



*(un)grounded: as if I was releasing something*

Sharna Barker

1. *I feel this as a part of it, within it*, 2022, paper, latex, acrylic, wire, 250 x 200 x 245cm.
2. *My breath is out of sync*, 2023, clay, calico, latex, thread, dimensions variable.
3. *I feel this as a part of it, within it no.2*, 2022, paper, latex, acrylic, wire, 270 x 150 x 100 cm.
4. *I am always reminding myself to breathe*, 2023, paper, latex, clay, polyester, 156 x 50 x 17cm.
5. *Self-portrait: move-in, move-with, move-on no.3*, 2022-3, clay, acrylic, board, latex, 30 x 24 x 10cm.
6. *Self-Portrait: move-in, move-with, move-on (parts 5 and 6 extended)*, 2023, clay, acrylic, latex, board. 156cm x 30cm x 60cm.
7. *What am I holding onto?* 2023, paper, paint, thread, wire, 170cm x 50cm x 40cm.
8. *As if I was releasing something*, 2023, paper and latex, 160 x 300 x 10cm.
9. *Allowing myself space to process*, 2023, paper, latex, wire, thread, 170 x 80 x 60cm.
10. *My left hip and more (repeated)*, 2023, paper, wire, latex, 110 x 80 x 65cm.
11. *Self-Portrait: move-in, move-with, move-on (series)*, 2022-3, clay, acrylic, board. Various dimensions.

*(un)grounded: as if I was releasing something* explores the boundaries of contemporary self-portraiture. Sharna's paintings and sculptures — as somatic (re)constructions of self — foreground disintegration, unpredictability, and failure, as 'self' appears and disappears interchangeably. Sharna claims that a continual (re)construction of self using unstable and pliable materials and forms emphasises the corporeality and materiality of the artist body that allows for multiple and various interpretations. In emphasising material volatility alongside using her skin tone, body casts and bodily scale, the paintings and sculptures offer some stability and accessibility to read them as self-portraits while simultaneously ungrounding the steadiness and security of 'self'. In the work there is a continual fragmentation and opening out of the artist's body from a painted figure to a formless and skin-like mass. Put differently, the work omits the representation of facial features and offers a stripping away of a solid and structured body.

*(un)grounded: as if I was releasing something* is the outcome of Sharna's doctoral research. Some of the works have been previously exhibited as part of this project, some are new creations. The project considers the limits of registering and recognising 'self' by reconceiving and expanding the representational strategies for the genre of self-portraiture. Sharna claims that the methods applied in her work demonstrate 'self' as embodied, dynamic, and changing where a continual collapse of form and structure is key. Sharna argues that her research enables ways to critically articulate the kinds of representational strategies that are being employed in contemporary art and will provide a complex and significant framework for new understandings of the genre.

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