what was dead was never dead

*what was dead was never dead* is an ongoing project that examines the universal belief in reincarnation and posthumous existence of dead relatives. in nigeria, people believe that human effort and achievement do not end with death on the earthly plane. this cosmological belief is articulated in a lot of different origin stories, many of which are built around individuals and archetypes in ghostland.

the world is an endless loop of the living and dead; coming and going. for instance, among the yoruba people, the universe is conceived as a three-storied structure: heavenworld above, earthworld and, the under-earthworld below it. the heavenworld above is the home of the father god, earthworld is the home of humankind [including animalkind, trees etc.], and the under-earthworld is the abode of the ancestors. when a child is born, the child is never named, until the gods are consulted, to reveal whom amongst the ancestors have come to live again on earthworld. hence, those who are dead, are never dead.

in this body of work, i try to capture the living-dead, by examining intimate family stories―to exhume memories, popular myths and taboos surrounding death, reincarnation and the universal belief in the afterlife.