

The beginning of a work is the act of wrapping a part of my body. I plan to wrap one part at a time—left arm, belly, right knee and shin, etc.—slowly covering my body from head to toe, nose to ankles. *One summer I wrapped a woman in pink thread. I took pictures. She couldn't stay wrapped too long because her circulation was constricted because of the thread, and she couldn't move. I took the ritualistic aspect of wrapping the body, but I took it out of the realm of the sexual and made it weirdly examinatory. Well, it was female or feminine: thread—women sew, pink—girly color, female body to wrap, but not sexual. (I wrapped other things too—trees, leaves, canvases.) The act of wrapping is incredibly satisfying. The obsession, the repetition, the banality. Just simple accumulation. But wrapping isn't forever and I didn't know what to do with the objects once they were wrapped. I left them for dead or posterity to change and droop and maybe end.*

I unwind the thread from my body and slowly loosen my skin from the binds of the thread. *I came to know myself, look at myself. Even like myself. All I really had to do was look, confront I guess. (I didn't know myself and) I didn't know I was normal. I wish I had known and liked longer, before. It feels so good.*

This act of wrapping and subsequent unwrapping occurs in private. *I've always been uncomfortable with my body. It all started when I, I don't know when. I felt about—shame, fascination, curiosity, and embarrassment—my body. When I was alone, it was okay; I hid, denied, pretended it wasn't.*

I document this wrapping and unwrapping as a recording of something that was, something that happened. It freezes the action that is otherwise fleeting. This freezing allows for two things to occur: the action to be examined at a later time, and the action to be transferred from the private to the public realm. *The desire to prolong, to not lose, to preserve.*

The photographs record my wrapped, and later unwrapped, body part from various angles, and create a still frame that lets me examine the former action as a relic. The photograph becomes a permanent, somewhat detached base for the canvas works. *In sixth grade, I cut my face out of my class picture in the yearbook. I remember I really liked my picture but I thought it was cool to disdain myself, cool not to care. Now when I look at the yearbook I wish it was there.*

I make small size or orientation adjustments to the photographs. With these fragments of photographs, I play around, like sorting a puzzle, to connect the pieces in strictly formal ways: along a line of thread, a shadow, a fold of skin; it is like a game, almost a simple exercise in basic design. Using these formal tools, I create a new image, like a collage, a patchwork of pieces of the primary photographs. *I am good at this. I always worry that I am not intuitive enough to be an artist, too organized, too intellectual, too architectural.*

The new, collaged image is given to the printer, and is removed from my hands. The printing is done through an outside source where the archival equipment and large-scale printers exist. The man who prints my work is funny and thoughtful. We spend time together looking at my pieced-together, new image, and discussing the printing outcome.

I provide proof prints for him, but, ultimately, once with the printer, the work is beyond my touch and control. *I like hand making. I want the feel of the paper, the canvas, the needle. But I have always loved Warhol for reasons I can't pinpoint. Maybe because he paved the way that allows, or even asks, contemporary art to incorporate manufacturing, like a company. It's no longer the misunderstood, reclusive genius fantasy.*

The collaged piece is then returned to me as a base to be stretched, many times distanced from the intimate act of constraining myself with thread. I examine this base anew, as though I have discovered a map or a record of something foreign or unknown. It is possible to think of this as simply the foundation: the stretching of canvas as a surface for the painting; however, it already holds layers of actions, thoughts, and manipulations. Embedded in the "simple" foundation is privacy, obsession, pain, awkwardness, documentation, self-promotion, fear, release, relief, hand- and machine-making. *Before leaving the studio, coat and hat on, bag on shoulder, dog on leash, I pause to look at my work. I want to take it in when I am in a mode of transit, a viewing mode, not the working mode in which I view it most constantly. This gives me the feeling of a new perspective; I am on to my next destination, but it also plants it in my head, a snapshot to take with me.*

Once the canvas is stretched, I look to the formal devices to help me re-enter the piece. The creases of skin, the shadows, and the image of a line of thread running into a thread mark left on my skin all create points of entry for me. I highlight information contained in the initial layers, and I draw new conclusions, seeking evidence that may have always been there but that I can see only now that I have some distance from the once private and uncomfortable act. I draw links by sewing into the canvas and drawing on top of it to connect these formal elements. The base canvas then becomes subverted pictorial space, and the surface is activated with new information. *I never thought I was a good painter. Got frustrated. Always someone better than me. The thread was my way. It acts like a brush stroke, slowly building up in density and color, making shapes, shadows, lines. It is my way of painting, my way of thinking. Sometimes I worry that I am too mathematical to be an artist. For as long as I can remember, I have been obsessed with tracing the angles letters make—street signs, newspaper articles, anything. I always want to make a map of lines. I used to think I was unstoppably crazy, but now I see it is part of my process. A space in which feeling and calculating overlap. I don't think there are too many things that are either or.*

In this final stage of the work, I largely retrace the original act of wrapping, actually sewing thread into the canvas over every line that was once wrapped on my body. This possibly redundant act underscores the distance between the initial private act buried in the surface of the canvas and the current, superficial marking, and serves to bring the canvas from the past act into the now of the surface. *And I remember I heard Yoko Ono speak once and she said how she can't speak about her art without being repetitive, always referring back to some central part of herself. This realization is what saved her and keeps her going.*

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Katherine Keltner, *Exquisite Bind*, 2007