CASTING the DOLLHOUSE

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

The Dollhouse is a model of domestic life; its material framework, spatiality, passage, function and aesthetic describe the architectural construction of a domestic ideal. Yet, the dollhouse is not simply an architectural model; it is made specifically to house a doll. While architecture structures the movement of the body, social constructions mold the body as well as its image. Thus, both architectural and social frameworks come together simultaneously to form the cast of the dollhouse, for which the doll is molded to fit.

But now she is trapped inside the dollhouse - her fortress and asylum - she is held captive in its frames and assessed on how well she fits; if she has been trained to use all the props, if she can suit the wardrobe, and play the pre-scripted roles. She must embody the doll in order to find a place of belonging. Thus the domestic ideal is cast in exclusion of the *real* woman inside the doll, whose presence becomes a screaming absence found in the impressions left from the cast.

I have assembled the casts of four Dollhouses and the Dolls made to fit inside them. Fabricated by an interplay of pairing and comparison, a formation between image and text, it is the meeting of two surfaces, of inside and outside, and a woman in between.

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Relief halftone. *National Library of Medicine.* Web. 1 Nov. 2012. <*http://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/dreamanatomy/*>

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Lois, George. *Esquire* Magazine, Issue no. 399, Feb. 1967. 1967. Offset lithography. *Museum of Modern Art,* New York. Web. 1 Nov. 2013. <*http://www.moma.org/collection/*>

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From *Beauty Parade Magazine*, March 1952. Print. *Vintage Scans.* Web. 30 Oct. 2013. <*http://vintagescans.blogspot.ca/*>

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Photograph. *Smithsonian Libraries.* Web. 12 Oct. 2013. <*http://www.sil.si.edu/imagegalaxy/*>

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Photography. *Zackary Canepari.* Web. 1 Nov. 2012. <*http://caneparidoesitbetter.com/*>

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A HOUSE MADE OF GLASS // THE GLASS HOUSE

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<*http://www.flickr.com/*>

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Deutsches Architektur-Forum. Web. 6 Mar. 2013.
<*http://www.deutsches-architektur-forum.de/*>

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micro. *"Der Barcelona-Pavillon (1929) von Mies van der Rohe."* 22 Aug. 2010. Photograph.
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Book cover. vintage45. *Wordpress*. Web. 11 Oct. 2013.
<*http://vintage45.wordpress.com/*>

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pix4notes. *'Media Burn'*, 2007. Photograph. 26 Jan. 2007. *Wordpress.* Web. 23 Jan. 2013. <*http://pix4notes.wordpress.com/*>

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Sullivan, Robert. 6 Dec. 2012. Photograph. *BBC News.* Web. <*http://www.bbc.co.uk/*>

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middleton van jonker. *"Self portrait by Robin Evans."* Photograph. *Middleton Van Jonker.* 15 Oct. 2010. Web. 12 Oct. 2013. < *http://middletonvanjonker.com/2010/10/15/self-portrait-of-a-critic/*>

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C-print. "Vanessa Beecroft." *Museo Magazine.* Web. 25 Oct. 2012. <*http://www.museomagazine.com/VANESSA-BEECROFT*>

Fig.147 **Francesca Woodman, *"Self-deceit #1."* Rome, Italy. 1978.**
Photograph. *The Guardian.* Web. 1 Nov. 2013. <*http://www.theguardian.com/*>

Fig. 148 **Interior reflections, Barcelona Pavilion.**
Quetglas, Joseph. *Fear of Glass.* Berlin: Birkhäuser-Publishers, 2001. 103.

This is the doll,
And this is her house.
She lives in this house,
Yet the house is me.

Fig. 1 Heather Benning, *The Dollhouse,* 2009

A dollhouse is a model of a house. Opening up to reveal a sectional perspective, the dollhouse is an expression of a house through its interior qualities. Instead of observing its form exclusively from the exterior, the dollhouse allows one to see the entirety of the interior as an assembled display. While the rooms inside its protective facade organize and suggest specific activities, carefully curated objects within the house describe the liveliness of the domain. From a privileged vantage point - an omnipotent perspective -we are invited to inhabit the staged events, and to incorporate the furniture and dressings. Through the dollhouse, we present and imitate life on a furnished stage. Tiny objects and props are set up, symbols representing rituals and habits, all teeming with Life, but whose life?

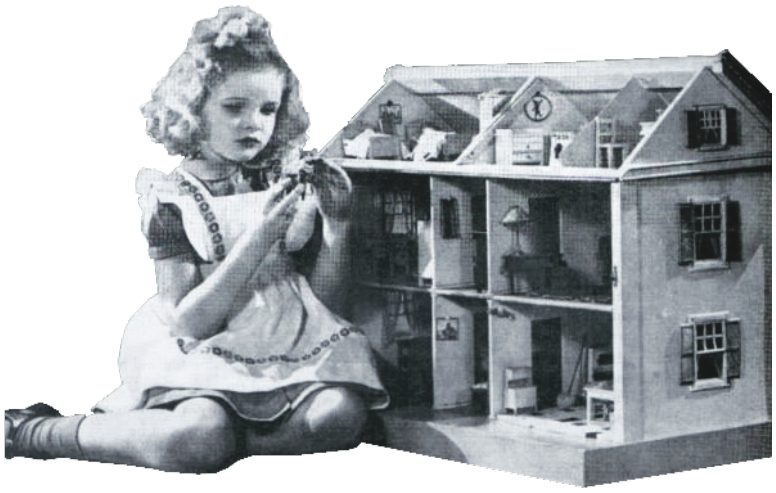

Fig. 2 Girl playing with dollhouse, c.1940

As a *model* of life-sized reality; the dollhouse parallels current beliefs and idealized life-styles, reflecting social relations that define domestic values. However, the Dollhouse is not just a miniaturization of a house, for it is specifically made to contain the Doll. Acting as the figure representing lived-being, the doll is the register of experience. She is compelled to act according to the furnishings and objects that surround her. We relate to the house through her, and we participate through her movement. Seamlessly, the doll embodies our own projections and sentiments, and we embody her encounters.

Fig. 3 Photograph of *Dolls' house of Petronella Dunois*, c. 1676.

Moreover, she is framed and contained by its decor, division and usage; the walls of the model are permanent dividers that organize function, but also act as potential limits. As in a staged existence, the very movements of the doll can be encouraged or deterred by the structure of the set as much as the props that accompany the rooms. The internal framework of our modeled houses - the organized thresholds and curated spaces by which we are forced to abide - actualizes our abilities and movements within the space, regulating rhythms and patterns of living.

The backdrop has been set for our dolls; play becomes role-play within the stage of a prescribed framework. We are presented with role models and model homes to set examples of and to demonstrate a model life.

Fig. 4 Sears gift catalogue, 1976

Conventional norms dictate the production of available models as well as the dolls that are made to fit inside. Yet the Doll itself is a manifestation of an imagined or ideal portrayal of a person's body, a form molded by cultural ideals, and created to fit into social and infrastructural models. Commercially camouflaged as mere playthings, dolls and dollhouses are sold as images of what we could be and more importantly, should be. So we must mold our own bodies according to the image presented; we become the Doll in order to live in the Dollhouse.

Fig. 5 *Woman (formerly Venus) of Willendorf*, statuette, 22-24,000BC

Dolls are considered one of the oldest toys, dating back to Ancient Egyptian, Roman and Greek civilizations.[1] The first dolls and figurines were handcrafted from wood, stone, ivory, clay, leather, and other natural materials. I imagine the very act of sculpting and shaping the doll carries with it an intimate connection to the created. Creation myths and spiritual beliefs often allude to our own inception from matter, suffused with life by a Creator; we cannot help but to associate a kind of 'soul' or essence within the doll.

Traditional figurines are believed to have been primarily used for spiritual or religious purposes, such as models of Gods, fertility idols, and tokens for the afterlife. Like a talisman, the doll functioned as a projection of a cultural belief or blessing. These dolls were not simply miniature replications of a physical form, but symbolic objects that housed a spiritual essence. In some cultures, these ritualistic dolls were never intended to be played with.

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1 Constance Eileen King, *Dolls and Dolls Houses* (London: Hamlyn Publishers, 1977), 132

Fig. 6 *Louvre voodoo doll*, Egypt, 2-3AD

Contained for centuries, she was found in a clay vase, blind and bound. By her side, inscribed in lead, an erotic attraction curse secures her body in a magical trance, a cryptic torment. She is made of unbaked clay and pierced with 13 nails of violent desire. Each nail represents a binding to the curser, part for part. Her head and heart are struck, her sexuality penetrated; her eyes, mouth, ears, hands and feet are bound as well.[2]

Thus, the doll embodies an active force, it is made of more than material constituents. We 'play' with the doll, and through her we can express our feelings and desires. By incorporating our personal intentions and sentiments, the doll comes alive. At the same time, the doll represents an idealization, an idol, an attempt to distill the essence of Woman, to capture her in an object as something to fertilize, and something to own.

2 Valerie Flint, Willem de Blécourt , *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe*. Volume 2, (London: The Athlone Press, 1999), 77-78

Fig. 7 *'Children inspecting dolls' heads at Ideal Toy Company in Jamaica, Long Island, USA,'* c.1955

The Doll is still an influential symbol today, and its power is acknowledged in its ever-continuous reproduction. For many, the doll represents a toy of the past, a childish plaything, or a 'phase'. However, the internalized rehearsal through doll play often returns, impressed by images that serve to reinforce an ideal figure, leaving a distinct imprint on one's own imagined body. One chooses to reject or pursue the attributes of the Doll, but this desired ideal becomes a centripetal force around which a woman must often contend.

Psychologists, anthropologists and behavioral scientists are used by marketers to construct and mold children's preferences and world view. "You are what you buy." It is not just objects that are being sold, but values.[3] Like the mass-molded army of figurines named Barbie, and the plastic mannequins that adorn window storefronts, the body is a symbol representing identity and Self.

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3 *Consuming Kids: The Commercialization of Childhood*, dir. Adriana Barbaro and Jeremy Earp, (Media Education Foundation, 2008) Documentary.

Fig. 8 Cast iron doll head mold, 1960s

To make a cast, a model is required as a prototype; both the interior and exterior of the form must be accounted for. A cast requires a mold which consists of one part that shapes the exterior form, and another that defines the shape of the interior void. The resultant form is a product of the space between the two parts of the mold. Both the form and the exclusions of the form are constructed in the same cast. As such, the exterior surface and interior void are created within the same fold; though intimately connected, they are cast in the shadow of one another.

BEING INSIDE

Fig. 9 *Bliss* Dollhouse, American, 1896

AN INSIDE-BEING

Fig. 10 Fetus in Womb, plaster cast, 1908

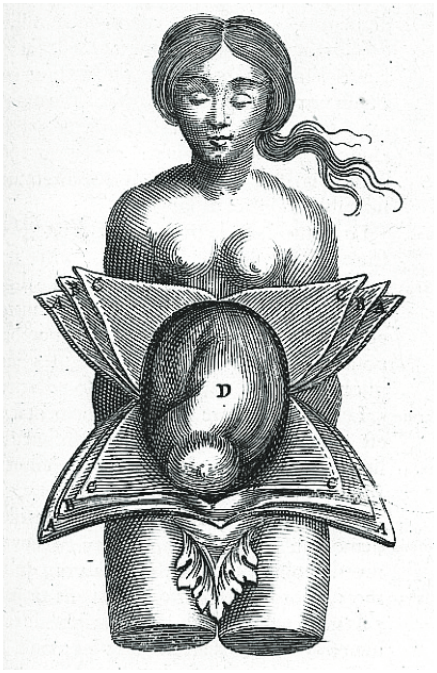

Fig. 11 Anatomical illustration of fetus in womb, 1684

"We all began inside."[1]

A prevalent understanding of embodiment is of 'being within'. The body is described as having a distinct interior and exterior by which skin acts as a border holding everything in, in an experience of containment. Things enter and certain things come out. Even the simple idea of fitting things into categories and compartments is directly influenced by our experience of embodiment.[2]

Moreover, our understanding of the body compels us to build and manipulate a formal existence that mimics and supports this experience. Cast from the inside - out into the world, we seek the safe haven of a shelter that protects and encloses. And so we construct an environment to contain our being.

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1 Karen A. Franck and R. Bianca Lepori, *Architecture from the Inside Out*, (Waltham, MA: Academy Press, 2007), 18

2 Christine Battersby, "Her Body/Her Boundaries: Gender and the Metaphysics of Containment," *Journal of Philosophy and the Visual Arts: The Body,* ed. Andrew Benjamin (London: The Academy Group, 1993), 31

Fig. 12 Nino Ana Batukela Samkharadze, "*Doll House*", 2011

Our built environment can be seen as a direct manifestation of our bodily expressions, a reflection of our physical form by accommodating our actions. Buildings become extensions specifically constructed for the movement of the body, enlarged representations modeled on the occupants within.

Architecture is a formulation and design of our constructed surroundings; it is a quest and a question pertaining to how we craft and enable our desired living experiences. The walls and floors that support and accommodate our belongings are not simply protective surfaces made of beams and posts; they form the structural bearings in which we are framed, the stage upon which Life is played out, ultimately shaping one's identity and sense of place.

Fig. 13 Jeffrey Silverthorne, "*Woman who died in her sleep.*" 1972.

The pre-modern experience of the body was described by enigmatic or supernatural phenomena,[3] but the growth of new scientific theories during the Renaissance opposed these mystical explanations of the body's functions. Dissection was used to reveal the unseeable space of the body, to attain knowledge and insight by uncovering the body's mysterious workings.

The english word cadaver has its origin based on the Latin word *cadāver*, most likely rooted in the word *cadere*, 'to fall', metaphorically meaning 'to die'. From a spiritual and religious standpoint, there was an instinctual fear for the Soul. The body was the temple for the Soul and dissection was a violent and public exposure of a sacred space.

3 Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture*, (New York: Routledge, 1995), 4

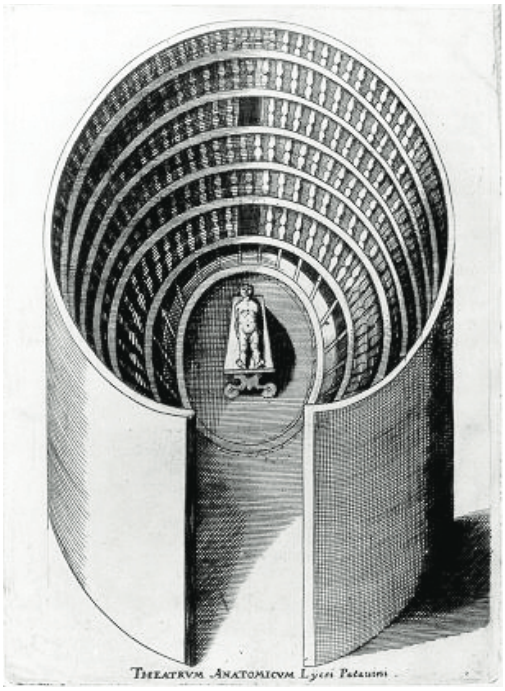

Fig. 14 "*The Anatomy Theatre of Fabricus,*" 17th century engraving

The anatomical theatre is an edifice designed for the dissection and demonstration of human anatomy, the study of *living structures*. Starting in the 16th century, the first permanent anatomical theaters were built in Europe for educational institutions. Resembling an amphitheater in form and performance, the anatomical theatre is specifically built for spectators to witness the body live under examination.

The invention of the anatomical theatre not only describes a growing interest in dissection as a method of medical research, but also reveals a new relationship between life and corpse. Disenchanted by mysticism, dissection was the only method by which one could provide visible evidence to support or disprove theoretical postulations of our interior nature.

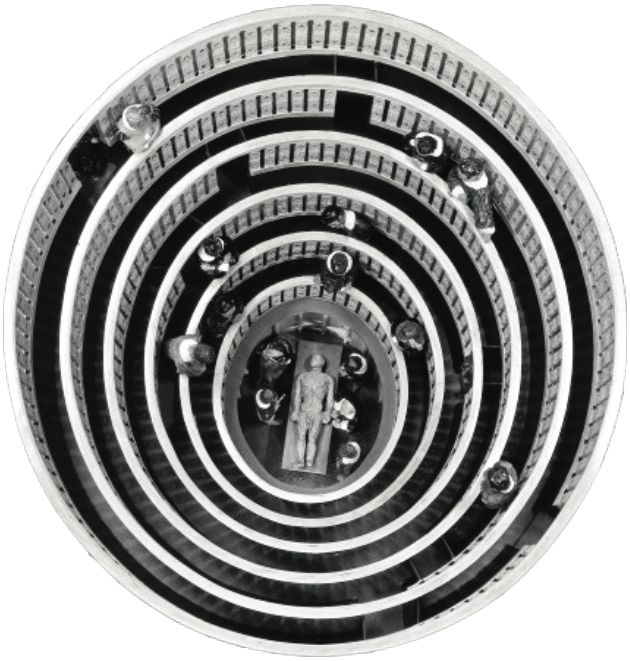

Fig. 15 Anatomical theatre at Padua. Diorama.

All are hushed when the anatomist enters the theatre. Surrounded on all sides by colleagues, students, and guests in the fields of both art and medicine, he circles the dissection table, upon which he is about to perform. This central platform sets the stage from which rows of seating or standing room concentrically rise upwards, funneling the roaming gazes towards the *tableau mort*. The spectators look down upon this stage from raised platforms, creating a perspective of seeing from above. Leaning bodies hunch over the balustrade, as wide eyes hover over the exposition. One body lies open and supine.

"...And there was the body, cut up and prepared beforehand, already shaved, washed and cleaned. He began with the outer skin..."[4]

4 Christine Quigley, *Dissection on Display: Cadavers, Anatomists and Public Spectacle*, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2012), 93.

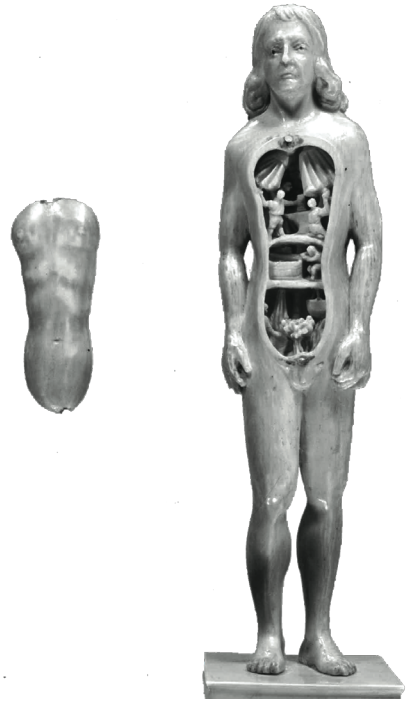

Fig. 16 *Anatomical Man*, carved ivory, 17th century

While the anatomical theatre was designed specifically to host the *sight* of the body, the anatomical body described a *site* of lived-experience. Up until this point, medical research was focused primarily on symptoms of the living; but to cut open the body and uncover its inner contents held promises of a knowledge that could not be obtained through external signs. Seeing was to have knowledge, and to thereby have control over the body.[5] Dissection allowed one to unveil the structure of the body, and to uncover our 'true' constitution by demonstrating its function and form.

The opened body was the site upon which anatomical Life was defined. Thus the body became a territory to carve, explicate and conquer. Backed by medical and scientific approval, dissection gained prestige, authority and influence.

5 Sawday, 81

Fig. 17 Frontispiece of Andreas Vesalius' *De humani corporis fabrica*, engraving, 1543

At the forefront of modern human anatomy, Andreas Vesalius emphasized the importance of an evidence-based knowledge. He believed that the human body was an immediate and primary source for uncovering the true order of Nature, which could only be acquired through practical experience. He warned of misconceptions that were founded upon knowledge that was not supported by demonstrable confirmation. On the frontispiece of Vesalius' seven-volume anatomical manuscript, he demonstrates the dissection of a woman's abdomen - the 'cradle of life' - while pointing to the ominous skeletal figure of Death.[6] Simultaneously generating new opportunities for discovery and intervention, dissection was the quest for knowledge under the looming reminder of our impending mortality. Within the same gesture, as both demonstrator and interpreter, he becomes the mediator between the interior of the body and its constructed body of knowledge.

6 Ibid., 7

Fig. 18 Development of fetus inside woman's womb, engraving, 1545

In this image, the dissection is staged in the city itself. She is poised with one foot raised and spread, exposing her body to the metropolis beyond. From an elevated viewpoint, one man observes her open womb through spectacles. Her eyes are closed graciously, and her hand is in the midst of a gesture. As if she removed her drapings only moments ago, she curtsies to begin her performance.

But how limp her hand hangs, and the wobbliness of her legs is uncannily yielding. Her body is propped up by the structures that dominate her surrounding. Within the city, her place, as well as her interior space, is rendered as a body - an edifice - that contains and supports life.

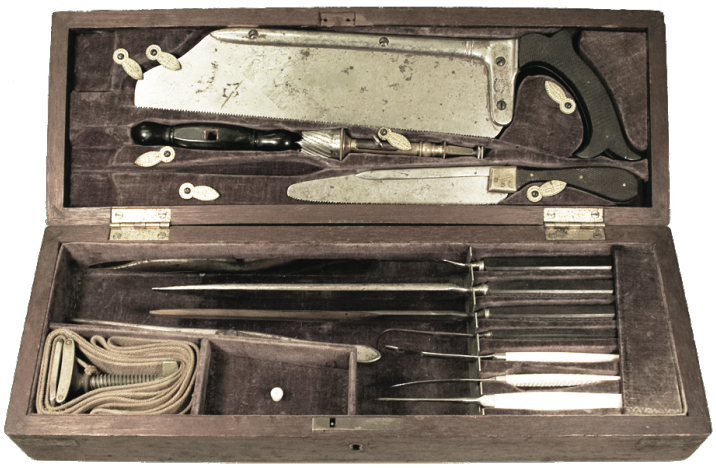

Fig. 19 Physician's kit: dissection and surgical tools, late 19th century

"With a very sharp razor make a circular incision around the umbilicus, deep enough to penetrate the skin, then from the middle of the pectoral bone [sternum] make a straight, lengthwise incision to the imbilicus, and from the lower region of the umbilicus proceed toward the pubes as far as the [...] region of the pubic bone, [...] so that there is required, as it were, one incision from the chest to the pubes. Next, on each side make an incision from the side of the umblicus transversely to the loins but penetrating only the skin [...]. When these incisions have been made in this way, and when the upper right angle of the four right angles of skin facing the umblicus has been lifted with a hook or with the tips of the fingers [...], little by little separate the skin from the fat at the breast and as far as the back by transverse incisions made very close to the skin. When this part of the abdomen and thorax has been laid bare of skin, the three remaining parts must be uncovered in a like manner."[7]

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7 *"How to deal with the skin, epidermis, fat, and fleshy membrane in the abdomen."* Charles Donald O'Malley, *Andreas Vesalius of Brussels* 1514-1564, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1964), Appendix, 345

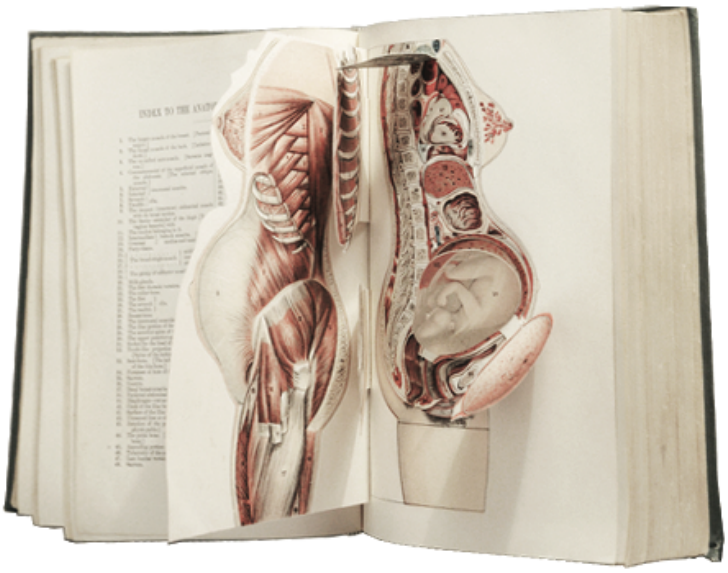

Fig. 20 Frederick Hollick, *The Origin of Life*, Anatomy flap book, c. 1902.

The Latin word for "body" is corpus. The use of corpus directly refers to the physical body, but is also used to describe a "body of work" or a collection of parts. The tools of dissection are applied to mediate beyond the surface of the body, both uncovering as well as defining a new perspective of the body. Carving into new territory, the scalpel allows for a view of an interior that is unavailable from the outside. As if one is reading a book, each membrane is examined and turned, folded over to reveal the subsequent leaves. Each section of the body is analyzed, probed, and recorded. These findings, illustrated and defined, are made into prints, and bound into manuscripts, compiled into the form of a new body of knowledge.[8]

"The true meanings of words are bodily meanings, carnal knowledge; and the bodily meanings are the unspoken meanings. What is always speaking silently is the body."[9]

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8 Sawday, 2

9 Norman O. Brown, *Love's Body*, (New York: Random House, 1966), 265

Fig. 21 *Elenco EDU-41007* 11pc 20" Human Anatomy Model, 2013

Anatomical models are often carved with removable pieces to demonstrate the internal workings of the body. The outer covering acts like a facade, a protective plane simultaneously separating inside from out, while containing and framing the spaces within. One gains access to the interior by cutting or crossing the threshold of the skin. Open and on display, a dissected view allows one to visually observe the interior composition in its entirety. Membranes and planes divide the cavity into parts, while separating and organizing the functions within; each component demonstrates a specific task.

The vitality that scientific reason describes is one of faculty, operatives, and definitives. Furthermore, medical authorities provide treatment by objectively combatting individual organs or symptoms in isolation of the whole body and its extended pressures.

Fig. 22 Marc Giai-Miniet, *Le Grand Digérant n°2*

Peeling back the facade of the house expose its inner secrets, shedding light on its most intimate and private spaces. The interior is defined by the partitioning walls, and can be experienced room by room, or as a unified composition of spaces. The sectional cut through the house allows the viewer to gauge and contextualize the environment in which the stages of rooms are situated. Each room stands in clear view, distinct from one another - on display- like living cells stacked and organized.

"Clearly the representation of function has always been architecture's primary form of embodiment. Embodiment thus can be defined as the codification of form as it has been legitimated in any specific period of time by function, aesthetics, and meaning."[10]

10 Peter Eisenman, "The Interstitial Figure," *Anybody*, ed. Cynthia C. Davidson. (New York: Anyone Corp., 1997), 244

Fig. 23 *3B Scientific Deluxe Torso*, 20-part educational anatomical model

The word organ, comes from the Greek word organon which is also used to describe a tool. The body is understood as a collection of parts - a four-pronged, 7500-piece apparatus - that carries out the processes of 'life'. By cutting the body into pieces, it becomes easier to manage, to handle, and to navigate the whole. Each part becomes its own definitive instrument detachable from the rest of the body. Moreover, specialized experts target specific members and produce a practical knowledge in isolation of the whole.

These 'pieces' of bodily knowledge are assembled - like a modular construction - into the form of a complete body. Inevitably, the way in which we describe and define the body's constitution and experience is reflected in the methods we use to construct our built environment.

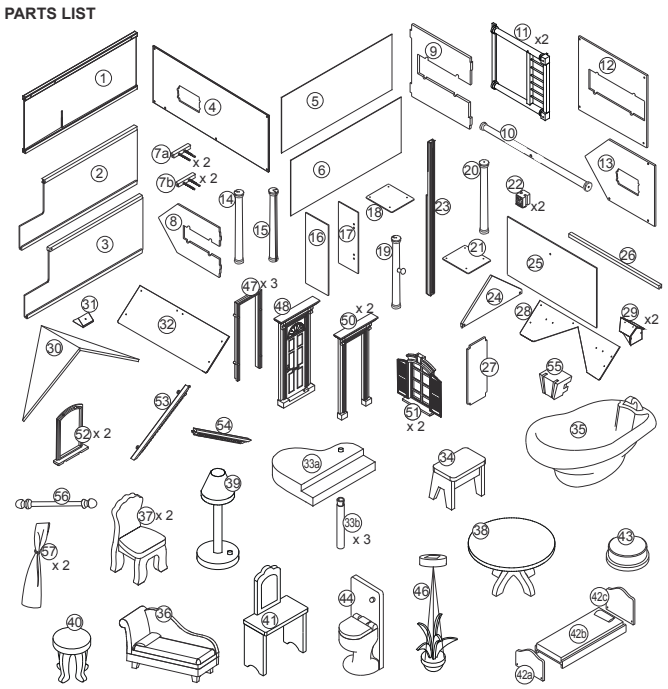

Fig. 24 Parts list, *My Dreamy Dollhouse* assembly kit by *KidKraft*

Through anatomy, medical science positions and defines all the visible functions of the body by measuring and analyzing its forms. The separation of individual components allows for a definitive categorization of our living parts; each member can be examined, scrutinized and defined. Taxonomy parcels out and assigns each member a place within the body's composition. It defines a locus, as well as a functional bearing for each part. At the same time, this partitioned approach reduces the study of "living structures" to categorical and empirical definitions. Each person's unique physiological composition is generalized in order to qualify a 'norm'.

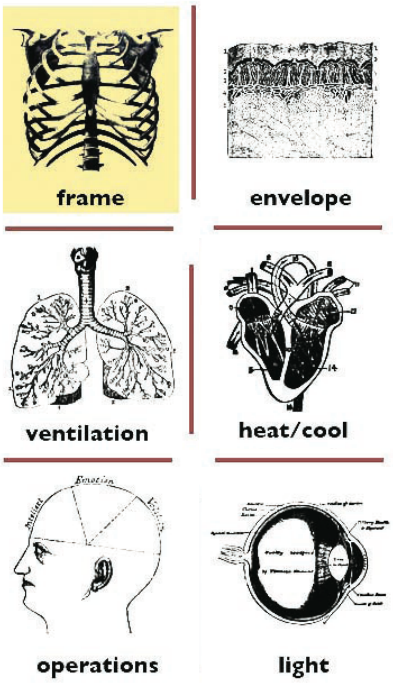

Fig. 25 *Home/Body Analogy*

Architecture has commonly been described and prescribed through medical and organic terms, with urban planners acting as *"doctors of space."*[11] These metaphors may be simplifications, but they reveal our approach to space and spatial design. When we begin to look at the body as analogous to our constructed systems, it infiltrates our language, it becomes a means of experiencing and describing our relationship to our surroundings. Yet what is missing from these images is the actual experience of blood and respiration rushing through the body in temperamental flux, as well as any intimacy or connection with our emotions, drives, expressions, and energy.

"The reconfiguration of the medical body by new sciences leads to a reconfiguration of architecture."[12]

11 David Pinder, "Modernist urbanism and its monsters," *Surrealism and Architecture,* ed. Thomas Mical, (New York: Routledge, 2005), 183

12 Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Embodied Image: Imagination and Imagery in Architecture,* (West Sussex: John Wiley and Sons, 2011), 120

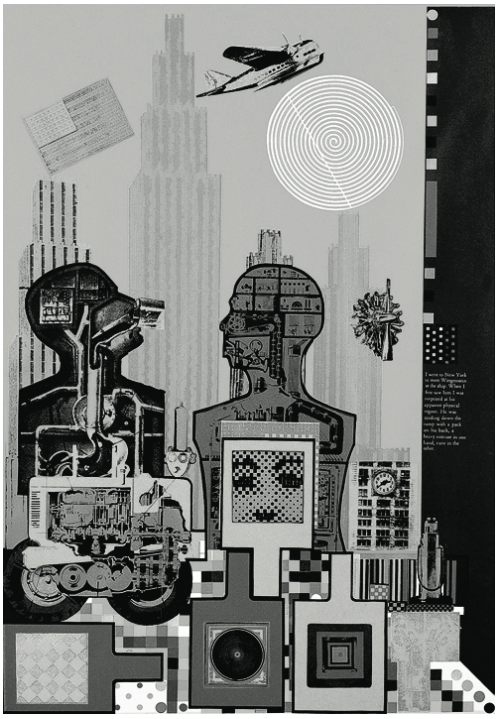

Fig. 26 Eduardo Paolozzi, *Wittgenstein in New York*, 1964

The scientific body is a living machine that requires the right parts to ensure proper function. Illness is seen as invasion, an infiltration of the body, an imbalance or weakness. Abnormalities and differences are considered an in-ability to function in the society, a dis-ability, dis-ease. Medical and scientific knowledge takes command over the lived-body, defining 'natural' qualities, as well as diagnosing 'abnormal' symptoms, armed with new definitions of Life and new defenses against Death.

Scientific research positions itself as neutral observation, seeking only to provide veritable and practical knowledge. Yet to have authority on knowledge - the 'truths' - of life, is to have power to influence, participate, change, create, and control the surrounding environment. Institutional authorities battle for control over individual bodies, the body of the masses, and the body politic.

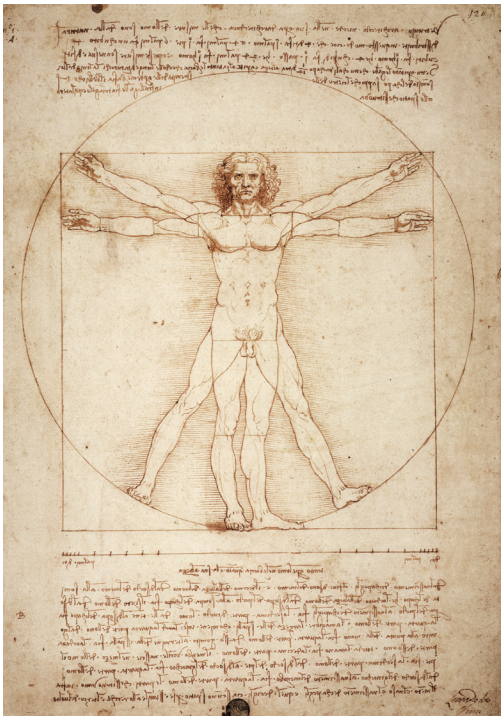

Fig. 27 Leonardo da Vinci, *Vitruvian Man*, c.1490

Leonardo da Vinci described the site of the body as a miniature world of universal forces; he believed that the workings of the cosmos were imprinted in the anatomy of the body. Formed by the same creative forces and impulses, the body incarnated Nature's mysterious design. This analogy joined the human flesh to the flesh of the world in a poetic and formal relationship. As a construct from and for the body, architecture was understood to be intimately connected to the physical form. Vitruvius wrote of an ideal figure, a divine body that would resonate in greatest harmony with Nature. Described as a set of ratios fit to be used in temple design,[13] Leonardo was able to illustrate these proportions through Man's anatomical form. The Vitruvian man was visual proof of these ideal proportions, and of this sacred relationship, a perfect harmony between Man and Nature. Thus, *his* body was invested with the creative power to construct physical structures and ideological frameworks as well.[14]

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13 Vitruvius Pollio, *Ten Books on Architecture,* (New York: Dover Publications, 1914), Book III, Chapter 1

14 Elizabeth Grosz, "Woman, Chora, Dwelling," *Gender Space Architecture,* eds. Jane Rendell, Barbara Penner and Iain Borden, (London: Routledge, 2003), 218.

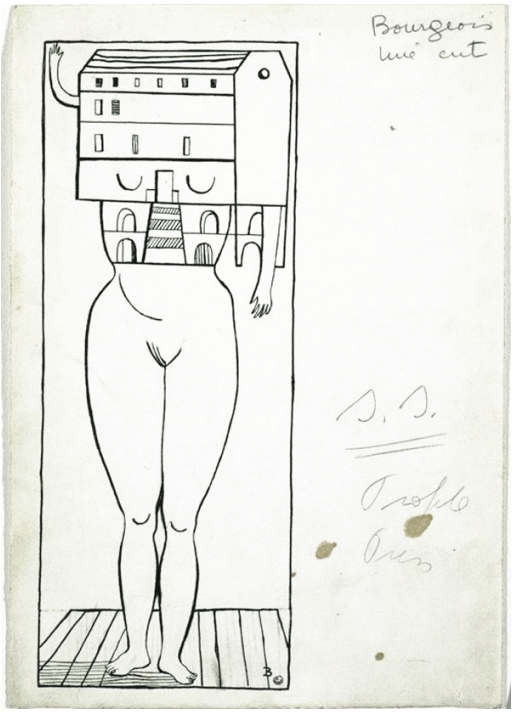

Fig. 28 Louise Bourgeouis, *Femme Maison*, 1947

Her body is encased by a house. She stands attentively, passively, and patiently. The house shields her face, acting as a filter and necessary interface between her and the world, her given perspective. Parts of the house are integrated into her body and an entry has been carved into her chest. She is a domestic container.

If man's anatomical power is analogous to a micro and macro-expansive creative force, woman's biological anatomy places her securely in an internalized state of production. Woman hosts her creative power within. Her body contains her reproductive power, it is a protective body and therefore in need of protection. She is not seen as a solid agent through which she can actively participate and manipulate the surrounding environment. Man's role is to build, and Woman's role is to be contained.

She is told that there is something inside her; and she is afraid of what it might be. Even though she has never seen it, she senses its presence; she carries it everywhere she goes. One fateful day, it begins to speak, to release a morbid yet arousing appearance. They tell her it is changing, that this something is capable of one thing, and that it is destined to emerge. She must make way for its ultimate function; but she fears that it will take over her entire being. Yet how can she escape from what is within her?

The Doll with Something Inside Her

Fig. 29 *'Cesarean operation,'* wax model from *Spitzner Collection*

"In women, in the hollow of the body below the ribcage, lies the womb. It is very much like an independent animal within the body for it moves around of its own accord and is quite erratic. ...When it suddenly moves upward [i.e., toward a fragrant smell] and remains there for a long time and presses on the intestines, the woman chokes, in the manner of an epileptic, but without any spasms. For the liver, the diaphragm, lungs and heart are suddenly confined in a narrow space. And therefore the woman seems unable to speak or to breathe..."[15]

Woman bears a territory within her; though she is inseparable from this space, she must fight for ownership and control of her dominion, or else concede to the hands of patriarchal authorities.

15 Aretaeus of Cappadocia, "Chapter 5: On the Paroxysm of Epileptics," *De causis et signis acutorum morborum (Causes and Symptoms of Acute Disease)*, ed. Francis Adams. *Perseus.* eBook.

Fig. 30 Ancient Roman Vaginal Speculum, 1 BCE

hys·ter·a

Greek “womb”, matrix

1. a hollow muscular organ lying within the pelvic cavity of female mammals. It houses the developing fetus and by contractions aids in its expulsion at parturition

2. Sense of “place or medium where something is developed”, from Old French matrice “source, origin,” from mater (genitive matris) “mother”.

Fig. 31 Gustave Courbet, *L'Origine du Monde (The Origin of the World)*, 1866

The female has a void. Though it has been called an emptiness or incompleteness, there is potential for life within this void, an ability to take in.[16] She is the embrace from where we all began; only she has the ability to encompass, to envelop and to subsume. She is always the one that receives; she is fleshy, supple, tender, and soft. She is the one that attends, comforts, accepts, yields, and accommodates. Thus the female specimen is *penetrable*, making her permeable, as well as vulnerable, to the exterior environment. Her unfilled vessel becomes a threat, its conceivability produces potential unknowns; yet in being un-ventured, it is an emptiness that can be entered and conquered. She is both a space of refuge and threat.

Feminine character traits attributed to her sexual organ, such as being penetrable, passive, receptive, nurturing, soft, mysterious, and concealed, are built into the language of scientific 'neutrality'.

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16 The nature of the void as having the capacity to receive, Jennifer Bloomer,"Big Jugs," *Gender Space Architecture*, eds. Jane Rendell, Barbara Penner and Iain Borden, (London: Routledge, 2003)

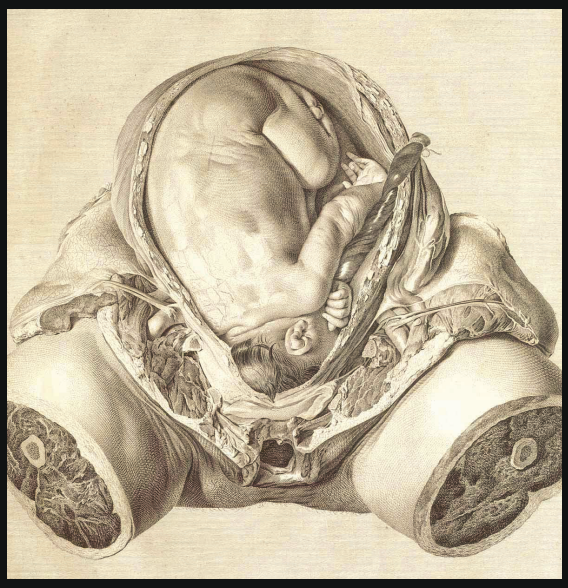

Fig. 32 Jan van Riemsdyk, *The Anatomy of the Human Gravid Uterus*, 1764

This womb is viewed as an object, a receptacle for a function. Anatomical illustrations depict organs in a state of dissection, parcelled and viewed from an arm's length away, in emotionless objectivity. Dismembered and displaced it no longer belongs to a body, nor anybody. Distinguishing the womb as an autonomous force - within but independent from the woman - reduces her stature as human being into a mere container for the reproductive organ. There is no place for her own sexuality, nor for her subjective experience in the phallocentric schema that she is conceived into. Science has expurgated the body and summarized the processes of life, while acclaiming parcels of knowledge as being more or less integral to vitality.

Fig. 35 *"Scientific Peep Show",* Popular Science, 1938

Science must speak of sexuality from a purely rational and logical stance, and does so in the most objective manner. Revealing how the body works, the scientific peep show is not sexual in manner, but of another type of discretion, the knowledge of the private interior of the body. However, the appropriation of 'peep show' suggests that the scientific view is one of voyeurism, of an intimate but one-way exchange. It is an empowered perspective, an objectifying and penetrating approach to the body. This scientific display does not present the body in its live and candid state, but posed within a curated, directed, and sanitary framework.

Fig. 36 Marcel Duchamp, *Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage...*, 1946-66

Look. There is a woman here. A gaze breaks through layers of gaping membranes onto an enchanted terrain of mounds and skin. Amongst the parched foliage foregrounding a waterfall beyond, she lies uncannily prone and relaxed, vulnerable yet uninhibited. She is placed at a distance, and the flickering light she upholds is the only gesture of life in sight. Restricted to glimpses through the peeping holes of the barrier, her face is out of range. And though one may strain, she is forever unreachable.

The gaze is no longer passive nor impartial, it is a transgressive act of participation. What we perceive is determined by how we are looking. Context depends on the interpretation of the viewer. Although she is naked and on display, it is the *view* that is ultimately being exposed.

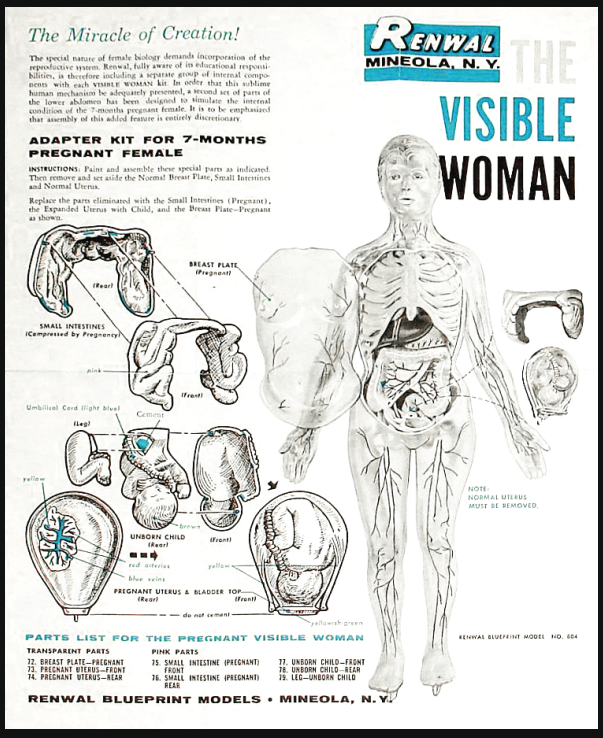

Fig. 33 *"The Visible Woman"* blueprint, *Renwal* model kit, 1963

The Visible Woman is an anatomical woman, a transparent and sealable container for her organs, distinguished by the womb, a container of life inside her. She does not feel sensuality towards herself and her body; she sees her sexuality as a reproductive function, with procreation as its ultimate purpose. There is no clear space for her own sexuality outside of its fulfillment through biological conception; her being is always described in relation to this thing inside her. But she is not separate from it, she is simultaneously void and container.

Without access to her own interior, she learns about her body through a lifeless, sterilized and impersonal image. So she does not know how to feel towards this thing inside her, that is both intimately part of her, yet somehow externally defined. She is no longer a sexual-*being* but a sexual object.

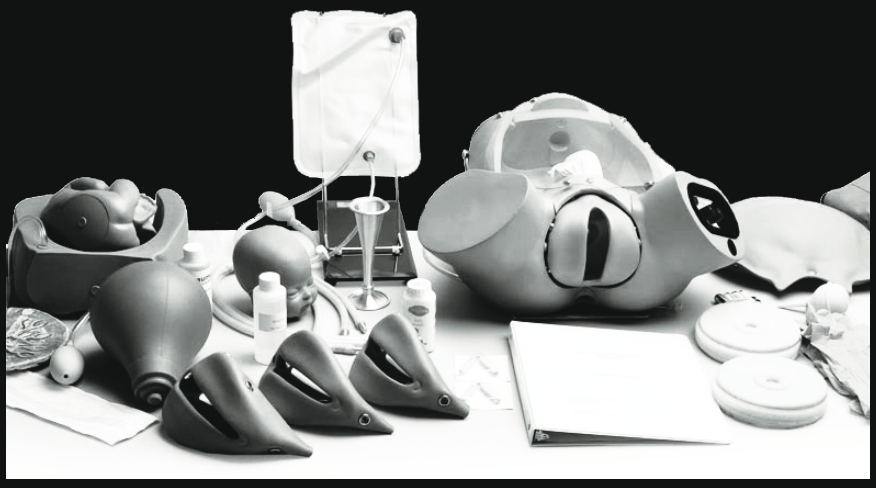

Fig. 34 *Advanced OB Susie S500.200 Versatile Birthing Torso*, 2012

As a birthing torso, Susie has all the necessary parts required to simulate the process of giving birth.[17] With suggestive extrusions and curves, her form is artificial yet familiar. She consists of a torso-sized container with an overt orifice through which simulated blood and birth takes place. Demonstrating the conveniences of modern capabilities, this training mannequin introduces the act of birthing as a seperate and detached experience without complications from the gestating woman. It is a tool used to teach the signs and symptoms of the procedure, but fails to qualify a connection to the live expereince. Yet this instrument is named Susie, she symbolizes a *real* woman. Without any other identifying features - like a face - she thus represents all women (she even comes in light, medium and dark skin tones). In turn, I am just another birthing torso, an elaborate gaping hole, a version of Susie S500.200.

17 Susie is installed with an electronic heartbeat on four AA batteries, and provided with simulated blood and urine. Susie is versatile, she has replaceable vulval inserts and a highly distensible cervix. Best of all, Susie comes with directions for use and can easily be packed and transported.

Fig. 37 Clemente Susini, *Anatomical Venus*, 'closed' position, 1782

During the Renaissance, the 'anatomical Venus' was used to attract and educate the public audience, promoting the exhibition of the body through the aphoristic command to "Know Thyself" - inside and out. Representing the life-sized female form, she was made to look as live as possible. Formed with precision and detail, wax was used to mimic the texture and color of living flesh. In her 'closed' position, the outer form is exhibited. She is modeled from head to toe with a smooth encasement of skin, often adorned with pearls or flowers, captured and exposed in a moment of ecstatic ravishment.

Skin is like an anatomical veil. It is a sensual surface, allowing accentuation and identification. The skin pronounces yet bounds the inner forms. Its taut envelopment draws attention to its concealment. For an anatomist, skin is a boundary that impedes vision and is pierced and peeled away.

Fig. 38 Clemente Susini, *Anatomical Venus*, 'open' position, 1782

From the outside, she is both sexually submissive, yet simultaneously threatening by her seductive power. When her chest-plate is removed, her sexuality is unveiled. Though unapparent from the exterior, she is fertile and fulfilled, hosting a fetus within her detachable womb. Her body no longer poses as a threat, but as a promise, a place of nurture and embrace. Thus the archetypal Venus, the ideal female, has been fulfilled by her maternal destiny, which is the true representation of feminine beauty.

"Is skin not, paradoxically, the most profound thing about us? A border defining within and without, a protective frontier, the envelope of the flesh [...] An interface of pains and pleasures - the skin is both armament and armor."[18]

18 Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio, *Flesh: Architectural Probes*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1994), 12

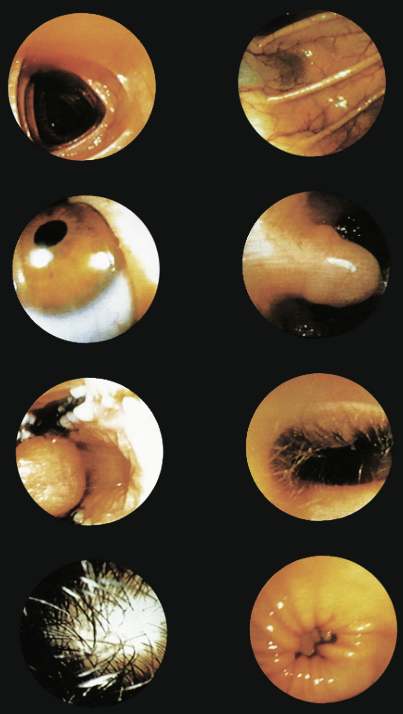

Fig. 39 Mona Hatoum, *Corps Étranger*, 1994

Woman's internal space - mysterious and unknown - is approached as something to uncover, conquer, and control. Anatomy attempts to describe and explicate Woman's sex, to capture its biological and therefore 'true' functionality outside of sensuality, emotions, and passions. Woman's body becomes a territory of potential threat and in need of control and ownership to ensure the symbolic and binding security over Woman's sexuality. Woman is caught between a fluid, fluxing interior, and a contained demonstration. Yet the body is not simply an object within the world through which we have contained experiences. The body is our means of expression, as well as an embodiment of expression itself.

"The body-interior, when it registers its presence, fractures the socially crafted exterior - the protective shell which we struggle to preserve."[19]

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19 Sawday, 12

Fig. 40 Jin Young Yu, *Untitled*, 2006

She begins to relate to her body like a sanitized instrument. She becomes uncomfortable in her own skin and the unruliness within; she fears what tongues may speak. She must ignore, hide or suppress her body's movements and expressions according to social guidelines and cultural tolerance. She chooses sterility in fear of disease and abnormality. She is taught to contain those things that are unsightly, and to fear her own vitality. And so she must strive to control her presence, and by concealing her own existence.

Medical, scientific and commercial establishments have attained authority by defining and de-mystifying the body, offering treatments, solutions and products in exchange for your body as a *site* of action, power and control. Your body is a force; a potential source that can work for or against any institutional establishment or social construct. However, this battle is fought internally where physiological and habitual territories lay at stake to be claimed.

Fig. 41 Berry Bush, *Vagina Monologues*. Baxter Theatre Centre, 2001

Reddened lips open to the sensuality of a dark and moist interior. Vitality is erotic, interactive, affected, transformative, reactive, temporal, hot, supple and in constant flux.

I am within and without, open and folded. I have a thousand words without reason, and a multiplicity to speak. I am inside-out, tingling, wriggling to shed this invisible itch; I can't reach. I am not incomplete; I do not need to be fulfilled. I yearn, to feel hunger, to consume and to be consumed. I am in flux, flexing, enrapturing, rupturing. I implode myself; I implore my Self! I am suffocating from within. Silently speaking, leaking, fluid and flooded, rushed with a convulsive pulse; I can't contain.

Fig. 42 "*The Victoria*," menstrual pad holder & belt advertisment, c.1900

In preparation for the shedding of the uterine lining, the body as a whole is effected by these internal happenings. Menstruation though seen as somewhat of an inconvenience to the modern woman, is a fluid, dynamic, gushing sign of life. It is a reminder of our cyclic nature, of birth and death, and of renewal and return. Instead of embracing or exploring the pulsating emotions and affects that color our outlook during menses, we regulate its pattern, and dread its arrival, we conceal its presence, and we see it as an unsightly disturbance to an otherwise invisible (and therefore happy) existence.

Unattractive female traits are considered threatening and are concealed as much as possible because they disturb the 'natural' order. Behavior that reveals this unstable interior space disrupts the image of the socially-crafted sanitized body. Science attempts to eradicate, or at the very least, contain her intolerable discharge.

Fig. 43 Anish Kapoor, *"Svayambh" ("Self-generated")*, 2009

A heavy thickness colors the very atmosphere with a raw intensity that she can taste in her mouth. The walls slowly begin to slide, thick, dripping, congealing, gathering speed, and leaving marked trails of its self. She becomes highly sensitive and attuned to the external movements around her. Touch is like a scraping she feels deeply inside, leaving her open and vulnerable. Defensively she attempts to fend off potential scarring. Her emotions become involved with every tongue and turn; her body is a tactile surface, glistening, absorbing, folding and feeling. This slippage is intimate, touching every surface, filling every crevice, smeared into the folds, inciting more drops to form, only to gather in larger grooves, finally to be lost in the culmination of a gushing release, destructive in nature, a silent demolition from within; it is death, but for regeneration.

Fig. 44 Ana Mendieta, *Body Tracks*, 1982

She must embrace the void within and allow its contractions to disturb the exterior currents. Though she is reactive and impressionable, this is perhaps desirable and even necessary. Being highly sensitive and tapped into her destructive qualities and characteristics, any lingering or unanswered desires, suppressed emotions or rejected sentiments, begin to surface, gaining momentum as they flow outwards. The outburst is often foreign at first, but uncanny in its recognition, like something returning. She is in a heightened state; she has the ability to feel life intensely, to be agitated, and moved to change, to renew, re-evaluate, and release.

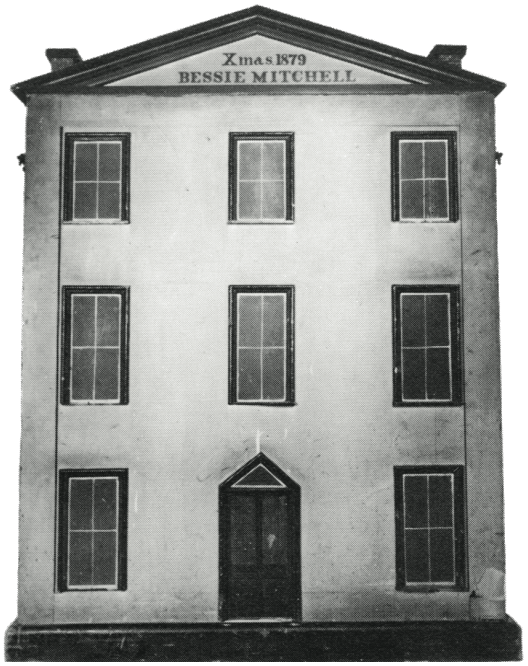

Fig. 45 *Bessie Mitchell's Dollhouse*, Christmas gift, American, 1879

PLAYING DOLL

Fig. 46 *Hysteria*, chronophotography, 1879

Fig. 47 Ancient Egyptian *'Soul House',* 2125-1985 BC

This is a house for the *ka*, the spirit or life force that continues to exist beyond the deceased body. The *ka* was believed to be like a person's double, often depicted as a smaller version of the living individual; existing from birth and beyond physical death. Models of food, supplies and other possessions nourished the *ka* through the energy housed within the represented objects.[1]

Miniature models have existed since ancient times, though the function and meaning of these objects have evolved significantly. In Ancient Egyptian tradition, tombs were the gateway to the afterworld and symbolic miniatures provided the dead with the things needed to journey comfortably into the afterworld. The most common miniature form found in tombs, ranging from Pharaohs to commoners, was the model of the house.

1 Donald Alexander Mackenzie, *Egyptian Myth and Legend*, (London: Gresham Pub. Co., 1913), 87. *Archive*. eBook.

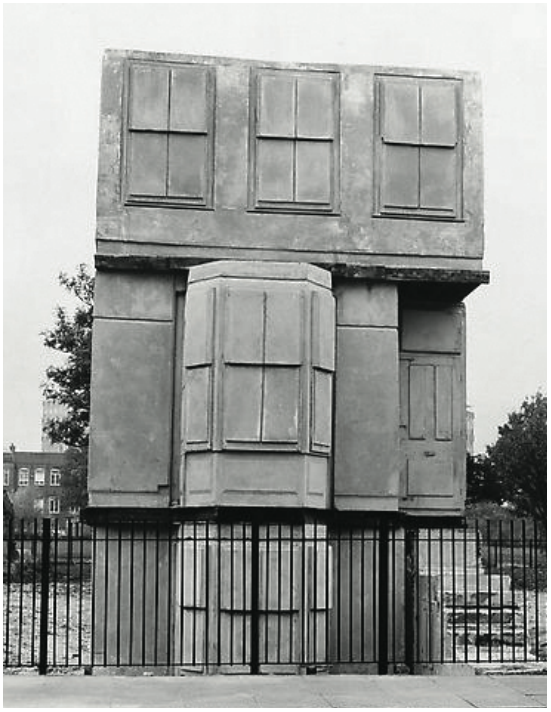

Fig. 48 Rachel Whiteread, *Untitled (House)*,1993

She receives a dollhouse from her father on Christmas day. There is a little doll like her within. She knows the house intimately; she arouses its inner workings. Traces of her presence are found everywhere; yet not in spontaneous array, but on formal display. Every room is socially furnished; separate functions are delegated and ritualistically decorated. Ever since she was a little girl, she has been playing the same role. Unbeknownst, she has been living and dreaming in this very house all her life. This is her dollhouse, a house for a doll.

Fig. 49 *Victorian girls playing with their dolls and dollhouse*, 1862

In the Victorian Era, the dollhouse was the stage upon which the customs of social exchange would have been rehearsed. The doll was always meant to be domesticated; molded as a template of an idealized resident. With the rise of the middle class, dollhouses continued to symbolize social class, not as an object of wealth, but a teaching tool.[2] The dollhouse served to educate young children about etiquette, duty and rites. Knowing and following social graces was the true indication of social status.

"Through ritual practices, children express their individuality and, at the same time, gradually incorporate the modes of moving and being of a particular community."[3]

2 Miriam Formanek-Brunell, *Made to Play House: Dolls and the Commercialization of American Girlhood, 1830-1930*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 20

3 Gabor Csepregi, *The Clever Body*, (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006), 73

Fig. 50 Frida Alvinzi and Raisa Veikkola, *Little Theatre of Dolls,* live production

The dollhouse becomes a theatre - a domestic display where users enable and create a scene before them, actualizing the imaginative forces within. It is important not to break character, she must know her place, position, cues, and when to speak. Play activates and embeds physiological memories, bringing forth a territory rich in symbolism and signifiers; "*it materializes subjects and objects.*"[4] She cannot help but to fall back to this role that she has rehearsed, fantasized and dreamed of. And so the enactment which began within the walls of the dollhouse were played out in the corporeal world, ingrained in her mind, and projected outwards into daily life.

4 Gianna Bouchard, *Anatomy Live: 'Be not faithless but believing': Illusion and Doubt in the Anatomy Theatre*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 99

Fig. 51 Queen Victoria Statue, Kensington Palace

"Victoria, Queen, Empress,
A Model Wife and Mother,
Beloved,Admired, Revered,
She Shall Live in the
Hearts of Her People."[5]

The Victorian Era is marked by the reign of Queen Victoria, monarch of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, from 1837 to 1901. During this time, the British Empire grew steadily, overtaking and spreading to foreign countries around the world. The movement towards industrialization generated a growth of wealth in the middle class, leading to rapid urbanization and commercial development. With these infrastructural changes, the domestic territory required defined roles to accommodate the new model. In America, over five million houses were built under her reign. By the end of the era, Queen Victoria ruled over 25 percent of the world's population.[6]

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5 Inscription on Queen Victoria statue in Victoria Park, Kitchener

6 "Victorian Era." Historic World Events, (Detroit: Gale, 2010), *Gale World History In Context*. Web.

Fig. 52 *Portrait of Victorian family,* daguerreotype

The Victorian house was an essential part of the society; it represented the strength of the family unit, and articulated class, wealth and taste. It was set apart from the workplace, and considered the complete and necessary counterpoint of industrialization.[7] Women who once participated or had access to the realm of production were relegated to homemaking duties. Social roles and etiquette were formalized to adapt to the changes in public and domestic territories.

The father was the Master, official head of house, the protector and bread-winner, decision-maker and authority figure. The mother was the Mistress, 'heart' of the home, like an angel watching over the house.[8] Proper homemaking was required to ensure the comfort of family members, while reflecting the wealth or status of the husband.

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7 Judith Flanders, *Inside the Victorian Home: A Portrait of Domestic Life in Victorian England*, (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003), 6.
8 Ibid.

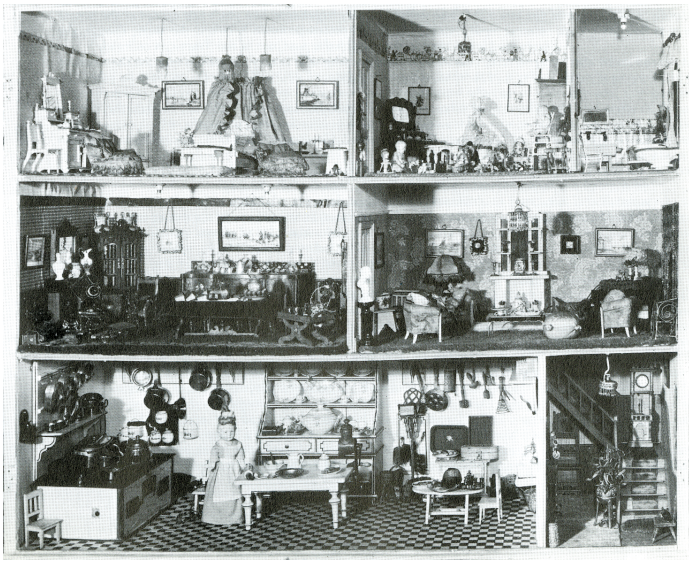

Fig. 53 *Devonshire Dollhouse,* 1905

The Victorian house was considered the shelter away from the filth and moral pollution of the industrial city.[9] Infiltration and trespass - of the physical and moral sort - were considered potential threats and were tactically guarded against. The house was compartmentalized and defined for specific functions while roles were divided and rigidly enforced.

Household duties included an array of activities, including child-rearing, cooking, cleaning and hosting. For a wealthy family, this consisted of overseeing a troop of servants and maids, the extensions of the Mistress's hand. But ultimately, regardless of class or staff, these responsibilities fell to the Mistress alone, as a reflection of her ability and quality of household management.

9 Ibid.

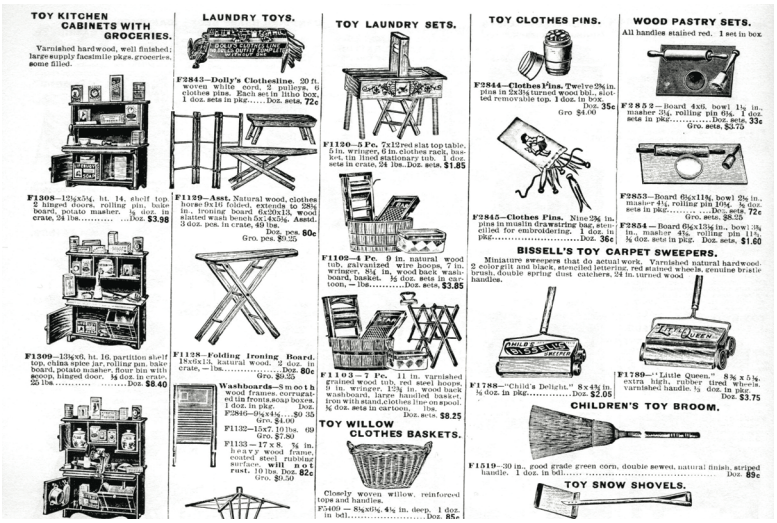

Fig. 54 Toy catalogue, Household toys by *Butler Boys (City Corps Co.)*, 1914

From a young age, she was taught to practice the role of housekeeper and to familiarize herself with miniature sweepers, cleaners and kitchen tools. Toy furnishings were popularly bought through catalogues, where items were organized by room or function. Alongside the upholstered seating and precious china cabinets, many toys replicated specific housekeeping tools. The focus of these objects were based on rehearsal and practice, as opposed to fantasy or amusement. As these were the props she was given to 'play' in the house, what choice had she but to adapt the role of dutiful housekeeper.

Fig. 55 *Maids all in a row: Women training for domestic service*, 1938

Excerpt from Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management:

"Chapter One: The Mistress

1. AS WITH THE COMMANDER OF AN ARMY, or the leader of any enterprise, so is it with the mistress of a house. Her spirit will be seen through the whole establishment; and just in proportion as she performs her duties intelligently and thoroughly, so will her domestics follow in her path. Of all those acquirements, which more particularly belong to the feminine character, there are none which take a higher rank, in our estimation, than such as enter into a knowledge of household duties; for on these are perpetually dependent the happiness, comfort, and well-being of a family..."[10]

10 Isabella Beeton, *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management*, first published in 1861, eBook.

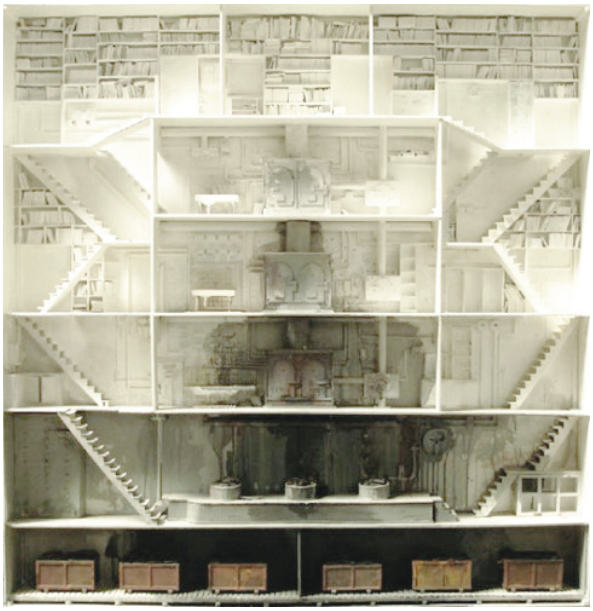

Fig. 56 Marc Giai-Miniet, *Grande boîte blanche (Big White Box)*

An architecture of division was devised to support the household hierarchy required to produce the most highly efficient and discrete serving capabilities. The kitchen produced 'dirt' with a residue in the form of smells and food waste and as such, was placed in the depths of the house, inaccessible to the public eye. Eating and food preparation were separated from living areas as much as possible, where it could be contained and controlled. The house became rigidly divided to prevent cross-contamination of public, private, seen and unseeable spaces.[11] Even within the enclosure, as a result of the increase of class separation in Europe, there was a need for the removal of the presence of the servant class from unnecessarily interrupting daily life. It was especially undesirable to contaminate public areas for receiving guests.

11 Lucy Worsley, *If Walls Could Talk: An Intimate History of the Home*, (New York: Walker Publishing Company, 2012), 179

Fig. 57 Servants' hallway, c. 1886

Originally formulated for the design of barracks,[12] the corridor was introduced to the domicile to increase privacy and efficiency throughout the house. From minimal points of entry, one accesses a series of enclosed rooms in a contained and direct throughway. Separating and organizing each person to their proper place, the corridor became a common, even essential household feature. Like a barrier or membrane within the home that composes the path of traverse, while quarantining spaces to their proper place in the house. A passage that both separates and binds its members within its rigid form. Minimizing untimely intrusions and awkward encounters, the corridor defined the spatial configuration as much as it facilitated the occupants' within.

12 Mark Jarzombek, "Corridor Spaces," *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 56, Ed. W.J.T. Mitchell, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2010), 753

Fig. 58 David Lynch, *Twin Peaks*, 1990-91

Home for her was not a place of refuge, leisure and peace; it was a battleground of household demands. This rejection of physical dirt simultaneously came to describe moral and psychological offenses as well.[13] Triumph depended on her vigor as well as her purity. It was in this domestic setting that the female role as mother and housekeeper became increasingly demanding and constraining.[14] While she directed a hidden housekeeping battle against physical dirt, she was to maintain a graceful, delicate and angelic appearance.

Unable to be either public or private, she is caught in between, always in command and on display. There is nowhere for her to hide in the house. She does not have the freedom to wander from the house nor within it. Pacing between the narrow confines of the corridor, she forms divisions within herself, between seeable and unseeable space; she must present or conceal her body accordingly.

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13 Flanders, 18
14 Ibid., 15-16

Fig. 59 Drawing Room, 1883

The Drawing-room of the Victorian era was considered the Lady's Apartment, an "essentially feminine" space.[15] It was used by the women of the house to receive house calls, and to host evening parties. Ladies would often withdraw to this room after dinner, later to be joined by the gentlemen.

The drawing room was not simply a formal space for entertainment but an indicator of the husband's wealth, and the measure of the Mistress' moral worth. This took on the fashion of highly decorated and elaborately furnished settings, with valuables and values on display. Home decor and home-making journals were popular during this time, with male authority writing about right and wrong design. Design was synonymous with moral expression, which was achieved through hard work, commitment and application.[16]

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15 Robert Kerr, *The Gentleman's House,* (London: John Murray, 1865), 152.
16 Flanders,172-4

Fig. 60 Laurie Simmons, *'Room Underneath'*, 1998

She sits with her feet planted, elbows on knees; she has been waiting for so long, but she must be ready to receive at any moment. She wants to draw the curtain, but she is always on display. Everyday she dusts the furnishings and sweeps the floor. There is so much pressure to keep everything in order, to be proper not vulgar, tasteful yet sensual, elegant and inviting; her space should be entirely *ladylike*.[17]

Embodied in the drawing room, her very sexuality, her private space, becomes a *place* for public perusal. The midsts of her intimacy is openly displayed through *interior* design. Furthermore, the inability to upkeep the house was assumed to be caused by 'something wrong', like weakness or illness - moral if not physical or mental. So she hides the dirt behind closed doors to conceal its existence.

17 Kerr, 151

Fig. 61 Victorian fainting couch

The fainting couch is an emblematic furnishing of the Victorian era. It is similar to the French chaise longue on which one can recline with legs outstretched. The signature element of the couch is the one-sided armrest and partial backrest, which creates a suggestive caress and seductive gesture. The lines of the couch cushion the curves of the delicate lady; soft -yet poised- flesh against plush padding. The Victorian lady is both contained and exhibited on the fainting couch, molded into the figure that fits the impression.

Social entertainment, gatherings and courtship had formal rules, expectations and etiquette. Women were to be sexually attractive and refined, whilst also being virginal and placid. Overcome by passion, the role of the female was to 'fall'; the fainting woman embodied feminine passivity: unconscious yet voluntary subordination.[18]

18 Leigh Summers, *Bound to Please: A History of the Victorian Corset*, (New York: Berg, 2001), 137

Fig. 62 *Victory* high-wheel touring bicycle,1889

There was a particular fixation on female sexuality in the Victorian era. Women's participation in physical activity was often a contentious issue surrounding physical and moral health.

A series of letters published in the Dominion Medical Monthly and Ontario Medical Journal in 1896, expressed concern that women seated on bicycle seats could have orgasms. Fearful of unleashing and creating a nation of 'over-sexed' females, some physicians urged colleagues to encourage women to eschew 'modern dangers' and continue to pursue traditional leisure pursuits. However, not all medical colleagues were convinced of the link between cycling and orgasm, and this debate on women's leisure activities continued well into the twentieth century.[19]

19 Eileen O'Connor, "Medicine and Women's Clothing and Leisure Activities in Victorian Canada," *Yale Journal for Humanities in Medicine*, 2007. Web.

Her fantasies grow larger; yet the house contains them. Soon she has expanded to fill the entire space; the walls remain as rigid as ever. Her flesh pushes against the corners and bulges towards the windows. She can no longer fit in the dollhouse; nor can she escape. It is getting harder for her to breathe. But the house is unrelenting and she begins to feel as if she is being pushed back in. The dollhouse that she received early that Christmas morn - the same one she eagerly peered into with wide glassy eyes - is now the life-sized reality she is cast into.

The Doll that Could Not Wander

Fig. 63 *The Material Miss,* pattern-sewn doll

In the Victorian era, dolls were not simply leisurely playthings, they were earned through domestic training and usefulness. Starting from a young age, girls would often learn how to sew by providing her own doll with linens and dressings. This practice was seen as an informal apprenticeship for future wives and mothers to be both industrious and nurturing. By the time she completed a full set - from undergarments and dresses, to pillowcases and embroidered curtains - she would be tailored and fit for the life-sized world.[20]

"...by integrating the corset in the doll's body, Philip Goldsmith rid the process of one step: stitching an extra corset over the body. "My improvement," wrote Goldsmith, "dispenses with this additional material of the corset and the additional labor required to make [it] and put it on."[21]

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20 Formanek-Brunell, 11
21 Ibid., 50-51

Fig. 64 Eugène Atget. Corsets on display in storefront window, 1912

Corset is based on the Old French word *cors*, simultaneously signifying body, person, corpse, and life. The corseted woman was the symbol of the desirable feminine. Proper dress was not only a social indicator of class, but also one of morality and respectability.[22] Victorian women were captivated by the corset and it was one of the first mass-produced articles of clothing to reach the market. In the early 1900s, the curves of the ideal silhouette reached an extreme, and women coveted the 17-inch waistline.[23] The physical and social underpinnings of the garment moulded the image of the woman tight-laced within.

"When we touch something, there is an initial feeling of pressure that gradually fades until the point of contact becomes more difficult to feel." [24]

22 Summers, 19

23 Ibid., 88

24 Drew Leder, *The Absent Body,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 72

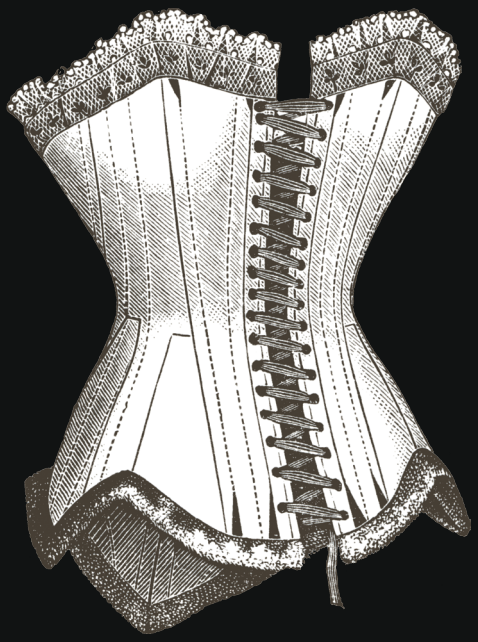

Fig. 65 Harper's Bazaar, corset lacing, 1882

The corset was designed to enhance women's figures and to bring focus to the waist. The structure of the garment fetishized the waist by emphasizing the curves of the bust and hips as it was believed that a small circular waist -as opposed to the natural oval shape- indicated good breeding.[25]

The optimal corset was structured with steel, whalebone and jean, often machine-moulded to ensure their unyielding resistance. This form-work, consisting of eight steel bands, structurally fitted with closely set whalebone, created an immobilizing armor. One set of bands measuring more than 1" wide follow the median curve of the body towards the front, in line with the liver, stomach, large and small intestines.

25 Summers, 20

Fig. 66 Ludovic O'Followell, X-ray of woman wearing corset, 1908

Women commonly experienced a purplish bruising along the pattern, leaving creases in the unbound flesh. These discolorations were about three to five inches wide, stretching from the sixth to the twelfth rib, directly over the diaphragm.[26] This constant unyielding and increasing compression on the ribs would certainly cause physical discomfort, but perhaps more arresting, it induced a certain constitution.

The pressure of the binding on the body had a two-fold effect. Its restriction on the abdominal area caused shallow, breathless gasps and a flushing in the face and neck, comparable to sexual excitement. The rigid formwork of the bodice also severely reduced activity, physically preventing women from unrestricted movement. This 'incapacity' or weakness was considered a natural and virtuous femininity.

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26 Ibid., 102

Fig. 67 *'Kiss Under Mistletoe.'* Victorian soiree, 1880

Fainting was considered a regular occurrence in the Victorian era, it was an act embedded with social meaning, representing the physical and emotional fragility and delicacy of a woman. A woman's disposition to weakness, even illness, was evidence of true femininity. In the late 19th century, three-quarters of women were considered 'out of health', and it seemed that almost only women were diagnosed with this mysterious ailment, commonly referred to as "the vapors", or hysteria.

Victorian doctors related fainting spells to emotional distresses rooted in sexual frustration or dissatisfaction. An excess or suppression of internal forces was believed to filter poisonous vapors into the body and effect the mind. Symptomatic ailments included anxiety, irritability, bloating, fainting, nervousness, digestive issues, and behavioral problems.[27]

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27 Rachel P. Maines, *The Technology of Orgasm: "Hysteria", the Vibrator, and Women's Sexual Satisfaction*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 35.

Fig. 68 Jean-Martin Charcot in Brouillet's *'Un Leçon Clinique à la Salpêtrière' (A clinical lecture at the Salpêtrière)*, 1887

Jean-Martin Charcot was a French neurologist and anatomical pathologist; a pioneer of modern neurology. Beginning in 1882, he worked and taught in Paris at the Salpêtrière, a notorious asylum for female outcasts of the society. Charcot hoped to unlock the mystery behind hysteria by photographing and recording its appearance. The observable symptoms were pieces of evidence, traces from the root cause. Charcot was able to break down the episodes into a series of phases with specific attributes and predictable movements, one leading to the next.[28]

On Friday mornings, Charcot would host a clinical lecture in the amphitheater. Upon the stage, amidst the room full of students, he presented patients suffering from hysteria, placing them on display for public examination. One by one, Charcot demonstrated the characteristics and particularities of symptoms by using hypnosis to induce or exhibit hysterical tendencies in the patients.

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28 Georges Didi-Huberman, *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), 22-23.

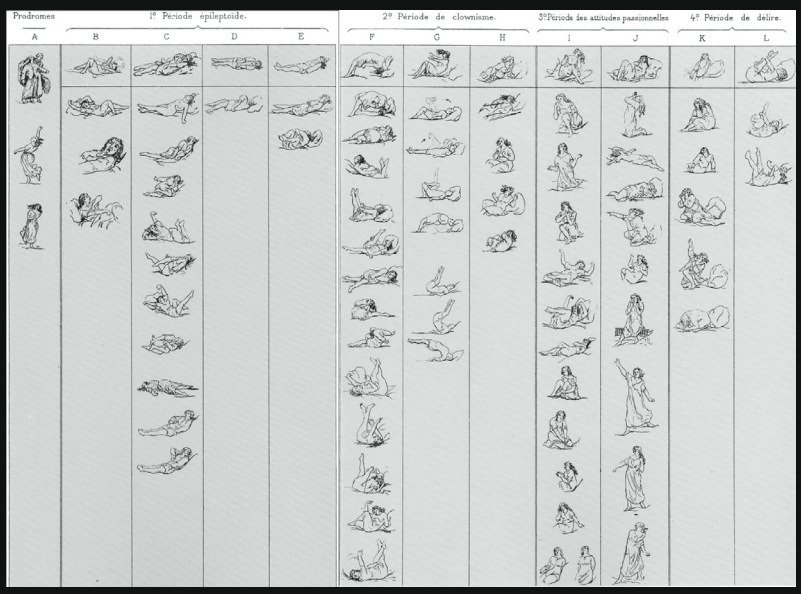

Fig. 69 *'Hysterical Phase Chart,' Iconography of the Salpêtrière,* 1904

Charcot's determination to distill hysteria to distinct and separate moments created an image-based research and an iconography of hysterical symptoms. He spent years studying and treating hundreds of patients suffering from some form of hysteria, documenting every physical gesture and facial detail during their hysterical attacks. From these images we are to read physical traits from her hysterical body, but stare blankly at a voiceless past without any context of knowing what she would have to say. Silently, she embodied the dangerous yet mysterious female, seized by unknown and therefore threatening desires.

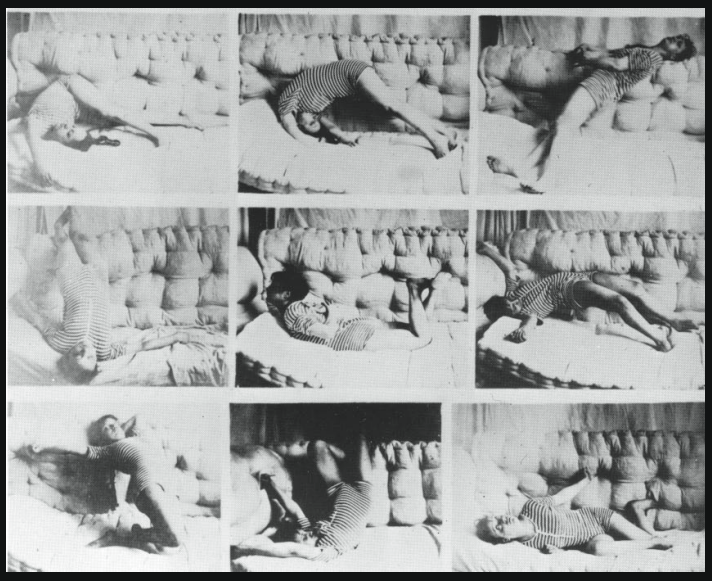

Fig. 70 *The Sculptural Movement,* hysterical attack, 1890

Her body's physical expressions can be described as extreme exertions, often involving unnatural bodily movements, exhibiting supernatural strength or indifference to externally applied pain; as if she is in an entirely other world. And though her body is free from constraints, at times she moves as one would if bound and laced. Overtaking her entire body, she is in subconscious and involuntary submission to this force. Her motions are aggressive like an expulsion, rippling through her entire body; sometimes violently exploding like an epileptic, sometimes hardening into a rigid petrification.

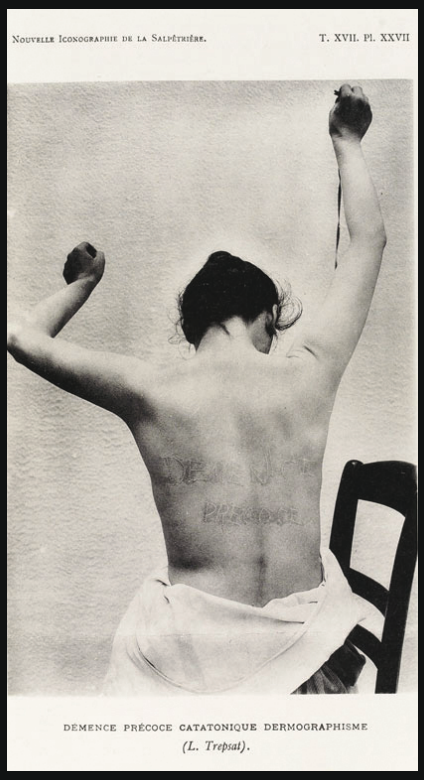

Fig. 71 Dermatographism ('skin writing'), *Iconography of the Salpêtrière,* 1904 †

Eliminated from medical terminology for decades, the word 'hysteria' continues to be an adjective commonly used to describe unreason or irrationality. More frequently than not, it connotes a feminine characteristic. The absorption and normalization of hysteria into our vocabulary reveals the direct influence medical definitions have on the language we use, and their ability to manipulate socially accepted 'norms'. Instead of questioning the definitions that we use, we are told that there is something wrong if we can not take form.

Eventually, hysteria was reduced to signs and symptoms; any specific or veritable cause remained obscure and could only be qualified through an extensive list of correlating and/or disparate traits. These definitions and 'symptoms' continued to evolve with changes in social beliefs, cultural expectations, and medical knowledge.[29]

† Her diagnosis *of dementia praecox* is 'written', inscribed on her skin. She has been marked and identified. She must wear this title, as word made flesh.

29 Elaine Showalter, *Hysteria Beyond Freud: Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1993), 329.

Fig. 72 Carolee Schneemann, *'Interior Scroll'.* Performance, 1975

hys·te·ri·a

from Greek ὑστέρα (hystera), the second woman

Also known as:

hysterisis, hystericism, hysteralgia, hysterical spasm, hysterical passion, spasms, nerve aches, nerve attacks, vapors, ammarry, women's asthma, melancholia of virgins and widows, uterine suffocation, womb suffocation [suffocation de matrice], uterine epilepsy, uterine strangulation, uterine vapors, uterine neurosis, metro-nervy, metric neurosis, metralgia, ovaralgia, utero-cephalitis, spasmodic encephalitis, etc.[30]

Synonyms: agitation, delirium, excitement, feverishness, frenzy, madness, mirth, nervousness, unreason

Antonyms: calm, control, sereneness

30 Didi-Huberman, 69

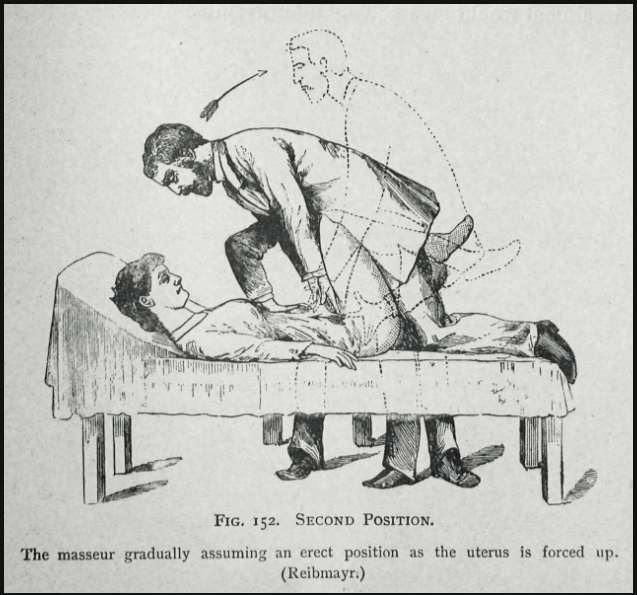

Fig. 73 *"Uterine Massage",* Practical Manual of Gynecology, 1891

A proper Victorian woman was not to be devoid of sensuality completely, but to be prudent and passive in temperament. Hysteria was considered the result of an excess energy, perhaps from an unfulfilled desire, causing an imbalance that effected the nervous system. This required a medical physician who induced a release of this tension by stimulating the female genitals towards "hysterical paroxysm". Manual manipulation was a customary and accepted medical practice; as it was deemed inappropriate for her to touch her own sex, it was quite common to call on the doctor when bothered by symptoms of hysteria at home.

19th century physicians not only approached woman's orgasm as an objective act, but as a goal to be reached by practical means. Her sexuality is not only seen as solely physical, but as something she is forbidden to access. She is stripped of all connection - personal and intimate - to her own sex.

Fig. 74 Lisa Gralnick, *"Hair Noose, 1920" (*re-appropriated chastity belt c. 1879), 2010

Female hysteria came to represent the potential or cautionary 'wandering' of women away from their domestic and feminine roles. The public roles and social opportunities available for women in the 20th century created a fear surrounding the health and stability of the family unit. Hysteria was considered threatening when it effected women's abilities to manage the home, and came to encompass any and all physical or behavioral deterrents preventing her from fulfilling her duties.

Any time a woman attempted to establish a presence outside of her defined place, she was accused or deemed hysterical. Physical and verbal outbursts, aggressive or offensive acts, and any behavior that defied her expected character were considered improper, immoral, and/or insane. Even women who were considered overly sensitive, or *too* womanly were categorized as hysterics as well.[31]

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31 Ripa Yannick, *Women and Madness: The Incarceration of Women in Nineteenth Century France*, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 134

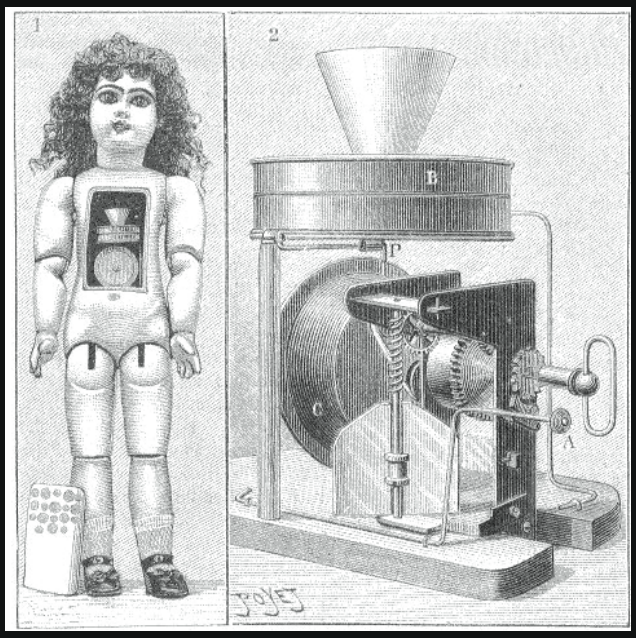

Fig. 75 Thomas Edison's *"Talking Doll",* Edison Phonograph Toy Manufacturing Company, c.1890

During the late-nineteenth century, Thomas Edison experimented with his new phonograph technology to re-invent and enhance existing objects. He was able to create miniature phonographs small enough to place into dolls, bringing the doll to 'life' by giving it speech. In Edison's factory, an alloted group of women recited nursery rhymes onto recording devices from a pre-determined script. Not only did this achievement boast of increasing the dynamism of the doll, it was also marketed to sound natural and realistic.

"The main difficulty has been in inventing machinery to make the doll phonograph so exact in its working that the cylinders may be interchangeable, and new cylinders with new sentences be substituted for the old ones at any time [...] we can supply a new cylinder with any sentence, and in any voice that the purchaser may desire." [32]

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32 "Dollphones: Mr. Edison's Wonderful Toy for Nice Little Girls." *Wichita Daily Eagle,* Kansas, Dec. 23, 1888. *Aaanimations*. Web. 24 Apr. 2013.

Fig. 76 Sears catalogue, *"Aids That Every Woman Appreciates,"* 1918

Vibrators eventually replaced the doctor's hand. Sold alongside household appliances, the vibrator was considered an instrument of therapy in the Victorian era, and did in fact aid many 'ill' women by allowing them to explore their physiology, if only temporarily. However, its controversial position between pleasure and health quivered uneasily for moral authorities. To require a vibrator suggested a frigidness, a disinterest or a lack of sexual energy; but to want a vibrator suggested an aggressive sexuality, a desire for the exploration and satisfaction of self pleasure. In both cases, the vibrator challenged the phallocentric view of sex.[33] A healthy woman did not desire carnal indulgence, she desired true fulfillment through penetration, through impregnation. Sanctified by marriage alone, young unmarried women suffering from hysteria were often told that an effective cure was a husband.

33 Maines, 10

Fig. 77 Adriana Petit, *Synthetic Rainbow Series,* photograph

A disease typically has a distinct origin, resulting in an illness - a certain physical disposition - which can be treated by addressing the disease. Although the symptoms and manifestations of hysteria clearly suggested an underlying disease - to the frustration of physicians and theorists - none of the ailments could be treated. Or more precisely, no disease could be found. This did not discourage hysteria doctors from hypothesizing elsewhere. If not physical, then perhaps nerve-related, or mental - some internal weakness that allowed the infiltration of unhealthy or immoral thoughts, producing an 'unfeminine' outward appearance. Women were believed to have an inherently weak disposition and unstable interior, and it was assumed that the illness was developing from within the woman, instead of examining the external pressures applied to her body.

Fig. 78 Louise Bourgeois, *Arch of Hysteria*, 1993

Hysteria doctors failed to acknowledge her body as one that is moving in rejection, rebellion of the constraints it has been confined to; or perhaps this is precisely what they feared to see. Intentionally or conveniently, hysteria was constructed to bind women to the domestic sphere.

While household responsibilities bound her to the house, social binds cinched her body into the desired form. The corset constricted physical movement as much as the Victorian house secured her place within its demarcations. Fainting - feigned or fated - was to submit to death, if only for a moment. The hysteric's physical assertions demand attention, it is her body's expulsion, an unwillingness to suppress her internal rebellion. Refusing to play dead any longer, she unashamedly and desperately desires to be live again.

DOLL - HOUSE

Fig. 79 *'Symmetrical Suburb,'* Levittown, PA, 1959

HOUSE-DOLL

Fig. 80 Laurie Simmons, *Walking House*, 1989

Fig. 81 Concrete slab foundations, Levittown, PA, 1952

After the second world war, there was an opportunity to organize a new beginning, and the need to construct a secure future. The technological revolution leading into the post-war era brought steel, infrastructure and manufacture to the forefront of civilization, effecting construction methods, living arrangements and social standards. The first American suburb was designed to address the urgent and extreme demand for housing immediately after the war. As thousands of returning soldiers were eager to raise families, Levitt & Sons embarked on a mass housing development that would provide a positive environment and appropriate space for young and growing families. The private dwelling represents the right of ownership, identity, and place. As such, the suburban sprawl can be seen as a division of land and the battle for property, for a plot of the American dream.

Fig. 82 *'New homes nearing completion,'* Levittown, NY, 1947-51

Levittown was planned to support a new order of domestic life. Twentieth century industry gave rise to a new progressive order based on capitalism, productivity and 'progress'. The construction of the first Levittown in the grasslands of New York state started in 1946 and was efficiently and economically accomplished through standardization and replication. By 1948, thirty Levittown houses were being produced each day and sold for under $8,000.[1] Levitt adapted the assembly-line method for rapid construction, producing the largest number of houses in the shortest amount of time.

The practical means of mass production or pre-fabrication rely on singularized components and conformity. Lane by lane, lined in perfect perspective, we begin to see an uncanny precision in replication.

1 Peter B. Hales, "Levittown: Documents of an Ideal American Suburb," *University of Illinois*. Web.

Fig. 83 *"The 1956 Jubilee"* Levittown housing ad, PA

Concerned for the monotony of the streetscape, Levitt introduced slight variations in his available models without significantly altering the basic structure. Levitt created the perspective of variety by rotating the orientation of the house in relation to the street, as well as interchanging modular components to offset the uniformity of the facade; thus maintaining cost efficiency. Regardless of the external form, the models shared a similar if not identical interior layout, equipped with all the conveniences of modern living.

Moveable furniture and fixtures suggested a flexibility in usage and design, while the open-concept plan promised to be a custom-fit dwelling. The propagation of products-as-lifestyle created a desire and dependence on these objects as definitive of home.

Fig. 84 *'Open house at Levittown housing development,'* PA. c.1953

"To stroll through the model home was to immerse oneself in a world completely constituted by the Levitts, and the experience of the model home tour in turn instilled a sense of duty to create and recreate versions of that image..."[2]

The Levittown housing exhibition was not only the presentation of an ideal lifestyle but also a demonstration of belonging as a collective. In order to create a feeling of community, Levittown was targeted towards specific social and racial classes, and each Levittowner was required to abide by the same rules, encouraged to share the same values and to desire the same lifestyle. In this way, the neighborhood ideal brought direct pressure on each member to conform. Simplified and socialized, we live in model houses like model residents.

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2 Dianne Harris, "The House I Live In: Architecture, Modernism, and Identity in Levittown," *Second Suburb: Levittown, Pennsylvania*, ed. Dianne Harris,(University of Pittsburgh Press: Pittsburgh, 2010), 212

Fig. 85 *Fully Furnished Dollhouse*, cardboard kit, includes seeds to grow miniature lawn.

Experienced with wartime production methods, Levitt used standardized parts to be assembled by builders with specific and often singular tasks; moving from site to site, painting window frames, or installing shingles. The complete construction of a Levittown house was broken down into a straight-forward 27-step process.[3]

Levitt assured control over the entire project from material manufacturing to the supply of appliances to outfit the home. Pre-fabrication was a necessary and boasted achievement, and Levitt owned lumberyards where every procedure was analyzed and detailed to maximize efficiency. Trucks would arrive on site with building materials ready to be assembled -calibrated for exactly one house unit- packed in accordance to the order of installation. Neither measuring nor cutting was necessary.[4]

3 Amy Wagner and Rich Wagner, *Levittowners.COM: The Online Levittown Museum*. Web.
4 Ibid.

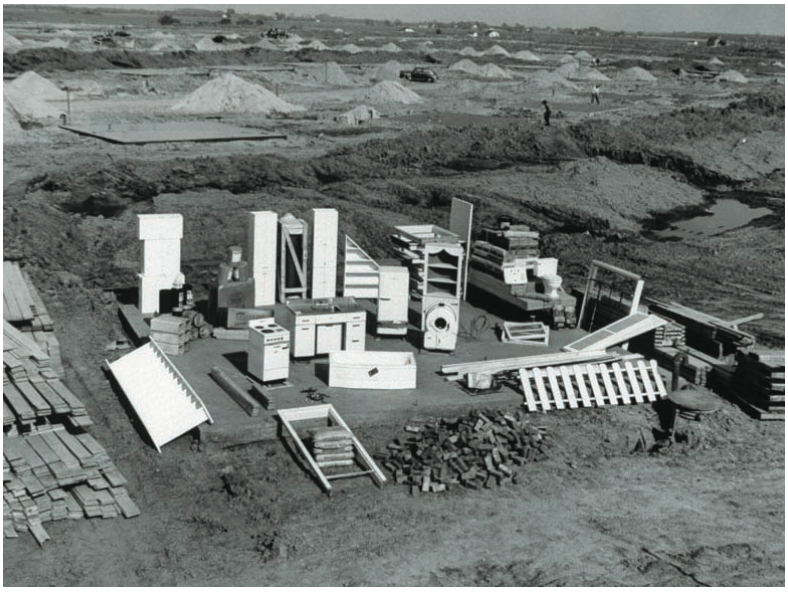

Fig. 86 Building materials for one house, Levittown, NY. 1948

In order to minimize costs, plumbing and piping needs were centralized as much as possible, and the remaining areas of the house were designed around this mechanical core. Levitt contracted General Electric to outfit all his Levittown houses with new and complete sets of electric appliances for the kitchen. Within 9-1/2 feet, an entire artillery of machines was set up, including range, oven, fridge, dishwasher and washing machine. Stand alone kitchen units were composed and organized into full sets, and positioned to maximize the functionality of the complete unit. Bolted in on-site, the pre-assembled kitchen is now a standard 'built-in' feature of housing construction.

"Both the process through which we build and the forms themselves embody cultural values and imply standards of behaviour which affect us all."[5]

5 Leslie Kanes Weismann, "Women's Environmental Rights; A Manifesto," *Gender Space Architecture*, eds. Jane Rendell, Barbara Penner & Iain Borden,(London: Routledge, 2003), 1

Fig. 87 Doll family and accessories, Sears catalogue, detail. 1976

Sold along-side the 60-piece kitchen set is a 5-piece family. Like the kitchen accessories - individually designed for a specific function - each member of the family represents and functions as a component for the house. Furthermore, the nuclear family is distinguished and identified by title: Dad, Mom, Daughter, Son and Baby, encapsulating each member in a specific role in relation to the family unit. Roles provide each person a place and function, established in relation to other complimentary roles, working together to stabilize and normalize a larger process. Because of this, roles come with specific expectations, requirements, and limitations.

Fig. 88 *'Levittown family in front of original Cape Cod home.'* Levittown, NY, 1948

The suburban house is an essential part of modern family life across America; it presents an image of the American Dream, an idolization of the family unit and the ability to purchase it. As such, the image of the house with picket fence has become a symbol for the nuclear family.

In favor of space and quiet, the domestic realm was driven farther from the city centre as a result of the growing automobile industry. Thus the new suburban order depended on the husband to work away from the home, creating a situation where he is specifically unable to perform domestic work. Ideally, in order for him to focus on financial success, he would require someone to take care of him, maintain his house and nurture his family.

Fig. 89 *'Philomena Dougherty, wife and mother in the kitchen of her new Levittowner,'* 1952

The domesticated woman is called a 'Housewife'. It is not clear whether she comes with the house or not. This title emerged during the Industrial Revolution and became popular with the growth of suburban development. The Housewife has the responsibility to care for the children and maintain the house.

The kitchen was considered and proven to be the most significant feature of the house, and was consistently advertised and sold through this space.[6] Akin to the 'command center' of the home, this territory was designated for the Housewife. It was strategically planned for easy access from the garage and located at the front of the house by the entrance. A window allowed her to keep an eye out on the children, and to participate -visually- in the public sphere of the street.

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6 *"A dream house," Levitt wrote for a GE ad, "is a house the buyer and his family will want to live in a long time. . .an electric kitchen-laundry is the one big item that gives the homeowner all the advantages and conveniences that make his home truly livable."*

Curtis Miner, "Pink Kitchens for Little Boxes: The Evolution of 1950s Kitchen Design in Levittown," *Second Suburb: Levittown, Pennsylvania*, ed. Dianne Harris, (University of Pittsburgh Press: Pittsburgh, 2010), 263

Fig. 90 *General Electric* ad for Levittown kitchen. c. 1947-1951

In order to maximize the benefits of the scientific method to create the most efficient machines, it is also important to measure the intended user. To determine the most suitable layout within minimum spatial requirements, research experiments were conducted to observe the Housewife in motion. The data collected was based on frequency of action and positionality. Thus, a carefully calibrated mechanical ensemble was made to fit the life of the typical Housewife and her expected role in the house.

As quoted from the Levittown Times newspaper, *"Just think, at the same time, without leaving the room, you can prepare a roast, do the dishes and wash the week's laundry."*[7]

7 Ibid.

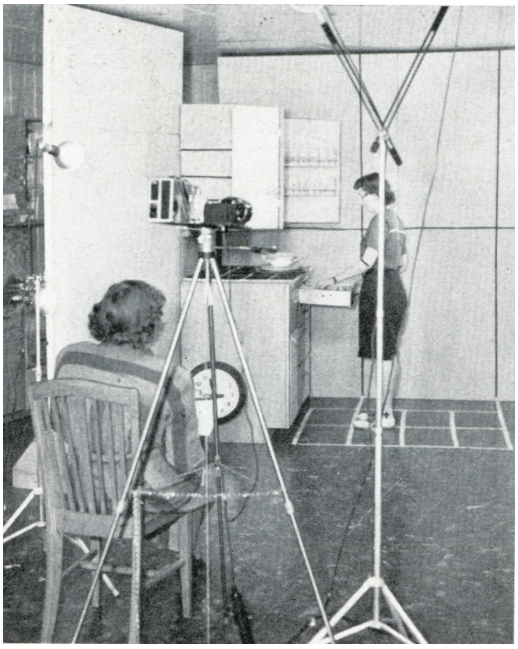


Fig. 91 *'New Kitchen Built to Fit Your Wife.'* Popular Science, 1953

"Reaching with the arms to heights of 46", 56", and 72" above the floor, requires an increase of oxygen consumed per minute over simply standing of 12%, 24%, and 50%, respectively. The energy consumed is therefore in proportion to the height of the reach. Reaching up with the arms takes less energy than bending the body. Reaching by means of a trunk bend to 22" and to 3" above the floor, increases oxygen consumption above that required for standing to 57% and 131% of cubic centimeters of oxygen per minute. Reaching by using a knee bend to 3" above the floor, requires 224% oxygen consumption. While this would indicate that a trunk bend requires less energy than a knee bend, the knee bend is believed to involve less muscular strain."[8]

---

† *Image Caption: "In planning kitchen, Cornell used "memomotion" (very slow) movies to show house-wife's actions. Wall and floor lines showed her position. Clock timed everything.*

8 Quoting Esther Bratton, Elizabeth Diller, "Bad Press," *Gender Space Architecture*, eds. Jane Rendell, Barbara Penner & Iain Borden, (London: Routledge, 2003), 387

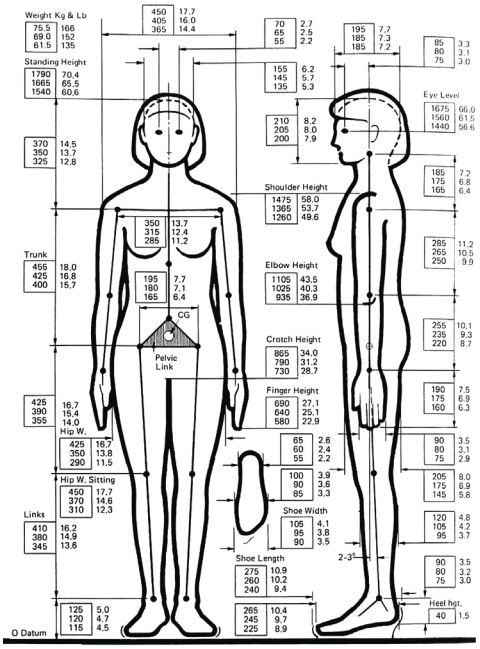


Fig. 92 *Typical dimensions of a woman*, Architectural Graphic Standards, 2000

She is the standardized graphic representation of Woman; she is an outline, a template. Multiple points are demarkated along her body by which her physical composition is measured and quantified, within a set range of variation. This image is presented as a general guide, a neutral source for an exemplary body, a typical female form. Defined by limits and rulers, this figure represents the standard body for which we design our constructed reality. With use, these boundaries fade from conscious acknowledgement, simply qualified as norms.

When we define our bodily attributes in terms of numbers and norms, these specifications become the base upon which our surrounding experiences are subsequently qualified. Subtly and directly, the body incorporates and habituates these constructed values.

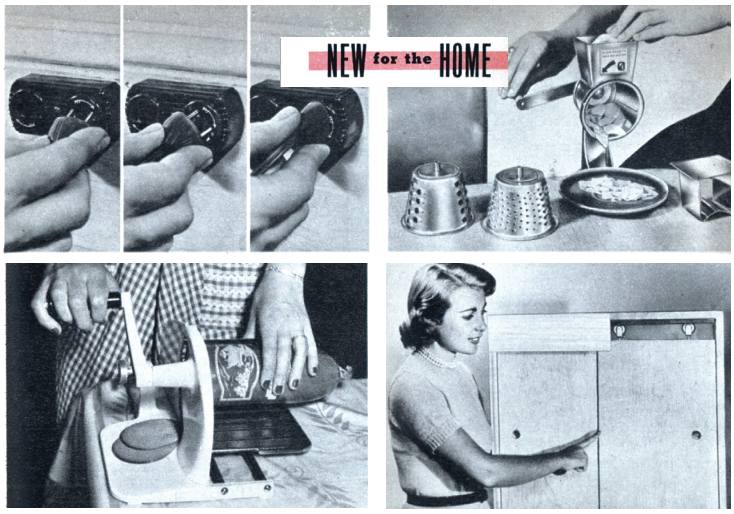


Fig. 93 *"New for the Home."* Mechanix Illustrated, 1950

Science technology provides a means through which we measure and define our own constitution. If science-based inventions are precisely crafted for mechanically efficient beings, then she must also be programmed to function according to their mechanisms, rhythms and requirements. The constructed environment is fitted for a specific body, perfectly tailored for the task.

Her daily routine is a persistent flow of tasks: running machines, preparing meals, cleaning, consuming and chauffeuring. From microwave to washing machine, the Housewife must not only interact with, but also coordinate every device. She begins to hum with the accustomed whirring of the machines, as if they spoke to her. Like a domestic dance routine, her movement is propelled by the tempo of mechanical pulsing.

Fig. 94 Martha Rosler, *Semiotics of the Kitchen,* video performance, 1975

As product specifications are increasingly calibrated to support efficient usage, her function and being, is ultimately reduced to mechanized motions. Like training, repetitive actions and motions are subconsciously absorbed into the memory of the flesh. These actions begin to change, and even define the experience of the body's relationship towards the world. Household appliances and products are designed based on demonstrated experience, yet qualified in numbers and results, exclusive to the dimension of affective qualities. Slowly the compilation of these seemingly small practices, become the practical means through which we experience, or 'act out' life.

"The more we carry out some gestures, the more our inward attitude comes to shape our whole being."[9]

9 Csepregi, 87

Fig. 95 *"Crosley Family Theatre Television."* 1950s television advertisment

Television quickly became a growing form of mass communication during this time and the living room was revisioned to accommodate it. As a space for public and private viewing, the television room was a theatre centered around the screen. In this manner, the outside realm was framed and projected back into the domicile; like a miniature theatre where staged domestic ideals are captured in the television set, drawing families to daily programming.

Characters on popular family sitcoms become like neighbours, living parallel albeit idealized lives, acting as a reflection and reassuring image of suburban domesticity. Thus the 'American Dream' has become a recurrent vision.

Fig. 96 *'Couple decorating house at night,'* Levittown, PA.

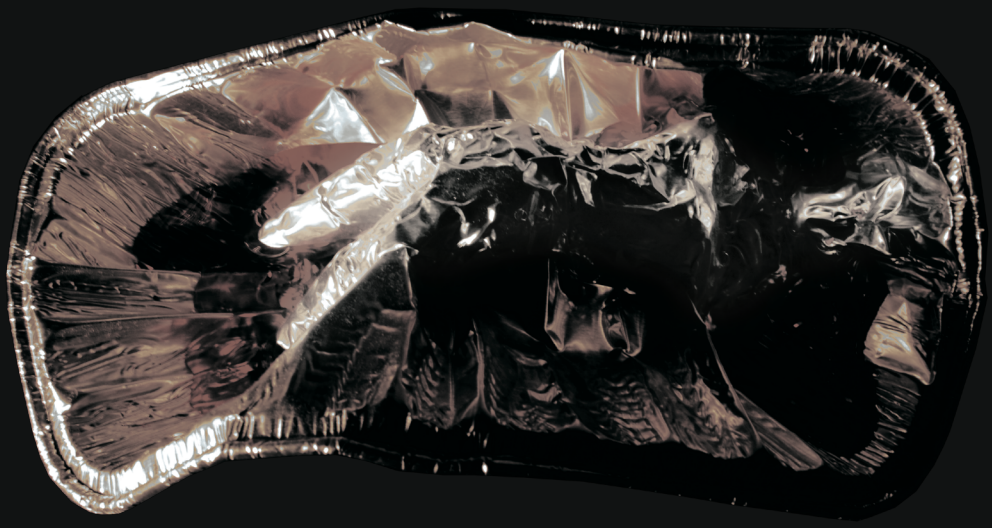
Levitt attempted to blur the lines between boundaries and open up communication and participation between all family members. While bedrooms remained tucked away, the kitchen, living, and dining rooms were visually connected and openly traversable spaces. However, as the house became increasingly public, it was necessary to update and maintain each space as if on constant display. Large picture windows acted to display the interior space through which one peers onto the domestic stage within. Dusted, polished and set, each house was framed and furnished, like pictures of a perfect life.

Product specifications

> Cast solid in high-grade platinum cure silicone
> Does not wrinkle
> Articulated skeleton
> All 3 entries are available and USABLE
> Can ship internationally
> Made in the USA

Height: 63.8 inches
Weight: 166.2 pounds
Waist circumference: 37.5 inches
Oral depth = 4.5 inches
Anal depth = 8 inches
Vaginal depth = 8 inches

Your Price: $1,999.99



Pre-Packaged

Fig. 97 *"Vintage Barbie Doll Lot 1968-1973 Julie, Jamie, Stacey, Miss America & Quick Curl."*

In 1959, Barbie is introduced as the new modern woman. She is happy, sensual, stylish and durable. She is the ideal woman, a mythic beauty, molded by machines and mass-produced for popular consumption. Her influence on young children is significant and pervasive even today, 60 years after her introduction.

From hollow head to pointed toe, Barbie is carefully designed. Originating as a fashion model, Barbie's body is designed for the practical purposes of clothing change and is ultimately shaped to display different outfits. Created to inspire young girls to pursue their dreams of beauty and success, Barbie acts as a stimulator, arousing a desire to *be* something, someone. In the mid-century, playing on television sets across America, Barbie's first commercial had aspiring girls singing, *"Someday, I'll be just like you, but until then...Barbie, beautiful Barbie, I'll make believe that I am you!"*[10]

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10 First Barbie Commercial. Mattel Inc. Television advertisement. ABC. 1959. *YouTube*. Web.

Fig. 98 *"This Is Your Wife."* Bell Telephone Ad, 1957

Playing with Barbie often centers around her wardrobe and using the props that are made for her different roles. Her identity as a fashion model has been overshadowed by the *role* model she now portrays. Barbie is presented with a predetermined wardrobe; she is pre-packaged and sold with complete sets of furnishings and matching accessories. 'Housewife' Barbie is distinguished by specific outfits and identifying props. Her accessories in turn dictate and determine the way in which girls can play with their Barbies. Imaginative and spontaneous play is subverted by an automated, pre-programmed and definitive imitation.[11]

"A homemaker has no inviolable space of her own. She is attached to spaces of services. She is a hostess in the living room, a cook in the kitchen, a mother in the children's room, a lover in the bedroom, a chauffeur in the garage. The house is a spatial and temporal metaphor for conventional role playing.

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11 Joseph P. Kahn, "Forever Young", The Boston Globe, 5 Mar. 2009. *The Boston Globe.* Web.
12 Weismann, 2

Fig. 99 *Barbie Learns to Cook* with dream kitchen and accessories, 1964

She is the picture of the perfect housewife; *"she [is] healthy, beautiful, educated, concerned only about her husband, her children, her home."*[13] With the aid of all her time-saving housework devices, she can manage the home while sparing an extra 3 hours a day for her own pursuits or leisure. Under the security of her husbands salary, she can purchase all of her hearts desires: clothes, cosmetics, and cookware. Identity was as easily bought and freely exchanged as her accessories. She has more privileges and opportunities than women have ever had before.

13 Describing the ideal American house-wife, Betty Friedman, *The Feminine Mystique*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1963), 18

Fig. 100 Kitchen ad, 1940s

Defined solely in terms of relation, the House-Wife is identified through her husband and purposed for his house. With a name that is void of self identity, she becomes dependent on the house to define her, to give her her value.

Ever since she could remember, she dreamed of having a husband and children; it was the most anticipated conclusion to her happy future. Everything that she cultivated with herself as a girl, culminates in her achievement, when she is asked for her hand in sacred matrimony.[24] The urgency of this binding fulfillment - the need to find a husband - is such a normalized act that it is the only figure of Woman that she knows. Desperately, she attempts to collect all the pieces to complete the image. Indeed her entire existence relies on the house and its accessories: the shoes, the stove, and the matching family.

Fig.101 *Barbie's Dream Kitchen and Dinette*, 1964

However, the appliances that are assembled and packaged together inherently implicate roles and actions that are pre-scripted. They are the tools that she must buy in order to relate and integrate into the domestic lifestyle that has been staged for her aspiration. Instead of a house that supports or expands her individual choices, her identity is molded to fit the roles the house offers. The more heavily standardization directs the products and technologies available for mass consumption, the more crucial it becomes for her to fit into the box as well.

Imitation is a rehearsal of movements, of actions or speech; it is to follow and assume the appearance of a model. What is uncanny about Barbie - beyond her notorious bust-to-waist ratio - is the similarity in the way we habitually purchase pre-packaged and pre-staged parcels of life.

Fig. 102 Kirsten Justesen, *Sculpture II*, 1969

We express and define ourselves with the objects and props that come neatly packaged in boxes. Items that we purchase to fill our homes represent identity and expression, yet the objects themselves function to define a lifestyle around them. Therefore, the accessories that are sold to us through the television, media and consumer outlets are not simply isolated task-oriented objects, but an entire assemblage of props that facilitate a model role, and a model life. Like Barbie, we simply assemble the parts that are provided and enable their intended functions.

She plays the roles she has been taught and sold in order to find a place of belonging. However, a role is more than a uniform, a function or a facade. 'Playing the part' requires one to embody a persona that may complement or contradict individual inclinations and desires. One must pause to inquire, is Barbie's dream house an accessory for her, or is she an accessory for the house?

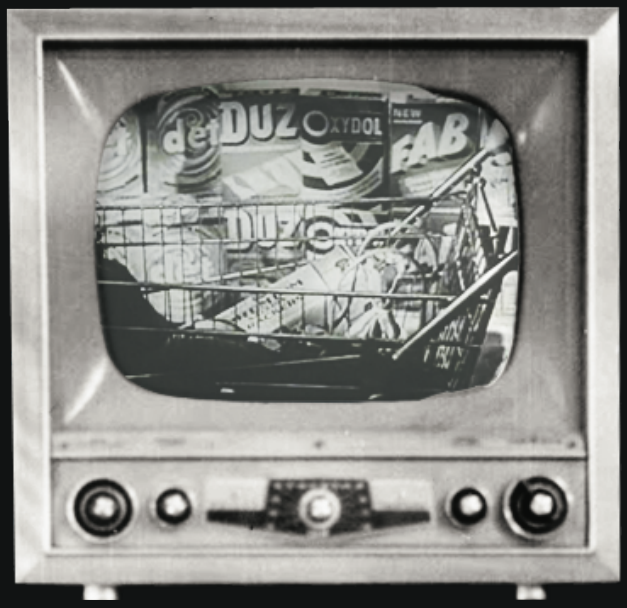

Fig.103 Television set from 1952, with image depicting housewife making purchases, 1950s

The house is so quiet during the day, she thinks she can hear electric wires buzzing from every room. She turns on the TV just to fill the air with something, some *life*. Television is her only window to the public realm, introducing - through simulation - the outside world brought into the home.[14] Her given perspective is through a fabricated reality of someone else's life, an opportunity for experience at the tip of her fingertips, but always out of reach.

Instead of self-guided exploration, public and social realities are brought into the domicile for her to observe, a constructed virtual reality that simulates and supports domestic life and traditional roles. Daytime television aimed at housewives attempted to reconstruct or perhaps direct women's social lives towards consumeristic tendencies. Even shopping programs are filmed like a step-by-step training video.

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14 Lynn Spigel, "The Suburban Home Companion: Television and the Neighborhood Ideal in Postwar America," *Sexuality and Space*, ed. Beatriz Colomina, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992), 188

Fig. 104 *"Housewife ironing and watching TV."*

She is so happy when her husband comes home, she has been waiting and preparing all day for this moment. She wants to show him how she has made the house warm and welcoming to embrace his weary body. He is tired and hungry, only wanting to put up his feet at the end of a long work day. He is at peace in his abode.

For her, this is the culmination of her daily battle, it is the frontline where fighting against fatigue and frustration she must host her own family, putting on a flawless performance for an expecting audience. Endlessly she serves the home without ever once feeling like the Master, and so she is the slave and the house her confinement.

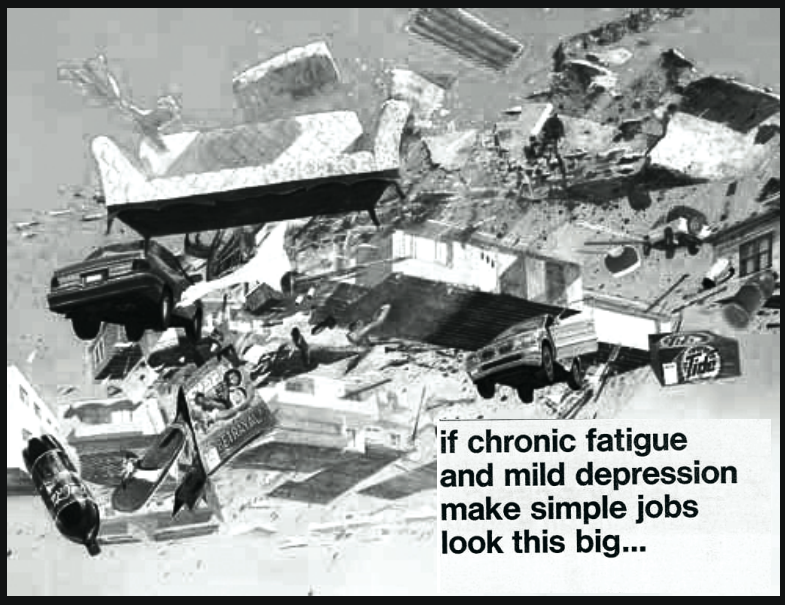

Fig. 105 Adam Cvijanovic, *Star* juxtaposed with heading from Ritalin advertisement (left spread), 1966

"The problem lay buried, unspoken, for many years in the minds of American women. It was a strange stirring, a sense of dissatisfaction, a yearning that women suffered in the middle of the twentieth century in the United States."[15]

Women have described an experience of emptiness or incompleteness, characterized by fatigue, agitation, boredom, or an uncertain existence. They also experienced extreme mood swings, restlessness, isolation, detachment and desperation. Some women encountered inexplicable blisters on their hands and arms. This elusive "problem with no name" was often brushed aside in denial, or absorbed in self-blame. This sentiment was largely shared - though unbeknownst - to suburban wives in the 1950's and 60's. Thus isolated in silence, women felt it was a shameful admission.[16]

15 Friedan, 15
16 Ibid.

Fig. 106 Ritalin advertisement (right spread), 1966

The cause of this 'problem with no name' was believed to be related to a lack of focus, a mental instability that rendered women incapable of fulfilling their roles. With the development of drug therapy after the war, pharmaceuticals became popularly prescribed over, or in combination with, psychiatric treatment. Drugs were gaining medical use, and proved to effectively restore an individual's ability to carry on with their daily lives. Amphetamines as well as antipsychotic drugs were often prescribed to housewives suffering from 'housewife syndrome'.[17] However, without actually curing nor enabling patients, most of these prescribed drugs only acted to suppress the symptoms of the ailment, merely resulting in a numb or indifferent attitude.

17 Ibid.

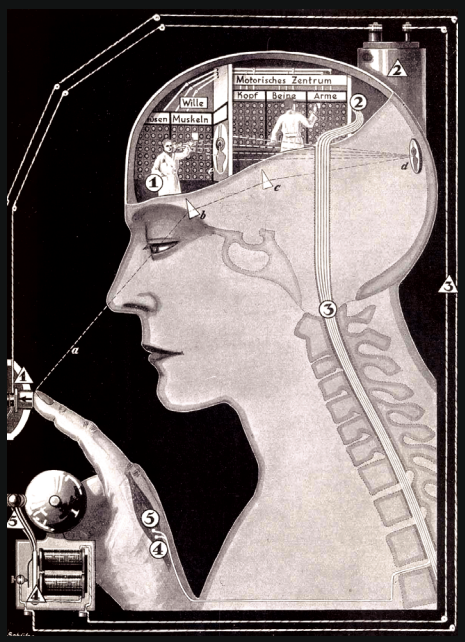

Fig. 107 Fritz Kahn, from *Das Leben des Menschen (Man Machines)*, 1926

She spends most of her time in the house, moving from duty to duty, but never quite having to involve herself in the mindless tasks. The house is her entire life; she knows every square inch, every creak in the floorboards, every chipped molding, every uneven surface, even how each and every cupboard and drawer opens with its unique spring.

The kitchen is made to support her in the battle of domestic duties as the control centre, and as the machines function without tiring, she is expected to abide by their standards of mechanical efficiency and efficacy. Her only chance for survival is to be vacant in the abyss of chores, to be mechanical, detailed, focused on the task and nothing more.

"Scientific management interpreted the body of this housewife as a dynamic force with unlimited capacity for work. Her only enemy was fatigue, and fatigue, in broader terms, undermined the moral imperative of the new social reform..."[18]

18 Diller, 386

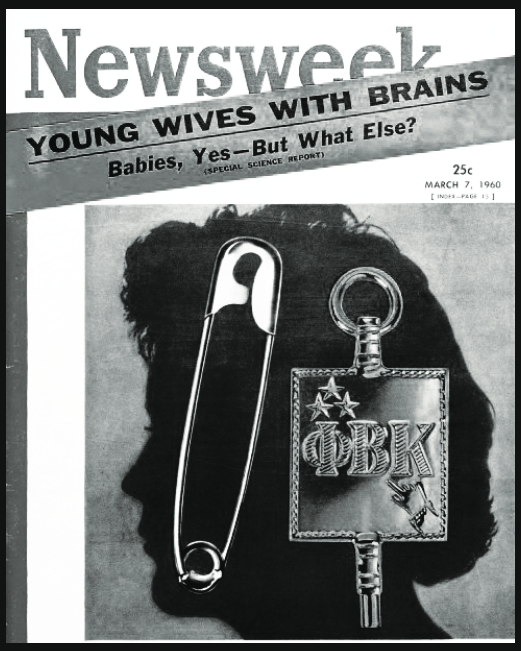

Fig. 108 *Newsweek* Magazine, Cover, Mar. 1960

It has come to the attention of the public media that a large number of women are not really *women* anymore. By biological definition, they do seem to have the sexual organs and appearance of the female species; they do not however, appear to host the required *feminine* characteristics. They say that these women are confused, that they have been blinded by their ambition; and that these women no longer understand what true fulfillment is.

Unbound by physical constraint and moral constitution, the reinforcement and re-establishment of gender roles has not ceased. It has taken a new form, fashioned through media, consumerism and education as the desire for the norm in fear against 'abnormality'. It would seem that it is becoming more and more difficult for women to just be Woman.

Fig. 109 *McCall's* woman's magazine, Cover, 1961

Women's magazines provide pleasant and neutralized knowledge, focusing on practical advice and tips, through a torrent of 'How to's like an instruction manual: how to style your hair (with a hat), how to revive your marriage, or how to get a new face. Her life is seen as a series of tasks or objectives that can be checked off a list; there are no articles or discussions that inspire intellectual, philosophical or political ideas. Her identity is constructed and held together by a flutter of 'small events'[19] of which her status and her value is composed.

"...[The] only passion, the only pursuit, the only goal a woman is permitted is the pursuit of a man...In the magazine image, women do no work except housework and work to keep their bodies beautiful and to get and keep a man."[20]

19 Friedan, 56
20 Ibid., 36

Fig.110 *Esquire,* men's magazine. Cover by George Lois, 1967

She longs for a real experience, with all the attachments including dirt and decay. She does not want a staged reality in which she plays the part of Woman. She does not want to dress her figure, to be pinned into a box in order to fit nicely in the schema of a prefabricated world. She never wanted to fit a pre-destined mold, to conform her body, her desires just to 'fit' in, to be 'normal', to qualify a standard and to be judged against someone else's ideal. But she risks being rejected, discarded, and refused. Those who do not submit to 'normality' are not accepted, and we are made to believe that there is no place for them in society, that they are lost, dispensable, ill, unsanitary, even harmful. She fears her own transgression, her emancipation outside of the house.

"...American women no longer know who they are. They are sorely in need of a new image to help them find their identity."[21]

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21 Ibid., 72

Fig. 111 Stereotyping woman drivers, featuring Bettie Page, *Beauty Parade*, Mar. 1952

She used to love driving; she remembers the freedom of drifting along roads that would take her anywhere and nowhere. Now on occasion, she attends the theatre with her husband who drives them into the densifying metropolis. She has been the passive and patient passenger for so long that she begins to lose her ability to drive herself. She does not feel the confidence to navigate and maneuver through the city alone. She knows only the paths that circumscribe her domestic routine, and having been removed from the city for so long, she is no longer familiar nor comfortable wandering through its foreign territory. There is nothing there for her anymore; the city is a forest, and she fears its unruliness.

Fig. 112 *'Hoover test of woman vacuuming.'* Oxygen consumption is measured during the task, 1926

The vacuum cleaner is mechanically designed to maximize efficiency and maneuverability. As she drives the machine over rows and rows of carpet, her breathing is measured for oxygen consumption per square footage.

Vacuuming is a numbing and empty action, only furthering her neurosis for flawlessness. Her actions are mechanical and invisible. She goes over the same areas repeatedly, attempting to align the direction of the pile so that there is no trace of her presence left at all. Her aspirations are sucked out of her, trapped in a muffled whirlwind, only to be bagged and contained for easy disposal.

"Most adjusted to their role and suffered or ignored the problem that has no name. It can be less painful, for a woman, not to hear the strange, dissatisfied voices stirring within her."[22]

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22 Ibid., 26

Fig. 113 *RealDoll* factory, face painting

The RealDoll is designed to recreate the appearance, texture, and weight of the human [...] form. Their primary function is to serve as sex partners. This activity can be accompanied by certain preparations such as dressing them up in different types of clothing, changing wigs or makeup, and even adjusting body temperature by use of electric blankets or baths.

In 2003, the "Face-X" system was introduced, allowing any face to be interchangeable with any body. Multiple faces can then be attached one at a time to a single doll by the owner. In 2009 the RealDoll 2 was introduced, which feature removable inserts for the mouth and vagina and faces that attach by magnets instead of Velcro.

RealDolls are shipped to nearly every country in the world, with the majority in the United States. To date, over 4000 dolls have been created and shipped.[23]

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23 "RealDoll: The World's Finest Love Doll," *RealDoll.* Abyss Creations, San Marcos, CA. Web.

Fig. 114 Cindy Sherman. *Untitled,* 2000

It feels like a waiting, a wake, a visage of death held together by the thinnest threads, while she dangles on a dream and a desire. Yet she must work so hard to uphold the image of happiness, contentment, even of satisfaction. She is always playing the role and patiently enduring the life she has chosen; she has been wearing the mask for so long that she no longer knows the face underneath the layers of concealer and plastic pretense. This unliving facade has become such a familiar reflection that she sees in the mirror, that it is the only armor she has to face Life itself.

But a pre-packaged and pre-scripted life is not really *life*; and this is the problem that has never been given a 'name', never spoken because she had been suppressed for so long, unmentionable because of a fear that once pronounced, she could no longer ignore nor eradicate its voice.

A HOUSE MADE OF GLASS

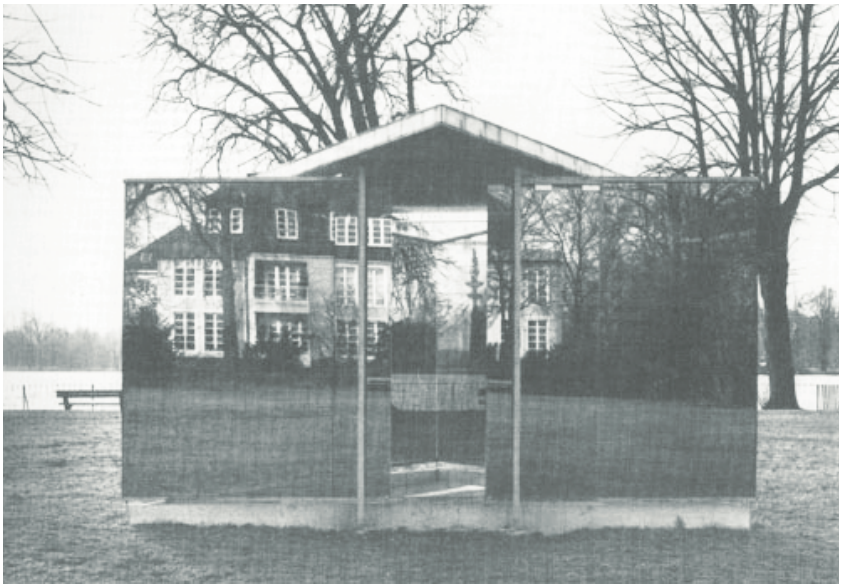

Fig. 115 Dan Graham, *Double Triangular Pavilion for Hamburg*, 1989

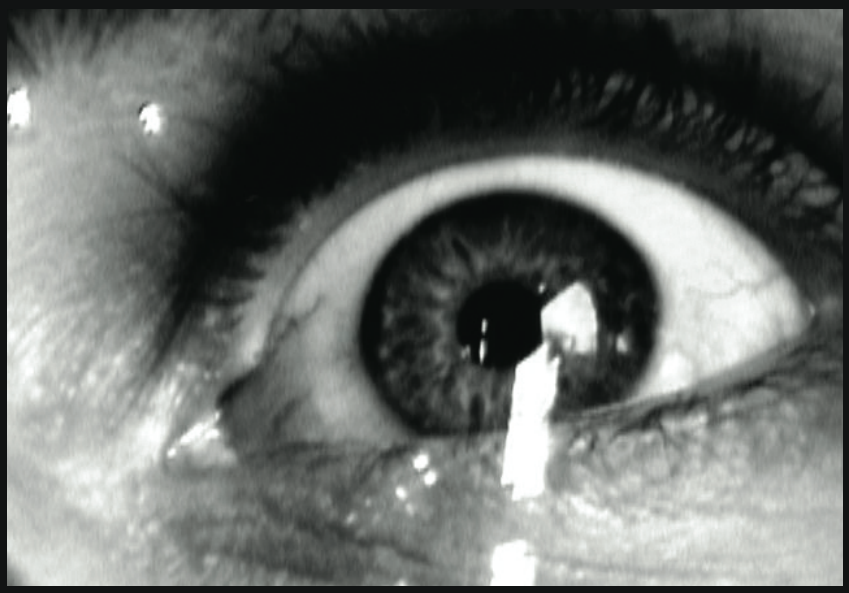

Fig. 116 Seeing

Fig. 117 Eugene Reno, *Untitled,* Photograph, 2011

Glass was the emblematic material of modernism. It was considered a pure molten material, untainted by human intervention.[1] Not only was it an expression of new industrial capabilities, it also symbolized the new vision and values of the booming society. The lightness and transparency of glass reflected the clarity and purity that the Modern Age promised.

The most obvious and desired function of glass is to see through it, to break the boundaries of within and without. Glass is invisible, yet its function makes it a purely visual material. It seduces the body, but receives only the eye. Regardless of its transparent quality, the insertion of glass implies a physical boundary that can only be penetrated by the gaze.

1 Joseph Quetglas, *Fear of Glass,* (Berlin: Birkhäuser, 2000), 123

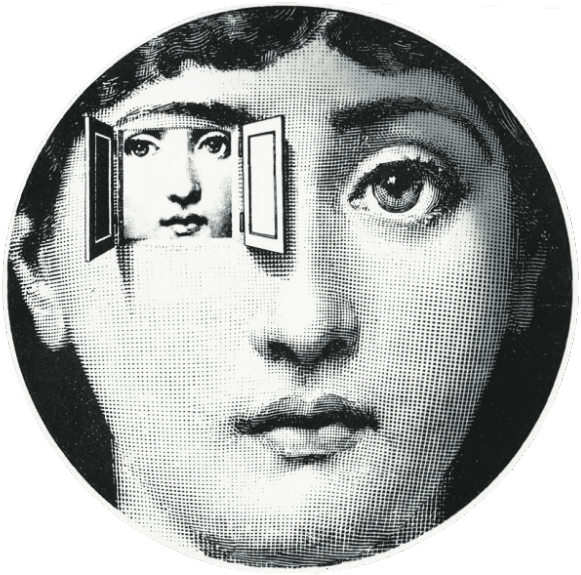

Fig. 118 Piero Fornasetti, wall plate inspired by Italian opera singer Lina Cavalieri

The interactions that take place across the glass plane may be constrained to the virtual realm, yet this territory is not readily contained nor defined. The eye does not just see, but *sees*; it wanders, searches, penetrates, reflects, receives and reacts. To catch someone's eye, or to make eye *contact*, is a palpable connection, felt so intensely that at times it is a wordless yet intimate exchange. Due to the public presence of the visage and its vulnerability to *being seen*, the private interior is also vulnerable to exposure, to be unveiled and made known through the gaze.

"The etymology of the word window reveals that it combines wind and eye [...], the word combines "an element of the outside and an aspect of innerness." [2]

2 Beatriz Colomina, "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism," *Sexuality and Space,* ed. Beatriz Colomina, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992), 121

Fig. 119 Barcelona Pavilion, original site with shadows of existing Doric columns, 1929

The Barcelona Pavilion was designed by Mies van der Rohe in collaboration with Lilly Reich for the World Fair of 1929, an international display of machinery and product ingenuity at the height of modern industrialism. Attracting thousands of visitors from around the world, it was on the stage of the Barcelona Pavilion that King Alfonso XIII of Spain inaugurated each participating country to the exposition. Representing Germany, the pavilion was to boast its rational, modernized culture and industrialized work force. Both architectural and monumental, the pavilion was to house this new and vitalized German spirit; and it was declared the Modern House.[3]

3 Quetglas, 32

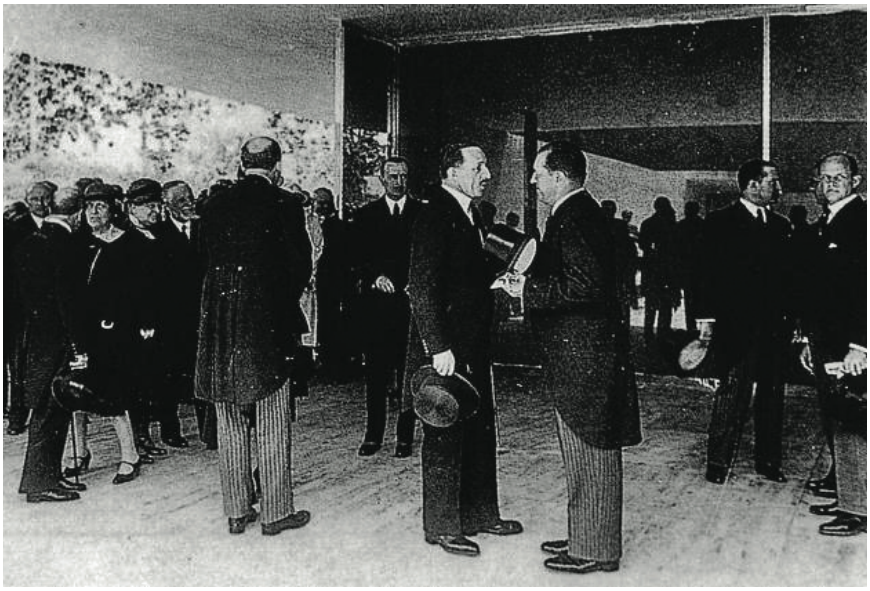

Fig. 120 King Alfonso with Mies, inauguration day, Barcelona Pavilion, 1929

At the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a call for a new order, one that would not only boost morale but also represent the aspirations of a strong, pure and progressive society. Moving with the rise of industry and the development of mechanical work force, an architectural tone of precision, efficiency and rationality was set.

With a clear and unembellished articulation, Modernism was a re-evaluation of industrial and domestic territories, a diagnosis of the growing metropolis and its potential directives. Described as an 'International Style', Modern design has inspired worldwide application for commercial, institutional and domestic constructions.

Fig. 121 Barcelona Pavilion, view from exterior

The Barcelona Pavilion has been called the essential modern house, yet it looks and functions nothing like a recognizable model. Its original manifestation as an exhibition pavilion remains its most familiar title to this day; but it feels like a house, strangely. It must house *something*.

Standing afloat a raised platform is a glass box allowing a clear view of the interior, a glimpse into is shaded depth. But what appears beyond the glass is not clear at all; hidden by the invisible walls of the pavilion is an empty and uncertain expanse. The eminence of the columns are minimized and disguised, serving simply to provide a gap between above and below. Yet their opaque compression flattens the horizon and eliminates depth, creating a disorienting and slippery frame of reference. One must consider what one is looking at and what is being seen.

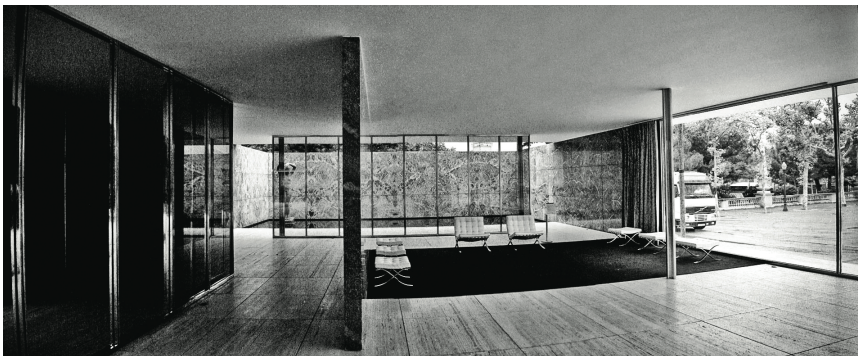

Fig. 122 Barcelona Pavilion, view of interior

Inside the pavilion, an open plan does away with everything: rooms, corridors, walls, corners, profiles, and ornamentation. Gone are all traces of domestic affairs, gone with the opaque walls that defined occupants to their proper place - freedom to roam in an expanse that presents no bounds.

Yet the experience of the interior is both neutral and agitated. Reaching the point of sterility, it is a space that feels exclusory even in its intimacy. Furthermore, the dissolve of visual opacities creates an inside composed of outside and an undecided existence between the two. Inverting perception into self-reflection, and dissolving in a myriad of mirrors, the pavilion resists definition and objectification. The modern house is not what it seems.

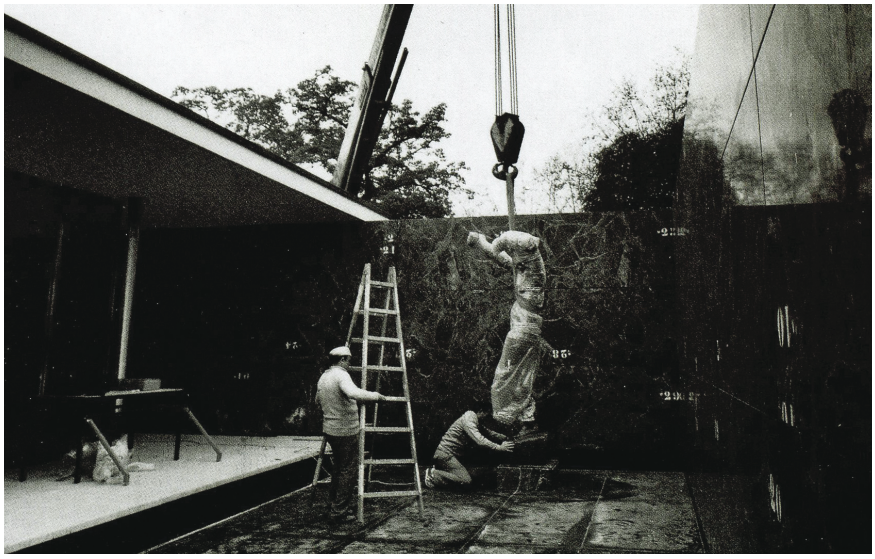

Fig. 123 *'Morning,'* Barcelona Pavilion, installation of Kolbe statue, 1986

There is a woman here. Her space is clearly delineated. She adorns and endures the elusive spirit of the pavilion. After the house is built, she is lifted by crane and gently guided into position. Since ancient times, sculpture has been used to demonstrate the use of a space, to objectify itself in order to be an object to relate to. Yet the modern house on perpetual display has no place for the statue inside its enclosure.

Immortalized in the blaze of the morning sun, she is placed in a small courtyard pool within the outer walls. The overhang of the roof extends towards her but fails to protect her. Though she is positioned in a vulnerable place, she is unreachable. Her stance is solidified with no possibility of escape or repose. She is the final piece of stone to adorn the surfaces of the pavilion.

Fig. 124 Kolbe statue, view from interior, Barcelona Pavilion

Georg Kolbe was a distinguished German artist known for his autonomous figure sculptures. The freestanding nude embodies the modern vision of the human form; natural and unadorned, the body itself is an expressive medium.

The statue makes visible the invisible forces exerted by the pavilion; her composure and physical articulation poses as a register of its elusive materiality. Her vertical posture draws focus and tension in the pavilion's horizon, and aids to orientate and stabilize the visitor. Simply referred to as 'Dawn' or 'Morning', Kolbe's statue was placed within the depths of the glass house.

Fig. 125 Barcelona Pavilion, view of Kolbe statue from interior

The Woman's place in the glass house, is *behind* the glass, as the Thing that is being viewed. Relinquished to the outskirts of the house, her presence is but a backdrop, established through its polished frames.

Glass transforms the objects and figures that surround it. The mere presence of glass presents an opportunity for the gaze.[4] By its own omission, glass displays the space it encloses. She is poised for the pleasure of the eye, and as long as she remains visible within the glass frame, she becomes an extension of the gaze, a dimensionless picture.

4 Referencing Lacan, Colomina, *Sexuality and Space*, 83

Fig. 126 *Christmas shopping*, New York, 1958

What is placed behind the glass is framed and removed from the viewer, creating an invisible but distinct separation. We are able to see right through it *as if* it was not really there and this allows us to observe shamelessly from a distance. Zooming into immediate objects and forms, we telescope through illusory screens by which we are physically bound and framed. We view the figures and fixtures displayed as objects, defined and staged within their own setting and context, while we are protected and separated by an ethereal, yet conclusive barrier. The body becomes Object in the looking glass.

Fig. 127 Jeff Wall, *"Morning Cleaning,"* 1999

Modern ideals attempt to rid architecture of its ornamentation as well as any traces of human sediment. Dirt resurfaces with a more obtrusive smudge in the house made of glass. It is a material that requires cleanliness and clarity. Dirty glass is not only visually unpleasant, but also distorts, even desecrates the intended vision. Eradication of dirt becomes an unspoken insistence in the modern house; an element so undesirable that all evidence of its existence, even of its elimination, are unseeable. Lest the image be tainted or the vision unclear, the image presented through glass must be aesthetically pure and effortlessly sterile.

We are charged to live like true members of our modern edifices: open, orderly and polished. The new modern order presents an idealized framework that has no tolerance for the flaws and stains that mark our living-being. The modern glass box is a theatre of Life without evidence of life.

Fig. 128 Eleanor Antin, *Constructing Helen*, 2007

In a similar manner, the statue embodies an imagined ideal that serves to place real women at the margins of society;[5] her presence is a replacement, a stand-in that is sanitized and flawless, an impossible realization, an unlivable body. This exaltation of cleanliness and sterility has created a growing intolerance for impurity in the home, as well as the body. Modern hygiene becomes intimately linked with 'beauty, chastity, piety, and modernity.'[6]

One rarely encounters images of women in public media that do not reinforce or perpetuate an ideal aesthetic or role. This idolized image is crafted to conceal the *real* bodies of women by eliminating all the imperfect and blemished traces of her. The current ability to manipulate the image has contributed, if not directed, the notion of a 'flawless beauty'. As a result, the saturation of manipulated imagery and staged realities creates a drive towards an impossible ideal.

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5 The idea of being marginalized: part of, yet separated, bell hooks, "Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness," *Gender Space Architecture*, eds. Jane Rendell, Barbara Penner and Iain Borden, (London: Routledge, 2003)

6 Diller, ed. Jane Rendell, 387

Fig. 129 Tom Sibley, *'Front Row'* by Helmut Lang, Barney's window display, 2009

One senses the fragility of glass as a material that is weightless and empty; it is devoid of substance yet actively participatory. Lacking concrete presence and prominence, it is all the more insidious: a screen that we struggle to see, and through which we are readily seen. Though the solidity of the glass as a physical wall would be considered a perfect barrier - impermeable and leak-proof - the limitations of the flesh do not impede the eye; and we become suspicious of being perceived or even surveilled. Without both physical and visual barriers, we do not feel the security of a private space; we automatically feel exposed no matter which side of the glass we are on.

"Modernity has been haunted, as we know very well, by a myth of transparency: transparency of the self to nature, of the self to the other, of all selves to society..."[7]

7 Quoting Anthony Vidler, Jonathan Hill, *Immaterial Architecture*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 152

Fig. 130 *Lingerie models posing as mannequins*, window display, 2007

What is this material that is invisible, yet aggressively so? Glass held the promise of an open metropolis, a clear, honest and pure architecture. Yet the mass implementation of glass has created an intangible battlefield where one is constantly faced with and vulnerable to an Other's gaze.

She looks at the woman behind the glass; and she looks back. Though the glass plane is only millimeters thick, what is suspended between them has more palpable depth than that. To look at the woman behind glass seems like a violation, but to see her returning gaze is also violating. She sees Woman on display as an image, or an ideal; but she can sense her vulnerability and exposure. Perhaps she really sees herself in the glass, in a reflection of what she desires and who she could be: an object worthy of display.

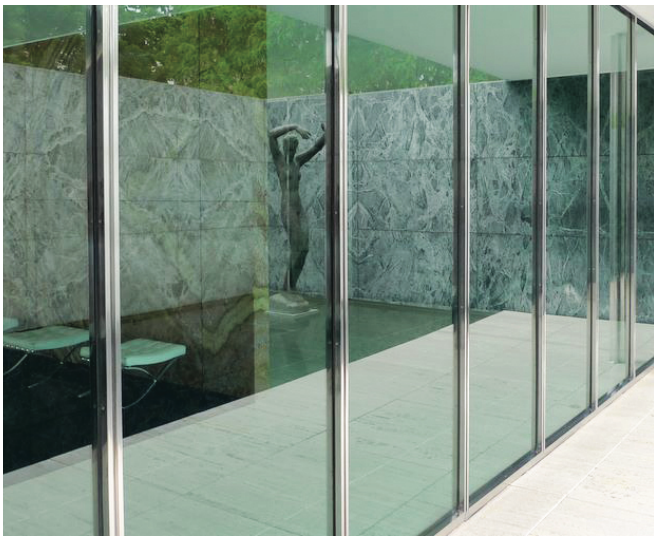

Fig. 131 Reflections, view from exterior courtyard, Barcelona Pavilion

Yet the most resonating force of glass is its reflective quality. It has an invisible ability to invert perception, displacing the viewer and layering the spectator into the image. The reflection observed from the exterior courtyard reveals her presence inside the house, layered upon the planes within. Assembled like a collage, the image places her securely within the framework of the house. The glass screen is both the invisible barrier that contains Woman and the reflection with which she must constantly gauge her own impression.

"...the pavilion is not made of stone, glass, stucco, and iron, but of reflections. And consequently [...] the pavilion is made of virtual landscapes, of impassable paths. Only mirrors can be made of reflections." [8]

8 Quetglas, 95

Fig. 132 Kolbe Statue, view from exterior courtyard, Barcelona Pavilion

The light is fierce and though her skin is flaking, she remains in position. Her hands are raised as her eyes are turned downwards; she does not face the light head on. She shelters her visage with a protective and resisting gesture. Placed alone in a depthless and impassable pool, we cannot see what she is turned from. She is paused between movement, flexion, reflection, forced to accept the place of being exposed, being viewed, desired and adored, yet being excluded, exterior and outside. Remaining transfixed; she does not meet our gaze. With one hand shielding and the other yielding, she endures the eminent glare. Gracefully and quietly, she performs.

She feels as if she is surrounded by masks: flimsy facades, hardly formed beyond a silhouette. She is caught in a familiar reflection, "I think I've been here before", but really it was just an illusion - or maybe paranoia. The glass screens dissolve into glazed stares every which way she looks; those lukewarm pupils, peer panel after panel. Drowning from inside; frantic and petrified.

The Doll in the Mirror

Fig. 133 Artist unknown, Cover art from John Jakes *The Asylum World*, 1969

im·age

from Old French *image* "image, likeness; figure, drawing, portrait

from Latin *imaginem* "copy, statue, picture," figuratively "idea, appearance," from stem of imitari "to copy, imitate"

An image is a likeness, an appearance of an idea or a model, while a reflecting glass suggests observation or contemplation, of self or other.

Fig. 134 *Lanvin* storefront window display, Paris, 2013

An image is not simply a projection, but also acts as a reflection of one's potential Self. As western culture increasingly relies on the visual realm, the image begins to bear more significance; it becomes more crucial for us to maintain and also project an image of our own.

She seeks to find a place for her imagined self in order to relate to her visual surroundings and she finds an image by which to model her identity. In a subconscious and simultaneous manner, she observes the figure through the glass as much as she feels the frame positioned for her display. She does not see her as an other, but as herself in another body.

Fig. 135 Close-up of Kolbe statue

The inescapable light piercing Dawn not only represents the rising of the new Modern order, but its scathing illumination is almost blinding. Though her body is still, she must hold her arms up in surrender of her visage, her sight, her *view*. The light is both heedless and scrutinizing, and she is powerless in its searing surveillance. To cover one's face is to conceal one's prominent means of communication, to deny one's participation, one's personage by containing its expression.

Safe from her percipience, she is observed from inside the house, publicly but discreetly. While the house frames her in visual objectivity, the direct piercing sun forces her downturn eyes, disabling her from seeing into the glass house; the light incapacitates her vision and petrifies her stance.

Fig. 136 Francis Bacon, *Study after Velázquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X,* 1953

I see his eyes, I know they are there; but they are not seeing eyes, his entire being is consumed by his gaping horror. He is dissolving, surrendering to the darkness that surrounds him. Focused internally, the blackness he faces only acts as a void that absorbs his dissolution. His mouth becomes his eye, the orifice that opens to allow the black abyss of his interior to join with the infinite black canvas of un-doing, un-being. He is being consumed from the outside-in or perhaps from the inside-out.

"The face is not an envelope exterior to the person who speaks, thinks, or feels...The face is not a 'head' - just one body part among others - it is a body part that allows the body to be organised as human, as meaningful, as expressive."[9]

9 Clare Colebrook, *Understanding Deleuze*, (Crows Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2002), 146

Fig. 137 Brigitte Bardot during *Les Femmes*, a film by Jean Aurel, 1969

To be on the receiving end of a gaze often feels like a one-way exchange, a violation, or something taken away; it is a submissive and helpless trespass, a wordless but none-the-less pronounced encounter. It is to see without acknowledging the reciprocal gaze, to refuse an other's subjective experience, which is to exclude one's participation in the visual exchange.

Women have been cast into the objective role of 'being-desired'. She is stripped of having desires in that her own subjectivity is denied.[10] And so she loses grasp of her own desiring in order to maintain her desirability.

"The Look of the Other, which reveals to me my object side, judges me, categorizes me; it identifies me with my external acts and appearances, with my self-for-others"[11]

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10 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*

11 Susan R. Bowers, "Medusa and the Female Gaze" *NWSA Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Spring, 1990), 219 *JSTOR*. Web.

Fig. 138 Paris Fashion Week, 2013

The materiality of glass is an invisible barrier, a form of protection from relating to or absorbing the object. It discreetly focuses a point of view, it frames a perspective, and constructs a particular outlook, inverting her *being-in-the-world* into being a Thing in the world. Maintaining a wavering gap between fantasy and reality, she is regarded, but only from a distance. As in theatre, acting as the fourth wall,[12] glass creates a distance that shields against the returning gaze of the Object.

"Within this framework, women are seen as extensions of the male gaze and as instruments of the emerging consumer society and it's transformative powers at the dawn of modernity... passively transformed by forced modernization rather than as appropriating modernity on their own and, through this appropriation, being able to change the world that is transforming them."[13]

12 The fourth wall in modern theatre describes the invisible plane at the front of the stage that contextually separates the audience from the performers on stage.

13 Quoting Alain Tourain's *Critique of Modernity,* Susana Torre, "Claiming Public Spaces: The Mother's of Plaza de Mayo," *Gender Space Architecture,* eds. Jane Rendell, Barbara Penner and Iain Borden, (London: Routledge, 2003), 140

Fig. 139 Josephine Meckseper, *Media Burn*, 2007

The use of the female body for display and marketing purposes stimulates consumer desire while promoting an image of an idealized body. Women are directly targeted as consumers, but are hugely effected by the figure of the model itself, influencing their purchases as well as their personal body-images. As the visual realm increasingly demands attention, she is constantly reminded of her own projected image.

Thus the Woman-as-display-object is a normalized and passive image, so commonplace that she hardly stands out. Like every other object framed and posed in public storefronts and virtual galleries, her body is desired with the same gleam in the eye. The woman behind the glass seduces her to imitate, to own; to *be*.

Fig. 140 *A woman is reflected in an untitled piece by artist Anish Kapoor,* Miami Beach, Florida, 2012

In the same glance, the glass that invites the eye, inverts an outward gaze into a maze of self-reflection. Her position appears calm on the surface, but the tremors beneath the surface shatter her visage into a rippling dissolve. Her reflection shows a multiple of selves, an inconsistent movement, shifting, lingering, and unfolding. She witnesses her fragmented self-reflection and she can only see a multitude of eyes in the mirror, always watching, focusing, and following her. Thus her perception is reflected back onto herself; she is subject to both the gaze from the Other as well as towards the Self.

Fig. 141 Window display

Body images contribute to the order of social etiquette in the way it structures our relationships to each other,* as well as to our own bodies. This ideal image has taken form through subtle and over publicity and conditioning within the society, dictating what is 'normal', acceptable and desirable, thereby secluding traits that are somehow unnatural or unsightly. We are compelled to act accordingly, projecting and molding the ideal image. We are drawn to this unreality; it is like an escape, or maybe hope.

"...when women are held in highest esteem they are typically stripped of their natural qualities - adorned, sanitized, deodorized, and denuded - becoming "objects" of beauty and even worship."[14]

14 Jamie L. Goldenberg and Tomi-Ann Roberts, "The Beast within the Beauty: An Existential Perspective on the Objectification and Condemnation of Women," *Handbook of Experimental Existential Psychology,* eds. Jeff Greenberg, Sander L. Koole and Tom Pyszczynski, (New York: The Guilford Press, 2004), 71

Fig. 142 Woman's reflection in cosmetic mirror

She feels the need to live up to this 'normalized' but objectified image of Woman. Having to constantly engage in her own reflection and projected image, she obsessively compares herself to the images that model how she should be. She is constantly faced with images of flawless femininity, haunted by her own inadequate reflections and followed by invisible but objectifying eyes, and so she keeps a watchful eye over herself.

She internalizes the panes of surveillance, becoming mirrors in her dark interior, and this becomes a method of defense and assurance - a self-regulation of her own image in order to reflect the ideal. If she cannot uphold the mask of desirability and if she refuses to become an object of desire, she loses more than just power, she loses 'face', she is refused acknowledgement; she is stripped of her identity. Her external projection haunts her internally and she no longer knows herself without the glass screen.

Fig. 143 Reflection of Kolbe statue, Barcelona Pavilion

The cutting light is illuminating as it is exposing. Though she is bound to the courtyard, her presence is revealed in the reflections, impressions, and illusions caught within the house. she is dissolving, blurred between hard rational lines. Cast to the outskirts of the modern house, she is behind the glass and in its mirrors; forever haunting its interior.

"...reflectionsconfusethepictureofreality. Thevirtualandtherealbecomehardtodistinguish,.."[15]

15 Robin Evans, 'Paradoxical Symmetries,' *Translation from Drawing to Building and Other Essays,* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 261

Fig. 144 Robin Evans, *Self-portrait*, Barcelona Pavilion

The reflection in the glass merges with the image framed behind the glass. Slowly we realize that we have been the ones with shielded eyes, unknowing performers on an illusive stage. The house transforms, displaces, mirrors and dissolves its occupant; the subtle reflections that are caught in the glass plane multiplies its audience and traps its visitors in an unknowing labyrinth of self-inspection. With an indistinguishable focal shift, image becomes reflection, and spectator becomes spectated. One is forced to confront one's own reflected image, or one's accidental display; we oscillate between observer and observed. In the glass house, surrounded by invisible mirrors, we are but fragmented reflections of Her. We must present ourselves, perform, and take form.

Fig. 145 Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Your Body is a Battleground)*, 1989

Your body is a battleground. You are always projecting an image of your Self; your exterior facade is on display, subject to being viewed and judged. Impressions and exchanges occur at this surface - the sight - of the body as the perceptible plane of interaction. The internal struggle that you face in shaping and accepting your physical body is a reflection and an indication of an imagined ideal.

The Modern gaze penetrates beneath the surface of the skin. Like an x-ray, surveillance of the body's interior open for scrutiny and interpretation, and is an indication of the private interior becoming public territory.[16] Thus the body also hosts the battle within, as a *site* for potential control and influence. You are fighting in this battle as well; you must submit to the invasive eye or fight against it.

16 Beatriz Colomina, "X-ray Architecture: Illness as Metaphor," *Positions* (Fall 2008), University of Minnesota Press, 33

Fig. 146 Vanessa Beecroft, *vb45.007.*, 2001

This battle is silent but not passive; its confrontation is without words. Voiceless, this body becomes both a command and a challenge. Standing in unity, fearless but trembling, hovering torsos resting on a mid-thigh horizon. The solidarity is in the multiple, an army of flesh. Yet her presence wavers between subject and object, viewer and viewed, singular and collective. The body en masse, flesh on flesh on flesh, filling the space with untouchable eyes; this body is unyielding. There is no emptiness so one can look away; no place where one can be at a distance.

Without the protective glass plane that allows for discreet observation, the eye is timid to engage. Her body is seductive and it is unashamed, aggressive, almost threateningly so. But looking away from the flesh, we are caught in her sight; forced at last to see her *seeing* and to face Woman with an unrelenting gaze.

Fig.147 Francesca Woodman, *"Self-deceit #1,"* Rome, Italy, 1978

Perhaps it is in the elusive reflection that she can be found - yet not as one that lives in relative terms, not as the Other, the counterpoint, or the object - but as a being that channels life outwards and within and back out again.

She is capable of becoming many forms, and she refuses to stand under the glare of unlivable ideals. She can only regain her subjectivity by refusing to be molded into an object of display, by finding her own image and facing the fear of her own gaze. She is no longer petrified to raise her visage, to meet the gaze of an expectant audience, but she does not pause to pose nor to perform.

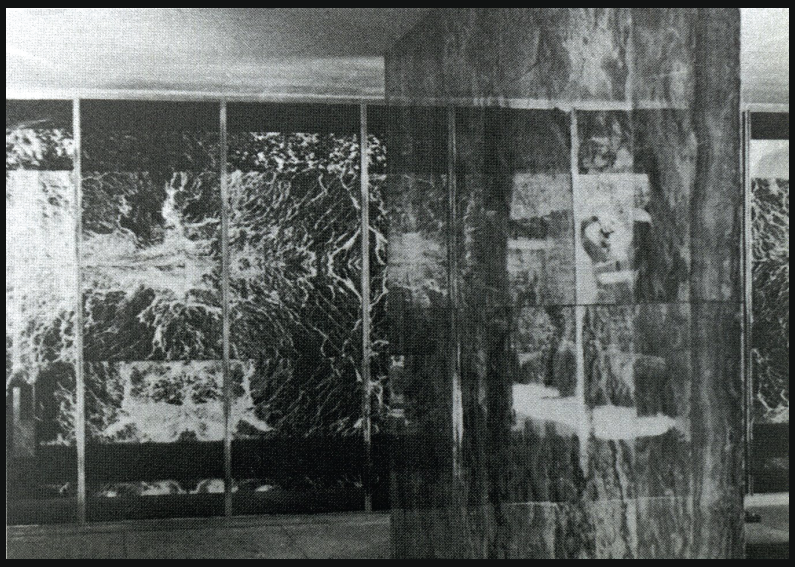

Fig. 148 Interior reflections, Barcelona Pavilion

Life traverses through her, it does not hover at the surface like the stolid glass plane that only allows you to know her image. She is neither inside nor outside; her body bleeds into the marbled flesh of the walls. Her spirit can not be distilled nor contained, but is composed of a layering, a multiplicity, always escaping just within reach. She cannot be captured, not by the image nor the house; she leaps between the reflections on the walls. She is dancing and inflamed, suspended and submerged, streaking and dissolving, wandering and desiring, leaving the faintest streaks in the glare of a burning sun.

Sometimes I see this Other woman inside, but she is usually hard to grasp. Her presence, like an unreachable itch, is unshakable and insatiable; she is in agitated frustration, panicked apathy, terror and despair. Terrified to bare myself in order to reach her, I can hardly bear my nakedness. Paralyzed and anxious, I am fearful to look; but I know I must face her.

The Woman Trapped Inside the Doll

I remember I was searching for her, but all I see are little pink bodies. Not without faces, but faceless in the way a mask is empty and anonymous. They stare blankly at me, with dead eyes, neither seeking nor finding. I don't know if they can see me, if they are speaking to me silently, behind expressionless gazes. But they are everywhere I look, piled in heaps, tangled and strewn, making mounds that cover the surface of what once was there; now a land of dolls. I begin to search for one like her, or one that could be mine.

EPILOGUE

There are two pathways that run parallel. Side by side in silence. One would never know that another may by present only steps away. Both passages carved from the same earth but worlds apart nonetheless. A bright light in the distance illuminates the narrowness between the walls, only to create darkness in the depths of the paths.

I follow the path; it goes on and on in a monotonous yet nauseating rolling, coming in waves but never culminating to an overflow. Just a steady, almost mechanical movement, never stopping nor pausing; I need to rush my step in order to keep up with the frame, not get left behind, or lose out, or be late. I hurry along in an anxious state - of goals, aims, futures, and prospects - of *pursuit* or perhaps *in* pursuit. And now I can no longer tell whether I am racing towards something or running away from it.

The room is small, symmetrical, possibly cubic; and blue. Its damp surfaces are moist from reflection and ingestion. It is difficult to gauge the depth of the pool, but a mirrored reflection suggests a room below as above. A tormented and erratic drip shatters the unbearable mirror of silence; wispy ebbed fingers lurch and glisten, only to be swallowed back into the blue expanse.

In the center of the room, hovering over black waters, a red corridor continues through a series of glass planes, held mechanically in place. I see her standing at the threshold of the passage, but I can't reach her over the dark unmoving waters below. What is down there is unseen, unspoken, and undoing. Uncertain of the edges beyond, I have not the courage to sink in. She remains hauntingly close, and I can see her shadows multiply, overlapping each other, bleeding red at the very borders.

I saw her once again last night. I did not recognize her at first, but I caught her unmistakable gleam. Most of the time, she is kept at bay, undercover, unrecognized, unwanted, unknown and unbecoming. I hesitated to stare, but was fixated on the face in the mirror looking back, intimately familiar yet so uncertain.

Almost uncomfortably difficult to focus on, I look towards her without trying to see, because I am afraid of what is looking back. Her visage comes through the creases of my skin, in the silent shadow of inflections that mark the fluency of my life as I have lived, as a record and a history of my being in the world. She has always been there and so I am haunted by her invisible presence.

Now she is speaking yet I know not what she utters. Her expression is ghastly and mutable; slipping in a landslide of sentiment, I feel her gasping leaving an oozing residue that coats my throat in suffocating words; and I am left desperate and groping, in a silent battle between inside and out, between her and I.

A liquid embrace, wet pulsations. I am dissolving under the surface, suffused but empty, swelling but clammy, drowning or dreaming... I could sense the first scream before it escaped, the initial act of doubt and moment of sinking, like falling so deep the world becomes dirty streaks on an internal looking glass. The realization that not all is as it seems, that underneath the glossy facade is an unassuming and inescapable compromise. Because the Dollhouse is actually inside me, fortified, guarded, inaccessible and secured. Furthermore, these walls are not built to shelter my interior from harm, but serve to prevent *her* from showing, preserving and protecting the projected image I display to the world.

She fears death (or is it Life) to the point that her entire life has been a slow ritual of death. The Dollhouse is the model of her life, as well as the house for her spirit, her *ka*, her second woman, her Self.

Consciously, yet unaware, I have always been preparing for the Dollhouse. Before I had a chance to establish my desires of being-in-the-world, I was learning my place and trying on my mother's heels. Constantly reminded to behave like a lady, to eliminate boyish or aggressive traits, and to adjust the movement of my body, I was trained to step gracefully, to leave no traces, to be patient, passive, and to wait for things to present themselves. Instead of actively and unabashedly fighting for the life I was drawn to, I continued to rehearse for the one I was pre-ordained to live.

She is becoming aggressive, obstructive, even destructive in order to make a space for herself in a framework that has been constructed to exclude her very presence. She refuses to stay inside the house, and to be contained within its designation. She is clawing to get out, she gnaws at my emotions and tears at my thoughts. So I am trapped in the depths of my two-fold prison: all this time, while I have been peering, lurking and yearning from the exterior of the Dollhouse, I was unable and unwilling to see that I was really the woman trapped inside.

It is a tremendous feat to eradicate this feeling, to constrain and contain an Other within my Self, and I fear I will implode. I can only find a release by facing *her*, the woman I have restrained inside my self-containment. I can no longer be ruled by social 'norms' that require the denial of my identity, value, and autonomy. As long as I have a fear of being on the out-side, or being undesirable, of not fitting the mold, I will never be able to break free from the Dollhouse.

Fuming and deserted, I have been living and dreaming in this house for so long that my entire being is immersed, even embedded within this model of domestic bliss. So I desire and despise the very formwork that molded my being; that creased the folds of my flesh into plastic armament and armor. Ignited from within, I am burning in a searing blaze; I seethe to destroy the Dollhouse and all its contents. The eruptions are extreme, quick to spark the yearning unknowns that flame my abandoned desires. A moment of hesitation, an exhale, before the collapse of a former framework, scorched with a fury unleashed to create a new form of my own. I want to break out of the house, I will not be forced into its frames any longer - not by default nor defeat.

I can feel a multiplicity of energies and currents of desire as manifested through my body. I can choose to suppress, deter, dam, resist, deny, withstand and force my body's expressions; or I can allow Life to course through my veins, to bleed at the edges and to flood and overwhelm the borders of my being. My body is alive! It is my expression, my state of being, my capacity and connection to the exterior realm. My body is my filter and my method of embodying the world around me; it shapes my actions as well as my form; it is the instrument as well as the tune by which I dance within and without the house.

Each desire sparks a flicker of ecstasy, a luminous glow, a peak, a tremble, steady but fleeting; the shadows sway around her. The flesh of the earth is saturated, leaking, and bleeding from deep within; it is hot and moist, dark, wet, dripping and enflamed. She steps hesitantly, her footsteps leave muddy impressions, rippling reflections, the ground absorbs her every movement, pulling, grabbing at her toes, yearning for her to join its eternal existence. Simultaneously sinking and afloat, she is in a fiery entanglement of seduction. She is ignited by passion, however brief, intimately illuminating.

One by one they plunge, with one last glimmer and fading sizzle, a tinted afterglow. Temporal intensities leaving a hardened residue, a stain of something that once was, never to return to its previous state, irreversible, irreformable, passed, lost. Yet with every fallen flame, an undiscovered shadow appears, dancing, flickering, awakening.

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INTRODUCTION

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BEING INSIDE//INSIDE-BEING

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