

bodyTime()

Introduction

In a small Randburg studio, every second weekend, artists gather—novices to masters—all tracing bodies in quiet focus. A soft “How’s everyone?” fills the air, grounding life-drawing that pares humanness bare—flesh poised, breath caught, doubled in two exposures. *bodyTime()* skims time’s edge—neither locked nor lost—skin tracing a toe’s reach, a hand’s drift, a veil’s bend. Pareidolia glints: what’s there, what’s not, shimmers in the overlap.

The title *bodyTime()* implies a programmer’s function—a method—floating somewhere between the logic of object-oriented programming but with light and limbs instead of computer code, and the abstractions of object-oriented ontology without the esoteric rhetorical trappings. Ultimately, these are just pictures, where what is seen is sometimes only a hint, just a shadow. A reaching for a non-dual celebration of simple dualities. At Stokvel Gallery, Melville, 15 to 16 March 2025, André Clements offers 16 prints—each a body folding into itself, sharp yet soft. No fixed frame pins them; every curve dares a quiet yes—steady, then gone. Here, they’re finite, rare, raw. Step in; meet the glimmer where presence bends its shadow play.

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20241101_1 (Toe)

A toe teeters at the frame's edge, taut, twisting—its arch flares, slicing through shadow to graze an armpit's dip. Wrinkles ripple up an ankle, brushing a neck's faint tilt, then ease downward, meeting flesh that holds steady where the foot strains. Toe traces a line to a distant curve—nipple, a silent tie across the span.

No neat frame binds it; tension hums between the lean reach and the body's grounded weight—a spark of motion tipping against stillness, articulation testing what's whole. Light bends soft across the overlap, shadow pooling where edges blur—a form caught mid-shift, alive, elusive.

Step closer; bear the invitation.



20241101_2 (Elbow)

An elbow juts, bending shadow across a breast's curve—upper arm stretched, fine hair glinting in the Canon 5DSR's crisp gaze. No blur here; every strand catches light, a quiet testament to flesh meeting lens. The breast rests, steady, where the arm angles—less a clash, more a crossing, like lines on a map half-drawn.

No pose holds still; the overlap shifts—arm guarding or reaching, breast simply there, a tension that's soft, not strained. Light pools, then spills, carving edges where hair prickles against smooth skin. It's raw, close—yet pulls back, a form caught in mid-thought, mid-breath.

In bodyTime()'s triptych, it follows the toe's twist—here, the elbow turns the page. Not loud, not lush—just real.
Step closer; trace the grain.

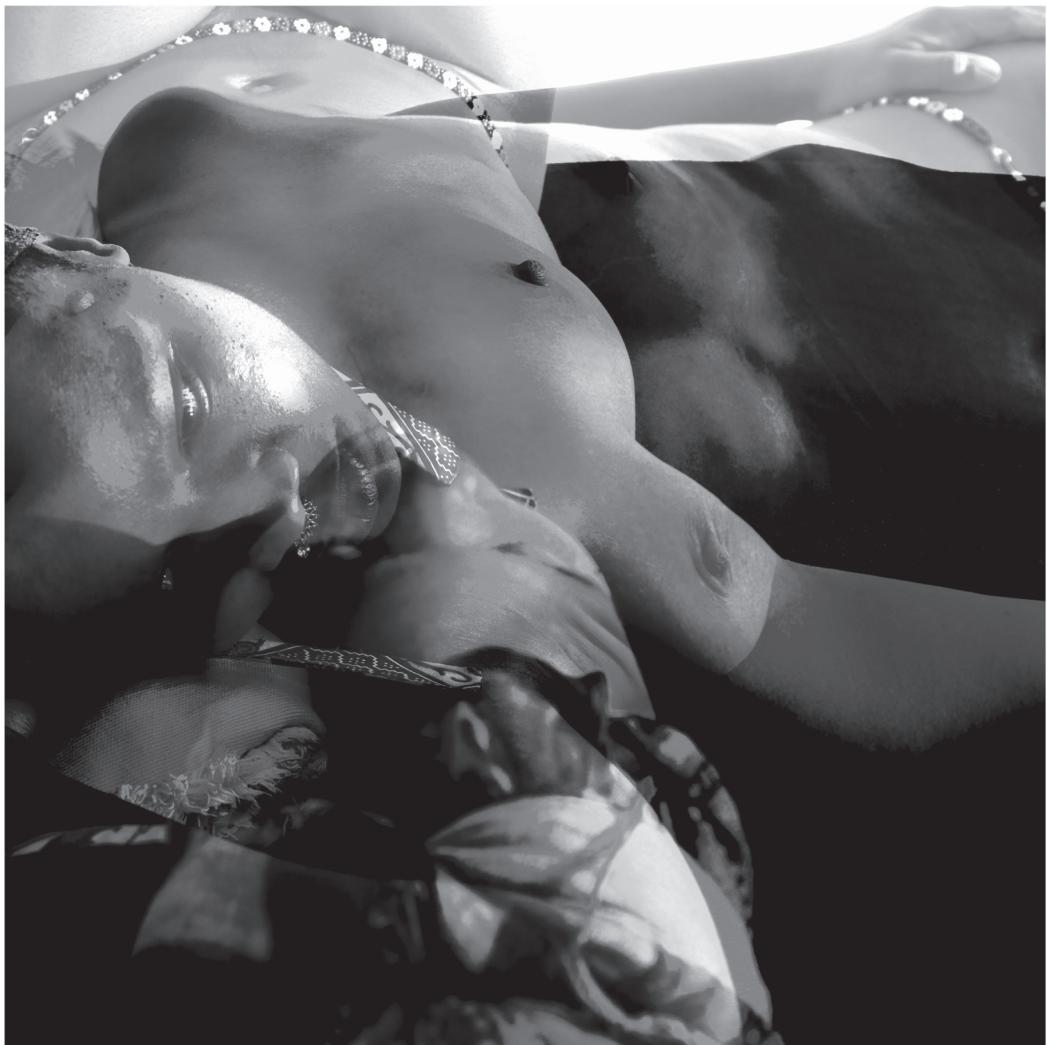


20241101_3 (Hand)

A hand rests—or drifts—fragile veins tracing whispers beneath skin, hovering over the body's quiet sweep. A light-curve lifts from a belly-button's neat slit to a nipple's soft peak, etching a vesica piscis in shadow. Below, the pubic delta stirs, half-shielded by the hand's faint arc—protective, seeking, unanswered.

Time folds here: double-exposure sinks belly into softness, pubis rooting it still. Curves melt into shadow, lines yielding to quiet. Veins, barely there, sketch maps without claim—echoes of touch too light to grasp. The hand bridges nipple to delta, a tender thread of doubt.

In bodyTime()'s triptych, it seals the arc—toe's pull, elbow's edge, now hand's grace.
Step closer; feel its quiet gravity.

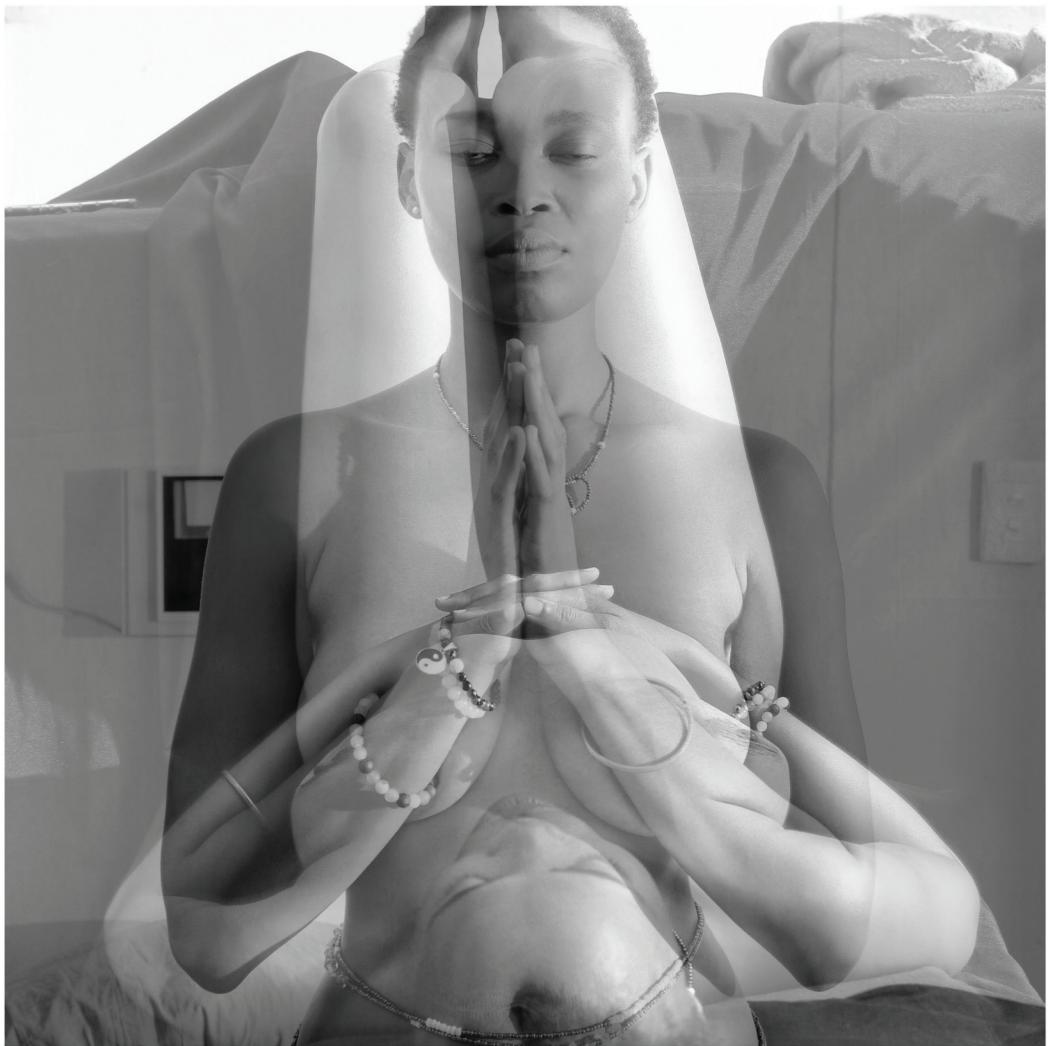


20231201_3 (Dancer)

A dancer turns—still, yet stirring—her doubled form unfurls from soft repose into motion. Skin skirts light, tracing a quiet arc where shadow bends, as if time stumbles—neither fully here nor gone, a breath snagged mid-turn.

No moment traps her; she's a spark between then and next. Gravity tugs, then slips, threading a texture—real, yet fading. A living trace eludes the frame. The glow drifts, unhurried, easing us into a pause like memory, motion hushed for now.

She dances without sound—her glance a quiet call, her becoming a shadow cast.
Stay with it—dance with the dark and with the light.



20231203_III (iHubmyOfferTheCandleThatIsn'tThere)

Two exposures softly align—a figure seated upright, facing forward, and reclining, head tilting toward us. Her hands, clasped prayer-like yet light, converge in quiet meditation, birthing an illusory candle—a gentle artifact flickering between poses. This phantom glow, unlit yet present, emerges from the tender overlap of inward stillness and outward offering, a whisper of illumination that never fully forms.

Beads and bracelets ground her in embodiment, while the candle's mirage lifts it beyond—hinting at the unseen, the relational, the fleeting. In `bodyTime()`, this work reflects meaning's quiet dance: not fixed in objects, but born where authenticity meets vulnerability, where consent lets presence shine softly. It's a contemplative pause—echoing Nussbaum's gentle gaze, Khayyám's shadows—inviting us to see not what's forced, but what's allowed to drift into view, delicate and true.



20241005_1 (Embrace)

Eyes, her face softly with arms and torso—an intimate circle of holding. Whispering both vulnerability and quiet strength: a subtle piercing, faint tattoos, each marking individuality while dissolving boundaries between inner reflection and outer form. She appears both seen and unseen, held and holding.

It's a moment of gentle containment, inviting memory, gaze, and the intangible to converge.



20240810_1 (Entangled Calm)

She emerges from a soft tangle of her own limbs—serious yet quietly light. Overlapping exposures trace an outward gaze that still feels inward, as if poised between rest and motion. Light grazes muscle and curve, shadows slipping in, merging multiple versions of her into one moment of becoming.

It's neither purely still nor fully moving—an intimate knot of time, glimpsed mid-shift. The figure seems both self-contained and open, inviting us to sense how identity unfolds in gentle collisions, each limb a question of who we are or might yet be.



20231110_1 (Convergent Forms)

Two exposures fuse—a nude figure upright, illuminated, while a second, shadowed presence softly intersects. In the overlap, pubic hair drapes over a bent knee, forging illusions that tease the eye—what is flesh, what is shadow? Hands float near the body, neither fully here nor gone, each curve suggesting both the familiar and the ungraspable.

This gentle distortion is less about shock than about seeing anew: boundaries blur, identity becomes a quiet negotiation of presence and absence. The body holds its ground yet slips away, inviting us to sense how even the most intimate lines can shift into something else entirely.



20240505_2 (Ritual)

Hair drifts like cosmic currents, necklace beads glint like seeds of a sacred mala. Two exposures fold together, evoking Shiva-Shakti: body and spirit, presence and dissolution. Each strand, each bead, resonates with subtle energy, bridging flesh to cosmos. Shadow meets light in a quiet interplay—every breath a threshold to deeper union.



20240922_1 (Shelter)

Limbs and torso fold into each other, curly hair brushing a gentle arc, revealing yet veiling the body's most intimate terrain—the plumbing and knee held in a tender balance. The composition wraps the figure in layers—knee bent, tattoo glinting, shadows pooling—offering closeness without baring all. It's a moment of sheltering and sharing, where each curve feels quietly claimed.

Folds of skin mirror folds of fabric, blurring the line between body and surroundings, where comfort and exposure mingle without judgment. The tattoo punctuates this rhythm, a mark of individuality threading through the calm. Intimacy holds its own quiet power.



20241103_1 (Pulse)

Arms flung wide, a man's torso, chest laid bare, reaching beyond the frame. His face is divided across exposures: one gaze direct, confrontational; the other drifting out into shadow. Flesh merges with silhouette, one self fading into another.

The stretch pulses—fingers tense, shoulders braced—between bold assertion and cautious retreat. A tender collision of presence and doubt, the fractured face bears the weight of being seen and slipping away.

Reaching splits the quiet void—striving seeks the light.



20240907_01

A man sits, arms and legs, in subtle tension. Poised between strength and surrender. Also lies, flaccid unguarded—what is the weight of being male and seen? Human and somehow alienated? Acceptance, reluctance, introspection.

Not bravado, no retreat—just a middle ground where masculinity meets vulnerability. Bearing or release, resilience or doubt. He quietly reflects on what it means to inhabit his form, unperformed yet charged with presence, and absense.



20241117_2 (Veil of Folds)

A back arcs, arms braced at its sides—steady, carved, poised. Through it, a chest glints—angled, arms splaying in a breath's faint echo. A veil of light and texture cuts across—skin's ridge or fabric's ghost, a trace of what was. The body hovers, neither whole nor split, alive in its merge and fade.

Flesh grazes shadow—muscles taut, then fleeting. Shoulder blade juts, hip creases sink—contours flare where time folds in cascading locks. The second figure, softer, haunts within—ribs rising through the veil, gaze heavy, unseen.

Solidity bends, then slips—form giving way to apparition.
Let the veil shift.



20240113-20240922_2 (Ember's Drift)

A figure flares in black-and-white—one exposure seated, lotus-curled, fierce yet rooted; another reclining, languid, spilling across the frame. Fingers curl sensually, trailing heat through shadow, as her top-left face flickers—hair or defiance?—teasing the eye. The wall's rough bite grazes her back, clashing with skin's soft give—breasts, belly alive with faint grain.

Hair dances wild, threading the split—upright poise melts into reclined ease, a second silhouette simmering beneath. No edge stays still; necklaces glint, tattoos dance, flesh bends free. It's a restless pulse—lotus to drift, grit to glow—caught mid-unfurl.

Inside; feel the spark linger.



20241116_2 (Fullness)

Hands settle, overlapping softly against a body at ease. The composition draws the eye to curves—round, unapologetic—where light and shadow glide, not to defend or retreat, but to hold space. Skin claims its fullness, scars and folds threading a calm wholeness, a non-dual dance where vulnerability and resilience aren't at odds but flow as one.

No guarded stance, no folded arms—just a quiet completeness radiating through layered contours. It's a moment of presence, unhurried, where fullness feels both simple and profound.
Sense how the body anchors, confident in being.



20240712_20250118_1 (Bending Diamonds)

Two moments softly meet—one distant, arms folding gentle against black; the other near, a far hand brushing a close ear. A diamond's light bends through—faint from a mouth's edge, firm across a bicep—fragile, sharp, threading a quiet pull.

Not all shield, not all bare—skin maps a whisper where inner folds graze outer lines. The gaze holds—steady, soft, daring in its drift—neither giving nor guarding full. Presence curls inward, then out, a gesture snagged mid-breath.

It glimmers—bending diamonds of stance and gaze.
Step closer; find your reflection in its way.

Saying Yes, Softly

A small group gathers in my studio for a few hours. It's been this way regularly since 2017: just a handful of artists and a someone who will pose, sometimes friends, sometimes strangers, all sorts of bodies, all sorts of lives. We begin not by drawing, not by positioning, but by checking in gently: "How's everyone today?"—model included, always. There's a moment of quiet recognition, simple consent to share this space. No assumptions, no roles forced upon anyone—just a soft yes, freely given, freely received.

In that moment, something quietly shifts. Layers of everyday pretense soften and dissolve. We move gently into presence—no forcing, no pushing, just being there, together. Time slows; the body settles. This gentle space is about more than art—it's a subtle invitation to authenticity, to vulnerability offered without exposure, to honesty emerging not from pressure but from permission.

That's where *bodyTime()* begins. Not as an abstract idea, nor some grand claim to absolute truth, but simply as an extension of these weekly encounters, this familiar, shared humanness. *bodyTime()* quietly carries that same energy into a collection of gentle black-and-white double-exposure photographs, softly layered, shown briefly at Stokvel Gallery in Melville, just for two days (March 15–16, 2025). Each piece is priced playfully at R3,333.33—not market logic, just shapes and curves that feel right.

But more deeply, *bodyTime()* offers something else—a gentle exploration of how we meet each other and ourselves, how we handle power, how we say yes to vulnerability without becoming victims or heroes or saviours. This space we create each week through life-drawing—soft, consensual, honest—quietly opposes the noisy, often hidden drama of everyday interactions. That exhausting cycle of victimhood, blame, and forced rescue—what psychologists call the Karpman Drama Triangle—is diffused simply by our careful consent. No one takes power from another here. Power is never truly shared, only taken or relinquished—but here we invite each other softly to take only our own power, no more, no less.

Vulnerability within consent becomes something gently profound. The difference between vulnerability freely offered and vulnerability taken is subtle but essential. Without consent, vulnerability becomes mere exposure, harsh and unsafe. But within clear, quiet consent, vulnerability opens softly, beautifully, honestly. It becomes safe precisely because it is freely chosen. This is the gentle thread running through *bodyTime()*: consent as the quiet heartbeat that makes honesty safe, makes vulnerability beautiful, makes authenticity possible.

Honesty, in this space, quietly dismantles the drama that often dominates life. No pretense, no masks, no hurried performance. It becomes integrity—a quiet resistance, gentle defiance against a louder world often built on domination and coercion. This integrity aligns softly with my broader Vita-Socio-Anarco ethos, which values life, community, and non-domination over control, profit, or forced outcomes. Integrity isn't moral superiority; it's a quiet choice—sometimes successful, sometimes failing, always striving toward authenticity.

This gentle rebellion shows itself subtly in the consistent pricing of my work—always R3,333.33, an absurdity designed to undermine the art market's insistence on seriousness. It's playfulness, quiet defiance, a softly spoken resistance. Stokvel Gallery echoes this ethos perfectly. Founded by Gordon Froud, it's artist-run, commission-free, raw walls, simple lights—nothing grandiose, no hidden agendas. It mirrors the quiet humility of the life-drawing space, a gentle invitation extended to everyone equally, softly, honestly.

But bodyTime() also invites us to reconsider the way we see, the way we look. Philosopher Martha Nussbaum offers the nuanced possibility of non-pathological objectification—a respectful gaze, intimate yet non-invasive, possible only with clear consent. Consider images like 20241101_1—a foot, a breast softly dissolving—or (Dancer) 20231201_1—a dancer suspended gently between stillness and movement. The gaze in these works isn't about possession, but quiet recognition. Intimacy without invasion, openness without forced exposure. Consent, again, makes this gentle exchange possible.

Gender freedom subtly emerges here too, quietly dismantling rigid stereotypes. Life-drawing, bodyTime(), and the spaces around them intentionally reject binary assumptions or fixed roles. Bodies are simply bodies; people simply people. Everyone steps forward as themselves, without needing permission to be anything other than what they naturally, softly, authentically are. There's no loud activism here—just quiet inclusion, subtle equality, gentle openness.

All of this—consent, vulnerability, honesty, integrity, quiet resistance, respectful looking—leads gently to the recognition of life's inherent transience, the shadow play described by Omar Khayyám. The body, illuminated briefly by life's candle, casts shadows that flicker softly across walls. Beingness drifts quietly through moments we never fully grasp. In bodyTime(), nothing is claimed or fixed—only gently offered, fleetingly held. It's a humble recognition that the map we've drawn—this treatise, these photographs—is never the territory itself. Every map is simply a territory—provisional, incomplete, but real enough to feel and explore.

My role as an artist, facilitator, and photographer is intentionally minimal, a “light-touch” process. I don't direct; I gently invite. I create spaces, not outcomes, because outcomes are never fully ours to control. We strive quietly, humbly, sometimes successfully, sometimes falling short—but the artistry lies in this honest striving. It's not perfection we seek, but the gentle courage to say yes, to take our own power without imposing upon others.

Ultimately, bodyTime() doesn't promise certainty—only possibility. It's an invitation to stand quietly in our authenticity, gently claim our own power, accept vulnerability, reject drama, and embrace integrity. It reminds us softly that we are transient, shadows briefly cast upon a wall, phantom spirits quietly illuminated, each for a brief moment saying yes.

In the end, perhaps all we can truly offer is this quiet yes—a soft, humble invitation to meet each other honestly, vulnerably, briefly, before the candle dims and shadows fade. To gently claim our own power, no more, no less. To stand simply as we are—openly, gently, authentically—together.

And then, quietly, let go.

André Clements

Artist Statement

bodyTime(): Bodies between stillness and being—two moments layered, tracing movement, touch, and life's elusiveness.

Advance Praise

You give the viewer an opportunity to view the model from several points of view; clearly, it takes time to look at anything or anyone from different angles in different poses, so you present that opportunity to the viewer. Wonderfully anachronistic, showing us glimpses in black-and-white that remind us of Duchamp's "nude descending a staircase", Balla's futurism, Boccioni's "Unique forms of continuity in Space" and Edweard Muybridge's Studies in motion.

- **Carl Jeppe**

...everything about these are quite something . The overlayed exposures take me into an imaginary surreal erotic world. Controversial French psychologist, (post-Freud) Jacques Lacan comes to mind.

- **Anton Uys**

Curatorial Background

The 16 works in bodyTime(fugitivity) are exhibiting in their inaugural showcase at the Go Naked naturist stand at The Sex Expo, 29 November to 1 December 2024, Gallagher Estate. Go Naked naturist advocates for the theme: nonsexual nudity in a sexualised world.

Thanks

Gratitude to Gordon Froud for Stokvel's walls and roof, Sammy Muller for her opening words, and all who embraced this softly unfolding vision—and, most of all, to the participants, artists, sitters, and my family, who make the life-drawing sessions and these works possible.

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