

**An Interpretation of the use of Female Imagery
in the works of
selected contemporary South African Artists.**

By

Jeanette Graham

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.....

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MOTIVATION FOR NATIONAL HIGHER DIPLOMA 1992-93

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TITLE:

An interpretation of the use of Female Imagery in the works of selected contemporary, South African artists.

PURPOSE:

- (1) The candidate wishes to research the reasons and motivations for the use of Female Imagery, as a means of expression in the works of selected artists.
- (2) To determine whether the possibility exists that male artists, before and during the early 20th century, have a predominantly negative attitude when using female imagery in their works and, if so, to what extent. To find out if this trend is carried through in the works of contemporary male artists.
- (3) To determine whether there were any forms of restrictions on female artists before and during the early 20th century. If so, did this affect their portrayal of the female image.
- (4) An investigation will be undertaken to determine whether contemporary female artists show a tendency to react against certain former restrictions and the traditional use of the female as image, and whether they present new content in this regard, compared to their male contemporaries.

MOTIVATION:

The female figure has been used inexhaustibly as subject matter throughout the centuries and remains a point of reference, a source of inspiration to many artists. This has motivated me to deal with the topic. It has also inspired me to research why 'female imagery' has played such an important role as subject matter in the Fine Arts.

Until, and during, the 19th century, most professional artists were male and most art works recorded were produced by male artists.

The possibility that this historic male dominance could have had a significant effect on the way in which the female image was portrayed during the 19th and 20th centuries, is a factor which warrants further investigation.

HYPOTHESIS:

The actual status of women in the power structure of the art world was dominated by men, with the exception of the last 10 to 15 years. This could cause 'Female Imagery' expressed by male artists to differ from that of female artists.

METHOD:

The topic will be researched using books, articles, newspapers, questionnaires and interviews. Structured questionnaires will be formulated from the conclusions, decisions and opinions derived from the research done in the first three chapters.

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Fig. 1.1. Aphrodite.



Fig. 1.2. Virgin of Paris.

1.

INTRODUCTION

Historically, the female figure has often been used to express the artist's emotions or ideas. It is not only the figure that is important but the manner in which it is portrayed. It has been represented as an object of fertility, love, sexuality, sensuality etc. and has been used repeatedly in Greek Mythology.

In Greece, before the fourth century B.C., sculptures of young women were usually clothed while those of young athletes were normally naked. By the fourth century statues of nude women were beginning to be made to express 'ideal nudity'. This ideal developed around the cult of Aphrodite, the love goddess. To the Romans it was the goddess, Venus.

The Greek Master Praxiteles created the first significant Aphrodite statue (Fig. 1.1) for the island of Chidos. The s-shape of this voluptuous female nude, becomes a familiar symbol of desire in later works.

During the middle ages there was little interest in portraying naked women in the arts, except in instances where there was a need to symbolize fleshly lusts. Only during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, did women begin to play a more important role in courtly life and were expressed more in the arts and letters.

With the rise of the age of chivalry came the cult of the Virgin Mary in the Church. The virgin counterbalanced the idea of Eve the Temptress that had dominated the thinking during the earlier years of the Middle Ages. Mary achieved a position of honour and even of power in the masculine world of knighthood and the crusades.

These images of women at the royal courts or the Virgin Mary were depicted fully clothed. Despite this, their femininity was not completely hidden but accentuated by the slightly seductive s-curve posture present in the Virgin of Paris (Fig. 1.2)



Fig. 1.3. Birth of Venus. (Botticelli)



Fig. 1.4. Venus of Urbino. (Titian)

Even though there is a similarity between the Virgin of Paris and the Aphrodite due to their femininity and the s-curve posture, they are quite different. According to Hobbs [1975:153] 'Aphrodite' is a goddess of beauty whose nudity implies an acceptance of the human body. The 'Virgin of Paris' is a spiritual figure whose beauty exemplifies a beatitude transcending the earthly body.

The Italian Renaissance, a form of society based on city-states, overtook the Feudal system of the middle ages. The church began to lose its influence on the artists, as they began to work for the wealthy noblemen who held political power. Men like Lorenzo de' Medici inspired a new interest in the arts of the Greek culture. It was not easy for the artists of the fifteenth century to narrow the gap between the goddess of love and the Christian Virgin. The medieval attitude of the female image still prevailed. Images of naked men took on the role of becoming symbols or representations of biblical heroes e.g. like Michelangelo's David, or symbols of the growing middle class society of traders. Femininity was out of style.

Sandro Botticelli managed to create one of the most enduring versions of Venus Aphrodite in art history e.g. the Birth of Venus (Fig. 1.3). Although Botticelli's 'Venus' is a naked woman she creates a different, almost sacred atmosphere in comparison to the nudes that follow. She 'floats' above the ground and is characteristic of medieval Christian art (angels and virgins).

The Venetian artist, Titian, painted the Venus of Urbino (Fig. 1.4) nearly sixty years later. There is nothing medieval about this nude. Her facial expression combined with her passive almost seductive posture signifies she is available for pleasure. Through this work Titian established a convention of female nudity that was to endure for centuries. Versions of this pose have been repeated in countless works.

By the seventeenth century, Rubens's paintings (Belgium) of nude women, like Titian's goddess, seem uninhibited about their nakedness. They lack the medieval reserve that is still found in Botticelli's Venus. In The Judgement of Paris (Fig. 1.5)

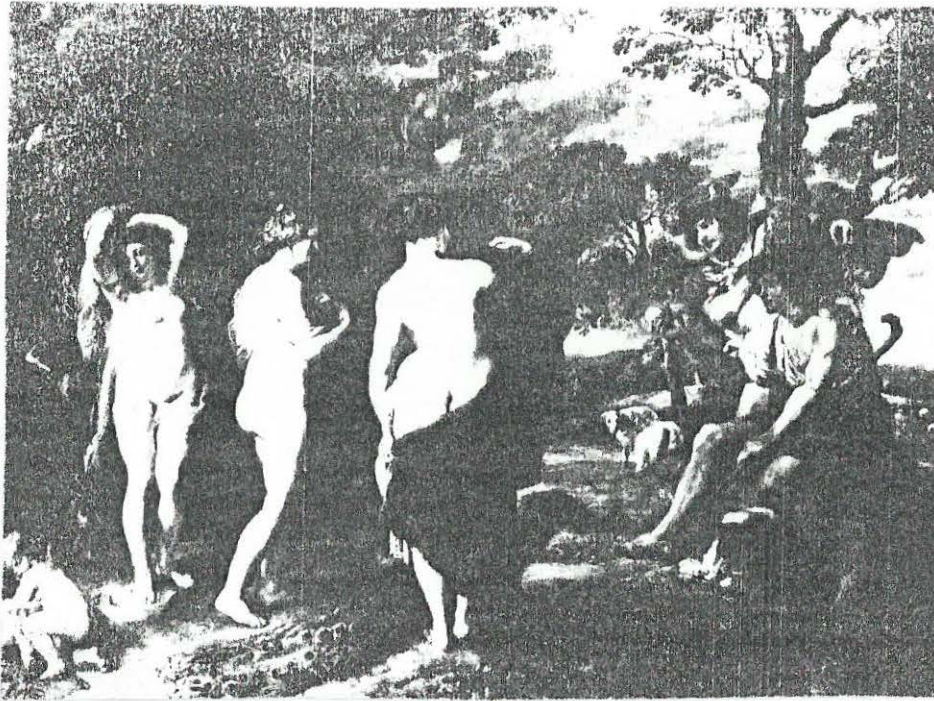


Fig. 1.5. The Judgement of Paris. (Rubens)



Fig. 1.6. The Dance. (Picasso)

Rubens portrays a Greek story of a beauty contest between Athena, Aphrodite and Hera.

The appearance of nude female images managed to survive even the nineteenth century Victorian period. The sight of a woman's ankle was even considered provocative during these times. Even the use of the word 'leg' was considered indecent.

Yet the art of the time was full of sexually titillating paintings of Turkish harems, Roman slave markets and orgies. As long as the nudes in a work were considered classical and the subject matter could be interpreted as information to teach historical or moral lessons, it was approved.

Western painting and the Venus theme had survived over a period of 400 years. In the early twentieth century, the female form was still present. The modern movement grew stronger. The traditional practice of realistically illustrating a subject or nude was overlooked and classical themes seemed to lose their credibility in an increasingly scientific and materialistic world.

During the early years of the twentieth century artists sought solutions to overcome the limitations of realism. Picasso's solution broke the rules of composition, including the conventions of the nude. This is made clear in his painting, **The Dance**. (Fig. 1.6)

Matisse's approach was to turn the female figure into just another compositional element as can be seen in **Dance** (Fig. 1.7) Occasionally, both these artists, in their later years, returned to slightly more traditional methods of representing the female nude.

Many artists began to apply the new techniques discovered, to traditional subject matter. When we look at the British artist Henry Moore, we find that his sculptures were some of the more successful efforts at interpreting the female figure in new



Fig. 1.7. Dance. (Matisse)



Fig. 1.8. Maquette for Reclining Figure. (Moore)

ways. He does not necessarily portray the female body as beautiful, yet his work was often very sexual in nature. This is due to the fact that he used semi abstract shapes to suggest, rather than represent parts of the body e.g. **Reclining Figure** (Maquette) (Fig. 1.8). He started to experiment with open sculpture. Moore began with 'natural' open spaces, such as that formed by the elbow the woman is leaning on or that which exists below her raised knee. Often he would distort them, making a space larger or smaller than viewers would expect, sometimes even eliminating parts of the body.

Moore's sculptures create different ideas in viewers' minds as they move around the massive form. Some see landscape-like forms, e.g. mountains and caverns, which suggest a reassuring permanence. Others tend to see body shapes or sexual allusions. His sculptures are more than just the body of a woman, they can be seen as an affirmation of life itself.

During the 1960's, artists went back to more realistic representations of the human figure. They leaned towards the 'comic strip' type of representation and advertising. Pop Artists, such as Andy Warhol and Tom Wesselmann created satirical versions of the modern Venus. Warhol took the ideal woman off her pedestal and put her on the supermarket shelf. She became as common and as interchangeable as a line of food cans.

Tom Wesselmann's **Seascape** (Fig. 1.9) reflects the dehumanisation that occurs in a mass-media, mass-production modern world and implies that the status of women has become likewise (as dehumanised and mass-produced.)

Wesselmann created a series of Great American Nudes. Each one is set in a collage environment of sexual symbols and products which advertising has made necessary to life. It is almost as if the Venus has become a figure whose only features are sexual.



Fig. 1.9. Seascape. (Wesselmann)

The traditional concept of Venus seems to have survived among the more cliché images of our modern culture. Her role in art has been compromised, almost completely destroyed by the emphasis on abstract and the new attitude of the modern twentieth century.

The interpretation of the female image by male artists, in chapter two, is more specifically researched with regard to presentation of the female. Different ways in which the female image has been presented before and during the early 20th century will be discussed. Various male opinions and statements have been viewed which reflect disagreements and contradictions concerning the debate of the female image. Artists, when dealing with the nude, often disagree on what is considered as 'indecent' or morally acceptable.

As early as 1652, Italian painter and architect, Pietro Berrettini Da Cortona, stated in a **Treatise on Painting and sculpture** (Florence), concerning the nude: *"Images of the nude are not per se obscene, for in many men's judgement many such images have been painted without obscenity. But, for my part, I think this happens rarely and in practice does not ordinarily succeed, because more often than not the painter of nude images designs them with some immodesty. Nor would a painter deserve praise who, in order to show off his skill, pictured and exhibited - I do not say the illicit familiarity of Mars and Venus - but the lawful embraces of a married couple in the nude, for not all that we are allowed to do in private are we allowed to represent in public."* [Murray, 1976: pp 130-132]

French sculptor, Pierr Jean David D'Angers (sculptor of Thomas Jefferson and of the pediment of the Partheon in Paris) believes that the nude is the most beautiful creature God has made. He contradicts Da Cortona, almost 200 years later (1830) by stating that *"The nude is indecent only when it shows unchastè acts. Sculpture should be pure and virginal, that is its essence and its character; but that depends upon the morality of the artist."* [Ibid :221]

French painter and writer, Odilon Redon in his letters and journals (1888), describes how he believes an artist can successfully handle the nude image: *"A painter is not intellectual when having painted a nude woman, he leaves in our minds the idea that she is going to get dressed again right away. The intellectual painter shows her to us in a nudity that is reassuring, because she doesn't hide it. Thus, without shame, she remains in an Eden for glances that are not ours, but those of a cerebral world, an imaginary world created by the painter, when moves and has its being a beauty that never gives birth to impurity, but on the contrary lends to all nudity a pure attraction that does not demean us. The nudes of Puvis de Chavannes never get dressed, nor do many others belonging to the charming bynaeceum of Giorgione and Correggio. But there is one, in Manet's Picnic, who will hurry to dress herself, after her boring ordeal on the cold grass, among those gentlemen without ideals who surround her and talk to her. What are they saying? Nothing innocent, I suspect."* [Op cit:pp 359-360]

Samuel Alexander, author of the book Beauty and Other Forms of Value [1937], comments on the manner in which a nude is expressed. *"If the nude is so treated that it raises in the spectator ideas or desires appropriate to the material subject, it is false art, and bad morals."* [Crofton, 1988:134]

In 1956, American author and lecturer Kenneth Clark, contradicts Alexander and believes that *"No nude, however abstract, should fail to arouse in the spectator some vestige of erotic feeling, even although it be only the faintest shadow - and if it does not do so, it is bad art and false morals."* [Ibid:134]

I support the often raised question relating to the use of the female image: How many artists today 'label' a nude as Eve, Venus, etc. to simply excuse the use of the nude female figure, in whatever form or environment? Whether it be obscene and immodest or morally justified. American novelist and short-story writer Nathaniel Hawthorne expresses his views concerning this subject in his book The Marble Faun [1860] *"Every young sculptor seems to think that he must give the world some*

specimen of indecorous womanhood, and call it Eve, Venus, a Nymph, or any name that may apologise for a lack of decent clothing." [Ibid:133]

Hobbs (author and lecturer at the Illinois State University) raises the following questions concerning the voluptuous nude woman of Belgian painter Rubens: "*Are Rubens' nudes a reflection of the tastes of a period or an expression of some northern European preference for hearty and healthy women? Or, indeed, are these wondrous women an expression of the artists' personal tastes?*" (considering the fact that the central nude, Aphrodite, is a portrait of his wife). [1975:156]

British painter, David Hockney, may have an answer to these questions. In 1976 he states that "*Any great painter of the nude has always painted nudes that he liked; Renoir paints rather pretty plump young girls... He was sexually attracted to them and thought they were beautiful, so he painted them; and if some thin little girl came along he'd probably have thought, lousy model. Quite right. Michelangelo paints muscular marvellous young men; he thinks they're wonderful. In short, you get inspired.*" [Op cit:134]

Many factors can affect artists' ways in which they portray the female image. This can depend on the period in which they lived or personal and cultural experiences. What was 'morally acceptable' to one person, was perhaps completely unacceptable to another.

In my assumption, many male artists portrayed the female nude in alluring, provocative and often very revealing poses for their, and other male viewers', personal enjoyment. The use of a mythical theme or Biblical title in earlier years, often disguised the true motivations behind the creation of a female nude, giving it an air of respectability in a society where it would otherwise be 'unacceptable'.

Naturally, one cannot say that all male artists' motives were totally sexually orientated. There are artists, for example those working during the second half of the 20th century, whose genuine motivation was to exalt the aesthetic beauty of the

female nude. Rodin, for one, appreciated beauty in woman and expresses this in his own sculptures and words *"In short, beauty is everywhere. It is not she that is lacking to our eye, but our eyes which fail to perceive her. Beauty is character and expression. Well, there is nothing in nature which has more character than the human body. In its strength and its grace it evokes the most varied images. One moment it resembles a flower : the bending torso is the stalk, the breasts, the head, and the splendour of the hair answer to the blossoming of the corolla. The next moment it recalls the pliant creeper, or the proud and upright sapling ... Again, the human body bent backwards is like a spring, like a beautiful bow upon which Eros adjusts his invisible arrows.*

At another time it is an urn. I have often asked a model to sit on the ground with her back to me, her arms and legs gathered in front of her. In this position the back, which tapers to the waist and swells at the hips, appears like a vase of exquisite outline... The human body is, above all, the mirror of the soul, and from the soul comes its greatest beauty" [1983:48].

Jerry Caplan, artist and professor of art, Pennsylvania, also refers to sensuality in his work. *"I have always found the female form appealing. While I do other subjects, the female form continues to be a source of inspiration and excitement. It has been a symbol of love and beauty for centuries. After all - women are the vessels of civilization. The female form can be seen as a metaphor for regeneration, wholeness, infinity and life. Women are the other half of men."* [Wagner, E, 1989:6]

These two artists view the female image from a completely different angle. They endue the female image, not only with beauty, but with character and expression, allowing her to be recognised as more than just a sexual object. They leave no room for dispute when deciding what is indecent or decent.

Having earlier referred briefly to the historical role of the female image in Greek Mythology and post Greek art, we are made aware that the leading artists in history

are mostly male. This prompts me to include the question raised by Linda Nochlin (professor of art history at City University Graduate Centre): "*Why have there been no great woman artists?*" [1989:158]

In reviewing male opinions and statements, specifically before and during the 19th century, concerning the woman as artist, there are many reasons which can be brought forward in answering this question. These will be discussed, more fully, in chapter three.

During the Victorian age, English writer on art, economics and social reforms, John Ruskin, commented in the Academy Notes (1875). "*I always said that no woman could paint.*" [Crofton, 1988:197]

French painters expressed similar views. Renoir, for example, said concerning female artists and intellectuals. "*I consider women writers, lawyers and politicians ... as monsters and nothing but five-legged calves. The woman artist is merely ridiculous, but I am in favour of the female singer and dancer.*" [Adler & Garb, 1990:84]

"*No woman painter knows what style is*" Edgar Degas, quoted in Wilson, American Painter In Paris: A Life Of Mary Cassatt (1971) [Op cit:197]

Enlarging somewhat on this thought, author George Moore wrote in 1893 (in his book Modern Painting) "*Women astonish us as much by their want of originality as they do by their extraordinary power of assimilation. I am thinking now of the ladies who marry painters, and who after a few years of married life, exhibit work identical with that of their illustrious husbands.*" [Ibid, 1988:197]

Writer Shulamith Firestone, author of the book The Dialectic Of Sex (1972), goes so far as to say: "*The higher percentages of women in art lately may tell us more about the state of art than about the state of women.. Art is no longer a vital centre that attracts the best men of our generation... The animation of women and*

homosexuals in the arts today may signify only the scurrying of rats near a dying body." [Ibid:198]

Nochlin answers her own question, implying that art (in our case specifically the female image) is produced as a result of the influence of the present social structure and society. Art, she says "*...is not a free, autonomous activity of a super-endowed individual, 'influenced' by previous artists, and, more vaguely and superficially, by 'social forces' but rather, that the total situation of art making, both in terms of the development of the art maker and in the nature and quality of the work of art itself, occur in a social situation, are integral elements of this social structure, and are mediated and determined by specific and definable social institutions, be they art academies, systems of patronage, mythologies of the divine creator, artist as he-man or social outcast.*" [1989:158]

I believe that this 'negative' attitude towards female artists, would definitely have had an effect on the way in which the female image has been portrayed, specifically before and during the 19th century.

Female Imagery, during this period, was mainly expressed through the recorded works of male artists. There are too few cases of female imagery expressed by female artists, to even make a relevant comparison with the former. This is also due to the fact that in a male dominated art world, the documenting of art history was controlled by men. They would exclude the occasional woman artist, considering her contribution to art as irrelevant and unimportant. In doing so, female imagery expressed by female artists before and during the 19th century, was almost non-existent.

Considering these combined statements and opinions concerning the female artist, it is clear that the general attitude was negative, and probably obstructive, towards female artists trying to gain recognition within their social structure.

Having taken the first three chapters into account, chapter four is comprised of interviews with, and questionnaires answered by, South African contemporary artists using the female image.

Chapter five is a discussion on my own work involving the use of the female image.

Irrespective of the reasons or motivations behind the portrayal of the female image there is no doubt that it has never failed to maintain such a visually prominent position in art throughout the centuries and continues to be used extensively within existing contemporary art forms.

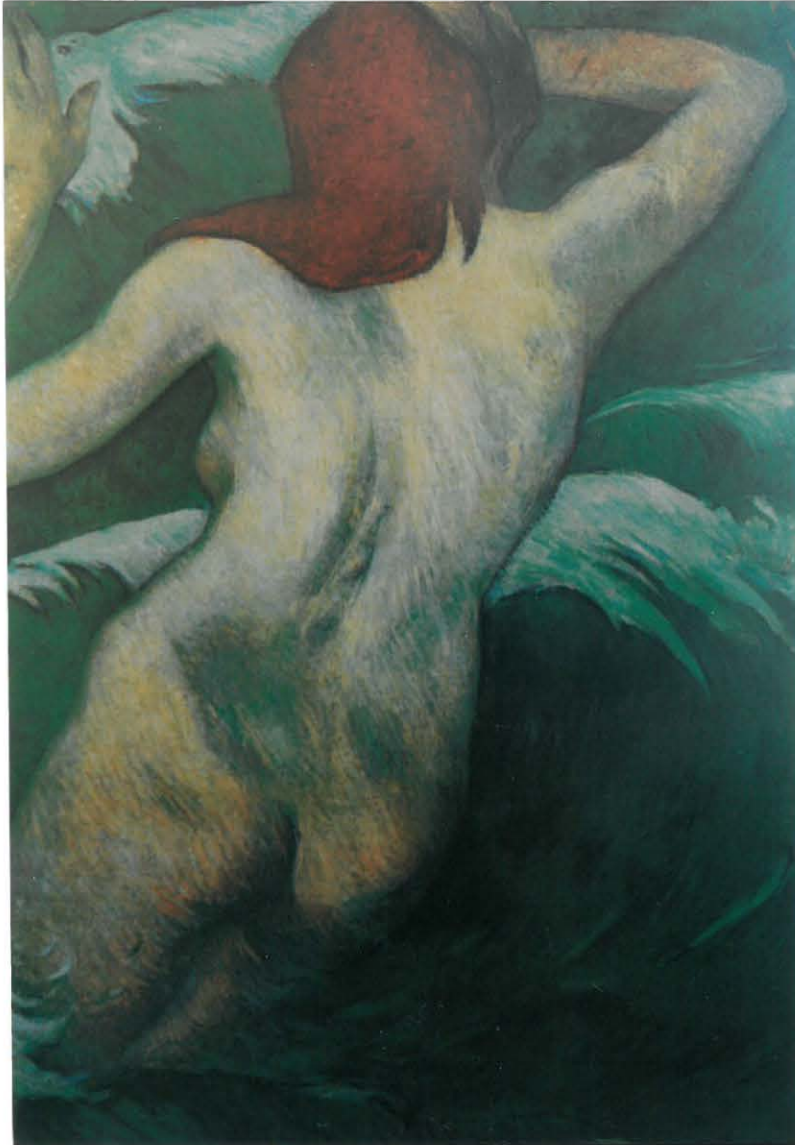


Fig. 2.1. Ondine. (Gauguin)

2.

THE DEPICTION OF THE FEMALE IMAGE BY MALE ARTISTS

2.1 Female Image - a means to express the "fears" in men

Paul Gauguin was a painter who gave up his career as a stockbroker, left his wife and children, to go and paint in Tahiti. The Tahitian women fascinated him. Throughout his career, he concentrated on producing images of women. He even married a thirteen year old Tahitian, Teha'amana.

Ondine or Woman in the Waves (Fig. 2.1) by Gauguin, is a painting of an image of a female figure seen from the back as she enters the waves. This image was repeated several times in different works. For example in Soyez Mystérieuses (a polychrome relief), At the Black Rocks (a woodcut) and in the background of a portrait of Meyer de Haan entitled Nirvana. Was his interest in this particular image; of a woman entering the waves, or the hidden story behind the ondine?

Edward B. Henning (curator of modern art at the Cleveland Museum of Art) sheds some light on the poetic concept behind the ondine in his article titled, The Woman in the Waves *"In northern folklore an ondine (or undine) was a female water spirit who could acquire a soul only by marrying a mortal and bearing his child. In a fairy tale written in 1811 by Baron de la Motte - Fouqué, an ondine married the knight Hildebrand, who later rejected her for a real woman. The ondine returned to the water but reappeared on the day of Hildebrand's wedding to give him a fatal kiss. The odine was a femme fatale, embodying the treacherousness and dual nature of both woman and water. The idea of woman as the root of sin and death, which haunted the romantic imagination deeply affected Gauguin."* [Artnews, Vol, 83, No. 3, March 1984:106]

Is it possible that Gauguin may have been obsessed by these beliefs, considering his lonely surroundings amongst the Tahitian people and the illness and suffering he endured towards the end of his life?

Gauguin went further to say about his mysterious beliefs. *"Earth is our animal spirit. My Eve is almost an animal. That is why she is chaste in spite of her nakedness, whereas all the Venuses in the Salon are indecent and immodest."* [Marchiori, 1968:24]

The circumstances that Gauguin found himself in; the mysterious Tahiti women, his isolation from civilization and his illness, contributed to the way he expressed the female image. We can say that he almost idealized these women and their mysteriousness, creating a 'fear', that is revealed in his work and poetry. Eventually Gauguin's physical disabilities and sufferings prevented him from painting. He turned to writing and died in 1903.

An exhibition of **Pablo Picasso's** later works at the Pompidau Centre in Paris were of paintings, drawings and engravings he made between the age of seventy and ninety. The theme of sexuality dominates more than three-quarters of the two hundred works. [Berger, J. 1988. An Old Man's Frenzy. Art International, No. 3, Summer:21]

Author, critic and B.B.C. T.V. broadcaster John Berger, points out a similarity between the reasons and motivations behind Picasso's later works and the late poems of Irish poet and dramatist, W.B. Yeats. in his article titled An old Man's Frenzy, Berger quotes Yeats's verses: *"You think it horrible that lust and rage should dance attention upon my old age; they were not such a plague when I was young; what else have I to spur me into song?"* [Ibid:21].

As Picasso grew older, he loved women as much as he ever had, but he had to face the absurdity of his own relative impotence. [Berger,1988:26]



Fig. 2.2. La Pisseuse. (Picasso)

Berger raises the following question to explain, possibly, why Picasso was obsessed with sexually orientated female images in his old age. *"Why does such an obsession so suit the medium of painting? Why does painting make it so eloquent?"* [Ibid:21]

In answer to this question Berger replies: *"If one remembers that the first, the basic purpose of painting is to conjure up the presence of something which is not there, it is not surprising that what is usually conjured up are bodies. It is their presence which we need in our collective or individual solitude to console, strengthen, encourage or inspire us. Paintings keep our eyes company. And company usually involves bodies."* [Ibid:21]

Picasso's paintings, involving the female image, became crude and insulting in nature. Views of sexual confrontations were exposed. He shockingly displays the female genitals to viewers. Professor Rosenblum (of fine arts at New York University and co-author, with H.W. Janson of Nineteenth Century Art) describes these female images in his article titled, The Fatal Women of Picasso and De Kooning that *"... many of his surrealist female monsters also reveal their sex organs with the abandon of an animal in heat."* [Artnews, Vol. 84 No. 8, Oct. 1985:102]

He continues to say that in Picasso's final years the 'Femme Fatale' (Female figure (monster) who displays her sexuality as an irresistible and probably lethal trap for the male spectator) [Rosenblum, Ibid:99] *"was reincarnated as an almost laughably grotesque and clumsy animal who seemed grossly united with the forces of nature, nonchalantly displaying her sexual parts to male viewers or shamelessly pissing into the sea."* [Ibid:100] La Pisseuse (Fig. 2.2) based on a famous Rembrandt Bather, is *"... a grotesquely comic creature who almost parodies, in her animal fusion with the waters of the sea, the Birth of Venus myth"*, [Ibid:102].

Rosenblum states that *"... the myth of the femme fatale is usually associated with 19th century sexual fears and is assumed to have reached its apogee in the 1890's."* [Ibid:99]. Picasso comments on three studies of his own involving a female image.

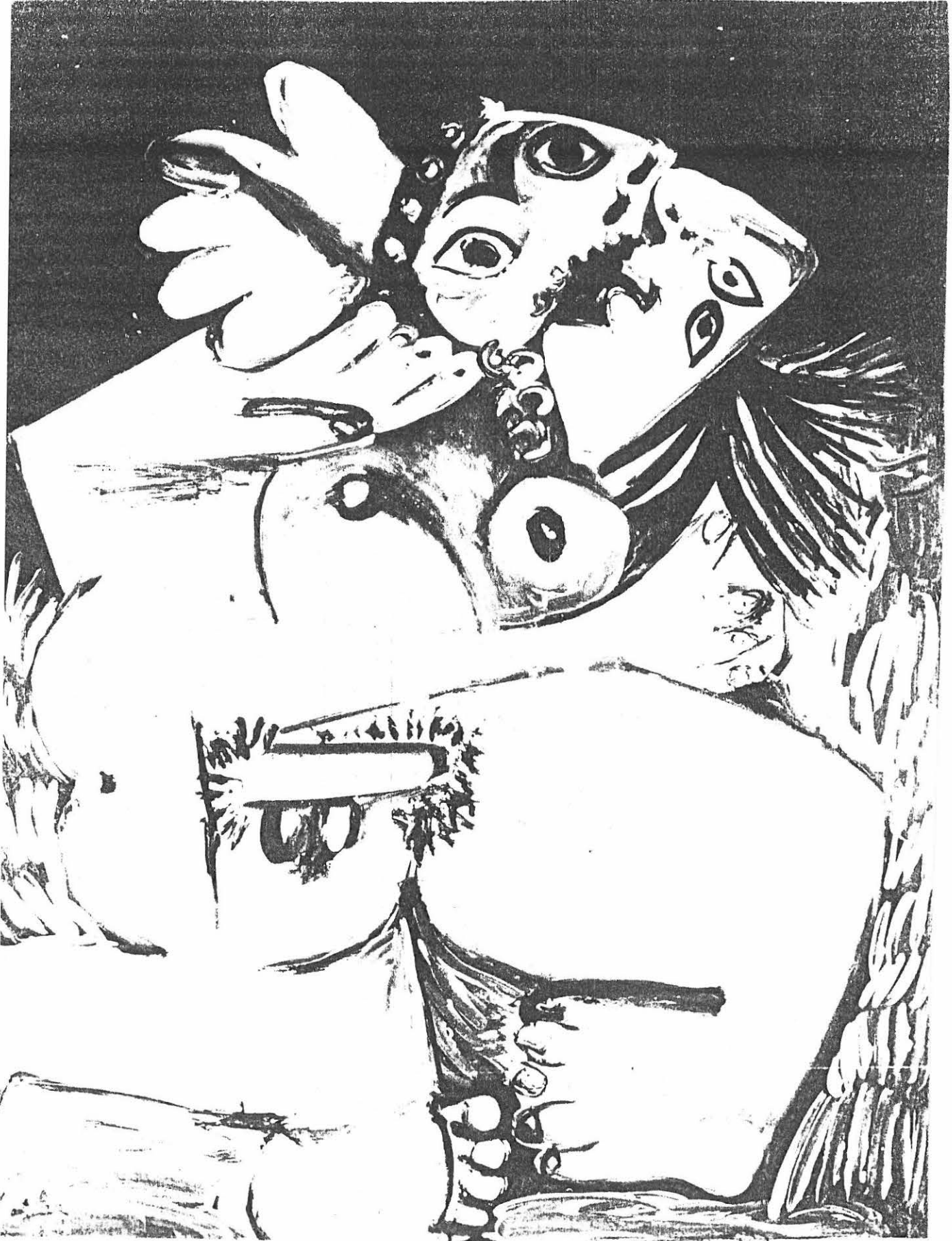


Fig. 2.3. The Embrace. (Picasso)

"I made three of her. In the third one I dominated her, and it is the best; in the others she dominated me...women devour you!" [1988:05].

Another example of Picasso's later works is The Embrace (Fig. 2.3) crudely and blatantly exposing both male and female sexual organs.

Was this all due to the fact that he was old and lonely, cut off from the contemporary world as a historical person and painter? John Berger describes Picasso's condition or state of mind as being *"an old man's frenzy about the beauty of what he can no longer do. A farce. A fury."* [Op cit:28] Picasso had to paint every day. He seemed to rely on the expressive content of the painting to prove to himself that he was still a living man. This probably kept him alive. It is on very rare occasions that female artists produce such crude and degrading female imagery. During the 19th century it was not even acceptable for a woman, if she was even recognised as an artist, to produce works in the form of nudes. In conclusion, it seems that certain 'sexually related' fears seemed to exist more amongst male artists than female artists.

2.2 The Female Image As Decorative Object

The **Art Nouveau Movement** was a period that dominated the use of women as subject matter, for decoration and admiration. They were constantly represented as charming play things to dress and arrange in alluring poses.

Jan Thompson (Curator of Exhibits at the Buffalo and Eric County Historical Museum) may be able to explain this phenomenon in her article titled, The Role of Woman in the Iconography of Art Nouveau. Thompson states that this fact may be the result of *"...what may be considered the essentially male chauvinist attitude of turn-of-the-century men."* She continues to say that *"... women were kept as virtual pets, set up on marble pedestals and made to feel helpless and therefore desirable."* [Art Journal, Winter 71/72 xxx1/2:158]



Fig. 2.4. Dress design. (Van De Velde)

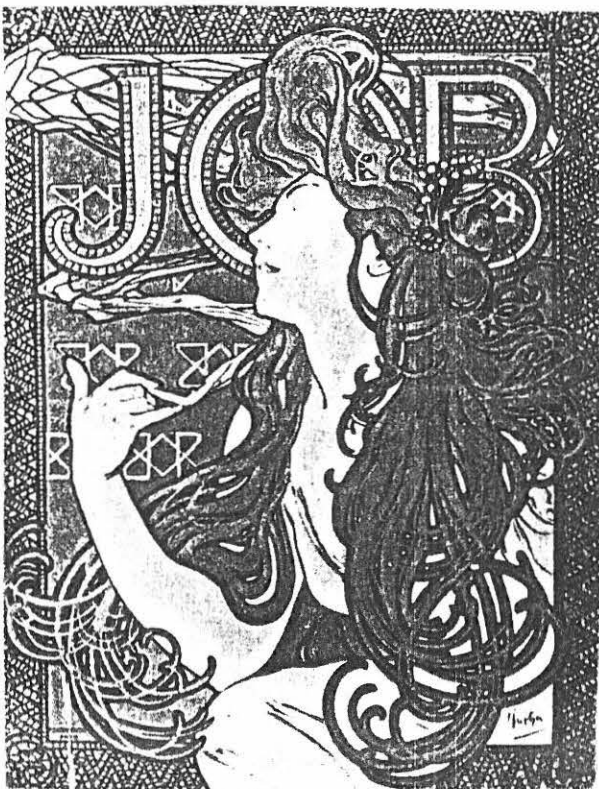


Fig. 2.5. Job Cigarettes. (Mucha)



Fig. 2.6. Documents Decoratifs. (Mucha)

Women were depicted in a highly idealized state. A position where men would have preferred them to stay. Instead, there followed a growing freedom of female behaviour in all areas of life, towards the end of the 19th century. Women were determined to gain economic and political independence. They began to work outside the home and became educated in order to follow a desired career. Women's clothes became simpler and more practical for situations. e.g. work and recreation.

In the context of these awakenings Thompson remarks that *"In spite of, or perhaps because of, Woman's increasing public role, she was even more zealously patronized as a fragile, helpless object, used in a decorative and literal sense to adorn the household : a man's wealth and position were judged by the style in which he kept his wife. In the established fashion world, women were still consumed as if they were animate mannequins meant to display dressmaking virtuosity ..."*. [Ibid:159]

The Belgian designer, Henri van de Velde, is an example. He designed a dress for his wife, (Fig. 2.4), which also incorporates the linear and abstract designs found in his architecture and applied art.

Women's hair was another obsession dominating the motifs of Art Nouveau artists. It was exaggerated into lengthy tendrils and abstract curls intertwining the decorative surfaces in posters such as Job Cigarettes (Fig. 2.5) or Documents Decoratifs, (Fig. 2.6) done by the illustrator Mucha.

Regarding his father's attitude towards woman as a decorative object, his son Jim Mucha writes : *"A woman, for him, was not a body, but beauty incorporated in matter and acting through matter. That is why all his female figures, however solid, are not really of this world. They are symbols, unattainable dreams ..."* [Ibid:162]. Mucha's female images were images created from fantasy.

Another favourite analogy was associating women with flowers. Mucha saw flowers *"...as the natural accompaniment to feminine beauty as well as symbols of woman*



Fig. 2.7. Death of Sardanapalus. (Delacroix)

as goddess of nature." [Ibid:167] The result was numerous representations of dreamy, nymph-like women.

The Art Nouveau movement is regarded as a period in which the portrayal of the female as decorative object in advertising and art, seemed the chief consideration. Thompson supports this fact by viewing this period as "...a last-ditch anxiety-ridden attempt to keep women in their traditional places : in a sense, it has succeeded down to the present day, as women continue to be featured as cunning advertising attractions and as objects of designers' whims." [Ibid:167] The Art Nouveau period and its decorative approach in representing the female image, reveals to us that men preferred women to remain in their 'idealized goddess state'. They refused to accept and feared the increasing liberal actions that women began to take.

2.3 The Female Image And Violence

Orientalism, with all its mystery, had an influence on 19th century French artists of the Romantic period. The Near East existed as an actual place for painters like Gérôme, who portrayed it realistically. For other artists it was more of an open field laid bare to the imagination. They filled it with fantasy, erotic and sadistic desires.

Delacroix's painting, Death of Sardanapalus (Fig. 2.7), was painted before his trip to North Africa in 1832. It is not of an accurate ethnographic study but rather expresses the artist's own fantasies of forbidden passions. It was painted forty years before Gérôme's work, proving that Delacroix was not influenced by Gérôme, but relied totally on his own imagination.

It is in the writing of Linda Nochlin, titled The Imaginary Orient that this concept is expanded. She said, "... is it Western man's power over the Near East that is at issue, but rather, I believe, contemporary Frenchmen's power over women, a power

controlled and mediated by the ideology of the erotic in Delacroix's time. " [Art in America, May 1983:123]

This painting is the story of the ancient Assyrian ruler Sardanapalus, when he heard that he had been defeated, he gave orders that all his valuable possessions, including his women, must be destroyed. He then went up in flames with them.

The fact that Sardanapalus owned his women can be related to the assumption, shared by men of Delacroix's class and time, as Nochlin states it *"...that they were naturally 'entitled' to the bodies of certain women. If the men were artists like Delacroix, it was assumed that they had more or less unlimited access to the bodies of the women who worked for them as models. In other words, Delacroix's private fantasy did not exist in a vacuum, but in a particular social context which granted permission for, as well as established the boundaries of certain kinds of behaviour."* Commenting on this, Nochlin wrote, *"It is difficult, for example, to imagine a Death of Cleopatra, with voluptuous nude male slaves being put to death by women servants, painted by a woman artist of this period."* [Ibid:124]

Delacroix combines his own desires and fears, expressing men's domination over women in an Orientalized setting. Nochlin comes to the following conclusion in this regard: *"Delacroix had come too close to an overt statement of the most explosive, hence the most carefully repressed, corollary of the ideology of male domination : the connection between sexual possession and murder as an assertion of absolute enjoyment."* [Ibid:125]

One can assume that Delacroix's female images expose the fact that men of his period, including himself, believed that certain women, were owned and dominated by men. These women were part of their possessions. With this attitude in mind women were often violently handled, if not in reality, in fantasy.

The painter **Paul Cézanne** seemed drawn to themes of violence, aggression and sexual abandon, in many of his early works. Robert Simon, a doctoral candidate in the department of fine arts at Harvard, examines the circumstances and implications of this inexplicable body of work, in his article Cézanne and the Subject of Violence.

These violent, aggressive images in which Cézanne's women are raped, strangled and stabbed were done between 1859 and ± 1872. Commentators have seen these works as *"... the products of an artist wrapped in sexual gloom. This is a Cézanne who sleeps a troubled sleep and has a taste for blood. In his fundamental essay "Cézanne's Doubt", the philosopher Merleau-Ponty writes : His first pictures, up till about 1870, are dreams in paint : a rape, a murder. They spring from feeling and want above all to arouse feeling. So they are nearly all executed in large brush strokes and give the moral physiognomy of the action rather than its actual appearance."* [Art in America, May 1991:122]

Simon inevitably raises the statement that it *"... is the outright strangeness of the paintings themselves, whose violence, placelessness and obscurity of purpose are almost without equal in high 19th century European art."* [Ibid:123]

He later goes on to say that *"There is a clear relationship between certain of Cézanne's more enigmatic, anxiety-ridden and horrific early pictures and various kinds of 19th century mass-media and popular images."* [Ibid:123]

During 1871, 25 000 to 30 000 communards were massacred in Paris, by the troops of the national government. Simon believes that Cézanne was deeply involved throughout this time of violence, in a project of critical reflection.

He continues to proclaim that the news bulletins known as 'canards' (a kind of 'low' journalism for barely literate audiences), played a large role influencing Cézanne to express scenes of murder and rape so frequently. The 'canard' told stories, as Eugen



Fig. 2.8. The Rape. (Cé zanne.)

Weber emphasizes of "*fear, fear, fear : of brigands, thieves, rape, hail, floods, rabies, epidemics, violence of all sort*". [Ibid:125]

In relation to these themes we can consider some of Cézanne's paintings. The Murder, revolves around a killing on a lonely landscape. The Rape (Fig. 2.8) is a drawing involving "*A furious entanglement of lines and bodies...*" [Ibid:125] The woman is screaming with the man forcing his weight upon her. There is an image of a strangler in a bedroom, amongst many others. Cézanne seems to transform the graphic interpretations of the canard into aesthetic works of art.

Manet's Olympia (1863), inspired Cézanne to produce some of his most disturbing works. One of which is A Modern Olympia, in which a servant rips off the sheets from her mistress, while a middle class, bearded man sits and watches. This man physically resembles Cézanne himself. The woman is unveiled for his viewing. "*Thus , seen in relation to Olympia,*" as Simon states it, "*the position of the customer - spectator (Manet's implicit viewer) merges explicitly with that of the artist, voyeur, fantasizer and pimp - all peddlers and consumers of the woman - image.*" [Ibid:131-132]

Simon enlarges on this thought by writing that "*Cézanne was certainly no feminist, and if his early pictures pondered and volatilized modes of male fantasy and desire, it was to the extent that he saw the realm of desire and fantasy as belonging to men and often taking shape around images of women. If the high-culture genre of the nude depended upon the eroticised representation of women's bodies, in the emergent consumer culture of the 19th century the image of woman was also the primary site upon which mass desire and fantasy were constructed. The artist's studio, the Salon and the marketplace alike were thus ultimately domains of masculine authority. Although the gaze of Manet's Olympia seemed momentarily to challenge the position of mastery assumed by the male viewer, Cézanne's A Modern Olympia sought to re-implicate Monet's painting in this broader social field and to challenge the assumption that its conditions of representation could be escaped or encompassed.*" [Ibid:133]



Fig. 2.9. Found. (Rosetti)

We can conclude that the woman's body seems to be the primary and traditional site in European painting for male viewing pleasure. Robert Simon has tried to relate the early images of Cézanne in relation to the 19th century culture and its self-representations. He leaves us with the thought: "*... to look, especially, upon these images as if they have something to tell us about our own modernity - our own circumstances and self-representations - as they return our gaze.*" [Ibid:186] Cézanne seems to express his own secret fantasies and desires to dominate the opposite sex, in his violent, often sexually violent, portrayals of female images. It would be difficult and probably virtually impossible to find a woman artist in this period, who would have represented these violent scenes of rape and murder, in which the female image is the constant victim. It is possible that Cézanne, like those during the Art Nouveau Movement, was trying to oppress the rising liberal actions of women during the 19th century.

2.4.1 The Female Image As Prostitute Or "Fallen" Woman

The female, as prostitute, has been one of the most recurring themes expressed in female imagery, during the 19th century.

Nochlin in her book, Women Art and Power, makes us aware of the difference between the meaning of 'fallen' in the masculine and feminine. In the former it means to be killed in war, but when concerning women it means to have any sort of sexual activity out of wedlock.

The Pre-Raphaelite painter **Dante Gabriel Rossetti** was almost obsessed with the subject of the 'fallen' woman, in both his paintings and poems. In his painting Found (Fig. 2.9) Rossetti represents a London street at dawn. A girl runs across the street and is recognised by a driver coming into the market. She in turn recognises him and falls on her knees in shame. The Gate of Memory, a watercolour done by Rossetti in 1857, is another example of a depiction of a prostitute. He also wrote poems relating to the fallen-woman theme e.g. "Jenny".



Fig. 2.10. Olympia. (Manet)

Rossetti's painting Found, may have had numerous interpretations attached to it. Nochlin makes us aware that *"...it would be a mistake to read the fallen woman in this painting simply as an emblem of Rossetti's attitude toward women; on a deeper level, perhaps, it also reflects his attitude toward himself."* [1989:80]

Rossetti, later in his life, began to rate his poetry above his painting. He used his art to raise money quickly and in a sense lost respect for his art. Nochlin continues to write that *"The painting of the fallen woman can almost be seen as a synecdoche of Rossetti's disillusionment with painting and with himself as a painter. Rossetti made explicit the analogy between an artist and a prostitute in a letter to Ford Madox Brown of 1873 : 'I have often said that to be an artist is just the same thing as to be a whore, as far as dependence on the whims and fancies of individuals is concerned.'"* [Ibid:81]

According to Nochlin, Rossetti himself may feel in some way to be 'fallen'. She states that *"... for the artist above all - to debase one's art for money, to sell one's talent, to 'sell out', in short. Surely this sense of moral failure, of 'selling out', or perhaps of 'overselling' hangs over the troubled history of Found and at least in part accounts for its unfinished state."* [Ibid:81]

The painting titled "Found" was even completed by another artist as it passed unfinished into the possession of William Graham, after Rossetti's death. Rossetti seemed to lack confidence in his art and in himself as artist. He seemed to relate his feelings of disillusionment and inferiority as artist, with that of 'fallen' women, by referring repeatedly to female images of 'fallen' women throughout his paintings and poetry.

The Olympia (Fig. 2.10), executed by French Realist painter **Manet**, is a painting which has inspired many artists. He places a reclining nude in a Renaissance composition and pose. To this he adds details of jewellery, shoes, a cat, a black

maid and gives her an appropriate name, establishing her identity as a modern prostitute.

The expression on her face challenges the position of mastery (which is usually the male viewer). [Simon, Art in America, May 1991:133] She is portrayed as unashamed and assertive. Commenting on this Elizabeth Hollander, Professional American model and writer, wrote in her article Working Models "*Olympia's direct gaze, like that of many of her predecessors, invokes both her own sexuality and the viewer's but her expression evinces neither the cheap lewdness of a pin-up girl nor the serene narcissism of the Venus she would otherwise be; it is the face of a model who knows, absolutely, what she is doing. Rather than using the model as a vehicle for fantasy, his own or the viewer's, Manet has created an image of her, in the revealing guise of a prostitute posing as a goddess, that brooks no fantasy at all.*" [Art in America, May 1991:12]

It is interesting to note the reactions Olympia caused amongst artists. For example, Cézanne and Gauguin. We have already discussed Cézanne's reaction in No. 2.3. Just to recap, Cézanne expressed his Olympia as a woman being unveiled before a man with a top hat and cane. This man may even resemble Manet. [Ibid:131]

Gauguin expressed Manet's Olympia in a pencil caricature. (1889) Simon gives an adequate description of this sketch. "*Gauguin's vulgar Olympia is awkwardly propped up on her bed, while the figure behind her suggests the figure of a male artist, with the maid's bouquet of flowers replaced by a palette growing out of his groin.*" [Ibid:133]

Manet's fellow artists of that time seem to suggest that Olympia was not just an 'image' of a prostitute, but arose out of a more personal experience in Manet's life. It is also possible that the above two artists are portraying their own experiences, desires and fantasies. By making use of the female image, they are able to express their own experiences and fantasies.



Fig. 2.11. Les Demoiselles d' Avignon. (Picasso)

The futuristic and cubistic movements brought on a long process of dislocating and devaluing the traditional importance of the nude.

Picasso's Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J. Version O), 1907, (Fig. 2.11) is primarily concerned with the female body and sexual desires, evolving out of a profound spiritual and moral crisis in his life. [Clair, J. 1988, Art International, No.3, Summer 1988:10]. The 'Femme Fatale', which was mentioned in No. 2.3, is associated with 19th century sexual fears, reaching its peak in the 1890's. [Rosenblum, 1985, Artnews, Oct, Vol. 84, No. 8:99] She was re-created in one fearful guise after another and reached a climactic effect in les Femmes d'Alger, which previously carried the title The Brothel. Rosenblum describes this painting as follows "... whose quintet of furies assail the male spectator with the sale of their potentially deadly pleasures." [Ibid:100]

Picasso himself explained the origin of this peculiar work. "*The masks were not sculptures. Not at all. They were magic objects,*" he told his friend André Malraux. "*The Africans were intercessors ... against everything, against unknown and threatening spirits ... I understood that I am also against everything. I too think that everything is unknown that everything is an enemy! Everything - not the details! Women, children, animals, tobacco, playing cards ... All the fetishes were used for the same purpose. They were arms ... tools ... All alone in that awful museum, with masks and Indian dolls and dusty mannequins. Les Femmes d'Alger must have come to me on that day, though not at all because of the forms; rather because it was my first work of exorcism - that's what it was!*" [Op cit:12]

Jean Clair (Editor of exhibition catalogues and author in France) believes that at this precise moment of Picasso's life he "... *felt like primitive man, defenceless in the face of a hostile universe, or a young child lost in the dark, too scared to listen to reason. Painting was not a matter of formal or aesthetic problems but rather a riposte to a personal threat.*" [Ibid:12]

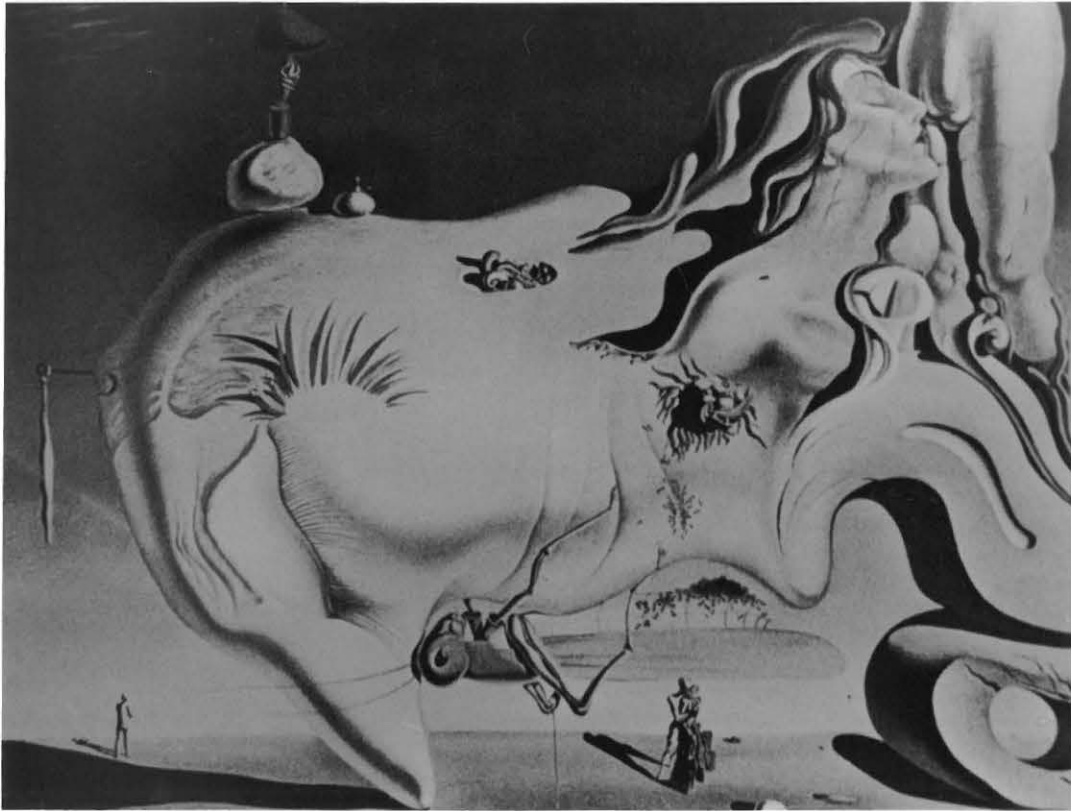


Fig. 2.12. The Great Masturbator. (Dali)

What was this personal threat? If we sum up the opinions of both Jean Clair and Robert Rosenblum, we can possibly state that Les Femmes d'Alger was an attempt by Picasso to exorcize his own 'sexual fears', possibly fears towards prostitutes. According to Rosenblum, this theme of monstrous, wild women, displaying their sexuality, expresses this fear "... *as an irresistible and probably lethal trap for the male spectator recurs, with harrowing variations, throughout his career...*" [Op cit:99]. This painting was produced much earlier in his life, in comparison to the works discussed in 2.1. Although Les Femmes d'Alger comments on prostitution, it is not yet handled in a manner as blatant and crude as his later works are.

2.4.2 The Female Image As Eroticism

Women played a decisive role as a creative source for productions of male surrealists. Breton, a surrealist poet, defines surrealism as "*a kind of psychic automatism which corresponds very closely to a dream state, which today is very difficult to delimit.*" [Alexandrian, 1970:47] He wanted surrealist paintings to give form to humanity's most secret longings.

In Dali's painting the figure of Gala Dali (his wife), is woven into the development of Dali's surrealist imagery. She encouraged him and brought order into his life. Dali often signed his works with both their names and gives credit to her by saying, "*Every good painter who aspires to the creation of genuine masterpieces should first of all marry my wife.*" [Ibid:97] He carries on to say "*She teaches me also the reality of everything. She teaches me to dress myself... She was the angel of equilibrium, of proportion, who announced my classicism.*" [Chadwick, 1991:37]

Her image is present in Dali's painting, The Great Masturbator :1929-32 (Fig. 2.12). The imagery in this painting expresses Dali's erotic desires and feared impotence, revealing also Gala's role as the stimulator of these erotic desires [Ibid:37]. Dawn Ades (author of the book Salvador Dali) supports this opinion in



Fig. 2.13. Susanna and the Elders. (Tintoretto)

her monograph that it is a "*psychodrama of frustration and mingled fear and desire in the presence of the loved one.*" [Ibid:37]. By using a specific female image (i.e. of Gala) repeatedly throughout his works, Dali continues to express his own personal erotic desires and fears, characteristic of the Surrealist movement.

2.4.3 The Female Image As Object to be Gazed At

During the Renaissance, 'Adam and Eve' were often depicted in a single moment of shame. Their shame was not so much in relation to one another, but rather in relation to the spectator. As painting turned more and more to the secular, other themes also offered the opportunities of painting nudes. In most of these paintings there remains the implication that the nude (usually a woman) is aware of being seen by a spectator. As John Berger states: "*She is not naked as she is. She is naked as the spectator sees her.*" [1972:51]

If we consider Tintoretto's paintings, during the Italian Mannerism period involving the theme of 'Susannah and the Elders', we actually join the elders to spy on Susannah, taking her bath. She, in turn, looks back at us looking at her.

In another version, concerning the same subject (Fig. 2.13) 1518-1594, Tintoretto portrays Susannah looking at herself in a mirror. In so doing she joins us as a spectator to herself. The mirror was often used as a symbol of vanity [Berger, 1972:51] and narcissism. These two paintings support the fact that most early male artists portrayed the female image in 'passive' roles to be looked at, while the male played the 'active' role of spectator.

2.5 The Female Image As Functional Object

American artist, **Allen Jones** repeatedly made use of erotic imagery in his work. From couples merging, to thigh and groin paintings.



Fig. 2.14. Chair. (Jones)

In 1969, he went a step further and created a set of three painted fibreglass sculptures. They consisted of life-size women in the posture of pieces of furniture; namely a hat stand, a chair and a table and were wearing thigh-high leather boots, lingerie wear, wigs and eyelashes. According to Marco Livingstone (Author and deputy editor of the 19th and 20th century entries for the MacMillen Dictionary Of Art) "*...these images of female passivity and submissiveness were meant to shock, and so they did.*" [1990:174] e.g. Chair 1969 (Fig. 2.14).

They did more than just shock, they aroused the wrath of the feminist movement, emerging at that time. Livingstone continues to support Jones by saying that it was not his intention "*to encourage violence against women or to speak of their domination by men but simply to elicit a direct emotional response from every viewer in order to circumvent the preconceptions usually at work when people look at art.*" [Ibid:174]

It is irrelevant whether or not it was his intention to arouse anger in the interpretation of his work. The fact remains that the message he carries across to viewers, is one of the female image being portrayed as nothing but a 'functional object'. In doing so he predominantly reflects on the state of women as objects to be used.

2.6 The Female Image As An Individual

In the European tradition of painting, there are a few exceptional nudes that are simply the expression and portrayal of a loved woman. In these cases the painter's personal vision of the particular woman he is painting is so strong that it makes no allowance for the spectator [Berger, 1972:57]. We, the spectators, can witness their relationship, but we remain outsiders. The manner in which the artist has painted her includes her intentions and her will, in the complete structure of the image. It is revealed in the expression of her body and face.



Fig. 2.15. Helene Fourment in a Fur Coat. (Rubens)



Fig. 2.16. Diane. (Rembrandt)

This occurs in Dutch artist, **Peter Paul Rubens**' painting titled Helene Fourment in a Fur Coat :1577-1641 (Fig. 2.15). It is a painting of Rubens' second wife. Her fur coat is about to slip off her shoulders as she turns. Rubens represents a single moment in time yet the painting 'contains' time and its experience [Ibid:61]. We can imagine that a few moments ago she was naked.

John Berger describes this painting as follows *"Her body confronts us, not as an immediate sight, but as experience - the painter's experience. Why? There are superficial anecdotal reasons : her dishevelled hair, the expression of her eyes directed towards him, the tenderness with which the exaggerated susceptibility of her skin has been painted."* [Ibid:61]

Rembrandt's painting Diane :1636 (Fig. 2.16), is a painting expressing the intimate beauty of a nude woman ready to receive her lover. She does not look at the 'spectator' but focuses her eyes and attention on her approaching lover. Beckoning his approach with a wave of her hand. In so doing she totally excludes us as spectator. Once again we become uninvolved outsiders.

In both these paintings the spectator does not play an 'active' role, but is rather excluded from participating. It is interesting to note that both these paintings were executed in the 17th century, when women still played very passive roles in society. They had not yet become a threat to the existing male-dominated society, in comparison to the late 19th century. If these two artists had lived two centuries later, it is possible that these female images would have been expressed in a totally different manner.

2.7 The Female Image As Sensual Object

French sculptor **Rodin**, was fascinated by women to such an extent that he worshipped them as he would have worshipped a deity. He never created a Venus or Cupid but represented 'Love' in the form of 'The loving couple'. A favourite



Fig. 2.17. The Eternal Idol. (Rodin)

theme he constantly returned to without ever repeating himself. [Champigneulle, 1967:152-154]

Rodin has expressed his fascination of women in many ways :

"A woman undressing - what a glorious sight! It is like the sun breaking through the clouds ... The whole of nature resides in every model ..." [Ibid:154]

"I won't quite say that a woman is like a landscape that changes with the movement of the sun; but the comparison is almost right." [Laurent, 1990:108]

As I have previously quoted in chapter one. *"The human body is, above all, the mirror of the soul, and from the soul comes its greatest beauty."* [Rodin, 1983:48]

Rodin fell in love with a talented young woman, Camille Claudel. It has been said that she inspired him with her ideas which enriched and stimulated his imagination. [Op cit:167] She was involved with him for nine years. It was during this time that he produced some of his most impassioned works.

The Eternal Idol :1889 (Fig. 2.17), has almost the reverence of a ritual act. It involves two bodies that do not quite touch. The man kneels before the girl, his head bowed beneath her breasts while his hands remain motionless behind his back. The girl kneels above him. Humble and submissive. It is one of his most sensual and passionate works. The words "Eternal Idol", can readily be applied to the rest of his work. According to French art historian Bernard Champigneulle (author of a monograph on Rodin) these are *"... two words which dwelt in the very depths of his being."* [Ibid:153] In a sense women became 'idols' in Rodin's life. Champigneulle carries on to say that *"Woman had ceased to be the passive object of male concupiscence and become a sensual being who shared in all the transports of sensual pleasure."*

Rodin's female images, although they are nudes, are never expressed in vulgar positions. He exalts the female body rather than degrading it. To him, the female body was an object of passion.

Unlike Rubens and Rembrandt, Rodin's sculptures were produced in the late 19th Century, when women were already starting to seek their own independence in a male dominated society. Camille Claudel, was one woman artist striving to gain the same recognition that Rodin received in the art world. She did not achieve the same success and fame as Rodin did, even though her work was almost of the same quality and standard or possibly even better.

CONCLUSION

Taking the above quotes, ideas and discussions into account, we can conclude by saying that the period before and during the 19th century was dominated by men. Many of the male artists, towards the turn of the 19th century, began to experience and fear the growing freedom of women in society. The foundation of 'male as the dominant sex' began to shake. This fear and uncertainty, amongst other sexual related fears, were expressed by male artists in their works. The artists used the female image in vulgar, erotic and violent means, as a form of their expression. These forms of expression degrade, humiliate and demean the female image. In some cases, a specific woman had a direct influence on the artist. Usually it was the woman he loved. Her image would be expressed directly or indirectly in the artist's work. Seldom was the female image portrayed in a positive light during the 19th Century. It seems that the major role that the nude, female image played in art, specifically during the 19th and early 20th Century, was to satisfy the desires and fantasies of the dominant sex. Liberal actions rising among women at the turn of the 19th century, in an effort to escape from the existing male domineering society, seemed to accelerate and increase the 'negative' content in the use of female imagery by male artists in an attempt to keep women in her traditional 'passive' state.

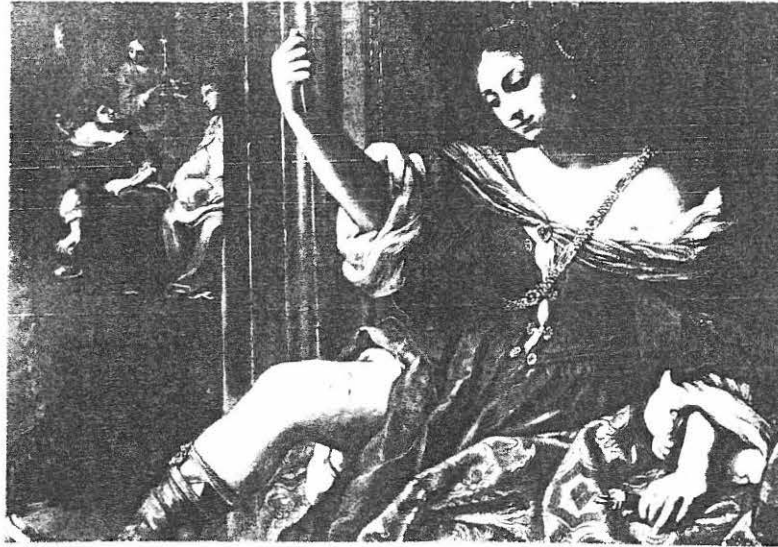


Fig. 3.1. Portia Wounding her Thigh. (Sirani)

3.

THE DEPICTION OF THE FEMALE IMAGE BY FEMALE ARTISTS

3.1 Woman Artists Before The Feminist Movement

The general attitude towards art and women artists, before and during the 19th century, is expressed by British authors Adler and Garb. *"Art functioned as the marker of taste, of sensibility, of 'difference'. It was created by men of 'genius' and appreciated by men of taste."* [1987:9] In these times art, culture and scientific knowledge were regarded solely as the domain belonging to men. Russian architect Feodor Rerberg, wrote at the turn of the 19th century, that *"The art of women is intimate. It is rarely seen on the streets, it does not build palaces or temples, it does not decorate their walls with paintings, nor city squares with monuments."* [Yablonskaya, 1990:221] Women, in general, were not considered intellectually capable of achieving art on a high standard.

Like many of the women artists of the Renaissance period, **Artemisia Gentileschi** and **Elisabetta Sirani** were the daughters of painters. Orazio Gentileschi was an important follower of Caravaggio while Giovanni Andrea Sirani was a pupil of Reni.

Many 17th century artists portrayed interest in female heroines, including Sirani, who produced numerous paintings on this theme. e.g. Portia Wounding Her Thigh [1664]. (Fig. 3.1). She was so talented that people did not believe it was her own work that she was producing. To overcome this stereotypical male view she became accustomed to working in public. She even opened a school for women artists in Bologna, 1652. Work of such standard and quality was expected only from male artists.



Fig. 3.2. Susanna and the Elders. (Gentileschi)

During this same period in Italy, another woman artist, Artemisia Gentileschi, was also receiving recognition as a talented artist. Rape and seduction was another favourite theme in the Renaissance period. Tintoretto's version of Susanna and the Elders was previously discussed in chapter two. His representation confirms "*an ideology of dominance over powerlessness, in which woman's voluptuous body is affirmed as an object of exchange between men.*" [Chadwick, 1990:97] It is an expressive scene of women fulfilling men's sexual needs.

Gentileschi's version of Susanna and the Elders [1610] (Fig. 3.2), however, departs from this tradition in various ways. She isolates the figure against an architectural structure, confining it to a restricted space. The nude is portrayed as a distressed young woman, whose twisted body emphasizes her vulnerability. [Chadwick, 1990:97]

Normally, in other representations concerning the same subject, the male gaze is often reinforced by directing both gazes towards the female body. Gentileschi however, represents the conspiratorial glance of one elder towards the other. She abandons the more traditional compositions by placing Susanna off-centre, in the composition. [Chadwick, 1990:97]

Other paintings executed by Gentileschi, for example Judith Decapitating Holofernes and Judith in the tent of Holofernes [c. 1620], contain scenes of ferocious energy and violence, not characteristic of women artists during this period. British author and professor, Whitney Chadwick, mentions that the gazes of the female images decapitating Holofernes are not the usual coy glances and averted gazes of Western paintings. The result, she says, "*... is a direct confrontation which disrupts the conventional relationship between an "active" male spectator and a passive female recipient.*" [Ibid:102] Gentileschi confronts this concept in a subtle way, just as many female artists succeeding her in centuries to come do.

In both these women artists' work, we can see that they intentionally move away from the traditional method of portraying female images, involved in the chosen or

given themes. The female image is seen from a female's point of view and not from the customary male's view. The result, though subtle, is seen in the difference of position, posture, facial expression and handling of the subject matter in a given theme, of the female image.

Berthe Morisot, an upper middle-class woman, was a 19th century French Impressionist. Her work was often viewed in a predominantly 19th century, stereotypical manner; according to British authors Adler and Garb as "... *the unmeditated expression of an intrinsic femininity, delicate and charming in nature, but essentially lightweight and insignificant when compared with the work of her male contemporaries.*" [1987:7]

She lived in a time when debates and arguments concerning women's education continued throughout the century. Women who possessed talent as writers or artists were thought to be copying men, or accused of using men to do their work. Their talent was simply not recognised, as was the case in Sirani's time.

There were many factors that obstructed the paths of women striving to become artists. They were pressurized to conform to the accepted norms of feminine behaviour in society. Women of Morisot's class were not allowed to venture out on their own without a chaperon. [Adler & Garb, 1987:16] Morisot expressed her frustration in her journal concerning this matter "*What I long for is the freedom of going about alone, of coming and going, ... of stopping and looking at the artistic shops, of entering churches and museums, of walking about the old streets at night; that's what I long for; and that's the freedom without which one cannot become a real artist. Do you imagine that I get much good from what I see, chaperoned as I am, ... This is one of the principal reasons why there are no female artists.*" [Ibid:16]

Women were also excluded from the studio and café, where male artists gathered and exchanged ideas about painting. Morisot's marriage to Manet's brother Eugène



Fig. 3.3. On the lawn. (Morisot)

and her friendship with Degas, were the only means that gave her many opportunities for discussion on the latest artistic debates. Without these 'favourable' circumstances she may not have achieved what she had in the art world.

Women artists were limited to expressing certain subject matters. They mainly represented the daily rituals which comprised a woman's world. Morisot often represented sewing, nursing and minding children e.g. On the lawn [1874] (Fig. 3.3).

Occasionally, when the family took holidays in the countryside, she was able to paint landscapes and other scenes. Women very rarely painted portraits of men. It was thought inappropriate for an unmarried woman to ask a man to sit for her.

The theme of the nude was hardly ever represented by women artists of the time. They were inhibited by their restricted training and current notions of decency [Adler & Garb, 1987:97]. These accepted 'norms' were due to a male dominated society.

Commenting on this, Nochlin mentions in her book Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays [1989:159], that women students were not admitted to join the life drawing classes at the Royal Academy in London, as late as 1893. When they eventually were allowed, the model had to be partially covered by drapery. Due to these circumstances Nochlin states: *"To be deprived of this ultimate stage of training meant, in effect, to be deprived of the possibility of creating major art works, unless one were a very ingenious lady indeed, ..."* [Ibid:160]

To her knowledge [Ibid:160] there are no existing historical representations of woman artists drawing from the nude. Nochlin carries on to say, *"that is, it is all right for a ('low', of course) woman to reveal herself naked-as-an-object for a group of men, but forbidden to a woman to participate in the active study and recording of naked-man-as-an-object, or even of a fellow woman."* [Ibid:160]



Fig. 3.4. Before the Mirror. (Morisot)

Other 19th century male views obstructing the paths of women artists are expressed by Tamar Garb, in her article The Forbidden Gaze [Art in America, May 1991:147]. Women artists were seen as incapable of working in higher genres. It was considered far too expensive to provide fine-art education for women, causing an over-crowding of the artistic profession. *"Even the problem of depopulation was invoked : some believed that the advent of the professional woman would reduce the nation's birthrate - if not because women artists might refuse to have children, then because their reproductive capacities would inevitably deteriorate as a result of excessive mental stimulation."* It is possible that this opinion still exists in the 20th century, but to a lesser extent.

Artist, Mary Weatherford stated in an issue of Art in America [Fruch and Raven, Art Journal; summer 1991, vol. 50, No. 2, p 9] : *"It's difficult for women in the art world, and I'm committed to my feminist project. But it's a mistake to talk about discrimination in the art world, since it is really about discrimination in the real world."*

Despite all these obstacles Morisot did, however, produce a few very successful portrayals of the female nude. e.g. Before the Mirror [1890] (Fig. 3.4). Unlike Manet and Degas's bathing nudes or reclining prostitutes, which were often somewhat 'satirical', Morisot's nudes are handled in a more gentle and sympathetic manner. Chadwick describes Morisot's nudes as *"a deeply sympathetic representation of self-awareness and awakening sexuality."* [1990:221] It is possible that Morisot expresses her own experiences as a woman, in her portrayals of the nude.

Morisot participated in many exhibitions alongside the other Impressionist artists. She was a member of the group which organized the independent group show held in 1874. (Known as the first impressionist exhibition). [Adler & Garb:32]. Art critic, Gustave Geffroy declared that *"No one represents Impressionism with more refined talent or with more authority than Morisot."* [Ibid:56] This positive

comment from a male critic of her time, was almost an exception compared to most of the reviews she received.

In 1888, art critic Alfred de Lostalot wrote of her work *"Given her delicate colour and adroitly daring play of her brush with light, it is a real pity to see this artist gives up her work when it is only barely sketched because she is so easily satisfied with it."* [Ibid:57] Yet her work was impressionistic, like those of her male contemporary impressionists.

Critics commented on the 'lack of finish' in her work, blaming it on her femininity. Paul de Charry, in a review in 1880, wrote, *"Morisot is a woman, and therefore capricious. Unfortunately she is like Eve who bites the apple and then gives up on it too soon. Too bad, since she bites so well!"* [Ibid:64]

During the late 19th century art critic, Teodor de Wyzewa claimed that Impressionist painters' expressive qualities were inherent to women. He declared that *"Only a woman has the right to rigorously practise the Impressionist system, she alone can limit her effort to the translation of impressions."* [Ibid:64]

In 1892, Gustave Geffroy wrote of her work as *"... a delicate painting which is a feminine painting."* [Ibid:64]

These dominant 19th century views of femininity, failed to recognize that most of the Impressionists were male artists. They neither acknowledged the variety of different ways in which other contemporary women artists worked. [Ibid:64]

These critics, amongst others, imply that Morisot's style is a result of her "unconscious expression of self" [Ibid:64] due to her 'femininity'. In other words, there was not a conscious effort of control over her work. Recognition is given, however, to her male colleagues' *"deliberate exploration of certain aesthetic and political choices, which resulted in a particular way of working."* [Ibid:64] Attributing Morisot's style to her femininity is unreasonable when comparing her

work with that of her male associates contemporaries. Her work was mostly viewed, not as a professional artist's work, but rather as the work of a woman.

Morisot's success as an artist was not only as a result of her talent. Factors such as her marriage to Manet's brother Eugène, her family's wealth and support contributed to her success. Less fortunate female artists, for example French artist Marie Bracquemond, were inhibited in their development as artists. Bracquemond came from a lower class and received no support from family or husband, hence she is one of the least known of the women Impressionists.

When considering the difficulties and obstructions that had to be overcome by Morisot and other women of her time, one realises how much more difficult was it for women before the 19th century, when men still played a more dominant role in society.

Little female imagery was expressed by women artists during this period, owing to the small number of practising women artists. Nude female imagery was rare, due to the restrictive circumstances already discussed. The few female nudes by women artists hold a subtle difference in the manner in which they have been portrayed, compared to that of their male contemporaries. The women artists seemed to handle nude female imagery in a more sensitive and possibly more considerate approach to the subject matter.

It was a continuous and tremendous struggle for women to gain recognition as artists. They possessed a limited amount of freedom in portraying certain subject matter, specifically the female nude. Adler and Garb [Ibid:84] make it clear that woman, for critic Charles Baudelaire and for so many of his contemporaries of the 19th century, was " 'a divinity, a star ... a kind of idol, stupid perhaps, but dazzling and bewitching,' and 'a perfect image of the savagery that lurks in the midst of civilisation,' and 'it was this creature which the male artist was to 'observe' and depict'..." and not the female artist. Women's place was to be the 'observed' and not the 'observer.' It was generally accepted that women could not think for

themselves and perhaps did not even have the ability to think on the same level as their male contemporaries.

Having taken all the discussed 'restrictions' on women artists, up until the turn of the 19th century, into account, it is safe to conclude that these 'restrictions' have definitely had an effect on the way in which these women artists have portrayed the female image.

3.2 The Female Image expressed by Female Artists in reaction to past and present dominant male views

Art critic Donald Kuspit, quotes a few lines from the writings of Konrad Lorenz describing the slow transformation by the Feminist Movement. [1984, Nancy Sperio. Art in America, January:88]

"At first nervously submissive, the female gradually loses her fear of the male, and with it every inhibition against showing aggressive behaviour, so that one day her initial shyness is gone and she stands, fearless and truculent in the middle of the territory of her mate, her fins outspread in an attitude of self-display, and wearing a dress which, in some species, is scarcely distinguishable from that of the male."

The restrictions placed on women artists within a male dominant society, discussed up until now, still prevail to a certain extent during the 20th century. Women artists of this period take a firm stand and struggle persistently to overcome these restrictions. It is still questionable if their efforts are successful.

Early feminism was very 'body orientated'. Women began to question and confirm their existence as women, in a male dominated society. They did this by describing and expressing women's bodies and bodily functions. All these images focused on the affirmation of being a woman. This first important step for women, according

THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING A WOMAN ARTIST:

- Working without the pressure of success.**
- Not having to be in shows with men.**
- Having an escape from the art world in your 4 free-lance jobs.**
- Knowing your career might pick up after you're eighty.**
- Being reassured that whatever kind of art you make it will be labeled feminine.**
- Not being stuck in a tenured teaching position.**
- Seeing your ideas live on in the work of others.**
- Having the opportunity to choose between career and motherhood.**
- Not having to choke on those big cigars or paint in Italian suits.**
- Having more time to work after your mate dumps you for someone younger.**
- Being included in revised versions of art history.**
- Not having to undergo the embarrassment of being called a genius.**
- Getting your picture in the art magazines wearing a gorilla suit.**

Please send \$ and comments to: **GUERRILLA GIRLS** CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD
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WHEN RACISM & SEXISM ARE NO LONGER FASHIONABLE, WHAT WILL YOUR ART COLLECTION BE WORTH?

The art market won't bestow mega-buck prices on the work of a few white males forever. For the 177 million you just spent on a single Jasper Johns painting, you could have bought at least one work by all of these women and artists of color:

Bernice Abbott	Elaine de Kooning	Dorothea Lange	Sarah Peale
Anni Albers	Lavinia Fontana	Marie Laurencin	Ljubova Popova
Sofonisba Anguisola	Meta Warwick Fuller	Edmonia Lewis	Olga Rozanova
Diane Arbus	Artemisia Gentileschi	Judith Leyster	Nellie Mae Rowe
Vanessa Bell	Marguerite Gérard	Barbara Longhi	Rachel Ruysch
Isabel Bishop	Natalia Goncharova	Dora Maar	Kay Sage
Rosa Bonheur	Kate Greenaway	Lee Miller	Augusta Savage
Elizabeth Bougreau	Barbara Hepworth	Lisette Model	Vavara Stepanova
Margaret Bourke-White	Eva Hesse	Paula Modersohn-Becker	Florine Stettheimer
Romaine Brooks	Hannah Hoch	Tina Modotti	Sophie Taeuber-Arp
Julia Margaret Cameron	Anna Huntingdon	Berthe Morisot	Alma Thomas
Emily Carr	May Howard Jackson	Grandma Moses	Marietta Robusti Tintoretto
Rosalba Carriera	Frida Kahlo	Gabriele Münter	Suzanne Valadon
Mary Cassatt	Angelica Kauffmann	Alice Neel	Remedios Varo
Constance Marie Charpentier	Hilma af Klimt	Louise Nevelson	Elizabeth Vigée Le Brun
Imogen Cunningham	Kathe Kollwitz	Georgia O'Keeffe	Laura Wheeling Waring
Sonia Delaunay	Lee Krasner	Meret Oppenheim	

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Fig. 3.5. Untitled posters. (Guerrilla Girls)

to artist, writer and teacher, Joyce Fernandes [1991, Art Journal vol. 50, No. 2, 35] "*... was a process of self-identification ...*" Women exchanged images, ideas and knowledge with one another. This led to various groups and women organisations.

In 1969, Judy Chicago began educating women in the arts, at Fresno State College in California. It was probably the first feminist art program. [Lacy, S. 1991. Art Journal, vol. 50, No. 2:64] This led to their first successful class project 'Womanhouse'. Here women were encouraged and challenged to express themselves, their needs, values and experiences freely. The students took over an old abandoned house. In each room an environment was created of the individual personality of the various women. The ideas were based on the 'home'. Miriam Schapiro (teacher in California, artist and writer) expresses 'home' in her own words.

"Our home, which we as a culture of women have been identified with for centuries, has always been the area where we nourished and were nourished. It has been the base of operations out of which we fought and struggled with ourselves to please others. What would happen, we asked, if we created a home in which we pleased no one but ourselves? ... what if each women were to develop her own dreams and fantasies in one room of that home?..." [1972. Art Journal, xxx1/3:268] Performances were also held in Womanhouse, by the Performance Workshop. 'Womenhouse' was a means to break away from the confined space that society had forced, and often still forces, women into.

Another active women's group, **Guerrilla Girls** - Conscience of the Art world, formed in 1985, chose to protest against sexism and racism in the art world. Posters were put up and demonstrators protested in front of museums and galleries, "*... pointing to the inadequate numbers of women artists represented in leading New York galleries,*" announced by a press release dated 6 May 1985. [Schor, M. 1990. Art Forum International, Sept:125]. For example: Untitled posters (Fig. 3.5) During 1985, women artists in America still did not receive the recognition equal

to that of their male contemporaries, as was the case with Morisot in the 19th century.

The Guerrilla Girls' precise identities and numbers are unknown. In the past, anonymity was a curse on female artistic creativity. The Guerrilla Girls use it however, to their advantage.

Feminism has analyzed over the past two decades, the depiction of women in advertising, pornography and history. They have continued to discuss the ways in which these images have reinforced the powerlessness of women. [Fernandes, J. 1991. Art Journal, vol. 50, No. 2:36]

Women groups such as WAP (Woman against Pornography) and WAVAW (Woman against Violence against Women) have supported these discussions. They condemn the pornographic female imagery and industry. "As one WAVAW group wrote, *"Not only does pornography reinforce male sexuality, it also perpetuates the myth that women are willing and eager to be dominated, often violently."* [Frueh, J and Raven, A. 1991. Art Journal, vol. 50, No. 2:6]

Poet and writer, Maureen Bloomfield raises the following question in her article titled The National Sculpture Conference : Works by Women (NSC:WW). *"Do women's museums, conferences and organisations help women's art to be better recognised within the larger art community or do they lead to greater isolation?"*

New York artist, Harmony Hammond answers the question as follows: *"Today we know about more art by women than ever before in history, and that is because of the women's movement. It is because of women's galleries, exhibitions, magazines, slide registries, books and projects of all sorts that we made happen. I look to these institutions to continue this visibility. Certainly, the NSC:WW is important in this respect ... Such projects not only validate our work to ourselves and give us the strength and inspiration to continue working, but also help us to become recognised within the larger art community."* [1987. Sculpture Vol. 6, No. 5:24]

Hammond's answer adequately sums up the results and consequences of the feminist movement. The various women's groups and organizations aimed at changing certain traditional and contemporary 'female imagery' expressed by male artists. This movement was a reaction against dominant male views and an attempt to bring more women artists into the light.

As we have already mentioned, **Judy Chicago** has pioneered new means and approaches to art education for women. She co-founded the Feminist Studio Workshop and the Women's Building in Los Angeles. She has introduced new ways of expressing female imagery into the art community, through her ideas and art works.

In the 1960's Chicago began using forms around a central core, her vagina, that which made her a woman. It was through this that she gained sexual pleasure, yet because of it she was despised by society. [Chicago, 1975:55] She would express the sensation of orgasm in these images explaining in her own words that *"I was trying to affirm my own femaleness and my own power and thus implicitly challenge male superiority."* [Ibid:55] Colour was used in these images to represent emotional states e.g. the state of orgasm through colour that dissolved. These created representations of vaginal iconography related, in some way, to personal experiences of the body. In this way her works attempt to confront and transform the culturally accepted female image that had mostly been presented in the works of male artists.

At a show, held at California state College at Fullerton, (\pm 1969) male reviewers refused to accept that Chicago's work was intimately connected to her femaleness. They interpreted the work simply as working with formal issues and could not comprehend the true meaning and intensity of her work.

Enlarging on these reactions and reviews, Chicago writes that *"At that time, there was no acknowledgement in the art community that a woman might have a different point of view than a man, or if difference was acknowledged that difference meant inferiority."* [Ibid:63] It seemed that during this time, to be considered a 'serious'



Fig. 3.6. The Dinner Party. (Chicago)



Fig. 3.7. Primordial Goddess. (Place setting from The Dinner Party.) (Chicago)

artist, she would have to suppress her femaleness and move away from the direct expression of womanliness. Once again, women artists' subject matter was restricted, due to the dominant sex and their 'hold' in the art world.

Female painter, Miriam Schapiro however, was able to 'read' Chicago's work. She could identify with it. A male artist friend of Chicago could not identify with her oversimplified forms by stating. "*Judy, I could look at these paintings for twenty years and it would never occur to me that they were cunts.*" [Ibid ; 64]

Chicago explains these reactions of male viewers as the result of trying to deal with matters crucial to herself as a woman, "... *'within' the structure of male art language and a male oriented art community, a group whose values reflected the patriarchal culture in which we live.*" [Ibid:65] According to Chicago, in the 1970's there was no frame of reference to understand a woman's struggle. [Ibid:65] Men could not respond to such imagery, as they had always been comfortable and accustomed to a community based on their interests and needs as men. They did not understand or value the struggles that women were going through in the 1970's.

The Dinner Party (Fig. 3.6) and Primordial Goddess (Place setting from The Dinner Party) (Fig. 3.7) [1974-79] , was a successful work executed by Chicago, that became a symbolic history of women in Western civilization. She explains The Dinner Party as an attempt "... *to try and create a work of art that could convey the sense of women's real contributions and symbolize the tragedy of women's containment.*" [Ibid:210]

Judy Chicago's participation in the Women's Movement opened many doors for female artists and created a new awareness of female imagery expressed by women artists. I believe that the consequences and results of her efforts are felt not only in Western civilization but amongst S.A. contemporary artists as well. e.g. Chicago confronts the traditional manner in which the female image has been portrayed, by

expressing female imagery from a feminine view, inspired and created from personal experiences, as a woman.

This struggle is also expressed differently in the images of American artist **Cindy Sherman**. She has developed many styles and subject matter in her photographs, fashion photos, films stills, fairy tales, art historical portraiture and scenes of dummies positioned in sex acts. Out of her work emerges much feminist content, which also reflects both past and current feminist thinking, concerning the struggles over sexuality and representations of the female image. Many critics still refuse to accept that Sherman's motives and theories are embedded in feminist theory. According to Jan Augikos (critic and a historian in New York), "*... they still recast her gender polemics as a grand concert of 'human' (and 'human' always means 'male') desire.*" [1993. Art Forum International, Jan:74]

Sherman's photographic portraits involve images of women selected from magazines and movies. These images are surrounded by sheets, curtains, bathrobes, dresses and wigs: These accessories add an atmosphere of fear, waiting and submissiveness, that often plays a large part in women's lives, both in and out of the movies. Sherman views images of women in the way society reads them. She adds to her work a sense of authority, anger and a somewhat perverse humour.

Sherman uses herself in the various roles of anxious, withdrawn, dreamy or stupefied women. These women are far from desirable and are not narcissistic or exhibitionistic. According to Jamey Gambell (Author in New York) images in her fashion photos "*do not project the nonchalant sexuality and affluent ease that are essential to the fantasies fashion nurtures. The fantasies they embody are too individualized...*" [1984. Art in America, March:116] Some of the works express an image belonging to no specific social class, having lost their social standing. They are victims, dreamers, waiting for outside events to decide their fate.

Margaret Iverson (Lecturer in England and Reviews Editor of the British Scholarly Journal) states in her article Fashioning Feminine Identity, that "*Sherman's*



Fig. 3.8. *Untitled.* (Sherman)

photographs present the female body in the third person : "She" poses as object of the gaze in relation to "he", actively taking up a passive, exhibitionist aim. " [1988. Art International, No. 2, Spring:57] Sherman further questions the politics of pornographic representation through the use of dummies involved in sexual acts.

She arranges medical dolls, possessing anatomically correct genitalia, in performances of sexual fantasy, exposing what is conventionally hidden. They seem to expose knowledge of what sex looks like, yet at the same time are not real. The fact that the dummies fail to imitate the sensations of real, soft flesh; distances the spectator from the body. The surrounding luxurious fabrics tend to focus more on sensuality. e.g. Untitled. [1992] (Fig. 3.8)

These images may also evoke castration anxiety. Commenting on this, Critic Augikos asks the question *"...what is their effect on the woman spectator...?"* He continues to add that *"Metaphorically, they represent what is typically displaced, sublimated, or repressed. Sherman's pictures, in fact, flaunt accoutrements immediately suggestive of fetishism."* [1993. Art Forum International, Jan:79]

Like her photographs, Sherman's dummies representing female sexuality, promote the desire to see the private and forbidden. Yet unlike traditional portrayals of female sexuality by male artists (discussed in chapter two), Sherman *"withholds both narcissistic identification with the female body and that body's objectification as the basis for erotic pleasure. Her mechanisms of arousal - rubbery tits, plastic pussies, assorted asses, dicks, and dildos - may deceive momentarily, but finally defeat the proprietary gaze of the spectator, whose desire can only partially be satisfied by the spectacle of artificial flesh."* [Ibid:79]

Cindy Sherman, through the use of her female images, attempts to question the traditional concept of 'male' as active spectator. Her photographs involve active looking through a woman's eyes, as Sherman herself is the photographer. Critic Augikos states that *"... this ambiguity makes them both seductive and confrontational"* [Ibid:77] She casts us, as women, in a role as both viewer and



Fig. 3.9. *Untitled black and white photograph.* (Kruger)

subject, defying the traditionally accepted role of male as 'active' viewer and female as 'passive' object or subject to be looked at.

The montage technique that American artist **Barbara Kruger** uses, is to juxtapose, superimpose and interpose various found texts and photographic images. Her aim as an iconoclast-artist is similar to that of Sherman's and Chicago's. According to the writings of Iversen, the aim is to destroy "... *the old visual pleasures and man-made entrapments of desire.*" [1988. Art International., No. 2, Spring:52] Through the use of these techniques "*she exposes, opposes, deposes stereotypes and clichés.*" [Owens, C. 1984. Art in America. January:98]

Her work is concerned with gesture, more than with action. Craig Owens (Writer and senior Editor of Art in America) more accurately describes her concern "*with the stereotype's transformation of action into gesture...*" [Ibid:98] She also makes use of personal pronouns to include and involve the viewer directly. Because of the use of these pronouns such as "I", "we" and "you", her pronouncements acquire body weight and she personalizes the information by allowing each sentence or statement to make a direct challenge. This challenge is not necessarily directed at a group of viewers, but rather at each individual spectator. Some viewers find Kruger's work to be intimidating. She, in turn, stresses that her work signifies threat and does not in itself pose a threat. [Owens, Ibid:100]

Owens describes 'stereotypes' to be those that "...*treat the body as an object to be held in position, subservience, submission;...*" [Ibid:100] In one of Kruger's works, she reflects a woman's face in a shattered mirror, accompanied by the words 'you are not yourself.' In other words, according to Iversen "... *ones fantasized recognitions of ourselves in media images are delusions.*" [Op cit:53] Immobility is also a common theme in Krugers work. She portrays a female silhouette, pinned down and accompanied by the statement : 'We have received orders not to move.' e.g. (Fig. 3.9) [Untitled black and white photograph:1983]

We can relate the female image to the writings of Michel Foucault in his book Discipline and Punish. He states that "*The body... is directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs.*" [Op cit:98 - 100] Kruger addresses the struggle, in which an active role is played by the stereotype. This struggle, according to Owens, is "... *over the control and positioning of the body in political and ideological terms.*" [Ibid:98]

Kruger not only reacts against traditional male dominating views concerning female imagery. To a greater extent she reacts against a male dominated society that places control and restrictions over women in political and ideological structures. With this approach, her work is taken a step further than the art world.

Having already discussed the importance of 'erotic desire', expressed by male surrealist artists, in chapter two. Professor Chadwick believes that it is this aesthetic point of view that divided men and women surrealists. She continues to say that men seemed "... *to treat woman as an image or agent of inspiration in an art of disruptive hallucination and erotic violence,...*" Women however sought to express "... *a specifically female consciousness by recourse to a more composed, narrative, often autobiographical art of sensibility.*" [1985. Art in America, July:121]

According to Chadwick, there is no erotic art amongst women Surrealists, "*as confrontational, explicit and shocking*" as art expressed by male Surrealists. There are "*no frenzied paroxysms of erotic violence, no obsessive search for a latent sexual content behind every image and object.*" [Ibid:122]

Leonor Fini, amongst other women artists, successfully expresses her own individuality in her work. She achieves this by placing her self-image, often in recognizable depictions, at the centre of her paintings. In Fini's paintings we can often recognize her dark catlike eyes and sensuous mouth, characteristic of herself. In this way she manages to assert her own autonomy and freedom to an extent that



Fig. 3.10. Composition with figures on a Terrace. (Fini)

seems the basis of the Surrealist ideal. [Chadwick, 1985:111] Fini supports this view by stating that *"The small child believes that it is the centre of the world. But I, I accept this officially. I have lived and celebrated it."* [Ibid:111] Fini continued to explore 'areas' such as sexual power and dominance by women and female sexual imagery, which was still alien to many (both male and female) of her time. An example of her work is Composition with figures on a Terrace [:1939], (Fig. 3.10)

Fini has also produced a number of paintings involving androgynous male figures asleep under watchful female divinities. Yet these male images do not hold the same standard of eroticism that is often visible in female imagery expressed by male surrealists.

Women surrealists' work, specifically Fini's, are dominated by personal experience as was the case with the previously discussed feminist artists. The female image remains at the centre of the work, *"but not as the repository of male desire and the stimulus of male creativity,"* as Chadwick puts it, *"but as the source of the sensibility that will weave together dream and reality, conscious and unconscious states, past and present."* [Op cit:124] Her work, like other women surrealists, was filled with narrative content, often reflecting her own life.

Art using female imagery, which spoke directly to their lives as women, was produced in the Surrealist movement. Their path was one *"of personal exploration rather than that of a collective liberation of desire."* [Ibid:128]

Fini's independence kept her from totally joining the Surrealist movement. She stated her position, writing that *"Men have tried to exile, to imprison, women. A study exclusively devoted to women is still a sort of exile."* [Op cit:236] Her life and art continually advance *"... the notion of the autonomous, absolute woman : beautiful, imperious, and governed by passion."* [Ibid:112]

Like Chicago and Sherman, Fini is in total opposition to the traditionally accepted views of sexual power and dominance belonging to men.

British artist Nancy Spero's female images seem to be approached differently to that of previously discussed female artists. They appear as erotic, crude, brutal and barbaric. Their appearance is similar to Picasso's works, yet according to author and critic Donald Kuspit, they are unlike Picasso's female images in the way that his seem malleable and 'puppet' like. [1984. *Art in America*, Jan:88] Spero's images are derived from primitive art or art of the insane. The refuse to be seductive or sentimental and are expressed rather aggressively. She expresses the content in her work, in a direct manner.

Spero views women as the symbol of the rejected in a male-dominated world system. The victim of mistreatment under male ideology. Her work expresses the stubborn, refusal of the 'feminine' to conform to certain social standards of behaviour and conduct, in a male society.

Spero's art seems to consist of four basic phases. They range, as art critic Kuspit states, "...from a critical, negative position to one of ideal female individuality" [Ibid:90] Her early works are labelled as her black paintings. They are obsessed with the issue of the difficulty of women obtaining an independent female identity. She achieves this by depicting the female image "... bound to her sexual and maternal functions." [Ibid:92] In her second phase, the female images become more dynamic involving the world-system in the form of the Vietnam War. Kuspit describes the content of this work in the following words. "*The violence is now explicit, in contrast to the sullen resentment of the black paintings.*" [Ibid:92]

The third phase is called the 'Codex Artraud' series. It involves texts combined with female images. Spero draws many of her texts from Antonin Artaud's (French actor, director and poet) writings. These works of Spero create a sense of horror and secretiveness. According to Kuspit (French actor, director and poet), in this phase "... the withdrawal of woman from man accelerates and becomes even more perverse." [Ibid:93] The texts show woman, including Spero, with a mind of her own.



Fig. 3.11. The First Language. (Spero)

The fourth phase still involves female images and words taken from other authors. She even includes 'footnotes' along side the art works. There is a flow of information in these works, creating an intense psychological unity. [Ibid:95] The female image is monumentalized and exalted through the use of repetition. The figures are energized, reflecting self-acceptance and enjoyment of her own being. Kuspit states that: "*The bodies now have a classical uprightness...*" An example of Spero's work is The First Language (detail) [:1981] (Fig. 3.11)

In conclusion, we can say that although Spero's art seems characteristic of male artists' work, it is viewed from a woman's point of view concerning her own body and expressing woman as the victim of man. Her later works condemn man by his own actions and words against woman. Eventually she elevates woman to "*...having more willpower as well as more self-understanding than man.*" [Ibid:96]. Many of Spero's works refer to herself as woman. They contain personal and individual content of her struggles as a woman artist and as a woman.

Spero's female images express "*... a triumph of the will, a triumph over the male tradition which depicted woman as a dead weight, all her allure no more than a sign of her primary role as an instrument for the preservation of the species. But as pure spontaneity she apotheosizes her own will to survive.*" [Ibid:96] Spero symbolizes the independence that women are gaining in the 20th century

The women artists that have been researched, react in various ways against the male-dominated views, discussed in chapter two and also against persisting male dominant views prevailing in the 20th century. The basic influences on their works appear to be similar. They are all determined to gain an independent stand, not only in the art world but also within society. The analysis of representations, experiences and images of women, including the initial process, become important in these artists' work.

Judy Chicago's entire working process and chosen medium portrays a femininity that she feels could only be created and understood by women. With the implementation

of various working programmes for women artists, Judy Chicago aimed at creating a situation that would encourage and stimulate recognition for the female artist in society. Iconoclast artist Barbara Kruger, unlike Chicago, destroys existing found female images through a destructive process of cutting and pasting, juxtaposing these images into new visual materials. Kruger personalizes her images with words arranged in various thought provoking questions or statements, confronting each one of us, causing us to pause and think. One questions the effect of her work, whether it causes a momentary thought or does it achieve further contemplation and meditation in the minds of viewers.

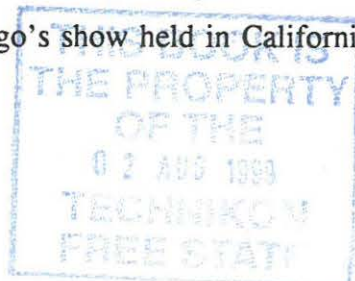
Nancy Spero, to a certain extent, also juxtaposes images, but images of her own creation. Her technique of repetition and primitive ink drawings seem to express her frustrations arising out of the struggle she has experienced as a woman and her own desire in gaining total independence.

Leonor Fini personalizes and portrays her own individuality by reflecting her own physical characteristics throughout her work, Cindy Sherman 'individualizes' her work to a far greater extent by taking photographs of herself posing in various roles, yet symbolizing different women. Her photographs deny the *"masculine desire to fix the women in a stable and stabilizing identity"* [Chadwick, 1990:358], often projected in advertising and film media. Feminist writer, critic and editor, Cassandra Langer, pursues a feminist analysis of Sherman's and Kruger's work in her article Feminist Art Criticism: Turning Points and Sticking Places. She raises a few thought provoking questions. *"What is the attitude fostered by these artists towards women? How do the models of women represented affect the audience? What audience do Kruger and Sherman appeal to? Is it provocative to participate - to see with the eyes of the male gazer?"*. Langer concludes these questions with one final question. *"Can feminist artists enter the 1990's using the system without it abusing them?"* [1991, Art Journal, Vol.50, No.2, Summer:25] Do These artists receive the audience reaction they intended or could their work possibly have a negative result and even 'back-fire' on their original intentions?

The processes that these artists have chosen to take, are just as important as the work itself. Lecturer and editor, Margaret Iversen describes Kruger's process as destroying "...the old visual pleasure and man-made entrapments of desire" by physically attacking the media images with scissors and glue. [1988. Art International, No.2, Spring:52] The manner in which she participates in creating these works is just as important as the final result of her work. Nancy Spero also participates in an aggressive and violent manner, by repeating fragmented images, using a rubber stamp and ink to convey her content. Her rebelliousness is evident in the manner in which she creates these often barbaric and crude images. Cindy Sherman physically disembodies the limbs of plastic dolls, rearranging them in sexually confronting poses. The physical participation in the processes taken by these three artists all involve a certain amount of aggressiveness, destruction, violence and rebelliousness. The actual steps taken to complete the works are as much a part of the work as the final result. Their approach totally contradicts and confronts the traditional belief that women's art often displays a "*sentimental femininity, a womanly grace that is strained and resolute*" [Chadwick, 1990:17] Judy Chicago's work displays an aura of femininity, yet it is definitely not sentimental or strained.

Leonor Fini is not as physically involved as the former artists, but rather attacks mentally with images from a 'dream-like' world. Images of herself are created and placed in surroundings of fantasy.

These female artists continually assess and question the prevailing views of sexual power and dominance belonging to men, including male dominance in society and the political realm. Their art continues to challenge the traditionally accepted role of male as 'active' spectator and female as 'passive' object. They deal with the images that portray female emancipation, vaginal iconography, iconoclasm and photographic fictionalized reality, to oppose and confront the traditional manner in which the female image has continually been portrayed. This type of reaction is generally not easily accepted by male critics of the 20th century, as was the case with Judy Chicago's show held in California (\pm 1969).



These actions taken by women reflect, not only against a male dominated art world and society, but also on their own personal inner conflicts as women in their struggle to be liberated.

CHAPTER 4

Questionnaires and interviews concerning South African contemporary artists.

It was previously concluded that before and during the early 20th century, most male artists held a predominantly negative attitude when using female imagery. Female artists during this period were limited and restricted in many ways, due to a persisting male dominated society. As a result this influenced female artists' creative processes, content and attitudes towards expressing the female as subject matter.

For this research I have selected four male and four female contemporary South African artists. By means of interviews and questionnaires, their reasons and motivations, for the use of female imagery in their works, will be evaluated and compared. Their answers will also be discussed with regard to conclusions drawn in this research.

There is no doubt that the female form has been a source of inspiration from the beginning of art history and has continued to be even in our own society.

Sculptor, Jean Doyle believes that the female form *"...can convey a lust for life, humour, sensuality, spontaneity, honesty, warmth and sympathy. It can evoke a summum of ecstasy, a potent and rare witchery, a heady elixir. It can be seductive, vulgar, erotic, obscene, aggressive or virginal. In short, it is a flexible and fluid means of expression."* [Appendix B-9]

Painter, Armando Baldinelli strongly believes that there is no form more perfect than a woman's body. He agrees that *"All art, since the beginning of history has been inspired mainly by the feminine body, to represent that which was most harmonious*



Fig. 4.1. *Title unknown. (Solomon)*



Fig. 4.2. *Title unknown. (Solomon)*

and beautiful of nature's creation...The body of a woman is harmony in form."
[Ibid:B-3]

4.1 Questions 1-3:

Motivations, personal experiences and inspirations.

The following three questions concentrate on the reasons for the use of female imagery in the works of the selected artists. I approached each artist with the following introductory question. (No. 1.) How would you explain your motivations for the use of female imagery in your works? Their motivations vary from one spectrum to another, yet there seems to be a definite pattern amongst female artists in relation to the male artists. I will first discuss the male opinions I received.

Kendell Geers is generally interested in **how** the female form has been expressed to affirm certain moral and ideological patriarchal positions. [Ibid:B-1] He challenges the inherent meanings of an image and at the same time challenges Calvinist patriarchy "...at its most vulnerable position: Sexuality." [Ibid:B-1]

Ceramic Sculptor, **Peter Solomon** is motivated by the fact that the aim of his work is to be humorous and uplifting. [Ibid:B-2]. "*My ladies*", he states, "*are meant to be metaphors (of certain tendencies in to-day's Society).*" [Ibid:B-2] e.g. Untitled (Fig. 4.1 & 4.2)

Painter **Armando Baldinelli**, as we have already mentioned, believes that there is no form more perfect than a woman's body. [Ibid:B-3]. According to him "*The body of a woman is harmony in form.*" [Ibid:B-3]. 'Form' has been his main source of motivation.

Painter **Braam Kruger** is motivated by the fact that the female form has always been one of the great themes in art, "...together with the still life, crucifixion, hunting scenes etc. Of course sexually too, in which field I am only interested in women, limiting as it is." [Ibid:B-4].

He uses the figure "...to create the illusion of high art, real art, almost as a kitsch symbol of art" and then as Kruger expresses it, *I contemporise it, f__k it up.*" [Ibid:B4]. It is necessary for him that art becomes anarchistic, before it can actually replace the former orders.

According to these answers, the male artists seem to be motivated mostly by external factors. They are influenced by the female image as an art form and tend to concentrate on how female imagery has been expressed in the past, in relation to our society.

When questioning the female artists, I found that their motivations seemed to be inspired by other sources. Sculptor **Bonita Alice** is motivated by her curiosity about **why** the female image has been such a popular subject in art: unlike her male contemporaries, who tend to concentrate rather on how the female form has been expressed, Alice questions the motivations expressed by her male contemporaries: *"...is it about the form or its associations?, or does that become a single issue in the case of the female image?"* [Ibid:B-5]

Eroticism plays another important motivating factor in her interpretation of the female image, as it did in Nancy Spero's work. She states, *"I would like my work to be seen as part of the search for an eroticism for women which does not demean them."* [Ibid:B-6] Some of her works carry individuality which is important for Alice because *"if the human and vulnerable aspect of the nude can be made evident, her dignity will also be partly restored."* (1991, Business Day, 20th March:12)

Sculptor **Isolde Krams** breaks away from the traditional role of artist and female model. She is motivated by being both model and artist, as is the case with American artist Cindy Sherman's photographic works. Krams believes that the female figure *"...is never represented as a 'real' person and seldom in realistic surroundings."* (1991:111) This single factor challenges and motivates her to discover new approaches towards expressing female imagery.



Fig. 4.3. *Unfinished commission of triptych.* (Kruger)

Sculptor **Jean Doyle** expresses her use of female imagery as an extension of her personality. [Appendix B-8]. She states that "*They reflect my concept of the female. My figures are myself.*" [Ibid:B-8] Her expressive images are a means of dealing with life. [Ibid:B-9]

Painter **Penelope Siopis** was unavailable to specifically answer this question. Yet through research it appears that Siopis confronts the traditional manner in which the female figure has been portrayed as 'passive' subject to the male gaze. She also takes a critical look at South African history as recorded from a dominant, white, patriarchal point of view. [Krams, 1991:107]. It is clear that she expresses her own uncertainties on how the dominant male role has expressed female imagery in the past, motivating her to question these former values.

Unlike their male contemporaries, female artists seem to be mainly motivated by internal factors involving themselves as women. They look beyond just the outward female form and how it is expressed and rather question why it has been expressed in certain ways. The traditional male dominant role and its values are continually questioned.

The following two questions relate to the first and are basically a continuation on the theme of motivation. I asked if they expressed personal experiences in their work and, in the case of female artists, their specific experiences within their own bodies as women. (No. 2) I continued to enquire if other factors had inspired them, perhaps a specific "woman figure?" (No. 3)

Only one male artist, Braam Kruger agreed that he expressed personal experiences in his female imagery. He is at present inspired by his girlfriend, actress Grethe Fox, who has become his muse. Her image is tirelessly repeated in sketches and paintings. Fig. 4.3 is a commission Kruger was currently working on, of a triptych dominated by the image of Fox holding a machine gun, against a Johannesburg skyline. Kruger explains that "*I've got to have fun in my work, if I don't, I can't expect other people to enjoy it.*" [Levin, A. 1993. Style, July:76]

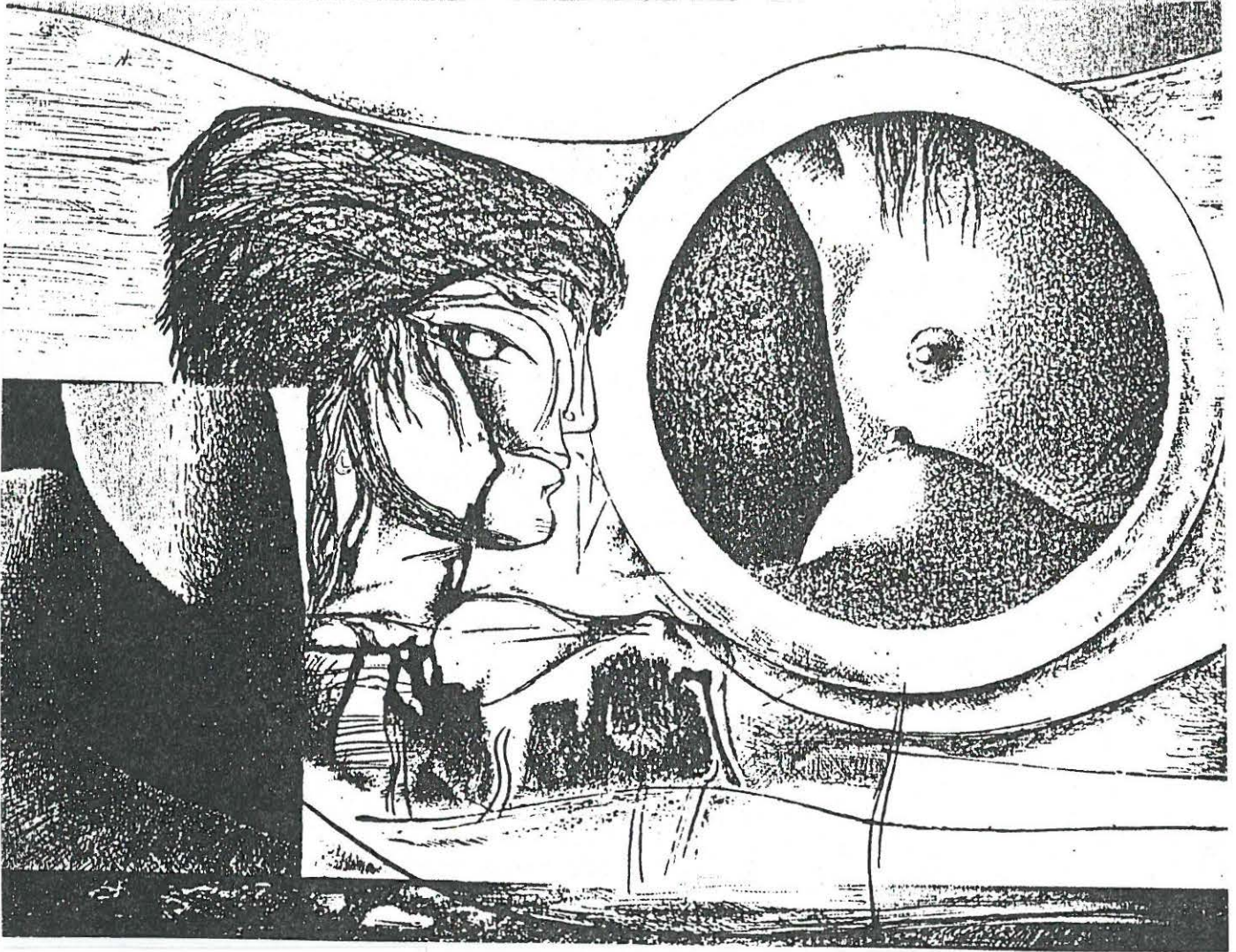


Fig. 4.4. The Mirror. (Baldinelli)



Fig. 4.5. The Girl at Her Dressing Table. (Krams)

Geers admits that his images are not autobiographical while Solomon uses female imagery *"purely as a sculptural phenomenon"* [Appendix B-2]. American pop star Madonna, has influenced Geers's work to a large extent. According to him she alone has challenged patriarchal value systems more than anybody else, ever. [Ibid:B-1] Other factors such as the circular shape of the female breast is a strong factor influencing Baldinelli's art and repeatedly makes its appearance in various forms, including the sun. He describes this single attraction as going *"...beyond sexual possessiveness, which only lasts a few moments. It can remain aesthetically chaste and pure and is the absolute expression of love and life which is the first nourishment of humanity. The breast has a special masculine attraction, perhaps men desire the breast as return to the maternal one. Who knows? Perhaps I did not get enough of my mother's."* [Ibid:B-3] e.g. The Mirror (Fig. 4.4)

From these answers I conclude that most of the male artists do not tend to express personal experiences in their female imagery. Half of them are inspired by a specific "woman figure", as was the case with former artists such as Rubens, Dali and Rodin or, like Baldinelli, are inspired by other factors.

On the other hand all four female artists agree on expressing personal experiences within their female imagery, in comparison with only one male artist. Some female artists tend to rely more on personal experiences than others. Bonita Alice believes that her own experiences are *"...secondary to my re-working of existing images."* [Ibid:B-5] i.e. other peoples' images. Marilyn Monroe is a favourite 'woman figure' that has inspired her yet, she states that *"...if there is a single image of woman that influences me, it is that image which exists in all images of women."* [Ibid:B-5]

Isolde Krams, like the 1970 feminist artists, represents the female figure totally from a female point of view, using her own body as reference for her sculptures. By using herself as model, she represents the female image as an 'ordinary-looking' female. This is expressed in her sculpture The Girl at Her Dressing Table (Fig. 4.5 & 4.6) which is not sexually threatening. Krams achieves this by concealing the sex of the figure from the viewer. The mirror does not take on the traditional role of vanity but



Fig. 4.6. Detail of The Girl at Her Dressing Table. (Krams)



Fig. 4.7. Madonna of Muizenberg. (Doyelle)

rather "...stands for truth, self-realisation, wisdom and reflection of the soul. Rather than admiring herself, this girl is contemplative." [1991:124] The mirror is the focal point, drawing the viewer closer to see the figure's face, causing the viewer to invade the figure's personal space.

As has already been mentioned, Jean Doyle does express her personal experiences as a woman through her work. Through experience she is qualified to question the relationship between a woman's mass and her credibility in our society. According to Doyle, our society favours the male view that 'thin, desirable women's opinions carry weight, while large women tend to be thought of as ridiculous and absurd. She brings to our attention the following: "*One wonders if the amount of space a woman occupies is directly relevant to her plausibility?*" [Appendix B-9] Doyle attacks these issues with humour, expressed in her sculpture Madonna of Muizenberg. (Fig. 4.7) She plays on the possibilities that male artists often only depict "...*the desirable, submissive and sensual qualities...*" [Ibid:B-10] in their female imagery, reflecting only their own sexual desires. Madonna of Muizenberg is a humorous exaggeration of how most women are in reality. Doyle asks the question "*Could it be true that men are arrogant enough to believe that women are in constant need of their attentions?*" [Ibid:B-10] She in turn quotes lines by society photographer, Herman J Hahndiek:

*"They say some women have no soul
God left them with a gaping hole
A secret longing never stilled
A need forever left unfilled."* [Ibid:B-10]

Commenting on this , she questions, "*Their own need? Transparently veiled?*" [Ibid:B-10]

Penny Siopis, like American artist Judy Chicago, also expresses her personal experiences as a woman through the use of vaginal iconography, the form of cakes, fruit and flowers. These are arranged in still lifes filled with symbols of fertility and

emblems of female experience. Amongst these emblems are added natural forms of fruit which appear more phallic, disrupting the traditional active role of male as spectator, by including the male under equal scrutiny as the female. [Ibid:11]

Because of these personal experiences they have reason to question past and existing male dominant views concerning female imagery. Jean Doyle suggests the possibility that the average South African male in our society tends to discriminate against larger women. Penny Siopis, like many other feminist artists, questions the traditional active role of male as spectator and female as the observed.

In conclusion it is clear that these female artists do express personal experiences to a far greater extent than their male contemporaries, as it was with the feminist artists discussed in chapter three.

With regard to question three, none of the female artists have a specific 'woman figure' who influence their female imagery, in comparison to two of their male contemporaries, who do.

4.2. Questions 4-9:

Female liberation and the traditional active role of male as spectator.

In questions four to six, I approached the artists' views on 'female liberation' within our society; how they personally felt about the subject and if they thought women took a 'back seat' in the art world?

The male artists researched in chapter two 'feared' the growing 'female liberation' movement. In contrast, the South African male artists are in support of women's liberation. Kendell Geers was the only male artist who admitted that 'female liberation' had a specific influence on his work. All the male artists agree that women do not take a 'back-seat' in the art world of our society.

On approaching the female artists with the same questions, I found that their answers were not as abrupt (ie. simply a 'yes' or 'no') as their male contemporaries. They responded with depth and more detail. The general feeling amongst them was also one of emancipation from past creative structures. Half of them felt that the 'female liberation' movement had directly influenced their work.

However, Alice feels that female artists are still sometimes discriminated against: *"For example, they may have to do more in order to be taken as seriously as men."* [Ibid:B-5] Krams responds by saying that women sometimes have to take a 'back seat' in the art world, because they have more roles to fulfil than merely just being an artist. She believes that the emphasis has moved from housewife to working women. We live in a society where no credit is given to housework and rearing of children. Women have to make a definite choice between the two. She believes that women's situation has worsened and states that, *"Now woman is expected to perform two roles simultaneously and to top it all she has to look good while she is doing it."* [Ibid:B-6] The word 'Feminism', she believes still seems to *"...be a swear word, that most people get aggressive or offensive over. (male and female)."* [Ibid:B-6]

Doyle agrees by saying that women are constantly torn between child-rearing and their artistic creativity. The approach to their art is a single-minded aggressiveness which is modified. [Ibid:B-8] Female artists to-day, unlike those before and during the early 19th century, do receive equal opportunities in creative tuition. They are more openly recognised as professional artists. As mentioned by Alice, they still may have to go one step further to achieve the same credibility as a male artist. [Ibid:B-5] Their traditional single role as housewife and mother has changed to the role of housewife, mother and artist.

Two questions confronted the artists with the issues of whether male artists depict the female image differently to female artists and secondly if they direct their work at a specific audience? A variety of opinions were voiced.

I will first take a look at the male artists' opinions. According to Geers, male and females have different ideological codings resulting in difference. Solomon and Kruger suggest that the difference lies in the individual's experiences and not the sex.

The female artists' opinions tend to differ slightly. Krams explains that she depicts herself in her images and that male artists supposedly represent female imagery for different reasons and *"...from a different insight/perspective."* [Ibid:B-6] Doyle comments on a statement made by a male art critic (Argus, July 26/93) concerning one of her sculptures as being "a nude, all dressed up", *"If men don't depict women differently they certainly describe them most inadequately."* [Ibid:B-8]

She continues to suggest that, *"When a male artist depicts a woman, there is a possibility that he will draw from his model the desirable submissive and sensual qualities in her which reflect in a mirror image, his own sexual desire."* [Ibid:B-10]

Both male and female artists are in agreement that female imagery is depicted differently by both sexes but their reasons tend to differ. The female artists still feel it is as a result of gender, as was the case with most of the male artists discussed in chapter two. The male artists, however, feel that is as a result of ideological codings and individual experiences and not specifically the difference in gender. Could it be, that male artists are not always aware that they depict the female image differently, perhaps more provocatively, as a result of their sex?

In responding to question eight (male artists) and question seven (female artists), none tend to direct their work at specific audiences, as was the case during the 19th century. Their work is directed at both sexes. They also agree that their female imagery does not play the traditional role as 'passive' objects to be looked at. Kruger suggests that his images may even become spectators of the audience. [Ibid:B-4] The male artists' views concerning this subject are in total contrast to the traditional views of the male artists existing before and during the early 19th century.

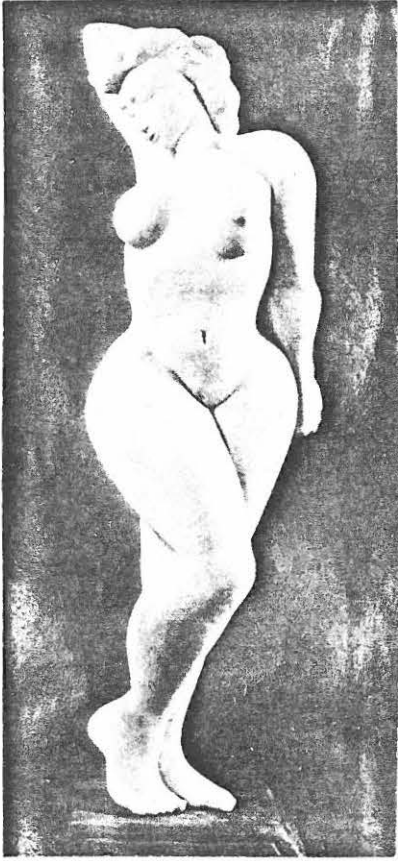


Fig. 4.8. Standing Female Nude. (Alice)

As far as female artists in general are concerned, they have always approached this subject from a different angle. This fact was concluded in chapter three. Alice states that her images may even appear to be visibly affected by the spectators' presence. [Ibid:B-5] In her work she specifically takes a look at the traditional manner in which the female image as subject has been treated by male artists, particularly since the 19th century. Hazel Friedman describes Alice's reactions in her article titled: These nudes not for the voyeur, as exposing "*...a reflection of the unequal power relationships that existed and continue to exist, in society.*" [1991. Business Day. 20th March:12]. The manner in which Alice presents her images prevents the viewer from becoming a voyeur. [Friedman, H. Ibid:12] As Alice explains: "*I wanted the viewer to recognise them as having skins, to regard them not simply as abstracted sex objects, removed from the subject.*" [Ibid:12]. eg. Standing Female Nude (Fig. 4.8) Friedman describes Alice's nudes as "*...generalised and anonymous... possessing "...a self-consciousness that's not merely calculated coyness.*" [Ibid:12] Alice still confronts this traditional issue in our society through her works. She suggests that the traditional factor of keeping women in their 'passive' roles, may still exist in our society. It may not be as prominent as before and during the early 19th century, but to a far lesser degree it still exists.

4.3. Question 10-12(male) 9-11(female):

Inspiration from historical works and how women's art is perceived today.

I approached the artists with the following question. Do you draw ideas or gain inspiration from historical works expressing the nude? (No.10-male, No.9-female). If the artist's reply was in the affirmative, I continued to question their intentions in 'copying' these images and placing them in new or contemporary surroundings.

I received only one positive response from the male artists. Braam Kruger agrees that he gains much inspiration from historical works. His work is influenced by the traditional great masterpieces.

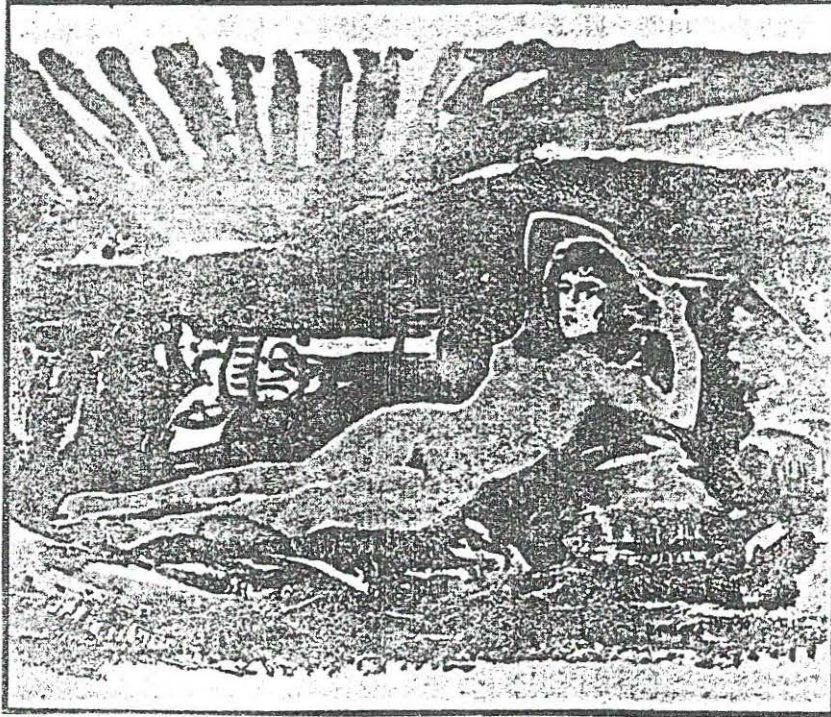


Fig. 4.9. Maya with Gun. (Kruger)



Fig. 4.10. Patience on a Monument. (Siopis)

He feels that he is giving the masters other options that they never had. Options like placing Mickey Mouse in a scene or painting Giorgione's reclining Venus onto a cheap Hong Kong background. [Vinassa, A. 1990. Star, 12th June:4]. He gives his paintings and drawings titles like Venus with Batman, Vibrating Venus or Maja with Gun (Fig. 4.9). His reasons: *"I try to make those works timeless, not stuck in a particular historical context."* [Appendix B-4]. Kruger's works are almost a modern reflection of some of Cezanne's early works, who also imitated and reproduced fellow artists' masterpieces. (discussed in chapter 2.) Writer and critic Joyce Ozyński, put forward the following question, concerning Kruger's exhibition "Nudes" (1990), in her article titled Kruger self consciously re-introduces the nude. *"Could it not be, one wonders, that Kruger is shyly re-introducing the good old fashioned nude, made intellectually respectable by the addition of a little satire?"* [1990. Star, 26th June:8] She continues that a lot of his imagery *"...is seemingly irreverent and in some degree, a critique of the sexism underlying the original images."* [Ibid:8] Kruger describes his creative thought process with this comment: *"I am interested in art that looks wrong. I hate art that looks right. I know when I do work that looks good."* [Vinassa, A. 1990. Star, 12th June:4]

The female artists all agree that they gain inspiration from historical works. Krams refers to it as using parody but states that it is not a 'copying' but rather *"...an answering to, a re-acting to, poking fun at, turning in on..."* [Appendix B-6]

Penelope Siopis, as we have already mentioned, takes a critical look at South African history. Great deeds and political events of men were mostly recorded while women's experiences were basically ignored. Many of her paintings centre around a Hottentot woman, Saartjie Bartman who was displayed by a Victorian man in 1810 *"..... as the central 19th century icon for the sexual differences between whites and blacks."* [Friedman, H. 1990. Star. 14 December:4] Saartjie Baartman received degrading treatment as a showpiece, because of her sex and her race. Siopis confronts the issue that our society has taught us to *"...identify people primarily in terms of difference - "otherness" - from ourselves."* [Ibid:4] In her painting titled Patience on a Monument (Fig. 4.10), the overlapping forms and figures suggest the

layers of history. The figures decreasing in size "...indicate the diminishing significance of repeated, cliched historical facts." [Rankin, 1992:12]

It appears that the South African artists, specifically female artists, are influenced to a larger degree by historical works; in comparison to artists before and during the early 19th century. Perhaps it is because South African female artists tend to question historical documentations (in whatever form) far more than South African male artists.

The following question was posed: How do you think an exhibition of women's art is perceived today? Both sexes generally agree and feel that 'groupings' of artists should be left alone. This was not the case before and during the early 19th century, when male and female exhibitions were preferably labelled separately.

4.4. Additional Questions for individual artists.

I approached Baldinelli with the following question: As an experienced artist in your advancing years, you still hold a strong fascination for and a provocative means of expressing the female? Could you comment on this? Unfortunately, due to circumstances, he was unable to directly answer this question. However, through extensive research, I was able to provide an adequate answer. Armando Baldinelli in his later years, like Gauguin and Picasso, began to depict woman "...as the desired object, mysterious, sometimes unapproachable, always fascinating." [Werth, 1974:10]

Baldinelli describes his work in the following statement published on an invitation for his exhibition titled "Yesterday and Today" 1989, Momentum Centre, Pretoria. *"I would like to consider my work as seen from an open window looking through the filter of my soul, to show the performances of my inner feelings and the sentimental emotions."* [Appendix B-3] Writer and critic Michael Coulson, comments on Baldinelli's work during his advancing years, that not surprisingly "...dream and

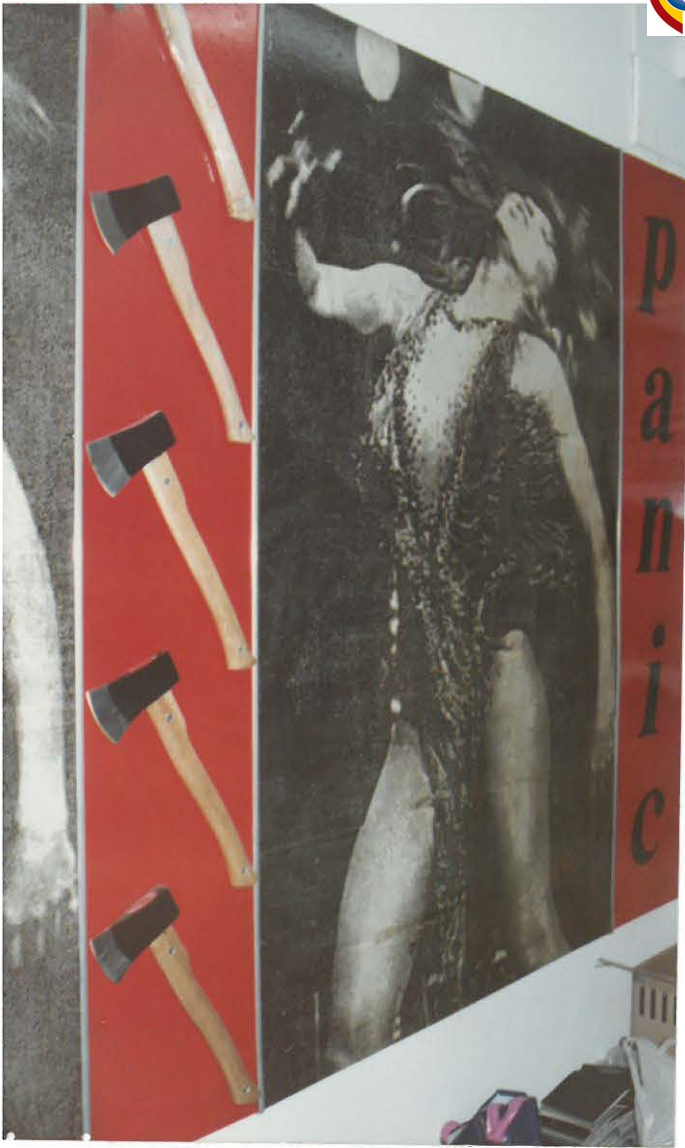


Fig. 4.11. Panic. (Geers)



Fig. 4.10. The New Eve. (Dorfa)

reverie seem to be replacing the exuberant activity of earlier decades." [1988. Financial Mail, 24 June:126]

I questioned Geers on his motives regarding the inclusion of weapons when depicting female imagery. He agrees that he combines found objects (eg. weapons) to introduce what he calls a "... 'Reality Principle'" that makes the viewer aware that the works are an extension of a broader sociological context." [Op cit B-2] The viewers almost become like spectators at the scene of an accident. [Ibid:B-2] Panic (Fig. 4.11) is a repeated image of Tina Turner surrounded by axes.

I approached Peter Solomon, Jean Doyle and Isolde Krams as to what extent the inclusion of feminine accessories and lingerie reflect on the content of their work? All agreed that they played an important part in the overall portrayal of their work, as was the case with Cindy Sherman and Allen Jones.

For Solomon these elements emphasize the kind of absurdity that is fundamental to the kind of content expressed in his figures. [Ibid:B-7] Doyle believes that "*A heightened erotic aspect could be explored by using the trappings of elegance (gloves, jewellery) on an otherwise nude figure.*" [Ibid:B-9] eg. The New Eve (Fig. 4.12) Krams creates a private, forbidden space through the use of these elements, causing the viewer to become "*an intruder even a voyeur*". [Ibid:B-7]

4.5. CONCLUSION

4.5.1. Female artists

The South African women artists, unlike those before and during the early 19th century, as well as the discussed feminist artists, do receive equal opportunities in creative tuition. They are more openly recognised as professional artists and live in a society in which male artists are more tolerant to female liberation. This does not necessarily reflect the views of the total South African male population.

With the above in mind, I questioned whether these positive factors have any influence on the works of the selected female artists, in comparison to those discussed in chapter 3.

Bonita Alice is in search for an eroticism for women which does not demean them. Isolde Krams is both model and artist, discovering new approaches towards expressing female imagery as 'real' persons. Jean Doyle expresses herself through her imagery. Penelope Siopis uses vaginal iconography to question the issue of the female figure as passive subject to the male gaze. In her later works she confronts South African documented history.

Despite the fact that these artists are less restricted than their predecessors, they still continue to access, question and confront prevailing male dominance in society. They oppose and confront the traditional manner in which the female image has been portrayed (and often still is) in our society. They also express personal experiences and experiences within their own bodies, as did the feminist artists.

Their reasons and motivations may remain similar to those in chapter three but new content is presented in their work with regard to our own society. They confront their male contemporaries with issues relating to South African culture and historical background, which was dominated by men.

4.5.2. Male Artists.

The selected male South African artists, unlike their predecessors do not 'fear' female liberation but support it. They are not opposed to female artists gaining the same recognition as male professionals. The traditional active role of male as spectator and female as 'passive' object, does not apply to their works.

In the light of these changes, do South African artists also have a predominantly negative attitude when using female imagery? Do they satisfy their own desires and fantasies in comparison to those discussed in chapter two?

Baldinelli, in his old age, holds a secret fascination for the female breast. Kruger has an obsession to reproduce reclining nudes in scenes of fantasy. It is as if he sometimes still attempts to keep the female in her traditional 'passive' state. Perhaps unawares! His later works are totally infatuated by his new muse, Grethe Fox. Geers is totally inspired by the Madonna figure, a sex symbol in our society. Solomon expresses large female images not only as humorous but as the absurd. Perhaps this is a reflection of our male society's attitude towards large women.

Despite the differences mentioned above, there are also similarities with those artists discussed in chapter two. Generally, the selected male artists do not express personal experiences as do their female contemporaries, rather, they seem to be inspired by specific 'women figures'. They agree on expressing female imagery differently to that of their female contemporaries, but because of reasons stemming from our particular society. These include different ideological backgrounds and individual experiences and not because of gender. Their female contemporaries were not in total agreement, which raises further questions!

Taking these differences and similarities into account, South African male artists still hold a predominantly negative attitude when using female imagery but to a far lesser degree than their predecessors. Their images, however, remain subtly provocative, possibly satisfying their own personal desires and fantasies. Perhaps they are unaware of this but this fact seems to be present within their works.

In concluding this research on the use of the female as image, it becomes apparent that many characteristics pertaining to male and female works produced in other countries and earlier times, do not directly compare with works produced by the selected South African artists. Their comment on sociological issues however, tends to remain similar. The issue of male as the 'dominant role player' in art or society, has been so deeply rooted through many centuries, that it almost guarantees that this conflicting question will remain debatable for years to come.



Fig. 5.1. Femme Fatale.



Fig. 5.2. Proverbs 11:22.

5.

A DISCUSSION ON THE CANDIDATE'S WORK

I believe that my art should first and foremost glorify God. My sculptures reflect my desire to live according to what Paul writes in Colossians 3:23-24. *"Whatever you do, work for the Lord, not for men."* [1978:254] I may not always achieve this to the full, but I strive to.

Sculpture needs participation not only from the artist but also from the spectator. Visual assimilation is not enough. We need to walk around the work and be able to touch, feel and experience the sculptural sensations and qualities. Spectators must try to relive the artist's experience in their own personal way. [Prendini, P. 1985. Gallery, winter :23]

In my works I combine different techniques and various mediums e.g. wood, glass, metal and resin. With bronze being the predominant medium, my aim has been to combine various mediums which will successfully complement the bronze figures and objects.

The use of the female image is intertwined in all my works. In this way I am able to express my own personal experiences and emotions as a woman, artist and Christian. I do not concentrate totally on personal experiences but also symbolically interpret circumstances and situations that women in general experience.

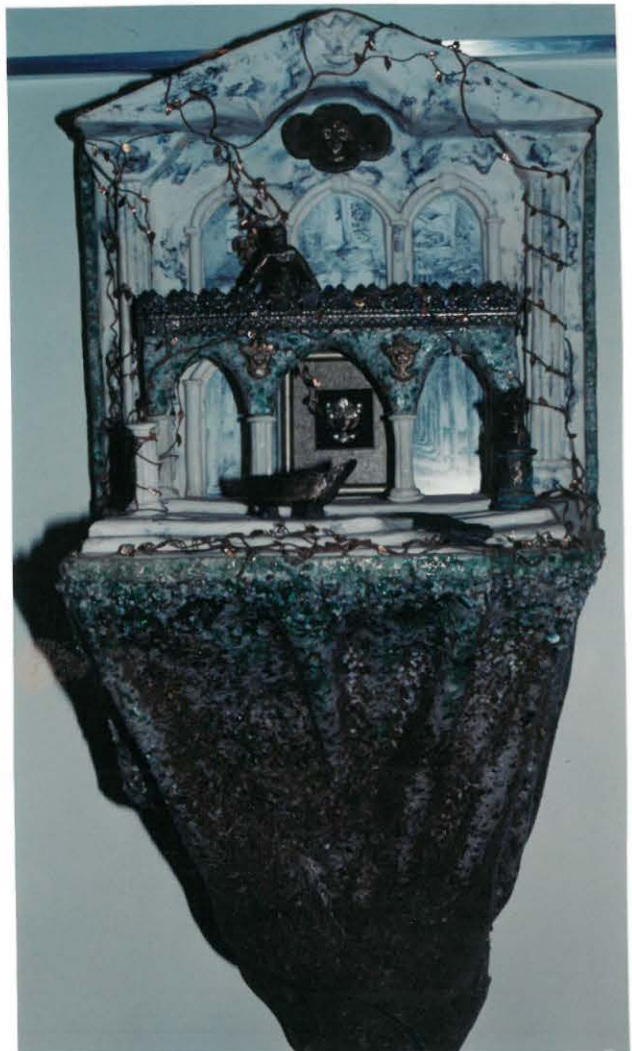
I feel that it is important to remember that the female was also created in God's image. It is up to us as artists to decide how we are to portray the female image. As we have already discussed in previous chapters, modesty and immodesty does not depend entirely on clothing or nudity, but more on the manner in which an artwork is undertaken. Rookmaker (Philosopher and lecturer) describes this concept in his own words. *"Behaviour is the expression of an attitude."* [1970:240]



Fig. 5.3. The Leaning Figure of Society.



Fig. 5.5. Birdbath.



To convey content, a combination of feminine accessories and figures are used. The female torsos in Femme Fatale (Fig.5.1), evokes an air of eroticism due to the use of lingerie. Women can use lingerie and other types of "erotic clothing" to become, in a sense, dangerous or an irresistible temptation to men. It can be accompanied by seductive body language as expressed in Proverbs 11:22 (Fig. 5.2). *"Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion."* [1978:761] It does not matter how beautiful a woman may be. Her manner of pose and conduct either glorifies and enhances her beauty or spoils it.

Femme Fatale also symbolizes the domineering role that fashion has played on women throughout the centuries. The torsos towering over the undersized figure, reveals the pressure often experienced by women in a fashion-conscious society. Men often play a large role in determining the type of dress code women should follow in the workplace or at home.

Their behaviour is similar to that of men that were discussed during the Art Nouveau movement, who tended to place women on pedestals alongside their possessions.

This is portrayed in The Leaning Figure of Society (Fig. 5.3). The over-decorated surfaces symbolize the Art Nouveau movement. The female image signifies how women, in the last few decades, are experiencing their own individuality through fashion and are stepping down from that pedestal.

Fashion also continues to restrict woman. She often finds herself in helpless situations, simply because of the restrictions her clothing places on her. (e.g. skirts too tight to walk, shoes too high to run, no practical forms of pockets etc.) The Swing (Fig. 5.4) is a reflection of the restrictions placed on women during the Victorian age, specifically concerning their clothing and behaviour in these forms of dress. Victorian painter Jean Honoré Fragonard in his painting The Swing : 1766, reveals how improper it was for a woman to swing in a full length pettycoated dress. A young man, strategically placed, admires her from below. Practically,

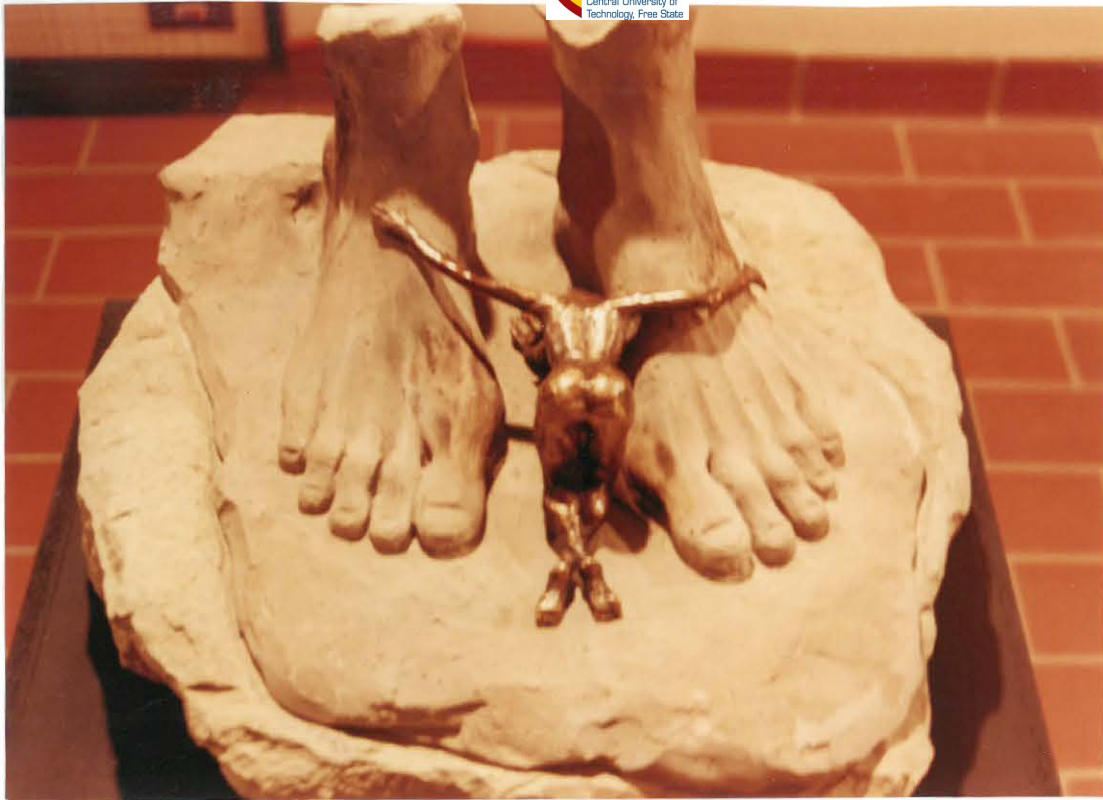


Fig. 5.6. Submission.



women would experience a greater freedom of movement, if it were not for all the restrictions that fashion has held.

Birdbath (Fig. 5.5) is a sculpture which comments on the concept of male as 'active' spectator and female as 'passive' object to be looked at. I portrayed this by physically omitting from the scene the female figure, whom the viewer expects to see in the bath. The visible accessories (e.g. bath, towel), suggest her presence.

Many traditional works of art involving female imagery, represent the woman in a state of submission to the male as spectator or as participant in the work. This traditional role of women was considered the accepted norm by the dominant sex and often still is to this day. I contradict these views in my sculpture titled Submission (Fig. 5.6). It manifests my belief that the only person to whom we are totally to submit ourselves, our will and our bodies, is Jesus. This is also a form of sacrifice on our part which corresponds with the content in the work titled Which Way? (Fig. 5.7). Women often have to make certain choices just because they are women. To become a successful artist or career woman (specifically before and during the 19th century) usually demands a sacrifice. It may involve a husband or family life. Many women commit themselves to their family and, in turn, sacrifice their career opportunities. It is only on rare occasions that women may successfully choose both and succeed.

Escape (Fig. 5.8) is a sculpture in which I again omit the physical presence of the female figure. A path leads upwards into the heavenly realms, leaving behind earthly possessions and objects that so often tie us down. In this case, what specifically has had a hold on women is portrayed.

Art is a continuous struggle and has specifically been for women. It is also a great treasure. Treasure is often rare, beautiful, mysterious and occasionally carries great weight. We must have willpower and determination to carry this treasure, as expressed in (Fig. 5.9) titled Treasures. We have choices as artists to fulfil the commands of our work. Rebirth (Fig. 5.10), is a sculpture that reveals the writings



Fig. 5.8. Escape.



Fig. 5.9. Treasures.



Fig. 5.7. Which Way?

of American author Madeleine L'Engle in her book Walking on Water. She writes that *"The artist is a servant who is willing to be a birthgiver. In a very real sense the artist (male or female) should be like Mary who, when the angel told her that she was to bear the Messiah, was obedient to the command."* She continues to say that, *"I believe that each work of art, whether it is a work of great genius, or something very small, comes to the artist and says, 'Here I am. Enflesh me. Give birth to me.'"* [1972:18] We, as artists, can either willingly obey or refuse. In this sculpture I signify myself as artist and Mary as Mother. The light in the centre symbolizes Jesus. Just as Mary had a choice to obey God, so I as an artist had a choice to create.

The Thinker (Fig. 5.11) is a sculpture revolving around my own personal thoughts. It represents a woman in a state of meditative thought. Her thoughts are echoed in the carved soapstone recesses beneath her. Visually one is able to place oneself in her position and meditate.

Throughout my portfolio, I have attempted to involve the viewer in intimate scenes that take place in each individual work. Some sculptures are purposefully executed on a smaller scale, containing intricate detail, thereby forcing the viewer to draw closer to the work, thus becoming directly involved.

I conclude with the words of Eugene Delacroix (19th century painter) and Eva Hesse (20th century artist), concerning the importance of expressing ourselves, or a part of ourselves, in the work created.

Delacroix stated that *"fine works of art would never become dated if they contained nothing but genuine feeling. The language of the emotions and the impulses of the human heart never change."* [1985:163].

Eva Hesse in turn wrote *"It takes a special kind of courage to be oneself in art : to trust what's inside you and believe that your work will make sense some day."* [Ibid:153]



Fig. 5.10. Rebirth.



Fig. 5.11. The Thinker.

APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Questionnaires***
- Appendix B: Answers ,interviews from selected South African artists***
- Appendix C: Curriculum Vitae of selected artists***
- Appendix D: Bibliography***
- Appendix E: Details of plates***

QUESTIONNAIRES FOR S.A. MALE ARTISTS:

1. How would you explain your motivations for the use of female imagery in your work?
2. Many female artists express their own personal experience as women as well as experiences within their own bodies, in their works. As a male artist, do you perhaps portray your own experiences in your representation of the female image?
3. What other factors inspire you to use female imagery in your work? Are there, at present or have there been, any specific women who have inspired you to portray the female image?
4. Does the continuing increase in female liberation within society, especially during the late 80's and early 90's, have any influence or effect on your portrayal of the female as image?
5. As a male South African , what is your opinion on women becoming more liberated?
6. Do you think that women tend to take, as it were, 'a back seat' in the art world?
7. Do you think that male artists are more likely to depict the image of a woman differently to that of female artists? And if so why?
8. Do you regard your "female imagery" to be directed specifically towards a male or female audience, or perhaps both and why?
9. a) To what extent do you become the spectator to your female images?
b) Are your female images portrayed as "passive" objects to be looked at?
10. Do you draw ideas or gain inspiration from historical works expressing the nude? If so, what are your intentions in "copying" these images and placing them in new or contemporary surroundings.
11. How do you think an exhibition of women's art is perceived today?
12. What do you find aesthetically appealing in the female image?

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS

Armando Baldinelli (13)

13. As an experienced artist in your advancing years, you surprisingly still hold a strong fascination and a provocative means of expressing the female. Could you comment on this?

Kendell Geers (13)

- 13, What are your motives in including weapons when depicting the female image in your works?

Peter Solomon (13 & 14)

13. To what extent do the inclusion of feminine accessories and lingerie reflect on the content in your work?
14. American artist Allen Jones is known for his sculptures portraying women as functional objects e.g. tables and chairs. His work may reflect the idea that women are there to fulfil the needs of the opposite sex in a functional way. Some of your works portray female imagery as functional objects. Would you consider your works reflecting the same or similar messages as Jones' work?

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR S.A. FEMALE ARTISTS:

1. How would you explain your motivations for the use of female imagery in your work?
2. Many female artists, especially feminist artists, express personal experiences and experiences within their own bodies as women. Does this apply to your own work? If so, to what extent?
3. What other factors have inspired you to use female imagery in your work? Has there possibly been a specific "woman figure" that has influenced you?
4. Does the continuing increase in female liberation within society, especially during the late 80's and early 90's, have any influence or effect on your portrayal of the female as image?
5. Do you think that women tend to take, as it were, 'a back seat' in the art world?
6. Do you think that male artists are more likely to depict the image of a woman differently to that of female artists? And if so, why?
7. Do you regard your "female imagery" to be directed specifically towards a male or female audience, or perhaps both and why?
8. a) To what extent do you become the spectator to your female images?
b) Are your female images portrayed as "passive" objects to be looked at?
9. Do you draw ideas or gain inspiration from historical works expressing the nude? If so, what are your intentions in "copying" these images and placing them in new or contemporary surroundings.
10. How do you think an exhibition of women's art is perceived today?
11. What do you find aesthetically appealing in the female image?

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS

Jean Doyle (No.12) and Isolde Krams (No.13)

To what extent does the inclusion of feminine accessories and lingerie reflect on the content in your work?

Isolde Krams (No.12)

The mirror is often used in art to portray woman looking at herself or watching herself being looked at. does this have any relevance to your sculpture titled "Girl at her dressing table"?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONNAIRES

Kendell Geers

1. I combine found images and objects from my immediate environment and juxtapose them in unexpected ways that challenge, subvert, confirm or deny inherent meanings. I select the images and objects for their ideological associations. I appropriate images from both the Mass Media and Art History. Some of these images have included representations of women. Each image is specific to the content of the specific work that it appears in and it was selected for the needs of that piece. In general I am interested in how the female form has been used to affirm certain moral and ideological patriarchal positions. In challenging the inherent meanings of an image I am also at the same time thus challenging Calvinist patriarchy at its most vulnerable position : Sexuality.
2. No. I do not make art that is autobiographical.
3. Yes Madonna. She has singularly done more to challenge patriarchal value systems than anybody else, ever. I wrote an article on the subject towards the end of last year, coinciding with the release of her book, Sex. I can't remember which issue it was - but it was only to include Madonna on the cover.
4. Yes. See question 3.
5. Absolutely essential. The sooner the better.
6. No. Marion Arnold, Penny Siopis, Linda Goodman(Givon), Keren Mckerron, Margaret Vorster, Helen Sebidi, Bongwiwe Dhlomo, Marilyn Martin, Rochelle Keene, Lesley Spiro, Elizabeth Rankin, Sandra Kloppers, Anita Nettleton, Rayda Becker, Rhoda Rosen, Karin Skawrin, Sue Williamson, Sadra Kriel, Lorna Ferguson, Jill Addleson, Melanie Hillebrand, Hazel Frieman, Samantha James, Lucia Burger. etc.etc.
7. Yes. Different ideological coding.
8. Both are guilty of believing the patriarchal generalisations we have been taught and therefore both need to be challenged.
- 9a. Personally not at all. If I perceived myself as the "spectator" of my work I would "create" (draw, paint, etc) my own images. I am critically re-producing images that already exist, thereby challenging the viewer to judge the relations inscribed within an existing image.
- 9b. No.
10. No. See question no.1

11. Very trendy.
12. I do not make art about aesthetics. My choice of objects or images is never related to aesthetics. The selection is done on purely moral and ideological grounds.
13. The use of found objects introduces a "Reality Principle" that makes the viewer aware that the works are an extension of a broader sociological context. In this awareness they become self - conscious of their looking, like spectators at the scene of an accident, accomplices to a crime.

Peter Solomon

1. The Aim of my work is to be humorous and uplifting. My Ladies are meant to be metaphors (of certain tendencies in today's Society) It is not important to me if people are receiving this underlying intent.
2. No,I use the Female Body, purely as a Sculptural Phenomenon (as a means to an end)
3. No.
4. No.
5. I think that it's great.
6. No.
7. I think that different depictions of any subject matter rely on the individual artists aims in any piece.
8. My work is directed towards both male and female audiences.
- 9a. Not at all. These sculptures are individual statements, I make them, I do not "watch them happen".
- 9b. No.
10. No.
11. I think that depends on the statements being made and on the quality of work exhibited, it also depends on the education of the viewers.
12. Almost everything.
13. To a very great extent. As my pieces are "metaphorically over the top." Any element emphasizing this kind of absurdity is fundamental to the kind of content involved in my pieces.

14. No, my pieces are meant to function on two levels.
- a)
 - i. To be uplifting, humorous and absurd. (sculpturally)
 - ii. They are meant to be Metaphors, of the way some people live today. (a particular element of Society) (ie frivolous over the top.)
 - b) I think that a Sculpture that functions (is usable) allows people to relax and enjoy it without trying to discover what is its "meaning".

Armando Baldinelli.

1. I am often asked why the subject of my paintings is mainly based on the nude feminine body. I believe there is no form more perfect than a woman's body. All art, since the beginning of history has been inspired mainly by the feminine body, to represent that which was most harmonious and beautiful of nature's creation. One has only to think of the Greek statues, Botticelli's paintings, the buxom women of Rubens, Renoir's women. The capricious ones of Toulouse Lautrec, up to modern paintings. The body of a woman is harmony in form. The breast has a fundamental importance, an attraction which goes beyond sexual possessiveness, which only lasts a few moments. It can remain aesthetically chaste and pure and is the absolute expression of love and life which is the first nourishment of humanity. The breast has a special masculine attraction, perhaps men desire the breast as return to the maternal one. Who knows? Perhaps I did not get enough of my mother's.

On Invitation for the Exhibition, "Yesterday and Today" (1989)

My discipline is a moral, as much as the aesthetic intransigence, therefore my art automatically becomes the story matter of my language. Looking at my past "forties period" today, I could repeat the same words: Nothing has changed in my heart, but new and wider experiences enriched and consolidated my belief in a new form of figurativity. I aim for elegance in harmony of shapes and colours, in a vigorous spontaneity, more freedom of interpretation and techniques.

Nothing is to be left to chance.

The sentiment and fantasy gives the life to the forms which bring back again the sentiment. The objective memories should become tangible visions.

I would like to consider my work as seen from an open window looking through the filter of my soul, to show the performances of my inner feelings and the sentimental emotions.

I try to understand and let understand the secret and the mystery of the paint which was and still is the journey of my life."

by Baldinelli.

Braam Kruger.

1. Chiefly because it is such a strong art genre, one of the great themes, together with the still life, crucifixion, hunting scenes etc. Of course sexually too, in which field I am only interested in women, limiting as it is.
2. Yes.
3. I try to use the figure to create the illusion of high art, real art, almost as a kitch symbol of art. And then I contemporise it, f__k it up. See, I believe art has to be anarchistic before it can replace former orders. The women in my life at the time, feature mostly , or women like them. At the moment it is Grethe Fox (see mentioned Style article)
4. The closest thing I can be to a feminist, apparently, is to be fighter for their rights, which I have done since the early 80's in various published essays (Insig), De Kat and I believe in my art also.
5. See 4.
6. Not in SA, where art is not considered as real work for men. Not in the world since the 60's. Anyway, I think it is demeaning for any one group to justify themselves as woman artists, or worse, feminist artists, gay artists, black artists, political artists etc. All artists are simply artists and there is nothing glamorous about it, just a type of worker.
7. Every person experiences objects, feelings etc in a different way, each one has a different field of references/ associations to draw from. That is what makes art so unique, it is not possible for 2 artists to make the same thing.
8. The audience is not the concern of the serious artist, much as actors can't applaud themselves. Perhaps it is of the woman artist, feminist artist, political artist. I won't know. This is a disgusting sexist question.
- 9a. Usually, the characters in my work are spectators of me, or as you would like to put it, of the audience.
- 9b. No.
10. Yes. One of the many angles are that I can give those artworks and artists options they didn't have at the time, eg. Mickey Mouse, later artworks, styles events. In a send up way, I try to make those works timeless, not stuck in a particular historical context. See references in Style and De Kat.
11. The general feeling of artists from every sexual perversion whom I have spoken to, feel sorry for artists hiding in groups. (see 6)
12. Her eyes.

Bonita Alice.

1. I am interested in the fact that the female image has been such a popular subject in art, from the very earliest images we have to the present and also within most cultures. I am curious about why - is it about the form or its associations? , or does that become a single issue in the case of the female image?
2. My work is mostly about other people's images. My own experiences certainly influence the forms I make but this is secondary to my reworking of existing images.
3. As I have suggested, it is existing images of women that interest me, all the way from Ancient Greece to Hollywood (M.Monroe is a favourite). So if there is a single image of woman that influences me, it is that image which exists in all images of women.
4. The time and political climate (re feminism) in which I work will no doubt have influenced my images. I have always taken liberties with the female form (and will continue to do so) - sometimes in a very unfashionable way as far as conventional feminists are concerned.
5. I don't think women artists take a back seat but I do think that they are sometimes discriminated against. For example, they may have to do more in order to be taken as seriously as men.
6. This is a Huge question! And I'm not sure that I'd like to try and answer it. Numerous studies have been done, in the context of the feminist debate, which have examined the female subject/male artist relationship. I think there is very little doubt that the male view (traditionally) of the female figure relates very specifically to the traditional male/female relationship as set up by a society. Be careful to specify which tradition you are referring to - these relationships can change outside of the Western context. However, more recently, both male and female artists have re-examined and reworked this subject.
7. I have no specific audience in mind for my work.
8. The role of spectator is very important for my work - in some cases the most important factor is the shift from The subjects traditionally passive role - She is aware of the spectator/viewer and may appear to be visibly affected by his/her presence.
9. I think this question has been answered above.
10. I'm not quite sure what you mean. I personally think it is time to leave "women artist only" exhibitions behind.

11. This is a difficult one to answer. For one thing, I am interested in the erotic female nude. I would like my work to be seen as part of the search for an eroticism for women which does not demean them.

Isolde Krams.

1. Explained in Thesis.
2. Yes, please read my thesis section 3 & 4.
3. Yes, please read my thesis section 3 & 4.
4. I think emphasis has shifted from woman as housewife and mother to working, professional woman - a society where no credit is given to housework or the rearing of children. Housework is not seen as work! Today women need to choose between becoming successful business women or housewives/mothers. I don't think women's situation has improved, I believe the opposite to be true. Now woman is expected to perform two roles simultaneously and to top it all she has to look good while she is doing it! Please see my collages and photomontages on the subject.
5. Sometimes they have to, because of the reasons explained above, she has to fulfil more roles than merely being an artist. Secondly has the supposed emancipation of women in the 60's and 70's not changed women's situation (my view) especially not in South Africa!

"Feminism" seems to still be a swearword, that most people get aggressive or offensive over. (Male and Female).
6. I depict the female figure (myself) for many reasons. (please see the section where this is explained in detail). If a man represents a female figure, I suppose it is for different reasons and from a different insight/perspective.
7. Both, I want to suggest that my sculptures have different aspects to them, they represent not just one view. There are different levels of meaning. The viewer is asked to participate, to understand.....(Again my thesis will explain this) In a sculpture I may simultaneously play with ideas like parody, realism, fantasy, politics, gender conflict, tradition verses the here and now.... Male and female viewers hopefully can identify with some aspect.
- 8a. I don't.
- 8b. Again read my thesis, where I explain how in the beginning my sculptures and 2 - D works were passive objects and slowly started moving, taking charge.
9. Yes, I use parody a lot. It is not a copying, it is rather an answering to, a reacting to, poking fun at, turning in on.....

10. With indifference, as old hat. (Unfortunately).
11. I work with my own body for many reasons because I am the cheapest model, because I feel most familiar with the female shape, because I can express my concerns best by portraying the female shape - Why I find her aesthetically appealing I do not know, I don't know if I can claim to do that really!
12. Please read my explanation of my "Girl at her Dressing Table" you will find my understanding in there.
13. She becomes a seductress, but also a private image. The spectator feels that he is invading, looking at something private, perhaps even forbidden. The viewer becomes an intruder even a voyeur. At times my sculptures therefore can shock dep. where they are exhibited. For example "Woman in her Bath" stands in an entrance hall or gallery, at first sight one has the compulsion to turn away, as if one had invaded a woman by mistake. It is also a playful decorating thing. Dressed....undressed, undressed but not naked.....

This is part 3+4 of my M.A. thesis handed in Feb. 1991. at the University of the Witwatersrand, with the title:

...City and Environment:

A consideration of the Female Figure in an Everyday Context.

Jean Doyle.

1. Answered previously.
2. These few verses on ART AND THE MEANING OF LIFE might answer this question.

*This is a question I have pondered
And on it many hours have squandered
Does art exist through power of fashion
Or does it live by lust and passion.*

*Can a sculpture stand in grace
And can its sculptor last the pace?
Or do they have a gaping void
And must it then be filled by Freud?*

*And does the virgin metal race
In perfect time with mass and space
Or does a sculpture cross the chasm
Erupting in a vast orgasm?*

*But there may be some consolation
For all my mental masturbation
Art leaps its bounds, it seems to me
And copulates with those who see.*

3. Lillit, Bethsheba, Dietricht, Thatcher - any woman who use what they have at their disposal in order to achieve.
4. One sculpts women as they appear at the time. If they are "liberated", that's how they will be portrayed.
5. Women, in most cases, choose to diversify their creativity - choose to have children. They juggle their energy between child-rearing and artistic creativity. The single-minded aggressive approach to their art is modified. They, therefore, appear to be taking a back seat.
6. A male art critic (Argus, July 26/93) reported one of my sculptures to be "a nude, all dressed up". If men don't depict women differently they certainly describe them most inadequately.
7. My work is not directed towards an audience.
8. My female images are an extension of my persona. They reflect my concept of the female. My figures are myself.

9. The resulting incongruence of placing a graceful Botticelli figure, a decadent Otto Dix, or an heroic Titian in a contemporary environment is hard to resist.
10. Woman's art is increasingly relevant. Am showing in a group exhibition next month entitled "Women on Women". This sort of subject matter generates wide interest.
11. Answered previously.
12. Largely. My work hangs on such items.

Jean Doyle: Additional Interview.

My art is for me, self protective. It is a means of dealing with life, coping with pain, rejoicing in pleasure, making the intolerable tolerable. It expresses the absurdities of human existence, transforming the impotent and dull into the sublime and ridiculous, using as its vehicle, intemperate feminine bulk. Art gives one the means to transcend mediocrity, to hold an affirmative stance toward life, as the creative spirit can view things from a distance and re-articulate them in a lighter substance, a different medium. Art is the re-enactment of the world in imagery, a celebration of life in metaphor.

As the imagery becomes the vehicle for creation, it must be chosen for its relevance. The female form can be used effectively to this end. It can convey a lust for life, humour, sensuality, spontaneity, honesty, warmth and sympathy. It can evoke a summum of ecstasy, a potent and rare witchery, a heady elixir. It can be seductive, vulgar, erotic, obscene, aggressive or virginal. In short, it is a flexible and fluid means of expression.

Whether the unclothed female form is considered "nude" or "naked" is simply academic. She stands with great presence, quite bare, without the need of Kenneth Clark's endorsement of her nudity to elevate her to an art form. I consider my figures to be perfectly bare.

Clothed or partially clothed figures may convey yet another dimension - a different facet of expression. A heightened erotic aspect could be explored by using the trappings of elegance (gloves, jewellery) on an otherwise nude figure.

Note:

*There was once a lass who was quite at her best
When she stripped off her undies, her bra and her vest
She cried - "I am bare but not quite undressed"
And this, I believe, was far from a jest
It sounds an enigma, but here are the clues
She hadn't removed her gloves and her shoes.*

My partiality to the substantial female form is a double-coded enquiry into the relationship between a woman's mass and her credibility in our society; thin women are considered desirable, seductive and sensual whereas large ladies are thought of as absurd and ridiculous. One wonders if the amount of space a woman occupies is directly relevant to her plausibility.

This gives rise to the simplistic and often-held male view that women must needs be thin in order for their opinions to carry weight.

On the other hand, one's argument need not be sated with weighty and profound ways of expressing this. The issue can be treated with humour - "in risu veritas" - (in laughter, truth). After all, one doesn't need to be solemn to be serious. Nor does one have to anguish at the discrepancies between what things are and what they ought to be. Humour in art is not indicative of cultural slumming. Nor is it the result of light-weight reasoning. There is an understanding that tears and laughter have some kind of symbiotic relationship. "And if I laugh at any mortal thing, tis that I may not weep" - Byron.

When a male artist depicts a woman, there is a possibility that he will draw from his model the desirable submissive and sensual qualities in her which reflect in a mirror image, his own sexual desire. Could it be true that men are arrogant enough to believe that women are in constant need of their attentions?

Note lines by society photographer, Herman J Hahndiek -

*"They say some women have no soul
God left them with a gaping hole
A secret longing never stilled
A need forever left unfilled."*

Their own need? Transparently veiled?

The female nude has strutted her stuff in the manner dictated by demands made on her from Venus of Willendorf to Madonna of Muizenberg. Whether something new is being explored or whether the same attitudes are being expressed on a different level is arguable. The disproportionate figures I use are probably nearer to fantasy than to realism. Unlike the nature of 2-dimensional work where fantasy can be explored, the fantastic sculpted figure may look incongruously real, grotesquely alive, horribly substantial. My work examines fantasy on a realistic level.

As I find it a lot easier to describe the content of my work rather than the technical aspects of it, I submit a verse to elucidate the spatial problems I encountered in the sculpture entitled "Bust of Eris".

Bust of Eris

*I've sculpted Eris, if you please
Graced in a hat of birds and bees
Around her neck flash spheres and cubes
And all propped up by largish boobs.*

*But should I let her lavish charms
Spread right out towards her arms?
Or should I lapse and call it quits
And let her hat outweigh her tits?*

*I must admit I am confused
Bewildered, baffled and bemused
And here I must confess my greavage
Of how to cope with all that cleavage.*

The most persuasive influence on my work is undoubtedly the society of the prosperous bourgeoisie where a superfluity of wealth is able to support its idleness; where behaviour includes exhibitionism, ostentation, posturing and artifice. To present this sympathetically, I depict my subjects with a stylised elegance, in a sort of camp representation which has serious but not honourable intentions. The subject matter of grossly indulgent women is an easy target for mockery, but it is performed with a self-mocking abdication of any pretensions to power.

CURRICULUM VITAE OF SELECTED SOUTH AFRICAN ARTISTS

BALDINELLI, Armando

Born 1908 Ancona, Italy.
Resided in SA from 1953.

A painter and graphic artist of figures, portraits, still life and elements of landscapes. Works in oil, acrylic, gouache, ink, wash, pencil, charcoal and in various graphic media, particularly woodcuts. 1963-71 abstract works. 1964-66 a number of assemblages in metal and wood. A painter of frescos and a mosaic artist.

STUDIES 1925-28 Academy of Fine Art, Rome; 1935-39 Istituto Superiore di Belle Arti, Modena, Italy.

PROFILE 1962-63 a member of Gutai Pinacoteca, Osaka, Japan. 1941-51 Professor at the Art Institute Aldini and Valeriani, Bologna. A number of book illustrations in Italy. A designer of stained glass windows; 1950-52 designed the windows of Noto Cathedral, Siracuse, Sicily, where he also painted alfrescos in the apse; 1962 designed the windows of St George's Presbyterian Church, Wolmarans Street, Johannesburg. He is also interested in cinematography and has made a number of films. 1962-63 lived in Japan; 1964 in New York. He has travelled extensively throughout the world.

EXHIBITIONS He has participated in numerous group exhibitions from 1931 in Italy, Zimbabwe, SA, throughout Europe and in the USA; 1936 Istituto di Cultura, Bergamo, Italy, first of over 10 major solo exhibitions held in Italy; from 1953 he has held over 20 solo exhibitions in SA, the USA and Portugal; 1967 Pretoria Art Museum, Prestige Joint Exhibition with Gunther van der Reis (qv); 1975 University of the Witwatersrand, Prestige Exhibition; 1981 Republic Festival Exhibition; 1981 Rand Afrikaans University, Retrospective Exhibition; 1984 University of the Witwatersrand, Retrospective Exhibition.

AWARDS 1936 Diploma d'Onore, Italian Contemporary Art Exhibition, Budapest, Hungary; 1946 Diploma d'Honneur, Musée des Beaux Arts, Nancy, France; 1950 awarded the Canadian Government Prize, Venice Biennial; 1965 Artist of Fame and Promise Award.

REPRESENTED British Museum, London, UK; Civic Gallery, Bologna, Italy; Galleria d'Arte dei Contemporanei, Milan, Italy; Hester Rupert Art Museum, Graaff-Reinet; Johannesburg Art Gallery; Modern Art Gallery, Ancona, Italy; Modern Art Gallery, Florence, Italy; National Gallery of Modern Art, Rome, Italy; Pietersburg Collection; Pretoria Art Museum; Rand Afrikaans University; SA National Gallery, Cape Town; Sogetsu Kaikan Gallery, Tokyo, Japan; University of the Witwatersrand.

PUBLIC COMMISSIONS Numerous commissions in Italy. From 1953 a large number of mosaics and murals in public buildings in SA, including at Jan Smuts Airport, Johannesburg; Hyde Park Shopping Centre, Johannesburg; Transvaal Provincial Administration Building, Pretoria; Natal Provincial Administration Building, Pietermaritzburg and in theatres, churches and educational institutions

BONITA, Kim Alice

Born in South Africa in 1962.

STUDIES 1979 matriculated at Hyde Park High School, Johannesburg, with distinctions in Art and Art History; 1984 BA (Fine Arts) Witwatersrand University.

PROFILE Travelled extensively: 1979 visited Europe, concentrating on historical and contemporary museum art in Britain, France, Holland and Greece; 1985 - 86 Europe, America and the United Kingdom visiting major art galleries and architectural sites. Extended visits to Paris, Rome and New York. Investigated current trends in sculpture, drawing, painting as well as in music, dance and theatre. 1985 appointed Tutor at the Johannesburg Art Foundation teaching both adults and children; 1986 Part-time Tutor in sculpture at the Johannesburg School of Art, Ballet, Drama and Music; 1987 Appointed to the post of Temporary Full-time Lecturer of Sculpture in the Fine Art Department, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. Has also worked as an assistant to the Props Manager on a film production; 1992 employed as assistant Curator, Unisa Art Gallery, Pretoria. Has completed extensive restoration to a pair of wood and plaster Art Deco lamp figures

EXHIBITIONS 1984 New Signatures Exhibition - winner of First Prize; 1984 Work selected for National Students Exhibition - Grahamstown Festival; 1985 Women's Festival Exhibitions - held at both the Market Theatre Gallery and the Natalie Knight Gallery; South African Sculpture Exhibition, Windhoek, Namibia; 1985/86 Work selected for Cape Town Triennial Travelling Exhibition; 1987 High Camp Exhibition, Passe Par Tout Gallery, Johannesburg; Work selected for Corona de Mar Exhibition, Uvongo, Natal.; Exhibition of works by Staff of the Fine Art Department, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. (Shown in Johannesburg, Pietermaritzburg, Durban and Stellenbosch.); Stutafords Wood Exhibition (in conjunction with the South African Association of Arts), shown in Durban, Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town

DOYLE, Jean

Born 1940 Wynberg, Cape Town.

A sculptor of figures and wildlife. Works in bronze.

STUDIES 1961-1963 Cape Town Training College , under Stephen de Villiers (qv), gaining a Higher Primary Teachers Certificate; 1983 SA Institute of Foundrymen, under Dr A Koursaris.

PROFILE A member of the SAAA; 1964 taught at the Alicedale Primary School, Cape Province; from 1976 a sculpture teacher at Studio 6, Wynberg, Cape Town; 1978-81 at Cape Town Art Centre and in 1986 at Disa House, Cape Town. 1970-71 illustrated Douglas Hey's articles for " Die Burger"; 1975 designed a birds of prey identification poster for the Department of Nature and Environmental Conservation; In 1983 she opened a bronze foundry in Cape Town and was elected a member of the SA Institute of Foundrymen. 1980 visited the USA.

EXHIBITIONS From 1980 she has participated in several group exhibitions in the USA and SA; 1980 The Venue, Sea Point, Cape Town, first of five solo exhibitions held in SA and SWA/Namibia.

REPRESENTED Pietersburg Collection; University of the North.

PUBLIC COMMISSIONS Several portrait busts from 1980; 1984 "Just Nuisance", Simonstown; 1984 Commemorative plaque of Mansergh, Cape Agulhas.

REFERENCE SA Art Calendar vol 10 no 3.

GEERS, Kendell

Born 8 June 1967; Johannesburg; South Africa.

STUDIES 1985-88 BA (FA); University of the Witwatersrand

PROFILE 1989 Lived in New York working as full time assistant to Richard Prince; 1990-91 Art Critic for "The Star" and "Die Vrye Weekblad" Newspapers; 1991 Gallery Manager, Newtown Galleries. Member of Market Theatre Gallery Advisory Board. AA Life Vita Award Judge; 1992 Curator, Goodman Gallery. Founding member of Institute of Contemporary Art, Johannesburg.

EXHIBITIONS 1991 Solo Exhibition: "Mediations"; Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg. Group Exhibitions: 1988 "Martensen Exhibition", Witwatersrand University, Johannesburg; 1989 "Human Rights Now", Durban Exhibition Centre, Durban. "Porn Pawn", Fig Gallery, Johannesburg. "Paper Chase", Fig Gallery, Johannesburg; 1990 "Table Mountain from Bloubergstrand", Cornucopia Gallery, Cape Town. "Volkskas Atelier", SA Association of Arts, Pretoria. Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg. "Looking at Art, Looking at Faith", Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg. "Klapperkop", SA Association of Arts, Pretoria. "Downtown Johannesburg opens the Fig", Fig Gallery, Johannesburg. 1991 "Volkskas Atelier", Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg. "National Sculpture Symposium", Michaelis Art Gallery, Cape Town. "Cape Town Triennial", South African National Gallery, Cape Town travelling until June 1993. "From Edoardo Villa to Kendell Geers", Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg. 1992 "Les Tables Artistiques", Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg. "Vita Art Now", Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg. "Volkskas Atelier", Technikon Natal Art Gallery, Durban.

AWARDS 1990 Mamba Award - Best Critic for 1990; 1991 First Quarter Vita Award; Mamba Award - Best Critic for 1991; Mamba Award - Best New Artist for 1991.

REPRESENTED Collections: Johannesburg Art Gallery; South African National Gallery; University of the Witwatersrand; Anglo American; Various Private Collections.

REFERENCES "Resistance Art in South Africa", Sue Williamson, David Philip, Cape Town, 1989, Page 69; "Art From South Africa"; Exhibition Catalogue; Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, England, 1990, Pages 23 - 24; "Spring is Rebellious", Ed Ingrid de Kock and Karen Press, Buchu Books, Cape Town, 1990, Pages 43 - 46.

KRAMS, Isolde

Born in Germany in 1961, came to South Africa in 1974

STUDIES In 1984 she obtained a BA Fine Arts Degree from the University of the Witwatersrand, majoring in sculpture, obtaining a distinction.

SIOPIS, Penelope

Born 1953 Vryberg, Northern Cape.

A painter of interiors and still life. Works in oils, pastel and mixed media. A series of tables laden with food and objects. 1986 "Act II" series set in Paris Opera.

STUDIES 1971-74 Rhodes University, gaining a BA(FA); 1975-76 Rhodes University, gaining an MFA with distinction; 1978 - 79 on a British Council Scholarship at Portsmouth Polytechnic, England, where attained a Post Graduate Diploma.

PROFILE 1980-83 A Lecturer at the Natal Technikon; from 1984 a lecturer in the Fine Arts Department of the University of the Witwatersrand. 1986 spent eight months at Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris.

EXHIBITIONS She has participated in group exhibitions from 1975 throughout South Africa and in Switzerland, the USA and West Germany; 1978 Collectors Gallery, Johannesburg, first of seven solo exhibitions, of which two have been held in the UK; 1982 Cape Town Triennial; 1985 Cape Town Triennial; 1985 Tributaries, touring SA and West Germany; 1986 Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, joint exhibition with Peter Schutz (qv); 1987 AND 1988 Johannesburg Art Gallery, Vita Art Now.

AWARDS 1985 Merit Award, Cape Town Triennial; 1986 Volkskas Atelier Award; 1986 Anderson Capelli Research Award, University of the Witwatersrand; 1987 Vita Art Now Quarterly Award Winner and Merit Award Winner.

REPRESENTED Durban Art Gallery; Johannesburg Art Gallery; King George VI Art Gallery, Port Elizabeth; Natal Technikon; Pretoria Art Museum; Rhodes University; Roodepoort Museum; SA National Gallery, Cape Town; University of the Witwatersrand.

REFERENCES AASA; Gallery Summer 1985; SA Arts Calendar Summer 1985-1986 & Winter 1986; De Kat December/January 1986 & May 1986.

PROFILE Lived and worked at the Cité Internationale in Paris. Commenting autobiographically she portrays her view on society using as references sculpture of the nineteenth century, Pop Art, Furniture and Feminist Art.

EXHIBITIONS 1985 Cape Town Triennial; 1987 Johannesburg Art, Ballet and Music School exhibition; 1988 Johannesburg Art Gallery, Vita Art Now.

AWARDS 1982 National Students Fine Art Competition; 1984 Merit Award in Sculpture, New Signatures, SAAA; 1984 Martienssen Prize, Student Competition, University of the Witwatersrand; 1984 Anya Millman Scholarship for Overseas Travel.

REPRESENTED Durban Art Gallery; University of the Witwatersrand.

REFERENCE *De Kat* December/January 1986

KRUGER, Braam

Born 1950 Boksburg, Transvaal.

A painter, sculptor and graphic artist, working in oil, acrylic, watercolour, gouache, ink, wash, pencil, enamel, charcoal, wood, ceramics, the encaustic processes and in various graphic media. 1982 three-dimensional paintings in plastic; 1985 "Batman" series; 1985-86 "Black" paintings; 1987 working on a series of paintings with Simon Stone (qv)..

STUDIES 1974-79 Pretoria Technical College (Technikon), under Gunther van der Reis (qv), gaining a Teachers Diploma in Art; 1980 Frans Masereel Centrum voor Grafiek, Kasterlee, Belgium.

PROFILE From 1979 a member of the SAAA; founder of the SA Alternative Monuments Commission. 1984 a lecturer in painting, Cape Technikon. 1977 produced a series of etchings illustrating *Laatnagvrese*, a book of poems by Wessel Pretorius; 1986 illustrations and cover of a book of short stories by Jan Strydom. 1970 a scenic painter for PACT. Has lived in the Cape Province and presently in Johannesburg. 1978 visited New York; 1979 Paris; 1979-80 in Antwerp, Belgium.

EXHIBITIONS He has participated in numerous group exhibitions from 1974 in SA, West Germany, Belgium and the USA; 1975 own studio, Pretoria, first of c.20 solo exhibitions, one of which was held in Belgium; 1978 Rand Afrikaans University, solo exhibition; 1979 exhibition of pottery and ceramics; 1985 Cape Town Triennial; 1987 Johannesburg Art Gallery, Vita Art Now.

REPRESENTED Bellville Municipal Gallery; Pietersburg Collection; Pretoria Art Museum; Pretoria Technikon; SA National Gallery, Cape Town; Sterckshof Museum, Antwerp, Belgium; Ministry for Culture, Belgium; University of Natal; University of Pretoria; Walter Battiss Museum, Somerset East; Willem Annandale Art Gallery, Lichtenburg.

PUBLIC COMMISSIONS 1974 mural for the Pretoria Technical College; 1983-84 portrait for the SA Nursing Council.

REFERENCES 3Cs; AAASA; Style March 1985; De Kat April 1986; SA Arts Calendar Winter 1986.

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Galleria degli uffizi, Florence.
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Museum of Modern Art, New York.
- Fig. 2.12. Dali. The Great Masturbator. 1929-32. 43 ¹/₄x59". Oil on canvas.
Private Collection.
- Fig. 2.13. Tintoretto. Susanna and the Elders. 1555. 4'9 ¹/₂"x6'4". Oil on canvas.
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.
- Fig. 2.14. Jones. Chair. 1969.
- Fig. 2.15. Rubens. Helene Fourment in a Fur Coat. c 1636. Oil.
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.
- Fig. 2.16. Rembrandt. Diane. 1636. 72 ⁷/₈ x 79 ³/₄". Oil on canvas.
The Hermitag Leningrad.
- Fig. 2.17. Rodin. The Eternal Idol. 1889. 73.2x59.2x41.1 cm. Plaster.
- Fig. 3.1. Sirani. Portia Wounding her Thigh. 1664.

- Fig. 3.2. Gentileschi. Susanna and the Elders. 1610.
- Fig. 3.3. Morisot. On the lawn. 1874. 73x92cm. Pastel on paper.
Paris. Musee du Petit Palais.
- Fig. 3.4. Morisot. Before the Mirror. 1890. 30x20cm. Pencil.
Paris, Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des Dessins.
- Fig. 3.5. Guerrilla Girls. Untitled posters. 1989. 9 ½x12".
- Fig. 3.6. Chicago. The Dinner Party. 1974-70. 48'x48'x48'. Multimedia.
- Fig. 3.7. Chicago. Primordial Goddess. 1974-79. (place setting from The Dinner Party.)
- Fig. 3.8. Sherman. Untitled. 1992. Multimedia.
- Fig. 3.9. Kruger. Untitled black and white photograph. 1983.
- Fig. 3.10. Fini. Composition with figures on a Terrace, 1939. 99x79cm. Oil on canvas.
Collection of the Edward James Foundation, Sussex.
- Fig. 3.11. Spero. The First Language. 1981.
- Fig. 4.1. Solomon. Title unknown. ±1991-92. Ceramix
- Fig. 4.2. Solomon. Title unknown. ±1991-92. Ceramix
- Fig. 4.3. Kruger. Unfinished commission of triptych. 1993. Oil.
- Fig. 4.4. Baldinelli. The Mirror. 1974. 40X58½ 4 Col. Lithograph.
- Fig. 4.5. Krams. The Girl at Her Dressing Table. 1988. 1,42x0,51x1,20m. Painted
fibre glass, wood, perspex and bronze.
S.A. National Gallery, Cape Town.
- Fig. 4.6. Krams. Detail of The Girl at Her Dressing Table.
- Fig. 4.7. Doyle. Madonna of Muizenberg. ±1989. Bronze.
- Fig. 4.8. Alice. Standing Female Nude. ±1991.
- Fig. 4.9. Kruger. Maya with a Gun. ±1990.
- Fig. 4.10. Siopsis. Patience on a Monument. 'A History Painting' 1988. 198x176cm. Oil
and collage on board. William Humphreys Museum.
- Fig. 4.11. Geers. Panic. 1990-1.
- Fig. 4.12. Doyle. The New Eve. Bronze and oil.

Candidates Work.

- Fig. 5.1. Graham. Femme Fatale. 1993. 125x32x33.
Multimedia and bronze.
- Fig. 5.2. Ibid. Proverbs 11:22. 1993. 40x40x25cm
Bronze, resin, stone.
- Fig. 5.3. Ibid. The Leaning Figure of Society. 1993. 155x31x31cm.
Resin, stone, bronze.
- Fig. 5.4. Ibid. The Swing. 1993. 92x65x10cm.
Bronze, metal, copper.
- Fig. 5.5. Ibid. Birdbath. 1993. 95x48x36cm
Resin, Bronze, copper, stone.
- Fig. 5.6. Ibid. Submission. 1993. 20x38x37.
Resin, grog, bronze.
- Fig. 5.7. Ibid. Which Way? 1993. 90x60x50.
Metal, bronze.
- Fig. 5.8. Ibid. Escape. 1993. 80x130x42cm.
Wood, metal, bronze.
- Fig. 5.9. Ibid. Treasures. 1993. 80x27x22cm.
Sandstone, bronze.
- Fig. 5.10. Ibid. Rebirth. 1993. 155x37x27cm.
Resin, grog, oil.
- Fig. 5.11. Ibid. The Thinker. 1993. 75x35x35
Bronze, soapstone.