

range of footage of the late filmmaker and Pucill collaborator, Sandra Lahire (Lahire also worked on *Mirrored Mesure*, *Swollen Stigma* and *Cast*) where facial images are interspersed with mirror images of the filmmaker herself. A recurring motif is the use of her own body and this is given stark emphasis as the filmmaker becomes interchangeable with the deceased. Illusion and fantasy formulate a large part of the process of bereavement, acting as a layered metaphor for death itself. The illusionary quality of the film, whilst referencing earlier and subsequent aspects of Pucill's works, enables the celebratory nature of life's potential for death. The pain and sadness attached to losing a loved one is contemplated in such a manner that the final experience leaves the spectator grieving for a woman (any woman) one may never have actually known. Continuing the theme of relationships between women, in *Taking My Skin* (2006), Pucill works with her own mother to create a dialogue between herself and her mother, as filmmakers. The collaborative endeavour enables one to be party to both something very personal (a daughter's private interaction with her own mother) whilst at the same time be party to reflecting upon one's own relationship with this intimacy and indeed one's own mother. The two women reflect upon the film making process ('I am not aware of you taking my skin' says the artist's mother) and the gaze of the spectator being directed through both subject positions negates the distribution of power. The tactile nature of aging skin is juxtaposed with the black and the white colour of the surrounding spaces as both women negotiate their emotional ties.

In *Blind Light* (2007) Pucill uses the domestic space as a way of entering into the filmed space of home. This beautiful film enrapures the possibilities of coloured light through the cinematic and the viewer is asked to take part in the performance of film practice. As is often the case in Pucill's work, the presence of the camera is made apparent to the spectator throughout and the actual physicality of film as film is evoked incessantly here. The skyline from the window

of the room is focused on as a signifier of hope and the use of the saturated colour gives a flow to the continuing range of moving images. The different exposures given to particular images gives the film its haunting sensibility and it is the filmmaker's narration of her worldview that helps to situate the gaze into a mesmerising trance-like state. She points out the elements on display (the moon, the sky, the clouds), her voice-over allowing the physicality of the human body to be an entity along with many other entities. The focus pulling draws us in and out of the reality space and the lived materiality of the film is questioned as the spectator experiences the multitude that is Pucill's world. In her next film, *Fall In Frame* (2009) this multitude is focused on in such a way that an array of feminist displays pitches the film into another time and space. The mirror functions as a looking glass for a young woman in costume. Her Edwardian nightgown is at odds with the contemporary setting of the domestic space and yet her extended long hairpiece helps to situate her into the familiar space that is echoed throughout all of Pucill's oeuvre. The woman looks into the camera in the mirror and is able to see herself looking at her own reflection. She plays with the aesthetics of the framing and manipulates the amount of light coming through the window blinds. Her actions are known themes in Pucill's work as this protagonist pours tea and stitches her apron to the tablecloth with her own hair. As she stands the tea crockery crashes to the floor and the noise is used as an accompaniment to the outside space of the front of the house and her walking to the seashore dragging everything with her. The performed displays of these feminine actions are at odds with the contemporary suburban street and the imagery jars with contemplative possibilities.

Pucill's latest film *Phantom Rhapsody* (2010) returns the spectator to the origins of cinema with its black and white take on feminine icons as a source through which to investigate contemporary female subject positions. It combines an exposing of the filmmaking process with a construction of a fractured narrative and

in this respect, draws upon her earlier films, *You Be Mother* and *Backcomb*. The function of the mirror here, used both to reflexively show the camera, and to simultaneously bring together a woman grooming her self image whilst framing the camera, works to re-examine Pucill's earlier concerns with the female gaze. Here, concerns with exposure of process are almost abandoned and instead the magic and seduction of the illusory quality of film is celebrated to the full. In *Phantom Rhapsody*, we have entered the world of disappearing acts and different female archetypes are rendered visible and then invisible in a play on the theatrical idea of magic acts of ritual. A whole array of differently styled wigs and body stockings are served up as a way of displaying known female types through the Western art historical knowledge base, and the performance of 'femininity' is understood through the presence of the disguise. Different women are dressed up and perform as circus mistresses and as leaders of a theatrical play on sexuality. Pucill herself acts as a naked presence on display, her bare back suggesting the witnessing of both vulnerability and strength. This theatrical rendering of known feminine archetypes feels at once current and historical and it is this that marks out the film's unique ability to speak of contemporary female subjectivity.