Transgenerational Dialogues with Jo Spence about Class and Gender in the Mother–Daughter Sphere: Drawing as the site of transformation from feminist generation to genealogy

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THESIS CONTAINS /DVD

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Unless otherwise stated, all images by Jo Spence are reproduced courtesy of the Jo Spence Memorial Archive, London.

Abstract

This thesis explores the possibility of inscriptions of the feminine by means of a historically situated and personal drawing practice in which gesture, mark, paper, scale and space are fundamental co-ordinates of the staging of passage through generation (mother–daughter relations) to genealogy (a claimed and remade connectivity under transformation).

This thesis accompanies and critically reflects upon a practice in fine art that stages and works through two transgenerational dialogues. The first, an artistic dialogue that moves from reference to creative independence with acknowledged filiation takes place between myself and the influential artist-photographer Jo Spence. The complementary dialogue is a prolonged personal encounter through drawing with the mother, my mother, and the history of a troubled relationship which was staged and transformed by means of 'working through' (Sigmund Freud) that was effected by art-working (Bracha L. Ettinger). My work is also situated in relation to the writing on drawing by Serge Tisseron.

The work starts from an historical engagement with and research into the working practices of Jo Spence, whose work offered resources for the exploration of a working-class subjectivity in relation to the complex relation between mother and daughter in terms of shared histories and their emotional residues. A drawing practice, distinct from Spence's staged photographic work of remembering, placed the drawing body of the daughter in proximity with the drawn body of the mother in both the real time and space of the making of the work and the virtual time and space of creating drawings from sketches and memory in the studio. Using, over the period of research, different papers (qualities and sizes), pastels, and studio spaces, the practice restages the encounters between the drawing body with its movements and visualisations, the drawn body progressively escaping from the delineating and containing line. The spectator encounters the trace and impressions of the former in the forms and spaces of the latter, created on paper by means of variations of scale, size and both modes of drawing and spaces of exhibition.

The working process is the means by which psychic spaces of encounter, return and remembrance, and restoration within the post-Oedipal relation of two women could be constructed and, by the same token, opened out, to allow what is named an alternative *inscription of the feminine* to be disclosed by, and become visually accessible through graphic and spatial evocation of connectivity and what Bracha L. Ettinger names distance-in-proximity.

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Introduction

This thesis explores the possibility of what Griselda Pollock has named *inscriptions in, from and of the feminine.* In a historically situated, classed and gendered drawing practice, gesture and mark, paper and line, scale and space are fundamental co-ordinates of the staging of *passage through generation* (mother–daughter relations) *to genealogy* (a claimed and remade connectivity under transformation).[1] In 1977 the artist Mary Kelly proposed the notion of reading for visual inscriptions by women in contemporary culture. She wrote:

> In summary, I think that feminine narcissism is an essential component of the feminist problematic in so far as it includes a symptomatic reading of our visual inscriptions, a reading based on absences as much as on presence; that such a reading suggests the way in which heterogeneous signifying processes underlie and often erupt into a signifying practice; that because of the coincidence of language and patriarchy the 'feminine' is (metaphorically) set on the side of the heterogeneous, the unnameable, the unsaid; and that in so far as the feminine is said, articulated in language, it is profoundly subversive.[2]

In 1996 (in the catalogue of the influential exhibition *Inside The Invisible*) Griselda Pollock took up Mary Kelly's initial gesture of feminist criticism and with extended phrasing elaborated this concept of inscriptions further when she wrote:

> The phrase, 'inscriptions in the feminine,' has an archaeological ring to it. As if deciphering an ancient culture whose language is lost while its strange monuments remain to puzzle and provoke our curiosity, we must assume that we do not yet know what is being traced upon the surfaces of culture by artists speaking in, from, or of the feminine. A feminist reading for the inscriptions of the feminine means listening for the traces of a subjectivity formed in the feminine within conflict with a phallocentric system. Beyond that, it implies figuring out what working from that place, however unconsciously, might be *producing*, as yet unarticulated, unrepresented, unsignified, unrecognised.[3]

As an art historian Griselda Pollock reads art works for this often unconscious or unrecognised presence of feminine difference. As an artist, I am seeking to create

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[1] I am using genealogy in the sense that 'Genealogy uproots the traditional foundation of history and disrupts history's apparent continuity by concentrating on minor events and "accidents" and insisting knowledge is always rooted in power, but seeks to deny its own origins,' as defined by David Macey in *The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory* (London: Penguin Books, 2001), p.157.

[2] Mary Kelly, 'On Sexual Politics and Art' (1977), in R. Parker and Griselda Pollock (eds), *Framing Feminism: Art and the Women's Movement 1970-1985* (London: Pandora Press, 1987), p. 310.

[3] Griselda Pollock, 'Inscriptions in the Feminine,' in M. Catherine de Zegher (ed.), *Inside The Visible: an elliptical traverse of 20th century art: in, of, and from the feminine*, (London: The MIT Press, 1996), p. 74.

works that create a space for the emergence of feminine difference: for the event to occur, not for an image or iconography of the feminine. I aim to open out the concept of '*inscriptions in, from and of the feminine*'. Non-expressive, the feminine will be understood in terms defined by Bracha L. Ettinger as a shared psychic space and memory, and not as an attribute of women. Inscription is a metaphor of both drawing as a kind of writing, but also carving both through gesture and surface. Inscribing is a writing, an inscription can be read across a marked surface.

This thesis accompanies and critically reflects upon a practice in fine art that stages and works through two *transgenerational dialogues*. The first is an artistic dialogue that moves from *reference* to *creative independence with acknowledged filiation*[4] between the influential artist-photographer Jo Spence and myself. The complementary dialogue is a prolonged personal encounter through drawing with the mother, my mother, and the history of our troubled relationship: the topic of the mother/daughter histories and class was also a key theme of Spence's photographic work. This was staged at the intersection of a life narrative and a narrative of practice and transformed, beyond the narrative testament of a lived dialogue and direct physical closeness to my mother, by means of Sigmund Freud's concept of '*working through*'[5] that was extended into a specifically artistic practice as '*art-working*' in terms of Bracha L. Ettinger. She writes,

> The place of art is for me the transportation-station of trauma: a transport-station that more than a place is rather a space, that allows for certain occasions of occurrence and encounter, which will become the realization of what I call *borderspacing in a matrixial trans-subjective space* by way of experiencing with an object or process of creation. The transport is expected in this station, and it is possible, but the transport-station does promise that passage of remnants of trauma will actually take place in it; it only supplies the space for this occasion. The passage is expected but uncertain, the transport does not happen in each encounter and for every gazing subject. The matrixial trans-subjective field is a field in whose scope there is no point to speak, neither of such certainty nor of absolute hazard. Likewise, it is pointless to evoke there the whole subject, a definite hindrance of encounter, a neat split between subject and object, to total evacuating of the subject or its shattering into endless particles. In this psychic field, a gathering of several of its potential intended correspondents is possible – of several, and not all of them, and not at

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[4] I am using *filiation* in the metaphorical sense of a twofold mother–daughter relation between two generations of working-class women artists and their experiential, shared relation to the working-class mother.

[5] Working-through is one of Sigmund Freud's fundamental concepts of how psychoanalysis dynamically transforms the subject according to the associative method. See Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertand Pontalis ,*The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. D. Nicholson-Smith, (London: Karnac, 1973), pp. 488-9.

> just any moment, in their actualization as partial-objects and partial subjects, between presence and absence.[6]

My work draws on two feminist concepts: one is Griselda Pollock's *inscriptions in the feminine* and the other is the proposition of a feminine 'beyond the phallus' theorised by the leading practising feminist artist Bracha L. Ettinger as the *matrixial.*[7] Neither has, however, explored these psychoanalytical or art-historical concepts through drawing or through the freighted history of drawing the female body. Written through the creative working process of making artwork my practice-based project asks: in what way can a fine art drawing practice take on and expand what emerges out of *feminist, autobiographical memory work,* initiated in the influential photo therapy work of Jo Spence?

In Chapters One, Two and Three, the thesis tracks my historical engagement with and research into the working practices of Jo Spence, whose work initially offered resources for the artistic exploration of a working-class subjectivity in relation to the complex relation between mother and daughter in terms of shared histories and their emotional residues. In Chapter Two I examine the artistic staging of the relationship as I began to explore the complexities of the photographic collaborative process in which Spence was involved, engaging and experimenting with performance of inhabiting or re-positioning the mother's body though performing in/with a latex cast of my mother's body, and in photographing the performance of being in the latex cast of my mother's body. This marked a transition from a practice associated with Spence (photo therapy) and a return to a personal drawing practice involving my own mother as model. In Chapter Three, I critically examine the next phase of this process, carrying over the legacies of engagement with Spence into the specific space of repeated encounter with, and dialogue with, my mother. This is the first bridging between the transgenerational dialogue with Spence and the transgenerational dialogue with my mother. This involved a process of investigation and experimentation at the intersection of recalled, reworked life narratives and a narrative of practice in which drawing functioned as both a means to recreate intimacy and to enable change through dialogue.

In Chapters Four and Five, the thesis documents the transformation of this dialogue (effected through research and experimental practice) in my own drawing practice, which now becomes distinct from Spence's staged photographic work of

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[6] Bracha L. Ettinger, 'Art as the Transport-Station of Trauma', in *Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger: Artworking 1985-1999* (Ghent: Ludion, 2000), p. 91.

[7] Bracha L. Ettinger is a leading feminist painter and theorist. Her thesis on the Matrix was first published in the article 'Matrix and Metramorphosis', in *Differences* 4:3 (1992), pp. 176-208.

remembering. From this dialogue and gradual emancipation, I used my artwork as a visual investigation of the creative and imaginative process of *working through/artworking* rather than as therapy. The idea of returning, rethinking and reworking, is not about a therapeutic space but concerns building a new relationship in both the act of drawing and drawing as a process of enactment. I emphasise the importance of the process of making over product; drawing becomes the exploration of marks left by the process itself. I frame my work critically also in relation to the writing on drawing by Serge Tisseron, widely quoted in the critical literature on drawing as a mode of artistic thought rather than as a medium in the formalist sense.

According to Tisseron's contemporary exploration and expansion of the primacy of drawing practice as a thinking tool, 'the hand's drawing gesture is an essential movement by which thought learns how to think itself through.'[8] The hand's gestural movement and moment organises, and corresponds to, mental and physical processes of encounter, appropriating a spatial arena, like a psychic landscape. Enacted in the back and forth motion, drawing stages and acts out a transitional space of exchange. Channelling meaning between gesture and the materials of the artwork 'in process', the idea in itself comes into being. The inscription of the hand's marking gesture and touch can then be read across a marked surface. The paper is a gathering receptacle of creative thought for the retrieval of connectivity and reciprocity that produces and renews meaning. Tisseron writes,

> The process of turning thoughts into forms require the possibility of containing form in which the creator's thought can be cast and then retrieved. Such mechanisms requires the possibility for the containing form to be invested both as: a) a metaphor of the mother's body, which is everyone's primal container, psychically as well as physically (the realm of bonding investments); and as b) a metaphor of one's own body (the realm of narcissistic and sexual investments).[9]

> For Tisseron drawing acts through the inscriptive gesture. He concludes:

> The process of the inscriptive movement first transforms physical stimulus into image and into representation; it then gathers those representations into a whole and hierarchizes them in order to connect them to a single purpose which will provide the cornerstone of the whole: sensation in the poem, illusion in the novelistic story, idea in the essay.[10]

In the light of Tisseron's work, I suggest that my practice of drawing as the enactment of intimacy and the space for dialogue opens up communication, connectivity and

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[8] Serge Tisseron, 'All Writing is Drawing: The Spatial Development of the Manuscript', *Yale French Studies*, 84, Boundaries: Writing and Drawing (1994), p. 36.
[9] Ibid. p. 41.
[10] Ibid. p. 42.

reciprocity between the mother's body as fantasised but internalised other, my own body in relation to another feminine (maternal) body and the real presence of a mother (model) and a daughter (artist) in real space, producing an image on paper. The paper is container and surface for self and internalised other to be disclosed across what Bracha L. Ettinger calls a *borderspace* that is shared and as such is defined as specifically arising from feminine sexual specificity in the generation of human subjectivity.[11] In drawing as a narrative of its making, the artist encounters his or her own body and situates themselves in relation to the world through the gesture and materials of the artwork 'in process'.

My practice placed the *drawing body* of the daughter in proximity with the *drawn body* of the mother in both the real time and space of the making of the preliminary drawings and the virtual time and space of creating drawings from small sketches and by memory work in different studio spaces. Over the period of research I used different papers (qualities and sizes), pastels, and studio spaces. The practice restaged the encounters between the *drawing body* with its movements and visualisations, and the *drawn body* progressively escaping from the delineating and containing line as the practice sought to create in drawing a space *of* the body rather than a space *for* the body in figuration.

What encounters does the drawing provoke when the bodies of spectators participate in re-figuring the gestural movement? The *spectator* encounters the trace and impressions of the former (the real encounter) in the forms and spaces of the latter (the virtual event on paper), created on paper by means of variations of scale, size and both modes of drawing and spaces of exhibition. As a result of the performative aspect initially gained, in part, from my engagement with Spence, now enacted in drawing on a larger scale and in a specific space (resulting in site-specific drawing), the viewing process also comes into its own significance. The thesis examines the important role of spectator because the key shift from generation to genealogy takes place in drawing and its exhibition in a specific sequence and spacing of the series. The thesis has to situate the practice that fundamentally emerges out of *feminist autobiographical memory-work* in relation to contemporary drawing practice, with specific relation (dialectic) to gesture and mark, line and paper, the body and space.

In the final chapter, which draws theoretically on the work of Bracha L. Ettinger, the *working process* became the means of what I now identify as the *psychic space of encounter, return, remembrance and restoration (retrieval)* within the post-Oedipal relation of two adult women that could be constructed and, by the same token, opened

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[11] Bracha L. Ettinger, 'Metramorphic Borderlinks and Matrixial Borderspace', in John Welchman (ed.), *Rethinking Borders*, (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

out, to allow what I name *an-other female body* to be disclosed by, and become visually accessible through graphic and spatial evocation of connectivity and what Ettinger names *distance-in-proximity*. My practice, therefore, researches a possibility beyond what Jo Spence initially made possible for me to initiate: a re-encounter with a troubled past, a trauma in the mother–child relationship. The facilitator of this transition, in both the transgenerational dialogue with Jo Spence and the transgenerational dialogue with my mother, is the matrixial theory offered by Ettinger. This concerns an encounter with a feminine other that is not an image of, or representation of an other. There is, however, a 'trace', and a tracing of the visualisations through drawing of a specific woman's body. The final drawings explore the relation between space, scale, seriality, mark-making and drawing gestures that involve the body of the maker/artist as a means to produce an effect of the body as a space of otherness in which line is not bounding, containing, delimiting, describing. Can a drawing practice enable a passage for what Ettinger has called '*a space for occurrence and encounter*'? This, of course, may not occur for every viewer. It is in the intersection, therefore, of the journey through drawing and Ettinger's proposal for a supplementary track for the feminine subjectivity as severality that this passage can be both practised and theorised. I aim to imaginatively create, retrieve, restore and regain, across time and memory a progressive, pleasurable and privileged return and relation to a maternal body as a spatial encounter rather than re-configuration. Drawing is both the site of research into the potentiality of this process and the production of the event-encounter that then solicits the viewer when the works are themselves displayed in specific spatial configuration, scale, and series.

Chapter One: Formative Years

Beginnings

My research is founded upon my first brief engagement with Jo Spence as a result of the work illustrated in her book *Putting Myself In The Picture*, which I encountered as a mature student on my final year of a BA course in Fine Art in 1998.[12] I was working with representations of the body in drawing and painting, and casts of bodies in latex. The outcome was a large installation of multiple hanging latex bodies that I then photographed and wore in performance.

Intermediate Elaborations and Research: Jo Spence Archive

It was on the MA in Feminism and the Visual Arts (with a practice-based component) that I was able to situate Jo Spence's practice in a much wider context, critically examining her work within the feminist struggle of the 1970s. Foregrounding the social and economic reality of women's struggles and class conflict, Jo Spence was a pioneering, working-class feminist artist-photographer who radically breached the borders between private and public, history, family and society.[13] Extending a quote from Griselda Pollock, Alison Rowley writes, this 'was a time when British feminist involvement with the visual arts began to engage with a range of political and cultural theories, Marxism, semiotics, psychoanalysis, deconstruction, to reclaim other media outlawed by modernist hierarchies'.[14]

This profound historical moment of critical feminist intervention in the analysis of art theory and practice cannot be underestimated. It influenced and changed the very foundations and modes of contemporary art history, theory and practice. While researching Spence's background and her engagement with highly influential

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[12] Jo Spence, *Putting Myself In The Picture: A Political, Personal And Photographic Autobiography,* (London: Camden Press, 1986).

[13] Jo Spence's formative years were spent working in collaboration with the Hackney Flashers Collective, who, in an act of consciousness-raising during the crucial years between the legislation and implementation of the Equal Pay Act in Britain, made two major projects from 1974 onwards entitled *Women and Work* and *Who's holding the Baby* to 'make visible the invisible, thereby validating women's experience and demonstrate their unrecognised contribution to the economy'. Spence, *Putting Myself In The Picture,* op. cit., p. 69. Furthermore, women's status in the workforce, especially the debate surrounding equal pay and job opportunities, is still very much on the political agenda today. BBC Radio Four, *Women's Hour*, 27 February 2006.

[14] Alison Rowley wrote of the formative 'second wave' of feminist years in her essay 'On Viewing Three Paintings by Jenny Saville: Rethinking Feminist Practice of Painting', in Griselda Pollock (ed.), *Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts*, (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 104.

theoretical discourses, her work informed and encouraged my own innovations through practice, which were then developed into a proposal for a practice-based PhD.

In Spence's work I recognised a starting point for my own explorations of classed subjectivity, with a particular focus on the relation between mother and daughter. I decided that representations of the body were becoming the site of work into how subjectivity is constituted across one generation and another. The MA enabled me to explore theories of generational transmission of classed subjectivity in the works of Carolyn Steedman alongside the work of Spence.[15] The outcome was a large-scale interactive art book, based on the child's game 'tripartite'. The art book was multimedia, presenting found pieces of differing puzzles that do and do not marry or seemingly fit together. By juxtaposing several partial narratives beside one another, together with randomly playing digital sounds, Spence's photographic images and drawings of my own mother, I was able to generate an engagement and dialogue between Spence and myself.

As a starting point, I will first provide a selective background to Spence's tentative use of the camera and its image as a therapeutic tool. Having left the world of 'professional photography'[16] (from being a high street photographer with a studio and processing dark room), Spence radically 'reclaims other media outlawed by modernist hierarchies'[17] and shifts her work into the realm of amateur photography. She writes, 'I became the subject of my own enquiry rather than the object of someone else's, where I act rather than being acted upon'.[18]

On entering higher education as a mature BA student at the Polytechnic of Central London between 1979 and 1982, Spence writes of the theoretical tools gained from being 'on the receiving end of interpenetrating theories of communication, culture, psychoanalysis, semiology, sensitometry, history and feminism and social and political discourses', to produce 'photographs to fulfil specific needs'. This raised critical

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[15] Carolyn Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman,* (London: Virago, 1986).

[16] Jo Spence began her career as professional photographer, firstly by working for several years assisting commercial photographers before going freelance and opening up her own high street studio in Hampstead. Having learnt the visual techniques of the highly idealised and desirable visual stereotype or iconic image that 'makes us look good', 'beautiful', 'glamorous', a visual commodification maintained by the world of professional photography, Spence specialised in weddings, portraiture and family group shots, actors' portfolios and such like. Producing such images colluded in facilitating a specific need for idealised representations of the client or sitter. Spence was a professional 'voyeur' for several years before becoming disillusioned, and beginning to form oppositional community-based photography workshops, before eventually going to university.

[17] Rowley, 'On Viewing Three Paintings by Jenny Saville', op. cit, p. 104.

[18] Jo Spence, *Cultural Sniping: The Art Of Transgression,* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 163.

questions, 'Who are they for?', 'Do the subjects want to be represented that way?', 'Are our images understood?', 'Are they critical enough of the existing social order which daily reproduces itself and in so doing naturalises that very process of reproduction?' This transformative learning experience radically changed her practice. Reading and producing images differently, Spence states, 'There was no simple "taking photographs"'.[19]

As a starting point, mediated by the ready-made family snapshot as an accessible and prominent means of story-telling, Spence locates a class identity by its private and domestic content and opened up a space for class and gender and self-exploration through her own family album. She writes, 'I began to reverse the process of the way I had been constructed as a woman by deconstructing myself visually in an attempt to identify the process by which I had been "put together"'.[20]

In reassembling and analysing the structure of the family album, the outcome was presented as storyboards, with thirty laminated panels spanning forty-five years of her life (1.1-1.3).[21] Spence expands the album's content, in part, with critical explanatory texts that pose questions of representation, rather than a series of statements.[22] She argues that the image of the family at leisure masks essential truths about the person or persons being photographed.[23] Family snap-shots are often taken to show the family as a happy unit, together at play on holiday, looking relaxed and content with their lot. The divisions and conflicts within the family, the varying power struggles between parents, children and adults, are very rarely visible or caught in the amateur snapshot. When conflict is caught on camera these images are often deemed to be unsuitable for the family album and are invariably discarded, hidden away from view, or ripped in half with persons missing or faces burnt out. How the family presents itself to the outside world often contains a much darker side, hidden beneath what we as viewers perceive to be occurring.

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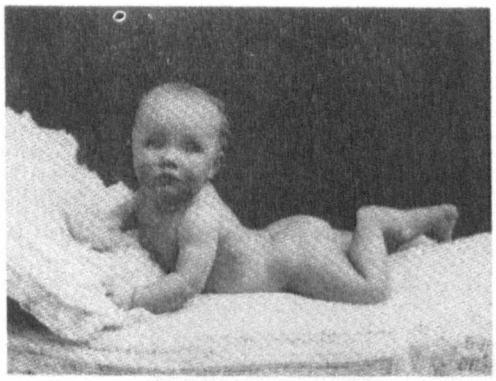
[19] Spence, *Putting Myself in the Picture*, op. cit., p. 135.
[20] Ibid., p. 83.
[21] Fourteen panels are illustrated in *Putting Myself In The Picture,* pp. 84-97.
[22] The work of John Heartfield informed the foundations of Spence's earlier work; John Heartfield was an anti-sentimental and anti-romantic image maker, juxtaposing photography and text in order to address the relations of power and to question the political strategy of representation.
[23] 'The camera has been historically used as an authoritative hierarchic device vested with a class ideological motive that invariably excludes the represented subjects' specificity than social, cultural and political power'. John Tagg, 'The Burden of Representation: Photography and the Growth of the State', *Ten. 8*, No. 14 (1984), pp. 10-12.: 'The representation it produces is highly coded and the power it wields is never its own. It arrives on the scene vested with a particular authority to arrest, picture and transform daily life; a power to see and record; a power of surveillance that effects a complete reversal of the political axis of representation which has confused so many labour historians'.



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THE FAMILY ALBUM

1939 to 1979

1 Eight and a half months *(High street photographer – Woodford)*

2 Five hundred and twenty eight months later

1.1 Jo Spence, *Beyond The Family Album* (detail), 1979, dimensions variable, mounted and laminated photographic storyboards.

TRYING to recall one's own history is a painful process of selective remembering and selective forgetting. Of knowing and not knowing. At times moving from description to sentiment, from self pity to self evaluation. I have tried not to treat myself as an object under the microscope, as a sociologist or anthropologist might, nor to pretend with hindsight, that I was always in control of my life. Quite clearly I was never in control.

My parents, Herbert Cyril Clode and Gladys Kate Peach married in 1933 during the Depression. I was born in June 1934. These early photographs, all taken before I started school, show me as the centre of the family. My mother, who stayed at home to look after me, dearly loved my father who worked in a furniture store in Putney, in order to support us all.

Both my parents came from working class families. My paternal grandfather had a history of militancy in the Transport and General Workers' Union. My parents, during the early part of their lives together, were in a process of what has come to be termed 'social mobility', moving from one class to another. For as long as I can remember we lived in 'nice' suburbs of London. Before I went to school my father had taught me to read, write and count, and to use the telephone.

As a record of *her* life, as a mother, these early photographs give no indication of the amount of sheer hard work involved in childcare.

Of my father's life as a worker I had no record at all.

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1 Three weeks old: a bundle in a basket. Who is she? Who took the picture?

2 Fourteen months: we look very pretty together, artistically posed in this 'mother and child' cameo on the Bognor beach (*father, deceased/snapshot*)

3 Three years: in grandma's back yard, Colliers Wood. 'Such a lovely little girl, doesn't she look like Shirley Temple?' (*Uncle Syd, deceased/'amateur' photographer*)

4 Four years: visit to Broadstairs. My mother was pregnant; did I know? (*Sunbeam Photo Company Ltd/beach photographer*)

5 Four years, two months: the last record of having my mother to myself, in our garden in Wandsworth. She seems to have looked after me well. At this time the peace treaty was being signed between Hitler and Chamberlain. (*father/snapshot*)

'GEMINI. . . Mars increases your drive and energy after the 16th, and the people you meet now may have a profound influence on your attitudes and beliefs. . . '
'My' horoscope *Women's World*, May 1979

1.2 Jo Spence, *Beyond The Family Album* (detail), 1979, dimensions variable, mounted and laminated photographic storyboards.

WHY would I want to put my 'private' photographs on show for everybody to see? Maybe it is because this record of my life lacks so much that I want to share its gaping holes with others.

When World War II broke out it altered most British people's lives. For me, it happened just as I was about to start school – the very same week. Almost immediately, my mother, our new baby and I were evacuated to Surrey. My father visited us at weekends, until the panic was over and we returned home.

In 1940 I was sent from London, this time alone and even further away. I lived for a while with a family of Cornish agricultural workers, sharing a room with another unhappy child. Later my mother rescued me from an isolation hospital where I had been sent with 'skin trouble'. A week after I was back in the bosom of the family it cleared up. For a while, before going into a munitions factory, my father was a rent collector. Ironically, during this time we were homeless and lived with my grandparents. At some point we moved to a suburban estate with ornamental cherry trees and front gardens with no fences. By now both parents were working in essential warwork, contributing to the 'war effort'. My brother was in a nursery and I became a 'latch key' child.

In 1944 my brother and I were evacuated together, this time being sent unwillingly to a Derbyshire mill village where we lived with a family of coal miners. I became a surrogate parent for my brother; a role which we both resented but were trapped in. No photographs exist of this period, but the iniquities dealt out to evacuees certainly need some form of documentation. During this period I experienced incredible friendship from other children similarly 'lost', like myself. We felt the adults had abandoned us.

Clearly these recollections hardly transcend anecdote but to me they are an essential part of my 'memories'.

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1 Five years: displaced from the centre of the family. And showing it. For me this year meant having a baby brother, starting school, war breaking out, being evacuated. What will happen to this ideal family, in this idyllic garden? My father's age, flat feet and piles, prevented his call up.
(*grandfather, deceased/ snapshot*)

2 Five years: 'mother's little helper' walking brother Michael in the park.
(*mother, deceased/snapshot*)

3 Six years: looking like an uncared for, but rather cheeky 'orphan'. This is a 'face' I still see on me even now. Less often though.
(*school photograph/Cornwall*)

4 Eleven years: looking like a refugee. Another 'face' I still see on me . . . more often now. The five year gap between these photographs masks years of being constantly uprooted, adapting, being ill, living in different families, various schools, sleeping in street shelters. Being the one to get home before everybody else and preparing the evening meal. Resenting the loss of my so-called childhood, but becoming independent and able to cope at a very early age. From the state's point of view I was another 'problem' which needed solving at various points in this life.

But I never got caught stealing.
(*school photograph/unknown*)

1.3 Jo Spence, *Beyond The Family Album* (detail), 1979, dimensions variable, mounted and laminated photographic storyboards.

The ready-made snap-shot acts like a double-sided negative, hiding and holding a different story of social division of culture and power, but Spence invites the viewer to look *Beyond The Family Album.* Beyond the smile and pose we are encouraged to question the way the image is constructed as a contradiction of what it portrays. She writes:

> We must learn to see beyond ourselves and the stereotypes offered, to understand the invisible class and power relationship into which we are structured from birth. We must begin to question photographs, ask not only what we think they show us (and how much of what we think we perceive is in fact based on the particular type of visual rhetoric worked upon the sitter), but also what they don't (can't?) show us.[24]

Generated by feminist cultural theory and art practice, using the camera as a political tool in working differing theories through practice, Spence opened up a space to dismantle and disrupt the codes of representation within family photography. Combining personal experience, political understanding and an active mode of art theory, she started to photograph herself and her family differently. The now familiar feminist phrase 'the personal is political' was much expanded by her groundbreaking photographic research work. The impact of this historical precedent, identifying a private and personal-political axis within domestic photography, opens up space for women artists working in similar context and the domain of classed, feminine subjectivity after the 1970s.

At a practical level, as women we need to recall the uncompromising restrictions placed upon practising women artists before and after the 1970s and the all-too-often crippling financial burdens, the lack of patronage, exhibition space and employment within the art world.[25] If there ever was going to be (in the words of Lucy Lippard), 'God forbid, a new stylistic "movement"' to come out of British 1970s Feminism, it would have had to have the necessary ability to be resourceful as well as original.[26] Derived from her radical art practice, Spence describes herself as an

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[24] Spence, *Putting Myself in the Picture*, op. cit, p. 92.

[25] For examples see Parker and Pollock (eds.), *Framing Feminism: Art and the Women's Movement 1970 -1985*, op. cit..

[26] At a time when feminists envisaged change, Lippard wrote 'Perhaps the greatest challenge to the feminist movement in the visual arts, then, is the establishment of a new criteria by which to evaluate not only the aesthetic effect, but the communicative effectiveness of art attempting to avoid becoming a new establishment in itself, or, God forbid, a new stylistic "movement," to be rapidly superseded by some other one. Women's conditioning and capacity to please can lead to pleasing a broad audience as well as pleasing the art hierarchy – a broad audience which would be, of course, half female. Finding that audience, making contact, is a political as much as an artistic act, but it is as creative as anything an artist can do. It takes immense amount of energy,

'amateur photographer', and in this context she would invariably send her films away to be developed at bulk processing plants such as *Bonus Print*, a place where she had once worked on the production line. *Bonus Print* still can be found on most high streets, easily accessible, reasonably priced and open to everyone wishing to follow her resourceful precedent (although recent developments in digital technologies have impacted significantly on the photographic industries).

Spence's work was never fully acknowledged in its own historical moment of the 1970/80s.[27] *Beyond The Family Album* was, however, specifically made for a major exhibition entitled *Three Perspectives on Photography* held at the Hayward Gallery in 1979, and Spence participated in many other collaborative and solo exhibitions, as well as exhibiting in community spaces throughout her career. In addition to being an accomplished, creative solo and collaborative writer (publishing numerous articles and several books), Spence's work still stands as an incompletely studied and under-analysed archive.[28]

Having only seen Spence's work in her books, art journals and art magazines, I first extended my formal approach to her work in 2001. My first port of call was to strike up correspondence with her former partner, collaborative project co-worker and photographer Terry Dennett, Curator and Keeper of the Jo Spence Memorial Archive. It was a little later that I was privileged to visit this severely under-funded resource. This was not without unexpected results. I met Terry Dennett in London but had not anticipated that the archive would be retained in Dennett's and Spence's former home, photographic studio and office. Upon entering a narrow galley-bricked yard, with a raised waist-height vegetable garden running along the left side, I recognised and crossed the landmark 152 *Colonisation* door-way. I will come back to *Colonisation* shortly, to identify a major move in Spence's work that went on to inform her later photo therapy work.

Once inside the archive I was overwhelmed by the prolific amount of photographic and written material produced by Spence, right up until her untimely

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courage and originality. Lucy Lippard, 'Changing since Changing,' in, *From the Centre: Feminist Essays on Women's Art* (New York: Dutton, 1976), p. 36.

[27] I am sure this is a regrettable oversight by many art writers, art historians and art critics who have documented the impact and significance of the British women's movement on feminist art practice, especially with reference to photography as an art practice rather than photographic documentation, during and after the 1970s and 1980s. For example, one of the most influential and important books of its time, *Framing Feminism: Art and the Women's Movement 1970 -1985*, op. cit., despite its references to the photographic work by the community based Hackney Flashers Collective, in which Spence was actively involved, does not mention her directly.

[28] For a more detailed chronological account of exhibitions and publications by Spence, see *Cultural Sniping*, op. cit., pp. 234–8.

death in 1992.[29] In this moderate flat, every possible wall space was banked from ceiling to floor with shelves stacked and crammed full of books she had read and written. There was also a selection of video and audio tapes of interviews. Transcripts and articles she had read, written and published. Box files overflowing with slides, contact sheets and photographs, many of which go unseen, took up the larger wall space. Folders and files bulged with cheap *Bonus Print* processing packages. It was abundantly clear that Spence had never ceased working, and fighting against what she termed 'our disgusting class-divided society'.

Rummaging through someone else's lifetime body of work and personal possessions, especially in its original place of production, made me feel as though I was treading upon the hallowed ground of some distant relative or ancestor. It was an intimate and familiar, yet also unfamiliar, feeling, trying to piece together the cultural connections between Spence's and my own social, economic and family histories, through the corpus of her archive. I was, and still am, the intimate unknown stranger trying to make sense of it all.

Throughout the flat, in every available nook and cranny were visual aids, artefacts and props used by Spence in her work. The entire flat was almost a shrine, with things carefully kept and maintained. A large print entitled *Excised* from the series *Narrative of Dis-ease* hung on the wall with a large mirror propped underneath it. Later, I would begin to understand how important this mirror was to her photo therapy practice. At the time, the most unsettling item for me was a small white rubber skeleton that hung from one of the shelves, used not long before Spence's death, in her *Final Project* work.

While the archive reflects Spence's overwhelming ability to engage and experiment with so many different photographic genres and intellectual thought processes that, as she said, 'cross-fertilised' her work, it was evident that she would invariably return to re-thinking and re-working the mother and daughter relation at differing points, intervals and stages throughout her career. A clear example of this re-working, re-thinking process can be clearly seen in the image on the reverse cover of *Putting Myself In The Picture* (1.4). Spence sits in front of an old gas-fire piecing together previous images of her mother and daughter re-enactments that then go on to inform her subsequent photographic performance. This complex combination of cross-fertilisation dispersed her mother and daughter project across the entire archive, making it impossible to separate the cross-fertilised strands from other projects. I spent

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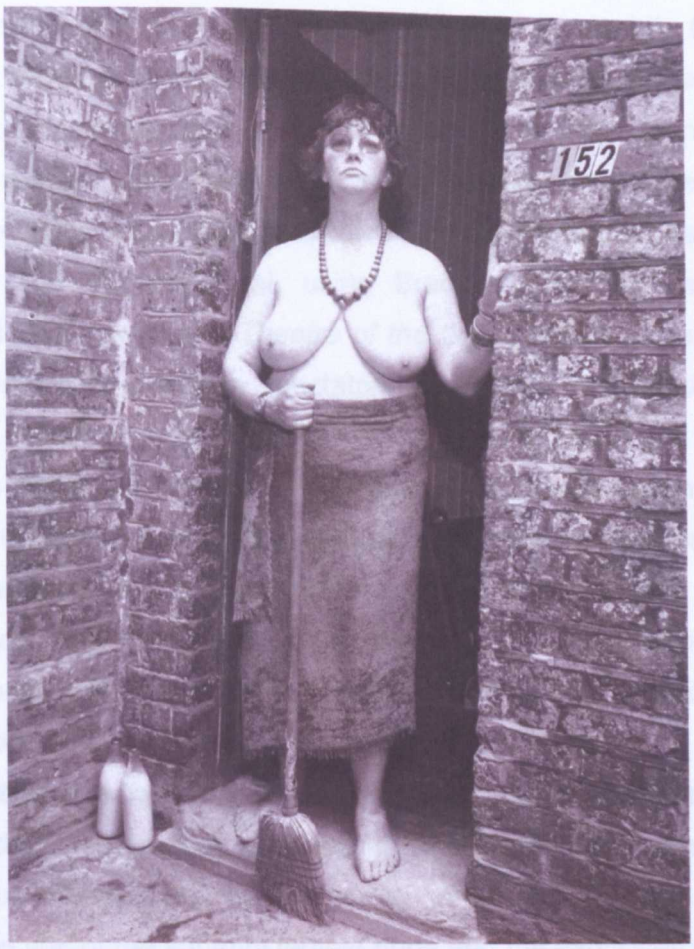
[29] It was breast cancer that first marked a slow decline in Spence's health, which led to the onslaught of leukaemia and her subsequent death in 1992, as is documented in *Cultural Sniping,* op. cit..

1.4 Jo Spence, *Untitled*, no date. Reproduced from Jo Spence, *Putting Myself in the Picture* (London: Camden Press, 1986), back cover.

an intensive day with Dennett over the light-box looking at clips of slide film, finding only a handful of mini-narratives at any one time. There was so much to see and digest, there never were two slide sheets that came from the same box. I found no singular box that I had hoped would hold Jo Spence's *Mother and Daughter Photo Therapy Project*.

In searching through the archive it felt as if I was looking for an imaginary 'golden egg', the one image or set of images that would bind the work together. Not surprisingly, this essential image or truth did not exist. Just as with the complex formation of human subjectivity, the mother and daughter project work was fractured and fragmented. And just like the remaking of the family album, it was complex and selective. It was an impossible task to understand where Spence was coming from when all I had were clues and questions. It became obvious that Spence's work is entirely about process, rather than fixed answers or meanings. I kept having to take several steps back before I could take one step forward in trying to understand the working process that led to the *Mother and Daughter Shame Work* project. This process of understanding brought me back to an image entitled *Colonisation* (1.5).

Colonisation was produced as one in a series of three images photographed in collaboration with Dennett between 1981 and 1982, as part of the *Remodelling Photo*



1.5 Jo Spence and Terry Dennett, *Colonisation*, 1982, dimensions variable.

History project.[30] It was shot using a series of scenarios using Kenneth Burke's five-element *Pentad* method of analysis.[31] This provided Spence and Dennett with an experimental platform to break down and disrupt the historical hierarchically classed political divisions within documentary photography in terms of gender, class conflict and race.

By applying a highly intellectual process of photo theatre to photography, Spence and Dennett described their work as polemic and themselves as polemicists. Using the camera as an observational critical weapon, turning it in and on itself as a

[30] Spence, *Putting Myself in the* Picture, op. cit, pp. 118-133.

[31] Dennett writes: 'Burke's system of Pentadic analysis was used by playwrights, authors and journalists to examine the form and structure of their work. It consisted of a five-element analysis of a situation, broken down into the Act, Scene, Agent, Agency and Purpose. Burke explained the significance of this sequence; so, "You must have some word that names the Act (names of what took place, in thought or deed), and another that names the Scene (the background of the act, the situation in which it occurred); also, you must indicate what person or kind of person (Agent) performed the Act, what means or instrument he used (Agency), and what purpose for the Act. Any complete motives (must) offer (Scene), who did it (Agent), how he did it (Agent), and why (Purpose)".' Terry Dennett, 'The Wounded Photographer: The Genesis of Jo Spence's Camera Therapy', *Afterimage*, vol. 29, no. 3 (2001), pp. 26-7.

revolt from within the photographic ranks, caused great concern in the media world, which later led to them both being dismissed from *Camera Work* magazine. Undeterred from this setback, use of the process of photo theatre to re-enact scenarios and events in order to speak and act out became an important turning point in Spence's work.

Spence and Dennett worked in alliance with the highly politicised leftist work of Berthold Brecht and Augusto Boal, using Brecht's ideas on estrangement and distantiation, and Boal's writing in *Theatre of the Oppressed* on a reciprocal mode of politicised communication between spectators and actors.[32] *Colonisation* is a highly theoretical piece of work, whereby Spence and Dennett take on the trappings of theatre, although not as a form of entertainment, even though the image is humorous with its use of overt visual metaphors and dominant genre stereotypes. In a double-act between two intellectual class-conscious photographers, constructed and staged on a backyard doorstep, this intertextual monochrome image has multiple colonial and postcolonial meanings that question and disrupt the dominant format of documentary 'realism' and its oppressive anthropological mode of representation.[33]

Cross-referencing historical anthropological and sociological discourse, the image is of a rather unappealing, over-weight, white working-class woman, whose ill, ageing and fatigued, blemished body bears the hard knocks of daily toil.[34] The image swims against the tide of the youthful female nude and the exoticised and commodified *body beautiful* proffered and prescribed by advertising and the media that define the norms and expectations of femininity.[35] Frankly presenting her plump middle-aged body, (accompanied by props, gestures and pose), Spence situates herself between stereotypical primitivist ethnic tropes and white, Western cultural trappings of socio-economic status. Cross-reading one subject in terms of another, the image begs the question, is 'she' black or is 'she' white? Spence stands barefooted and half-dressed with an old, fringed, bath towel wrapped around her portly waist. Tucked and folded, it hangs to one side like a sarong, or grass skirt with its old, frayed, fringed edging. A beaded necklace is strung around her neck. Bangles on one hand and a watch on the other adorn her wrists. 'Chin up', 'shoulders back', Spence playfully stands boldly defiant in the doorway of her house, hut or hovel. Her large breasts exposed, the broom in her hand is held rather like a tribal spear, or livestock shepherding rod or

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[32] Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, reprint edition (London: Pluto Press, 2000).
[33] See Sonia Wilson's detailed postcolonial analysis, 'White Metonymy: A Discussion around Jo Spence and Terry Dennett's *Colonisation*', *Third Text*, no. 37 (1996-7), pp. 3-16.
[34] From early childhood into adulthood Jo Spence suffered severely with asthma.
[35] See, for example Griselda Pollock's critique of the inadequacies of representation of women in 'What's Wrong with Images of Women', in *Screen Education*, no. 24 (1977), pp. 28-32.

stick. This highly politicised and intertextual image forces the diligent viewer to take more time to look beyond the stereotypical, white working-class woman standing by the morning milk bottles, waiting to be brought inside to the private and personal space of the run-down home, or the African woman standing guard before her darkened hut or hovel. The photograph produces confusion between two differing stereotypes, like two negatives that create a double exposure of discourses. Using Brecht's estranging de-familiarising method of distantiation in the photo-theatre process, Spence is a stranger in the midst who should not be there, and yet who speaks and 'acts out'. Her theorised, artistic, photographic process interrupts the viewing perspective, producing meanings that go beyond what we might immediately think the image is showing us. Furthermore, in moving on from her earlier radical campaigning documentary work for children's rights entitled *Who's Holding The Baby* to documentary 'realism', in showing the medium's conceits, we are able to ask the question, 'who's holding the camera?'

While Spence's body is firmly situated in the image, her gaze, overshadowed by her glasses, looks out of the camera's frame, over the high wall and head of the photographer. Backed up against, or in the raised vegetable garden opposite, Dennett would have had to crouch in the narrow galley brickyard, like a predatory white anthropologist hiding in the African bush, or, in the same moment, a surveilling sociological photographer, in order to frame and fit the whole of Jo Spence's body into this tight sideways shot. Both inside and outside the camera's frame, *within the form of its own production*, both Spence and Dennett simultaneously re-enact a doubled anthropological and sociological stance to *act out*, that is, to disrupt and displace any fixed historical visual rhetoric.[36] By its very title, *Colonisation* suggests a historical location in time, place and culture. If we mediate our viewing perspective around and out of this image, Spence's estrangement process disturbs the normalised reading of the image. She stands out alongside the audience and begs the audience to question... where does the audience situate themselves politically, socially and culturally in relation to this post-colonialist image? (therefore making the audience re-read and re-orientate themselves towards the content).

Photo theatre created a fertile, experimental ground for Spence's photo therapy work, which is a methodology of process, change and transformation. In offering an open-ended communication between the sitter and the audience, photo therapy began to make visible the process of telling the story of the self, as autobiography, as satire and as a political gesture. In using photo therapy as a progressive mode of autobiography, internalised childhood fantasies, memories and feelings of rejection and abandonment, anger and resentment are *acted out*, spoken of and fore-grounded in

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[36] See Stephen Heath, 'Lessons From Brecht', *Screen*, vol. 15, no. 2 (1974), pp. 56-78.

the present rather than remaining buried in the past,[37] in what Spence calls an 'unconsciousness raising process'.[38]

Working from within a certain feminist perspective in the mapping of conceptual and political intersections through the intimate minefield of self-analysis and social theorisation, photo therapy starts by using the powerful and political axis found within the family album photographs as a therapeutic point of entry. In re-constructing and re-enacting the image of herself as a child, Spence seized control of the image and its representation to offer another kind of story-telling in the production of an alternative conceptual family album (1.6).[39]

Pitched at a much deeper politicised conscious and unconscious level to identify the hidden societal structures that determine our lives, this work is staged like a mini psychodrama, a 'seeing cure' rather than a Freudian 'talking cure'. By placing herself in the centre of the drama, Spence offers a new dimension and approach to autobiography that goes far beyond what any words could articulate. She validates the hurt inner child and draws our attention to the complexities and fractured nature of a sense of self for a more selective politicised type of remembering.

In using selected theories that do and do not match within the emotional and social realities of surviving hardship, then, in muddling them up or turning them on their head, Spence opens up a space to reveal how desire, fantasy and emotions are fostered but then not allowed expression through cultural modes of surviving hardship, at both economic and emotional levels. In making the most complex ideas and theories accessible, these playful images are both painful and powerful to look at. They were also empowering for Spence herself, in the sense that she used photo therapy in an attempt to overcome her sense of powerlessness and despair at growing-up female in a white working-class family. Where photo therapy cannot get rid of class conflict, it can create the strength to understand and to then speak about it. In this sense, these

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[37] By no means is this kind of process a call for sympathy; as Linda Nochlin has pointed out, 'What is important is that women face up to the reality of their history and of their present situation, without making excuses or puffing mediocrity. Disadvantage may indeed be an excuse; it is not, however, an intellectual position. Rather, using as a vantage point their situation as underdogs in the realm of grandeur, and outsiders in that ideology, women can reveal institutional and intellectual weakness in general, and, at the same time they destroy false consciousness, take part in the creations of institutions in which clear thought – and true greatness – are challenges open to anyone, man or woman, courageous enough to take the necessary risk, the leap into the unknown'. Furthermore, having crossed class boundaries on entering university, Jo Spence says, 'when you act in the light of knowledge which is in your own self-interest of your group or class, this is not brave but absolute necessity.' Nochlin, *Women, Art and Power and other Essays* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), p. 176, quoted in Rosy Martin, 'Putting us all in the picture', *Women's Art Magazine*, no. 48 (1992), p. 15.

[38] Spence, *Cultural Sniping*, op. cit. p. 166.

[39] See the grainy images on the front cover of *Putting Myself In The Picture*, op. cit.

1.6 (above) Jo Spence and Rosy Martin, *Untitled*, no date. Reproduced from Jo Spence, *Putting Myself in the Picture* (London: Camden Press, 1986), cover. (below left) Jo Spence, *Beyond The Family Album* (detail), 1979, dimensions variable, mounted and laminated photographic storyboards. (below right) Jo Spence and David Roberts, *Evacuee*, 1988, dimensions variable.

images become the stage for an exploration of 'self' in a complex and constantly changing process of becoming, where there is no narrative resolution.

Impelled to explore her feelings of rejection by her family, in an attempt to discover her own sense of rage and impotence as an unwanted and unloved daughter, Spence extends this vital and critical engagement between past and present, and how the past shapes and affects the future.[40] She begins to reconstruct and re-enact

[40] A class identity is, like sexuality, constructed through a system of representations. Victor Burgin articulates the process whereby women and men come to internalise an oppressive ideology through its representation: 'We become who we are only through our encounter, while growing up, with the multitude of representations of what we may become – the various positions that society allocates to us. There is no essential self which precedes the social construction of the self through the agency of representation'. Victor Burgin, 'The Absence of Presence', in *The End of Art Theory,* (London: Macmillan,1986), p. 225.

personal and intimate visual scenarios that would have (informed and) happened in daily life. In dressing up as her imaginary, stereotypical, white working-class mother she identifies her own complex subject-position while also projecting that of her mother's in the social and economic world. Imaginary is used here in terms of likeness and difference, a masquerade of a familiar stereotypical working-class mother. Spence's mother had died of breast cancer many years earlier, and so she had to rely on charity shops to gather the kind of cheap working-class style clothes her mother might have worn. These garments were made from the labour-saving synthetic wash and wear fabrics – 'no need to iron' that were shapeless and cheaply mass-produced, often brightly coloured with large floral prints and elasticised waistbands for comfort while working. Aprons, headscarves, hair curlers and slippers, red-rimmed glasses that her mother might have worn, were sought and pieced together as props to create a material closeness to her mother, as well as a way of identifying and situating her mother's identity within an era when her mother would have been a mother.[41] Coming to terms with her own subject-position through the figure of the mother shows Spence marking an incisive transition or separation from the mother; a move that at once makes possible the re-formation of the daughter's subjectivity and constitutes a major element of the feminist theoretical revision and contribution to psychoanalysis.

More importantly for my research, while engaging with her work, Spence's working process gave me a theoretical and practical framework from which to try to understand my own relationship to my mother. By re-staging and reconstructing her own identity in the present, Spence widens the scope of sexual politics to consider a post-Oedipal mother–daughter relationship. This became the linchpin, the point of entry, site and topic for my doctoral practice-based research.

In Spence's collaborative works with Valerie Walkerdine entitled *Mother and Daughter Shame Work: Crossing Class Boundaries*, made in 1988 (1.7), the respectability of a 1950s white, working-class woman going about her daily chores is restaged on an imaginary doorstep. We see a return of the broom and milk bottle props. The mother is a far cry from the socially and sexually active 'Yummy Mummies' proffered and sustained by today's women's magazines.[42] As the ageing, post-

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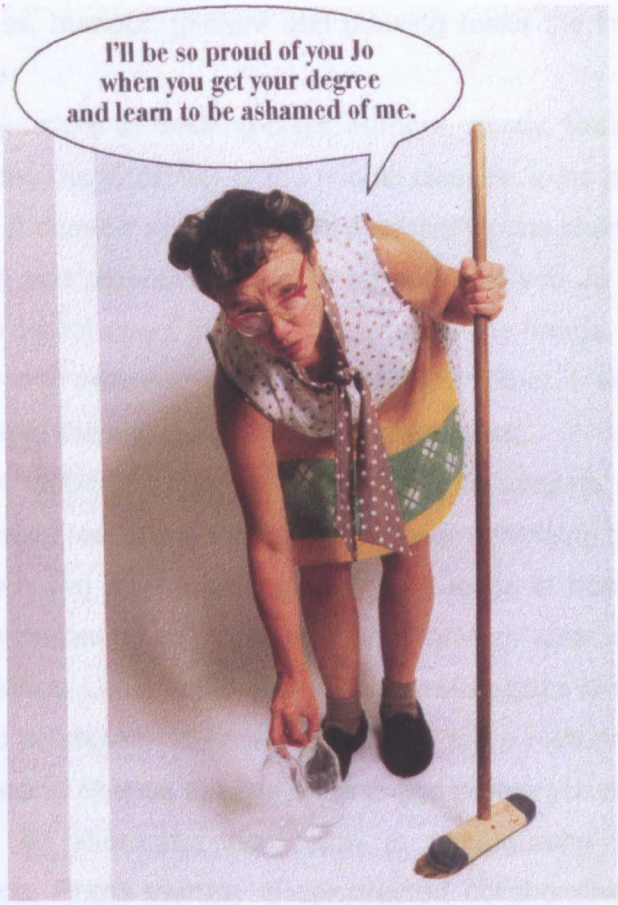
[41] In the home and in the workplace Spence says, 'To glimpse working-class women at their "daily toil" was for me a way of reclaiming my own mother's identity, and allying myself to it, for here was the world in which she had occupied a place'. Spence, *Putting Myself in the* Picture, op. cit., p. 59.

[42] Opening a copy of 'Closer', 'Heat', or 'Reveal' magazines will inevitably display a barrage of images proffering the youthful and sexual maternal images of celebrity mothers. Dressed in 'fashionable' clothing, invariably stick thin and back on the sexually available market, this group of women is often termed 'Yummy Mummies' by the mass media.



1.7 Jo Spence and Valerie Walkerdine, *Mother and Daughter Shame Work: Crossing Class Boundaries*, 1988, dimensions variable. Reproduced from Jo Spence, *Cultural Sniping: The Art of Transgression* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 170.

menopausal, non-sexual mother stoops down to place the 'empties' on the doorstep she looks up to meet her adult daughter's educated, judgemental gaze. The audience is then caught in the complex reconstruction of visual signifiers and metaphors, where there is an exchange, an overlap of internal and external conflicting dialogues that shift between mother and daughter and daughter and mother.

The roles of the mother and daughter become blurred in this warring battlefield of naming, blaming and shaming that operates between the two whose imaginary encounter the art work restages by this double act of designifying and performing for the camera. The mother can be viewed as being trapped in the domestic sphere of the doorstep, 'beside herself' with resentment, while the daughter is in a state of rebellion, 'not wishing to be like her mother'. Caught within this interplay between social classes, however the image is read, it never conforms to expectations of the 'nurturing mother' or the 'good enough daughter'.[43] Disrupting any conventional reading, Spence's

[43] It must be noted that despite gaining class mobility through a state education, Spence never found her place within the middle classes. In conversation with John

calculated playfulness, humour, gesture and punning make the image misbehave on many different levels.

At the very juncture of working-class humour, gently 'taking the piss' without pathos, rather than the respectability of the middle classes 'to be seen and not heard', Spence *speaks out*. A comical speech bubble poignantly puns shame, embarrassment, mutual recrimination and resentment, 'I'll be so proud of you Jo when you get your degree and learn to be ashamed of me'.[44] Underneath the image, Spence writes 'with some guilt I enact my personal stereotype of the mother I was ashamed to be associated with while in the social flight from my class roots'.

Unlike *Colonisation*, the camera, and how it is used in photo therapy, is a mediating or therapeutic tool rather than a predatory or surveilling device. Developed in collaboration between two equals, taking it in turns to be in front of and behind the camera, there is an exchange of power relations between sitter and photographer, a sharing of vulnerabilities. Used in this way, the camera's gaze is non-hierarchical and non-threatening and promotes the development of a more nurturing gaze towards the sitter. Through this work, Spence opens up the image process to access and extend its scope to consider an alternative dimension to photography without a dominant hierarchical presence. Photo therapy is constructed collaboratively in a safe studio environment, with a mutual exchange of openness and playfulness and a non-hierarchical development of ideas. Risks could be taken without judgemental interpretation, allowing each participant to take control. Built up on a non-invasive social interaction and applied on a one-to-one basis among what Spence termed co-counsellors, 'we used simple lighting and camera equipment, and drew upon techniques from psychotherapy'.[45] Reasonably cheap to finance, 'co-counselling is an inexpensive and non-hierarchical therapy', 'a safe place in which we give each other permission to change, to review, to let go and move on'.[46]

As the *Mother Daughter Shame* Works were made after the death of both her mother and father, Spence points out that 'as both my parents are dead, it could be the

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Taylor, she describes herself as a 'post-educated working-class woman', and says 'I've found in looking back that for a lot of my life I've had to pretend that I was somebody I wasn't. I had to pass myself off. I've been able to cross between groups very easily, but never belonged to them. I'm talking about coming from a working-class background and "becoming middle class"'. Jo Spence, 'Cultural Sniper: Passing/Out – Thoughts on Split Class Subjectivity (Jo Spence in Conversation with John Taylor)', *Ten. 8*, vol. 2., no. 1 (1991), pp. 19-24.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Among Spence's co-counselling partners were Valerie Walkerdine, Rosy Martin, Tim Sheard and David Roberts.

[46] Rosy Martin and Jo Spence, *Double Exposure: the Minefield of Memory* (London: Photographers Gallery, 1987).

site of any number of fictional narratives about the sitter which cannot be confirmed or contradicted'.[47] Full of subjective emotion yet free from judgemental ideologies, free to fantasise or to daydream, photo therapy allowed its producers to imagine beyond the restrictions and confines of reality, beyond one's own lifetime. The notions are as limitless as the daughter's material daydream of her mother's working-class envy for the material luxury of a 'New Look' skirt in Carolyn Steedman's book *Landscape For A Good Woman.*[48]

In this work, Spence added a further dimension to the post-Oedipal mother and daughter relation, which operates beyond the narrative testament of a lived dialogue and material closeness to her mother. In re-imagining and returning to the body of the mother, evoking nearness beyond the regard of bodily proximity, she accesses a deeper unconscious level of interrogation of female fantasy and libidinal desire for the feminine. This generates movements of memory into dreamed timelessness, an imaginary moment as a place of intersection, encounter and exchange reworked through the intimate and intense minefield of memory for the possibility of retrieving something that was once lost, denied, forgotten or repressed. Caught between knowing yet not knowing, in a new transformative experimental territory, using the process and movement of memory to retrieve a re-encounter with her mother, Spence writes, 'through the making of artworks, I have begun to represent the daughter's gaze (my own) towards my mother, and also enact fantasies of myself seen through (my projection) of her gaze to me'.[49]

In *Libido Uprising*,[50] made in collaboration with Rosy Martin in 1989, the mother and daughter are again closely related through their gaze and their pose. Rather than the daughter being a mother-blaming victim, the image shifts to the rebellious yet loving daughter (1.8). Hidden and obscured behind the red-rimmed glasses, a reciprocal desiring gaze operates between each subject. The mother tenderly looks down and cradles a vacuum cleaner where there is an overlap between the erotic and the

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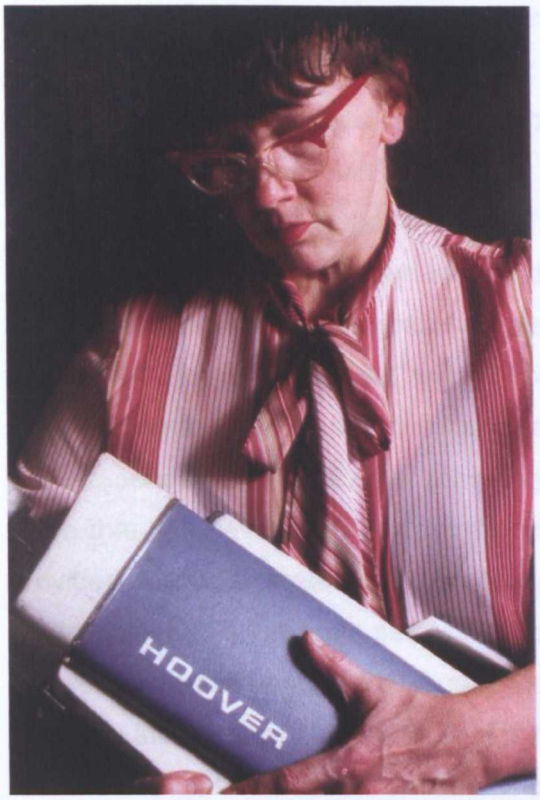
[47] Ibid. Jo Spence's mother died seventeen years earlier of breast cancer.

[48] Recalled in Carolyn Steedmans's work *Landscape For A Good Woman* is the unpicking of her mother's unfulfilled dreams for a New Look skirt as an elaboration of her own desires. 'When I want to find myself in the dream of the New Look, I have to reconstruct the picture, look down at my sandals and the hem of my dress, for in the dream itself, I am only an eye watching. Remembering... on the other hand, I can see myself watching. I am in the picture. To see yourself in this way is a representation of the child's move into historical time, one of the places where vision establishes the child's understanding of herself as part of the world. In its turn, this social understanding helps interpret the dream landscape.' *Landscape for a Good Woman,* op. cit., pp 142-3.

[49] Jo Spence, 'The Daughter's Gaze: Blaming, Shaming, Renaming and Letting Go', in A. Kingston (ed.), Mothers (Birmingham: Ikon Gallery, 1990), p. 27.

[50] Spence, *Cultural Sniping*, op. cit. p. 199.



1.8 (left) Jo Spence and Rosy Martin, *Libido Uprising – Extract from Part 1, c. 1948*, 1989. Reproduced from Jo Spence, *Cultural Sniping: The Art of Transgression* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 199. (above) Detail.

domestic. In destroying and then reconstructing aesthetic codes of representation of the working-class mother, the Mother and Hoover can be comically read as a Madonna and Child.

Spence uses her body as a tool to invent new ways of imagining the intense internal dialogue between women of two different generations without a fixed dominant hierarchical presence, her body functioning as a surface behind another surface that cannot be seen. She made use of the conceptual distancing art-therapeutic method to work through loss, mourning, and the desire and need for restoration. Sustained at the juncture of conceptual experimental and imaginative feminist art theory and practice, she also revised highly intellectual and influential discourses around representation and the gaze to enable a more critical contribution to knowledge and understanding of the *self* in process. Redeemed across time and intervals, she re-works, re-names and re-frames her rage and resentment to produce acceptance of the loss of her mother, to then 'let go and move on' from the emotional ties of rejection, by coming through the working process itself to accepting her mother for who she was.

As the creative and theoretically savvy artist in the image, Spence is able to disengage, distantiate and estrange herself, and then to allow herself the possibility as an artist to pursue a process of gaining independence from the mother. Nothing, however, is static or fixed. Photo therapy is all about process and the transformation that takes place because of process. Instead of foreclosing on material closeness and separation, by *moving on* in a process of gaining independence from the mother, loss

and separation are then regained and retrieved through an imaginative return to the body of the mother. Lying behind the image, I argue, redeemed across time and memory in the imaginative and intellectual artistic process of re-imagining and re-framing there is, rather than a negative, a positive transgression and realisation for an *inscription in, from and of the feminine*.[51]

In the wake of her own renewed libidinal desire, polarised around the female body, Spence creates a progressive, pleasurable and privileged return and relation to the mother's body. The effect results from intense internal questioning, obscured from sight behind the half closed eyes and red-rimmed glasses, that shifts the image from sight to sensation and into the imaginary world of knowing and not knowing as a non-place that can never be fully determined through oppositional differences. This in turn provides a crucial means for perceiving and understanding and others. There is a tender sense of a separate self in relation to the mother that initiates a conceptual and progressive empowering, providing a moment of generosity, of giving and receiving. A profound love or act of kindness, that is reciprocal, open-ended and without closure.

This elusive chance encounter does not operate on the premise of chance. It occurs as a result of regularity and repetition in the constant process of returning, re-working, re-naming and re-framing. Producing *Libido Uprising* involved 'the *process* of making hundreds of images'.[52] Each performance consisted of a unique set of rituals and interactions between developing narrative themes of repetition that are redeemed and re-worked across time and intervals before the work moved into its final production and selection stage. Working at an experimental level, many of Spence's images remained private, for personal consumption only. With only a handful remaining in the archive, after an exhausting day of trying to grapple, absorb and understand so much visual and written information, from which I had to try to tease out the relevant major points that led to Spence's *Mother and Daughter* project work, I left the archive overloaded with information and fragments of unpublished work.

My aim was to take on, in part, Spence's legacy, continuing from where she departed from these investigations to concentrate upon her experience of being diagnosed with a life-threatening illness, by treating her generational mother and daughter work as unfinished business. I extended her works across a metaphorical transgenerational dialogue of shared experience in relation to the working-class mother, by adding another chapter: my own narrative history then became material for analysis through my writing and drawings of my mother, to which I will return in Chapter Three. Caught within the intimate familial filiation between two working-class women

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[51] See my introduction, above and Pollock, 'Inscriptions in the Feminine,' op. cit.
[52] Spence, *Cultural Sniping*, op. cit., p. 198.

artists of two generations, my artwork would have to create both a means to explore and engage with, and then move beyond this generational filiality to genealogy.

Chapter Two: Rubbered Up With Mother

My practice uses the body as a site and a mediation of a relation between two generations of working-class women artists. I track through Jo Spence's process into my own practice in order firstly to understand the former and then use that understanding of a process of *working through*, rather than the immediate intimacy or medium, to reconfigure my own mother and daughter relationship in another aesthetic domain. The double fold of my family history and the analysed archive of Jo Spence created a secondary metaphorical mother–daughter relationship between Spence and myself. In examining the genealogical engagement with both the historical moment of the 1970s, critically examined from the present, and with the work of Jo Spence, practice-based research into her work also had the support of two exhibitions which engaged a timely revaluation of her work. The exhibitions were held in Ireland and Barcelona in 2005 and represented the first critical re-engagement with her legacy and place in art history since her death in 1992.

To take a step back, however, the first stage of my research was to explore the complexities of the collaborative process in which Spence was involved. In juxtaposing archival research with my own initial practices in photography and performance, I came to demonstrate the difference of my results. After experimenting with a number of photographic performances and digital formats, I decided to re-engage in a drawing practice that extended an already established working relationship with my own mother. It was not until my mother agreed to have a plaster cast taken of her body that things began to shift in my work. The cast taken from her body then became one of my tools, an aid through which to engage in a different but related manner with Spence's process of inhabiting or re-positioning the mother's body.

With the experience of having my own body cast in plaster and casting several friends and colleagues, I can affirm that this is not a pleasant process. It was even less so for my mother, who is now over the age of seventy, around the same age Spence would be were she still alive. The process of casting is very intimate, if not invasive. Cold and wet, it creates a great deal of mess, and can take a full day to do, while the person being cast has to stand still for long periods of time. It requires stamina and endurance, with the hardest work undertaken by the person who is cast (2.1).

Casting also involves much preparation, from cutting up reams of plaster bandage, to dividing and seaming the body like a dress pattern, which then gives guidelines for the application of the plaster. The plaster bandage then has to be dipped in cold water, placed and rubbed into the surface of the skin from the feet upwards.

2.1 (top left) Preparation of plaster. (right) Casting. (bottom left) Latex casting.

You have to be both quick and methodical, moving across the body in simultaneous sections, which consist of a back and a front for a more even cast. The last cast across the chest is the most uncomfortable as it feels restrictive when you breathe. The cast around the hips is disconcerting; I usually let the person being cast apply the plaster bandage to the intimate crotch area. Invariably, however, rogue pubic hairs get matted into the plaster, regardless of the petroleum-based Vaseline that is applied beforehand. The cast then needs to be carefully cut along the seams and quickly prized off the body before the plaster has a chance to fully set. Having eased off the first cast, my mother became fascinated with seeing herself for the first time in reverse in plaster. It was as if she was looking at someone else (viewing her body as an intimate stranger or 'other' mature woman).

Once the casts have been removed and allowed to dry thoroughly, further work is needed before application of several layers of liquid latex.[53] The smell of ammonia is

[53] At the end of this thesis, as a general guide, I have submitted rough notes for anyone wishing to cast the body in plaster (Appendix 1). This can then be used to make a latex cast, which can then be sewn together.

intense and this part must be done with the windows open. Then comes the fun part of peeling the latex off with the aid of baby powder, which stops the latex from sticking to itself. This smell and moment always reminds me of old ladies' nursing homes. The released, lax quality of the latex adds to this association, with its silky 'goose bumped' texture registering every crease and crevice, roll and fold of my mother's aged, blemished body. Even the veins on my mother's feet and ankles and coarsely cut toenails are registered.

Following this came the laborious job of trimming and sewing the latex by hand. Unlike the flat dimensions of a cloth-sewing pattern, the latex carries with it the contours of the body. The soles of the feet, ankles, legs, crotch and armpits are the hardest to marry up and sew. Whilst I had a second latex cast under way, I took the opportunity of sewing the latex together where and whenever I could, which generated some curious and grimaced looks from people I encountered. I once accidentally left the latex in a Morrison's carrier-bag on a train and had to describe the contents to a bemused station guard, who then became very agitated when I said what it was. Without wishing to alarm the other passengers, he arranged for me to swiftly get it back via the next station stop.

A lot of the comments I received were fixated on the material, textured surface of the work, referencing the latex cast as skin. I was mistakenly called Hannibal Lecter a few times.[54] If I explained that the cast was taken from my mother's body and formed a basis for my art practice, there was always a look of amazement, followed by disgust and horror. What is it about the body of the mother? The mother historically has no cultural space or legitimacy, despite the fact that we all have a mother, whether we know her or not. Our relationship to her naked body is largely feared or fraught with anxiety. The fear of such a confrontation is far too great, for it is a confrontation that embodies everyone's future and past. Could this possibly be because, more often than not, the mother is viewed as the stuff of therapy, of ambiguous heterosexual ideology in relation to sexual differences, of comedy and of family crisis in the domestic sphere? Even though today there are images of older women in art world and in the media, the ageing naked body of the mother is still highly undervalued and problematic to address.

Opening out the problematic surrounding images of older women bodies brings me to the photographic work of Melanie Manchot, dated 1996, entitled *Mrs Manchot* (2.2) and two photographs by Ella Dreyfus, dated 1999, entitled *Age and Consent* (2.3), which can be usefully juxtaposed with the two opening photographs from Spence's

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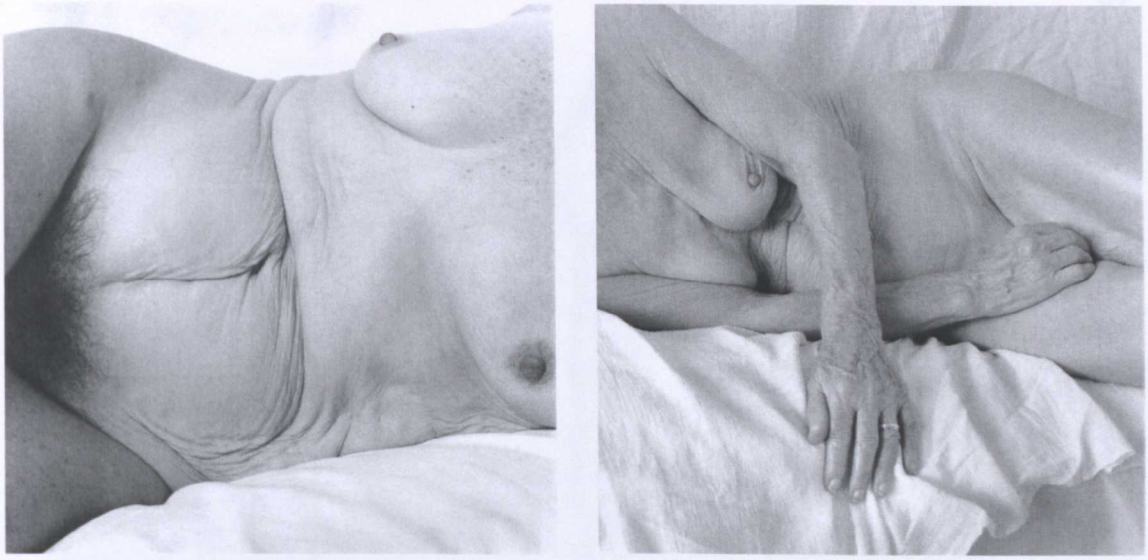
[54] Hannibal Lecter, a character from the film and book *Silence of the Lambs*, assists FBI Agent Clarice Starling 'for his own ends' in tracking down the character Buffalo Bill: a serial killer who horrifically skins women for the pleasure of then dressing in their re-sewn skins.

2.2 Melanie Manchot, *Mrs Manchot*, 1996. Reproduced from Griselda Pollock, *Encounters In The Virtual Feminist Museum: Time, Space and the Archive*, (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 33.

Beyond The Family Album (1.1). In the contextualisation of time and body Griselda Pollock writes of Melanie Manchot's 'daring [...] gesture of cultural defiance' in her series of fifty, large scale photographic representations of her mother's naked body. While welcoming the intervention in a missing iconography, Pollock, however, expresses reservation about the capacity of 'simple' representation to manage the cultural taboo and the mythic freight generated by the confrontation with a maternal nude. She writes: 'What the work might be said to lack is its active renegotiation of the profound – and never literally anatomical – fantasies lodged within both men and women, straight and gay, of and around the maternal body, precisely not as a figured object or visual sight, but as both a memory and an imago.'[55] While Manchot's photographs might have originated from a trusting relationship with her mother, produced over a four-year period in the mid 1990s, unlike Spence's mother and daughter works, nothing is transformed in Manchot's mother and daughter relationship. The mother's aged body is too literal. The image visualises and fixes a sight of the

[55] Griselda Pollock, *Encounters In The Virtual Feminist Museum: Time, Space and the Archive*, (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 48.



2.3 Ella Dreyfus, *Age and Consent*, 1999. Reproduced from Griselda Pollock, *Encounters In The Virtual Feminist Museum: Time, Space and the Archive*, (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 34

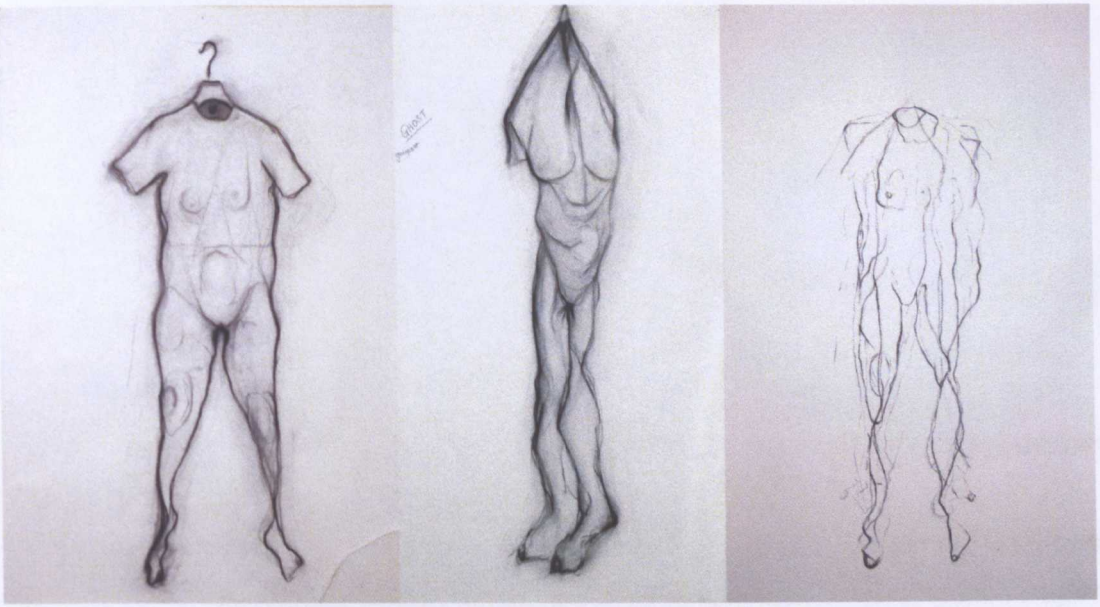
naked body of the mother, leaving no room for imagination or memory. The daughter's libidinal desires towards the mother are seemingly lost and there is no space for the body of the artist/daughter to be disclosed in or by the image, except as viewer. The enlarged photographic observations of Manchot's mother's actual, aged, naked body, showing the mature mother's body as it is, monumentalise the aged naked body of the mother, but little else. It is as if the older woman's body has nothing to offer other than the frank fact of a confident woman shown naked and middle aged, rarely seen in the public domain.

Woven into the experience of looking at two photographs of mature bodies (showing the torso without heads) from a series of photographs by Ella Dreyfus (2.3), entitled *Age and Consent* (1999), Pollock suggests an intimate and curious photographic encounter with the passage of time captured in the photographic registration in the creased skin:

> precisely because of the exact balance between what the photographic process can make me see and how it can produce a texture in the visible, a skin ego of the aging body, [...] [this] induce[s] a feeling of tenderness and memory along with curiosity and the possibility of identification with the female body that registers time through its skin. [...] In that, there is little chance of viewing pleasure, because what we then contemplate is not only this other woman, but our death.[56]

Beyond the problematic of any actual, literal or direct observational image of an older woman's body, is the possibility for an '*other*' identification or encounter with the mature

[56] Ibid., pp. 50-51, my italics.

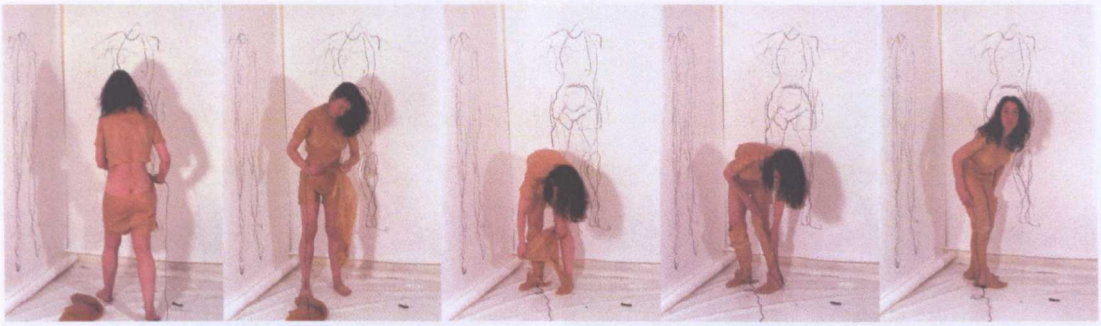


2.4 (left) Paula Farrance, *Hanging Latex*, 2003, charcoal on Fabriano paper, 48" × 72". (centre) Paula Farrance, *Hanging Latex*, 2003, charcoal on Fabriano paper, 48" × 72". (right) Paula Farrance, *Hanging Latex*, 2003, charcoal on Fabriano paper, 48" × 72".

female body, in and of its own time, threaded through the psychic investment bound up in it '*as both a memory and an imago*'. Like Spence's mother–daughter works, which open out an imaginative and creative re-positioning or re-configuration of the mother's body for a progressive, pleasurable and privileged return and relation, one way forward was for me to experiment with my mother's latex cast in my drawing practice.

Once the latex was sewn, I initially began to draw from it by hanging it on a clothes-hanger (2.4). Here, the top of the latex took on a rigid stance from the shape of the hanger inside with its splayed shoulders resting against the wall. Then, as it hangs, the latex becomes lax in itself, distorting the contours of the body and leaving the legs dangling loosely. Arranged without real precision or definition, with no 'real' reference to my mother's actual lived-in body, this disembodied, imprecise disarticulation led me to pin a latex tag on the nape of the neck from which the latex could hang alone. Distorted with no fixed shape inside for support, neck gaping, the latex hung with more overall fluidity.

At this point I did not want to wear the latex as a metaphor for getting into or under my mother's skin. I simply wanted to draw the latex cast as something once closely in contact with her body, something connected to her and myself and in relation to my art practice. This was very different from Jo Spence's performative reconstruction, as she would act out being her mother. At this stage I decided that the equivalent would be for me actually to dress in the latex casts. I made another latex cast with Velcro strips sewn along the seams. My initial drawings of the latex cast went



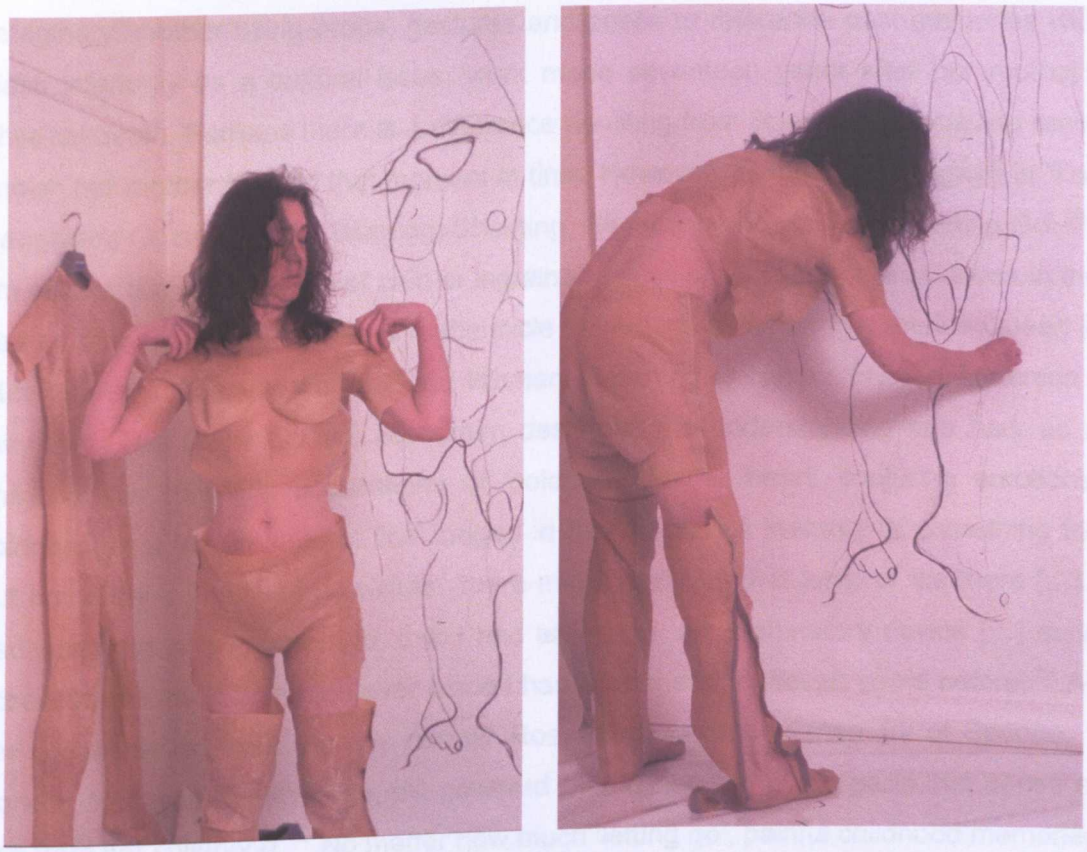
2.5 Paula Farrance, *Untitled (First Performance)*, 2003.

on to be used as backdrops for a series of photographs I then produced of my wearing the latex casts of my mother's body.

The process of producing these photographs was not quite 'lights-camera-action'. I soon became frustrated with trying to work alone with very little knowledge of photographic equipment including the SLR camera I was using (the same that Spence would have used). In trying to run back and forth, winding on the film and bracketing each shot, the shoot was hindered by my trying to both stage and perform the process of having to get undressed while attempting to get dressed, piece by piece, into the ill-fitting casts. Despite my best efforts, each performance was governed by only being able to take thirty-six shots at a time. There was no continuity, and the outcome looked like a disorganised striptease, or slapstick humour. At this point I learnt a great deal from things going wrong rather than right and it was clear that I was in no real control, either in front of or behind the camera (2.5).

From this experience I came to appreciate the importance of collaboration. Unlike Spence, I do not mean in terms of a co-counsellor. I just practically needed to have someone, anyone, there to press the shutter, wind on and bracket the film. This non-use of photo therapy in my work became clearer as I moved on to find two virtual strangers to help. This impromptu impersonal arrangement was, in comparison to Spence's way of working, no basis for an intimate collaborative photo therapy session. And just as Spence must have felt, in revealing parts of our naked selves, there was and is an element of risk.

At this point it was a relief to be involved in a practice that did not seem to have a direct relation with my mother and daughter research. Without an exchange about mothers, it was fun to have someone behind the camera while I messed around in front of it. I restaged each performance again and again as Spence would have done. For the second performance, I hung up the original thicker latex cast and it became a part of my backdrop, along with a new set of drawings. In this work I wanted to attempt to convey how I experienced the process, the actual bodily experience of wearing (and



2.6 Paula Farrance, *Untitled*, 2003.

performing) the latex and its awkwardness. The drawings of the latex cast became bigger as a means of representing my larger body inside the latex cast of a smaller woman (2.6).

Initially the latex is cold to wear, although it quickly warms to your body temperature. It does not, however, retain heat. It also smells and becomes clammy with sweat when worn under studio lights. It is very uncomfortable as my mother is much smaller than myself. I knew from the start there was no hope that the latex, thick or thin, would fit me. I therefore wanted to generate humour in trying to wear the darn thing, and so I did not bother sewing Velcro to the seams between the legs, top and middle sections. My mother's feet, ankles and calves are the hardest to prise myself into as the latex cast splits and gapes at the seams. As the top is tight around my neck and under my arms, I have to extend my arms away from my body. Rather like an ugly sister whose foot would not fit into the glass slipper,[57] my work at that time did not fit into Spence's frame of photo therapy, however much the deeper relations of class and generations remained.

[57] For Spence's work on the re-staging of the Cinderella story in direct relation to a family divorce, see Spence, *Putting Myself in the Picture*, op. cit. pp. 98-105.

This project was unlike Spence's work in which she dressed up as her 'imaginary' mother using props, gestures and poses to reference past memories with class inferiority as a cultural issue, work made seventeen years after her mother's physical death. Perhaps there is a difference resulting from Spence never having really known her mother beyond that moment in time. However, as much as I engage in 'The Daughter's Gaze: Naming, Blaming, Shaming, Renaming and (*to finally*) Letting Go',[58] I am always left with a sense of pain or ingrained sense of resentment: a coldness in the heart, comparable in many ways to the icicle lodged in Kay's heart by the Ice Queen in Steedman's *Landscape For A Good Woman.* Referring to Hans Christian Anderson's fairy tale, *The Snow Queen*, Steedman describes the understanding she had, as a child, of her mother's accusations of 'coldness' in her heart, conjuring emotional coldness as a frozen lump of 'ice' lodged in Kay's heart. A memory of something felt but not seen is imagined as visible: 'there might really be that lump of ice there [...] I had seen this a long time ago, that I had an image, an explanatory device [...] quite accessible to my imagination ever since I had read the story seven years before.'[59] As her collaborative photo therapy partner Rosy Martin writes in memory of Spence, 'I wonder, too, whether she was still powered by the need to make good that sense of loss from her childhood'.[60] No matter how much 'letting go', painful childhood memories of class-inferiority reappear in much of her later work, such as the tearful, childlike Spence holding a teddy-bear in 'Excised' from the series entitled *Narrative of Dis-ease* (3.4). On the other hand, I used no gesture or pose to reference my mother in any of my performances.

I was uncomfortable wearing and performing in the latex cast of my mother's body. With the flashing lamplights going off and the intense heat making me sweat, I started to turn my back to the camera and draw onto the drawings I had hung as backdrops in an attempt to register on that 'screen' the bodily experience of wearing the maternal latex cast or 'skin'. Unknown to me at the time, this act and the gesture towards drawing allowed a distancing shift to occur across disciplines in the performance. This shift became an integral part of my subsequent research process. My work aimed to create both a means to engage with, and move beyond, i.e. distantiate, this filiality with Spence. It became increasingly clear that photography and photo therapy would not be the chosen method or process for the 'work' I wanted to do to explore transformation in a mother–daughter relationship. My drawing practice gave

[58] Spence, *Cultural Sniping*, op. cit., pp. 197–201.
[59] Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman*, op. cit, p. 106.
[60] Martin, 'Putting Us All In The Picture', op. cit., p. 15.

me a valuable starting point from which to explore this separation from Spence's work and to shift my mother and daughter research into another aesthetic domain.

In the meantime, it was clear that before leaving it entirely, I needed to work more on the process of performance, building up a critical and comprehensive understanding of aspects of Spence's practice in order to form a contrasting dialogical investigation of both the structure and effect of her practice through my own interventions. I did not intend to present this work in the format of photographs alone and critically reviewed and questioned the content of each performance and its outcome. One of the obvious differences was, even though Spence called herself an 'amateur photographer', her acquired professional practice skills were present in her photographic practice. My photographic skills were (and still are) limited by my lack of practical experience and formal training. My specialist field of study has always been grounded in drawing and a fascination with the restless line drawn on paper, not photography.

Extending my skills into new digital media, my aim was to flip successive images of Spence's mother and daughter work in one direction and my images in another. This would take the form of a simple interactive object that was cheap to produce and accessible, like a mini-exhibition in a book (or so I thought). Having said this, it was with a simple printer, scissors and a laminator that I made the first flipbook of my performance. The outcome was far from satisfactory, insofar as it takes at least fifty to sixty images to make the flipbook *flip, and* with only thirty-six shots per roll of film this was impossible. Each performance was produced separately and differently. There was no continuity or direct sequencing of the performance process. All that was visible was my bobbing head as I got in and out of the latex. The size of the image was also far too small to see any of the details, and the overall images were hindered by my lack of camera skills. Simple things were fraught with difficulties such as turning off the strip lighting in the studio, which can cause a green hue to be cast across the image. Ultimately, there were far too many technical and practical problems that hindered and diverted the overall viewing perspective into something that seemed to be disorganised, of poor quality and not properly thought-through.

The next stage of my research was to sequence the performance process by working in collaboration with the photographer Claire Harbottle, using a technologically advanced digital camera.[61] The constant reviewing and reworking process allowed for sustained experimentation. At a practical level, there were no further film and processing costs, or time and waiting for developing processes. Other benefits were

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[61] Claire Harbottle is a professional photographic artist, whose work focuses on images of the pregnant pre-maternal body and birth <http://www.claireharbottle.com/>.

the camera's ability to focus and wind-on automatically. The continuity I was seeing in reviewing my work was strengthened by the camera's ability to shoot and digitally store approximately one hundred and forty high-resolution images simultaneously. These could then instantly be reviewed on the display screen at the back of the camera. The camera also came with its own software and computer cable connection. The images can be saved (from the start to finish) in whatever file format is required by your computer. At one particular stage the sequencing of frames almost touches upon filmic and video processes, as they flashed up on the computer screen in download mode. This instant feedback provided me with the means to change the set-up and re-shoot the same day, experiencing few delays or interruptions. This was very different from Spence's way of working in that she would have had to wait while her films where being processed and developed. In a sense, digital photography lessens the expectation and surprise of something possibly forgotten.

Together we shot seven performances in one day, and as with Spence's work, each performance consisted of a unique set of interactions between developing themes in my work. This involved the production of hundreds of images as I set up and staged each performance to show the process in its entirety rather than presenting disorganised fragments. First, with the camera set up on a tripod, I started by walking into the fixed frame towards the latex cast on the floor. Once undressed and redressed in the ill-fitting latex I discovered that I was in the process of disengaging myself from Spence's practice by turning my back and drawing onto two large, hanging drawings. This was a key moment in the PhD process, from primary research into Spence to working within a parallel internal and external space. In a handful of the images a movement or shift disclosing a space within which the self can be performed in the drawing process occurred. Photography work made this visible.

From my previous experiences of the awkwardness in wearing the latex, these drawings were produced specifically for this performance. What were originally used as backdrops were now foregrounded in the performance. In a playful, joyous moment I seemingly dance across the frame with my back turned, drawing across the drawings, in a process of gaining independence from Spence's practice, emphasising this disengagement. I then start to remove and disentangle myself from the latex cast, get redressed and walk back towards the camera and out of the frame.

Continuing with this format Claire Harbottle then took a much more active role from behind the camera. We both aimed to push the experience of the performance process further through the digital camera's ability to focus and take shots in quick succession. With the camera off the tripod Claire Harbottle moved in closer, detailing the ill-fitting latex cast against my own body. At one point she described herself as a

2.7 Paula Farrance, *Untitled*, 2004.

predator as I began slowly and awkwardly, in a twisted and distorted manner, to wrench myself out of the tight neck of the latex cast like an overt symbolic re-birth, this enacted both a separation from the latex cast of my mother's body and from the photographic practice and processes of Jo Spence (2.7).

In using Spence's practice as a 'theoretical object',[62] in tracking through her process came the possibility for me to return to drawing of my mother's body. I felt able to separate and move beyond this direct engagement and return to my drawing and the relationship with my mother and undertake a possible exploration of 'inscriptions in, from and of the feminine', worked through the drawings of her naked body. Like Spence's family album that led to and 'cross-fertilised' her mother–daughter works, this was initially staged at the intersection of a life narrative and narrative of practice, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

In the meantime, with over a thousand images already stored on my computer, I began to piece together sequences from each performance, which I had edited down to

[62] See Mieke Bal, *Louise Bourgeois' Spider: the architecture of art-writing*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), p 5. On the concept and impact of art, Bal writes 'looking *at* art in the sense of looking *to* art for an understanding of what art does... this term refers to works of art that deploy their own artistic and, in this case, visual, medium to offer and articulate thought about art.'

two hundred and forty-two shots. PowerPoint slide presentation allows images to be shown on a continual, open-ended loop. Each image was set to duration of two seconds and viewed on a black background, implying a window dimension. Submitted as part of my PhD research, I entitled this piece *Rubbered Up With Mother* (see Appendix 2 [DVD]). The remaining images remain in my personal archive for possible future reference or revision.

From the experience of making *Rubbered Up with* Mother, I began to understand why so many of Spence's images remained private, resulting in only a handful remaining in the archive. It also occurred to me that Spence, in revising and condensing each performance to fragmentary moments re-worked over time, would have used the mirror that I had seen in the archive. A mirror, with its direct feedback, like the display screen on the back of a digital camera, would have enabled Spence to slow down the process selectively. She would have been able to re-work each shot, working with precision towards the sensitive, elusive moment between knowing and not knowing, where she sought to create a staged and constructed imaginary encounter polarised around the female body that visually points towards *inscriptions in, from and of the feminine*; a pleasurable return to the feminine through the body of the mother.

From this direct engagement with and demonstrated differences from Spence's practice and process, the act of and gesture towards drawing took me into a parallel internal and external space. I was able to identify a space within which the self can be performed in the drawing process while also approaching (but not inhabiting) the other. Like an exchange or movement from one place to another, this was a transition into another aesthetic domain where drawing became for me a differentiating way of entering into the performance aspect of Spence's memory-work. But unlike Spence, I did this without the theatricality of props, gesture and pose in performing the latex cast of my mother's body. Instead, a specific relation (dialectic) to gesture and mark, line and paper, the body and space emerged. Pursued further over the subsequent period of research, exploring different papers (qualities and sizes), pastels, and studio spaces, the practice restages the encounters between the drawing body with its movements and visualisations, and the drawn body, to enable drawing as space, event and image to carry the 'work' of transformation in a woman-to-woman adult relation.

Opened out in the following chapter is the double genealogy of the relationship with my own mother and Spence. Drawing in performance and returning to a historically situated ongoing drawing practice, which emerges out of feminist autobiographical memory-work supported by Spence's influential revision of her family

album.[63] Working through two transgenerational dialogues, with acknowledged filiation between Spence and myself, the artistic dialogue moves from *reference* to *creative independence.* The complementary dialogue is a prolonged personal encounter through drawing with my mother, which initially began with the exploration and investigation of my own identity and shared personal history of our troubled relationship. In so far as this situates my earlier works within a feminist discourse, like Spence's revision of her family album and her performative photographic mother–daughter works, this 'cross fertilises' with and affects a crucial understanding of my own mother–daughter work that followed. Thereafter, Jo Spence's mother and daughter legacy is threaded through an imaginative and creative re-positioning of the mother, my mother and the *drawings* of her body.

[63] See Chapter One, above.

Chapter Three: Early years: Drawing on a mother–daughter experience – Jo Spence, My Mother and Myself.

This chapter analyses my drawing practice in order to convey its process of enquiry. My practice was staged and transformed at the intersections of a life-narrative (history) and the narrative of practice with the mother (present), which used aesthetic encounters to reprocess our shared history of a troubled relationship. As an artist still with unfinished business with my mother, Jo Spence's influential photographic and photo therapy revision of memory-works (which trace a trajectory from personal to collective acts of memory in terms of exploration and interpretations of the complicated and intimate stories we live by, stories of shared histories and complex relations between mother and daughter whose tangled roots lie in childhood[64]) provided a model for a *working through* by means, in my own case, of drawings of my mother's body in the context of a real dialogue and exchange. Opened out in this chapter is a twofold genealogical engagement between my practice and that of Jo Spence, and between my mother and myself. The artistic dialogue between Spence and myself has moved from initial *reference* to *creative independence* accompanied by *acknowledged filiation.* Spence's influential legacy for a feminist practice around the mother and daughter relationship is transformed into a new kind of practice by means of a prolonged personal and intimate encounter through drawing with my own mother, which involved a process of investigation and experimentation, situating drawing as both intimacy and dialogue: a means to both physical proximity and dialogical transformation of the past. This becomes different both from Spence's staged 'photographic autobiographical'[65] work of remembering and my own initial direct performative engagement with her photo therapy practice.

I initially started to work from direct observational encounters with my own mother's body, drawn in sketch books and on Bockingford paper in a format that was at once a typical life drawing set-up and different: the model, nude, was my own mother. Throughout this stage of my doctoral research, my mother played a sustained role as the primary focus for my drawing practice as for the earlier casting of her body. My mother's visits to my home and studio in Leeds during this period of research were constructive and productive for both of us. Her willingness to come and sit for me offered us both a means of spending time alone together, working collaboratively

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[64] See Chapter Two.
[65] Jo Spence, '*Putting Myself In The Picture*, op cit.

together without interruption. The work progressed at differing stages, enabling me to interpret as well as produce the drawings while incorporating them into a narrative structure. Paralleling Spence's autobiographical work of remembering and revision of her own family album via photographic archives and restaging, my research in a drawing practice began to explore prohibitions and phobias, family taboos and desires that have been denied through the studio sitting, and the phases of drawing from a model in a familiar situation. Through conversational questioning and close observations of my mother's naked body, while she sat, I attempted to draw towards a visual investigation of this relation and then reflect, through the work that was produced, where this might lead in the present tense of a lived, post-Oedipal relation between this mother and this daughter.

As we began to forge what became a reconciliation, I had initially thought the gesture towards conciliation extended by my mother was generated by feelings of guilt, pay-back, or perhaps her way of making good the treatment I had received as a child. My own subjective memory contains memories of both mental and physical abuse alongside a traumatic experience of abandonment.[66] After being sent away 'for your own good' to live with close family members, I feel I was left traumatised. These experiences left in me a haunting sense of rejection that tipped over into self-loathing and self-harm. In many different ways my 'body later presented its bill', as child psychoanalyst Alice Miller has written

> The truth about our childhood is stored up in our body, and although we can repress it, we can never alter it. Our intellect can be deceived, our feelings manipulated, our perceptions confused, and our bodies tricked with medication. But some day the body will present its bill, for it is as incorruptible as a child, who, still whole in spirit, will accept no compromise or excuse, and it will not stop tormenting us until we stop evading the truth.[67]

Fearing and hating my family, my body became a site of resistance and protest. Mentally and physically I spent many years of my adolescence in revolt.[68]

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[66] I recollect as a small child in nursery school I was repeatedly reported as having marks across my body that were not necessarily from the usual childhood rough-and-tumble acts of playing. I recall having deep-welts on my body from being hit, at worst struck with a bean cane or a leather dog lead, all kept behind the kitchen door. On the cusp of going to junior school the education authorities were involved and it was decided I should be sent to live with a relative. At the time, I remember feeling rejected and abandoned with a sense of not belonging.

[67] Alice Miller, *Thou Shalt Not Be Aware – Society's Betrayal Of The Child*, (London: Pluto Press, 1986), p. 227.

[68] Physical and mental symptoms such as anorexia and bulimia, depression and anxiety, unchecked, later worked their way into further self-harming methods such as alcohol and drug abuse, used as a means to blot out the past and present. Severely under weight I was sectioned for seventy-two days under the mental health act for

I was the rejected daughter sent away who would return to the family home mentally and physically wounded some years later. In a state of protest, rebellion and anxiety, the anorexia that I developed was not my only form of control and self-denial; it was also a cry for attention from parents who were often absent when needed. Both my parents *overlooked* and *turned a blind eye*, and apparently ignored the acts and signs of disorder and distress that were anorexia. My feelings felt unheard and my anorexia invisible.[69] In looking back, from a very early age I was fighting a concealed, silent war against my parents that was also enacted between my body and myself.

In the suffocating and violent enclosure of home, I recall my mother beating into us her frustration at suffering from financial hardship, how she had to work double-shifts at the children's home up the road *to feed and clothe you kids*.[70] Receiving hardly any housekeeping from my father, she would work both night and morning-shifts to keep the family financially afloat, only to return home to the demands of other family members. This experience laid the ground for my always putting the needs of others before my own – something with which I later have had to come to terms. I learnt from her to distance myself from her, locking us into a negative relationship. I showed hardly any respect for my mother while growing up, and later, as a young adult, I avoided contact with her as much as possible.

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being a danger to myself. After many years of counselling, I had to begin to face up to these problems and try to understand just how much I had internalised the belief that it was all my fault and that I didn't deserve to exist let alone to eat. I had believed my body was my enemy and from a very early age food was the only thing I could control. My body was the locus of my pain and I was on a knife's edge between chaos and death, I did not want to die, I just wanted the chaos, emotional and physical pain to stop. Later, I realised it was imperative for me to acknowledge these past events and restore a relation firstly with my body, rather than (at this stage) with my parents.

[69] In my teens, even though I would not have admitted to having it (let alone having the language to explain why), I knew that I was experiencing symptoms of anorexia because of my bad relationship with and avoidance of food. In looking back, my parents' lack of acknowledgement made me symptomatically shout even louder, I so desperately wanted them to hear me. Instead, unacknowledged, my anorexia got worse. I began to strongly believe I wasn't anorexic or a good enough one because no one said anything or did anything. It has only been recently (I am now in my forties and my mother in her seventies) that we have been able to talk about that taboo subject. Nonetheless, I found myself very angry and distressed that my mother acknowledges that she did see the signs that I had hoped she would acknowledge as a child and adolescent. Beyond my overall emaciated bodily appearance and the lack of eating that was never talked about, my mother talks of the *tell-tale signs* she found and told my father about. The finding of hidden food from the dinner plate, the residue of sick down the toilet, the black bin-bags of sick that I hid when unable to use the toilet, the large empty containers of laxatives in the bin. My mother says, 'we didn't do anything because we thought it was just a phase you were going through'. Thankfully this 'phase' waned some years later.

[70] On mothering and the economic understanding of childhood, especially within working-class families, see 'Reproduction and refusal', in Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman*, op cit., pp. 83-97.

Protesting, rebellious and angry for most of the time, I never lived up to my mother's expectation of the *good enough* daughter and my mother did not live up to my expectation of the *good mother*. For many years I saw her as the loveless mother who had no time for herself, let alone a second child. This was while my father, who was hardly ever at home, spent his free time pursing his own interests and love of engines and anything mechanical. In the evenings he would go to the local pub, leaving us kids at home alone to fend for ourselves and also in the mornings. When my mother was out *working all hours God sent* my brother got up to all sorts of trouble in which I colluded. My brother was the main perpetrator; I somehow slipped through the net while my parents' time and attention was taken up elsewhere.

I left home at seventeen vowing never to return, and as a young adult lived many years of self-imposed estrangement from both of my parents, which was my way of escaping and evading the past. Their bad marriage, after years of family feuding and violence, finally ended in a messy divorce. At this point I did not want anything to do with them or the past. It is not as though I wanted to evade my working-class roots; I just did not understand the politics that had, in part, led to such a sad state of affairs. Both my brother and I avoided our parents as much as possible, and each other. Huge barriers of reciprocal silence grew between us all. It was as though I did not have a past, or a family. Yet I still needed to fill a sense of loss: I so much wanted to belong, to be part of a family or group. My brother had since married and started a family of his own, and in a way, for a short while I found solidarity in being a part of a substitute family group through nursing and living in halls.[71] This was before I purposely moved as far away as was possible, to escape being forced into taking sides during and after my parents' separation and divorce.[72]

By this time, my parents had found new partners, and were making new lives for themselves. It was as though our poverty-stricken past had never existed; all material items (from our family) had literally gone up in smoke in the back-garden through acts of rage, resentment and jealousy. Unlike Spence, we did not even have a family album or keepsakes to remind us of our time together, only nasty, selectively forgotten, repressed, rotten memories of emotional loss and despair, hardship and deprivation, unhappiness that I believe none of us wanted to acknowledge at that time, or any other for that matter.

As much as my parents had seemingly moved on from the past and had new partners, I too had moved on, making a new life for myself crossing class boundaries

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[71] A professional nursing position gave me a great opportunity to secure a career and a place to live in a community environment.

[72] I spent three years in abroad travelling and working, and then came home to England for three weeks, only to return to abroad for a further two years.

upon entering higher education. At this point, I had no sense of belonging to my family or to my class history. Like Spence, I certainly had no sense of belonging to the middle-class institutional values of an academic environment.[73] University represented, as Spence writes, 'a daily painful experience of feeling inadequate, uncomprehending, unloved, unpolitical, incapable'.[74] On entering university as a mature student – only partially educated, like Jo Spence, I lacked any theoretical approach. Nonetheless, working through my own sense of not belonging and of not being *good enough* was the starting point of an investigation into my identity, and an exploration of the sense of what it meant to be an outsider, and what it meant to be *me*, by tentatively examining myself and my body through drawings and paintings.

In a process of working things out, through my body and the body of my work, I situated myself as both object and subject of interrogation. What started out as an anatomical exercise grew into a form of self-analysis that had begun while I was a student on my BA Fine Art Course. I went on an anguished personal journey inward. Made over time, I began to see my drawings as a visual diary, like thought maps where patterns of fear, turmoil and conflict emerged across a drawn surface in a tangled web of anxious lines from which a taut but assertive figure repeatedly emerged. In that process I was beginning to repair what I can only perceive as a split, or fissure, that had occurred during childhood. I had lived a great deal of my life as if my body was an old nag or horse, my consciousness being my head, or the rider sitting upon that flagging, failing horse/body that I would persistently abuse as though it were my enemy. From this came the desire to mark out and reclaim my territory as a whole person through a life-size drawing, rather than that of separate parts that dangled beneath me like an old bag of bones (3.1).[75]

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[73] Having been a mature student at the Polytechnic of Central London from 1980 to 1982 Spence also resented that 'The course was riddled the with contradictions of teaching and learning within a power-based institutional framework. Tutors never ceased to be tutors even if they were political or personal allies. They still occupied positions of power [...] [and] made us very angry for much of the time'. Spence, *Putting Myself in the Picture*, op.cit., p. 135.

[74] Ibid., p. 135.

[75] This evokes Sigmund Freud's image of the relation between the ego and the id, i.e. conscious self and the bodily unconscious of the drives: '[the ego] in its relation to the id is like a man on horse-back, who has to hold in check the superior strength of the horse; with this difference, that the rider tries to do so with his own strength while the ego uses borrowed forces [i.e. from the super-ego].' Sigmund Freud, The Ego and the Id, *The Ego and the Id*, trans. J. Riviere, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. XIX (1923-25), (London: Hogarth, 1961), p. 25. Unfortunately there is no space to develop this association here, but it may serve as the beginning of a possible future project.

3.1 Paula Farrance, *Large Self-Portrait*, 1996, charcoal on Bockingford paper, approx. 29" × 72".

This was not done to assume a positive self-image, or an image of victim or survivor; it was more about using the potentiality of drawing to give me order to disorder. Some of these early drawings are strong, life-sized self-portraits, with heavily drawn charcoal outlines creating a force field, and with my body assertively standing boldly, topped with a defiant gaze staring out at the viewer. Drawing from my reflection in the mirror, I began to work through an overwhelming sense of insecurity and self-hate, denial and disgust. My body was the locus of my pain: I was trapped inside the enemy, in a skin I could not shed, a skeletal cage from which I could not escape. What, had for many years been hidden and obscured started to become unveiled and exposed, with all its imperfections. I began to reclaim my body through drawing, by asserting control over its representation. Like Spence, 'I became the subject of my own enquiry rather than the object of someone else's, where I act rather than acted upon'.[76] I was at once repelled by and compellingly fascinated with the anatomical physical extremes of my body that acted like a catalyst.

By using art as an interpretative mechanism rather than simply as a method of representation, and by putting myself under such close and ruthless scrutiny, many of my drawings were intense, emotionally dark and obsessively personal. There was a constant play inwards as well as outwards, in a process of trying to explain something about me, and possibly other women as well. Unlike Spence's work, here there was no restaging of the past, as I believed (at that time) the past was already symptomatically physically and emotionally written across my body. All of my work at this time was produced in the privacy of my own home, working at an experimental level. Many of these drawings remain private (3.2).

I felt no safety when working at university; I could not deal in public with the physical and emotional extremes that went far beyond conventional representations of the female body (and of those that exist in the familiar patriarchal canon of art history, which idealises and objectifies the female body). Conventional representation did not include bodies like my own. Even though the physical structure of bones, organs and flesh was like that of any other person, the physical dimensions, proportion and extent of my body left me as a *thing* rather than a person, which served as a focus of discussion and sometimes action, especially one that evokes disgust and ridicule. This was partly due to my naivety, and partly to other people's ignorance and fear that I was something/someone unmanageable, uncontrollable and uncomfortable.

Alongside the drawings of myself, I had my own body cast in plaster. This single body cast was then used to cast a second representation of my body in latex that I would go on to experiment with. At this stage I used photography as a means to

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[76] Spence, *Cultural Sniping*, op. cit., p. 163.

3.2 (left) Paula Farrance, *Self-Portrait*, 1995, charcoal on Bockingford paper, 24" × 31". (centre) Paula Farrance, *Self-Portrait*, 1996, graphite on Bockingford paper, 24" × 31". (right) Paula Farrance, *Self-Portrait*, 1996, Charcoal on Bockingford paper, 24" × 31".

document my progress, but as with Spence's work there was no simple 'taking photographs,' as the images misbehave on many different levels. I was basically playing around with the idea and body of a forbidden female body that refused to be compromised, or contained in accordance with accepted cultural norms. I would place my latex body cast in the public domain, in commercial sites such as shop display windows, launderettes, supermarkets, service stations and cafes etc., and take snap-shot photographs before trying to retrieve the latex cast without being caught.[77] At other times, I would just sit and watch people's reactions and resistances to something they found disgusting and distasteful.

Moving beyond the humorous aspects of performing a non-conforming female body, I realised that the naked female body was a powerful tool, which led me to cast other friends and colleagues. It would be their latex body casts that I then went on to wear and photograph in performances exploring ideas and interconnections around corporeal subjective experience. While it is not possible to understand the bodily experience of what it is to be a woman by simply slipping into a disembodied latex hollow cast of the female body, the surface of the female body carried by the latex cast is nevertheless discursively inscribed with the lived experience of the woman from whom it originated. Surface information, marks, blemishes, pubic hair that are all too often rendered absent from normalised reading of the female image in art history, and the media (whereby the skin is a speaking mask that never says what it shows)

[77] I was caught and banned from a well-known young woman's clothing store in 1999. I was treated like shoplifter rather than a shop-floor protester.

became, in part, revealed. In a private struggle to come to terms with my own identity and 'femininity', worked through a process of exploration and discovery through drawing and casting of mine and other bodies came the possibility to look at things afresh and establish a far better relationship with my own body. No longer the enemy I had perceived it to be, I tentatively started to stop making such excessive physical demands on my body.

One of the most influential turning points while I was an undergraduate student came from reading the writing of Julia Kristeva, and her theorisation of abjection in her book *Powers of Horror.*[78] At the very beginning of the book Kristeva cites food-loathing as a vivid act of self-assertion of the child's existence, rejection and separation from its parents' desires. Kristeva's poetics of writing, working within contemporary feminist discourses of philosophy, psychoanalysis, politics, theology, linguistics, literature and art, posits:

> Food loathing is perhaps the most archaic form of abjection. When the eyes see or the lips touch that skin on the surface of the milk – harmless, thin as a sheet of cigarette paper, pitiful as a nail paring – I experience a gagging sensation and, still further down, spasms in the stomach, the belly; and all the organs shrivel up the body, provoke tears and bile, increase heartbeat, cause forehead and hands to perspire. Along with sight-clouding dizziness, nausea makes me *balk* at the milk cream, separates me from the mother and father who proffer it. 'I' want none of that element, sign of their desire; 'I' do not want to listen, 'I' do not assimilate it, 'I' expel it. But since food is not 'other' for 'me', who am only in their desire, I expel, I spit *myself* out, I abject *myself* within the same motion through which 'I' claim to establish *myself.*[79]

In this condensed description of the actuality of the abject as a physical sensation, the direct force of the imaginary is conveyed by sparsely mixed words: the 'abject' as rejection, as gagging, organs, bile, perspiration, nausea and balk. In all of its sordidness and sense of the dramatic, this description and imaginary vision, for me, rang horribly true in relation to the mother who fed me, the primary sole carer in my early life, the mother whose body from which I originated and with which I formed my earliest intimate relationship.[80] No longer, as before, did I turn the anger I had for my

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[78] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: University Press, 1982).

[79] Ibid., p. 2.

[80] The mother's relation to her child, specifically the importance of the initial and influential early relation between a girl and her mother, an area in which Sigmund Freud admitted some ignorance, has been greatly developed and expanded upon by twentieth century feminist psychoanalytical revisionists. While engaging with the writing of Kristeva, this brought me into contact with other feminist theoreticians and analysts, such as Luce Irigaray's text 'The Bodily Encounter With The Mother'. Emphasizing and

3.3 (left) Paula Farrance, *Latex Body Cast*, 1996, latex and paper, approx. 26" × 17". (right) Detail.

mother inwards upon myself, clinging symptomatically to 'abjection'. The only way forward for me was to direct it outwardly into a creative and productive anger, like Spence, making it visible. At one point I embedded Kristeva's words onto the surface of my latex body cast, as a means to bring home my own perception of the 'abject' anorexic, the rejection of my body and my mother's gratification. Neither inside nor outside the body, you can read this text through the surface texture of the latex cast of my chest (3.3).

From here I started to look at other women artists who had worked towards deconstructing, redefining, and reclaiming their own bodies through contemporary feminist art practice in *Women's Art Magazine*. This was when I came across the work of Spence first through *Putting Myself In The Picture* (1986) and her later second book *Cultural Sniping* (1995). Mediated by her body Spence used theoretical, theatrical drama to communicate radical, oppositional, political information through constructed

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restoring the role of the pre-Oedipal archaic mother, which goes beyond Sigmund Freud's Oedipus Complex, to consider previously undisclosed aspects of the maternal relation, Irigaray's work enabled me to conclude that mothers matter. My relationship with my mother matters as it gives a vital and crucial understanding of our now post-Oedipal relationship. See Luce Irigaray, 'The Bodily Encounter with the Mother,' trans D. Macey, in *The Irigaray Reader*, ed. M. Whitford, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981), pp. 34-46.

performances that evoke a physical and emotional sensation in the viewer. Of particular significance was the powerful image I saw hung in the Jo Spence Memorial Archive in 2001, entitled *Excised*, from the series *Narrative of Dis-ease* (3.4). Like *Colonisation* (1.4), this is a highly intellectual piece of work, again using Brechtian methods of *estrangement* and *distantiation* as a reciprocal mode of politicised communication between spectators and actors, whereby there is an encounter or exchange, an emotional tension that disrupts the viewing experience and leaves viewers to comprehend a particular state or experience they find themselves, or have found themselves enmeshed with. Spence shows us what having cancer is like in a way that goes far beyond the autobiographical private diary of the cancer sufferer. As Hagiwara Hiroko writes in her preface to the exhibition, *Jo Spence: The Healing Camera.*

> Jo Spence's photographs of her body and her disease are not simply the private record of a cancer sufferer. They explicitly tell us that having cancer is a social experience. The photos urge us to see highly social issues, how society deals with a woman's body, cultural implications of the disease, and medical professionalism and authoritarianism. Spence's insightful social criticism and search for survival as a dignified person provide us with power.[81]

Presenting a child-like woman figure, head hung low and dressed in a hospital gown, clutching a teddy (3.4), the image asks the question of *what* is being done and *who* is doing it? In *Narratives of Dis-ease* we encounter Spence's *abjection* as her body is ravaged by cancer and all that goes with it: the alienation from society, the estrangement between herself and the objective world, from her body, from different parts of her personality, and especially the subordination and authoritarianism she experienced at the hands of the medical profession. Made in the same year as *Libido Uprising* (1.7), this work is cross-fertilised with photo therapy and remains a powerful piece that hangs in the Jo Spence Memorial Archive, (that I would see and better understand some years later[82]).

While on an MA programme in Feminism In The Visual Arts, at the University of Leeds, engaging with art history and contemporary feminist theories, focusing especially on class, subjectivity and difference through the work of Jo Spence and Carolyn Steedman. I started to understand that there were social, historical and

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[81] Reprinted, in part, in Dennett, 'The Wounded Photographer', op. cit.

[82] Spence's work on her life-threatening illness was particularly helpful to me when my own father was diagnosed with stomach cancer, especially in terms of the authoritarianism he endured under the Local Medical Authorities in his fight for his social right for a valid second opinion regarding his overall course of treatment. Spence gave me a level of understanding of how my father felt as a cancer patient – as with many other sufferers, cancer and its complex treatment was something my father struggled to talk about.

3.4 Jo Spence and Dr Tim Sheard, *Narratives of Dis-ease*, undated. Reproduced from Jo Spence, *Cultural Sniping: The Art of Transgression* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 207.

political components of my subjectivity missing from my work. Born in 1964 I was a too young to have had my socialist feminist consciousness raised in the 1970s. Nonetheless, I recognised in Spence's work a starting-point for my own explorations of classed subjectivity, with a particular focus on the mother and daughter relation. Spence gave me a cultural and artistic *filiation*, offering an experimental platform of shared experience in relation to the working-class mother, with the possibility for me to innovate through my own evolving artistic practices. Spence consciously opened up her working processes to anyone interested in using them for a non-profit making purpose.

Spence's practice would also influence Annette Kuhn's book *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination*.[83] In the acknowledgements Kuhn recognises a debt to Spence by declaring her to be 'one of the project's 'angels', and throughout the book

[83] Annette Kuhn, *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination,* (London: Verso,1995).

Kuhn draws freely on the protocols set out by Rosy Martin and Jo Spence, especially their photo therapy and family album works. This serves to affirm the influential role of Spence's intervention in the spheres of feminist autobiography and the exploration of class and family memories via photography. Kuhn uses the immediate image before her in the family album as a means to explore her own 'family secrets' that relate to a social and psychic struggle, the image functioning as a narrative device in the interpretation of memories embedded below its surface. She calls this process 'secondary revision',[84] a term borrowed from Sigmund Freud, who introduces it in *The Interpretation of Dreams.*[85] Unlike Spence, however, Kuhn did not restage and revisit through performance. Instead, she uses the example of Spence's work to revisit and *work through* her own family album, confronting untold stories of her own childhood through a *present* confrontation with its traces in photography. This project becomes a foundation for and example of a process, inspired in part by Spence, but distinct from photo therapy, better known as memory-work. Spence's historical precedent thus generated not only a generational connection between Spence and Kuhn's individual personal, social and cultural histories, it also offered me a genealogical engagement which could open up the original project, via memory-work, to direct engagement with the past via a drawing process with my mother.

Across contemporary feminist art practice, theory and revision of memory-works, I started to work towards a better political and critical understanding of working-class women, women's bodies and their relationships with their mothers. I began to grasp why reviewing the notion of *family secrets* would be important, indeed necessary, if I were to gain the insight for a new way of thinking. In the uncovering and interpretation of internal conflict and feelings, by coming to terms with past issues, emotionally as well as intellectually, I could understand the influence of the past on the present as both fantasy and lived fact. Annette Kuhn writes:

> Bringing the secrets and the shadows into the open allows the deeper meanings of the family drama's mythic aspects to be reflected upon, confronted and understood at all levels. This in turn helps coming to terms with feelings of the present, and so in living more fully in the present [...] In unearthing some of 'my' family secrets, I have learned in the most practical and immediate way that, with the proper motivation, memory work, especially when it draws on the readily available resource of the family album, is easy to do, offers

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[84] Ibid., p. 5.

[85] See Sigmund Freud, 'The Dream-Work', in *The Interpretation of Dreams,* trans. James Strachey, Pelican Freud Library Vol.4 (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976), pp. 629-49.

> methodological rigour, and is fruitful in countless, often unexpected, ways [...] revealing not ultimate truth, but greater knowledge.[86]

During the course of my research, my brother's sudden and untimely death from pneumonia, at the age of thirty-six occurred. At his funeral, where my parents and I met like intimate, known, yet unknown strangers, with a sense of loss and a realisation of how fragile life and our understanding of it is, I started to ask questions about our shared family past and so began the painful process of trying to understand my family, its hardships and struggles and my sense of displacement.[87] My engagement with the work of Jo Spence gave me a means at this critical point to identify the complex hidden societal structures, events and circumstances, which had determined my parents' lives, as well as my own. This was at odds with an initial raging, judgemental interrogation on my part, together with a call for acknowledgement and recognition of what went on behind the closed doors of our shared family home. I had to confront my relationship with my parents and acknowledge and recognise their history, with a view to realising the possibility of making sense of and understanding my early childhood experiences and relationship with my mother.

Like Spence, they too had been emotionally battered, evacuated during the war and raised in the class conflict of post-war poverty. They too had struggled and been shunted through life without access to a formal education; they had relentlessly to graft to achieve the things they had and have. My father worked for a great deal of his later life in a car factory while my mother worked where and whenever doing low-paid *women's work*, such as cleaning, shop and factory work, then secretarial work, and later working the night-shift as a nursing assistant at a local autistic children's home.[88]

The similarities between my mother and Spence in terms of age, era, geographical location and upbringing are very close.[89] Spence became a metaphorical, highly politicised, theoretical and intellectual working-class feminist mother to me (similar to Annette Kuhn's genealogical 'project angel'). Tracking Spence's working

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[86] Kuhn, *Family Secrets*, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

[87] With the loss of my brother came a sense of loss from my childhood. Deeply saddened by his death I was also angry. Our shared experiences of what had happened and gone on in the family now rested heavily on my shoulders, I had no ally, I was the only direct reminder left to face up to our parents when trying to deal with memories of a shared troubled past.

[88] I mainly remember my mother working night-shifts; at the time we were made aware this was not only to bring another income into the family home, my mother also worked nights to be at home during the daytime, albeit asleep, in case of emergencies such as my brother or myself being ill, or my brother being sent home from school for misbehaving (which happened regularly).

[89] Had Spence still been alive she would have been one year younger than my mother. Both my mother and Jo Spence were brought up in London, only 20 miles or so apart.

process through my own practice created a transgenerational dialogue between her and myself. She became an imaginary mother that I never had. Generating an awareness of class, Spence's *Beyond the Family Album* works gave me an understanding of the social and political context in which she and my mother had both lived and survived. Where my mother had very little consciousness of the politics of family life and all of its uneven and repressive power relationships, down-trodden for most of her life (inside and outside the family), she was only partially politicised, with little knowledge of the economics of and struggles between labour and capital, or the politics of feminism. Issues such as women's oppression inside and outside the family environment were never considered, let alone spoken of.

Unlike Spence and Kuhn, we had no family album or photographs as such to remind us of the past. In restoring my relationship, I asked my mother, and she agreed, to be the key figure in my practice-based research, wherever this might lead. In this painful process, my mother and I began the slow and sordid task of deconstructing both of our histories through an intense out-pouring and verbal questioning between artist/daughter and mother/model. This was when I decided that representations of the body were becoming the site of my research into how subjectivity is constituted between one generation and another. The resulting drawings were made in the intervals between my mother coming to sit for me, in an act of emotional honesty and openness, but accompanied with lies and half-truths. We both took a huge risk in digging up the past, raising the silent stories, and dealing with what had gone on in both our families.

The initial drawings that formed a part of the practice component of my MA thesis[90] started out as sketches in sketchbooks that later developed onto Bockingford paper attached to a drawing board (3.5). Like a boundary or force field containing my mother's body, I would draw heavy outlines onto the soft surface nap of the Bockingford paper with a graphite stick. As with the drawings of my own body, I initially found my mother's body both compelling and repellent.

Disregarding the disciplines of a life-class, however, these were not silent observations: they came as the result of an intensive, intimate dialogue between the two of us as I worked, not just about the past but also where this mother and this daughter situate themselves in the here and now, two women from different generations who are intimately and implicitly entwined. It was not an easy task, opening up to memories that had become concealed through years of silence. I found this a very painful process, and I am sure my mother felt this also. I started to

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[90] Drawings can be seen in my thesis entitled *Another Story To Tell* by Paula Farrance (1999) at the University of Leeds and also at the Jo Spence Memorial Archive.

3.5 (left) Paula Farrance, *Drawing of My Mother*, 2000, graphite on Bockingford paper, 24" × 31". (right) Paula Farrance, *Drawing of My Mother*, 2000, charcoal on Bockingford paper, 24" × 31".

understand the beneficial support that Spence's photo therapy process would have provided in working collaboratively alongside non-judgemental co-counsellors.

Accompanying the work of Jo Spence who, in a sense founded the theoretical movement towards memory-work in revisiting the family album, I also had the support of other feminist autobiographical writers such as Carolyn Steedman, Annette Kuhn, as well as Spence's collaborative workers Valerie Walkerdine and Rosy Martin. Academic researchers who have looked at family secrets and validate the family and the personal history as history, their intriguing stories and work on experiential memories of struggling to grow up as a girl in a particular kind of family and in a certain class setting and historical era, led me far beyond my own personal history and into explorations of familial, social and cultural, national and many other manifestations of collective shared memory. For me, each subjective story grabbed and took me on a captivating journey that charted the process of coming into being of women whose feminist 'memory-works' revisited the childhood of lives rarely recognised for their significance and value. As Steedman states in the very beginning of *Landscape For A Good Woman* these are narrative stories of 'lives lived out on the borderlands, lives for which the central

interpretive devices of the culture don't quite work'.[91] These influential works by both writers and practitioners, like Spence, paved a way for me to explore my own childhood memories, and my early relationship with my mother. This not only enabled me to locate my work within a feminist discourse; their examples also moved the work (and my own mother and daughter relationship) through into a developing drawing practice.

In working through the conflicts that unfolded in dialogue with my mother, there was guilt and shame to be dealt with. As with the works Spence made collaboratively with Rosy Martin[92] and Valerie Walkerdine[93], and following the example of writings by Steedman, Kuhn and in Marie Cardinal, this was a process of unwinding the ties of family secrets, silences, emotional residues and possible lies. As I recall, I was the needle in my mother's eye, something felt deep within my gut and also something that was instilled in me through outbursts of anger and resentment throughout my childhood. I recollect being beaten because I was the unloved, unwanted, second child, the foetus that would not abort, the daughter that she did not want, that tied her to a loveless marriage with all its violence, financial burdens and extra hard work. My own experience opens out onto the experience recounted by Algerian-born French novelist Cardinal in her autobiographical novel *The Words To Say It.*[94] Expanding upon rather than simply exposing the influence of the mother's hostile 'pre-natal' relation to her daughter, Cardinal recounts and recalls a history of pain and terror lived through a daughter's early identification and internalisation of her mother's wish to abort her unwanted, unborn second child. She makes clear that without knowing this fact, she must have always felt something of it without being sure until much later in her life what 'it' was that haunted her. Opened out in Cardinal's book is the notion of a trans-mission of tracing projected through the pre-maternal/pre-natal encounter. Cardinal consciously and unconsciously identified and symptomatically, in falling prey to a psycho-somatic affliction of perpetual menstrual bleeding, acted out the destructive fantasy of her Catholic mother's wish, on the cusp of divorce, to abort her unborn child. With an awareness of madness and death Cardinal writes:

> I understood that she had conferred death upon me at my birth, that what she wanted me to give back to her was death, that bond between us, a bond I had

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[91] Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman,* op cit., p. 5.
[92] See Rosy Martin and Jo Spence, *Double Exposure*, op. cit. See also Spence, *Putting Myself In The Picture*, op cit; Rosy Martin and Jo Spence, 'Phototherapy: psychic realism as a healing art?', *Ten. 8.* no. 30 (1988), pp. 2-17; Jo Spence and Patricia Holland (eds), *Family Snaps: the Meanings of Domestic Photography* (London: Virago, 1991).
[93] Alongside the collaborative works made with Jo Spence in, *Cultural Sniping*, op. cit., see also Valerie Walkerdine's *Schoolgirl Fictions,* (London: Verso, 1990).
[94] Marie Cardinal, *The Words To Say It*, (London: Pan Books, 1975).

> tried hard to discover was death. This filled me with horror [...] I knew that my mother unconsciously resented my birth.[95]

Having lived with this agonising uncertainty, followed by many years of hospitalisation from being on the verge of bleeding to death from a continual and excessive flow of menstrual fluid, Cardinal's internal conflict was later successfully worked through a lengthy process of psychoanalytical treatment. With a certain relief from the mechanisms of repression, to a degree Cardinal gained independence from the mother's negative influence. No longer acting out the destructive behaviour of the mother's desires, towards the end of her book she writes: 'If I had not become insane, I would have never have emerged'.[96] This is not a celebration of inspired madness and the hell that goes with it, neither is it away of exposing the violent behaviour of her mother or the condition or moment that formed Cardinal and the many family events and circumstances that followed. What interested me was Cardinal's move towards a different way of living with that knowledge, away from the repetition of acting out is a re-alignment or shift in which she was able to live her own life with a freedom to be herself, in her own right, with her own thoughts.

No matter how much working through is undertaken, even if in the form of therapy as in Spence's case, it is only possible to make good family failings and disturbances by being strong enough to talk about them, making them visible in order to explore them in the hope of possible future acceptance. In 'letting go', it is necessary to acknowledge that you will never get to the bottom of it all, there is no unsullied or fixed 'truth', or as Spence says, 'there is no peeling away of layers to reveal a "real" self, just a constant reworking process'.[97] This process remains open ended, which is crucial for possible change and alternative identifications, particularly in relation to the mother and daughter relation and the psychic investment bound up in it. Hence the importance of Freud's concept of *working through* pursued further through my conscious decision to return to an ongoing and historically situated but personal drawing practice.

Constructively and critically to understand the impact of such a sad state of affairs required immense tolerance between this mother and this daughter. Admitting and addressing in the present the effects of the past, to then use it as raw material for interpretation, mined for its meanings and possibilities, made possible the work that followed. For this I have the deepest and utmost respect for my mother, for collaboratively working things out together, rather than in opposition.

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[95] Ibid., pp. 37-8.
[96] Ibid., p. 211.
[97] Spence, *Putting Myself In The Picture*, op. cit., p. 97.

In trying to grasp and understand the class and family politics of my mother's place and position in history, in tracking through Spence's process in my own practice in order to understand it, this enabled me to, in part, understand my own mother and daughter relation and to imagine a different aesthetic practice through which to perform the transformation that could now reclaim the earlier engagement with a psycho-biographical drawing of the body. Moreover, it gave me a means of empowerment and a place in my own specific experiential history, woven into the family and to feminist politics of class conflict and the struggle of surviving hardship, which belongs to a far wider individual and collective lived history. I was thereby able to assume a place in feminist genealogy.

Instead of cutting my losses and moving on from my mother, which was tempting – our lives had moved on and were so different, to some degree freeing us from past conflicts – I had a compassionate drive (with a creative autonomous intent) to know my mother beyond the negative static identity of the *bad mother*, and for my mother and myself to know each other beyond past conflict and grievances. I wanted to shift the protesting and interrogative voice of the daughter to that of the artist/practitioner working towards a future and new way of thinking, one sustained by practice which produces fantasy and possible imaginary identifications 'around the maternal body, precisely not as a figured object or visual sight, but as both a memory and an imago.'[98] Written through the creative *working process* of making artwork, my practice-based project could then ask: in what way can a fine art drawing practice take on and expand what emerges out of *feminist, autobiographical memory work,* initiated in the influential photo therapy work of Spence and generated from the shared and transmitted burdens of intergenerational histories?

Drawing became a passage for a psychic encounter, worked through the images and fantasies of my mother's body in the real time and space of the making of the work and in the virtual time and space of creating new enlarged drawings from sketches and memory in the studio. I aimed imaginatively to create, retrieve, restore and regain, across time and memory a progressive, pleasurable and privileged return and relation to a maternal body as a spatial encounter rather than re-configuration.

Having already experienced the power of the female body as a tool from my early work on a BA in Fine Art, I wanted to find away of engaging with Spence's work beyond repeating its autobiographical content. At the start of my doctoral research I began to explore the complexities of the photographic collaborative process in which Spence was involved, engaging and experimenting with performance of inhabiting or re-positioning the mother's body, though performing the latex cast of my mother's body

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[98] Pollock, *Encounters In The Virtual Feminist Museum*, op. cit., p. 48.

(see Chapter Two). From this direct engagement with and demonstrated differences from Spence's works, I was able to identify a space within which the self can be performed in the drawing process. In the act and gesture towards drawing in performing the latex cast of my mother's body, the artistic dialogue between Spence and myself moved from *reference* to *creative independence*, so that I ceased to be in a metaphorical mother-daughter relation. Drawing and the conscious artistic decision to return to this practice became a way of entering into the performance aspect of Spence's working practice. *Rubbered up with Mother* 'cross-fertilised' with drawing marks a transition from this direct engagement with Spence. My developing practice then moved and returned to drawing, based on an ongoing and historical situated and personal drawing practice.

Building on an ongoing archive, the sittings between my mother and myself were to continue at differing times in the first stage of my PhD. I started to concentrate on my mother's anatomical form and proportion to include the whole of her body within the confines of the Bockingford paper. As with the discipline and practice of a life-class, this established a formal distance between us, a safe visual viewing plane between artist/practitioner and sitter/model. Observed from a distance I felt safe to release myself from the identity of the unforgiving, angry daughter that had fused me to my mother in such an unproductive way. I knew there was more I should do through practice, beyond the safety, formality and discipline of the traditional life drawing scenario, and beyond the narrative testament of a lived dialogue and material closeness to the mother. I knew there were other choices, but what I wanted to do was explore the specific relation (dialectic) to mark and gesture, line and paper, the body and space.

In the following chapters I discuss the development I made as an artist, by means of *working through* a prolonged personal encounter through drawing with the mother, my mother. Founded in Spence's *Mother and Daughter* project work, a strong residue of *acknowledged filiation* with this legacy is carried through with my own mother and drawings of her body. By returning and renewing this relation between this mother/sitter/model and this daughter/artist/practitioner came the notion of a retrieval of a psychic encounter with the mother, brought into possibility through the making of the artwork in which I had to discover new properties for line and space, but also I would have to find a way to integrate my body – not as an image but within the process of drawing. Performance did not disappear but would later re-appear in the act of drawing in a new space: a studio of my own.

Chapter Four: Bodies and Transformation: Return to Figuration by means of the Drawings of the Mother.

This chapter sets out to describe the development I made in my research by means of Sigmund Freud's concept of *working through.*[99] This involved a prolonged personal encounter through drawing my mother, in both the real time and space of the making of the work and in the virtual time and space of creating drawings from sketches and memory in the studio. There was actual phenomenological time spent together with my mother's gift to me, the artist, of her body to draw. Creating an archive of poses and gestures through intimate and persistent drawing relations to a body and a relationship invested with painful histories, I devised a series of works and exhibitions to examine how my changing drawing practice could open out a new space. Beyond the narrative testament of a lived dialogue and material closeness to the mother, a transition emerges. Through a continual process of engagement and identifications in relation to the imagined body of my mother, drawing became a passage for a 'psychic encounter'. This opens up a space, a *borderspace* in Bracha L. Ettinger's terms, for the passage to and from the feminine. The feminine is understood not as the phallic, negative other, but as the archaic legacy of a primordial 'severality', a subjective track defined by Ettinger as *matrixial.* This means that subjectivity is, from the beginning, an effect of encounter, not just the product of separation and ultimately, castration. This non-phallic definition of the feminine is not an attribute of women or their bodies, it is an effect of the encounter-event and a borderspace that is shared between several subjective entities.[100] Paralleling Spence's work in photographic series, by means of drawing in series I aimed to imaginatively create, retrieve, restore and regain across time and memory a progressive, a pleasurable and privileged return and relation to a maternal body as a spatial encounter rather than a re-configuration.

Written through the narrative of an intimate and persistent drawing practice I shall argue that the *working process* became the means by which a psychic space of encounter, return, remembrance and restoration within the post-Oedipal relation of two adult women could be solicited. In this chapter my drawing practice stages a transition through memory to an imaginary body of *Mum.* Like Spence's mother and daughter works, this was made possible through a process of continual reviewing and re-

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[99] Laplanche and Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, op cit. See also my Introduction, above.

[100] Bracha L Ettinger, 'Metramorphic Borderlinks and Matrixial Borderspace', op. cit., pp. 125-59.

thinking, re-working and re-making of the art works. Hence the concept of related drawings and ultimately the practice of working in series.

This brings me back to the back cover of Spence's book *Putting Myself In The Picture* (1.4). Viewed under the magnification of an optical loupe, this image shows Spence sitting in front of an old gas fire, sequencing and staging the reviewing and re-thinking, re-working and re-making of her previous archival photographic works. This is how I first viewed many of her unpublished mother/daughter works, looking through a loupe at contact sheets over a light-box during my visit to the Jo Spence Memorial Archive.[101] From this, I come to understand and recognise in my own drawing practice the potential role of reflection that I viewed in Spence's practice of staging and sequencing her photographic works, if I were to move and develop my drawings beyond the life model scenario.

My first drawings simply started out as a familiar safe journey around my mother's body, made from a distance. Initially my mother would stand and shift around. I did not direct her in any way, as I tentatively moved around her within the domestic environment of my home. Hidden behind my drawing board, I began to experiment with the line, unleashing its from being an outlined force field that previously contained and distanced her body from me. Dealing indirectly with my mother's body I hung these initial drawings in my studio and started to work from one into the other on much larger Fabriano paper, which came on a roll rather than in sheets. I could work from ceiling to floor, life size and even larger. More often than not I would work on two larger drawings side by side.

I found this liberating as the size of the Bockingford paper was proving to be creatively restrictive to me. I needed to be able to explore the draughtsmanship, the perspective and the geometry of the skeletal structure, the proportion, height, width and weight, the delicate silk-like surface of her ageing skin and the way it hung, sagged, crumpled and creased like wrinkled crêpe paper in detail. The marks that bear life's intervals, the mental and physical hard-knocks made over the passage of time and history of her life all became too sanitised when also trying to detail the tilt and stance of the whole of her body onto Bockingford paper.[102]

I became fascinated with the detail of my mother's body, right down to her cracked-soled feet and coarsely cut toenails, and also with what I could not directly see in front of me. For example, how the flesh at the back of her lower legs would hang

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[101] See Chapter One, above.

[102] Intervals: bodily experiences of pleasure and pain, marks of physical graft, pregnancy and childbirth, poor diet and life-style, fluctuating weight-gain and weight-loss, illness and ageing, all of which leave traces upon the body, not limited to the surface skin alone.

when the bone of her leg was fore-fronted in the drawing, or the embodied feeling of what it felt like to have a tilted-hip seated naked, with bum and back impressed onto a plastic-seated chair. I wanted to somehow move beyond the surface of the skin, and work through her body without containing it within a single outline.

Later the drawings were done in my studio, which was an empowering moment for me. For the first time my mother came into my professional working space (so far removed from the domestic and her own environment). Perhaps my mother was a little tense at first. Here I felt that I was in control of the direction of the work. We started to spend a great deal of time working together in the studio. There was considerable trust bestowed on me by my mother, like a gift and a testament to a lived, renewed relationship in the making of the work, from drawing and casting her body, then back to drawing. My mother, in a sense, lent herself or rather gave herself over to me.

This is an act of kindness and generosity that facilitates, acknowledges and reciprocates my creative intent. Throughout my research my mother has given me her full support and consent, in her words, 'if it helps you and your work'. In breaking down the distance, and extending the boundaries beyond the confines and safety of life-drawing, came a more intimate approach. Through communication and trust, from formality came informality. My mother allows me to have intimate close access to her naked body that is otherwise reserved for her relationship with her husband or on medical grounds with her GP. In returning to my drawing practice, I began to engage with the intimate pleasure and scrutiny of drawing my mother's body and began to experiment with colour.

I was so much more physically and actively involved in the drawing process on the new larger-scaled paper. In a manner similar to that of performance, my whole body became involved. To some degree, there was an element of comparison going on between the two bodies of the mother/model/sitter and daughter/artist/practitioner that came from wearing the latex cast of my mother in performance that hung in my studio. While the latex cast of my mother lent itself to dealing with the surface of her body, it was disembodied with no 'real' reference to my mother's actual lived-in body. In these early drawings of my uncomfortable body inside the latex cast of my mother, the readability of whose body was whose, at times, was ambiguous. It was not until a little later, while in performance that the act and the gesture towards drawing allowed a distancing shift to occur across disciplines, as discussed in Chapters One and Two, above, where I could identify a space within which the self could be performed in the drawing process, and made visible by photography work. Drawing in performance and returning to a historically situated ongoing drawing practice raised the question of how was I going to find myself in the drawing as the daughter/artist/practitioner.

Opening out this problematic surrounding the artistic presence of the practising female artist brings me close to the figurative works made by Paula Modersohn-Becker, especially a self-portrait in which she imagined herself as pregnant, entitled *Self Portrait on Her Sixth Wedding Day* (1906). Rosemary Betterton has juxtaposed this painting with a work by Käthe Kollwitz showing Kollwitz's superimposed portrait head with a reclining nude torso of a woman, entitled *Self Portrait and Nude Studies* (1900) in the context of early modernism.[103] Discussing images of the pregnant or maternal body made by a woman, made of herself, Betterton writes:

> for women artists to represent the female body is to confront the question of likeness as well as difference, of proximity to, as well as distance from the maternal body. The body of the artist and the body of the nude – what is at stake here is the separation of the two. If the body of the artist was permitted to women, it was only in so far as their bodies, and specifically their bodies *as* mothers were denied.

She concludes 'the problem for the woman artist still remains'.[104] This raises the question: has it become possible since early modernism for women to resolve the division Betterton noted in the work of Modersohn-Becker and Kollwitz? My research through Spence is, in part, an exploration of that possibility, not by means of self–portraiture, but by means of a drawing practice that is produced in a space where two bodies – artist and mother – encounter each other as mother and daughter. This leads to a secondary discussion of the body of the artist as woman onto the space of her practice. Exploring images of the artist in the studio in modernism, Griselda Pollock analyses modernist women artists' claims for 'the right to enjoy being the body of the painter in the studio – the creative self in the private domain.'[105] There they create a new contemporary space to address their own relationship as women artists to the process of making and producing. My work operates at the intersection of these two different strands in art history. The work is seeking a forum to hold both Spence's exploration of remembered embodied history of a mother and a daughter together with the possibility of that daughter acting as the creative artist, in order to produce a change via the act of drawing.

In returning to drawing as my primary medium, I set up a direct communication between the process of seeing and the act of drawing the figure (as a spatial encounter rather than re-configuration) conveying something previously unresolved or

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[103] See Rosemary Betterton, 'Mother Figures: The maternal nude in the work of Käthe Kollwitz and Paula Modersohn-Becker', in *Intimate Distance: Women artists and the body* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 29, 45.
[104] Ibid., p. 29.
[105] Griselda Pollock, 'Painting, Feminism, History', in *Looking Back to the Future: Essays on Life, Death and Art*, (London: Routledge, 2000) p. 75.

undisclosed (re-claimed) in drawing as a space-making and body-making productive site. Why drawing (and my use and handling of the materials and place/space of production as a resource) and not painting or, for that matter any other modernist medium? Writing of the renewed or revived importance of drawing since the 1990s in her book *Vitamin D: New Perspectives In Drawing,* curator Emma Dexter asks 'Why is it drawing's time now?'

> Because drawing offers freedom, as an under-regarded and under theorised backwater, to explore hitherto overlooked or repressed aspects of creativity. But when drawing first started to emerge autonomously in the mid-1990s, it was also the perfect medium to contrast with the sort of art that preceded it.[106]

I want now to define, critically, the space my drawing practice sought to create and occupy which can best be articulated in double distinction from two other contemporary practices that both re-engage with drawing, indeed life drawing, and the body. Avigdor Arikha and Beth Fisher represent counterpoints in contemporary drawing and life figuration, in relation to which my practice can be situated, between both the linear and the painterly poles of drawing. There is a balance between representation and abstraction in the work of Avigdor Arikha, who in 1965, having previously studied the historical techniques of traditional representation following on from highly acclaimed abstract paintings, returned to drawing, working directly from life and the figure. His collection of drawings and prints from 1965-2005 were exhibited at the British Museum in 2007, to which they were donated. In the accompanying exhibition catalogue, entitled *Avigdor Arikha: From Life*, Robert Hughes quotes Avigdor Arikha's dissatisfaction with abstraction as 'painting from painting' thus reversing the modernist development: 'I had not linked the act of painting to the fact of seeing, and it struck me – a terrible blow – that our culture was manneristic, as Rome was when Caravaggio began work there.'[107] With drawing's capacity to resonate and connect with the world around him and following the repeated advice from his life long friend Alberto Giacometti, in 1965 Avigdor Arikha honed his imagination, creativity and skill solely in drawing. Over an eight-year period he maintained a relationship and returned to the persistent intensity of looking and working directly from life and the figure.

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[106] Emma Dexter, *Vitamin D: New Perspectives In Drawing*, (London: Phaidon Press, 2005), p. 3.

[107] Arikha continues: 'When I stopped painting abstracts it was because the balance between belief and lucidity broke. Lucidity won. Then I realized that you can draw nothing that won't be read as something, interpreted back to the real world' Quoted in Robert Hughes, 'Avigdor Arihka', in Duncan Thomson and Stephen Coppel (eds), *Avigdor Arikha, From Life – Drawings and Prints 1965-2005*, (London: British Museum Press, 2006), pp. 10, 11.

I want to now contrast Avigdor Arikha's 2007 exhibition of drawings from life and the figure with a major exhibition of contemporary drawings made up by a roster of 26 younger artists, entitled *Drawing Now: Eight Propositions* held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, in 2002-3. Highlighting the role of drawing's past in the present, curator Laura Hoptman identifies in her catalogue essay the idea of drawing as process.

> Even through the changes in American and European art in the 1960s, the core of the view endured in a new emphasis on drawing that celebrated its purity, its experiential nature, the way it seemed to privilege the artist's hands, its aspect of *non finito.* All of these qualities became synonymous with the term "process," which broadly speaking referred to art that physically bore the traces of its own making.

The process of seeing and the act of drawing are linked together:

> Perhaps, however, this notion of drawing as process should be seen as developing from specific moments in time and taste, rather than as given. [...] By and large these drawings are finished and autonomous and to some degree representational. Invoked by Yve-Alain Bois they are 'projective' that is, they depict something that has been imagined before it is drawn, as opposed to being found through the process of making.

But Hoptman then links this new descriptive and narrative tendency with contemporary visual culture and other typologies of drawing. This drawing refers to 'the language of life around us.'[108] With particular reference to the work of Richard Serra, Laura Hoptman sums up her argument by suggesting that 'for many artists today drawing is not a verb but a noun.'[109] This is not without its shortcomings; in her review, Barbara Pollack in *Art Monthly* 2003 states 'by emphasising narrative over process, Hoptman has selected a group of artists whose primary commonality is an emphasis on craft [...], who by their own definition create drawings as "final products".'[110] The focus on narrative and the everyday is set against modernist emphasis on the artist's touch and process. The risk is that instead of both you get craft and you get marketability. Barbara Pollack concludes 'it may be time – before we move past the 70s – to recall that the emphasis on process was a strategy of resistance against what today appears to be the inevitable commodification of art.'[111]

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[108] Laura Hoptman, 'Drawing is a Noun', in *Drawing Now: Eight Propositions*, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2002), pp. 10-13.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Barbara Pollack, 'Drawing Now: Eight Propositions', *Art Monthly*, no. 263, (2003), p. 35.
[111] Ibid.

By choosing to return to drawing rather than continuing to paint, I am suggesting (unlike Robert Hughes), that Avigdor Arikha did not reverse or move beyond the modernist notion of the artist's touch. Rather, in a reverse return Avigdor Arikha started to work and draw through process, opening out new possibilities. Dexter argues when defining the difference between painting and contemporary drawing:

> Oil painting, by contrast, is an art of accretion and concealment [...] The conventions of painting demand that every part of the canvas bound by the frame is covered with paint, organised compositionally at the service of totality. Just as painting's limits are set by the frame, so too the act of painting carries a sense that it can achieve completion and closure.

Note on the other hand, she reframes the artist's relationship and approach to paper as material resource, a container of thoughts where the idea in itself comes into being, as I have discussed in my Introduction, in terms of conceiving paper as a *gathering receptacle* of creative thought that can retrieve a specific kind of relationality that produces and renews meaning. The act and gesture towards 'Drawing is improvisatory and always in motion, in the sense that it can proceed ad infinitum without closure or completion, continually part of a process that is never ending.'[112] This suggests a temporality, appropriating a transitional space within drawing. Expanding the field of what drawing can actually achieve, according to curator Catherine de Zegher, 'It always stands at this critical point of transition – a transition between self and other, attachment and separation, imagination and realisation, idea and plasticity of form, be it fluid or fixed'.[113] In drawing as a narrative record of a process of its making, the artist encounters his or her own body and situates themselves in relation to the world through the gesture and the materials of the art work 'in process'.

To revisit the everyday is personal, and it is significant that Arikha draws his own familiar environment. In the collection of his drawings exhibited in 2007, amongst the everyday objects, such as a pair of well-worn shoes, glasses, an umbrella, an old arm chair and so on, is the intimate interior working space of his studio and adjoining library which occupies the centre of his modest apartment in Paris. Home and studio, with its small printing press, are linked to the everyday and personal. Drawing from direct observation and life, his wife the poet Anne Atik frequently features in many of his works (a total of 10 were shown in the 2007 exhibition).

This brings me to an intimate and attentive drawing carried out in silverpoint, entitled Anne *Pregnant*, dated 22 July 1969 (4.1). The half reclining figure of Anne is

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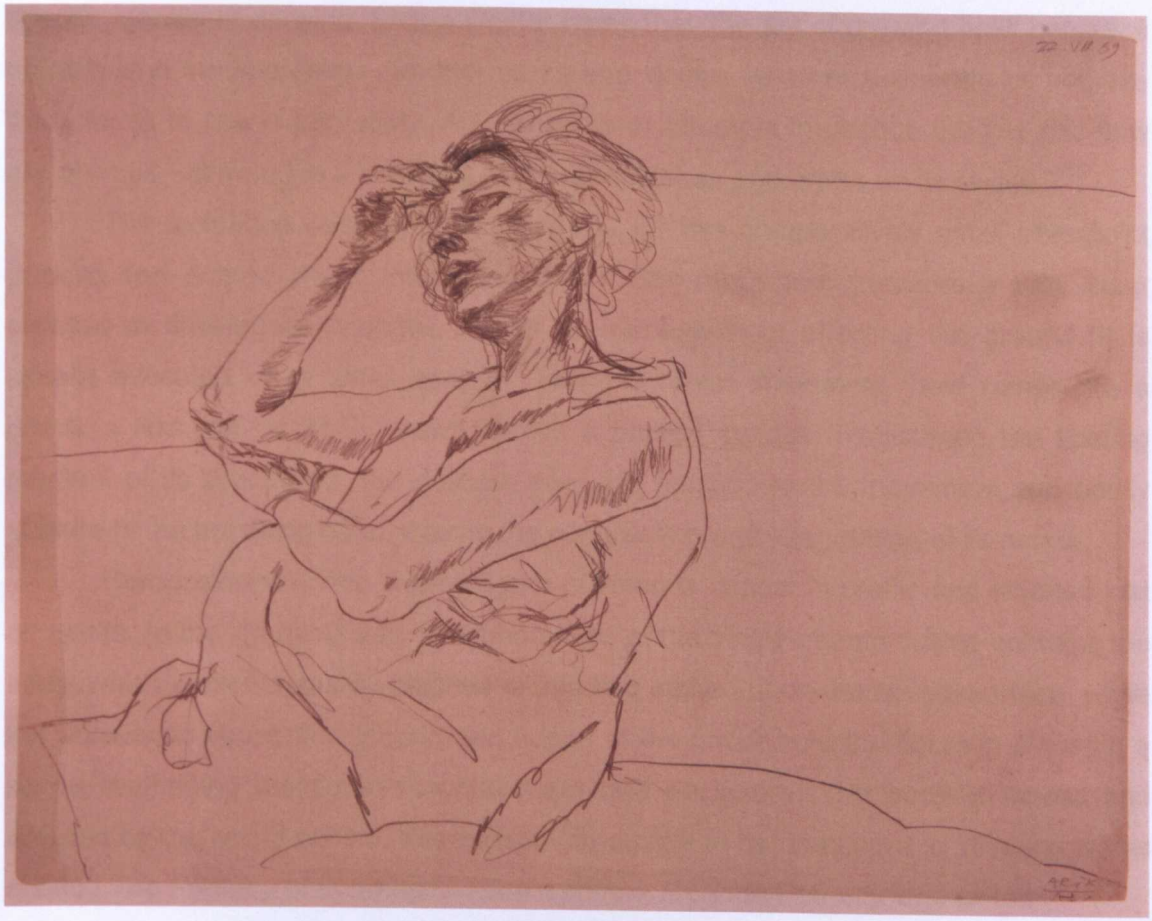
[112] Ibid, p 1.

[113] Catherine de Zegher's opening paragraph of 'Works on Paper and Other Marginalities: Theorizing and Curating Drawing', unpublished transcript of lecture presented at Arts@CATH, University of Leeds, 14th March 2010.



4.1 Avigdor Arikha, *Anne Pregnant*, 1969 silverpoint on primed paper. Reproduced from Duncan Thomson and Stephen Coppel (eds), *Avigdor Arikha: From Life* (London: British Museum Press, 2006), p. 38.

seated at the end of a couch with her far shoulder impressed into its corner, chin up her head tilts back with her thumb and fingers supporting her temple and brow. Her foregrounded forearm situated diagonally across the plane of the drawing, with the elbow bent, her lower arm extends and rests upon her pregnant torso while her hand clasps the end of the couch. Described in the catalogue commentary listings (in part, contributed by Arikha): 'It was a very hot summer in Paris. Anne, pregnant with their second daughter, Noga, was exhausted. There are several related drawings done on the same day'[114] that would have been, as Stephen Coppel comments: 'executed from life in one session. No revision or subsequent reworkings or modifications were allowed. For Arikha these restraints were necessary if the subject was to express emotional force and intensity.'[115] As with the first drawings of my mother's body (3.5), this suggests life drawing as immediacy and intimacy: the direct response drawing could offer as a primary medium between thought, idea and action. Writing of the

[114] Duncan Thomson and Stephen Coppel (eds), *Avigdor Arikha, From Life*, op. cit., p. 117.
[115] Stephen Coppel, 'The Prints', in *Avigdor Arikha, From Life*, op. cit., p 23.

specific identity of drawing, Emma Dexter notes that 'the act of drawing itself betokens honesty and transparency – all the marks and tracks, whether deliberate or not, are there for all to see in perpetuity. Any erasures or attempts to change the line mid-flow are obvious – drawing is a form that wears its mistakes and errors on its sleeve.'[116]

The technique used by Avigdor Arikha for this comparatively small silverpoint drawing (on primed paper measuring 245 x 351 mm), also 'requires a very clear purpose in drawing as changes cannot be made without affecting the ground. It is usually executed on a small scale',[117] using a metal implement, held rather like a pencil, a line can be freely drawn across a primed surface. Registering the fleeting moment of its production, the delicate grey line testifies to the movement and bodily gesture of the travelling hand, tracing the observation and imagination of its maker.

Compositionally, the seated figure of Anne is almost in profile and situated just off centre, to the left hand side. The sharpness of the single etched outline contains the body, which is contrasted by patches of shading etched upon the body's surface, while the untouched supporting ground and edges of the paper hold the figure in place, in a sense reaffirming the figure's containment and enclosure. The body is bound and secured by the single outline. Interpreting the outline in her catalogue of drawing works entitled *The Primacy of Drawing: An Artist's View*, Deanna Petherbridge writes:

> Outline drawing, where detail is suppressed or subjugated to the containing and defining contour, is the most conceptual means of drawing. It is also the most abstract, in the sense that to arrive at a clarity of outline is a process of reduction and deliberate simplification and stylisation [...] The space contained within an outline is often empty of incident, but if we are familiar with its conventions, we read body or object, or abstract form. Being the most schematic, the reductive outline drawing is therefore the most encoded.[118]

Where Arikha's outline contains the body, in my return to drawing my mother's body I wanted to, in a sense, unlearn the rules and protocols of life drawing. Without losing the level of abstraction and imagination, I wanted to discover new properties for line and the body and space. I did not want to contain the body within a reductive heavy outline that previously distanced my mother's body from me.

To confirm the position and diverse scope of figuration in contemporary drawing, situating my practice between two distinct extremes, alongside Arikha's small and intimate linear drawing, I want to include some monumental painterly drawings by Beth Fisher, who, in 2010 held an exhibition entitled *Beth Fisher: Grisaille Legacy*, at

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[116] Dexter, *Vitamin D*, op. cit., p. 3.
[117] Ibid., p. 130.
[118] Deanna Petherbridge, *The Primacy of Drawing: An Artist's View*, (London: Southbank Centre, 1991), p. 32

4.2 Beth Fisher, *Maiden* (centre panel), 2000–9, from *Tilly in the Unicorn Tapestry* series, Conté, charcoal. Reproduced from *Beth Fisher: Grisaille Legacy* (Edinburgh: Royal Scottish Academy, 2010), pp. 56-7.

the Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh. Beth Fisher's exhibition of drawings and prints, covering a period from the 1990s to 2007, culminate and respond to a long career in drawing the figure, the nude, and increasingly family members and her daughter. Assigning value to the everyday and personal, the intimate, the complex interplay within the family is a dominant theme in Fisher's exhibition, which can be read as a chronology of relationships and events, often anxiety and turmoil, within the domestic space. Described by Nick Bradford in the accompanying catalogue as 'a kind of representational-figurative experience of what is often a dilemma, even a lived-in nightmare',[119] drawing becomes a suffocating space. In the central panel entitled *Maiden* (2000-9) from *Tilly In The Unicorn Tapestry* series, the paper is filled to capacity with volcanic energy or molten quality of accumulated voluminous figures that meld into each other, seemingly fighting for space (4.2).

[119] Nick Bradford, 'The Artist As Mediator: Is Beth Fisher A Family Shaman' ,in *Beth Fisher: Grisalle Legacy* (Edinburgh: Royal Scottish Academy, 2010), p. 33.

In distinct contrast to Arikha's small silver point drawn directly onto a single sheet of specially coated paper, Fisher's drawings and prints range from six feet tall and between twelve and eight feet wide, made up of conjoined sheets of paper. These large works, made up of a mass of Conté pastel and charcoal lines and marks, involve intense rubbing away at the paper's surface to change its texture. They require long periods of planning, compositional organisation and revision of line and refinement of tone and shading. In Fisher's work, in contrast to Arikha, from corner to corner, no ground is left untouched. Using paper rather like a canvas, it is as if the viewer is sealed off from the paper's surface. Incorporating qualities associated with Dexter's description of painting there is an element of 'concealment ... completion and closure'. Although Fisher's work shares scale with my own, it is my contention that the way she uses up the space of the paper and of the bodies she represents, leans back towards painting, rather than opening up the issue of how else line might convey the energy and substance of the body, which was the question that informed my research.

Displayed alongside five monumental preparatory working drawings by William Dyce, in her introductory essay Fisher pays homage to the allegorical and mythic narrative context of these historic works, from which she draws parallels, when she writes: 'Can I appropriate the concepts of "history painting", traditionally a vehicle of political statement, of patriarchy and establishment, to exploit it as a vehicle of the unremarkable, the personal, in the contemporary context?'[120] The personal and political, which chimes with 1970s feminism, is evident throughout Fisher's drawings. In the accompanying exhibition catalogue essay, Ludmilla Jordanova describes Fisher's working practices as

> 'the process whereby she makes ideas visible [...] to which her many preparatory sketches stand testimony[...] producing narratives, in the manner of history painting. In turning to historical precedents, whether they are myth, symbols or dense narratives, she is passing her experiences through an array of lenses, which precisely, transforms them.'[121]

Related by critics to painting and narrative, Fisher's drawings have also been linked with Jo Spence's work under the notion of 'confession'. As Jordanova notes:

> 'I could easily locate Beth's work within the artistic traditions that are 'confessional', which is to say that they reveal to viewers the maker's own intimate experiences. Jo Spence's unflinching photographs about breast cancer are a case in point. The desire or willingness to tell all has played an important role in second-wave feminism, and thereby takes on political resonance. The

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[120] Beth Fisher, 'Thoughts on working life', in *Beth Fisher: Grisalle Legacy*, op. cit., p 9.
[121] Ludmilla Jordanova, 'Is This A Portrait I See Before Me?', in *Beth Fisher: Grisaille Legacy*, op. cit., p. 15.

> use of personal lives, especially when it involves others, also becomes an ethical and more generally a philosophical matter. Do individuals 'own' process, events, and experiences that happened in their lives? This raises issues that come within the domain of philosophy, and other social sciences, since any answer hinges on an account of the relationships in which human beings are embedded.[122]

For me, Spence's legacy was not confessional. Furthermore, my own work is not autobiographical, as are Fisher's drawings of her own family and her daughter. My drawings take up the personal – classed and gendered subjectivity in history – in relation to line as a means to create the space in drawing as a practice and an event that touches on 'the relationships in which human beings are embedded'. The next stage of my work witnesses changes of scale – changes of space and responses to work in specific exhibition space. Giving my working drawings a public space was important to me.

Studio Work: Exhibition June, September and December 2005

Initially, the drawing-board I rested upon became incorporated into the drawing. It gave me a way of identifying my own space, place and position in relation to my mother. At first she sat upright and matriarchal, with formally crossed legs, and with her elbows resting on the arms of the chair, hands clasped on her lap or on the armrests. Sitting directly across from my mother, as the drawings progressed my drawing-board lowered. My mother also began to relax and became more familiar and comfortable in my studio space; at times her bottom would slip forward and she would nod off in the chair.

The chair she sat on in my studio also became an integral part of my work. My mother choosing to sit in a chair allowed me a more sustained intimate observation. It gave me a great way of thinking and working out how she was sitting, scaffolded both into the structure and into the space around her, how her flesh would disperse itself across the chair's rigid structure. In my mother's absence, I later began to draw the chair that she had sat in, exploring what it was to work from the memory of my mother's presence past.

Working on larger scale paper, I felt as though I had been given the artistic licence and freedom to take an imaginary leap into the unknown. I was able to take risks and began to decisively move my work away from its associations with life-drawing, experimenting with the significance of colour, in the restless line-drawings that evoke *traces* of the body, of mother and daughter and the role of memory after each sitting. If the mythic origins of drawing in the scenario of the girl outlining the silhouette

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[122] Ibid., p. 18.

of her departing lover figures drawing as a trace of the real body,[123] my drawings seek to capture virtual traces of an absent but imagined body by means of the gesture of my own hand. A separation and bond through memory started to tentatively emerge, a transition into an imaginary known yet unknown. In their very early stages these smaller and larger drawings formed, in part, my work-in-progress show.

In this exhibition, entitled *Drawings of my Mother: By Paula Farrance, 5-7 Lifton Place, June 2005*, I wanted to show the work in progress, and the process of beginning to work things out through rethinking, reworking and remaking the drawings from memory (see Appendix 3 [DVD]; Appendix 4 [DVD]). Each drawing was specifically informed by and developed from the last: from the smaller drawings to the larger drawings made in the absence of my mother. These larger drawings hung in pairs, and were staple-gunned to the walls, as if they had been produced in the studio. The spacious lower floor of 5-7 Lifton Place, with its high ceilings and open layout, lent itself to the size and scale of the work. This was the first time I had been able to see the work collectively staged and sequenced in three continuous rooms.

The exhibition opened with an experimental attempt at using colour on a small scale that, in part, went on to inform two larger drawings that incorporated the visual plane of the drawing-board. The same can be said for the smaller and larger drawings that hung opposite. In the next room, in the larger drawings, my choice of colour becomes more selective, the soft pink, light blue pastels and a graphite stick continued throughout the rest of the show. The line, however, at times was heavy-handed, too direct and harsh. The coloured line was seemingly layered, which was not my intention. In the detailing of how I remembered my mother's body, the work failed in terms of moving the drawing beyond the connotations of life drawing. This realisation and failure was, nonetheless, part of the process of working things through. The key to moving forward was the question of how was I going to visually engage the viewer with my theoretical concerns. Beyond the problematic of any actual, literal or direct observational image of an older woman's body, was the hope of moving towards the '*possibility*' for an '*other*' identification or encounter with the mature female body, in and of its own time, but threaded through the psychic investment bound up in it '*as both a memory and an imago*'.[124]

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[123] This archetypal image is based on Pliny the Elder's story of the origin of drawing, in which a Corinthian girl, who 'was in love with a young man, and when he was going abroad she drew around a silhouette on the wall around the shadow of his face cast by the lamp.' Pliny the Elder, *Natural History: A Selection*, trans. John F. Healy (London: Penguin Books, 1991), p. 336.

[124] Pollock, *Encounters In The Virtual Feminist Museum*, op. cit., p. 48.

In the next section, leading to the final room, in two larger drawings that hung opposite each other, and two smaller accompanying drawings, I tentatively began to experiment with the concept of what it is to imagine the body of my mother, and the role and movement of memory after each sitting. In the first drawing the line started to relax a little, as did Mum's poise and pose. In the large drawing opposite was the empty chair that Mum chose to sit in. This gave me a way of thinking and exploring visually the absent yet imaginary presence of Mum. For me, the drawings now started to make sense as readable diptychs, more than just pairs that staged the formal stylistic, technical, production and experimental process of using colour and line. They indicated a possible visual way forward for the next stage of my work.

The two large diptychs in the final room continued to explore the imaginary presence of Mum through the significance of the empty chair. Overall, I recognised that I would have to take more of an imaginative, intimate viewpoint of Mum's body, if I were to push my practice visually into the next stage, whereby I would have to creatively take risks in my drawing practice and secure the direction of my research. Although in its early stages, visually and conceptually, I had to direct the work away from its associations with life-drawing and point the viewer to the role and movement of memory after each sitting. The exhibition started and concluded as work-in-progress. After much constructive and critical deliberation, I was itching to return to drawing and sustain the focus and retain the continuity.

The next, intermediate showing of my work was scheduled for the beginning of September 2005 in the Old Mining Building, University of Leeds, and was entitled *Drawings of my Mother by Paula Farrance, September 2005* (see Appendix 5 [DVD]; Appendix 6 [DVD]). Retracing my steps from the previous exhibition, the show started with two diptychs of Mum seated in the chair, monumental in size and scale. In these much larger drawings there was a freedom in the restless coloured line: the weight and detail began to speculate. The omission and accentuation of certain re-remembered parts of Mum's body brought a freedom for playfulness in the line: imaginative moments of construction, and deviation to the level of conceptual abstraction. This marks the transition from a literal, drawn reference to my mother's actual body made in a life model scenario.

Passionately involved in the work, the size and scale allowed me imaginatively to move in closer to Mum's nakedness. In the process, this moved the viewing experience away from the previous matriarchal, formal viewpoint of Mum into new ground for visualising the intimate relation between mother and daughter. In the play of the line that evoked both the body of return and the drawing process with and after encounter, the next diptych was a close up, intimate viewpoint of parts of Mum's body.

The restless line began to work across and through the torso of Mum's body, hand and arm. In detailing where Mum's hand could or would have been, or possibly the top of the drawing-board, or the arm/leg of the chair, there is nothing necessarily fixed or contained. The restless coloured line, in part, is left incomplete, with uncertain endings that started to open up the body. For me, this monumental, *close up* drawing of parts of Mum's body tentatively started to work in terms of pushing my drawing towards a visual language that, significantly, was felt by my supervisors to 'evoke a more intimate, familial relationship beyond the life model scenario'.[125] Engaging in a set of interactions between the body of the artist and the body of work, I was no longer a detached observer.

The remaining drawings staged and depicted intimate moments of trust between mother and daughter, such as when Mum fell asleep on the sofa at home: from dozing off seated, to then being caught between the crevice of two sofa seat cushions, in a curled up foetus-like position. Finally I hung a *close-up* diptych and drawing of Mum's upper body with her hand drawn to, and, at times tucked under her face, her head appearing to rest on a pillow. Working beyond this obvious anecdotal account, depicted in the staging of the work, the last diptych and final drawing re-worked over time from one into the other, into monumental size and scale, started to move between abstraction and figuration. While not wishing to lose sight of the readability of the form, but wanting to open up the body further (where certain parts of the body are recognisable but not definite), a potential way forward for me was to continue to work at this monumental size and scale, to test out this new-found playful freedom: to use abstraction to evoke a tracing of a visual memory of the body of Mum (the restless line evoking a residue of a presence past, rather than literally depicting it). The next intermediate exhibition was scheduled for early December 2005.

In the works produced for this exhibition, instead of retracing my steps, as before – using drawing as intimacy as well as a visual dialogue with mother, beyond the narrative testament of a lived dialogue and material closeness, returning and possibly retrieving an intimate familial awareness through the imaginary body of Mum – I wanted to see what had worked and what had not: to constructively and critically reflect back in order to move the work on and into the next stage. Instead, I lost direction and embarked on a whole new set of drawings of my mother that did not progress, falling back into the safe restrictions and confines of life-drawing. In the drawings of Mum sleeping, the line was tense, literal and direct. Rather than being imaginative and speculative in monumental size, scale and detail, these drawings

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[125] Nicky Bird, personal communication with Professor Griselda Pollock, supervisory report, 9th September 2005.

'failed' in terms of taking risks and 'failed' in terms of making the right connections. My realisation from the December 2005 exhibition brings me back to the photographic works of Melanie Manchot, dated 1996, entitled *Mrs Manchot* (2.2), discussed in Chapter Two, specifically the sense that Manchot's representation of her mother's aged, naked body is too literal, visualising and fixing it, and, leaving no room for imagination or memory. Any possibility for disclosure of the daughter's libidinal desires towards the mother is lost, and the only space for the body of the artist/daughter is as viewer. As a result, it felt as though both the body of Mum and I were trapped in the drawing, with no covenant or libidinal space for the creative freedom of an imaginary closeness between mother and daughter that resisted being contained to a single mark or outline.

Drawing again on the example of Jo Spence, whose final work was the product of an interim process of reviewing and revising the initial images, I needed to pause and diligently go back through my work so far. I needed to retrieve what I had gained across the previous intermediate exhibitions. Each stage of the work, with all its technical decisions, procedures and problematics needed to be critically returned to and taken to a new level. Part of this critical reflection would be to write about its shortfalls. To repeat a quotation from Mieke Bal, I would need to treat my work as a *theoretical object*:

> looking *at* art in the sense of looking *to* art for an understanding of what art does [...] this term refers to works of art that deploy their own artistic and, in this case, visual, medium to offer and articulate thought about art.[126]

This concept allowed me to drive the theory forwards and allow for the writing to be an integral part of the process of working things out (through the body of Mum – not just a drawn body or sitting body but a thinking female body?). What I discovered in this period was the specific nature of the relationship between the psychological journey of return and restoration in my relationship to and with my mother, and the artistic exploration and experimentation in which psychological transformation found an artistic mode of inscription via experimentation in drawing, that would lead to discussions about scale, space, line and gesture. The idea of *inscriptions in, from and of the feminine* is not about intentionality and conscious purposes in representation; it invokes the event, the transformation of materials and feelings, that artworking creates via materials and gestures. *Inscriptions in, from and of the feminine* catch up unconscious dimensions of feminine subjectivity, sexuality and body-memory in this key intergenerational matrix. Writing through the narrative of a working process and the

[126] Bal, *Louise Bourgeois' Spider*, op. cit., p 5.

relationship with my mother allowed the event to enter consciousness and hence critical recognition as practice. Although the encounter between drawing and transformed relationships developed beyond (but was never in conflict with) Jo Spence's immensely important work on autobiography and emotionally-charged histories of family relationships, I suggest that my writing through the double process maintained a continuity with Spence's work: making us pay attention to the 'work in process' by means of working in series.

Opened up in the next chapter is the process of starting to think the female body through the materials of the artwork. Drawing out a passage for a psychic encounter, the practice proceeded to restage the encounters between the *drawing body*, with its movements and visualisations, and the *drawn body*, in order to enable drawing as space, event and image to carry the 'work' of transformation in a woman-to-woman adult relation. By returning and renewing this relation between this mother/model/sitter and this daughter/artist/practitioner came the notion of a retrieval of a re-encounter with the mother, brought into possibility through the making of the artworks.

Chapter Five: Figuring Space: Final works produced at Lifton Place Studio

This chapter focuses on the way in which I began to rethink the female body through the drawing gesture and the materials of the artwork as a space-making and body-making productive site, in both the act of drawing and drawing as a process of enactment. Encounter with a drawing involves the body of the artist via the making of the line that produces space. I am arguing that the virtual space created in a drawing can become a psychic space experienced via drawn space.

Between the summer of 2006 and early 2007, in a series of new drawings produced at my Lifton Place Studio, I increased the paper size in order to explore a means to *work through* the body of Mum in terms of the remembered and the imaginary, in opposition to my previous method of directly drawing taken from my mother as the model. I also aimed to retrieve and then translate a more intimate, familial awareness. Worked not from direct study, but from the accumulated memories embedded in my earlier drawings, I moved in closer to concentrate on selected parts of the female body, in order to generate a different kind of intimacy that was not based on the scenario of the artist–model situation. The conditions of the original encounter, reflecting the specific engagement with Jo Spence's notions of reworking actual family histories, now began to give way to a secondary encounter, staged in the practice of drawing, that would begin to shift from a registration of an event, to the production of a space of encounter with maternal femininity that implied a critical role and space for the viewer, initially myself as first viewer as well as maker, and then others. This practice would raise new questions relating to scale and affect, association and memory, which would then necessitate further reconsiderations of the manner in which I could make the shift from a direct transgenerational dialogue with Spence and with Mum, into what I am naming a genealogical relation. This implies a more abstract sense of the manner in which drawing, the evocation of a mature woman's body, and the feminine otherness could be encountered via a new network of marks and spaces generated in the form of large-scale drawings.

At this stage of the research, I wanted to move beyond the function of skin as an imagined surface, and to work *through* the body as a space without allowing line to contain it within a single outline. Resisting the normal function of line as contour and hence limit of the body as a closed entity, I aimed to explore uses of line to open up an imaginary, embodied spatiality that would in turn incite a bodily awareness in a viewer. The pink and blue lines can be perceived as suggesting, but not describing, flesh, bones and veins, whereas the graphite line weaves in and out, speculating on the

contours and providing surface information as well as creating tension at the paper's surface between its own play and the evocative colour and forms generated by the other two lines. As I argued in Chapter Four, the drawings stage a presence past: where certain parts of the body are recognisable but not described, the line started to liberate the work from any connotations of life drawing. Indulging in this new-found freedom of abstraction moved the image on from any literal reading of my own mother, but without completely erasing the memory and the actual being of Mum. A strong residue of my connection to Mum continued to remain in an intimate yet distanced relationship in the making of the artwork. Just as the drawing becomes liberated from any residual description or analysis of the other body – 'Mum' – so too the reference to the particularity of my mother in my history opens on to a more meta-feminine problematic, which, drawing on feminist critical formulations, I name the *inscription* of feminine subjectivity beyond autobiography. Going beyond even these existing feminist insights into how feminine difference makes its mark in cultural forms, I would argue that my research was seeking to create *an-other feminine body*. Just as Jo Spence explored the generational dynamic through performative masquerade of her mother's body, creating a socio-cultural commentary on class and gender, so my explorations of feminine subjectivity and class take place via the transformation of the life drawing, the nude, and reclaim the female body of art for an intergenerational exploration of memory and intimacy between mother and daughter. This is viewed, significantly, as in Spence's work, from a position of the daughter's maturity and historical self-awareness in relation to a mother as an adult feminine other.

Thinking the female body through the materials of the artwork, in the final five drawings produced at Lifton Place Studio, I increased the paper size and focused on the point of contact of the torso and hand. I maximised the drawing space in my university studio to accommodate what Alison Rowley, writing of Jenny Saville, has clarified as the difference between scale rather than size.[127] Refuting the misrecognition of Jenny Saville's painted women as fat and gigantic, Rowley pointed out how Saville's effect of monumentality was based on scale of the image within pictorial space rather than the body size of the model.

Moving in closer to concentrate certain areas of the body of Mum onto one sheet of paper, instead of the using two sheets of Fabriano paper side by side I started to use photographic Tetenal super-white backdrop paper. Rolled from side to side rather than from ceiling to floor, this paper was the only paper readily available to me in terms of size. The paper took up the whole expanse of my drawing wall, approximately 9ft in height by 10ft wide. The paper available for a drawing thus doubled in size.

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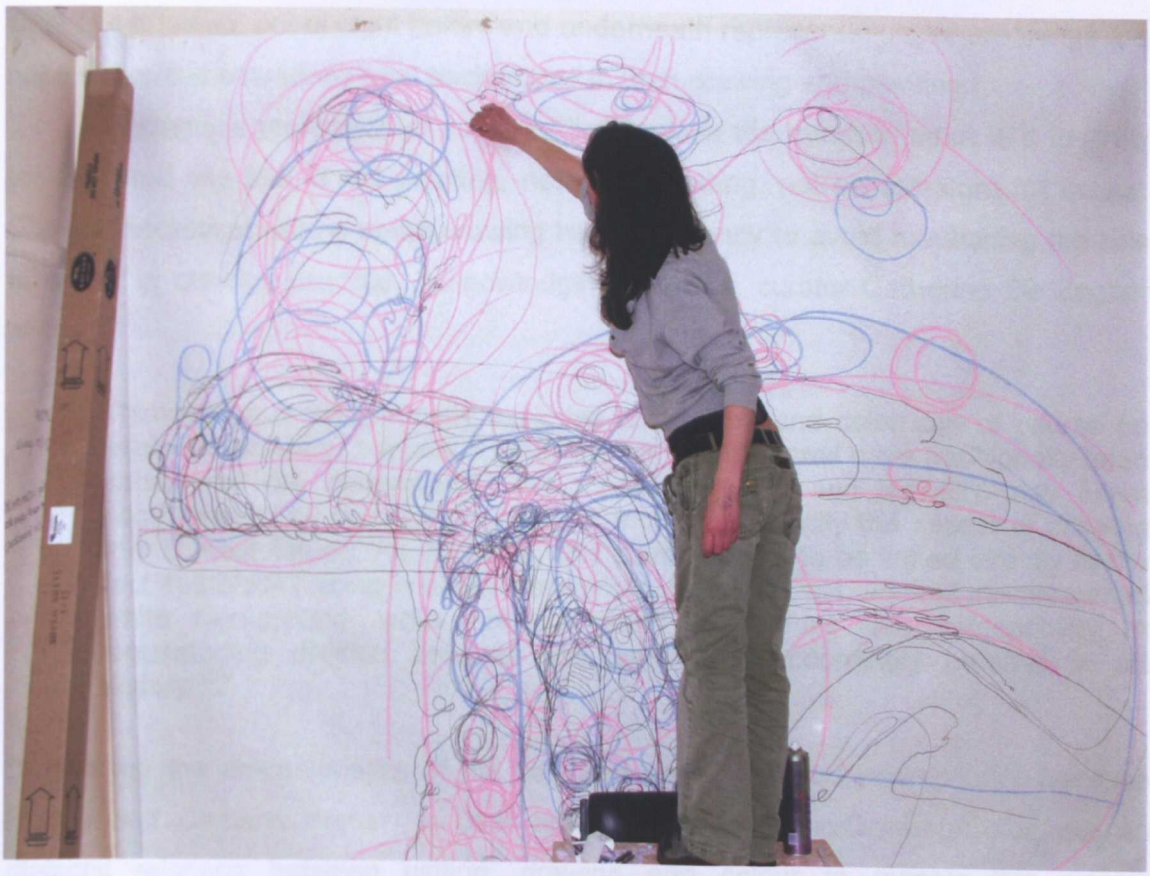
[127] Rowley, 'On Viewing Three Paintings by Jenny Saville', op. cit. pp. 94-6.

5.1 Drawing in Progress at Lifton Place Studio, 2007.

Alongside the increase in scale came a change in the conceptual rationale for the drawn line (and revision of pastel quality). I view these first larger scale drawings as preliminary works in progress that finally outgrew the paper and my studio space (5.1). Working on this scale changed the physical process of construction and viewing perspective, and my relation to the artwork (not just the image) (5.2). Moving in closer to the body of Mum, I did not want to cover over or fill the paper, reducing the body to a surface, like a screen sealing off the viewer. On the contrary, with the increase in scale I wanted creatively and imaginatively to *work through* the body and open it up further, for a certain kind of connection, which would hold a sense of the body in a space between sight and touch. My practice sought to create in drawing a space *of* the body rather than a space *for* the body in figuration with a specific relation to (or dialectic between) gesture and mark, line and paper, the body and space. On both practical and conceptual levels, questions that emerged at this new stage of critical experimental methods and production were: what is the function of each different line and colour? What is the effect of the scale of the paper and hence the body drawn on paper in relation to my own body? Does the new scale at which I had chosen to work create the effect of a maternal body experienced from the perspective or memory of a child or even a small baby? Do I want this effect? How to resist it? How to construct an adult female position?



5.2 Drawing in Progress at Lifton Place Studio, 2007.

In traditional canons of art history painting is always considered to be about colour and drawing has been generally regarded as a supplementary tool in the painting's production. The image is drawn firstly on paper or directly onto canvas, but concealed drawing lacks materiality in this hierarchal positioning. As Deanna Petherbridge posits in her introduction to *The Primacy of Drawing*, 'Drawing lacks materiality in comparison with painting. This together with its ubiquity and functionality is probably why, outside of "master drawings", the medium is generally undervalued. Though not by artists.'[128] As discussed in the previous chapter, drawing's recently revived status as a medium in its own right counteracts its historically inferior, supplementary position to painting. While recognising this progressive independence and complex divisiveness, rather than being an either/or, going in opposite directions, according to Walter Benjamin, 'The only instance in which color and line coincide is in the watercolor, in which the pencil outlines the visible and the paint is put on transparently. In that case the background is retained, even though it is colored.'[129] In this sense the layers of transparent coloured wash applied over pencilled outlines blurs

[128] Petherbridge *The Primacy of Drawing*, op. cit., p. 7.
[129] Walter Benjamin, 'Painting, or Signs and Marks', trans. R. Livingstone, in *Selected Writings*, vol. 1, ed. M. Bullock *et al.* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), p.85.

what it is retained, out of sight before and underneath representation, where things are not clear on the shared material background in both drawing and painting.

Benjamin's prohibition of coloured lines raises the question what is it to draw the coloured line that is not painting, not underdrawing, not an armature for colour. Current theoretical writing about drawing has a tendency to avoid mentioning the role of colour in drawing practice. Acknowledging this trait, curator Catherine De Zegher writes,

> Thinking on drawing mostly excludes color. Line and color can of course be related in drawing, but pencil, graphite, ink and charcoal have traditionally been considered the materials for the medium. Clarity and legibility may seem compromised by color, and lucidity of thought is exactly the aspect of drawing that is most valued. As in writing, this clarity seems to be linked directly to the fact that black tracing is easily discernible, in its contrast, against the presumed white background, while color is seen to confuse this perceptibility. A longstanding division between line and color accordingly persists in art history.[130]

Unravelling the characteristics of the coloured line's confused *perceptibility* Georges Roque and Caroline Weber, in their article entitled *Writing/Drawing/Color,* set up dialectic relations between writing, drawing and colour to resolve this classic opposition.[131] Firstly, by establishing the common ground of the white background that is shared between a drawing done in black and the black ink used in writing, drawing and writing are closely tied to language. The contrast of the black mark of the image or text upon the white ground is favoured and most valued for legibility and clarity in terms of readability and representational properties, which serves to underscore the instrumental role of the line's descriptive ability to communicate to others its content and meaning. Roque and Weber write: 'Thus, a certain truth of the pen stroke would stand to reinforce the analogy between writing and drawing [...] in which 'both of them [are] charged with expression of thought.'[132] This definition however predominates and excludes the use of colour in drawing as with most writing. By introducing colour into this dialectic discussion we read that colour is generally considered feminine, 'relegated to the realm of emotion, sentiment – a position which makes it all the more incapable of expressing an idea.'[133] Colour has no form, no language or place other than as a superfluous ornament, an enhancement to reinforce drawing's overall design, 'colour is to drawing as writing is to speech', 'conceived of as the instrument of an

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[130] Catherine de Zegher, *On Line: Drawing Through The Twentieth Century*, New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2011), p 23.
[131] Georges Roque and Caroline Weber, 'Writing/Drawing/Color,' *Yale French Studies*, No. 84: Boundaries: Writing and Drawing (1994), pp.43-62.
[132] Ibid., pp. 48, 52.
[133] Ibid., p. 55.

instrument.'[134] In revealing the line's ideation through grammatical analysis, the inscriptive gesture of the hand becomes important: there is an inscriptive *trace*, a passage for a plan of expression. Drawing is not an idea, rather a tracing of a *trace*; a plan of expression in the mind for the conscious formation and critical development of subjectivity and possible change. As discussed in the introduction, I argue that the hand's gestural movement and moment organises, and corresponds to, mental and physical processes of encounter, appropriating a spatial arena, like a psychic landscape. Enacted in the back and forth motion, drawing may also stage and act out a transitional space of exchange across a bridging space, what Bracha L. Ettinger terms a *borderspace* for the passage to and from the feminine.[135] This stream of action and thought that conflates space, thought and the body, and Roque and Weber conclude that it releases lines 'from the once-dominant instrumental-representational function, in order to stand on their own and assert their independent value,' freed from the task of representation and material support.[136]

In the redefinition of the feminine coloured line, line mutually shares with drawing both movement and emotion in which the line has become a moving trace in time and space that exceeds the scope, limitations and boundaries of the visual plane of the paper. In this understanding of the working process, both the act of drawing and the drawing process of enactment are a generative of an in-between psychic space. The psychic space does not exist except in the conceptual-affective space that drawing can make possible. Investigated through the performative conceptual gesture, the body coincides with another kind of drawing, which links interiority with exteriority emerging out of memory and emotional experience. Ettinger's theory of the Matrix specifically refutes the traditional concepts of woman's body as an interior or container. Instead she stresses that we all carry beyond our long prenatal sojourn a tracing of a shared borderspace in which the exterior limit of one living form was at once the most intimate interiority of another. Thus the borderspace is an archaic sensory and proto-psychic inscription that aesthetic practices may re-activate precisely by creating forms and spaces and their interactions that remember such paradoxes of co-existing interiority and exteriority. Fundamentally the borderspace marks the encounter with a radical alterity, an irreducibly other other who is at once intimate and sharing. Translating matrixial insights into my drawing practice means that the alterity of the other body emerging on the paper concerns an encounter with a feminine other that is not an image of, or representation of an other, neither construct or composition. Thus *an-other female body* may be disclosed by, and become visually accessible through graphic and

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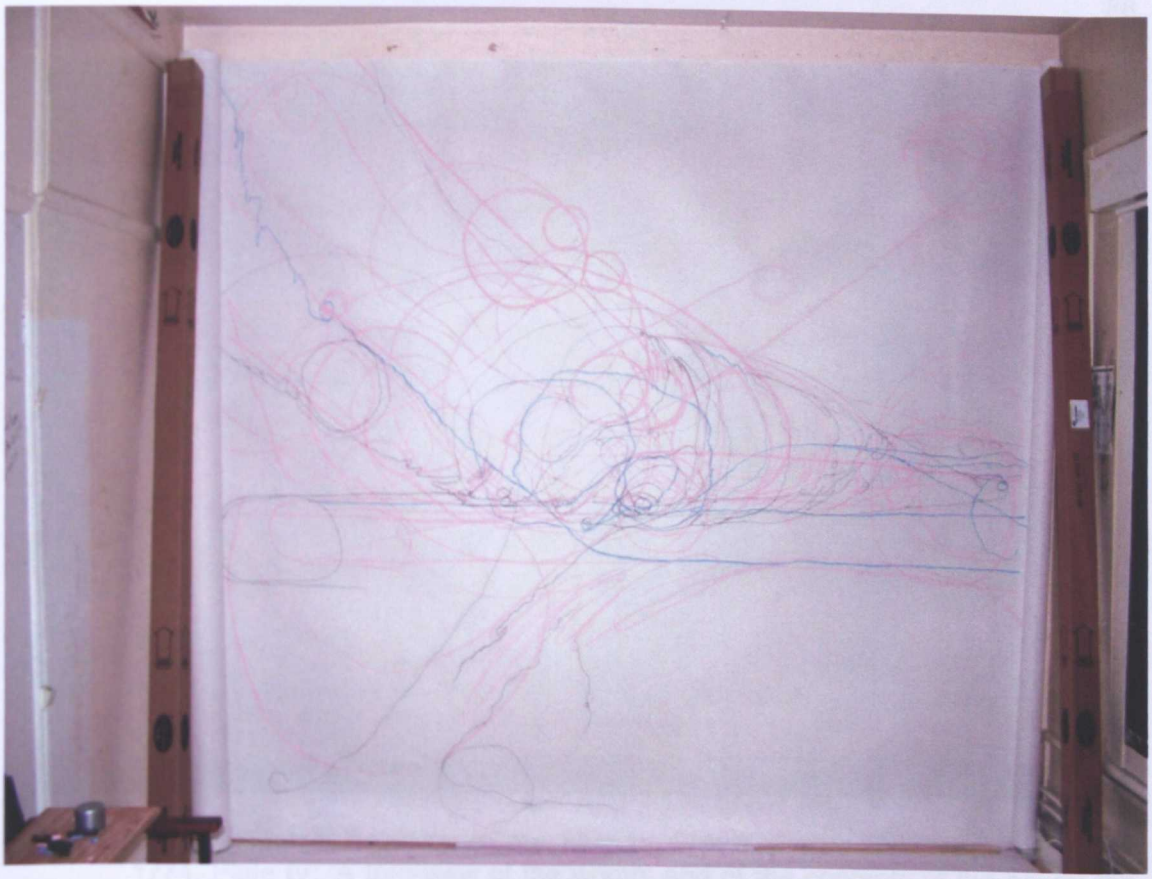
[134] Ibid., pp. 55, 57.
[135] Ettinger, 'Metramorphic Borderlinks and Matrixial Borderspace', op. cit.
[136] Roque and Weber, 'Writing/Drawing/Color,' op. cit., p. 60.

spatial evocation of connectivity and what. Ettinger *names distance-in-proximity*. This is her formulation for the specific nature of matrixial intimacy between the partners in this archaic space of human becoming, in which the paradoxical condition of unknownness and alterity co-exists with the most profound and corporeal intimacy. She will name this condition of proto-subjectivity: severality.

At this preliminary experimental stage of development, identified in the *artworking,* drawing stages and acts out a transitional space of exchange between gesture and the materials of the artwork 'in process' in which the idea itself comes into being, into material visibility inscribed upon the material surface of the paper as the tracing of the *trace*. I understand the paper as a gathering receptacle of creative thought for the retrieval of a reciprocal connection that produces and renews meaning, through the specifically open qualities of the coloured line on paper.

Performed in the process of making the artwork, the pink line is my initial draft (the first trace of a line of thought). It takes possession of the space on paper. On its own, it can be read as a child's scribble or scrawl, a place where something looks like it might or could be. Simple yet complex, with no formal composition, arrangement or order, it starts something from which the drawing can proceed, leading to the discovery. At times I make mistakes. However, nothing gets hidden or erased as these mistakes invariably lead me to produce other ideas found in the *working process* that then get incorporated into the *artworking*. The blue line is more deviant: it lends a spatial tension with the childlike connotation of disruption. It works with the pink in a more direct imaginative manner to form and structure. The graphite line is more sophisticated and weaves and threads itself through the body to speculate on surface detail. Open-ended, each line carried with it its own personality or persona. Differences between colours, lines and the spatial play generated in and from these lines reciprocally lead to legibility and composition of thoughts and ideas, which gather together on the paper. In doing so there was a dialogue or conversation in operation.

Testing this out in these preliminary drawings through the weight, mark and nature of the line, I tried different pastels for thickness and selective colour match (soft pink and light blue pastel). I opted for a better quality pastel, Sennelier, for its depth of colour, which sustained the presence and character of line, on such a large expanse of paper. The pink pastel is especially soft, the blue a little firmer. Each glides across the paper, rather than scoring or dragging the surface. The paper absorbs the pastel readily, without bleeding. The pastel sinks itself into the paper while holding the line to the surface, at times, leaving a wonderful impacted crumbled residue where I have impressed my thumb to paper. Alongside the change in pastel I also changed from a firm graphite stick to a much softer one (Faber Castel 9B). The softer 9B graphite



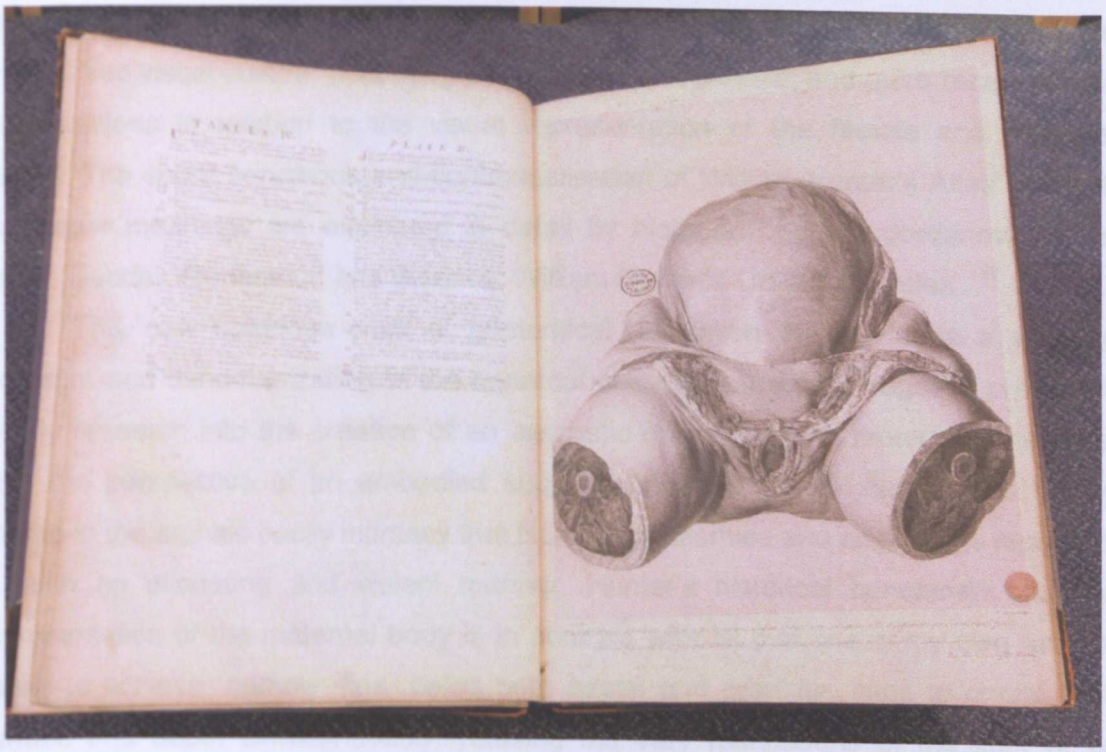
5.3 Drawing in Progress at Lifton Place Studio, 2007.

chunk, with the tip rounded off, has a much thicker line and a darker, more sustainable presence (5.3).

Excised femininity: the mutilated inside of the gravid female body

Within the history of art, the maternal feminine as a source of meaning has often been reduced to the tropes of misogynist or phallocentric thought and representation. In order to draw out and historically contextualize the difference my drawings sought to create in terms of space for and of a female body, it is necessary to introduce an extreme counter-case in order to bring into this feminist debate the problematic of representation of the reproductive body and women's relation to it.

In 1774 William Hunter, proprietor of a private anatomy school, financially supported by his obstetrical male midwifery practice, undertook a series of dissections, assisted by his young brother and surgeon John Hunter. Artist Jan Van Rymsdyk drew and Robert Strange oversaw the production of engravings based on the drawings. The linear anatomical drawings/engravings of a dissected gravid female body were published in large life size format entitled *The Anatomy of the Human Gravid Uterus Exhibited in Figures* (5.4, 5.5).



5.4 William Hunter, *Anatomy of the Human Gravid Uterus Exhibited in Figures*, 1774, Plate IV: 'A fore-view of the womb, and of the contents of the pelvis; the ossia pubis, with the muscles and ligaments which cover them being removed.'

5.5 William Hunter, *Anatomy of the Human Gravid Uterus Exhibited in Figures*, 1774, Plate VI: 'This represents the child in the womb in its natural situation'.

Clearly within a tradition of anatomical studies from cadavers, Hunter's now famous representations of dead pregnant women in such high quality engravings have entered into visual culture, becoming the object of art historical and more recent artistic re-evaluations in relation to the visual representation of the female and maternal bodies. The social conditions and contextualisation of William Hunter's Atlas' content, its deeper meanings are examined in detail by historian Ludmilla Jordanova in her essay 'Gender, Generation and Science: William Hunter's Obstetrical Atlas'.[137]

This now notorious work of anatomical illustration that performs a violating exposure and dehumanization of the maternal body is useful as a negative precedent for my research into the creation of an aesthetic encounter with maternal otherness, from the perspective of an embodied subject sharing a sexual identity and having shared in the archaic bodily intimacy that Hunter's anatomies and engravings represent in such an alienating and violent manner. Hunter's historical benchmark work in representation of the maternal body is in contrast with all that line in my own artwork seeks to achieve, namely: line, being both pastel and graphite, aims to create both surface and depth simultaneously, refusing the very foundations of the idea of an external spectator looking into an opened up cavity or interior. I allow line to move around and across, building up play of spaces and lines whose effect is the sense of a body that has both surface and depth dimensions. Traditional life drawing uses line to establish contour and suggests external volumes. It is often based on anatomical studies, écorché figures and drawings of dissections such as Hunter's. In creatively *working through* the imagined body of Mum in my drawing practice this was not the impression I was trying to convey; I was not seeking material composition or actual physical realism associated with the discipline of anatomical drawing, revealing the bodies hidden interior contents of intestines, muscle, organs and bones.

What is visible within William Hunter's extensive volume is his relentless pursuit, through dissection of the gravid mother's body, of what would not normally be seen in live pregnancy or childbirth. This leads to an empty abdomen, a cavity without placenta, until finally the gravid body is reduced to a minimal outline, which then disappears leaving the body of the mother unidentifiable as an actual body. Hunter's *Atlas* ends with the remains of an aborted pregnant uterus and a foetus at three months development. The contrast with these representations of the pregnant maternal body, dead body serves as the most radical counterpoint to my research into drawing the maternal body, neither as a one-time container of a child nor as an excavated interior that disappears the subject of the mother completely, but as a locus of memory

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[137] Ludmilla Jordanova, 'Gender, Generation and Science: William Hunter's Obstetrical Atlas', in *Natured Displayed Gender Science and Medicine 1760-1820* (London: Longman, 1999).

and remembered relations, tensions, affections, hurts and most importantly, a potential site for the work of transformation of intergenerational relations between classed subjects as mother and daughter.

In research into representations of the gravid maternal body, I now want to turn to William Smellie's *Atlas*, which was essentially produced as a visual and written teaching aid on the birthing process that followed on from his earlier textbook entitled *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Midwifery* (1751). Although similar in size to William Hunter's *Atlas*, it reads more like a mechanical manual, working from the inside out. It starts with two comparable illustrations of the architectural bone structure of the female skeleton: a normal pelvis, followed by a pelvis twisted and distorted by rickets. From this deep scientific interior skeletal viewpoint, which was of no real interest to Hunter, Smellie's *Atlas* progresses to include the outward composition of the pregnant female body in preparation for birth, which is then followed by a number of obstructed and problematic births. It crudely illustrates new innovative techniques using various types of cranial scissor-like devices with locking systems and handles: coarse curved blades grip the outline of the unborn baby's head in some of his illustrations, while others show the unborn child in complicated twisted breech positions, with legs and arms protruding out of the mother's body (5.6).

5.6 William Smellie, *A Sett of Anatomical Tables, with Explanations, and an Abridgement, of the Practice of Midwifery* (London, 1754), Tab. XXIV.

These volumes were intended to help student practitioners. In his preface Smellie states, 'the greatest part of the figures were taken from Subjects prepared on purpose, to shew every thing that might conduce to the improvements of the young Practitioner, avoiding however the extreme Minutiae.'[138] This results in a graphic hardness and a clinical clean-cut dissection of the female body. Smellie's *Atlas* is primarily based on his midwifery practice, but by contrast Hunter only obliquely mentions birth in his 1774 publication and unlike Smellie, Hunter did not favour or show the intervention and use of forceps in delivery. This serves to situate Hunter's independent existence as source of the most well known drawings of the gravid female body dissected with unborn dead child within.

Another interesting comparison brings Hunter's works alongside the medical counterpart of a series of life sized, coloured and curious Wax Venus models from around 1770, held in the Specola Collection, University of Florence, exhibited by the Wellcome Library in London in 2009. According to Jordanova, 'Wax enjoyed a considerable vogue in this period for modelling and sculpting purposes as well as for anatomical ones'.[139] These sculpted replications of bodies were used as teaching aids when real bodies became in short supply.[140] The wax figures were displayed on a plush velvet mattress often covered with a cotton sheet edged with lace work, all together housed in a public glass, coffin-like case. There is an element of enticement and enchantment in the way in which the whole wax figure is theatrically laid out like a side show, fairground attraction or collectable item. Not quite real and strangely fetching, the crafted, idealised and seemingly floating Ophelia or Venus,[141] is dainty, slender and youthful in appearance, carefully smoothed and buffed to a flawless ivory effect, with long flowing brown hair and a dream-like expression. Her pale ivory surface is cut through the torso, making it detachable to expose removable organs beneath, including a comparatively small, underdeveloped child in the uterus. The hollowed open body is a cabinet of curiosity (5.7).

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[138] William Smellie, 'Preface', in *A sett of anatomical tables, with explanations, and an abridgement, of the practice of midwifery : with a view to illustrate a treatise on that subject, and collection of cases* (London, 1754)

[139] Jordanova, 'Gender, Generation and Science', op. cit., p. 190.

[140] In 1745 a byelaw forbade dissection without prior permission and as a dead body, in terms of the law, did not constitute as property and therefore could not be brought, sold or stolen.

[141] The wax Venus particularly recalls John Everett Millais' *Ophelia* (1851-52, Tate Britain, London), a Pre Raphaelite oil painting of Elizabeth Siddal.

5.7 Eighteenth-Century Anatomical Venus, La Specola, Florence.[142]

I want to use these historical examples to point up the notion of seeing inside. My drawing practice seeks to use line, colour and gesture to 'see' the female body that has mothered, but not from this incisive intrusive or violating seeing into an exposed opened body, where cutting and drawing becomes the basis for an abusive knowledge, premised on death and intrusion. Here I am using this digression into the history of representations of the maternal body as opened cavity, to underline the 'difference' I am seeking to articulate in my drawings of Mum.

Far from closure, without losing sight of the legibility of an evoked body, the line is economical and open in its refusal to contain the body, working with perspective so as not to make the circles flat. Constructed on this scale, my whole body is involved in the process of making and I become increasingly aware of my closeness to the space, surface, image and materials. Like an embodied double exposure, I could fit my entire body into the creative space of the drawn body of Mum I was producing (5.2). This created an unexpected question in one viewer: Did this create the effect of attempting to re-inhabit the primordial maternal space? In the studio, on viewing one of these preliminary larger drawings of the body, it was put to me: was I the child once within it, and did I want this effect?[143]

In constructively and critically analysing the material process of construction, by increasing the size of the paper and hence the drawn body, I realised (on this scale) that putting the viewing body too close to the drawn body will make the viewers feel like a child. It was not my intention to re-create an 'unremembered' experience of being in the maternal as a space of containment. What I was seeking was how to generate, in the drawing body and the drawn body, a sense of what Ettinger terms co/in-

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[142] Images from John Bender, 'Opening up a few corpses 1795-1995', <http://www.stanford.edu /dept/HPS/WritingScience/etexts/Bender/Corpses.html> (accessed 27 October 2011).

[143] Personal communication from a supervisory session with Judith Tucker and Griselda Pollock, February 2007.

habit(u)ating – that is, a sense of co-existence across a shared *borderspace* whose traces are inscribed differently in each partner. Ettinger writes:

> Co/in-habit(u)ating is inseparable from the subjects' affecting one another and being thus transformed while creating a joint borderspace for their transgressed subjectivity-as-encounter, at the price of their being dispersed (into partial subjects) – but not split, and assembled (into amalgamated temporary identity via joint hybrid objects) – but not fused.[144]

For Ettinger, the Matrix is not about a mother or maternal body that contains the child: in their co-existence, both co-emerge and co-affect in a shared encounter. So in response to this question: did I aim to create in the viewer a memory of being in the maternal body, the answer was no. The strategy for defining the possibility would need a different space for the making: my relationship to the paper, the drawing and image that would involve the viewers in a space of co-emergence not enclosure. Openness at the surface might forestall any tendency to monumentalisation of a boundaried Other/Mother.

I want to stress once again, both in terms of the legacy of Jo Spence in this project, and in terms of my specific intervention in feminist art practice, that what is being worked out on paper, between the body of the artist and the drawn body on paper, is an *adult*, Post-Oedipal relationship between two women of two generations, with shared traumas and histories that could be worked through personally by this means, and which could become the ground for a specific contribution to contemporary feminist art through drawing.. The invocation of the specific severality of the archaic prenatal-prematernal encounter, which led to a discussion of Hunter's representations of that anatomically, does not collapse back into the mother/infant. The Matrix, founded archaically, is a human potentiality that may be activated in post-natal life in specific moments of traumatic, ethical or aesthetical encounters to generate specific kinds of aesthetic effects and modes of non-sadistic visuality. In this stage of my research, it was clear that the moves I had made to disable the kind of interrogative and representational looking typical of anatomy classes and life-drawing, had succeeded in shifting the ground to the domain of the inter/transgenerational and the feminine. But issues still remained: such as the meaning of the increased scale in relation to the body perception and psychic memories it might evoke: namely that of the mother/child rather than the mother/daughter in their adult re-encounter.

In a preliminary state, when I increased the scale of the body, the margins of the paper started to become filled, with no space around the image (5.4), and I started

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[144] Bracha L. Ettinger, 'Traumatic Wit(h)ness-Thing and Matrixial Co/in-habit(u)ating', *Parallax* vol. 5, no. 1 (1999), p. 93.

to lose sight of the conceptual thinking space outside of the female body. I needed practically and conceptually to extend the space inside and outside the image and to be free to move in and around the body without becoming caught and restricted to the limits and boundaries of the paper. In addition, to see what the line was doing and to keep a clear direction of where it was going, I needed to sequence the drawings alongside one another. This required a new space for the drawings as well as a new space for the act of drawing, that would translate my own body's work into an effect the viewer could then encounter through the installation of the drawings. From the studio as a space of production, I recognized a necessary move into a built space that would function as integral to the generation of the effects I was seeking, in and through a series of drawings produced as an installation that could sequence the viewer's journey. I needed to explore a new kind of space for this practice and exhibition.

Chapter Six: Studio 51 AFF, Sunny Bank Mills, Farsley: Drawing Space as Psychic Space

As a result of the challenges posed in my work and the ending of my AHRC sustained studio space within the University, in May 2007 I found and moved into my own productive space. I found light industrial premises: unit 51 A First Floor, Sunny Bank Mills, which had the potential for being a new studio. It initially required approximately three months basic renovation and refurbishment, remaking it into a habitable working studio space. I was able to begin drawing following construction and installation of a 24ft drawing wall in July 2007, and the rest of the build continued to come together around this, which made possible the sequencing of five much larger scale artworks exhibited on the drawing wall and on four floating exhibition panels. This formed the material basis of my next exhibition, held in November 2007, and marked a major move towards building and sequencing a further body of work for final exhibition held in October 2008.

The Finding of a Studio Space

When viewing possible and affordable premises that could facilitate the importance of space, scale and series in my artwork in a much larger studio I found Sunny Bank Mills, Farsley, Leeds. Only supplied with electricity and in dire need of renovation, I saw straight away the potential for increasing the scale of the artwork beyond 10 ft, with the provision of a much larger viewing and working area. 51 AFF is a remarkable space for a studio; with 1400 sq ft to work with I was able to explore the versatility and potential of constructing much larger-scale drawings. Inside what would become the studio, I imagined the process of making the new larger works and how these drawings could take shape in relation to the space in which they would be made. I imagined the idea of how, in compositionally returning to and *working through* the intimate pose and gesture of the hand and torso, between and across the drawing as I move around the drawn bodies, a potential conversation could take place, provoking change and transformation across the drawings. It was a profound feeling to find a space in which to make, see and sequence drawings: a space to travel in and around the artwork, and also to have the potential opportunity to exhibit independently (paper and finances permitting), resulting in site-specific works.

This move resulted in a major drawing event-encounter occurring in and across the artwork. The new space generated a productive critical tension in a working process that sought and invited connection, not only in terms of the condition of its making, but also across the multiple axes and connections that had been emerging in

the work: between the body and space, mark, gesture and paper, artist and spectators. Emphasising attention to embodiment in drawing practice as performed through the artist's gesture, practising artist Sara Schneckloth argues,

> The drawing event is an occasion; an occasion to remember, to re(con)figure, to imagine, to react, to abreact, to become possessed, to render. It is also an occasion to fail, to aspire and fall short. This is a studio process of ritualized entry into memory, locating reservoirs of past experience and finding what the pools hold for the body in moment of recall [...] the gestured marks flow and the drawing emerges as an indexical moment of remembering, an image that evokes a time/passed as felt in the present.[145]

The embodied and inscriptive gesture articulated and performed through the moving body of the artist places the body and its physical and perceptual processes at the centre of aesthetic and critical enquiry, across what Bracha L. Ettinger terms a shared *trans-subjective borderspace.* I am proposing that artistic practice can be the site of an *event* or occurrence for transformation and connection between self and other, imagination and realisation, artist and spectator. Acknowledging that line or mark, be it coloured, figurative or abstract, can challenge and change the understanding of the material supporting surface as a reciprocal space for encounter in which the artist situates him or herself in the world, within communication, within relation to an otherness being evoked in drawing and to an otherness who will share in the viewing experience of the finished work. In this specific drawing practice the intimate gesture of drawing is a working process by which I as the artist not only exist in relation to the world, but also exist in relation to someone else, as previously discussed. Identified in the *artworking,* drawing stages and acts out a transitional space of exchange between gesture and the materials of the artwork 'in process', where the idea itself comes into being, into a material visibility inscribed upon the material surface of the paper. Used to retrieve the thought that has been cast out, this is the tracing of the *trace* for conscious formations and critical development. Enacting this enquiry I argue that the *trans-subjective* embodiment of the dynamic line is a moving trace in time and space, which exceeds the scope, limitations and boundaries of the visual plane of the paper. The drawing body coincides with another kind of drawing, which links interiority with exteriority, emerging out of memory and emotional experience. This alterity through the body concerns an encounter with a feminine other that is not an image of, or representation of an other. There is, however, a 'trace', carried both psychically and in the accumulated experience of studying and drawing a specific woman-other, and a re-tracing of the visualisations through the distillation of a memory

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[145] Sara Schneckloth, 'Marking Time, Figuring Space: Gesture and the Embodied Moment', *Journal of Visual Culture*, vol. 7 (2008), p. 281.

of once drawing a specific woman's body. Within this specific drawing practice, this evokes processes that anticipate an instant of relatedness to the other where *I* and *not-I(s)* both differ and share in subjectivity: it relates to that which Ettinger calls *metramorphosis* which she identifies as an aesthetic operation specific to the effects of the supplementary subjective dimension she theorizes as the *matrixial feminine*. Metramorphosis is both a non-phallic, non-binary mode of producing meaning and an indicator of another kind of gazing that is dispersed, decentred and without mastery of a defined object of vision. Ettinger writes,

> I relate the Matrix to the process I call metramorphosis dealing with *I* and *not-I(s)* in emergence and in co-existence, with neither symmetrical nor identical nor mirroring relationships. These are processes of change without domination. *I* and *not-I(s)* may relate to one another or simply turn their backs on one another, but they neither swallow nor kill one another – symbolically or in reality – while transforming in one another's presence. The borderlines between them are surpassed and transformed in the borderlines and in shared spaces, metramorphosis may occur, creating redistribution in the shared field and change in the common subjectivity. The borderlines between *I* and *not-I(s)* are surpassed and transformed to become thresholds. This is a shift aside for the Phallus, an-other symbolic filter.[146]

Ettinger proposes a specific aesthetic process, not previously theorised, that transcends the binary oppositions between figuration and abstraction. She posits that the affect of the metramorphic operations opens out into a *matrixial gaze*. This is a way of relating to, and being affected by, an artwork that does not involve sadistic mastery or voyeuristic curiosity. It encourages the willingness to allow change to occur. The *borderline* becomes a threshold between drawings and viewers, viewers and artist, artist and her others, including the real Mother and the psychic object the m/Other.

Thinking the female body through the materials of the artwork in a new space and the investigation of it across a conceptual dimension of connections and interrelations inscribed across space, studio and paper, my practice restages the encounters between the drawing body with its movements and visualisations, and the drawn body, to enable drawing as space, *event* and image to carry the 'work' of transformation in a woman-to-woman adult relation. The working process became the means of constructing and opening out what I now identify as the *psychic space of encounter, return, remembrance and restoration (retrieval)* within the post-Oedipal relation of two adult women. Drawing on Ettinger's matrix and metramorphosis, but taking it in a direction not considered by Ettinger, namely drawing and the remembered encounter with the adult maternal body, I also intervene by carrying this feminist psychoanalytical theory of feminine difference into the field of the drawn human body in

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[146] Bracha L. Ettinger, 'Matrix and Metramorphosis', op. cit., pp. 200-201.

ways which are distinctive from the many engagements with figuration in painting, drawing and photography that I have discussed in earlier chapters from Spence to Saville, Manchot and Fisher. My drawing practice allowed the disclosure of what I name *an-other female body*, which became visually accessible through graphic and spatial evocation of connectivity and what Ettinger *names distance-in-proximity.*

In the sense of the trace and its tracings enacted by the embodied dynamic of lines relating to each other in and across the drawings by way of seriality and spatiality in exhibition, drawing is a connecting medium that stands at a critical point of transition that necessitates the exploration of marks/lines left by the working process itself. These ask to be experienced by the viewers not only sensorially but as a theoretical, spatial configuration and construction whose making could be rationally understood as a new affective viewing experience. Ettinger writes of 'certain occasions of occurrence and encounter, which will become the realization of what I call borderspacing in a matrixial trans-subjective space by way of experiencing *with an object or process of creation.*'[147] This produces a potential awareness of a corpo-real aesthetic encounter that shifts the gesture as initially embodied by the artist towards that of the viewer's exploration by way of exhibition.

What these site-specific drawings stage and act out becomes acted upon as a transitional space of exchange and encounter, in terms not just of the materials, or the lived experience performed through the embodied inscriptive gesture made by the artist, but of a coinciding (working between the inscription and support) in which these tracings and traces gather together and become interchangeable and confluent in relation to the viewer's mobile reception, perceptions and visual imaginings as they move from drawing to drawing in the space in which the large-scale works form an environment. In the context of viewing these new larger drawings, *distance-in-proximity* refers to a psychic space enacted in *artworking* that could potentially inspire and evoke in the mobile viewer's intimate observations a space of co-existence, not of enclosure, an effect implying an openness that can be universally occupied by anyone regardless of sexual difference. It is, therefore, critical that the effect of these new larger scale drawings be understood within an analytical framework that draws upon feminist psychoanalytical studies in the (pre-)maternal sphere, especially concerning aesthetic negotiations and transformation in 'difference', in order for the *metamorphosis* that occurs in *artworking* to be fully grasped.

The new drawings produced at 51 AFF explore the relation between space, scale, seriality, mark-making and drawing gestures that involve the body of the maker/artist as a means to produce an effect of the body as a space of otherness in

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[147] Ettinger, 'Art as the transport-station of trauma', op. cit., p. 91, my italics.

which line is not bounding, containing, delimiting or describing, and to enable a passage for what Ettinger calls '*a space for occurrence and encounter*,' '*in the feminine*.' This, she stresses, may not occur for every viewer; it is in the intersection, therefore, of the journey through drawing and Ettinger's proposal for a supplementary track for feminine subjectivity-as-severality that this passage can be both practised and theorised. Within my practice, drawing is both the site of research into the potentiality of this process and the production of the event-encounter that then solicits the viewer when the works are displayed in specific spatial configuration, scale, and series.

My changing drawing practice, therefore, researches a possibility beyond what Jo Spence initially made possible for me to initiate: a re-encounter with a troubled past, a classed and gendered trauma in the mother–child relationship. The conceptual tool through which I have subsequently understood the transition, in both the transgenerational dialogue with Spence and the transgenerational dialogue with my mother, is the matrixial theory offered by Ettinger. She writes,

> The matrixial *gaze* is linked to a feminine One-less desire which is not limited to 'women only'. It is a subjective-*object* a that emerges within a *singular* plurality and partiality, within a *singular* borderspace with its borderlines and borderlinks, where co-emergence in difference is born out of unconscious eroticized aerials of the psyche invested in and from a matrixial stratum of subjectivization. With metramorphosis, we move from lost (by castration) object/Other (on the impulse/drive/orifices-organs psycho-analytic *One and All* phallic axis) to unconsciously transformed by metramorphoses relations-without-relating between *I/non-I* (on the relational and transitional One-less matrixial beyond-the-phallus psycho-analytic axis).[148]

It is through Ettinger's practice-led theorisation of non-phallic subjectivity and matrixial aesthetics that I was able to transpose the founding question of my research into transgenerational artistic dialogue within the feminist trajectory, from a close encounter with Jo Spence's restaged memories of a classed and gendered childhood, into a distinctive practice of drawing and embodiment. This practice as it developed over the PhD retained the memory of an encounter of daughter/artist with mother/model, while developing an aesthetic practice based on line and spatiality. This led to an intervention into both culturally explored histories of troubled mother–daughter relations and specific feminist debates about representability and visibility of the female body as a privileged and problematic site for women's artistic practice, from Käthe Kollwitz and Paula Modersohn-Becker through to major feminist artists after 1970, culminating in the work of the painter Jenny Saville.[149] Even within the genealogy on

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[148] Bracha L. Ettinger, *The Matrixial Gaze* (Leeds: Feminist Arts and Histories Network, 1995), p. 50.

[149] See Rowley, 'On Viewing Three Paintings by Jenny Saville', op. cit.

6.1 Exhibition invitation, November 2007.

which my work is founded, drawing had not systematically been used as the site of such research. In relation to Ettinger's enabling and radical contribution to contemporary feminist aesthetics, my intervention facilitates the exploration of *matrixial* aesthetics not in painting, her practice, but in drawing.

From the first viewing onwards I took photographs of the work in progress, not necessarily as a visual diary, even though the images are, in part chronological. These photographs are more a means of showing how I worked things, as the document of a process of making, whereby the artworks started to have a relationship with the space in which they were being made. Documented in the photographs is a comparison between a constructed, measured space created when I built the studio, and the construction of a psychic space in the making of the artworks in that studio. It, therefore, becomes necessary, to explain the physical infrastructure I built at 51 AFF as this was instrumental in enabling me to realise the new direction in my research into drawing, as an opening for a *matrixial* model of transformation through re-encounter with the m/Other, rather than a performative re-enactment in the style of Jo Spence. Using one of the earlier photographs as the image for an invitation to the 9th November exhibition (6.1) and as part of this exhibition, I displayed a selection of these photographs on the landing outside 51 AFF. Submitted as supplementary work that supports this project is Appendix 7, entitled *51 AFF*.

The Remaking of 51 AFF into a Studio/Exhibition Space

When I first moved to this new studio space, I had to clear 51 AFF and its adjoining landing, in order to make a space to store my work and equipment and move out of Lifton Place. After taking back and painting all the brickwork, I then panelled out one of the longest walls, and studio 51 AFF started to slowly take shape as an open studio space. To keep the continuity of drawing, I constructed a large expansive drawing wall and the rest of the studio build came together around it. Vamping up a discarded science table frame, to which I fixed wheels, makeshift handles and a new top, this became my portable platform on which I could place stepladders, in order to construct the high points of the studio and the artwork. With the first (initially experimental) large-scale drawing under way on the drawing wall, it soon emerged that the process of drawing on this new scale would involve moving around the studio space on the viewing and working runway. I was able to explore the drawn body on the drawing wall by travelling across, in and around it. Working at this large scale quickly confirmed my expectation that there would be little danger of the drawn female bodies infantilising the viewer or myself, which had been a risk in the relation of the large-scale drawing and confined viewing space of the Lifton Place Studio.

These initial drawings were very different from those produced in the Lifton Place Studio, where the material changes in my final works had started to struggle and the drawn body on paper and I were hemmed in by the walls and ceiling of the studio. In-between the drawings produced at Lifton Place, I had the additional problem of not being able to make, see and sequence a conversation between the drawings as I worked (6.2).

In the new, expansive studio space, working with an awareness of space inside and outside of the artwork, I wanted to lift and float the artwork away from the existing interior walls and floor, in order to integrate it within the space in which it was made. I put the first two 14ft floating exhibition panels, which hover approximately four inches away from the interior wall, opening onto a space without physical boundaries. Each exhibition panel and the new paper size and scale of the drawn body was worked out in relation to the layout and features of the studio, with particular consideration given to how, between and across sequenced drawings, a movement and conversation could reciprocally take place across multiple axes within the studio, by way of specific spatial configuration, scale and series, as a joint *projective psychic realm.*[150] I opted to leave the far end wall visually open. What operates before and beneath the drawn image on paper and in the space of the studio is an imaginative creative thinking space that

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[150] I am drawing this term from Griselda Pollock's use of Bracha L Ettinger's concepts of matrixial proximity-in-distance. See Griselda Pollock, *Differencing The Canon: Feminist Desire and Writing of Art's Histories* (London: Routledge, 1999) p. 211.

6.2 Drawing in Progress at Lifton Place Studio, 2007.

informed the material basis of my own specific art practice. The pivotal point is my return to the female body by means of a *movement of remembrance*: *working through* the body, in the act of drawing I think and imagine the body through the materials of the artwork.

Drawing in Studio 51 AFF

On this scale you have to work with the variable condition of the studio; having fixed the paper to the drawing wall, it needs time to adjust to the temperature and humidity of the studio: by its own weight the paper will stretch and sag in the middle. This is my first physical encounter with the artwork, in which every blank piece of paper is a new and exciting place of imaginative speculation, plotting and planning, where I spend a great deal of time looking and moving in and around the paper, creatively thinking the female body across time and space, imagination and memory. Through this process the non-covered space on the paper is not just a blank background or surface of nothingness, neither is the studio space necessarily a void of emptiness. Looking and travelling around the studio and paper the space creates interconnections between thinking, moving, and making. The paper is a gathering receptacle of creative thought for the retrieval of connectivity and reciprocity that produces and renews meaning, in which drawing anticipates the concept of the *matrixial* theorised by Ettinger. In the

drawn body is the potential for a yearning for what Ettinger's terms *connectivity* 'in the feminine,' an effect of a shared space of reciprocal otherness not enclosure.

Worked through the accumulated memories embedded in my drawings, I now imagine the body in the drawing, rather than drawing from a study from which a detail enlargement had been taken as a starting point. I imagine the lines, the circles and the artwork taking shape on this scale and in the new studio space, which gave me the freedom to pace out my thoughts and ideas, in a re-assembling of memory felt in the present. I conceptually return to the intimate composition of the imagined hand and torso of the seated female body. Performed through the intimate gesture of drawing is a process that embodies and incites a passage for connection, relation and dialogue across a shared *borderspace* whose *traces* and *tracings* are inscribed differently in each other. The drawing *event* evokes vital processes of transformation in the embodied gesture transferring into marks inscribed across the paper, between sight and touch, imagination and realisation. Found within this conceptual space of drawing is a covenant or libidinal space in the drawn body for a progressive, pleasurable and privileged return and specifically an *adult's* relation to '*an-other female body*'.[151] This is a moment of distinction in my work from Ettinger's *matrix*, which starts from pre-maternal, pre-natal relations. The insistence on the adult mother and daughter relates more to the initial engagement with Jo Spence.

Moving in closer to the paper fixed to the 24 ft long drawing wall, once I have marked the paper with the first line there is no going back, and no lines or circles are hidden or wiped out. For me, all the lines, including the imperfections and discrepancies, are about a process of *working through* the female body, to creatively move around the imagined body of Mum, looking *through* the body not *at* it, creating a new space for a certain kind of connection, which holds a sense of the drawing body in a psychic space of *co-existence*, between the imaginary and realisation.

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[151] Ettinger writes of a matrixial covenant in terms of a feminine psychic sphere/ dimension, connective desire and metramorphosis. As such, use of the term 'covenant' here is based on the idea of a matrixial covenant-in-differentiation offered in Ettinger's theory. She writes: 'A matrixial covenant zooms-in by chance and fade-out by/with asymmetrical metramorphosis. The series of encounters between the co-emerging I and non-I via conductible links on the trauma/phantasy level and on the phantasy/desire level, along connections between the I and non-I and their hybrid object(s) a, shared beyond time in a series of conjunctions beyond place, shape a unique borderspace that gives birth to co-meanings of I-with/for-Other form "within the shell." Just as the woman beyond-the phallus is several and in between, so too the matrixial gaze is diffracted through and with-in (with-in-ter) the screen. Between-beyond visual art-works, specific erotic aerials of singular, almost-missed encounters approach visibility.' Bracha L. Ettinger, 'The With-In-Visible Screen', in The Matrixial Borderspace, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), p. 112.

Each line interrelates and merges with the other to intimately detail the relation of a female body to itself. Where the hand and body touches itself, the touch is a tender, intimate, familiar awareness and signifies a sense of self. Intimately involved without alienation, during the production and exploration of the larger-scale body there is a shared, hospitable space for a twofold intimate, familiar awareness. United yet separate in the touch is a sense of a separate self in relation to the female body drawn on paper. Through a *matrixial* web of inter-relations in the re-tracing of the trace and its tracings is an elaborate reflective process, as if I am in touch or contact with my own self-otherness, in an ambiguous sense of self, which is at once a human condition and a specifically feminine one, since, according to Bracha Ettinger's matrixial theory, the girl's sense of her own femininity is produced in a relation of *fascinance*, to a feminine other.[152]

I find it hard to articulate the experience of what happens between different thoughts in the making of the artworks and how things, found and experienced in the body of the drawing, in return, influence or affect and effect back on me. In the drawing *event* comes a trace of a theoretical and conceptual presence of *'an-other female body.'* The lines converse and converge with each other, in an intimate reciprocal dialogue without words, which is ongoing and unfolds over time across a psychic arena or landscape where thoughts, emotions and ideas constantly exchange and develop towards conscious formation and critical articulation. Between the mother's body as fantasised but internalised other and my own body, the act of drawing stages a presence of *'an-other female body'* in *connectivity* 'in the feminine'.

At the level of abstraction and refusal to contain the body within a single mark or outline is a constant movement, a physical motion across the spatial arena of the paper and the studio performs an emergent action or intention enacted through the moving body of the artist to the shifting drawn body on paper. The drawn lines or circles are not fixed or static; they are full of energy, fluid and open-ended, and they fail in terms of reducing the female body to any formal or literal reading of the body in general or my own mother's body in particular. Making a connection with an invisible thought, the open-ended coloured and graphite lines offer no narrative resolution, fixed answers or meanings. I never arrive at the point where I have got it ('the feminine') in the material sense of a complete image; it is always partial. This is consistent with matrixial theory's attention to a subjective level that concerns moments of partiality alongside the phallic model of discrete self/other opposition.

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[152] Bracha L. Ettinger, 'Fascinance and the Girl-to-m/Other Matrixial Feminine Difference', in Griselda Pollock (ed.), *Psychoanalysis and the Image* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 60-93.

This effect is not because of the paper size, but rather because of the scale of the drawn body and my physical nearness to and contact with the materials. As in an ongoing, undecided viewing experience, there is a *distance-in-proximity*, without a centralising focus. The practice restaged the encounters between the *drawing body* with its movements and visualisations, and the *drawn body* progressively escaping from the delineating and containing line that might have once been seeking to create a drawn body on paper. The process creates in drawing a theoretical space *of* the body rather than a space *for* the body in figuration. Through the inscriptive gesture and detail of the tactile drawn line impressed onto paper, I lose sight of the body (like a blind spot) and the drawn body fails as an object as it fades in and out of sight. There is no fixed viewpoint or total overview of the body or the paper size. The scale of the drawing liberates the gesture from description. The paper is no longer support for an image: it is a space for encounter that opens up new possibilities for further encounters and inter-relations in viewing these site-specific drawings by way of specific spatial configuration, scale, and series in exhibition.

Ettinger uses a very psychoanalytical vocabulary to translate her experiences as a painter. Some of her terms resonate with what I have found myself trying to explain in my own specific process of writing about drawing. She writes:

> Metramorphosis is a co-poietic activity in web that 'remembers' these swerves and relations, inscribes affective traces of jouissance and imprints of trauma and encounter, and conducts such traces from non-I to I, from one encounter to further encounters. Metramorphosis transfers the knowledge of these events with-in-to the matrixial psychic sphere. Through art's metramorphic activity, these traces are transmitted into culture and open its boundaries. An affected matrixial encounter creates diffuse traces of events unthought-of but charged-with-some-awareness. [...] Subsymbolic tunings that do not function on the level of distinct units of signification nevertheless make sense here. Artworking makes meaning available for later conceptual elaboration.[153]

Narrated through this specific process, there operates a powerful dynamic between the scale of the hand that intimately touches itself and the hand that creatively draws and tenderly touches the body on paper. It initiates a conceptual and progressive empowering, providing a moment of generosity, of giving and receiving of knowledge and gratification - a profound love or act of kindness, that is reciprocal, open-ended and without closure, and in turn provides a crucial means of how we perceive and understand others and ourselves.

Documenting this doubled complexity of a dual yet intimate, familiar awareness and paradoxical relation through the tactile touch, are the fluid and open-ended lines of

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[153] Bracha L. Ettinger, 'Wit(h)nessing Trauma and the Matrixial Gaze', in *The Matrixial Borderspace* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), p. 144.

the pastel and the ways in which the character of the line changes from being pink to then blue, with the detailing of the sophisticated and mature graphite lines imaginatively tracing tenderness towards the mature, reclining body and hand of Mum. Working between the series of drawings, moving around, in and out of multiple drawn bodies on a doubled axis of *distance-in-proximity* there emanates a continuous reciprocal connectivity of an actual awareness experienced in drawing, provoking exchange between and across the work, like an interrelating shared encounter between bodies. Articulated through the qualities and repetition of the inscriptive embodied gesture on paper, this is not just a drawn body or sitting body: performed in the act of drawing, it is a constructed, thinking female body that mediates a reciprocal and progressive knowledge-producing activity. I am arguing that drawing stages and acts out a transitional space for a re-engagement with the mother. Not a reconfiguration of my mother, the drawn body and space makes possible a progressive, pleasurable and privileged return and relation to a maternal body as a spatial encounter.

51 AFF Studio Exhibition: Drawings of Mum by Paula Farrance, 9th November 2007, Sunny Bank Mills, Farsley, Leeds

An initial exhibition gave me the means of showing the vital relay between process, exhibition and participation. I documented and tracked the passage of the viewer in and around the artworks, which can be seen in a slide presentation entitled 51 AFF STUDIO EXHIBITION: Drawings of Mum by Paula Farrance: 9th November 2007, Sunny Bank Mills, Farsley LS28 5UJ (Appendix 8 [DVD]). This was compiled as a result of the studio exhibition and the overall viewing participants who attended and became actively involved.[154] Overall, the viewers' observations were not silent: they generously asked questions and gave constructive critical feedback as to what they perceived from viewing the artwork. This was encouraging because such feedback confirmed my aspiration that the encounter created in the process of making might be glimpsed and even shared in the process of viewing that this studio made possible.

In this site-specific exhibition, produced in the converging pictorial space of the studio, emerged the potential to explore the embodied aesthetic encounters in *artworking* in relation to the artist, that could potentially make available to the viewer the feminine 'difference' in alterity and *severality*, which this series of drawings enacts and stages through *distance-in-proximity*. The five new large-scale drawings are open-ended and fluid with no fixed viewpoint or total overview of a complete or literal drawn body. Unframed and secured on the drawing wall and four floating exhibition panels,

[154] At the opening view approximately seventy-five people attended and in the following five days another thirty people also visited.

the artworks hovered off the interior studio walls and floor and floated into the interrelating studio space in which they were made. With no given visual frames or boundaries and in proportion to the scale, the drawings offered the viewer the freedom of walking in and around, between and across the drawings, physically merging with and fading in and out of the series of large-scale bodies, without becoming visually confined or trapped within the drawn body/bodies.

To locate the capacity of drawing through the embodied inscriptive gesture involves in the viewers a willingness to explore the many facets of the drawn bodies. In the constructed measured space of the studio, the mobile viewer cannot view one drawing without having an awareness of another, and so the series of drawn bodies shifts and turns slightly in movement and visualisation. The detailing of the lolling resting hand urges the viewer to move forward, close to the papers surface, to then be taken back to grasp the overall sum of what there is to see, which changes the viewer's distance from the work. In doing so, the image of the drawn female body hovers between appearance and disappearance as it fades in and out of sight on a double axis of *distance-in-proximity*, which potentially allows viewers the freedom to imagine several possible realities, shifting into new visual relationships. There is no fixed unitary vantage point in the studio exhibition where you see it all – the five drawings cannot be viewed by the viewer without an awareness of another in reflection to themselves, as a physical encounter of co-existence which this space made possible. This embodied viewing experience, however, may not occur for everyone: as Sara Schneckloth writes 'Showing drawing is like tapping a tuning fork to see who is on the same wavelength.'[155]

This elusive *connectivity* 'in the feminine' does not operate on the premise of chance: it occurs as a result of regularity and repetition of 'difference' in the constant process of re-marking a passage into the female body. At this experimental stage I see these first large-scale works as 'works in progress' that open onto a new theoretical level of engagement in the production of drawing in series, laying the ground for more developed works, to be exhibited at the end of the summer of 2008. I had demonstrated the potential of the studio both for drawing on this scale and as an experience in space, and I now wanted to push this situation and the drawing to a new level of abstraction.

Exhibition: Line by Line: Working through/Drawing with...

The aim of the final exhibition was to stage at the level of production the imaginative journey around a seated female body, and at the level of the exhibition the capacity to

[155] Schneckloth, 'Marking Time, Figuring Space', op. cit., p. 284.

move the viewer in space by means of the sequenced series of drawings around the drawn body of a mature feminine other. There were a series of changes I wished to make between the initial experimental show in November 2007 and the to final show in October 2008. These final works were explicitly built on a critical dialogue with an existing archive of work, especially the first group of large-scale drawings. Constant reflection on and response to the limits reached in the previous phase of the work, directly informed production of the new drawings.

I made a deliberate move towards greater abstraction, in order to dispel the force of a representational, delimiting outline, and to draw the responsive viewer more strongly into the encounter-event staged within the dynamic space of materials, picture plane and studio. Increased abstraction in turn increased the flow of lines between the individual drawings, thus making the viewer's movement around the space more fluid. The final line by line show involved imagining a passage around the body so that it is turned in space, acquiring its own volume across the series of drawings, an experience that the viewer could also experience in the passage around the exhibition. This transferred the sense of the movement and complexity of her otherness from the imaginative movement which produced the drawings, to the viewer's passage through an exhibition as a passage around an other.

A catalogue of the exhibition was produced (see Appendix 9 [catalogue]), to record the installation of the individual drawings, and to give the work the potential to make its way in the world beyond the geographical constraints of the studio space in Farsley. The catalogue included an introduction and philosophical contextualisation of the drawings, by Anna Johnson, which itself had been written on the basis of a prolonged conversation between Johnson and myself, within the studio space over a period of ten months, a period which gave Johnson crucial access to the process of constructing the final show.

Completion of the final works has in a sense placed me back at a beginning; creating the final series of works entirely from memory produced a sense that this final event-encounter carried no debt to the traumatic history associated with my actual mother, and had instead come from the enactment of another psychic dimension, moving from a dialogue with a single human other to the potential for a shared encounter-in-difference with several unknown others. In terms of my own practice, this was at once a closure and an opening – I am freed from the need to work and re-work the relationship with my mother, but I have not 'moved on' in the sense of cutting her adrift from my life and practice. The final drawings developed a new understanding of the materiality of the line, and its capacity, at a certain scale and with a certain deployment of colour and depth, to choreograph the movements and potential for affective response in the viewer.

The co-emergence of the female body with the abstracted line in the final drawings brings the question of feminine sexual difference to a discourse (the renewal of drawing as a medium in itself) that has so far been unable to satisfactorily engage with the privileged relation between drawing and the drawn body, which inevitably evokes a feminine otherness.

In this thesis I have had to account for the conditions of production, from intimate life drawing sessions to the performative space of a studio as exhibition space. This opens out an invitation to the viewer. Under the first phase of the research, I enacted a direct encounter with Jo Spence – necessary in order to encounter personal history and trauma, staged between myself and others. The distillations and experience from this first phase of work emerged in a renewed drawing practice that moved away from a representational engagement with the body of the mother, to an enactment of an embodied relationship in the space and process of drawing. This lent itself to theoretical articulation through Ettinger's psychoanalytical theorisation of matrix and metramorphosis, which dialogically informed the planning of a drawing series which could anticipate the viewer's own embodied movement.

Postscript

Before concluding, it is necessary to emphasise a recent development in thinking on drawing, in the form of a major exhibition curated in 2011 by Catherine de Zegher and Constance Butler at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, entitled *On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century.* This exhibition represented one part of an ongoing reconsideration by de Zegher of the constituent elements of drawing and how they have been transformed over the twentieth century and beyond. The exhibition places a focus on line, and its clear relation to mark and gesture, as well as the twentieth century movement of drawing 'from line, to grid, to web', something de Zegher specifically associates with the grown contribution made by women artists.[156] This provides a final context within which to situate the specific graphic dimensions of my research insofar as it has sought to liberate line as a force for constituting space and relationality in contrast to definition, contour and containment.

[156] De Zegher, Catherine, *On Line*, op. cit., p. 130.

Conclusion

My research operates at the intersection of a specific development in feminist art practice and cultural theory that addresses the memories and traumas of class and gender through the autobiographical. Jo Spence provided a route into this research via her work with performative photography, but after performatively exploring her modes of photographic practice, in relation to a troubled relationship with my own mother, I decided to use my ongoing drawing practice as a means of taking Spence's legacy into a new field that has to date been the site of considerably less feminist theory and practice. The moves I make in this research thus directly engage with two fundamental discourses: contemporary theory and practice in relation to drawing as an independent form – as demonstrated through discussions of work by Deanna Petherbridge, Catherine de Zegher and others – but also major debates in feminist cultural theory and art practice concerning representation of the female body, although historically explored more in relation to painting, film and photography than drawing. The point reached within the final series of drawings at Sunny Bank Mills, Farsley, was that of a co-emergence between the female body and an abstract line, which brought together the question of feminine sexual difference with a discourse (the renewal of drawing as a medium in itself) that has so far been unable to satisfactorily engage with the privileged relation between drawing and the drawn body, thus inevitably raising the question of the position of feminine otherness within the specific field of drawing practice.

My work conjugates cultural analysis of mother–daughter relations in terms of class histories and new directions in feminist psychoanalytic theories of non-phallic sexual difference. Ettinger's *matrixial* theory enters as a means of theorising my specific intergenerational work on the mother–daughter relation, a work that moves beyond a direct filiation with Jo Spence to create a space for a transformed relation *both* to Spence and to the body and psyche of Mum, a space of a transformative encounter. As such, the final two series of drawings, which are site-specific installations rather than an exhibition of discrete works, move beyond the trope of filiation between daughter and mother, into a genealogical space where the viewer encounters a different evocation of the feminine body. The research documented and analysed throughout this thesis belongs in the context of four major strands of work: feminist explorations of classed subjectivities, feminist explorations of the possibilities for shifting the representation of the female body, and specifically the maternal body, the possibilities for a psychoanalytically inflected aesthetics that hovers between memory and abstraction, and the articulation of the above through drawing, insofar is it can be theorised and analysed in terms of the line and its autonomy in relation to other media.

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Appendix 1: Notes for casting the body in plaster through to latex and sewing

Once you have found a brave and willing participant to cast and a person to aid you, preparation is as follows:

1) A good working area that is warm with access to hot and cold water (so as the person being cast has somewhere to clean themselves afterwards).
2) Plaster Bandage cut into strips, approximately 5x7 inches. Approximately two boxes of plaster bandage will be enough to cast an average body.
3) Plastic washing-up bowl, permanent marker pen, couple of towels.
4) Two chairs.

A rough guide to casting the body in plaster

I have found the best way to start casting the body is to begin by dividing the body into three sections with a permanent black marker pen. Rather like a clothes pattern for stockings, shorts and a top, with each section following on from each other. Each section is then seamed at the sides creating a front and back. Seaming at the widest point of the body makes the removal of the front and back section easier. In addition, casting in three separate sections, with a break in between each cast section, staggers the length of time needed for the person being cast to stand. Once you have done your first body cast you will have an idea of the process and possibly be more adventurous in positioning the body (and please be aware the first cast is about trial and error). Next is the application of Vaseline to the crotch and armpits, as pubic hair will invariably set itself into the plaster resulting in the cast having to be carefully cut away from the crotch and armpits. However, if the person being cast does not have overall excess body hair, there is no real need to 'Vaseline' the whole body. Generally, short body hair or down will not get caught in the cast and any plaster residue will easily wash off the body. In addition, if the Vaseline is applied too thickly to the skin, it can hinder the casting process by making the application of plaster bandage slip. Vaseline also acts as a barrier and surface detail can be lost.

I always start casting from the feet upward, one leg at a time. So it is best to have the person being cast to stand with their feet about 2-3ft apart to ensure access to the inner and upper thigh. If you cast the body in sections, there is no need for the person being cast to be completely naked (often making them feel vulnerable), they can easily, at this first stage wear clothing to the upper part of the body to keep warm. I also mark the floor as to where the feet are situated to, in part, allow for the person

being cast to (roughly) resume the same position after a break between cast sections (casting can take a day). Following the manufacturers instructions on the use of the plaster bandage (this may vary) place the plaster bandage into clean cold water for about 30 seconds until it softens and takes on a creamy texture. Lift out of the water and drain a little before folding in two and applying to the skin: rubbing and pressing the bandage gently onto the surface of the body to ensure good contact and detail with no air bubbles. This part of the process is made so much easier if the person aiding you prepares the plaster bandage in the cold water and passes it to you while you do the application, joining each application onto the last. This allows for you to work quickly and for the plaster bandage to bond to each other before drying out. At this point it is imperative to be quick and methodical. Evenly building up the thickness with two to three layers at a time. While working upwards and across the body, take care to butt up to the side seamed guideline, rather than plastering completely over. Ensure the back and front of the cast section are worked in conjunction with each other.

Once one leg is completed, leave on the leg to set while starting the same process on the other leg (this is of course, if the person being cast is comfortable for you to do so). Remember the person being cast is the person working the hardest. Having cold wet plaster placed on your body is not a pleasant process; the person must also stand upright and as still as possible (I have known people to faint). Make sure you're aware of how they are feeling throughout casting. Once the plastered legs have set, carefully run a blunted blade (like the back of a dinner knife) along the seam to break the seal of the thin layer of plaster that would have formed. Be aware this is a disconcerting moment for the person being cast, don't press the knife in too far. Then, ask the person being cast to flex their leg muscles and gently wiggle while keeping the pose. This should allow for enough movement for you to gently prize off the front and back cast. Be warned, even though the outside of the cast is seemingly dry, it is not bone dry and solid. The cast at this stage is very fragile, be very careful of the edges and try not to distort the cast. If needs be, ease the cast off the body by gently pushing the person's flesh inwards along the broken seam rather than tugging at the cast. After casting the legs, it is easy to forget the soles of the feet. I do this at the end of the day by filling a large enough cardboard box with two inches of fine dental plaster mixed with water before asking the person being cast to place their feet separately into each box while standing.

Once the legs are removed you may want to take a break before starting the shorts section of the body. Following the marked lines on the body this takes on the same format of the legs, working from the seamed line upwards, methodically working up and across the body (ensure there is no residue of plaster on the skin from the last cast before starting). This time you may want to do the front of the cast first before

going straight in and doing the back (it is important to do the front and back of the cast in one sitting rather than having a break in between doing the front and the back, this is for continuity of the pose and keeps the cast relatively even). To save embarrassment, when you get to the crotch area, ask the person being cast to place the first layer of plaster bandage to the crotch with their hand (ask them to try and not bend or tilt their body while doing so, it should be done with touch rather than eye). It is for you to then smooth over the plaster bandage into the correct position making sure you do not overlap on the seamed line. Once the cast is dry enough to be taken off be aware rogue pubic hairs may have become trapped in the plaster. You may want to gently ease the cast off, at this stage, taking a lot more care and attention towards the person being cast. In extreme circumstances you may have to carefully prise the cast of to a point where you can reach in and cut the pubic hair away from the cast with a small pair of scissors. If the person is brave you may want to pull the cast away sharply with one tug.

After a break, hopefully you have an idea of the casting process to continue with rest of the upper body. For the upper body you may want to place two chairs either side of the person being cast, this gives then something to rest their hands on while taking the arms away from the body (be aware, without support, it is very uncomfortable to hold the arm away from the body for any length of time). Using the back of two chairs allows you to have access to the armpits without too much discomfort to the person being cast. Casting the upper part of the body can seem restrictive to the person being cast because of their breathing movement and the hardening of the plaster. It is best, rather than breathing deeply, for them to keep calm and too take small shallow breaths throughout. You may also want to tackle the lower arms and hands as a separate section to upper body cast. I have never done a full head cast, and at this stage, I cannot advise on how to do so.

Once the whole cast is complete, leave it to dry completely overnight. You may find that the cast has an eggshell like quality (where not enough plaster bandage was applied). This can be easily remedied by carefully applying plaster bandage to the outside of the cast, paying particular attention to the delicate edges. Next, you may find air holes inside the cast; these can be carefully filled with a fine grade of Polyfilla. Depending on how well the casting went this is the time to rectify any major cracks or flaws. Once this is done and the cast is again completely dry you can coat the inside of the cast with liquid shellac wood sealant. Which, if applied in 2-3 thin coats soaks into the cast, dries and hardens without losing the surface detail. The shellac strengthens the cast and allows the cast to be used for more than one cast of latex.

Please be aware that I have only used this format of casting for the purpose of using the plaster cast to take a second cast in latex. If you want to use the plaster cast

for any other reason, you will have to seek advice on the possibility of later building an armature inside the plaster cast to hold it upright.

Application of latex to the plaster cast

To prepare you will need:

1) Clean dust-free workspace that is well ventilated.
2) Supports and padding to hold the casts in place.
3) Plenty of cheap brushes with the loose hairs taken out.
4) Liquid Latex and thickener.
5) Baby Powder.

Depending on how thick you want the latex depends on how many layers of latex you apply as evenly as possible to the cast. You can buy a latex thickener and add a small amount to the latex giving it the consistency of emulsion paint (be warned, thickening the latex may cause visible brush strokes and an overall patchy effect to occur, don't add too much). It is well to remember to work all the cast sections at the same time when applying the latex as evenly as possible. This helps with the continuity of thickness and overall colour. Make sure the casts are well supported and are stable before applying the latex. Most importantly work in a well-ventilated area because of the overwhelming smell of ammonia. Allow for each coat of latex to dry before applying the next to prevent a dragging effect to occur. Once you have the desired thickness required and the latex is completely dry, you can remove the latex by firstly sprinkling the inside with baby powder to stop the latex sticking to itself. Gently release the latex from the sides of the cast before gently pulling it slowly off, dusting with baby powder as you go.

Sewing the latex

To prepare you will need:

1) Good quality leather sewing needles.
2) Monovic Invisible Thread.
3) Small block of hardwood, small sharp scissors, sewing pins.

After a lot of experimentation with electric sewing machines and various glues and adhesives to piece the latex together, I found the best way by far is to sew it by hand. First you need to trim the edges of the latex of any excess latex that would have spread over the sides of the cast. Use a small pair of sharp scissors, keeping to the shape and pattern of the cast as much as possible. Unlike the flat dimension of a clothes pattern the latex carries with it the contours of the body, if you deviate from this,

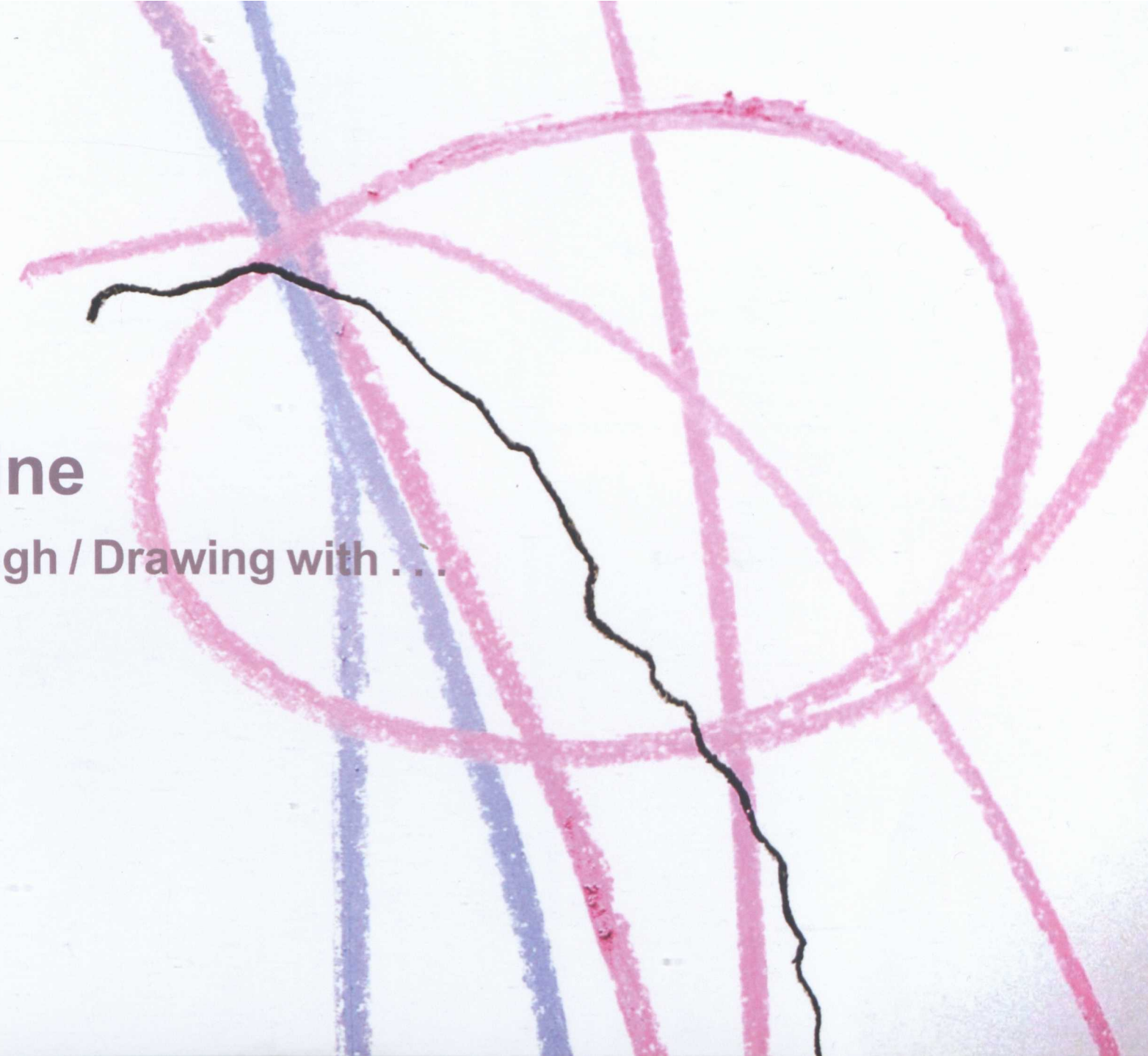
the front and back of each section will be hard to marry up and sew together (the feet, ankles, crotch and armpits being the hardest to match up). Match and pin the latex edges together with a small overlap, taking care not to stretch or distort the latex. When starting out for the first time, start with the top of the leg, working downwards. Each stitch has to be done individually in an up and down motion, rather than using a running stitch action (stitching several stitches at a time). This is to prevent the latex from ripping and for you to gauge the correct tension in the thread. There is no point in knotting the thread, best to sew forwards and then backwards before going forwards again at the start of each new length of thread (this will secure the latex far better than any knot). Depending on how thick the latex is, some force is needed to penetrate two layers of latex, so I often use a small block of wood to help push each individual stitch through. Once each section is sewn at the sides you will need a lot of patience to get the rest of the sections to fit and be pinned together ready for sewing. It is useful to hang the completed upper part of the latex cast from a hanger and to then marry and fit the shorts section and so on.

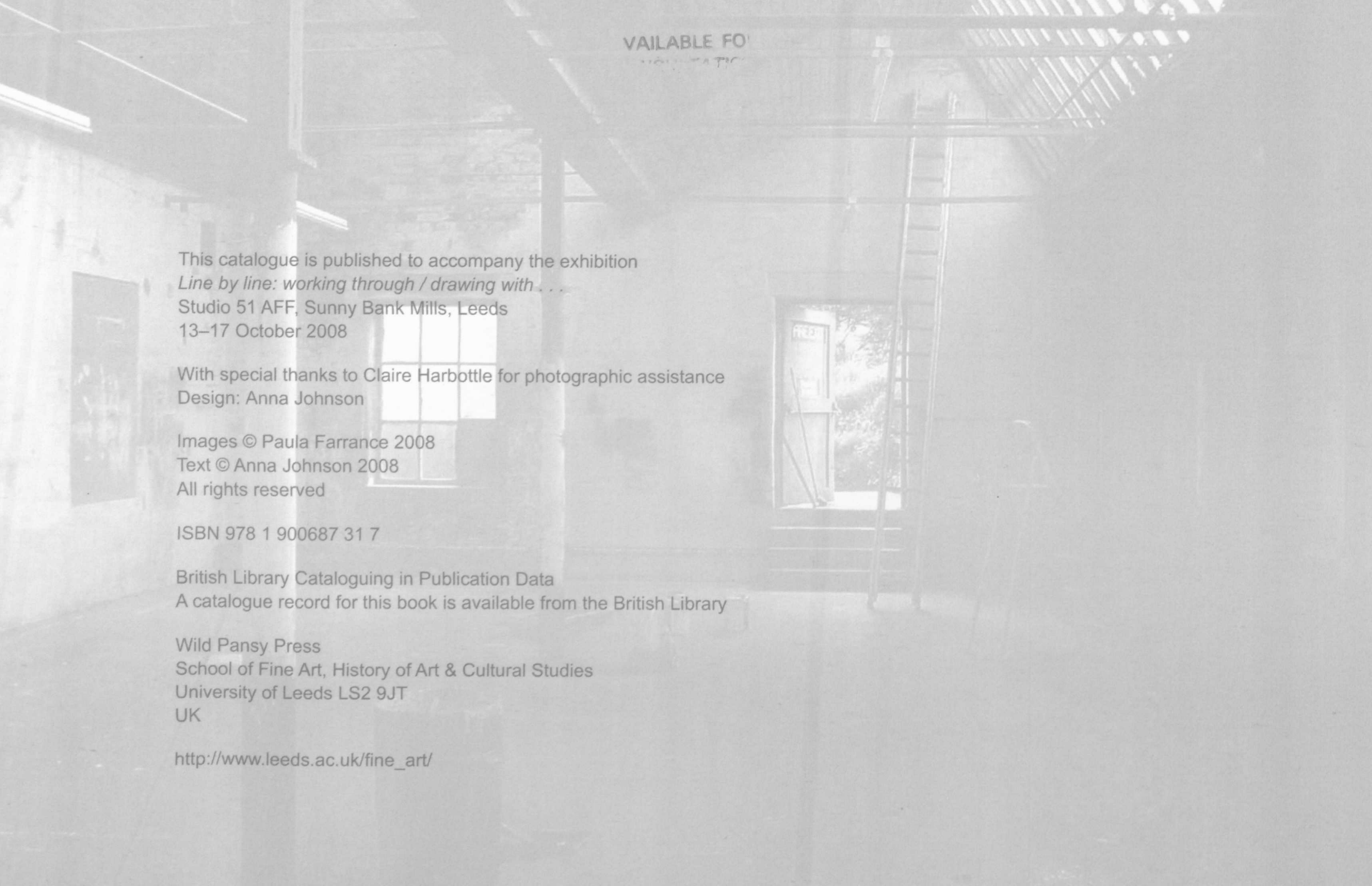
Once completed, to prolong the life of the latex after use, dust well with baby powder, keep away from direct sunlight and store in cardboard box in a dry environment. This is to prevent discolouration and the latex from perishing.

Line by Line

Working through / Drawing with . . .

Paula Farrance





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Line by Line

Working through / Drawing with . . .

Paula Farrance

Drawing 1 (Series 2) 2008
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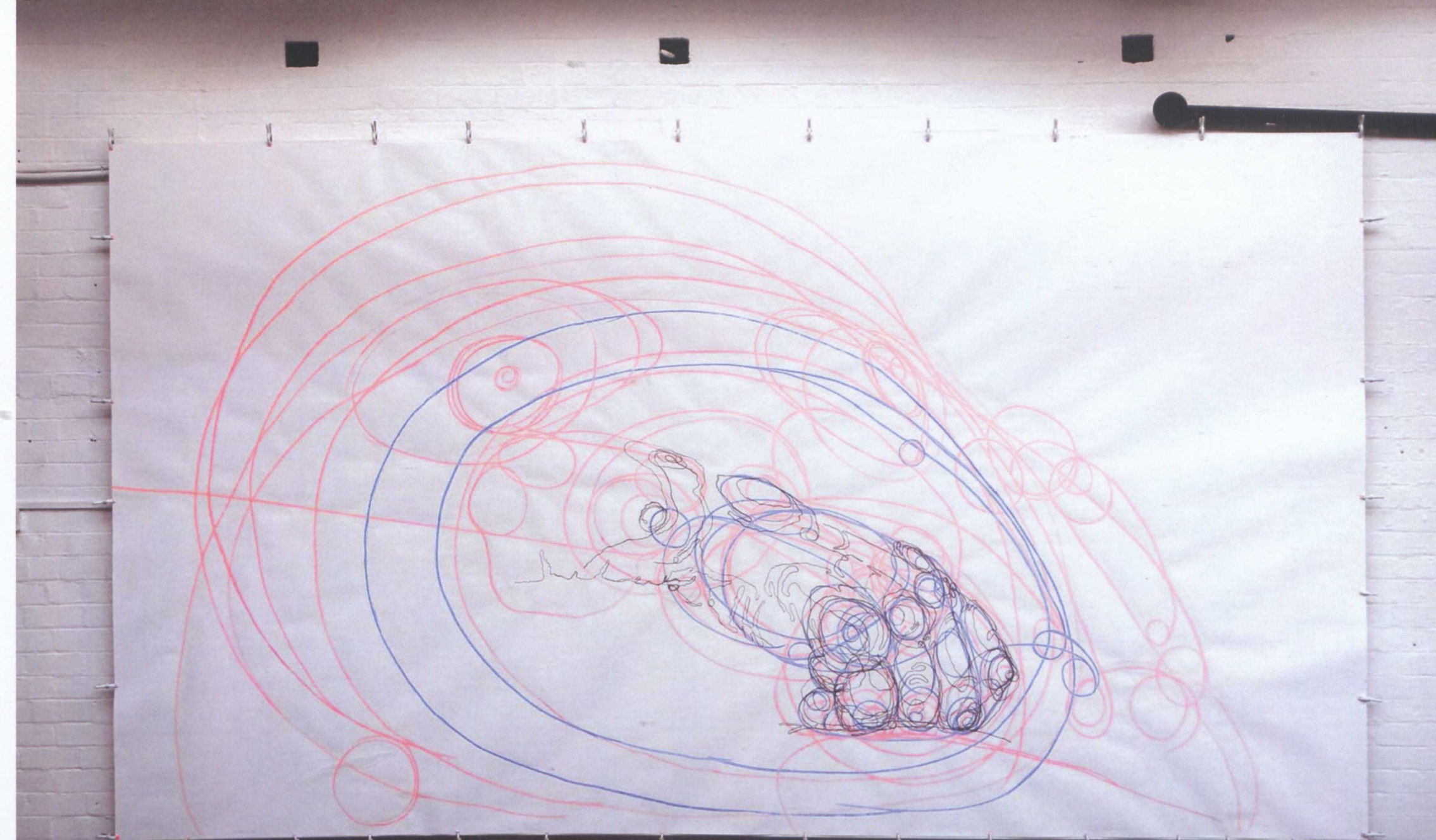

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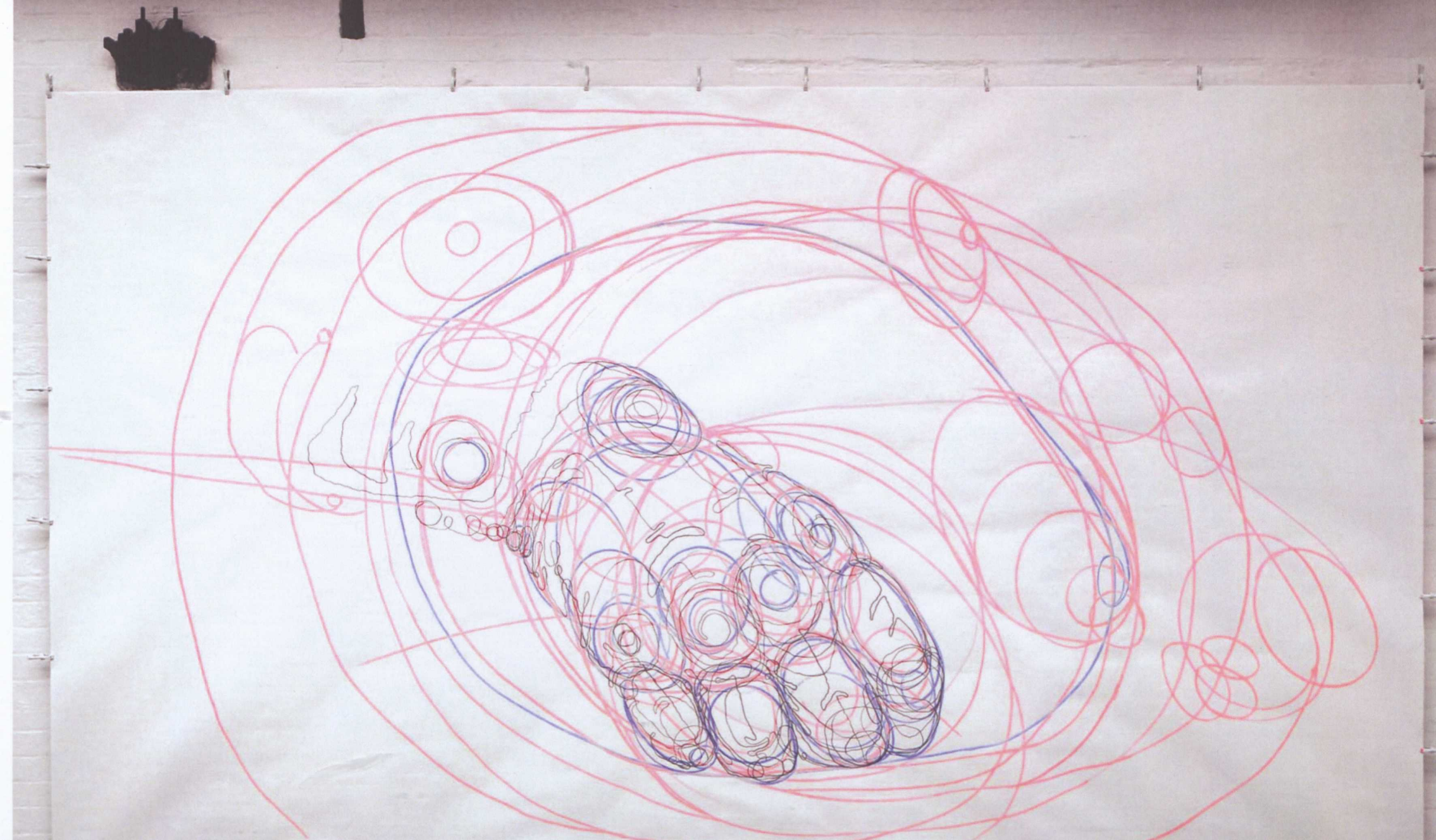

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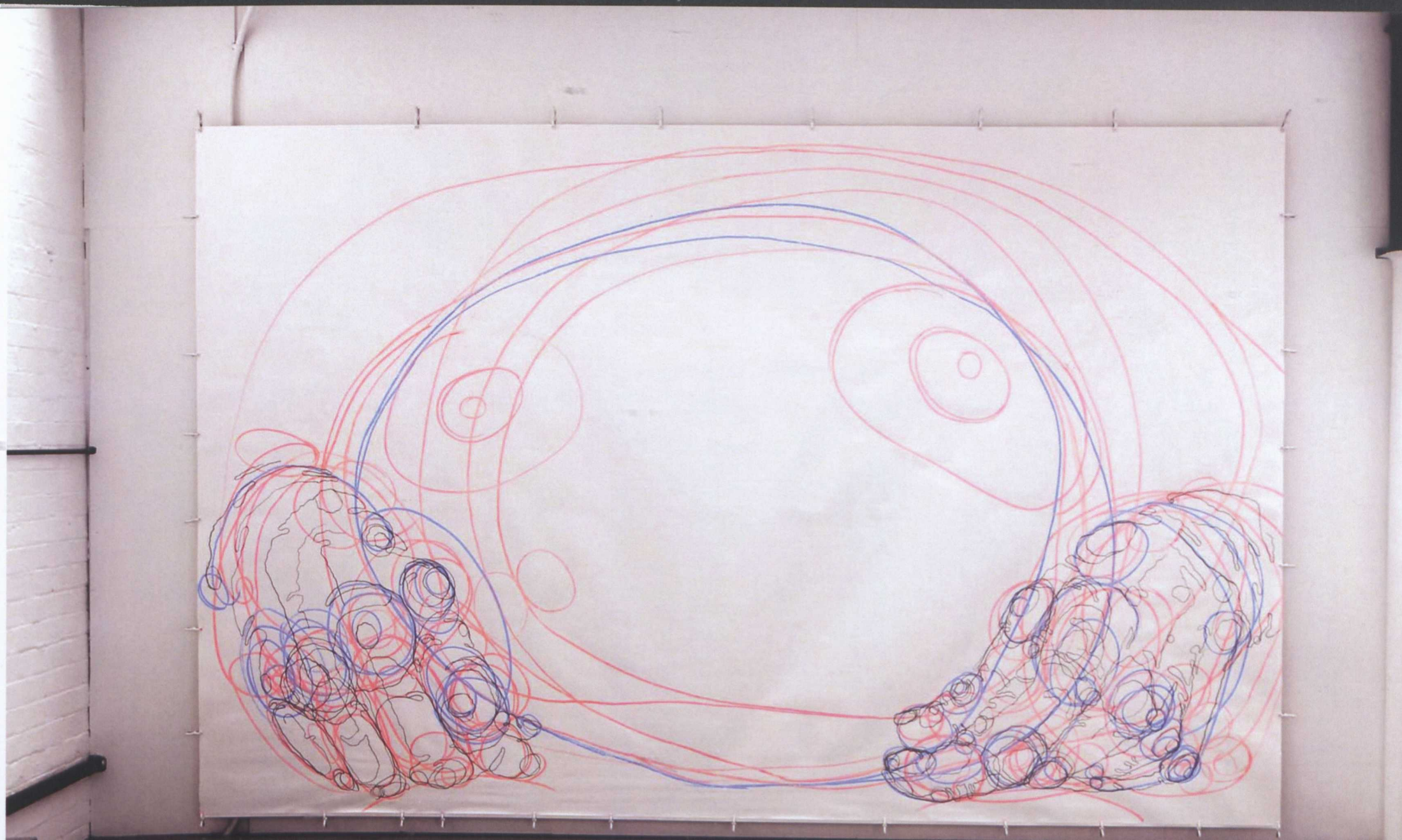

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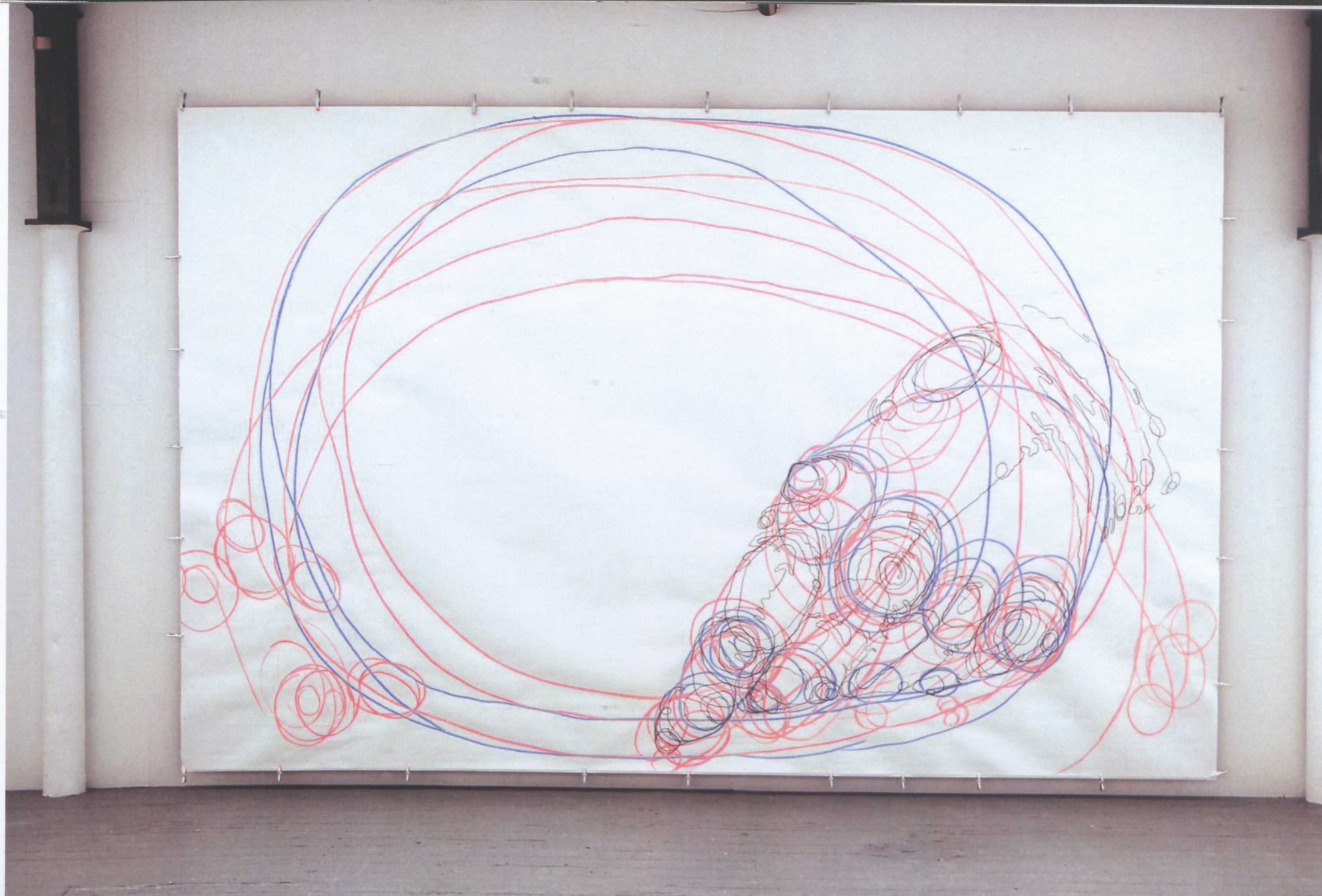

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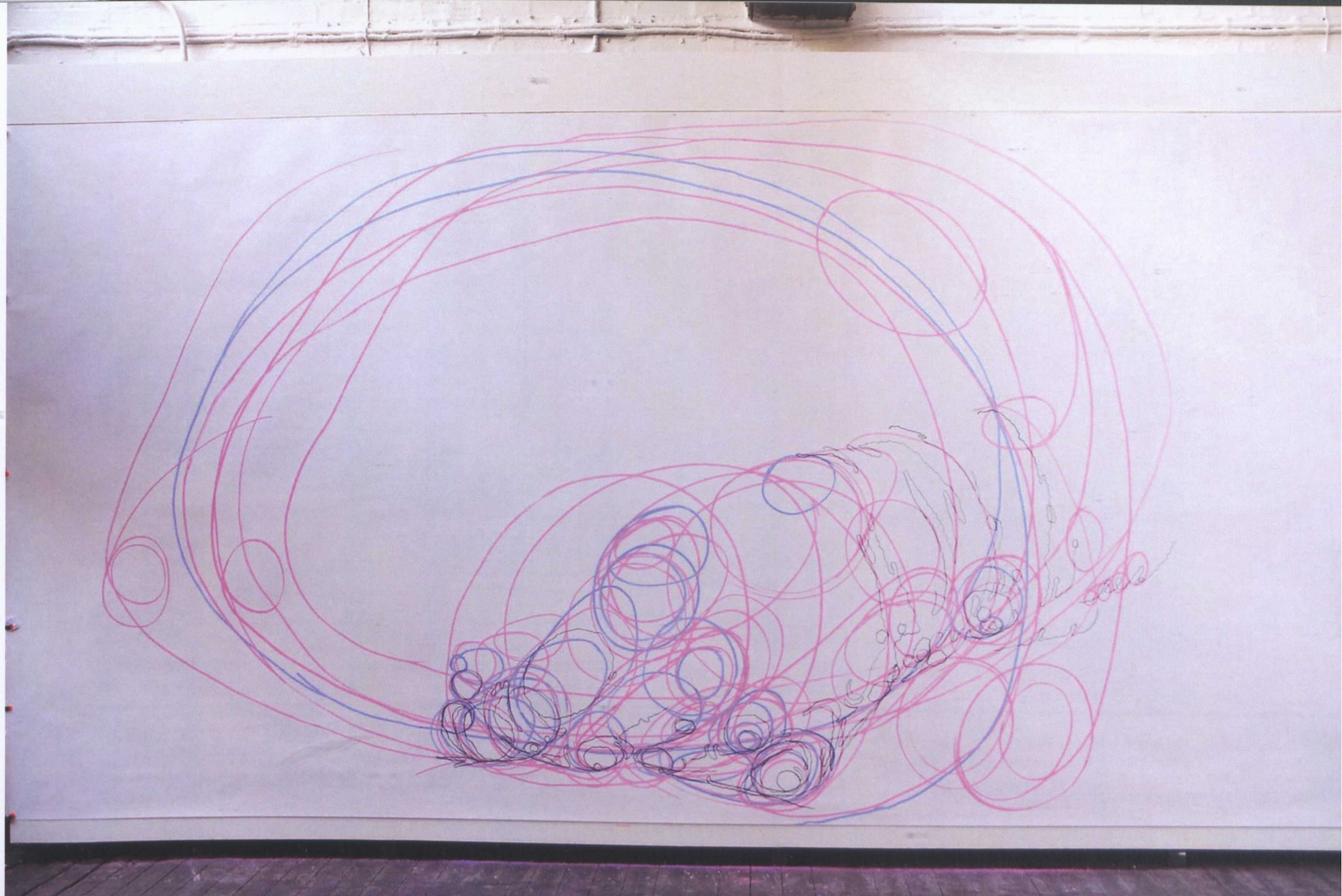


The following essay developed from a series of conversations between myself and Paula Farrance between September 2007 and October 2008, in her studio space at Sunny Bank Mills in Farsley. Although Farrance's works are articulated here through a particular theoretical framework, this is merely a tool to register their significance within an extended philosophical and aesthetic history of the materiality of the line, visual figurations of the female body, and approaches to a non-phallic feminine otherness. I should stress that what is expressed of the works as works, and their opening of the affective space of an-other feminine, has only been possible due to my conversational encounters with Farrance, a close reading of her written account of the genealogy of her practice, and the ability to witness the emergence of her drawings within the studio space at Farsley.

Anna Johnson

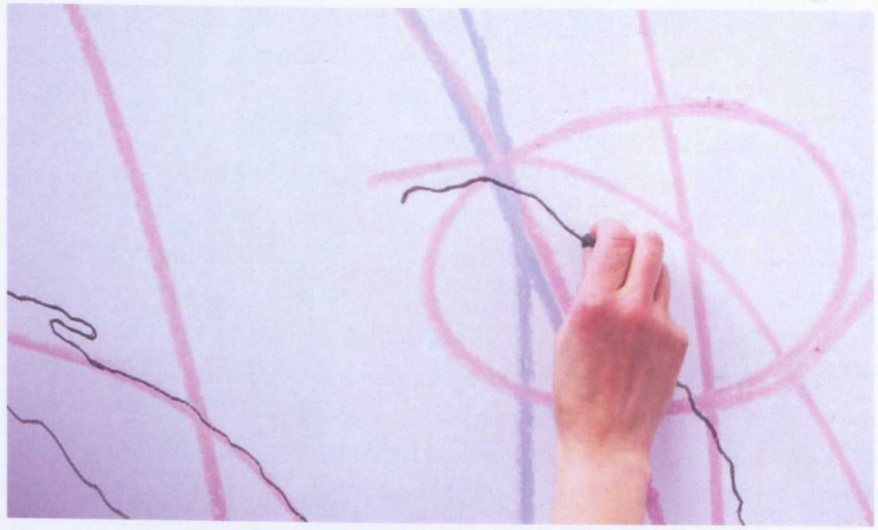
On the Maternal / Line

Anna Johnson

I

> The turning away from the mother is accompanied by hostility; the attachment to the mother ends in hate. A hate of this kind may become very striking and last all through life.[1]

In discussing Willem de Kooning's *Woman* paintings, Julia Kristeva suggests that his 'massacred' forms are exemplary of artistic 'creation', which 'always feeds on an identification, or rivalry with what is presumed to be the mother's *jouissance*'.[2] Split between culture and nature, ethics and singularity, the imaginary of the mother's body is the constituting limit of sociality, and as such both an instigator and rival of those cultural practices that contest similar territory. De Kooning's *Woman* is not the end of the story, however: Kristeva's concern is with creation by women, the question of whether women, maternity, feminism and 'creation' are reconcilable. What if de Kooning's *Woman* series, she asks, had been created by a woman? The response is at once throwaway and profound: 'Obviously she would have to deal with her own mother, and therefore with herself which is a lot less funny.'[3]



Here is the difference inscribed in Kristeva's problematic: de Kooning's *Woman* is an abstract universal – *the* mother – while the hypothetical woman's *Woman* is particular: 'her own mother'. Moreover, this particular then slides even further from the universal: into the woman's own self. For Kristeva, apparently, because mother and daughter are not culturally distinguishable, their rela-

tionship is both immediate and unmediated; perpetually cut off from symbolic articulation. As women we are always shackled to our own mothers, and because of this the violence characteristic of de Kooning's *Woman* will always be turned inwards:

> Indeed, how can She be that bloodthirsty Fury, since I am She (sexually and narcissistically), She is I? Consequently, the hatred I bear her is not oriented toward the outside but is locked up within myself. There is no hatred, only an implosive mood that walls itself in and kills me secretly, very slowly [...].[4]

Paula Farrance's drawings can be seen as both a response to and a rebuttal of Kristeva's rhetoric, not in the sense that they make de Kooning's *Woman* again (by massacring her), but because of the *particular* mother they deal with (and also because they're often quite funny). Not only this, but they also do what Kristeva cannot entertain: they operate a symbolised separation between mother and daughter, and moreover one that emerges from the transformation of a traumatic estrangement. This separation/transformation is itself inseparable from a material re-vision of the gaze upon the body of a female other.

The genealogy of the drawings in this catalogue is one of a sustained visual and theoretical re-examination of the role of the mother (and the mother's body) in the production and representation of female subjectivity. It is a genealogy with two mothers – Farrance's actual mother and her elective artistic 'mother', Jo Spence.[5] Spence's visual exploration of the mother–daughter relation is particularly significant as a work to dismantle and reposition the dead weight of an ossified maternal imago:

> my mother ceased to be the monolith of my imagination and began to exist on many different visual planes, each linked to my memories of her at different periods in her life. The ability to have a dialogue with my imaginary mother (now dead) encouraged me to parent myself better.[6]

Made from the point of view of an educated (and so to some extent, socially estranged, ashamed or shameful) daughter addressing the image of a working-class mother, Spence's work, in its combination of psychoanalysis and Brechtian historical materialism, provided an initial theoretical model for Farrance to approach her own mother–daughter relation; supplying tools to situate and thus represent a fraught family history, defusing a desire to judge parental failures and betrayals and/or make demands for contrition. Spence's collaborative projects – especially Remodelling Photo History (with Terry Dennett) and her photo therapy work with Rosy Martin and Valerie Walkerdine – have also been instrumental in forming Farrance's practice. Ideas thought through Spence, of collaboration and non-hierarchical 'co-counselling', have lent Farrance's work a particular sensitivity to the intersubjective relations inscribed in the making of art (artist–model, photographer–model). Her work has also retained a link to Spence in terms of performance, although this persists on a less overt level – directed into a preoccupation with bodily movement, indexicality and ephemerality.

Nevertheless, there are two key sites that have, in their persistence, facilitated a productive separation from Spence's legacy. The first is a divergence in terms of the subject–object or self–other relation configured in their respective practices. Where Spence begins from the remembered/projected *image* of her mother, Farrance's drawings are grounded in a work with a living fe-

male subject. Farrance's mother, as both a living body and speaking subject, has been a pivotal force in her work. Not only in the act of giving her body over as the locus of Farrance's visual research (consent is crucial here, as is agency), but also in her participation in the practice itself. The initial object of the work between mother and daughter was a reparative dialogue, of which drawings of the mother's body were conceived as a visual map or record. The representation of the mother's body was not, at that embryonic stage, the primary object of the work; it seems to have figured initially as the site of access to a fragile and potentially dangerous process of breaking the seal on a traumatic family history. The early life-studies that inform Farrance's current drawings from memory were thus produced in a working situation far removed – in its orientation around the speech of both parties – from the silence of the classical artist–model relationship.[7]

Encountering the mother only on the level of image or fantasy brings an ethical limitation – the mother in such a register is only ever the other-of-the-self, never an-other subject. So, for instance, because Spence's engagement is with the image and memory of a long-dead mother, the primary vehicle for this is fantasy, which produces a closed loop. Spence herself confirms this: 'through the making of artworks, I have begun to represent the daughter's gaze (my own) towards my mother, and also enact fantasies of myself seen through (my projection) of her gaze to me'.[8] To undertake a comparable re-imagining with the participation of a living, breathing mother (who is also, at times, resistant, annoying, bored or tired), is a very different thing. Engaging with a living mother will of course no more magically reveal the 'truth' of the mother–daughter relation, but there is a crucial dimension that is added: Farrance's work with her mother's body is founded on her mother's agency, on her willingness to lend her own body (and willingness to accept the consequent estrangement from it). The drawings in this catalogue are therefore built upon the ethical gesture of the gift, and as such are dependent on the subjectivity of their ostensible object.

The second site of divergence from Spence is the medium: Farrance's insistent return to drawing brings with it a set of visual and representational problematics distinct from Spence's exploration of the coded visuality of the photograph. Together, these represent a greater shift – from Spence's interrogations of representations *of* the female body, to a broader consideration of the material conditions of representation itself.

II

> [...] the mother is the faceless, unfigurable figure of a *figurante*. She creates a place for all the figures by losing herself in the background, like an anonymous persona. All returns to her—and, in the first place, life—all addresses and destines itself to her. She survives—on the condition of remaining in the background.[9]

Although the specificity of drawing is of critical importance for Farrance's work, it also inherits a discourse on surface usually connected more closely to American Modernist painting, where the gestural and material relationships between mark and surface have been 'read' according to a metaphorical association between the blank canvas and the fantasmatic body of the archaic (m)Other. The doubling of surface in painting – laying of paint-surface over canvas-surface (for example Jackson Pollock's obliteration of one

by the other,[10] or Helen Frankenthaler's uneven melting of the two[11]) – is given another meaning in Farrance's practice. Rather than the problematics of paint (pouring or flicking, container or brush/stick) that have long characterised the gestural differences contested between Frankenthaler's and Pollock's treatments of the canvas-field, the materiality of pastel, laid light and loose on the grain of paper, inhabits an alternative semiotic register to the penetration of fabric by fluid. As Farrance works, for example, a fine dust of pink, blue, or pink-and-blue will snow itself in a line beneath the drawing wall – the relationship of mark and surface here is one of granularity and unstable residue. The surface itself also makes a difference: the paper's fibrous, porous, non-woven structure is materially much closer to skin, in its irregularity of surface, creases, bruises, lumps and bumps, its un-spun filaments like tiny hairs. If we accept the psychoanalytic metaphorics of paper surface as skin, and of the blank space as the Other-mother, the body evoked is a rare one in the history of western art: a feminine body that gives itself to be drawn, but is not supine; it rises up to meet the hand, and receives its mark. (Such a rising up is not only a matter of verticality, Farrance's chosen construction of floating walls for production and exhibition also pushes the drawings into space.)

It is important, however, that the body-image drawn from and on this surface stops short of the monumental, all-powerful phallic mother. Confusing the scale of the figure with the size of the paper, for instance, risks totemising it, tipping over into a monstrous, supernatural feminine, Kristeva's 'death-bearing she-Gehenna'.[12] Given their monumental size (and the bodily relations of scale that follow) as well as their spacing of the body (hand, belly and breast as partial-objects),[13] drawings of this size could, in other conditions, all too easily dwarf the viewer. This problematic – ratios of size, scale and space – however, has been rigorously worked out in the making of Farrance's drawings at Studio 51 AFF. The gallery-studio itself has given the drawings room to grow just enough for the line to determine its own full extent – the line can keep shy of the edges of the paper surface without artificial constraint. The quantitative relation of line and paper (the vast paper surface is deliberately not filled) and their exhibition on floating walls (boards standing proud of the studio wall), all work to elude the kind of claustrophobic, depthless surface that would evoke pre-Oedipal undifferentiation.[14]

Returning to the body of the mother is in many ways a perilous move, given the associations frequently made between the maternal body and a pre-symbolic 'before' of subjectivity. Kaja Silverman in particular has criticised the tendency within feminism to see the pre-Oedipal as holding the key to female subjectivity and sexuality:

> to impute the daughter's erotic investment in the mother to the pre-Oedipal phase is to suggest that female sexuality precedes language and symbolic structuration—to give it, in other words, an essential content. It is also to align women in an extremely problematic way with categories such as "nature" and "the imaginary," and to render her relation to language highly unstable.[15]

In many ways, Farrance shares Silverman's suspicion of the pre-Oedipal, insofar as she stresses that the mother–daughter under investigation is between two *adult* women, seeking an imaginary for this relation that specifically escapes the suffocating proximity of the pre-Oedipal. In seeking this imaginary inscription via a corpo-

real encounter, however, Farrance also questions Silverman's stark opposition between language/subjectivity and body/nature/imaginary/essentialism. Because Farrance's investigations of this territory take place in and through an artistic/aesthetic practice, such an opposition is unsustainable, and connects more comfortably to Griselda Pollock's conception of artistic practice as a crucial tool for feminist work to rethink subjectivity and sexuality (refusing the idea of subjectivity as *essentially* symbolic), positing 'a non-essential, and non-reductive relay between corporeal events, sensations and intensities and their psychic transformation/inscription through the registers of the *imaginary*'.[16]

Thus, although psychoanalytically informed, Farrance's practice has had to reach well beyond the limits of what psychoanalysis can think in order to undo its conceptual blockages on the subject of femininity and female subjectivity. Although she seeks to escape a regressive approach to the corporeal feminine via the pre-Oedipal, this is not through a protective retreat into the security of the symbolic subject. Rather, this seeking out takes place through an interrogation of the material conditions of drawing and viewing, and a close scrutiny of the relationships between sight and touch.

For instance, the configuration of 'part-objects' (hand, belly and breast) that insists in the most recent drawings indicates a corporeal dimension – the touch – that exceeds the classical list of detachable pre-Oedipal part objects (breast, faeces, phallus, as well as Lacan's additions of 'the phoneme, the gaze, the voice … and the nothing').[17] The phenomenology of touch brings two characteristics that are particularly useful in re-imagining corporeality: a non-fusional indeterminacy of activity and passivity (as well as interiority and exteriority), and a relation that escapes the psychoanalytic organisation of the body as a collection of orifices (the orifice-model giving a very limited determination of relations between inside and outside, and thus between self and other). The skin, the organ most closely associated with touch, is itself heterogeneous and transmodal, especially in the crossing of sight and touch, and touch and voice, which are of no small significance for Farrance's work.

To approach an idea of touch through an imaging of the female body, however, is not innocent. The two together – female hand on female body – have their own weighty history, originating in the genre of the Venus *pudica*, which Nanette Salomon has tracked from Praxiteles' *Knidian Aphrodite*, through Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* and Titian's *Venus of Urbino* to (of course) Manet's *Olympia*:

> The most telling gesture […] is that of the right hand before the pubis. The gesture constructs a sexual narrative of protective fear that is conveyed by her body language as a whole. As she leaves her bath, the goddess hears someone coming and in modesty and fear urgently protects herself. […] [B]eing seen here is undeniably connected to being violated.[18]

The ideology of the Venus *pudica*, Salomon argues, constitutes the female nude as 'essentially sexual' (the idea that it might not be is actually quite difficult to think). At the same time, however, the endlessly repeated gesture of covering the genitals, so often extraneous to the particular narrative in which the female figure appears, produces an 'essentialist definition of woman in general', as sexual, shameful and violated by the gaze.[19] In their focus on the female hand in contact with the naked female body, however, this history and ideology are actively blocked by Farrance's drawings. The

agency of the drawn hand is transformed, as is its orientation in space. The sequential ordering of the drawings – in which the artist and then the viewer moves, drawing by drawing around the body – intermittently introduces a space between hand and body, shifting the sites of touch, eluding entirely the *pudica*'s shameful double concealment/indication of the genital area, as well as the corollary violating exposure. It is the touch of skin on skin that is crucial, not what is displayed in the hand's gesture. And again, the specificity of drawing has a crucial part to play here – the tenderness of the drawing hand upon the drawn hand, as it places it upon a drawn body, opens out 'self' touching to possibilities beyond the dualities of closure versus exposure or shameful covering versus violation by the gaze.[20]

In this context, it is important to stress that Farrance is emphatic in locating her work away from the strategy of attempting to undo shame and invisibility through acts of showing or exposure of an abjected female body. Discussing Cindy Sherman's photographic representation (in her 1992 *Sex Pictures* series) of a body that is at once female, old *and* pregnant, Rosemary Betterton emphasises the ambivalence of art that attempts an affirmative use of ideas of the female body as grotesque 'to destabilise idealisations of female beauty or to realign the mechanisms of desire',[21] in that it risks simply reinforcing already existing ideas of female corporeality as innately transgressive, disgusting or dangerous.[22] Once in the public domain, it is not possible to control whether such work will be taken up as truly transgressive (and thus transformative) or reduced to the titillation of the freak show.[23] The preoccupation of Farrance's work with a close proximity (both real and imagined) to the detail of her mother's aged and blemished body could potentially be located within this territory, but her approach to it through drawing – as a materialisation of vision – re-opens the gap between looking and representing that is sutured by photography, instead using an indirect 'gaze' (in inverted commas because it is an 'impure' gaze, contaminated by touch)[24] to seek out the invisible dimensions hidden beneath the projected blank surface of the feminine.

To do this, the images themselves have been re-focused: as much as the lines are not constricted by the edges of the paper, the lines themselves also do not constrict or bound the shape of the female body. They wander between suggested but indefinite forms, freeing them from a contained whole-body, but anchoring them just enough that they cannot fragment into the regressive *corps morcelé* of psychosis or paranoid-schizoid infancy. That is, the shift in Farrance's work to dimensions of this size has enabled an embodied gaze, as she puts it, not at the female body, but *through* it – a diffraction of the historical identity of femininity and surface. Not drawing from life is, in this context, a deliberate strategy; once the forms of this female body were established through a repeated drawing and re-drawing, to such an extent that Farrance was able to cease working from life, new considerations were introduced. A dissatisfaction with working only in graphite also led to the tentative introduction of colour. This, together with the shift away from the formal concerns of life-drawing 'proper', has moved the drawings towards a dual consideration of memory and spatiality. This work inhabits a territory between Bergson and Merleau-Ponty; both have taken up the following comment, attributed to Leonardo da Vinci:

> The secret of the art of drawing is to discover in each object the particular way in which a certain flexuous line

> which is, so to speak, its generating axis, is directed through its whole extent, like one main wave which spreads out in little surface waves.[25]

For Bergson, this line is the image of pure duration, a ridge of intensity in the pressing-together of heterogeneous virtuality.[26] More cautious than Merleau-Ponty, Bergson's idea of this line has a problematic relation to the work of art. To gain access to it would be an act of pure intuition, something Bergson limits to philosophy. Art's capacities in this respect are hampered by its materiality, which he broadly reduces to the utilitarian interaction of fabrication; of a functional body *acting upon* inert materials.[27] By contrast, Merleau-Ponty inverts this problematic, arguing that in its inseparability from the body of the artist, the work of art has drawn attention to a mode of being unavailable to thought alone: 'Indeed we cannot imagine how a *mind* could paint'.[28] This possibility is premised upon an ontology of chiasmic crossing, in which the relationship between inside and outside, I and Other, seen and unseen is not one of rift, discontinuity or antagonism, but compossibility. Merleau-Ponty uses the idea of a 'flexuous', invisible line to contest the reality of the 'prosaic' line-as-outline, normally considered to be 'a positive attribute and a property of the thing in itself'.[29] Freeing the line from this prosaic conception allows us to see that line as 'no longer the apparition of an entity upon a vacant background':

> The beginning of the line's path establishes or installs a certain level or mode of the linear, a certain manner for the line to be and to make itself a line, "to go line." Relative to it, every subsequent inflection will have a diacritical value, will be another aspect of the line's relationship to itself, will form an adventure, a history, a meaning of the line—all this according as it slants more or less, more or less rapidly, more or less subtly. Making its way in space, it nevertheless corrodes prosaic space and the *partes extra partes*; it develops a way of extending itself actively into that space which sub-tends the spatiality of a thing [...].[30]

The line as it winds and arcs in Farrance's drawings could never be mistaken for the depthless geometrical outline. An earlier index yielded up by her mother's body – a cast latex skin – is now returned by the daughter's body through the indexicality of the line, which maps the movement of a particular body in space. Pastel is ground into paper with the pad of a thumb, a movement that conscripts for drawing not just the precise directionality of fingers, hand, wrist and forearm, but the whole arm, shoulders, chest, waist, hips – in this sense, these are whole-body drawings. There is also an oscillation (although in its intimations of speed, oscillation is perhaps the wrong word) of distance and proximity, in both the viewing and the making of the work, as accumulated moments of distance and proximity constitute a slow adjustment of exchange; interchange, in the gradual drawing of the line *from* space.

The lines of pastel on paper are not the only lines that make Farrance's drawings drawings: lines of tension as the paper stretches and sags (this paper is a skin, after all); the line of paper on board, of the distance between board and wall – all contribute to the re-figuring of the female body. The construction of the 'house' of these drawings is contemporaneous with their draw-ing; they appear contained at the point of completion, but their earliest becoming is one of fragile partiality: to begin with, they emerge with their environment. The construction of the studio space, its reclamation

from an abandoned and derelict shell, is almost as much as part of the work as the drawings themselves – at the very least, the process of forming a working space *around* the activity of drawing means that the space they inhabit is far from being a neutral, empty container.[31] Farrance's drawings attest to a gap (actually a series of gaps); the interstice between skeleton and skin: they float, both from the walls of the space they inhabit, and *within* that space. This again connects to Merleau-Ponty:

> The animals painted on the walls of Lascaux are not there in the same way as the fissures and limestone formations. Nor are they *elsewhere*. Pushed forward here, held back there, supported by the wall's mass they use so adroitly, they radiate about the wall without ever breaking their elusive moorings. I would be hard pressed to say *where* the painting is that I am looking at.[32]

It is colour in particular that grounds this evasion of place. Luce Irigaray, after Merleau-Ponty, situates colour as the unlocatable ground of the visible.[33] Colour brings a symbolism into the drawings; Farrance sees characteristic differences in the pink and the blue pastel lines that diffract black graphite. Blue and pink – evoking veins seen through skin, broken capillaries, folds and fat, stretch marks – together lend corporeal weight to the surface contours speculatively lined in mobile black. Beginning with pink allows the drawings to build upon an initiating mark that is not a black incision of a white surface. Although pink marks the beginning, however, the sinuous interleaving of the lines is not a layering: pink, blue and black do not chart a linear transition from ground to figure, or the laying of form onto the body of the paper, but the generation of an unlocatable pictorial field by the work of the line that is at once the work of colour.

There is a tension inherent in this field, within the gap created between image and material. Although sometimes the drawings border on abstraction, it is a mother's body they draw (through time and through space – a drawing-out, attenuation), and a daughter's body that draws. They chart the movement of a body in space, but as with Merleau-Ponty's animist Flesh,[34] this body is a thinking body, it is an in-dividual, indivisible, undetermined body-and-psyche. This body-and-psyche thus thinks as it moves, and moves as it thinks, the drawings unfolding the trace of a movement-thought, which in its movement is thinking, remembering, imagining an-other female body.

III

To return to the question of genealogy, a final mode of separation from the artistic legacy of Jo Spence concerns both the personal and the question of therapy. Although it has been important to discuss the specific history of these drawings, their origins do not determine their meaning. Where Spence discusses the result of her photo-therapeutic re-imagining of her mother in terms of an ability 'to parent myself better', Farrance's drawings far exceed the considerations of a personal therapeutic process. The traumatic scars of this particular familial relationship have not been normalised, healed or sutured, but have turned outwards into a practice; their affective force remains, but acts elsewhere. From an initial, psychoanalytically informed encounter with a traumatic personal and family history, there has been a shift to another register of work. Where Kristeva makes the distinction between a male artist mas-

sacring the image of woman to rival the jouissance of *the* mother, and a woman, who is barred from such work because of her perpetually unfinished separation from her own mother, Farrance's drawings have in a sense come full-circle. In moving away from the legacy of Jo Spence's photo-therapy work, especially its revelation of and ironic play with – but also attachment to – over-coded representations of working-class motherhood, Farrance has reached a point where the particularity of images *of* (the/my/a) mother has been transformed into the investigation of a nameless, impersonal feminine through a spacing of the image and its material support. The genealogy of this practice, particularly its generation from another's founding act of generosity, however, is such that while it circumvents the 'necessary' violence of de Kooning's *Woman* series, it is nonetheless able to seek out an impersonal, non-specific visual encounter with, in Farrance's own words 'an-other female body'.

To close: while not wishing to assimilate one to the other, something of the significance of this movement can be understood through Maurice Blanchot's idea of the work of the writer. Following Blanchot, Gilles Deleuze associates writing with a movement towards the impersonal, away from the possessive personification inherent in the classical psychoanalytic model of fantasy ("'*a* child is being beaten" is quickly transformed into "my father beat me"'), but also away from the universal, 'eternal daddy-mommy':[35]

> literature takes the opposite path, and exists only when it discovers beneath apparent persons the power of an impersonal—which is not a generality but a singularity at the highest point: a man, a woman, a beast, a stomach, a child […]. It is not the first two persons that function as the condition for literary enunciation; literature begins only when a third person is born in us that strips us of the power to say 'I' (Blanchot's 'neuter').[36]

A peculiar connection, perhaps; surely the neuter is of little use in thinking about a project that seeks an encounter with/in an-other feminine? Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to confuse the neuter with the indifferent or the generic. In Blanchot's hands, the singular literary beginning that Deleuze mentions concerns not only the writer, but the writer's other, the interlocutor; the impersonal in literature creates a space for whomever to occupy, but only on condition of becoming *non-I*: 'The third person is myself become no one, my interlocutor turned alien; it is my no longer being able, where I am, to address myself and the inability of whoever addresses me to say "I"; it is his not being himself.'[37]

Such is the force of the shift in Farrance's work, beyond contesting the problematic particularity of the mother–daughter dynamic presented by Kristeva, and irrespective of Farrance's repeated engagement and dis-engagement with the body (history and subjectivity) of her own mother. This work, through a gradual moulting of the particular, has reached a point where the address to a feminine other is no longer of an 'I' to a personal other (a 'you', linked by gestation and lineage), but from 'elsewhere' to an impersonal other-woman, indicating an affective space of encounter *in the feminine*, that is (although again on condition of becoming *non-I*) potentially accessible to whomever, regardless of sex, gender, sexuality or personal history.[38]

Notes

1 Sigmund Freud. Femininity, in *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, trans. J. Strachey, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. XXII (London: Hogarth, 1964), pp. 121–2.

2 Julia Kristeva, 'A new type of intellectual: the dissident', in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. T. Moi (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), p. 297.

3 Kristeva: 'A new type of intellectual', pp. 297–8.

4 Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and melancholia*, trans. L. S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), pp. 28–9.

5 See Jo Spence, *Putting Myself in the Picture: A political personal and photographic autobiography* (London: Camden Press, 1986), and *Cultural Sniping: The Art Of Transgression* (London: Routledge, 1995).

6 Spence: *Putting Myself in the Picture*, p. 156.

7 Michelle Boulous Walker has emphasised the need to approach the mother as site of both body and word, and sees Luce Irigaray's labial metaphorics of the feminine as exemplary of such an approach: 'We need to do more than merely represent the mother as breast. We need an inscription of the maternal that does at least two things; one that actually refers to women as mothers (contra Kristeva) and one that theorises the terrain of the mother's body in less reductive terms. We need to re-chart the maternal as a terrain of body *and* word. Irigaray's work arguably does both. In her writing we witness a metonymic displacement from the mother's breast to the ambiguous terrain of the labia. The uncertain "lips" of Irigaray's poetic texts evoke a mother whose sexuality is always tied to speech rather than the invisible (non-signifying?) ink of the breast.' Michelle Boulous Walker, *Philosophy and The Maternal Body: Reading Silence* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 140.

8 Jo Spence, 'The Daughter's Gaze: Blaming, Shaming, Renaming… and Letting Go', in A. Kingston (ed.), *Mothers* (Birmingham: Ikon Gallery, 1990), p. 27.

9 Jacques Derrida, 'All Ears: Nietzsche's Otobiography', trans A. Ronell, *Yale French Studies* 63 (1982), p. 250.

10 See Griselda Pollock, 'Killing Men and Dying Women: A Woman's Touch in the Cold Zone of American Painting in the 1950s', in F. Orton and G. Pollock, *Avant-Gardes and Partisans Reviewed* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp. 257–60.

11 See Alison Rowley, 'On Viewing Three Paintings by Jenny Saville: rethinking a feminist practice of painting', in G. Pollock (ed.), *Generations and geographies in the visual arts: feminist readings* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 101–2.

12 Kristeva: *Black Sun*, p. 28.

13 Although they could be seen as cutting and fragmenting of the body, these are not disconnected or excised fragments; the gaps between are just as much an active component of Farrance's drawings as are the bodily forms. The function of the paper is such that the gaps between lines and forms are not absences.

14 See, for example, Alison Rowley's discussion of the 'suffocating inseparability and loss of identity' both figured and materialised in the tactility of paint in Dorothea Tanning's *To the Rescue* (1965). Rowley: 'On Viewing Three Paintings by Jenny Saville', pp. 102–4.

15 Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 123.

16 Griselda Pollock, 'Does art think? How can we think the feminine, aesthetically?' in D. Arnold and M. Iverson (eds), *Art and Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), p. 131.

17 Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: the first complete edition in English*, trans B. Fink (London: WW Norton, 2006), p. 693.

18 Nanette Salomon, 'The Venus Pudica: uncovering art history's "hidden agendas" and pernicious pedigrees', in G. Pollock (ed.), *Gener-*

ations and Geographies in the Visual Arts (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 74.

19 Salomon: 'The Venus Pudica', p. 81.

20 This of course evokes Irigaray's idea of an active–passive, indeterminate, feminine self-touching, given in her notorious image of the 'two lips' (See Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. C. Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985)). Perhaps more interesting, however, is her later return to this image in connection with a critique of Merleau-Ponty's chiasmic intertwining of vision and touch, and her criticisms of the closure inherent in his image of the hand touching itself, both of which are absolutely pertinent for Farrance's work but too convoluted to develop here: 'Two leaves of my body and two leaves of the world seem to make it impossible for another flesh to be visible and seeing, between the one and the other. […] Merleau-Ponty's whole analysis is marked by this labyrinthine solipsism. Without the other, and above all the other of sexual difference, isn't it impossible to find a way out of this description of the visible, doubled with that of the tactile of the touching hands? But unless we are to remain within the confines of this rigorous and luxurious approach, we must ask the question of the other as touched and touching. And of an other whose body's ontological status would differ from my own.' Luce Irigaray, 'The Invisible of the Flesh: A Reading of Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, "The Intertwining—the Chiasm', in *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, trans. C. Burke and G. C. Gill (London: Athlone, 1993), p. 157; on the lips as a sexual difference inadvertently written into Merleau-Ponty's ontology, see pp. 166–7.

21 Mary Russo, *The Female Grotesque: Risk, Excess and Modernity* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 60, cited in Rosemary Betterton, 'Prima Gravida: Reconfiguring the maternal body in visual representation', *Feminist Theory* 3 (2002), p. 261

22 See Betterton: 'Prima Gravida', pp. 261–2.

23 Another example of this difficult area might be Rosy Martin and Kay Goodridge's Outrageous Agers project, which attempts to challenge the under-representation of the aging female body by 'subvert[ing] conventional stereotypes of the older woman using irony, parody and transgression'. Rachel Gear, 'The Old Hags are Laughing', *Make* 87 (2000). See Chris Arnot's apparently well-intentioned, but ultimately patronising response to Martin and Goodridge's project: 'Cellulite for sore eyes', *Guardian*, February 3, 2000. Also relevant are the drawings of Beth Fisher, which, while formally closer to Farrance's work, remain tied to the act of exposing an aged body.

24 See Bracha Ettinger, 'Matrixial Gaze and Screen: other than phallic, Merleau-Ponty and the late Lacan,' *PS: Journal of the Universities Association for Psychoanalytic Studies* 2 (1999), p. 23.

25 Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, trans. M. L. Andison (New York: Citadel, 1992), p. 229. See also Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'Eye and Mind', trans. M. B. Smith, in G. Johnson (ed.), *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), p. 142.

26 Bergson: *The Creative Mind*, pp. 162–5.

27 Bergson: *The Creative Mind*, p. 94.

28 Merleau-Ponty: 'Eye and Mind', p. 123.

29 Merleau-Ponty: 'Eye and Mind', p. 142.

30 Merleau-Ponty: 'Eye and Mind', p. 143.

31 To repeat the above metaphor associating blank canvas or paper surface with the unwritten body of the (m)Other, this simultaneous emergence of work and space could very easily be figured through an imaginary of differentiation-in-co-emergence or co-poïesis, drawn from Bracha Ettinger's theorisation of a 'matrixial' dimension of subjectivity. See Bracha Ettinger, *The Matrixial Borderspace* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

32 Merleau-Ponty: 'Eye and Mind', p. 126.

33 See Irigaray: 'The Invisible of the Flesh', pp. 154–8.

34 See Irigaray: 'The Invisible of the Flesh', p. 172.

35 Gilles Deleuze, 'Literature and Life', trans. D. W. Smith and M. A. Greco, in *Essays Critical and Clinical* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 2.

36 Deleuze: 'Literature and Life', p. 3.

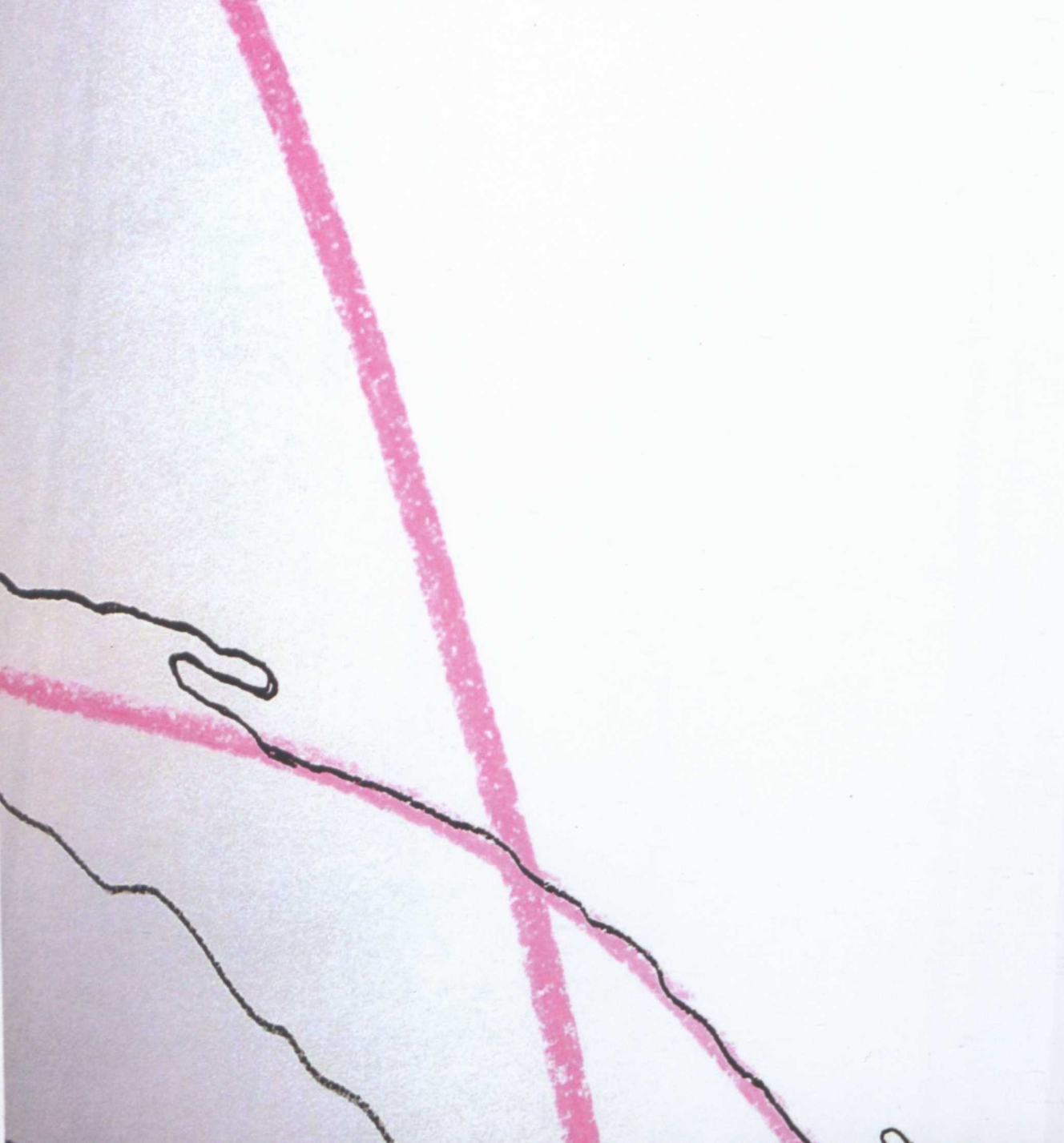
37 Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, trans. A. Smock (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), p. 28.

38 On the address to the other-woman as an encounter with originary feminine sexual difference, see Bracha L. Ettinger. 'Plaiting a Being-in-Severality and the Primal Scene', *Almanac of Psychoanalysis* 3 (2002), pp. 91–109; also '*Fascinance* and the Girl-to-m/Other Matrixial Feminine Difference', in G. Pollock (ed.), *Psychoanalysis and the Image* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 60–93.

Line by Line

Working through / Drawing with . . .

Paula Farrance

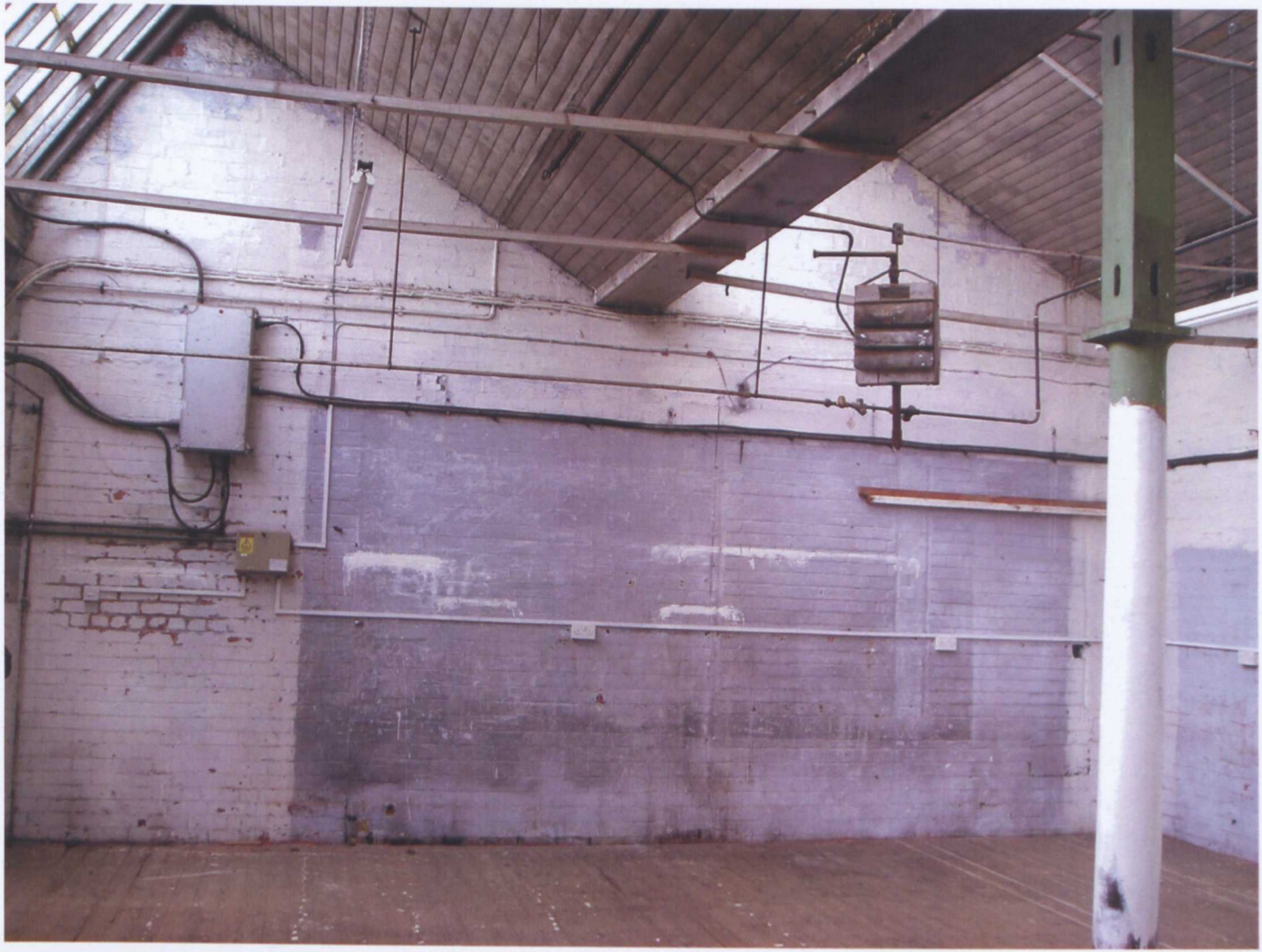


Appendix 7

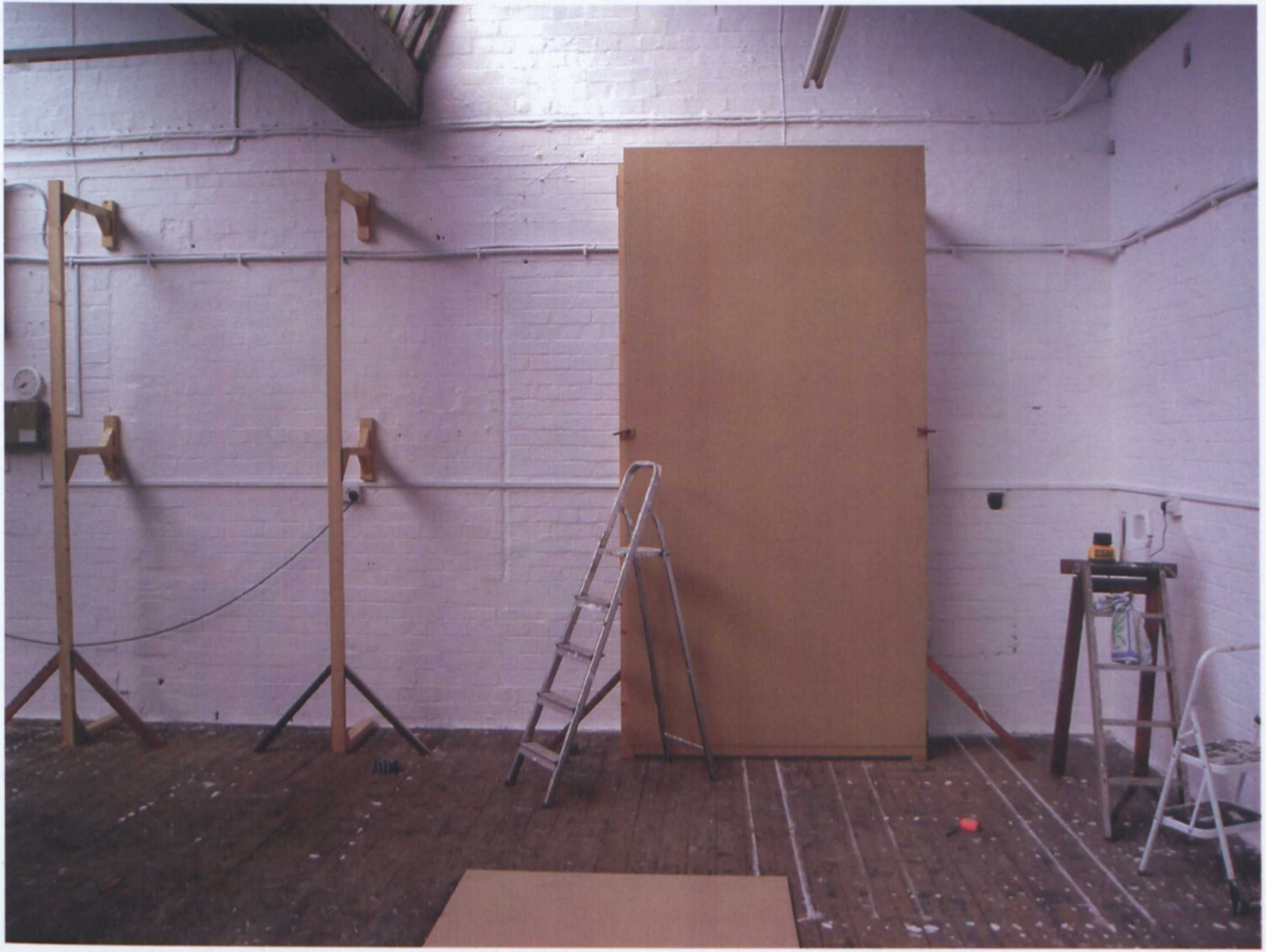
51 AFF

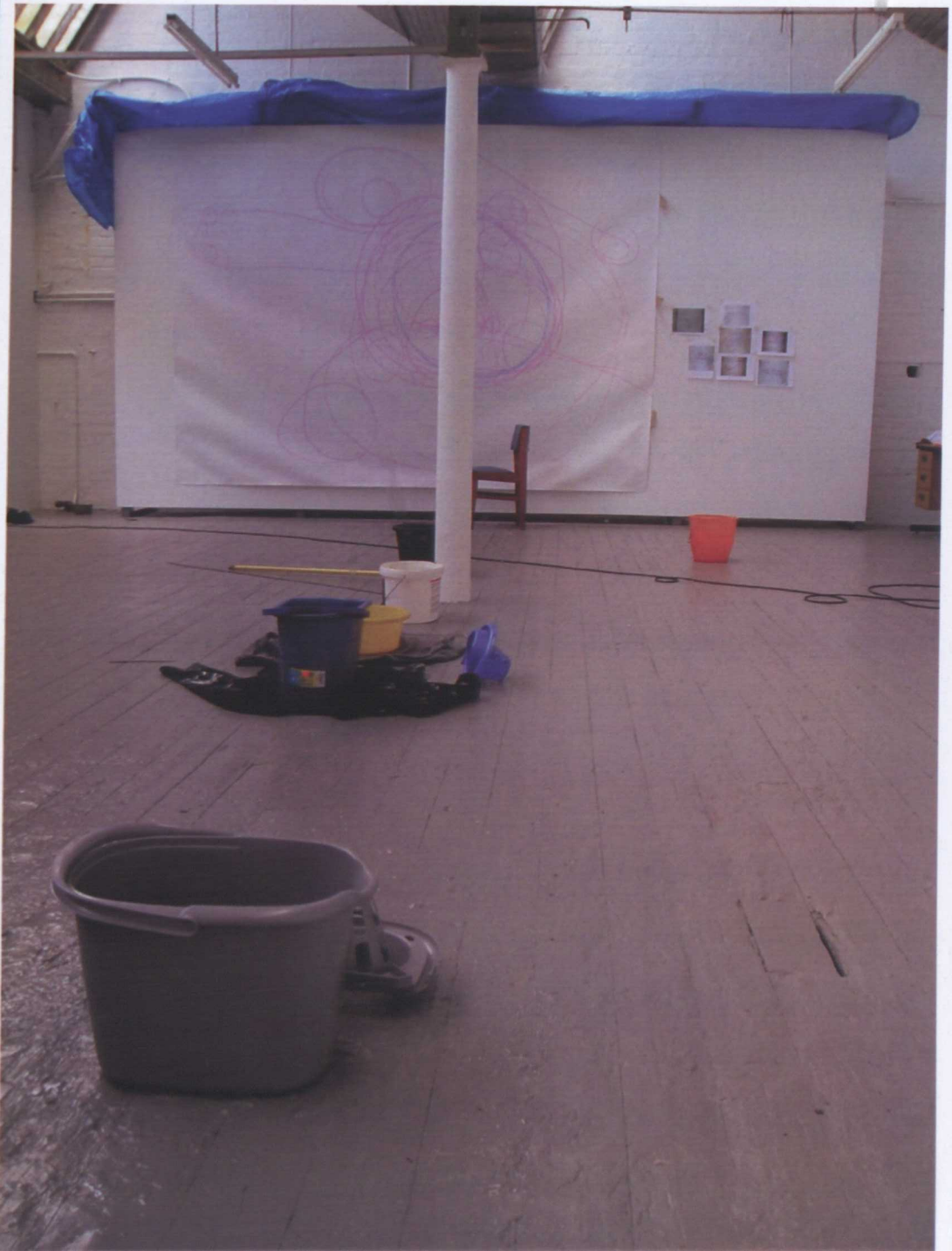
Paula Farrance


FIRE EXIT
Push bar to open

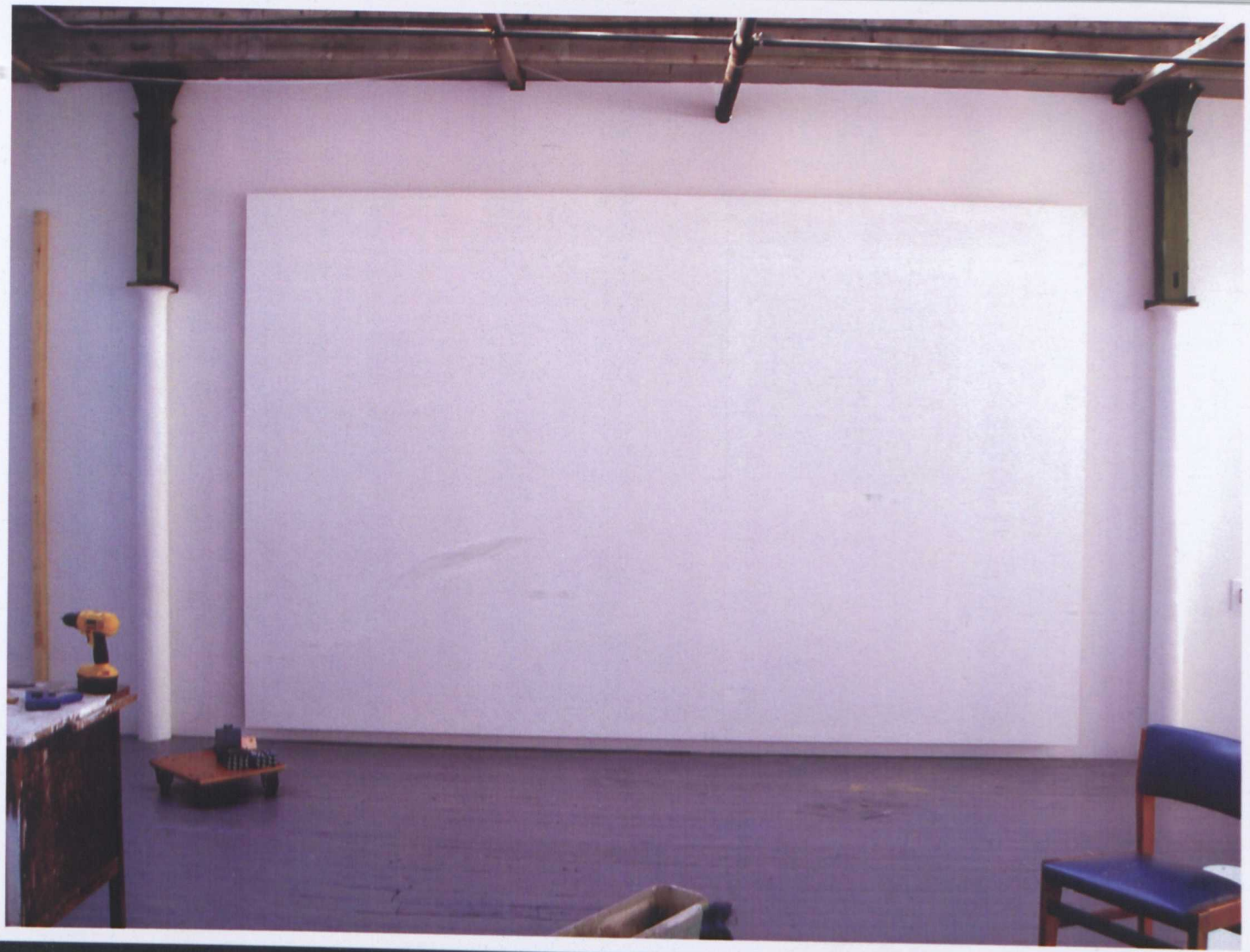


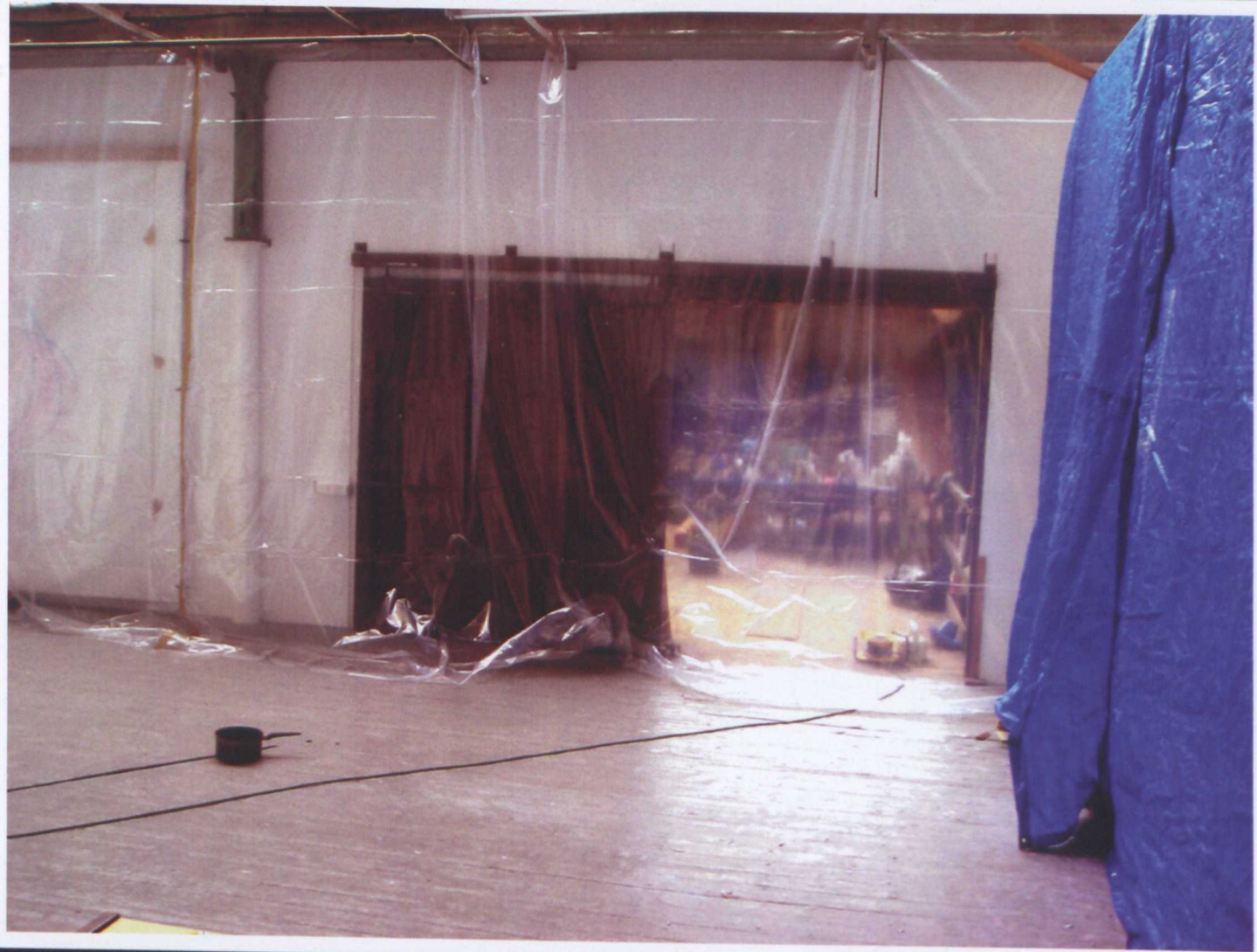

FIRE PRECAUTIONS

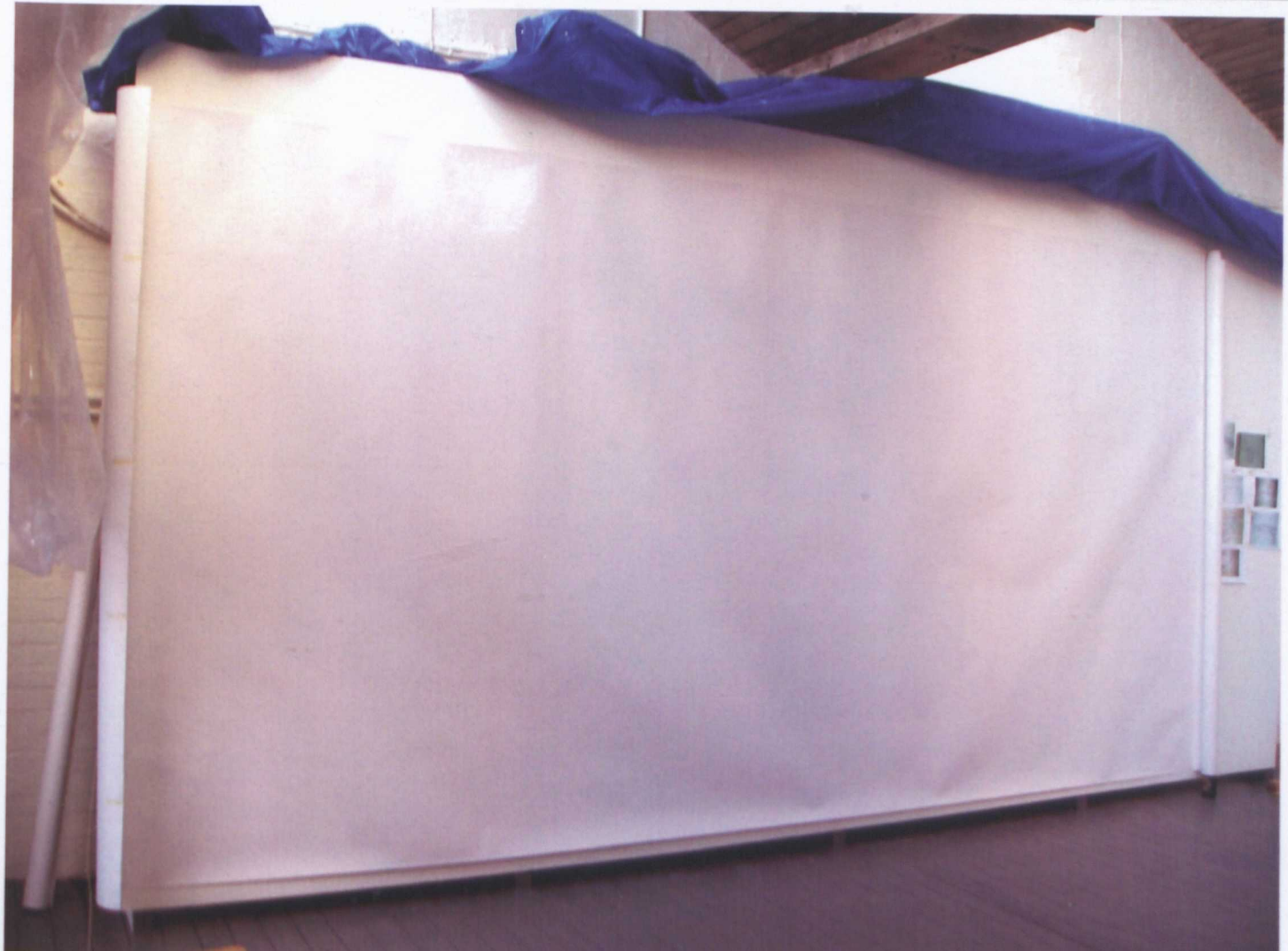


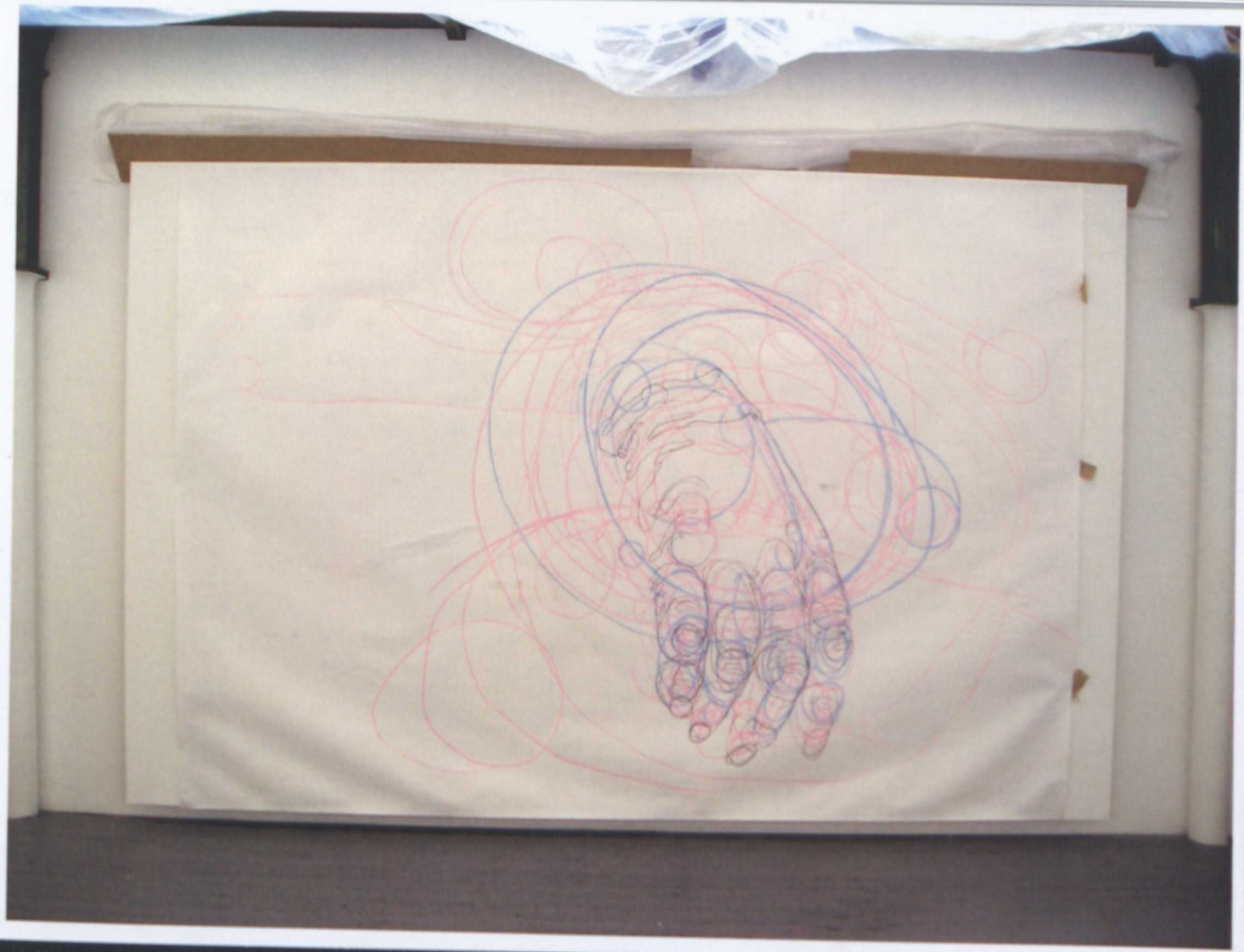


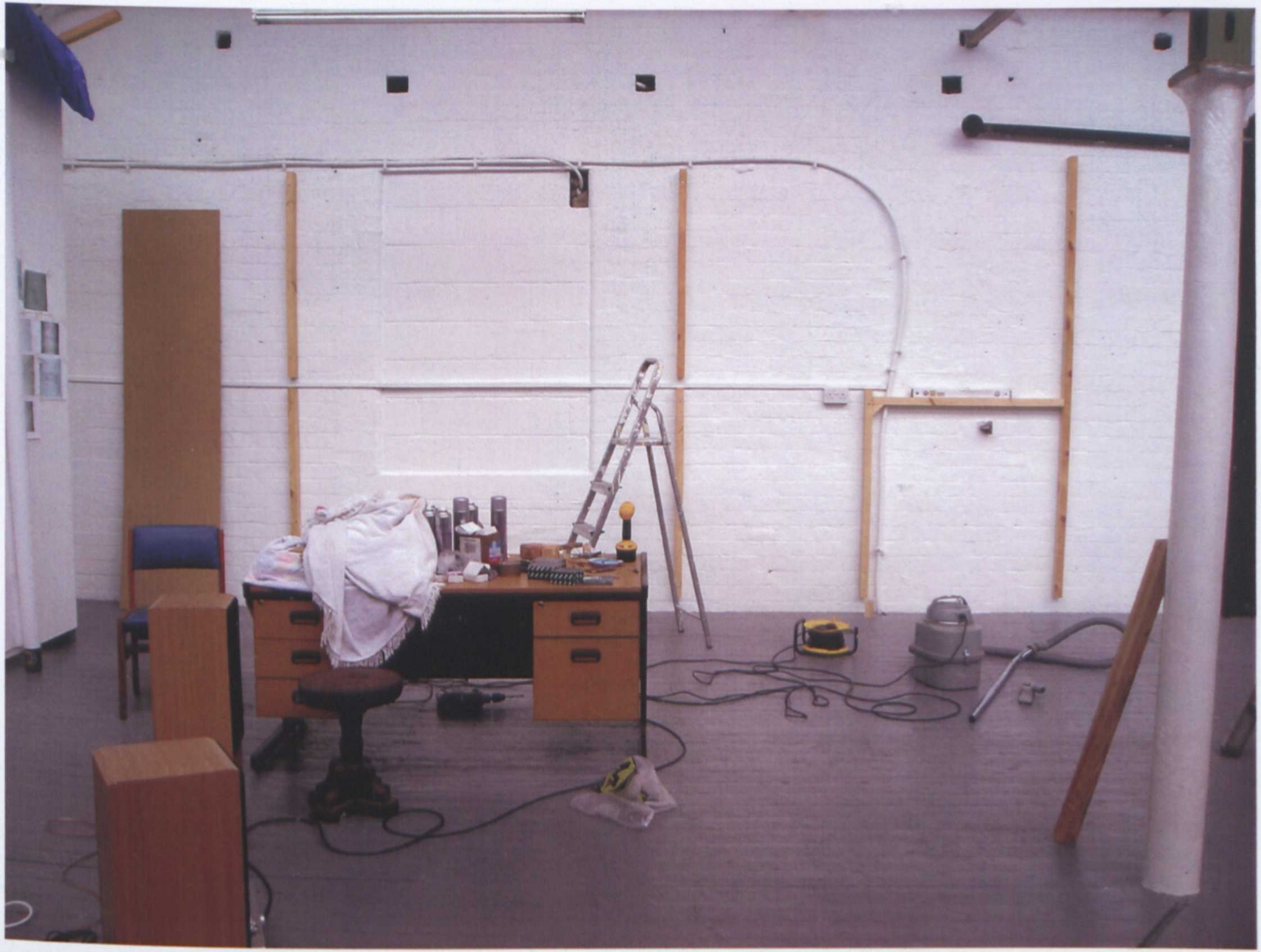

DEWALT
POWER SHOP

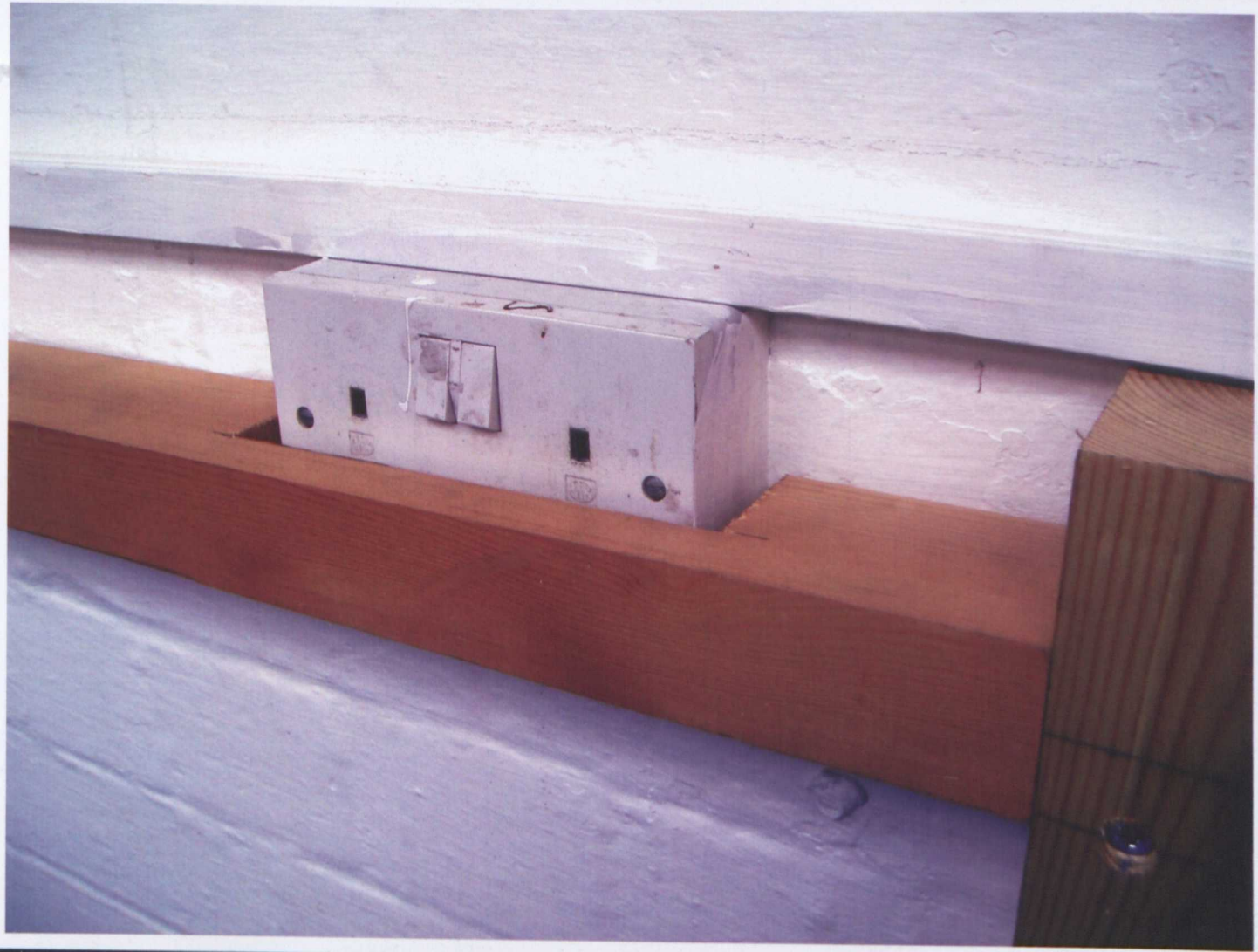


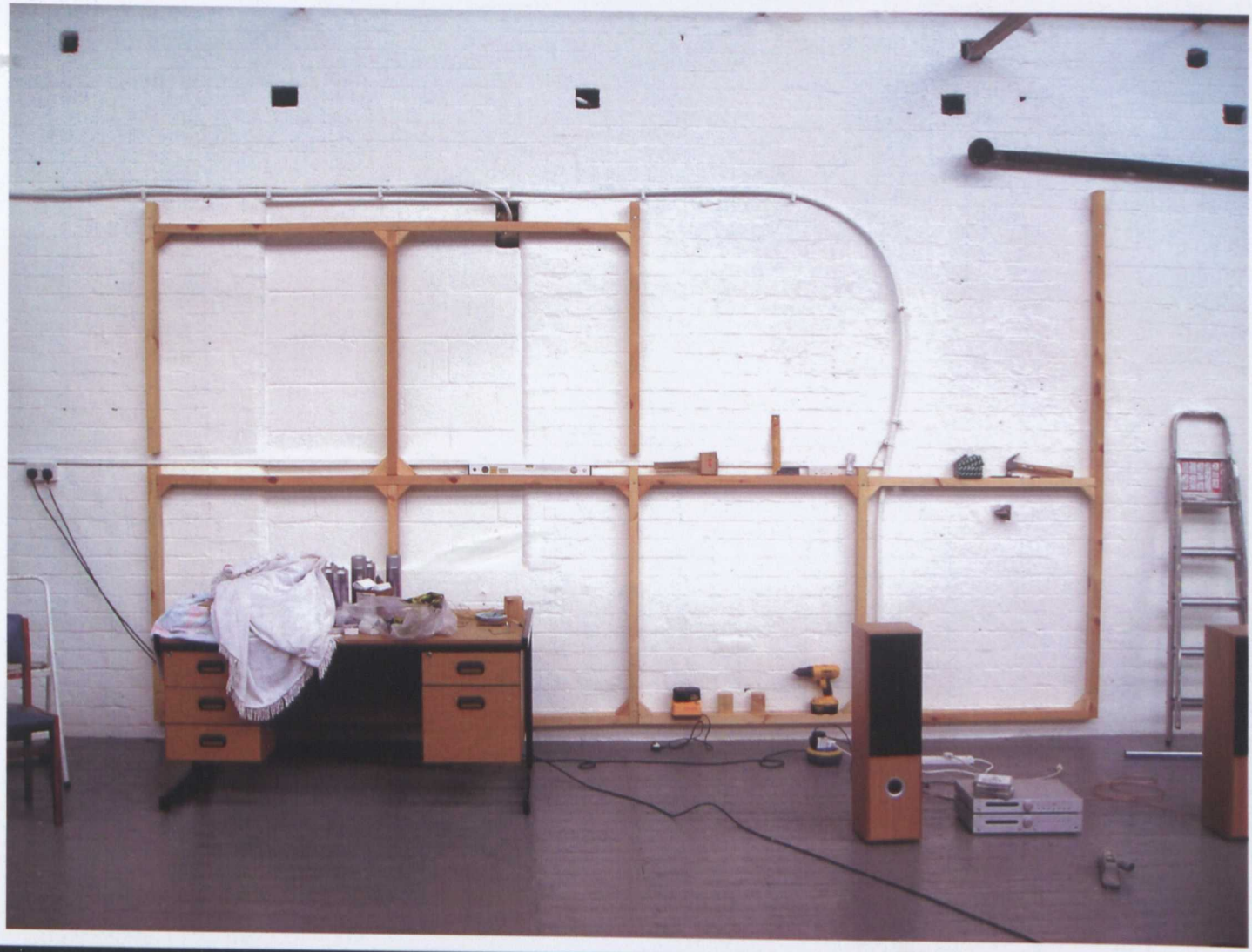


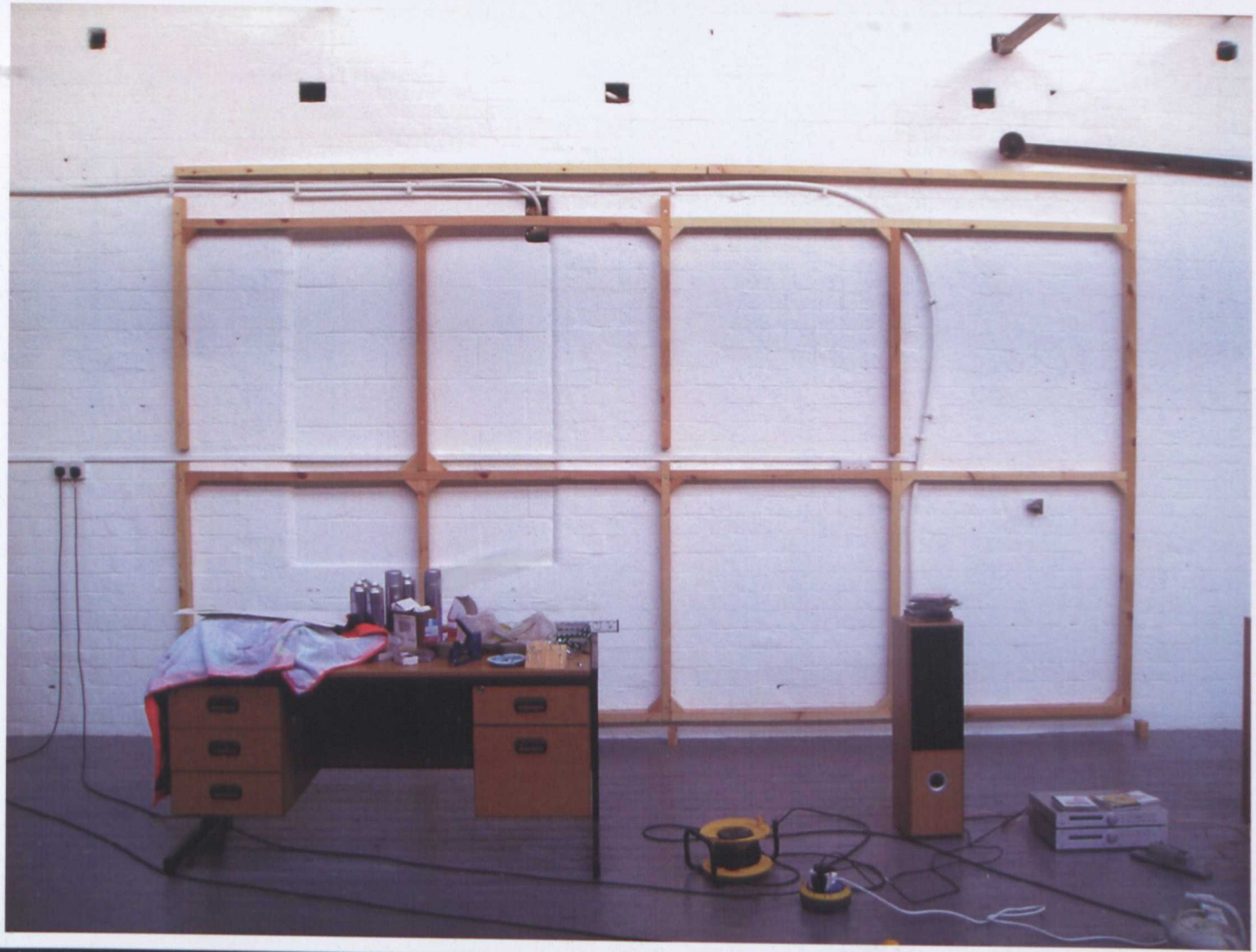


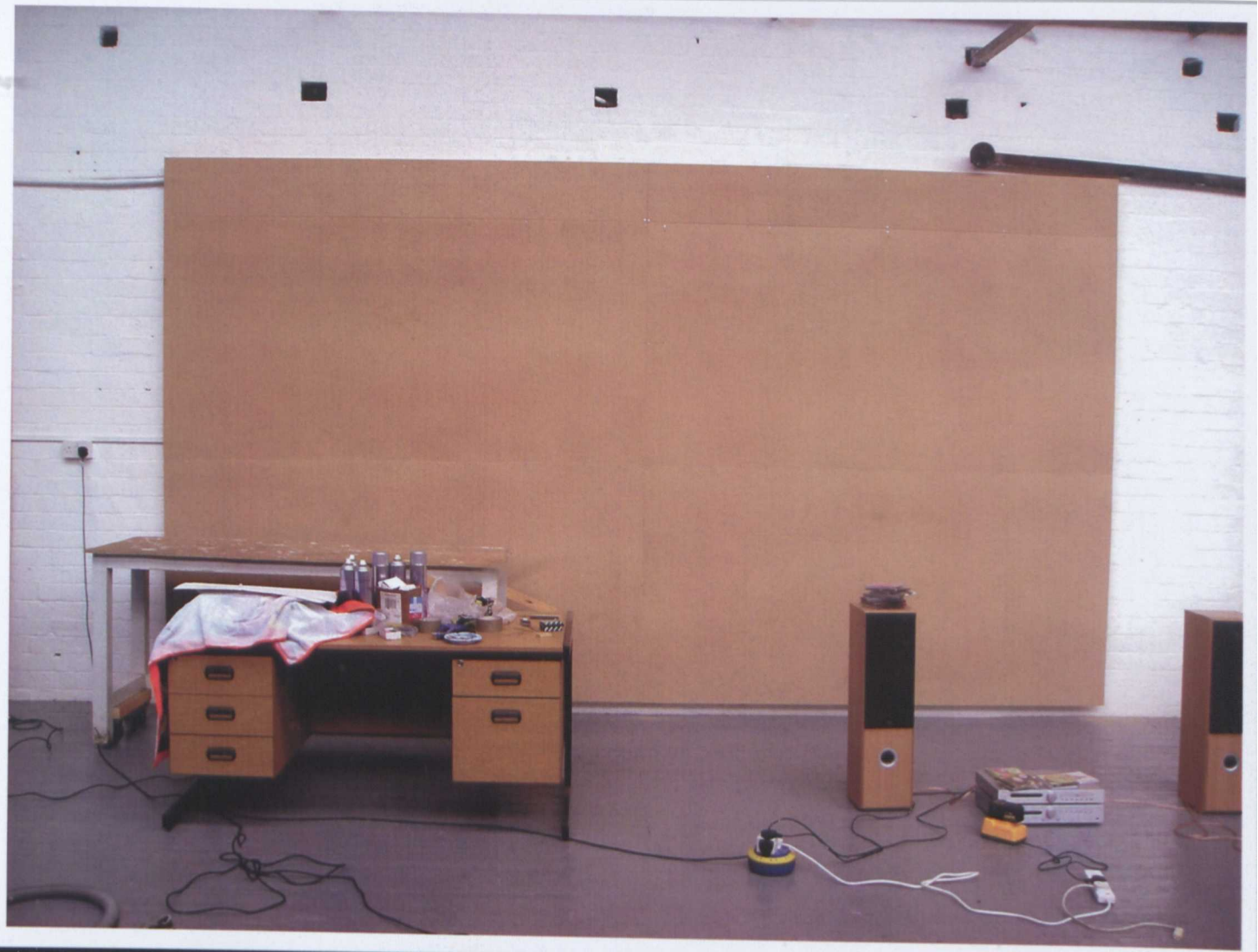


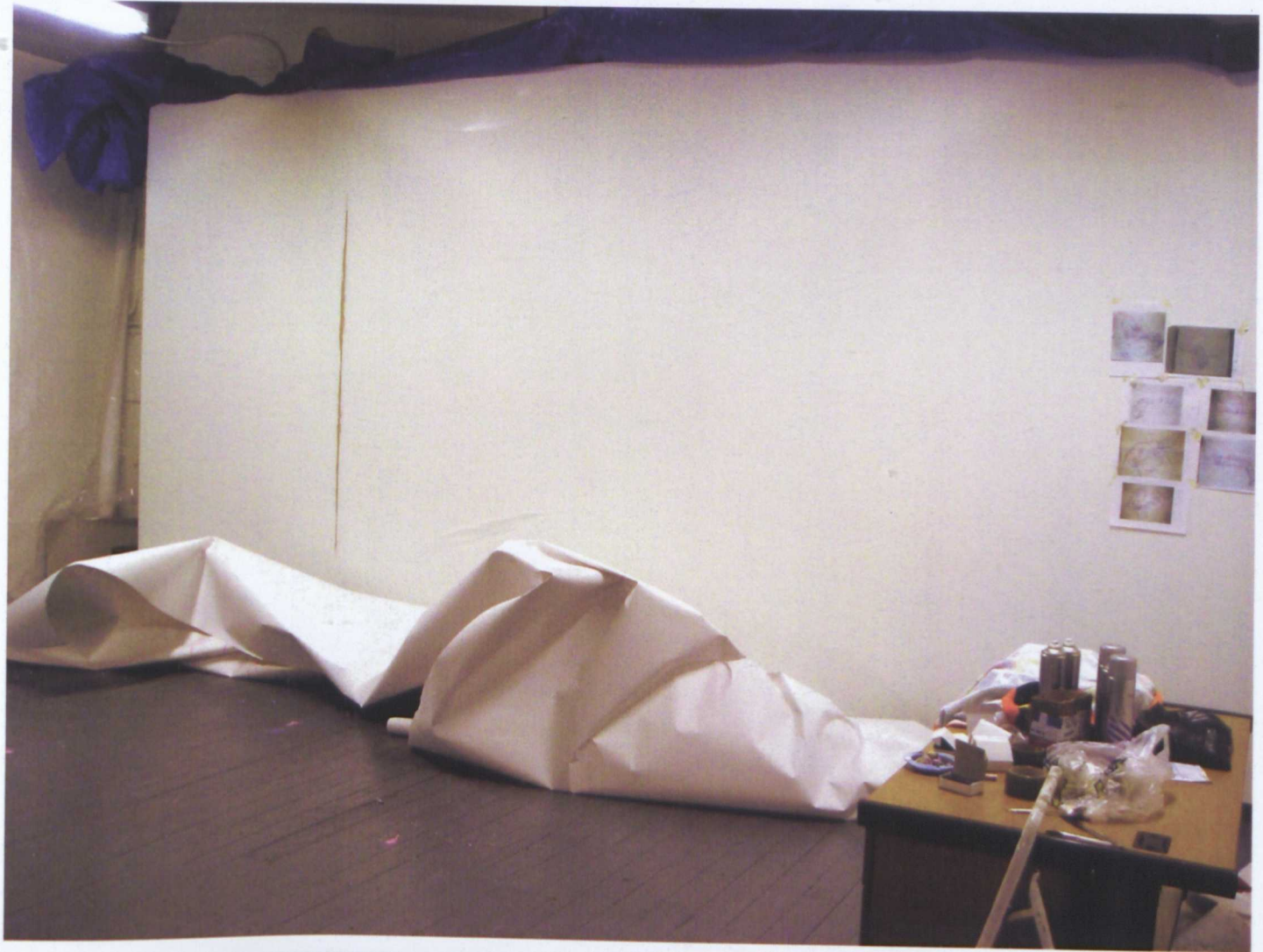


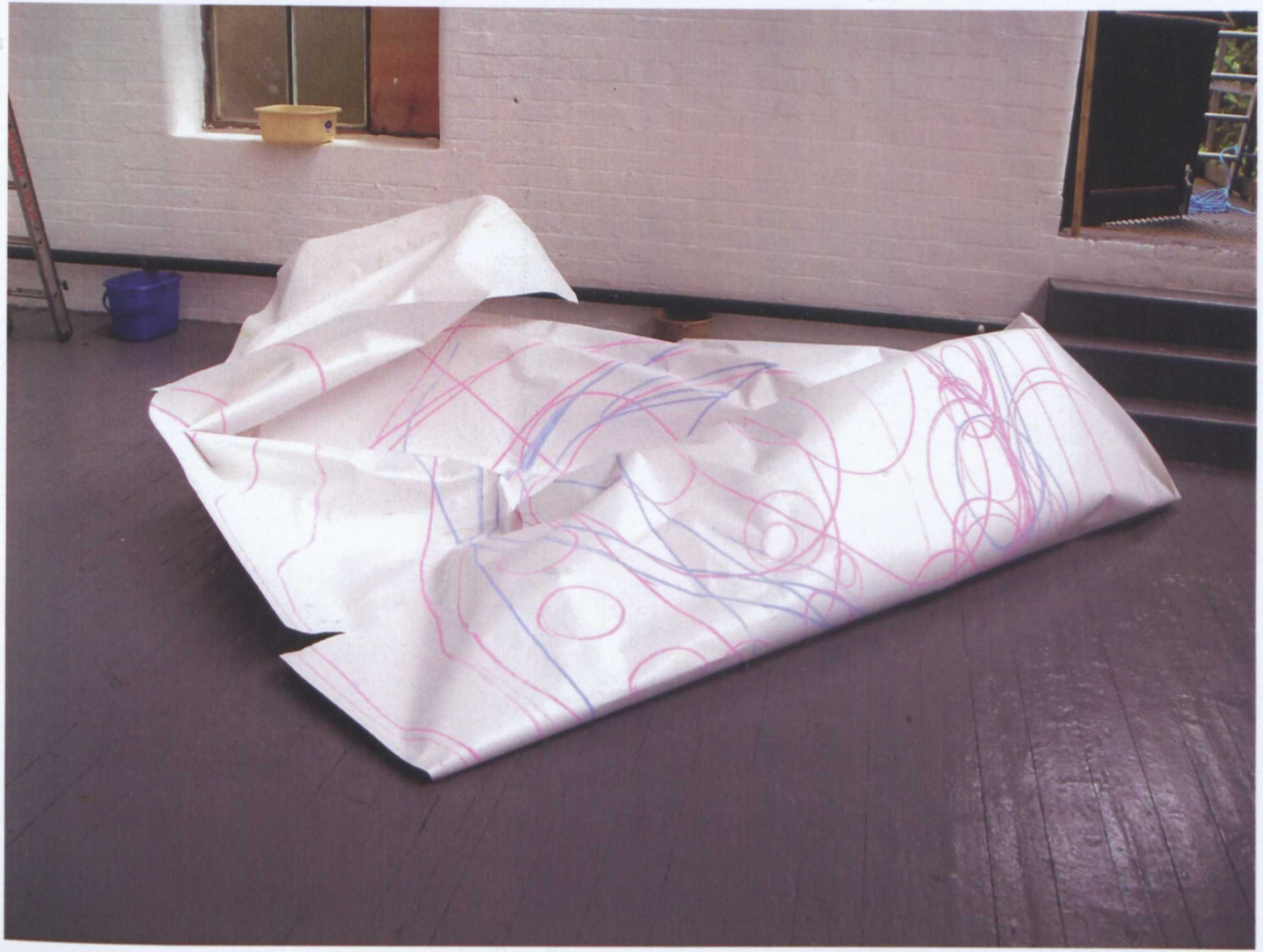


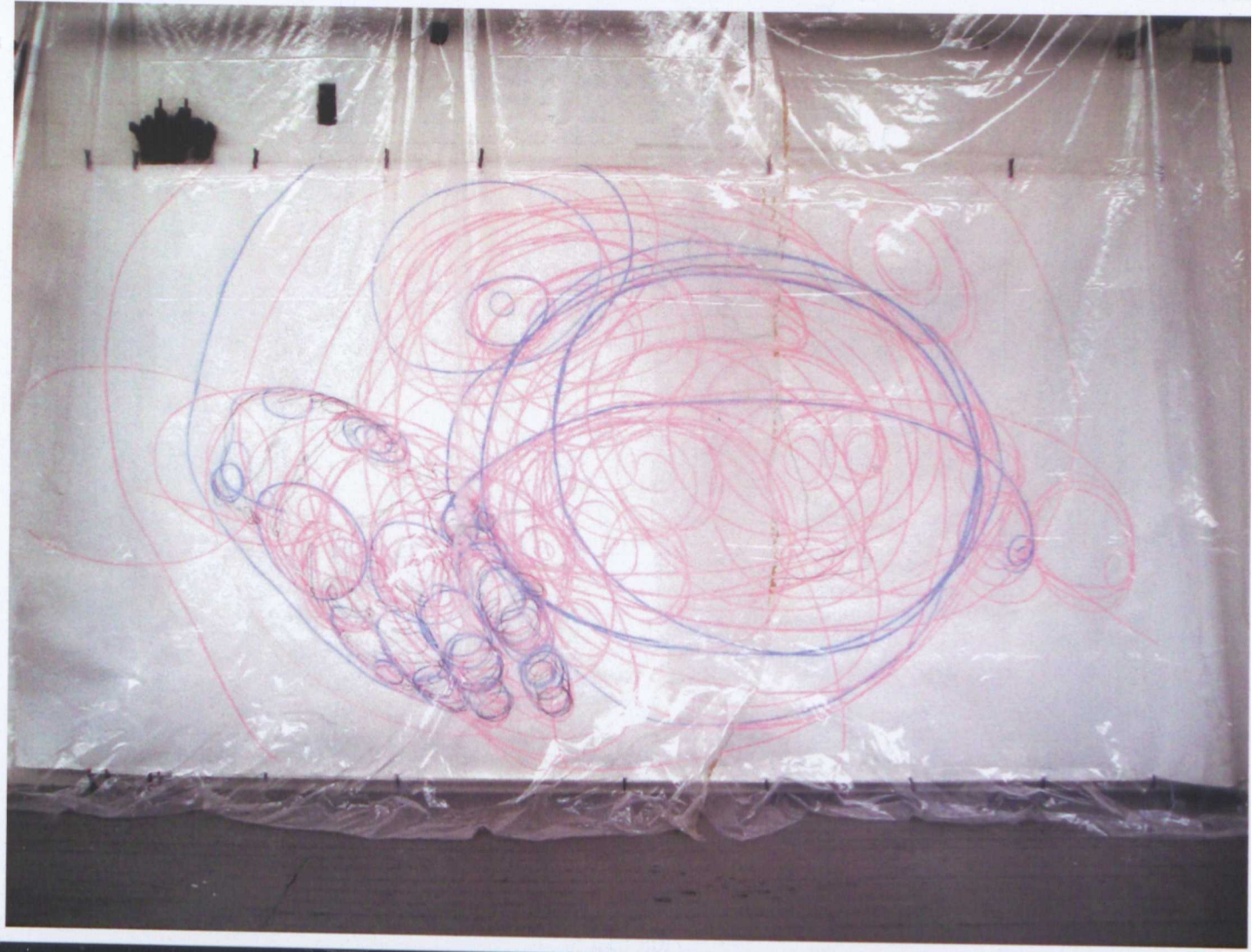


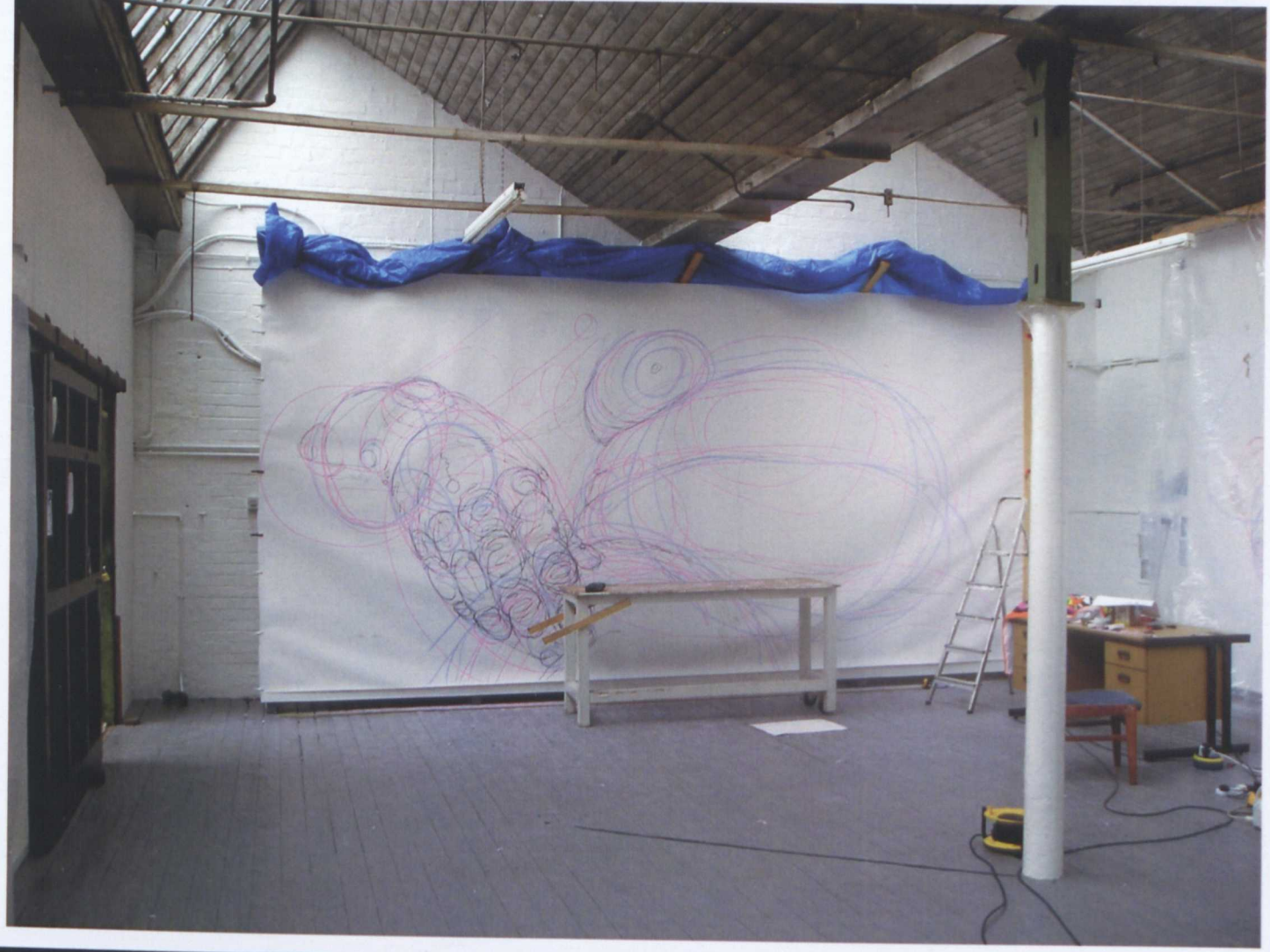


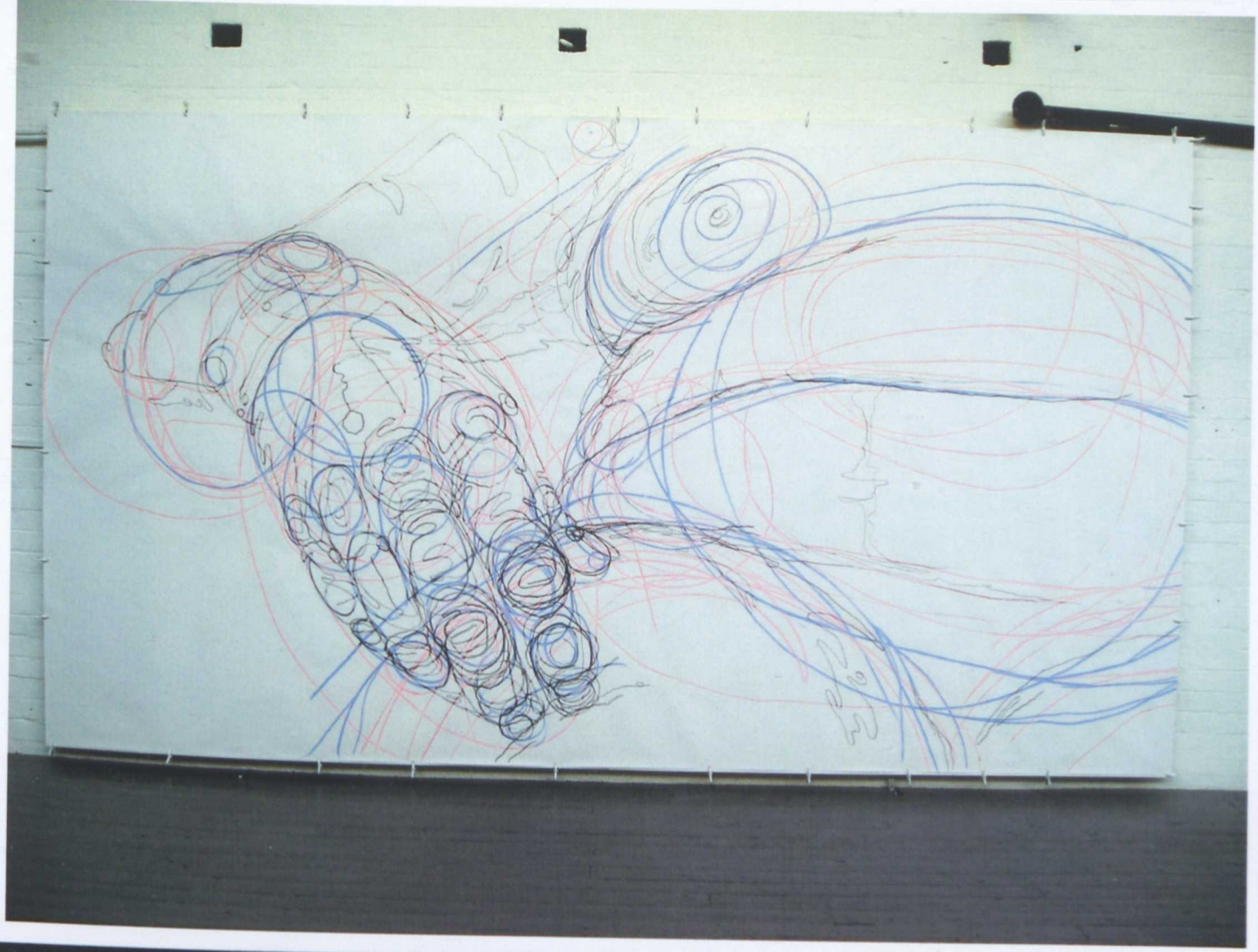




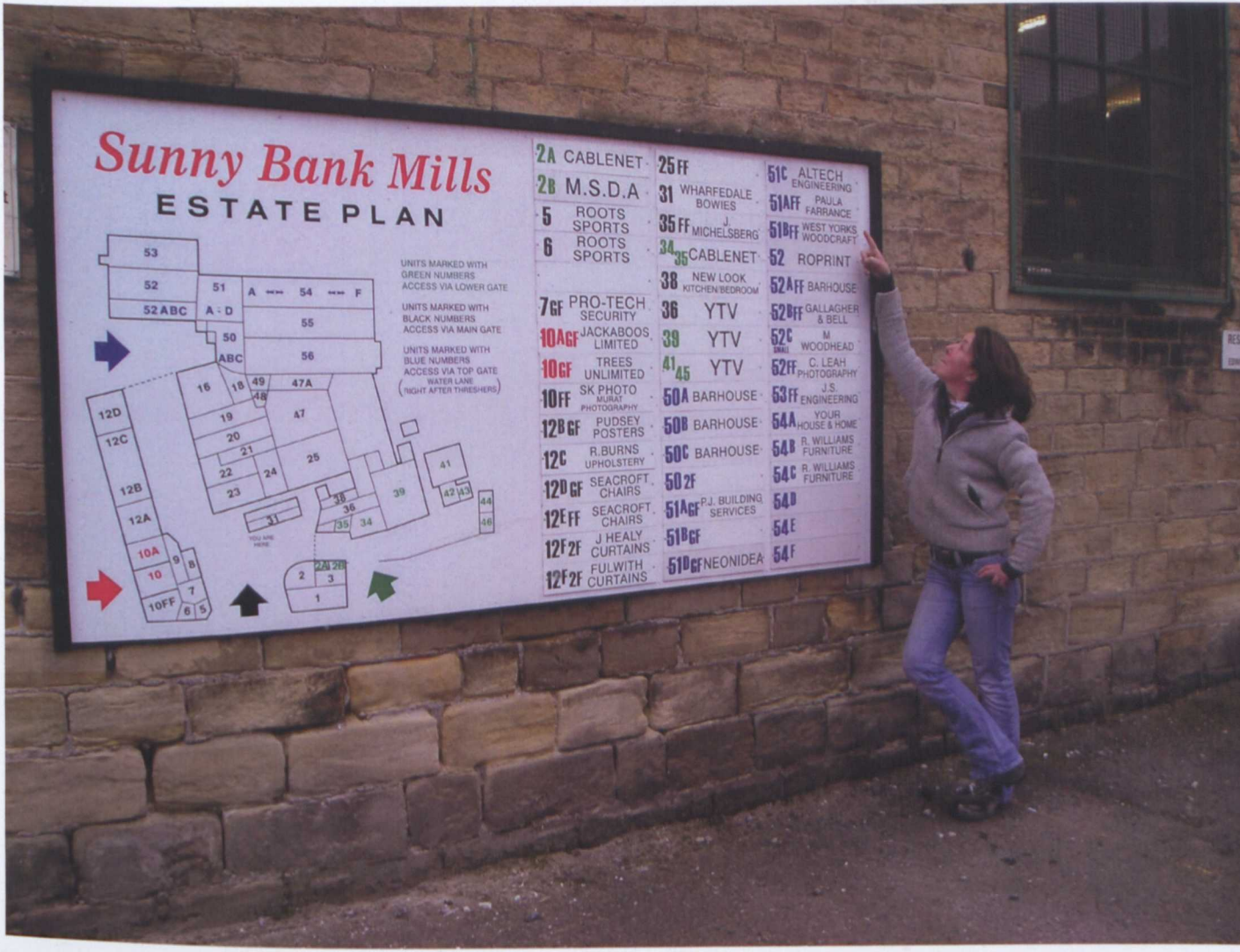




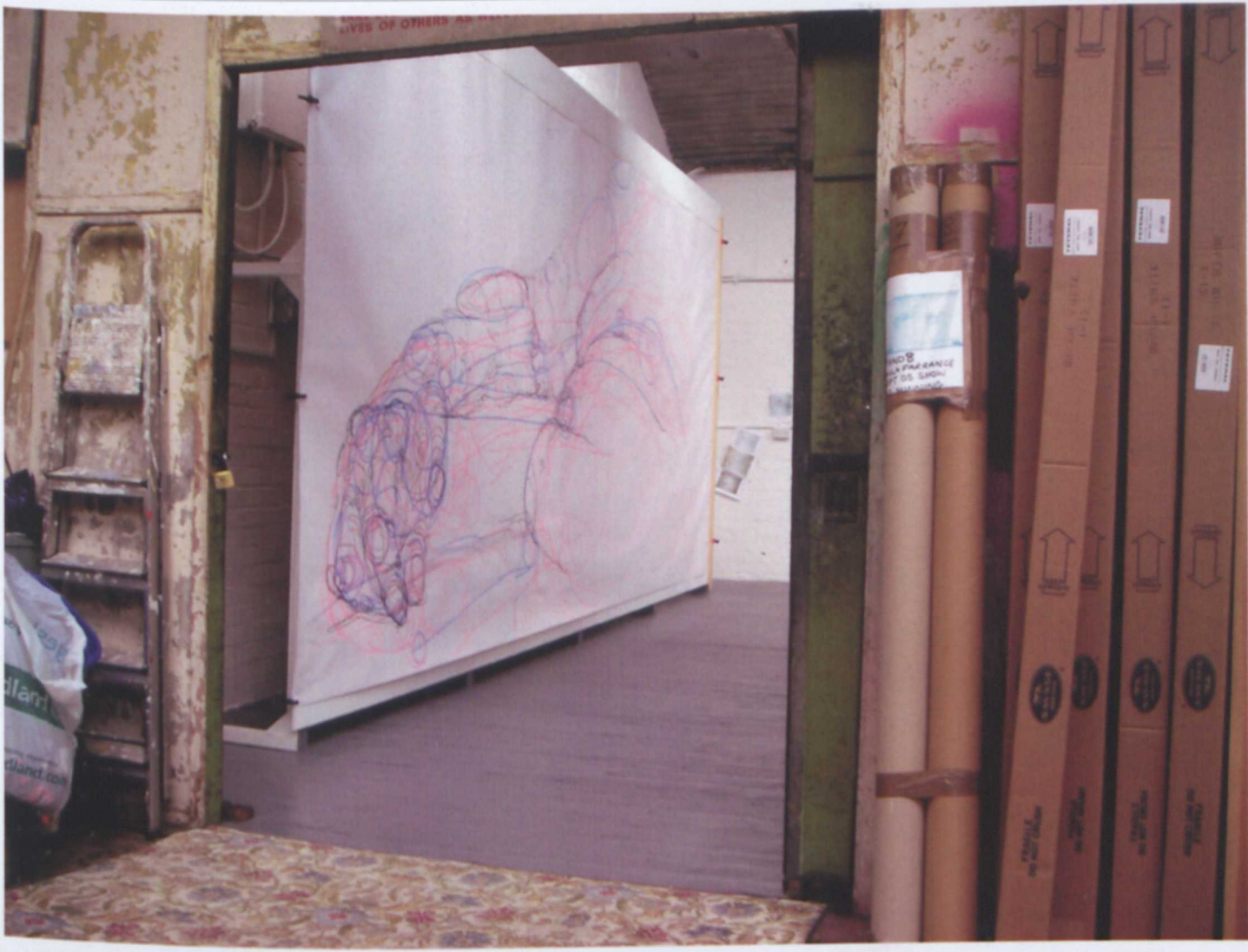


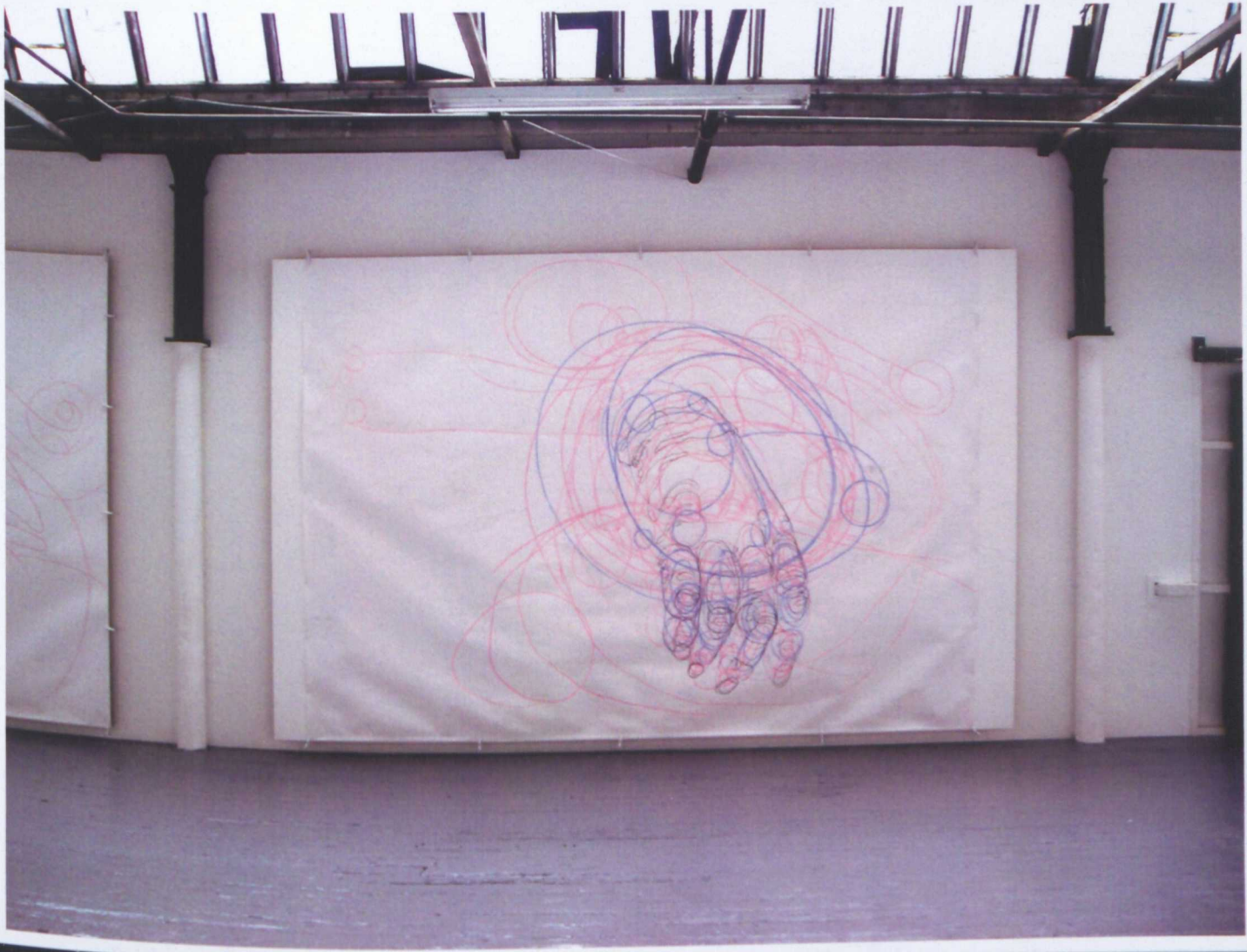


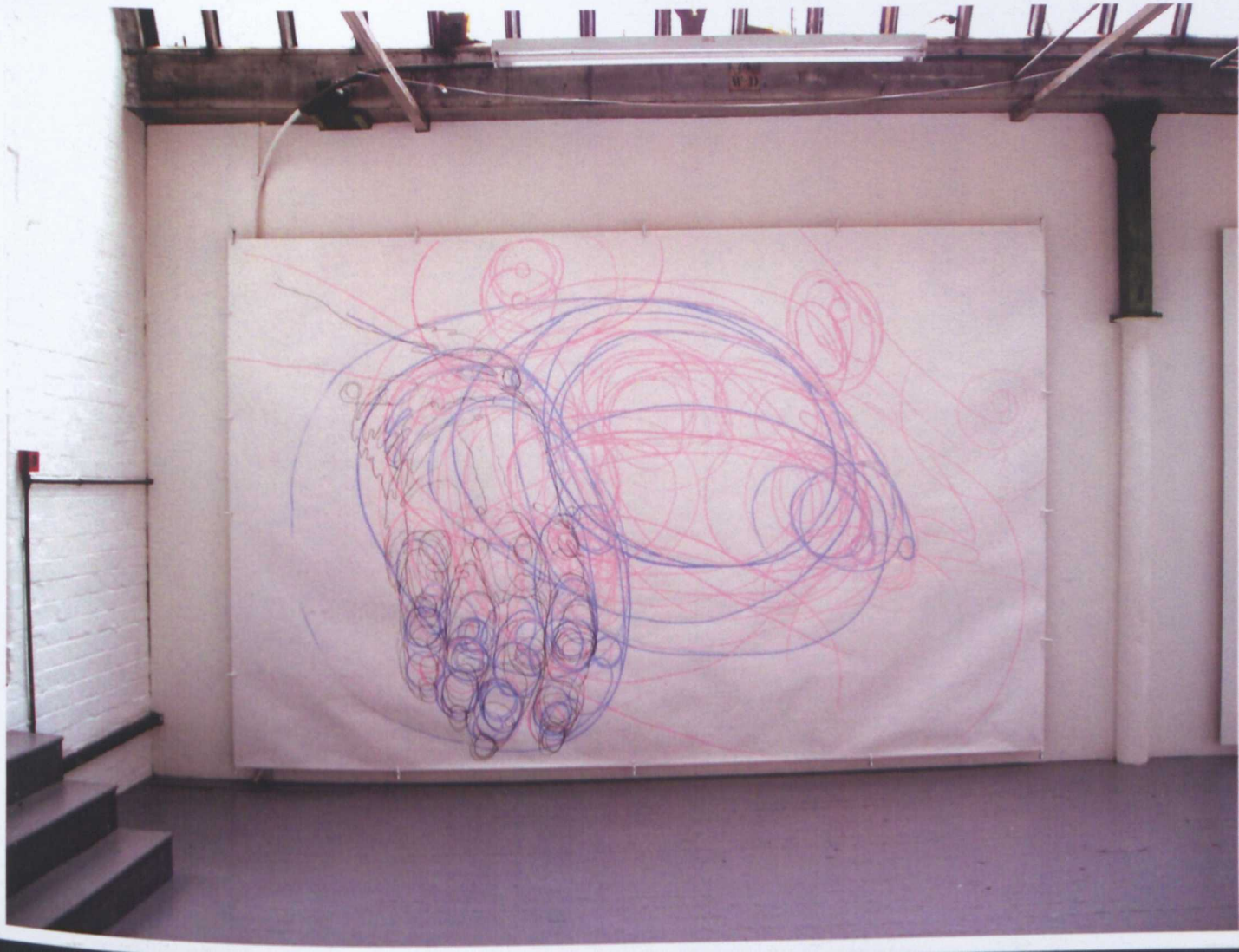

FIRE PRECAUTIONS
EMPLOYEES ARE WARNED AGAINST THE POSSIBLE DANGER OF FIRE, AND IT IS THE DUTY OF ALL PERSONS TO MAKE THEMSELVES FULLY CONVERSANT WITH THE MEANS OF EXIT, IN THE EVENT OF SUCH AN EMERGENCY ARISING.
HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS ARE ASKED TO GIVE FULL CO-OPERATION AND TO SEE THAT EMPLOYEES IN THEIR RESPECTIVE SECTIONS ARE FULLY ACQUAINTED IN THIS MATTER.
AUDIBLE WARNING WILL BE GIVEN IN THE EVENT OF AN OUTBREAK, AND AT ALL TIMES, EXITS MUST BE KEPT CLEAR OF OBSTRUCTION.
RECENT OUTBREAKS OF FIRE HAVE HAD DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES, AND IT IS WITH A VIEW OF REDUCING THESE DANGERS TO A MINIMUM, THAT WE ASK EMPLOYEES TO TAKE EVERY PRECAUTION AGAINST ENDANGERING THE LIVES OF OTHERS AS WELL AS THEMSELVES.

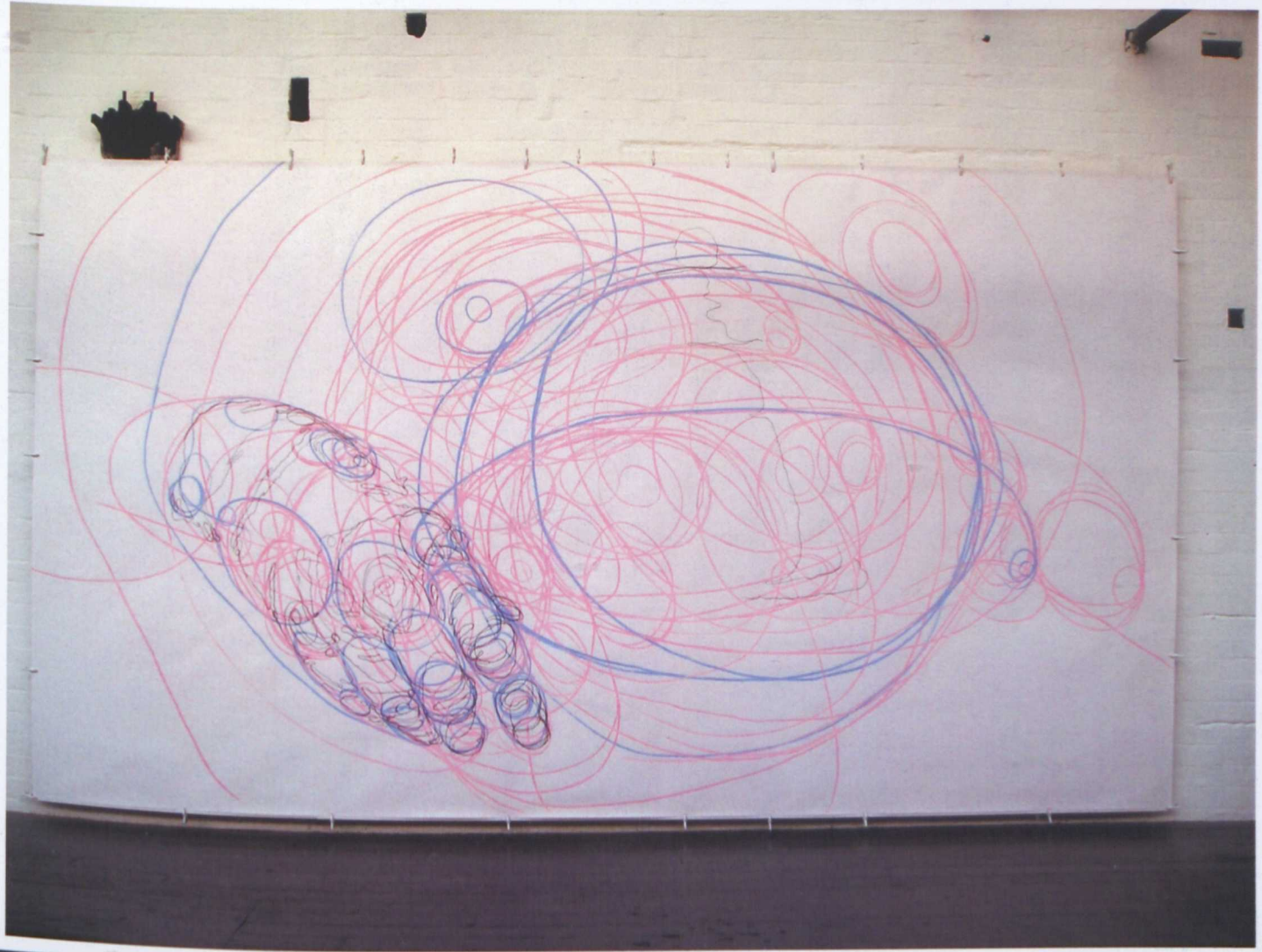

Sunny Bank Mills
ESTATE PLAN
UNITS MARKED WITH GREEN NUMBERS ACCESS VIA LOWER GATE
UNITS MARKED WITH BLACK NUMBERS ACCESS VIA MAIN GATE
UNITS MARKED WITH BLUE NUMBERS ACCESS VIA TOP GATE WATER LANE (RIGHT AFTER THRESHERS)
2A CABLENET
2B M.S.D.A
5 ROOTS SPORTS
6 ROOTS SPORTS
7GF PRO-TECH SECURITY
10AGF JACKABOOS LIMITED
10GF TREES UNLIMITED
10FF SK PHOTO MUMAT PHOTOGRAPHY
12BGF PUDSEY POSTERS
12C R.BURNS UPHOLSTERY
12DGF SEACROFT CHAIRS
12EFF SEACROFT CHAIRS
12F2F J HEALY CURTAINS
12F2F FULWITH CURTAINS
25FF
31 WHARFEDALE BOWIES
35FF J. MICHELSBERG
34 35 CABLENET
38 NEW LOOK KITCHEN/BEDROOM
36 YTV
39 YTV
41 45 YTV
50A BARHOUSE
50B BARHOUSE
50C BARHOUSE
502F
51AGF P.J. BUILDING SERVICES
51BGF
51DGF NEONIDEA
51C ALTECH ENGINEERING
51AFF PAULA FARRANCE
51BFF WEST YORKS WOODCRAFT
52 ROPRINT
52AFF BARHOUSE
52BFF GALLAGHER & BELL
52C M. WOODHEAD
52FF C. LEAH PHOTOGRAPHY
53FF J.S. ENGINEERING
54A YOUR HOUSE & HOME
54B R. WILLIAMS FURNITURE
54C R. WILLIAMS FURNITURE
54D
54E
54F

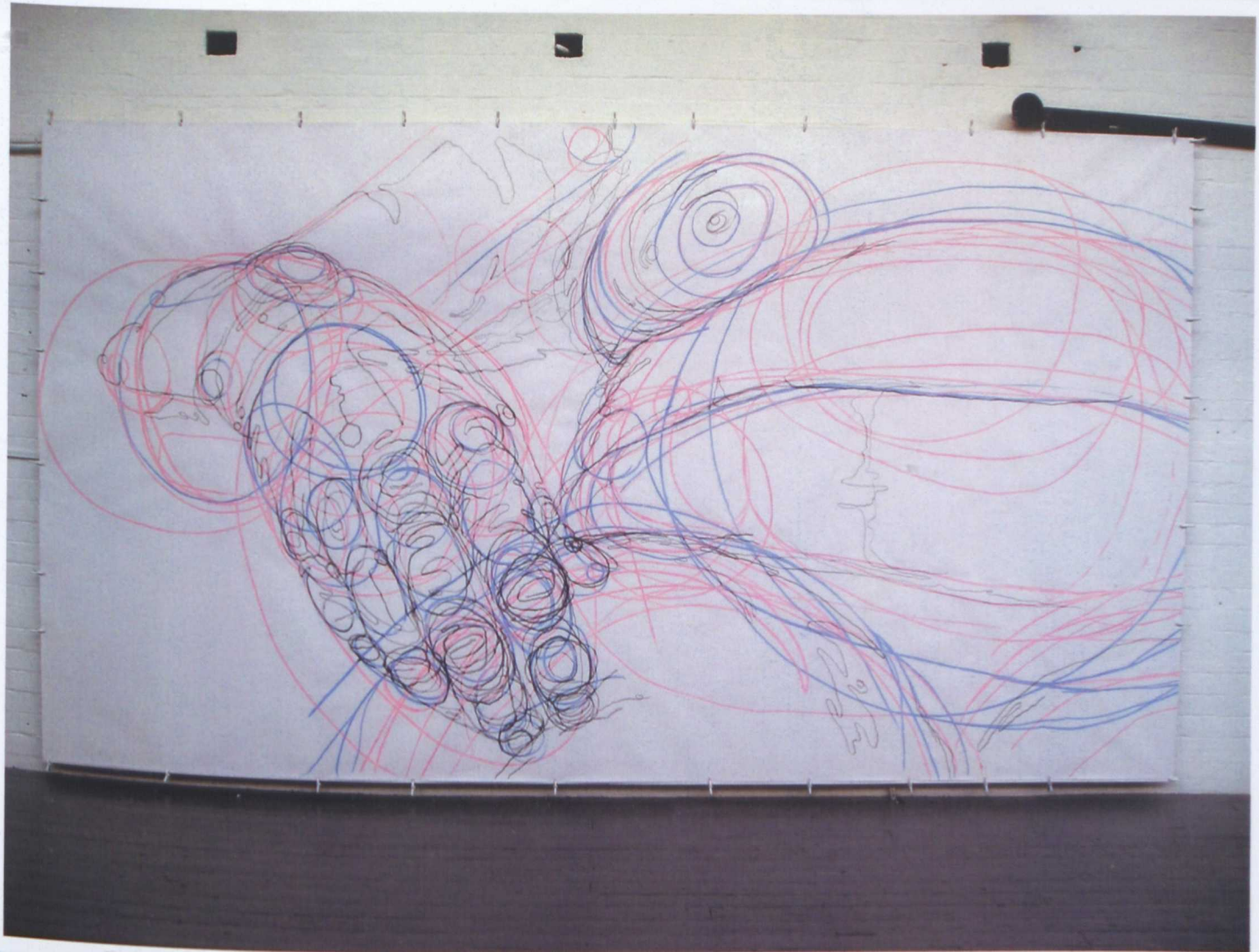

51 A FF STUDIO EXHIBITION
Drawings of Mum by Paula Farrance
9th November 2007
Sunny Bank Mills, Farsley LS28 5UJ

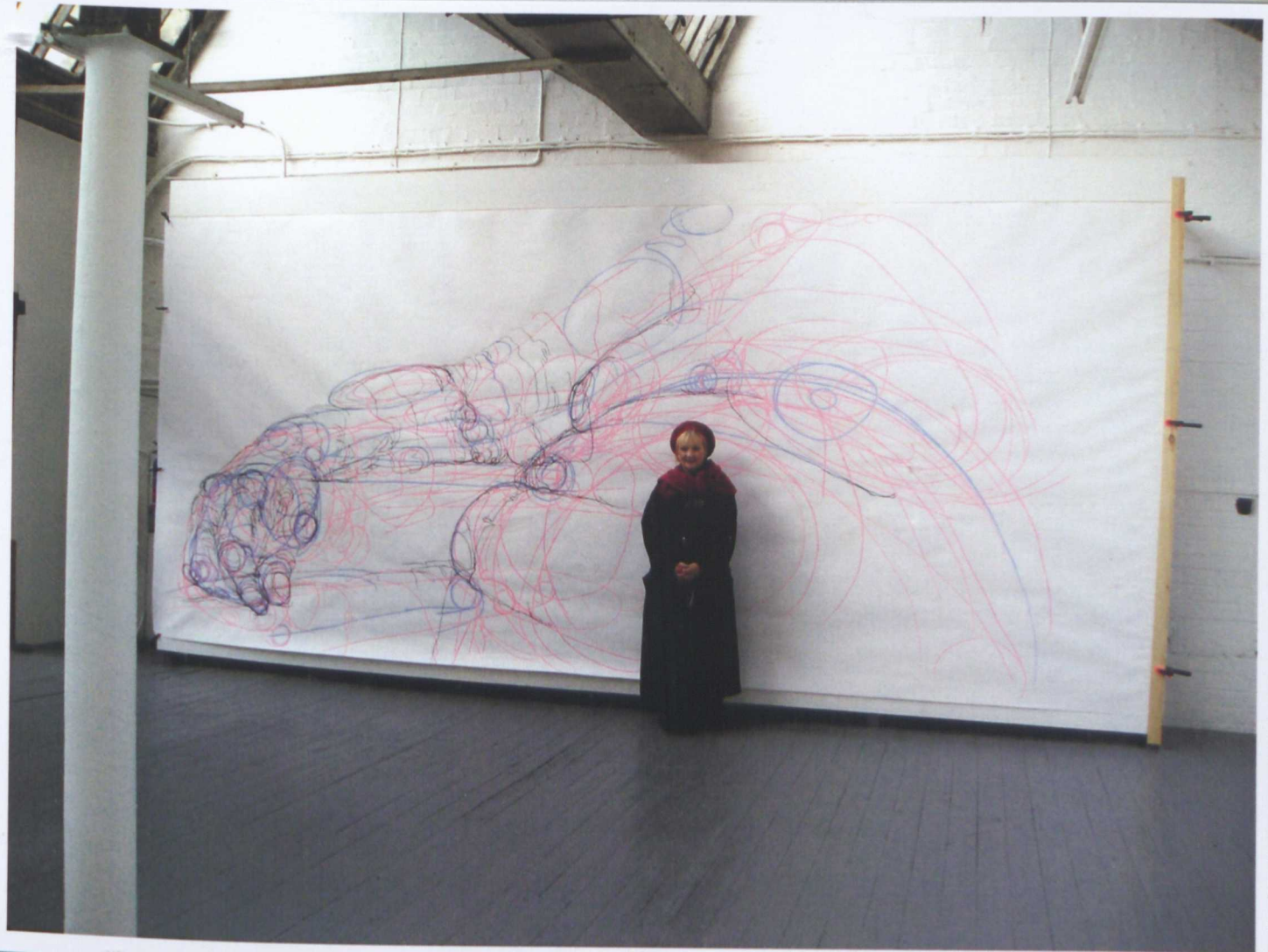


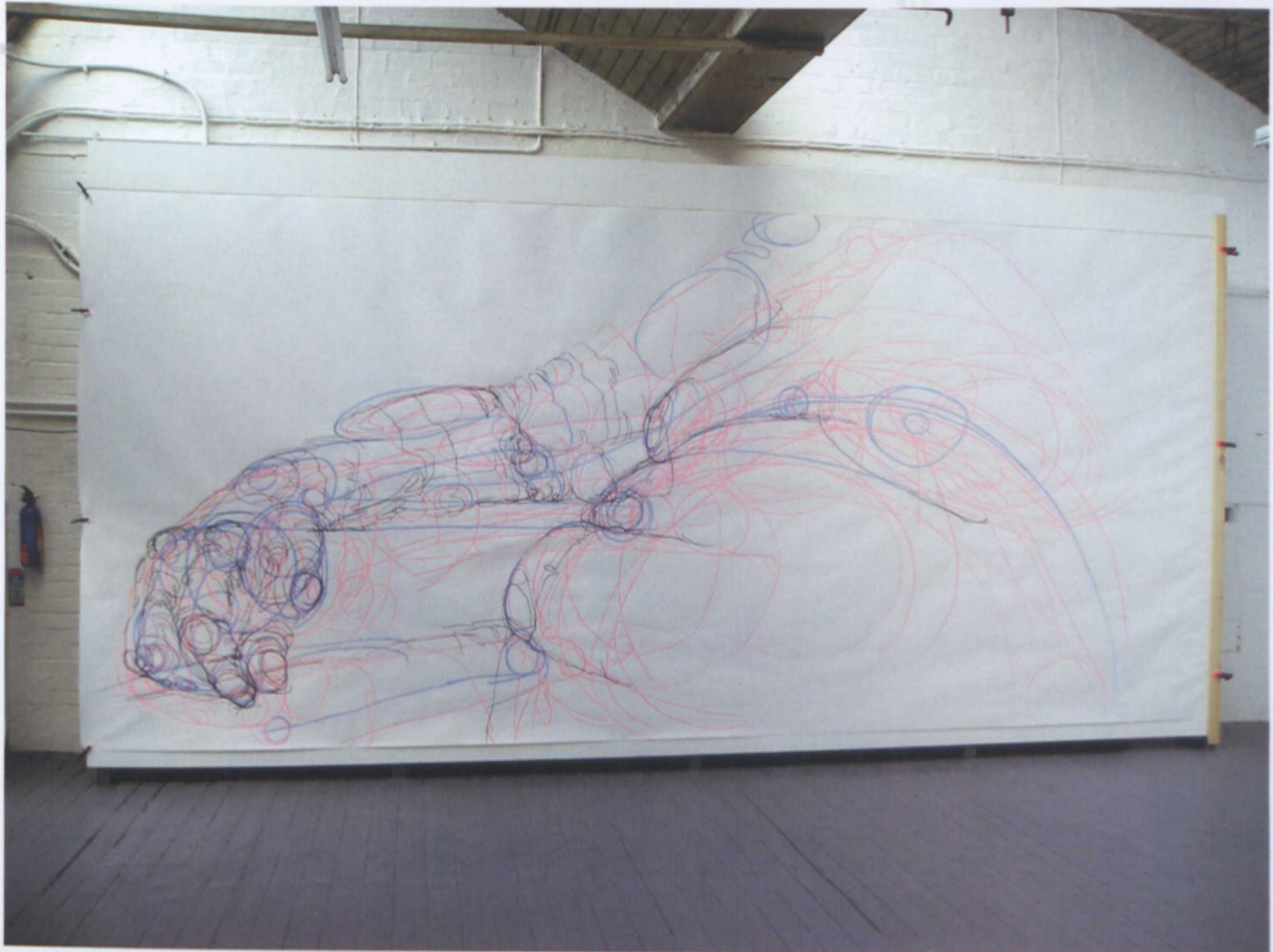


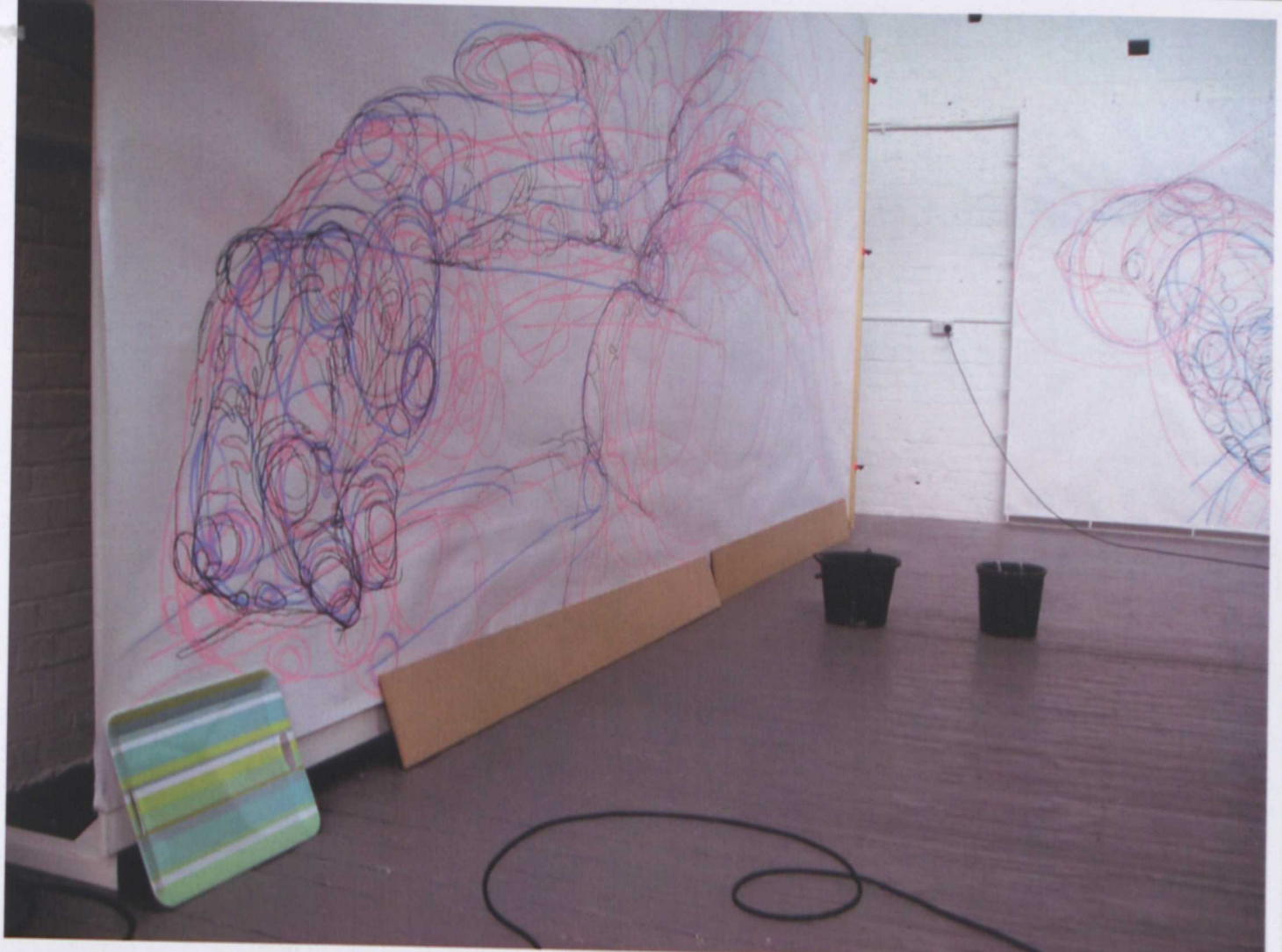


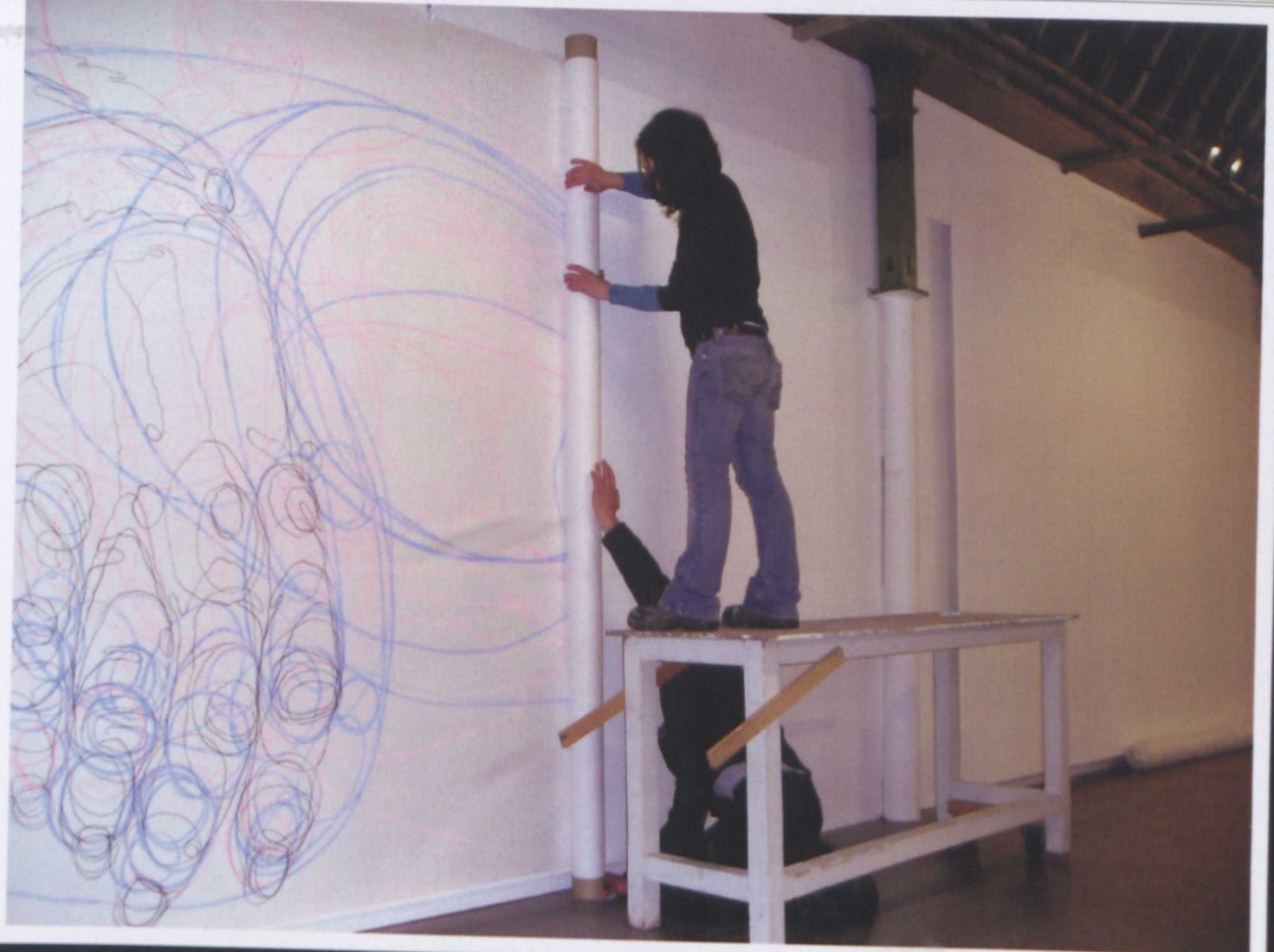













FIRE PRECAUTIONS