

Rosamunde Bordo – Artist Statement

Practice Overview

I am exploring the construction and conflation of factual and fictional narratives through a multidisciplinary art practice. In my ongoing work, *The Denise File*, I am using a collection of found postcards as a starting point to materialize ‘evidence’ of the elusive recipient of these letters, Denise. I have approached the work as an investigation and constructed it around the basic question: ‘who is Denise?’. I have been considering how the female detective might offer a framework for this unconventional research project, that doesn’t claim to be either historical or fictional. The collection of postcards is not an archive, although they are real documents. If there is an archive at all, it consists of the accumulation of ‘evidence’ that I produce, in other words, the artwork, into which my own experience of searching for Denise is intertwined and embedded. From the start, my access and understanding of Denise has always been mediated through the one-sided correspondences of the souvenir postcards I have in my possession, and I am conscious of myself as yet another mediator, now between Denise and the viewer of my work *The Denise File*. As the projects develops, I am more actively placing myself between Denise and the viewer.

Project Description

In the sprawling first segment of the *The Denise File*, called *The Relationship Without Images*, I investigate Denise through this peculiar phrase pulled from a love letter from one of the correspondents. By taking on this man’s particular language of desire as my own, I set myself material and procedural parameters for the work. In *the Relationship Without Images*, I attempt to follow, interpret and challenge his words by privileging touch over sight, objects over images, and

my own lived experience over any kind of fixed narrative. In this work I seek to produce physical, tangible traces of Denise through a practice of collecting, copying, documenting, and mediating.

In one scenario I set out to locate one of Denise's belongings, gone missing. The searching out and finding of the missing item, Denise's housecoat, becomes a creative act. In the pockets of the housecoat, I also find money and a used Kleenex. I include all three of these items in the unfolding collection of evidence I am gathering on Denise, as well as other unexpected items, such as an uncovered to-do list which I adopt as my own. I probe further into the housecoat as an object by wearing it, sleeping in it, writing in it, and disobey the rules of no images by using drawing and frottage as other means of grasping it. By allowing my own curiosities, experiences, and gestures to mediate my encounter with Denise, the boundaries between myself as artist/investigator dissolve into the object of my investigation. The housecoat can be considered a physical meeting place for myself and Denise. The more I gather, produce, and reproduce physical material, the veracity of the documents, objects, and Denise herself are increasingly called into question.