



SHE IS RISEN

KATHY LANDVOGT & ZOE CONDLIFFE
CHAPEL GALLERY
ABBOTSFORD CONVENT

NOV 25

constraints imposed on traditional forms and can be broken apart

Emanating from a site-specific exploration of the spaces of the Abbotsford Convent, this multi-media collaboration explores the institutionalisation of the political form.

Coming together and telling our stories in a way that is both intimate and powerful. Using images, text, and movement, this exhibition is about storytelling as a way of rising above the constraints imposed upon us.

Thank you to the women who have shared their stories for this project.

This installation takes place on the land of the Kulin Nations. Sovereignty was never ceded.

COLLABORATIVE INSTALLATION

Stories: EDIE BANNERMAN, MARY-LOU REED, CATHY WILLIAMS. Some storytellers have chosen to remain anonymous.

The Installation

What strikes me is the fact that in our society, art has become something which is related only to objects and not to individuals, or to life. That art is something which is specialized or which is done by experts who are artists. But couldn't everyone's life become a work of art? Why should the man or house be an object, but not our life?" - Foucault

An installation is a unified piece of work, prioritising ideas over objects, and we invite you to view this collaboration as such. 'She' was created in this space, inspired by this location, and is therefore inseparable from it. You, as the audience, viewer and participant, are the key actor in this space. This installation aims to move beyond transactional forms of art-viewing and focus on a conversation between the work and the viewer. For this installation, the process of storytelling has been prioritised above the final aesthetic product. The women involved were able to tell their stories in the way that made the most sense to them, with minimal editing, and so you will see and hear a variety of forms of raw storytelling here.

The Collaboration

This is a space created for our stories to be told, and heard. We each offer something different and deeply personal. We each use our own language, words, images, music, or movement.

There are connections between our stories but the threads are only lightly woven together. The visitor completes the circle with their own imaginative something. Finding relevance and function between the images, language,

Collective storytelling among women is a radical act of and an important form of consciousness-raising. Trauma experience will continue to be seen as private, discrete (actively attempt to split open the private sphere, where stories are traditionally expected to reside. The telling stories with each other is crucial to making sense of our ourselves within it, and moving forward from individual

Women's stories, along with stories of other marginalised, been prioritised as important pieces of history or as influential consequential contributions to society. The mythologising experiences through the act of storytelling is a definitive reclaiming of the process of history-making for women. My work has been inspired by the women in my life; filmmaker and collaborator for this exhibition, Dr Kathy L writes:

In personal narratives people organise fragmentary experience personal history to create a unique 'self' ... This process is apparent in its absence, when trauma surfaces repeatedly because it cannot yet be named... " New interpretations of discovery of not being alone in one's experience, and in a shared language (Kathleen Susan Landvogt, 2004).

As long as female stories remain absent from public discourse, experience will continue to be shrouded in pain, guilt and Performed storytelling allows women to take control of

place. My work privileges stories to assert that they are legitimate forms of knowledge and power. This creates an alternative to patriarchal knowledge forms that prioritise science, rationality and “fact,” and invalidate female anecdote.

‘She is risen’ is a site-specific exploration of the silences and stories of women who have experienced policing or institutionalisation of their body, sexuality, freedom, motherhood, and/or culture as a result of being a woman. This installation holds five stories of five women, that speak to the five locations and five women painted and drawn by Kathy Landvogli.

My personal story is expressed through ‘Silence’ - a movement piece choreographed and performed in the space with Cathy Williams and inspired by a song of the same name composed and performed by Elvie Bannerman for this installation. The piece grapples with the policing and abuse of female bodies and experiences, the impossible task that is put on women to somehow appropriately service the male gaze while remaining virginal, and the process of rebirth and self-discovery of our own personal and minds leading toward self-actualised storytelling and sisterhood. The primary motif is the white sheet. This installation takes place on the site of the Magdalene laundries, where “fallen women” were sent and put to work laundering white sheets. In the laundries women were not allowed to speak to each other or share stories, with the idea that this would keep off their traumatic histories. Perhaps it also prevented healing, as society that did not care to hear. My depictions cannot perpetuated the shame women felt through isolating their trauma and we use the sheet to explore and break apart the binary notions women are forced into. ‘Silence’ is an expression of the mutual storytelling we share that gives us the courage and strength to move beyond our trauma.

For this installation, the process of storytelling has been prioritised in my work. Like today’s work, they usually came out of

This collaboration began two years ago when I asked Z my art off the walls and into the realm of politically and art. We have been having an extended mother-daughter feminism for many years. This collaboration cements to I want my art to more closely reflect the social work in values and feminist concepts that are such an important Feminists need to recover hidden histories of women’s power relations they reveal, while also looking honestly (Jane Flax, 1990).

Having worked for the last 12 years for the Good Shepl founded and ran the Abbotsford convent and other resic Australia from 1863 to 1974, there was no more immed than with the young women who were sent to live there personal question about the experiences of a family me and. The was sent to one of those institutions in the 19 The work of these young women, who were mos struggling with poverty, unemployment, mental illness the part of the lost ‘herstory’. Their stories are missing, so society that did not care to hear. My depictions cannot in How as to speak for anyone. Yet it is an injustice to re liberation visible, so I want my work to ask questions th silences impossible to distance myself from these historical have been from another time, but they have a continuous work. Like today’s work, they usually came out of

the five small *plein-air* acrylic paintings. I was drawn to the strangely empty spaces, their beautiful neglected bones, their rich textures and muted colours. They are powerful metaphorical spaces, resonant of the herstory lived experiences should hold no shame. Instead architectural settings common in religious paintings. These buildings are also specific, real sites, now National Heritage listed as significant and working for and lessening stigma within the public eye of our welfare history.

The figures

Back in the studio I created the five large pastels, imagining the young women into the spaces. More accurately, they seemed to insist on being seen there. These are stylised figures, based on life drawings of real people but without individual identities, naked and stripped bare of identity. They are also naked because it was their bodies and others', mainly men, reactions to them that caused trouble. It was their bodies that society found problematic.

The lines

The young women each had to find a way to be in this constrained place and I was trying to find a way to put them there. The third element is the lines, an abstraction that tries to explain how the figures are held in the spaces, both aesthetically (how can the oddness of these floating and oversized figures be made satisfactory to look at?) and metaphorically (how could the young women be safe, even thrive, in this environment?). Obliquely, the lines also centre on the navels of the women because they defined and framed them through their lack of a mother who was able to care for them.

The young women in my drawings cannot speak for themselves, but the collaborators on this installation can. In this process lie some answers. From them we learn that it is not *inside* the walls where the main problem lies, because we still cannot seem to find a way for women to be both safe

It has been a confronting and healing process to rise to :

What gave me strength were the many women who have shared their thoughts on my journey. So my public sharing now is about the same acknowledgment and validation offered by them. They often be an isolating experience. May we know we are :

Throughout the creative process of a performance piece Zoë, I enjoyed merging the life-art bridge. At first exploring intuitive movement what our shared experiences felt like birth to an unfolding narrative of moving with each other, metaphors and the spaces in between in meaningful ways.

I believe we each carry many stories in our bodies and I believe being with them, allowing them to surface and giving expression (for me through movement) - that we are able to transcribe

acquittal of my attacker at trial. I was snamed into silence by a community	The Laundry	\$250
that believed I was to blame, and shunned by my peers, my school and a	The Wall	\$250
judicial system that was supposed to protect me.	4. The Bishop's Parlour	\$250
	5. The Courtyard	\$250

I felt as if I'd been stripped of who I was. I was lost in a sea of emptiness,	anything	
and suddenly I couldn't find joy in anything that I was writing, or anything	any wings on paper	
I was singing. But through my journey of recovery I was incredibly lucky		
to meet several amazing women who helped me to find my identity and my	1. Prudence and the Passageway	\$550
voice once again.	2. Hope and the Laundry	\$550

	3. Courage and the Wall	\$550
This work marks the breaking of my own silence, as I have chosen to throw	4. Faith and the Bishop's Parlour	\$550
away the shame that has been placed upon me. These words are my	5. Charity and the Courtyard	\$550
and my hope is that when they are heard that they help others to break their		
silence, and in their own way, to be able to sing again.		

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