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24

12 *Years*

A FEMINIST PUBLICATION ON ART AND POLITICS





# 12 YEARS

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A FEMINIST PUBLICATION ON ART AND POLITICS

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# FROM LIBERATION TO LACK

MIRA SCHOR

The three phases of the historical and political development of feminism—from the demand for equality, through the rejection of patriarchy by radical feminism, toward a third position that sees the male/female dichotomy as “metaphysical”—present a dilemma to feminists whose own personal maturation has been synchronous with the women’s liberation movement of the early ’70s, the feminist art movement, and the recent influx of French feminist psychoanalytic and linguistic theories, a dilemma that is replicated in the disposition of the books in my library on feminism and feminist art and art-historical analysis.

## Equality\*<sup>1</sup>

In a cardboard box stored at my mother’s house: a dog-eared copy of *Our Bodies Ourselves, Everywoman* (by the Fresno Feminist Art Program, 1971), and the first issue of *Ms.*

In my closet: a yellowed photocopy of Linda Nochlin’s essay “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?”

On my shelves: *A Room of One’s Own* (every sentence underlined and then reunderlined in darker graphite); *The Second Sex* (inherited from my older sister, the pages nearly powder).

## Radical Feminism\*

*From the Center* by Lucy Lippard; *Women Artists 1550/1950* by Ann Sutherland Harris and Linda Nochlin; *Feminism*

and *Art History* edited by Nochlin and Thomas Hess; monographs, catalogues, autobiographies and biographies of women artists: Frida Kahlo, Charlotte, Louise Bourgeois, Alice Neel, Georgia O’Keeffe, Agnes Martin.

## Rejecting the Dichotomy\*

More accessibly placed in the front row of my shelves: *Old Mistresses: Women Art and Ideology* by Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock; *The Madwoman in the Attic* by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar; *New French Feminism: An Anthology* edited by Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron; *The New Feminist Criticism* edited by Elaine Showalter.

On my sofa, bookmarks stuck between pages: *The Daughter’s Seduction* by Jane Gallop; *Speculum of the Other Woman* by Luce Irigaray; *The Newly Born Woman* by Cixous and Clement; *Sexual/Textual Politics* by Toril Moi.

All is not on the distaff side: back shelf, *Letters to a Young Poet* by Rilke; in the front, *Ways of Seeing* and *The Sense of Sight* by John Berger, *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation* edited by Brian Wallis, *Recodings* by Hal Foster; on my sofa, *Male Fantasies* by Klaus Theweleit.

The purpose of this list is not to boast of erudition but to illustrate the feminist dilemma, which is that all of these books remain relevant. Feminism has little institutional memory, there has been no collective absorption of early achieve-

ments and ideas, and therefore feminism cannot yet afford the luxury of storage. Teaching young women to paint, I have found that every young woman who feels in herself the inchoate desire to do something, say something about her life, must begin at the same beginning, or very close to it, that my sisters and I did 17 years ago. The rose-filtered lenses that camouflage patriarchal domination need to be removed, and the ABCs of feminist art history and thought must be learned anew. Thus, a feminist art teacher cannot afford to pack away Linda Nochlin’s signal essay “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” yet she must also be cognizant of the psychoanalytic and linguistic writings implicit in the very title of Nochlin’s more recent essay “The Origin Without an Origin” (*October*, no. 37). While alert to the need of unformed art students, the feminist teacher must be responsible to the growth of her own work. Women of my generation form a living bridge across ebb tides of feminist thought. It is in the spirit of this role that this essay on feminist art is written.

The earliest proposals for what might constitute feminist art concentrated, in terms of content, on personal experiences



re-examined in consciousness-raising sessions. Untold stories of marginality and repression were shared and reworked into statements of rebellion and affirmation. There was an awakening of body awareness, pride, and anger. Satiric readings of female images in popular culture were attempted. Formally, central-core imagery and layering were proposed as metaphors of female sexuality. Previously trivialized methods of production, such as quilting and embroidery, were redeemed for "high art."

These proposals were based on empirical observations of thematic and formal recurrences in art by women (and it is remarkable how persistent these occurrences are), and fueled by the understandable desire (urge) to define and validate what a visible "Other" might be. Innocent and idealistic, and also in opposition to male representations, women artists sought to create representations of female sexuality, of femaleness, and femininity. In their search a belief in representation was evident and implicit.

In the last decade, the work of French psychoanalytic and linguistic theorists has served to undermine the stability of concepts such as identity, authorship, origin, representation—precisely the concepts that American feminists had been trying to resituate within the art work of women artists.

It is a familiar irony in the history of feminism that the goals feminists fight to achieve are declared insignificant or in error just as the goals are at last met. For example, in the nineteenth century, just when women art students were finally admitted to drawing classes with a male nude model, the nude lost its primacy as a concern of art. Some of the ideas of French feminism might seem to operate in a similar pattern of frustration. This is not to say that there are no threads linking the old feminism (Anglo/American) and the new (French). There are times when the description that an Italian waiter once nightly affixed to a pensione's endless re-presentations of veal—*la même chose* ("the same thing")—applies, but with different references and more sophisticated and erudite methods of analysis and critique. American feminism of the early '70s un-



CINDY SHERMAN *Untitled Film Still*, 1979, black-and-white photograph, 10"×8".  
Courtesy, Metro Pictures, New York.

veiled the sexism embedded in the quotidian experience of our culture, and further, in Western, Greco/Roman, Judeo/Christian civilization. French feminism restates the problem, indeed deepens it, by positing that a person's very acquisition of language, her entry into culture, is an inscription into the world of the Phallus, the law of the Father, which language *is*. (These are ideas primarily developed by the French psychoanalytic theorist Jacques Lacan.) Any effort to ignore this law, to search for a definition and a representation of female sexuality, crosses a field mined and snared by phal-

locentric logic; to seek to define the "Other" is still to operate within the framework of a "binary system" in which the Phallus is the primary referent, yet to try to expose the flaws in phallocentric thought by taking its arguments to their logical ends, to use phallocentric thought against itself by "miming" it, is to risk being "recuperated" (remember how feminist art themes and forms used to be "co-opted" by male artists?—*la même chose*, only different). So one can find oneself literally in a *no-man's land*, where, as Janis Joplin so aptly put it, "women is losers."



A question central to the visual artist, then, is how women artists have represented female sexuality, which has been specularized<sup>2</sup> and fetishized by men, yet posited as unrepresentable because unseeable, unknowable, and unthinkable. This question is addressed in the work of more women artists than one essay could sensibly deal with; this essay will concentrate on some work dealing with the representation of female sexuality as interpreted in recent feminist critical writings, or work perceived by contemporary art critics to be dealing with "issues of representation" and "originality."



Cindy Sherman's work is generally considered an exemplar of the instability of identity. Also, her work functions as textbook illustration of recent critical analyses of the "specularization" of woman; it seems to spring from and to cause a proliferation of text:

*Is it necessary to add, or repeat that woman's "improper" access to representation, her entry into a specular and speculative economy that affords her instincts no signs, no symbols, or emblems, or methods of writing that could figure her instincts, make it impossible for her to work out or transpose specific representatives of her instinctual object-goals? The latter are in fact subjected to a particularly peremptory repression and will only be translated into a script of body language.*  
—Luce Irigaray<sup>3</sup>

*Now the little girl, the woman, supposedly has nothing you can see. She exposes, exhibits the possibility of a nothing to see.*  
—Luce Irigaray<sup>4</sup>

*When you lose your mind, it's great to have a body to fall back on.*—Shari, Calvin Klein commercial

Formally mimicking "cultural productions" dominated by male specularity—movies and commercial photography—Sherman poses and *makes herself up*; there is no one "I" in her work. She is a blonde lying on a bed dressed in a black bra and panties, mouth half-open, eyes unfocused, body akimbo in a pose hinting at post-orgasmic stupor, or, more likely, a police photographer's view of a crime victim. She is a crouching young girl in a red calico dress, looking up innocently and fearfully. She is a sweating, open-mouthed, vacant-eyed, prone woman in a wet T-shirt. She is a witch, a pig, a pimply ass, a corpse half-visible under dirt and debris. A complete survey would

indicate that a substantial number of the women "enacted" by Sherman are either squatting, crouching, or prone, crazed or dead. More "positive" images tend to look stupid or have a slight mustache.

The possible interpretations of this category of "negative" representations (representations of negativity, a "nothing to be seen") unfold in a peculiar sequence which reflects the changes in her work. The ironic intention of these textbook representations of the "Other"—cunt, witch, shrew, bimbo, victim—presumably ensures that they will be seen as *critiques* of this vision of woman, in much the same way that critics have explained away images of woman in the work of her male contemporaries (such as David Salle).

One has to see a Sherman photograph on a person's wall to understand the nature of its appeal: a wet T-shirt clinging suggestively to breasts is *la même chose*, whether you call it *draperie mouillée* (Kenneth Clarke, *The Nude*) or tits and ass. These negative representations are disturbingly close to the way men have traditionally experienced or fantasized women. Sherman's camera is male. Her images are successful partly because they do not threaten phallocracy, they reiterate and confirm it.

And yet another interpretation of Sherman's negative representations allows the female artist's sense of her own monstrosity, the monstrosity of her project of being an artist, to seep to the surface. The "anxiety of authorship" proposed in *The Madwoman in the Attic* results from the conflation of two phenomena faced by women artists: "the dominant patriarchal ideology presents artistic creativity as a fundamentally male quality" and the "dominant images of femininity are male fantasies"<sup>5</sup>—the "Angel in the House" and the Whore. Women artists seek to adopt/adapt male forms in order to be read (in order not to be thought to babble incoherently in "no-man's" language), but their sense of monstrosity in rejecting these fantasy images and of the monstrousness of their anger against these images lurks more or less veiled within their work, like Mr. Rochester's first wife, hidden but uncontainably violent.

Sherman denies the element of self-portraiture, and there is much criticism of the autobiographical "phallacy" which would limit women artists to their (biologically determined) experience and limit the work of art by chaining it to one author. Nevertheless, Sherman is the artist and her model, the camera and its image. The more successful she becomes

commercially, the more she dares her public to turn away from images so hideous they couldn't possibly sell (predictably they do)—images of the relentless degradation of woman until she molders underground. In a 1985 tableau (#150) she is seen from above, her face is covered with sweat, her hand touches a grotesquely large red tongue. Her expression is one of subservience yet rebellion. Perhaps a sexual slave, she is also monstrously huge in relation to the teeny "normal" figures in the background. A 1987 image (#175) presents a bulimic apocalypse in which only Sherman's tiny, prone, screaming reflection in mirrored sunglasses remains amid half-eaten junk food and vomit. A rejection of junk culture, it is also a case history of a female disorder—disruptive of the more conventional sexuality of her early work. The monstrosity and self-hatred of female authorship, increasingly evident in Sherman's impersonations, run rampant over the irony and create, paradoxically, a powerful feminist body of work.

*But woman has sex organs just about everywhere. She experiences pleasure almost everywhere. Even without speaking of the hysteresis of her entire body, one can say that the geography of her pleasure is much more diversified, more multiple in its differences, more complex, more subtle, than is imagined—in an imaginary centered a bit too much on one and the same.*—Luce Irigaray<sup>6</sup>

Sherman's hysterical reenactments of specularization and of the monstrosity of a woman artist's rebellion focus on aspects of female sexuality related to woman as the object of the male "gaze," as a "nothing to see." Works by other women artists move toward metaphors of the multiplicity of female sexuality, of "This sex which is not one." The "geography of her pleasure" is mapped out on the scattered leaves of the "Cumaeen Sybil" discovered by Percy and Mary Shelley and reilluminated by Gilbert and Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic*. The legendary poetess's histories and prophecies, traced in undecipherable languages, are strewn about a dark cave. This vision of "the body of her precursor's art, and thus the body of her own art, [lying] in pieces around her,



dismembered, dis-remembered, disintegrated"<sup>7</sup> is bracingly close to the experience and the work of many significant women artists.

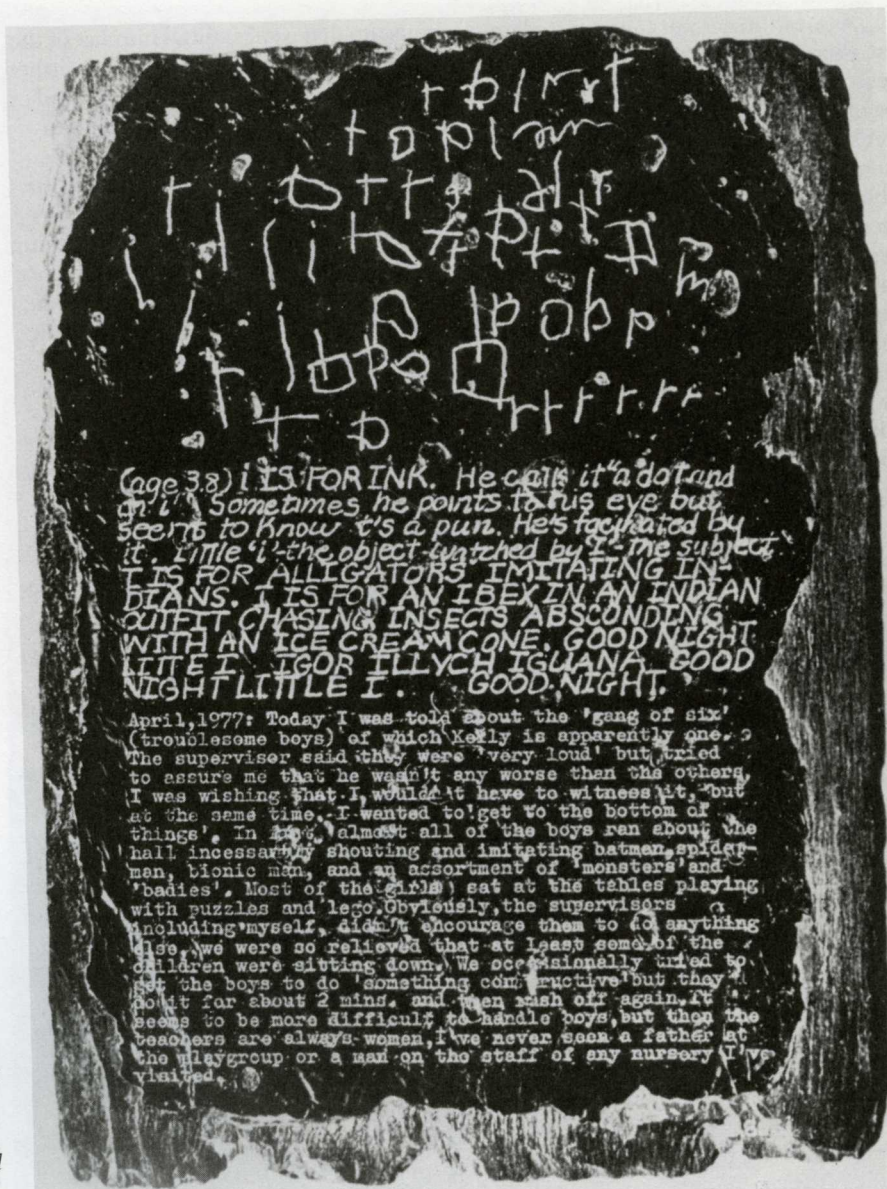
Significant and monumental works by women artists have been constituted by a proliferation of "Sybil's pages," multiple images, often rectangular, framed and placed along a grid. The works I have chosen to examine in content and intent span several phases and families of recent art and feminist thought.

Hanne Darboven covers the walls of the gallery (cave) with identically framed works which bypass the pitfalls of male language by presenting texts that are not texts, in any decipherable sense. Her environments, of systems, indexes, and numbers, hint at an unclosable infinity of references. The pages of this Sybil are covered with an uncracked code, but laid out in the irreproachable (male) grid.

Darboven's austere neutral (neuter) and obsessively expansive cyphers can be bookended with Mary Kelly's obsessional documentation of truly the oldest female profession, being the mother of a son. Kelly's *Post-Partum Document* (1976–1980), a diary of her son's early years, is considered the epitome of art informed by Lacanian theory:

*Kelly's work is an attempt to find a way to expose these processes [representation, language and sexual position] and their significance for both woman and art. She has constructed the document in order to show what lies behind the sexual division of labour in child care, what is ideological in the notion of natural maternal instinct, what is repressed and almost unrepresentable in patriarchal language, female subjectivity. In making the mother and child relation the subject of her art work, she is addressing some of the most politically important and fundamental issues of women, art and ideology.*—Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, Kelly's work has many characteristics of feminist art in its early stages: it is multiple, layered in time; its subjects are motherhood, nurturing, separating. It is autobiographical and biographical in its obsessively complete narration of infant development. From Darboven's barren but infinite cryptography, we have come in *Post-Partum Document*



MARY KELLY "Document 6" from *Post-Partum Document*, 1979, resin on slate. Collection of Arts Council of Great Britain. Courtesy, Postmasters Gallery, New York.

to the all too familiarly decipherable saga, whose heroic subject is a little boy-child who triumphs against the engulfing intimacy with the mother's body and enters into language. The piece, which begins with impressions of the body's shit on his diapers—a Lacanian Shroud of Turin—ends when he learns to write his own name.

The name of the Mother remains unwritten. And exegeses of Kelly's work, while illuminating, leave important (and obvious) questions unasked. Would a work based on the development of a hypothetical girl-child lead to an as predictably Lacanian conclusion? And would the critical realm have valued a piece dedicated to a "nothing to be seen"? As Irigaray has noted: "the mother/daughter, daughter/mother relation constitutes an

extremely explosive core in our cultures. To think it, to change it, amounts to knocking over the patriarchal order."<sup>9</sup>

Between these bookends lie the pages of the supposedly genderless, successful artists of the '80s. Multiplicity of forms and images, a type of layering, occurs in the works of Jennifer Bartlett and Pat Steir. Bartlett's *Rhapsody* and *In the Garden* and Steir's *A Vanitas of Style* and her self-portraits in the style of great (male) masters are major works in which mimicry of male styles is inscribed and deconstructed within the format of "ready-made grids, a code prepared in advance"<sup>10</sup> (male).

Bartlett's pieces are encyclopedic assemblages of basic subjects of traditional representation (tree, house, figure) and visual components (color, geometry,



mark), all on identically measured squares or rectangles. There is no "I" at all, only a hundred mimings of other identities. In *Vanitas* Steir brilliantly mimics styles and techniques from the history of art. In her self-portraits, an "I" appears repeatedly, yet transformed, disfigured, by the lens of male self-portraiture. A new Alice in Wonderland, she leaps through the "mirror phase" into the Symbolic Order.

This art of the myna bird is a virtuoso brand of guerrilla warfare, for the Annie-Oakley-I-can-do-anything-you-can-do-better excellence of its "mimicry of male discourse."<sup>11</sup> The equivalence implied by the multiplicity of imagery seeks to undermine the coherent face of phallic identity, by belying its claim to uniqueness or originality. Both Steir and Bartlett make no effort to represent a female Other. They confront a male audience with its own image, in a fractured, albeit gridded, mirror.



One can detect a link between current theories about origin and originality, representation and reproduction, and the "law of the same," which ordains that "woman's only relation to origin is one dictated by man's."<sup>12</sup> The injunctions against concepts of origin and originality central to "simulationist" art, for example, seem to go hand in hand with those injunctions against female representation. The undermining, in deconstruction and simulation theory, of any integrity of representation specifically represses female representation. The art that is presently validated relies on theory and language, and language, we are told, is the Father and the Phallus. In its repression, representation is feminized.

One returns then to the problem of representations of female sexuality or femininity, that is to say, the problem of essentialism:

*Essentialism in the specific context of feminism consists in the belief that woman has an essence, that woman can be specified by one or a number of inborn attributes which define across cultures and throughout history her unchanging being and in the absence of which she ceases to be categorized as a woman. In less abstract, more practical terms, an essentialist in the context of feminism, is one who instead of carefully holding apart the poles of sex and gender maps the feminine onto femaleness, one for whom the body, the female body that is, remains in however complex and problematic a way the rock of feminism.*—Naomi Schor<sup>13</sup>

Women are waved away from the door marked "essentialism" by deconstructionist critics and by others afraid of the biologicistic implications and dangers: they altruistically warn of essentialism's error of logic, the trap door of binary oppositions (male/female, active/passive, culture/nature). Woman is waved back, but to what? ... to PHALLUS and LACK, lack, lack, the keystones of Freud/Lacanian psychoanalytic theory. Like

## "In our difference is our best hope for universality, or specificity."

Bluebeard's last wife, she may nevertheless be impelled to open the forbidden door, even if that act reeks of the illogical, the biologicistic, the binary. And in there are the wives Bluebeard has killed, a locked room full of lacks (whose portraits Cindy Sherman may have limned in her tableaux of self). But what of the still-alive wife, who opens the door?

Phallic culture (from all accounts a redundancy) has done everything to prevent, to disable women from achieving any representation of self that would not return to the primacy of the Phallus, one way or another. And while it is certain that all women are permeated by the phallocratic order, efforts to escape the system, to enter a no-man's land, are understandable, even laudable, however quixotic. The injunction against essentialism seems a continuation of the repression by Western civilization of woman's experience (of which sexuality is only a part), and it should be defied, no matter the risk.

Opening Bluebeard's door takes many forms. One, certainly, is the feminist spin I have sought to put on works by women who attempt to bypass feminist interpretation in order to gain wider acceptability. It is a common reflex of women artists wishing serious consideration (and deservedly so) by mainstream standards of judgment to suppress and deny the female quotient of their art, to refuse to admit to difference. Georgia O'Keeffe's vehement denials of the sexual content of her images is a classic example of the wish to "pass." Cindy Sherman's denials of self-portraiture and of feminist intent (female rage) are a contemporary version of the same reflex. It is quick and deep: "of course my work is of universal import, I am an artist first, a woman second." As Susan Rothenberg remarked in an interview, "When I'm in the studio, I'm just a painter."<sup>14</sup> No one wants to be part of a second class, no one wants to be

marginal (although men can freely co-opt feminist ideas and forms, and can self-righteously search for and claim an anima ... and get brownie points for trying).

It may be worthwhile heeding Cynthia Ozick's warning to Jewish writers with a comparable desire to assimilate:

*We can give ourselves over altogether to Gentile Culture and be lost to history, becoming a vestige nation without a literature; or we*

*can do what we never dared to do in a Diaspora language: make it our own, our own necessary instrument, understanding ourselves in it while being understood by everyone who cares to listen or read.*<sup>15</sup>

In our difference is our best hope for universality, or specificity. The Surrealist movement, in its preoccupation with the irrational and the unconscious, was in a sense the artistic apotheosis of lack (significantly the Surrealist movement begins with Freud and ends with Jacques Lacan). The very intensity of its focus on lack makes it the perfect site for its reinvestigation by women artists.

*The male Surrealists ... passionately desired woman's ability to bear children, which is why they desired woman. Indeed, I would argue that much of Surrealism is an attempt to appropriate woman's power to give birth by every treacherous means possible. Much Surrealist imagery can be understood as the product of a false pregnancy—a strangely aborted product from a female point of view.*—Donald Kuspit<sup>16</sup>

Works by women artists such as Frida Kahlo, Louise Bourgeois, and Elizabeth Murray are representations of femininity whose organic forms and stylistic peculiarities owe much to these "strangely aborted" Surrealist products. These characteristics are often described by post-modernist critics as narcissistic and fetishistic, yet these works deal directly with female body experience, sexuality, fruition, barrenness, and the quotidian facts of woman's life.



To begin by juxtaposing Kahlo's self-portraits to Sherman's, one might note that Sherman's work clearly has a Surrealist dimension, as it slides into dream-like irrationality and fairy-tale grotesquerie. Whether self-portraits or not, hers are hardly "realist" works. In Kahlo's openly autobiographical work, an exactly controlled, detailed and smooth paint surface, biomorphic forms, and dream-like scenes that are retablos of her own life parallel work by male Surrealists. But, in her work, the tragedy of truncation (real) and infertility (real, not, as in the case of the Surrealists, fanciful), and the possibility of fruition through art, are depicted directly, without disgust, without sentimentality, without irony. In *Henry Ford Hospital* (1932) she lies naked in a pool of blood on a large hospital bed in an empty space far away from "man's land" (the factories of Detroit); from her hands flow veins of red blood/paint toward images of sexuality and loss. She is alone with pain and paint. It is a rich solitude, transfiguring clots of endometrial blood into the richly colored matter of painting.

Louise Bourgeois also claims no distance from physical experience and autobiography. Her insistence on the source of her work residing in psychological

wounds inflicted on her by her father contravenes any formal theories of art and yet embodies the Oedipal crisis that psycholinguistic theory interprets as the entrance of human beings into the Symbolic Order of the Father. Bourgeois obsessively returns the critical audience of her work to its motivating source—the murderous rage of a betrayed daughter. Her admission to the Symbolic Order has been warped by her father's open affair with her governess, yet her link back to the Imaginary (completeness of relation to the Mother) is damaged by her mother's presumed complicity.

The forms that Bourgeois' anger takes are directly related to those of Surrealism. The influence of "Primitive" sculptures and totems is pervasive. "Primitive" art was a locus of the (female) unconscious of "civilized" (non-primitive) Western man; its influence on a woman artist is bound to differ. Bourgeois' *Femme/Couteau* and Giacometti's *Spoon Woman* are kin but they are not sisters. *Spoon Woman* has a tiny head and a large receptive body. *Femme/Couteau*, in its degree of abstraction, is ambivalent and bisexual. It is a vulva and a knife—what woman is and is feared to be. Bourgeois' forms are blatantly vaginal, mammary and womblike, yet

exuberantly, mischievously phallic. It would betray her intent to deny the role of her own body experience. The rawness of her surfaces and the openly sexual nature of her forms vitalize the organic/biomorphic Surrealist vision of lack and dissolve the distance the male viewer seeks to place between himself and the art object and between consciousness and his own suppressed physicality and mortality.

Elizabeth Murray's paintings are not only of organic forms, they *are* organic forms. Like the fluids of Irigaray, like the creature in *Alien* (a mother, it turns out!), the paintings push away the rectangular frame and the picture plane, not in the additive and self-consciously art referential (reverential) manner of Frank Stella, but in a stream of interlooping, thrusting and curving sweeps of saturated color—as their subjects, the contents of daily and studio life, are swept off their feet toward abstraction. Even her drawings insist on reshaping the frame of traditional art; but while the frame is forced to zigzag around the drawing, the drawings often center around a round, wooden clitoral plug affixed to the gritty pastel surface.

These works by Kahlo, Bourgeois, and Murray may seem subservient to Surrealist influence. But they are *by* women, and, as such, the disturbing possibility of his own castration inherent in the fetishized object is doubled for the male viewer. "The idea that a 'nothing to be seen,' a something not subject to the rule of visibility or of specula(riza)tion, might yet have some reality would indeed be intolerable to man."<sup>17</sup> Perhaps more disturbing, then, is the possibility that the female experience of container/contained, inside/outside, evidenced in these works intimates that woman is not just a lack, not just a hole, but w/hole, that the lacks represented in these works are full metaphors for the membrane between thought and matter, life and death, which is at the core of art.

### Postscript

Important work has been left out, unhappily. The "pattern and decoration" work of such notable feminist artists as Miriam Schapiro and Joyce Kozloff did not quite fit into the pattern of this particular train of thought. Further along the loom of woman's work, one might have included the work of the German artist Rosemary Troeckel, but I have not yet had the opportunity to see it "in person." Other pages from the Sybil's cave beg inclusion—the works of Eva Hesse, Nancy Spero, Agnes Martin. Many of these works would lead to another essay altogether, on the role of abstraction (understood in a formalist sense) as a metaphor for female sexuality.

FRIDA KAHLO *Henry Ford Hospital*, 1932, oil on metal, 30.5 × 38 cm.  
Collection, Dolores Olmedo.





NOTE: This article was originally written in 1987.

<sup>1</sup>This three-part schema is derived from Julia Kristeva's "Women's Time," as summarized by Toril Moi in *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (London & New York: Methuen, 1985), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>*Specular* (*specularized*, *specularity*) is a key word used extensively by the French psychoanalyst and philosopher Luce Irigaray to describe the mechanism whereby the instrument (the speculum) that man uses to see and represent woman is a mirror in which he sees only his own reflection (a "return to the same"). "[Woman is] a mirror in which the 'subject' sees himself and reproduces himself in his reflection." This quote is from Irigaray's *Speculum of the Other Woman*, translated from the French by Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985) p. 240. With its echoing of words such as *spectator* and *speculation*, it is a very useful term in feminist theory.

<sup>3</sup>Irigaray, p. 124.

<sup>4</sup>Irigaray, p. 47.

<sup>5</sup>Moi, p. 57.

<sup>6</sup>Irigaray, "Ce Sexe qui n'est pas un" ["This Sex Which Is Not One"], *New French Feminism—An Anthology*, edited by Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (New York: Schocken Books, 1981), p. 103; Mary Shelley, quoted by Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 96.

<sup>7</sup>Gilbert and Gubar, p. 98.

<sup>8</sup>Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), p. 167.

<sup>9</sup>Irigaray, *Le Corps à corps avec la mère* (Montreal: Les Editions de la Pleine Lune, 1981), p. 86, my translation.

<sup>10</sup>Irigaray, quoted by Moi, p. 147.

<sup>11</sup>Moi, p. 139.

<sup>12</sup>Irigaray, *Speculum*, p. 33.

<sup>13</sup>Naomi Schor, "This Essentialism Which Is Not One: Coming to Grips with Irigaray," lecture for *Our Academic Contract*, University of Alabama symposium, October 1987.

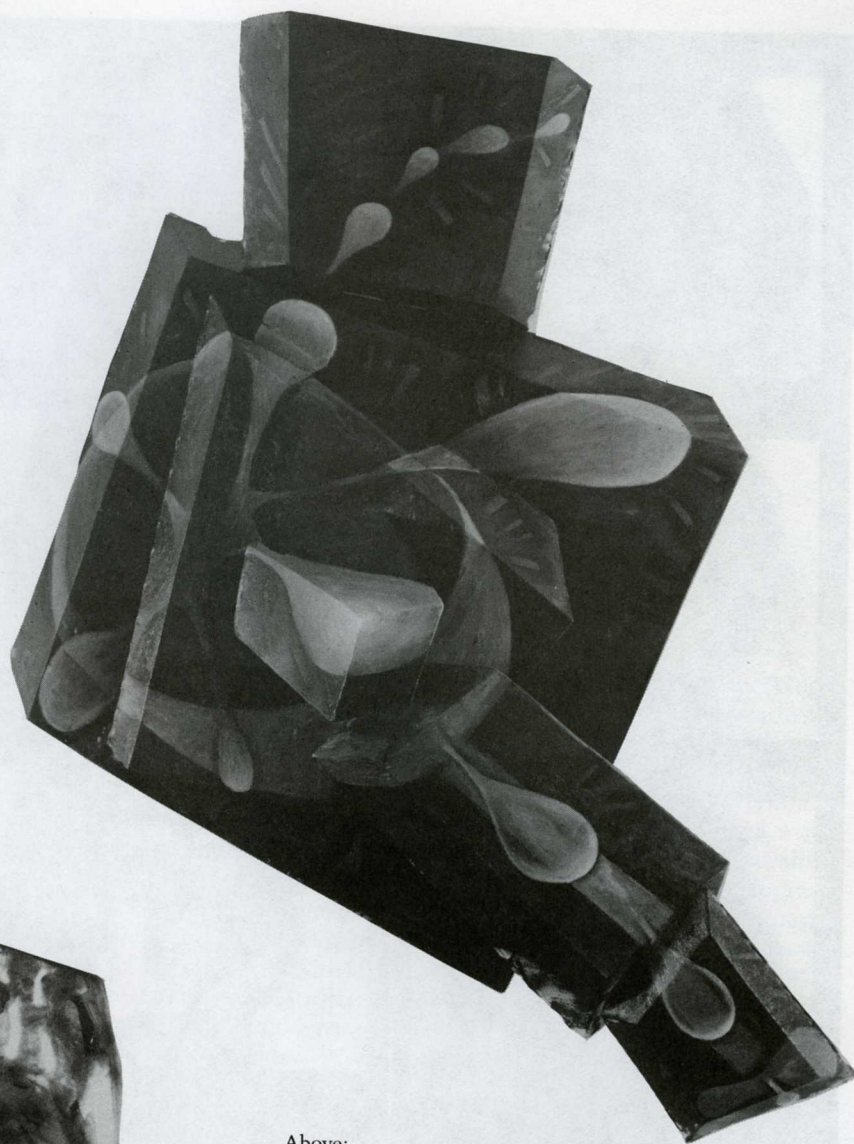


PHOTO: ANDREW MOORE

Above:

ELIZABETH MURRAY *Wild Life*, 1986, oil on six canvases, 62"×81"×21". Collection of Douglas S. Cramer Foundation, Los Angeles. Courtesy, Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.

Left:

LOUISE BOURGEOIS *Nature Study*, 1984, version II (cast 1988), bronze with polished patina, 30"×19"×15". Courtesy, Robert Miller Gallery, New York.

<sup>14</sup>Quoted by Eleonore Heartney, *Art News* (Summer 1987), p. 140.

<sup>15</sup>Cynthia Ozick, *Art & Ardor* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1984), p. 177.

<sup>16</sup>Donald Kuspit, "Dorothea Tanning's Occult Drawings," *Art Criticism*, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 47.

<sup>17</sup>Irigaray, *Speculum*, p. 50.

Mira Schor, a painter living in New York, is co-editor of *M/E/A/N/I/N/G*, a journal of contemporary art.

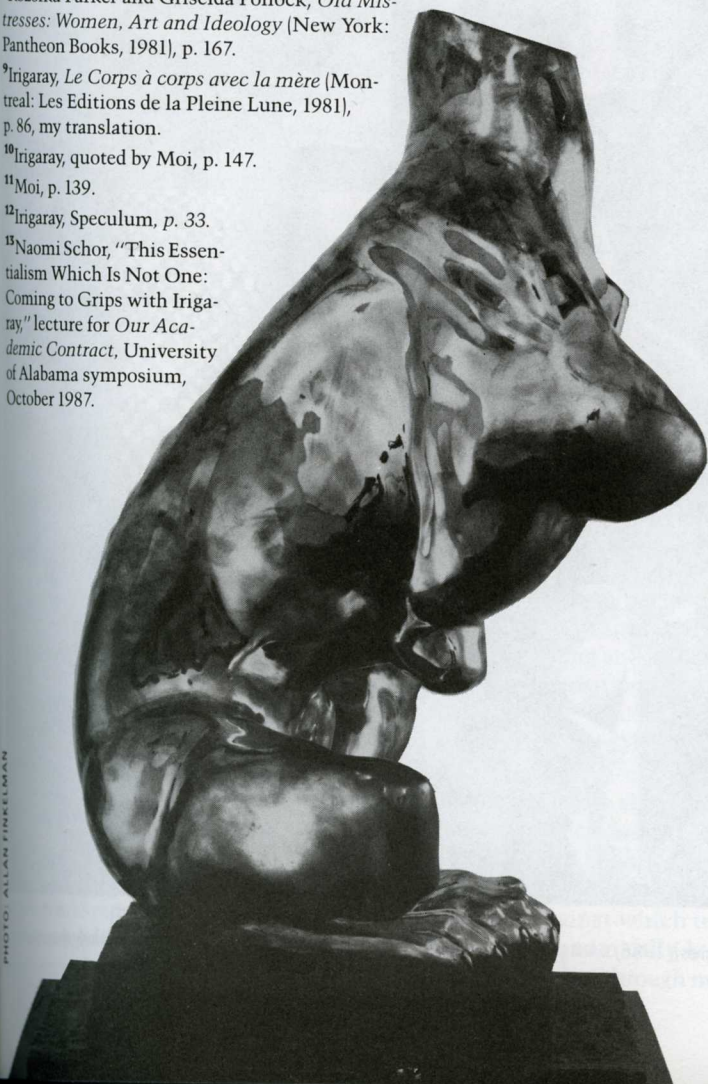


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