

# CLAIRE A. WARDEN

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## Artist Statement

*Mimesis* is grounded in issues of identity, the other and the psychology of knowledge and power. The creation of this series comes at a time when the struggle to accept the unfamiliar is pervasive in our culture. When looking at these images, the urge to ask “what is it?” echoes the question, “what are you?” a question that has been directed towards me countless times and one that I find increasingly difficult to answer. Raised in a family with a diverse ethnic heritage has led me to reflect on the fluid, abstract nature of identity, which informs my use of photography.

I use saliva and mark-making as part of my photographic process, which steers the work away from the signifying functions inherent to the medium of photography. I use these interventions as symbolic acts to expose the inherent biologic and socio-cultural forces that stimulate the emergence and performance of an identity. This process produces a series of images that reveal certain truths in identity and simultaneously the inadequacies of language to describe oneself. Resembling systems of the natural sciences—microscopic, topographic and celestial—the photographs allegorize the complexity of systems that make up an individual and the perception of self.