

## **Abstract**

In this research I examine the idea of confession and confessional art as a form of practice in selected examples of artworks by British contemporary artist Tracey Emin. Emin's work is paradigmatic of this kind of impulse in contemporary art and is clearly linked to an exploration of autobiography in art. Confession, stemming from religious and psychoanalytic practices, and more recently in the form of television chat shows, always involves an audience, i.e. the people who the confessor confesses to. Emin's work can be shown to openly present the private to the public, thus framing such perceptions of confession even though her work does not necessarily share the same moral framework as is traditionally the case with practices of religious confession. Her work epitomizes the practice of confession in art in the extreme and I particularly focus on her explicit references to sexuality. I also evaluate my own creative work in the light of the above as there is not much of this kind of framework in the context of South African art.