrum</td>
<td>MDF, glue, Gesso. Acrylic paint, Sticky dots/shapes, Boncrete, Sealer</td>
<td>H98cm x W103cm x D4cm</td>
<td>$1350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Slinky</td>
<td>Hand-cut card, foam tape, fishing wire</td>
<td>H349cm (length) x W, D10-12cm</td>
<td>$550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Random Acts of Colour and Form</td>
<td>Hand-cut card</td>
<td>H13cm x W38cm x D37cm (variable)</td>
<td>$450 (including a made to measure acrylic case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Collective Play</td>
<td>Sticky dots/shapes on wall</td>
<td>variable</td>
<td>free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Anemones</td>
<td>Memo pads - paper</td>
<td>H12.5cm x W146cm x D144cm (variable)</td>
<td>$80 ea ($350 set)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Plasticity Roomsheet

#### Sales List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>Dawn Gamblen &amp; Minaxi May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Into the Groove</td>
<td>Dawn Gamblen &amp; Minaxi May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthetic Symphony</td>
<td>Dawn Gamblen &amp; Minaxi May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ooze</td>
<td>Dawn Gamblen &amp; Minaxi May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seep</td>
<td>Dawn Gamblen &amp; Minaxi May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spray of Light</td>
<td>Dawn Gamblen &amp; Minaxi May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrap N Roll</td>
<td>Dawn Gamblen &amp; Minaxi May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crazy Suckers</td>
<td>Dawn Gamblen &amp; Minaxi May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poly Saturate</td>
<td>Dawn Gamblen &amp; Minaxi May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixtape Rewind (red &amp; white triptich)</td>
<td>Dawn Gamblen &amp; Minaxi May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Dawn Gamblen &amp; Minaxi May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contoured (red &amp; white)</td>
<td>Minaxi May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(black &amp; white)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrance</td>
<td>Dawn Gamblen &amp; Minaxi May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cascade</td>
<td>Dawn Gamblen &amp; Minaxi May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Window Dressing</td>
<td>Dawn Gamblen &amp; Minaxi May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take-away Totem</td>
<td>Dawn Gamblen &amp; Minaxi May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stretch</td>
<td>Dawn Gamblen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**List of Ingredients**

<p>| 1 | glass perfume bottles, paper memo pad, patty pans | WHITE | $30 |
| 2 | glass jar, silicon pinch bowl, glitter, plastic toy | $30 |
| 3 | glass jar, plastic toys, styrofoam heart, plastic lid, paper towel | $50 |
| 4 | glass lid, synthetic loofah | $50 |
| 5 | glass jar, styrofoam balls, plastic pin holders, sticky dots, wooden skewers | $50 |
| 6 | glass milk bottle, plastic lid, cotton wool, CD, pom-poms, silicon pinch bowl, mirror, eraser | $70 |
| 7 | glass bottle, synthetic pearl beads | NFS |
| 8 | drinking glass, plastic lid, plastic toy, plastic pin holder | $30 |
| 9 | glass lid, plastic lid | $30 |
| 10 | glass perfume bottle, perfume | YELLOW | NFS |
| 11 | glass jar, paint pen, plastic straws | $30 |
| 12 | glass jar, styrofoam ball, rubber balloon, wax | $30 |
| 13 | glass jar, plastic magnets, plastic LED light fitting | $30 |
| 14 | glass jar, plastic and foam ball | $50 |
| 15 | glass jar, plastic lid, wooden matchsticks | $30 |
| 16 | glass milk bottle, plastic beads, wooden skewer, plastic fan propeller | $50 |
| 17 | glass bottle, plastic ruler, plastic pencil case, plastic sewing needles, wooden matchsticks | $50 |
| 18 | glass prayer bottle, plastic toys, plastic lid, plastic swizzle sticks | $30 |
| 19 | glass milk bottle, paper flower, plastic tubing, plastic toy | $70 |
| 20 | glass bottle, plastic bubble tea straws, plastic garland flower | $50 |
| 21 | glass jar, plastic lid, metal cookie cutter, foam and plastic ball, plastic toy eraser | $70 |
| 22 | glass tealight holder, styrofoam ball, paper sticky dots, plastic toys, paper umbrella | $50 |
| 23 | glass jar, plastic utensils, plastic toy eraser | $30 |
| 24 | glass bottle, rubber jar ring, plastic lid, acrylic bead, sticker | $50 |
| 25 | glass lid, styrofoam ball, paper sticky dots, acrylic bead, rubber bouncy ball, plastic toy | $50 |
| 26 | glass tealight holder, nail polish, acrylic bead | $30 |
| 27 | glass lid, rubber jar rings, plastic candy holder | $30 |
| 28 | glass perfume bottle, Gaultier perfume | NFS |
| 29 | acrylic beads, coloured tac | $50 |
| 30 | glass tealight holder, foam red nose, plastic die, paper sticky dots | RED | $30 |
| 31 | glass bottle, plastic lid, plastic container, plastic bead, food colouring, metal drawing pins | $50 |
| 32 | glass tealight holder, foam and plastic hearts | $30 |
| 33 | plastic jelly mould, paper cut-out, glass perfume bottle | NFS |
| 34 | plastic toys, glass jar | $30 |
| 35 | glass prayer bottle, plastic flagging tape, paper streamer, rubber band ball | $50 |
| 36 | glass milk bottle, netting fabric | $50 |
| 37 | glass jar, metal lid, plastic reflectors, plastic lid, PVC tape, acrylic bead | $50 |
| 38 | glass jar, metal lid, plastic plate, plastic straws, plastic beads, plastic toys | PINK | $70 |
| 39 | glass jar, plastic button, plastic toy, plastic toy eraser, candy | $30 |
| 40 | glass jar, ceramic piggy bank, animal rubber band | $30 |
| 41 | glass jar, plastic toy, plastic pen lid | $30 |
| 42 | glass jar, plastic bubble tea straws, plastic bendy straws, pen | $50 |
| 43 | glass milk bottle, flagging tape, synthetic flowers | $50 |
| 44 | glass jar, aluminium decoration | $50 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>glass prayer bottle, eyeshadow, spraypaint, plastic knitting needle, foam makeup sponges</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>glass milk bottle, plastic bag, resin, PVA glue, icing sugar, acrylic pigment</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>glass milk bottle, plastic bag, styrofoam ball, paper sticky dots, wooden toothpicks</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>glass milk bottle, PVA glue, truffle patty-pan</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>glass jar, plastic lid, rubber bouncy ball, synthetic pom-poms, hair elastic, plastic candy holder</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>glass jar, plastic toy, resin, icing sugar, cachous</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>glass perfume bottle, sugar butterflies</td>
<td>NFS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>glass lid, acrylic bead, post-it note origami flower</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>glass jar, plastic lids, plastic toys</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>glass jar, foil candy wrappers, plastic toy, plastic toy eraser</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>glass jar, glitter glue pen</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>glass fish bowl, latex balloon</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>glass prayer bottle, plastic knitting needles, plastic candy holder, post-it note origami</td>
<td>$70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>glass milk bottle, blue masking tape, plastic and metal giant toilet brush</td>
<td>$70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>glass bottle, plastic crazy straw, plastic scented eraser</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>glass tealight holder, plastic toys, rubber bouncy ball</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>glass perfume bottle, MT tape, plastic toy</td>
<td>NFS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>glass lid, plastic toys</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>glass bottle, flagging tape</td>
<td>NFS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>glass milk bottle, plastic bag</td>
<td>NFS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>glass bottle, plastic lid, plastic candy holder, plastic toys, plastic lids</td>
<td>$70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>glass bottle, plastic lid, plastic LED light fitting</td>
<td>NFS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>glass bottle, slime</td>
<td>NFS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>glass bottle, coloured pencil</td>
<td>NFS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>glass jar, stretchy rubber toy</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>glass jar, polystyrene balls, paper sticky dots</td>
<td>NFS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>glass jar, water, food colouring, plastic lid, plastic bubble blower kit</td>
<td>NFS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>drinking glass, plastic toys</td>
<td>NFS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>glass test tube, plastic straws, permanent marker drawing</td>
<td>NFS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>glass vial, synthetic pom-pom</td>
<td>NFS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>glass bottle, plastic toy</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>glass bottle, bubble wrap, PVC tape</td>
<td>NFS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>glass bottle, rubber balloon, plastic toy</td>
<td>NFS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Sweet Kicks Candy Carpet</td>
<td>hundreds &amp; thousands candy, hundreds &amp; thousands biscuits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Colour Candy Trail</td>
<td>hundreds &amp; thousands biscuits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Lolly Discs</td>
<td>MDF board, icing sugar, resin, hundreds &amp; thousands, PVA glue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Iced Tile</td>
<td>MDF board, icing sugar, resin, hundreds &amp; thousands, PVA glue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>Candy Coasters</td>
<td>MDF board, icing sugar, resin, hundreds &amp; thousands, PVA glue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Sweet Singles</td>
<td>hundreds &amp; thousands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>Candy Cosmos</td>
<td>watercolour paper, food dye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>Printed Matter</td>
<td>heavyweight Arches watercolour paper, food dye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>Velcroed Tea Party</td>
<td>chinaware, Velcro, synthetic pom-poms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Fading Castle</td>
<td>glass fish bowl, plastic lid, hundreds &amp; thousands, resin, glue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>Lonely Rook</td>
<td>drinking glass, metal lid, plastic toys, hundreds &amp; thousands, resin, glue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Contributors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributors</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holly Story</td>
<td>Writer, critic, support, editor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jude Bunn</td>
<td>Graphic design, production, support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul O’Connor</td>
<td>Feature writer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacqueline Baker</td>
<td>Multimedia support + assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bexan Honey</td>
<td>Exhibition installation support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>02 Image - Normality to Celebrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Introduction - Mirror Mirror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Image - Its as Easy as One, Two, Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>06 Write Up - One Life To Live - Mr Paul O’Connor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>Interview - The Celeb Informer - Communicating with Bjoxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>Component List - Silhouette Pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-10</td>
<td>Component List - The Tagged Celebrities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Feature - Tagged Tell Tales - Madalyn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Feature - Tagged Tell Tales - Michi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Feature - Tagged Tell Tales - Bjoxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Feature - Tagged Tell Tales - Elisa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Finale - Sprawled on the Wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-19</td>
<td>Special - Hollerscope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Credits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mirror, mirror on the wall who is the fairest of them all?

Standing, looking into the reflective glass in front of me, questioning myself, wondering who is behind the image staring back at me. Who am I? What am I? Who do I want to be?

I don't see looking at myself. I don't always see what I see of me in this world shaped by those around me, so I imagine that I am no longer the person I appear to be. I transform myself.

Enter the characters in my stage act. Bork, Michael, Madonna and Elvis play the game of creating hybrid masks to camouflage me. I am no longer just the self I see but a blend of the people I aspire to be. My stars are all musicians, a second desire that I wish to be. They combine with my identity, creating fusions that are new and familiar for all to see. They allow me to change continually. I am now, different. I am a chameleon, changeable, interesting and adaptable.

I am a hybrid face to be marketed. It is easier to like this face I set eyes on. It is no longer just the Mirror May I am so familiar with, but rather a celebrity who is changeable, groomed, airbrushed and beautified to be as perfect as they can be. I am something that can be used for anything that the advertiser can conceive.

My culture is not what others may assume when they see me. It is all that surrounds me and the media that I embrace and am wholeheartedly embraced by.

Now I am blending with them. I'm self-assured, confident, and successful with the world at my feet. I walk around with my head a little higher, with the spark and feeling of stars in my eyes. I have natural plastic surgery, morphed, Photoshopped until I am fifty percent them and fifty percent me. Am I still me? Am I them? Or a cooler version of me that makes for a more appealing symmetry for the eyes to perceive.

I look at the images of the new personalities and hardly see myself. I identify with these celebrities who continually change themselves visually. Something I also like to experiment with, playing with the constraints of this body that encases my personality.

Celebrity, change, commodity are mediums that are employed by our consuming society. Allowing the tagging of people and objects that popular culture so readily craves and identifies for us to believe.

Now I'm tagged, "mirror, mirror what do you see?"
The cult of the celebrity is a mysterious thing.

For years I held my hands and got up off my knees. A form of prayer, a sexual act, bowed down disobedience or preservation of my existence in the making. I stand and smile. The lights flash and I am transported away in the applause. I'm the Top Of The Pops. All-list glitter. Who will fill the void I leave behind on the star-studded footpath of Hollywood Boulevard?

I've danced and I've sung, there was, still is, a time when I'd do anything just to get my name up in lights. The camera is there capturing every movement, every kiss, every McDonald's temptation (I'm a vegan you know), every red carpet statement. It's a vintage film. Image saturation. I make love to the camera, I work it baby, and make them want me. Can you handle this affair? Enter a world of gossip and speculation. Embellish the story and decorate me. Strike a pose. Whatever the face. I'll be there, hold that front page. That paparazzi at the airport that tried to photograph my child had it coming. Hold that tight. Pose after pose, first class all the way.

There is a superstition that every photograph steals a piece of its subject's soul. Once soulless the physical presence left behind must then be free to absorb all that is effaced. To be refilled, reminted. Besides the endorsements, contracts and money, what is laid before the feet is unfading adornment.

Everyone wants to be famous. Fans give me existence, A form of permanence in this world, the answer is returned. They too survive. To buy and observe. The plane engine roars and I glance out the window and catch my reflection and of course it's looking back at me. Fasten your seat belt. You're coming along for the ride. I'm up, up, and away.

Love me, adore me, and respect me. Worship can lead to envy and envy can lead to imprisonment and emulation. An extreme make-over. An extreme case of Homosexuality. A super me. To keep moving, I'm not going to stop till I've had enough. I am the champion of this stage, screen and video hits. I'm not a master of disguise. I always became me. Change is the key to success and is recognition. Continually go from kitsch to cool and back again. Britney, Justin and Christina weren't even in mouse ears when I began my first transition. Made my first transaction, and began the transformation. Get your tongue ready I'm coming in for that kiss. I'm coming in to love.

When asked where I am born there's a string of possibilities: Neverland, Graceland, Ispand or the band of the Fab Four. My life is derived from part popular myth, partly 'born' out of necessity. The will to survive, to stand out from the pack. Katoosh may be my new regien but MTV is still my tribal land. My skin is black, but can be morphed into any shade.

The colour palette is only limited by the director of photography's skill, the mood I am in or the culture I want to be. I could have settled at being a Bonneton model but that's for the unknown. These on-off claimants of fame, I wanted more. No fifteen minutes for me. I'm Liberace's girlfriend, Priscilla's first love, Elton's confidante and Versace's muse, I'm a product, I'm art, my art is product. Can produce be art? Packaged up but never left on the shelf. I'm a legend, a legacy, a legacy blonde in hipsters and a midriff. A sight to be beheld and be heard. Pump up the volume, I hear the support band kick in. My concert is a sell out.

I pause for a moment and try and recite the entire lyrics of Madonna's Borderline. "Something in the way you love me won't let me be. I don't want to be your prisoner. Do you wonder. My voice is transcendental, void of origin, full of affectations. It's west coast cool with east end cred. I'm the bling of the Bronx, the tv in your tv. Your Prince, your King, your Queen. I'm Minax to the MX. Coca-Cola never tasted so good. I'm disco royalty. M's Jackson if you're naming. I waggle my hip to the internal beat. I shake it like a Polaroid picture. I give it all my all. I've lost the music. I grab my cotton but my bosses get knucked in my Calvin's so I saunter. I take to the stage, I step into the light, and they shout my name.

A girl in the crowd has a t-shirt of me. The image taken five years ago, when I had cropped hair, my Indie phase. My face distorted across her breasts. One eye lost in her cleavage. I've been plied on, stuck to walls, crucified on bedroom doors - the cult of celebrity, the cult out celebrity. From life size to super size my image has been captured, shrunk, stretched and pulled, I am collectible, I am endorsable. Copyrighted.

I'm what you want, what you need. I'm the height of fashion. I am fashion. Dress me up unless me. Secrets you want to know it what it's like, wouldn't you? What it feels like to be a? The chorus kicks it in, I bet she thinks this song is about her. I'm labelled a visionary, a whore, a superstitious, a has-been, an icon, a freak, a someone. A celebrity, I've earned my place. I have been borned and branded. I have lost my reputation, bad good. The Minax first name only. No search for identity needed. My surname replaced with celebrity, I've been tagged with name. It's grabbed by my psyche, and the words appear on a chain around my neck. Fame. I want to live forever. People remember my name. Fame. It's pushing me to the brink of reality and I want to share it with you. Someday. We all have only one life to live, it's all we have to live, if it means making everyone else wants. End stage right. "No photographs please."

Written by Paul O'Conner o/tu/97 toaster and goons poodle by the choir.
HAVING A CELEBRITY AND FAME
Mind-blowingly surreal. 'Blowingly', I don't think that is a word.
Oh well!
WHAT DO YOU WAVE AT THE DOOR?
I get to sing, dress up, play and make a fool out of myself.
THE HAPPIEST MOMENT OF MY LIFE:
When I make music music.
THE SONG THAT DESCRIBES MY LIFE:
Red and Yellow and Green and Blue....
THE MOST IMPORTANT THING I LEARNED:
Honesty
YOUR WORST OBJECT WHOULD:
Paint the town pink and shower the world in a rainbow of colours.
SOMETHING I HAD NO I Datables:
The permanent de-lousing of my chil hairs.
IN APPLETON:
Quirk factor
I WOULD DO MUCH BETTER IN A PLACE:
Everyone was authentically themselves and kind to one another.
THE QUEENS:
In drag
I COULD:
I would eradicate irrational fear and replace it with good cheer
MY BEST UTILITY
Layer upon layer or a cross between a swan and a tutu.
AN UNUSUAL ITEM:
Japanese umbrella boots. Keeps the rain off your shoes.
THE SECRET TO HAPPINESS:
Being yourself no matter what.
AM I AMEMOY:
No one understanding me.
WHEN I WOULD DANCE:
Play some more or be a presenter on Play school
I WILL REMEMBER:
Being topi-topy.
I WOULD DREAD
"Not of this world"
APPEARANCES:
The corner shop owner (and David Hasselhoff)!
MY FAVORITE THING TO DO:
Rhythm, sound, creativity and spontaneity
MOST OF THE TIME:
I am on my own planet
TOMORROW OR NEVER:
The grass is greener, the raindrops are more glittery and the world is enveloped in cotton wool.
Name
Mich

Company
Peter Pan's Forgotten Dreams

Hometown
Neverland

Activity
Dancer, musical genius, actor, make-up artist and professional chameleon

Life Belief
Create a gingerbread house iced with nursery crimes

Star Sign
Gemini

Background
AfroAmerican

Favourite Movies
Dr Jekyll + Mr Hyde
Wizard of Oz

Name
Bjaxx

Company
One Little Indian and a Polar Bear

Hometown
Iceland

Activity
Ventriloquist, singer, quirky creator, actor, show stopper.

Life Belief
Be off the planet and catapult into other worldliness

Star Sign
Sagittarius

Background
IcelandonInuit

Favourite Movies
Tank Girl
Brazil
Name
Elvin

Company
King is Back

Hometown
Graceland

Activity
Rocker, smooth talker, Leg wobbler, actor, swonner and dead or alive.

Life Belief
Rock the roll until you drop.

Starsign
Capricorn

Background
AngloAmericanian

Favourite Movies
Casablanca
Some Like It Hot

Sprawled On the Wall

So where to from here Michi, Maddr, Elvin and Bjaxx? What do we do now we are no longer fantasy but real gems of mass consumerism? Do we sit well at night and wake up to the sounds of the restful suburban sound or do we stand tall and rear the trolley to the check out call?

We have been badgered into badges, slapped into stickers, printed into posters, customised into ads, imprinted into acrylic cut-outs and styled in true magazine fashion.

We, formerly known as Michael, Macouna, Elvis and Bjork have reinvented ourselves with a drop of Michael to transform into the extraordinary awesome foursome. We are no “Plastic Lane” or Bruce or Sheila, we are an identity keen to be seen.

Our life isn’t over until we have a go at being turned into perfume, clothes, fabrics and accessories. The world is our treasure. We are not the heartthrob. We are make believe fantasies, marketed, manipulated and altered into golpots. Changed, commodified and consumed until the market is impregnated with our presence.

We promote ourselves to the next level of transformation. Waiting in the aisle for the sins to sound. No surname for us, we are Michi, Maddr, Elvin and Bjaxx, no longer just real but now hyper real. Remember our names subliminally trained into your brains. Our journey never ends until.........
Libra
As time to set up your party, put on your shirt, slip, dip, sip on the sun cream and bask in the sun. Feel the wind in your hair and the breeze in your face. Focus on the music, let the rhythm of the beats wash through you, and let your heart and soul be lifted by the music. This is the perfect moment to dance and enjoy the sounds of the world around you.

Scorpio
Sound precious pockets of time venerating and insider. Switch on the stereo, choose your music, and let it flow into your ears. Close your eyes and let the sounds wash over you. Feel the rhythm and the melody of the music fill your body.

Sagittarius
You are so fast in the way you move, the way you handle things, the way you think. You are a quick learner and always eager to explore new experiences. This is the perfect time to let your mind wander and let your imagination run wild.

Aquarius
You are so focused and driven, always ready to learn and grow. You are always seeking new experiences and challenges. This is the perfect time to let your mind wander and let your imagination run wild.

Cancer
Food, friends, family... What else could you desire? You are so focused and driven, always ready to learn and grow. You are always seeking new experiences and challenges. This is the perfect time to let your mind wander and let your imagination run wild.

Aries
This is a special time for you. You are so focused and driven, always ready to learn and grow. You are always seeking new experiences and challenges. This is the perfect time to let your mind wander and let your imagination run wild.

Scorpio
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Scorpio
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Lao

Do not be afraid that your decision to go to the beach will erase your fashion sense, and your chances at the first-late weeks of the season. You will not have been feeling talkative for the last two months. Your clothing has become a functional, expendable necessity of your life. 

Woodenman, Eithal and Eta reiny are not going to assess your fashion sense. If they do, they will be oved by your mermaid legs. Do not let the sight of the poolside beauty concern you. You have been a walking talking cliché from the start. Wrinkly, semi-wet hair, and a bathrobe. The poolside beauty is overwhelmed by the pool's beauty. You are not in the mood to find your own fashion sense. 

Taurus

Garden lovers know how to make the most of the weather. Your taste for the outdoors is at its peak. The beauty of the outdoors is enhanced by the company of others. The garden is a place of refuge and relaxation. Your love for the outdoors is matched by your love for the indoors. Your love for nature is matched by your love for human interaction. 

Gemini

You have an important decision to make this month: take the high road or the low road. The high road is a journey of discovery, adventure, and challenge. The low road is a journey of comfort, security, and routine. Your decision will be influenced by your personal values, goals, and aspirations. Choose wisely.

Virgo

You are the perfect time to catch up on what you have been missing this past few months. Spend time with friends, family, and loved ones. Your love for nature is matched by your love for human interaction. Your love for the outdoors is matched by your love for the indoors. Your love for nature is matched by your love for human interaction. Your love for the outdoors is matched by your love for the indoors.
Minaxi May is
TAGGED

An ART ON
THE MOVE
Education
Resource for
teachers and
students

Tagged: Celebrity, Change, Commodity, Education Notes
HOW TO MAKE THE BEST USE OF THIS PACKAGE

This Education Resource has been developed to assist teachers to maximise the educational value and enjoyment of ART ON THE MOVE’s touring exhibition Tagged. It provides background about the artist, her artworks and themes in the exhibition. It also provides project ideas for teachers who wish to extend the experience of Tagged into a classroom project. The resource is designed to be used by teachers and students in conjunction with an exhibition visit or a Smarter than Smoking Education Event.

PLANNING AN EXHIBITION VISIT?

ART ON THE MOVE offers a range of subsidised services:

An artist’s talk and/or activity at your school

The Smarter than Smoking ARTIST ON THE MOVE transports an artist to your school to deliver a slide talk and/or activity.

Transport

The Smarter than Smoking ARTBUS provides subsidised transport to the exhibition and includes a healthy snack for students followed by an enjoyable exhibition-based activity.

An artist’s talk and tour through the exhibition

The Smarter than Smoking ARTIST ON THE MOVE transports an artist to the gallery to guide students through the exhibition.

Contact the Education Officer at ART ON THE MOVE for more information about Education Events for your students in conjunction with this touring exhibition.

Contents

3
4, 5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12

About Tagged
Who is Minaxi May?
Celebrity
Identity
Identity - person as product
Mass media, popular culture, Postmodernism
Plastics
Technology
References & acknowledgements

About
TAGGED

Tagged is an exhibition about the impact of celebrity, change and consumption on individuals.

Exploring the longing to be someone else, someone famous, familiar etc, Minaxi May invents new celebrities using digital morphing techniques.

May enmeshes images of pop culture celebrities Elvir, Bjork, Madonna and Michael Jackson with images of herself to create these new celebrities, which she then re-brands into commodities. These fabricated personalities are objectified, marketed and packaged as in real life branding.

The works in the exhibition are the results of this commodification - life-size acrylic figures, digital videos and wall works that include posters, badges, video postcards and a billboard.

May explores contemporary society’s obsession with fame and celebrity. By using herself in the artworks, she mirrors the feelings of countless consumers who succumb to the ever-present manipulation of media culture.

3
Who is Minaxi May?

Minaxi May is a Mirror Tagged Artist, Designer, and Capricorn Rooster.

How old were you when you realized you were going to be an artist?

I don't know if there was a precise moment... art was what I always did. I have been told, that as an infant I would draw on absolutely everything. I was an animator, muralist, illustrator - you name it! I did it. I oscillated between dreaming of being a performer/musician and a designer of fashion, graphics and products to creating artworks that embraced my need to be destructive and to create commentary on the world I inhabited.

What are the best things about being an artist?

I feel I am so privileged to work in a profession that allows me to be expressive and offers me variability in the activities and ideas I can pursue. Because of the way I work, I am constantly learning - expanding my mind and gaining new skills - which I love. I have been able to experiment in fashion, sound, technology, installation, window display and public art. I think being an artist makes one continually question oneself - it comes with the territory of being in a position where one can freely express and filter their ideas and thoughts into tangible form for themselves and for others to see. There is in this questioning, room for change and growth. I love being an artist in eccentric ways - in the way I look or what I might collect. I can reason that it is part of my expression - I am an 'artist' after all. It is so humbling to be able to create and add expression to the world.

What are the worst things?

The worst is probably not having a reliable income and having to constantly rely on yourself. I often say I have chosen the hardest profession for my sensitive personality. It is difficult to be constantly self-motivated, critical, reliable, focused and disciplined. I often feel miserable. The 'ego' is a pain too as being an Artist does require a lot of concentration on the self, which can sometimes bring up emotions and intersections like competitiveness which requires one to be mindful. It can be really overwhelming and nerve-wracking.

What do you do to relax?

I read magazines, watch DVDs, listen to music, go for walks, cook, create or shop-browse (lol).

Favourite movie?

I don't have a favourite but I love Johnny Depp (who doesn't?), Tim Burton and Baz Luhrmann directed movies, animations especially Pixar or Japanese movies that generally have myths or epics in them, see foreign/melodrama, or are imaginatively edited. I love documentaries about music, art or popular culture such as Rock School or Dogtown and Z-Boys.

Favourite music?

I tend to like a wide variety of music but more to the house/funk/jazz/electronica end. Labels like Mute, Work, Ninja Tune, Verve and Motown. But I also love people like Bjork who push boundaries. It really depends what mood I'm in. I like listening to DJs such as DJ Shadow and Kool.

Did you ever want to be anything other than an artist?

Yes. If I could choose again, I would, well, I am very indecisive - I would have been a musician/performer as I feel in some ways they are more expressive, challenging professions as you, yourself are directly enmeshed in the artwork. Or a designer maybe as then I could create 'new' aesthetics and earn a reliable income. Or even a writer. But I figure, I have the opportunity to be creative, to express myself, the medium I choose, does not have to limit my expression - I can still make music or design - and I have. Whatever I chose would have to be in the arts as otherwise I would not be authentic to whom I am.
When did our obsession with celebrity begin? Was it the advent of the modern mass-media that started it all? Was it the proliferation of visual imagery that began with television in the 1950s?

Andy Warhol in the 1960s was the first visual artist to explore the phenomenon of celebrity.

Warhol also experimented with art techniques and materials that mirrored mass media production in society. The actual making of his artworks using techniques such as screen printing enabled him to mass-produce images thereby questioning the notion of the original, hand made art piece. By producing artworks about celebrities and mass producing their images in a repetitive way, he shows us how we consume our idols and how society allows us to do this. We all have a piece of Marilyn Monroe or Elvis Presley - because we can. Their image is common property - instantly recognized and known.

Mashal May explores this idea of idolizing celebrities and wanting to be someone else in her artwork. Just as Warhol, in the 1960s, utilized the most up-to-the-minute contemporary image making processes (usually reserved for commercial art and advertising production), May uses contemporary image manipulation software to morph herself with these popular celebrities’ images. Warhol also used contemporary synthetic materials such as pvc and plastic reflective surfaces mimicking materials used in space exploration. May, too, explores the use of plastic materials such as Perspex in her artwork.

The celebrities May has chosen to focus on in Tagger - Elvis, Bjork, Madonna and Michael Jackson - have things in common. They are all musicians who have been at the forefront, their appeal is widespread across generations and in their careers, they have cultivated a particular look or image. May treats them as an extension of self, having developed the morphed images out of boredom, the longing to be someone else and the need to be a chameleon.

Identity

Identity is the term used for an individual’s comprehension of him or herself as a discrete, separate entity. It also refers to the capacity for self-reflection and the awareness of self. Identity is related to self-image - a person’s view of him or herself - usually known as personal identity. The term identity relates to self-image, self-esteem and individuality.

Identity theft is the deliberate taking of someone else’s identity (without that person’s permission) for criminal purposes. This has become especially prominent with the information age. In recent times, a number of movies have been made about identity theft and identity loss such as Identity Theft, The Bourne Identity and Memento.

Identity crisis refers to a crisis in a human being’s life which occurs when they lose a sense of who they are, most common in the teenage years. With the nature of the world today, identity crisis is becoming more common as the changing world demands us to constantly redefine ourselves to meet the challenges of rapid development in technology, the global economy and dynamics in local and world politics.

Social identity is individuals labelling of themselves as members of particular groups e.g. subcultures, a social class, an ethnic group.

Online identity is a social identity that network users establish in online communities. Although some people prefer to use their real names online, most Internet users prefer to identify themselves by means of pseudonyms, which reveal varying amounts of personally identifiable information. In some online contexts e.g. multiplayer online games, users can represent themselves visually by choosing an avatar; an icon-sized graphic image.
Identity

Since the 1960s, and the beginning of the mass media age, celebrities have been commodified and their identities made popular and available. Image and media identity is everything. For this reason, celebrities such as Madonna constantly try to rebrand themselves so they can continue to appeal to their audience. Michael Jackson has taken this to extremes, completely altering his physical appearance so as to appear as another person - although some would say his appearance is now something other than human.

Merchandising is one of the ways celebrities’ images become highly familiar with audiences - T-shirts, posters, handbags, ties, badges, coffee mugs, fan magazines etc. Minasi May satirizes this phenomenon in Tagged through presenting much of the work in the form of merchandising objects. She explores ideas of self through morphing elements of her physical image with the images of celebrities in the objects.

Although we have now emerged from the post modern era, it is generally thought that Post Modernism and the beginnings of the digital/information/visual age occurred at the same time. Tied in with this was the increased interest in popular culture in the 1960s, leading ultimately to a debate between high art and more popular forms of kitsch and folk art.

This interest in popular culture has prevailed and the nature of the visual arts in today’s society has changed to include mass media, fine art, popular culture and advertising images. There is a crossover between high and popular cultural forms and an emphasis on new technologies.

As the distinction between high art and popular culture are blurred, imagery from anywhere has the potential to be used by artists to present their messages. Art-making now involves the freedom for artists to refer to any source, be it cultural, historical, popular culture, fine art, literary or the mass media.

Mass Media

Tagged is an exhibition that deals with post modern concerns. It is founded on popular culture and the artworks in the show are created using new materials and current practices such as digital manipulation, installation and video. In Tagged, Minasi May looks at the way the media makes icons of celebrities, packaging and commodifying them for general consumption by society. Through her work May critiques our obsession with celebrity, change and consumerism, ironically using new materials and the processes of consumer society such as printing, merchandising and large scale advertising.

Popular Culture

Artists are no longer bound by the requirements of traditional art disciplines and visual arts works are no longer seen as objects of wonder and contemplation - art can be changing, impermanent and found in areas not traditionally designed for it.
Plastics PVC Synthetics Mirror

Mirax May loves plastics and the nature of other new, highly sophisticated materials being used in industry today. She is interested in the way they are loaded with meaning – for example, shiny, reflective surfaces are a symbol of urbanization. Reflections are signs of the times and reflective materials allow us to see ourselves – we constantly catch glimpses of ourselves as we pass through the urban environment.

Project Ideas - Plastics

Secondary
Create a piece of sculpture made entirely from new, synthetic media, reflecting aspects of the urban environment. Begin with drawing and photographing the built environment.
Consider - buildings, road signs, vehicles, reflections, machinery, scaffolding, noise, slick interiors, neon signs, graffiti, public art.

Primary
'Crazy Self Placements' - Begin with a photograph of yourself imposed into the Adobe Photoshop program. Perform simple image manipulation commands such as distortion filters and colour adjustments. Reverse final image then print out onto adhesive inkjet film (available from office suppliers) and attach to the underside of a piece of perspex. If perspex and adhesive film is too expensive, this can simply be done by laminating a good quality print.

In today’s society, computers create new environments in which time is cut and pasted together in ways impossible in lived experience. This allows contemporary artists to explore further dimensions in their work.

1960s American Pop artist Andy Warhol was fascinated by plastic, a material that really came to the fore in the 1950s and 60s with the advent of mass production and the beginnings of space exploration. He looked plastic; he had undergone plastic surgery; he launched a road show called The Exploding Plastic Inevitable, and he used plastics in his artwork e.g. in his work Silver Clouds, 1966, which was an installation of floating helium balloons made of metallic polyester film.

Warhol’s artwork reflected both the positive and negative aspects of plastics; however, he managed to make even the negative i.e. the kit, disposable and banal seem appealing. His work oozed artificiality, sameness, repetition and mass production and he was known to express a love of synthetics and ordinary consumer merchandise.

Andy Warhol happily endorsed the vision of a plasticised world, where the natural finally gave way to the artificial, the lasting gave way to the fashionable and the idea of a single hand made art object gave way to the mass produced consumer product.

All of the artworks in Tagged are made from synthetic materials, from the digitally printed posters to the large vinyl billboard, plastic coated badges and life size (Mary's size) printed acrylic silhouette cutouts. In addition, May uses contemporary processes to make her artworks, working with computer software such as Adobe Photoshop and Morphous (image morphing program) to produce her imagery. May's badges, vinyl billboard and acrylic cut-outs have been commercially made using modern industrial processes.

In today’s society, computers create new environments in which time is cut and pasted together in ways impossible in lived experience. This allows contemporary artists to explore further dimensions in their work.

Mirax May has used the software program Morphous to create her morphed images in Tagged. This program is readily available for download on the net at a reasonable price:

www.morphoussoftware.net

The program allows for the creation of animated sequences, morphing one face (human or otherwise) with another. Adobe Photoshop can be used with the resulting images to alter them up.

Morphous would be a great software program to purchase for the art classroom.

283
References


http://www.morpheussoftware.com.au

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ART ON THE MOVE
6th Carbon Court
Osborne Park WA 6017
PO Box 1333
Osborne Park Delivery Centre
Osborne Park WA 6919
Telephone: (08) 9242 7887
Facsimile: (08) 9242 7878
Email: artmoves@artonthemove.com.au
Web: www.artonthemove.com.au
A memory of clutching a kaleidoscope in my sweaty palm as a kid is still vivid. As colour fractured and bloomed, the little dodgy cardboard tube shaken furiously, allowed everything to change, to appear as new, again and again. The word’s Greek origins are ‘beautiful, form, view,’ providing a fitting introduction to the work to be found in this exhibition, and an opposite metaphor for Minaxi May’s broader inquiry. Glosey, bright, tactile things, like the Pop artists before her, May exists in the materiality of the manufactured world around her, simultaneously exciting its tightly sprung symbolism, and the drives and desires that underpin our relationship with it. Her tangible pleasure in the colour and form surrounding her is reworked, shaken ... with the world emerging as new.

The works here are the culmination of an experiment that began in 2006 with May conducting a residency at Sydney’s Gunnsbury Studios. Away from her studio and in an effort to avoid the cross-Nielson’s trap of heavy work home, she cast her eye around local stations to see what might spring forth. Using a wall of her new working space as a canvas, a ‘container’, the result, Playtime, emerged as a hubbub of work exploring colour and pattern – paintings using oil monoprints, collage, peg sculptures, and the humble sticker doll arranged on 18x15cm cartridge paper in ephemeral geometries and lyrical patterns, popping and fizzing in fluorescent and sherbert tones. The self-enforced parameters of this incubus forced a new way of working for May, restricting her access to the wide range of media she regularly utilises, and back home, conducting another residency at the Fremantle Arts Centre, she continued the experiment.

Kaleidoscope is the latest incarnation of the project. Material has been restricted to colour in ready-made tones and everyday items manufactured from paper, purchased off the shelf. What is left is a low-fi exploration into form, colour and pattern, with material left largely raw. Conjoining the historical methodologies of Colour Field and Op Art movements or contemporary artists Cathy Blanchflower, John Nixon and Matthew Johnson, the meditation disentangles the power of colour phenomena and pattern, with simple rules of reduction and composition. But May’s works also remain rooted with their everyday connotations, and in this way stay indicative of her wider practice – items continuing to dialogue with the external world, reflecting the way she engages with the everyday.

A slinky-like cardboard sculpture veers into the air, layered spheres causing tiny individual spatial inventions, perilously balancing like Zaha Hadid bridge, brazenly inclining into space. As each circle repeats itself in different shades, shadows fall upon neighbours, and

Spin Me Lollipops of Dedicated Colour
Fut, styxdy, CDX, down all thins, up past & past
the effect is one of rich composite colour zones. The crinkly edges of hundreds of party cake pins stacked together (a nod to May’s obsession with cooking) fuse into each other, bleeding colour into a vast tonal range, enabled from an original combination of five basic colours: red, yellow, blue, green and pink. The intricate patterns that emerge are delicate, with the soft edges of the material giving the form a feeling of fluidity — a subtle, rainbow, lei.

Rustic little tatty-coloured streamers criss-cross each other like flags or liquorice strips, the intersection of lines creating an optical mixture of vivid colour. The colourful effect is one of bold complexity, while up close, the paper is cheap and colours are basic. A burrowing swell of confetti settling in a corner visually buzzes and hums like the end of a big night, loose paper shards propping against each other at different angles, an organic asymmetry that exists like traces of past activity. Another scattering of random shapes, appear as the cardboard effluvia from the Slinky work, reflecting the cyclical and investigational relationship with material that positions this experiment.

Deceptively simple, the works tease perception as the viewer treads a path around the gallery space (aptly a design space, referencing the line-up that May feels with design). Positioned throughout the room in various nooks and corners, peeping up and out, works evoke the playful approach to composition that they have been borne of. May’s process is visible in the hand-cut elements, the use of materials and in the interaction with the space — the trajectory of reworking materials from stationary shop to studio, to gallery is almost tangible. And this is May’s ability — to rework: shake; rearrange, the world around her.

A kaleidoscope is a geometric equation, of light, mirrors and little shiny objects — a formula that written out in black and white, just doesn’t explain the sawed-off-palmed magic that imbues it. With a turn of the tube, everything can look different, as can paper pulled from a stationer’s shelf.

Nyanda Smith
SELECTED QUALIFICATIONS
2006 - PhD, Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, Macquarie University
1999-07 - Master of Arts - Art Therapy, Edith Cowan University
1997 - Bachelor of Arts - Visual Arts, Curtin University of Technology

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS
2008 - Etwa (performance), outdoor video projection program, Campbelltown Arts Centre, NSW
2000 - Kaleidoscopic Shadowbox Gallery, South Yarra
2006 - Installation, Gallery Studio (above Alkemade), Redcliffs, SA
2004 - Installation, Fremantle Arts Centre, Fremantle
2004 - Installation, Fremantle Arts Centre, Fremantle
2001 - Installation, Fremantle Arts Centre, Fremantle

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS
2009 - Luminous 2009: Exhibition, Old Bank Building, Minarets Art Award, City of Armadale Administration Centre, Armadale
2008 - Silver Atrium 25, Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, Fremantle
2007 - Music Makes The People Come Together, Lake Macquarie City Gallery, Newcastle, NSW
2004 - Beauty of Books, Fremantle Arts Centre, Fremantle
2004 - Ship To Shore, Perth International Arts Festival Program 2004, Fremantle Arts Centre, Fremantle
2003 - Sydney Biennale. Collectors Art, Artbank Shopping Centre, Sydney
2002 - Perth Centre, WA, Art Gallery, Fremantle
2000 - Australian Body, Fremantle Art Centre, Fremantle
2000 - After Dark, Fremantle Art Centre, Fremantle
2000 - The Leg, Fremantle Fashion Festival, Market Street, Fremantle
1999 - SuperSaturated, Fremantle Art Centre, Fremantle
1999 - The Open Exhibition, Fremantle Art Centre, Fremantle
1999 - Women Working For Women, MICA, Fremantle

COLLECTIONS
Fremantle Visitors, City of Fremantle Art Collection, Fremantle Art Centre, Fremantle

MOBILE: 0449 311 300 EMAIL: mmn@minaximay.com WEBSITE: www.minaximay.com
Earlybird Shop 120 South Terrace, South Fremantle 6162, WA

Every show is an expression of process and comes together through the efforts of many individuals. Special thanks to an amazing crew of people who have contributed to the promotion of Kaleidoscope: Kim Enright, Judy Burns, Olga Grills, Dawn Densmore, Pat Wollin, Rennels Coon, Kim Rendleman, Rhonda Smith, Judith White, Tamara Grant, and all the people at the Art Centre. A huge thank you to everyone, Dave & Chris at RJ Sedge Furniture, Bridget Mckay & Hopa Art & Fremantle Arts Centre & their Artistic Director, and everyone who supported the artists in Residencies Program. Thanks also to friends, family and even colleagues including PICA & Awesome Arts for their constant support, patience, and conversation.

Cover: Silky, cardboard, wire and tape
Plasticity

Since its invention in the mid-nineteenth century, plastic has become one of the most ubiquitous materials on earth. This is partly because the term actually refers to a diverse family of materials incorporating celluloid, vinyl, acrylic, nylon, polystyrene, polyester, polyethylene, and others, each with their distinct chemical makeup and physical properties. Despite this diversity, all plastics are suited to mass-production, and throughout the twentieth century became synonymous with modernity, convenience and low cost. Upon its initial discovery plastic was immediately employed as a substitute for more esteemed materials (its earliest applications saw it utilised for buttons and knife handles in place of horn, and for brilliant balls instead of ivory). Incongruously tying it to mass-culture and the everyday. It is therefore not surprising that it has attracted the attention of Dawn Gamblin and Minna May, two artists known for utilising non-heroic materials to poetic effect.

Dawn Gamblin creates sculptures and installations from utilitarian objects such as light-globes, paperclips, scissors and fishing line. Such commonplace materials are elegantly arranged into larger forms, transcending their humble application so as to lend them almost mystical import. She has created a hovering protective circle from light globes, ghostly apparitions from fishing line and  fly screens, and a text of seemingly orthodox hieroglyphics out of spilt jigs. Her frequent use of multiples reflects an obsession with breaking forms down into smaller components (arranging a pocket of alphabet pasta into individual letters, or pixelating the view into her studio by packing the doorway with open-ended boxes) or building them up (as in her most spectacular work, Support for the Ordinary, a Doric column created from 35,512 suspended paperclips). Her works typically reflect a cleverness that makes them highly engaging to audiences in the gallery, but they are always executed with the lightest of touches.

In comparison to Gamblin’s well-mannered creations May’s works take a more exuberant approach in keeping with her fascination with the aesthetics of popular culture. Her works are generally highly coloured, with the glossy sheen of magazine and advertising imagery. A key body of previous work explored the phenomenon of celebrity and her relationship to it—the processes of longing, identification, and desire that exist between the celebrity and the fan. For other exhibitions she has taken the stuff of the cute, kitch, and colourful and explored their formal application through meticulous arrangement and display. As with Gamblin’s practice, such works are capable of inspiring a sense of wander from the simplest of means—a pile of coloured cardboard cut-outs, a rainbow sausage of stacked party-pan liners, or a floor carpeted with 120 kg of 100s and 1000s—in some of her most effective and minimal installations.

The Plasticity works were developed during an eight-month residency at Fremantle Arts Centre, the collaborative nature of the project allowing Gamblin and May to push their investigation to a scale not previously realised. Created from a combination of new and recycled plastics, the works draw on the aesthetic of mass production and commodification—a visual language we are
all well-versed in — playing upon the basic delight we experience as viewers and consumers when confronted by multiples, or the conglomeration of coloured objects into a spectrum. In keeping with the historical precedent of their chosen material, the artists have thrown themselves wholeheartedly into the realms of capitalist exuberance and its connotations of affluence and domestic bliss, even producing a cheerful "welcome" mat for the entrance to the gallery.

But there is a darker side to their investigation as well, an awareness that we are all beholden to this material, whether we like it or not. As Gamblen and May themselves note in their artists' statement:

The ubiquitous nature of plastic is very apparent in our modern industrial world. Even if an object's external surfaces are not made of plastic there may still be plastic embedded into the internal parts, meaning that a meeting with this omnipresent material is unavoidable for most of us.

Various common plastics have been linked (admittedly, often inexcusively) to the development of cancer, birth defects, deafness, blindness, tumours, diabetes, and the early onset of puberty, as well as immune system, skin, respiratory, and liver dysfunction. Furthermore, our awareness of the ecological and economic impact of this largely non-biodegradable derivative of oil, coal and gas cannot help but underpin its functionality. Gamblen and May's works expose a similar nagging disquiet. One of the first objects that viewers will encounter is an oversized roll of 'Bubble Wrap' created from crushed plastic drinking cups. The work confounds readings of protection and destruction, practicality and waste. Others seem to distort nature, reading as bizarre chimera of vegetal or marine forms. Indeed, the more one spends with these works, the more perverse they become, seeming to bubble out of gaps in the architecture, seep insidiously over the floor, send tendrils probing across the room or plug up voids in the exhibition space. The Plastics works therefore subtly threaten the viewer as much as they delight and fascinate, calling into question our relationship to a material to which we are inextricably bound.

Andrew Nicholls
July, 2010

Andrew Nicholls is an artist, writer and curator based in Perth, Western Australia.

Above:
Info the Groove (detail) — bubble tea straws, tape

This page, left to right:
Mixtape Rewind (detail) — electrical tape
Next page:
Mixtape Rewind (all - detail) — electrical tape
Previous page, left to right:
Mixtape Rewind (Primary) – Red, Blue, Yellow – electrical tape
Cassette (Red, Black, Yellow) – electrical tape, wood

This page:
Mixtape Rewind (Triptych) – electrical tape

This page, left to right:
Spray of light – plastic spray can lid, HOF, acrylic paint, flood lights
Window Dressing – High density Polyethylene, take-away carton, plastic film, Jar paper
Thank You

Dawn and Minaxi would like to thank the following people:

Phil Gambian and Jacqueline Baker for their support. Their unremitting technical and installation assistance made setting up Plasticity a “breeze”.

Dan Duggan and Kanato Otsuki for their collection and supply of reusable plastic materials.

Andrew Nichols for his eloquent writing about our processes and the context of this exhibition in the catalogue.

Jude Bunn, Nikki Stringer and Moa Jackson for their assistance with catering for the opening night celebration.

Leigh Robb, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA) curator, for generously contributing her time to facilitate conversations about Plasticity as part of the artists’ talks.

Fremantle Arts Centre (FAC) and their Artist in Residence program. In particular Bevan Honey, Found staff and the Administration. The residency was a rewarding experience that enabled us to have studio space in which to experiment, collaborate and develop our practices for Plasticity.

Most importantly to the City of Melville’s Heathcote Museum and Art Gallery personnel for giving us the opportunity to exhibit. Especially Soula veryadiler and Claire Bushby for their assistance in installing Plasticity.
The Innovators series of exhibitions at Linden Centre for Contemporary Art are unique events. In each instalment of the series, several artists of diverse and divergent practise are selected on the merit of their proposals and brought together by a sympathetic approach to concept and/or execution. Once selected, each artist is offered technical, curatorial, marketing and financial assistance to present new work in an environment that encourages risk and experimentation. Innovators 2 presents works that, when viewed collectively, addresses themes of excess, materiality and colour.

*Burning Up* by Kristen Phillips takes its title from a Madonna song of 1983. Made of bronze, her intricately detailed sculptures contain multiple motifs including jewellery, floral patterns and fruit. Sometimes the amalgamation of these objects renders them difficult to decipher as they merge into an almost liquid mass. And when displayed on day-glo pink plinths the eye is even further perplexed. The result is an optical excess, in which Phillips references Dutch still life paintings. Her 1980s colour schemes and design histories that exemplify a consumer driven morass inherent in our contemporary lives. But in their materiality, Phillips has made the drudgery so alluring and bespoke, that she has ironically created another object to be desired.

Like Phillips’ bronze works, the forms that make up Naomi Troski’s *Slow Haze* are difficult to define. Composed of a white synthetic lattice suspended by rope, Troski’s amorphous forms billow throughout Gallery 3. As you move around the room, in order to establish the optimum viewing angle to decode the ebb and flow of the plastic and rope structure, you become acutely aware of how much you are looking through the object, rather than squarely at it. Slowly, the subject becomes as much about our relationship to the object in space as it is about the object alone. And in a rare feat of alchemy, Troski produces an organic shape that echoes the vapour of a low cloud from the synthetic form of a plastic lattice.

In *Minna May & Dawn Gamblen’s* *Installation Synthetic*, material becomes subject. Composed of hundreds of rainbow coloured bouncy straws, the artist duo have assembled an installation from readily available materials. It shows once again that art objects need not be made, rather just recognised (as Duchamp readymades) and repositioned in the gallery. While one could detect undertones of commentary about consumerism and waste in *Synthetic*, May & Gamblen seem more concerned by the formal qualities of plastic: its durability, myriad colour and identical forms recontextualised into an aesthetically alluring installation.

There is something fantastical in Valentina Palonen’s *Imagining New Colours*. In the confines of Gallery 5 she has created a room of curiosity, intrigue and wonderment from everyday materials such as polyurethane foam, resin and ribbon. The title work appears as a synthetic, though strangely organic, globular pink, yellow and blue form with human feet protruding out. Its egg shape suggests a crouched figure cocooned within, though there is an inherent ambiguity between a living organism awaiting metamorphosis or an expired specimen likely to be found in a science or anatomy museum. The trolley on which the figure sits suggests the latter, as does the presentation of Palonen’s other ‘specimens’ on shelves and hooks in the gallery space that transforms it into a storage room for the exotic, hidden and unfamiliar.

Elaine Miles also explores ambiguity in *Indoor/Outdoor*. Part performance and part static exhibit, it consists of video and installation works alongside the artist’s occasional intervention with objects in the exhibition space. Window display cabinets offer a domestic context within the gallery to exhibit the discarded household objects the artist has collected over several years and provokes thought of quotidian experience and collective memory. On interacting with Miles’ evolving installation and performance, one’s focus is directed toward the transition of everyday objects in our indoor (private) and outdoor (public) lives.

There is something hidden in *Unfolded* by Kirra Jamison. Her intricately crafted works on paper made with gouache, acrylic, pen, vinyl, watercolour and ink seem to compile fragments of a broader narrative that is skewed by repetition and absence. The multiple sheets butted up to each other on the wall appear like a book unbound and the imagination runs wild while the eye can find no anchor for the image in space, as each exuberant collaged colour competes for the viewers attention. And the mind further races as a result of the plastic representation of the organic plant-like forms.

Ultimately, one detects in Jamison’s work that despite the non-linear narrative drawn from page to page, a transformation seems to be occurring, and, like creeping ivy, elements of each image begin to interlock and fuse. Similar sentiments can be formed about the diverse projects presented in Innovators 2, in which themes of excess, materiality and colour proliferate.

Trent Walters
Linden Innovators 2
25 June–24 July 2011

Dawn Gamblen & Minaxi May Synthetic
Kirra Jamison Love Me Two Times
Elaine Miles Indoor/Outdoor
Valentina Palonen Imagining New Colours
Kristen Phillips Burning Up
Naomi Troski Slow Haze

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Zakka ♥

MINAXI MAY
25 June – 7 July 2012

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Paper Mountain Co-Directors
Renee Coles
Anna Dunnill
Steve Genovese
Amber Harries
Joanna Sulkowski.

——

Paper Mountain is on Noongar land.

Upstairs, 267 William St, Northbridge
info@papermountain.org.au
papermountain.org.au

Essay written by Anna Dunnill
Photography by Jarrad Seng
Design by Desmond Tan
1. Here’s where it started. Minaxi’s friend was digging in the garden of his Mosman Park rental when his spade hit something solid. He scraped away the dirt and wedged his fingers underneath it, and it was an old glass bottle. When he started digging again, there was another right beside it. He dug and dug and in the end he unearthed a hundred of them, buried there under the soil.
2. This is what happens, eventually, to the detritus of our lives.

3. The word ‘Zakka’ means ‘many things’. Specifically: life-improving things. Not as in vaccines or free universities, but as in stationery, cutlery, toys, plastic bags, food; objects with very specific functions. It also means: kitsch, cute, handcrafted, pop. Objects that make your life better both through function and through design.
4. Minaxi May takes these objects, these glorified tools, and reimagines them. 76 assemblages called Handpicked & Sorted line the ledge of the gallery wall. With a colour palette lifted from hundreds-and-thousands, the assemblages march through the food-dye spectrum: white, yellow, orange, red, pink, blue, green.

5. The materials list includes icing sugar, foam balls, beads, coloured tack, stickers, washi tape, plastic toys, hair elastics, scented erasers and drinking straws. Everyday objects are stripped of their raisons d’être. Absurd and beautiful, these works drift between art, design and utility, taking in all three, settling on none.
6. Hundreds-&-thousands are a processed sugar rainbow. They have one purpose and that purpose is Life Improvement. They are a moment of colourful excess. They are pure design.

7. Sweet Kicks Candy Carpet (2012) is a floor installation resembling a hall runner. Stretched down the middle of the gallery, it’s a long thin carpet of densely packed hundreds-and-thousands, edged in hundreds-and-thousands biscuits, those ones with the glazed pink icing and the coloured speckles. Opposite the assemblages, a hundred-odd of the same biscuits are glued end-to-end, like a strip of molding on a wall.
8. Alongside, opposite the spectrum of bottled assemblages, hang three monoprints produced with hundreds-and-thousands on paper. The food dyes burst into a bright cosmos, each coloured speck - each hundred, each thousand - clearly visible.

9. The neat biscuit edges of the candy carpet; the evenly-spaced bottles and jars; the edges of the paper. Without them, the bursts of kitsch and colour might explode outwards, envelop the entire gallery, and beyond. Contained, given shape, they hold themselves together. Every tiny element balanced on the next, precarious but still.
10. Someone dug up the bottles, and cleaned them up, and gave them to Minaxi. This is what happens to the detritus of our lives. Unearthed, cleaned, and now they’re here, dipped and wrapped and drawn upon, filled with candy and drinking straws and coloured paper and scented erasers. These objects are reinvented, made new. Linked unexpectedly with things they’d never normally sit beside. Telling new stories.
List of works

Front Cover: #62 Dino Jenga—glass lid, plastic toys
P3-5, P8, P10-11, & covers: Handpicked & Sorted series
P3: #8 Resting Rooster—drinking glass, plastic lid, plastic toy, plastic pin holder
P4: #18 Bells On Top—glass prayer bottle, plastic toys, plastic lid, plastic swizzle sticks
P5: Top: #23 Peering—glass jar, plastic utensils, plastic toy eraser
P5 Bottom: #31 Balancing Act—glass jar, plastic lid, metal cookie cutter, foam and plastic ball
P6 & 7: Exhibition view

Shelf: 1-77 Handpicked & Sorted series
Back: #87 Fading Castle—glass fishbowl, plastic lid, 100s & 1000s candy, resin, glue, 245 x 210 x 210mm
Back: #88 Lonely Rook—drinking glass, metal lid, plastic toys, 100s & 1000s candy, resin, glue, 92 x 90 x 90mm
Floor: #78 Sweet Kicks Candy Carpet—100s & 1000s candy, Hundreds & Thousands biscuits, 6100 x 880 x 4mm
Top: Red view

#32 I Heart You—glass tealight holder, foam and plastic hearts
#33 Moulding Our Way—glass perfume bottle, plastic jelly mould, paper cut-out
#34 Reddy or Not—glass jar, plastic toys
#35 Wrapped—glass prayer bottle, plastic flagging tape, paper streamer, rubber band ball
#36 Mashed Up—glass milk bottle, netting fabric
#37 Reflected—glass jar, metal lid, plastic reflectors, plastic lid, PVC tape, acrylic bead

P8 Bottom: #38 Rabbit in a Dome—glass jar, metal lid, plastic plate, plastic straws, plastic beads, plastic toys
P9 Left to Right:
#79 Colourful Tree, Hundreds & Thousands biscuits, 10610 x 40 x 12mm
#80 Lolly Discs—MDF board, icing sugar, resin, 100s & 1000s candy, PVA glue, 90 x 90 x 3mm each
#81 Lolly Discs—MDF board, icing sugar, resin, 100s & 1000s candy, PVA glue, 90 x 90 x 3mm each
#81 Iced Tile—MDF board, icing sugar, resin, Hundreds & Thousands biscuits, PVA glue, 48 x 45 x 8mm
#82 Candy Coasters, 100s & 1000s candy, PVA glue, MDF board, icing sugar, resin, 91 x 111 x 3mm each
P10: #41 My Little Pritsy Unicorn—glass jar, plastic toy, plastic pen lid
P11: #72 Banded Green—drinking glass, plastic toys
Back Cover: #60 Quacking Around—glass tealight holder, plastic toys, rubber bouncy ball
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE #</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>A Nexus Between Art, design &amp; Consumerism. Image by Minaxi May</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Zakka – Zakka – Zakka ART. Image by Minaxi May</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>ZakkaART: Diagram of relationships and interconnections. Image by Minaxi May</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>ZakkaART Proposed Manifesto/Principles. Image by Minaxi May</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Now You See Me. Photographed by Pascal Veyradier</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Multiple Choice. Photographed by Pascal Veyradier</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Sil-who-utte – Bjaxx and Elvin. Photographed by Pascal Veyradier</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>That Was Then, This is Now. Photographed by Minaxi May</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Tagged: C.C.C. Catalogue. Designed by Glow Studios</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Morphing Process. Digital image by Minaxi May</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Good Luck Fishy. Photographed by Minaxi May</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Synthetic – room installation. Photographed by Dean McCourtney</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Three Types of Creatives. Image by Minaxi May</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Sticky Note Rolls. Photographed by Minaxi May</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Silky – installation. Photographed by Minaxi May</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Shrooming It. Photographed by Minaxi May</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Confetti and Pom Poms. Photographed by Minaxi May</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Bright Bright Rainbow Tent. Photographed by Minaxi May</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Anemones. Photographed by Minaxi May</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Silky – detail. Photographed by Minaxi May</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Taking the Spot for a Walk. Photographed by Minaxi May</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Kaleidoscope – series. Photographed by Minaxi May</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Playtime. Photographed by Minaxi May</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Kaleidoscope Merry-Go-Round. Photographed by Minaxi May</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Kaleidoscope Chroma. Photographed by Minaxi May</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Kaleidoscope CMYK. Photographed by Minaxi May</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Kaleidoscope Spacey. Photographed by Minaxi May</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>Confetti &amp; Pom Poms – detail. Photographed by Minaxi May</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>Collective Play. Photographed by Minaxi May</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>Kaleidoscope Petite Flora. Photographed by Minaxi May</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>Anemones – detail. Photographed by Minaxi May</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>Sticky Note Rolls – close-up. Photographed by Minaxi May</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>Sticky Note Rolls – design development/initial tests. Photographed by Minaxi May</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>Baker’s Delight – detail. Photographed by Minaxi May</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>Spaced Out Confetti Spectrum. Photographed by Minaxi May</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>Synthentic mural. Photographed by Dean McCourtney</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.</td>
<td>Synthentic dot. Photographed by Dean McCourtney</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.</td>
<td>Curve Ball. Photographed by Dawn Gamblen</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45.</td>
<td>Exclamation. Photographed by Dawn Gamblen</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46.</td>
<td>Synthetic Symphony. Photographed by Dawn Gamblen</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47.</td>
<td>Crazy Suckers. Photographed by Dawn Gamblen</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48.</td>
<td>Poly Saturate. Photographed by Dawn Gamblen</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49.</td>
<td>Wrap N Roll. Photographed by Dawn Gamblen</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50.</td>
<td>Synthetic mural – close-up. Photographed by Dean McCourtney</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51.</td>
<td>Straw Bombing pole. Photographed by Phil Gamblen</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52.</td>
<td>Straw Bombing pole – detail. Photographed by Phil Gamblen</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53.</td>
<td>Straw Bombing tree. Photographed by Phil Gamblen</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54.</td>
<td>Straw Bombing tiles – detail. Photographed by Phil Gamblen</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55.</td>
<td>Mixtape Rewind large. Photographed by Dawn Gamblen</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56.</td>
<td>Mixtape Rewind (Reds). Photographed by Dawn Gamblen</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57.</td>
<td>Contoured. Photographed by Dawn Gamblen</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58.</td>
<td>Poly Saturate – detail. Photographed by Dawn Gamblen</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59.</td>
<td>Ooze. Photographed by Dawn Gamblen</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60.</td>
<td>Seep. Photographed by Dawn Gamblen</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61.</td>
<td>Spray of Light – detail. Photographed by Dawn Gamblen</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62.</td>
<td>Into the Goove. Photographed by Dawn Gamblen</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63.</td>
<td>Window Dressing (pm). Photographed by Dawn Gamblen</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64.</td>
<td>Twelve Green Bottles. Photographed by Tony Nathan</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65.</td>
<td>ZakkaART – Handpicked &amp; Sorted installation. Photographed by Jarrad Seng</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66.</td>
<td>Always Look in the Bright Side of Life. Photographed by Toni Wilkinson</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67.</td>
<td>Handpicked &amp; Sorted (pinks). Photographed by Jarrad Seng</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
68. Elizabeth Arden Splendor (#10). Photographed by Jarrad Seng

69. JPG’s “Classique Femme” (#28). Photographed by Jarrad Seng

70. Macaron Gaultier (#29). Photographed by Minaxi May

71. Velcroed Tea Party. Photographed by Minaxi May

72. Lolly Discs. Photographed by Minaxi May

73. Iced Tile. Photographed by Minaxi May

74. Candy Coasters. Photographed by Jarrad Seng

75. Colour Candy Trail. Photographed by Jarrad Seng

76. Sweet Kicks Candy Carpet. Photographed by Jarrad Seng

77. Candy Cosmos. Photographed by Minaxi May

78. Fading Castle & Lonely Rook. Photographed by Jarrad Seng

79. Light Bulb (#7). Photographed by Jarrad Seng

80. Polished Orange (#26). Photographed by Jarrad Seng

81. Meshed Up (#36). Photographed by Jarrad Seng

82. Printed Matter. Photographed by Minaxi May

83. Bella on Top (#18). Photographed by Jarrad Seng

84. My Little Prissy Unicorn (#41). Photographed by Jarrad Seng

85. Kitty Can Can (#39). Photographed by Jarrad Seng

86. Piggy in the Middle (#40). Photographed by Jarrad Seng

87. Dinos Toppled Over (#62). Photographed by Jarrad Seng

88. Brellacocktailsaurus (#22). Photographed by Jarrad Seng

89. I Heart You (#3). Photographed by Jarrad Seng

90. Banded Green (#72). Photographed by Jarrad Seng

91. Reddy or Not (#34). Photographed by Jarrad Seng

92. Gloss Array. Photographed by Minaxi May

93. Access All Hours. Photographed by Minaxi May


95. Celebrity $$$’s. In collaboration with and photographed by Jacqueline Baker

96. Rapidly Growing Consumer(ism). Photographed by Minaxi May

97. For Sale. Photographed by Minaxi May

98. Maan Flora – detail. Digital image by Minaxi May


100. Handpicked & Sorted (blues). Photographed by Jarrad Seng


102. Sweet Kicks Candy Carpet – detail. Photographed by Jarrad Seng

103. Sweet Singles. Photographed by Minaxi May

104. Connections Between Pop / Mediated Culture, Art, Design and the Everyday (Zakka). Image by Minaxi May

105. Art, Design & Consumerism, Connections & Cycles. Image by Minaxi May

254

257
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