

Dis-Location/Re-Location

Leora Farber

Dis-Location/Re-Location

The Albany History Museum, Grahamstown

28 June — 27 July 2007

The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum, Port Elizabeth

7 August — 9 September 2007

The South African Jewish Museum, Cape Town

30 September — 15 November 2007

The US Art Gallery, Stellenbosch

16 October — 17 November 2007

The Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Bloemfontein

4 December 2007 — 27 January 2008

The Johannesburg Art Gallery

10 February — 13 April 2008

The Durban Art Gallery

15 May — 27 July 2008



How might an artist's sweeping cultural and temporal references embody something of a white woman's ambivalent situation — lace, hide, heed, straitlaced, hidebound, hideous, bind, unlaced — in the hidden places associated with European femaleness in Africa? (Murray 2008:51).

A creativity which celebrates impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, culture, ideas, politics, movies, songs ... rejoices in mongrelisation and fears the absolutism of the Pure. *Melange*, hotch-potch, a bit of this and a bit of that is how newness enters the world (Rushdie 1991:393).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	i
LIST OF FIGURES	ii
Introduction	2
Unmaking and remaking self and other: narratives of displacement in the exhibition <i>Dis-Location/Re-Location</i> : Leora Farber in conversation with Sandra Klopper	6
SOURCES CITED	42
BIOGRAPHY	44
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	46
SOURCES ON <i>DIS-LOCATION/RE-LOCATION</i>	48
The exhibition	53
<i>Aloerosa</i>	54
<i>Ties that Bind Her</i>	64
<i>A Room of Her Own</i>	76
<i>A Room of Her Own</i> : stage set details.....	81
<i>Cultivars</i>	100
<i>Between Cup and Lip, Though and Action</i>	107
<i>Dis-Location/Re-Location</i> installation views.....	115

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1:	<i>Aloerosa: Transplant</i> . 2006-2007.....	3	Figures 20a, 20b, 20c & 20d:		
Figures 2a & 2b:				Details of the dressing table, arranged for the <i>Ties that Bind Her</i>	
	Leora Farber, details from <i>Trails of Matter, Strata of Mind</i> . 1990-1991.....	6		photographic shoot, 2006	31
Figure 3:	Wax anatomical model	7	Figures 21a & 21b:		
Figure 4:	Leora Farber, <i>Muse for Medea II</i> . 1994	7		Details of special effects in process for the <i>Aloerosa</i> photographic shoot,	
Figure 5:	Leora Farber, <i>Skinless IV</i> . 1996	8		2006	32
Figure 6:	Leora Farber, <i>Morgan</i> . 1997.....	9	Figures 22a, 22b & 22c:		
Figure 7:	Leora Farber, <i>Skin Craft I</i> . 1997	9		Latex casts used in the <i>Aloerosa</i> photographic shoot, 2006	33
Figure 8:	Leora Farber, Untitled	9	Figures 23a, 23b & 23c:		
Figures 9a, 9b & 9c:				Latex casts used in the <i>Ties that Bind Her</i> photographic shoot, 2006.....	34
	Leora Farber, video stills from <i>Four Minor Renovations: Revamp,</i>		Figure 24:	<i>Dis-Location</i> team members, 2006	35
	<i>Refurbish, Retouch, Refine</i> . 2000.....	10	Figure 25:	<i>A Room of Her Own</i> , pre-performance, 2006	36
Figure 10:	Leora Farber and Strangelove, <i>Nemesis II</i> . 2005.....	12	Figures 26a:	Leora Farber, <i>A Room of Her Own</i> , Detail of chandelier, Sammy Marks	
Figure 11:	Strangelove, corset for <i>Nemesis I & II</i> and the <i>Aloerosa</i> series, 2004	12		Museum, 2006.....	37
Figures 12a & 12b:			Figure 26b:	Leora Farber, <i>A Room of Her Own</i> , detail of main stage-set ceiling panel.	
	Strangelove, garments from the <i>Wind</i> range	13		2007.....	37
Figure 13:	Yinka Shonibare, <i>The Three Graces</i> . 2001.....	14	Figure 26c:	Leora Farber, <i>A Room of Her Own</i> , ceiling panel of side-set. 2007	37
Figure 14:	Portrait of Bertha Marks, c. 1906	15	Figure 27a:	Detail of fabric used as original source for the wallpaper. 2006.....	37
Figure 15:	Leora Farber, detail of <i>Corpa Delicata</i> during the performance. 2001	23	Figure 27b:	Detail of wallpaper showing digitally composited roses and aloes. 2006	37
Figure 16:	William White, <i>Florence Nightingale and her sister Parthenope</i> . c. 1836	23	Figures 28a & 28b:		
Figure 17:	Leora Farber, <i>A Room of Her Own</i> , detail of wallpaper before the			Installation of <i>A Room of Her Own</i> stage-set, Nelson Mandela	
	performance. 2006	29		Metropolitan Art Museum. 2007.....	39
Figures 18a & 18b:			Figure 29:	Installation of <i>A Room of Her Own</i> stage-set, Oliewenhuis Art Museum.	
	Leora Farber, <i>A Room of Her Own</i> , details of wallpaper, main stage-set			2007.....	40
	installation. 2006.	29	Figure 30:	Installation of <i>A Room of Her Own</i> video, Johannesburg Art Gallery. 2008	40
Figures 19a, 19b & 19c:			Figure 31:	The Kagan family, studio portrait, Latvia, 1935	50
	Leora Farber, <i>A Room of Her Own</i> , details of roses after the performance.		Figure 32:	Henia Kagan, Rochel Kagan and Sora Rival Kagan Latvia, c. 1920	50
	2006	30	Figure 33:	Portrait of Bertha Marks, c. 1906.....	51
			Figure 34:	First immigrants of the Kagan family to southern Africa, studio	
				portrait, Latvia, c. 1902.....	51

Documentation of the exhibition

<i>Aloerosa: Induction</i> . 2006-2007	55	<i>A Room of Her Own</i> , video stills. 2006-2007	98
<i>Aloerosa: Induction</i> (detail). 2006-2007.....	56	<i>Cultivars: Genera I, Anthowatereriea</i> . 2006-2007.....	101
<i>Aloerosa: Propagation</i> . 2006-2007.....	57	<i>Genera II, Perrusonii</i>	101
<i>Aloerosa: Efflorescence</i> . 2006-2007	58	<i>Genera III, Fitzwilliaristata</i>	102
<i>Aloerosa: Veldscape</i> . 2006-2007	59	<i>Genera IV, Phyllisaunderside</i>	102
<i>Aloerosa: Maturation I</i> . 2006-2007	60	<i>Genera V, Hillingtonubichella</i>	103
<i>Aloerosa: Maturation II</i> . 2006-2007.....	61	<i>Genera VI, Blessorbiculata</i>	103
<i>Aloerosa: Supplantation</i> . 2006-2007	62	<i>Genera VIII, Castaneatuayward</i>	104
<i>Ties that Bind Her: Preservation</i> . 2006-2007.....	65	<i>Genera IX, Cordilabrassima</i>	104
<i>Ties that Bind Her: Debilitation</i> . 2006-2007.....	66	<i>Genera X, Enacristarkness</i>	105
<i>Ties that Bind Her: Regeneration</i> . 2006-2007.....	67	<i>Genera XI, Millermensis</i>	105
<i>Ties that Bind Her: Debilitation</i> (detail I). 2006-2007.....	68	<i>Genera XII, Tuscryptopoda</i>	106
<i>Ties that Bind Her: Debilitation</i> (detail II). 2006-2007.....	69	<i>Between Cup and Lip, Thought and Action</i> . 2006-2007.....	108-114
<i>Ties that Bind Her: Debilitation</i> (detail III). 2006-2007	70	Installation views: The Johannesburg Art Gallery	116-123
<i>Ties that Bind Her: Debilitation</i> (detail IV). 2006-2007	71	Installation views: The Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Bloemfontein.....	124-127
<i>Ties that Bind Her: Preservation</i> (detail). 2006-2007	72	Installation views: The Durban Art Gallery	128-129
<i>Ties that Bind Her: Reparation</i> (detail). 2006-2007	73	Installation views: The US Art Gallery, Stellenbosch	130-131
<i>Ties that Bind Her: Regeneration</i> (detail). 2006-2007	74	Installation views: The South African Jewish Museum, Cape Town	132-133
<i>A Room of Her Own: Generation</i> . 2006-2007.....	77	Installation views: The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum, Port Elizabeth	134
<i>A Room of Her Own: Generation</i> (detail). 2006-2007	78	Installation views: The Albany History Museum, Grahamstown	135
<i>A Room of Her Own: Redemption</i> . 2006-2007	79	<i>A Room of Her Own</i> . 2006-2007. PAL DVD, 00:30:38	139
		<i>A Room of Her Own (Floorboard)</i> . 2006-2007. PAL DVD, 00:09:30	139
		<i>A Room of Her Own (Wallpaper I)</i> . 2006-2007. PAL DVD, 00:16:33	139
		<i>A Room of Her Own (Wallpaper II)</i> . 2006-2007. PAL DVD, 00:07:52	139
		<i>A Room of Her Own (Skin Graft)</i> . 2006-2007. PAL DVD, 00:30:00.....	139
Stage-set details			
<i>A Room of Her Own</i> , stage-set pre-performance. 2006-2007.....	84		
<i>A Room of Her Own</i> , detail of stage-set pre-performance. 2006-2007	85		
<i>A Room of Her Own</i> (Set I). 2006-2007.....	86		
<i>A Room of Her Own</i> (Set II). 2006-2007	87		
<i>A Room of Her Own</i> (Set III). 2006-2007	87		
<i>A Room of Her Own</i> (stage-set details). 2006-2007	88-97		



Introduction

INTRODUCTION

Dis-Location/Re-Location (2006-2008) was launched with a public performance for a limited audience at the Premises Gallery, Civic Theatre, Johannesburg, on 12 August 2006. The exhibition travelled to seven South African galleries and museums between June 2007 and July 2008. Incorporating photographic, sculptural, installation, performance, video and sound art, and requiring extensive logistical support for its production, transportation, installation and dismantling, it was an ambitious undertaking. From its initial conception as an exhibition, *Dis-Location/Re-Location* (hereafter *Dis-Location*) quickly evolved into a large-scale project, brought into being by collaboration between myself and the Johannesburg-based design team Strangelove and realised through a number of working partnerships. Over the course of its three-year life-span, the project gave rise to numerous outputs, several of which are research-based. These include a panel discussion at the Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG) (12 April 2008), an educational supplement for secondary school learners, a programme of public walkabouts and discussions with Fine Art students from tertiary education institutions wherever the work was exhibited, academic journal articles and conference papers focusing on the work, presentations in four national Visual Arts Departments, a mini-catalogue and a 156-page full-colour publication (Law-Viljoen 2008) containing ten scholarly essays on the work, responses to questions it raises and issues tangential to it.

In this catalogue, I present the exhibition through written text and full documentation of the work, as well as documentation of the work installed in the exhibition venues. The written text takes the form of an interview Sandra

Klopper conducted with me.¹ In answering her questions, I outline the theoretical framework and conceptual underpinnings of the work, contextualise *Dis-Location* within a history of my art-making practice, provide a history of the project as it evolved from a collaboration with the design team Strangelove, explain how source material was processed during the production of the work, elaborate on my choices of media and materials and explore how these support content and possible readings of, or affective responses to, the work, detail reasons for having chosen particular exhibition venues and touch on some of the predilections and anxieties that led to its production.

The exhibition may be described as a genealogical-theatrical enactment of familial histories of diasporic displacement and colonial legacies that have shaped my position as a white, middle-class, English-speaking, second-generation Jewish female South African. These histories are interlaced with personal experience of displacement in postapartheid South Africa. In the work I explore constructions of South African first- and second-generation immigrant Jewish identities, with reference to three actual and fictional female personae, namely, Bertha Marks (née Guttman) (1862-1934), an English, upper-middle-class, orthodox Jewish woman who was the wife of the Rand entrepreneur Sammy Marks; my mother, Freda Farber, (1932-),² an orthodox Jewish woman who came to South Africa

¹ The text is a revised version of an interview between Klopper and myself that took place in 2008 titled 'Bertha Marks reborn: Leora Farber in conversation with Sandra Klopper', originally published in *Dis-Location/Re-Location: exploring alienation and identity in South Africa* (Law-Viljoen 2008:10-25).

² Aside from being present in the form of her voice, which constitutes one of the three narratives that make up the soundtrack of the DVD-ROM *A Room of Her Own*, and being imaged as a child in Latvia as part of a family portrait, Freda Farber is not represented in the work. She plays a

from Latvia in 1935, and myself (1964-), as a postcolonial, second-generation Jewish female whose experiences of cultural transformation and renegotiation of identity take place through processes of cultural contact and exchange. Through this exploration of self-identity, I explore how conceptions of white South African cultural identities may be renegotiated in terms that embrace hybridity and transformation.

My exploration traverses wide geographic and temporal terrain, ranging from Victorian England and late nineteenth to mid twentieth century Eastern Europe to the Transvaal Republic in southern Africa and post-1994 South Africa. The three personae's individual encounters with the lifeworld, or what Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1964) terms the "body-world relation", are considered as sites of geographic, cultural and psychological displacement. Through the work, I provide a glimpse of how each persona's subjectivities, with their multiplicitous ambivalences and ambiguities, are practised, lived and experienced in three different space-time continuums. Although there are marked differences between their colonial, diasporic and postcolonial contexts, a central theme that underpins the exhibition is that each persona's condition of displacement is linked by disjunctures arising from processes of dislocation, alienation, relocation and adaptation.



Figure 1: *Aloerosa: Transplant*. 2006-2007.
Archival pigment printing on soft textured fine art paper, 315 g,
editioned 1/9, 135.8 x 102 cm.
Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.

cameo role in the exhibition; greater emphasis is placed on Bertha Marks's and my subjectivities.



Unmaking and remaking self and other:
narratives of displacement in the exhibition

Dis-Location/Re-Location

Leora Farber in conversation with Sandra Klopper

SK To begin, could you provide a brief outline of your earlier works in terms of the subject matter, materials and media you worked with, and sketch the theoretical underpinnings of these works?

LF Throughout my artistic career I have been deeply interested in the body as a site of political intervention. In the paintings I produced for my Master's degree (MA Fine Art, University of the Witwatersrand) during the years 1989 to 1992, and for my first solo exhibition (Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg) in 1993, I used medical images of dissected bodies, together with objects historically associated with the still-life genre as reference material (Figures 2a & 2b). While referencing the visual and conceptual language of seventeenth-century Dutch still-life paintings, my intention was to subvert the privileging of vision over touch that underpins western historical (patriarchal) painting traditions. The optical emphasis in traditions such as Dutch still-life painting is arguably achieved through the privileging of the gaze, totalisation (pictorial unity) and mastery of medium. I consider the gaze an objectifying, distanced and disembodied form of looking that involves control and possession and gives authority and power to the viewing I/eye. Formal means of subversion that I used in my paintings included a reliance on strategies associated with feminist modes of production, such as tactile engagement with the painting medium, excessive detail and decoration, layering, repetition, fragmentation, indeterminacy and dispersal. By consciously foregrounding open-endedness and heterogeneity, I sought to discourage any fixed, definitive, singular or stable reading and totalising visual consumption of the work.



Figures 2a & 2b: Leora Farber, details from *Trails of Matter, Strata of Mind*. 1990-1991.
Found objects, fabric, plastic and oil paint on canvas, 144 x 200 x 35 cm.
Photographs by Clive Hall.

From 1993 to 1994 I used similar strategies, but as opposed to employing the still-life genre as a metaphor for the body, I dealt more directly with the (female) body itself. I was particularly interested in representing the female body as a site of rupture and transgression of the patriarchal order. Depicting the rupture of bodily boundaries in a fairly literal way, I explored ideas of containment and excess, interior and exterior (see for example, Figure 4), in an attempt to uncover the untidy layers that lie beneath the pristine, supposedly seamless images of women as they have been, and are currently, represented within a western paradigm. In producing these works, I discovered the tactile pleasures of the wax medium. Although I was not aware of it at the time, wax was to become a primary medium for me; indeed, it plays a critical role in the work on *Dis-Location*. I find it remarkable that a substance can so closely, even startlingly, mimic human flesh. Georges Didi-Huberman (1999:66) reflects that in its “plasticity, instability, fragility, sensitivity to heat” wax “suggests the feeling or fantasy of flesh ... there probably exists no other substance that can imitate with such polyvalence both the *external flesh*, the skin and all the internal flesh, the muscles and viscera”. To reference the inner body, I looked at images of seventeenth-century medical models of the human body (Figure 3), in which internal organs, fluids, veins, tissue, muscle and outer skin are anatomically correctly rendered in wax.

From this preoccupation with the ‘uncontained’ body, I became interested in how bodily excess, particularly that of the inner body, is contained and controlled within the boundaries of the skin. In western culture, bodily excess is subject to what Pamela Allara (2001:[sp]) calls “the dual tyrannies of slimness and youth”. On the one hand control can be exercised through self-imposed regulations such as dieting, exercise, eating disorders and biotechnological practices, and on the other hand through external mechanisms as evident in contemporary media



Figure 3 (left): Wax anatomical model, specimen of the heart showing the coronary vessels and the great vessels that enter and leave the heart, Ostetricia 968, Museo La Specola, Florence.
 (*Encyclopaedia anatomica* 1999:261).

Figure 4 (right): Leora Farber, *Muse for Medea II*. 1994.
 Found objects, fabric, wax, plastic and oil paint, 185 x 125 x 60 cm.
 Photograph by Ruphin Coudyzer.

representations of cultural ideals. As in the historical tradition of the female nude, many such ideals involve processes of fixing female sexuality and transforming the female body into a symbol of containment. From this focus on the uncontained body, in 1995 I began to explore how marginal bodily matter is contained and suppressed in such images of ‘seamless’ physical perfection. Using pigmented wax, I transformed the surfaces of garments associated with feminine stereotypes into tactile, intricately decorated, skin-like wax constructions (Figures 5, 6, 7 &

8). Setting up an analogy between fabric and flesh, I merged garment and body — corsets with torsos, gloves with hands, boots with legs — consciously allowing distinctions between the inner and outer body to conflate. These objects infer both bodily presence and absence. Skin itself becomes a site of control, an external ‘fabric’ crafted in ways that mimic the fabrication of ‘femininity’ according to the dictates of the heterosexual, white, male gaze. Sewing implements and beauty aids (historically associated with ‘women’s work’) as well as medical instruments (a reference to the masculine role that medical science has played throughout history) function as primary tools of control. Fastening, piercing or displayed on waxy ‘skins’, these instruments are intended to draw parallels between the craft of tailoring a garment to fit a stereotypical body size and contemporary surgical procedures that ‘refashion’ the body to fit western markers of ideal beauty.

These parallels between the idea of skin-as-fabric and the practice of cosmetic surgery fascinated me. As opposed to wax being a metonym for flesh, in cosmetic surgical practices it is actual flesh that is being cut into, manipulated, removed, stretched taut and stitched closed. In filming a series of cosmetic surgical procedures (Figures 9a, 9b & 9c), I was particularly struck by the similarity of the procedures and techniques to those used in garment-making: the ideal pattern is marked out on the cloth/skin in dotted lines, the ‘fabric’ is cut, excess is removed and the pieces are joined to form the desired shape by stitching or suturing.

By 1999 I was focusing almost exclusively on cosmetic surgery and more broadly on the body’s relation to medical- bio-technologies. With this conceptual shift, I consciously changed from physical, tactile materials to using technologically-based media such as photography and video. While I initially saw cosmetic surgery as a contemporary extension of the way in which the female body was



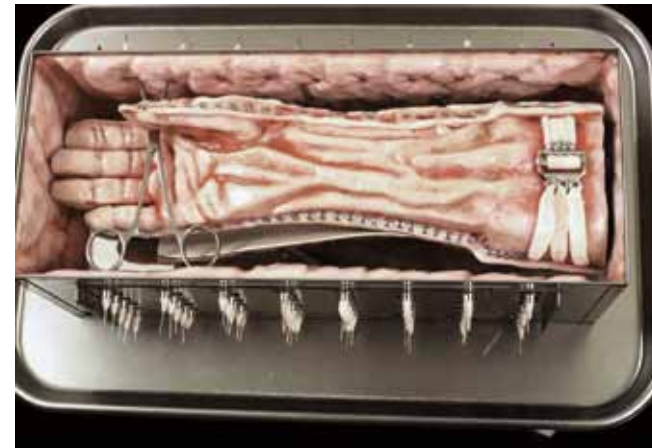
Figure 5: Leora Farber, *Skinless IV*. 1996.
Wax, fabric, found objects and metal, 50 x 42 x 18 cm.
Photograph by Charles Blackbeard.



Figure 6: Leora Farber, *Morgan*. 1997.
Wax, fabric, found objects and theatre trolley,
trolley: 83 x 182 x 56 cm; figure: 70 x 106 x 65 cm.

Figure 7 (right above): Leora Farber, *Skin Craft I*. 1997.
Wax, found objects, stainless steel and mild steel, 49 x 50 x 47 cm.

Figure 8 (right below): Leora Farber, *Untitled*. 1998.
Wax, found objects, metal and mirror, 105 x 55 x 55 cm.
Photographs by Ruphin Coudyzer.



pathologised and constructed as a spectacle for the (male) medical gaze in the Victorian era, working in this area revealed that by 1999 debates surrounding cosmetic surgical practices were already far more complex. Cosmetic surgery is a site in which tensions between women's objectification and their attempts to negotiate a sense of bodily agency from within a context of western visual culture play out. These tensions shift between conceptions of recipients of cosmetic surgery as victims of cultural exploitation who passively collude with and reinforce patriarchal structures of power and authority, and Kathy Davis's (1995) proposition that cosmetic surgery can empower women to assert or negotiate their 'feminine' identity from within the cultural constraints of a gendered social order. My exploration of the broader implications of cosmetic surgery revealed that in its complex relations to various controlling political trajectories and regimes the female body is materially and metaphorically contested terrain — a site in which agency, freedom of choice and individual empowerment are negotiated in relation to the pressures of cultural and capitalist power and control.

SK Like many of your earlier works, the *Dis-Location/Re-Location* exhibition includes challenging images of physically traumatised bodies. This brings to mind some of the writings of French theorists such as Julia Kristeva, Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray. To what extent and how have these feminist scholars influenced your thinking?

LF During the time I was making work for my Master's degree, Cixous's and Irigaray's writings resonated strongly with me. I related to the way they express a powerful form of body politics in poetic language. Their fluid, metaphorical and



Figures 9a, 9b & 9c: Leora Farber, video stills from *Four Minor Renovations: Revamp, Refurbish, Retouch, Refine*. 2000. PAL video, 28 min looped.

lyrical approach and their emphasis on “tactile/corporeal sensitivities” (Jones 1985:84) seemed to support what I was doing, albeit unconsciously, in my painting practice.

Irigaray (1981) and Cixous (1981) propose a form of ‘writing through the body’ (*écriture féminine*) that draws on and gives privilege to what they consider to be a specifically ‘female’ sexuality. They understand ‘female’ sexuality as being multiple, diffuse and tactile in nature, and argue that by asserting these qualities in language, women (and men) can create new forms of signification that have the potential to evade phallogocentric discourses. Cixous’s notions of the body politic, in particular, are based on her conviction that women must put themselves into the text and assert their bodies as a source of self-knowledge. The concept of accessing a form of signification that could have the transgressive potential to disrupt the naturalising sameness of the symbolic order was critically important to the work I was producing at the time. Furthermore, Cixous’s references to the idea of women writing their bodies, their imaginations and their libidos also appealed to me, as did her notion of restoration by healing the mutilated body and effecting a rebirth of the self.

Although Cixous and Irigaray consider the female body as a product of social histories, relations and discourses that define and determine its representation, their understanding of women’s sexuality as separate from men’s and as linked to the (female) body has led to criticisms of idealism and essentialism. This is not surprising, as their connections between the body, sexuality and textuality are bound up in the phallogocentric system they attempt to undermine.

While I was aware of these criticisms during the 1990s, I could not downplay or deny the strong correlations that could be drawn between *écriture féminine* and my painting practice.

It was, however, Julia Kristeva’s writings that were, and remain, seminal to my art-making practice. Her almost naturalised definition of abjection as “that which disturbs identity, system, order — the in-between, the ambiguous” (Kristeva 1982:4) underpinned my work throughout the late 1990s and into the early 2000s. I particularly relate to her description of abjection as a process through which subjective and group identities are constituted by excluding anything that threatens one’s own (or one’s group’s) boundaries. She notes that in the abject, whatever threatens the identity of “one’s own clean and proper self” is physically and psychologically rejected, yet never completely removed; it “hovers at the periphery of one’s existence, constantly challenging one’s own tenuous borders of selfhood” (McAfee 2004:46). These concerns around the formation of self-identity as lodged within the body, bodily borders and the instability of its margins, and liminal states of in-betweenness, lie at the core of my earlier works and those on *Dis-Location*.

When making the work for *Dis-Location*, I became interested in Kristeva’s theories of a semiotically driven ‘transgressive language’ that she presents as a potentially subversive, even revolutionary, form of signification. Although transgressive language has similarities with *écriture féminine* in that both strive to disrupt the fixity of the symbolic order, it is based on a fundamental difference: Kristeva’s transgressive language is dependent on both the semiotic and the symbolic orders of signification. Like *écriture féminine*, transgressive language privileges bodily, preverbal and pre-Oedipal experience, but is a form of expression that

is not entirely separate from the symbolic realm. For the work on *Dis-Location*, in which I explore the unstable nature of subjectivity, the idea of a fluid form of signification that slips between the symbolic and the semiotic seems appropriate. Kristeva's 'speaking subject', whose subjectivity is produced through, and is dependent on, an ongoing dialectic between the semiotic drives and symbolic language, seems particularly close to the kinds of subjectivities represented in the work on *Dis-Location*.

SK *In the course of this interview we shall consider some of the themes and concerns that link this monumental project to your earlier work: when and why did you first become interested in exploring the relationship between your own history and that of Bertha Marks?*

LF This exploration began when the design team Strangelove — Ziemek Pater and Carlo Gibson — and I collaborated on a work that we produced for Brenda Schmahmann's 2004 exhibition, titled *Through the Looking Glass*. In an exchange of ideas, we conceptualised and completed the photographic works *Nemesis I* (2004) and *Nemesis II* (2005) (Figure 10). In both, I am dressed in a Victorian-styled, vegetan leather corset designed and manufactured by Strangelove (Figure 11) and appear to be cutting, stitching into and fastening up my skin. From these initial collaborations, conversations emerged in which we realised that although we work in different materials — wax and vegetan leather — we share an interest in corsets as historical and contemporary fashion garments, and in using them as signifiers of bodily constriction and control.



Figure 10: Leora Farber and Strangelove, *Nemesis II*. 2005.
Forex, 15 lambda prints, wood, 306 x 625 cm.
Photographs by Ruphin Coudyzer.



Figure 11: Strangelove, corset for *Nemesis I & II* and the *Aloerosa* series, 2004.
Vegetan leather, cotton thread and twine.
Photograph by Anton Hammerl.
Courtesy of Strangelove.

Favourable public reception of *Nemesis I* and *Nemesis II* confirmed my conviction that our collaboration could be developed further. This led us to begin conceptualising what I would later develop into the *Dis-Location* project. Our starting point was Strangelove’s Victorian-inspired yet contemporary fashion range titled *Wind*, first shown at the Johannesburg Fashion Week in August 2002 (Figures 12a & 12b). This range intrigues me, as it presents an interesting combination of African and European styling and materials. It features Victorian corsets made from African cowhide and wide A-line skirts — reminiscent of Victorian and traditional Xhosa dress — made from synthetic parachute fabric. In dresses and skirts of the *Wind* range, the fabric inflates at the hips, buttocks and breasts, creating a silhouette similar to that of Sarah Baartman’s ‘steatopygia’. This effect is achieved by using wind machines to blow air into the garments: as sealed sections of the garments fill with air, they inflate into three-dimensional forms. Through these forms, Strangelove refer to a Victorian ideal of female beauty, yet simultaneously subvert it by setting up visual correlations between the volume and shape of Baartman’s body and that of the inflated garment. In so doing, Strangelove gesture towards Baartman’s objectification under the tyranny of the white male colonial gaze.

In its fusion of Victorian and South African ethnic signifiers, the *Wind* range has similarities to works by Yinka Shonibare, in which he combines Victorian clothing design with batik-wax printed fabrics popularly associated with West Africa so as to produce a hybrid style (Figure 13). Although they have become almost synonymous with West African dress, the fabrics are, in fact, exported from the Netherlands, making them hybrids in themselves (Dodd 2010:470). The curious hybridity of the *Wind* range prompted us to develop ideas around our experiences as second-generation South African immigrants (Pater is second-generation Polish, Gibson



Figures 12a & 12b: Strangelove, garments from the *Wind* range, Johannesburg Fashion Week, Turbine Hall, 2002. Photographs by Anton Hammerl. Courtesy of Strangelove.

Strangelove base their *Wind* range on the Victorian-inspired garments worn by the Xhosa-speaking peoples. Traditional Xhosa garments reflect initial stages of transculturation processes that began at the time when they first encountered European settlers in the nineteenth century. Traditional Xhosa garments include an A-line skirt accompanied by a tight-fitting bodice, reminiscent of the Victorian corset. The skirt is usually trimmed with concentric rings of black braiding. Although they are hybridised versions of the colonial petticoat and, later, the crinoline hoops that Victorian women wore to support their skirts, these rings have become synonymous with traditional Xhosa style. In the garments worn in the final narrative series of *Dis-Location* titled *A Room of Her Own*, Strangelove references the black rings, interpreting them as rows of white braiding.



Figure 13: Yinka Shonibare, *The Three Graces*. 2001.
Dutch Wax printed cotton textile, three life-size
fibreglass mannequins, three aluminium bases.
(Mutual Art.com. 2012).

second-generation Italian). We debated questions around our identities as white South Africans, particularly our contradictory feelings of displacement, alienation, belonging and identification with the rapidly transforming city of Johannesburg in which we live and work.

We decided to produce a custom-made garment, based on the 2002 Victorian-African range, for each of the photographic narratives that make up the exhibition (*Aloerosa* [2006-2007], *Ties that Bind Her* [2006-2007], and *A Room of Her Own* [2006-2007]). The narratives, and the garments worn in them, developed sequentially. Our search for an appropriate period setting in which to stage the images led us to the Sammy Marks Museum in Pretoria — the former home of

Sammy and Bertha Marks that has been restored to its Victorian splendour and now functions as a museum. While working in this space I became interested in Sammy Marks's background as a diasporic Jew from Lithuania. His humble beginnings as a *smous* (a travelling peddler of wares on farms) in the Cape Colony and subsequent rise to prosperity may be likened to those of my maternal and paternal grandparents who, as Jewish immigrants to South Africa from Latvia and Lithuania respectively, were forced to start a 'new life' in what they envisaged as 'the land of opportunity'. Like most Eastern European Jewish immigrants, both sets of grandparents sought to escape the religious and economic persecution to which the long-established Jewish communities from Eastern Europe were subjected.

Being able to pose as Bertha Marks — effectively impersonating her in the space where she had once lived — allowed me to experience a deep empathy with her. Her story, which is one of colonial displacement involving the difficulties of dislocation and relocation, loneliness, alienation and attempts to transcend these limitations, struck a chord in me. At the age of 22, she was brought to South Africa from Sheffield in England, to what were then no more than a few huts on the farm Zwartkoppies, 12 kilometres outside the developing South African Republic capital of Pretoria, to enter into what appears to have been an arranged marriage with Sammy Marks. As Marks's fortune grew, he replaced the original farm huts with a 40-roomed mansion for his wife and their six children. Yet, despite the material opulence of her surroundings, Zwartkoppies remained a place of emotional, intellectual and physical confinement and isolation for her.

In researching Bertha Marks’s history, I found that in contrast to Sammy Marks, whose entrepreneurial successes are well-documented, she remains an historically marginalised figure. Given the paucity of information available, one of the most valuable sources was Richard Mendelsohn’s (1991:181-196) ‘The gilded cage: Zwartkoppies after the war’, which forms a chapter in his biography of Sammy Marks. In this chapter, Mendelsohn provides factual details about Bertha Marks’s life, personality and role as Victorian wife, mother and woman. Another important source of first-hand information was provided by her letters to her husband, housed at the Isaac and Jessie Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies & Research at the University of Cape Town. These were written during her many trips abroad or while he was away. However, despite these historical sources upon which my perceptions of Bertha Marks were based, she remained an enigmatic figure. The comparatively scant information on her increased my curiosity, leading to a series of questions which became the basis for the themes I visit and revisit in *Dis-Location*.

SK *Your empathy with Bertha Marks seems to stem largely from what you characterise as her experience of (mental and physical) confinement and isolation. How are these concerns developed and realised in Dis-Location?*

LF To answer this question fully I must begin by mentioning how some of my ideas were shaped by Stuart Hall’s constructivist understanding of identity on the one hand and Mendelsohn’s historical research on the other. The slippages between Bertha Marks and myself that I introduce in the work bring to mind Hall’s (2000 [1996]:21) conception of postcolonial identities, which he considers as performative; for Hall, identity is a “production” which is “never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation”. In this



Figure 14: Portrait of Bertha Marks, c. 1906.
Sammy Marks Collection of Photographs, Pretoria, SM 245.
Courtesy of the Sammy Marks Museum.

postcolonial framework, identity is seen as polyglot, heterogeneous and diverse; an unstable construction that is in a constant state of flux, as opposed to being conceived of in terms of cultural purity and authenticity and as embodying an essential ‘true self’. I refer to colonialism in *fin-de-siècle* southern Africa through the period setting of the Sammy Marks Museum and Victorian styling of the shoots, yet this referent is simultaneously located within the present, signified by the plastic fabric of the skirts I wear and my short contemporary haircut. I *perform* the part of Bertha Marks, while at the same time ‘staging my own subjectivity’ by playing the role of ‘the postcolonial persona’ who grapples with her own complex sense of identity as a white woman living in postapartheid South Africa.

In the work the part-historical, part-imaginary and part-fictionalised persona of Bertha Marks and myself as the postcolonial protagonist are metonymically represented in the image of my body. Although the two personae are represented as a bodily amalgam, in certain images, specifically those where the protagonist is shown trying to preserve her English cultural heritage — as in the *Ties that Bind Her* series, in which she is shown inserting a rose cameo into her breast — I more obviously address Bertha Marks’s experience of displacement as opposed to mine, but in other works I deal more explicitly with my experiences.

When conceptualising her narrative, I tried to imagine Bertha Marks’s initial feelings of what must have been deep alienation upon arrival in southern Africa. According to Mendelsohn (1991:181-196), her initial alienation was followed by over a decade of acute loneliness and a sense of confinement. In the chapter on Bertha Marks in his biography of her husband, Mendelsohn provides a vivid image not only of her loneliness at Zwartkoppies, her homesickness for England and her desire to ‘recreate’ an English botanical and architectural environment on the Highveld, but also of her sense of entrapment within the patriarchal social constructs that dictated her day-to-day life. In order to understand, identify with and visually convey a sense of her displacement, I combined factual accounts of her life experiences (gained from Mendelsohn’s extensive research) with imaginative projection, personal interpretation and what Dominick LaCapra (2001:87) calls “empathetic unsettlement” — a term he uses to denote an experience of otherness “in which one puts oneself into the other’s position, while recognising the difference of that position and hence not trying to take the other’s place”.

I am inclined to think that the reasons for Bertha Marks’s profound sense of alienation might have been two-fold. The first had to do with her physical isolation — she moved from an upper-middle-class Jewish family, where she enjoyed an active social life and community support, to the remoteness of Zwartkoppies. As Mendelsohn (1991:187) notes, because Zwartkoppies was a long carriage ride away from Pretoria, trips into town could be undertaken only on special occasions. The second reason may have had to do with the intellectual, emotional and psychological constraints that her upbringing and social position imposed on her.

As a British immigrant who was ‘transplanted’ into southern Africa, like many British immigrant or settler women Bertha Marks was reluctant to adapt to, let alone embrace, her new surroundings. She constructed her identity around a constant striving to maintain English attitudes, behaviours and values by upholding Victorian moral and social codes of ‘respectability’, with their inherent assumption of white supremacy. White supremacy was established and maintained through what Anne McClintock (1995) and Laura-Ann Stoler (1989) call ‘the politics of exclusion’ — a form of discrimination in which race, gender and class were categorised and hierarchically ordered. These politics were put in place and upheld by conventions of separation and distance from that which was Other to the Self. Bertha Marks would have acted in accordance with socially accepted colonial norms and it is therefore likely that she made intellectual and emotional attempts to maintain and uphold these segregationist politics. Her sense of physical alienation might well have been exacerbated by these attempts to avoid contact with her new environment, particularly with Others of different race, ethnicity, class, language and religion. Since her husband was frequently away on business and the Victorian codes of respectability dictated that it would not be ‘right and proper’ for her to be on a footing of friendship with the servants,

the mansion over which she presided became her “gilded cage” (Mendelsohn 1991:187). It strikes me as ironic that while Bertha Marks may have had to contend with anti-Semitism in England and South Africa, and was herself subject to the rigidities of Victorian gender constraints, at Zwartkoppies it was her ‘superiority’ as an upper-middle-class, white colonial woman that defined her relations with her African servants. McClintock (1995:6) captures the irony of this contradictory position in her observation that, as did Bertha Marks, although barred from formal power colonial women discreetly upheld the conventions of Empire. As she puts it, “women were not the hapless onlookers of empire, but were ambiguously complicit both as colonizers and colonized, privileged and restricted, acted upon and acting” (McClintock 1995:6).

Bertha Marks’s displacement was characterised by ambivalence — she felt a deep sense of disjuncture from her environment (*here*) offset against her longing to be at home in England (*there*). In contrast, the sense of displacement I experienced during the years prior to making the work for *Dis-Location* (2000-2006) may be described as ‘ambiguous’. Above all, my sense of alienation stemmed from my experience of living in the African metropolis of Johannesburg. As a city, Johannesburg has undergone massive and rapid change since 1994. The ever-shifting physical environment and social fabric of the city over the previous two decades induced in me a feeling of displacement that, at the time, I imagined as similar to that of a displaced immigrant attempting to find ways to adapt to new surroundings. This statement is not intended to suggest nostalgia for the apartheid city in which I grew up, but rather to give a sense of the difficulties I experienced upon realising that the once familiar landscape of the city in which I had lived for most of my life had become increasingly alien to me. I was even prompted to ask myself whether it is possible, belatedly, to feel like an immigrant in the country

(or city) of one’s birth. Walter Truett Anderson (cited in Steyn 2001:149) seems to answer this question for me when he says, “You don’t have to leave home to become a refugee. This dispossession does not have to happen, but it can and it does — and will — happen in many cases as old belief systems erode, as old bases of personal and social identity change.” Yet paradoxically, while experiencing this sense of psychological dislocation and alienation from my physical environment, I also felt a strong desire to relocate myself within it in ways that permitted personal integrity and to find ways in which to renegotiate and reimagine my place as a white, English-speaking South African (WESSA). I consciously attempted to shape a new identity by either discarding or re-evaluating my Anglo-Saxon — or what might be thought of as deeply ingrained colonial — behaviours, values and beliefs, while at the same time retaining those which still seemed relevant to my sense of self.

Although I could identify with Bertha Marks’s feelings of displacement as a newly arrived immigrant, my ways of dealing with what felt like a sense of dissonance from my environment differed considerably from hers. Whereas Bertha Marks retained a colonial mindset in which the Self was set up in a hierarchical, dichotomous relationship to the Other, in contrast my need to relocate myself within my environment encouraged me to recognise, confront and accept the stranger-other-foreigner-within. Kristeva (1991:1) has an evocative way of articulating this relationship between self and other: “Strangely, the foreigner lives within us: he is the hidden face of our identity, the space that wrecks our abode, the time when understanding and affinity flounder. By recognising him within ourselves, we are spared detesting him in himself.” Opening up a psychic

space for the estranged other-within was both affirming and alienating for me; this other presence felt uncanny — at once disturbing owing to its unfamiliarity, yet also distantly known.

SK In both *Bertha Marks's* and the postcolonial protagonist's lives, 'nature' (in the form of aloes and roses) is grafted onto the body. How would you define the implications of this radical intervention — acts of conjoining skin and plant that in the exhibition are shown to affect/affirm/transform identities — for an understanding of your work on Dis-Location?

LF In each of the core narratives of the exhibition, an initial, self-initiated incision or cut into the skin culminates in a grafting of organic and, as in the case of the photographic series *Ties that Bind Her*, inorganic materials onto the protagonist's body. Various species of indigenous aloe plants are used as metonyms for South Africa or 'the land', while the rose is used as a signifier of whiteness and 'Englishness'. In this sense the protagonist's body is intended to represent the quintessential 'English rose' onto which the 'African' aloe is grafted.

In terms of horticulture, a graft's purpose is to cultivate new orders, through actions of cutting, severing, transplanting and attaching. During the production of the work, my thinking around the graft was influenced by Colin Richards's (1997:234, 235) use of the term. As he argues, grafting involves not only contact but also exchange — interactions that commonly intersect across difference. When one grafts one thing onto another, the boundary one crosses can be — and often is — traumatically transgressive; even though it may lead to productive and successful fusion, the cut that enables the graft can be a deep wound that leaves permanent scars. As Richards (1997:234) notes, grafts can be "about disfigurements,

cultural error, the sometimes violent aesthetic of the imperfect fit ... [they] can seem monstrous misfits attesting to the effects of our most well-intentioned 'cross cultural' contacts".

The way in which the graft is realised in the work evokes Victorian constructs of femininity such as modesty, docility and patience that were seen as embodied in the domestic imperative of needlework (Parker 1984:4, 5). Rozsika Parker (1984:189) makes the point that in the nineteenth century needlework and femininity were virtually synonymous: "women embroidered because they were naturally feminine and were feminine because they naturally embroidered". Representation of this politically gendered activity is given a disturbing twist; the protagonist appears to be working on her skin as opposed to fabric or tapestry weave. I subvert the conception of 'women's work' and the claustrophobic passivity associated with domestic labour in Victorian England by implying that the act of sewing can be redefined as a form of agency. Needlework is a means through which Bertha Marks struggles to affirm, and I attempt to renegotiate, a sense of identity as a white woman living in (post)colonial Africa. Although Bertha Marks undertakes the graft with great trepidation, the conjoining of flesh and plant through intimate acts of cutting and stitching leads to new subjectivities and hybrid identities.

It is crucial to an understanding of the project as a whole that the creation of new subjectivities is achieved through traumatically violent interventions. In *Aloerosa* and *A Room of Her Own* the protagonist's white skin is brutally disfigured by the apparently genteel act of sewing. Although in the postcolonial protagonist's case these actions arise from a desire to become integrated or to belong, they can also be read as metaphors for cultural contestation, particularly in those works that foreground Bertha Marks's efforts to preserve her whiteness. Yet, even for the

postcolonial protagonist, the generative possibilities of cultural exchange do not emerge without conflict. The insertion of an indigenous, but nonetheless alien, culture into her body transforms her into something akin to Richards's 'monstrous misfit' or abject hybrid. Her bodily violations imply not only a physical but also a psychic or psychological experience of trauma.

I am intrigued by the idea that, like the concept of grafting, the term 'hybridity' has a biological etymology, originally being used in reference to the offspring of plants or animals of different species or varieties. In certain images my bodily fluids and tissue serve as both nutrients and host to emergent, hybrid specimens; my flesh replaces soil. Therefore, although the 'taking' of the graft, represented by the aloe's growth, is imaged as physical in the work, metaphorically this insertion of the other and its 'taking root' is a psychological process: for Bertha Marks it enables an encounter with the Other of colonial discourse and for the postcolonial protagonist the re-emergence of the other-within through activation of the uncanny. The graft brings that foreign, strange otherness within the self to the fore: that which was once familiar (homely) returns as the unfamiliar (unhomely). In this sense, evocation of the uncanny may be read as partially symptomatic of those encounters with alterity that were, for myself (and others), sublimated as a white woman growing up under apartheid. Like abjection, the uncanny is a liminal state, wherein one's subjectivity is situated at the border or threshold between Self and Other or self and the other-within.

SK *Clearly, though, your experience of this liminal space is conflicted: while it is an in-between space of productive cultural exchange, it is also a space fraught with anxiety, not least because, regardless of how close you manage to get to the other, this closeness is also very threatening.*

LF Yes, for Bertha Marks and the postcolonial protagonist the process of remaking her subjectivity is disturbing on several levels. Initially, the incision into the skin in order to effect the graft violates a bodily boundary, transgressing the integrity of the body. Thereafter the growing closeness to the Other or other-within that the graft evokes is not only uncomfortable and unnerving but deeply threatening. For both personae, the threat is related to the fear of losing autonomy as a subject through the dissolution of ego boundaries.

Both personae have to come to terms with their whiteness and the multiple racial, historical and cultural privileges that this implies. For Bertha Marks, this process is particularly fraught with fear and anxiety, given that she lived an insular life in which the Victorian politics of exclusion were upheld. For her, any contact with the Other would have been so threatening that her initiation of transformation processes could be described as cautious and tentative at best. Therefore, for Bertha Marks, the productivity of the graft is limited, or at least regulated, by the extent to which she was willing to transgress the deeply internalised politics of exclusion.

Nevertheless, considering Robert Young's (1995:2) proposition that in colonial discourse the fear and darkness associated with the Other is simultaneously underpinned by fascination and desire and the fantasy of 'crossing over' into this unfathomable and treacherous territory, Bertha Marks's initiation of the graft seems probable. Taking this idea further, if one reads her practice of grafting in the context of Homi K Bhabha's (1994:64) assertion of colonial Otherness as being an object of desire and derision, and Young's (1995:2) proposition that the

seeming fixity of ‘Englishness’ is in fact unstable, then it is plausible to think that her ‘Englishness’ might have been imbued with an uneasy ambivalence that marks a psychological resistance to her identity.

Bertha Marks’s ambivalence between desire and derision is evident in the work. From her desire to engage with, and attraction to, the Other — signified by her self-induced insertion of the aloe into her body — in *Aloerosa: Maturation I*, she tries to cut the aloe off (or out of) herself. This action proves futile for, as shown in *Maturation II*, although the head of the aloe initially inserted lies next to her on the ground, new shoots continue to sprout from different places on her body. Bertha Marks’s attempts to cross into the ‘otherness of the Other’ may therefore be seen to represent both a transgressive violation of the ideological constructions of colonial discourses and an enactment of the very ambivalences embedded within them.

In the vast context of identity politics and politics concerning the construction and representation of selfhood and otherness, prevalent in fields ranging across the Humanities, the other has now become associated with multiple forms of alterity. Therefore, in my case, encountering the other had lost much of the transgressive significance that it might have had for Bertha Marks. For me this encounter was psychological; I had to come to terms with alterity as a repressed part of my psyche. In other words, I needed to heal a psychological wound that was linked to my experience of growing up in South Africa as a white woman. Healing is a process that involves psychical trauma — as Melissa Steyn (2001:120) suggests, for some WESSAs the pain of confronting the construction of their whiteness, as well as the shame of white guilt, is part of a complex process of growth. “A white skin”, she says, “is not skin that can be shed without losing some blood” (Steyn 2001:xvii).

For the protagonist, crossing cultural or psychological boundaries or thresholds means entering a liminal space located between self and other. Yuri Lotman (cited in Papastergiadis 1995:14) speaks of the criss-crossing of boundaries that leads to “a constant state of hybridity ... always oscillat[ing] between identity and alterity”, which in turn results in a tension that is most evident at the boundaries of the liminal space. This state of in-betweenness brings to mind Kristevian abjection and Sigmund Freud’s psycho-cultural concept of the uncanny, both of which I mentioned earlier, as well as Bhabha’s Third Space of hybridity.

Bhabha’s (1990:211) conception of the Third Space is generative and fecund. It “enables other positions to emerge ... displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom”. In the work, the Third Space allows for unpredictable outcomes to emerge from grafting of different cultures, giving rise to new identity formations. According to Bhabha (1996:313), entering this hybrid space encourages a perception of difference as “neither One nor the Other but something else besides, in-between”. His concept of a liminal state of in-betweenness might usefully be linked to abjection: as Rosemary Betterton (1996:144) notes, while “the vulnerability of the borderline is a threat to the integrity of the ‘own and clean self’ it can also offer a liminal space where self and other may intermingle”. Intermingling, in turn, engenders terror or rapture in the subject, both of which gives rise to and perpetuates a sense of ego dissolution. The uncanny has a similar effect on the subject, although in the postcolonial protagonist’s case what returns to the fore is that which has long been buried in the unconscious, whereas in an abject state nothing is recognisable or familiar. So, if one puts Bhabha, Kristeva and Freud together, it is possible to conclude that what is potentially productive can also be terrifyingly disruptive. Commenting

on Mary Douglas's (1966) examination of order and transgression in relation to the body, Lynda Nead (1992:6) notes that, "All transitional states ... pose a threat; anything that resists classification or refuses to belong to one category or another emanates danger ... it is the margins, the very edges of categories, that are most critical in the construction of ... meaning."

In the work, one of the ways in which the protagonist's state of liminality is played out is through indirect references to the Victorian construct of hysteria. She is represented, in interior and exterior contexts, as fainting or collapsing, losing self-control and self-discipline and therefore personal restraint and dignity. For instance, in the *Aloerosa* series, she moves from being in a state of formal self-control — both physically and in terms of her social position in Victorian society, signified by the tightly laced corset she wears as she takes her morning tea in the English rose garden — to a state of disarray as she moves further into the African landscape towards the close of the day. When she finally discards her constricting Victorian corset in the final image in the series, *Supplantation*, it is to suggest a sense of liberation, which simultaneously implies an experience of loss. To suggest the loss of dignity, hinted at in the progressive loosening of the laces of her corset throughout the series, I looked at the third stage of a full hysterical attack photographically documented by the French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-1893). The poses the hysterics adopt during this stage represent physical enactments of the release of sublimated desires. Charcot recorded these images while working at the Salpêtrière asylum in Paris from 1862 to 1893. He tried to break down the range of identifiable body positions into a kind of visual iconography of hysteria. At the core of this iconography were the *attitudes passionnelles* or 'passionate gestures' (picturesquely and theatrically enacted by the hysteric)

consisting of vivid physical representations of extreme emotional states, such as hatred or love. In their theatricality and 'over-dramatisation' the poses the protagonist adopts echo those of the *attitudes passionnelles*.

In the final image of the exhibition, *A Room of Her Own: Redemption*, the protagonist appears to have undergone, or is undergoing, an hysterical fit. She has entered into a liminal state of in-betweenness; a hybrid space that, like Bhabha's Third Space, is located between self and other. For me, Steyn's characterisation of the attainment of hybridity seems to epitomise this state of liminality. Steyn (2001:115, 116) describes hybridity as a narrative of

letting go and taking on ... the need to let go of old selves ... This is the narrative that bespeaks those who are prepared to live closer to the edge, where 'edge' does not signify an abyss, but the transition where familiar and unfamiliar meet ... this position insists that a new self must be negotiated in the infinite spaces between the past and the future, the old and the new, the European and the African, the white and the black.

SK *Although you indicate that you have been intrigued by Bhabha's idea of a productive, fecund Third Space, would it be correct to conclude that the theme of alienation is central to the work?*

LF Yes, alienation is central to the work, but I consider the protagonist's alienation as being directly related to, and a consequence of, her *displacement*. Therefore in my view it is the theme of displacement and the effects it has on each person's subjectivity that are of primary significance in the work. While the concept of 'alienation' and what I consider to be the liberatory aspects of Bhabha's Third Space might seem contradictory, it is important to reiterate that the protagonist's entry into a liminal state stems from her sense of alienation. This recognition points to a fundamental ambivalence upon which the exhibition

is premised: while displacement is understood in terms of trauma and conflict, processes of dislocation and relocation are also shown to provide generative opportunities for new identities-in-becoming and ways of being-in-the-world.

These shared experiences of alienation, and in Bertha Marks's case of isolation and confinement, play out in the work in various ways. The protagonist is always alone — in her rose garden, in the veld, or in her bedroom at Zwartkoppies. Her bedroom provides the spatial context for expressing her sense of isolation, as is the case in the *Ties that Bind Her* and *A Room of Her Own* series. Interestingly, alienation and the liberation of the Third Space are conjoined in my conceptualisation of the bedroom. I chose to work with, and in, the main bedroom at Zwartkoppies, given that it is most likely the space that for Bertha Marks would have been private and personal. Thus in the work the bedroom signifies a space of alienation and acts as a metaphor for her colonial lifeworld, but is also a transitional space of self-induced transformation.

The title *A Room of Her Own* derives from Virginia Woolf's extended essay *A room of one's own* (1989 [1929]), based on lectures she delivered in 1928 at the two Cambridge women's colleges on the subject of Women and Fiction. In this she was partly inspired by Lucy Honeychurch, the chief protagonist in EM Forster's novel *A room with a view* (1989 [1908]), who struggles to reconcile her experiences of conformity and freedom represented, on the one hand, by the well-bred sterility of England and, on the other, by its passionate opposite, Italy. In Woolf's essay, the acquisition of a room (of her own) signifies intellectual freedom and economic independence, both of which were inaccessible to Bertha Marks. Like Honeychurch and Woolf she faced intellectual, emotional and creative limitations under patriarchal oppression, even though she lived in material luxury. For each

of these women their private space or 'room' was, in one sense or another, a liberatory space. At the same time, this privacy signalled their isolation from the world. Playing with this ambivalence, I suggest that Bertha Marks took advantage of the suffocating patriarchal conventions of her time, but did so from within the confines of her private space or room. And like Honeychurch and Woolf, she struggled to convert her experiences of alienation and subjugation into wings of flight or quest. By cutting and conjoining her English identity, signified by white flesh, pearls and roses, with local plants and African trade beads, she finds ways to create a new, hybrid subjectivity.

Use of the room as a physical and psychic space of transformation is particularly evident in the performance and subsequent video, which are components of the series *A Room of Her Own*. In both, the three personae's narratives are grafted

Pieces which formed part of the soundtrack for the performance and video were, in order of arrangement: an excerpt from Chopin's *Funeral March*, Op. 35 in B Minor; Gallupi's *Adiogo*; Beethoven's *Adagio Cantabile* Sonata Op. 13 (*Sonata Pathétique*) in B Minor; Beethoven's *Menuetto Sonata no. 18*, Op. 31 no. 3 in E Flat Major; Chopin's *Prelude* Op. 28 no. 4 in E Minor and Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata* Op. 27 no. 2, first movement.

together in the soundtrack, which consists of three sections. The first is a voice-over narration of extracts from Bertha Marks's letters to her husband. I chose these quotations because they reveal the frustration of a married Victorian woman, her loneliness, her concern for the Jewish upbringing of her children and her ingrained colonial prejudices, attitudes and values. In the second section, Freda Farber narrates her childhood memories of leaving Latvia and adapting to life in South Africa. The third section 'speaks' for me as the postcolonial protagonist. In



Figure 15: Leora Farber, detail of *Corpa Delicata* during the performance. 2001.
Wax, stainless steel, metal and gas burners, 70 x 145 x 270 cm.
Photograph by Steven Hobbs.

A Room of Her Own had its antecedent in a performance at the Premises Gallery, Johannesburg, in 2001. In this performance over 1000 hand-made, individually sculpted wax chocolates were melted on a stainless steel bed (Figure 15). Video footage of a live ‘tummy-tuck’ operation was projected onto a screen positioned behind the bed.

this section, one hears jarring, discordant sounds of contemporary Johannesburg — cars hooting, people shouting, dogs barking. Towards the end, these sounds override the harmonious classical piano music underpinning all three sections.

In the performance and video, the dramatisation takes place in a three-dimensional photographic, archival re-creation of a section of the main bedroom in the Sammy Marks Museum. Before the performance, I used pigmented wax to build up the wallpaper of the re-created room (or ‘stage-set’) into three dimensions. A cast wax rose was inserted over each rose depicted in the wallpaper and the smooth background to this motif was modelled into an irregularly moulded, tactile, relief



Figure 16: William White, *Florence Nightingale and her sister Parthenope*. c. 1836.
National Portrait Gallery, London. (Parker 1984:[sp]).

surface. During the performance, heat was applied to the back of the aluminium surfaces of the stage-set, causing the wax roses and their surrounding ground to slowly shift and melt. Pieces of ‘fleshy’ wax and roses fell to the floor around the protagonist. In a serene state of self-absorption, she appeared to be oblivious of her colonial world collapsing around her as she stitched young aloe leaves into a rosette-formation on her thigh. This self-absorption, with its implied isolation and alienation, is echoed in the protagonist’s pose. In deciding on this pose, I found it useful to look at nineteenth-century British oil-painting conventions of female postures and gestures (Figure 16). Many of these works show women with their “eyes lowered, head bent, shoulders hunched” — poses that, as Parker (1984:10) points out, represent the ‘ideal’ feminine traits of repression, subjugation and submission. But, as she continues, the needleworker’s concentration and silence also suggests “self-containment, a kind of autonomy” (Parker 1984:10). Ultimately,

this was a double-edged sword: these women had to turn their source of boredom and frustration into a means of self-expression, and use it to achieve a private sense of contentment and independence.

I am fascinated by Parker's (1984:10) observation that in nineteenth-century oil-painting conventions, "[t]he silent embroiderer has ... become implicated in a stereotype of femininity in which the self-containment of the woman sewing is represented as seductiveness". In a deliberate play on these conventions, I tried to set up an analogy between the protagonist's self-contained pose and her representation as an eroticised object. Enclosed in her own secretive space, performing intimate acts by and on herself, the protagonist's body becomes a spectacle for the (male) gaze. This is particularly evident in the *Ties that Bind Her* series, where her breasts are partially exposed, her body is faintly visible through the semi-transparent fabric of her dress, her ankles (a signifier of eroticism in the repressive lexicon of Victorian sexuality) are revealed, and her reflection is mirrored back to the viewer, who is invited to take up the ambivalent position of intimate voyeur.

SK *Looked at from the perspective you have just outlined, would it not be appropriate to say that the protagonist's alienation not only tells us about the realities of coming to terms with the other, but also about her experience of an oppressive (white) patriarchy? If one takes this one step further, the protagonist's efforts to graft foreign matter onto her body could be read, from a feminist perspective, as an act of self-mutilation.*

LF Self-mutilation is such a complex and fraught issue. This is partly because cutting as a practice has become increasingly common among teenage girls. As

many psychologists have noted, the compulsion to cut one's body to the point of breaking the skin and releasing blood is a form of self-mutilation. It is not about the conscious intent of self-harm, nor the experience of physical pain. Rather, the cutter craves the relief provided by the endorphins released into the body that 'anesthetise' the person's emotional pain. This often becomes addictive. Cutting is therefore a way of 'speaking' when one is unable to express overwhelming emotions or unfulfilled emotional needs verbally; it is a desperate cry for help in the face of a devastating sense of alienation, lack of belonging, powerlessness and abandonment (D'Arcy 2007; Ellis 2002:12).

Several feminist writers (such as Rosemary Ellis [2002]) take this idea further by suggesting that, as is the case with the eating disorder anorexia nervosa, cutting is an extreme bodily response to expectations embedded in patriarchal ideologies rather than a symptom of individual psychopathology. Rather like the hysteric of the late nineteenth century, the anorexic responds to situations in which she feels powerless by controlling her body in a bid for independence and autonomy (Przybysz 1992:180). Viewed from this perspective, cutting may be seen as a non-verbal way in which some contemporary women respond to the patriarchal regulation of the boundaries of femininity, using their bodies as means through which this is effected. Ellis's feminist reading of cutting therefore prompts an interesting question - could Bertha Marks's action of cutting into her skin in order to effect the graft be read as a form of self-mutilation, and as such, as a desperate attempt to speak through the body from within the rigid constraints imposed on it in the Victorian era? According to Ellis (2002:10), acts of self-mutilation "create a renewed sense of external agency, through control over [the] body". Speculatively, if this contemporary practice were to be reframed in the light of Bertha Marks's alienated, isolated life at Zwartkoppies, her 'cutting' may be regarded as a reaction

against feelings of numbness and sublimated desires that such alienation may have provoked. Speculating further, if the contemporary psycho-logical/somatic disorder of cutting could be projected into a Victorian context, these emotions may be read as symptomatic of the gendered constraints and restrictive social norms with which women of the upper-middle-classes were expected to comply, and cutting might be seen as a form of release and liberation. Victorian constructs of femininity such as hysteria (and its associated sublimation of desire), needlework and cutting are thus imaged as the means through which the protagonist deals with transformative physical and psychological changes in responding to her alienating environment.

It might be argued that by showing Bertha cutting herself, I afforded her an opportunity to voice her anger in the face of situations in which she felt powerless. Seen in this way, cutting, as it is used in the work, has the transgressive potential to disrupt the sameness of the symbolic order, both through its evocation of abjection and through its potential to act as a means of self-expression that derives from the semiotic. Pursuing this line of argument further, it is possible to draw a correlation between the historically gendered disorder of hysteria and contemporary feminist readings of self-mutilation as forms of agency. There is general agreement among feminist writers that hysteria was a way in which nineteenth-century women reacted to their systematic oppression, particularly their ‘lack of voice’. Some feminist writers consider hysteria an unconscious form of feminist protest against women’s marginalised position in patriarchal society, while others see it as a desperate form of communication by the powerless. For example, Cixous (cited in Du Preez 2004:47) describes hysterics as a “core example of the protesting force of women”, given the ways in which they used their bodies as a source of (limited) agency and as vehicles through which the laws and

restrictions of the symbolic order could be transgressed. Alternatively, as Elaine Showalter (1997:7) suggests, hysteria may be thought of as “an expression, a body language for people who otherwise might not be able to speak or even to admit what they feel”. If one takes up Showalter’s reading of hysteria as a ‘pathology of powerlessness’, the representation of hysteria and the sublimation of desire associated with it, as well as Bertha Marks’s cutting, may be seen as attempts to ‘speak through the body’ or evoke a form of transgressive language and in so doing liberate the body and mind from the restrictions imposed on women by patriarchal society. If one accepts the proposition that hysteria, needlework and cutting are bodily or semiotically-driven forms of speech, they may be recognised as forms of agency, by means of which the protagonist is able to articulate her trauma — and, for Bertha Marks, as empowering mechanisms that enable her to ‘speak out’ against being the victim of colonial gendered discourses.

SK *Why did you choose yourself as the main protagonist for the project? Did the power of the self-portrait have any significant role to play in the conceptualisation of the work?*

LF Given that my body is used as a metonym for the three personae around whose experiences of displacement the narratives are structured, I can understand why a viewer might think that I am the main protagonist in the work. However, it is important to remember that I am one of three personae whose life experiences are represented. Therefore, my experiences of displacement are those of one persona refracted through the historical lens of two South African immigrant Jewish women. We are three individual personae, whose experiences and representations

are phonetically and visually grafted throughout the work. That said, there were specific reasons why I chose to enact the parts of all three personae, as opposed to having another person perform the protagonist's part.

First, although in the work my speaking position slips fluidly between artist and protagonist, I differentiate between *myself* (as *artist, maker of the image* and the person who *performs* my part as the postcolonial protagonist) and the *postcolonial protagonist* (the character who is being portrayed). I found that in *Dis-Location*, as in many autoethnographic texts, writing about oneself, or inserting oneself as a character into the text, results in a form of distance between one's subjectivity at the time of writing and the character's subjectivity; as Catherine Russell (2006:2), speaking about autoethnographic writing, says, "the self we write about is turned into 'an other' over time". Therefore, by turning myself into an ego in the text, the character I portray is not synonymous with 'myself': even though the postcolonial protagonist and I consist of the same person, there is a difference between us. I found the tensions between these slippages and processes of differentiation useful: while the slippages allowed for a sense of immersion in the work, differentiation resulted in a critical, self-reflexive distance from it. Awareness of this difference is what allows for self-reflexivity in the text. As is common in autoethnographic modes of self-representation (Russell 1999), I draw attention to the fictive, constructed nature of the image by inscribing myself into the text in an ironic way — in other words, I mediate the way in which I am represented and identify myself as maker of the image. The work became a site wherein I, as an artist, could represent myself as a fiction. In it, I could imagine myself to be a member of another society in a different time and place, and re-create or "self-fashion" (James Clifford cited in Russell 1999) my own subjectivity.

Secondly, in an autoethnographic text the subject's account of personal experience is not only autobiographical but also reflects an understanding of "personal history [as] implicated in larger social formations and historical processes" (Russell 1999). In *Dis-Location*, the postcolonial protagonist's narrative reflects my history and the legacies it carries. These histories shape and form my current subjectivity as a white, middle-class, English-speaking, second-generation Jewish female South African. Although in the work I narrate my experience of recent displacement from the position of the present, this identity (unstable as it is), as Hall (2000:23) says, is not constituted through a "mere 'recovery' of the past" but rather, as he puts it, through "the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past". I am positioned by my inherited Eurocentric, particularly Anglo-Saxon, past and the deeply ingrained colonial legacies it carries. 'Playing the part' of Bertha Marks, and reflecting on Freda Farber's narratives, were therefore for me ways of re-enacting my historical legacies in order to understand how they have shaped my place within the present moment in postapartheid South Africa.

Perhaps it is in this process of 'enacting' my historical legacies that the power of the self-portrait comes into play. I don't see the representation of my body in the images that make up the *Aloerosa* and *A Room of Her Own* series as forms of self-portraiture, but the staging of the series *Ties that Bind Her* certainly alludes to the iconographical tradition of 'Venus at the mirror' (the trope of the female subject looking into and being reflected in the mirror), which is a form of self-portrait. *Ties that Bind Her* comprises a set of self-portraits of the protagonist, seated in the main bedroom of the Sammy Marks Museum at what was Bertha Marks's dressing table. At the time of photographing, sitting in Bertha Marks's 'place', looking into the mirror that once reflected her image, afforded an intense experience of

‘being Bertha’, leading me to feel a deep sense of ‘empathic unsettlement’ with her. As I have established, she is on one level a reflection of my colonial legacies. Therefore, facing my own image from the physical and metaphorical position she had previously occupied, I was able to engage with my past while living it in the present. Norman Denzin (2006:423), speaking in relation to autoethnographic writing, puts this idea across well: as he says, “In bringing the past into the autobiographical present, I insert myself into the past and create the conditions for rewriting and hence re-experiencing it.”

SK From our discussion on the content of the work, I'd now like to turn to issues around process, media and choice of materials as they feature in Dis-Location. To begin with, why did you decide to work with a range of media — photography, performance, installation, sculpture and video?

LF Although I have always considered painting to be my primary medium, since 1997 I have made work in a range of media, including sculpture, video, photography, installation and performance, often combining these in one work or across a solo exhibition. In working with these diverse media, I constantly draw on my background and training as a painter, although I acknowledge that each medium has its own specificities that need to be taken into account. My choice to work across a range of media is usually two-fold: I employ media based on choices that best suit the realisation of the concept that I want to convey, and I employ media for the sake of the differing kinds of affective responses each medium may evoke.

In *Dis-Location*, I used still photography as a primary medium because it allows for the construction of ‘staged subjectivities’ or critical forms of self-representation wherein the subject is placed in a particular context and a specific moment in time. This photographic ‘genre’ has a long association with contemporary feminist art and art dealing with identity politics. In this genre, the artist may use the photograph as a medium to call attention to the construction of personal identity and the body (usually the artist’s own) as a means to critique the power relations (colonial, gender, class) inscribed in representation or as a means to critique notions of fixed selfhood. What is of importance here is on the one hand the so-called ‘veracity’ of the photograph, its ability to simulate ‘reality’ and effect a suspension of disbelief, and, on the other, calling attention to the fact that as a representation the photographic image is itself a construct.

In the narratives, meaning is generated by the way in which the protagonist interacts with (engages with, becomes part of, distances herself from) and is positioned within selected settings. However, in *Dis-Location*, the protagonist not only ‘dresses up’, wears make-up to affect appearance or dons appendages to convey an alternative identity or assert a contested one, as is often the case in work that deals with ‘staged subjectivities’: she also undergoes multiple bodily transformations — the images represent fictions of photography that take up the category of illusionistic fantasy. Her illusionary transformations were created through use of cinematic special effects (make-up techniques). In this respect, still photography was an ideal medium, as it allowed for the labour-intensive process of rendering the special effects just prior to the shoot and enabled the photographer to capture ‘a specific moment’ of the transformation process that, in each of the three narratives, is shown to take place over time.

For example, although the nine images of the *Aloerosa* series were shot over four days at different times of each day, the narrative takes place within the linear timeframe of 12 hours. Still photography therefore allows one to create an illusion of time's passing that, in the *Aloerosa* series, is signified by the accelerated growth of the aloe. Temporality is also reflected in each narrative series as a whole, as the images of which they are comprised follow a linear trajectory: they are chronologically ordered to reflect the progressive stages of the transformation process. There is a spatial progression from the first narrative (*Aloerosa*) to the second (*Ties that Bind Her*), as the setting of the image changes from the exterior (of the house and veld) to the interior (of the bedroom) and, finally, in the third narrative, *A Room of Her Own*, the protagonist herself moves into a state of psychological interiority. Although each narrative is discreet, in that there are no physical traces on the body of the transformation that occurred in the previous narrative, with each spatial change the protagonist moves into a deeper 'state of interiority'. From its physical position in the interior of the house (which is an interior space in itself) the room is internalised by the protagonist to the point where it becomes an extension of her body and, conversely, her body becomes her personal 'room'.

In contrast to still photography, which 'freezes' a moment in time, I used performance and video in *Dis-Location* because they are time-based media that allow for the representation of continuous motion. By using these media, I was able to suggest a fictitious 'time-span' that collapses over a century of geographical, historical and generational time into 30 minutes. This span of time is played out in the soundtrack, which begins with Bertha Marks 'speaking' about her life experiences between 1885 and the early 1900s and ends with the postcolonial persona's experience of Johannesburg in 2006. The 30-minute duration of the

performance plays out in real time in the video. In the exhibition, video was used to bring an event which took place in the past (the performance) into the present (of the exhibition). For example, edited footage of details from the performance, such as close-ups of the roses dropping to the floor and melting off the walls, played on miniature LCD screens inserted into the walls of the stage-set, which had been broken up into three separate installations. The screens were framed so as to create the impression that the videos were animated paintings. In these installations, a wide range of media are combined: video (with sound), installation, photography, print and sculpture.

While each of the media I used in *Dis-Location* has the potential to evoke affect, for me the soundtrack is particularly poignant. Many viewers have commented that they find the classical music and the biographic, autobiographic and autoethnographic narratives combined with ambient sounds to be deeply moving. The narratives seem to allow for an empathic understanding of each persona's lived experience of displacement. Perhaps this is because they take the form of personal disclosures: it is almost as if the persona is speaking in private, to herself; the audience is made privy to, but not part of, her inner world. Like other sounds, music can be intensely affective and act as a powerful trigger for associative thoughts, emotions and memories.

SK *In the sculptural and installation works, what motivated you to choose certain materials over others? Were specific materials and/or processes involved in the staging of the shoots?*

LK When making three-dimensional work, I tend to choose materials for their metaphoric and affective qualities. This is one of the reasons wax features so prominently in *Dis-Location*, particularly in the performance, stage-set installations and video. When working up the surfaces of the wallpaper, I built up the areas surrounding the roses into a smooth, yet subtly textured relief, which looked and felt remarkably like human skin (Figure 17). For me, working with wax is sensory and sensate; the very materiality of the medium renders the surface of the work a site for bodily or emotive investment. I particularly relate to Didi-Huberman’s (1999:65) description of working with wax as a tactile, bodily experience and the heightened degree of physical contact the medium can provoke:

Wax ‘moves’: it warms up my hand, it assumes the temperature of my body, and at that moment becomes capable of involuting before the detail of my fingers, taking my prints, transiting softly, as though from one biological form to another ... this vegetal material ... nestled against my flesh, becomes like flesh ... wax ... ‘moves’ in the sense that it ‘upsets’ ... [it] presents a disconcerting multiplicity of physical properties ... the fundamental *passivity* — malleability — and *fragility* of wax ... [is] always consequent on some kind of metamorphosis”.



Figure 17: Leora Farber, *A Room of Her Own*, detail of wallpaper before the performance. 2006. Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.



Figures 18a & 18b: Leora Farber, *A Room of Her Own*, details of wallpaper, main stage-set installation. 2006. Photographs by Creative Colour Solutions.

Owing to its ability to change from a solid — to malleable material to liquid — and return to its solid state, wax is an ideal medium for suggesting processes of formation and transformation: through the application of heat, which in this instance was intended to be metaphoric of the warmth of the ‘African sun’, the known security of the protagonist’s colonial world dissolved around her. The idea of the room being ‘in-process’, or in a state of becoming, is analogous to her processes of physical and psychological transmutation.

When working up the wallpaper surfaces, I applied alizarin crimson wax as a first layer over the printed wallpaper. As a result, the roses and their attached pieces of ‘flesh’ appeared as if ‘bleeding’ while they slid off the wall, leaving viscous traces of their paths (Figures 18a). While liquid and in motion, the wax residues bore a strong resemblance to blood and bodily fluids making them markedly abject but, once solidified, they became more evocative of what Rosalind Krauss (2005:397) calls the “condition of matter”: a kind of viscosity which is “neither solid nor liquid but somewhere midway between the two” (Figure 18b). After the performance the wax remaining on the wallpaper congealed into formless masses, as did pieces of wax that had fallen with the roses to the floor. In their viscosity these masses were disturbingly reminiscent of the inner body and thus took on further abject qualities (Figures 19a, 19b & 19c). I heightened these abject associations by using shellac, which creates a particularly ‘visceral’ effect when applied over wax surfaces. In the installations these ‘formless masses’ suggested processes of mergence and separation, of establishing and denying boundaries between inside and outside. They may therefore have prompted a sense of bodily or sensory awareness in the viewer, perhaps even leading to dissolution of ego boundaries. Unlike in the installations, where viewers were able to view the wax surfaces from close proximity, in the performance and the video the visceral



Figures 19a, 19b & 19c: Leora Farber, *A Room of Her Own*, details of roses after the performance. 2006. Photographs by Charles Blackbeard.

qualities of the material were mediated. In the former, clear demarcations between the audience and the stage-set or subject were intentionally set up to emphasise the protagonist's isolation, and in the latter, owing to the optical nature of the video medium, the immediacy of the melting wax and palpability of the material are set at a remove.

Another example where I used wax for its fleshy qualities is in the plant-like sculptures titled the *Cultivar* series. I constructed the *cultivars* by grafting materials of different natures: synthetic, natural, fabric and plastic. I usually began with a plastic replica of an aloe and a plastic or fabric replica of a rose which I sliced up and, incorporating fragments of actual plant materials (rose-thorns, dried roses and petals, cactus spikes, curled-up roots of a pot-bound plant, dried branches and twigs), conjoined these pieces into strange, hybrid configurations. Each *cultivar* was unified by coating its entire surface with a thick layer of wax in order to create a sense of 'fleshiness' reminiscent of the succulent flesh of the aloe. I would often colour the wax to resemble tones of 'Caucasian' flesh so as to draw an analogy between the outer surface of the plant and human skin. In other instances I used wax as a thin coating in an attempt to evoke a sense of the soft, velvety texture of the rose-petal.

Perhaps the best way to explain how and which materials were used in the shoots is for me to speak about pre-shoot preparation and the make-up process, both of which I found fascinating. Although the Sammy Marks Museum is furnished in Victorian style, and therefore has period objects and ornaments in place, it was necessary to supplement these with additional pieces supporting the content of the image. For example, for the *Ties that Bind Her* series shot at Bertha Marks's dressing table, I added the kinds of objects one might expect to find in a Victorian

boudoir (period perfume bottles, hairbrushes, jewellery, lace doilies, ladies' gloves in a glove box, a manicure set), as well as 'jarring' items that disrupted the typically sweet sentimentality of the Victorian sensibility (Figures 20a, 20b, 20c & 20d). These included various kinds of scissors, pocket knives, bandages, tins filled with African trade beads, pins, sewing needles and blood-stained balls of cotton wool. While objects such as pins and sewing needles do not automatically carry disturbing associations, in the context of the images wherein the protagonist uses them to penetrate her skin they take on unsettling connotations. Most of these objects had to be sourced and hired from antique shops. The process of researching and sourcing items for shoots began several weeks in advance of the shoot, as did preparation for the special effects.



Figures 20a, 20b, 20c & 20d: Details of the dressing table, arranged for the *Ties that Bind Her* photographic shoot, 2006.
 Photographs by Shannin Antonopoulou.
 Courtesy of the Sammy Marks Museum.



Figures 21a & 21b: Details of special effects in process for the *Aloerosa* photographic shoot, 2006.
Photographs by Shannin Antonopoulo.

In conceptualising the special effect for a particular image, the make-up artist and I first discussed what it was that I wanted to achieve and then considered ways in which this could be realised on the body (or not). Assessing the feasibility of the effect entailed detailed research. We had to look closely at the root and growth patterns of specific aloe plants, as well as at their stem and leaf formations, so as to be able to translate them onto the body. Translation meant that we had to imaginatively substitute flesh for soil and veins for roots or stems (Figures 21a & 21b). For example, in the print *A Room of Her Own: Generation*, the root system of the hybrid aloe growing in the protagonist's thigh is translated into threads of embroidery cotton. The roots, which visually parallel veins, appear to be growing under and out of the skin. I found the idea of transposing materials that, although organic, are still foreign to the body intriguing, as it allowed for thinking about the body as 'raw material' or flesh as a sculptural medium. One of the most stimulating aspects of the process was discussing with the make-up artist, in intricate detail, how to create a convincing illusion of the fantastic: if an aloe plant were to be planted in one's arm, which direction would the growth take? If the stem grows under the skin, at what point, and how, does it rupture the skin to emerge from it?

Creating the special effects for the performance posed an unexpected challenge. While in still photography a particular action and its consequences can be fixed in time (making direct continuity after that moment unnecessary), working in real time, in front of a live audience, meant that the action performed, and its consequences, had to be followed through — if not for the duration of the work, then at least for some moments thereafter. An example is the protagonist's stitching into her skin. To achieve suspension of disbelief, the make-up artist and I had to find a way for the skin to 'bleed' each time it was pierced by the needle. We experimented with a foot-operated pump, using tubing to carry blood-like

fluid to the piece of ‘flesh’ being stitched into, but this proved cumbersome. It was also difficult to conceal the tubing and control the amount of ‘blood’ being released. A compromise was reached by making cuts into the piece of ‘fake skin’ on the protagonist’s thigh and filling these with blood-like fluid. It therefore appeared as if she had cut the slits into which she inserted the aloe leaves before the performance. To strengthen the associations with blood, deep-crimson embroidery cotton was used for the stitching.



Figures 22a, 22b & 22c: Latex casts used in the *Aloerosa* photographic shoot, 2006.
Photographs by Hannelie Coetzee.

Each stage of growth or change shown in the images was preceded by detailed discussions and preparation of the plant to be used in the shoot. Preparation included processes such as shaving the stem of an aloe with a blade to form a flat surface that could be glued onto my forearm, and working with latex ‘skins’. Although its texture is ‘rubbery’, as opposed to the smoothness of wax, latex is also a medium often used by artists to simulate the appearance of human skin. It provided a lightweight base into which a plant, stem, seedling or root could be embedded (Figures 22a, 22b & 22c). It also proved an excellent material for casting objects such as the pearl necklace, choker and bracelet that the protagonist wears in the *Ties that Bind Her* series (Figures 23a, 23b & 23c). The bases or casts

were stuck onto my body during the make-up process. Their edges were expertly blended with my skin so that they were not discernible and the colour of the latex was carefully matched to my skin tone.

The make-up and photography were demanding processes. Only one stage of the transformation process could be realised each day. The make-up usually took up to eight hours to complete and this was followed by some four hours of photography. Continuity was critical in order to create a suspension of disbelief: at each stage of the transformation process the position of the ‘new’ plant or object had to be perfectly aligned with the position that it had occupied in the last image. While being made-up I had to remain practically motionless so as not to disturb the effect being created. Although the concept and setting for each shoot were preplanned and the protagonist’s pose had been scripted beforehand, a fair amount of improvisation took place on site to accommodate unpredictable factors that could not be rehearsed such as lighting, precise camera angle and depth of focus.

I am often asked why I did not simply photograph the figure in context and use a digital manipulation programme such as Adobe Photoshop to create the illusion of growth into the flesh. For me, this would not have allowed for the ‘embodied’ experience I wanted; I needed to come as close as possible to actually experiencing, *at the level of the lived*, what it might be like to have an aloe growing in my forearm. The discomfort (and, at times, physical pain) I experienced during the make-up process became almost akin to the pain I imagine one might feel if a foreign object were to grow in one’s body. Verisimilitude was achieved through make-up — as opposed to digital — special effects, and post-production digital manipulation



Figures 23a, 23b & 23c: Latex casts used in the *Ties that Bind Her* photographic shoot, 2006.
Photographs by Hannelie Coetzee.

was kept to a minimum. Photoshop was used only for colour adjustment, so as to evoke a sense of the image being a hand-coloured photograph, and to simulate qualities found in historical paintings, such as heightened *chiaroscuro*.

SK What was the impact on your work of collaboration with other artists and assistants?

LF In contrast to the conventional or historical conception of the artist whose primary, and often only, task is to make art, over time I came to see myself as ‘director’ of the project. This was because, in addition to being ‘the artist’, I had to assume multiple roles: project manager and representative, logistics co-ordinator,

fundraiser and writer. Adopting these multifaceted roles was complex, as it often necessitated wearing several hats simultaneously and having to be proficient in many areas.

Much of the creative work, however, was collaborative or involved working with others. In addition to the collaboration with Strangelove, working partnerships took many forms. Paid expertise included a professional photographer, a digital retoucher, a special effects artist, a video editor, a voice-over artist and a sound artist, as well as specialist Fine Art printers. The performance involved working with numerous professionals, including a producer, a production manager, an assistant director, a director of photography, a pianist, a choreography consultant, a period consultant, set designers, videographers and electrical engineers. Graphic Design and Visual Art BTech students from the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture at the University of Johannesburg also played important roles. Eight students received National Research Foundation bursaries to work on the project over a period of two years. The project provided them with valuable work-place learning opportunities: some were responsible for major aspects of the work such as the digital compositing of images on the stage-set panels while others acted as shoot stylists, photographic assistants, creative and/or technical assistants, graphic designers and casters of wax roses. Each individual brought a wealth of technical knowledge to the work and provided valuable creative input based on their particular expertise.

Once I had explained my initial idea for the work, those involved in its production and I would discuss how the concept could best be realised. In almost every instance our interaction proved to be an organic process involving a fair amount of give and take. Our discussions had a direct bearing on the realisation of the

work. Sometimes my initial idea had to be modified to accommodate technical or logistical factors but by working within what initially seemed to be ‘limitations’, creative and innovative solutions opened up. At other times, collaboration meant that I had to adapt my working style. Working with the engineers who built the stage-set was interesting because, unlike myself and other artists who tend to work organically, allowing the medium, imagery and material to suggest the next step in the process of making, the engineers required the design and materials to be specified upfront. While I am used to changing direction at any point during the making process, they work towards a predetermined plan which is followed through with minimal deviation from start to finish.

Although it was challenging at times, I found it extremely rewarding to allow my initial ideas to be modified, shaped and formed through discussion, process and professional input. The results and the means by which they were achieved were often unexpected and surprising to me. Flexibility and openness to new approaches and ideas was very important yet, at the same time, it was also necessary to retain a sense of conviction in the initial concept informing the work. On shoots, decisions concerning factors that could not be preplanned or arose unexpectedly were in the main made spontaneously and came about through dynamic interaction between team members. For me, the way in which everyone worked towards a common goal was exciting; it made me aware of the enormous potential and value of working with others as opposed to working alone in one’s studio.

SK Use or processing of sources is one of the most complex and fascinating aspects of artistic production. Can you explain how you used and interpreted your sources in different phases of the project?



Figure 24: *Dis-Location* team members, 2006.

Left to right (above): Charles Blackbeard, Andreas Kahlau, Jay Hyde, Les Cohn, Elizabeth Héle-Senekal, James French, Shannin Antonopoulou, Anina Kruger, Ziemek Pater.
Left to right (below): Leora Farber, Dennis da Silva, Gretha Brazelle, Debra Nicoll, Carlo Gibson. Absent: Craig Bartlett, Julian Dall, Catherine Meyburgh.
Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.

LF For me, the acquisition of source material was an integral and ongoing part of the research process. The work was produced through creative processing and interpretation of sources throughout the time of making and, in certain instances, references to source material informed decisions as to how the work was installed in the gallery spaces. Source material, subject matter, content, the processes of making and the final output were closely intermeshed, with each being contingent upon the other. Intangible sources such as personal interpretation, imaginative thinking and empathetic projection were interwoven with what I tend to think of

as more ‘concrete’ sources (theoretical, historical and literary texts, information garnered from interviews, music, video and audio extracts, contents of archives, visual imagery, plant materials and references to Victorianism). From the starting point of Strangelove’s *Wind* range — in which the garments themselves can be considered as artworks based on intensive research — the content and imagery of the exhibition unfolded in an ongoing process of negotiation.

Negotiation involved moving backwards and forwards throughout the making process between the initial concept for the work, source material and interpretation of sources, each of which had to be weighed up against practical or technical factors. I found that it was frequently through combinations of diverse source materials that some of the most interesting interpretations emerged. Despite my reservations about using sources that often seemed too diverse or unconnected, once processed in the work the combinations gave rise to a text imbued with a dense matrix of signification and meaning.

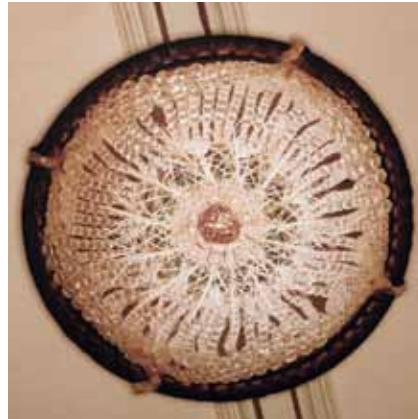
I found that the process of negotiation between source material and making put me in an ambivalent position. On the one hand, being open to the multitude of diverse sources and ways in which they could be interpreted meant submitting the work to a somewhat unpredictable outcome. On the other, I was careful not to exert too much control over the source material so as not to close off potentially rich possible interpretations. Ultimately it meant balancing between the two options: I found the former process to be both exciting and unnerving, whereas the latter was useful in that it allowed me to rein in very disparate sources and work with them to achieve a certain degree of aesthetic, ideological and thematic coherency.



Figure 25: *A Room of Her Own*, pre-performance, 2006.
Photograph by Charles Blackbeard.

In the exhibition ceiling panels were suspended above the main stage-set installation and the smaller of the two side-sets. In both panels, an image of an aloe, similar in shape to a round, flower-like chandelier at the Sammy Marks Museum, was digitally composited onto the latter’s central core, creating a visual hybrid of the two ‘plant’ forms (Figures 26a & 26b). In the Oliewenhuis Art Museum the side-set panel was mounted onto the gallery ceiling so that it appeared to be part of the architecture of the space (Figure 26c).

The wallpaper of the stage-set is a pertinent example of how the entangled relationship between source material, subject matter, content, processes of making and the final output played out. Starting with a piece of fabric with a rose motif as a primary source (Figure 27a) Graphic Design students digitally replaced



Figures 26a, 26b & 26c:
Above (left): Detail of chandelier, Sammy Marks Museum, 2006.
Photograph by the author.
Courtesy of the Sammy Marks Museum.

Above (right): Leora Farber, *A Room of Her Own*,
detail of main stage-set ceiling panel. 2007.
Photograph by Charles Blackbeard.

Below: Leora Farber, *A Room of Her Own*,
ceiling panel of side-set. 2007.
Installed at Oliewenhuis Art Museum.
Photograph by George Hugo.



Figure 27a (left): Detail of fabric used as original source for the wallpaper, 2006.
Figure 27b (right): Detail of wallpaper showing digitally composited roses and aloes, 2006.

certain roses of the wallpaper motif with deep etched images of aloes (Figure 27b). Images of other architectural elements (such as a dado rail, frieze and skirting board) were thereafter digitally composited together with the wallpaper panels. Once the composited images had been printed on canvas and mounted onto wood and aluminium panels, the panels were joined together to form a photographic simulacrum of a room. I worked over the wallpaper with wax, replacing most of the printed roses and aloes with cast wax roses, leaves and stems. After the performance, I inserted cast wax aloes and *cultivars* of various sizes amongst the melted roses and remnants of the wallpaper on the floorboards and walls so as to suggest new growth.

SK *You exhibited Dis-Location in seven South African cities. Did the differing forms of architecture and history of the venues in which you showed the work influence the ways in which you chose to present the exhibition?*

LF Wherever possible I chose to exhibit *Dis-Location* in South African galleries or museums that reflect the countries' colonial history. Two of the galleries in which *Dis-Location* was shown date back to the Victorian era: the Albany History Museum in Grahamstown was established in 1855 and the Durban Art Gallery had its beginnings in 1892. The Johannesburg Art Galley opened to the public in 1915. The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum (NMMAM) in Port Elizabeth opened considerably later, in 1956. Despite their temporal differences, a common feature is that these galleries are all examples of neoclassicist architecture, typical of the British building style in South Africa in the late Victorian era and the first half of the twentieth century. With its reminders of Greece and Rome, the neoclassicist style was used to express the spirit of Empire; it was a means by which the British could 'replicate themselves' by transplanting their language, culture, institutions and value systems to the colonies. By establishing art galleries in the colonies, the British hoped, as Jillian Carman (2006) candidly puts it, to "uplift[t] the colonial philistine".

In retrospect, it seems that it was in these previously colonial institutions that *Dis-Location* resonated most strongly. This might have had to do with the way in which architectural elements of the gallery (such as friezes, dado rails, wooden skirting and floorboards) were represented in the work and vice versa. But over and above these architectural similarities are the ideological correlations between Bertha Marks's colonial experience in southern Africa, in which she insistently upheld British values and culture, and the ways in which these galleries represent

attempts to transplant British cultural values, first into southern Africa and later into the Union of South Africa. The temporal and ideological correlations between the work and the spaces in which it was shown set up an interesting trialectic between the colonial architecture and history of the gallery, the imagery and content of the work and the postcolonial, postapartheid context of the present. As the work 'spoke' to its context, the context echoed the content of the work, yet this synergy was constantly disrupted by references to the postapartheid present signified by the postcolonial persona's presence.

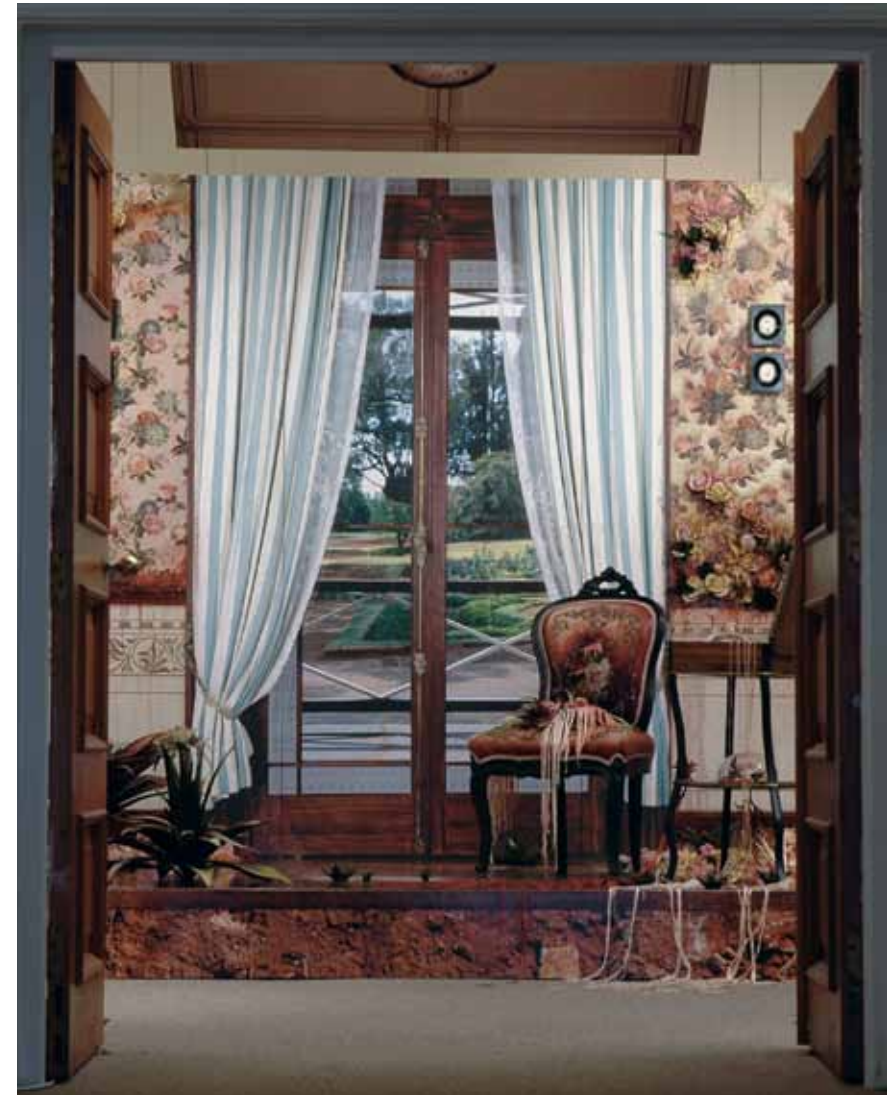
For me, this trialectic was particularly evident in the exhibition at the Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG). In its current position in the Johannesburg inner-city that which remains of the JAG's original neoclassicist edifice — whose foundation stone was laid in 1911 — now resembles a displaced colonial island in the midst of an Afropolitan space. Although the ideological underpinnings of Empire and temporal references to its colonial past are cemented in its architecture, the JAG's immediate environment in the inner-city is postcolonial. While setting up the exhibition at the JAG, I was struck by the disjuncture between the contemplative silence and relative lack of human presence 'inside' the gallery, and the crowded, noisy 'chaos' of the city 'outside'. The JAG's colonial history is almost palpably present in the southern wing of the gallery where *Dis-Location* was shown: while working in the Florence Phillips Gallery and the rooms adjacent to it, I felt as if I had entered into Bertha Marks's time and space. The combination of the contemporary, Afropolitan, postcolonial space surrounding the JAG, the gallery's inbuilt legacy of South Africa's colonial past and the visual fusion of its colonial past and postcolonial present in *Dis-Location* set up a series of what I experienced as deeply unsettling, yet extremely provocative, tensions.

SK Our discussion leads me to suggest that *Dis-Location* is not only reflective of South Africa's colonial past and ways that it has impacted on the present, but also hints at the future. So, what comes next?

LF As *Dis-Location* leaves the viewer with no neat answers or given conclusions, perhaps our discussion should end on a similarly inconclusive note — all will unfold in time.



The neoclassicist architecture itself often provided cues as to how to work *with* the space in ways that heightened the three-way dialogue between the architecture and history of the gallery space, the work and the postapartheid present. Because of its emphasis on balance and symmetry, I found that the formal nature of the space could often be exploited in interesting ways. An example of this was at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum, where I set up a play between perspectival and illusionistic space (Figure 28a). The stage-set installation was placed in a small room leading off the main gallery. I positioned the photographic door of the stage-set, with its illusionistic view of the rose garden outside the main bedroom of Zwartkoppies, in the centre of this space. If one stood in the middle of the doorway leading into the main gallery, it was possible to see the stage-set door through a double set of doorways. From the first doorway, the glass door of the stage-set appeared to be part of the gallery architecture, creating an illusion of the two-dimensional representations of the bedroom and garden as being three-dimensional spaces (Figure 28b). I was able to set up a similar, although simpler, configuration at the Oliewenhuis Art Museum (Figure 29).



Figures 28a (left) & 28b (above): Installation of *A Room of Her Own* stage-set, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum. 2007. Photographs by Brent Meistre.



Figure 29: Installation of *A Room of Her Own* stage-set, Oliewenhuis Art Museum. 2007. Photograph by George Hugo.



Figure 30: Installation of *A Room of Her Own* video, Johannesburg Art Gallery. 2008. Photograph by Clive Hassall.

The galleries and museums in Bloemfontein, Stellenbosch and Cape Town were chosen for their references to diverse South African histories and the relationship of these histories to the physical locations of the institutions. The Neo-Dutch style Oliewenhuis Art Museum in Bloemfontein was formerly a mansion that served as a residence for the Governor-General of the Union of South Africa from 1942. The building in which the US Museum in Stellenbosch is housed was built in 1851 as a Lutheran church. The Jewish Museum in Cape Town presents exhibits and multimedia displays of the history of the Jews in southern and South Africa. As in the colonial spaces, the work reverberated with the history, architecture, locations and current ideological positioning of these galleries.

At the JAG, the video *A Room of Her Own* was set up in a way that seamlessly blended the presentation of the work with the architectural structure of the building. On either side of the Florence Phillips Gallery are two small rooms with deep semi-circular niches. I used wallpaper panelling to create the illusion of a flat wall between the two sides of a niche, mounting a plasma screen on which the video played in the centre of the wall. A sense of drama was created by framing the simulated wall with rich red wine-coloured velvet curtains. Viewers were invited to watch the video while seated on period armchairs placed directly opposite the screen.

SOURCES CITED

- Allara, P. 2001. The cosmetic and the confectionary: the body as object and image in the work of Leora Farber. Catalogue text for the exhibition *All you can be*, Art Circle, Potchefstroom, 2-13 October:[Sp].
- Betterton, R. 1996. *Intimate distance: women, artists and the body*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Bhabha, HK. 1990. The third space: interview with Homi Bhabha, in *Identity, community, culture, difference*, edited by J Rutherford. London: Lawrence & Wishart:207-221.
- Bhabha, HK. 1994. *The location of culture*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Bhabha, HK. 1996. Culture's in-between, in *Questions of cultural identity*, edited by S Hall & P Dugay. London: Sage:53-60.
- Carman, J. 2006. *Uplifting the colonial philistine: Florence Phillips and the making of the Johannesburg Art Gallery*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- Cixous, H. 1981. The laugh of the Medusa, in *New French feminisms*, edited by E Marks & I Courtivron. Brighton: Harvester Press:259-260.
- D'Arcy, L. 2007. Cutting. [O]. Available: http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/mental_health/cutting.html
Accessed 30 April 2008.
- Davis, K. 1995. *Reshaping the female body: the dilemma of cosmetic surgery*. New York/London: Routledge.
- Denzin, NK. 2006. Analytic autoethnography, or déjà vu all over again. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 35:419-428.
- Didi-Huberman, G. 1999. Wax flesh, vicious circles, in *Encyclopedia anatomica: a complete collection of anatomical waxes*. Museo La Specola Florence. Köln: Taschen:64-74.
- Dodd, A. 2010. Dressed to thrill: the Victorian postmodern and counter-archival imaginings in the work of Mary Sibande. *Critical Arts* 24(3), November:467-475.
- Douglas, M. 1966. *Purity and danger: an analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo*. Vol. 2. London/New York: Routledge.
- Du Preez, A. 2004. Putting on appearances: mimetic representations of hysteria. *de arte* 69:47-61.
- Ellis, RL. 2002. A feminist qualitative study of female self-mutilation. MA dissertation, Virginia Polytech Institute and State University, Blacksburg Virginia.
- Encyclopedia anatomica: a complete collection of anatomical waxes*. Museo La Specola Florence. 1999. Köln: Taschen.
- Enwezor, O (ed). 1997. *Traderoutes history and geography*. Catalogue for the second Johannesburg Biennale. Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council & the Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development. Singapore: SNP printing.
- Forster, EM. 1989 [1908]. *A room with a view*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Greene, G & Kahn, C. 1985. *Making a difference*. London: Methuen.
- Hall, S. 2000 [1996]. Cultural identity and diaspora, in *Diaspora and visual culture representing Africans and Jews*, edited by N Mirzoeff. London: Routledge:21-33.
- Hall, S & Dugay, P (eds). 1996. *Questions of cultural identity*. London: Sage.
- Irigaray, L. 1981. This sex which is not one, in *New French feminisms*, edited by E Marks & I Courtivron. Brighton: Harvester Press:99-106.
- Jones, AR. 1985. Inscribing femininity: French theories of the feminine, in *Making a difference*, edited by G Greene & C Kahn. London: Methuen.
- Klopper, S & Farber, L. 2008. Bertha Marks revisited: Leora Farber in conversation with Sandra Klopper, in *Dis-Location/Re-Location: exploring alienation and identity in South Africa*, edited by B Law-Viljoen. Johannesburg: David Krut:11-25.
- Krauss, R. 2005 [1996]. *Informe* without conclusion, in *Theory in contemporary art since 1985*, edited by Z Kocur & S Leung. Oxford: Blackwell:395-407.

- Kristeva, J. 1980. *Desire and language: a semiotic approach to literature and art*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kristeva, J. 1982. *Powers of horror: an essay in abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kristeva, J. 1991. *Strangers to ourselves*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- LaCapra, D. 2001. *Writing history, writing trauma*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Law-Viljoen, B (ed). 2008. *Dis-Location/Re-Location: exploring alienation and identity in South Africa*. Johannesburg: David Krut.
- McAfee, N. 2004. *Julia Kristeva — essential guides for literary studies*. New York/London: Routledge.
- McClintock, A. 1995. *Imperial leather: race, gender and sexuality in the colonial contest*. New York/London: Routledge.
- Meecham, P & Sheldon, J. 2000. *Modern art: a critical introduction*. New York/London: Routledge.
- Mendelsohn, R. 1991. *Sammy Marks: 'the uncrowned king of the Transvaal'*. Cape Town: David Philip.
- Mendelsohn, R. 2008. The gilded cage: Bertha Marks at Zwartkoppies, in *Dis-Location/Re-Location: exploring alienation and identity in South Africa*, edited by B Law-Viljoen. Johannesburg: David Krut:27-39.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. 1964. *L'oeil et l'esprit*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Mirzoeff, N (ed). 2000. *Diaspora and visual culture*. New York/London: Routledge.
- Murray, SA. 2008. Awfully pretty: female embodiment in *Dis-Location/Re-Location*, in *Dis-Location/Re-Location: exploring alienation and identity in South Africa*, edited by B Law-Viljoen. Johannesburg: David Krut:49-58.
- Mutual Art.com. 2012. Art Appraisal. Yinka Shonibare. *Three Graces*. [O]. Available: <http://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/Three-Graces/C27F26461D9074A5> Accessed 12 July 2012.
- Nead, L. 1992. *The female nude: art, obscenity and sexuality*. New York/London: Routledge.
- Papastergiadis, N. 1995. Restless hybrids. *Third Text* 32, Autumn:9-18.
- Parker, R. 1984. *The subversive stitch: embroidery and the making of the feminine*. London: The Women's Press.
- Przybylski, J. 1993. Quilts and women's bodies: dis-eased and desiring, in *Bodylore*, edited by K Young. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press:165-184.
- Richards, C. 1997. Graft, in *Traderoutes history and geography*, edited by O Enwezor. Catalogue for the second Johannesburg Biennale. Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council & the Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development. Singapore: SNP printing:234-237.
- Rushdie, S. 1991. *Imaginary homelands: essays and criticism 1981-1991*. London: Granta.
- Russell, C (ed). 1999. *Experimental ethnography: the work of film in the age of video*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
Haussite.Net > Script Section. [O]. Available: <http://www.haussite.net/haus.0/SCRIPT/txt2001/01/russel.HTML> Accessed 29 March 2012.
- Russell, C. 2006. The challenges of ethnographic writing. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 7(2):1-9.
- Showalter, E. 1997. *Hystories: hysterical epidemics and modern media*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Steyn, M. 2001. *Whiteness just isn't what it used to be: white identity in a changing South Africa*. New York: SUNY Press.
- Stoler, LA. 1989. Making Empire respectable: the politics of race and sexual morality in twentieth-century colonial cultures. *American Ethnologist* 16(4), November:634-660.
- Woolf, V. 1989 [1929]. *A room of one's own*. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- Young, K. 1993. *Bodylore*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.
- Young, RJC. 1995. *Colonial desire: hybridity in theory, culture and race*. New York/London: Routledge.

BIOGRAPHY

Johannesburg-based Leora Farber (born 1964) obtained her BA Fine Arts (1985) and MA Fine Arts (*cum laude*) (1992) degrees from the University of the Witwatersrand. She currently works as an artist, academic, arts writer, editor and curator. Farber began teaching as a part-time lecturer in the Fine Arts Department of the then-Technikon Witwatersrand in 1994 and was appointed in a full-time capacity later that year. In 2007, from her position as Senior Lecturer in the University of Johannesburg's Fine Arts Department which she had joined in 1994, Farber was appointed Director of the university's new research centre in the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture (FADA), titled Visual Identities in Art and Design.

Farber has published articles in numerous academic journals, chapters in books and conference papers. She has edited three volumes: *Johannesburg and megacity phenomena* (2008), *Imaging ourselves: visual identities in representation* (2009) and *On making: integrating approaches to practice-led research in art and design* (2010) (Johannesburg: Research Centre, Visual Identities in Art and Design). Each volume was accompanied by a conference of the same title. She has edited special editions of the journals *Image & Text* and *Critical Arts* and has received funding awards from the National Research Foundation, the National Arts Council and the University of Johannesburg Research Committee.

Selected solo exhibitions

- 1993 *Seeing through the body* Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg
- 1996 *Skin-Less* Gasworks Gallery, London
- 1997 *Instrumental* Thompson Gallery in collaboration with Read Contemporary Art, Johannesburg
- 2001 *Corpa Delicata* The Premises Gallery, Johannesburg
- 2001 *All You Can Be* Art Circle, retrospective exhibition as one of three official artists represented at the Aardklop National Arts Festival, Potchefstroom
- 2001 *Corpus Delecti* Carinus Art Centre, Standard Bank National Festival of the Arts, Grahamstown
- 2006 *A Room of Her Own* The Premises Gallery, Johannesburg.

Selected group exhibitions

- 1995 *The Body Politic* curated by Colin Richards. Johannesburg Biennale, Gertrude Posel Galleries
- Inside-Outside* curated by Julia Charlton. Johannesburg Biennale, Johannesburg Art Gallery
- 1996 *Colours: Contemporary Art from South Africa* Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (catalogue)
- 1999 *The New Anatomists* Gallery 1010, The Wellcome Institute, London (catalogue)
- Body as Commodity* Nexus Contemporary Art, Atlanta (with Marc Quinn and Nan Goldin)
- The Exquisite Corpse* Jibby Beane Contemporary, London
- Adorn* Jibby Beane Contemporary, London
- Emergence* curated by Rayda Becker. Standard Bank National Arts Festival: Albany History Museum Grahamstown; King George VI Gallery, Port Elizabeth; Durban Art Gallery; Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg
- 2001 *Two Icons: The Atom, The Body* curated by Kathryn Smith. Exhibition in conjunction with *Urban Futures 2000* conference, MuseuMAfrica, Johannesburg
- 2002 *Skin: Surface, Substance and Design* Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, New York City (catalogue)
- 2005 *Through the Looking Glass* curated by Brenda Schmahmann. Albany History Museum, Grahamstown; King George VI Gallery, Port Elizabeth; Durban Art Gallery; South African National Gallery, Cape Town; Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg (book publication)
- Skin-to-Skin* curated by Fiona Kirkwood. Textile 07 Kaunas Art Biennial, Lithuania (catalogue)
- Reconcilliation* curated by Elfride Dreyer. University of Pretoria, Arts and Reconcilliation Festival, Pretoria

2006 - 2007

Second Skin (2006-2007) curated by Ellen Lupton for the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum. Produced and circulated by Vitra Design Museum. Exhibition venues: Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei; Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, Taipei (catalogue)

2010 *Transgressions and Boundaries of the Page* Africana room, JS Gericke Library, University of Stellenbosch as part of the Woordfees 2010 Festival, Stellenbosch; The Gallery of the North-West University Potchefstroom Campus; FADA Gallery, Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, University of Johannesburg

2011 *The Surface, the Underground and the Edges*. Afropolis. Media. City. Art. Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum, Cologne; The Michaelis Gallery, Cape Town.

Work in selected South African public collections

Gertrude Posel Gallery; Johannesburg Art Gallery; MTN Art Institute Digital Art Collection; Oliewenhuis Art Museum; Pretoria Art Museum; Pretoria Technikon; Sanlam Corporate Collection; Sasol Wax Collection; Tatham Art Gallery; Technikon Witwatersrand; Trinity Session; Unisa Art Collection.

Exhibitions curated

2008 *Too close for comfort: belonging and displacement in the work of South African video artists*. Video programme co-curated with Lee-At Meyerov, Intermission, Johannesburg

2011 *The Underground, the Surface and the Edges*. Video programme co-curated with Anthea Buys, featured on *Afropolis. City. Media. Art*. Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum, Cologne, Germany; *Collaborations/Articulations*, FADA Gallery, University of Johannesburg; Michaelis Art Gallery, University of Cape Town

Space, Ritual, Absence: Liminality in South African Visual Art. Exhibition co-curated with James Sey, FADA Gallery, University of Johannesburg

2012 *Lichtenburg Flower and Medusa*. Exhibition by Bracha Lichtenburg Ettinger, co-curated with Ann-Marie Tully, NIROXprojects, Johannesburg.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Photographer: Michael Meyersfeld

Clothing design and production: Strangelove

Special effects artist: Debra Nicoll

Period consultant and props: Mannie Liebmann

Creative and technical assistant: Shannin Antonopoulo

Set-up assistants: Elizabeth Héle-Senekal & Lerato Shadi

Design and signage: Tamlyn Hall & Craig Bartlett

Scanning and printing: Dennis da Silva & Andreas Kahlau

Digital retouching: Julian Dall

Framing: Anthony Shmit

Stage-set design and construction: Charles Blackbeard & Jay Hyde

Photographers for artwork on stage-set: Hannelie Coetzee, Tristian McLaren, Phillip Schedler & Justin Dingwall

Finished art and compositing for stage-set: Anina Kruger, Craig Bartlett & Paul Dale

Electrical engineers: Charles Blackbeard & Jay Hyde

Pianist: Ilse Myburgh

Voice-over artist: Gretha Brazelle

Rose casters: Elizabeth Héle-Senekal, Shannin Antonopoulo, Rosalind Cleaver, Robyn Macgowan, Claire Pickster & Lerato Shadi

Sound arranger: James French

Video editor: Catherine Meyburgh

Catalogue design and layout: Eben Keun & Jacques du Toit.

Documentation of the exhibition

Brent Mestre (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum, Port Elizabeth)

Creative Colour Solutions (The South African Jewish Museum, Cape Town & the US Art Gallery, Stellenbosch)

George Hugo (The Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Bloemfontein)

Clive Hassall (The Johannesburg Art Gallery)

Angela Buckland (The Durban Art Gallery).

Thank you to

Jacques Tredoux and Crown Relocations for their sponsorship of the packaging and transport of the exhibition

Andrew Brookhuizen of Aluminium Trading for his sponsorship of the aluminium panels used in the construction of the stage-set

Hendrik Roux of Homecomfort for his sponsorship of heating pads used in the performance

Jo Jacinto of Advanced Materials Technologies for his sponsorship of silicone used for casting rose petals

Sandra Klopper for her initial (2008) and recent (2012) interviews, the first of which was formative to my conceptualisation of the project

Nerina Walters, Senior Curator of the Sammy Marks Museum, Pretoria and her staff for the use of the Sammy Marks Museum as a shoot location.

Special thanks to

Jenny and Dennis da Silva for their patience and their extraordinary commitment to the project

My husband, Charles Blackbeard, whose technical expertise, involvement at every level of the project and unconditional support have enabled me to achieve the (im)possible.

The exhibition was made possible by the generous financial assistance provided by

The National Arts Council



The National Research Foundation



The University of Johannesburg Research Committee



I extend special acknowledgements to the National Research Foundation and the University of Johannesburg Research Committee for their recognition and support of the project as practice-led research.

The work on the *Dis-Location/Re-Location* exhibition was produced as creative research under the National Research Foundation Research Niche Area: *Visually embodying identity in a postcolonial environment*. This Niche Area was lodged within the University of Johannesburg's Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture's, Research Centre Visual Identities in Art and Design.

Leora Farber
Johannesburg
August 2012.

SOURCES ON *DIS-LOCATION/RE-LOCATION*

- Allan, L. 2008. *Dis-Location/Re-Location and 'inside' and 'outside'*. Panel paper, Johannesburg Art Gallery, 12 April. Unpublished.
- Allara, P. 2008. Leora Farber's *A Room of Her Own*: feminist performance as class play. *de arte* 77:53-56.
- A Room of Her Own*. 2008. Catalogue. Johannesburg: David Krut.
- Bishop, R. 2008. /, or on how newness enters the world, in *Dis-Location/Re-Location: exploring alienation and identity in South Africa*, edited by B Law-Viljoen. Johannesburg: David Krut:111-117.
- Buys, A. 2008. White outsider adapts. Weekend Review, Culture. *The Weekender* February 23-24:10.
- Carman, J. 2008a. *Dis-Location/Re-Location*. Panel paper, Johannesburg Art Gallery, 12 April. Unpublished.
- Carman, J. 2008b. Recreating identities in the archive and the museum. Paper presented at the South African National Committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM-SA) special session: diversity and the role of museums, South African Museums Association 72nd Annual National Conference, Sacred and secret heritage: the diversity and sensitivities of African cultural traditions, 24-26 June, University of Stellenbosch Business School, Bellville Campus, Cape Town. Unpublished.
- Carman, J. 2008c. Recreating the archive, in *Dis-Location/Re-Location: exploring alienation and identity in South Africa*, edited by B Law-Viljoen. Johannesburg: David Krut:69-78.
- Du Preez, A. 2010. Material girls: lingering in the presence of the material sublime. *Critical Arts* 24(3), November:392-417.
- Farber, L. 2005. *Dis-Location/Re-Location: Aloerosa*. *Cultural Politics* 1(3), November:317-327.
- Farber, L. 2008. *Dis-Location/Re-Location*: colonial and postcolonial narratives of white displacement in South Africa. Paper presented at the Re-orientating whiteness conference, 3-5 December, University of Melbourne. Published in *Acrawasa ejournal* 5(1). [O]. Available: <http://acrawsa.org.au/ejournal.htm> Accessed 12 May 2010.
- Farber, L. 2009a. Cutting and stitching as transformative acts: creating new subjectivities in the exhibition *Dis-Location/Re-Location*. Paper presented at the Cosmetic cultures: beauty, globalization, politics, practices conference, 28-30 June, University of Leeds.
- Farber, L. 2009b. *Dis-Location/Re-Location*: a case study of a practice-led research visual arts project. Paper presented at the Art of research conference, 24-25 November, University of Art and Design Helsinki. Published in *The Art of Research conference proceedings*, edited by M Mäkela. Helsinki: University of Art & Design Helsinki:[Sp].
- Farber, L. 2009c. *Dis-Location/Re-Location*: exploring white displacement and alienation in postapartheid South Africa. Paper presented at the White spaces? Racialising white femininities and masculinities conference, 8-9 July, University of Leeds.
- Farber, L. 2009d. Practice-led research in the *Dis-Location/Re-Location* project. Paper presented at the On making: integrating approaches to practice-led research in art and design colloquium, 15-16 October, Visual Identities in Art and Design Research Centre, University of Johannesburg.
- Farber, L. 2010. Confronting or embracing the foreigner within? Hidden faces of identities, as played out in the exhibition, *Dis-Location/Re-Location*. Paper presented at the second global conference, Strangers, aliens and foreigners, 20-22 September, Oriel College, Oxford. *Inter-disciplinary.net*. Published in the ebook conference proceedings: [O]. Available: <http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/at-the-interface/diversity-recognition/strangers-alien-and-foreigners/conference-programme-abstracts-and-papers/session-1-strangeness-and-the-condition-of-strangers-critical-reflections/> Accessed 13 January 2010.

- Jacobsen, W & Farber, L. 2008. *A room of her own*. Catalogue essay. Johannesburg: David Krut.
- Kasibe, M. 2008. Oreosness/coconutness: 'not quite black, not quite white', in *Dis-Location/Re-Location: exploring alienation and identity in South Africa*, edited by B Law-Viljoen. Johannesburg: David Krut:79-84.
- Klopper, S & Farber, L. 2008. Bertha Marks revisited: Leora Farber in conversation with Sandra Klopper, in *Dis-Location/Re-Location: exploring alienation and identity in South Africa*, edited by B Law-Viljoen. Johannesburg: David Krut:11-25.
- Law-Viljoen, B (ed). 2008a. *Dis-Location/Re-Location: exploring alienation and identity in South Africa*. Johannesburg: David Krut.
- Law-Viljoen, B. 2008b. Introduction, in *Dis-Location/Re-Location: exploring alienation and identity in South Africa*. Johannesburg: David Krut:4-10.
- Murray, SA. 2008. Awfully pretty: female embodiment in *Dis-Location/Re-Location*, in *Dis-Location/Re-Location: exploring alienation and identity in South Africa*, edited by B Law-Viljoen. Johannesburg: David Krut:49-58.
- Neluheni, M. 2008. Leora Farber in collaboration with Strangelove. *Dis-Location/Re-Location* at the Johannesburg Art Gallery. *Artthrob*, February. [O]. Available: <http://www.artthrob.co.za/08mar/reviews/jag.html> Accessed 14 June 2008.
- Ord, J. 2008. Parergons of dis-closure: identifying meaning, signifying identity with a difference, in *Dis-Location/Re-Location: alienation and identity in South Africa*, edited by B Law-Viljoen. Johannesburg: David Krut:103-108.
- Schoeman, G. Leora Farber. *Oliewenhuis*. *Art South Africa* 6(3), Autumn:100.
- Van der Watt, L. 2008. Imagination in crisis: displaced subjects, virtual communities, in *Dis-Location/Re-Location: exploring alienation and identity in South Africa*, edited by B Law-Viljoen. Johannesburg: David Krut:87-101.
- Van Rensburg, W. 2007. *Dis-Location/Re-Location educational supplement*. Supplement for secondary school learners, Grades 10-12. Johannesburg: David Krut:[Sp].
- Van Rensburg, W. 2008. Artistic chronotypes: visualising identities through time-space organisation in the work of Leora Farber, in *Dis-Location/Re-Location: exploring alienation and identity in South Africa*, edited by B Law-Viljoen. Johannesburg: David Krut:41-46.
- Venn C. 2009. Identity, diasporas and subjective change: the role of affect, the relation to the other, and the aesthetic. *Subjectivity* 26:3-28.
- Venn, C. 2010. Aesthetics, politics, identity: diasporic problematisations. *Critical Arts* 24(3), November:334-335.



Figure 31: The Kagan family, studio portrait, Latvia, 1935.
Left (above) to right (below): Israel Leib Kagan, Sora Rivel Kagan,
Dov Behr Kagan and Freidele Kagan.
Archival pigment printing on soft textured fine art paper, 315 g, 59 x 42 cm.
Family photograph belonging to Freda Farber.



Figure 32: Henia Kagan, Rochel Kagan and Sora Rival Kagan Latvia, c. 1920.
Archival pigment printing on soft textured fine art paper, 315 g, 59 x 42 cm.
Family photograph belonging to Freda Farber.



Figure 33: Portrait of Bertha Marks, c. 1906.
Sammy Marks Collection of Photographs, Pretoria, SM 1093-2.
Courtesy of the Sammy Marks Museum.



Figure 34: First immigrants of the Kagan family to southern Africa, studio portrait, Latvia, c. 1902.
Family photograph belonging to Freda Farber.



The exhibition

Aloerosa



Aloerosa: Induction. 2006-2007.

Archival pigment printing on soft textured fine art paper, 315 g,
editioned 1/9, 65 x 65 cm.

Photograph by Hannelie Coetzee.



Aloerosa: Induction (detail). 2006-2007.

Archival pigment printing on soft textured fine art paper, 315 g
editioned 1/9, 25 x 35.83 cm.

Photograph by Hannelie Coetzee.



Aloerosa: Propagation. 2006-2007.

Archival pigment printing on soft textured fine art paper, 315 g,
editioned 1/9, 65 x 65 cm.

Photograph by Hannelie Coetzee.



Aloerosa: Efflorescence. 2006-2007.

Archival pigment printing on soft textured fine art paper, 315 g
editioned 1/9, 78 x 103.89 cm.

Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.



Aloerosa: Veldscape. 2006-2007.

Archival pigment printing on soft textured fine art paper, 315 g,
editioned 1/9, 86.65 x 120 cm.

Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.



Aloerosa: Maturation I. 2006-2007.

Archival pigment printing on soft textured fine art paper, 315 g,
editioned 1/9, 90 x 120 cm.

Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.



Aloerosa: Maturation II. 2006-2007.
Archival pigment printing on soft textured fine art paper, 315 g,
editioned 1/9, 90 x 120 cm.
Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.



Aloerosa: Supplantation. 2006-2007.

Archival pigment printing on soft textured fine art paper, 315 g,
editioned 1/9, 52 x 70 cm.

Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.

Ties that Bind Her



Ties that Bind Her: Preservation. 2006-2007.
Archival pigment printing on soft textured fine art paper, 315 g,
editioned 1/9, 100 x 133.2 cm.
Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.



Ties that Bind Her: Debilitation. 2006-2007.

Archival pigment printing on soft textured fine art paper, 315 g,
editioned 1/9, 100 x 133.2 cm.

Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.



Ties that Bind Her: Regeneration. 2006-2007.
Archival pigment printing on soft textured fine art paper, 315 g,
editioned 1/9, 100 x 133.2 cm.
Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.



Ties that Bind Her: Debilitation (detail I). 2006-2007.
Archival pigment printing on soft textured fine art paper, 315 g,
editioned 1/9, 61 x 45.9 cm.
Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.



Ties that Bind Her: Debilitation (detail II). 2006-2007.

Archival pigment printing on soft textured fine art paper, 315 g,
editioned 1/9, 46.05 x 62 cm.

Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.



Ties that Bind Her: Debilitation (detail III). 2006-2007.
Archival pigment printing on soft textured fine art paper, 315 g,
editioned 1/9, 35 x 47 cm.
Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.



Ties that Bind Her: Debilitation (detail IV). 2006-2007.
Archival pigment printing on soft textured fine art paper, 315 g,
editioned 1/9, 90 x 120 cm.
Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.



Ties that Bind Her: Preservation (detail). 2006-2007.

Archival pigment printed on soft textured fine art paper, 315 g,
editioned 1/9, 42 x 56 cm.

Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.



Ties that Bind Her: Reparation (detail). 2006-2007.
Archival pigment printing on soft textured fine art paper, 315 g,
editioned 1/9, 42 x 56 cm.
Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.



Ties that Bind Her: Regeneration (detail). 2006-2007.
Archival pigment printing on soft textured fine art paper, 315 g,
editioned 1/9, 42 x 56 cm.
Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.

A Room of Her Own



A Room of Her Own: Generation. 2006-2007.
Archival pigment printing on soft textured fine art paper, 315 g,
editioned 1/9, 100 x 133.2 cm.
Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.



A Room of Her Own: Generation (detail). 2006-2007.

Archival pigment printing on soft textured fine art paper, 315 g,
editioned 1/9, 56 x 75 cm.

Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.



A Room of Her Own: Redemption. 2006-2007.
Archival pigment printing on soft textured fine art paper, 315 g,
editioned 1/9, 102 x 135.8 cm.
Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.



A Room of Her Own
Stage-set details





UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA





A Room of Her Own, stage-set pre-performance. 2006-2007.
Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.



A Room of Her Own, detail of stage-set pre-performance. 2006-2007.
Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.



A Room of Her Own (Set I). 2006-2007.

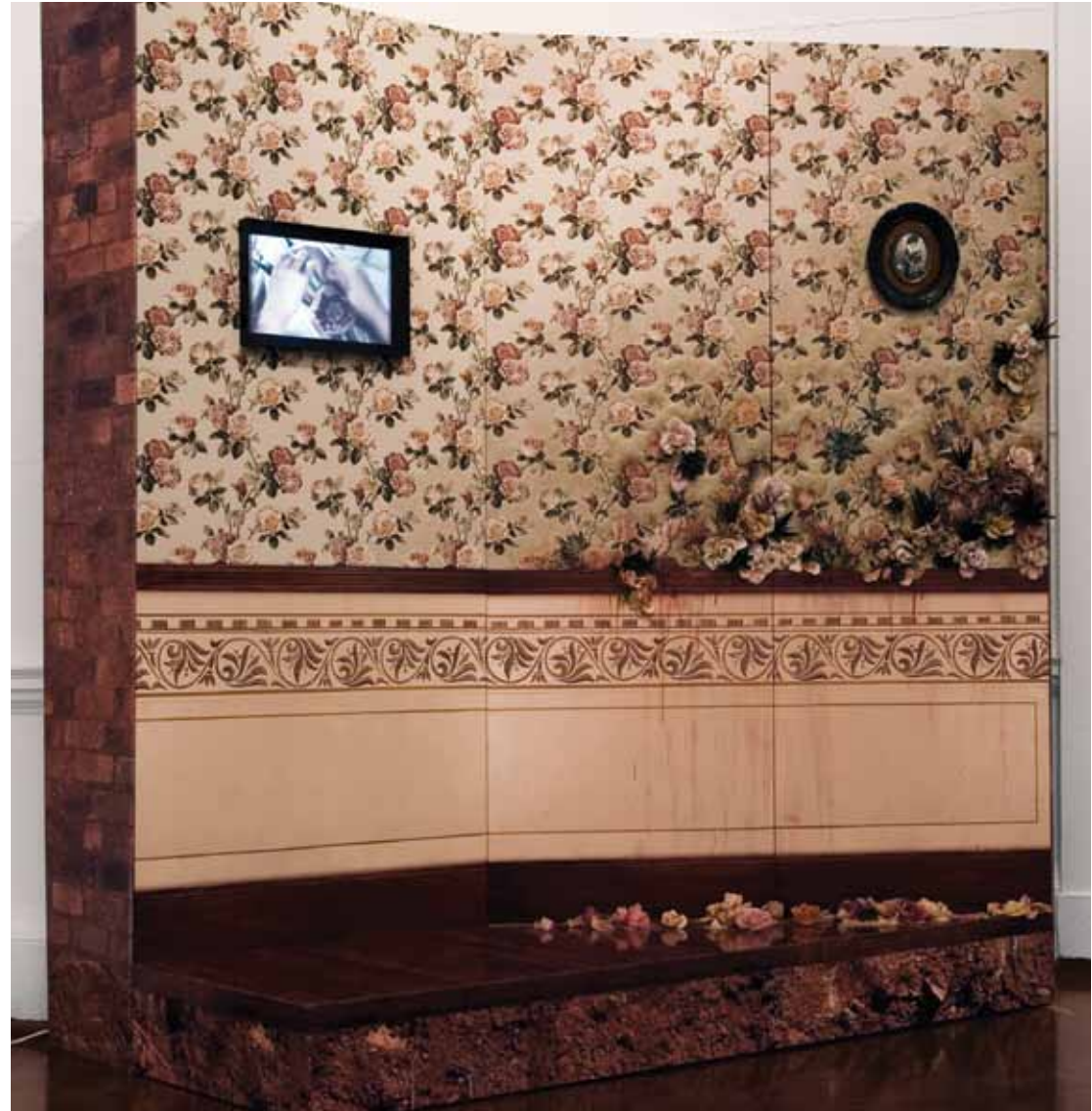
Archival pigment printing on canvas and vinyl, wax, aluminium, mild steel, wood, mirror, glass, fabric, embroidery thread, plastic,
3 wall panels 230 x 100 x 53 cm, 1 ceiling panel 160 x 100 x 2 cm, 3 floor panels 230 x 100 x 35 cm.

Photograph by Angela Buckland.



A Room of Her Own (Set II). 2006-2007.

Archival pigment printing on canvas and vinyl, wax, aluminium, mild steel, wood, glass, 19 inch LCD display, 1 wall panel 230 x 100 x 53 cm, 2 wall panels 230 x 75 x 53 cm, 1 ceiling panel 85 x 100 x 2 cm, 1 floor panel 230 x 75 x 35 cm, *Skin Graft* PAL DVD, 00:30:00.



A Room of Her Own (Set III). 2006-2007.

Archival pigment printing on canvas and vinyl, wax, aluminium, mild steel, wood, glass, 8 inch LCD display, 2 wall panels 230 x 75 x 2 cm, 1 floor panel (triangle) 131 x 150 x 75 x 35 cm, *Wallpaper II* PAL DVD, 00:07:52. Photographs by Clive Hussall.



A Room of Her Own (stage-set details).





















A Room of Her Own, video stills. 2006-2007.
PAL DVD, 00:30:38,
editioned 1/9.



Cultivars



Anthowatereria
Family: *Ruscaceae* x *Aphelandraceae*
Genus: *Alouatta* - *Spino* *leucota* x *ragosa* hybrid
Origin: *Wiltshire, Britain, 1978*
Parentage: *Rosa* *Rajana* x *Götterdämmerung*



Perrusonii
Family: *Ruscaceae* x *Cactaceae*
Genus: *Echinocactus* - *Spino* *gracilis* x *hybrid* *tra*
Origin: *Wiltshire, Britain, 1977*
Parentage: *Dr. Darby* and *Stenthorst*

Cultivars: Genera I, Anthowatereria. 2006-2007.
Archival pigment printing on photo smooth cotton paper, 315 g,
editioned 1/9, 28.3 x 34 cm.
Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.

Genera II, Perrusonii.



Fitzwilliaristata
Family: Rosaceae s. Aphanactaceae
Genus: *Alceon* Species: *aristata* s. hybrid form
Origin: South Africa, 1832
Parentage: *Alceon* s. *Vitis* *Vitis*



Phyllisaunderside
Family: Rosaceae s. Aphanactaceae
Genus: *Cauloformis* Species: *polygynum* s. *polygynum*
Origin: South Africa, 1922
Parentage: *Phyllisaunderside* s. *Phyllisaunderside*

Genera III, *Fitzwilliaristata*.

Genera IV, *Phyllisaunderside*.



Hillingtonubichella

Family: *Ranunculaceae* / *Celastraceae* / *Asplodeleaceae*
 Genus: *Allosummitaria* / *Opuntia* / *Species parviflora* / *intermedia* / *in rose*
 Origin: *Lower and Shaver*, Britain, 1960
 Parentage: *Opuntia* / *Opuntia* / *Moss* / *Flora*



Blessorbiculata

Family: *Ranunculaceae* / *Celastraceae*
 Genus: *Ranunculus* / *Species orbiculata* / *hybrid* / *in*
 Origin: *Grey*, Britain, 1967
 Parentage: *Queen Elizabeth* / *mother*



Castaneatuayward
 Family: *Rubiaceae* & *Asplundaceae*
 Genus: *Alseodaphnophila* Species: *castanea* & *hybrid* (no) & *attenuata*
 Origin: *Bombay, Seram, idg*
 Paratype: *Tropica de l'Exposition* (nothing)

Genera VIII, *Castaneatuayward*.



Cordilabraxima
 Family: *Rubiaceae* & *Liliaceae* & *Portulacaceae*
 Genus: *Alseodaphnophila* Species: *obovata* & *willd* (no) & *umbellata*
 Common Name: *Nobley* *Splendens*; *Sakhejankhe*
 Paratype: *Tropica* *Beauty* & *ambrosia*

Genera IX, *Cordilabraxima*.



Enacristarkness
Family: Rosaceae & Crataegaceae
Genus: Adonisveris Species: cristata & hybrid tea
Origin: Norman, Britain, 1916
Parentage: Osmunda Gley & Sandford

Genera X, *Enacristarkness*.



Millermensis
Family: Rosaceae & Rubiaceae
Genus: Rosagris Species: Millermensis & hybrid tea
Origin: Austin, Britain, 1970
Parentage: Norman Adelaide de Rothschild & Clonara

Genera XI, *Millermensis*.



Tuscrytopoda

Family: Rosaceae s. Alphalderaceae

Genus: *Rosa* Species: *crystopoda* s. *gallia*

Origin: Rose, Britain, 1837

Parentage: *Tuscry* s. *ambrosia*

Between Cup and Lip, Thought and Action



"What I want is a good English parlour maid, one who has been in the Country for some years; also one who has no objection to coloured people, as I have two slightly coloured servants and one coloured boy. Should she object to occupying the same room as the Coloured Girls, I shall provide separate sleeping accommodation for her". I prefer employing respectable white girls. "In the first place native girls are not trustworthy and their morals, as a rule, are not of a high standard. In the second place, their wants are so few that they are very independent and if their demands are not met, they go away and live in their kraals".

1



Louis is going away to boarding school in England so that he can become an English gentleman...I shall miss him so...but do I agree with Sammy's view that "nearly 75% of the children who are educated in the Transvaal are devoid of two qualities essential in a well regulated society, namely gratitude and straightforwardness, and that he would not like our children to mix with others who may be deficient in these two respects". At least I do not have to part with Dolly and Gielie quite so soon, as Sammy feels that "it is ample if our girls can write a good English letter and can do some other useful things which are required by people of the middle class".

2



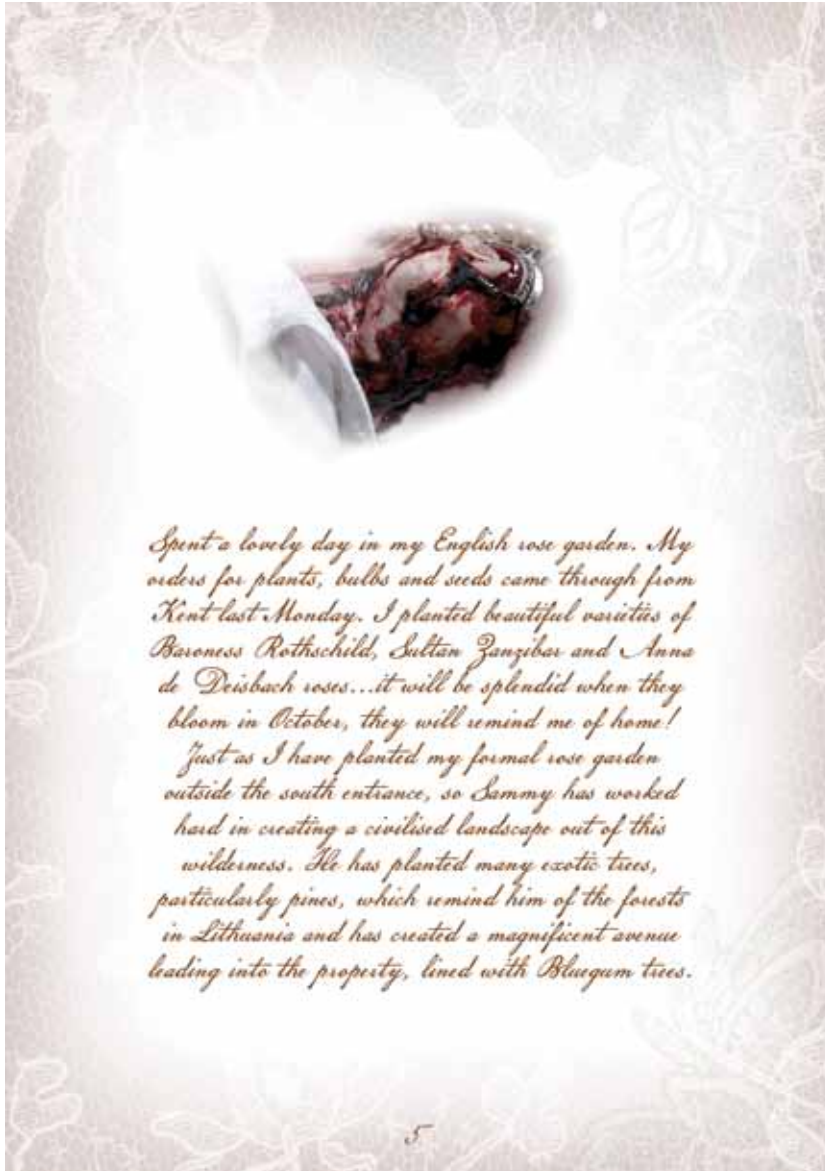
Finally, I am to find liberation from the endless physical and social isolation of country living and the demands of managing this large household as we are moving to Parktown in Johannesburg! There I will be able to mix with women of my own class and enjoy activities befitting my status as a domestic feminist! After all it is becoming more acceptable for a lady to move beyond the hearth and enter public life but I never wish to be like those awful militant feminists and suffragists! Domesticity and the household are still uppermost in my mind and I am first and foremost a good Jewish woman.

3



For all the crowds that come every Sunday and the servants around me, I am so much alone at Zwartkoppies. This place is like a gilded cage for me! Sammy is away on business much of the time, it takes two hours to do the twelve-mile carriage drive to Pretoria, so trips to town cannot be undertaken every day...There are seldom visitors during the week...it is so awfully quiet here! I long to have a conversation with just anyone, even one of the servants, but that would not be right and proper! I cannot wait for another trip home to Sheffield...it is so hard to bring myself to come back here after being with people of my own kind.

4





"I am as yet worried to death trying to find a suitable Jewish family with proper accommodation for Gurlie and Miriam.... All the families so far are certainly not the class I would like a child of mine to mix with. I don't [sic] know if you can understand the difficulty because as a rule rich Yiddlen do not need to take in strangers and the others who want to I consider too common... what we must now guard against is putting her with a family where she would be disgusted with the Yiddlen.... As far as terms go even if I have to pay high it will be better for Gurlie to live with a good class of Jewish people".

7



Sammy has done so well for himself, after starting out with nothing but a canteen of cutlery in this country! Zwartkoppies, our English country home on the Highveld, is now a good-sized house, well suited to our position in society and, thanks to my purchases from Europe and England, is extremely well appointed. Yet, I am so weary of his endless instructions which, as his dutiful wife, I am expected to obey! I went to the trouble of writing him a 24-page letter and he responded: "There are certainly some amazing little things in it, but of course being a woman you must be excused!!" "I wonder if he really reads my letters? Perhaps I need only write short ones in the future".

8



Dr Kay is such an old fusspot! How can he say that "I do not rear the children in a commendable manner...just because I take them to the theatre as a treat now and again and allow them their evening meal at six o' clock?" And then he says that "I will not recover fully because I wear light blouses, and stay at the dinner table until past nine o' clock." I am sick of his admonitions to take care of myself and of having to lead a quiet life! "The truth is I take care not to get cold, I never go out at night, nor do I wear low dresses, so by...not eating strawberries, not touching any spirits nor any water ...I hope I may long keep as I am".



"...it is a great pity that there is really nothing that you do take a pleasure in outside business. After all one has one life only, it is quite right to work hard, but at the same time, there is not a man who does not sometimes enjoy a little mild recreation, which is one of the very best nerve tonics. I have just sent you a note saying that as you object to my taking a little mild recreation, I give up so much that other women of my age enjoy. You are too hard...there is really no reason why I cannot go to a theatre now and again or to look on at a dance...I am most careful of myself, the weather here is so mild and I would never go out unless I felt quite fine".

1.

1. *Sammy Marks Papers, Kaplan Centre for Jewish Research at the University of Cape Town.*
Letterbooks 1 - 41, 1880-1919, 11. B. Marks - Klogg 20.05.1895.
Cited in Mendelsohn 1991:183.
2. *Sammy Marks Papers, Kaplan Centre for Jewish Research at the University of Cape Town.*
Letterbooks 1 - 41, 1880-1919, 17. Marks - W. F. Bailey 31.07.01.
Cited in Mendelsohn 1991:184.

2.

1. *Sammy Marks Papers, Kaplan Centre for Jewish Research at the University of Cape Town.*
Letterbooks 1 - 41, 1880-1919, 11. Marks - Professor Pinner 16.06.1895.
Sammy Marks Papers, Letterbooks 1 - 41, 1880-1919, 17.
Marks - B. Marks 15.09.1900. Cited in Mendelsohn 1991:106.
2. *Sammy Marks Papers, Kaplan Centre for Jewish Research at the University of Cape Town.*
Letterbooks 1 - 41, 1880-1919, 20. Marks - F. Long 11.02.05.
Cited in Mendelsohn 1991:210.

3.

Mendelsohn 1991:190.

4.

- Sammy Marks Papers, Kaplan Centre for Jewish Research at the University of Cape Town.*
Letters to Sammy Marks, B. Marks - Marks 29.04.06.
Cited in Mendelsohn 1991:185 - 187.

5.

Mendelsohn 1991:104, 188.

6.

- Sammy Marks Papers, Kaplan Centre for Jewish Research at the University of Cape Town.*
Financial Records - S. Marks. Receipt R. W. Winfield and Co. 03.12.84.
Sammy Marks Papers, Kaplan Centre for Jewish Research at the University of Cape Town.
Letterbooks 1 - 41, 1880-1919, 6.
Marks - Adler Brothers 14.03.1885, 26.03.85. H. W. P. Stead - Adler Brothers 14.07.1885. Sammy Marks Papers, Kaplan Centre for Jewish Research at the University of Cape Town.
Letters to Sammy Marks, Adler Brothers - Marks 30.07.1885, 06.08.1885.
Cited in Mendelsohn 1991:34, 35.

7.

- Sammy Marks Papers, Kaplan Centre for Jewish Research at the University of Cape Town.*
Letters to Sammy Marks, B. Marks - Marks 10.03.06, 01.06.06, 08.06.06, 15.06.06. Cited in Mendelsohn 1991:200.

8.

1. *Sammy Marks Papers, Kaplan Centre for Jewish Research at the University of Cape Town.*
Letterbooks 1 - 41, 1880-1919, 18. Marks - B. Marks 16.08.02.
18.08.02. Cited in Mendelsohn: 182.

2. *Sammy Marks Papers, Kaplan Centre for Jewish Research at
the University of Cape Town.*
Letter to Sammy Marks, B. Marks - Marks 29.04.06.
Cited in Mendelsohn: 156.

9.

102. Dr. James Alexander Kay 1901-2.
Cited in Mendelsohn 1991:195.

3. *Sammy Marks Papers, Kaplan Centre for Jewish Research at
the University of Cape Town*
Letter to Sammy Marks, B. Marks - Marks 01.06.06.

10.

*Sammy Marks Papers, Kaplan Centre for Jewish Research at
the University of Cape Town*
Letter to Sammy Marks, B. Marks - Marks 08.07.07.

*Mendelsohn, R. 1991. Sammy Marks. The Uncrowned King of the Transvaal.
Cape Town: David Philip. Athens: Ohio University Press.*



Dis-Location/Re-Location installation views





Installation views: The Johannesburg Art Gallery
Photographs by Clive Hassall.

















Installation views: The Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Bloemfontein
Photographs by George Hugo.





Dis-Location / Re-Location

Leora Farber in collaboration with Strangelove





Installation views: The Durban Art Gallery
Photographs by Angela Buckland.





Installation views: The US Art Gallery, Stellenbosch
Photographs by Creative Colour Solutions

THE ERIC AND SHEILA SAMSON GALLERY





Installation views: The South African Jewish Museum, Cape Town
Photographs by Creative Colour Solutions



Installation views: The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum, Port Elizabeth
Photograph by Brent Meistre.



Installation views: The Albany History Museum, Grahamstown
Photographs by Brent Meistre.

1115
The Bird
George S. Gifford
Richards