



Play to Rehearse

Beth Dawson

The short graphic story, Play To Rehearse, narrates an account of the transitional experience between childhood ideals and adult realities. It is practical research contributing to the knowledge of how to communicate intimate emotional accounts through illustrated fictionalised stories.

Research process

The comic looks to innovate approaches within the medium by partnering a 'confessional' (M.L Rosenthal, 1959) poetic style of writing with stylised sequential imagery to explore original methods for sharing and visualising complex psychological or emotive states. This piece in particular explores the concept of communicating authentically versus through a performed persona of oneself and ultimately plays with the notion of truth within the 'confessional narrative' genre. It does so through an exploration of character creation in comics and questions how the true narrator of the comic can be masked by using a visual representation of someone 'acting' a part instead. In doing this, the comic intends to challenge perceptions of the authorial voice within the confessional/biographical comic genre.

Research Insights

The story contributes to a body of contemporary comic work exploring and evolving sequential illustrative practice through unpicking the structuring and creation of comics and the conventions within this field.

Dissemination

Rigorous process has been used to validate the significance of the piece through its selection via juried panel for international exhibition and with this comic, the author is one of only a few women selected for exhibition at Salon Stripa, International Comics Festival 2015 in Serbia. The comic was also exhibited in Leeds City Library's Art Library exhibition space as part of F= Presents "Festival Of The Body" exhibition, 2016.

STARRING AMY TID
AS ANNIE ROBIN...

Play to Rehearse

BY BETH DAWSON.

I heard someone say that
children play to rehearse



To prepare for being older.



Now that I am older



I don't feel well rehearsed



I often wish ...



that i could



go back
to the bottom of
the garden



and practise some more



When I am troubled



I sometimes try to recall

All of the stories



the vicar would tell us



As he sat on his chair backwards.



something about chickens



something about a brick in a box



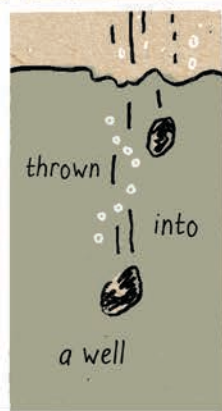
some story

of sticks and stones



Well, I never broke any bones.





When I was an angry child



watching them until they were so small they'd look more like sticks.

I would kick the big logs, washed up on the banks of the river

kick until they came free and began to float away...

Then I'd run back home through the long grass



And feel like I'd set myself free

They say that children play to rehearse



But I can't escape the feeling...

I did all the living back then

And now...



I just recite the lines

To a life, where I feel more like the understudy...

and less like the star.

Oh well

Oh well.