

## ABSTRACT

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### *L O A: Drawing the Diagram/me/*

Operating in the wake of Conceptual art, this PhD sheds new light on the function of fiction and objectivity. I have positioned fiction at the centre of my methodology in order to signal or mark a place of lack in all systems of objective recording; map, diagram, geometry, perspective etc. Following Roland Barthes, I propose fiction as a 'third', neutralising system that I name *diagram/me/*.

I have written a set of characters; A and H, whose interaction pulls together strands from two disparate approaches to art practice: Conceptual art from the 1960s and the Euston Road School (1937-1990s). As a painter within the legacy of the latter, A inherits a set of suppositions that suggest a fixed, sovereign, position in relation to the object. A's position cannot be easily sustained however; a proliferation of forms – textual and diagrammatic – are substituted for the unifying painting.

Something intrudes upon A that H, as interlocutor, speculates on through a range of media with mutable characteristics, such as melted wax, Tipp-Ex, ink that leaks or paint that spills across boundaries. Drawing primarily on the psychoanalytic theories of Jacques Lacan, H's *scribe-ely* activity demonstrates the flaw at the centre of all organisatory or communicatory systems: Subjectivity. For Lacan, a Subject is a subject of language, riddled with desire. *Diagram/me/* traces the subjective position as a network within which something has been lost.

The working title for this PhD – *The Lost Object Archive* – has gradually evolved into a figure: *L O A*. All the elements of the *L O A* are of equal status and can be encountered in any combination. It is in the gaps between the different components that 'I' as subject is constantly being re-written, echoing the endless revisions of the speaking subject.