

Lydia Cook

Courtship.A Photographic Investigation of Romantic Engagement

Master's Thesis

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*COURTSHIP:
A PHOTOGRAPHIC INVESTIGATION OF
ROMANTIC ENGAGEMENT.*

LYDIA RUTH COOK

*'A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF
DESIGN.'*

*UNITEC INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
2011.*

Abstract:

The research title of my project is: *Courtship: A photographic investigation of romantic engagement.*

The research question is concerned with the evolution of romantic courtship with reference to the influence of fairytale conventions. The project aims to produce a photographic series and exegesis, which explore the constructs embodied in traditional fairytales in the context of social and aesthetic behaviours in courtship.

The project started with an investigation of both academic references and contemporary artists. My Initial experimentation created works that communicated ideas surrounding themes such as fairytales, romance and gender confusion.

I became interested in finding connections between academic and creative concepts such as the aesthetics of gender identity and the psychology of courtship and fairytales. By engaging in a creative process and exploring references that influenced the works, I was able to question and explore these themes through performing roles of both genders within the creation of characters. This exegesis essentially tracks my creative process, research and the questions and challenges I have faced along the way.

Masters In Design by Project Proposal

Title of the research project:

Courtship: A photographic investigation of romantic engagement.

Research Question:

How is contemporary romantic courtship evolving with reference to the influence of fairy tale convention?

Aim of the project:

The project will result in a photographic series with an exegesis, which aims to investigate social constructs embodied in the tradition of fairytales in the context of contemporary social and aesthetic behaviours found in courtship.

Objectives:

- 1) Investigate social behaviour in contemporary romantic courtship.
- 2) Ascertain the potential influence of fairytale mythology in contemporary courtship.
- 3) Produce a series of photographs exploring social constructs embodied in the mythology of fairytales in the context of contemporary courtship.

Methodology:

- 1) Conduct a literature search on social behaviour in everyday romantic courtship.
- 2) Conduct a literature search of courtship ritual in fairytale mythology.
- 3) Utilise this research in the development of the photographic series.
- 4) Incorporate findings from photographic practice in conjunction with the exegesis.

Methods:

- 1) Literature search and annotated bibliography.
- 2) Survey of relevant contemporary art in this area.
- 3) Informed use of location, props, clothing and photographic construction.