Paula Chambers – Feral Objects and Acts of Domestic Piracy

Positioning poltergeist phenomena as a metaphorical framework within which to investigate how sculptural objects, installations and related artworks that utilize domestic objects and spaces, can be seen to have disruptive and resistant agency when positioned as feminist, both historically (grounded in the 1970s) and in relation to more contemporary feminist concerns (female embodiment, illegible rage, precarious labour). Exploring the performative nature of domestic objects and spaces when these become an externalization of a specifically ‘feminine’ mode of resistance, (McRobbie), I aim to examine the agency of domestic objects that perform as sculpture in a disruptive and transgressive manner. Positioning the domestic as a site for the formation of female subjectivities, and more specifically, how these subjectivities may be formed as interrelational with domestic objects and spaces, and therefore perform as stand-ins for a femininity structured as relational to the domestic. (Massey, Young). How this might be read within the context of ‘The Enfield Poltergeist’ case study, and how this might be evidenced through sculptural practice. Considering agency as a complicit and equal exchange between subject and object (Latour, Gell, Bennett, Haraway), and that agency becomes imbued within an object during processes of making, the object becoming a representative in the world of that maker’s agency. The agency of objects can be seen to manifest through the secular magic of poltergeist activity, through the performativity of sculpture, and through the disruptive and resistant domestic strategies undertaken by girls and women.