

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO MAN'S IDENTITY  
CRISIS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL  
PRESSURE BY THE VISUAL MASS MEDIA AS A  
THEME IN CONTEMPORARY FINE ARTS.**

**BY**

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I, the author, hereby certify that all the material in this research study, unless otherwise stated, is my own work and has not been submitted for qualification purposes at any other institution.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### CHAPTER 1

1.1. The Statement of the Problem .....	1
1.2. The Subproblems .....	1
1.3. The Hypothesis .....	2
1.4. The Definition of Terms .....	3
1.5. Delimitations .....	3
1.6. Assumptions .....	4
1.7. The Importance of the Study .....	4
1.8. Method of Investigation .....	4
1.9. Reference System .....	5
1.10. Visual Material .....	5

### CHAPTER 2

#### THE INFLUENCE OF THE SOCIAL PRESSURE OF THE VISUAL MASS MEDIA AND ITS EFFECTS OF MAN'S IDENTITY CRISIS.

<b>2.1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2.2. Past Theories .....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.2.1 Lasswell's Hypodermic Model .....	8
2.2.2 Paul Lazarsfeld's Minimal Effects Theory .....	9
2.2.3 The Theory of Selective Perception - Mc Combs and Becker .....	9
2.2.4 The Uses and Gratifications Theory - .....	10
2.2.4.1 The Para - Social Interaction Concept - David Horton and Richard Wohl. . . .	11
2.2.4.2 The Theory of Escape - Elihu Katz and David Foulkes. . . . .	12

2.2.4.3 The Theory of Fantasy and Reality Oriented Content - Wilber Schramm. . . . .	12
2.2.5 Agenda Setting - Mc Combs and Shaw's Theory . . . . .	13
2.2.6 Powerful Media Revisited - Noelle Newman's Theory . . . . .	14
<b>2.3 Contemporary Theories . . . . .</b>	<b>15</b>
2.3.1 Media Virus - Douglas Rushkoff . . . . .	16
2.3.2 The Medium is the Message - Marshall McLuhan . . . . .	17
2.3.3 Identity Crisis - Stephen Frosh . . . . .	20
2.3.4 The Culture of Narcissism - Christopher Lasch . . . . .	22
2.3.5 The Saturated Self - Kenneth J. Gergen . . . . .	25
2.3.6 Signification and Simulation - Jean Baudrillard . . . . .	30
<b>2.4 Conclusion . . . . .</b>	<b>32</b>

**CHAPTER 3**

**THE THEME AS PORTRAYED IN CONTEMPORARY FINE ART.**

<b>3.1 Introduction . . . . .</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>3.2 Modernism . . . . .</b>	<b>37</b>
3.2.1 Richard Hamilton . . . . .	39
3.2.2 Roy Lichtenstein . . . . .	40
3.2.3 Andy Warhol . . . . .	41
3.2.4 Willem de Kooning . . . . .	42
3.2.5 Eduardo Paolozzi . . . . .	43
3.2.6 Jasper Johns. . . . .	44



<b>3.3 Postmodernism</b> .....	44
3.3.1 Barbara Kruger .....	46
3.3.2 Cindy Sherman .....	47
3.3.3 Jean Michel Basquiat .....	48
3.3.4 Dumb Type .....	50
3.3.5 Kiki Smith .....	51
3.3.6 Marc Quinn .....	52
<b>3.4 Conclusion</b> .....	53

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE THEME AS PORTRAYED BY THE RESEARCHER IN PRACTICAL TERMS.**

<b>4.1 Introduction</b> .....	55
<b>4.2 Discussion of Individual Works</b> .....	55
4.2.1 Pseudo Prodigy .....	57
4.2.2 Multi- Identification .....	58
4.2.3 Glad Comfort Zone .....	59
4.2.4 Mental Lamination .....	60
4.2.5 Image Duplicator I .....	60
4.2.6 Image Duplicator II .....	61
4.2.7 Comfortable Contamination .....	62
4.2.8 New Improved Reality .....	63
4.2.9 Plastic Dissection .....	63
<b>4.3 Conclusion</b> .....	64
<b>LIST OF REFERENCE SOURCES</b> .....	65

<b>ILLUSTRATIONS</b> .....	69
<b>ILLUSTRATIONS: BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	78
<b>ILLUSTRATIONS OF PRACTICAL RESEARCH</b> .....	80

## CHAPTER 1.

### 1.1 The Statement of the Problem

This investigation proposes inquiry into the social pressure exerted by the visual mass media and how it becomes an influence towards man having an identity crisis. The media's impact on an individual and its consequences will be of importance especially when concerning its effects on how an individual is tempted to conform or transform into different identities thus placing his or her 'original' identity at risk.

It will also explore into the specific theme and how it can be portrayed in contemporary Fine Art, as well as the application thereof to the researcher's practical work. Identified art works by prominent contemporary artists, containing the theme, will be analysed and the context in which the image was utilised and the apparent reason for the use thereof, will also be studied.

### 1.2 The subproblems

Subproblem 1. The first subproblem will be to determine whether the influence of social pressure by the visual mass media contributes to man's loss of identity and then to determine how the influence of the visual mass media affected man's identity crisis.

Subproblem 2. The second subproblem will be to analyse as to how the specific investigation is portrayed and applied as a theme in contemporary Fine Art.

Subproblem 3. The third subproblem will be to determine how man's identity crisis, on account of the mass media's influence, could be interpreted in pictorial terms.



### 1.3 The hypothesis

**The hypothesis to subproblem 1** is that the visual mass media contributes to the social pressure on the individual in its display of many personalities and images that are idolized and worshipped by the public, thus deluding the individual's truths and ideals. It is hypothesized that man no longer has his own values which then become blurred by idolized images that are being displayed on screen and in magazines. Man's identity crisis is mainly caused by the collection of various identities that are displayed by the media and joined together within the individual to display an overvalued self. Different personality orders are formed by the continuous bombardment of the media which man evidently consumes.

**The hypothesis to subproblem 2** is that man's identity crisis was especially portrayed in contemporary Fine Arts as fragmented and distorted images of idols that were displayed within the visual mass media. The portrayal of man's identity changed with the influence of the visual mass media, in that imagery became an assembly of celebrities and idols appearing in the contemporary visual mass media. It is also hypothesized that photography played an important role in the development of portraying the theme as new techniques, such as silk screening, helped contain the media image almost directly.

**The hypothesis to subproblem 3** is that man's identity crisis can be portrayed in pictorial terms by the researcher in a more satirical nature. Certain features within the works can be transformed and exaggerated and can therefore evolve into an almost ridiculed portrayal. The figures within the works can be idolized on account of that which is shown within the visual mass media of the era. Reference materials can be borrowed and interpreted directly from the media eg. magazines and manipulated to display man's identity crisis. The image does not become a whole but rather a synthesis of various human features, a multi- personality. This fragmentation can possibly form a collage of the crisis man's mentality withheld.

#### 1.4 Definition of terms

Identity Crisis. Man's identity crisis is seen as a personality disorder demonstrating an individual's identity that is placed within a critical situation. The oneness and selfhood of the individuals are placed within a dilemma.

Social Pressure. Social pressure pertains to the individual being persuaded to adapt to specific prevailing trends within the social environment in order to become part of those trends.

✓ Mass Media. Mass media, within the context of the study, is a form of communication via visual transmission serving extensive communities with popular information and entertainment.

✓ Contemporary. Contemporary is the living, happening or being at the same time, especially when concerning the present day fashions ie. trends of the same age. This period could be limited from the 1940's until the present day.

✓ Fine Arts. Term for a group of arts that include painting, sculpture, drawing and photography. These are distinct from applied, industrial and commercial art, as fine art is not primarily utilitarian.

#### 1.5 Delimitations

The study will not include any other means of mass communication except for the visual mass media. The visual media will only include magazine, computer, billboards and television communications.

The study will deal with the psychological aspect, only insofar as it involves mass persuasion of the media as an influence on the self. It will also exclude the different aspects of propaganda



and its influences on the self.

### **1.1.6 Assumptions**

The first assumption. The first assumption is that social pressure is exercised on the individual by the visual mass media.

The second assumption. The second assumption is that man is generally sensitive to social pressure exercised by the mass media.

The third assumption. The third assumption is that the images used in the visual mass media are often repetitive and continuous and therefore constantly bombard the individual with ideas and influences, thus changing man's individual ideals and values.

### **1.7 The importance of the study**

Extensive studies have taken place with regard to the mass media's manipulation of modern society eg. Pop art. The influence of social pressure by the mass media leading the individual to have an identity crisis is by comparison a relatively less exploited field in the Fine Arts and warrants further investigation. The study will also highlight specific artists under the specified research theme thus creating public awareness with regard to this phenomenon ie. man's identity crisis as a theme in contemporary Fine Arts.

### **1.8 Method of investigation**

The methods of investigation will mainly consist of historical and philosophical interpretations of the theme. Research into the related literature ie. mass media and the influence on the self, will be analysed and then delimited to only that pertaining to the theme. Psychological theories

and past empirical studies will also be analysed.

An analysis of visual material will be vital in the investigation ie. identified artworks that contain the imagery concerning the matter. Contemporary magazine sources will also become vital in displaying more contemporary works as well as art and theorist sources established on the Internet.

Observational studies of the visual mass media will also be considered. An examination of media such as magazines and television programs could be of major importance to the study.

#### **1.1.9. Reference System**

The Harvard Method is used as the reference system for this research study and it entails the following information:

1. The author of the book as well as the date of publication, for example (McQuail, 1994...).
2. The page number of the book, for example (... , 36).

According to this method, the information is furnished in brackets throughout the text and is mentioned in detail in the Bibliography. The Bibliography is alphabetically arranged according to the author's surname and is placed at the end of the research study.

#### **1.1.10. Visual Material**

All photographs are placed separately from the text in an annexure at the end of chapter 4, for example, photograph number 8 will be found in figure 8 (fig.8). The researcher made use of visual material obtained in Library books and magazines pertaining to the field of study. Illustrations of works by contemporary artists and visual material featuring the researcher's

practical work, will be available for the purpose of analysis and discussion.

## CHAPTER 2.

### 2. THE INFLUENCE OF THE SOCIAL PRESSURE BY THE VISUAL MASS MEDIA AND ITS EFFECTS OF MAN'S IDENTITY CRISIS.

#### 2.1. Introduction.

It was of vital importance to firstly discuss various theories concerning the visual mass media and how it has caused social pressure on the individual, resulting in man's identity crisis. These theories were selectively chosen as the most prominent in the field and would supply a sufficient understanding of the visual mass media and how it affected man's identity crisis. The theories will specify which elements of the visual mass media affect the individual and also which type of individual is affected by the media. Another important aspect was the manipulation of the audience and how man was influenced to self idolize or to be manipulated so as to cause an identity crisis.

Before various contemporary theories of mass media and its effects on man were to be examined, it was of considerable importance to review earlier theories concerning the visual mass media and how it affected the individual. These earlier theories are significant as they were the forerunners or influential elements in the construction of the more contemporary ideas. A brief review of these theories will be sufficient in furthering understanding of their basic principles.

Some media research had taken place before the television became widespread in the 1950's, but the advent of this new highly distributed medium then prompted researchers to look more deeply into the media's effects.

## 2.2. Earlier Theories

### 2.2.1. Lasswell's Hypodermic Model

Dr Lasswell, a professor of law at Yale University, has contributed a vast amount of writing to renowned communications studies, explaining the media and its effects.

One of Lasswell's most well known concepts, developed in the 1940's, was the '*hypodermic needle model*', also known as the '*silver bullet concept*' mentioned in many of his theories. In his reference to this concept, Lasswell described the media as similar to a hypodermic needle injecting liquids into a person, in other words, explaining it as the media infusing ideas into the audience affecting them to behave differently. The media is thus causing the breakdown of traditional values and allowing the viewers to inhabit a false consciousness. The communicator, not the consumer or receiver, was viewed as the causative person (Agee, Ault & Emery, 1985: 30).

Large scale research projects (Ibid. 1985: 31) were initiated on Lasswell's account during the Vietnam war in the 1960's, like the Yale Communication Research Project by Carl I. Hovland and also another studying the voting behaviour of individuals being influenced by mass media in Erie County, Ohio by Paul Lazarsfeld. However, these projects failed to prove Lasswell's theories.

For two decades, communication students and scholars' ideas were also structured on Lasswell's theories such as the design of the act of communications ie. Who, says what, on which channel, to whom, with what effect? These phrases consequently described the studies concerning control analysis, content analysis, media analysis, audience analysis and effect analysis respectively (Ibid: 30).

Dr Lasswell's theories were very naive and became similar to a laboratory experiment in explaining the media's effects on its viewers. His generalizations were not sufficiently substantiated by empirical work and consequently cannot be accepted as a reliable theory.

### **2.2.2. Paul Lazarsfeld's Minimal Effects Theory**

Evidence from empirical studies, proving Lasswell's theories incorrect and done by the sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld from Columbia University, showed that the media had little direct effects on voting, thus also on the viewer's perception of ideas, during an election campaign. Lazarsfeld (Agee, *et al.* 1985: 31) stated that media rather reinforced preconceived ideas and beliefs of the viewers than changing them.

Lazarsfeld then argued that the mass media had a narcotizing dysfunction of absorbing their audiences' time without energizing them (Ibid: 31). The media controlled the audience, directing them to accept a similar idea to their own. Lazarsfeld persistently claimed that the media did not change the viewer's actions or mind, but only added to their personal ideas (Ibid: 31)

Later theories, such as the selective perception theory, determined that this model was too simplified because researchers concluded that the more personal the medium, the more persuasive it becomes.

### **2.2.3. The Theory of Selective Perception Mc Combs and Becker.**

During the 1950's, theories with regard to the media's effects predominantly suggested that people wanted their beliefs and judgements about things to be consistent with each other. People exposed themselves to information that was consistent with their ideas and actions and they thus shut out all other communication. Professors Maxwell E. McCombs and Lee B.



Becker (Agee, *et al.* 1985: 32) stated that some key parts of each individual's experience which influenced his or her perceptions, were the set of previously acquired attitudes and opinions. They also suggested that stereotypes are created and used as a familiar and consistent link among all the people.

In selective perception, items regarded more favourable were more likely to be recalled than the contradictory. The viewer would shape his or her interpretation according to his existing attitude (Ibid: 32).

*Selective attention* was another aspect of this theory. It consisted of the reader or viewer skipping parts of the story or even all of it. The viewer was thus only perceiving what he felt was vital. *Selective retention* implied that the reader would retain or remember only parts of what was read. People remembered only what they wanted to remember. The emphasis was mainly on the seeking and avoiding of information rather than the transmission of instruction or urging of opinion change (Ibid: 32).

#### **2.2.4. The Uses and Gratifications Theory.**

According to Bryant and Zillman (1994: 418) the Uses and Gratifications theory mostly emphasized what people did with the media rather than what the media did to them. The mass media was considered as a functional tool for the individual relating a certain type of gratification to a certain type of audience characteristic. The Uses and Gratifications theory saw the media audiences as variably active communicators.

Theorists, like the Israeli psychologist, Elihu Katz, began to look at the interaction between the audience with the medium and the particular programs they watched. There obviously were differences and variabilities within the viewer's responses and their interpretations. Uses and Gratifications research was mainly concerned with the social and psychological needs of the

audience therefore saying that media effects could no longer be associated with the message on a homogeneous mass audience. The concept was concerned with differential interpretation of each individual and not the mechanistic perspective of media itself (Ibid: 418). The consumer decided which mediums and programs to use to gratify his or her needs. The effects of mass media therefore were considered individualistic, in the sense of a different response or interpretation of the visual mass media, being a result of the different personality or psychology of the viewer. Individual psychology was thus the most important means of researching mass media's influence on man. It was also stated that researchers should have studied the process of change in space and time, the consequences of that change in uses of communicated messages, and the effects of the change on the personal life of the subject.

Mass media content, as indicated by McQuail (1994: 176) that was chosen and used by the individual, could be selected for several reasons and gratifications, examples being (a) the *theory of para-social interaction* presented by Donald Horton and Richard Wohl , (b) the *theory of escape* by Elihu Katz and David Foulkes, and Wilber Schramm's *theory of fantasy and reality-oriented content*.

#### 2.2.4.1. The Para-Social Interaction Concept - David Horton and Richard Wohl.

The para-social interaction (PSI) concept suggested by Horton and Wohl (McQuail, 1994: 181), briefly concerned the interaction between certain types of mass communicators (personae or entertainers) and their public. It was like a conversational give and take. The communicators supplied the viewers with what they wanted or expected, enabling the audience to relate to the persona as in reality, like a personal relationship. There became an interaction with the personae.

In one study done during the 1970's that examined parasocial relationships between the audience and newscasters, more than half the people surveyed agreed with the statement that

the newscasters almost became like friends you see every day (Dominick, 1993: 53).

#### 2.2.5.2. The Theory of Escape - Elihu Katz and David Foulkes.

Katz and Foulkes (McQuail, 1994:179) presented a chain of key concepts in the area of mass communications concerning popular culture. These theories basically explained that modern society gives rise to tensions or *drives* which lead to *high exposure* to mass media with its *content* and *context* from which *psychological processes* can obtain compensatory gratification and, as an unanticipated *consequence*, '*narcotization*' of other role obligations. Dependence on the media was seen as a characteristic of an individual. Social variables determined the individual's degree of dependence on the media. Katz and Foulkes (Ibid: 179) saw escape from reality as something like a goal, a value or a motive for the individual. This escape was like a kind of narcotization of the viewer, which then eventually lead to gratification.

#### 2.2.4.3. The Theory of Fantasy and Reality Oriented Content - Wilber Schramm.

Schramm (McQuail, 1994: 176) divided mass communication into two main strands ie. fantasy and reality. Fantasy oriented content supplied by the media, consisted of non-informative, fictional information. This obviously then served as an escape, a para-social interaction or capture from reality. Reality-oriented content then served as the informative, usually non-fictional content. It was more attached to reality. The main purpose of this concept was purely for informative reasons. Fantasy was for the immediate reward of gratification and reality for the delayed.

Media use can be seen to be both limited and motivated by complex and interacting forces in society and in the personal biography of the individual (McQuail, 1994: 320). Professor Alex S. Edelstein (Agee, et al. 1985: 37) an international communications scholar, claimed that the study of communication should rather be seen as consequence and not as a cause of these

influences. Researchers had to study the process of change in time and space, the consequences of that change in uses of communicated messages and the effects of the change on the personal life of the subject. Edelstein did research on the uses and gratifications theory in the United States and in Yugoslavia and concluded that the individual evaluates sources of information not in terms of the source's credibility, but in terms of content, breadth of perception and availability. The consumer determined which medium to use depending on which gratifies his or her needs.

### **2.2.5. Agenda Setting - McCombs and Shaw's Theory**

As an important term in mass communications, agenda setting was a significant theory, explaining the media's direct influence on what the audience was exposed to and how this then directly manipulated the viewer's ideas.

Agee (*et al.* 1985: 34) indicated that the agenda setting effect mainly concerned the influence of the mass media emphasising certain topics, thus causing the viewers to perceive these same issues as important. The basic idea of this theory was the ability of the media to influence the projection of events in the public mind. It was the ability to affect cognitive change among individuals, to structure their thinking and its ability to mentally order and organise the viewer's world for them.

Two professors of mass communications, Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw did an empirical study concerning the agenda setting function of the mass media in a study of voters in the 1968 American election. The undecided voters were directly influenced by what the media emphasised as important issues. The results also indicated that the media's input was vital, thus emphasising that the press had set the agenda for its audience. The mass media became like a conveyer belt carrying the predetermined information (*Ibid*: 34)

Communicators of the media suggest that what concerned the people, concerned them. But in this respect, actually then only concerned the viewers. The media became powerful instruments of guidance. They have influenced what we do and what we think. Information control has been practised for centuries with the realization that knowledge is vital to social power and that those who control the flow of communication, have the ability to exercise power over the people. The concept of agenda setting was well established, although its status as a detailed theory remained to be determined.

#### **2.2.6. Powerful Media Revisited - Noelle-Newman's Theory**

In spite of findings supporting the Minimal Effects theory, by the 1960's researchers began to find and believe that media impact did in fact have great influence. These researchers concluded that a person's life could not become similar to a laboratory controlled experiment. The effect of the media on the human mind was impossible to interpret because every individual was different ie. no decisive conclusion could be found. The powerful mass media was now reemphasised by researchers like Dr. Elisabeth Noelle-Newman. This West German communication's researcher, strongly stressed the media's powerful effects by noting three important factors: the ever-present and universal media; the cumulative effects of the media ie. messages being repetitive, cumulative and reinforcing each other; and communicator consonance ie. leading to sameness of media messages (Friedlander, Lee & Merrill, 1990: 88).

Another concept of Noelle- Newman (Ibid: 88) was the spiral of silence idea. This concept totally supported the powerful media theory in showing how inferior the viewer was compared to the effects. Newman explained that people who felt they were in the minority were silent and therefore reinforced the majority. The more people took the minority view, the more powerful the majority became and this then became a spiralled effect. The majority then ruled the minority. Therefore, they became the surfer of the effect of the media's great influence which had great effect. Basically the theory proposed that the

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certain issues, the people are guided by the media as the dominant factor.

### **2.3. Contemporary Theories**

The earlier theories became forerunners and influential factors for the more contemporary theories. The following discussion includes ideas and theories pertaining toward what the visual mass media of the present entailed. These theories were of utmost importance describing how the mass media as a social factor influenced and affected its audience until pressurised to the identity crisis of man.

The most important factor in this section included theories interpreted about different individuals being influenced in different ways. Psychoanalysis became a vital element in discovering how the media had affected these individuals and how the viewers reacted with or against this media persuasion. The media effects were then seen differently as compared to when the media had first bombarded society.

A newer consciousness, Postmodernism, also pervaded this era and became an influence on what society perceived and experienced. Postmodernism seemed to be very much a theory of, or for, the *information society*. This era undermined the traditional notion of culture as something fixed or hierarchical. It favoured forms of culture which were transient, of the moment, superficial, appealing to the sense rather than reason; it was volatile, illogical, kaleidoscopic and hedonistic (McQuail, 1994: 27). Frosh stated that with Postmodernism the certainty of the self slipped away, leaving only celebrating but empty surfaces (Frosh, 1991: 7).

#### **2.3.1. Media Virus - Douglas Rushkoff**

A graduate of Princeton and the California Institute of Arts, Douglas Rushkoff extended the

theory of Dr Lasswell's '*Hypodermic Model*' where media is considered to be injected into the viewer causing influences on the individual. Rushkoff (Internet 1) called the late twentieth century the '*data sphere*'. It was the time when information, such as ideas, images, icons, fads, fashions, and fantasies, travelled through the world at the speed of light. Messages were transported through the '*arteries*' of the vast information superhighway and '*infected*' the new media into the culture.

Rushkoff (Internet 1) described the '*media virus*' as any event, image or idea that travels through the media space similar to a biological virus that spreads through the body or a community. The circulatory system became cables, satellites, internets etc. The biological virus consisted mainly of DNA wrapped in a protein shell for protection and travelled through the body of its host. The virus attached itself to the host cell and injected the '*code*' inside. If the host DNA had weak ends, it could insert itself into the host code and then use the cell to replicate the virus. Media viruses were the same. They were social codes wrapped in a shell of media and thus travelled safely through the media sphere. It then was safely '*injected*' into the viewer's heads. Eventually the '*media virus*' replicated and could cause a full scale '*viral infection*'.

Rushkoff (Internet 2) then reckoned that if the individual's cultural code was weak in certain areas, then only did the '*media virus*' penetrate and '*infect*'. Some individuals were immune to certain codes and thus were not infected. The '*media viruses*' could not really be launched where there was no cultural need for them. Rushkoff theorized that there will always be holes open though, for viruses to penetrate the mind, but the more the mind got exposed to a certain '*code*' the more immune it got to the message.

### **2.3.2. Medium is the Message - Marshall McLuhan's Theory.**

Marshall McLuhan, a professor of English and director of the Centre for Culture and



Technology at Toronto University, was one of the most widely mentioned and controversial theorists of his time. His books '*The Gutenberg Galaxy*' (1962), '*Understanding Media*' (1964), and '*The Medium is the Massage*' (1967), combined with several television appearances and lectures, have made him to be known as the prophet of a new age of electronics ( Agee, et al. 1985: 35).

According to McLuhan's theory (1964: 7) the medium was the message. This basically meant that any medium became an extension of ourselves. Electronic technology numbed our senses and then the content of the medium was like a juicy piece of meat carried by the burglar to distract the watchdog of the mind ( Ibid: 18 ).

McLuhan later extended on this saying by calling one of his books, '*The Medium is the Massage*' ( 1967 ), implying that the media massages or constantly rubs ideas into the mind, causing a technological extension of man and his consciousness. McLuhan (Ibid: 61) also stated that translating man's life into the same form of information technology could resolve the whole globe into a single consciousness. This then implied that media has thus caused the retribalization of society and has also created a whole '*Global Village*'.

According to McLuhan (Ibid: 22), a medium can be '*hot*' or '*cool*'. The *cooler* the medium, the more information has to be supplied by the audience and the *hotter* the medium the less information needs to be supplied by the viewers. Wide-screen movies were thus considered the *hot* medium because the hotter the medium, the more it enthrals the viewers, thus the senses being numbed to a greater degree. The television screen on the other hand will be the *cooler* medium.

It is significant to mention that McLuhan's theories cannot be accepted as definite proof of the effects of mass media on man and can only be interpreted as his personal ideas. Adler and Cater's (1976: 36) remark that McLuhan was relying on intuition and analogy rather than

statistics or empirical evidence, offers an appropriate reflection with regard to the limitations of this author's approach.

Several contexts within McLuhan's theories have sparked new ideas for further research for students of communications, such as Douglas Rushkoff's (1994) ideas of the media as a virus. McLuhan allowed the reader to think about how the environment had changed by the impact of mass media. He was an investigator and explorer of ideas and thus persuaded us merely to think about changes in our environment. Despite these limitations, McLuhan's theories became of vital importance in the influence on contemporary ideas.

As previously mentioned, McLuhan related the media with the '*numbing of the senses*'. McLuhan associated this '*narcosis*' or '*numbness*' with the Greek myth of Narcissus. The youthful Narcissus mistook himself with his own image in the water for that of someone else. This extension of himself numbed his perceptions and he became obsessed with his own repeated image. That myth showed the fact that man became fascinated by any extension of himself in any other material other than his own physical being (McLuhan, 1964: 41). McLuhan also stated that an extension of the individual was an attempt to maintain equilibrium. This extension of the individual was regarded as an '*auto amputation*' (Ibid: 42) and this strategy was then resorted to by the body when the perceptual power could not locate or avoid the cause of irritation. The extension or *amputation* controlled the stresses and the irritations (disease). Like the myth of Narcissus then, the image was the self- amputation or extension, created by irritation. The image then produced a generalised numbness that declined recognition. Self amputation forbids self- recognition (Ibid: 42).

Technology was considered as the extension or self- amputation of the physical body. The television image became this extension to fulfill the *irritation*. It was obvious that the television image varied from culture to culture, for example European television had then impelled on its peoples, the American styles of packaging and dressing. The concept of the idol and the use

of technology, adapted man toward them. McLuhan (Ibid: 46) then stated that it was that continuous embracing of our own technology in a daily use that puts us in the role of Narcissus; that of subliminal awareness and numbness in relation to these images of ourselves.

Expanding on these ideas, McLuhan explained that the individual thrived on the pleasure of being an individual within masses. Having others present became a comfort and a numbness. Mechanical technologies that separated and extended the functions of the individual's physical being, caused the disintegration of the individual and placed man out of touch with himself. Clothing was seen as an extension of the skin. McLuhan stated that in the electric age we wore all mankind as our skin (Ibid: 47). The Europeans began to dress like the Americans and the Americans became more European cultured.

Author Kroker (Internet 4) described McLuhan's theories as entering a *vortex* of the critical, cultural imagination, where the *fixed perspective* was dismissed along the way, and where everything passed over instantaneously into its opposite. McLuhan was found to be a thinker who had total ambivalent perspectives on the techno culture of that era. Kroker found McLuhan's blind spots to be his liberal thoughts, Catholic and structuralistic (before its time) precisely because the gravitational point of McLuhan's thought was the preservation of creative freedom in a modern century, and because of stress caused by its technology, was under a constant state of emergency. Kroker (Internet 4) then finally mentioned that McLuhan's final legacy was that he was the playful perpetrator, and then the victim, of a sign- crime. As Ctheory (Internet 4) mentioned in its editor's note, McLuhan was never the technotopian that contemporary technophiles liked to portray (Internet 4).

### **2.3.3. Identity Crisis - Stephen Frosh.**

Stephen Frosh, a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Birkbeck College, University of London and a Principal Clinical Psychologist in the Child and Family Department at the Tavistock Clinic

in London, was mainly concerned with the psychoanalysis of the self and how social factors affected the individual.

As an extension on the majority of the past media theories, Frosh determined the effects of the visual mass media by the '*language*' of psychoanalysis. In psychoanalysis, it was the subjectivity of the individual which was the centre of concern, a subjectivity given not just by what can be easily expressed as a consciously available '*I*', but also by obscure and contradictory segments of a hidden self (Frosh, 1991: 2). This suggested that the persuasive power of the social environment did not reside in what it said, but in the way it entered unnoticeably into the psychic structure of the individual. Psychoanalysts regarded the self as a constructed phenomena. The importance of the discussion of psychoanalysis lay in its method of exploring the individual and how he was affected by the visual mass media, instead of investigating a mass crowd which resulted in different conclusions. The individual was considered the most important element in finding the effects of the media whereas in previous media theories influence was concerned with man as a whole. A discussion mostly characteristic of contemporary psychopathologies concerned the attitude of the self and that of narcissism.

According to Frosh (Ibid: 115) narcissism was universally theorised as a defensive response to the inability to construct a secure and stable self; this in turn was the result of environmental deficiencies. Frosh (Ibid: 3) explained that if the individual was narcissistic, it was claimed that he was struggling to preserve selfhood through gratifications achieved by manipulating others. Narcissism was not simple self- aggrandisement born out of an overvaluation of the self, but was more likely to be a desperate set of strategies for survival in a setting in which the self seemed to be in danger of breaking down. The formation of the self was considered solely a defensive mechanism, a way of limiting the destructive power of the unconscious.

One of the characteristics of contemporary Western life is that of confusion when faced with the contradictions and multiplicities of contemporary life. What was generally accepted was

that the contemporary state of mind was in the condition in which the '*struggle to be a self*' was nearly impossible (Ibid: 5). Modernity was related to words like 'contradiction', 'fluidity' and 'multiplicity' found most often in the ideas of modernist and postmodernist movements. Contemporary culture represented a rupture with the past, throwing previous assumptions and traditions to the wind, undermining accepted ideas and modes of relationship between people and people, and between people and things (Ibid: 6).

Pathological self formations were characteristic of an unstable or non-existent self structure, which were referred to as '*narcissism*' and '*psychosis*'. According to Frosh (Ibid: 8) these were sometimes taken as products of contemporary social stressors, affecting only some individuals; but they also were often taken as emblems of the whole route of contemporary culture. A recurrent discussion pertaining to the term *narcissism*, was that of modernity being characterised by the denial of relationships with others, in both individuals and as a cultural phenomena. The narcissistic character was also pertained to the values of commitment to others and the toleration of reality, which were central elements in a truthful and also non-alienated existence. The endurance hereof, entailed recognition and acceptance of the modern agony without the option to escapist illusions. This endurance therefore became a type of self preservation or recovery.

Frosh (Ibid: 108) later then also claimed that the adult self was organised around self esteem; in other words, all human activity was narcissistic in the sense that it was concerned with self-maintenance and with the uncovering of positive self-images: a culture structured around self reflections, mirrors and exhibitionistic images which merely exaggerated what was fundamental to the self. All was presentational; feelings were mere representations of the success or failure of self esteem regulation.

According to Frosh (Ibid: 110) the world fluctuated. It became paranoid and idealising and the environment of the narcissist was haunted by visions that continually changed shape. The

strategy of fusing the ideal self, the ideal object and the actual self images together, produced an overvalued self which did not need to be dependent on others and thus did not fear rejection.

It was a society in which what was real slipped away, merging with what was illusory, in which the image ruled, in which people were immersed in a dream but dreams lost both their depth and their significance. Reality became dreamlike in its constant promise of fulfilment of desire, but when the objects of desire were achieved, they then were found to be empty (Ibid: 125).

Narcissism was considered a commonly shared state of mind reflecting the terrifying emptiness produced by the denial of reality (Ibid: 125).

#### **2.3.4. The Culture of Narcissism - Christopher Lasch.**

Stephen Frosh often referred to Christopher Lasch's theories on narcissism, which constantly influenced Frosh's theories as in his books called '*The Culture of Narcissism*' (1979) and '*The Minimal Self*' (1984). Lasch constructed some important links between the nature of modern culture, American culture specifically, and the formation of a certain type of subjectivity (an impoverished inner world). He suggested that contemporary life had no formation of a deep and integrated sense of secure being. Thus, the self became like a collection of chameleon images. Furthermore he suggested that every age developed its own peculiar forms of pathology, which expressed in exaggerated form its underlying character structure (Frosh, 1991: 63).

The present contemporary age is that of character disorder and of borderline narcissistic states. Lasch (1979: 64) suggested that narcissistic disorders were exaggerations of the normal successful type in Western society and that everyday narcissists thrived in an environment that rewarded the manipulation of others whilst penalising the more personally caring relationships. Narcissism was used in part to convey the egocentricity and rampant individualism of modern

Western '*consumer*' culture (Ibid: 64).

Lasch (1979: 97) stated that modern life was so mediated by electronic images that the self could not help responding to others as if their actions were being recorded and simultaneously transmitted to an unseen audience. In the language of television, the image of modernity was '*the image*'. He saw narcissism as a kind of mirror function, seeing the world as a mirror projecting the individual's own fears and desires. The mirror and the television screen came across as dominating the thinking of narcissistic states. It was the surface representation of things, their appearance and visual icon which was glamourised in a society concerned mainly with the attractiveness of things. The self became a set of images and roles, self presentation as the vital reality of experience. For Lasch (Ibid: 97) that consequence of surface-centeredness was an alienated experience of unreality and inner emptiness. The mirror effect made the subject an object and simultaneously made the world of objects an extension or projection of the self. The consumer was considered to be surrounded not only by things but by fantasies and solely lived to gratify his desires. The individual was then confronted with the dissolution of parental authority and moral virtue, or at least of the super- ego.

The mass media, with their cult of celebrity and its glamourization and excitement, made the Americans especially, a nation of fans and moviegoers. The media gave substance to and intensified narcissistic dreams of fame and glory and thus encouraged the common man to identify himself with the stars and to hate the '*herd*'. These illusions helped fill the emptiness and insignificance of the ordinary man with the rich experiences of the stars. With this preoccupation with the self, this self absorbed man had then started searching for self-fulfilment. Narcissism became one of the central themes of the American culture. This condition (Ibid: 101) appeared to represent the best way of coping with the tensions and anxieties of modern life, and the prevailing social conditions therefore tended to bring out narcissistic traits that were present, in varying degrees in everyone. Those conditions also transformed the family, which in turn shaped the underlying structure of personality.

According to Lasch (Ibid: 156) the narcissist divided society into two groups: the rich, great, and famous on the one hand and the common *herd* on the other. These personalities were afraid of not belonging to the company of the great, rich and powerful, and of belonging instead to the mediocre, by which they mean worthless and average in the ordinary sense of the term. They worshipped heroes only to turn against them when their heroes disappointed them. Narcissist patients often admired some hero or outstanding individual and experienced themselves as part of that outstanding person. They saw the admired individual as merely an extension of themselves. If the person rejected them, they experienced immediate hatred and fear and reacted by devaluing the idol.

Overexposure to manufactured illusions soon destroyed their representational power. The illusion of reality dissolved, not in a heightened sense of reality as expected, but in a remarkable indifference to reality (Ibid: 160). Lasch (Ibid: 160) indicated that people's sense of reality appeared to rest on the willingness to be taken in by the staged illusion of reality. Reality thus presented itself as an impenetrable network of social relations, as '*role playing*', the presentation of self in everyday life. To the performing self, the only reality was the identity he constructed out of materials furnished by advertising and mass culture, themes of popular film and fiction, and fragments torn from a vast range of cultural traditions all being contemporary.

According to Lasch (Ibid: 97) one of the most important social influences contributing to the narcissistic type was that of the mechanical reproduction of culture. Cameras and recording machines not only transcribed experience but altered its quality, giving modern life the character of an enormous echo chamber, a hall of mirrors. Life presented itself as a succession of images or electronic signals, of impressions recorded and reproduced by means of photography, motion pictures, television and other sophisticated recording devices. Modern life was therefore mediated by electronic images and the audience thus could not help responding to others and themselves, as if being recorded and simultaneously being transmitted to an unseen audience. The abundance of recorded images undermined the sense of reality of man. Reality had become



more and more what was seen by the cameras and the perceptions of man were distrusted until made true by the camera.

Lasch (Ibid: 72) then also described this condition of narcissism as an inclination, in this therapeutic age, to dress up moralistic platitudes in psychiatric garb. Narcissism had more in common with self-hatred than self-admiration. In a world structured by its surfaces, self-presentation, person's substitution, object replacement and a society of actors became attributes of the narcissist. The narcissist became between the mirror and the mask, self-affirmation in the mirror, controls of others from behind the mask (Frosh, 1991: 74). There was a need to have this inflated image of the self constantly confirmed by others.

According to Frosh (1991:61) Lasch analysed the modern state of mind as an attitude of superficiality and the avoidance of intimacy in which the external world was experienced as an extension of the self. Western capitalism was '*the culture of narcissism*'. The narcissism of the time could have been considered fun, as self-aggrandisement sometimes was, but Lasch (Frosh, 1991: 68) made it clear why it had to be opposed, for the end point of narcissism was not triumph of the self, but its decay.

#### **2.3.5. The Saturated Self - Kenneth J. Gergen.**

The theorist Kenneth Gergen particularly explored the impact of social saturation on the ways of conceptualizing the human self and the related patterns of social life. Changes such as new technologies continually echoed throughout the culture, slowly collecting until one day it became noticed that man had become dislocated and what was lost could not be found. With the intense saturation of the culture, the self became jeopardized and traditional patterns of relationship turned strange. A new culture was developing.

Gergen (1991: 6) claimed that cultural life in the twentieth century was dominated by two

major vocabularies of the self. From the nineteenth century there occurred the *romanticist* view of the self, where each person's characteristics portrayed personal depth such as passion, soul and creativity. Since the rise of the *modernist* world at the beginning of the twentieth century, the romanticists were threatened. The main characteristics of the modernists consisted of the self not settling for the depth of the romanticist views, but instead they reasoned in their individual beliefs, opinions and conscious intentions.

Both romantic and modern past beliefs began eroding, the main reason for that being a result of the forces of social saturation. Emerging technologies saturated the individual. Gergen (1991: 6) then stated that social saturation furnished the individual with a multiplicity of incoherent and unrelated languages of the self. Messages within the individual then doubted the truthful self and this fragmentation of self- conceptions corresponded to a multiplicity of disconnected relationships. The fully saturated self became selfless in the end.

Gergen (Ibid: 7) then contrasted the *modern* and *romantic* approaches of the self with the condition of *Postmodernism*. The belief of the self was placed into jeopardy with the entrance of the postmodern era. Postmodernism did not introduce new understandings of the individual, new traits or characteristics, but the very concept of personal essences was thrown into doubt. Under this condition, a person existed in a state of continuous construction and reconstruction and as Gergen (Ibid: 7) stated, the centre failed to hold.

Technologies dominated the everyday life of the individual and as he became joined to these social surroundings, he then began to reflect that infusion of partial identities. The viewers of these technologies ingested a multitude of different forms of relationships, circumstances, opportunities and feelings and these remained in their minds until they arose at the right moments.

The effects of social saturation and the populated self (saturated self) amalgamated into a new

pattern of self-consciousness. Gergen (Ibid: 73) related these effects to a syndrome termed *multiphrenia*. This condition mainly resulted to the splitting of the individual into a multiplicity of self-investments and of the saturated selves, with efforts to exploit the potentials of the technologies. The individual used these technologies for self-expression.

The entries into modern and cultural life seemed to have become disconnected. These consequences were viewed as a *postmodern* consciousness and it entered into the arts, sciences, leisure, media and entertainment world. Gergen (Ibid: 111) stated that this consciousness came with the increasing awareness of multiplicity in perspective. Concepts of truth, honesty and authenticity had become strange and the very concept of an internal core began to disappear. Objects of knowledge acquired a malleable character. Traditional categories of cultural life became blurred and the edges indistinct. The concept of the individual person began to lose its integrity thus the self belonged more to the aesthetic, robotic, symbolic, economic and literary (Ibid: 118). Man became machinelike but with a spiritual side, in full possession of conscious control, sheeplike creatures who were dependant on mass media but drawn towards goals of uniqueness and independence (Ibid: 119). The portrayals of the self multiplied, the lines grew increasingly complex and with that mounting complexity the boundaries grew fuzzy.

Gergen (Ibid: 119) then also claimed that the individual's realities were being replaced by pseudo- or staged reality. The importance of the individual was hidden by the race to appear important, to gain that celebrity status by manipulating information. One of the best and most influential elements of the postmodern situation, could be seen in the incoherence of the television. Traditional television features usually consisted of one storyline and towards the 1960's, the breakdown of that linear plot could be seen. Emerging multi dramas launched an array of stories, partial stories, and different scenes all interwoven towards occasional conclusions.

Music television or MTV has carried the postmodern breakdown of narrative rationality to its

furthest extreme (Ibid: 132). MTV in the United States is a twenty- four- hour, nonstop cable television channel that primarily featured rock music videos. The channel was launched in 1981, and within three years it acquired an audience of more than 22 million viewers, largely between the ages of twelve and thirty-four. MTV is mainly a postmodern medium and relies heavily on the breakdown of objective reality. The shape or identity of an object or person changed several times within a video clip and what appeared to be the reality of a photographed world was revealed to be a drawing, which then proved to be an artifact of a machine operation. Gergen (Ibid: 133) claimed that entering into the world of MTV meant to abandon the concept of the coherent world and with the loss of that rational coherence, a longstanding demarcation of self-identity also receded from view. Douglas Rushkoff (1994: 127) also explained that MTV created an aesthetic rather than a narrative world. The aim of a good rock video was to establish a set of symbols, totems or even memes that together reflected the world of the performer's music or the world view being sold. For the postmodern, life became more fully expressive and enriched by suspending the demands for personal coherence, self- recognition and simply being within the ongoing process of relating (Ibid: 134).

Another personality (dis)order that Gergen (Ibid: 150) founded on the claims of an incoherent society, was that of the *pastiche personality*. This personality was like a social chameleon, constantly borrowing bits and pieces of an identity from whatever sources available and constructing them as useful in a given situation. If the identity was properly managed, the rewards would be substantial. The individual no longer looked back to find their true and enduring self.

Research psychologists substantiated Gergen's image of the pastiche personality. Mark Snyder (1979: 134) and his colleagues at the University of Minnesota compared the behaviour and lifestyles of persons termed high in *self- monitoring* - masters at self- presentation, sensitive to their public image, who are able to control or modify their appearance, to that with a much less concerned group. The differences between the high and low self- monitoring individuals

showed the distinction between inner- directed (or self determining) and other directed (or socially malleable) personality types. The research thus demonstrated that those high in self-monitoring processes are relative to those who are low; more positive in their attitudes towards others, less shy, less upset by inconsistencies, more emotionally expressive and more influential. Snyder (1979) did not condemn the self- monitoring strategy for its incoherence, superficiality and deceit, but found it gave the individual the flexibility to cope quickly and effectively with the shifting situational demands of a diversity of social roles. The mutable self demanded a new orientation towards the self. It also showed that the condition gave rise to a form of narcissism where daily life gave rise to a continual search for self gratification.

Fashion has the greatest potential in making multiplicity even more evident. During the modernistic era, concern for fashionable clothing was limited to mainly the more wealthy minority. Clothing was not considered a means of self expression. As postmodern consciousness expanded, those views of fashion subsided. The pastiche personality believed that there was no self outside of that which could be constructed within a social context. Clothing became the central means of creating the self. With the correct clothing the individual became the part. The public turned more to the *unique* boutiques because with each different label came a different statement of the self. Gergen (Ibid: 154) stated that it was not the world of fashion that drove the customer into a costly parade of continuous renewal, but the postmodern customer who sought means of *being* in an ever- shifting multiplicity of social contexts.

In conclusion Gergen (Ibid: 172) summarised that in place of the enduring and identifiable self, there were lives lead without direction, fragmentation and incoherence. As the individual moved into the postmodern world, his purpose was replaced by pastiche. Two major processes were important relating to the conceptions of the individual to ongoing patterns of conduct. In both cases the connection was fostered by the technologies of social saturation. The first was that of the self becoming increasingly populated with *fragments of the other*, the result being

that the individual participated in a world of incoherence and a world where 'anything goes'. The postmodern being was a restless nomad (Ibid: 173). Secondly, not only did the technologies of social saturation fashion the individual without character, but at the same time it furnished *invitations to incoherence*. Technology and lifestyle started operating in the same state of symbiotic interdependence. The technologies engendered a multiplicitous and polymorphic being who thrived in incoherence (Ibid: 173). The individual entered into the age of *techno- personal systems*.

### 2.3.6 Signification and Simulation - Jean Baudrillard.

The contemporary social theorist, Jean Baudrillard, born in 1929, theorised that contemporary culture was *one of the signs*. As one of the most important contributors to postmodern theories, he stated that everything was a matter of signification, which was obviously connected to the explosive growth in the media.

Baudrillard (Webster, 1995: 177) claimed that individuals interacted with strangers by communicating with parts of themselves as signs. Individuals received signs from anywhere and everywhere in newspapers, radio, books and television. Contemporary life was circulated with signs about what was happening in the world, with signs about what sort of identity one wanted to portray, about one's standing, about aesthetic preferences and so on. Society was sign saturated. Baudrillard (Ibid: 178) then continued to state that as a result of everything being a matter of signification, it unavoidably concerned artifice and inauthenticity, because that's what signs were, after all. Therefore, the individual's *reality* became concerned with the signs portrayed on the television screen. Man manufactured images in which there was nothing to see. If the *masses* recognised that signs were just simulations, then they were left with a mass of signs which just did not signify. Baudrillard basically related these theories to his idea of the postmodern consciousness.

The inauthenticity of man could also be seen in the individual's body shape, which then had become a matter of choice and people could design the signs of their bodies. The plasticity of the body shape could be seen in the way people went through diets, exercise, clothing or even surgery, giving the idea how malleable the body had become. There was no authentic body shape, just simulations which represented neither the true nor ideal body nor a deviation from it, they just were signs without significance. Baudrillard (Ibid: 180) expressed that if phenomena were socially created, then they were simulations with no *reality* beyond themselves. In the postmodern era the distinction between the real and unreal, the authentic and inauthentic, the true and false had collapsed and when all became artifice, then all certainties disappeared. There was no truth, just versions of the truth. The postmodern audience saw and heard nothing, they just experienced the spectacles which characterised the contemporary.

Baudrillard (Gergen, 1991: 121) also theorised that the postmodern consciousness found its most powerful expression in the concept of *hyper-reality*. Media portrayals of the world were driven not by the way the world *was*, but by the steadily emerging histories of portrayals itself. The portrayals were continually influenced by the preceding ones and thus reality was transformed into the hyper-real. The media was the strong addition to the re-presentations of these realities and thus these realities were accumulated, accentuated, interpenetrated and finally created into the hyper-real. Culture thus opened the possibility of the selves as artifacts of hyper-reality (Ibid: 122).

#### 2.4. Conclusion

It was evident that under certain conditions mass media messages would have effects on people. Also noticeable was that being exposed to a message did not necessarily mean understanding it. Understanding the message was not the same as being affected by it and the psychological effects were different from the action-oriented effects. People also received messages and then simply disregarded them.

The theorist's Lasswell, Lazarsfeld, McCombs and Becker investigated the media's influence on a homogeneous mass audience with relative incompetence and little precision. Lasswell's *hypodermic model* was generalised and was not sufficiently substantiated by empirical studies. He investigated the influences of media as if it all became a laboratory-like experiment which left no space for the subjectivity of the individual. Lazarsfeld otherwise theorised that the media merely reinforced preconceived ideas and thus only a *minimal effect* took place. A basic directive that made the previous theories unqualified was that the personal characteristics and ideas of the individuals were not being considered.

The *uses and gratifications theory* then related the influence of the visual mass media on a more personal effect, while Noelle- Newman strengthened this idea by affirming that a person's life could not become a laboratory controlled experiment as each individual was distinctive in his own way. *Agenda setting* emphasized how the media had the upper hand and could determine the information that needed emphasis.

From the information researched on the past theories of the media's effects, it was evident that the visual mass media did have an effect on man, but on a personal level. Theorists could no longer research a mass audience, as characteristics of the individual would show different effects and consequences. Considering that the visual mass media did have an influence on the individual, it was of utmost importance to discover what the effects and influences of the media were. The more contemporary theories started concerning mainly the individual and the new conditions that the media had contributed to man.

Douglas Rushkoff borrowed Lasswell's theory of the *hypodermic needle* and extended on it by referring to a *media virus* being injected into the viewer's system. Each 'virus' affected each individual differently. McLuhan theorised that technology had become an extension of ourselves and numbed our senses so that it could enter into the individual's mind and then affect them individually. McLuhan had an enormous influence on future theories and his ideas



were substantial to most theorists, however he relied mostly on intuition rather than specific empirical studies and thus his research could be considered limitational and merely speculative. According to the researcher, both Rushkoff and McLuhan had substantial information concerning man's identity crisis. The senses of the individuals were attacked in different ways, but penetrated where the *cultural code* was the most weak.

With the discovery of the media's effects influencing individuals in different ways, man's identity crisis was best described by Frosh who proved that *psychoanalysis* became a vital element in discovering how the media had affected individuals and how they reacted towards it. Psychoanalysis was mainly concerned with how the self had become a constructed phenomena. The explosion of the media into the individual's mind caused a myriad of multiple images and thus obviously formed different conditions of self. *Narcissism* became a condition serving as a defensive mechanism for the individual. Modern life was so mediated by electronic images that the self could not help responding to others as if their actions were being recorded and being transmitted. Lasch constructed more links on Frosh's theories implying that the narcissist was a performing self, his identity constructed out of materials furnished by the media. The researcher observed that both theorists were correct in their interpretations of the individual becoming narcissistic as an influence of the media's penetration into their minds, but that was only one condition amongst a few.

*Postmodernism* emerged as a new era with the developments in new technologies. With the infusion of partial identities, a syndrome called *multiphrenia* occurred. Incoherent identities formed *pastiche personalities* which developed by borrowing pieces from identities and constructing new ones. Baudrillard also theorised that individuals interacted as signs to one another and thus had become artificial and inauthentic. All was a matter of *signification and simulation*. Man had an identity crisis and nothing that he stood for was real. All had become superficial, illogical, hedonistic and it appealed to the sense rather than reason. According to the researcher, the term *hyperreality* was a term better used in the state of Postmodernism,

which referred to cases where people's imaginations demanded the real thing, but in order to attain that, they had to generate fakes. Over time the fakes came to substitute the real.

The researcher's hypothesis had been proven accurately. The visual mass media did have substantial effects on an individual by deluding his truths and ideals, however, this effect was enlightened by the idea of different personalities developing and new truths being found. The basic assumption thus was that within the postmodern era, man was so saturated with images from the media, that s/he became a multiplicity of selves.

## CHAPTER 3.

### 3. THE THEME AS PORTRAYED IN CONTEMPORARY FINE ART.

#### 3.1. Introduction

For many centuries, up until the mid 19th century, architecture, sculpture and painting were the three principle visual arts of Europe. With the industrial revolution, developments of capitalist economic systems arose, therefore the consumer society altered the social context in which Fine Arts operated. The advent of colour photography and the development of machinery of various kinds played crucial roles in the social and technological transformation.

Positive responses and attitudes towards the media could already be found in the works of two 19th century painters, Gustave Courbet and Vincent van Gogh. Courbet (1819- 1877) painted a number of artworks to deliberately shock and offend the Catholic Church and the middle class public of the time. Courbet focused on contemporary peasant life and showed the incorporation of popular culture and subjects into the high arts. Fine Art no longer was addressed to the connoisseur, but to all the public.

In the 1870's, Vincent van Gogh (1853- 1890) admired the black and white images of the popular magazines such as *Illustrated London News* and *Graphic* where he discovered a strong vein of social and critical realism in the illustrations. He identified emotionally with the images of peasants and workers and not with the Dutch middle class into which he was born. The themes and sign's Van Gogh employed were in themselves commonplace and were thus understood by millions. Both Courbet and Van Gogh understood the limitations of the mode of production and distribution of easel painting in reaching a popular audience and therefore

in using popular imagery and incorporating craft values in their painting styles, they shifted against the elitism.

In 1912 - 1913 Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso incorporated bits of newspaper into their collages and thus widening the idea of media being included into Fine Arts. This art was simultaneously representational and anti- naturalistic which would influence later Cubistic works dealing with the material world around them (Stangos, 1981: 53). Picasso saw that the rational, often geometric breakdown of the human head and body employed by so many African artists could provide him with the starting point for his own reappraisal of his subjects. This break with traditional perspective was to result, in the following years, in what contemporary critics called 'simultaneous' vision ie. the fusion of various views of a figure or object into a single image (Delacroix, H; Kirkpatrick, D & Tansey, R, G, 1991: 960). An excellent example of this breakdown of forms could be seen in Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* where different angles and profiles could be seen within one image. Picasso influenced many future artists with the breakdown of representational form portraying fragmented, distorted and broken up images of contemporary society and man's identities (Hanhardt et al. 1989: 53).

Marcel Duchamp pushed this issue even further by selecting objects and images from the real world and re- presenting them as 'ready made' art. As stated by Hanhardt, Heiferman and Phillips (1989: 59) by relocating these media objects in an art context, the artist conveyed new messages that defined art within a framework of commodity fetishism.

This chapter will mainly be divided into two essential parts namely Modernism and Postmodernism, both containing various art movements and artists portraying the *signs* of the time. The Modernistic era's most prominent movement, Pop Art, produced artists such as Hamilton, Lichtenstein, Warhol, De Kooning, Paolozzi and Johns. These artists had diverse ideas but all portrayed elements pertaining to the researcher's theme.

### 3.2 Modernism

Modernism was a term that recognized that Avant- Garde art, from Manet to the early 1970's, followed both a logical development of styles and subject matter that culminated in the simultaneous extremes of Minimalist art and Photo Realism. Modern art during the early decades of this century resulted from the coalescence of certain component ideas that formed the basic structure of modern society: secularism, individualism, bureaucracy and pluralism and these formed the core of modernity (Gablik, 1984: 16). Modernism was mainly used by scholars to refer to the artistic styles that called attention to the processes of making art. These styles thus included the use of modern materials and technology to express the activity of the artist. They depicted the essence of the modern model of reality revealed by science and the ways in which the mediums were manipulated (De La Croix *et al.*, 1991: 953). The art of this era was mainly divided into art with psychological and conceptual concerns and art with social and political concerns. A brief summary of certain artists within this era was essential in structuring the influences and ideas leading towards Post Modernism.

The body had been the principal subject of Western art since the Renaissance and it became the central metaphor for the understanding and exploration of political change. The modern period was particularly characterised with the body as being mutable, incomplete and altogether human. According to Mirzoeff (1995: 2) abstract techniques of representation seemed to characterize figuration as inherently conservative, bypassing and evading the sense of corporal 'dis- ease'. Artists and critics formed a critique of their own time, displaying the development of the mass industrial society.

A distinction had been drawn between the Fine Arts and mass media, however that did not mean there could be no interaction between the two arts. Borrowing, influences and cross-overs occurred in both directions, but the mass media still remained the higher economic

resource because it reached more people and had a greater social impact. Mass reproduction of the image in the media had changed the nature of contemporary life and thus also changed the nature of modern art. Hanhardt, *et al.*, (1989: 58) stated that the effect of an image was that of overload, fragmentation, repetition, standardization, dislocation and the understanding of 'reality' became a function of representation.

Pop art showed mixed responses to mass culture, some artists celebrated consumer products and media stars whilst others indicated a critical response. According to Walker (1994: 22) the term 'Pop Art' consisted of a wide range of paintings, sculptures, prints and collages produced by professional artists who used popular culture and mass media material sources of iconography, techniques and conventions of representation. The first use of the term 'Pop Art' was initiated by the art critic Lawrence Alloway, a member of 'The Independent Group' which was an organization which met in the Institute of Contemporary Arts (London) in order to discuss popular culture. Alloway referred to this term not only as an art movement, but also to the contemporary mass culture (Delacroix, *et al.* 1991: 1057). Pop art looked at existing representations of reality found in graphic design, packaging, the cinema etc. They looked at 'nature', which now was replaced by the ever increasing humanly constructed world of buildings, signs, posters, magazines, films, television and computer simulations. Billions of people lived in a media- saturated environment and the artists portrayed these surroundings.

New technologies had raised questions such as: what had been the response of fine artists to the existence of mass media? How did the mass media make use of the visual arts? Was there any vital social role left for art? (Ibid: 1). More and more artists sought to control and manipulate their images and the dissemination of their works using the media as their guidelines. Artists like Jeff Koons, Salvador Dali and Andy Warhol used the media and Fine Art as a symbiotic relationship. In their application of creativity to self- presentation and self-promotion, fine artists increasingly imitated the behaviour of mass culture stars such as Madonna and Michael Jackson (Ibid: 2).

Painting then soon made use of the screen as a new medium. In 1962 Rauschenberg and Warhol began to silkscreen images mechanically onto their canvases taking images from real life eg. magazines, movies and newspapers. The photograph became the origin of the Pop artist's works. These new mechanical means not only modified art's forms but also its very concept (Hanhardt, *et al.* 1989: 60).

### 3.2.1. Richard Hamilton

Richard Hamilton (1922-) was a self-aware Pop artist who lectured and wrote about his methods and iconography. During the 1950's Hamilton claimed that to be a fine artist was to suffer from the divided personality of schizophrenia. While at work, the artist experiences the traditions of Fine Art and painting. At leisure he enjoyed pulp novels, cinema etc. The two worlds were sharply different and Hamilton and others from 'The Independent Group' were the first to notice this cultural division, thus they tried to make the barrier more permeable (Delacroix, *et al.* 1991: 1057). The first truly Pop Art work made in Britain was done by Hamilton, employing a collage technique in his work *Just What is it that Makes Today's Homes so Different, so Appealing?* (Fig 1) which was exhibited as early as 1956. Hamilton here addressed himself to the modern concepts of love, leisure, the comforts of consumerism and the overcrowded conditions which were then accepted as the norm in Western society. It displayed a modern interior occupied by a pin-up girl and a muscle-man and the whole room crammed up with icons from the consumer world (Ibid: 1058).

In works like *She* (fig.2) Hamilton had collected details from advertisements and incorporated them into a single composition. Only suggestions of the images eg. machinery and female imagery were depicted. According to Hunter and Jacobus (1992: 333) the Pop artists had a consuming interest in problems of a purely pictorial nature and to what extent a symbol could be reduced without loss of informational value. Hamilton's different kinds of representation within the same picture showed his pleasure in intertextuality and displayed the development

of Post Modernism. Hamilton identified eleven important elements of mass culture eg. popular (designed for the mass audience); transient (short term solutions); expandable (easily forgotten); low cost; mass produced; young (aimed at the youth); witty; sexy; gimmicky; glamorous and big business.

Important differences became apparent when comparing Hamilton's own works to the list. His works were not mass produced, not cheap, not expendable and not aimed at a mass audience.

### 3.2.2 Roy Lichtenstein

American Pop firstly saw the Pop Arts' movement as mere plagiarism as their paintings began to look like copies of advertisements or comics. Then with the comparison of the Fine Arts and the media, did they see that artists in actual fact reflected the world around them and that the images were mirrored appearances. Pop artists took existing images from one context and placed them with others thus recontextualising them. Placing objects next to others in different contexts formed new compositions ie. collages were formed (De La Croix et al. 1991: 1057).

Roy Lichtenstein (1923-) not only used the mass culture for subject matter, but also earlier styles of art. An example was his *Big Painting IV* (fig 3), his subject matter consisting of a detail of a brushmark from an action painting (Ferguson, R. 1992: 34). Where the action paintings were emotional, spontaneous and personal, American Pop displayed a contrast of unemotional, deliberate, systematic, impersonal and detached styles. Lichtenstein presented 'the sign of the sign' of authenticity, and everything became an emblem. Non- commercial Fine Art appeared to become commercial applied art (Hunter, S & Jacobus, J, 1992: 35). The formalism of pop art was particularly shown in the artist's work *Whaam!* (Fig 4). The freezing moment of violent conflict between two jet fighters excluded any sense of horror and suffering of the war, the emblematic style keeping the audience distanced from the realities. This systematic approach in which figures were portrayed, clearly displayed what society was like and how the



media had depersonalized man within his society.

### 3.2.3 Andy Warhol

The most famous of all the Pop artists was Andy Warhol (1928- 1987). Before pursuing his successful career in painting and film- making, Warhol was an illustrator and designer in New York which played an obvious influence on his Fine Art. His works revealed an obsession with consumer goods such as soup cans, coldrink bottles and slogans from everyday goods which were mass produced and machine manufactured. His Pop Art closed the gap between the mass-produced image and Fine Art. Pelfrey (1985: 287) stated that Warhol's work was both cynically humorous and starkly realistic in its reflection of how the mass media, especially television, tended to reduce everything to equal importance and thereby mashed perception into a kind of pulp.

An important element to Warhol's works was the medium of the silkscreen process where hundreds of images were produced with varieties in tone, colour and designs. The technique was economic and speedy and all kinds of ready-made images could be produced in series. Silk screening helped overcome the traditional limitations of the handicraft mode of production of easel painting (Walker, 1994: 39). According to Walker (Ibid: 39) machines implied repetition, standardization, automation, the mass manufacture of identical objects, the loss of craft skills, the subordination of the worker to the regime and rhythm of the machine whereas Fine Arts, by contrast, stood for the values of the individual or personal expression, originality and skilled handwork. To retain some uniqueness to his works, Warhol left 'errors' within the printing process. In the media saturated environment the same image was encountered repeatedly showing that at first the image was a shock and then repeated images thereafter become familiar and developed an element of the stereotype. Repetition had emptied images of their meaning. They had become commodities.

Cinema and television had the power to transform actors into cult figures and they showed characteristics of religious icons. Warhol employed a photograph of Marilyn Monroe as a basis for a sequence of prints and paintings and then intensified the icon- like, stereotypical qualities of the original. The design was simplified by emphasising her lips, mouth, hair and eye shadow with electrifying colours. In this work, *Marilyn Diptych* (fig. 5) Warhol succeeded in revealing the processes of star- making in action. The flat colours and multiple images gave the several faces of Monroe a mass-produced quality which was part of the celebrity image. The *Marilyn Diptych* and *100 Soup Cans* (fig. 6) were both considered as celebrities (reproduced in media) and both were portrayed in the same way showing Warhol's attitude towards individualities.

Warhol not only recycled images and objects from the media but also created his own celebrities. He made his own movies and his own movie stars and he knew the medium well enough to manipulate it for his own ends.

### 3.2.4 Willem de Kooning

Willem de Kooning (1904-) embraced Gestural Abstract Expressionism (in New York) after an early career in commercial art and as a figure and portrait painter, this experience gave him a special command in fluid line and subtle colour. His series of huge women and the work *Woman and a Bicycle* (fig. 7) was particularly inspired in part by female models on advertising boards, but the forms also suggested fertility figures and a satirical inversion of the traditional image of Venus, goddess of love (Harcourt *et al.* 1991: 1034).

With the woman as his subject, de Kooning used the images to show the destructive stereotype. Using images collected from magazines and billboards, de Kooning directly manipulated them to his paintings displaying women as a creator, destroyer and sexual icon. Images displayed toothpaste smiles influenced by models in advertisements found in the media everyday. His works mirrored fantasies about these women and revealed the underlying motivations, attitudes

and value systems which surrounded them (Bentz & Mayes, 1993: 181). De Kooning's works could basically be divided into three possible effects: the isolation of the woman (where the works encourage the viewer to isolate themselves from other women); the power of the woman (which was diminished by these images) and the exploitation of the woman (where works invite and perpetuate the exploitation). The series of women pointed to the twentieth century change in the iconography of women as depicted in art. Bentz and Mayes (Ibid: 183) saw the modern representations of his women as victims, slashed and mutilated, as objects and also as powerful entities to be reckoned with. The images showed the stereotype of women as wife, mother and sex object. The fragmented, angry and deadly women, the central image of de Kooning's series, were not a societal fact, but was rather a phenomenon of the artist's making. By presenting women in a caricatured manner, as having enormous eyes, teeth and breasts, and in a mutilated, slashed, fragmented state, these exaggerated physical differences could be seen as symbols of inherent and inferior moral, intellectual and psychological characteristics (Ibid: 185).

### **3.2.5 Eduardo Paolozzi**

Paolozzi (1924-) used images from the mass media in various ways, but portrayed it analytically. With childhood influences of comic books, movies and pulp fiction and an interest in Picasso, Dada, Surrealism, non- Western culture and natural and physical science, he invested in these products and the media and showed them as mythic dimensions of society. Collecting images from his student days and assembling them into a new situation, Paolozzi allowed the viewers to add their own interpretations. Works like *Wittgenstein in New York* (fig. 8) displayed the image as a fantasy montage of the metropolis seen by an outsider as an assemblage of symbols (De La Croix *et al.* 1991: 1058). Images of printed circuit boards, signs, televisions, machinery, traffic signals and signboards represented the way city dwellers perceived life. The two separated heads revealed how man processed information and fed their bodies with the existing information overload. Technology was a potentially dehumanizing force and man was depicted as a symbol rather as an emotional entity.

### 3.2.6 Jasper Johns

The American artist Jasper Johns (1930-) was one of the earliest and most provocative conceptual artists of his time. His main interest was the complex process involved in perceiving simple symbols and therefore he introduced elements such as the American flag and targets into his works in the mid 1950's. These images were applied with thick encaustic wax and a rich, and textured surface displaying merely what was to be seen, for example the target. The work remained a replica of a target but also became an art object (De La Croix et al. 1991: 1070).

In his work *Target with Four Faces* (fig. 9) Johns had added four cast faces on top of the target within a box with a hinged lid. These did not portray portraits but became simple faces each seeming the same but having slight individual differences. Like the targets, the faces represented only themselves. His works forced the viewer to wrestle with the relationship between the thing and its representation. Seeing objects and things as mere symbols already exposed ideas of the artist seeing society as a walking image of what had been exposed by the mass media. Advertising continually displayed signs and symbols which lead the viewers to draw their own conclusions to what was to be perceived.

### 3.3 Post Modernism

Post Modernism was a term that applied to describe the avant Garde art since the early seventies, when both the cultural context of avant Garde art and its own logic of artistic development had reached a point of critical change (Pelfrey, 1985: 317). The last two types of Pop art represented in the Modernistic period, Minimal and Op art, showed an absolute abstraction and absolute realism which then lead towards this stylistic breakthrough namely post modernism. This movement differed from Modernism in that it willingly borrowed past styles of art rather than searching for something new. Post Modernism combined these past styles finding an eclectic approach in a singular form. The era concerned displayed terms like

Conceptual Art, Environmental Art, Feminist Art, painting and video art.

According to Walker (1994: 88) Post Modernism displayed a plurality of styles, eclecticism, retro - style, decoration, complexity, contradiction, ambiguity, high and low culture, fine and commercial art as well as collage. The complexity and diversity of contemporary culture became important displaying the urban environment as multi- media, multi- racial and multi-cultural. Artists within this era no longer exhibited their works in galleries or museums but rather as wall murals, environments and happenings.

The body was continually under siege from the pharmaceutical, aerobic, dietetic, liposuctive, calorie- controlled, cybernetic world of Post Modernism (Mirzoeff, 1995: 1). It had basically become a central concern in all spheres of the arts. Change had become the norm and thus the body had to change with it. The differences between the Modern image (single body) and the Post Modern (fragmented body) was clearly visible. The Post Modern body became an assemblage of fragments and portrayed that it was a fact of everyday life. The face and the body could, in the contemporary world, be moulded into any shape desired. This fragmented state assembled from various modes of identity thus became a staple component in Western modernity.

According to Mirzoeff (Ibid: 191) the drawing of a body could be described between two moments; the pregnant moment of Neo- Classicism and the perfect moment of Post Modernism. While Neo- Classicism tried to give birth to the ideal form, haunted by fear of monsters, Post Modernism simply aborted its monsters. There seemed to no longer be the need to draw a live model, to represent the human body and to study it in traditional or new mediums. The 'body image' began to disappear as a representative image of society and emerged rather as a sign with a range of metaphorical meanings. This was seen as a 'bodyscape'. The following artists are to be discussed in the next division: Barbara Kruger, David Salle, Cindy Sherman, Jean Michel Basquiat, Kiki Smith, Marc Quinn and the

performance group Dumb Type.

### 3.3.1 Barbara Kruger

The American artist Barbara Kruger (1945 -) was best known for her subjects of the manipulation of attitudes by the modern mass media portraying it by using media layout techniques which were used by the mass media to sell consumer goods. Her huge word and photograph collages (fig. 10 & 11) expressed the cultural attitudes embedded within commercial advertising and she targeted concerns of feminism and the attitudes of political and economic power. In most of Kruger's works, viewers were invited to read multiple meanings into the images, drawing from their own experiences, but her art forced nearly everyone into some consideration of how attitudes were moulded by the bombardment of mass media that surrounded them daily. Juliana Engberg (Internet 5) stated that Kruger's ongoing project was to provoke questions about power and its effect on the human condition: to investigate the way power was constructed, used and abused.

A growing number of artists started using alternative supports for their works and Kruger turned to billboards in an effort to reach a wider and a different audience opposed to what was available to them in the art galleries. This showed that the gap between art and advertising continually seemed to become narrower. She also used electronic signs which had its own advantages of being able to transmit a rapid stream of messages with their illumination and motion attracting the eye. Moving the artworks indoors and out, in private spaces and public, gave her the resilience of reaching her target audience and mass viewers. Other means of portraying her works were on posters, t- shirts, placards and pamphlets. Her art spoke to the complexity of life in contemporary America in a powerful and relatively straightforward way.

Kruger's photomontage texts made an ideal starting point for the examination of the Postmodern impulse in contemporary arts. However according to Dettmar (Internet 6)

concerning her book 'Remote Control' (1994) Kruger was accused of being a resolute writer dealing with Modernist texts about Postmodernism. Kruger saw the Post Modern state of man as everything merely being represented as an image. Seeing was no longer believing, photographs did lie, words had power but usually did not mean anything and the very notion of truth was put into crisis. Man was literally absent from the present and the video camera had replaced the mirror as the reflection of choice. Personal taste literally dictated the techniques of man's bodies and showed their place in the world. The 'audience' of the media was considered to be unmoving targets waiting to be turned on and off by relentless seductions of remote control (Kruger, 1994: 5). According to Mirzoeff (1995: 6) Kruger disrupted all the predictable binary oppositions that could have been made around her works, such as male/female, art/ photography, self/ other, Modern/ Post Modern. She deployed a self-conscious and disruptive strategy in her art practice, which had become a staple of interpretations of Post Modernism and her very different modes of address was in itself symptomatic of the crisis in representation that had become a cliché of Modern and Post Modern times (Ibid: 6).

### **3.3.2 Cindy Sherman**

The photographer, Cindy Sherman, reflected a process of identity change within her works by taking photographs of herself in roles, costumes and environments that resembled film stills from Hollywood 'B' movies. Gopnik and Varnedoe (1990: 372) stated that Sherman made her subject the secondary apparatus of celebrity culture, the movie still and the fan publicity shot, but instead of floating disembodied above it, she sank deep into it, until her own identity was lost in the set poses of secondhand life. She did not document a specific role or make herself up as an exact likeness of a specific star, but instead combined her outfit, makeup and environment into an image that struck the viewer with an illusive *deja vu* flash of recognition based on the atmosphere, her facial expression and the overall mood of the photograph. Her works became an entire production and characterization compressed into the format of a single evocative image. The photograph became the stage for Sherman to experience the idea of a

movie, a star and an era as in her work *Untitled Film Still* (fig. 12). Sherman thus personalized her experience of the media to move in and out of identities that she could experience for a time and then share with herself and others.

A sense of unease in Sherman's works came from the reaction of masculine viewing pleasure by a woman photographer. In changing the gender authorship and refusing the traditional distanciation between artist and model, Sherman made us aware of the constructed nature of the camera's gaze and the power inherent in that gaze (Mirzoeff, 1995: 131). Sherman often portrayed herself as a Madonna, such as the work *Untitled (History Painting #205)* (fig. 13) placing over her own breasts a plastic model of large female breasts with especially prominent nipples, causing the viewer to be satisfied and also disrupted by what they saw. This use of prostheses forced even the most eager viewer to confront the artificiality of her representation and of the Madonna portrayed several times within the past. According to Mirzoeff (Ibid: 133) the continuing reiteration in Western visual culture of the Madonna icon revealed a set of ambiguities and ambivalence in modern gender identity which had yet to be resolved into an entirely new or Postmodern form.

### 3.3.3 Jean Michel Basquiat

Jean Michel Basquiat (1960 - 1988) was born in Brooklyn, New York which played a great role to his stance as an artist. He was constantly induced by the overload of graffiti appearing on the walls around him and the various concepts it held. In the 1970's his brief messages appeared on the streets of Manhattan all signed 'Samo'. Graffiti was perceived not only as a challenge to public order, but as an assault on the hegemonic values of the art world (Mirzoeff, 1995: 164). Suzi Gablik (1984: 103) identified graffiti as marking the end to Modernist self assurance. By the age of 24 Basquiat was collaborating with artists like Andy Warhol and Francesco Clemente and displaying at exhibitions like the Whitney Biennale (Eshun, 1996:186).



Basquiat worked in the early eighties collision of experimental subcultures of Hip Hop, Post Punk, Neo Expressionist art and video technology (Ibid: 186). The artist picked up all signs and signals from the accelerating culture and brought them together into a mythology of their own. Images of decapitated black heads, copyright logos, cereal packet ingredients, Marvel comics, toy advertisements and crowns for boxers and jazz musicians which he identified with and idolized (Internet 3). Basquiat portrayed and elaborated the ‘psychic sensations of life in the Information Age, the heavy weather of media fallout, schizophonic blizzard and bodily dislocation’ (Eshun, 1996: 185). According to Eshun (Ibid: 186) he painted as if a media bomb was constantly blowing up in his head and as displayed in all his exhibitions, his works revealed a preternatural hypersensitivity as if wearing his nerves, raw and exposed, on the outside of his skin.

In works like *Untitled (Hall of Fame)* (fig. 14) Basquiat displayed himself as the idolized and commercial image of a comic of ‘Captain America’. Contradictory words like ‘Shame’ and ‘Fame’ played with the idea of ambiguity within man’s environment and the overexposure of the media image. In most of his works, Basquiat grasped words and catch phrases from the mass media and misspelled or rearranged them to form new meanings and placing them into new contexts.

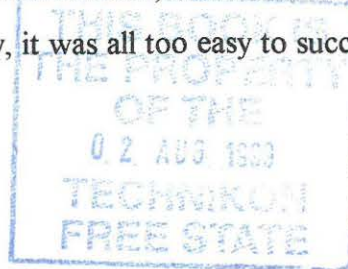
Mirzoeff (1995: 163) claimed that Basquiat’s body and his corporal identity was always at the forefront of his work, problematizing the very notion of incorporated identity. The works of Basquiat were central to the contemporary sense that an ‘end to the body may be at hand; in other words, the figurative body no longer took on its natural shape but became a fragmented and symbolic structure. This meant not the end of the body, but rather the end of one body and the beginning of another kind of body (Ibid, 163). This interchange of the bodily appearance drew special attention to man’s identity crisis within the age of an information overload and the media affecting man daily in a world of inconsistencies.

### 3.3.4 Dumb Type

The Japanese performance group Dumb Type (fig. 15) used technology to comment on the media and its messages, as well as explored the issues confronting humanity and the ways in which society confounded equality, acceptance and tolerance. The gay American dancer who joined the Kyoto-based group in 1989, Peter Golightly (Keall, 1996:22) remarked that the group was trying to draw a picture of themselves or humankind in relation to their environment and showed that they were not a society of people running around in the wilderness, not a society of people who were not highly technological. They thus drew pictures of themselves inside a video information jungle. The name Dumb Type itself was a reaction against intellectualism, symbolic of the group's desire to eschew media bombardment by exploring non-verbalised communication. The group's highly distinctive works were largely the result of the multifarious nature of its membership and the array of skills they possessed. Golightly (Ibid: 23) claimed that they were fine art's people working in painting, architecture, engineering, video art and computer art, but they wanted to take it out of the idiom and put it in more of a performance context.

Their work *pH* was about the relationship between humankind and the media. It was concerned with information overload and found that technology was an exciting way of exploring new forms of expression. The technology itself was not the subject as such, but rather a means of critiquing media hype itself. Golightly (Ibid: 23) explained it as when making an abstract piece of work where the artist gave the audience a lot of freedom in interpreting it. The work itself was seen as a blend of disjointed narratives and a television talk-show format, with sophisticated use of live video, music, slides and computer art. By stating the obvious and declaring themselves as gay, lesbian, black, as prostitutes, as men or woman, the performers hoped to side-step preconceptions and to elicit a poignant human response. The piece was intended for open minds, to create an effect and to invite dialogue (Ibid: 23).

In the work *S/N#* a distinctive feature was the projection of a list of words combined in meaningful juxtapositions such as signal/ noise, sample/ narrative, synapse/ nerve, stocking/ necktie, shotgun/ needle and so on, each coupling conveying a sense of the world perceived from an active thought (Ibid: 23). With those distorted segments of language and the inclusion of human billboards, *S/N#* had more active use of text than in all Dumb Type's previous productions combined. Golightly (Ibid: 23) observed that, in a world where the media had so successfully homogenised ideas of normality, it was all too easy to succumb to what he had described as 'the Brady Bunch Effect'.



### 3.3.5 Kiki Smith

The American sculptor, Kiki Smith (1954-) made the fragmented body the subject of her works. Mirzoeff (1995: 25) stressed that the Post Modern body was not an ideal whole but an assemblage of fragments and that in the contemporary world, the fragmentation of the body had become a fact of everyday life. If a person had enough money, man's body could be remoulded into any suitable shape and it was particularly common throughout Western people to control and change the shape of their bodies by dieting, exercise and body building. Smith's works were more meditative than confrontational, yet her exhibitions were found particularly controversial at the time. Her life and art operated as generalized sensations and enigmatic signs and her subject matter continuously evolved along the axis of our difficult relationship to the body (Ibid: 142). It was questioned that in a culture that celebrated fame in redundancies of immediate recognition, how was man supposed to respond when that visionary voice in the poetics of body art abandoned the body (Ibid, 142). For Smith the body was just one possible vocabulary for, or a way of mapping, being present.

In her work *Projects: Kiki Smith* (fig. 16a) the artist displayed a row of water containers labelled in Gothic scripts with the names of various bodily fluids. It played a simple idea of the body being separated or fragmented and was displayed as totally defenceless to its



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surroundings. The Gothic script insinuated the idea of a Frankenstein - like experiment where ideas of joining different parts brought about the forming of a whole (Ibid: 27). This suggested that man's body was far from presenting a defensive wall to the outside world and thus was being too open and vulnerable.

In a collaboration with the late David Wojnarowicz, Smith created a group of four photography light boxes overlaid with photographs of sections of the two artists bodies covered in blood (fig. 16b). The boxes were connected to each other with cables and collectively to a plaster model of the human body in a fetal position. The cables suggested the umbilical cord, linking child to mother and the internal lymphatic and circulatory systems. The hands that are suggested within the work, had made the strongest impression in those pictures, but it was unclear in what activity they were engaged. Hands suggested communication, touching and healing, but in this work it was covered in blood, evoking surgery or even torture (Ibid: 27).

Smith forced attention to the fragile, interconnected biospheres in which man lived. According to Mirzoeff (1995: 28) this sense of the body was widely understood to be its Post Modern condition and this fragmented body had been indispensable to the representation of the body throughout the modern era.

### 3.3.6 Marc Quinn

Quinn's works showed the charting of his life through the use of the imprint, the mould and the trace. Like photographs, they captured the presence of a body momentarily suspended through its passage in time, a passing glimpse of the self, contained and yet separated from its own form in a paradoxical take on what it meant to be alive then (Sanders, 1995: 43).

In his works entitled *Emotional Detox* (fig. 17a,b,c) and *The Blind Leading the Blind* (fig. 17d), Quinn employed lead body casts taken from himself and then dramatically fragmented,

twisted and contorted them. The head (the site of logic and control) constantly fought with the body (the site of emotion and sexual desire). The struggle to be a whole was clearly displayed within these works. While being interviewed, Quinn (1995: 43) stated that the works were about the two speeds, between mental and emotional speed and that it was about the difference between the cerebral, about being led by the head and then the body following after. The extreme physical contortions seemed to try and fix themselves in some or other way as can be seen within his *Emotional Detox* works. Candles were placed within the bodies, burning down slowly to show the slower emotional speed of things. These works basically displayed the fragmentation of the self and the disjunction of the mind and the body.

### 3.4 CONCLUSION

It was obviously evident that the mass mediated society was portrayed in the contemporary Fine Arts and that the images varied considerably from one another. During the Modern era, the body was portrayed as the media image itself. Artists took images directly from the visual mass media and portrayed it as they saw their own surrounding society. Hamilton, Lichtenstein and Warhol reduplicated and enlarged their images placing them in a different environment thus recontextualizing them. The element of mass reproduction was especially important and artists like Warhol made great use of this by using mechanical silkscreen techniques. The Modern body was still portrayed as a whole and merely displayed the body mediated by its influential surroundings.

The Post Modernists displayed a plurality of styles, eclecticism, contradiction and ambiguity other than that of the Modernists. Contemporary culture had become complex and thus everything was seen as 'multi- environments'. Whereas the Modern body was singular, the Post Modern was fragmented. Continual change within man's environment caused fragmentation and the mutability of the contemporary image of man and this then also displayed different modes of identity. As previously mentioned, the body was seen as sign and thus there were no

truths. It was hypothesized by the researcher that man had an identity crisis on account of the visual mass media bombarding the individual and this identity crisis was seen in a variety of ways by contemporary artists. This fragmented state was assembled from various modes of identity collected from the media. Basquiat and Quinn displayed it by dislocating the figure's heads from their bodies. Artists like Sherman, Dumb Type and Basquiat also displayed themselves within their works thus recontextualising themselves as superstars. The two identities being applied within one work showed man's crisis with his immediate identity on account of the media's influence.

It was however evident that within the works of Smith and Quinn, discussed within the Post Modern section of the text, that man had become so fragmented by the media that the influence thereof was no longer important. Kiki Smith and Marc Quinn showed the human body as fragmented, dislocated, emptied and as a struggle towards wholeness. In a world where change had become the norm, it seemed inevitable that the body had to change as well. According to Mirzoeff (1995: 1) it had already been claimed that the appearance of the 'body without organs' was present and technology had found new forms of communication, such as computer environments, that went beyond the limits of the individual body.

## CHAPTER 4.

### 4. THE THEME AS PORTRAYED BY THE RESEARCHER

#### 4.1 Introduction

The researcher particularly chose the theme on account of her constant relationship with the visual mass media eg. television, computers and magazines. With the fascination of how the media could promote an individual to a higher stance of living and generate the mind creatively, it could only have been seen in a positive light. This however did display the insecurities of the artist and thus showed the identity crisis she embodied. As a personal opinion, the artist claimed that most of modern man led a life with an identity crisis at hand and it could not be prevented (unless being secluded from the media in all aspects) but found that it was strangely comforting and potentially creative in being able to portray what the media spilled out at mankind.

#### 4.2 Discussion of Individual Works

There were a few elements that became vital in displaying the individual mediated by the information overloaded environment. These elements followed throughout most of the works of the researcher as it was found that they displayed the basic foundations of the theme portrayed. They consisted mainly of compositional fragmentations, reference sources, mediums and imagery.

The researcher particularly chose the element of fragmentation of the singular figure ie. the media image, to become a fundamental element in her works. The complete compositions of most of the works were basically dissected into strong horizontal and vertical divisions of media cut- outs. The human body changed constantly in the contemporary world and thus the fragmentation of its image displayed the theme to its fullest. These collages had strong

influences from the Cubistic collage as it also displayed how the Cubists directly brought the popular media image into an Avant Garde artwork. This breakdown of forms helped bring together various identities which were evidently the important feature of the hypothesis of the theme researched. Adding different images from the surrounding environment and representing them next to each other in another environment (the artwork) helped recontextualize the basic image itself. A very important Post Modern approach was the juxta positioning of different 'times' and 'styles' within the same picture plane as seen in the researcher's work *Comfortable Contamination* (fig. 7). This plurality of styles displayed the idea of the world turning into a 'whole global village' which was expressed by Marshall McLuhan in chapter 2 (cf pp. 14). The fragmentation also displayed the personality disorder explained by Gergen ie. the pastiche personality. Man became a social chameleon borrowing pieces from identities from all sources and then constructed them until they became useful.

Another important basis to which the artworks were assigned was their reference sources. The researcher particularly searched within media articles such as magazines, comics and images taken directly from advertisements. Most media images were idolized on account of the obvious consumer demand. Thus, images portrayed within the artworks themselves were already idolized and over- real. This played an important role in depicting how man had picked up the fragments of the 'ideal' and 'plastered' himself to that perfect stereotype. Man was the media.

Oil paint was the most prominent medium in the researcher's art but when combined with other elements such as plastic and resin, it then added a whole new concept to the final product. The paint in itself was a traditional medium and was combined, in a Post Modern sense, with a contemporary medium such as the plastic. The plastic added a feeling of the glossy, cover page image that was usually seen as an advertisement and the paint was the magazine image itself.

As seen in the works of Paolozzi, simple signs and mechanical elements were included to



display a machine- like existence. He invested the products of mass media and mass production with a mythic dimension, seeing them almost as sacred objects of the age. These elements helped dehumanize what the viewer would see in the paintings. Baudrillard (cf pp. 25) had explained that man was seen as a sign and that all that he portrayed was a simulation of what was real. Images of targets, arrows, comics and bar codes all added to that simulation of what was seen objectively by an individual. Jasper Johns also made use of signs as important replacements of the body in art or rather as an indication of what media did to the body. Signs could be objective enough to allow viewers to create their own interpretations and to decode the images individually from personal experience.

#### **4.2.1 Pseudo Prodigy Diptych (Fig. 1)**

This diptych contained a contemporary idea of a conforming unisex society, like the clothing and perfume industries that were advertised to reach a greater public. Individual identities had become so blurred that the risk of the sex of the consumer was put at risk. Advertisements catered for unisex individuals, displaying boyish woman and girl- like men consuming their items. An interesting element expressed by an outside commentator was that a religious feeling was contained within the work. The strong target design on the plastic seemed to develop into a silhouette of a god- like image, a reproduced and imitation religious icon that displayed a role of what the individual strived towards. This developed an interesting interplay of the perfect, accepted stereotype and showed an official higher stance in society. Perfecting man's body became more important than what was to be accepted as an original.

An important element, the target, was especially influenced by the targets within the works of Jasper Johns (cf pp.39). He was mostly interested in the complex processes involved in perceiving simple symbols. They were seen as common things which were often seen but seldom examined with careful attention. His painted targets remained the replicas of a target, but it also became an art object, with no clear significance, because it could not be used as a

target and it remained a painting. The important idea was thus that simple appropriated things acquired a presence that forced the viewer to wrestle with the relationship between the thing and its representation. The targets within the researcher's works merely represented this same concept. It became a simple symbol and was then related to the other images within the individual work.

The exploration of using a diptych instead of a singular canvas strengthened the idea of separate identities and incoherent lives. The fragmentation and splitting of the two magazine images and then the swapping and replacing of each other, strongly suggested the 'multi-human' that was ever present within the environment. The plastic medium strengthened the idea of the magazine influence within context of a hyper real image or glossy, super model likeness. The numbering within the targets suggested on the plastic also contained ideas of a machine-like artificial quality that was ever present within all the works.

Any media images could have been used, thus strengthening the fact that the objectification of the sexes were always present. The work had no connotation to gay issues, which could have been accepted by the viewer, but it did however explore into ideas of the media's target onto an individual identity that lacked the strength to 'selectively perceive' what was for or against their moral judgements.

#### **4.2.2 Multi- Identification (Fig. 2)**

This work was directly aimed at the individual and the many identities s/he withheld. Three dominant, female faces were placed next to each other in a way that they seemed to be seen as a whole. The ID number and the identikit lines suggested this oneness. Each individual face displayed a different culture and different colour strengthening the idea of 'one global village' (cf pp.14). The painting was arranged so that it seemed like an ID booklet displaying an enlarged ID photograph of 'one individual'. As the title suggested, the individual would have

been accepted globally and into any culture.

According to Delacroix, Kirkpatrick and Tansey (1991: 1076) Postmodernism adopted the posture of analysis, borrowing tools of theory and assessment from other fields and appropriated styles from older art and other cultures to create works that questioned every aspect of art making, the operation of the art market and the relationship between meaning in art and the society in which it was made. This work displayed these ideals.

#### **4.2.3 Glad Comfort Zone (Fig. 3)**

Here the image of a perfect 'wonder bra' girl seemed to escape out of an outer garment. A suggestion of male clothing appeared just beneath the beauty queen, but was not made obvious. The compositional fragmentation was not as evident as in the previous works. A clothing piece ie. a large, red hat was sewn onto the head in an uneasy manner. This displayed the kind of 'psychiatric garb' that an individual would wear to add to their appearance.

The hands became an important focal point incorporating a kind of meditative stance of preoccupation with what outer images should become. These were either potentially pre-meditative, or the immediate stripping away of outer garments. It became a constant removal of the image and replacing thereof with different identities and images. The target in the background also added to the radiation from media imagery or the targeting towards the 'idol'.

Imagery like a large zip in the front of the image was seen as a sign or symbol showing awakening or escaping from the old, yet the image was idolized on the outside. This thus was an explanation of the continual change within a social environment. The zip and the stitching that appeared on the work encouraged a kind of adhesive or attaching element that contained the attachment to man's securities.

#### **4.2.4 Mental Lamination (Fig. 4)**

This work contained yet more idolized fragments of female models but with an influence of Basquiat's (cf chap. 3. Pp. 45) decapitated heads. The head of the figure is slightly separated from the rest of the body and accentuated by incorporating arrows and it portrayed the dislocation of body and mind within the individual. The mouth was over accentuated like a local advertisement for a toothpaste. The photos took on a narcissistic notion demonstrating that 'perfect' bits were taken from each model and joined to a 'perfect' whole.

In the lower half, the figure revealed a barcode. This sign served as a commercial commodity and thus the figure was also seen in that objective light. The plastic here again was placed over the barcode to display the lamination of the preoccupations of the societal mind.

#### **4.2.5 Image Duplicator I (Fig. 5)**

This image basically served as a fragmented collection of different media influences. With the combination of a comic image and the silkscreen process itself, it made the image almost mechanical and flat. Comical and real images combined gave an unreal feeling to the work. The process and the title of the work also went hand in hand ie. the duplication of the image and duplication of the individual in society.

Another element which evidently became important was Baudrillard's hyperreal ideas. The work displayed the image being able to reduplicate over and over, such as new images upon new images thus leading towards some new realities. Nothing contained the 'original' self but was instead desensitized to what society had created out of itself.

The flat basic colours gave a feeling of an advertisement for an individual. It could easily be seen as a promotion within a magazine of the individual and its identity. The barcode also

reappeared within the image and displayed the commerciality of a mass-produced product.

#### **4.2.6 Image Duplicator II (Fig. 6)**

This work in an oil medium, displayed basic fragmentations showing a simplistic portrayal of a billboard such as the artworks done by Barbara Kruger. The large wording over the image demonstrated the advertising aspect within a high art ideal. The advertisement could have been there for the selling of any image, no specific individual, but displayed the commerciality of the identity of a person. The selling of the self was contained in the fragmentation of any person taken from any magazine image and that which the person on the street would pick up and imitate.

The wording was taken from one of Lichtensteins works, also called *Image Duplicator*, but placed within a different context by adding 'realistic' images of the face instead of a comic image. This work reverberated from the Pop Arts' era, but claimed new ideals by adding the new realistic facial images from contemporary magazines.

Although the work was fairly large and bold, it was not entirely attention grabbing. The image and the words seemed to metamorphose into each other thus leaving nothing to be more dominant than the other, thus showing the ignorance of man towards advertising. The bombardment and competition of everyday advertising allowed no room for an outstanding impact of one single advertisement. Thus, all became monotonous and of equal quality in the end.

#### **4.2.7 Comfortable Contamination (Fig. 7)**

Different technologies displayed different images of varying individuals as fast as the speed of developed technology. With the continuous change in the environments, man formed partial

identities which he too continually changed. This multiplicity of self investments and man's saturated self caused a psychological condition namely multiphrenia (cf. Pp.22).

Within this work, the two individuals became a divided self and drew personalities from all over the world and from a variety of media's. The image became a breakdown of objective reality and culminated into something totally new. Traditional African bodies were cut and combined with the heads of a popular comic image. The fragmentation of the contemporary and the traditional displayed its roots in Post Modern ideals and evidently created a feeling of disease. In the chapter 1 McLuhan (cf. Pp.14) described how in the electric age man wore all mankind as their skin and thus all became one global village and a single consciousness.

From an outsiders view, the head being portrayed as a media image unlike the traditional bodies, showed that the mind followed the media's ideals and the body remained the original. The body struggled to follow within the ideals of what the media bombarded into the individual. The elimination of the eyes also revealed the absence of the soul and little, original identity was shown. Man was caught in a natural body and could only manipulate it with large amounts of capital. The omission of the legs was evidence of nothing being able to carry the body forward into the future. The body was not whole thus was crippled in the ability to transport itself as a result of an incoherent mind. With the addition of the wheelchair, man seemed to transport himself with artificial limbs.

#### **4.2.8 New Improved Reality (Fig. 8)**

This advertisement for a child's doll portrayed a play with desire and innocence. The name BABE was taken from a reformulation of the popular Barbie doll which so many children were brought up with. It showed a stereotype image which displayed an adult version of what a child wanted and to grow up to be. The advertisement contained a price and catchy slogans to tempt the consumer to buy, yet had underlying sarcasm with how it was presented. 'New improved

reality' already insinuated a reality that was to become a fixation of the contemporary youth. The specific price also contained a sexual insinuation, which displayed the idea of a sex idol with a perfect body. The media always exclaimed that 'sex sells' and this then was pushed to its limits for a childlike item.

As explained by the viewing public, the work also could have displayed the 'idol' in a showroom, display- type environment. The doll was seen as a mannequin with an objective babe identification. The sign 'Made in Taiwan' too claimed a factory, mass-produced image that took on no specific individual identification.

#### **4.2.9 Plastic Dissection (Fig. 9)**

This work basically displayed the malleability of the human body under constraints of the visual mass media. The ever-present fragmented body was joined here by the insinuations of plastic surgery lines and the potential of undergoing this surgery to conform the body to prescribed imagery. The sewing and cutting of the body showed how manipulative the physical could be in the modern age with the input of large amounts of capital. The 'repairing' of the body also suggested that a fixed image had developed from several selected fragments.

The proportions of the mouth also displayed enlargement and what the importance of enhanced features were to man. The plastic added to the oil medium again showed that the individual had become a malleable, distorted image. It also claimed that the individual was under constant change and that the plastic could be replaced whenever it was required to.

Simple significations, as inspired by Baudrillard's theories, also added the objectification of a person in his environment. The 'Input' sign for instance contained elements pertaining to the adding of size to the breasts of the female, thus leading the specific individual to comply with specific images within the media. The barcode objectified the person as was seen in previous

works.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

The 'psychiatric garb' that man wore became an ever growing fascination for the artist and displaying it in painterly terms gave way to answers about individuals choosing their specific ideals. The prescribed medium ie. oil paints did become restricting to a degree as compared to that used within the Contemporary arts of the era. Developing new ways of portraying contemporary ideas in this medium did however leave plenty of room for experimentation. Elements for further study were found and deemed inquisitiveness for research into items such as the influence of computers in modern man's life and how it would change the concept of art. Also the connection man had with the rest of the world via the Internet and thus bringing the world even closer therefore continuing the search for a 'global village'.



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## **INTERNET**

Internet 1

Round table Interview - Douglas Rushkoff.

[Http://www.users.interport.net/~rushkoff/index2.html](http://www.users.interport.net/~rushkoff/index2.html)

Internet 2

Media Virus: Hidden Agendas in Popular Culture.

[Http://www.users.interport.net/~rushkoff/index2.html](http://www.users.interport.net/~rushkoff/index2.html)

Internet 3

Jean - Michel Basquiat.

[Http://www.broadartfnd.org/bio-basquiat.html/](http://www.broadartfnd.org/bio-basquiat.html/)

Internet 4

Digital Humanism: The Processed World of Marshall McLuhan.

Authur Kroker.

[Http://www.ctheory.com/a28-digitalhumanism.html](http://www.ctheory.com/a28-digitalhumanism.html)

Internet 5

Lonely Hours - Barbara Kruger.

[Http://www.zip.com.au/~niina/kruger.html](http://www.zip.com.au/~niina/kruger.html)

Internet 6

Postmodern Jeremiads: Kruger on Popular Culture.

[Http://bion.mit.edu/ejournals/b/n-z/unindexed/PMC/by-filename/5.review-5.994](http://bion.mit.edu/ejournals/b/n-z/unindexed/PMC/by-filename/5.review-5.994)

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

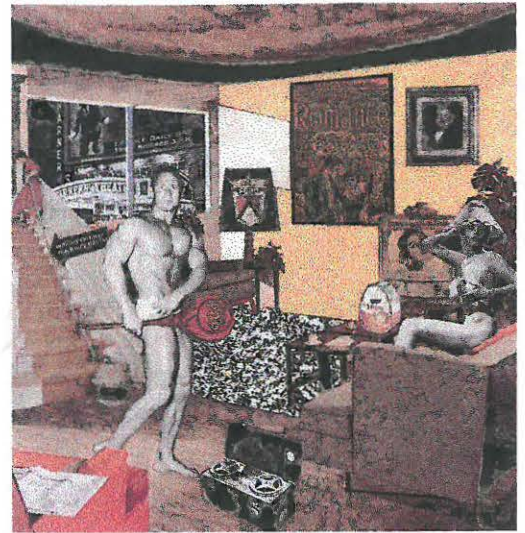


Fig. 1.

Richard Hamilton

**Just What is it That Makes Today's Homes so Different, so Appealing?**

1956

Collage on paper

25 x 26 cm

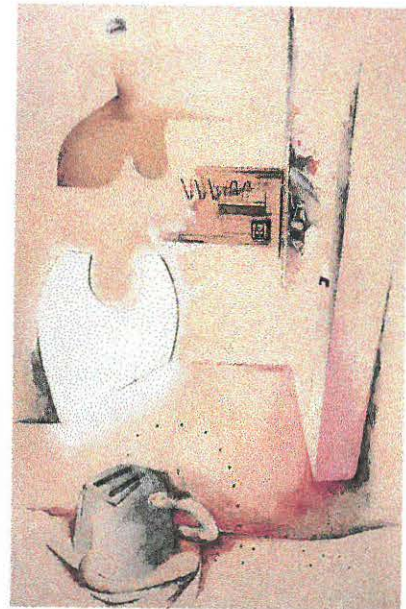


Fig. 2.

Richard Hamilton

**She**

1956

Oil cellulose and collage on panel

48 x 32 cm

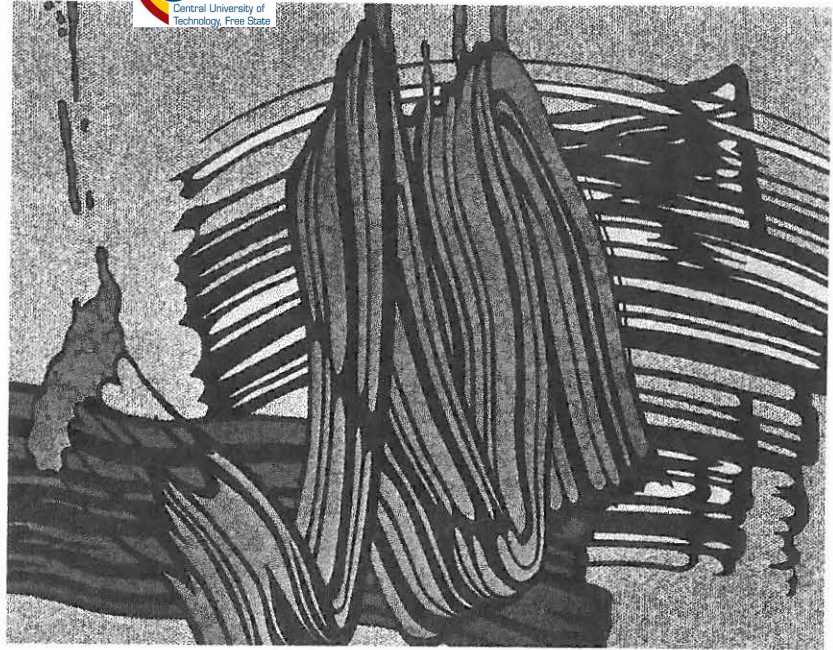


Fig. 3.

Roy Lichtenstein

**Little Big Painting**

1956

Oil and synthetic polymer on canvas

68 x 80 inches



Fig. 4.

Roy Lichtenstein

**WHAAM!**

1963

Magna on canvas

172.7 x 406.4 cm



Fig. 5.

Andy Warhol

**Marilyn Diptych**

1962

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas

50. 8 x 40. 6 cm



Fig. 6.

Andy Warhol

**100 Soup Cans**

1962

Oil, acrylic and silkscreen enamel on canvas

50. 8 x 40. 6 cm

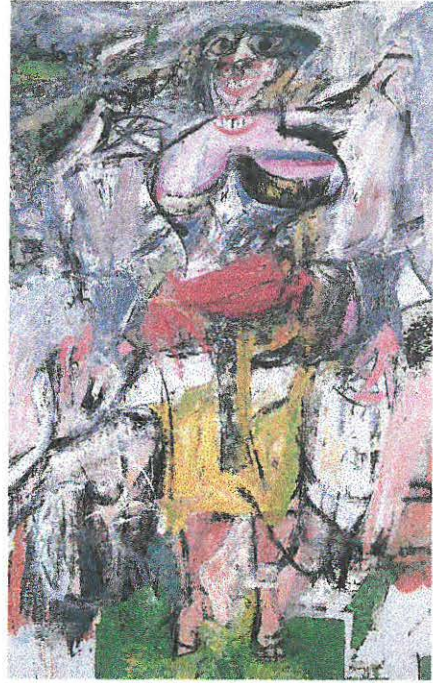


Fig. 7.  
Willem de Kooning  
**Woman on a Bicycle**  
1952 - 1953  
Oil on canvas  
6' 4.5" x 4' 1"

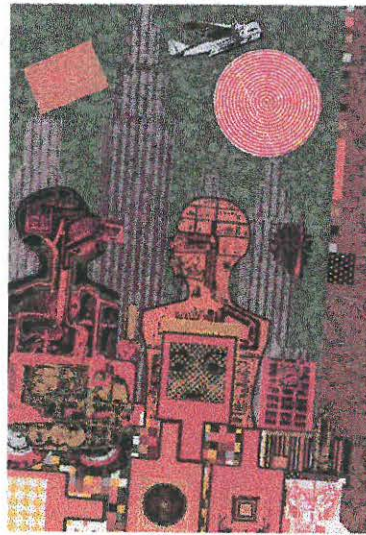


Fig. 8.  
Eduardo Paolozzi  
**Wittgenstein in New York**  
1965  
Screenprint  
65. 96 x 66 cm



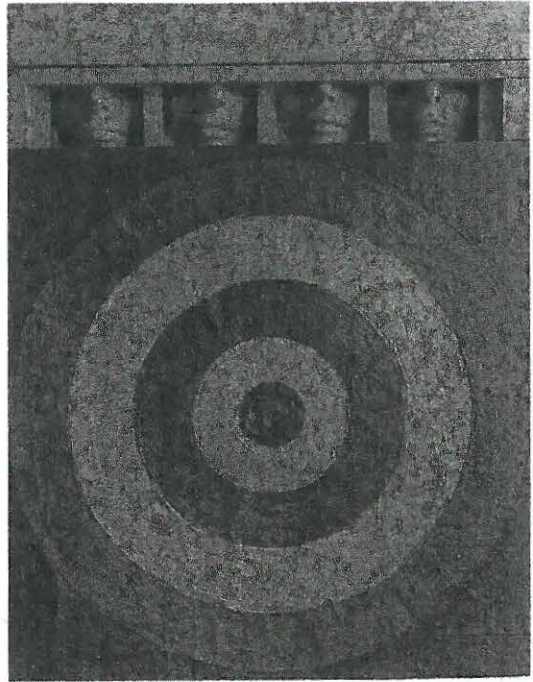


Fig. 9.

Jasper Johns

**Target with Four Faces**

1955

Assemblage of encaustic and collage on canvas with plaster objects

26" x 26"

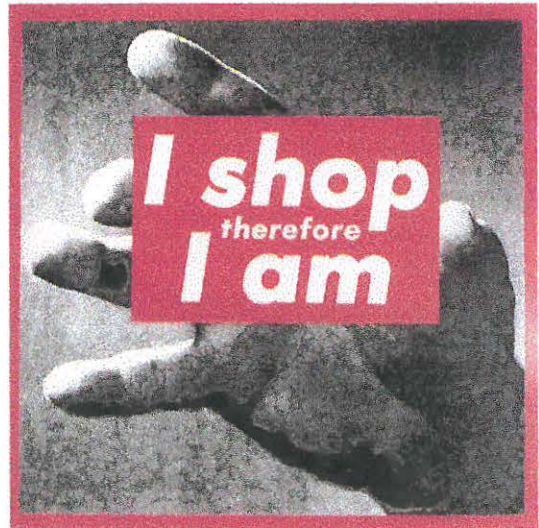


Fig. 10.

Barbara Kruger

**Untitled (I Shop therefore I Am)**

1987

Graphic silkscreen on vinyl

281. 9 x 287 cm

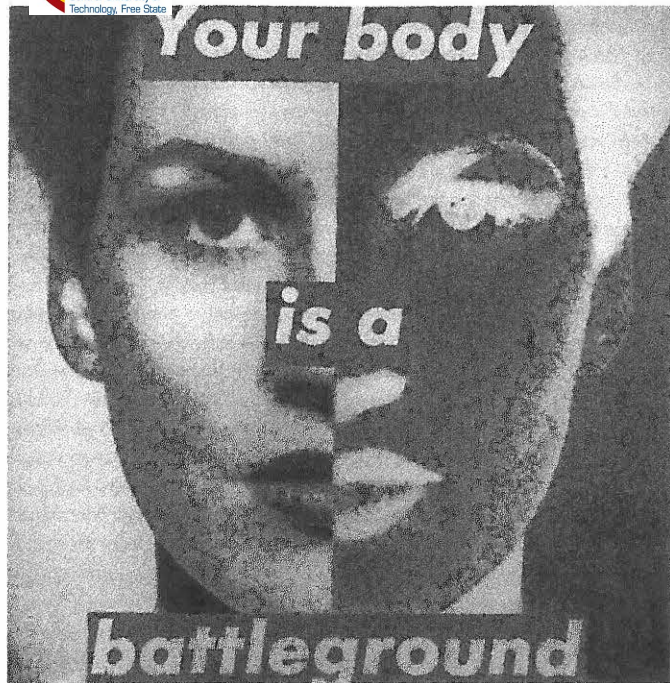


Fig. 11.

Barbara Kruger

**Your Body is a Battleground**

1989



Fig. 12.

Cindy Sherman

**Untitled Film Still**

1978

Black and white photograph

8" x 10"



Fig. 13.

Cindy Sherman

**Untitled (History Painting #205)**

1989

Black and white photograph

8" x 10"

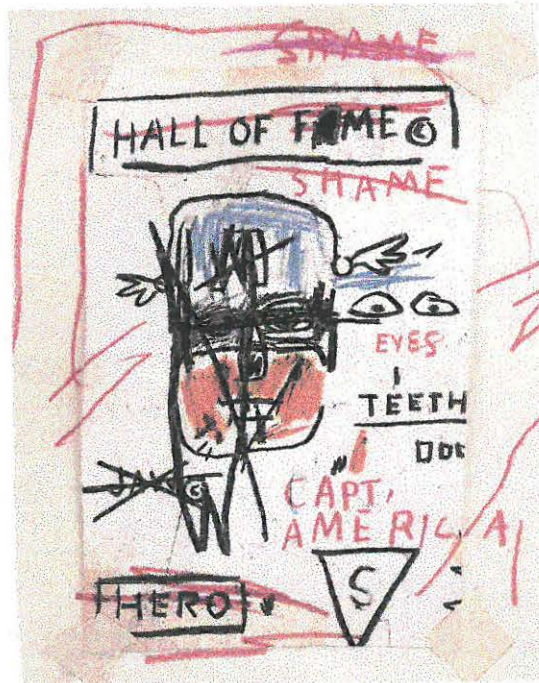


Fig. 14.

Jean Michel Basquiat

**Untitled (Hall of Fame)**

1983

Coloured pencil, crayon, oil stick, paper, tape collage on paper

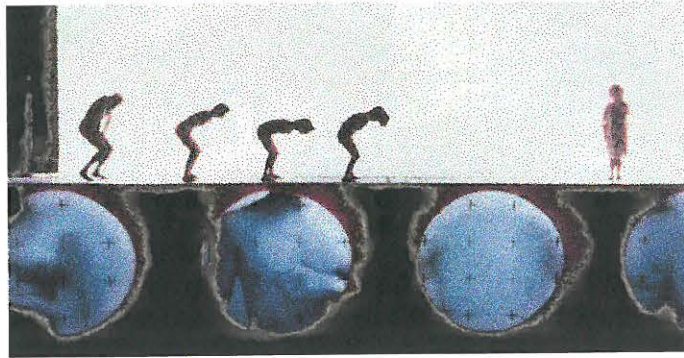
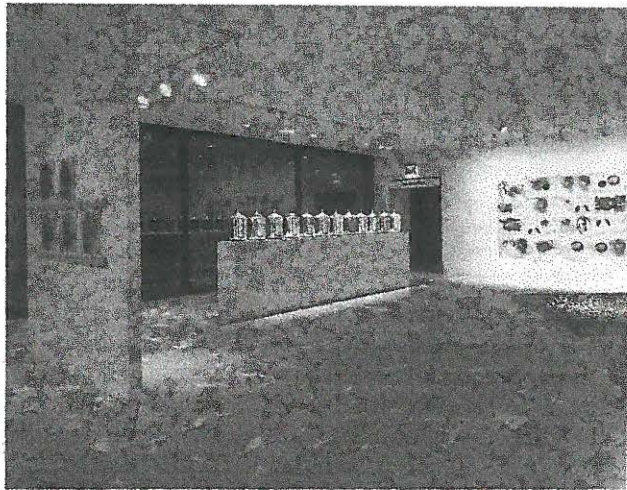


Fig. 15.

**Dumb Type**

Performance

1996



a.

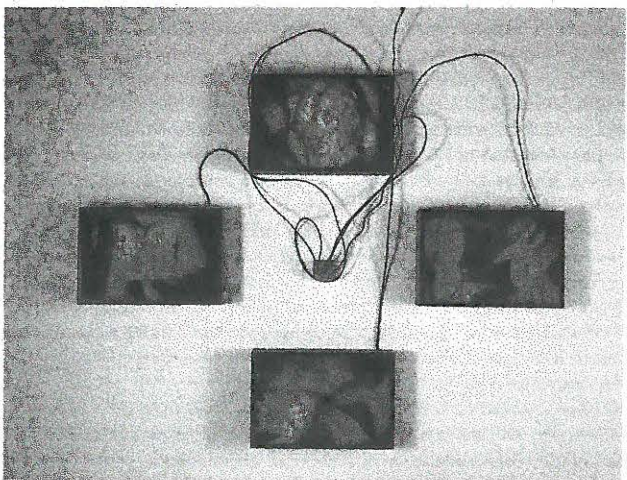
Fig. 16 a. & b.

Kiki Smith

**a. Projects: Kiki Smith**

1990 - 1991

Installation



b.

**b. Untitled**

1982 - 1991

Four photographic light boxes

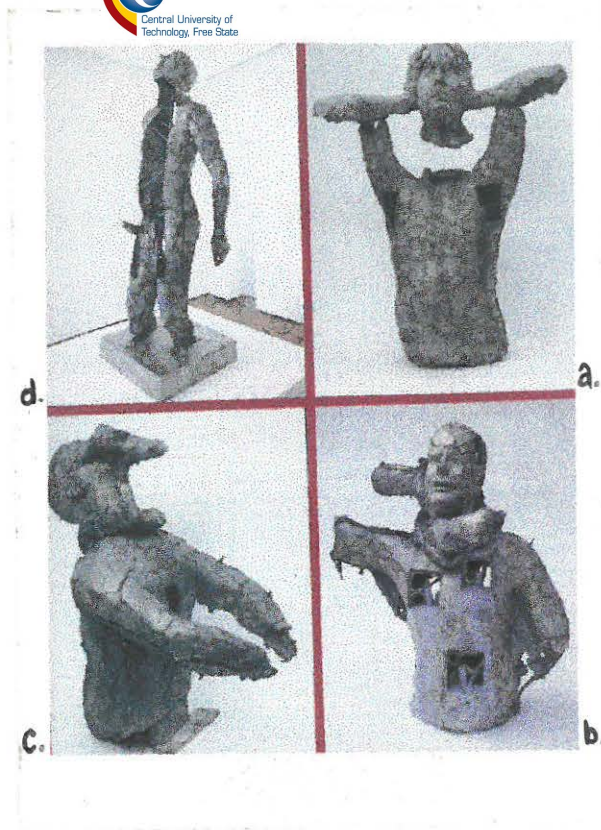


Fig. 17 a, b, c & d.

Marc Quinn

**a. Emotional Detox (The Seven Deadly Sins IV)**

1994 - 1995

Cast lead and wax

**b. Emotional Detox (Love)**

1994

Edition of 3

Cast lead and wax

**c. Emotional Detox (The Seven Deadly Sins III)**

1994 - 1995

Cast lead and wax

**d. The Blind Leading the Blind**

1995

Cast lead

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**Fig. 15.** Keall, M 1996. *Weird and Wired: Pavement*. Issue 15. pp. 20 - 22.

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**Fig. 17 a, b, c, d.** Sanders, M 1995. *Dazed and Confused - Invasion of the Body*: Issue 13. pp.  
42 - 45

ILLUSTRATIONS OF PRACTICAL RESEARCH.



Fig. 1.

Lara Massmann

**Pseudo Prodigy Diptych**

1997

Oil paint on canvas and plastic

170 x 75 cm





Fig. 2.

Lara Massmann

**Multi- Identification**

1997

Oil on canvas

1 x 1.5 m

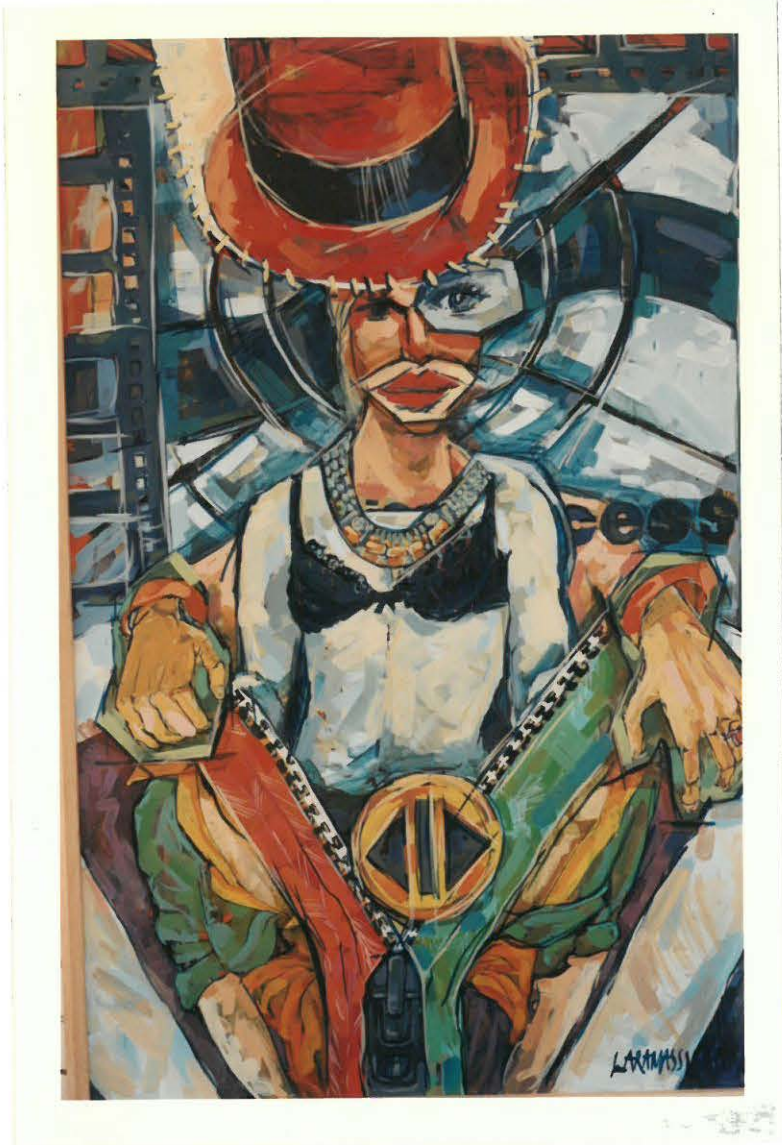


Fig. 3.

Lara Massmann

**Glad Comfort Zone**

1997

Oil on canvas

1 x 1.5 m



Fig. 4.

Lara Massmann

**Mental Lamination**

1997

Oil on canvas and plastic

1 x 1.5 m



Fig. 5.

Lara Massmann

**Image Duplicator I**

1996

Silkscreen process

42 x 52 cm

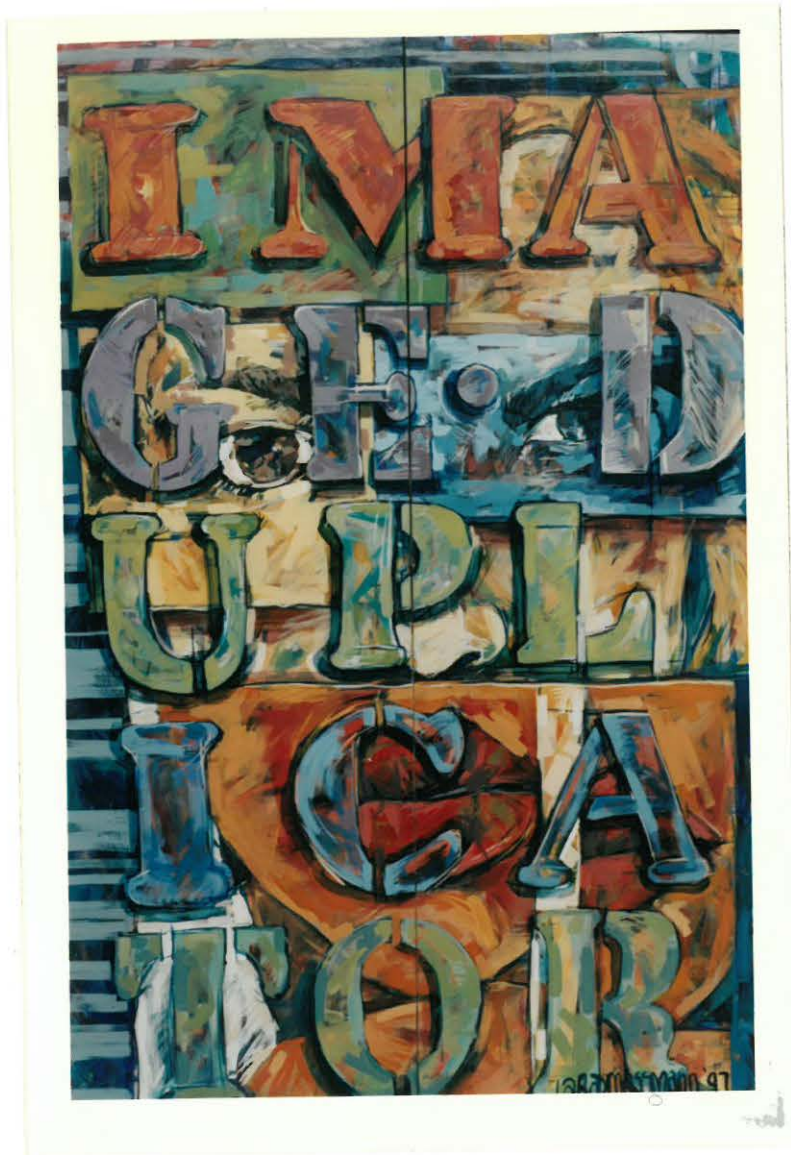


Fig. 6.

Lara Massmann

**Image Duplicator II**

1997

Oil on canvas

1.5 x 3 m

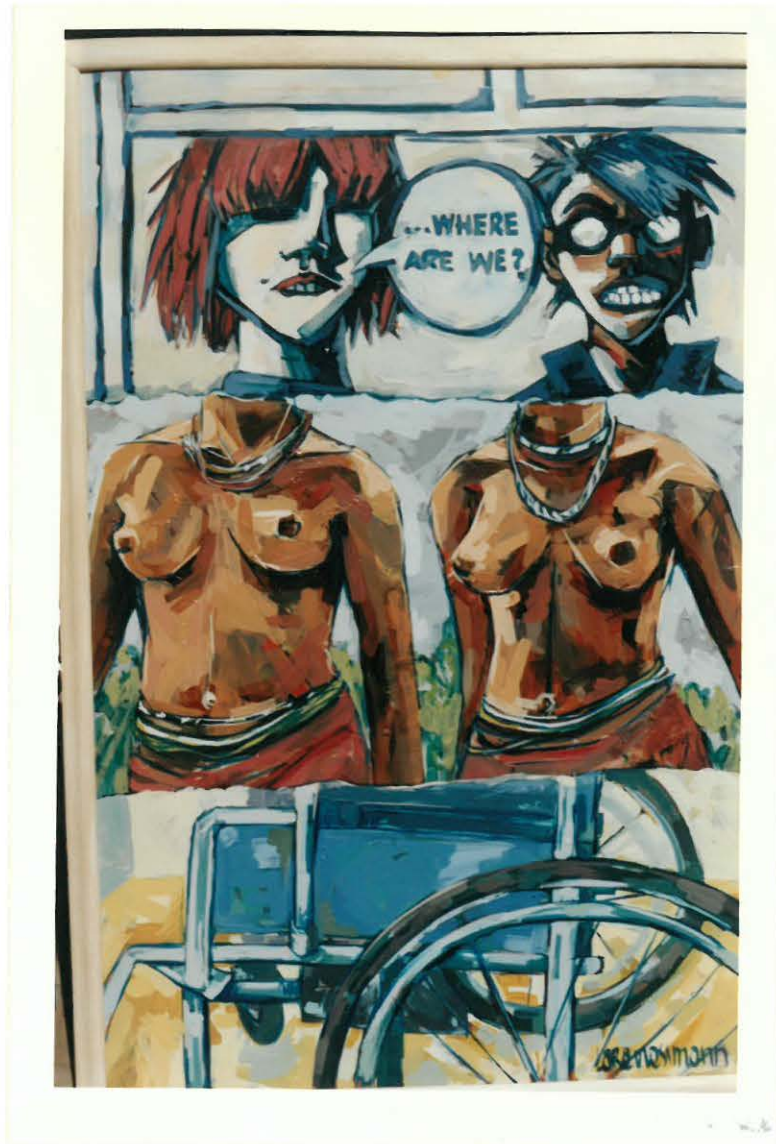


Fig. 7.

Lara Massmann

**Comfortable Contamination**

1997

Oil on canvas

1 x 1.5 m

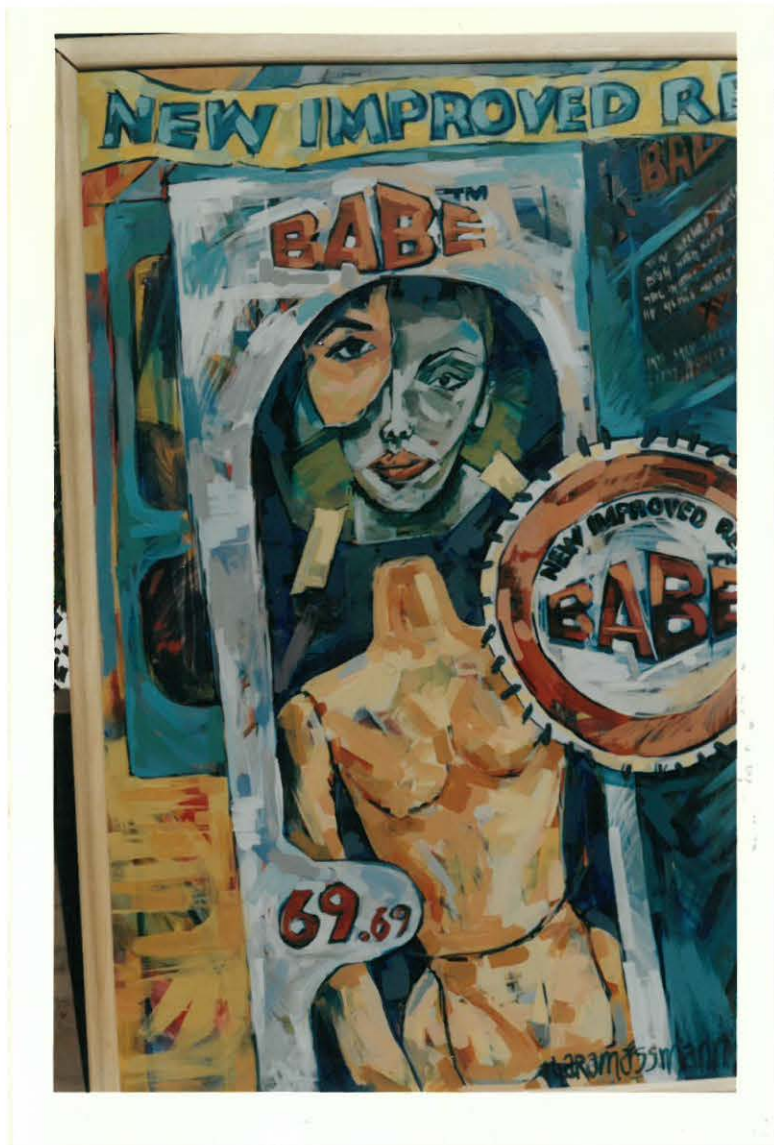


Fig. 8.

Lara Massmann

**New Improved Reality**

1997

Oil on canvas

1 x 1.5 m



Fig. 9.

Lara Massmann

**Plastic Dissection**

1997

Oil on canvas and plastic

1 x 1.5 m





Fig. 10.

Lara Massmann

**Brand New - Your Retro**

1997

Oil on canvas

1.5 x 2m

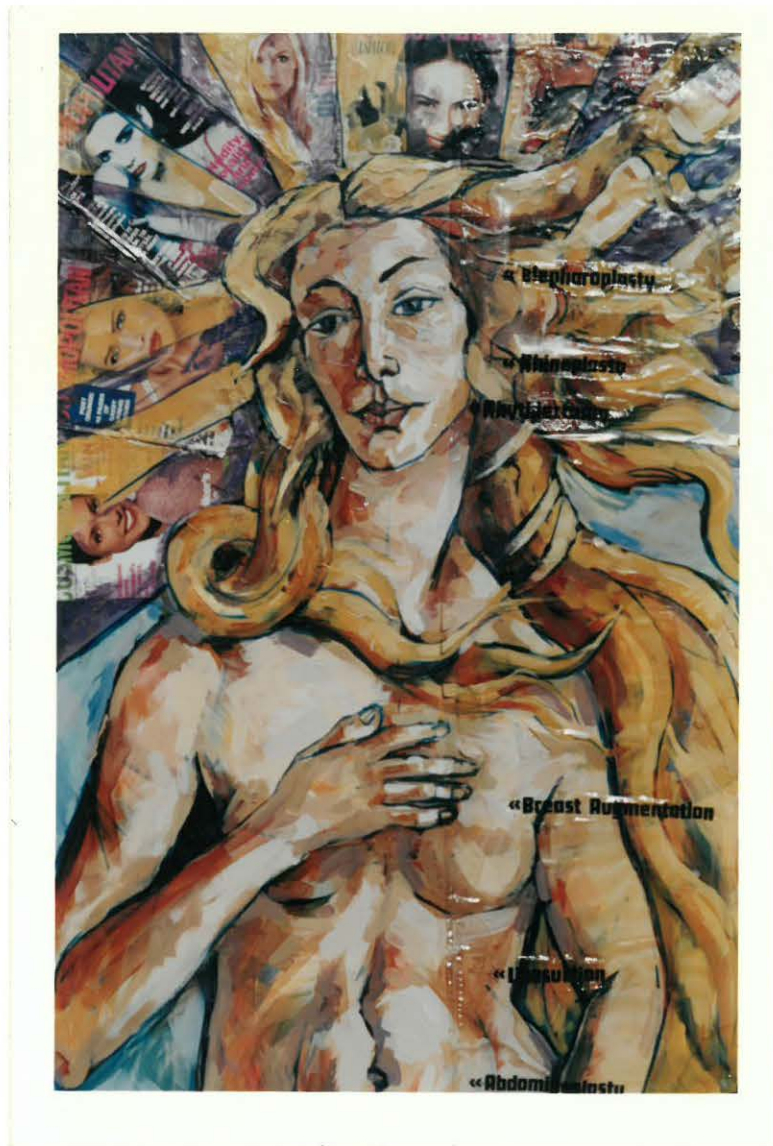


Fig. 11.  
Lara Massmann  
**Supergirl**  
1997  
Oil on canvas  
1 x 1.5m