

A841 – Project

Rachel Whiteread's Nine Tables: Formalist Object, Feminist Critique or Something In-Between?

**Rachel Whiteread's Nine Tables:
Formal Space, Feminist Space and the
Space In-between?**

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Introduction

In this essay I will consider a sculpture, *Untitled, (Nine Tables)*, (1998, Fig.1 and Fig.2¹), by the British artist, Rachel Whiteread. This work is a concrete cast of nine second-hand tables, or more accurately, a cast of the space underneath the tables, what has been called the negative space². As such her casts are imprinted with the residue from the people that inhabited these spaces and her work has been interpreted as alluding to loss and memory; ‘as metaphors for the human body or as spaces emptied of their occupants who, in their absence, nonetheless leave a trace or an imprint of their missing presence’³. Casts raise questions about the ‘displacement of past into present, the tracing of absence’⁴ and sculpture also questions the relationship between the viewer and the object. The relationship with the viewer is also disrupted as it is not possible to engage with the object, (a table), in the way in which we normally would: a space we can normally inhabit becomes a space denied to us. By solidifying the space it enforces a distancing which disturbs the viewer-object relationship: it displays that which is not normally visible, disrupting our familiarity with the object.

The choice of artwork is pertinent as it is not easily compartmentalised: Whiteread’s work seems to embrace some purely formalist elements, whilst also suggesting the work of the Minimalist artists, and yet also be possibly making a social statement or criticism. Whiteread’s work is not without precedence, Carl Andre is often mentioned in connection with her work, and Bruce Nauman’s *A Cast of the Space Under My Chair*, (1965-8) is often cited, something Whiteread acknowledges: ‘Ultimately, I think that my work is more physiological, and Nauman’s more psychological,

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conceptual.⁵ However, I believe Whiteread uses Nauman's work as a departure point, a stepping stone, opening up different interpretations to the work than that offered by Nauman.

I will consider three opposing interpretations to this work; a formalist approach using the Modernist ideas of Clement Greenberg, and in particular Michael Fried, a feminist interpretation where I will consider the concept of the vertical and the horizontal planes and the 'space' occupied by feminist critique. Lastly I will draw on Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind Krauss' concept of the entropy and the formless, the space in-between, in turn an adaptation of Bataille's ghosts and Derrida's concept of the trace. Krauss in particular, because of her initial embracing of Modernism and her association with Michael Fried offers an interesting alternative to those feminist art historians who have rejected Modernism and Formalism such as Pollock and Kelly.

In discussing these three art historical positions I will explore the concepts of the inner and outer space and between the vertical and the horizontal planes, the former synonymous with the autonomous formal aspect of the work and latter relating to the social realist aspect of the work. I hope to show that Whiteread's artistic choices constantly shift the boundary between these two extremes, between an object of conviction and a simple object⁶.

Minimalism and Form

Whiteread's work is often associated with the Minimalists such as Judd and Andre, principally, I believe, because *Nine Tables* multiplicity suggests factory manufacture, an object or assemblage of objects that are essentially inert, or as Greenberg writes, 'offer the

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eye a minimum of “interesting” incident.⁷ On first encountering *Nine Tables*, the objects themselves are not immediately recognisable and as such remain just that, objects. Identification is further hampered by the inability to walk within the installation⁸ and the title of the work, *Untitled*, suggests the artist wishes us to engage with the work beyond any immediately recognisable feature, (although the bracketed addendum, *Nine Tables* prevents us from treating the work as purely abstract⁹). The effect of this imposed boundary is to frame the work, and as I shall discuss later to enforce of the viewer a certain way of engaging with the work that is less ‘theatrical’. Even when we have ‘worked out’ what the cast is of, further engagement with the work as a functional object is also denied, no longer can we put our feet under the table, forcing the viewer to think about a space that was previously ignored. Whiteread’s work crosses the boundaries of architecture and sculpture and in so doing creates ambiguities between the inner space of formalism and the outer space of social reality. It is in this ‘space in-between’ that Greenberg chooses to draw the boundary between art and non-art.

Given that the initial look of non-art was no longer available in painting since even an unpainted canvas now stated itself as a picture, the borderline between art and non-art had to be sought in the three-dimensional, where sculpture was, and where everything material that was not art also was.¹⁰

This boundary between good and bad art, the aesthetic consideration which forms the pillar upon which Modernism stands was later explicitly redefined as a defensive reaction to the increased medium diversity of art, (and alternative art theories), of the late sixties

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thereby excluding the majority of new art of this time as well as most contemporary art of today, including *Nine Tables*. Greenberg and Fried saw the Minimalists as sneaking objects in through the backdoor under the guise of the avant-garde. Certainly they pushed the boundaries of art as the avant-garde must, but as with what Greenberg called Novelty art¹¹, they did so at the expense of an aesthetic experience: it produced a 'one-time surprise'¹², contrasting with the aesthetic surprise that lasts forever. As Bannard writes, 'It is part of the nature of these [Minimalist] works to act as *triggers* for thought and emotion pre-existing in the viewer'¹³.

Whiteread initially chose objects to cast with which she has some personal association (e.g. *Shallow Breath*, 1988 or *Closet*, 1988), but in her later works such as *Nine Tables* she uses more utilitarian objects redolent of factory manufacture such as the school or office tables thus removing the personal history: 'When you use second-hand furniture it's inevitable that the history of objects becomes a part of the work'¹⁴. The multiplicity of the objects (e.g. **nine** tables) also used later by Whiteread in works such as *Untitled (Floor)*, 1992, or *Untitled (One Hundred Spaces)*, 1995, also suggest factory manufacture and impersonality but unlike the Minimalists, each cast is different. Factory manufacture is a hallmark of the Minimalist genre; often the work is not made by the artist but by a company specialising in a particular manufacturing method. In this respect Whiteread's *Nine Tables*, being a cast, fulfils the Minimalist requirements: however Whiteread does have influence over the finish of the work through her choice of casting method, through her defining the limits of the space that is cast and through the chosen material. *Nine Tables* is cast in concrete which captures the particles

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of the objects previous history: later Whiteread started to use materials such as resin and rubber (e.g. *Untitled Twenty Five Spaces*, 1994 and *Untitled Rubber Plinth*, 1996), which produced a high gloss surface finish that does not take up the debris of its cast, suggesting that form is of increasing importance to the artist. The choice of casting material shifts the boundary between the formal, inner space, and social, outer, space. The glossy resin surfaces distance the viewer from personal association whereas the concrete of *Nine Tables*, and the pot marked surface of the previous inhabitants of the space, place this work in a more social realist context. Whiteread's later work, the casting of staircases, *Untitled (Stairs)*, 2001, further removes the personal aspect of the work for viewer, being a space for which people have little personal memory of, and emphasises the formal aspect of the work.

The relationship between artwork and its beholder became the key theme in Michael Fried's defensive polemic, *Art and Objecthood* (1965)¹⁵. If I would anticipate Fried's reaction to *Nine Tables*, I think he would say that the work is insufficiently abstract. If we consider a sculptor that Fried wrote about extensively, Anthony Caro, his abstract sculptures are suggestive of objects without directly representing them. For example, Caro's sculpture *Deep Body Blue*, 1966, Fried talks of as being an 'abstract door'¹⁶, which although suggestive to the viewer as a door is itself an anti-literal object: it is not a door. Whiteread's *Nine Tables* are too literal as objects to be regarded as Modernist sculpture. To quote Yve-Alain Bois, 'for in the absence of the image one is, or *should be*, forced to abandon the idealistic concept of meaning... the enemies of formalism usually keep away from abstract art for that very reason.'¹⁷ It seems to me

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this boundary is also the boundary between sculpture (or some sculpture anyway), and architecture. It is not possible for an architectural door to be an anti-literal door, an imagined door, because it has to function as a door¹⁸. For a work of sculpture to be a Modernist work it must be anti-literal. It is Fried's dogmatism that was to become the downfall of Modernism, he created a solid inflexible boundary between Modernist 'good art' and 'bad' art: once punctured the whole canon came down. This boundary excludes any tarnishing of its aesthetic ideal by, what Kuspit calls, the 'world historical' approach¹⁹. Works of art such as *Nine Tables*, because they do not fully comply with the rules of entry, are prohibited from becoming part of the Modernist clique and are prohibited from such a formal analysis. this, despite indications that the artist was deliberately emphasising some formalist aspects of her work through choice of material or increased abstractness. As Klaus Riegel wrote, 'as the precision [of formalist description] increases, so does the rigidity of the structure it provides.'²⁰ Fried's strict exclusion of the world historical, of the social factors that may or may not influence the work's production, and his isolation of the artist to his studio, elevates the status of the artist, or as Kuspit puts it, 'Fried expects the successful realisation of integrity within the studio to count for something in the life-world, as if dignity of art was inherently a moral dignity.'²¹ High Modernism took the moral high ground, and its elitist approach tended to exclude formalism being a part of the increasingly prevalent social and feminist theories that Fried fought so hard against. Once Fried's boundary was bridged both Modernism and formalism were to die together. However, in my opinion, to ignore formalism is to disallow a complete analysis of the art object

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and it is only through the form of the object that we can arrive at an aesthetic judgement. A less militant formalism, a less exclusive formalism, could yet reveal more about a work of art than the world-historical viewpoint can do by itself²².

...one's most formal descriptions are always predicated upon a judgement and that the stake of this judgement is always, knowingly or not, meaning. And it is my contention that the reverse is also true: it is impossible to lay claim to meaning without specifically (and I would say initially) speaking of form.²³

A Feminist Perspective

The surface imperfections of *Nine Tables*, invites a narrative interpretation²⁴, placing the work in the outside world. However the solidity of the casting material resists it going 'further down the road of literalness itself and into a realm of excessive, bodily materiality'²⁵. Modernism requires us to be a disinterested spectator: by its surface imperfections *Nine Tables* locates the spectator within the work and requires the spectator to participate in the artwork. However Whiteread limits the engagement. If, as with the work of the artist Eva Hesse (e.g. *Metronomic Irregularity II*, 1966), who is often cited in relation to Whiteread's work, there was a more organic form to the object, and our reading would be more intimate.

The whole question of 'Soft Sculpture' would invite a language of anthropomorphism, of bodily projection and empathy. Bulbous forms, organic forms, seemed deliberately to inscribe an erotic of the body. Even when most insistent on the qualities of form, she cannot avoid the literalism demanded by Bourgeois²⁶.

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However Fried, in order to exclude Minimalist sculpture from the Modernist canon, also inferred an anthropomorphic reading of an artwork, not only through its organic properties, but also through its presence, its 'bodily form'²⁷. If we are to read *Nine Tables* as 'body' the hard impenetrable surface prevents us from gendering the body in the same way we can with Hesse or Bourgeois. Their use of materials; rubber, latex, plastic, plaster, wax, resin or hemp, evoked bodily organs and bodily functions²⁸. The abstraction of *Nine Tables* and the unfamiliarity of the subject prevent it suggesting a blatant Freudian association. To quote Lucy Lippard from the 1970s, 'Ideally a bag remains a bag and does not become a uterus, a tube is a tube and not a phallic symbol'²⁹. Whilst *Nine Tables* resists us gendering the artwork it also resists us placing it in either personal or public space. The artwork is a capture of the residue of a public space and it is displayed in a public space (an art museum) but the memories that it invokes are private and unique memories. Unless there is an explicit sexual reference, and even then it is used as a point of departure for a psychoanalytic analysis, feminist art theory does not resort to form to study an artwork. In the same way that Modernism does not allow a trace of the external to influence it, Feminism does not allow a trace of the internal to taint its judgement. Yet neither, by itself, can offer us a complete view of the artwork. Mignon Nixon has revisited the Lacanian feminist analysis, prevalent in the 1970s and 1980s, in her article *Bad Enough Mother*, where she suggests that Whiteread's work should be read in relation to Melanie Klein's shift 'from neurosis to psychosis, from sexuality to the death drive'³⁰.

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Instead, perhaps we should look to Rosalind Krauss' concept of verticality and horizontality³¹. The opposition of the vertical to horizontal can be equated to the opposition of formalism to feminism. The verticality of the plane surface of Modernist painting can be equated to the verticality of man (sic) standing. Fried's instantaneousness favours the visual senses over all other senses. You could consider instantaneousness as the immediate reaction we have on meeting an individual, that inherent sense of liking or disliking, or trusting or distrusting that humans feel. Krauss equates the horizontal plane with the carnal, the space that our bodies occupy and it is therefore played out over time. The horizontal is the earth, the social, the environment, the scene of enactment. The horizontal is the female; the vertical plane is the male. The traditional allusion of the female with earth, with nature, roots feminism to the external, to the social. Sculpture would appear to have both vertical and horizontal elements, but Krauss points out that sculpture, at least until the time of Rodin, 'ceaselessly mapped the carnal order onto the plane of the visible'³². Whiteread's *Nine Tables*, however, has elements of horizontal and vertical planes. Each individual piece, each space, has verticality which preferences the formal aspect of the work. But the duplication of the works preferences the horizontal and is played out over time: both elements exist at one and the same time.

The rise to prominence of identity as a subject of art coincided with the decline of Modernism. Modernism's decline was partially brought about by various forms of political activism, civil rights, gay liberation, women's rights movement etc., who all took identity as their core issue. In perhaps, the founding article for the modern

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feminist art critique, *Why have there been no great women artists?* (1971), Linda Nochlin was to challenge the idea of the artist as a genius, arguing that rather than art being the ‘free, autonomous activity of a super-endowed individual’ it did ‘occur in a social situation, are integral elements of this social structure, and are mediated and determined by specific and definable social institutions’³³. Griselda Pollock, augmenting this hypothesis, and drawing on the psychoanalytical theories of Freud, writes,

Freud also had suggested that the “public’s real interest in art lies not in art itself, but in the image it has of the artist as a ‘great man’,” even though this fact is often repressed. To unravel the riddle of a text is consequently to do violence to the idealized image of the artist as genius – to commit some kind of “murder” – hence the resistance, not merely to psychoanalytic work on art in general, but to any kind of demystifying analysis such as that carried out by social, critical, and feminist historians of art.³⁴

By destroying the concept of the autonomous artist, whether male or female, and opening the door of the studio to allow the ‘real’ world in, by externalising the artwork, we shift the focus of our attention away from the internal form of the work to the factors that affected its creation. Whiteread refers to herself as a realist artist and disclaims any intention for her to be a formalist artist,

I don't think it does really, I think that proportion maybe is more of something that, proportionalism. No I think that proportion with making the works and that comes very much from drawing and, you know and a sort of physical thing, for me it's to do with being able to move things around and in and out of buildings and whatever, but I enjoy playing with that and I think the formality, you know the works often are

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very sort of formal looking, but I think that was never an intention. You know it's not that I'm trying to make the straightest line or the most beautiful curve, it really comes from the thing that I'm physically casting and have chosen to cast, so maybe the formalism comes from the actual spaces and the interpretation for me but not finally the sculpture, if that makes sense.³⁵

Conceptual art and non-medium specific art appears to allow the artist to remove the female form from the work. For the feminist art historian psychoanalysis offers, not the opportunity to replace this essentially patriarchal system with a matriarchal one, but to 'side with Freud into a move into an adult rather than infantile relation to art'.³⁶ However it would not appear, in a patriarchal society, to allow the woman to ever remove the association of her work with the female form. This Lacanian idea allows us to read a work as gendered, whether the female form is present or not. Judith Butler argues³⁷ that it is the mere act of 'doing', of casting the object, that expresses the gender and it is not any anthropomorphic association in the artwork itself. The implications for this are that gender is performative, and that gender can never be removed from the art object. The absence of an actual feminine form from *Nine Tables* has not rendered the work androgynous because the act of creating the work was gendered. Toril Moi also argues that removing the gender from art is a futile undertaking:

that Western feminism is an impossible undertaking, a political struggle in the name of women, aiming either to render such a nomination a matter of indifference or to valorise difference within a

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system of binary oppositions which systematically privilege one term, man, over its negative other, woman³⁸.

It is left to Julia Kristeva to suggest how women's identity can be freed. She suggests that feminism should occupy a third space, neither patriarchal nor matriarchal, which deconstructs all binary oppositions and all constructs of identity³⁹. I shall discuss deconstruction from a formalist perspective in the next section.

Entropy and the Space In-between

The formal reaction responds to technical, painterly values, the novelties they offer, the pleasures they afford....The other reaction, widely represented by the critics of the day, in horror or derision, emphasizes subject matter⁴⁰.

In 1935 Martin Heidegger wrote *The Origin of the Work of Art* in which he posited the concept that a relationship could be both critical and respectful, both detached and attached, at the same time. It was not until 1978 that Jacques Derrida was to take this philosophical idea in his complex polylogue, *Restitutions of the Truth in Pointing* in which he formulated the concept of deconstruction. Derrida formulates the idea of trace, the element of an object that is neither presence nor absence. Whiteread talks of presence and absence in relation to her work⁴¹,

Yes the presence and the absence, you know whether it's casting the space underneath a table and really enjoying the fact that there are pieces of chewing gum and all sorts of other things that actually become part of the sculpture, but I think that absence is, you know, in more the sort of physical

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way in which people are absent that's one way to read the work, but I think it's something that I very much played with especially in, in you know a lot of the chair pieces and you know making a hundred chairs together and it's almost like an audience, an absent audience.

Bois and Krauss, drawing on the concept of Bataille's *informe*, use this concept to dissolve the binary oppositions of form and content in an artwork. In particular Krauss identifies casts with 'entropy', a state of rest in which the internal and external conflicts are at rest. Entropy is irreversible: once the binary oppositions are disturbed it is not possible to revert back to them. Krauss cites Smithson's example⁴² of a sandbox filled on one side with white sand on the other with black sand. A boy runs around the sandbox kicking up the sand and mixing it as he goes. When asked to reverse his direction it is not possible for the sand to be un-mixed: it remains in the state of chaos. Krauss equates this concept with the dissolving of the figure-ground relationship in art and the 'collapse of the barrier separating art from life'⁴³. This collapse of barriers, the dissolving of the artwork into entropy, Krauss suggests,

Resonate[s] with the ambition of "high modernism" to conceive a spatial condition unique to the perceptual modality specific to the arts of vision, one that would cancel all separations of figures from their surrounding spaces or backgrounds to produce a continuum unimaginable for our earthly bodies to traverse, but into which we viewers might easily slide – or glide – in an effortless, soaring, purely optical movement.⁴⁴

Entropy, Krauss suggests, makes the viewer disappear, to become part of the chaos that is the artwork. *Nine Tables* implicates the viewer in the work, and the circularity of its argument engulfs the viewer in an intimate bounded relationship from which the viewer

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cannot escape. Personal memory becomes implicated in the frozen memory of the table that in turn contains the residue of the artwork at that moment in time.

Applying the concept of the formless to *Nine Tables*, it is both an object (or in this case a space) as well as a point in time (when the cast was made). As Cvorovic notes⁴⁵ in relation to Whiteread's *House*, a cast plays between the binary oppositions of presence and absence. It is both present, a supplementary to the original, yet also absent in that it is the cast of an empty space. Space has become mass, 'separated from life by its surface texture'⁴⁶. The original however, through the residue left on the surface maintains its attachment with the space. This circuitous relationship dissolves the polarised relationships between external and internal, between form and content. The materiality of the cast, 'simultaneously suggests the processes of solidity of materials, historicity and memory, a phenomenological experience of the world, and at the same time a negation of all these'⁴⁷.

Conclusion

Right now, art history operates with maximum theoretical integrity when it verges towards the extremes of empiricism and aestheticism: the truth of the fact, the truth of the work of art. Clearly, truth is a little more elusive once you venture into the wide district between these extremes, which is where most people want to be.⁴⁸

Aestheticism and empiricism, verticality and horizontality, form and content, Modernism and Marxism, inner world and outer world,

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Formalism and Feminism, studio and world-historical, abstraction and realism, instantaneousness and narrative: these polarised positions both resist any form of integration, yet Rachel Whiteread's *Nine Tables* appears to have elements of both. Whilst the artwork can be exclusively adopted by either position, by doing so it would ignore the value and opinion of the other and therefore give an incomplete reading. If the artwork can possess attributes of both the oppositional theoretical positions we are clearly in need of a theory that also does that. In Louise Bourgeois's book, *The Puritan*⁴⁹, she tells the story of a perfect man who lives in a perfect building who one day leaves the door open to have a woman come inside. The man secretly falls in love and paralysed he withdraws. That perfect man, it is claimed, is Alfred Barr, that perfect building is Modernism, and that woman is Bourgeois. Once bridged, Fried's wall of exclusion, the boundary by which Modernism was defined, brought down the whole building. But although the theory may have been punctured, artworks continue to be produced that have formalist aspects. As Storr concludes⁵⁰, Whiteread has renewed, rather than broken, the mould of modernism. The twin pillars of Feminism and Modernism that I have briefly discussed in this essay do not permit, because of their theoretical positions, contamination from the opposition. But it would appear that the artwork we have discussed, Rachel Whiteread's *Nine Tables*, does contain both elements. In this essay we have discussed both the polarised positions but also attempts to work in the space in-between. We briefly mentioned Julia Kristeva's 'third way' and I also discussed Bois and Krauss' idea of the 'formless', a deconstruction of the art object and also the art historical positions that dissolves the oppositional stances. Whilst

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this theory avoids the binarisation of the artwork, it produces an ambiguity in the artwork's appreciation and it does not, for me, answer the fundamental question of what is 'good' art: the aesthetic concern that Kant, Reigl, Wolfflin and Greenberg grappled with. Deconstruction avoids the conflict in assuming that the two oppositional stances exist at one and the same time, entwined in the chaos of entropy: that the artwork contains both the external and internal. However an alternative proposal to dissolve the opposition is to remove one pillar of the opposition. If the artwork can only take one position at any one instance in time, we no longer insist that it be both at the same time, we can also remove the requirement of an all-embracing grand theory. Given the predominant visual field of art it might apt to take an allegory from the quantum theory of light: light can be either a particle or a wave, but it cannot be both at the same time: *Nine Tables* exists in both formalist and feminist space, but it does not do so simultaneously.

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Illustrations

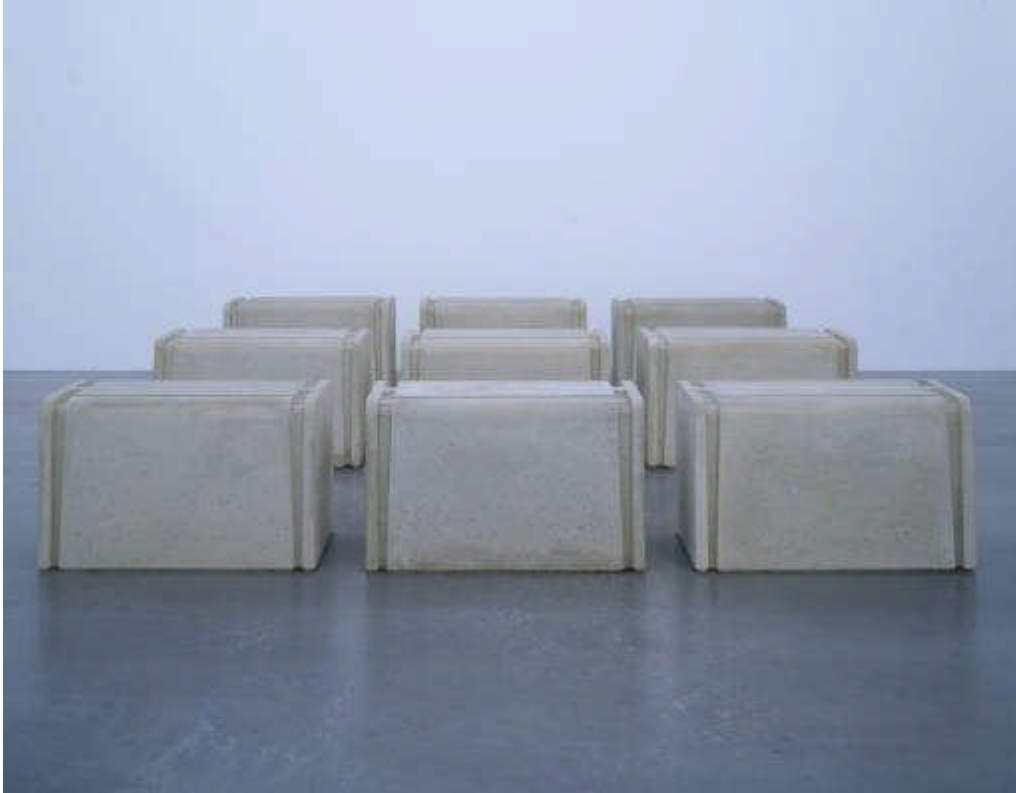


Figure 1 Rachel Whiteread, *Untitled (Nine Tables)*, 1998, Concrete and polystyrene, 681 x 3750 x 5190 mm Tate Modern Gallery
<http://www.tate.org.uk/servlet/ViewWork?cgroupid=999999961&workid=70990&se-archid=9286&roomid=false&tabview=image&imageid=355088>

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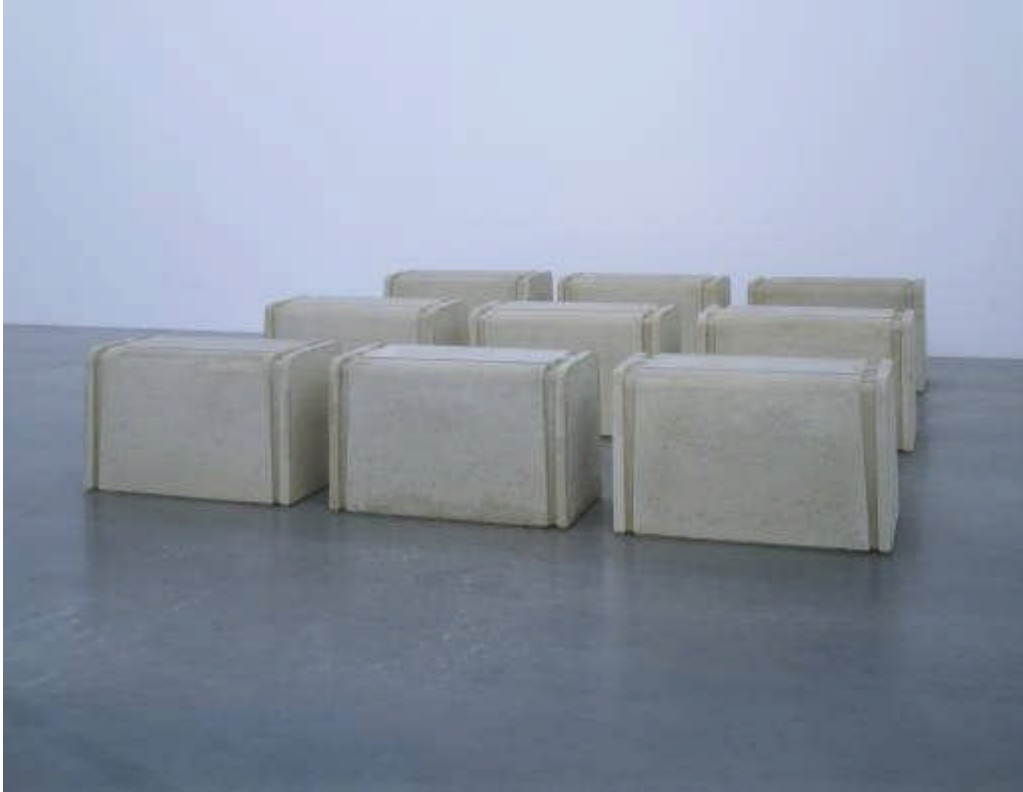


Figure 2 Rachel Whiteread, *Untitled (Nine Tables)*, 1998, Concrete and polystyrene, 681 x 3750 x 5190 mm Tate Modern Gallery
<http://www.tate.org.uk/servlet/ViewWork?cgroupid=999999961&workid=70990&se-archid=9286&roomid=false&tabview=image&imageid=355092>

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Notes

¹ Rachel Whiteread, *Untitled (Nine Tables)*, 1998, Concrete and polystyrene, 681 x 3750 x 5190 mm Tate Modern Gallery

² Various authors refer to this term, such as Sarah Rosenbaum viewing her installation, *Untitled (One Hundred Spaces)*, <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/museo/3/rachelwhiteread.htm> and Charlotte Mullins in her book, *Rachel Whiteread*, e.g. p.7.

³ Sue Malvern, *Antibodies: Rachel Whiteread's Water Tower*, Art History, Vol.26, No.3 June 2003, p.392.

⁴ Uros Cvoro, *The Present Body, The Absent Body, and the Formless*, Art Journal, Vol.61, No.4 (Winter 2002), p.55.

⁵ Rachel Whiteread, quoted from Charlotte Mullins, *Rachel Whiteread*, (Tate Publishing, 2004), p.73.

⁶ Michael Fried uses these terms in his introduction to *Art and Objecthood*, (The University of Chicago Press), 1998, p.25 and also in his essay, *Shape as Form: Frank Stella's Irregular Polygons*, also in *Art and Objecthood*, pp.77-99.

⁷ Greenberg, *Recentness of Sculpture*, from O'Brian, John, *Clement Greenberg, The Collected Essays and Criticism, Volume 4, Modernism with a Vengeance, 1957-1969*, (The University of Chicago Press), 1995, p.253.

⁸ This limitation is often imposed on Whiteread's works by galleries to prevent damage but it is not the artist's intention. At the Tate Modern, *Nine Tables* is guarded by a low roped fence and backed against a wall as it is, prevents a full engagement with the work.

⁹ Whiteread stopped using titles for her work in the early 1990s (see Charlotte Mullins, *Rachel Whiteread*, p.19), but she continued to indicate what the work was cast from (e.g. *Nine Tables*) without suggesting what it had become. Later he titles changes from the object that the cast was from to what it represented, e.g. *Untitled, (One Hundred Spaces)*. Here is Whiteread's explanation for her choice of titles, 'I think that it's not that I'm, I'm not responsible for how people respond to works, but you can't dictate how people respond to works, and it's actually something that I, you know a long time ago when I was first making sculpture I think maybe for about three years maximum I titled works and I was very careful about titling them. I spent hours pontificating about what the, you know what the words should be, and then I decided that actually it was because it's the sort of thing that you can sort of take in one breath to then give it a name, it made the reading of it very specific, which is why I stopped titling things and now everything which makes life very complicated is untitled and then would be maybe Grey Bed in brackets or something, you know so it's very, it's much more specific rather than having a kind of poetry to the reading of it'. (from an interview between Whiteread and John Tusa from BBC Radio 3,

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http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/johntusainterview/whiteread_transcript.shtml

¹⁰ Greenberg, *Recentness of Sculpture*, from *Clement Greenberg, The Collected Essays and Criticism*, Vol.4, p.252.

¹¹ Greenberg's catchall for Pop Art, Assemblage, Kinetic, Environment and other 'avant-garde' art practices of the late 1960s.

¹² Greenberg, *Recentness of Sculpture*, from *Clement Greenberg, The Collected Essays and Criticism*, Vol.4, p.254.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.254 (author's footnote).

¹⁴ Charlotte Mullins, *Rachel Whiteread*, p.34.

¹⁵ Fried's *Art and Objecthood* essay is often read in terms of it being a defensive response to Minimalism. But in the introduction to his book of the same name he writes, 'It is often assumed by writers who weren't actually there that with the advent of Minimalism in the mid-1960s the high modernist group was put of the defensive... But the mood in 1967-68, artistically speaking, was distinctly upbeat.

¹⁶ Michael Fried, *Art and Objecthood*, p.30.

¹⁷ Bois, *Whose Formalism*, from Bal, Mieke; Bois, Yve-Alain; Lavin, Ervin; Pollock, Griselda and Wood, Christopher S., *Art History and its Theories*, *The Art Bulletin*, Vol.78, No.1 (March 1996), p.9.

¹⁸ Whiteread has cast a 'false door' in her work, *False Door*, 1992.

¹⁹ Donald Kuspit, *Authoritarian Aesthetics and the Elusive Alternative*, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol.41, No.3. (Spring 1983).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p285.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.276.

²² The rigid formalism of Greenberg and Fried arose from the less prescriptive formalism of Clive Bell and Roger Fry. The latter particularly often allowed his formal analysis, his 'significant form' to be influenced by social and historical factors.

²³ Bois, *Whose Formalism*, from Bal, Bois, Lavin, Pollock, Wood, *Art History and its Theories*, p.10.

²⁴ Lisa Dennison writes, 'the nuances of surface in the casting of Whiteread's early works meant they leant themselves to the type of narrative interpretation that artists of previous generations had worked so carefully to avert', quoted from *The Art of Rachel Whiteread*, p.10.

²⁵ Briony Fer, *Objects Beyond Objecthood*, *Oxford Art Journal*, Vol.22, No.2, Louise Bourgeois, (1999), p.27.

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²⁶ Ibid., p.29.

²⁷ Ibid., p.31.

²⁸ Rosalind Krauss, *Bachelors*, (The MIT Press, 2000), p.55.

²⁹ Lucy Lippard, quoted in Briony Fer, *Objects beyond Objecthood* p. 28. Lippard later wrote, in an about turn, 'the time has come to call a semisphere a breast if we know damn well that's what it suggests'.

³⁰ Malvern, *Antibodies: Rachel Whiteread's Water Tower*, *Art History*, Vol.26, No.3 June 2003, p.394.

³¹ Bois and Krauss, *Formless*, p26.

³² Ibid., p27.

³³ Linda Nochlin, *Why have there been no Great Women Artists?*, from Edwards, Steve, ed., *Art and its Histories: A Reader*, (Yale University Press, 1999), pp.152-161.

³⁴ Pollock, *Theory, Ideology, Politics: Art History and its Myths*, from Bal, Bois, Lavin, Pollock, Wood, *Art History and its Theories*, p.16.

³⁵ This is part of an interview between Whiteread and John Tusa from BBC Radio 3, http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/johntusainterview/whiteread_transcript.shtml

³⁶ Pollock, *Theory, Ideology, Politics: Art History and its Myths*, from Bal, Bois, Lavin, Pollock, Wood, *Art History and its Theories*, p.17.

³⁷ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, (Routledge, 1999).

³⁸ *Painting, Feminism, History* by Griselda Pollock, quoted in *Art of the Twentieth Century, A Reader*, edited by Jason Gaiger and Paul Wood, p.231.

³⁹ *Women's Time*, Julia Kristeva, 1979.

⁴⁰ Bois and Krauss, *Formless*, p13. writing of a Manet retrospective exhibition in 1983.

⁴¹ This is part of an interview between Whiteread and John Tusa from BBC Radio 3, http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/johntusainterview/whiteread_transcript.shtml

⁴² Bois and Krauss, *Formless*, p.73.

⁴³ Ibid., p.75.

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⁴⁴ Ibid., p.75.

⁴⁵ Cvorc, *The Present Body, the Absent Body, and the Formless*, Art Journal, Vol.61, No.4 (Winter 2002), p.57.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.57.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p.60.

⁴⁸ Christopher Wood, *Theories of Reference*, from Bal, Bois, Lavin, Pollock, Wood, *Art History and its Theories*, p.25.

⁴⁹ Quoted in Sue Malvern's article, *Antibodies: Rachel Whiteread's Water Tower*, p.402.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.402.

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