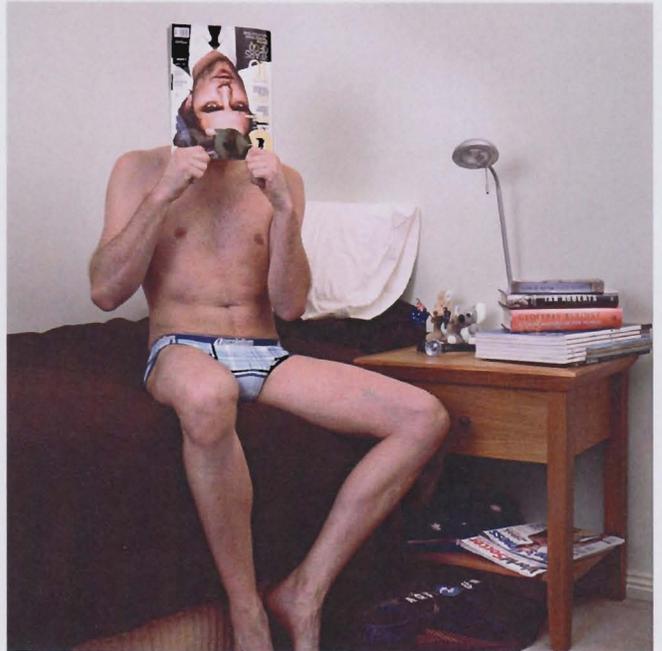


# FOUR ATTEMPTS AT DISGUISE



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## Introduction

### Fatigue and Affection

Image fatigue. So many images... so many people taking and making photographs... focusing; directing; documenting; empowering; capturing; enlightening; processing; saving; storing; deleting; discarding; remembering; reconstructing; levelling; layering; channelling; rasterizing; spotting; sharpening; filtering; masking; reconstructing; deconstructing; contextualizing; critiquing...

Fatigued with the questions: what is a photograph and what is a photograph in the age of electronic imaging and the discussions surrounding digital data and photographic truths and untruths. I'm not interested right now. Now I want to engage with the image before me, the thing itself, and determine my relationship with the subject and the photographer.

The photographers tell a story. The photographs in this exhibition breathe easy with resolved technical sophistication, revealing the dedication of the artist and a celebration of the tools of contemporary image making. Both render the narrative inviting and communicate without interference.

There is an exchange. How is the image important to me? How long should I stand before the image before this exchange becomes meaningful, personal? I bring my world to the relationship and oscillate between engaging, initial recognition of associations, and disengaging. But what happens when I linger in the space between interest and disengagement?

This is the critical space – the space where the image can offer more than I bring to it. It is the difference between seeing and looking. I stay, I am intrigued, and through reverie and patient contemplation, I gain affection for the photographs - not for the information they provide but for the poetic way each story unfolds.

Kellyann Geurts

Senior Lecturer, RMIT University Fine Art Photography

# Trying to Tantalise the Audience

Choosing titles for exhibitions can be tedious, confronting and disillusioning. Part of the confrontation comes from the fact that we're declaring, before the fact, what the punters might see, feel or think about at the exhibition. Artists are an illusive lot and would prefer not to be defined. The disillusionment sets in when a title doesn't live up to our own experience of our work. The tediousness comes from the fact that we're onto the next work and having to choose a title for last month's passion gets left to the night before the catalogue is off to print.

Choosing titles for group shows is all these things only ten times worse. A big group of people, with entirely different interests and artistic persuasions trying to tantalise the audience, and say nothing at the same time. Hence, the world is full of graduate exhibitions with the most neutral of titles.

So when I was told of 'Four Attempts at Disguise' I was amazed at the ingenuity of these four, once again. The show presents four very different practices and its title addresses important aspects of those practices. They've achieved the impossible. Not only that, the title does not limit or define but leaves us full of questions that lead us into the work.

Why are these attempts rather than ultimate statements or triumphs of contemporary photographic practice? What's being hidden by the disguises? Who is being disguised? Disguise seems so secretive that it's something you do to yourself, not someone else. But, in most cases, photography is something you do to someone else. Who is doing who here?

Regardless of whether we know who appears in these images by Clare, Jon, Daisy and Dida, we are left wondering about subjects, objects, whose behind the camera and whose in front of it. There's nothing easy here. No one's defined in a fraction of a second. Not the subjects, not the artists, and which one's which anyway? There are no take-away narratives. The relationship between truth and fiction is constantly blurred and just as Clare teeters on a drinking glass, the audience is similarly tentative, confronted with the familiar rendered dis-functional and thus curious and remarkable.

The 'attempts' are also very important. We live in a world where what's expected is achievements, solutions and personal bests. You'd think you might be protected from this in a place of learning but this is far from true and art students are under increased pressure to perform at the highest level. This high level academic performance is no road to good art. What artists do is full of 'attempts'. The opportunity to stumble, deviate, abandon, run before you can walk or simply pause for a look around, or a nervous break down, are all crucial processes on this 'pathway'. They're also important in the process of looking at art. I hope you will take the time to ask the questions this work demands.

Lyndal Walker

Lecturer, RMIT University Fine Art Photography

Daisy Watkins-Harvey

Who Was Untitled #1 - #9

I can't see you, but I know you are there.

You are watching me.

You are the other.

And we have been here before...

*Untitled #1* (2009), 120 x 100 cm, Inkjet Pigment Print



Dida Sundet

## Performing Metamorphosis

Performing Metamorphosis is the waking dream where the lived and the imagined purposely collide. Reflections on binary opposites woven together to create tension and contradiction between fear and desire, memory and fantasy, the light-hearted and the grotesque.

Fiction and fantasy represent endless possibilities for crossing boundaries and discovering the vulnerable and uncanny within the safety of imagination. From a tradition of seeing the world as paired sets of dualities, monsters and hybrids are born to embody a fear of, and an attraction to, what is partly, or completely, unknown.

If we can dream our dreams into being perhaps we also (by laws of balance) birth our own nightmares. Perhaps it is all an illusion. Despite our struggles and convictions, we are ultimately not the masters of our own minds.

*Step Inside* (2009), 75 x 50 cm, Inkjet Pigment Print



Clare Rae

## Climbing the Walls and Other Actions

This series is concerned with visually representing my experience of femininity, whilst also exploring aspects of representation. I use the body to promote ideas of discomfort and awkwardness, resisting the passivity inherent in traditional representations of femininity. The images attempt to de-stabilise the figure, drawing tension from the potential dangers the body faces in these positions. Whilst the actions taking place are not in themselves particularly dangerous, the work demonstrates a gentle testing of physical boundaries and limitations via a child-like exploration of the physical environment.

*Untitled* (2009), 75 x 50 cm, Inkjet Pigment Print

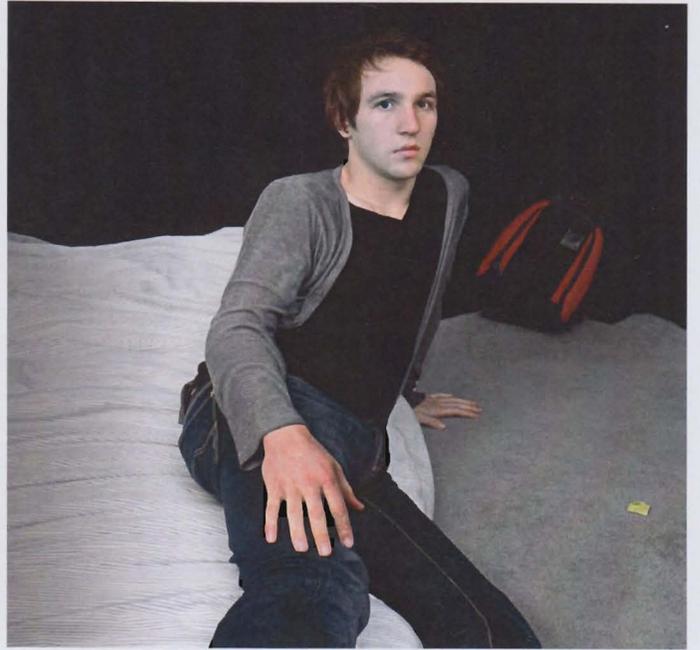
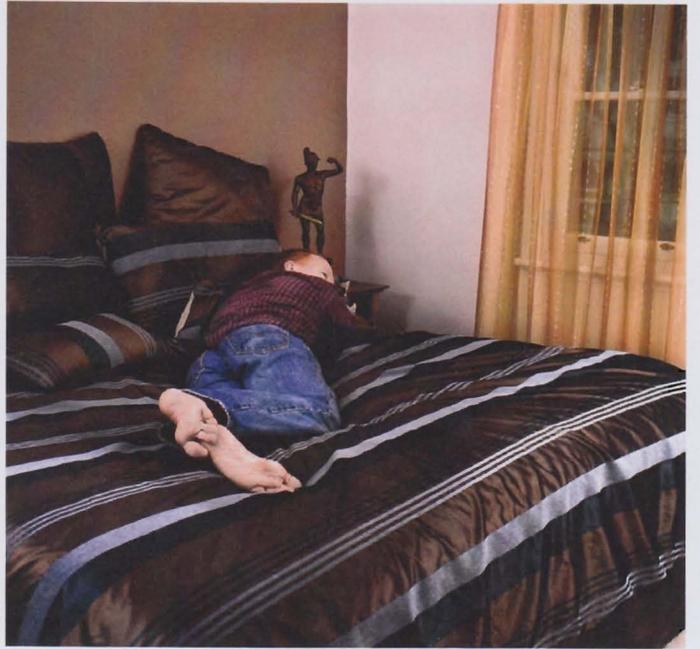


Jon Riethmuller

## Masculine Me(n)

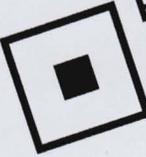
He is constructed; gender is imposed. There are many facets; you know some of them: he opens his identity to you cautiously as he is vulnerable. Your experience of this identity is his protection. He wants you to experience him as masculine. He won't reveal all. His experience of you is similar but he longs to know you better and connect at a deeper level. He feels whole when this intimacy occurs. I am a normal man: all men are normal.

*Anthony, Tony, Steinar, Tom* (2009), 70 x 70 cm, Inkjet Pigment Prints



RMIT Univeristy  
Fine Art Photography

Honours Graduate Exhibition

 RMIT SCHOOL OF ART  
**GALLERY**

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