

Statement

Both Re-MAKE-ing BACON and Kneading Bodies are parts one and two of a trilogy that have been funded by two Louisiana Tech University Summer Research Grants (2007/08). Both projects are part of an ongoing research into the **haptic, visceral** and “**in/visible forces**” that shape the body. In addition, both projects are an investigation of what it might mean to dwell in a **visceral architecture of the domestic**.

A visceral architecture of the domestic is prominent in the work of the English painter Francis Bacon and the writings of the Bulgarian-French philosopher, literary critic and psychoanalyst, Julia Kristeva. To begin, Bacon's figures mold space and are molded by space, people are squeezed into keyholes, smeared across beds and disappear into drains. “The figure enacts its small feats, shutting a door with the tip of its foot, twisting itself on a stool.”¹ Consequently, Bacon was interested less in matter and material and more interested in **materials** and **forces** and their effects upon the body. Materials and forces are the conceptual and physical ground upon which re-MAKE-ing BACON was conceived. People were expected to crawl; squirm, and struggle upon a steel armature that supported a construction with a number of openings where one could peer into a number of illuminated openings. The body and its struggle to “enact its small feats” in order to gain physical and visual access to the construction upon the armature becomes the necessary coupling that completes the circuit and makes the experience of the work complete.

Kneading Bodies explores themes of the domestic, haptic and visceral world of what Julia Kristeva refers to as the **chora**. The chora is defined as follows:

In the earliest stage of psychosexual development (0-6 months of age), you were dominated by a chaotic mix of perceptions, feelings, and needs. You did not distinguish your own self from that of your mother or *even the world around you*. Rather, you spent your time taking into yourself everything that you experienced as pleasurable without any acknowledgement of **boundaries**. This is the stage, then, when you were closest to the pure **materiality** of existence, or what Lacan terms “the Real.” At this stage, you were, according to Kristeva, purely dominated by your drives (both life drives and the death drive).²

Dough/bread, are the sustenance of life and are posited in many foundation myths as an embodiment, metaphor, allegory, and/or symbol of the body. Kneading Bodies again refers to the in/visible forces that shape the body. Forces circulate around and through the materials that define house/home. Combined, these forces and materials act upon and **knead** the body as if it were malleable dough. The dough is introduced to and held by the ‘house/home jig’ where all the tools (forces and materials) slowly begin to go to work. Boundaries are established. The “pure materiality of existence”, the chora is lost.

*Under the skin the body is an over-heated factory
and outside, the invalid shines,
glows,
from every burst pore.*

Antonin Artaud

1. *The Logic of Sensation* by Gilles Deleuze; translated by Daniel W. Smith; Published by the University of Minnesota Press, copyright 2003
2. <http://www.cla.purdue.edu/academic/engl/theory/psychoanalysis/kristevadevelop.html>

