

MAKING DOMAINS conference – Illustration Animation Kingston University,
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Central to this talk is the ongoing development of one project, *Woman's World*, a novel collaged from text fragments cut from the pages of vintage women's magazines and reassembled to tell the 1962 story of Roy and 'sister' Norma's struggle to live up to the prescribed ideals of feminine perfection. The collaged text pieces retain the essence of their original context, which permeates through to the finished piece. Thus Norma's constructed persona is governed by their editorial opinions and values, while her narration is shaped by the syntax and inflections of the source material's distinctive voice.

The talk also reflects more broadly on the effect women's magazines from this period had on the psyches and self-images of their readers.

Seen through the eyes of a cross-dressing man, the magazines read as an instruction manual: how to apply make-up, how to create the latest hairstyles, how to choose and accessorise the appropriate outfit for every occasion. By stitching together words and phrases, Roy is reconstructed as Norma Fontaine, transfigured through the adopted new vocabulary. Keen to achieve womanly perfection, Norma immerses herself in the prescriptive directives on fashion protocol. Empowered by their authoritative tone, she adopts the descriptions themselves as a mantle of femininity, envisioning herself swathed in pale lilac organza supported by a dozen layers of stiff tulle, or a simple, elegant white and gold chiffon cocktail dress by Digby Morton.

The talk also describes the most recent developments for *Woman's World*: a work-in-progress feature-length film of the book composed from thousands of clips sourced from 1950s and '60s films, commercials and TV shows. As with the book, the found material retains inherent characteristics of its original form, which can affect the audience's response on both conscious and unconscious levels. Employing a near identical collage methodology, it continues to explore the above themes while experimenting with the principles of narrative continuity and discontinuity: drawing on, and playing with, an audience's propensity to find a coherent story.

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