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Annotated Bibliography

Question: How do personal histories and past traumas shape artistic expression and identity in contemporary art?

Elkins, J., 1996. *The Object Stares Back: On the Nature of Seeing*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company.

In *The Object Stares Back*, James Elkins investigates the connection between perception and representation in art and explores how the act of seeing is influenced by cultural, psychological, and philosophical factors, arguing that our understanding of objects is shaped not only by what we see but also by how we engage with them. He delves into the ideas of perception, reality, and interpretation, examining how the act of seeing can lead to deeper emotional engagements with artworks, emphasising the importance of the viewer's experience and how individual interpretations shape our understanding of art. The book raises questions about the limitations of visual representation and the potential for objects to communicate complex ideas and emotions. Elkins' exploration of the relationship between perception and representation in art aligns with my interest in how personal experiences of memory and trauma shape our understanding of visual art. Elkins' exploration of how viewers perceive art, shaped by their personal experiences and contextual influences will guide my approach to better understanding how art is created and interpreted effectively.

Bachelard, G., 1994. *The Poetics of Space*. Translated from French by M. Jolas. Boston: Beacon Press.

The Poetics of Space by Gaston Bachelard is a philosophical work that explores how we experience intimate spaces and how these spaces influence our memories, emotions, and imaginations. The house is central to Bachelard's exploration which he describes as a metaphor for the soul, a repository of memory, and a space where our inner and outer worlds intersect, and how the layout and architecture of a home can resonate with feelings of safety, solitude, and reflection. Bachelard's emphasis on intimate spaces inspires me to think of physical spaces, whether real or imagined, as metaphors for psychological states or emotional memories. The idea of the house as a vessel for memory aligns with my interest in how histories imprint themselves on us.

Bourgeois, L., 2003. *Spider: The Architecture of Art-Writing*. Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz.

In *Spider: The Architecture of Art-Writing*, Louise Bourgeois explores her iconic Spider sculptures, which are metaphors for complex psychological states as a result of deeply personal narratives. The book offers insight into the emotional processes behind Bourgeois' art, delving into her own memories, particularly her tumultuous relationship with her mother and the broader emotional landscape of her childhood. Bourgeois' exploration of personal trauma, memory, and the unconscious resonates with my own artistic practice, where I examine themes of identity, mental health, and the imprint of personal history on the self. Like Bourgeois, deeply personal experiences inform my work, particularly around childhood trauma and its long lasting impact. Bourgeois argues that her art serves as a therapeutic process for dealing with her past traumas and experiences and this approach to auto ethnography will guide me in understanding how personal narrative is translated into meaningful forms of expression.

Saltzman, L. and Rosenberg, E., eds., 2006. *Trauma and Visuality in Modernity*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Trauma and Visuality in Modernity is a collection of essays that explore how trauma, visual culture, and representation connect in modern times. The writers explore how trauma is depicted, understood, and experienced through visual mediums, such as art, and examines how trauma influences the way we represent things visually, and how these visual representations can help us better understand trauma. The essays look into the complexities of representing trauma, highlighting the challenges and ethical considerations involved in depicting suffering and loss. I aim to explore these deeply personal themes and this book is crucial in helping me understand how trauma is visually represented across different mediums.

Djurberg, N. and Berg, H., 2018. *Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg: A Journey Through Mud and Confusion with Small Glimpses of Air*. Stockholm: Moderna Museet.

Nathalie Djurberg is a Swedish artist known for her stop motion animation films that often portray raw, unsettling, and grotesque depictions of human emotions, desires, and traumas. Djurberg's practice combines a childlike, handmade aesthetic with deeply disturbing content, creating an uneasy tension that challenges the viewer's expectations. Djurberg's practice has been criticised for its uncompromising depictions of uncomfortable subjects that provoke deep emotional engagement and some might argue that depicting graphic trauma risks exploiting pain and suffering, turning deeply personal and painful experiences into consumable art. This raises questions about who is allowed to tell these stories and whether the work risks exploiting trauma for shock value or artistic acclaim. There is a risk of sensationalism, voyeurism, or reducing complex human experiences to spectacle, which may obscure deeper messages about healing and resilience. Graphic depictions of

trauma can also potentially retraumatise individuals who have lived through similar experiences, raising questions about the responsibility of the artist in triggering these responses.

Freud, S., 2003. *The Uncanny*. Translated by D. McLintock. London: Penguin Books.

In *The Uncanny*, Sigmund Freud explores the concept of the uncanny, which refers to experiences that provoke feelings of unease or discomfort due to their familiar yet alien nature. He investigates how the uncanny emerges from repressed memories and experiences, particularly those associated with childhood, fear, and the return of the repressed and discusses how certain motifs can evoke feelings of the uncanny, revealing the complex relationship between the conscious and unconscious mind. Freud's exploration extends to how the uncanny can manifest in the arts, suggesting that artists often tap into the uncanny to provoke emotional responses and challenge viewers' perceptions of reality. Freud identifies the uncanny as a product of repressed emotions and memories and the ways these experiences inform our present selves, providing me with a powerful framework for expressing the complexities of memory and trauma.