

JES-CI NAGRA PRESENTS:

**STARLESS & SILVER: THE ABSTRACTION OF FETISH AS IT
OCCURS THROUGH ANALOGUE PHOTOGRAPHIC MEANS**

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ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP.

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.”

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BRANDON SAYRING
THE ARC THEATRE, WHANGANUI.
COSTAS THRASYVOULOU

AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST FRIENDS & FAMILY.

IN MEMORY OF:

ALC5 (1969 - 2010)

BALWANT SINGH NAGRA (1921 - 2011)

ABSTRACT.

This visual arts research project utilises analogue photographic methods, specifically black and white photographic processes of still and moving image to examine the relationship between photography, fetish and the stage. Differentials in the term ‘fetish’ are investigated to locate the operation of fetish; these include fetishism and fetishisation. These terms are explored to identify how analogue photographic means could align itself with the operation of fetish, through ritual, object and ‘protection against loss’. Using the subject matter of the stage that has been fabricated as part of this project, *Starless and Silver* explores the anticipation and expectation of both the stage and the photographic image, and inturn observes the formation of an unrequited viewing experience.

PRELUDE.

This Master of Art & Design research project *Starless and Silver* is comprised of a 20% written component, and the following 80% as a practical component. The layout of this exegesis is fashioned in two parts: Act ONE highlights the critical thinking around the subjects explored in this project, where Act TWO, the Production section accounts for the investigations and visual explorations that have been conducted throughout *Starless and Silver*.

Whilst being based in Whanganui, I have found a number of other artists using analogue methods throughout the arts, including music and photography. This led me to observe the nature of analogue methods, inquiring whether it has a unique and irreplaceable quality in its output? Or is this the last gasp of air analogue methods takes before it is completely replaced by the digital age? Will analogue continue to survive? I guess time will tell.

Act ONE begins by outlining specific traits found in analogue photographic methods; these traits are examined for their potential roles in allowing the medium to operate in the realm of fetish. This includes looking at photography's relationship with indexicality, illusion, 'natural magic' and nostalgia. There follows a discussion on fetish, which specifically defines the terminology and operation of fetish as it is applied throughout *Starless and Silver*. This includes identifying fetishism and fetishisation, as it is approached from an etymological and anthropological stance.

The next segment draws upon French film theorist, Christian Metz' paper titled, *Photography and Fetish* (1985) which discusses the use and operation of analogue photographic methods, specifically comparing still and moving image as they correspond to fetish. These comparisons are then examined to see how analogue photographic methods and its artefacts could operate in the realm of fetish.

The final segment in Act ONE discusses the use of the stage as a subject to examine how an unrequited viewing experience occurs within the artworks made in *Starless and Silver* through employing a lack of narrative, leading to a failed viewing experience.

Act TWO is the production section of this exegesis which outlines investigations that have been conducted using analogue photographic methods during this project. This section discusses the use and construction of the stage, and illustrates decisions made through a series of exhibitions, which have informed the final works and exhibition of *Starless and Silver*.



FIGURE 1. DRY ICE (THIRD STAGE OBSERVATION), JULY 2011, 120MM NEGATIVE SCAN.

ACT ONE: SETTING THE SCENE.

* * *

PHOTOGRAPHIC ILLUSIONS.

Starless and Silver employs analogue photographic methods, specifically working with black and white eight-millimetre cine film, and medium format photography. These methods have been investigated to determine what they offer to the fabrication, materiality, and reading of photographic works produced. I have approached this investigation by observing specific traits that arise from film-based medium, such as its engagement with ‘natural magic’, illusion, indexicality and nostalgia. Within the project these components are examined to assess how analogue photographic methods and their artefacts may operate as a fetish.

Photography has a distinct indexical feature due to it being a direct tracing of reality. “The physical link between an object caught by a lens and the image left by rays of light on film is the material basis for its privileged relation to reality” (Mulvey, 2006, p. 8). American film theorist Laura Mulvey identifies indexicality through the materiality of an analogue photographic recording. In a contemporary context we now have digital photography, where the process of taking and producing photographs has changed. A great deal of physicality has been removed from the digital image making process. For example, digital photography stores its image information as binary code in digital data, compared to the analogue method of storing this information as a physical negative. I believe analogue photographic methods sustain an attribute of physicality that affirms the connection to indexicality. Therefore this leads *Starless and Silver* to enquire whether analogue photographic methods could operate as a fetish over digital imaging.

According to Mulvey the analogue photograph is a ‘descendent of natural magic’ (Mulvey, 2006, p. 18). Historically, William Fox Talbot spoke of this ‘natural magic’, when he discovered how to fix a photographic image to make it permanent.

The most transitory of things, a show, the proverbial emblem of all that is fleeting and momentary, may be fettered by the spells of our ‘natural magic’, and may be fixed forever in the position which it

seemed only destined for a single moment to occupy ... (as cited in Batchen, 1999).

‘Natural magic’ occurs in analogue photographic methods through its virtue of chemical processing to reveal and keep latent imagery. This process permanently fixes the light received from a real object, from a real space, from a moment passed into a physical photographic artefact.

The notion of ‘natural magic’ implies a sense of illusion through the way an analogue photographic image is achieved. I am not investigating the term illusion for its deceptive nature, that is, I am not trying to use magic as such to deceive the viewer. The illusion of a photograph is understood as the ability to record a three-dimensional space onto a two-dimensional plane. Author Richard Allen refers to the photographic illusion as ‘reproductive illusion’ and further explains, “... reproductive illusion uses our capacity to see the object through the photograph” (Allen, 1993, p. 25). This act of illusion also extends to the formation of an analogue moving image where a series of still frames are viewed consecutively to create the illusion of movement.

Generally photography’s indexicality confirms the subject matter, in this case the stages’ presence in reality; its photographic recording then acts as evidence of this. Roland Barthes observes this operation as a referent. He elaborates:

The photographic referent is not the same as the referent of other systems of representation. I call the ‘photographic referent’ not the optionally real thing to which an image or sign refers but the necessarily real thing which has been placed before the lens, without which there would be no photograph. ... Contrary to imitations, in photography I can never deny that the thing has been there. (Barthes, 1981, p. 43)

This illustrates that there is a confirmed belief in a photograph for it to operate as a referent, due to the operation of indexicality. In *Starless and Silver* the referent of the photographic image refers to the subject matter of the stage; in turn the photograph cannot be separated from this referent. For Barthes a photograph indicates something ‘that-has-been’, consequently a photograph implies a reality of a past presence. For Andre Bazin (1960) the photograph is not a sign of something, but a presence of something, or perhaps we could say a means for putting us into the presence of something. Through transference of reality into a photographic form, an illusion is created where the spectator is put into the presence of the stage, as it existed in the past.

Starless and Silver has significant nostalgic undertones due to employing analogue photographic methods, a medium of the past. Critic Raymond Bellour discusses analogue photography as, “The mechanical, even banal, presence of the photographic image as index takes on a new kind of resonance, touched perhaps by nostalgia, but no longer tied to old debates about the truth of photographic evidence” (as cited in Mulvey, 2006, p. 31). This sense of nostalgia is apparent through the use of analogue photographic objects and its set of protocols adhered by to make and view these photographic pieces. Correspondingly black and white photographs evoke a sense of nostalgia, due to their materiality indicating a past time and the spectator’s background knowledge of how the images were processed. Nostalgia has an affiliation with fetish through a fear of an object, or technique becoming lost. “When an observer has a nostalgic attachment to an object, they feel a sympathy toward it” (Storrington, 2010, para. 2). A sense of sympathy is triggered when the notion of nostalgia arises.

APPROACHING FETISH.

Within *Starless and Silver* the term fetish has been investigated, not with any erotic insinuation, but through examining what forms fetish, what identifies fetish, and how it operates. To begin with I have approached fetish in terms of its etymological roots. The writer Charles Bernheimer elaborates:

Etymologically, the fetish is a decadent object. The word comes from the Portuguese *feitico*, "artificial, skilfully contrived," ... The sense of human fabrication as opposed to biological origin, of cultural signs replacing natural substance, is at the basis of other words in the Romance languages deriving from the same Latin root: Spanish *afeitar*, "to make up, adorn, embellish" (Thomas, 1996).

Fetish presents itself through a fabricated object; this is signified throughout this project through the photographic artefact been made using analogue photographic methods. Within *Starless and Silver* the notion of fabrication is continued throughout all the processes to creating a photographic artefact. This includes constructing the stage sets, lighting these, and processing the photographic artefacts in the darkroom.

Consideration of how a fetish object is fabricated must be acknowledged; this is referred to as 'fetishism'. This term identifies a key aspect to how this project has been conducted - through the making of the object. American based fetish analyst Vekquin defines fetishism as:

Like any other kind of 'ism', fetishism involves acting and thinking in accordance with its derivative concept, which in this case means simply taking a fetish and using it in an act, thus, creating a fetish act, which is the defining characteristic of fetishism (Vekqium, 2009, para. 4).

The method of making is where fetishism arises; this is evidenced throughout *Starless and Silver* by abiding to the specific processes that are involved with analogue photographic methods. From an anthropological view fetishism is described as a ritual, which is an act that is performed in order to achieve something. The ritual of analogue photographic methods rely on a specific order of workings that are meticulously observed routines confirmed by repetition. Examples of ritualistic acts are located in the film development, enlarging and printing processes in this project by

using a specific orders of chemical baths in varying times to create the photographic image. Ritualistic acts also extend into the presentation of each finished photographic work. The results of these rituals lead to a photographic artefact.

The photographic artefact in *Starless and Silver* depicts a stage; therefore the spectators' attention is directed to what is happening upon the stage, as this informs the operation of the fetish object on a different level. This process can be identified as fetishisation. Vekquin defines this as: "The act of objectifying a tangible or intangible object, or part thereof, into a fetish. This is the process of assigning transcendental meaning, whether consciously or unconsciously, to an object ..." (Vekquin, 2009, para. 5). Within *Starless & Silver* a transcendental state of speculation and anticipation arises from the spectator questioning why the stage has been depicted. This has led the project to examine the unrequited viewing experience that takes place in the photographs and moving image piece of the stage. The reading of the stage becomes influenced by a fetishisation that presents itself in the visual fixation of the stage.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND FETISH.

As Ben Singer notes, Metz (1985) makes a fetish out of the analogue photographic technologies used to create a photograph or moving image piece, but this is not explicitly pointed out in *Photography and Fetish* (Singer, 1988). The following will examine Metz' paper on the subject of photography and fetish by discussing specific components that have influenced this project. These include the fetish object, 'protection against loss', the '*lexis*', and viewing of still and moving image.

A component of fetish that Metz discussed in *Photography and Fetish* is 'Protection against loss', a term coined by Sigmund Freud, which is described in his castration theory. Where an object stands in for what is lost or is in danger of becoming lost, also this object implies a sense of security. Metz points out that, "The fetish, too, means both loss (symbolic castration) and protection against loss" (Metz, 1985, p. 84). Metz associates 'protection against loss' with photography by referring to a past moment captured and preserved in a photograph, which is the indexical operation of photography. He explains, "... with each photograph, a tiny piece of time brutally and forever escapes its ordinary fate, and thus is protected against its own loss" (Metz, 1985, p. 84). Within *Starless and Silver* the photographic works reveal the stage as it existed in the past, confirming a past moment, therefore protecting this visual state of complete loss of never having been seen.

I have extended the concept of 'protection against loss' specifically to analogue photographic processes due to its decline in our present day where digital photographic imaging has become predominant. In undertaking *Starless and Silver* I became increasingly aware that analogue photographic materials such as paper and film are becoming obsolete and harder to obtain. This gave a sense of preciousness to the materials and methods I used to create an artwork. The act of using and maintaining analogue photographic processes ensures that its method is 'protected against loss' by being actively practiced throughout *Starless and Silver*. I believe this increasing rarity of analogue photographic procedures and its artefacts links this practice to fetish. When something operates within the idea of 'protection against loss', a sense of nostalgia begins to reside in its process. This indicates that this entity needs to be protected through triggering some sort of sympathy towards it.

There are obvious differences between a photograph and moving image that are evidenced in the parallel comparison of both mediums within *Starless and Silver*. These photographic mediums imply an undeniable relationship with time; this also affects how fetish aligns itself to analogue still and moving image. Metz refers to these differences in reading duration as the *lexis*; a term founded by Danish semiotician Louis Hjelmslev. Metz elaborates:

Obviously the photographic lexis, a silent rectangle of paper, is much smaller than the cinematic lexis. Even when the film is only two minutes long, these two minutes are enlarged, so to speak, by sounds, movements, and so forth, to say nothing of the average surface of the screen and of the very fact of projection. In addition, the photographic lexis has no fixed duration; it depends, rather, on the spectator, who is the master of the look, whereas the timing of the cinematic lexis is determined in advance by the filmmaker (Metz, 1985, p. 81).

The operation of the *lexis* in each medium acts as a gauge of time, evident in the imposed viewing time of a moving image piece compared to a photograph. The varying reading of the *lexis* in each photographic medium affects how the spectator responds to a photographic artefact, which in turn affects the way the fetish object is experienced.

In addition to the viewing *lexis*, the nature of how the spectator engages with moving image over still image impacts on how it operates as fetish. Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu states; "photography very often primarily means souvenir, keepsake" (Metz, 1985, p. 82). A keepsake implies something that an individual would have for his or her own private viewing, whereas viewing a cinematic piece can be a shared and viewed in a social situation. Metz does suggest that: "... film is more capable of playing on fetishism, photography more capable of itself becoming a fetish" (Metz, 1985, p. 90). The fetishism of film implies a means to an end, watching to see what happens, whereas a photograph is still, where the spectators can draw their own conclusions.

The object of fetish within *Starless and Silver* is an artefact made using analogue photographic methods, which are photographs and eight-millimetre film. According to Metz, a still photograph operates better as a fetish object over moving image:

Film is more difficult to characterise as a fetish. It's too big, lasts too long, and it addresses too many sensorial channels at the same time to offer a credible unconscious equivalent of a lacking part

object. It does contain many potential part objects (the different shifts, the sounds, so forth), but each of them disappears quickly after a moment of presence, whereas a fetish has to be kept, mastered, held, like a photograph in the pocket (Metz, 1985, p. 87).

A photograph can be kept and handled, thus enabling it to operate as a fetish object. Alas Metz does state that: "... a film cannot be touched, cannot be carried and handled: although the actual reels can, the projected film cannot" (Metz, 1985, p. 88). However, this does make a reel of eight-millimetre film operate as a fetish object, when it is not being projected. Therefore, in terms of this project the artefacts of a photograph and reel of eight-millimetre film are regarded as fetish objects.

The significance and value of an object of fetish is affected by how it was made, and what it is made from. An analogue photographic artefact is imbued with a specific materiality derived from the chemical procedures it has undertaken due to photographic materials containing silver halides. This content develops a sense of value due to the idea of silver being precious, which may promote the value of a fetish object.

VIEWING EXPERIENCE OF THE STAGE.

The subject matter of the stage has been depicted within the photographic works made throughout *Starless and Silver*. The photographic index of the stage indicates a past “that-has-been” moment, which induces a sense of loss. This loss that is located in the medium is then compounded when the photograph of a stage failing to deliver what we might expect to find when looking at this subject matter. A stage, traditionally speaking, signifies a platform that commands an audiences’ attention to witness an event or narrative. I have deliberately employed the stage in antithesis of this expectation, by not providing an explicit narrative. The stage itself alludes to illusions being performed, which also has connotations of magic. This is achieved by using optically patterned floors to trigger a sense of illusion, in addition to the shrouds of black curtains that evoke a sense of mystery. A sense of expectation and anticipation arises from the use of these devices.

The differing reading ‘lexis’ of still and moving image affects how the spectator experiences and reads the representation of the stage. Moving image tends to imply that answers will be delivered within its fixed duration, by offering a beginning, middle, and end. However, the moving image piece within *Starless and Silver* does not deliver on this assumption. The sequence of still photographs relies on the spectators’ engagement, and leaves them questioning why the stage has been depicted, and what might, or might not have taken place. The two photographic mediums operating alongside one another highlights the differing means in how the spectators read the work.

The spectators activate the viewing experience of the stage, as the empty stage invites them to speculate why they are looking at a photographic depiction of the stage. In Lisa Le Feuvres’ essay titled *If at first you don’t succeed...celebrate* (2010) points out the possibility of embracing the “gap between intention and realisation” (para. 3). What resides there? The depiction of the stage indicates an intention to reveal something. However, the realisation that the depicted stage in *Starless and Silver* presents a void, exposing a lack where there are no revelations, creates an unrewarding viewing experience. This is where the possibility of failure presents itself: “... but failure is engaging, venturing into the

unknown. “ (Le Feuvre, 2010, para. 4). Through the perceived abyss of the stage, a sense of the unknown creeps in.

The viewing experience of the stage evokes a sense of failure, of loss, by failing to deliver a narrative, or absolute reason why the stage has been depicted. This then forms an unrequited viewing experience. The notion of failure can bring an array of things to light, as Le Feuvre explains:

Failure can open a wormhole through which one can travel to the past. If a recollection is represented as a perfect point-by-point double of the past, it is time travel without knowledge of the present. A memory of the past that has been tainted by the imagination is a process predicated on engagement: the past becomes filtered through the knowledge of the present. (Le Feuvre, 2010, para. 9).

The possibility of time travel through failure is a point of interest; this impression is enhanced by the operating ‘*lexis*’ of the photographic mediums used to depict the stage. The still photographs represent a point-by-point doubling of the past, the reading of these photographs are then tainted by the knowledge obtained from the moving image piece, which affirms the failure of a delivered outcome. The stage being depicted in still and moving image plays with offering potential answers, but none are revealed. Instead time is featured in an immobile state, increasing the possibility of a failed viewing experience.

The spectator activates a state of fetishisation by consciously or unconsciously objectifying the use of the stage. This is where fetishisation could present itself, through the continual questioning of why the stage has been depicted in the first instance. The spectator activates the transcendental meaning offered through the works of *Starless and Silver* by assigning the stage with a meaning, whether metaphoric or not, in order to connect, or understand the photographic depiction of the stage.

* * *

ACT. TWO: PRODUCTION.

* * *

This section of the exegesis discusses and demonstrates the practical developments throughout *Starless and Silver*, by examining the formal and technical aspects of the analogue photographic mediums, the use of the stage and its fabrication. Through these investigations I will identify where analogue photography may operate as a fetish, and also observe how an unrewarding viewing experience emerges through the final works. This section will also address the rationale for decisions made for the final artworks, and demonstrate the workings and findings of the trial exhibitions concerning exhibition layout and installation issues.

ANALOGUE PHOTOGRAPHIC METHODS.

A large part of my practice in *Starless and Silver* takes place in a darkroom set up for black and white processing (refer to Figures 2 & 3). This gives me the opportunity to engage in all aspects of producing an analogue photographic work, from film development to printing photographs. By working with analogue means, a sense of the handmade is then presented through the final works. My interest lies in the ‘natural magic’ involved in analogue photographic methods, due to the particular way photographic chemical processing is used to reveal latent imagery. It can also be argued that this developing procedure is also a ritualistic act, which can then be identified with the operation of fetish. Whilst engaging with these analogue photographic practices I discovered that film based materials are becoming a rarity. Even obtaining specific knowledge for cine film was a particular challenge. This was remedied by approaching Foxton’s MAVtech, Audio Visual Museum (Figure 4) where I met people who have helped and guided me through the technicalities of cine film in *Starless and Silver*.



FIGURE 2. (LEFT) SELECTION OF CHEMICALS USED FOR PROCESSING 8MM FILM, MAY 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION. FIGURE 3. (RIGHT) FILM PROCESSING BAY, MAY 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.



FIGURE 4. FOXTON MAVTECH AUDIO VISUAL MUSEUM, APRIL 2010, 35MM NEGATIVE SCAN.

Many photographic chemicals and materials are not readily available in New Zealand; therefore I had to source most materials from overseas. I took this opportunity to record and learn how to mix chemicals to process latent imagery on various film formats (refer to Figures 5 - 7). From this I became aware how the notion of fetish manifests itself when something is at risk of being lost, hence the idea of 'protection against loss'.

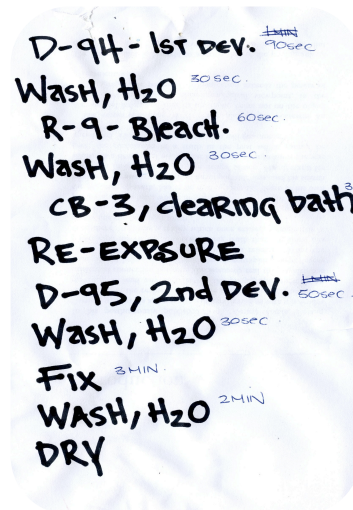


FIGURE 5. (LEFT) EIGHT-MILLIMETER CINE FILM SOURCED AMERICA, MAY 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION. FIGURE 6. (RIGHT) EIGHT-MILLIMETER FILM PROCESSING INSTRUCTIONS, JUNE 2010, SCANNED DOCUMENT.

first DEV. *1. D-914

H₂O @ 21°C , 750 ML
Metol .6g
Sodium Sulfite 50g
Hydroquinone 20g
Potassium Bromide 8g
Sodium thiocyanate 6g
Sodium Hydroxide 20g

stir in plexi glass -
it heats up.

+ H₂O to make:
1L

- KEEPS - 2WK

*2 R-9 Bleach

1L H₂O

Potassium Dichromate
: 9.5g

Sulphuric Acid. 98%.

12 ml - add acid
to H₂O

BE VERY CAREFUL.

DOESN'T KEEP -

*3 CB-3:
clearing Bath.

H₂O @ 20° , 750 ML
Sodium Sulfite 10g
H₂O to make
1L.

one stor. clearing bath.

1 MONTH. KODAK REC.

- DUMP - 1 USE -

*4. 2nd DEV. D-95

H₂O @ 21°C , 750 ML
Metol 1.0g
Sodium Sulfite 50g
Hydroquinone 20g
Potassium Bromide 5g
Potassium Iodide .25g
Sodium Hydroxide 15g

H₂O to make:

1L

Keeps - 2WKS

FIGURE 7. CHEMICAL RECIPES FOR PROCESSING EIGHT-MILLIMETER FILM, JUNE 2010, SCANNED DOCUMENTS.

THE PHOTOGRAPH.

Throughout *Starless and Silver* I have worked with a range of still photographic film formats and cameras to expand my research of techniques with regards to analogue photographic methods. These formats included standard 35-millimetre film, medium format (120-millimetre) and large format (4 x 5 inch sheet film). Each camera had different characteristics; medium format and large format were well suited for the studio situation I was working in. For a large part of this project I used the 4 x 5 camera. Though it achieved great detail, I considered the scale of the final photographic prints and how it would operate as a fetish object. Originally I was aiming to produce larger-scale photographs, however this size did not harmonise with the intimate scale necessary for the operation of a fetish object. Therefore for the final photographic works in this project I am utilising a Zenza Bronica medium format camera, which produces 6 x 4.5 centimetre negatives (refer to Figures 8 & 9). This format still retains great detail in its negatives, which enhances the fetishistic nature of the final photograph as a fetish object. The proportions of the negative were taken into consideration when making the final decisions about camera and film format.

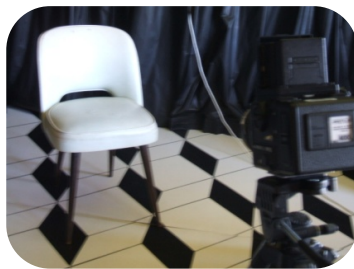
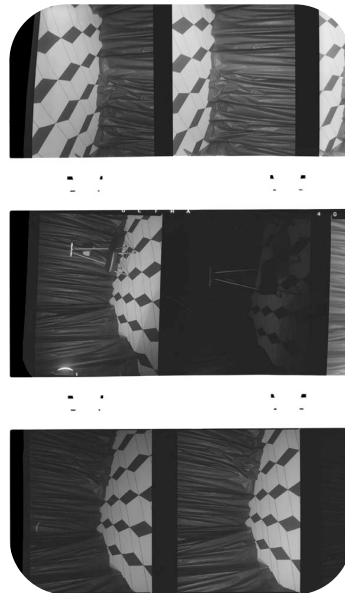


FIGURE 8. (ABOVE) WORKING WITH THE ZENZA BRONICA IN A PHOTO SHOOT, APRIL 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION. FIGURE 9. (RIGHT) 120MM PROOF SHEET OF NEGATIVES, 20 x 25 CM, MARCH 2010, NEGATIVE SCAN.



I have employed fibre base printing techniques when printing the final photographs (Figure 10). I have selected this method to enhance the photograph as a fetish object. A fibre base print results in a unique artefact; it is textured because of the rippling of the paper due to its rag content. It is also noted for its archival quality, which alludes to the objects' ability to be kept. Fibre based printing also allows me to selenium tone the final prints to bring out a range of tones in the abundance of black within the image content.

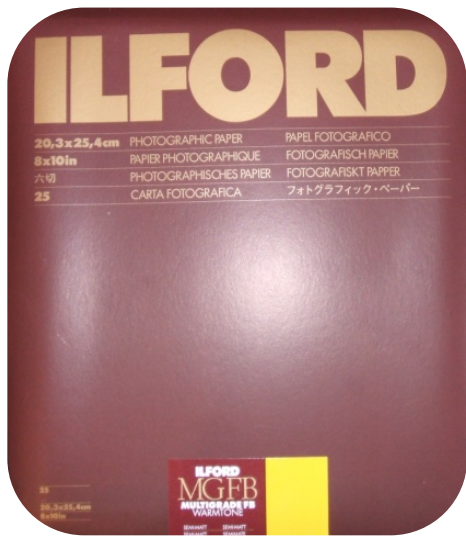


FIGURE 10. PACKET OF FIBRE BASE PAPER, 20 X 25 CM, JUNE 2011, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.



FIGURE 11. WATERJET CUT ALUMINUM DRY EMBOSSEING PLATE, 20 x 25 CM, JULY 2011, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

Issues have constantly arisen around the presentation of the photograph for it to operate as a fetish object. I arrived at focusing on the materiality of the fibre base paper. An aluminium plate was cut using a water jet cutter to create a dry embossing plate. This was used to embellish the outer edge of the photographic paper to enhance the photograph as a fetish object (refer to Figures 11 - 13). The design used for the embossing plate was inspired by the simple lines of the Art Nouveau period. The top of the design mirrors the downward flow of the curtains, where the bottom acts as an anchor mimicking the shape of the footlights of the stage.

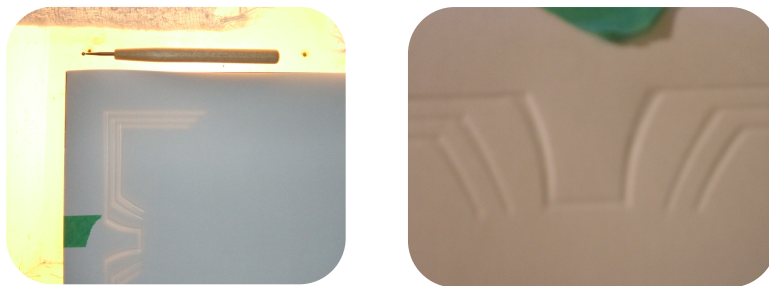


FIGURE 12. (LEFT) DRY EMBOSSEING A PHOTOGRAPH IN PROGRESS OVER A LIGHT BOX, AUGUST 2011, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION. FIGURE 13. (RIGHT) DRY EMBOSSEING DETAIL ON PHOTOGRAPHIC PAPER, AUGUST 2011, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

MOVING IMAGE.

The moving image pieces created during *Starless and Silver* have been made using eight-millimetre cine film. The development process for this film uses a reversal process that results in a positive-negative that is ready for projection (refer to Figures 14 to 17).

Eight-millimetre is considered low-grade quality due to the size of the film as it restricts how much visual information is recorded. This low-grade quality is apparent alongside the superior quality of the medium format photographic works. This is also evident when viewing the projected moving image piece; the image washes in and out due to poor exposure and uneven

development (refer to the DVD in the Appendix). These qualities reaffirm the analogue

aspect of moving image through highlighting its imperfections and exposing a handmade quality to the piece.

The common connotations that come with viewing standard eight film implies a sense of personal viewing, as this type of moving image was the predecessor of home videos for recording family events. A sense of this personal or private viewing is mirrored in the smaller scale of the final photographs, as a smaller scale suggests that physically only one person at a time can view the photograph.



FIGURE 14. ENLARGED 8MM FILM SCAN, .8 x 5.5 CM, JUNE 2010, SCANNED DOCUMENT.



FIGURE 15. YASHIMAT-S 8MM CINE CAMERA, 20 X 15 X 5 CM, APRIL 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

The type of cine film I am utilising is a silent format. There is no magnetic or optical strip to record audio, and the cameras I am using are not capable of recording sound (Figure 15). Silent film is said to privilege visual gestures and utilises camera angles and lighting. These aspects become more noticeable to the spectator because they are not shaped by any audio influence (Williams, 2004). Instead the spectator relies more on visual cues to decipher what is happening within the image, and upon the subject matter, which in this case is the stage.



FIGURE 16. (LEFT) OMO 8MM/16MM CINE FILM PROCESSING TANK, 28 X 15 X 28 CM, JUNE 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION. FIGURE 17. (RIGHT) CINE FILM READY FOR PROCESSING, 25 X 25 X 3 CM, JUNE 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

However when the moving image piece is projected, this silence is broken by the sound of the projector motor and the smell of burning dust from the projector bulb. These sounds and smells of analogue projection add a sense of nostalgia to the viewing experience. This nostalgia is identified as a result of viewing an outdated technology in a contemporary context (refer to Figures 18 & 19).



FIGURE 18. (ABOVE) EUMIG P26 8MM PROJECTOR, DIMENSIONS VARIES, SEPTEMBER 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION. FIGURE 19. (BOTTOM) VINTAGE SILVER SCREEN FOR PROJECTION, 90 X 70 CM, SEPTEMBER 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

Whilst working with the moving image of the stage I have focused on a speculated outcome of a narrative or event to unfold, to inform the spectator. I have contradicted this by not providing an outcome, hence creating a failed viewing experience.

Moving image has the potential to work with many camera angles, providing different views of the stage offering a prospective narrative. The DVD accompanying this exegesis in the Appendix shows my explorations in moving image. In the final moving image piece I have selected a stationary camera position. Holding the viewer in a fixed position reduces the possibility of forming a narrative, because the spectator is unable to explore the stage through other vantage points. This camera angle also mirrors the perspective used in the photographs.

I have examined how filming and projecting the cine film at measured frames per second alters the reading of the moving image piece. The optimum rate is 24 frames per second; this results in the illusion of natural movement. I have filmed my moving image pieces at 16 frames per second, which has resulted in malformed movement. When projected at a slower rate a constant flickering occurs. Mulvey (2006) explains that when the film/moving image is constantly jumping, the spectator's mind doesn't follow any lines of narrative but seeks moments of clarity to figure out what they are seeing. In response to this I have observed that this distorted image enhances the unrequited viewing experience.

FORMATION OF THE STAGES.

During this project I have constructed three stage sets. These were constructed in succession, with each stage being more elaborate than its predecessor. This has given me a variety of settings to photograph and film. Constructing the stage sets utilises the component of fabrication, a characteristic of fetishism that has presented itself throughout *Starless and Silver*. This idea of fabrication has also continued to be used in producing photographic prints of the stage. My stage construction processes became almost obsessive; this is evident in the time it took to create the optical patterned floors, and to make an abundance of curtains (Figures 20 & 21).

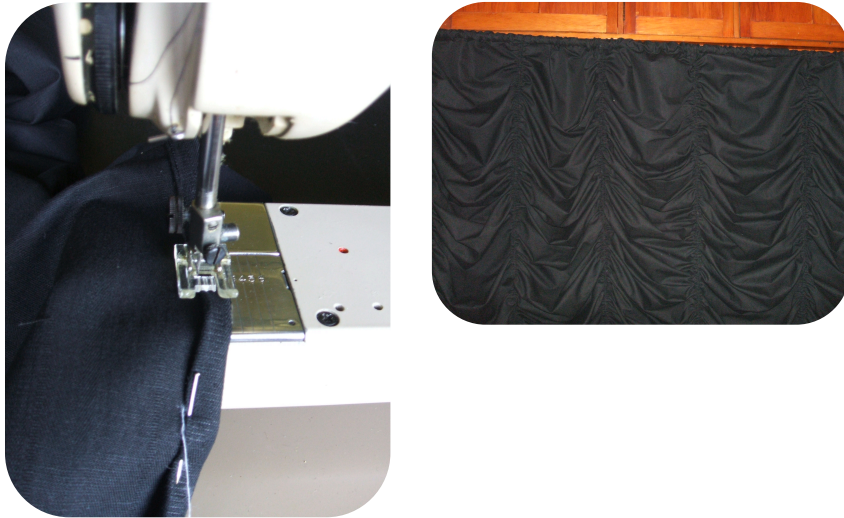


FIGURE 20. (LEFT) SEWING CURTAINS IN PROGRESS, SEPTEMBER 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION. FIGURE 21. (RIGHT) DETAIL: FESTOON BLOOM CURTAIN FOR THE DRESSING OF THE THIRD STAGE, 200 X 300 CM, JUNE 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

The stage set's colour scheme is specifically designed for black and white film, which enhances the indexical property of photography, due to black and white film recording a black and white reality.

The scale of these constructed stage sets are significantly smaller than full sized stage sets not only for practical reasons, but to allow me to continue to explore the idea of illusion as it operates photographically. The challenge of working with a smaller scale stage was ensuring that the photographic illusion of this space looked real, so that the spectator could imagine approaching it.

The first stage set that I constructed was an exhibition piece in *Mundane Fetishes*, January 2010, Flying Start Scholarship, Community Arts Centre, Whanganui (Figure 22). This was the platform for my first explorations, which allowed me to examine how the optics on the stage floor and objects operated within the same space. The first 3-D stage set was an un-raised two by two metre square platform with black curtains along two sides. The pattern painted on the floor was of a repeated and shaded necker cube pattern (Weisstein, 1999). I found an issue arose in the scale of the floor optics. The pattern was too large and distance had to be provided between the spectator and space to get a sense of the optical illusion; therefore scale needed further attention in the following stage sets.



FIGURE 22. FIRST STAGE SET EXHIBITED IN *MUNDANE FETISHES*, COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRE, WHANGANUI, 240 X 240 CM, JANUARY 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

The second stage set was specifically made to fit into more of a domestic space, which was a hallway. Again this stage had an un-raised platform, with a long narrow optically patterned floor and three walls of black curtains enclosing the floor at the edges. The floor design for this set was taken directly from David Lynch's 'Twin Peaks, Red Room' (1990) Lynch uses the bare elements of wall and floor space and turns them into bold visual features, which creates a visual fixation. Originally the context of the Red Room drew on a sense of an in between, unreal place, which alluded to ideas of magic and illusion. The pattern used from the Red Room had to be scaled down significantly to work on a one by two metre floor space (refer to Figures 23 & 24).



FIGURE 23. SECOND STAGE SET, 240 X 120 CM, MAY 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

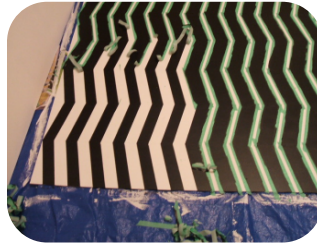


FIGURE 24. UNMASKING THE FLOOR OF THE SECOND STAGE, 120 X 240 CM, APRIL 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

The third stage constructed was a definite shift from making stage sets; I incorporated a classic design element of the stage itself: the proscenium arch. This stage construction was raised from the ground, has built-in footlights, and specific curtains to enhance a sense of a traditional stage. These included wing curtains and festoon blooms; these also had a practical purpose to disguise technical devices such as smoke machines and lights when photographing the stage. The design for the floor was intentionally less complex, and not as common as the checkerboard configuration. I employed the use of triangles creating squares. Even though this appeared to be a simple pattern I found it was not. The scale of the pattern needed to be very small to retain a tiling effect. This meant that it took two sessions of masking, using, in total, 4,500 right-angled cut pieces of masking tape (refer to Figures 25 to 31).



FIGURE 25. THIRD STAGE IN NEARING CONSTRUCTION, 200 X 240 X 50 CM, JUNE 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

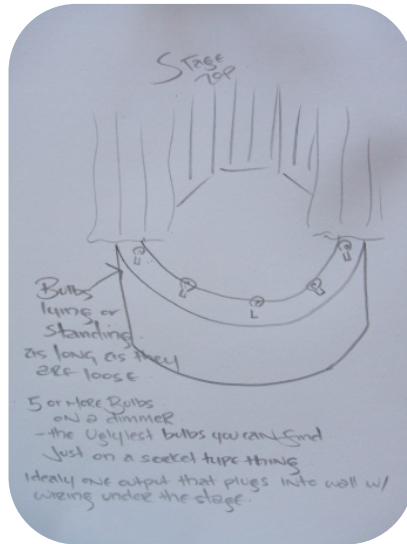


FIGURE 26. FIRST SKETCH OF THIRD STAGE, APRIL 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.



FIGURE 27. (LEFT) CONSTRUCTION VIEW: FOUNDATIONS OF THIRD STAGE, 200 x 240 x 50 CM, MAY 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION. FIGURE 28. (RIGHT) OVERVIEW OF COMPLETE FIRST MASK ON THIRD STAGE FLOOR, 120 x 240 CM, MAY 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.



FIGURE 29. (LEFT) DETAIL OF COMPLETE MASKING OF THE THIRD STAGE FLOOR, 120 X 240 CM, MAY 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION. *FIGURE 30.* (RIGHT) OVERVIEW OF COMPLETE UNMASK OF FIRST LAYER ON THIRD STAGE FLOOR, 120 X 240 CM, MAY 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.



FIGURE 31. FINAL UNMASKING OF THIRD STAGE FLOOR, 120 X 240 CM, MAY 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

I am not exhibiting these stages and stage sets in the final exhibition. The photographs are the indexical sign of the stage and replace the stage in its absence.

PHOTOGRAPHING THE STAGE.

Understanding how the stage sets were activated was a continuous exploration throughout *Starless and Silver*. I set out to contradict the traditional use of the stage to create an unrequited viewing experience. In this segment I will discuss these investigations and findings as they occurred from photographing the stage sets.

Lighting has been a critical factor in photographing the stage, due to the starkness of a black and white set. The black curtains absorb a lot of light, while the white floor reflected the abundance of light used. Overall I found that I had to use long exposure times to achieve detail in the curtains of the stages (refer to Figures 32 & 33). Lighting has also affected the moving image pieces; the footlights upon the third stage set appear to have halos from over-exposure, which is a trait of the eight-millimetre cine film (refer to the DVD in the Appendix).

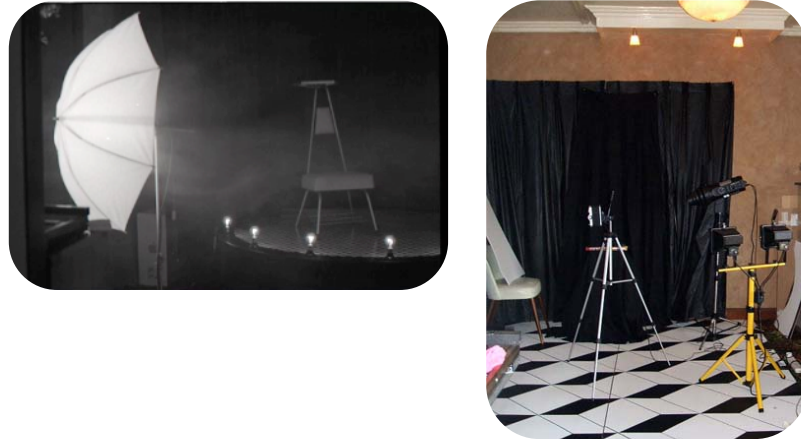


FIGURE 32. (LEFT) LIGHTING CONFIGURATION IN STUDIO, AUGUST 2010, 35MM NEGATIVE SCAN. FIGURE 33. (RIGHT) BEHIND SCENES IN A PHOTO SESSION, MARCH 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

The first experimentations on the stage sets were to investigate how objects activated the space. I found that objects used in the spaces created visual cues to question the presence of a narrative. The chair is an object reused throughout the photographing of the stage sets. The chair is used metaphorically to convey a sense of waiting. Figures 34 to 38 demonstrate these investigations.



FIGURE 34. (ABOVE) WHITE VALET CHAIR (FIRST STAGE SET OBSERVATION), MARCH 2010, 120MM NEGATIVE SCAN. FIGURE 35. (BOTTOM) BLACK VALET CHAIR (FIRST STAGE SET OBSERVATION), MARCH 2010, 120MM NEGATIVE SCAN.



*FIGURE 36. (LEFT) WHITE CHAIR (FIRST STAGE SET OBSERVATION), MARCH 2010, 120MM
NEGATIVE SCAN. FIGURE 37. (RIGHT) WHITE CHAIR (THIRD STAGE OBSERVATION),
SEPTEMBER 2010, 4 X 5 " NEGATIVE SCAN.*



*FIGURE 38. TWO WHITE CHAIRS (FIRST STAGE SET, SCENE OBSERVATION), JULY 2010, 35MM
NEGATIVE SCAN.*

I found that the full-size objects used on the small-scale stages became a disruption that resulted in a broken illusion; they distorted the perception of the size of the stages. A similar issue arose around the size of the light bulbs used upon the third stage construction. The larger bulbs were at risk of exposing the scale of the stage, therefore I trialled a set of smaller bulbs. I found that the smaller bulbs highlighted the oddity of the light fittings. As a result I am continuing to use the larger light bulbs, as they do not compromise the viewing effect of the stage as much as the smaller bulbs do (refer to Figures 39 & 40).



FIGURE 39. (LEFT) THIRD STAGE (FOOTLIGHT OBSERVATION: LARGE BULBS), SEPTEMBER 2010, 120MM NEGATIVE SCAN. FIGURE 40. (RIGHT) THIRD STAGE (FOOTLIGHT OBSERVATION: SMALL BULBS), MARCH 2011, 120MM NEGATIVE SCAN.



FIGURE 41. SPINNING SPIRAL PROP (STILL OBSERVATION), AUGUST 2010, 35MM NEGATIVE SCAN.

Figure 41 shows a spinning prop I employed in a particular segment of a moving image piece. My intention was to create an illusion that utilised moving image (refer to the DVD in the Appendix). Unfortunately this exercise failed due the scale of the prop and it also compromised the idea of an unrequited viewing experience.

I also investigated the stage sets' placement and surroundings and how this would affect the reading of the stage in the photograph. The second stage set focuses on its domestic surroundings. I began to explore how this juxtaposition may contradict the expectation of the stage (refer to Figures 42 & 43). On further reflection I did not want to include domestic elements, because the spectator would be able to build a narrative with them at the expense of focussing on the stage. I had also incorporated this domestic observation in a moving image piece; this was done using a panning camera angle, which I found that this conflicted with the visual fixation the stage (refer to the DVD in the Appendix).



FIGURE 42. (LEFT) FINISHED PHOTOGRAPH: DOMESTIC SURROUNDING (EXPLORATION OF SECOND STAGE SET), 35 x 28 CM, JUNE 2010, SILVER GELATIN PRINT ON FIBRE BASE. FIGURE 43. (RIGHT) FINISHED PHOTOGRAPH: DOMESTIC SURROUNDING (EXPLORATION OF THE THIRD STAGE), 35 x 28 CM, AUGUST 2010, SILVER GELATIN PRINT ON FIBRE BASE.

Capturing smoke with analogue photographic techniques has been an investigation for activating the stages. I have examined how smoke operates in moving image and still photographs, and consider smoke to be the most successful in activating a space. It creates an atmosphere that suggests the unknown. Smoke has a minimal yet dominating quality due to it being a non-physical object. It commands the space of the stage set by its movement, which when photographed has both a translucent and opaque quality. The use of smoke has also remedied the problematic issue of not revealing the actual scale of the stage. I have also extended this investigation by using dry ice to activate the stage. I found that dry ice gave an anchoring dynamic to the space due to its water-falling effect down the front of the stage (refer to Figures 44 - 47).



*FIGURE 44. FINISHED PHOTOGRAPHS: SMOKE AND WHITE CHAIR (FIRST STAGE OBSERVATION),
(X4) 10 X 12.5 CM, APRIL 2010, SILVER GELATIN PRINT ON FIBRE BASE.*

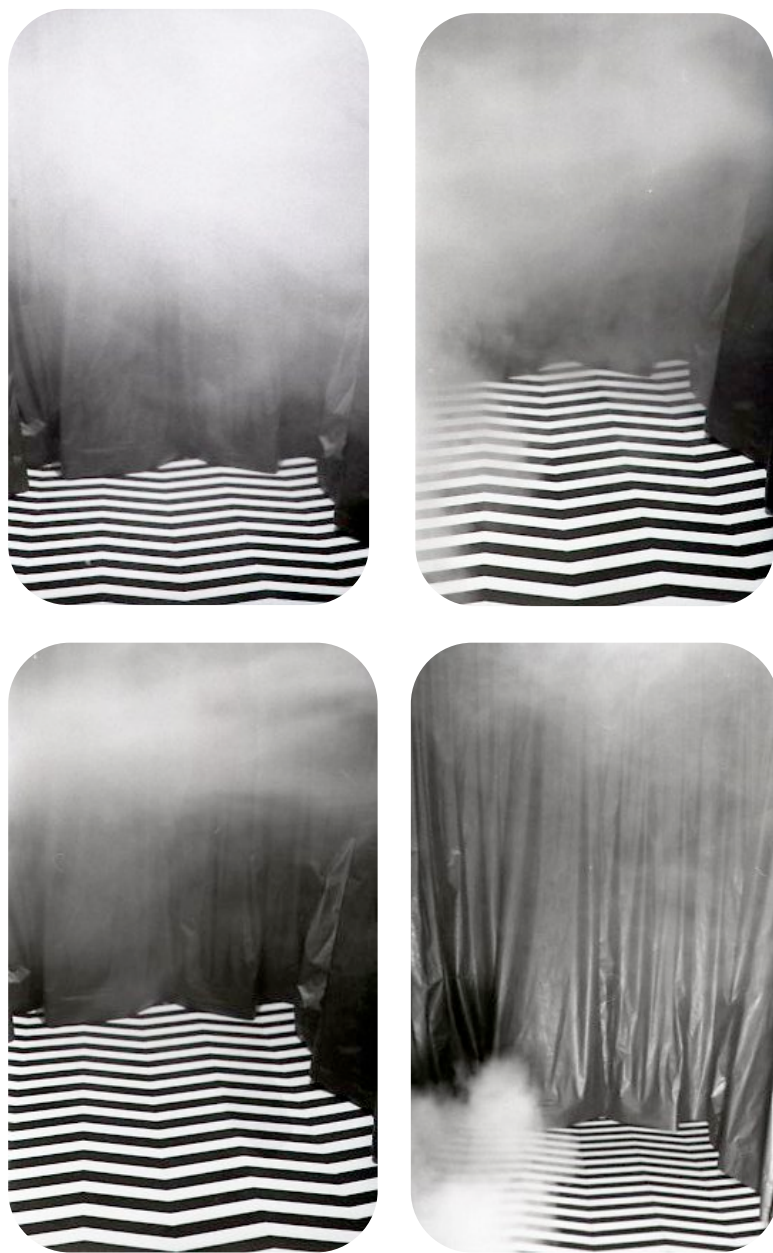


FIGURE 45. FINISHED PHOTOGRAPHS: SMOKE (SECOND STAGE SET OBSERVATION), (x4) 10 X 12.5 CM, MAY 2010, SILVER GELATIN PRINT ON FIBRE BASE.

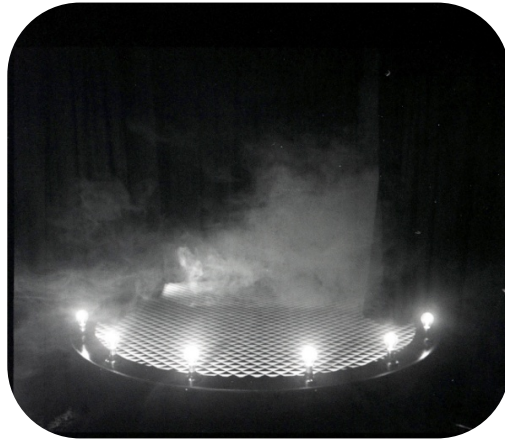


FIGURE 46. FINISHED PHOTOGRAPH: SMOKE (THIRD STAGE OBSERVATION), 28 x 35.5 CM, AUGUST 2010, SILVER GELATIN PRINT ON FIBRE BASE.



FIGURE 47. DRY ICE (THIRD STAGE OBSERVATION), APRIL 2011, 120MM NEGATIVE SCAN.

The operation of the smoke and dry ice presents itself differently in still and moving image. The moving image pieces showing the smoke tend to animate the space within the frame by capturing smoke's ability to move, filling and leaving the stage spaces. The static image of smoke comes through as a frozen mist in the photographs, suggesting a past moment captured.



FIGURE 48. FINISHED PHOTOGRAPH: 'WHERE REASON BEGS TO DIFFER' SERIES, 28 X 35.5 CM, JUNE 2010. SILVER GELATIN PRINT ON FIBRE BASE.

The camera angles used to photograph the stage sets has also played an important role in how the spectators orientate themselves in relation to viewing the photograph. Figures 48 to 50 are a part of a photographic body of work that experiments with depth of field, and a camera angle positioned low to the floor to highlight the optical patterns on the floor. This camera angle places the spectator as if they were lying on the floor of the stage, creating some sort of perceptual disorientation; the spectator is positioned in the stage set. From this body of work I become aware of how the use of camera angles could manipulate the spectator's relationship with the photograph. My overall approach to photographing the stage has been to use camera angles that distance the spectator from the stage, rather than include them. I want the spectator to feel as if they are about to watch something unfold upon the stage.

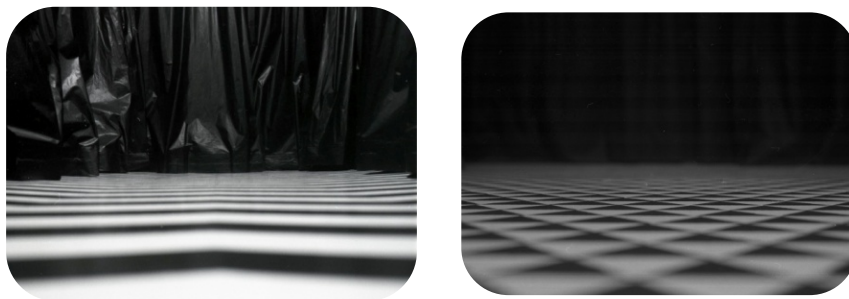


FIGURE 49. (LEFT) FINISHED PHOTOGRAPH: 'WHERE REASON BEGS TO DIFFER' SERIES, 28 X 35.5 CM, JUNE 2010, SILVER GELATIN PRINT ON FIBRE BASE. *FIGURE 50.* (RIGHT) FINISHED PHOTOGRAPH: 'WHERE REASON BEGS TO DIFFER' SERIES, 28 X 35.5 CM, JUNE 2010, SILVER GELATIN PRINT ON FIBRE BASE.

TRIAL EXHIBITIONS.

PEEP SHOW

Peep Show (Figure 51) took place at the Federal Hotel Gallery, Whanganui, on the 18th June 2010. This was the first opportunity to test appropriate ways to exhibit the photographic work I was producing in conjunction with my ideas of how the photograph could reveal the notion of fetish.



Figure 51. Midyear exhibition poster for *Peep Show*, June 2010, Digital documentation.

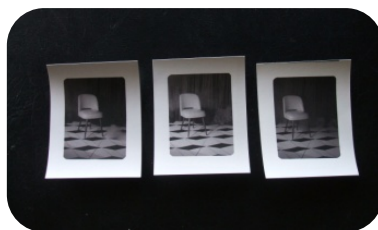


FIGURE 52. NOTE ROUNDED EDGE DETAIL, (X 3) 10 X 12.5 CM, MAY 2010, SILVER GELATIN PRINTS ON FIBRE BASE. DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

Initially I used the standard practice of framing photographs behind glass, but I felt the framing was unsuccessful in terms of this project. The idea was to investigate how a photograph could operate as a fetish object due to its ability to be held and treasured like a keepsake. I printed a set of 4 x 5" photographs to demonstrate their capability of being held. These were exhibited in *Peep Show*. I was interested to see how the audience would react to these photographs. They were placed on a table with the intention that the spectator could pick up the images and look at them. I did not supply white gloves or a cue card because I was trying to move away from gallery etiquette. The audience did not respond to this invitation (refer to Figures 52 - 54, & 59). My intention was to convey a sense of the analogue process in the final photographic works so the spectator would appreciate the medium and its artefacts. For the final presentation of these photographs I have decided against framing or matting to expose the materiality of fibre based photographs.



FIGURE 53. (LEFT) FRAMED SMOKE (OBSERVATION PIECES OF THE SECOND STAGE), (X 2) 40 X 50 CM, MAY 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION. FIGURE 54. (RIGHT) 'WHERE REASON BEGS TO DIFFER' (IN FRAMING PROCESS), 40 X 50 CM, JUNE 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

At this point in the project I was also experimenting with how to exhibit the moving image piece. In *Peep Show* I used a film editor to present the film so the spectator could control the viewing of the moving image piece (refer to Figures 55 & 56). I was exploring the notion of fetish as being contained and manageable and I thought I could achieve this by employing a film editor. I felt that this experiment was not successful due to the work becoming about an apparatus; the focus was not on the eight-millimetre film itself. Therefore I have decided on a traditional method for presenting the moving image piece by using a projector, and a silver screen, which creates and enhances a sense of nostalgia.



FIGURE 55. (ABOVE) SAIMIC 8MM FILM EDITOR, DIMENSIONS VARIES, APRIL 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION. FIGURE 56. (BOTTOM) DETAIL OF IMAGE AS VIEWED FROM THE SAIMIC 8MM FILM EDITOR, JUNE 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

Also during this exhibition I took the opportunity to explore and activate the environment that my work was viewed in. I used a smoke machine, alternative lighting and black curtains to mimic a theatre or cinema environment within the gallery. I have found that the Federal Gallery space could not be completely altered to mimic this environment because essentially it is a gallery (refer to Figure 57).



FIGURE 57. (LEFT) PEEP SHOW OPENING, OBSERVING THE ALTERED ATMOSPHERE IN THE GALLERY SPACE USING ALTERNATIVE LIGHTING AND A SMOKE MACHINE, JUNE 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION. FIGURE 58. (RIGHT) PEEP SHOW OPENING, SPECTATOR ENGAGING WITH FILM EDITOR AS 8MM MOVING IMAGE VIEWER, JUNE 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.



FIGURE 59. (ABOVE) *PEEP SHOW* OPENING, SPECTATOR WITH PHOTOGRAPHS, JUNE 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION. *FIGURE 60.* (BOTTOM) DETAIL OF IMAGE AS VIEWED FROM THE FILM EDITOR, JUNE 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

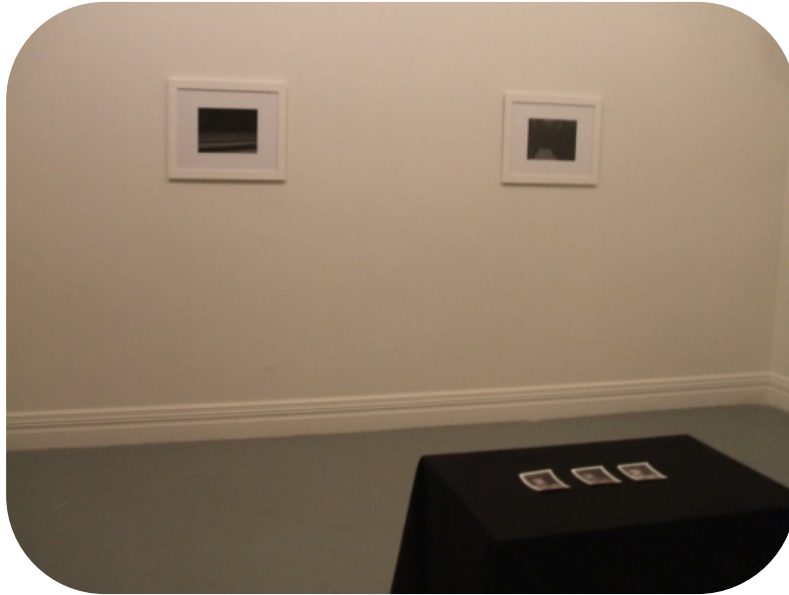


FIGURE 61. (ABOVE) *PEEP SHOW* EXHIBITION LAYOUT, JUNE 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.
FIGURE 62. (BOTTOM) *PEEP SHOW* EXHIBITION LAYOUT, JUNE 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

STARLESS & SILVER



FIGURE 63. *STARLESS AND SILVER*, NOVEMBER 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

The *Starless and Silver* exhibition was held at The ARC theatre, Whanganui, on the 27th November 2010 (Figure 63). The layout and age of this exhibition space has an over bearing quality, which affected the reading of the artworks. I explored this quality by creating a distinct barrier between the moving and still photographic works. The moving image piece was set up in the basement, to mimic a cinematic environment (refer to figure 64). To view this space the spectator walked downstairs to the basement where the photographs were hung (refer to Figure 65). To visually link the two viewing spaces I used red light lamps, however the red light were interpreted as an erotic connotation of fetish, which wasn't my intention (refer to Figure 66).

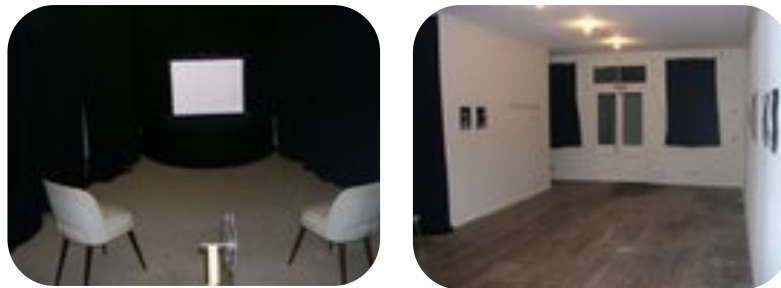


FIGURE 64. (LEFT) BASEMENT LAYOUT FOR MOVING IMAGE PIECE, NOVEMBER 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION. FIGURE 65. (RIGHT) *STARLESS AND SILVER* EXHIBITION (LAYOUT OBSERVATION), NOVEMBER 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

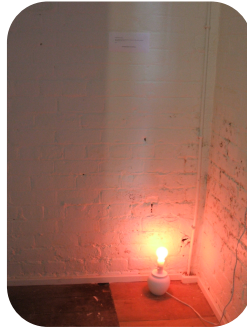


FIGURE 66. RED LIGHT AT THE TOP OF THE BASEMENT STAIRS, NOVEMBER 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

To view the moving image piece in this exhibition the spectator had to rely on the projectionist being present to operate the projector. This approach was to abide by specific protocols in viewing an analogue medium of film, which created a sense of nostalgia. However, this added a performance element to the work that controlled the viewing duration of the work. Upon further reflection I found that the spectator's viewing experience seemed to be completely governed by the duration of the moving image and the photographs became a secondary aspect to the exhibition. Instead I want to achieve a non-linear time sequence to emphasise an unrequited viewing experience of the still and moving image. A mirroring effect presented itself in *Starless and Silver*; this was evident through the repetition of objects within the exhibition and the space itself. This included the use of actual black curtains, and white chairs in the basement (refer to Figure 67). These were the same objects that were photographed upon the stage sets and shown in the photographs on the ground floor. I have decided to explore this element further because it links to photography's analogues quality.



FIGURE 67. SETTING UP THE BASEMENT FOR VIEWING THE MOVING IMAGE PIECE, NOTE THE ABUNDANCE OF BLACK CURTAINS, NOVEMBER 2010, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

The photographs in this exhibition were not of a consistent scale throughout which interrupted their viewing. The varying scales of the photographs indicated different purposes. The photographs were also hung in groups of three, which created potential part narratives about the stage. Upon reflection I found that the inconsistent compositions of the photographs disrupted the stages' illusion. These photographs were of a larger format, 40 x 50 centimetres, and 28 x 35.5 centimetres and these sizes started to lose a sense of a fetish object (refer to Figures 68 -71).



FIGURE 68. (ABOVE) PHOTOGRAPHS HUNG IN THE EXHIBITION, (UNTITLED), 28 x 35.5 CM, NOVEMBER 2010, SELENIUM TONED FIBRE BASE PRINTS, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION. FIGURE 69. (BOTTOM) PHOTOGRAPHS HUNG IN THE EXHIBITION, (UNTITLED), 28 x 35.5 CM & 40 x 50 CM, NOVEMBER 2010, SELENIUM TONED FIBRE BASE PRINTS, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.



FIGURE 70. (ABOVE) PHOTOGRAPHS HUNG IN THE EXHIBITION, (UNTITLED), 28 x 35.5 cm & 40 x 50 cm, NOVEMBER 2010, SELENIUM TONED FIBRE BASE PRINTS, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.
FIGURE 71. (BOTTOM) PHOTOGRAPHS HUNG IN THE EXHIBITION, (UNTITLED), 28 x 35.5 cm, NOVEMBER 2010. SELENIUM TONED FIBRE BASE PRINTS. DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

INCANDESCENT SILVER

The final exhibition will again be held at The ARC theatre, Whanganui. I will be re-addressing the use of the exhibition space. After observing the symmetrical composition of the stage in my own work, I have made a decision to work with a symmetrical layout throughout this exhibition (refer to Figure 72). I intend to exhibit moving and 16 still images alongside one another on the ground floor. In doing so I will be highlighting the photographic mediums relationship with time that operates through the differing reading 'lexis'. This will challenge linear time by constantly representing the past in the photographs and the present in the moving image (as discussed in Act. ONE), thereby disrupting any form of narrative. Between the two mediums there is no indication of the future, or a resolved and requited viewing of the stage becoming resolved.

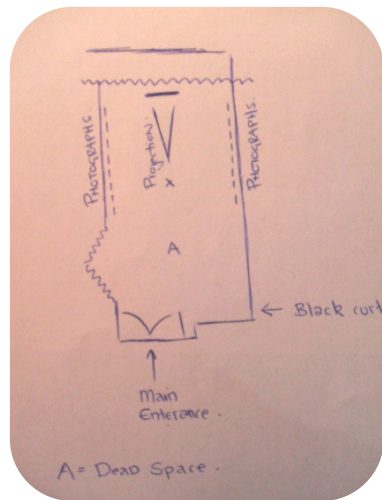


FIGURE 72. LAYOUT PLAN OF FINAL EXHIBITION, AUGUST 2011, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

Repetition will also take place by introducing a film loop to view the moving image piece. This will dissolve any coherence of a beginning, middle or end, which is generally expected of moving image. At first I approached the moving image by not editing it. This was to demonstrate its entirety and emphasise some kind of analogue quality. Upon reflection the moving image was too long and this became problematic in holding the spectators' attention. Employing these measures is a part of my investigation into disrupting linear time when viewing the moving image (refer to Figure 73).

The element of repetition also extends into a mirroring effect found with the use of black curtains within the photographic pieces. Black curtains have also been used in the exhibition space, for example the silver screen is contained in a wall of black curtains to enhance a sense of cinema in an alternative-screening environment (refer to Figure 74).

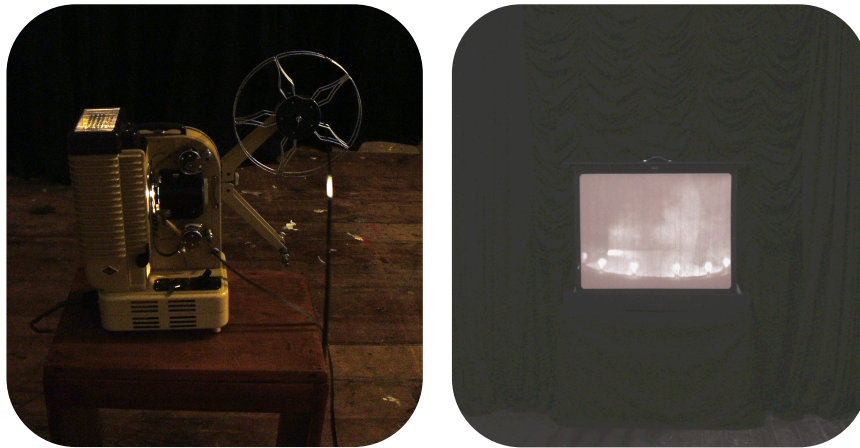


FIGURE 73. (LEFT) THE PROJECTOR LOOP USED IN *INCANDESCENT SILVER*, DIMENSIONS VARIES, SEPTEMBER 2011, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION. FIGURE 74. (RIGHT) THE PROJECTOR SCREEN INCASED BY BLACK CURTAINS IN *INCANDESCENT SILVER*, SCREEN (80 X 90 CM), CURTAINS (300 X 400 CM), SEPTEMBER 2011, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

A sense of private viewing experience has been created through creating an intimacy in the exhibition space. This is also conveyed through the height at which the photographs and eight-millimetre film were presented. They are hung at a height of 155 centimetres from the floor; this meant that the spectator was in close quarters with the work, almost looking down to it at times.

The lighting of the space had to be addressed in order to see the photographs alongside the projected moving image piece. This was achieved by using low wattage light bulbs, which effectively acted as another mirroring element that presented itself throughout the exhibitions of *Starless and Silver*, and *Incandescent Silver*.

Further documentation of *Incandescent Silver* can be found in the DVD in the Appendix.

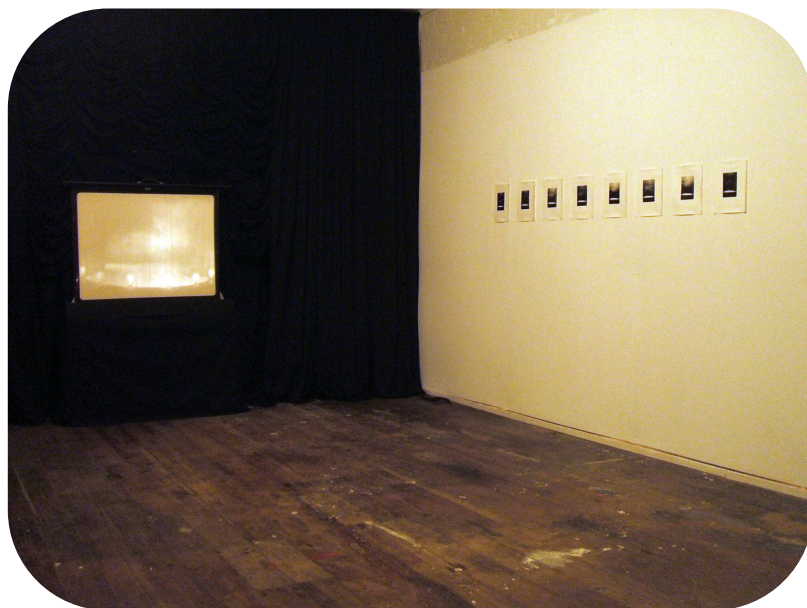
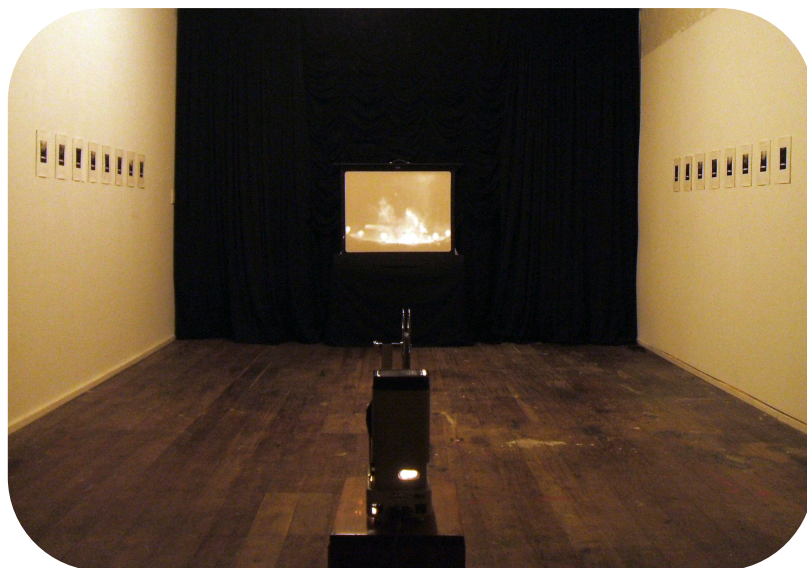


FIGURE 75. (ABOVE) INCANDESCENT SILVER (FRONT ON VIEW OF EXHIBITION LAYOUT), 400 X 900 X 300 CM, SEPTEMBER 2011, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION. FIGURE 76. (BOTTOM) INCANDESCENT SILVER (SIDE VIEW FROM THE LEFT OF EXHIBITION LAYOUT), 400 X 900 X 300 CM, SEPTEMBER 2011, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.

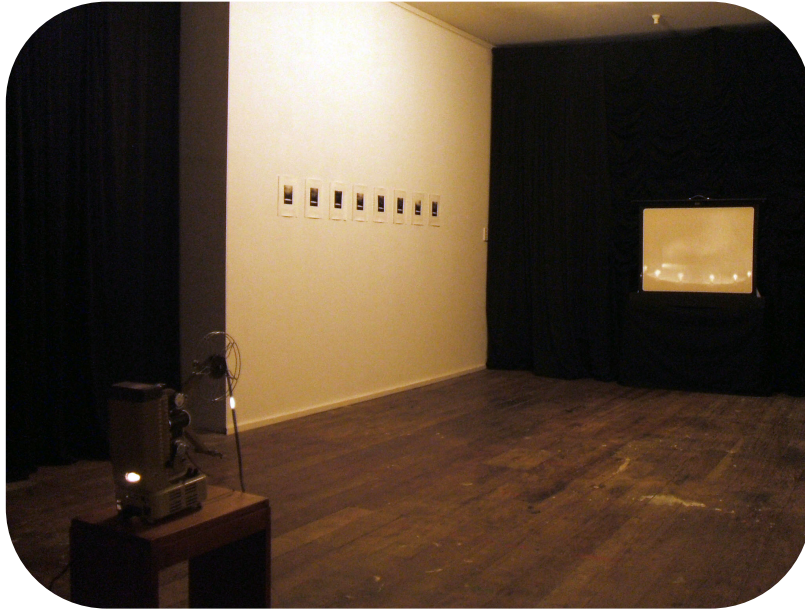


FIGURE 77. (ABOVE) *INCANDESCENT SILVER* (SIDE VIEW FROM THE RIGHT OF EXHIBITION LAYOUT), 400 x 900 x 300 CM, SEPTEMBER 2011, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION. FIGURE 78. (BOTTOM) *INCANDESCENT SILVER* (BACK VIEW OF EXHIBITION LAYOUT), 400 x 800 x 300 CM, SEPTEMBER 2011, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.



FIGURE 79. (ABOVE) INCANDESCENT SILVER (VIEW OF RIGHT HAND WALL OF EXHIBITION), (X 8), 20.3 x 25 CM, SEPTEMBER 2011, SELENIUM TONED FIBRE BASE, DRY EMBOSSED PRINTS, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION. FIGURE 80. (BOTTOM) INCANDESCENT SILVER (CLOSE UP VIEW OF PHOTOGRAPHS HUNG ON WALL), (X 3), 20.3 x 25 CM, SEPTEMBER 2011, SELENIUM TONED FIBRE BASE, DRY EMBOSSED PRINTS, DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION.



FIGURE 81. PHOTOGRAPH OF *INCANDESCENT SILVER*, 20.3 x 25 CM, SEPTEMBER 2011,
SELENIUM TONED FIBRE BASE, DRY EMBOSSED PRINT, SCANNED DOCUMENT

CONCLUSION.

The abstraction of fetish throughout *Starless and Silver* has not only occurred through the use of analogue photographic means, but also through the final reading and use of the stage. Fetish is commonly identified through an act or a fetish object. Analogue photographic means share these traits and are therefore able to operate as a fetish. Primarily, fetish has presented itself through the materiality of analogue photographic methods, which is influenced by act of fetishism. An offshoot of fetishism has been identified as 'rituals', located in an anthropological sense of the definition of fetish. Secondly fetishism is confirmed in an etymological stance of fabrication, which is evident throughout the entire making during this project. From making stage sets, to developing film, exposing photographs, and embellishing the final photographs to achieve a sense of fetish object.

This abundance of fabrication leads to a handmade aspect of the work produced throughout *Starless and Silver*. Analogue photography's engagement with illusion and 'natural magic' comes from its virtue of chemical processing, which also ties into these ideas of 'ritual' and fabrication. The visual aesthetic of the final works presented in *Incandescent Silver* is unique to analogue photographic processes, to what photographic material consists of, their silver halides enhancing a black and white media.

A state of fetishiation has also embedded itself into the visual representation of the stage. This occurs in the gap of intention, where there is potential to provide a narrative or linear event, when this common connotation to the representation of the stage is null a realisation void draws on a sense of an unrequited viewing experience.

Nostalgia has presented an engagement with fetish by identifying analogue photographic means impending obsolescence. Nostalgia induces a sense of rarity, which triggers a basic sympathetic thought to a slowly discontinued medium. This also draws on a sense of 'protection against loss', which is applicable to analogue photographic methods.

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APPENDIX.

The DVD accompanying this exegesis includes:

A folder containing digitally documented eight-millimeter moving image clips, (unedited), which are referred to during the production section of exegesis.

Two Chairs – ALC5

Stage Smoke

Spinning Prop

Glitter Throwing

The second folder on this DVD includes further documentation of *Incandescent Silver* for the examination process:

‘Unrevealing stage’ video documentation of the eight-millimeter moving image piece.

Video walk through of the exhibition

Additional photographs documenting the exhibition