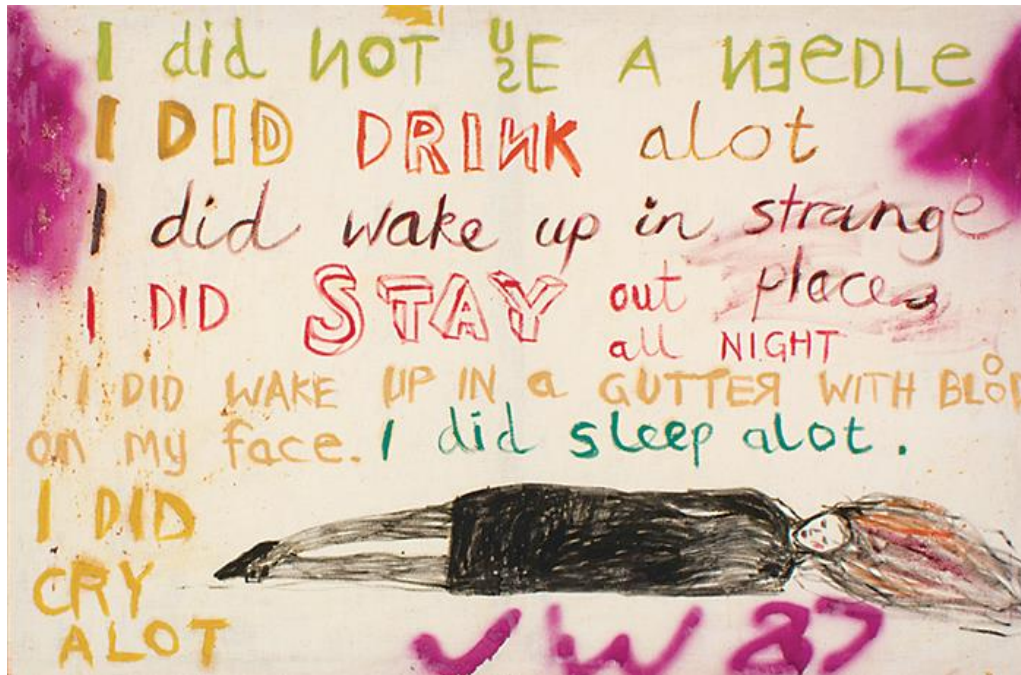


**AAD011 CASE STUDY / CONTEXTUAL RESEARCH AND UNDERSTANDING**  
**NAME: CAOIMHE O'HARE**

Theme: Gender



**Jenny Watson, *The Key Painting*, 1987**

Jenny Watson's art is created using improvisational brushwork with bold colour and 'childish' text. She pulls on her experiences of childhood and womanhood, combining autobiographical with confessional moments of crude honesty. Watson's public paintings have been described as having two great assets, which are "*her professionalism and her narcissism*"<sup>1</sup>. However, it is in that 'narcissism' that allows her work to be related to by many women who have received similar comments in their youth, yet the criticism is directed towards her publicization of these, rather than the source of the quotes. '*The Key Painting*' was a controversial work that was described as "offensive" by critics such as Peter Timms, who argued "*they seem to be dismissing me*"<sup>2</sup>. Her work critiques the comments that have been made to her when she was younger, and the pressures of perfection that women are often held to. The horizontal figure at the bottom of the painting is a self-portrait that appears in many of her works from the 1980s and 1990s, injecting a deeply personal part of herself into each painting through dark black lines that almost overpower the whole piece, reflecting her lived experiences.

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<sup>1</sup> McDonald, J. (2017), 'Review: Jenny Watson, *The Fabric of Fantasy* at the Museum of Contemporary Art' Smh.com.au, Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023, Available at: <https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/review-jenny-watson-the-fabric-of-fantasy-at-the-museum-of-contemporary-art-20170905-gyay09.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Burke, K. (2021), 'Sexism, slurs and Australian art: women's struggle to be seen in a male-dominated world', TheGuardian.com, Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023, Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2021/dec/29/sexism-slurs-and-australian-art-womens-struggle-to-be-seen-in-a-male-dominated-world>.

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