

## (After) After

Anachronism, Modernist Picture-making and the  
Romantic Literary Tradition

Laurence Figgis



Laurence Figgis, *The Club-Grande*, 2017 (detail), dye-sublimation print, collage, acrylic paint on canvas, 120 x 304 cm, ©Laurence Figgis



# Contents Page

<a href="#"><u>Abstract</u></a>	p.2
<a href="#"><u>Research Question</u></a>	p.3
<a href="#"><u>Context</u></a>	p.4
<a href="#"><u>Methods</u></a>	p.6
<a href="#"><u>Research Output</u></a>	p.9
<a href="#"><u>Contribution to the Field</u></a>	p.39
<a href="#"><u>Dissemination</u></a>	p.41
<a href="#"><u>Evidence</u></a>	p.42
<a href="#"><u>Acknowledgements</u></a>	p.43
<a href="#"><u>Appendix: Painting Gallery</u></a>	

# Abstract

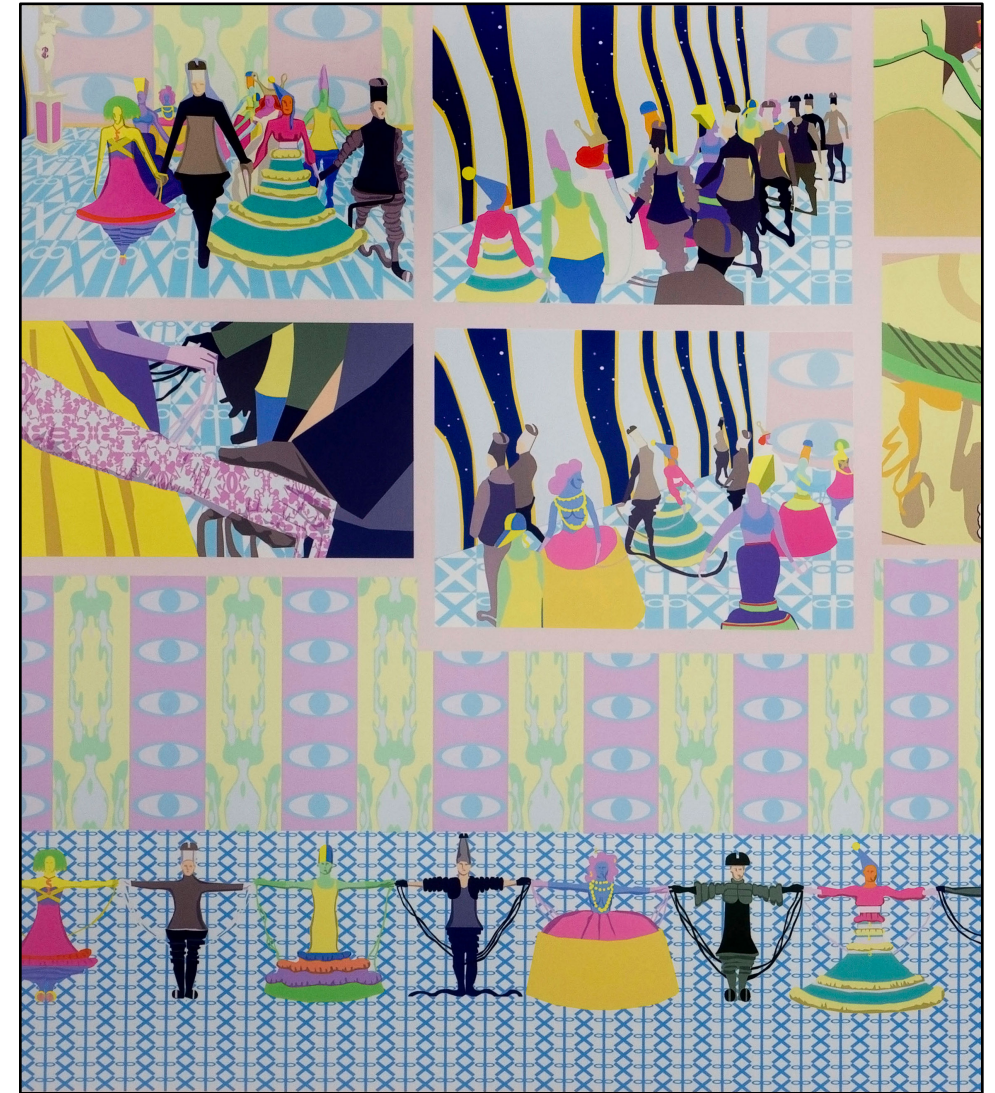
Undertaken between January 2014 and September 2017, this research output is formed of a series of narrative paintings, a fictional text and a short contextual essay which (re)articulate deliberate anachronism as a methodology for story-telling and picture-making. The methodologies of this output evolved from a study of how anachronism was deployed (as a deliberate creative strategy) in European/ American painting and illustration of the mid-twentieth-century and has reappeared in recent contemporary work, offering a critical reinvention of images and fictional genres associated with romantic literary traditions in both elite and popular culture. Following this supporting research, this output re-articulates deliberate anachronism as a structural fusion of modernist picture-making and romantic fiction. This fusion is articulated and examined through a range of conscious strategies such as design and writing in order to construct images and compositions for narrative paintings.



# Research Question

With reference to Post-World War II examples of painting and illustration (in which anachronism is deployed as a conscious formal device), how do these historical prototypes suggest a methodology for:

- creating images and structuring compositions in contemporary narrative painting?
- articulating the structural relationship between anachronism, modernist picture-making and the romantic literary tradition?



Laurence Figgis, *The Club-Grande* (detail), 2017, dye-sublimation print, collage, acrylic paint on canvas, 120 x 304 cm, ©Laurence Figgis.



# Context

Contemporary narrative painting practice which

- appropriates images/objects from the past

AND / OR

- uses a deliberately old-fashioned style of image-making

in order to re-create the mood and sensibility of romantic art (and literature) in a contemporary context.



Steven Campbell, *On Form and Fiction*, 1989-90, Acrylic and ink on paper, benches, table, plant, reel to reel player, sound, dim. variable, Edinburgh and Glasgow: National Galleries of Scotland and Glasgow Museums



Kara Walker, *Dredging the Quagmire (Bottomless Pit)*, 2017



Sigmar Polke, "The Illusionist (Lens Painting)", 2007, Mixed media on fabric, 86 1/2 x 118 inches, 220 x 300 cm © The Estate of Sigmar Polke



Paula Rego, *Angel*, 1998



Karen Kilimnik, *the green fairy cottage in the Vietnamese jungle*, 2015, water soluble oil colour and glitter on canvas, 51.4 x 61.6 cm



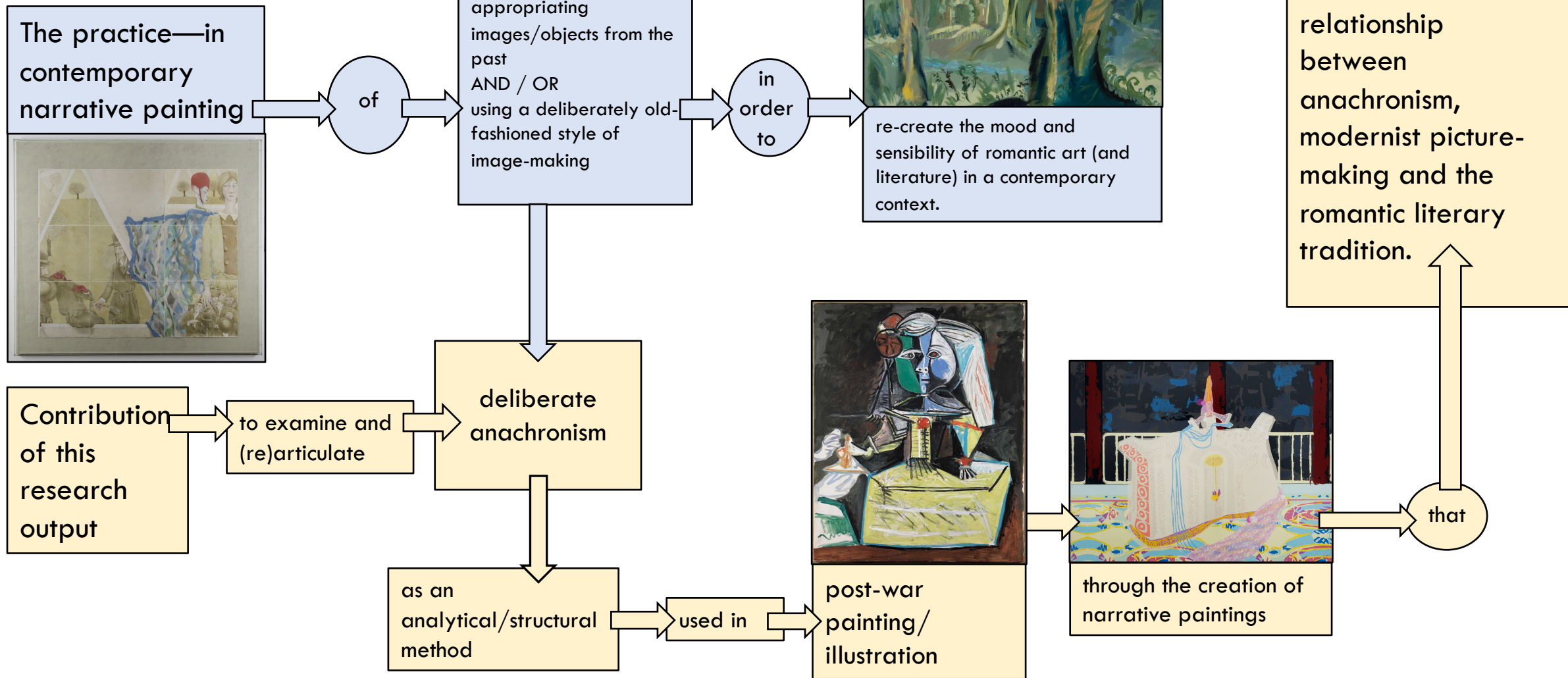
Kai Althoff, "Untitled", 2012-2014, Colored pencil and felt-tip pen on paper, 174 x 199.5 cm



Cathy Wilkes, *Installation View*, Aird's Lane, Glasgow, 2016



# Context



# Methods

## Supporting research: anachronism in post-war art and romantic fiction

The methodology for this output was informed by supporting research into:

1. paintings and illustrations from the post-war era in which deliberate anachronism is used as a pictorial method — I focused on four main bodies of work:

- Pablo Picasso's suite of paintings based on *Las Meninas* (1957).
- Eyvind Earle's conceptual paintings for the Disney animation, *Sleeping Beauty* (1959).
- Robert Rauschenberg's illustrations to Dante's 'Inferno' (1958-9).
- Eric Winter's illustrations for Ladybird Books' 'Well-loved Tales' (1963-5).

2. anachronism in romantic historical fiction, and related genres such as the literary fairy tale.



Pablo Picasso reimagined the seventeenth-century Spanish court (depicted by Velázquez) as a cubist painting: *Las Meninas*, 1957, oil on canvas.



Eyvind Earle combined medieval gothic and mid-century-modern graphic styles in his designs for Disney's *Sleeping Beauty* (example, c.1950s. gouache and tempera on artists' board)



Robert Rauschenberg used images transferred from magazines to illustrate Dante's *Inferno* (avoiding the medieval sources appropriate to the poem's context) (see Krčma, 2017): *Canto IX: Circle Six, The Heretics*, 1959 – 60, solvent transfer, mixed media on paper.

Eric Winter's illustrations to the 'Well-Loved Tales' (1963-5) made use of cinematic framing and costume reminiscent of Hollywood period films.



This supporting research is available in the public domain via my academic paper, ['American Gothic'](#), and my journal article, ['Bad Retail: A Romantic Fiction'](#) (included as part of the [body-of-work](#) for this output).



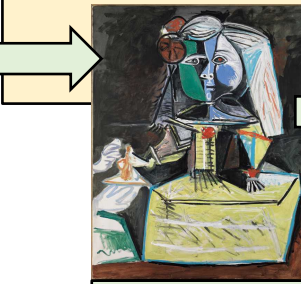
# Methods

From the supporting research I arrived at the following observations or principles:

- An anachronism is a thing belonging to a time period other than that in which it exists — often regarded as a ‘mistake’ in art and literature — but sometimes deployed consciously to exaggerate a sense of fantasy or implausibility.
- Hollywood ‘costume-films’ (inspired by romantic historical fiction), often mix-up fashion-styles from different periods, in the effort to create a romantic image of the past (see Maeder 1987: 10). This approach is also found in illustrations to fantasy genres such as the fairy tale.
- In post-war visual culture that evokes imagery or narratives from the Medieval, Baroque or Rococo periods — the modernist perspective of 1950s/60s design (its tendency to fetishise technology and the future) jars with the representation of the distant past.
- The post-war painters and illustrators mentioned above used (inappropriate) techniques of modernist picture-making such as cubism and collage to depict *ancien régime* subjects.
- Deliberate anachronism can evoke the decay or destruction of modernity itself — and generate dark visions of the present and future — this is seen in Science Fiction and Dystopian Fiction.

These principles guided the choice of research methodologies for this output:

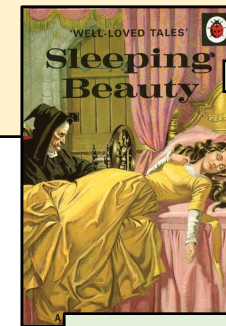
- 1) Fiction-writing should be used to generate the paintings, and the language should suggest a combination of time periods (exaggerating this tendency of historical romance).
- 2) The methods used should evoke a theatrical sensibility e.g. processes derived from costume and set design (for theatre and film).
- 3) The paintings should refer to a range of time- periods simultaneously. This should include (but not be limited to) art & design sources from 1950s/60s. The methods should acknowledge that post-war design is itself a pastiche of conflicting aesthetic genres and epochs: for example—19<sup>th</sup>-century women’s costume (which influenced Dior’s ‘New Look’) and Bauhaus design. The aim is to produce an exaggerated sense of anachronism by bringing these disparate time-periods together.
- 4) Collage processes (and other modernist picture-making techniques) should be used to generate the compositions for the paintings.



Picasso, *Infanta Margarita Maria*, 1957, oil on canvas, 100 x 81 cm.



Diego Velázquez, *Las Meninas*, 1656, oil on canvas, 194-276 cm



Winter's illustrations for the 'Well-Loved Tales' resemble Hollywood period films adapted from historical romances like *Ivanhoe* (1952, dir. Richard Thorp).

These observations are expanded in my academic paper, '[American Gothic](#)', and my journal article, '[Bad Retail: A Romantic Fiction](#)' (included as part of the body of work for this output).

# Methods

## Overview of the research methods for this output

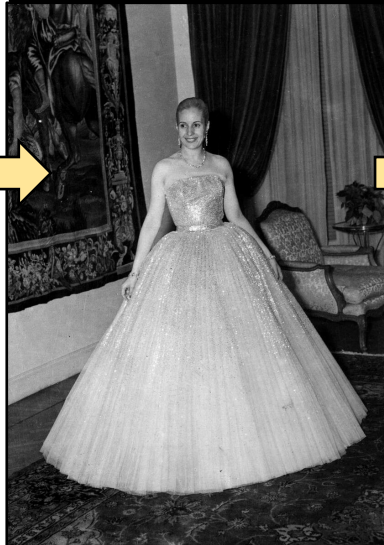
(deliberate anachronism re-articulated as the construction of images and compositions for narrative paintings):

### 1: Fiction Writing

*"Styrene was soon weary of dancing with the Monothses. And, Lord-love-you Corpus-Eye, the night was 'old,' as the Torians say, when she leaned on the Gallery of Rexecs and peered into the hall below. She turned and looked behind her, the last of many furtive glances to ensure that Trite was not observing her. And, satisfied that he was not (indeed that he was nowhere to be seen in the Club-Grande), she took a final galvanising breath, snatched up the folds of her capacious gown and fled the discino, as quickly as she could without stumbling on her heels."* (Excerpt from 'Bad Retail')

I wrote the short prose-fiction 'Bad Retail,' a story combining aspects of fairy tale, historical romance and dystopian fiction.

### 2: Art & Design Sources



To illustrate the story, references were gathered from a wide range of art/design sources.

### 3: Costume & Set Design



Costumes and décor (for the characters and settings in the story) were created using theatre and film-production design techniques.

### 4: Collage



Working from these elements I used hand-made and digital collage techniques to build compositions for the paintings.

### 5: Transfer onto stretched canvas



Acrylic paint or dye-sublimation print were used to make the finished works on stretched canvas.

These methods are expanded in further detail through the articulation of my research in the 'Outputs' section.



# Research Output

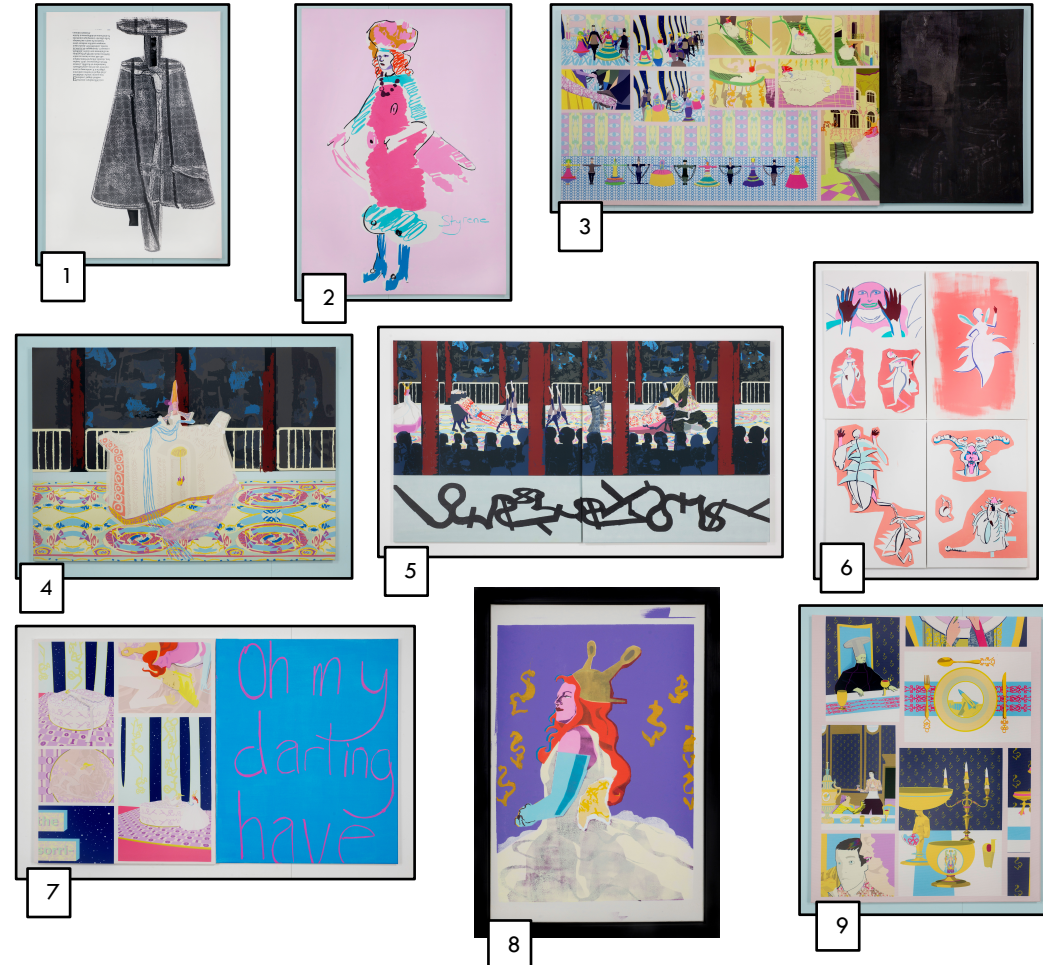
The body of work for this output consists of:

Nine paintings:

1. [The General, 2017, dye-sublimation print on canvas, 200 x 141 cm](#) (plus 4 preparatory works/source images)
2. [Costume for Styrene, 2017, acrylic paint on canvas, 200 x 141 cm](#) (plus 3 preparatory works/source images)
3. [The Club-Grande, 2017, dye-sublimation print, collage, acrylic paint on canvas, 120 x 304 cm](#) (plus 61 preparatory works/source images)
4. [The Goddess of Land Services, 2017, dye-sublimation print on canvas, 118 x 168 cm](#) (plus 9 preparatory works/source images)
5. [The Mar'ge, 2017, dye-sublimation print, acrylic paint on canvas, 126 x 236 cm](#) (plus 22 preparatory works/source images)
6. [Athener, 2017, acrylic paint on canvas, 182 x 122 cm](#) (plus 9 preparatory works/source images)
7. [Oh My Darling Have, 2017, dye-sublimation print, acrylic paint on canvas, 100 x 160 cm](#) (plus 20 preparatory works/source images)
8. [Styrene, 2017, acrylic paint on canvas, painted wood frame, 100.9 x 70.4 cm](#) (plus 5 preparatory works/source images)
9. [After the Mar'ge, 2017, dye-sublimation print on canvas, 81 x 65 cm](#) (plus 29 preparatory works/source images)

One journal article: '[Bad Retail: A Romantic Fiction](#)' — consisting of:

- [a short contextual essay](#)
- [an illustrated work of art-writing / literary fiction.](#)



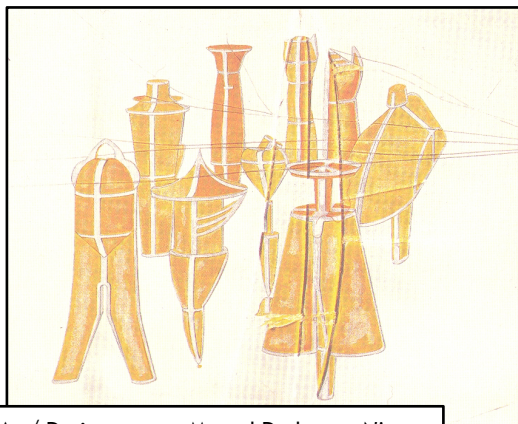
The following pages include comprehensive documentation of inspirational source images and preparatory studies alongside the finished paintings — to show how the relationship between anachronism, modernist picture-making and the romantic literary tradition was articulated through the construction of images and compositions for narrative paintings.



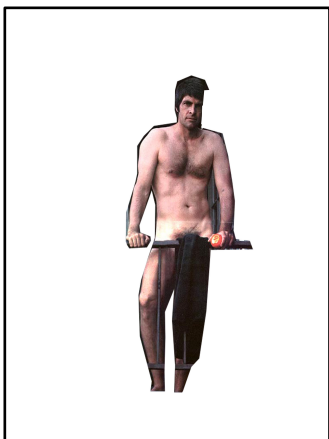
# Research Output

## Painting 1: *The General*

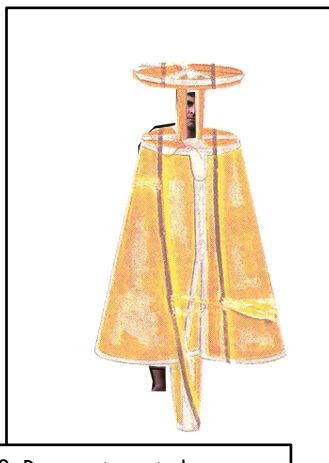
### Sources and preparatory studies



1.1. Art/ Design source: Marcel Duchamp, *Nine Malic Moulds*, 1914-15.



1.2. Preparatory study:  
collage component from c.  
1970s *Playgirl* nude pin-up.



1.3. Preparatory study:  
digital collage.



1.4. Preparatory study for  
*The General*, 2015, digital  
print on paper.

### Completed work



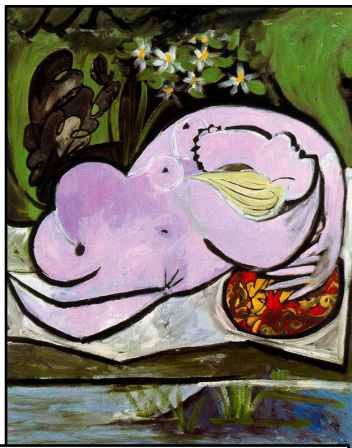
*The General*, 2017, dye-sublimation print on canvas, 200 x  
141 cm, ©Laurence Figgis



# Research Output

## Painting 2: Costume for Styrene

### Sources and preparatory studies



2.1. Art & Design source: Pablo Picasso, *Female nude in the garden*, 1934, 162 x 130 cm, oil on canvas, Musée Picasso, Paris, France.



2.2. Art & Design source: Ascot Gavotte from *My Fair Lady*, 1964, dir. George Cukor (film still)



2.3. Preparatory study: *Costume for Styrene*, 2016, crayon on paper, 42 x 29.7 cm, ©Laurence Figgis.

### Completed work



*Costume for Styrene*, 2017, acrylic paint on canvas, 200 x 141 cm, ©Laurence Figgis.



# Research Output

## Painting 3: The Club-Grande

## Sources and preparatory studies



3.1. Art & Design source: Theda Bara in *Cleopatra*, dir. J. Gordon Edwards, 1917, publicity still



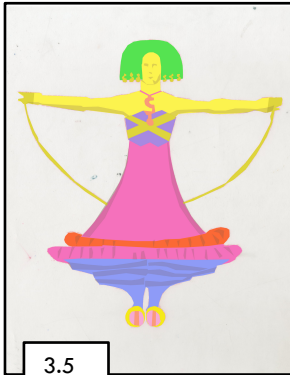
3.2. Art & Design source: Erté, costume design, 1930s



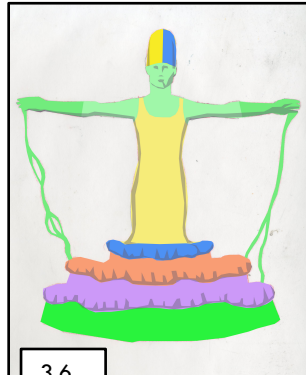
3.3. Art & Design source: Erté, costume design, 1930s



3.4. Art & Design source: 1990s street fashion (*Clueless*, dir. Amy Heckerling, 1995)



3.5



3.6



3.7



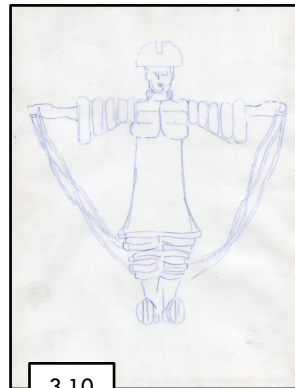
3.8



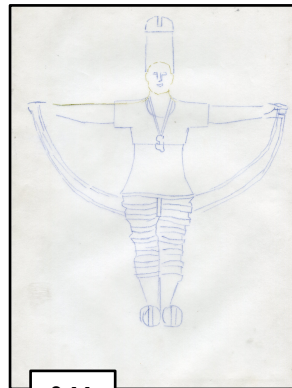
3.9

3.5-9. Preparatory studies for *The Club-Grande* (dancing figures), pencil drawings with digital colour, each 21 x 14 cm.

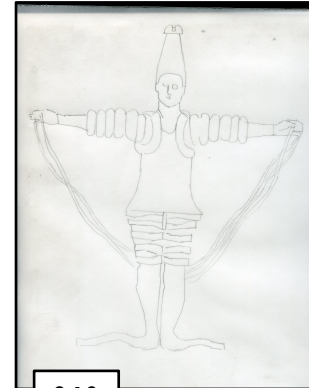
*"What dancing! The Bams took the sport seriously—as they took everything else in life. True, their faces remained rather fixed and solemn...But they spoiled as many pantalons as their hosts (by stepping on them and tearing them). And the Soric-oothers' loyalties were soon tested when the Bams approached them...for who among them could refuse such wonderful partners?" (excerpt from ['Bad Retail'](#))*



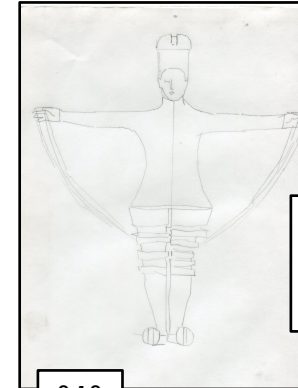
3.10



3.11



3.12



3.13

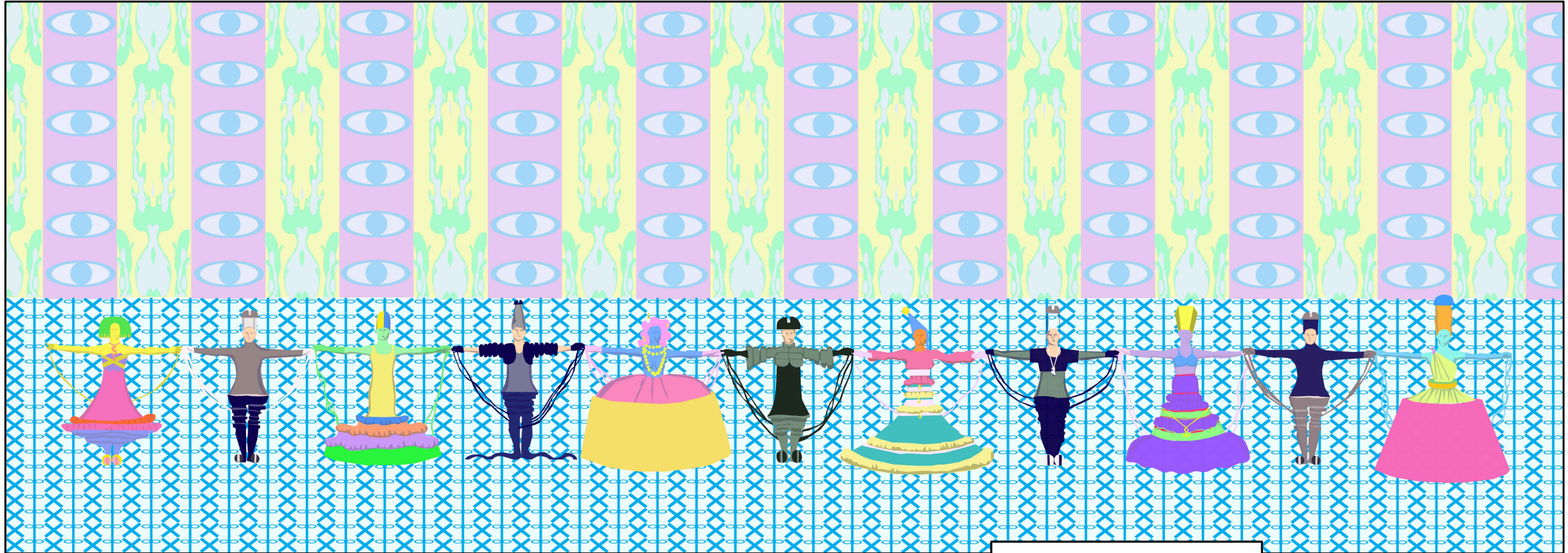
3.10-13. Preparatory studies for *The Club-Grande* (dancing figures), pencil drawings on tracing paper, each 21 x 14 cm.

# Research Output

Painting 3:

*The Club-Grande*

Sources and  
preparatory  
studies



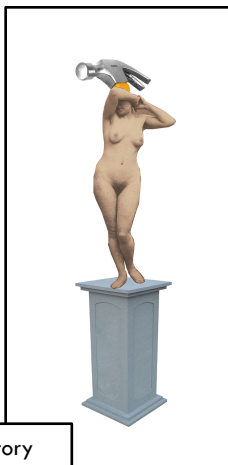
3.14. Preparatory work:  
completed digital painting for *The  
Club-Grande*.



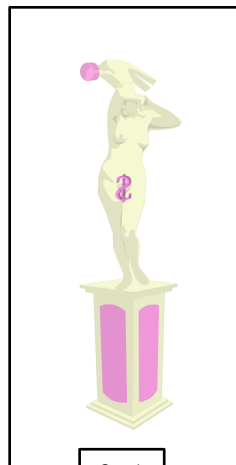
# Research Output

## Painting 3: *The Club-Grande*

## Sources and preparatory studies



3.15-16. Preparatory studies (décor), digital collage, digital painting.



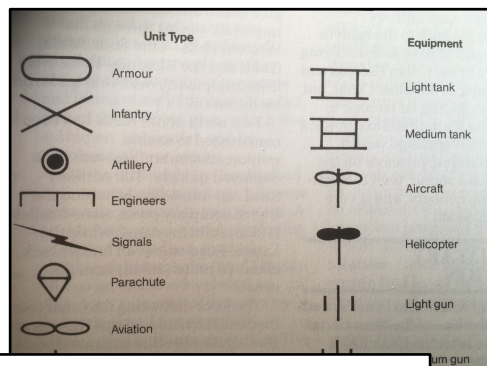
3.16



3.17. Art & Design source: Salvador Dalí, dream sequence for *Spellbound*, dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 1945.



3.19. Art & Design source: *Pride and Prejudice*, BBC TV series, 1995 (Netherfield Ball)



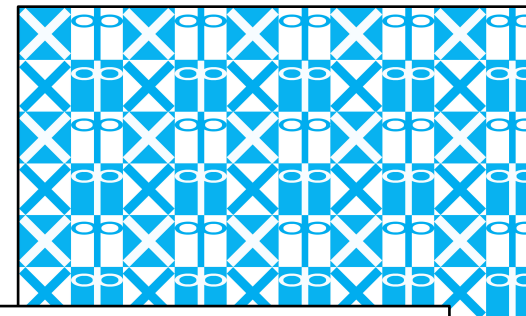
3.17. Art & Design source: military symbols from *Modern Land Combat*, D. Miller & C.F. Foss, 1987 (see 3.18).



3.18. Preparatory study: design for interior, digital painting.



3.20. Preparatory study: dancing figures, crayon on paper, 23 x 42 cm.



3.18. Preparatory study: design for floor tiles (based on "aircraft" and "infantry" symbols), digital painting.



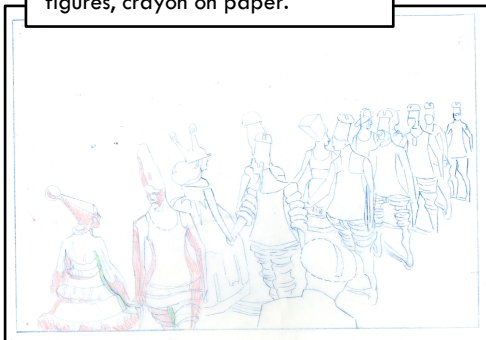
3.21. Preparatory work: completed digital painting for *The Club-Grande*.

# Research Output

## Painting 3: *The Club-Grande*

## Sources and preparatory studies

3.22. Preparatory study: dancing figures, crayon on paper.



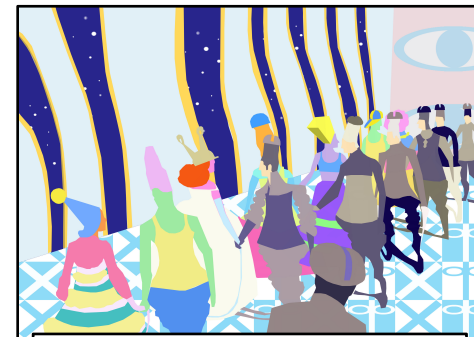
3.23. Preparatory study: ballroom windows, crayon on paper.



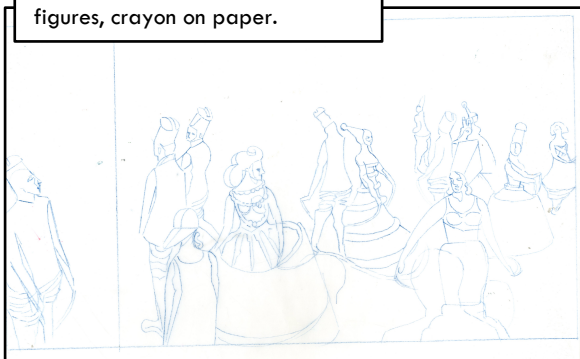
3.24. Preparatory study: ballroom digital paintings.



3.25. Completed digital painting for *The Club Grande*.



3.26. Preparatory study: dancing figures, crayon on paper.



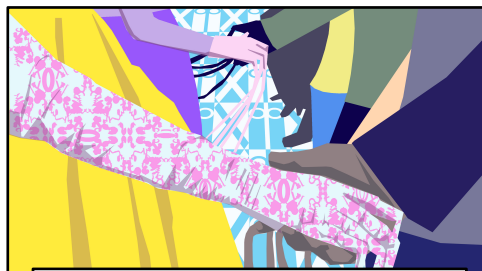
3.27. Completed digital painting for *The Club Grande*.



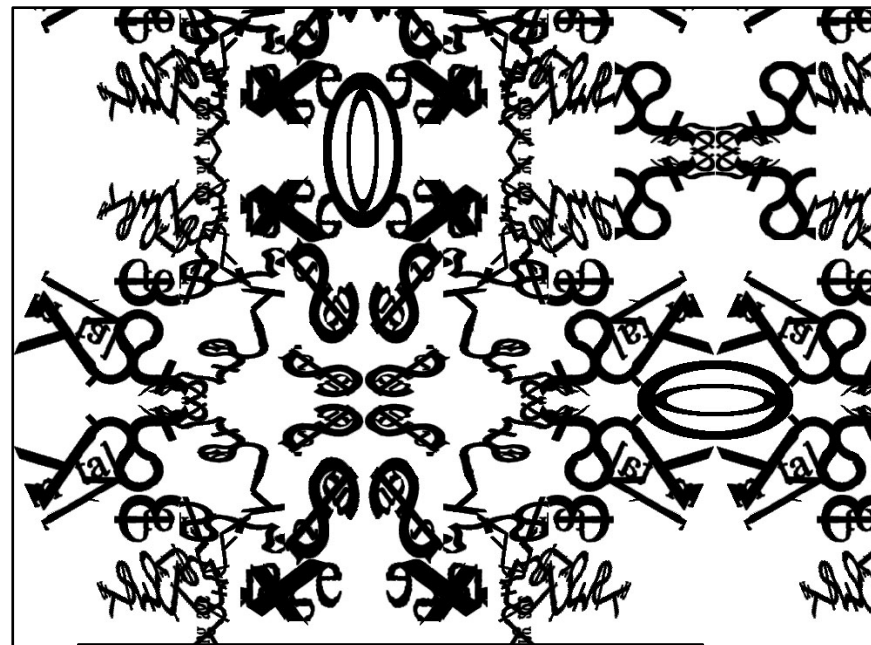
3.28. Preparatory study: dancing figures, crayon on paper.



3.29. Completed digital painting for *The Club Grande*.



3.30. Preparatory work: Rococo-inspired pattern made from distorted currency symbols and other typography (used for glove decoration in 3.29), digital collage.





# Research Output

## Painting 3:

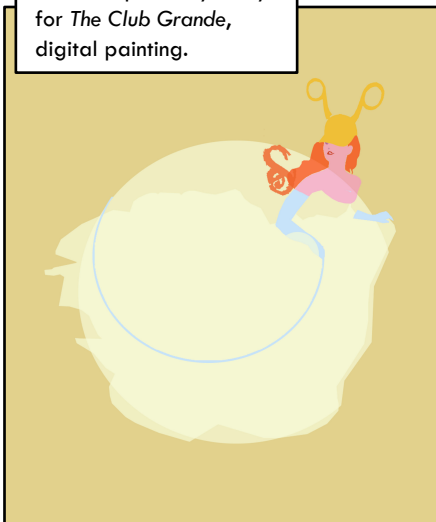
### The Club-Grande

## Sources and preparatory studies

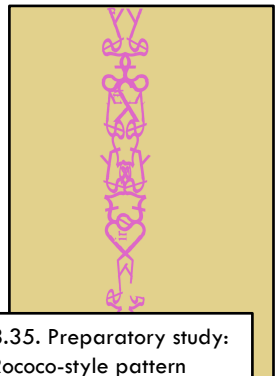
3.31. Art & Design source: Annie Leibovitz, Disney Dream Portrait Series: Scarlett Johansson as Cinderella, 2007



3.34. Preparatory study for The Club Grande, digital painting.

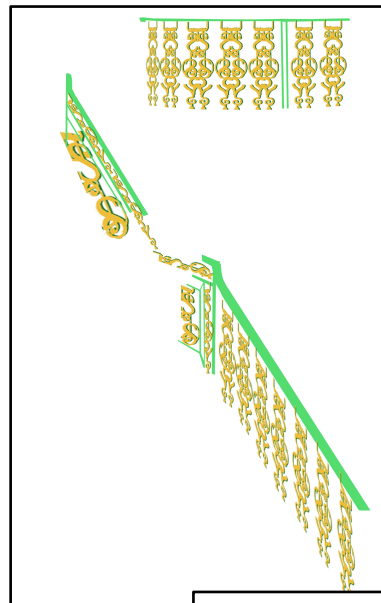


3.32. Art & Design source: Rococo interior



3.35. Preparatory study: Rococo-style pattern made from currency symbols, digital painting.

3.33. Preparatory study: digital collage.

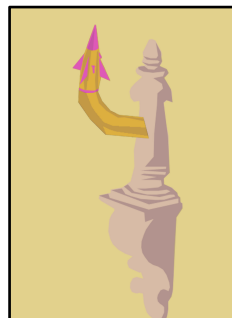


3.39. Preparatory study: design for bannister, digital painting.

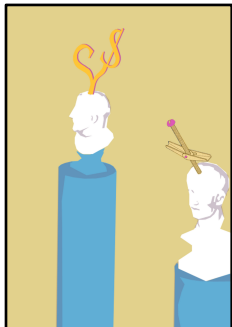
3.38. Preparatory study: design for newel post, digital painting.



3.37. Preparatory study: design for wall scone (torpedo decoration), digital painting.



3.36. Preparatory study: design for busts, digital painting.



*"She turned and looked behind her, the last of many furtive glances to ensure that Trite was not observing her. And, satisfied that he was not ...she ...snatched up the folds of her capacious gown and fled the discino, as quickly as she could without stumbling on her heels." (Excerpt from 'Bad Retail')*



3.40. Preparatory work: completed digital painting for The Club-Grande.

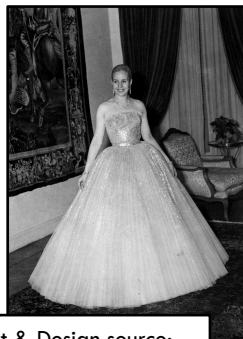


# Research Output

## Painting 3:

## The Club-Grande

## Sources and preparatory studies



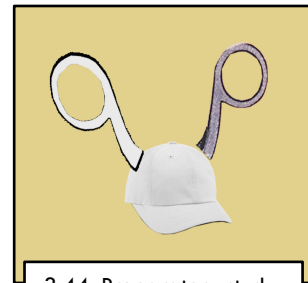
3.41. Art & Design source: Eva Peron wearing Christian Dior, 1949.



3.42. Art & Design source: Gone With the Wind, dir. Victor Flemming, 1939.



3.43. Art & Design source: Rococo interior (The Winter Palace, St. Petersburg).



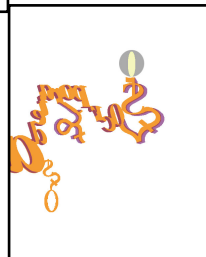
3.44. Preparatory study: design for a crown, digital collage.



3.45. Preparatory study: digital collage.



3.46. Preparatory study: gouache & crayon on paper.



3.47. Preparatory study: design for a scone made from currency symbols/typography.



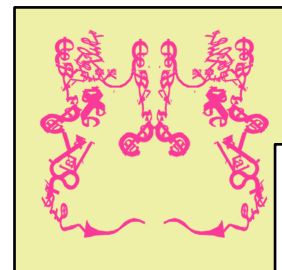
3.48. Preparatory study: statue holding torpedo, digital collage.



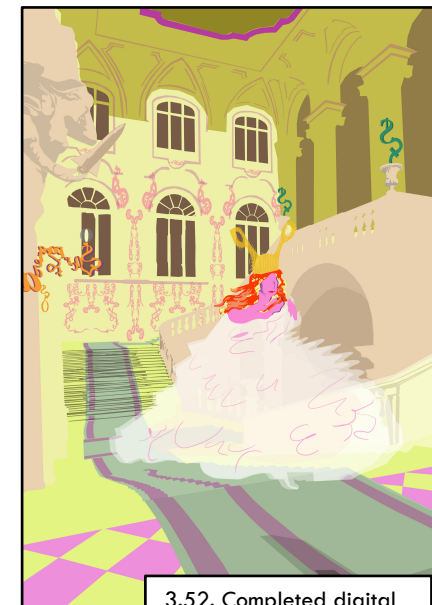
3.49. Preparatory study: statue holding torpedo, digital painting.



3.51. Preparatory study: pencil, watercolour, gouache on paper, 42 x 29 cm.

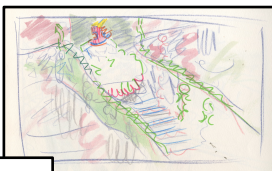


3.50. Preparatory study: Rococo pattern made from currency symbols, digital painting.

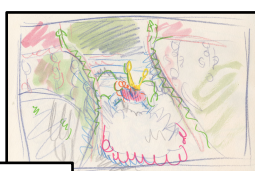


3.52. Completed digital painting for The Club Grande.

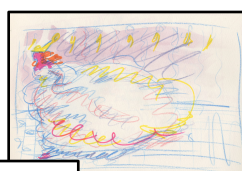
3.53-5. Preparatory studies: crayon, watercolour, ink on paper.



3.53

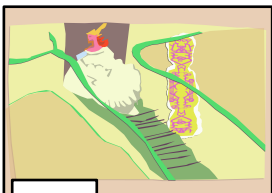


3.54



3.55

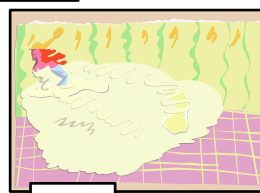
3.56-8. Preparatory study: completed digital paintings for The Club Grande.



3.56



3.57



3.58



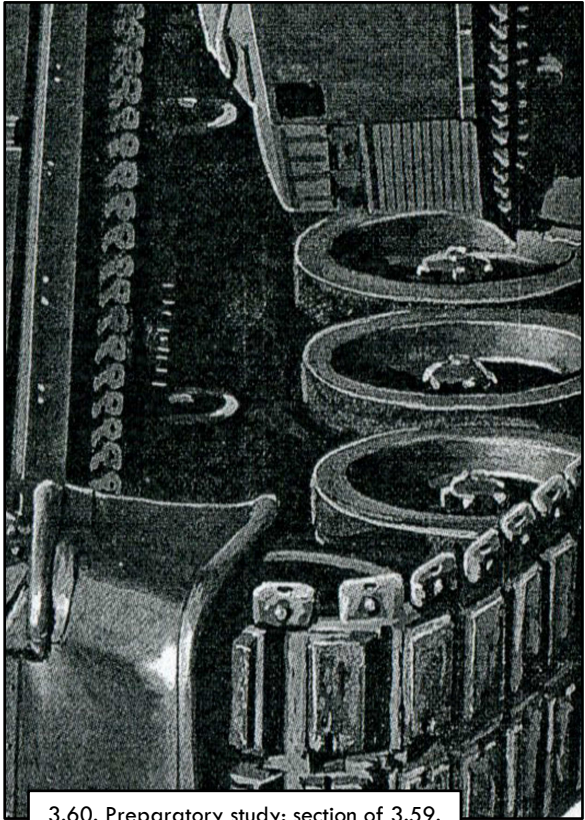
# Research Output

## Painting 3: The Club-Grande

## Sources and preparatory studies



3.59. Art & Design source: page photocopied from *Modern Land Combat*, D. Miller & C.F. Foss, 1987.



3.60. Preparatory study: section of 3.59. (rotated and enlarged), digital image.



3.61. Completed canvas for *The Club-Grande* — the image in 3.60. was printed in sections, pasted to a stretched canvas and obscured with layers of black acrylic paint mixed with translucent acrylic medium.



# Research Output

## Painting 3: *The Club-Grande*

Completed  
work



*The Club-Grande*, 2017, dye-sublimation print, collage, acrylic paint on canvas, 120 x 304 cm, ©Laurence Figgis.



# Research Output

## Painting 4:

### *The Goddess of Land-Services*



4.1. Art & Design source: Diego Velázquez, *Queen Maria-Anna of Spain*, 1652-3.



4.2. Art & Design source: Mantua, 1755-1760 © Victoria & Albert Museum .



4.3. Art & Design source: Punk hairstyles, Kings Road, London, 1981.



4.4. Art & Design source: Piero della Francesca, *Montefeltro Altarpiece*, 1472-4.



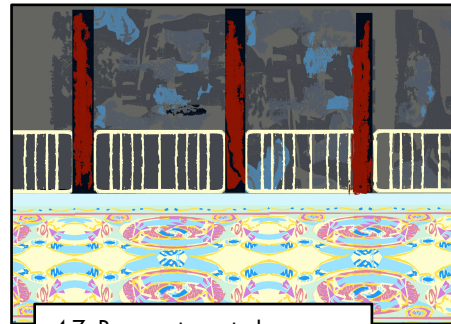
4.5. Art & Design source: page photocopied from *Modern Land Combat*, D. Miller & C.F. Foss, 1987.

## Sources and preparatory studies

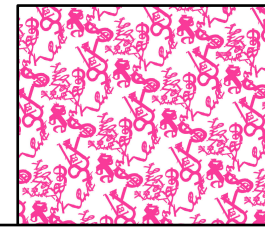
*"The late-arriving entity was tall, magnificently dressed in the most solvent and corp'rate garments that flashed and shivered as she advanced on the crouching Queen. By the time she reached the altar, at least two thirds of the Corpus were on their knees. All those who remained standing were dressed in dark retail. 'The Goddess of Land Services!' a kent was heard to say." (excerpt from 'Bad Retail')*



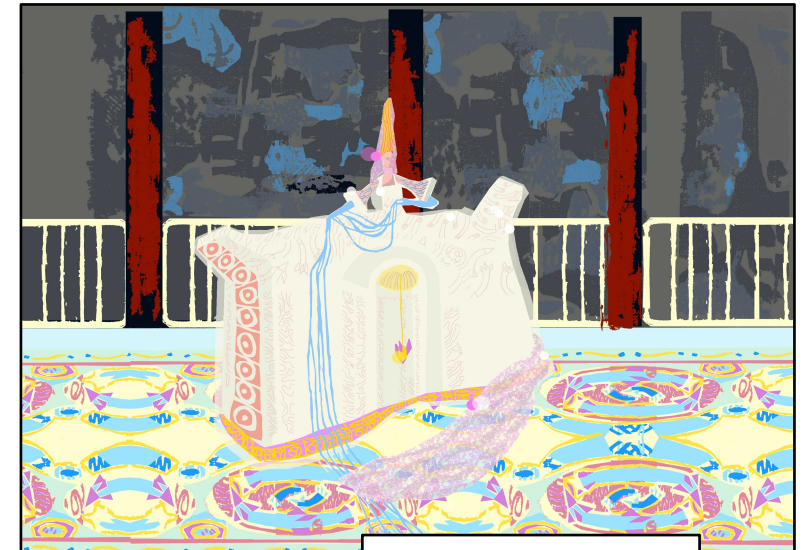
4.6. Preparatory study for *The Goddess of Land-Services*, pencil, ink, watercolour on paper.



4.7. Preparatory study: background (adapted from [5.17](#)), digital painting.



4.8. Preparatory study: roccoco pattern made from currency symbols (used for veil in 4.9), digital painting.



4.9. Completed digital painting for *The Goddess of Land Services*.



# Research Output

Painting 4:

*The Goddess of  
Land-Services*

Completed  
work



*The Goddess of Land Services*, 2017, dye-sublimation print on canvas, 118 x 168 cm, ©Laurence Figgis.



# Research Output

## Painting 5:

### *The Mar'ge*

## Sources and preparatory studies

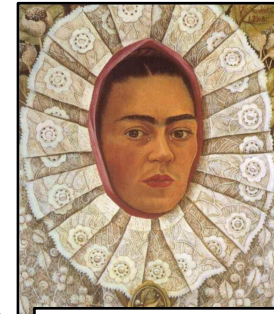
"The bride at least wore *some* bright colours for the occasion. Her dress was rather dour, but her veil and petticoat sparkled with coquettish hues, where emblems of the two religions entwined, as if in love. Now a hush was falling on the temple. The choir's last refrain of 'Corp'rate day!' had faded out, leaving only a trace of an echo in the vaulted space." (excerpt from '[Bad Retail](#)')



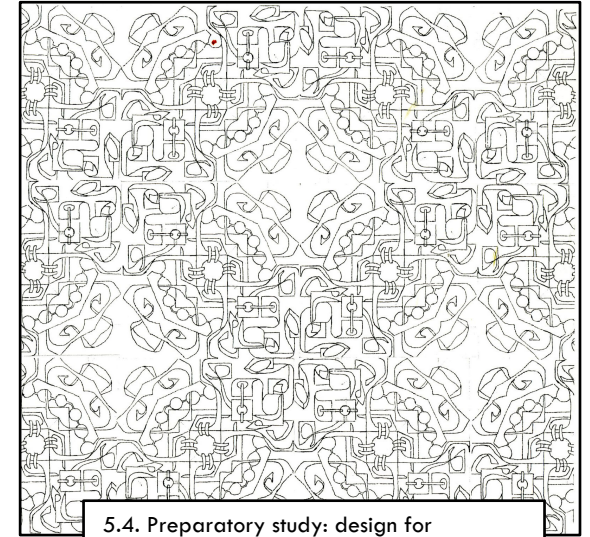
5.1. Art & Design source: *La Reine Margot*, 1994, dir. Patrice Chéreau (wedding scene).



5.2. Art & Design source: Late 90's JNCO Jeans.



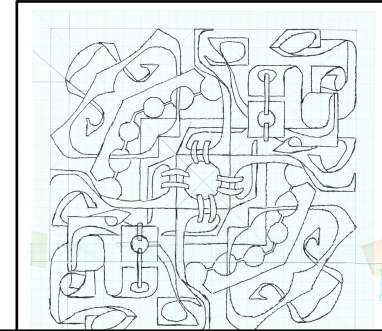
5.3. Art & Design source: Frida Kahlo, *Self-Portrait*, 1948



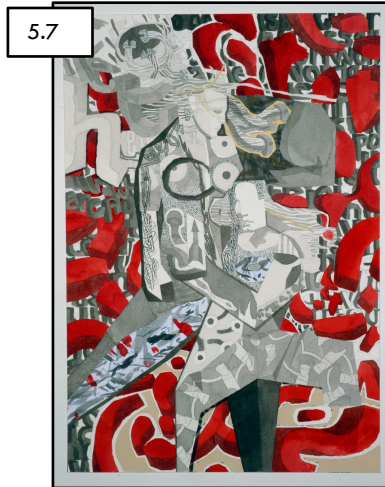
5.4. Preparatory study: design for patterned cloth, photocopy on paper.



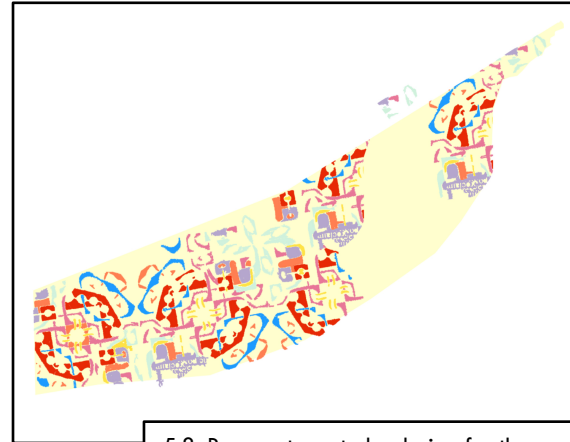
5.5. & 5.7. Preparatory studies: abstract patterns based on images of military hardware: pencil, ink, watercolour and collage on paper (photocopied and used in collaged background for [5.10.](#))



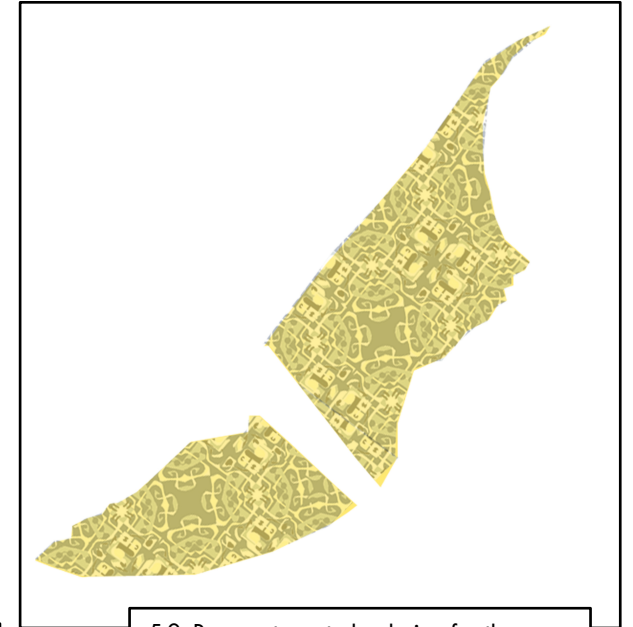
5.6. Preparatory study: design for patterned cloth, ink on graph paper.



5.7



5.8. Preparatory study: design for the bride's train (based on 5.4 & 5.6), digital painting.



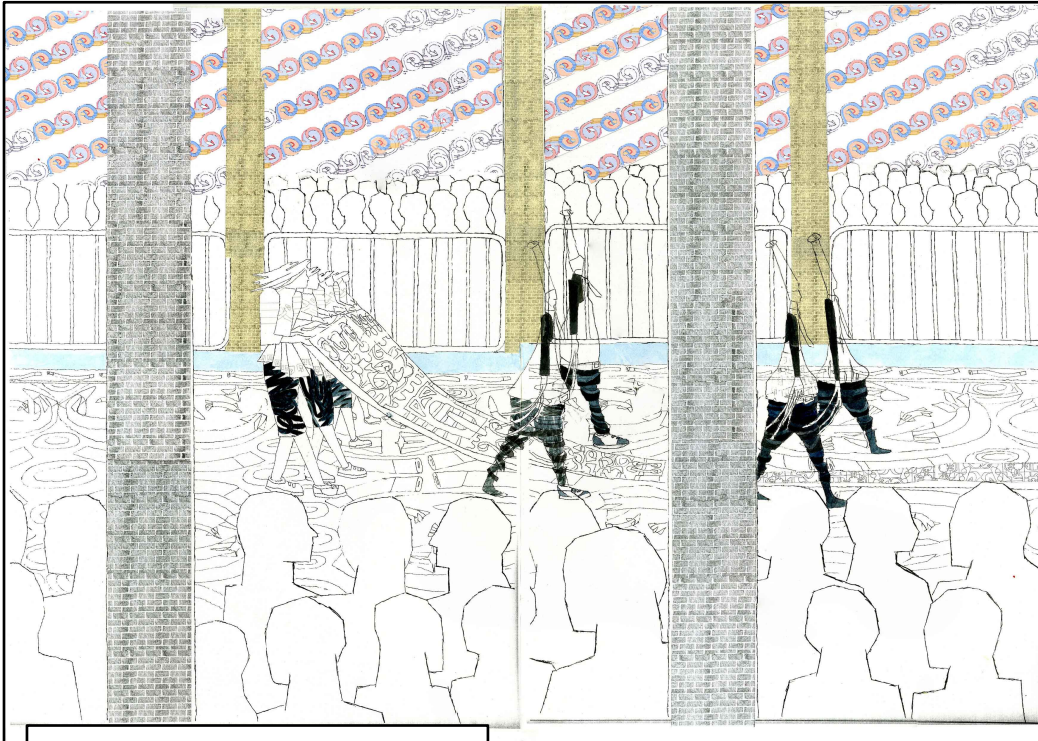
5.9. Preparatory study: design for the bride's veil (based on 5.4 & 5.6), digital painting.



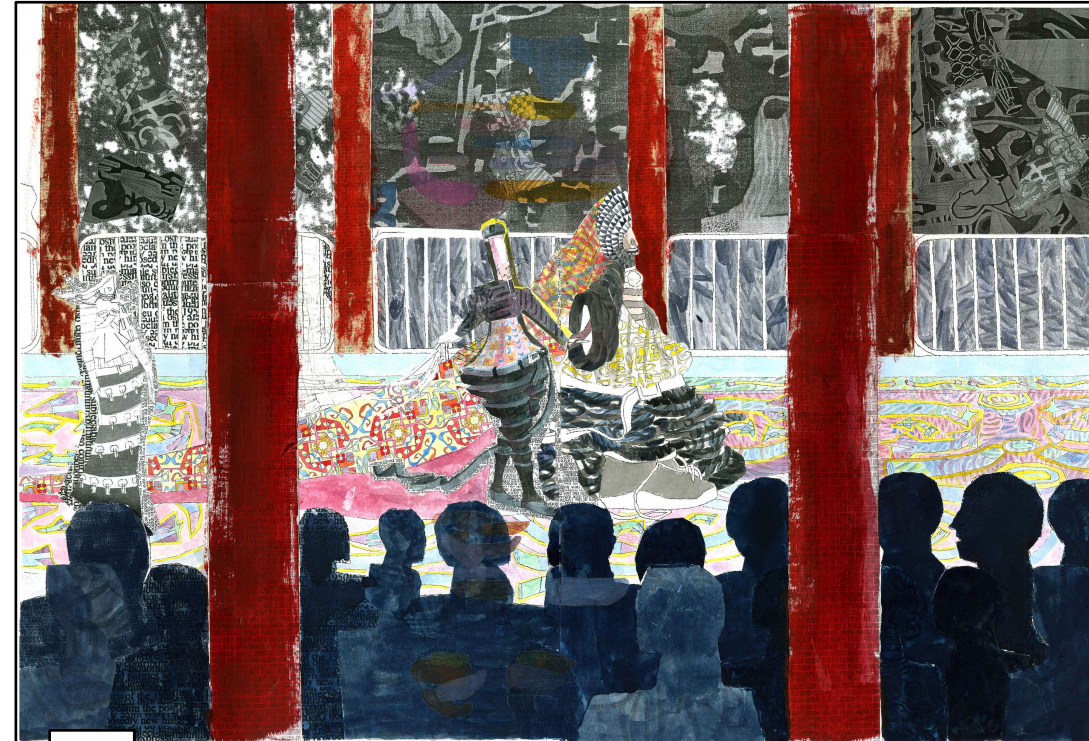
# Research Output

## Painting 5: *The Mar'ge*

### Sources and preparatory studies



5.9.-5.10. Preparatory studies for *The Mar'ge*: pencil, ink, watercolour, gouache and collage on paper.

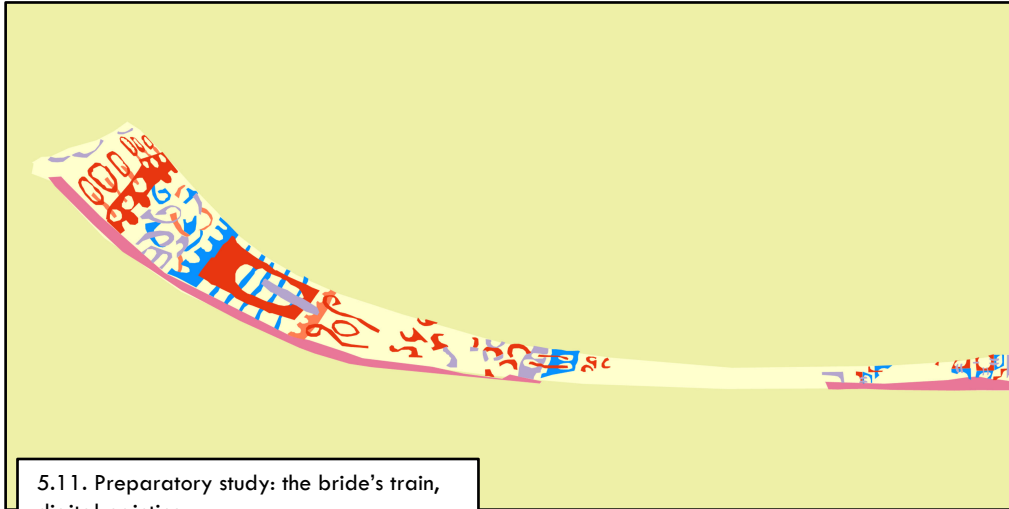


5.10

# Research Output

## Painting 5: *The Mar'ge*

## Sources and preparatory studies



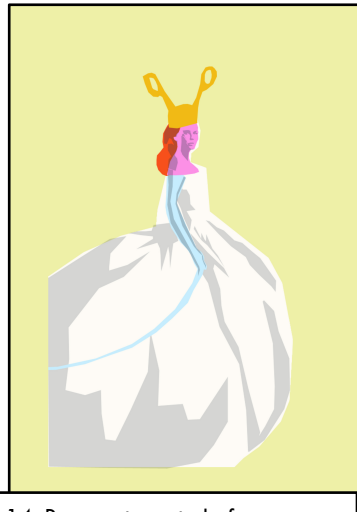
5.11. Preparatory study: the bride's train, digital painting.



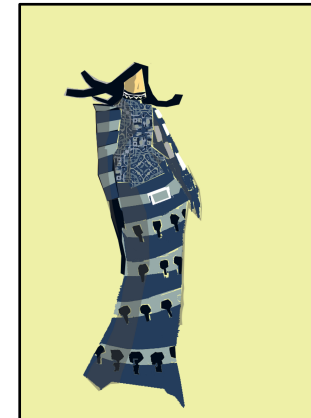
5.12. Preparatory study for figures in *The Mar'ge*, digital painting.



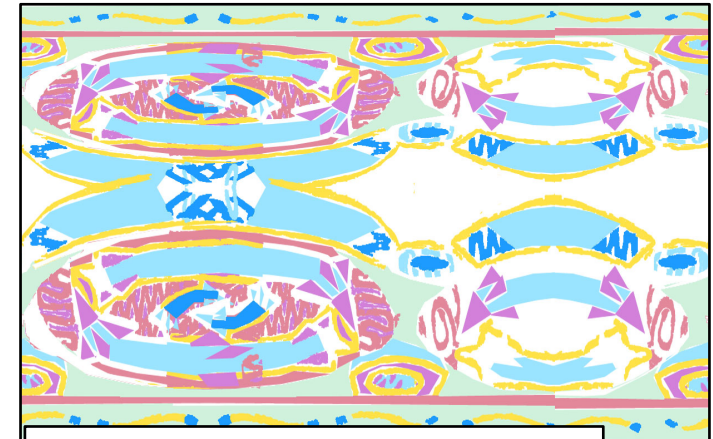
5.13. Art & Design source: Annie Leibovitz, Kirsten Dunst (as Marie Antoinette) for *Vogue*, 2006.



5.14. Preparatory study for a figure in *The Mar'ge*, digital painting.



5.15. Preparatory study for a figure in *The Mar'ge*, digital painting.



5.16. Preparatory study: design for a carpet (based on forms derived from military hardware), digital painting.

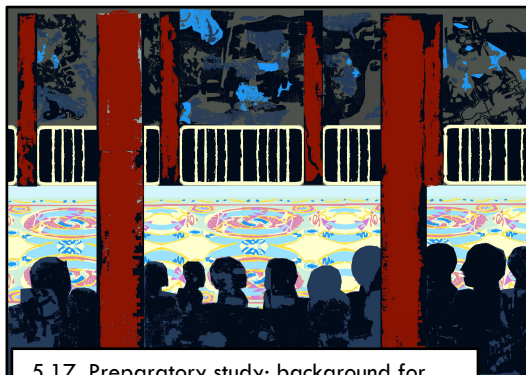


# Research Output

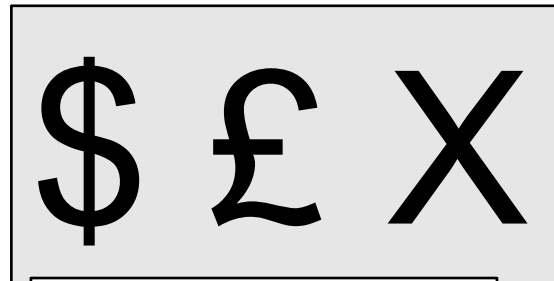
## Painting 5:

### *The Mar'ge*

## Sources and preparatory studies



5.17. Preparatory study: background for *The Mar'ge*, digital painting.



5.18. Art & Design source: currency symbols and other typography (Arial font).

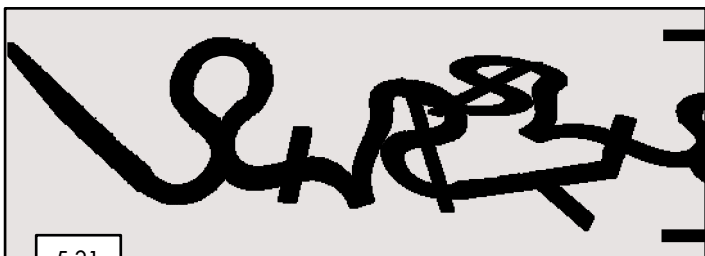


5.19

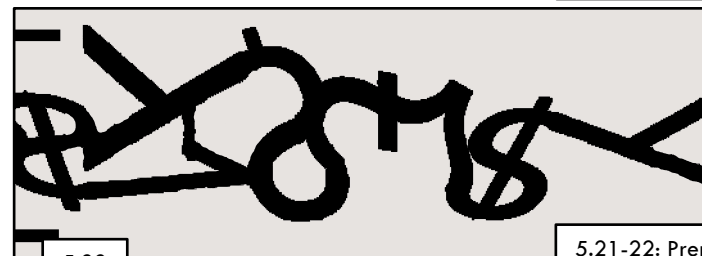


5.20

5.19-20. Preparatory work: completed digital paintings for *The Mar'ge*.



5.21



5.22

5.21-22: Preparatory work: templates for the acrylic-painted boarder for *The Mar'ge* (design based on distorted currency symbols—see 5.18.), digital prints.



# Research Output

Painting 5:  
*The Mar'ge*

Completed  
work



*The Mar'ge*, 2017, dye-sublimation print, acrylic paint on canvas, 126 x 236 cm, ©Laurence Figgis.



## Sources and preparatory studies

# Research Output

## Painting 6:

Athener



6.1. Art & Design source: Alberto Giacometti, *Woman with Her Throat Cut*, bronze, 1940



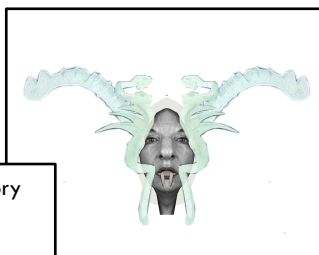
6.2. Art & Design source: Costume by Edith Head for Norma Desmond in *Sunset Boulevard*, 1950



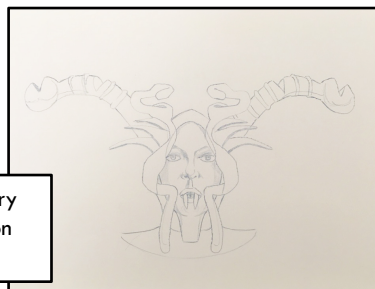
6.3. Art & Design source: *Sunset Boulevard*, 1950, dir. Billy Wilder



6.4. Preparatory study: crayon on paper



6.7. Preparatory study: digital collage



6.8. Preparatory study: crayon on paper

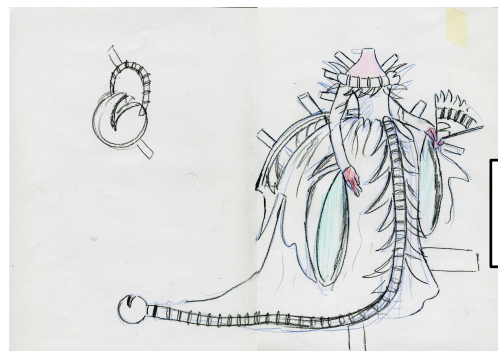


6.5



6.6

6.5-6. Preparatory studies: crayon on paper



6.9. Preparatory study: crayon on paper

## Completed work

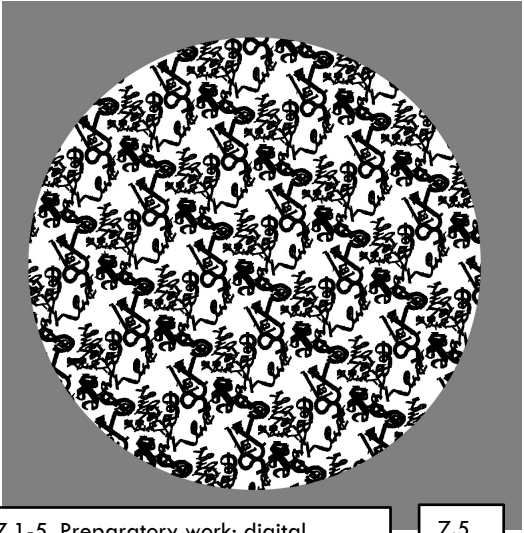
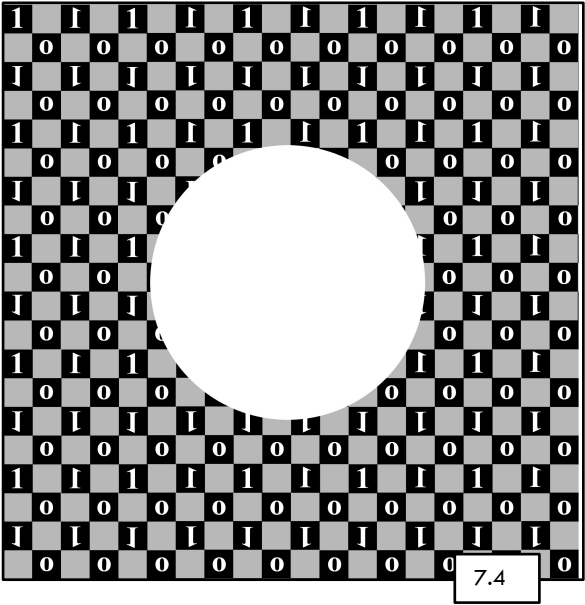
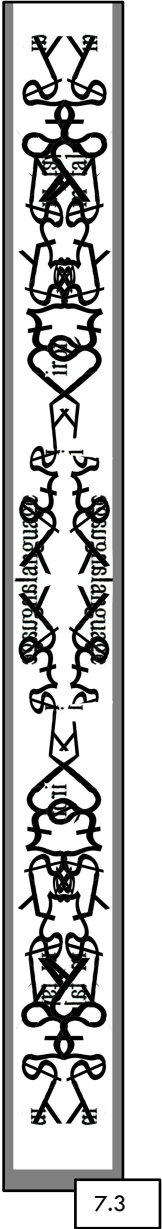
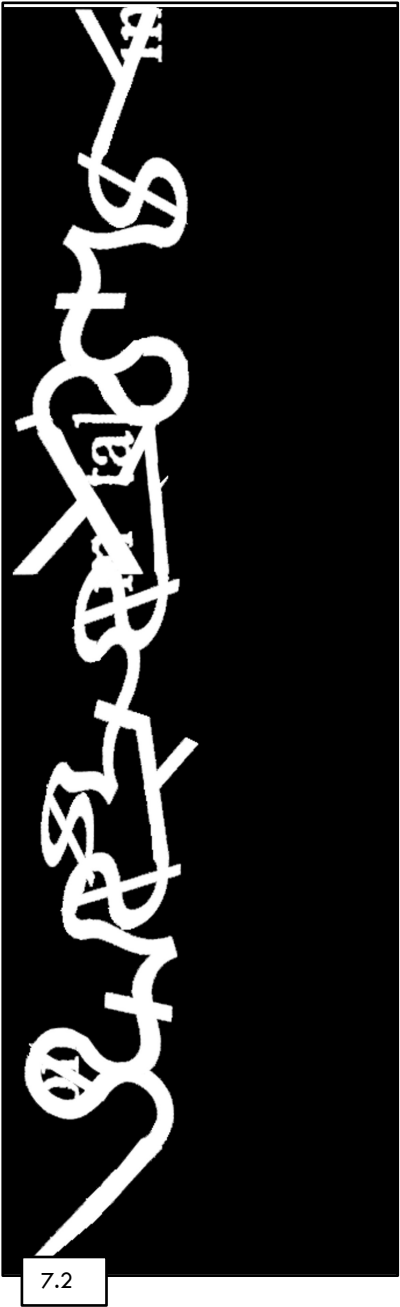
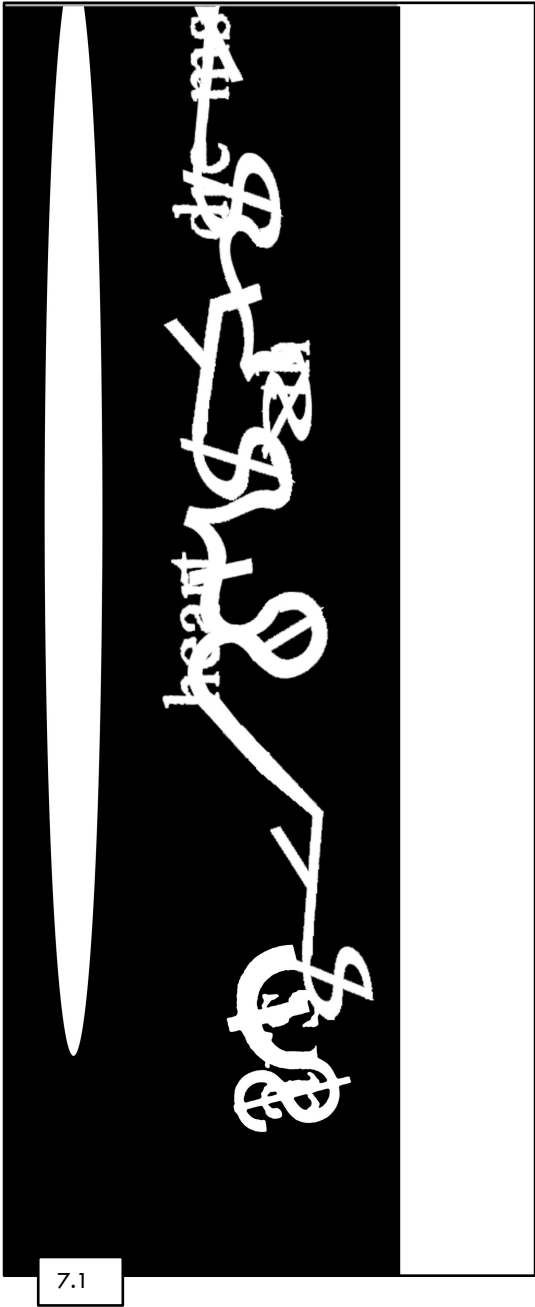


Athener, 2017, acrylic paint on canvas, 182 x 122 cm, ©Laurence Figgis

# Research Output

Painting 7:  
*Oh My Darling  
Have*

Sources and  
preparatory  
studies



7.1-5. Preparatory work: digital designs for a model interior ([see 7.6](#)) (rococo and art deco patterns derived from currency symbols and other typography).



# Research Output

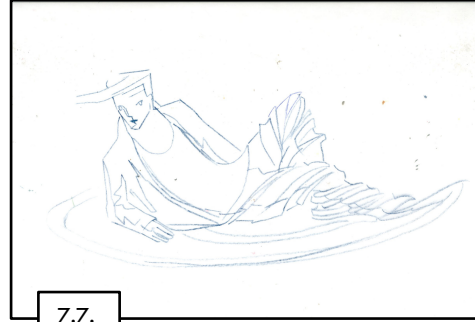
## Painting 7:

### *Oh My Darling Have*

#### Sources and preparatory studies



7.6. Preparatory work: photographed 3D model of an interior for *Oh My Darling Have* (printed paper mounted on card) — [see 7.1-5.](#)



7.7.



7.8.

7.7-8. Preparatory studies: crayon on paper.



7.9. Completed digital painting for *Oh My Darling Have*.

# Research Output

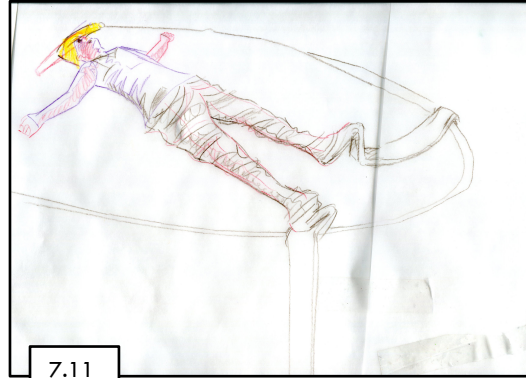
## Painting 7:

### *Oh My Darling Have*

#### Sources and preparatory studies

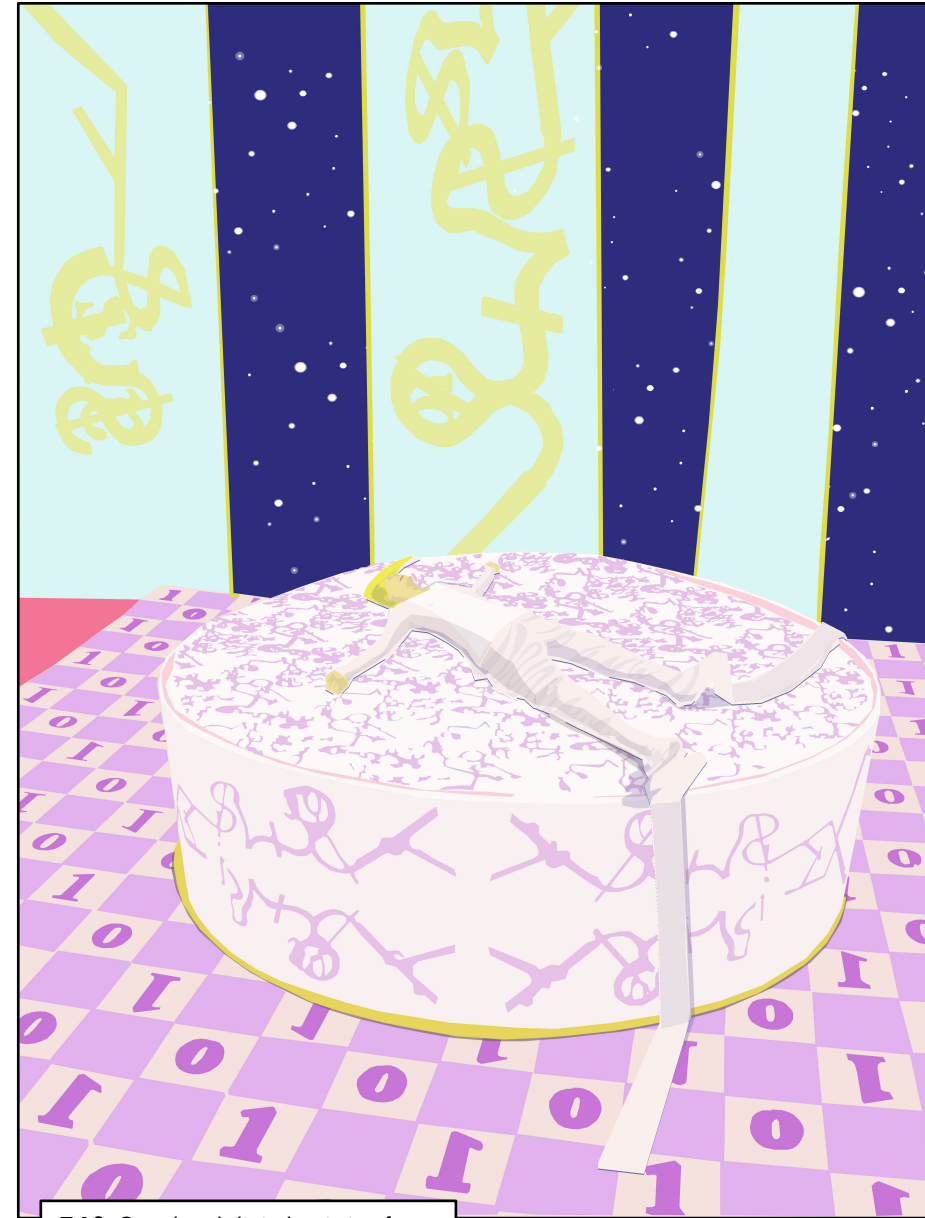


7.10. Preparatory work: photographed 3D model of an interior for *Oh My Darling Have* (printed paper mounted on card) — [see 7.1-5.](#)



7.12

7.11-12. Preparatory studies: crayon on paper.



7.13. Completed digital painting for *Oh My Darling Have*.



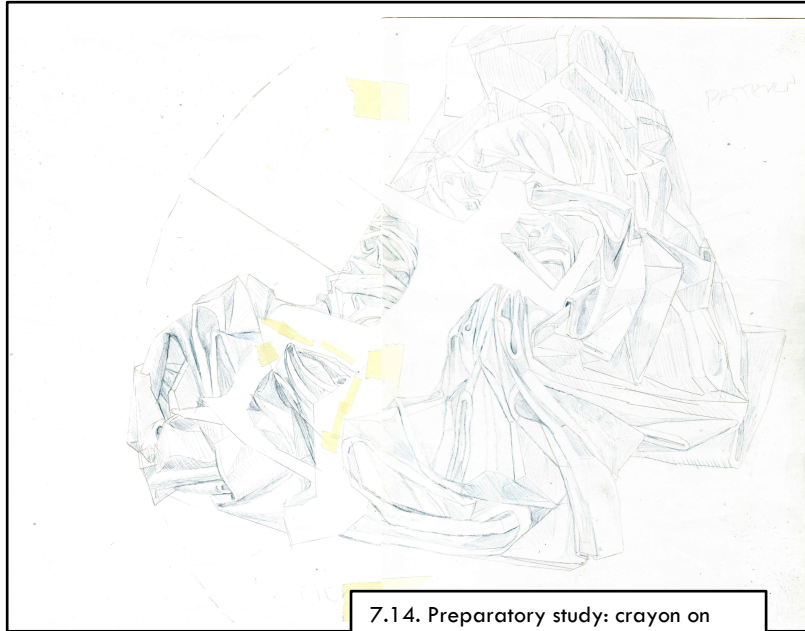
# Research Output

## Painting 7:

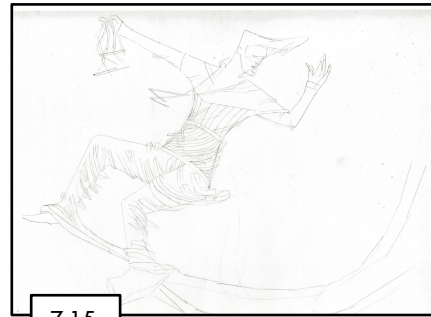
### Oh My Darling Have

## Sources and preparatory studies

*"Her hands glided over the soft folds of the coverlid towards his sleeping file. 'Oh my poor have!' she murmured. She crouched over him trembling. With a sigh she climbed onto the bed beside him, hauling herself over the blankets in her great dress, laughing a little, struggling and floundering as though in deep water. 'Oh my have!' she said again. 'Oh my darling object!'" (excerpt from ['Bad Retail'](#))*



7.14. Preparatory study: crayon on paper.



7.15

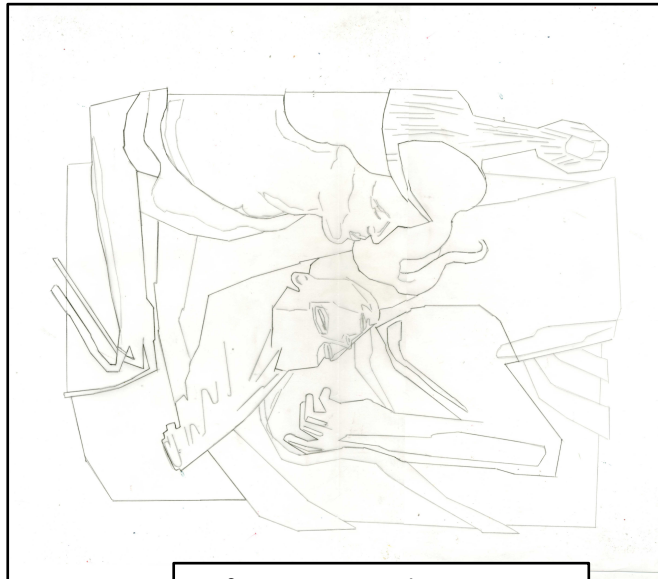


7.16

7.15-16. Preparatory studies: pencil on paper/ crayon and watercolour on paper.



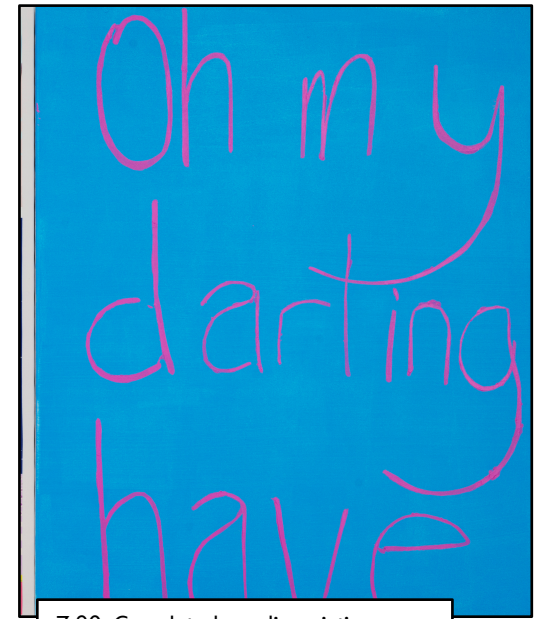
7.17. Completed digital painting for Oh My Darling Have.



7.18. Preparatory study: crayon on paper.



7.19. Completed digital painting for Oh My Darling Have.



7.20. Completed acrylic painting on canvas (based on text from 'Bad Retail') the fiction written as part of the methodology for this output.



# Research Output

Painting 7:

*Oh My Darling  
Have*

Completed  
work



*Oh My Darling Have*, 2017, dye-sublimation print, acrylic paint on canvas, 100 x 160 cm, ©Laurence Figgis.

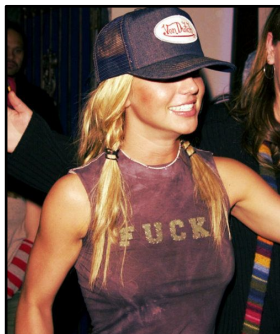


# Research Output

## Sources and preparatory studies



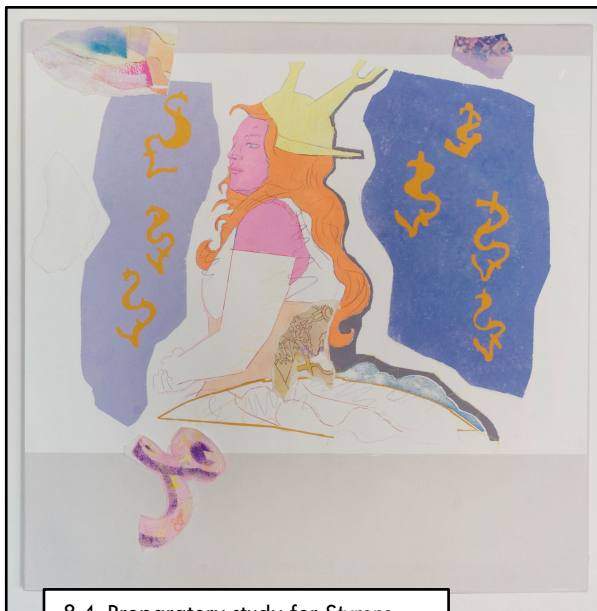
8.1. Art & Design source: Franz Xaver Winterhalter, *Elisabeth of Bavaria, Empress of Austria*, 1865.



8.2. Art & Design source: Britney Spears wearing a trucker cap, c. early 2000s.



8.3. Preparatory study: device made from entwined currency symbols, digital collage.



8.4. Preparatory study for *Styrene*, crayon, gouache, collage on paper mounted on canvas.



8.5. Preparatory study for *Styrene*, digital painting.

## Completed work



*Styrene*, 2017, acrylic paint on canvas, painted wood frame, 100.9 x 70.4 cm

# Research Output

## Painting 9: After the Mar'ge

## Sources and preparatory studies



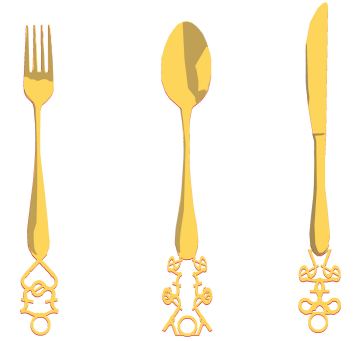
9.1. Art & Design source: Page photocopied from *Modern Land Combat*, D. Miller & C.F. Foss, 1987.



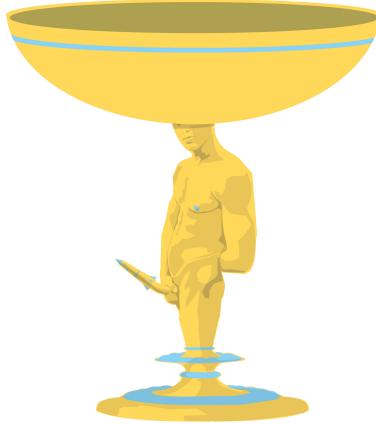
9.2. Preparatory work: design for a plate, digital painting.



9.3. Preparatory study: design for cutlery (incorporating currency symbols), digital collage.



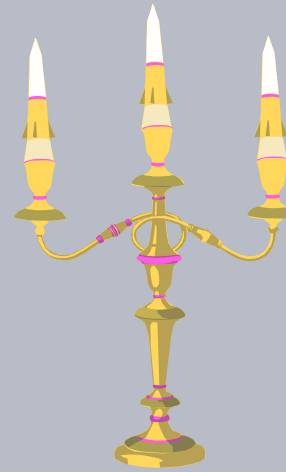
9.4. Preparatory work: design for cutlery (incorporating currency symbols), digital painting.



9.5. Preparatory work: design for tableware, digital painting.



9.6. Preparatory work: design for candelabra (incorporating military hardware), digital collage.



9.7. Preparatory work: digital painting from 9.6.



9.8. Preparatory work: design for tableware, digital painting.

*"After the mar'ge, the entire Corporation went to the Hall of Solid-Profit. There was enough drink and fine sustenance, enough scandal and fun-fun to amuse the Corpus-total. All eyes should have been on the bride. This was her day, and she looked solvent and grand." (excerpt from ['Bad Retail'](#))*



# Research Output

## Painting 9: *After the Mar'ge*

## Sources and preparatory studies

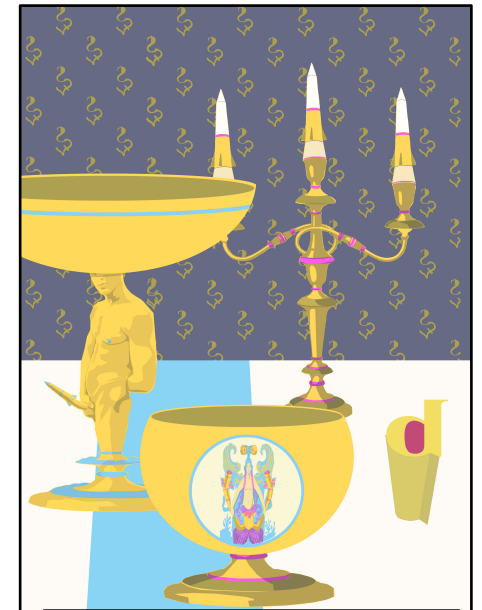
9.9



9.10



9.11. Preparatory work:  
design for a dish, digital  
painting.



9.12. Completed digital painting for  
*After the Mar'ge*.



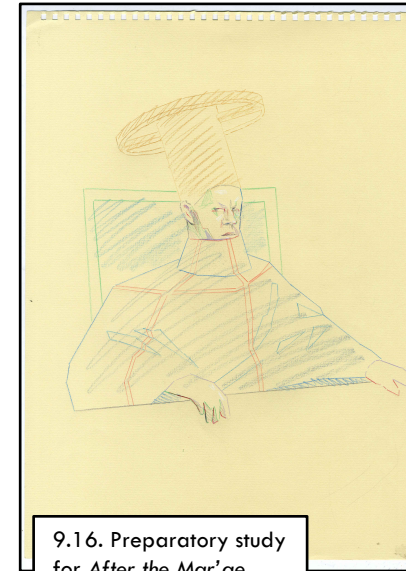
9.13. Art & Design  
source: Diego  
Velázquez, *Portrait  
of Pope Innocent X*,  
c. 1650



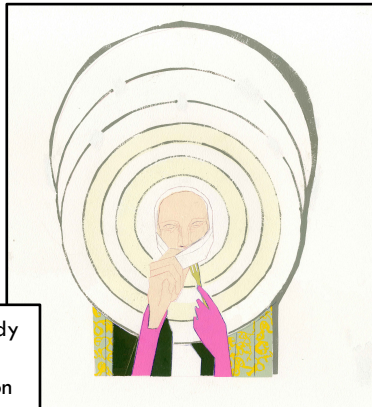
9.14. Detail of [image 1.4.](#)  
used as basis for 9.16



9.15. Preparatory work:  
design for goblet,  
digital painting.



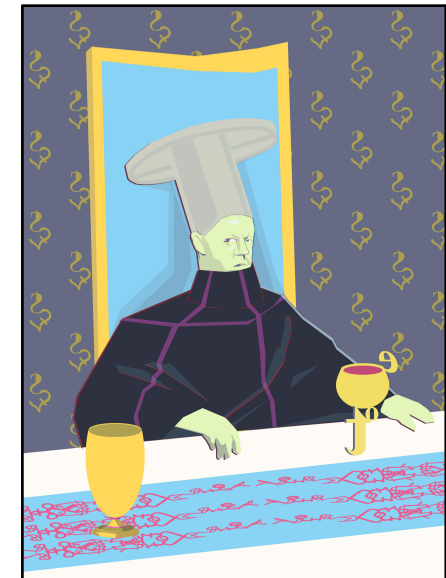
9.16. Preparatory study  
for *After the Mar'ge*,  
crayon on paper.



9.18. Preparatory study  
for *After the Mar'ge*,  
crayon and gouache on  
paper.



9.19. Completed digital painting for  
*After the Mar'ge*.



9.17. Completed digital painting for  
*After the Mar'ge*.

# Research Output

## Painting 9:

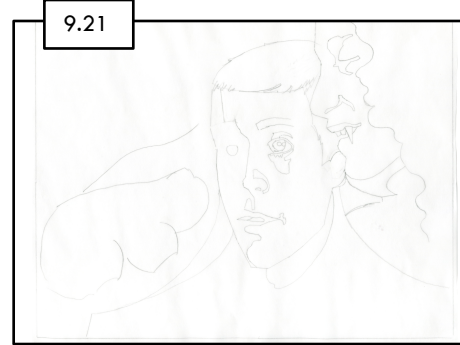
### After the Mar'ge



9.20. Art & Design source: Gustave Moreau, Oedipus and the Sphinx, 1864

## Sources and preparatory studies

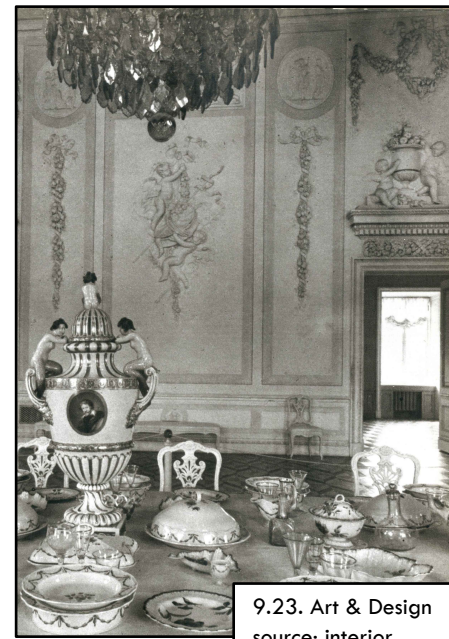
*"The looks thrown in his direction were not kind, but he made no attempt to enjoy himself discretely. The partner of his mirth was a creature with a lovely oother's face and hands shaped like massive cat's paws, strong enough to break an ather's skull. The refined and delicate gestures of those vicious-looking hands went some way towards concealing their might. Certainly the handsome file was quite at ease. Every now and again, he would touch his cheek against the Sphinx's shoulder. And she would whisper something in his ear..."* (excerpt from [Bad Retail'](#))



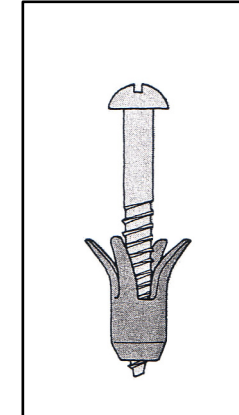
9.21



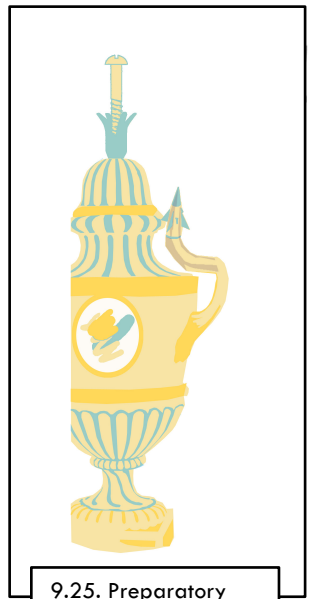
9.21-2. preparatory work: pencil study & completed digital painting for After the Mar'ge



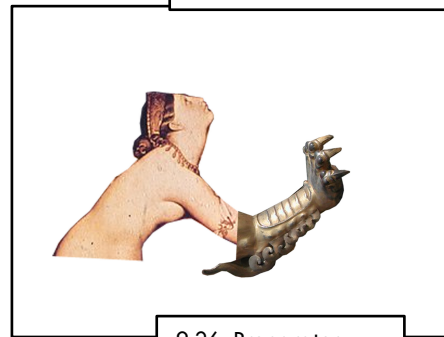
9.23. Art & Design source: interior Winter Palace, Saint Petersburg



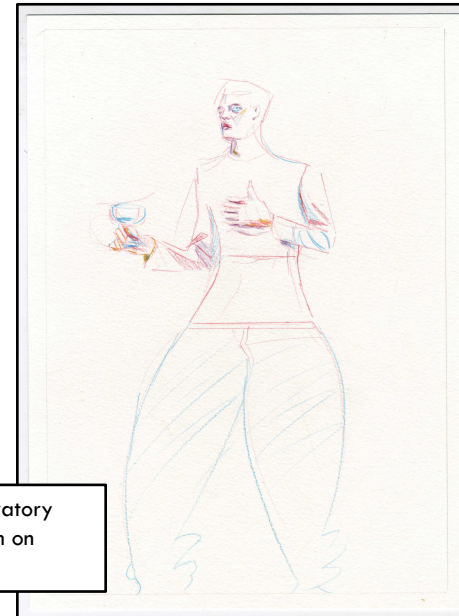
9.24. Art & Design source: diagram of screw and wall plug from The Good Housekeeping Guide to DIY, 1977.



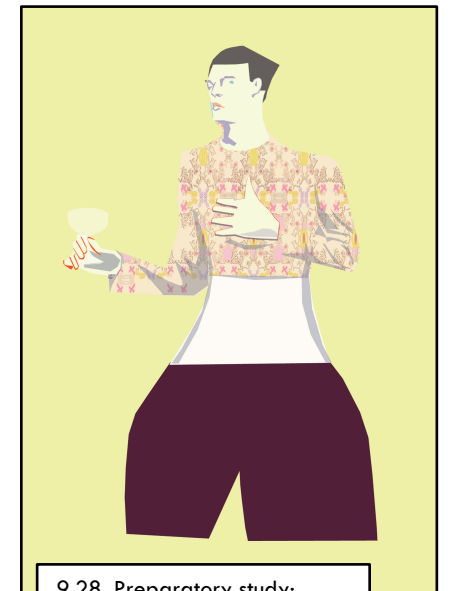
9.25. Preparatory study: design for a tourine, digital painting.



9.26. Preparatory study: the Sphinx, digital collage.



9.27. Preparatory study: crayon on paper.



9.28. Preparatory study:, digital painting.



## Sources and preparatory studies

# Research Output

## Painting 9:

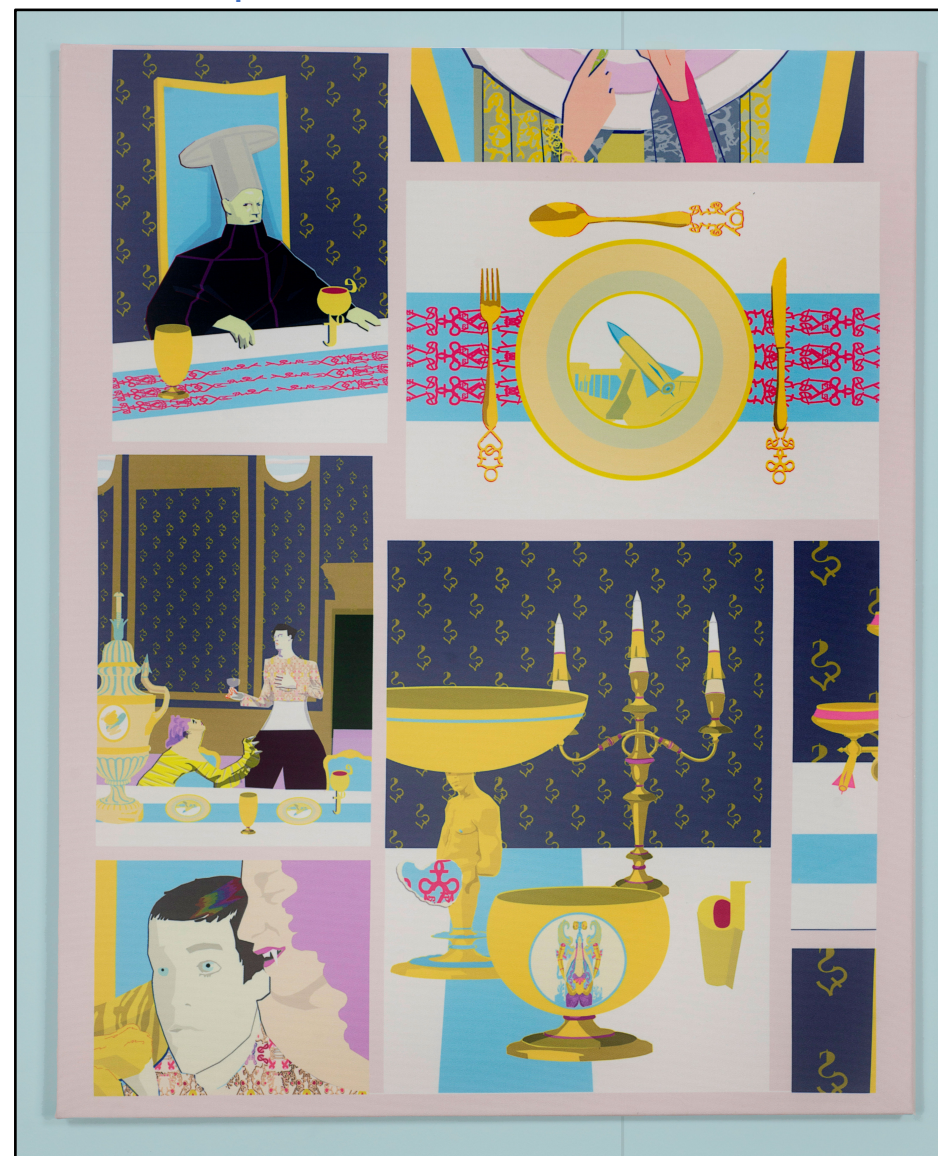
### After the Mar'ge

*"The Sphinx was tapping on her glass with feigned haughtiness, the bright young ather was making a speech. 'To my good friend Hypocampus... who is the dearest friend that any-kent could wish for...' He raised his glass in the direction of the Sphinx, who pressed her hands together and shrieked with laughter so loudly the Corpus-major shook its head and scowled. To Blonda!' she cried, saluting her friend in return."*  
(excerpt from [Bad Retail'](#))



9.29. Completed digital painting for  
After the Mar'ge.

## Completed work



After the Mar'ge, 2017, dye-sublimation print on canvas, 81 x 65 cm,  
©Laurence Figgis.

# Research Output

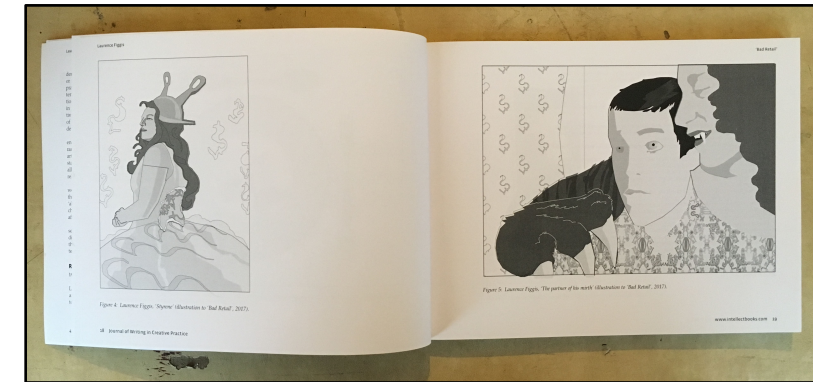
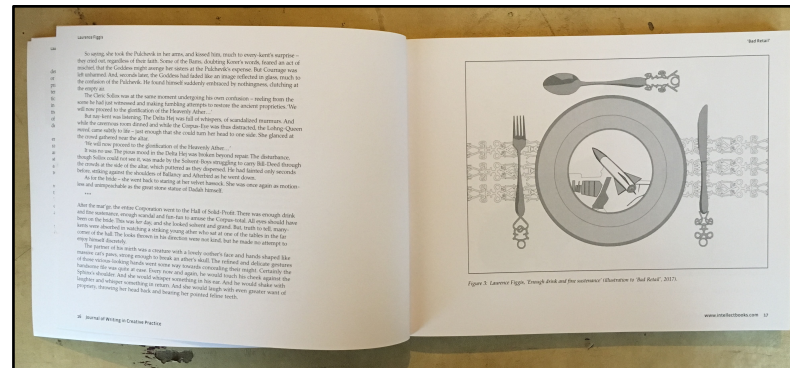
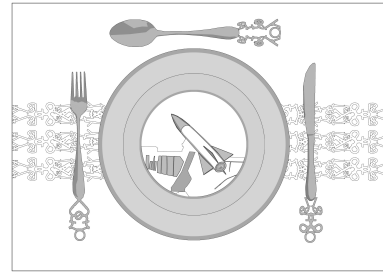
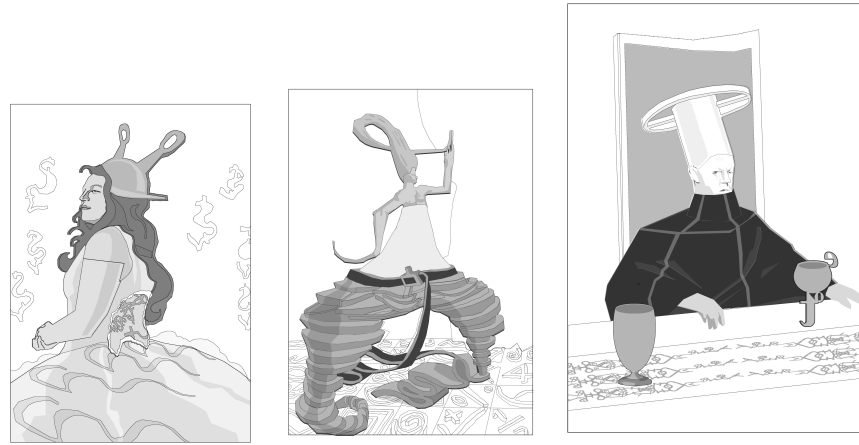
## Journal Article:

### 'Bad Retail: A Romantic Fiction'

Images of the fiction 'Bad Retail' (and accompanying illustrations) as presented in the *Journal of Writing in Creative Practice*—

many of the illustrations for this version of the story were derived from the paintings shown on the previous pages—

click the link to read the full story (along with a short contextual essay relating to this output)



**Link to the Journal Article: 'Bad Retail: A Romantic Fiction' by Laurence Figgis on the Glasgow School of Art RADAR site: <http://radar.gsa.ac.uk/5629/>**



# Contribution to the field

## Findings and conclusions:

### Research questions:

With reference to Post-World War II examples of painting and illustration (in which anachronism is deployed as a conscious formal device), how do these historical prototypes suggest a methodology for:

- creating images and structuring compositions in contemporary narrative painting?
- articulating the relationship between anachronism, modernist picture-making and the romantic literary tradition?

The research methodology led to the following conclusions:

- Anachronism can be experienced as a deliberate (modernist) strategy when the artist conveys:
  - its theatrical/performative quality.
  - its potential to create moments of inconsistency or rupture in the image (a feeling reminiscent of collage).These qualities are particularly strong in:
  - Images derived from historical romantic fiction (and similar genres such as the fairy tale).
  - Paintings in which modernist techniques of picture making are combined with images of the *ancien-régime* past.
- An anachronism (an object displaced from its proper time period) is equivalent to collage (the transposition of material from its context).

It can thus be:

- applied as an analytical method in contemporary narrative painting.
- used as a device for structuring the limits of the 2-dimensional picture-space through methods derived from modernist picture-making.
- This approach is distinct from (and critically opposed to) the shallow concept of “retro” culture described in Simon Reynolds’ influential study, *Retromania* (2011), a phenomenon he attributes, in part, to the endless recycling of old pop music on *YouTube*. Reynolds’ fear was that nostalgia would prevent culture from moving forward, that the perpetual recycling of the recent past would lead to ‘a cultural ecological catastrophe’ when ‘the seam of pop culture is exhausted’ (Reynolds, 2011: xiv).

Continues on the next page:

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- As this research demonstrates, the act of collaging from the past can enrich the practice and experience of contemporary narrative painting. This approach is comparable to the poet Paul Oppenheimer's reflection on Goethe's *Roman Elegies*:

...these quilted snatches are viewed as past moments – of clarity, beauty, civilization, and spiritual elation – that must somehow be retained and restitched in a sense, spliced onto the present, ... as if they were alive, as if they were types of intelligent, deathless energy, and this so as to allow the past, with a nourishing insistence, to feed the present. (Oppenheimer 1998: 84)

- The post-war painters and illustrators (identified in the supporting research for this output), synthesize an older tradition of narrative painting (that of medieval, renaissance or baroque periods) with a modernist language (of collage and geometric stylization). For these artists, the culture of the 'old-regime' provided a source of '*intelligent, deathless energy*'. This deathless energy continues to resonate with our own contemporary context—a time in which dystopian fears seem especially pronounced.

- Above all, it has been the purpose of this research to connect the experience of anachronism to the fundamental principle of narrative painting: its formal aspect, defined by TJ Clarke as a two-dimensional image (occurring within agreed physical boundaries) that allows the viewer to engage (imaginatively) with the 'limits of a [three-dimensional] place' (Clark 2013: 281). As critic Susannah Thompson stated [in her essay written to accompany this body of work](#):

Through his verbal and visual forms, 'full of tell-tale fault lines and stitches', Figgis has sought to dramatise the equivalence of collage to anachronism, using the fractures and glitches created by both ways of working to foster a reading of 'period' costume, setting or speech which acts in the same push/pull manner as flatness in Modernist painting. Can we be in both places at once? Are we *here* or *there*?

These conclusions are expanded in the journal article, '[Bad Retail: A Romantic Fiction](#)' (included as part of the body-of-work for this output).



# Dissemination

## Paintings:

[‘Laurence Figgis: \(After\) After’, Blenheim Walk Gallery, Leeds Arts University, 11 August - 29 September 2017](#)

Full documentation of the exhibition is available via the [GSA Repository of Art Design Architecture Research](#) and my website: [laurencefiggis.co.uk](http://laurencefiggis.co.uk)


The exhibition included an interpretive gallery text available on site: [‘After \(After\)’: Prof. Susannah Thompson \(The Glasgow School of Art\)](#)

The exhibition was [reviewed by Karen Tobias-Green for the online magazine Corridor 8](#) (06.09.2017).

As part of the educational material for the exhibition I undertook a public talk and slide-presentation on the work and research: [‘\(After\) After: Visual Story-telling in Post-war Culture from Picasso to the ‘Well-Loved Tales’](#)

## Journal Article:

[‘Bad Retail: A Romantic Fiction’, \*Journal of Writing in Creative Practice\*, Volume 10, Number 1 \(September 2017\)](#) This special edition of the JWCP, edited by Susannah Thompson and Laura Edbrook was subtitled “Art-Writing, Paraliterature and Intrepid Forms of Practice”. The article can be [read online](#) via the GSA Repository of Art Design Architecture Research.



## Laurence Figgis

### (After) After

**11 August — 29 September 2017**  
 Blenheim Walk Gallery  
 Leeds College of Art  
 Blenheim Walk  
 Leeds  
 LS2 9AQ

**Preview:**  
 Thursday 10 August  
 5.00 - 7.00pm

**Artist's Talk:**  
 Thursday 28 September  
 1.00 - 3.00pm

Laurence Figgis: (After) After re-presents postmodernism as a perverse fairy tale. Figgis is an artist, writer and Lecturer in Fine Art Painting and Printmaking at The Glasgow School of Art (GSA), working in collage and with text/image relationships. With research-practice focusing on Rauschenberg's Dante drawings (1958-60), Picasso's Las Meninas series (1957), as well as 1960s Ladybird Book illustrations, Figgis will reinterpret such art historical melodramas, probing the place of kitsch and anachronism in the early twenty-first century.

A new interpretation text by art historian, writer and critic Dr Susannah Thompson (GSA) will accompany the exhibition.

[www.leeds-art.ac.uk/exhibitions](http://www.leeds-art.ac.uk/exhibitions)

Image: Laurence Figgis, Costume for Styrene (study), 2016, crayon on paper, 42 x 29 cm © the artist.

# Evidence



Installation shots from the exhibition: 'Laurence Figgis, '(After) After,' The Blenheim Walk Gallery, Leeds Arts University, 2017, (photograph by Hamish Irvine, ©Hamish Irvine Photographer ©Laurence Figgis); screenshots from the video of the artist's talk which took place during the exhibition



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of Art

The Glasgow School of Art Research  
and Development Fund

Dye-sublimation Prints by Photo  
Canvas Printing

### List of texts cited in this output:

Clark, T.J. (2013), *Picasso and Truth: From Cubism to Guernica*, Princeton; Woodstock: Princeton University Press.

Krčma, E. (2017), *Rauschenberg/Dante: Drawing a Modern Inferno*, New Haven; London: Yale University Press.

Maeder, E. (1987), 'The Celluloid Image: Historical Dress in Film', in Edward Maeder (ed.), *Hollywood and History: Costume Design in Film*, Los Angeles; London: Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Thames and Hudson. pp.9-43.

Oppenheimer, P. (1998), 'Goethe and Modernism: The Dream of Anachronism in Goethe's "Roman Elegies"', *Arion*, Vol. 6: 1, pp.81-100.

Reynolds, S. (2011), *Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to its Own Past*, London; Faber & Faber.

# Appendix: Painting Gallery

*The following pages  
contain a gallery of  
works 1-9 (the  
finished paintings  
produced for this  
output) — for  
optional uncluttered  
viewing*





computer-message,  
which is susceptible to some form of  
electronic editing. Although all of  
systems has a mass of on-board  
every modern military weapons  
major aspect. Nevertheless, almost  
ECM/ECM/ECM equipment. It carries a  
2000-ton, which was essentially an  
aircraft of the British design. HMG  
when an event occurs like the  
warfare enters the battle domain, and  
sprints. Only occasionally do EW  
systems, difficult-to-understand  
classified area, and in any event an  
even in description. It is a highly  
mysterious combat is largely  
reflected. Where actions and  
operation, which is often

Electronic warfare (EW) is a













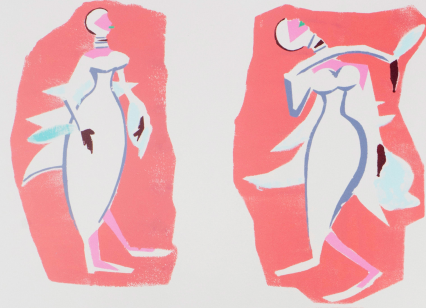




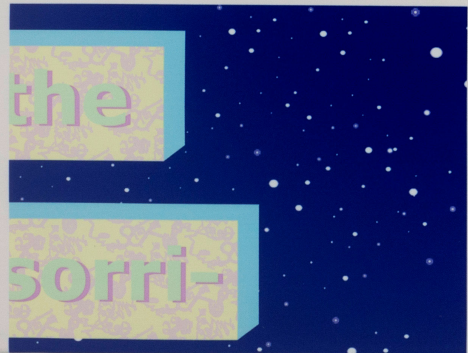












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