

**Through the Camera Obscura: Exploring the Voyeuristic Gaze through Grahamstown's
Architecture.**

By

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Abstract

My study explores the politics of viewing and the gaze. I argue that the gaze both arrests and objectifies the body, which in turn transforms subjects into objects therefore regulating social behaviour. The basic notion of the gaze will be explored throughout this thesis and thereby contextualizes my sculptures, which are casts of my naked body. My particular concern lies in how the ideas of surveillance have had an influence on architecture and buildings in Grahamstown. Throughout this mini thesis, I will explore a number of architectural spaces of Grahamstown such as the Provost prison, Fort Selwyn and the Camera Obscura which I argue were all designed based on the ideas of surveillance. The entanglement of Grahamstown architecture and the female form as a subject of voyeurism forms an important part of this thesis, as the context of Grahamstown architecture is centered on visibility, which in turn subjects people to a form of discipline. The Provost Prison, the Camera Obscura and the forts of Grahamstown are all good examples of this. Outside of this, the female body is also subjected to the gaze, which in turn suggests that the female body is also under surveillance and as a result also becomes disciplined. My installation is a response to Antony Gormley's *Event Horizon*, in which he placed 33 steel and fibreglass casts of his own naked body at an elevated level on buildings around Manhattan and Brazil.

In this discussion I have contextualized my work with reference to the ideas of different theorists. The three main theorists I have cited are Michel Foucault, Jonathan Crary and Laura Mulvey. Foucault is specifically cited due to his discussion on Panoptic power, surveillance and docile bodies. Crary makes a number of important points with regards to the ideological operations of the Camera Obscura as well as its history while Laura Mulvey's writings form the basis of the voyeuristic gaze from the perspective of a feminist.

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that all sources that I have used have been acknowledged by complete references. This thesis is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the

requirement for Masters of Fine Art at Rhodes University. I declare that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at another university.

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Introduction

The focus of this mini thesis is exploring the gaze and how women are subjected to the voyeuristic gaze of the male viewer.¹ I will discuss concerns about how the gaze is a form of entrapment due to the manner in which the viewed is locked in the viewer's gaze. The primary emphasis of my exhibition is on the Camera Obscura which can be seen in Figure 1. It is the built environment through which I will discuss visibility and invisibility in the context of Grahamstown. I will draw comparisons between the entrapment of the gaze to the entrapment of the prisoner in the Panopticon prison, the viewer inside the dark chamber of the Camera Obscura and the person inside a body cast. These feelings of entrapment are all intrinsically connected as the gaze and the body cast are both central to my practical work. My personal feelings of 'entrapment' inside my body were the foundation for this project, which arose in a large part out of high levels of self-consciousness. This project was very liberating for me as I was forced to expose myself in a very literal manner and be in my most vulnerable state within society. The body cast is therefore a very significant part of this project, as my predominantly naked body had to be moulded in order to create the nude figures.

The Camera Obscura is a darkened chamber in which a 360 degree moving colour image is projected by mirrors onto a plaster-of-paris table. I chose to use the Camera Obscura as the main point of access to my installation, as it is arguably, the epitome of the 'all-seeing eye'. According to Uricchio (2002: 111) the Camera Obscura "isolates and confines" the subject. By being in a fixed location which is hidden from the world, "the viewing subject is at the centre of the world

¹ As I will argue in a subsequent chapter, the notion of a male viewer is concerned less with the biology of the viewer, but with forms of seeing predicated on a gendered subject.

viewed” (ibid, 111). Using Jonathan Crary’s *Techniques of the Observer*, I will unpack terminology relating to the metaphors of power, gender and hierarchy within the technology of the Camera Obscura. In this chapter, I will draw from Crary’s Foucauldian approach regarding issues of gender and explain how female self-representation is embedded in the space of the Camera Obscura. I will also provide a history of the Camera Obscura and explain its significance as a metaphor for the mind, highlighting its influence in the nineteenth century, specifically as a tool of surveillance.

The central literature that I will make use of to explore the ideas of the power of the gaze is Michel Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish - The Birth of the Prison* which explains the relationship between the subject, the viewer and how panoptic power is the result achieved through the realization that one is ‘subjected’ to the gaze. The effect of this is to create a situation wherein the surveyed subject subjects himself or herself to the power effect, simply through being aware or having the knowledge of the possibility that they could be being watched:

He who is subjected to the field of visibility, and knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection (Foucault, 1979: 202-203)

I refer to Jonathan Crary’s *Modernizing Vision*, in which he explains the function of the Camera Obscura and highlight the similarities between the Camera Obscura and the Panopticon. Jonathan Crary (1995: 30) states that, “the Camera Obscura is like the Panopticon, structured by geometrical space which clearly defines power positions.” William Urrichio is also an important theorist whom I make reference to throughout this mini thesis, specifically to his publication *There’s more to the*

Camera Obscura than meets the eye. I incorporate literature on other artists, such as Antony Gormley and Suzanne Valadon, whose works are relevant to my discussion as they also deal with complexities of looking and being-looked-at. Gormley is particularly relevant as he also created full standing nude figures of himself.

In terms of my practical work, my interest in the subject of the gaze is quite sustained, as it informed my fourth year art practical submission which was exhibited in the old Provost. This is a building which was used for observation in Grahamstown by making the viewer aware of his or her own looking therefore emblemizing the power of the gaze. As Foucault suggests:

At the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy. By the effect of backlighting, one can observe from the tower, standing out precisely against the light the small captive shadows in the cells of the periphery. They are like so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible (Foucault 1977:200).

I placed sculptures of bodies, which had no heads or arms, in the cells and closed and locked the cell doors, therefore only allowing access to my figures through the windows of each cell. This afforded both a limited and fixed perspective, making the viewer aware of his or her own gaze. The figures were seen as vulnerable due to their lack of arms and heads. Each figure was covered in an interesting 'skin'. One was completely covered in white cable ties which speaks of restriction. Another was covered in a latex imprint of bubble wrap which was stretched over the figure to emphasize the figure's vulnerability, as something is usually bubble wrapped when it is very fragile and runs the risk of being broken. The third figure was covered in red cellophane which I burnt with a heat gun. This was to highlight the trauma that this figure had undergone. The fourth figure was covered in Malpitte which are spikey seed pods which hold pips that if ingested, cause hallucinations. This was particularly relevant as I was dealing with issues surrounding mental illness and if these particular seeds are ingested, it can lead to a psychotic state similar to that of someone suffering from a form of mental illness. The Malpitte made this figure almost impossible to handle or move, as there was the risk of being pricked by the spikes on the seed pods. All the figures had realistic casts of feet, just to highlight the fact that I was portraying the lives of real people who are forced to live and suffer from mental illness and how they are often stereotyped by society. The fact that I made the figures with no heads was significant as I was avoiding any form of stigmatization from the viewers at my exhibition but also a loss of individuality. I placed the figures on high plinths, to create the effect that they were in positions of power inside the cells of the Provost, as the viewer was not given the opportunity to walk into the cells and closely scrutinize the figures. This is similar to my Masters exhibition, as I will also place my figures in positions which are inaccessible to the viewer, therefore frustrating the viewer's gaze.

My Masters continues and refines my fourth year interests. I plan to unpack Grahamstown's history with regard to the politics and the architecture of looking and observation in terms of the city's militaristic design and how it was built with ideas of observation in mind. I make connections between my immobilization in the process of having a mould made of my body and the immobilizing power of the arresting, objectifying impetus of the gaze. My exhibition will be accessed mainly through the Camera Obscura located in the Observatory Museum in Grahamstown.

My exhibition is a response to Antony Gormley's *Event Horizon*, figure 2. Gormley, is a British sculptor who also explores concepts of observation through his figurative sculptures. His installation *Event Horizon* consists of 31 steel and fiberglass casts of his own body, which were positioned on an elevated level on iconic buildings all over the city of London, Manhattan and Brazil. In an interview published in the New York Times, Gormley stated that, "the installation connects the palpable, the perceivable and the imaginable, creating a relational field in which the passer-by as well as the aware viewer is implied in a matrix of looking and being looked at" (Vogel 2010: 27). When questioned about the use of his own body, Gormley stated that, "the process [of body casting] is neither easy nor comfortable" (ibid, 27).

Gormley (cited in Vogel 2010:27) stated that the confrontation between the "stillness of an object" and the "movement of its beholder" is key. Gormley's works have regularly addressed "our relationship to the outside world, reinforced by an acknowledgement of the spatial coordinates of a body at a particular moment in time and place" (ibid, 27). The works in this exhibition offer an "ever-shifting field" for the body of the viewer (ibid, 27). Gormley states "As indexical copies of my body they are the registration of a particular time of a particular body which in their displacement of air, indicate the space of "any" body; a human space within space at large" (ibid,

27). Gormley was fascinated to see viewers pointing up at the horizon during the installation for *Event Horizon* in London in 2007 (ibid, 27). The “transfer of the stillness of the sculpture to that of the observer is exciting” (ibid, 27). When observing the works dispersed all over the city, he hoped to make viewers aware that they were at the centre of a group of “silent witnesses” surrounded by figures which were looking out at space and perhaps also at them (ibid, 27). Through *Event Horizon*, Gormley hoped to encourage people to look around and in this process “re-assess one’s own position in the world” (ibid, 27).

Gormley stated in Vogel (2010:27) that, “the level of tension between the palpable, the perceivable and the imaginable is heightened” in a city such as Manhattan due to the “density and scale of the buildings.” The field of the installation has no “defining boundary”. One of the implications of *Event Horizon* is that the viewers are left with “uncertainty about the work’s scope: about the spread and number of figures” (ibid, 27). When Gormley installed *Event Horizon* in London, he placed the figures on top of buildings and on the edges of rooftops, positioned as if about to jump off. The figures lacked “iconic resemblance” to living people due to their upright, static poses and their “uniform colouration,” but the police still received panicked phone calls of reports of people trying to jump from buildings (Taylor, 2010: 6). To some, the figures resembled “sentinels watching over the city of Manhattan,” while to others, they seemed more of a “threat” to the city, and they were read by one bystander as an “invasion of the city” (ibid, 6). By installing the figures in a public space, the viewers are unsettled as the distinction between art and life is blurred in a manner that is arguably more effective than a white cube installation.

Gormley’s sculptures constantly address the role of the human being, as an “individual or mass” and as a “social being”, and with its “simultaneous role as object and subject” (Vogel, 2010:27). Therein lies the significance of sculptures that resemble the human form in a public context, taking

up space as an object which simultaneously animates reactions. By reducing the human form to a “trace or index, he releases his figures from the restraints of traditional sculpture, set up on plinths in self-contained isolation and in accordance with their perceived function” (ibid, 27).

In Chapter one, I focus on Grahamstown’s history and elaborate on how the town was designed around ideas of observation. I also explain what the Camera Obscura is and how it forms the focal point of my exhibition. In Chapter two, I explore Foucault’s theory about the Panopticon and explain how it is similar to the Camera Obscura in how it places the viewer in a position of power. I will cite Laura Mulvey and further explain her views on the gendered gaze in relation to cinema. I also make reference to the artist Suzanne Valadon, who works with the nude female body and ideas surrounding the gendered gaze. In Chapter three, I contextualize my exhibition and explain how being inside a mould is similar to that of being inside the space of the Panopticon and the Camera Obscura. I explain the process of creating the figures, I discuss the buildings I have chosen to use in the exhibition and in addition, give a brief account of the gendered stereotypes encountered in my study.

Chapter 1: Grahamstown's History as a military town

In this chapter, I will focus on Grahamstown's history and explain how the town was designed around ideas of observation. The main emphasis of my theory and practical work is focused on the Camera Obscura and how it was designed and used as an ancient surveillance tool in Grahamstown. I will form a discussion around how the Camera Obscura is a built environment through which visibility and visibility take place, particularly focusing on the city of Grahamstown being the central space of my exhibition. While a comprehensive account of the town's formation is beyond the confines of this research, it is necessary to briefly unpack its militarized past and the significance of the buildings in that history.

The city of Grahamstown with its "soaring spire of the Cathedral of St Michael and St George" and "its towers, turrets and steeples which punctuate the harmoniously low-rise lines of buildings which have grown old together", will act as my exhibition space (O' Meara, 1995: 10). The Eastern Cape Frontier of South Africa offers fascinating insight into British military strategy and colonial development. The Eastern Cape frontier was a very turbulent frontier for over 100 years. It was the area where the four main population groups, being the Dutch, the British, the Xhosa and the Khoikhoi met. Many tactical decisions were made on this frontier which were "prominent in the shaping of South Africa" (Robson & Oranje, 2012: 23). British settlement patterns on the ground were influenced by "strategy and policy". All of the settlements in the Eastern Cape had a very strong military component and were very often largely constructed by military people, mostly the Royal Engineers (ibid, 23). The British tried to subdue the turbulent frontier by settling British immigrants in the area by creating towns. When that failed, they built military defense lines by means of a "series of forts, military garrisons and signal towers" (ibid, 23). At this point in time, the British policy was not to engage in war and eliminate the threat but to slowly "invade 'tribal'

areas and create towns and infrastructure with the aim of preserving the area”. The intention was far from wanting to eliminate the Xhosa but rather to force them into a “submissive state” in order to provide a labour force for the colony. Military personnel were used to build infrastructure and to prepare the layouts of the towns, but in the case of Grahamstown, were also the main residents of the town (ibid, 46). This is a significant point which suggests that from its inception, Grahamstown was deeply militarized therefore making the distinction between civilian and military life rather blurry.

Grahamstown is said to be one of the “greatest maintained Victorian towns located outside of England.” From the earliest period of British administration, fortifications were planned. Colonel Graham instructed that frontier posts be built with guards who could protect the drifts of the Fish River (ibid, 10). This is significant as it is suggestive of the investment in the notion of surveillance in the town’s inception. These posts were either “rehabilitated farm houses or stone-built shelters” (ibid, 10). These early establishments were not just farms managed by local citizens, but were also linked to military intelligence as a “series of observation and early warning posts” (ibid, 10). “To strengthen over-stretched military forces, the 1820 Settlers – close on four thousand men, women and children – were brought from Britain.” They were attracted by the offer of farms in the District of Albany, but they were unaware that they were brought to South Africa to form a “living chain of defence” (ibid, 11). In 1814, the surveyor K. Knobel was sent to Grahamstown to plan the emerging settlement in an “orderly fashion”. Starting his line from the first built gaol, he suggested that a broad street be built from west to east, now known as High Street. The officer’s mess had to be removed, but he recommended that the citizen’s houses remain, declaring that, “although a triangular space would be left open, that space having the most elevated ground in its centre, might allow a very convenient situation for a church or any other public building” (ibid, 17). This is

exactly what materialized. A few years later the military moved in, and the “finest Gothic Revival cathedral in South Africa was built, which was also the focal point of the country’s best existing collective example of Victorian architecture”. By the 1860’s the “triangular square” in which the cathedral was located, became the central business district of Grahamstown (ibid, 19).

In his book of planting and planning *The making of British colonial cities*, Robert Home explains the evolution of a British colonial spatial development strategy which was developed over a period of two centuries. Its aims included “commercial gain, strategic maneuvering in the game of international geopolitics and, later, the removal of unwanted social groups (political or religious dissenters, debtors and the unemployed)” (ibid, 20). The main components of the model can be summarized as simply, the ‘policy of deliberate urbanization’. Towns were seen as the “centre of trade and defense as well as a civilizing influence.” The town site was laid out in advance of occupation and done according to a prepared plan. This presumed that an adequate number of colonists were available to begin a settlement, a figure which was set at forty families in New Hampshire in the U.S.A, for example. Planning had to be done in advance, to avoid the “indecent and incommodious irregularities which other English Colonies are fallen unto for want of an early care in laying out the towns” (ibid, 21). The physical form of the colonial planned town was a “rectilinear or grid-iron layout of wide streets embodying classical ideals of symmetry, order and proportion” (ibid, 21). The centerpiece of this regular grid of wide, straight streets was the “square reserved for public use.” The street blocks of the colonial grid were subdivided into large, rectangular town plots. Plot dimensions varied and plot frontages of fifty feet (15,2 m) wide or more were available (ibid, 21).

The idea of a ‘model settlement’ emerged early on in Britain’s overseas expansion. The politicians, most of whom never visited the colonies, drew the boundaries. This is suggestive of the notion of

a world that could be known often in a disengaged and disembodied fashion. The soldiers carried out the conquests and chose the ports from which to control the population (ibid, 22). The military often formed the first colonial governments and intimidation was an essential part of the maintenance of colonial administration. “The administrators determined the pattern of urban settlement by selecting the administrative posts and deciding on the nature of the administrative regime” (ibid, 22). This bias towards “functional administration,” and the use of the military to implement it, largely impacted the spatial development of South Africa- it was “ordered, spacious, functional and logical” (from a colonial point of view) (ibid, 22). The approach adopted in the Eastern Cape, was not only in line with British policy at the time, but it was also very “avant-garde”, illustrating the flow of information between Britain and its colonies. It is interesting to note that even though they were “defending the frontier against an ‘enemy’ armed with assegais and sticks, the British did not revert to fortified towns; instead signal towers, forts and defensible lines were built.” Below I draw attention to a few such structures in Grahamstown.

The Provost Prison in Grahamstown, was built after the sixth Frontier War in 1838. The Governor of the Cape Forces gave instructions for the building of a “fortified barracks establishment” on the Drostdy grounds in Grahamstown which was to include a military prison (O’Meara 1995: 24). Built by the Royal Engineers, the Provost was based on Jeremy Bentham’s eighteenth century ‘Panopticon’ for the ‘ceaseless surveillance’ of prisoners. It consisted of an outer circle of cells and a large round tower. From the tower, the prisoners could constantly be kept under surveillance, as its windows overlooked each cell (ibid, 24).

Fort Selwyn up on Gun Fire hill, which was built in the shape of a seven pointed star, is a suggestive merger of visibility and militarism (ibid, 88). This was primarily to enable the maximum number of men and guns to fire from the walls. It was designed and constructed by the Royal

Engineers and was built primarily to protect the residents in the town and its water supply. There were several masts with crossed arms that were erected in Grahamstown, Fort Beaufort and Peddie. These were established to improve communication between the three towns; however the masts were usually obscured with haze (ibid, 88).

While the forts were constructed with the explicit aim of militarized surveillance and communication, the Camera Obscura had a similar function, despite it not being a military tool strictly. The Camera Obscura in Grahamstown, located in the Observatory Museum, was used as a way to track people's whereabouts without them knowing that they were being watched. Due to the lack of sufficient communication methods at the time, the people of Grahamstown relied on the Camera Obscura to find people going about their daily activities in the town. In my interviews with Moses Lamani, the operator of the Camera Obscura at the Observatory Museum, he commented that once a person had been spotted through the Camera Obscura, a messenger would be sent to town to deliver a message to that person. As a tool for observation, the Camera Obscura became a place of power, where people's whereabouts could constantly be watched (ibid, 51). Built by Galpin in the 1880's in a period which coincided with the above-mentioned settler-colonialism, the Camera Obscura in Grahamstown was the first Victorian Obscura in the Southern Hemisphere (ibid, 51).

The Camera Obscura, literally meaning "dark chamber, is a room or box lit only by a small hole that admitted sunshine" (Slatoff-Burke 2004:3). "Light rays pour through the hole projecting an image of the outside world on the opposite wall or onto a plaster of paris table (ibid, 3). The imagery framed by the Camera Obscura is "transient; it is as ephemeral as the world around us, prone to change, to day and night, clouds passing, sun shifting, and people moving" (ibid, 3).

The “dark chamber” or Camera Obscura can also be seen as a model for the mind and the unconscious (Kofman 1998:13). According to Sarah Kofman (1998:11), the Camera Obscura seems to be “contaminated by more ideological, more unconscious connotations, carried instantaneously by the notion of camera/chamber and that of obscura” (ibid, 13). It “isolates consciousness, separates it from the real; enclosed, the latter constructs a sort of neo-reality, analogous to that produced by psychotics” (ibid, 17). Similarly, the process of being cast and the viewer’s solitary position in the Camera Obscura are metaphors for isolation and the trauma of being alienated or severed from social urban life. Indeed, the condition of fracturing with regards to subjectivity is a key component that informs my project.

In Descartes and Locke’s essay on *On Human Understanding* (published in 1690), the Camera Obscura was explained as being a complex technique of power. It was a means of establishing what was considered as “perceptual truth” for an observer and it “de-alienated a fixed set of relations to which an observer was made subject” (Walker, 1997: 12). Whether in the work of scientists, artists, empiricists or rationalists, the Camera Obscura was an apparatus that guaranteed access to an “objective truth about the world” (Walker, 1997: 12). It assumed importance as a model for both the “observation of empirical phenomena” and for “reflective introspection and self-observation” (ibid, 13). Locke (cited in Walker, 1997: 13) states that the camera is a means of “spatially visualizing the position of an observing subject.” Here, one can draw parallels between the operations of the Camera Obscura in which the outside world is viewed completely from afar and the techniques of mapping by colonials both turn the visualized world into a distant and knowable ‘other’. The image in the room takes on a special significance in referring to what is meant in the seventeenth century to be “in camera,” that is “within the chambers of a judge or person of title” (ibid,14). He adds a more authoritative function to the observer’s passive role in

order to guarantee and “police the correspondence between the exterior world and interior representation” (ibid, 14). It also goes as far as to exclude anything unruly or disorderly. The secure positioning of the self within the empty interior space of the Camera Obscura was a “prerequisite for knowing the outer world”. The camera provided an “infallible vantage point on the world.” It defined an observer who was subjected to an “inflexible set of positions and divisions” (Crary, 1988: 33). “In a sense this is complicit in maintaining a relationship between the private individual and the world as that defined by “distance” with the outside almost implicitly becoming other” (Crary, 1988: 33).

Crary disregards the theatrical elements of the Camera Obscura and focuses on the ways in which observation is connected with power due to the camera having the ability to reproduce reality. For him, the Camera Obscura is linked to a “quest for knowledge, ownership and control”: in this scheme the observer is an “autonomous humanist subject” (Crary, 1988: 35).

According to Uricchio (2002:110), “on the one hand, the Camera Obscura and its successors could have been seen to represent a nineteenth century narrative of representational progress; on the other hand they can be seen as an enduring apparatus of social and political power, surveillance, and control ” (Uricchio, 2002:110). It is significant to note that the Camera Obscura also has ‘blind spots.’ Although it can rotate a full 360 degrees, it still cannot facilitate the observation of the whole of Grahamstown, as many buildings and various daily urban and social practices are obscured by other buildings. There are also many places that cannot be seen fully through the lens of the Camera Obscura as they are at a distance that cannot be reached.

In the 1600’s, the Camera Obscura became the “model of the eye” (ibid, 110). It has always had a close relationship to the human body and its modes of perception. Crary is interested in the “corporeality” of the Camera Obscura, the way in which the body of the viewing subject is

“enclosed in a darkened room where pictures appear and people move about.” The darkrooms of the early Camera Obscuras were like private theatres where the performance was that of a “fuzzy image projected on a beam of light” (Crary, 1988: 34). The viewer was cut off from the outside world in a “contemplative space in which his or her own perception could be explored” (Crary, 1988: 34).

One imagines the viewer of the Camera Obscura alone or standing in a small group in a dark room trying to adjust their eyes and trying to get the best possible position so that the image could be seen to its best advantage (ibid, 36). The body of the viewer can be seen as the “flexible seeing apparatus” which is the component that moves about and changes the image, enhancing the body’s experience or possibly “ordering and disciplining” (ibid, 36). The Camera Obscura was designed for the observation of the real world but it also gave rise to an “interiorized space of observation – the self-reflective space of the darkroom” (ibid, 36). In this manner, the viewer of the Camera Obscura has notable similarities to the person enclosed inside a body cast. In the same way that the viewer inside the Camera Obscura is enclosed in a darkened room, cut off from the outside world, so is the person who is trapped inside the body cast. This experience can also be related to the unconscious, that is to say, unconscious material is not readily available to the subject and only finds manifestation in more symbolic forms such as dreams and slips of tongue. In a similar way, the casting of the body is subjected to a similar fracturing.

Surveillance is responsible for regulating bodily and other visible activities. Foucault (1997) is cited in Koskela saying that, “bodies under surveillance do not need to be regulated since they regulate themselves: they are docile bodies”. As Koskela argues, this can be related to the docile bodies entrapped in body casts (Koskela, 2000: 172). From the perspective of the overseers, the ‘bodies’ seen in a surveillance monitor are ‘doll-like’ (ibid, 172). While being under surveillance

is certainly a bodily experience, it is also an emotional event. Surveillance as an emotional experience evokes a variety of feelings: the objects watched can feel “guilty without reason, embarrassed or uneasy (ibid, 174).

The Camera Obscura was adopted by philosophers as a metaphor for the “relationship between the human subject and the observed object” where it positions the observer so that “truthful observations of the world could be made”. The Camera Obscura can be seen as an “infallible vantage point” which provides the isolated and private observer with a more authoritative role. (Crary 1988: 31). In this Chapter, I have given a brief description of Grahamstown’s history and further explained how the town was designed and built around ideas of observation. I have described the space of the Camera Obscura, linking it to the process of body casting. In the following chapter, I will be primarily focusing on the ideas of looking. I do this by drawing homologies between the condition of being inside the Obscura as a viewer and the condition of being entrapped inside the body cast. Both states, I argue, are comparable to the person in the watch tower of the Panopticon.

Chapter 2: The Camera Obscura and the Voyeuristic gaze

There is a large body of scholarship focusing on Western urban contexts (Simmel 1903; Berger 1972) and different forms of the gaze such as the medical gaze and panopticism (Foucault 1963; 1977), the male/voyeuristic gaze (Mulvey 1975; Kaplan 1977; Pollock 1988; Berger 1972; Nochlin 1989), the imperial gaze (Kaplan 1977) and the gaze in colonial contexts (Fanon 1963). In this chapter I focus on the concept of the gaze and explore gendered aspects of visibility. I begin by unpacking Foucault's theory of the Panopticon, drawing parallels between its operations and those of the Camera Obscura with regards to the subject positioning of the viewer inside those spaces. I also focus on concerns around the gaze and how women are subjected to the voyeuristic aspect of this gaze. The panoptic prison, like the Camera Obscura, is a theatrical stage (Foucault, 1979: 200). "It is not simply a physical space that inscribes power relations or the all-seeing eye of God in the central tower that oversees the prisoners, it is more importantly, the effect of this knowledge which may or may not be being realized" (Foucault, 1979: 200). An example of this would be with knowing that the guard may or may not be in the tower. (ie. the guard may not be in the tower.) The effect is therefore performative in that the prisoners regulate their own behaviour (Foucault, 1979: 200).

"The Camera Obscura with its connotations of authoritative and authoritarian surveillance, links empiricist/rationalist optics to a disciplinary regime which empowers the unseen observer" and is thus comparable to the Panopticon (Crary, 1988: 48). Both also construct a "perspectival arena" in which the objects of perception are framed within a cohesive and orderly visual field reflecting the vision of God:

The aperture of the camera obscura corresponds to a single,
mathematically definable point, from which the world can be

logically deduced by a progressive accumulation and combination of signs...Founded on laws of nature (optics) but extrapolated to a plane outside of nature, the Camera Obscura provides a vantage point onto the world analogous to the eye of God (Crary, 1988: 48).

The Panopticon is an architectural plan for a prison which was produced by Jeremy Bentham. Its functionality relies almost entirely on its “investment in its visual aspect” (Foucault, 1977:204). It consists of a circular arrangement of cells, all of which open onto a central watchtower. From this watchtower it is possible to observe any prisoner at any time. The lighting arrangement in the cells prevents the possibility of blind spots through which a prisoner might render him or herself invisible to the watchtower occupant (ibid, 201).The side walls of the cell make prisoners invisible to each other and prevent any direct communication between them. The architectural arrangement of the watchtower and the use of blinds on its windows ensures that the watchtower occupant is invisible to the prisoner. The prisoner is then “...seen but he does not see; he is the object of information, never subject to communication” (ibid, 203). The ‘power’ in this manner is therefore “visible but unverifiable.” Foucault states that, “The Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the seeing being seen dyad:

In the peripheral ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen (ibid, 202)”. The fact that the tower and its windows are visible to the prisoner makes him/her feel as if he/she is being watched, but the use of venetian blinds on the windows of the tower leaves the prisoner unsure whether this is actually the case. The result of this,

according to Foucault, is that the prisoner experiences a feeling of constant surveillance and in this sense produces docile subjects. This is the very basis of panoptic power. Panoptic power is the “effect achieved through the realization that one is subjected to the gaze.” (ibid, 203)

It is vital to highlight at this point that, for Foucault, power functions automatically in the Panopticon:

Human beings are the vehicles of power relations. They do not hold it nor constitute its source, thus the complex arrangement of bricks, lights and spaces, and the relays and relations of visibility and invisibility which these effect, actually intervene into human relations, structuring them and rendering them asymmetrical (ibid, 203).

Foucault is interested in the Panopticon for two reasons. Firstly, he identifies the extent of its influence. The Panopticon was never actually built but as an architectural plan it has had significant influence upon architecture of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century public buildings (ibid, 115). The Provost in Grahamstown is one such example of a Panopticon. Secondly, Foucault understands the Panopticon as an “ideal or perfect model of the surveillance relations involved in modern technologies of penal power” (ibid, 115). Thus, it is an important device for understanding the modern functioning of power.

He further notes, “Power functioned through its visibility”. In the modern era, Foucault argues that:

The ordering of the visible and invisible, within the power relation, no longer exists, or at least not in relation to penal power. In the modern era it is power which is invisible and anonymous, and it is those who are subjected to it who are visible (ibid 115).

Power partly functions, by making people visible. It involves a “complex ensemble of practices which individualize persons and which constitute those individuals within a field of visibility, such that they can be observed and kept under surveillance” (ibid, 117). Therefore, it does not matter who occupies the watchtower and “what motive animates him.” The more frequent and impermanent these anonymous spectators, the greater the prisoner’s “anxious awareness of being observed.” (ibid, 117). It is of no significance if the prisoner is actually being watched or not. Occupancy of the watchtower and the “apparition of a surveyor” are sufficient to secure the panoptic effect (ibid, 117). A final point to note is that the watchtower occupant, as well as being a vehicle of Panoptic power, is also subjected to it. According to Sartre (1992: 112) the effect of ‘the look’ is described in terms of alienation. To experience ‘the look’ is to experience oneself as “no longer belonging to oneself but as belonging, as an object, in the project of the other” The act of the seer experiencing the world as distant becomes important, as his/her own subjectivity is characterised by a split being one such example, as an “other.” (Sartre, 1992: 112).

Merleau- Ponty, cited in Crossley (1996:105) states that power is affected and stabilized in the Panopticon because the surveyor is “inaccessible; the blinded window of the watchtower precisely constitutes and communicates an inaccessible surveyor, and assumes an “inhuman” form.” As Foucault notes, the surveyed is “the object of information, never the subject of communication.” (Foucault, 1979:203). The Camera Obscura as a social apparatus is said to duplicate the authoritarian gaze of the Panopticon. The argument Foucault is making is that power cannot solely

be assigned to the dominant order. Rather, society consists of a multiplicity of power relations that are constantly played out and are constantly changing due to the dominant order always being questioned. Power is not entirely 'oppressive', because it acts in both ways, producing counter forms of empowerment, especially when employed locally against dominant forms of oppression.

Let me draw attention to the design of the Camera Obscura to further elaborate on these points.

The Camera Obscura has three main features: "The viewing subject is in a fixed location, hidden from the world; the viewer's relation to the world is spatially contiguous and temporarily simultaneous; and the viewing subject is at the centre of the world viewed" (Urrichio, 2002: 112).

These three criteria are also met by the Panopticon however, it has given rise to a more specific range of interpretive characteristics: the world viewed is architecturally confined (within the Panopticon's walls); surveillance and visual control are its dominant modes; therefore, it is seen as "entrapping rather than liberating" (ibid, 112). The irony of the Panopticon is that despite very real differences in power between the observer and controlling the observed, it is mutually entrapping. This is in large part due to the human agencies locked within the outer walls of the structure: They can look back, "fixing the inhabitants of the tower in their gaze" (ibid, 112). But it is also due to the inhibited nature of the controlling gaze: the central viewing tower is surrounded by an "artificial horizon standing between it and the world" (ibid, 112).

Thus, the Panopticon differs from the Camera Obscura not only in terms of functionality, but also in its definition of the world viewed. Inside the Camera Obscura, the external world takes a flattened and inverted form in a darkened room. It translates a live moving image, which is instantly reflected onto the plaster-of-paris table (ibid, 112). Jonathan Crary refers back to Locke and Descartes as major figures in generating the idea of the human mind enclosed in a darkened space knowing the external world by an apparent 'objective truth'. This was embodied by the

Camera Obscura. “The position of the spectator here is idealized, not fixed in a historical or temporal space but closed in a dark box described by being “universalized and homogenized” (ibid, 112). Healy (1996: 2) further states that, “although these classical notions of spectatorship are limited in acknowledging alternative viewpoints and a varied array of viewers, they do point out much about the workings of power and the idea that the perceived viewer, perhaps representing the colonizer, or the bourgeoisie or the surveyor, controls, conquers, imprisons the object within the frame by its gaze” (ibid, 2).

Parallels may be drawn therefore between the overseer in the central tower and the user of the Camera Obscura. The user of the Camera Obscura experiences the world as a mere picture because he or she is completely separated from his environment in both a physical and psychological manner (Healy, 1996:4). The viewer’s experience of the surroundings could only be through their vision because of their literal physical separation which caused a division between them and the world, making it unified. Due to the understanding of being completely isolated and separate, the users cannot contextualize themselves with regard to their surroundings which made them as real as the images projected on the walls by the Camera Obscura itself (ibid, 4).

In my exhibition, the place of viewing, or Camera Obscura, and the notion of the subject’s experience of power is made complex by the alienating and isolating space of the Camera Obscura. Furthermore, the notion of an all-seeing subject is subverted by the fact that the viewer is unable to see everything as some spaces are obscured.

British and American feminist film theory has traced this determination of ‘the look’ especially in classical narrative Hollywood films and shown how the look is constituted as a primarily male and patriarchal. Scholars have argued that based on how the system of the look is deployed by the

film, it constructs the look of the spectator as one that is “predicated on a male radius of perception” (Mulvey, 2009: 18).

I will further unpack the different aspects of the gendered gaze by referring to the work of Laura Mulvey and Suzanne Valadon. The gaze is a mechanism through which power is exercised thus, arguably, in social situations, people adapt their performance of the self to the expectations of the audience as a result (ibid, 20). If one is always being watched, then one is always adapting to conform to the imagined expectations of the viewer. Through surveillance, an individual’s “personhood and dignity are harmed by surveillance because the person is treated as an object of social control and manipulation” (Ibid, 20). According to James Elkins (1996: 31), “looking immediately activates desire, possession, violence, displeasure, pain, ambition, power, gratitude and longing. There seems no end to what seeing is.” Hence the gaze is “not neutral” (ibid, 31). We do not simply look at an object and see an object. “This seeing is aggressive: it distorts what it looks at and it turns a person into an object.” One can argue that this aggressive seeing creates a power struggle between the observer and the observed (ibid, 31).

Laura Mulvey in her essay “*Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*” was one of the first to link the analysis of the “orchestration” of the look in narrative cinema with psychoanalytically defined needs in the spectator, such as voyeurism and exhibitionism and in turn fusing two types of theories that are both concerned with the issue of cinematic identification. The historical distinction of voyeurism and exhibitionism along the lines of gender roles, makes the woman the object and the man the active bearer of the look. The aesthetics of the narrative cinema were founded on the patriarchal orchestration of the look (Mulvey, 2009: 20). The spectator’s identification is therefore channeled into the cinematic image along the track of the male look, which proposes the place of the woman in front of and that of the man behind the camera. Occasionally, the camera itself

assumes a frontal position comparable to that of the spectator's in theatre; it pretends to articulate their point of view. A point to highlight here is the fact that the Camera Obscura's functionality is similar to that of the film experience.

Suzanne Valadon's treatment of the conventions of the female nude is the historic representation of the female body for the male gaze. Representations of the female body and sexuality have been framed historically by the gaze. The concept of the gaze assumes that "looking "is not indifferent; it is always implicated in a system of control" (Mulvey, 2009: 20). In its most objectifying form, the male gaze is considered to be based on an understanding of women's positions within a patriarchal culture as "bearer of meaning" rather than a "maker of meaning," the "signifier for the male other," as Laura Mulvey phrases it (ibid, 20). As such, the male gaze can be seen as the structuring principle for the tradition of the nude. Mulvey goes on:

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, the pleasure in looking has been split between "active-male and passive-female" (Mulvey, 2009: 19). The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness (ibid, 19).

The art historian T.J Clark describes the mechanism of the male gaze, without using the term, when he outlines the traditional manner of viewing the nude. He refers to women as "a picture for men to look at, in which a woman is constructed as an object of somebody else's desire" (Clark, 1985: 131). Suzanne Valadon's contradictory nudes reveal the power of the male gaze, which women cannot entirely escape. Her works challenge the stereotype of the female nude and at the

same time empties it, thereby revealing its workings by refusing and denying it. Through Valadon's works, the male viewer is not offered the pure, voyeuristic pleasure which is usually present in traditional representations of the nude (Mathews, 1991:417). Reviewing an example of Valadon's work titled 'The Future Unveiled 1912', figure 3, we see a rather large nude red-haired woman with her body extended across a reclining chair. Her body is turned towards the viewer and totally open to him or her. Both women in the painting have their eyes fixed on the card game which they are playing. This keeps the viewer 'out of action' due to the closure of their gazes. In another painting called, 'Reclining Nude,' figure 4, Valadon paints the woman's body as if it is closed towards the viewer because her expression suggests that she is resisting our invasive gaze. The dominating power of the male gaze is now read through the self-conscious, anxious or negative reaction from the nude woman. The gaze is returned, but it is neither "seductive nor passive". It is a gaze of awareness through which the viewers are made to feel as if they are looking intrusively. In this painting, the male gaze is "constructed but defied" (ibid, 418).

In the images discussed, Valadon participates in as well as contradicts the traditional objectification of the female body by how she represents women as both the subject and the object. Her images are very radical in their lack of a controlling gaze which is a lack that shifts them out of traditional categories of the female nude (ibid, 425).

In this chapter, I have drawn homologies between the condition of being inside the Camera Obscura as a viewer and the condition of being entrapped inside the body cast. I have also explained how being inside the Camera Obscura and the body cast is comparable to being inside the Panopticon. I also focused on concerns around the gaze and how women are subjected to the voyeuristic aspect of this gaze, using examples of Suzanne Valadon's work and theories written

by Laura Mulvey. In Chapter three, I will be primarily focusing on my work and I will explain the making, materiality and installation of my sculptures.

Chapter 3: The Making, materiality and installation of *Obscura*

This chapter focuses on three interrelated aspects; the making of the sculptures, the materiality of the sculptures and the installation of the sculptures on specifically chosen buildings within close proximity to the Observatory Museum, thus allowing easier access to the works through the Camera Obscura. All the buildings are suggestive of the interconnectedness of visibility, architecture and the gendering of visibility. However, a brief digression in the form of a few anecdotes is perhaps worthwhile in drawing attention to the extent to which even the very logistics of creating the installation generated their own telling effects.

In the process of creating my sculptures I received several interesting responses from men who saw my nude figures. In the first instance, when creating the mould (figure 5) over my prototype figure at a business in Grahamstown, I was approached by two men who had come to buy something from the business. They walked up to where I was working, my figure was lying face first on the table, so they could only see the back of the figure. They both laughed and said, “Nice bum, but can you please turn the figure over so we can see the front.” I was offended by their remarks and did not appreciate their humor. The next instance was when I was creating my seven fiberglass and resin figures in Port Alfred. A Frenchman approached my sculpture and ran his hand down the nude figure. He then proceeded to kiss it on the lips and said, “Beautiful.” The last instance which I will mention occurred after I had made my first fiberglass and resin figure at the above mentioned business in Port Alfred. I asked to have a photograph with the workers who had helped me to create the figure, all the workers were men. All of the men either placed their hands on the breasts of the figure or on the bum for the photograph and all thought it was a hilarious joke. The point I found most interesting was the fact that all men felt it was acceptable to touch the figure in inappropriate ways or make inappropriate remarks about the figure even though they

knew that it was a replica of me. While there is clearly great difficulty in drawing conclusions about such incidents, they are perhaps suggestive of the operations of a gendered looking that subjects the female body, even an artificial one, to such degrees of voyeurism.

My Masters exhibition is centered on the ideas of surveillance and the gaze. The gaze arrests and objectifies bodies, turning subjects into objects and regulating social behaviour. I have made seven fibreglass and resin nude figures of myself, of which five will be placed on specifically chosen buildings in Grahamstown. Each building is ascribed with particular gender roles or political connotations. My Masters exhibition is a continuation in some ways of my fourth year exhibition, which was centred on the ideas of surveillance and the gaze. As mentioned previously, I chose to use the old Provost Prison in Grahamstown, which was built and designed around Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon theory. This is a building used for observation – but by creating an awareness, for the observer, of his/her own looking. For as Foucault suggests, “every cell is visible from the central tower and yet the seer in the tower remains invisible” (Foucault, 1980 115). I found this idea to be rather poignant and felt that I needed to investigate other spaces built purely around the ideas of watching and being watched, particularly in Grahamstown. This led me to delve into the history of Grahamstown and how the town itself was designed and built around the ideas of observing and being observed. Through this I found the Observatory Museum, the very location of the Camera Obscura which was the starting point for my Masters exhibition. The space inspired me to create an exhibition particularly focused on the ideas of surveillance. I found the notion of the invisible voyeur particularly interesting, as the person in the tower of the Camera Obscura could watch people on the street, without them knowing that they were being watched.

I have always been interested in the human form and I had never made a full standing figure before. This is what inspired me to create my first ever standing figures. I started investigating other artists

who work with the human form and I found inspiration in the work of Antony Gormley. His exhibition titled, "*Event Horizon*", in which he placed nude male casts of his body on rooftops all over the city of Manhattan and Brazil was particularly exciting to me. However, there is quite a distinction between Gormley's and my work. Instead of the masculine, defiant poses of Gormley's figures, I have created more vulnerable nude female figures. Unlike Gormley's figures which dominate the skyline, I will situate my figures on the lower veranda roofs of the buildings, where they will become more integrated into the architecture of Grahamstown.

Part of the impetus of the project was to explore the notion of the artist as the artwork. This afforded me the opportunity to reverse roles, from the subject (as artist) that creates moulds of other people – thus objectifying them- to the one who is subjected to such a process. In this sense, it was quite interesting, as the artist, offering up my own body for the mould making process, thereby taking up that space of being entrapped inside the mould. Part of the significance of this lies in the slight shift in power differentials as it means surrendering control as an artist and willing myself to be mute and static while inside. When looking at my female figures (self-portraits), therefore, I am in a sense faced with my own vulnerability as a woman being scrutinized. Growing up as a very self-conscious child and teenager, I feel that this project has been very liberating for me. I have had to 'open myself up', by placing multiple nude figures of myself in very public spaces, to be scrutinized by the Grahamstown public.

In order to make the mould of my own naked body, I had to endure the lengthy and traumatic process of being cast. I have made connections between my own immobilization in the process of having a mould made of my own body and the immobilizing power of the arresting, objectifying impetus of the gaze. Having to be predominantly naked for the making of my mould I would have had no control over the gaze. Because the mould literally immobilized my body, it would leave

me completely vulnerable in the hands of the people who were moulding me. For this reason, I asked my mother to make the nude mould of me, as I felt less embarrassed having my mother covering me with Body Double. She had never molded a full body before therefore I had to talk her through the process of mould making as she went along, up until it was time for my eyes, mouth and ears to be covered. I had to put all my trust in my mother for the rest of the process and hope that she would not get me stuck inside the mould.

For me, the very act of subjecting oneself to being molded is performative. It required a challenging stillness and reliance on my mother. Due to her lack of familiarity with the process, I had to talk her through the process of body casting two days in advance, a condition that generated its own anxiety. However, she too would be subjected to a certain degree of vulnerability despite exercising control over the process. She covered me from my head to my waist in molding silicone called Body Double. During this lengthy and uncomfortable process, I had to stand in an upright position for nearly two and a half hours while the Body Double and plaster was applied. Gormley points out “At the beginning, the moulding process is an act of will, willing yourself not to move or scratch or fiddle” (Vogel 2010:27). Furthermore, it becomes, “an act of endurance” (Vogel 2010:27). To concur, this act of endurance is exacerbated by a feeling of the loss or a muting of all senses. My eyes, ears and mouth were all covered, so I could not see, hear or talk while under the Body Double. Due to the heavy weight of the plaster on my back for such a lengthy period of time, my sculptures have all been cast with slightly arched backs. The final part of the process was by far the most painful. When the Body Double was pulled off, it pulled each and every hair on my body with it. The same process had to be repeated for molding my legs. I stood in an upright position in the same spot for over two hours while my mother applied the layers of Body Double

and plaster to my legs. Due to the sweltering heat, and a lack of blood circulation throughout my legs, I fainted.

When I made the first few casts, some of my hairs were transferred onto the sculptures. This is important to note, as the cast is then not just a “representation” but to an extent also contains a trace of my body. Fiona Bradley (1996: 11) states that body casting, combines “that which is present with that which is other - the residue of the original which advances and retreats in the mind of the viewer.” The cast is therefore an “indexical remnant and a way of re-producing the body of the person being cast.” Bradley (1996: 8) further states that, “in the casting process the original, the recognizable object which the work seems to be ‘about’, is lost. What is left is the residue or reminder, a space of oscillation between presence and absence.” (ibid, 11) The body cast is an imprint of the negative mould which has been taken off a person. A cast captures a person’s resemblance: from his/her facial features, to body markings such as skin patterns, moles and wrinkles, and therefore the cast represents the absent body (ibid, 11).

There is a significant link between the mould and the deployment of my mother in its making. That is to say, the plaster covering that is placed over the body double is called a Mother Mould which is integral in the mould making process. It is the hard outer casing of the mould which is usually made from plaster into which the floppy body double mould fits. The Mother Mould holds everything in place when making your cast. Here, one could make tentative comparisons with the process of bringing a living being to life, at least in process. That is to say, the mould of me would later give “birth” to seven identical figures of myself. Indeed, knowing that my own mother was molding me made me feel quite safe inside the cast. Another important point to note is the fact that I, as the artist was asking my mother to subject me to the gaze by making a mould of my naked form and by making this mould, she was in fact objectifying me. As the artist and the artwork, I

am playing out the roles of both viewed object and viewing subject as I am able to look at the figures of myself. This direct connection between the process of making the sculptures, their form and existence as “docile” bodies and then their placement in different locations in Grahamstown all re-enact the dynamics of surveillance, visibility and objectification through a gendered lens.

This leads me to the next point of fracturing/splitting. My exhibition deals with the fracturing/splitting of spaces on several levels. I focus on the connection between inside and outside spaces. Using the Camera Obscura as the main looking device in my exhibition, I am placing my viewers inside the darkened room of the Obscura, where they can observe the outside space which is projected onto a round plaster of paris table. Arguably, the notion of “splitting/fracturing” has a significant link to the splitting of the Frontier, which is a geographical phenomenon that separates two or more groups of people (in the settler’s case the British and the Xhosa) as well as mental and emotional space in which these two groups construct their identities (Dampier, 2000; 40). The Eastern Cape Frontier was a literal and metaphorical divide between colonizers and colonized, thus part of the purpose of the settlement scheme was to secure British control of the Cape by stabilizing the frontier with families, symbolized by the presence of women. According to Stoler, “The arrival of women [in the colonies] usually occurred in conjunction with some immediately prior or planned stabilization of colonial rule” (ibid, 42) Thus, Somerset’s “human barrier”, was specifically a female one. Women were expected to limit, as far as possible, the influence of “Africa” on their British settlement. They therefore tried to create an environment that was similar to ‘home.’ Colonial women went to great lengths to reconstruct their environments so that their homes became places that were familiar to them. Women’s domestic endeavors were significant, as Winer goes on to say:

In the face of what they perceived as a giant emptiness, these women went about domesticating their new, and sometimes temporary worlds. It is the activities of immigrant women, as a ‘civilizing’ force that played a central role in the creation of frontier identity. In asserting their domestic values certain women attempted to create a structured predictable domain of respectability, gentility and decorum (Dampier, 2000; 49).

Women played an important role in the colonial project, as they concentrated on domesticating the frontier by imposing their identities as Englishwomen onto the landscape of the Eastern Cape. The most important feature of the frontier is that it represented change, becoming a “shifting, uncertain, contested zone” (ibid, 49). On the one hand, women invoked Victorian traditions in the new territory but at the same time found themselves in conditions of change brought in part by frontier conflict. The effect, is arguably, a condition of ‘sameness’ that was subjected to contingency, not unlike the effect of rusting I created when encrusting my sculptures.

Splitting/ fracturing also finds expression in the mould making process, as the mould mutes all senses and divides the person inside the mould from the outside world. There is then also a divide between the subject being moulded and the object that is produced from the mould, as the object is referential of the subject that was molded. The actual mould making experience also involves the process of splitting/fracturing, as the body double mould is made as a complete one piece mould which at the end has to be cut into two separate parts in order get the person out of the mould and then these parts have to be rejoined to make the actual sculpture. In the process, therefore, the person viewing the mould is subjected to a temporary state that makes a holistic viewing difficult. My nude sculptural figures similarly frustrate the viewer’s gaze by restricting

full access to them. Instead, the viewer will look at the figures through the Camera Obscura and carefully positioned looking devices such as a telescope, binoculars and opera glasses. These will face the chosen buildings on which the figures will be placed, granting the viewers closer access or a 'zoomed in view' of the artworks. The use of these looking devices is important, as it draws attention, self-reflexively, to the politics of looking. By engaging with my figures through different looking devices, the viewer may become more aware of his or her own position as the voyeur.

The notion of a fractured seeing is also significant when engaging with the actual sculptures. My nude figures have closed eyes and therefore do not grant access to the viewer. The effect is that in the process of looking, one is made aware of that very act and its entanglement with relationships of power in part because in the relationships of looking between the two, one is unable to return that gaze. Instead, the viewer encounters an artwork that is seemingly caught up in itself, as it is both available to the public gaze yet it also seems reluctant to be. 'Elite' viewers, viewers whom I have invited to my exhibition, will be the only privileged viewers able to gain access to my figures through the Camera Obscura, while the 'ordinary' viewer on the street will not be granted this 'position of power', by virtue of encountering the figures from the street in closer proximity. Being enclosed inside the mould and the Camera Obscura links effectively to Foucault's theory on docile bodies where he states:

The enclosure of the student within a classroom behind a desk, the drilling of the soldier within the platoon, the surveillance of the prisoner within the cell and the isolation of the patient within the ward were all components in a rigid control of time and space that not only objectified the subject, but created a sense of individualism and heightened self-consciousness (Foucault, 1979: 202-203).

Isolated from other prisoners within his cell and constantly surveyed, a state of conscious and permanent visibility was induced in the inmate that made him regulate his activities according to the rules of the prison (ibid, 202-203). Here, parallels may be drawn with the experience of being cast, in which one's body is enclosed in a rigid structure, restricting movement and breathing, and requiring much discipline and self-control. Thus not unlike the prisoner in the cell and the patient in the ward, what is produced in the process is precisely that, an objectified state of being with a heightened sense of self-consciousness as one views oneself as under surveillance. Indeed, the process produces one into an artwork of sorts.

The main point of access to the works will be through the Camera Obscura, which is located in the Observatory Museum in Grahamstown. The location of the Observatory Museum is very central as it allows the viewers a full 360 degree view of the city. The Camera Obscura will place the viewer in a position of power while observing the works which are up on the buildings. "In cities, surveillance (cameras) make the use of power almost instinctive: people are controlled, categorized, disciplined and normalized without any particular reason" (Koskela, no date: 2). This is a vital statement because by using an aged surveillance device such as the Camera Obscura, I am in a sense placing my viewers in a comparable position of power as that which the guards in the tower of the Panopticon were in; or presently, the person in today's society behind the CCTV camera. People under surveillance are, as in the Panopticon-"to be seen but to never know when or by whom" (Foucault, 1979: 202-203).

The Observatory Museum is a traditional home from the Victorian era which has been left relatively untouched with its display of the original lifestyle of the settlers of the time. This house will act as my exhibition space. Given the entanglement of colonial settlement, surveillance and gender dynamics I have chosen to give some background information about the gendered

stereotypes within the Victorian era, in particular, looking at the average family house-hold setting and how men and women had different prescribed roles to play.

The nineteenth century was controlled by the Victorian era which was an age consisting of distinctive “values, norms and principles”. Acceptability and decorum were central to Victorians whose obsession with keeping up appearances is what maintained the rigid class and gender separations of the time (Dampier, 2000:47). Men and women’s identities were confined within very specific gender roles. Women were stereotypically limited to the private sphere of “domesticity, wifehood and motherhood”, while men were involved in the public sphere of “business, politics and money” (ibid, 47). This is not to say that women’s position was not related to the public domain, “the private, personal image of the nineteenth-century English woman was in her own time indistinctly related to her social place and role.” Broadly speaking, Victorian women were characterised as “weak, shallow, lighthearted, reserved, and obedient and of course, ladylike, with all the manners, dress and affectations this entailed” (ibid, 50).

Dampier (2000) further makes reference to the models of Victorian male and female behaviour which were explained by John Ruskin in a series of lectures given in 1864, entitled “*Of Queen’s Gardens.*” Ruskin identified the ideal of Victorian manhood, the man’s power is “active, progressive, defensive”. He is eminently the “doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender” (ibid, 50). His intellect is for “speculation and invention; his energy for adventure, for war.” Women’s power, on the other hand, was “not for battle, - and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement, and decision.” This “sweet ordering” was restricted to the home, which was described as “a place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division . . . a sacred place” (ibid, 51).

The patriarchal characterization of men as “war-hungry aggressors” drove the colonial enterprise. Settler women did not generally resist the gender roles given to them, and they did not oppose the racism and greed of colonialism (ibid, 54). Victorian ladies were expected to be “prim and reserved” (ibid, 51). According to Dampier (2000:52), the ideal of the “domestic angel” came into conflict with difficult frontier conditions in which survival was a priority. However, keeping up domestic rituals was one way that settler women could maintain their identities and make a contribution to the ‘civilizing’ process at the same time (ibid, 52). By directly instructing or teaching by example, settler women could convey Victorian valued gender roles. In other words, by being the epitome of the English Lady, the white woman could make her contribution toward building the Empire without compromising her ‘femininity’ (ibid, 52). However, the East Cape frontier was a harsh environment which made it difficult for the white women to uphold their gender, race and class position. Moreover, a great deal of anxiety was caused by the contest over identity between colonizers and colonized (Dampier, 2000:53), suggesting that the project of colonial settlement as one of ongoing negotiation over time, mediated in part arguably, by self-conditioning and self-surveillance.

The cultural codes and politics of seeing and being seen are deeply gendered. There is some voyeuristic fascination in looking, in being able to see. It is clear that women have agency over their own practices of looking and can use both direct eye contacts and “technologically mediated gazes” as a means of resisting oppression (Dampier, 2000:53). It is important to note that Victorian life was deeply devoted to forms of public and private performance that entailed a certain degree of self-surveillance, which in turn regulated the body where in the body would perform in the public in highly constructed ways (ibid, 53). Today, it can be argued that the female body is still an object of a gaze in a way that is very different to the way in which the male body is viewed.

Through my exhibition, I hope to highlight how my own subjectivity as a woman in the present day has been shaped by the dynamics of looking or being looked at. It is therefore important that the sculptures are casts of my own vulnerable, naked body occupying key sites, both literally and metaphorically.

This has led me to make use of specifically chosen gendered spaces within this traditional Victorian household and buildings within Grahamstown to highlight aspects of the gendered gaze. Inside the Observatory Museum, I will place two figures and my actual mould for closer and more detailed scrutiny by the viewers of the exhibition. Located in the house is one room labeled, “The Victorian Man” (figure 6). I found this an appealing gendered space in which to place one of my figures. The room consists of a table in the middle of the room surrounded by chairs, there are several books lying both open and closed on the table and on the right hand side of the room there is a large wooden and glass bookcase against the wall, filled with books. There is also a male mannequin standing looking towards the bookcase. On either side of the room are two giant standing globes and to the left of the room, are several paintings on the wall.

One’s sense of the room is that the room is that it is very boastful, as it contains items of knowledge and education which was mainly only experienced by the men in the Victorian era. Women’s access to scientific knowledge was restricted in comparison in this era. The two globes in the room relate to the ideas of exploration and science which are discourses that characterize the colonial era. These globes also relate to the ideas of ‘seeing’ the world and seeing it from a distance. In addition, a taxidermied Wildebeest head can also be found on the wall in the centre of the room, suggestive of the notion of control over the natural world through capturing, measuring and careful observation.

It is worth pointing out as well that the nineteenth century was the great age of scientific advancement and the bridge leading to the technology of today. The enthusiasm shown in the Victorian times for scientific experimentation and discovery is therefore epitomized in the Camera Obscura, the Meridian Room, Turret Clock and Galpin's Telescope, which are all spaces or objects that can be seen within the Observatory Museum. These were all discoveries and inventions made by men of the time. Here one can discern the gendered discourses of 'invention', scientific knowledge and 'discovery', which in turn, located women only in the house-hold having to provide the meals, sew the clothes and raise the children. Another aspect worth noting is that there are no mirrors in the Victorian man's room, while the woman's dressing room has four mirrors in it. This is suggestive of gendered differentials with regards to visibility as well, whereby women would regard themselves as being on display for men who visited the household, and arguably, for the general populace. Therefore, I have chosen to place the figure who is clenching her fists in the Victorian Man's room (figure 7), as it has a defiant, less vulnerable posture and it will seem as if she is challenging the male figure in the room. My figure is being passively confrontational as she has an upright static, almost militaristic pose and is looking the male mannequin in the eye, yet her eyes are closed. I will install a sound piece in this room as well, a voice recording of a man reciting parts of the written history about the difference in gender during the Victorian era. The effect will be that of a dialogical encounter between past and present, and between the two kinds of representations, the museum and the mine, that confront one another.

The next room that I have chosen to place a figure is in the downstairs area. It would have been the old dining room. It is a very dark, damp, subterranean room with no windows. It is very deep down in the museum, a space that would probably not usually have been seen. It is referential of an unconscious space as it will be pitch dark and only my figure in the centre of the room will be

lit up. It is particularly an uncomfortable space to be in as it feels very claustrophobic and the damp smell makes you not want to linger for too long. This would have been where the woman of the house would have spent a lot of time while setting the table and preparing the meals. This figure will have specifically positioned magnifying glasses which light up attached to certain parts of her body, magnifying these specific vulnerable areas of the nude female form (figure 8). The effect is that of exemplifying the condition of being-looked-at and at the same time subvert the notion of looking, by exposing the figure to close up scrutiny. An interesting point to note is that her eyes are closed. In this manner, she is both embodying the female subject and is under a degree of surveillance but simultaneously confronts the viewers which then turn her into a mute object. While in this space, observing the close up figure, I plan to have a surveillance installation piece in the room which leads off the dining room, in which I will install a projection piece that will play footage of the viewers observing the figure in the previous room (figure 9). This will further draw attention to the notion of subjection to visibility in ways that make the viewers uncomfortable in that as they realize that they have been videoed and watched during my exhibition, they will in turn see themselves in fact as participants in these politics of surveillance. Subsequently, through this surveillance piece, I hope to highlight the notion of ‘looking back’. It becomes significant, therefore, that I make use of this room as it is an underground space, a space which nobody would want to be in and in part, symbolizes the “peeping tom” quietly sitting in a hidden, dirty, damp room hidden from the world, but secretly observing it at the same time.

I plan to light up and install my actual mould within the space of the Observatory museum given its centrality in the exhibition (Figure 10). I would like to play with the notion of the empty shell. A mould “shapes” something and restricts the person inside it. Similarly, settler women were disadvantaged in several ways which locked or restricted them into their domestic roles. The notion

of a restrictive device and process such as the mould becomes poignant then given its homologies with the conditions of Victorian life for women. However, this is arguably, not simply a historical phenomenon as it finds resonance in contemporary times whereby the visibility of women is conjoined in part with the naturalization of the domestic sphere as a feminine space.

Similarly to Gormley, I would like to release my viewers from the constraints of traditional sculpture, being on plinths and in a traditional gallery setting, by placing five figures up on buildings where they are no longer physically accessible to the viewer. In this sense, the installation implicates the viewer as an active looking subject. The geographical structure of Grahamstown differs greatly from the metropolitan spaces of New York and Brazil, where Gormley displayed his figures. The design of Grahamstown was a particularly militaristic structure, strategically planned and built as the centre of trade and defense (Robson, Oranje, No date: 19). The physical form of the colonial planned town, grid-like with wide streets, embodied the classical ideals of symmetry, order and proportion. (ibid, 19). By making my viewers aware of the geographical structure and militaristic design of Grahamstown, this might impact their engagement with the works, as they will begin to realize how the town was designed around ideas of surveillance and observation.

I have chosen five specific buildings in which to place five of my figures in Grahamstown; namely a pink building adjacent to the City Hall (figure 11), an old store called Birch's (figure 12), a space which has been declared a national monument next to Lewis stores a furniture shop (figure 13), the very top of the building adjacent to the Magistrates Court (figure 14) and the Observatory Museum itself (figure 15). Arguably, these five buildings are good examples of places where gendered subjectivity is framed and policed. Birch's has always been a clothing shop in Grahamstown, since the settlers' days. As a clothing shop, therefore, it becomes a strategic space

to place one of my figures, as a clothing shop is always a space of self-conscious observation surrounded by reflections of oneself via mirrors. But in addition to this, Birch's is the only place for students to rent their graduation gowns from, granting it as not only a place affiliated with discourses of science and knowledge but also that of achievement or mastery. City Hall would have been the place where the men during the Victorian era would hold meetings to discuss town matters. Women would not have been seen in a space such as this. Therefore in making use of the smaller and less prominent and imposing pink building that is adjacent to it, I hope to draw attention to the peripheral occupation of the public realm by women in this era, an occupation, which, as noted, simultaneously constituted women as objects of display. It becomes important to the installation, therefore, that the female figure on top of this building appears to occupy it almost ambivalently, and rather than locate herself in a position of dominance, of looking-over, she appears almost precarious by virtue of being seen by the public. This leads me to the next point with regards to Gormley's work, my initial point of departure for this work.

The main differences between Gormley's work and mine are that his includes masculine figures with defiant poses that appear to dominate the horizon, while my vulnerable female figures will be a critical inversion of Gormley's work as I will be immersing the figures into the landscape and architecture of Grahamstown, far from a position of power over the horizon. Subsequently, they explore the tension between the motifs of invisibility and visibility. As such, the figures will be situated on the lower veranda roofs of the buildings such that the effect is one of being immersed in the city itself. Another notable difference is that, my figures will mainly be accessible through the Camera Obscura, while Gormley's were not. His location of Manhattan was far more commercial, dense and metropolitan than Grahamstown. More importantly, through placing the viewers in the Camera Obscura they will actively perform the condition of fracturing of the body

and mind that comes with surveillance, even as they too may take up a position of power. Thus in a sense, one can imagine my viewer looking through the Obscura as similar to Gormley's figure that looks over the city, generating some discomfort over the populace.

Similarly to Gormley, I hope that my figures will also encourage the people of Grahamstown to become more observant and be more aware of the making of their surroundings, of how they too have become produced through the space. Like Gormley, I also find the stillness of the sculpture and the stillness of the viewer particularly fascinating, as my viewers will be in the effective space for self-observation and contemplation in the Camera Obscura. The stillness of the sculpture, situated in the moving image of the Camera Obscura will become an exciting point of inversion. In both Gormley and my own work, the viewer becomes the viewed in some sense. In Vogel (2010:27) Gormley explained, "Like a statue", the bystanders "become static sculptures themselves looking up". It is the tension between mobility and immobility and the exercise of power through the gaze and its disciplinary techniques, which are central to my project. Additionally, in a way, my static sculptures subvert disrupt the subject/object, active and passive dyad dichotomies which Mulvey speaks about in that the 'passive object' (my sculptures) become the active subjects as they act upon the environment becoming temporarily animated.

Conclusion

Throughout this mini thesis, I have explored the basic notion of the gaze in order to contextualize my sculptures. I have referred to the artist Suzanne Valadon who works with notions of the gaze in her paintings and I have used theory by Laura Mulvey to further elaborate on the ideas of the voyeuristic gaze. As mentioned in previous chapters, the project arose out of personal experiences of self-consciousness and feelings of vulnerability particularly in my teenage years, a condition which is far from unique but arises in part, in a social context where particular gender discourses abound with regards to the female body. It is therefore significant that the figures are nude figures of myself, opening myself up in my most vulnerable state to be looked at by the city of Grahamstown. I hope to thereby highlight how women are subjected to the voyeuristic gaze of the male viewer and explain how the politics of seeing and being seen are deeply gendered. Moreover, the reference to and use of Grahamstown as the research location has been made specifically because of the extent to which the town's structure and its architecture themselves are deeply intertwined with visuality, a point I drew attention to in my fourth year exhibition. Thus my master's project is expansive on two levels: it is firstly an extension of a set of arguments made from my fourth year research and secondly, attempts to locate my experiences in a broader historical and geographical context.

I have compared my figures to the figurative sculptures of Antony Gormley, particularly looking at his installation *Event Horizon*. Importantly, some differences abound in that while Gormley's figures are placed over the horizon and present themselves as though imposing over the cityscape, I have placed mine in more inconspicuous spaces such that they are carefully integrated into the actual city of Grahamstown, positioned on the lower veranda roofs of buildings. The effect is

arguably, one of an ambivalent occupation of space. As such the gendering of the figures becomes significant. Like Gormley, I too have created figures from my own body. However, while Gormley's figures have been criticized for their excessive masculinity (Mitchell 1996), an aspect that finds expression as well in their actual placement in the landscape, by creating nude female figures whose very occupation of space appears unresolved, I hope to critically draw attention to the effects that result from forms of surveillance to which the female body is subjected.

I began by providing a history of the establishment of Grahamstown as a settler town, focusing on its design and its interconnectedness with surveillance. As noted, from its inception as an urban space, Grahamstown was riddled with conflict as a result of a series of frontier colonial wars. Out of such, a number of buildings were established under a military regime oriented around placing its occupants under observation. Buildings in Grahamstown that were used by the military during the Victorian era, such as the Panopticon prison, Fort Selwyn and the Camera Obscura were all designed as spaces of observation. The Camera Obscura, a central site not only in town but in my research as well, was used as a tool to track people's whereabouts in the town. As such, it remains intimately tied to the range of militaristic discourses of surveillance and control through visibility despite its use for civic purposes. Indeed, its use is in part, illustrative of Foucault's argument that draws parallels between military discipline and the discipline of the body under modern forms of power which make the distinction between the military and the civic porous.

This is a point which I elaborate on in the second chapter by invoking Foucault's writing on the panopticon and surveillance. A key argument is made, via Foucault and Jonathan Crary, about how such forms of visibility engender docile bodies. However, I extend these arguments through Laura Mulvey's theoretical deliberations, for whom such a gaze is in fact a gendered form of looking. For Mulvey, in the act of spectatorship, the one engaged in the act of looking is implicitly placed

in a masculine role that renders the subject being looked at vulnerable, turning him/her into an object of gaze. Thus an account for the process of making the figures becomes significant then, as it illustrates this very dynamic, turning the sensuous subject into a mute one to be on display. In other words, the very process of making the artwork and the final works become more than symbolic or representative, but enact the theoretical argument that underpins my research.

To further expound on these points and in order to make discursive connections between Grahamstown's past and contemporary politics of the gaze, I gave a brief description of the gendered stereotypical roles that men and women had to play during the Victorian era to further explain my carefully thought out installation in the Observatory Museum, which was also a house during the Victorian era. As noted in the thesis, in the context of colonial military administration that also invoked Victorian norms, men were positioned as 'actors' or agents in the world, who 'discover' it, 'invent', and importantly, 'observe' it. On the other hand, Victorian discourse placed much emphasis on female decorum and manners, tasking women to subject themselves to relatively high degrees of self-surveillance and arguably, normalized self-consciousness. This is suggested in the very representation of the Victorian rooms by the Observatory Museum curatorial efforts whereby the gentleman's room contains items that speak of exploration and knowledge, while rooms set aside 'for women' suggest a more complex dynamic around women's visibility: on the one hand women were partially removed from the public realm in ways that naturalized the domestic space as a feminine one, on the other hand, women were under much surveillance as Victorian ladies. It is precisely with this in mind that I chose to place one of the figures in the Victorian man's room to appear as though to be challenging the male mannequin in the room. The notion of a still figure that 'acts' back at its public is indeed, an overriding concern with which I began, that is, to create artwork that is not simply representative but generates its own effect

amongst viewers. In this sense, I hope to subvert the notion of the 'object' as passive, insignificant and powerless by creating and placing figures in such a way that they produce self-reflexivity among viewers. Unlike Gormley's figures that achieve their 'power' through size, placement and form, in my artwork such 'power', I hope, arises out of the viewers' *engagement* with the very condition of vulnerability of the figures, both in their form and in their placement on different buildings in Grahamstown in the public realm. That is to say, the artwork ultimately becomes relational, predicated on the actual interaction between still figure and viewer, far removed from colonial officials, scientists and explorers that engaged the world from a distance, through various Camera Obscuras.

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Illustrations

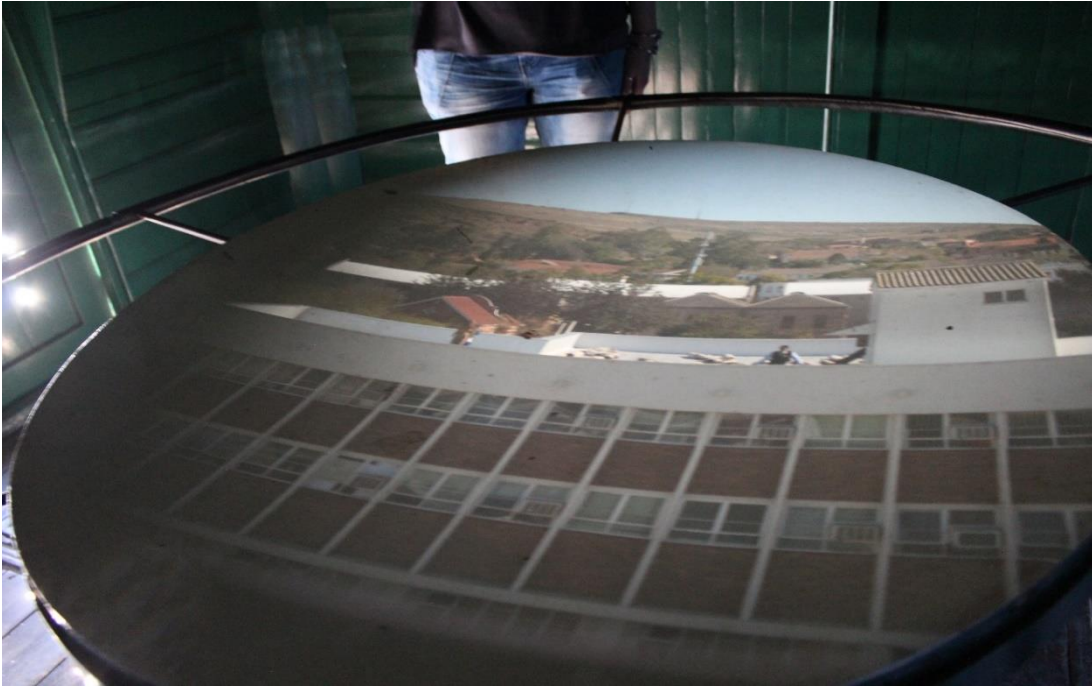


Figure 1



Figure 2

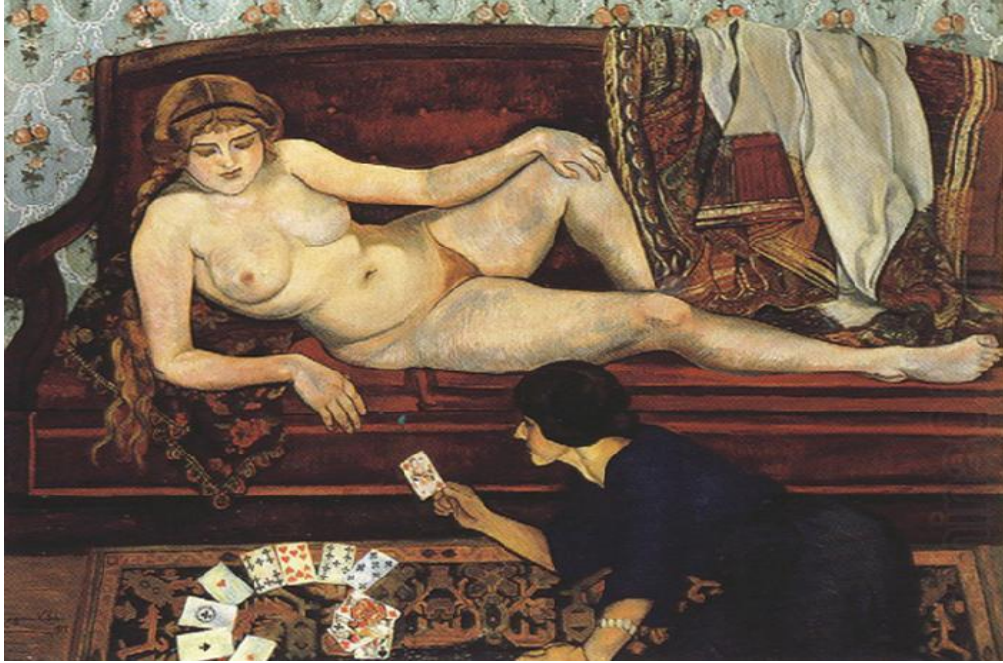


Figure 3

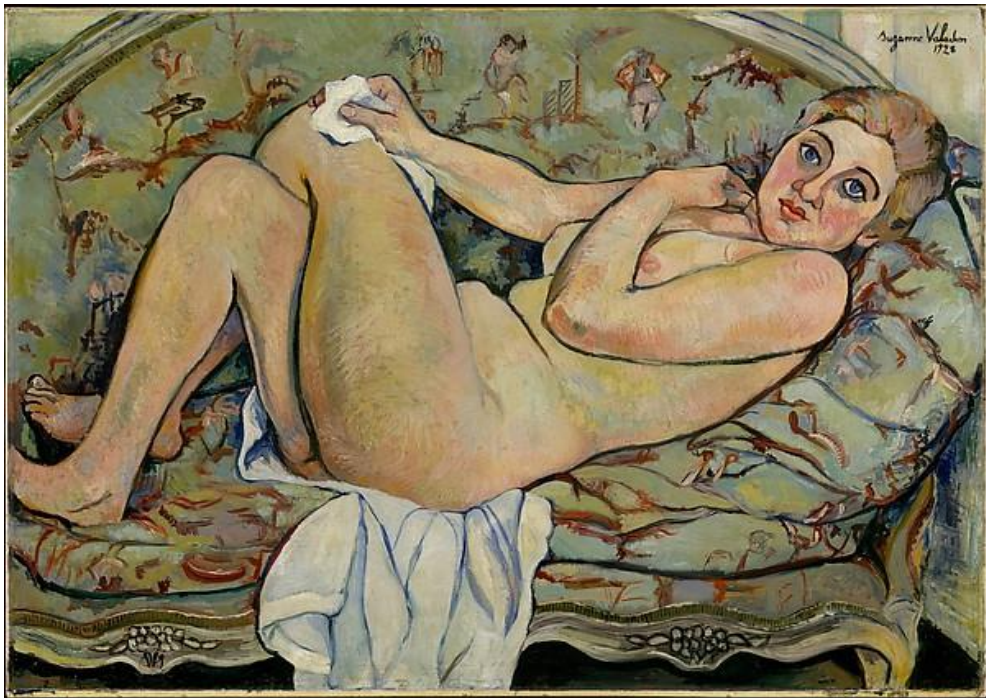


Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15