



<http://snailtracks.otdac.org>

Opening Times: The work you have developed for your commission is called *Snail Tracks*, can you tell us where the title comes from?

The title *Snail Tracks*, comes from a phrase by writer Julie Hayden, describing the delicate trails of sweat lacing the palms of the protagonist's hands in her short story 'Day Old Baby Rats'. I was very taken with the assimilation of a snail's clammy excretions to the tracks of human sweat. I decided to use *Snail Tracks* as a title partly because I liked the way that it alludes to these lingering viscous secretions, which in the context of my videos and imagery in general also can't really fail to have an uncomfortable proximity to human secretions.

I was also drawn to the idea of these sticky trails being created which cloy to the skin and mind leaving a residue or aftertaste, the way in which certain imagery, sounds and other sensations can do and the way in which perhaps one might navigate the internet.

Opening Times: The work makes reference to the aesthetics and language of certain types of adult sites that provide a marketplace of freely downloadable clips catering to all sorts of niche fetish. What is your fascination with such sites and how does it relate to your practice?

Much of my work engages with ideas around fetishism, the erotic and commerce so navigating this in an online context felt like quite a natural development. The structure of these type of platforms has been something I have been interested in working with for a while and I have also been considering ways in which I could approach making a more overtly erotic video piece, so these two things are very much interrelated. In terms of my practice, I am interested in exploring how sexual desire functions and also the potential that the internet gives for cross contamination into other things, like a seepage of references, multiple links or pages.

The videos in *Snail Tracks* were shot in collaboration with a friend and conceived for another project initially. During the research phase I tried to consider the format of a range of different fetish clips, from the amateur to the more heavily produced. I am not so interested in the aesthetics of the sites and clips themselves- which often don't go very far in exploring different types of sexualities and identifications. But I am exploring how the internet can be used as a

relatively safe and anonymous space to interact with the plurality of sexual preferences and as a place that performers can earn money in relative anonymity.

With the project *Snail Tracks* I wished to create a genuine space where clips could be available for free. In the future I would like to see possibilities of setting up my own pay per view web-page or clips to be hosted on sites. I would be interested in merging aspects of what might be considered an artwork with other visual stimulus that would normally be associated with delivering sexual gratification of some form. In this context boundaries are classically murky, and with a new round of censorship laws coming to the UK it seems more poignant than ever to be able to have a platform to play with and question.

Opening Times: Each available clip is a close up investigation on materials and subjects close to your work, as fur, leather, ceramics, the body, and fluids. How much is this fragmentation and the possibility of re-appropriation important for this work?

These are materials I have worked with repeatedly in different contexts exploring them at a macro or fragmented viewpoint. The use of this type of camera work is an important tool for me to amp up the intensity of these loaded surfaces and to create an hyper-fetishised viewpoint. I am also interested in inducing a kind of nausea through the use of over saturated surfaces and quick changes of perspectives, adding slightly hallucinatory connotations.

Online viewing - happening through various devices, lends itself to multiple viewing allowing to both examine and consume at very close quarters chosen materials. My decision to revisit the same materials and objects plays into my own desire for them. It allows me an important opportunity to devote attention to each of these materials separately, and to pay homage, caress and tend to them. I have my own fetishes, and for me a loss of objectivity is really important to play with, as it re-engages with the active process of fetishization.

Opening Times: Each clip also has a soundtrack developed in collaboration with Patchfinder. What was the thinking behind collaborating and scoring the work? And how does the use of sound allow you to control or indulge the act of fetishization within the work?

I was first drawn to the intensely textural quality of Patchfinder's music, but also to a certain coldness which I thought could work as a rupturing influence to the saturated nature of the clips. When we first imagined developing sounds for *Snail Tracks*, there was initially a focus on the amplification of different types of materials; creating floods of sounds using highly sensitive microphones on surfaces such as rubber, toothbrushes and fur. This gave Patchfinder a chance to be playful with sound creation, and try different techniques, whilst opening for me a further way to enhance the fetishisation of the materials I had chosen. We decided to create some incongruity between the scene and the score, a frisson induced between image and sound. Where the image is more 'overt' the sound tends to be more dissonant. Implicit images are accompanied by tasteful harmonies. There is a sort of indulgence in fetishizing the imagery, the sound adding complexity whilst simultaneously playing to or repelling it.

Opening Times: The images in the clips also link up to an extended network of references, photographs, short stories, syllabus, definitions, expanding data and suggesting new forms of use, whilst increasing their desirability.

I suppose it was important for me to try to represent the plurality of how one might encounter and assimilate seemingly tangential things together, and how the boundaries between a story, an old ceramic figurine, fur care instructions and someone clenching a cream cake, can subsequently become more porous or fragile. There is a tendency to read linearly materials or images with sensual or erotic qualities and therefore a kind of flatness ensues. I wanted to question reactions and information hierarchies in a more rhizomatic way.