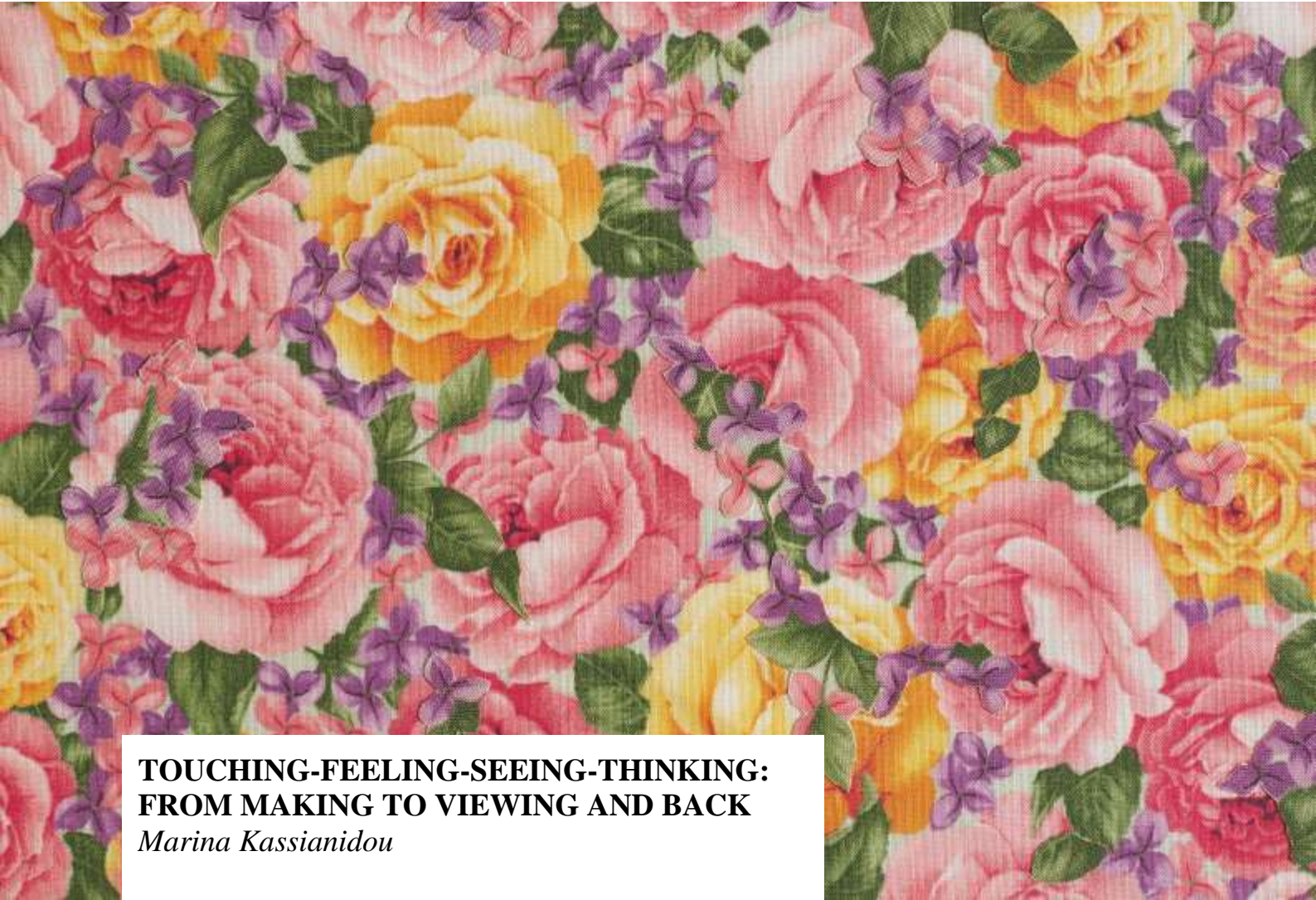


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**TOUCHING-FEELING-SEEING-THINKING:
FROM MAKING TO VIEWING AND BACK**

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Image © Marina Kassianidou,
Faulty Samples I (Back to Front) (detail), 2013
Fabric Collage, 29.2 x 29.2 cm

TOUCHING-FEELING-SEEING-THINKING: FROM MAKING TO VIEWING AND BACK

Marina Kassianidou

Abstract

This paper focuses on a book of collages made using found fabric samples. The works involve using small cut pieces of a fabric sample to make collages on other similar or identical fabrics. As a result, the artist's interventions partially disappear into the pattern of each fabric. These collages are exhibited as a modified sample book that viewers can touch and look through. The paper juxtaposes the process of making these collages with the process of viewing them. I specifically address the role of touch, or a seeing-touching that Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari associate with a haptic space, in the making and viewing of the works. I argue that the works request the viewers to engage in attentive viewing—a kind of viewing that involves physical closeness and seeing-touching that unfolds over time. Thus, despite the partial imperceptibility of the artist's interventions, the role of the haptic is foregrounded when viewing the works. Drawing upon the processes of making and viewing the works, I suggest that a practice of attentive viewing may open up a shared space between viewer and artist, thus shifting the relationships between viewer and artwork, and viewer and artist, beyond a subject/object distinction.

Key Words: attentive viewing, collage, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, haptic space, Luce Irigaray, otherness, practice-based research, subject and object relationships

Faulty Samples I is an artist's book of collages on found fabric samples made between 2012 and 2014. I obtained these old fabrics from home furnishing and fabric stores. The collages involve using cut pieces of the surface to modify the pre-existing printed pattern. Thus, the making process depends on repeated actions of cutting and attaching, both of which relate to the artist's hand. The completed collages display a subtly textured surface, which the viewers can see as well as touch. In this paper, I discuss the role of touching and of seeing-touching, which Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari associate with a haptic space, in both the making and viewing of these collages. Due to their subtlety, the specific collages may be seen to challenge the physicality and tactility usually associated with collage. Diverging from this view, I suggest that the subtlety of the collages may, in fact, foreground the need for the viewer to engage more actively in seeing-touching. Finally, I argue that the viewer's increased involvement with the work may open up a shared space between viewer and artist, thus shifting their relationship beyond a subject/object distinction.

The collages forming part of *Faulty Samples I* were made as part of a wider project that aimed to investigate the relationships between the artist's marks and a pre-existing surface.¹ Marking, in general, can be conceptualised as a gesture towards an other—at the most basic level a surface—and a way of negotiating a relationship with that other. When an artist marks or intervenes on a surface, the resulting marks are quite literally the traces of her encounter with that surface. The artist's marks usually differentiate themselves from the surface and become visible as signs of the artist's actions. This differentiation is not only a perceptual or formal concern, having to do with the visual relationship between mark and surface, but as psychoanalyst Serge Tisseron argues, one that can also symbolise a differentiation between self and other.² On a conceptual and psychic level, marking becomes a process of structuring, performing, and understanding subjectivity and the self's relation to an other. Most often this relation is seen as a hierarchical distinction. That is, the artist/subject leaves her marks on

what is usually assumed to be a blank surface/object, which merely acts as a passive container for those marks.³

Within this framework, my aim was to shift these relationships by focusing on the ‘other’, the surface I would be marking, right from the beginning of the making process. I specifically focused on found or already marked surfaces. The task I set myself was to try to respond to the specific features of each surface rather than treating it as ‘blank’. This methodology involved studying surfaces closely to reveal their characteristics and then devising marks and modes of marking that related to each surface. It was through following this approach that *Faulty Samples I* was made.

The Artist’s Work

It took approximately two years from the moment of finding the fabrics to actually making the first works with them. After carrying samples around to artist residencies with me—all the while looking at them, touching them, thinking of ways to work with them, and trying out various experiments—I eventually turned to collage. The physical action of cutting fabrics corresponds to these surfaces’ common use—they are cut to make clothes, furniture covers, curtains, and so on. I began cutting small parts of the samples and gluing them on similar or identical samples, thus disrupting or altering the printed patterns.



Fig. 1: Marina Kassianidou, *Faulty Samples I (Mutant DNA)*, 2012, Fabric Collage, 29.2 x 29.2 cm



Fig. 2: Marina Kassianidou, *Faulty Samples I (Outgrowth)*, 2012,
Fabric Collage, 29.2 x 35 cm



Fig. 3: Marina Kassianidou, *Faulty Samples I (Outgrowth)* (detail), 2012, Fabric Collage, 29.2 x 35 cm

In *Faulty Samples (Mutant DNA)* (2012) [Fig. 1], a series of wavy lines have been attached next to another series of lines, resulting in the creation of new shapes on the surface. For the work *Faulty Samples (Outgrowth)* (2012) [Fig. 2, 3], one of the flowers of the pattern, near the edge of the piece of fabric, has been 'grown' with the addition of collaged flowers, leaves, and branches. The outgrowth almost reaches the other end of the piece of fabric, 'growing' over pre-existing foliage. Other collages came to involve repeated and regular interventions, thus resulting in a reorganisation or remaking of the pre-existing pattern. In *Faulty Samples (Back to Front)* (2013) [Fig. 4, 5], the purple flowers and leaves forming part of the background have been cut from a small sample of the fabric, and placed over the flowers forming part of the foreground on a different sample of the same fabric. This has been done in a regular manner such that most foreground flowers now have a background flower over them. In *Faulty Samples (Double Growth)* (2013) [Fig. 6, 7], groups of flowers cut from a fabric sample have been placed on an identical sample such that the two sets of flowers, the ones on the surface and the ones added, are joined at their stems. Consequently, the stems appear to flower from both ends. The choice of which stems to 'grow' was random at first. Then, the next collage piece was placed as close to the first one as possible without overlapping it, so as to keep the surface relatively flat, and so on.



Fig. 4: Marina Kassianidou, *Faulty Samples I (Back to Front)*, 2013, Fabric Collage, 29.2 x 29.2 cm



Fig. 5: Marina Kassianidou, *Faulty Samples I (Back to Front)* (detail), 2013, Fabric Collage, 29.2 x 29.2 cm

The making of all these collages necessitates a two-part process of cutting and attaching. The process of cutting usually involves cutting around parts of an image, thus separating and isolating small pieces of a surface. My decision of where to cut each time is the result of close study of each surface, and depends on the printed image. The cut pieces are then attached onto other intact pieces of fabric. I spread glue on the backside of each cut piece, place it on the fabric at a pre-determined location, and smooth it over with my hands to ensure it is affixed. The exact placement of the pieces once again depends on the pre-existing pattern.



Fig. 6: Marina Kassianidou, *Faulty Samples I (Double Growth)*, 2013,
Fabric Collage, 29.2 x 32 cm

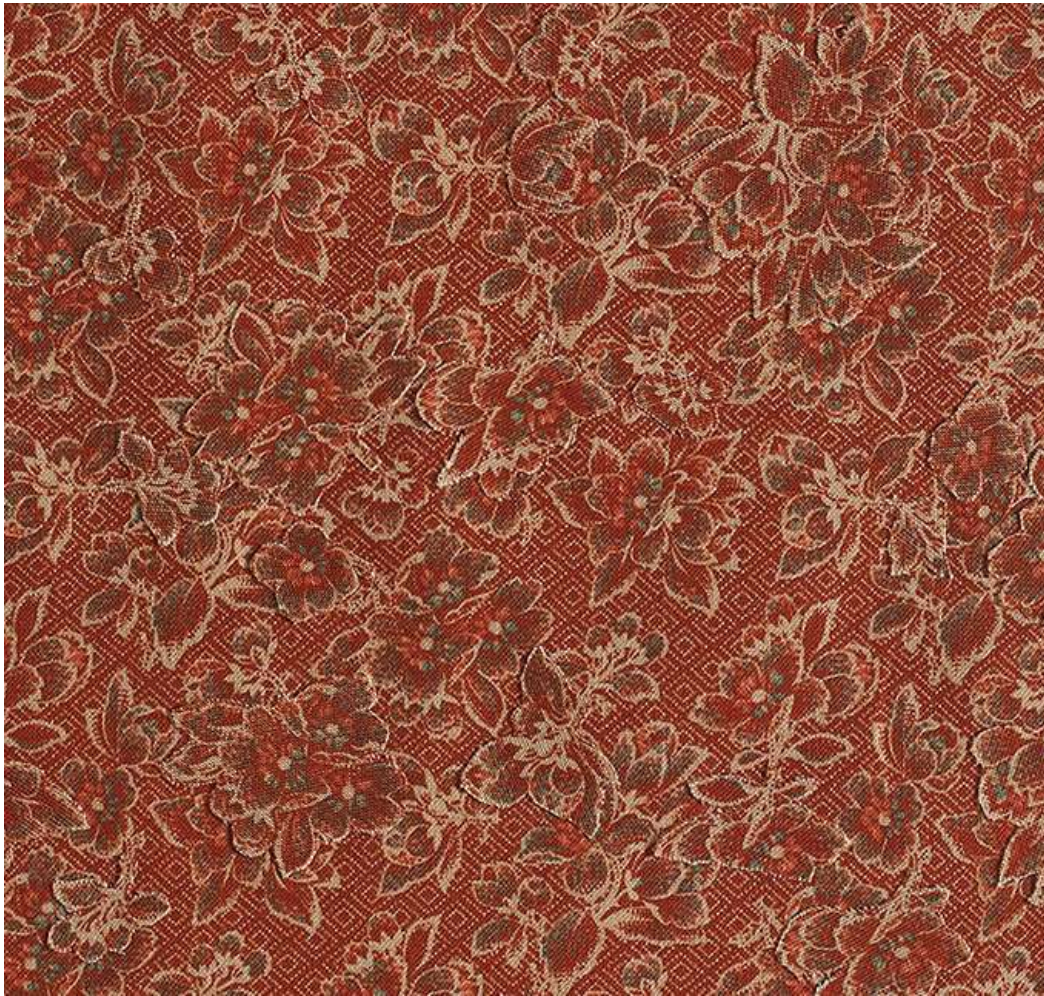


Fig. 7: Marina Kassianidou, *Faulty Samples I (Double Growth)* (detail), 2013, Fabric Collage, 29.2 x 32 cm

While making these works, I sit at a table, with the collage lying horizontally before me. I position myself just a few centimetres away from the work and spend multiple hours hunching over it. My hand movements are controlled and limited in scale. The fabric samples are quite small, up to approximately forty-five by thirty centimetres, and the images on them may be quite convoluted, with arrangements of tiny leaves and flowers, interweaving sinuous lines, and interlocking geometric shapes. My tools are small; I use a pair of sharp scissors to carefully cut around the images and a fine brush with which to apply glue on each cut piece, which is then placed at a precise location on a collage. These actions are then repeated. Overall, there are no large or forceful gestures that emphasise movement and presence. Rather, gestures are restrained and relatively still, almost as if emulating the stillness of the surface I am working with.

The extended time spent handling each surface during the making of a collage may lead to an increased familiarity with it over time. As I work with each surface, a shift gradually occurs in how that surface is perceived; I develop an increased sensitisation to it. I become more attuned to the colour variations, the logic of the pattern, the quality of the printing, the texture of the fine weave, and the fragility of the cloth as small cut pieces disintegrate into fibres between my fingers. The surface unfolds itself over time, revealing more information. In a sense, I come closer and closer to it, thereby becoming absorbed by it. This absorption occurs both through looking at the surface and actually handling it—touching, cutting, attaching, and retouching. Given that an anonymous designer or team of designers created the

patterns printed on the fabrics, similarly reworking and redoing them multiple times, I am essentially handling someone else's image. I am also becoming intensely involved with something other—a material that bears the traces of other making processes and other people's decisions.

'An Art of Touch and Hand'

According to Richard Shiff, due to its dependence on cutting, collage 'is very much an art of touch and hand', one that encourages viewers to see 'through the experience of touch'.⁴ Cutting and attaching are physical actions and not visual illusions, thus relating more to touch rather than vision. The actions of cutting and attaching can usually be felt/perceived when viewing collages—cut edges are real and are there for the viewers to identify. Moreover, the various cut and attached pieces on a collage exhibit specific and fixed bounded forms that 'prevent this medium from attaining the "transparency" or self-effacing quality that often characterises paint in traditional painting or graphite in traditional drawing'.⁵ That is, collage pieces do not 'disappear' into a pictorial illusion and are more likely to appear as opaque 'foreign matter', asserting their material presence on the surface even more.⁶ When looking at a collage, it is possible to perceive the process of its making—the viewer can imagine the actions of cutting and attaching as well as the order of placement of the pieces. As Shiff puts it, the visible cuts 'call attention to themselves, the action that generated them, and the physicality of the material they transform'.⁷

In fact, the attached pieces on a collage literalise depth since they are physically in front of or on top of the support. While discussing Pablo Picasso's collages, Rosalind Krauss suggests that the affixing of a collaged piece, that is, the setting down of one plane on another plane, is 'the centre of collage as a signifying system'.⁸ This actual and clear overlap leads collage towards representation since 'the supporting ground that is obscured by the affixed plane resurfaces in a miniaturised facsimile in the collage element itself'.⁹ The collaged element, in other words, comes to represent the obscured plane. According to Krauss, who follows Ferdinand de Saussure's analysis of the sign, collage demonstrates the need to efface something in order to represent it. This condition of absence is essential to the operations of the sign, which is a 'substitute, proxy, stand-in, for an absent referent'.¹⁰ It is only by obscuring and absenting the ground that the collaged element can be seen to represent it, and to ultimately generate meaning.

In addition, the visible cuts can be seen as seams that simultaneously separate and connect collaged piece and support. As Catherine de Zegher writes, 'the seam between juxtaposed planes' results in a line that is 'both disjunctive, marking the edges of fragments of the fractured subject, and connective, delineating new relations'.¹¹ Laura Hoptman takes this discussion further when she associates the seam between collaged elements, especially between elements that are found and elements that are made, with Marcel Duchamp's term *infra-slim* or *infra-thin* (*infra-mince*). According to Hoptman, the *infra-thin* characterises a space that forever exists 'as a seam between components' and is 'called into being by the juxtaposition of two elements, almost but not completely conjoined'.¹² Due to its obvious seams, collage as a medium brings disparate things into close proximity, letting them 'contribute to a larger narrative' without forcing them to lose their identity—an *infra-thin* space is always maintained between them.¹³ The seam produces meaning by simultaneously connecting and separating the various elements, by bringing them extremely close without ever allowing them to fuse.

This discussion depends heavily on seeing the collaged piece and identifying the seams it creates on the surface. In fact, Hoptman implies that the seams *must* be visible when she insists that 'in the best examples' of collage the different elements are detectable as such.¹⁴

What happens, however, when surface and collaged piece are almost identical, as in *Faulty Samples I*?

Since collaged piece and surface come from the same source—the same fabric—the attaching suggests an undoing of the cutting by connecting the cut piece back to a bigger surface. After all, the collaged piece is part of that surface, first removed and subsequently reconnected to it. In fact, the attached piece quite literally repeats the surface. It is almost as if the surface is folded onto itself, repeating its features. There is an undeniable material continuity between collaged piece and support, and there is also partial visual continuity; they display parts of the same pattern. As such, the edges of the collaged piece cannot always be visually determined. The collaged piece withdraws into the surface, almost becoming one with it and coming close to reversing its removal from it. The surface not only folds *onto* itself—repeats itself—but also folds *into* itself, rendering the repetition partially indiscernible. This folding surface partially undoes the artist's interventions as well as the spatiotemporal relations between collaged piece and support, the 'spatial register of collage', as Briony Fer calls the placement of one plane on top of another.¹⁵ Indeed, in actuality, I am still affixing one plane on top of another with one plane obscuring the other. Visually, however, this spatial and temporal order is suppressed. The continuity between collaged piece and surface means that background and foreground partially cohere with each other. The collaged element is, therefore, itself partially obscured and camouflaged within the pattern. There is almost an obscuring of the obscuring of the support, as the collaged element becomes nearly indiscernible from its surroundings.

This is not to say that the artist's actions are completely invisible. The collaged pieces introduce textural difference on the surface. They also introduce visual disruptions that vary depending on the placement of each piece. For example, in *Faulty Samples (Outgrowth)* (2012), the addition of flowers and leaves results in many visual disruptions. Interrupted leaves, missing bits of flowers, coloured shapes that lurk around recognisable images and that do not seem to belong anywhere—these emerge when looking closely. They appear around the border between a collaged piece and the support, a border that is quite difficult to locate despite these scattered bits of images around it. My interventions are partially absorbed by the busy pattern and vivid colours—the seams between pieces become infra-thin indeed. Given the partial continuity between collaged piece and support, it is possible to assume that this is how the fabric was originally printed. Perhaps the outgrowth is part of the pattern or a printing mistake. In works that involve repeated interventions, the artist's actions become absorbed in the repetitiveness of the pattern, thus becoming part of a new pattern. Each sample is almost redesigned and presented as if this has always been its design.¹⁶

If the activities of viewing and interpreting collages depend on being able to see the cut pieces and resulting seams, then how does the suppression of the artist's interventions in *Faulty Samples I* affect the viewers' interaction with the work? Does it challenge the quality of collage as 'an art of touch and hand'? In the following sections, I suggest that, paradoxically perhaps, the camouflaged work may actually amplify the role of touch when viewing these works, while moving the discussion from the tactile to the haptic.

The Viewer's Work

When the collages are seen from afar, they come across as regular pieces of fabric—that is, the collaged pieces go unseen or are taken to be part of the pattern. In this way, the viewing of the actual works as artworks cannot happen from a distance, but requires the viewers to approach them and employ close observation. This may turn the viewers into more active and attentive participants in their encounter with the work, causing them to *practise* a specific kind of viewing.¹⁷

In addition to the need to be approached, the collages invite touch. Fabric, as material, forms part of an infant's first tactile experiences in the world.¹⁸ These types of surfaces evoke a sense of the familiar spaces or material environments with which many, if not most people, interact. In addition, according to Germano Celant, fabric also alludes to the action of covering something.¹⁹ In the case of clothing, this something is the human body, which is both covered and extended by fabric.²⁰ As such, fabric elicits a hidden or absent body as well as the sense of clothing touching a body. Moreover, in the case of *Faulty Samples I* the added pieces of material on each collage extrude slightly from the surface, perhaps needing someone to touch them in order to confirm their presence.

Given the specific features of the collages and fabric as material, when deciding how to install *Faulty Samples I*, I eventually turned to the idea of a sample book. The collages are shown bound together, referencing their provenance as fabric samples. The book is installed reclining on a stand and viewers are invited to look through it, as they would with a regular sample book [Fig. 8, 9]. As such, both approaching and touching are encouraged through the format and placement of the works.



Fig. 8: Marina Kassianidou, *Faulty Samples I, II* (installation view), 2014

In the case of *Faulty Samples I*, the presence of an open book in an exhibition space asks the visitors—who presumably have come in that space to engage with art—to approach. The low placement of the book on a stand means that the viewers must come close to the work and look down in order to see it.²¹ At that point, forms and lines may begin to arise on the surface, indicating the artist's actions. This may entice the viewer to touch the surface, to confirm that what she may have glimpsed is indeed there. When the viewer moves her hand over the surface—in a gesture echoing the artist's movement when first placing each piece on the surface—she can feel the collaged pieces. Several visitors to exhibitions where *Faulty Samples I* was shown engaged with the work in this way.²² The fact that the collages are

placed one over the other, in a way that allows parts of all of them to be seen, reveals that there is more underneath, enticing viewers to begin exploring by lifting and touching the layers one at a time. The near-horizontal placement of the book, the turning of leaves, and the touching remind the viewer of the activity of reading. In a sense, the work asks to be ‘read’, in that it requires time before some of the artist’s interventions even begin to emerge. Moreover, as several viewers noted, the touching of each collage is reminiscent of braille reading, where changes in texture allow the reader to construct meaning solely through touch. Unlike braille reading, however, the works need a viewer that both sees and touches. That is, the artist’s interventions are both visual and textural and can only be experienced more fully through a combination of senses.



Fig. 9: Marina Kassianidou, *Faulty Samples I* (installation view), 2012–2014, Bound Book of Fabric Collages, 48 x 32 cm

This intertwining of seeing and touching resonates with how Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari discuss the haptic space. The use of the term ‘haptic’ in art, from the Greek ‘haptos’ (απτός) meaning something that can be touched, originates from the art historian Alois Riegl. Riegl differentiates between a haptic vision and an optic vision. Haptic vision involves a near view and ‘is analogous to the sense of touch in the way that it must synthesise mentally a number of discontinuous sensory inputs’.²³ Riegl chooses to use the term ‘haptic’ rather than ‘tactile’ because tactile may be understood too literally as touching.²⁴ Moreover, haptic vision involves plane surfaces with clearly outlined and isolated figures adhering to a material ground.²⁵ The sharpness and clarity of these figures ‘provoke[s] the sense of touch’.²⁶ Riegl’s primary example involves ancient Egyptian relief art. In contrast to haptic vision, optic vision corresponds to a distant view and involves ‘a synoptic survey of objects in space.’²⁷ It emphasises the recognition of three-dimensional space and depth.²⁸ As Laura Marks argues,

optical vision places greater distance between viewer and object and enables the viewer 'to imaginatively project him/herself into or onto the object'.²⁹

Following Riegl, Deleuze and Guattari also differentiate between a haptic space and an optical space.³⁰ Like Riegl, they consider haptic to be a better word than tactile because 'it does not establish an opposition between two sense organs but rather invites the assumption that the eye itself may fulfil this nonoptical function'.³¹ The sensation of vision combined with touch produces haptic visuality, where the 'touching' may be done with the eyes.³² Still following Riegl, Deleuze and Guattari also associate the haptic with close looking, as haptic visuality works through closeness and engagement with the physical presence of an other or something other.³³ Since the viewers are close enough to touch the other with their eyes, such a proximity enables haptic looking to emerge.

The use of a sample book that viewers can look through for *Faulty Samples I* resonates with Deleuze and Guattari's discussion, since the viewers' physical closeness to the work encourages haptic looking. The viewers of *Faulty Samples I* are invited to touch the surface of the collages with both their eyes and hands. Merely coming close to each collage may not be sufficient to reveal the collaged pieces. Rather, an attentive viewing is requested that allows the eyes time to scan over the surface, to become sensitised to it, and to begin recognising visual disruptions. When looking at the works so closely, there is no 'entering' into their space but rather a hovering of the eye on the surface. The physical closeness between the viewers and the works and their increased familiarity with the surface over time suggest an intimate encounter, or a coming closer to an other. The more time spent with each surface, the more the viewers can begin to discern minor disturbances on it, and try and determine who or what brought those into being. When this touching with the eyes is accompanied by actual touching, the collaged pieces begin to emerge and the viewer sees-touches the work as both an image and a material object.

Deleuze and Guattari associate haptic space and close looking with what they call a smooth space. A smooth space is amorphous, non-hierarchical, and non-organised; it can grow infinitely in all directions and consists of continuous variations. It is differentiated from a striated space, which Deleuze and Guattari associate with an optical space and distant looking. A striated space is delimited, organised, measurable, and consists of forms that can be identified from a distance.³⁴ In a sense, the patterns on the fabrics in *Faulty Samples I* can be thought of as smooth spaces: they involve a potentially never-ending repetition of shapes or images in all directions, they have no one correct orientation, and they depend on a continuous visual rhythm. The artist's interventions are either minimal, creating subtle disruptions in the rhythm, or they emulate the repetitiveness of the pre-existing pattern, thus becoming confused with it. As Deleuze and Guattari suggest, smooth spaces cannot be seen from a distance, cannot be seen as being 'in front of' someone and cannot be entered. Rather, the viewers are asked to distribute themselves *on* the surface.³⁵ They are asked to practice close looking, to become involved, and to take time and move along the surface, using both their eyes and hands, even without knowing what it is they are looking at or for.³⁶ When they start discerning-feeling the artist's interventions, the surface may start to move towards a striated space, providing points for the viewers' eyes to focus on.³⁷

In this way, viewing these collages becomes a spatiotemporal process involving movement and attentiveness. The necessity for movement in space implies greater bodily involvement on the part of the viewer. According to Laura Marks, haptic visuality itself 'involves the body more than is the case with optical visuality' precisely because it combines vision with touch.³⁸ The closeness to the works and the ability to recognise the artist's marks/actions creates links between looking and touching, looking through touching, and/or touching through looking, all of which involve the viewer with the work in different ways. In fact, according to Vivian Sobchack, when viewing an artwork it is impossible to separate out the senses—the whole

body is implicated in the experience.³⁹ When viewing *Faulty Samples I*, the viewer's body is required to be actively involved in the looking; otherwise the artist's work will be missed. In order to see the artist's interventions, the viewer needs to employ movement, physical proximity, attentiveness, close and sustained looking, and a combination of senses rather than only a more distant optical view. All of these also involve time—the viewer is asked to spend time getting to know the work. These characteristics make the actual words I have been using—'looking', 'viewing', and 'viewers'—problematic because the viewers are being asked to engage in something much more than simply viewing. They are being asked to engage in a practice of attentiveness that unfolds over space and time.

Admittedly, this means more work for the viewers. The attentive viewers I have been describing are willing to take time and come close to the work, interact with it and touch it. They are willing to let their perceptions change as they move, touch and observe. They are willing to give the work a chance and to work *with* the work. They do not assume that they know or recognise the work from the beginning of the encounter but are willing to approach and enter into a process of getting-to-know via seeing-touching-feeling.

I am not claiming that the need to practice attentive looking is something specific to *Faulty Samples I*. The experience of viewing any visual artwork is enriched or otherwise transformed when the viewer comes close and attends to the work. With *Faulty Samples I*, an attentive viewing that draws upon multiple senses not only allows the precise actions of the artist to emerge but, as I argue in the next section, also enables a sharing between making and viewing that implicates artist, work, and viewer in a process of co-constitution.



Fig. 10: Marina Kassianidou, *Faulty Samples I (Pyramid)*, 2014, Fabric Collage, 29.2 x 32.5 cm



Fig. 11: Marina Kassianidou, *Faulty Samples I (Unkempt)*, 2014, Fabric Collage, 29.4 x 38.3 cm

An Art of Touching-Feeling-Seeing-Thinking-Sharing

In this final section, I suggest that the practice of viewing described earlier, which involves a touching-feeling-seeing or haptic aspect, may open up a shared space between viewer and artist, thus, shifting the relationships between viewer and artwork and viewer and artist beyond a subject/object distinction.

The traditional relationship between viewer and artwork posits one as the subject and the other as the object. Within phallic logic, these are placed on opposite sides.⁴⁰ That is, phallogocentric gaze assumes the existence of a 'subject' who looks at an external and separate 'object'.⁴¹ The work—the 'object' or 'other'—is to be assimilated as the same or rejected as wholly 'other'.⁴² Moreover, within phallic logic, the artist forms, in some ways, another 'other' for the viewer. Simply put, the artist makes something that the viewer subsequently sees/consumes. This seeing could lead to the objectification of the artist, that is, if one begins seeing the work as representative of the artist herself.⁴³

Artworks involving nearly indiscernible interventions may have the potential to challenge these oppositional and hierarchical relationships. Partially indiscernible artworks and interventions are not presented as 'other' for the viewing pleasure of the viewer. The viewer cannot define herself as such when faced with works that resist immediate viewing. If for the viewer the other is the artwork, then this other cannot initially be retrieved in full but only partially. As discussed earlier, the viewer needs to adjust her position and employ seeing-touching in order to engage with the works. At the same time, it is possible that the action of touching may be seen as still residing within the phallogocentric domain. Riegl reminds that haptic also means 'to fasten', which implies a fixing or an attaching.⁴⁴ Thus, touching the surface may be seen as physically possessing that surface, taking it over. While this may be a

possible way of understanding the touching of the works, I would argue that the specific mode of seeing-touching requested by the works reveals different possibilities.

To begin with, the action of moving the hand over the surface in order to feel the collaged pieces reminds more of a caress than a grasping. Moreover, this is a process that requires time for the viewer to discern some of the interventions on the surface. The artist's marks both signal the 'presence' of the artist through slight disruptions *and* hide that presence through partial assimilation into the surface. The operations of signalling and hiding are brought closer together, approximating ambiguous states of appearance-in-disappearance of the artist's mark, always in relation to the surface. In addition, the relationship between mark and surface is not stable but shifts depending on the viewer's position. Thus, mark and surface may be seen as enacting continual operations of connecting and distancing, which could lead to oscillations between a smooth and a striated space. As Deleuze and Guattari argue, smooth and striated are not straightforward oppositions but interconnected operations—smooth spaces can become striated and vice versa.⁴⁵ The viewer may find herself in the midst of these operations.

According to Sobchack, perception addresses the world—it is directed towards an other.⁴⁶ How the perceiving subject will relate to that other depends precisely on the nature of the address. Drawing on Luce Irigaray's writings on attentive practices of listening, viewing and touching, Hilary Robinson proposes a practice of attentiveness for art viewers.⁴⁷ Irigaray calls for a reconstitution of the subject, one which entails

becoming capable of giving and receiving, of being active and passive, of having an intention that stays attuned to interactions, that is, of seeking a new economy of existence or being which is neither that of mastery nor that of slavery but rather of exchange with no preconstituted object—vital exchange, cultural exchange, of words, gestures, etc., an exchange thus able to *communicate* at times, to commune . . . beyond any exchange of objects.⁴⁸

For this to happen, each subject needs to recognise that the other cannot be reduced to an object or to one's self and that communication with this other occurs via 'reciprocal listening', which requires attentiveness and concentration.⁴⁹ This attentive listening is 'a subjective and bodily practice', which allows for an inter-engagement of the senses.⁵⁰ Robinson points out Irigaray's example of Buddha contemplating a flower.⁵¹ This contemplation involves thinking, listening, viewing, and respecting.⁵² Using Irigaray's writings, Robinson calls for an 'attentive audience' in visual art.⁵³ The attentive audience engage in a viewing that suggests proximity rather than distance and utilises more than one sense when experiencing a work so as to get to know the work. This is something that *Faulty Samples I* specifically requests—to be attentively seen, touched, and 'listened' to. That is, the viewer has to *work* towards viewing the artwork.

By attending to the artwork, the possibility may open for it to be viewed as something more/other than an object. The work may be approached as something the viewers can engage with and get to know, rather than as something they already know and own or reject, or as something they only look at and consume from afar. As Irigaray writes, attentive looking means attending to something other without owning it or mastering it.⁵⁴ This practice of attentiveness leads to a shift from looking at the work as a singular object to experiencing processes of engagement.⁵⁵ Through this engagement, the viewers' perception of the work gradually alters as the artist's actions begin to emerge.⁵⁶

I suggest that the viewers' involvement with the work may enable a sharing with the artist on several levels. To start with, by approaching the works, the viewers begin to observe the artist's marks and their relationship to the surface. Thus, they begin to approach the making

process of the works. This can be seen as a mimetic re-enactment of the making process, that is, the marks on a surface reveal the actions of the artist, enabling the viewers to re-create the process of making in their heads and bodies. The approaching/sharing I am suggesting coexists with and simultaneously goes beyond this mimetic re-enactment.

In fact, aspects of the process of attentively viewing the works resonate with aspects of the making of the works. The viewers physically come very close to the work, as close as the artist was whilst making the work. They then spend time with the surface, scanning it with their eyes and hands, becoming sensitised to and familiarised with it. Again, this resonates with the experience of making which involves the artist studying the surface, becoming familiarised with it over time and then touching it through cutting and attaching. Just as the artist is absorbed and spends time at work, so is the viewer asked to take time and explore the works, engaging in a process of discovery. The viewer is asked to practice attentiveness towards an other and engage in a process of close and sustained looking, much like that practiced by the artist during the making.

This is not simply a matter of mimetic re-enactment, with the viewers mimicking the actions of the artist, nor is it simply a matter of both artist and viewer touching the same surface. Instead, attentive seeing-touching forms an integral part of both the process of making and the process of viewing these specific works as it allows the artist's work to emerge. Through attentive seeing-touching, the artist decides on and makes each collage. For their part, the viewers need to practise attentive seeing-touching in order to allow the artist's work to emerge, thereby fulfilling their role as viewers. As a result, both the viewers and the works change through their encounter—the viewers begin to see-touch as the works begin to unfold. In the pieces under discussion, this two-way change is made possible through the partial indiscernibility of the artist's interventions. The viewers participate in the 'making' of the work, and while they may not have physically made the work themselves, by engaging with it they enable it to emerge. And when the work begins to emerge, the viewers begin to exist *as viewers*. As such, viewers and works co-constitute each other through their encounter.

Furthermore, the viewer's actions are almost a complementary continuation of the artist's actions. The artist employs cutting and attaching as her mode of thinking. She touches the surface in order to attach a collage piece, which she then presses onto the surface to ensure it is affixed. This affixing leads to the partial disappearance of the collaged piece, which hides itself in the pattern of the fabric. The viewer may notice a visual disruption on the surface and touch it in order to understand what she is looking at. The viewer's touch leads to the recovery of the camouflaged collaged piece. Where the artist's touch leads to hiding, the viewer's look-touch leads to revealing. The folding that occurs during making is followed by an unfolding during viewing-touching. Both of these processes, folding and unfolding, form part of the work and the artist's cutting-as-thinking continues into the viewer's viewing-as-thinking.

I am not suggesting that the processes of making and viewing are the same, but that some aspects of the experience of making are somehow partially transferred to the experience of viewing—in other words, something is shared between artist and viewer, something that goes beyond communicating an idea or a process of making. That is, as the viewers approach the work, they are approaching the artist in the sense of sharing a space and process with the artist. They are not approaching the artist as an object to be viewed through her marks on a surface, but rather as an embodied subject that is engaged with the work. The work is not meant to be seen 'as a stand-in for the objectness of the other'.⁵⁷ Rather, the work may act as a shared space, an acknowledgement of *both* the embodied artist and embodied viewer at work, whether that work is attentive making-touching or attentive viewing-touching or a continuous linking of the two.

Ultimately, the sharing between artist and viewer may become a type of reciprocal offering. The artist offers her work to be seen, but unless the viewers engage in attentive viewing-touching, the work may well go unseen. That is, the remains of the artist's human presence on each surface request another human presence—the viewer—in order to emerge. With their contribution, the viewers offer something back to the work and the artist. By approaching and engaging with the work in a touching-feeling-seeing-thinking encounter, they *give it* the possibility of emerging and existing as an artwork. A great deal of faith is placed in the viewers. There is always the possibility that they may not engage with the work at all, thus, mistaking what they see for something else or even not actually seeing the work. This is one of the risks taken when engaging in this kind of practice.

As I discussed earlier, collage has been described as an art of the hand and touch, one which depends strongly on the visible overlay of planes and the formation of seams. Its meaning is usually associated with the obvious differences between the juxtaposed or overlaid planes and with the seams' ability to both connect and separate disparate elements. The camouflaged collaged pieces in *Faulty Samples I* simultaneously resist this visibility and amplify the role of touch through the haptic or seeing-touching. The meanings they give rise to may not have to do with the difference between collaged pieces and support so much, but rather with processes of engagement with something other. According to Rebecca Fortnum, 'meaning is something constructed by *both* artist and viewer in the collaborative venture of making and looking', with viewers not 'passively uncover[ing] meaning, but . . . actively construct[ing] interpretations'.⁵⁸ These interpretations emerge through the possible viewing experiences the artist sets up.⁵⁹ *Faulty Samples I* specifically stages an encounter between itself and the viewer that rests on the viewer's willingness to engage in attentive touching-feeling-seeing-thinking. Even if the viewer does not immediately see the cut pieces and resulting seams on the surface, as might be the case with many other collages, she will hopefully still believe in Shiff's assertion that collage is an art of touch and hand. She will then take the time to approach the work and see-touch.

Notes

¹ This investigation formed part of a recently completed Ph.D. in Fine Art. Marina Kassianidou, 'Between Marks and Surfaces: Indiscernibility, Subjectivity, and Otherness' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Chelsea College of Arts, University of the Arts London, 2015).

² Serge Tisseron, 'All Writing Is Drawing: The Spatial Development of the Manuscript', *Yale French Studies*, 84 (1994), 29–42 (pp. 33–34).

³ For a discussion on the implications of seeing surfaces as blank, see Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 134–135.

⁴ Richard Shiff, 'Picasso's Touch: Collage, "Papier Collé, Ace of Clubs"', *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin* (1990), 38–47 (p. 41).

⁵ Shiff, 'Picasso's Touch', p. 39.

⁶ Shiff, 'Picasso's Touch', p. 39. Materials such as paint and graphite are much more malleable and can be used to imitate effectively various visual effects. That is, brushstrokes and drawn lines can blend into each other, disappearing into a visual illusion. Cut and attached pieces of material do not have the same plasticity.

⁷ Richard Shiff, 'Cézanne's Physicality: The Politics of Touch', in *The Language of Art History*, ed. by Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 129–180 (p. 162).

⁸ Rosalind E. Krauss, 'In the Name of Picasso', in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1986), pp. 23–40 (p. 37).

⁹ Krauss, 'In the Name of Picasso', p. 37.

¹⁰ Krauss, 'In the Name of Picasso', p. 33. Saussure analysed the sign as being composed of a signifier and a signified. The signifier is the form of the sign, for example, a written trace, while the signified is the concept represented by the sign. According to Krauss, this separation between material form and immaterial concept emphasises the fact that the sign operates in the absence of the thing to which it refers. See Krauss, 'In the Name of Picasso', p. 33.

¹¹ Catherine de Zegher, 'A Century Under the Sign of Line: Drawing and Its Extension (1910-2010)', in *On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century*, by Cornelia H. Butler and Catherine de Zegher (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2010), pp. 21–123 (p. 27). De Zegher is specifically discussing Cubist collage here.

¹² Laura Hoptman, 'Collage Now: The Seamier Side', in *Collage: The Unmonumental Picture*, by Richard Flood, Massimiliano Gioni and Laura Hoptman (London: Merrell, 2007), pp. 9–11 (p. 9).

¹³ Hoptman, p. 10.

¹⁴ Hoptman, p. 10.

¹⁵ Briony Fer, *On Abstract Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 30.

¹⁶ As Rosalind Krauss points out, the technique of collage is derived from commercial practice. The moving around of 'bits and pieces' of material before affixing them on the surface, specifically reminds of layout design. Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Picasso Papers* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998), p. 71. My collages, acting as reorganisations of the surface, can be seen within this tradition as redesigns of the fabric.

¹⁷ As Ralph Rugoff writes, works that are difficult to see because they are invisible or nearly imperceptible, may involve the viewers in processes of discovery, with viewers having to 'surrender the aloofness of gallery *flâneurs* and instead publicly declare [their] desire to look'. Ralph Rugoff, 'Homeopathic Strategies', in *At the Threshold of the Visible: Miniscule and Small-Scale Art, 1964–1996* (New York: Independent Curators Incorporated, 1997), pp. 11–71 (p. 14).

¹⁸ While discussing painting and collage, Richard Shiff notes: 'The surfaces that offer a hand its initial experiences and induce it to acquire habits and practices are, of course, neither canvases, nor panels, nor papers. We encounter the surfaces of human bodies and domestic environments long before developing the specific manipulative practices that pictorial representation involves'. Shiff, 'Cézanne's Physicality', p. 180.

¹⁹ Germano Celant, 'Dressing Louise Bourgeois', in *Louise Bourgeois: The Fabric Works*, ed. by Germano Celant (Milan: Skira, 2010), pp. 13–25 (p. 13).

²⁰ Celant, p. 14.

²¹ My discussion here draws upon Briony Fer's discussion of Eva Hesse's studioworks. Fer calls attention to the installations of groups of small works on tables and other horizontal surfaces. The low horizontal surfaces mean that viewers have to stand close to the studioworks and look down on them. In this way, the viewers are invited to imaginatively participate in a process of re-arranging these objects and creating links between them. Briony Fer, *Eva Hesse: Studiowork* (Edinburgh: The Fruitmarket Gallery, 2009), pp. 60, 76.

²² My discussion of the viewers' experience draws upon my own observations as well as discussions with several visitors to exhibitions where I showed the work.

²³ Margaret Iversen, *Alois Riegl: Art History and Theory* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993), p. 9.

²⁴ Iversen, p. 170.

²⁵ Iversen, p. 78.

²⁶ Alois Riegl, 'Excerpts from The Dutch Group Portrait', *October*, 74 (1995), 3–35 (pp. 30–31).

²⁷ Iversen, p. 9.

²⁸ Iversen, p. 79.

²⁹ Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 166.

³⁰ Deleuze and Guattari situate their discussion with respect to Riegl's analysis as well as Wilhelm Worringer's and Henri Maldiney's.

³¹ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 543.

³² Marks, p. 162. Marks also situates her discussion of haptic visuality with respect to Riegl. Marks, pp. 162–169.

³³ Marks, p. 190.

³⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, pp. 524–551.

³⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, pp. 544, 530.

³⁶ Marks identifies this as another characteristic of haptic works, that is, they request a look that moves on the surface 'for some time before the viewer realises what she or he is beholding'. Marks, p. 163. She identifies weaving, embroidery, and decoration as examples of images 'that invite a small, caressing gaze'. Marks, p. 169.

³⁷ As Rosemary Betterton notes, this process of closely looking and of trying to identify details 'is more akin to the traditional practice of the connoisseur'. Rosemary Betterton, 'A Matter of Paint: The Carnal Subject of Aesthetics', in *Differential Aesthetics: Art Practices, Philosophy and Feminist Understandings*, ed. by Penny Florence and Nicola Foster (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 281–298 (p. 287). The connoisseur, the discerning viewer par excellence, studies images closely in search for signs of 'mastery'. The close looking I have been discussing does not aim at distinguishing quality but is more concerned with perceiving minor differences that show that something has actually happened on the surface.

- ³⁸ Marks, p. 163. See also the further definition of ‘haptic’ in Γεώργιος Μπαμπινιώτης [George Mbambiniotis], *Λεξικό της Νέας Ελληνικής Γλώσσας* [Dictionary of Modern Greek], 2nd edn (Athens: Κέντρο Λεξιλογίας [Centre for Linguistics], 2002), p. 265.
- ³⁹ Vivian Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 77–78.
- ⁴⁰ Griselda Pollock, ‘Oeuvres Autistes’, *Versus*, 3 (1994), 14–18 (p. 15). Phallic logic is based on hierarchical binary oppositions—a logic of being/not-being which privileges the positive term over the negative one. That is, it structures the world in relationships of A/not-A, thus, leading to discontinuous and dichotomous distinctions. Griselda Pollock, ‘Thinking the Feminine: Aesthetic Practice as Introduction to Bracha Ettinger and the Concepts of Matrix and Metramorphosis’, *Theory, Culture and Society*, 21.1 (2004), 5–65 (pp. 39–40).
- ⁴¹ Hilary Robinson, *Reading Art, Reading Irigaray: The Politics of Art by Women* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006), p. 65.
- ⁴² Pollock, ‘Oeuvres Autistes’, p. 15.
- ⁴³ Robinson, pp. 82–84.
- ⁴⁴ Iversen, p. 170.
- ⁴⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, pp. 524, 551.
- ⁴⁶ Sobchack, p. 85.
- ⁴⁷ Robinson, p. 78.
- ⁴⁸ Luce Irigaray, *I Love to You: Sketch for a Felicity within History*, trans. by Alison Martin (New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 45.
- ⁴⁹ Irigaray, pp. 46, 118.
- ⁵⁰ Robinson, p. 78.
- ⁵¹ Robinson, pp. 78, 92.
- ⁵² Irigaray, pp. 139–140.
- ⁵³ Robinson, pp. 75–88. Robinson opts for ‘audience’ rather than ‘viewer’ because the term ‘viewer’ is too tied to sight alone and also because the term ‘audience’ retains traces of Irigaray’s interest in listening.
- ⁵⁴ Irigaray, p. 24.
- ⁵⁵ As Rugoff points out, this emphasis on process and engagement is something that invisible or nearly invisible art can bring about. See Ralph Rugoff, ‘How to Look at Invisible Art’, in *Invisible: Art About the Unseen 1957–2012* (London: Hayward Publishing, 2012), pp. 5–29.
- ⁵⁶ For a discussion of other types of works involving indiscernibility and of the viewers’ relationship to those works, see Marina Kassianidou, ‘Lost in Space? “Invisible” Marks, Artworks and Artists’, *RevistArquis*, 2.4 (2013), 82–98, and ‘In the Gap Between Visibility and Invisibility: The “Fugitive” Image’, *The International Journal of the Image*, 2.3 (2012), 65–84.
- ⁵⁷ Robinson, p. 84. Or, I suppose, not only as a stand-in for the artist as I am not sure that an artwork, especially one involving manual interventions, can entirely avoid the risk of being seen as standing in for the artist.
- ⁵⁸ Rebecca Fortnum, ‘Seeing and Feeling’, in *Unframed: Practices and Politics of Women’s Contemporary Painting*, ed. by Rosemary Betterton (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004), pp. 139–161 (p. 142).
- ⁵⁹ Fortnum, p. 142.

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Biography

Marina Kassianidou has just completed a Ph.D. in Fine Art at Chelsea College of Arts, University of the Arts London, UK. Her degree was completed under the supervision of Jeffrey Dennis, Bernice Donszelmann, and Rebecca Fortnum. Her current research interests include relationships between mark and surface in visual art, painting, drawing, collage, and site-specific art.