

- What is feminist art? Art that draws attention to the role of women in society or to the particular sensibilities or circumstances of being a woman.
- Tate definition: 'Feminist art is art by women artists made consciously in the light of developments in feminist art theory in the early 1970s.' Which rules out men (see below) and requires us to be aware of the mental state of the artist and her knowledge of feminist art theory specifically from the early 1970s.
- The women's movement and the call for equal rights can be dated back to the eighteenth century and the Enlightenment, in particular to the French Revolution and ideas of equality.
- In England, women's rights were debated even earlier, during the English Civil War by, among others, the Levellers; a movement that emphasised popular sovereignty, extended suffrage, equality before the law, and religious tolerance, all of which were expressed in the manifesto 'Agreement of the People'. For a brief period, during the Restoration of Charles II (1660-1685), women engaged in a number of activities that were previously forbidden, for example, become actors and painters, openly become a mistress, and about 10% of businesses were owned by women (probably widows).
- At the end of the eighteenth century, Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797) was well

known as an advocate of women's rights. During her brief career, she wrote novels, treatises, a travel narrative, a history of the French Revolution, a conduct book, and a children's book. Wollstonecraft is best known for *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), in which she argues that women are not naturally inferior to men, but appear to be only **because they lack education**. She suggests that both men and women should be treated as rational beings and imagines a social order founded on reason. In the nineteenth century **John Stuart Mill's The Subjection of Women** (1869) was an important work.

- Is the work of any female artist feminist art? No, women artists are human beings and can produce any type of art.
- Can men produce feminist art? Yes, but they sometimes have a harder time
 justifying the work. For example, is Allen Jones, Chair (1969, Tate) a feminist work
 that draws attention to the objectification of women or is it exploiting women?
 Jones has said, 'I think of myself as a feminist'.
- In this talk I have selected all women artists and I have selected works with a feminist message with some exceptions, such as Rachel Whiteread and Bridget Riley.

References

http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/definitions/feminist-art.htm



- Feminism in art and art history has its own series of waves or movements. We normally talk about the four waves of feminism:
 - **1. Political power** (1830's early 1900's): women's fight for the vote and equal contract and property rights.
 - **2. Legal equality** (1960's-1980's): equality in the workplace, sexuality, family and reproductive rights.
 - **3. Real equality** (1990's present): the day-to-day issues of gender equality, race issues and sexual stereotypes.
 - **4. Social media empowered** (2008 present): Facebook, Twitter and other social media are used to highlight issues.

Well Known Feminist Works

- Marina Abramovic (b.1946), Rhythm 0, 1974, Performance Art
- Martha Rosler (b.1943), Semiotics of the Kitchen, 1975, black and white video with sound
- Judy Chicago (b.1939), The Dinner Party, 1979, installation. Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, Brooklyn Museum, New York
- Cindy Sherman (b.1954), Preening in the Kitchen, 1977, Museum of Modern Art, New York

- Barbara Kruger (b.1945) I Shop Therefore I am, c.1990
- Tracey Emin (b.1963), My Bed, 1998, by, Saatchi Collection, London (now destroyed)
- Mona Hatoum (b. 1952), *Performance Still*, 2009, Lebanese-born Palestinian artist who lives in London.
- Helen Chadwick (1953-1996), Vanitas II, 1986, cibachrome print, 50.9 mm x 51 cm,
 NPG, self-portrait with her work Of Mutability (1986) in the background
- Sarah Lucas (b. 1962), Two Fried Eggs and a Kebab, 1992
- Jenny Saville (b. 1970), Rosetta 2
- Rachel Whiteread and Tracey Emin are covered in 'Young British Artists'.

Notes

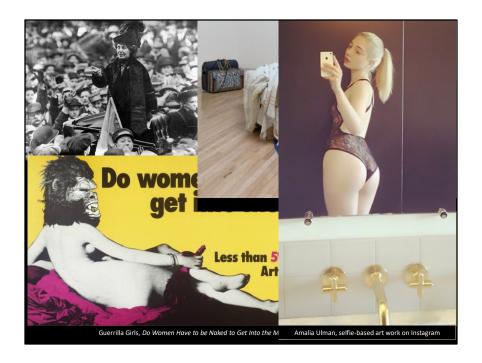
- **1857, the first act of Parliament** that allowed women to **apply for divorce** was the Matrimonial Causes Act, 1857.
- 1870, 1882, 1884, 1893, married women were allowed to **inherit property in their own name** and keep the money they earned.
- 1907, the Qualification of Women Act allowed women to be elected as borough, and county councils and be elected as mayor.
- 1918, All men over 21 did not get the right to vote until the Representation of the People Act 1918. This same act gave all women over 30 the right to vote. Women then accounted for 43% of electorate. If all women over 21 had been allowed to vote then they would have been in a majority because of the loss of men in the war. The electorate tripled from 7.7 million to 21.4 million.
- 1918, The Parliament (Qualification of Women Act) gave women over 21 the right to stand for election as an MP.
- 1921, Parliament decides not to make lesbianism an 'act of gross indecency' as it was thought few women could comprehend that such acts existed.
- 1922, the Law of Property Act allows husband and wife to inherit property equally.
- 1928, equal voting rights to men was brought in by the Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act, 1928.
- 1956, women teachers and civil servants should receive equal pay.
- 1956, The Sexual Offences Act defines rape under extended, specific criteria.
- 1958, The Life Peerages Act entitles women to sit in the House of Lords.
- 1964, The Married Women's Property Act entitles a woman to keep half of any savings she has made from the allowance she is given by her husband.
- 1965, Barbara Castle is appointed Minister of Transport, becoming the first female minister of state.
- 1967, Labour MP David Steel sponsors an Abortion Law Reform Bill, which becomes the Abortion Act. The Act decriminalises abortion in Britain on certain grounds.
- 1970, The Equal Pay Act makes it illegal to pay women lower rates than men for

the same work.

- 1971, the first Women's Liberation march in London attended by 4,000 people.
- 1975, The Sex Discrimination Act makes it illegal to discriminate against women in work, education and training.
- 1976, the Equal Opportunities Commission founded, the Race Relation Act and the Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Act.
- 1985, the Equal Pay (Amendment) Act allows women to be paid the same as men for work of equal value.
- 1986, the Sex Discrimination (Amendment) Act enables women to retire at the same age as men.
- 1987, Diane Abbot becomes the first black women MP.
- 1994, rape in marriage is made a crime.
- 1995, the Disability Discrimination Act.
- 2005, the first civil registrations of same-sex couples.

References

http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/mona-hatoum



Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928), After selling her home, Pankhurst travelled constantly, giving speeches throughout Britain and the United States. One of her most famous speeches, "Freedom or death", was delivered in Connecticut in 1913 Guerrilla Girls, *Do Women Have to be Naked to Get Into the Met. Museum?*, 1989, 28 x 71 cm, Tate

Barbara Kruger, I Shop Therefore I am, 1987, by changing one word Kruger has turned René Descartes' philosophical statement, 'I think therefore I am', into a slogan for consumerism.

http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/barbara-krugers-artwork-speaks-truth-to-power-137717540/

Tracy Emin, *My Bed*, 1998, Tate Amalia Ulman, selfie-based art work on Instagram

First Wave Feminism – political power

- First-wave feminism was a period of feminist activity and thought, that occurred within the time period of the 19th and early 20th century throughout the world. It focused on legal issues, primarily on gaining women's suffrage (the right to vote).
- Emmeline Pankhurst was a key figure in the women's suffrage movement.
 Pankhurst, alongside her two daughters, Christabel and Sylvia, founded and led the

- Women's Social and Political Union, an organisation which was focused on direct action to win the vote. Her husband, Richard Pankhurst, also supported women suffrage ideas since he was the author of the first British woman suffrage bill and the Married Women's Property Acts in 1870 and 1882. After her husband's death, Emmeline decided to move to the forefront of the suffrage battle.
- In 1999 Time named Pankhurst as one of the 100 Most Important People of the 20th Century, stating "she shaped an idea of women for our time; she shook society into a new pattern from which there could be no going back". She was widely criticised for her militant tactics, and historians disagree about their effectiveness, but her work is recognised as a crucial element in achieving women's suffrage in Britain.

<u>Second Wave Feminism – legal equality</u>

- It that first began in the early 1960s in the United States, and eventually spread throughout the Western world and beyond. In the United States the movement lasted through the early 1980s
- Second-wave feminism broadened the debate to a wide range of issues: sexuality, family, the workplace, reproductive rights, de facto inequalities, and official legal inequalities. Second-wave feminism also drew attention to domestic violence and marital rape issues, establishment of rape crisis and battered women's shelters, and changes in custody and divorce law.
- French writer Simone de Beauvoir in The Second Sex (1949) wrote, 'One is not born, but rather becomes a woman'. had in the 1940s examined the notion of women being perceived as "other" in the patriarchal society. She went on to conclude that male-centered ideology was being accepted as a norm and enforced by the ongoing development of myths, and that the fact that women are capable of getting pregnant, lactating, and menstruating is in no way a valid cause or explanation to place them as the "second sex".
- In 1963, **Betty Friedan**, influenced by *The Second Sex*, wrote the bestselling book *The Feminine Mystique*. Discussing primarily white women, she explicitly objected to how women were depicted in the mainstream media, and how placing them at home limited their possibilities and wasted potential.
- The male gaze. In 1972, John Berger in Ways of Seeing, focuses on how women are portrayed. He wrote 'Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at.'
- In 1985, a group of female artists formed the **Guerrilla Girls** to draw attention to the way female artists had been and were still being ignored or marginalised by art historians and major galleries.
- Relevant legislation is the Race Relations Act (1965), Equal Pay Act (1970), Sex Discrimination Act (1975) and the Race Relations Act (1976).
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/70sfeminism/

Third Wave Feminism – real equality

- Is feminism still relevant? Women are doing well in previously male dominated jobs such as law, politics and medicine. Women's rights are better protected. Marriage and children are no longer obligatory.
- BUT women are still treated as objects in the media, there is still social pressure to marry and have children and women do not always receive equal pay.
- The was a move from treating women as victims (second wave) to accepting some successes but demanding complete equality and the inclusion of all racial types and sexual orientations.
- In the 1990s the feminist debate looked at changing society at a fundamental level by examining what we mean by identity, including sexual identity. The art of Tracey Emin, Cindy Sherman and Louise Bourgeois, for example, explores a range of personal themes within the context of feminist concerns.
- Third-wave feminism began in the early 1990s and continues to the present. The
 movement arose partially as a response to the perceived failures of second-wave
 feminism and the perception that women are of "many colours, ethnicities,
 nationalities, religions, and cultural backgrounds".
- It engages with a wider range of issues such as **gender-based violence** (intimate partner abuse, rape, "femicide," as well as violence against those in **gay**, **lesbian**, **and transgender** communities), reproductive rights: access to adequate healthcare, contraception, safe and **legal abortion**, and information about choices regarding sexual health, family planning, *and* sexual pleasure. Negative images of women in pop culture and media, including in music, art, film, and advertising. Increasingly unrealistic (and unhealthy) expectations regarding weight and beauty (e.g., issues like **body image**, cosmetic surgery, dieting, eating disorders, etc.). The glass ceiling, maternity (and parental) leave policies, and childcare and support for single parents in the workplace and through public policy. Both domestic and global labour practices, including the feminization of poverty, sweat shops, unionizing, and liveable wage.
- Unlike the fixed position of second-wave feminists about women in pornography, sex work, and prostitution, third-wave feminists were rather ambiguous and divided about these themes (feminist sex wars). The third-wave embraces sex positively and looks for a more complex analysis of the relationship between oppression and empowerment. It has opened up a new field of queer theory, the study of bisexual, transsexual and transgender (as opposed to cisgender), genderqueer (including bigender, agender, genderfluid and third gender), cross dressing (transvestism), gay and lesbian identities. The other term that is used increasingly is LGBT or GLBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender).
- Continues to challenge essentialism, that is there are inherent characteristics associated with each sex, such as kindness in women and aggression in men. See all binaries, such as male v. female, white v. black as artificial social constructs that limit possibilities.

• In the late 1980s and 1990s was the huge success of women artists in the Young British Artists movement. Three of these artists - Rachel Whiteread, Gillian Wearing and Tomma Abts - became Turner Prize-winners, while a number of others - the assemblage artist Sara Lucas, the photographer Sam Taylor Wood, the painters Fiona Rae and Jenny Saville, and the installationists Tracey Emin, Anya Gallaccio and Georgina Starr - achieved fame in a variety of disciplines. The English conceptual Helen Chadwick (1953-96), noted for her feminist performances and installations, but perhaps best-known for photocopying her body next to dead animals.

<u>Forth Wave Feminism – social media empowered</u>

- The fourth wave of feminism is a recent development that is hard to define. It builds on the other waves and is distinguished by using the power of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and personal blogs to discuss and bring about gender equality and social justice. The internet has created a 'call-out' culture, in which sexism or misogyny can be called out and challenged immediately with relative ease. Online feminism has impacted how companies market to women so that they are not 'called out' for sexism in their marketing strategies.
- It started in about 2008 and continues into the present day (2017). It is associated with after-abortion talk lines, pursuit of reproductive justice, plus-size fashion support, transgenderism support, male feminism, and sex work acceptance; and led to developing media including Feministing.com (a feminist blog founded in 2004 as 'a way to get through the mommy filter'), Racialicious (Facebook, race, identity and pop culture), blogs, and Twitter campaigns.
- It has been defined as a movement that 'combines politics, psychology, and spirituality in an overarching vision of change.'
- Kira Cochrane, author of *All the Rebel Women: The Rise of the Fourth Wave of Feminism*, defines fourth-wave feminism as a movement that is connected through technology.
- Facebook CEO Sheryl Sandberg, Lean In (2013) has been described as a fourth wave book.
- In 2014, Argentinian artist Amelia Ulman uploaded images on her Instagram
 account seemingly trying to create an 'It' girl in Los Angeles. She acquired a
 following of 65,000 people before announcing it had been an artistic performance
 concerning the role of women in society.
 http://www.telegraph.co.uk/photography/what-to-see/is-this-the-first-instagram-masterpiece/



Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–1653), *Judith Slaying Holofernes*, c. 1614-20, 158.8 × 125.5 cm, National Museum of Capodimonte, Naples Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–1653), *Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting*, 1638-39, 98.6 × 75.2 cm, Royal Collection

- In 1971 the art historian Linda Nochlin published Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists? Which investigated the social and economic factors that prevented women from becoming 'great' artists. This provoked a search for forgotten women artists in history and a number of books and articles were written, such as:
 - Deborah Cherry, Painting Women: Victorian Women Artists, 1993, Routledge
 - Whitney Chadwick, Women, Art and Society, 1990, Thames & Hudson
- Nochlin's argument was that art cannot be separated from our social situation and institutions. The concept of the artist genius is exclusively male and we tell stories of child prodigies who can draw at an early age and get into art college in the early teens, such as Turner, Millais and Picasso. But did girls at an early age see themselves in that role and could adults imagine them in that role. Nochlin asks a related question 'Why are they no great aristocratic artists?' with the possible

exception of Toulouse-Lautrec whose deformity made him a special case.

Notes

- Undervalued women artists from the Renaissance included:
 - Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–1653), one of the most accomplished followers of Caravaggio, famous trial of Agostino Tassi for rape. The first woman to become a member of the Accademia di Arte del Disegno in Florence. Almost entirely ignored by art historians until the 1980s.
 - Sofonisba Anguissola (Cremona, 1530, Palermo around 1625), was called into Spain by King Philip II
 - Lavinia Fontana (Bologna, 1552, Rome 1614) departed for Rome by invitation of Pope Clement VIII.
 - Later Fede Galizia (Milano or Trento, 1578, Milano 1630) painted still lifes and a *Judith with the head of Holofernes*.
- · And more recently,
 - · Diane Arbus
 - · Magdalena Abakanowicz
 - · Magdalena Abramović
 - Pauline Boty
 - · Louise Bourgeoisie
 - Frida Kahlo
 - Lee Krasner
 - Barbara Hepworth
 - Dora Maar
 - Lee Miller
 - Louise Nevelson
 - Georgia O'Keefe
 - Cindy Sherman
- In the 1980s art historians such as Griselda Pollock and Rozsika Parker questioned the gender-loaded assumptions of art history which uses terms such as 'old master' and 'masterpiece'. They also questioned the central place of the female nude in the western canon, asking why men and women are represented so differently.

References

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artemisia Gentileschi



Elizabeth Thompson, Lady Butler (1846-1933, Scotland Forever!, 1881, Leeds Art Gallery

Women Artists in the 19th Century

- Nochlin and other art historians (see Women Artists 1550-1950) researched women artists through history that had been overlooked or ignored or belittled, and there are many.
- Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, in Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology, took fundamentally new directions from earlier surveys by rejecting evaluative criticism altogether. They turned to an analysis of women's historical and ideological position in relation to art, art production, and artistic ideology as a means to question the assumptions that underlie the traditional historical framework. They touched upon another of Nochlin's point 'to what extent our very consciousness of how things are in the world has been conditioned too often falsified by the way the most important questions are posed.' Pollock and Parker emphasized that 'the way the history of art has been studied and evaluated is not the exercise of neutral "objective" scholarship but an ideological practice.' They recognized that 'women's relation to artistic and social structures has been different to that of male artists'. In other words there are no great women artists

because we live in a society that does not accept that greatness can be associated with women and art.

- Germaine Greer in The Obstacle Race argued that we 'cannot make great artists
 out of egos that have been damaged, with wills that are defective, with libidos
 that have been driven out of reach and energy diverted into neurotic channels'.
- There were some important women artists working in England in the nineteenth century and many others working in France and America. Practically, it was very difficult for women artists to attend training as all the courses were for men.
 Some women artists were trained by their fathers and others were wealthy enough to pay for a private tutor. Even when trained it was not possible for a women to attend a life drawing class and so it was difficult to become proficient in history painting.

References

Some of these arguments are taken from the article 'The Feminist Critique of Art History' by Thalia Gouma-Peterson and Patricia Mathews.



Georgia O'Keeffe (1887-1986), Autumn Trees – The Maple, 1924, Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Santa Fe

Women Artists in the 20th Century

- O'Keefe is known as the mother of American modernism. She is best known for her flower paintings, New York skyscrapers and the New Mexico landscape.
- She was born in a farmhouse in Wisconsin and her parents were dairy farmers. In 1905 she started her training at the School of Art in Chicago and then New York. Her father went bankrupt and she could not fund her education so she spent two years as a commercial illustrator and seven years, from 1911 to 1918, teaching in Virginia and South Carolina. She moved into total abstraction and began working as a serious artist after her move to New York in 1918. She married the photographer Alfred Stieglitz in 1924. She painted close-ups of flowers which many have thought represent female genitalia but she has always denied this. From 1929 she spent part of the year in New Mexico and moved there after Stieglitz's death in 1946. Her painting Jimson Weed sold for \$44 million in 2014, more than three times the previous record for a female artist.
- O'Keefe loved New Mexico, she explained in 1943, "Such a beautiful, untouched lonely feeling place, such a fine part of what I call the 'Faraway'".

O'Keeffe was a legend beginning in the 1920s, known as much for her independent spirit and female role model, as for her dramatic and innovative works of art. Nancy and Jules Heller said, "The most remarkable thing about O'Keefe was the audacity and uniqueness of her early work." At that time, even in Europe, there were few artists exploring abstraction. She received unprecedented acceptance as a female artist from the fine art world due to her powerful graphic images and within a decade of moving to New York City, she was the highest paid American woman artist.

References

https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/mar/01/georgia-okeeffe-show-attate-modern-to-challenge-outdated-views-of-artist



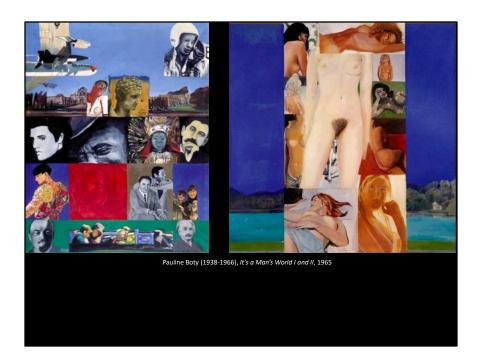
Pauline Boty (1938-1966), The Only Blonde in the World, 1963, 122.4 x 153 cm, Tate

UK Women Artists Since 1950

- Pop artists were fascinated by Marilyn Monroe as the most famous of movie stars and the epitome of a new sexuality. Most responses to her were made by men, however. Boty was one of the few women artists working in this vein and perhaps that gave her a different view on Marilyn Monroe. Is the figure isolated by being squeezed between fields of abstract forms? Is the title ironic? Boty's work was sometimes concerned with gender and sexuality and so it is ironic, that she was herself frequently discussed in terms of her appearance.
- Waldemar Januszczak, then the art critic at the Guardian, on BBC2's *The Late Show* was criticized for his blatant sexism about Boty; Januszczak had declared that since she was such a "bad" and "derivative" painter, Boty's "dolly bird" status was the only thing anyone would ever find interesting about her.
- In fact, her painting is unique, she photo-realistically paints to look like collage and there was no one else looking at gender issues or looking at women's role in post war mass culture.
- She became one of the first women artists to do what many did later, pose in front
 of their work. She would happily disrobe as long as the work was central.

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- https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2013/apr/27/pauline-boty-pictures
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- http://www.dailyartdaily.com/mother-pop-art-shes-not-american/
- https://imagebreakdown.wordpress.com/2016/11/09/its-a-mans-world-i-ii-1965-pauline-boty-collge-photography-paint/



Pauline Boty (1938-1966), It's a Man's World, 1965

- It's a Man's World I on the left shows the images associated with men glamour, fame, war, violence and loss. There are personalities such as J. F. Kennedy shown at the bottom between Lenin and Einstein. The fame and violence are only relieved by the rose positioned over Jackie Kennedy holding her dying husband.
- It's a Man's World II on the right would have been deeply shocking at the time particularly painted by a woman. 'A strip of images of part-naked women in coquettish clichéd porn magazine poses is superimposed over a blue-green classical English landscape complete with a little Palladian structure. At the centre of this painted collage of coy porn images is a pure, unadulterated naked female torso. The torso is cut off at the neck and thighs, depersonalised and as far from pornographic as an image of nakedness can be. It challenges pornographic imagery simply by being itself.' (Ali Smith, The Guardian, 2016)
- 'It's a man's world' was one of her mother's favourite phrases. She had been
 prevented from going to the Slade by her draconian father and so when Pauline
 expressed an interest in going to art school her mother pressurised her husband to
 allow her to go. Luckily, he agreed. Pauline Boty grew up in Carshalton and
 attended the Wimbledon School of Art. Later she attended the Royal College of

Art. She was sent to the stained glass class as this was deemed more appropriate for women than painting. The school had recently been refurbished and they had forgotten or thought it unnecessary to include women's toilets so she was often seen wandering round the building. She became a friend of Peter Blake and David Hockney and became well known in the London pop art scene. She also worked as an actress on stage, in films and on television. She died aged only 28 of cancer and despite the fact that she was a central and iconic figure she disappeared from view for 30 years. In 1993, some of her paintings were discovered rotting in an outhouse on her brother's farm.

 She was diagnosed with cancer when she was pregnant and decided not to be treated as it would have required an abortion. She died six months after her daughter was born. Sadly, her daughter died of a drug overdose the day she graduated as an art student.



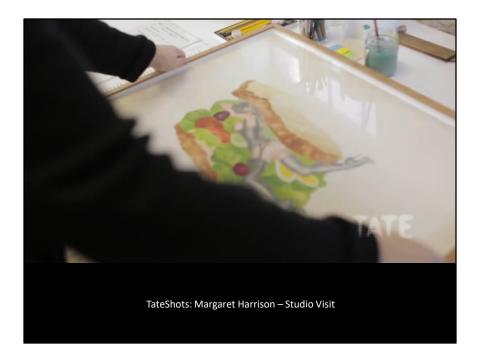
Pauline Boty, BUM, 1966

- It was part of a commission from Kenneth Tynan for Oh, Calcutta!, a pop musical designed by her. This is her last work as she knew she was dying. The musical ran for 3,900 performances in London and was controversial when released as it featured total male and female nudity. It later became the longest running show on Broadway. The title is taken from a painting by Clovis Trouille (1889-1975), Oh! Calcutta! Calcutta! (1960) a pun on the French phrase 'O quel cul t'as!', (pronounced 'oh-kell-q-ta', 'What an arse you have!').
- She was the incarnation of the
- Later at a 1991 exhibition The Pop Art Show at Royal Academy, out of 202 works only one was by a woman (My Lover by Nikki de Saint Phalle). There were a number of women Pop artist such as Rosalind Drexler, Marisol, Jann Haworth, Evelyne Axell and Pauline Boty. There was no complaint as the assumption seems to have been that Pop Art was essentially masculine.

References

https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/oct/22/ali-smith-the-prime-of-pauline-

boty



- Margaret Harrison (b. 1940) founded the London Women's Liberation Art Group in 1970. Soon after, an exhibition of her work was closed by the police for its 'pornographic' depiction of men. Linder Sterling's photomontages, combining images from pornographic magazines with pictures from women's magazines, make a powerful feminist statement.
- In his 1972 book *Ways of Seeing* the Marxist critic John Berger had concluded 'Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at'. In other words Western art replicates the unequal relationships already embedded in society.
- In what is sometimes known as First Wave feminist art, women artists revelled in feminine experience, exploring vaginal imagery and menstrual blood, posing naked as goddess figures and defiantly using media such as embroidery that had been considered 'women's work'.

References

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret Harrison



Marina Abramović (b. 1946), Rhythm 0, 1974

- Rhythm 0 (1974) was a six-hour work of performance art by Serbian artist Marina
 Abramović in Naples The work involved Abramović standing still while the
 audience was invited to do to her whatever they wished, using one of 72 objects
 she had placed on a table. These included a rose, feather, perfume, honey, bread,
 grapes, wine, scissors, a scalpel, nails, a metal bar, and a gun loaded with one
 bullet.
- The purpose of the piece, she said, was to find out how far the public would go: "What is the public about and what are they going to do in this kind of situation?"
- Her instructions were placed on the table:
 - There are 72 objects on the table that one can use on me as desired.
 - Performance.
 - · I am the object.
 - During this period I take full responsibility.
 - Duration: 6 hours (8 pm 2 am)
- Visitors were gentle to begin with, offering her a rose or a kiss.
- Art critic Thomas McEvilley, who was present, wrote:

- "It began tamely. Someone turned her around. Someone thrust her arms into the air. Someone touched her somewhat intimately. The Neapolitan night began to heat up. In the third hour all her clothes were cut from her with razor blades. In the fourth hour the same blades began to explore her skin. Her throat was slashed so someone could suck her blood. Various minor sexual assaults were carried out on her body. She was so committed to the piece that she would not have resisted rape or murder. Faced with her abdication of will, with its implied collapse of human psychology, a protective group began to define itself in the audience. When a loaded gun was thrust to Marina's head and her own finger was being worked around the trigger, a fight broke out between the audience factions."
- As Abramović described it later: "What I learned was that... if you leave it up to
 the audience, they can kill you." ... "I felt really violated: they cut up my clothes,
 stuck rose thorns in my stomach, one person aimed the gun at my head, and
 another took it away. It created an aggressive atmosphere. After exactly 6 hours,
 as planned, I stood up and started walking toward the audience. Everyone ran
 away, to escape an actual confrontation."
- When the gallery announced the work was over, and Abramović began to move again, she said the audience left, unable to face her as a person.
- Abramović said the work "pushed her body to the limits." When she returned to her hotel room she found some of her hair had turned white.

Notes

• As a child, Abramović's mother beat her. In an interview published in 1998, Abramović described how her "mother took complete military-style control of me and my brother. I was not allowed to leave the house after 10 o'clock at night till I was 29 years old. ... [A]II the performances in Yugoslavia I did before 10 o'clock in the evening because I had to be home then. It's completely insane, but all of my cutting myself, whipping myself, burning myself, almost losing my life in the firestar, everything was done before 10 in the evening." The 'firestar' was Rhythm 5 (1974) when she lost consciousness because of lack of oxygen in the centre of a star-shaped fire. Her life was saved when the audience realised what was happening.

<u>References</u>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marina Abramovi%C4%87



Marina Abramović (b. 1946), The Artist Is Present: March – May 2010

- Abramović is perhaps best known for her 2010 work at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. She sat for 736 hours and 30-minutes in the museum's atrium while spectators were invited to take turns sitting opposite her.
- Visitors waiting in line were invited to sit individually across from the artist while
 she maintained eye contact with them. Visitors began crowding the atrium within
 days of the show opening, some gathering before the exhibit opened each
 morning to rush for a more preferable place in the line to sit with Abramovic. Most
 visitors sat with the artist for five minutes or less and the line attracted no
 attention from museum security except for the last day of the exhibition when a
 visitor vomited in line and another began to disrobe.
- She sat opposite 1,545 sitters who were asked not to touch or speak to her. Every sitter was photographed and compiled in to a book and posted on Flickr.
- She said it changed her life completely and a whole new audience of teenagers between 12 and 18 saw performance art for the first time and started coming back.



Martha Rosler (b. 1943), Semiotics of the Kitchen, 1975, black and white video

- Rosler was born in New York and graduated from Brooklyn College (1965) and the University of California, San Diego (1974). Her work has been widely influential and she has lectured internationally. She undermines images of mass consumption, such as TV advertising by disrupting the viewer's expectations. Semiotics of the Kitchen has the format of a cookery programme but the content presents kitchen utensils as dangerous and subversive instruments of destruction. In the 1970s the kitchen was domain of the housewife and it was where she created fashionable dishes for the delight of her husband. Cookery classes conventionally assisted in training the housewife in perfecting this role.
- Semiotics is the study of meaning-making, signs and symbols and the construction
 of meaningful communication. It is concerned with the study of signs and sign
 processes (semiosis), indication, designation, likeness, analogy, allegory,
 metonymy, metaphor, symbolism, signification, and communication.



Cindy Sherman (b. 1954), *Untitled Film Stills #3, #6, #7, #13, #14,* #35, Museum of Modern Art

- Sherman began making these pictures in 1977, when she was twenty-three. The
 first six were an experiment: fan-magazine glimpses into the life (or roles) of an
 imaginary blonde actress, played by Sherman herself. The photographs look like
 movie stills purporting to catch the blond bombshell in unguarded moments at
 home. The protagonist is shown preening in the kitchen (#3) and lounging in the
 bedroom (#6).
- Sherman tried other characters in other roles: the chic starlet at her seaside hideaway (#7), the luscious librarian (#13, at left), the domesticated sex kitten (#14), the hot-blooded woman of the people (#35), the ice-cold sophisticate (#50), and others. She eventually completed the series in 1980. She stopped, she has explained, when she ran out of clichés.
- Sherman's strategy was not to use pop-culture images but to immerse herself in the whole film still world. The images therefore look and function just like the real ones—they lure us into a drama we find all the more compelling because we know it is not real. There are no Cleopatras, no ladies on trains, no women of a certain age. There are, of course, no men. The sixty-nine solitary heroines explore a world

- of fictional femininity that took hold in postwar America—the period of Sherman's youth.
- Although most of the characters are invented, we sense right away that we already
 know them. That twinge of instant recognition is what makes the series tick, and
 it arises from Cindy Sherman's uncanny poise. There is no wink at the viewer, no
 open irony, no camp. As Warhol said, "She's good enough to be a real actress."

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Cindy Sherman (b. 1954), Untitled #126, 1983, Tate

- Cindy Sherman is shown wearing a costume and posed with one foot on a cane chair. It is one of four groups of fashion photographs produced between 1983 and 84. This is from the first group which was commissioned by a retail store for a magazine. She was supplied with top of the range clothes and Sherman has created the antithesis of glamorous world of fashion.
- The model in the photographs is intended to look angry, exhausted, abused, grimy and even psychologically disturbed. In her notebook, she wrote: 'Attack clothes ... ugly person (face/body) vs. fashionable clothes' and 'pseudo-fashion shots ... stupid looking model types.' She said that she was 'trying to make fun of fashion. I'm disgusted with how people get themselves to look beautiful. I'm much more fascinated with the other side.'
- Sherman typically uses herself to parody stereotypes of women in the media. She said, 'Obviously, I'm trying to make someone feel bad for having a certain expectation'. When we look in fashion magazines we expect to find attractive women modelling the clothes. Sherman has used makeup and lighting to subvert this expectation. She has a mirror by the camera and thinks herself into the role she is playing which is often an abused, disturbed or violated woman.

Although she always retains a critical stance and an element of irony her work
reinforces the idea that our public identity lies in appearance rather than reality.
All forms of media create an identity by crafting and manipulating the appearance
of the selected person using costume, hair, makeup, accessories and posture as
well as choosing the person's location and surroundings.

Notes

- Cindy Sherman is an American photographer who takes portraits of herself in various scenarios and with various costumes and face styles to parody stereotypes of women in the media. She has parodied female types used in old movies, television soaps and magazines. She rose to fame in the 1980s with a series of 'film stills' mimicking stars such as Sophia Loren and Marilyn Monroe. She explores the sensual as well as the horrific and old age. In the 1990s she caricatured characters through art history sometimes using grotesque costumes and makeup.
- Untitled #126 belongs to a group of photographs relating to fashion photography produced between 1983 and 1994.

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Judy Chicago (born Judith Cohen, b. 1939 in Chicago), *The Dinner Party*, 1979, Brooklyn Museum

• One of the great iconic works of this phase of feminist art is Judy Chicago's The Dinner Party, 1974–9. It represents 39 women round a dinner table including Boadicea, Eleanor of Acquitaine, Elizabeth I, Artemisia Gentileschi, Mary Wollstonecraft, Emily Dickinson, Virginia Wolf and Georgia O'Keefe. The work took six years to complete at a cost of \$250,000. There are three lots of 13 women the number of people at the Last Supper. It was produced from 1974 to 1979 as a collaboration and was first exhibited in 1979. Subsequently, despite art world resistance, it toured to 16 venues in 6 countries on 3 continents to a viewing audience of 15 million (some sites say 1 million). It was retired to storage until 1996, as it was beginning to suffer from constant traveling. Since 2007 it has been on permanent exhibition in the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum, New York.

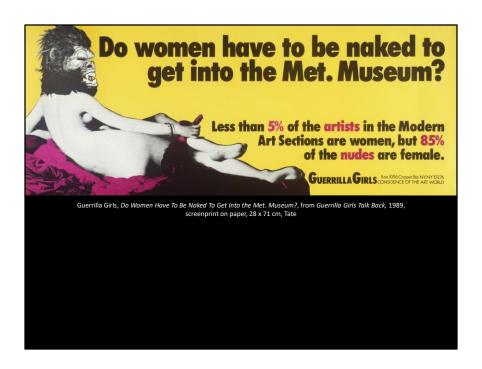
Notes

 Chicago's The Dinner Party is the first epic feminist artwork. It consists of a dinner table with 39 hand-crafted place settings for each of the mythical and historically

- famous women that form the basis of an alternative view of history based on women rather than men.
- Later feminist artists rejected this approach and attempted to reveal the origins of our ideas of femininity and womanhood. They pursued the idea of femininity as a masquerade – a set of poses adopted by women to conform to social expectations of womanhood.

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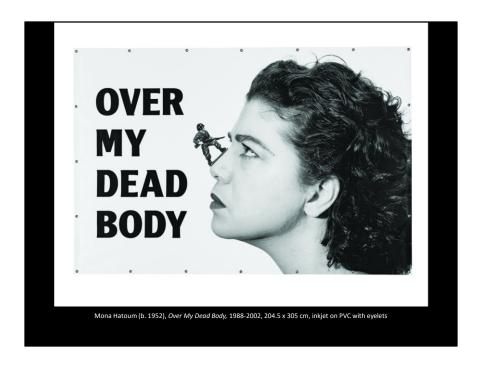


Guerrilla Girls, Do Women Have To Be Naked To Get Into the Met. Museum?, from Guerrilla Girls Talk Back, 1989, screenprint on paper, 28 x 71 cm, Tate

• In 1985 a group of female artists formed the Guerrilla Girls to draw attention to the way female artists had been and were being ignored or marginalised. Guerrilla Girls formed in response to the Museum of Modern Art's exhibition "An International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture," which opened in 1984. The exhibition was the inaugural show in the MoMA's newly renovated and expanded building, and was intended to be a survey of the most important contemporary art and artists in the world. In total, the show featured works by 169 artists, of whom only 13 were female.

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Mona Hatoum (b. 1952), *Performance Still,* 1985 Mona Hatoum (b. 1952), *Over My Dead Body,* 1988-2002, 204.5 x 305 cm, inkjet on PVC with eyelets

- Hatoum is a Lebanese-born Palestinian artist who lives in London.
- Performance Still, in 1985 she walked through Brixton in bare feet dragging a pair of Dr Martens boots that were tied to her ankles. The one-hour performance called Roadworks was filmed and reduced to a six-minute video. Ten years later she extracted this still and printed it and mounted it on aluminium. It is always shown on the floor leaning against the wall. "'One comment I really liked was when a group of builders, standing having their lunch break, said 'What the hell is happening here? What is she up to? And this black woman, passing by with her shopping, said to them, 'Well it's obvious. She's being followed by the police'. Hatoum added: 'One guy came up to me and said: Excuse me. Do you know you're being followed?' Hatoum's black boots were (and are) a symbol of the punk movement, but were also part of the uniform of the often violent and racist groups of skinheads as well as the police. In this piece the footwear can be seen as a signifier of a measure or condition that keeps someone under control, a symbol of oppression. Roadworks was concerned with ideas of control, individual struggle

- and social conditioning, which resonated both generally and specifically in the local context." (Tate)
- Over My Dead Body, 'Edgily surreal, bold and highly controlled, works by Mona Hatoum reveal feminist ideals and a cultural sub-consciousness with an underlying hint of humour. In Over My Dead Body, Hatoum deploys a toy soldier perched on the nose of the artist in profile. This uncanny representation, with the artist's conceited stare, makes war and oppression seem tiny, almost laughable, yet driving home the point that the title, for many people in the world, cannot be shrunk, reduced and taken for granted. The use of a powerful text and carefully planned imagery compose a strong billboard, highlighting Hatoum's allusion to women's victimisation in war and violence, playing on the theme of war as a direct result of patriarchal control.' (Christies, signed 5/6, inkjet on PVC, estimate \$30,000-45,000)
- Mona Hatoum was born in Beirut to a Palestinian family and during a visit to London in 1975, civil war broke out in Lebanon and Hatoum was forced into exile.
 She stayed in London and trained at the Slade School of Fine Art between 1975 and 1981.

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Helen Chadwick (1953-1996), Vanitas II, 1986, cibachrome print, 50.9 mm x 51 cm, NPG

Self-portrait with her work Of Mutability (1986) in the background

- This self-portrait by Helen Chadwick confronts the long tradition of female nudes made by male artists for the pleasure of other men. Allegorical depictions of 'Vanitas', a naked woman gazing at herself in a mirror, invited male viewers to enjoy a female nude while simultaneously condemning her sinful pride. Chadwick disrupts the convention by introducing herself into the picture. As both the artist and subject of the work, the naked figure is not a supine model but the creator of this work of art.
- Chadwick's earlier work utilised her naked form, questioning the representation of the female body and addressing what Chadwick called 'the issue of the female body as a site of desire'. She attempted to complicate the conventional passive objectification of women. Many critics, including former feminist colleagues, concluded that she reinforced the stereotypes she sought to subvert. As was the case for other women artists that were reclaiming their bodies through their art practice, she was accused of regressive female narcissism. She disagreed with the accusations but her later work moved inside the body to flesh and to bodily

excrement.

- Of Mutability was Chadwick's first major solo exhibition, held at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in 1986. It toured internationally and resulted in her nomination for the **Turner Prize in 1987**. This was the first year a women had been nominated.
- Chadwick died suddenly at age 42 of a heart attack in 1996.

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Sarah Lucas (b. 1962), Self-Portraits 1990 – 1998, 1999

- Lucas is an English artist. She is part of the generation of Young British Artists who
 emerged during the 1990s. Her works frequently employ visual puns and bawdy
 humour, and include photography, collage and found objects.
- It was in the early 1990s when Lucas began using furniture as a substitute for the human body, usually with crude genital punning. In earlier work, she had displayed enlarged pages from the *Sunday Sport* newspaper. Through her career, Lucas has continued to appropriate everyday materials (including, for example, freshly made fried eggs) to make works that use humour, visual puns and sexual metaphors of sex, death, Englishness and gender.
- This is one of 12 self-portraits created by Lucas in which she uses her 'masculine' appearance. She poses in a conformational way challenging conventional feminine poses. Her pose, her clothes and her expression are all deliberately defiant. Food as a symbol for a body part is a common theme of her work and it is used to undermine conventional views about the female nude. The food is suggestive and potentially humorous but its crudity prevents outright laughter.

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Sarah Lucas, *Two Fried Eggs and a Kebab*, 1992, 76.2 x 152.4 x 89 cm, The Saatchi Gallery

- One of Lucas' most famous works Two Fried Eggs and a Kebab, parodies the
 traditional still life and evokes similarities between itself and feminist Judy
 Chicago's infamous piece The Dinner Party. There is a clear humorous reference to
 breasts and female genitalia.
- The food and the table invoke the surrealism of Magritte but its casual look suggest Dada and found-objects. The central image is that of consuming the female body as food which is, in turn, a metaphor for sexual consumption.
- Lucas graduated in 1987 from Goldsmiths College where she was a year or two
 ahead of the other YBAs including Damien Hirst. In 1988 she showed her work at
 the Frieze organised by Hirst. She did not sell and found after the show that it was
 all the men that were selling and getting the publicity. She had to wait until 1992
 when she had her first solo exhibition.
- In 1993 she ran a bric-a-rac shop with Tracy Emin in Shoreditch. It sold decorated mugs, keyrings and hand-painted T-shirts. In 2016 she described Emin's work as 'second-rate'. 'I find it cheap,' Lucas says. 'In the same way that I wouldn't wear

high heels or lippie. The confessions and the puerile sex stuff – I just would never do that.'

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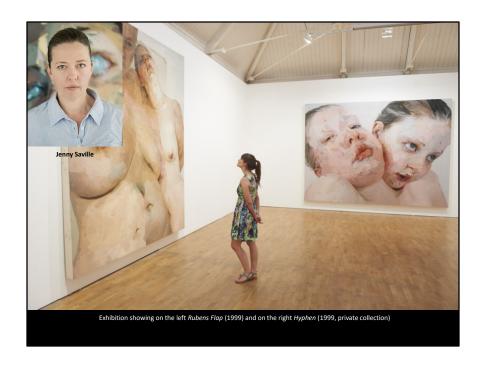
Sarah Lucas (b.1962), Ace in the Hole, 1998, four bunnies (kapok, wire, tights, stockings, clamps, four chairs) and a baize card table, dimensions variable Sold at Sotheby's in 2014 for \$905,000

- This wry, amusing sculpture with its sexual suggestiveness is typical of a lot of Lucas's late 1990s work. This is part of her 'Bunny' assemblages that she started in 1997. sculptural tableaux that incorporate stockings stuffed with cotton and wire, and shaped into the lower torso and legs of the female anatomy. The four figures' limp legs are splayed, as their headless bodies curiously slither off chairs. They sit in sexually suggestive poses with the fourth figure sitting on a card table. The red and black tights suggest the four suits of a pack of playing cards and the title is both sexually suggestive and is a poker term referring to an ace dealt face-down to a player and thus figuratively any hidden advantage.
- Lucas confronts and subverts male stereotypes, such as poker, and through this all
 male-dominated hierarchies. Lucas is reflecting upon the misogyny she finds in
 particular social settings using everyday objects that become highly-charged with
 meaning. Tights, for example, are cheap, thrown away commodity items that
 acquire an erotic charge but also suggest death. Lucas draws attention to our own
 simplistic beliefs and thoughtless stereotypes about gender differences. Lucas's

- work is amusing and incisive.
- Lucas satirizes the unthinking misogyny of the media and her brutal sexual
 innuendoes outlads the lads while appearing to be one of them. Both Tracey Emin
 and Lucas exploit a 'bad-girl' image that uses butch heterosexuality, excessive
 behaviour in public and art that operates in the space between their private lives
 and public art exhibitions.
- Recently, Lucas was featured in two of the international surveys of contemporary art: the 2013 Carnegie International and the central exhibition of the 2013 Venice Biennale. In 2013 she had a major retrospective at the Whitechapel Gallery and she represented the UK at the 2015 Venice Biennale.
- One of her biggest collectors is Damien Hirst who loves her work and adds, 'I
 would say she's the most important of the YBAs ... She's the greatest artist I
 know.'

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Jenny Saville (b. 1970), Rosetta 2, oil on paper mounted on board, 249 x 185 cm, private

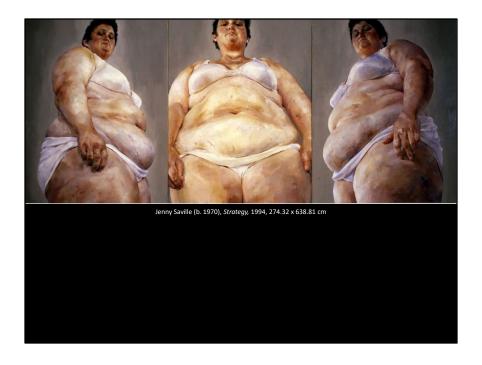
Exhibition showing on the left *Rubens Flap* (1999) and on the right *Hyphen* (1999, private collection). The figure in *Rubens Flap* appears to be a self-portrait.

- Jenny Saville (b. 1970), one of the Young British Artists, large scale depictions of nude women. 'There is a thing about beauty. Beauty is always associated with the male fantasy of what the female body is. I don't think there is anything wrong with beauty. It's just what women think is beautiful can be different. And there can be a beauty in individualism. If there is a wart or a scar, this can be beautiful, in a sense, when you paint it.'
- British figure painter Jenny Saville was born in Cambridge and began her course of study at the Glasgow School of Art in Scotland in 1988.
- Upon graduating in 1992 with a successful senior show, the young artist's career
 was off to an explosive start; every painting was sold, including one to British
 gallery owner and art collector, Charles Saatchi. Saatchi purchased all her work
 and commissioned her for the next few years. She quickly established herself in
 part through this patronage.

- Saville exhibited at the controversial Sensation show at the Royal Academy of Art in London in 1997.
- Saville's technique is traditional and seemingly outmoded, she has found a way to reinvent figure painting and regain its prominent position in the context of art history. Known primarily for her large-scale paintings of nude women, Saville has also emerged as a major contemporary artist and leading figure of the Young British Artists (YBA).
- Her blatantly feminist subject matter, of obese and sometimes faceless women
 with vast bodies, partly originates from a trip to America. It was while studying at
 Cincinnati University in Ohio, that Saville's lifelong fascination with the workings of
 the human body began to affect her artwork. Much of her work features distorted
 flesh, high calibre brush strokes and patches of oil colour, while others reveal the
 surgeon's mark of a plastic surgery operation.
- Saville has been **influenced by Cindy Sherman** a contemporary conceptual photographer who uses herself as model. Saville collaborated with photographer Glen Luchford (b. 1968) to created images of herself using a sheet of glass to squash and distort her flesh. These self-portraits were exhibited as photographs (shot from underneath the glass) rather than paintings.
- Saville's art, which is frequently compared to contemporary British painter Lucian
 Freud, has always focused on the human form and how it can be represented.
 Currently, Jenny Saville lives and works in London, England, where she is a teacher
 of figure painting at the Slade School of Art. (Much of the above is taken from
 Invaluable.com)

Quotations from Jenny Saville

- "There is a thing about beauty. Beauty is always associated with the male fantasy
 of what the female body is. I don't think there is anything wrong with beauty. It's
 just what women think is beautiful can be different. And there can be a beauty in
 individualism. If there is a wart or a scar, this can be beautiful, in a sense, when
 you paint it."
- "I'm not anti conceptual art. I don't think painting must be revived, exactly. Art reflects life, and our lives are full of algorithms, so a lot of people are going to want to make art that's like an algorithm. But my language is painting, and painting is the opposite of that. There's something primal about it. It's innate, the need to make marks. That's why, when you're a child, you scribble."
- "The art I like concentrates on the body. I don't have a feel for Poussin, but for Courbet, Velasquez - artists who get to the flesh. Visceral artists - Bacon, Freud. And de Kooning, of course. He's really my man. He doesn't depict anything, yet it's more than representation, it's about the meaning of existence and pushing the medium of paint."



Jenny Saville (b. 1970), Strategy, 1994, 274.32 x 638.81 cm

- Part of the infamous 1997 Sensation exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts in London, Jenny Saville creates enormous canvases that focus on bodies in an unflinching manner. Likening the physicality of paint to the feeling and appearance of skin, Saville constructs sometimes horrifying images of contemporary identity.
- Strategy, 1994, shows three views of an obese woman presumably on the verge of taking action. She is self-consciously sizing herself, looking at her body from different angles. The viewer is in a strange position, between disgust and empathy, yet is complicit in the tacit judgments placed on the woman's body by the ideals presented in the images of mass media. Set slightly below the woman looking up, the viewer is less in a privileged position than a forbidden one. We are the scale or mirror looking back at the woman; we are her measure.

Notes

Saville draws much from the history of painting, especially artists known for
pushing the human figure to its limits of stress and decomposition. She cites Diego
Velázquez's tonal virtuosity, the carcass paintings of Chaim Soutine and
Rembrandt, and Willem de Kooning's notion that "Flesh was the reason oil paint

was invented" as key influences. Critics also add a roster of British painters, including Francis Bacon, Frank Auerbach, and Lucian Freud, as important forerunners and inspirations for Saville's work. What seems to separate Saville from her influences, however, is her reliance on conceptual, critical social messages instead of subjective expression.

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Jenny Saville (b. 1970), Stare, 2004-05, 304.8 x 250.19 cm

- Several paintings and drawings are part of a series titled "Stare," executed between 2004-2011, which depict a young boy whose full lips are curled into a subtle snarl.
- Collecting material from pathology textbooks, plastic surgery manuals, chronicles of injuries and burns, and similar publications, Saville often adds an observational perspective to her work by attending surgery demonstrations and visiting butchers. As shown in Stare, 2004–5, these sources are the starting points for Saville's aggressive use of scale, brushy, wide strokes, and textures that extend long figurative traditions in painting and inventively adapt the medium for meditations on victimization, trauma, and disease.



Jenny Saville (b. 1970), *In the realm of the Mothers II*, 2014, charcoal on canvas, 270.2 x 345 x 5.1 cm

- This recent work is from her first solo-exhibition in London.
- Her paintings often refer to a different period of her life which she has painterly depicted through her own physical appearance. Human flesh has always remained in the centre of her work and all her paintings are based on photographs since she dislikes working from life.
- As a mother of two small children, Saville figuratively presents the physical act of how to become one, while expressing a woman's personal feelings towards the playful interaction between the nude female and the nude male body.
- Motherhood imbued her with an incredible new confidence "I just felt like I was flying!"

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Rachel Whiteread, Demolished, 1996

Rachel Whiteread (b. 1963), Demolished, 1996

Description. The two works in this room are about the tower block in different social situations. The first is a set of twelve screen-prints of tower blocks being demolished in East London. The artist is Rachel Whiteread and she photographed each of three separate demolitions as a series of three stages from a single spot and, in addition, she took a single photograph of the context. The work is called *Demolished* and the photographs were taken between 1993 and 1995 [and the artwork is dated 1996].

The artist. Whiteread lived and still lives in East London, a historically poor area, and she was recording the destruction of people's homes just after the period known as Thatcher's Britain. It was a time of economic recession and there was a wave of rioting in 1991 and 1992 caused by high unemployment and social discontent.

Memorial to the past. Some of the photographs remind us of a war zone. However, the beauty of the screen-prints suggests a better future. Like her sculptural casts, they serve to record what she has referred to as 'something that is going to be completely forgotten ... the detritus of our culture', creating a memorial to the past in the hope of generating something better for the future.

Turner Prize. Whiteread became the first woman to win the Turner Prize [of £25,000]

for *House* [in 1993]. This was a concrete cast of the inside of a Victorian terraced house and, for the same work, she also won the £40,000 K Foundation art award presented to the 'worst artist of the year'. *House* symbolised the people who formerly lived there prior to the increasing gentrification of the area. She is well known as a sculptor who creates casts of the spaces inside, under or around many everyday objects such as baths, sinks and chairs.

Can art change the world? As a pragmatic artist Whiteread said, 'I don't think art changes the world in terms of stopping people dying of Aids or of starvation or being homeless. But for an individual ... it can enhance daily life, reflect our times and, in that sense, change the way you think and are.' The images could be from any city and stand for social planning for the poor world-wide. I mentioned that some of these photographs remind us of a war zone. Let us turn to a work that represents an iconic tower block at the centre of a real war zone.

Notes on Rachel Whiteread, Demolished, 1996

Rachel Whiteread (b. 1963) was born in Ilford, Essex and studied at Brighton Polytechnic and the Slade. She is lives with the sculptor <u>Marcus Taylor</u> and they have two sons.

Whiteread employs casting methods using plaster, rubber and resin which are typically used as part of the process of making sculptures rather than in the finished work. She makes sculptures of the spaces within, around and under everyday objects from baths and sinks to houses, so called 'negative spaces'. This draws our attention to the forgotten spaces around and within our everyday world and fixes them in time as public monuments. The spaces around objects are normally occupied by human beings and so the solidified spaces become symbols for our human presence while refusing us entry. By removing the object and refusing its function the shapes express absence and loss. Her early work was personal and biographical but her later works have become universal and their titles have become straightforward, down-to-earth and descriptive. For Whiteread her sculptures are metaphors for neglect of people and their environment in Thatcher's Britain (Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister, 1979-90, John Major was Prime Minister from 1990 to 1997, followed by Tony Blair from 1997 to 2007).

Whiteread was the first woman to win the Turner Prize in November 1993 for *House* (destroyed 1994) a life-sized replica of the interior of a condemned terraced house in Bow in London's East End. It took two years to plan and was made by spraying liquid concrete into the building's empty shell before its external walls were removed. *House* was completed on 25 October 1993 and demolished eleven weeks later on 11 January 1994. *House* also won the K Foundation award of £40,000 for the worst work of art of the year. K Foundation threatened to burn the money unless it was accepted so she gave some of the money to Shelter and the rest was allocated to young artists based on a competitive submission. K Foundation burned £1 million the following

year.

Demolished is a portfolio of twelve duo-tone screen-prints. The one shown is called 'B: Clapton Park Estate, Mandeville Street, London E5; Bakewell Court; Repton Court; March 1995'. The screen-prints are divided into three groups, A (A: Clapton Park Estate, Mandeville Street, London E5; Ambergate Court; Norbury Court; October 1993), B and C (C: Trowbridge Estate, London E9; Hannington Point; Hilmarton Point; Deverill Point; June 1995). The prints were scanned from photographs of the demolition of tower blocks on three separate estates in Hackney, East London. Whiteread took the photographs between October 1993 and June 1995. The transfer to screen-prints involved enlarging the black and white photographs which has increased the grain. The stages of the demolition are recorded in the form of three photographs taken from the same spot. A fourth photograph on each site records a pile of rubble (A), a dust-filled stormy sky (B) and tower blocks on a sunny day (C). The A-series is visually neutral but B and C are reminiscent of war photographs. In the early 1990s Whiteread lived in East London, a historically poor area.

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Bridget Riley born 1931, Evoë 3, 2003

- Description. The curved shapes recall the outline of leaves or petals, and the sense
 of movement conveyed in the painting suggests the cadences of ocean waves.
 Riley has spoken about her great love of nature and although the forms in Evoë 3
 are not directly representational, they suggest shapes and rhythms familiar from
 the natural world.
- Matisse. In its clear, bright palette and sense of joyous movement, the painting evokes the work of Henri Matisse (1869-1954). The rich colours and sharply delineated forms in Evoë 3 suggest the influence of Matisse's late cut-outs. The undulating rhythm of Riley's shapes also recalls images Matisse made throughout his life of dancing figures. She said, 'the only way anyone can enter my painting is by looking; there's no theory in them ... The very habit-ridden public, and I'm not blaming them, want something that looks like a painting.'
- Figure painter. As a student she was such a good figure painter that she won a place at Goldsmiths College but she rejected 'the direct depiction of people, which I had loved and enjoyed ... to find out about this new world'.
- Works alone. Bridget Riley's studio is on an upper floor of a west London terrace house where she lives and works. She gets out of bed and goes straight to the

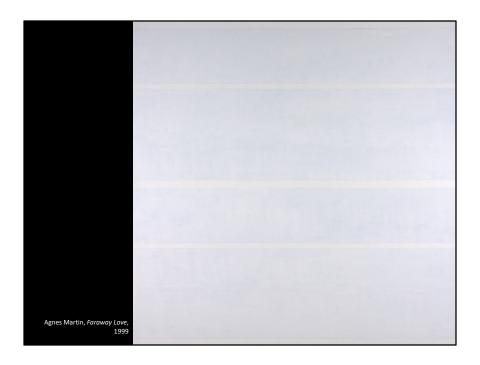
- studio every day. Riley has lived alone for decades, never married, has no children. She works on her own but since the 1960s, assistants have painted Riley's works from her preparatory notes and studies.
- Revelry. Riley always conceived of this painting as a festive revelry or bacchanalian cry. The title is a shout of joy at the festivals of Bacchus. She wrote that 'When I had finished Evoë and was thinking about its title I toyed with the idea of calling it "Bacchanal without Nymphs" ... But then I remembered, just in time, that I am after all supposed to be an abstract artist'.
- Constrained but free. Her range of work may be considered narrow but she
 quoted Stravinsky who said, 'The more constraints one imposes, the more one
 frees oneself of the chains that shackle the spirit.'

Notes

- Bridget Louise Riley (born 24 April 1931 in Norwood, London) is an English painter
 who is one of the foremost exponents of Op art. She spent her early years in
 Cornwall, and studied in London at Goldsmiths College and the Royal College of
 Art. She first drew critical attention with the black-and-white paintings she made
 from 1961, and her international breakthrough came four years later in *The*Responsive Eye at MoMA, New York, which celebrated the Op art movement.
- In 1966 Riley began her explorations of colour and form through stripes or bands across the canvas, and more recently shorter units cut by vertical, diagonal or curved lines. Her reputation was further enhanced at the 1968 Venice Biennale when she became the first woman – and the first contemporary British painter – to win the International Prize for painting.
- Although Riley's work is consistently abstract, it is founded in natural experience.
 As she has written: 'The eye should feel caressed and soothed, experience frictions and ruptures, glide and drift.'
- She currently lives and works in London, Cornwall and the Vaucluse in France.

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Agnes Martin (1912-2004), Faraway Love, 1999

Some international women artists.

- **Description**. This is Agnes Martin's *Faraway Love*, painted in 1999. It is a five-foot square canvas painted over using acrylics and graphite pencil. Martin began by painting the canvas all over with a white acrylic. She then measured out and marked with pencil the rectangular bands into which she painted the large light blue segments, with rough brushstrokes and we can even see some fingerprints in the paint. The light blue is a type of acrylic paint called Liquitex which is more translucent and light-reflecting than most acrylics.
- Mark Rothko. Martin was influenced by Mark Rothko; whose work we will see
 later. She said he had 'reached zero so that nothing could stand in the way of
 truth'. She reduced her work to the bare minimum and her early abstract work
 consists of lines and grids with subtle colours on a six by six-foot canvas. Later, like
 this work, she reduced the size of the canvases to five by five foot and used pencil
 marks and bands of colour.
- New York to New Mexico. Early on, she worked in New York for ten years in the 1950s and 60s and was one of the few leading female artists in the masculine art

- world of the period. She moved to the dessert in New Mexico in 1968 and worked on her own in her remote studio for the rest of her life. She became reclusive and gave few interviews. When she died in 2004, aged 92, she said she had not read a newspaper for the last fifty years.
- Buddhism. She studied Buddhism, like Gormley, not as a religion but as a guide to living her life. She viewed her work as a pursuit of perfection and she strived to create paintings that reflected 'beauty, innocence, and happiness.' Her peaceful and reclusive lifestyle and her gentle and subtle paintings have become extremely influential. She is seen to have approached near-mystical perfection and for some she has become a visionary and for others almost a saint. Her art has been described as a 'religious utterance, almost a form of prayer' and she said that 'art is the concrete representation of our most subtle feelings'.
- Meaning: Figurative to Abstract. So, we can see that two artists, Gormley and
 Martin, who appear at first glance to have taken a very different approach to art,
 one figurative and one abstract, in the end are both exploring what it means to be
 human. This room is an introduction to the close engagement between artist and
 art work and between us, the viewer, and the artwork. Let us now go back to the
 beginning of the twentieth century and look at some of the pioneers of modern
 art.

Notes

- Agnes Martin (1912-2004) was born in Canada and moved to America when she was 19. After college she studied Buddhism, like Antony Gormley. However, she was not interested in it as a religious discipline but as a code of ethics for life. She taught in New Mexico before moving to New York in 1957, aged 45. She left New York ten years later and disappeared from the art world to live alone in New Mexico. She did not paint for seven years and returned to painting in 1974, aged 62. She was known to have schizophrenia and once had electric shock treatment and she was known as a closet homosexual but never publicly expressed her feelings for women. From 1973 onwards she was regularly exhibited in major galleries around the world. When she died aged 92 she was said to have never read a newspaper during the previous 50 years.
- Martin praised Mark Rothko for having 'reached zero so that nothing could stand in the way of truth'. Following Rothko's example Martin pared down her work to encourage a perception of perfection and to suggest a reality beyond our direct perception. Her signature style was defined by an emphasis upon line, grids, and fields of subtle colour. In the early 1960s, she created 6 × 6 foot square canvases that were covered in dense, minute and softly delineated graphite grids. Later, like this work, she reduced the scale of her signature paintings to 5 × 5 foot and shifted to using bands of ethereal colour. She also modified the grid structure by using pencil lines and, in some paintings, she used primary colour washes of diluted acrylic paint blended with gesso.

- Many of her paintings have positive names, like Happy Holiday. She said, 'Beauty and perfection are the same. They never occur without happiness'. She believed in art as a realm of transcendent experience and said 'Beauty is the mystery of life. It is not just in the eye. It is in the mind. It is our positive response to life.'
- Martin wrote, 'I hope I have made it clear that the work is about perfection as we are aware of it in our minds but that the paintings are very far from being perfect

 completely removed in fact even as we ourselves are.'
- Martin has often equated beauty and love with happiness, as an abstract concept
 not influenced by or reflective of her own personal life: 'In my best moments I
 think "Life has passed me by" and I am content.' This sentiment chimes with the
 title Faraway Love, which suggests something out of reach, perhaps even
 unattainable, which nevertheless remains a pure state, not tainted by melancholy
 or longing.
- Artists such as Richard Tuttle, Ellen Gallagher and Roni Horn cite Martin as a
 central figure in their research and practice. 'Her art has the quality of a religious
 utterance, almost a form of prayer,' wrote one New York critic, reviewing her
 recent exhibitions at the Elkon and Pace galleries.
- In 1976, she made one movie called Gabriel which is about a day in the life of a
 young boy which is full of happiness and innocence and is absolutely free of
 misery.

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http://www.artnews.com/2015/07/31/what-we-make-is-what-we-feel-agnes-martin-on-her-meditative-practice-in-1976/_ an interesting and in-depth interview with Martin.



Sheela Gowda (b. 1957), *Behold*, 2009

- This is called Behold and was produced in 2009 by Sheela Gowda, an artist from Southern India. Can you tell what the two materials used here are?
- This work consists of four kilometres of human hair and twenty car bumpers. In Bangalore, where Gowda lives, the hair and car bumpers used in *Behold* are everyday materials with ritual significance. Short strands of human hair are commonly knotted around the bumpers of vehicles to ward off accidents and bad luck.
- Both hair and bumpers refer to Indian industries. When pilgrims visit a temple to
 fulfil their sacred vows, they have their hair shorn as a mark of humility. The
 valuable hair is donated to the temple where it is woven into talismen and sold by
 the priests for profit. Longer hair is in demand for wigs and hairpieces and for
 keratin used in beauty products in the West.
- The shiny, clean metal bumpers contrast with the organic, dark, mat strands of hair. The hair is both linear and coiled in places in a balance between the abstract and the human. The spheres of hair suggest heads and the loosely hanging strands suggest entrails. The hair takes on a new role as it inverts the normal hierarchy of fragile human body against a hard metal machine. The hair is the strongest

element as it can ward off accidents and prevent damage to the delicate machine. Gowda commented that the pairing of these materials is 'a coming together of fear, superstition, belief and a need for comforting action in the framework of modern life'.

Notes

- Sheela Gowda (b. 1957) is a South Indian artist living and working in Bangalore, Karnataka, who references human beliefs and superstitions. Gowda began her career as a figurative painter and moved towards three-dimensional works in the 1990s as her interest in using indigenous and locally relevant materials grew. She said, 'I was unable to find the means within painting to translate certain strong reactions to immediate issues. I do not like to use my work as a vehicle for making strident statements, and needed subtler means.' She uses materials such as incense and cow dung that are associated with everyday rituals in India.
- She exhibited *Behold* at the Singapore Biennale in 2011 and the Venice Biennale in 2009 and had a solo exhibition in London in 2010.
- In *Behold*, she uses four thousand metres of rope hand-woven from human hair. Each rope has hundreds of individuals hair of all genders and ages. Hanging entangled within this black, knotted mass are twenty steel car bumpers. She wanted to contrast the organic material with the industrial car bumpers. It is the apparently weak organic material that is believed to protect the hard steel from damage through its talismanic power. The strength of the hair is shown by using it to suspend the bumpers. *Behold* is one of Gowda's largest installations to date. The Arsenale, where the piece was installed in Venice, was used by the Venetian navy as a rope factory centuries ago. This industrial heritage is mirrored by the tradition of motorists in Bangalore tying woven hair to car bumpers as a talisman for their safety. The hair comes from temples where pilgrims shed their locks in ritual sacrifice, and the material is then sold on for wigs or for industrial use.
- The installation fills a room, the two contrasting materials forming a three dimensional drawing in space, in which thin yet strong strands of hair are used to suspend and support the shiny metal bumpers in an abstract configuration. Coils and spheres of hair on the floor are suggestive of the human form. For Gowda the piece communicates 'a coming together of fear, superstition, belief and a need for comforting action in the framework of modern life'. She does not wish he work to be seen as beautiful as she feels this is superficial as the underlying layers are dark.
- The braiding of four kilometres of hair suggests intensive physical labour. Gowda says, 'Most of my works are labour intensive, but I do not like to make the process immediately apparent ... I feel it adds to the intensity of the work while remaining seemingly simple and minimal.'

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Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010) at Tate Modern

- She was born in Paris in 1911. Her parents ran a business restoring antique tapestries, which sparked her life-long interest in textiles. Though she initially studied mathematics and geometry at the Sorbonne, she soon changed direction and trained as an artist. In 1938 she moved to New York City, where she remained until her death in 2010.
- Bourgeois returned again and again to a number of themes, though the materials she used to express them vary greatly. Her sculpture, drawing and writing are characterised by an unflinching emotional honesty, as she continually retold and reworked the memories and stories that shaped her life.
- "Everything I do," Louise Bourgeois said, "was inspired by my early life."
- The article *Lumps, bumps, bulbs, bubbles, bulges, slits, turds, coils, craters, wrinkles and holes* by Elaine Showalter discusses the art of Louise Bourgeois and her exhibition at the Tate in 2007.
- As Whitney Chadwick notes in her classic Women, Art, and Society women's
 "attempts to juggle domestic responsibilities with artistic production have often
 resulted in smaller bodies of work, and often works smaller in scale, than those

produced by male contemporaries. Yet art history continues to privilege prodigious output and monumental scale or conception over the selective and the intimate".

Notes

- Bourgeois was born in Paris and grew up in the suburbs in Choisy-le-Roi. She had an older sister and a younger brother. Her mother was a tapestry restorer who employed twenty women and Bourgeois helped restore tapestries and repair missing feet and horses hoofs. Matisse also grew up in a textile region but while he retained his love of bright colours she inherited a darker mood. Her mother was a passionate feminist but her father had affairs. When she was 11, Bourgeois witnessed her father's affair with their live-in English tutor, Sadie Gordon Richmond. She hated her father for this and his explosive temper, domination of the household, and for teasing her in front of others. These combined events left the artist with life-long psychological scars. Her mother died in 1932 while Bourgeois was studying mathematics at the Sorbonne.
- Bourgeois was desperate to please and terrible competitive. She married an American art historian in 1938 and moved to New York where she entered a more professional, masculine and creative world. She raised three sons (one adopted) and in 1945 had her first solo show. By then her work had taken on her love of New York, clean-cut, scientific and cruel. A major theme was female confinement in the home and she painted the housewife as houses for heads or rooms for bodies. The home for her is both a cage and a maternal body. The house is the female body, endlessly requiring maintenance, trapping the female artist in her biology.
- In the 1990s she produced cages or cells.' The Cells represent different types of pain.' The physical, the emotional and psychological, and the mental and intellectual. Bourgeois was interested in the male hysteric whose attacks were caused by fear. Her Cell (Arch of hysteria) is a polished bronze headless male body suspended from a string.
- As well as the spider Bourgeois has a lifelong affiliation with animals and insects from the time her father filled the family estate with an assortment of hens, dogs, ducks, rabbits, pigs, and even a donkey. She looks to animals for qualities they might share with humans.

Quotations

- Art was Bourgeois' tool for coping. "I need to make things. The physical interaction with the materials has a curative effect. I need the physical acting out, I need to have these objects in relation to my body." For her, "art is a guarantee of sanity."
- "Every day you have to abandon your past or accept it, and then if you cannot
 accept it you become a sculptor." For Bourgeois art was "a kind of torment that
 raged and abated, but could not be cured...In my art, I am the murderer."
- Bourgeois was in psychoanalysis for 30 years. Her childhood traumas relate to

- fears of abandonment. Relating to her mother illness and death. Artists repeat themselves, she observed, "because they have **no access to a cure**". To be born an artist was both a privilege and a curse.
- She ran Sunday salons every week in the same apartment in Chelsea, New York.
 Entry was open to all, with Bourgeois' number publicly listed. "There were only
 two rules," said Gorovoy. "You can't have a cold, and you have to bring your work."
 Bourgeois held these salons, which she dryly referred to as "Sunday, bloody
 Sunday", on a weekly basis until her death in 2010, at the age of 98.
- She kept journals all her life. 'you can stand anything if you write it down... words put in connection and can open up new relations.'
- In 1992, she wrote, "The work of art is limited to an acting out, not an understanding. If it were understood, the need to do the work would not exist anymore... Art is a guaranty of sanity but not liberation."
- "What **modern art** means is that you have to keep finding new ways to express yourself, to express the problems, that there are no settled ways, no fixed approach. This is a painful situation, and modern art is about this painful situation of having no absolutely definite way of expressing yourself."

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Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010), Maman, 2000, Tate

- 'The feminists took me as a role model, as a mother. It bothers me. I am not interested in being a mother. I am still a girl trying to understand myself': Louise Bourgeois.
- Bourgeois' parents owned a gallery that sold antique tapestries. Her father was
 prone to fits of anger and dominated the household. He had many affairs, which
 her mother forgave but they were never forgiven by Bourgeois. The most wellknown is his affair with Bourgeois' tutor, an Englishwoman called Sadie. Her
 mother was a quiet, intelligent and enduring woman. Bourgeois' childhood trauma
 and her emotions formed the basis of her work throughout her long life.
- Bourgeois first began depicting the spider in small ink and charcoal drawings in 1947. She began using the spider as a central theme in the late 1990s. Maman is one of the largest spiders she created measuring over 10 metres high and made of steel and marble. It was part of her Turbine Hall installation for the opening of Tate Modern in 2000. Six bronze versions were cast from it. The image is intended to be positive and refers to the strength of her mother. Bourgeois associates the spider

with spinning, weaving, nurture and protection. She has been called *Spiderwoman*. She said,

"The Spider is an ode to my mother. She was my best friend. Like a spider, my mother was a weaver. My family was in the business of tapestry restoration, and my mother was in charge of the workshop. Like spiders, my mother was very clever. Spiders are friendly presences that eat mosquitoes. We know that mosquitoes spread diseases and are therefore unwanted. So, spiders are helpful and protective, just like my mother."

• In the 1995 poem 'Ode to my Mother' she explains her mother was a weaver and the spiber is a maternal figure:

The friend (the spider – why the spider?) because my best friend was my mother and she was deliberate, clever, patient, soothing, reasonable, dainty, subtle, indispensable, neat, and useful as a spider ... I shall never tire of representing her.

• "I came from a family of repairers. The spider is a repairer. If you bash into the web of a spider, she doesn't get mad. She weaves and repairs it."

Notes

- **Femme Maison** (1946-47). A series of paintings concerned with women and the home. They consist of women's heads replaced by houses which keeps their minds domestic by isolating them from the outside world.
- Destruction of the Father (1974). This is a flesh-toned installation in a soft and
 womb-like room. Made of plaster, latex, wood, fabric, and red light, it is the first
 time she used soft materials on a large scale. It is set in a dining room come
 bedroom, and the abstract blob-like children have rebelled against their
 overbearing father and murdered and eaten him.
- **Cell** (1993). She made a number of works that were enclosed in small rooms. *Cell* (*Three White Marble Spheres*) is concerned with fear and captivity. The mirrors inside the work represent an altered and distorted reality.

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