

exhibition statement

“Building and dwelling are at the core of any affirmation of being.” - Heidegger

My body is a memory site where ecologies of gender *dwell*, where my father’s work as a builder, and my mother’s work with textiles interpenetrate each other to occupy bone and flesh. Just as ecosystems consists of interdependent colonies, my body is colonized by a history of men working outside and women working inside to infiltrate the porous walls of the structures of home, thereby inhabiting one another.

I often think that my mother would have been an artist if she had lived in another time. In retrospect, I think that almost everything she did around the home was a creative activity in the guise of domestic work. She sewed our dresses and clothes, she taught me to knit, crochet, embroider, quilt, craft, bake, draw, and she tried to teach me to play the piano and to sing.

My father was a builder. He belonged to a family of masons. My grandfather, uncles and father were known for their skill with stonework, but they also worked on small building projects, framing homes and laying brick. When I was around 10, my grandfather passed away and my parents sold their small farm and bought my grandparent’s house, which sat on the edge of eleven acres of woods. In the woods was a tree fort that my father and his four brothers built in their youth. My sisters and I played in it, and once, in a moment of stubbornness, I ran away to the safety of its walls. It was a way to experience independence while still feeling sheltered and supported by the old wooden floor that embodied history.

Heidegger argues that *building* and *dwelling* are fundamental to what it means to be human. Building not only shelters but also embodies great skill, satisfaction and creative activity. As cultivation, dwelling within the home enacts a history of *caring for*. This exhibition merges the practices building *with* dwelling, alongside the gendered practices of men constructing from the outside and women nurturing from the inside in a way that dissolves dichotomies so that the two subsist as an eco-system where the structure of the home is a living organism that breathes and dwells.

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November 2017