

# Drawing on the domestic space: Mapping from a feminine perspective

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## Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material that 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M C Hansen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Miriam Hansen

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## Abstract

This practice-led visual arts project explores drawing as a creative act of subjectivity, whereby the materiality of drawing is posited as a surface on which to explore a position of ‘freedom to’, potentially exceeding the limits of ‘freedom from’, through an expression of a lived experience of femininity on paper. Taking myself as a feminine subject located in a domestic space, I explore the potential of drawing to create new perceptions and new visualities of the feminine.

Drawing is explored as a surface for mapping a lived experience in the domestic space, and as a way to explore feminine creative activity. In this context my project becomes an exploration of how the ambiguous status of drawing, and drawing’s transitory functions, may become an intermediary between lived experience, consciousness and the drawing surface, thereby potentially creating a visual threshold between differing states of perception in relation to the feminine and the domestic.

As a practice-based project, this exegesis comprises 20 per cent of the entire thesis, with the studio-based work comprising 80 per cent.

## Introduction

This project explores a reframing of notion of freedom in relation to the feminine and the everyday domestic space, assuming a feminine position from which to create an affirmation of femininity through drawing. The capacity of drawing for subjectivity, its potential for mapping and its ability to reflect intimacy was why it was chosen as the primary medium in this project, within which, drawing was explored from a feminine perspective, underpinned by the utopian perspectives of feminist theorist Elizabeth Grosz.

This exegesis makes up 20 per cent of my thesis and investigates drawing as a medium for the exploration of contemporary feminist contexts. Chapter One introduces Grosz's position in relation to linking freedom to femininity and subjectivity, framing it in such a way that it is not considered in terms of 'freedom from' but 'freedom to', a position from which to explore the feminine in the absence of oppression, through the visual explorations of feminine creative activities. Chapter Two discusses how the concept of material thinking and the processes of drawing have defined this research, examining how the ambiguous and self-revelatory capacities of drawing may be posed as a tool for mapping a feminine space and recording consciousness. Chapter Three discusses other woman artists exploring the subjectivity of drawing, the self-portrait and the gaze into domestic space. Chapter Four reflects on my studio practice, providing a visual documentation of the works that have impacted on the underpinning goals of this research and that have led to the defining characteristics of its investigative form.

## Chapter One: The feminine and the freedom to

Feminist philosopher Elizabeth Grosz (2011) poses a critique of historical feminist perspectives and suggests that, 'It must be acknowledged that feminism has not succeeded in either of its competing and contradictory aims' (p. 75), that feminism has attained neither a 'genuine and thorough-going equality' (p. 75) nor a 'genuine and practical autonomy' (p. 75). Nevertheless, she retains a utopian perspective, suggesting that the future for feminism is 'open-ended', with the potential to 'bring into existence new kinds of beings, new kinds of subjects and new relations to objects' (p. 75). Grosz insists that feminism is not constrained by the cultural limitations of 'patriarchal power relations' (p. 61) and that new feminist research can create new perceptions of the feminine and support and 'enable more action, more making and doing, more difference' (p. 73). Grosz suggests freedom needs to be considered in terms of self-affirmation rather than the elimination of constraint or other-directedness. She acknowledges the Foucauldian history of this concept, and suggests that 'the distinction between freedom-from and freedom-to is to a large extent correlated with a conception of freedom that is ... directed only to one's actions and their conditions and consequences' (p. 61).

For Grosz (2011), freedom is framed as autonomous – the freedom to create – rather than a position focused on liberalisation, or freedom from a constraint. She explores the relationship between creative activity and social and cultural expansion, proposing that new knowledge may be available if concepts of freedom are explored more 'positively' rather than being considered in terms of emancipation from hegemonic or phallogentric constraint: 'I want to explore concepts of life where freedom is conceived not only or primarily as the elimination of constraint or coercion, but more positively as the condition of or the capacity for action' (p. 60). In Grosz's opinion, the limitations of feminism are not framed in terms of the need for more recognition for women – '(who is it that women require recognition from?)' (p. 73) – but in terms of the possible creation of new visualities and therefore new perceptions of the feminine. She poses the question, 'Is feminist theory best served through its traditional focus on women's attainment of freedom from patriarchal ... constraint? Or by exploring what the female – or feminist – subject is capable of making or doing?' (p. 61).

Linking creativity to femininity and subjectivity Grosz provides a position from which to explore femininity in the absence of oppression – ‘freedom to’ (Grosz, 2011a, p. 61), within which the everyday routines of domestic space are explored as the ontological preconditions for an expression of a feminine subjectivity, as opposed to the contemporary Western cultural default position of a portrayal of women as ‘victims of consumer culture’ (Felski, 2000, p. 20), tied to the Marxist view that ‘Femininity is formed through mass production, disseminated through endless images of female glamour’ (Felski, 2000, p. 20). As an alternative, this research posits the visual depiction of creative feminine activity in the domestic space as an authentic expression of the feminine, a portrayal of femininity that is not predominated by consumerist cultural ideals but in terms of autonomous and subjective experience. Grosz (2011) proposes an exploration of activity and subjectivity, ‘the subject’s freedom through its immersion in materiality’ (p. 61), can provide a positive direction for feminism by exploring a position that is autonomous, ‘unconcerned with the other and its constraints’ (p. 61).

The revelation of the unconscious through drawing processes provides a model of thinking that potentially enables a mapping of autonomous experience. Leo Duff suggests that the tacit abstractive processes of drawing can map both memory (the past) and (the present) conscious lived experience:

If mapping provides truth, factual representation, and confirmation and represents consciousness, then memory provides fiction, abstraction, and tacit and subconscious thoughts. Add mapping to memory and we have the ingredients of the mental process used in drawing. Mapping, when used analytically with repetitive and stable methods can exist as its own entity. Memory however needs and uses mental and physical mapping processes as part of its make-up. (Duff, 2001, p. 3)

Avis Newman’s (2003) concept of drawing as a generative ‘operation of thought’ (p. 67) also reflects a perspective that drawing can be experimental and inventive, as if simulating a visual form of consciousness. Gopinath (2004) refers to drawing as a direct and transparent expression of the creative process, and suggests that it is an autonomous process, expressing experiences, tracing the movements of the maker, and revealing the choices and thinking processes behind its construction: ‘it is widely accepted that drawing has a unique ability to reveal the artist’s mind at work and to expose the workings of the creative process’ (p. 38). Avis Newman also suggests that the intimacy

of thinking processes may be revealed through drawing, 'When we look, we enter the intimate space of a work that is as close to the action of an artist's thought as one can get' (p. 70). Emma Dexter (2005) refers to the subjective and self-revelatory qualities of the drawing process and its consequential form, 'all the marks and the tracks, whether deliberate or not, are there for all to see in perpetuity ... drawing is a form that wears its mistakes and errors on its sleeve' (p. 7). Michael Newman (2003) posits that drawing provides a map of its own 'becoming', creating a visual record of the consciousness of the drawer, and suggests that this, '... offers the potential to not only record the state of consciousness of the drawer as it appears, but also to record the drawing's becoming as it appears through the trace of marks on paper' (p. 95).

For Meskimmon (2012) the concepts of gender and drawing become interconnected through the duration of drawing processes, and drawing's innate transitory position may 'allow an open-ended process of elaboration' (p. xx), an exploration of the feminine 'against the grain of dualistic logic' (p. xx). Meskimmon cites Grosz's concept of time as 'indeterminate and unfolding' (p. xxi), and relates this to the unpredictability of drawing: 'This is what drawing is ... not simply a mechanical repetition ... [but] an open-ended and ... materializing ... force whose movements and operations have an inherent element of surprise, unpredictability or newness' (p. xxi). Dexter (2005) suggests, each drawing exposes its own becoming, a self-referential and evidential map of its own mark-making, and therefore 'forever describes its own making in its becoming' (p. 6). As a drawing is created, the duration of its becoming is recorded, its linear form providing a map of the movements of its own creation. Harty (2012) suggests that in viewing a drawing 'each linear mark' (p. 18) becomes a visual recording of a 'trace of time replicable by the movement of the eyes tracing that line' (p. 18).

With its associations of habitual repetition, the domestic space provides an arena for the investigation of everyday life. Rita Felski (2000) suggests, 'Home is, ... a highly gendered space. Women have often been seen as the personification of home or even its literal embodiment' (p. 23). If women may be seen to embody the pre-eminent rhythms of the everyday in domestic space, they may be seen to represent 'a certain feminine resistance to the project of civilization ... only the domestic sphere is deemed to exist outside the dynamic of history and change' (p. 23). Routine activities carried out in the domestic space then may underpin and support subversion, 'Habit is the

necessary precondition for impulse and innovation' (p. 19), or as Grosz (2011) suggests in reference to Henri Bergson, it is '...the automatized substrate of daily behaviour that provides a probabilistic guarantee of the accomplishment of action. It is only against this assumed or taken-for-granted background of the economy of details that free acts may erupt' (p. 68). Therefore domestic activity provides a precondition for innovation. 'Freedom is thus the exception rather than the rule, in the sense that it can only function through the autonomy of the living being against a background of routinized or habitual activity' (pp. 67 - 68). In this research the freedom-to-draw becomes a position from which to explore the feminine and the domestic space. Time spent drawing in everyday life – symbolic of 'freedom to' – creates the embodiment of a lived experience of freedom, in the context of Grosz (2011) where 'Freedom is understood, on the antideterminist position, as the performance of an act by someone who could have done otherwise, even under the same conditions' (pp. 63 - 64).

The relationship of the gaze to the feminine is pervasive in art and is significant to this project's focus on the visuality of the feminine. This is both because of 'the pre-existing patterns of fascination' (Mulvey, 2003, p. 57) with the gaze, and because of a work's dependence on a beholder for its effect. The social dimensions of the activation of the gaze of a viewer expose a discourse on spectatorship, as Cathryn Vasseleu (1998) explains: 'More than any other sense, the eye objectifies and it masters' (p. 15). This discourse is characterised by Margaret Olin (2008), who suggests 'While most discourse about the gaze concerns pleasure and knowledge, ... it generally places both of these in the service of the issues of power, manipulation and desire' (p. 319). However it may be considered that if a sense of intimacy or private space is created through drawing, the relationship of the viewer to the subject can evoke a sense of voyeurism, and in so doing dominance may be denied to the viewer, the gaze is 'unmasked' as 'something like staring' (p. 322). A resistance to, or a subversion of, a voyeuristic gaze may be explored, whereby the gaze may be exposed (subverted) by soliciting a gaze that is direct and intimate: 'The direct gaze of the spectator ... draws his attention to the voyeuristic quality of his own gaze' (p. 322).

## Chapter Two: Drawing as the materiality of thinking

Taking drawing as a primary and foundational means of exploration, the medium's capacities are explored in the context of a paradigm of contemporary feminist theory, exploring 'The capacity for drawing to address an essence, to indicate an underlying conceptual structure merely through tone and without colour or any real three-dimensionality' (Rawson, 1969, p. 1). As a platform for the exploration of concepts, drawing becomes a method in the context of Paul Carter's *Material Thinking* (2004), a concept where tactic knowledge in the form of knowledge of materials, a consideration of ideas and reflection on form, all work together, collaborate and provide a threshold for creative arts practice. As Barbara Bolt says, 'it is in the joining of the hand, eye and mind that material thinking occurs' (Bolt, 2007, p. 30), materials, methods and concepts accumulating to provide a methodological framework for research.

The unfolding of drawing is not simply taken as the repetitive operation of process; within this project drawing occupies a territory as an intermediary between human activity and our relationship to the environment. Marshall and Sawdon (2012) see the ambiguity of drawing as a sustaining feature of drawing practice, one that allows it to explore concepts. 'The possibility is that a lack of definition is not only desirable; it is also a necessity' (p. xii), allowing drawing to mediate between and around concepts. The viewpoint is that the ambiguity of drawing practice inevitably stems from 'a lack of definition and forms a strategy that enables and sustains drawing practice' (p. xii). Within this research, drawing's ambiguous qualities were harnessed to explore concepts visually, the drawing plane providing a surface on which to materialise a process of thinking and making. Emma Dexter (2005) suggests that the slippery territory of drawing 'offers artists freedom, as an under-regarded backwater, to explore hitherto overlooked or repressed aspects of creativity' (p. 8). In this context, my research took the territory of drawing as 'an under-regarded backwater' (p. 8), and the domestic space as one of the 'overlooked' (p. 8) visualities of 'creativity' (p. 8).

The informality of drawing form, the ephemeral potentials of drawings and the ambiguity of the drawing process provide a level of transience and mutability to my drawing processes. Tania Kovats (2005) suggests that the materiality of drawings provides an

interdependent ‘visual reality’ (p. 9), the drawing surface creating a stasis as if marking a point on a map – in this instance a mapping of everyday experiences of the feminine. If the tracks and subtle decision-making processes of the drawer are revealed through their drawing, then these can be seen to express the subjectivity of the drawer.

Kovats (2005) suggests, ‘The act of drawing is associated with the act of seeing but the two things are not the same – nothing looks like a drawing. Drawings are their own visual reality and we have the capacity to look at them because of the analogizing faculty of our minds’ (p. 9). If the act of viewing a drawing is to accept the drawing’s capacity to evoke space, form and activity, then the viewing may be seen as the act of creating an illusion. Drawing may thus provide a transitory position between the visible and the invisible, as Michael Newman (2003) suggests: ‘If drawing is the art of trace, this would mean that it has a privileged relation to the non-visible’ (pp. 95-96), as an in-between: ‘Drawing continues to occupy an in-between; between gesture and concept; or between mark and design’ (p. 95). As a trace of the process of drawing, the marks provide a conduit between the past and present, the everyday, and the illusion of the activity of the everyday on paper. Considering that drawing occupies a transitory position as both expressive mark and observational representation of the real, these functions were implemented as part of a methodology, with drawing posited as a surface for the materiality of consciousness. The expressive linear form of drawing provides a level of subjectivity, a self-revelatory trace of my presence; the becoming of the drawing is its own clearly visible linear form. Experimental drawing is explored as a primary research tool, employing reflective opportunities and an active and methodical studio practice in order to explore interconnections between ‘subjects, and new relations to objects’ (Grosz, 2011b, p. 75).

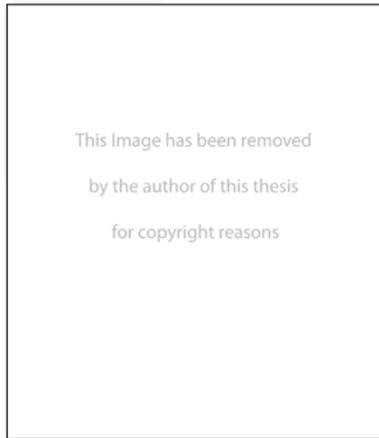
So with a project heavily reliant on drawing practice, a project whose territory was bound to drawing, consistency in process and a disciplined approach to making were found to form the basis of what Gray and Malins (2004) describe as a ‘systematic process’ (p. 133). This process emerged from the perseverance of a disciplined routine of drawing everyday that provided the data related to my conceptual framework and the creation of a field for comparative analysis.

The main intellectual tool for analysis is comparison. The aim is to discover similarities and/or differences by the use of comparison and contrast. This helps to form categories and establish boundaries, find inconsistencies, discover patterns and connections and paint the larger picture beyond the specific detail. (Gray & Malins, 2004, p. 133)

Within this project, drawing was limited to the traditional media of graphite and ink on paper and the discipline of routinely making and recording work. During this research I developed an affinity to drawing in a sequential experimental series, finding that if during the drawing process I contemplated an existing work it influenced visual outcomes. In many cases I drew the same image or idea several times in different ways as a strategy to create interrelated surfaces on which to compare the elaboration of concepts. In these instances it was the subtler heuristic shift that was most informative, and in many cases the reflections on form, mark-making and scale provided the most definitive outcomes. Regularly, I made drawings in response to a pre-existing work, ironing out details of composition and scale, using the pre-existing work comparatively as a reflective surface during the process of making, responding to its identified limitations.

In this research drawing from everyday lived experiences was explored in relation to Carter's (2004) concept of 'creative research' (p. 10) that suggests that the creative and imaginative processes of drawing may be transitory and create visual and social relations between contexts and processes: 'Creative research is related to the goal of material thinking, and both look beyond the making process to the local invention of social relations' (p. 10). Carter's concept of collaboration is not proposed in terms of collaboration between different artists but as a collaboration of individual artworks, accumulating to create what Carter calls a 'third apprehension' (p. 5). Carter discusses the idea of collaboration in terms of individual works that accumulate to create new and contingent intersections: 'they gather, coagulate and ultimately produce a blot on the map; a thickening at those points of intersection between the various passages' (Rosenberg & Fairfax, 2008, p. 3). This concept captures the way in which collaborations of individual drawings accumulate to create new and undistinguishable clusters, and suggests that, collectively, their appearance may make possible a new conversations: 'And it is out of these implicated processes that a third apprehension emerges. When it emerges in this way, it constitutes material thinking' (p. 5). This concept is embodied in the outcomes of this research where; the 'third apprehension' (p. 5) may be considered in relation to an accumulation of drawings, where visual and literal intersections are formed, collaborating to create new relationships and meanings.

## Chapter Three: Drawing from others



**Figure 1**  
Cindy Sherman  
*Untitled Film Still # 2*, 1977  
Photograph

Cindy Sherman performs for the camera in roles that explore gender, the gaze and stereotypes of femininity. In her photographs, ‘Sherman presents the female subject under the gaze, woman *as* a picture’ (Olin, 2008, p. 322), evoking the generic forms of gender. Performing to the gaze, the subject’s gaze sees itself, but is also aware of being seen: ‘Often this gaze seems to come from a subject off-camera, with whom the viewer might be implicated’ (Foster, 2012, p. 2). The gaze of the subject initially appears self-sustaining, internalised, but unfolds as a direct play to the gaze of the viewer.

Sherman shows her subjects to be self-surveyed, but in a mode less of narcissistic absorption than psychological estrangement. Thus in the distinction between made-up woman and her mirrored face in *Untitled film still # 2* (1977), Sherman points to the gap between the imagined and actual body-images that yawns within each of us’ (Foster, 2012, p. 2)

In doing so Sherman exposes the implications of the gaze in cultural representations of femininity, the viewer becomes aware of their own complicity in this narrative as they gaze. Sherman sets up the viewer to dramatise her work, to expose the gaze and imply a sense of a gaze as if ‘off-camera’, implicating the viewer in the generation of meaning.



**Figure 2**  
Susan Hauptman  
*Self-Portrait*, 2005  
Charcoal on paper, 610 × 635mm

Susan Hauptman's self-portraits are charged with a sense of intimacy, the viewer being drawn into an intimate feminine space she has depicted with such a precision that an uncanny realism inhabits the drawing surface. Lived experience, domestic symbolism and the feminine are constants in Hauptman's work, her technical mastery a means for self-revelation. The artist's self-portraiture, its candid self-revelatory subjectivity and her enigmatic return of the gaze expose an image of femininity with uncanny realism: 'Susan Hauptman's self-portraiture has all the fascination of a cobra, hypnotic but deadly' (Mullarkey, 2006). The return of the gaze challenges us to look: 'Hauptman's complex consciousness of herself as an artist/maker and woman/wife challenges us to look as closely as she does' (Boettger, 1999). The return of the gaze and the image of unconventional beauty deny the viewer's potential for voyeurism – the gaze is returned with compelling clarity and realism, disallowing any sense of objectivity and creating a disturbance of the current cultural signifiers of the feminine and the domestic.

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**Figure 3**  
Kiki Smith  
*Untitled (Woman with Bird)*, 2003  
Ink on paper  
510 × 760mm

Kiki Smith's works are often charged with a personal symbolism and with a visual language of 'archetypal forms ...worked into an intensely personal mythology' (Darwent, 2005, p. 249). Smith's works on paper explore a linear drawing form, with her imagined spaces forming new associations between the subject and its relation to its environment, and hence her works investing 'lived experience with significance beyond our everyday engagement with the world of things' (Bird, 2003, p. 16). Smith refers to the drawing process as an immediate expression of subjectivity and materiality, 'Drawing is something where you have a really direct, immediate relationship with the material, with the paper and the pencil in front of you ... With drawing, you're in the present. In drawing you take physical energy out of your body and put it directly on the page.' (Darwent, 2005, p. 250)

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**Figure 4**  
Mary Cassatt  
*Lydia at a Tapestry Loom*, 1881  
Oil on canvas  
927.1 × 647.7mm

Mary Cassatt painted women in private domestic spaces, making visible aspects of women's labour and exposing the domestic space as both active and creative. By portraying an image of a woman absorbed in feminine creative activity, Cassatt shows us how the gaze can become 'disturbed' through a disruption of conventions of the gaze. In the case of *Lydia at a Tapestry Loom* (Figure 4), Pollock comments:

The viewer is forced into a confrontation or conversation with the painted figure while dominance and familiarity are denied by the device of the averted head of concentration on an activity by the depicted personage ... Why this lack of conventional distance and the radical disruption of what we take as normal spectator-text relations? What has disturbed the 'logic of the gaze'? (Pollock, 1988, p. 126).

When the viewer is forced to look into feminine creative space, the creation of the sense of intimacy becomes prevalent and potentially transgresses the conventional dominating forces of the gaze, and disturbing what Pollock suggests are normative spectator-subject relations.



**Figure 5**  
Tabaimo  
*Japanese kitchen*, 2003  
Ink and gouache on paper

Tabaimo fragments the banal environment of the domestic space, providing ‘surrealistic narratives in domestic interiors’ (Art 21, 2012). Her work often incorporates violence and everyday domestic settings, creating the uncanny, fragmenting the domestic space and transfiguring it through drawing, Tabaimo creates disturbances of the domestic that may provoke questions about the society in which they are located. In her work *Japanese kitchen* (Figure 5), Tabaimo draws on the details of the everyday, reconfiguring them in unexpected relationships of scale and dramatising the space, creating tension through the implications of violence and drawing the viewer to gaze into a scene of a potential disturbance of the domestic sphere.

Sherman and Hauptman create intimate self-revelatory portrayals of the feminine through self-portraiture, deftly commanding the gaze. Sherman sets up the viewer to dramatize her work, to expose the gaze and imply a sense of the gaze as if 'off-camera', implicating the viewer in the generation of meaning. Hauptman exposes the implications of the gaze in cultural representations of femininity, the viewer becomes aware of their own complicity in the spectator subject narrative as they gaze. Hauptman's drawings appear as objective observation, as if they expose a diagrammatic representation of the real. Smith's exploration of her own material world through drawing, the direct way that she uses drawing to interpret her environment is a way that I have come to understand drawing, as an interconnection between consciousness and the everyday, given form. Smith refers to the immediacy of the materiality of drawing as allowing 'direct' engagement with the page; her works explore ambiguous narratives of the feminine, subjective expressions of experience, interconnections between the material world and a feminine conscious experience. Cassatt's creation of an intimate gaze into domestic space decenters the viewer; the self-absorbed subject appears independent of the gaze, as if it is not reliant on the viewer for activation. Tabaimo uses the visual language of the everyday to expose and disturb cultural narratives in a subtle socio-political way through drawings of the domestic space; in her work the viewer is drawn to gaze into to an intimate space, a mechanism that has been implemented in this research.

## Chapter Four: Reflection on studio methods and visual documentation

This section discusses the key works made during the project and their impact on the goals of the research as it unfolded. This visual documentation of my project's developmental stages discusses particularly significant points in relation to its progression into the final exhibited form.

### Section One: Exploring the expressive qualities of the line



**Figure 6**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Contour Sandals*, March 2012  
Pencil on paper, 420 × 297mm



**Figure 7**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Red Sandals*, March 2012  
Coloured pencil on paper, 420 × 297mm



**Figure 8**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Sandals*, March 2012  
Indian ink and pencil on paper, 420 × 297mm



**Figure 9**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Sandals in Ink*, March 2012  
Indian ink on paper, 420 × 297mm

This project began as an experiment with the potential of mark-making, exploring observational drawing techniques, and with a focus on ways to evoke a sense of movement and expressiveness. Working with objects associated with femininity, I spent time experimenting with differing drawing approaches, drawing at different times of day and in differing physiological states as strategies to explore the self-revelatory and expressive potentials of the drawing process. Figures 6–9 explore contour and tonal rendering in differing media. In Figure 9, the use of Indian ink had the advantage of being difficult to control – a wet medium and my lack of experience with dip pens provided a process that was unfamiliar and less controllable, more open to surprise and unpredictability, resulting in a looser and more expressive drawn form.



**Figure 10**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Dehydrate*, March 2012  
Indian ink on paper, 420 × 297mm



**Figure 11**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Spray-n-Wipe*, March 2012  
Indian ink on paper, 420 × 297mm



**Figure 12**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Tiger Spray*, March 2012  
Indian ink on paper, 420 × 297mm



**Figure 13**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Doll*, March 2012  
Graphite on paper, 420 × 297mm

In Figures 10–13, Indian ink was explored further as a support for expressive mark-making, a strategy for lessening my control over my own drawing processes, allowing the media to impact on the work and potentially create a sense of subjectivity rather than a solely observational recording. In Figures 12 and 13, narratives were created through visual associations between domestic objects, expressive mark-making contributing to a sense of animation and playfulness in these works. A feeling of movement in these drawings accentuated a visual ‘linear equivalent of movement’ (Kaupelis, 1980, p. 25). Looser and more expressive drawing accentuated the traces of making more than in more controlled approaches, but this was not limited to drawings made in wet media – my work *Doll* (Figure 13), drawn in graphite, also maintains a level of animation.



**Figure 14**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Jug*, March 2012  
Graphite on paper, 295 × 420mm



**Figure 15**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Jug II*, March 2012  
Graphite on paper, 295 × 420mm



**Figure 16**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Ink Jug*, March 2012  
Indian ink on paper, 295 × 420mm

Figures 14 and 15 were both drawn in graphite, exposing differences in observational outcomes and the medium's impact on the drawing. In Figure 16, the intensity of contrasting marks achieved using ink created a sense of animation. This sequence of drawings is progressively loose and expressive in drawing style, which led me to consider the impacts of sustained observation on the accumulation of short-term tacit knowledge. In this series, 'tactic and subconscious thoughts' (Duff, 2001, p. 3), appeared to impact positively on my capacity for interpretation, or 'a kind of knowing, feeling like one knows, let's making happen' (Tonkinwise, 2008, p. 2). Repetition thus seemed to provide the precondition for this increase in confidence, and at this point in my research drawing in series was identified as a tool for comparison, providing the creation of a field of reflection and interpretation through drawing.



**Figure 17**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Sewing in ink*, April 2012  
Indian ink on paper, 841 × 594mm



**Figure 18**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Sewing in ink II*, April 2012  
Indian ink on paper, 841 × 594mm



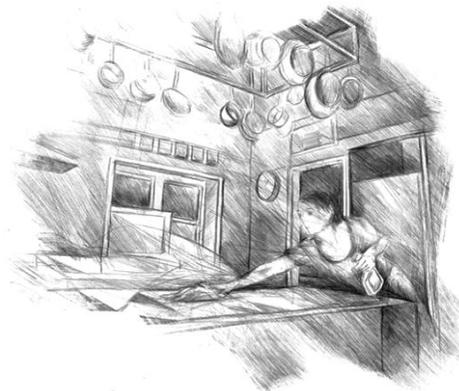
**Figure 19**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Sewing mountains*, April 2012  
Graphite on paper, 700 × 500mm (detail)

If it is taken that drawing reveals the tracks and the subtle decision-making processes of the drawer, then drawing may be seen to expose the subjectivity of the maker. Here, this concept was combined in another layer of subjectivity – that of the self-portrait. Figures 17 and 18 were drawn in ink, working with a dip pen and brush. The extreme contrast of the black ink to the paper created a very graphic image that distracted visually from the content, de-emphasising the central focus of the domestic activity and flattening the drawing plane. I made a decision at this point to return to the medium of graphite, exploring its potential to create variations in tone and the illusion of form and movement.

## Section Two: Drawing in domestic space



**Figure 20**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Sketch for handmade*, April 2012  
Graphite on paper, 595 × 840mm



**Figure 21**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Untitled (Kitchen)*, April 2012  
Silverpoint on paper, 295 × 420mm



**Figure 22**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Bird scan*, April 2012  
Graphite and charcoal on paper, 605 × 845mm

In Figure 18, an act of domesticity traverses into an act of violence and destruction, while in Figures 21 and 22 the activation of a sense of narrative was explored by varying the scale. Although this series of drawings speaks strongly of an activated domestic space, the sense of narrative is potentially definitive and reduces the ability to involve the viewer in the generation of meaning. The most informative element of these works was the site of the cutting in *Sketch for handmade* (Figure 20), where the potential for violence creates tension, the gestural marks and the central composition draw the eye of the viewer to the site of the cutting, dramatising and emphasising this specific point of activity.



**Figure 23**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Self-portrait with sling under grapevine*, April 2012  
Graphite on paper, 297 × 210mm



**Figure 24**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Study*, April 2012  
Graphite on paper, 420 × 295mm



**Figure 25**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Internalisation*, April 2012  
Graphite on paper, 700 × 500mm



**Figure 26**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Internalisation II*, April 2012  
Graphite on paper, 700 × 500mm

The preparatory sketch *Self-portrait with sling under grapevine* (Figure 23), made in my workbook, reveals a sense of my emotional state at the time, the agitated and broken marks expressing physiological unease. The gaze is bewildered and vacant, the subject staring into the space behind the viewer as if unaware and unconcerned with the surveillance they are subject to. The broken approach to mark-making identified here was then explored in relation to self-portraits in my domestic space (Figures 24 – 26). These works portray my subject willingly participating in the pleasures of domestic space, and explore the visual depiction of the voluntary internalisation of culturally prescribed narratives of femininity. The dominating sense of voyeurism presents the subject as subordinate – as if force-fed culturally defined expectations of femininity – rather than actively and pleasurably immersed in domesticity, as was the intention.



**Figure 27**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Cutting branches*, April 2012  
Graphite and silverpoint on paper  
700 × 500mm (detail)



**Figure 28**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Plant Spray*, May 2012  
Graphite on paper, 700 × 500mm



**Figure 29**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Jug*, May 2012  
Graphite on paper, 700 × 500mm



**Figure 30**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Drawing myself*, May 2012  
Graphite on paper, 700 × 500mm

In Figure 27, I drew with extended and overlapping lines, combining two different images and exploring the process of drawing as a tool for blending images together. In Figures 28 and 29, the movements of the subject and the drawer are exposed in their linear form, the lines providing a map of the making and creating a sense of animation. Figures 28 – 30, began as an experiment with differing approaches to drawing, I explored the process of drawing softly with sustained physical engagement, the resulting fine lines and the consequent linear style creating a sense of translucency, as if the viewer can see through the drawing. I denoted this loose linear approach to drawing as my ‘scribbly line’ technique. The approach maintains a level of subjectivity, the ‘scribbly line’ revealing its own construction, indicating the presence of the drawer.

### Section Three: Activating domesticity



**Figure 31**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Cauliflower*, May 2012  
Graphite on paper, 700 × 500mm



**Figure 32**  
Miriam Hansen  
*New Sewing*, May 2012  
Graphite on paper, 700 × 500mm



**Figure 33**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Candle II*, May 2012  
Graphite on paper, 700 × 500mm

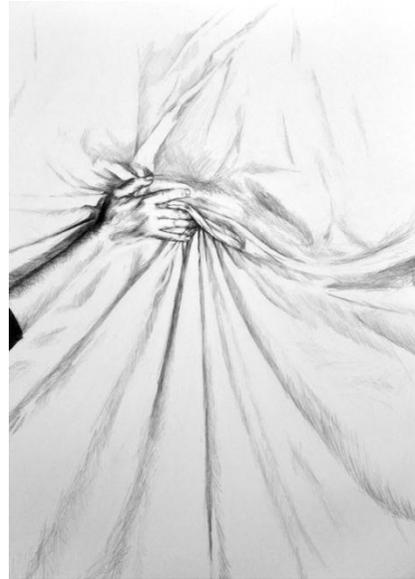


**Figure 34**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Dahlia*, May 2012  
Graphite on paper, 700 × 500mm

In Figure 31, the subject's gaze and the composition of the drawing provide a visual pathway to the site of the subject's active relationship to the object. Figure 32 explores drawing's ability to provide a sense of intimacy. Here, the eyes of the subject are averted, focused on the site of activity and unaware of the gaze of the viewer, 'unconcerned with the other' (Grosz, 2011a, p. 61) self-sustained and fully immersed in the materiality of creative activity.



**Figure 35**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Wiping*, June 2012  
Graphite on paper, 700 x 500mm



**Figure 36**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Folding*, June 2012  
Graphite on paper, 700 x 500mm



**Figure 37**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Smoothing*, June 2012  
Graphite on paper, 700 x 500mm

The work *Wiping* (Figure 35) was made as an experiment with the creation of a sense of movement in the work; the circulating lines on the implied surface intended to represent the directional movement of the domestic activity. However, this was not the outcome, the lines appearing like marks on the wall that are being removed by the wiping action. The finished work remains static, failing in its attempt to provide a site of activity. But it does focus the viewer on the movement and provided a mechanism for further the

emphasis of activity. The work *Folding* (Figure 36) explores the image of a domestic gestural movement, as having relation to touch, while *Smoothing* (Figure 37) explores an overlooked gesture carried out every day in domestic space. In the process, a visual relationship was created between the surface of the drawing's content and the surface of the drawing plane, an illusion of the activity as if it was carried on the surface of the paper. These works provided the starting point for another series of drawings employing the tactics of focusing the gaze on the activated point of physical contact in relation to domestic activity, and exploring the illusionary integration of the drawing's surface and the drawing plane.



**Figure 38**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Cutting*, June 2012  
Graphite on paper, 700 × 500mm



**Figure 39**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Cutting II*, July 2012  
Graphite on paper, 700 × 500mm



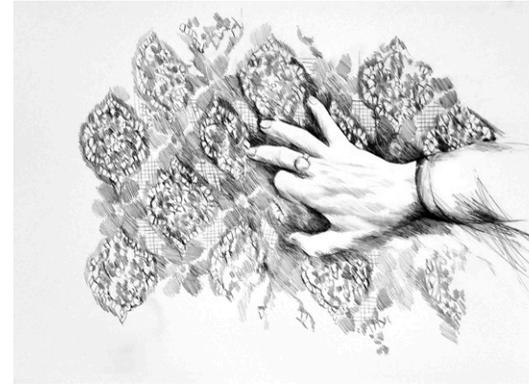
**Figure 40**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Mending*, July 2012  
Graphite on paper, 700 × 500mm

In Figures 38, 39 and 40, the linear construction in the drawings is clearly visible, the gestural mark-making helping to contribute to a feeling of activity. The subject is obscured from view, and so the gaze of the viewer is drawn to the site of activity. Emphasising the threatening potential of each activity, this series may support an image of the domestic as active, but the sense of violence dominates and the creative is overshadowed by the destructive. This led to a decision to explore domestic activities and drawing styles that were less likely to give the impression of violence. I still wanted to explore the domestic space, with more of a focus on observing and mapping from a feminine perspective.

## Section Four: Drawing from a feminine perspective



**Figure 41**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Touching soft*, August 2012  
Graphite on paper, 354 × 500mm



**Figure 42**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Feeling*, August 2012  
Graphite on paper, 354 × 500mm

Figures 41 and 42 experimented with fine mark-making and detailed rendering, exploring approaches to drawing that had the potential to imply a sense of feminine activity. I wanted to revisit a previous work, *Folding* (Figure 36), which depicts a moment of activated contact between the subject and the object. To do so, I experimented with a soft and ambiguous approach to drawing that had the potential to create a visual sense of delicacy. However, on reflection I concluded that it wasn't just the delicate mark-making that makes the drawings appear intimate; it is the horizontal format that contributed to the sense of the interior. The smaller scale also provokes a closer inspection, and therefore potentially a more intimate or intense viewing experience.



**Figure 43**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Sewing soft*, September 2012  
Graphite on paper, 354 × 500mm



**Figure 44**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Sewing soft II*, September 2012  
Graphite on paper, 354 × 500mm

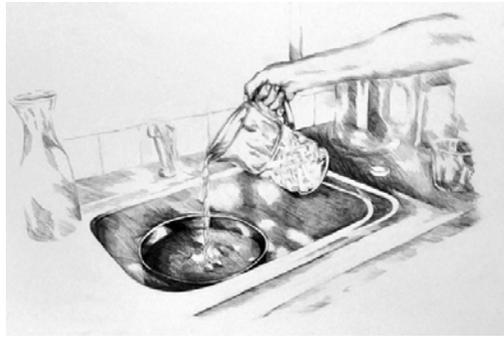


**Figure 45**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Placing soft*, September 2012  
Graphite on paper, 354 × 500mm

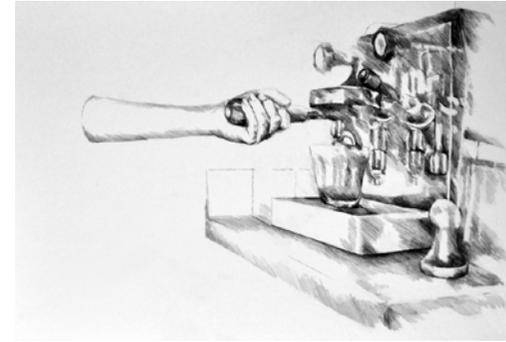
Figures 43 and 44 explore the creation of an illusion of domestic (private) space and intimacy (touching), while Figure 45 places more emphasis on the activation of touch. In these drawings the beautification of the domestic space is elaborated through drawing, emphasising the decorative elements found in the everyday as a metaphor for the visibility of the presence of the feminine in everyday space. The accentuation of the surface decorations and the antiquated nature of these objects create a feeling of nostalgia, history or time, provoking a sense of narrative or memory; but also create of an illusion of domestic (private) space, and contribute to a sense of intimacy and femininity.



**Figure 46**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Washing*, September 2012  
Graphite on paper, 354 × 500mm



**Figure 47**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Pouring*, September 2012  
Graphite on paper, 354 × 500mm



**Figure 48**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Espressing*, September 2012  
Graphite on paper, 354 × 500mm

In *Washing* (Figure 48), *Pouring* (Figure 49) and *Espressing* (Figure 50), the arm is disconnected from the subject – not faded out gently, but overtly detached. In this series I was experimenting further with the omission of the subject's body as a tool for the emphasis of the activity, but in this instance I was relatively unsuccessful. The amputation of the arm provokes another relation to violence and subjugation, robbing the subject of identity as the arm may be seen as an autonomous entity. The disconnection of the arm from the subject creates a predominant sense of subordination. The sequential relationships between the works create a narrative of the domestic, a repetition of everyday activity made by a subject whose identity is implied as irrelevant or unrecognised. This led to a decision to explore my every-day as if collecting data, having established a structure of media and content, I decided to explore a differing approach to observation recording and mapping. My intention was to create a multiplicity of observations of my everyday, as a record of creative activity in the form drawing, carried out in the domestic sphere.

## Section Five: Mapping the every-day



**Figure 49**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Jug III*, October 2012  
Graphite on paper, 354 × 500mm



**Figure 50**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Jug IV*, October 2012  
Graphite on paper, 354 × 500mm

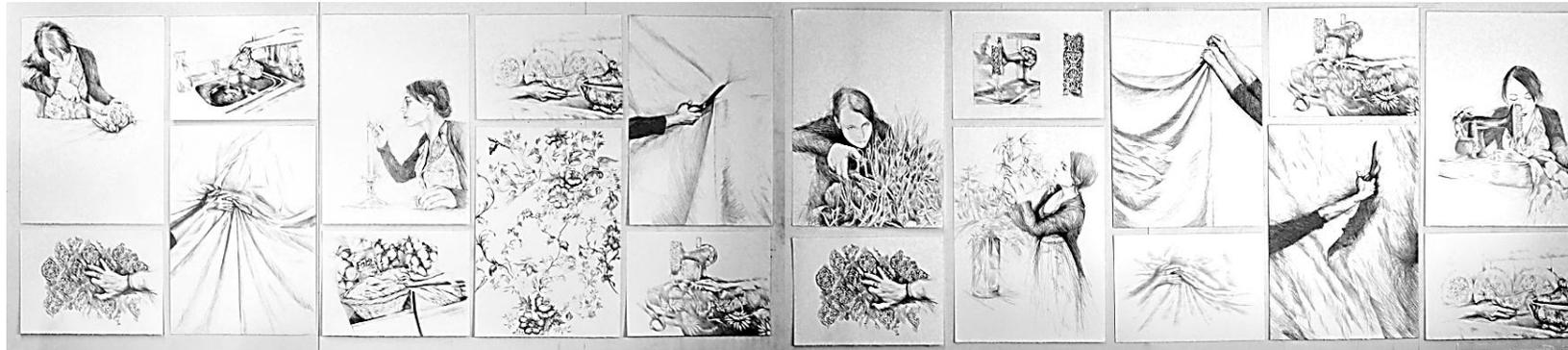


**Figure 51**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Glass Jugs*, October 2012  
Graphite on paper, 500 × 354mm



**Figure 52**  
Miriam Hansen  
*Pouring II*, November 2012  
Graphite on paper, 354 × 500mm

A decision to pursue drawing as a form of mapping meant the freedom to reinterpret domestic objects I had previously drawn. I was interested in how the reiteration of images might provide clues to time, duration or routine. It was my intention to include these drawings in an accumulated map of feminine lived experience, in the anticipation that they would provide visual references to the repetitive and rhythmical cycles carried out in everyday domestic space. In Figures 51, 52 and 53, where the subject is absent, the gaze is reduced to that of the viewer and the drawer, a simple connection is made between the gaze of the spectator and that of the maker. A smaller scale was explored as a mechanism for an enhancement of the viewer's sense of intimacy in engagement with the drawings.



**Figure 53**

Miriam Hansen

Trial installation of drawings in linear grid form, 2012

Digital file

Layering of my drawings was trialled here, an approach to the installation of my works, presenting them in a linear grid (Figure 53). The effect of the close proximity of the individual drawings is an accumulation of visual relationships, activating a narrative of the domestic space and providing a sense of time and feminine experience. The evocation of the sense of duration provided a relation to experiences, a repeated inference of interrelated activities and objects. However, the grid has a sense of control, of militancy, suppressing the sense of freedom and creativity. The images are being made to conform to a pre-existing framework, thereby reducing the variables that could be explored in scale and format.



**Figure 54**  
Miriam Hansen  
Trial installation of drawings in random accumulation form, 2012  
Digital file

The use of the traditional medium of graphite on paper and a relatively analytical style of application supports a sense of mapping, emphasised by the repetition when clustering my drawings as in Figure 54. The viewer may be provided with an initial encounter of objective observation, before arriving at the sense that the work is an intimate and subjective response to a lived experience of the feminine and the domestic space.

Carter's (2004) concept of the 'third apprehension' (p. 5) may be considered to be materialised in a random accumulation of drawings, where visual and literal intersections may gather to create new relationships, collaborating to create new meanings. As individual points in time are recorded through the observation and drawing, a subjective gaze into domestic space is made permanent, reiterated and then exposed on the gallery wall. Displayed collectively the appearance of my installation of drawings may make possible a new conversation, where 'a third apprehension emerges' (p. 5), a new visible perspective of a familiar territory.

The installation of works for examination will be explored as a means to re-present the mapping of a lived experience, experimenting with a random display of drawings where variables of accumulated density and individuated placement may accentuate the sense of activity and creativity. In this way drawing may become an expression of creative activities in the context of Grosz's (2011) 'freedom to' (p. 61), where time spent drawing in the everyday domestic space embodies a lived experience of freedom, where 'Freedom is understood, ... as the performance of an act by someone who could have done otherwise, even under the same conditions' (pp. 63 - 64).

## Documentation of Final Exhibition

The final exhibition of work for examination was installed in 'Outer-space', the larger of the two gallery spaces at The Refinery Artspace. My individual drawings were installed across an interior wall and on two adjoining wall panels in an attempt to create a consolidated installation of drawings. Within this installation approach, the scale of the overall work, larger-than-life size, was explored as a way of creating an immersive experience for the viewer, accentuating the potential of the spectator to share in a lived experience of the domestic space through an expansive installation of drawing.

In my installation drawings were pinned across the gallery walls, some in dense clusters and others with space around them. Key works, drawings that were identified as the most expressive of creativity activity, were given the most wall space around them. Works with visual associations to these were pinned in relative proximity. The mapping of the everyday through drawing was supported by the visual relationships created between individual works as well as drawings made in series. Through these associations non-linear narratives were created of an unconscious experience of time spent in domestic space, where the variability and repetition of drawings may become indicative of the mutability of the routines carried out in the everyday. Potentially the visual connections made between individual drawings, their associations, and relationships may also create an experience that suggests an interconnection between lived experience and an expression of creative activity through drawing, one which is revelatory of the experiences of a feminine subject located in domestic space.



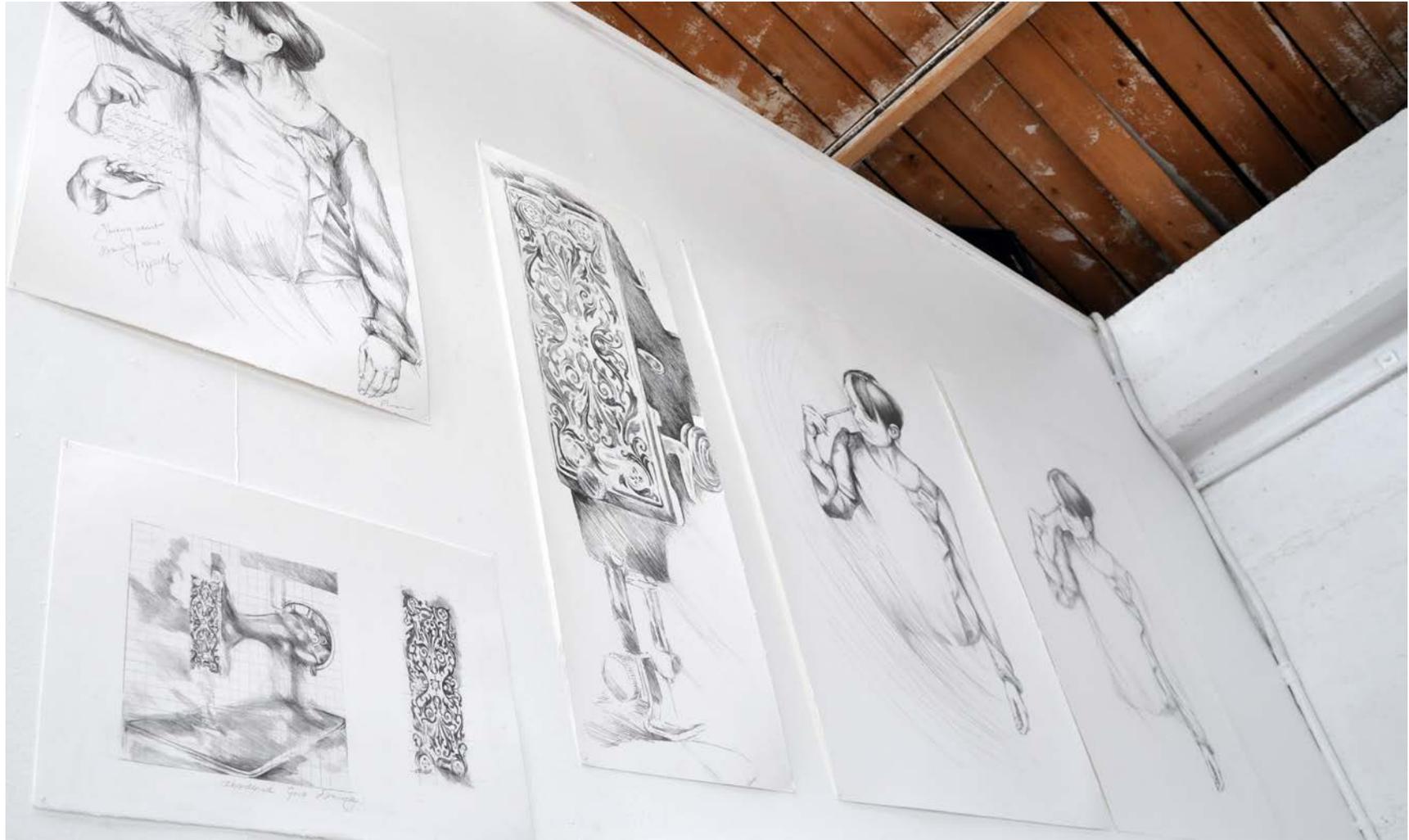
**Figure 55**  
Miriam Hansen  
Installation view of final exhibition, 2013  
Digital file



**Figure 56**  
Miriam Hansen  
Installation view of final exhibition, 2013  
Digital file



**Figure 57**  
Miriam Hansen  
Installation view of final exhibition, 2013  
Digital file



**Figure 58**  
Miriam Hansen  
Installation detail, 2013  
Digital file

**Figure 59**  
Miriam Hansen  
Installation detail, 2013  
Digital file



**Figure 60**  
Miriam Hansen  
Installation detail, 2013  
Digital file



**Figure 61**  
Miriam Hansen  
Installation detail, 2013  
Digital file



## Summary

This project explored the materiality of drawing as an expression of lived feminine experience and as a surface on which to expose acts of subjectivity and creativity. Taking myself as a feminine subject located in a domestic space, and in the context of Grosz's 'freedom-to' (2011a, p. 61), I explored the potential of drawing to create new perceptions and new visualities of the feminine and the domestic. I investigated drawing as the materiality of thinking, exploring the mark and different media in relation to observations of my own everyday activities. The practice of drawing was identified as a tool for the expression of subjectivity, a creative dialogue embodied in the materiality of the drawing surface potentially laying claim to an unconscious experience of the feminine. However, it was discovered that situating an individuated observational gaze into domestic space, that retained a sense of freedom was potentially limited, as within normative spectator–subject relations the gaze functions as a dominating force. In recognition of this, mapping became a strategy that re-emphasised a subjective view into domestic space, and drawing from a feminine perspective was explored as a strategy to create a subjective accumulation of feminine lived experience. In the re-presentation of the details of the confines of the domestic sphere, the viewer is drawn to look into feminine creative space; a sense of intimacy becomes possible, a shared perspective between that of the viewer and the drawer. The resulting outcome of this research is an assemblage of drawings, a self-revelatory map of making, each intimate inflection revealing as a mark made in a series of conscious and discrete decisions. Retracing the linear construction of these drawings with their eye, the viewer may then collaborate with the drawer in the generation of meaning from this map of experiences; potentially exposing an expression of subjective feminine creativity and an embodiment of a lived experience of freedom, materialized in drawing and re-presented on the gallery wall.

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