
JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

Education Kit



Julie Rrap *Yaw* 2004
from the series *Soft Targets*
digital print 120 x 120 cm
Courtesy the artist, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery,
Sydney and Arc One Gallery, Melbourne
© the artist

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Ways to use this Kit	3
Curriculum Connections	3
Artist Biography	4
Exhibition Overview	5
<i>MCA Collection Exhibition: selected by Julie Rrap</i>	6
STUDY NOTES	
1. Approaches to Self-Portraiture	8
2. Representations of the Female Body	9
3. Feminist and Postmodern Strategies	11
4. The Performing Body and "Body Double"	14
5. The Fragmented and Deconstructed Body	16
6. Trickery, Artifice and Invention	19
7. Artist/Subject/Viewer Relationships	20
8. Exhibition Display and Organisation	22
FOCUS ARTWORKS	
1. <i>Disclosures: A Photographic Construct</i> (1982)	23
2. <i>Puberty</i> from the series <i>Persona and Shadow</i> (1984)	25
3. <i>Overstepping</i> (2001)	27
4. <i>Boat Tail</i> from the series <i>Soft Targets</i> (2004)	29
LEARNING IDEAS AND FOCUS QUESTIONS	
• Junior Secondary Years 7-10	32
• Senior Secondary Years 11 & 12 / Tertiary	35
Glossary	37
Further Reading and Resources	40
Acknowledgements	41

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

INTRODUCTION

This education kit has been produced by the Museum of Contemporary Art to support the exhibition *Julie Rrap: Body Double*.

Julie Rrap: Body Double is a major survey of work by Australian artist Julie Rrap, bringing together photographs, videos, sculptures and installations encompassing twenty-five years of artistic practice. Curated by Victoria Lynn, the exhibition examines the uncompromising way Rrap has used her own body in photography, video and sculpture to question representation, perception and power structures.

This kit offers an insight into the artistic practice of Julie Rrap. It examines key works in the exhibition, provides background information about the work, and discusses themes, connections and concerns in Rrap's art.

This resource is intended primarily for use by teachers and students of Secondary groups, as well as a general guide for Tertiary and community arts audiences.

Please note: This exhibition contains images of nudity. Exhibition content may not be suitable for younger audiences, especially Primary students. Teachers can contact MCA Learning for further information.

WAYS TO USE THIS KIT

This material in the kit is primarily designed for students of Visual Arts and Photographic & Digital Media, but is also relevant for English, especially for the study of Visual Literacy.

This kit can be used in a variety of ways for education groups as well as individual study and research. The material is intended to complement, and be used in addition to, the information provided in the exhibition publication and the exhibition wall texts.

Use images, activities and ideas to assist with pre-visit preparation, as a guide during the gallery visit and to develop post-visit activities. Teachers are advised to adapt these activities to suit their students' needs or to integrate areas of this resource into existing classroom units of study.

Key terms in **bold** are defined in the glossary at the end of this kit. A guide to additional reading and resources has been provided to assist in further study.

The Study Notes section of the kit analyses artworks in relationship to key themes that have developed in Julie Rrap's art. Focus questions and activities are included to stimulate discussion and critical thinking by students.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Teachers are encouraged to adapt syllabus links from the list below to suit the system of their school's state. Use this list as a starter for planning, or talk to MCA Learning staff for further ideas.

For senior students in New South Wales, *Julie Rrap: Body Double* is an ideal context to develop case studies, investigating an artist's practice and looking at approaches to photography, sculpture and installation using the body. The study of the exhibition in the Museum environment during the class visit to the MCA provides a valuable opportunity to look at the Conceptual Framework, and study the Frames through engaging with the works of art, or to look at the development of a Body of Work.

Visual Arts/Creative Arts

- The role of the Contemporary Museum
- Working in series, developing a Body of Work

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

- Postmodernism
- Conceptual Framework—Artist, Artwork, Audience, World
- Exposure to a range of artistic practice
- Diversity of media and techniques
- Art and politics, art and current events
- Artist's Practice
- Identity and self
- The role of the artist's body in contemporary art practice
- Feminist perspectives
- Performance and role play
- Appropriation and recontextualisation

English

- Analysing Visual Texts
- Oral and research skills
- Response to visual stimuli
- Creative writing and response
- Critical essays and reviews

Photographic & Digital Media

- Allusions to popular culture including film
- The photographic portrait and self-portrait
- The place of photography in the canon of art and art history
- Photography as documentation – truth and artifice
- Photographic manipulation – reconfiguring 'reality', morphing
- The moving image – video and installation
- Multimedia presentations
- Appropriation and recontextualisation

Society and Environment

- Visual arts as a reflection of contemporary culture
- Visual arts as a reflection of cultural or personal identity

ESL/NESB/CALD

- Developing a visual arts vocabulary list
- Written and oral responses
- Cultural identity and issues in the visual arts
- Indigenous cultures and histories

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Born in Lismore, Australia in 1950, Julie Rrap currently lives and works in Sydney. She has an extensive exhibition history dating back to the early 1980s. Julie Rrap is represented by Arc One Gallery in Melbourne and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery in Sydney. Recent solo exhibitions at Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery include *Soft Targets* in 2004 and *Fall Out*, 2006.

Rrap's work has been featured in major Australian and international exhibitions including: *Australian Perspective*, Sydney, 1983, 1985 and 1987; the *Biennale of Sydney*, 1986, 1988 and 1992; and *Fieldwork: Australian Art 1968 - 2002*, National Gallery of Victoria, 2002. Other group exhibitions include: *Turbulence: The Third Auckland Triennial*, New Zealand, 2007; *Girls, Girls, Girls: Images of Femininity from the Banyule Art Collection*, Bendigo Art Gallery, 2005; and *National Sculpture Prize 2003*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

Public art projects have included the installation *Fleshstones* at Republic Tower, Melbourne 2003; and *Overstepping*, billboard project at Hero apartments, Melbourne, 2002.

In 2001, Rrap was awarded winner of Hermann's Art Award for *Overstepping* and was awarded a Fellowship Grant from the Australia Council for the Arts.

Monograph publications include *Julie Rrap: Body Double*, curator Victoria Lynn's book to coincide with the MCA exhibition (co-published by Piper Press and the MCA) and *Julie Rrap*, also a Piper Press publication (1998).¹

¹ Julie Rrap, Artist's Profile, <http://www.aucklandtriennial.com>, (accessed August 20th 2007)

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

Julie Rrap and the MCA

Julie Rrap has had a long relationship with the MCA, beginning with the purchase of *Disclosures* in 1994, which was first exhibited at the MCA in 1993 as part of *Art of this World: The MCA Collection*. In 1996, she took part in the MCA exhibition *Photography is Dead: Long Live Photography*. Rrap was the first artist appointed to the Board of the MCA, on which she served from 2000-2004. Rrap was chair of the MCA's inaugural Artist's Advisory Group, a small national panel brought together to provide feedback and to encourage greater involvement by artists with the MCA.

EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

Julie Rrap: Body Double

For over twenty-five years, the Sydney-based artist Julie Rrap has sought to disclose and unravel the ways in which the human body has been defined throughout western history and culture. She does so with a seductive wit, an outward display of pleasure, and a determination to match the gaze of her audiences. Deeply based in the story of the body, Rrap's art is always a surprise, resulting from an individual ingenuity that aligns with a feminist strategy to continuously seek and present the unpredictable and unanticipated. This exhibition surveys Rrap's work over three decades and focuses on three key themes in her work: the trickster, the body double and the ways in which her work represents the body as a fragmented entity.

Often playing the role of thief, vixen or mischievous impostor, Rrap has worked as a kind of 'trickster', literally 'occupying' the work of some of western art's most famous paintings or pop-cultural images. During the 1980s, artists such as Edvard Munch provided vehicles for Rrap's exploration of the ways in which the female nude had been represented through the history of art, as in her 1984 series *Persona and Shadow*. 'The historical paintings', she explains, 'were really stepping-off points for me to do a performance'. By mobilising these well-known images, Rrap unravels the condition of woman as 'other' and this strategy has persisted in her work through to the *A-R-MOUR* series (2000).

Throughout the 1990s until the present day, Rrap has used her own body in various postures through shadow play, masquerade, mirror and mime. She performs as a 'body double' for the still and moving camera. Drawing on the notion that gender is in itself a performance, Rrap has forged the theme of the stand-in, a prosthetic body double, and her works often invite viewers to imagine

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

themselves in such a role. This is evident in sculptural installations such as *Vital Statistics* (1997) and *Hard Core/Soft Core* (2006) through to the most recent work in this exhibition, *Body Double* (2007).

Increasingly, Rrap represents a body in pieces, inevitably raising ethical and aesthetic issues in relation to how we depict, interpret and understand the human form. Such issues have been discussed both in broad social terms (for example in relation to the Abu Ghraib photographs or in connection with genetic engineering), as well as in the field of art. For Rrap, the body and its representation is porous, excessive and oozing with a sense of tease and trickery. In works such as *Hairline Crack* (1992), *Porous Bodies* (1999) and *Overstepping* (2001), this body oversteps the margins of comfort, taking us into the zone of transgression. It is, however, always in the company of a foil that more often than not, allows us to laugh out loud with the artist.

Victoria Lynn, Guest Curator²

MCA COLLECTION EXHIBITION: SELECTED BY JULIE RRAP

To complement her exhibition, Julie Rrap has acted as curator by selecting a number of works from the MCA's permanent collection to be presented as a separate exhibition on the same floor as *Julie Rrap: Body Double*. The artist's introductory wall text is reproduced here as an introduction to the artist and works which interest Rrap or connect with her practice.

MCA Collection Exhibition: Selected by Julie Rrap

This selection was framed by fairly broad principles that relate to interests in my own practice over the last 25 years. However, one image in particular, Arnulf Rainer's *Face-farce* (1971), resonates as a pivotal work for my other choices.

Figuration created through ironic and conceptual gestures, as opposed to the purely expressive, has always interested me. I think this is because photography, as a critical tool in my visual thinking, has always made the relationship between subjective and objective observation problematic.

One of my earliest influences in this regard was the work of the Austrian artist Arnulf Rainer, whose self-portrait work *Face-farce* was recorded photographically by an assistant while the artist was under the influence of the drug mescaline, rendering him psychologically 'absent' from the process. In revisiting these images of himself, Rainer attempted to use this photographic 'proof' as a trigger to recreate his memory of the event by drawing and painting on the surface of the image. This gesture exposed the disjunction between the 'objective' eye of the camera and the 'subjective' interpretation of the artist/viewer. His mark-making on the surface of the image was an

² Reproduced from Julie Rrap: Body Double exhibition introductory text, written by Victoria Lynn, 2007

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

attempt to expressively reach across this void between image, sensation and memory.

In this work, what we are confronted by is a 'double' space; one emotional and unguarded, the other a more considered and constructed response.

Of course all great art works have multiple impacts on our senses, but in combining the camera with the handmade, the tension between the direct and indirect gesture become more apparent.

In choosing Rainer's image to articulate this tension, I have tried to consider this selection of works in dialogue with Rainer's proposition. Some works use drawing as photo-realism, while others construct photographs as masquerades. Some appear to exist purely as expressive gesture, while others mask the subjective with irony.

Julie Rrap³

³ Reproduced from *MCA Collection: Selected by Julie Rrap* introductory text, written by Julie Rrap, 2007

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

STUDY NOTES

Use this summary of key exhibition themes as teaching notes to help prepare for the gallery visit, to assist with preparing an essay topic or assignment, or as self-guiding notes while at the museum.

1. APPROACHES TO SELF-PORTRAITURE

'Rrap uses her body in the same way that she uses a particular piece of technology – because it is literally 'at hand'. Her works are not aimed at portraying the psychological persona of Julie Rrap.'⁴

Rrap 'uses her body as a prop, in the same way she uses bronze, rubber, photo emulsion on wood' and other materials in her artmaking to investigate her ideas.⁵

Julie Rrap does not consider the repeated use of her own body in her art to be a form of self-portrait. She features in nearly every work in *Body Double* but Rrap contests the description of her art as self-portraiture. 'I'm not trying to do an endless portrait of myself...not in the sense of an artist using oneself for the purpose of self portraiture'.⁶

So if Rrap is not making a self-portrait, what is she exploring in her art? The artist comments, 'I see myself as talking from the third person, not as a self portrait... I use my self-image in a more disembodied way. I am having a conversation with the female body: I am in two positions at once as model and author. The use of the self is almost like a **ruse**.'⁷

To Rrap, her own body is the most ready tool at hand for artmaking. This idea is reiterated by the exhibition curator Victoria Lynn, when she says Rrap's artmaking 'does not proceed from a desire to express the self. Rather she uses her body as a tool, in a way that fully embraces the more analytic approach of women artists who emerged concurrently in the United States, such as [Cindy] Sherman', where the body is used as a vehicle for examining ideas relating to the 'performance' of a gendered identity.⁸

During a recent conversation with the curator, the use of Rrap's own body was suggested to function more like a feminist revisioning of the Duchamp-ian use of the **readymade**.⁹

⁴ Victoria Lynn, *Julie Rrap: Body Double*, Museum of Contemporary Art and Piper Press, 2007, p 9

⁵ Victoria Lynn during 'exhibition walkthrough' at Museum of Contemporary Art, August 28, 2007

⁶ Julie Rrap in interview with Virginia Trioli, 'Sunday Arts', ABC, August 12, 2007

⁷ Julie Rrap in *Julie Rrap: Body Double*, Victoria Lynn, Museum of Contemporary Art and Piper Press, 2007, p 52

⁸ Victoria Lynn, *Julie Rrap: Body Double*, Museum of Contemporary Art and Piper Press, 2007, p 47

⁹ Julie Rrap in conversation with Victoria Lynn and Jo Daniell, Museum of Contemporary Art, August 27, 2007

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

2. REPRESENTATIONS OF THE FEMALE BODY

For over twenty-five years, Julie Rrap has explored and unravelled the ways in which the human body, especially representations of the female body, has been portrayed in Western art history, media and culture.

Rrap's relationship to the emergent feminist ideas of the 1960s and 1970s – in which feminine stereotypes were challenged and images by, about and for women were created – is evident in the way she constructs images which refer to artworks from nineteenth and early twentieth century European art.¹⁰

Rrap investigates the representation of the female subject within the history of Western art in numerous works, including the photographic series *Persona and Shadow* (1984) and the grid of female faces in *Transpositions* (1998).

In these works, Rrap critiques the representation of the female body by using the original artworks as a source for **deconstruction** in her own works. Rrap's process involves making transparent ideas about the objectification of women, which she feels the original images reinforced and replicated.

Drawing on key feminist ideas, Rrap explores how the **gaze** of the viewer is traditionally constructed as heterosexual and male, and links this concept to the construction of 'femininity as passive' and 'masculinity as active'.

Rrap's work questions the long history of images made predominantly by male artists for male patrons, and in which women were primarily presented as objects for visual

consumption and pleasure. She does this by taking up the role of the artist and maker of the images, and by inserting herself into the artworks themselves. She is therefore able to challenge the dominance of male artists in art history and to uncover the limited range of representations of women in Western art.

Appropriation (the quotation of other artists' works in your own work) has been an important feminist and postmodern strategy since the late 1970s. Rrap has said, 'To steal is to take what wouldn't normally be offered, what wouldn't be inherited. In cultural situations, there are unspoken rights of inheritance – to title, territory, position, money, prestige, power, and name. A male-constructed history implies an inheritance that is not naturally received by women and isn't normally assumed to be theirs.'¹¹

Much of the artist's work from the 1980s deliberately alluded to European art history. In the *Persona and Shadow* series her body is represented as a photographic collage, cut up and fragmented, and then placed within an expressive and painterly backdrop. Rrap appropriates works by the Norwegian expressionist painter Edvard Munch. Rrap has said, 'with the Munch images, my own figure is fragmented and displaced, squeezed into an apparently immutable outline inherited from history. It was about the discomfort of imagery that we can't alter now. How do you deal with it – these representations of your own sex, where women are so confined and limited?'¹²

Transpositions (1988) constructs a community of women, appropriated from a series of paintings by European male artists, challenging the predominance of 'a male constructed [art] history'.¹³ Rrap selected images in which the

¹⁰Victoria Lynn, *Julie Rrap: Body Double*, Museum of Contemporary Art and Piper Press, 2007, p.47

¹¹ Julie Rrap in interview with Terence Maloon, *Julie Rrap*, Piper Press, 1998, p.118

¹² Julie Rrap in interview with Terence Maloon, 'Interview with Terence Maloon', *Julie Rrap*, Piper Press, 1998, p.118

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.118

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

woman was gazing directly back at the viewer, rather than looking away. This challenges their place in the original artworks, by artists including Edouard Manet, Paul Gauguin, Sandro Botticelli and Rene Magritte, as having a passive position as models and muses only rather than an active role in the images.

Transpositions also reflects the experience of an Australian artist trying to engage with European art history. Rrap felt this acutely when she worked as an artist in Europe during the 1980s and 1990s.

Vital Statistics (1997) refers to Leonardo da Vinci's drawing of the Vitruvian Man and its image of scientifically "perfect" proportions. As feminists have noted however, this perfect body is male. Women's bodies are therefore constructed as **other** because they are excluded from this idea of perfection. Rrap's artwork also alludes to the process of unsuccessfully squeezing into existing archetypes and ideals of female beauty. Her body casts are presented like shop mannequins on stands, which can be adjusted to fit. In the photographs, she squeezes her body into the casts, which create an impossibly thin figure.

Rrap focuses upon the representation of the female body in mass media such as film, fashion magazines and advertising billboards in works such as *Overstepping* (2001). She also considers how female beauty has been idealised as a classical form, forever youthful, virginal and passive. This critique is also achieved through the appropriation of imagery from existing paintings, for example in the neon work *O* (1999).

O presents the female body as a neon sign, with a mosquito zapper as her crotch. It takes its title from the erotic novel by Pauline Réage, *The Story of O* (1954), and its visual references from Gustav Courbet's 1866 painting *L'Origine du Monde* (*The Origin of the World*) and Marcel Duchamp's installation *Etant donnees* (*Given*)

(1946-66). Both of these art works depict a headless female form with a focus on her sexual organs. *Etant donnees* features a wooden door with a peephole through which the [passive] female figure can be viewed, emphasising its voyeuristic nature'.¹⁴ Neon signage of female bodies reminds the viewer of street signage in urban areas, such as Kings Cross.

While addressing serious issues, Rrap also uses elements of personal history and humour. Rrap's father sold mosquito zappers for a short time, and the zapper is a common feature in Australian rural households.

¹⁴ Reproduced from *Julie Rrap: Body Double* exhibition wall text for *O*, written by Victoria Lynn, 2007

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

3. FEMINIST AND POSTMODERN STRATEGIES

Rrap's art 'aligns with a feminist strategy to continuously seek and present the unpredictable and unanticipated'.¹⁵

Feminist ideas and strategies aim to challenge power relations and hierarchies in society. Feminists look at distinctions between public and private space (such as the workplace and the home) and public and private aspects of the body; the construction of 'masculine/ feminine' as fixed gender concepts; the construction of women as 'othered' or marginalised subjects in history and society; the rights of control over the body (such as reproductive rights); and critiques in visual debates (around **agency**, representation and inclusion of women artists and their gendered perspectives).¹⁶

Many of these fundamental feminist concepts have been taken up by postmodernism. Postmodern approaches readily integrate feminist strategies through the critique of patterns of authority, power relationships and hierarchies; the shift in thinking about meaning and representation as multiple rather than binary; the notion of an ideal body deconstructed and represented as fragmented and constructed; and the impact of visual culture on the construction of gender and identity. The dominant **gaze** in postmodern theory is understood to be that of a white, heterosexual male, and is therefore often challenged by feminist, queer and postcolonial perspectives.

Rrap's work can be approached from the angles of feminist and postmodern ideas, but these are not exclusive readings, and the artist

does not necessarily make her works with these theories in mind.

When the artist photographs herself naked, in works such as *Disclosures* (1982) and *Persona and Shadow*, the line between her private and public selves is blurred. The roles of author/spectator/voyeur/ subject are confused in *Disclosures*, in which Rrap is both photographer and model, and the audience becomes both the viewer and the person looking through the camera. This is a strategy often used in feminist and postmodern criticism and artistic practice. Rrap explores these tensions repeatedly in her work by using herself as the subject.

The major exhibition *Zeitgeist*, held in Berlin in 1982, had a significant impact on the artist, because it clearly revealed to her the lack of inclusion of women artists in the discussions of contemporary art. What was immediately noticeable to Rrap was that there was only one female artist, Susan Rothenberg, included in the list of 45 artists, which included Georg Baselitz, Joseph Beuys, Gilbert & George, Anselm Kiefer, Frank Stella, Cy Twombly, and Andy Warhol. For Rrap, this exhibition reinforced the idea that a male canon, even within a notion of progressive contemporary art, was clearly alive and well. Rrap returned to Australia and produced the series *Persona and Shadow*.

Recently Rrap commented that when making *Persona and Shadow* in 1984, 'One has to realise that at that point [feminism] had hardly been spoken about – not in this country, not in relation to the visual arts. But we're speaking as if I was conscious of all this at the time, and I wasn't. It was synchronicity—there are moments when things happen together and complement and enhance one another.

¹⁵ Victoria Lynn, *Julie Rrap: Body Double*, Museum of Contemporary Art and Piper Press, 2007, p 9

¹⁶ Susan Sontag, 'A photograph is not an opinion. Or is it?', reprinted in Susan Sontag, *Where the Stress Falls: Essays*, 2001, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, NY, p 238-51

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

People were becoming aware that you can't look at an image, especially an image of a woman, with innocent eyes...It was a few years down the track before this sort of work [involving the naked female body and made by women] got taken into the mainstream of feminist practice and suddenly I became an accepted figure in the feminist movement. But people forget that artists have their own motivations for doing things, which may coincide from time to time with larger agendas and rhetoric from other areas.¹⁷

¹⁷ Julie Rrap in interview with Terence Maloon, *Julie Rrap*, Piper Press, 1998, p.118

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE



Julie Rrap *Conception* 1984
from the series *Persona and Shadow*
cibachrome print approx. 194 x 105cm
Courtesy of the artist, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney and Arc One Gallery, Melbourne © the artist

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

4. THE PERFORMING BODY AND “BODY DOUBLE”

‘This is a performing body—not in the sense that the artist documents performances per se—rather, it is a body that enacts various postures.’¹⁸

‘Even though the artist does not perform live for an audience, she does perform for her camera and with her sculptural materials’.¹⁹

‘Rrap’s work has performance at its centre.’²⁰

Julie Rrap’s body is a ‘performing body’, but her performances are not often enacted in public. Unlike most performance artists, Rrap creates private actions.

These private actions emerge out of photography and sculpture, and are part of the process of making the work. They involve moulding and casting of the body as in *Body Double* (2007) and *Vital Statistics*; computer manipulation of Rrap’s body as in *Overstepping* (2001) and *Soft Targets* (2004); or the creation of poses, sets or costumes for the purpose of photographs in *A-R-MOUR*.

This way of building up an artwork implies ‘that the body is always in a state of change or process. The notion of process—a body that is undergoing a set of changes, either through performance, or through sculptural processes of casting—is something that has featured’ repeatedly in the work of Rrap.²¹

Exhibition curator Victoria Lynn writes that, ‘Drawing on the notion that gender is in itself a performance, Rrap has forged the theme of the stand-in, a prosthetic body double, and her works often invite viewers to imagine themselves in such a role.’²² This concept is based on the premise that gender is not a fixed entity which is biologically defined or fixed in time, but is always being performed in the social field.

In Rrap’s work, identity is not fixed, but played with, revealed or concealed through the use of costumes, masquerade and digital manipulation as in the *A-R-MOUR* series (2000).

Lynn considers *Body Double*, the title of the MCA exhibition and accompanying book, to be a significant concept in Rrap’s work from the beginning. A body double is a ‘stand in’, the term referring to the person which stands in for the actor in a film, impersonating the actor during episodes that involve specialist skills or stunts.²³ Lynn suggests that, in many of her works, Rrap performs as a kind of ‘body double’ for the still and moving and camera, as a kind of actor performing a series of changeable (gender) roles. This relates to the idea that Rrap does not see her work as self-portraiture.

The installation *Body Double* (2007) features two headless white casts of Rrap’s body, upon which a moving image is projected. The projection is of a naked body occupying and then leaving the body cast, rolling from one cast to the other, and changing gender from female to male, unsettling the static nature of the reclining figures. ‘This journey creates *turbulence* in our understanding of the stillness of sculpture and pushes the body through a series of transformations that twist, distort and re-assign gender, echoing the hermaphroditic

¹⁸ Victoria Lynn, Arc One Gallery, Melbourne, <http://arc1gallery.com/artists/julierrap/reviews.htm> (accessed August 25, 2007)

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Victoria Lynn, *Julie Rrap: Body Double*, Museum of Contemporary Art and Piper Press, 2007, p 47

²¹ Victoria Lynn, *Julie Rrap: Body Double*, Museum of Contemporary Art and Piper Press, 2007, p 99

²² Ibid., p.9

²³ Ibid., p.47

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

forms of early marble sculptures. The cycle of arrival and departure that the work suggests, as moving flesh slides out of one still form and into another, conjures spirits and phantasms and the endless loop of time.²⁴ *Body Double* also evokes an image of the spectre of death, of the soul rising out of the body. The bodies which emerge and roll appear **spectral**.



Julie Rrap *Body Double* (2007)
rubber, DVD projection, sound
Preparatory work for sculptures
Courtesy the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney and Arc One
Gallery, Melbourne © the artist



Julie Rrap *Body Double* (2007)
rubber, DVD projection, sound
dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney and Arc One
Gallery, Melbourne © the artist

²⁴ Julie Rrap, Artist's Statement November 2006,
<http://www.aucklandtriennial.com>, (accessed August 20th 2007)

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

5. THE FRAGMENTED AND DECONSTRUCTED BODY

Fetishised and fragmented female body parts, such as hair, skin, bare feet, shoes, breasts and genitalia occur frequently in Rrap's work. The artist also uses strategies of erasure, inversion and reflection.

A key thread in the exhibition is the artist's recurrent exploration of body fragmentation, or 'the ways in which [Rrap's] work represents the body as a fragmented entity'.²⁵ Rrap explores the body in pieces, where body parts are separated from their host body and manipulated, stretched or squashed.

Rrap references images of the fragmented body, especially the female body, within contemporary culture and mass media. These representations are familiar to the general public as well as art-literate audiences. They include: cosmetic surgery and prosthetics, developments in medical science, violent images of conflict and war, and digital manipulation in fashion photography, advertising and the internet.

In Rrap's work, the body is often constructed not as a singular and contained entity but as one that can be broken up and separated. This can be seen in *Persona and Shadow*, in which Rrap's body is cut up and collaged together; in *Overstepping*, where we see just a digitally transformed pair of feet; in *Rise and Fall*, where we see only empty ballet shoes and a pair of male feet on the screen; *Hairline Crack*, where hair has been removed from the body and turned into a sculpture; and *Porous Bodies*, in which body parts and fluids are used in playful images and humorous narratives.

Rrap's use of erasure and inversion could also be considered a process of fragmentation. In

the works from the series *Fall Out* (2006), *Eraser Head 1-6* (2006) and the video *Mind over Matter* (2006), Rrap uses erasure as a performance of rewriting and erasing of information, knowledge and visual representation. In *Mind Over Matter* we see Rrap using the *Eraser Head* rubber heads, which are cast from her own head, to relentlessly erase the artist's own image. The artist drew over the photograph with graphite pencil and then proceeded to erase the image with the heads.

The rubber heads appear heavy, and it seems a test of endurance for the artist to continue the action of continuously erasing her own image. The heads are also displayed in the gallery space in six vitrines. Rrap is referencing a famous work by Robert Rauschenberg, *Erased de Kooning Drawing* (1953), as well as suggesting the "rubbing out" of women from history as if their presence was never there.

Inversion is the action of turning something upside down or putting it in the opposite position, order, or arrangement. In art, this strategy challenges conventional notions of reality by presenting an unexpected experience and transforming the contested 'original'. Surrealist artists such as Salvador Dali, Marcel Duchamp, Rene Magritte and Meret Oppenheim employed notions of inversion.

Rrap used inversion in the reversal of her name from Parr to Rrap (Parr spelt backwards), which she considers to be an artwork in itself.

The image *Yaw*, from the series *Soft Targets*, is literally an inverted image—the original image was photographed the other way round. Rrap plays with the image construction by inverting the original image and digitally manipulating it for exhibition by extending the shadow, so that it looks as if Rrap is suspended from the ceiling.

²⁵ Victoria Lynn, *Julie Rrap: Body Double*, Museum of Contemporary Art and Piper Press, 2007, p.61

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

Anti-Voyeur (1993) is a large mirror-surfaced keyhole on the wall. The scale of the keyhole is exaggerated to massive proportions, thus manipulating 'reality' (that the door it belongs to must be accordingly massive). Rrap says, 'In 1991, I revisited the keyhole form, but the inversion on this occasion functioned with a connection to surrealism. The keyhole was crafted in mirror stainless steel and was installed on an isolated wall that became the representation of a large door with a proportional keyhole. Since the surface was reflective, the viewer was both drawn in and rebuffed by this mirror effect.'²⁶The sculpture *Prosthetic Knight* is positioned near the mirror to emphasise the process of reflection.



Julie Rrap *Body Rub 2* (2006)
archival print on watercolour paper
image size: 199 x 100 cm paper size: 210 x 110cm Courtesy the artist
and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

²⁶Julie Rrap in *Julie Rrap*, 1998, Piper Press, p.60

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE



Julie Rrap *Mind Over Matter* (2006)
DVD duration: 17 min. 36 sec.
Courtesy the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

6. TRICKERY, ARTIFICE AND INVENTION

A trickster character is a figure that metaphorically plays hide and seek, often transgressing boundaries of conventional behaviour, using sly wit or masquerade. A trickster disrupts normality. She/he can modify her shape or body or form in relation to her changing environment. Victoria Lynn suggests that the concept of the trickster pervades much of Rrap's work.

Rrap explores the idea of role-playing or acting in character. Lynn links this to her 'trickster' approach to ideas and visual imagery.²⁷ An example is the *A-R-MOUR* photographic series from 2000, in which the artist takes on the poses and characters of famous film actresses, including Elizabeth Taylor in *National Velvet* (1944), Catherine Deneuve in *Repulsion* (1965) and Marilyn Monroe in *The Seven Year Itch* (1955).

Rrap has played trickster with these characters and scenarios, transforming these filmic moments with weird visual plays and computer manipulation. The body is blurred to become part of the environment. The images are noticeably "tweaked" but there is a transparency to the digital manipulation of these images because what has been manipulated is clearly visible.

Camouflage #4 (Eiko) evokes a scene from the Japanese film *In the realm of the senses* (1976), except in Rrap's image the steel of the knife held in her mouth morphs into her face, blurring the distinction between human body and object. In *Camouflage #5 (Catherine)*, legs and arms are absorbed into the floor, taking on the texture of their surroundings and acting as a kind of camouflage. This connects to the idea of acting as a form of social camouflage, and gender as a series of acts or performances. This series positions feminine beauty and

celebrity as construction. There is a sense of strangeness or oddness to the photographs, because they still play with reality. Rrap has said, 'I've always been interested in the **slippage** between whether you regard a photograph as real or not.'²⁸

There is often a **foil** in Rrap's work. This is explicit in the work *O*, where the voyeuristic gaze of the spectator is interrupted or made uncomfortable by elements of humour and potential danger, such that it becomes 'a pleasure that comes wrapped in a question or critique.'²⁹



Julie Rrap *Camouflage #4 (Eiko)* from the series *A-R-MOUR* (2000)
digital print 122 x 122cm
Courtesy the artist, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney and Arc One
Gallery, Melbourne
© the artist

²⁸ 'Interview with Terence Maloon', *Julie Rrap*, Piper Press, 1998, p.120

²⁹ Julie Rrap in interview with Virginia Trioli, 'Sunday Arts', ABC, August 12, 2007

²⁷ Ibid., p.13

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

7. ARTIST/SUBJECT/VIEWER RELATIONSHIPS

'More often than not, her works implicate the viewer, at times asking for direct interaction.'³⁰

Exhibition curator Victoria Lynn talks about 'the gaze returned to the audience'³¹ as an element in Rrap's work. Rrap uses a variety of strategies to explore the relationship between the artist, subject and viewer, as we see in *Disclosures* (1982). These include her choice of: materials, camera position, lighting, clothing, nakedness, movement, non-movement, her treatment of **point of view** and her choice to make a work interactive or not.

The sculpture series *Monument* (1995-96) invites the viewer to occupy the imprint left by the artist's body and experience the work physically. The viewer witnesses their own inclusion in the work, often in awkward and revealing poses, directly on a monitor which plays back this performance process in real time. The viewer simultaneously becomes artist, artwork and audience, an experience which is sometimes uncomfortable for them and for the other observers in the gallery.

Rrap has said of this piece, 'In 1995-96 I made *Monument*. Whereas monuments generally glorify the heroic, these make a mockery of that. They are anti-heroic. These works are floor sculptures made of fibreglass and bronze dust. In the gallery or outside they invite the viewer to get down onto them in order to get into them. This requires that the viewer bend into a position not usually associated with looking at art.'³²

Rrap has also said, 'It is sometimes necessary that we place the body outside what is familiar. I am more interested in releasing the audience's imagination by engaging the viewer in the construction and definition of the work. Objects and their sensations, touch for example, become more of interest as a field of inquiry.'³³

This work is 'anti-monumental', because it explores the idea of the artist and the gallery viewer becoming their own sculpture or monument.

Rrap has noted that, 'Working with impressions of body parts for *Monument* led on to the latex moulds of *Vital Statistics* and *Prosthetic Knight* (1997). In *Prosthetic Knight*, the form in which the latex impression is embedded rotates and the viewer's gaze brings the figure to life, fleshing out the negative form and making it positive. The viewer is a partner in completing the sculpture'.³⁴

³⁰ Victoria Lynn, *Julie Rrap: Body Double*, Museum of Contemporary Art and Piper Press, 2007, p 47

³¹ Reproduced from *Julie Rrap: Body Double* exhibition introductory wall text, written by Victoria Lynn, 2007

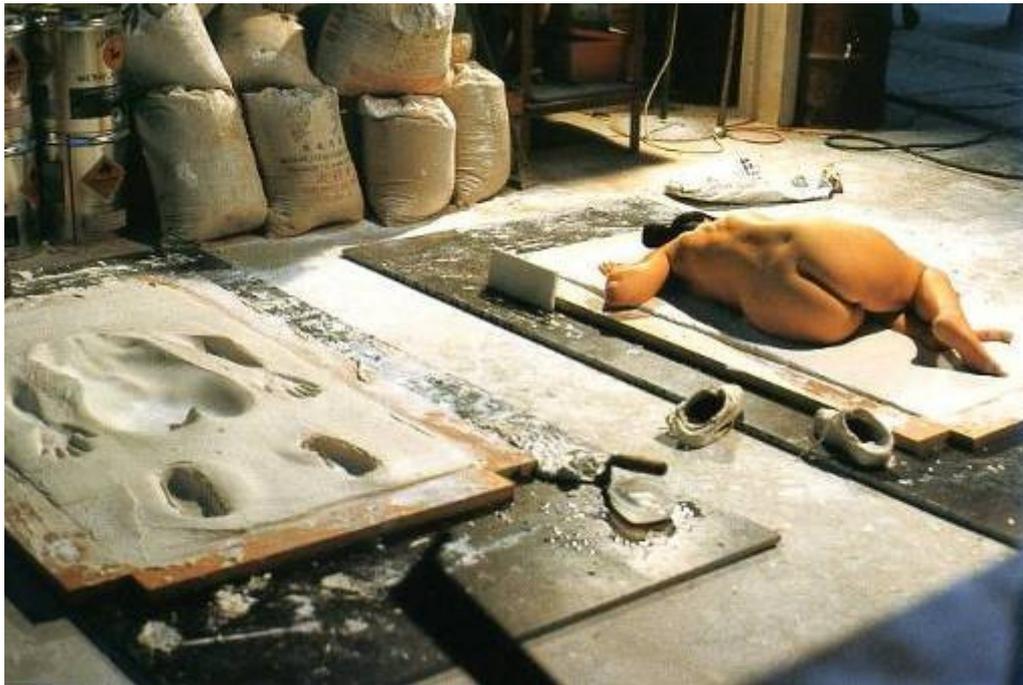
³² Julie Rrap in interview with Terence Maloon, 'Interview with Terence Maloon', *Julie Rrap*, Piper Press, 1998, p.125

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Julie Rrap in interview with Terence Maloon, 'Interview with Terence Maloon', *Julie Rrap*, Piper Press, 1998, p.125

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE



Making the plaster casts for the series *Monument*
Location: Crawford Castings. Photograph: Jacky Redgate
Julie Rrap *Monument* (1995 - 1996)
fibreglass and bronze dust, camera and monitor
148 x 80 x 20cms
Courtesy of the artist, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney and Arc One
Gallery, Melbourne

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

8. EXHIBITION DISPLAY AND ORGANISATION

The exhibition is not hung chronologically. It is displayed in a way that looks at connections between and across Rrap's practice over time, so artworks are placed in this relationship instead. The exhibition is hung not to represent demarcated decades of Rrap's output, but to interconnect and represent themes within her artistic practice.

Rrap says all of her art making, whatever the media, is like an 'endless dialogue'. 'It's not like you have an idea and it's got nothing to do with what you've done in the past. It's moving back and forward and across things'.³⁵

Despite covering over 25 years of Rrap's practice, this exhibition is considered to be a survey exhibition and not a retrospective, because it focuses on particular aspects of her career and excludes some major works.

Victoria Lynn is the curator of *Julie Rrap: Body Double*. She has known Julie Rrap for over 20 years, and this close relationship was evident in the collaborative approach to display and selection of works.

The earliest work in the exhibition is *Disclosures: A Photographic Construct* (1982). The most recent work included is *Body Double* (2007). The audience can trace the links between these works through the blurring of the distinctions between artist, artwork and audience and through the installational approaches to each work.

Disclosures: A Photographic Construct comes from the MCA Collection. Audiences can draw connections between this work and other works from the collection in the associated exhibition *MCA Collection: selected by Julie Rrap*, which is in the same Level 4 gallery space.

³⁵ Julie Rrap in interview with Megan Backhouse, August 2003, <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2003/08/06/1060145719411.html> (accessed August 12th 2007)

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

FOCUS ARTWORK 1

Disclosures: A Photographic Construct (1982)

'Rrap has embraced photography and video in the feminist spirit of exploring the materials of the very media that have been used to objectify women.'³⁶

Disclosures: A Photographic Construct (1982) is an important work by Rrap, and a prime example of her experimentation with, and deconstruction of, the techniques of photography. It has been described by the artist as 'setting the scene for everything I have done since then'.³⁷

The title of the work reinforces the idea that this installation aim to question the 'photographic construct', revealing the artifice of photography. One of the ways Rrap does this is repeatedly reveal the process of production of the work. We see the artist's studio in disarray, the tripod, the lights and the umbrella-shaped reflector. Existing images of the artist are pinned to the wall and seen in the background, adding another layer of **representation**.

Rrap uses various photographic techniques to discuss ideas about authorship, voyeurism and complex subject/viewer/artist relationships. Rrap makes clear that she is the photographer, the author of the image, as well as the model, dressed and undressed, posing and not posing, performing for her own camera. She has said that she was 'taking my clothes off and authoring myself doing that'.³⁸

As viewers, we find ourselves 'metaphorically between the cameras, so they ...experience what it is to be trapped in the gaze of a voyeur'.³⁹ This is an important structural aspect in *Disclosures*, used to position the viewer 'as, basically someone surveying a naked woman as an object.' Rrap sets up 'corridors of images' which create moments where two cameras are pointing at each other. The audience becomes caught in between the cameras.⁴⁰ As a result, 'we, the audience, are being looked at'.⁴¹ The audience may also notice that the view from the camera and image is reflected in the opposite photograph.

Repetition, manipulation of the image and fragmentation of the image occur significantly in this work. In some of the photographs the images are torn and collaged, or they begin to burn, suggesting dissolution of the image itself. Genres within photography are also blurred, interior shots are combined with self portraiture and portraiture, colour (associated with art photography) is placed on the wall, while black and white photographs (associated with photojournalism) are suspended from the ceiling.

³⁶ Victoria Lynn, *Julie Rrap: Body Double*, Museum of Contemporary Art and Piper Press, 2007, p 9

³⁷ Reproduced from *Julie Rrap: Body Double* exhibition wall text for *Disclosures: A Photographic Construct*, written by Victoria Lynn, 2007

³⁸ Julie Rrap in interview with Terence Maloon, 'Interview with Terence Maloon', *Julie Rrap*, Piper Press, 1998, p.117

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.116

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ (Victoria Lynn, *Julie Rrap: Body Double*, Museum of Contemporary Art and Piper Press, 2007, p. 55

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE



Julie Rrap *Disclosures: A Photographic Construct* (1982)
cibachrome prints mounted on aluminium, black and white
archival prints mounted on board, fishing line
10 x 9 m
Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, purchased 1994
Installation view: Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

FOCUS ARTWORK 2

Puberty (1984) From the series *Persona and Shadow*

In the work *Puberty*, Rrap refers specifically to Edvard Munch's oil painting *Puberty* (1894). We can see an outline of a figure from the Munch painting around Rrap's fragmented body. The outline represents the shadow left by Munch's female **archetype** in the sourced painting.

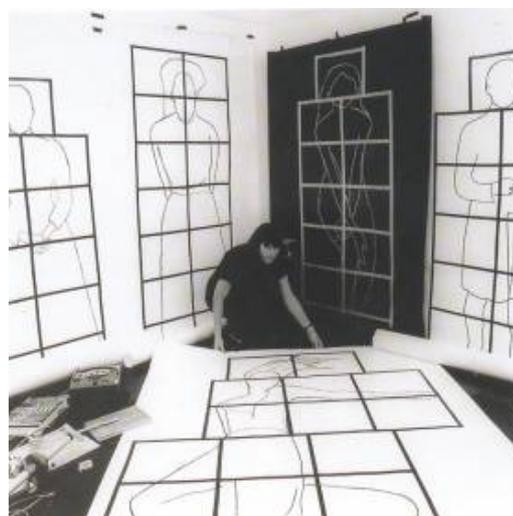
This series explores the idea that female gender has been moulded into a long and established history of female archetypes and mythologies surrounding constructs of a female **persona**. In this series, Rrap wanted to unravel and disclose those archetypes and play 'trickster' with them and their effects on the female psyche.⁴² Rrap also refers to the original imagery of sexual awakening and the sense of threat in the shadow figure.

Persona and Shadow incorporates both painting and photography. Scale is important to the effect of the work—the images are life size, mimicking the scale of the actual body, and are mounted towering over the viewer.

Rrap made the works in *Persona and Shadow* through a complex process. 'First I made an outline from the original artwork by projecting a slide of the original onto backdrop paper. I then gridded over this drawn outline. I then made a series of black and white shots of myself standing or lying in the gridded image with each square of the grid represented by a separate photograph. I then printed all these images and reassembled them to recreate the original gridded image. In reassembling these

images I made sure that the outline of the original artwork was unbroken. The effect of this was to fragment my body. The idea was therefore that the outline from the historical image could not be changed and its completeness caused my figure to be disjointed and fragmented. I then used oil sticks to paint in the background of these assembled black and white images, but I left my fragmented figure in black and white. Once this collage assemblage was complete at life-size I copied the image on a 4x5 camera and then processed the resulting transparency as a cibachrome photograph at the same life-size scale—a facsimile print. I then destroyed the original collage.⁴³

The preliminary, gridded drawings were destroyed by the artist to make sure that they were never exhibited in any form, because the focus for Rrap was on the layered version of representation that emerges in the final exhibited works.⁴⁴



Julie Rrap in the studio making *Persona and Shadow*, 1984

⁴² Victoria Lynn during 'exhibition walkthrough' at Museum of Contemporary Art, August 28, 2007

⁴³ Correspondence with the artist, 16 October 2007

⁴⁴ Julie Rrap in conversation with Victoria Lynn and Jo Daniell, Museum of Contemporary Art, August 27, 2007

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE



Julie Rrap *Puberty* 1984
from the series *Persona and Shadow*
cibachrome print approx. 194 x 105cm
Courtesy of the artist, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney and Arc One Gallery, Melbourne
© the artist

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

FOCUS ARTWORK 3

Overstepping (2001)

Overstepping is a large format, glossy digital image in which the artist's feet sprout into fleshy high heels. The visual realism of the feet indicates they 'belong to a real woman... We are simultaneously given both a sense of style and of exquisite pain. No woman who has ever worn stilettos can look at *Overstepping* without wincing. This single image has it all. It describes the female body and the way it is fragmented and manipulated in the interests of appearance as well as the personal cost of those transformations.'⁴⁵

Overstepping references Rene Magritte's painting *Philosophy in the Boudoir* (1947). In this painting, Magritte blurs fetishised items of clothing (a woman's dress and high-heeled shoes) with a suggested bodily imprint of a woman left on the objects. Using a realistic style and irrational juxtapositions, Magritte sabotages the viewer's sense of security about the reality of appearances and the appearance of reality. Rrap achieves a similar strategy with *Overstepping*, which Rrap has said explores 'the ultimate **fetish** in the Freudian sense'.⁴⁶

The idea of feet and shoes as charged, fetishised objects is common in advertising, especially in women's magazines and large-scale billboards. Rrap uses advertising's cropping of the image and glossy full colour surface in *Overstepping*.

Rrap's installation *Rise and Fall* (1994) is a useful comparison with *Overstepping*. In *Rise and Fall*, we see, on a video monitor, a pair of male feet teetering on his toes trying to do the ballet en pointe, while in the foreground on five

surrounding plinths are motorised pink ballet shoes, which loudly rise and fall. The failure of the male feet to match the female pose, while still remaining the centre of attention, presents a humorous critique of male/female stereotypes and power relationships. The title suggests power, as in the rise and fall of empires, a particularly male-dominated history.

Rrap blurs the distinction between the authentic and the simulated, the real and the unreal, the true and the fake. In *Overstepping*, our senses are confused by the impossibility of the image we are witnessing: a convincing image of woman's foot literally becoming a stiletto heeled shoe. The two fluidly become one, and the limitations of the physical body are transcended by the artist through digital manipulation of the original photograph of the artist's foot. This image uses inversion to question our notions of the real, by demonstrating how easily experiences can be constructed.

⁴⁵ Joanna Mendelssohn, *Photofile*, Spring 2007, p. 35

⁴⁶ Julie Rrap in interview with Virginia Trioli, 'Sunday Arts', ABC, August 12, 2007

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE



Julie Rrap *Overstepping* (2001)
digital print 120 x 120 cm
Courtesy the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney and Arc One Gallery, Melbourne
© the artist

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

FOCUS ARTWORK 4

Boat Tail (2004) From the series *Soft Targets*

'In *Soft Targets*, the human figure is at once elevated to an aesthetic ideal and damned as a target of wilful damage and destruction or calculated military aggression.'⁴⁷

The series *Soft Targets* (2004) consists of large scale, digitally manipulated photographs printed on watercolour paper and pinned directly to the wall. Rrap plays with fragmentation, through the relationship between the original and the imperfect copy, a **simulacrum**. The generation of the second and subsequent versions begins to generate new and subsequent meanings and associations. In *Soft Targets*, the idea of simulacrum emerges as shadows or copies of the central figure which create a counter presence, a life of their own.

Soft Targets shows the artist's naked body, in active poses, jumping, bending and twisting. The body is depicted as strong and in motion. The agility and muscularity of Rrap's body is central to this investigation of the malleable human figure.

The shadows of the body are complete, often reflected up the curved backdrop, but corresponding parts of the body are digitally erased. The original body is fleshy and **corporeal**. The face is mostly hidden, making this a generalised body or sculptural form, rather than specifically the artist's body.

Shadows and shape-shifting feature prominently in *Soft Targets*. The shadows a fill in or extend Rrap's fragmented physical body,

edging it towards an idealised, unified body, without defects. The reclining body in *Boat Tail* is less active, more passive, than other images in the series, although the shadows of the legs stretching up the backdrop give a sense of movement. Rrap says that in the context of beauty ideals and expectations, 'the body is a hot medium, one that is highly charged'.⁴⁸

Rrap uses pure pigments on rag paper, in a muted pastel palette. The palette and poses are suggestive of classical art traditions, referring to aesthetic ideals surrounding the representation of the human body.

Rrap investigates the fragile dimension of human existence, particularly in reference to the body in combat. The titles in the series refer to specific military terms which use a cold, abstracted language. *Boat Tail* in military engineering jargon means a 'bullet of tapered base or truncated base design'. In contrast to the military terms, the naked bodies in the images are 'soft targets', vulnerable and fragile. Another work in the series, *Fish-tailing*, refers to 'the result of the bullet base collapsing in the target, causing the bullet to bend and deviate from course.'⁴⁹

When the image was made in 2004, there was much discussion in the media about war and its representation/dissemination in contemporary society. Images from the US military base Abu Ghraib of military prisoners being ridiculed and humiliated by soldiers circulated very quickly and extensively across the internet, newspapers and television news. Discussion of the images raised issues of ethics of representation during wartime, the treatment of human captives during war and the accountabilities of both.

⁴⁸ Ibid. p.122

⁴⁹

Julie Rrap, *Julie Rrap: Soft Targets*, (press release) Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney <http://www.roslynoxley9.com.au/> (accessed August 25, 2007)

⁴⁷ Ibid.

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

There is also a reference to the shared act of viewing in art and through a rifle sight in military operations. 'Just as one looks at a work of art, or peers through a camera lens, one fixes a target in one's sight', so that the fundamental element of surveillance of an object or target is inherent to each.⁵⁰ Photographers and soldiers both "shoot" the body; the human form is fragmented or cut off in the cropped photograph, as well as by weapons of war.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE



Julie Rrap *Boat Tail* (BT) (2004)
from the series *Soft Targets*
pure pigment prints on acid-free rag paper
image size 142.5 x 173cm paper size 152 x 173cm
Courtesy the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney and Arc One Gallery, Melbourne
© the artist

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

LEARNING IDEAS AND FOCUS QUESTIONS

JUNIOR SECONDARY—YEARS 7-10

Pre-Visit Questions and Activities

Knowing about Art

- What is a portrait? What types of portraits can you think of? Look at examples of school photos, family photographs, pictures of famous people in magazines and paintings of important people. What makes them portraits rather than just representations of the human form?
- Research the art and life of Julie Rrap. Make an illustrated timeline of some key moments in her art practice including dates and a short description of ten of her artworks. Include a biography.
- Discuss as a class why artists make portraits. Possible reasons include: for posterity, to describe a likeness or a personality, or to capture a moment in time. What others can you think of? What reasons do you have when you take photographs?
- Common terms used in photography include: composition, lighting, pose, point of view, cropping, depth of field and image manipulation. Select photographs from magazines and photocopy them. Label the techniques used in the photographs.

Making Art

- Use images of people from magazines to make a collage of an invented figure or an imagined version of yourself.
- Create a portrait without a face or physical likeness. The portrait could be about the subject rather than just how they look.

You could create a portrait of the hands of a person engaged in their favourite hobby, or a word portrait or a performance piece.

- Using props, costumes and backdrops create a photographic portrait that refers to a scene from a film. Role-play the different characters.
- Take colour photographs or film a student acting in the role of a chosen film character. Add a twist to the image that is unexpected and changes how it was originally done in the film. How does this change your reading of the character?
- Draw a portrait of another student that attempts to capture their physical features. Experiment with a range of techniques such as drawing without lifting your pencil off the page, drawing from memory, or drawing with your eyes closed.

Gallery-based Questions and Activities

Knowing about Art

- Discuss as a class the differences between seeing the actual photographs and films in a gallery space and viewing them in the exhibition booklet or online. Discuss and note down the impact of the lighting in the gallery space, the sound in video works, the scale and colour of the photographs, the relationships between different works in the gallery space.
- How do you think the series *Soft Targets* was technically created in terms of lighting and digital manipulation?
- The works from *Soft Targets* are pinned directly onto the wall. Why do you think the artist has chosen to do this? Compare how this work has been mounted with other works in the exhibition. What range of mounts or display devices are you

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

seeing? How does such a decision influence the look and interpretation of the artwork?

Making Art

- Sketch some of the bodies you can see in the gallery spaces. Try a series of small, quick, thumbnail sketches that focus on the outline shapes of the body.
- Use the side of a soft pencil or cross-hatch with a harder pencil to show the different light and shade in a selected photograph. Use this technique with three different works and compare the different lighting in the photographs.
- Ask some classmates to pose according to the instructions in the work *Monument* while others do quick sketches of the poses to emphasise distortion of the human form created by the works.
- Look at the works *Persona and Shadow*. Students can work in groups and draw sections of the body. Using blunt scissors and glue sticks, cut and re-arrange to create a composite figure.
- Discuss the works *Hardcore and Softcore*. Students to make a sketch of the multiple shadows created by these works indicating the tonal range distinction.

Post-Visit Questions and Activities

Knowing about Art

- Which work or works in this exhibition were your favourites? What was it that impressed you about these works? Was it the ideas? Was it the way they were constructed? Discuss your opinions with the person next to you or with other members of your group.

- You could also think about the work that you least liked in the exhibition. What was it that you found difficult in this work? Why was this?
- Julie Rrap likes to challenge her audience. Her images can be provocative. How did you react when you first saw her series *Persona and Shadow*? Why do you think that Rrap has used her own image in these works?
- When the doors of the lift opened to MCA Level 4 galleries, what work did you see first? Why do you think the curator placed these works here?
- What colour were the walls in the exhibition? Were they the same colour throughout? How did colours relate to themes in the work? For instance, discuss the reasons behind the selection of a deep red wall to go behind the *Persona and Shadow* series.
- Julie Rrap uses a wide range of materials and techniques in her practice. List as many different materials as you can remember seeing during your visit.
- Discuss the use of sound as an element in the video installation *Body Double* (2007). How did this affect your response to the work?

Making Art

- Rrap often manipulates her photographs by re-arranging sections of the body, subtly distorting form, and remediating images through drawing. Create your own photographic collage, working back into it using paint, pastels or felt pens. You could also consider the addition of transparent and translucent overlays.

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

- Rrap used casting to create her sculptural forms *Monument I, II and III*. Using dolls or mannequins, make impressions in clay. Consider the position of the figure. You could also use parts of your own body. Students might also look at the body prints of Yves Klein when creating these works.
- Referring to Julie Rrap's work *Camouflage # 3 (Elizabeth)* from the *A-R-MOUR* series (2000) and using classical allusions to mythical beasts (minotaurs and chimeras) students can create a morphed digital self-portrait. The artworks of Yasumasa Morimura can also be referenced.

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

SENIOR SECONDARY–YEAR 11 & 12 (ALSO RELEVANT FOR TERTIARY)

PRACTICE/PROCESS/TECHNIQUE

- Discuss Rrap’s intentions as an artist and the relevance of her choice of media to these intentions.
- Why do you think some of the images are in black and white and some are in colour? Select and examine four of the photography-driven images from the Julie Rrap exhibition. Compare and contrast the various compositions, viewpoints and formal elements.
- How does Julie Rrap challenge our notion of what is real or what is fake? How does she explore these ideas in the series *A-R-MOUR?*
- ‘Rrap has used her own body in various postures through shadow play, masquerade, mirror and mime’. Discuss this statement, in relation to five artworks you have seen in the *Julie Rrap: Body Double* exhibition.
- Write a list of all the unexpected elements in the work of Julie Rrap and explain what makes them ‘unexpected’.

SELF-PORTRAITURE

- Julie Rrap does not consider the use of her own body in her art as a form of self-portraiture. She has said recently ‘I’m not trying to do an endless portrait of myself...not in the sense of an artist using oneself for the purpose of self portraiture’.⁵¹ After viewing the exhibition, what do you think she means by this statement?

- Why do artists create self-portraits? Research artists who have deliberately used self-portraits throughout their career, such as Frida Kahlo, Mike Parr, Andy Warhol, Hannah Wilke and Brett Whiteley.
- Research artists who use themselves repeatedly in their art, but do not consider their art to be exclusively self portraiture. Artists include Marina Abramovic, Tracey Moffatt and Monica Tichacek.
- Explore the idea that sometimes artists blur the lines between self-portraiture and portraiture. Look at images by Kalup Linzy, Ana Mendieta and Yasumasa Morimura as part of your investigations.
- When the artist is the ‘subject’, how is the relationship between the subject and the viewer changed or played with? Would the effect be different if the artwork was of an unknown person?
- If Julie Rrap does not consider her works to be self-portraits, why do you think she has repeatedly used herself and her body in her art? What do you learn about the artist from this technique?
- Do photographic portraits seem more truthful than painted portraits? Why? Why not?

GENDER AND GENDER POLITICS

- Why has the body been such a focus for female and/or feminist artists?
- In some of her portraits, Julie Rrap uses traditional conventions and inverts them with a feminist tilt. Explain how she does this. Refer to specific examples. You may want to start by exploring what is meant by the terms “feminist” or “feminist approach to art”.

⁵¹ Julie Rrap in interview on ABC Sunday Arts, August 12, 2007.

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

- Consider the fragmentation of the body image in popular culture. How have postmodernism and feminism worked to differently interpret and reconfigure the body? Refer to examples to support your answer.
- Why have artists such as Mary Kelly elected not to include images of the female form in their work?
- How has the perception of images of female nudity changed over time or in various contexts? Discuss your different responses to these images in an art gallery, in magazines or on the internet. What informs your reactions? How do people of a different generation, for example your parents or teacher, respond?

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

GLOSSARY

Agency

This is the capacity for human beings to make choices and to bring those choices into a social field.

Allegory

In art and literature an allegory is when the literal content of a work stands for abstract ideas, suggesting a parallel, deeper, symbolic sense.

Appropriation

This term often refers to the use of borrowed elements in the creation of new work. In Postmodernism this term refers to the way artists take visual elements from other artist's work and re-contextualise these elements in ways that create new meanings from the old.

Archival print

Refers to a negative or photographic print processed and printed in a particular way to ensure a long lasting stable image.

Avant-garde

This term is commonly used to refer to people or works that are experimental or novel, particularly with respect to art, culture, and politics. Avant-garde represents a pushing of the boundaries of what is accepted as the norm, primarily in the cultural realm.

Camouflage

A kind of visual subterfuge used to hide or disguise the presence of something.

Cibachrome

A cibachrome print is a colour image on paper produced by a colour transparency, which is a positive image (rather than a negative). Cibachromes are usually very glossy and highly saturated in colour.

Corporeal

Relating to a person's body, as opposed to their spirit. In art and performance this often refers to the exploration of the body in a purely physical way rather than intellectualised.

Curator

The person responsible for the care, collection, interpretation and display of artworks, or objects, in a museum or gallery. The term is also used in parks and zoos. Curators in contemporary museums liaise with artists directly, write catalogues and labels, and work with other departments in the museum, or to arrange installations and public projects, as well as exhibitions in the gallery spaces.

Discourse

Written or spoken communication or debate. In art, discourse means the conversation that is occurring around theories and ideas about artworks and culture.

Ether

In theoretical discourse this term is used to describe the discourses and ideas floating around in a culture at a particular moment in time. See also **Zeitgeist**.

Exposure

The process where film (analogue) or a CCD chip (digital) is exposed to light over time.

Fibreglass

Glass threads mixed with special resins formed into a matting or fabric that is light and easily moulded.

Fetish

A form of sexual desire where gratification is linked to a particular object, body part or clothing. In a broader cultural sense this term is used to describe a society's excessive and irrational worshipping of something - such as the way society fetishises women's bodies, feet or shoes.

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

Fluidity

In discourses on gender and sexuality, this term denotes moving away from binary and structured definitions towards a more flexible and open-ended way of approaching gender.

Gaze

To look or see with fixed intention. The gaze is a term used in art history and theory referring to the relationship between the viewer and the subject, suggesting a position of power by the viewer over subject.

Gender privilege

This is a term used to describe rights granted to the male population in society on the basis of their biological sex, as compared to rights of the female population. The term "gender" is used in relation to socially constructed norms rather than "sex" which is a biological term. For example: disparity in wages, where men often get paid a higher wage than women for the same labour.

Hybrid

Something that is made up of different elements, suggesting a fluidity or multiplicity.

Male canon

Identified and critiqued by Feminism, the 'male canon' is the art and artists traditionally studied in Western art history, which intentionally or unintentionally excluded women from participating in its discourse.

Manipulation

In art, this term refers to the way an artist handles their materials in the course of producing a work. It can also refer to the way an image is changed using a computer program such as photoshop to alter an image.

Minimalism

A non-representational style in sculpture and painting which arose in the 1950s. Minimalist artists suppressed detail and gesture and used

pure, reduced compositions or simple, massive forms.

Modernism

A style or movement in 20th century arts that consciously rejected classical or traditional forms and searched for new modes of expression. These new modes of expression were a response to changes in technology, travel and ideas exchanged in the 19th century in Western Europe. This included experiments in forms or style, and an emphasis on art or architecture that could be located neutrally in any context, without noticeable external references.

Muse

From Greek and Roman mythology, the Muses were goddesses who presided over the arts. More generally, a muse is the source of inspiration for an artist or writer. Conventionally the muse is constructed as female and the writer or artist as male.

New Media

An artform or art style which utilises new media technologies, such as the internet, digital film, computers, and other non-traditional media.

Oeuvre

The collective work of an artist, with regard to characteristics of style in their practice over the years.

Paragram

The humorous use of a word to bring out different meanings or applications.

Persona

An aspect of a person's character that is perceived by, or presented to others- for example in portraiture and self-portraiture.

Perspex

A thermoplastic resin which is usually clear and easy to mould when heated.

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

Physicality

Of or relating to the body. In art this often refers to the way an artist uses their body in making the work as well as the physical presence of the work in a space in relation to the viewer.

Point of view

A position from which something is observed or considered, and the direction of the viewer's gaze. In photography and film, point of view (or POV) refers to positioning of the camera in relationship to the viewer.

Postmodernism

A late 20th century style and concept in the arts, architecture and criticism. Typical features include a deliberate mixing of styles and media, self-conscious use of earlier styles and conventions, and the incorporation of images relating to the consumerism and mass communication of society.

Ruse

A trick, strategy or artifice. Something designed to deceive.

Series

A set, number or sequence of things, events or images of a similar or related nature which come after each other in succession.

Sequence

Related events, items or images which follow each other in a particular order in a set or group. A sequence can be incorporated into a series, but not the other way around.

Silicon rubber

Any of various synthetic elastic materials whose properties resemble natural rubber.

Simulacrum

An image or representation of someone or something. Jean Baudrillard used this term to suggest the way an image can be reproduced and dispersed in new ways completely removed from its original purpose and context.

SLR

A 'single lens reflex' camera, allowing the photographer to manually adjust features such as shutter speed and aperture.

Surrealism

An avant-garde movement in art and literature, developed in the mid-1920s, which sought to release the creative potential of the unconscious mind, for example, by the irrational juxtaposition of images.

Symbolism

A visual picture or image or emblem that represents or describes something else by association, resemblance or convention.

Transgression

To go beyond the limits imposed by convention, morality, social norms or tradition. In art this will often have a deliberately provocative, offensive or shocking element designed to engage the viewer in questioning why these norms and conventions exist in our culture.

Type C photograph

A photograph printed from a negative (the developed film that contains a reversed tone image of the original scene).

Unravel

In postmodern theory, this term is used metaphorically to suggest the undoing, or deconstructing of an idea or object in order to investigate hidden or less obvious elements.

Vutek print

A commercial printing process noted for the very large scale that is able to be produced without deterioration in the image.

Zeitgeist

From the German expression meaning "the spirit of the age" it is literally translated as "time (*zeit*) spirit (*geist*)". It describes the intellectual and cultural climate of a particular era.

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

Julie Rrap: Body Double Exhibition resources

Lynn, Victoria. *Julie Rrap: Body Double*, Piper Press, Sydney, 2007.
Available from MCA Store , RRP \$69.95

Colour poster of *Overstepping*.
Available from MCA Store, RRP \$9.95

MCA Artist's Voice: Julie Rrap. Video in MCA Level 4 space.

Further reading

Alexander, George, Catriona Moore, Terence Maloon and Sam Schoenbaum. *Julie Rrap*, edited by John Dunn, Piper Press, Annandale, NSW, 1998

Alexander, George. 'Sex in the cyborg: Julie Rrap's Overstepping', *Artlink*, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 27–31, 2001

Bond, Anthony. 'Imagining the Body', *Contemporary: Art Gallery of NSW Contemporary Collection*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW, pp. 247–250, pp. 286–7, 2006

Grosz, Elizabeth. *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2004

Lynn, Victoria. 'Identity and the body: the work of Julie Rrap', *Look*, September, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, pp.12-13, 2004

Maloon, Terence. 'Julie Rrap: interview by Terence Maloon', *Art and Australia*, Vol.33, No.4, Winter, pp. 518-27, 2004

McEvelley, Thomas. 'Redirecting the gaze', *Making Their Mark: Women Artists Move into the Mainstream, 1970-85*, edited by Nancy Grubb, Abbeville Press, NY, pp. 187-96, 2004

Milner, Jacqueline. 'Articulating the Unspeakable: The Feminist Photography of Julie Rrap and Anne Ferran', *Brought to Light 11: Contemporary Australian Art 1966 – 2006*, Queensland Art Gallery Publishing, Brisbane, Qld, pp. 132–9, 2007

Moore, Catriona. *Indecent Exposures: Twenty Years of Australian Feminist Photography*, Allen & Unwin in association with the Power Institute of Fine Arts, University of Sydney, NSW, pp. 119–24, 127–31, 1993

Nochlin, Linda. *The Body in Pieces: The Fragment as a Metaphor of Modernity*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1994

Rrap, Julie. 'Artist's Statement', *A-R-MOUR*, exhibition catalogue, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, 2006

Rrap, Julie. 'Artist's Statement', *Fall Out*, exhibition catalogue, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, 2006

Rrap, Julie. 'Artist's Statement', www.aucklandtriennial.com, 2007, accessed 20 August 2007

Schoenbaum, Sam. 'Julie Rrap: interview with Sam Schoenbaum', in George Alexander et al. (1998), *Julie Rrap*, Piper Press, Annandale, pp.122-6, 1998

Stanhope, Zara. 'Take a good look at my face, love at first sight: artists and their relationship with the camera', *Eyeline*, No. 51, Autumn–Winter, pp. 26–9, 2003

Williams, Linda. 'Julie Rrap', *Art + Text*, No. 52, pp. 80–1, 1995

JULIE RRAP

BODY DOUBLE

Web Resources

Julie Rrap information and articles

<http://www.artlink.com.au/articles.cfm?id=2532>
<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2003/08/06/1060145719411.html>
<http://www.roslynnoxley9.com.au/>
<http://arc1gallery.com/>

Artists/artworks referred to in Rrap's art

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L%27Origine_du_monde
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edouard_Manet
<http://www.csulb.edu/~karenk/20thcwebsite/438final/ah438fin-Info.00045.html>
<http://www.csulb.edu/~karenk/20thcwebsite/438mid/ah438mid-Info.00003.html>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Raft_of_the_Medusa
 Rene Magritte *Philosophy in the Boudoir* (1947)
<http://www.csulb.edu/~karenk/20thcwebsite/438final/ah438fin-Full.00045.html>

HSC Syllabus links

http://hsc.csu.edu.au/visual_arts/content/practice/art_hist_writing/feminist_issues/MDOC5Feministissues.html

Photography related

<http://documents.stanford.edu/Archaeography/helpwin/27>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Julie Rrap: Body Double Education Kit Produced by MCA Learning, August 2007

Kit written by Jo Daniell, MCA Educator.
 Edited by Russell Storer and Justine McLisky.

Glossary contributions by Simon Power and Keg de Souza. Alan Guihot and Narelle Kleindanze assisted with syllabus activities.

Thanks to Julie Rrap and Victoria Lynn for their assistance and permission to reproduce introductory texts, catalogue texts and images for this kit.

Published September 2007 by the Museum of Contemporary Art Limited, Sydney, Australia. ©The Museum of Contemporary Art Ltd, the artists, authors and photographers. All rights reserved. The publisher grants permission for this education kit to be reproduced and/or stored for twelve months in a retrieval system, transmitted by means electronic, mechanical, photocopying and/or recording only for educational purposes and strictly in relation to the exhibition *Julie Rrap: Body Double*.

Julie Rrap: Body Double

Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
 30 August 2007 – 28 January 2008
www.mca.com.au

Exhibition organised by the Museum of Contemporary Art. Curated by Victoria Lynn.



The Museum of Contemporary Art is assisted by the NSW Government through ARTS NSW and by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, and the Visual Arts and Crafts Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments.