

An Autoethnographic Approach to Material as Form and Meaning in Sculpture and Printmaking

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Research Question

What is the role of material in sculpture and printmaking with particular reference to my own creative work?

Abstract:

This study involves a written component in dialogue with a creative body of work in sculpture and printmaking. There is an engagement with the personal material and corporeal experiences in relation to the production of a body of artworks. The focus is on the materials used, the materiality and the personal experiences. The written component engages autoethnographically and psychoanalytically on the structural possibilities and metaphoric potential of materials, namely: sugar, polyurethane foam and metal. The principle interest is on sugar. Whilst emphasizing the materiality and the object-material-viewer and/ or maker embodiment, there are particular interests in the ways in which the 'objectness' and/ or 'thingness' of materials affects the experience of the artwork by a physically present viewer. There is an exploration on how the materiality of the work may provoke experiences associated with abjectness and disturbance. It is suggested that the grotesque, abject, uncanny and amorphous, have the ability in sculpture to affect the viewer as well as maker through sensual experiences of the works material. The amorphous, formless and malleable materials' abilities is argued to be able to subvert conventions that allows for the investigation of how anti-form embraces temporary existences. The written component further aims to support an understanding of the process and choice of materials through an exploration of a number of theoretical and critical positions on the importance and significance of materials when used to produce artworks. There is a primary engagement with ways of making meaning through cultural production in Fine Arts in South Africa by focusing on materials' structures (social, political, historical, and chemical) in relation to personal experiences.

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The aim of this thesis is to reflect on the production of a new body of work in sculpture and printmaking. The focus is on engaging specifically with the materials used, the materiality and my personal experiences through an autoethnographic approach.¹ My primary step has been to produce a new body of creative work in sculpture and printmaking, which is focused on the structural possibilities and metaphoric potential of materials, namely: sugar, polyurethane foam and metal. My principle interest and focus is on sugar. Whilst having an emphasis on the materiality and the object-material-viewer and/ or maker embodiment, my particular interests are in the ways in which the 'objectness' and/ or 'thingness' of materials affects the experience of the work by a physically present viewer. I explore how the materiality of the work may provoke experiences associated with abjectness and disturbance.

The written component aims to support an understanding of my process and choice of materials through an exploration of a number of theoretical and critical positions: my intention is to look psychoanalytically and autoethnographically at the importance and significance of materials when used to produce artworks. I look at ways of making meaning through cultural production in Fine Arts in South Africa by focusing on materials. This includes how materials' structure (social, political, historical, and chemical) brings more to the encounter between the object, material and viewer; evoking a sensual and metaphorical experience. The theoretical discussion will be grounded in a more critical exploration of the works of a number of selected artists; including my own work that engages with materiality on a structural and metaphoric level.

¹ 'Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse personal experience in order to understand cultural experience. A researcher uses tenets of autobiography and ethnography to do and write autoethnography. Thus, as a method, autoethnography is both process and product.' (Ellis, E. Adams, and Bochner, 2010: 1)

As a central component to this research, I produce new sculptural and graphic works. My focus within this study develops out of, and extends from a number of approaches and possibilities evident in my previous work which consisted of sculptures and prints.

In my former body of work, I used installations as a way to activate engagement with the abject, the grotesque and uncanny. My process involved numerous material experiments with a range of materials, including: sugar, tar, 'bakkie'-liner, membrane sealant, polyurethane foam, wood, dust, and soap.² I explored the physical interactions between the materials and my body, examining each response and its physical characteristics. Many of the materials were toxic to my body, as well as being physically unstable, thus evoking uneasiness. The types of physical interactions with the works as a result, were experiences with alien forms and abnormal masses, which were tactile and intriguing, specifically sensually of disgust, ugliness and repulsion.³

I installed a range of large (2m x 2m) and intimate (7cm x 12cm) amorphous sculptural forms, and lit these in ways that created an immersive experience in a contained space for my undergraduate final exhibition. The black or yellow bulbous masses were either adhered to the ceiling, hanging in corners or directly on the floor. In the process of creating, I began making forms that were not only shapeless but geometric multiple facets, or a combination of both. The sculptures developed into hybrid forms which began a visual conversation between the amorphous and the contained opening further ideas around disgust and the abject.

² Bakkie- Liner is a black or grey material used to coat the tailgate of a light duty truck.

³ This is further explored in chapter 3

The dichotomies of the amorphous and contained, disgust and the abject⁴ are important aspects within my body of work as the pushing and pulling of boundaries is my focal interest in my material exploration. The disruption of the materials and the viewer's relationship with the disturbance of the boundary is my prompt into exploring more in depth how this has forced me to explore my own personal experience, physical disturbance and embodiment of specific materials through abject relationships.

Since this initial material exploration I have narrowed down my main material choices to sugar, polyurethane foam and metal (steel and iron), which allows me to focus on an intimate material experience with individual forms. Whilst exploring these materials, my main focus will be on sugar. In consideration of the intimate material experience, a few terms become critical in how the following chapters develop in their meaning. When there is an intimate material experience, there is an encounter. An encounter in this dissertation is understood as the crucial moment of reception, it is the moment in which the experience occurs. My body of work prompts particular encounters. The works consists of bulbous and shapeless masses, which include melted sugar in some way. The material structure, which will be later discussed at length, is sticky and continuously melting. The stickiness asks the audience to consider form and meaning in a particular sense. Form as a result becomes a question of boundary and skin, it prompts questions around where the line is drawn when an artwork invites vulnerability into the space of the viewer, a letting down of boundaries. While a boundary may be understood as a clear separation or division, the quality of the melted sugar, implies skin. The skin, as a natural boundary offering safety and comfort, invites the idea of porousness and a possibility of cross overs.⁵ By narrowing down to these three materials, I aim to give the viewer an opportunity to develop an understanding of the artwork with a more conscious awareness of the particularity of the object, its making, the process and its material.

⁴ Abject – This term is explored in depth in chapter 2. It can briefly be explained as the uncomfortable confrontation of the self where personal physical boundaries are ruptured on an intensely intimate level.

⁵ In consideration of this, I also use the materials ink and soap, which are not discussed in this paper, however will be considered for future explorations.

In chapter one I engage from a theoretical standpoint with the object, material, and thing, in order to explore the varying definitions, their fluidity and cross-overs in meaning. I look at these definitions in specific relation to other artists and their works, in order to locate how artworks have been visually understood and read in various contexts. I will be discussing works by Joseph Beuys, Richard Serra, Joni Brenner and Anish Kapoor, as each of these artists' practices involves a particular means of making which has influenced my own making practice. A visual exploration of their works, through a close looking at the physical details, offers an avenue into understanding where an artwork fits in and when it has been made with a conscious awareness of the material and how this affects the corporeal viewer's and maker's readings.

In chapter two, I move on to a psychoanalytical reading of experience through an exploration of ugliness, the grotesque, formlessness and abject theory. I explore these concepts by looking at a number of theorists, mainly: Nina Athanassoglou-Kallmyer on ugliness, Hal Foster on the grotesque, and Julia Kristeva on the abject. Through an exploration of ugliness, I engage with the aesthetic category of all that is unpleasant. The grotesque challenges ugliness by introducing the concept of hybridity. The abject as I explore is an aspect within aesthetic theory which relates to the uncomfortable confrontation of the self where personal physical boundaries are disturbed on an intimate level. I do these explorations in order to discover the various emotive cues triggered by the materials that prompt this particular type of abject reading of the works. In this chapter I also refer to Sigmund Freud on the uncanny; that which is both desired and repelled, and Brian Massumi on affect theory; the unconscious physical response, as these terms speak towards each other and are activated through the sensual engagement of the works individually and collectively.

Through this psychoanalytical reading I aim to explore how conscious and unconscious thoughts as well as motivations, are prompted through the engagement with the artworks physical structure. I transition from a theoretical standpoint into an autoethnographical exploration of my process and my material choices in order to prompt a nuanced understanding of personal experience as a means of research.

As a result, in chapter three, *Thinking Through Making*, I focus on a more in-depth material and personal exploration. As academics Carolyn Ellis, Tony E. Adams and P Bochner discuss, autoethnography is an anthropological approach which is primarily concerned with material culture and the personal experience (2010: 1). Thus using an autoethnographic lens and process, means that I approach the research and writing by describing and analysing my own personal experience with the materials. In turn, and by extension, this enables me to explore and understand wider cultural experience.

By critically exploring each of the specific materials through my abject personal relations to them as well as cultural associations, I hope to develop an understanding of the complexity of the ways in which materials function in sculpture as both structure and metaphor – in other words, these are more than mere items which produce something else, but materials that possess agency in their own right. Through a considered and detailed exploration of the process of making and the relevance of the generative way in which it functions, I explore the ways in which the artwork is activated or enlivened. Conducting this exploration through creative practice shows how it can be a useful means of reflective research.

Through this exploration of the materials and my personal abject embodiment of each of them, I explore materials which are impermanent or unstable, specifically sugar. The flexible and changing capabilities of the sugar, considers the abjection of the maker and in turn draws in the viewer's body, considering their own physical structures stability. I explore the personal experience in relation to the physicality of the human body as well as looking the role of impermanent materials in order to

comprehend how the body and impermanent materials begin to prompt readings of mortality, and physical and psychological vulnerability.

Finally, in the last chapter, I conduct a more detailed visual analyses of my own specific artworks; prints and sculptures. The specific works are chosen based on their generative flow in the process of making from the one form to the next. On the one hand, I address the subtleties of the materials and processes involved in each work. On the other hand, I reference related works in the body of work in order to note the role of a continuous process of making and to directly link my theoretical explorations to the physical works themselves. The unstable quality of the materials of the works is explored in terms of impermanence, ephemerality and mortality. While the disintegration is considered, the generative process of making also posits a consideration of how the materials are salvaged, and re-used in the production of additional works. While the formless works can be read in a bodily sense, this prompts further corporeal questions for both artist and viewer.

I engage in these discussions, explorations and sensual explorations so as to underscore the way the production of a creative body of work is a valid means of research which offers avenues into other areas of research. The detailed exegesis and cultural production of artworks challenges conventional methods of research, in that it directly confronts the subjective influence and eschews rigid definitions of what is considered valuable by exploring and analysing lived experience.



Image 1.0 – Image of exhibition layout for the body of work produced alongside this dissertation

OBJECT, MATERIAL, THING

The world is perceived in numerous and varied ways, one of which is by understanding what it consists of. Thus, the following chapter explores three terms: object, material and thing. I explore these terms and the fluidity of their meaning in specific relation to the artists: Joseph Beuys, Richard Serra, Joni Brenner and Anish Kapoor. I focus on Joseph Beuys - *Der Chief/ The Chief (Fluxus Song)*, 1964; Richard Serra - *Switch*, 1999; Joni Brenner - *Mute to tell*, 2005 and; Anish Kapoor - *C-Curve*, 2007.⁶

In chapters, two, three and four I engage with a discussion of sugar, polyurethane foam and metal (steel and iron) on a more complex autoethnographic and psychoanalytical level in reference to my own body of work. In this chapter I address the artists: Beuys, Serra, Brenner and Kapoor, their processes and their works as resources, as well as engage with a number of theoretical positions and perspectives concerning their ideas around materiality, the object and the viewer's relationship.

It is arguable that historically, materiality has been over looked for a focus on the object. Only more recently has the topic been investigated to give materials an agency. Petra Lange-Berndt's, researcher in the field of material studies in art history, sense is that materials are entangled in a web of life and it is in their structure that they reveal themselves (2015: 13–19). It is not enough to acknowledge what a work is made of, there needs to be an acknowledgement and conversation

⁶ Joseph Beuys - *Der Chief/ The Chief (Fluxus Song)*, Gallery view Fluxus-chant Berlin-New York-Berlin, Galerie René Block, Berlin (December 1, 1964), 1964

Richard Serra - *Switch*, 1999. Installed at the Gagosian Gallery's location in Chelsea.

Joni Brenner - *Mute to tell*, 2005, at Art First in London

Anish Kapoor - *C-Curve*, 2007, Installed in the Louvre's Khorsabad court (2007)

around the context of the material, its history and its encounters (Lange-Berndt, 2015: 20). The idea here is to place an agency on material by focusing on what a work is made of and to consider how the material is worked with, the material's provenance and the space in which it is made or manipulated to form an object or thing.

THINGS

Theorist, Bill Brown, discusses 'thing theory' in his text *Thing Theory* (2001). He makes the claim that 'a thing', becomes 'a thing' when it has lost its function, when the object is outside of its socially understood function (Brown, 2001: 4). The object consequently becomes a thing when it manifests in a way that is set apart from the world in which it existed (Brown, 2001: 4). So it is only when the object stops conventionally functioning for us that we engage with its 'thingness' because we develop a subject-thing relationship. The ability of the object to assert itself as a thing, indicates a change in the relationship, showcasing a particular subject-oriented relation (Brown, 2001: 4). An object becomes a thing when its flow within its circulation, consumption and exhibition is prohibited (Brown, 2001: 4). The 'thingness' blurs the boundary between object, thing and material. It is here where the viewer can perhaps begin to contemplate the relevance of the material, where the material is understood to not only be what the object and/ or thing is made of, but to carry its own abundance of meanings.

Things are ambiguous enigmas that have amorphous characteristics which are inevitably irresolvable, as a thing designates the concrete and ambiguous simultaneously (Brown, 2001: 4). Existing as a threshold, a thing lies in-between that which is and which is not, for it is situated outside the order of objects, rather situating itself as an unresolved phenomenon existing within and amongst the environment. As anthropologist Arjun Appadurai's book *The Social Life of Things* (1986) explores, subjects encode things with significance (1986: 5). The social life of things is deepened by an understanding that things in motion, traveling through contexts

is where complexities and the lives of things becomes multifarious (Appadurai, 1986: 5). The meaning of the object, material or thing is not inherent, but is rather constructed through the lives it has lived within different contexts amongst different things.

Brown explores anthropologist Marcel Mauss discussions around objects exploring that however stable material objects may seem, they are different things in different scenes (Mauss in Brown, 2001: 9). The thing, the material, is thus in a constant state of meaning making with subjects through its movement. To quote anthropologist Nicholas Thomas, 'As socially and culturally salient entities, objects change in defiance of their material stability. The category to which a thing belongs, the emotion and judgement it prompts, and narrative it recalls, are historically refigured' (Thomas, 1991: 125). Thus the means in which a thing is articulated is open to a fluidity which allows the meaning making process to remain in flux and prompts both the thing and person to be active in the process. Brown discusses how Constructivist Materialism sought to recognise objects as participants in the reshaping of the world (2001: 10). It was through Surrealism's attempt to exert a different determination that there was a challenge to achieve a greater intimacy with objects and things (Brown, 2001: 11). The intimacy and pushing of boundaries offers opportunities to engage more thoroughly with the idea and concept of permeable boundaries of meaning.

Accordingly, while the object and thing are distinct concepts, as Jacques Derrida argues, 'the thing is not an object [and] cannot become one' (Derrida, [1984: 14] cited in Brown, 2001: 3); there is a fluidity that ruptures their distinct meanings by allowing the agency to be given to the material. This allows us, as political theorist Jane Bennett and feminist theorist Karen Barad state, to explore; 'where matter is understood as a dynamic and shifting entanglement of relations rather than as a property of things' (in Lange-Berndt, 2015: 17). As is argued by Brown, we know the world only as it is mediated by the senses (in Lange-Berndt, 2015: 17). The activated

sensual engagements prompts a looking which is more comprehensive, exploring avenues which may have been previously over looked.

MATERIALS AND MATERIALITY

Lange-Berndt discusses these key ideas relating to materiality in the book *Materiality* (2015). A focus on materials thus asks the viewer to consider the non-human, to acknowledge it, in understanding that the bodily sensations are embodiments of the material form in which it is immersed. The sensations which materials offer, point to a world where human bodies and their surroundings have become porous (Lange-Berndt, 2015: 18). The role of placing agency on the materials, according to Lange-Berndt, is to acknowledge the materials, for what they are, how they affect the viewer plus to expand on their histories and varied contexts, as well as to follow their traces and to find out how, in Derrida's phrase to, 'make the matériel laugh' (Derrida, [1985: 126] cited in, Lange-Berndt, 2015: 20, 207–208).

Marshall McLuhan, in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, explores how the medium is the message, and how the content of the message is always another medium (1964: 23, 24). As a result it is the medium that shapes and controls the association (McLuhan, 1964: 26). In consideration of this, Derrida expands on materials by looking at *matériau* (support of the message; medium) and *matériel* (addressee of the message; physical or material world; equipment) (1985: 124). Thus in the above phrase, 'make the matériel laugh', Derrida is engaging with the opposition of matter and form where the *mât* does not need to be cancelled out (2015: 126). Instead there should be an invention of 'something to make all its supplements (*mât* + X) resonate and sing through the equally potent forces of laughter and love' (1985: 126). Thus I would understand, to 'make the matériel laugh' would be to allow for spontaneous and instinctive meaning in multitude to be derived freed from bound meaning.

Academic, Terrence Hawkes states that: “‘reality’ inheres not only in things themselves, but in the relationships we perceive between things, not in items but in structures’ (2003: 3). Hawkes suggests that meaning making happens through constructed and perceived relationships between things, objects and materials. Hawkes position derives from and follows the Structuralist tradition established by Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure’s exploration of meaning as fluid, existing in fields that are not solitary (Hawkes, 2003: 9).

Saussure explores how the meaning that is developed in linguistics and by implication in other forms of language forms part of complex systems of correspondences between signs and ideas (in Hawkes, 2003: 10). As a result there is always a duality, a conversation developing. Post-structuralism challenges this by questioning the fixed nature of meaning by emphasising context. Meaning is therefore argued to be fluid and susceptible to change.

As mentioned above, Appadurai explores how subjects encode things with significance, and that things in motion, traveling through contexts is where complexities and the lives of things becomes multifarious (Appadurai, 1986: 5). In conversation, poststructuralist philosopher Keith Moxey, argues that meaning is not only constructed by people but that this construction varies in terms of the social and historical context in which it is perceived (Moxey, 1994: xii). Thus that which we perceive changes according to the specificities of the interaction in which we perceive it. Objects carry their own provenance, consequently objects and viewers develop in dialogue.

I posit that in order to further the meaning making process, it is crucial to understand the object, material and/or thing which is engaged, as a form of material culture. As a result of the anthropological approach through autoethnography the concern is primarily with material culture. Material culture is understood by, archaeologist and anthropologist Daniel Miller, as the study of the human social and environmental relationships with the constructs of their material world (1994: 13).

In *Things ain't what they used to be*, Miller explores material culture by discussing the act of collecting and the way in which collecting has the ability to tell a story. He discusses classifying in terms of how meaning is produced as a means for understanding objects in relation to the fluidity of the object. He explores objects by looking at how boundaries can be transcended and how our understandings of objects need to consider that the objects can be both passive and active; thus affecting their meaning (Miller, 1994: 17).

In turn, whilst considering the passivity or activity of the object, it is useful to understand how it has been classified. In *Museum Objects*, Professor Susan M Pearce focuses on deconstructing the way in which we categorise objects. She creates an awareness of the language we use to discuss objects. Pearce argues that material culture is a phrase used as a collective noun, and as a result is capable of a range of definitions (Pearce, 1994: 9). She also addresses the fact that the different categories of material culture, created through the use of different words, assign a certain value to objects and/ or things (Pearce, 1994: 9). Something can be classified as material culture through the assignment of human values, or through the process of selection. Often the ways in which the selected item is then put on display results in the object being considered as material culture (Pearce, 1994: 10).

Pearce discusses the terms: thing, object and artefact. According to Pearce 'thing' is the word used in everyday speech for the entire range of non-material matters which impact our daily lives (1994: 10) which is argued differently by Brown, where he argues that the thing is mainly a material form. Object shares a slipperiness in both ordinary speech and intellectual discourse in that it is a word used in a general sense, rather than in a direct way (Pearce, 1994: 10). Artefact, meaning 'made by art or skill', implies the application of human technology upon the natural world (Pearce, 1994: 10–11). These definitions are all derived outside of the fine arts context and offer the beginning stages for exploring how the terms vary in meaning.

There is a usefulness in exploring how the terms are defined outside of the discipline, as it offers a wider view on how art is often about things, objects and materials which are not necessarily or conventionally considered to be art or involved in the art world.

OBJECT

The object has been explored and understood in numerous ways by many theorists in order to destabilise our fixed perceptions. Academic Dr Antony Hudek, in the book *Object* (2015), discusses these ideas around the object. In his introductory essay, *Detours of Objects*, he explores how objects exist within and constitute environments. Hudek references art historian Jean-Francois Chevrier's statement that: 'Every object is a thing but that not every thing is an object' (in Hudek, 2015: 14). Hudek draws upon this statement to contemplate the idea of being defined by objects, and reflects on how the thing is explored as 'something broader than the object'.

Hudek draws attention to philosopher Martin Heidegger's statement that: 'things are something assertive of their own independence, its presence as well as nearness, while objects are everywhere and in equal measure' (in Hudek, 2015: 14). The object is thus separated from the thing in that the object is seen as accessible. Similarly, Hudek claims that objects are not just the material, perceptible and consumable goods commonly referred to as objects but that they are rather a trove of disguises and triggers that a single subject cannot exhaust (2015: 14).

In summary the object is complex in its ability to carry a variety of associations and connotations. The object thus prompts multifaceted meanings and understandings with the viewer through the object and viewer encounter. Hudek focuses on the object over the subject, and looks at how this destabilises the subject rather than doing away with it (2015: 16). The subject is destabilised by shifting the power dynamics off the subject and emphasizing the agency of the object. However the

stability of the object and subject is disrupted when the object is dematerialised and questioned. He further discusses how:

‘The once stable boundary between object and subject proves increasingly unreliable: the subject must now contend with its own availability and attraction as an almost object while the object accrues the status of almost subject bearing little relation with the material, graspable thing’ (Hudek, 2015: 24).

Hudek arguably claims that objects are phenomena that can communicate an abundance of meanings; moving beyond the material thing, thus including the subject, and destabilising the power relations between object and viewer. This destabilisation activates a consideration of the fluidity of the boundaries which are so firmly articulated.

OVERLAP BETWEEN VIEWER AND THING

Author Dinah Eastop in, *String-Figure Making: Processes of Objectification and Embodiment*, reinforces this idea of overlap. Eastop analyses how changing representations arise from processes of objectification of materials and body parts as a totality – in other words body parts and materials function as a single objectified entity (2012: 77). This process begins to question where the body or subject ends and where the object or material begins (Eastop, 2012: 77). This means that there is a complexity present in the interaction between subjects, objects, materials, things and language. Such complexity illuminates the negotiation and ambiguity of boundaries and how they are sustained or disturbed.

The knotted-ness of subjects, materials, objects and things evokes a complexity. In *The Cultural Biography of Objects*, archaeologists Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall, state that ‘... as people and objects gather time, movement and change, they are constantly transformed, and these transformations of person and object are tied up with each other’ (1999: 169). Meaning develops and fluctuates as objects and people interact in different contexts and encounters. Actions intertwine with objects,

materials or things so that meaning transforms and grows via the processes, exchanges and productions in which the thing is involved.

As Gosden and Marshall state; 'Material things are not external supports or measures of an internal life, but rather people and things have mutual biographies which unfold in culturally specific ways' (1999: 173). Consequently the biography accumulated allows us the opportunity to comparatively explore the meaning acquired through the social interactions and relationships of people and things in the diverse contexts.

So, in consideration of my works this dissertation will explore, it is important to note that many of the works are never complete, in that they are constantly melting, or 'living'. The 'objectness' becomes less relevant than the material used for the works. The process of making becomes significant in prompting the opportunity to look at the activity of the material rather than the artwork as a final piece. This raises questions regarding where the boundaries lie between the material and object, and how they could then become a thing.

Materials themselves suggest an abundance of complex meanings embedded in their materiality that occurs before the objects are formed. Thus the meaning is developed and constructed through an intuitive behaviour of making and engaging with the material. Materials invite an intimacy in that they are open to manipulation, to being played with. The material itself carries out a structure (physical and social) which could presuppose the outcome of the objects form, in that the meaning begins before the form is completed. I am interested in when the boundaries between the object, material and the viewer become ambiguous.

In consideration of the viewer's ambiguity, the material must be considered on a more conscious level. In Lange-Berndt's introduction for, *How to Be Complicit with Materials*, she notes the importance of material discussions at present. She states

that 'to conscientiously look and write about materials is to politically consider the process of making and the associated power relations, to consider the workers, the tools and spaces of production' (Lange-Berndt, 2015: 12). The purpose of invoking the political and economic thus expands on our understanding of material offering a fresh awareness that materials can be more than what they are assumed to be. Monica Wager expands on this stating that the medium, the material, is not a neutral medium of transportation, or form of idea but instead, 'can be regarded as indissolubly interwoven with it' (2001: 67). The material is thus activated and not a passive conduit for meaning ascribed through its object associations but is significant in its own rights.

While we consider the materiality of the works and processes, I am interested to see how meaning changes or develops when the conventional use of the material is challenged. What happens when everyday materials are taken into the production space of the art world? What happens when the work is engaged with as a material rather than as an object, where the material becomes a 'thing' in a process of making? In my own body of work I work with materials considered to be outside of their conventionally understood uses and work with them in abstract ways to develop shapeless forms in which the material is chemically unstable.

BRIEF ANALYSES

Artists Joseph Beuys, Richard Serra, Joni Brenner, and Anish Kapoor, deal with the concepts of form in terms of the viewer-material-object relationship. Each artist works with particular materials, i.e. felt, clay, steel. These materials are in each case manipulated and physically considered in specific relation to how they are encountered as things not only after the work is complete but also during the process and making of the works. Each artist makes use of materials which are vulnerable to change and are able to push upon boundaries through the initial encounter on an intimate level.

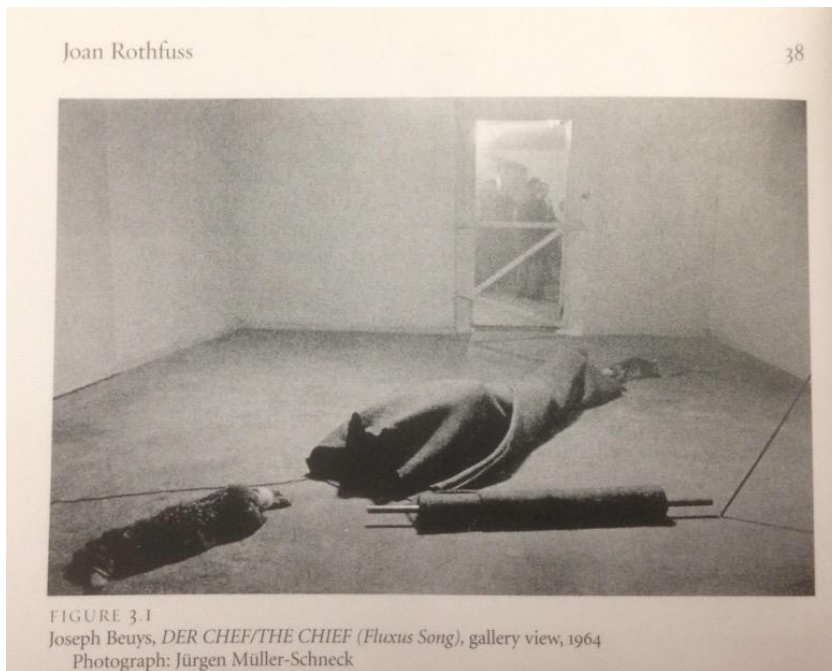


Image 1.1⁷

Joseph Beuys

*Der Chief/ The Chief
(Fluxus Song)*, Gallery
view

1964

Berlin-New York-Berlin,
Galerie René Block, Berlin

Materials used in
performance: felt, sound,
string and two dead hares

German artist, Joseph Beuys's sculptural and installation-based body of work engages significantly with materials and their symbolic value. In his work, *The Chief* (1964) Beuys is wrapped in felt on the floor with two dead hares on either end of him (Rothfuss in Ray, 2001: 38) (Image 1.1). During the performance/installation he made grunting noises in a microphone, emitting mimicked stage cries whilst remaining rolled up in length for eight hours. The felt wrapped around his body was made of hare fur, with the two dead hares at each end of the roll. His body lies stretched motionless upon the floor, entirely wrapped in the felt, as an ambiguous mass. Uncomfortably, the mass moves in time as the artist breathes and lives, giving a disturbing uncanniness to the materials as they appear to live as well. The body and materials are visually and tacitly considered as one, morphed together.

His pieces carry the presence of the material beyond its physical presence – in that the material becomes more than the means of the portrayal of an idea. He aims to engage socially, politically and spiritually through his material encounters (Rothfuss

⁷ Photograph Jürgen Müller-Schneck, Image taken from *Mapping The Legacy*, by Joan Rothfuss in Gene Ray (page 38)

in Ray, 2001: 39). By providing uncanny life-like qualities to the two dead hare corpses, he immediately changes how the bodies are understood and they begin to be read more as things. This animation of the corpses, comments on the voiceless capabilities of the hares, whom can no longer/ or rather never could speak for themselves.

His performance and physical bodily presence is embedded in the encounter between the viewer, the material and the object. It is in the use of his body as a material, a shapeless mass, with other materials, the felt and sound specifically, that boundaries are disrupted. The viewer is prompted to question the start of their presence in relation to where the materials and objects start and end. This happens through the morphing of the materials with his body, in that they behave and congeal together. Felt is made by matting, condensing and pressing fibres together, in this case a matting of hare hair. The density of the materials making is carried through into the intertwining of the material and body together morphing into a single thing. The use of the sound further pushes on the boundaries as the sound is a crucial moment in the disruption of boundaries. The sound is not physically bound to the body and felt, but can instead reach through and enter into the viewer's physical space. I find this an interesting influence in my own work as I later explain how I attempt to do this through smell. The indefinite thresholds and divides are ruptured. Consequently the artist, viewer and work become immersed within each other's physicality. The work enters the space of the viewer and as a result the viewer unconsciously forms part of the work.

The use of dead hares invites abjection into the work, which is emphasised by the lifeless carcasses of the hares in relation to the living cries of the artist. As the artist and hares are read as a single formless mass, the boundary of life and death is pushed to a point where the viewer is ultimately invited into the created and fictional space of the hare's death, as a witness to the loss of lives. The hare's bodies, remnants of life, become infused in a multitude of meanings rendering the bodies of both artist and hares as formless manifestations of a trauma, which the viewer is now ultimately invaded by, through the experience of the work. The viewer is both invited into the

space and withheld as the layout does not completely invite the viewer into the experience. The artist acting as a voice for animals, specifically dead animals, asks the viewer to consider their role within the work in consideration of both death and life. The creation of space extends upon our understanding of materiality as the immaterial material of sound prompts a vulnerability for the human body.

While the boundaries become blurred in the work of Beuys, American minimalist artist Richard Serra does the opposite – the materials from which he creates his sculptures assert their physical presence and insist upon containment or perhaps difference by asserting a boundary. His large flat geometric sculptures are massive, heavy and dense; their sheer physicality questions the stability of the viewer. When the works are encountered the viewer should become acutely aware of the vulnerability of their body, and the sensitivity of human existence.

Working mainly in metal, and on a colossal scale, Serra makes use of the material rather than the object; creating an interaction where the form evokes uneasiness, through the relation between the physical forms: for example, *Switch*, 1999, Image 1.2 places the subject in a vulnerable, insignificant position in proportion to the material – the sculpture consists of six large plates made from weatherproofed steel, has 13 feet high 6 inch curved walls, and weighs several tons (Golden, 2001: 58–59). Serra creates uneasiness in his viewers by making space physical – that is, he gives a concrete form to what would otherwise be empty or undefined space (ibid). The size of the steel also invites the sense of smell into the experience. The steel's material structure is rusted, in a state of disintegration or rather change, despite that the steel is stated by the artist to be weatherproofed. Due to the massive scale of the work the smell of oxidising steel, the odour of rust would be potent and carry an overwhelming presence in the viewer's space.



Image 1.2⁸

Richard Serra

Switch

1999

Weatherproof Steel, six plates, each: 13 feet; six inches x 52 feet x 2 inches

In relation to these two artists, I consider South African contemporary artist, Joni Brenner, and her use of the viewer's biological relation to form – particularly to bone – as a way to develop a palpable surface which activates a sense of the uncanny. Her use of material develops unfamiliarity within form; maintaining a distance, while simultaneously holding the viewer. She holds the viewer's attention via the presence of her hand in the material – for example, clay – that she uses to construct a work. By this I am referring to the way the artist works with the material. She is actively and consciously leaving a presence of how she manipulates the material to remain present in the artwork's outcome. Brenner's (2011) work, *Mute to Tell*, which appeared in the exhibition *Unavoidable*⁹, exemplifies this statement (Brenner, 2011: 25) (Image 1.3).

⁸ Installed at the Gagosian Gallery's location in Chelsea, Image taken from *Art:21 Art in the twenty first century*. (Page : 58- 59). Photo courtesy of Online. URL: <http://www.gagosian.com>.

⁹ *Unavoidable*, 2011. Solo Exhibition of Joni Brenner at Art First in London.



Mute to tell
Sika-guard consolidated clay, enamel paint,
sprayed enamel plinth 130 x 25 x 25 cm

Image 1.3¹⁰

Joni Brenner

Mute to tell

2005

Sika-guard
consolidated clay,
enamel paint,
Sprayed enamel plinth
130 x 25 x 25 cm

‘This exhibition is a focused reflection on the unavoidability of one’s mortality, aging, and passage through life. At the core of the exhibition are the very last works made of Wilson Mootane (her sitter), four torso’s in oil - images that are utterly life affirming and present, in the very same moment that they assert his absence, and mark his end. One’s mortality and unavoidable end is tied up with the legacy that is left, that continues to speak of the life of the artist and of the sitter: what is unavoidable is the trace of life, the record of being.’
- (Brenner, 2011: 10)

Through a working of the surface Brenner simultaneously activates the form as contained abstracted surfaces which disrupt our normative understanding of the human form. She does this by working into a relatable form, a skull or head configuration, which she viscerally disrupts in subtle changes to the surface. These moments which rupture the conventionally understood smooth skull or scalp, challenge perceptions of the stability of the body, further questioning its permanence while simultaneously making us aware of its presence. Her work triggers visceral tactility, at the same time as it draws on a biological relationship. Brenner’s use of a corporeal relation to the skull or scalp in her forms as well as her process of repetition with subtle nuances in each sculpture is how she divulges into the obsession of the relevance of the slightest changes. *Mute To Tell*, is one of a number of works in the exhibition in which she is speaking towards the unavoidable

¹⁰ Image taken by John Hodgkiss Courtesy of the Catalogue *Unavoidable* (Brenner, 2011: 24-25)

reality of life and the traces there of by focusing on a specific sitter repeatedly. Her process allows her use of texture and material as 'image' to communicate meaning, beyond (as well as within) the material itself.

Similarly British-Indian artist Anish Kapoor uses material in sculpture to facilitate an uncanny experience for the viewer. His sculptures occupy spaces; they become present in their materiality. Each manipulation of material (i.e. metal, dust, wax), acknowledges the material in the production. His focused use and critical installation of materials provokes the viewer into a deeper material engagement. Through his meticulousness in making some of his works, such as *C-Curve* (2009), he removes the artist from the work and allows the form, the uninterrupted material, to develop meaning through its reception as purely what it is (Koln, 2013: 183) [Image 1.4]. *C-Curve* consists of a large thick sheet of unblemished steel slightly concaved and curved in the shape of a 'c' as if it would be seen from an aerial view. The large sheet of seamless, undisturbed steel reflects the viewer and environment, mirroring them into the sculpture, forming an image where the viewer and sculpture exist together. The sheen is vacuum-like in its ability to absorb the viewer effortlessly. While the work appears clinical in its execution, the shape both invites and encases the viewer. It physically has a prescribed shape however in the reflective ability of the steel, the shape becomes ambiguous when viewed up close, as the reflections begin to form new a space encompassing the viewer in the experience.

There is something evocative in the materiality of Kapoor's sculpture beyond the material of the steel, but also in how the steel has been handled. Kapoor has engaged in an obsessive and intense process of polishing the material. The treatment of the material implies a process of refining and labour. In this instance the material qualities prompt questions around labour and economics, questioning the value and tempting the viewer with questions of preciousness and a sense of wanting to touch to find a imperfection in its 'perfectness'.

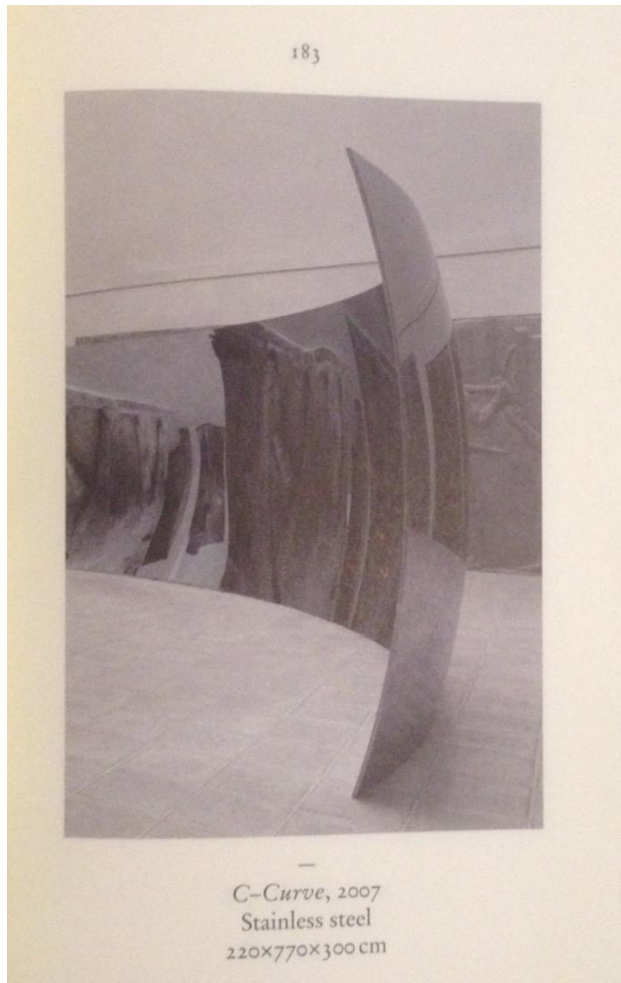


Image 1.4¹¹

Anish Kapoor

2007

C-Curve

Stainless Steel

220 x 770 x 300 cm

Looking at these artists who have worked and still work this way indicates that material is and has been under discussion on a very physical level through art in various ways for some time. If we contemplate this from a poststructuralist lens, where we consider that meaning is in a state of flux, it has a moment of relevance in the world of cultural production as meaning-through-making.

To explore through the lens of 'meaning-through-making' is a way of developing an understanding of the artwork through the process and the means of making rather than purely through an interpretation of the final product. It is to activate the process as an integral part of how the work is understood. A 'meaning-through-making' lens asks for a consideration of the intuitive nature of not only the artist but the behaviour of the materials. Thus whilst engaging with an object-material-viewer

¹¹ Image taken from *Symphony for a Beloved Sun* Anish Kapoor, By Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther Konig, Koln, (Page 183). Installed in the Louvre's Khorsabad court (2007) as a part of the 'Contrepoint' exhibition.

and/ or maker conversation, I am considering the psychoanalytical significance of that conversation in relation to an embodiment of a material.

By contemplating the structure and metaphorical properties of materials there is a possibility that through their properties and the processes of manipulation, particular experiences can be prompted.

In summation of this chapter, I explore object, material and thing in relation to Beuys, Serra, Brenner and Kapoor's artworks as a way to engage with how the placement of agency on the material allows an opportunity to explore the fluidity and cross-overs of meaning between the terms. The materiality of the works is shown through the artworks discussed to activate particular uncanny embodiments of the works in which the viewer is asked to contemplate around their corporeal existence and the very impermanence or disruption of that. An exploration of these artists and their artworks shows how an artwork functions, and how it is engaged socially (collective interactions in society) through its material structure. The materiality of the work provokes specific emotive cues, namely: ugliness, the grotesque, the abject, and the uncanny. I adopt a psychoanalytical lens to analyse these emotive cues in the following chapter.

UGLINESS, THE GROTESQUE, FORMLESSNESS AND THE ABJECT

The previous chapter explored the terms: object, material and thing in order to explore the varying definitions, their fluidity and cross-overs in meaning. The object was argued to be accessible, existing as both active and passive, in inexhaustible troves of disguises and triggers (Hudek, 2015: 14). A 'thing', in conversation, was argued to be a particular something which has become functionless, and is outside of its socially understood function, apart from the world in which it has existed (Brown, 2001: 4). While materials were acknowledged as being entangled in a web of life, where their structures reveal themselves by not only acknowledging what a work is made of, but too considering the materials history and encounters (Lange-Berndt, 2015: 20). Materials and things are argued to be changeable and dynamic as well as concrete and ambiguous in that they consider the 'stuffness' and senses of encounters, destabilizing the object. This was further explored by looking at how these terms materialize and overlap in the artworks of Beuys, Serra, Brenner and Kapoor. The exploration of the biographical nature of the works prompts understandings into how artworks function materially in relation to how they are socially engaged prompting new understanding in the materiality of the artworks.

In this chapter I explore key concepts related to aesthetic and psychoanalytic studies that underscore my own body of work. This exploration is a way to later engage in visual analyses of specific works. Through a comparative study of theorists' concepts I investigate, ugliness, the grotesque, the uncanny, formlessness and abject theory. The terms I deal with in chapter 2 form the basis of chapter 3: in which I adopt an autoethnographic, historical and socio-political approach to understanding each of my material decisions: sugar, polyurethane foam and metal — with particular reference to the personal corporeal bodily experience of each material.

Aesthetics is a fraught discourse around tensions and boundaries about visual and emotive perceptions. While aesthetics has multiple facets, it is most prominently discussed within two categories: beauty and ugliness, and how these categories are fluid or contradictory (Athanasoglou-Kallmyer, 2003: 281). I engage with the discourse of aesthetics not through words, but through the visual and emotive responses my artworks evoke. My body of work consists of abstract forms and materials which are in a state of change. The sculptures are large masses which appear tumour-like and are coated in melted sugar, allowing them to drip and ooze. The prints are dark and ambiguous forms which occupy large black fields of space. It is my intention that my works deal mainly in the abject, the ugly, and that which disgusts, in conversation with how this can become desirable and visually attractive.

UGLINESS, THE GROTESQUE AND HYBRIDITY

Art historian, Nina Athanassoglou-Kallmyer in *Nineteen Ugliness* (2003) looks at ideas around ugliness, exploring it as the versatile source for all aspects that disrupt the understood norm of what ugliness is seen to oppose. She uses ugliness to surface conversations regarding dissonance, irregularity, excess, the irrational and deformity (Athanasoglou-Kallmyer, 2003: 281).

Athanassoglou-Kallmyer refers to theorist, Geoffrey Galt Harpham's, notion that beauty is stable and unwavering, while ugliness is alternatively understood as 'a shapeless mass of heterogeneous and conflicting attributes caught in "a civil war of attraction and repulsion"' (Harpham [1982, 9] cited in Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, 2003: 282). Ugliness therefore generates an inherent tension in its ability to both attract and repulse. Harpham describes the inner structures of the ugly in art as marked by a confusion of hierarchies, by an incompatible simultaneity of 'high' and 'low' ([1982: 9] cited in Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, 2003: 283). It is via the co-existence of the normative idealised 'high' and the abnormal, strange 'low', a hybridised existence, that an understanding of the grotesque and the ugly emerges.

The ugly was evidently equated towards the formless, primitive or bestial, ultimately a non-thing (Harpham [1982: 9] cited in Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, 2003: 283).

In *Aesthetic Theory*, philosopher, Theodor Adorno draws out this idea of ugliness as a 'non-thing'. He states that originally, ugliness was considered a pre-civilised amorphous element, similar to nature in the raw, or to that which is incomplete and unformed. Beauty, on the other hand, developed as a secondary reaction, a response to ugliness – the form given to formlessness (Adorno [1997: 46-47] cited in Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, 2003: 283). Adorno's position is that 'ugliness is understood as that which opposes the ruling law of form; it is integrated by that formal law and thereby confirms it' (1977: 46). Thus ugliness was initially understood as a disavowal of the beautiful. As a result, 'If one originated from the other it is beauty that originated in the ugly and not the reverse' (Adorno, 1997: 69).

According to Adorno, it thus follows that, in art, ugliness acts as a direct challenge to viewers' notions of beauty: 'Art has struggled hard over the course of its development to establish boundaries and [...] any indication of the frailty of these boundaries, anything hybrid, provokes the strongest rejection' (Adorno, 1997: 67-68). So to activate ugliness in art is to disrupt the rules that govern a form that is meant to be 'beautiful'. At this point, the hybrid – as a notion within ugliness, and as a moment of complete rejection – is introduced.

Athanassoglou-Kallmyer discusses the grotesque as a term that evokes this hybridity (2003: 282). She references the Italian origins of the word, '*grottesche*' – which originates from 'grotto', a cave. '*Grottesche*' was particularly present in 1480, as it referred to the fantastic decorative designs discovered on the walls of underground, grotto-like vaults of ancient Roman Temples, baths and palaces.' (Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, 2003: 282). The images in these spaces were filled with hybrid formations of ambiguous and improbable combinations of human figures, animals and plants

(ibid). The hybrid forms were thus the embodiment of the grotesque, of ugliness as they resulted in outrageous and unnatural forms which links to the discussions by Adorno and Harphams on the 'non-thing'.

Literary theorist Peter Stallybrass and literary critic Allon White in *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (1986) extend the discussion of the grotesque as it relates to the hybridity: ' [the grotesque] is formed through a process of hybridization or in-mixing of binary opposites, particularly of high and low, such that there is a heterodox merging from elements usually perceived as incompatible, and this latter version of the grotesque unsettles any fixed binaryism' (Stallybrass and White, 1986: 44). They thus propose that the grotesque is a conflation of hybrid forms. So, the authors argue that when high and low merge in a hybrid form, this gives way to the grotesque. However, dominant ideas of beauty tend to position high and low in opposition. This means that their hybrid union disrupts normalised notions of beauty (Stallybrass and White [1986: 43] cited in Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, 2003: 284). The disruption consequently acts as a moment of analysis, in which the ideal is questioned and its meaning is pushed outside of its limits.

Towards the latter half of the eighteenth century – that is, during the Enlightenment – ideas surrounding the grotesque and beauty were challenged through discourse around relativism and multiplicity. This challenge was a way to determine whether the terms were 'contingent, relative and mutable concepts, determined by diverse parameters, such a geography, time, climate, culture, race and national and ethnographic particularities' (Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, 2003: 288). In other words, what was interpreted as beautiful in one context could be interpreted as ugly in a different context. If beauty and ugliness are context and canon dependent, this implies that they are interchangeable, fluid concepts; varying according to place, time, and perception.

FORMLESSNESS

Considering the fluidity of the terms, Adorno states that ugliness is a characteristic of twentieth century artists (1997: 47). He explores ugliness in relation to the 'formless' and the 'abject'. Generally speaking, ugliness, formlessness and the abject are aesthetic categories that have developed their own aesthetic discourse. Psychoanalytic, Marxist, and gender theories have influenced the complexity of the way the terms have been understood (Adorno, 1997: 47). Through the use of the abject in aesthetics, ugliness is able to generate a reaction of disgust, blurring boundaries and disrupting conventional beauty imagery (Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, 2003: 288).

In *Documents* (1929-30), theorist Georges Bataille discusses the idea of 'formlessness' or, in his words, 'informe'. He examines formless/informe as both the absence of form or meaning, as well as the progression of 'aesthetic, moral and physical degradation, a bringing of things down in the world by stripping them of all lofty references' (Bataille [1985: 31] cited in Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, 2003: 291). Bataille tracks the interpretation of formlessness as a contestation against customary, theoretical aesthetic demands (1985: 31). The lack of shape and significant form opposes any sense of order. As it has no limits, it is consequently in a state of ambiguity. The lack of ability to define and contain the material due to sculptural disintegration, allows for the decay of a form to actively affect the viewer through its unsteady metamorphosing. This is particularly relevant to my works, as my own corporeal state is emulated in the melted sugar's ever-changing and unstable material structure.

Athanassoglou-Kallmyer relates Bataille's formlessness/*l'informe* to art. She discusses the first exhibition of *informe* art, which occurred in Paris in 1977 at the Georges Pompidou Centre (2003: 291). The show was curated by art historian, Yve-Alain Bois and art critic, Rosalind Krauss. They categorised 'the formless' into four main categories: the first, *base materialism*, focused on a work's material nature;

its prime identity. The second category, *horizontal*ity, is the focus of *informe* – that is, to go against the principles of hierarchy. The third category, *pulse*, is an imperceptibly slow shake-up of the surface of the work; producing an uncanny, disturbing effect of change (Athanasoglou-Kalmyer, 2003: 291). When precarious, unstable and changeable materials are used there is a pushing and pulling upon a contained sense of form, slowly rupturing the surface through disintegration. *Entropy*, the fourth and final category, is the degradation of energy, leading to disorder and to the disintegration of matter (Athanasoglou-Kalmyer, 2003: 291). These four categories offer a lens through which to critically assess that which is formless.

THE UNCANNY

The categories within aesthetics mention many terms which have to be discussed in depth. While formlessness and the grotesque have been discussed, two other significant terms to discuss are the uncanny and the abject. In the text, *The 'Uncanny'* (1919), psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud, discusses how aesthetics is an exploration of the qualities of feeling (1919: 1). The uncanny, is one such feeling. Freud views the uncanny as that which fits in with all things terrible. However, he states that, 'it [the uncanny] is that class of terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar' (1919: 1-2). Through his in-depth exploration of the German word, *unheimlich* (unhomely) as it relates to *heimlich* (homely), he shows how the terms carry a duality in meaning.¹² The word *heimlich* is ambivalent in the sense that it coincides with the meaning of *unheimlich* (Freud, 1919: 2-4). While the experience of the uncanny is entirely subjective, Freud discusses key instances in which the feeling can be evoked: through intellectual uncertainty; the ambiguity between animate and inanimate objects; doubles and repetition; the omnipotence of thoughts and the estrangement of something through repression

¹² *Unheimlich* : strange, uneasy, bloodcurdling, uncomfortable, gloomy, dismal, gruesome (Freud, 1919: 2)

Heimlich: belonging to the house, not strange, familiar, homely (Freud, 1919: 2)

To do something Heimlich – pleasure at someone's discomfort, secretive, malicious, deceitful (Freud, 1919:3)

'What is Heimlich thus comes to be unheimlich' (Freud, 1919: 4)

(1919: 2-6). In each of the above instances note the ambiguity of the feeling that could occur. It is through the experience of these kinds of circumstances that the uncanny can be evoked – each instance offers a discomfort corresponding with a familiarity. The uncanny offers an experience that is strange yet is reminiscent of something once known.

THE ABJECT

In the third category, *pulse*, Athanassoglo-Kallmyer discusses how for Bataille, the *informe* is connected to base materialism, as well as scatology and vulgarity (2003: 291). His connection to these terms brings forward the topic of the abject and its relationship with the uncanny. In her now classic text *Powers of Horror*, psychoanalyst, Julie Kristeva states that the abject is neither subject nor object. According to Kristeva, ‘the self is beset by abjection’ (1982: 1). Abjection is the place where meaning collapses, and the self is constantly challenged because the abject ‘is that which is opposed to I’ (1982: 1-2). Using the example of food loathing as a fundamental and old form of abjection, in reference to vomiting, Kristeva posits that the abject is improper and unclean: it ‘is thus not the lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but that which disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite’ (Kristeva, 1982: 4). The abject is both an action and a condition in which there is a split and breach of once clearly defined aspects and borders. Abjection is a complex term, yet Kristeva renders it poetic: abjection is ‘immoral, sinister, scheming, and shady: a terror that disassembles. A hatred that smiles, a passion that uses the body for barter instead of inflaming it, a debtor who sells you up, a friend who stabs you’ (1982: 4). In aesthetics, the abject divulges into the uncomfortable confrontation of the self where our personal physical boundaries are ruptured on an immensely intimate level.

Art critic Hal Foster elaborates on Kristeva's description in his text *Obscene, Abject, Traumatic*: the abject as a mix of revulsion and desire, it is 'what I must get rid of in order to be an I at all'. Foster states:

'It is a phantasmatic substance not only alien to the subject but intimate with it - too much so in fact, and this overproximity produces panic in the subject' (Foster, 1996: 114).

Ultimately, the abject encroaches upon our delicate boundaries, it disturbs our spatial understandings of our bodies. By corrupting our physicality visually (bodily fluids, open wounds, vomit and decay), the abject is an evasive experience with a violent memory. The abject's hybrid nature — that ambiguous in-between — does not respect borders or rules (Kristeva [1982: 4] cited in Athannassoglo-Kallmyer, 2003: 292). It is the abject which intends to disturb identity, structure, and ultimately the individual in a direct and undeviating manner.

AFFECT

In terms of abject theory, when reading the various arguments by many authors, Kristeva and Foster included, the abject is referred to as affecting the viewer. When engaging with the abject, the uncanny and terms surrounding disgust and hybridity, the viewer is engaged in a particular emotive experience. This experience is understood to be a result of affect, an internalization by the viewer of the work. In her literary summary on affect theory, artist Kat Beavers explores multiple theorists stand points on the term (2011: 1). According to philosopher, Brian Massumi in, *The Autonomy of Affect* (1995), affect is a manifestation of the body's internalisation of an intensity, an emotional embodiment of the strength of a feeling through a physical experience. He describes affect as an 'intensity which is embodied through purely autonomic reactions most directly manifested in the skin - at the surface of

the body, at its interface with things' (Massumi, 1995: 85).¹³ Affect is a non-conscious autonomic remainder of an experience, it is the involuntary bodily response as a result of a happening¹⁴. Massumi states that: 'Actually existing, structured things live in and through that which escapes them. Their autonomy is the autonomy of affect' (1995: 87). According to Beavers, this means that the human body thus exists as 'walls' which act as sensory receptors; allowing the intensity of the experience to be transmitted and externalised (2011: 1). On the other hand, Massumi argues that more than sensory receptors, absorbing pulses or discrete simulations; the body infolds contexts, violations and cognitions. This 'infolding' inevitably raises the raw domain of experiential richness (Massumi, 1995: 90).

Author and academic Anna Hickey Moody explores French philosopher Gilles Deleuze's definition of affect theory as: 'that which is felt, before it is thought' (2007:8). According to Deleuze, affect is different from emotion in that it is an a-subjective bodily response to an encounter (Moody, 2007: 8). It is thus the untampered and rare bodily stimulations that bring nuanced first-hand experiences into the viewer's space. Affect theory is consequently the unconscious unfolding and infolding of a bodily response in relation to ugliness, the grotesque and the abject.

MESSINESS

Through my practice, specifically my sculptures, I activate the trauma of the abject in a physical, fleshy way; evoking the process based messiness of making. As a maker the sculptures are a visual realisation of my personal abject and uncanny physical internalisations. They are a sense based processes of engaging through the experience and transforming that into a physical thing which is shared socially. The grotesque, abject, uncanny and amorphous (formless) are thus all terms which become apparent in my sculptures abilities to affect the viewer and maker in their varied sensual experiences of the works. Lange-Berndt notes that, the physicality of

¹³ This is particularly relevant in relation to my own 'skin' issues, which I draw attention to in my fuller discussion later in the thesis in the context of my own work.

¹⁴ An experience, an interaction, a moment of engagement with something.

the world lost its stability early in the twentieth century, when research into the micro-world of atoms, quantum mechanics and the theory of relativity resulted in material being understood as energy levels rather than 'stuff'. (Lange-Berndt, 2015: 18).

Lange-Berndt describes materials, the substances that artists use, as messy and unstable formations. She argues that materials when explored through the notions of time and processes can be expanded upon and thus allow the ability to address how through their messiness, materials disrupt and obstruct social norms (Lange-Berndt, 2015: 18). Amorphous, formless and malleable materials are those which subvert conventions; allowing grotesque formlessness to reject material containment. The anti-form opens up an opportunity for materials to embrace temporary existences. The impermanence of the materials allows them to develop uncanny lives of their own; transforming and metamorphosing (Lange-Berndt, 2015: 19). As Lange-Berndt argues, it is the garbage, or indistinguishable 'stuff' that can cause traditional material hierarchies to implode (Lange-Berndt, 2015: 19).

Surrealist, George Bataille, proposes that it is through decomposition that the form becomes relatable to our own forms and begins to affect the viewer. His concept of '*bas matérialité*', base material, is indicative of ruins, relics, decay and decomposition, a material which corresponds to our own mortality (in Lange-Berndt, 2015: 19). The sticky substance for instance, begins to blur the distinction between subject, object and material as well as drawing on phobias and anxieties (in Lange-Berndt, 2015: 19). Sticky substances are able to leave residue on the skin, which activates invasion, uncleanliness and disturbance with the boundary of the body. Sticky substances are also directly relatable to the body's processes of excretion: sweat, snot, spit, phlegm, urine. All of these substances are abjections of the self, which draws on the anxiety of having what the body has rejected remain upon the body or alternatively, what another body has rejected in contact with the body.

In summation, this chapter explored the theories and key concepts involved in discussions around ugliness, the abject and the grotesque. These terms included, ugliness, the grotesque, hybridity, the non-thing, formlessness, the uncanny and the abject. These terms were all specifically explored in consideration of the encounters prompted by my own body of work and the processes of making. I ended with reference to Bataille's notion of decomposition, and Affect theory, which allows us to consider in the chapters to follow how the artwork is able to act as a site of encounters and experiences which allow for a-subjective bodily responses.

In the next chapter, I recount my own abject corporeal and sensual material experiences with particular reference to the sticky substance of melted sugar. I analyse the materials central to my making-process within sculpture and printmaking in order to understand their complexity, and the ways in which they contribute to the production of meaning. I allow the viewer into my personal and vulnerable space as an artist, and a human through the autoethnographic lens. I consequently show how my sculptures evoke sensual experiences that are tied to the notions of the grotesque, abject, uncanny and the formless.

THINKING THROUGH MAKING

In chapter two I focused on the theories that ground discussions of ugliness, the abject and the grotesque. I ended with reference to Bataille's notion of decomposition – he looks at ugliness, the abject or grotesque as physical manifestations that link object, artist and viewer in an unbounded interaction (in Lange-Berndt, 2015: 19). In this third chapter, I investigate how specific materials in my work relate to personal and shared experiences, grounded in the physicality and sensitivity of the corporeal body. I explore each material in detail through the lens of 'meaning-through-making' / 'thinking-through-making' as a way of developing an understanding of the materials and works through the process and means of making rather than purely through an interpretation of the final product. While the process of making is activated, the material structure and history is also surfaced to aid in more developed understanding of the body of works as a whole. As a result this chapter explores both the intuitive nature of not only the artist but the behaviour of each of the materials and processes of making. In the fourth chapter I activate the insights upon which I build in chapter three to conduct a detailed visual analysis of a selected number of my works.

Art is a process of making and the result is generally shared with an audience. Author, Maria Lind, states that art production is an intellectual process, and abstract art in particular has the capacity for self-reflection (2013: 10). My process of making, leading up to the 'final' product, is driven by the need to develop an understanding of why the materials I work with carry significance on a personal level and beyond that to resonate in the experience of viewers.

Through my creative practice I have developed a way of working that considers myself and my body, as well as the viewer and their bodies in relation to the experience of the artwork. The current forms, as sculptures, prints, drawings and interactive installations, are manifested through an intuitive and experimental process of making. Central to this process is the disruption of physical boundaries and the exploration of form within space.

Beginning from a biographical and physical reading of the materials I use in my work, I probe into the way my materials respond when I disrupt their static structures. Disruption occurs through the heating, boiling and melting of substances that leave the substances unstable, thus disturbing the assumed fixed boundaries between materials, objects, artworks and viewers. I ask how this disruption facilitates or provokes meaning through an experience of embodied materiality. To embody a sculpture and material is to make visible or tangible an expression of an idea, quality, or feeling, which probes the viewer into exploring and making palpable intellectual, emotional and physical meanings which constitute and encapsulate them within the experience. This kind of embodied experience is as much a visual encounter as it is a series of tactile, visceral and elusive interactions between the body of the viewer and the experienced materiality of the unstable object.

Growing up, I struggled with the effects of food allergies and intolerances on my body – allergies which I have not outgrown as an adult. The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) writes that, an allergy is fairly simply explained, as a hyper/ abnormal immune response. When the body comes into contact with an unwanted a substance or environment that it perceives as a threat, it responds with allergic reaction (NIAID, 2012: 8–9). The body's immune system will react hyper-sensitively towards the material; agitating the body's boundaries. The harshness of the agitation depends on the severity of the allergy. A food allergy is an abnormal response to a food; triggering the body's immune system and resulting in various kinds of adverse food reactions (NIAID, 2012: 8–9). On the other hand, an intolerance is the body's inability to digest a certain food substance.

As a result of allergies and intolerances, my body reacts aggressively to sugar, dairy products, gluten¹⁵ and sulphonamides.¹⁶ I turn my attention towards sugar in particular, in order to elucidate the personal, corporeal relationship I have with my artworks. By exploring my uncanny and abject material relationship with sugar, I invite the viewer into my own personal and intimate material experiences.

Theorist John Randolph refers to ‘intimacy’ as a concept that enables a shift away from the fixed boundaries that shape a particular structured social thought, and towards a series of new dialogues and interpretations (2004: 574–593). Using a personal lens in my work is a strategy I employ to prompt a nuanced understanding of the material I use – viewing sugar through my lens, helps the viewer understand what this material means for me, rather than only understanding what society considers it to be, prompting a multitude of meaning.

During the process of making, I consider who may come into contact with the work, what they may do and how their bodies would interact with the object-ness and materiality of the sculpture. The viewer brings their own context to the work, and while they do not and cannot reproduce my experiences, we may share commonalities in our lives and reactions. As theorist, Stuart Hall, discusses, it is through shared experiences, that people can interpret meaningfully what is happening around them (1997: 2). While he understands that there is diversity in this, he also understands that meaning is constantly being produced and exchanged through interactions (Hall, 1997: 3). The significant aspect, for me, is for the viewer to enter into the space in which the sculpture exists and to allow their own physical bodies to experience the work sensually, emotionally and intellectually in as full and rich a way as possible. The viewer should enter the space conscious of their senses

¹⁵ Gluten intolerance. My physical reaction is intestinal swelling, bloating and abdominal cramping, which can result in damage to the small intestines. “Gluten is a part of wheat, barley, and rye. Gluten intolerance is associated with celiac disease, also called gluten-sensitive enteropathy. This disease develops when the immune system responds abnormally to gluten. This abnormal response does not involve IgE antibody and is not considered a food allergy.” (NIAID, 2012: 16)

¹⁶ Allergy to sulphonamides. ‘Sulpha’, belonging to the drug family of sulphonamides. My physical reaction to sulphonamides is acute vomiting.

and how these are being activated, as I encourage the viewer to touch, smell and listen to the sculptures.

Prompting the viewer's initial attention and engagement is the tactility and visceral quality of my work. However, it is the viewer's interaction with the environment and their experience of the work that should hold and sustain their attention. I hope to achieve this by allowing the process to become more than mere action, and for the material to exceed the confines of object-ness. This means that I create sculptures that disturb, disrupt and narrow the space between subjects and objects. The viewer enmeshes themselves in space where they are invited to be both attracted and repulsed. The uncanniness of the experience should be met with desire and disgust, for the audience may be both repelled and drawn in, while confronting a raw abjection of the self. By this I mean that the viewer becomes aware of the possibility of a rupture of their assumed secure skin, body. This happens through the visual relation of the forms as they are able to activate a bodily association.

SUGAR

"Everybody's got their poison, and mine is sugar" – Derrick Rose, American athlete (Rose, 2017).

In the text, *Auto-ethnography: An Overview* (2011), scholars, Carolyn Ellis, Tony E. Adams and Arthur P. Bochner discuss the usefulness of auto-ethnography as a particular approach to research. While the use of the personal, from the traditional perspective of 'objective' and hence impersonal science, is argued as being biased. Ellis *et al.* argue that it opens up a greater lens to the making process and disrupts canonical boundaries (Ellis, Adams and Bochner, 2011: 1). Ellis and Holman Jones argue that auto-ethnography is a self-reflective mode of research and writing – it is a framework that through the personal experience facilitates an understanding of the cultural experience (Ellis 2004, Holman Jones 2005, quoted in Ellis *et al.*, 2011:

1). The authors propose that auto-ethnography challenges canonical ways of conducting research and representations of others – it highlights the impossibility of universal narratives; embracing the complexity of stories and relationships between authors and readers. The authors discuss auto-ethnography as it relates to ‘telling’:

“‘Telling’ is a writing strategy that works with ‘showing’ in that it provides a distance from the events described so that the audience may think about the event in a more abstract way’ (Ellis, Adams and Bochner, 2011: 5).

Given that my work deals with my personal experience with allergies and intolerances, I look at sugar, sucrose specifically, and my body’s abject relationship with it. Sugar has the possibility of communicating multiple layers of meaning through a personal, emotional, intellectual and physical experience with itself as a material. My making process, where I draw on sugar as the primary material to create art, has been an intuitive one. Yet, ultimately it is my personal body’s reaction to sugar as a hostile substance that drives the creative process.

My initial association and reactions with sugar, began through the consumption of dairy, sugar in its lactose form. As a result my relationship between my body and sugar started out unsympathetically, as it caused dark rings under my eyes, stomach problems, rashes, skin irritability, severe sinus blockages of both the throat and nasal passage, as well as diarrhoea. It was an instantaneous, direct and harsh reaction. Over the years, the allergy’s severity fluctuated, allowing my body to let its guard down. However, after a sudden vicious allergic reaction my body was forced back into its defensive position. Since the initial hostile relationship intensified it has also extended more widely, expanding to sucrose in its many forms.

Sugar (glucose, lactose, sucrose, fructose), when ingested, now leaves my body raw. If consumed I suffer with intestinal swelling and cramps for a number of days. I find

my flesh bare, with open wounds and sores that do not heal as standard wounds would – medically, these wounds are considered a type of eczema.¹⁷ The healing of the wounds’ is prolonged and uncomfortable leaving my fleshy security, my skin, in a position of vulnerability. Sugar abjects me in a complex and fluid way; it destabilises and ruptures my body’s physical boundaries, leaving them disturbed. Internally and externally, I am both exposed and in pain. My experience with sugar has developed through a violent process in which the material attacks and the body defends. While the sugar is aggressive, and constant my body’s reactions are continually in flux. Visually the relationship appears non-existent – my body’s abjection is sluggish, and the entire process of ‘refusal’ is slow yet prolonged.

Yet what is the academic merit of describing this reaction? Anthropologist Ruth Behar in *The Vulnerable Observer*, argues that the emotions and experiences of the anthropologist should be recognised with the same value as academic objectivity within the practice of recording (1966: 12). According to Behar ‘vulnerability’ in this context is a kind of receptivity, and familiarity; a lessening of the distance between self and other (1966: 12).¹⁸

Sugar’s materiality affects me on a deeply personal level, as my body engages with it in a raw and vulnerable way. This reaction forms the backbone of my creative research process – the bodily ruptures I experience in response to sugar are not limited to my personal identity but have a wider transpersonal significance too. By transpersonal, I mean that the sugar experience is able to extend beyond my individual and personal encounter to encompass broader aspects of others’ experiences with the material.

¹⁷ ‘**eczema**—the term for a group of allergic conditions that causes the skin to become inflamed and is characterized by redness, itching, and oozing lesions that become crusty. The most common type of eczema is known as atopic dermatitis, or atopic eczema, and is particularly common in young children and infants.’ (NIAID, 2012: 26)

¹⁸ Behar is discussing this in relation to representation with in anthropology of ‘the other’.

Sugar is a widely used substance/ product, global in its ubiquity, yet it attacks individually. Its hostility is embodied in various ways. Immersed in a history of severity, it as a material has perpetuated problematic moments through consumer encounters. Its contradictory existence dabs both into desire and disgust. This tension in the 'meaning' of sugar, as will be below discussed, is a result of a rich and complex series of relationships it has had, beginning with the elites' perpetuation of slavery (Mescher, 2005: 3). Its extension into indentured labour condensed its embodiment and resulted in sugar trade wars (Mescher, 2005: 3–4).

Sugar, produced from sugar cane, is understood to have originally been cultivated in the south pacific region, in India (Bengal Region), New Guinea and Barbados before spreading across the world through colonial slavery or indentured labour (Mescher, 2005: 1). The history of the production of sugar in South Africa is closely linked to the colonial project through indentured labour. Journalist, Grethe Koen, in *The Bitter History of South African Sugar*, explores the history of sugar production. Sugar cane was and remains to be cultivated in the coastal areas of KwaZulu-Natal (Natal) (Koen, 2015: 1). In 1845, British settlers colonised the Natal area. It was after their settlement that farmers began to bring in cane tops from Mauritius to cultivate sugar cane (Koen, 2015: 1). However in 1859, desperate for more labour, the *Coolie Law No. 14* was passed to bring indentured labourers from India to South Africa.¹⁹ The indentured labourers were promised food, board and a small monthly stipend in return for labour as well as crown land and citizenship after five years of debt servitude (Koen, 2015: 2). In contradiction to this they were poorly treated, worked exorbitant hours in poor conditions and their wages were generally withheld (Koen, 2015: 2). As result of the suffering of the labourers, a R12 billion industry was bred out of the market, with Tongaat-Hulett, Illovo and the Crookes brothers leading the sugar industry (Koen, 2015: 1).²⁰ Socio-economically, sugar became a commodity of power and control.

¹⁹ Coolie is a word which has been used derogatively towards Indian people. It has racist associations which reiterates the historical link sugar has with racial oppression/slavery.

²⁰ A similar history of course in the West Indies underlying the wealth of the British upper classes, there, their history was more connected to slavery. Tate and Lyle sugar empire's connection to Tate Gallery: art resting on the backs of slave trade.

In the film documentary, *Addicted to Pleasure – Sugar*, actor, Brian Cox, discusses with food historian, Ivan Day, how sugar in thirteenth century Britain, was a material that was expensive and rare. He goes on to discuss how in the early modern period it was a symbol of status that was used not only as a culinary substance but as a plastic medium, as an 'art material' (Barclay, 2012). Sugar was moulded and made into intricately detailed sculptures of people and buildings of the upper class, which were placed on tables as grand gestures of wealth. Day discusses how sugar sculptures were a symbol of decadence and a means in which the very wealthy would 'show off' (Barclays, 2012). Entering into the sixteenth century, sugar slowly shifted from its predominantly ornamental status as 'art object' to being consumed. Although it was initially only consumed by the wealthy, as it was more commercially produced, its value dropped and its consumption increased (Barclays, 2012). Before its consumption on a mass level, Cox discusses how sugar was used in pharmaceuticals during the fourteenth and fifteenth century: 'A spoon full of sugar to help the medicine go down' (Barclays, 2012). As the physical repercussions of sugar were originally unknown, it has resulted in many health issues to date. Sugar thus began to affect the body beyond its ingestion as a material.

The desire for sugar in a very physical way was the initial prompt for the material's destructive embodiment. Having been colonially exploited, the historical relevance of sugar links with its contemporary position within society, as it is causing a silent, yet global pandemic of ill health. Sugar is an ingredient in a huge range of foods. It is added not only as a preservative but as an ingredient that is tasty, and desirable. These days, sugar is readily accessible. The ubiquity of sugar means that its consumption has increased. Society at present is fast paced, resulting in more modified foods with multiple additives and often excess sugar. The surplus of sugar stimulates and triggers cravings within the body.

As it is in almost everything consumable, my body has increasingly developed a rejection to sugar. Sugar is reaching a point at which it acts as poison to the human body. This is because of over consumption, conscious or unconscious (Barclays:

2012). The excess consumption of sucrose can affect the body in adverse ways, including obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes. All of these consequences are considered harmful and unhealthy.

In contrast to negative socio-economic, historical and biological narratives about sugar, it still tends to be considered ‘a treat’. As a sweet textured material it is palatable and desired. The human body craves it like it would a drug. Its consumption is linked to want, and the inclusion of sugar into food sources – especially where its presence is often unnoticed or unnecessary – encourages this desire. The desire for sugar, through craving, is thus most often misconstrued as a need.

So sugar’s adverse health effects, and fraught, ‘ugly’ history are much like my personal unpleasant and complicated experiences of the material. Sugar has a history that transcends its physical state. Sugar consequently carries this double of positive and negative parallels in relation to the physical affects of sugar as sweetness/energy with ill health/decay. Therefore the social story of sugar acts as an initial point of connection for my viewers – once locked in a broader socio-historical conversation with my work, viewers can move towards an understanding of the personal, abject relationship I have with sugar.

SUGAR AS A MATERIAL IN MY ART PRACTICE

Through experiments in my process of making I have come to understand sugar’s physical structure, and the way its material properties speak beyond its atomic structure in a particular way. Sugar can be burnt, melted, heated and cooled. It can cut, crack, bubble and ooze. As a result of these manipulations the physical state of sugar is altered and will evidently stay in flux as the processes of manipulation are complex. I employ aggressive methods to manipulate sugar. Since the material has its own power over my body, the way I manipulate the material is a fight for

control. However, the process reveals an unexpected power dynamic between me (the 'maker') and the material.

Initially I melt the sugar with water on a heat source. Whilst this is a straightforward process, it is also violent, aggressive and seductive. The way in which the sugar crystals dissipate in the process of boiling is gradual. It proceeds in silence for a while melting and then reaching a boiling point. Once boiling, the sugar dispels and rejects the water from its own 'body'. When all the water has evaporated a bubbling syrup remains. It bubbles slowly, sensuously and smoothly, while crackling softly. Then, it morphs effortlessly from a clear liquid colour towards a crystal umber. The crackling is enticing, the smell delectable. All the while, small particles of sugar disperse into the air, allowing the body to inhale and absorb. To protect my body from absorbing the substance that it finds so threatening, I cover, mask and shield myself from its sensual, yet dangerous allure.

The habitual procedure of covering my body, of creating a barrier is a crucial aspect of my process. I wear a full suite to cover my skin, to prevent the sticky substance from coming into direct contact. In order to protect my internal body, I have to wear a mask with filters. The masks filters the air entering my body allowing me to breath. Without these simple aspects of clothing, which may be unnecessary to other people, my body otherwise would go into a state of shock. As a result the barrier is a constant reminder of my own vulnerability and bodily sensitivities.



Image 3.1²¹ - Image 3.1 indicates how sugar changes in colour as it is melted, referred to in cooking as caramelizing. What is referred to as burnt caramel in the image is the stage of sugar I sculpt with.

An extended time on the heat source allows the sugar to burn and change its colour to an unending dark red-black. The sugar smokes robustly, momentarily losing its allure. The smoke is thick and limitless, sucking all the oxygen from the air, suffocating the maker. It is at this stage, in its most aggressive state that I begin to sculpt the sugar. Once removed from the heat source, the smoke settles and the syrup oozes out in thick, lethargic bubbles. The smell of the sugar is pungent. The burnt and molten sugar is both dangerous and difficult to work with. It is viciously hot and exceedingly sticky. When sugar is exposed to heat, it becomes extremely hazardous to touch, its temperature exceeding 160 degree Celsius – much higher than most other food substances when heated. The stickiness and syrup-like properties of the molten sugar intensifies the danger of working with it. If it comes into contact with the skin, it sticks and burns. Once stuck, it has a prolonged presence on the skin and causes intensified burns and blisters.

Contradictorily, the sugar is especially attractive during the heating and melting process. It glistens, drips, and moves in thick silky streams. Its colours are bright, the smell fresh and potent; the sound enticing. A subtle range of colours glisten though the sugar's glass-like appearance as it dribbles and streams downwards, catching the light. Its properties entice not only the maker, but the viewer as well, as this state of constant change is irreversible.

²¹ Image courtesy of Baker Bettie. *How to Caramelize Sugar*. Online URL: <https://bakerbettie.com/how-to-caramelize-sugar/> (Date Accessed: 11/02/2018)

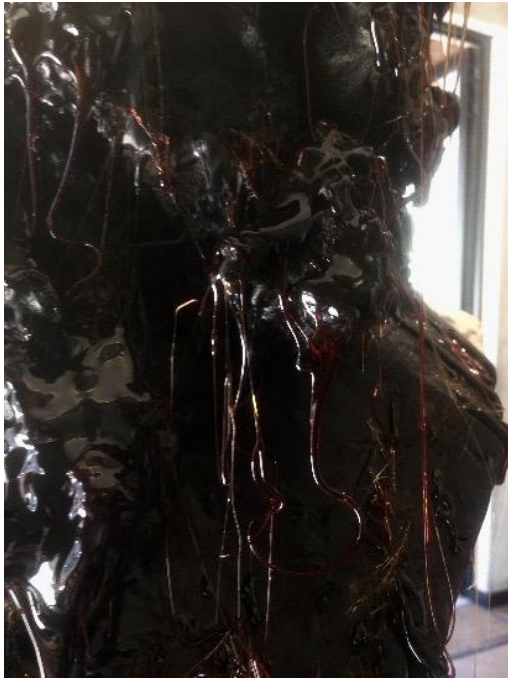


Image 3.2 - In this close up detail of one of my sculptures, (Image 3.2) the viewer can see the melted sugar gliding over the surface of the foam. It slips from the surface, marking its path with a series of stains. As the sugar cools, it temporarily solidifies in a glass-like state of rich red umber. In this state, the sugar is breakable, like glass, yet it remains sticky.

Once the heat source is removed, the temperature of the sugar decreases rapidly, solidifying in a temporary, firm physical state. In its blistering liquefied state, as it is dangerous to work with, it requires fastidious careful moulding and manipulation. The experimenting process is vital to the making as well as to the experience. Each time the sugar is worked with it responds unpredictably, it changes colour ever so slightly, hardens or heats up differently – this means there is always a limit to the control I have over it. A deepened sense of meaning emerges from this way of working – a significant factor upon which to reflect is how the sugar behaves during the making process, in consideration of its fluctuating state of change.

As my material-object engagement is entirely personalised, the way I work with the sugar is considered. Although at times inhibited, this method of making is also aggressive and harmful for the body. While I am in control of the process, the result is uncontrolled and unpredictable. This speaks towards my own bodily experience when I ingest sugar. The process resonates with the way I respond physically to the material. Its aggressive history, which contradicts its common use, is now physically present in the hostility of the heated and burnt material.

Once I have manipulated the sugar, it stays in a state of fluctuation, constantly melting and solidifying. My body's own instability is now relatable to the material: the material, when in a solid state, is scar and scab-like. However, it resembles blood or a bodily fluid when it is liquid. As a result of its unstable structure, the molten sugar drips and melts; leaving behind a sticky residue. The same way that the surface now carries the sugar's presence, my body carries marks indicative of where its boundaries have been ruptured. Considering my process of making further, the viewer can perhaps begin to see how the means of making is a bodily response to a material-object-viewer-maker relationship.

The method I use to disrupt the sugar and the process of making involves chemical reactions. The material's chemical change occurs through heating which gives way to melting. Food scientists, Shelly J. Schmidt, Leonard C Thomas and Joo Won Lee explore the process of melting sugar in *Can the Thermodynamic Melting Temperature of Sucrose, Glucose, and Fructose Be measured Using Rapid-Scanning Differential Scanning Calorimetry (DSC)?*. Their experimental studies show that sugar does not in fact melt, it decomposes (2011: 1). When sugar (glucose, fructose or sucrose) is heated the crystalline structures and molecules are in the process of breaking (Schmidt, et al., 2011: 1). Schmidt states that:

‘a true thermodynamic melting material, which melts at a consistent, repeatable temperature, retains its chemical identity when transitioning from the solid to the liquid state’ (Schmidt, et al., 2011: 1).

Schmidt and Lee make use of high-performance liquid chromatography to explore if sucrose remains sucrose both before and after the introduction of heat (2011: 2). The experiments reveal that sucrose does not retain its physical chemical properties, rather it decomposes into molecules such as carbon and oxygen (Schmidt, et. al, 2011: 2). This ‘apparent melting’ (+/- 140 - 160 degrees Celsius) is what prompts the

danger of the material (extremely high temperature) and gives it the agency to dictate how it should be handled.²²

As a means to make art, the material moves into a different realm – it is not dissolving or concealing itself as it would when added to food or drinks. Instead, it takes on the properties of what Brown would term a thing: I gain momentary control of the sugar in that I disrupt its ‘sugariness’ and create from it a physical mass.

POLYURETHANE FOAM

Polyurethane foam is another material central to my making process. It behaves as a middle layer that is heat resistant yet maintains a vulnerability to the melted sugar.²³ The foam is a material formed through expansion, resulting in bulbous masses of form. The amorphous creations refer to the human form, as well as reference pustule masses, tumours, and lard. Referring to fat, the foam appears as an abjected thing which has been rejected from a whole. The foam as a result appears as a cut out or rejected part of a body.

Commonly used in construction for insulation, polyurethane foam is an expansive creamy yellow substance that is produced through an exothermic chemical reaction. There are two yellow liquids that interact through a process of stirring, heating and a catalyst reaction, which chemically form a substance that is in a state of expansion. While the material is available in a spray can, I manually mix the two separate chemicals. I do this in an environment which optimises the expansion of the foam. In the most favourable environment the expansion is advantageous, rapid

²² “To distinguish “melting” caused by decomposition from thermodynamic melting, the researchers have coined a new name – “apparent melting” (Lee, Schmidt, Thomas, et al. University of Illinois, 2011: 2).

²³ I came about using the foam in my process of making art, as a result of needing a material that could behave as a middle layer. I needed a material that I could work with in a way that could have a partial resistance to the intense heat of the sugar, while still being susceptible to it. I needed a surface that was heat resistant yet maintained a vulnerability to the melted sugar. As a result poly urethane foam, or more colloquially known as expandable foam, became another key material in my practice.

and not easily managed. The material swiftly expands and heats within itself settling in varying shapeless amorphous and nebulous forms and then firmly solidifies. While the fickle foam is in the process of undisciplined expansion, it should not be touched,



as it is exceptionally sticky and tenacious. It is during the expansion phase that I am able to work with the foam; attempting to shape the voluptuous swells and bubbles. The settled yellowish formations are irregular, bulbous and inelegant masses. Although I aim to control, as far as it is possible, the substance for my purposes, the expansion and behaviour of the foam is unpredictable and difficult to manipulate. It is a matter of ‘going with the flow’ as the saying suggests.

Image 3.3

Mary Bellis — in *The History of Polyurethane - Otto Bayer* — states that polyurethane was discovered and patented by German Chemist Otto Bayer and co-workers at IG Farben in Leverkusen, Germany, in 1937, and was initially used as flexible foams: such as upholstery, mattresses, earplugs, sealants, and packaging (Bellis, 2017: 1).²⁴ In its rigid forms it is also commonly used for the insulation for buildings, water heaters, refrigerated transport, and commercial and residential refrigeration.

Within the body we have various layers that form our structure. One of these layers is fat, which is formed in the body through the use of the unused energy ingested in the body — such as the excess consumption of sugar. My use of foam represents sugar in an alternate state in the body, as a fat. Fat has a number of functions, one of which is to retain heat for the body by insulating and protecting our vital organs. Polyurethane foam has a similar function in the built environment — like fat, it

²⁴ Poly urethane foam is an organic polymer composed of organic units joined by carbamate (urethane) links (2017: 1). In accordance to the Alliance of The Polyurethane Industry, ‘Polyurethanes are formed by reacting a polyol (an alcohol with more than two reactive hydroxyl groups per molecule) with a diisocyanate or a polymeric isocyanate in the presence of suitable catalysts and additives.’ (Bellis, 2017: 1)

squeezes and pushes itself into spaces, filling crevices in order to support and insulate a particular structure.



Image 3.4

If we look further at the way in which the material behaves during the process of chemical reaction and subsequent liquid expansion, we can notice that it is similar to sugar as neither of the materials allows the maker much control over the final physical outcomes. Also the foam layer, in its sculptural use, most often behaves as a barrier where the sugar is simply coated over its surface and the interaction is left to chance. The behaviour between the two materials is dependent on how either of the materials interact with each other as well as the environment. If cooled, liquid sugar, is swathed sumptuously upon the surface of the foam – as is visible in image 3.4, the relationship is neutral, and the sugar trickles off the surface over time. However, if the sugar is exceedingly hot and is rapidly poured on top of the foam, it might burn and scar the surface.

The bulbous shapeless masses that the foam takes evoke the human body. Initially the two chemicals are a golden yellow liquid, each varying in their degree of yellow. During the mixing, the colours morph and become a milky yellow which after exposure to light, darkens towards a dirty yellow. The shape along with the colour mirror fat, growth-like masses, or pus. The foam thus becomes a visual reference for bodily formations. Through the amorphous structure a multitude of visual references are prompted. The most relatable reference is perhaps a pimple, a

bulbous mass coated in an oily liquid which ruptures; exposing a pustule mass, a visual of the abjected self. The uncanniness of the experience of these forms comes from the fascination with the familiarity of the form as well as the unfamiliarity of it. The few initial references to pus, growths, warts, and skin abnormalities is disgusting, yet the attraction of the glistening sugar draws the viewer nearer.

As a result of the bodily reading of the forms, the unsettled and formless appearances exude and suggest a visceral tactility that also invites and repulses the viewer into engaging with the area that the form occupies. The shapeless mass brings the contained environment into a visual conversation by muddling the geometrically structured space, the walls and ceiling, with the uncontained mess of the sugar and foam. The response of the palpable amorphous form to its physical surroundings thus most often activates a sense of the abject, forming a particular presence in the space for the viewer. The foam's fleshly presence prompts a platform which gives the sugar an extended agency. The foam provides a visual formation that the sugar visually compliments in its repulsively attractive physicality.

If we continue to look sculpturally, the forms tend to read as heavy and stable masses; however they are most often hollow and light in weight. The foam masses are made through the use of a pre-existing form, or mould, normally fairly organic in shape such as a balloon, however this varies from sculpture to sculpture. The foams' fickleness plays and responds around the form, either working into the suggested shape or defying it entirely. The form is removed after the foam has set. My intention is that the size and scale of the forms should suggest a reading of the self in the forms. On a physical level the formations should prompt bodily readings, suggesting and referring to external appendages, limbs, and the body as a whole, as well as internal organs and fluids. The varying sizes and forms allow a sense of discomfort to form: the internal and external corporeal relations co-exist and occupy the same space, not only together but within the space of the viewer too.

If we continue to look at my sculptural formations, we can see that their fluctuating existence allows the materials to have real and actualised lives. The sugar melts and morphs, drawing a strong parallel to the living-ness of artist, Marc Quinn's sculpture, *Self* (1991 – Present) Image 3.5. The sculptural series are self-portraits of the artist, in which he uses his actual body, his blood, as the material. The sculpture of Quinn's head is immersed in frozen silicone and needs electricity to maintain its structure. The materiality of the sculpture has both a symbolic and real function.²⁵ Similarly my sculptures continue to decompose and deteriorate, showcasing the role of time in the works, as well as disrupting the boundaries of canonical sculptural stability. Both *Self* and my body of work involve materials emphatically unstable, allowing the work to carry an uneasiness in the anticipation of a movement or change.



Image 3.5

Sculpture as a medium provides a platform which activates the physical space of the viewer. The three dimensional capabilities of sculpture allow a visually more intense experience because sculpture occupies space, a space co-existent with our own physical presence in a space. Sculpture's ability to tangibly occupy the space of the viewer is an integral part of the experience. The forms instability and susceptibility to change often causes a disruption in the boundaries between the viewer and the object within the physical space. The boundary disturbance is caused by the material. It is the sugar that crosses the boundary and begins the experientially based conversation between the object, material and viewer blurring lines. This is activated not only through the sugar physically crossing into spaces through melting but through physical participation. I intend through the experience of the works to not only provoke a 'visual' interaction but a tactile, bodily, and visceral relationship too, where the viewer is asked to touch and interact with the sculptural forms as an activated participant.

²⁵ The work was made in consideration of Quinn as alcoholic and a notion of dependency – of things needing to be plugged in or connected to something to survive – is apparent since the work needs electricity to retain its frozen appearance.' Every five years a new portrait is done, presenting a cumulative index of passing time and an ongoing self-portrait of the artist's ageing and changing self - Quinn, Online, URL: <http://marcquinn.com/artworks/self> (Date Accessed: 11/02/2018)



Image 3.6 - In order to underscore the way in which sugar disrupts boundaries, I need to stimulate the process of fluctuation. In order to do this, I am not only focusing on the active participant and the fluctuating materials, but I am also focusing on my processed based practice of making. This way of making allows me the freedom to extrapolate and experiment additionally with the materials.

As a result of the changing and fluctuating, representations arise from processes of objectification of the materials and body parts of the viewer as a totality – in other words the body and materials are functioning as a single objectified entity. This process begins to question where the body or subject ends and where the object or material begins (Eastop, 2012: 77). More so than a painting, the physicality of my forms underline that the artwork is an extension of the self. Academics George Newman, Daniel Bartels and Rosanna Smith explore the ‘extended self’ in terms of the artwork, deducing that the original artwork is perceived by an audience to contain some part of the person who created it. This is discussed through notions of creativity and the imbuelement of the essence or soul of the artist to the work (Newman et al., 2014: 648–657).

In terms of my own bodily experience the actuality of residue is a prominent factor. Residue is the remnant, the result of something that had happened and an amount has been left behind. For my body, it is the scaring, the scabs and the abjected residual of the self that remains. For my sculptures, it is the dripping, the staining, and excess, as shown in Image 3.5, which I aim to activate by keeping the traces. Thus through the existence and life of the sculptures prints are produced.

FROM SCULPTURES TO PRINTS

The next section concerns the transition from sculpture to prints, and the process of creating monotypes. This phase in the making is a result of the process and of the unstable behaviour of the melted sugar.



Image 3.7 - A detail of the excess liquid sugar collected below the sculptures on a sheet of paper.

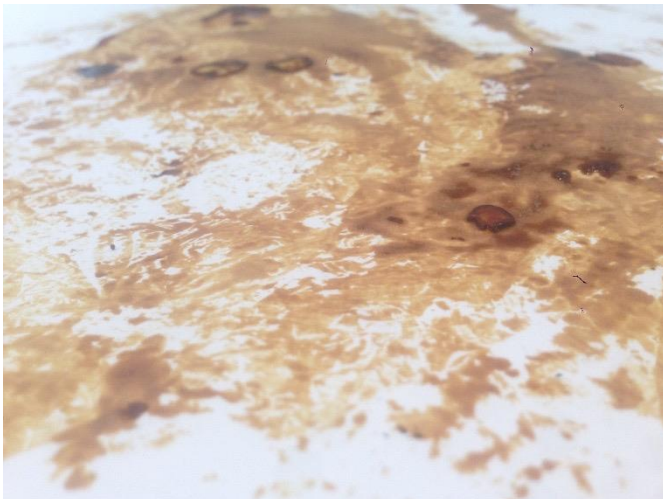


Image 3.8 - A close up detail of the liquid sugar staining the paper. Although this state may appear dry it still maintains the ability to liquefy.

As discussed above, the sculptures 'live' and consequently drip. During the sculptures first stages of dripping I place paper under the different forms. The paper then collects the freshly liquid sugar on the surface, as can be seen in image 3.7. It is through the residue of the uncontrolled forms that new masses develop. As the sugar is unpredictable, I amuse and entertain its' structure by making use of various types of paper to experiment with how it will scar and stain, as seen in image 3.8. The residual liquid sugar collects on paper through the natural deterioration of the forms, the sculptural masses. I run the paper that has collected the residual liquid through a printing press, with a solid black slab of ink on a plate, fusing the ink over the paper's entire surface.

This physical act of fusion between the ink, sugar and paper leaves the melted sugar in an exceedingly unstable state. The lively existence of the sticky sugar pierces through the solid black body of ink. The disruption of the deep black space is slow yet permanent. Certain sections of the sugar do not pierce through the ink. These sections lurk below the ink; their presence noticeable yet not prominent. The rest of the sugar punctures and diffuses the ink; threatening its once structured boundaries, and disrupting its sense of wholeness. The sugar materially abjects in this process, in that the sugar is dispelling that which is both of itself and not.



Image 3.9 - A visual of the ink and sugar battle upon the paper.

In image 3.9, the viewer can see a close up detail of a freshly printed paper with the layer of sugar and a solid black layer of ink on top. The viewer is able to view the ink and sugar conflict, as the sugar has pierced through the

solid ink slab. The viewer also confronts the ghost of the sugar which has not

penetrated through the ink but looms below the black surface. The battle of the sugar with the ink creates shapes that resonate with geographical and biological images. The sugar and ink layers upon the paper form together within the black abyss in a visual battle. The colourful masses (yellows, oranges, reds) that form within the black space are thus able to activate an image. The prints set in motion a visual conversation around shapeless masses in space. The masses of colour evoke outer space, galaxies, weather imagery and alien forms. This uncertainty in recognition allows the viewer to be drawn into the print on an intimate level, encouraging a closer inspection of the image. Only by looking closely at the prints and the details is the encounter between the ink and sugar visible. The residue is visible in the sugar's inability to displace all the ink from its physicality. There are consequently visual remains of each substance within each other.

My regular process is that these initial prints are then subjected to a second act of printing. As the sugar in the first print stage continues to alter and change its colour, form and phase of matter, the print remains relatively unstable and in a state of flux. Academics, Elaine Collins and Susanne Chandler, explore how the 'product approach' to art is predicated on the creation of a final and finished stable and permanent work (1993: 199). The instability of sugar and ink is key to my theoretical rejection of the notion of a 'finished' artwork. The monotypes resist fixity and stability. They embrace change; shifting and decaying as they exist as 'real', organic things, much like bodies do. This lack of finality lends itself to running the initial monotype through the press again, with another sheet of paper. This phase in the process allows an ever more ghostly image to develop. While the ink section becomes increasingly transparent, the 'black' space reads as a bad photocopy or a scan. The image appears amoeba like; bodily and peculiar in its formation. The images resemble scans of the internal structure of the human body: soft tissue, internal organs, blood vessels.

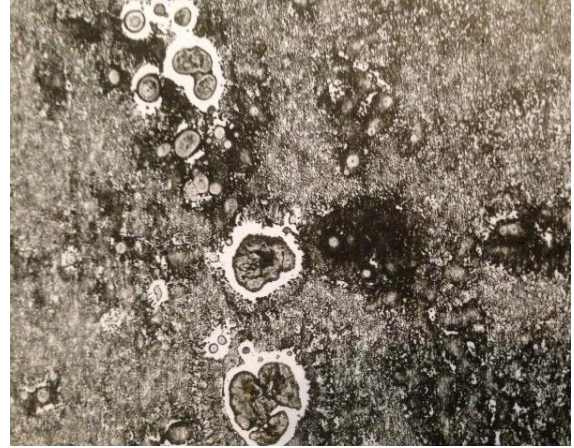


Image 3.10 (A) and 3.11 (A) - Close up details of my prints.

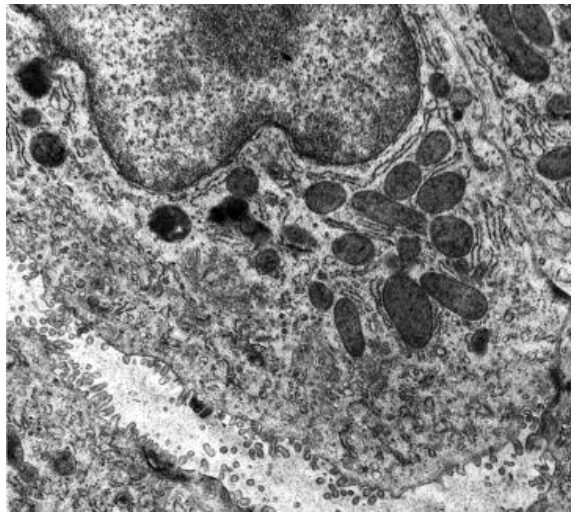
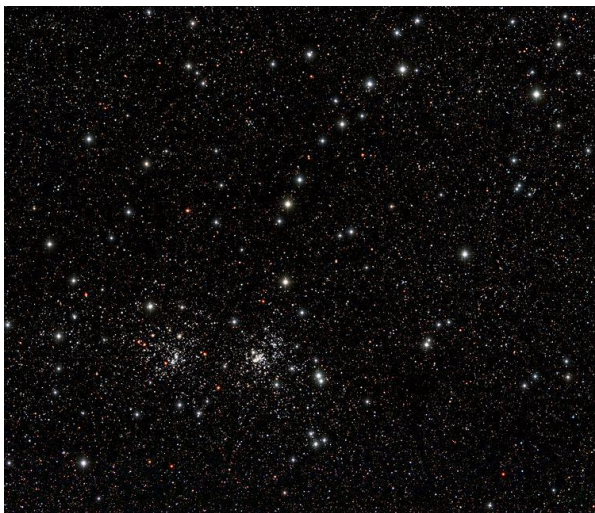


Image 3.10 (B) and 3.11 (B) - Comparative images in relation to Images 3.10 and 11 (A). Image 3.10 (B) is a photograph of a double cluster and Greg's Charm Bracelet, star constellations.²⁶ Image 3.11 (B) is a two dimensional image of a thin sample on a Transmission Electron Microscope (TEM).²⁷

The process of making sets in motion a potential way of looking: while the sculptures make reference to the outer layers of the human body, the prints evoke its internal functions. Upon a more detailed looking, the viewer may begin by looking at the

²⁶ Image courtesy of Greg Parker, 2012. Earth Science Image of the Day. Online, URL: <http://epod.usra.edu/blog/2012/11/double-cluster-and-gregs-charm-bracelet.html> (Date Accessed: 11/02/2018)

²⁷ Image courtesy of Sam Adam, 2016. A Level Notes. Online URL: <https://alevelnotes.com/Magnification/106> (Date Accessed: 11/02/2018)

sculptures internal corporeal presence via an uncanny association. The resemblance of imagery appears to be of the internal structure of the human body on a biological level, producing biomorphic imagery. Upon this close inspection an internal recognisability of amoeba and x-ray like imagery suggests that the viewer is able to step into the image and engage with the petri-dish view, to look microscopically at the forms. This view is challenged through the mass-like association that the sculptures carry in their abject presence, referring both internally and externally to the human body, both of the self and distant from it too. The viewer is prompted to feel as though they are moving from a form which feels wholly bodily to prints that look inside the body. When there is less to see, it is most important to actually experience the work in the flesh and look closely (Lind, 2013: 14). By looking intensely and closely the image will eventually appear more foreign and less familiar, pushing the viewers' understandings of what they initially interpreted in the images.

Similarly, if the viewer is looking from a distance at the prints, they begin to suggest images entirely foreign to human body, celestial. The forms that amass across the surface of the prints ultimately carry the viewer back towards an external relation – after looking at the prints for an extended period of time, the forms begin to resemble atmospheric images. In particular, the darker images suggest outer space – a familiarly foreign celestial realm. The potential uncanniness of both familiar and foreignness could unsettle and intrigue the viewer to further inspect and explore the new images, to create dialogues.



Image 3.12

The process of printmaking and image generation never breaks away entirely from the sculptural forms, as the sculptural process gives way to the patterns and forms that occupy the surface of the prints. I continue the process by creating further prints from the residue of the original image. The plate carries a trace of the sugar from the original print and thus another 'ghost image' can be printed from the plate as well as seen above in image 3.12. My decision to use printmaking as one of my processes is because it is a method of making that allows for multiples. The physical acts of fusion through the press challenge the materials structures and involves and allow a multiplicity of layering. Each step and each form informs the next stage or phase in the process of making. The main part of the process is however is still entirely based on the behaviour of the materials and how they behave in dialogue with each other and the spaces in which they exist.

METAL - STEEL AND IRON

Whilst my material focus has been primarily on sugar and subsequently on the conversation with the poly urethane foam, there is a third material that plays a significant role in my art pieces – metal. I discuss the role of metal, steel and iron, in my making process. I explore its personal, intellectual and structural association to my body as a maker, as well as in relation to the other materials.

While the metal, steel, is the material I have engaged with the least up until this point, it still has a prominent role in the making process. Its primary function is as a plate or tray, on which the dripping sugar collects, as seen in image 3.13. The material relationship is activated by the sugar's interaction with the metal, both visually and physically. The metals geometric shape in relation to the fluid organic form of the liquid sugar allows for interesting moments of disturbed boundaries, where the sugar either overflows or is at the moment of bursting over the seams.



Image 3.13

Metals tend to be used as materials that re-enforce stability and structure. Physically and historically metals carry a complex set of identities. Metals are natural resources and malleable materials that are mined. Conventionally they have been used for tools, construction, jewellery and a number of aspects in daily life. Metal has also played a significant role within art — particularly sculpture. Characteristically metals are hard, opaque, solid and conductive.

I work primarily in steel. Steel is a fusion of the elements of iron and carbon mainly, although carries minimal amounts of other elements. On a practical level, I work with it because it has a high tensile strength and is cost effective. The physical structure of steel is susceptible to being manipulated, it can be heated, hammered, melted, bent, moulded and pressed — which alters its shape without breaking it. While steel exists as a strong dense material, its physicality is vulnerable to change even after having been manipulated. Metal and more specifically, steel, expands and retracts. In relation to water, it oxidises and rusts; existing in decomposing states of fluctuation. When the sugar in its various states of fluctuation is brought into contact with the steel, the sugar's unstable structure interacts with the steel; allowing moisture to take effect upon the steel's surface. Even though we may find the material structure of the steel being challenged, it remains physically heavy, firm and structurally static, maintaining a prominent and stable presence for the viewer.

The history of steel inevitably began as a simple encounter between a subject and material. Mining as the initial and main platform on which it is encountered carries a vast and complex history. Within South Africa the mining of metals was a large contributor to our socio-political position as a country, economically, environmentally and racially (Antin, 2013: 1). Metals carry resonance in this context, specifically in the Witwatersrand, where the goldfields were discovered in 1886 (Antin, 2013: 2 - 3). Gold led to the development of entire cities, such as Johannesburg, while also causing the devastation of natural environments.

Mining is a process in which minerals or other geological materials seen to be of value are extracted from the earth by various and specific means (Worldwide, E.L.A., 2010: 3). The procedures involve chemicals and processes which each have a different environmental impact, for example: soil erosion, the development of sinkholes and the loss of biodiversity (Worldwide, E.L.A, 2010: 3). The chemicals contaminate the soil, groundwater and surface water, which have long-term devastating impacts on the water sources and the aquatic life (Worldwide, E.L.A, 2010: 8). Regardless of the repercussions, the materials continue to be mined. If we consider the desire and consumption of sugar regardless of its effect upon the body, metal is similarly desired materially – notwithstanding its attack on the environment.

In contrast with the sugar and polyurethane, metals may not seem to be closely associated with the human body. Yet, metals are a resource that our body needs in order to survive. As my experiences are rooted in the physical engagement between myself and the material, metals have played a significant role in my body's complex war within itself. The human body particularly needs iron in its blood system. Iron plays a vital role in the production of red blood cells, while it is also a section of haemoglobin (Abbaspour, N., Hurrell, R., & Kelishadi, R., 2014: 164). Haemoglobin assists in the transportation of oxygen within the blood stream to parts of the body (Abbaspour, N. et al., 2014: 164). Iron also has a crucial function in the cell that

produces energy (Abbaspour, N., et al., 2014: 165). Iron whilst the most significant metal for the body is only one of a collection of metals that the body needs (Abbaspour, N., et al., 2014: 164).

An iron deficiency is not rare; it is in fact a fairly common occurrence, especially for females (Abbaspour, N., et al., 2014: 164).²⁸ With my own bodily experience it has been slightly worse. As a result of my other bodily challenges, my iron deficiency has a higher intensity. When you suffer from an iron deficiency the body will physically display a number of factors as a result. Your body will experience fatigue, weakness, and dizziness and other function impairments that affect cognitive development (Abbaspour, N., et al., 2014: 170). You will also appear pale and display darkened rings under your eyes. Internally your body is struggling to produce the cells that provide you with energy as well as struggling to transport oxygen throughout the body (Abbaspour, N., et al., 2014: 170). When this happens, certain aspects of growth will hinder, such as hair growth, as well as the body will be prone to infection. The lack of iron also causes the body to bleed more easily resulting in effortless bruising and slower clotting when the surface is ruptured (Abbaspour, N., et al., 2014: 170). Taking this all into account, for myself, as I have little or no sugar intake, my energy and strength is already weakened and with the iron deficiency it is intensified to either fainting or blacking out if my iron levels are not regulated. With the increased bleeding and bruising my flesh is extremely vulnerable. This lack of defence and susceptibility to infection causes the already infected wounds from the sugars abjection to increase in pain and their healing process to be further prolonged.

These three materials all affect me, some more so than the others. I have embodied each individually through autonomic reactions in an intense personal and physical way which directly manifests in the skin, the surfaces of the body. Each leaves my

²⁸ An iron deficiency is essentially the lack of iron in the blood system due to poor consumption of food with iron, or the body's poor absorption after having been consumed. This is more common in females due to the loss of blood during menstrual cycles and hormonal changes. In severe cases the person is known as being Anaemic (Abbaspour, N., Hurrell, R., & Kelishadi, R., 2014: 164)..

body defenceless and vulnerable. As sugar has the most violent and harshest effect on my body; it affects me deeply and has as a result been my primary focus. My body, which should be a place of security, is constantly being challenged and disturbed by aggressively subtle materials. Thus if we consider each of these three materials in relation to their materiality through the use of an autoethnographic lens, we can begin to see how materials carry a significant socio-political history – that can be read through personal interaction and experience. In consideration of this as well as the physicality of the materials themselves, the audience and maker are able to see how the materials draw within and beyond themselves.

In summary we have looked at the materials individually: politically, socio-economically and personally as well as in relation to each other. As Lange-Berndt states: ‘To understand materials is to be able to tell their histories’ (2015: 16). The materials have also been explored in their ability to evoke the human body both physically and emotively. I have adopted a descriptive-writing style, associated with the auto-ethnographic approach, as a way to bring the reader into my personal and emotive process of making. Activating the theories discussed in chapter one and two, and the auto-ethnographic descriptions of the materials in chapter three, I conduct a detailed visual analysis of specific sculptures and prints from my body of work. I move through the exegesis by focusing on the actualized lives of the materials as they inform the production of each new artwork.

BITTERSWEET INTERRUPTIONS

It is my understanding that art is made to be experienced, and my work in specific is made to be experienced both intimately and at a distance. In the previous chapters a number of issues were discussed. In chapter one I looked at how to begin locating the artwork in terms of the object, thing and material while understanding that there is a fluidity and crossover between these concepts. I focused on a few examples of artworks by certain artists whose practices have influenced my own practice in terms of thingness and materiality. In chapter two I explored the emotive cues which provoke a particular reading in the artworks through formlessness, the grotesque and the abject appearances. I also explored how these emotive cues in terms of affect theory become specific instants during encounters. In the third chapter I focused on the process of making, with regard to specific material choices and situating those processes and choices within an autoethnographic framework. The role of the personal experience was explored in order to develop nuanced understandings of the materials in consideration of their conventional understanding. In the following chapter, I conduct a visual analysis of a group of my sculptures and prints in order to activate the literature discussed in the previous chapters.

I consider the process of making, moving from my sculptural works towards the process and production of my two dimensional prints. By maintaining a concentration on the process of making and how the forms develop, I show the life and movement of the works as they exist in time, as well as within the space of the viewer and maker. Furthermore, whilst beginning with the small intimate works I will move progressively through to the larger sculptural forms, and then on to the two dimensional prints. I focus on the prints and their behaviour within the process of making. Once I have moved through the works in detail I engage with a particular

sculptural work which explores the role of re-use in art. The work is a sculpture which I created by collecting the remnants of sculptures I had constructed before it.

FROM SCULPTURE TO PRINT AND BACK AGAIN

Sugar when used as a material for artworks, allows me to engage with the materials' materiality in varied contexts, where the 'sugariness' of sugar is not as easily overlooked — much like the 'foaminess' of foam. Metal and steel, when worked with as material within art rather than only as the final form an object has taken, allows us to rethink and engage beyond the object and look closely at the material and its behaviour. As discussed in chapter one of the thesis by Hudek; the object is complex in its ability to carry a variety of associations and connotations as it destabilises the subject by shifting the power dynamics off of the subject and emphasizing the agency of the object (Hudek, 2015: 16). However, the stability of the object and subject is disrupted when the object is dematerialised and questioned.

The creative production of materials as artworks thus prompts the viewer to be more aware of the materiality of the materials than they are in their everyday use — as can be seen in the Protean Series (Image 4.0) and additional works discussed below.



Image 4.0



Image 4.1 - *Protean Form*, melted sugar and soap on steel base, 20 x 20 x 7 cm, 2016.

Protean Form, Image 4.1, was the first fully solid sugar sculpture I made. The work is approximately 20 x 20 x 7 cm in size. However, the size varies over time as the sugar continues to morph. In physical comparison to the viewer, the size is uncomfortably similar to a stomach, or an internal organ that is in a state of rot. The rotten-like form is a molten mass of sugar crudely coated in soap. The globular corpus seeps through itself as a result of the soaps porous structure, allowing the sugar to breathe through its material anatomy. The sugar suffocates the soap, seeping into it, through it, and over it, staining it inconsistently. While the soap shell dries out and appears dulled and scab-like, the sugar glistens as it encroaches upon the surface.



Image 4.2 - *Protean Series II – B*, Melted sugar and Soap on a steel base, 1 of 6 sculptures, 20 x 20 x 6 cm, 2017

As *Protean Form* is the first in a series of sculptures, the existence and remnants of the other sculptures in the series vary, but I will discuss them collectively. Each form begins to speak closely to ideas of the abject and of disgust – given the material ability of sugar to disrupt conventional notions of sculpture, material and the corporeal relation. The sugar not only invades the soap in these series of forms, it seeps outwards; slipping towards the edge of the steel surface. The sugar becomes a thing in this process; as the thing acts as that which is uncontained, constantly in flux, multiplying and growing. The sugar is also actively being worked with outside of its conventional use, rendering its understood purpose, unnecessary and no longer plausible. Thickly sitting and gathering upon the clean sharp edge of the metal, the sugar sits at a point of tension and taunts the viewer. Then it ruptures, sliding off the surface as it enters the viewer's space.



Image 4.3 - *Protean Form, Series II – A*, Melted sugar and soap on a steel base, 20 x 20 x 7.5 cm, 2017

In '*The Poetics of Softness*' (1967), art historian, Max Kozloff discusses the softness of sculptures and how this allows the surface to be elastic and re-arrangeable (2015: 91). Regardless of how abstract a sculpture may be, softness unavoidably evokes the human in its anthropomorphic essence.²⁹ The organic form subsequently asks the viewer to correspond between the soft aesthetic and their own transient state (Kozloff [1967] in Lange-Berndt, 2015: 92). Unstable materials alter through time due to their malleability; posing a question around materiality and questioning the very nature of matter. The 'chance' factor of the sugar, inevitably invites an intimacy in that the form is open to manipulation, vulnerable to being played with. As discussed in chapter one, these sculptures are able to show how the material itself can carry out a structure (physical and social) which presupposes the outcome of the form. The meaning of the sculpture is happening before the form is completed, as the form will never be complete. The sugar and steel are physically pushing on each others boundaries as well as the viewers'. Evidently, as a result of

²⁹ Anthropomorphic – attributing human-like qualities to things not seen as human.

the experience of the work, the inert structures are subsequently destabilised through the materially based encounter. The human body, the environment and the artwork, through the material interaction become permeable.



Image 4.4 - *Untitled*, Melted sugar and steel, 30 x 30 x 18 cm , Plinth 30 x 30 x 90 cm, 2017

In image 4.4, the melted sugar has ruptured through the contained space; intruding into the viewer's space. This work is a bulbous form of molten sugar melted onto on a steel rod and steel square base, all placed upon a plinth. The amorphous form evokes the shape of the brain and is skull-like in size. Upon the plinth, the sculpture takes on a lolly-pop like appearance, as the rich red colour and gooey consistency of the sugar violates the clean white surface. Similarly to a blood stream, it creeps seamlessly across the surface, glistening as the sugar pulls the metallic smell out of the steel by means of the moisture disturbing the chemical boundaries. The dripping imbues the material with 'life'. Its uncanny existence through its life provokes affect within the viewer. However it is the sugariness of the sugar that forms the abject connection to the mass. As Bataille proposes, it is through decomposition, that the form becomes relatable to our own forms and begins to affect the viewer (cited in

Lange-Berndt, 2015: 19). The decay and decomposition of the sugar as a material, corresponds to our own mortality, considering the body as fluctuating. The stickiness of the sugar blurs the distinction between subject, object and material (Lange-Berndt, 2015: 19). The human body existing as 'walls' which act as sensory receptors; allows the intensity of the experience to be transmitted and externalized, affecting the viewer (Beavers, 2011: 1) This is activated through physical experience, the viewer embodying and engaging with the uncertainty of the material. The blood-like appearance offers a discomfort and uncanniness in its strange yet known quality. The ambiguity of the unclean and ruptured liquid outside of the body disturbs the assumed order of its internal association, challenging the viewer's corporeal identity. The abject is evidently evoked through the viewers' sensual experience.

Although the glass-like sheen upon the surface appears smooth and solid, as the sugar morphs, it maintains its gooey syrup qualities. When touched by the viewer, as they are encouraged to, the sculpture sticks to the hand and leaves a gummy trace upon the skin. The impermanence of the form as it melts and morphs raises questions around permanence, relating in a bodily way to mortality. The instability of the organic form as it decays relates to the transient state of our own selves, our bodies, on a daily basis. The question of mortality is evoked by the corporeal embodiment of the temporary and perishable reality of the human body. The repetition of the *Protean Form* series and this form, in relation to the other sculptures, sets up a constant confrontation with impermanence, formlessness, decay and change.

As discussed in chapter two, 'formlessness' according to Bois and Krauss is conceptualised into four main categories: base materialism, horizontality, pulse and entropy (Athanasoglou-Kallmyer, 2003: 291).³⁰ Sugar's material structure embodies

³⁰ - base materialism -the works material nature, its prime identity.

- horizontality, a focus of informel, to go against the principles of hierarchy.

all these aspects: it is the raw material that defies the logic of the immutable object in that its state is unconventionally impermanent. Its impermanence consistently shakes up the surface of the form, ever-changing, as if living. This living-ness is an uncharacteristic result of the decay and disintegration of the material form.

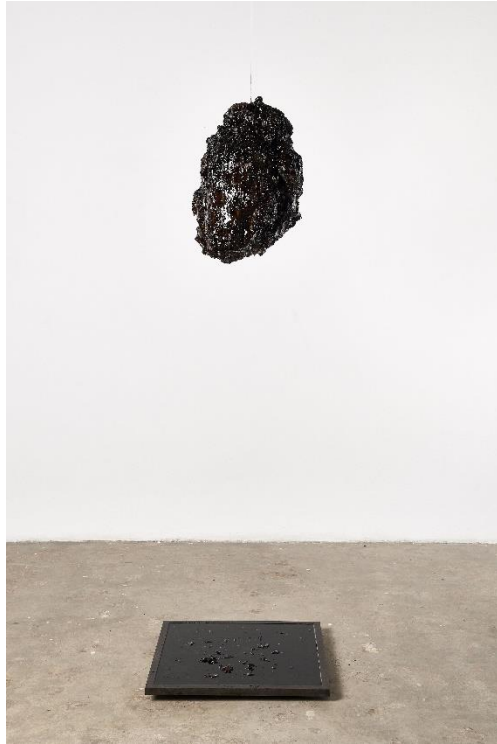


Image 4.5 - *Captured Decay*, Polyurethane foam, melted sugar, steel, paint. 90 x 90 x 190 cm. 2016-2018.

These categories are also embodied in *Captured Decay* (Image 4.5). The work is composed of an amorphous mass of polyurethane foam, painted black, coated in melted sugar and layered in soap. The decaying mass, dripping with sugar is eerily suspended over a steel tray. The tray collects the traces of the sculpture's existence and deterioration.

Thick, tacky molten sugar coats the floating mass, approximately 50 cm in size. The way it glistens contradicts the form's rotten appearance as the material slowly decomposes into the tray below. The soap is disturbed and stained, sitting as an open wound upon the foam. The sugar drips slowly and smoothly from the 'wounds' before splattering below; activating the open space in split moments between the two parts of the sculpture. The drip is unpredictable and inevitably uncontrolled, leaving the viewer unsure of the sugar's behaviour. The steel tray contains the syrupy substance and the fallen remnants of the soap and foam. The pool of sugar shines in the tray which, after months of dripping, is almost full. The sugar sits at

- pulse, an imperceptibly slow shake up of the surface of the work producing an uncanny even disturbing effect of change.
- entropy, the degradation of energy leading to disorder and to the disintegration of matter (Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, 2003: 291).

the edge of the steel, filled to the top, pushing upon the border of the contained space. The tension of waiting for the mass to drip from above, is further activated in the tray reaching its capacity. The meniscus of the sugar; waiting for the single drip and the moment of overflow, sets up this additional tension in the work. Watching this dripping motion, the viewer is caught in the moment just before rupture, in the space between containment and chaos. As Lange-Berndt states it is the amorphous, formless and malleable materials which subvert conventions; allowing grotesque formlessness to reject material containment (2015: 19).



Image 4.5 - A - Detail of the bulbous mass



Image 4.5 - B - Detail of steel tray

The anti-form of the sugar opens up an opportunity to embrace temporary existences in sculptures. The impermanence allows for an uncanny life of the sugar. As an inanimate material, ambiguity is evoked through the transforming and metamorphosing. Considering disintegration in the sculptures, there is a repetition in the presence of the drip. Constantly attempting to break containment and pushing upon borders, the drip acts as mysterious moment. Brown discusses how:

‘Sidney Nagel brings the form of the drop into optical consciousness (Pp. 23-39) and thus demonstrates (like Ponge) how the most familiar forms, once we look, seem unpredictable and inexplicable’ (Brown, 2001: 6).

The fragments and remains of the sculptures, on a two dimensional surface, on paper, activate a different way of looking to that which the sculptures necessitate: the sculptural forms are immersive and intensely bodily, while the prints invite the viewer into another space of engagement. In chapter three, I looked at this space of engagement as a visual conversation around shapeless masses in space; evoking

outer space, galaxies, weather imagery and alien forms. However, the prints also appear amoeba-like; bodily and peculiar, resembling scans of the body; soft tissue, internal organs, blood vessels. The monotypes differ from the sculptures, while like the sculptures they also resist fixity and stability embracing change; shifting and decaying as organic things, the prints are able to settle, over an extended period of time. They become the final residue and remnant before beginning the cycle again.

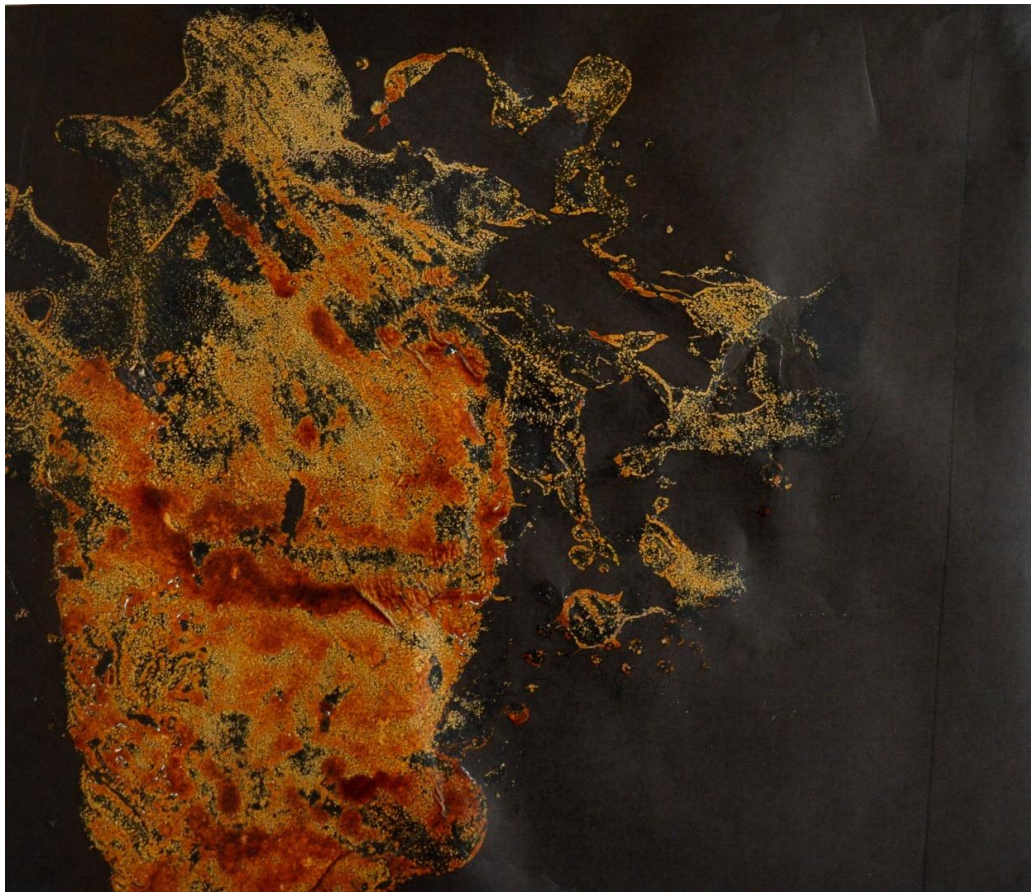


Image 4.6 – *Untitled*, 46 x 52 cm, Monotype (Ink and melted sugar), 2016

Image 4.6 is an example of a print with freshly collected liquid sugar, printed with a solid black slab of ink on top. As explored in the process, this physical act of fusion, between sugar, ink and paper leaves the melted sugar unstable. Although fused together, the ink and sugar push and pull against each other's physical structures. As is apparent in the image, the sugar has pierced through the solid black body of ink. Although certain sections of the sugar have not, their ghost-like presence under the ink renders the image curious. More curious, though, is the section of sugar that did fight off the ink. The vibrant sugar mass sits visually in a black abyss – looming

and floating. The residue of the battle between the sugar and the ink exposes shapes, lines and abstract imagery suggesting geographical and biological images. The bright orange mass activates a visual conversation as a shapeless mass in an endless space. As the sugar settles and continues to decompose, the vibrancy in the image is lost and an aged stain is left on the surface. The potency of the sugar dulls, glistens and disappears. However, the image retains the mass, even once the sugar 'dies'. The process is long, and the prints 'live' for many months before drying. Image 4.7 is the same print as Image 4.6, only 20 months later.

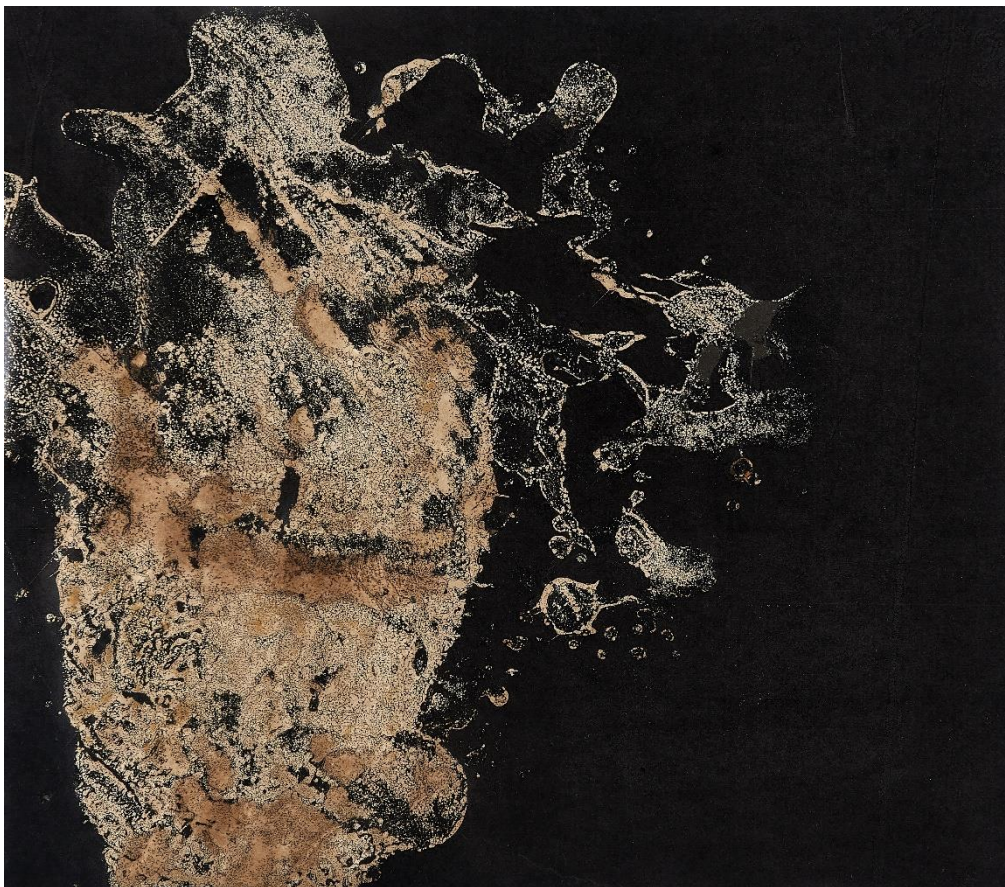


Image 4.7 - *Abyss VII*, 46 x 52 cm, Monotype (Ink and melted sugar), 2018

The uncertainty in the behaviour of the materials in print allows the viewer to be drawn into the print on an intimate level. The print offers a contained visual field of unstable material, where the behaviour of the materials is actively present.

In image 4.8, the viewer is seeing the result of the process of multiple printing, which offers a more ghostly image. The artwork is transparent; offering the different visual clues of faraway celestial spaces and simultaneously internal microscopic bodily imagery.

While close looking offers a biological inspection of the detailed particulars, it ultimately pushes the images further away, estranging the image through intense exploration. As George Simmel in *The Philosophy of Money*, said of telescopic and microscopic technology, 'Coming closer to things often only shows us how far away they still are from us' (Simmel [1990: 475] cited in Brown, 2001: 6). The images evoke both distant cosmic forms and intimate details of the inside of the human body. However, through the act of looking meticulously, the images become even further removed from the self. Close inspection abstracts and estranges the recognisability into completely alien forms floating in space (Image 4.8, 4.9).

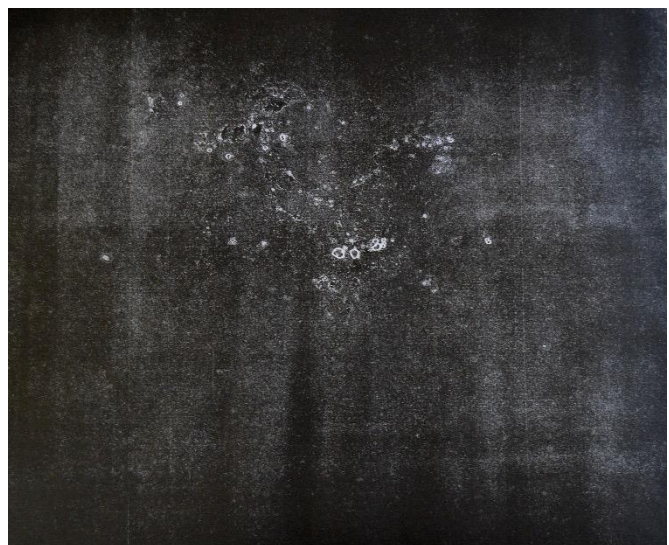


Image 4.8 – Untitled, Monotype, 64 x 64 cm; Image 4.9 – Untitled, Monotype, 63.5 x 78 cm

The estrangement of the image, challenging the relationship of the body to the image can also happen sculpturally. As in the final sculptural work I speak about, *Sugar Pool*, a pushing and pulling of boundaries is immensely physically present. This work is a hollowed out mass of polyurethane foam, upon a steel base. Molten sugar

slurps out from the once hollowed out mass of foam. The length of time that the sugar is melted for is chemically present in the appearance and behaviour of the material. The sugar in this instance is particularly more liquid, never hardening at all and the colour is a vibrant red.

The liquid sugar comes from the drippings and remnants of other sculptures – in other words, *Sugar Pool* is compiled from the left-overs. The pool in this instance is a pool of the sculpture's rejected parts, the dispelled parts of itself. The sugar is re-used, repurposed.



Image 4.9 - Sugar Pool, Polyurethane foam, steel and melted sugar, 2017 - 2018.



Image 4.10 - *Sugar Pool*, Polyurethane foam, steel and melted sugar, 2017 - 2018.



Image 4.11 - *Sugar Pool* detail of pool of sugar inside the foam.

This sculpture is the most interactive. From time to time, I pick up the form and tilt it around, to allow the material to smoothly slide across the inner surface. Once the sculpture is placed back down upon the steel, the viewer is welcome to feel the sugar in a sensual way and place their hand inside the sugar, allowing it to smoothly coat their skin, blurring the boundaries between the uncontained, and the contained. The viewer here is asked to be vulnerable, to allow the material into their space, inside their personal experience of a work.

In the other works the sugar is able to escape and enter viewer's space without their permission. *Sugar Pool*, however, is a pool of sugar that has been contained as a result of its naturally chaotic behaviour. In this work the viewer is asked to invade the sculpture. The viewer is given the power to invade and encroach upon the sugar. This work invites a sense of ambiguity in the blurring of the boundaries between the subject, material and object. This ambiguity is activated through the participation, or hesitation thereof. The uncanny qualities of the sugar and abjectness of the form both invites the viewer to touch whilst the unfamiliarity prompts a sense of reluctance. The deep and rich colour of the sugar appears endless, implying a sense of the unknown. The anxiety and reluctance comes from the decision making. The viewer is unexpectedly unsure of what to expect should they choose to immerse a part of themselves inside that which they do not know.

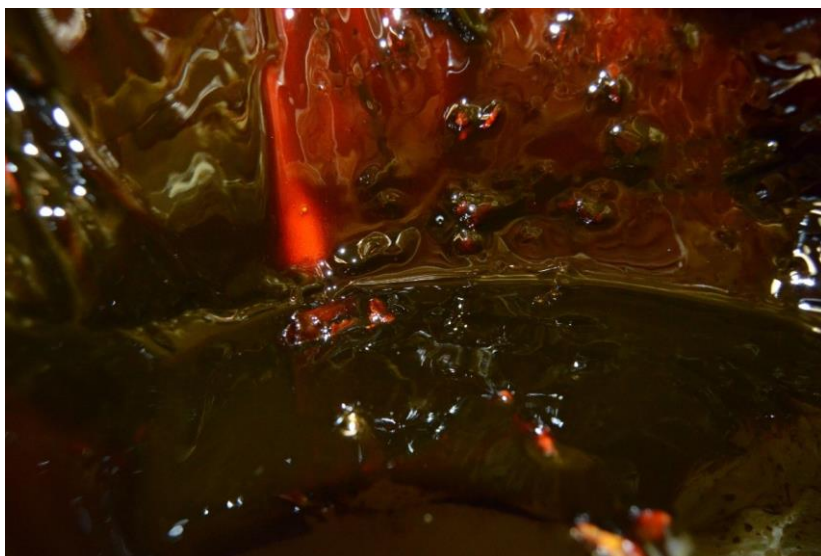


Image 4.12 - *Sugar Pool*,
Detail of pool of sugar
inside the foam.

As the sculpture is a containment of residue, it is in fact an aftermath of a forms rejection of certain parts of its structure. As Kristeva: states 'Abjection is above all ambiguity; because even though abjection is a process of getting rid of, it does not release the subject entirely' (1982: 9). The violence of abjection leaves an imponderable affect upon the self. Since abjection is an action; visible in the sculptures is a trace, a remnant of the process. The sugar stains leaving a part of itself upon the surface. The scarring of the mass invites as Kristeva, discusses, the symptom: ' ..., a structure within the body, a non-assimilable alien, a monster, a tumour, a cancer that the listening devices of the unconscious do not hear, for its strayed subject is huddled outside of the paths of desire' (Kristeva, 1982: 11).

The sculptural disintegration and active movement of the sugar creates an uncertainty around the embodied experience of the unsettling forms in their rotten appearance, connoting the illness, sickness, disease. The temporary and ever-changing experiences of the works and prints allows for new and unpredictable occurrences and happenings. Should a viewer choose to invade the sculpture, they are acutely aware that by making that decision, they are allowing the sugar an opportunity to invade in return.

Thus, in summary, by looking at the behaviour of the materials in specific relation to each of the works, a complexity and intricacy can be explored. The meticulous exploration of the details offers nuances in understanding the role materials and how the material is able to activate and engage the viewer in specific intimate experiences. The material's life and ever changing existence offers an alternative reality to how the artworks are experienced. The material qualities are able to affect the viewer on the initial encounter and experience. The sense based encounters offer an immersive engagement with the works in a raw bodily way, which the visceral and tactile qualities evoke upon reception. The unstable, anti-form amorphous materials, when engaged with as material things, instead of 'final' objects ruptures conventional means of experiences with artworks.

In conclusion, through an engagement with specific materials and allowing the viewer into my personal experiences through an autoethnographic approach, I produce a body of creative work in sculpture and printmaking, which focuses on the structural possibilities and metaphoric potential of materials, namely: sugar, polyurethane foam and metal (steel and iron). By concentrating on the specific materials and the object-material-viewer and/ or maker embodiment, I explore how the 'objectness' and 'thingness' of materials affects the experience of the work by a physically present viewer.

Through a theoretical exploration of the object, material and thing, I explore how the viewer and maker come to understand and categorise what the world consists of. By understanding how the terms function, the viewer can begin to determine how they activate the reading of the artwork as more than just an object. In giving an agency to the material of the work, the conventional focus on a final and complete artwork is shifted. The stable boundaries between material, object and thing are subsequently destabilised. This collapse in boundaries, or cross overs in meanings also invites conversation of the non-thing and how that allows us to contemplate more complexly on the material and thing qualities of artworks.

Through a theoretical investigation and exploration of other artists' work, processes and material choices, I ask my audience to consider how materials are able to evoke both the non-human and human. I argue that by acknowledging the materials from which an artwork is constructed, the viewer can come to understand the experience of interacting with the work as an embodiment of the material form of the artwork.

As Lange-Berndt posits; the 'sensations which materials offer, point to a world where human bodies and their surroundings have become porous' (2015: 18). If the viewer

can understand the materials for what they are, they can begin to explore the effects of the object-viewer interaction. I explore my materials' chemical compositions and complex histories, trying to figure out how to, as Derrida says, 'make the materials laugh,' (Derrida [1985: 126] cited in, Lange-Berndt, 2015: 20). I hone in on the 'biographical' qualities of sugar, polyurethane and metal, so that the viewer and reader can understand the complexity of these materials: while chemically the sugar 'continues living', the overall work, whether sculpture or print, multiplies in meaning as maker and viewer engage, encounter and manipulate it.

Central to the viewer's experience of my work are theories of ugliness, the grotesque, the uncanny, formlessness and abject theory. To understand these terms, I refer to aesthetic and psychoanalytic studies. I suggest that the grotesque, abject, uncanny and amorphous, apparent in my sculptures, have the ability to affect the viewer as well as maker through the sensual experiences of the works material. It is in the amorphous, formless and malleable materials' abilities to subvert conventions that a grotesque formlessness emerges. This allows for the investigation of how anti-form embraces temporary existences. The uncanny nature of materials such as the melted sugar, is activated by the impermanence of the materials as they live lives of their own, ever-changing. Through the consideration of the active decomposition of the forms in relation to the human body the material embodiment can inevitably affect the viewer, by blurring the distinction between subject, object and material and thus re-enforcing the personal nature of the interaction. The unstable qualities of the materials of the works explores impermanence and transience by considering the breakdown and generative processes of making. This posits a consideration of how the materials are salvaged and re-used in the production of additional works.

I call upon the personal as a means to understand the collective. I do this to show how the use of the personal experience can be a reliable means of research. The close looking at how materials function in these numerous ways shows how materials are able to communicate meaning through both personal and shared experiences. The structures of the materials and the corporeal body both physically and emotively affect each other. Thus through the consideration of the materials' histories and

through the autoethnographic lens, I facilitate an engaged and emotionally rich account of the making processes in which a vulnerability is both accessed and invited.

In addition, the role of the physicality of the human body as well as the role of impermanent materials offers the opportunity to comprehend how the body, through the embodiment of impermanent materials, prompts readings of mortality, perishability and ephemerality. Through in depth visual analyses of my specific artworks; prints and sculptures, my audience has the opportunity to discover these readings. In focusing on specific works, I note the role of a continuous process of making, and relate the theory explored in the first two chapters to my own practice. I look at the personal experience and processes of making within the cultural production of a creative body of work as a means of research which offers different avenues into other areas of study. The body of work opens up explorations into chemical, biological and social explorations in terms of social and scientific studies.

As a result through the practical exploration of sugar, the audience is asked to contemplate that they experience the world through their bodies and their encounters, within space and among things. They are asked to consider that human bodies are temporary entities; that they are unstable and in a constant state of change, where the change does not affect their bodies' bio-chemical structure. The structure is contained while the body goes through transformations on a habitual basis. The body as a form is in a conversational tension with itself, pushing upon its own boundaries. This means that materials disrupt the body – their chemical structure allows for transformational moments to occur; moments that disrupt inert structures. It is in these moments, the moments where the body's vulnerability and experience with the materials is engaged, that a deeper understanding of materiality is reached.



Image 4. 14 - *Untitled (Conversation)*. Polyurethane foam, concrete, spray paint, melted sugar and a wooden tray, 2016



Image 4.15 - *Protean Form, Series II - c*, Melted sugar and soap on a steel base, 20 x 20 x 7.5 cm, 2017



Image 4.16 - *Protean Form, Series II - B*, Melted sugar and soap on a steel base, 20 x 20 x 7.5 cm, 2017



Image 4.16 - *Untitled*, Polyurethane Foam, 220 x 110 x 70 cm, 2016

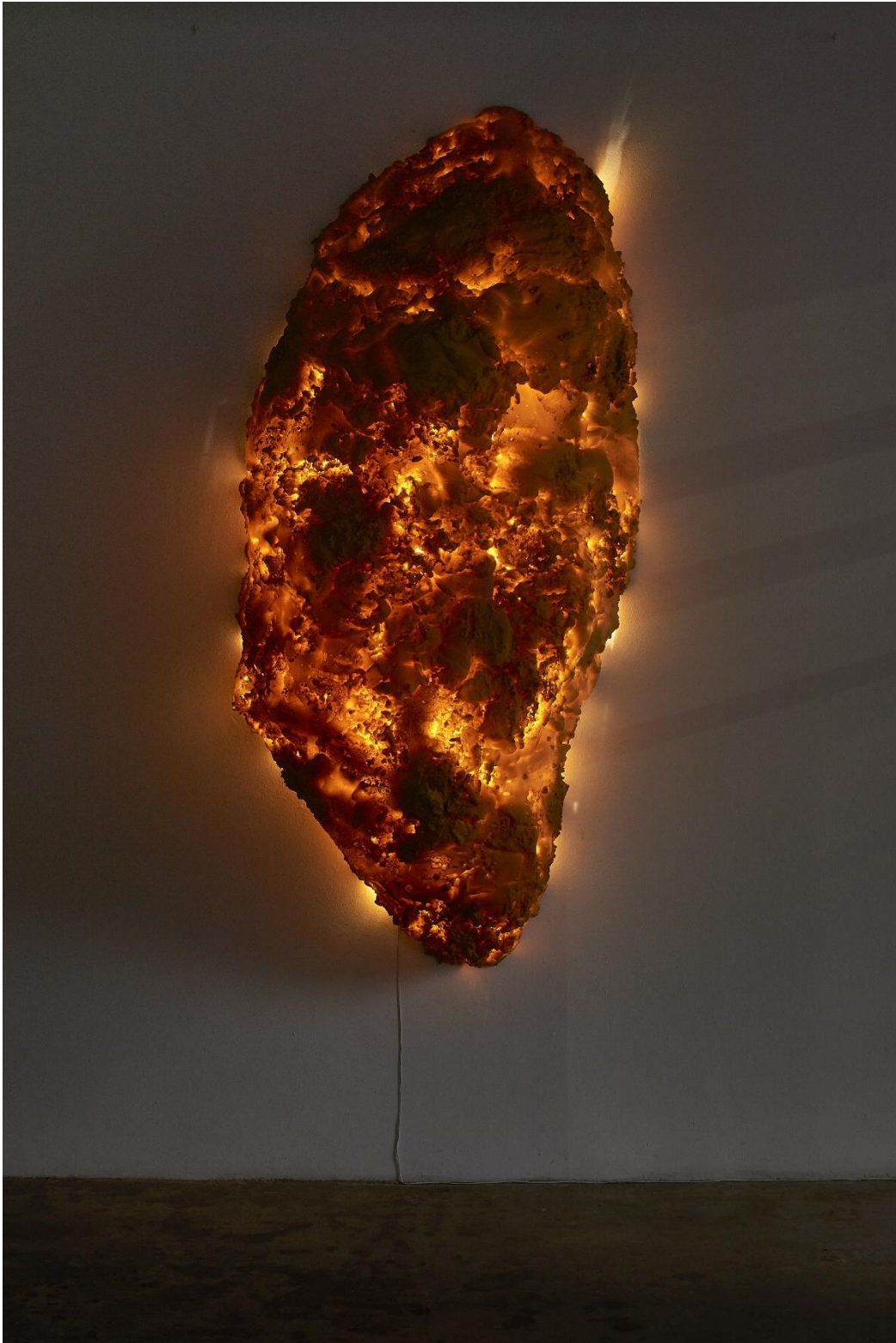


Image 4.17 - *Untitled*, Polyurethane Foam, 220 x 110 x 70 cm, 2016



Image 4.18 - *Biomorphic Square*, Polyurethane foam and melted sugar, 2017 - 2018



Image 4.19 - [Side View] *Biomorphic Square*, Polyurethane foam and melted sugar, 2017 -2018



Image 4.20 - [A year of dripping] *Biomorphic Square*, Polyurethane foam and melted sugar, 2017 - 2018



Image 4.21 - *Abyss I*, Ink and melted sugar on paper, 39 x 28 cm, 2017 - 2018



Image 4.22 - *Echo I*, Ink and melted sugar on paper, 39 x 28 cm, 2017 - 2018



Image 4.23 - *Abyss II*, Ink and melted sugar on paper, 39 x 28 cm, 2017 - 2018



Image 4.24 - *Echo II*, Ink and melted sugar on paper, 39 x 28 cm, 2017 - 2018



Image 4.25 - *Abyss III*, Ink and melted sugar on paper, 39 x 28 cm, 2017 - 2018



Image 4.26 - *Echo III*, Ink and melted sugar on paper, 39 x 28 cm, 2017 - 2018

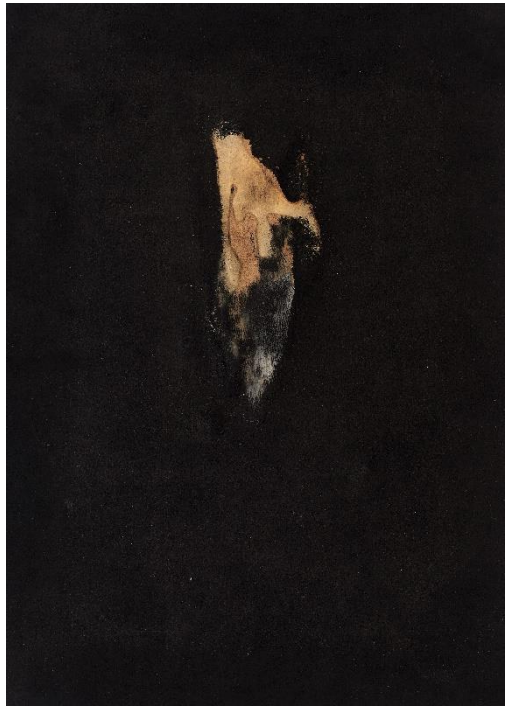


Image 4.27 - *Abyss IV*, Ink and melted sugar on paper, 39 x 28 cm, 2017 - 2018



Image 4.28 - *Echo III*, Ink and melted sugar on paper, 39 x 28 cm, 2017 - 2018

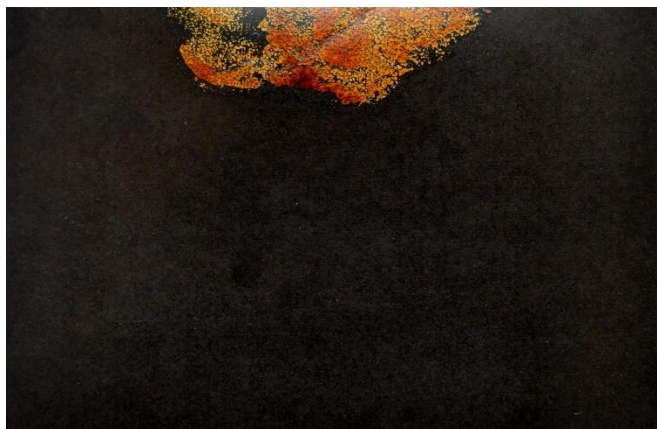


Image 4.29 - *Abyss IX*, Ink and melted sugar on paper, 15 x 23 cm, 2017 - 2018

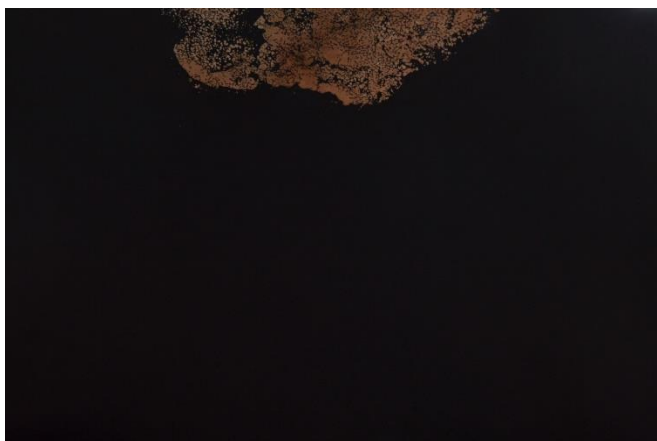


Image 4.30 - [A year of drying] *Abyss IX*, Ink and melted sugar on paper, 15 x 23 cm, 2017 - 2018



Image 4.31 - *Abyss X*, Ink and melted sugar on paper, 41 x 66 cm, 2017 - 2018

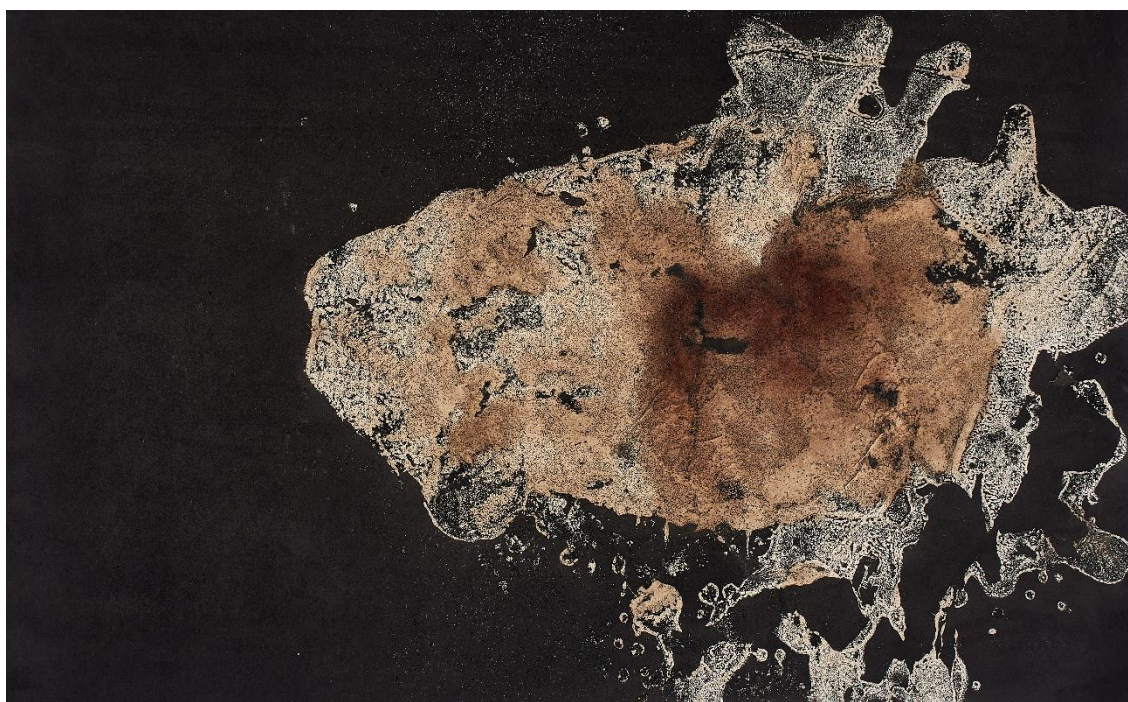


Image 4.32 - [20 months of drying] *Abyss X*, Ink and melted sugar on paper, 41 x 66 cm, 2017 - 2018

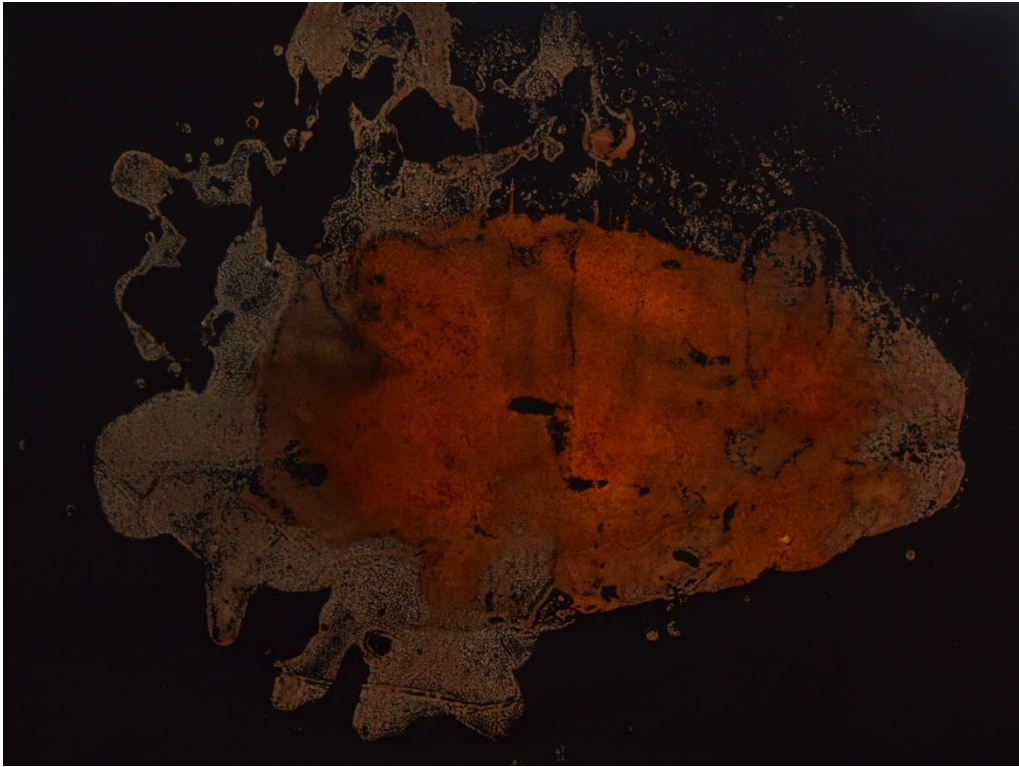


Image 4.33 - *Abyss VII*, Ink and melted sugar on paper, 49.5 x 59.5 cm, 2017 - 2018

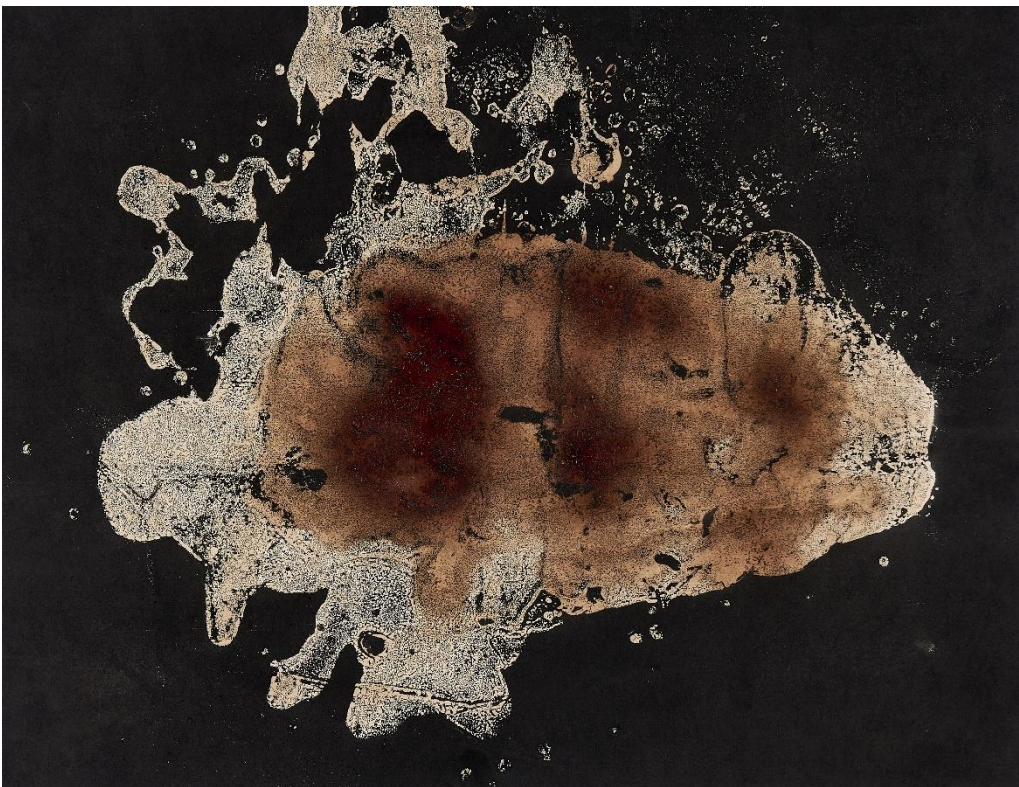


Image 4.34 - *Abyss VIII*, Ink and melted sugar on paper, 49.5 x 59.5 cm, 2017 - 2018



Image 4.34. Abyss VI, ink and melted sugar, 41.5 x 43.5 cm 2017 - 2018



Image 4.35 - [A year drying] *Abyss VI*, ink and melted sugar, 41.5 x 43.5 cm, 2017 - 2018



Image 4.34 - - *Efflux I*, Ink and melted sugar, 60 x 53 cm, 2017 - 2018.



Image 4.35. *Efflux II*, Ink and melted sugar, 60 x 71 cm



Image 4.36 - *Abyss V*, Ink and melted sugar on paper, 65 x 72 cm, 2017 - 2018



Image 4.37 - *Abyss V*, Ink and melted sugar on paper, 65 x 72 cm, 2017 - 2018

[Poor quality photograph intentionally taken to show the bulbous three dimensional qualities of the print]

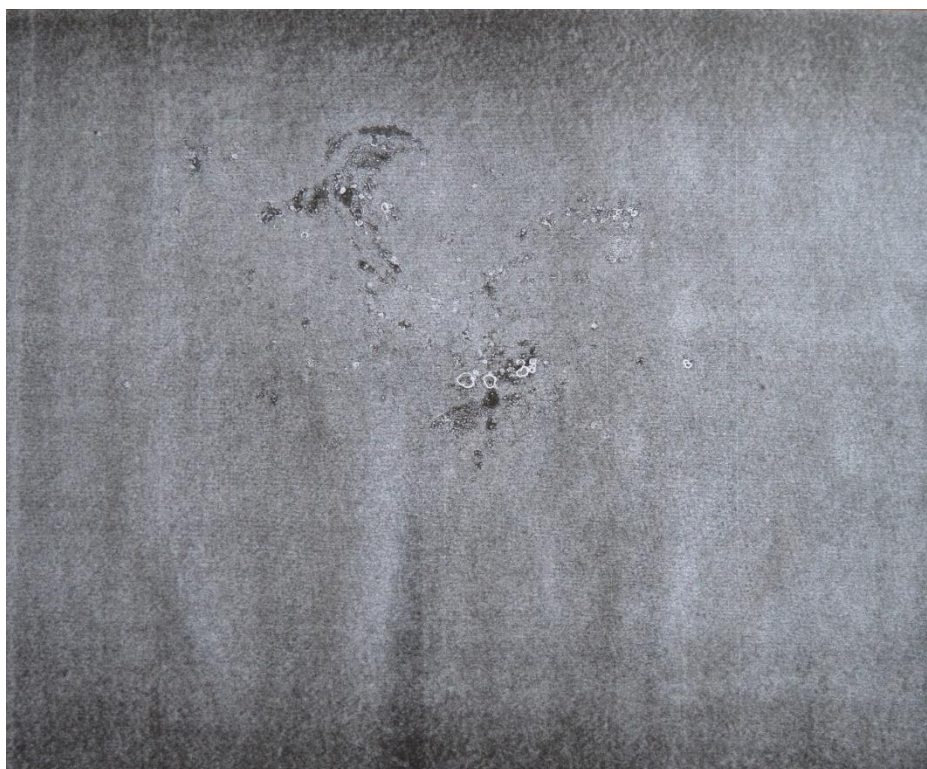


Image 4.38 - *Echo C*, Ink on paper, 66 x 64 cm, 2017

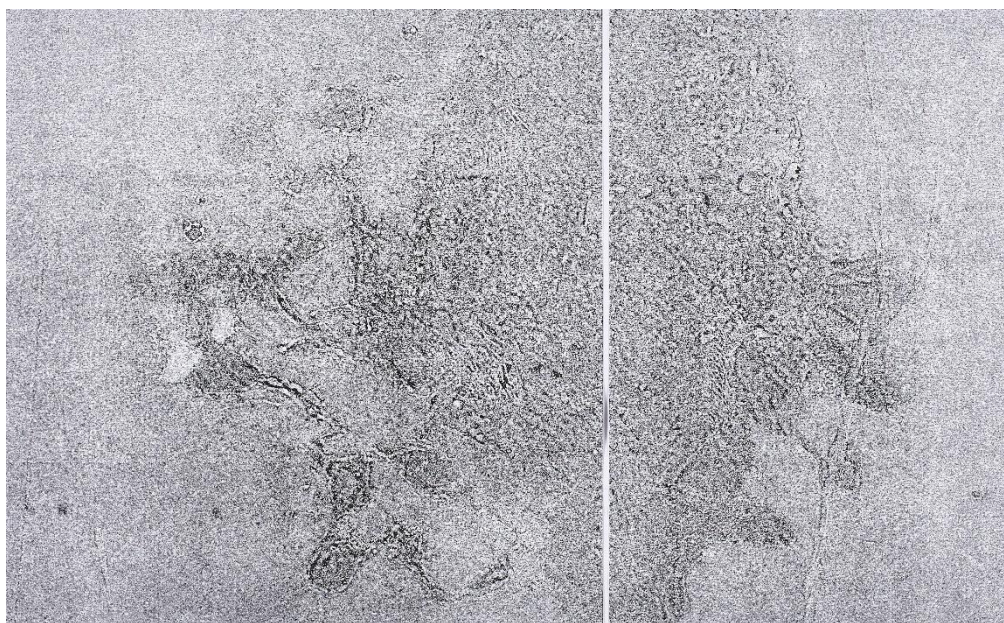


Image 4.39 - *Ghost I and II*, Ink on paper, diptych, 36.7 x 34 and 36.7 x 24, 2017



Image 4.40 - *Echo H*, Ink on paper, 63 x 64 cm, 2017

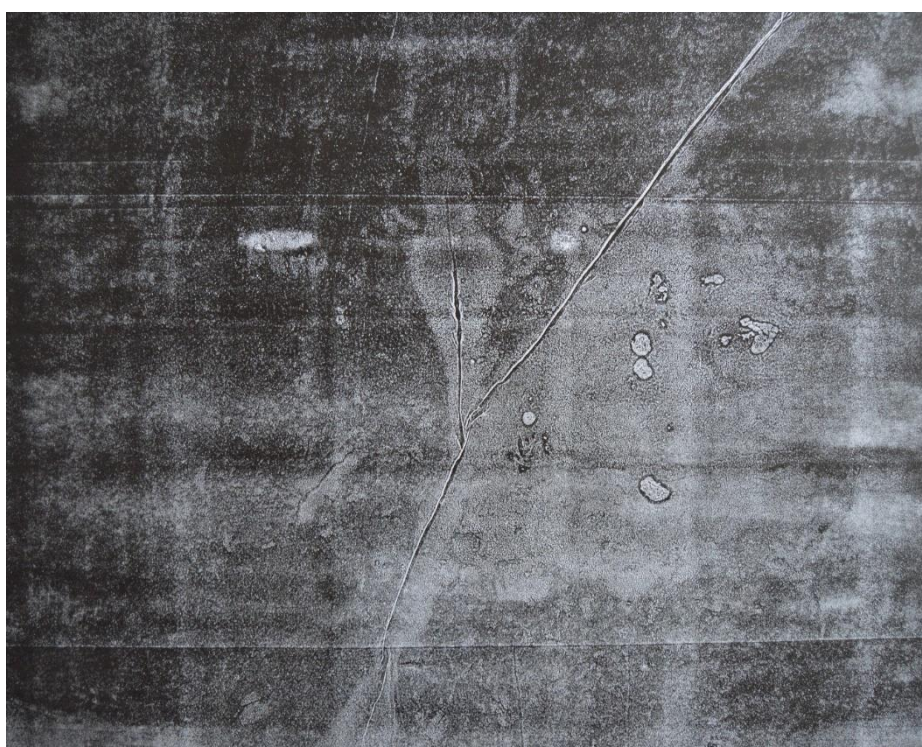


Image 4.41 - *Echo D*, Ink on paper, 60.3 x 74 cm, 2017



Image 4.42 - *Echo B*, Ink on paper, 63 x 77.5 cm, 2017



Image 4.43 - *Echo E*, Ink on paper, 64 x 64 cm, 2017

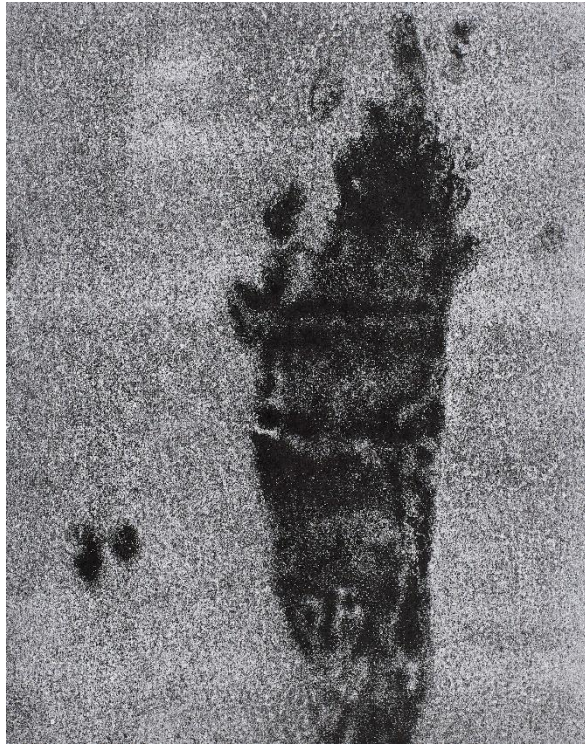


Image 4.44 - *Parallel Echo I*, Ink on paper, 32 x 25 cm, 2017

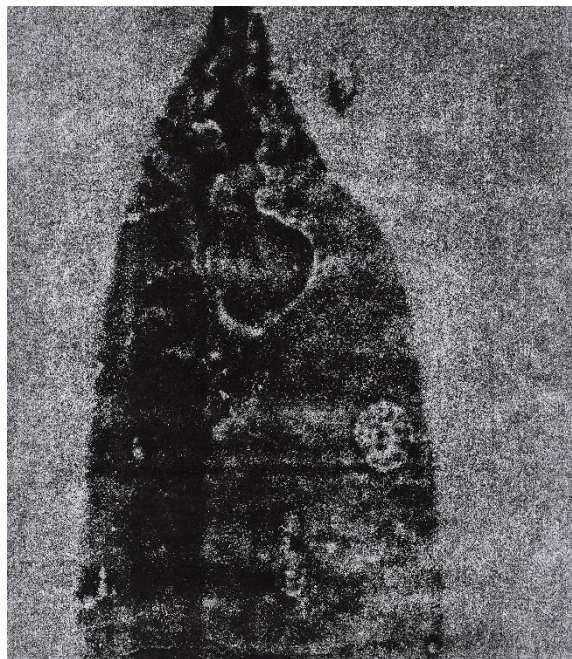


Image 4.45 - *Parallel Echo III*, Ink on paper, 27.5 x 25 cm, 2017

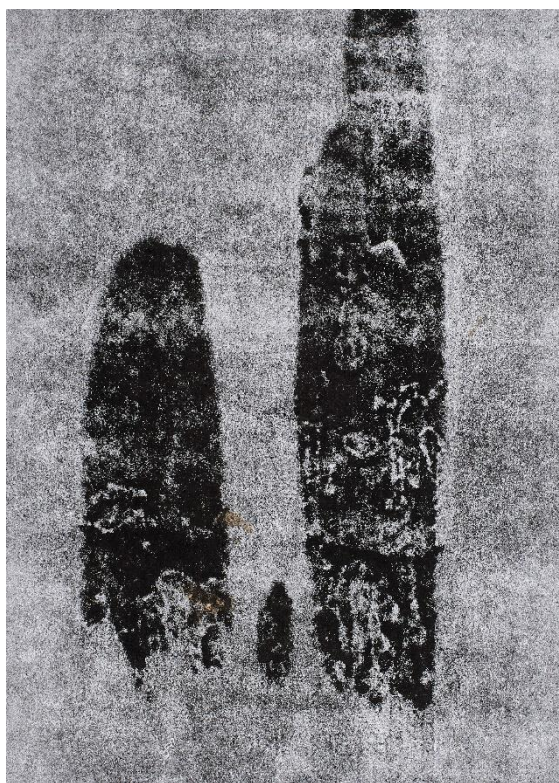


Image 4.46 - *Parallel Echo II*, Ink on paper, 34.6 x 25 cm, 2017



Image 4.47 - *Uncertain Split*, Ink on paper, Triptych, 13.5 x (13 x 3) 39 cm, 2017

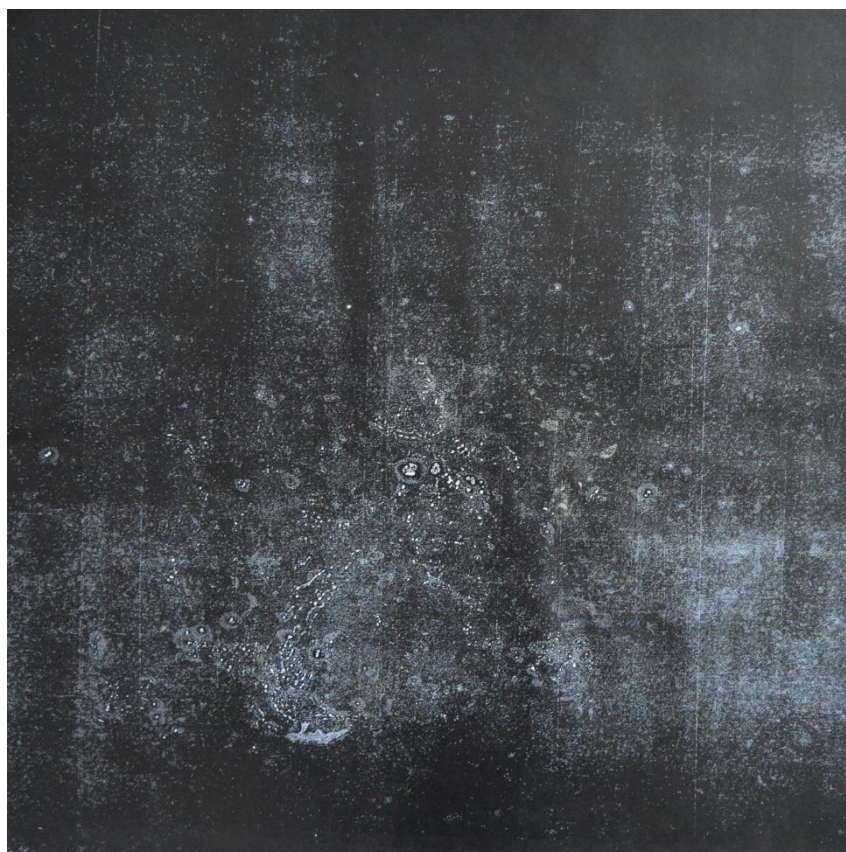


Image 4.48 - *Echo G*, Ink on paper, 64 x 64, 2017



Image 4.49 - *Echo A*, Ink on paper, 68 x 62, 2017



Image 4.50 - *151.50 (Hours)*, ink and melted sugar, 100 x 210 cm, 2018

Image 1.1 - Joseph Beuys, 1964, *Der Chief/ The Chief (Fluxus Song)*, Gallery view: Berlin-New York-Berlin, Galerie René Block, Berlin. Photograph Jurgen Muller-Schneck, Image taken from *Mapping The Legacy*, by Joan Ruthfuss in Gene Ray. pp. 38.

Image 1.2 - Richard Serra. 1999. *Switch*, Weatherproof Steel, six plates, each: 13 feet; six inches x 52 feet x 2 inches, Installed at the Gagosian Gallery's in Chelsea. Image taken from *Art:21*, Art in the twenty first century. Pp. 58-59. Photo courtesy of Online. URL: <http://www.gagosian.com>. Date Accessed: 13/02/2018.

Image 1.3 - Joni Brenner. 2005. *Mute to tell*, Sika-guard consolidated clay, enamel paint, Sprayed enamel plinth, 130 x 25 x 25 cm. Art Frist, London. Image taken by John Hodgkiss Courtesy of the Catalogue *Unavoidable*. pp. 25.

Image 1.4 - Anish Kapoor. 2007. *C-Curve*, Stainless Steel, 220 x 770 x 300 cm. Installed in the Louvre's Khorsabad court (2007) as a part of the 'Contrepoint' exhibition. Image taken from *Symphony for a Beloved Sun Anish Kapoor*, By Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther Konig, Koln. pp. 183.

Image 3.1. Untitled. Image courtesy of Baker Bettie. *How to Caramelize Sugar*. Online. URL: <https://bakerbettie.com/how-to-caramelize-sugar/>. Date Accessed: 11/02/2018.

Image 3.5. Marc Quinn. *Self*. (1991- Present). Image courtesy of Marc Quinn Online, URL: <http://marcquinn.com/artworks/self> . Date Accessed: 12/02/2018.

Image 3.9 (B) - Greg Parker. 2012. Image courtesy of Greg Parker, 2012. A double cluster and Greg's Charm Bracelet, star constellations. *Earth Science Image of the Day*. Online. URL: <http://epod.usra.edu/blog/2012/11/double-cluster-and-gregs-charm-bracelet.html>. Date Accessed: 11/02/2018.

Image 3.10 (B) - Sam Adam. 2016. A two dimensional image of a thin sample on a Transmission Electron Microscope (TEM). *A Level Notes*. Online. URL: <https://alevelnotes.com/Magnification/106>. Date Accessed: 11/02/2018.

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