

BODY ARCHIVE STATEMENT

Body Archive is an ongoing long-term project, over a decade of images, documenting both the extraordinary and banal experiences of my life. It began as an inquiry into the practices and aesthetics of historical medical and forensic photography, and associated assumptions of the photograph as a document of the moment, or a representation of truth – what Walter Benjamin describes as evidence of an occurrence. As a culture we are spellbound by the potential implications found in skin cells, DNA strands, and microscopic fibers; technological innovation in contemporary medical and forensic methodologies position the body as the central locale for the collection of residual trace evidence.

This work examines our artistic and scientific expectations of photography and the body in transformative ways. Traditional notions of the female body in art, the figure as object on view, are set aside to consider the body as an active participant in creative and narrative process. I incorporate performance and photography with a willingness to use my own body as both test subject and subject matter in an investigation of personal and cultural assumptions linked to notions of the body, science, narrative, authorship and documentary photographic practice.

I explore the body as a site of experience, and the body as both repository and author of information. To create a documentary self-portrait without bias and point of view, I place a light sensitive emulsion, sans camera, on the surface of my body to record my actions. The images are created over time: minutes, hours. The resulting documentary photographs are the striking visual residue of my experience: traces of body fluid, clothing, skin prints, and the fine edges of body hair become evidence of my occurrence. A disjointed self-portrait where the instantaneous opening and closing of the camera's shutter is replaced by a performance turned into visual testimony. I live in a body and my body is an archive, my skin the surface through which I experience the world.

-Amy Jorgensen