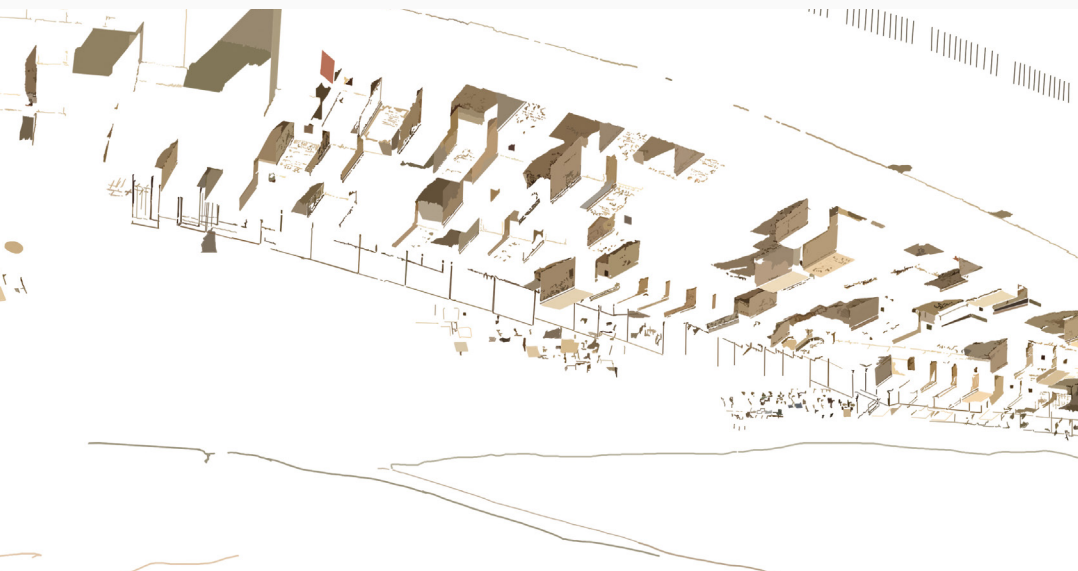




# Sites, Games <sup>and</sup> Melancholy objects

Lyrene Kühn-Botma





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16 October 2019 - 8 November 2019

Lyrene Kühn-Botma

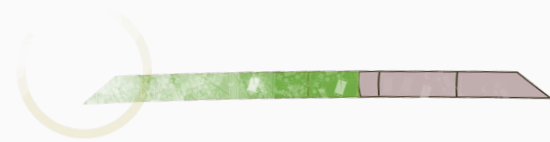
Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the M.A. Fine Arts degree in the Department of Fine Arts in the Faculty of the Humanities at the University of the Free State

Front page: **Stages** (detail) (2018),  
Four digital drawings, Giclee print on  
Photo Rag, 60 x 90 cm (each).

My interest in grief, loss and mourning derives from my brother's fatal motorcycle accident which took place in 2013, when he crossed train tracks in the Namib Desert. Following this loss, I found habitual mourning practices to be insufficient. In response, I have expressed my grief in a variety of alternative ways, such as tattooing (a more popularised performative expression), iterations on social media and digital sites, and playing specific types of video games in remembrance. It is through these actions that the question as to whether video games provide a space where grief and mourning can be practised arose.

The works created are generated in an intertwined and hybrid manner to construct a mixed and multi-type printmaking / drawing / digital drawing portfolio. This visual exploration ties mixed media with the intertwining characteristic of intermedia art; as materials, media or disciplines (drawing, printmaking and new media) do not interact with one another in a restricted manner. Elements pertaining to different media and disciplines become much more interwoven, thus the works created are a creative and technical unforeseen process to grapple with loss. In this study, as explored in the digital drawing entitled *Sacrosanctity*, the narrative of a video game, as well as religious and contemporary globalised and digitised mourning practices is in constant conversation with one another. Intertwined in this difficult multi-layered conversation are objects, for example gravestones and personal belongings, which signify and represent grief, both publically and personally.

In *Sacrosanctity* several viewpoints are suggested in the work. The hands in the foreground introduce or direct the viewer to an imaginary landscape consisting of a church, cemetery churchyard and floating computer cases. These hands are characteristic of the first-person point of view assumed by some video games. The viewer is thus invited to be imaginatively transformed into a video game player, staring at an imaginary, *virtual* landscape of loss on a screen. This digital drawing, along with other digital drawings and pigment ink drawings on exhibition, explore the potential of imaginary, *virtual* spaces in video games in the performance of grieving rituals, beyond and in addition to pursuing the prescribed quests and journeys for which they have been designed.



HP (Hit Points) bar in *Sacrosanctity*

Grief and loss are investigated visually through the exhibited portfolio of pigment ink drawings, digital drawings, and pigment ink drawings with printed silkscreen layers. The *virtual* spaces explored in these media are often generated digitally as in the digital drawings *Sacrosanctity* and *Stages*. The digital works are printed, after having been created on a screen using *Adobe Photoshop*, digitally drawing and editing in a visually layered process. Sites, places and motifs associated with grief are explored as pigment ink drawings on paper. These drawings depict the tangible interactions between real places, websites or handheld devices (for example, cellular phones and tablets), and plants pertaining to arid regions (cacti and succulents). The interactions and connections between, and intertwined aspects of, these *virtual* and *real* sites are explored by layering pen drawings with printed silkscreen layers.

In *Sacrosanctity* objects of grief are arrayed. Melancholy objects play a central role as conduits to, and representations of, the deceased in mourning rituals because they are involved in grief and loss. The melancholy object, as articulated by Margaret Gibson (2004: 289) – after Donald Winnicott's transitional objects (1997) – signifies memory which is inherent to the mourning process and, as such, could be described as the memorialised object of grief (Gibson, 2004: 289). These objects may consist of anything, from a piece of furniture to the ashes of the deceased. However, I am interested in whether contemporary technological objects, such as the computer, handheld device or video game console may be considered melancholy objects. In *Sacrosanctity*, the linear drawings of a computer case

appear taller in scale than the drawing of the church depicted on the left. This specific technological object is explored as a melancholy object, along with other non-technological objects, including the buff (neck gaiter) and ear plug worn by my brother when he died.



Various types of sites are explored and intertwined visually in all of the drawings. On the one hand, there is the physical site of a fatal accident, the cemetery as a place of burial, and the site where I sit and play video games. On the other hand, there are the digital websites and the *virtual* imaginary sites of video games. All of these sites collude, connect and interact in the drawings. I aim to investigate the influence of *real*-world experiences on those of *virtual* imaginary worlds generated by digital media, and vice versa. In *Sacrosanctity* all of these sites are entangled with one another, and the viewer is confronted with a picture of the crumbling image of the Holy Trinity Anglican Church located in Knysna, South Africa. Permeating the open bricks of the church are parts of a motherboard, linking the line drawings of the computer cases next to the church. The viewer is invited to view the scene as a *virtual* imaginary world, as if in a video game. The image of the bereaved may journey into *virtual* spaces of play while the devices used to interact digitally serve as the vehicle of this mutual journey in grief. In contemporary society, handheld devices and technologies provide users with the possibility of immersing themselves in diverse sites and spaces.



# Video Games

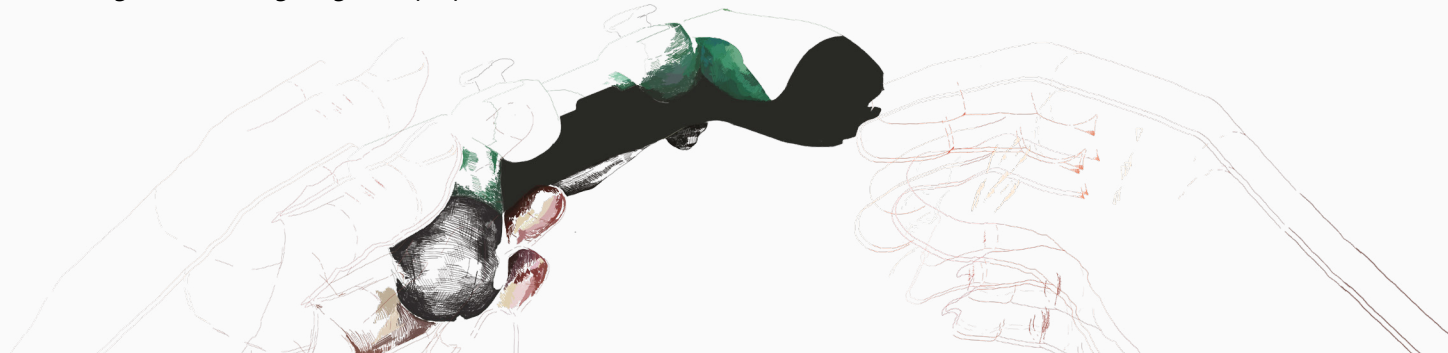
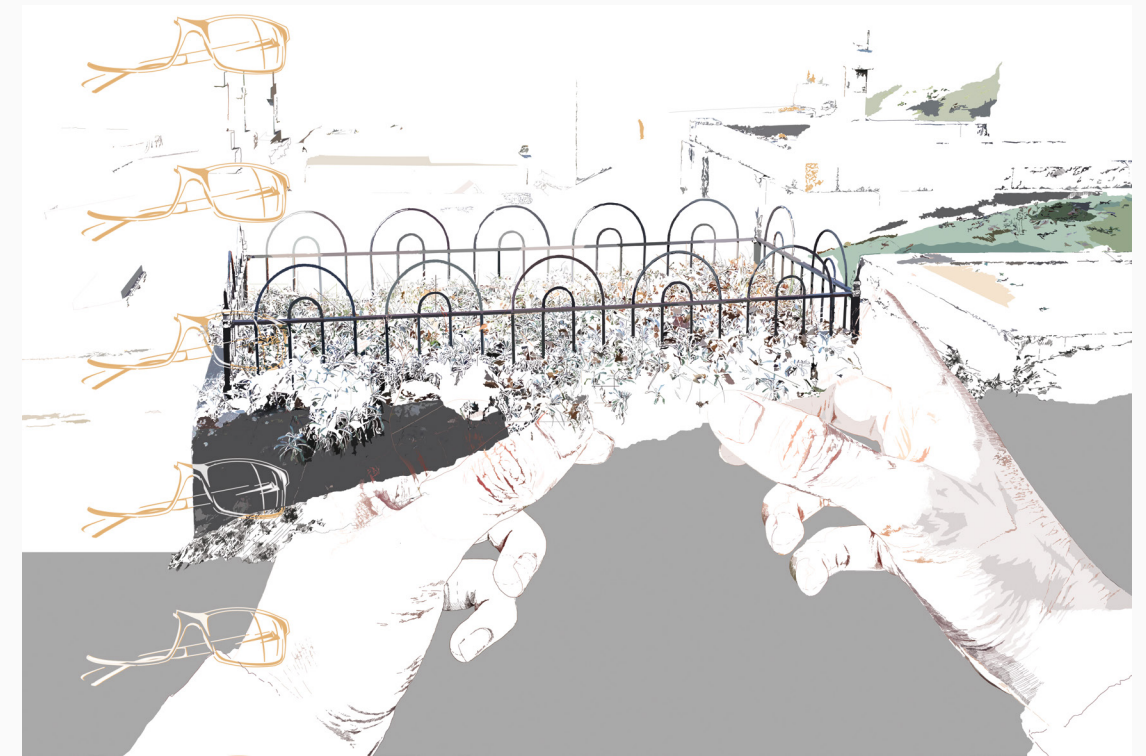
Previous page: **Sacrosanctity** (2019), Digital drawing, Giclee print on Photo Rag, 60 x 150 cm.

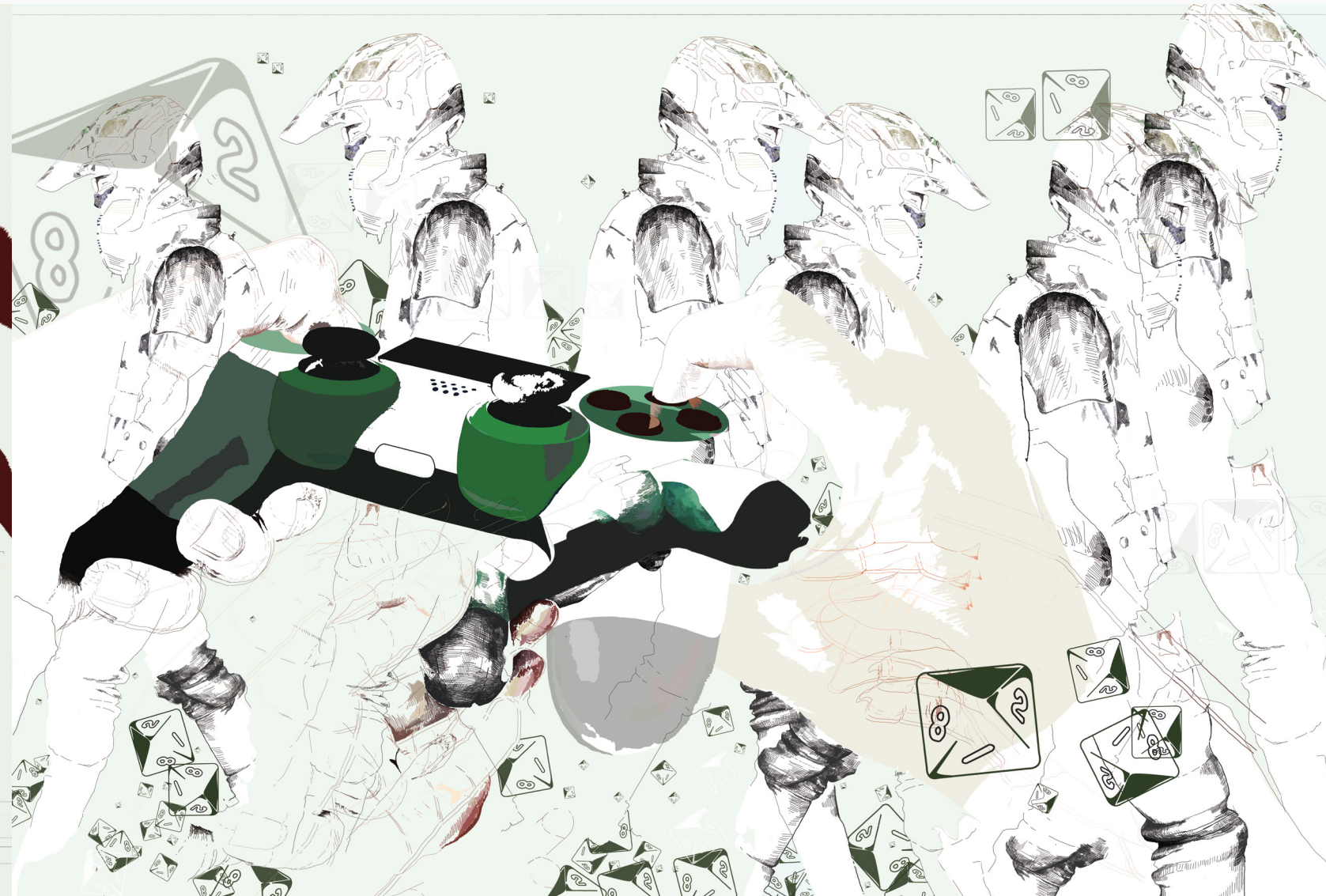
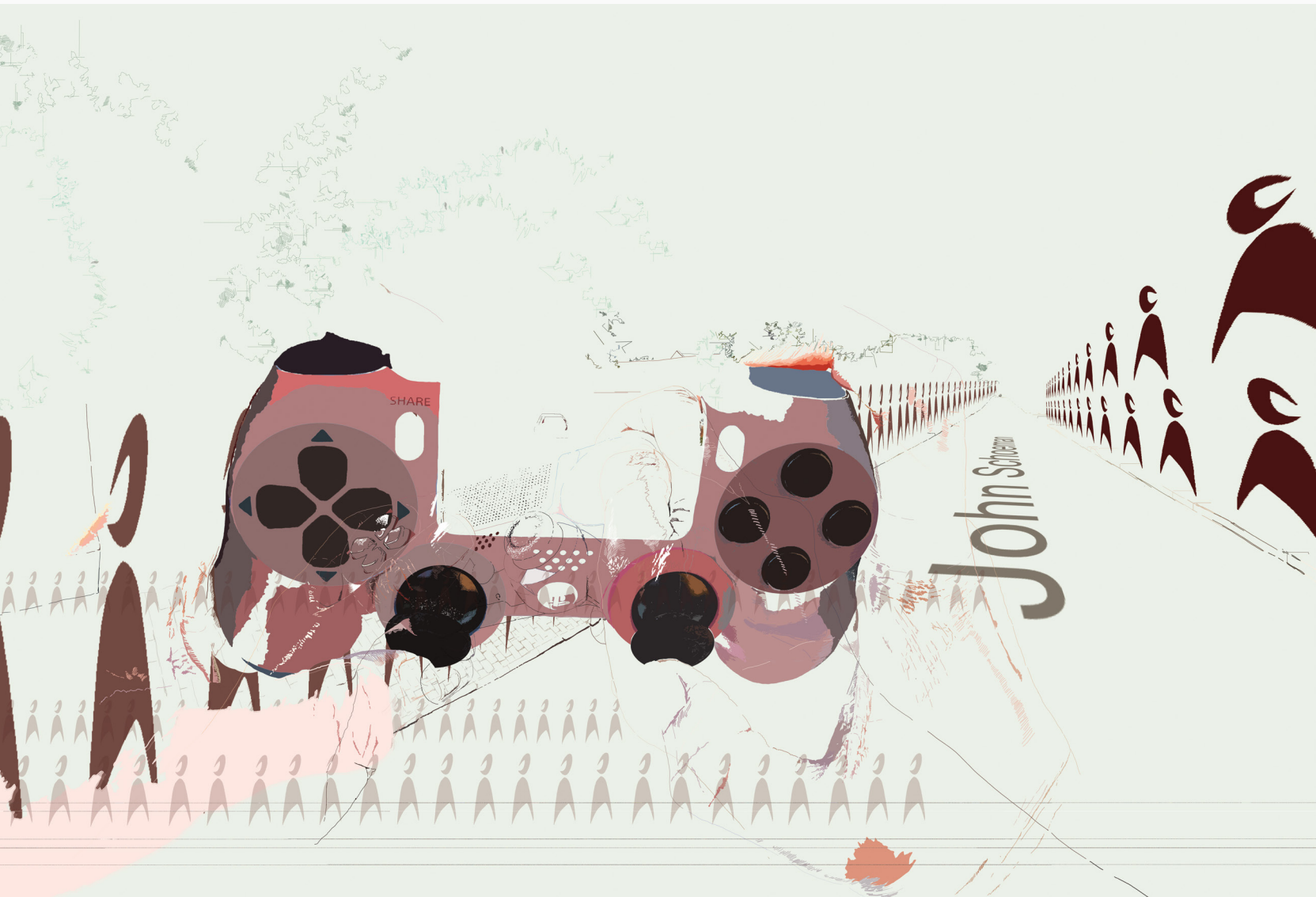
Right: **Stages** (2018), Four digital drawings, Giclee print on Photo Rag, 60 x 90 cm (each).

To play, as a mourning practice, seems odd because play is usually associated with fun and escapism. However, play can also be extremely serious (Huizinga, 1949: 9). Play has the ability to assume the mentality with which it is approached or conducted by the player. Once a game has started, it assumes to be a generated creation of the mind (Huizinga, 1949: 9-10). For Plato (Laws 644 de, 803 BC), play ensues specifically when joy and sorrow have been united. There is an option of inserting a picture of the deceased into a *virtual* space as an avatar in order to construct new and imaginary scenarios through interaction. In playing with, and exploring, imaginary *virtual* spaces, I "insert" my brother's likeness and personal representation into my own present experience. In video games such as Bioware's *Mass Effect* (2007-2012) series, players can personally create and edit the appearance of their avatar. In Thatgamecompany's *Journey* (2012), the avatars are hooded and generalised, giving the player

the freedom to imagine their appearance, gender, age, history, etc. By inserting my brother's likeness into the *virtual* spaces of video games, I produce new interactions and scenarios with him. As it is, video games are already widely associated with death and dying, though not necessarily with mourning. While mourning does exist within the narrative aspect of games, 'character death' and 'avatar death', in the form of respawning or so-called 'permadeath', are considered typical video game mechanics. Respawning is a video game mechanic used to 'reset' the player's avatar if the player fails and his or her avatar dies. By contrast, 'permadeath', as Matt Burns terms it (2013), is when the avatar or video game character dies permanently, mirroring death in the *real* world. The repetitive playing of video games as an act of remembrance in mourning, however, is a relatively novel iteration of grief.

In the four stages of the **Stages** digital drawing series, as in most of the works containing hands, the first-person point of view is adopted. However, this point of view is not from the avatar's perspective, but from that of the player holding the conduit associated with playing certain video games, i.e. the *PlayStation* controller. The controller conduit reappears repeatedly as a pictogram in other pen drawings, as in **Interlaced Environments** and **Semblance**. The controller is the symbol of the video game, as the handheld device used when engaging in *virtual* spaces.





*Stages* (2018), Four digital drawings, Giclee print on Photo Rag, 60 x 90 cm (each).



**Circles** (3 of 125) (2016-2019), 125 pigment ink pen drawings on Rosapina, 28 x 28 cm (each).

In my own art practice, the studio space is considered the space of play. The magic circle, as Johan Huizinga (1948: 10) called it, is the imaginative world of play, the physical place of playing, and holds the qualities of seriousness, absorption and devotion inherent to it. The artist has the freedom to engage with and follow her own rules to guide creative play in the studio space. Art is then observed, repeated constructed and conducted like play. Self-imposed rules apply in the playing field of the artist, in the studio space, and with regard to the materials used and disciplines adhered to. Materials can be manipulated in specific ways when rules (*ludus*) are applied to making observational/ digital drawings and silk screening/ embossing. Furthermore, in the **Circles** series, this kind of disciplined routine practice of daily/weekly creative engagement in play is manifested in each circular shape which suggests a specific ludic sphere. The rules applied here were that the work must resemble a circle, be 28 x 28 cm in format, and have uninterrupted lines made with a 0.1 pigment ink pen. The wall of circles is but a sample 125 in total, of how a repeated, everyday practice could accumulate to overwhelm the viewer by sheer numbers. Moreover, the work reflects the value and development of repetitive practices in games.

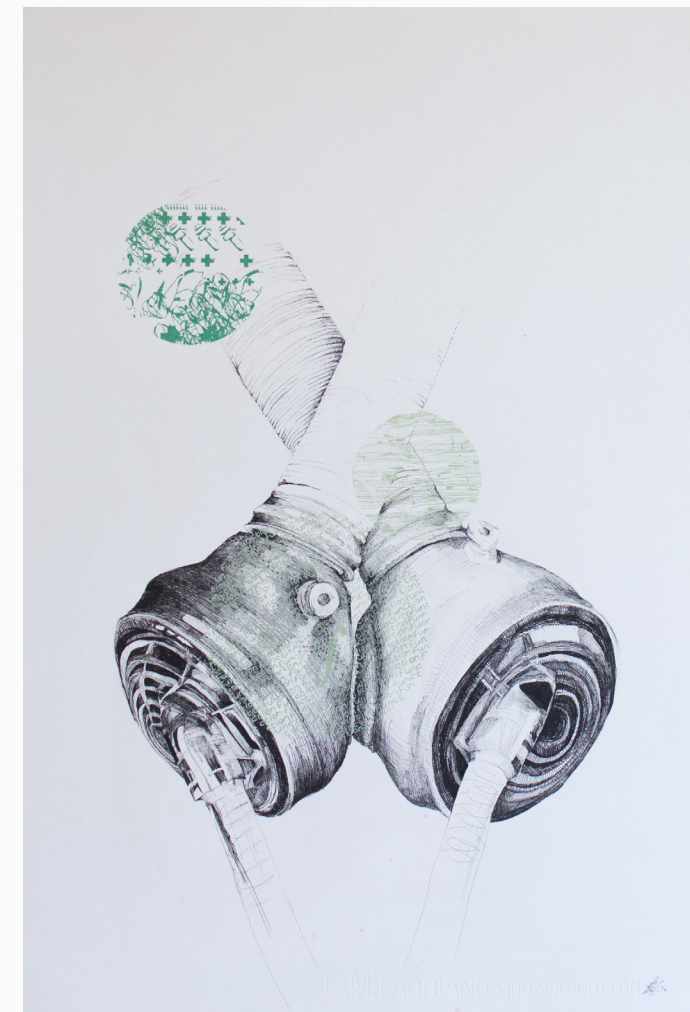
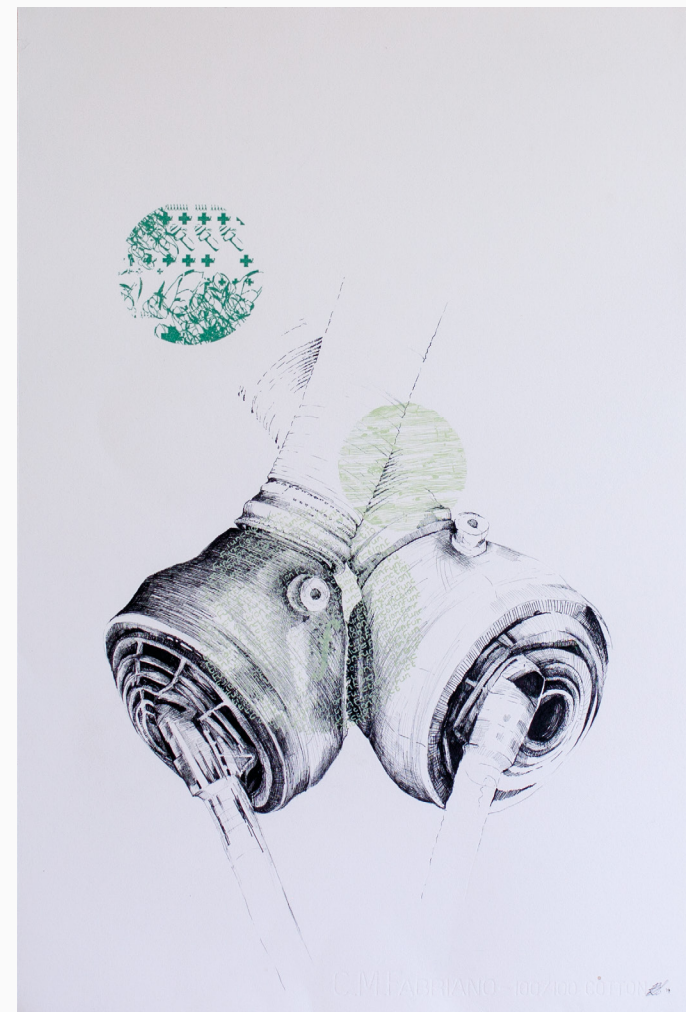


## Cacti and Succulents: The imagined interstice between living and dying

In most of the pigment ink works, I use the motifs of succulents and cacti. In *Interstice*, *Ctrl+V Ctrl+V Ctrl+V*, *Inscribe* and *Shortcut*, the plants are intertwined with or interact with hands. During my initial period of grief and loss, I experienced the act of gifting flowers to grieving individuals as contradictory. A bunch of flowers is a prominent *vanitas* symbol and is immediately associated with impermanence and the fleeting quality of life. Once the flower is picked, it is immediately and constantly in a state of decay. As a response to this, I have selectively and delicately drawn succulents and cacti as replacements for funeral flowers because they last longer and can be replanted to grow again. In *Shortcut*, a succulent resembling a funerary wreath with hands is depicted with short, repeated lines resembling digital or binary code and is situated where the portrait of the deceased would usually be displayed in a wreath of flowers.

These plant replacements have the ability to continue living for a few weeks once removed from the soil and may, subsequently, be planted once again. This continuity in their existence is reminiscent of the continuity of the moving image or avatar of my brother in videos and video games.

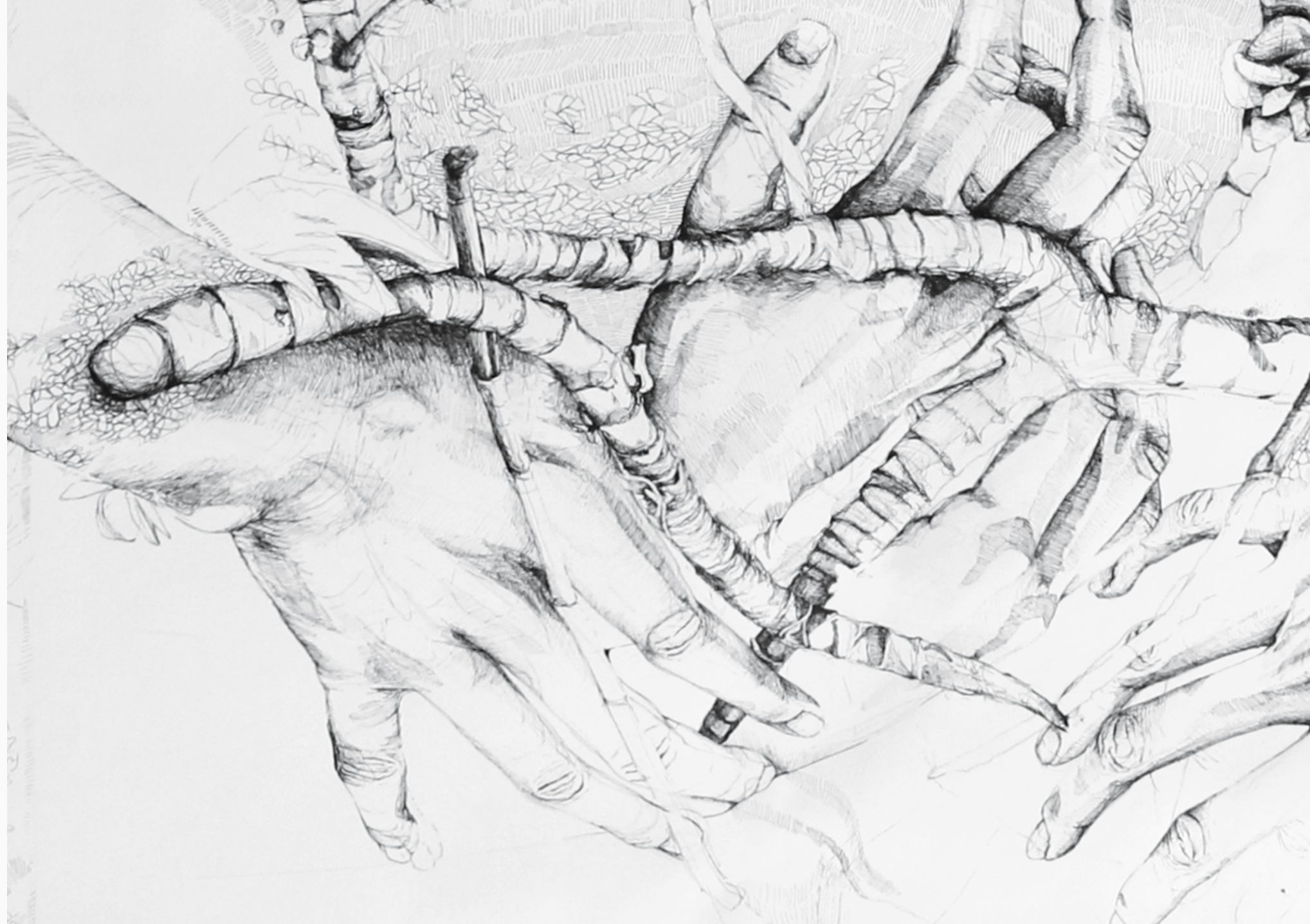
When the plant is removed from the soil, it is suspended in a state between living and dying and, if left without sustenance and soil for too long, it will perish. However, it has the potential to continue to live if there is a deliberate intervention. Unlike the continual life of succulents or cacti, my brother's life was cut short. Nevertheless, the suspension and displacement of succulents and cacti are similar to my brother's likeness and traces of his image in *virtual* spaces and digital media. The digital images relating to my brother as well as his likeness continue to move, to be edited, changed or watched as moving videos. In the work *Faux*, drawn, temporary artificial hearts also connote this suspension between the living and dying of the body. Artificial hearts are typically used to bridge the time between the removal of one's heart and receiving a heart transplant, or if transplantation is impossible. Thus, it is a temporary, intermediary, functional object. Most of the drawings of plants refer to specimens from the garden of my childhood home. Some plants are delicate and sparse while others resemble shrubs containing dead, dried out leaves, intimating a feeling of unease and tension by means of the dark crevices behind the cactus leaves.



*Faux* (2017), Two pigment ink drawings with silkscreen on Fabriano, 60 x 45 cm (each).



**Shortcut** (2017),  
Pigment ink  
drawing on  
Academia, 100 x  
70 cm.

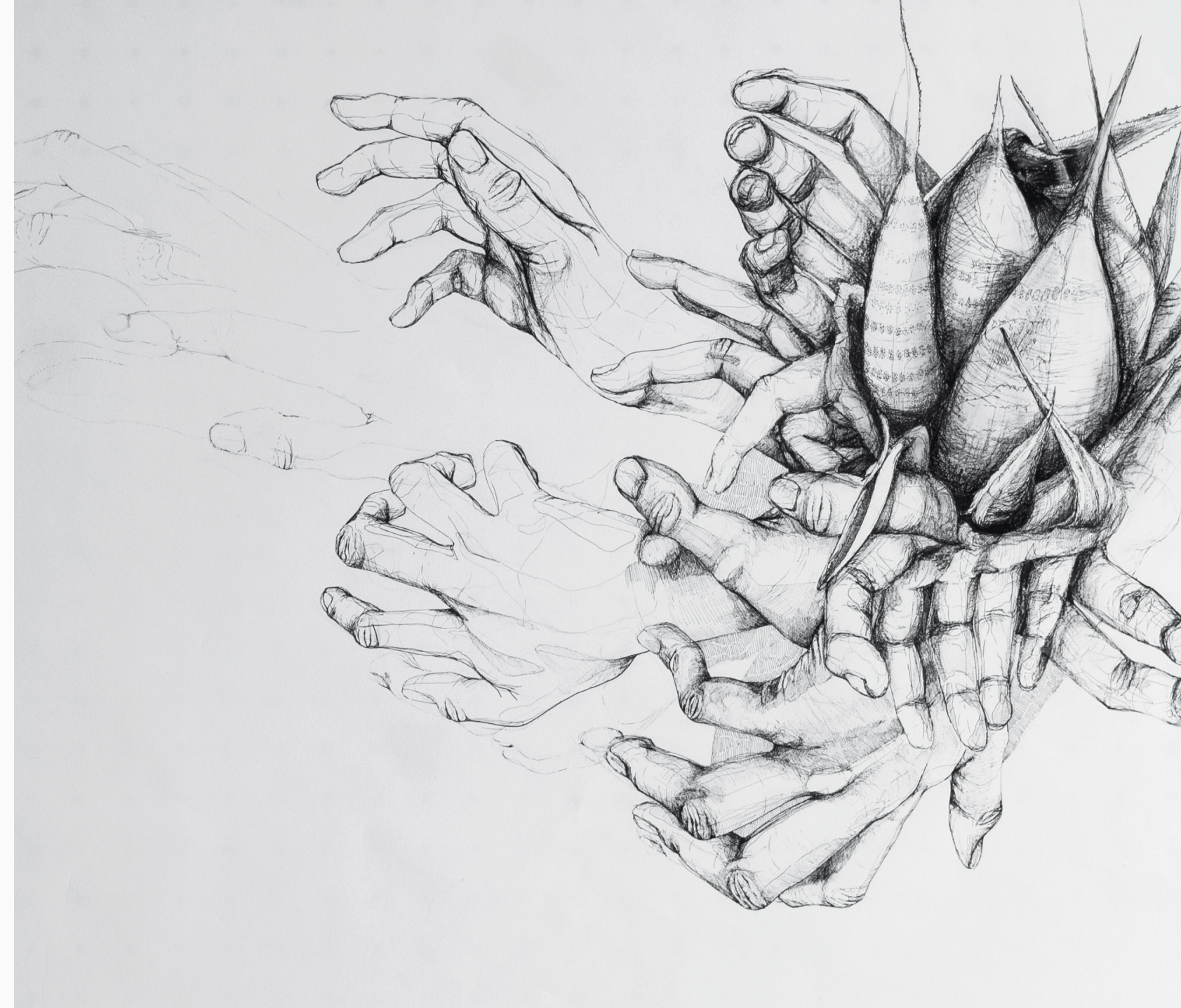




Left: **Incredulity**  
(2017-2019), Pigment  
ink drawing on paper,  
81 x 59 cm.

Right: **Ctrl+V Ctrl+V**  
**Ctrl+V** (detail) (2017),  
Pigment ink and pit  
drawing on Academia,  
59 x 85 cm.

Most often the motifs accompanying these plants are hands, mostly in gestures of blessing, holding empty spaces, pressing buttons on a controller or stretching out to reach something unattainable. In **Sacrosanctity** and **Incredulity** the signalling hand resembles the gesture of a religious blessing. In **Incredulity**, the pointing hand, which is reminiscent of Caravaggio's *Incredulity of Saint Thomas* (1607-1602), points towards a critical dried out wound on a cactus. The cactus, resembling organ pipes, continues to live while the hand points towards the visible distress. The blessing gesture alludes to institutionalised religions, specifically charismatic Christian greetings. Such references suggest a comparison between Christian institutional mourning practices, which are often experienced as fragmentary and insufficient, and alternative image practices, which aim to supplement them.



Following 4 pages: **Semblance**  
(2019), Six pigment ink drawings with  
silkscreen on Rosapina, 60 x 45 cm  
(each).

Hands are central to the interactivity between our bodies and the digital apparatus and their pictures. However, the important functioning and interaction of our hands are forgotten when working on devices and computers because the movements and gestures become second nature. Users become immersed in the displays on the screen while the gestures and inputs made with our hands become automatic and mechanical. In the **Semblance** series, the device is removed from the gesturing hands, bringing their existence as the overlooked yet primary mode of tangible interaction to the fore.







Most notably, the avatar's hands are usually that part of the body that is seen when playing a video game or interacting with objects. However, these onscreen representations of hands become extensions of the player into the *virtual* worlds of video games. Players empathise with these interacting hands and the first-person point of view to further their immersion in the video game. This, among other video game mechanics, promotes spatial presence or the feeling of being completely immersed in the game (Madigan, 2016).

It is mostly through our fingertips that we are able to interact with and dictate what is displayed on the screen of a cellular phone or tablet. It is through the tangible experience of touching the smooth screen displaying a moving image of the deceased that the bereaved may experience an ephemeral moment of melancholy. By deliberately layering hand drawings by means of printed silkscreen overlays, as in the drawing **Nip**, this experience of intangible, layered images on a screen is made apparent.

Right: **Nip** (2018), Pigment ink drawing with silkscreen on Rosapina, 60 x 45 cm.



## Melancholy Objects

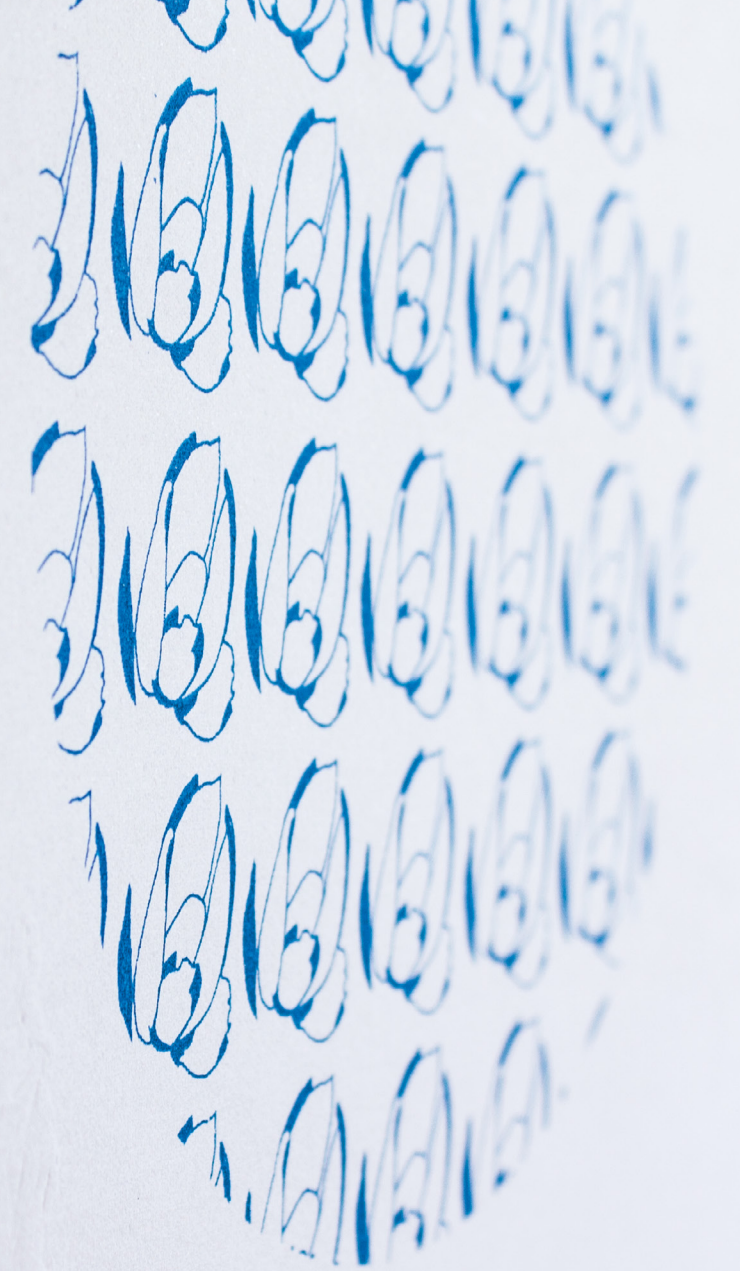
Objects of grief often mediate conversations about, and expressions of, grief and loss. In the digital drawing *Conduit*, the ornate wooden box, a container of ashes, is not portrayed as a venerated object as I would have liked it to be, but as part of the funerary industry, where goods are exchanged. Pictograms of cell phones are layered and pasted onto the small wooden box which seems to be incomplete or dissolving. I find it curious that as an object, my brother's ashes do not evoke the same emotional and melancholic sense of loss as his personal computer, depicted in *Sacrosanctity*. To me, his computer, a technological object, has agency and has become a precious object or relic. I interact with this object daily/weekly, and it can be 'woken up' (started) and put to sleep (switched off). This interaction mimics the practice of visiting a church, grave or final resting place of the deceased. It is repeated and is similar to a site that can be visited for a specific purpose such as visiting the deceased.

*Conduit* (detail) (2019), Digital drawing, Giclee print on Photo Rag, 80 x 50 cm.



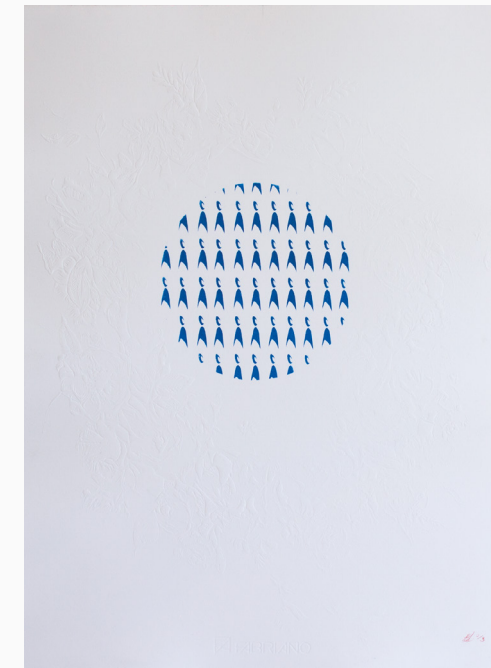
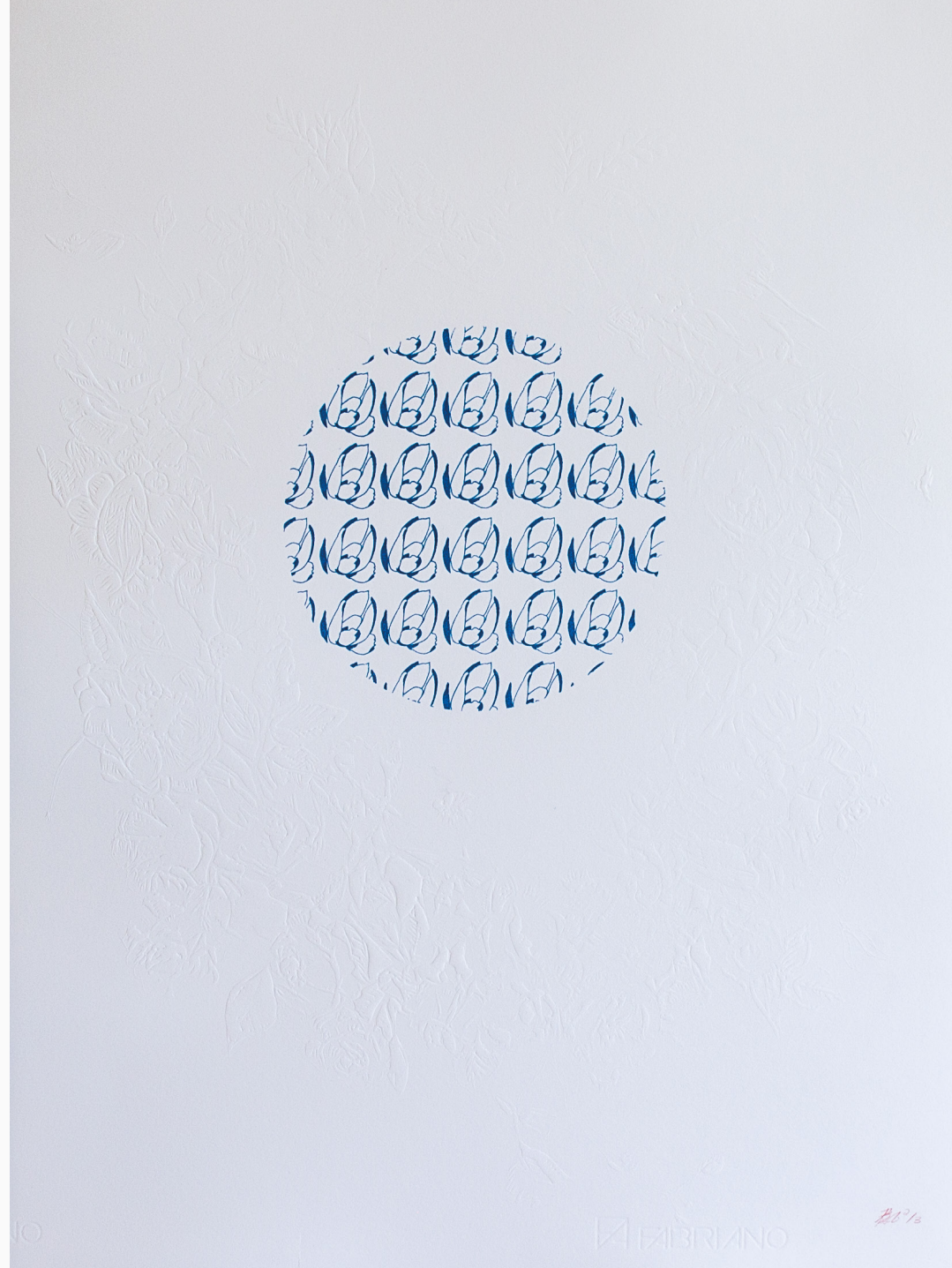
My brother's image is stored on all of my handheld devices and computers. In addition, I have constructed his image and likeness as part of the *virtual* worlds of select video games and websites. Copying the likeness of the deceased has been practised throughout history. Portraits of the deceased have been painted on boards and attached to upper-class mummies from Roman-occupied Egypt. Moreover, Death masks, casts made from the faces of the deceased, which were originally used as references when painting the deceased, have been produced from the Middle Ages up until the 19th Century. Photographs, according to Roland Barthes (1980), have been integrally connected to death and mortality. However, all of these previous modes of copying and preservation of the likeness of the deceased have been stationary. By contrast, contemporary digital technologies can preserve recordings of the deceased as a moving, speaking image. Digital images do not appear as a result of the same conditions as those that exist in the form of a tangible medium. Rather, they appear from digital code (Belting, 2001: 25). I regard the digital device and computer as tangible media upon the screen of which digital images can appear. Without the technological conduit, the digital image cannot be displayed. Digital images and *virtual* spaces are therefore bound by certain conditions. However, these conditions allow for the construction of imaginary digital spaces and moving images. These are rendered visible through input, from the bereaved, player and/or viewer, as explored in *Stages* and *Sacrosanctity*.

*Symbols* (detail of Succulent Symbol)(2018-2019), Silkscreen with embossing on Rosapina, 60 x 45 cm (each)



Previously, the bereaved may have experienced the moving image of the deceased through dreams and visions. However, these were not guaranteed visitations, but were sporadic or serendipitous experiences. Digitally, one can actively revisit sites where the deceased has been reconstructed as a virtual avatar, or one can actively visit various *virtual* sites of play by sitting in front of the screen. Still, imagery of the deceased cannot be separated from the digital mode of display. These “[i]mages continue to be tied to the screen” (Belting, 2001: 25). It is only via the medium of the computer and handheld device that the deceased can be presented as a moving, speaking image. In the exhibited drawings, the image is once again presented in the form of a static medium. Movement is merely imaginatively suggested. Here the affect and overwhelming sense of intangibility of the deceased, as experienced by the bereaved, are represented.

Right: **Symbols** (2018-2019), Six silkscreens with embossing on Rosapina, 60 x 45 cm (each).







In his book *Camera Lucida* Roland Barthes (1980: 26-27) discusses and contrasts two experiences when looking at the photograph: the *studium* and the *punctum*. The *studium* piques the viewer's general interest when gazing at the image (Barthes, 1980: 26). The *punctum* however, is the wounding or stabbing reaction to viewing a specific photograph (Barthes, 1980: 26-27). Barthes (1980: 26) refers to this accidental moment by stating that "[I]t is this element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me". As opposed to viewing a printed photograph, Hans Belting (2001: 25) mentions that "In our digital age, images have lost their connection to a carrier medium, such as a photographic print". The individually-recognised *punctum* is deeply intimate and personal since it is recognised by the individual, and the resulting wounding experience is felt instantly and internally.

In *Interstice* my personal experience of the *punctum* is shared with the viewer. In an original digital still image, I am reaching out to touch my brother's head in the dark surroundings of a garage. I reach, but my hand is unable to touch the tips of his hair. Very often the *punctum* is a "detail," i.e. a partial object (Barthes, 1980: 43). In the drawing, the wounding detail of the photograph is removed from its original form as a digital still and reduced to a small pictogram of a hand which is layered on top of a drawn shrub of prickly cacti and hands. The wounding point is the small space between my hand and my brother's head. The hand is unable to touch the deceased. This time, it is obscured, not by a screen as is the case with digital images and videos, but by the representation of the smallest of physical spaces.

*Interstice*, 2019, Pigment ink drawing with silkscreen on Rosapina, 58.5 x 94 cm.

In ***Semblance*** meticulously-drawn hands holding invisible devices with which they are interacting are carefully and lightly drawn on paper. The handheld devices are suggested by the hands' holding positions, but are omitted. These devices are represented in the drawings as printed, floating, and immortalised pictograms surrounding the hands. In Egyptian funerary practices, the *ka* statue existed as the body or vessel to which the spirit of the deceased, the *Ka*, could return and served as a permanent representation thereof. Hans Belting (2001: 100) argues that the Egyptian mummy and statue ensured "embodiment". Because of the qualities and meaning connected to the *Ka* statue, I connect this phenomenon to handheld devices onto which the images of the deceased are stored in order to appear and reappear or to which to return.

In the digital drawing series ***Stages*** the viewer is guided through four scenes. The title is reminiscent of the five stages of grief made famous by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and David Kessler (2005), which were innovative for its time. However, in my experience, these stages are sometimes followed too strictly by grieving individuals who feel unsure and lost in their responses to grief and trauma. The stages model makes it seem as though there is an end to grief, or *acceptance*, after which the bereaved would no longer be grieving. Douglas Davies (2002: 53) asserts that "[T]he idea of bereaved people 'getting back to normal' is potentially misleading", for the majority of grieving individuals, especially close family members there is not a state to which they can return before the death occurred. Four scenes, rather than five stages, are depicted in the digital drawing. By removing one of the stages, the viewers are confronted with their own loss, and the lacunae or incompleteness they may experience themselves. The realisation is that grief never entirely goes away (Gibson, 2004: 289).



***Semblance*** (controller detail) (2019), Six pigment ink drawings with silkscreen on Rosapina, 60 x 45 cm (each).



***Stages*** (detail) (2018), Four digital drawings, Giclee print on Photo Rag, 60 x 90 cm (each).

## Interlacing sites



*Sacrosanctity* (detail) (2019), Digital drawing, Giclee print on Photo Rag, 60 x 150 cm.



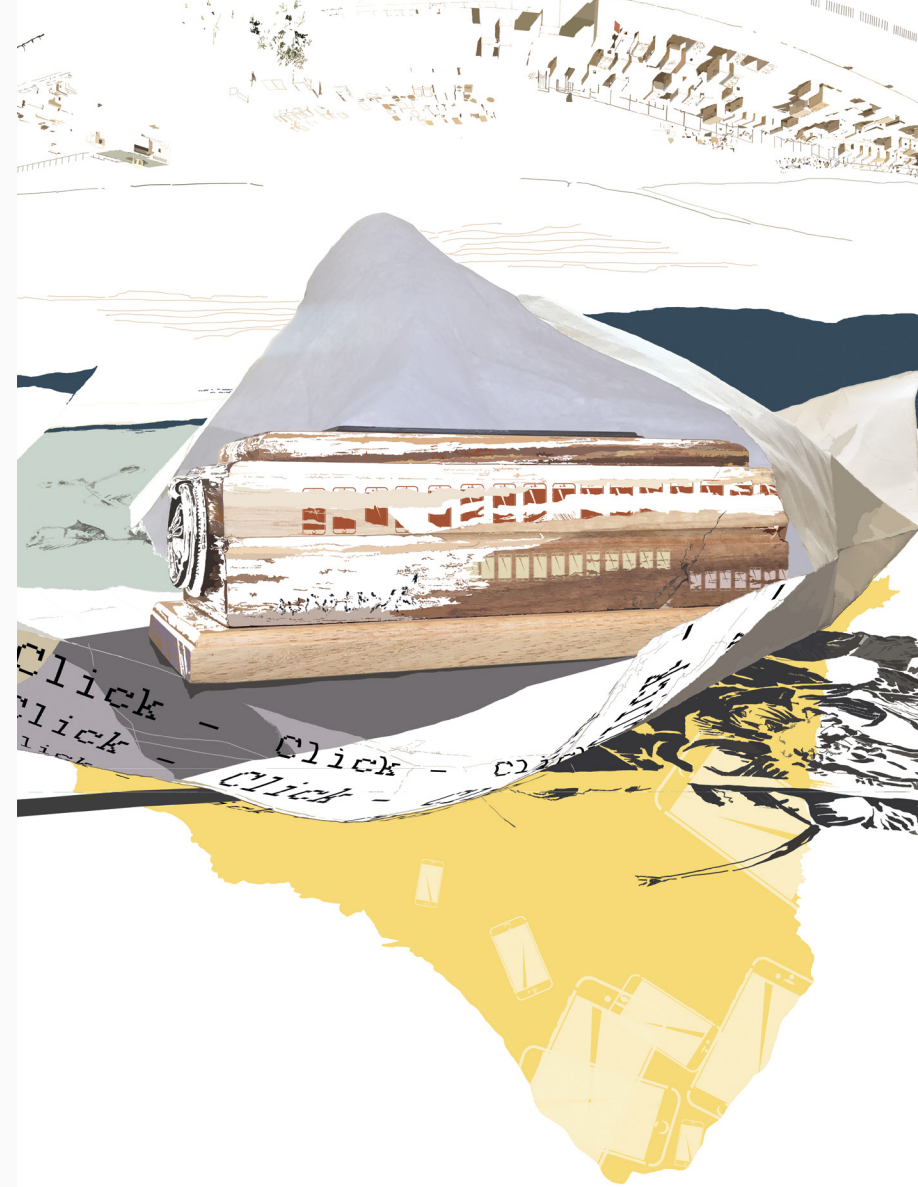
*Interlaced Environments* (detail) (2019), Pigment ink drawing with silkscreen on Rosapina, 32 x 84 cm.

I suggest that melancholy objects may be any object, including the hard drives, computer cases and devices on which recordings of the deceased are stored and repeatedly displayed. Contemporary technological devices are central to our daily functioning and are used for our own purposes apart from their role of providing opportunities for the viewing of images of the deceased. As a result, they cannot exist only as a representation of the deceased. Handheld devices, themselves, do not exist as melancholy objects alone. Instead, they possess multiple meanings for the bereaved. Therefore, they function differently from the traditional melancholy object which stands as a memorialisation of grief and loss. The device on which images of the deceased are stored seems to be enchanted with the potential of viewing pictures of the deceased not only while moving, but also while interacting. The *Symbols* series explores the various possibilities of digital mourning processes by rendering publicly-, privately- and individually-generated signs to represent the contemporary mourning process. These pictograms are also repeated in the rest of the portfolio of work.

The places and sites presented in most of the drawings propose a liminal quality. All of the drawings are pieced together from photographic references, creating compositions which combine references to various sites. These drawings are transformed into imaginary sites where elements from the *real* world, digital technologies and the *virtual* world collide. In most of the drawings, i.e. *Sacrosanctity*, *Interlaced Environments*, *Interstice*, *Faux*, *Nip*, *Conduit*, *Stages*, *Symbols* and *Semblance*, individually-created pictograms are used repeatedly. These symbols have been idiosyncratically designed on the journey of personal grief and mourning. For instance, the succulent pictograms replace the funeral flower; the *PlayStation* controller is seen repeatedly in landscape scenes; and gravestones are layered as reminders of cemeteries as places of remembrance. The function of the repeated pictograms is to reinforce the interconnectivity and interweaving of the sites of grief.

**Inscribe** (2017-2019),  
Pigment ink drawing on  
Rosapina, 71.5 x 56 cm.

The traditional, physical places of grief, such as the churchyard and cemetery, are regarded as the sites preceding the historical possibility of digitised mourning. Online sites, such as *Facebook*, *YouTube*, online memorials and even online cemeteries, are now available to users. Cemeteries are now no longer necessarily used by all. Instead, other, more informal yet still institutionalised, sites of memorialisation exist. These include places, such as privatised memorial parks, or walls of remembrance in churchyards. In the drawing **Inscribe** the established practice of drawing circles to play a game, as in the **Circles** series, is overlapped with other established practices of personal expressions of grief, such as tattooing. The motif of an arm and hand displaying one of the tattoos added to my arm a few weeks after my brother's death extends inside the circle.



**Conduit** (2019), Digital  
drawing, Giclee print on  
Photo Rag, 80 x 50 cm.

The cell phone symbol is deliberately inserted in and over the ornate box of ashes in **Conduit**. The phone resembles rows of small niches or small windows on the wooden, seemingly dissolving box. In the work, the cell phone is reminiscent of a gravestone or niche found in cemeteries and memorial sites. There is a similarity in shape and format between the niches in which ashes are to be placed, gravestones and cell phones. In **Conduit** and **Sacrosanctity** the viewer is confronted with elements that allude to the traditional sites of grief and mourning. In **Conduit** a curved line drawing of the sacrosanct cemetery around the city of Jerusalem in Israel floats above the small ornate box of ashes stuffed in an envelope.

The roadside shrine is another type of memorialisation which has moved away from the church and cemetery. To me, this type of site is particularly powerful. These informal shrines are usually situated at the location where a roadside accident or collision occurred. For those who have lost loved ones there, the place surrounding the site has a numinous quality to it. It is as though the energy and rupture that occurred at the particular site are embedded in the soil surrounding the area. Katharina Schram (2011: 5) states that memory is not only embedded in our bodies, but also inscribed onto places and different settings, such as memorials and shrines. The site of my brother's crash is referenced in the works *Conduit*, *Sacrosanctity* and *Faux*. The particularities of his accident (on a dirt road by train tracks), the consequences of his trauma (referred to as a pool of yellow 'blood' protruding from the box of ashes in *Conduit*), and the return to the site (suggested by the motif of the ear plug pictogram rediscovered in the dust on a

following visit), confront the viewer. This is an attempt to stress the importance and endeavour to captivate the quality of the site where my brother ceased to live. Irene Stengs (2011: 72) states that "ephemeral memorials may be considered ritualised sites that not only "are", but at the same time "act" and interact with the social reality through which they are constituted". The numinous site of my brother's fatal accident cannot be reached daily, weekly or even annually. In response, I attempt to invigorate *virtual* sites, such as in *Sacrosanctity* and *Interlaced Environments*, with the same agency or potency as I would experience the actual site to be.

*Interlaced Environments*  
(2019), Pigment ink drawing  
with silkscreen on Rosapina,  
32 x 84 cm.



## Mediating

While grief and loss are universal experiences, they are extremely personal in expression. Humans have attempted to understand death since prehistoric times, and that search for meaning will always be prevalent in society, irrespective of social environment or religion. The purpose of this series of drawings in and on different materials and media is to flesh out and expose the difficult experiences of grief and loss. This entails visually representing how these experiences translate into personalised mourning practices in terms of play and other iterations. These artworks attempt to relay the difficult, coagulating and communicative experiences of iterations of contemporary grief on multiple platforms – physical, digital and *virtual*. These artworks attempt to provide empathetic experiences of loss to viewers, and explore visual ways of communicating experiences of loss and trauma through the conduits available in technologically-driven societies. In doing so, they also explore the unique and personal iterations in grief developed through play and informal activities in bereavement.

*Sacrosanctity* (detail) (2019), Digital drawing, Giclee print on Photo Rag, 60 x 150 cm.



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# Curriculum Vitae (abridged)

**Lyrene Kühn-Botma**

**+27 (o)82 824 4745 | KuhnL@ufs.ac.za**

## Education

2011-2014 B. A. Fine Arts (With distinctions in Drawing and Printmaking as well as Contemporary South African art contexts), University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa

## Current Employment

### 2019

Junior Lecturer, Department of Fine Arts, University of the Free State, South Africa

## Exhibitions

### 2019

*Betwixt and Between*, Group Exhibition, Sceana Foyer, Free State Arts Festival Visual Arts Program, Bloemfontein

*NeXus*, A Transnational Exposition, Bloemfontein, South Africa & Brighton, United Kingdom (Vrynge festival, Free State Art Festival 1-7 July 2019: Brighton Jubilee Library, Brighton Pride, Brighton, United Kingdom 29 July- 11 August 2019)

### 2018

Phatshoany Henney New Breed Art competition Finalist exhibition, Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Bloemfontein, South Africa

*Speaking out and standing up: An exhibition in honour of courageous South African women*, Group Exhibition, Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Bloemfontein

*Leermeesters*, Group Exhibition, Gallery on Levisieur,

Bloemfontein, Free State, SouthAfrica

SASOL New Signatures Top 100: Discovering South Africa's Emerging Artists, Finalist Exhibition, Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria, South Africa

*VROST: Free State Open Studio Tour*, Free State Art Festival, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa

### 2017

*Bio Art*, Group Exhibition, Microbiology Department, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, Free State, South Africa

Phatshoany Henney New Breed Art competition Finalist exhibition, Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Bloemfontein, South Africa

### 2016

SASOL New Signatures Top 100: Discovering South Africa's Emerging Artists, Finalist Exhibition, Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria, South Africa

### 2015

*A single grain of Rice*, competition Exhibition, Galerie Metanoïa, Paris, France

*ENGRAM*, Exhibition show at the William Humphreys Art Gallery, Kimberley, South Africa

### 2014

SASOL New Signatures Top 100: Discovering South Africa's Emerging Artists, Finalist Exhibition, Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria, South Africa

*Oculus*: Annual Student Exhibition, Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, Free State, South Africa

### **2013**

*Curiosus*: Annual Student Exhibition, Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, Free State, South Africa

### **2012**

*Unleashed*: Annual Student Exhibition, Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, Free State, South Africa

### **Works in Collection and Notable Spaces**

Belmond Mount Nelson Hotel, Cape Town, South Africa

### **Publications**

#### **2019**

Speaker at EDHE Lekgotla, Durban

### **Services**

**2018** Member of the Free State Art Collective

#### **2018**

Co-judged: Down the Rabbit Hole: Art/Photography Competition, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa

#### **2013**

Community Service learning Program at Lesedi la Setjhaba, Rocklands, Bloemfontein, Free State, South Africa

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