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# Out-of-Place

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Documentation and commentary on the body of practical work submitted for the degree of Master of Fine Art.

Faculty of Humanities  
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## COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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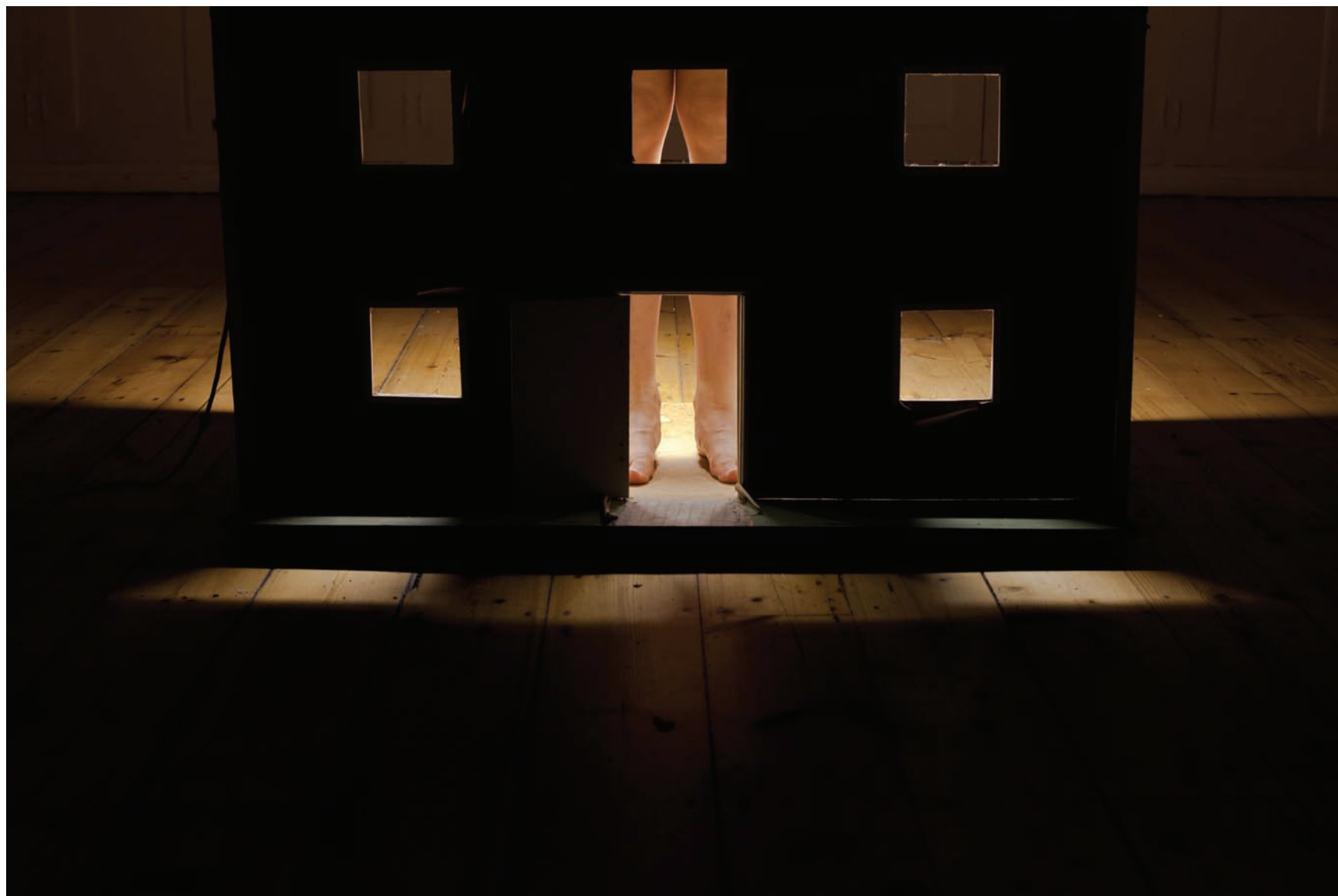
## Process work

This series of photographs were the initial process works for my project. I began photographing my body, predominately my legs, in personal spaces. These spaces included my family home and my studio and depicted performances of my interaction with these spaces and objects and elements from the home. This series of process works introduced to me to the idea of working within the home and photographing my performances. They differ from the main body of work, which was photographed in my mother's new home – the location that I chose for my photographs and performances, in that they were not remediated into collage works.



*Untitled 1 (Process Work)*

Inkjet Print  
2012  
61 x 86cm



*Untitled 2 (Process work)*

Inkjet Print

2012

61 x 86 cm



*Untitled 3 (Process work)*

Inkjet Print

2012

61 x 86 cm



*Untitled 4 (Process work)*

Inkjet Print

2012

86 x 61 cm



*Untitled 5 (Process work)*

Inkjet Print

2012

86 x 61 cm



*Untitled 6 (Process work)*

Inkjet Print

2012

61 x 86 cm



*Untitled 7 (Process work)*

Inkjet Print  
2012  
61 x 86 cm



*Untitled 8 (Process work)*

Inkjet Print

2012

61 x 86 cm



*Untitled 9 (Process work)*

Inkjet Print

2012

61 x 86 cm



*Untitled 10 (Process work)*

Inkjet Print  
2012  
61 x 86 cm



*Untitled 11 (Process work)*

Inkjet Print

2012

61 x 86 cm



# Introduction

This project initially arose from my fascination with the relationship of fairy stories to the place in which they are commonly told, the home. I was interested in the state of betweenness, the slippage between the lived experience of the childhood home and the world of fantasy that these stories occasioned through my imagination. As the project grew it moved out of the realm of fairy stories and developed into an investigation of my adult relationship with my mother's house. It became an exploration of the slippage between my experience of belonging in my mother's house as a child and my sense of displacement in it as a young adult. My mother recently began to build a new house that was itself in a state of "becoming" in that it was under construction. As a space that was in flux and unoccupied, it offered me a perfect opportunity and setting in which to stage the work for this project.

Prior to my exploration of my mother's new house, the first works for this project were photographed in personal spaces such as

my childhood home and my studio. Through the process of being photographed, and by interacting with these spaces and objects that referenced various aspects of home, I started an exploration based on the concealing and revealing of my body. This exploration sparked an interest in the ideas of "the uncanny" as articulated by Sigmund Freud (1919). The uncanny suggests that something can simultaneously be both familiar and strange or unknown, and that the uncanny moves along a continuum of comfort and alienation (Freud 1919, 225). My work explores such a continuum in my experience of my mother's house from comfort to alienation. The use of repetition, one of the forms that manifest the uncanny, has been central to my efforts to understand this continuum (Freud 1919, 223).

As the work progressed I sought to recreate this sense of flux between comfort and alienation and to manifest this through formal manipulation of the photographs I took. I printed the photographs as jumbo

prints<sup>1</sup> and used them as my medium, along with other materials, to create collages and to shape new images. The photographs were continually remediated through a process of tearing them up, cutting them and covering them with glue, masking tape, packaging tape, thread, micropore<sup>2</sup>, stockings and sellotape. The processes of collage provided an appropriate method for exploring and combining photography with domestic materials that referenced fixing and binding.

While making the works, I pushed and explored the associative qualities of the various materials. As micropore is used to medically dress bodily wounds, it spoke of skin, scars and healing, evoking an intimate

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<sup>1</sup> Jumbo print: a print from a photo lab is slightly larger (102mm x 152mm) and more popular than a standard postcard-sized print.

<sup>2</sup> Micropore: a medical adhesive paper tape used to dress wounds and secure medical tubing. It is also used to minimize scar formation by allowing skin to breathe while protecting the area from stenting (stenting pulls the wound in a way that can cause thick scars to develop). Micropore tape secures the skin and helps prevent pulling of the healing skin.

and tactile association. On the other hand, the ubiquitous brown packaging tape also used in my work, commonly used for sealing boxes, suggests a sense of emotional and physical distance quite opposite to the intimate associations of micropore.

Remediation, process-performance and repetition became key forms in the making of my work. Repetition became an effective means of expressing my anxiety about my state of betweenness as well as a way of exploring and understanding it. I employed a variety of repetitive actions in the creation of my work, repeating mediums, performances and images. I also employed repetition as a means of illustrating movement. Repetition is also key in my process performances, whether in repetitively attaching images with bandages to paper or cardboard, cutting bandages into rectangles, or returning again and again to my mother's house to try to physically locate my body there. My performance unfolds both in front of the camera and in the repetitive actions of the making of the collages. I remediate materials in my collages through juxtaposing physical

material with photographs of that material, setting up a tension between the real and imagined. I removed materials from their original context or use and remediated them in relation to each other. Remediation allows one to process materials and change them. It creates a space between the imagined and the real.

In this text I discuss how my work functions in relation to its artistic context: the uncanny, repetition, nostalgia and remediation. Accordingly, my text is divided into four chapters: Locating the surface disruption; Repeating, enacting displacement; Narrating: in my mother's house; and Medium as object. In the first chapter I locate my work within an artistic context, looking at artists such as Annette Messenger, Kiki Smith, the Starn Twins and Francesca Woodman, each of whom explore the disruption of the image surface. Chapter two focuses on repetition, its role in Freud's notion of the uncanny and the role it performs both in the creation of the work and my understanding of the work. Chapter three looks at the role of nostalgia

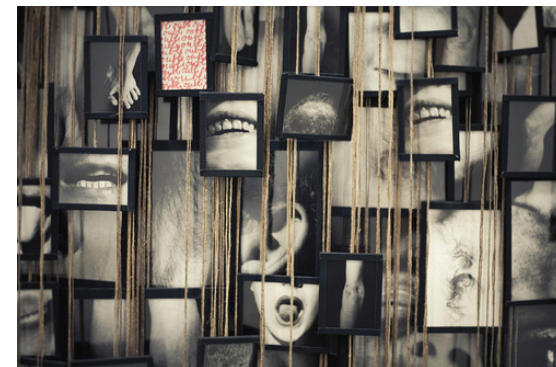
in my work, while in chapter four, Medium as object, I discuss the works in relation to their materiality.



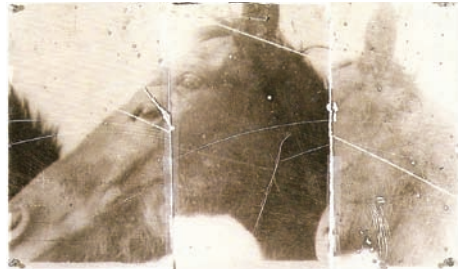
## Locating the surface disruption

The work of artists like Annette Messenger, Kiki Smith and the Starn Twins forms a context and framework around the photographic image and the photograph as object. The way these artists' works reference the body, as well as the disruption of the image surface through seriality, fracturing and repetition have influenced my own image-making. In Messenger's case her handling of the imaging of the body through collage is particularly compelling and best exemplified in her work *My vows* (1988-91). She fragments the body by taking small photographs of its details, which she then combines through a hanging process into a larger autonomous form. Her method of assemblage asserts the physicality of her photographs; by fragmenting and then combining the photographs into a new form she obscures the body while also transforming it.

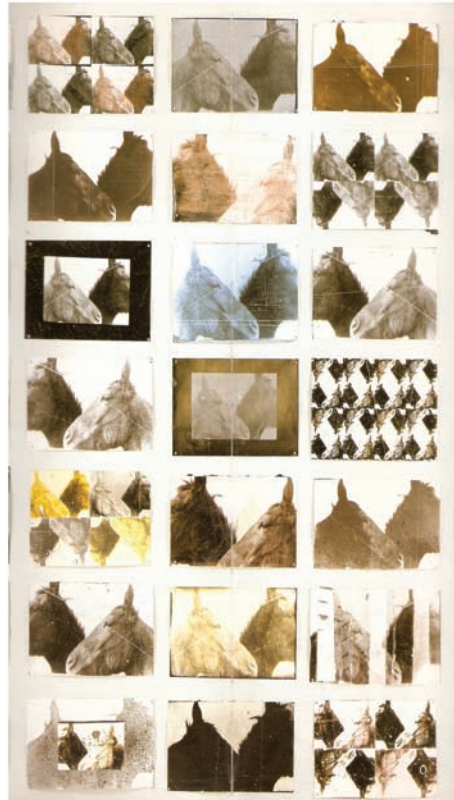
The Starn Twins also fragment and recombine their images. In *Two-headed Swan* (1988-89) they take an image of a swan, cut up the image, tint it, crumple it and then reassemble it, but now incorporating a second swan head. In 1986 they produced



Annette Messenger, *My Vows*, New York (1988-91). Gelatin-silver prints under glass, and string



The Starn Twins, *Horses*, New York (1985-86). Toned Silver print, tape



The Starn Twins, *Horses*, Cambridge, Mass (1985-86). Toned Silver print, tape

an edition of 100 unique prints of two horses' heads taken from the same negative but printed differently, tinted, cropped and collaged in repeating patterns made up of up to 16 horse pairs (Grundberg 1990, 36). Kiki Smith's work was also informative in its use of repetition and its cannibalism<sup>1</sup> or recycling of the image. I was drawn to her frequent depictions of the body and how she reuses prints, cutting them up and repurposing them.

The photographs of Francesca Woodman formed the initial stimulus for my practice. Whereas the Starn Twins disrupt the surface of their photographs by means of cutting, sticking and collaging, Francesca Woodman's work contains no such surface disruption. Here, disruption occurs within the image itself through a process of blurring, cropping and framing. Indeed, Claire Raymond notes in her book, *Francesca Woodman and the Kantian Sublime*, that "Woodman took photographs as an

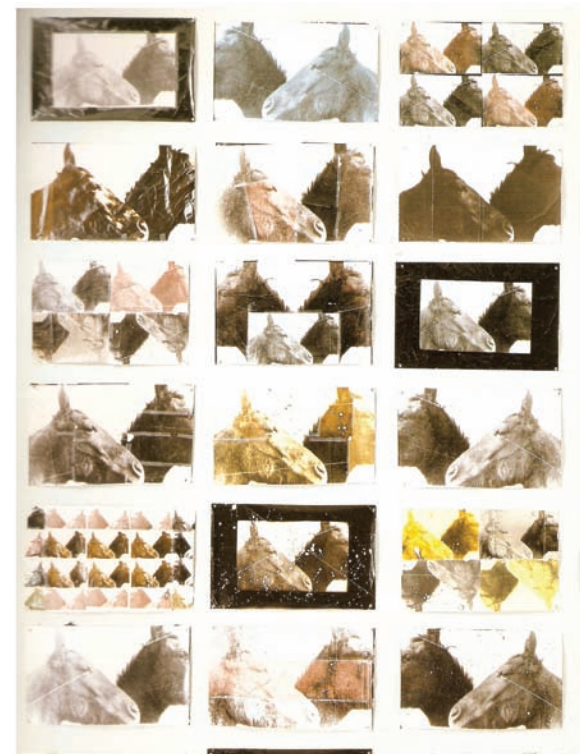
<sup>1</sup> I use the word cannibalism here to reference how Smith consumes the prints she creates by cutting them up and reusing them in different works.

unending interrogation of the disturbance of the frame, an interrogation that, as it happened, her bodily performance, both as photographic subject and as photographer, capably provided” (Raymond 2010, 136).

Neither the Starn Twins nor Annette Messenger professes to be overly concerned with the meaning of the traditional subject matter of their work. In this context Conkelton and Eliel assert that “Messenger deliberately disregards accepted meanings and mixes sources and forms, discovering in her material play a conceptual anarchism in which ideologies are set aside” (1995, 10). Mike Grundberg quotes Doug Starn as saying that “The image means nothing to us, in a sense. It’s just exciting to look at” (Grundberg 1990, 23). Grundberg himself extends this comment: “In other words, their art is resolutely occurred in the ocular. At its best, it derives its meaning and appeal from its surface, not from any underlying concept, and it defies conventional analysis” (Grundberg 1990, 23). According to Grundberg and Conkelton and Eliel, the



*The Starn Twins, Horses, New York (1985-86). Toned Silver print, tape*



*The Starn Twins, Horses, Cambridge, Mass (1985-86). Toned Silver print, tape*



Kiki Smith, *All Souls*, New York (1988). Screenprint on thirty-six attached sheets of handmade Thai paper



Kiki Smith, *Banshee Pearls*, New York (1991). Lithograph with aluminum-leaf additions on twelve sheets of handmade Japanese paper



Kiki Smith, *Untitled (Moons)*, New York (1993). Collaged lithograph on handmade Nepalese paper

surface and the interplay of materials give the Starn Twins' work its meaning, not its subject matter, while *Messenger* focuses on the play between materials. In both cases, materiality and the interchange between materials appear to be more weighty concerns than subject matter.

In this respect my work differs from the artistic context in which I have chosen to locate it. While in my collages the photographs do take on a dual role as both photographic object and collaged material, the imagery is important in and of itself, before its function as collage material. The imagery of my body and its relationship to the home play a pivotal role in how I treat the images. For example, in *Fraying* the photographed body is framed by and contained in the mirror within the format of the jumbo print, which in turn has been covered by and bound with layers of stocking and stitched repetitively in text-like rows. The collage emphasises the containment of the body within the mirror; it is the location of the body that forms the focus of the work.



The Starn Twins, *Two-headed Swan*, Vienna (1988-89).  
Toned silver print, tape, metal



## Repeating, enacting displacement

Informed by Freud's notion of the uncanny, my project explores ways of expressing feelings of alienation and unease and aims to inhabit what cultural critic Nicholas Royle describes in his discussion of the uncanny as "the revelation of something unhomely at the heart of hearth and home" (Royle 2003, 1).

Sigmund Freud, in a philosophical exploration of *heimlich*, uncanny's German antonym, suggests that *heimlich* refers to belonging to the home, of being familiar, intimate, friendly and not strange (Freud 1919, 220). This resonates with the setting of my images within the home environment. Freud clarifies that the word also suggests secrecy

or being kept from view, from others and from the self. He believes that the secretive state of *heimlich* develops until it comes full circle and meets its opposite, *unheimlich*, or the uncanny (Freud 1919, 225). In reviewing Royle's book, *The uncanny*, Kevin Morrison, a professor of English at Syracuse University, comments that Freud concluded that the experience of the uncanny "naturally disrupts both a sense of one's own self and one's place in the world" (Morrison 2003, 139). Freud writes that "the better orientated in his environment a person is, the less readily will he get the impression of something uncanny in regard to the objects and events in it" (Freud 1919, 220). Thus my sense of out-of-placeness amplifies my uncanny feeling of not belonging in my mother's new house.

### *Shifting*

Jumbo prints & cellotape  
2012-2013  
19 x 89 cm



The uncanny can be represented through different means, one of which is repetition. Freud wrote that “in the unconscious mind we can recognize the dominance of a compulsion to repeat, which proceeds from instinctual impulses” (Freud 1919, 144). He further adds that “anything that can remind us of this inner *compulsion to repeat* is perceived as uncanny” (Freud 1919, 145). The concept of repetition is key to my project: the repetition of a figure performing similar actions; reproduction of the photographs; multiple images of the same performance; and the repeated actions of my physical work on the photographs themselves. Repetition used to create the work *Shifting* is marked by the action of collaging the images with several variations of the same photograph of my body in my family home, repetitively worked over in layers of sellotape. The tape obscures parts of the images, creating a film over them suggestive of a veil or curtain that conceals parts of the image and also hints at revelation.

Freud examined how repetition, particularly of unpleasant past experiences, is a means of rearming oneself, of “mastering the amounts

of stimulus which have broken in and ... binding them, in the physical sense, so that they can be disposed of” (Freud 1919, 20). In *Beyond the pleasure principle* (1920) Freud discusses repetition as a means of dealing with repressed anxieties. As an example he gives the instance of a child playing with a toy, constantly throwing it away and then retrieving it to deal with the absence and therefore supposed loss of his mother.

In my work with repetition I have attempted to uncover the repressed/hidden feeling of out-of-placeness that is at the root of my uncanny experience. The repetition of my own image is an attempt to find comfort in the familiar. In *Unfolding*, repetition is expressed through multiple photographs of my legs performing within a doll’s house. The jumbo prints of these images were physically taped together, and then re-photographed as a whole and produced as an inkjet print, the surface of which I scrubbed. There is a tear in the print through which one can see parts of the concealed original prints below. The rows of images are not aligned in these two layers, thereby suggesting a continued layering and repetition beneath the surface.

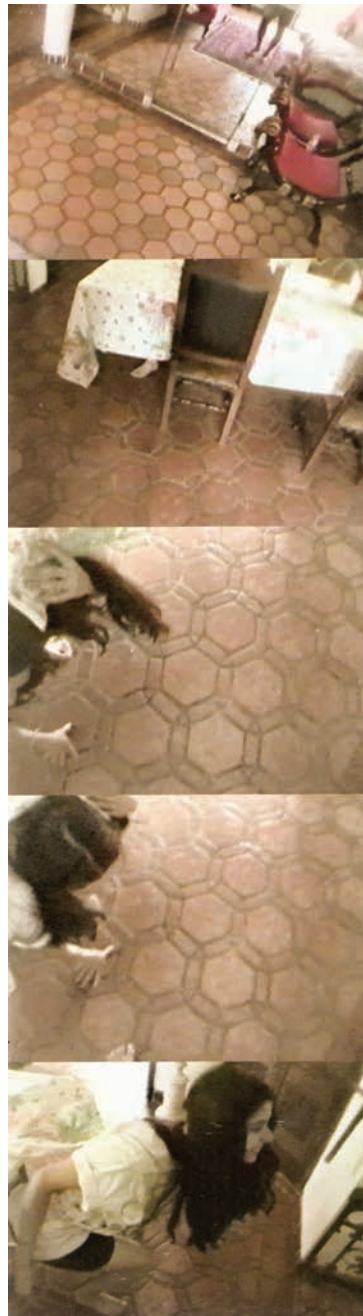
The top print appears faded and scrubbed while the bottom layer is shiny, as if the image is slowly sloughing off its skin. Through this tear in the surface the viewer is invited to look under and beneath.

Freud quotes German philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling on the uncanny, describing it as “something which ought to have remained hidden but has come to light” (Schelling in Freud 1919, 224). He applies Schelling’s description to his own argument, saying, “the uncanny [*unheimlich*] is something that is secretly familiar [*Heimlich-heimisch*], which has undergone repression and then returned from it, and [...] everything that is uncanny fulfills this condition” (Freud 1919, 241). Freud does, however, observe that while the uncanny is something that undergoes repression and returns from it, conversely “not everything that fulfills this condition ... is on that account uncanny” (Freud 1919, 245).

The concept of concealment plays a role in my imagining of the work. In my images my body is often obscured by motion-blur or is reflected in mirrors, or hidden further through



*Unfolding*  
Inkjet print, jumbo prints tape  
2012 - 2013  
62 x 47.5 cm



the collaging process behind bandages, glue and tape. This serves to evoke Schelling's notion of things that ought to remain hidden coming to light. While collaging the images it feels to me that I attempt to encase them and give them a home, to return them to the familiar. Ultimately the use of repetition in my work suggests the lack of permanence and belonging that elude me.

Contemporary American artist Janine Antoni's 2005 video work, *Ready or not, here I come*, evokes Schelling's sense of the hidden coming to light. The work references the childhood game of hide-and-seek, enacted by Antoni and her father. Through her use of this childhood game Antoni conjures up childhood memories. The work uses repetition to create a sense of the concealed and revealed as the viewer moves repeatedly through the house with her pursuer. Twice finding her, she slips away in a white sheath redolent of bedtime and childhood, until, on the third attempt, unable to find her we move through the house, exploring it, looking around and seeing spaces that appear serene and domestic.

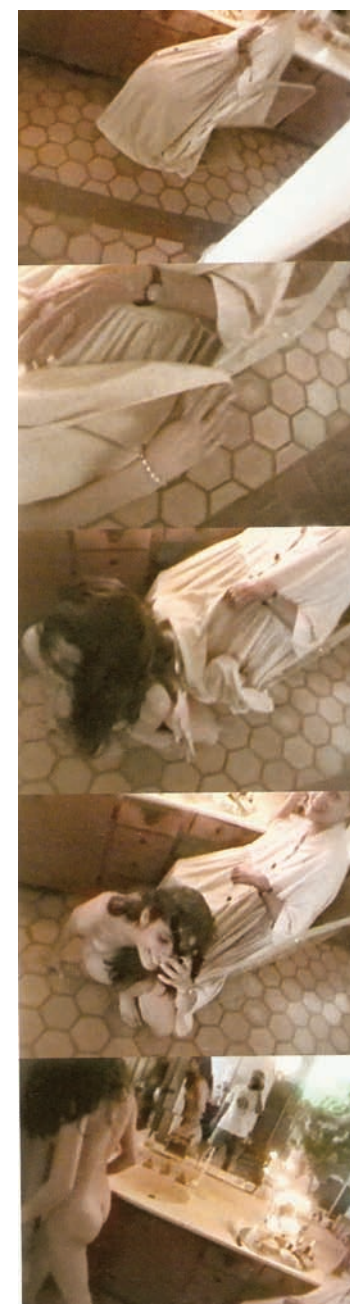


Janine Antoni, *Ready or Not, Here I Come*, London (1994) Stills from Single Channel video

For author Marina Warner, “they [the rooms] speak of shelter, of intimacy, of cleanliness: this is the child’s secure and familiar world of home” (Warner 2000, 81). The third time around the house, the camera motions grow choppy and disturbing as her father searches through the house again and again (Warner 2000, 81). Eventually she is found under her mother’s nightgown and slips away nearly naked.

Inspired by Janine Antoni, in my work *Stepping* I sought to capture my own movement, with the camera pursuing me through my mother’s house. With a slow shutter speed I photographed my feet moving in the doorway of my sister’s old room. I collaged these images and partly submerged them under glue, then scanned sections of the collage to be re-printed and re-collaged. I became both the body trying to hide and, through my camera’s gaze, the pursuer. The sense of pursuit is further evoked by the viewer’s search for fragments of my dissolving, hidden body within the final collage.

Nicholas Royle relates the sensation of dislocation in regards to the uncanny: “One tries to keep oneself out, but one cannot. One tries to put oneself in: same result. The uncanny is an experience of being *after oneself* in the various senses of that phrase. It is the experience of something duplicitous, diplopic, being double” (Royle 2003, 16). The photographer and the photographed subject in my work, both myself, are the mirrored, doubled images of me simultaneously pursuing myself and hiding from myself.



Janine Antoni, *Ready or Not, Here I Come*, London (1994) Stills from Single Channel video



*Stepping*  
12x10 prints  
2012 - 2013  
127 x 165 cm

When performing these images I was blind to what the camera was capturing and could not see what the camera's eye could see. What appeared to me in the mirror was not the same as what the camera captured. My body of work is about things hidden from myself, hidden from my gaze in the camera's eye, semi-obsured by the layers of bandages, tape and glue. The camera is the blind spot, which reveals and exposes hidden aspects of my anxious condition and relationship to my mother's house. The camera became my eye, thereby playing with the act of seeing.

The space in which I perform in front of the camera is not suggestive of a particular space. It is a space in flux, empty and devoid of fixtures or homely touches such as flooring, curtains and furniture. This absence is very specific, a space under construction that is becoming my mother's new house. It is the disposition of a new location.

*Lapsing*  
Jumbo prints, masking tape & micropore  
2012-2013  
12 x 338.5 cm

The articulation of this space of betweenness, of the becoming in my mother's house and my lack of location and sense of becoming,



is what I am attempting to convey in my work. In *Lapsing* I attempt to explore this sense of betweenness. *Lapsing* is made from discarded pieces of photographs that I had cut sections out of for another work. The resultant spaces were filled with masking tape and overlaid with micropore and the prints were joined edge-to-edge so that the skirting boards in the images aligned to form a shape evocative of a wave. The work plays with absence, the filling of those absent, empty spaces and the continual change of the images through the process of collage.

The fragmented and repeated images of my own body allude to my awareness of how a consciousness of the construction of the feminine as surface has tempered the depiction of the female body in western visual culture (Rus 2005: online). Many contemporary artists have exploited material and image disruption of the surface in their work to explore the mutable processes of construction that imagining the feminine self might entail within a postmodern context. As critic Eva Rus notes, Francesca Woodman's photographs depict her body

in a way that suggests the idea of the self's "constant transitionality and mutability of being" (Rus 2005: online). This idea is evoked through her depictions of the body as distorted, faceless, dual, cropped and dissolving. Rus continues: "Woodman gets outside of the corporal limitations of her female human frame through the very act of incorporating herself as a subject of her own art" (Rus 2005: online). Rus comments that Woodman negotiates the boundaries of the self by applying strategies of doubling, metamorphosis and fetishization and she writes that Woodman's body, as the foremost signifier for feminine identity, "symbolizes a margin that not only delimits the morphology of the imaginary self, but also allows access to the unfamiliar, the social, the symbolic" (Rus 2005: online). Thus Woodman's body shapes a permeable border between the external reality - the unconscious, social institutions.

Similarly, the depictions of my own body are fragmented through motion blur, cropping and collage. The surface of my feminine body becomes a site of construction as



I manipulate the surface of my collages. Through multiple images of the same performance and by reworking the images through the collage process, my work attempts to capture the idea of the self's "constant transitionality and mutability of being". My mother's house becomes a symbol for the self, and thus my discomfort in my mother's new house derives from my developing adult personality and my emerging sense of self.

Freud understands the compulsion to repeat as part of a process to come to terms with repressed memories or states (Freud 1914, 151). Unable to remember, one acts out a "stimulus". Unable to fully articulate my state of out-of-placeness and becoming in words or speech, I enact these states in order to process them and assuage my anxiety about them. Repetition can be a sign of agitation or unease. People with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) tend to perform repetitive actions or display restless behavior as a means of alleviating their anxiety; for example, jiggling legs because one is uncomfortable with sitting still. Similarly, in my images the figures are

restless and constantly in motion. The act of collaging them incorporates these repetitive motions, as if through them I can assuage the restlessness and unease of the images – but conversely this repetition also serves to again reflect my unease and feelings of dislocation.

## Narrating: in my mother's house

Nicholas Royle writes that “it (the uncanny) would appear to be indissolubly bound up with a sense of repetition or ‘coming back’ – the return of the repressed, the constant or the eternal recurrence of the same thing, a compulsion to repeat” (Royle 2003, 2). The uncanny suggests a link to nostalgia for this reason, as nostalgia is a longing for the past or for a return to the past. It speaks of separation from that past and a sense of wishing to return. *Nostros* stems from the Greek meaning “return home” and *algia* also has its roots in Greek, meaning “longing” (Boym 2007, 7).

Svetlana Boym describes the cinematic image of nostalgia as a double exposure, or as “superimposition of two images – of home and abroad, of past and present, of dreams and everyday” (2007, 7). She believes that “the moment we try to force [nostalgia] into a single image, it breaks the frame or burns the image” (Boym 2007, 7). In my work *Binding* I attempted to force this idea of double exposure into a single image by fracturing the image into multiple images of the same performance. The edges



*Binding*  
Jumbo prints & packaging tape  
2012 - 2013  
63.5 x 48 cm



*Mantling*

Paper, packaging tape, jumbo prints  
2012 - 2013  
28.7 x 32 cm



*Dusting*

Light jet print, Diabond  
2012 - 2013  
57 x 44.7 cm

of the packing tape backing the work fan out around the edges, disrupting the grid format of the photographs and breaking up the edges of the image's boundaries. In my work *Mantling*, I tore the photographs of my body moving in the light and shadows coming through the window of my mother's house, and covered them in packaging tape before securing them to a piece of brown paper. These fragments are further distorted by the light and shadow in the photographs and the masking effect of the packaging tape. The resulting image makes the body seem strange and deformed, as if it were a fantastical creature hiding in shadows.

Boym distinguishes two main types of nostalgia: *the restorative and the reflective*. Restorative nostalgia places its emphasis on the *nostros* (home) and attempts a return to, or a reconstruction of, the home. *Reflective nostalgia*, however, stems from the *algia* (the longing itself) and "delays the homecoming – wistfully, ironically, desperately" (Boym 2007, 13). A person experiencing *reflective nostalgia* is aware of what Boym calls "the gap between identity and resemblance,

the home is in ruins or, on the contrary, has just been renovated and gentrified beyond recognition” (Boym 2007, 15-16). The nostalgic aspect of my work falls into the grey area between *nostros* and *algia* in that I return home to find myself in a place I don’t belong. It is no longer recognizably my childhood home, but has instead become the site of construction of a new home.

While nostalgia may appear to be a longing for a particular place, Boym writes that it is actually a longing for a particular time: the time of childhood. In my work this longing for childhood and what it symbolizes – a longing to return to the past – is expressed by a desire to return to my mother’s house. Svetlana Boym describes nostalgia as “a longing for home that no longer exists or has never existed”. She continues that it is “a way of making sense of the impossibility of homecoming” (Boym 2007, 9). I find this observation appropriate to my experience of home. When imaging this experience of home in my work, I appear as a spectral figure, only in parts, blurred or reflected in mirrors. In *Dusting* my figure appears



Francesca Woodman, *Self-Deceit* #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, New York (1979). Silver Gelatin print



*Approaching*  
 Light jet print, Diasec  
 2012 - 2013  
 150 x 75 cm

behind the blur created by the effect of the movement of two plastic bags. Fragmented photographs in my work seek inclusion through repetition and enclosure, swaddled in tape, glue and bandages, as if trying to hold them together.

Francesca Woodman's series, *Self-deceit* (1978), plays with mirrors, the spectral figure and the concept of looking. Claire Raymond explains the *Self-deceit* images thus: "the woman sees herself seen through the allegory of the arranged mirror before which her body turns and this self-seeing becomes a violence, a tableau of the violence done to the one who enacts the seeing" (Raymond 2010, 51). *Self-deceit* depicts Woodman's naked body's interaction with a mirror in an empty building. She plays with the space and her reflection in the mirror. In *Self-deceit #1* Woodman crawls around the corner of a room so that her lower body is obscured and her face is reflected in the mirror. In subsequent images, *Self-deceit #5*, *#6* and *#7*, she hides behind the mirror and then "simply dives with her arms so that her upper half is blurred, effaced, next to

the mirror” (Raymond 2010, 50). There are similarities between this series and my work, *Approaching*, in that both works depict the naked bodies of the artist interacting with a mirror, and through this seeing a kind of violence is enacted in the fragmentation of the body by the mirror.

*Approaching* is a diasec triptych comprised of three images of myself interacting with a mirror in the shell of my mother’s house. The reflective surface of the diasec-printed image reflects the ongoing presence of the mirror and its glimpses of the body. The mirror and reflective surfaces are recurrent subjects in my images. The camera itself is yet another mirror, reflecting my image back to me. In my printed images I try to reference the shiny and reflective, smooth and flat surface of a mirror in the reflective nature of the diasec surface itself. In *Approaching* the mirror forms a diagonal across the picture plane. It creates a sense of violence as the figure depicted is cut into fragments by the sharp edges of the mirror. In the upper section of the triptych only the top of my head is visible; in the middle section, the

lower half of my body is captured both crouching on top of the mirror and reflected back in it; in the lower section of the triptych my lower body appears to the side of the mirror and my upper body is reflected in it.





*Seaming*

Jumbo prints, cotton thread, cardboard, clear tape  
2012-2013  
36.5 x 51.8 cm

## The Medium as Object

In my project the medium of collage became one means of disturbing the stasis of the image, particularly through the incorporation of household materials. Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin ask the question “What is a medium?” in their book *Remediation: understanding New Media*. They answer with this simple definition:

a medium is that which remediates. It is that which appropriates the techniques, forms, and social significances of other media and attempts to rival or refashion them in the name of the real. A medium in our culture can never operate in isolation, because it must enter into relationships of respect and rivalry with other media. (Bolter & Grusin 2000 98)

Mediums therefore derive their identities from other mediums. The mediums used in my collages remediate each other: a photograph of bandages remediates the bandages themselves and are understood in relation to the original bandages with which they are juxtaposed. Materials thus became integral to the process of making my work.

Curator and author Dianne Waldman writes, “Collage has often emphasized concept over end product; it has stressed the meaning of process; it has brought the incongruous into meaningful congress with the ordinary and given the uneventful, the common-place, the ordinary a magic of its

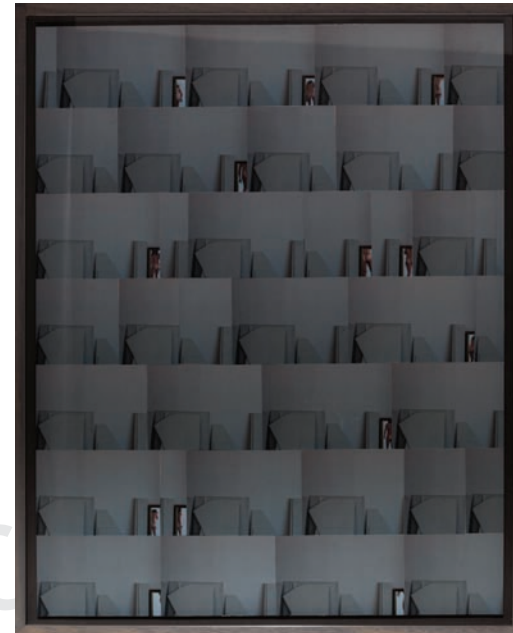
own” (1992, 15). Process can thus be seen to be more important in collaging, rather than the focus simply being on the end product. The process and performance I enact when creating my work is pivotal to the conception of its end product.

The process of constructing the collages is intuitive. When I begin working on an idea I have only a vague conception of where the piece is headed and it is only through repetitive actions, which then prompt further performances, that the final work is arrived at. Sometimes I remediate the images in a way that shows the marks of their previous incarnation. In *Seaming* I used thread to sew photographs of my body reflected in a mirror in the corner of a passageway to secure them to a cardboard field. I then unpicked the stitches, leaving the marks of their passage. The images were then reassembled and re-stitched over the surface of the collage with a neutral-toned thread. The photographs and the cardboard still bear the marks of the previous sewing and unsewing. In reworking the image I separated the photographs from the place that they were originally bound

to and then rebound them in new positions and configurations, suggesting thereby that these bonds are not constant or eternal.

The works remediate each other, using the same materials, images from the same series, images photographed in the same location. Some images are constructed out of other images, using the remains of photographs that were cut up for other collages or photographs of the collages themselves. The same jumbo prints were used to make *Seeking* and *Appearing*. The prints in these works depict a row of tiles leaning against a wall in my mother’s house. I added a mirror to the row, contained within which is the reflection of my moving body. In *Seeking*, the series of photographs is arranged on a rectangular field, laid end-to-end across the field. The photographs are cropped – some show the mirror, some just a portion of the tiles and some the whole image. The offcuts of the jumbo prints used in *Seeking* (images of my bottom) were assembled in a row and taped together in *Appearing*.

As Dianne Waldman (1992) suggests, collage focuses on the process of its creation rather than just the result; it juxtaposes ordinary objects to create an artwork. Everyday objects are used to create my collages: glue, packaging tape, masking tape, bandages, micropore, sellotape, thread and glue. These materials are used to connect, heal, mend, fix, protect and obscure the photographic and inkjet prints of my performances in my mother's house. As noted, the jumbo prints themselves are also used as material for my collages. I perform with these materials by cutting up bandages and using them to connect and secure the jumbo prints or by covering the images with sellotape and masking tape, arranging and then sticking them together with glue. Once I have decided on a material, I use it over and over again, exploring its qualities and its capabilities. This process resulted in different series of works determined by the dominant use of a particular medium. The materials in a collage carry their own connotations and denotations, of healing and connecting. In the collages, the glue



*Seeking*  
Jumbo prints  
2012 - 2013  
75 x 60 cm



*Appearing*  
Jumbo prints, cardboard & micropore  
2012-2013  
24 x 39 cm

takes on the feeling and appearance of skin, covering the images; bandages suggest healing and trauma; glue binds and holds together; sewing is evocative of clothing and therefore covering, of concealing, of shielding the body.

Micropore is used as a collage material in my work *Murmuring*. The backing field of this work was created from small jumbo prints collaged together with a torn 8x10 print in the center of the field. The whole surface was covered with strips of micropore, the strips folded back over the edges. The micropore covers the “scars” of the torn print and the broken field of collaged jumbo prints. Glue is spread over the torn print, rendering the micropore more transparent and creating a halo around the print, embedding the micropore in the work. The work evokes a sense of space. Similarly, in *Cossetting* micropore is used to connect and join the fragmented image surface. Photographs of me running naked were overlapped and secured with bandages on a cardboard field. The surface was then worked over with micropore, leaving gaps between the



*Murmuring*  
Jumbo prints, glue, micropore, 8x10 print  
2012-2013  
35 x 55.7 cm



*Cossetting*  
Jumbo prints, bandages, micropore & glue.  
2012-2013  
22 x 38.5 cm

strips so that a partial view of the images shows through. The surface is submerged under glue, turning the micropore into a transparent veil suggestive of skin, broken by the exposed sections of the photographs.

Packaging tape, as a material, is normally used to seal boxes that are being stored or sent on a journey. As noted, the associations of packaging tape can be seen as oppositional to those of micropore, as the latter secures skin while the former evokes movement and betweenness. In works such as *Pacing*, packaging tape is used to augment the motion of the feet to create a sense of movement. By invoking the packaging tape's suggestion of movement together with photographs of my legs moving up and down the stairs in my mother's house, I sought to capture a sense of movement, of tumbling down stairs. The work features a central strand of photographs moving from the top right to bottom left of the image plane. This diagonal compositional element brings the eye downwards, following the motions of the feet. The images and the rectangles of bandage and tape create an

unstable surface, as they are not applied in a linear fashion. Rather, they are worked so that they are jumbled on top of one another, their corners pointing the eye in a myriad different directions across the image surface.



*Pacing*  
Jumbo prints, cardboard, packing tape & bandages  
86 x 78 cm

I create collages to explore my feelings of out-of-placeness, often using disruptions in the surface to do so. Authors Joan and John Digby discuss the role of the surface of the collage, explaining that the idea “that the collage, a medium of surface planes, could explore subsurfaces of reality was an idea Picabia had raised in his attribution of titles to the unconscious” (1985, 19). This suggests that surface disruptions can convey psychological disruptions. In my work collage allows me to play with the disjunction between surfaces and surface planes to evoke my feelings of dislocation. My work moves between the rough, ruptured surfaces of collage and the flat, almost hyper reality of the diasec images. These two surfaces create a disjunction in seeing, an out-of-placeness. In *Hemming*, I cut up images from a series that was photographed in the corner of my sister’s old bedroom. I had originally cut out sections of the jumbo prints for inclusion in another artwork and I then sandwiched two of these incomplete jumbo images together. The image’s bodies are absent, leaving vague traces of their edges. The space of the removed body was

filled by the depicted space of the other photograph and its traces of my body, hinting at my spectral presence within the home. The surface plane in this work is ruptured by its flatness and the viewer can see that it consists of multiple surfaces, but presents only one. The reflective surface of the final diasec print makes it difficult for the eye to settle on the surface.



*Hemming*  
Light Jet print, Diasec  
2012 - 2013  
50 x 72 cm

In the collages, the image surface is often fractured or seemingly collapsed, indicating that the space the figures move through is unstable. In *Emerging*, I sought to evoke a sense of out-of-placeness through the fragmentation of the collages and the instability of the moving figures. The field for the collage started as a test strip for a photograph from *Fraying* that depicts the reproduction of the stitches in that collage. This test strip was then worked over, placing figures cropped from jumbo prints of me running naked down my mother's passage. The entire image was then worked over, first with strips of micropore and then glue, so that some of the images became obscured beneath the layers. The image shifts between the appearing/disappearing figures who are running through the image. Again, the multiple layers break the surface as the cut up jumbo prints are obscured by layers of glue and micropore.



*Emerging*  
Jumbo prints, inkjet print, glue & micropore  
2012-2013  
66.7 x 42.7 cm

“There is”, writes American painter, assemblagist and pioneer in the concepts of performance art Allan Kaprow, “a never-ending play of changing conditions between the relatively fixed or ‘scored’ parts of my work and the ‘unexpected’ or undetermined parts” (Cufer 2012, 27). I share Kaprow’s perspective in relation to my own work, as there is a continuous play between the secured parts of my works – things that are taped, glued or sewn over and together – and the pieces that are still in flux. Pieces that still need to be placed, such as additional bandages or jumbo prints, are in constant interaction with the “fixed” or “located” pieces. As Bolter and Grusin describe it: A viewer confronting a collage, for example, oscillates between looking at the patches of paper and paint on the surface of the work and looking through to the depicted object as if they occupied a real space beyond the surface. What characterizes modern art is the insistence that the viewer keep coming back to the surface or, in extreme, an attempt to hold the viewer at the surface indefinitely. (1999, 41)

Collages encourage the viewer’s eye to move between the surfaces, to consider both the materials used and the surface and created image as a whole. Bolter and Grusin also write that remediation stems from mediation, that other media constantly mediate the medium: for a medium to function, other media must be present. All products of mediations are real as objects, as they remediate the real. All mediations are an act of reform of the media and of reality (Bolter & Grusin 1999, 55–6). My media are re-mediated as materials in my collages rather than being used for their intended purpose, and my performances are remediated as photographs, as are the bandages and micropore. Collage in my work relies on the interactions between the photographs, reproductions and materials. There is an interplay between the photographed collage elements and bandages and the jumbo prints and bandages in works such as *Gathering*. There are two layers of photographs, one of which is a remediation of the real objects and the other of which is the reality of the objects themselves.

*Gathering* started as a collage of images of myself performing in front of a wall in my mother's house, which was in the process of having the plaster chipped off and replaced. Facing the camera, I moved a plastic bag in front of my face, which became obscured by motion blur in the photograph as a result of an intentionally long exposure. The photographs in this work are landscape in format, punctuated by the vertical form of

my body and the two metal drums used by builders. The images were joined together with bandages, as if to heal the trauma of the disjunction between the images, and creating a collage. This collage was then photographed, rendering it as a flat fixed image that I printed as an inkjet print. The print was reproduced eight times and I then joined all the prints together to form a long, rectangular composition.



*Gathering*  
Jumbo prints & bandages  
2012 - 2013  
140 x 360 cm

*Gathering* was slowly built up through the repetitive action of cutting the bandages into rectangles and using them to secure the jumbo prints to the flat inkjet prints, creating interplay between the flat, photographed bandages and jumbo prints and the real, physical bandages and jumbo prints. The image thus created is fragmented and takes on the appearance of a pixilated digital print. This image is the largest piece in the body of work. Its large scale mimics the chipped wall in the photographs of which it is comprised, expansive with grey and white flecks.

In creating my collages, my actions in creating the work are as much a performance as was my performance before the camera. There is an element of performativity in the process of both making and taking the image and the reworking of the photograph as object in the collages. I have performed in my photographs to become conscious of myself and of my sense of becoming in my mother's new house. As Elizabeth Bronfen writes:

Each performance of a body in an image uncovers something, but it also adds something. The image is always both more and less than the body, similar but never the same. The represented body is visible and invisible, present and absent at the same time. The image formula misses what it seeks to articulate; it is inhabited by a radical duplicity. It is this duplicity I want to call "uncanny". (2010, 10)

Each image of a performance of the body shapes the body differently. The juxtaposition of these images of the body reveals what is present and absent – in the images and in the gap between them. In my performances the multiple photographs each uncover something different about my body and its state of becoming. Often it is literally both present and absent, appearing in a mirror or disappearing into motion blur. It becomes, perhaps, uncanny in its repetitions and in the gap in reality between its various forms. I explore the repetition of multiple images of the same performance in *Windowing*, allowing the viewer to see shifts in time and movement.



*Windowing*  
 20 framed jumbo prints  
 2012 - 2013  
 Dimensions variable

Dianne Waldman states that, “the Surrealists employed collage as a surrogate for the subconscious” (Waldman 1992, 15). I have attempted to use collage as a surrogate to process my subconscious feelings about my mother’s house and my feelings of out-of-placeness. Through repetitive actions and performances enacted in the creation of the collages I have explored thoughts and feelings that I have no clear access to in words.

My project explores a sense of out-of-placeness through a process that involves an obsessive fracturing of the image and surface of the photographs with which I work. The disruption of the photographic images through motion blur, mirrors, repetition and collage destabilizes my sense of place in my mother’s house and provides me with an opportunity to enact this out-of-placeness and the anxiety it evokes. It is my becoming in a space. The artworks enact this sense of becoming through the performance and creation of the collages.

## Returning home

This project explores the disruption of the image through photography and collage in a way in which motion blur, reflection, repetition and the physical disruption of the image surface is key. In my work all these aspects have connected to ideas of the uncanny and I have thus considered the uncanny in relation to repetition and the state of dislocation that I have endeavored to evoke. I explored the notion of nostalgia and its relationship to my work to explore how my sense of out-of-placeness is tied up in my no longer “belonging” in my mother’s house as I once did as a child.

I sought to explore my feelings of out-of-placeness in this new house, which was still in the process of being built. Its construction site offered me the perfect setting in which to perform the dislocation I felt as I negotiated the remembered comfort associated with my old childhood home, and the often conflicted feelings that have characterized my experience of becoming an adult.

I photographed myself performing in my mother’s new house. By collaging the resultant photographs I attempted to disrupt the surface of the final image, exploring the remediation and juxtaposing of my materials. These disruptions were attempts to enact my feelings of out-of-placeness and, in using my body as the subject matter for the work, the notion of the constructed concept of self and its constant shifting became of interest to me. In considering the notion of self in relation to my work it became apparent to me that the house had become a symbol for the self and that my developing adult personality, my sense of self and my search for my own home had created my feelings of out-of-placeness in my mother’s new house.





## Documentation of works



*Tracing*

Cardboard, micropore & 8X10 print

2012-2013

32.5 x 38.5 cm



*Splitting*

Jumbo prints

2012-2013

15 x 35.7 cm



*Leading*

Paper, micropore, cardboard & Jumbo prints

2012-2013

41.5 x 51 cm



*Emerging*

Jumbo prints, inkjet  
print, glue & micropore  
2012-2013  
66.7 x 42.7 cm



*Murmuring*

Jumbo prints, glue, micropore, 8x10 print

2012-2013

35 x 55.7 cm



*Cossetting*

Jumbo prints, bandages, micropore & glue

2012-2013

22 x 38.5 cm



*Cosseting*

Jumbo prints, bandages, micropore & glue

2012-2013

22 x 38.5 cm



*Dissolving*

8x10 prints, micropore & thread

2012-2013

22 x 131 cm



*Fraying*

Cotton thread, stockings, cardboard, micropore, jumbo print

2012 - 2013

36 x 27 cm



*Appearing*

Jumbo prints, cardboard & micropore

2012 - 2013

24 x 39 cm



*Shifting*

Jumbo prints & cello tape

2012 - 2013

19 x 89 cm



*Lapsing*

Jumbo prints, masking tape & micropore

2012 - 2013

12 x 338.5 cm



*Seaming*

Jumbo prints, cotton thread, carboard, clear tape

2012 - 2013

36.5 x 51.8 cm



*Pacing*

Jumbo prints, carboard, packing tape & bandages

2012 - 2013

86 x 78 cm



*Mantling*

Paper, packing tape, jumbo prints

2012 - 2013

28.7 x 32 cm



*Binding*

Jumbo prints &  
packaging tape  
2012 - 2013  
63.5 x 48 cm



*Unfolding*

Inkjet print, jumbo  
prints tape  
2012 - 2013  
62 x 47.5 cm



*Approaching*  
Light jet print, Diassec  
2012 - 2013  
150 x 75 cm



*Submerging*

Light jet print, Diassec

2012 - 2013

19.5 x 142 cm



*Seeking*  
Jumbo prints  
2012 - 2013  
75 x 60 cm



*Stepping*

12x10 prints

2012 - 2013

127 x 165 cm



*Stuttering*

Jumbo prints & bandages

2012 - 2013

47 x 78.7 cm



*Gathering*

Jumbo prints & bandages

2012 - 2013

140 x 360 cm



*Dusting*

Light jet print, Diabond

2012 - 2013

57 x 44.7 cm

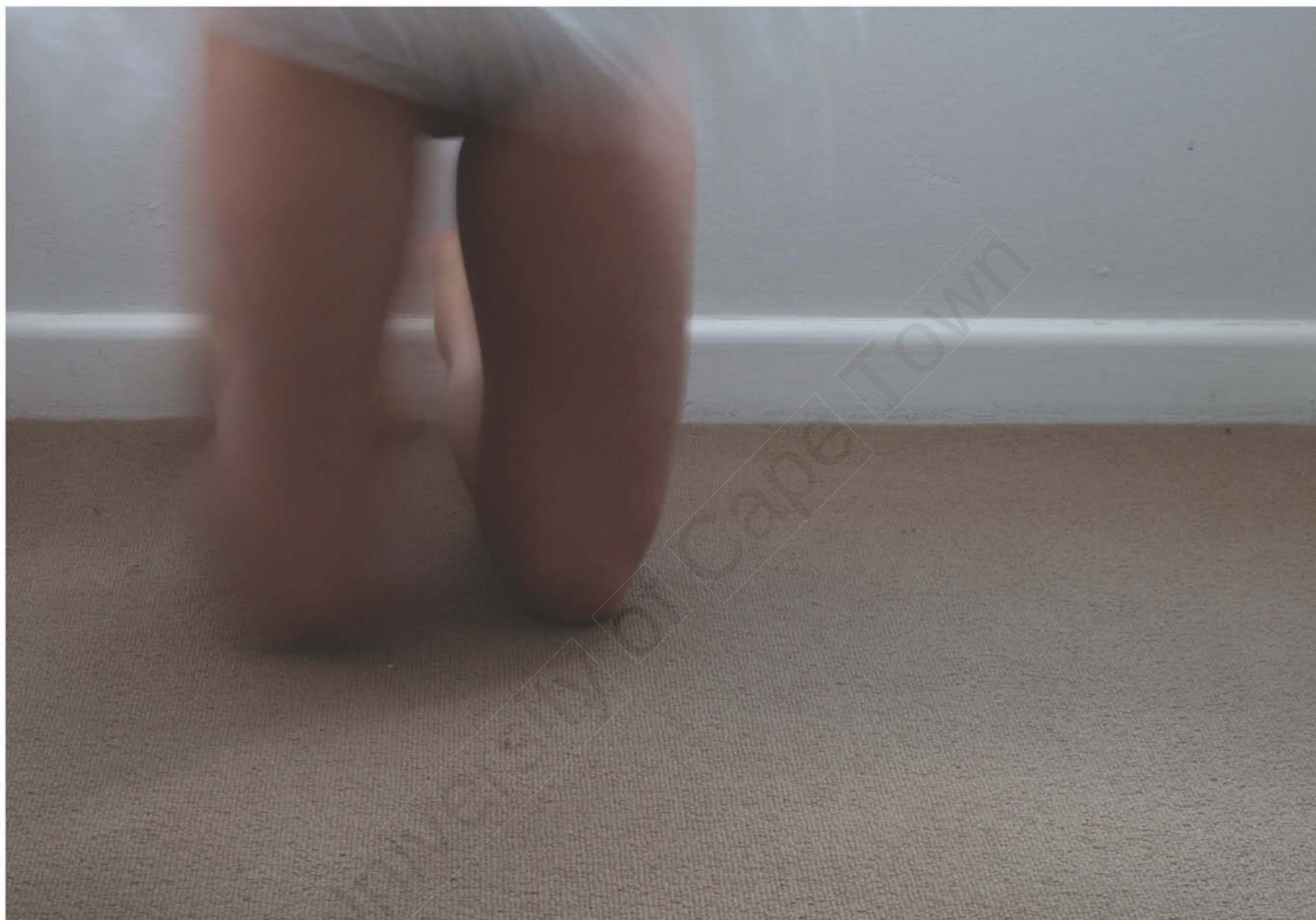


*Hemming*

Light jet Print, Diassec

2012 - 2013

50 x 72 cm



*Skirting*

Light jet Print, Diassec

2012 - 2013

50 x 72 cm



*Nearing*

Light jet print, Diassec

2012 - 2013

83.3 x 40 cm



*Admitting*

Light jet print, Diassec

2012 - 2013

50 x 72 cm

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