

Fleshed Out

Observe me. Here I am, dressed and draped in my wrinkled skin. My face is pasted on an image of a marble bust, a self-portrait with the immortality of marble and the deterioration of flesh. My sagging, crepey skin mocks the perfection of marble, a bold, vulnerable, confrontation with the evidence of aging.

As a culture we have an aversion to the wrinkled truths of aging. Self-portraits by women showing their aging skin are rare. In *Fleshed Out*, I use photos of my wrinkled neck, chest, arms and hands as draped clothing, substituting the folds of my skin for the folds of sculpted fabric.

The self-portraits are digital collages, inkjet prints ranging in size from 12 x 12 inches to 26 x 20 inches. The images of the busts and sculptures come from museum collections or public sculpture. Imposing my face, with its visible pores, age spots and wrinkles onto smooth, generalized marble faces gives them a specificity they lacked. Marble lasts, flesh does not. Photos of my wrinkled skin become stuff to work with, a material I manipulate in Photoshop, to clothe the sculpture.

Women my age are nearly invisible in a youth-oriented, anti-aging culture. We do not want to see bodily evidence of deterioration and decay. I confront these fears as I clothe marble busts in the skin we would prefer to erase or veil.