



Amanda Davies

MISTAKE

28 JULY - 18 AUGUST 2018

Selected works from the catalogue

BETT GALLERY

mistake,

to perceive or understand erroneously; to interpret or estimate incorrectly; to misunderstand or misapprehend.

to recognise or identify incorrectly; to take (one thing or person) for another; to invest with the wrong personality or individuality.

to take by mistake

mistake,

an error in opinion, understanding, perception, interpretation, or judgement; misconception

Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary 1962

Indiscipline

King Crimson

I do remember one thing.
It took hours and hours but...
By the time I was done with it,
I was so involved, I didn't know what to think.

I carried it around with me for days and days...
Playing little games
Like not looking at it for a whole day
And then...looking at it.

To see if I still liked it.
I did.

I repeat myself when under stress.
I repeat myself when under stress.
I repeat myself when under stress.
I repeat myself when under stress.

I repeat...
The more I look at it,
The more I like it.
I do think it's good.

The fact is...
No matter how closely I study it,
No matter how I take it apart,
No matter how I break it down.

It remains consistent.
I wish you were here to see it.

I like it.

Songwriters:
Adrian Belew / Anthony Charles Levin / Robert Fripp / William Scott Bruford
Indiscipline lyrics © Universal Music Publishing Group



Croning

My tongue worries an irregularity, a rough spot, along the gum line of one of my front teeth.

The tip of my tongue is compelled to insert itself in the crack in the tooth, and to work it, work it. The tooth develops some play. It is a bit loose in its socket. It gives way. Out it comes, without any resistance. It looks less like a tooth and more like an undersized brown almond. I examine it in horror, then rush to the mirror, expecting to behold an unsightly gap—the face of a crone.

But though I hold the brown tooth in my hand, in the mirror when I bare my teeth, *there they all are*, all my white teeth, all intact. I know it's a dream, but I don't wake. I stay dreaming, caught in the lucid conundrum of the two irreconcilable teeth which are the one: the rotten one I have shed, and the apparently healthy one I have firmly fixed in my mouth. I feel relief and the sense of having escaped something morbid. *Almost*. The bemusing presence of the browned, broken, almond-like tooth is implacable.

As I am dreaming I am reminded of an earlier dream in which the entire roof of my mouth turned out to be false: a plate, and, once I remove it the actual roof of my mouth feels as spacious as a vaulted cathedral. Reminded of this, within the present dream—which is a sequel, I am comforted that the brown tooth that I have shed is not the 'real' tooth, but a false double, which has atrophied leaving a vibrant tooth in its stead.

The motif of lost teeth in dreams is apparently a common one. Teeth are related to biting and chewing; to maturity and ageing; to talking, to telling the truth and to lying; to smiling and confidence; to flirtation and desirability. Freud himself, in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, touched upon tooth symbolism and, though he offered a sexual interpretation for tooth dreams, he insisted that for every dreamer, a symbol refers to different things according to context and personal association—what he referred to as the particular 'psychic situation'.

My psychic situation is that I am *croning*. My friend invented the term. She meant it positively. *Almost*.

Croning is the process of becoming a crone. I'm in it. I looked up the word crone and it comes from late Middle English, via Middle Dutch: *croonje*, *caroonje*, meaning 'carcass, old ewe'. In old Northern French, the word *caroigne*—carrion, refers to 'cantankerous woman'. I have decided to embrace *croning*. For one thing, attempts at alternatives require too much time, energy and money. Besides, efforts to resist becoming a crone are prone to almost certain failure. And what is more, the cantankerousness set in some time ago. So, I am resigned. I looked at a recent photo of myself and was surprised at the size of my teeth: I have literally become *long in the tooth*. An old ewe. The hair dye has not been fooling anyone for a while now, so I decided to desist. I *liked* the result. Under the dye I was not so grey as I might have guessed and, moreover, the grey suits my face. It's not so much that I have let myself go, as *let myself go-Patti Smith*.

Maria Kunda

MISTAKE

Mistake is a series of new figurative paintings in which my image manifests in ways that are inspired by real and imagined stories about loss of control and errors of judgement.

Situations are established in the studio that engage the tradition of theatricality in painting – situations that don't quite make sense. As in my previous work the figure in the paintings has returned to the ground - lying horizontal, the position for sleeping, dreaming, healing, sex and death.

Infected teeth were seen as the cause for a range of illnesses including arthritis, stupidity and all kinds of nervous diseases underpinning the 1920's Focal Infection Theory, which was widely taught until later being discredited.

Mistakenly, Virginia Woolf's psychiatrist George Savage, subscribed to 'Focal Infection Theory', recommending in 1922 that Woolf have three teeth removed to relieve psychological tension. Following this Woolf's mood did not improve, she wore false teeth and developed a distrust of medical treatment (she is never portrayed smiling in photographs).

The painting titled "If we survive the teeth we succumb to the waves" is a nod to Virginia Woolf and her references to teeth, which are many, in *Orlando* and *Mrs Dalloway*¹

Through the performative process I attempt to rupture the 'already familiar world',² questioning our presumptions about perception. For example, in some of the paintings I have played out a mistake and excessively applied Band-Aids to my face, creating an adhesive mask through which I cannot see, it suctioned to my skin. This suffocating act plunges me into a restricted visceral world of sound and space.

Through exploring arts' affective dimension I reflect on the practice of feminist artists of the 1960-1970's. The title of one of the paintings 'fantasmatic' is a term artist Lygia Clark coined "that covers the sense of experiencing something without a real or identifiable referent – it is something that is not reducible to visibility".³ In a way our feelings are fantasmatic in that in they are not visible, we only see the body reacting to our emotions.

In this series of work I attempted to explore phenomenology through investigating the subtle energies of the body and attempting to visualise the 'felt' experience. This leads to questions about the boundaries between mind, body and emotion; are they so clear, are they there at all?

Amanda Davies

1 Orlando, Virginia Woolf, Vintage Classic, 2016, First Published 1928, 143

2 Maurice Merleau-Ponty

3 Susan Best, Visualising Feeling: affect and the feminine avant-garde. I.B.Tauris, 2014, 140





Amanda Davies

Amanda is an artist based in Tasmania.

Maria Kunda

Maria is a Tasmanian writer and artist with a special interest in Surrealism.

M I S T A K E

Amanda Davies
28 July - 18 August 2018
catalogue of selected works

Bett Gallery
<https://www.bettgallery.com.au/>

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List of selected works from the catalogue in order from front page

<i>Mistake</i> oil on linen 40cm x 30cm 2017	<i>Indiscipline</i> oil on linen 40cm x 30cm 2017	<i>Clusterfuck</i> oil on linen 35cm x 35cm 2018	<i>What was felt before is gone</i> oil on linen 40cm x 30cm 2018
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Writing

Croning by Maria Kunda 2018

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