

Roomination by Hannah Jo Goffe-wood (GFFHAN002)

Artist Statement

My father used to paint our windows for privacy instead of buying curtains. How is the home affected by physical manifestations of trauma? I think most of us have moments when we feel like the roof is caving in, and we don't have enough hands to hold it or catch the falling pieces. In this body of work, I want to show what it's like to freeze-frame that moment. From one point of view, we see ourselves trying to achieve the impossible, and from another, we see all the pieces suspended in the air, in their out-of-place spaces. The temporal nature and juxtaposition of endurance and impermanence interests me. There is a boundary between the two that breeds a sense of artificial peace of mind. My goal was to empathetically replace the othering of trauma with solidarity and recognition.

In my body of work, the house stands as a metaphor for the self. As the audience passes through the space, I expect people to uniquely relate to different works. However, the overarching feeling that there is something holding you back, not of your own volition, is omnipresent. Through becoming aware of the spaces we inhabit and the ways in which we interact with them, I imagine what it would be like for one's own temperament and personal, homely secrets to spill out at the seams and announce themselves in a world with no curtains or painted windows. I hope the audience gets to pass through the space and gain a sense of reverence for the way in which we occupy the spaces we live in, and how they are altered by our past experiences. There's no place like home.

Curatorial devices in the Home

have grounded the forms of my works to relate back to a familiar sense of home. I have carefully looked at the curatorial strategies used in the home and how I might utilise these strategies within the gallery space. Artworks are presented on tables or shelves that echo the home space in their practicality.

I decided against using white plinths and opted for furniture to display the pieces. The sound piece I created is played through a telephone which the audience must pick up and answer to hear it; the phone is placed on a phone table which prompts the viewer to sit and listen. I created a plinth (with spindle legs) the height of a coffee table in the shape of a giant sponge to present my photographic book on. A mantelpiece-height shelf holds a series of photographs in frames depicting chests of drawers with their bottom drawers removed.

Paint Colour

All furniture pieces, present in the space, have been repainted in wood primer. All imperfections have been coated in the pink primer. The dull pink colour of the primer reminded me of calamine lotion. This lotion is used to soothe chickenpox, sunburn, insect bites and other common childhood ailments. Coating the home in this pink hue is an attempt to soothe the space and treat the irritated itchiness of a traumatic home.

Primer, conceptually, also made me consider the home as a transitional space that we pass through, particularly in our childhoods; all possessions and spaces are inconceivable and impermanent. We packed our lives into suitcases and moved to a different continent, which meant we left almost everything behind in the lost home. The idea that one can create or adopt a new home instantaneously by naming and shaping it as one's own space has been a constant reassurance. The act of besmearing the pieces in this pink is embodying the act of claiming and rebuilding a home.

This House Has Many Hearts - Photographic Series- Three A1 prints

I had already worked with the concept of cleaning the home as a method of attempting to cleanse a sullied space of trauma, but I also wanted to relate this act of scrubbing clean to the body, and I did this in my photographic series of photocopy transfers on skin. The images on the skin appear rough and imperfect, as if there has been an attempt to erase the images, but they remain etched on and possess the skin. The fragmented nature of the transfer speaks to the wavering memory of situations we live through. The dark marks on the skin resemble stigmata, representing the communal pain a family lives through in a traumatic homespace. I photographed the transfers onto the calf of my grandmother, the back of my mother, and onto my stomach. When coupled with the transfers, you are able to see the impressions time has etched onto the skin of my mother and my grandmother. Printed in a large format, they resemble stained glass windows with icons of past histories.



Natural Disasters - Photo Book (A3 landscape)

I created a photobook to examine the “natural disasters” within the home. When we are disturbed in the homespace by a transgressor, homely domestic jobs fall by the wayside as we attempt to hold together the homespace as it caves in. This series came to me when considering the act of burning toast. Toast burnt and left blackened on the cutting board or in the toaster is a physical manifestation of distraction within the home. The smell of burnt toast hangs heavy in the air and is identifiable in the same way that someone can tell if

there has been an argument between two people. In any attempt to salvage the burnt toast by scraping off the scorched top layer, the dark crumbs scatter like shrapnel and coat the kitchen, likely surviving a wipe down of the counter. I sought to find these occurrences in the home, which are small in the grand scheme of things, but in the moment can feel like the end of the world.

Link to PDF of book:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CJx4xrz-hEEW8y5scAWO7F2gTKKB0kbF/view?usp=sharing>

Trifle - Photo Book (A4 portrait)

I stumbled across a medical study titled Washing Away Your Sins:

Threatened Morality and Physical Cleansing (Zhong & Liljenquist, 2006). The study coined the term “the Macbeth effect”. The principle is that, “a threat to one’s moral purity induces the need to cleanse oneself” (Zhong & Liljenquist, 2006;1451). Upon reading this study, I started to then view the act of cleaning the home as an attempt to rid the space of the trauma that took place within its walls. The act of scrubbing clean impurities, trying to escape the error or impurity, is a recurring theme throughout this body of work. I tore and stitched together sponges to create soft sculptures of houses. I photographed the soft sculptures within my home. In the book the sponges start off sullied and reemerge cleansed and retake their spaces within the home space. Book is displayed on a plinth giant sponge table with spindle legs.

Link to PDF of book:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VG12KqLSWH6ORh2x3n_RibQdWuneu0tZ/view?usp=sharing



Scrub Up - Installation of 40 scrubbing brushes

Throughout my project, I have used the constant motif of family photographs. Remembering the past is intangible, and one can easily get lost between reality and imagination. Family photographs act as evidence that these past realities did in fact exist. Family photos can also act as a tally recording who was present and where you were most frequently. I have enjoyed working with dislodging the family members from the homespaces, isolating and examining the homespaces present in the background of family photographs. Isolating elements allows one to reconsider a photo one may have seen hundreds of times and form a different opinion thereof. Image below is not the full installation.



We're home, baby. We're home - Sound Piece

As a child with separated parents living in different countries, you spend a lot of time on the phone hearing alternate realities about homes you no longer live in. I wanted to capture the polarising longing and dissonance felt towards these homes as an introduction to this body of work. I used sound clips from films to access these alternate realities. These quotes from various movies either mention the words "home" or "house", or describe the idea of a home, and create a conversation about different fictional realities of home.

Through making the listener sit and hold up the phone to their ear to hear the sound piece, I wanted to translate the feeling of sitting numbly, waiting for the phone to ring on a Thursday night (sometimes it didn't ring), uncomfortably still, tethered to the phone, listening to someone you barely know tell you about a reality you are disassociated with.

Link to sound piece:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/15kpg5iG1I3Pcj8lSeDWtvmzB7dHEY19U/view?usp=sharing>



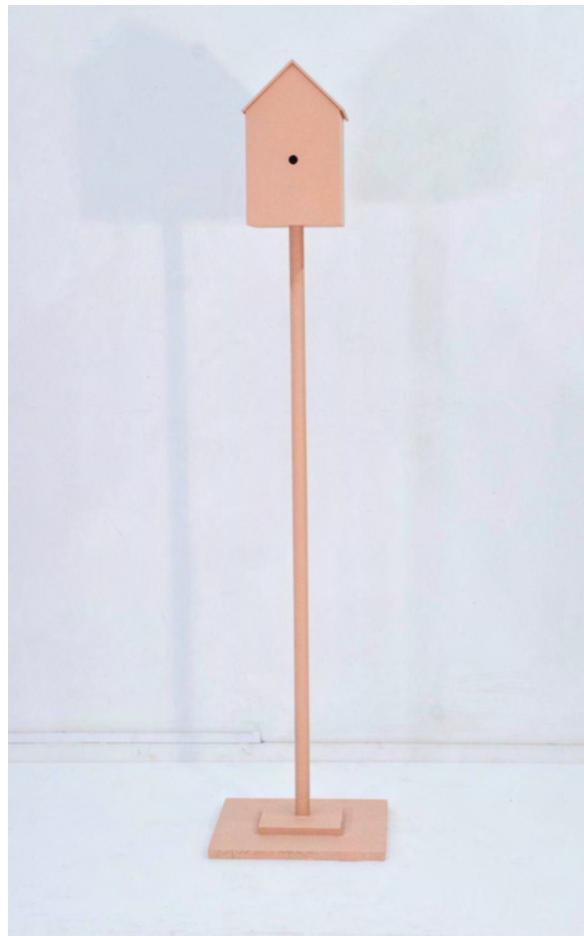
Eye of the Storm - Video Piece

The beginning of this project, the concept of worldbuilding was at the forefront of my thinking when developing what I wanted to do. The main inspiration for this was the 1939 film version of *The Wizard of Oz* (Fleming, 1939). Growing up, it was my grandfather's favourite film to watch with us; as a result, I have watched it an inordinate number of times. Ultimately, the story of Dorothy escaping to Oz is the epitome of escaping to another realm to deal with your reality. The twister that transports Dorothy to Oz was, to me, a powerful visualisation of the transgressor projecting themselves onto the home space, forcing Dorothy to escape to another world.

I created a video piece containing footage of me as Dorothy in a school play, in which I dissolve into the twister from the film. The viewer presses their eye against a hole in a wooden birdhouse to watch this video.

Link to video:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1OXMjmf99vOmHfTif7LSxswCtlyE7SwSx?usp=sharing>



Swaddled - Patch work book

I have created a patchwork book using the quilting technique English paper piecing (EPP), whereby fabric is wrapped around paper templates (see Figure 1). The sewer will then hand-stitch the individual segments together, one at a time, to form a pattern of some kind. While researching English paper piecing, I fell in love with the fact that historians take as much care with preserving the paper templates as they do with the final fabric quilt top. When you look at the back of a historic EPP quilt, you may see the various scraps of paper used as the templates (old advertisements, postcards or magazines), giving a temporal quality to the backs of the quilts. I decided to use family photographs as my templates and my two birth certificates (one I received when I was born in London and the other I received when I arrived at 2 years old in South Africa). I carefully selected homescapes from the backgrounds of family photographs, and swaddled these fragments in the cloth. I then stitched these home fragments together to create a preserved, yet alternate, reality.

I have left the bright preliminary tacking thread in place, that would usually later be unpicked and discarded when the quilt is finished, to symbolise the physicality of actively giving care and piecing things together. I am not an adept quilter, so my stitches are

rudimentary and show the acts of trying, learning, and hoping that pieces fit together. On one hand, I am criticising my parents, but I am also aware that they have bore witness to their own trauma, that caring for a child has a learning curve, and that things happen that we cannot control. This work is meant to illustrate the learning praxis of care and a visible manifestation of caring.



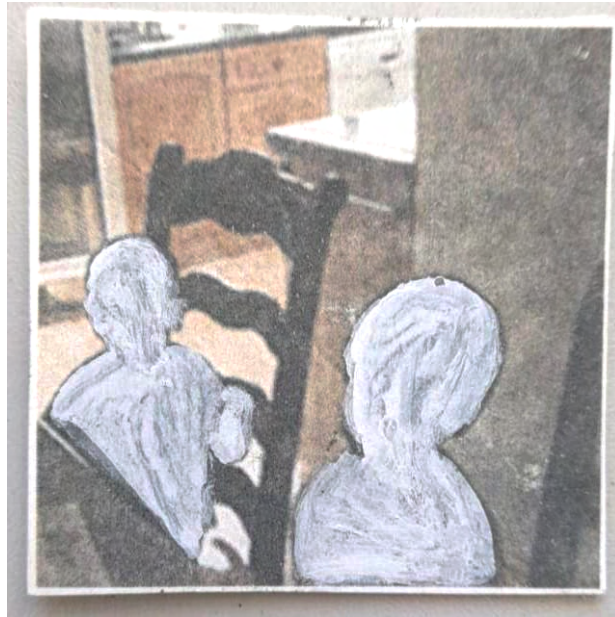
Bottom draws - Photo Series

The concept of a bottom drawer has always interested me - the idea that at some point, as young women, we are meant to start collecting for a dream home. I coupled this with the idea that once you leave your childhood home, your childhood home becomes a fictional place. Almost overnight, you can never truly return to it, as you have surpassed it in some capacity. I have created a mantelpiece scattered with frames, each one containing a chest of drawers. Each chest is missing its bottom drawer, evoking the sense that the dream home you had as a child evaporated and can never truly be recreated or returned to except in memory. The photos were taken using a disposable camera to mimic photos from my family archive. I displayed the photos atop a shelf fashioned out of a bottom draw. Turned upside down with the base board supports the frames. Visually it narrates the act of upturning these bottom draws, displaying the intangibility of a dream home.



Small photocopy transfers- Photocopy Transfers on Fabriana with tipex (6x6cm)

To expand upon the idea of turning over the quilt to reveal a history conveyed through personal artefacts, I decided to rework the photos used in the quilt by creating photocopy transfers of them, and working into the individual squares. Alternating between colour pencils and correction fluid, my objective was to further examine the homespaces. I sought to determine an edge, recognise the subject, and remove the subject, playing a memory game with the image and the mark.



References

van der Kolk, B. (2015). *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. Penguin Books.

Warner, M. (2018) *Forms of enchantment : writings on art & artists* . London: Thames & Hudson Inc.

Zhong, C., & Liljenquist, K. (2006). *Washing Away Your Sins: Threatened Morality and Physical Cleansing*. *Science*, 313(5792), 1451-1452.