

Home is where the heart is.

Knock Knock is an exhibition of fashion and textile curated by Felix Choong that continues Peter Galassi's exploration of the home in *Pleasures and Terrors of Domestic Comfort* held at MoMA in 1991. Across more than 150 photographs, the suburban home and its surfaces were captured and here the exploration is localised in garments. The notion of 'comfort' conjures to mind the padded weight and caresses of soft furnishings on skin, but also the economic security that it affords. The scenes depicted in Galassi's exhibition are at first glance enviable in their wealth and ornamentation, but on closer inspection many are filled with an undercurrent of ambiguous dread and fear. Loneliness, anxiety, desire all permeate these otherwise idyllic rooms. Families are seen together, but disengaged from one another. A young woman getting dressed in the chaos of her overturned bedroom. A man's face illuminated by the fridge light, disenchanted by its offerings. These photographs highlight the demise of privacy, the loneliness of late capitalism, and the significance of image culture in shaping our perceptions of society and the individuals that make it up.

Within the space, garments are presented in lieu of photographs, exploring the tension between pleasure, comfort and lurking threat. Ideas surrounding conflict, gender, labour, excess, childhood, comfort, shelter and that thick blanket of sentimentality we like to bury ourselves under are all ruminated on. Soft furnishings and trinkets left behind by a grandmother become a tribute to her memory — her doilies reborn as delicate garments. A toy plane complete with whirring propeller ceases to represent childhood imagination and freedom, but is instead cumbersome, restrictive and stifling. Elsewhere, our incessant desire for comfort results in tumorous appendages bulging softly across the hips and torso. A mother's fur coat and pearl necklaces become a bourgeois cilice. Swatches of antique upholstery reminiscent of old curtains create a window, framing the exposed back of the wearer — the cutout represents an exercise in personal and domestic exhibitionism. Buttons become an emotional archaeology signifying our hoarder-like tendencies: they swarm the body en masse covering a jacket, skirt and tights. An ensemble of distressed printed linens constructed using military techniques appears put together in a rush, conveying the threat of displacement and having to leave your home at a moment's notice.

Taking its name from the eponymous children's jokes, *Knock Knock* situates the front door as a gateway, but also a barrier. The home is meant to be a cocoon against the troubles of the world, yet behind closed doors these spaces present us with intimacies, connections and altercations that must be reckoned with whether we want to or not. The artist, Rory Mullens, was invited to build a rudimentary house within the space. Constructed from salvaged wood and other throwaways, the house is an extension of our being. Rather than build a perfect replica, this house's crude assemblage is a parody of keeping up appearances, the veneer has been scraped away to reveal the identities we attempt to consolidate through our homes are merely façades.

Pleasure, belonging, comfort and the pathological projections of each are embedded in one another, our perspective twisting and changing according to the slant of light.¹ These garments are snapshots into our own lives, the ones that we exhibit and the ones that we conceal.

¹ <https://aperture.org/editorial/terror-pleasure-staying-home-sara-knelman/>

