

I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE ROSES

CHLOE BARTRAM

I thought it would be roses offers an opportunity to examine personal reflections of womanhood. Having been raised on the stories of love often found in fairy tales, it began with me wanting to speak with women about their sexual narratives. Collaboration began with a desire to understand firsthand their experiences and to facilitate a more open dialogue about gender and sexuality. It aims to expose the bias apparent in the taboos and societal untruths surrounding female sexuality while discussing the greater 'collective consciousness'. Through tapping into this collective experience, the installation interrogates a gendered sense of self or identity, and how this is connected to a woman's sexuality. The work explores experiences felt and not always acknowledged.

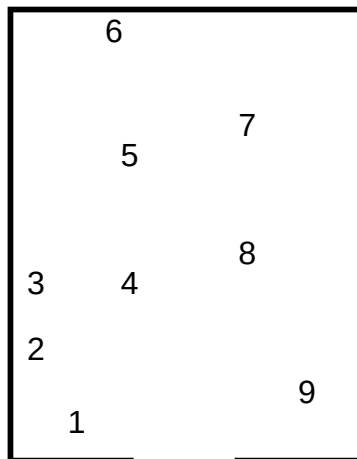
These love letters give the participating women right of reply. They draw attention to narratives and experiences that are often ignored or skewed in the mainstream consciousness. The sharing of knowledge is incredibly important to this project, and this has been emphasised by bringing together a further group of women to sew the letters. The fabric speaks to the veils we must wear and gives form to the experiences we embody, but that never fully show who we are. *I thought it would be roses* pays reference to the history of women's fibre art and the stories we have told through cloth for generations. The needles left in some of the works act as a final stroke of defiance; her weapon of choice.

In part it was my mother, Margaret, who was the catalyst for undertaking this project; she has lived these women's stories. I acknowledge the women who shared with me, the women who sewed with me and the women on whose support I rely. Thank you to Andrew Christie for his time and woodwork.

The participants found the process a cathartic one. For some, they carried the burden of an experience they never wanted. Should you also share in this you are invited to pen your own 'love' letter to continue the work. You are welcome to sit at the sewing table, once used at Heathcote Hospital, and place the letter through the slot at the front of the wooden letter box. The box has no other opening and will hold your stories for you.

GOOLUGATUP HEATHCOTE

14 November 2020 – 14 February 2021



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| <p>1. <i>Letter Box</i>
Jarrah, woodwork: Andrew Christie
45 x 35 x 35cm
NFS</p> | <p>6. <i>Sewing Table</i>
Found sewing table, stationary, chair
NFS</p> |
| <p>2. <i>Love Letter #13, Dear First Love</i>
Muslin, black thread, embroidery hoop
42 x 140cm
\$1,700</p> | <p>7. <i>Love Letter #8, Dear Father in Law</i>
Muslin, black thread, embroidery hoop
42 x 120cm
\$1,700</p> |
| <p>3. <i>Love Letter #9, Dear Love of my Life</i>
Muslin, black thread, embroidery hoop
42 x 140cm
\$1,700</p> | <p>8. <i>Love Letter #7, Dear Ex Boyfriend</i>
Muslin, black thread, embroidery hoop
42 x 156cm
\$1,700</p> |
| <p>4. <i>Love Letter #1, Dear Car Wash Attendant</i>
Muslin, black thread, embroidery hoop
42 x 130cm
\$1,700</p> | <p>9. <i>I thought it would be roses</i>
Digital video, looped
NFS</p> |
| <p>5. <i>Love Letter #4, Dear Fiancé</i>
Muslin, black thread, embroidery hoop
42 x 128cm
\$1,700</p> | |



City of
Melville