

FRA BEECHER

Body of Work (2018-20) explores the physicality of the life model, using a variety of different approaches. There are six chapters within the project. Each image represents a female life model, who, seated or standing, has held a pose. The work challenges the misconception that female life models are passive objects, by offering an alternative perspective on the experience of the models themselves. By documenting the tools used by life models, including their own bodies, the physical nature of the role can be observed, allowing the body to be likened to that of an athlete in training. The act of looking is practiced through life drawing, these works explore the often unseen aspects of life modelling.

Chapter One: Seated

Life models often sit for weeks or months in a single pose. These photographs documenting the chairs used for these poses, within their life class environments, evoke/ speak to the models' presence, without explicitly showing them in pose. These images also speak of the disciplined nature, and physical discomfort, of sustained poses.

Chapter Two: Standing

Masking tape is used to mark the outer edges of a life model's body, wherever their limbs make contact with the physical space around them. These marks enable models to return to their pose after a break. They represent the rigour of the life models' role; constricted by tight parameters. A study of stances, this documentation represents a library of standing poses.

Chapter Three: Dynamic

Small-scale 'sketches', of models posing during life classes, show the body in action. The strenuous nature of posing can be seen; muscles are taught and limbs are stretched. These works show the body at work; nudity is the uniform, not the subject.

Chapter Four: Sustained

Large scale images of skin textures show the impressions left on models' skin from sustained poses. These temporary scars represent the stillness of the body, and yet, the active physical impact of its weight upon itself. This explores the reality, and normality, of the body of the life model.

Chapter Five: Subject

These handwritten comments were collected from artists attending life classes. The process of looking and the action of drawing are present within the words. The notes are photographed to highlight their objecthood and physicality, like the life model's body itself.

Chapter Six: Object

Within a life drawing studio various angular objects are used to support and contort the body. Life models know these objects intimately; they are integral to their work, although they are not often represented by artists. In a life class, bodies are treated as objects. These props represent the bodies, and limbs, which interact with them.