



# RESEARCH

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TOOLS OF THE TRADE  
MANDY FRANCA

## INTRODUCTION

Before I can explain what my practice is and the relation to newer technologies I first have to tell about my years before I got to this point.

My name is Mandy Franca and I study fashion design at the WDKA. Before starting at the WDKA I studied fashion and textile two years before that at the Royal Academy of Art, The Hague. It was the only course in the Netherlands where you could get a bachelor degree in Textile. Before that I completed my study in Graphic Design and I didn't want to do anything more with graphic design nor the computer.

In the past few years during my studies at the WDKA I realized that I love digital work and that my decision to study at the WDKA was a good choice because I had the freedom to develop it further. In addition, my interest in textiles remained. During my studies I did a few elective courses so I could develop as a designer, among courses like Smart Textile and Mediating I also did Open Design where through typographic research I made scale models of furniture with a 3D printer. So to define what my craft is would be a very difficult question to answer, because I love to design prints, artworks, product design, graphic design/typography and develop concepts.

## MY DEFINITION OF MY PRACTICE IN RELATION TO NEWER TECHNOLOGIES.

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But there is one major thing and work that I would love to develop more and make a living out of it as a freelancer in the upcoming years of my life, and that would be making 2D collages. What I do is bring different worlds together. It may sound abstract, but that is my craft. I construct and deconstruct, even when I'm making clothing that I usually see more as artworks than wearable garments. My collages are usually fashion/design related. I like to work digital by using my own images that I take with my own camera, combining them with photos that I find online or for example in newspapers. The images that I find in newspapers or others I scan and edit them in Adobe Photoshop in a way that is usable for me.

Through contemporary techniques such as photography, there is an excess of images to find, so there are enough 'impossible' images offered online. Not only images that are being shared at this very moment, think of social media and apps like Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook, as well as images from the past or that can not be seen with the naked eye. A variety of images are available in various forms that are as close to being shot under a microscope or far off as the Earth High Definition Viewing project of NASA where you can see live images of our planet. Because we have so much access to all of these images through the internet our options have become much broader than a 100 years ago. What makes a technique that has been around for hundreds of years by mix & matching images of now and old together and by using Adobe to something innovating.



*own work*

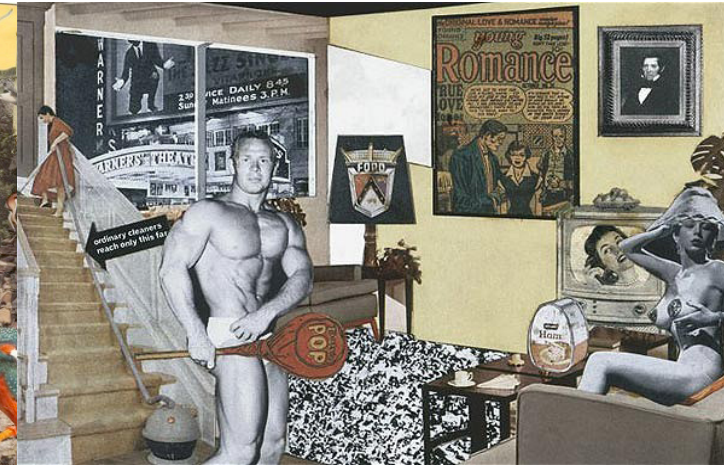
There are many contemporary artists that use this technique now with strong references to historical work such as the Berlin-based Tim Roelof. By looking at his work and technique I immediately think of Richard Hamilton's *Just What Is It That Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?* 1956, collage, that is one of the earliest works to be considered Pop Art. This is a good example of an artist that uses his work in a different discipline such as fashion. In 2008 he teamed up with the fashion house Versace. The artist created a total of twelve original works that were used as prints on the dresses. Versace debuted their collaboration of fashionable, wearable art which consisted of four dresses in Roelof's style.

A person that has a more 'modern' approach to collage and someone I can more relate to is the contemporary Dutch artist Ingrid Baars. She used to work as an independent illustrator and photographer before she decided to concentrate only on her artistic work. Her style came into being and grew from collage to full-blown digital treatment of her images.

With the constantly evolving techniques nowadays makes it more interesting to try to mix & match old & new techniques and images. For example the works of Karel Appel, that used to make art by painting on wood and making his own collages in his own way, how would he have approached that idea if he would have made that kind of work now? He could have combined his painted art with his scanned art with a CNC machine as an example. That's why I love the concept of this minor. During this period of time I tried to make my digital work 3D without losing the 2D element in it. The idea of creating something that already exists but by mix & matching and experimenting taking it to a new level makes it more and more interesting to try to make collages on a different way.



*Tim Roelof*



*Richard Hamilton*



*Ingrid Baars*

In the previous chapter, I mainly focused on my love for 2d 'art'. What I expressed in the previous part of the minor. During the second part of my minor I chose not so much for a direction in the form of a craft, but rather a certain poetic thought that I developed further during my studies. For me this means that I try to create & visualize a world in a different way. Besides creating 'worlds' I reflect, in my work, often on my own realistic world. This is often the basis or the subject for my concepts. My work mainly evolves around identity, contact and communication between beloved ones and belonged emotions and memories in the recent years. Beloved, I mean in the broadest sense of the word, as in family, but also romantic relationships, interpersonal relationships in one's life. I think this is an issue that many people are interested in, not only artists. In today's world it is normal that you are far away from the people with whom you share a connection. Because it's easier to travel than, for example a 100 years ago. People emigrate, travel for work or to see more of the world, etc.

One becomes attached to objects for the same reason. For example, many have had a moment in their lives that they found themselves walking down a beach, saw a beautiful shell and it took home with them. You do not take it with you only because you like the exterior, but it serves as a visual reminder of that beautiful moment when you had found it. Or think of a wedding ring, or an object that you got as a gift from your parents. So it's not so much the object, but the memory that remains. The object will get an emotional value regardless of the physical real world value. An object is always something that does not contain life and has no value. It only gets value after the 'owner' is emotionally attached to it. The context must be changed. Context changes by the personal experience, the feeling and the area where the object is located, is found or developed. That creates a bond between the person and the object. Therefore, I will research why this commitment exists and how it develops.

An interpersonal relationship is a strong, deep, or close association or acquaintance between two or more people that may range in duration from brief to enduring. This association may be based on inference, love, solidarity, regular interactions, or some other type of social commitment. Interpersonal relationships are formed in the context of social, cultural and other influences. The context can vary from family, friendship, marriage, relations with associates, work, clubs, neighborhoods, and places of worship. They may be regulated by law, custom, or mutual agreement, and are the basis of social groups and society as a whole.

I eventually chose to examine three types of relationships through using my own life and experiences as an example and make three case studies: family, (love) relationship and sense of self.

**STUDY 1  
FAMILY - GRANDFATHER -  
DECEASED**

I grew up with a family that lives on the other side of the world. This fact has left an impression on my life and formed/influenced the relationships in my later life. A good example is the story and the relationship between my grandfather and his granddaughter (myself). I've met him in total, three times in my life. In those three times he did not speak a word. I did not know him well but felt very connected by the idea that I am a part of him, and would not exist without him. When he died, my father kept a piece of his hair for me, I want to make a piece of jewelry out of it. From the stories my parents told me and me meeting him in person I formed an image of him. There are a few things I know of him through these stories. For example, he (probably) had osteoporosis, but also that every day he wore a gold chain with cross-shaped pendant. In his house all the room doors were always open, except one. I never knew what was hidden behind that door, except the fact that there is a small room behind it. After I've asked my father, I got a surprising answer: My grandfather was a collector of 'junk'. Stuff he liked and valued, kept in his small room. Obviously it was a person who was very fond of his privacy....

**STUDY 2  
(LOVE) RELATIONSHIP -  
BOYRIEND - DISTANCE**

I've been in a relationship with a man for over 7 years. He travels around a lot for work and used to be abroad for over six months a year. You can develop an emotional connection with someone you do not often see .. You learn to maintain a long distance relationship, where as with my family that lives on the other side of the world physical contact is not possible, the absence is present. But when you do get to see each other again for the first time in a while, there is a sense of relief as you get back an extra piece of yourself even after you have actually forgot that you've missed that small but important bit. I then choose to create a jewel. Two rings with hair from both of us, cast in resin as a reminder that even though we are far apart certain physical laws only exist when chosen to believe in. Memories have no distance, so these rings bring us closer no matter how far apart...

**STUDY 3  
SENSE OF SELF**

The 'Sense of Self' is clearly shaped by interpersonal relationships in one's life. The relational self is a part of the individual's self-concept that consists of feelings etc through interaction with others. That past and present relationships also affect a person's emotions and behavior in new encounters and relationships with others. You are born with a fixed number of characteristics that you get passed on from your parents, they include DNA, appearance and often personal characteristics. In later life you come into contact with people outside your family that will result into social relationships that will eventually add certain characteristics to the person you will become or became. To sum up; 1. It comes from within. 2; projects itself into the world. 3; The projections bounce back onto yourself and will eventually develop the sense of self". As previously mentioned, I grew up with a family that lives on the other side of the world, which has left a significant impression on my life and provides the basis of the relationships I've formed later in my life. Perhaps it has left a lifelong mark that influences 9 out of the 10 works that I make.

We are almost literally bombarded with Facebook updates and Instagram photos on a daily base from our friends, family and loved ones. Services like these are so focussed on monetizing on peoples need for closeness even when there is distance, that they have perfected the accessibility of immortalizing (a lot of the times fake) memories that the original purpose of these services almost completely reverses and actually create a void of feelings towards your loved ones. The efforts to keep in touch are at a minimum and so are the rewards. Because there is no actual sense of loss the novelty and importance of the memories is in steep decline. The abundance of small less important news from friends on one's easily accessible online timeline makes it so that it loses intensity through repetition. Much like annoying advertisement on a commercial website.

You see now that there is a certain need and interested to communicate with our loved ones instead of observing them through social media. You want to create a bond and express your feelings.

The ring that I made, was at one point my bespoke / personal “happiness” object. It was a ‘tool’ that I carried with me which I had an emotional connection too, it was a psychological support and a (positive) memory of a person and connected feeling that I carried with me. It makes the object personal in an emotional supportive way, because you carry it with you for your own state of mind. I want to ‘catch’ a piece of that person’s memory and the connection that you have with the individual and put that in an object so you could wear those close to you when (physical) contact is not possible. It is not about the piece of DNA, not the code, but the ‘human’ part of the person that I carry with me.

After researching the principle ‘carry someone with you’ and how that could be possible, I limited myself literally on the surface of the body, which to my mind wasn’t what I was looking for, especially in the first study. It is more about the emotional and psychical way you carry someone and make it in to something visual; in the form of an object that is associated with the body.

*My grandfather suffered from a unpleasant illness that caused brittle bones, known as osteoporosis. The inside of his bones have almost lace-like structure. I will use the extra space caused by osteoporosis to preserve a part of a person, in this case me. He was a man that was very fond of his privacy so the inside of his body is a perfect place to ‘use’ as a ‘space’ to save a piece of a loved one. I will make a mix of a ‘part of me’, hair; a symbol of life, one of the most delicate and durable part of a human and a liquid material that could also partly fix his osteoporosis to fill in a piece of me so he could have carried that with him...*

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Anne Leferink is a researcher that studied the applicability of various clinical imaging techniques to visualize the growth of cultured bone. She grew tissue to visualize this. As she did, she discovered a new way to create bone or cartilage tissue. The method works by cubes, microstructures, to mix with stem cells. The stem cells encapsulate the cubes, of epoxy resin or polylactic acid, in. This creates small particles bony material, later sticking together. This creates a strong tissue that is much larger than is possible with current techniques.

Defects bones are difficult to reach, such as osteoporosis, She reach te bones by making the cubes injectable. Leferink will inject the cubes in a gel so that the bone or cartilage around the blocks grow.

The way she could probably do that is by using the same kind of special needle that they use at the hospital to harvest stem cells. It is a needle that reaches the center of the bone. The exact place where I would inject the ‘part of me’ where i was referring too.

By making a combination of ‘myself’ and Leferink her technic I could not only give a part of my self to my grandfather to keep close to him but also fix his disease.



## EXAMPLES - JEWELRY CONTAINING HUMAN ELEMENTS



**HAIR** - Mourning jewelry has been around since at least the 16th century, but it is associated with the Victorian Era, when mass production made it affordable. The trend reached its high point after the death of Prince Albert in 1861, when Queen Victoria, as well as members of her court, wore black clothing and matching mourning jewelry for decades. Some of the most interesting examples of mourning jewelry included hairwork, which describes bracelets, necklaces, and rings made from woven human hair. The hair was not necessarily from the deceased—in the middle of the 19th century, 50 tons of human hair a year was imported into England for use by the country’s jewelers. People started making memorial jewelry because there was no photography, and wanted something as a touchstone to remember them every day.

**TEARS** - A Victorian-era lachrymosa, also called lachrymatory, tear catchers, or tear vials. Sometimes worn on a necklace, sometimes merely held, they were used to gather the tears wept by mourners at funerals. One type of lachrymosa had a special top which allowed the tears to evaporate (signifying the time to stop mourning), others had a sealed top to allow the tears to last for a year, at which point they would be poured on the grave of the person whom the tears were wept for.

**ASHES** - Norwegian design studio Skrekkøgle figured out a way to rebuild a printer to accept dog ashes as “ink”, allowing them to print a vintage-looking black-and-white photograph of a dog. Algordanza, a Swiss company, has taken a fascinating approach to memorializing loved ones who have passed; They will compress and super-heat your loved one’s cremated ashes and turn them into a man-made diamond that can be worn and cherished.

## EXAMPLES - OBJECTS BASED UPON HUMAN ELEMENTS



**THE ALLELES' DESIGN STUDIO** - was founded in an effort to create affordable and accessible prosthetic covers for lower limb amputees. This product was designed with the intention of fitting onto one's existing endoskeletal prosthesis to create the form of a leg without the need of going to a clinic. They wanted to create a different experience for their clients by removing the product from the medical realm to act more as a personal statement and fashion accessory.

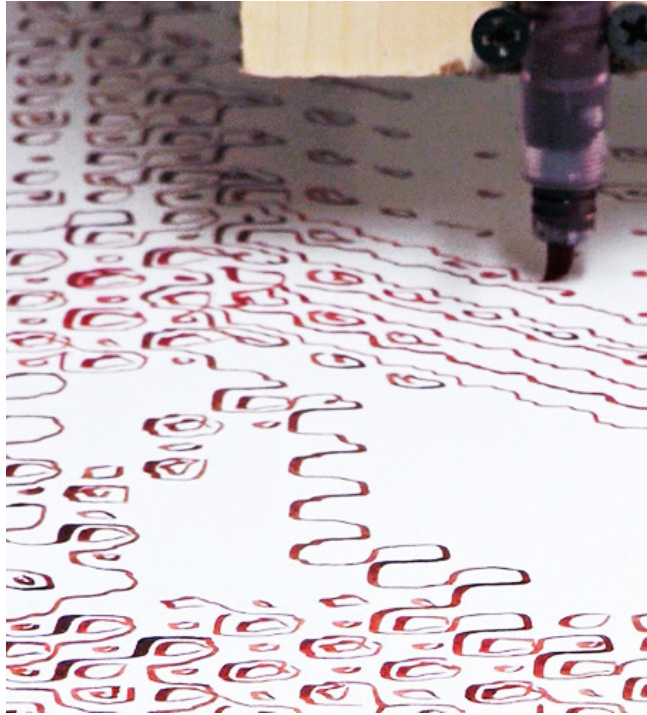


**JORIS LAARMAN** - is working with carmaker Opel to design a range of furniture based on the way bones grow. The form of the pieces was optimized using Opel's software - which the car-maker uses to refine car parts to increase strength and efficient use of material. The software mimics the way that growing bones are able to generate additional material where it is needed, but also to remove material where it is superfluous, by making the bone thinner or hollow.



**IRIS VAN HERPEN** - In 2011 Iris van Herpen showed a plastic skeleton dress that represents her feeling of re-born during a parachuting jump. The dress is printed on a 3D printer that prints with polyamide powder. It is a great combination of traditional craftsmanship with innovative techniques such as 3D printing. Thus she creates sculptural effects with stunning organic and futuristic visual impact.

## ART AND OBJECTS THAT CONTAIN HUMAN ELEMENTS



**MARC QUINN** - makes self portraits made of frozen blood. For his ongoing self-portrait project simply titled "Self," Quinn uses his own blood to create a frozen bust every five years. The works' appearance changes over time as Quinn ages, making for an interesting study in decay. He also thinks that the total self portrait-ness of using his own blood and body has an ironic factor, in that even though the sculpture is his form and made from the material from his body, to him it just emphasises the difference between a truly living person and the materials which make that person up.

**TED LAWSON** - 'drawing blood' takes on a different description for artist ted lawson's 'ghost in the machine': a life-sized, nude self-portrait rendered from his own bodily fluid. fed intravenously to a CNC machine, lawson's blood traverses through the mechanical parts, while a robotic arm attached to the device — programmed to trace the designated illustration — carefully maps out the human form.

**DAVID CATÁ** - Overexposed Emotions - David Catá uses his body as a canvas for writing an autobiographical diary. the performance cum-sculptural self-inflicted pieces that make up the series 'a flor de piel' are portraits of the faces of people who have left their mark on the artist's life; family, friends, partners and teachers sewn into the palm of his hand.

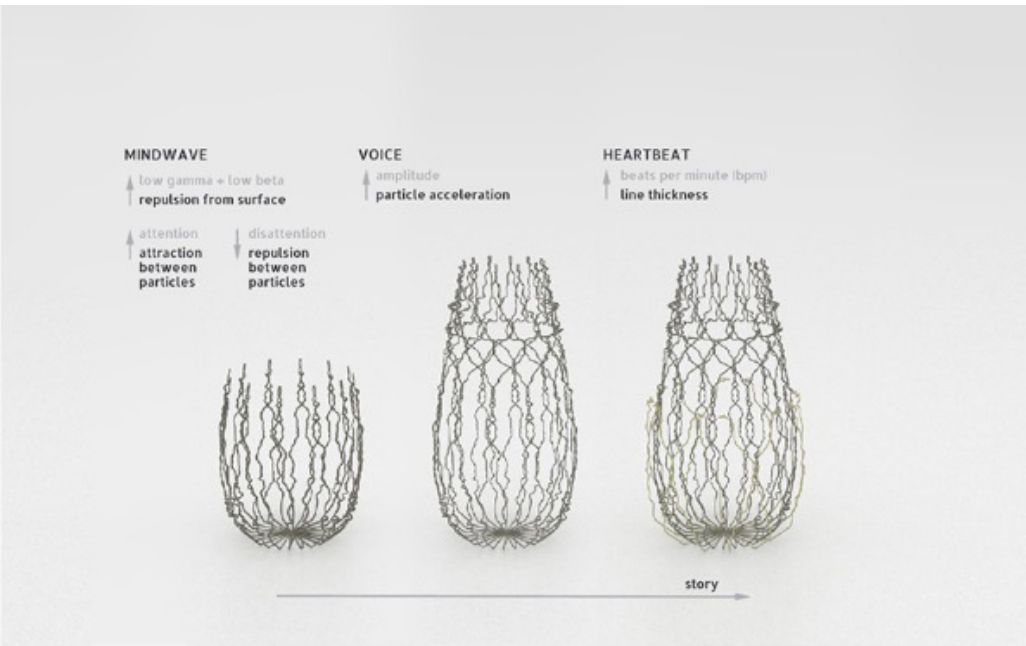


**EDUARDO KAC** - "Time Capsule" is a work-experience that lies somewhere between a local event-installation, a site-specific work in which the site itself is both my body and a remote database, and a simulcast on TV and the Web. The object that gives the piece its title is a microchip that contains a programmed identification number and that is integrated with a coil and a capacitor, all hermetically sealed in bio-compatible glass. The temporal scale of the work is stretched between the ephemeral and the permanent; i.e., between the few minutes necessary for the completion of the basic procedure, the microchip implantation, and the permanent character of the implant. As with other underground time capsules, it is under the skin that this digital time capsule projects itself into the future.



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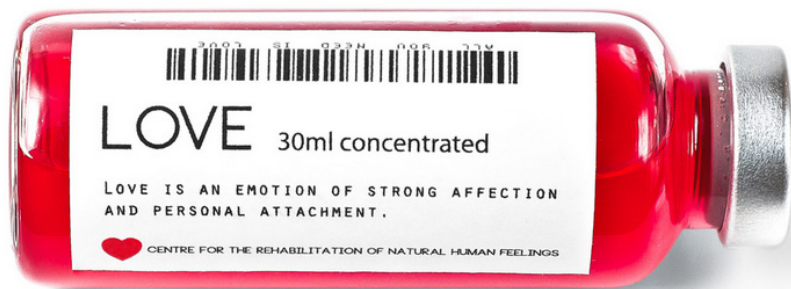
## EXAMPLES - ART AND OBJECTS BASED ON HUMAN EMOTIONS



**ESTUDIO GUTO REQUENA** - are using 3D printing to physically manifest the brainwaves that represent human emotion. Spearheaded by architect and studio founder Guto Requena, The Love Project uses portable scanners to measure said brainwaves—as well as heartbeats and voice fluctuations—while a subject speaks about a person that he or she cares deeply, and subsequently turns that data into house decorations.



**LISA PARK** - Eunoia II is outfitted with 48 vibration pools, inspired by the 48 emotions philosopher Baruch Spinoza outlined in his book, *Ethica*, like frustration, excitement, engagement, and meditation. Each speaker vibrates according to Park's brain wave-interpreting algorithm, which transforms intense signals from Park's Emotiv EEG headset into intense vibrations in the pools of water. Here, Park is literally putting her inner struggles on display, and the whole show depends on how she deals with her feelings.



**VALERIO LOI** - realized he had been witnessing a long time a lack of feelings, those feeling that are the base of human interaction, cooperation and well-being generally. Although human interactions and feelings always find a way to be expressed, the hectic lifestyle we are immersed in makes things more difficult, and the high stress levels sometimes lead people to find recovery using medications, pain-relief drugs and so on.. The high street market offers a complete range of drugs that should help people recovering from a huge variety of illnesses and their symptoms. But what if this symptoms were a only a lack of satisfaction on a spiritual level? Valerio Loi created a series of alternative medicines. Vials that contain concentrated amounts of human feelings and ways of interaction such as, empathy, peace. His aim is to show them as e reminder of what sometimes are the only necessary things to live a better and brighter life.



**DANIEL SHER** - Present day technology allows us to hear, text, see, and use pictures and icons to express how we feel. however, there are physical and emotional dimensions that exist only when we're close to loved ones. In response to this problem, Daniel Sher asked herself, 'how can I use technology to bring people closer in a different yet familiar way? It was important to her not to try to reenact the feelings of touch, pressure and warmth we feel when we hug or caress our loved one. 'Trying to imitate that will always feel fake.' With this understanding of human interaction, she wanted to create new experiences for those who wish to express their love and affection. as a result, for her final project, Sher, along with Ben Hagin, has developed 'saying things that can't be said', a series of objects that revolve around people in long-distance relationships.

Allot of artists are already researching the possibilities how to keep close by communication with loved ones, the body and visualizing the feelings that you have, but that stil does not keep a piece of a person close to you for your own emotional support. Thats I way I see implants as the future.

You see now that there is a certain desire and interest in more personal contact with loved ones. Nothing is private anymore. Every contact that you have with someone that lives far a way is tangible and even detectable, what makes it not only for you anymore.

And “Today we can no longer trust the representational nature of the image as the key agent in the preservation of social or personal memory and identity.” - Eduardo Kac.

He means by that through, for example plastic surgery. In that comes the possibility of erasure of the memory you have of that persons physical image. So by carrying a person inside your body you will always remember the person in its purist form of life. The external memories becomes implant in the body. And is in that way only meant for the ‘wearer’ as to through the naked eye an a X-ray scan it wil not be seen.



## SOURCES

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