

# UC San Diego

## UC San Diego Electronic Theses and Dissertations

### Title

Come Back to Me

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0nk0z6hq>

### Author

Kayser, Heidi

### Publication Date

2016

### Supplemental Material

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0nk0z6hq#supplemental>

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Come Back to Me

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements  
for the degree Master of Fine Arts

in

Visual Arts

by

Heidi Kayser

Committee in charge:

Professor Anya Gallaccio, Chair  
Professor Judith Dolan  
Professor Ricardo Dominguez  
Professor Kyong Park

2016

©

Heidi Kayser, 2016.

All rights reserved.

The Thesis of Heidi Kayser is approved and is acceptable in quality and form for the publication on microfilm and electronically:

---

---

---

---

Chair

University of California, San Diego

2016

## EPIGRAPH

“...my nightmare is a culture inhabited by posthumans who regard their bodies as fashion accessories rather than the ground of being...” *Hayles, 1998*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Signature Page .....	iii
Epigraph .....	iv
Table of Contents .....	v
List of Supplemental Files .....	vi
Abstract of the Thesis .....	vii

## LIST OF SUPPLEMENTAL FILES

Catalog

## ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Come Back to Me

by

Heidi Kayser

Master of Fine Arts, in Visual Arts

University of California, San Diego, 2016

Anya Gallaccio, Chair

The multifaceted project, *Come Back to Me*, critiques the current state of image commodification to pose questions about subjectivity constituted through an ever-expanding ecosystem of fashion. As fashion theorist Anne Hollander claims, clothes “*share in the perpetually idealizing vision of art,*” and therefore merit the same meticulous analysis as painting. The work in *Come Back to Me* examines the relationship of fashion to the canon of female portraiture. I claim that the bodies of women depicted in painting throughout the ages are perpetually portrayed as doll-like objects rather than powerful, autonomous subjects. It is clothes that form these subjectivities, and the sartorial shaping of the body directly affects the somatic, and indeed, the body-image itself. “Sumptuary Laws” instated during the Renaissance dictated dress codes that policed dividing lines between Aristocracy and a rising middle class by forbidding sartorial extravagance and excess. Today, sumptuary laws have been inverted- the Capitalist machine now demands the gluttonous consumption of products by everyone, with the



fashion industry as a driving engine. *Come Back to Me* constructs a metaphorical narrative of the cycle of becoming human, thing, and image, as sustained through the fashion system.

*Come Back to Me* collects four bodies of work: a performance, a fashion film, a series of photographs, two sculptures and a sculptural gown. The works were shown in an exhibition with an accompanying catalogue and written thesis paper. As time-based media, the performance and the fashion film explore the plastic nature of the actions between bodies in relationship to clothes, and the exhibition of material objects freezes these actions into a liminal state between possibility and artifact.