

Carol Quarini

I have been making and studying contemporary lace for many years and use it as a medium for conceptual work. My background as a biologist informs much of my practice, which ranges from representations of images such as cells to conceptual ideas about genetics, psychoanalysis and the uncanny.

I am studying net curtains and the way they can be used to re-read the relationship between the domestic, the uncanny and the gothic. I am interested in the uncanny feeling described by Freud that occurs when the familiar becomes strange, the boundary between the homely and unhomely is blurred and when what has been repressed comes to light. This boundary, the liminal space between home and not-home, is represented by the net curtain.

My current work uses net curtains embellished with handmade lace. Some curtains express the unsaid thoughts of the householders, others reflect the curtain's role as a silent witness in the home, revealing hidden truths. Some curtains appear to have taken on a life of their own and become complicit in the terrors of the gothic house. They all reference the slippage between the homely and the unhomely described by Freud and highlight the duality of the home as sanctuary and prison found in the gothic.

By making curtains that at first glance appear conventional, but which contain an unhomely hidden meaning, I subvert the innocence, femininity and domesticity of lace and rethink the role of the net curtain as domestic veil. Displayed in pairs or groups, the messages on the curtains play out different scenarios, and when combined with words projected onto the wall beside them they form a series of narrative installations.