

Psychic Counterpoints: Participatory realist documentary and printmaking as thwarted war romance, longing and desire.

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Abstract

For Gilles Deleuze, contemporary cinema is a cinema of time that produces 'an image of thought,' as a process that can't be summed up into a rational whole. Rosalind Krauss states that contemporary visual artists combine their forms with other mediums such as film to create similar psychological meanings for their work.

This paper will focus on the art piece titled 'Looking for Charlie,' (2011) where I combine participatory realist documentary with printmaking to create psychological "time-images" for my viewers. 'Looking for Charlie' is a work where under the permission of my grandmother, I endeavoured to find the American soldier named "Charlie" with whom she has been in love with since he was stationed in Melbourne during World War Two.

The first part of this paper explores how I used these mediums in order to immerse myself into the emotions of my own grandmother. Contemporary documentary filmmaker John Safran and Surrealist artist Claude Cahun's work are analysed as comparisons, particularly Safran's immersion into the guises of other people within his 'Race Relation's' series (2009).

A Google and Ancestry.com search to find Charlie is then discussed in terms of the prints that I made for the exhibition. I compare this installation to aspects of Jean Pierre Jeunet's film 'Amelie from Monmarte,' and the documentation of fragments taken from other people's lives in the work of photo-conceptualist artist Sophie Calle to show how this art piece mirrors the notion of reversing traditional roles of the active male gaze and the passive female object of desire. The results of the search for Charlie are then discussed in terms of Jacques Lacan's "Rat in the Maze" theory to detail the emotions people experience regarding thwarted romance, and to explore

the ethics associated with my searching for, and the presentation of the findings regarding Charlie.

The societal constraints that occurred in Australia regarding marriage to foreign soldiers during World War II led to the thwarting of true romance for many people.

This was seen as a time of great relationship trauma for young couples globally, and immense insecurity for women. In Western countries there were quick courtships and marriages because of the instabilities created by conscription and the stationing of single foreign soldiers in home countries (Turner, 1954, p. 260). Thwarted romances for the women and soldiers who had been separated would have led to feelings of intense longing, desire and psychic fracturing. The insecurity that resulted from the abandonment of the romantic ideal during the war deeply informs my research and is part of my own family history.

For my *Looking for Charlie* (2011) artwork I wanted to fulfill the wish of my grandmother to be reunited with her long lost love, an American soldier named Charlie whom she courted in Australia in 1942. In the case of my grandmother, her longing came about mainly because she was instructed by her family to marry hastily while Charlie was stationed in New Guinea, and then she was prohibited to keep up a correspondence with Charlie after he left Australia.

It could be said that social and cultural belief systems dictate normative behaviour and can create unfulfilled desires. Stereotypes developed in this way can inhibit a person's ability to live their life the way that they want to, and the subject may self scrutinize and repress their desire over long periods of time. This situation is relevant to my grandmother, therefore such links between forestalled romance and longing will be investigated as part of this paper.

Also relevance to *Looking for Charlie* is the postmodern concept of eclecticism and the combination of printmaking and photo-conceptualism with other mediums to

create extra meanings. I will therefore also discuss how I combined hybrid art forms to immerse myself into the character of my grandmother in order to present psychological images for my audience.

In terms of creating extra meanings in contemporary art through hybrid forms Rosalind Krauss (1999, 289-385), makes use of the concept of the “Third Meaning,” informed by Roland Barthes’ film still analysis. She defines the Third Meaning as the obtuse meaning that is created by the film still. Barthes believes that the film still is made up of three different codes operating on different levels: 1.) The informational level that gathers together everything we can learn about the setting, 2.) The second level is that of symbolic signification. 3.) The third level has no codes and no means of translation into language. (Barthes, 1977, 52-53.)

The film still that contains the Third Meaning does so because it is a suspended still that is taken as a fragment of something that usually exists in a much larger context and is therefore unreadable. Krauss (1999, 297-298) states that other media such as the “photo-novel” are cultural phenomena that have also have access to the Third Meaning. This Third Meaning enables the photographer or filmmaker to allude to other mediums within their work as well as potentially venturing into deep psychological frames of mind.

To make my own art style I combine photo-conceptualism with other forms to make what is defined as “photomedia.” In the realm of photomedia Krauss (1999, p.295) speaks of how photo-conceptualism imitates documentary photography as a way of ‘mobilising the unexpected formal resources in the look of ‘non-art.’’ Krauss notes that photography is mimetic in nature, and because of this it can assume the guise of a plethora of non-art experience ‘in order to critique the pretensions of high art.’ Visual artists who have inspired my practice have learned to achieve this same essence of mimicry of other mediums to create Third Meanings for their work through photography. Krauss states that Cindy Sherman does this by using photographic practice to evoke narrative forms such as the cinema, fashion photography and comics. Between 1977 and 1980 Cindy Sherman created her *Untitled Film Stills*,

which are character portraits of herself shot in the same style as Hollywood publicity photographs. More often than not the characters in her shots are from melodramatic films who appear as women in distress who are perfectly aware that they are being watched (Blessing, 1997, p.81). It is the feminine archetypes that Sherman observes through film that also influence the creation of alter egos in my work.

Photo-conceptualist installation artist Sophie Calle sometimes mimics the documentation of private eyes and detectives to provide us with stories based on her art interactions in real life that are presented as non-fiction, yet sometimes they become increasingly uncanny and have the appearance of fantastic fiction. This occurs in her book *Double Game*, where she imitates the actions of a character that Paul Auster created for his fiction novel *Leviathan* that was partially based on her life (Calle, 1999). In these ways both artists utilize the notion of the Third Meaning to find ways in which to become fictional “Others.”

As a means of placing emphasis on the psychological and to become the “Other” in my own work I combine the mediums of photo-conceptualism with printmaking, film, writing, drawing and performance art. I also use Surrealist alter egos, participatory realist documentary and elements of Magic Realism in my filmic and performance installations to extend upon the creation of narrative for my art.

A new trend in postmodernist film also shows a strong emphasis on the interior thoughts of the protagonists and has had an influence on my *Looking for Charlie* work. This style has been compared to the literary genre of Magical Realism because they both contain shifts in time, destabilization of the reader, self-reflexiveness, eclecticism and discontinuity (D’hain, 1995, p.12). In a similar way to the Magic Realists and Surrealists it also focuses particularly on the fantastic to delineate realistic and vulnerable states of mind.

To gain a historical perspective on the presentation of the psychological within film and how it has informed my work, let us take a brief look at Gilles Deleuze’s books

The Movement-Image (1983) and *The Time-Image* (1985). Here he discusses how the psychological in film has been delineated since the Modernist period and this is how you can distinguish the newer style from classical film. He states that the avant-garde of the twenties demonstrated ‘a fascination with movement and space rather than time, and the organisation of time is subordinated to the representation of movement through montage’ (Rodowick, 1997, p.12). In earlier cinema the focus on the representation of movement was done through connecting intervals of montage through movement and action. In the modern filmic form, or the “time-image” as Deleuze likes to put it, the montage becomes divided according to sensations and creates changes in time rather than actions. For Deleuze, ‘the cinema of time produces an image of thought’ as a process that cannot be delimited as a rational whole (Rodowick, 1997, p.17).

The postmodernist film that influences my work mirrors this Deleuzian concept of the time-image, as well as Magical Realist sentiments where there is an uncanny depiction of the protagonist’s waking thought processes, and a liberation of altered mental states. Elements of this style have been adapted to the filmic, performative, etching and drawing components of my art to create time-images for my audience that place an emphasis on fantastic waking psychological states.

Movies such as *Donny Darko* by Richard Kelly (2001) and the Spike Jonze films *Being John Malkovich* (1999) and *Adaptation* (2002) exemplify this genre. The fantastic imaginings of someone encountering writer’s block are delineated well within *Adaptation*, which is based on the personal troubles experienced by Charlie Kaufman while writing a screen adaptation of the book, *The Orchard Thief*. This feeling is emphasized by the self-reflexive nature of the script and bizarre character shifts that happen to the protagonist during the film, where he finds himself literally becoming part of his own screen adaptation (Jonze, 2002). Similarly, the mental states of longing, and desire are delineated within *Looking for Charlie* via the use of self-reflexive performance techniques that produce uncanny character shifts.

For my installation I developed a style that is postmodernist in nature because through performance, Surrealist and participatory documentary techniques I “became” my grandmother in order to act as a conduit for her possible reunion with Charlie, and to personally explore the feelings of reminiscence and psychic fracturing that are associated with thwarted war romance, longing and a desire for knowledge of Charlie’s eventual fate.

As part of the project I made two films named *Psychic Lisa*, and *Looking for Charlie* (2011). For *Psychic Lisa* I am disguised as my grandmother and I visit a psychic in New York. Here I explain the story of Nanna and Charlie, and present *Psychic Lisa* with a photograph of Charlie and a list of possible phone numbers for him in the US (Fig.1). The inclusion of the film footage of *Psychic Lisa* was to make an analogy between Tarot and the concept of chance. The analogy was drawn with Tarot because often its receivers believe that they have found knowledge of their destiny from a random metaphysical source. This inclusion emphasised the fleeting and contingent nature of love, and how chance played such a big part in the story of my grandmother and Charlie.

My second performance *Looking for Charlie* is a public performance that I did as an abstraction of my grandmother’s wish to find Charlie. The task that I set up for myself is to kiss somebody named Charlie whilst carrying out similar performance actions as the protagonists of films such as *Possessed* (1947) and *Purple Rose of Cairo* (1985) (Fig. 2).

Time and character shifts evident within this video are imitative of contemporary Magic Realist cinema and reiterate the Deleuzian concept of the time-image. A common element found in the post modernist film style is that time has been manipulated so that it either appears absent because it has been distorted or time has collapsed, creating a setting in which the present repeats or resembles the past. There may also be a ‘synchronicity’ of time where events are juxtaposed so that they are related meaningfully but not causally. (DelbaereGarant, 1995, 258-259.)

A strange shift in time and place occurs in *The Looking for Charlie* film where the main action suddenly shifts from Potts Point in Sydney, Australia to Times Square in New York. This shift is used to delineate the contingent nature of love and the psychological experience of longing that spans continents. Times Square is an appropriate setting for my performance because at this point all I knew was that Charlie was lost in America somewhere, and Times Square is an enormous meeting place for thousands of people. The large crowd depicted in the video added to the effect of disorientation that I wanted to portray as part of my search. This film has additional footage of my grandmother singing *Fascination* and playing the piano, which adds another character dimension to the piece by confronting the audience with the person that this film is actually about.

The Surrealist wall drawings that accompany this film are of US military ships morphing as they travel through time and space (Fig. 3). These objects of fantasy are used as psychological time-images that symbolise the contingent nature of the feelings of love and longing. The crumbling mast of a US military ship is included as a Surrealist image in this installation. This drawing is a Surrealist depiction of Tarot 16 – *La Maison Diev* (The Lightning Struck Tower), and represents the divine destruction and fall of a romance that has been hindered due to war.

As stated earlier, to psychologically “become” my grandmother I utilized the methods of Surrealist alter egos and participatory realist documentary. Alter egos have been presented in Surrealist art as a way of examining normative social and cultural behaviour, as well as critiquing notions of narcissism that Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan developed when speaking about female pursuits of the ego. Contrary to the beliefs of Freud and Lacan, the Surrealist artist Claude Cahun recognises that narcissism is not necessarily a neurotic state when explored in art, instead it can be used as a way of understanding your core (Shaw, 2006, p.44). Narcissism in art can therefore be used for an interrogation of the self. Surrealist alter egos are adapted within this performance in order to immerse myself metaphorically to the point of understanding what it was like to be my grandmother during this time.

My performance style can also be related to contemporary participatory realist documentary because, like Surrealist alter ego exploration, it requires the immersion of the journalist into their subject matter. Richard Armstrong (2005, p.112) states that participatory realist documentary involves increasingly interventionist tactics on behalf of the filmmaker and in some cases appears to be an updated version of Gonzo Journalism, which was developed by Hunter S. Thompson. This is usually a politically motivated style of journalism that explicitly includes 'the writer's feelings at the time of witnessing the events or undergoing experiences written about (Hirst, 2004, p.6). Examples of journalists who practice this form are Michael Moore, Louis Theroux and the Australian documentary comic John Safran.

John Safran's documentary style is similar to my own because it involves costume and is generally comedic in nature. In assuming the guises of other people, Safran goes a step further than other participatory realist Documentary filmmakers in terms of self-immersion. In his most recent series, *Race Relations*, he assumes the guise of an African American and works in a diner in Chicago to see into what it is like to be racially discriminated against. In another episode he dresses up as a lady boy in Thailand and goes on a date with a man to find out what it is like to be sexually desired for having feminine Asian features (Vickery, 2009).

My performances draw on participatory realist and Gonzo styles as a psychic interrogation of the foundations of my own family tree. The film footage of my 1940's alter ego presents a time-image for the audience by creating a link between my grandmother and myself, whilst delineating feelings associated with thwarted war romance. By making an analogy between myself, my grandmother and war torn feminine film archetypes I am making a societal comment about Western conventions for love. In particular I am trying to uncover unnecessary fictions about how women are expected to behave within relationships.

One of the behaviours made relevant within the *Looking for Charlie* film and the printmaking component of my installation is the traditional belief that women should not be the pursuer in their desire for the other. This idea is confirmed through an

analysis of relationship advice literature for women. The contemporary book, *The Rules*, proclaims ideas that date back to 1917 (Fein et. Al, 1995, p.1). Pop psychology books such as this one are read more widely than alternative feminist texts and reflect ‘old-style gender stereotypes’ which reduce women to a passive role and insist that men ‘take control.’ Underpinning the idea of feminine passivity is the notion that ‘Biologically, the man must pursue the woman’ (Boynton, 2003, 237 - 238). Women are instructed that if they take charge in their own concerns of the heart they will inevitably end up unmarried and rejected by their partners (Boynton, 2003, p. 238).

Therefore the main theory that informs my art piece is the idea of reversing traditional roles of the active male gaze and the passive female object of desire. In many cases, women have as much desire to gaze at the male as the male does toward women. In the case of my grandmother, to exercise this desire in searching for answers regarding Charlie’s fate was needed to bring an end to her longing.

As the final element of my installation, I display photo etchings of *Genealogical research* that my mother and I conducted via the internet to find the real Charlie (Fig. 4). These are presented as time-images that display the kind of discrete searching that was needed to find out answers for my grandmother. We drew on Ancestry.com family trees, and sourced newspaper clippings and some photographs of people in Charlie’s family tree. These findings were exhibited as edited fragments because they delineate the longing and searching component of the artwork as well as providing us with a realistic view of the situation. By only showing fragments of answers about Charlie I show that even when you search for someone as much as you can, you never find out everything. For instance on Google you only find fragments and a cyber outline of what you were searching for, not an entire reality.

French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (1998, p.137) explains this phenomenon in more detail when he says that knowledge is an enigma, particularly in relation to the way that we experience love. According to Lacan, the subconscious is structured like a language. If we want to know everything about our desire then the person who chooses to follow this path can become like a rat in a maze (Lacan, 1998, p.139).

For Lacan, desire is what drives us all subconsciously. If we are not aware of how to tackle our desire, the way that we choose to follow this drive could create problematic results for us. The Latin origin of 'desire,' is *desiderio*, which means 'longing for' implies an absence. Desire is when a neurotic initiates 'a labyrinthine search for the lost object' (Miller, 1992, p.229). In the case of my grandmother this feeling would have been quite strong because she experienced all of the doubts and tribulations associated with thwarted love. Lacan affirms this idea when he says, 'people wonder what the knowledge of those who do not speak could be. They wonder about it. They don't know why they wonder about it. But they wonder about it all the same. So they build a little maze (*labrynthe*) for rats' (Lacan, 1998, p.139.)

Lacan (1992a) later speaks of how to cure the subject of strong or unobtainable drives for desire. He says that first this desire should be made apparent in the subject's or analysand's conscious mind instead of simply existing as an opaque fantasy (p.229). The subject then needs to work out how to act on their desire in order to find out whether it is worth having or not. In order to fulfil desire, ethics and discretion in the matter need to be taken into consideration, for once a subject has named their desire they should act in accordance with what they know about this desire (Lacan, 1992b, 3-5).

To explore the ethics associated with searching for and the presentation of our geneological findings I found it useful to examine films and artworks that confront similar issues. The protagonist of the film *Amelie from Montmartre* chooses to follow a labyrinth to creatively join the subconscious signifiers of love, and to set up a cat and mouse game to find out if her romantic desire is reciprocated or not.

She develops a love crush on a man called Nino Quincampoix who is living in a similar isolated fantasy world to herself. Amelie spots Quincampoix for the first time scrounging for photo fragments underneath a photo booth. She then appropriates Nino's photo diary that has fallen off the back of his scooter, and tries to work out the significance of the diary to Nino by shadowing him. Instead of simply giving it back to Nino, Amelie discretely develops a creative trail for him that is inspired by using

fragments of this diary (Jeunet, 2001). By imitating this style of searching within the printmaking component of the installation I extend upon Lacanian notions of desire.

Amelie's fanciful daydreams develop into behaviours that are also very reminiscent of Sophie Calle's shadowing and surveillance techniques used in her *Suite Venitienne* and *Address Book* projects from the 1980s. Sophie Calle began working as an artist when she returned to Paris after travelling the world for seven years. She recalls feeling isolated and lost; and this isolation inspired her to follow and investigate the lives of strangers on the street. She states that she photographed these strangers 'without their knowledge, took note of their movements, then finally lost site of them and forgot them' (Baudrillard, 1998, p.3). In *Suite Venitienne*, Calle followed and documented a man who she firstly followed on the street and then lost. By chance Calle encountered the man and spoke with him that night at an art opening where he told her he was planning a trip to Venice. To create her artwork Calle decided to pursue the man secretly throughout his trip. To follow his exact footsteps she engaged in detective activities such as phoning a hundred hotels to find out at which one he was staying. When she eventually found him she photographed him every time she saw him and also documented the places he had been, and the things he photographed (Baudrillard, 1998, p.77).

The artworks of Calle alongside the activities of Amelie reverse traditional roles of the active male gaze and the passive female object of desire. I create a similar style of searching within *Looking for Charlie* because I want to present an honest account of how women sometimes gaze at the other.

Part of the beauty of *Suite Venetienne* is the discretion with which Calle carries out her project. Baudrillard (1998) writes, 'the only way not to meet someone in Venice is to follow him from a distance and not lose sight of him,' yet he also points out that the city of Venice 'is built like a trap, a maze, a labyrinth that inevitably...brings people back to the same points...By the nature of things everyone is followed in Venice; everyone runs into each other, everyone recognises each other' (p.83). By shadowing and searching for answers these women are able to find answers about their desire, if only in a voyeuristic way on behalf of Calle.

We are left to question if the photographs that Calle presents are real or not, because in displaying interactions with real people Calle is bordering on being unethical due to the potential invasion of her subjects' privacy. What is interesting about Calles work is that no one is recognisable within her exhibitions, yet if her stories are presented as true to life then surely the subject would recognise themselves.

To protect personal privacy when exhibiting the genealogical research within my own exhibition, *Looking for Charlie* the findings, names and addresses were altered out of respect for the people who are still living. The manipulation of true identities on my prints adds to the uncertainty of the piece and reemphasizes the opaque nature of love and longing.

Due to the multilayered and eclectic nature of *Looking for Charlie*, new psychological meanings have been produced through its execution. The presentation of time-images or psychic counterpoints via the fragmented and obtuse linking of drawing, film and printmaking emphasize the intricate nature of love and how it can never be delimited as a rational whole. The use of Surrealist alter egos and participatory realist performance within such imagery also enabled me to question the ways in which people are meant to behave when pursuing their desire. Women are not socially expected to pursue the "Other" when it concerns matters of the heart, but as Lacan (1992, 3-5) points out with his "Rat in the Maze" theory, sometimes desire will never be resolved unless it is followed in a discrete fashion. My mother and I did not find out everything about Charlie, and there were no signs to say that he still thought of my grandmother before his death. Yet we did find closure in discovering that he had moved on and appeared to be happily married, and that there was no chance of rekindling her romance any further.

| *Adaptation*, 2002. dir. Spike Jonze, Columbia Pictures, USA.

| *Amelie from Montmartre*, 2001. dir. Jean-Pierre Jeunet. Victories Productions – Tapioca Films – France 3 Cinema.

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Psychic Awakening is an in-universe event for the 8th Edition of Warhammer 40,000 beginning in Autumn 2019.[1]. Psychic Awakening is a monumental event that will shape Warhammer 40,000 forever, on a scale unlike anything youâ€™ve ever seen before. Across this epic event, every codex will see expanded rules as we explore the front-line war zones of a cataclysmic new conflict that makes the 13th Black Crusade look like a border scuffle. Every single Warhammer 40,000 faction has a stake in Psychic To continue the romance, you should agree to look into the matter and generally select the Neutral Good option when given the choice. Linzi's Book. When you camp in an area map, at some point you'll catch Tristian reading a trashy romance novel that he borrowed from Linzi. The poor boy, he went to Linzi for relationship advice! This is the first time he actually might accept your advances. To further the romance, you should: Ask him about the book he's reading. He'll tell you that he's confused, so you tell him "you always try to find something in words that can&a Realism is about recreating life in literature. Realism arose as an opposing idea to Idealism and Nominalism. Idealism is the approach to literature of writing about everything in its ideal from. Nominalism believes that ideas are only names and have no practical application.Â This emphasis was brought on by societal changes such as the aftermath of the Civil War in the United States and the emergence of Darwin's Theory of Evolution and its effect upon biblical interpretation. Characteristics: Â· Emphasis on psychological, optimistic tone, details, pragmatic, practical, slow-moving plot.