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Dermagraphies: Techniques of Drawing on Skin

Tattooing as an act of mark making and its documentation in two different artists' work is the theoretical focus of this paper. Specifically, Lisa Benson's *Twenty minute spin* (DVD, 2006) will be juxtaposed with the digital presentations of Tagny Duff's *Living Viral Tattoos* (2008) and *Cryobook Archives* (2009). Both artists provide opportunities to consider the techniques of drawing on bodies as vectors of information, and involve issues of technology, staining skin, and its display. While Duff's initial production was located in the bio-technology laboratory and Benson's work was done in the art gallery under tattoo parlour conditions, both are mediated by their complicit forms of exhibition, incorporating performative aspects that include shifts in space and viewing. Relations between skin, technique, and tattoo, to further conceptualise notions of *dermagraphics*, are key themes in this discussion. Inscriptions of the skin via the mechanism of tattoo also enables a return to Derrida's discussion of Lévi-Strauss and acts of writing.