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The 'Maternal' Feminist: Exploring The Primal in Women's Art

How does a trope of maternal caring function in women's art influenced by feminism? While images of the abundant female breast are often deployed in the history of art to promote and privilege maternal connotations over the erotic; in women's art, the breast, or its referent, rejects notions of idealised womanhood. Although conventions in visual culture endorse enduring traditions of mythic, maternal womanhood as a transcendental state, feminists have argued that much women's art confronts codes that govern principles of an implied sexual hierarchy.ⁱ Indeed, feminist art often asserts aggressive and sadistic portrayals of the feminine: it mounts a challenge to social presuppositions that ascribe the maternal as impossibly sacrosanct.ⁱⁱ Accordingly, I will employ Julia Kristeva's psychoanalytic theories to explore how feminist art deconstructs logic that construes womanhood as being either disparately maternal or primal. I argue that feminist art demonstrates that these are not mutually exclusive dispositions, as connoted in the history of visual culture by prolific, influential Marian iconography. I invoke the work of several artists, including the photographic art of Cindy Sherman; the sculptural assemblages of Dorothy Cross; and, the sculptural installations of Rona Pondick. As their art deploys the female body, its facsimile or referent in ironic and ominous ways to dismantle sexual convention usually represented in art. They show how humour in feminist art confronts and destabilises discursive tradition through a pun or an ironic response to historical referents. Indeed, Jo Anna Isaak has told us that the humour of feminist art is often meant to disturb, to create inner conflict and arouse viewer interest in alternative messages.ⁱⁱⁱ The term 'feminist art' is used to describe women's art focused on issues of female identity; art that dismantles primary double encoding of gender. Historian Lynda Nead defines feminist art as 'necessarily deconstructive in that it works to question the basis of existing aesthetic norms and values whilst also extending the possibilities of those codes and offering alternative and progressive representations of female identity.'^{iv} Thus Kristeva's 1984 psychoanalytic concept of *jouissance* in *Revolution in Poetic Language* is germane to this discussion as it reflects similar disruptions.^v

Jouissance refers to primal (*semiotic*) irruptions or disruptions emerging in discourse from within an individual (*the speaking subject*). The semiotic is evident when humour subverts

symbolic frameworks, or linguistic traditions (*the symbolic*), that ascribe encoded (gendered) subjectivity as normal and natural states. Jouissance refers to one's ability to usurp the authority of the symbolic when demeaning to the cultural 'other', in this case, woman. While jouissance can evoke playful responses in an artist, it can further provoke deep — often morbid and disturbing — laughter expressed textually. As Kristeva asserts:

Art — this semiotization of the symbolic — thus represents the flow of jouissance into language. Whereas sacrifice assigns jouissance its productive limit in the social and symbolic order, art specifies the means — the only means — that jouissance harbors for infiltrating that order.^{vi}

The semiotic and symbolic are not defined by Kristeva as independent, mutually exclusive states, nor do they slot neatly into an equivalence of a conscious/unconscious dichotomy. They are referred to as interdependent modalities which constitute the speaking subject. According to Isaak: 'included in this notion of jouissance is a sense of play as linguistic excess, the joy of disrupting or going beyond established, or fixed, meaning into the realm of non-sense'.^{vii} Accordingly, when considering the possibilities of subversive feminist art, Elizabeth Grosz tells us: 'The avant-garde is a catalyst of social upheavals through its capacity to induce crises of representation, expressing and liberating the otherwise unarticulated *jouissance* of the semiotic.'^{viii} Thus reiterating the connection between jouissance and feminist art in their subversive potential.

There are, of course, important revolutionary, non-humorous, portrayals of motherhood in women's art. Rosemary Betterton, for example, has reflected on the mother figure in early expressionistic works of German artists Käthe Kollwitz and Paula Modersohn-Becker.^{ix} Betterton focused on Modersohn-Becker's *Reclining Mother and Child* (oil on canvas 1906), and Kollwitz's *Woman With Dead Child* (etching 1903). She showed how each work, featuring a nude mother embracing her child, constitutes a poignant, earthy display of maternity. Whereas the Modersohn-Becker reflects a deep intimacy, expressing warmth and empathy towards two sleepy, reclining figures; Kollwitz's emphasis is on a mother's dispiriting agony following the loss of a child. Kollwitz's sepia-toned, brooding portrayal, displays raw anguish as the grieving mother slumps, clutching the dead child tight to her body. For Betterton: '[b]oth images stand outside the western cultural tradition of spiritual and dematerialized motherhood symbolized by the immaculate conception and virgin birth.'^x Similarly, Catherine Opie's confronting portrait, *Self-Portrait/Nursing*, 2004, featured on the front cover of Andrea Liss' book *Art and the Maternal*, seems to both merge and celebrate the artist's experiences as a feminist artist, and a mother.^{xi} With cropped hair, brash tattoos, and

pendulous breasts, Opie portrays herself (literally warts and all) as she nurses her infant son in a provocative, yet tender, depiction of maternity.



Fig. 1: Cindy Sherman, *Untitled #216*, 1989

Cindy Sherman's large-scale photograph, *Untitled #216*, from her *History Portraits* series, 1989, provides a quirky example of subversive feminist art (Fig. 1). Sherman reinterprets renaissance artist Jean Fouquet's lavish work *Virgin and Child (Melun Diptych)*, c.1450 (Fig. 2). The Fouquet features a svelte, elegant Virgin placed before a jewel-encrusted throne. Ivory satin, ermine stole, and precious jewels reinforce her high renaissance status as the 'Queen of Heaven'. The Madonna's arms are spread wide to unravel her opulent drapery, and reveal the sacred breast. This disrobing results in a triangular composition that encompasses her slender torso, with the revered left breast balanced atop an unlaced garment. In a breathtakingly tight bodice, the Virgin's peculiar physiognomy is exaggerated by Fouquet, whereby her breasts are rendered more like plump melons, rather than an accurate portrayal of female anatomy.



Fig. 2: Jean Fouquet, *Virgin and Child (Melun Diptych)*

Similarly, Sherman's Madonna features an odd spherical, orb-like breast. But by way of contrast, the artist provides us with a 'tawdry' portrait; one in which the sublime elegance and delicacy of Fouquet's Madonna is transformed into a seemingly clumsy, creased creation. While Sherman sustains a Madonna-like 'tender' and 'maternal' gaze, with her eyes downcast to engage the child, her harsh visage with its eccentric features, contradict the Virgin's apparent loving devotion portrayed by Fouquet. Sherman's dull palette of khaki greens and aquamarines is alienated from the subtle mix of Fouquet's glowing ochres and ivories, and rather than triumphantly erupting from her bodice, as does the Madonna of Melun's, Sherman's 'breast' is a bizarre prosthetic. It is a false anatomy precariously adhered to her chest as she offers the 'child' this incredible gland. The viewer cannot perceive the baby Jesus, save for a mere glimpse of his head, but he looks weightless in his 'mother's' arms. One could feel anxious, though, as this outlandish Madonna might drop the child, or fling him aside in a violent instant.

Sherman's reconfiguration of Fouquet's divine Madonna seems ridiculous and menacing, but her photograph is no more or less illusionary than the reverential images of maternity proffered by 'the masters'. Both are derivative of the myths and fantasies of history, cognisant of an artist's ability to create illusions of mothering based on the cultural principles of maternity. Interpretation of Sherman's narrative remains open-ended, in the sense that her

opus questions our social consciousness, and is arguably symptomatic of our ideals and horrors. As Barbara Creed has argued, women in film are often monsterised by patriarchal logic in which a woman's reproductive possibilities are perceived to be in close, animalistic proximity to nature. In terms of imaginary alliances between the bodies of women and unruly matter, Creed has said that: 'woman as monster threatens the male symbolic order of law, civilisation and language. Man defines woman as 'other' and attempts to exclude her from the symbolic order [...].'^{xiii} In her filmic transformation into an absurd Madonna, Sherman becomes a distorted facsimile of the original. Laura Mulvey has argued that Sherman's photographs are well placed within a 'movie-like' context of illusion and horror — that they are 'phantasmagoric', not underpinned by a particular theoretical base, but that her work can be compared to a rebus for the viewer to decode.^{xiiii}

In the original painting, the Madonna's potentially erotic right breast is concealed; located peculiarly well-distanced from the exposed left one. However, the hidden breast is sensually shaped and rounded by Fouquet, and its luminosity with subtle shades, hint at the Virgin's cleavage. In this way, it is difficult to imagine that her fully exposed breast, bounding forth from an unlaced bodice, is *un*eroticized by Fouquet. Caroline Walker Bynum, however, cautions against extrapolating modern perceptions of the erotic onto depictions of body parts in late medieval art.^{xiv} Bynum takes issue with art critic and historian Leo Steinberg who argues that art depicting 'humanated' body parts, such as Christ's bloodied, circumcised penis, or the Virgin's lactating breast, is so prevalent that very few theorists look beyond literal content to assess what Steinberg sees as less obvious meanings that sexualise body parts. In her response to Steinberg, Bynum denies eroticism is evident in Christian iconography, especially at the expense of the medieval artist's wish to portray Christ's penis or Mary's breasts as divine (humanised) symbols, that link us to salvation through pain and nourishment. Bynum argues that: 'There is reason to think that medieval viewers saw bared breasts (at least in painting and sculpture) not primarily as sexual but as food with which they were iconographically associated'.^{xv} Martha Easton's view of eroticism in medieval art differs from Bynum's.^{xvi} For Easton, sexual symbolism, censored over time, is made redundant and erased from the academic canon so that now: 'imagery that is sexual in nature, in either religious or secular contexts, becomes invisible to us.' She adds: 'Ironically, the category of ostensibly religious art contains most explicitly sexualized images.'^{xvii} Marina Warner has written about the Fouquet as a fetishised vision of the Virgin Mary, portraying a model widely believed to be Agnès Sorel, mistress of King Charles VII of France. In the left panel of the

diptych Étienne Chevalier (who commissioned the work) and Saint Stephen gaze and admire the Madonna, with her cinched waist and exaggerated breasts, and, as Warner has described, ‘from her flirtatious bodice a round firm breast bursts forth.’^{xviii} This suggests that adoration of the Madonna’s bounteous breast can be perceived as a pretext for the sensual in Marian iconography. While Fouquet seems to privilege a demure, nurturing figure, erotic tension runs high in his work, underscored by the sacred/profane breast distinction.



Fig. 3: Dorothy Cross, *Virgin Shroud*, 1993

The spectre of a powerful, sadistic Madonna lurks in Dorothy Cross’ *Virgin Shroud* from her *Udder Series*, 1993 (Fig. 3). Cross induces an ominous Marion apparition reminiscent of an Our Lady of Lourdes, or a Blessed Virgin Mary, figures made familiar in art by notables such as Botticelli (1485) or Raphael (1505).^{xix} Evocative of childhood memories in Ireland, Cross fabricated a monstrous, sumptuous, and elegant Madonna unusually draped in duotone cowhide. This Virgin stands not on a pedestal, but on a flimsy clothes rack with the delicate, satin sheen of Cross’ grandmother’s 1914 wedding train subsumed by the great piebald pelt — a hefty weight over the silken garment. Cross configures a beautiful, but intimidating figure; one looming large at a massive two metres high and one metre wide. With its glossy white, indicative of the pure state of a sexually unaware young bride, the marriage garment connotes virginity. At the same time, one is confronted by a vast mother ‘predicting’ a young

woman's apparently inescapable destiny. The cowhide provides an animalistic connection linking this outrageous woman to nature, its brutal severity masked by the purity of the more glamorous, sleek train. In this sense, Cross merges a primal female cruelty into the work. She suggests an intimidating womanliness through the looming, powerful figure.^{xx} The repressed other seems to revisit us in Cross' work, emerging from the semiotic reserve in which drives, fears and dangerous desires mingle. The *Virgin Shroud* is compellingly weird: it dismantles ambiguous sign systems to connote exaggerated female sexuality through the draped dead beast, with its necrotic teats arranged like a diabolical crown atop the faceless Virgin's head. While the symbolism alludes to a magnificent mother, it further signifies cow's milk and maternity, qualities synonymous with fertility, reproduction, and new life. And, as Roger Malbert has said, 'the cow is probably the quintessence of motherhood in the popular imagination; her reliability, gentleness, infinite patience and mindlessness exemplify the virtues most valued in the maternal role.'^{xxi} This is a reminder that cultural imaginings of idealised maternity normalise motherhood in dualistic terms, as being carnal and non-intellectual, and as co-existing with a masochistic, saint-like disposition.

In 1987 Kristeva interrogated the notion of a symbolic masochistic Virgin construct in 'Stabat Mater'.^{xxii} She articulated maternity (while pregnant) through a poetic, dialectical style of writing, utilising parallel split texts in column form. The right side reflects the authority of the symbolic, while its partner develops as a semiotic irruption from within the 'speaking mother'. Kristeva writes:

FLASH— instant of time or of dream without time; inordinately swollen atoms of a bond, a vision, a shiver, a yet formless, unnamable embryo/ Christianity is doubtless the most refined symbolic construct in which femininity, to the extent that it transpires through it — and it does so incessantly — is focused on Maternity' (1987, p.234).

Kristeva argues that Christian interpretations of the real-life Mary, mother of Christ, cleared a way through fantastic apocryphal writings to idealise her as a perfect woman/mother on a divine pedestal. Her maternity 'involves less an idealized archaic mother than the idealization of the *relationship* that binds us to her, one that cannot be localized — an idealization of primary narcissism.' (1987, p.234). The Virgin hypothesis represents a powerful concept of denial, devised to repress female desire, which, for many, does include motherhood. Through its association with transcendence, the Virgin allegory signals the impossibility of a woman's role when presupposed as divine and sacrosanct. Kristeva asserts that the Virgin construct is a formidable anchoring device lodged in the realm of the symbolic, configured to transmit masochistic saintliness, therefore causing it to be both deceptive and potent. Embedded in

this 'saintliness' is *power*. Man-made, paternal rules made implicit in the mythological status of the Madonna, creating an impossible status for real women to attain.



Fig. 4: Dorothy Cross, *Amazon*, 1992

In *Amazon*, 1992, Dorothy Cross provides a reshaping of the archetypal maternal figure (Fig. 4). The artist's canny deployment of domestic tools and props complicate the trope. The 'womanly' object of a dressmaker's dummy is fashioned into a sculptural assemblage, and reminds us that ascribed femininity links not just to materiality, but also to the 'feminine' arts of domesticity. The title invokes the Amazons, strong mythological warrior-women who severed their right breasts to improve their archery skills. Despite its violent connotations, like *Virgin Shroud*, there is a chic symmetry to the work. The slim-waisted torso of a headless dummy exudes style and sophistication, emphasised by a decorative three-legged mahogany stand. Subtle tones align with the modish two-tone cowhide to form a sheath-like 'dress', a radiant garment encasing a trim body. Fashionable undulations of the repressed erupt in *Amazon*, but in this case to form just one hideous, oversized breast, cast by the artist from the cow's actual udder. For Malbert, the fantastic chest erupts 'into a brazenly swelling single breast, thrust forward in a parody of masculine, military-style assertion and culminating in a gnarled, leathery teat, resembling the head of a penis.'^{xxiii} The elegance of decapitated form, aligned with matronly significance, is complicated by Cross through violent phallic connections (the severed breast, the slaughtered cow). For Malbert, this enhances 'the disorientating effect of freakish abomination'. A cow and its udder evokes the quintessence of the cultural carer, but Cross converts her effigy into an ominous overturned fertility symbol.

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Malbert goes on to assert that: ‘the isolation of the udder — or breast — in Cross’ assemblages signifies the separation of the body from the head, the suspension of rational thought that is supposed to accompany motherhood.^{xxiv}. Cross rearranges bestial glands with morbid opulence. The texture of a cow’s udder is soft and cushy at first, but it dries hard like forbidding armour. Therefore great tension registers in the work between the quintessence of caring and mindless gentleness, cohabiting with the violence of butchery.



Fig. 5: Rona Pondick, *Baby*, 1989

Rona Pondick’s sculptural assemblage, *Baby*, from her *Baby Bottles* series, 1989, is oddly provocative and horrifically attractive (Fig. 5). Two empty baby bottles are aligned like alien breasts set in a facsimile of faeces. Expulsion and revulsion are evident through Pondick’s unrefined fetishistic testimonial to new life, juxtaposed with a rapacious infant. Pondick raises the impossibility of separating bodily functions from desire and nurturing, symbolised by the clay-clad, brown objects. Faecal material amalgamates with the charming, delicate appeal of an infant’s legs, enhanced by adorable tiny, white booties. In an uncanny rendition of the breasts, baby bottles shoot forth from the child’s legs, blurring distinctions between comfort and discomfort, between pain, craving, and revulsion. And while *Baby* signifies nourishment, excrement and growth, the message remains ambivalent. On the one hand, we are reminded of the child’s dependency and desire at the absent mother’s breast, whereas, on the other hand, *Baby* evokes a monstrous child-mother dyad, linked to a sinister erotic charge through associations with reviled breastmilk and excrement.

For Mignon Nixon, Pondick's art exhibits a Kleinian-style phantasy as we are led into an evocative unknown. *Baby* invokes the dark continent of madness, obsession, impulses and desires, as the primal resonates in her off-putting installation.^{xxv} Nixon has explored Kleinian-based imaginings of the fragmented body in modern art, with a focus on the work of Pondick and Louise Bourgeois.^{xxvi} The author points to a primal allure immersed in their art, one which induces a suppressed, devouring 'other', but one consumed with hatred, and not pleasurable female desire. Nixon posits that: 'in the Kleinian model in which much recent body-centred work on aggression is grounded, the mother-infant relation is not one of positive identification but of radical alienation.'^{xxvii} Pondick's *Baby* also provides a metaphor for the abject in a post-Freudian dismantling of maternity. The abject, defined by Kristeva in *Powers of Horror*, is that which stimulates disgust in us, while, simultaneously, it is morbidly fascinating.^{xxviii} Kristeva asserts that the abject is: 'above all a revolt against an external menace from which one wants to distance oneself.' That it is: 'not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. [It is] what does not respect borders, positions, rules'.^{xxix} The abject in *Baby* infers the potentiality of leaky body parts, of the inner viscosity of breasts and faeces which, although contained, threaten to leak and exude unwelcome body fluids into the disciplined world of the symbolic.



Fig. 6: Rona Pondick, *Double Bed*, 1989

Double Bed is also from Pondick's *Baby Bottles* series (Fig. 6). The artist procured 100 baby bottles, filled them with milk and, in some instances, blood. The weighty overabundance of bottles is anchored by Pondick to an elongated, fetishistically bound, waxed mattress. *Double Bed* evokes wondrous childhood memories of an inviting, warm place — it resonates with comfy bedtime stories and fairy tales, but this bizarre slumbering creature provokes our anxieties through Pondick's recall of obnoxious viscosity. In contrast to inviting comfort, as Nixon has told us, 'Pondick's installations have enacted oral-sadistic infantile fantasies, as in the conflation of greedy tearing mouths and persecutory devouring breasts.'^{xxx} Pondick's work also issues a reminder about earlier feminist art, such as Mary Kelly's *Interim* series, 1983-85; or Meret Oppenheim's *My Nurse*, 1937, which imply sadomasochistic fastenings of the abject. Their art grills the fetish (the norm in male surrealist art) with its punished, trussed-up flesh, and tortured female form. As Johanna Malt has said: 'the confusion of animate and inanimate objects is one of the primary registers of the uncanny [...] the surrealist [had a] fascination with dolls, mannequins and automata in these terms.'^{xxxi} Kelly's work depicts bound leather garments in which diverse ordinary objects, such as women's clothes, are contorted and twisted through an array of tying and knotting procedures. In *My Nurse*, Oppenheim confronts the fetish to reject Freudian-style, 'male-only' sexuality that emerged in twentieth-century art. In *My Nurse*, the artist arranged spike-heeled shoes (a favourite of the fetishist) trussed up like meat on a steel meat-platter, signalling what Freud called uncanny oral significance.^{xxxii}

But Pondick's art goes even further to imply an *aggressive* femininity, not by way of an absent mother, or a knife-wielding 'carer', but by incorporating the lingering phantom of an horrendous infantile body. In *Double Bed* she creates an opportunity to consider the emergence of more virile female subjectivity. Her work not only refers to a disembodied, contorted spectre of the mother, but also implies a greedy savage; an oral and devouring, infantile type as the semiotic breaks out from the primal depths of desire.

Pondick's work, like that of the other women's art discussed in this paper, brings to light discourses indicative of a cultural neuroses obsessed with denial of matter and repression of the primal. At the same time, convention in the history of art maintains that submissive female fecundity is the ultimate state of being for a woman. I have attempted to show, however, that feminist art reconciles sacred and sadistic states for a more aggressive mother to emerge. The distinguishing hallmark of the art analysed is its irreverence for convention marked by elaborate artificiality, fakes, and laughter *of* and *with*, but not *at*, the

bodies of women. But the potency of the work is not in its censure or destruction of historical referents, rather than the arbitrary free-play of the signifiers. In dismantling images connoting a paternalistic logic of maternal caring, feminist art depends on the notion of a discursive subject profoundly engrossed in, and inscribed by, the symbolic. The feminist art discussed is confronting, it shunts us into both familiar and unfamiliar terrain. At the same time, however, we have been induced by the artists to at least contemplate the unknown, to seek out the hidden operatives of the reviled 'other' lodged deep within the adoration of the mother figure in western art.

ⁱ Helena Reckitt and Peggy Phelan, *Art and Feminism*, ed. by Helena Reckitt, survey by Peggy Phelan (London: Phaidon, 2001). Reckitt and Phelan considered the influence of feminism in a broad spectrum of women's art. Reckitt has said that feminism exposed 'cultural assumptions about gender to politicizing the link between public and private, to exploring the nature of sexual difference, to stressing the specificity of bodies marked by gender, race, age and class' (p. 13).

ⁱⁱ Whitney Chadwick, *Mirror Images. Women, Surrealism, and Self-Representation*, ed. by Whitney Chadwick (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1998). Chadwick examined feminist surrealism through women's art that explored subjective desire and sexuality. She asserts: 'The term [female self-portraiture] implies active agency, often through deconstructive strategies or through the use of symbolic and metaphorical avatars to represent aspects of self' (pp. ix-x).

ⁱⁱⁱ Jo Anna Isaak, *Feminism and Contemporary Art: The Revolutionary Power of Women's Laughter* (London: Routledge, 1996). I am strongly influenced by Isaak's analysis of laughter in women's art. The author shows how ironic humour in art constitutes strategic reversals of binary logic to produce alternative portrayals of female identity.

^{iv} Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude. Art, Obscenity and Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1992), p.62.

^v Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. by Margaret Waller, intro. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

^{vi} Kristeva, p.79.

^{vii} Isaak, p. 3.

^{viii} Elizabeth Grosz, 'Julia Kristeva and the speaking subject', in *Sexual Subversions. Three French Feminists* (Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 1989), p.55.

^{ix} Rosemary Betterton, 'Mother Figures. The maternal nude in the work of Käthe Kollwitz and Paula Modersohn-Becker', in *An Intimate Distance: Women artists and the body*, (London: Routledge, 1996).

^x Betterton, p. 20.

^{xi} Andrea Liss, *Feminist Art and the Maternal*, e-reader version (Minneapolis:University of Minnesota Press: 2009)

^{xii} Barbara Creed, 'Film, Horror and the Primal Uncanny', in *Phallic Panic. Film, Horror and the Primal Uncanny* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2005), p.15.

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- ^{xiii} Laura Mulvey, 'A Phantasmagoria of the Female Body', in Julie Rouart ed, Louise Roger trans., *Cindy Sherman*, (U.S.A.: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 2006)[coincides with the exhibition *Cindy Sherman*, Paris and Berlin], p. 284-5.
- ^{xiv} Caroline Walker Bynum, 'The Body of Christ in the Later Middle Ages: A Reply to Leo Steinberg', in *Fragmentation and Redemption. Essays on Gender and The Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1992).
- ^{xv} Bynum, p. 86.
- ^{xvi} Martha Easton, "'Was It Good For You, Too?'" Medieval Erotic Art and Its Audiences', in *Different Visions: A Journal of New Perspectives on Medieval Art* [ISSN 1935-5009], 1 (2008) <differentvisions.org/one.html> [accessed 9 June 2012] (para 1 of 13).
- ^{xvii} Easton, pp. 1-2.
- ^{xviii} Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex. The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), p. 203.
- ^{xix} See Sandro Botticelli, *Madonna Adoring the Child with Five Angels* (1485-1490); Raphael, *Madonna dell Granduca* (1505). Also van Eyck *The Virgin of Chancellor Rolin* (1435); William-Adolphe Bouguereau, *The Virgin of the Lilies* (1899); Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, *The Apparition of the Virgin to St. Bernard of Clairvaux* (1678) for examples of Marion iconography.
- ^{xx} Tate Channel, 'Dorothy Cross', in *Tate Shots* (2008) <<http://www.tate.org.uk/tateshots/episode.jsp?item=14890>> [accessed 27 June, 2011].
- ^{xxi} Roger Malbert, 'Fetish and Form in Contemporary Art', in *Fetishism. Visualising Power and Desire*, ed. by Anthony Shelton (London: The South Bank Centre in association with Lund Humphries, 1995), p.94.
- ^{xxii} Julia Kristeva, 'Stabat Mater', in *Tales of Love*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987). Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.
- ^{xxiii} Malbert, p.94.
- ^{xxiv} Ibid.
- ^{xxv} George Fifield, 'Rona Pondick's Monsters of Fear and Desire', in *Sculpture 22* (2003), 35-39. p.35.
- ^{xxvi} Mignon Nixon, 'Bad Enough Mother', in *October 71*, (Winter 1995). 71-92.
- ^{xxvii} Nixon, p84.
- ^{xxviii} Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).
- ^{xxix} Ross Guberman, *Julia Kristeva Interviews*, ed. by Ross M Guberman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p.118.
- ^{xxx} Mignon Nixon, 'The Gnaw and the Lick: Orality in Recent Feminist Art [1996]', in *Art and Feminism*, ed. by Helena Reckitt, survey by Peggy Phelan (London: Phaidon, 2001), p.276.
- ^{xxxi} Johanna Malt, *Obscure Objects of Desire: Surrealism, Fetishism, and Politics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.4.
- ^{xxxii} Sigmund Freud, 'Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety', in *The Major Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. by Robert M. Hutchins (US: William Benton, 1952), pp. 718-754.

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Artwork credits:

Fig. 1: Cindy Sherman, *Untitled #216*, 1989, color photograph, 87.125 x 56.125 inches (221.3 x 142.6 cm) framed, 94 x 63 inches (238.8 x 160 cm). Edition of 6 (MP #216). Courtesy of the Artist and Metro Pictures.

Turton-Turner, The 'Maternal' Feminist: Exploring The Primal in Women's Art

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Fig. 2: Jean Fouquet, *Virgin and Child (Melun Diptych)*, tempera on panel 36.6 x 33.5 inches (93 x 85 cm), c. 1450, Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp

Fig. 3: Dorothy Cross, *Virgin Shroud*, 1993, cowhide, muslin, silk satin and metal stand, 79.1 x 31.9 x 47.2 inches (200.9 x 81.0 x 119.9 cm) sculpture, Tate gallery. Courtesy of the artist and Frith Street Gallery, London.

Fig. 4: Dorothy Cross, *Amazon*, 1992, cowhide and tailor's dummy, collection of Avril Giaccobi. Courtesy of the artist and Frith Street Gallery, London.

Fig. 5: Rona Pondick, *Baby*, wax, baby bottles, and shoes, 3.5 x 23 x 11 inches (8.9 x 58.4 x 27.9 cm), 1989. Private collection, USA. Courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery, New York and the artist.

Fig. 6: Rona Pondick, *Double Bed*, plastic, rope, pillows, baby bottles, and wax. 9 x 162 x 73 inches (22.9 x 411.5 x 185.4 cm), 1989. Courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery, New York and the artist.