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ANXIOUS OBJECTS AND EVERYDAY LIFE

BY

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this discussion is to survey the tradition of producing *anxious objects*, objects which are intended to provoke anxiety in 20th century art, for example this can apply to the work of Damien Hirst and Helen Chadwick. An *anxious object* is defined here as any object, installation or visual thing that the artist uses to provoke a reaction of anxiety by virtue of its shocking and visceral qualities, thus creating an unsettling tension in the onlooker. The *anxious object* is mainly represented by these artists through an animal symbol/body/body-parts or the internal organs.

The history of the *anxious object* relates to the history of Surrealism. The surrealists employed objects that would shock and attack the morals and beliefs of their audience, to jolt the audience into engaging with the artwork and to create within the viewer a dialogue concerning social issues. This has similarities with the artistic aims and devices used by Damien Hirst and Helen Chadwick.

There are certain reasons why a sensation of anxiety may be generated by the presence of animal bodies or their internal organs. This can be examined by taking a look at what the symbol of the animal means both in the work of Damien Hirst and Helen Chadwick and in society. Psychoanalytic theories have described how recognition of the self may come about. For example this is theorised in the writing of Jacques Lacan. Similarly Kristeva's theories of abjection give an insight into how and why the visceral scenes of animals and their interiors brought to us by Hirst and Chadwick have such a powerful effect on the viewer.



Fairytales and myths is broken into four sections. The first section takes into consideration the sublime and how a threatening object or situation can have a beneficial effect for society.

The second section illustrates the need to face the sublime and the horrors of life through another form of media that uses animal symbology and shock tactics (as do Hirst and Chadwick) that being the Fairytale.

The third section moves onto other forms of media, myths and movies. Showing that these elements (i.e. anxiety provoking objects or visuals via theories already expressed above) are employed widely by artists not only in art galleries but in literature and on the big screen, in fact they span the boundaries of media representation and society.

This chapter finally culminates with a discussion of the horror film the *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* as possessing many of the qualities ascribed to the sensation of anxiety.



CHAPTER I

SURREAL INSPIRATION

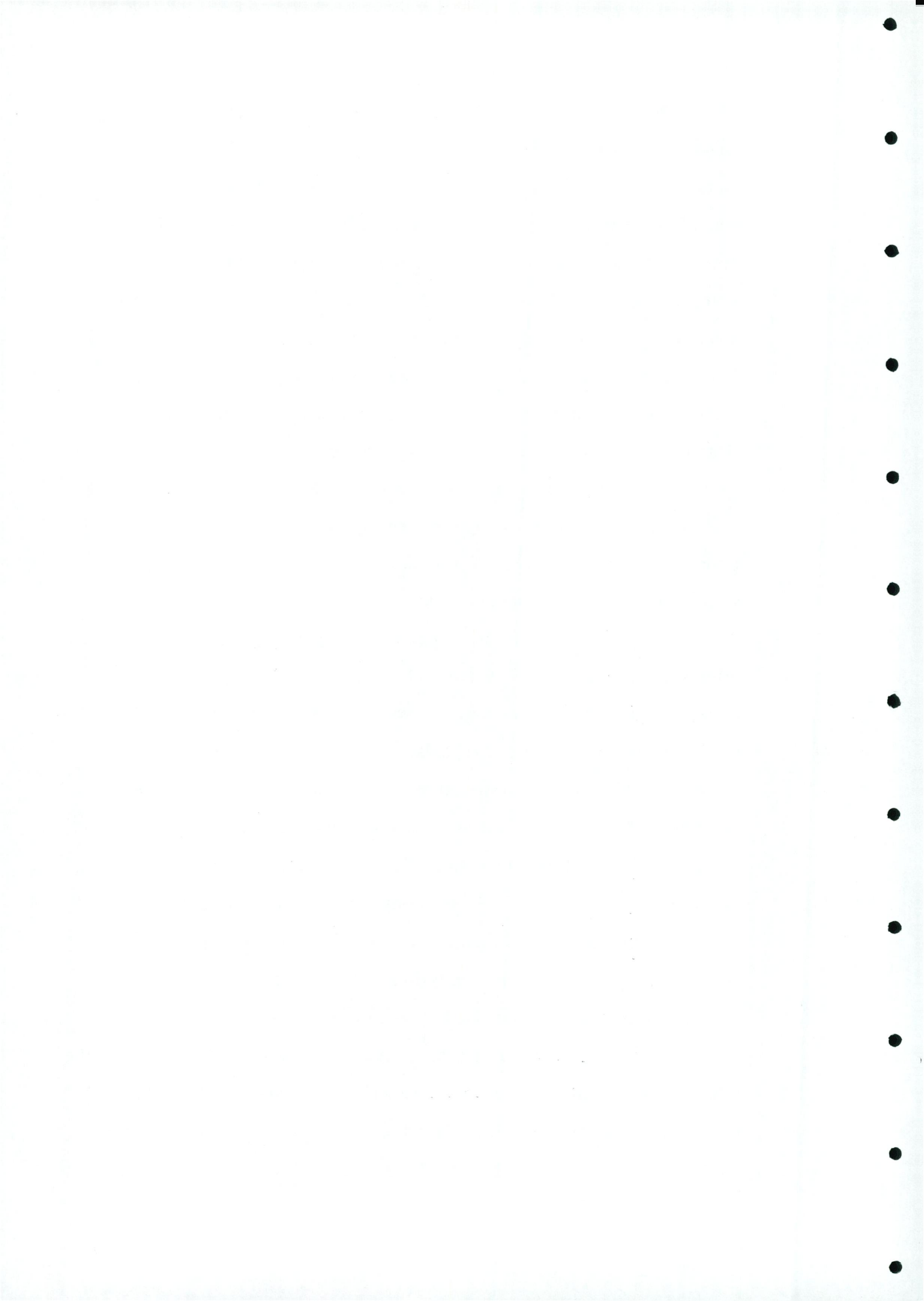
The history of the *anxious object* relates to the history and ideas of Surrealism. The *anxious object* can be defined as an object that has the power to communicate to the viewer a sense of uneasiness or anxiety whilst simultaneously conveying a message or a warning. One reason artists use objects to create tension in the onlooker is because of their physical presence and the immediacy with which they can convey a concept. Andre Breton, founder of surrealism, talks at length about the force of the object as compared to the force of other media such as painting, in his 1928 manifesto *Surrealism and Painting*. Here he states that the object, like a shock to the system is much more efficient at conveying a message or a concept.

Surrealists have long been concerned with the object and its powers of communication. They experimented with *objets trouves*, with the possibility that the meanings of these objects are subject to change. Every object was regarded by the surrealists as a “disturbing and arbitrary being ” (Chipp, 1984, p. 418) and was credited with having multiple connotations. Various concepts could be achieved by using one particular object in different situations. This aspect is echoed in the art of Damien Hirst with his consistent use of the cow, sometimes evoking questions about religion sometimes questioning the transience of life.



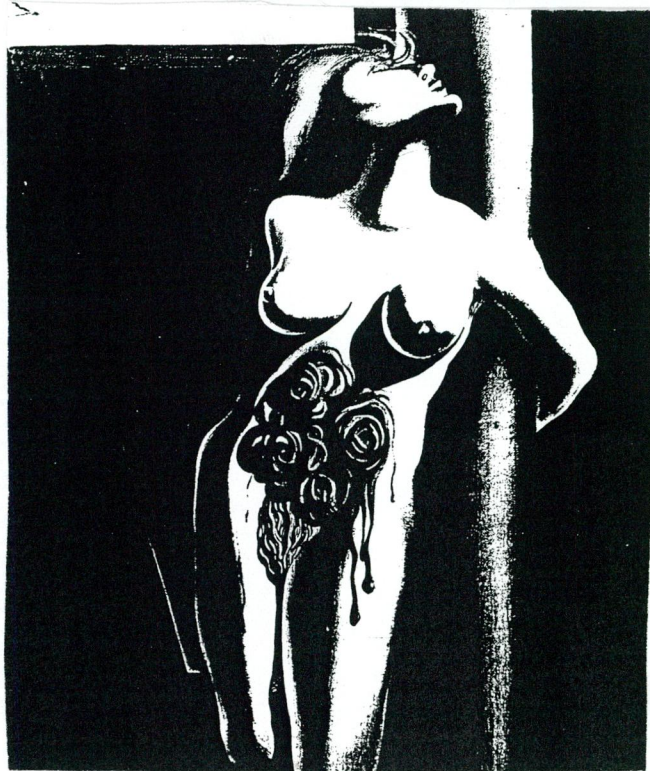
The surrealists experiments in automatism such as the *Exquisite Corpse* drawings yielded a great source of inspiration metamorphosing objects and situations along with their chance convoluted titles. It consisted of a drawing made by several people, but none of them got to see what the one before had drawn or written. For example, a drawing by Breton, Man Ray, Morise and Yves Tanguy. (Plate 1 p 8), many of the results were published in *La Revolution surrealiste*, such as 'The winged vapour seduces the locked bird'. Both of the artists that I am dealing with in this essay (Damien Hirst and Helen Chadwick) also use convoluted titles to enhance the ideas their artworks portray. This aspect of their work will be discussed later in a comparison with a surrealist artist Leonora Carrington. A brief account of surrealism illustrates other similarities between these artists.

Surrealism came to prominence in the early 1920's having its origins in the art of the Dadaists. It was a literary as well as artistic movement and poetry was at its centre. Many of the artists were also poets for example, Meret Oppenheim and Andre Breton. Breton, founder of surrealism published his manifesto in 1924, and the evolution of surrealism is merged almost completely with him. Only Breton could grant the title surrealist to an artist! He then imposed disciplines of action and of dreaming on members. Surrealists were greatly interested in the theories of Freud, especially those concerning the unconscious and dreams. They tried to channel these aspects of the mind along with unreason to create art. Surrealist art has often been deemed brutal and savage in its portrayal of what the mind holds buried deep in the recesses of the unconscious. Much of male surrealist art contained a kind of erotic violence or an assault on the female form as in Dali's *The Bleeding Roses* 1930, (plate 2, p8)

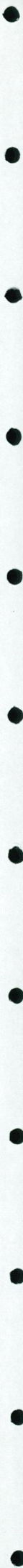




(Plate 1) Exquisite Corpse Drawing by Breton, Man Ray, Max Morise and Yves Tanguy, 1928.



(Plate 2) The Bleeding Roses by Salvador Dali, 1930.

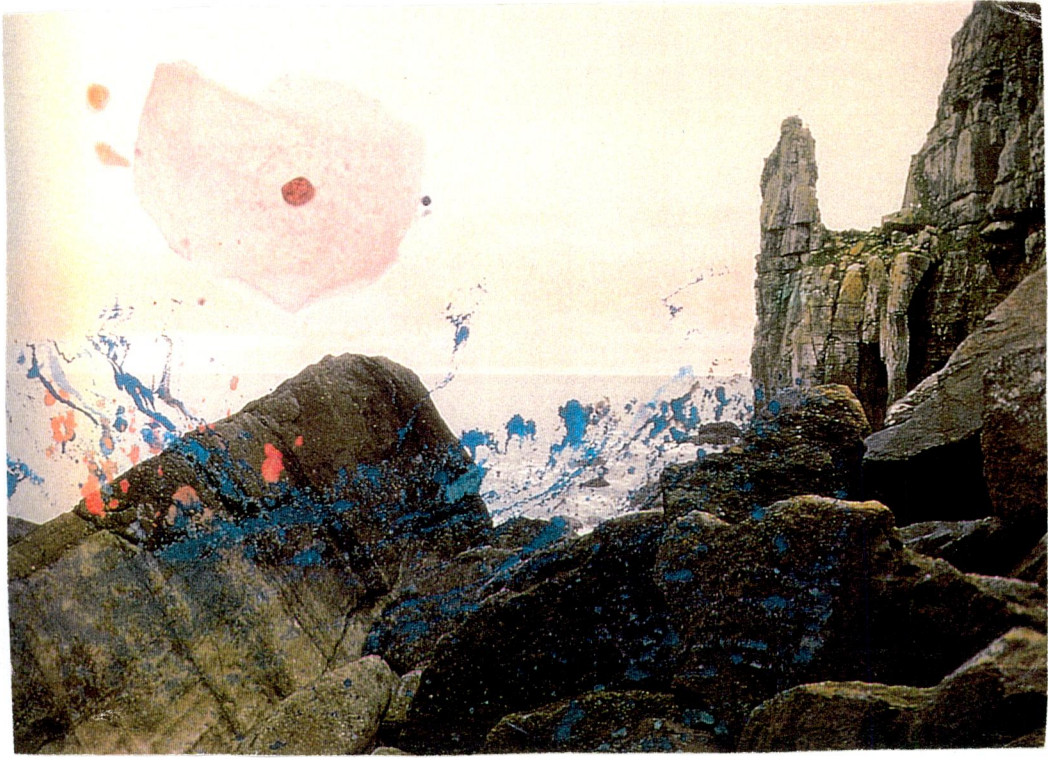


Bleeding Roses take the place of eggs in the womb symbolising passion, pain and death; the inside is presented on the outside. Both Hirst and Chadwick brutally present us with savage internal views of the body of ourselves and of society via the peeled bodies of animals in various states of preservation and decay.

Almost all of the female artists involved in surrealism used an autobiographical approach in their work. Some used their own images in representation, to tell a story about themselves, as distinct from male surrealists who rarely used self portraiture in their paintings and favoured the use of the female form or the *femme-enfant*. It is interesting to note that Helen Chadwick repeatedly uses her own image in her work striving to make "*autobiographies of sensation*" (ICA video). For example, in "*Of Mutability*" (plate page p32), she used photocopied images of her body alongside images of animal bodies. She has even used her own body cells in the work entitled "*Viral Landscapes*" (plate 3 page 10). Hirst, like the male surrealists before him, consistently opts to use bodies other than his own.

Surrealists often used animal symbology in various representations of human, everyday objects and vegetable matter to create new and different levels of understanding in their work. Leonara Carrington a female surrealist chose this approach in her painting *Self Portrait* 1938,(plate 4 page 10) where her hair resembles a mane identifying her with the rocking horse in the room. (Isolated, immobile, restricted) and with a real horse outside the window, (a free spirit running wild). Also present is a hyena with enlarged breasts representing a devouring element. This type of representation engages the animals as Totems, alter-egos and mirror





(Plate 3), Viral Landscapes, Helen Chadwick, 1988-89 .



(Plate 4), Self Portrait, Leonara Carrington, 1938.



images for the artist, much in the same way Hirst and Chadwick use animal bodies as an expression of human nature and human drives.

Leonora Carrington employed a technique much used in surrealism to bring extra meanings into her work by naming her totem animal, a horse, Tartar in her early short story *The Oval Lady*. The word tartar bears links to the Greek under-world, to Celtic myths and is a double anagram of art; it also reads rat rat in a mirror. The imbuing of so many meanings into the name of a totem animal, combining puns, ideologies, traditions and mythologies to create new meanings or to open up other avenues of thought is an aspect carried out by many surrealists but also by Hirst and Chadwick.

Both artists give extravagant titles to their pieces. For example, Hirst's, *Isolated Elements Swimming in The Same Direction For The Purpose of Understanding, 1991*, (plate 5 page 13) consists of 38 fish, each a different species. They are pickled in perspex boxes, all facing the same way, which can be seen as a metaphor for human nature. The way in which people are all headed the same way and all are searching for an answer but keep themselves separated. Hirst offers us many such other pieces bearing titles with conundrums and paradoxes within. He has stated in an interview with Adrian Dannat, that he wants to make a piece called *Objects Given to Me by Women Individual and Unique*, in *Flash Art*, No. 169 p. 61. "You don't know if the women are individual and unique or the objects are".

Helen Chadwick also bestows her artworks with intriguing titles, which cause us to give both the title and the art work extra attention and contemplation. The 1993 piece *Glossolalia* (plate 6, page 13) consists of fleshy lambs tongues that Chadwick herself

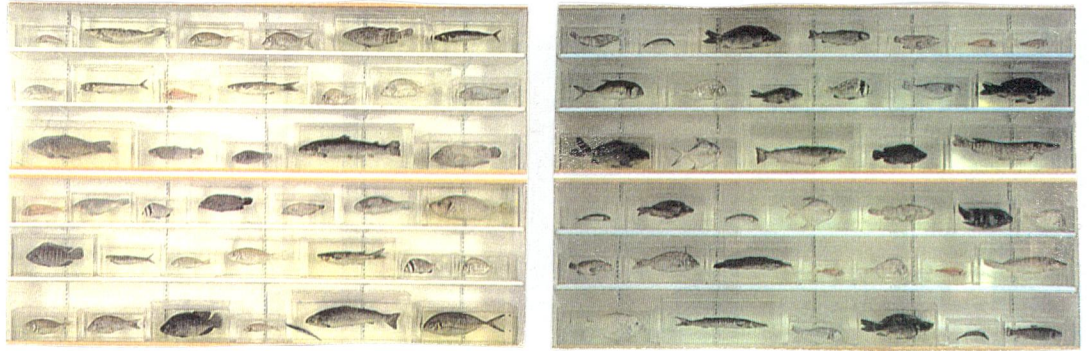


stitched together and created into a new form which she then cast in bronze describing them as a “hundred tiny penises”(Chadwick, Effluvia.). The lapping tongues resemble water flowing from a fountain head, at the top. Five little tongues open around a hole, creating a kind of anal orifice; thus, Chadwick introduces an air of ambiguity to the piece as regards its gender:

It's no longer a singular phallus.
You could read all of the tongues as
a cluster of phallic forms, but no more
than the corolla of a flower. I wanted to
make a work that would play off now
you read gender and yet be impossible
to define, so that a phallic structure is
not simplistically penile and something
more supposedly feminine also doesn't
quite live up to that stereotyping.
(Chadwick, Bad Girls, ICA. CCA.).

The title of the piece *Glossolalia*, reflects the content of the piece. To pronounce it, you must use your tongue in an almost tongue twister fashion, thus providing us with a type of onomatopoeia.

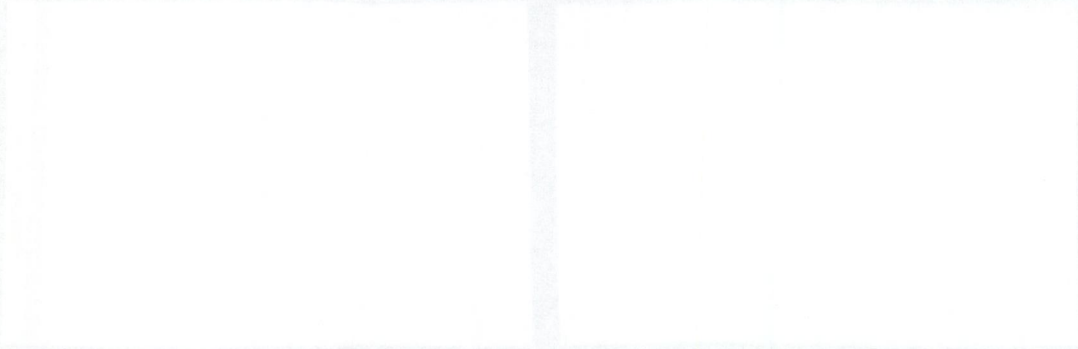




(Plate 5), Isolated Elements Swimming in The Same Direction For The Purpose of Understanding, Damien Hirst, (1991).



(Plate 6), Glossolalia, Helen Chadwick, 1993.



SHOCK TACTICS.

In 1928, Andre Breton published *Le Surrealisme et la peinture*, to describe more clearly the intention of surrealist painting. In it, he stated that:

If the plastic arts are to meet the need for a complete revision of real values on which all minds today are agreed, they must therefore either seek a purely interior model or cease to exist”(Alexandrian, 1993 p.60).

It seems from the previous example of artworks by Hirst and Chadwick that they are once again addressing the need for a complete revision of real values. They offer us no definite answers; they simply pose us with the question for our own contemplation and judgement.

From 1930 onwards Surrealist Art became more harsh, more violent and ever more impatient to influence social life. Surrealist artists had now gained an awareness of the power to disturb and to seduce and had acquired the methods through which they sought to achieve their aims. The Surrealists wanted to see an end to the capitalist society and help advance the proletariat. Breton even tried to persuade left-wing organisations that propaganda was simply not enough for a revolutionary art. It must be an art that approached human desires afresh. However, he urged his artist friends not to give in to pleasing the audience, as he states in Second Manifesto:

The Approval of the public must be avoided above all.... The public must be held exasperated at the door by a system of taunts and provocations.
(Alexandrian 1993, p, 95)



Salvador Dali was the product of a combination of everything the surrealist movement had acquired, but according to Alexandrian:

his determination to 'cretinize' the public (a reminder of Dada), his 'cannibalism' (A reminder of Picabia), and his appeal for bad taste (A reminder of Breton's statement; I force myself to go further than anyone else in the bad taste of the age'), acquired transcendent power because of his fanatical egocentricity.[...] He became the protagonist of a tragic-comedy of art, in which his actions and his gestures contributed to the emotional charge of his painting. (Alexandrian, 1993,).

Damien Hirst's explosive arrival on the art scene echoes that of Dali. Newspaper columns are constantly brimming over with reports of Hirst's latest artistic exploits. Whether it is the exhibition of a cow and calf sawn in half, in *Mother and Child Divided*, (plate 7, page 17) or the rotting carcasses of two cows in *Couple Fucking Dead Twice*. The reactions of animal rights activists provide additional publicity, some of who are outraged by his work so much that they try to destroy it while its on exhibition. For surrealists an exhibition was the prime opportunity to invite the public to a festival of the imagination that would both excite and confuse them. The purpose of such an event was that all taking part would be torn between amusement and anger, enthusiasm and indignation. As Alexandrian describes it:

It was a matter of creating a stimulating environment, an atmosphere that would enhance the spectator's receptiveness and arouse in him at the same time laughter, revulsion and desire, so that he was bound to approach the painting

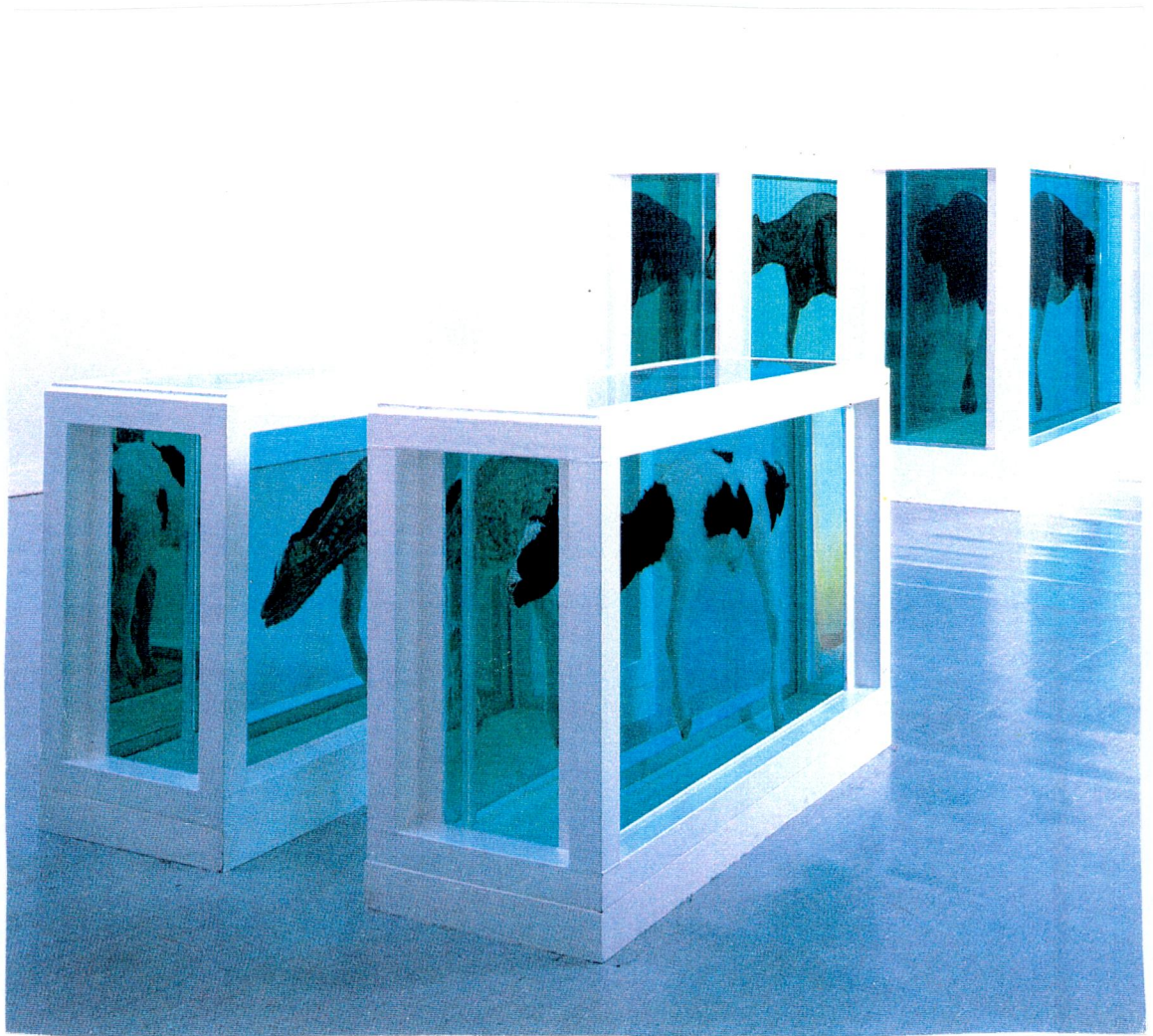


and sculpture in a state of emotional disturbance. (Alexandrian, 1993, p151).

Both Damien Hirst and Helen Chadwick bring their audience on a similar journey through various emotions. They both use similar devices to the surrealists to excite and confuse the audience whilst simultaneously enticing and repulsing them.

Helen Chadwick's pieces for the exhibition **Bad Girls** at the ICA is likened to "*the surrealist traditions of Louise Bourgeois and Meret Oppenheim*" (ICA catalogue **Bad Girls**, foreword), because of her unsettling use of taboo materials: the "*unacceptable use of animal skin, their fetishistic, bestial quality and subversive scrutiny of the body*" (Cherry Smith, **Bad Girls** ICA). This exhibition also contained *Glossolalia* a work that intrigues the audience because it confounds gender, it's shiny bronze surface attracts the viewers yet simultaneously keeps them at bay, due to the viscerally repellent lambs tongues, surrounded by animal pelts. It is obvious from this example that Chadwick has succeeded in creating an environment of anxiety for the spectator much in the same way as the surrealists have with their exhibitions.





(Plate 7), Mother and Child Divided, Damien Hirst, 1993.



CHAPTER II

PSYCHOLOGICAL ANXIETIES

ANIMAL SYMBOLOGY

This section examines the reasons for the sensation of anxiety when faced by the *anxious objects* within the work of Damien Hirst and of Helen Chadwick, by taking a closer look at their use of the animal and its symbology, because the object that makes us anxious in their work is generally some form of animal. By using an animal image in their work, artists open the possibility of a huge variety of responses to that image. This is simply because human responses to animal images, symbols and animals themselves are inconsistent, fearing the animal in one instance and sentimentalising them the next. Of late, the animal has become a mode of expression for contemporary ideas of human identity, because of its ability to provoke hatred, fear or concern and regret, sometimes encompassing one or all of these aspects. The animal can be seen as man's anxiety about his own so called animal nature, something that should be tamed or repressed.

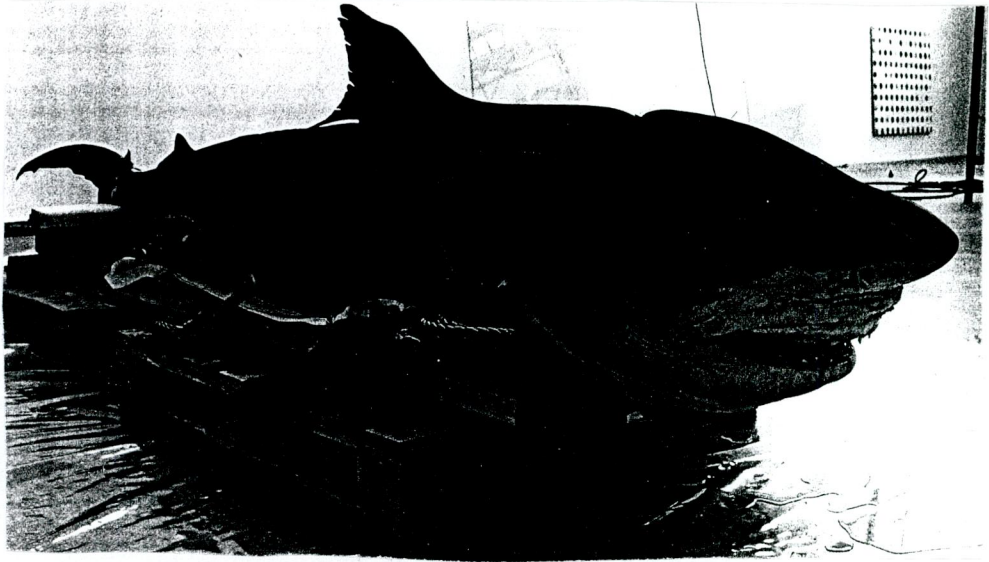
Hirst takes what could be called on one level an inquiry into 'man's' animal nature across boundaries. By presenting sliced open bodies not this time for public consumption in the line of nutrition, but for the aesthetic contemplation of such a process. Hirst has in fact managed to reach a good cross-section of society through his explorations of the trials of life. With his preserved tiger shark and divided cows he has attracted a huge public following who gasp at his sculptures wondering what he will dare to do next. What is it that gives his images the power to provoke such strong reactions that it drives a member of the public filled with outrage to vandalise the



piece *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living* (i.e. the tiger shark) (plate 8, page 20) with dog shit? One element is Hirst's use of shock, which he employs in his work along with the ongoing exploration of universal hopes and fears, plus the classic themes of love and death. Hirst uses animals that he knows have a strong shock value, animals with certain stereotypes attached to them because of their status in the food chain or because of myths and legends attributed to them. He maintains that "*rather than be personal you have to find universal triggers. Everyone's frightened of glass, everyone's frightened of sharks, everyone loves butterflies*" (Hirst, *Flash Art*, no 169, p61), for example, *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*", blatantly exploits a fear of sharks. Hirst's attitude takes full advantage of the stereotypical position that the shark holds in contemporary culture. This is due in part to its link to popular culture in films such as *Jaws*. The success of the piece depends upon our being in the same room as a real, 16ft tiger shark, towards which most of us will have a prejudiced reaction of fear and fascination. The title of the piece serves also to enhance these reactions.

Similarly, with the piece "*In and Out of Love*" (plate 9, page 20), Hirst can almost guarantee that the audience will feel pleasure tinged with sadness at the sight of the living and dead butterflies. "*In and Out of Love*" (1991) was an installation in a space off Oxford Street in London. Malaysian butterflies attached to white canvases hatched, their entire lives spent in the gallery with a simulated tropical climate, eating, mating, laying eggs and dying. In another part of the building specimens were embedded into painted canvases, dead yet beautiful. Anxiety lies here for us because Hirst

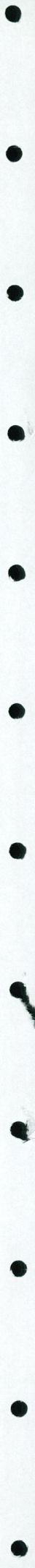




(Plate 8), Tiger shark before placement in tank, 1991,
Damien Hirst.



(Plate 9), In and Out of Love, Damien Hirst, 1991.



knows how to evoke emotions in the viewer; he presents us with the ephemeral nature of life, hence we end up asking ourselves about life, living, death, etc. The butterflies become a symbol of our own existence, of the purpose of life and its brevity.

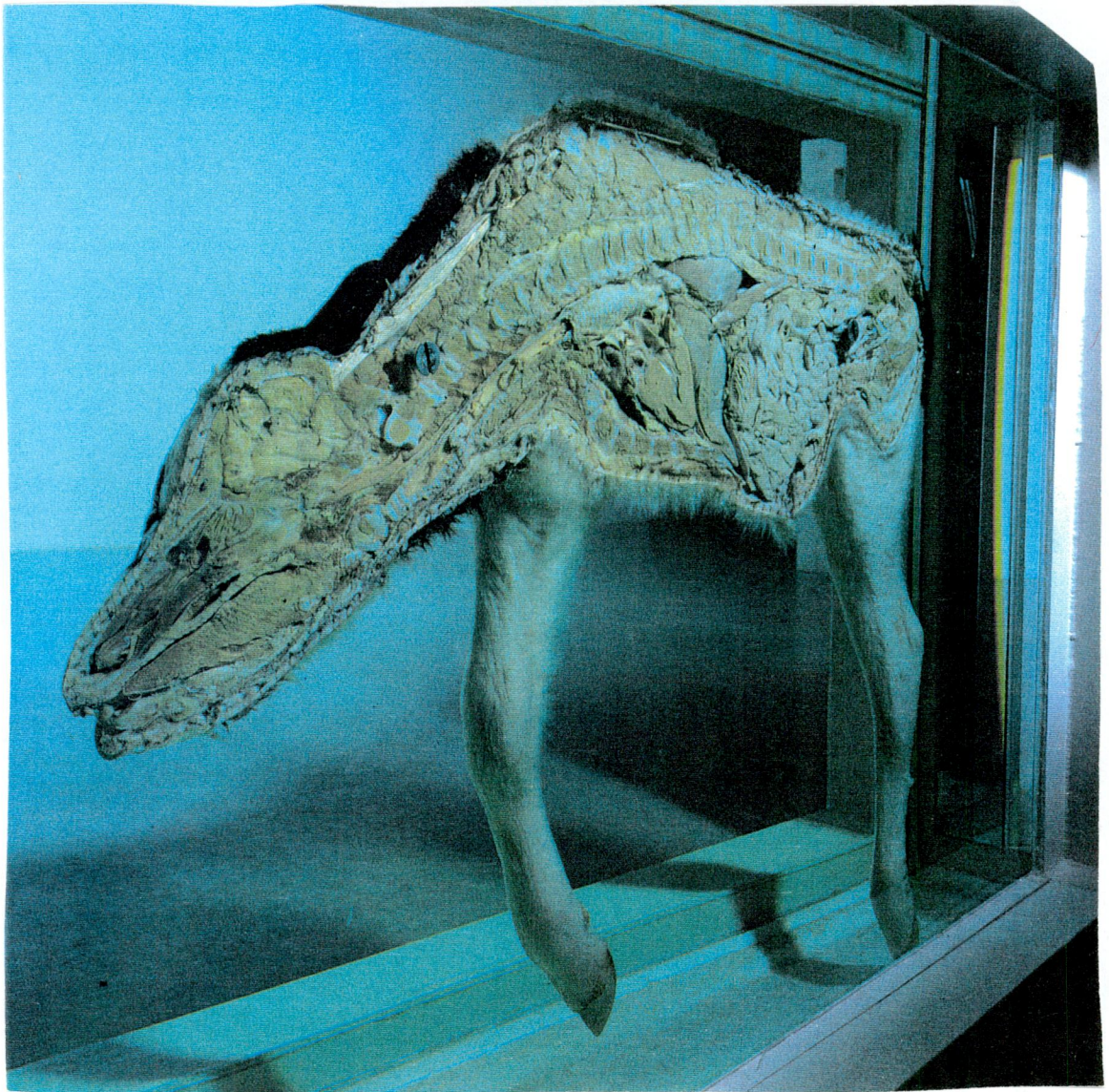
Hirst's unsentimental use of the cow in works such as "*Mother and Child Divided*" is recognised as being much more controversial. The cow for Hirst is like the surrealist Readymade; a banal and ordinary mass produced object that if used in a different way becomes a concept, a thing of the mind. In a Warholian fashion he states,

What is the most alive thing and the most dead thing? It is the cow, because it is traditionally the most slaughtered animal...Cows are like the coke cans. They are mass produced. Their individuality is taken out of them. (Flash Art, no 178).

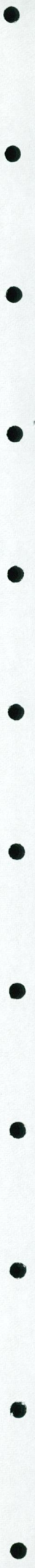
The symbol of the cow differs from that of the shark and of the butterflies in that it possesses the other connotation of motherhood and family, an aspect that is obviously implied in the piece "*Mother and Child Divided*" (Plate 10, detail, p22) made for the 1993 Venice Biennale. It consists of a cow and a calf sliced in half, which are preserved in two tanks of formaldehyde. This spectacle alone is not enough for Hirst, anxiety is heightened for the viewer because he/she must walk between the two halves of the bisected animals. The animals' interiors are flattened against the glass for intimate inspection and a sense of empathy then falls over the viewer for the mother and her child. Still evident is Hirst's quest to hit us with a visceral punch:



I want to make people feel like burgers...
What is the difference between a cow and
a burger?. Not a lot... I want people to look
at cows and feel; Oh my God! So then, in turn,
it makes feel like burgers. (Biorruso, Hot Wired:
POP/Gallery/ Post-Mortem)



(Plate 10) Mother and child Divided, 1993, (detail).



Sarah Kent in a discussion of the work of Damien Hirst from *Shark Infested Waters* notes the same observation by Helen Chadwick

We generally treat internal organs as the 'hidden profane'. Meat reveals the links between what we eat and what we are-the human as animal.(Kent, 1994, p.37)

This discussion of the 'human as animal' and people as burgers is continued in the next section where Lacan's writing on the 'self' is used to describe why the viewer goes through different emotions when looking at animal bodies.

REFLECTED SELVES

According to Lacan:

The Self is constituted through anticipating what it will become, and then this anticipatory model is used for gauging what was before.
(Gallop, 1952, p.81)

According to Palmier:

The mirror stage is a drama that sees the anticipated image of the body as totality replace the anguish of the body in bits and pieces.
(Gallop, 1952. P.79)

Lacan in the *International Journal of Psycho-analysis* in 1953 in a paper entitled *Some Reflections on the Ego* states that:

This illusion of unity in which a human being is always looking forward to self-mastery, entails a constant danger of sliding back again into the chaos from which he started; it hangs over the abyss of a dizzy ascent in which one can perhaps see the very essence of anxiety.(Gallop, 1952. P.84)



These quotes serve to show that when we look at the work of Damien Hirst and Helen Chadwick, we are once again faced with the mirror stage. We see in many of these works a reflection of ourselves, we see the 'bits and pieces' that we are and through time and with decay, what we will eventually become. Both Hirst and Chadwick make us realise this concept, due to the fact that certain pieces by both artists illustrate the transience of life, food chains and decay. In *Self Portrait* 1991, (plate 11, page 25) Helen Chadwick presents us with a photograph of a brain held between two hands as her own self portrait where her outward features, her face is replaced and represented by the cerebellum. Chadwick chooses to look inward to convey her outer appearance, as Marina Warner writes:

The manners, the figure, the costume
that 'do oft proclaim the man' she has
exchanged exterior for interior.
(Warner, In *Extremis: Helen Chadwick
and the Wound of Difference*)

Like Hirst, Chadwick also opts for the fleshy interior of the body to convey notions of the self or human nature. For Chadwick, the brain not only represents the face but also the dwelling place of the mind. Chadwick in Hirstian fashion chooses some of the most lowly and ordinary creatures to convey her ideas. In works about self image and identity, she likens the cerebellum to earthworms. She once wrote:

To me, earthworms are a source of
pleasure. Perhaps by focusing on [them]
it might be humbling for man, perhaps
we could get back some perspective on
things... (Warner, In *Extremis. Helen
Chadwick and the Wound of Difference*)

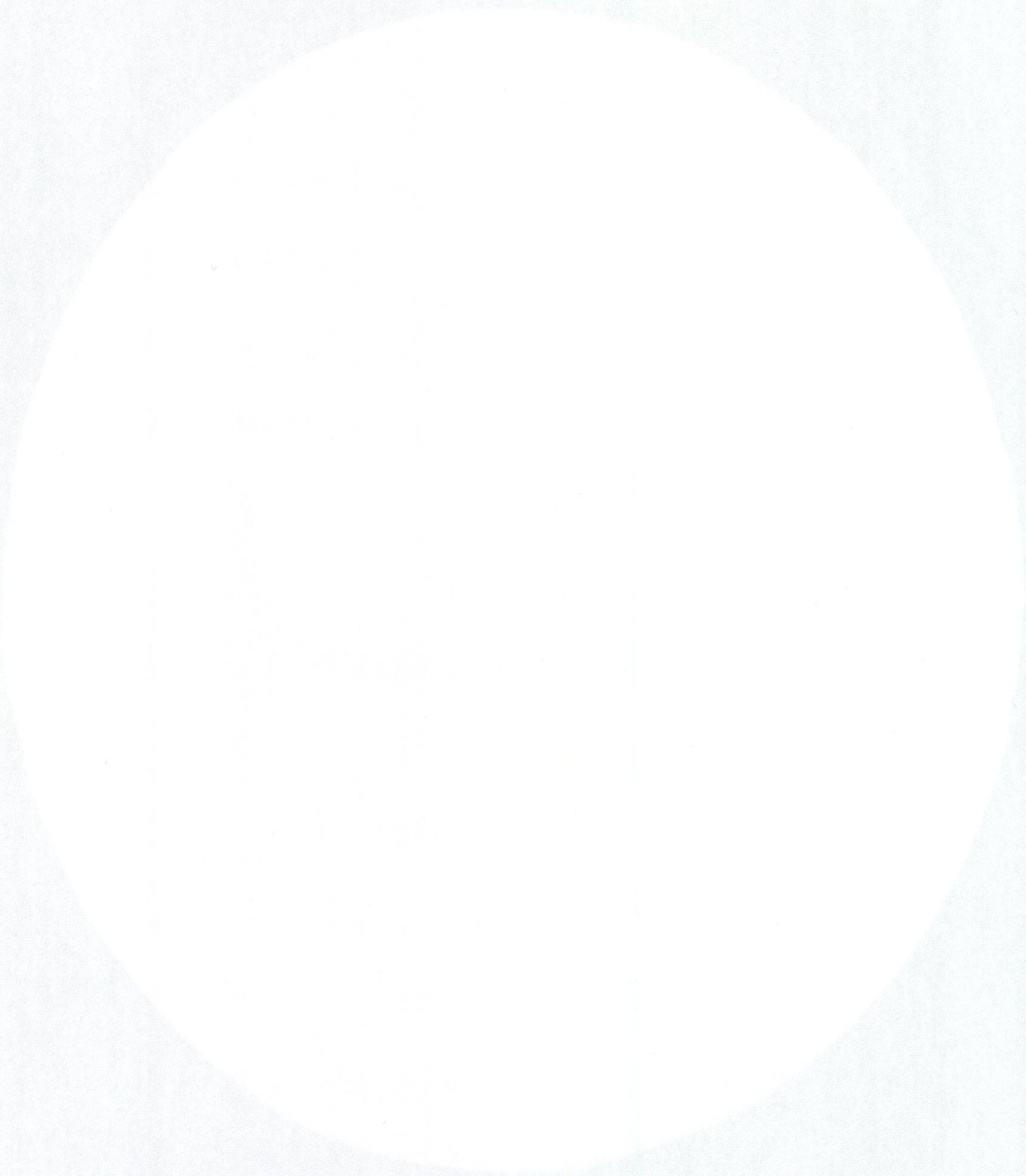




(Plate 11), Self Portrait, Helen Chadwick, 1991 .

It has been part of Chadwick's oeuvre to delve into what it means to be human, to be made of flesh. She even named her art *Enfleshings* which is also the title of her book written in 1989. Its cover is lavishly encased in a photograph of red glowing raw meat. She wrote:

Selfhood as conscious meat – I am mc,
my mass times the power of my
light. At its most bald, this is our
flesh-hood – a red mirror. (As above)



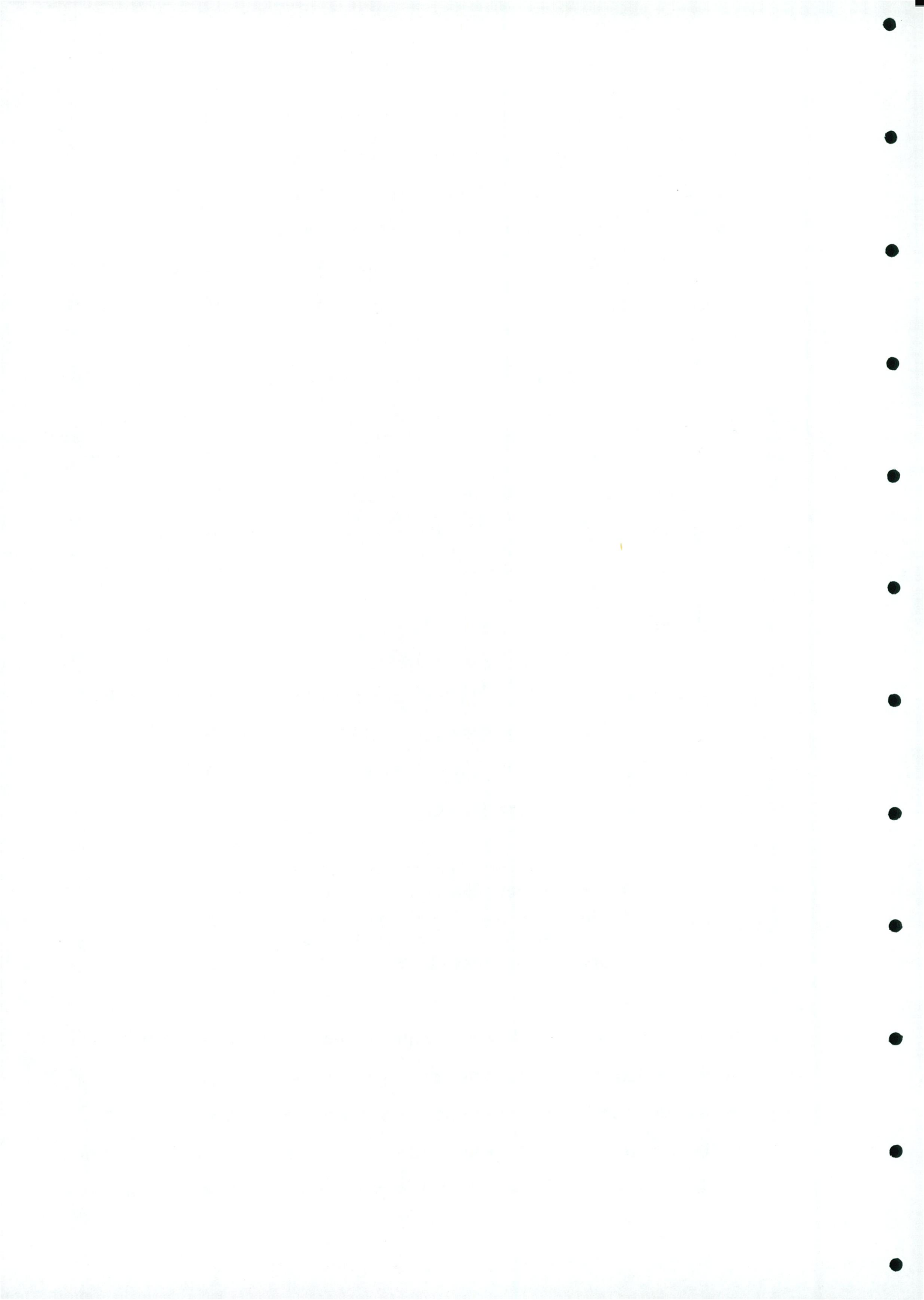
Both Chadwick and Hirst offer us reflections of ourselves of our society and of our sexuality through the stripped bodies of animals and their internal organs. Their *anxious objects* are the animal corpse, hide or body parts which they use as a metaphor for the human body rather than an actual human body. Hirst stated in an interview that he would not use an actual human corpse as the shock factor would be too much and the work would lose its metaphoric status. The use of an animal body means that we the viewer are able to confront the concept of death, because it is removed one step further away from us. Moving on in the quest to find answers as to why Hirst and Chadwick's *anxious objects* or animal bodies cause the viewer to identify with or become repulsed by it, is traced in an investigation into the abject qualities contained within their work.

ABJECT ANIMALS

Some of Kristeva's theories of abjection can be related to the work of Damien Hirst and Helen Chadwick. In particular consideration can be given to the pieces *A Thousand Years* and *Carcass* respectively. In *Abjection Melancholia and Love*, Elizabeth Gross writes that Kristeva is fascinated by the ways in which:

Proper sociality and subjectivity are based on the expulsion or exclusion of the improper, the unclean and the disorderly elements of its clean and proper self. (Gross, 1989, p 86).

Hirst's installation *A Thousand Years* (plate 12, page 28) horrifies the viewer in expressing the 'improper' and the 'unclean'. The installation consists of two large glass cubes one with a white cube containing thousands of maggots, from which blue bottles hatch and fly into the other glass cube. It houses a rotting cow's head, upon



which the bluebottles feed, lay eggs and some of them fly into an insect-o-cutor and die. The life cycle of a fly is irrevocably bound up with death, flies spread disease and maggots hasten decay. The life cycle of a fly in this case could also be a metaphor for the human life cycle, starkly showing the darker and more threatening aspects of a society living and breeding off the vulnerable, dying or dead bodies of others. Thus presenting the viewer with moral questions about how they live, what they do to survive and how others may suffer for their benefit. There is however another possible reading of this unclean and disorderly system, that being the passage of time. Hirst gets the viewer thinking about time and the vast cycles of mortality, as is pointed out by Jerry Saltz in *Art in America* "*He (Hirst) gets you to think about the fact that of the five billion or so people now on earth, all will be gone within say 100 years*". (Saltz, June 1995, vol. 83).

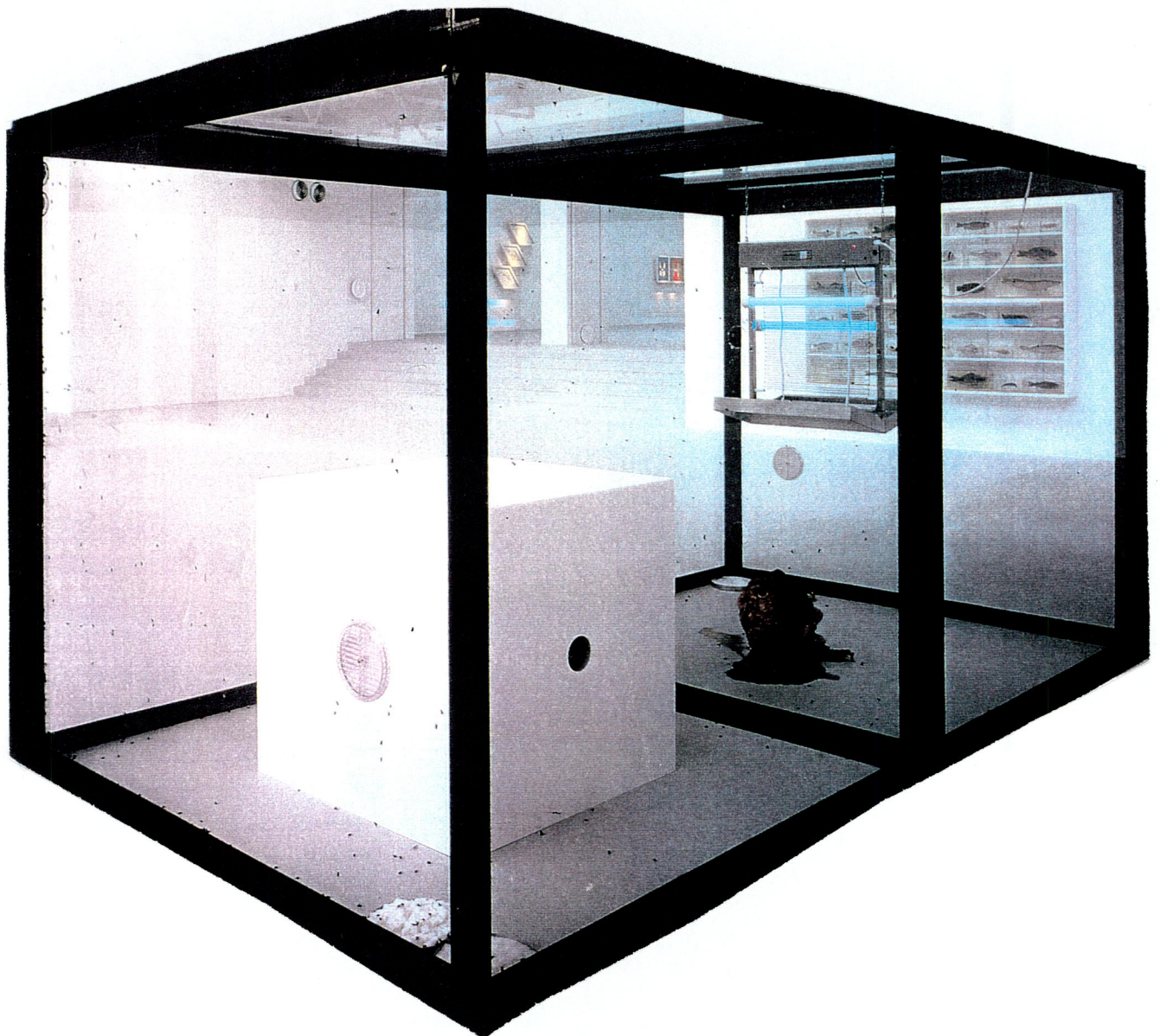
According to Elizabeth Gross:

Kristeva distinguishes three broad categories of abjects, against which various social and individual taboos are erected; food, waste and the signs of sexual difference. The subject's reaction to these abjects is visceral. It is usually expressed in retching, vomiting, spasms, choking, in brief, in disgust.

Also

Abjection is a reaction to the recognition of the impossible but necessary transcendence of the subjects' corporeality and the impure, defiling elements of its uncontrollable materiality. (Gross, 1989 pp 87/88).





(Plate 12), A Thousand Years, Damien Hirst, 1990.



The reason why *A Thousand Years* is so successful is because it works on many levels. Not only is it viscerally repellent, it also encompasses the notions of abjection by showing us a murdered corpse, a food chain, waste and decay altogether whilst simultaneously being a reflection of ourselves and our nature. Both artists Hirst and Chadwick are successful in creating situations of anxiety and tension in the viewer. They take the viewer past old boundaries and on to new limits by exposing them to the attractive and repulsive aspects of abjection. They confront the viewer with their own actions and offer an alternate idea of identity by showing the viewer the abject, that which:

Disturbs identity, system and order,
disrupting the social boundaries
demanded by the symbolic. It
respects no definite positions or rules,
boundaries or socially imposed limits.
(Gross, 1989, p90).

Both artists will go to extreme lengths, in the pursuit and portrayal of a concept that they wish to use in an artwork. Hirst has stated in an interview with David Bowie in (*Modern Painters*, 19 vol. 9)

I have no social conscience when I'm
working. It is out of my hands. The
viewer may want to make that judgement.
I am not too concerned with interpretation.
Neither can I allow myself to be bothered
by taboo or even an idea of integrity".

In the same interview, David Bowie posits Andre Breton as one of the original writers to suggest the artist as murderer. Hirst states that for him "murder" is "a way to stretch things to the limit, to go beyond the law". He has also expressed an interest in the idea of "Taking things out of the World" and that "You kill things to look at them"



(I.C.A. Show, London, Jay Jopling '91). It has to be said, however that neither Hirst or Chadwick actually killed any animals. Hirst orders them from abattoirs and fish markets, and Chadwick got her animals from a farm.

Chadwick found that she developed a tender relationship with, and to, the animals through the process of cleaning and photocopying their bodies for the piece '*Of Mutability*' .

Helen Chadwick talks at length in her book *Enfleshings*, on the installation of '*Of Mutability*', which is comprised of two parts; *The Oval Court*, and *Carcass*, (Plate 13, p32)

This particular installation embodies many of Kristeva's theories of abjection; from the display of various bodily cycles, to the use of corporeal waste and the decaying corpse.

In *The Oval Court*, Chadwick has created a type of Garden of Delights with an ovoid pool containing many figures in various stages of pleasure. These figures are the photocopied images of the artist's own naked body alongside photocopied images of the animal bodies. She speaks of the actual process of photocopying as a way to join any one body to a foreign body:

The boundaries have dissolved,
between self and other, the living
and the corpse. This is the threshold
of representation, not quite real, not
exactly alive, but the conscious implicate
depths of reflection.(Chadwick, 1989, p.29).

Chadwick wants to show the animal bodies as being completely swollen with pleasure to "catch the physical sensations passing across the body – sensations of gasping, yearning, breathing, fullness", says the artist. (Chadwick, 1989, p.39). The *Oval Court* creates a complex allegory of the five senses, which are also aroused in the viewer,



imagining the sound of water, the smell of the fish and the goose's entrails. The lamb and the rabbit almost invite stroking yet the image of the artist's hands in the monkfish repels the viewer. One of the figures of the artist is "*gagging with pleasure*" (plate 14, page 34). the tied cornucopia figure, "*she's bursting out of the basket, and fruit is bursting out of her*". (Chadwick, 1989, p47).

This image plays on Kristeva's second theory of abjection "Corporeal Waste", where:

bodily fluids, waste products, refuse –
faeces, spit, sperm, etc – provoke cultural
and individual horror and disgust,
symptomatic of our cultural inability to
accept the body's materiality, its limits,

its natural cycles and its mortality. (Gross,
p 91).

It also offers us a contradiction for the artist vomits fruit but seems to be in a state of ecstatic pleasure, and the animals she frolics with are actually corpses. Elizabeth Gross points out in her book *Abjection Melancholia and love* that:

The corpse is intolerable; it exists at the very borders of life. The corpse signifies the supervalence of the body. The bodies recalcitrance to consciousness, reason or will. It poses a danger to the ego in so far as it questions its stability and its tangible grasp on and control over itself. (Gross, 1989, p 92).

Chadwick, like Hirst, has managed to set up a situation which promotes anxiety in the viewer through her use of animal bodies and by imbuing them with contradictions.





(Plate 13) The Oval Court and Carcass, Helen Chadwick.



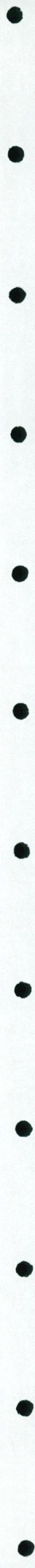
A further aspect of abjection comes into play in the accompanying piece to the *Oval Court*, entitled *Carcass*. This installation comprises a rectangular tower of glass filled with compost, some of it collected from her neighbours and some of it the waste and vegetable matter that was used in the making of the *Oval Court*. *Carcass* represents metamorphosis in the life cycle. It is a towering monument to decay, the ecstatic animals of the *Oval Court* with which Chadwick had developed such a tender relationship now lie putrefying along with other organic forms, in an open topped glass tower. The glass column is a metaphor for the body, a counterpoint to the ideal beauty of the forms in the 'Oval Court'. It is also a monument to abjection.

This particular installation pushed the boundaries of the socially acceptable so far as to provoke a public outcry. *Carcass* does not respect the borders of the 'clean and proper self;' the stench of its contents, putrefaction invades our personal space and our nostrils. The piece if seen from far away has an eerie beauty with its layers of colours and textures. However on closer inspection the smell of the decaying matter became overpowering, an important element to the installation in relation to the beauty of the *Oval Court*. However due to complaints the ICA took down *Carcass*, and left the *Oval Court* in its entirety. As far as Chadwick is concerned it loses its meaning without *Carcass* to offer an alternate view, that being (as Kristeva points out in Powers of Horror p 92) "*the danger to identity that comes from without*" via "*excrement and its equivalents (decay, infection, disease, corpse, etc.)*"





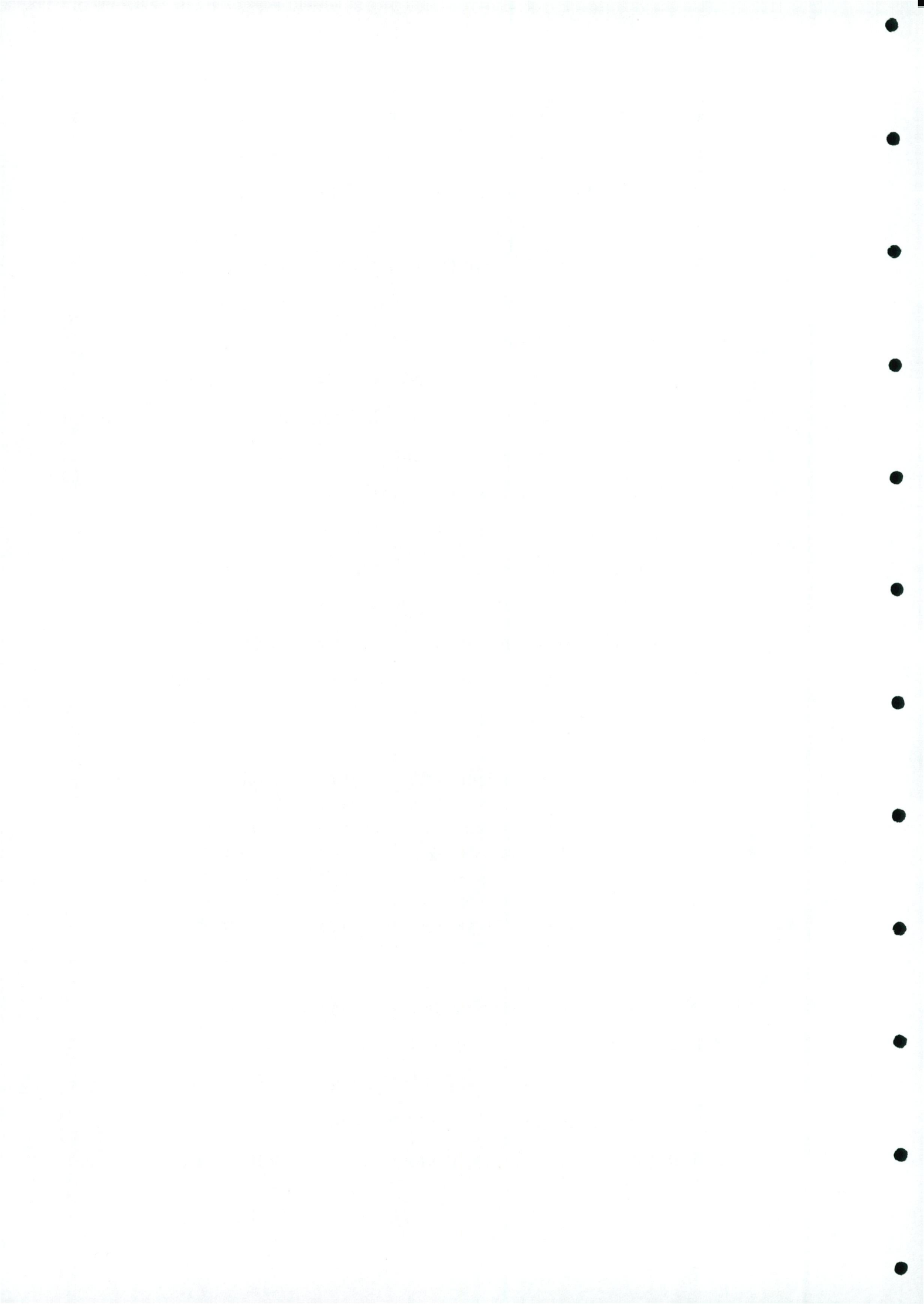
(Plate 14), Of Mutability (detail), Helen Chadwick.



Both Damien Hirst and Helen Chadwick present us with artworks that seem in fact to be cautionary tales, an aspect that is dealt with in the seventeenth century Dutch tradition of Vanitas painting, which depicts ripeness and its transience. Michael Corris stated in 'openings' an article in a magazine that Damien Hirst's work has often been compared to this particular genre; with his emblems of death and works depicting the transience of life, illustrating our fragile corporeality. Helen Chadwick's work has also been compared to this tradition. Chadwick's work entitled 'Of Mutability' encompasses many of the elements of the Vanitas tradition as Marina Warner states it shows "*figures full and bursting, bearing their ripe qualities to the world before they start to wrinkle and decay*" (Enfleshings, p44) and is in fact inspired by the genre of Vanitas. "Nature morte, dead nature or still life, includes the Vanitas as one of its species" (Warner 1989, p44), which is obviously a large and important element in the work of Chadwick along with what Warner states have fascinated Chadwick the most such as:

The emblems of passing time – fallen petals, bruised fruits, withered grasses, the moulted feather that floats on the slightest stirring of the air, the soap bubble. For just so fragile and fleeting is the life of a man, proclaimed the mottoes: homo bulla, some rubrics ran, man a bubble. (Warner, 1989, p44)

The Vanitas tradition refers explicitly to the female vice of vanity and chastises women for their addiction to pleasure. These works offer a cautionary tale to the young foolish and vain such as Jeremias Falck with his engraving 'The Old Procuress' (plate 15, page 36) which illustrates that a woman sins when she adorns herself. This is





(Plate 15) The Old Procuress, Jeremias Falck, 1619-77.

because the object of her vanity is the satisfaction of her lust; the same appetites that may be wicked in youth become unseemly folly in old age. The allegory of vanity then becomes a warning against foolishness of another sort. Helen Chadwick's vanitas pieces differ in that she uses the nude and her figures "*embrace worldly beauty and corruption*".(Warner 1989, p44). Chadwick constantly referred to and was inspired by the Vanitas tradition throughout her series of works with their "*cautionary mottos to speculate on the impermanence of the*



the flesh;” she employed and instilled within her work “*humble emblems of passing time to speculate on the value of the transience and the inevitable movement towards entropy and death*” (Warner, 1989, p44). In many works she uses substances such as food which only have a certain shelf life, for example chocolate in *Cacao*, she even uses cells from her body in *Viral Landscapes*, cells that have now been transformed within an artwork, their transience stilled. The Vanitas tradition with its warnings and cautionary tales directed at women in particular, influenced a genre, placing the female in such a state of anxiety that she dare not go beyond the boundaries of common laws and rulings. Examples of such scare tactics are found not only in the area of painting but also in literature and storytelling, in fact throughout the media of the culture of that period. For example, in the parable of the Five Foolish Virgins in the New Testament, who:

improvidently failed to fill their lamps with oil and so missed the wedding feast with the heavenly bridegroom.(Warner, 1989, p)

This method of providing society with a cautionary tale so that they gain insight into their own personal traits as used by the Vanitas tradition and by Helen Chadwick and Damien Hirst can be found in other traditions such as the Fairytale and in Horror films.

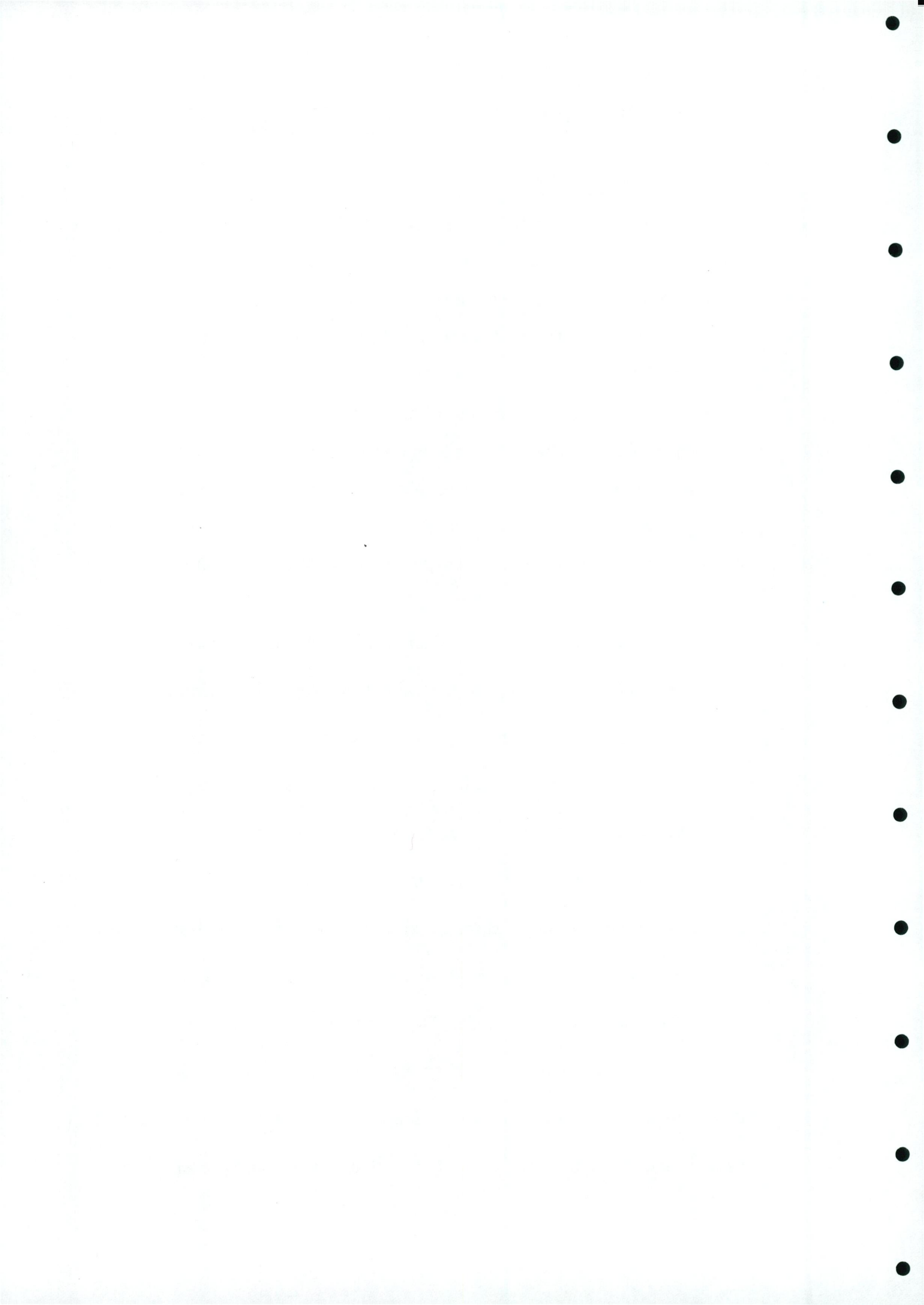


CHAPTER III – FAIRYTALES AND MYTHS

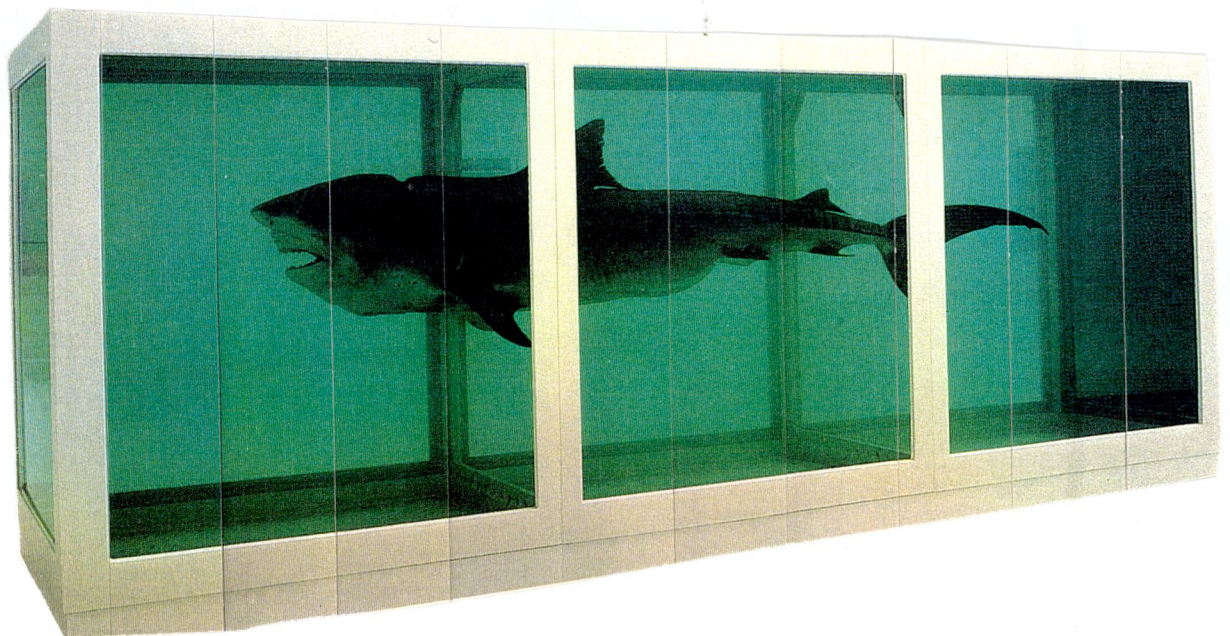
SUBLIME OBJECTS

Both Helen Chadwick and Damien Hirst present the spectacular with animal imagery that sets up a tension, a state of anxiety with many possible connotations, one being that the animal bodies represent the spectator. Schleiermacher regarded the aesthetic experience “as an awareness of the self with the object, a conscious merging of subject and object, rather than a perception of an object.” (Dupré, 1960,'s p174/175) This merging of the self with an object is known as a feeling, and certain elements are always present in feelings as shown by Johannes Volkelt, “an experience of pleasure or displeasure an awareness of corporeality, explicit or implicit representations” (Dupré, 1960's p175).

These experiences are reflected through the artworks of Hirst and Chadwick. Something in the object beckons the spectator ever nearer, the object communicates feelings, mostly because the artist concerned has structured feelings within it. Also because the artists know how to effectively use animals and animal bodies as symbols and metaphors for the self and for the spectator. The artists show us animals stripped of their skin, in simple food chains and in various states of decay which is meant to shock us into contemplating the transience and purpose of life. These situations of anxiety that the artists places us within can be an ordeal for the senses. However, these installations are not really dangerous situations, they act in fact as sublime elements. Because they are contained or preserved or



dead they do not really pose as a real threat to our lives: "Sublimity is contained not in any thing of nature, but only in our mind, insofar as we can become conscious of our superiority to nature within us, and thereby also to nature outside us." (Dupré, p 123).



(Plate 16), The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living, Damien Hirst, 1991.



The kinds of situations that Hirst and Chadwick place the viewer in can be read as sublime situations. Their art may frighten us and shake our morals even leave some feeling physically ill, but it has 'no dominance' over us, other than its power to instil processes of contemplation and a re-evaluation of our ideas and our actions.

The idea of facing the sublime is aptly expressed by Hirst in his work entitled 'The Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living'(plate 16, page 39). The sixteen foot tiger shark suspended in liquid bears all the markings of a killer, a hunter with razor sharp teeth., but it is dead it has no life with which to take another. This knowledge however, does not take away from the effectiveness of the piece. Its effect lies in the fact that the mind of the spectator fills in the gaps, even though the spectator knows that the shark is dead, immobile, it seems "latently lethal" (Burns, 1997, p 8)

Hirst and Chadwick are by no means the only exponents of the qualities of the sublime, similar tactics have been used in other forms of media to get across a point to the viewer. For example, fairytales and horror films both use similar aspects to create a situation of tension, which allow the viewer to gain insights into processes of life, living and death.

FAIRYTALE REALITIES

To understand the reasons behind the need to face the sublime, to experience the anxiety and tension imposed on us through the spectacle of the flayed bodies of animals in the work of Hirst and Chadwick, other forms of media can be taken into account, such as the fairytale and the horror film.

Both forms of media use a narrative to project to the audience a cautionary tale, an aspect that is often present in the art of Hirst



and Chadwick. Julia Kristeva in her book *'The Powers of Horror'* cites "the narrative as a cache for suffering", she states that "the theme of suffering horror is the ultimate evidence of such states of abjection within a narrative representation" (Kristeva, 1982 p.140/141).

Fairytales have served through the years as a form of entertainment to while away the evening hours, but they also have another function, which is that of illustrating primitive human drives and violent emotions through animal symbology. Chadwick in her work also uses animal symbology to tackle the area of human drives and emotions. Through her work the viewer is brought on a journey of the self, in order to question the boundaries of gender and the taboos concerning one's inherent animalistic drives. In the Fairytale these animalistic drives are overcome in the end, assuring that the individual can succeed against the odds. Therefore, fairytales, by exposing the audience to the darker sides of life, by illustrating the animalistic and savage behaviour, actually help the audience to cope with any such anxious scenarios that they may come up against in life.

In his book *'The Uses of Enchantment the meaning and importance of Fairytales'*, Bruno Bettelheim cites the unconscious as a decisive factor in relation to behaviour both in children and in adults. If anxieties are repressed by an individual in the unconscious then that individual as Bettelheim puts it, could "become severely crippled". (Bettelheim, 1991,p7) It is only through sorting the unconscious material and allowing it to surface as a perfectly normal anxiety or apprehension, that any progress can be made. A simple and safe way to face these inner anxieties (or demons) is through the use of imagination and Fairytales, or through some of the more visceral artworks by Hirst or Chadwick, whose tactics and concepts are



echoed in fairytales. Thus Fairytales and indeed artworks can be seen to be an outlet for anxieties relating to human drives and experiences. The darker situations in life are due to our own natures, as Bettelheim puts it “the propensity of all men for acting aggressively, asocially, selfishly” is born out of anger and anxiety. (Bettelheim, 1991,p172).

In the story ‘*Little Red Riding Hood*’, an animal, the wolf, represents the asocial, selfish, violent and animal tendencies within us. Bettelheim states that the creation of psychoanalysis was to help people to find a medium through which they can understand the problems life entails without giving in under duress or resorting to escapist measures. Freud’s advice concerning this area of study is one of facing up to the deleterious situation. To battle courageously against all obstacles, for it is only by going through this process that “man can succeed in bringing any meaning out of his existence.” (Bettelheim, 1991,p7). Hirst sometimes presents us with a life-cycle, its advantages and trials, showing us the simple facts of life: - you’re born, you reproduce, you die – as in the piece ‘*A Thousand Years*’, thus harking back to the Vanitas tradition by illustrating once again the transience of mortal life. The fairytale whilst simultaneously an embodiment of life’s transience also admits that a struggle in life is unavoidable.

In common with the artistic expression of Helen Chadwick, fairytales are laden with sexual connotations, symbols and associations of desire and terror. This illustrates that society needs to contain these anxieties somehow, and when the tale is retold, it is so that others may learn something about life by its warnings and advice. The child reading the fairytale is expected to learn about society from the protagonists in the tale and identify with them. The



elements of terror, violence and fear are deemed an integral part of the story without which it would not get across the messages it tries to. These elements do not pose a real threat to the child. Thus, they act in the same way as the work of Hirst and Chadwick as sublime elements and as cautionary tales. Helen Chadwick's work entitled 'Loop my Loop' (plate 17, page 44) has been compared to the fairytale, which "*trades in complex narratives of love, destruction and terror*" Loop my Loop however presents "*a terrible embrace of good and evil reconciled in pleasure*". (Effluvia, 1989, p 13) It consists of blonde hair wrapped around and interwoven with pig's gut, bringing into play the notion of the female golden haired girl surrounded by meat, like a type of goldielocks surrounded by the three bears. This work has also been described as going against the grain of the Vanitas tradition.

Loop my Loop,

the obscene helical lovebraid of pig gut and golden locks, is a necrophilic coupling which mocks the vanitas genre of painting and takes Helen Chadwick's earlier essays on the theme to the edge of excess. (Effluvia, 1989, p13).

Helen Chadwick once again places the viewer in an anxious position, the beautiful silky golden hair wrapped and embraced by meat by the internal organs of a pig. The viewer, used to finding an elegant face framed by such luxurious hair now instead finds pig's gut winding through the softly textured hair. This work sets up all kinds of anxieties; the thought of combing hair with a piece of a dead animal, the shudder experienced if such an object got caught and could not be freed from one's hair. Chadwick makes the viewer face such taboos and re-establish the borders society sets up.





(Plate 17), Loop my Loop, 1989, Helen Chadwick.



Cherry Smyth's discussion of this work shows how Chadwick uses our unconscious preconceptions to set up a situation of anxiety for the viewer. Chadwick knows this piece will have the desired effect because of Western cultures socially conditioned ideas concerning blonde hair.

The hair is dry and timeless, the sausage, wet and fresh, prone to decay. The pale pink skin of the intestine evokes the removed absent pale skin of the blonde subject, who is undeniably female because of how the image of long blonde hair has been constructed in Western culture. (Smyth, 1993 p13).

Chadwick effectively establishes within the viewer a sensation of anxiety due to the visual display of visceral and abhorrent qualities of meat and hair intertwined, as Cherry Smyth states:

"There is a tangible horror, a fear of contamination, of disease in imagining caressing one's hair with a piece of meat".

As is pointed out by this example people as a part of a society, culture or an institution like the family, learn a set of codes for life. These codes are basically a set of associations, which help us to interpret and to understand signs and symbols that both the media and the culture we live in bombard us with. According to Fiske and Hartley, "*Reality is itself a complex system of signs interpreted by members of the culture in exactly the same way as are films and television programmes*" (Fiske and Hartley, 1992, p.65/66). Horror films can present society with such codes or cautionary tales by creating for the audience extreme levels of terror, by setting up situations of anxiety in common with the work of Chadwick and Hirst.



FANTASY FEAR

Gordon Burn shows how Damien Hirst and his art has suffused contemporary culture, his concepts are being employed in every form of existing media. In one day he saw a woman wearing a promotional spot painting T-shirt (for Hirst's Sensation exhibition) more spots on an outfit by designer Rifat Ozbek worn by a female singer on 'Top of the Pops', sliced cars in glass and steel cases in television advertisements. Gordon states that Hirst:

has become a staple of the features pages and media columns, the arts diaries and op-ed cartoons, and lends support to Walter Benjamin's view that while artistic experiments are rejected by the masses as "incomprehensible" when encountered as a part of avant-garde art, they are accepted and appreciated when seen as part of mass culture" (Burn, 1997, p8).

The medium of the horror film bears many links to the work of Helen Chadwick and Damien Hirst . In the same way as the art of Hirst has become a normal part of contemporary culture, Noel Carroll shows how horror has flourished as a major source of mass aesthetic stimulation and also states that; "horror has become a staple across contemporary art forms, popular and otherwise"(Carroll, 1990, p1).The horror film, like the work of Hirst and Chadwick, deals in sudden shocks and in the display of open bodies, viscera and blood. The horror film in common with Hirst and Chadwick sets up this situation to produce from the audience an emotional effect, to create scenes of terror and anxiety within the audience. "In horror fictions, the emotions of the audience are supposed to mirror those of the



positive human characters” (Carroll, 1990, p18). In the work of Hirst and Chadwick the audience is also meant to identify with the stripped animals. The audience is supposed to feel empathy for the dead animals and reflect upon society and the actions of its members.

Horror films, thrillers, chillers have been consistently in the mainstream of popular choice. Since the turn of the century, they have become one of the most enduring genres of film. Horror films in common with the art of the surrealists, Helen Chadwick and Damien Hirst, enthrall avid audiences through the conventions of the spectacle; the elements of shock and surprise and the acceptable are common to all three. When the horror film is over it leaves the viewer with a residue of mortal and of moral consciousness, an aspect that is also evident in the work of Hirst. The spectator is shocked at first by the display of the insides of the animals bodies in ‘Mother and Child Divided’ but then identifies and empathises with the sawn in half cow and calf. This work creates ideas about family and the spectator begins to think about how the cow is treated in society. The cow is treated as a banal expendable commodity, Hirst makes the audience see it from a different view that of having similarities to the lives of humans.

The horror film’s ubiquitousness in contemporary culture, thus offers society with a similar role model as the work of Hirst and Chadwick, in creating anxiety within the viewer to induce the questioning of ideas, ideals and actions, as Twitchell states; “We need myths when we need information, and because we need information when we are confused, fantasy structures are given by a society as maps so- to- speak – by which a lost audience can find its way. (Twitchell, 1985, p. 87).



Myths function by putting into action a system of order, a society. Hollywood film makers have endeavoured to create myths with the result of becoming the ultimate myth making machine and their product is the horror film.

The horror film is seen to be a return to the instinctual way of life. It is through the dark glass of the horror film that we can learn who we are and how we function as a dark society. Also since a lot of horror films are basically similar in content or story-line then there is obviously a need for reiteration of certain themes, for certain aspects of humanity to be constantly re-addressed.

In the Philosophy of Horror Noel Carroll states that although speculative:

It is frequently remarked that horror cycles emerge in times of social stress, and that the genre is means through which the anxieties of an era can be expressed (Carroll, 1990, p207).

It is obvious from the work of Hirst and Chadwick that these artists are also including contemporary anxieties regarding gender, morality, mortality and religion in their art.

Also of great importance in contemporary culture and of mass concern is health and the threat to health by the outbreaks of BSE in cows, pigs and sheep and CJD in humans. This disease has infiltrated into the food chain and is affecting and killing people who eat contaminated meat. The prospect of becoming terminally ill has instilled fear into mass culture, a fear of contamination by meat. Helen Chadwick and Damien Hirst consistently confront society with artworks which basically contain meat, cows, pigs, lambs. They set up situations of anxiety around the edible and around the fact that



humans are also merely meat. The bans on exporting British meat also heighten this sense of anxiety concerning animals and meat.

The fears and anxieties of the public as regards the work of Hirst in particular can be seen in the vast media coverage that his work attracts. For example the shipping of Hirst's work "Some comfort gained," (plate 18, page 50) was delayed at customs. "It took two days to convince (U.S. Customs) that it should be classified as a work of art and food, that this major sculptural piece was not going to enter the food chain" from New York Magazine 13 May 1996, (Hirst, 1997, p151). In the same book there is a quote from Time Out 8-15 May 1996 by Damien Hirst following the BSE concerns voiced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, "I told them nobody's going to eat it but they said that's not the point".

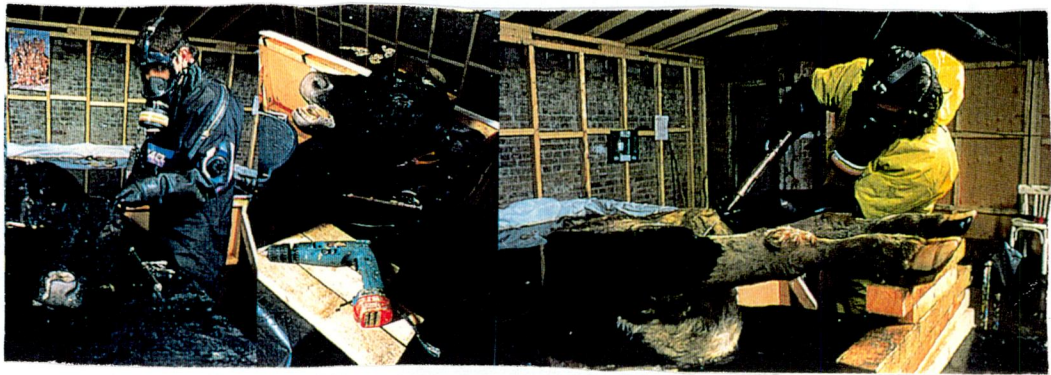
This fear of contamination is also evident in the work of Helen Chadwick in works such as 'Loop my Loop' where pig's flesh entwines with blonde hair. In the series entitled 'Viral Landscapes' cells were surgically removed from Chadwick's body.

The title itself implies infection; a threat to the body. In the series of 'Piss Flowers' with their play on chance and sexual difference where the artist and a male friend urinated in the snow and then cast the results in bronze. Chadwick confronts the audience with a substance normally thought to be polluting and marginal and in a poem invites them to sit on these sculptural flowers of urine, an act that would certainly set up anxieties for the viewer.

This fear of contamination to the viewer of the work of either Hirst or Chadwick is evident in the outright ban of some of their exhibits. Chadwick's work entitled 'Carcass' was banned and taken down by the ICA because of the overpowering smell it produced. Due to the processes of decay and fermentation, it caused many visitors



to the gallery to feel ill and thus complain about the exhibit. Hirst's sculpture entitled 'Two Fucking, Two Watching' was banned from New York because the health department said "it would pose a public health risk as it might explode or prompt vomiting among spectators" (Hirst, 1997, p151). The sculpture was designed to show the processes of life and death by allowing the animals to rot. However the glass cases might have shattered due to the build up of gases. The animals were to have hydraulic devices inserted into them to simulate movement making the experience for the viewer even more graphic and disturbing.



(Plate18) Some Comfort Gained From the Acceptance of the Inherent Lies in Everything, 1996, (preparation) Damien Hirst.





(Plate19) Some Comfort Gained from the Inherent Lies in Everything, 1996, (detail), Damien Hirst.



SOCIAL BUTCHERY

Contemporary horror films also have an increasing degree of graphic violence. In common with the work of Hirst and Chadwick this violence is directed at the body:

as it is burst, blown up, broken and ripped apart; as it disintegrates or metamorphoses; as it is dismembered and dissected; as it is devoured from the inside out.(Carroll,1990, p211).

Carroll states that "in the contemporary horror film the person is so often literally reduced to mere meat (Carroll,1990, p211).

One particular horror film that treats people as mere meat is *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. This film has the ability to create tension and anxiety in the viewer. It also like the fairytale and the work of Hirst and Chadwick, conveys a cautionary tale. During the mid-seventies filmmaker Tobe Hooper's now classic film *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* a film which now occupies a space in a museum, was like some of Hirst's and Chadwick's work, banned in its entirety. Horror is a genre of filmmaking that relies upon transgression to shock to repel the audience into questioning actions and motivations, yet it also contains very illuminating aspects and characteristics of human behaviour. In Hirstian style Tobe Hooper presents the horrific in a bid to induce a process of questioning of moral values. The film centres on a group of young adults who are travelling around Texas in a van. They stop off at a house and when they explore the surrounding area end up being butchered by the inhabitants in a nearby house. One girl is actually hung on a meat hook to await her death while her boyfriend is butchered in-front of her. The butchers consist of a family of men who lost their jobs in the slaughter house



due to advanced technology and now hack their food 'victims' to death with a chainsaw. This 'family' is portrayed as feeding themselves the only way they know how, via the trade of slaughtering. Robin Wood in *Studies in Entertainment* has analysed the film as:

embodying a critique of capitalism, since the film shows the horror both of people quite literally living off other people and off the family, since it implies that the master is 'the family' (Wood, 1986, p158/159).

This analysis therefore also implies that horror/slasher/violent films have a latent function other than entertainment. They comment on society's darker hidden elements in an effort to reflect society to itself. This subtext bears a striking resemblance Damien Hirst's 'A Thousand Years'. In the film the family of men slaughtered people from which to feed, thus representing societies savage and cannibal nature in living off the flesh of others. Hirst allows maggots to breed on the flesh of a cow's rotting head, thus offering us a similar analogy of society feeding off other members of society.



Conclusion

The tradition of producing anxious objects in twentieth century art as in the work of Helen Chadwick and Damien Hirst, spans all forms of media and culture. It seems that in the past and on into the future artists intend to place the spectator in a precarious position of tension to extract from them some kind of reaction. This technique has been used by all the artists cited throughout this thesis, mainly through the use of the animal; the animal as a vehicle for shock by virtue of its nature as food, as meat as a symbol for the human self.

Surrealists revelled in the spectacle and the use of shocking tactics to provoke a reaction from their audience, to inspire questioning and break routine thoughts. The anxiety-producing objects in the work of Hirst and Chadwick also cause the audience to become embroiled in emotion ranging from empathy to outrage. Anxiety in the viewer is seen to arise from many different disciplines. Through a look at the writing of Lacan it is shown that viewing the visceral works of Hirst and Chadwick may lead the viewer to re-experience the 'mirror stage' thus gaining an insight into the self. Empathising with the animals creates an anxious situation for the viewer where they realise the consequences of their actions not only for the animals but also for the self within society.

Kristeva's theories of Abjection also offers an insight into why such visceral scenes cause reactions of anxiety within the viewer. Corpses, bodily fluids, flesh and decay all present in the work of Hirst and Chadwick, represent the threat to the 'clean and proper self' and pose a threat to identity, to morality and mortality.

The vanitas tradition is evoked to further show the transience of life and as a warning to the impermanence of the flesh.



This tradition can equally be applied to Hirst as to Chadwick, many of Hirst's works are meant to rot to decay to show the processes of life and death, its transience. For example this is achieved by Hirst's use of the butterflies in "In and Out of Love" which aptly reveals their transient lives.

Hirst and Chadwick are not the only ones to produce anxiety in such a way. The method of using the internal organs of the body to get across a meaning is widely used throughout culture and media.

The reason why the audience experiences anxiety when confronted with such visceral scenes is because they are socially conditioned to react in a certain way. Examples can be found in the areas of mythic thought, in the fairytale, the vanitas tradition and the current genre of horror films. Damien Hirst himself has been compared to the characters of horror films such as Damien from the Omen films, showing that like the horror film Hirst has "passed into mythology" (Hirst, 1997, p156).

Horror films, the Texas Chainsaw Massacre in particular, creates scenes of the utmost terror on screen and anxiety in the viewer; to witness the slaughter of humans for food. This film heightens the sense of anxiety because the viewer simultaneously feels a kind of empathy for the butchers. This is brought about because of their social circumstances. There is nothing else for them to eat. Like the flies and maggots in Hirst's 'A Thousand Years' that eat from the rotting carcass of a cow's head in order to survive, they have no choice as they are locked in a glass case.



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