

# STUDIO METHODS PROPOSAL

## *BODYWORK*

*BODYWORK* is a publication work compiling original writing (by myself and friends), selected quotes and images from other sources into a collaged anthology exploring themes of non-normativity, masculinity, and queer sexuality through the conversation of text, image and the audience's feelings and interpretations of such.

The aim of the work is to create an experience that both calls to like-minded people, as well as confront those who aren't. It isn't about normalising what's depicted; that would defeat the whole purpose of non-normativity, but to expose people to other lifestyles. They don't have to get it or like it, but you have to accept that it's a thing, and it's not a thing you can police for other people. This is an important concept for people to grasp, especially today with the world leaning towards the right, censorship and puritan approaches to sexuality. Hopefully this work makes readers take one step towards the idea that people are always going to be weird, and that's alright.

I also want to emphasize community within the work, both historically, in the contemporary, here and overseas. One way this is done is through commissioning friends to write about their experiences and ideas around the themes stated above, whether that be prose or essay or poetry. This builds both community interpersonally (with me and them), but demonstrates the varying experiences within the community at large. It also gives the work a more personal, local, and meaningful touch rather than simply repeating what has come before.

The final form of the work is an A5, saddle stitched book with a black/dark brown leather front & back cover also stitched to the inside pages. The stitching is light brown, blending sort of in with both outside and inside. The inside paper is a mix of cream and slightly textured paper, and butter paper. The butter paper allows for more images to appear at different points through layering. The soft thinness of the papers, as well as their colour contrasts with the thick, durable leather cover, prompting ideas of the vulnerability yet strength of skin and the body.

On one of the first pages is a simple list of sources for the content that is not mine, with a section dedicated to the commissioned writers. The rest of the pages are layouts of word and image, with varying design approaches so that every page is a new experience, and you could open to any spread and enjoy it without having to read the rest of the book.



My chosen studio method is Gavin's one of Re/quotation, of borrowing pictures & text from other sources and using them within, or to create work. He differentiates between three key aspects of this methodology: quotation, re quotation, and appropriation. Quotation is the repetition of a group of words by someone other than the original author, often with correct citation. Requotation is doing this again and again. Appropriation is the borrowing without citation, removing the text from its original context.

This methodology can be seen across history in the depiction and redescription of the same scenes or stories, eg. the many Madonna and Child paintings and statues. Copying old masters was also an accepted practice for creating work, in order to fully learn and understand technique. It is also seen in other creative fields such as music. There, re quotation is a recognised practice in sampling and remixing music and is less associated with the negative side of the concept of 'appropriation'.

A specific example of a movement that utilised the methodology of re quotation was that of what we now refer to as the Pictures Generation in the 1970s. Originally this was the title of a five-person show, though the term now applies to the more general movement/trend at the time. They engaged in a critical analysis of media and consumer culture through the appropriation of commercial images. Both the [Tate](#) and the [Met](#) describe this as using the "same mechanisms of seduction and desire that played upon them" - using the language of the images presented to them to create their own work.

The idea of manufactured culture through images was a key idea within the work the Pictures Generation created: "Among these thinkers' central ideas was that identity was not organic and innate, but manufactured and learned through highly refined social constructions of gender, race, sexuality, and citizenship." (The Met) This non-organic idea of aspects of identity can also be seen in Gender Theory in the social sciences, especially in the work of Judith Butler in the early 1990s, twenty-odd years later. Butler's argument was that gender is a performance learnt and repreformed by individuals, not simply an inherent state of being.

They were inspired by the likes of Michel Foucault, and especially Roland Barthes' [The Death of the Author](#). Barthes' text provides a theoretical basis for being able to use others' work within your own. The text argues that there is no such thing as an author in the sole genius creator sense; just someone that brings together many different ideas, images, words, etc. to create a text. While I agree with this to an extent, I would also argue that there is work in that bringing-together, work that through doing it, one could be considered an author. In this way I believe that a text one writes/creates is 'their' work.

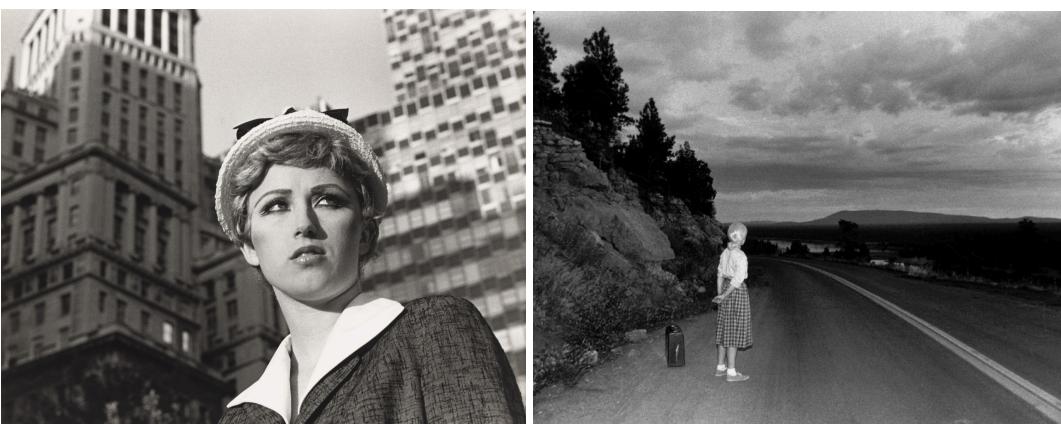
[Selection of Pictures Generation artists and their work over the page.]



*Untitled (four single men with interchangeable backgrounds looking to the right)*  
Richard Prince (1977). Advertisement clippings, “[turning] the lie back on itself.”



*Untitled #87* Cindy Sherman (1981). Takes the format of a magazine spread to show a vulnerable image of the artist. Critiques the male gaze via encouraging the audience to participate in it via that format.



*Untitled Film Still #21* (1978), *Untitled Film Still #48* (1979) Cindy Sherman. Two examples of her series staging cinematic tropes of midcentury Hollywood. Showing how we base our identities off stock ones in media constructed through setting, camera angle, wardrobe and lighting.

In a cultural and practical context, requotation is known in the art world for getting artists sued for appropriation. Artists such as Richard Prince and Jeff Koons have brought the conversation around appropriation, copyright infringement and fair use into the art world's attention, especially in the past decade. The work their various lawsuits are about are often very obviously using other peoples images without substantially changing them, and not for (in my opinion), particularly convincing conceptual reasons.

[See examples of the work these lawsuits were about over page.]

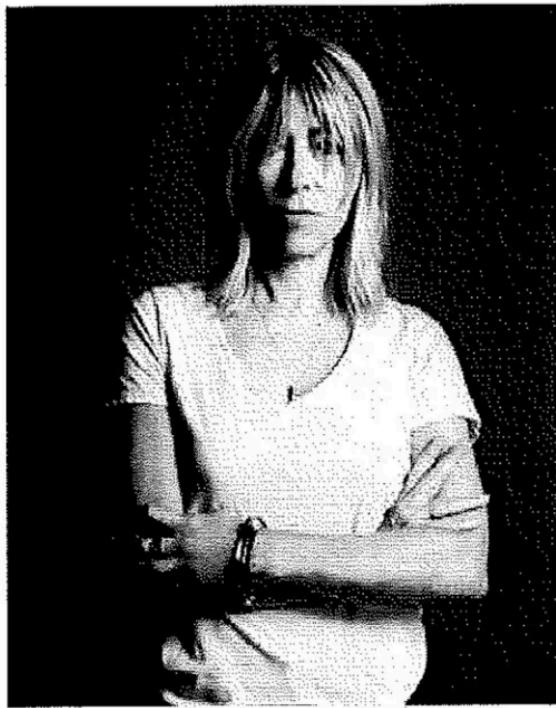
In NZ we have 'fair dealing', not 'fair use'. According to [Copyright Licensing New Zealand](#), fair dealing "permits a party to use your copyrighted material, without your permission, for the purposes of research, private study, criticism, review and news reporting."

Copyright Licensing NZ also makes a distinction between [derivative or transformative](#). "You can be accused of copyright infringement if your new work is substantially similar to the work that either inspired you, and if you've used identifiable elements from that work." A work must be different enough from the original to create a different story/message in order to be transformative. "Has value been added by creating new information, aesthetics, insights and understandings?" If yes, then it's transformative, and gets its own copyright protections. They explicitly state on this page that this is how collage artists can operate; using other peoples images to say something different.

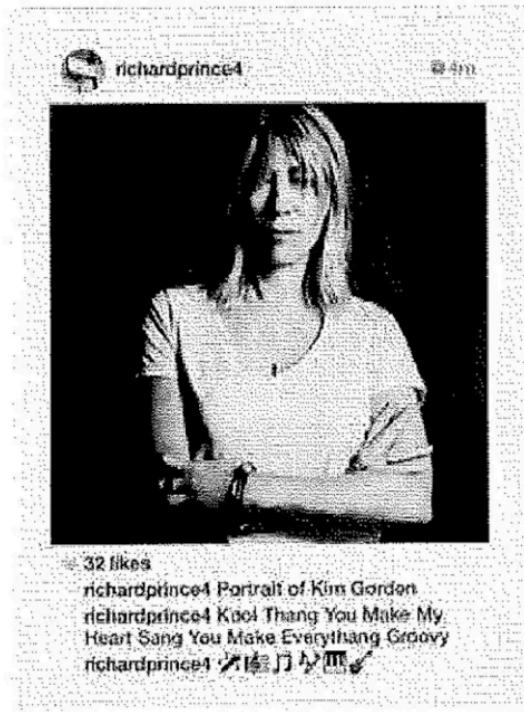
I've been told over the years that the general rule is that a work needs to be changed/shifted by at least 10% for it to be considered original.

The aim I see underpinning this method is to generate discussion around the role images play in our image-heavy culture. This method prompts both artist and subsequently the audience to interrogate how society produced certain images and for what purpose. Do they enforce stereotypes of identity, or serve a different function? How do they perform this function?

My practice has been for the past year very image-heavy, and not always with ones of my own making. This aim of prompting discussion is always woven into my work, whether that be in the foreground, or taking a backseat to other, more important aims in a specific work.



McNatt's *Kim Gordon I* (Fig. 5)



Prince's *Portrait of Kim Gordon* (Fig. 6)

McNatt v. Prince (2016).

#### *Rogers v. Koons*



Art Rogers - "Puppies"



Jeff Koons - "String of Puppies"

Rogers v. Koons (1992).

The process:

(red text indicates most relevant/important to the method)



- ★ **Gathering/collecting materials:** probably longest stage
  - finding relevant stuff, writing my own work and reflections, using others' writing (commissioned). Below is a list going into greater detail on this step.
  - Begin collecting relevant quotes, articles (academic & other), lyrics, tags, comments, images, excerpts from past writing/projects, others' art/projects
  - Do more reading around others' personal experiences & perspectives
  - Research relevant UK law (example); does this translate into NZ law?
  - Research other similar publications (in subject matter or aesthetics)
  - Research local scene/events/etc. again (write it down this time)
  - Speak to friends about potential contributions
  - Make plans for own original writing
- ★ Compile thematically into a story that makes sense
- ★ **Layout pages & experiment** with repetition, layering, etc. weaving together all the materials with InDesign.
- ★ Choosing what pages are for butter paper/other paper.
- ★ Printing correctly
- ★ Physical construction of books.

The impact the method of re quotation could have on the work is major. The bulk of the work for this piece is in the collection of quotes/images and in curating and collaging them digitally. The work could simply not be made without the method of re quotation - it is nearly all quotation. Especially with requesting others to write pieces (prose, poetry, essays, etc.), this could result in the work taking a while to take physical form, since the majority of the work is in curating.

The selection of what to include in the work will no doubt have an effect on what the overall story/conceptual argument of the work will be. The way I bring it together in InDesign in terms of creative visual experimentation (editing, cropping, layout, repetition, etc.) will also have an effect on the outcome of the work.