Je Peux Voir les Hommes Cachés dans la Forêt (2016) is a seventeen panel photomontage, derived from a composite image published in La Révolution Surrealiste (1929). In the centre of the original image is a reproduction of a painting by Renée Magritte, featuring a naked woman, identity unknown, head averted, surrounded by photographs of members of the Surrealist group. In my re-imagining of this image, I appear in photographic negative, masked, in the midst of digitally inverted photographs of a series of watercolour drawings. All of the men have their eyes closed; the subject of the dream is always the dreamer.

At the beginning of Winter, Unica Zürn found a long roll of C-type paper. When she unrolled it, she saw that it was the colour of skin, a pale apricot, unblemished. To Zürn’s touch the paper was warmish, smooth and with an even texture, like skin after sunbathing. She placed the paper on the floor and lay upon its surface. With a kind of gentle horror, she saw that the paper began to change colour, ripening to the hue of a nipple, then after a while, to the tint of a dark genital pink.

At the end of Summer, Sheila Legge was given a long roll of C-Type paper. When she unrolled it, she saw that it was a deep turquoise blue, the colour of skin in a photographic negative. The surface was cold, dry, the temperature of the underside of a stone. She placed it on the floor and with a strange pleasure, she saw that the paper began to lighten to a pale mineral blue. Legge lay down and spread her body over its surface, relishing the coolness.

Years later, Legge and Zürn noticed raised areas on the surface of the rolls of paper, as if the warmth of their bodies had drawn out something latent in the material, activating a thermal print of arms, legs and a head. If these shapes were cut out, they could be worn, like garments or disguises, so that the registers of the photographic record and the real would merge.

Sheila Legge’s performance in Trafalgar Square, her head concealed by a hood of rose petals, photographed by Claude Cahun.

Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven’s portrait of Marcel Duchamp, comprised of feathers, chicken bones and a champagne glass.

Duchamp’s moulds and casts for Étant Donnés, which assembled, produced the fantasised, supine body of Maria Martins.

Other disassembled and reconfigured bodies. Hans Bellmer’s disarticulated and rearranged imaginings of Zürn’s corporeal form, photographed, taken apart and photographed again. Intense, suicidal Unica, with her astonishing, anagrammatic drawings and poems, words and images all cut up and re-assembled, equivalent but not the same. A photographic negative operates as a kind of ‘photo-anagram’. Spectral after-image and primary material record of an event, it offers up a scrambled and reconfigured meaning, a mirror image, identical but not the same.