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## The Art of Murder

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### Abstract

In 'On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts', Thomas De Quincey argues that murder can, by definition, be considered a form of visual art and should be viewed as an aesthetic rather than from a sociological point of view. This is also what I intend to do. I will look at murder from a stylistic perspective and use De Quincey's aesthetic analysis of murder to create my own pieces of textual practice. This link between murder, eroticism and art can also be seen in numerous other novels and pieces of art. My research is concerned with the relational and psychodynamic aspects of the connection between the topics. The first step towards confirming this connection is to define murder, a concept that is both difficult to process but one that is also constantly provoking attention. Murder is seen as the worst thing in human life but that doesn't stop people being incredibly curious about it.

In the Oxford English Dictionary art is defined as "The expression or application of creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting, drawing, or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power." The key words here are 'typically' and 'primarily.' By this definition it is possible that, like Thomas De Quincey argued, murder could be considered an art form.

Any attempt at pinning this definition down, however, shows that it is seen as a pervasive one to many. The problem with this then becomes a methodological one. How does one study murder as it operates in the encounter with works of art? I decided on a practice-led approach, comprised of three different strands; artistic, psychoanalytic and writing practices.

The context for my research is polymorphic and located in the continuously changing field between visual and textual material.

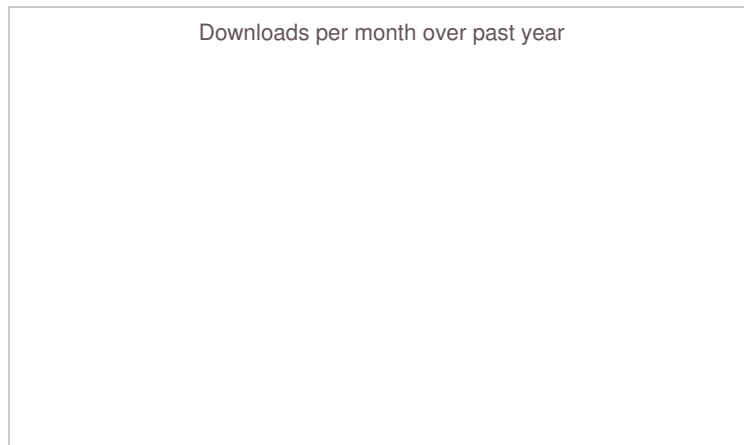
I have focussed mainly on the following novels; *The Story of the Eye* by Georges Bataille, *Justine* by Marquis De Sade, *In the Realms of the Unreal* by Henry Darger, *The Aesthetics of Murder* by Joel Black and *Murder as a Fine Art* by Thomas De Quincey. I have used these pieces of literature as the basis for my own textual practices as well as using artists that have been viewed historically as controversial.

These artists are as followed; Walter Sickert, Henry Darger and Jake and Dinos Chapman. I have used these artists and writers as characters in my writing practices, always besides the story's main character – Murder.

I have written my own psychological short stories and will be using these stories/poems to create textual imagery of the assembly between murder and art. The use of adjectives in these pieces are particularly important. My research will look into controversy, ethical issues and stylised violence in art as well as the psychological features that go into writing about murder. I will be presenting violence as a form of expressive art both through creative writing and illustrative pieces representing both the artists involved in my writing and a replication of their styles of creativity. My own artistic practice will support the writing and help sustain the

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