

Nata Hamilton

WORKSHOP

Writing as Sculptural Gesture



Introduction

This workshop explores how critical and reflective thinking transforms into form and material presence, using close reading and writing as generative tools to inspire new creative sensibilities in art making.

SCHEDULE 60 MIN. APPROX.

Introductions (5 min.)

Activity 1: Model the Method (10 - 15 min.)

Activity 2: Practice the Method (20 min.)

Activity 3: Reflections - Group Discussion (15 min.)

Feedback (5 min.)

Introductions: Introduce yourself.
What would you like to get out of this session?

Critical thinking » form and material presence



Nata Hamilton, *smaller circles, larger circles*, 2025.
Collection of own hair, horse hair, charred pine, rusted mild-steel.
Dimensions variable.

Activity 1

Model: Close Reading and Writing

Clarity / Repeatability / Focus

5 SENTENCE / PARAGRAPH

STRUCTURE

Introduction - Any background information, if known (context)

Description - Details about the work (scale, placement, texture, form, colour etc.)

I am particularly drawn to... / One element that interest me most... - Focused observation

For me, it reads as ... - Analysis, Evaluation, Interpretation of the work

In my own practice I ... - Synthesis (How does it relate to or influence my own work?)

Example:



Mona Hatoum, *Recollection*, 1995.
Human hair. Dimensions variable. Installation view Beguinage St. Elisabeth, Kortrijk.
Fotostudio Eshof, Courtesy of the Artists.

The Interplay of Material and Form: Mona Hatoum: *Recollection*, 1995

Artwork

I came across *Recollection* (1995) by Mona Hatoum during one of my regular visits to Camberwell Library. In this work, Hatoum articulates time, space, and the body as an interwoven, cyclical site that is always shifting, rolling, and renewing (Bell, 2008).

Dispersed across the gallery space, strands of Hatoum's own hair, rolled between her fingers into delicate, gossamer-webbed spheres, collected over years in shoeboxes, gather in corners and on the windowsill. The accumulation of these fragile threads creates spheres that are at once intimate and cosmic, charged with the potential of movement.

I am particularly drawn to how in this work the interplay of material and form together dictate meaning, or open the work up to meaning, interpretation and reflection.

For me, in *Recollection* (1995) the fragile threads of hair accumulate, become spheres, and in turn embody mobility, fluidity, and continuous return. The sphere is at once visceral, intimate and cosmic, linking the body's cyclical process of shedding and shaping anew to cosmic roundedness.

In my practice, I also turn to my own hair as a material that stores memory, carrying the trace of the body and the passage of time. Yet, while Hatoum shapes hers into spheres, I form mine into springs – smaller circles within larger ones. The spring, like the sphere, is a site of potential energy, but it also functions as a storage mechanism, holding and releasing movement as an embodied archive of home. By shaping my hair into these rounded, rhythmic forms, I explore memory as cyclical, visceral and cosmic, locating home within the infinite interwoven loops of return.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bell, K. (2008) 'A Mapping of Mona Hatoum' in *Mona Hatoum: Unhomely*. Berlin: Holzwarth Publication, pp. 61 – 73.

Introduction / Context

Description

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Focused observation

Synthesis

Interpretation

Activity 2

Practice

1. Select **ONE** artwork of your choice.
2. Close Looking - Silent observation.
3. Close Writing - Apply our 5 sentence/paragraph structure & write max. 200 - 250 words about your chosen artwork.

** Structure: Introduction (context) / Description / One element that interest me most... / For me, it reads as ... / In my own practice I ...*

Activity 3

Reflections

- Did focused looking and writing alter how you saw the work?
- How did the writing guide or disrupt your thinking?
- What might you take from this process into how you normally engage with or create art?
- Did anything unexpected spark: a thought, image, or feeling?

Feedback: How was the experience for you?
ONE word on a post-it-note.