

MOTHERHOOD AND REPRESENTATION AT THE SACKLER

CENTER FOR FEMINIST ART: JUDY CHICAGO,

CATHERINE OPIE, CANAN SENOL

by

Laura Allred Hurtado

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
The University of Utah
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Art History

Department of Art and Art History

The University of Utah

August 2011

Copyright © Laura Allred Hurtado 2011

All Rights Reserved.

The University of Utah Graduate School

STATEMENT OF THESIS APPROVAL

The thesis of _____ **Laura Allred Hurtado** _____

has been approved by the following supervisory committee members:

_____ **Elena Shtromberg** _____, Chair **January 7, 2011**
Date Approved

_____ **Paul (Monty) Paret** _____, Member **January 7, 2011**
Date Approved

_____ **Jill Dawsey** _____, Member **January 7, 2011**
Date Approved

and by _____ **Brian Snapp** _____, Chair of

the Department of _____ **Art and Art History** _____

and by Charles A. Wight, Dean of The Graduate School.

ABSTRACT

This thesis begins with one central question: How did second-wave feminist artists represent motherhood and how is it represented today? I explore this question through case-studies of three artists and their work: Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* (1974-1979), Catherine Opie's *Self-Portrait/Nursing* (2004) and Canan Senol's *Fountain* (2000). All three works of art were on display during the inauguration of the Sackler Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum in 2007. The physical dominance of *The Dinner Party* within the gallery acts as a metaphor for its ideological influence within the scope of feminism itself. My first chapter establishes Chicago's need to minimize representations of motherhood by obscuring her as an unwanted guest. Yet, the neighboring temporary exhibition "Global Feminisms," curated by Linda Nochlin, highlights maternal-representation, indicating a different vantage point in feminism's approach to motherhood. My second chapter investigates the appropriation of *Madonna del Latte* iconography in Opie's *Self-Portrait/Nursing*, framing it as an attack on traditional Christian values for both personal and political reasons. Yet this appropriation maintains the fantasy of the mother-child dyad, which second-wave feminists, like Chicago, sought to disrupt. In my third chapter, I explore Senol's video art *Fountain*, which codes the breast as phallic and powerful. Further, I draw a connection between Julia Kristeva's writings on *chora* with *Fountain's* sound of leaking milk. By examining

these three works, this thesis ultimately highlights the complicated relationship between feminism and motherhood.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Chapter	
1. GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER? JUDY CHICAGO'S <i>THE DINNER PARTY</i> AND RENDERINGS OF MOTHERHOOD AT THE SACKLER CENTER FOR FEMINIST ART.....	10
Motherhood in Chains.....	14
Kristeva's Critique and the New Dinner Guest.....	21
2. MADONNA DEL LATTE: CATHERINE OPIE AND A DISCOURSE ON MATERNAL PASSION.....	27
The Renaissance Madonna as Foil.....	30
Proposing the Good Nursing Mother.....	37
3. CONCEPTUALIZING MILK: THE SEMIOTICS OF CANAN SENOL'S <i>FOUNTAIN</i>	45
The Part for the Whole: Fragmented Breasts and Central-Core Imagery.....	47
Phallic Breast: Signifier of Power.....	51
The Sonic Quality of Dripping Milk.....	56
CONCLUSION.....	62
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	66

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many individuals and institutions have aided me in this study. I am particularly indebted to the University of Utah Department of Art and Art History who provided generous funding, travel grants to New York and Washington D.C., and the opportunity to teach at the university level. Without such consideration, much of my study would have been impossible. Thanks are especially owed to Professor Elena Shtromberg, for her thoughtful advice and her genuine interest in my scholastic development, to Professor Monty Paret for his forthrightness—your honesty is invaluable—and for Jill Dawsey, who encouraged me to pursue this idea from the very beginning. I would also like to thank Professor Lela Graybill, for her theories on the sublime, and Professor Shelia Muller, for her mentoring, dedication and encouragement. For scholastic support, I thank the Sackler Center for Feminist Art. Thank you to the women of the Avenues Reading Group, the BYUMOA, and the Great Basin Feminist Society, I have consistently looked to you as examples. To Ashlee Cook, Annie Burbidge Ream, Analisa Bacall, Amanda Beardsley, and Scotti Hill for your friendship, edits, and support. For help with the Turkish translations, I thank Yeliz Lambson. Thanks are owed to Clara and Kaerlig Hurtado and Alexis and Nicole Deforge. Thank you also to the mothers in my own life: to Barbara Allred who gracefully and ambitiously dragged five young children to the

LACMA and to Lovisa Lyman, for your equal balance of bookishness and maternal passion. Thank you to John Allred who nurtures and celebrates my independent voice. For the unfailing support of my dearest husband and kindest friend Tom Hurtado, thank you, thank you, thank you. And finally, to my wild little pack, oh, how I love being your mother. I am so proud of our little family and will always be grateful.

INTRODUCTION

Through a close examination of Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* (1974-1979), Catherine Opie's *Self-Portrait/Nursing* (2004) and Canan Senol's *Fountain* (Çesme) (2000), this study explores three distinct modes of representing motherhood by feminist artists. My study begins chronologically and investigates one central question: How did 1970s feminist artists represent motherhood and how is it represented today? In navigating this question, I position three vastly different works whose context and feminist agendas often conflict and I place them in a cross-generational dialogue. Yet, in no way does this investigation pretend to be the comprehensive history of either feminism or representations of motherhood. To do so within the limited scope of a thesis would prove both superficial and futile.¹

Grouped together as case studies, the works I discuss were chosen not only because of subject matter but also particularly because of the year and location in which

¹ Typically, feminism of the 1960s and 1970s is called second-wave feminism. However, within that term there are a wide variety of representational strategies especially regarding motherhood, and the flat equation of Judy Chicago representing all second-wave feminist art is certainly problematic. The most obvious is Mary Kelly, a contemporary of Chicago, whose approach to representing motherhood is dramatically different. Simultaneously to the creation of *The Dinner Party*, Mary Kelly created, *The Post-Partum Document*, a work that explores many of the reoccurring themes I investigate in this thesis, namely: psychoanalysis, the maternal body, lost and anxiety, language development and gender construction. So as not to encompass the entire second-wave feminist movement with one singular artist, I have often chosen to refer to Judy Chicago's feminist practices simply as Chicago's feminism.

they were exhibited. While each work offers a different vantage point, all three converged at a single site, The Sackler Center for Feminist Art in 2007. In the United States, 2007 was dubbed “the Year of Feminism” in art.² Such a bold declaration for the art world was supported by several noteworthy exhibitions, but especially “WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution,” and “Global Feminisms: New Directions in Feminist Art,” the many journals published that year on the subject, and the various conferences which explored the issue, in particular the landmark conference “The Feminist Future: Theories and Practices in the Visual Arts” at the Museum of Modern Art. According to Rosalyn Deutsche, “The events that make-up ‘the Year of Feminism’ are engaged, among other activities, in writing the history of feminism and especially, of arts relation to feminism since the 1960s.”³ For Deutsche, 2007’s vigor was primarily rooted in drafting histories about feminism then in relation to feminism now.

However, feminism, as a catchphrase, was not limited to the art world. Similar statements were also made on the political front. On January 20, 2007, Senator Hillary Clinton announced that she would run for President of the United States. Yet, throughout her campaign, she was inundated with sexist remarks.⁴ According to journalist Amanda Fortini, when Clinton declared her candidacy, “sexism in America, long lying dormant, like some feral, tranquilized animal, yawned and reveal itself . . . When it comes to

² Rosalyn Deutsche, Aruna D’Souza, Miwon Kwon, Ulrike Muller, Mignon Nixon, and Senam Okudzeto, “Feminist Time: A Conversation,” *Grey Room* 31(Spring 2008), 32. See also, Kate Taylor, “Feminist Art Goes Back Under the Lens,” *New York Sun* (March 2, 2007), <http://www.nysun.com/arts/feminist-art-goes-back-under-the-lens/49658/> or the special section on Feminist art in the Washington Post, including Blake Gopnik, “What is Feminist Art,” *The Washington Post* (April 22, 2007), <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/04/22/what-is-feminist-art>

³ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁴ One of the most famous of these occurred in early 2008 when at a campaign rally, Clinton was heckled by an attendee to “iron my shirt.”

women, we are not post-anything.”⁵ Such blatant gender-based criticism spurred multiple news circuits to explore the impact and legacy of the feminist movement in the 1960s and the 1970s and to position its history in relationship to the sexual politics of 2007. The basic premise of these editorials: What did feminism accomplish and where is it now?

I also use this inquiry as a starting point for my study. In particular, I turn my attention to an institution established in 2007, the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum. Launched as a “museum within a museum,” the museum’s Sackler Center is the only major museum to dedicate space solely for the display of feminist art.⁶ Its establishment in 2007 was a momentous in the art world because women artists, and in particular feminist artists, have notoriously been underrepresented and at times excluded from major museums, despite their significant contributions to art production.⁷ Examining such a significant historic site in feminist art history, at such a remarkable time, provides a rich physical location for exploration.

⁵ Amanda Fortini, “The Feminist Reawakening: Hilary Clinton and the Fourth Wave,” *New York Magazine* (April 13, 2008), <http://nymag.com/print/?/news/features/46011/index4.html>

⁶ The Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art is a distinct space within the Brooklyn Museum. The center is separated by a two large glass doors, a “portal entry” that demarcating the center as independent. According to designer Susan T. Rodriguez, The Sackler Center was to be thought of as “a visually distinctive environment symbolic of the Museum's commitment to creating a permanent home for showcasing feminist art and recognizing and exploring the importance of a woman's point of view.” Susan Rodriguez, “Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art: About the Center: Gallery Design,” *Brooklyn Museum*, Accessed January 2010, http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascfa/about/gallery_design.php

⁷ In April of 2007, the same year the Sackler Center for Feminist Art opened, the well-known Guerrilla Girls published an ad in the Washington Post listing the then current statistics of women to men in the DC National museums. Guerrilla Girls, “Reinventing the F Word: Horror on the National Mall,” *Guerrilla Girls*, 2007, accessed June 2010, <http://www.guerrillagirls.com/posters/washposthorror.shtml>.

Inaugural exhibitions often establish the mission statement for new museums and the Sackler Center opened with two major exhibitions: the permanent exhibition of Judy Chicago's iconic work, *The Dinner Party* and an ambitious survey of contemporary feminist art entitled "Global Feminisms: New Directions in Contemporary Art." As with the many editorials of 2007, the exhibitions positioned 1970s feminist art practices within a historical context (addressing the question what did 1970s feminism do) and "Global Feminism investigated feminist art practices now.

While all histories are subjective, Chicago's version of feminist history dominated the exhibition space of the Sackler Center. The presence (and influence) of the historic *Dinner Party* forefronts it as the consummate masterpiece of all feminist art and champions Chicago as the sole author of the feminist artistic narrative. However, equally significant was the adjoining exhibition "Global Feminisms" which sought to position and display contemporary feminist artistic practices. Curators Rielly and Nochlin claimed this exhibition would, "look to the present and future, instead of the past" presenting feminism as *feminisms* broadening the scope of Chicago's essentialist feminism and rectifying its ills.⁸ In other words, their goal was to make feminism plural, allowing for multiple experiences and perspectives and to offer a new frame of reference to feminist art practices.

As for representations of motherhood, very little of the monumental work *The Dinner Party* addresses the subject. The small portions in *The Dinner Party* that do represent motherhood tend to marginalize the issue, ushering it to the periphery of the work. "Global Feminisms," however, clearly focuses on motherhood as a feminist topic,

⁸ Maura Rielly and Linda Nochlin, "*Global Feminisms*": *New Directions in Contemporary Art* (New York: Merrell, 2007), 11.

particularly because a significant number of works in the exhibition invoke it. Such a dramatic increase in the representation of motherhood in feminist art practices today, I argue, points to a clear change in discourse within feminism itself.

Chapter one, “Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner? Judy Chicago’s *The Dinner Party* and Representations of Motherhood at the Sackler Center for Feminist Art,” investigates the relationship between Chicago’s feminist art practices and motherhood. Mirroring the dominance *The Dinner Party* held in the Sackler Center for Feminist Art, Chicago’s work acts as a cornerstone of comparison throughout this thesis. Paying particular attention to the illuminated M on the *Margaret Sanger Runner* and the embroidery on the *Mary Wollstonecraft Runner*, I posit that *The Dinner Party* marginalizes motherhood primarily by obscuring it to the periphery of the piece. For Chicago, this marginalization and demotion of the image of the mother reflect a politically motivated desire to challenge assumptions regarding women’s lives naturally including motherhood. Theorist Julia Kristeva critiques second-wave feminism in general for avoiding the maternal. Because all are born of women, Kristeva asserts, motherhood remains a central and pervasive aspect of lived experience that requires rigorous examination.⁹ I then turn to “Global Feminisms” as a site, which disrupts *The Dinner Party*’s dominance of both the physical and ideological space in the Sackler Center. As a new banquet guest to the feminist

⁹ Similarly, Adrienne Rich states in the foreword of her book *Of Women Born*, “Because young humans remain dependent upon nurture for a much longer period than other mammals, and because of the division of labor long established in human groups, where women not only bear and suckle but are assigned almost total responsibility for children, most of us first know both love and disappointment, power and tenderness, in the person of a woman.” Adrienne Rich, *Of Women Born: Motherhood as Experience and Intuition*, (New York: Norton & Co.), 11.

dinner party, “Global Feminisms” ushers in representations of motherhood as a valid feminist subject matter.

I examine the Sackler Center’s inclusion of motherhood as feminist subject through two very different works of art, Catherine Opie’s *Self-Portrait/Nursing* and Canan Senol’s *Fountain*. These pieces narrow the scope from the broad category of representations of motherhood to a more focused lens on the lactating body and, in particular, the act of breastfeeding. I do this for three reasons. First, images of nursing mothers are among the most pervasive representations of motherhood in art history, due to the long-standing tradition of Madonna and child imagery in Christian iconography. Such pervasiveness encodes images of the lactating body with historical convention. All three artists negotiate this heritage of the lactating mother and ultimately revise, embrace or reject its history. Second, breastfeeding is a clear identifier of motherhood that is manifested through a distinct bodily process.¹⁰ As an infant cries, the lactating body responds. Third, bodies carry political associations. From the “back-to-nature” pro-breastfeeding campaign of Rousseau in the eighteenth century to the propagandistic ads of Nazi Germany that conflated conservative family values with nationalism, breastfeeding has long been used as a tool for political agendas.¹¹ Moralizing narratives continue into the present and are used by both liberal and conservative political agendas to maintain an ideologically driven social order.

¹⁰ In no means do I intend to suggest that breastfeeding and/or pregnancy are the definitiveness of motherhood. On the contrary, there is a multitude of ways in which motherhood is performed and expressed. While some of these manifestations are tied to the physical maternal body, many acts of mothering are not. Rather, breastfeeding and pregnancy, as bodily processes, are among the few uniquely visceral experience tied specifically to biological reproductive responses.

¹¹ Marilyn Yalom, “The Political Breast: Bosoms for the Nation,” *A History of the Breast* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1997): 105.

This renewed attention to representing breastfeeding raises certain questions (all of which are variations of the first inquiry): How do current representations of the breastfeeding mother indicate an overall change in feminist priorities? Why was this subject marginalized by 1970s feminist artistic practices? And finally, how does the social climate today regarding breastfeeding and the female body in general fuel such a return to an art historical tradition of depicting lactation?

I respond to these questions in chapter two and chapter three. Chapter two, “Madonna del Latte: Catherine Opie & A Discourse of Maternal Passion,” explores Opie’s return to mothering as subject matter. She does this through an appropriation of Renaissance *Madonna del Latte*’s visual vocabulary, disrupting traditional representations of the Madonna through her nudity and butch identity. Opie’s use of mechanical replication renders *Madonna del Latte* images as social constructions. Like Chicago’s *Dinner Party*, Opie’s work is motivated, at least in part, by political ambitions. *Self-Portrait/Nursing* deconstructs the gender boundaries well established in traditional maternal representation. In addition, Opie’s image reinserts a celebration of maternal passion into the canon of feminist artistic production. I consider the writings of psychoanalytical theorist Julia Kristeva in this chapter, particularly “Stabat Mater” because of its close analysis and reinterpretation of representations of the Virgin Mary. Throughout the thesis, I rely heavily on Kristeva because of the rigor of her investigation in and revision of the maternal body in psychoanalytic terms and because of her explicit statements regarding the need for such thorough investigations both in the 1970s and as recently as 2004.

The last chapter, “Conceptualizing Milk: The Semiotics of Canan Senol,” addresses the fragmented lactating breasts represented in Senol’s *Fountain*. Bringing back Judy Chicago’s central core images, particularly the *Margaret Sanger Plate*, from *The Dinner Party*, in which a singular genital part stands in for a whole body, I discuss the way that fragmentation becomes either a violent act against the body or a method that limits the body to biological organs. The chapter then explores and compares Senol’s work to both Duchamp’s *Fountain* (1917) and Turkish artist Serkan Orkaya’s *Artist as Fountain* (1999). Such references as well as formal elements in the composition itself, code the maternal breast as phallus, allowing it to act as a signifier of power. Further, I claim that this reversal of masculine power structures is repeated through the sound of dripping breast milk in *Fountain*. Addressing this audible element, I suggest that *Fountain* can be paired with Julia Kristeva’s text “Revolution in Poetic Language” (1974) by articulating what Kristeva called *chora*, a maternal pre-language. Like Senol, Kristeva’s theories on maternal language serve to revise Lacan’s theories regarding the patriarchal origins of language.

I conclude by asserting that these case-studies attest to the struggle feminist artists have had with the images of motherhood having used a variety of visual strategies to represent her. Works dealing with representations of motherhood have seemingly returned as a prominent feminist subject matter as evidenced in the exhibition “Global Feminisms.” However, such a return does not necessarily suggest a return to earlier representational modes, which idealize motherhood. Further, the point of this thesis is not to privilege Senol and Opie over Chicago, or to suggest that what is current is simply more progressive, more in tune, or more politically correct than earlier expressions of

feminism. Rather, the different agendas, practices and artistic strategies used by Chicago, Opie and Senol collide at the Sackler Center for Feminist Art in a way that questions modes of representing experience of women's bodies.

Such multiplicity of narratives, even within a shared time period, points to the ambivalence and affection of feminist artists regarding representations of motherhood. Whether wrapped in chains, disembodied or performed, the representations of the maternal that are on view at the Sackler Center for Feminist Art do not suggest indifference but rather are diverse investigations into the experience of motherhood. These rigorous examinations indicate and display the complexity of motherhood, an experience that Julia Kristeva calls, "pregnant with madness and sublimity."¹²

¹² Julia Kristeva, "Motherhood Today" (presentation, Colloque Gypsy V, Paris, France, October 28, 2005), <http://www.kristeva.fr/motherhood.html>.

CHAPTER 1

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER? JUDY CHICAGO'S *DINNER PARTY* AND RENDERINGS OF MOTHERHOOD AT THE SACKLER CENTER FOR FEMINIST ART

“There was one born every year for four years
and now. . . I am almost a prisoner.”

Margaret Sanger's *Motherhood in Bondage*

The Dinner Party is a monumental “banquet” that comprehensively reclaims and celebrates women throughout history.¹³ Although this ambitious project was under the direction of Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party* was primarily a collaborative effort of over 400 feminist artists and scholarly researchers, who collectively believed in the importance of the project. Made of several components, the primary form is a triangular shaped table set to serve thirty-nine women who contributed and influenced history in significant ways. Divided into three forty-eight feet long wings, decorated with hand-made ceramic plates, goblets, and delicately embroidered table runners, each individual setting stylistically honors the woman for whom it's set: a famous literary, political, or

¹³ Judy Chicago, “The Dinner Party,” *Brooklyn Museum of Art Sackler Center for Feminist Art*, 2007, accessed September 2009, http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascfa/dinner_party/home.php.

otherwise accomplished woman from Western history ranging from the fertility goddess to Emily Dickenson. In addition to the women represented by an individual ceramic plate and table runner, the heritage floor, which fills the center of the “dining room,” is covered in ceramic tiles with the names of 999 lesser-known, yet equally important women written on them.

Using materials such as ceramics and embroidery, the goal of *The Dinner Party* is primarily didactic: to revise traditional patriarchal canons of history, to celebrate women’s significant artistic contributions by utilizing what was traditionally women’s craft-based media, and to use central-core imagery (images based on the vagina) as a powerful symbol to explore (and reclaim) female sexuality and female universality.

According to art historian Amelia Jones, *The Dinner Party*, “asserts itself on such a scale and with such self-assurance that it has [become] a catalyst for feminist debate since its premier.”¹⁴ Originally displayed at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in March 1979, the piece has drawn just as much controversy as it has acclaim. During the culture wars of the 1980s, politicians, like Jesse Helms, saw *The Dinner Party* plates as sexual and pornographic.¹⁵ Modernist art critics asserted that the work was anti-aesthetic, too craft-based and too kitsch to be a serious contribution to the artistic discourse of the time.¹⁶ Perhaps most damning was the response from poststructuralist feminists who

¹⁴ Amelia Jones, “Sexual Politics: Feminist Strategies, Feminist Conflicts, Feminist Histories,” *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago’s Dinner Party in Feminist Art History* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 24.

¹⁵ See Jonathan Katz, “The Senators Were Revolted:’ Homophobia and the Culture Wars,” *A Companion to Contemporary Art Since 1945*, ed. Amelia Jones (New York: Blackwell Publishing).

¹⁶ Anette Kubitzka, “Rereading the Readings of *The Dinner Party* in Europe,” *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago’s Dinner Party in Feminist Art History* (Los Angeles: Armand Hammer Museum, 1996), 150.

condemned the work as naïve, reductive and essentialist. Poststructuralist feminism is a mode of analysis primarily interested in language and terminology, social construction of sexual difference, and Marxist theories of power and social structures. Scholars such as Griselda Pollock, Amelia Jones, Judith Butler and Laura Mulvey, among others, challenged the belief that women's shared experiences are held in common based on a biological predetermined essence of femaleness.¹⁷ In general, poststructuralist feminists saw gender as socially constructed and performative, a phrase coined by Butler rather than a biologically determined identity. They viewed *The Dinner Party* and much of Chicago's feminist practice in general, as exclusionary, drawing only from the experience of white, middle-class women of Western society. Further, they accused *The Dinner Party* of reinforcing masculine ideas of greatness and reestablishing linear narratives in history.¹⁸

In spite of (or perhaps because of) this conflicted response, *The Dinner Party* remains a shorthand icon for much of second-wave feminist art and the crowning jewel of the Sackler Center for Feminist Art's collection. As Elizabeth Sackler herself suggests, "The point was to use the wealth of *The Dinner Party* . . . as a starting point."¹⁹

Following Sackler's formula, *The Dinner Party* begins my examination. While the

¹⁷ Amelia Jones explains poststructuralist feminism in *Sexual Politics* as, "a diverse body of critical ideals spearheaded by British art historians Griselda Pollock and Lisa Tickner." I would also add Laura Mulvey to this list. Jones, *Sexual Politics*, 24.

¹⁸ This was further problematized by Chicago's project in general as she took on the role of master artist. Although over 400 people worked on *The Dinner Party*, only Chicago claimed the right to authorship. By this, critics assert that she reenacted the same patriarchal power structures that so many women were trying to resist. She obliterated the efforts of many women, integrating them with her own.

¹⁹ Using *The Dinner Party* as a starting point is a model, which I follow in this thesis. Robin Pogrebin, "Ms. Chicago, Party of 39? Your Table's Ready in Brooklyn," *New York Times*, February 1, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/01/arts/design/01party.html>.

monumental work visually celebrates the greatness of women throughout time, it does not represent women fairly or equally. Of the many accomplishments celebrated, motherhood is marginalized. It is a startling omission considering the historic effects of child rearing on women's lived experience. From this omission questions arise: Why is motherhood marginalized in *The Dinner Party*? What is the relationship between *The Dinner Party* and "Global Feminisms" at the Sackler Center for Feminist Art? How can "Global Feminisms" be seen as a guest that both critiques and revises Chicago's seminal work? I start my analysis with two representations from *The Dinner Party*, the *Sanger M* and the *Wollstonecraft Runner*, which depict motherhood as the source of death and imprisonment. Despite the significant scale of Chicago's narrative about the many contributions of women, these two images are small and insignificant. Such reductive fragments minimize the experience down to the margins. Motherhood is hidden in *The Dinner Party* functioning as a small and insignificant footnote.²⁰

Worthy of note, Julia Kristeva's has problematized second-wave feminism (in which *The Dinner Party* is included) for its aversion to motherhood as a subject matter. Framing "Global Feminisms" as an invited guest to Chicago's *Dinner Party*, I posit that motherhood is made visual though this ancillary invitation in the adjoining galleries. As newcomers to the table, "Global Feminisms" revises the feminist values held by Chicago.

²⁰ In her book, *Sexual Politics*, Amelia Jones noted Chicago's ambivalent view of motherhood. Jones, *Sexual Politics*, 62. Though Chicago appears to have changed her agenda towards motherhood in her work *The Birth Project* (1980-1985). Of this project, Chicago said, "Few images of birth existed in Western art, a puzzling omission as birth is a central focus of many women's lives and a universal experience of all humanity - as everyone is born." Judy Chicago, "The Birth Project," *Through the Flower*, accessed on June 2010, <http://www.throughtheflower.org/page.php?p=12&n=2>. Although *The Birth Project* has been criticized, like *The Dinner Party*, by many art historian Andrea Liss as "generalized and essentialized symbolism." Liss, *Feminist Art and the Maternal*, 103.

Furthermore, the exhibition's inclusion of motherhood as a predominant subject matter makes evident a change in feminist discourses in general and its relationship to the mother today.

Motherhood in Chains

The first image of motherhood in *The Dinner Party* is that of English writer Mary Wollstonecraft. Among her many accomplishments, Wollstonecraft famously wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* in 1792, one of the earliest manifestos on feminist philosophy. She wrote:

How many women thus waste life away the prey of discontent, who might have practiced as physicians, regulated a farm, managed a shop, and stood erect, supported by their own industry, instead of hanging their heads surcharged with the dew of sensibility, that consumes the beauty to which it at first gave luster.²¹

Wollstonecraft advocated against the false belief that women's natural ability was to *feel* instead of reason. Her belief was that women deserve equal access to education and to the labor force. In 1796, she wrote "It appears to me impossible that I should cease to exist, or that this active, restless spirit, equally alive to joy and sorrow, should be only organized dust."²² However, less than one year later, she died at the age of thirty-eight, from a placenta-related infection after giving birth to her daughter, the author Mary Shelley.²³

²¹ Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (London: Peters, Thomas and Andrews): 1792, PDF, e-book.

²² Mary Wollstonecraft, *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (London: Cassell & Co., 1796), PDF, e-book.

²³ Mary Shelley is most well known for her novel, *Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus*, published in 1818.

The table runner associated with Wollstonecraft, *The Dinner Party*:

Wollstonecraft Place Setting (Wollstonecraft Runner) depicts the author's limp body splayed out on the birthing bed, covered in a pool of blood.²⁴ Her wild hair stands out straight, suggesting a type of hysteric defeat. She is stretched out, a haggard corpse. Stylistically, the *Wollstonecraft Runner* is typical of eighteenth century British folk tradition. The figures are stiff and lack perspective. This naiveté of the style flattens the wounded Wollstonecraft to the bed obliterating her as she is consumed by the whiteness of the bed-sheets. To the side of the bed, her husband and two daughters weep at the sight. A top hat, used throughout the *Wollstonecraft Runner* as a symbol of her influence and intellect, lies discarded on the floor.²⁵ Certainly, maternal mortality rates were common in the eighteenth century. However, Chicago's appropriation of such an image in the 1970s allowed her not only to historicize obstetrical death but also to criticize motherhood as a corporeal danger. Influential women throughout history have sacrificed themselves in the service of children. Chicago's representation of motherhood frames these sacrifices through tragedy and loss.

If this statement gets at Chicago's intention, the placement of the image complicates this reading. This scene is located on the back end of the runner itself, placing it in the interior of *The Dinner Party* table. As a result, the image is only seen while looking at the *Wollstonecraft Runner* from across the room, a full 48 feet away, obscuring visual access, making close analysis difficult. This placement veils Chicago's

²⁴ While the runner depicts various stages of Wollstonecraft's life, for the scope of this thesis, I will only focus on the portion that deals with her death.

²⁵ The motif of the top hat is a repeated theme on the *Wollstonecraft Runner*. It hangs first triumphantly on her illuminated letter M and later is used to distinguish her as teacher and writer. It is an interesting choice because a top hat is a man's hat and not a women's.

contribution to feminist maternal representation. In *The Dinner Party*, the mother is ancillary and insignificant footnote. Given the magnitude of the project itself, this placement implies marginalization.

The second representation of the maternal is the illuminated letter ‘M’ on *The Dinner Party: Margaret Sanger Runner (Sanger M)*. Sanger coined the phrase “birth control” and founded the American Birth Control League, a forerunner to The Planned Parenthood Federation of which she began as president.²⁶ The letter is small, no more than two inches by two inches. Stylistically, it references the medieval, typically Christian, practice of including small didactic images to the first letter of a book or chapter.

The *Sanger M* suggests the Christian iconography of the Madonna and Child. It depicts a mother, whose head is veiled and highlighted with a halo, indicating her sainthood. Her body leans towards her baby and her arms wrap passionately around him. As for the child, his mouth is open apparently rooting, an instinctual action in newborns who open their mouths wide and turn their head towards the breast in search of food. However, the infant is left unsatisfied as the mother does not or perhaps cannot offer her breast. She weeps at the insatiable desire of another mouth to feed.²⁷

The use of gold both on the letter M and on the halo suggests the saintly attributes to motherhood. The bars of the letter M violently slice through her idyllic image, mimicking prison bars and thick metal chains draped around the body, holding her

²⁶ Sanger, dedicated her life advocating for women’s rights for reproductive knowledge and was arrested several times for it. However, she prevailed and continued to advocate for the reproductive rights of women.

²⁷ This Madonna and unfed child portrait stands as a type of anti-icon to traditional *Madonna del Latte* images of the early Renaissance. The *Madonna del Latte* tradition will be explored in more detail in Chapter two.

captive behind bars. The halo, which typically illuminates light heavenward, confines her movement. She is attacked on all sides. Chicago's framing of motherhood with such violence equates it with imprisonment.²⁸

The chains on the illuminated letter reference Sanger's *Motherhood in Bondage* (1928), an annotated collection of anonymous letters. In *Motherhood in Bondage*, Sanger organized the many letters she received from women explaining their desperate need for birth control into sections, such as "Double Slavery," "The Pinch of Poverty," or "Methods That Fail." An excerpt from letter six from the section "Solitary Confinement" says:

I am a mother of six children all under eight years old ... and now I am almost a nervous wreck being confined so close. I am almost a prisoner ... now I am not complaining about the children being born. I love them and want them, but I don't want them to come into the world without a fair chance to live."²⁹

Like the *Sanger M*, *Motherhood in Bondage* is not a rejection of the children themselves. Rather, the letters attest to the intensity of child rearing, the burden of poverty and the bondage of hyper-fertility.³⁰

For Sanger, the lack of birth control makes motherhood a "sordid and slavish requirement" and she spent a lifetime advocating for the freedom of choice.³¹ A choice and a right, Sanger believed would change humanity. In 1920, she wrote:

²⁸ On the preparatory drawing for the *Sanger M* Chicago wrote, "Margaret Sanger dreamt of a free motherhood and through that freedom, a new world. She believed that the chains in which women were held also held the whole world prisoner." Chicago, "The Dinner Party."

²⁹ Margaret Sanger, *Motherhood in Bondage* (New York: Brentano's, 1928), 226.

³⁰ Her own mother went through 18 pregnancies (11 live births). Sanger felt these pregnancies were the primary contributor to her mother's early death. Miriam Reed, *Margaret Sanger: Her Life in Her Words* (New York: Barricade Books, 2003), iv.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 118.

This is the miracle of free womanhood, that in freedom it . . . opens its heart in fruitful affection for humanity. How narrow, how pitifully puny has become motherhood in chains. [O]nce women were freed of involuntary childbearing, they would change the world; that an ‘unchained mother’ would in its freedom . . . open its heart in fruitful affection for humanity.³²

While Sanger’s comments are perhaps overstated, her optimism for the freedom of motherhood attests to the gravity and impact of involuntary childbearing on women’s lived experience. The moment women are allowed the choice of motherhood, rather than having it forced upon them, their hearts would have room for genuine affection. For Sanger, this increase of love was only possible when women had ownership of their own bodies and own destinies.

The inclusion of Sanger in *The Dinner Party* suggests the importance of her crusade to second-wave feminisms, such as Chicago. The need for reproductive freedom—for easy access to birth control and for legal and safe abortions—that concerned Margaret Sanger in the early twenties would have certainly been a contemporary issue for Chicago. Legal debates surrounded and plagued the “pill,” which was only authorized to married women in 1963 and unmarried women in 1972.³³ In 1973, the famous Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court ruling regarding women’s rights to abortion brought on a fury of abortion right debates.

Notably, Chicago’s handling of motherhood within *the Dinner Party* reflected widely held opinions of second-wave feminists. Among other issues, the women’s

³² Margaret Sanger, *Woman and the New Race* (Chicago: Brentanos, 1920): 117.

³³ In 1965, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in the case *Griswold v. Connecticut* that a Connecticut law prohibiting the use of contraceptives violated the “right to marital privacy.” In 1972, the case *Eisenstadt v. Baird* expanded the right to possess and use contraceptives to unmarried couples. This ruling was just 7 years before the creation of Chicago’s *The Dinner Party*. See Elaine Tyler May, *America and the Pill: A History of Promise, Peril and Liberation* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

liberation movement fought against “natural” assumptions regarding women’s relationship to motherhood and for freedom of reproductive rights. Published in 1958, Simone de Beauvoir’s descriptions of the fetus as a parasitic inhabitant offered a theoretical basis for second-wave feminism.³⁴ Beauvoir explains, “[The woman] feels it at once an enrichment and an injury; the fetus is a part of her body and it is a parasite that feeds on it; She possesses it, and she is possessed by it.”³⁵ The excerpt implicates the general feeling of ambivalence that underlines Chicago’s representations of motherhood in *The Dinner Party*.

In addition, Betty Friedan’s landmark book, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), asserts that many women (namely white, middle-class suburbanites) felt trapped, unfulfilled and, in general, bored in domestic roles. Described as the “problem that has no name” and sometimes dubbed the housewife problem, Friedan said:

Each suburban wife struggled with it alone. As she made the beds, shopped for groceries, matched slipcover material, ate peanut butter sandwiches with her children, chauffeured Cub Scouts and Brownies, lay beside her husband at night-- she was afraid to ask even of herself the silent question—“Is this all?”³⁶

³⁴ Simone Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1953), 495. In an interview, Beauvoir explained that American feminists first developed their own theoretical views and then discovered *The Second Sex*, which helped them articulate their experience. John Gerassi, “Interview with Simone de Beauvoir: The Second Sex Twenty-five Years later,” *Society*, Jan-Feb. 1976, <http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/ethics/de-beauvoir/1976/interview.htm>.

³⁵ Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 495.

³⁶ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1963), 2. While her landmark book captures a particular type of feminism, it failed to articulate the troubles of those who had to work and balance children with little or no outside resources, or those who were unable, due to infertility, social restrictions, gender, or desire, to have children at all. In addition, Friedan had little interest in the rights of the LGBT community, referring to lesbians as “the lavender menace.”

This question, “Is this all?,” helped spark and ground the feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Feminists challenged the social construction of traditional domestic roles and the social expectation of motherhood.

Accessibility to the birth-control pill helped women challenge these narratives. For the first time in history, motherhood was no longer an inevitable part of a women’s life but rather a choice. Fueled with newfound liberation, feminist artists, like Chicago, rejected myths which regarded mothers as naturally self-sacrificing and passive. According to art historian Julia Bryan-Wilson, “[Second-wave] feminists sought to abolish conventional ideas of motherhood altogether.”³⁷ Both *The Sanger M* and *Wollstonecraft Runner* indicates Chicago’s efforts to reject such conventions and to recode the maternal experience as one that is bonded, imprisoned, and life threatening.

Yet if revising maternal representation is Chicago’s agenda, it is buried by the insignificant size and placement of the image.³⁸ Given the tradition of mother-child imagery in art history, Chicago’s visual reduction indicates the low priority of representations of motherhood within her feminist agenda. The *Sanger M* and *Wollstonecraft Runner*, when studied in detail, do reveal an effort to revise imagery of motherhood. Yet, the inability to actually access these images indicates Chicago’s efforts to make invisible the experience of the mother from the history of women in general. As

³⁷ Julia Bryan-Wilson, “Lucy Lippard’s Feminist Labor,” *Art Workers: Radical Practices in the Vietnam War* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009), 128.

³⁸ Explaining the power structure in which many women found themselves in the 1970s, Linda Nochlin uses the same idea of imprisonment when she says, “Women are often weakened by the internalized demands of the male-dominated society itself, as well as by a plethora of material goods and comforts: the middle-class woman has a great deal more to lose than her chains.” in “Why Have there Been no Great Women Artists?” *Women, Art and Power and Other Essays* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), accessed September 2009, <http://www.miracosta.edu/home/gflore/noclin.htm>.

feminist art historian Andrea Liss points out, “The mother remained a silent outcast for many feminists who strategically need[ed] to distance themselves from all that was culturally coded as passive, weak and irrational.”³⁹ Within the history of women (at least the one constructed by Chicago in *The Dinner Party*) the mother is “a silent outcast,” an uninvited guest who is marginalized, ushered to the sidelines, and made invisible.

Kristeva’s Critique and the New Guest

Theorist Julia Kristeva took second-wave feminists, such as Chicago, to task for out casting motherhood. In 1979, the same year Chicago’s *The Dinner Party* was first exhibited, Kristeva asserted:

Now when feminism demands a new representation of femininity, it seeks to identify motherhood with that idealized misconception and, because it rejects the image and its misuse, feminism circumvents the real experience that the fantasy overshadows. The result? A negation or rejection of motherhood by some avant-garde feminist groups.⁴⁰

In 2004, Kristeva again made a similar assertion, “[W]e have become the first civilization which lacks a discourse on the complexity of motherhood.”⁴¹ For Kristeva, feminist groups, like those associated with Judy Chicago in 1979, had circumvented the real maternal experience. This lack of discourse on motherhood, according to Kristeva, has left society with an unprecedented vacuum. However, Kristeva, is not the only scholar to

³⁹ Liss, *Feminist Art and the Maternal*, xviii.

⁴⁰ Julia Kristeva, “Stabat Mater,” *The Kristeva Reader* ed. Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 161. Stabat Mater, according to Toril Moi, was first published in *Tel Quel* in 1977 under the title “Héretique de l’amour” which is a combination of the French word *heretique* which means heretic and *ethique* which means ethic. She later changed a portion of the text as well as the title to Stabat Mater, Latin for “Stand Mother,” referencing the Latin hymn regarding the agony of Mary at the foot of the cross. In addition to exploring the trope of the Virgin Mary, the article includes personal poems or narratives regarding her own maternal experience.

⁴¹ Kristeva, “Motherhood Today.”

notice feminism's reluctance to deal with motherhood as a subject. In 1986, scholar Adrienne Rich explained in her book, *Of Women Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*, why she chose to explore motherhood, "because it was a crucial, still relative unexplored, area for feminist theory."⁴² Although she originally received resistance from peers, she maintained that motherhood deserved exploration because of "the pressure on women to validate themselves in maternity."⁴³ In 2009, Andrea Liss repeats Rich's words to justify the pressing significance of her book, *Feminist Art and the Maternal*. She maintains that today within some circles feminism and motherhood remain at odds. Like Rich, Liss points to the resistance she received from fellow feminist colleagues, who asserted that by examining motherhood, she was "risking reifying essentialism."⁴⁴

If Kristeva had visual access to Chicago's representations of motherhood she may have not taken feminism to task for its failure to address motherhood.⁴⁵ To her credit, Chicago certainly does not abandon motherhood wholesale. In both the *Wollstonecraft Runner* and the *Sanger M* Chicago attempts to reframe motherhood outside of its long-standing legacy as constructed fantasy. The images seriously takes to task the corporeal cost of and the often-desperate economic or physical imprisonment caused by motherhood. While Chicago's framing may be read as negative, this imbalance is

⁴² Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born*, 12. Rich wrote this in the tenth-anniversary preface of *Of Women Born*. Rich originally wrote the book in 1976, the same year she came out as a lesbian.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 222.

⁴⁴ Liss, *Feminist Art and the Maternal*, xv. Liss felt these comments were the most shocking because of the colleague's "Refusal as a feminist to acknowledge the dilemmas involved in formulated a burgeoning philosophy of lived feminist motherhood." *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Certainly the second-wave feminist artist, Mary Kelly, a contemporary of Chicago, addressed motherhood through a rigorous scholarly investigation. Her project, *The Post-Partum Document* was created in 1974-1979, the same year as both *The Dinner Party* and Kristeva's "Stabat Mater." Returning to Kristeva's quote, it is important to note that she suggests that some, but not all, feminist groups negate motherhood.

justified given the over indulgent idealism of past representations of motherhood. However, Kristeva's comments in "Stabat Mater" seem particularly pointed towards Chicago's apparent visual obliteration of motherhood in *The Dinner Party*. Perhaps this is excusable. The overall project of *The Dinner Party* is an ambitious, if not problematic undertaking and certainly Chicago could not within the scope of the project give adequate time to everything and everyone. Yet for Kristeva, Chicago's circumvention of motherhood as subject leaves scholars (and mothers alike) without a satisfactory discourse regarding the complexity of the maternal experience.

This desire for a discourse on motherhood framed by a (socially conscious) feminist theory is satisfied in the surrounding galleries at the Sackler Center for Feminist Art by the exhibition "Global Feminisms: New Directions in Contemporary Art." Curated by Maura Reilly and Linda Nochlin, "Global Feminisms" was designed to be a major survey of contemporary feminist work, focusing on work done by young feminist artists, born after 1960. In addition, the exhibition was to assert a "new direction" in contemporary feminism abandoning the pitfalls of its second-wave counterpart. Conscious of the critiques levied against Chicago, Nochlin and Reilly say, "Our understanding of feminist art is more flexible and open than that of the past."⁴⁶ In fact, much of the agenda of "Global Feminisms" was to expand feminism as it was framed by *The Dinner Party* and Chicago's feminism.

Deborah Garwood, in an exhibition review, poignantly suggested "Artists who show in the surrounding galleries take on the role of invited guests to an ongoing

⁴⁶ Reilly and Nochlin, *Global Feminisms*, 11.

banquet.”⁴⁷ If “*Global Feminisms*” can be thought of as a guest to the *Dinner Party*, it is an unruly one. First, it interjects the maternal experience as a worthy feminist subject matter. Four works deal directly with the lactating mother as subject: Dutch photographer Margi Geerlinks’s *Mothers* 2000, Australian sculptor Patricia Piccinini’s *Big Mother* (2006), Catherine Opie’s *Self-Portrait/Nursing* (2002), and Kurdish conceptual artist Canan Senol’s *Fountain* (2000).⁴⁸ Further, the work of Dayanita Singh’s *Mona Ahmed* (1990-2000), Yurie Nagashima’s *Untitled* (2001), Mothers and Fathers artist collective’s *Mothers and Fathers* (2002), Lenka Klodová’s *Winners* (2005), Elizbieta Jablonska *Supermother* (2002) and *Eat Your Heart Out* (2001) and Hiroko Okada’s *Future Plan #2* (2003) explicitly explore issues of parenthood, arriving at a variety of conclusions regarding the experience. These works do not work together to form a new definition of contemporary motherhood but rather explored the subject individually, manifesting their feminism based on personal experience and cultural influence. Collectively, these works represent 20 percent of the entire exhibition, a far cry from the two small images in Chicago’s *Dinner Party*.

Second, the exhibition introduces the idea of plural feminisms. For Reilly and Nochlin, multiple feminisms reframe feminist dialogue from its hegemonic position of addressing solely white, middle-class heterosexual issues and expand the discussion regarding gender, identity and the body in a pluralist sense. While distinct feminisms may contradict each other, Maura Reilly explains that this expansion challenges, “the

⁴⁷ Deborah Garwood and Lara Taubman, “Roundtable Deborah Garwood and Lara Taubman discuss *Global Feminisms: New Directions in Contemporary Art* with Sandra Sider,” *Artcritical*, accessed May 2009, <http://artcritical.com/sider/SSRoundtable.htm>.

⁴⁸ In addition, one could also make a case for Oreet Ashery’s *Self-Portrait as Marcus Fisher I* (2000) as an image that explores the lactating breast.

false assumption that all women share identical struggles.”⁴⁹ She continues to explain, “in the plural, [feminisms] signify difference among feminists—not a consensus, but rather a multiplicity of point of view.”⁵⁰ Such efforts at breaking away from consensus and introducing plural feminisms over unified ones and are direct reactions to the spatial and ideological dominance of Chicago’s *The Dinner Party*.⁵¹

At the opening Reilly made an explicit effort to distance herself from Chicago, saying that although “*Global Feminisms*” was placed around *The Dinner Party*, it had no formal relation to it other than that it was in the same space.”⁵² However, her latter comments from the same discussion acknowledge the tension between the two:

I am not sure whether the work [*The Dinner Party*] will endanger future exhibits, but for ‘out of the know’ museum visitors there will always be a question of whether *The Dinner Party* is complicit with the changing exhibits. . . I don’t know that Chicago’s piece will always dominate in that space even though it is by nature dominating. *The Dinner Party* does create a context and a set of parameters by which to understand Feminism, so it automatically creates a discourse to interpret the meaning of Feminism and Feminist visual art in that space. It might always cause imbalances that are conceptual, physical or historical, effecting aberrations that are interesting or problematic or both.”⁵³

Reilly’s use of words such as “imbalance,” “endanger” “problematic” and “complicit” attest to the complicated relationship between *The Dinner Party* and the surrounding

⁴⁹ Rielly and Nochlin, 30.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 29.

⁵¹ The dominance of the piece was first discussed at the “Global Feminisms” opening symposium. Displayed in a large black-walled, dramatically lit triangular room, the piece radiates out from plate to table to room, to gallery to the whole Sackler Center for Feminist Art, emanating and echoing its definitiveness as an essential feminist work through its essential central-core imagery. Of this choice of display, Maura Reilly said, “I think that the curators have tried to separate Chicago’s work with unique lighting and installation techniques, but it may have made more sense if they had maintained the standard white box installation—or in this instance—a triangle.” Garwood and Taubman, “Roundtable.”

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Garwood and Taubman, “Roundtable.”

exhibition, “Global Feminisms.” This spatial tension within the Sackler Center is indicative of a greater tension within feminism in general. Her words, implicate the Sackler Center as a battleground for a variety of feminist narratives working either with or against the philosophies of *The Dinner Party*.

Certainly I am not suggesting that the “Global Feminisms” artists, such as those discussed in the following chapters, were students or followers of Chicago. They were not, nor were their works in direct reference or a conscious reaction to *The Dinner Party*. Yet, the popular success (or failure) of Chicago’s “masterpiece” was widely known. It is safe to say that *The Dinner Party* is emblematic of feminist art and to assume that the work would have been known to almost any artist working within a feminist agenda after 1979. Chicago’s efforts, at least in terms of scale, although not necessarily in terms of context, minimized the impact of motherhood in women’s lived experience.

The Dinner Party’s ideological dominance in feminist art practices is well documented and this sense of emblematic authority is replicated within the Sackler Center for Feminist Art. As a result, the inclusion of multiple representations of motherhood in “Global Feminisms” stands out. As new “guests” to *the Dinner Party* these collective artworks indicate new priorities in feminism today. In fact, “Global Feminisms” overall re-explores and re-navigates the once taboo territory of motherhood and alters the canon of feminist art as narrowly defined by Judy Chicago. Rather than tucking representations of motherhood into the margins of “Global Feminisms,” the artists, such as those discussed in the following chapters, can be seen as elaborating on Julia Kristeva’s call for a deeper, more scholarly investigation of the maternal experience.

CHAPTER 2

MADONNA DEL LATTE: CATHERINE OPIE AND A DISCOURSE ON MATERNAL PASSION

“The mother's body has been concealed in western religion,
and to reveal her, changes religious belief.”

Luce Irigaray

“I think [it's] probably hard for some people.”⁵⁴ At least that's how Catherine Opie responded to a 2009 interview when asked why people found her work so shocking. Yet, *Self-Portrait/Nursing* (2004) is stylistically a typical representation of motherhood. Opie and her son Oliver stare lovingly into each other's eyes, united in a way that blurs the lines between self and other. This blurred boundary is reinforced through the action of breastfeeding. The infant suckles at his mother's breast, satisfying his hunger. He snuggles up to her body, folding his legs and arms into her, pushing his foot against her arm, his fist into her breast. Visually, they represent an ideal interconnected union. Photographing a tender, iconic moment between herself and her child, particularly in the act of breastfeeding, mimics the pervasive iconography of the Madonna and child. Such a reference is reinforced by the brocaded fabric in the background and the three-quarter

⁵⁴ Mel Hogan, “Interview with Catherine Opie,” *Art Threat*, February 19, 2009, <http://artthreat.net/2009/02/opie-in-ny-an-interview/>.

view of the pair. Borrowing from the authority of the iconic Madonna, Opie is elevated to the status of ideal Mother.

Despite this status, she explains, “I am not a young Madonna and child. I’m a 40 year old woman with a double chin and wrinkles, nursing my child.”⁵⁵ Her age and body are not the only sites of disruption. She is a butch lesbian, with hairy armpits and cropped disheveled hair. Her face is red, blotchy, and pock-marked. Her large stretch-marked breasts divide and sag with the weight of milk. Most significantly, she is completely naked. The word *pervert* carved across her chest, like a self-declared banner, brands Opie’s body as different, scarred with the reminders of self-mutilation.⁵⁶ Behind her is a drape of thick red fabric textured with regal brocaded designs. Yet, the brocade tattoo on Opie’s right shoulder are emblems of alternative counter-culture, contradicting the regality typical of Madonna representation. Her identity functions as an anti-Madonna.

In fact, Opie’s entire physical appearance rejects the idealized mother she ostensibly stages through her use of iconic stylistic conventions. The image subverts the trope of the Madonna by presenting opposition: covered/exposed, ideal/real, and religious/secular. Using appropriation as a device, Opie molds the Madonna and child

⁵⁵ Catherine Opie, “A Evening with Catherine Opie” (presentation at Out at the Center Series, the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgendered Community Center, New York City, New York, March 2009), gaycenter.org/out.

⁵⁶ When Opie first carved “pervert” across her chest, it was a politically motivated reaction to the cultural wars. See *Self-Portrait/Pervert* (1994). In 1998, she said, “When I made this piece it was really about what was happening in the country around Jesse Helms and all the stuff that was coming down about perversion. I wanted my identity to be hidden, but yet I would wear what people would call me on my chest, reclaiming it in the most elegant and beautiful way. There’s a dual thing that happens in this self-portrait. Because of the cutting and the needles, it shocks people.” Catherine Opie, “Catherine Opie: American Photographer,” *Guggenheim Museum*, September 2008, http://web.guggenheim.org/exhibitions/exhibition_pages/opie/exhibition.html.

representation for her own needs.⁵⁷ In doing so, she also calls the original iconography to task, exposing it as a construction and a fantasy that essentialized the complexity of the live experience of motherhood.⁵⁸

To explore how Opie challenges stereotypes about the maternal, I begin with a comparison to the late fifteenth-century *Virgo Lactan* image *Virgin with Child* by Italian artist Antonio Boltraffio (1493-1499). Appropriation, photography and parody are concepts used by Opie to alter the meaning of the original iconic Madonna and Child rendering it open to deconstruction. Opie's image asks us to see and accept her as butch and mother. Turning to the writing of Judith Butler, I will explore the tension between essentialized and constructed identity. As Opie deconstructs the iconic nursing Madonna, she duplicitously stakes a claim for herself as a lesbian mother broadening the discourse on representations of motherhood.

Turning to the gesture of breastfeeding and the moralizing rhetoric regarding lactation as put forth by La Leche League, the World Health Organization, and the American Pediatric Association (among others), I suggest that Opie uses breastfeeding to perform the quintessential act of the "good mother." A brief examination of the legal

⁵⁷ According to Robert S. Nelson, the Latin etymological origin of the word appropriation means, "to make one's own." Robert S. Nelson, "Appropriation," *Critical Terms of Art History* ed. Robert Nelson and Richard Shiff (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996), 117.

⁵⁸ It is right to concede that Catherine Opie's *Self-Portrait/Nursing* is stylistically quite similar to Chicago's *Sanger M*. Both challenge Christian vocabulary in order to attack the abiding legacy of Madonna imagery, to frame motherhood according to their own political agendas. Both images are emblematic of their time. In fact, in terms of content, the *Sanger* letter is quite complex, but the small and insignificant scale of the letter compared to the monumentality of *The Dinner Party* does not offer enough room to thoroughly explore the idea. It is perhaps not the image itself but rather the insignificance of size that acts as a type of maternal marginalization or at least maternal distancing typical of Chicago style feminism.

battles waged on gay rights draws out the civic and political implications of such an photograph.⁵⁹ “Good mothers” breastfeed and Opie uses this gesture to a political end.

Opie’s gesture can be linked to Julia Kristeva’s scholarly examination of the Virgin Mary in her article “Stabat Mater” (1979). Kristeva calls upon the Virgin Mary in two ways. First, she claims maternal representation should abandon the enduring ideal of Virgin as the quintessential model of motherhood. Secondly, Kristeva advocates for a partial return to Mariology. Scholars should explore the drives that constitute maternal love. As Kristeva explains, maternal love is terra incognita, which has been left unmapped and unexplored since the abandonment of Mary. Opie’s fleshy and affectionate portrait and appropriation of the Virgin can be interpreted as responding to Kristeva’s dual acceptance and rejection of the Virgin as a model for motherhood.

The Renaissance Madonna as Foil

Because Opie’s *Self-Portrait/Nursing* clearly draws from Madonna visual iconographic vocabulary, it is helpful to point to an original Renaissance depiction of Mary as a point of comparison.⁶⁰ In Giovanni Antonio Boltraffio’s oil painting *Virgin with Child*, a virtuous young mother (as indicated by her halo) offers her left breast to her

⁵⁹ La Leche League International, *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* (NY: Plume Publishing, 2004), xiii.

⁶⁰ In a letter to the author, dated August 10, 2010, Catherine Opie said, “There was no specific image I was working off of, just a general *Madonna del latte* feel.” Opie did not mimic Boltraffio. Acknowledging this, I choose to work with a specific *Madonna de Latte* image as a method that allowed a close formal comparison of similar stylistic choices. Due to the realism of photography, the selection of a late Renaissance painting, with its emphasis on naturalism, made a more logic choice. However, by the late fifteenth century, *Madonna del latte* images were less common and stylistically quite different than their fourteenth century counterpart.

large healthy son. Opie's hair is disheveled and her body blotchy, whereas Boltraffio's virgin is luminescent. Her carefully arranged hair is pulled tight and her long curls drape neatly down her back. While Opie is naked, the Madonna's body is shrouded in layers of cloth.⁶¹ A sheer scarf drapes around her neck, modestly covering her single exposed breast. As with *Self-Portrait/Nursing*, the holy child's bent arm clutches and caresses his mother and her right arm tenderly cradles his foot. Similarly, the background is draped with a regal green and gold fleur-de-lis cloth. She is an ideal rendered natural, focused not on the outside world, nor on the viewer who stares at her, but only at the baby at her breast.

While Opie does not point to this specific Renaissance painting as the inspiration for her photograph, *Self-Portrait/Nursing* does draw upon the long-standing history of *Madonna del latte* iconography. As devotional objects, each image, regardless of artist, has a shared set of conventions. The most common trope is the modest fully clothed virgin who offers one small exposed breast to a healthy and robust Christ child.⁶² *Self-*

⁶¹ The modest Madonna covered the maternal body. However, the realism of the fifteenth century proved slippery. The exposed breast, realistically rendered, could be viewed as erotic. Yet, according to Marilyn Yalom, many artists explained this eroticism "as a sensual enjoyment . . . to convey the ideal of spiritual nourishment." Thus potential sexual response to the Madonna heightened the intensity of devotion. Marilyn Yalom, "The Sacred Breast," *A History of the Breast* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1997): 43.

⁶² Fourteenth and early fifteenth century *Madonna del latte* images used an iconic vocabulary of the disembodied "signed breast" to depict the Madonna in order to limit sexual responses to the exposed breast. Turning to the writing of Megan Holmes, one learns that the "signed breast" was positioned unnaturally high and appeared detached from the body. Megan Holmes, "Disrobing the Virgin: the *Madonna Lactans* in Fifteenth-century Florentine Art." *Picturing Women in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, Ed. Geraldine A. Johnson and Sara F Matthews Grieco, (Cambridge: CUP. 1997), 168. Alison Bartlett explains this conscious stylizing was a concerted effort to "balance the erotic and the devotional gaze." Alison Bartlett, "Madonnas, Models and Maternity: Icons of Breastfeeding in the Visual Arts" (presentation at the Performing Motherhood: Ideology, Agency, Experience Conference, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia,

Portrait/Nursing appropriates similar conventions and by doing so performs the expected trope of the nursing Virgin. Her photograph draws upon the regal fabric backdrop, similar positioning of maternal arms, the same bent right leg, and the offering of the left breast.

The Virgin Birth of Christ followed by the Incarnation also extends a significant link between the Madonna and Opie. As with Mary's miraculous virgin pregnancy, Opie's sexuality negates conception through intercourse. Rather, like the virgin, Opie's pregnancy was conceived through alternative fertility treatments, though Catherine Opie herself has not made any direct statements. With regards to Opie's conception, psychoanalyst Josefina Ayerza asserts:

She could be a Virgin, you know, today there's many ways for a woman to become pregnant without going through sexual intercourse . . . there are two levels here. Whether directly through sexual intercourse or in a laboratory tube, in the biological, to make a woman pregnant, you need the sperm.⁶³

Ayerza claims that sperm, in her reading, functions as a type of Holy Ghost, a present but unseen power. Using the terms of Christian iconography, she suggests, "The Holy spirit, a dove, makes the Virgin [in this case, Opie] pregnant."⁶⁴ Ayerza posits a reading of the image in terms of Christian theological metaphors that are both performed and undermined.

However, these Christian metaphors and iconographic conventions are merely appropriated in *Self-Portrait/Nursing*. In *Mythologies* (1957), Roland Barthes addresses

July 4-6, 2002.) See Cindy Sherman's *Untitled # 205* and *Untitled #207* (1989-1990) for post-modern examples of the signed breast.

⁶³ Cathy Lebowitz and Josefina Ayerza, "Catherine Opie: Cathy Lebowitz interviews Josefina Ayerza," *Lacanian Ink* 19 (May 2006), accessed February 2010, <http://www.lacan.com/lacinkXXVII9.htm>.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

the two ways appropriation affects representation. First, appropriation borrows only a portion of the original referent's authority and associated meaning. Opie's appropriation does this by taking on the iconic conventions, the gesture and the manner of the Renaissance Madonna and child. However, *Self-Portrait/Nursing* maintains only a fragment of the original referent's meaning. This fragmented meaning is then transferred onto the new object and produces an entirely new cultural symbol. In the case of Opie, her appropriation is not a replication of Renaissance *Madonna del latte* images but rather enacts a new Madonna. Second, appropriation strips the original referent from its intended context, leaving it vulnerable to deconstruction. Free from the dogma of religious context, Opie's work exposes the Renaissance Madonna as a trope, leaving her open to revision.

Significantly, Opie does not appropriate the medium by recreating this scene in a painting but instead she selected the medium of photography. Photography is a mechanical process rooted in modernity that lends itself to countless reproductions and also offers realism. Painting, at least for the Renaissance *Madonna del latte* artists, was a devotional practice akin to religious supplication. They created icons, images with transcendental properties of the holy mother. The technological medium of *Self-Portrait/Nursing* severs the Madonna from the religious sphere. Drawing from a heritage of staged photography, the role of the Madonna is performed and staged.⁶⁵ While positing herself within the conventions of *Madonna del latte*, Opie's image is vacant of the religious aura so present in Renaissance painting. In a slick mechanical process, the

⁶⁵ Photography has a long history in staging. In fact, all photography is a subjective construction of an image regardless of how objective the medium may seem. However, there seems to be a particular link here to Cindy Sherman whose large body of self-portraits deal directly with performing a variety of personas for a camera lens.

Madonna is not only secularized, but the icon is rendered vacant, removed from its religious value.

In his seminal 1939 essay, “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility,” Walter Benjamin investigates this notion of photography as undermined medium. Benjamin suggests that authentic artworks (meaning unique objects), like Boltraffio’s *Madonna and Child*, contain an aura. This aura endows art objects with a type of power, related to practices of rites, rituals and religious devotion.

He writes:

In even the most perfect reproductions, *one* thing is lacking: the here and now of the work of art—its unique existence in a particular place. It is this unique existence—and nothing else—that bears the mark of the history to which the work has been subject. . . . The whole sphere of authenticity eludes technological . . . reproduction.⁶⁶

By using the medium of photography, Opie unfixes her representation from the sacredness of devotional objects. While Opie’s performs the Virgin, she does so vacantly, selectively referencing particular conventions but avoiding those associated with holiness. Digital replication removes the *Self-Portrait/Nursing Madonna* from its iconic status. Her efforts destabilize the myth of the ideal mother, or as described by Kristeva the “ideal totality that no individual women could possibly embody.”⁶⁷

Opie’s nudity is also a disruption at the site of appropriation. According to Luce Irigaray, “The mother’s body has been concealed in western religion, and to reveal her,

⁶⁶ Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility and Other writings on Media*, eds. Brigid Doherty, Michael W. Jennings, and Thomas Y. Levin (Boston: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1936), 21.

⁶⁷ Julia Kristeva, “Stabat Mater,” 171.

changes religious belief.”⁶⁸ For Irigaray, maternal nudity reveals not an idealized form of essential, maternal femininity but rather a nonessentialized authentic body. If nudity changes religious beliefs, then it is a powerful tool capable of disrupting all maternal tropes from a fixed and frozen tradition. Nudity reveals what is hidden. The naked Opie demands that the viewer see her as she is. In a 2009 interview, Opie says “I guess a lot of people can’t accept the fact that a self-proclaimed pervert can actually be a mother who breastfeeds her baby, who has chickens, dogs and a family.”⁶⁹ Opie’s words, with a mixture of humor and pain, suggests the extent to which the gay community has been made suspect. In *Self-Portrait/Pervert* from 1994, she openly claims this “deviant” role by literally carving the word *pervert* on her body as a visual identifier of her socially labeled difference from normative behaviors. She uses her body as a platform to celebrate her non-normative identity. The choice to reveal her naked body exposes this lived duality: Opie is both mother and pervert. She is scarred, raw, real and thus her nakedness challenges the idealism of the nursing Virgin.

Opie appropriation of *Madonna del latte* can also be interpreted as parody, a device rooted in an ironic criticism of its mirrored referent. While imitation can be a source of flattery, it can also be a site of satirical critique. Lifted out of its original (religious) context, the imitating Madonna exposes the constructed “naturalism” of the original, which is rendered flat. In *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler explains parody as a

⁶⁸ Mireille Astore, *The Maternal Abject*. MA Research Paper/Dissertation, <http://mireille.astore.id.au/mother/index.html> Of course, Irigaray means Christian religions. Certainly many Greek goddesses were nude. Nudity, for the Greeks, was a religious tool that conflated virtue with the perfect proportions of the female body.

⁶⁹ Mel Hogan and Catherine Opie, “Opie in NY: an interview,” *Art Threat: Culture and Politics* February 18, 2009 <http://artthreat.net/2009/02/opie-in-ny-an-interview/>. In 2004, Tyler Green called Opie “Artist, Leather Dyke, PTA Mom,” in an article of the same title in *Black Book Progressive Culture*, Spring 2004, p. 86-90, ill.

practice that “serve[s] to reengage and reconsolidate the very distinction between a privileged and naturalized gender configuration and one that appears as derived, fantasmatic and mimetic—a failed coy as it were.”⁷⁰ Thus, according to Butler, parody challenges the distinct boundaries between the original and its copy. Reused and recontextualized, the pervasive Madonna imagery is left open to ridicule. The parody in *Self-Portrait/Nursing* reveals the false naturalism of the original; the Madonna becomes a trope. Again, Judith Butler’s texts are helpful in articulating Opie’s stakes in gender construction. In her book, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*, Butler maintains, “gender formation is a continual and ongoing performance in which our bodies are rendered intelligible. In this respect, all gender is a copy for which there is no original, pre-given, essence.”⁷¹ If gender has no essential origin, if it is unfixed as Butler claims, then *Self-Portrait/Nursing* can be understood as performative. Opie acts out the role of Madonna (as well as performing a butch identity), thus reframing the meaning of motherhood today. As Butler explains, there is no “original, pre-given, essence” which defines motherhood. Suggesting that a “true” or ideal Motherhood exists is exclusionary to Opie (among many others). Rather, motherhood, like all identities according to Butler, is an ongoing performance. In her gesture to expose the Madonna, Opie makes fluid the once fixed boundaries between gender and motherhood.⁷² She detaches the signifier from the fixed sign of motherhood.

⁷⁰ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 200.

⁷¹ Rhonda Shaw, “Performing Breastfeeding: Embodiment, Ethics and the Maternal Subject,” *Feminist Review: Empirical Interrogations: Gender, 'Race' and Class* 78 (2004), 109.

⁷² Michele C. Cone, “Female Troubles,” *ArtNet*, May 3, 2007, <http://www.artnet.com/magazineus/features/cone/cone5-3-07.asp>.

Opie deconstructs representational standards that fix motherhood within a limited narrative. Secondly, Opie stakes a claim for her own lesbian identity and, her maternal body, in the legacy of maternal representation. The image asks us, quite literally, to see her as she is, both butch and mother. Functionally, Opie collapses the well-established trope of the Mother as idealized, young and feminine.

Proposing the “Good Nursing Mother

Appearance is not the only way one performs and constructs identities; actions do as well. Yet scholars have said little about the gesture of breastfeeding in *Self-Portrait/Nursing*. This oversight is significant due to the attention paid to breastfeeding by leading feminist psychoanalysts Melanie Klein and Julia Kristeva.⁷³ In *Self-Portrait/Nursing* Opie uses the gesture of breastfeeding to perform the role of the good mother. In fact, breastfeeding has long garnered the attention of social theorists and current discourses from La Leche League equate breastfeeding with “good mothering.”⁷⁴ As a gesture, it is a clear identifier of motherhood, manifested through a distinct bodily process. Yet bodies are rarely neutral landscapes and as scholar Katherine Sutherland

⁷³ See Melanie Klein, “Weaning,” *Love, Guilt, Reparation and other Works 1921-1945* (London: Hogarth Press, 1975) and Julia Kristeva, “Stabat Mater” and “Revolution in Poetic Language” *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

⁷⁴ Rousseau’s wrote in length about the importance of breastfeeding at a time when most aristocratic women, middle-class women and even his own wife (and mistress) did not breastfeed their children. In book I of *Émile*, Rousseau wrote, if “mothers deign to nurse their children, morals will reform themselves, nature’s sentiments will be awakened in every heart, [and] the state will be re-peopled.” Notice the import Rousseau places upon mothers, who must breastfeeding, in order to moralize and repopulate the state. Interestingly, Mary Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* took Rousseau to task for his views on women. See Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *Émile, or On Education*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 46.

suggests, “Lactation and breastfeeding, like all bodily performances, are political.”⁷⁵ Therefore, Opie’s use of the breastfeeding gesture should be examined not just as an appropriation of Madonna and child vocabulary but also as driven by political motivations.⁷⁶

La Leche League, the largest lactation support organization in the world, while aiming to celebrate the significance of the lactating breast, moralizes the gesture. The League’s internationally published book, *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding*, states, “For many women, breastfeeding is a fulfillment of what it means to be a woman.”⁷⁷ This assessment problematically implies that maternity and breast milk define the essence of the gendered experience. La Leche League also embraces the overly simplistic and problematic motto “good mothering through breastfeeding.”⁷⁸ So-called back-to-nature feminists have also asserted the significance of breast-milk, leading awareness campaigns and staging protests in public spaces with nurse-ins.⁷⁹ In addition, the World Health

⁷⁵ Katherine Sutherland, “Of Milk, Miracles of Milk and Miracles: Nursing, the Life Drive and Subjectivity,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 20, no. 2 (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 2.

⁷⁶ In *A History of the Breast*, Yalom maintains, “the Rousseauist idea that woman was by nature a giving, loving, self-sacrificing, contingent creature was to form the basis for a new ideology of idealized motherhood.” This Rousseauist idea still maintains currency in today’s dogmatic pro-breast-feeding literature. For a more comprehensive historical survey of the political and medicalized breast, see Yalom, *A History of the Breast*.

⁷⁷ La Leche League, *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding*, 4.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, iv.

⁷⁹ In an interview with *Speigel Magazine*, Badinter takes the trend of back-to-nature motherhood to task. She says, “They want women to breastfeed their children, saying this will protect the babies against allergies and asthma and protect the mother herself against breast cancer. They want us to use washable diapers because it’s better for the environment . . . This movement is ideologically driven and is leading us back into the eighteenth century, to Jean-Jacques Rousseau and his model of the ideal mother.” For more in-depth reading of Elisabeth Badinter’s perspective on the back-to-nature movement, especially as it is tied to breastfeeding. See Elisabeth Badinter, “Women

Organization advocates a philosophy of *breast is best*.⁸⁰ Mothers today are more than ever assaulted with demands to breastfeed from a variety of sources. Thus the breastfeeding body is shaped by moral and medical constructions that equate “good mothering” with act of breastfeeding.

This action has specific political implications that are particularly important for Opie, a Los Angeles-based artist. In 2000, California was host to the highly controversial and polarizing debates over gay marriage. California’s hotly debated Proposition 22 sought to legally define marriage as solely between a man and a woman.⁸¹ Framed as pro-family, the often Christian-based (but not exclusively) proponents of the proposition

Aren't Chimpanzees,” *Der Spiegel Magazine Online International*, 8/26/10, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/0,1518,713890-2,00.html>

⁸⁰ The WHO official documents read, “The vast majority of mothers can and should breastfeed, just as the vast majority of infants can and should be breastfed. Only under exceptional circumstances can a mother’s milk be considered unsuitable for her infant.” World Health Organization, *Global strategy for infant and young child feeding*, (Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization and UNICEF, 2003), <http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2003/9241562218.pdf>. Similarly, the American Academy of Pediatrics states, “Extensive research using improved epidemiologic methods and modern laboratory techniques documents diverse and compelling advantages for infants, mothers, families, and society from breastfeeding and use of human milk for infant feeding. These advantages include health, nutritional, immunologic, developmental, psychological, social, economic, and environmental benefits.” Gartner LM, et al. “Breastfeeding and the use of human milk [policy statement]” *Pediatrics* 115, no. 2 (2005).

⁸¹ In 2000, California Proposition 22 altered a section of the Family Code, which read, “Only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California.” It was quickly invalidated by the California courts, which declared that same-sex couples had a constitutional right to marry. This overturned bill led to more public debate nation wide regarding gay marital rights. Proposition 8, from the 2008 election, using the same exact verbiage of Proposition 22, overturned the courts ruling and added a new section (7.5) to Article I of the California Constitution, declaring marriage only between a man and a woman. As of August 3, 2010, legislation based on defining marriage between a man and a woman was overturned again by California judicial system. See William N. Eskridge and Darren R. Spedale, *Gay Marriage: For Better or For Worse: What We’ve Learned from the Evidence* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2006).

saw their efforts as defending a traditional, religious and sacred institution. The risk involved in expanding the definition of marriage and family, for them, was a tectonic shift, affecting the overall structure of society [and as Roland Barthes postulates in *Mythologies*, to forever separate the sign of marriage from its original association between man and wife]. Those opposed felt the bill illegitimized a basic legal right for homosexuals. Proposition 22 was interpreted as hate-based legislation, designed to restrict gay rights, which legally should have been protected as a constitutional right. Further, anti-proposition 22 advocates felt that much of the political campaigning villainized the homosexual community, labeling them as deviant and unfit for child rearing. Of this suspicion, Opie said:

“Right, because we’re [the gay community] not supposed to have children, don’t you know that? We’re going to do bad things to our children (laughter), like breast-feed them, and make sure that they’re allowed to wear tutus if they want to wear tutus. Goddammit, don’t you know that he should have a football in his hand!?!”⁸²

Self-Portrait/Nursing clearly is given new impetus by these debates. Her performance as the Virgin Mother utilizes the moralizing “good mother” gesture as a concerted counter attack on traditional Christian values, which define maternity and affix gender roles to the exclusion of others. As an image, it is not simply deconstructing the trope of the Virgin Mary. Rather, it is an aggressive project with personal and political implications, one that seeks to make room for new models of motherhood. Opie’s *Self-Portrait/Nursing* engages a new kind of feminism that seeks to legitimize motherhood for lesbians. Feminist scholar Linda Blum situates the necessity of Opie’s gesture within a larger crisis of motherhood. In her article “Mothers, Babies, and Breastfeeding in Late

⁸² Opie, *Art Threat*. See also Catherine Opie, *Oliver in a Tutu*, 2004.

Capitalist America: The Shifting Context of Feminist Theory” she says:

Feminist scholars, particularly women of color and lesbian activists, began to realize that the right to bear and raise children without sacrificing one’s health, one’s sanity, or one’s job, and without having to be a man’s wife, will be a much more difficult right to gain than was the right not to have a child.⁸³

Much like Chicago’s *Sanger M*, which emblematically sought for women’s reproductive rights, Opie’s *Self-Portrait/Nursing* advocates for her rights to motherhood.

Implicitly tied to Opie’s investment in the political battles over the rights to bear and raise children is her personal desire to have child. In fact, a central theme in Opie’s practice is her search for family, or at least community life. Both *Self-Portrait/Cutting* and her collection of photographs entitled *Domestic* (1999) reflect a desire and a longing for lesbian domestic life. In an interview with Maura Rielly, Opie says:

I wanted to focus on the idea of community, the individuals within that community and how communities are formed. . . . Many of the images are suffused with longing. A lot of this is about my own desire. I’ve never really had a successful domestic relationship. I’ve always wanted one. So, in the domestic series, I was traveling around trying to figure out what it was all about. I think I learned a lot. Mostly, I realized that the lesbian domestic couple doesn’t necessarily have to be based on the heterosexual model.⁸⁴

Returning to *Self-Portrait/Nursing*, one can see this longing and desire fulfilled for Opie. It is, after all, a very passionate portrait of the artist with her child, infused with palpably tender mutual affection. She hugs and holds her son with a fervor that borders on pain. By representing the intensity of her love for her child, by cradling him, and mutually caressing each other’s skin, Opie engages a feminist discourse regarding the representation of maternal passion. Certainly, there are political implications at work for

⁸³ Linda Blum, “Mothers, Babies, and Breastfeeding in Late Capitalist America: The Shifting Contexts of Feminist Theory,” *Feminist Studies* 19, no. 2 (Women’s Bodies and the State Summer 1993), 294.

⁸⁴ Maura Rielly, “The Drive to Describe: An Interview with Catherine Opie,” *Art Journal* 60, no. 2 (Summer, 2001): 86.

Opie as she set out to deconstruct the Virgin as an idyllic (but unreachable) model for perfect motherhood. However, I find power in Opie's use of the iconic Madonna, not only in its ability to parody and ridicule a false naturalism but also because the appropriation allows for a (returning) discourse on the depth of maternal love.

Among scholarly contributions to the theories on maternal love, the writings of Julia Kristeva loom large. In the article "Stabat Mater," translated as "stand mother," she references the agony of the standing Virgin, grieving at the foot of the cross.⁸⁵ Kristeva defends or at least suggests that the value in the cult of the Virgin is that it offers a discourse regarding the intensity of maternal love, which is so often coupled with fear and loss. Kristeva asserts that maternal love is not only based on a primal instinctual drive to maintain the survival of ones' off-spring but rather, it is what psychoanalyst Janna Malamud Smith calls, quoting Euripides, "a potent spell."⁸⁶ Maternal love is a spell, which embodies both intense passionate attachment and visceral anxiety. Kristeva explains that such a love, or a spell, is "a surge of subdued anguish."⁸⁷ Later, in the same essay, she refers to maternal love as, "suffering lined with jubilation."⁸⁸ Similarly, psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan explored this idea of maternal love.⁸⁹ Summarizing Lacan,

⁸⁵ The essay largely offers a history of the Virgin Mary, explaining the various psychological functions she serves. Since the scope and direction of this paper is primarily art historical and not psychoanalytical, I will limited my brief comments to her statements regarding maternal passion and its associated representation because they help to inform the vexing problem of Opie and her return to idyllic mothering representation.

⁸⁶ Janna Malamud Smith, *A Potent Spell: Motherlove and the Power of Fear* (New York: Houghton Mufflin, 2003), 9.

⁸⁷ Kristeva, "Stabat Mater," 182.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁸⁹ Kristeva is clearly informed by Lacan and has spent time negotiating and revising Lacanian theory. Lacan and Kristeva differ in terms of the derivation of language. Lacan gives the symbolic order (meaning the development of language and culture) to the father while Kristeva maintains that language is first fueled by the semiotic, which is a first

Griselda Pollock (while discussing the similar effect of this jubilant anxiety in Mary Cassatt's work) explains, "both mother and child experience a pleasure so intense and unnamable it is almost akin to suffering. [Lacan's] term for this is *jouissance*."⁹⁰ Much of our psychic drives are set on recovering this original stage, what Lacan calls the stage of the "Real." But it is a doomed search, because, as Pollock explains, "the voice, the touch and the gaze which once functioned as an enveloping, life-sustaining embrace" has been imagined as an actual fusion with the maternal body and of which the child forever seeks but can never return.⁹¹

In 1979 and again in 2004, Julia Kristeva suggested that there was a paucity of representations that address maternal passion as a result of the feminist artist's abandonment of mariological imagery. Yet, Catherine Opie's *Self-Portrait/Nursing* renders motherhood politically engaged and passion infused. Of the photograph, Andrea Liss says, "It is without question one of the most powerful and magnificent contemporary photographic images of mother and child."⁹² For Liss, whom Opie's photograph garners the coveted front cover of her book *Feminist Art and the Maternal*, Opie's transgressive identity provides a new iconic and complex cover girl for modern motherhood.

Yet, some critics take *Self-Portrait/Nursing* to task for packaging motherhood in the same idealized mother-child dyadic rhetoric of past centuries, from which Judy Chicago worked so hard break free. While other critics may point to a variety of similar

language (that borders between nature and culture), which originating from the mother. For the scope of this chapter, I felt is best to simplify the discussion and focus solely on their joint contribution to a discourse on maternal passion.

⁹⁰ Griselda Pollock, *Mary Cassatt: Painter of Modern Women* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 180.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Liss, *Feminist Art and the Maternal*, 89.

appropriations of the Madonna and label the work unoriginal or simply repetitive. In fact, art history survey texts are filled with a long tradition of famous artworks, which appropriate the iconic Virgin for ulterior, and most often political, motives.⁹³

Appropriating mariological vocabulary as a short hand model for “good mothering” and as a tool for politics is certainly not novel.

To these critics, I concede that there is a contradiction in Opie’s image and especially in Opie’s gesture of idyllic breastfeeding that make it difficult to navigate. While the image may prove to be an emblematic symbol of twenty-first century motherhood, it may, with time, be taken to task, much like Chicago’s *The Dinner Party*, for what may be viewed as its stereotypical singularity and simplistic approach to a complex paradigm that abandons difference and trends towards neutralization. But perhaps the effectiveness of Catherine Opie’s *Self-Portrait/Nursing* lies in the ambiguity of its meanings, in her rejection and her embrace of the Virgin, and the contradictions encapsulated by the image itself. As to the future, it is difficult to stake a claim. Perceptions of motherhood, once unfixed, remain dynamic and unclear.

⁹³ During the hay-day of Virgo Lactans, Jean Fouquet’s *Madonna and Child* (1450) provocatively depicts Agnès Sorel, the mistress of the French king Charles VII, as both the Queen of Heaven and the nursing Madonna. Such repositioning elevates Sorel beyond the courts of France and raises her to the crowning courts of heaven. In the mid-sixteenth century, Queen Elizabeth I donned the label of the “Virgin Queen” and in the 18th century, Louise Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun depicted Marie-Antoinette, the consummate mother, nursing her children so as to counter rumors regarding her immorality and excessiveness. Similarly, Yosuke Yamahata, a photojournalist employed by the Japanese government, 1945 pictures of the Nagasaki victims show a traumatized women nursing her wounded infant to indicate the degree of trauma to political ends.

back to full color again. Also captured are the slight movements of the maternal body absent but implied. Rhythmically, the breasts move up and down. Like a puppet on a string, their movement references the ghostly breathing body from which they sprang.

The leaking, fragmented breasts, as seen in Senol's video, make absence present. Yet, what are the implications of fragmenting the maternal body? The following case study explores the devise of disembodiment in Senol's *Fountain* as a recoding of the maternal breast as a phallic signifier of power. Returning to *the Dinner Party* as a point of comparison, I pay special attention to Chicago's infamous plates, in particular the *Margaret Sanger plate*. By comparing Chicago's central core imagery with the breasts in Senol's *Fountain*, I discuss the implications of bodily fragmentation. Both artists use fragmented genitals as a part that stands in for a whole, albeit to different ends. I then turn my attention to the concept of *Fountain*, which is inherent in Senol's work through both title and subject matter. I examine Senol's citation (and inversion) of Duchamp's *Fountain* (1917) and her reference to Serkan Orkaya's *Artist as Fountain* (1999). In recalling these works, Senol makes reference to the phallus as a signifier of privilege and power. Such references code the maternal breast as embodying the authority of the phallic signifier and in doing so the work can be seen as reordering power structures. I close the chapter with a close reading of Julia Kristeva's "Revolution in Poetic Language" and examine the sonic quality of *Fountain* as revelatory of Kristeva's theories on semiotics. Ultimately, like Opie's *Self-Portrait/Nursing*, Senol's *Fountain* re-contextualizes the maternal breast through lactation, fragmentation, and appropriation of art historical references, which undermine existing power structures. Such practices highlight complications in feminist representations of motherhood and attempt to answer

Kristeva's call, as laid out in the introduction, for a more complex exploration of the maternal experience.

The Part for the Whole: Fragmented Breasts
and Central-Core Imagery

Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party Margaret Sanger plate* (1979) is a deep red glazed ceramic plate. The elongated diamond center with four labia-like wings suggests the vagina.⁹⁴ According to Chicago, the red hue of the Sanger plate was selected so as to serve "as a reminder of the bloodshed of many women who died during childbirth or as a result of illegal and unsafe abortions."⁹⁵ Images that exclusively focused on female genitalia were dubbed "central-core imagery" in 1970s feminist practices.⁹⁶ Explaining the purported goal of such imagery, Chicago stated:

[T]o be a woman is to be an object of contempt, and the vagina, stamp of femaleness, is devalued. The woman artist, seeing herself as loathed, takes that very mark of her otherness and by asserting it as the hallmark of her iconography, establishes a vehicle by which to state the truth and beauty of her identity.⁹⁷

In other words, Chicago embraces the imagery of the vagina and elevates it as trademark of her identity, celebrating her mark of otherness.⁹⁸ Chicago uses vaginal representation in its fragmented state to tout female power and to celebrate a mark of otherness as a way

⁹⁴ Chicago, *The Dinner Party*, 233. Chicago points specifically to the red sangrias butterfly as point of reference for the Sanger plate.

⁹⁵ Chicago, "Margaret Sanger," *Brooklyn Museum: Sackler Center for Feminist Art*, 2007 http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascfa/dinner_party/place_settings/margaret_sanger.ph

⁹⁶ Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party: From Creation to Preservation* (New York: Merrell Publishers, 2006): 12.

⁹⁷ Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro, "Female Imagery," *Womanspace Journal* (1973), 14.

⁹⁸ This practice is similar to the gay community use of the derogatory term "queer" as a celebrated identifier.

to counteract the long-standing devaluation of women.⁹⁹ Not exclusively sexual, the vagina was to be seen as an icon for one's entire identity and as a symbol of unity among other women.¹⁰⁰ The task of central core imagery was, for Chicago, "not the flesh painted by a male painter" but rather a particularly female gesture that was liberated from the shackles of male-dominated representation that objectified the female body.¹⁰¹ Faith Wilding, another 1970s feminist who worked closely with Chicago, explains central-core imagery this way:

There's lots of vagina in our work, but it is not about vaginas. Rather, we are inventing a new form language [that] radiates a female power. . . . These images are universal, for they are about being a human body in the world . . . a holy body.¹⁰²

Thus, the vagina, as a symbol of the real (and sacred) human body, became a symbol of women's liberation rather than an object of shame.¹⁰³

Yet, Senol's isolation of the breast only partially draws from 1970s central-core imagery conceptual philosophy. First, Chicago saw the fragmented vagina as an icon of female power, which articulates a universal (and divine) female essence. Yet, there is no conceptual indication that the fragmented breasts in Senol's *Fountain* are symbolic of a universal womanhood. Secondly, while Chicago uses the vagina to celebrate the liberation of female sexuality, Senol uses the fragmentation to disassociate the breast

⁹⁹ Hannah Wilke, Marlene McCarty, Lauren Lesko, Carolee Schneemann, Judy Bamber, and Miriam Schapiro, among others, also explore central core images to investigate the female body. Sometimes called cunt art, this collective practice has been seen as some of the most controversial of all feminist art practices. See Joanna Frueh, "Vaginal Aesthetics," *Hypatia* 18, no 4 (November 2003), 137–158.

¹⁰⁰ Sexuality certainly was a theme of the vagina art of Chicago. She advocated for women to stake a claim in their own sexuality and liberate themselves through such technological advancements as the pill, which would bring on a sexual revolution.

¹⁰¹ Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party*, 15.

¹⁰² Jones, *Sexual Politics*, 13.

¹⁰³ Judy Chicago, *Brooklyn Museum*.

from pervasive sexual connotations. In an interview, Senol explains that through fragmentation, the breast ceases to be a sexualized object.¹⁰⁴ Stripped of the female body, the breasts in Senol's *Fountain* are no longer linked to sexuality. Further, in *Fountain*, Senol claims that the fragmentation "dismantle[s] the cliché of the sacrificing mother image...rendering the image devoid of the holy mother concept."¹⁰⁵ Thus, the removal of the female body also disassociates the lactating breast from the divine or the well-established iconography of the Madonna.

Such theories assert that fragmentation removes the female body from the loaded signifiers often associated with it. This may be true; however, the close cropping of the breasts in Senol's *Fountain* severs the body in a violent act akin to castration. Yet, the memory of the erased body remains. The missing whole maternal body, even in its violent absence, implies an invisible presence. The breasts move up and down, rendering the breathing body present. To borrow the words of French art historian Jacqueline Lichtenstein, "the fragment is defined in terms of both presence and absence. It is something in itself. . . but [it] is also perceived as a sign, an index of a something missing."¹⁰⁶ So while the breasts themselves function as fountains and sources of life, they also duplicitously signal a loss—the castrated maternal body from which they sprang.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Canan Senol, Email Interview with Laura Hurtado, trans. Yeliz Lambson, June 2009. Canan Senol stated, "As the body is concealed, "breast" is both stripped of its object of desire condition and is rendered devoid of the "holy mother" concept."

¹⁰⁵ Senol, Email Interview. In no means am I suggesting a type of scapegoat in Chicago, but rather I am making clear that Senol's work and her associated writing suggests little about the breast as a universal icon.

¹⁰⁶ Jacqueline Lichtenstein, "The Fragment: Elements of a Definition," *The Fragment: Elements of a Definition*, ed. William Tronzo (Los Angeles: Getty Publications), 120.

¹⁰⁷ Fragmented breasts, as sources of life, also share a heritage with fertility goddesses

While fragmentation signals loss, both Senol's *Fountain* and Chicago's *The Dinner Party* plates also evoke the bounty of being fed. Regarding Chicago's plates, Laura Meyer points out that the vocabulary of [*the Dinner Party*] was "contained within domesticity [on plates] and that the central-core image was 'served and ready to be consumed.'"¹⁰⁸ Food has multiple meanings. On one hand, eating is linked to the domestic sphere but on the other hand, eating also suggests oral sex. Similarly, lactating breasts in *Fountain*, like *the Dinner Party* plates, makes reference to feeding.¹⁰⁹ The lactating breasts swell and drip with milk. However, Senol's *Fountain* is not a breastfeeding image. In fact, the image includes only the lactating breast. The infant, who suckles upon the breast, is nowhere to be found. The milk drips into a void rather than a mouth. The image, while suggesting a meal, disrupts the traditional give and take characteristic of breastfeeding, through lack of a recipient. Ultimately, *Fountain* isolates the lactating breast from both the maternal body and its anticipated function. This

who were depicted through exaggerated, fragmented and swollen genital organs. Senol's other self-portrait, from the same year as *Fountain*, is entitled *Kybele* (2000). *Kybele* depicts Senol as a powerful, nude woman, seated on a white plaster mountain with a swollen pregnant belly, large breast and expanded hips. The plaster mountain suggests a sculptural quality and the title refers to the Anatolian (modern-day Turkey) mountain goddess closely associated with caves, fertility and cycle of re-birth. The fertility goddess interpretation associates the female body with primitive fetishes. Senol asserts that the work was motivated by her childbirth experience that was "on one hand miraculous and on the other hand a natural and ordinary process of fertility and the functioning of the body in this respect." Senol, *Email Interview*. See Lynn Emrich Roller, *In Search of God the Mother: The Cult of Anatolian Cybele* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

¹⁰⁸ Meyer as quoted in *Sexual Politics*, 66.

¹⁰⁹ Sexual responses have been associated with nursing as a mutually gratifying experience and Melanie Klein describes the nursing pleasure as emerging from a sexualized orifice. Klein said, "This gratification is an essential part of the child's sexuality. . . Pleasure is experienced also when the warm stream of milk runs down the throat and fills the stomach." Klein, "Weaning," 290. However, the sexualities at stake for Chicago and for Senol are ostensibly different especially because there is no one feasting upon the breast.

disruption unfixes lactation from the assumed emotional link between the nursing mother and the hungry infant so well established in Judy Chicago's *Sanger M*, Opie's *Self-Portrait/Nursing* and in the iconic *Madonna del latte* representations.¹¹⁰

Phallic Breast: Signifier of Power

No longer is the lactating breast about performing the “good mothering” through breastfeeding. The purpose of the maternal breast in *Fountain* is, according to Senol, “to indicate a bodily process as a source of life.”¹¹¹ However, I purport to rethink Senol's claim. If *Fountain* indicates a bodily process as a “source of life,” this reading frames the artwork as a nouveau-fertility icon, which narrows the project (and the maternal body) as essentialist and universal. Rather, I argue that it is more accurate to suggest that *Fountain* indicates the maternal breast as a signifier of power. In her negation of the breastfeeding relationship, the breast becomes phallic, the privileged signifier. This reading is supported by formal elements; no longer are the maternal breasts soft and supple but rather, the lactating breasts are hard with engorgement and spurting with milk like unto a phallus. For art historian Craig Owens the phallus is “the signifier of privilege, of power and of prestige.”¹¹² From *Écrits*, famed psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan writes, “the phallus is the privileged signifier.”¹¹³ Thus, the fragmented engorged maternal breasts in Senol's *Fountain* frame the maternal body as signifier of power.

Does framing the maternal breast as phallus implicitly deny the female body? No,

¹¹⁰ Senol, Email Interview.

¹¹¹ Senol Email Interview.

¹¹² Craig Owens in “Representation, Appropriation and Power,” *Art in America* 70, no. 5 (May, 1982), 14.

¹¹³ Jacques Lacan, “The Signification of the Phallus,” *Écrits: A Selection* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2002), 287.

according to Lacan, who negates gendered readings of the phallus by maintaining that it is not an object and is “even less the organ, penis or clitoris, which it symbolizes.”¹¹⁴ Lacan is clear that the “phallus” is only a symbol of power and should not be misread as the masculine penis. If one believes Lacan, the phallic breast in *Fountain* does not transform the gender of the maternal body into a male penis. Rather, the lactating breast is depicted as phallic so as to be indentified as a source of power. It reorders structures of privilege.¹¹⁵

The writings of Melanie Klein are useful in investigating this issue further.

Klein’s theories position the supremacy of the breast as the original object of desire and the locus of all fantasies in contrast to Freud’s theories regarding the centrality of the penis.¹¹⁶ In *Weaning*, Klein writes: The first gratification which the child derives from the external world is the satisfaction experienced in being fed....The object of all these fantasies is, to begin with, the breast of the mother.”¹¹⁷ From the beginning, the mother’s breast plays a central role in human desire. Hal Foster explains it this way, “the milk is the object of need, the breast is the object of desire, the first such object for everyone.”¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Jane Gallop, “Reading the Phallus,” *Reading Lacan* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1987), 136.

¹¹⁵ Yet Ellie Ragland-Sullivan, among others, addresses the potential misreading of phallus or at least a conflation of meanings. She explains that even though the Lacanian phallus does not refer to the biological organ, “the penile part object and the phallic differential function are confused in language.” Such confusion seems implicit in the word itself, which is not only male in gender (in French) but also masculine by association. In fact, it can be difficult to accept Lacan’s assertion regarding the gender neutrality of the phallus because the physical attributes of the phallus symbol are derivative of the masculine organ. Ellie Ragland-Sullivan, “Jacques Lacan: Feminism and the Problem of Gender Identity,” *Substance* 36 (1982): 13.

¹¹⁶ See Sigmund Freud, “On Narcissism,” *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1995).

¹¹⁷ Melanie Klein, “Weaning,” *Selected Melanie Klein*, 290.

¹¹⁸ Hal Foster, “An Art of Missing Parts,” *October* 92 (2000): 128 - 56.

As such, maternal breast is the first external object of all human desire. For Klein, primal emotions such as envy and gratitude develop out of ones access to the lactating breast. The ‘good breast’ feeds, the ‘bad breast’ denies. Such first emotions impact the adult psyche, according to Klein, because they are rooted fundamentally in instincts of life and death. Upon weaning, the maternal breast is castrated from the infant. Severed and lost, the maternal breast remains the first primal object of all desire. Klein continues to explain that, “under the dominance of oral desires, the penis is strongly equated with the breast and in my experience penis envy can be traced back to envy of the mother’s breast.”¹¹⁹ The breast is not an archetype of the penis as the Freudian oral theory suggests. Rather, a theoretical desire for the penis, according to Klein, is a conflation of the original longing for the mother’s breast. Klein’s theories dismiss the supremacy of the penis as the object of primary desire (as posited by Freud) and position the (lactating) breast as the ultimate privileged signifier. Thus, penis envy is replaced by breast envy. Despite the asserted gendered neutrality of the phallus as asserted by Lacan, phallic breasts do conflate, or at least make ambiguous, gender signifiers.

The conflation of masculine and feminine signifiers is a strategy I also locate in Duchamp’s *Fountain* of 1917, from which Senol’s work takes its name.¹²⁰ Duchamp’s *Fountain* as a urinal has an industrial use, which is gendered masculine. Yet its

¹¹⁹ Melanie Klein, “A Study of Envy and Gratitude,” *Selected Melanie Klein*, ed. Juliet Mitchell (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 219.

¹²⁰ Of course, there have been many revisions of Marcel Duchamp’s *Fountain* such as Sherrie Lavine’s and Bruce Nauman’s to name a few. It should be mentioned that Duchamp himself authorized reproductions of *Fountain* that question the notion of authenticity in his work. Authenticity is a central issue that was contested by Duchamp’s *Fountain*. However, it is not a central theme of Senol’s *Fountain*. As such, I have spent little time addressing it in the scope of this chapter.

triangular shape was quickly read as feminine.¹²¹ According to art historian Danièle Perrier described Duchamp's *Fountain* as a "lifeless ceramic bowl, which becomes a fountain only through its male spurt."¹²² More importantly, a feminine form emerges in Alfred Stieglitz's 1917 photograph of Duchamp's urinal. Stieglitz, according to fellow artist Beatrice Wood, "took great pains with lighting, and did it with such skill that a shadow fell across the urinal suggesting a veil [of the Virgin]. The piece was renamed: "Madonna of the Bathroom."¹²³ Ironically, once Duchamp's *Fountain* is rendered feminine, it becomes virginal, even if the object is simply a toilet.

Yet, the anatomical implication in Duchamp's *Fountain* is the penis. Rather than ejaculating sperm, its phallic secretions are urine. A urinal is a repository of the abject, for masculine bodily waste. As Julia Kristeva explains, abject fluid, such as urine, "involves . . . the defiling, impure, uncontrollable materiality of a subject's embodied existence."¹²⁴ Duchamp's *Fountain* implicates the penis with corporeal impurity. However, Senol's *Fountain* differs from Duchamp's. Her fluid is not "defiling or impure" but is milk the primal object of need.

But Duchamp is not Senol's only point of reference in exploring the phallus as a

¹²¹ William Camfield, *Marcel Duchamp, Fountain* (Houston, TX: Menil Collection, 1989), 75. According to historian William Camfield, as early as April 12, 1917, *Fountain* started to receive feminine associations by Beatrice Wood, Van Vechten and Alfred Stieglitz possibly at the encouragement of Duchamp. Ibid.

¹²² Danièle Perrier, "Canan Senol: Once Upon a Time" *N.Paradox: International Feminist Art Journal* 17, no. 18 (June 2003/Jan 2004), accessed December 2008, <http://web.ukonline.co.uk/n.paradoxa/perrier.htm>.

¹²³ It is unclear who gave the new title to the piece. Apparently, Duchamp was at the Stieglitz photo shoot. However, Wood's account does not give credit to either artist specifically for this re-reading. See Louise Norton, "Buddha of the Bathroom," *Blind Man*, accessed August 2010, <https://www.msu.edu/course/ha/850/louisenorton.pdf>

¹²⁴ Julia Kristeva, *The power of Horror: an essay on the abject*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

signifier of power. In my interview with the artist, Senol said that a Turkish photograph referencing Duchamp by Serkan Orkaya was her original point of reference. Orkaya's *Artist as Fountain* (1999), according to Senol, provoked her. Completed one year before Senol's *Fountain*, the photograph shows a fully dressed Orkaya sitting in front of a red curtain suggestive of both Boltraffio's *Virgin and Child* and Opie's *Self-Portrait/Nursing*. Dramatic lighting enters from the right side windows mimicking the external "divine light" most often found in famous Western Baroque paintings. He looks out the window, smiles awkwardly while holding onto the head of a woman who kneels down, as Senol explains, "to feed on [his] penis."¹²⁵ However, Senol's description is a misread. The actual physical penis is unseen. Rather it is the artist himself who stands in as the symbolic phallus, as the signifier of creative power. He is the artist as genius, inspired by divine light. While it may simply be a sexual act of mutual gratification there is an implicit power position of the subordinated women literally bowing to the phallus and suckling it. In a curious reversal of gendered symbols, here the woman feasts upon the male artist.

While some might read the image as explicit or misogynistic, scholar Koen Brams insists that Orkaya's *Artist as Fountain* is both a "reclamation [of Duchamp] and a ridiculous joke."¹²⁶ For Brams, *Artist as Fountain* deconstructs and critiques "the western artist as creator whose expressions and secretions are all spouting from his masculine penis."¹²⁷ In its extreme, Orkaya's photograph ridicules the dubious myth of the western artist as genius. Brams's reading of the image as a satire is convincing, yet it is difficult

¹²⁵ Senol Email Interview.

¹²⁶ Koen Brams, *It's Not What It Looks Like! I Can Explain* (Istanbul, Baglam Publishing House, 2002), pdf, e-book sent to the author from the artist.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

to interpret Orkaya's *Artist as Fountain* as an image invested in revealing the exclusion and marginalization of the female subject.

Perhaps, this exclusion provocatively reinforces what Roslyn Deutsche calls, "masculinist positions of social authority" and embodies this authority in a male figure.¹²⁸ In contrast to Orkaya, the breasts, in Senol's *Fountain*, claim the position of social authority for the maternal subject. The lactating breast is not only powerful, privileged, and phallic but it is also the primal object of desire and the center of oral fixation. Further, the reference to Duchamp draws out its feminization and contrasts it with the phallic breasts in Senol's revision of *Fountain*. Duchamp's symbolic language is associated with a passive function by emphasizing its nature as an object designed to receive. Yet, Senol's spouting phallic breasts give the maternal body the authority and the (masculine) vocabulary to speak.¹²⁹

The Sonic Quality of Dripping Milk

According to Lacan, language is an order of laws, signs and symbols established by the father. Thus, the ability to speak and to participate in culture is dictated by phallic privilege. Alluding to Christian scripture, Lacan posits language as an order of symbols, which develops out of the name-of-the-father.¹³⁰ Designating language the Symbolic Order, Lacan says, "It is in the name-of-the-father that we must recognize the basis of the symbolic function, which since the dawn of historical time has identified his person with

¹²⁸ Deutsche, 34.

¹²⁹ Koen Brams, *It's Not What It Looks Like! I Can Explain* (Istanbul, Baglam Publishing House, 2002), pdf, e-book sent to the author from the artist.

¹³⁰ Lacan's comments here reference John 1:1 which states: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Holy Bible. Salt Lake City, Utah: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979.

the figure of the law.”¹³¹ If in the beginning was the Word, the origins of expressions that establish linguistic structure (and thus social law) begin with the masculine. Implicit in Lacan’s assertion is the negation of the mother as a contributor to linguistic development. In order to speak, the father must replace the mother.¹³² Similar to Klein’s reversal of penis envy into breast envy, Julia Kristeva challenges Lacanian theory, positing that language originates from the maternal body.

In light of Lacanian theory, the auditory element of Senol’s *Fountain* as the voice of the piece (as the voice of the maternal body) is significant. Senol’s *Fountain* speaks. The milk has a voice. This voice is disruptive, especially within the quiet context of the Sackler Center galleries. In a review of “Global Feminisms” entitled “Breast Intentions,” art critic Linda Camhi opens her critique by saying, “Something was dripping in the first rooms of “Global Feminisms”.”¹³³ The reviewer wanders the galleries searching for the culprit. When found, she says, “Its source: pendulous breasts leak milk ad infinitum.”¹³⁴ This review points to the resonating quality of Senol’s *Fountain*. It echoes and disrupts the viewing space. As a work of art, it does not allow for passive viewing but rather enters your space, your eyes, your ears, and your body, drawing you to locate it spatially, to discover the voice.

Katherine Sutherland, in her article “Of Milk, Miracles of Milk and Miracles: Nursing, the Life Drive and Subjectivity,” says, “‘Express’ means ‘to squeeze out’; it is a

¹³¹ Lacan, *Écrits*, 66.

¹³² Malcolm Bowie, *Lacan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 108.

¹³³ Linda Camhi, “Breast Intentions: The Brooklyn Museum Surveys the World’s Female Artists,” *Village Voice* (Apr 3 2007), accessed February 2010, <http://www.villagevoice.com/2007-04-03/art/breast-intentions/>.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

metaphor for speech but applies literally to lactation.”¹³⁵ For Sutherland, lactation as a type of communication is already prescribed within the existing language. One expresses words and one expresses milk. According to Webster’s dictionary, “express,” as it is used in language, is a mode of speech that is “direct, firmly or explicitly stated.”¹³⁶ Sutherland’s comments suggest that milk is an expression of language, explicitly stated. As such, it is a maternal language preexisting before the Symbolic order. Given this analogy to milk, I interpret Senol’s work as a disruption to Lacan’s assertion that language is solely derived from the father.

The concept of milk as a metaphor for speech undermines Lacan’s patriarchal structure of language acquisition.¹³⁷ Rethinking language development as posited by Lacan, Julia Kristeva suggests a prelinguistic communication called *chora*. *Chora* is not associated with signs and signifiers typical of the language developed in the Symbolic Order. Rather, it is a preverbal function, tonal, rhythmic, and according to Kristeva’s writings in “Revolution in Poetic Language” is “nourishing and maternal.”¹³⁸ The term asserts that words rather sounds have the potential to communicate. *Chora* is, as Kristeva suggests, a “vocal and kinetic rhythm” which is not simply random or meaningless but a “concrete operation” that “precedes the acquisition of language.”¹³⁹ Further, the *chora* is a method of communication that arises from Lacan’s stage of the “Real,” inside the

¹³⁵ Sutherland, “Of Milk, Miracles of Milk and Miracles,” 3.

¹³⁶ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, *Express*, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/express> (August 2010).

¹³⁷ Similar to Mary Kelly’s *Post Partum Document* which explores language development and the infant’s transition to the symbolic order and his entrance into the “name of the father” by ultimately rejecting the mother as no longer necessary.

¹³⁸ Julia Kristeva, “Revolution in Poetic Language,” *The Kristeva Reader* ed. Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University, 1986), 94.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 95.

maternal womb. Thus, the ability to speak arises *from* the maternal body rather than *against* it. The *chora* is a fluid rhythm of motion that fuels or gives content to the symbolic order. One might think of this in terms of Senol's work where the vocal (yet not linguistic) arrhythmic dripping has a voice that disrupts the silence of the gallery space.

Rather than fully rejecting Lacan's symbolic order, Kristeva's theory of language acquisition claims the development of language and the ability to speak is more nuanced. For Kristeva, language developed through both a female *chora* and a masculine symbolic order. As philosopher Kelly Oliver explains, "The symbolic order is what makes reference possible. For example, words have referential meaning because of the symbolic structure of language."¹⁴⁰ Yet such symbols are fueled by the first linguistic development of the *chora*. Oliver emphasizes that "without the symbolic all [language] would be babble. But without the [*chora*] all signification would be empty."¹⁴¹ Kristeva rethinks Lacan's theory of language acquisition, rejecting his abandonment of the maternal body as necessary for linguistic development. Returning to Lacan's biblical reference to John, Kristeva said, "Every God, including the God of the Word, relies on a mother Goddess."¹⁴² For Kristeva, language development from the beginning relied on the mother.

Senol's *Fountain* resonates with Kristeva's revision. The sound of the *chora* is the sound generated by *Fountain*; it speaks in tones and in arrhythmic drops. Turning

¹⁴⁰ Kelly Oliver, "Summary of Major Themes in Feminist Theory hosted by the Center for Digital Discourse and Culture," *Virginia Tech University*, 1998, accessed March 2009, <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/feminism/kristeva.html>.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² Kristeva, "Stabat Mater," 176.

both to the piece and to the descriptions of *chora* itself, words like *fluid*, *rhythmic*, *tonal* and *maternal*, arise. As Kristeva asserts, milk and tears “are the metaphors of non-speech, of a ‘semiotics’ that linguistic communication does not account for.”¹⁴³ As a metaphor for something that cannot be spoken, milk, like tears, functions as a voice for the maternal body, absent in Lacan’s concept of patriarchal language.

According to Kristeva, revealing this voice has the revolutionary power to disrupt the dominant patriarchal structure. Returning to Camhil’s review in the *Village Voice*, *Fountain* disrupts the silence of the gallery, speaking when silence is expected, luring the viewer to find its source. In “Stabat Mater,” Kristeva uses sections of poetic language to disrupt her own academic writing. She writes:

Language necessarily skims over from afar, allusively. Words are always too distant, too abstract for this underground swarming of seconds. ...Scent of milk, dewed greenery, acid and clear, recall of wind, air, seaweed. ...A hunger remains, in place of the heart. A spasm that spreads, runs through the blood vessels, to the tips of the breasts, to the tips of the fingers. It throbs, pierces the void, erases it and gradually settles in.¹⁴⁴

Dismissing the usefulness of the symbolic order to articulate the gravity of her maternal experience, Kristeva turns to the poetic language, which she calls revolutionary to articulate milk, hunger, and the void. The voice of *Fountain* utilizes the *chora* to revolutionary means—as a method for disrupting the coded power structure of the gallery space that contains it. Her work haunts galleries with its constant soundtrack of dripping fluid, reminding the patron of the maternal body’s ability to speak, its ability to revise, of its familiar unfamiliarity.

Fountain from its very premise, struggles to both subsume and subordinate a male-

¹⁴³ Sutherland, “Of Milk, Miracles of Milk and Miracles,” 9.

¹⁴⁴ Kristeva, “Stabat Mater,” 171.

dominated narrative. Whether by fragmentation, the inversion of Duchamp or through auditory cues, Senol subverts a masculine position in order to represent a speaking maternal body in a position of power, and as an object of desire. Visually, she does this in three ways. First, her violent dismemberment of the female body removes the breast from the historical conventions of maternal representation. Second, she represents the maternal lactating breast as an erect phallus, spurting with fluids. This device refigures the lactating maternal breast with the privileged power of the phallus. Lastly, through sound, Senol uses the tonal sounds of *chora* giving voice to her maternal body and that voice indicates the maternal body as revolutionary.

CONCLUSION

The artworks included in this study reveal attempts by feminist artists to redefine the image of the mother. From the second-wave movement to trends of today, the breastfeeding mother as a feminist subject matter has been marginalized, rejected, transformed, elevated, politicized and revised. The intent of this study was not to place these range of works in conflict because of the multiplicity of their approaches but rather to examine the different vantage points and dialogues that emerge between feminists. In fact, I began this study with the question: How did 1970s feminists represent motherhood and how is it represented today?

This inquiry regarding the ‘then and now’ of feminism persists in intellectual circles. In her October 2010, Susan Faludi addresses it and suggests feminism, as an overall movement, is in the mist of a generational breakdown, tantamount to matricide. She writes,

No one who has been engaged in feminist politics and thought for any length of time can be oblivious to an abiding aspect of the modern women’s movement in America—that so often, and despite its many victories, it seems to falter along a “mother-daughter” divide. A generational breakdown underlies so many of the pathologies that have long disturbed American feminism.¹⁴⁵

Faludi continues by saying “the contemporary women’s movement seems fated to fight a

¹⁴⁵ Susan Faludi, “American Electra: Feminism’s Ritual Matricide,” *Harper’s Magazine* (October 2010), 29.

war on two fronts: alongside the battle of the sexes rages the battle of the ages.”¹⁴⁶ Her likening of shifts in ideological approaches to a battlefield between “mothers-daughters” is particularly interesting within the context of this thesis. Feminists today, as daughters of the women’s liberation movement, who openly embrace the subject of motherhood, simultaneously, at least as Faludi would have us see it, reject the doctrines of their feminist foremothers.

However, this generational matricide seems to be, as Jack Halberstam suggests “a red herring.”¹⁴⁷ To quarrel with Faludi, the works discussed in the previous pages reveal a feminist attempt to redefine the image of the mother. Certainly, the major emphasis on representations of motherhood in Maura Reilly and Linda Nochlin’s “Global Feminisms” is different than Judy Chicago’s peripheral treatment of motherhood. However, this change does not imply that second-wave feminism treated the subject of motherhood lightly; it did not. Rather, as this study reveals the 1970s feminism of Judy Chicago’s *The Dinner Party*, made revolutionary efforts to break the assumed link between women and motherhood. Specifically, the *Sanger M* and the *Wollstonecraft Runner* revise the experience from a fantasy of perfection, by depicting the complicated financial and often corporal reality of motherhood.

Yet, there are differences that should not be minimized. Feminist art strategies and goals have shifted in the past forty years, especially in relationship to representations of the mother. Catherine Opie’s and Canan Senol’s willingness to forefront the maternal as a feminist subject indicates a clear change in feminist priorities from 1970s to the

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 29.

¹⁴⁷ Jack Halberstam, “Justifiable Matricide: Back-lashing Faludi,” *Bully Bloggers* (October 19, 2010), <http://bullybloggers.wordpress.com/2010/10/19/justifiable-matricide-backlashing-faludi-by-jack-halberstam/>.

present day. Their works revolve around the new challenges, such the instability of gender and the precarious (and exclusionary) definition of the nuclear family. While such shifts do not entirely reject their theoretical legacies, the works do attend to the subject of motherhood in ways that Chicago did not. However, the new and varied directions of Opie and Senol visual practices do not embody the matricide suggested by Faludi.¹⁴⁸ The goals of one generation are not necessary useful to the next.

While attending to a similar question as Faludi, this study indicates the various vantage points of Chicago, Opie and Senol. The artists I examine approach the subject of the breastfeeding mother within the context of her own political, personal, social and psychological paradigm. My effort is to place them in conversation, not at war with each other. Comparisons, contradictions and differences manifested in each individual work of art point to the richness of Chicago's, Opie's and Senol's investigation into the subject of motherhood.

Contrary to Faludi's claim of generational aggression, I have included works that overlap in their efforts to disrupt existing power structures. Much of the work selected seeks to release representation of motherhood from the roots of its Christian ideal, the long-standing and pervasive legacy of the nursing Madonna. Rather than resigning themselves to that heritage, Chicago, Opie and Senol have revised the image of the mother and to overturn assumptions regarding motherhood as a fixed ideal. They have collapsed representational conventions in order to make relevant their own visions of motherhood. Ambitiously all three artists can be seen, to some extent, as answering Julia Kristeva's call for a more scholarly investigation of the maternal subject.

¹⁴⁸ Such a statement assumes that 1970s feminist practices were spurred from a unified and cohesive center. They were not. From the beginning there were differences.

While this study traces ideological changes in feminist art practices, especially as it relates to the subject of mother, I did not set out to superficially position one generation above the other. In addition, the study is in no way a comprehensive survey of feminism and motherhood but should be seen as a series of specific case studies that explore a central idea. This study is not without its gaps. By expanding the scope outside of the very limited three central works, I could have turned to many other early feminist artists who dealt more explicitly with the subject of the maternal. Mary Kelly's *Post-Partum Document* is particularly absent from these pages, but is certainly a part of the broader context that I have investigated. In addition, the breast-like phallus form (or phallic breast form) in the sculpture *Le Trani Episode* (1971) by Louis Bourgeois would have offered an insightful point of reference. Like Senol's *Fountain*, *Le Trani Episode* similarly conflates and confuses male-female binaries and such comparisons would be an interesting investigation for future scholars. However, the strategy for this study was to examine works as single entities and place them in discussion, rather than grouping large amounts of complicated image work into a single framework, which would limit and narrow the interpretation. Although the works are examined chronologically, ultimately the study creates a map not necessarily a tidy linear history.

Returning to the original question: How did 1970s feminists represent motherhood and how is it represented today? This study suggests that feminist artists have approached the subject differently. By walking through the inaugural exhibitions of the Sackler Center, I have highlighted the ambivalence and embrace feminist artists have had with the image of the mother. Such confusions manifest efforts to make sense of a complex experience within a feminist framework.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alderton, Steven. *Patricia Piccinini: Double Love Knots*. Lismore, Australia: Lismore Regional Gallery, 2007.
- Allison, Dorothy, Jennifer Blessing, Nat Trotman, and Russell Ferguson. *Catherine Opie: American Photographer*. New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2008.
- American Academy of Pediatrics. "Policy Statement: Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk." *American Academy of Pediatrics*, Accessed on November 20, 2008. <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/115/2/496>.
- Andersen, Margaret L. "Thinking About Women: A Quarter Century's View." *Gender and Society* 19, no. 4 (2005): 437 - 55.
- Andrews, F.L. "Controlling Motherhood: Observations on the Culture of the La Leche League." *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 28 (1991): 85 - 98.
- Armstrong, Carol. "On Wack! Art and the Feminist Revolution and Global Feminisms." *Artforum* 45, no. 9 (2007): 360 - 62.
- Astore, Mirielle. *The Maternal Abject*. Master's thesis, Sydney College of the Arts, 2001.
- Ayerza, Josefina and Cathy Lebowitz. "Catherine Opie: Cathy Lebowitz interviews Josefina Ayerza." *Lacanian Ink*, 19 (2006). Accessed February 15, 2010. <http://www.lacan.com/lacinkXXVII9.htm>.
- Badinter, Elisabeth. "Women Aren't Chimpanzées," *Der Spiegel Magazine Online International* (2010). <http://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/0,1518,713890-2,00.html>.
- Bartlett, Alison. "Breastfeeding as Headwork: Corporeal Feminism and Meanings for Breastfeeding." *Women's Studies International Forum* 25 (2002): 373 - 82.
- Bartlett, Alison. "Breastfeeding Bodies and Choice in Late Capitalism." *Hecate* 29 (2002): 153 - 65.
- Bartlett, Alison. "Madonnas, Models and Maternity: Icons of Breastfeeding in the Visual

Arts.” Presentation at the Performing Motherhood: Ideology, Agency, Experience Conference, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia, July 4-6, 2002.

Bartlett, Alison. “Scandalous Practices and Political Performances: Breastfeeding in the City.” *Journal of Medial and Cultural Studies* 16 (2003): 111 - 21.

Bartlett, Alison. *Breastwork: Rethinking Breastfeeding*. Sydney: UNSW Press, 2005.

Bauer, Denise. “Alice Neel’s Portraits of Mother Work.” *NWSA Journal* 14, no. 2 (2002): 1 - 19.

Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation: The Body, In Theory: Histories of Cultural Materialism*, Translated by Sheila Faria Glaser. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995.

Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex*. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1953.

Beauvoir, Simone. “The Second Sex 25 Years Later.” By John Gerassi. *Society* (1976). Accessed on June 11, 2010.
<http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/ethics/de-beauvoir/1976/interview.htm>

Benjamin, Walter. *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media*. Edited by Brigid Doherty et al. Boston: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1936.

Bernstein, N. “Bronx Women Convicted in Starving of Her Breast-Fed Son.” *New York Times*, May 20, 1999.

Betterton, Rosemary. “Promising Monsters: Pregnant Bodies, Artistic Subjectivity and Maternal Imagination.” *Hypatia* 21, no. 2 (2006): 80 - 100.

Biesenbach, Klaus. “Into Me/Out of Me.” *Flash Art International* 39 (2006): 78 - 81.

Bloch, Ben. *Cosmos*. video art. c. 2003. (Houston). <http://www.benbloch.com/video.html>.

Blum, Linda M. *At the Breast: Ideologies of Breastfeeding and Motherhood in the Contemporary United States*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2000.

Blum, Linda. “Mothers, Babies, and Breastfeeding in Late Capitalist America: The Shifting Contexts of Feminist Theory,” *Feminist Studies* 19, no. 2 (1993): 291 - 312.

Bobel, Christina G. “Bounded Liberation: A Focused Study of La Leche League International.” *Gender and Society* 15, no. 1 (2001): 130 - 51.

Bowie, Malcolm. *Lacan*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991.

- Brams, Koen. *It's Not What It Looks Like! I Can Explain* Istanbul, Baglam Publishing House, 2002.
- Brown, Amy Benson, and Kathryn Read McPherson. *The Reality of Breastfeeding: Reflections by Contemporary Women*. New York: Bergin & Garvey Trade, 1998.
- Brown, Michael Patrick. "Unconcealed: *Nourising* in Public." Doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2007.
- Bryan-Wilson, Julia. "Lucy Lippard's Feminist Labor," *Art Workers: Radical Practices in the Vietnam War*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009.
- Buckley, Annie. "Viewpoint." *Artweek* 38, no. 2 (2007): 5.
- Buettner, Stewart. "Images of Modern Motherhood in the Art of Morisot, Cassatt, Modersohn-Becker, Kollwitz." *Women's Art Journal* 7, no. 2 (1986): 14 - 21.
- Butler, Cornelia H., and Lisa Gabrielle Mark. *Wack! Art and the Feminist Revolution*. Boston: The MIT Press, 2007.
- Butler, Judith. *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Cadwell, Karin. *Reclaiming Breastfeeding for the United States: Protection, Promotion and Support*. Boston: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, Inc., 2002.
- Cagle, V.B. "Lesson in Public Breast-Feeding." *Mothering* 136, (2006): 54 - 57.
- Camfield, William. *Marcel Duchamp, Fountain*. Houston, Texas: Menil Collection, 1989.
- Camhi, Linda. "Breast Intensions: The Brooklyn Museum Surveys the World's Female Artists," *Village Voice* (New York, NY) Apr. 3, 2007.
- Caputi, Mary. "The Abject Maternal: Kristeva's Theoretical Consistency." *Women and Language* 16, no. 2 (1993): 32 - 36.
- Castro, Joan Garden. "Review: Global Feminisms: The Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, Brooklyn Museum." *Sculpture* 26, no. 10 (2007).
- Cixous, Hélène. *Stigmata: Escaping Texts*, New York: Routledge, 2005.

- Chicago, Judy. "Place Setting: Margaret Sanger" Brooklyn Museum, Accessed July 10, 2010. http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascfa/dinner_party/place_settings/margaret_sanger.
- Chicago, Judy. "Through the Flower: The Birth Project." Accessed on June 22, 2010. <http://www.throughtheflower.org/page.php?p=12&n=2>.
- Chicago, Judy. Interview by Jan Butterfield, February 1984.
- Chicago, Judy. *The Dinner Party: From Creation to Preservation*. New York: Merrell Publishers, 2006.
- Chicago, Judy and Miriam Schapiro, "Female Imagery," *Woman-space Journal* 1, no. 2 (1973): 1 - 14.
- Cone, Michele C. "Female Troubles," *ArtNet*. Accessed May 12, 2007. <http://www.artnet.com/magazineus/features/cone/cone5-3-07.asp>
- Dallow, Jessica. "Review: Rethinking Feminism and Visual Culture." *NWSA Journal* 15, no. 2 (2003): 135 - 43.
- Dartnall, Colette, and Elizabeth A.T. Smith. *Catherine Opie*. Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1997.
- Deutsche, Rosalyn, Aruna D'Souza, Miwon Kwon, Ulrike Muller, Mignon Nixon, and Senam Okudzeto. "Feminist Time: A Conversation." *Grey Room* 31(Spring 2008), 32-67.
- DiQuinzio, Patrice. *The Impossibility of Motherhood: Feminism, Individualism and the Problem of Mothering*. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Duchamp, Marcel. "The Richard Mutt Case." *The Blind Man* 2 (1917).
- Dykstra, Jean. "Opie: The Community of Difference." *Art in America* 96, no. 11 (2008): 128 - 35.
- Engberg, Juliana. *Retrospectology: The World According to Patricia Piccinini*. Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, 2002.
- Erdrich, Loren. "I Am a Monster: The Malleable and the Indeterminate in Contemporary Female Self-Portraiture." *Cira 121* (2007). <http://www.lulu.com/product/file-download/i-am-a-monster-the-malleable-and-the-indeterminate-in-contemporary-female-self-portraiture/839832>.

- Eskridge, William N. and Darren R. Spedale *Gay Marriage: For Better or For Worse: What We've Learned from the Evidence*. Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Esterik, Penny Van. *Beyond the Breast-Bottle Controversy*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1989.
- Exley, Roy. "Review Catherine Opie: Stephen Friedman Galley London W1." *Art Review* 2, no. 4 (2004): 100.
- Fairbrother, Trevor J., and Sarah Vowell. *Family Ties: A Contemporary Perspective*. Salem, Massachusetts: Peabody Essex Museum, 2005.
- Faludi, Susan. "American Electra: Feminism's Ritual Matricide," *Harper's Magazine*, October 2010: 29 - 36.
- Foster, Hal. "An Art of Missing Parts." *October* 92 (2000): 128 - 56.
- Fox, Greer Litton, and Murry, Velma McBride. "Gender and Families: Feminist Perspectives and Family Research." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 62, no. 4 (2000): 1160 - 72.
- Freud, Sigmund. "On Narcissism." *The Freud Reader*. Ed. Peter Gay. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1995.
- Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1963.
- Frueh, Joanna. "Vaginal Aesthetics." *Hypatia* 18, no. 4, (2003): 137 - 158.
- Gallop, Jane. *Reading Lacan*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985.
- Garwood, Deborah and Lara Taubman, "Roundtable Deborah Garwood and Lara Taubman discuss Global Feminisms: New Directions in Contemporary Art with Sandra Sider," *Artcritical.com*. Accessed March 11, 2010.
<http://artcritical.com/sider/SSRoundtable.htm>.
- Geerlinks, Margi. *Crafting Humanity*. Photography, 2001 (TORCH Gallery, Amsterdam).
<http://www.margigeerlinks.com/>
- Geerlinks, Margi and Jerome Jacobs. Margi Geerlinks: Aeroplastics More Than Perfect. Accessed June 5, 2009.
http://previous.aeroplastics.net/2002_geerlinks/mg_2002_00.html.
- Giles, Fiona. *Fresh Milk: The Secret Life of Breasts*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003.

- Golden, Janet. *Social History of Wet Nursing in America: From Breast to Bottle*. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 2001.
- Golding, Sue. *The Eight Technologies of Otherness*. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Green, Tyler. "Artist, Leather Dyke, PTA Mom." *Black Book Progressive Culture*, (2004): 86 - 90.
- Gronlund, Melissa. "Global Feminisms." *Art Review* no. 13 (2007): 139.
- Guerrilla Girls. "Reinventing the F Word: Horror on the National Mall." *Guerrilla Girls*, 2007. Accessed June 2010.
<http://www.guerrillagirls.com/posters/washposthorror.shtml>.
- Jack Halberstam. "Justifiable Matricide: Back-lashing Faludi." *Bully Bloggers*. October 19, 2010.
<http://bullybloggers.wordpress.com/2010/10/19/justifiable-matricide-backlashing-faludi-by-jack-halberstam/>.
- Halberstam, Judith. *Female Masculinity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998.
- Harmon, A. "Lactivists Taking Their Cause, and Their Babies, to the Streets." *New York Times*, June 7, 2005, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/06/07/nyregion/07nurse.html>.
- Hausman, Bernice. *Mother's Milk: Breastfeeding Controversies in American Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Heartney, Eleanor. "Review: Global Feminisms: New Directions in Contemporary Art." *Art Press* 336 (2007): 78-79.
- Hogan, Mel and Catherine Opie, "Opie in NY: an interview," *Art Threat: Culture and Politics* February 18, 2009 <http://artthreat.net/2009/02/opie-in-ny-an-interview/>.
- Holmes, Megan. "Disrobing the Virgin: the *Madonna Lactans* in Fifteenth-century Florentine Art." In *Picturing Women in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, ed. Geraldine Johnson and Sara F Matthews Grieco. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1997.
- Hough, Jessica, and A. M. Homes. *Catherine Opie: 1999 / In and Around Home*. Ridgefield, CT: Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum/Orange County Museum of Art, 2006.
- Irigaray, Luce. *This Sex Which is Not One*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985.
- Jones, Amelia. *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago's Dinner Party in Feminist Art History*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996.

- Kauffmann, Stanley. "From Here to Maternity." *New Republic* 222, no. 5 (2000): 30-31.
- Katz, Jonothan, "The Senators Were Revolted: Homophobia and the Culture Wars," *A Companion to Contemporary Art Since 1945*, ed. Amelia Jones. New York: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.
- Kelly, Mary. *Mary Kelly*. London: Phaidon Press, 1997.
- Kelly, Mary. *Post-Partum Document*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999.
- Kimball, Karen Yeager. "Milk Machines: Exploring the Breastfeeding Apparatus." MA Thesis, University of North Texas, 2008 (ProQuest 1458658).
- Klein, Jennie. "Maternal Metaphors." In *Maternal Metaphors*, edited by Myrel Chernick van Meenan, Jennie Klein; Andrea Liss; Rachel Hall; Moyra Davey; and Karen Aardvark. Hackensack, NJ: Global Publishing Company, 2004.
- Klein, Melanie. *Love, Guilt and Reparation: And Other Works 1921-1945 (The Writings of Melanie Klein, Volume 1)*. London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1974.
- Klein, Melanie. "Weaning." In *Love, Guilt, Reparation and other Works 1921-1945* New York: Delacorte Press, 1975.
- Kolbowski, Silvia, Mignon Nixon, Mary Kelly, Hal Foster, Liz Kotz, Simon Leung, and Abraham, Ayisha. "A Conversation on Recent Feminist Art Practices." *October: The Feminist Issue* 71 (1995). <http://www.jstor.org/pss/778741>
- Krach, Aaron. "American Lesbian: With a Career Retrospective At the Guggenheim Museum, Catherine Opie Takes Her Place Among the Greatest Artists of Her Generation." *The Advocate* (December 2, 2008).
- Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Melanie Klein*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.
- Julia Kristeva, "Motherhood Today," (presentation, Colloque Gypsy V, Paris, France, October 28, 2005), <http://www.kristeva.fr/motherhood.html>
- Kristeva, Julia. "Revolution in Poetic Language," *The Kristeva Reader* ed. Toril Moi. NY: Columbia University Press, 1986.
- Kristeva, Julia. "Stabat Mater," *The Kristeva Reader* ed. Toril Moi. NY: Columbia University Press, 1986.

- Kubitza, Annette. "Rereading the Readings of The Dinner Party in Europe," *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago's Dinner Party in Feminist Art History*. Los Angeles: Armand Hammer Museum, 1996.
- Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits: A Selection*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002.
- La Leche League International, *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding*. New York: Plume Publishing, 2004.
- Latteier, Carolyn. *Breasts: The Women's Perspective on an American Obsession*. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Li, R., Rock, V.J., & Grummer-Strawn, L. "Changes in Public Attitudes Towards Breastfeeding in the United States, 1999-2003." *Journal of American Dietetic Association* 107 (2007): 122-27.
- Jacqueline Lichtenstein, "The Fragment: Elements of a Definition," *The Fragment: Elements of a Definition*, ed. William Tronzo, Los Angeles: Getty Publications.
- Liss, Andrea. *Feminist Art and the Maternal*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2009.
- Baumslag, Naomi M.P.H., M.D., and Dia L. Michels. *Milk, Money, and Madness: The Culture and Politics of Breastfeeding*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2008.
- Merriam-Webster Dictionary, *Express*,
<http://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/express> (accessed August 2010).
- Miller, Leigh Anne. "The Year in Feminist Art." *Art in America* 95, no. 3 (2007): 27.
- Mitchell, Juliet. *Selected Melanie Klein*. New York: Free Press, 1987.
- Moses, Leah. *9 Days Nursing*, 2007.
- Murphy, E. "Breast is Best: Infant-Feeding Decisions and Maternal Deviance." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 21 (1999): 187-208.
- Myers, Terry R. "Review: Catherine Opie: In and Around Home." *Art Review* 3 (2006): 142.
- Nelson, Robert S. "Appropriation," In *Critical Terms of Art History* ed. Robert Nelson and Richard Shiff. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996.
- Nochlin, Linda. Why Have there Been no Great Women Artists?" *Women, Art and Power and Other Essays*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988

- Norton, Louise. "Buddha of the Bathroom," In *Marcel Duchamp in Perspective*, ed. Joseph Masheck, 70 – 72. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2002.
<http://books.google.com/books>.
- Oishi, Eve. "Interview with *Patty Chang*." *Camera Obscura* 54 (2003): 118-29.
- Oliver, Kelly."Summary of Major Themes." *Feminist Theory Website Hosted by the Center for Digital Discourse and Culture at Virginia Tech University*. 1998, accessed March 2009. <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/feminism/kristeva.html>
- Opie, Catherine. "An Evening with Catherine Opie." Speech given at Out at the Center, Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgendered Community Center, New York, March 2009.
- Opie, Catherine. "Opie Retrospective," *Guggenheim.org*,
http://web.guggenheim.org/exhibitions/exhibition_pages/opie/exhibition.html
- Opie, Catherine. Email interview with Laura Hurtado Tue, Aug 10, 2010.
- Opie, Catherine. "Oliver in a Tutu," Chromogenic print2004 (Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York).
- Opie, Catherine. "Catherine Opie: In and Around Home." *Art Review*. No. 3 (2006): 142.
- Opie, Catherine. A.M. Homes. "Mod Painters." *Photo Op* 20, no. 9 (2008): 75-79.
- Opie, Catherine. *Catherine Opie: American Photographer*. New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum Publication, 2008.
- Owens, Craig "The Discourse of Others." In *The Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History*, edited by Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, 487 – 502. New York: Harper Collins, 1992.
- Peskowitz, Miriam. *The Truth Behind the Mommy Wars: Who Decides What Makes a Good Mother?* Berkeley, CA: Seal Press, 2005.
- Perrier, Danielle. "Canan Senol: Once Upon a Time." *n.paradox: international feminist art journal* 17/18, (June 2003/Jan 2004). 19 – 22:
<http://web.ukonline.co.uk/n.paradoxa/perrier.htm> (accessed December 2008).
- Pietz, William. "Fetish," *Critical Terms of Art History* eds. Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press: 2003.
- Pogrebin, Robin. "Ms. Chicago, Party of 39? Your Table's Ready in Brooklyn," *New*

- York Times*, February 1, 2007.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/01/arts/design/01party.html>
- Pollock, Griselda. *Mary Cassatt: Painter of Modern Women*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1999.
- Pondick, Rona. *Milk*, mixed media, 1989.
- Ragland-Sullivan, Ellie. "Jacques Lacan: Feminism and the Problem of Gender Identity," *Substance* 36 (1982).
- Reed, Miriam. *Margaret Sanger: Her Life in Her Words*. New York: Barricade Books, 2003.
- "Revolution of Rising Lactation." *ARTNews* 97, no. 8 (1998): 140.
- Richards, Amy. *Opting in: Having a Child Without Losing Yourself*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008.
- Richmond, Susan. "Review: Global Feminisms: New Directions in Contemporary Art: Brooklyn." *Art Papers* 31, no. 4 (2007): 46-47.
- Rielly, Maura. "The Drive to Describe: An Interview with Catherine Opie." *Art Journal* 60, no. 2 (2001): 88-95.
- Rielly, Maura and Linda Nochlin. *Global Feminisms: New Directions in Contemporary Art*. New York: Merrell, 2007.
- Rodriguez, Susan. "Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art: About the Center: Gallery Design." *Brooklyn Museum*. Accessed January 2010.
http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascfa/about/gallery_design.php.
- Roller, Lynn Emrich. *In Search of God the Mother: The Cult of Anatolian Cybele*. Berkeley California: University of California Press, 1999.
- Rosenfeld, Kathryn. "S/M Chic and the New Morality." *New Art Examiner* 28, no. 4 (2000): 27-31.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Emile, or on Education*. Trans. William H. Payne. New York: Prometheus Books, 2003.
- Ryan, A.S., Z. Wenjun, & A. Acosta. "Breastfeeding Continues to Increase Into the New Millennium." *Pediatrics* 110, no. 6 (2002): 1103-09.
- San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, *Making Sense of Modern Art: The Dinner Party*, <http://www.sfmoma.org/artwork/4353> (accessed March 2010).

- Sanger, Margaret. *Motherhood in Bondage*. New York: Brentano's, 1928.
- Sanger, Margaret. *Woman and the New Race*. Chicago: General Books, LLC, 2010.
- Schmied, V. & D. Lupton. "Blurring the Boundaries: Breastfeeding and Maternal Subjectivity." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 23, no. 2 (2001): 234-50.
- Schwab, M.G. "Mechanical Milk: An Essay on the Social History of Infant Formula." *Childhood* 3 (1996): 479-97.
- Schwarz, Arturo. "The Alchemist Stripped Bare in the Bachelor, Even," in Anne d'Harnoncourt and Kynaston McShine, eds., *Marcel Duchamp*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1973.
- Scott, J.A. & T. Mostyn. "Women's Experiences of Breastfeeding in a Bottle-Feeding Culture." *Journal of Human Lactation* 19, no. 3 (2003): 270-77.
- Senol, Canan. Email Interview with Laura Hurtado, translated Yeliz Lambson June 2009.
- Shaw, Rhonda. "Theorizing Breastfeeding: Body Ethics, Maternal Generosity and the Gift Relation." *Body Society* 9 (2003): 55-73.
- Shaw, Rhonda. "Performing Breastfeeding: Embodiment, Ethics and the Maternal Subject." *Feminist Review: Empirical Interrogations: Gender, 'race' and class* 78 (2004): 99-116.
- Sherman, Cindy. *Untitled #206, #207*, color coupler prints, 1989.
- Simms, E. M.. "Milk and Flesh: A Phenomenological Reflection on Infancy and Coexistence." *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* 32, no.1 (2001): 22-40.
- Smith, Janna Malamud. *A Potent Spell: Motherlove and the Power of Fear*. New York: Houghton Mufflin, 2003.
- Smith, J. "Mothers' Milk and Markets." *Australia Feminist Studies* 19 (2004): 369-79.
- Solsona, Gonçal Mayos. "Baudrillard and the Simulacrum Society," *Frontiers*, Spring (April - June 2010), accessed September 2010, <http://www.barcelonametropolis.cat/en/page.asp?id=21&ui=363>.
- Stanton, Domna C. "Difference on Trial: A Critique of the Maternal Metaphor in Cixous, Irigaray, and Kristeva." In *Poetics of Gender*, edited by Nancy Miller. New York City: Columbia University Press, 1986.

- Sterns, Cindy A. "Breastfeeding and the Good Maternal Body." *Gender and Society* 13, no. 3 (1999): 308-25.
- Sutherland, Katherine. "Of Milk, Miracles of Milk and Miracles: Nursing, the Life Drive and Subjectivity." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 20, no. 2, Motherhood and Materialism (1999): 1 – 20.
- "Symbols of Maternity." *School Arts* 102, no. 6 (2003): 8.
- The Holy Bible*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979.
- Thompson, Adam. "Review: Catherine Opie." *Art Papers* 30, no. 6 (2006): 64.
- Tyler May, Elaine. *America and the Pill: A History of Promise, Peril and Liberation*. New York: Basic Books, 2010.
- Vowell, Sarah, Alice Neel, David Hockney, John R. Grimes, and Dan L. Monroe. *Family Ties: A Contemporary Perspective*. Seattle: Marquand Books, Inc, 2003.
- Wall, Glenda. "Moral Constructions of Motherhood in Breastfeeding Discourse." *Gender and Society* 15/4 (2001): 592-610.
- Walters, Suzanna Danuta. *All the Rage: The Story of Gay Visibility in America*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Warner, Michael. *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999.
- Willis, Deborah. "Visualizing Memory: Photographs and the Art of Biography." *American Art* 17, no. 1 (2003): 20-23.
- Wilson, Siona. "Destinations of Feminist Art: Past, Present and Future." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1/2 (2008): 324-30.
- Wollstonecraft, Mary. *Vindication of the Rights of Women*. London: Peters, Thomas and Andrews, 1792, PDF, e-book
- Wollstonecraft, Mary. *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*. London: Cassell & Co., 1796.
- World Health Organization, *Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding*. (Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization and UNICEF, 2003)
<http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2003/9241562218.pdf>.
- Yalom, Marilyn. *History of the Breast*. New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1997.

Zerilli, Linda M. G. "A Process without a Subject: Simone de Beauvoir and Julia Kristeva on Maternity." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 18, no. 1 (Autumn 1992): 111-135.