

## Part 2. TRAUMA

### TRAUMATIC TRACES

In July 2016, I was invited to participate in an art residency 'Summer Lodge', at Nottingham Trent University's Fine Art Department. At the end of the academic year the studios are cleared and the fine art staff re-inhabit the space working for 2 weeks alongside a small group of invited artists and some 2<sup>nd</sup> year student studio assistants.

A symposium held at the end of the first week, took 'The Wild' as its theme and could be adopted by the artists. The symposium information asked; *Wild Thing, Wild at Heart, Wild in the country, Wild in the studio. How useful is the idea of untrammelled wildness to the contemporary artist?* In preparation, I began researching the archetypal wild-woman; the witch – who as the outcast in medieval Europe had all that was deemed abject, evil and mad projected onto her. I also looked at the extraordinary portraits of *Wilder Mann* (Wild Men) by Charles Fréger. (Fig. 72- 75) These traditional costumed and masked characters, adopt a hybrid bestiality, and, connected to mythical beings are believed to roam the wilderness regions of Europe. Inhabiting two worlds they remain the outsider, the other, foreigners, beggars, fools, and the old, yet are rooted in the cultural sphere. They shape shift and subvert our expectations of gender and social identity, the living and the dead.

Sometimes the savage beast is put to death so as to be able to bring it back to life under the leadership of man – culture prevailing over savage nature.  
(Fréger, 2014: p.245)

I was intrigued to discover that these carnivalesque rituals are still performed in rural parts of Europe, including the Schwäbische Alb region of South Western Germany where my maternal Grandmother was born. These characters felt uncannily familiar! Mikhail Bakhtin (1965) claims that in medieval Europe these characters emerged to 'empower the oppressed', and overturn the normal social hierarchies to challenge the power of the church and state. The carnival costumed body adopts a universal character.

*These images have been redacted for copyright reasons*

Figures 72 - 75. Charles Fréger, *Wilder Mann*, 2014

The grotesque image reflects a phenomenon in transformation, an as yet unfinished metamorphosis, of death and birth, growth and becoming. The relation to time is one determining trait of the grotesque image. The other indispensable trait is ambivalence. For in this image we find both poles of transformation, the old and the new, the dying and the procreating, the beginning and the end of the metamorphosis. (Bakhtin, 1984, p.24)

In her history of witchcraft, Federici explains that Europe moved from the early middle ages when ‘an animistic conception of nature that did not admit to any separation between matter and spirit’ (Federici, 2004, p.141) and into the age of reason, losing the idea of the body as the receptacle of mystical powers. She claims, ‘this is why, at the peak of the “Age of Reason” - the age of scepticism and methodical doubt – we have a ferocious attack on the body.’ (p.141) The female body needed to be controlled as a machine for the reproduction of labour. It is horrific that all over Europe hundreds of thousands of women were massacred, over a period of less than two centuries. The torture, and sexual sadism of the women accused reveals an unparalleled misogyny. The woman as witch, was ‘persecuted as the embodiment of the wild-side of nature, of all that in nature seemed disorderly, uncontrollable, and thus antagonistic to the project undertaken by the new science.’ (p.203)

I started with sketches, paintings, and totems of burnt sticks. (Fig. 76 - 79)



Figures 76-77. Ali Darke, *Untitled*, 2016  
(acrylic paint on glass)

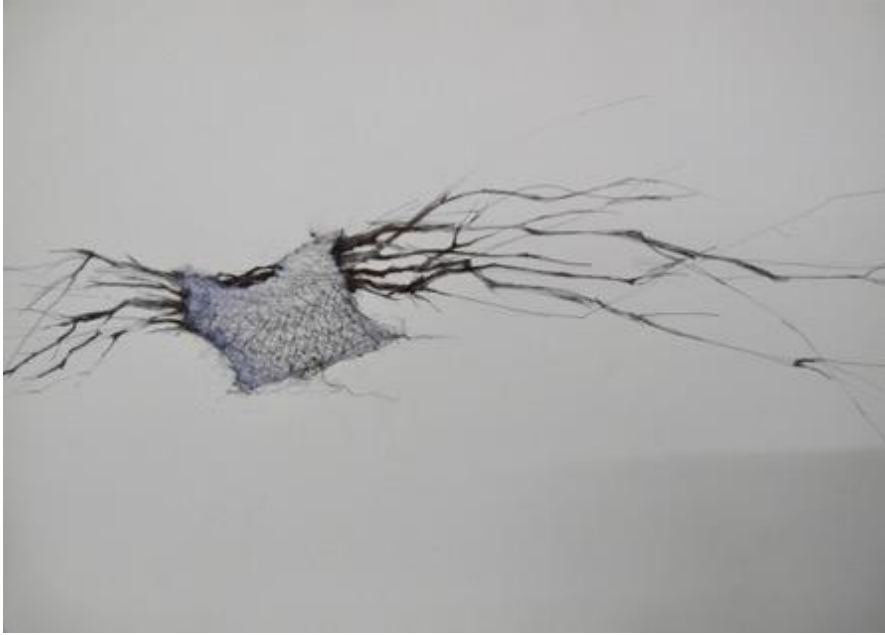


Figure 78. Ali Darke, *Totem 1*, 2016



Figure 79. Ali Darke, *Totem 2*, 2016  
(pen and ink)

A character was emerging that needed bringing to life, beyond the drawing. I resolved to embody this wild woman. Alongside the links with my German Granny Meyer, I should explain that my Mother would tease us, sometimes with such conviction I believed her, that she was indeed a witch. As daughters we fear we will turn into our

mothers. So, in this wild woman three generations co-existed. I was drawing on my own history at the same time embodying others, giving me permission to express something beyond my-self.

My Wild-Woman, shifted between two worlds, at the point of waking, when dreams are remembered and the unconscious hovers at the edges. I dressed in white night-clothes and used a duvet and pillow as props. Barbieri (2017, p.xxii) describes how costume can 'articulate an infinitely complex human nature through materiel and form'. Ritual dress is the 'materiel object through which the wearer becomes other than their everyday self...a threshold persona, a transitional being'. (p.xxii) I took details of witches from an exhibition at the British Museum, *Witches and Wicked Bodies: in art from the early Renaissance to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. (Fig. 82 - 85)

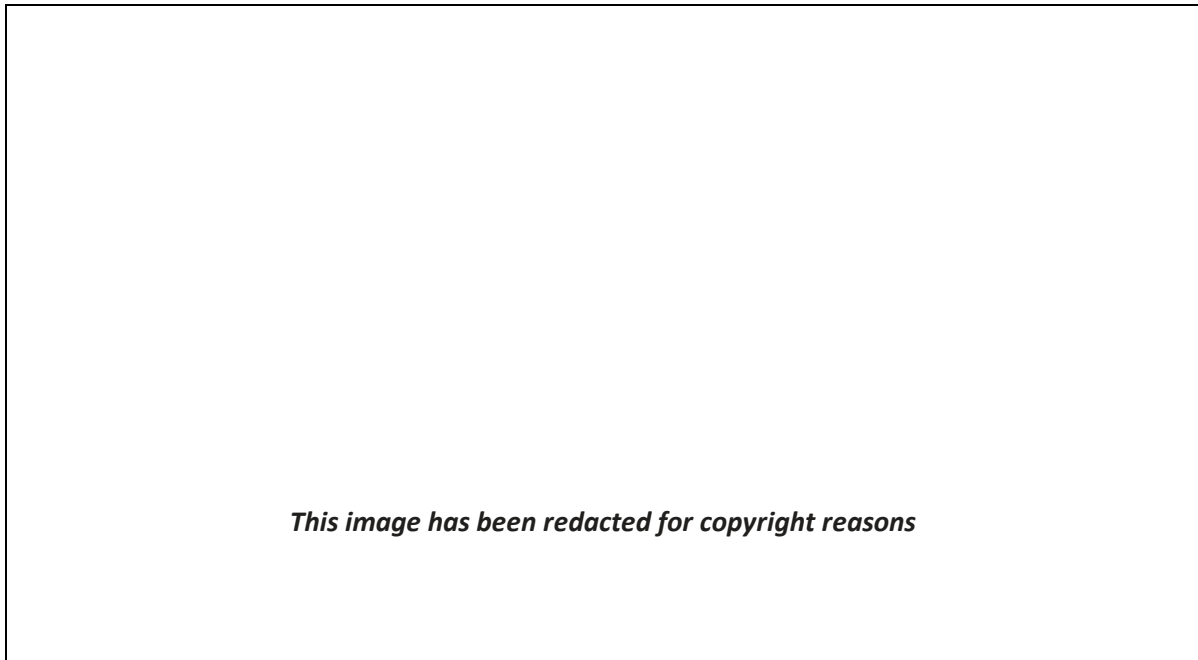


Figure 82. Veneziano, *The Witches Rout*, 1520

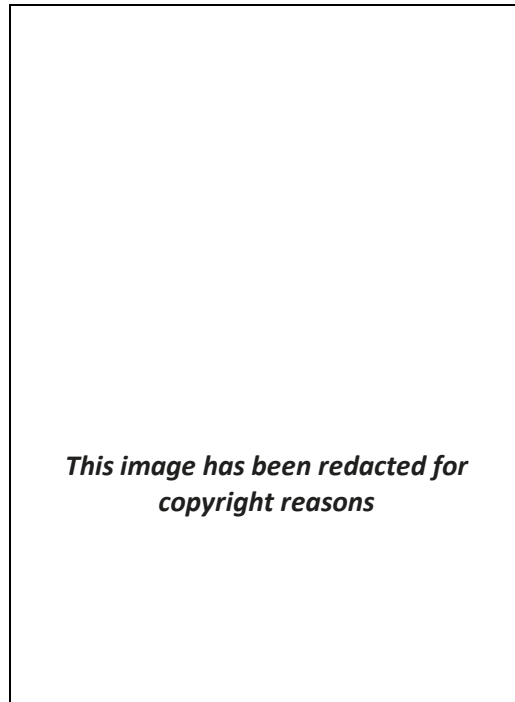


Figure 83. DÜRER, *Witch Riding a Goat Backwards*, c. 1500

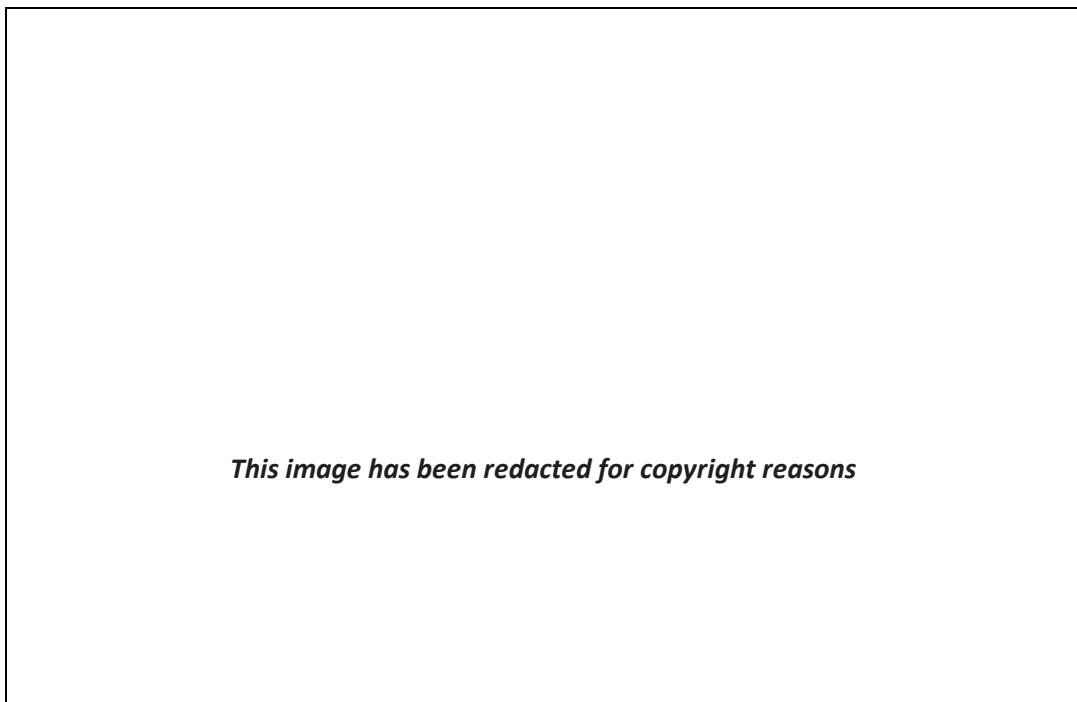


Figure 84. Francisco Goya, *Mucho Hay Que Chupar*, 1799

Figure 85. Francisco Goya, *Linda Maestro*, 1799

I was myself - an absurd middle-aged woman standing on a plinth, and in excess of myself, expressing something darker, more evocative, and troublesome. The static portraits resembled an anthropological study. (Fig. 87 - 98) In posing for the camera I felt vulnerable and dissociated. Roland Barthes (1981) describes his fascination with the power of photography to both anticipate the memory of the subject in the image while at the same time eluding to its passing - something transitional, a slippage in time. In writing about the experience of posing for the camera Roland Barthes states:

I am neither subject nor object but a subject who feels he is becoming an object:  
 I then experience a micro version of death (of parenthesis): I am truly becoming a spectre. (Barthes, 1981 p.14)

In the final images black paint is slowly poured over the Wild Woman's head. I had looked again at the history of my maternal Grandparents. Both were German but my Grandfather was Jewish and my Grandmother Christian. The Nuremberg Laws of 1935, the anti-Semitic and racial laws of Nazi Germany, forbade inter-racial marriage, for the *protection of German Blood and German honour*. The proclamation was illustrated by a diagram that graphically demonstrates the fear of contamination of the German body by Jewish blood. (Fig. 86)



Figure 86. DIE NÜRNBERGER GESETZE (The Nuremberg Laws), 1935

According to these rules my Mother was designated a 'Mischling', in-pure, and had it not been for my Grandfather's foresight in arranging for his young family to leave Germany in 1936, they would for sure have been murdered in the Holocaust. My mother arrived in London in 1937, aged 5, to join her parents. Anxious to assimilate their daughters into English culture, they refused to speak German in the home. So, in denying her language she learnt fast that to be German was to be the enemy - she must disguise her identity and her pain. Her parents rarely spoke of their past, but, unconsciously, the trauma and shame of her heritage, haunted my mother's life, and as Eva Hoffman (2004) describes;

In the aftermath of the Shoah, the traces left on the survivors' psyches were not so much thoughts or images as scars and wounds. The legacy they passed on was not a processed, mastered past, but the splintered signs of acute suffering, of grief and loss. (p.34)

As the black liquid was poured over my head, this turned into a diabolical ritual, a punishment, a public humiliation. I was made hypersensitive to the surface of my body. Transforming the skin as Maria Walsh (2013) suggests, has psychic implications about the boundaries between internal and external.

The material marker of that boundary is skin, but the skin, like the psyche, is both porous and sealing and therefore a liminal site of complex exchanges between inner and outer realities. (Walsh, 2013 p.124)

The skin, the sensitive surface with which we feel and perceive the 'other' - senses our body's boundary. Nicola Diamond (2013) describes the dynamic function of the skin in forming a relationship between self and other, creating a 'border-zone'. A child learns to experience their own bodies through the skin, through touch, setting up the condition of experiencing one's own body as 'other'. Internal and external perception of myself on the plinth were becoming less defined, contained, 'safe'. There was a duality between the sensations of embodying the Wild Woman while simultaneously feeling self-conscious at being photographed.

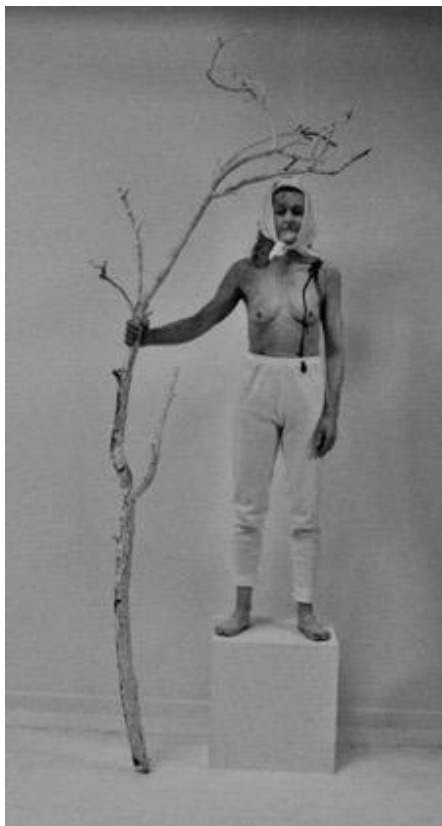
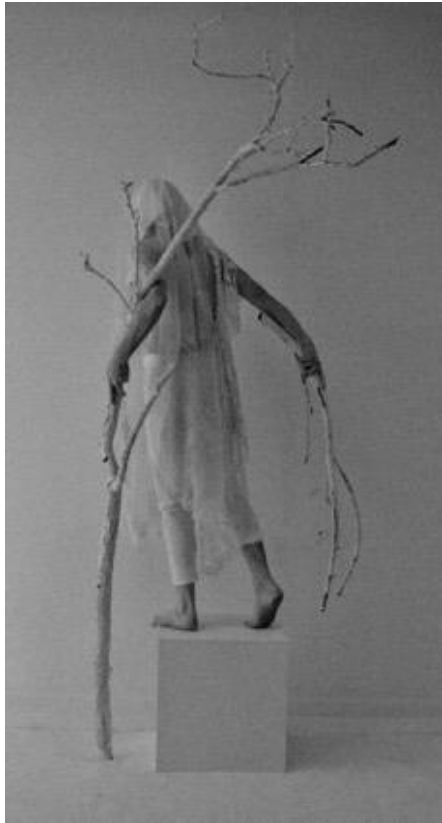




Figures 87 - 90. Ali Darke, *Wild Woman*, 2016.



Figures 91- 94. Ali Darke, *Wild Woman*, 2016.



Figures 95- 98. Ali Darke, *Wild Woman*, 2016.

## THE TRANSITIONAL BODY

Grosz (1994) describes a phase of 'infantile transitivity' which I find fascinating in relation to my experience on the plinth. She explains this as a phase in the child's differentiation, shifting between 'agent and spectator' or 'active and passive' roles in relation to the other, the child;

plays at both roles, giver and receiver, actor and audience, switching from one role to the other. This transitivity positions the child in a role of spatial reciprocity with the other, a space in which its position is attained only relative to the position of the other, yet where the position of the other is reciprocally defined by the position of the subject. (Grosz, 1994 p.48)

And thus, it is through the body that the child's being-in-the-world becomes a complex interplay of acting as both object for the other and self and an embodied subject for the self: the body is the agent by which all knowledge is gained and meaning created. This incorporates corporeal phenomenology to the theory of object relations, introjection and projection. Transitivity is also evident in relation to the flesh of the body with 'its capacity to fold in on itself, a dual orientation inward and outward...between touching and being touched, between seeing and being seen there is a fundamental reversibility.' (1994, p.100)

When thinking again about the transition from our beginnings, submerged within the body of the Mother, to an individuated self, it is clear that when these boundaries are violated, the positions of subject and object are manipulated, abused or subverted the consequences are unbearable for an integrated subject to withstand, trauma leads the fragile ego to be shattered, forever damaged.

The sensitivity and fragility of the skin-ego create the potential for the body's surface to take on metaphorical and symbolic meaning in human behaviour, but also as sites of artistic expression. In May 2018 I presented a paper *Between Here and There*, at the 'Making Connections' ADI PGR Conference, in which I looked at artwork that

expressed notions of subjectivity using the surface of the body as a site for mediating internal and external experience.

Walsh (2013) describes Anthony Gormley's body sculptures as the 'motif of the crustacean Ego', (2013, p.127) impenetrable figures. His work is an investigation into the body as an object. The sculpture *Learning to See* (Fig. 99) is a cast of his own body rendered in lead, fibreglass, plaster and as he adds poignantly to the list 'air'. Gormley (2015, p.166) explains; 'it is not about action but about being. It both comes out of concentration and demands a form of concentration. It is an empty case indicating a human space in space'. A dark interior space is concealed, but the 'learning to see' of the title a reference to the internal gaze of insight.

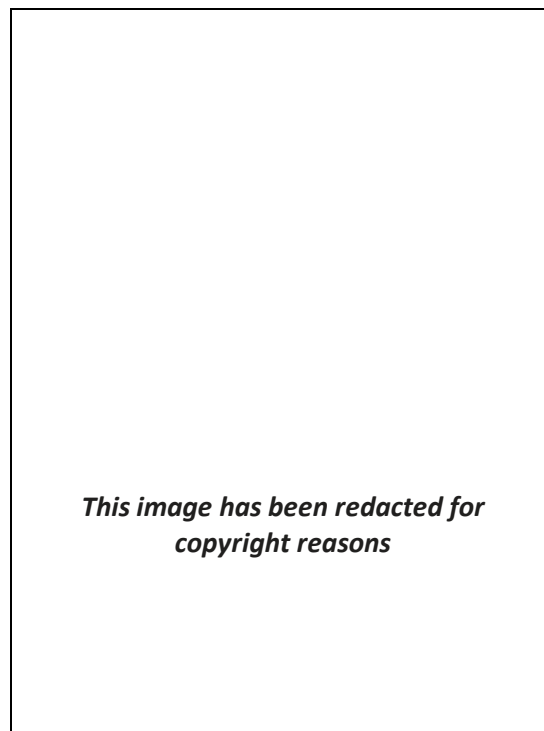


Figure 99. Anthony Gormley, *Learning to See*, 1993  
(cast iron)

Leader explains how Gormley expresses 'his fascination with negotiating and renegotiating the edge, in terms of whether it's within or without.' Edges, he says, 'are the relation between something and nothing, and they both define and release us.'

(2003, p.12) Later, Gormley's work metamorphose into the *Insider* (Fig. 100) figures, in which the volume of the body is compressed to an inner core, this contraction evoking not the dark interior void, but the '*irreducible residue of the body.*' (p.11) Gormley seems to be testing out the limits of being and nothingness.

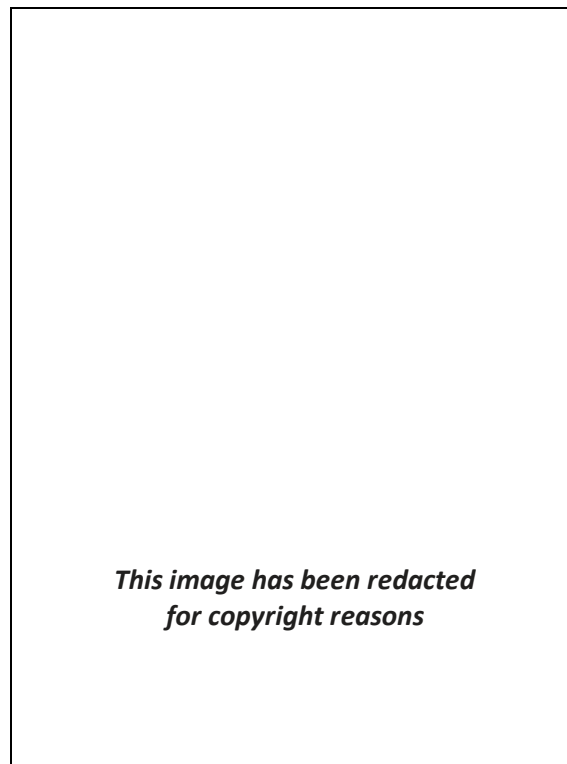


Figure 100. Anthony Gormley, *Insider*, 1998  
(cast iron)

In the *Domain* (Fig. 101) sculptures nothing is hidden, giving the illusion of a drawing in space, the hatched lines still create form, implying the body without bounding it. The drawn outline, that might define the body's boundary, or suggest a skin, here has been splintered into a fragile form in space. 'The skin has become a constellation rather than a continuous, unbroken surface.' (2003 p.12)

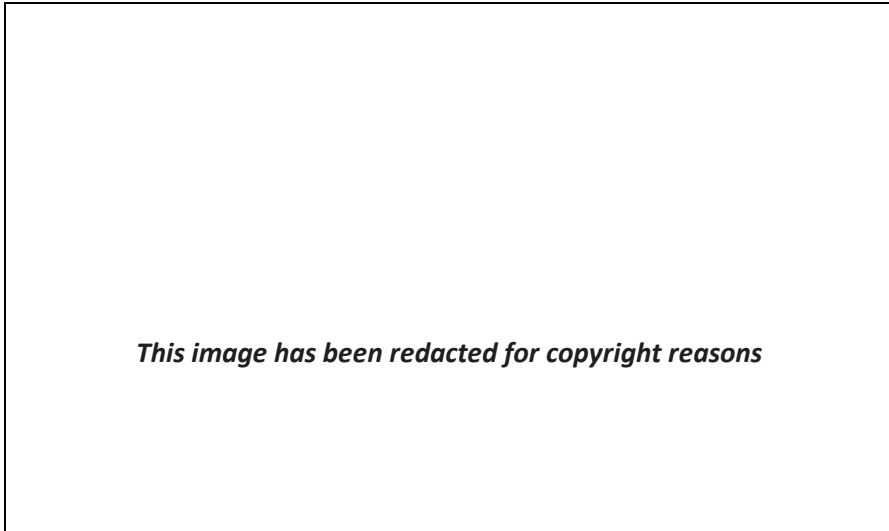


Figure 101. Anthony Gormley, *Domain*, 2003  
(steel wire)

In *Drift* (Fig. 102) (2007- 2014) Gormley's figures expand into the space demonstrating a porous liminality. Less grounded and weightless they speak more obviously of the psychic perception of our bodies in 'touch' with space than the physical body's limits. There is a confusion whether the structures are produced by the body, or the structures create the body. Internal and external exchange has become more fluid.



Figure 102. Anthony Gormley, *Drift*, 2007-12  
(steel wire)

I have always felt Gormley's figures to have a powerful, impenetrable presence regardless of their fragility which is curious. Even when the surfaces are breaking up and fragmented the figures remain individual and whole. They don't appear vulnerable or in need of the other - there is self-sufficiency even in their existential doubt.

In all of the work of Louise Bourgeois, her representations of the body become a vehicle for expressing deeply felt psychic phenomena.

Since the fears of the past were connected with the functions of the body, they reappear through the body. For me, sculpture is the body. My body is my sculpture'. (Bourgeois, in Bernadac and Obrist, eds. 1998, p. 228).

Towards the end of her life, Bourgeois used her extensive collection of fabric fragments and old clothes, through which the body can be inscribed with the traces and memory of embodiment, and touch. She made numerous cloth heads and body parts, covered in roughly stitched remnants, often barely containing the stuffing. They suggest wounds, scars and bandages. (Fig. 103)

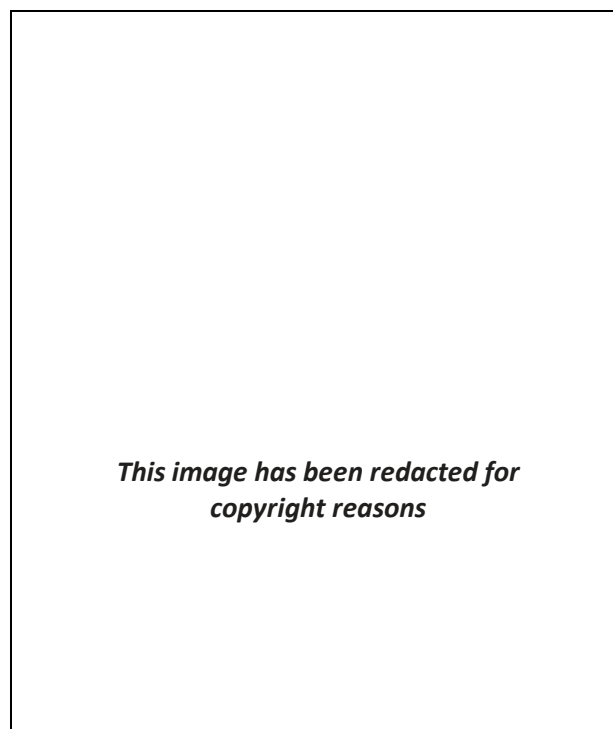


Figure 103. Louise Bourgeois, *Untitled*: 1998  
(mixed media)



As Potts (2007) remarks her different sculptural processes exploit their psychic implications, distinguishing between, 'carving and modelling, or shaping, on the one hand – which she conceives as destructive – and assemblage which she characterises as reparative'. (p.258)

These works suggest an attempt to repair a psychic 'trauma'. *Peaux de Lapins* (2006) in contrast expresses loss or trauma through an absence of the volume of the body. (Fig. 104) A wire mesh cage encloses fabric sacks hung limply from chains, their translucency lacks any substance. Their fragility evokes a withered body - all that remains when a body has left. 'Bourgeois' chiffons wrap the wound of absence; they carry the trace of the other and the other as trace. Here sensation and memory resurface.'

(Lorz, 2015, p.86)

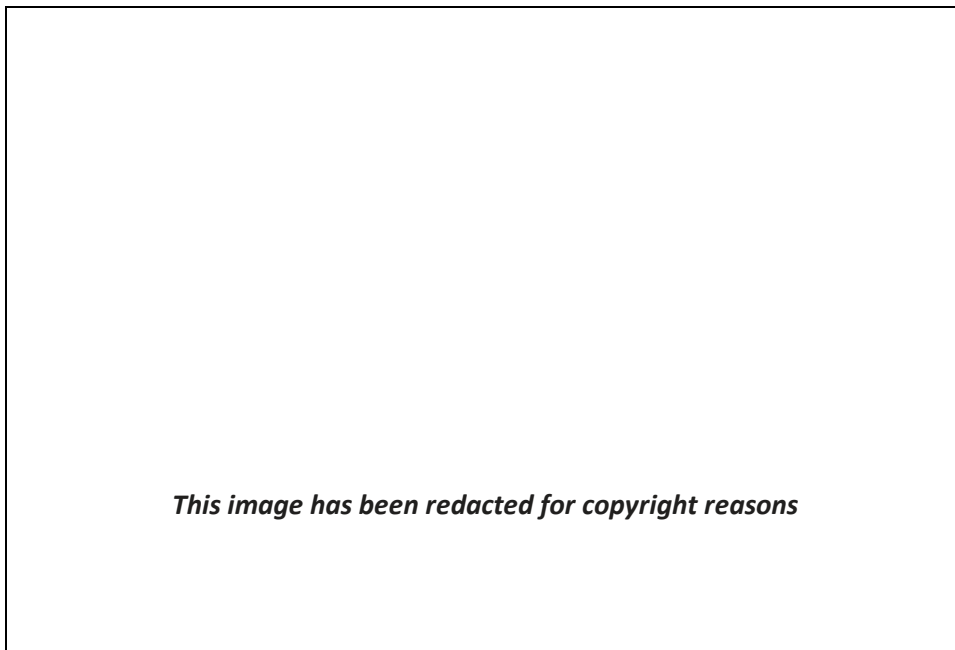


Figure 104. Louise Bourgeois, *Peaux de Lapins, Chiffons ferrailles à Vendre*, 2006  
(mixed media)

In Bourgeois' compulsive repetition there is always desire for relief from the psychic pain that tormented her. As Pollock states emphatically, 'Psychic trauma knows no time. It is a perpetual present, lodged like a foreign resident in the psyche'. (2013, p.2)

Her understanding is that the unknowable, unspeakable nature of trauma creates a silent space in our narrative memory, but the 'perpetual haunting force' remains ever present. The art-working itself becomes part of this transformation but the art work can only ever speak of the shadow of the trauma, the traces.

## RETREAT

It would be a while before I continued with the Wild Woman project. In retrospect I can see that I retreated back into the sphere of the mind, to create work that was more 'contained' and in some respects more manageable and intimate. I wanted to explore collage, layering images, objects, materials and models to see what resonated with memories and feelings. I brought together building debris, brick and plaster fragments, lumps of asphalt from a school playground, a collection of landscape photos, and some doll's house furniture. The work explored themes of childhood and the idea of the traces of trauma ever present - embedded in the psyche as recurring in dreams.

Associations shifted as I worked with the things in front of me. 'It is as though something fluid had collected our memories and we ourselves were dissolved in this fluid of the past'. (Bachelard, 1994, p.57) I thought back to my research about the potential of evocative objects to highlight 'the inseparability of thought and feeling in our relationship to things.' (Turkle, 2007.p5)



Figure 105. Ali Darke, *Test for the Glimpses*, 2017



Figures. 106 -107. Ali Darke, *Tests for the Glimpses*, 2017

To address a problem of storage I needed to work smaller. I had a collection of old boxes and decided that these could be the frames for the 3D collages. These boxes could allude to containment, entrapment, and dreams of escape. (Fig. 106 -107)

I had fixed on the title *The Glimpses* - thinking about those fleeting moments of recognition, flashbacks to a memory or dream - those uncanny 'déjà vu' experiences. Berger (1984) describes how artists find ways of viewing their work afresh – sometimes in the mirror to reverse the image, 'What they glimpse in the mirror is perhaps a little like the look of their painting at that future moment to which it is being addressed.' (p. 27) Time becomes momentarily confused. Uncanny.

I presented the collection in the Container Space at UEL for a work-in-progress seminar; the feedback was good, but I agreed that I had over worked the material. The early tests, had a vibrancy and tension that became lost with my tendency to "neaten the edges" and fix the image. There is a tipping point where the objects retain their individual identity but are transformed merely through proximity with the other – if

'over-worked' the final image becomes too formulated. In some of the images I had set the narrative too clearly maybe by fixing the scale and unifying the image. I could see that the tests were provisional - flimsy arrangements - and would be difficult to replicate for presentation. This was a challenge to solve in my work. (Fig. 108 - 116)



Figure 108. Ali Darke, *Glimpse I*, 2017  
(mixed media)



Figure 109. Ali Darke, *Glimpse II*, 2017  
(mixed media)



Figures 110 - 113. Ali Darke, *Glimpse III, IV, V, and VI*, 2017  
(mixed media)



Figures 114 - 115. Ali Darke, *Glimpse VII and VIII*, 2017  
(mixed media)



Figure 116. Ali Darke, *The Glimpses: Container Space*, UEL. 2018

Each piece held a deeply personal resonance for me that connected to specific memories. In feedback, this emotional intensity was observed - which by standing in isolation at eyelevel heightened the encounter. Stewart (1995) points out that in a miniature, a single-point perspective is allowed, and promotes interiority - in contrast to the public or social sphere of the monumental, the child-like miniature provides 'alternative or alienated views.' (p.81) And as Bachelard observes, the miniature offers the dreamer a whole world in which to fanaticise, he 'can renew his own world, merely by moving his face.' (p.157) The miniaturist has the illusion of possession over their world, and through the model can enter a new one. The miniature demands attention to the details, and the concentration 'detaches me from the surrounding world, and helps me to resist dissolution of the surrounding atmosphere'. (p161)

I had displayed them on makeshift stands which were clumsy and distracted from the boxes. In preparation for the Bow Arts Open Studio, I designed simpler steel leg stands for each box. The event was well attended, and the reaction extremely positive, provoking lively discussion about memory, dreams, childhood fears, and fantasy.

I questioned if setting myself the task of filling the boxes became a necessary component or a hindrance. I am used to working in the theatre scale model and hours of childhood spent in front of a doll's house, already sets in motion associations of designing for the performing body in space. I brought unconscious, habitual thoughts to the process and recognise how hard it is to break patterns of behaviour and ways of seeing.

## GHOSTLY VISITORS OF THE UNREMEMBERED PAST

Over the course of making the Glimpses, ideas for the next iteration of the *Wild Woman* evolved. I planned to create three short films showing manifestations of the *Wild Woman* to be projected onto the interior of three cabinets. She would perform endless cycles of futile labour suggesting the obsessive compulsion to repeat.

*Was Ist Diese Arbeit?* translates as *What is this Work?* A question addressing my insecurities and doubts about my art-working, Freud's theory of '*traume-arbeit*' - the

dream-work of our unconscious mind, and finally, the statement rendered in the steel arch above the entrance to Auschwitz, *Arbeit Macht Frei*; Work sets you free.

The work, in response to my mother's family history, was trying to understand the impact of their trauma. My Grandfather had been unable to persuade his parents to join him. They were murdered, shot in a forest at some point during their transportation to Auschwitz in 1943. The shadow of this trauma is traced in my psyche, emerging in my work consciously and unconsciously. An intergenerational transmission of past events haunting the present is evident. 'Loss of family, home, of a sense of belonging and safety in the world "bleed" from one generation to the next.' (Hirsch, 2012, p.34). The work would address this haunting, and research help me understand.

Between Mother and child, when maternal care is attuned and responsive to the child's needs a resilient sense of self can be nurtured and separation tolerated. However, the scars of trauma - psychic wounds that a Mother carries remain unavailable to the child and as Pollock (2013) explains, the child must grieve for a lost relationship. 'The subject identifies at the same time with a "dead mother" and traces of her trauma are thus invested within the subject itself.' (p.20) The past infiltrates and leaks into the future through this intersubjective transmission of affect, and loss is experienced as a phantom. As a young child, my mother would have experienced her parent's traumatic loss, and I am compelled to express some trace of this melancholy in my being, understanding it as a repeated search for an unlocatable, elusive and unspeakable loss that cannot be laid to rest. I have been told I do this with a dark humour.

Rendered in post-production to simulate old film footage, the flickering black and white films repeated on a loop, like recurring dreams. My *Wild Woman* returned as a comedic character, in night clothes, a witch-like hat, white makeup, a bird's beak mask and knitted scarf - recalling motifs from previous work. I used a blow-torch to burn the cabinets and cracked the glass.

In the film *WORDS* she writes the repeated line of the title *Was Ist Diese Arbeit?* on a blackboard, a punishment for some misdemeanour. The film *WOOD* shows her walking up and down the banks of a dump collecting sticks, and in *WOOL* she sits on a plinth, wrapped in and knitting a long scarf. (Fig.s 117 - 124)





Figure 117. Ali Darke, *Was Ist Diese Arbeit?* 2018  
(Exhibition view)



Figure 118. Ali Darke, *Words*, 2018  
(wooden cabinet, video)



Figure 119. Ali Darke, *Words*, 2018 (detail)



Figure 120. Ali Darke, *Wood*, 2018  
(wooden cabinet, books, video)



Figure 121. Ali Darke, *Wood*, 2018



Figure 122. Ali Darke, *Wood*, 2018



Figure 123. Ali Darke, *Wool*, 2018  
(wooden cabinet, video)



Figure 124. Ali Darke, *Wool*, 2018

I am always nervous presenting my artwork but felt particularly exposed and vulnerable showing this piece, partly due to its deeply personal content, and my presence being central to the work; but also, that I was showing film - a practice I know very little about. (I was frustrated with the ugliness of the projectors and if I could afford to would get mini black projectors which would have been less intrusive!) Although I struggled with the technology I learnt a tremendous amount and was pleased with the result - I had achieved what I intended.

Our seminar was held a few weeks after the event so I presented the films outside the context of the installation. The feedback was encouraging - suggesting I could develop a separate film piece out of the materiel. I was invited to exhibit the work 5 months later, in a group exhibition 'Fragments' at the Biscuit Factory in London. (Fig. 125) It is a fantastic cavernous space, with bare brick and concrete walls adding an industrial coldness to the atmosphere. I was surprised how well the projections worked in the natural diffused light of day, and under dimmed spotlights at night, allowing the textures and colours of the charred cabinets and broken glass to be more visible.



Figure 125. Ali Darke, *Was Ist Diese Arbeit?*  
FRAGMENTS exhibition view. 2018

The work brought a new dimension to the Wild Woman, encouraging me to question my motivations, and consider how trauma is transmitted to a generation that was not a victim or witness to the horrors of the Holocaust.

In December 2018, I attended a conference 'Ghostly Hauntings: Subliminal and unconscious messages from our ancestors', in which the notions of intergenerational transmission of trauma were discussed. The conference, aimed at CPD for psychoanalysts, described how when working with certain clients, a sense of ghostly possession and metaphysical phenomena can come to mind, reminding them of how within the psyche the past and future can collide in the present.

In every nursery there are ghosts. They are the visitors of the unremembered past of the parents; the uninvited guests at the christening.  
(Adelson, et al.,1987)

The conference was opened by the psycho-social academic Steven Frosh explaining his research that shifts between the individual psyche and the wider community to study the psychological repercussions for the generation traumatised by the horrors of the Holocaust to the surviving generations.

Central to Freud's psychoanalytic project that Frosh reiterates, is the principal that what is unbearable or too troublesome to keep in mind as an individual is shunned, repressed, introjected, hidden, buried or denied - all secreted into the darkest depths and recesses of the psyche.

There are somethings that are so tragic to lose that the loss itself is denied, even to the extent that knowledge of the existence of the lost object is itself repressed. This kind of melancholic object then remains as a psychic haunting: It is not known about, not recognised, therefore not grieved and consequently its loss acts as a present absence with continuing impact. (Frosh, 2013, p.12)

The unconscious lurking in the shadows, retains an energy that effects our conscious minds, inadvertently influencing behaviour, our language, our relationships; catching us out unawares. A careful listening and watching can recognise the slips and clues

and defences of the unconscious at work. Psychoanalysis and haunting go together. Psychoanalysis, he explains, intentionally stirs things up and demands that we confront and talk about the things we would rather hide. He describes these things as remainders, the things that are in excess from the past, cast out from conscious recognition.

They are the peripheral things, sniping from the side lines and the depths, harrying us as we go about our supposedly ordinary lives. We might think we are acting reasonably but behind this rational façade there is something else lurking, waiting to mess things up, to make claims of its own. (Frosh, 2013, p.3).

The clinical vocabulary of psychoanalysis describes the processes of transference and counter transference, projection and introjection, that occur between client and therapist that bring and re-enact relationships from the past into the present analytic encounter. As Frosh observes, 'Psychoanalysis is the science that deals with the permeability of personal boundaries in the face of unconscious events.' (p. 5). What he is describing has a 'horizontal' dimension - something passed between people in the here and now, that draws past events and relationships into the present - we are 'inhabited by the spectre of others, we are never free to be ourselves. Others occupy us.' (Frosh, 2013, p.12) These ghosts need to be set free from their purgatory. Thus, psychoanalysis and haunting demand a process of liberation.

Christopher Bollas (1987) describes this internal otherness as the 'unthought known'; 'Through the experience of being the other's object, which we internalise, we establish a sense of two-ness in our being, and this subject object paradigm further allows us to address our inherited disposition, or true self as other.'

(Bollas, 1987, p. 51)

If this internalised other brings with it a loss - something projected, some trauma that acts like a shameful secret in the psyche and cannot be openly recalled, it behaves like a ghostly object that has possessed the soul. This melancholy internalised object/other, can never be fully known, and consequently can never be properly mourned, which means that it is somehow preserved in a half-life or living death. Each

burnt cabinet might present a Crypt for things that lurk and wander in the liminal landscape between life and death, past and present.

There is a haunting resonance in this - one that I experienced in 'performing' the Wild Woman - I was myself and other, I was in excess of myself, echoes of my Mother, my Grandmother, and unpredictably and somewhat disconcertingly, of my own future old woman. Encrypted materiel was re-incarnated and foretold the future.

The traumatic is at once out of time but ever inserting itself into other times as a promiscuously repeating excess of affective intensity. (Pollock, 2013, p. 9)

The psychoanalytic principle of pathology points to the primal wound of separation from the mother that remains vulnerable. It is through these fissures in the psyche that future traumas invade, re-opening the scars, and striking at the heart of our being. And as Pollock describes each trauma 'deepening these pathways and being themselves deepened by inherited affects. (Pollock, 2013, p.110). In explaining intersubjectivity, as the route of the intergenerational transmission of trauma Pollock suggests the possibility of a prenatal matrixial theory of connectivity - 'all human subjects' she proposes are 'formed in an intimacy with an unknown, co-affecting other, an unknowable, and humanising partner in difference.' (Pollock, 2013 p.17) This suggests a gentler severance and gradual acquisition of subjectivity that rethinks the phallogocentric notions of psychoanalytic theory, to describe a shared 'border-space' between a (m)Other and child, which is 'linked forever with aesthesis, with resonance, movement, rhythm, affect.' (Pollock, 2013, p.18)

At the point of maternal severance - at birth, the child is in a state where it's interactions with the mother do not distinguish between her conscious and unconscious thoughts and gestures. She suggests that subjectivity evolves from a 'primordial psychic interface' from which separation occurs, but in a way that maintains mutual pathways through which past experience 'leaks into and becomes embedded in the future at this intersubjective level. (Pollock, 2013, p. 22) She calls this a matrixial border-space, between the psyche of the mother and psyche of the child.



She believes that a connectivity through artistic practice and presentation moves some dimensions of the encrypted psychological wounding to be transformed - a space between affect and sign is created that allows for 'psychic play, for affective movement, for the transformation of potentially petrified, traumatic affect.' (Pollock, 2013, p. 65)

It is interesting to relate the dynamic of this matrixial border-space when looking at artistic endeavour that expresses trauma and the pain of others. In exploring my family's experience of the intergenerational transmission of trauma, I was prompted to question the ethics of an artistic practice in memorial of catastrophe that I haven't experienced directly. Hirsch (2012, p.2) asks; 'How are we implicated in the aftermath of crimes we did not ourselves witness?' When appropriating the terrors of the Holocaust and my family's experience as matter for my work, I feel the doubt of an imposter; how should I retell the stories without appropriating them. The original trauma truly belongs to my Grandparents. My Mother, was so young she wouldn't have understood the full implications of their survival, but she was affected deeply, evident in shame and denial, and the need to create her ideal English family. As Kelly-Laine (2004, p.6) observes, one way of dealing with exile is over-adaption. 'Learning the language of exile' means having to repair the loss of one's world, and accept being a "foreigner". 'Exile is the metaphor of the human condition: lost childhood is the irrevocable representation of being human.'

Hirsch has called the specific experience of received memories, events that occurred in the past but are transmitted intergenerationally, as 'post-memory', to describe how the generation after relates to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before. (p.5) The retold stories are so vivid they form new memories resembling the original in their affective intensity. Central to Hirsch's study of post-memorial work is how the artists she considers attempt to reactivate the distant political memorial by 'reinvesting them with resonant individual and familial forms of mediation and aesthetic expression'. (Hirsch, 2012, p. 33).

## ART AND TRAUMA

Pollock and Hirsch both examine the photographic work of the artist and Lacanian psychoanalyst Bracha Lichtenberg-Ettinger, to understand the nature and impact of transmitted trauma. Hirsch (2012, p. 216) describes her work as 'a visual aesthetics of return, characterised by fracture, overlay and superimposition.' A return to the image of the trauma is a frequent hallmark of post memorial work. She considers *The Eurydice Series*, images created by Ettinger between 1990 and 2001. Ettinger re-appropriates a photograph taken of her parents in 1937 on the streets of the Polish city of Lodz, prior to the Holocaust. Working repeatedly with this image by superimposing it onto a photo of her own childhood face - she creates two time-worlds co-existing - before the Holocaust and a time after. This projection of her image onto and into the spaces of the past absorbs some of that moment, a form of return journey through the photographic medium. This is then overlaid with a third iconic image taken by a Nazi photographer, of a group of naked woman and children herded together on the side of a bleak anonymous hill, awaiting their execution. As she points out this is not 'a space to which one would want to return; it is the antithesis of "home".' (Hirsch, 2012, p. 218).

To create the final artwork, Ettinger has taken the iconic image and transformed it through copying, enlarging, cropping, and finally tinting with purple ink. 'They illustrate the underside of return, the fear that violence will be repeated, that, as Euridice's backward look, return will prove to be deadly.' (Hirsch, 2012, p. 218).

I am reminded of the fear that ghosts who visit from the past may drag us back with them to some deadly place. Through these layered and transformed images she is showing how the before, during and after cannot be separated out - the pre-war photo from the family album, cannot be disconnected from the iconic, archival, anonymous image in the killing fields. By superimposing her own face within the final images Hirsch believes Ettinger (2012, p.221) enacts the 'irreconcilable stakes of memory and return.' By closing the temporal space in her composite images, her return brings larger historical awareness to the trauma. She becomes implicated in the historical scene and takes on something of the pain. I understand that by embodying the hybrid character of the Wild Woman, I do the same - present and past inexorably interwoven.

Pollock describes Ettinger's process and art work as a mode of aesthetic wit(h)nessing, the bracketed 'h' drawing attention to both the witnessing of the victim's experience but also the 'being with, being beside, sharing'. (Pollock. 2013) And Ettinger describes her work as a means of transforming the residue of trauma through the artistic process itself - through aesthetic transformation a navigation away from trauma could be negotiated. (Fig. 126 - 128)

Ettinger's appropriation of iconic images from the Holocaust has made me re-evaluate my own relationship to my family's history. My work as I have stated is not specifically about the Holocaust but a means of understanding my claims to feel something of the after-affects.

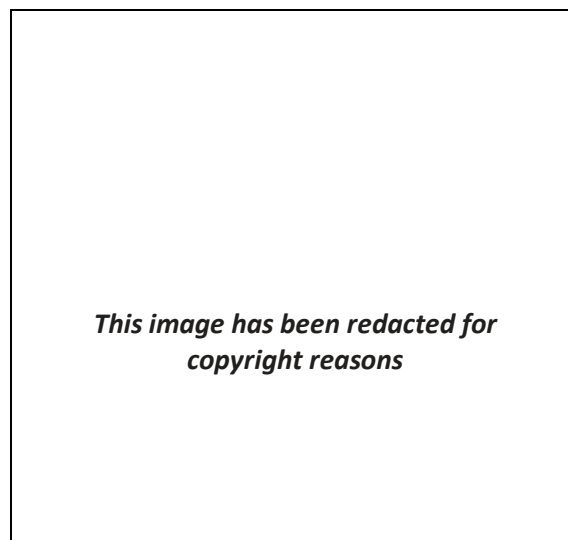


Figure 126. Bracha L. Ettinger, *Euridice No. 10*, 1996  
(oil, xerography, with photocopied dust, pigment and ashes on canvas)

Adorno's much quoted concerns regarding the limitations and ethical responsibilities of there being any meaningful language capable of talking about the Holocaust, claiming that 'to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric'. (Adorno, 1983, p.34) Whether poetry was capable of conceptualising the inconceivable; may be more questioning *how* Art can achieve this than whether any attempts *should* be made. Over-simplifying, glamorizing, trivializing, sentimentalizing or even exploiting the Holocaust have been some of the criticisms.

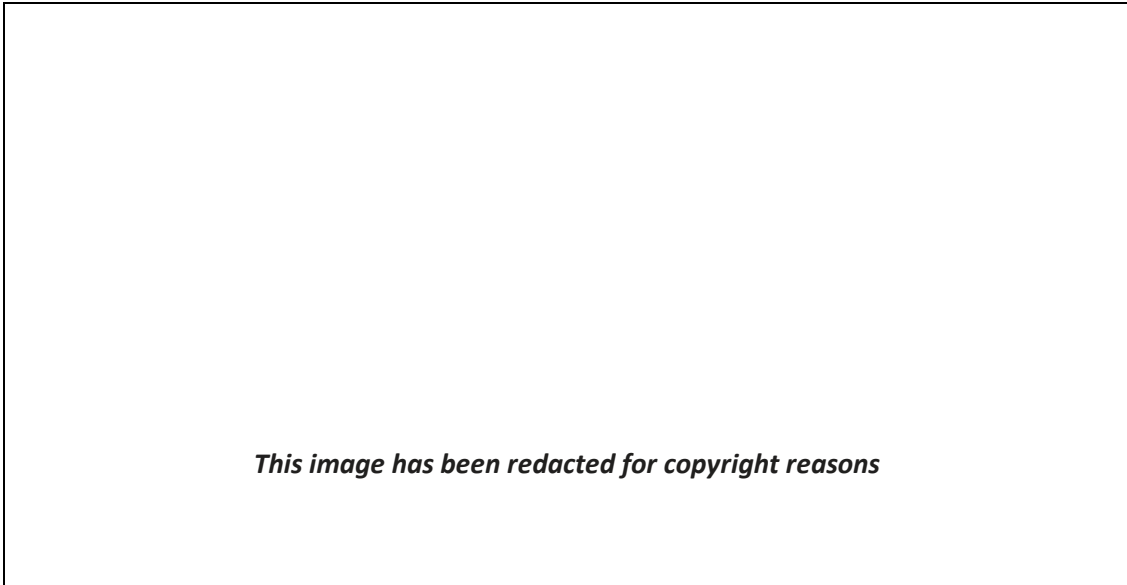


Figure 127. Bracha L. Ettinger, *Euridice No.15*, (1996)  
(oil, xerography, with photocopied dust, pigment and ashes on canvas)

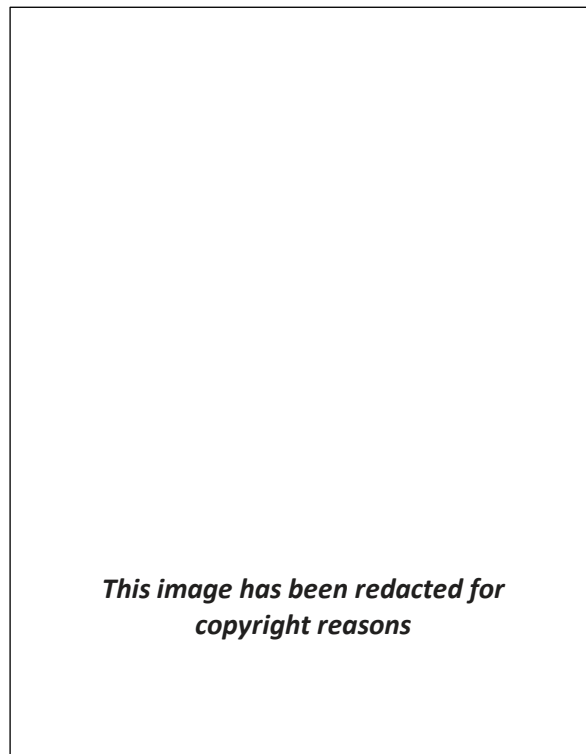


Figure 128. Bracha L. Ettinger, *Euridice No.37*, (1991-2001)  
(oil, xerography, with photocopied dust, pigment and ashes on canvas)

The challenge for historians, archivists, writers and artists is to navigate through the sacred and profane dualities of The Holocaust in memorial work. On the one hand the desire and need to commemorate, to respect the notion of 'never forgetting', while simultaneously avoiding indulging exploitation or aestheticizing the real trauma. Post-memory, although originating in the inherited stories and familial knowledge is constructed and constantly re-calibrated through mediated images.

Post memory is a powerful form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation. (Hirsch. 1996 p. 662).

If the space between the image and its meaning is held open by the art work and permits an instinctual visceral response - a contact with the traumatic memory is possible but always at a distance - there being a space between self and image. 'As spectators of the imagery of traumatic memory, we might, at certain points, regard our affective encounter from an *outside* in terms of a contact with a concealed *inside*'. (Bennet, 2005 p.44). Bennet is suggesting the possibility of an art work that 'ultimately renders perception itself the object of inquiry' (2005, p. 43) Less about asking what is the meaning, or what trauma is being described, but more how does the art 'put insides and outsides into contact in order to establish a basis for empathy?' (2005, p.45) There is a link in these thoughts to the potential relational transformation in the matrixial border-space.

## ART AND THE PAIN OF OTHERS

The Colombian artist, Doris Salcedo, has devoted her creativity to the act of mourning and memorial. Born in Bogotá in 1958, she has lived through decades of Colombia racked by political violence, disappearances and atrocity. And as she explains;

This view point has confined my work into a fragile threshold, a threshold filled with impossible contradictions that will remain unsettled in each and every one of my pieces. (Schneider-Enriquez, 2017, p. xvii)

Salcedo's practice begins with the testimony of others - victims of traumatic experience she lacks, but to which she gives powerful aesthetic voice and makes public, political violence and its aftermath. I was deeply moved by her installation *Tabula Rose* (2018) at the White Cube in Bermondsey. (Fig. 129) Wooden tables stood in the North Gallery, isolated from each other, yet each with a poise and powerful, silent presence. Each had been smashed to smithereens and painstakingly repaired. Spicer (2018) describes their fragile beauty showing how carefully they have been repaired, fragment by fragment. 'But that they will never be quite the same again is the very point of the work...These are quiet acts of protest that prompt us to remember.' (Spicer, 2018)

At any moment, with the merest touch, these precarious structures might collapse into the countless pieces from which they had been reconstructed. Although still recognisable, they would not withstand further use and will never fully recover. They had been subjected to a brutal and complex cycle of destruction and reconstruction. A hushed reverence hung over the gallery. One didn't dare get too near, yet the detail required a close inspection. Salcedo, 'interlaces the work of mourning with acts of ethical protest.' (Enwezor, 2015)

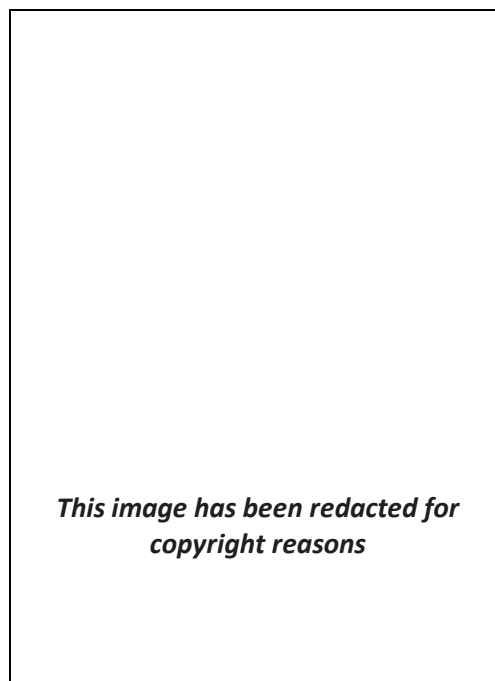


Figure 129. Doris Salcedo, *Tabula Rasa*, 2018  
(wooden table)

Her sculpture demands an act of recognition and with careful scrutiny - reading the signs, as the normal capacity of vision to make sense of the world breaks down. 'Salcedo's work unfolds through gradual negotiation of metamorphosis.' (Bennett, 2005, p.65) The affect is not carried in a narrative or figurative image of atrocity, but lies in the pursuit of understanding the transformative and creative process acted on the materiality and surface detail.

Altering objects to their limit, beyond which form and identity would be destroyed, she demands that her materials express tragedy and its aftermath, 'and this commitment to materiality defines both her practice and the nature of her address.' (Schneider Enriquez, 2016, p.4) Her chosen objects bare the traces of those harmed by political violence. She fills, scrapes and joins them, embedding fragments of cloth, buttons or bones. Salcedo's work speaks 'of the uncertainty and precariousness of that life when neither a place nor a space exists for human beings.' (Schneider Enriquez, 2016, p. 59) In Salcedo's *La Casa Viuda (The Widowed house)* (1992 - 1995) the sculptures refer to a private familial space cruelly violated. (Fig. 130)

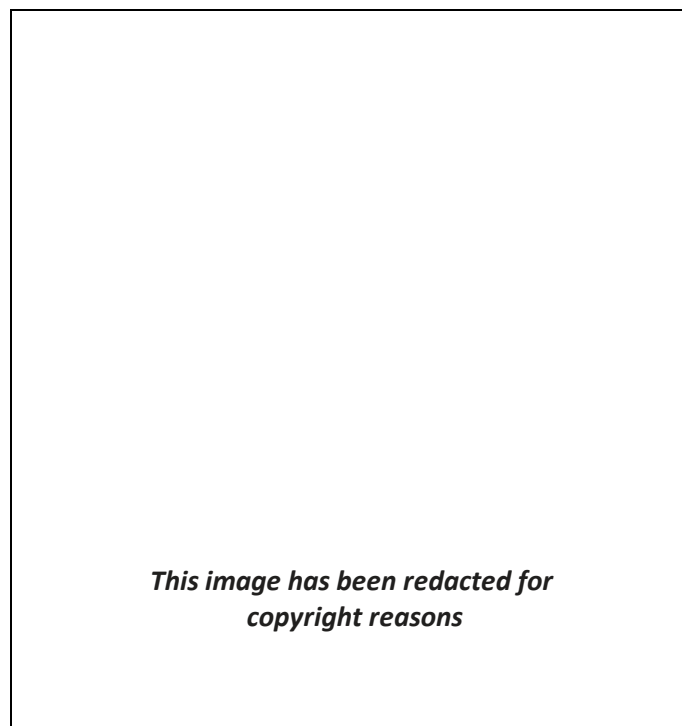


Figure 130. Doris Salcedo, *La Casa Viuda 1*, 1992-4

(wood, concrete, metal and fabric)

Salcedo's series of work, *Untitled*, (Fig. 131 - 132) made between 1995 and 2007, place contested space centre stage. The cupboards are filled with concrete, violated, weighed down, no longer a place for keeping things safe. They have been suffocated of life and something other has been forced inside, an entombed interior. I sensed a deep suffocating heaviness, vividly conveyed in their presence. Extracted from their familiar environment these objects will never return. Her sculptures show the burden of memory, and the long hard work of grieving on behalf of and alongside the victims. The pain of the other inhabits her present as an empathic trace.

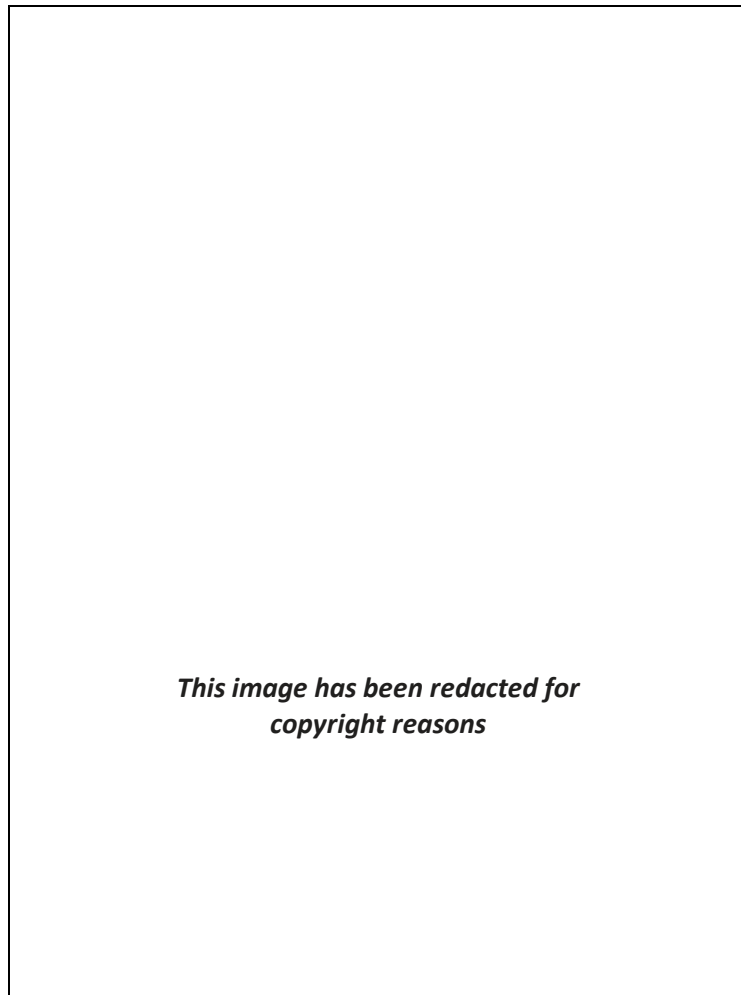


Figure 131. Doris Salcedo, *Untitled*, 2007  
(wood, concrete, metal and fabric)



Bachelard describes such furniture as the most intimate and personal of the home.

Wardrobes with their shelves, desks with their drawers, and chests with their false bottoms are veritable organs of the secret psychological life... They are hybrid objects, subject objects... A wardrobe's inner space is also *intimate space*, space that is not open to just anybody. (Bachelard, 1994, p.78)

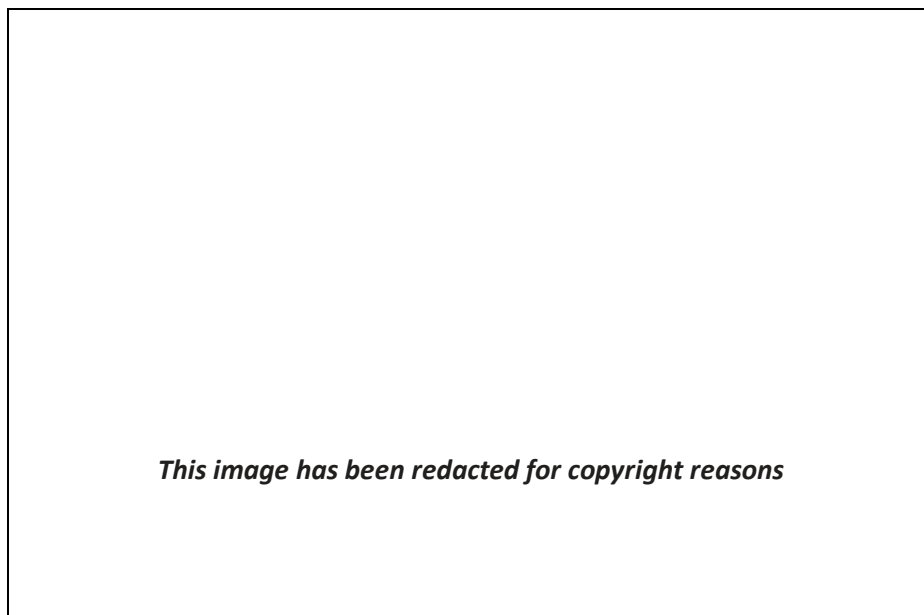


Figure 132. Doris Salcedo, *Untitled*, 2007  
(wood, concrete, metal and fabric)

As the viewer approaches these wardrobes, Salcedo engenders both our physical and emotional memory, there is a sense of haunting - a possession - a deadness invades. 'Through our encounter we register a move toward a critical thinking of loss in this context; toward a way of seeing, that changes the terms of engagement.' (Bennett, 2005, p.69) There is a post-memory working here that demands our attention. An act of looking, allowing our thoughts to unfold out of the details of signification, and inspire our empathic wit(h)nessing.

