

Re:possessed:  
Transforming Shadow Kin into Godlings

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## ABSTRACT

The goal of this process-based inquiry is to be responsive to the art making process and to what transpires when the work transforms in the different stages and different media. For this purpose, I use cut-out collage figures that are transformed from analogue to digital media, from inanimate to animate work, and from small scale to large and back to small. In addition to the physical transformation, I investigate what this transformation means to the work both conceptually and as content.

Through the cycle of disassembly and reconstitution, initial considerations about what constitutes hybridity, multiplicity or non-variability in the material practices of contemporary print media expand into thematic concerns of hybridity, alterity and repetition. These concepts are approached through a variety of texts on pluralism, polysemy, dynamism, hybridization and awkwardness.

Starting as hand-pulled prints, the paper collage figures transform into scans, digital prints, stop-motion work and finally video projections. Within this series of metamorphoses, each experimental iteration of the process investigates what qualities, characteristics and possibilities are relinquished by the altered relationship between the work in different stages, and what are repossessed in the final work.

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"If the print exists there must have existed something whose print it is... In other words, the print is the sign for an object, but the relationship between sign and the object it stands for is not fixed or stable: The print does not always have the same shape as the body that impressed it, and it doesn't always derive from the pressure of the body. At times it reproduces the impressions a body has left in our mind, it is the print of an idea."

Umberto Eco "The Name of the Rose"

## INTRODUCTION

My art practice consists mainly of producing works on paper. As an artist, I have mostly identified as a printmaker. I am interested in the process of layering colours by hand-pulling works through the press so that the ink is transferred to and pushed inside the paper, and eagerly await the reveal once the matrix is removed. A matrix (from the Latin word "mater" meaning mother) is the surface, such as a plate, stone or block, from which the image is transferred to a sheet of paper or other substrate.

Although printmaking as an artistic practice is often associated with medium specificity and a focus on technique, many contemporary print artists are determinedly troubling the conventional concepts of printmaking, like multiplicity, reproducibility and non-variability. A traditional view on printmaking focuses on producing from the matrix an edition of multiple images on paper, which in a gallery setting is usually displayed framed under a glass. However, beginning in the 1960s print artists started merging different disciplines and unconventional substrates, which resulted in more experimental—sometimes

only ephemeral—installations and objects, thus challenging the context of how a print could be experienced. Both print media's inclusiveness of multiple disciplines and technological advancements continue to introduce new processes and new materials, as well as new questions regarding the essence of printmaking.

Due to print media's ability to absorb conceptual and technological developments, an increasing number of artists are venturing into hybrid printmaking – that is, combining two or more printmaking techniques, or combining printmaking with other media to create works that expand print past the notion of the two-dimensional reproducible image. I am undertaking this strategy in my thesis work and with my research, seeking to understand what are the distinct philosophical and representational qualities that result from this fusion. Are there aesthetic and/or formal criteria specific to contemporary print media, and, if there are, whether they can be identified through the categories of function, process or materials? I am pursuing this question as well as the significance of collage, materiality, transformation, hybridity and otherness/alterity as these strategies and themes emerge in my practice.

## 1. MATERIALS AND PROCESSES

### 1.1. The Context for Print



Fig. 1: Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Porcus parte antica humana*, 16<sup>th</sup> century woodcut,  
<http://picssr.com/tags/fabulosos/>/page6

Printmaking is strongly associated with multiplicity. Woodcuts were the first method to reproduce art in a mechanical way. With the invention of lithography in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, printing no longer required engraving or cutting of the metal plate or block, which in turn not only made possible to create prints in exceedingly large numbers but also to do so with relative speed. Around 1900, advancements in printmaking technology had made it possible to reproduce virtually all two dimensional art works. However, simultaneously, the concept of reproduction and repetition were devalued in favour of the ideology of originality that began in early modernism and solidified in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In his seminal essay, Walter Benjamin posited that mechanical reproduction transforms the assignment of authenticity. With manual reproduction, the original preserves all authority -- the aura -- and the reproduction is merely a copy, or worse, a forgery. With mechanical reproduction, Benjamin felt that this is not exactly the case since there is no original, and the artwork is liberated from its need to possess a unique history and context, which are the prerequisites for authenticity, and thus the pursuit of "the aura" has come undone (218).

With the change in printmaking's status from the reproductive and supplementary art form to a primary means of expression that took place during the 1960s and 1970s, the binary authenticity-inauthenticity conversation no longer seems to apply to printmaking. Artist and researcher Ruth Pelzer-Montada has argued that "one print is as authentic or inauthentic as the other. Each print is authentic in the sense that it derives from the same 'original', and each print is inauthentic in the sense that there are multiple copies - however much they may vary" (3).

The ability to create multiples is not a critical concern in my printmaking practice, since over the years I have been increasingly producing singular images regardless of the ability to create editions. Rather, it is the distinct aesthetic and material qualities of the mark making and ink layering that appeal to me in such amount that, somewhat paradoxically, I am using a medium that is created for multiplicity to create unique work. Included in the visual qualities of printmaking is the dimensionality of ink as it sits on the substrate. As the ink is pushed onto and absorbed into the paper via the matrix, it has a different

surface quality than with ink or paint that is applied directly onto a substrate. Also, with linseed oil based inks, the large volume and fine particle size of pigment in the ink allow for the colour to retain high chroma even when it is extended with a transparent medium for creating layering effects, or for translucency. In addition, I am intrigued by the indirectness of printmaking as the image is transferred from a matrix to a substrate. In this sense, the act of transference creates an intervention between the image that the artist produces on the matrix and the image that the matrix produces on the substrate. Because not every aspect of the transference can always be controlled, the process invites both visual and technical possibilities that are unanticipated, and which may require adjusting the subsequent involvement with the materials and the developing image.



Fig. 2: Hannamari Jalovaara. Examples of my hand-pulled prints that were used as source material during the research.

## 1.2. Collage as strategy and process

For the purpose of this research I am using my own art practice and the creation of a collection of two-dimensional collage figures titled Shadow Kin. These figures are created exclusively from my archive of hand-pulled prints and drawings that I produced for earlier projects. My goal is to explore the thematic considerations, material strategies and methodological queries, of both my own artistic research as well as “experimental printmaking”, which is defined through how artists experiment with materials and processes, as well as through their experiments with display.



Fig. 3: Hannamari Jalovaara: Collage material in my studio.

In the early twentieth century, collage rose to prominence as an art form as the result of several avant-garde groups, such as Futurists, Dadaists and Cubists, exploring the experimental nature of assembling new aesthetic, political and cultural content through cutting and pasting. In the preface to *Cutting Edges: Contemporary Collage*, New York-based artist James Gallagher posits that collage can be defined as “an artistic composition made of various materials glued on a surface”, and it is comprised of the acts of recycling, reinterpretation and reprocessing of the source material.

In his article “Ambiguity and Theft”, poet and cultural critic Joshua Clover writes that collage always consists of two practices since it “requires two verbs: ‘to take’ and ‘to place’”. According to Clover, “collage has two faces: one turned toward the viewer, the other turned away.” What he means by this is that the viewer sees the elements of the artwork that are placed before them. However, these elements have always been taken from elsewhere, and this action is not visible. Clover posits that with collage the most important and necessary relation is not between aesthetics and politics, or content and form, but between “placing” and “taking”.

The strategy of “taking” only from myself implies that I am not combining or juxtaposing material that originates from disparate contexts. Hence, my collage is not rooted in the contextual disruptions of the source material, which result in critical cultural or political commentary. The “taking” from myself also necessitates that I cut up and destroy my own previously made original prints and drawings in order to repurpose and reassemble them in the new work. Because the source material is familiar to me, the qualities of otherness/alterity

are not attributed to strangeness that is evoked through assembling previously unknown and potentially irreconcilable elements. Rather, they are activated through the process of reconstitution and the awkwardness of the unfamiliar or previously unseen way of reconfiguring the familiar elements.

### 1.3. Animating the Artist's Studio

With the continuing development of technology, studio artists' ability to animate their inanimate work has become increasingly more feasible. However, according to archaeologist Marc Azéma of the University of Toulouse–Le Mirail and Jean-Michel Geneste, the curator of Lascaux, the illusion of movement was pursued by even Paleolithic artists. Animals in cave paintings have been depicted superimposed in various sizes and with multiple limbs, which under the flicker of a flame can suggest movement (Zorich). Although the illusion of animation is different from an image that actually transforms into another, the intention of provoking movement in order to augment or alter the visual experience or invoke a narrative quality does not require that the ensuing work shift into the realm of a cinematic animation. While the following artists hold a strong connection to their studio art, they have also explored a variety of ways of hybridizing their art making in order to animate their traditionally inanimate media.

South African artist William Kentridge, whose work rests on a foundation of printmaking and drawing, has extended his drawing practice into animation through creating successive charcoal drawings, which he photographs with his

camera. Contrary to traditional animation that always uses different sheets for each image, Kentridge erases his drawings and draws the new images on the same sheet. Sometimes there are several hundreds of alterations on one sheet of paper and the final image left on the paper is the last image of the sequence. Because of his process, Kentridge is only able to view the image that he is presently working on, and he places his trust on the process to guide what the drawings develop into in the sequence (Kentridge). Given Kentridge's education in mime and theatre, expanding his drawings into time-based media seems organic. According to Kentridge, he is interested in ambiguity, uncompleted gestures and uncertain endings. As his drawings morph and stretch out into time, his work poetically engages and alternatively activates both larger political events and individual narratives within a South African context (Kentridge in Tone).

Tabaimo is a Japanese artist who creates video installations by combining drawings, calligraphy, traditional Japanese woodblock printing Ukiyo-e and digital manipulation. Beginning with analogue hand drawings on rice paper, she scans them and animates them on a timeline on the computer. Her installations are immersive, as the viewer is often surrounded by multiple screens and/or purpose-built architecture on which the video is projected (DeBevoise). By incorporating movement into her work, Tabaimo is able to extend her imaginative imagery into the realm of surreal transmutation and create a narrative that is equally rooted in everyday activities as it is destabilizing. The inclusion of time allows for the unfolding of both the ordinary and the violent in the disturbing actions performed by her aesthetically pleasing subjects.

Laleh Khorramian is a New York based artist whose paintings and stop-motion animations are often made with her own monotype prints and drawings, as well as found scrap paper, as source material. Khorramian reworks the one-of-a-kind prints by drawing, scratching and erasing marks, and subsequently combines them into digital collages and digital stop-motion. For Khorramian, her monotypes are notably productive in her process that studies the fluid, and highly textured, mark-makings on a micro level, and then magnifies them into their mythical scale (Khorramian). Khorramian is drawn to the materiality of the printed mark, which she uses to build the context and the environment for her characters. By animating digitally the amorphous and mottled marks, she creates a fantastical space that both her characters and the viewer can journey through. With her stop-motion animations, Khorramian not only uses the process to experiment with and re-discover formal properties of already completed monotype and collage works that she reconstitutes for them, but she also uses it as a way to generate material for future work (Khorramian).

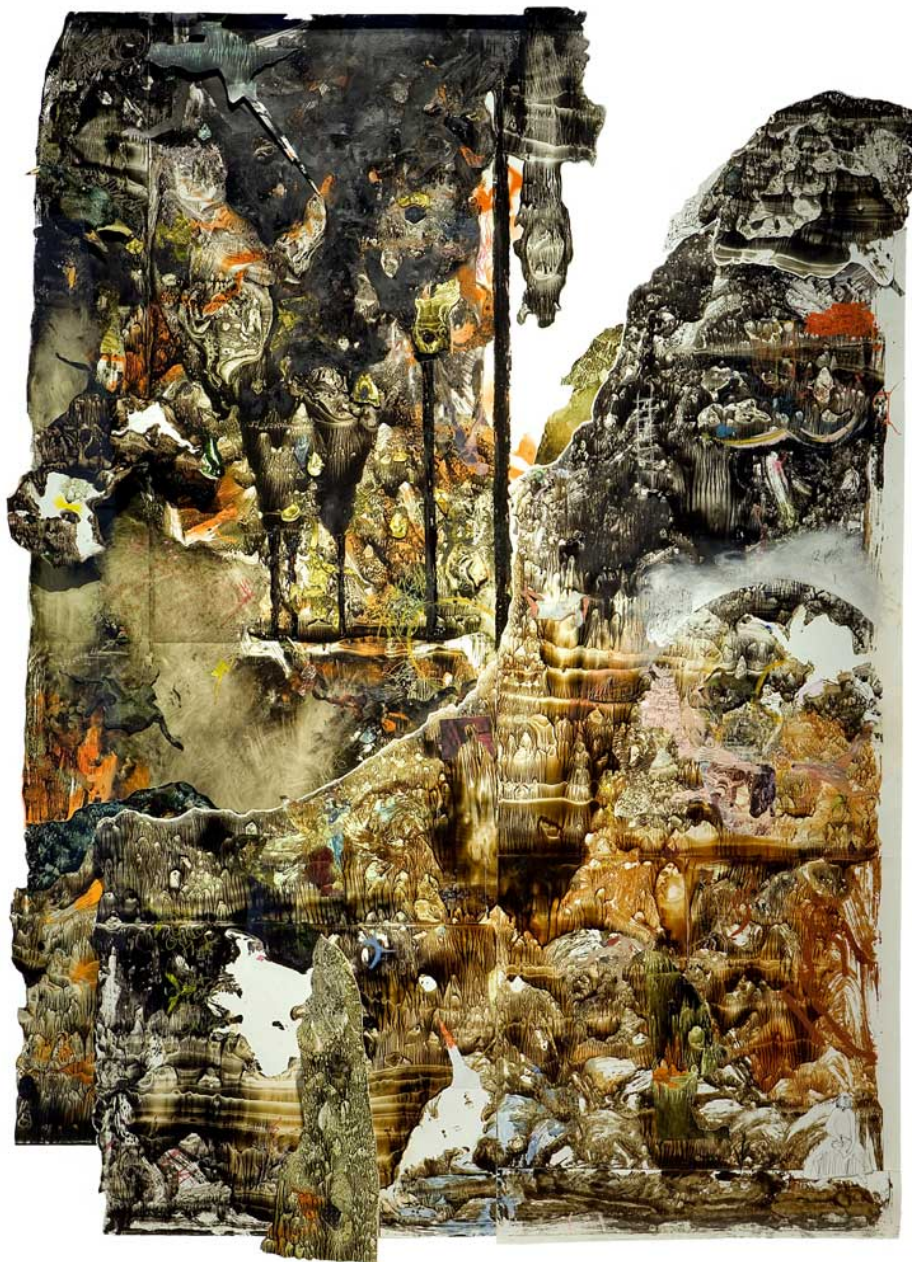


Fig. 4: Laleh Khorramian, *Some Comments on Empty and Full*, 2008.  
Ink, oil, crayon, and collage on polypropylene, 190.5 x 139.7 cm,  
Used by permission of the artist.

Beginning with the creation of the *Shadow Kin* series, my practice-led research provided an opportunity to inquire into what transpires when time and

movement are introduced into initially inanimate imagery, and what transpires when the artist's studio extends into animated work.

#### 1.4. The Laboratory

##### 1.4.1. Making *Shadow Kin* and *Godlings*

During my research, I worked on three related projects: the inanimate *Shadow Kin* and *Shadow Kin (beta)* series, and the animate *Godlings* series. The *Shadow Kin* series consists of an unspecified number of analogue collage figures created from my own hand-pulled intaglio, lithograph and silkscreen prints produced over a period of years as practicing printmaker. My intention was to break away from the constraints of working with a standard rectangular paper substrate and size. With collage in particular, I wanted to investigate the interaction between the different layers as I varied how I adhered the elements together in order to either keep them on an even surface level or to build up thickness. In addition, I was interested in what took place with the sense of materiality when the paper collage imagery was scanned and transferred as a digital print onto silk and as a projection onto paper.



Fig. 5: Hannamari Jalovaara. Shadow Kin collage figures in the studio. Various sizes.

I started by selecting hand pulled-prints from my personal archives and proceeded to cut them into pieces. These fragments became the source material for my collage assemblages titled *Shadow Kin*, a collection of cut-out figures ranging in size between 30 x 15 cm and 37 x 25 cm each. The figures are hybrid creatures with zoological and botanical features and characteristics. They have heads, torsos and limbs, as well as appendages, such as tails or feathers. However, neither their appearance nor number follow usual bipedal or quadrupedal forms since some have only one leg and some have limbs whose shape is ambiguous, and some do not have visible mouths or eyes. Nevertheless, I feel that it is possible to infer what their visual, auditory and tactile sensory experiences may be like and how they may have contact with their possible environment.

These figures were scanned and printed digitally onto white silk fabric in a large scale creating the series *Shadow Kin (beta)*, 190 x 106.5 cm each.



Fig. 6: Hannamari Jalovaara, *Shadow Kin (beta) II, V, IV*, 2016. Installation view. Concourse Gallery, July 2016. Photo: Ross Kelly. Used by permission of the artist.



Fig. 7: Hannamari Jalovaara, *Shadow Kin (beta) II*, 2016. Digital print on silk. Detail view. Concourse Gallery, July 2016. Photo: Scott Massey. Used by permission of the artist.

I increased the size to almost human scale so that I could examine the difference in the relationship between the viewer and the figures. If it was more facile to view the small scale *Shadow Kin* as their own self-sufficient group, the larger scale undertook to trouble the relationship between the viewer and the figures. This was accentuated by the fine silk gauze of the *Shadow Kin (beta)* series, which allowed for the fabric to move with air currents and create a suggestion of motion by the figures, albeit not incepted by them. The activation of the figures through inclusion of movement was compelling, and generated the succeeding phase of the research.

Following *Shadow Kin (beta)*, I proceeded to create a series of stop-motion animations titled *Godlings*. In order to create the animations, the scanned figures were digitally printed onto paper in a small-scale size, approximately 20 cm tall each. These figures were cut into pieces so that parts of their bodies could be manipulated during the shoot. With each *Godling*, the resulting movement gesture that is used to create the 5-minute long loop of alternating stillness and repetitive movement consists of 175 to 200 frames.



Fig. 8: Hannamari Jalovaara. Sample of *Godlings III* animation frames.

Akin to my process of assembly with the *Shadow Kin* collage figures, I did not have any predetermined designs or gestures when I started animating the *Godlings* figures. I envisioned the characters as being newly hatched gods with limitless powers. However, they are born into an environment that does not offer any stimulus or direction as to how to evolve further. In fact, as far as it can be discerned, there is nothing to perceive in their environment. The characters are left with the exploration of their own physicality. Since they are gods, they are able to disassemble and reconstitute their bodies in unlimited ways, yet nothing is prompting them to probe deeper into their abilities or explore their bodies in a different way.

In order to produce the movement sequences for the video maquettes, I had decided on certain criteria, e.g. they needed to begin and end in the same place, and I would not decide the movement in advance but during the actual shooting through being attentive to the quality of the movement and how it related to each character. I severed a limited number of body parts from the main torso, and began moving them while shooting stop-motion. I shot each movement sequence in one go without pauses as the steady and focus-demanding activity of small limb movements, which was followed by pressing the camera shutter button, presented more opportunities for an intuitive process.

Although as a printmaker I am accustomed to working from the desired end result backwards, this time my strategy was to work in a more process-oriented, instead of a product-oriented, way. I set as my goal to be responsive to the

process and to what transpired when the work was transformed in the different stages and different media.

#### 1.4.2. Materiality: Krishna Reddy and Johanna Love

One of the most technically innovative contemporary printmakers, Krishna Reddy, emphasizes the importance of the artist's involvement in their materials and the process. It is only through engagement with the different materials and processes that the artist discovers the possibilities inherent in them, and what their meaning is for the resulting artwork (14). For example, in so-called process reproduction (such as photography or transfers) the reproduction may contain elements derived from the original that can only be attained through the process, such as details that are invisible to the naked eye.

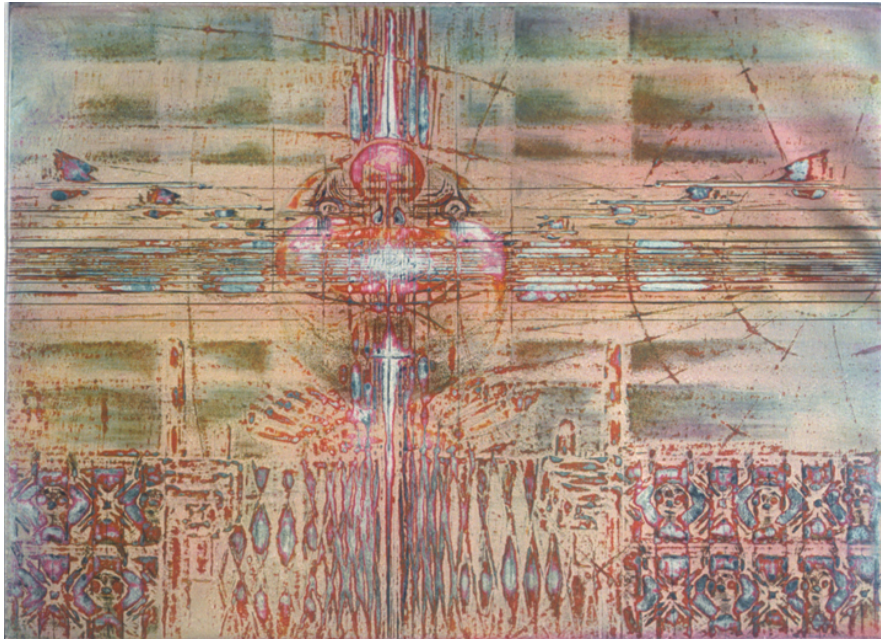


Fig. 9: N. Krishna Reddy, Clown and the Flying Swans, 1980. Viscosity print on paper, 42.9 x 57.2 cm. Used by permission of the artist.

The process-oriented thinking through the visual offers space for openness, complexity and incompleteness. Johanna Love, an artist who has theorized practice-based work with her process, explores notions of visual emptiness and absence, as well as dualities in perception and meaning, through a combination of digital photographic print and hand drawing. Love posits that each process enables certain types of thinking to occur, because certain decisions are directly informed by embedded contexts and ontological differences. "As a result of bringing these processes together a number of important contradictions, or rather, interruptions emerge within the image" (215). Love identifies a few paradoxical readings that these interruptions bring to present: the perception of pictorial space, the sense of materiality, and the reading of temporality (215). I am interested in her definition of dislocation, where different layers fuse in order to create "a spatial ambiguity where the picture surface hovers somewhere between each image layer" (214).



Fig. 10: Johanna Love, wir liegen auf dem Dach, 2008. Photographic print and drawing, 91.5 x 107 cm. Used by permission of the artist.

Exploring materials, and learning about matter and its meaning, is vital to a practicing artist. French art historian Henri Focillon (1881-1943) has written that “[The artist] touches, he [sic] feels, he reckons weight, he measures space, he moulds the fluidity of atmosphere to prefigure form in it, he caresses the skin of all things” (167). According to Johanna Love, Focillon is referring to the somatic senses of manual making which involve experiencing the artworks through their physical presence (218). For Love, it is through the act of drawing on the digital print that the image not only references the body (each drawn mark attests to

the presence of the hand) but it also loses its ability to reproduce and becomes unique (220).

This consideration of the image's material value and embodied connection when the physical weight of the image may be sensed through the body evokes considerations regarding the possible weight of an immaterial value that is derived from the invisible (yet sayable) history of how the image is made.

## 2. TRANSFORMATION

During the production of the series *Shadow Kin*, *Shadow Kin (beta)* and *Godlings*, what started as an inquiry into physical transformation has led to an exploration of what transformation means to the work both conceptually and as content. Initial considerations about what constitutes hybridity, multiplicity or non-variability in print media evolved into hybridity, alterity and repetition as thematic concerns.

Through the process of creating *Shadow Kin*, *Shadow Kin (beta)* and *Godlings*, I made several choices when transforming the work during the different stages. These choices included alternating between unique/multiple, small/large size, inanimate/animate, and analogue/digital.

Choices of materiality, scale and movement not only inform the physical expression of the work, but require that conceptual concerns are also reconsidered. In an 2002 interview with Art21, US based artist Martin Puryear

muses on the challenges of working with two-dimensional imagery (printmaking) after working and thinking in three-dimensions (sculpture): "You have to ask yourself 'What is this about?' Is this about making pictures of ideas that you want to do or is it about really the idea of trying to make a drawing that has its own reality? That's the challenge" (Puryear). When moving between different discipline boundaries, and resolving material and spatial challenges, holding on to a connection can be equally challenging to creating a work with its own reality. While enlarging the *Shadow Kin* collage figures into *Shadow Kin (beta)* digital prints on silk and transforming digital prints into *Godlings* video projections, the process required choices over what techniques are able to activate the sense of materiality of the previous incarnation, and how does the inevitable loss of certain physical attributes necessitate thematic reconstruction. With both *Shadow Kin (beta)* and *Godlings*, the material connection to *Shadow Kin* is relatively uncomplicated as they carry the haptic sense of analogue printmaking and paper collage into the digital prints. However, serendipitously, the many stages of the process and time-consuming print work invoked a subtle sense of a past with the characters, which I utilized in the conceptual development of the creatures as beings that were born within a (narrative) history and pre-existing reality.

## 2.1. Reconstitution

While my work is not consciously responding to the Surrealist agenda in externalizing the internal strange, the psychological polysemy alludes to the Jungian idea of communication between the conscious and unconscious minds.

Drawing from a formal interest in the shadow, the hybrid figures reference the Jungian psychology concept of the unknown elements of the psyche, which may be primitive, repressed, and non-human. My methodology, although based on aesthetic and intellectual choices, includes being responsive to the materials in the production of the work. While in my studio, I am responsive to how the collage source material – and the developing figures themselves – inform my choices.

The imaginary beings of *Shadow Kin* and *Godlings* are constituted of seemingly indiscriminate appendages and shapes that compose monster-like creatures with tails, legs and claws. On occasions, the body parts and their purposes are not entirely clear as the figures' forms follow an unfamiliar morphology. In the stop-motion animations of *Godlings* the functions of these limbs and extremities begin to reveal themselves through the inception of movement, which activates the figures and introduces a time-based dimension of narrative quality.

Referencing myths of origin, the *Godlings* series portrays a pantheon of nascent gods who are in the early stages of exploring their omnipotence.

Although limitless in potential and abilities, their repetitive gestures render their advancement ineffectual. Despite its kinship with mythology, the *Godlings* series is not set out to develop a mythic structure or a mythic narrative. Rather, it is using the framework of myth as a format for the repetitive gesture as a reference to the printmaking practice of creating an edition of a work.

Although movement in itself can be considered as transformation, the looped movement sequence does not reference metamorphosis within a linear

narrative. The figures are performing an undefined amount of repetitive gestures of deconstruction and reconstruction. The actions are self-deforming, and as such, firmly belong to the characters – despite being performed by me. Even though the impetus of movement originated from the figures and my response to them, as the animator of the *Godlings* characters, I am creating a narrative cycle of their original self-consumption and restoration. The degree of the looping metamorphoses varies between the gentle feeding of the bird back into the body in *Godlings II*, to the twitching dismembering, eating and regenerating of the limb in *Godlings I*.

## 2.2. Postmodernism, Pluralism

As a way to create a contextual framework for my inquiry into hybridity, I am applying the purported tenets of postmodernism, artist and professor Frank Vigneron's non-essentialist view on hybridization, as well as feminist theorist Karen Barad's writings on dynamism to my research. I have also included human geographer Jamie Lorimer's musings on awkwardness, because his writing creates space for disjuncture, discord and incompatibility, and thus pluralism. Whilst their frames of reference differ from each other, they all share a solid belief in the importance of subversiveness, and the value of embracing new and unexpected combinations and entanglements. Despite postmodern art and literature sharing many similar characteristics, such as fragmentation, parody and use of semiotics, I have chosen to examine pluralism through some of the concepts of postmodern literature, namely its non-fixity, ambiguity, fragmented forms, as well as reflexivity about its own status as something reconfigured.

Postmodernism is considered to advocate pluralism, multiculturalism, polysemy and multiplicity of codes, signs and texts, non-fixity, and the loss of continuity of universal history and narrative schemes. In "The Hybrids of Postmodernism", associate professor in modernist and postmodernist literature, and Salman Rushdie scholar Dana Bădulescu affirms that "the hybrids of postmodernism, which are the result of migration, displacement and uprooting, the re-visitation of myths, folklore and legends, or projections of their author's imagination... emphasize a defining characteristic of postmodernism, which is its pluralism" (9). Although much of the critique that postmodernism has received centres around pluralism and the ensuing impossibility of endless fragmentation, the disruption of totalizing has a remarkable impact on thinking of things in simply one way, and in the acceptance—or at least tolerance—of diversity. Of particular interest is how pluralism and diversity continue to extend into awkward encounters that are "generative, productively troublesome" (Lorimer 196).

Alongside proclaiming the loss of the grand legitimizing linear narrative, postmodernists have displayed a distrust – and at times outright rejection – of the authority and aura that is generated through purity, history and fixity. According to postmodernist thought, absolute value is no longer granted on the uniqueness of the work – in contrast, the work is read as a text where the elements have already been "produced" before and are now re-assembled into a new artifact. As a result of this decanonization "everything can be 'constructed' instead" (Bădulescu 11). Since literature seems to be especially suited for the postmodernist cultural production, it is perhaps no coincidence that the celebrated Italian novelist Umberto Eco writes in his book *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of texts*, that "the very existence of

texts that can not only be freely interpreted but are also cooperatively generated by the addressee...posits the problem of a rather peculiar strategy of communication based upon a flexible system of signification" (5). Not only then is the creative autonomy and fixity of the artwork questioned, so is the position of the addressee being on the outside, of being the "other". As American art historian Michael Ann Holly argues, art "perception always involves a circulation of positions, a process of movement back and forth that will forever undermine the fixity of the two poles, inside and outside" (Holly 83).

### 2.3. Hybridity

Subject to whether they are located in the ecological, biological, cultural or philosophical context, the definitions of, and the discussions about, hybrids can be quite different. In biology a hybrid is concisely defined as a crossbreed: the result of combining two species of mixed origin. In art and mythology this fusion may take many forms, such as blending zoomorphic and anthropomorphic features. Then again, in cultural terms "hybrid" refers to something that does not yet look "native" but is neither any longer identifiable as something unchanged. However, it is not a quality inherent in an object itself but is dependent on the viewer's personal culture as well as the social field of the cultural practice, and hence subject to change (Vigneron 37). Hybridization is ongoing since there exists no "stable" culture as cultures are continuously borrowing, integrating and adapting to—as well as rejecting—influences (Vigneron 36). Specifically, in postmodernism, hybridity was understood as a natural non-

fixed identity that recognizes plurality and relativity as essential strategies in constructing culture.

### 2.3.1. Hybridization in Visual Arts

Frank Vigneron posits in his article “Hybridization in the Visual Arts: Now You See Me, Now You Don’t”, a relativist view of hybridization is associated with the Deleuzian rhizome where hybridization is a conglomeration of pre-existing elements that are arranged in new configurations or are put together in new contexts and in ways that have not been previously encountered. The critical point in hybridization is where an assemblage ceases to be a simple juxtaposition and is metamorphosed into something entirely new (36).

Despite utilizing mimetic elements, hybridity frustrates the conventions of realism and verisimilitude (Bădulescu 19). It is perhaps no wonder that with the pluralist postmodernist proclivity for intertextuality, montage, collage, appropriation and pastiche, hybrids are a fitting subject matter, since they “are constructions of the mind” (Bădulescu 11) which continue to re-contextualize and morph with the reader or viewer (Vigneron 41). Prominent critic, scholar, and theorist in the academic study of literature Ihab Hassan theorized that these ambiguities, ruptures, and displacements that characterize the fragmentation of hybridization also serve to create an unstable “indeterminacy”. It is in this realm of “indeterminacy” where the customary binary “absolutes”, e.g. past and present, Same and Other, as well as the abject and the sublime, are synthesized and transmuted into new (albeit sometimes depthless) arrangements (504).

Hybridity can also be a way to subvert and confound canonical narratives and visual vocabularies. In *Otherworld Uprising: Shary Boyle*, Canadian artist Shary Boyle is quoted saying that “physical hybrids reflect a personal desire to deny and obliterate boundaries” (35). Rather than creating clashing juxtapositions, Boyle troubles these boundaries through ambiguity. Musing over Boyle’s sculpture *Snowball*, artist Kandis Friesen writes:

“Where one might expect to find her feet; a lone, claw-like foot emerges from a lacy slit. A bulge in her skirt further propels the peculiarity of this work. It is the juxtaposition of such elements that elicits the presence multiple unknowns. Does the sculpture represent a mysterious creature concealed by a flowery garment? Or are the flowers, bulges, and claw, constituents of a hybrid body? Perhaps she is not consumed nor concealed by nature, but rather becoming one with the other elements of the natural world.” (Friesen)



Fig: 11. Shary Boyle, Snowball. 2006. Porcelain, enamel, lustre.  
Appr. 26 x 17 x 16.5 cm. Used by permission of the artist.

When the interplay of embodiment, subjectivity and identity situates itself in the liminal space of continued flux the question of agency rises. When the initially

still *Shadow Kin* figures are animated and transform into *Godling*, they take on an altered agency as beings. Furthermore, they are no longer simply in the state of being but in a more dynamic state of becoming. According to Karen Barad “dynamism is generative not merely in the sense of bringing new things into the world but in the sense of bringing forth new worlds, of engaging in an ongoing reconfiguring of the world” (170). Speaking to the importance of re-visioning the past through this reconfiguring, British novelist and mythographer Marina Warner emphasizes that not only does the cyclical reconstruction into new forms make understanding change possible, but that these “metamorphoses express the conflicts and uncertainties, and in doing so, they embody the transformational power of story telling itself, revealing stories as activators of change” (210).

#### 2.4. Otherness/Alterity and Awkwardness

In “On Auks and Awkwardness”, Jamie Lorimer proposes that we take “awkwardness as an index of alterity” (197), and asks that we consider our disconcerting connections with awkward as potentially generative and productive when our ways of thinking of and perceiving the other are exposed and unsettled (196). Lorimer notes that despite eluding unambiguous affiliation, awkwardness does require a sense of co-presence or connection (196). The dialogical self theory in Psychology posits that the self is in a sustained dialogue with both actual and imagined others, and this extended dialogue shapes our self-understanding (Smythe 635). This concept of sustained connection is fundamental to the idea of the self’s dialectical nature. However, if one

perceives One (self) and Other being in a strictly binary relationship with one another, there is always tension between them as well as exclusion.

The relationship is more generative when One and the Other reject separate fixed identities, and their relationship remains in a perpetual state of 'in-process' or 'becoming' which upholds the tension without the exclusion. Karen Barad postulates "then it seems that we cannot ignore the full set of possibilities of alterity—that 'having-the-other-in-one's-skin' includes a spectrum of possibilities, including the 'other than human' as well as the 'human'" (392). With hybrids, replacing the quest for a securely fixed noun with a non-fixed dynamic verb creates space for a more generative, albeit at times troubling, interaction. Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben quotes Aristotle in *The Open: Man and Animal* when he acknowledges the benefits of reformulating every question concerning "what something is" as a question concerning "through what [dia ti] something belongs to another thing" (14).

London and Lund (Sweden) based writer, curator and professor Sarat Maharaj considers the possibility of engaging with the alterity of the Other without reducing the otherness or filtering it through one's established and accepted mental framework. He holds the position that without the examination and recognition of the other, the practice of artistic research would be hindered. For Maharaj, visual art as knowledge production is about engaging with 'difference and the unknown'. When the *Shadow Kin* figures interact with and respond to each other through their various manifestations in different media, they form relationships between one and other. After all, as anthropologist Michael

Taussig argues, alterity is fundamentally about relationship -- it is not a thing in itself (130).

In his article, which proposes openness to—and affection of—unfamiliarity, Jamie Lorimer suggests that awkward creatures unsettle and break down existing concepts and fixed identities. It is precisely through the breaking down that new possibilities emerge (196). In both awkwardness and postmodernism, deconstruction of pre-existing configurations and the ensuing reconstruction of unexpected combinations produce the possibility of multiple equally possible and relevant readings and interpretations. Whereas in Lorimer's view this is a symptom of the focus shifting from human centric to the "process of 'learning to be affected' by non-human others" (Vinciane Despret in Lorimer 9), in postmodernism it signals the transfer of authorship from artist to viewer or reader. This authorship is endowed with all that the viewer or reader has experienced before since Eco postulates that "no text is read independently of the reader's experience of other texts" (21).

In the *Godlings* series, the animated hybrid figures are "corporeally, ecologically and socially strange" (Lorimer 195) as their early efforts in exploring their own physical "omnipotentiality" results in repetitive and sometimes frustrated movements that are not necessarily fully relatable to the viewer. As Lorimer writes, awkwardness "sensitizes us to the challenges, risks and opportunities of thinking and living in multispecies worlds whose denizens cannot easily be aligned with human interests" (196).

The biomorphic forms of the *Godlings* clash with the scientific knowledge of human bodies. Despite their peculiar nonhuman hybrid appearance, the *Godlings* perform movements that mimic human gesturing and physical self-discovery. In this sense they locate themselves in the realm of the awkward, as awkwardness is “neither detached nor fully engaged” (Lorimer 196) in its sensibility – particularly where the powerful attraction of anthropomorphism triggered by the references to human form simultaneously invite and resist familiar concepts. Our inability to readily identify with the hybrid figures also ushers us into pluralism where our response to them depends on where our dominant context—our narrative—is currently located. Here both Lorimer’s taxonomy based pluralism and Warner’s postmodernist pluralism ask that we examine our notions on how these narratives operate in a hierarchical way, and revisit where value is located. After all, Barad, Lorimer, and Bădulescu each posit that a pluralist sensibility is a far more generous and generative way of experiencing the relationship that we have with difference and with beings that resist our habitual understanding of them.

As Lorimer suggests, sometimes it is, in fact, the subject and object’s liminality and alterity that make them intriguing and even in some cases a mystery to be loved (202). In addition, curiosity and intrigue are the modes to overcome the discomfort created by difference and initial unfamiliarity, and as such, they also become an ethical sensibility (203). Ultimately, it is through curious attention that we may find a way to relate to the non-human other with whom we may already co-exist, yet who may be the one ushering us into new terrain. Marina Warner suggests that we turn to stories – be they verbal or visual – to gain insight and agency into our selves, our world, and the forces that govern our lives and effect

change (212). If the former guiding master narratives have indeed been lost, it would behoove us to understand why we continue to need stories, and why we have reconstituted them in the way we now have.

### 3. REFLECTION ON THE WORK AND NEW DIRECTIONS

Through the continued process of creating these images I have investigated the earlier mentioned ideas: transformation, materiality, hybridity and alterity. In addition, I have investigated the processes and material practices of contemporary printmaking. With the *Shadow Kin* series, the relationship between the matrix and the resulting print is examined through a strategy of repurposing of the elements that are used to build the image.

Within this cycle the initial matrix is used to create a print, which is then used as source material for collage. When the collage figure is scanned, it is transformed into a virtual matrix for the digital print on silk or it is resized and digitally printed on paper in order to become a prop for the *Godlings* stop-motion series. In each stage the work possesses a distinct relationship between the source and the print, as well as haptic quality and materiality, until it is transformed into another. However, despite the delicate lightness of the fabric, the *Shadow Kin* digital prints on silk carry the illusion of printmaking and paper as material within them. In addition, the *Godlings* projections, which are created by light, carry the sense of print media on paper.



Fig.12: Hannamari Jalovaara, *Godlings II, III, V, IV, I*, 2017. Installation view. Charles H. Scott Gallery, July 2017. Photo: Ross Kelly. Used by permission of the artist.

I had no prior experience with stop-motion when I began the production of the *Godlings* series six months ago. The introduction of a new medium continues to generate methodological and psychological questions and deliberations. Giving the initially inanimate collage figures the capacity to gesture brings forth a set of new factors: what does it mean when *Godlings* perform gestures and gain a capacity for sensations? Furthermore, going forward I am interested in exploring further the role and the development of narrative both with the *Godlings* figures themselves as well as their environment. With *Godlings*, the narrative structure does not follow a progressive linear arc with a beginning, middle and end. There is no readily identifiable development or resolution. Rather, it is a loop of repetition and recurrence, where the looping could potentially annul motion's consequence (Hatton 406). However, media theorist Lev Manovich has

proposed that “the loop and the sequential narrative do not have to be considered mutually exclusive” (xxxiii). The loop provides structure for the progression of a closed-circuit experimental narrative without the linear storyline.

In *Limited Inc*, Jacques Derrida writes that “iteration alters, something new takes place” (40). As such, iteration is constantly altering whatever it seems to reproduce (40). While this is obvious when there is a significant change in the mark-making, or with materiality (e.g. analogue/digital, inanimate/animate, small/large), it may not be as readily perceivable when it refers to the meaning of the work.

According to professor of philosophy and literature John Phillips, Derrida combines the senses of alterity and repeatability to form the notion of iterability. It signifies the combination of a repetition (which implies sameness) and difference (which implies alteration). In essence, “a repetition is an altered version of that which it repeats” (Phillips). John Phillips clarifies that alterity doesn’t just mean other, which would imply a contrast between two actual discrete entities: “rather it designates the conditions upon which different discrete entities can be compared and contrasted at all” (Phillips). As an example, Phillips provides the translation of texts (of any kind). The text is permanently affected by this alterity, since something is missing from its complete meaning, resulting in the opening up of the text for further possible contexts and translations.

The repeated movements that the individual *Godlings* perform are looped since they do not vary in themselves. Being comprised of these short movement loops, they are not aspiring to be animations; rather, they are referencing continual reconstitution. Although the movement sequences do not change, the stillness sequences vary in length. As a result, when viewing the *Godlings*, sometimes several of the figures move simultaneously while at other times only one or two of them—or perhaps none of them—move. The stillness, the missing movement, is equally important to the actual movement. In this sense, the context of the movement changes, which in turn creates an opening for a variant response. Furthermore, we are always affected by the previous movement or lack thereof, and because of this we experience the repeated movement in an altered way.

With hybrids, it may be the absence of a signifier, such as an expected human, animal or plant body part that creates the possibility for other incarnations. Staying in the area of true awkward hybridity can be a delicate proposition for a work both conceptually and materially because it may face challenges of lapsing into being regarded as belonging fully either to the category that it originated from or to the category that it incorporated elements from. In these situations, the pull of an element is substantial enough that it leads to resisting regarding the work as a hybrid. For example, with the stop-motion animated prints the *Godlings*, the introduction of movement resulted in the work being at times considered more as an animation rather than as a hybrid between print media and animation. The decision to project onto paper was a strategy to redirect the viewer out of this expectation, and yet it became clear that motion signifying animation is a connection that can be challenging to overcome.

In this process-based inquiry each experimental iteration of the process, starting from the hand-pulled print, collage, scan, digital print, and finally stop-motion, investigates what qualities, characteristics and possibilities are relinquished by the altered relationship, and what are repossessed in the final work. Reviewing my process and the ensuing work, I have come to understand how every transformation not only made manifest what are the inalterable as well as altered properties of the work, but also introduced further considerations and possibilities to explore with future iterations. These include expanding the source material to contain new prints, pushing the materiality of the projections with resources that will allow for higher resolution, as well as pushing the durational relationship between stillness and movement in video sequences. Additionally, I am curious regarding what might take place if the figures interacted with each other, and what this would mean for the development of a new narrative. What would be the most generative process in order to unearth the characters' qualities? For example, are the creatures immortal? Do they have a family? Do they have special skills, deep-seated needs or fatal flaws, and what would I do in the studio to generate these? I also plan to experiment with the size and material of the projection substrate, which may evolve into developing an environment for the *Godlings* as a physical space for them to exist in. An additional question is whether to incorporate sound in the work. Could the creatures learn to speak? If so, what kind of a sound would they make? And what kind of a sound environment would they live in? As with my entire research, I will follow the lead of *Shadow Kin* and *Godlings* as they guide me in how they wish to exist in their new form, and what qualities and characteristics they wish to possess.

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