COMING CLEAN

The Treatment of Traces

By

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ABSTRACT

Coming Clean is a mixed media installation which aims to address and express ambivalent feelings or notions of loss arising particularly in the absence of a comprehensive narrative or history by focussing on what remains. By researching the role of indexical signs and strategies, particularly as they are deployed by the artist Doris Salcedo, I explore the capacity for these traces to not only effectively mark and memorialise loss, but to also convey the state of loss as experienced by the bereaved without providing a narrative account of the events which preceded them.

The domestic ritual of washing is both alluded to and used as a metaphor in etchings, photographic prints and readymade objects to illustrate my concerns, with particular emphasis on the dialectic between what is revealed or concealed. Using representations or traces of this task of laundry to examine this dialectic between concealment and revelation, I comment on the anxiety of dealing with incomplete narrative inheritances by considering how traces of the past which impose themselves on the present may affect both remembrance and the ritual of loss, while also taking into account the complexities behind the disclosure of sensitive information in families.

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that all the sources I have used have been acknowledged by complete references. This thesis is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for Master of Fine Arts at Rhodes University. I declare that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at another university.

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List of Illustrations

PLEASE NOTE: All photographs of my work were taken by Paul Greenway, unless otherwise stated.

Introduction:

To "come clean" refers to a process of disclosure in which one confesses or admits to something which has been withheld. The body of work which accompanies this thesis forms a reflection on the way discussions about the loss and memory of my father have been suppressed and evaded. The withholding of these narratives brought me to question their implications for my own memory of him in that I experienced no open affirmation of his life, nor expression of his death. In taking the avoidance of these narratives and the resulting ambivalence I experienced as their starting point, the prints, photograms, and found objects comprising this exhibition are a form of disclosure with the aim of reconciliation, thus aptly collectively titled *Coming Clean*.

In the works of *Coming Clean* and in this thesis I seek to examine both the complexities faced by those who have been bereaved and the delicate process of familial communication following a loss of a family member. This will be achieved by exploring the capacity of indexical signs, remainders and reminders of the deceased, to acknowledge and commemorate loss, to evoke the state of loss as experienced by the bereaved, and to act as „selective disclosures" which partially conceal as they reveal. It will be highlighted that such signs can communicate seemingly oppositional themes which can be compared to the dialectic of connection and disconnection, concealment and disclosure, which characterise my own experience of unspoken loss.

The title *Coming Clean* is further appropriate in that the works which comprise the exhibition refer to the process of laundering clothing, to the processes which allow dirtied garments to at least appear to be clean once again. This reference to the washing of clothing is also not incidental – clothing is a powerful metaphor for grief, mourning and loss. This will be elaborated on in Chapter One which, with reference to theorists such as Hallam and Hockey (2001) and Ash (1996), will firstly establish the way that worn garments, by means of their previous bodily connection to their former wearers, can act as powerful memory materials. Developing on this connection, the chapter will also highlight how, while clothing can bring the deceased into proximity, such garments also communicate paradoxical themes which can be seen as indicative of the "tensions, ambiguities and contradictions integral to material environments that have undergone a form of „trauma" or dislocation" (Hallam and Hockey 2001: 103).

These “tensions, ambiguities and contradictions” which surround those who remain following the loss of someone significant, are demonstrated in the first chapter through reference to artworks by the artist, Doris Salcedo, whose installations are relevant to include in this discussion both in terms of their material use of items of clothing, as well as in terms of their thematic concerns which involve mourning. These installation and sculptural works are largely informed by the testimonies of those whose lives have been affected as a result of the political violence in Salcedo‟s homeland of Colombia. Rather than representing or illustrating these narratives, or addressing the themes of loss, grief and mourning in a conventional sense (Barson 2004), Salcedo uses this research to comment on the way experiences of loss distort and disfigure the lives of the bereaved (Bennett 2002: 345). Her works are therefore appropriately made from the perspectives of those who remain in the aftermath of such violence. As Barson (2004) explains, “Salcedo‟s work manifests the experience of those who have witnessed the sudden, violent death or disappearance[1] of a loved one”, thereby addressing “the predicament of the individual who has witnessed unspeakable events and must continue living”. Using Salcedo‟s early installation works *Atrabiliarios* (1991) and the *La Casa Viuda* (The Widowed House) series (1992 - 1996), selected in order to develop the theoretical discussion of the indexical sign and its effectiveness in communicating dichotomous themes, Chapter One will assess how through their incorporation of clothing as a trace of former presence, these works communicate the consequences of violence and loss as experienced by the bereaved. This discussion will be assisted through reference to authors such as Bal (2010), who has written extensively about the theoretical implications of Salcedo‟s works and who dedicated a chapter in her book *Of what one cannot speak* (2010) to the methods of tracing utilised in Salcedo‟s works. Reference will also be made to authors who have written about the indexical sign in relation to contemporary art practice such as Gibbons (2007) and Krauss (1977), as well as to authors specialising in recent family bereavement research such as Jakoby (2012).

The incorporation of this bereavement research is pertinent to the discussion of the works and accompanying themes discussed above, as well as to the discussion of the works comprising *Coming Clean* which follow in Chapter Two. Like Salcedo‟s series *La Casa Viuda* which

[1] Civil unrest began in Colombia in 1948. By the 1980s, “disappearances” became commonplace. As Birkhofer (2008: 50) explains: “The disappearance and execution of political opposition is regularly used by oppressive regimes as a tactic to generate fear and uncertainty among the populace, resulting in an effective method of social control.”

refers explicitly to the aftermath of loss within the home - the domestic space previously inhabited by families – the works of *Coming Clean* too allude to both the nuclear family and the domestic sphere. I do this by making reference to the domestic task of laundry and in the grouping of the individual pieces which comprise this body of works into sets of fours (or threes where the missing number stands for the missing, absent family member) to allude to the Western, traditional nuclear family. This allusion to the family is pertinent in that authors such as Moos (1995: 337) have established that "families play a large role in the process of grieving". Rosenblatt (2002: 125) has even gone so far as to say: "Day-to day life in any family – family routines, communication, shared realities, times of anger and disappointment, and so on – may be strongly influenced by bereavement, even for losses decades ago." Although the literature supporting these assertions is extensive - according to Rosenblatt (2002: 125), "A search of the scholarly literature for publications dealing with „grief" and „family" yields more than 1000 items" – developing this area of research is beneficial. As Rosenblatt (2002: 125-6) acknowledges: "Even the areas of family life and the kinds of families about which we already have important publications need additional research and theoretical analysis."

Beyond the relation between the home and the family, Salcedo"s "visual articulation of that which is so often unacknowledged or made invisible" (Grynsztejn 2007) which characterises her work also poignantly introduces Chapter Two which will deal largely with the silences and secrets which shape and frame constructed narratives told by and about family members following loss. I attempt to address and probe the ambivalent feelings which arise as a consequence of such constructed narratives by putting forward the trace to account for such omissions while simultaneously highlighting their inability to restore an informed narrative in *Coming Clean*. In this regard, both the works comprising *Coming Clean* and the second chapter of this thesis will further benefit family bereavement research in that, as Rober et al. (2012: 539) state: "Much research remains to be performed to really understand what it means for a family when important information about sensitive events is withheld from members in the family."

Following on from the discussion of the indexical sign in Chapter One, Chapter Two will highlight the enduring nature of loss by reference to traces that remain which, I will show, endure as both persistent and tenuous reminders of a previous presence and present absence. The works from the exhibition *Coming Clean*, most notably the *Prosthetic* series and *Remainder/Reminder*, demonstrate the facility of the trace to offer a form of compensation

for what is missing while concurrently marking that disconnection. In order to further develop on the discussion of the indexical sign which was utilised in the discussion of works by Doris Salcedo in Chapter One, this second chapter will recount Pliny the Elder's tale of the Corinthian maiden which, according to Saltzman (2006), makes the connection between loss and indexical strategies for its representation. The chapter will also refer to photographic theory, which is pertinent both in relation to the discussion of the series of photograms, *Prosthetics*, and more broadly in that photography, Gibbons (2007: 29) highlights, is the "most widely used medium in the visual arts that embodies an indexical relationship to its subject" (Gibbons 2007: 29). This inclusion of photographic theory is furthermore relevant in that photographs, as Hirsch (1997: 22) states, "are very particular instruments of remembrance".

Taken literally, "come clean" implies the elimination of dirt. This notion of erasing traces of uncleanliness largely informs the body of work discussed in Chapter Two in that, to complicate the preciousness of clothing which belonged to someone now deceased as established in Chapter One, the second chapter will introduce the ritual, domestic chore of laundry which is both represented and implicated in the works of *Coming Clean*. This reference to laundry, what has been described as the "meeting point between filth and cleanliness" (Donaldson-Evans cited in Van Herk 2002: 897), will be used to stimulate the dialectics of absence and presence, concealment and revelation, protection and disruption, the public and the private, which are central themes in this body of work. Just as these categories will be shown to often not be wholly exclusive of one another despite their seemingly oppositional inferences, such a confusion of categories is described as epitomising dirt. As Douglas (1966: 5) states: "Reflection on dirt involves reflection on the relation of order to disorder, being to non-being, form to formlessness, life to death."

The allusion to dirt and its eradication is further significant in that dirt itself can be considered a trace. Excluding bacteria from the conception of dirt, Douglas's foundational study, *Purity and Danger* (1966: 35), works with the definition of dirt as "matter out of place". According to this view, which is dependent on a systematic ordering of ideas, dirt is in no way "a unique, isolated event" (Douglas 1966: 35), but rather "a residual category" (Douglas 1966: 36). It could thus be extrapolated that dirt is something with an existential relationship to its cause or origin, which would facilitate perceiving dirt as an indexical sign. In Chapter Two, by means of reference to the work *Remainder/Reminder*, I will assess the capability of indexical signs which point to the *elimination* of dirt to produce narrative

sequences which, it will be shown, using insights by family bereavement authors such as Gilbert (1996) and McNay (2009), are necessary for regaining a sense of order after a loss (Gilbert 1996: 269). This chapter will therefore further expand on the discussion of the indexical sign by showing how it can facilitate the construction of imagined narratives - narratives which in the absence of fully imparted information can be speculated on through the use of indexical signs.

The notion of dirt as an indexical sign will be most notably demonstrated through the reference to the stain (on which Sorkin‟s text [2000] offers valuable insight). In the work *Come Clean/Vanishing Acts*, which I highlight in this chapter, there is an allusion to the staining of garments of clothing in the superimposition of sections of x-rays over depictions of loads of laundry. This superimposition, which also disrupts the vision of the images beneath, will be shown to allude to processes of disclosure which, as will be highlighted in Chapter Two, attempt to regulate knowledge of destabilizing events such as loss. In this respect dirt will be likened to narratives about sensitive events which threaten order. As Douglas (1966: 40) asserts: “Uncleanness or dirt is that which must not be included if a pattern is to be maintained.” The complicity of the secret-holder or person who selects what to disclose of will consequently also be brought into question in this chapter by outlining the moral considerations of those who perform the task of laundry, those who are seen to be besmirched by what they seek to efface, as discussed in Van Herk‟s text, *Invisibled Laundry* (2002). This text, which expands on the themes and ideas outlined by Douglas (1966), specifically in relation to the ritual domestic task of laundry, is a significant point of reference in this chapter.

Chapter One: Loss, Memory and Objects as Indices

Grief is a "normal emotional response to the loss of a significant other" (Jakoby 2012: 680). This loss, Gilbert (1996: 271) suggests, results in the "destruction of the meaning that is drawn from significant relationships." Consequently, the process of grieving a loss calls for "the reconstruction of a sense of a new „normal" that must be put in place so that the bereaved may have a predictable and orderly world in which to function" (Gilbert 1996: 271). Although Jakoby (2012: 693) emphasizes that grief and its expression varies among "individuals, social groups and cultures", Currier, Holland and Neimeyer (2006: 403) have identified increased complications in this process that tend to be common to all cases of „traumatic loss". Jakoby (2012: 682-3) also identifies the variety of emotions which accompany grief. These range from guilt, aggression, yearning, anxiety, fear, and even – emotions largely excluded in Western discussions of grief – anger and rage.

This "precarious state" (Bal 2010: 36) of the bereaved arising from the destruction of meaning will be explored in this chapter in which I aim to establish how clothing not only points to the deceased by acting as memory material, but also how clothing, or traces of it, can communicate paradoxical themes which evoke the "tensions, ambiguities and contradictions integral to material environments that have undergone a form of „trauma" or dislocation" (Hallam and Hockey 2001: 103). Examples of works by Doris Salcedo which evoke "the state of loss" experienced by the bereaved in the aftermath of violence - particularly those which employ clothing, or traces of clothing - will be used to elucidate these concerns.

'Having been thereness'

Hallam and Hockey (2001: 46) emphasize that "remembering in relation to death is a crucial social process in which metaphorical and material dimensions are profoundly significant". This is as a result of the way bereaved individuals "are faced with reconfiguring their relationship with a living person to an incorporation of the memory of the deceased into their ongoing lives" (Baddeley and Singer 2009: 205). Baddeley and Singer (2009: 205) state that one of the ways that a "continuing bond is maintained" is through "retaining possessions from the deceased". Although the bereaved are often pressured to dispose of possessions which belonged to the deceased following bereavement, relatives often treasure objects, garments and photographs which embody memories of their previous owner (Ash 1996: 219; Hallam and Hockey 2001: 92). This relationship between loss, memory and objects forms

the basis of Doris Salcedo"s practice. Salcedo transforms universally familiar domestic objects – furniture and clothing - in order to give symbolic expression to grief and thereby comment on the distortion of lives following loss (Bennet 2005: 67). As Salcedo (2003) herself highlights, "In any given image or in a given object there is the absent content of previous events that each single object carries… Each object is invested with memory. Every object, in consequence, is invested with meaning." Furthermore, Bal (2010: 105) cites Taussig (2003) who describes how:

> history lies in the absence; in the cloth that has been worn, in the hole in the knee, and the smooth arc of the cutting edge. Even more than in the absence, history lies in the adaptations of materials to time, to the exigencies of life, much as a door handle loses its shine or the keys of a keyboard lose their lettering.

Worn clothing, Ash (1996: 219) explains, can be considered as being "*of* human beings as much as *the property of* human beings". This, Hallam and Hockey (2001: 43) explain is the consequence of social interaction "with and through material forms" which disrupts subject/object boundaries in such a way that these material forms "can become extensions of the body and therefore of personhood". As such, clothing is infused with personhood and identity (Hallam and Hockey 2001: 21). More intimately, worn clothing is "imprinted with the shape, size, and odour of the lived body" (Gibson 2004: 290). This past physical proximity to the deceased also accounts for the potency of worn garments clothing as objects of memory in that, as Birkhofer (2008: 50) highlights, this intimate connection to the body "remains even after the individual is gone because the clothing retains the form of the absent body and traces of this body via smells or stains" (Birkhofer 2008: 50). In this way, "clothes become remnants of lost individuals and markers of personal memory" (Birkhofer 2008: 50). This relationship between garments of clothing and memory explains why the wearing or treasuring of articles of clothing once owned by the deceased is regarded as a means of managing loss: these articles of clothing act as mnemonic devices capable of "creating and maintaining a sense of the past by storing memories and feelings attached to the past" (Jakoby 2012: 689).

This relationship between worn articles of clothing and the lost objects to which they refer qualifies these garments as indexical signs, one of three types of sign determined by C.S. Peirce. Each of these types of sign, the symbol, the icon, and the index, point to a relationship between an object and its representation, the signified and the signifier (Gibbons

2007: 30). The symbol is a sign which is assigned „subjectively"; it operates independently of the physical characteristics of the object to which it refers. Like linguistic and geometric signs the symbol is reliant on its usage and its reader to determine its meaning (Gibbons 2007: 30). The icon, in contrast, operates in terms of physical likeness; icons resemble or have properties in common with that to which they refer. Figurative art such as portraits can thus be considered iconic (Gibbons 2007: 30). While the indexical sign "may involve abstraction or, indeed, may be heavily mimetic", the index differs from the symbol and the icon in that it is ultimately "distinguished by the fact that the signifier retains at least something of the existential „having been thereness" of that which is signified" (Gibbons 2007: 30). The indexical sign is thus characterised by a physical connection to its object - as Krauss (1972 2: 59) explains, indices "are the marks or traces of a particular cause, and that cause is the thing to which they refer, the object they signify." Like a footprint, "the key example of the trace" (Bal 2011: 17), a direct impression of an absent foot to which it signifies, articles of clothing once owned by the deceased - both infused with their identity and personhood and retaining impressions left by their bodies- signify the absent body.

By extension of this semiotic paradigm of the footprint, the shoe is "an index of presence past" (Bal 2010: 17). As such, Salcedo"s work, *Atrabiliarios* (1992-1993: Figures 1 - 2), which exhibits actual shoes which belonged to victims of political violence, to those who have disappeared, *desparecidos*, can be said to "instantiat[e] the operations of the trace" (Bal 2010: 33). In this work, empty, worn shoes, the literal "remnants of the everyday existence of people no longer alive" (Bal 2010: 33) are tentatively placed in close-fitting, rectangular niches recessed into the wall of the gallery.[2] "Here", as Bal (2010: 16) states, "the traces of people are all there is." These shoes exist as remnants both in that such shoes are used to identify otherwise unidentifiable bodies, [3] but furthermore in that each shoe bears the literal,

[2] Bal (2010: 31) notes that the dimensions of this work varies, as does the colour of the wall into which the niches are embedded. Occasionally the wall pieces are accompanied by boxes made from animal skins which too contain shoes, but occupy the gallery space.

[3] Birkhofer (2008: 55) explains that a newspaper article which reported that a body of a victim who had disappeared in 1989 had been identified by his kin who distinguished him from a list of other anonymous victims based a description of his shoe, formed the starting point for this work. After reading about this case, Salcedo went on to discover that shoes were "often the only elements that could provide for the identification of individuals found in mass graves" (Birkhofer 2008: 55).

physical imprint of the disappeared foot (Bal 2010: 33). Each shoe, as Bal (2010: 34) states, "is the shoe where a foot has been, should be, can be again"[4].

Krauss (2 1977: 65) explains that, although "they are produced by a physical cause, the trace, the impression, the clue, are vestiges of that cause which is itself no longer present in the given sign". Therefore, the "absent, yet, at some other point in time, present content" (Bal 2010: 34) of the shoes, the feet that used to wear them, enables each shoe to remain "absolutely singular" (Bal 2010: 34). In other words, although the object is no longer present, the causal relationship between the indexical sign and its object retains singularity. As such, "indices always refer to singulars – single units, individuals, unique events" (Doane cited in Bal 2010: 34). The effectiveness of traces, indexical signs, in drawing together past and present, can be attributed to this retained singularity. As Gibson (2004: 290) elaborates with reference to clothing, such traces are powerful "in momentarily bridging (though never entirely) the space/time separation distancing the living from the dead".

Connection/Disconnection

This statement by Gibson (2004) begins to highlight the paradoxical dimension of clothing, and indices, as memory material. Although it has been recognised that "the dead and the living find proximity via material objects and places" (Hallam and Hockey 2001: 6), this proximity, like the empty shoes in *Atrabiliarios*, is marked by "sensations of both absence and presence" (Hallam and Hockey 2001: 126). As Hallam and Hockey (2001: 182) explain, "Often, to foster a connection is to simultaneously evoke absence." This is exemplified in Ash‟s account (1996: 221) which describes both how the ties which belonged to her deceased husband evoke present absence and absent presence simultaneously. As she observes: "While such objects stimulate memories that remain motionless, they simultaneously evoke the passage of time."

[4] The historical significance of shoes as a symbol in the visual arts also contributes to the meaning of this work (Birkhofer 2008: 55). Bal (2010: 17) elaborates on this by highlighting the powerful connection to the history of violence in the twentieth century that shoes hold. Bal (2010: 17) explains that, shoes, particularly in mass, carry a "holocaust effect" – she explains that in the aftermath of mass violence such as genocide, heaps of shoes remain. Bal (2010: 44) describes how "These heaps are devastating because they combine the particularity of each shoe, which evokes the individual who wore it, with the gigantic, dehumanizing mound" (Bal 2010: 44).

Clothing therefore "permits both a desirable (physical) connection" to the deceased, but also simultaneously "demands the acknowledgement of a fatal disconnection" (Hallam and Hockey 2001: 116). This tension is demonstrated in the work *Atrabiliarios*, in the placement of the shoes in the recessed niches. This negative space of the niche, a trace which "testifies to a terminated presence", resonates with the emptiness of the orphaned shoes, but also displaces the shoes from the viewer – as Bal (2010: 33) highlights, although they are "spatially present," their "temporality is cut off from the present".[5] Furthermore, the shoes are not even available for visual consumption – put simply, they are "hard to see" (Bal 2010: 46) as the niches are enclosed with semi-opaque animal skins, sewn roughly to the wall with black surgical thread in a similar manner to the way a body is stitched up following an autopsy. These skins, secured with thread, thereby create a membrane, hampering the viewer's gaze. Thus, the shoes, while present, are dislocated, literally unable to be fully grasped by the viewer. As de Jager (2004: 48) words it, "As a cloudy, uncertain residue, the shoes are *both* a material remainder that cannot be eradicated *and* a ghostly trace that cannot be grasped." What is more, these skins, flush on the gallery wall, "negate the depth of the niches" (Bal 2010: 47) making the three-dimensional shoes, as seen through these skins, start to resemble two-dimensional, old, sepia-toned photographs.

This comparison to the photographic image further exemplifies the tension between connection and disconnection in that while photographs can remind the viewer of the bodily traces of the dead in their living state, they also register loss. As Hirsch (1997: 23) observes: "They affirm the past's existence and, in their flat two dimensionality, they signal its unbridgeable distance." Thus, as de Jager (2005:48) states: "Both the veiled, dematerialised shoes, and the photograph as ghostly remainder… demonstrate precisely the melancholic precariousness of memory, which alerts us that ‚the past is irrecoverable and the past is not past.'" This paradoxical dimension is attributed to memory in that memory, like clothes which in their presence point to an absence, "is of course a substitute, surrogate, or consolation for something that is missing" (Hallam and Hockey 2001: 25). Although objects enable one to remember the deceased, "making connections with absent individuals and bringing them into the present", their absence is characterized by this act of remembering which "simultaneously evoke[s] the gaps they have left behind" (Ash cited in Hallam and

[5] This dislocation is also evocative of the experience of the families who have suffer following the disappearance of one or more of their members – in such cases of disappearance there is no body to identify, bury and mourn.

Hockey 2001: 181). For as Sheringham (cited in Hallam and Hockey 2001: 126) succinctly states, "To remember is to engage with what is already other."

For this reason, Hallam and Hockey (2001: 19) state that objects and images possess a "bittersweet" quality - they evoke what they cannot replace, and provide "touchstones" for emergent feelings of grief. They may also, as Hallam and Hockey (2001: 19) go on to state, be "avoided as sources of pain as when well-meaning relatives notoriously dispose of clothing that might upset someone newly bereaved". Objects such as clothing and photographs, and memory itself, can therefore be regarded as being "precarious" themselves in that while they can be reassuring they can also be unsettling. As Hallam and Hockey (2001: 103-4) emphasize:

> So precarious and unstable is the balance between recovering and relinquishing the dead, between achieving a comforting sense of continuity whilst repeatedly encountering the rupture of an earlier, embodied contiguity, that the nature of the materialities themselves and the ways in which survivors engage with them is crucial.

The Widowed House: Witnessing Disappearance

This „unstable balance" is expanded upon by Salcedo"s use of objects in the *La Casa Viuda* series (1992-1996) which explicitly "elicits the precarious state of those left behind" (Birkhofer 2008: 49). These sculptural works make reference to the domestic space in their use of household furniture and traces of clothing as materials. According to Bennett (2002: 342), the works of the *La Casa Viuda* series evoke both "the losses that households have borne and the silences that descend in the spaces inhabited by the deceased" following the violation of the home. This violation of the domestic space, Bal (2010: 99) asserts, is *represented* in this series, in a sense. The transgression of a threshold as well as the state of loss evoked is apparent even in the title of the work, which translated means "the widowed house". In these works, Birkofer (2008: 59) highlights, "the house, formerly a protector and participant in its occupants" lives, remains widowed and abandoned after their disappearance. It seems to cling to or attempt to absorb the traces of their existence".

Hallam and Hockey (2001: 103) emphasise that memories "are often entrusted to the intimate spaces of domestic life". Bal (2010: 104) elaborates on this, stating that "far from being a neutral, impersonal, and simply material place, the house as a space is filled with human presence". She observes further: "When this presence is destroyed, the house grows cold"

(Bal 2010: 104). This coldness, Bal (2010: 104) explains, is signified in this series of work by the absence of the house referred to in its title. Rather, actual furnishings of a home which synecdochically signify the house have been installed in a gallery space; generating the first tension of the work. Furnishings from the private domestic domain of the home are exposed to the public, generating "a conflicted sense of displacement" (Bal 2010: 87). This displacement "leaves only the gallery, the space of the visitors, to fulfil the role the widowed house can no longer provide: to give a home to pain" (Wong cited in Bal 2010: 101). Furthermore, despite being comprised of materials which allude to the household, the installation of these sculptures within the gallery space is anything but homely. Through Salcedo"s deliberate use of light and space, the installation of these works within the gallery space results in a further sense of the violation of the home.

Bal (2010: 164) explains the importance of space in the exhibition of sculptures, identifying "its signifying capacity, its power to affect us; its potential to become a political space or the opposite, a space of consumption that breeds indifference". As such, the positioning of works within a space impacts on the way that they are perceived and interpreted. As Bal (2010: 161) succinctly states: "The whole is more than the sum of its parts." In this regard, Salcedo"s arrangement of her works within the gallery space, as well as the lighting she deploys is significant to the discussion of her works. As found in *Atrabiliarios*, negative space plays an important role in the exhibition of the *La Casa Viuda* works. This deliberate sense of emptiness, Bal (2010: 162) explains, "is an indispensable element" of the installation of these works and as such, the ample space surrounding her works can be seen as "intended as part of them" (Bal 2010: 163). The *La Casa Viuda* works are each given generous breathing space, attaining a sense of visual silence which forces each work "to struggle with space for their specific part in it" (Bal 2010: 162) and appeals to "hearing" (Bal 2010: 166). As Bal (2010: 167) further explains:

> The space must not be neutral at all. On the contrary, it must „speak." It should not distract the viewers from the works but mediate and focus the mood the works propose as the affective ambiance within which the dialogue between works and viewers can take place.

Salcedo"s use of lighting, another important component of exhibiting sculptures, is also carefully deployed to assist in creating this "affective ambience". Unlike lighting traditionally deployed both to assist with the visibility of the work and to make the work appear "special, isolated, and sublime", the „greyness" achieved through the use of lighting

"as the absence of color" in the exhibition of Salcedo"s works rejects these enhancing effects (Bal 2010: 22).

Using light and space to achieve a sense of quiet, disharmony, and „out-of-placeness" can thus be read as a strategy to evoke the displacement experienced by those who used to reside alongside these pieces of furniture - which can be likened to the displacement which is implicit in acts of translation or metaphoring (Bal 2010: 20) – but also as a strategy to further evoke the "silences that descend in the spaces inhabited by the deceased" following the violation of the home (Bennett 2002: 342) . Furthermore, with this arrangement, which positions "speech against silence", Salcedo viscerally "explores the productive power of silence to evoke the particular experience of witnessing disappearance" (Wong cited in Bal 2010: 166).

Thresholds

The works comprising the *La Casa Viuda* series consist of composite structures: doors intersected with fragments of domestic furniture. Meskimmon (2010: 33) likens these doors to thresholds,[6] stating that they therefore evoke the testimonies of the women and children who recounted to Salcedo their stories of the violation of their homes, "their thresholds overrun" by perpetrators of political violence. These intersecting doors and pieces of furniture, like the shoes in *Atrabiliarios*, "are, again, traces, albeit less individual ones" (Bal 2010: 87). In this series of work these traces, in their reconfiguration and recombination "into forms that no longer have a use", allude to violence and the transgression of thresholds in that the objects are "deprived of their function in a way that is analogous to the dysfunction caused by extreme trauma" (Barson 2004). Furthermore, the transformation of the furniture in this series which results in material qualities that are "at once overly familiar, close, connected to us and at the same time, transformed, estranged, utterly unlike", manifests a tension "between the recognition of similitude and ineffable distance" (Meskimmon 2010: 43).

In addition to the reconfiguration and recombination the furniture has been subjected to, the pieces of furniture have been reworked and "slightly anthropomorphized" through the

[6] Meskimmon (2010: 32) claims that the series refers to *thresholds*. Thresholds, Meskimmon (2010: 32) indicates, can refer to: entry and exit points of a space, "the limit of sense perception", as well as "the point of demarcation in passing from one state to another, a change of state, a transformation". The works comprising the *La Casa Viuda* series, therefore, as Meskimmon (2010: 32) highlights, "refer literally and figuratively to the threshold, both in its inception and in its materiality".

inclusion of organic matter and traces of clothing which "evoke the idea of being wounded", and by extension seem to enact the violence that „widowed" the home (Bal 2010: 112). Meskimmon (2010: 32) describes these organic and material traces which have been "etched" across the surfaces of the furniture and "embedded" within the frames of the doors as markings "of corporeal inhabitation". Birkhofer (2008: 60) too identifies these traces of clothing as references to the human body, stating that the "fusion of the furniture with the vocabulary of the garment renders the pieces fleshlike, evoking the absent human body". These traces thus "establish an equivalence between the home and its occupants, and the threshold of the domestic space and the body" (Barson 2004). Furthermore, these unanticipated, subtle *suggestions* of bodily presences, termed *anthropomorphisms* by Bal (2010), therefore also function as indices, pointing to human presence through their absence rather than representing them (Bal 2010: 87)[7]. These anthropomorphisms, Bal (2010: 19) states, stand for a determination against the erasure of the past life of the objects, and function metonymically, persistently defending the presence of the victims.

The Foreign Body

In the sculpture *La Casa Viuda II* (1993-4: Figure 3), a small cabinet filled with concrete and a tall door aggressively intersect one another. Bones, which also evoke an element of violence, have been embedded into the surface of the cabinet. The anthropomorphic trace in this work is not immediately apparent. However, as Bal (2010: 101) highlights, the subtlety of these traces are part of their effectiveness – the resulting delayed noticing is "an integral component… as it contends with the way that violence seems to accelerate time" (Birkhofer 2008: 60). Looking closely at the work, one notices a zipper. This zipper is accompanied by a section of coarse checkered fabric which "looms up through the wooden surface of the cabinet" (Bal 2010: 101). Detecting this barely noticeable trace of clothing can be likened to the experience of unexpectedly coming across an old piece of clothing which once belonged to a deceased loved one at the back of one's wardrobe, which Hallam and Hockey (2001: 105) concede can yield "an upsetting reminder that the person who wore it is gone forever".

Such an experience highlights the "shadow side" of objects used as resources for memory making where, as Hallam and Hockey (2001: 105) explain, memories of the deceased evoked

[7] Tracing and anthropormorphism are two of three negative modalities identified by Bal (2010: 34) which she claims characterize Salcedo's sculptural works. Bal (2010: 34) states that these negative modalities "subvert the traditions of the history of art, representation, and the rhetoric of address, respectively" - they "appeal to and then refuse to collude with artistic strategies to which we have become so accustomed that they have lost their power to move".

by such objects may be experienced as involuntary "surges of sensations, mental images or physical reactions". This result, Sheringham (cited in Hallam and Hockey 2001: 105) explains, "breaks up habitual routines of self-awareness and, rather than fostering unity, threatens everyday self-consistency. The unassimilable past lodges in the present like a foreign body". Similarly, Meskimmon (2010: 37) highlights that while the objects comprising the La Casa Viuda series are recognisable, the traces embedded into the items of furniture such as the zipper draw our attention in their "extreme juxtaposition between found and facture" which halts the process of viewing the work and interrupts our recognition of the objects as familiar, which Meskimmon (2010: 37) describes as „violating a threshold". This juxtaposition arises out of incongruity - belonging to the domain of clothing, both the zipper and the piece of fabric paired with the items of furniture are out of place. In this instance the garments therefore function as synecdoches, "parts standing for the whole they came from and to which they point as traces" (Bal 2010: 101).

As such, these traces suggest that the „whole" for which they stand is existent, or at least has been. The zipper therefore alludes subtly to the human figure in appearing "to be the trace of someone disappeared into the small cabinet" and thereby turning the cabinet into "the lower part of the body" (Bal 2010: 101). Explaining how this metaphor comes about, Bal (2010: 104) describes how the zipper, a "concrete but not iconically represented presence", enticed her to "fill in or flesh out the piece". Bal (2010: 104) attributes this to the way "The trace as index stimulates the anthropomorphic imagination, enticing the viewer to provide the missing icon, so that the relationship to the real can be restored". In other words, although the human figure is not visible in this work, once the viewer has noticed the zipper they are compelled to see it in their imagination, one "which, in modern cultures, is infected by anthropomorphism" (Bal 2010: 104).

Something Has Happened

In order to make sense of the zipper in *La Casa Viuda II*, "one must narrativize it so that it becomes a trace of a former presence" (Bal 2010: 104). Similarly, in order to make sense of the deprivation that is the „widowed house" in the absence of references to any specific narrative in the work requires narrativizing on the part of the viewer. In this regard Bal (2010: 103) identifies the title as "a powerful agent of several rhetorical moves". She highlights that "To say that the house is widowed simultaneously makes the house *into* a widow through fictionalization, *like* a widow through metaphorical extension, and the *site* of

widowhood through metonymic encapsulation" (Bal 2010: 103). In addition, the fact the pieces of furniture comprising this work are *used* both locates the furniture in the past, and alludes to "the *singularized human existence* in the past" thereby implying a narrative "with subjects (characters) doing the using in a time now gone" (Bal 2010: 79). These pieces of furniture were loaded with memory and meaning even before their transformation into theoretical objects. Furthermore, the displacement of the items of furniture from their home to the gallery space arouses questioning - "What has happened between their routine use and their transformation into artworks, their displacement into the gallery?" (Bal 2010: 80). Although neither the testimonies which informed the works, nor the previous inhabitants of the house are represented figuratively, the "displayed and displaced pieces of furniture insist that an act of violation has taken place, and someone – a character- has been affected by it" (Bal 2010: 80). Even in their absence therefore, we are made aware that: "Something has happened, in the past" (Bal 2010: 80). As Bal (2010: 94-95) highlights:

> There is a crucial tension between concrete, historically real acts of violence to which the works' indexicality points and the frustration that the lack of address to these specifics entails. This is the tension between narrativity and the impossibility of telling and immersing ourselves into stories.

Barson (2004) explains that this tension is where the power of the work lies, "in its ability to convey the essence rather than the particulars of those testimonies to the viewer". This is achieved by utilizing articles of clothing as indexical signs. Bal (2010: 35) explains that, although the trace is singular "substantiating the previous, unique presence of someone or something of which it is the trace", that presence "is no longer actual, and the person who disappeared has ceased to be particular". As Bennett (2005: 61) explains, Salcedo's use of the trace in her work "always short-circuits the interpretive endeavour, offering too little content to ground a narrative of absent characters, yet too much to obviate an increasing bodily investment in viewing". In this way, Salcedo allows for the silence of the absent victims to „speak for itself" (Birkhofer 2008: 57). As Van Alphen (1997: 35) states, extreme trauma "cannot be represented, or made familiar in the form of a complete narrative", but, he asserts, it "can be known negatively, in the cracks and tears of the stories we tell". Therefore, "Rather than being read in terms of memory narratives, as references to the past", Bennett (2002: 346) claims Salcedo's works, in their use of traces, "can be seen as objects enabling the symbolic repetition – or enactment of the sense-memory – of trauma".

In this discussion I have highlighted the effectiveness of using the indexical sign within the thematic of mourning and loss. By means of the previous existential relationship with a lost object which defines indexical signs, it was shown that garments or traces of clothing in particular could serve as poignant vehicles for memory. Assisted by reference to Salcedo‟s work, *Atrabiliarios*, and her *La Casa Viuda* series - which deployed clothing as traces and traces of clothing respectively - I have highlighted the way that such traces point not only to the past, but are also capable of offering insight into the present experience of those who remain amongst them. In Chapter Two I will develop on these findings with particular emphasis on the tensions this chapter has shown the indexical sign to be capable of producing. By engaging with the works of *Coming Clean* I will consider how narrative inheritances are informed by the treatment of traces, for as Smart (cited in Smart 2011: 543) states: “Being part of a lineage carries with it echoes of the past, plus an embeddedness in what went (or who went) before. The past and the present are intertwined and each gives meaning to the other.”

Chapter 2: 'It will all come out in the wash'

„It will all come out in the wash" is a commonly heard statement which alludes to the facility of laundering a sullied garment to restore its appearance to its previous condition. The expression has come to be used to convey the idea that no long-lasting harm has been done, that problems or difficulties will be resolved or understood in time, but it can also be understood to mean that secrets will eventually be uncovered. I invoke this expression ironically, in that while the notion of washing alludes to themes of guilt, confession and reconciliation, which are relevant to the discussion of the works which comprise *Coming Clean* nonetheless, this thesis centres on the *enduring* nature of *irredeemable* absence by focussing specifically on what *remains* after loss. As such, in Chapter One I established the way that worn garments and traces of clothing retain a connection to their former wearer by means of an indexical relation resulting from a previous intimacy with their body. Consequently, items of clothing, or traces of it, can be considered as both compelling sources of memory, and an evocative means of rendering the precarious state of those who remain, in that such items evoke dialectics of absence and presence, connection and disconnection.

Having established this, in Chapter Two I will discuss the series of works which comprise the body of work, *Coming Clean.* I have taken a forensic approach to this body of work in order to emphasise the aspect of the physical trace in these works.[8] Each of these series - *Prosthetic*, *Come Clean/Vanishing Acts, Coming Clean*, *Remainder/Reminder,* and *Settle* – traces an adult reflection of my own childhood experience of loss and the avoidance of the topic within my own family. They can therefore be described as attempts to address/redress the tensions which arise in families where "nobody is explicitly talking about loss" (Rosenblatt 2002: 125). These works also consider the implications of such omissions in narrative inheritances - "the stories given to children by and about family members" (Goodall 2005: 492) - which, in their construction, commonly result in omissions, stories which remain untold or which are only partially imparted (McNay 2009: 1178). Such constructed narratives may even involve deliberately concealed secrets "fraught with uncertainties and complexities" (McNay 2009: 1178).

[8] As Rugoff (1997:104) states, the forensic aesthetic places an "emphasis on *physical* traces and the way it draws attention to the body's ghostly presence in an image-driven society".

These silences, selective disclosures, and secrets and their accompanying uncertainties and complexities will be referred to in this chapter in the discussion of the works which form *Coming Clean*, particularly by focussing on indexical signs as forms of evidence to assist in reconciling the experience of loss with such omissions in narrative inheritances, thereby assessing how to memorialise and make sense of such an unspoken loss. In order to explore these uncertainties and complexities, in this Chapter I will draw on dialectics – of absence and presence, concealment and revelation, protection and disruption, the public and the private. These thematic concerns will be drawn out using further theoretical discussion of the indexical sign and through reference to laundry - the ritual domestic act of eradicating traces – to which each of the works of *Coming Clean* refer or insinuate.

2.1 *Prosthetic* (Fig. 5-8)

As Salcedo"s works discussed in Chapter One highlighted, the trace or indexical sign is a compelling tool for both "concretizing and commemorating loss, for marking and memorializing absence" (Saltzman 2006: 20), and for evoking the conflicts and tensions experienced by those who remain in the aftermath of loss. Saltzman (2006: 2-3) refers to Pliny the Elder"s tale of the Corinthian maiden, remarking that this tale of loss (usually referred to in relation to the birth of Western iconic representation) presents "an art of the index". According to this tale, a woman, anticipating the absence of her lover, outlined his cast shadow on to a wall. Following this, the maiden"s father filled the outline drawn by his daughter with clay, making a relief in the man"s likeness. Saltzman (2006: 2-3) explains that these strategies of representation used by the Corinthian maiden and her father - "A luminous flame as a means of casting the shadow before it, a drawn outline as a means of capturing the evanescent image of that body, a sculptural cast as a means of reconstituting and concretizing something of that lost body" - all bear "something of a relationship of physical contiguity to their subjects" and thus "structure the visual object as the material trace of a fugitive body".

Similarly, the *Prosthetic* series presents the traces of four household objects[9] which point to the absent body both in their former association with clothing and their subtle evocation of the human form. This subtle reference to the body responds to the "ongoing absence of the deceased in their bodily being" which Gibson (2004: 291) states "is one of the profound existential shocks of bereavement". She goes on to explain that following bereavement there

is a "desire for bodily return" which "is both compensated for and replaced by representation and objects" (Gibson 2004: 291). This "process of surrogation", the attempt by those who remain to "fit satisfactory alternates" into the "cavities" left following death is expressed in the works which comprise the *Prosthetic* series (Roach cited in Hallam and Hockey 2001: 26). Like the man‟s silhouette captured by circumscribing his shadow in Pliny the Elder‟s tale, which Stoichita (1997: 15) explains allows the woman to create a replacement for her absent lover in its mnemonic capacity, the images of the *Prosthetic* series, reminiscent of silhouettes themselves, too render absence. This absence is evoked through a combination of the modes of representation - "silhouettes and casts, photography and even film"– whose origins are apparent in Pliny‟s mythic tale and "are predicated on their contiguous relation to their subjects, their physical relation to the material world" (Saltzman 2006: 12).

Each image comprising the *Prosthetic* series is composite, made up of photograms of each section of a replicated, household object. These objects – a suit bag, an ironing board, a suit rack and a pair of shoe trees – are objects whose function is dependent on clothing which is not being worn. The suit rack, for instance, previously functioned as a structure on which to hang clothing. In this sense, the readymade object already spoke of absence in that it stood in as a substitute for the frame of the body, preventing creases in the material. This notion of absence is then compounded by the indexical manner in which each object has been reproduced - by cladding each object with transparent tape which once layered, was then sliced off of the objects leaving hollow „moulds‟ of each of the objects. These „moulds‟ were then pieced back together and translated into photograms.[10]

Photograms, Krauss (1 1977: 75) explains, "are produced by placing objects on top of light-sensitive paper, exposing the ensemble to light, and then developing the result". Similar to the shadow in Pliny‟s tale, the objects are defined by their form preventing light reaching the surface of the light-sensitive paper. The resulting images, Krauss (1 1977: 75) explains, bear "ghostly traces of departed objects". These traces can be likened to footprints in that like the impression left behind by the absent foot, the lighter areas of the image are the precise places where an object has been. This process therefore epitomises Sontag‟s description of the photograph as "something directly stencilled off the real" (Sontag 2001: 154). Photograms are thus explicitly indexical and demonstrate the indexical condition of all photographs. As

[10] This seems to correspond with what Gibson (2004: 291) states of objects, which through use and resulting from the "particularity of its significance to an individual‟s memory and grieving… can be *transformed* in ways that are antithetical to their assumed objective, material form".

Krauss (1977: 75) explains: “the photogram only forces, or makes explicit, what is the case of *all* photography. Every photograph is the result of a physical imprint transferred by light reflections onto a sensitive surface.”

The process of replicating the objects used in the *Prosthetic* series rendered the previously solid objects hollow and transparent, which enabled light to partially pass through them to reach the light sensitive surface of the photographic paper. The result is ethereal, with areas resembling bones as pictured in x-rays. As Kott (1987: 9) states: “An X ray is light‟s penetration into the body. It over-exposes the body. As it reaches or permeates the skin, the ray of light outlines the body and brings out its shadows.” The x-ray thus also resonates with Pliny‟s tale, but is further significant given that x-rays are also a means of representing the body, and the damaged body in particular. They are used to locate and depict internal and thus invisible injuries. The x-ray therefore further characterises simultaneous absence and presence in that similar to the footprint which points to the absent foot, they depict what we know is there but cannot see. This notion of the trace is furthered by the existence of fingerprints, scratches and dust particles on the surface of the image which is characteristic of the aesthetic of the x-ray. The fingerprints in particular, however, in contrast to the absence represented in the image, point indexically to someone whose unique presence is implied rather than shown. These traces suggest that someone has examined each segment of the object, thus alluding to the notion of complicity.

This notion of complicity is also evident in that the segments which make up each of the images are not seamlessly joined - the curvature of the photographic paper has distorted the architectural lines of the objects, and whiteness filters through the seams. Not only have the dimensions of the objects been rendered two-dimensional in the photogram process, but even the dimensionality of the buckled photographic paper is visibly rejected in that the photograms have further been scanned and stitched together, creating a composite, constructed, digital image. This piecing together of elements both alludes to the practice of piecing together memory quilts[11] using fabric from “the dresses of the dead” (Finley 1929: 78), but also serves to emphasise flatness, the same flatness which Gibson (2004: 291) attributes the surface of a photograph, “which lacks the thickness, texture and form of a hat, shoe or jumper, which has been shaped by the wearer‟s body”. Furthermore, these slivers of whiteness between the segments of the image also recall the seams of the items of clothing

[11] This nineteenth-century mourning ritual practiced by women in the domestic sphere further highlights the connection between textiles and memory and objects and memory (Rohan 2004).

that gave these objects their function or even the creases where clothing has been folded, but also the buckling and creasing of beloved photographs, kept as a reminders of a loved one, relics testifying to their existence, themselves prosthetic "substitutes for remembering" (Kuhn 2010: 303). As Gibson (2004: 291) admits, despite the flatness which characterises the photographic image, in such cases, "[e]ven a photograph… can be touched and held in ways that give the flat surface an imagined thickness and form – like a body or a body object such as clothing".

2.2 *Settle* (Fig. 9-13)

A foil to the *Prosthetic* series, three life-size dust portraits on paper, titled *Settle I-III*, can similarly be attributed this "imagined thickness and form" (Gibson 2004: 291). Each portrait in this work is a trace, an impression taken directly off of the bodies of my remaining family members. Unlike the four bold portraits which make up the *Prosthetic* series, these full body impressions are rendered on large sheets of white paper, and are barely visible from afar. Upon closer inspection, however, the subtle figures are seen to consist of fine particles of dust, and even hairs. Rather than alluding to the invisible „insides" of the body, like the *Prosthetic* series, these works seem to consider the „surface" of it.

The procedure of creating each of these portraits involved the use of wheat paste, which was first smeared onto each of our bodies, and then transferred from our bodies onto a large sheet of paper. This process of transference between our living bodies to the flat surface of paper, like that of a scene captured by a camera and printed as a photograph, is significant in that like the silhouette drawn by the maiden in Pliny's tale, these portraits too "refus[e] the fetishistic function of representation" (Saltzman 2006: 26) by providing only "an outline, a marker, a designated space to remember" (Saltzman 2006: 23). Although the maiden's outline cannot be considered "a replacement or a simulacrum of her lover" (Saltzman 2006: 23), it is this outline that Saltzman (2006: 3) claims establishes this possibility for remembrance as opposed to the disavowal of loss that she suggests is qualified by the maiden's father's production of a sculptural cast.

By means of its production, the principle of this work can also be likened to the procedure of creating a death mask - an exemplary instance of the indexical sign – which derives its memorial capacity from its contact with the body of the deceased (Saltzman 2006: 12). In *Settle I-III*, the trace of such bodily contact is marked and further alluded to by the use of the tumble drier lint dust particles which were allowed to „settle" on the adhesive impressions left

on the paper by our bodies. The remains of the remnants of washing (pieces of lint), these particles - which once resided in close proximity with the body or are actual remnants of that body such as fingernail clippings or hairs – also point to the irretrievable past by referencing the exponential losses in everyday ritual. In this way, these works can be seen as a form of an attempt to both retain and memorialise something which has already been lost while pointing indexically to those who remain. To use Roach"s words (cited in Hallam and Hockey 2001: 26), in this work, the "bodies of the *now* living, become mediators of memory"; the bereaved, as represented in this work, are thus positioned as delicate reminders of the one who is mourned.

The notion of losses in everyday ritual as alluded to by the residues utilised in the *Settle* series is continued in both the *Coming Clean* and *Come Clean/Vanishing Acts* series of works.[12] In both of these works iconic depictions of clothing in the process of being laundered resonate with the title of this Chapter, „It will all come out in the wash". Using this premise, these works are suggestive of the loss inherent in the process of laundering items of clothing which accounts for the apprehension of the bereaved to launder the clothes of the deceased. Graves (1996: 40) explains this by likening laundry to "an operation", a task which "makes violent inroads into our relationship with others" by "wip[ing] away the memory/trace of our own bodily experience". Acknowledging the intimacy of clothing, she asks, "[i]s it the clean or the dirty that one loves?" highlighting how "the smell of the clothes of those we love is, as the first summer rose, delicious, elusive and always a tremulous reminder of mortality" (Graves 1996: 40). The apprehension of the bereaved towards washing the clothing of the deceased loved one can thus be attributed to the fear of losing this intimacy with the body, and thus letting it „all come out in the wash". This tension is most explicitly demonstrated in the *Coming Clean* series.

2.3 *Coming Clean* (Fig. 14-23)

This series consists of four pairs of monotypes and etchings. The four monotypes bear the traces of single items of clothing, epitomising the notion of the trace as described by Best (1999: 172) as they are literally "the result of the outer world touching some impressionable surface and leaving a legible mark". Items of clothing were pressed onto a surface of ink, which once removed, left an impression of each garment. The works begin to resemble x-ray

[12] The title, *Vanishing Acts*, has been appropriated from a quotation from Van Herk (2002: 894) which is quoted further in this passage.

images in that, as a result of this process, only impressions left by the items of clothing allow clues pointing to the texture and type of garment to be seen, faintly revealing neatly folded items of clothing out of the dark backgrounds. These monotypes are paired with etchings which, in their iconic depictions of loads of laundry, stand in stark juxtaposition. Unlike the monotypes, which are suggestive of absence in their emptiness, affirming a sense of loss by containing only the traces of clothing of an absent wearer, the various garments of clothing depicted in the etchings are detailed and have been given form. This tension between each pair that comprises this series resonates with an account cited in Hallam and Hockey's text (2001: 194-195) in which a bereaved mother (Mara 1998) describes the significance of her son's remaining clothes which she acknowledges will in time become a "pile of used fabric". This statement, as Hallam and Hockey (2001: 194-195) go on to highlight, encapsulates "the anticipatory anxiety provoked when the future anonymity of highly charged personal objects is imagined". The juxtaposition between the distinctly defined articles of clothing as depicted in the etchings and the disappearing clothing in the monotypes is thus suggestive of this anxiety, but the combination of the two mediums is also an embodiment of it. While the etchings can be printed several times with the same end product, the monotype is characterised by its inability to be exactly repeated. These four monotypes, in their principle and in their combination with the iconography of laundry – a ritual chore which also testifies to the passage of time - are therefore testament to the tenuous relationship between the bereaved and the objects left behind by the deceased.

In further contrast to the monotypes containing the faint traces of articles of clothing, each etching clearly depicts particular garments of clothing distinctly belonging to various family members. These garments are intertwined, as they would be found in the washing machine. This illustrates the implications of a death in the family for both the individual members, and the family as a whole. As Wedemeyer (cited in Moos 1995: 338) explains: "Death in the family… exposes a basic tension of family systems: It is a *systemwide* event and yet it is also a *personal* event for each individual in the family." Grief within the family thus involves the "interplay of individual family members grieving in the social and relational context of the family, with each member affecting and being affected by others" (Gilbert 1996: 271). In some families the topic of death is avoided as a source of discomfort and anxiety, and some parents choose to avoid such discussions until a time when their children are old enough (Rober et al. 2012: 535). While in such cases the initial intention of the secret holder is to protect others, Imber-Black (1998) and Paul and Berger (2007) claim that this can "create

barriers and affect family communication" (Rober et al.2012: 530-531). Similarly, while McNay (2009: 1179) acknowledges that secrets "serve particular functions in families", she warns that when secrets "disrupt the construction of narrative inheritance they also disrupt the formation of identity in children growing up in those families" (McNay 2009: 1179). This notion of compromised communication is examined in the *Come Clean/Vanishing Acts* series.

2.4 *Come Clean/Vanishing Acts* (Figs. 24-27)

In *Come Clean/Vanishing Acts*, the x-ray is deployed as an obstruction to sight rather than an informative visual document. Areas of actual x-rays have been cropped and enlarged, making the location of the part of the body they depict unclear. Further ambiguity results from the way these areas of x-rays have been positioned to overlay details of the etchings which formed the *Coming Clean* series. These details, as a result, can only be partially seen through the x-ray fragments. The difficulty of perceiving both images in their entirety evokes the irreconcilable sensation of loss, where although there is an impression of presence, there is only absence. Pairing the domestic ritual sequence of laundering clothing with the x-ray which partially obscures its representation functions to reference not only the proximity to the body which makes such items of clothing potent memory materials, but also activates the dialectic of concealment and revelation which is made explicit in the title of the work.

This relationship between what is concealed and revealed alludes to the notion of selective disclosure, a term favoured by Rober et al. (2012: 538) for accommodating "an appreciation of the cautious way in which family members deal with sensitive family issues" rather than including the associations of destructiveness embedded in secrecy.[13] In this way, the concept of selective disclosure takes into account the "complexities of family communication when deliberate information is not revealed" (Rober et al. 2012: 538). In referring to the delicate process of familial communication, the concept of selective disclosure takes into account "the way people decide to disclose of sensitive information to close others, and the observation that disclosure happens selectively; to certain people, certain things are said, while other things remain unsaid" (Rober et al. 2012: 531). Concepts of both selective disclosure and secrecy are evoked literally in the series *Come Clean/Vanishing Acts* in that the viewer‟s

[13] Rober et al. (2012: 530) cite Caughlin, Afifi, Carpenter-Theune, and Miller (2005) who have acknowledged that in Western culture "open communication is valued and revealing secrets is considered to be healing and morally superior to keeping them". In line with this Western bias, Imber-Black (cited in Rober et al. 2012: 530) states that secrecy is "toxic" and "dangerous" whereas privacy is healthy.

vision has become compromised, dictated by the placement of the x-ray detail, but also metaphorically by means of the representation of laundry, a chore which although an unavoidable reality, has been "marginalized, sidelined and disguised" (Van Herk 2002: 893) in both literal and figurative accounts.[14] This is considered a likely result of the "shameful necessity" of the task "to erase dirt, sweat, and bodily effluents" (Van Herk 2002: 893). As a result of these associations with "both filth and eroticism", Van Herk (2002: 893) explains that the domestic task of laundry "inhabits an uneasy zone of soothsaying erasure" and, by extension, "serves the *binary polarities* of secrecy and visibility".

According to Van Herk (2002: 897), laundry endures as a metaphor for secrets. This becomes apparent when one considers the definition for secrets proposed by Vangelisti and Caughlin (1997) who regard secrets as "a form of information control, in which some information is under the control of someone who purposefully hides this information from someone else" (Rober et al. 2012: 530). This notion of information control can be attributed to the washing machine which, Graves (1996: 36) explains, is itself a "site of control – the place/space in which „dirt" can be eliminated", restoring "a wholeness which seems at one stage (in the dirty linen basket) to be irrecoverable". The notion can also be ascribed to the laundress herself[15] who too is complicit in the elimination of dirt, in quietly concealing the dirty stories laundry tells (Van Herk 2002: 894). As Graves (1196: 35) reminds us, there are tasks that even the washing machine cannot perform.

[14] Representations in literature and art, Van Herk (2002: 893) believes, give emphasis to this marginalization of laundry and its relegation "to conduit rather than coda". In examples such as Homer"s *The Odyssey* ([800 B.C.] 1967) , Van Herk (2002: 893) states that "the work of laundry is presented more as a vehicle than occupational end, intended to achieve a goal (in Odysseus"s case, entrance to the city) inevitably more significant than either the space of *nettoyage* (cleanliness) or the work at hand, the cleaning of clothes". Similarly, although countless artworks depict the activity of laundry, Van Herk (2002: 896) asserts that "the subject of laundry is treated as negligible". Rather, Van Herk (2002: 896) states, works such as Jean-Baptiste Greuze"s *The Laundress* (1761) and Pablo Picasso"s *Le repasseuse* (1904) are characteristic of "artists making laundresses the object of their gaze but consequently romanticizing their toil". Furthermore, although in labour history, hygiene and sanitization have been paid much critical attention (especially in relation to social reform) the documentation of the labour of laundry "is as much a vanishing act as the outcome of the work itself" (Van Herk 2002: 895).

[15] Van Herk (2002), Graves (1996), and Standton (2004) all comment on the task of laundering clothing as being gendered, with laundry being largely perceived of as "women"s work" (Van Herk 2002: 894). Graves (1996: 33) even goes so far as to state that "The washing machine is the badge, the insignia, the natural extension and justification of the existence of the housewife". Amongst intangible and unmeasurable, repetitive, laborious tasks delegated to the „housewife" such as sweeping, dusting and cleaning, Van Herk (2002: 894) explains that laundering the soiled clothing of the family is a task perceived of being "entirely secondary to both the sanctified aspects of family life and the goal-orientated quests of men". Demoted, yet still a necessity, the chore "thus bears the weight of the contradictory conjunction between cleanliness and dirt, appearance and effacement, the private and the public" (Van Herk 2002: 894).

> Women still select the „dirties". They must interpret the instructions for selection, for „whites", „coloured dainties", „wool", „heavily" or „lightly soiled", „cold" or „hot" wash, even special operations such as „stiffening" or „starching"… [The washing machine] does not hang clothes on the line, it does not air them, it does not return them to the family's drawers.

Van Herk (2002: 894) therefore describes the work of the laundress as "a career in the vanishing acts of making work and dirt invisible". The resulting cleanliness, therefore, "is a display, a declaration" (Van Herk 2002: 894).

The role of the laundress moreover "denotes women as managers of dirt… requiring that women keep moral slime, degeneracy and contamination at bay" (Van Herk 2002: 892). This, Van Herk (2002: 892) states, simultaneously implies "that they will be contaminated by the dirt they seek to efface". In Emile Zola's novel, *L'Assomoir* (1877), which depicts laundry work, for example, the laundress "who is supposed to embody physical and moral cleanliness, suffers the corrupting influence of the *blanchisserie* (laundry) and is tainted by the dirty linen she must clean" (Van Herk 2002: 896). Such a moral profiling of those who wash clothing only to be contaminated by the dirt they seek to eliminate resonates with the moral considerations of secret-holders in families which prompted the less loaded and more compromising term of selective disclosure. Just as the task of laundry "bears the weight of the contradictory conjunction between cleanliness and dirt, appearance and effacement, the private and the public" (Van Herk 2002: 894), the term selective disclosure takes into account the "constant tension in relationships between two contradictory needs: the need for disclosure and the need for secrecy" (Rober et al. 2012: 531). The moral profiling of the women who perform laundry is also further revealing of more general societal attitudes towards both literal and figurative senses of dirt. As Cohen (2005: ix) highlights, "In a general sense, filth is a term of condemnation, which instantly repudiates a threatening thing, person, or idea by ascribing alterity to it." In this way, like Douglas's (1966: 36-7) reasoning that we ignore or distort "[u]ncomfortable facts that refuse to be fitted in" in order to preserve "established assumptions", stories which are withheld or kept secret in families are most often those which are considered destructive or threatening (Rober et al. 2012: 535). This comparison between the subject of the secret and dirt - both of which Douglas (1966: 36) explains "confuse cherished classifications" and are thus condemned - can be illustrated by the stain. Just as stains are seen to tarnish appearances and are thus subjected to rituals of cleaning, unsavoury subjects are deliberately withheld from narratives in an attempt to elude such corruption.

Most literally, a stain can be described as "a discolouration produced by foreign matter having penetrated into a material", but it can also refer to "a cause of reproach; stigma", or to "bring reproach or dishonour upon; blemish" (Webster New College Dictionary cited in Sorkin 2000: 77). These various denotations of the stain express moral deliberations. As Sorkin (2000: 79) explains, like soiled clothing whose proximity to the filth of the body contaminates the laundress, the self-stain[16] too "renders the body uncontrollable: both capable and culpable of transmission, transgression and impurity, exceeding the acceptable, surpassing the boundaries of the skin". This abject connection to the body is further emphasised by Sorkin's (2000: 78) descriptions of stains as "sores of a fabric", "raw wounds" or "scars of retrospection". In such descriptions stains have been personified and reference damage done to the body.[17] This connection to the human body and reference to the body in disrepair is illustrated in *Come Clean/Vanishing Acts* where the dark parts of the x-rays which negate the appearance of the etchings, operate in a similar fashion to the way a stain would destroy "the continuity of the cloth" (Sorkin 2000: 77). The combination of the iconic representation of laundry with the x-ray image thus allows for this allusion to the stain or the running of dye in the washing process, which stains. Consequently the metaphorical dimensions invoked by the definitions of the stain as cited by Sorkin (2000: 77) are evoked by these allusions to stains; the disruption to the continuity of the cloth can be likened metaphorically to the destabilizing and undesirable effect of both loss and secrets on family narratives.

Even the most commonplace stains, "the benign scars of accident" (Sorkin 2000: 77), explicitly establish a relationship between the stain and memory of an inadvertent incident. The notion of the stain as alluded to in this series is thus further pertinent because, like the clothes left behind by lost loved ones, stains too "function both as remainder and reminder of what has come to pass: both evidence and memory" (Sorkin 2000: 78) in that like photographs, a stain too is a "direct indexical sign of a specific moment" which in a manner similar to "a snapshot or a still life" (Von Busch 2007: 5), also functions to represent the

[16] The term "self-stain" refers to stains inflicted upon oneself (Sorkin 2000: 79).

[17] It is interesting to note that Freud (1915) made reference to the wound in comparing and contrasting the states of mourning and melancholia. According to Freud (cited by Holly 2007: 11), "The complex of melancholia behaves like an open wound", which "continues, always, to bleed". Additionally, Bennett (2002: 343) describes grief as being "[u]nlike the sensation of a cut", in that it is "not something that can be understood as occurring within the moment but is, rather, a more diffuse and extended purpose".

passage of time (Sorkin 2000: 80). Stains thus also effectively articulate the precarious state of the bereaved in that for the wearer of the stain the present is tainted by a sign pointing to the past, resulting in "an always present-past for the wearer of the damage" (Sorkin 2000: 79). It is for this reason that Graves (1996: 37) asserts: "Bleach and washing machines testify to our longing for repentance."

Although bleach, according to Graves (1996: 38) "wipes out blood/guilt and memory, denies the need for mourning, let alone the certain knowledge that we ourselves must die", the true stain, Sorkin (2000: 77) asserts, "is permanent, forever altering the way a garment looks and therefore, is regarded" (Sorkin 2000: 77). In this way, the true stain can also be likened to the notion of the „fogged" photograph, also alluded to in the *Come Clean/Vanishing Acts* series by means of the partial concealment of the depictions of washing. The accidentally over-exposed, „fogged" photograph, Stoichita (1997: 189) explains, "is not in itself pure absence, but rather the eclipsing of an image". As Stoichita (1997: 189) goes on to explain, "The image is there, but hidden, „fogged", concealed for ever by a curtain of shadow, which no one is capable of raising". Like stains which will not come out in the wash, the fogged photograph too is "a calamity that no technology can ever repair" (Stoichita 1997: 189). Furthermore, in its photographic form, and also like stains, the „fogged" photograph too evokes sensations of both absence and presence, and also embodies the "immutable and irreversible pastness and irretrievability" which Hirsch (1997: 20) states, is the condition of all photographs.

2.5 *Remainder/Reminder* (Figs. 28-31)

Similar to the way in which the stain and shadow in the „fogged" photograph remain persistently present, the series of lint, *Remainder/Reminder*, is a tenacious attempt to retain traces of the past. The title of this work makes explicit that what remains functions as a reminder of what has been lost. In this work the remains of washing, pieces of lint, are presented in twelve lightboxes. In these lightboxes, these remnants of domestic ritual are elevated as objects to be examined and preserved. Like the *Coming Clean* series and the *Prosthetic* series, the pieces of lint are grouped into sets of four, alluding both to the typical nuclear family and the number of weeks which typically comprise a month. These groupings have been selected and arranged according to their colouring in order to reference the changes in colour a bruise goes through in the process of healing. The act of accumulation, saving and ordering the pieces of lint which comprise this series can therefore be considered

as illustrative of an attempt to account for an absent or unfinished narrative, which Goodall (2005: 498) states "is a difficult fact to live with".[18] As Shank (cited in Bosticco and Thompson 2005: 3) explains, "it's as if nothing has happened unless a story is told about it." The series of lint which form this work address this directly in that each piece has been conscientiously collected and archived, referencing both the passage of time and forming a constructed narrative sequence.

The pieces of lint themselves are an evocation of the passage of time in that each piece is formed by an accumulation of textile fibres and other materials lost in multiple loads of washing. These residues, the by-product of the ritual sequence of washing, can therefore be read as an attempt to restore or at least compensate for what is effaced or lost in the process of washing, in that they are literally composed of the fragments and fibres displaced in the commonplace ritual. In their origin as a by-product of the domestic ritual of laundry, however, these lint pieces simultaneously evoke the notion of decomposition. Each piece consequently exposes what is lost in the process of washing and is therefore a testament to the deterioration of textiles over time. In this way, these pieces of lint illustrate the notion that "clothing is perishable, it makes a second grave for the loved being" (Barthes 1984: 64).

If, as Sorkin (2000: 77) suggests, cloth "holds the sometimes unbearable gift of memory", then the use of these pieces of lint and their residues, in *Remainder/Reminder* and *Settle* respectively, can be seen to demonstrate the precariousness and fallibility of memory itself, physically accounting for the reluctance of washing the clothing of a deceased loved one for fear of losing what little of them remains. Graves (1996: 41) acknowledges this disruptive aspect of washing, stating that the "reassurance of protection and containment" embodied by clothing is destabilized by the process of washing in that "the washing machine reduces all categories to an abysmal confusion, a senseless higgledy-piggledy".

This confusion of categories is illustrated literally by the lint pieces which are composed of an amalgamation of fibres, hairs, and a range of other residues. The undesirability of such "an abysmal confusion" (Graves 1996: 41) is embodied by these pieces of lint too - in their fusion of bodily traces and other clues these pieces of lint are met with simultaneous fascination and repulsion. This sense of disgust elicited from these objects can be attributed to their very nature as "a residual category, rejected from our normal scheme of

[18] Goodall (2005) discusses the power of narrative inheritance - particularly in scenarios where these have been shaped by omissions, secrets, and lies - using the case of his own nuclear family.

classifications" which Douglas (1966: 36) describes as a defining feature of Western notions of filth. This element of simultaneous allure and aversion is significant in that it allows for the extension of the notion of "abysmal confusion" to the bereaved, in that like Bond"s (1999: 130) reading of Salcedo"s hybrid *La Casa Viuda* works discussed in Chapter One, these pieces of lint, beautiful and precious, but also abject, can be likened to "the memory of a loved one contaminated by the image of their death".

Gilbert (1996: 269) states that faced with this state of „abysmal confusion", the bereaved need to reconceptualise reality by "focussing on regaining stability and meaning after a loss". This stability and meaning, Mc Adams (cited in Bosticco and Thompson 2005: 3) suggests, can be regained through narratives, in that narratives have the ability to "bring order to disparate events, combining them into logical sequences". McNay (2009: 1178) further elaborates to this end, highlighting the important role that narratives play in "the construction of personal identity, relationships, and fully actualized lives", while also realizing however, that in some cases "A narrative inheritance is not always readily acquired".

This collection of lint, of the unseen losses of everyday life, can therefore be seen as testament to the omissions in narrative inheritances which, like the disposal of such pieces of lint, give off "at least the illusion of control" (Poulos 2008: 57). Such omissions promote a strategy of silence, a silence which Giddens (cited in Poulos 2008: 51) states is "the kind of silence that disrupts the story, a silence that keeps the narrative from being spoken... a heavy, silencing silence that builds into a secret". This kind of silence that builds into a secret is alluded to by means of reference to the task of laundry. In this chapter, particularly through reference to the *Come Clean/Vanishing Acts* series, I have shown laundry to be an appropriate metaphor for examining notions of secrecy. This is due to the fact that it can be compared to a site of information control which threatens the potential for memories to be preserved in the same way that omissions in narrative inheritances about loss compromise the expression of grief. In contrast to this secrecy and silence, the lint, salvaged (as opposed to being disposed of) and then laid out and displayed in the gallery space, embodies the title of the exhibition, *Coming Clean*. This title speaks of a process of disclosure which, partnered with the pieces of lint each embedded with secrets and clues which point to the past, is suggestive of the notion of recovery, both in the sense of healing and retrieval.

Like the *Settle*, *Prosthetic* and *Come Clean/Vanishing Acts* series, *Remainder/Reminder* alludes to traces of the body, most obviously in that the pieces of lint consist of particles of

dead skin and fibres of clothing which resided within close proximity to the body, but also by means of the allusion to the bruise which, like the x-rays referenced in the *Coming Clean*, *Come Clean/Vanishing Acts* and *Prosthetic* series - and in contrast to the notion of healing - are manifestations of internal injuries otherwise unseen. In this regard, like the x-ray which gives "form to the invisible" (Henderson 1988: 336), this allusion to bruising in *Remainder/Reminder* can be seen as further motivating the dialectic of concealment and revelation.

The notion of healing is demonstrated in the work *Remainder/Reminder* by means of the organisation of the sequences of lint which, as previously mentioned, is an evocation of the changes in colour a bruise goes through in the process of healing. This process of healing, like stains which gradually fade in the wash as alluded to in the *Come Clean/Vanishing Acts* series, "denotes the passage of time" (Sorkin 2000:79). This evocation of the passage of time is expanded on by means of the formation of a constructed narrative sequence, which, in combination with the pieces of lint, indices of deterioration over time, assists in determining "the „work" of remembering… as the „maintenance" of fragile memory narratives" (Sturken 1999: 236).

Although these pieces of lint have been retrieved from being disposed of to form a sequence which alludes to the passage of time, this collection of traces can by no means be seen to recover a fully imparted narrative, but rather present a constructed narrative sequence which is evocative of both disclosure and concealment. In this way, each piece of lint, even furnished with subtle clues which allude to the past, like Salcedo"s zipper discussed in Chapter One, rather represents a narrative about loss which can only be speculated by what remains. This inability of the indexical sign to elicit a narrative is best presented by theorists of photography. Although Sontag (2001: 5) explains that "Photo"s furnish evidence", Gibbons (2007: 34-37) problematizes this notion of substantiating the past, in stating that "although indexicality is important for evidencing the existential status of things represented in photographs, it does not provide the whole story as far as photographic representation is considered by any means". Additionally, Hirsch (2008: 116) cites French art historian Georges Didi-Huberman (2003) who describes how in the photographic image "we simultaneously find truth and obscurity, exactitude and simulacrum". In this way, the indexical sign can be seen as an embodiment of the notion of selective disclosure.

The influence of narrative on understanding is therefore developed and complicated by the works of *Coming Clean.* A sense of narrative is evoked by reference to the task of laundry at its various stages, moving from the objects associated with clothing (*Prosthetic* series), to the laundry process (*Coming Clean* and *Come Clean/Vanishing Acts* series), to the by-product of washing (*Remainder/Reminder*), and finally, to the remains of this by-product (*Settle*). While the reference of this task can be seen to address the notion of routine and repetition, and by extension, the ritual of loss, using this metaphor also functions to complicate notions of a fully disclosed narrative in that the task itself entails attempts to eliminate traces for the appearance of order, thereby stimulating the notion of selective disclosure. Additionally, although each work alludes to the past by means of an indexical relation to it, the narratives these indices are suggestive of have been shown to be "like the memories and secrets out of which they are born, only *traces* of the *whole* story" (Poulos 2008: 64).

Conclusion: Coming Clean

In both *Coming Clean* and within this thesis I have explored the capacity of indexical signs to acknowledge and commemorate loss, to evoke the state of loss as experienced by the bereaved, and to act as „selective disclosures" which partially conceal as they reveal.

In Chapter One I showed how indexical signs such as the garments of a loved one which remain following their loss, can serve to simultaneously affirm their life and reiterate their absence. Outlining the ability of clothing to point to its former wearer by means of a previous intimacy with their body, Chapter One focussed on Doris Salcedo"s works which employed clothing as traces and traces of clothing respectively. The worn shoes which comprise *Atrabiliarios*, each of which bear the negative form of where a foot had been, were used to exemplify the way indexical signs point to absence in their presence, simultaneously bringing the object to which they refer into proximity, and marking its remoteness. This equivocal balance between absence and presence was realised in works such as the *Prosthetic* series discussed in Chapter Two. In its title and in each depicted object"s subtle resemblance to the form of the body, the *Prosthetic* series alluded to the substitutionary role objects play in the aftermath of loss, highlighting how even the most commonplace objects can facilitate the work of memory.

In discussing this series of work in Chapter Two, I firstly highlighted how the past presence of an absent replica of an object, in this case an object which already spoke of absence in its intimate association with storing or preserving clothing, is suggested by the indexical means of each of these works" production. I explained how in presenting the literal trace of where the replicated objects were placed on photographic paper, these digital reproductions are evocative of both absence and presence in that they point to where an object has been, thus effectively demonstrating the existential connection which determines the indexical sign. This reference to the photographic process of the photogram was then used to introduce photographic theory which was referred to throughout the course of Chapter Two, particularly in relation to the „fogged" photograph which was shown to be a compelling instance of "immutable pastness and irretrievability" (Hirsch 1997: 20).

Evoking such dialectical notions of absence and presence, connection and disconnection, I showed – particularly with reference to works of the artist Salcedo in Chapter One - that indexical strategies for representation can effectively demonstrate the tensions experienced

by the bereaved in the aftermath of loss without narrating or attempting to represent them. This was most effectively put across by Salcedo"s work *La Casa Viuda* by means of the fusion of subtle traces of clothing to reconfigured pieces of furniture, which stimulated suggestions of bodily presences without representing them, evoking the way that for the bereaved "the unassimilable past lodges in the present like a foreign body" (Sheringham cited in Hallam and Hockey 2001: 105). The indexical sign was also consequently shown to be useful in considering narratives shaped by silences and secrets in that while it was shown that the indexical sign or trace pointed to a previous singular event or presence, it was also emphasised that in the absence of particularity, these traces could only be used to speculate with, thus furnishing only an imagined narrative (Bal 2010: 35; Bennett 2005: 61). In this way, using indexical signs, mediums and strategies, *Coming Clean* productively both reflected on and formed a partially imparted narrative, a selective disclosure.

This reflection on partially imparted narratives, on the relationship between what is revealed or concealed, was further assisted by both the suggestion of and reference to the domestic chore of laundry in the works of *Coming Clean*, which not only located this research within the private domain of the nuclear family, but also - in its routine, repetitive practice - alluded to private ritual. Using Mary Douglas"s definition of dirt as being based on "the relation of order to disorder, being to non-being, form to formlessness, life to death" (Douglas 1966: 5), comparison was drawn between information partially imparted, withheld or concealed from narrative inheritances and the traces eliminated in the process of laundry. This metaphor facilitated the consideration of the way that the treatment of traces which impose on the present affects both remembrance and the ritual of loss. In particular, I highlighted how attempting to maintain order, to evade the destabilising effect of loss by concealing its traces, has the potential to disrupt the formation and maintenance of memory, sanitizing highly charged objects "imprinted with the shape, size, and odour of the lived body" (Gibson 2004: 290) and thereby rendering them anonymous (Graves 1996: 40).

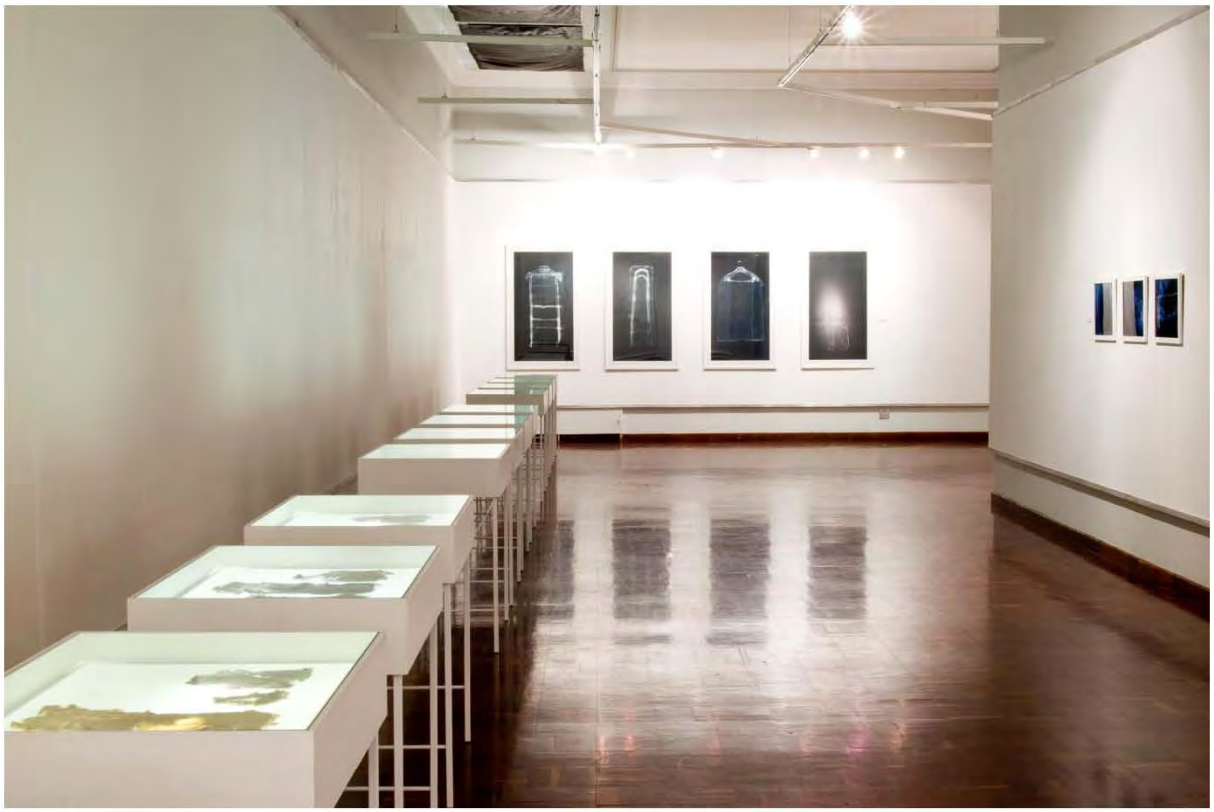
As such, I established that laundry could be considered a form of information control and therefore could be used as a metaphor for secrets (Vangelisti and Caughlin cited in Rober et al. 2012: 530; Van Herk 2002: 897). By means of this comparison, I likened the laundress, in charge of quietly concealing the dirty stories laundry tell, to the secret holder. Using both the moral judgements associated with the laundress, who in literary accounts has been portrayed as being tainted by the dirt she is in charge of eradicating, and the stain, which was also shown to be evocative of notions of moral contamination, this discussion, most notably with

regard to the *Come Clean/Vanishing Acts* series, highlighted the moral deliberations of the secret holder (Van Herk 2002; Rober et al. 2012).

In response to the Western association of secrets with destructiveness, a more neutral term proposed by Rober et al. (2012) was included in the discussion. This term, selective disclosure, was shown to also appeal to the dialectic between the concealed and the revealed, but was shown to be more accommodating of the complexities behind the disclosure of sensitive information (Rober et al. 2012: 893). Just as relationships are faced with both "the need for disclosure and the need for secrecy" (Rober et al. 2012: 531), the laundress too is presented with negotiating "the contradictory conjunction between cleanliness and dirt, appearance and effacement, the private and the public" (Van Herk 2002: 894).

It is with the findings of this exploration into the abilities of the indexical sign that the concluding work, *Settle* was produced. The series demonstrates the ability of the indexical sign to simultaneously commemorate and register loss, and by extension, to evoke the tensions experienced by the bereaved in that - as I have shown - this intimate family portrait can be seen as an evocation of the past within the present, a form of dedication, confirming previous presence and underlining present absence. This work can also be seen, as the title suggests, as the outcome of a process of negotiation, a marker which symbolises resolution. It exemplifies an acceptance of the notion of selective disclosure as an integral process of negotiating the complexities behind disclosing information in families by means of partially revealing traces of the bodies of my remaining nuclear family, concluding an intimate process which depended on their understanding and cooperation.

Appendix A: Exhibition Installation Images



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Illustrations:

Figure 1. Doris Salcedo, *Atrabiliarios* (1992-1993), wall installation with sheetrock, wood, shoes, animal fibre, and surgical thread in ten niches with eleven animal fibre boxes sewn with surgical thread, 99 x 388.6 x 14.6cm, Pulizer Foundation, St. Louis, MO. Courtesy of Alexander and Bonin, New York, and Jay Jopling/White Cube, London. (Reproduction taken from Mieke Bal. 2011. *Of what one cannot speak*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, colour plate 1.1, page 34.)

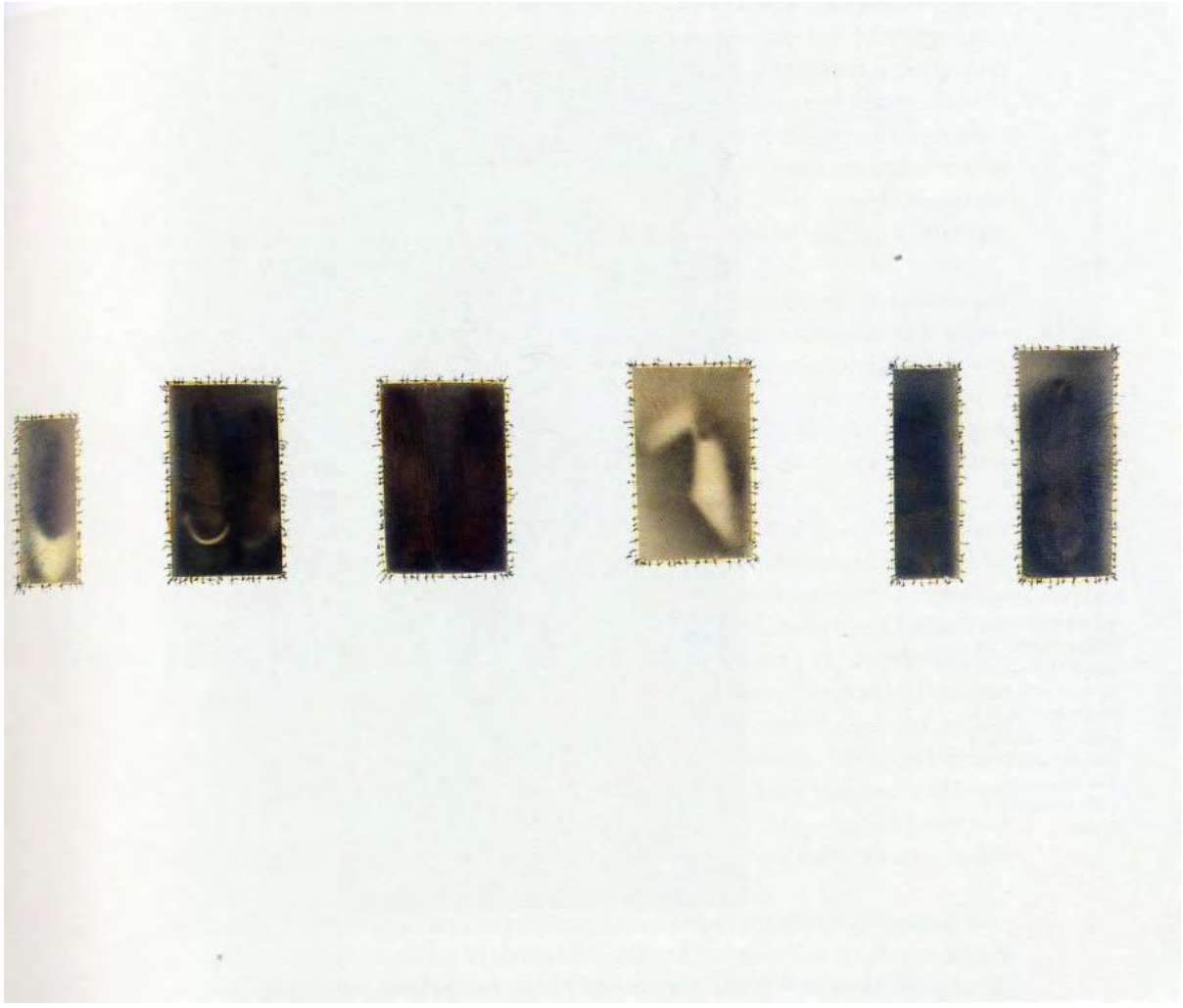

Figure 2. Doris Salcedo, *Atrabiliarios* (detail) (1992-1993), wall installation with sheetrock, wood, shoes, animal fibre, and surgical thread in ten niches with eleven animal fibre boxes sewn with surgical thread, 99 x 388.6 x 14.6cm, Pulizer Foundation, St. Louis, MO. Courtesy of Alexander and Bonin, New York, and Jay Jopling/White Cube, London. (Reproduction taken from Mieke Bal. 2011. *Of what one cannot speak*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, colour plate, page 31.)

Figure 3. Doris Salcedo, *La Casa Viuda II* (detail) (1993-1994), wood, metal, fabric, and bone, 260 x 80 x 60.5 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Courtesy of Alexander and Bonin, New York, and Jay Jopling/White Cube, London. (Reproduction taken from Mieke Bal. 2011. *Of what one cannot speak*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, Figure 2.7, page 99.)

Figure 4. Doris Salcedo, *La Casa Viuda II* (detail) (1993-1994), wood, metal, fabric, and bone, 260 x 80 x 60.5 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Courtesy of Alexander and Bonin, New York, and Jay Jopling/White Cube, London. (Reproduction taken from Mieke Bal. 2011. *Of what one cannot speak*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, Figure 2.8, page 100.)

Figures 5-8: Cassandra Wilmot, *Prosthetic I – IV*. (2012-2013), digital prints, 80cm x 142cm.

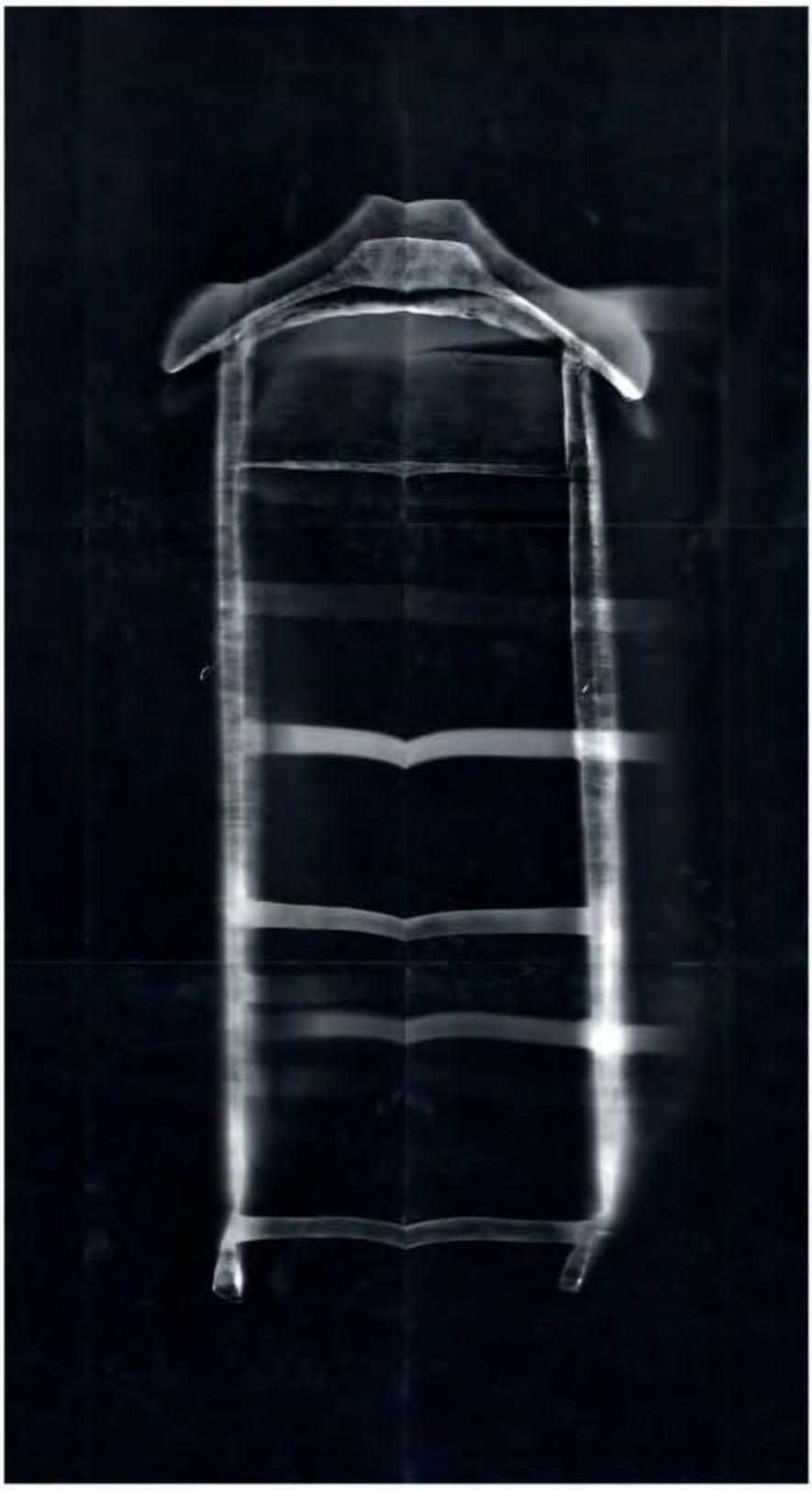

Figure 5: *Prosthetic I*

Figure 6: *Prosthetic II*

Figure 7: *Prosthetic III*

Figure 8: *Prosthetic IV*

Figure 9: Cassandra Wilmot, *Settle I –III* (2012-2013), lint dust on Hahnemühle, 1250 x 2500 cm each.

Figure 10: *Settle I* (detail)

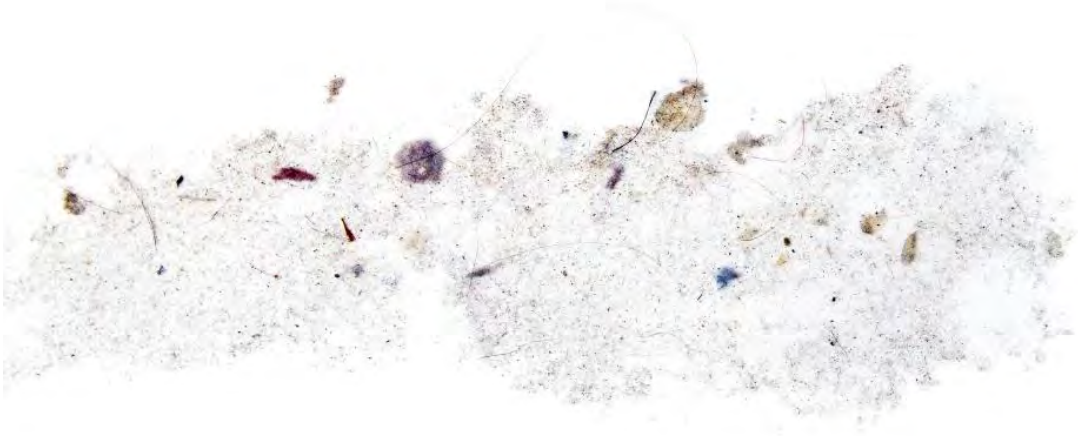

Figure 11: *Settle I*

Figure 12: *Settle II*

Figure 13: *Settle III*

Figures 14 and 15: Cassandra Wilmot, *Coming Clean I – IV* (2012-2013), etching and monotype, 86,5 x 117,5 cm each (framed)

Figure 14: *Coming Clean I-II*

Figure 15: *Coming Clean III-IV*

Figure 16 and 17: *Coming Clean I (Diptych)*

Figure 16: *Coming Clean I (etching)*

Figure 17: *Coming Clean I (monotype)*

Figures 18 and 19: *Coming Clean II (Diptych)*

Figure 18: *Coming Clean II* (etching)

Figure 19: *Coming Clean II (monotype, detail)*

Figures 20 and 21: *Coming Clean III* (Diptych)

Figure 20: *Coming Clean III* (etching)

Figure 21: *Coming Clean III* (monotype)

Figures 22 and 23: *Coming Clean IV* (Diptych)

Figure 22: *Coming Clean IV* (etching)

Figure 23: *Coming Clean IV* (monotype, detail)

Figure 24: Cassandra Wilmot, *Come Clean/Vanishing Acts I-III* (2012 - 2013), etching and digital prints on glass, 39,8 x 46,6 cm each (framed).

Figure 25: *Come Clean/Vanishing Acts I*

Figure 26: *Come Clean/Vanishing Acts II*

Figure 27: *Come Clean/Vanishing Acts III*

Figure 28: Grouping of lint from *Remainder/Reminder* series

Figure 29: Grouping of lint from *Remainder/Reminder* series

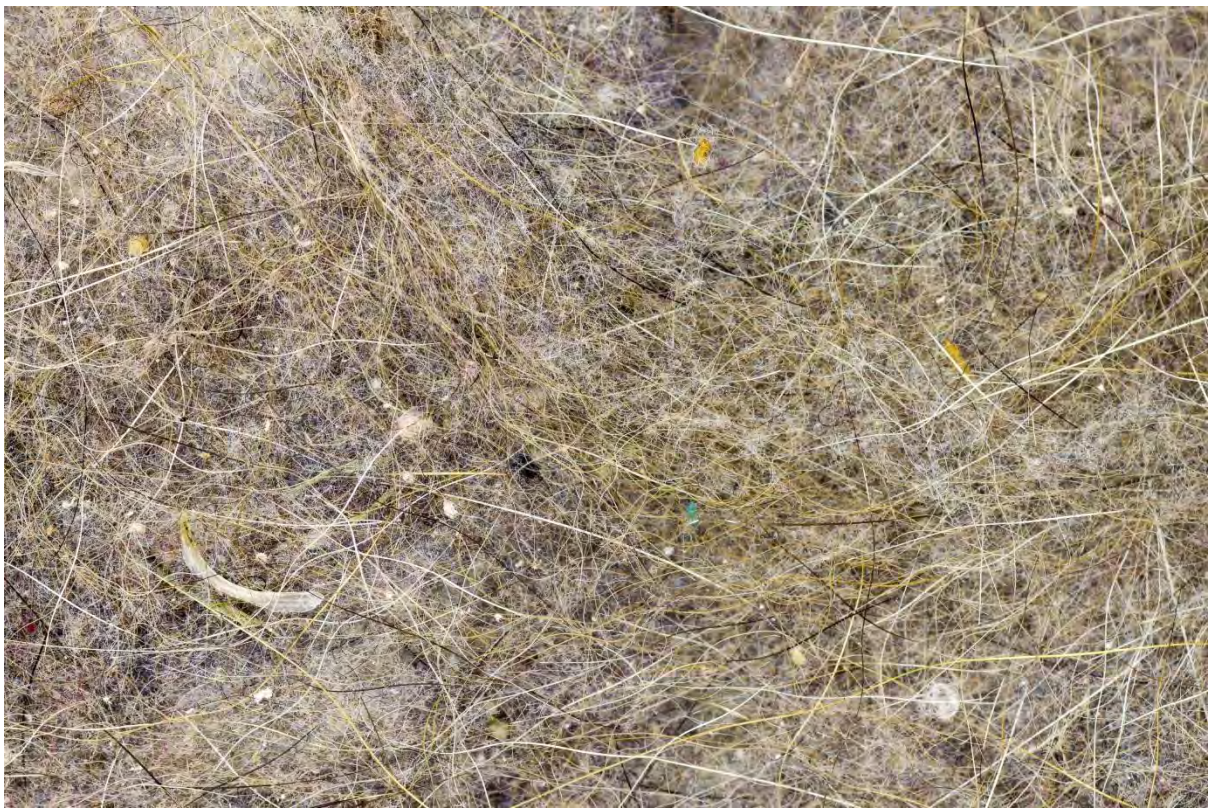

Figure 30: Detail of piece of lint from *Remainder/Reminder* series

Figure 31: Detail of piece of lint from *Remainder/Reminder* series