



Justine Wesselo

The hunt is better than the kill





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*"It is conventional to call 'monster' any blending of dissonant elements. I call 'monster' every original inexhaustible beauty."*

- Alfred Jarry

## IN THE BEGINNING

For the duration of my studies at the Rietveld Academy I have always had a particular taste for certain dark morbid things. First I worked a lot with sculpture and performance arts from making a six meter Mickey Mouse sculpture out of garbage bags with an erect penis filled with other students' art till having an alter-ego, Annemiek, who made a performance called *'Half om half'* where she made the perfect meatball with eight kilos mincemeat with someone else dropping the ingredients from above including a raw egg from his rectum. Everything I made always had a certain taste to it, but I could not put my finger on it. During the years of studying and developing my work evolved and so too my taste. I became a painter and installation maker. I found out that images are very important to me but especially to my practice. I used photography as a medium to work from. It is no surprise that when it came to making a thesis I was going back to the images, first they would not be art related but later on in the process when I would look to the works of artists that I enjoy I began to see the thread connected them between the non-art related at the art related.

After making a selection of artists and their works, I took a more in depth look at the selection I made.

I based my selection on artists or works of art that have made a lasting impression. Why have these artist and artworks stayed with me; always lurking in the dark corners of my mind? Can I make a connection between the artworks and my personal thoughts, relationships, material things and inspiration I find in everyday life?

In my daily life I am intrigued by the darker side of things. I enjoy watching crime documentaries. Losing myself in the stories of infamous people or people that are falsely accused and finally get their story out and are freed. For example, Ted Bundy hunted and murdered at least thirty women. As I watch the documentary about him, I start to feel sympathy for him, and I find this ludicrous. The day Bundy was executed people were celebrating his death; wearing t-shirts printed with, "Burn Bundy Burn", shooting off fireworks and drinking beer. This was completely absurd, as if it were some sort of sporting event or festival instead of the execution of a man. Bundy said to his lawyer that these people were celebrating his death and they thought that he was the animal. Those people celebrating found it normal to celebrate a man's death. Of course, what he did was horrific, however I still find it ridiculous that they celebrated. Their normal I find truly absurd. In addition to crime documentaries, I also enjoy the psychedelic aesthetics



of horror films and thrillers, seventies erotic photography and everyday objects where the function is not entirely clear. I have a collection of decorative glass apples. The apple collection looks so interesting just sitting there together and I think about the history of the apple. The meaning of the apple and biting into the apple but these apples you certainly cannot bite into and I find the apples just as preposterous as the idea of biting into them. Absurdity in normality.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines uncanny as:

**uncanny** (adjective) 1 **a**: seeming to have a supernatural character or origin: eerie, mysterious **b**: being beyond what is normal or expected: suggesting superhuman or supernatural powers.

Sigmund Freud took it further turning uncanny into concept in his thesis '*Das unheimliche*' The Uncanny. Freud refers to the uncanny as an intensely peculiar feeling that we get as adults when we are reminded of something from our childhood. For myself the uncanny is a clear concept, however difficult to define. For me it can be more of a feeling and/or a combination of different often familiar objects placed in a weird creepy context. The uncanny is not new but something familiar that becomes unfamiliar something you can not quite put your finger on. Stirring up emotions, memories, making room for imagination. The outcome is always unsettling.

I first read The Uncanny an essay by Mike Kelley when I was in my basic year. As I was thinking about the apple, I was reminded of a passage in his essay that has stuck with me.

Psychoanalyst Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel quotes this passage, going on to say '*...idealization is only a thin film disguising an unchanged material, a mechanism aiming at masking the self. It also shows that there are human beings that prefer truth to mendacity.*' This follows a discussion of fetishism and perversion, which are '*connected with sham, counterfeit, forgery, fraudulence, deceit, cheating, trickery, and so on - in short with the world of semblance.*' Perverts tend toward aestheticism, she maintains; they often have a love of art and beauty, and this is likend to the infant's wonder at the accessible parts of their own bodies, and their love of shiny and animate external objects - like dangling pieces of colored glass. This external beauty is compared to the embalming of corpses, where make-up is applied to give the imitation of life, and, in the case of the Egyptian funerary practice, this decorating impulse is continued with jewels and other precious materials until the dead body is sculpted into a god - that is, a fetish an idealized substitution for something secret and shielded.



Ted Bundy - Execution day, January 24 1989.



Ed Gein - Human skin gloves, 1952.



Ed Gein - Female nipple belt, 1952.



Ed Gein - Human skull soup bowl, 1952.

This example calls to mind a contemporary account of the actions of another murderer and grave robber Ed Gein who, after his mother's death, dug up the graves of women roughly his mother's age to bring home pieces of them. Gein found solace in these body parts which seemed to him like dolls and, in some cases, he even wore these parts to approximate, in his own actions, his mother's living being. Investigators, searching Gein's house, found boxes of body parts, some dabbed with silver paint and decorated with bits of ribbon.<sup>1</sup> He made kitchen utensils from bones and some he even made into mask and gloves that he wore. These body parts that he turned into personal ceremonial artifacts he donned them and in his own actions, in his mind he became his mother and he would also have sex with the corpse that he stole. No one in the western world had seen or heard of anything like what Ed Gein had done. His unconceivable carnage, villainous acts and gruesome artistic expression showed just how vile humanity can be.

In these situations where it is not quite clear what to expect, building up tension is it staged or not? I wonder and question myself what would happen or is it even possible to look at art the same way as looking at a crime scene?

For example, when we look at '*Lumpenprole.*' This is a work I came upon during my research. It is a work of Mike Kelly made in 1991. It intrigued me, not only by the way it looked; a large floor rug with unidentified lumps throughout, but also by learning what the title meant. '*Lumpenproletariat*' - A theory to describe the members of the proletariat, criminals, vagrants and the unemployed. An underclass. It completely sparked my curiosity on so many levels; What happened? What took place here? Who is this? Who did this? Why? What was their motive? What does this mean? I began to wonder what if you observe artworks as if they are evidence or part of a crime scene?

1.The Uncanny - An essay by Mike Kelley, 1992. page 12-13



"A painting is something that requires as much trickery, malice, and vice as the perpetration of a crime, so create falsely and add a touch from nature." - Degas

## IT'S CRIMINAL

For me it does not come as a surprise that art and criminal behavior go hand in hand with one another. But maybe saying criminal behavior does not cut it, I will go more in depth on that later. It is not as black and white as I am presenting it to you here. The connection goes much deeper than that. There are many different voices and entities to consider. Before I go into depth and ramble on, I will simply break it down for you. I am using a technique I learnt as a child to show you where the similarities lay. We start off making a comparison list.

<b>Art</b>	<b>Crime scene</b>
<i>Silent situation tells the story</i>	<i>Reconstruction of a story</i>
<i>To question without a direct answer</i>	<i>To question with a possible direct answer</i>
<i>Figuring out the answer to the question</i>	<i>Solving the crime</i>
<i>Creating from an idea</i>	<i>Recreate from evidence</i>
<i>Piecing inspirational ideas together</i>	<i>Piecing evidence together</i>
<i>Telling a story</i>	<i>Recreating a story</i>
<i>Own truth</i>	<i>Facts and reality</i>
<i>Inspiration</i>	<i>Motive</i>

Let us look at the different voices I spoke of earlier. We have; the artist, the criminal, the spectator, the detective and finally the victim/victims. What to do with all these? Let us keep the focus on the artist and the criminal. As artist one will likely make a work that will be seen in certain setting and to be seen one needs a spectator. The spectator views the work and has thoughts or feelings about it. Some spectators will want a more in-depth understanding of their feelings. Listening to what the works tell them but also trusting on what their eyes and brain show them.

Trying to piece the puzzle together like the ones in the weekend newspaper. Now let us look at what the criminal would need; a space to create an organized chaos, a victim, and a motive. After one's deed is discovered, the investigator comes in. Trying to understand what they are looking at. Acknowledgement is credit and credit is power. So now I think it is safe to say that we see the artist as the criminal, the spectator as the detective and the artwork as the victim. I will go more in depth about this later in the thesis.

*"The imagination will not down, if it is not art, it becomes crime."* - W. C. Williams



## VIEWER VS. VOYEUR

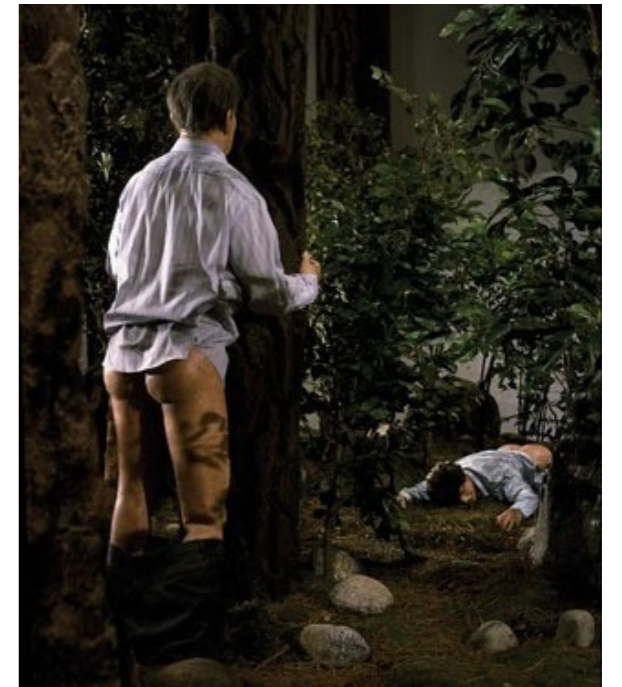
So earlier I talked about the different ways perspectives in art and crime scenes. Here we take a voyeuristic position. It feels like the glass apple we are not supposed to bite into. And it has massive, mesmerizing power; we know we should not because it would cut us open from the inside but the shiny shimmering colors makes us want to. And especially the danger element, we search for it, but do not want to get affected by it. We want to stay just on the edge. We get off on grief of others. There is an immense impulse of wanting to see things we have never seen before, but what the hell right? That is what makes us human. It is the thrill because the hunt is better than the kill.

Installation - plants, trees, and motorized figures. The garden, a full-scale tableau of an outdoor woodland scene, heavy trees shrubs and rocks. A tranquil picture of nature is rudely interrupted by the presence of a middle-aged balding man with his trousers around his ankles. From one side of the installation his actions are not immediately apparent, being partially hidden by tree trunks and foliage. The sound of mechanical activity draws the viewer in, to discover a man copulating with a tree, a robotic figure with repetitive movements.

When I look at McCarthy's work *The Garden* it gave me this feeling of the absurdity of the everyday existence. A so-called paradise or Garden of Eden within its banality. It leaves me with a feeling of shifting between conflicting emotions; is it serious, comical, or just bad taste/camp? Is it something that is there to confront me as a viewer to say like; Hey you, you pervert you like to watch from a safe distance and are happy to pay for this? Or is it here to turn it the other way around and to say like; Hey you, I'd like you to watch this and to feel extremely uncomfortable.

A strange kind of fun fair attraction being put on display within a sexual morality for public behavior. When people are outside during the night or in a more secluded area, they have the feeling that other people cannot see them. They feel freer to do what they please. Or are they doing it because they want to be seen and want to be caught? Like a flasher.

Although the viewer is looking at an outdoor scene, they become witness of something private, someone's inner desire. Even become a witness to a criminal act. You know that looking at it is wrong, but you keep on watching. Becoming a voyeur. What does that say about you?



Paul McCarthy - The Garden 1991.

"I do not understand laws, I have no moral sense. I am a brute."  
- Rimbaud

**ART HAS NO RULES, NO GOOD, NO BAD BUT EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN.**

From my perception art has no rules, there is no good or bad. It is limitless like a child's fantasy, full of wonders and endless possibilities but sometimes jaded within the adult world. When I am looking or reading about some work, for example the work of John Duncan *Blind Date* that Mike Kelley mentioned in his essay, I feel like there is still a moral line that should not be crossed. John Duncan travels to Mexico to have sex with a dead woman. For art's sake I can see how sex, violence and art lie very close to each other, but I morally feel it is wrong to abuse a dead body. Comparing it with our judicial system; when someone is convicted of a crime they are punished. They are placed in prison however is this completely justified. If we look at the Richard Ramirez case, or as people called him; The Night Stalker. He did some horrible nasty things to women and children and yes, he was punished for this. However, if we take a deeper look at his own childhood, he was copying what he knew. The abused became the abuser. His childhood was taken from him and he tried gaining it back through violent actions. Just like the teddy bear that he was never given as a child he was also never given a moral sense of right and wrong.

So, this is a part of the book from Mike Kelley *The Uncanny*. When I first read it, I was shocked and I could not wrap my mind around it, how completely absurd. The more I read it the more I understood, how it could be valid to make a counter argument for it, just like the above.

The artist John Duncan called *Blind Date*. This work consisted of Duncan having sex with a human corpse and was presented in the form of an audio tape as a kind of concrete music. Duncan said of the experience, '*one of the things this piece showed me was that people don't accept death. Until the body is completely dust, people cannot accept the fact that someone is dead. To me the corpse was like solid matter that had nothing to do with the person who was occupying it. (...) To those who hold one to an essential notion of the human body, the corpse is inseparable from the life force that once occupies it; to those that do not, the corpse is simply another material*'.<sup>2</sup>

'*It is the unfamiliar familiar, the conventional made suspect. This once-familiar thing is the infantile primary narcissism which holds sway in the mind of the child and is still harbored unconsciously in the adult.*'<sup>3</sup>

2.The Uncanny - An essay by Mike Kelley, 1992. Page 24

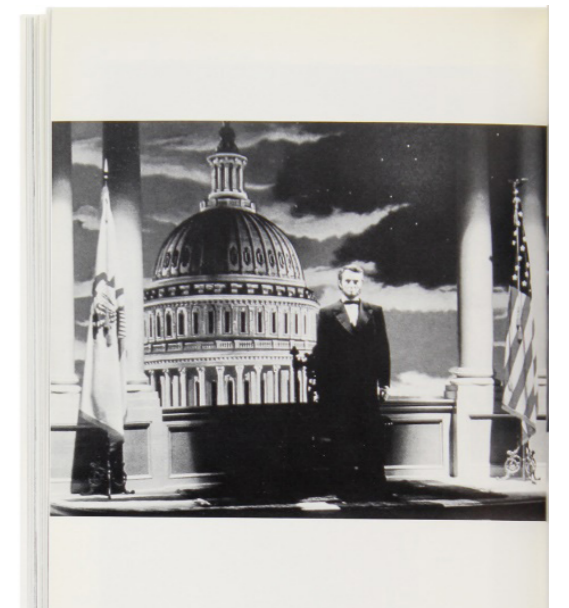
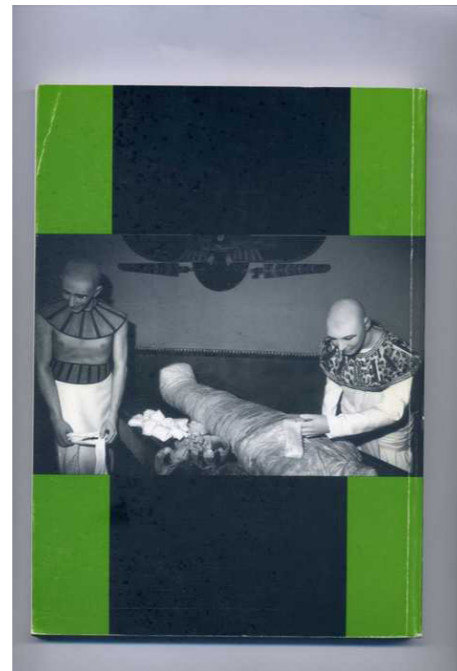
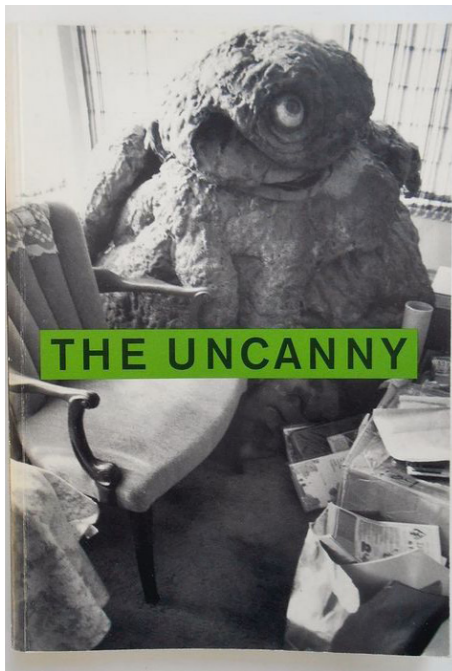
3.The Uncanny - An essay by Mike Kelley, 1992. Page 25



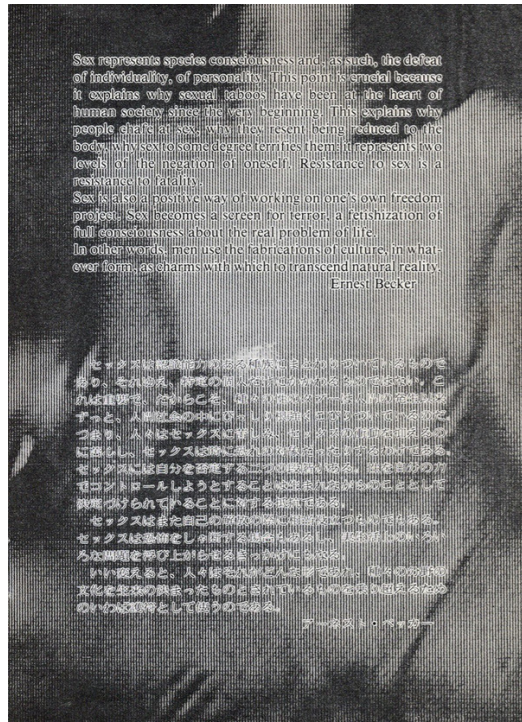


Richard Ramirez -  
Day of the arrest,  
August 31 1985.

This part takes us back to my earlier thoughts on the glass apples and how they used to fascinate me as a child. The glass and the colors now hold a different weight in my thoughts. Now I like them as objects for the lack of purpose that they have, only being. I have the same with other objects. Another example; I keep the toys and stuffed animals I played with as a child in my room because I like the way they look, as decoration but the purpose they once served is gone, now they are not only there as decoration but also as something I can hold on to. To make me aware of the fact I once was an infante, pure. Sometimes I feel guilty about it, when I see them in my room next to, an ashtray and a pack of condoms. A room that is for an adult and not a child. I am not a child anymore, but they are immortally stuck in their frozen age. But I am not, I am not immortal.



The Uncanny - An essay  
by Mike Kelley, 1992.



John Duncan -  
Blind Date, 1984.

"There is something agreeable in the misfortunes of others." -  
Thackeray



**(DIS) CONNECT**

Arthur (Usher) Fellig, Austria pseudonym Weegee was a photographer/ photojournalist and worked at the lower eastside of Manhattan (1930-1940.) He developed his signature style by following emergency services and documenting their activity. Realistic scenes of urban life, crime, injury, and death.

Weegee published books, worked in cinema, and made short films, collaborations with film directors Jack Donohue and Stanley Kubrick. Weegee was often the first one to be on the crime scene. He listened to a portable police-band shortwave radio and was the only freelance newspaper photographer with a permit to own such a radio.

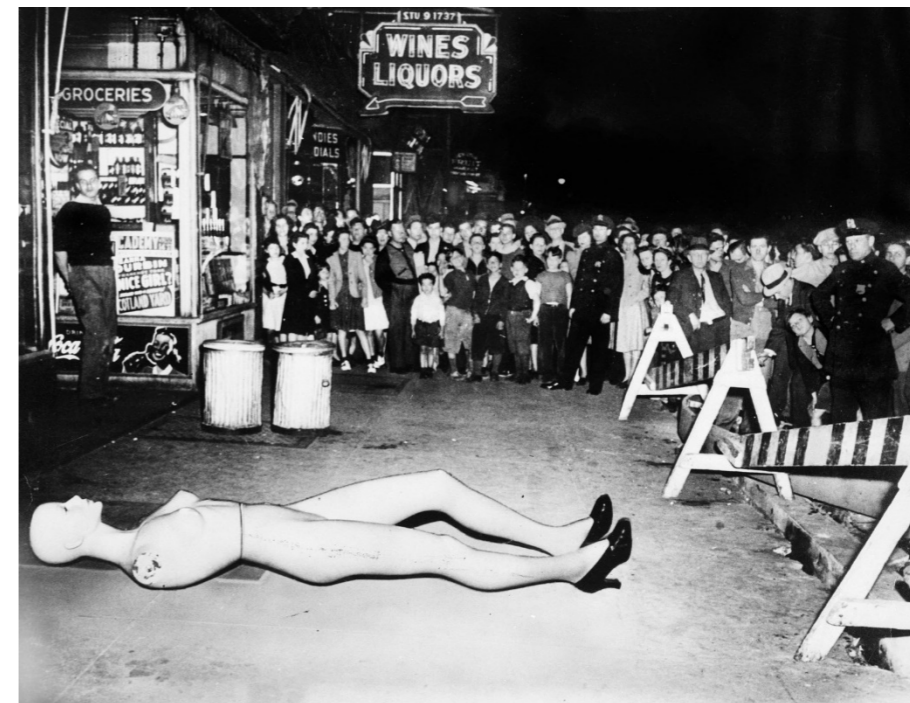
This says something about the way he looked or treated photography in a commercial way. He knew what sold and what the public wanted from him. I can see Weegee, the artist, staging the scenes to make the aesthetic pleasing to the eye and on the other hand I see him as a great business man.

Weegee mixed fantasy with reality. He understood what sold. At night he would walk the street of New York on the lookout for murder, arson, car crashes and/or socialites. His success was driven by all means necessary which means; bribing cops, moving bodies and staging scenes to make it look authentic. On a vinyl record; Famous photographers tell how Weegee speaks of using these means to an end to claw his way to the top: *"The easiest kind of a job is to cover a murder; the stiff would be laying on the ground. Cheap shots were easy sales."*<sup>4</sup> Weegee claims to have fought for humanism. Weegee states:

*'This is the most wonderful experience for any man or woman to go through. It is like a modern Aladdin's lamp, you rub it, in this case it is a camera. You push a button, and it gives you the things you want. So even a drunk must be a masterpiece. I will drive around all night or all year looking for a good drunk picture. In other words, I am a perfectionist, when I take a picture, if it's a murderer or a drunk it's got to be good.'*<sup>4</sup>



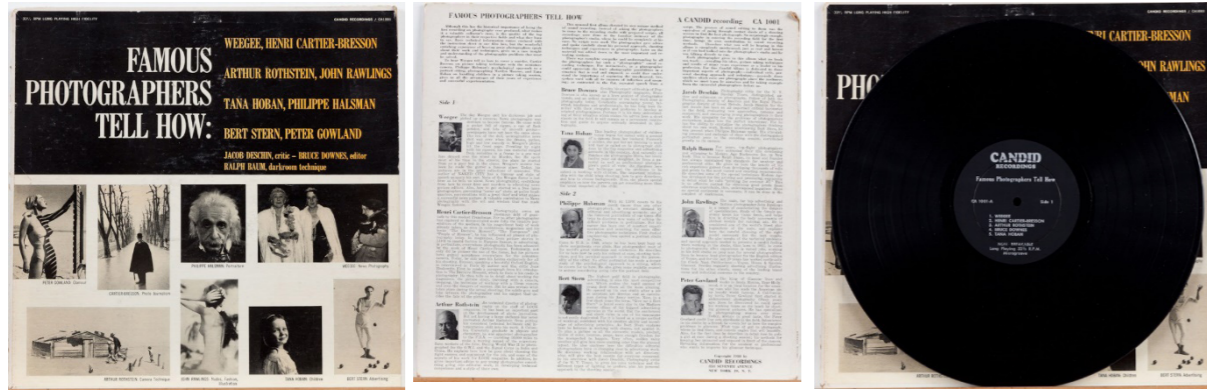
Weegee - Dressing room behind the circus ring, Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus 1944.



Weegee - Crowd with mannequin, 1940.

4. Famous photographers tell how, Weegee, side 1





Famous photographers tell how - 1958.4

Weegee's idea was to make the camera human. His motto was "Fake it until you make it". His work ethic was not to just capture the tragedy, he wanted his own angle and to incorporate his dark sense of humor. He wanted his own punchline; the darker the better. If that meant staging the tragedy from time to time to get the perfect picture, so be it.



Weegee - Accident, 42nd Street and 3rd Avenue, 1946-1946



Weegee - Drink Coca-Cola, 1942.

In my opinion by staging his pictures Weegee actually turned the crime scene into art.

*'For death is always there, in a peaceful, natural guise, in a logical yet tragic guise, in a violent and dramatic guise. Life looks awkward in old photos; death never looks awkward. Death is always grim. The closer you get to it, the worse it gets. In that sense, you could say that death erases time - it is the big equalizer that connects the present, the past and the future. A dead person from thirty years ago is as dead as a dead one today, and both remind us, the living, of our own death and make us sigh and hope that it will not be a brutal death, because if something is the ultimate loneliness, it is death.'*<sup>5</sup>



Plaats Delict Amsterdam - 2007.

During the process of writing this thesis I found myself stuck from time to time, a 'writers block' one might have called it. When this happened, I would talk to several people about my subject. People that look from the outside inside. Sooner or later, someone would give me the golden tip. To look up this book called *Plaats Delict Amsterdam*. The book is predominantly comprised of photographs taken at crime scenes, forensic photography and other police photography from Amsterdam between the years 1960 and through 1980's and in between sets of photographs are first-hand accounts from police officers, journalist and

<sup>5</sup> Martin Brill, *Plaats Delict Amsterdam*, page 70



forensic photographers. It is like you can almost look over the shoulders of the police and they will take you to many places with lots of variety. Places of the victims and the murders until the place it gets blurred. The images show you complete rawness in a sense of time or sometimes even nostalgia. Some parts of the book have interesting and relevant interviews and essays in it from well known Dutch writers and policemen.

These are the parts I will be using in my thesis throughout.



15. Zelfdoding in kruiken

Ruud Buurman, journalist and columnist, writes an extremely interesting part. 'At any calamity, the photographer needs to keep emotional distance from the subject for the sake of self-preservation and does so by means of a camera. The distance is created through a lens and that lens makes it a corpse, not a human, an object that must be captured. There was nothing more to be done, it could not be revived. They put the thought out of their heads that the victim had ever walked around, had thought, had a partner, children and a mother and father.'<sup>6</sup>



6 Ruud Buurman, *Plaats Delict* Amsterdam, page 30



I am reminded of Nan Goldin and her work. She was able to pull herself through a horrific situation by turning the camera on herself and making her life and abusive relationship the subject of her photographs. I feel that by distancing herself she made beautiful artwork and was personally able to cope.



Nan Goldin  
- Nan and  
Dickie in  
the York  
hotel, New  
Jersey,  
1980.



Nan Goldin  
- Nan and  
Brian in  
bed, New  
York City,  
1983.

Nan Goldin - *'The Ballad of Sexual Dependency'* 1970-1980.

An autobiographical and universal diary made of images about human beings and their weaknesses that tells you about life, sex, violence, drugs, friendship, and loneliness. A work in progress that started in the early eighties including beautifully tragic and oddly comforting images. It is a smorgasbord of emotion. Her work is a close, personal and an intimate document, but in some sort of strange way universal. People either relate to the subjects or they are drawn to the rawness of the actions of people that they never knew or are interested in the people that they only heard about through media.

It is difficult to express, but the roughness or harshness which the photos portray, are bearable because of the care and love the photographer has put in; through unfiltered not sugarcoated raw and honest portraits. Goldin not only became close with her camera but also with herself. Every photo carries not only a part of the subject's soul but a part of her soul as well. Her photos are never flat or 2D to me.

Bertillon had high hopes for his method. He even believed that the photographer was able to penetrate beyond appearances and read the subject's "physiognomic expression". Like a portrait painter, it must reveal of a face: "... the nature of the subdued or passionate sentiments that move it at the same time."

*'Identification, the aim of both anthropological photography and police photography, consists not only of recognizing the face but also of reading the soul. And if the passions are modelling the face, then it should be possible, by studying facial features, to penetrate the innermost layers of a personality to identify the threat of deviant social behaviour and signs of wildness.'*<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Rick Suermondt, *Plaats Delict Amsterdam*, page 156-157





Nan Goldin -  
Nan one month  
after being  
battered,  
1984.



Nan Goldin  
- Rebecca at  
the Russian  
baths, NYC,  
1985.

Weegee sometimes staged the drama. Goldin was part of the drama and often a victim. She was in it when it was happening and Weegee was there after the fact, earning money at the expense of someone's grief and tragedy. Goldin used it more as a personal experience. Weegee is something you would find in a paper, on a desk at a police station and Goldin's photos would be just at home in a personal photo album as they would be in an art gallery. Weegee's work looks factual and leaves little to one's own imagination whereas Goldin's work is intimate, and I look at the photos and I can connect with it and my imagination runs wild. Both Weegee and Goldin used their cameras to distance themselves from the subjects and calamities, however for me Weegee lost the personal aspect in his photography. I cannot connect with his photos, whereas with Goldin even though I have never been in her situation, I can relate to her through her photographs. Weegee's photographs are unrelatable life and death, Goldin you can see yourself in it or see it before your eyes. The willing suspension of disbelief. For entertainment purposes we turn off part of our brains so that we can become enraptured in a story, theatre, music, or dance. We choose to believe what we are seeing as true but we know that we do not have to respond to it.

*"That willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith."* - Samuel Coleridge

So here I would like to talk about three artworks I came across during the process of writing the thesis, that I think are worth mentioning. These are three works by different artist that on the surface do not seem to touch upon the same stuff but are secretly related like taboo lovers. I will explain it throughout. Let us begin with the work of Tracey Emin.

Also known as the tent; textile sculpture appliqued tent, mattress, and light with appliqued names of 102 people Emin has ever slept with, not necessarily in a sexual way. Among the names in the tent were her grandmothers with whom she used to fall asleep while listening to the radio and two numbered fetuses representing the mother she never came to be. There were also boyfriends and lovers and relative strangers. This work no longer exists it was destroyed during a fire.

This work is about taking the outside inside, using the tent to represent a sleeping space but placing the names on the inside of the tent. So, you present yourself to the outside world but inside you have all these things and people that have been present in your life, but the world does not see that because they only see the outside. So, the artist allows you inside her private space and shares her story to the outside.

There is a story to be told, a riddle to be solved.



Tracey Emin - 'Everyone I Have Ever Slept With' 1963-1995



By placing the handsewn appliqued names on the inside of the tent increases a sense of intimacy.

When I look at the work of Emin I am strangely reminded of the work of Demand, but in a very different way like the opposite way, they are like twins that look like they had different fathers.

Thomas Demand makes photographs of 3 dimensional models that look like real rooms and spaces. He uses photography to record life size cardboard constructions of spaces, interiors, environments. The life size models are highly detailed, yet they retain subtle but deliberate flaws and anachronisms. The reconstructions were meant to be close but never perfectly realistic. His work shows the gap between truth and fictional world is always subtle. Subjects in Demands photographs often relate to pre-existing press images, scenes of cultural or political relevance. There is an absence of people in Demand's work which is conspicuous and thematic. Every



Thomas Demand *BÜRO (OFFICE)*, 1995.



Gregor Schneider - *Kinderzimmer (Nursery)*, 2008.

trace of language has vanished, papers on a desk and floor have no text on them, *Office 1995*. Labels next to doorbells bare no names. Demand is interested in, "how you think it should be." A lot is based on the knowledge we know from pictures. Scenes that conceal something, a murder scene without a body. Demand has the object overturn the notion of photography as an inevitable objective or truthful medium. To reinforce the status of the photographic image as an illusion.

When I speak about Demand I must not forget mentioning Schneider. They both make spaces without traces. Demand makes work where at first glance it seems like there is a lot of life but there never was even though you think you might see it with your own eyes. You must take a deeper look and you will see that there are no things to make it personal. Schneider makes spaces where there is no life to be seen but there is this feeling and it is very much



present, you can not see it with your eyes but feel it in your body and mind.

Gregor Schneider's work revolves around the reconstruction of rooms and other architectural spaces. Frieze: the work is a kind of anti-monument, a synthetic non-space, 3 dimensional sculptures, constructed rooms. Spaces in galleries, museums, and other buildings. Schneider's fascination with darkened asphyxiation rooms has become a genre. His work alludes to fear, death, and suffering, exemplifying the tricks that the human mind can play when stretched far beyond the normal. Schneider wants his work to help us to reflect upon and overcome our nightmares. His work consistently features hollow rooms, haunting spaces, and dark mausoleums, which creates a sense of claustrophobia and unease.

In 2008 Schneider became embroiled in controversy after saying he wanted to create a space in a museum in which people could die. This argument was that society's horror of death was so acute, that would prefer dying in the clinical impersonality of a hospital rather than somewhere beautiful. The cruelty in our society that disregards our final act. He wants to lead death out of a social taboo with this public dying room making it a positive experience. Like the birth of a human being.

Emin takes what seems to be an ordinary object, a tent, something that on the surface is very unpersonal then places the names of everyone she has slept with inside the tent thereby making it intimate personal but still leaving the viewer space to ponder about it. The names, who are these people, what happened? Also, people leave a distinct smell behind where they have slept. This smell could be a comfort for you and for the other, do not wash away the smell do not let it slip away, it makes me feel safe and nostalgic.

Thomas Demand shows you what at first glance is a very personal scenario but when you take a deeper look it is void of living personality. No personal human traces were ever there to be left behind.

Gregor Schneider makes a space for you to experience and to evoke a certain feeling. Almost forcing you to get into this state or feeling. The room looks very unpersonal but just personal enough that the viewer had a sense of someone there. Like when you walk into someone's house and it is just a house and not a home.

*"A painting is something that requires as much trickery, malice, and vice as the perpetration of a crime, so create falsely and add a touch from nature." - Degas*

## THE POWER OF THE MIND

'Art can have influence over you', like Mike Kelley said in *The Uncanny*<sup>8</sup> projecting mental scenarios on the objects. I believe that art can also make you see through time. Art can place you in the specific time the art was made. Leaving you wanting more of the space in which the art is depicting. Creating more possibilities and scenarios of that which could be. To me the mental and the physical are connected, they are one. The two spaces share a constant dialogue with one another. The physical is there to either give you a bodily feeling, a feeling of weight, or it can also completely fade you away, you are no longer there, as if you are floating, only your conscious is moving through space, also if you have a place to be you will get there going from point a to point b, something else has taken over but let us stay with art. If you have this specific feeling while looking at art you and the work are no longer separate, the lines between you and the art become blurred and confused.

When it comes to looking at a crime scene, I believe the same mental and physical reaction as which happens with art can also happen at a crime scene. The detective would so acutely look at the crime scene that they too would enter this other mental or physical state while looking at the crime scene.

When I talk about this, it makes me go back to a conversation I had with a dear friend of mine. We called it '*The power of the mind.*' We can always place ourselves in a grim or gruesome situation. And some more than others. We can see ourselves sliding the knife into the skin we can feel the pain, the blood dripping down, we can hear it, smell it. And now it is almost a sense of relief, it is almost real, isn't it? But we are not giving in, we are not doing it. Because we know the consequences, but we can paint the picture so clear. I believe that artist touch upon this specific state of mind. This is our creation. We grab this feeling this state of mind and turn this into a work, the mental feeling and or the bodily feeling. We can express and dump it. Just like the killer, only the killer does not inflect his creation on material or objects but sees a human being as his object, turns this into his canvas and project. This is my design. I believe that when it comes to the detective, they are in the head space of the criminal. Feeling is seeing, because you can only understand when you know because how are you otherwise capable of understanding?



Mike Kelley - Lumpenprole, 1991.

Let's talk about shower curtains and how eerie they are. They are used to keep the water from spilling over on to your bathroom floor and giving you a safe feeling, a feeling of protection, like you are in a womb, warm and secure. Instead they leave you with an eerie feeling, it keeps on sticking to your wet naked body and how the edges are always browning. Then you close your eyes and scary images flash through your mind. You feel extremely vulnerable and remind yourself of famous scenes from movies; the one where a person gets stabbed while standing in the shower or how out of the blue you feel an extra hand shampooing your head. The curtains could open at any moment. Even though you know those scenes are from movies, your imagination is rooted in your mind and you hold the feeling these images produce in your body as truths. You are at your most vulnerable at that moment and there is only this flimsy flower shower curtain that you know is totally useless.







Roadside Shrine

As time passes, the shrine starts to look lurid. The shrine gets neglected under the influence of the elements. The stuffed animals get damp, dirty and smelly, flowers start to rot, and the candles burned out. It exudes an eerie feeling and the more time that passes the stronger that uneasy feeling becomes. As you walk past one of these shrines it reminds you of your own mortality.

The readymade, the statue, because of its construction in permanent material, constantly evokes in the viewer its own mortality. This, indeed, could be said to be the point of Christian statuary: to rub people's noses in their own mortality so that their minds were forever focused on the afterlife. And this is probably why, in the Modern era, figurative sculpture is held in such low esteem, for this primitive fear cannot be erased from it. The aura of death

It is funny how something so familiar becomes so grim. Just like the symbol of the clown. It is an image that has been used over decades. Here the infamous serial killer John Wayne Gacy transformed himself into a clown. Later he painted a self-portrait and Mike Kelley then exhibited the portrait along with his costume. When we look at the theory of the uncanny and the works of Mike Kelley that contain stuffed animals, we can see that there is a direct connection towards serial killers and their dysfunctional childhoods. Serial killers are known for having a childhood that was not pleasant at all to say the least. It had been taken away from them. This represent the stuffed animal, something that gives you security and the safe feeling that was never there. These are represented in the work(s) of Mike Kelley. Giving it a stage owning up to the theory of the uncanny. A stuffed animal is uncanny. It becomes almost a perverted fantasy. And then is this case gaining back what was taken. I find it interesting that when someone has passed away by accident or been killed on a certain spot people start to bring stuffed animals and flowers wrapped in plastic as a sort of offering, a memento to the victim on that very spot, it supposed to give a 'my heart goes out to' or 'my love goes out to' (and so on) it should resemble a loving, peaceful or caring feeling.



Lamp post become make-shift shrine

surrounds statues. The origin of sculpture is said to be in the grave; *the first corpse was the first statue.*<sup>10</sup>

At first hand these places symbolized people's feelings, love, and life a memorial to remember the life of the one who has passed. The time passes and it turns sour and even more tragic. They place the objects to show their love, loss, and thoughts. Some use it to accept the tragedy, part of the grieving process. Others continue to place these offerings at the makeshift shire. They cannot seem to move forward, if they have this place then it is like they still have the dead person with them. They have a place death where they can go and say look these people have died but we these people are still here. But as time goes over it becomes even worse because now it has become a full death scenario. Nothing in this world will last forever, the time we live in. They say that time heals, but does it really when you pass by a scenario like that?

*"I have a mad impulse to smash something, to commit outrages."* -  
Hermann Hesse



Not everything just enough. We want to be confronted with our own mortality. It sets the tone. We want to see, to say thank god that is not me, but it could be but what if? So, we pay for this effect or feeling some more than others some more grotesque than others. So, we pay the artist and give our attention to the criminal like a secret. We are dirty admirers in a sordid affair. Eventually we will have seen everything; the best and the worst of humanity and that day it will be our death or rebirth I have not figured that out yet. Less is more. Not knowing everything, not seeing everything allows the viewer to fanaticize about what could be.

Mike Kelley's *Lumpenprole*, 1991 reminds me of Heaven's gate an American UFO religious cult based near San Diego, California. The cult members were all dressed in identical black t-shirts and sweatpants with black Nike Decades athletic shoes and arm bands patches saying, 'Heaven's gate away team.' Each member had a five-dollar bill and three quarters in their pockets. To kill themselves the members took phenobarbital mixed with apple sauce and washed it down with vodka. After taking the mixture they secured plastic bags around their heads. They went in shifts and when one group completed their mission the surviving members would take the plastic bags off and place a purple cloth over them for privacy.



Heaven's Gate Away Team, March 26, 1997.

*"A painting is something that requires as much trickery, malice, and vice as the perpetration of a crime, so create falsely and add a touch from nature."* - Edgar Degas

**SOME PEOPLE STUDY THE WORLD, OTHER PEOPLE LIVE THE WORLD, AND FEW PEOPLE ARE THE WORLD**

People want to control everything - artist and criminals take control over something or someone but lose control over rules and laws.

Artists and killers are the same, they touch upon the same stuff but then different areas. They think they are above the law for them there are no rules they live in a different world a childlike fantasy. It is all about losing that control. No rules, no law just me, myself, and I.

Artists are in the state between. Knowing exactly what or why you are doing something makes you do nothing. An action that is not automatic. From loving to making art like the Michael Jackson song; Human Nature. This counts for the killer too, it is almost in the same manner but with a different outcome. Just like making love. Violence and sex are very similar acts. We have been romanticizing it over decades. Sex sells and therefore violence too, a so-called shock value, in stories it sells but in art as well. Bad publicity is still publicity. But in art it is the task to not make it a cheap trick. People immediately see-through authenticity.

Artists need an audience, because would they exist without being seen? Serial killers feed upon being seen they can or will only stop when they get caught. Are you a criminal when you are not being caught? They need the audience. Both are not looking for a full understanding because we do not live in one's headspace, we do not ask you to be capable. We just want you to listen not to answer.

In the end everyone sticks to their own morals, their own rules, their own beliefs, and everyone lives in their own reality. Some people study the world, other people live the world, and few people are the world. But the real question is, which one are you?



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