Make Me Yours

Make Me Yours:

How Art Seduces

By

Laura González

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This book is solely, completely and unequivocally for Neil.

In one of his books Morelli talks about a Neapolitan who spent years sitting in the doorway of his house looking at a screw on the ground. At night he would pick it up and put it under his mattress. The screw was at first a laugh, a jest, a communal irritation, a neighbourhood council, a mark of civil duties unfulfilled, finally a shrugging of shoulders, peace, the screw was peace, no one could go along the street without looking out of the corner of his eye at the screw and feeling that it was peace. The fellow dropped dead of a stroke and the screw disappeared as soon as the neighbours got there. One of them has it; perhaps he takes it out secretly and looks at it, puts it away again and goes off to the factory feeling something that he does not understand, an obscure reproval. He only calms down when he takes out the screw and looks at it, stays looking at it until he hears footsteps and has to put it away quickly. Morelli thought that the screw must have been something else, a god or something like that. Too easy a solution. Perhaps the error was in accepting the fact that the object was a screw simply because it was shaped like a screw. Picasso takes a toy car and turns it into the chin of a baboon. The Neapolitan was most likely an idiot, but he also might have been the inventor of a world. From the screw to an eye, from an eye to a star...

—Julio Cortázar, *Hopscotch*

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FOREWORD

AVANT LA LETTRE

SHARON KIVLAND

Here is the first scene: it comes before any introduction. It is an image. Perhaps you must turn back to it now. Look, a woman, a tiny woman (or a small girl), stands on the tiptoes of her little black pumps, which have a low wedge heel and an ankle strap. She is in front of a wooden door, embellished with bolts, mounted in a brick wall, but no, it is not outside, I do not think so, for the floor is smooth; it is in an interior space. We should, you know, be curious about this door, as curious as the little woman/girl who is stretching upwards to look at something that lies behind the door. We should be curious, too, about the woman who is trying so hard to see what is beyond the door. There is, one might say, a scene within a scene, a *tableau* within a *tableau*, and already, before having read a word, the stage is prepared for seduction. Later, you will recognise the scene, even if you have not seen it, for it is registered in the history of art; it is significant and enigmatic. Hold on a minute. Hold your breath like the woman in the black wrap-around dress, with the black shoes and black hair, who so much wants to see what is hidden behind the inviting door and, in short, invites you to join her. There is always a moment before giving in to temptation, before the fall (a moment of judgement). You remember what is said about curiosity? Well, you can say that about seduction and desire, too. You know it, but all the same, *quand même*. It is a little like *Alice*, climbing onto the mantelpiece, about to step through the looking-glass from the space of one room to the space of another, where she will forget the names of things, and even her own, where (later) sense must be made of what has no sense at the time.

This first scene—may we think of it as a staging? Yes, I think we might, for as you will find, our desire is not even our own, but rather, is assumed, following the unconscious script of the past, figured in the present, as or through another or others; that is why there are so many of us here, you, we, I, and she (I am profligate with pronouns, but they

perform various functions as substitutes). *Jamais deux sans trois*, in any case, and you might hear that as no couple, no pair, without another always in the room (*en scène*), excluded by the two of *them*. The child is positioned as the one who looks. There is something that does not translate in this encounter—that of the child and its parents, one without language, two with; the coupling of the parents in the primal scene is observed, or its observation is fantasised (it does not really make a great deal of difference), but there are no words for it, not at the time. Desire is the stuff of language, raising a question, producing a gap in knowledge; it does not keep still, but there is a delay between desire and pleasure, as any seducer knows, and pleasure may not be all that enjoyable anyway. Shifts in structure have effects and consequences, and logical moments or sequences, recognised in the life of each subject, constitute structure itself and, in the encounter with the work of art, form a certain object. To be a subject is not to have some ineffable essence, but to hold a position in relation to other subjects (or other signifiers). The relations between positions remain the same, whatever elements are put into them. The elements do not react because of any inherent property but because of the position they occupy in the structure. There is still the woman in front of the door, holding her position, and we are positioned to look at her looking.

In *Seminar X*, his work on anxiety, Jacques Lacan says (yes, he says, for a woman writes it down as he speaks, and then a man edits it, and then another, whom I know also to be a man, translates it—and I must say that I would prefer to translate *angoisse* as anguish, just as I would choose to leave *jouissance* alone. There is a great difference between speaking and writing) that he has made his listeners move along the path of the Don Juan fantasy (neat, the way a seducer so suddenly appears, no?).[1] It is, he says, a woman's fantasy because it corresponds to the wish—the wish of a woman, all women—for an image that would fulfil its function: that there might be a man who has *it*, which, from experience, is clearly a misrecognition of reality—"better still, he always has it, he cannot lose it". Don Juan is the man who has everything, and so he is an impostor, because no man has it; it is a role he accepts, to be always in the place of another. In the fantasy no woman may take it from him, "and that's the crux of it. That's what he has in common with women, whom one cannot take it from, of course, because they don't have it". There is a relation to

1. Jacques Lacan, *Anxiety: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book X*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, tr. by A. R. Price, London: Polity, 2014 [*Le Séminaire livre X—L'angoisse*, Paris: Édition du Seuil, 2004].

an object, an object that the woman does not have (the man does not either but does not have *differently*), and so she cannot lose it. Something else, behind the door, might have it, if only it were possible to reach it: in a landscape, in a gas lamp held in one hand, in a splayed body, in twigs, velvet (the velvet that lines the dark passage of the viewer's gaze, and if you look carefully, you will see that there is nothing to be seen through the many fissures in the door), leaves, parchment, brass piano hinges, synthetic putties and adhesives, steel binder clips, plastic clothes pegs, tape, cotton, and more, in a list from memory, one that is not complete. But the work of art does not have it, either, though it may be expected of it, nor is it *it*, and this is where seduction begins (seduction, then, might be the answer to the anguish or anxiety in the desiring subject, the anxiety produced by lack). I fear, however, that I am conflating the *objet petit a*, the object cause of desire, with the phallus—that is so easily done with a part object, which becomes an object only when it is taken for an object of desire, when it is infused with what is desirable.

I told you to hold on. There is a script; it is printed across the image, across the back of the woman who is blocking your view with her body, making you await your turn. *Make me yours* lies over her body. Language screens the scene and directs attention to it at the same time: inside and outside. Language, here as words, is as exactly positioned as the body it overlays. What is a speaking body, especially if the body is an image, one that confronts other hidden bodies, off-stage yet part of the staging, which are known to be *there*? There is the touch of the hand, in what looks like lettering, a direct address, but one that does not take the vocative, does not name you, the command: make me yours. Who, me, you? Is me the book—*ah, suis-je le livre*? The woman? She is like a promiscuous letter; goodness, anyone could read her, anyone could have her, and it would not be her fault, because it is never, never the fault of the seducer, not if you were stupid, weak enough to succumb to seduction, if you did not have the force of will to tie yourself to the mast of your expectation. If the title is an imperative, it demands something of the reader. Demanding, it is a voice, another part object. It commands, and thus is the voice of a master, a woman raised to a high and powerful position (on her toes). Or it is a sly or pleading or charming voice, requesting to be taken (which is just as masterful, in its quiet way). This is rather slippery, another move on my part to take one thing for another, to hear the title as well as to read it, and to consider its tone, its inflection, the manner in which it may be spoken and received. I think you will find that you will become a keen listener to what follows, attentive to delivery, embellishment, and gesture. The subtitle, set in a semi-transparent frame, is more revealing, if one takes it to be

an instruction for use, like a manual to follow, a set of instructions or information: how art seduces; or an explanation: this is how it happened, the story of a romance; or even another promise, if one reads it erotically both with and against the image it veils. There will, you know, be some rules to this engagement.

I assumed she is a woman. That was easy, for I know that she is. You might not be so certain, of course, and that produces anxiety. The indeterminacy of gender always does. I suppose any ambiguity is troubling, even when, perhaps especially when, it produces some kind of pleasure. We do not know much about the desire of the other—that is, if we are hysterics—but we want to know all about it. The hysteric assumes the desire of another in her identification with that other, but that desire is only sustained on the condition that she is not its object (what do you take me for!). The name is feminine, of course, but a name denotes only what is known by that name. And some say that the hysteric escapes the mastery of knowledge even as she articulates it. Casanova is far more confusing than Don Juan in his performance as a seducer. I used to think they were the same. The former ends his life as a librarian while the latter is dragged down to hell, but books or flames are not the only difference. Casanova devotes himself to the staging of his seductions, and often, sexual difference is reversed or dissolved. He lets himself be seduced and deceived in order to seduce and deceive. Casanova is torn between the other as a fixed being and the other as malleable. In the end it is no more than the assumption of "correct" comportment, a taking up of a symbolic position or a sexual etiquette that may have little to do with *politesse* or good manners, but has everything to do with a "correct" identification with a certain signifier, made at the "correct" time and under "correct" circumstances—the circumstances in which desire may circulate in its ferret-like way. This is a structure at work. Is that what will be asked of you, this folding of inside and out?

The image (let us return to it) is not a usual scene of seduction; the lighting is harsh, without the soft dimness that produces blindness (love has to be blind—for not to see the other as s/he is useful, making desire possible where otherwise it might not work, like when finding out a woman is really a man, for example). There is a drive to know, and any locus of knowledge produces transference. Others have preceded this woman; the surface of the door is unpleasantly discoloured where faces have rubbed against it. There is a woman-like thing behind the door, what we may think to be a woman (a body in parts), and there is a woman, no, two women, behind that woman-object exposed in the painted scene, gas lamp in hand: Maria Martins and Alexina Duchamp, the latter always

called ‘Teeny’, a diminutive coming from her mama, because of her tininess at birth—am I making too much of size? And there is a woman behind this book, as much as there is one in front of it.

Yes, things being as they are, I will leave it there, unlike the usual libertine conception of the desired object as a contingent goal: the woman is possessed, then the seducer moves on to another object of prey. In this scene, the encounter with the work of art is repeated. This is, then, the second scene: an introduction made *avant la lettre*, a lovely term which etymologically derives from the engraving made before the caption is added that will describe what is seen in the image; it comes before lettering, before letters. It is delivered with a warning, however, my short foreword (words before words, words that will frame or be echoed in what follows, words that could only be produced afterwards). This is *before*, before there are words for something, words that are yet to come, words from one who is other than the author, and who is now residue—a foreword of (erotic?) stimulation that precedes the event to come, preparing the way like some panderer in an amorous intrigue. Objects and words seduce; works of art are taken as making promises of gratification (not on offer, impossible in the structure of representation), which are imagined, must be imagined as seducers or agents of seduction—for they would not work, do their work, if they were not—and so the affair is set in motion, *à la lettre*.

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I still miss Dr. Sh—. He had the courage to enter into analysis with me even though I gave him a strange request. He knew better, of course, and it was not long before I shifted the focus from using analysis to write a book to actually acknowledging my symptom. I will always remember he took the time to close the curtains in the room to protect me.

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I want to close these lines by thanking Neil again, this time for simply but crucially bringing out the seducer in me.

INTRODUCTION

A FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH SEDUCTION

I will start with a detour, even though I know it is too soon for this kind of liberty. However, the diversion will be very productive as circuitous routes are at the core of what this text investigates. Not long ago, I had the opportunity to visit Philadelphia. I had always dreamed of my encounter with Marcel Duchamp's *Le Grand verre (La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même)*.[1] I had puzzled over Richard Hamilton's meticulous reproduction housed at the Tate Modern in London; yet, I suspected that seeing the "definitively finished" version, the one with the aesthetic breakage, would answer some of my questions around this enigmatic work of art. Dawn Ades, Neil Cox, and David Hopkins explain the importance of the breakage for Duchamp:

> In 1927 both panes of glass shattered while in transit from an exhibition in Brooklyn. When its owner Katherine Dreier brought herself to tell Duchamp of the disaster, he accepted the breakage as a kind of 'chance completion', and in 1936 spent some months patiently mending it, finally encasing each panel in two further glass panels, mounted in a wood and steel frame.[2]

But in my encounter with the work of art I thought was at the centre of what I was trying to study, I was not prepared for what was to happen. *Le Grand verre* is in room 182 of the Philadelphia Museum of Art and joins other masterpieces by Duchamp including his 1932 *The Green Box* notes and the infamous Richard Mutt signed original urinary, entitled *Fountain* (1968). In the next room, numbered 183, one can find *Étant donnés* (1946–1966), which has not been moved since its permanent installation in 1969. I had not thought much about *Étant donnés*, concentrating on the riddles posed by *Le Grand verre*, but the way visitors related to it while I sat in room 182 caught my attention. So I decided to look.

The first thing that left me begging was its title. *Étant donnés: 1º la chute d'eau, 2º le gaz d'éclairage*, *Given: 1. The Waterfall, 2. The Illuminating Gas*.[3] Given... what is given? Is anything going to be given to

me? There is more to this title, in the same way that there is more to *L.H.O.O.Q.* than five letters—if the letters are pronounced in French, they are homophonous to the sentence *elle a chaud au cul* (she has a hot bum), *elle* being the moustached Mona Lisa. In *Étant donnés*, I cannot help but read Thanatos, in the form of an epitaph. A manuscript note in the 1934 *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (The Green Box)*, also at The Philadelphia Museum of Art, refers to a "*State of Rest*", a "*choice of Possibilities*",[4] with capitals and underlined, and these led me to Sigmund Freud's death drive.

Given suggests an offering, perhaps posthumous: is Duchamp giving us his body of works? It is Duchamp's last known piece, on which he worked for twenty years, during which most of the world thought he had completely abandoned art to play chess. Like the latter game, *Étant donnés* represents an individual encounter with the work of art; a group of people, small as it may be, would be pressed to see it exactly at the same time. With this thought, and prepared for a punning game of chess—as I know something of Duchamp's work—I leave the ready-mades and paintings of room 182 to venture into the next gallery. And like in any great adventure, there are a number of obstacles I have to address. The first one, often forgotten, is one I had already overcome: to see *Étant donnés* one has to go all the way to Philadelphia. In a late capitalist world, where art tours to venues near almost anybody in the Western world, travel is made easy, blockbuster shows are traded, and permanent collections are decimated by loans, the site specificity of *Étant donnés* is unheard of.

The second obstacle is a constitutive part of the piece. In the darkness of room 183, at the far end of the Philadelphia Museum of Art—a darkness one has to get used to—I first encounter a wooden door, which Duchamp had sent to New York from Spain. It is mounted on the wall, with handsome bricks forming an arch in its upper edge. The door is not *any* door, however. This is a door without a handle, a door that is visibly not for opening and closing. This may be one of the reasons why visitors to the Philadelphia Museum of Art that make it all the way to the end of the Modern and Contemporary Art galleries turn around barely after entering room 183. This is what I took great pleasure in observing. With the works *Prière de toucher* (1947)*, Fountain, Comb* (1916)*, 50cc of Paris Air* (1919)*, With Hidden Noise* (1916), and *Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?* (1921) among others in the adjacent room, a keen but uninformed visitor cannot be blamed for thinking that the door of *Étant donnés* is also a ready-made. Hector Obalk writes:

> The only definition of 'readymade' published under the name of Marcel Duchamp ('MD' to be precise) stays in Breton and Éluard's *Dictionnaire*

abrégé du Surréalisme: 'an ordinary object elevated to the dignity of a work of art by the mere choice of an artist.'[5]

Either that or the door just puts people off.

The third obstacle in *Étant donnés* is only applicable to people like me. This is not a gender issue, which is present but much more delicately than what has often been discussed. So why is this piece not about the gendered body? After all, are we not looking at a naked woman? Or are we? I was only too aware of the theories around the bulging genitalia of the naked body, the question of hermaphroditism, and the feelings of throbbing fleshiness felt by some intellectual and critical viewers in relation to the unreal landscape in the background. I must say, my impression is that this body does not only refer to a body but also points towards a history of representation. Yet, this was not the obstacle. The issue I was faced with was also not an economic, or a racial, one. No. As a 4ft 10" human being, the issue is one of height. On closer inspection, one can see that the Spanish door is metaphorically hinged upon two small holes, around which the wood has changed colour, no doubt due to the breath of visitors. The stain in the door both tames and reveals the way of seeing the work, as it shows—and somehow also demands—from where to look. Through the holes, viewers peep and see the other part of the installation. Yet, after having travelled halfway across the world, there I was, helpless, unable to reach the holes on the door. I could not believe it. I jumped: I saw a leg. I jumped again: oh, how light and colourful. This was not working. I took out my digital camera (the museum allows photography without a flash in most of its rooms) and extended my arms up, clicking through the holes. Was this going to be a missed encounter? Would I only be able to see an image, a second rate, shaky representation?

Tired and jet-lagged, I was ready to give up. I stomped back into light and airy 182, with the reassuring *Le Grand verre* and where a bored gallery assistant was sitting. *No*, she giggled when I asked, she did not have anything I could stand on—even though we were sitting on a particularly apt bench—and my pleadings and travel dramas only added to her boredom. I was not even worthy of a look. Nothing. Who cared about art, anyway? I walked back to room 183 and resolved to perfect my jumping technique. I was not going anywhere. I was even prepared to ask somebody to lift me—and body contact with strangers is the very last resort—when I had an idea. As a small person, I tend to wear shoes with heels, and, although the ones I was wearing then were not high enough for the occasion, doubling their height would suffice. So I took off one shoe and stood on one leg and two shoes. I could reach now, propping my one-

legged body by holding on to the Spanish door. The irritating third obstacle was conquered, and I can show you what I saw (Fig. 0.1).

The last obstacle I had to overcome is the most disconcerting. This piece is viewed from a single and specific point, through holes. The encounter with *Étant donnés* is so personal that, as Julian Jason Haladyn explains, the experience is always very difficult to summarise, let alone document.[6] I was not prepared for the fact that *Étant donnés* is clearly a work about gaze and looking. The references to dioramas and peep shows, and the teasing of vision within these, are literally present in the piece but apart from showing our gaze back at us, and converting us into objects in the same way those contraptions and entertainment venues do, this is an installation about a particular kind of looking: looking at art. Evidencing this is its discussion, in visual form, of the two main subjects of the history of art, particularly painting: the nude and the landscape; and its exploration of different media: sculpture, painting, chiaroscuro, photography, assemblage, time-based media, conceptual art—remember the title. Funnily enough, though, *Étant donnés* cannot be represented, either in words or images, as in and out cannot be viewed at the same time. It cannot be photographed as a whole. It is an experience in sequence, a little like a film, but one in which the viewer acts on, or lives. Even the shop's clever idea for the unavoidable postcard—a telling of the experience through lenticular photography—misses the point.

My complete bafflement at something so evident (what else could I have been expecting?) might have been because I had never really seen the piece before. Whereas *Le Grand verre* is a transparent, freestanding structure that can be seen from any point, *Étant donnés* limits the view. Moreover, I was completely excluded from the scene, only partly seeing it from the outside, although even that last word is contentious. Where are we in relation to the Spanish door? In or out; enclosed or excluded? Or both? Even though I was not in the scene of the work, I was in another scene: that of the experience of viewing. I was very conscious of my act of looking. Yet, apart from being a work about gaze and looking, it is also about what one cannot see. I wanted to get a peek at the head of the woman, even though I knew that, no matter how or how much I moved, I would be unable to fulfil my wish. Does she have one, anyway?

Fig. 0.1: Marcel Duchamp's *Étant donnés* (behind the Spanish door) at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, as experienced by the author

What one can see through the holes has been well documented—you can see my own images in Fig. 0.1—but the strong experiential content of the work requires I record it again, in writing. Straight after the holes is a thick darkness—a darkness, I learn in books, that is velvet-lined. Then, bricks are arranged so that they form a casual but meticulous gap through which I peep at the scene. This scene has elements of the psychoanalytic primal one. The *International Dictionary of Psychoanalysis* defines the primal scene as:

> the sight of sexual relations between the parents, as observed, constructed, and/or fantasised by the child and interpreted by the child as a scene of violence. The scene is not understood by the child, remaining enigmatic but at the same time provoking sexual excitement.[7]

It is brightly lit, which immediately challenges my shadow-accustomed eyes. A bucolic landscape, apparently painted over photographic material and reminiscent of the backdrop of Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*, with a waterfall conveying the illusion of running water, gives way, at the

forefront of the scene, to a bed of real twigs which support a naked body, only partially visible, holding the illuminating gas, which does just that, illuminate. I know this scene so well, yet it still feels strange to write about it. Nothing goes with anything, but it has some sort of unity. Is this the scene of a crime? Is the body dead, or about to die?[8]

Étant donnés continues to baffle Duchamp scholars, some of whom find it difficult to place within his work. There have been theories around *Given* being a three-dimensional representation of *Le Grand verre*,[9] as some of the themes are re-worked—not least the bride, stripped bare—and they both share elements articulated in *The Green Box*. Of course, *Étant donnés* could be comprised within the context of *Le Grand verre*, but it also references a number of other works by Duchamp. For some critics, *Étant donnés* means a return to (some would say a step back into) representation. But, as Dalia Judovitz points out, this is not a negation of ready-mades and conceptualism; rather, *Étant donnés* takes Duchamp's ground-breaking ideas to their extreme: is the Philadelphia Museum of Art not a ready-made, when looked at through the holes of the Spanish door?[10] And if it *is* a negation—which could also be argued—it is so in the Hegelian and Marxian sense of "aufgehoben". Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's "aufheben" has three distinct but related meanings: to cancel or suspend, to raise up, and to preserve or maintain. The duplicity of these meanings delighted Hegel and would also delight Duchamp.[11]

I could write many interpretations about my experience, from what I saw and what I have read. Of all the explanations, I found that psychoanalysis lent itself particularly well as a critical approach, due to its Dada and Surrealism connections, its relation to gaze and its portrayal of the body. But historical, technical, psychological, contextual and even phenomenological accounts cannot explain my sudden overpowering attraction to *Étant donnés*. I had been unequivocally seduced, and this is where it all started.

This study is about seduction as it manifests itself in certain works of art. It is concerned with what happens between seducer and seducee in the seductive encounter. This specific relationship, as will be seen, is governed by conflict. To study it, I have taken a psychodynamic approach, looking at the psychological, cultural, and active forces underlying behaviour. Yet, the guiding principle of the research is practice—artistic and others, including looking—as this is what enables a psychodynamic relation with objects and works of art. The research is indebted to various works of art, which have inspired it along the way. These will be explored throughout the text and the visual material. What may be more obscure is the influence of a number of literary texts, namely Choderlos de Laclos's

Les Liaisons Dangereuses, Marquis de Sade's *Dialogue between a Priest and a Dying Man*, Giacomo Casanova's memoirs *History of My Life,* and Vladimir Nabokov's novels. Of all of these, the first three have a direct link to seduction, as they approach issues linked to libertinism. The last inspiration, however, may require a little explanation. The divine details, precision, interest in detectives, and detection, unravelling of the story at the end (for example in *The Eye*), narrative structure (*Pale Fire*), and the act of recounting without telling but by showing (as in *Lolita*, *Bend Sinister*, *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight* or *Despair*) are all writing attributes I have kept in mind while constructing this text. Malcolm Ashmore's *The Reflexive Thesis: Wrighting Sociology of Scientific Knowledge*, more academic in its execution, has also stimulated my writing.[12]

There are certain rules of engagement I must mention before I set out to explore the complex phenomenon of seduction. The present volume is structured around pairs of chapters: 1 and 2, 4 and 5, 6 and 7, with chapter 3 acting as a pivot on which the narrative hinges. Chapter 3, "The Scene of a Crime", is the kernel, the point at which the writing changes somewhat, reversing and mirroring itself—and reversibility, as we will see, is a key characteristic of seduction. This chapter introduces Roland Barthes's conceptualisation of the *still* as what allows us to see, and also makes a case for different modes of writing, using Jacques Lacan's work as an example. Often seen as obscure and impenetrable, Lacan's use of language reflects the structure and ways of working of what it describes, the unconscious. The second part of the chapter is the analysis of a seductive encounter between an object—a work of art—and a subject—me. The example I have chosen is Sophie Calle's work *Take Care of Yourself*. As I apply the self-reflexive methodology I develop in chapter 2, the piece on Calle's work should act as evidence of seduction. Duality, another trait of seduction, will also make an appearance in chapter 3, in the form of the analysis's conclusion, a photographic image.

On either side of chapter 3 are the other six chapters, which, together with this introduction and a conclusion, form the nine parts of this text. Chapter 1, "The Seduction of the Object and its Problems" sets the context through a review of the existing literature on the topic, including a brief outline of disciplinary areas concerned with seduction (psychoanalysis, consumer studies, captology, criminology), a review of the key arguments in Jean Baudrillard's monograph and the analysis of several examples. I took special care to explore the two main recurrent problems of seduction, as pointed to by extant studies: its definition and its pervasiveness, which paradoxically, makes it difficult to apprehend.

In chapter 2, "Screen as Method", I outline a number of blind alleys through which I went, to arrive at the conclusion that a methodology to study seduction was required. Reviewing existing work on seduction led me to see that it was not a case of studying seduction itself, but of developing a tool to study it, as this was lacking within previous works, mainly focused on philosophical aspects or the techniques of seduction (rather than its observation). So in chapter 2, I form a plan, a trap to capture and record instances of seduction and, with this, resolve the problem of how to look at this object of study. I form my proposal—the self-reflexive methodology—stemming from engagement with three practices—psychoanalytic, artistic and writing—which are developed throughout. I examine a series of parallels between the practices of art-making and psychoanalysis. The latter's history is, I argue, valuable for the study of the psychodynamics of seduction, as these also take place in a clinical transference situation.

In chapter 4, "Work of Art as Seducer", I undertake further analysis of works of art. A way of reading, of interpreting what is seen through the methodological instrument, is proposed, and I divide the writing into sections exploring photographic self-portraiture, place, objects, dreams, and participatory and performative works. The artists I discuss are Lee Friedlander, Lisette Model, Eugène Atget, Tracey Emin, Naia del Castillo, Damian Hirst, Méret Oppenheim, Man Ray, Louise Bourgeois, Pipilotti Rist, Santiago Sierra, Tino Sehgal, and Marina Abramovic. The writing is constructed experientially, from my own encounters with these works of art, works that seduce me. Therefore, this is not an observational analysis of seduction, but a study, like in the case of my encounter with *Étant donnés*, from within.

In chapter 5, I examine what happens when seduction goes wrong or is on the path of becoming a perversion, an addiction, a psychopathology. Organised under the categories of appropriation, stalking, neurosis, and perversion, I explore the works of Robert Rauschenberg, Richard Prince, Sherrie Levine, Sophie Calle, Chris Kraus, Vito Acconci, Laura Blereau, Christina Ray and Lee Walton, Jillian Mcdonald, Robert Mapplethorpe, Gina Pane, and Marina Abramovic, among others.

Chapters 6 and 7 are part of a continuum. Playing on its criminal disposition—which I explore in chapter 1—I put seduction's case forward to a jury or panel and defend it. This chapter is outlined as a series of questions and answers that relate the context of seduction, as set out in chapter 1, to the work developed in subsequent chapters. By putting the work undertaken in my study back into its context, its validity is tested. Chapter 6 raises issues around the methodology and its place within

Marxism (the close context), whereas chapter 7 looks at the work of art and other models to study seduction (the wide context). After chapter 7, I return to conclude and close, involving you, the reader, directly into the text. This structural arrangement is fairly classical and straightforward (literature survey, methodology, empirical study, analysis and evaluation; with an introduction and a conclusion). You will also notice that, occasionally, there is a visual interlude. Sometimes, the response to the work of art analysed, or the devising of the methodology, has a visual response or outcome, aside from the writing. This stems not only from my own visual arts practice and training but also from the engagement with the works themselves, an example of the analysis of a seductive encounter, just as the writing is.

My aim is to formulate a way of studying the seduction exerted by certain works of art from within the seductive relationship. Thus, the contribution this book makes is a methodology—a conceptual framework for operation—that facilitates the study of seduction, in particular of works of art. As the investigative work is done from the inside, the capture of seduction is essential to its study and reflection and, thus, the methodology focuses on these two aspects—capture and reflection—as well as recognising the moment where the subject falls for the object. The focus on works of art comes from the fact that this research is concerned with object-subject encounters, rather than with subject-subject encounters. Works of art are seductive in themselves, as we will see in the first chapter, and provide a more complex and open case study than objects of consumption such as lemon squeezers, shoes or electronic goods, which are more openly governed by market rules.[13]

The first question my study proposed was: *what makes a work of art seductive?* An attempt at answering it showed that there is another question that needs to be asked first. If we assume, given the evidence shown in the literature, that seduction is a pervasive phenomenon, but one that is not completely visible, the only possible way to study it is by provoking it, by becoming part of it so one can understand the hidden and unseen elements that take place. There is no current methodology to do this, however, so my research question evolved to become an epistemological and methodological one: how might one study seduction as it operates in the encounter with a work of art? The answer to my question is the self-reflexive methodology, a tool that will enable those who are seduced in the art gallery to develop an awareness that the specific relation formed with the work of art is reversible, that they are not passive, but active, and that the encounter is not a fatal one, but one that can bring about self-knowledge. This would thus allow the viewer to avoid