

The Texture of Memory: cloth, memory and materiality

'I believe there is box-thought, the thought we call rigorous, like rigid, inflexible boxes, and sack-thought, like systems of fabric. Our philosophy lacks a good organum of fabrics'.

Michel Serres (1983) *Rome, The Book of Foundations*.

'It is possible to see without being seen, but "to touch is always to be touched"'.

Paul Rodaway (1993) *Sensuous Geographies, Body, Sense and Place*.

'Memory: the space in which a thing happens for a second time.'

Paul Auster (1982/ 1988,) *The Invention of Solitude*.

Michel Serres argues for soft logics, modes of thought that are open and inclusive, like a fine soft weave. Gilles Deleuze writes of 'the fold that goes out to infinity'. These seminars take cloth and metaphors of cloth as starting points to explore the relationship between cloth, memory and materiality. We consider the tactile qualities of surface and texture, and their appeal to the senses - specifically that of touch. Because our bodies are always in contact with cloth, it can stir conscious and unconscious memory.

Touch suggests proximity, making it perhaps the most intimate of the senses: to be touched suggests a capacity to be moved or affected by an encounter. Strangely perhaps, the emergence of new media, particularly digital work, has brought about a renewed interest in both the haptic – the visual tactile – and also questions of materiality: the raw stuff or substance from which things are made. What implications does this have for the encounter between the viewer as an *embodied* subject and the artwork?

We will look at work by contemporary artists who explore the emotive qualities of cloth (and hair), such as Chohreh Feyzjdjou, Eva Hesse and Mona Hatoum, amongst others. Some use cloth itself, thread, rope, or hair; others make reference to cloth and touch through other visual media, such as installation, photography, and the digital. In different ways they appear to explore materiality, fragility and loss, often focusing on the ordinary and familiar.

Reading material will include texts that engage with psychoanalysis, philosophy and visual culture.

Week 1 Introduction: cloth, memory, materiality.

Week 2. Repair: Remembering, Repeating and Working Through

Week 3 Nature Morte: the work of art and 'the work of mourning'. W

Week 4 Embodied Subjectivity: Memory – Making - Materiality and Week Abjection:

Week 5 Encountering Art; encountering the Ephemeral

Week 6 Cloth/es for living / Clothes for dying + essay briefing.

Week 7 Essay tutorials