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Re-conceptions of Uterine Discourse through a print-based practice

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Abstract

Re-conceptions of uterine discourse through a print-based practice investigates representations and significations of the uterus, through print, video, and installation works. The research is informed by explorations of early modern English midwifery guides and contemporary experiences of the uterus through qualitative interviews undertaken with women aged 18 to 30. Centrally, I ask what can be learnt through a multi-disciplinary practice led research enquiry into social constructions of the uterus? More specifically the project investigates the iterative potential of printmaking, the temporal capacity of video, and the affective qualities of ink to unsettle understandings of the uterus. I contribute to creative practices that draw on feminist theoretical approaches to embodiment and highlight productive engagements between the fields of visual art, early modern women's history, and contemporary women's studies. I draw on scholars Sara Ahmed and Judith Butler, who suggest that temporal residues can stickily persist and accumulate through time and modes of re-iteration. Enacting the research through embodied approaches to printmaking, specifically working with my body and video, I disrupt temporal residues and the sedimentation of the medicalisation of the uterus. My research makes space and argues for an embodied understanding of the uterus as temporal, complex and ambiguous.

A layered methodology, informed by Karen Barad's diffraction fostered a practice led approach that iteratively turned and re-turned print-based, qualitative, and historical research materials as affective avenues to generate understandings. This diffractive methodology contributes to an exploration of the corporeal and embodied registers of printmaking practice. The emergent uterine stories and representations, as presented in the exegesis and body of artwork, offer nuanced consideration of the complexities of this contested organ and of the multiplicities of everyday lived experience of being in a body with a uterus.

Declaration of Originality

I declare that: this thesis presents work carried out by myself and does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; to the best of my knowledge it does not contain any materials previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; and all substantive contributions by others to the work presented, including jointly authored publications, is clearly acknowledged.



Angelica Harris-Faull

Signed 05/07/2023

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The writing group that emerged out of the 2018 University of Adelaide's HDR Gender, Sex & Sexualities Conference, at which I presented, brought wonderful friendships and support – thank you all for sharing the journey. I would also like to acknowledge my research cohort – I feel lucky to have shared this research process with you. Finally, special thanks to my friends and family, especially Claire, my mother.

Glossary

Printmaking and bookmaking terminology

Baren: hand printing tool. Traditionally a smooth round pad consisting of layers of paper and covered in Bamboo with a handle.

Brayer: another term for a printmaking roller, used to apply ink to printmaking plates.

Codex: in bookmaking, codices are signatures (groups of pages stitched together) joined together to form a book.

Ghost print: any print made after the first inking and printing of the plate, typically less ink on the matrix leading to subtle 'ghost' prints.

Plate: the material and surface (lino, metal, cardboard, wood) which is used (carved, etched, drawn into) to make a print.

Proof print: a provisional print made part way through carving the lino, or etching the metal plate, to gauge and reflect on how the ink and work is progressing before making changes. Categorised by the IPCNY, as an "artist annotation."[1]

Matrix: an additional term for 'plate,' used interchangeably within the printmaking field.

Terminology relating to historical themes

Early modern period: defined in the Oxford dictionary as, "belonging to, or designating that period of history regarded as the earliest stage of modern history." It is typically inclusive of years 1500 – 1700.[2]

Matrix: (often interchangeable) term for womb, originating in Latin, used in early modern primary texts on anatomy or reproduction (often phrased as 'generation').

[1] "Glossary of Printmaking Terms." International Print Centre New York, accessed 11 September, 2019, https://www.ipcny.org/glossary.

[2] *Oxford English Dictionary,* 3rd ed., s.v. "early modern," https://www-oed-com.access.library.unisa.edu.au/view/Entry/58987?redirectedFrom=early+modern#eid1092032040.

Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction: formative experiences in the medical museum and the uterus

In 2015 I travelled to Florence, Italy, to undertake an Ian Potter Foundation funded artist research residency at La Specola's seventeenth-century wax anatomical museum.[3] I sought this collection to study and observe the life-sized, meticulously constructed human figures that were both biologically realistic and also overlaid with symbolic ephemera and meaning.[4] I was interested in what was revealed of early modern medical ideas about the female body through the dissecting, opening, and laying out of the human form. I have a long-held interest in the ways that human bodies are medically measured and mapped both internally and externally and in the socially situated ways that they are presented and spoken about. My interest in the medicalisation of the body is in part through growing up with a younger brother who from birth spent much time in hospital. I watched my brother's body being medically quantified, assessed, and implanted and over time observed the ways that some spaces within our bodies become, or are, contested. I came to realise through my brother's experience of living with cochlear implants, that bodies are often sites of tension and politicisation, and this notion of contested and medicalised bodies has stayed with me and been explored in my own practice.

La Specola's vast wax anatomical collection has been a rich source for a range of academic scholarship and art practices, including doctoral research by American-born Australian textile

[3] The Museo di Storia Naturale, also called La Specola, 1775, holds a large collection of wax anatomical models of normative male and female bodies and an obstetrics collection. Anna Marker, "The Anatomical Models of La Specola: Production, Uses and Reception," *Nuncius*, vol. 21, issue 2 (2006): 279. For an overview of the anatomical collection see: Leonie Schmidt, "Body construction and representation: anatomical waxes in the Museo La Specola," *South African Journal of Art History*, vol. 27, no. 2, (2012): 248-258. Kara Reilly in "Two Venuses: Historicizing the anatomical female body" explicates the wax Florentine Venus as modelled after Venus de' Medici and Titian's Venus of Urbino. See: Kara Reilly, "Two Venuses: Historicizing the anatomical female body," *Performance Research,* vol. 19, no.4 (2014): 113-114.

[4] I attended several national and international collections in 2015 to 2016. Including the Harry Brookes Allen Museum of Anatomy and Pathology (Melbourne University), The Gordon Museum of Pathology (Kings College London), the Istituto di Anatomia Umana Normale (University of Bologna), Museo di Storia Naturale (Florence, Italy) and the Vernon-Roberts Museum (Adelaide University Medical School).

artist Kate Just, Australian textile artist Deborah Prior and UK artist Sarah Simblet.[5] The collection is held in dimly lit rooms that are filled to the brim with velvet-lined glass cabinets of wax models of dissected organs and bodies. One room is dedicated to foetal development and the female reproductive organs through gestation. With a sketchbook in hand, I lingered in this room, listening to other visitor's conversations as they entered the space. A full spectrum of emotions and reactions were expressed: some viewer's voiced unease and shock at seeing the dissected uteri and developing fetuses, and some remarked on their own experiences of pregnancy, while others poked their head in the room and promptly stewarded their children away from the collection. What struck me while observing and listening was the affective potential of these uteri and foetal models, and their power to evoke complex reactions and emotions. Despite their age these anatomical models provoked significant responses in contemporary museum visitors including disgust, fear, and fascination.

This experience stayed with me, and later, back in Australia, I continued thinking about the uterus, and my own experiences with this internal organ. I began talking to the people around me – friends, family, and sometimes strangers – about their experiences with their uterus. In these conversations the uterus was not a neutral organ, it held more significance. It embodied social expectations, and experiences that were shaped by uncertainty, pain, frustration, desire, hope. The uterus was also connected to medical encounters and the regular labour of contraception. I was struck, again, by the complicated relationship many people have with this part of the body. Social, legal, and medical conversations and legislations of this organ added another layer of complexity. My arts practice and research investigates these complications and concepts of embodiment and temporality through print, installation, and video. I was motivated to explore these multifaceted themes; this research began as a print-based and conceptual investigation into the uterus. From an autoethnographic position, the scope of the research

[5] Kathleen Just, "The Texture of Her Skin: A Studio Project Excavating and Reweaving Visions of Female Subjectivity," (PhD exegesis, Monash University, 2013). Deborah Tjikalyi Kim Prior, "The anatomical Venus exquisite disgust & desire: crafting the body in contemporary art practice," (PhD Exegesis, University of South Australia, 2013). Sarah Simblet, (PhD, University of Bristol, 1998).

broadened to explore historical, and specifically early modern uterine signification and imagery, and other contemporary lived experiences of this reproductive organ. I was drawn to the early modern period (1500-1700) as it witnessed the development and spread of the mechanical printing press, a technology which enabled the reproduction of texts and images, and one which I use in my practice. I sought ways to make explicit the differences and complications or entanglements between images, text and lived experiences drawn from different periods – the 1600s and today. This process of sifting and reading texts and images through each other formed the basis of a practice led research methodology, which drew on Karen Barad's theory of diffraction.[6]

At the outset of this project my reproductive organs and uterus felt like an invisible mass residing deep within my abdomen. Time was marked by the daily work of taking contraception and the monthly constellation of blood on a menstrual pad. These were the primary temporal reminders of my interior reproductive activity. I had not seen or felt my reproductive organs through imaging technologies or pregnancy. The uterine representations and significations encountered in the world around me, were often linked to pregnancy, motherhood, the ticking-fertility-clock metaphor, and notions of womanhood. I began to see connections between my viscous menstrual blood, a visible marker of my experience of my reproductive body, and the gloopy printmaking ink, which I often used to excess in the studio. It became clear that the uterus was overlaid with complexities and sociocultural concepts related to everyday experiences. Engaging with cultural constructions, and lived experiences of the uterus, connected with my practice, and prompted the question: *how can multi-disciplinary practice-led research explore the representation, signification and lived experiences of the uterus, and female reproductive bodies?* I sought to investigate *how the iterative potential of relief printmaking, the temporal capacity of video and the affective potential of ink could unsettle early modern uterine representations and consider contemporary uterine experiences.*

[6] Karen Barad, "Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting together-apart," *Parallax,* no. 20, issue 3 (2014): 168.

The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* defines the uterus as womb, an "organ in the lower body of a woman or other female mammals in which child or young is conceived and nourished till birth."[7] 'Uterus' and 'womb' refer to the same organ, however they are often associated with different usage and colloquial signification. The term 'womb,' emerged in old English in the eighth century, and alludes to the "belly, bowels, heart, womb, hollow."[8] 'Uterus' derives from Latin in the late fourteenth century, and refers to "abdomen, womb, stomach." In contemporary medical descriptions of female reproduction organs, the term 'uterus' is most employed. 'Uterus' is defined, by some medical sources, as a 'hollow,' pear-shaped organ with muscular thick walls.[9] The uterus organ is framed by a medical lens and typified by its function and capacity for reproduction. I came to recognise the limitations of these definitions. In this exegesis, I predominately use the term 'uterus,' except in interview excerpts, and published texts and artworks.

The Womb, Uterus, and Matrix

Over the course of this research, I came to the understand the uterus as a complex and metaphor-rich organ. The female reproductive system intersects medical, technological, political, social, and historical discourses. Informed by my earlier explorations of historical depictions of the uterus, I became curious about the early modern period. Converging in this era is an increased production of printed texts and images made possible by the development and dissemination of the printing press and printing knowledge, and documented medical explorations of human reproductive organs. Furthermore, at this time the term 'matrix' was used interchangeably with the term womb, both signifying reproduction. Research into the early modern period generated connections between notions of reproduction, womb and matrix. I argue that the matrix, the uterus and the process of printmaking are entangled. I posit that using a diffractive approach connecting contemporary research with an historical inquiry

[7] "Uterus, n: The Concise Oxford Dictionary."
[8] "Womb, n: Oxford English Dictionary."
[9] Jennifer Whitlock, medical content reviewed by Brian Levine, "The Function and Anatomy of the Uterus," Verywell Health, accessed 4 February, 2020, https://www.verywellhealth.com/uterus-location-function-female-anatomy-3157180. This is an accessible internet-based medical resource which offers insights into how the uterus is defined and understood in the contemporary vernacular.

enables a complicating of uterine discourses across different time periods. I began exploring English early modern midwifery texts and the ways that the uterus was represented pictorially and in written description. These were overladen with cultural assumptions about women that often focused on ways to control and contain their activities. The uterus is articulated in these texts through farming and shipping metaphors that were informed by cultural notions of procreation, including mothering, sex, health care, pregnancy, menstruation.[10] Early folklore and religion shaped ideas about the uterus, conception, and the roles of men and women in reproduction. As I investigated contemporary uterine discourses through qualitative interviews and a participant drawing process, it was clear that ideas about female reproductive organs are informed and shaped by socio-cultural practices. Other significations of the uterus were drawn from individual experiences and allowing space for these voices was key to my practice. This research centres on an investigation of early modern print-based uterine images to consider shifting contemporary uterine discourses. Historical images and texts combined with contemporary discourses, and lived experiences, generated a research-based practice that critiques the medicalisation of female reproductive bodies and the connection between the uterus and expectation of reproductive function. It seeks to address a sense of dislocation that is generated by the continued representation of the uterus as isolated from the whole body.

Framing the Uterus through a Medical Lens

While the uterus is framed through a medical lens, everyday experiences of this organ are shaped by distinctive structural and socially situated practices that move beyond the medical. Our experiences with female reproductive organs are socially connected to systems of health, education, legislation, religion, and politics. Experiences of poverty, shame, and silence impact individual reproductive and sexual bodies. Relationships with procreative organs are also informed by, but not limited to mental health, menstruation, endometriosis, contraception, and

[10] See: Patricia Crawford, *Blood, Bodies and Families in Early Modern England* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2015), 58, 67-70 and Mary Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies: The Politics of Reproduction in Early Modern England, 2006)* 201-203.

fertility. The choices we make for our bodies move from the personal to the legislative and political as evidenced in the ongoing and polarising Roe versus Wade debates about an individual's right to abortion.[11] The erosion of these rights diminishes individual agency.[12] Reproductive choice is not a new phenomenon; it moves through history and is connected to social, cultural, and political codes.

The lawmaker, medical doctor, and anatomist have historically been occupations dominated by men. The early modern legitimisation of gynaecology and obstetrics as Western medical practices can be linked to male practitioners entering the birthing room first in the early modern period.[13] We live with the inheritance of these systems. Gender, race, class, and sexual orientation shape individual's everyday experiences of health care and living in a reproductive body. Unequal access to reproductive rights has proliferated through history, and these experiences are socially and culturally situated. The bodies of people with a uterus emerge as contested sites, where questions of agency, power, experience, and representation continue to collide. These themes have been explored by a range of artists, of particular interest to this research are artworks by West-German born American artist Kiki Smith, American artist Martha Rosler and UK artist Judy Clark. Their works challenge anatomical, medical, and scientific methods to unpack the medicalisation of female bodies. Additionally, reproductive politics and health care are generative issues that have been focussed on by several artists, including Ukrainian American Katrina Majkut's textile contraceptive works which are discussed in Chapter Eight.

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[11] "Roe v. Wade," Planned Parenthood, accessed 12 October, 2022, https://reproductiverights.org/roe-v-wade/

[12] For example, President Donald J. Trump's 2017 reinstatement of the Golden Gag Rule, which mandates that any overseas organisation receiving U.S aid money does not provide information or services on abortion. This law was also reinstated through the presidency of George W. Bush, *Engender Healthcare* (charity organisation) states that up to 20 developing countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East lost service providers and access to reproductive healthcare. See: https://www.engenderhealth.org/media/info/definition-global-gag-rule.php

[13] See: Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies*, 144-149 and Eve Keller, *Generating Bodies and Gendered Selves: The Rhetoric of Reproduction in Early Modern England (*Seattle: The University of Washington Press, 2007), 157-163 and Laura Gowing, *Common Bodies: Women, Touch and Power in Seventeenth Century England,* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 149-159.

Temporality

Temporality moves through this practice-based research conceptually as the methodology involves a looking back to the past and moving between temporal periods: the early modern period and the contemporary. Academic Sara Ahmed, in *The Cultural Politics of Emotions*, writes with reference to Judith Butler's work on gender, that performativity in the present "depends upon the sedimentation of the past."[14] I draw on Ahmed's idea of historical sedimentation and stickiness to explore the notion that specific, and historical representations and significations of the uterus can persist and accumulate, particularly through modes of re-iteration and repetition.[15] This notion of sedimentation and temporal residues enabled a negotiation and navigation between the past and the present in nonlinear modes in my practice through repetition, layering, superimposition and video methods. Additionally, I call on Barad's notion of diffraction, which points to the entanglement of matter and temporal discourses.

Ideas about temporality were considered as a way of thinking through an entangled and temporally bound human organ. The uterus marks cyclical time in myriad ways across a life. This emerged as a central enquiry in the studio. Cultural assumptions of the uterus are overladen with temporal notions: the uterus has distinct phases - it is born with a lifetime supply of eggs ready for potential reproduction. When menarche occurs, the uterus is then marked by phases of bleeding. For some this period becomes a ticking clock signifying a sense of urgent time. Later the cultural constructions of the perimenopausal and menopausal uterus position this as a loss of control, while some might see this as a time of release from the cyclical period. Menstruation is in some contexts a time of cultural and social separation and stigma. Ideas about time: linear, non-linear, and experiential emerged through creative practice and research.

[14] Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 93.
[15] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics*, 93.

Artists working with historical imagery of the uterus, and female reproductive organs and bodies have informed this research. Specifically, UK artist Damien Hirst's disembodied pregnant uterine public sculptures, South African artist Willemien de Villiers's textile works which draw on early modern illustrations, and American artists Julie Russell-Steuart and Joan Lyon's exploration of historical uterine imagery through the artist book form. Additionally, I investigated works by artists who explore notions of temporality and embodiment. This included Polish printmaker Zuzanna Dyrda's print installation, video and body-based works, and Costa Rican printmaker Priscilla Romero's body imprint works.

Embodied Experiences of the Uterus

Phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty frames the human body as our mediator in the world; the body is our central mode of experience.[16] New materialist and post humanist theorists, such as Stacy Alaimo and Karen Barad, remind us that the matter of the body and the world are shared and porous.[17] Embodiment is the lived experience of one's body, including the senses and emotions. It is intertwined with notions and experiences of the self. Embodiment is socially situated; it is inextricably bound to and shaped by broader social, cultural, historical, political, and personal contexts. The body is social, political, and individual. Intersectional feminist frameworks, which have origins in the activism, social justice, and academic work of American Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw, critiques the notion of universal experience through highlighting the interconnectedness of gender, sexuality, race, class, and institutions.[18] Intersectional approaches critique and decentre the historical and ongoing privileging of specific voices, positions and the privileging of white feminist histories. Academics Elizabeth Evans and Élénore Lépinard in a chapter titled, "Confronting privileges in feminist and queer movements," state that "we can only really grasp the complexity of privilege when we

[16] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), 146.
[17] Stacy Alaimo, "New Materialisms, Old Humanisms, or Following the Submersible," *NORA – Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research,* vol. 19, no. 4 (2011): 282.
[18] Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence Against Women of Color," *Stanford Law* Review, vol. 43, no. 6 (1991): 1244, 1261, 1297-1299.

understand the ways in which gender, race, and class intertwine during the 'allocation' of privilege by any given society."[19] These theories underpin this project's understanding of privilege, power and the politics of representation. Later in this introduction I frame my positioning in the research.

Affect theory, which I drawn on in this research, can be understood as a broad theoretical approach to considering emotion and embodiment. Scholars Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Greg suggest that "affect is found in those intensities that pass body to body (human, nonhuman, part-body, and otherwise),"[20] and go onto state that such intensities "sometimes stick to bodies and worlds." Ahmed extends a notion of affect as "what sticks, or what sustains or preserves the connection between ideas, values and objects,"[21] I draw on Ahmed's notion of 'stickiness' to consider the affective register of early modern and contemporary uterine discourses and imagery. Additionally, these theories underpin the discussion of contemporary lived experiences of the uterus, from qualitative research, as participants framed their experiences of embodiment and their reproductive organs. The development of specific artworks in this project are informed by autoethnographic reflections of embodiment, emotions and experiencing my uterus. Embodiment and lived experiences of the uterus emerged as key themes and areas of enquiry in this project.

A broad range of artists explore themes of embodiment, the notion of the body as socially and politically situated and use their own bodies as art. Specifically, in this project, I explore the body impression works of Australian printmaker Noela Hjorth and Cuban-born American artist Ana Mendieta. UK artist Bee Hughes's embodied and socially situated explorations of menstruation and body fluids are drawn on in this research. I also look to the exploration of the

[19] Elizabeth Evans and Éléonore Lépinard, "Confronting Privileges in Feminist and Queer Movements," in *Intersectionality in Feminist and Queer Movements,* (Routledge, 2019), 15.
[20] Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (eds), *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 1.
[21] Sara Ahmed, "Happy Objects," in *The Affect Theory Reader,* ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 29.

body through expanded collage, printmaking, installation, performance, and textiles by artists including, Australian artist Sally Smart, American artists Kara Walker and Nancy Spero, and Japanese-Australian artists Hiromi Tango and Ema Shin.

The Womb and the (Print) Matrix

During this research, I encountered an etymological connection between 'matrix' in printmaking terminology and the uterus. The matrix in printmaking is the plate: the surface which is often altered to enable the production and reproduction of multiple images.[22] The etymology of 'matrix' witnesses a convergence of meanings. From the fourteenth century, 'matrix' is associated with the womb, or uterus; it is also rooted in the Old French 'matrice' (womb), the Latin 'matrix' (pregnant animal) and the Late Latin 'mater' (original source and mother).[23] Early modern midwifery guides use the terms 'womb' and 'matrix' interchangeably. The etymology of 'matrix' reveals ideas of gendered reproduction. It is evocative of a site or carrier and matter which is produced from that site. The printmaking matrix and the uterus both have the potential to reproduce. These connections formed a key area of enquiry in the research. I noted ways in which printmaking 'matrix,' and its early modern and gendered etymological traces are articulated in contemporary printmaking theory. Furthermore, my practice explored connections between ink, blood, uterus, matrix and the tactile viscosity of material and matter.

Within contemporary printmaking theory, a discussion on etymological connectivity between womb, uterus and matrix is limited. However, two key printmaking artists and academics, Kathryn Reeves and Ruth Pelzer-Montada, who do identify a womb-matrix connection also note the historic positioning of printmaking as feminised, and therefore an artform afforded less

[22] Walter Chamberlain, *The Thames and Hudson Manual of Etching and Engraving*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972). The matrix in printmaking is intimately linked to concepts of reproduction, with historical origins in the development of cast metal letter type.
[23] "Matrix, n," Oxford English Dictionary, accessed 9 September, 2019, https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/115057?isAdvanced=false&result=1&rskey=Lgpeyk&.

value than other artforms, including painting.[24] While these two authors point toward traces of printmaking, reproduction and gender, this research extends these ideas to contribute to this small body of literature. A feminist exploration of the uterus and printmaking intersections underpin, therefore, this exegesis and body of artwork.

Field of research

This doctoral research explores uterine discourses through a printmaking-based practice, predominately using relief techniques to generate printed material and artefacts for installation, artist books and video works. I draw upon early modern printed representations of the uterus and female bodies, findings from conversations undertaken with individuals who identify as female, and analysis of contextual literature and relevant artists' works. I seek to contribute to an intersection of feminist theory and printmaking theory and practice. I was drawn to relief printmaking techniques for their connectivity with early modern printmaking methods and for the embodied, iterative nature of linoleum carving.[25] As I explored ideas and concepts of embodiment and temporality the practice expanded into video and installation work.

Scope of the Research

The Uterus

In this research I acknowledge that there are different cultural understandings of the uterus and term 'woman', but a broader cultural exploration of uterine discourses is beyond the scope of this project. Bodies and our relationship with the body are individual. I recognise that not all women have a uterus and not all people with a uterus identify with the term 'woman.' For clarification, in this exegesis, I use the term 'woman' when talking about interview participants

[24] Kathryn J Reeves, "The Re-vision of Printmaking," in *IMPACT (International Multi-Disciplinary Printmaking Conference) Proceedings 1999*, IMPACT Press, Centre for Fine Print Research, University of West England, 69.

[25] In this exegesis I use the term linoleum/lino 'carving.' This refers to carving into the surface. This process is also more broadly referred to as 'linoleum/lino cutting.'

because each individual chose this as their descriptor; at other times the term 'people with a uterus' is employed to acknowledge the variety of bodies that might live with a uterus. The uterus is a contested and complex organ. In this research, I call on post-humanist theorist Donna Haraway's concept of "material-discursive,"[26] to frame the uterus. This theoretical approach offers modes to explore interconnections between material and discursive worlds. Drawing on Haraway and feminist, theoretical physicist Karen Barad, I frame the uterus as "material-discursive:" an organ in the body which is both fleshy-matter and socio-culturally coded.[27]

Historical Scope

The early modern period (approximately 1500 to 1800) became the historical focus in the early stages of the research. Reflecting on the wax anatomical models in La Specola, I was curious about two-dimensional representations of the uterus in early mechanically printed texts. From the late 1400's onwards across Europe, and via the merchant/publisher William Caxton in England, Johannes Gutenberg's mechanical printing press increased the production and reproducibility of texts.[28] Searching for images and discussion of reproductive organs in early modern printed texts led me to seventeenth century English midwifery guides including the first midwifery manual written in 1671 by a female midwife Jane Sharp, 'The Midwives Book or the Whole Art of Midwifry Discovered'.[29] These guides included woodcuts of female reproductive bodies and uteri, and these became foundational in this research. Early modern

[26] Haraway also theorises the term "material-semiotic" to critically address a binary consideration of human and non-human. The notion of "material-semiotic", or "material-discursive" opens a space consider the interconnectedness of matter in the world, and processes of constructing, observing and responding to matter. See: Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies,* vol. 14, no. 3 (1998): 595.

[27] Karen Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter comes to Matter," in *Material Feminisms,* eds. Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 134-135. In the same text, editors Alaimo and Hekman chart divisions between material and linguistic approaches in feminist theory. Instead, the editors advocate an approach which acknowledges insights from both linguistic and material approaches to "build on rather than abandon the lessons learned in the linguistic turn." See *Material Feminisms,* eds. Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 6.

[28] Michelle Levy and Tom Mole, *The Broadview Introduction to Book History* (Peterborough, Ontario, Canada: Broadview Press, 2017), 70 & 172.

[29] Jane Sharp, *The Midwives Book, or the Whole Art of Midwifry Discovered,* ed. Elaine Hobby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

uterine images and printed texts produced via relief printmaking and the printing press became central to my research as I sought ways to unsettle early modern representations with contemporary experiences in a studio-based practice.

Scope of Artist Research

There are a broad range of artists working across expanded printmaking, feminist art practices using the body, autoethnographic practices, and the making of artists books. The artists discussed in this exegesis are drawn on for their conceptual enquiries and practices that connect with the themes generated in this research led practice including contemporary lived experiences of reproductive bodies and processes. I explore artists who work with methods and materialities that connected to my research, including printmaking, the use of the body, video methods, and artist books. Historical imagery from medicine and from contemporary public culture are also a source of creative reference and research. Imagery of the uterus created through other visualising technologies, including ultrasound, magnetic resonance imaging and x-rays, are not the focus of this research. As discussed in the historical scope, I explore print-based and manual modes of visualising the body.

An extensive group of modern and contemporary international printmakers work with relief and lino carving methods. For example, Australian printmakers Rew Hanks and David Frazer's lino work are highly detailed and technically advanced. Hanks delves into the historical archive in his exploration of English-settler colonial history, and Frazer's work examines the human condition and emotion.[30] I acknowledge their formative contribution to the field of contemporary printmaking and recognise different avenues of interest. In this research I call on concepts of repetition, layering, temporality, and of visceral materiality. These theoretical and practice-based approaches informed the selection of artists - Alberta Whittle, Heather

[30] See: "Rew Hanks," *Nicholas Thompson Gallery,* accessed 1 February, 2022, https://www.nicholasthompsongallery.com.au/artists/rew-hanks/#BIOGRAPHY and "David Frazer," *Dfrazer,* accessed 1 February, 2022, https://www.dfrazer.com/bio

Shimmen, and Nancy Spero amongst others, and theorists, including Sara Ahmed and Karen Barad, who are discussed throughout this exegesis.

Researcher Positioning

While I use my body and reflections on everyday experiences in this practice-based research, I acknowledge my subject positioning. Born in Australia I have Cornish immigrant and Tasmanian convict heritage. I am cisgender and have female reproductive organs including a uterus, which is experienced temporally and through quotidian practices that shape its function. My formative experiences with sexuality were framed through heterosexuality, and its social scripts which pervaded my experiences growing up. In recent years I have explored my own sexuality and listened to lived experiences from the Queer community. I am aware that my subjectivity is contingent on context and history. It is connected to a complex network of socio-cultural, economic, and institutional privilege, but this positioning is also shaped by the way my body, and other bodies with uteri, are mediated by medical, legislative, and social frames.

Throughout this practice led research a process of reflexivity was undertaken including keeping a reflective journal, making reflexive artefacts, and having regular discussions with supervisors. I sought relevant literature about research positioning, attended and presented at gender studies conferences and was a member of a gender studies writing group. I took part in workshops on qualitative research, and in ways of responding to disclosures of sexual assault. Subject positioning was a consideration when interviewing participants who shared and represented a range of differing sexualities, subject positions and individual experiences with their uteri. Many of these individual experiences were quite unlike my own and in thinking through these experiences the work of other artists of different subject positioning was sought in considering, and reflecting on these complexities, in my practice.

Diffractive writing, reflexive artefacts, and books

At the end of the exegesis, in Appendix 1, are a series of experimental diffractive writing pieces. These reflexive pieces developed in response to the doing of the research and sit as creative autoethnographic writing. One thread of theoretical work with diffraction, undertaken by scholars Karen Barad and Iris Van Der Tuin, explores the potential of diffraction as a non-linear and experimental writing mode.[31] In this research, diffractive writing unfolds as different textual forms are brought together into a conversation or collision. From these textual intra-actions, alternate co-emergent insights emerge. In my research the diffractive writing pieces also take lead from 'autotheory' an emergent contemporary feminist practice in which multi-disciplinary practitioners use "autobiographical and first person" positions to open new modes of writing, challenging and processing theoretical notions.[32] In these pieces of writing I engage with artist books made in the research, as well as my own positioning in relation to being a researcher and reflections on embodiment.

A number of books and small artefacts were made in this study; the books present and respond to the semi-structured interviews and the artefacts record my negotiation with early modern texts and personal reflections on lived uterine experiences. The latter were generated from various processes including testing ideas, recycling prints, overprinting, and messy inking. They became objects to think with as I attempted to unpack my position in the research, themes of embodiment and the sometimes-messy reality of being a changing, leaking, emotional body. These works mark time both in the research and in my body. The material and aesthetic qualities of the artefacts, as disordered and misprinted, were generated through this reflexivity.

[31] Iris Van Der Tuin, "A Different Starting Point, a Different Metaphysics": Reading Bergson and Barad Diffractively," *Hypatia,* vol. 26, no. 1 (2011): 39, and 26-27.

[32] Author Maggie Nelson's text *The Argonauts* is an example of the fluid weaving of theory and embodied, autobiographical writing. See: Maggie Nelson, *The Argonauts* (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2016).
For an introduction to the concept see: Lauren Fournier, "Sick Women, Sad Girls, and Selfie Theory: Autotheory as Contemporary Feminist Practice, *a/b: Auto/Biography Studies*, vol. 33, is. 3 (2018): 643-644.

Additionally, in response to the interviews with women about their uterine lived experience, I decided to present their stories and drawings as hand-stitched books. In the exegesis I call these 'Interview Books.' Researching uterine discourses in the early modern texts and digitised archives, I was struck by the absence of female authors and voices. This informed my decision to hand make books, which centre the drawings and voices of the interview participants and enable a tactile way to engage with women's lived experiences and their drawings. I contextualise the books made in this research through the discussion of artists who make books with connected themes and materialities.

Field of Contribution

This research contributes to the field of visual arts and specifically to an intersection of corporeal feminist theory and printmaking theory and practices. Artist and academic Kathryn Reeves, in a 1999 *IMPACT* conference paper, stated that "little work has been done in printmaking related to semiotics, feminism or psychoanalysis." This statement is echoed in more recent scholarship;[33] I take lead from Reeves's call in this doctoral research. Additionally, this research contributes to gender studies as I highlight productive engagements between the fields of visual art, early modern women's history, and contemporary women's studies. The research offers novel methods to visually present and respond to the interview conversations. I argue that the affective qualities of ink, the iterative capacity of relief printmaking and the temporality of video methods complicate and unsettle early modern and contemporary uterine imagery and signification. Throughout this exegesis, in mapping a field of related creative practitioners, researchers, and my own practice-led research, I identify ways in which this research offers insights and a contribution to the field.

[33] Kathryn Reeves, "The Re-visioning of printmaking," 69. A more recent scholarly anthology, edited by Ruth Pelzer-Montada, acknowledges the current and ongoing marginalisation of prints and printmaking, while also highlighting a lack of critical collections of print-oriented theoretical writing. This text is primarily Eurocentric in focus, a limitation raised by the author. Ruth Pelzer-Montada, "Introduction," in *Perspectives on Contemporary Printmaking Critical Writing Since 1986,* ed. Ruth Pelzer-Montada (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 1-2.

Research Outcomes

This research has generated insights on tensions between historical, medical, and individual experiences of reproductive bodies that have resulted in an exegesis, exhibition, conference papers, a published paper, and other exhibitions. The study offers outcomes for the field of printmaking and more broadly provides insights for developing shifting uterine representations and discourses. I contribute to, and extend, a nexus of printmaking and feminist theory. This research contributes to an embodied and corporeal discourse of printmaking, with key additional insights from a diffractive methodology offering alternate modes of framing relief print methods including installation and video works. The interview conversations, visual method and accompanying creative presentation of data contribute to a growing field of visual qualitative scholarship and creative practice.

Structure of the Exegesis

This exegesis presents a series of interconnected thematic chapters, in order to engage with multi-layered foci, specifically early modern representations, secondary literature, popular culture discourses, interview conversations and artefacts. Moving away from a standalone literature and artefact review, a thematic, diffractive approach developed in the studio. These processes are discussed in Chapter Two, Methodology and Methods. The subsequent chapters attend to and contextualise the themes which emerged through the studio-based practice.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter Two details the Methodology and Methods which were employed to investigate the research questions. I look to Karen Barad's notion of diffraction and Sara Ahmed's concept of sedimentation and affect to provide avenues for a methodological approach that underpins a practice that works with embodiment, repetition, layering, temporality, and superimposition to navigate historical uterine imagery, contemporary lived experience and autoethnographic reflections. This practice-led research was developed through mixed methods, including

repetitive printmaking practices, video, historical enquiries, qualitative semi-structured interviews, and reflexive writing and artefact making.

Chapter Three discusses *She C/leaves* (2017-2019), a work in which I explored and experimented with inking, paper cutting, layering and installation. This practice-led experimentation became an early case study that pointed toward the affective nature of gestural ink application and layering as initial ways to disrupt early modern uterine imagery. This chapter maps formative research with imagery and texts that depict early modern anatomised uteri and female bodies.

Chapter Four explores the development of a key linoleum matrix, a life-size outline of my body. I consider the effect of its iterative printing and reflect on how this matrix came to signify the complexities and contradictions of making of bodily images in this practice-led research. The body prints formed the basis of two installation works: *In Body, In Time* and *Temporal Abruptions: making and unmaking the body.* This chapter charts repetition, and the repeated use of matrices, as ways to unsettle and complicate the representation and signification of the uterus.

Chapter Five explicates the print-based work *Womb Imaginings* that explored early modern uteri representations drawn together with lived experiences from conversations with women. I explore the uterus as contested space, laden with complicated socio-cultural meanings. *Womb Imaginings,* shaped by insights drawn from the women, generated ways of seeing the uterus as emotive, temporal, and knotty. Affective inking and repetition are explored as modes to reimagine the early modern uterus.

Chapter Six details the development of handmade books, titled 'Interview Books,' that emerged through my response to the qualitative interviews and uterine drawings. In the chapter, I draw on Barad's concept of diffraction as a "re-configuring of patterns," to argue that the women's

drawings of their uterus 're-configure' medicalised imagery through presenting their embodied everyday uterine practices. The themes that emerged informed video artwork made in this practice-based research.

Chapter Seven, a short, interstitial chapter, explores a collection of reflexive artefacts that draw on my experiential diffractive writing and imagery. This creative process became a way to think through the doing of the practice-led research and my position within the project.

Chapter Eight explores the development of four video works which extended my use of relief printmaking processes to investigate themes of embodiment, temporality, and the uterus as a space of ambiguity, contradiction, and paradox.

Chapter Two

Methodology and Methods

Introduction

> *A body is vulnerable; we are vulnerable. A body tells us the time; bodies carry traces of where we have been. Perhaps we are all these traces.*[34]
>
> Sara Ahmed

This chapter details the methodology and methods employed in this practice-led project that recognises an entangled and reciprocal relationship between the doing of research and research materials. This project builds on my practice as a printmaker, where I use my own body and transpose printed material into video and performative work. It seeks to investigate the iterative potential of relief printmaking, the temporal capacity of video, and the affective potential of ink to unsettle early modern uterine representations and consider contemporary experiences. The materials of this research were generated through mixed methods, including repetitive printmaking practices, video, historical enquiries, qualitative semi-structured interviews, research in sexual health clinics, and reflexive artefact making. Barad and Ahmed provide avenues for a methodological approach that underpins a practice that works with embodiment, repetition, layering, temporality, and superimposition to navigate historical uterine imagery, contemporary lived experience and autoethnographic reflections. This chapter explicates the development of this practice-led, diffractive methodological framework and its methods.

[34] Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 247.

Diffraction and the Entangled Matrix

Diffraction, a pre-existing concept in physics, was developed by scholars Karen Barad and Donna Haraway as a theoretical mode to consider agency and to acknowledge and make visible non-human and human entanglements. Barad states that the development of research and knowledge is not an isolated or neutral process of "making facts," or building an understanding of the world.[35] In Barad's theoretical approach, the concept of knowledge production is critiqued; she argues for the development of ethically attuned practices which acknowledge researcher's entanglement and position in the generation of knowledge. Haraway's notion of situated knowledges also addresses these concerns.[36] Diffraction, following Barad, is understood as an iterative and ongoing "(re)configuring of patterns,"[37] and as such it is not isolated to a specific place, space, or time. Diffraction is an ongoing iteration of world occurrences which are non-linear, co-emergent and temporally diverse.[38] In a formative discussion Haraway states that,

> …diffraction is a mapping of interference, not of replication, reflection, or reproduction. A diffraction pattern does not map where differences appear, but rather maps where the *effects* of difference appear.[39]

Haraway's concept of observing "effects of difference,"[40] offers insights for a critical observation of traces and changes which emerge through patterns, for example, in the reading of different texts in conversation with each other. Diffraction entangles and instigates "superimpositions"[41] between myriad research materials and temporalities. Furthermore, in a diffractive methodology "theory, method and analysis are not defined steps within research, but occur

[35] Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007), 3 & 90-91.
[36] Donna Haraway, "The promises of monsters: a regenerative politics for inappropriate/d others," *Cultural Studies* (1992): 300.
[37] Karen Barad, "Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart," *Parallax*, no. 20, is. 3 (2104): 168.
[38] Barad, "Diffracting Diffraction," 168.
[39] Haraway, "The promises of monsters," 300.
[40] Haraway, "The promises of monsters," 300.
[41] Barad, "Diffracting Diffraction," 176.

throughout the entire process, diffractively being read through each other."[42] This research developed through such conversations, as anthropologist Tim Ingold says perpetual new beginnings are found through a process of "thinking and making inside a process of growth which yields not a proliferation of ends but perpetual beginnings."[43] This concept and theories of diffraction, affect and embodiment lead to alternate textual and material connections, superimpositions and readings which were valuable in negotiating historical and contemporary visualisations and discourses of the uterus.

Diffractive methodologies have been drawn on by a range of researchers across different disciplines, of particular interest to this research, is London-based artist Amba Sayal-Bennett's doctoral research and video-based practice.[44] Sayal-Bennett worked with Baradian concepts to explore material agency and ways of framing the artist, materials and processes of making artwork as equally active in the development of practice-led research insights.[45] I draw on Barad, Haraway and insights from auto-ethnography to discuss my position in this project. I have undertaken a process of textual and visual diffractive re-turning through temporally shifting uterine images and discourses, which is discussed in relation to artworks in Chapters Three and Five. These consider ways of responding to the repetition of early modern uterine imagery through generative printmaking methods that enabled a tactile and physical drawing together and re-orientation of imagery.

Print historian and researcher Ad Stijnman frames the fundamental quality of printmaking as "the replication of the image."[46] The word replication has roots in fifteenth-century Latin

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[42] Julie E. Brice and Holly Thorpe, "New Materialisms, Material Methods, and the Research Process: A Creative Experiment in Cutting Together-Apart," *Leisure Sciences*, (2021): 4.
[43] Tim Ingold, "100 Day Studio: Tim Ingold – Making, Growing, Thinking," YouTube video, posted 14 July, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FptmjWzj6Vw
[44] Amba Sayal-Bennett, artist website, http://www.ambasb.com/
[45] Amba Sayal-Bennett, 'Diffractive Analysis: Embodied Encounters in Contemporary Artistic Video Practice', in *Tate Papers no.29*, https://www.tate.org.uk/research/tate-papers/29/diffractive-analysis, accessed 5 June 2022.
[46] A.C.J Stijnman, "A history of engraving and etching techniques: developments of manual intaglio printmaking processes, 1400-2000" (Postdoctoral Thesis, Amsterdam Institute for Humanities Research (AIHR), 2012) https://dare.uva.nl/search?identifier=2a2a67f7-9aab-4f06-90ba-f097d5c8438d, 277. The thesis was subsequently published as a monograph with the same title. See also: Levy & Mole, *The Broadview Introduction to Book History,* 19. The mechanically printed word emerged in Europe in

replicare meaning to 'repeat' and 'reply.'[47] As discussed in Chapter Four, at the outset of this project I began with a large piece of uncut linoleum which was carved to mirror the outline of my body. Over the duration of this study, this life-sized body-matrix was repeatedly printed as the complexities of embodiment were generated through practice. The matrix, its etymology and generative potential, is key to my broader enquiry in which I became interested in messily and repeatedly printing linoleum carved blocks to create printed material for use in video and installation works. Echoing Stijnman's framing of printmaking, I repeatedly printed matrices: the printed matter began to 'reply' and shift as new layers of ink, images, and mess sedimented.

In considering my relationship with the matrix, I was drawn to art historian and philosopher, Georges Didi-Huberman's articulation of cast objects and imprint-based substrates as *empreintes:* objects which carry a "visual and tactile 'evocative present' of a past that continues to 'work' and transform the substrate in which it has left its mark."[48] In Didi-Huberman's framing of the imprinted surface as alive with traces from its reciprocal matrix and past; I found connections and resonances with Ahmed's notion of sedimentation, as the accumulation of ideas, images, experiences across and through time. As I printed repeat layers of matrices on the same surface, each matrix intra-acted with the previously embedded inky lines. This

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approximately 1454, as Johannes Gutenberg developed a structure capable of holding inked movable type which could be pressed or printed into surfaces. Gutenberg's press is predated by Chinese developments in hand-printable woodblocks. It should be noted that the role and influence of the printing press, as a technology to reproduce and perpetuate texts, in Europe in the early modern period is contested terrain. Historian Elizabeth Eisenstein published an influential text, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe,* which advanced print as a revolutionary technology, key to the emergence of secular sciences and a shift away from prior manuscript practices. Eisenstein's text acknowledges the complexity of these developments. See: Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe,* Canto Classics Edition, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). Eisenstein's research has been critically addressed by several academics, including Zeynep Tenger and Paul Trolander who note that manuscript culture co-existed with the gradual emergence of print technologies and culture. See: Zeynep Tenger and Paul Trolander, "From Print versus Manuscript to Sociable Authorship and Mixed Media: A Review of Trends in the Scholarship of Early Modern Publication," *Literature Compass,* vol. 7, no. 11(2010): 1036.

[47] Oxford English Dictionary (Online), 3rd Ed., "Replication" https://www-oed-com.access.library.unisa.edu.au/view/Entry/162883?redirectedFrom=replication#eid

[48] Georges Didi-Huberman, "Opening up an anachronistic point of view," in *Perspectives on Contemporary Printmaking, Critical Writing Since 1986,* ed. Ruth Pelzer-Montada (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 186. Didi-Huberman primarily discusses 'empreintes' in the context of cast objects. Translator Miranda Stewart suggests the term can extend to other processes and forms of impressions. Stewart in articulating the plural and complex nature of the French term 'empreinte,' states that the word can mean 'print,' 'imprint,' 'impression,' 'trace,' or 'mark.'

iterative printing process produced new connective lines and revealed traces and superimpositions of uterine discourses. Differences between and within print-based artworks actively disrupted the print matrix as a means of identical reproduction. I became attuned to instances of diffractive "interference"[49] in studio-based artefacts. Thus, a diffractive approach afforded non-linear analysis of uterine representations from differing temporalities, sources, and voices. In addition, I call on scholar Dorota Folga-Januszewska's concept of "printmaking as a phenomenon of thinking," that frames the matrix as a multiplex form that "embodies an openness to change."[50] These concepts led to a reconsideration of relief printmaking, in my practice, as a generative and non-replicable making process. Images are not produced as edition-based identical copies. Instead, I investigate generative and repetitive printmaking processes which lead to variation.

The Printmaking Studio as a Sensorium: Ink, Affect and Embodiment

The printmaking studio is filled with distinctive smells, tactile objects, and encounters. Print processes are sensorial and embodied and I approached the studio as a sensorium, which was informed by historian Alain Corbin's 1986 text *The Foul and the Fragrant, Odour and the Social Imagination.* Writing in the introduction of this text medical historian, Roy Porter, states "today's history comes deodorised."[51] Noting his call for a broader exploration of the senses in material history, I was driven to consider sensorial experiences in the printmaking studio and bring this into my writing, to further consider the embodied registers of the research. I became attuned to the smell and sound of the ink, for example, listening for the changes in the texture of relief printing ink as it is rolled across a surface. In becoming attentive to my sensorial relationship with the printmaking studio, I began thinking about its affective nature. Scholars

[49] Haraway, "The promises of monsters," 300.
[50] Dorota Folga-Januszewska, "Printmaking as a Phenomenon of Thinking," *Celebrating Print,* accessed 20 June 2023, https://www.celebratingprint.com/post/2017/03/22/printmaking-as-a-phenomenon-of-thinking#:~:text=By%20Dorota%20Folga%2DJanuszewska%20%7C%20With,matrix%20and%20its%20potential%20image. Para. 1.
[51] Alain Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant, Odour and the Social Imagination,* (London: Pan Macmillan Publishers, 1994), v.

Gregory Seigworth and Melissa Gregg articulate affect as "visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally other than conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion." [52] Correspondingly, anthropologist Paul Stoller conceptualises meaning emerging from ethnographer's bodily experiences, suggesting that,

> we (ethnographers) too are consumed by the sensual world, that ethnographic things capture us through our bodies, that profound lessons are learned when sharp pains streak up our legs in the middle of the night.[53]

In framing embodied knowledge, Stoller, like Haraway and Barad, remind us that as researchers and artists we are implicated in processes of making and meaning production. Furthermore, insights can be gained through attention to sensorial phenomena and materials in the print studio.[54]

Ahmed explores how complex webs of affect and emotions, contingent on diverse contextual phenomena, come to "transform or 'work on' the surfaces of bodies."[55] Ahmed's notion of transformative bodily surfaces offers valuable insights for locating emergent relationships between the matrix, ink, and embodiment and are drawn on in the development of my artwork. There are sensory fluid states shared both by printmaking and bodily uterine processes. Furthermore, as discussed by art historian Kelly Donahue-Wallace, print terminology is often symbolic of bodily states.[56] Matrices printed without a traditional border are termed 'bleed' prints, as the ink bleeds and reaches out to the edges of the paper. Donahue-Wallace posits that "our experience of prints and our assumptions of them are shaped first by the material itself –

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[52] Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, "An Inventory of Shimmers," in *The Affect Theory Reader,* eds. Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 1.
[53] Paul Stoller, *Sensuous Scholarship*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 23.
[54] Here I connect to a body of scholarship which considers material awareness and relationships. For example, anthropologist and artist Tim Ingold describes making as "a working *with* rather than a doing *to."* He locates this framing in an attentiveness and discourse of embodiment, "rather than getting stuck on issues of technique, or of power and control." See: Tim Ingold, *Redrawing anthropology: materials, movements, lines,* (London, England, New York, New York: Routledge, 2016), 21-22.
[55] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotions*, 85.
[56] Kelly Donahue-Wallace, "Towards theories of Printmaking" *MAPC Journal (*2009): 9-12.

the ephemerality of the paper, its delicateness…the imprinting, the stamping and pressing."[57] Building on this conceptualisation, I suggest that the material processes and artefacts of printmaking are sensorial and embodied. They are felt and registered in our bodies. Working with ink and print processes through sometimes messy, embodied, and sensorial modes generated responses to the research questions and themes of uterine temporality and medicalised bodies.

Ink, traditionally smooth and consistent in relief printmaking, is resisted in my practice in order to investigate the affective potential of messy ink, layered ink and matrices printed to excess. The spreading of ink is visceral: it swells, bulges, and exudes. As oil-based relief ink ages, it thickens and collects matter. Ink fills the air with a particular smell which lingers on my body. In comparison, each month the arrival of my menstrual discharge is marked by an iron-smell, while I start to feel the gradual dislodging of blood and matter. Pale blood transitions over several days to deep red globular material. Figures One and Two document a constellation of menstrual fluids, as a temporal marker of my cyclical uterus, and informed embodied and sensorial inky experiments in the studio. Amorphous ink and menstrual blood operate in liminal spaces. While this blood is often politicised and socially obfuscated, in this research it is framed as conceptually generative.[58] Like the unpredictable patterning of blood soaked into pads, working in the studio with layered, globular, and fragmented ink, generated modes of negotiating uterine discourses from past and present through affective ink states.

[57] Donahue-Wallace, "Towards theories of Printmaking" 9-12.
[58] Pelzer-Montada, "The Attraction of Print: Notes on the Surface of the (Art) Print,": 78.

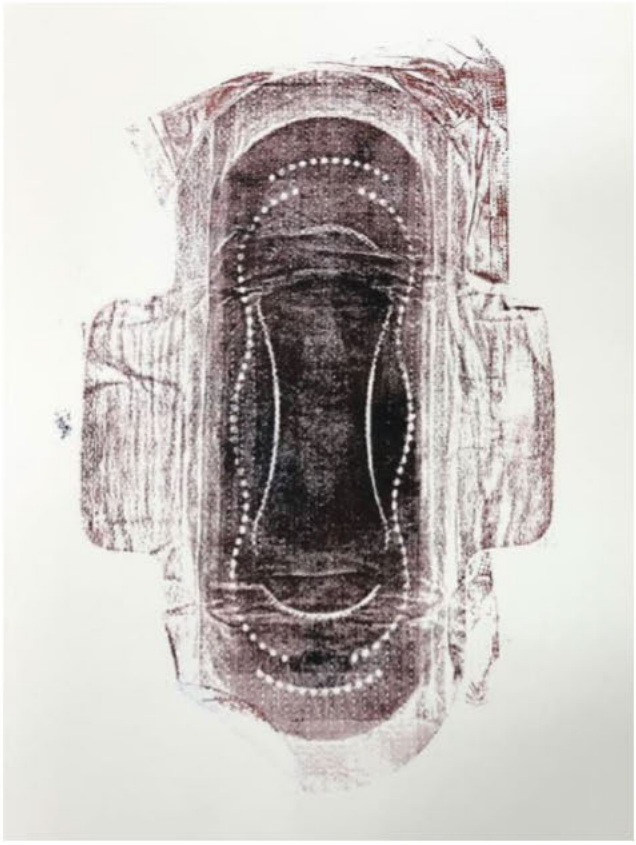

Figure 1: Angelica Harris-Faull, Studio experimentation. Inked and printed menstrual pad, 2018.

Image source: Photograph by author.



Figure 2: Angelica Harris-Faull, Used menstrual pad, 2018.

Image source: Photograph by author.

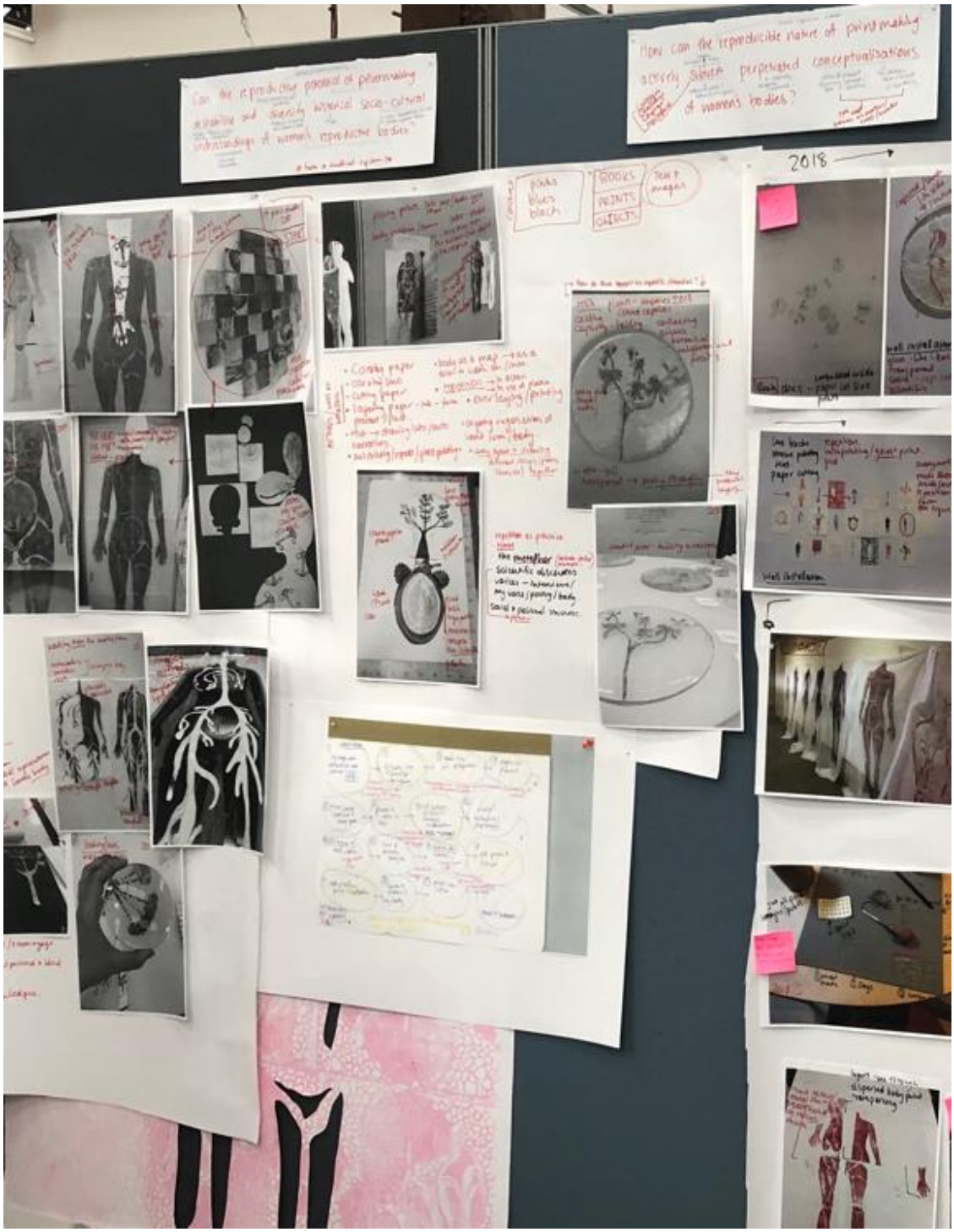

Figure 3: Angelica Harris-Faull, Studio wall: photographs, photocopies, pen notation, linoleum prints on paper, 2018-2019.

Image source: Photograph by author.

Methods

The following section of the chapter outlines selected methods that underpin this practice-led research into early modern uterine imagery and significations, and generate insights into contemporary women's lived experiences of their uterus and reproductive body. Methods included historical textual and image analysis, qualitative semi-structured interviewing and a visual drawing method undertaken in the interviews. These methods are interdisciplinary, including women's history, early modern history and social science, therefore specific key scholars, which are discussed throughout the exegesis, are drawn on to support my practice-led research and knowledge generation in the studio.[59] Post-doctoral researchers Alisa Kronberger and Lisa Krall, in a 2021 article exploring feminist art and theory, highlight the productive potential of Baradian methodologies which "point(s) to many different influences" and brings "disciplines and perspectives which seem far apart into conversation."[60] The methodology, discussed earlier, works with diffraction to bring the different research themes and materials into conversation with each other. Underpinning this project is an awareness of researcher positioning. The making of artwork in the studio, working with print, video, installation, and book making processes in embodied and affective modes, brings together the different themes and materials generated through a range of research methods, mapped in Figure 3. I developed works which used relief prints, gestural inks, text and recorded voice. Video, specifically stop-motion and performative approaches, were drawn on to explore temporality, affect and embodiment. They are temporally inflected methods that intersect my approach to printmaking. This is further unpacked in thematic chapters.

Responding to Early Modern Sources

The early modern period offers a nexus of developing print technologies, the beginnings of the publishing of numerous midwifery guides, and investigations in both text and imagery of

[59] Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt, *Practice As Research: Approach to Creative Arts Enquiry* (London: IB Tauris, 2010), 3-6.
[60] Alisa Kronberger and Lisa Krall, "Agential Realism Meets Feminist Art. A Diffractive Dialogue Between Writers, Theories and Art," *Matter: Journal of New Materialism Research,* vol. 2, no. 2 (2021): 26.

human reproduction. Historical source material was accessed via the *Early English Books Online (EEBO)* database, a repository tailored for early modern history scholars and researchers. Initial database searches utilising key words ('women', 'women's bodies, 'uterus', 'womb' and 'reproductive organs) yielded ballads, court records, medical texts and midwifery guides. Early modern midwifery guides were selected as key historical source material, due to the presence of woodblock illustrations and their discussion of the uterus and female reproductive organs. These guides are authored by men, one exception is English midwife and author Jane Sharp's 1671 text *The Midwives Book or The Whole Art of Midwifery Disclosed.*[61] Textual and visual analysis of this, and other midwifery guides provided insights into seventeenth century understandings of the uterus which informed studio practice, creative decisions and approaches to making artwork. Figure 4 from 2017, present initial notations of midwifery guides, this included image description and analysis, sketches, definition of key terms, quotations and contextual research. The sketches and notes formed a groundwork of imagery, ideas and texts for lino carving and studio practice. The early modern woodblocks of female reproductive bodies, uteri, and uteri filled with fully formed babies were re-carved in linoleum to layer, superimpose and bring into conversation with other images, monoprints and research materials. This is discussed in depth in thematic chapters in this exegesis.

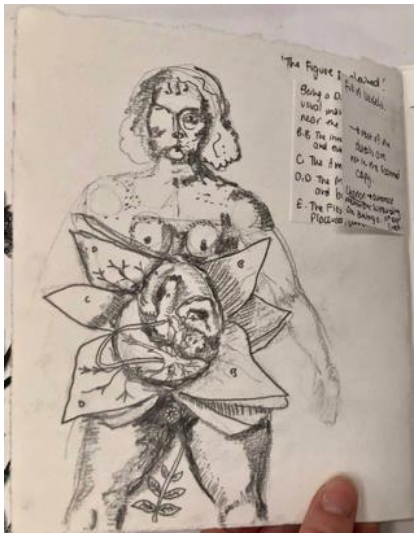

Figure 4: Angelica Harris-Faull, historical source notation, 2017.

Image source: photograph by author.

[61] Sharp, *The Midwives Book, or the Whole Art of Midwifry Discovered,* ed. Elaine Hobby, *xvi.*

Contemporary research in the clinic and qualitative interviews

To contrast early modern depictions of the uterus with contemporary views, research was undertaken in a sexual health clinic in an Australian city. Flyers, information sheets, medical imagery and other material about reproductive choices and sexual health were collated. A qualitative method was chosen where individuals were invited to discuss and visualise their uterus in an interview and drawing process.[62] The women spoke about their experiences with their uterus, and connecting subjects including contraception, puberty, sex education and their sexual and reproductive bodies. These conversations revealed the ways that the uterus and reproduction are socially framed; this informed the development of my practice-based research and artwork.

Undertaking interviews, and a process that asked women to draw their uterus, led to key research understandings which are discussed in the thematic chapters of this exegesis. The interview data, and my reflective writing on the interviews, caused critical shifts in the research and my use of the words, 'womb' and 'uterus.'[63] In response to, and as a mode to present the interview data, I developed Interview Books. The style of these books were informed by the material produced by the participants, giving them a direct and simple quality. Insights from interview data threads through the making of other artwork which is themed by concepts of embodiment, temporality, medicalisation, and experiences of dislocation, which are discussed in themed Chapters.

Visual methods in interviews

In response to early modern anatomical, and uterine woodblocks, and contemporary medical illustrations of female reproductive organs, I sought to understand how participants would

[62] See Appendix Two, page 210, for further information on ethics, recruitment and the interview method.
[63] At the outset of this research, I approached uterus as a medical term, connected to formal and scientific discourse. The interviewing process, and specifically interviewees' discussion of their understandings the terms 'uterus' and 'womb' led to a rethinking of my framing of these terms. I sought further nuance and contextualisation.

visually depict their own uterus. Contemporary illustrations were drawn from general practitioner resources, sexual health clinics, and medical texts. There is limited published research that utilises visual methods to consider young women's embodied and sensorial relationships with their reproductive organs.[64] The interviews and visual method contribute to this field. The women were invited to draw a biological map and a lived experience map of their uterus. The drawing process aimed to gain insights into participants' anatomical knowledge of female reproductive organs and offer a space for participants to explore how they felt about their uterus. Visual methods in qualitative interviews can lead to embodied, sensorial and creative responses from participants, and as academic Lia Bryant states the "use of multiple layers of data collection" enable nuanced understandings.[65] Bryant argues that visual methods offer "participants greater freedom in expressing how they see and what they see," while also challenging interviewer-participant power dynamics.[66] Correspondingly, researcher Fiona Buchanan states that the use of visual methods in interviews are "empowering as nothing is predetermined," leading to experiences of agency for participants. [67] The visual method in this research documented the women's individual lived experience of the uterus.

Researcher positioning in the interview space and interview analysis

Ann Oakley's 1981 text *Interviewing Women*, her follow up article in 2015, and Michele Fine's 1994 article *Working the Hyphen* informed my process of sensitively approaching the interview

[64] See: Kari Nyheim Solbrække and Hilde Bondevik, "Absent organs-Present selves: Exploring embodiment and gender identity in young Norwegian women's accounts of hysterectomy." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being,* vol. 1 (2015): 1-10, Sarah Johnson, Christine Pion, and Victoria Jennings, "Current methods and attitudes of women towards contraception in Europe and America." *Reproductive Health,* vol. 10, no. 7 (2013): 1-9, and Lesley Hoggart, Victoria Louise Newton & Jane Dickson, "I think it depends on the body, with mine it didn't work": explaining young women's contraceptive implant removal," *Contraception,* vol. 88 (2103): 636-640.
[65] Lia Bryant, *Critical and Creative Research Methodologies,* 14.
[66] Lia Bryant, *Critical and Creative Research Methodologies*, 24.
[67] Fiona Buchanan, "Touching on emotions: using clay work in a context of relational empowerment to investigate sensitive issues," in *Critical and Creative Research Methodologies in Social Work,* ed. Lia Bryant (UK: Routledge, 2015) 174. Buchanan, "Touching on emotions," 184. In addition, my decision to offer the drawing process half-way through the interview was informed by Buchanan's research design where the visual, or tactile method, in the form of clay work, was undertaken at the end of the focus group when the researcher perceived a sense of trust and support in the process and between individuals. See: Buchanan, "Touching on emotions," 176.

space.[68] Oakley and Fine articulate several complexities of interviewing: the presence of the interviewer, self-reflexive interviewing approaches, and the ethics of interviewers identifying with participant selection criteria. The interview space is complex, comprising dynamic verbal and non-verbal exchanges between interviewer and the participant.[69] As an interviewer, I actively listened to participant responses and was attentive to body language, verbal and emotional communication. I checked with participants for their preferred pronouns and language, and asked the women how they understood and used specific words. When appropriate, I shared personal experiences. Sharing often led to a level of reciprocity in creating a sensitive and generative interview or conversation space. I acknowledge the power relations within the interviews but aimed to create an equal and safe space.

Conclusion

This chapter has mapped the development of a diffractive, printmaking-oriented and practice-led methodology. The theoretical underpinning of this methodology takes note from a range of scholars. Central to the interlocution of these theoretical approaches is Ahmed's work on sedimentation and affect, and Barad's scholarship on diffraction. Baradian diffractive theory is non-linear, and in this research it has enabled the re-turning of multiple and different texts, materiality and temporalities. Additionally, looking to Baradian diffraction, feminist theory and scholarship on self-reflexivity assisted in a clear articulation of my own involvement and position in research. This chapter outlined the complex and layered methods and approaches which were undertaken to investigate uterine imagery and significations. I superimposed and

[68] Ann Oakley, "Interviewing women: A contradiction in terms?" in *Doing Feminist Research,* ed. Helen Roberts (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 30–61. Oakley published a follow-up article on this subject: Ann Oakley," Interviewing Women Again: Power, Time and the Gift," *Sociology,* vol. 50, no. 1 (2016): 195-215. Additionally, I turned to research by academics Helmi Järviluoma, Pirkko Moisala and Anni Vilkko who acknowledge the embodied nature of qualitative research as it emerges from both cerebral processes and experiences of being a body in the world. The authors cogently argue for an "acknowledgement of the theoretical position as a political position is part of the research process," reflexive practices help to articulate a researcher positionality. See: Helmi Järviluoma, Pirkko Moisala and Anni Vilkko, "*Gender and Qualitative Methods.* Introducing Qualitative Methods Series," (London: Sage Publications, 2003), 22.

[69] Jonathan Skinner, "A Four-part Introduction to the Interview," in *The Interview, An Ethnographic Approach,* ed. Jonathan Skinner (London: Berg, 2012), 1-49. See also: Anne Montgomery, "Difficult Moments in the Ethnographic Interview: Vulnerability, Silence and Rapport," in *The Interview, An Ethnographic Approach,* ed. Jonathan Skinner (London: Berg, 2012), 143-159.

re-turned text and images from interview conversations, early modern midwifery guides, artworks, uterine discourses, contemporary sources and autoethnographic reflective writing. Each research mode and process was diffractively re-turned and superimposed through printmaking-centred practice-led research. Additionally, this chapter explored connections between printmaking processes, embodied states and affect. The insights from this methodological approach informed the development of an exegesis and body of artefacts. I develop a sensorial and embodied discussion of printmaking that contributes to a theoretical framing of the matrix.

Chapter Three

Observing, Recording and Ordering the Uterus and Female Reproductive Body

Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the iterative development of the print-based work *She C/leaves* (2017-2019). This work became an early case study in which I experimented with inking, paper cutting, layering and installation. This practice-led experimentation began to point toward the affective nature of gestural ink application and layering as modes to unsettle early modern uterine imagery and signification. This chapter maps formative research with imagery and texts that depict early modern anatomised uteri and female bodies. As framed in the Introduction, the uterus is a contested space which is managed and signified through social, religious, and legal codes; uterine function is framed by medical practices. Responding to early modern midwifery guides through print-based processes generated connections between the printing press, medicalised uterine imagery and socially constructed notions of female reproductive bodies. This chapter first outlines elements from early modern midwifery texts, which informed my creative practice, and then proceeds to discuss linkages with thematically connected modern and contemporary artworks by Barbadian-Scottish artist Alberta Whittle, American artist Martha Rosler, British artist Judy Clark, and Australian artist Heather Shimmen.

Early Modern Midwifery Guides, the Early Modern Printing Press and the Management of the Uterus

I began formative research through English early modern databases and read several midwifery guides printed throughout the 1600s. I found only one authored by a female midwife, Jane Sharp.[70] In the opening pages of Sharp's 1671 text, *The Midwives Book or The Whole Art of*

[70] Elaine Hobby, "Introduction," in Jane Sharp, *The Midwives Book or The Whole Art of Midwifry Discovered by Jane Sharp,* ed. Elaine Hobby (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), Elaine hobby, xvi.

Midwifry, the author addresses her fellow "sisters" to lament the "many miseries" experienced by pregnant women.[71] Sharp positions her text as an educational resource for midwives that is informed by her own experiences of caring for pregnant and birthing women. She also intended it to be an informative resource for young men and women. It includes translations of other medical texts to make them accessible in the training and education of midwives. Sharp's text reveals her understanding of gendered social norms and the institutional or economic restrictions of her time.[72] She states that "some perhaps may think…that it is not proper for women to be of this profession, because they cannot attain the knowledge of things as men may."[73] Sharp notes that male medical practitioners, with financial means, could "be bred up in Universities, Schools of learning, or serving their Apprenticeships for that end and purpose, where Anatomy lectures being frequently read."[74] Control over bodies and knowledge and training particularly in the medical realm was evident in these early modern texts.

Female midwives faced institutional disparity and cultural assumptions of gendered roles. Gendered criticism is present in midwifery guides authored by male practitioners, including English physician Thomas Chamberlayne's 1697 text which states that female midwives, "know nothing but the outsides of things…they are ignorant of the structure of the parts, they cannot tell how to go about their work."[75] However, in early modern England pregnancy and birth were predominately managed by female midwives and women.[76] Pregnancy was often confirmed at the point of 'quickening' when a women felt the foetus move.[77] The notion of 'quickening' infers

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[71] Sharp, *The Midwives Book,* 2. https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A93039.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext
[72] Sharp, *The Midwives Book,* 2. https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A93039.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext
[73] Sharp, *The Midwives Book,* 2. https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A93039.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext.
[74] Sharp, *The Midwives Book,* 2. https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A93039.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext
[75] Thomas Chamberlayne, *The Compleat midwife's practice enlarged*, 1.
[76] Cathy McClive, "The hidden truths of the belly: the uncertainties of pregnancy in early modern Europe," (Society for the Social History of Medicine Student Prize Essay 1999, runner-up), *Social History of Medicine: the journal of the Society for the Social History of Medicine,* vol. 15, no. 2 (2002): 212-213.
[77] See: Rebecca Whiteley, "Figuring and Picturing Figures: Images of the Pregnant Body and the Unborn Child in England, 1540-c.1680" (Winner of the SSHM'S Roy Porter Essay Prize, 2015), *Social History of Medicine,* vol. 32, no. 2 (2019), 1-3. See also: Barbra Duden, "Quick with Child: An Experience That Has Lost its Status," *Technology in Society,* vol. 14 (1992): 335-344.

a female embodied knowledge, complicating the narrative offered by Chamberlayne. Historian Elaine Hobby, and others, highlight early modern societal tensions in the management of, and access to midwifery education and practitioner licensing.[78] Tensions play out within the printed pages of the birthing guides and the control of knowledge about the uterus and management of the pregnant body is contested and politicised within the texts. The printing press perpetuated ideas about the female reproductive body. It became overlaid with notions of control and institutionalised knowledge that would give rise to the formalisation of the man-midwife and management of women by obstetricians. Socially constructed ideas about the uterus have continued in different forms into the present day.



Figure 6: *Anatomy of the abdominal muscles*, Commentary on the Anatomy of Mondino by Jacopo Berengario de Capri, (detail), 1521, fol. 6v.

Image source: National Library of Medicine, accessed June 2023, https://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/historicalanatomies/Images/1200_pixels/Berengario_p06v.jpg

[78] There is a body of scholarship which examines the practices of seventeenth-century midwives. There was a system of licencing via Bishops, with skill-based evidence and testimonials presented by prospective midwives. Scholars also acknowledge the probability of unlicensed midwives, and additionally apprenticeship-based education models. Elaine Hobby, "Introduction," *The Midwives Book*, xvi. See also: Doreen Evenden, "Mothers and their midwives in seventeenth-century London," in *The Art of Midwifery Early Modern Midwives in Europe,* edited by Hilary Marland, (London: Routledge, 1993), 9.



Figure 7: Artist unknown, from The Compleat midvvife's practice enlarged, by Thomas Chamberlayne, 1659, 96.

Image source: National Library of Medicine accessed June 2023 https://collections.nlm.nih.gov/bookviewer?PID=nlm:nlmuid-2327006R-bk 121 [digitised copy]

In early modern English midwifery guides female bodies are visually depicted through two central modes: as a whole body, partially anatomised with a fully developed foetus, or as a disembodied impregnated uterus. In both modes the uterus and its biology or reproductive function are the central focus. As historian Katherine Park states, "she exists not for herself, but for others: the curious reader and the foetus by her side."[79] Investigating the depiction of female bodies across different midwifery guides, for example Figure 6, I was struck by this repeated composition. The female figures are consistently positioned with a downward, docile gaze, often concealing genitals or breasts behind flowers or hands. The focus is the foetal form held in the uterus and the revelation of the reproductive interior. The female body is framed as a passive receptacle. In contrast, male anatomical figures, for example Figure 5, are pictorially cast in control of the opening and revelation of their insides.[80] Their gaze addresses their own

[79] Katherine Park, *Secrets of Women, Gender and the Origins of Human Dissection*, (New York: Zone Books, 2006), 267.
[80] Park, *Secrets of Women, Gender and the Origins of Human Dissection*, 264-267.

fleshy interior or looks out to the viewer. While both male and female bodies within these texts are objectified, the printed representations configure differing relations to sociocultural gendered ideals. I chose to focus on Jane Sharp's midwifery guide as it was female-authored and critically frames issues of gender and class. However, Sharp's guide, like other midwifery texts of the period, employ the same woodblocks which depict anatomised female reproductive bodies and disembodied uteri. Observing and reflecting on these woodblocks, and the ways they repeat and reiterate through early modern guides, informed studio-based decisions to rework the woodblock images to unsettle and reimagine medicalised and anatomised female bodies. This is discussed later in this chapter.

Developing *She c/leaves*

I returned to historian Katherine Park's description of the anonymous printed female figures who "exist(s) not for herself, but for others..."[81] Park speaks to the politics of reproduction and the signification of female bodies in midwifery guides. In these woodblock prints, female bodies are reduced to function, to biology, specifically their capacity to gestate. Overtime, in the studio, I collected photocopies of the woodblocks and photographs documenting my engagement with historical texts in the Rare Book Collection housed in the University of Adelaide. Responding to Park's statement, I decided to remove the female figure from the page to work with absence and presence as the basis for initial studio experimentation. I began to consider my paper-carving scalpel blade as akin to the anatomist's toolkit. Carving out the body from the page produced erasure: the printed lines of the figure were removed, and their interior organs voided. All that remained of the body was an outline in the page, which became a stencil for printing. With this stencil, I printed gestural layers of pale reds, blues and pinks that formed an abstracted body. This printing process further anonymised and removed details of the woodblock figure, this complicated their role as objects for reproductive knowledge. By generating accumulations of inky layers of abstract bodies, I came to recognise the emergence of systematized and medicalised uterine imagery and my own role in this reproduction.

[81] Park, *Secrets of Women, Gender and the Origins of Human Dissection*, 267.

Anatomical enquiries of the uterus, documented in these guides, engage practices of labelling, defining, and systematising. In the studio, drawing on Ahmed's notion of sedimentation and my identification of the repetition of a woodblock across midwifery texts, I chose to re-carve and re-work an anatomised female figure. The choice to re-carve historical woodblocks was informed by initial photocopy and monoprint experiments of layering different imagery. I realised that through the embodied process of re-carving woodblocks, I could layer, or to use Ahmed's term 'sediment' different imagery, time periods, affective inky marks to instigate new connections and conversations. Thinking more about sedimentation in the studio, I experimented with hand printing which led to variations in the density of ink and the replication of the matrix. This deeply shaped my use of ink, across the research, as I understood that the disordered ink spoke to temporality and embodiment. At the same time, I experimented with transposing labels, and anatomical line work from the early modern figures via drawing onto monoprints and paper printed with layers of imagery of hands, plants and text. Experimentation with these different print-based methods led to the print-based work *She C/leaves.* 'To cleave' possesses two antonymous meanings: to split apart and to adhere together. *She c/leaves* draws on these divergent meanings; as female body (the anonymous 'she') is dislocated from the midwifery guides, the body also became re-embedded into a new ordering structure in my artwork. As I continued to work with this outline, mono printing through carved body forms and layering inks, I came to realise my complicity in the management of this body, but further to consider various social and political shifts in the time that I was working, which led me to contemporary artists working with historical imagery.



Figure 8: Angelica Harris-Faull, preliminary experiments in the printmaking studio, 2018.

Image source: Photograph by author.



Figure 9: Angelica Harris-Faull, preliminary experiments on the studio wall, relief print on glassine paper, pen drawing, inserted back into an anatomical text, 2018.

Image source: Photograph by author.



Figure 10: Angelica Harris-Faull, *She c/leaves*: experimentation with relief print and monoprint on glassine paper and printmaking paper, 2018.

Image source: Photograph by author.

Other artists have explored representing and reworking historical woodblocks, often to unpack the works through a contemporary critical lens of gender, race and the politics of representation. Of particular interest to this research are cross disciplinary Barbadian-Scottish artist, researcher and curator Alberta Whittle and Australian artist Heather Shimmen's layered print works. Whittle's practice is "motivated by the desire to manifest self-compassion and collective care as key methods in battling anti-blackness."[82] In the 2019 laser cut woodblock work *Secreting Myths,* Whittle deconstructs and reinterprets an engraving by Belgian Renaissance artist Theodor de Bry. The original depicts Spanish invaders first encounters with the indigenous population. Whittle's inked interventions disrupt colonial narratives embedded in the historical print to offer different perspectives and urge a questioning of "accepted Western constructs of history and society."[83] Employing secretions of gold ink laid over part of the original print, Whittle masks and obscures historical narratives. Engagement with this work and thinking through the disruptive potential of ink, led me to further consider the politics of representation and subject positioning in my own research practice. While I was engaged with similar notions of masking and unsettling imagery, I considered ideas about agency through notions of presence and absence.

Whittle's interventions with historical prints highlight the ongoing legacy and systems of colonisation, inequity, and privileging of Western epistemologies. In this research, deconstructing and responding to historical prints from midwifery guides led me to explore gestural inking and monoprinting to depart from the medical schematisation of the female body and uterus. Moreover, while my work was developing, the overriding rhetoric about the uterus was one of control, and legislative moves to oppress choice as epitomised in the Roe versus Wade debates that dominated global conversations. Drawing on Whittle and other artists these debates began to infiltrate my work. Themes about control, agency and temporality weave through *She c/leaves* and opened avenues for creative practice. Temporal entanglements – time

[82] Alberta Whittle, "Biography," accessed 12 July 2022, https://www.albertawhittle.com/biography.html.
[83] Alberta Whittle, "How Flexible Can We Make The Mouth," accessed 12 July 2022, https://www.albertawhittle.com/biography.html.

shifting across epochs, and the uterus as a temporally infused organ, began to emerge in studio experimentation and informed later works.



Figure 11: Alberta Whittle, *Secreting Myths (magenta)*, 2019, laser engraved woodblock print on paper.

Image source: National Galleries of Scotland website, accessed June 2023, https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/234787

Bodies are, as historian Mary Fissell writes, "embedded in social practices."[84] Philosopher Michel Foucault theorised a 'medical gaze,' where the subject or body is distanced from self through the authority of the medical professional. Foucault locates this in the shifting medical epistemologies in the eighteenth century.[85] The Foucauldian medical gaze appraises the body on several levels. The surface is observed and through anatomical techniques the medical gaze

[84] Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies,* 11.
[85] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of The Clinic* (Oxon: Routledge Classics, 2003) xii-xvi.

"penetrates into the body," rendering its interiority knowable through the empirical pursuits of science and medicine.[86] This concept offers insights into ways in which the body comes to be impressed with, and by, specific ideas and practices. Early modern anatomical scholarship and woodblock illustrations reveal understandings of the body which are imprinted with socio-cultural ideals and figurative language. Historian Jonathan Sawday suggests that metaphors within early modern anatomical texts "acted not only to explain everyday function and structure but to constrain the body within the overarching organization of patriarchal authority,"[87] which has relevance for ways women's bodies were represented through print processes.

Early midwifery guides draw on flowers and plants for their symbolic qualities in ways to depict women's bodies. Flowers, and specifically rose buds, are repeated symbols in the woodblocks of anatomised female bodies. The flowers conceal genitals, or they are held partially hidden behind the figure. Material culture historians Patricia Fumerton and Megan E. Palmer, analysing the representation of women in early modern ballads, identify the rose as "symbols of female sexuality – the bud of virginity, the bloom of mature sexuality, and the blown rose of expiring fertility."[88] While the early modern period marks an increased production of midwifery guides, the printed press allowed for increased production of herbal guidebooks that were commonly used in households and importantly by midwives.[89]

Plant forms, and specifically plants found in herbal remedy guides that describe use for reproductive health, fertility, and ways to invoke uterine bleeding, became symbols in the practice-based research. I sketched and noted relevant plants from a key English early modern

[86] Foucault, *The Birth of The Clinic*, 167.
[87] Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 226.
[88] Patricia Fumerton and Megan E. Palmer, "Lasting Impressions of the Common Woodcut," in *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Catherine Richardson, Tara Hamling and David Gaimster (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2016), 390.
[89] Elaine Hobby, "Early-modern midwifery manuals and herbal practice," in *Critical Approaches to the History of Western Herbal Medicine: From Classical Antiquity to the Early Modern Period,* ed. Susan Francia and Anne Stobart (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 71-77.

herbal text authored and first published in 1597 by trained barber-surgeon John Gerard.[90] For example, English Galingale was described in the following remedy: "if boyled in wine, and drunk,… it bringeth downe the natural sickness of women."[91] While I was in the studio monoprinting, experimenting and working with the anatomised female figures, I began thinking again about Foucault's ideas about the body as impressed with meanings. I decided to experiment with printed layers of lino carved human scale hands and lino carved plants gathered from herbal guides. Exploring the symbolism and layered meanings within the early modern prints prompted me to try removing the roses and playing with the absence of the body as I printed. The printed hands disrupted the use of flowers imbued with sexuality and fertility to consider issues of control and agency. Through these print-based interventions with historical images, themes of agency, reproductive or bodily control and affective and temporal experiences were generated.

[90] John Gerard, Robert Davyes, Thomas Johnson, Robert Priest, Rembert Dodoens, and Katherine Golden Bitting Collection On Gastronomy. *The herball: or, Generall historie of plantes*. London, printed by Adam Islip, Joice Norton and Richard Whitakers, anno, 1633, Pdf, accessed 28 June 2023, https://www.loc.gov/item/44028884/.

[91] John Gerard, "The Herball, or, Generall Historie of Plantes," 31, [78-79 in digitised copy]



30 Of the Historie of Plants. Lib. I.

CHAP. 24. *Of English Galingale.*

1 *Cyperus longus.* English Galingale

2 *Cyperus rotundus vulgaris.* Round Galingale.

Figure 12: John Gerard (1545-1612), *The herbal or Generall historie of plantes. Gathered by John Gerarde of London Master in Chirurgerie very much enlarged and amended by Thomas Johnson citizen and apothecary of London*, 1633: 30-31.

Image Source: Library of Congress, digitised book, accessed June 2023, https://www.loc.gov/item/44028884/ 78, [digitised copy]

I found connections between the woodblocks in Gerard's Herbal Guide and contemporary Australian print-based artist Heather Shimmen's layered works, which often include abstracted plants and female figures. Shimmen states "I strive to make these females of the species appear as imbued with strength and power and a touch of introspection. I like them to appear ambivalent…"[92] The female figures, that reference historical prints and narratives, are subverted through layered printing and the manipulation of imagery. In the felt linocut series titled *'The Lady of the Swamp'* and '*Lost 1, 11 and 111'* the head of the female figure is repeated across the circular works, however her face and ability to connect to the viewer's gaze is gradually disrupted as plant forms are progressively layered and appear to grow from her head.

[92] "Heather Shimmen," ZoneOne Arts, accessed 27 June, 2023, https://zoneonearts.com.au/heather-shimmen/.

Plant forms and layered printing in Shimmen's work create an "unsettling instability," as disrupt historical imagery is disrupted leading to a sense of ambiguity and emotion.[93] In my work, paper cut and printed plant forms also work to disrupt the historical imagery but work to complicate the positioning of female bodies within midwifery guides as reproductive vessels. In *She C/leaves* I have included plants with herbal qualities that effect uterine function to highlight the ways female reproductive bodies are contested sites, impressed with meaning. and to point towards opportunities for agency.



Figure 13: Heather Shimmen, *Lost 2*, 2016, linocut on felt.

Image source: Zoneone Arts, accessed June 2023, https://zoneonearts.com.au/heather-shimmen/

In the studio, paper cutting removed the bodies to complicate the notion of anonymity, presence, and absence. As I monoprinted gestural layers of ink and introduced new imagery of plant and hand matrices, I continued to consider the agency of the female figure in the medicalised guides. Medical historian Barbara Duden offers a complementary explication of the hierarchical relationship between the embodied subject and modern medicine, which structurally is "designed to remove me from my body, to disembody me."[94] A similar

[93] Erin McFadyen, "Heather Shimmen" *Artist Profile,* www.artistprofile.com.au/heather-shimmen/, accessed 10 April 2022.
[94] Barbara Duden, "Disembodied Health," *New Perspectives Quarterly,* vol. 17, no. 1 (2000): 58.

investigation is undertaken in American artist Martha Rosler's 1977 video work, *'Vital Statistics of a Citizen, Simply Obtained*.' Rosler draws on filmic narrative conventions to investigate Foucauldian concerns of bodily control and categorisation. The video presents a woman (Rosler) being measured and the data recorded by lab-coated individuals; a voice-over states, "her mind learns to think of her body as something different to herself. It learns to think, perhaps without awareness, of her body having parts, these parts are to be judged."[95] Rosler opens a critical dialogue on the potential effects of processes of external and internalised dominant socio-cultural narratives of bodily control and ordering.



Figure 14: Martha Rosler, *Vital Statistics of a Citizen, Simply Obtained*, 1977, video, 39:16 minutes, colour, sound.

Image source: Electronic Arts Intermix, accessed June 2023, https://www.eai.org/titles/vital-statistics-of-a-citizen-simply-obtained

English artist Judy Clark's work, *Catalogue [female symbol] 3 Skin* also maps and records the

[95] Martha Rosler, *Vital Statistics of a Citizen, Simply Obtained,* 1977, video, 39:16 minutes, colour, sound. Accessed via: Video Data Bank, http://www.vdb.org/titles/vital-statistics-citizen-simply-obtained#:~:text=Taking%20aim%20at%20the%20social,colonization%20of%20women%20and%20Others. I transcribed this quote from the video work sourced online.

female body surface, engaging scientific, forensic, and diagrammatic imagery. Akin to Rosler, Clark makes artwork with her own body, and a similar tension emerges between the intimate bodily details and a distancing of the body, and its experiences, produced via scientific visual tropes. Artists Judy Clark, Martha Rosler and historian Katherine Park's investigations of bodily representations highlight ongoing relationships and tensions between gendered bodily representation and medicalised modes of recording the body. In contrast, the studio experimentation and work *She c/leaves* generated abstracted representations of female reproductive bodies layered with affective colours and imagery of plants and hands which disrupt and unsettle medicalised female bodies.



Figure 15: Judy Clark, *Catalogue [female symbol] 3 Skin*, Graphite, plastic, glass, ink, card, transfer lettering, tape and clay, 1973.

Image source: Tate, accessed June 2023, https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/clark-catalogue-female-symbol-3-skin-t01826

Returning to *She c/leaves*, I questioned and evaluated how the installation of these prints, ordered on the wall like unbound pages of a book, could be reconciled with the feminist and embodied drives of this research. The repetitive dislocating and reinsertions I performed in the

studio, led me to realise that I had reproduced a problematic representational technique of segmenting women's bodies. The early modern midwifery texts, and in effect my own printing processes, attempt to order the female body, and its capacity. As I diffractively layered fragments of midwifery guides, herbal guides and gestural inking though iterative printing modes, I came to observe and acknowledge repeated templates, or structures for producing medicalised bodies. Sitting with these tensions and in evaluating the development of the work, I began to take apart the grid installation and experiment with different installation and collage methods.



Figure 16: Angelica Harris-Faull, *She c/leaves*, relief print and monoprint on glassine paper and printmaking paper, 2018.

Image source: Photograph by author.

As introduced in the methodology, the printed works made throughout this research underwent revision and iterative reprinting. The works evolved through studio practice, iterative printing, observation, reflection and testing. *She c/leaves,* Figure 15, was initially presented as a grid wall installation. This installation decision was informed by the studio-based experimentation of removing the figure from the page which produced absences and presence. This limited the potential for the prints to interact with other imagery and as discussed earlier problematically segmented bodies. From this evaluation, I therefore started experimenting with constructing more organic, larger wall installations that began to include elements from my studio walls: photocopies, notes and test prints and fragments. This informed the development of a larger scale wall installation, discussed in the next chapter, *She c/leaves* did not remain a distinct artwork in the research. Instead, it became layers of a later work, which engaged a broader exploration of the effects of ordering women's bodies and anatomised bodies through representational practices and printmaking processes.

Conclusion

This chapter has mapped bodily representations and understandings through specific theoretical traces, and historical and creative artefacts. I investigated theoretical and practice-led explorations of recording, ordering and managing the body, and specifically the female body. The works by artists discussed in this chapter employ performative and print-based interventions to unsettle implicit and overt power structures within historical imagery and discourses. Their works reveal how societal expectations can imprint onto bodies, and specifically female reproductive bodies. In contributing to this field of enquiry, I discussed *She C/leaves;* this work offers relief print processes as a dynamic mode to engage with and highlight the complex histories of female bodily representation, and specifically in early modern anatomical and midwifery texts. Body forms in this research have been pressed into paper, and recorded through video methods, however, they exist in an uneasy space. In working with

printmaking methods, the discussion of *She C/leaves,* acknowledges the problematic nature of repeating specific body images. This is discussed further in the following chapter.

The next chapter continues to investigate relevant theoretical, conceptual and affective registers of representations of female bodies, and connects these diffractive layers to a central matrix in the research enquiry.

Chapter Four

Body Matrix

Introduction

> *Gathering all this information about women, being madder than hell, realizing further my status as a woman, I decided to make Woman the protagonist, to depict her as liberated, even if I know this isn't really the case.*[96]
>
> Nancy Spero

This chapter explores the development of a key matrix and the effect of its iterative printing across the duration of the project. The linoleum carved life-size outline of my body, the key matrix, came to signify the complexities and contradictions of exploring reflexivity, agency, and the making of bodily images in this practice-based research. The process of making representations of bodies evokes political and ethical registers. It is not a neutral process, instead it reveals specific actions and decisions. The body prints that are documented and discussed in this chapter formed the basis of two installation works: *In Body, In Time* and *Temporal Abruptions: making and unmaking the body.* More broadly, the repeated use of linoleum matrices formed a key strategy to unsettle early modern uterine imagery and explore the representation and signification of the uterus. This chapter works towards this inquiry, as I discuss the making and repeated printing of a matrix, in conversation with works by artists Kiki Smith, Sally Smart, Noela Hjorth, Kara Walker and Nancy Spero who investigate embodiment and the ways bodies encompass the social and political.

[96] "Nancy Spero," Frith Street Gallery, accessed 5 May 2022, https://www.frithstreetgallery.com/artists/14-nancy-spero/

Carving My Body into Linoleum

The previous chapter articulated the development of the print-based work, *She C/leaves*, in which I dislocated an anonymous, anatomised pregnant female body from an early modern midwifery text. In responding to the woodblock, I disrupted the anatomised body through gestural printing, paper cutting and introducing imagery of historical and contemporary contraceptive devices and plants. I became aware of how the early modern female body was represented as static, powerless and small. The figure is passive, without agency. Her body had been cut open and revealed by the medical scalpel. The image is constructed to evoke symbolism of reproduction and fertility. It operates as a didactic tool. I began to wonder who was this woman? This led to more questions: how was the image was made? It was unlikely that this pregnant woman left her body to science. While this woman's story has been lost to history, her image has persisted in medical knowledge via the printing press. As I thought through these ideas, I began to think about the ethics and politics of image making, the creation of medical and scientific knowledge and sought to lay my own body on the carving table.

Lying on top of a large roll of uncut linoleum, I traced a continuous pencil line around the edges of my body. In contrast with the small-scale of *She C/leaves*, the expanded scale of this matrix led me to imagine my body on the early modern anatomist's table and, recalled experiences of lying on the contemporary doctor's examination table for reproductive health checks. Scholar Neil Graham Holmstrom's doctoral research reveals a lineage in Western art that renders the "female corpse" as "exposed and eroticised" via the historically male dominated field of anatomy and the dismemberment of the body.[97] On my own 'anatomist's table,' I carved my body outline, removed the surrounding linoleum and turned my attention to the interior bodily spaces. Theorists Elizabeth Grosz and Susan Bordo discuss the body as enmeshed in cultures,

[97] Neil Graham Holmstrom, "Beautiful, Dead, Dissected: The Dismembered Female Body in Artistic Representation" (PhD Thesis, University of Tasmania, 2017), https://figshare.utas.edu.au/articles/thesis/Beautiful_dead_dissected_the_dismembered_female_body_in_artistic_representation/23239364 , 26.

societies and histories.[98] Bordo states that "the body we experience and conceptualise is always *mediated* by constructs, associations, images of a cultural nature."[99] On the linoleum, I intuitively drew and mapped interior body lines which demarcated limbs, connective joints, spaces where organs might have been, and a circular central abdomen shape. Drawing on Bordo, the lines and abstracted shapes which emerged in the carving process were mediated by my experience, as documented in Figure 16, of studying anatomised bodies in medical museums. Additionally, they recalled the measured lines of clothing patterns and scientific diagrams that had informed earlier practice and my childhood experiences of witnessing the medical mapping of my brother's body.

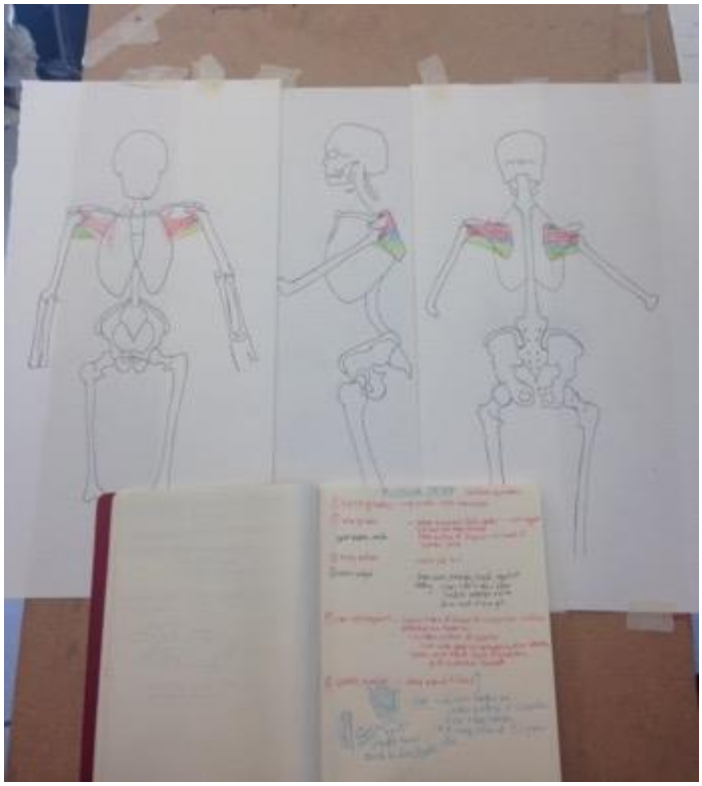

Figure 17: Angelica Harris-Faull, Sketching the muscles of the body from an anatomical drawing course, Ruskin School of Art, Oxford. See right image for anterior anatomical position, 2015.

Image source: Photograph by author.

[98] Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: toward a corporeal feminism* (N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 19-25. Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. 10th Anniversary ed. (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2003), 35. (italics in original text).
[99] Bordo, *Unbearable Weight,* 35.

In contrast with the empirical pursuits of early modern anatomical representations, the linoleum carved representation of my body has an interior that is devoid of identifiable organs. In the drawing and carving process female reproductive organs were erased. Through this intentional erasure of biological purpose and potential, I began to consider the contradiction and complexities drawn from lived experiences with bodies that were not reproductive, or that actively resisted this socio-cultural framing of the uterus, as the vehicle for reproduction. Additionally, as this project unfolded, so too did a global conversation about reproductive rights, bodily autonomy and choice. The development of the body matrix, in which the uterus is abstracted and to an extent erased, but still contextualised within the body, enabled me to investigate the complexities of the reproductive body, notions of absence and presence, and untangle early modern biological and medical depictions of the uterus. Feminist theorist Sonia Kruks suggests embodiment, as our experience of the body, encompasses the "fleshy and subjective existence" and also the "bearers of social identities."[100] The linoleum carving was based on the outline of my body. However, through making, it became abstracted from my subjective embodied experience, which mirrored the contradictory and complex ideas about agency and making representations of bodies.

The body matrix created in the studio is static, immobile and anonymised. It lacks potential for mobility or autonomy akin to the anatomised female bodies in early modern midwifery guides. Thus, while carving, I decided to leave the legs of the body footless, as if the body was embedded or held in the linoleum block. This decision, informed by questions and insights generated through *She C/leaves* and the practice-led analysis of the early modern woodblocks, resulted in a body locked into a physical and temporal space. Additionally, the body is intentionally headless. This body cannot engage the viewer's gaze, further restricting it's agency. The body is held in a state of construction and deconstruction. In effect, the practice-based decisions in the making of the matrix, exacerbated the static and limited agency which I had observed in the

[100] Sonia Kruks, "Women's 'Lived Experience': Feminism and Phenomenology from Simone de Beauvoir to the Present," in *The SAGE Handbook of Feminist Theory*, eds. Mary Evans, Mary, Clare Hemmings, Marsha Henry, Hazel Johnstone, Hazel, Sumi Madhok, Ania Plomien and Sadie Wearing (London: SAGE Publications, 2014), 78-79.

early modern woodblocks of female bodies. As I grappled with the signification of this, I turned to lithographs made by Australian artist and printmaker Noela Hjorth and print and sculptural works by American artist Kiki Smith.

Fragmenting and Printing the Body Matrix

Noela Hjorth's work utilises impressions of the body, and specifically the female body, to explore themes of mythology, spirituality and symbolism.[101] In the body print works, for example in Figure 17, *Image 1* made in 1978, black ink appears to congeal on the textural paper forming impressions of limbs, breasts and an abdomen. Hjorth used her own body, and extended the lithographic impressions "by hand to further develop the forms and add texture."[102] *Image 1* creates an allusion of the body through gestural inking. In contrast with the early modern anatomical and more contemporary schematized representations of the body, Hjorth's printed works evoke an embodied and sensorial map of an individual living body. Similarly, Cuban American artist Ana Mendieta in 1982 created a series of gestural body impression works titled *Body Tracks* with animal blood and tempura paint.[103] These works call on a register of absence and presence, experiences of bodily violence and the politics of representing bodily experiences.[104]

In the studio I began test printing the body matrix. Initially, I selected deep blue and red inks to evoke blood, internal organs and to reference lived experiences of the body. The repetitive print process, caused me to consider the ways this static and schematised matrix might evoke an experience of the body, which drew me to other creative and research practices that investigate

[101] "Noela Hjorth: Work", Noela Hjorth, accessed 20 June 2022, http://www.noelahjorth.com.au/work
[102] "Noela Hjorth: Print-making", Noela Hjorth, accessed 20 June 2022, http://www.noelahjorth.com.au/category/work/print-making/
[103] Julia Bryan-Wilson, "Against the Body Interpreting Ana Mendieta," in *Transnational Perspectives on Feminism and Art, 1960-1985,* eds. Jen Kennedy, Trista E. Mallory and Angelique Szymanek (New York: Routledge, 2021), 139, 149.
[104] Joanna S. Walker, "The Body is Present Even is in Disguise: Tracing the Trace in the Artwork of Nancy Spero and Ana Mendieta," *Tate Papers,* no. 11 (2009), https://www.tate.org.uk/research/tate-papers/11/the-body-is-present-even-if-in-disguise-tracing-the-trace-in-the-artwork-of-nancy-spero-and-ana-mendieta

representations of embodiment and anatomical imagery. Of specific relevance is Kiki Smith's investigation of corporeality and bodily states. Smith, who works across printmaking, sculpture and installation, employs thin papers, weighty cast metal forms and visceral inky marks to offer tactile and affective insights into embodiment.[105] Smith's exploration of bodies often appear as liminal; we see body fluids, organs transgressing their interiority and bodies in transformative states. In *Sueño*, a large etching from 1992 presented in Figure 18, Smith worked with master printmakers to trace the exterior of her body, which was transformed into a floating écorché.[106] Smith's material engagement reveals bodies which appear rich with lived experience. Author Stephanie Skestos connects Smith's exploration of liminal and abject bodily states with an approach to the body that "challenges and contradicts classical representations of the body as an absolute, universal form."[107] Smith and Hjorth's material engagement with ink and paper result in representations of bodies which allude to individual experience and engaged with the body as a fluid, changing entity. In contrast, the body matrix in my research heightened the medicalised, anonymised body. Reflecting on Smith and Hjorth's work led me to disrupt the matrix via gestural inking and layered printing, in order to approach the female body, and specifically the uterus as an organ which is not reduced to its medical and biological function. Instead, the uterus is framed as an organ that encompasses complex lived experiences and shifting states.

[105] Joyce Beckenstein, "Personal Curiosity: A Conversation with Kiki Smith," Lisa Coulthard, "Visible Violence in Kiki Smith's *Life Wants to Live," Journal of Medical Humanities,* vol. 25, no. 1 (2004): 22.
[106] Deborah Wye, *Artists and Prints: Masterworks form The Museum of Modern Art,* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2004), 256. Écorché, a French term, for a human figure depicted (often drawn, painted or sculpted) with skin removed to map the musculature systems of the body.
[107] Stephanie Skestos, "Untitled, 1988 by Kiki Smith," *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies,* vol. 25, no. 1 (1999): 64.



Figure 18: Noela Hjorth, *Image 1,* lithograph, 155 cm x 105 cm, 1978.

Image source: Klare Larson, accessed June 2023, https://www.smh.com.au/national/eccentric-printmaker-made-her-house-into-a-living-sculpture-20160427-gog5g8.html



Figure 19: Kiki Smith, *Sueño,* etching and aquatint, 106 x 195.8 cm, 1992.

Image source: Museum of Modern Art, accessed June 2023, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/60140

Continuing to work with my matrix and grappling with questions of representation, I considered the affective qualities of Hjorth's inky body prints. I also returned to Smith's work, and her articulation of anatomical texts as one method for considering the interior of the body. Reflecting on the influential textbook, *Gray's Anatomy,* Smith states that it "gave me a language with which to express and discover myself. There are so many ways to think about what happens within oneself, individually and culturally."[108] Anatomical representations are culturally and socially situated. The interior of the body matrix I carved was devoid of identifiably organs, instead it included preliminary suggestive anatomical lines and uncarved shapes. With this in mind, I began to explore the interior of the matrix, and specifically the uncarved shapes within the body, through ideas and imagery of maps, time, patterns, imprints.

Hand cutting paper stencils and mono-printing opened up ways to disrupt and alter the matrix. Figure 19 documents this early experimentation. The globular lines are evocative of lymphatic systems and plant roots. While the body is static and centralised akin to the early modern representations, it shifted through these studio decisions. I came to consider these as sensory maps of the body which could evoke different ways to, as Smith states, think about what happens within ourselves.[109] Additionally, while drawing in response to early modern prints, I observed that parts of the uterus were numbered and labelled. Informed by these annotations, which position the uterus via medical knowledge systems, I worked with black pen marking and altering the body matrix. The pen lines divide and re-order the body, however the marks are not associated with medical knowledge or information. Borrowing from the imagery and systematising medical codes enabled me to think through the ways in which the reproductive female body is ordered and managed. Overlaying and drawing on the prints disordered the medicalised body.

[108] Beckenstein, Personal Curiosity: A Conversation with Kiki Smith: 22. See also: Oral History Interview.
[109] Beckenstein, Personal Curiosity: A Conversation with Kiki Smith: 22.



Figure 20: Angelica Harris-Faull, Test prints with body matrix: printing with hand-cut templates and ghost printing, 2017-2018.

Image source: Photograph by author.

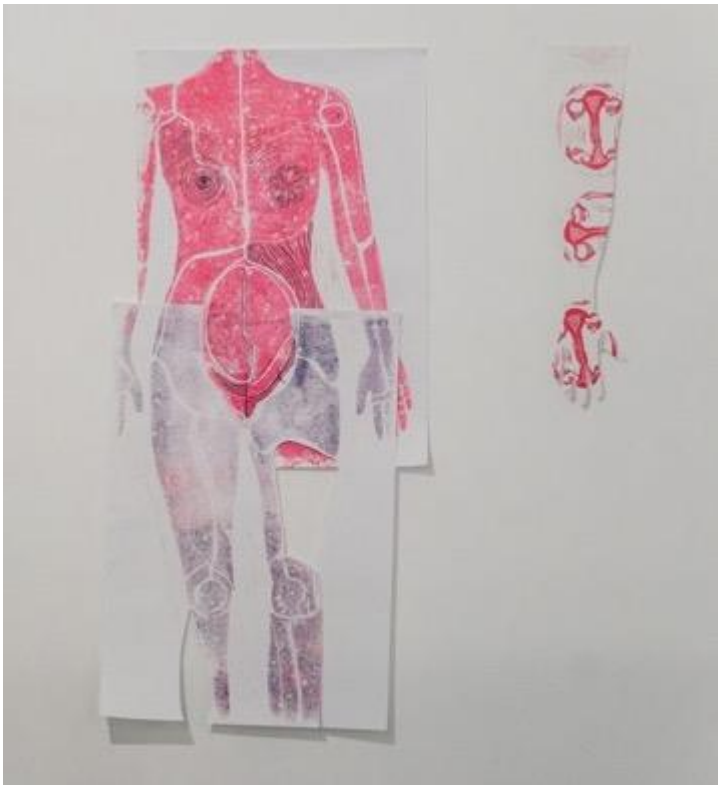

Figure 21: Angelica Harris-Faull, Body matrix prints: cutting and drawing into printed works, 2018. Presented at Trocadero Gallery.

Image source: Photographed by Matto Lucas.

Printing and Re-printing the Matrix

Over the duration of the research period, I continued to print the body matrix. Working with this matrix necessitated an intimate and physical relationship. Too large to fit into the printing press, each body print was impressed by hand. The studio walls became lined with one silent and static printed body after another. Ahmed articulates a feminist theoretical work "as a building project" comprised of active choices. For example, citation choices act to develop a "feminist memory."[110] In the printmaking studio, another kind of building project was unfolding: iterations of inky printed bodies accumulated. Thinking with Ahmed's notion of feminist work as a cumulation of active choices, I evaluated and questioned the effects of my accumulative printing, and specifically, what occurred through repeating an individual body image? Working in the studio, considering works by Smith and Hjorth, I began to see the repetitious printing of the body as producing and normalising a specific anatomical schema and perspective. Repetitive printing generated ideas about agency and tensions inherent in making representations of bodies with medical and anatomical imagery. The body-matrix is an individual body shape, and is not framed as representative. This practice-led realisation informed decisions in the studio to expand the installation of this body matrix to encompass other research materials and prints in order to highlight and disorder medicalised imagery of the body, which is discussed later in this chapter.

Reflecting on the cumulative body printing in the studio led me to Grosz's examination of practices of defining bodies, and the implications of embedding specific body understandings in theoretical and social knowledge.[111] In charting ways in which the Western philosophical mind-body dualism has been gendered, [112] Grosz critiques the notion of a singular or ideal body

[110] Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*, 14-15.

[111] See: Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble, Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, (New York: Routledge, 2008), Elizabeth Grosz, *Space, Time and Perversion, The Politics of Bodies*, (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1995), Barbra Duden, *Disembodying Women: Perspectives on Pregnancy and the Unborn,* trans. Lee Hoinacki (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

[112] The mind and the body are key, ongoing areas for theoretical, philosophical and creative investigations. Western philosophical understandings of the mind are typically linked to rationality, order and cis-male bodies. Comparatively, female bodies have been associated with unstable and leaking corporeality. In this binary framing of bodies and sex, the female body is linked with understandings of nature as antithetical to order and rationality. Numerous feminist scholars and artists have challenged

and, instead, proposes a multiplicity or 'field' of bodies.[113] Her scholarship calls for feminist accounts of different bodies, in order to acknowledge and ethically approach bodies as informed by numerous phenomena including cultural contexts, histories, biology, sexes and genders.[114] Historian Gail Reekie offers a similar conclusion that "the contemporary body…is a discursive configuration in the present that is made up of a repertoire of specific historical bodies."[115] Kiki Smith, and works by Nancy Spero and Kara Walker, which are discussed later in this chapter, highlight the complexities of working with representations of the body and draw our attention to the culturally and historically situated nature of our relationship with and understanding of bodies.

As I engaged with plural understandings and representations of bodies drawn from artist's works, interview data, and theorists, I continued to consider the tensions inherent in working with one specific image of a female body. My body was continually connected to the making and doing of the research. In my appraisal of this evolving work, the rigidity and fixed lines of this matrix became a mode to investigate the role of printmaking in fixing images of anatomised female bodies. Additionally, the repeating matrix made visible this process of fixing, categorising and schematising individual bodies into generalised representations, akin to the early modern anatomical woodblocks discussed in the previous chapter. Iteratively printing this matrix, I became implicated in historical and ongoing modes of categorisation and the ordering of female bodies. I needed to cut through and disrupt the effects of this matrix and my role. Through evaluating the development of these printed works, I was drawn back to my research question, and specifically to investigate the potential for ink – messy, layered and

these notions and explored the problematic effects of connecting specific gendered and sexed bodies with either the mind or the body. There is scholarship which address these concerns. For example, see: Clara Fischer and Luna Dolezal, "Contested Terrains: New Feminist Perspectives on Embodiment," in *New Feminist Perspectives on Embodiment,* ed. Clara Fischer and Luna Dolezal (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

[113] Gail Weiss, "A Genealogy of Women's (Un)Ethical Bodies," in *New Feminist Perspectives on Embodiment,* ed. Clara Fischer and Luna Dolezal (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), Through this framework Grosz critiques essentialist notions of woman, and suggests that in a post humanist position the is no 'a priori femininity.' See: Elizabeth Grosz, "Notes Toward a Corporeal Feminism," *Australian Feminist Studies*, vol. 2 (1987): 1-16.

[114] Grosz, *Volatile Bodies,* 20-21.

[115] Gail Reekie, "History and the bodies of illegitimately pregnant women," *Australian Feminist Studies*, vol. 12, no. 25 (1997): 86.

smudged – to instigate affective imagery and unsettle medicalised and anatomical representations of the uterus, and by extension the female body.

In the studio, I worked for sustained periods with this matrix and mixed inks directly onto its carved surface. Masses of sticky deep blues and vibrant reds merged on the linoleum surface to form mottled purple inky veins. [116] Colour bloomed across the body, imparting traces into the substrate. The matrix, with its accumulated inky layers, the roller, the baren, and my body all intra-actively informed the emergent prints. The specific carved outline of my body was repeated, unchanged in each print. However, in these prints ink-based differences emerged due to accumulated layers and colours, variant hand-printing pressure and the application of ink. The ink cut across the static nature of the body. As the ink accumulated and began to bleed into carved lines and leave messy traces on substrates it began to disrupt the body. This method of working with ink, which was gestural and messy, generated printed bodies which evoked different states and sensations. These prints present the tension of transfiguring inky states and the ongoing fixation of the linoleum carved lines. The flattened bodies are held in constant states of construction and deconstruction. Held in these contradictory states, the matrix and its layered, speckled printing, gesture toward ongoing socio-cultural ordering of female bodies and issues of bodily representation. I connect with Kiki Smith's reflections on the personal and revelatory qualities of the text, *Grey's Anatomy*; however, I also understand this text as part of a complex history of anatomy, which is framed by discourses of medical knowledge, science and reason; and marked by class, inequity, control and power.[117]

While printing the matrix, I gathered different papers and materials to use as substrates for experimentation. The body was printed on transparent fabric, transparent glassine paper, thick printmaking paper, tissue paper, discarded prints from the studio and rolls of rice paper. These

[116] As discussed in Chapter Two, these colours suggest affective bodily states and fluids.

[117] At various points in the history of anatomy, including the Italian Renaissance and the 1800's bodysnatching by English William Burke and William Hare, bodies for dissection were procured through graverobbing, stealing and murder. The history of anatomy, and specifically the treatment and procurement of cadavers intersects class and poverty. See: Keir Waddington, *An Introduction to The Social History of Medicine, Europe since 1500,* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 116-117.

materialities evoked bodily textures, specifically skin layers. These different materials suggested layers, but also skin-based idioms, in which skin comes to signify emotion. Transparent materials, and thin gauze-like fabrics creased while printing, were suggestive of shrouds and gauze for wrapping wounds. Printing on fabric generated disruptions in the replication of the matrix, as the material imparted its own subtle pattern and texture. Printing the body on transparent fabrics led to different installation methods, and the decision to suspend some of the prints on provisional wooden rods. *In Body, In Time,* depicted in Figures 22 and 23, was generated through this experimentation and marked one stage of work with this matrix. The transparent hanging bodies enabled a viewer to move between and become part of the layers of bodies. Transparency dissolved notions of interior and exterior and implicated the body of the viewer. The prints were loosely adhered to wooden rods and suspended at different heights. The fabric was marked, edges frayed and ephemeral in appearance, drawing attention to the constructed nature of the body images.

To further disrupt the matrix, and address its centrally located position, I began to superimpose other matrices and text onto the body. The resulting body prints, and specifically the abdomen area, are continually ruptured and fragmented by imagery of plants, hands, uteri and text. Plants and disembodied hands enter the bodies and printed words work to poetically unsettle expanses of inky colour. Imagery of plants and hands draw attention to questions of agency, and to ways in which the uterus is managed through medical and herbal knowledge. Superimposing temporally shifting words and images onto the body enabled the emergence of new conceptual and inky lines. Process of creating the body, and continually working and altering the body through different materials, fragmentation, gestural inking and layered printing, generated ideas which led to the making of the installation work *Temporal Abruptions: making and unmaking the body.* Additionally, this practice-based research revealed ongoing tensions in the biological, medical and socio-cultural constructions of female bodies, and reproductive organs.



Figure 22: Angelica Harris-Faull, *In Body, In Time,* installation from 2018 exhibition at Trocadero Gallery.

Image source: Photographed by Matto Lucas.



Figure 23: Angelica Harris-Faull, *In Body, In Time*, installation in SASA Gallery, Adelaide, 2021.

Image source: Photograph by Rosina Possingham.

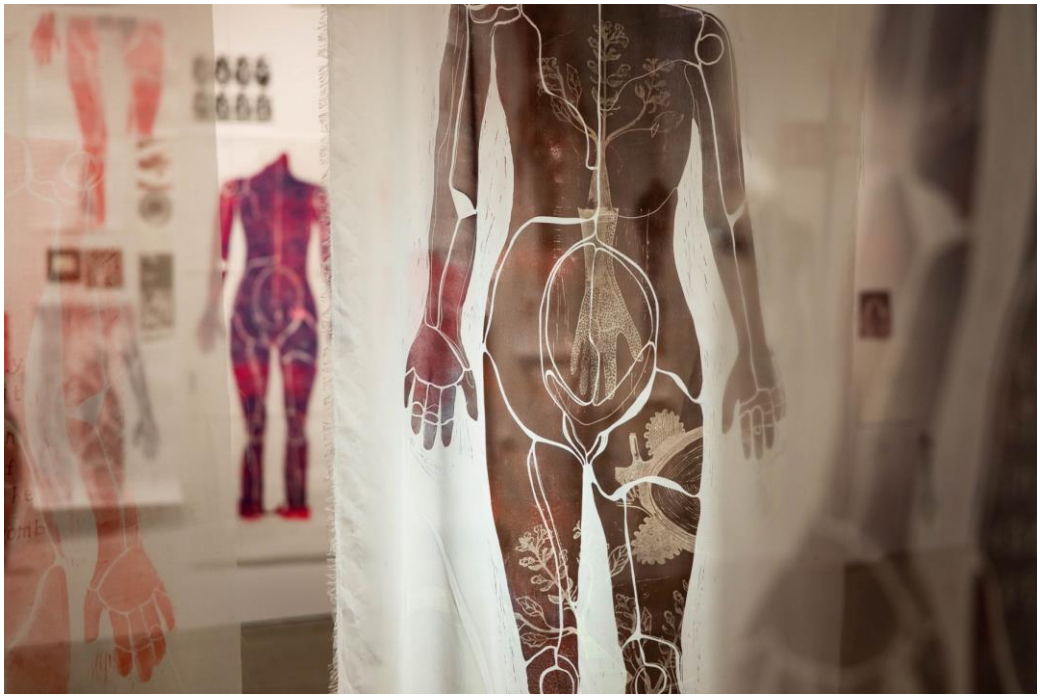

Figure 24: Angelica Harris-Faull, *In Body, In Time*, installation in SASA Gallery, Adelaide, 2021.

Image source: Photograph by Rosina Possingham.

Working with the Wall: Layering Prints

As work with the body matrix developed, I came to realise that my studio walls – which were layered with prints, tests and notes - allowed for more complexity and simultaneity than the individual printed body works. With this awareness, from 2018, I expanded the scale of these experimentations and began working with gallery walls for studio critiques and exhibitions. On large walls, I cumulatively layered and collaged body prints, uterine prints, monoprints, paper cut contraceptive plants, test prints, discarded prints, photocopies of early modern imagery, hand-written notes, and diagrams. Cellular patterns and plant-based imagery were also printed in layers on the body-matrix works and incorporated into the wall installation. Plants, chosen specifically for their contraceptive and medicinal qualities, were hand cut from discarded prints. These plants, including darnel, treacle mustard and succory, sourced from John Gerarde's early modern herbal guide, have the potential to change the function of the uterus, and therefore our lived experience of the uterus. Transposing these plant forms onto printed paper and bringing them into contact with the body matrices generated ideas about different forms of reproductive knowledge and questions of mediated choice in reproductive health care. In arranging printed matter on the wall, I began seeing patterns and alternate connections between the research materials. I considered how this method and collage could engage notions of temporality, and specifically a looking backwards and forwards through time.

Wall-collage methods enabled a non-linear and non-hierarchical mode to physical and conceptual layer of printed matter. This provided avenues to reflect on the complexities of bodily states, and investigations of early modern and contemporary uterine representations generated through the research. As introduced earlier in this chapter, I decided to incorporate the printed works from the *She c/leaves* series into a growing large-scale wall-installation. Additionally, the inclusion of photocopies, notes and other textual and studio research records, highlighted and made visible my role in the research and in the construction of representations of female reproductive bodies. As Barad states, "we are not outside observers of the world.

Neither are we simply located at particular places *in* the world; rather, we are part *of* the world in its ongoing intra-activity."[118] The large-scale wall arrangements which developed point toward Barad's reminder that we are immersed in, and implicated in the world, and more specifically in this research, constructions of female reproductive bodies.



Figure 25: Angelica Harris-Faull, work in development, test installation in studio, 2018.

Image source: Photograph by author.

[118] Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway,* 184.



Figure 26: Angelica Harris-Faull, test installation of wall collage, 2020.

Image source: Photograph by author.

Collage, as a creative method, introduces the performative actions of tearing, cutting into, revising, reconstructing and reframing. While collage has a significant history in feminist creative practice,[119] scholar Gwen Raaberg reminds us that as a medium it does not have an "essential" relationship with women or political art.[120] Raaberg frames collage as a feminist strategy through which artists critique and deconstruct "dominant perspectives and discourses, and the institutions that frame and support them." Centrally, this "utilizes fragmentation, discontinuity, and dialectical oppositions to stage multiple, fluid

[119] Artist Miriam Schapiro developed the term, "f*emmage*: a word invented by us to include all of the above activities as they were practiced by women using traditional women's techniques to achieve their art-sewing, piecing, hooking, cutting, appliquéing, cooking and the like--activities also engaged in by men but assigned in history to women." Femmage as an art historical term and iteration of collage has been extended to encompass aesthetic and feminist registers. Schapiro's framing of the term is woman centric. See: Miriam Schapiro and Melissa Meyer, "Waste Not Want Not: An Inquiry into what Women Saved and Assembled—FEMMAGE," *Heresies,* 1, no. 4 (1977-78): 67.

[120] Gwen Raaberg, "Beyond Fragmentation: Collage as Feminist Strategy in the Arts," *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal,* vol. 21, no. 3 (1998): 154.

relationships."[121] Australian artist Sally Smart employs large-scale collage methods, in which gallery walls become dynamic arrangements of fragmentary texts and images.[122] Smart's work, such as *The Anatomy Lesson*, offers a re-visioning of Western historical anatomical theatres through a compositional allusion to Rembrandt van Rijn's painting *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*. Smart playfully subverts gender and gendered clothing while connecting this work to concerns of "identity; using the body (or absence of the body) and dress as an object of psychical and physical inscription."[123] Smart's bodies manifest as layers of cut fabric, table legs, human-like legs with shoes, fragments of trousers, coats, dresses and numerous gesturing arms. Scholar Rachel Fensham writing on Smart's more recent installation work, states that the artist presents "multimedia installations cut into, as they cut up, the linearity, the patterning, the pretty pictures, the narratives."[124] Fensham identifies a productive quality of collage-installation methods: a potential to disrupt narratives through physical and conceptual reworkings which can in turn, offer new and alternative narratives.[125] In her installations, Smart uses collage techniques to present multilayered critiques of sociocultural and art historical representations of identity and gender.[126]

[121] Raaberg, "Beyond Fragmentation: Collage as Feminist Strategy in the Arts," 169.
[122] Sally Smart, "Work," accessed 30 June 2020, https://www.sallysmart.com/cms-work-9/index.phps.
[123] Sally Smart, *Artist Statement*, 1995, Vizard Foundation Art Collection of the 1990s files, the Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne, n.p.
[124] Rachel Fensham, "On Choreography: Femmage, collage, assemblage," *Performance Research,* vol. 23, 4-5 (2018): 268.
[125] Fensham, "On Choreography: Femmage, collage, assemblage": 268 & 272.
[126] Melissa Miles, "Sally Smart: The exquisite pirate," *Eyeline,* vol. 60 (2006): 38-39



Figure 27: *The Anatomy Lesson* 1995 Sally Smart. Synthetic polymer paint on fabric with collage elements / 244 x 335cm

Image source: Vizard Foundation Collection, The Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, accessed June 2023, https://www.vizardfoundationartcollection.com.au/the-nineties/explore/sally-smart/

The act of physically cutting is central to Smart's installations. As writer Melissa Miles states, "rupture and reconstruction go hand in hand in her work."[127] I was particularly drawn to the notion of reconstruction in Smart's works. The physical process of layering the different research materials on the wall in this research, was informed by feminist collage strategies which enable alternative narratives through the acts of cutting, layering and reworking.[128] Layered prints and research fragments encompass the entirety of the gallery wall. Through this physical process, I reflected on medical modes of rendering the body's interior visible. The wall installation alluded to an omnipresent medical apparatus which externally dissected the body, while I, and the printing press, fixed the anatomised bodies into paper. The iterative process became central in, as I have suggested elsewhere,

[127] Miles, "Sally Smart: The exquisite pirate," 38-39.
[128] Raaberg, "Beyond Fragmentation: Collage as Feminist Strategy in the Arts," 158.

> draw(ing) the historically represented body into critical observation by tracing how bodies have been understood through medical-anatomical enlightenment practices of segmenting, labelling and creating bodily hierarchies.[129]

The installation decisions in *Temporal Abruptions: making and unmaking the body* developed through experimentation, instigated a dialogue between historical imagery and more contemporary research materials. This looking backward and forward in time via the installation of printed materials drew me to works by American artists Nancy Spero and Kara Walker, who investigate the politics of historical representations and the body. In the print-based work, *Sheela-Na-Gig (Artemis) Totem 1,* 1985, Spero re-contextualises and reprints images of "powerful female archetypes across history, including the Sheela-Na-Gig, the Celtic goddess for fertility and destruction…and Artemis, the Greek goddess for hunting, childbirth and the moon."[130] In re-printing imagery of symbolic female figures in a totemic form, referencing sacred cultural objects, Spero's work addresses gendered histories of representation and power. Collage, hand-printing and working with gouache enabled, according to Spero, "all manner of processions, conflicts, interruptions and disruptions"[131] Correspondingly, artist Peter Soriano described Spero's approach to printmaking as

> "at times the image is barely pressed onto the wall or paper, like the relaxed after-roll of a drumstick striking a drum. Her closely grouped repetitions are reminders of the control used in inking the plates and the range of pressure used to transfer the images to the surface."[132]

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[129] Angelica Harris-Faull, "The Re-Producing Womb – Matrix," in "Space and Place," ed. Sarah Pearce, Kristi Urry, Aisha J. M. Sultan, and Biannca Challans, special issue, *Writing From Below*, vol. 4, no. 3 (2019).
[130] *Leon Golub and Nancy Spero,* (London, UK: Tate Modern, 2022).
[131] "Nancy Spero: a Conference," *Serpentine Galleries,* accessed 27 November, 2022, https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/whats-on/nancy-spero-conference/
[132] Christopher Lyon, "The Figure as Hieroglyph: Nancy Spero's "First Language", *Artcritical: the online magazine of art and ideas,* October 25, 2010, https://artcritical.com/2010/10/25/lyon-on-spero/

Printmaking in Spero's works exceeds its function as a means for identical repetition; instead gestural ink, pressure, and the body generate experimental and emotive works. The variations and disordering produced Spero's by hand printing, informed thinking about the affective potential of ink. I considered my use of ink and repetition in the wall installation. While Spero recasts female figures as "protagonists" and "liberated," in part through repetition, in my research the repetition of printed female bodies in the installation of *Temporal Abruptions* enabled me to respond to and reflect on the ongoing effects of the medicalisation of bodies.

While developing the wall installation work, I was also drawn to American artist Kara Walker's work which examines historical and ongoing issues of race, gender, sexuality and violence through silhouetted wall installations, large-scale public works, drawing and film.[133] Of particular resonance was Walker's silhouetted wall installations which present ambiguous and violent scenes of anonymous figures. Walker references historical racist representations of African Americans and recasts these scenes on large scale walls. Engaging with Walker's work led me to further consider the violence in fragmenting and cutting the body and the ways in which the printed anonymised early modern pregnant female bodies resonate with medicalised imagery of contemporary female bodies. Spero and Walker take symbolic materials and figurative imagery to respond to historical representations of people who have been othered and subjected to institutional and systemic inequity and discrimination. Specifically, in Spero's work: women, and in Walker's works: African Americans and the ongoing effects of the Transatlantic Slavery. Engagement with these works and their ideas, solidified my gestural inking methods and collaging of bodies and printed research material to disorder medicalised imagery and encompass lived experiences of the body.

[133] "Kara Walker" accessed 25 June 2022, http://www.karawalkerstudio.com/biography . See also: "Kara Walker and Larry Walker", *BOMB: Oral History Project,* accessed 25 June 2022, https://bombmagazine.org/articles/kara-walker-larry-walker/



Figure 28: Nancy Spero, Sheela-na-gig/Artemis: Totem 1, 1985. On display Tate Modern, 2022.

Image source: Tate Modern, on display. Photograph by the author. https://www.tate.org.uk/visit/tate-modern/display/artist-and-society/leon-golub-and-nancy-spero



Figure 29: Kara Walker, *Gone: An Historical Romance of a Civil War as It Occurred B'tween the Dusky Thighs of One Young Negress and Her Heart*, 1994.

Image source: Museum of Modern Art, accessed June 2023, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/110565



Figure 30: Angelica Harris-Faull, *Temporal Abruptions: making and unmaking the body*, installation in SASA Gallery, Adelaide, 2021.

Image source: Photograph by Rosina Possingham.



Figure 31: Angelia Harris-Faull, *Temporal Abruptions: making and unmaking the body*, installation in SASA Gallery, Adelaide, 2021.

Image source: Photograph by Rosina Possingham.



Figure 32: Angelica Harris-Faull, *Temporal Abruptions: making and unmaking the body* (details) installation in SASA Gallery, Adelaide, 2021.

Image source: Photograph by Rosina Possingham.



Figure 33: Angelica Harris-Faull, *Temporal Abruptions: making and unmaking the body* (details) installation in SASA Gallery, Adelaide, 2021.

Image source: Photograph by Rosina Possingham.

The printed bodies, which emerged through this research, push against epistemological and anatomical claims of body knowledge and ordering. Engaging with repetitious printing and collaging methods in the studio, and with Elizabeth Grosz's theoretical notion of a plural field of bodies, formed ways to explore and make visible the complexities of bodily representations. The printed bodies made in this research change through experimental inking practices. While these printed bodies remain rigid in their compositional lines; through creative practice I worked to challenge, disrupt and alter the bodies and they propelled my thinking towards new work to extend and explore thematic ideas about different kinds of knowledge: specifically, the way lived experience disrupts medical and scientific knowledge and legal codes. I was acutely aware during this time of the global conversation about reproductive rights as instigated by challenges to Roe Vs. Wade in USA and local conversations in South Australia about decriminalising abortion.[134] Additionally, working with this matrix across the entirety of the enquiry led to my realisation and acknowledgement of the complicity and complexity and role of reproductive printmaking technologies, my own body and studio actions in re-presenting specific bodily realities.

This chapter specifically, and the research more broadly, employs and critiques printmaking's historical inseparability to the repetitious production of anatomised body representations. I subvert printmaking conventions to enable inky flows, smudges and material difference to emerge across the printed bodies.[135] In contrast with the artists' works discussed in this chapter, my print-based installations specifically reckon with printmaking processes and its capacity for replication. Further, they consider early modern print technology which facilitated anatomical and medical recording and the perpetuation of body knowledge. The printed bodies, with their numerous iterations in the installation work, draw attention to the schematising and homogenising representational strategies of anatomical images. The large-scale wall-collage

[134]See: "Abortion to finally be decriminalised in SA," *InDaily,* 24 June, 2022, https://indaily.com.au/news/2022/06/24/abortion-to-finally-be-decriminalised-in-sa-from-july/ and "Tracking the States Where Abortion is Now Banned," *The New York Times,* updated 26 May, 2023, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/us/abortion-laws-roe-v-wade.html

[135] For example: editioning processes, or near identical replication.

installation represents a disruption of temporal residues, to draw on Ahmed, of anatomical imaging and the complicit printing press. Incorporating inky monoprints, discarded prints and research notes, this installation unsettles the authorial voice of anatomical and medicalised images. In my work, bodies are intentionally layered, shifting and fragmented. The next chapter maps the development of subsequent bodies of work, generated from the making of this matrix, that directly consider the research question: how can the iterative potential of relief printmaking, the temporal capacity of video and the affective potential of ink unsettle early modern uterine representations and contemporary uterine experiences?

Chapter Five

The Uterus Navigating an Affective and Multi-temporal Space

Introduction

"The uterus is so many things…"[136]

Kaitlin, interviewee

This chapter explicates the print-based work *Womb Imaginings* that explored early modern uteri representations drawn together with lived experiences generated through interview conversations with women. As an internal organ the uterus can be visualised through medical and scientific imaging technologies, through diagrams, and anatomical models, and through creative practices. While the uterus is historically linked with female bodies, not all women have a uterus. Additionally, not all people with a uterus identify as women.[137] Individual lived experience and subject positioning, including transgender, non-binary and cis gender, shape experiences with reproductive organs. The uterus is laden with socio-cultural meanings. It is associated with the potential for new life, with clocks that mark time, and as a space of nurture. It is also linked with pain and invisible temporal labour and subject to political and legislative controls. The research-based artworks discussed in this chapter were shaped by analysis of interviews with women that generated ways of seeing the uterus as affective, temporal, and knotty. To contextualise *Womb Imaginings*, I discuss uterine-based artworks by South African artist Willemien de Villiers, English artist Damien Hirst, Japanese Hiromi Tango, Japanese-Australian artist Ema Shin and Zimbabwe born, Ethiopian-based artist Virginia Chihota.

[136] Kaitlin (pseudonym), research participant, interview by Angelica Harris-Faull, 2018, 21-22.

[137] Recent academic research in feminist and gender studies which presents transgender individual's voices and experiences with their reproductive body. See: Michael Toze's article: "The risky womb and the unthinkability of the pregnant man: Addressing trans masculine hysterectomy," *Feminism and Psychology,* vol. 28, is. 2 (2018): 194-211. Toze draws upon autoethnographic insights while discussing ongoing intersections of institutional, legal, and governmental issues of reproductive access and legislation and lived experience.

Crafting the early modern uterus

The early modern period marked a shift in who controlled the knowledge about women's bodies and procreation. As discussed in Chapter Three, men began to enter the birthing room in the form of the male medical practitioner; at the same time there was an increase in male-authored midwifery guides. These authors borrowed agricultural and industrial terminology and concepts to create metaphors to describe the uterus and render the internal process of conception and gestation communicable to a medical and general audience. Conceptualising the uterus as a field to be plowed,[138] a harbour for (seminal) ships to enter and dock,[139] an empty bottle,[140] and a house[141] positioned the uterus as a space waiting to be filled. Historian Katherine Park, states that through this period "women increasingly became the objects of knowledge rather than knowers themselves."[142] The early modern period, and specifically the late 1400s, witnessed the spread of printing presses from Europe to Britain, which assisted in disseminating male authored midwifery guides and effectively perpetuating notions of the uterus as a passive receptacle.[143] The Latin for womb, matrix, became the 'plate' for printing and thus inextricably intertwined with signification and the dissemination of knowledge.[144]

Historian Daisy Murray states that "the alignment of woman and womb is indicative of an emerging concept of womanhood that defined women by their generative function."[145] This period represents a co-construction of female identity and reproductive function. Historian

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[138] Sharp, *The Midwives Book,* 32.
[139] Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies*, 248. Fissell states that "women were just the containers, loaded and unloaded by men" See also: Mary Fissell, "Remaking the Maternal Body in England, 1680-1730," *Journal of the History of Sexuality,* Vol. 26, no. 1 (2017): 114-139.
[140] Laurinda Dixon, *Perilous Chastity, Women and Illness in Pre-Enlightenment Art and Medicine,* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 117-119. Dixon offers insights into seventeenth-century medical illustrations which visually liken the uterus with a bottle.
[141] The term 'womb' is frequently used in early modern midwifery guides.
[142] Park, *Secrets of Women*, 82.
[143] Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies,* 202–3. See also an additional recent article: Mary Fissell, "Remaking the Maternal Body in England, 1680-1730." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* vol. 26, no. 1 (2017): 114-139.
[144] Ruth Pelzer-Montada, "Authenticity in Printmaking – a Red Herring?", paper presented at IMPACT (International Multi-disciplinary Printmaking, Artists, Concepts and Techniques) Conference held at the University of Art and Design Helsinki UIAH, Finland, 2001, 5.
[145] Daisy Murray, "Feminine Value and Reproduction in Rowley's *The Birth of Merlin,* in *Perceptions of Pregnancy from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century,* eds. Jennifer Evans and Ciara Meehan (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 113-114.

Lianne McTavish states that the "female body was more regularly scrutinized than the male body for its reproductive capacity."[146] Jane Sharp, midwife and author, also drew on agricultural processes to elucidate the roles of men and women in reproduction, stating that, "man in the act of procreation is the agent and tiller and sower of the Ground, Woman is the Patient or Ground to be tilled."[147] The male is the active participant in reproduction: sowing seed and shaping the fetus. The gendered nature of such descriptions reveals the coding of male and female reproductive organs with different notions of power and agency. The uterus is correlated with perceptions of occupancy and passivity – ideas which began to percolate through my thinking and work.

Sharp's *Midwives Book* contains a small selection of woodblock illustrations, including uteri, midwifery equipment and a single image of a female body. I was drawn to this body and to the representations of the uterus that is removed from the female body and presented with a fully developed small child in the intrauterine space. As I broadened my engagement with other historical guides, I found that uteri were consistently depicted as impregnated and disembodied. Historian Rebecca Whiteley describes such illustrations as 'birth figures,' which she suggests functioned as socio-cultural diagrammatic images for midwifery practice and education.[148] Other, non-pregnant, experiences of the uterus are rendered invisible in the illustrations. Drawing and studying Sharp's uteri led me to English artist Damien Hirst's large-scale public sculpture, *The Miraculous Journey*, made between 2005 to 2013, which is situated outside the Sidra Women's and Children's Hospital in Qatar. The sculpture maps foetal development within several disembodied uteri. Hirst states, "I hope the sculpture will instil in the viewer a sense of awe and wonder at this extraordinary human process, which occurs every

[146] Lianne McTavish. "Reproduction 1500-1750," in *The Routledge History of Sex and the Body 1500 to the Present,* eds. Sarah Toulalan and Kate Fischer (New York: Routledge, 2016), 353.
[147] Sharp, *The Midwives Book or The Whole Art of Midwifry Discovered,* 32.
[148] Whiteley has stated that there is limited research, beyond her contribution, which has critically examined printed foetal images in early modern midwifery texts. See: Whiteley, "Figuring Pictures and Picturing Figures," 247. See also: Rebecca Whiteley, "The Limits of Seeing and Knowing: Early Modern Anatomy and the Uterine Membrane," *Object – Graduate Research and Reviews in the History of Art and Visual Culture,* vol. 19 (2017): 95-119.

second all across the globe."[149] Hirst's uterine scenes halt time, as fluid foetal developmental stages are paused and cast into solid forms which borrow from the Western history of anatomy and science. And while he reminds us that this extraordinary process happens every second, *The Miraculous Journey* belies any physical, emotional, or temporal labour of the uterus or of the person.

Hirst's cast metal work bears similarities to the early modern woodblocks as it depicts impregnated uterine representations which privilege a narrative of foetal development and biological function. *The Miraculous Journey* presents an uncertain relationship to issues of reproductive healthcare and justice in a country where abortion is prohibited and pregnancy is controlled in that to be unmarried and pregnant is illegal.[150] Scholar Beck Wise speaking about this work, concludes that "as the fetus is rendered visible, the woman is erased."[151] Hirst's work removes and decentres the female body and the pregnant body. In doing so, these sculptures, reveal an ongoing focus on foetal growth thus reducing women to biology.[152] The woman becomes concealed, and as with the early modern prints, there is no curiosity about other experiences that women may have, and it is these that I sought in developing new ways of envisaging the uterus.

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[149] Naomi Rea, " 'We Are Not Expecting Everyone to Like Them': Damien Hirst's Graphic Fetus Monuments Return to View in Doha," *Art World,* https://news.artnet.com/art-world/damien-hirst-public-fetus-works-go-back-up-in-doha-1398895 para. 3.

[150] Researcher Leila Hessini's article (see below) details legal, religious and socio-cultural practices and policies in relation to abortion and reproductive health care. Of specific note, abortion can be accessed in Qatar if there is a risk to a women's life, risk to physical health and foetal impairment. The Qatari Legal Portal (Al-Meezan) lists several articles which relate to abortion, and list imprisonment terms (from three to ten years) for medical practitioners and women "without medical necessity" who medically or intentionally perform, or undergo an abortion. See: Leila Hessini, "Abortion and Islam: Policies and Practice in the Middle East and North Africa," *Reproductive Health Matters,* vol. 15, is. 29 (2007): 76, 78. See also: *Law No. 11 of 2004 Issuing the Penal Code, Abortion: 315 Article, 317 Article, 317 Article,* Al Meezan (Qatari Legal Portal). Accessed: 10 July 2020. https://www.almeezan.qa/LawArticles.aspx?LawTreeSectionID=267&lawId=26&language=en

[151] Beck Wise, "Fetal Positions: Fetal Visualization, Public Art, and Abortion Politics," *Rhetoric of Health & Medicine,* vol. 1 (3-4), (2018): 315.

[152] Scholar Beck Wise's critically examines these sculptures in relation to foetal-centric imagery employed in the American antiabortion movement. See: Wise, "Fetal Positions: Fetal Visualization, Public Art, and Abortion Politics," 315. See also: Barbara Duden, "The Fetus as an Object of Our Times," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics,* no. 25 (1994): 132-135.



Figure 34: 8 Representations of the Foetus in the Womb, woodblock prints from Jane Sharp's Midwifery Guide. Artist unknown.

Image source: Wellcome Collection, accessed June 2023, https://wellcomecollection.org/works/sw68jftr



Figure 35: Damien Hirst, *The Miraculous Journey*, 2005-2013, bronze, installation image from Sidra Medicine in Doha, Qatar.

Image Source: Qatar Museum, accessed June 2023, https://qm.org.qa/en/visit/public-art/damien-hirst-the-miraculous-journey/

Womb Imaginings: Re-carving the Early Modern Uterus

I started to experiment with ways to respond to the uterine imagery. Building on the linoleum carving undertaken in *She c/leaves,* that was a reinterpretation of the historical woodblock of the woman from Sharp's guide, I decided to re-carve and enlarge the uterine matrix to enable further investigation. In this early work the female figure in *She c/leaves* was re-carved unchanged from the historical image. This time, however, I removed the fully developed fetus and marked the intrauterine space with concentric lines. Emerging through intuitive carving, these lines are suggestive of ambiguous movement, fluids, temporality, and change. I began test printing the matrix. Initially working with varied tones of blue, red and pink inks to suggest blood and the colours of bodies I saw preserved and created in anatomical museums. I repeatedly printed the matrix exploring the effect of ghost prints and different hues. *Womb Imaginings* developed from iterative experimentation with this matrix via methods of hand printing, layering matrices and painterly inking.

The decision to carve and print the uterus, akin to the early modern birth figures and Damien Hirst's sculptural works, removed and distanced the uterus from the body. Early work with this matrix involved cycles of iterative printing, documented in Figure 35. As I accumulated test prints in different tones, I pinned works in gridded lines on the studio wall. These grids resembled the composition of the early modern birth figures. Observing the repeated printing and grid installation I recognised a tension. The uteri persisted as disembodied. While the foetus had been removed, it was replaced with identically repeating circular lines and while these recalled a sense of the repetition and temporal labour that was explored in a later video investigation of a pill packet (discussed in Chapter Eight), a paradox persisted. Thinking through this tension, which emerged in the studio, I saw that the removal of the foetus was as complicated as it's ubiquity in the midwifery guides. In response, I turned to the interview conversations to explore contemporary uterine experiences. Several themes were generated in analysing the interviews. It became clear that the women's lived experiences were complex and ambiguous, emotional, and at times paradoxical, often involving contraception devices, medical

interventions, physical labour, and mental health. These became foundational in the development of the practice-based works *Womb Imaginings,* the books and the video works discussed in Chapter Six and Chapter Eight.



Figure 36: Angelica Harris-Faull, test prints on the drying rack, 2018.

Image source: Photograph by the author.



Figure 37: Angelica Harris-Faull, inking plates in the studio, 2018.

Image source: Photograph by the author.

Let's talk about the uterus: interview conversations

Sharp, in her midwifery guide, states "we women have no more cause to be angry or ashamed of what Nature hath given us than men have." [153] She recognised, in 1671, that women might be shamed or angered by their bodies, thus alluding to female reproductive organs as contested space. I wondered what contemporary connections Sharp's words might hold. Interview conversations with women, aged between 18 to 30, generated a broad spectrum of emotions, experiences and imagery connected to their reproductive organs. The uterus was a locus for feelings about social pressures, gendered notions, and complex experiences with medical interventions. I was drawn back to Sharp's words, as the uterus persisted in interview conversations as a space that caused deep reflection, feelings of uncertainty, ambiguity and varied emotions. These themes were also found in the work of artists Tango, Shin, and Chihota.

[153] Sharp, *The Midwives Book,* 32.

Interview conversations framed the uterus as inscribed with socio-cultural meanings, narratives, and heteronormative scripts that centred reproductive function, biology, and pregnancy. In some ways I discovered a parallel with concepts and themes from the early modern prints and Hirst's work. One participant, Kaitlin explained that the "uterus is so many things, it's a marker of assumed gender or sex, opportunity…to grow another human, it's also pain for many people, and it can be risk."[154] For Kaitlin the uterus was an invisible organ which could hold potential health risks, including cancer. It was layered with hopes, uncertainties, and multifaceted emotions. Kaitlin acknowledged lived experiences as bringing nuance to sociocultural significations. Nora, on the other hand, described the uterus as "a political word," that connected to socially constructed and gendered scripts and expectations. Critical of such scripts, she states, "it's an important part of being a woman, having a baby, so if you don't have a baby…well, you're not a complete woman yet…so you're going to be judged for not and you're going to be judged for the way that you do motherhood."[155] Kaitlin and Nora show ways in which the uterus is intertwined with experiences of identity. Conversations with women revealed entangled, knotty, and contradictory meanings embedded in cultural discourses of the uterus that often moved beyond a consideration of biology. While doing the interviews an international debate about reproductive politics proliferated through the media, and by turn began to shape my thinking, which was largely driven by the challenges to legislation in America.[156]

As I continued to reflect on the interview conversations and ways I might disrupt early modern images, I turned to a series of artists who were also exploring reproduction and their lived experience. I was particularly interested in textile-based Japanese artist Hiromi Tango and the ways in which her work diverges from Hirst's sculptures. Tango's 2011 performance installation work, *Hiromi Hotel – Mixed Blood,* according to writer, Anna Davis provided viewers

[154] Kaitlin (pseudonym), research participant, interview by Angelica Harris-Faull, 2018, 21-22.
[155] Nora (pseudonym), research participant, interview by Angelica Harris-Faull, 2018, 32-33.
[156] Louise Kaplan, "The Overturn of Roe v. Wade: Reproductive Health in the Post-Roe Era," *The Nurse Practitioner,* vol. 47, no. 10 (2022): 5-6.

"an intimately recorded dialogue with her [Tango's] physical body, thoughts and emotions."[157] Tango, pregnant throughout the performance, wove a large uterus-like structure around her body. The densely layered textiles formed a sack-like shape conjuring a fleshy materiality. Tango's work is temporal and contingent on labour; the installation grew through cumulative weaving, while Tango's own body became a 'hotel.' In contrast with Hirst's disembodied static scenes, Tango's work is embodied, affective and, as presented in Figure 37, she remains central to the piece. Tango is wrapped in the materials of the work, and by extension her pregnancy. Cultural and medical understandings of pregnancy in Japan point toward expectations for pregnant women to maintain a certain kind of healthy body.[158] The uterus is internal and individual, however through medical interventions and cultural ideas it becomes public and surveyed. As interviewee Nora states, "you are judged" for not having children, and for how you have children.[159]

[157] Anna Davis, *Hiromi-Hotel – Mixed Blood Catalogue Essay*, accessed: http://hiromitango.com/Hiromi-Hotel-Mixed-Blood.
[158] Ivry Tsipy, "Embodied responsibilities: pregnancy in the eyes of Japanese ob-gyns," *Sociology of Health & Illness,* vol. 29, is. 2 (2007): 256, 269.
[159] Nora (pseudonym), research participant, interview by Angelica Harris-Faull, 2018, 32-33.



Figure 38: Hiromi Tango, *Hiromi Hotel: Mixed Blood*, Opening Performance, Primavera 2011, offsite project, Museum of Contemporary Art, 2011.

Image source: Hiromi Tango, artist website, accessed June 2023, https://hiromitango.com/RED-ROOM-HIROMI-HOTEL. Photograph: Alex Davies.



Figure 39: Virginia Chihota, *Fighting With One's Self* (original title: *Kuzvirwisa*), silkscreen print on paper, unique state, 1885 x 1385 mm.

Image Source: Tate Modern, accessed June 2023, https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/chihota-fighting-ones-self-p81969

Returning to the studio, pondering how complex lived experiences from interviews might speak to the re-carved early modern uterus, I decided to experiment with inking and layered thick relief ink across the matrix, and marking parts of the plate with inconsistently applied ink. As I printed, the clarity of the carved lines were reduced and the image began to seep. I saw that this method created ambiguity, textures, and affective colours within the intrauterine space. To further emphasise these ambiguous qualities I charged the roller with ink and rolled it across wet prints. This action blurred the exterior lines of the matrix and the uterus became subsumed by ink. The gestural and disordered inking processes disrupted and complicated the early modern birth figure. Investigating the affective potential of ink, I looked to screen-print based works by Zimbabwe born, Ethiopian-based artist Virginia Chihota.

Chihota's work *Fighting With One's Self* depicts an abstracted uterine form. Swathes of colour, painterly textures and layers form a sac-like uterus. In the centre of the uterine sac an obscured figure, possibly a self-portrait of the artist, sits, head in hands. Authors Emma Lewis and Zoe Whitely state that the print is "rich with symbolic references to fertility, loneliness and female subjectivities associated with traditional gender roles linked to pregnancy."[160] The composition of Chihota's monoprinted figure is taut with emotion and a sense of uncertainty. The figure urges us to consider connections between pregnancy, motherhood, notions of isolation, and the self. Chihota's work speaks to these complicated relationships. The materiality and gestural application of ink imbue this work with a sense of embodied memory and dislocation. These themes were echoed by women in the interviews who spoke about their feelings of disconnection through conflicting thoughts about procreation, and through experiences of medical procedures and interactions with healthcare practitioners.

Experimentation in the studio with monoprinting and inking led to changes appearing within the image of the uterus. I started printing with menstrual pads and thick red ink. Pressing the pads into the paper resulted in irregular textural patterns. These marks became ways to explore

[160] Emma Lewis and Zoe Whitely, "Virginia Chihota - *Fighting With One's Self*" *Tate,* accessed 15 October, 2022, https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/chihota-fighting-ones-self-p81969.

temporality and cyclically releasing of menstrual blood. Working with burgundy, brown, deep blue, red, purple, and pale pink inks suggested different uterine states, blood, and bodily processes as the mark of menstrual blood changed across time from a vivid red to a pale pink or a dirty brown. The amorphous, disordered and varied inking of the matrix led to prints in which the intrauterine space was individual. Continuing to work with this matrix and thinking back to the ubiquitous birth figures in early modern midwifery guides, in Figure 39, I began to imagine within my re-carved uterus different affective states and lived experiences. In making this work I intentionally chose artefacts that were related to the sometimes-quotidian experiences of the uterus – be they items to stem the flow of blood or items to prevent conception.



Figure 40: *Womb Imaginings*, multiple lino prints on paper 2017-2018. Installed at SASA Gallery, UniSA.

Image source: photograph by Rosina Possingham.



Figure 41: *Womb Imaginings,* (detail) multiplate lino prints on paper, 2017-2018. Installed as SASA Gallery, UniSA.

Image source: Photograph by Rosina Possingham.

A reciprocal exchange between my research led practice and the lived experience of contemporary women began to emerge. Furthermore, themes from this lived experience were found in the work of artists, discussed here including South African artist Willemien de Villiers and Australian, Japanese artist Ema Shin. Both Shin and de Villiers investigate reproduction, embodiment, and representation through textural stitched and woven works. De Villiers employs embroidery on reclaimed textiles to investigate women's history, "anatomised patterning," and images of foetal development, disease, and plant matter.[161] De Villiers's intricate threads form anatomised male and female bodies which reveal scenes of gendered sexual violence and reflections on plant and human reproductive cycles.[162] Her work challenges traditional decorative embroidered surfaces through violent and anatomical imagery. Similarly,

[161] Daniel, interviewing on behalf of Textile Artist.org, "Willemien de Villiers: An observer on the fringe," accessed 4 February, 2020, https://www.textileartist.org/willemien-de-villiers-observer-fringe/
[162] Willemien de Villiers, "Work: 2017 – 2014," accessed 17 May, 2023, https://willemiendevilliers.co.za/2017-2014/

Shin's printmaking and textile practice transforms pale pinks and fleshy coloured threads into female bodies, organs, and plant forms.[163] Shin writes that the works "express femininity, sexuality and domesticity."[164] Shin's tactile bodies recall reproductive cycles. The winding threads and blooming flowers suggest bodily states and lived experiences.



Figure 42: Willemien de Villiers, *Female Notions*, 2019, hand stitched with cotton thread on used, stained domestic linen.

Image source: Willemien de Villiers, artist website, accessed June 2023, https://willemiendevilliers.co.za/2022-2018/



Figure 43: Ema Shin, *Soft Alchemy*, 2017, woven tapestry, cotton, wool.

Image source: Ema Shin, artist website, accessed June 2023, https://emashin.org/section/292370.html Photograph by Jeremy Weihrauch.

[163] Ema Shin, "Artwork," accessed 17 May, 2023, https://emashin.org/section/292370.html
[164] Ema Shin, Artist statement, https://www.craft.org.au/2017-finalists/ema-shin. See also: Glenn Barkley and Bridget Guthrie, eds., and Tamworth Regional Gallery, *Open House: 3RD Tamworth Textile Triennial 2017* (Tamworth: Tamworth Regional Gallery, 2017), 24-25.

Artists Tango, Chihota, Shin and De Villiers depict the uterus as affective, temporal, and shaped by individual understandings. Their works raises questions of agency through evoking a sense of entanglement and unease. I began to think about the concept of agency in reproduction, medical interactions and in the notion of occupancy. In the early modern midwifery guides, images of disembodied uteri and the female body are cut and marked by an unseen medical hand. How could I work with printmaking and video methods to unsettle these tensions? The hand struck me as a symbol which suggested agency, control, and the exertion of power. Indeed, Sharp in her discussion of reproduction, positions the hand as the active male participant that shapes reproduction. The male hand implies control and power. Bringing these ideas into the studio, I carved a disembodied life-sized linoleum hand and arm, which could be printed like a stamp. This hand, traced from my own, was initially printed in layers over the uterine matrix. The hand entered the uterine space, disrupting the interior of the body and generated questions of autonomy and control. As I reflected on the interaction between the printed hand and the body interior, it evoked a sense of unease. The hand emerged as an affective image recalling subjective experiences of medical professionals examining my body and the ways in which bodily autonomy shifts in encounters with medical practitioners. While the hand discussed in Sharp's Midwifery Guide is male, and the early modern dissected bodies are marked by the invisible hands of male anatomists, the hand in *Womb Imaginings* is intentionally neutral and abstract in representation. It has no signifiers of gender or identity. The printed hands, as an affective motif, generated conversations and questions about whose hands are on our bodies. These ideas were extended in the video work, *I am not my uterus,* discussed in Chapter Eight.

The printed hand in *Womb Imaginings* led to further complications and questions in the research. I grappled with understanding how historical imagery might be destabalised and how agency might be represented by this printed hand motif. Reflecting on the interview conversations, I was drawn to moments in which women expressed contradictory feelings about their uterus and grappled with issues of bodily autonomy, and medical authority. For example, Stella who shared experiences of having bi-cornuate uteri, a uterus with two

chambers, expressed that "I actually want to get my uterus removed because I genuinely don't want kids," but stated that it depended on what her "doctors feel like saying."[165] Stella, skeptical in her statement, hints at medical gatekeeping and the difficulty young adults have in negotiating medical practitioners if they seek the removal of their reproductive capacity during child bearing years. Similarly, Nora, expressed a "resistance" to her uterus "because of my medical complications but more so the societal expectations that I find frustrating.[166] Nora's feelings of 'resistance,' and 'frustration' suggest the emotional impact of cultural assumptions and expectations of female bodies, reproduction, uterine use, and function. These insights informed the development of the printed hand in *Womb Imaginings.* I began to understand that this hand was a metaphorical image for the complex, and at times, unsettled relationships and uncertain emotions individuals have with, and in response to their uterus. This organ is socially constructed and, following Ahmed, historical sedimented orientations which shape "how the world coheres around" us.[167] By this, I mean that individuals carried a weight of embodied social constructions of the uterus. As one interviewee, Deidre, said, "it's a kind of love and hate relationship, it makes me think of my children and happiness, but also monthly suffering and struggle."[168]

Womb Imaginings responds to and complicates the early modern birth figure. The repeating uterine impressions are marked by differences - ink, colour, texture, imagery, and tone alter across each print. These works employ the compositional grid and representational techniques of early modern uterine images found in English midwifery guides to highlight the persistence of medicalised and schematic images of the uterus. The interior of the organ is kept intentionally abstract to allude to this space as equivocal, emotive and embodied. *Womb Imaginings* uses painterly inking and other reproductive imagery and materials to imagine memory and emotions around the menstruating uterus, the partial or absent uterus, the uterus

[165] Stella (pseudonym), research participant, interview by Angelica Harris-Faull, 2018, 20.
[166] Nora (pseudonym), research participant, interview by Angelica Harris-Faull, 2018, 32.
[167] Sara Ahmed, "Orientations Matter," in *New Materialisms Ontology, Agency, and Politics,* ed. Diana Coole and Samantha Frost (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2010), 235.
[168] Deidre (pseudonym), research participant, interview by Angelica Harris-Faull, 2018, 14.

with endometriosis, the experience of medical procedures, intrauterine contraceptives, and the uterus in ambiguous states. The affective colour, painterly ink textures and layered imagery reflect embodied uterine experiences. There are no singular meanings of the uterus, it is an equivocal space, as Kaitlin states in her interview the uterus "is so many things."[169]

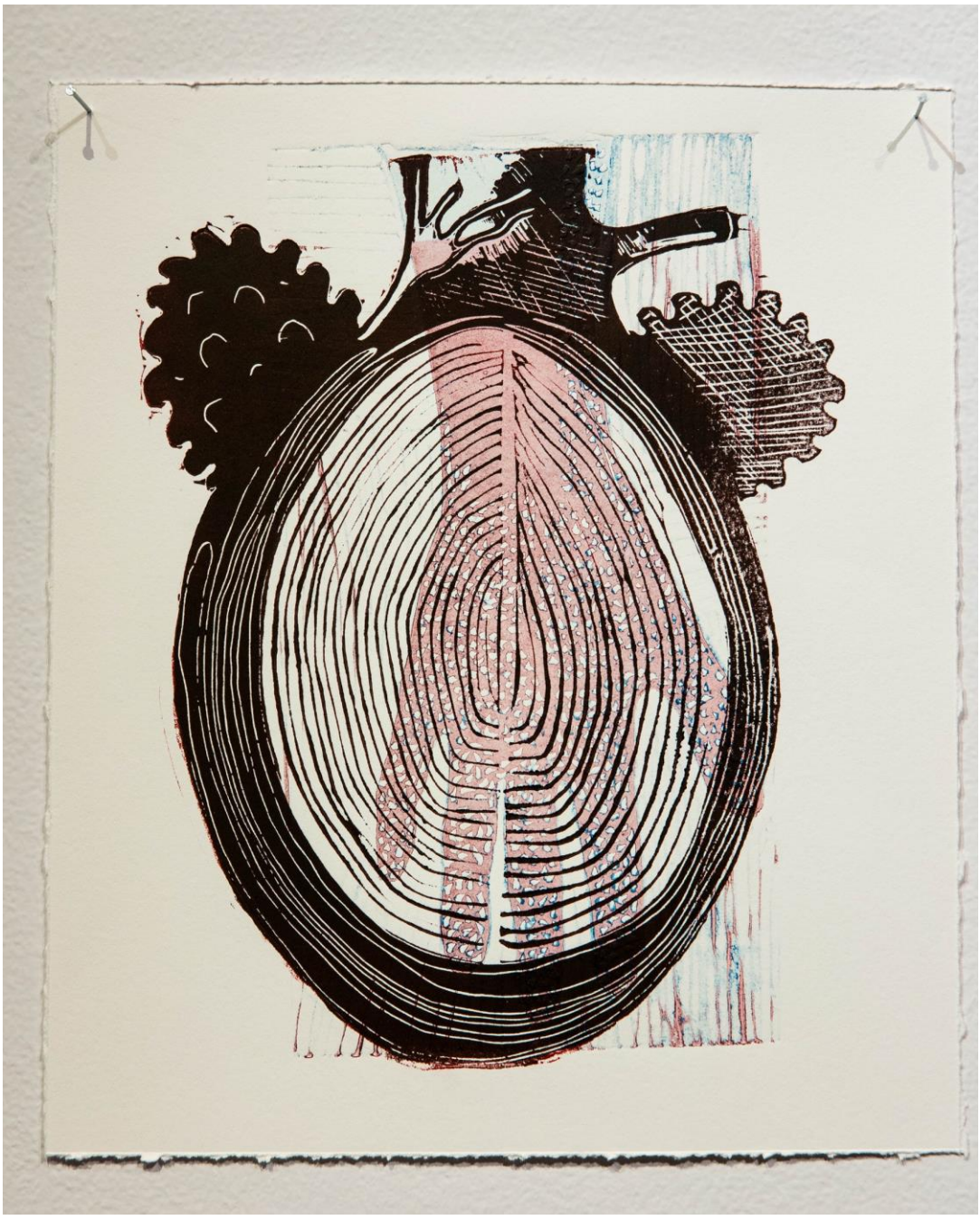

Figure 44: *Womb Imaginings*, multiplate lino prints on paper 2017-2018. Installed at SASA Gallery, UniSA.

Image source: Photograph by Rosina Possingham.

[169] Kaitlin (pseudonym), research participant, interview by Angelica Harris-Faull, 2018, 21-22.



Figure 45: *Womb Imaginings*, multiplate lino prints on paper 2017-2018. Installed at SASA Gallery, UniSA.

Image source: Photograph by Rosina Possingham.



Figure 46: *Womb Imaginings,* multiple lino prints on paper 2017-2018. Installed at SASA Gallery, UniSA.

Image source: Photograph by Rosina Possingham

Conclusion

This chapter has addressed key research questions through investigating the signification and representations of the early modern uterus and contemporary lived experiences via interview conversations. This revealed a persistent representational strategy in which the uterus is removed and distanced from the body and is presented impregnated. Researching early modern metaphor-rich uterine descriptions from midwifery texts, and seeking the work of other artists, led me to understand the female body as a space of contested and changing knowledges. Medical, social and vernacular ways of thinking about the uterus rubbed against one another; the uterus emerged as a morally coded and legislated organ. Additionally, early modern anatomical explorations and sociocultural discourses on reproduction saw an interlocking of female identity with reproductive potential and function. The diffractive methodological approach through which I undertook a re-turning of uterine discourses via interviewing, engagement with artists' works and studio-based explorations enabled reflections on temporally sticky socio-cultural significations of the uterus.

The interview conversations revealed individual lived and embodied uterine experiences. This chapter contributes to a growing body of research which centres embodied uterine experiences. These conversations informed the re-interpretation of an early modern uterine woodblock. In the re-carving process, I removed the early modern foetal representation to explore more ambiguous intrauterine states, while also acknowledging contradictions in this process. I move away from an interlocking of the uterus with reproductive function. The affective inking and imagery used in *Womb Imaginings* invites viewers to reimagine the early modern uteri to connect to a range of contemporary embodied uterine experiences. The next chapter presents the visual method undertaken by interviewees and the handmade books which developed in response to interviewee contributions.

Chapter Six

Making Meaning: Re-drawing the Uterus and bookmaking through contemporary lived experience

Introduction

"It's like a little chamber of secrets."[170]

Nora, interviewee discussing her uterus.

In this chapter, I discuss the multi-stage process of making linocut print books that emerged as I responded to the qualitative interviews and to participant's uterine drawings. I explore insights generated through this process, a way to gather contemporary lived experience, and the rationale for the books, which for purposes here I am calling interview books. In the interview, each person drew a biological map and then an embodied portrayal of their uterus. I made one book for each interview participant which included a digitised copy of their drawings and my lino carved text of select quotes from conversations with the women. Drawing on Barad's concept of diffraction as a "re-configuring of patterns," I argue that the women's drawings of their uterus, 're-configure' medicalised imagery through presenting their reflections and lived experience. Further, the making of the books can be seen as a diffractive practice-led research process. I posit this as a mode to hear contemporary women's voices. In exploring my research questions, bookmaking became a method to make visible current uterine experiences. To contextualise this, I call on researchers Fiona Buchanan and Gillian Rose and relevant book-based artworks by German American artist Kiki Smith and French artist Natalie d'Aarbeloff. I specifically draw on Australian artist Bronwyn Platten and her exploration of creative methods with research participants.

[170] Nora (pseudonym), research participant, interview by Angelica Harris-Faull, 2018, 21.

Participant Uterine Drawings

Sociologist Fiona Buchanan states that visual methods "can reveal aspects of the self which are difficult to access" or verbalise.[171] Relevant to this is Australian artist and researcher Bronwyn Platten's drawing workshops, and broader investigation of eating disorders, that revealed participants' creative exploration of their mouths through taste, feel and touch. Platten states that the 2012 workshops and resultant book, *Mouths and Meaning,* created "a multi-sensory understanding of embodied experiences."[172] The drawings reorient our familiarity with, and visualisation of the anatomy of the mouth, teeth, and jaw, toward abstracted and affective images. Gestural drawn lines conjure the sensations of the mouth. The workshops employed prompts, including asking participants to draw their mouth with their eyes closed, or after eating. Platten's work highlights the potential for drawing methods to reveal individual experiences and sensations of being in a body.

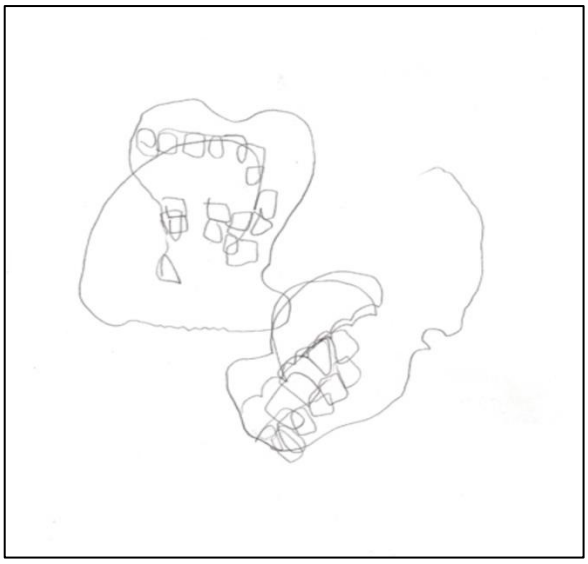

Figure 47: Bronwyn Platten, Mouths and Meaning: Participant's drawing, closed eyes.

Image source: Bronwyn Platten, artist website, accessed June 2023, http://bronwynplatten.com/index.php/mouths-and-meaning/mouth-drawings/

Mouths and Meaning informed the design of my visual method, as I also developed ways for participants to visualise embodied and experiential imagery. I introduced the concept of

[171] Fiona Buchanan, "Touching on emotions: using clay work in a context of relational empowerment to investigate sensitive issues," in *Critical and Creative Research Methodologies in Social Work,* ed. Lia Bryant (UK: Routledge, 2015), 190.
[172] Bronwyn Platten, *Mouths and Meaning: Workshop 1,* ed. Bronwyn Platten and Barry Gibson (The University of Salford and Leftfield Creative, Manchester, 2012), 9-11. "Mouths and Meaning," http://bronwynplatten.com/index.php/mouths-and-meaning/mouth-drawings/

making a biological and embodied uterine drawing as part of the interview. The first drawing asked women to depict their understanding of their reproductive organs, titled Biology Map Drawing shown in the figures below. The second drawing, titled Embodied Reproductive Organ Drawing, asked women to render their lived experience of their uterus. In contrast with Platten's work, I chose not to give further verbal or visual prompts, instead letting participants' creative expression guide their drawing. The drawings revealed multifaceted stories that were connected to secrecy, silence, identity, menstruation, contraceptives, and interactions with medical practitioners. Furthermore, the process evoked a spectrum of emotions, including feelings of hope, loss, shame, and uncertainty that were often tied to ideas of reproductive choice and potential.

Scholar Gillian Rose states that artefacts made in visual methods "may be tools for thinking with"; they open avenues for expressions of affect, emotion and lived experiences.[173] The uterine drawing process created space for women to discuss their relationship with their reproductive organs, which led me to centre this embodied knowledge generation, through the making of books. Cognisant of the absence of women's voices in the Early Modern Midwifery Guides, I was motivated to find other ways to posit women's experience through books that were small, tactile, and recalled the historical pamphlets that I had been exploring at the start of my practice-led research. These interview books became tools for thinking about different kinds of knowledge and shared participants' uterine drawings and experiences for a wider audience.

In asking my participants to visualise their reproductive organs,[174] several women, including Kaitlin, Deidre, Evelyn, Stella, and Lilly connected the biological map drawing process with their understandings of biomedical images. Lilly, for example, stated that a medical diagram was "the

[173] Gillian Rose, "On the Relation between 'Visual Research Methods' and Contemporary Visual Culture." *The Sociological Review*, vol. 62, no. 1 (2014): 41.
[174] Drawing a biological map was introduced to participants as an invitation for them to depict their internal reproductive organs. The level of detail and representational approach to this drawing was guided by the participant.

only sort of image of that kind of thing (the uterus) that I would have in my head."[175] Lilly and Stella stated that medicalised diagrams of the uterus were ubiquitous. While diagrams were familiar, some participants expressed uncertainty when depicting the internal reproductive system. Nora stated, "I'm not really sure of all the connecting things to be honest…this is like a little chamber of secrets."[176] Nora's description of the uterus as a 'chamber of secrets,' alluded to the complexities of visualising an organ which is generally unseen and rendered opaque by medical and social metaphors. The drawings revealed a spectrum of women's understandings of their anatomy that were often framed by culturally situated medical imagery.[177]

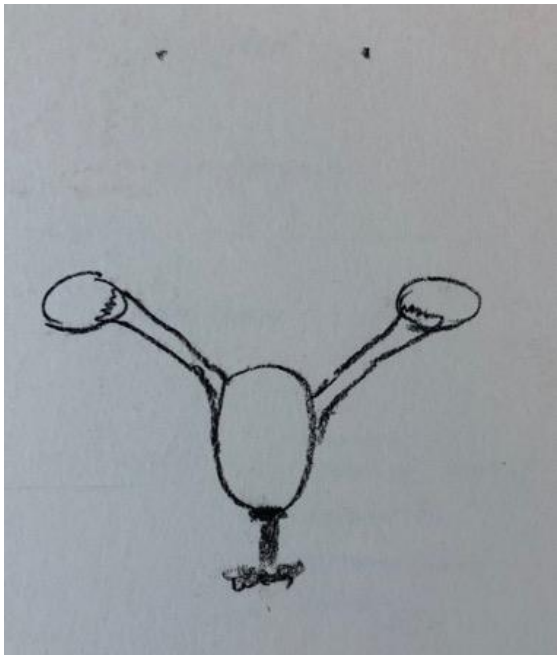

Figure 48: Nora, *Biology map drawing: "this is like a little chamber of secrets"*, charcoal pencil on paper, 2018.

Image source: Photography by author.

[175] Lilly, (pseudonym), research participant, interview by Angelica Harris-Faull, 2018, 28.
[176] Nora (pseudonym), research participant, interview by Angelica Harris-Faull, 2018, 21.
[177] The uterus, ovaries and fallopian tubes were most frequently depicted in drawings. The endometrium, ovarian ligaments, cervix, cervical canal, and vaginal tunnel appeared less often.

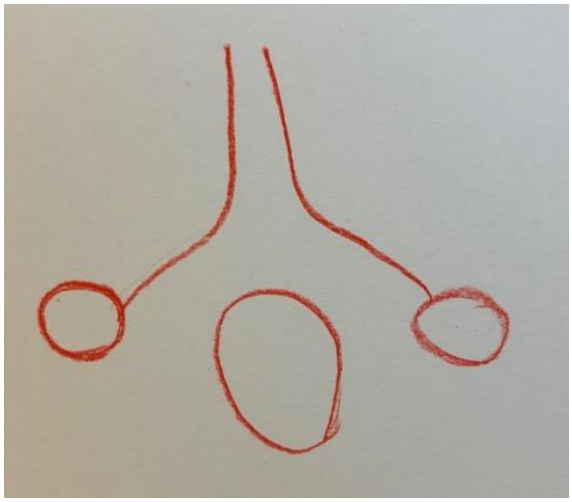

Figure 49: Deidre, *Biology map drawing: "could be textbook...kind of quintessential ovaries and stuff,"* pastel on paper, 2018.

Image source: Photography by author.



Figure 50: Evelyn, *Biology map drawing: "this could be a womb, it also makes me think of a cycle,"* pastel on paper, 2019.

Image source: Photography by author.

As I thought about the prevalence of medicalised uterine imagery, described by women in the interviews, I recalled American artist Miriam Schapiro's diary entry, that asked "if I repeat the shape of my being enough times will that shape be seen?"[178] Schapiro's personal questioning of the politics of representation connected with ideas about power and knowledge as expressed by the participants. For example, Stella, who identified as queer and lives with a uterus that has two chambers, drew a biology map which presented a normative medical image of a uterus. Admitting she rarely saw images or representations of a bi-corneal uteri, when she began her embodied drawing of her uterus, she said, "this is the first time I've drawn a uterus with so much expression…everything else I've seen has been clinical."[179] She reiterated that this drawing was different to medical imagery. Stella made her own representation of a what a two

[178] Thalia Gouma-Peterson, "Miriam Schapiro: An art of becoming," *American Art,* vol. 11, no. 1 (1997): 12.
[179] Stella, (pseudonym), research participant, interview by Angelica Harris-Faull, 2018, 25.

chambered uterus might look like. Her anthropomorphic uterus actively disrupts and reconfigures clinical imagery through presenting a personalised and humorous rendering.



Figure 51: Stella, *Biology map drawing: "everything else has been so clinical,"* pastel on paper, 2019.

Image source: Photography by author.

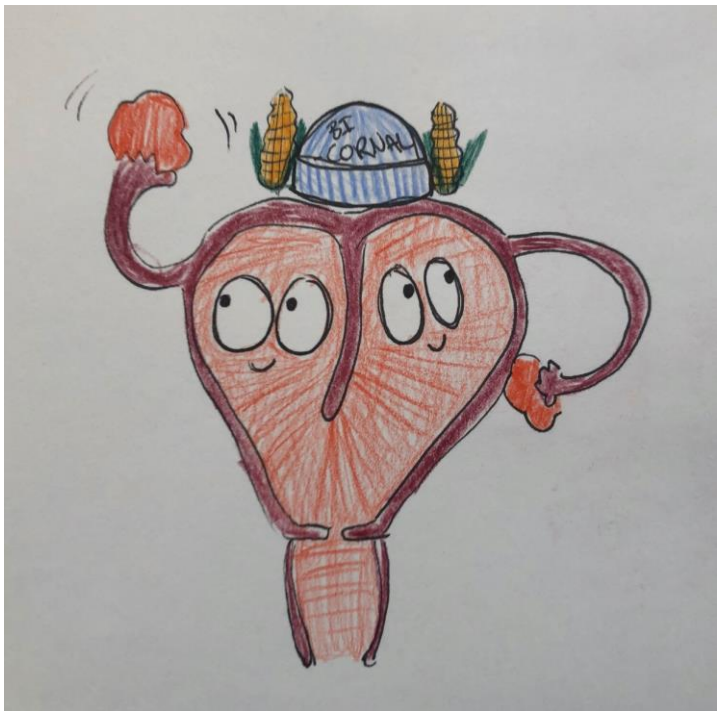

Figure 52: Stella, *Embodied reproductive organ drawing: "this is the first time I've drawn a uterus with so much expression,"* pastel, paper, 2019.

Image source: Photography by author.

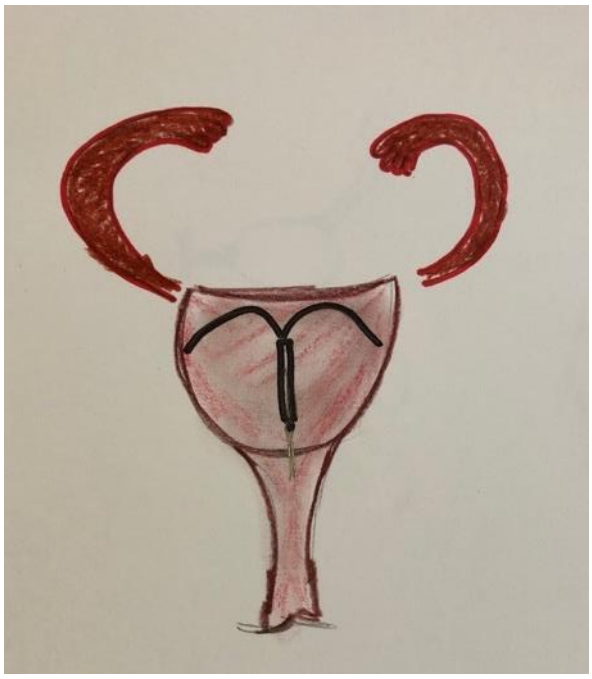

Figure 53: Kaitlin, *Biology map drawing: "it's going to be a textbook,"* pastel, pencil, and pen on paper, 2018.

Image source: Photography by author.

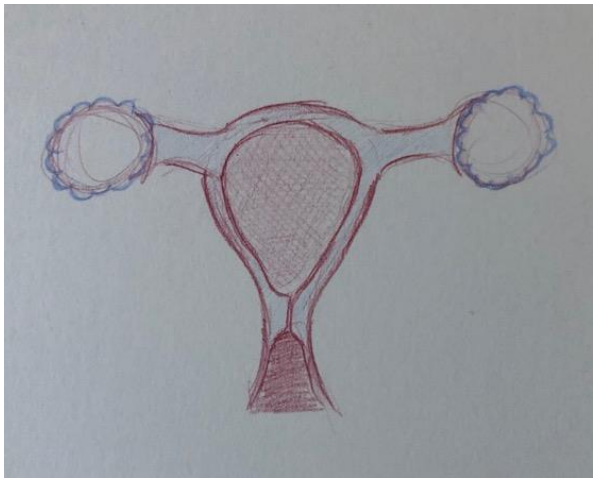

Figure 54: Lilly, *Biology map drawing: "everything is kind of bleeding out into everything else,"* pencil on paper, 2019.

Image source: Photography by author.

Participants explored colour, texture, and tone to connect with their embodied uterine experiences. Katlin's muted colours and faint concentric marks depicted her experience of the Mirena, which stopped menstruation. Her evocative drawing resonates with her comment that the Mirena made her uterus "really quiet."[180] In contrast, Evelyn's dynamic drawing of a red "ball of wool or twine,"[181] became more intense, tonally representing the changing stages of menstruation. While drawing, she stated, "I don't know how to draw it [the uterus] but most of the time I feel quite good about everything. I like that I have the ability to have children and that

[180] Kaitlin, (pseudonym), research participant, interview by Angelica Harris-Faull, 2018, 19 – 20.
[181] Evelyn, (pseudonym), research participant, interview by Angelica Harris-Faull, 2018, 26.

it is a possibility."[182] Deidre described her uterus as a "kind of love-hate relationship"[183] with a red crossed heart connecting her experiences of pregnancy, pain, love and fertility. Kaitlin and Deidre's affective drawings communicate the uterus as a temporal organ experienced through menstrual cycles, pregnancy, shaped by contraceptive devices and imbued with emotion.



Figure 55: Deidre, *Embodied reproductive organ drawing: "kind of a love hate - productive, it makes me think of my children, kind of happiness but also monthly suffering and struggle and childbirth,"* pastel on paper, 2018.

Image source: Photography by author.

[182] Evelyn, (pseudonym), research participant, interview by Angelica Harris-Faull, 2018, 26.
[183] Deidre, (pseudonym), research participant, interview by Angelica Harris-Faull, 2018, 14.

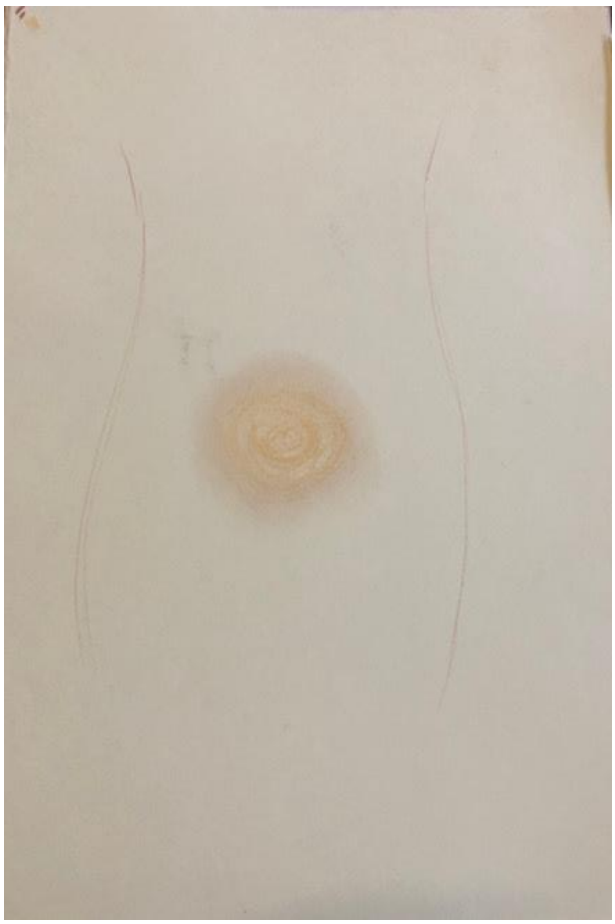

Figure 56: Kaitlin, *Embodied reproductive organ drawing: "it's very quiet,"* pastel, paper, 2018.

Image source: Photography by author.

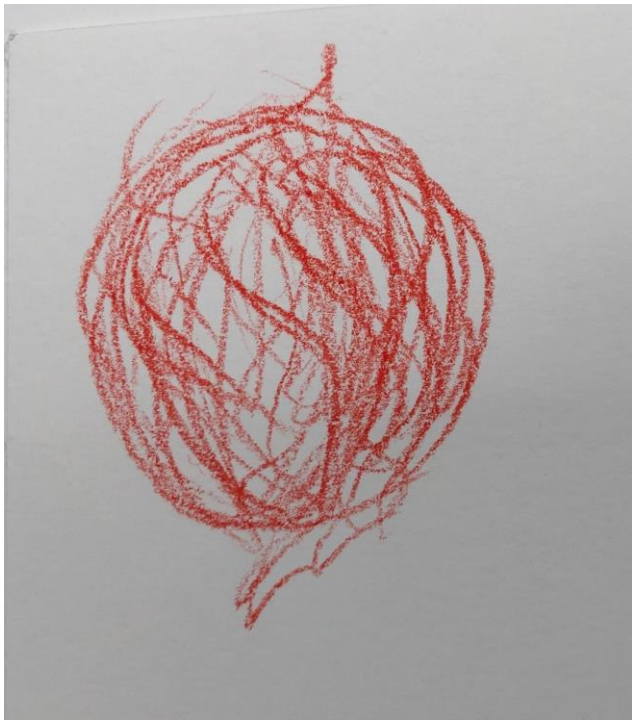

Figure 57: Evelyn, *Embodied reproductive organ drawing: "it's like it's all squeezing something, maybe that's a tightly wound ball and then slowly it's just unravelling through your period,"* pastel, paper, 2019.

Image source: Photography by author.

The drawing process also became a space for women to depict their contraceptive devices, medical conditions, and encounters with health practitioners. Nora drew a series of coloured squares which communicated different aspects of her reproductive organs. The black square represented her uterine cysts. Furthermore, it symbolised broader ideas relating to her uterus, including guilt and a lack of control. As she stated, "all the regulations, I find so frustrating, and the medical systems…but also society, because there are assumptions."[184] Nora's contradictory and complicated feelings ranged from shame to frustration. Another participant, Lilly, explored her life with chronic illnesses, including endometriosis. While drawing, she described conversations with doctors about seeking a hysterectomy as a younger person, her experiences of 'gate keeping' in hospitals and her search for non-medicalised knowledge. Endometriosis for Lilly meant "everything is kind of bleeding out into everything else."[185] Spikey shapes signified her uterine pain. Lilly and Nora's drawings revealed ways in which experiences of the uterus are shaped by, and in tension with medical institutions. Further, the participants' drawings highlight the importance of choice and control over reproductive bodies.



Figure 58: Nora, *Embodied reproductive organ drawing: "all the regulations, I find so frustrating, and the medical systems...but also society, because there are assumptions,"* pencil and pen on paper, 2018.

Image source: Photography by author.

[184] Nora (pseudonym), research participant, interview by Angelica Harris-Faull, 2018, 27-28.
[185] Lilly, (pseudonym), research participant, interview by Angelica Harris-Faull, 2018, 29-30.



Figure 59: Lilly, *Embodied reproductive organ drawing: "it's probably rarer to have like a body that just works and stays working for like most of your life,"* pencil on paper, 2019.

Image source: Photography by author.

During this time in the studio, reflecting on *Mouths and Meaning*, and my own participants' embodied drawings led to an important insight. It became clear that for each individual the uterus was experienced as the most complex part of their body, and that the clinical nature of medical representations belies these complexities. The highly individual works made by participants, and their comments, destabilise a homogenous diagrammatic representation of the uterus. This realisation informed the bookmaking process and subsequent video artworks. Participants used a range of drawing materials, texture, and tone to evoke bodily sensations and emotions. I argue visual methods, as a research tool, provided opportunities for participants to express and communicate via sensorial, tactile, affective, and experiential modes. I posit that enabling women to share their experiences, thoughts, and ideas via visual methods, allowed this project to undertake a diffractive approach, which generated varied and different images and understandings of the uterus. These, and several practitioners who make artists books, were drawn on in the making of the interview books, discussed next.

Developing the Interview Books

Artists Martha Wilson and Peter Frank's comment that "book art is not a single style, it is many styles finding a medium…It is not a single artist, it is many artists finding a public,"[186] resonated with me as I spent time developing the books in response to participant conversations and images. I was particularly drawn to artists books which were analogue in style, unique-state and often include hand written or printed elements. This style resonated as a way to present my particpants perceptual drawings of their bodies. Kiki Smith and Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge's 1997 collaborative book, *Endocrinology,* poetically explores the body's lymphatic system. Smith states of the work, "I was trying to make rudimentary prints: cutting out a piece of paper, inking it and printing it onto another piece of paper."[187] The inconsistent inking and printing of abstracted organs in *Endocrinology* are rich with texture. The prints create a sense of an impression or memory of the body. Berssenbrugge's hand written and typed text diffractively cuts across the page, opening new connections between image and text.

Similarly, French artist Natalie d'Aarbeloff's 1980 *For a Song* explores connections between poetic text and imagery. D'Aarbeloff's matricies of hand written text are centrally placed on the page. There is an immediacy and raw quality to this book. The use of handwriting creates a sense of personal communication, imparted from the artist to the reader. The almost crude type is illuminated by the unevenly shaped slab of printed black ink. Smith, Berssenbrugge's and d'Aarbeloff's presentation of rough paper edges, idyosyncratic handwriting and textural ink imbue the works with a sense of raw tactility, embodiment and emotion.

[186] Martha Wilson and Peter Frank, *Art Gallery of South Australia,* (wall text display), 1978.
[187] "Kiki Smith: Prints, Books and Things," The Museum of Modern Art, https://www.moma.org/audio/playlist/251/3235

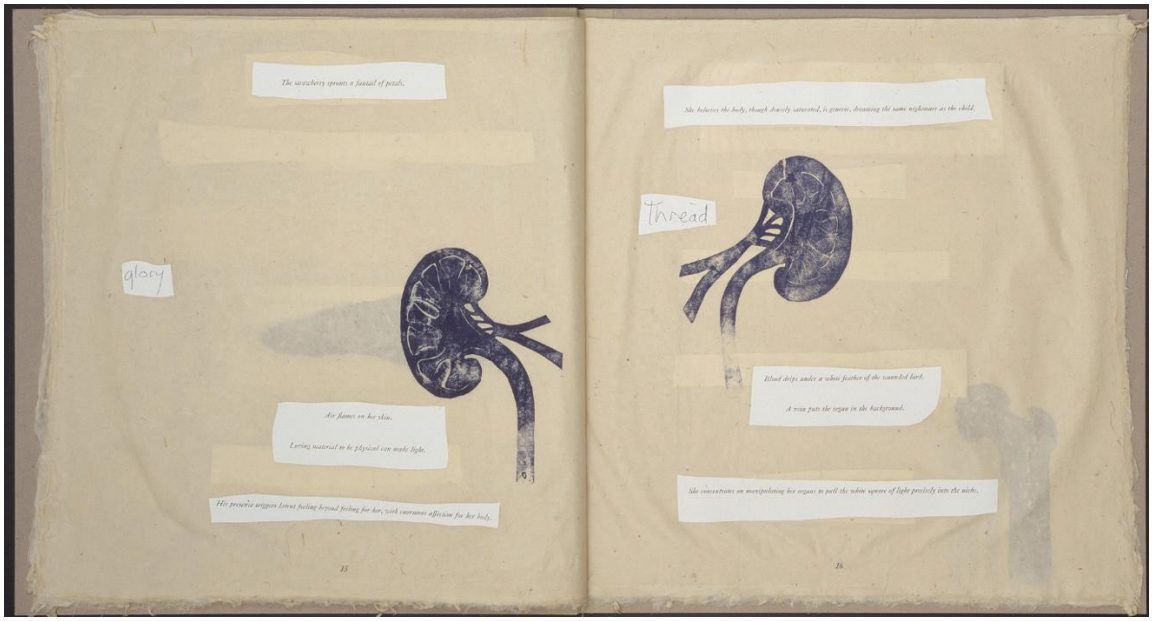

Figure 60: Kiki Smith and Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge, *Endocrinology*, artist's book, offset printed, and one aquatint, 1997.

Image source: The Museum of Modern Art, accessed June 2023, https://www.moma.org/audio/playlist/251/3235

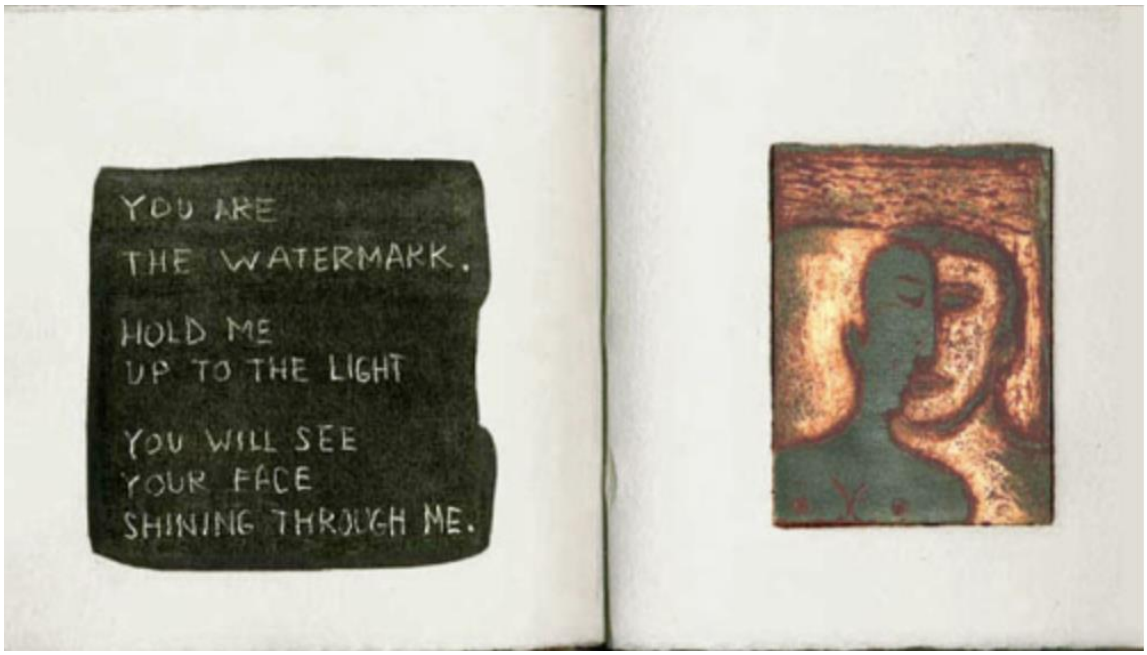

Figure 61: Natalie d'Aarbeloff, *For a Song*, artist's book, 1980.

Image source: Natalie d'Aarbeloff, artist website, accessed June 2023, https://www.nataliedarbeloff.com/fas-seven.html

Thinking about the expressive and analogue styles of Smith, Berssenbrugge and d'Aarbeloff's books informed my initial studio experimentation in response to the interview conversations. I first explored monoprinting, layering colour and hand drawn shapes. In these tests, I responded to colours that participant's used in their drawings thinking about the way women used colour to communicate experiences and emotions. In the studio, I began to work with these colours to explore monoprinting and ghost printing. I mocked up monoprinted pages with typed excerpts from the interviews. While this offered a starting point, I found that the monoprinted pages limited the legibility of the text. During this experimentation I became aware of the responsibility of making creative descisions in presenting and responding to people's lived eperience and I came to understood that the book making process emerged out of multiple contexts: lived experience, the process of analysing interviews and my creative response. Considering these complications, I moved away from thinking about the materiality of ink and monoprinting and returned to the women's drawings and conversations as a starting point for developing the stitched book works.

After experimenting with monoprinting, I sought lino carving for its capacity for further creative control. I chose a range of quotes which highlighted what it meant for the women to live with their uterus and how they understood this organ. Recalling the affective qualities of the books by Smith and d'Aarbeloff, I decided to use my handwriting to transcribe the interview exerpts onto linoleum. I was interested the labour intensive quality of carving blocks of handwriting. The labour and care embedded in this method connected to the temporal, physical and emotional experiences shared in the interview conversations. The choice to use my handwriting, with it's raw yet direct style, inflected the books with a sense of the irregular, personal, and individual. Reflecting on participants' complex experiences with social pressures, medical systems and practicioners, the handwriting moved the books away from a detached or clinical tone. They are intentionally idiosyncratic in style. These time-intensive, almost meditative, methods allowed me to deeply contemplate the interviews, while offering a way to share and visualise participant experiences.



Figure 62: Studio documentation: Carving book plates, 2019-2020.

Image source:
Photography by author.

In their final state the interview books physically and conceptually centre the voice of the participants. The compositional choices in the making of the books was driven by analysis of the interviews and their emergent themes. Clearly presenting the women's stories was a priority. I reflected on their feelings of conflict, shame and silence associated with, for example, menstruation or endometriosis. Many people felt loss, grief, and frustration through medical conditions, at what had happened to their bodies, or experiences with health professionals. Concurrently, the uterus was also connected to feelings of potential and growth. These experiences needed physical space on the page; their voices were key. This drove the compositional decision to centrally place the lino prints on most book pages. Responding to these complex feelings and experiences shared by participants, led me to carve the excerpts and imagery as negative space within the linoleum blocks. As I printed the lino, the text became white space sitting in coloured ink. The relationship between the white text and coloured ink embraced the paradox and contradictions of people's lived experiences with their uterus. These decisions rendered the text both central and infer notions of absence and loss. The paradoxes

and contradictions existing between these two states within the book became a way to explore the complexities of uterine experiences.

I was curious about the everyday objects which people described as they told stories about their uterus. Tampons, menstrual pads, contraceptives, condoms, medical diagrams, period moon cups, and medications were often described by participants as shaping quotidian lives. It was through using, or not using, these objects, and their associated social and cultural meanings, that participants revealed temporal and emotional experiences of their uterus. For example, Nora and Kaitlin described early practices associated with menstration, feelings of shame and the social pressure to hide menstrual pads. The insights from the women, and specifically their explication of complicated, and sometimes negative emotions associted with their uterus, and its functions, resonated with findings from a survey undertaken of over three thousand people who menstrute, or experienced menopause. Authors Karen Pickering and Jane Bennett, who developed the research into *About Bloody Time,* found pervasive "negative attitudes" and a "lack of knowledge."[188] Thinking about the complexities of managing and living with a uterus, I sketched and carved stylised images of the uterine objects. I decided to embed some of the participant's words into the objects that they descibed. Physically enclosing women's quotes into familiar objects, like menstrual pads, became a way to explore social pressures and complex emotions associated with the uterus.

[188] "About Bloody Time," Victorian Women's Trust, accessed June 19, 2023, https://www.vwt.org.au/projects/about-bloody-time/ See also: Karen Pickering, "The taboo around menstruation and menopause doesn't only hurt women," 5 June, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/jun/05/the-taboo-around-menstruation-and-menopause-doesnt-only-hurt-women?CMP=share_btn_fb&fbclid=IwAR3pA6S4ZyKVEKxvE0ZjWAHgbPRhgeOWL6k3HZyCI_c93voOS_lUgDz5unc

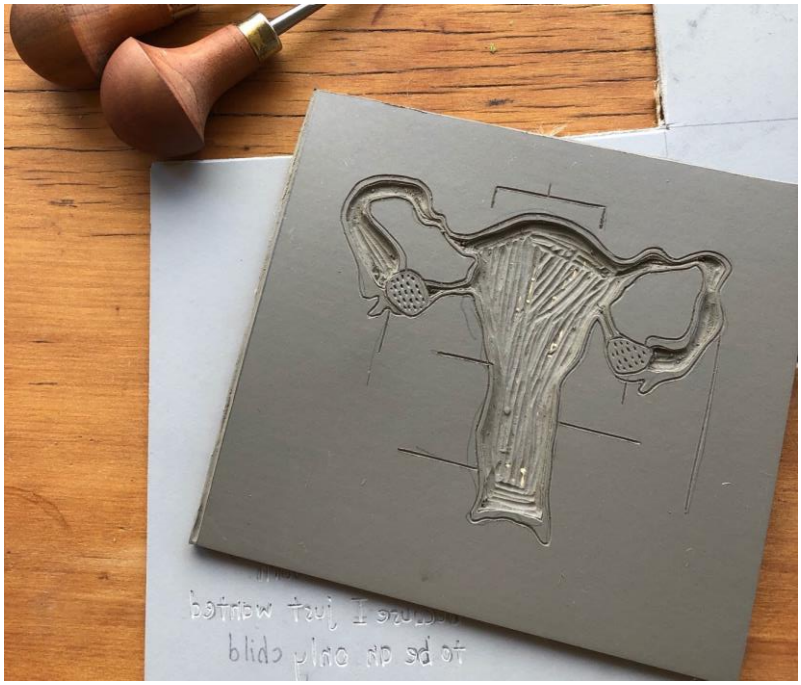

Figure 63: Studio documentation: Carving book plates in response to Evelyn's interview, 2019-2020.

Image source: Photography by author.

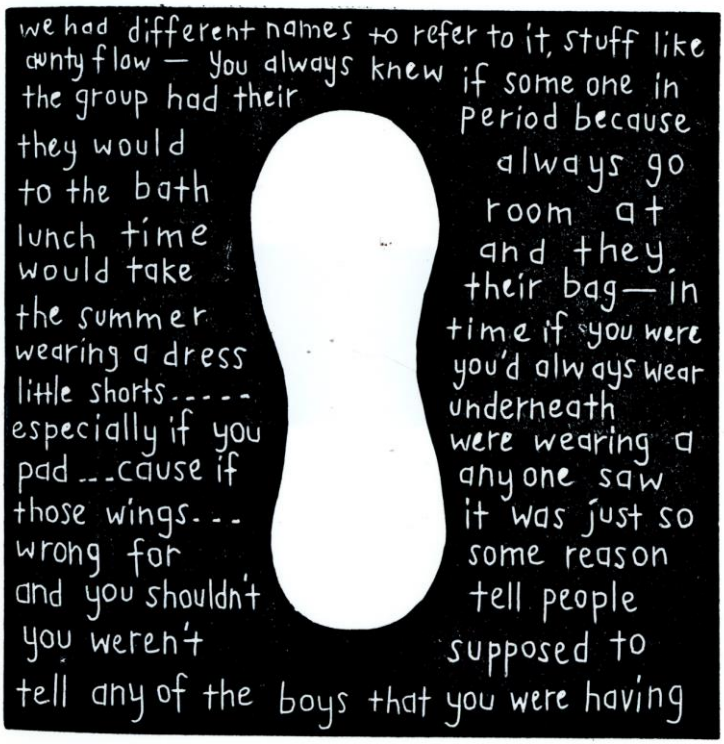

Figure 64: Kaitlin, Interview Book, 2020.

Image source: Photography by author.



Figure 65: Nora, Interview Book, 2020.

Image source:
Photography by author.



Figure 66: Studio documentation: Working with ink, 2020.

Image source:
Photography by author.

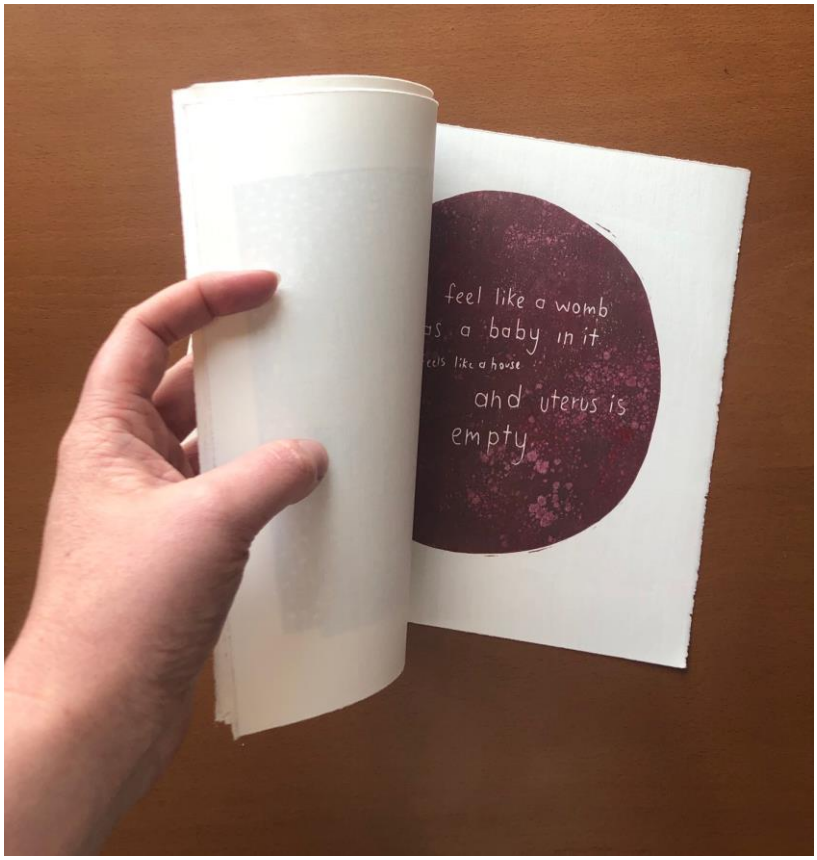

Figure 67:
Documentation of book made in response to the interview with Nora, 2020.

Image source:
Photography by author.

The interview books are a creative, non-traditional mode of presenting qualitative data. American theorist and book artist Johanna Drucker describes the spaciality of a book as "intimate and public at the same time; it mediates between private reflection and broad communication."[189] The book, as Drucker suggests, is a connection point. In my research the interview books connect the women's stories in an intimate and physical way with an audience. To call on artist and scholar Victoria Browne, the interview books are understood as "interactive haptic experiences."[190] Considering this I decided to install the collection of books on a long narrow table with chairs on each side. Viewers would be encouraged to sit, and read, and find space for possible reflection and sharing of their experiences and connections to the themes within the books. The aim was to generate open, public discussion. Future avenues for

[189] Johanna Drucker, "Intimate Authority, Women, Books and the Public-Private," in *The Book as Art: artists' books from the National Museum of Women in the Arts,* eds. Krystyna Wasserman, Audrey Niffenegger and Johanna Drucker, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2007), 14.
[190] Victoria Browne, "Dissemination of Knowledge," in *Printmaking in the Expanded Field,* ed. Jan Pettersson, (Oslo: Oslo National Academy of the Arts, 2017): 59.

research could investigate more collaborative book and printmaking processes with interviewees to enable further creative expression.



Figure 68: Documentation of book made in response to the interview with Stella, 2020

Image source: Photography by author.

Conclusion

In my project, participants' used colour, tone, abstraction and figuration to depict their embodied uterine drawings. Women reflected on their creative choices as ways to communicate and express their experiences and emotion. Some drawings explored participant's interactions with medical practitioners and experiences of medical systems. Other drawings symbolised complicated emotions associated with the uterus, social pressures, and ways in which the uterus is connected to temporal aspirations for the future. For participants the uterus is not *just* an organ in the body; it is culturally and socially coded with emotion, significations, and meanings. The uterine drawings actively re-configure the diagrammatic medical image to reveal individual meaning making. In the creative process of connecting words and images, the making of the interview books offers alternative views to the early modern midwifery text with its sole focus of reproductive function. The books give central space to a multiplicity of voices and experiences. Further articulating and sharing the complexities of uterine experiences, these interview books contribute to a growing academic and creative movement to record and share stories of the body which are embodied and

vernacular. The themes and insights which emerged through the participant drawings and interview.

Chapter Seven

Reflexivity in practice: artefacts and diffractive writing

I am my uterus. I am not my uterus. And it feels everything.

Script, *I am not my uterus,* video work.

In this interstitial chapter I explore a small collection of experimental reflexive artefacts that were made from combining fragments of my creative writing and imagery that developed as a reflection on the practice-based research processes and on thinking through living with a uterus. These artworks might be considered artist books although for this discussion I am calling them reflexive artefacts. Reflexivity generates an acknowledgement of the constructed and situated nature of knowledge[191] and calls for a consideration of researcher positioning. This is equally relevant to both practice-based research, especially a project such as mine that includes mixed methods, and qualitative research in other disciplines. Anthropologist Charlotte Aull Davies describes reflexivity as "a turning back on oneself, a process of self-reference."[192] I documented this "turning back" on myself through experimental writing and the making of artefacts. This experimental writing became a way to find the voice of the woman in the early modern imagery and also foundational in the writing of the scripts and for the video works. Furthermore, it became a way to reflect on the tension between a fixed historical image and contemporary everyday practices. To offer context, I discuss artworks by American artists Mary Kelly, Julie Russell-Steuart and Joan Lyons that investigate reproductive organs.

The doing of this practice-based research was multi-faceted; as established, images and ideas about the uterus were drawn from historical and contemporary avenues. I began thinking about these different encounters as embodied and affective experiences: holding a historical book,

[191] Charlotte Aull Davies, *Reflexive Ethnography: A Guide to Researching Selves and Others* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2008), 7.
[192] Aull Davies, *Reflexive Ethnography,* 4.

drawing in an anatomical museum, and immersing myself in the archive, getting a pap smear or taking the contraceptive pill, and reading the unfolding news about reproductive rights through Roe versus Wade. In sifting through myriad concepts about the uterus, an autoethnographic creative writing developed that included diffractive writing pieces (see Appendix ##) and making of the reflexive artefacts. I was drawn to medical historian Barbara Duden's description of her archival research: "I have passed hours, pouring over old books, searching through musty archives, glimpsing the traces left by bodies of the past."[193] In my own practice-based research processes, I resonated with Duden's evocation of material and conceptual sifting and listening. For example, reading American artist Joan Lyon's 1989 artist book *The Gynaecologist,* which explores an encounter between a woman and her male gynaecologist, led to my experimental diffractive writing piece *The Book (Appendix #).* Through writing, I explored Lyon's book as revealing inky traces of control and power over reproductive bodies. Moreover, this creative engagement with Lyon's work, and more broadly other research processes, created space for me to think through research themes, embodiment and reflect on my positioning as a woman with a uterus.

Over the course of the project, as the reflexive artefacts developed, I investigated other artists' engagement with book making processes, of particular relevance was American artist Julie Russell-Steuart's work *A Forensic Examination of Women's Reproductive Rights*.[194] The flap-book presents layers of an anatomised female torso rendered to recall historical imagery. The printed body is carved open to reveal religious symbols, guns, historical images of a printing press and text. Russell-Steuart's political work presents quotations from past texts on issues of reproductive rights, control, and legislation. In the studio, thinking about my (fruitless) search for women's experiences in early modern midwifery guides, and noting the power of layering in Russell-Steuart's work, I turned to the performative action of cutting into prints. Working

[193] Barbara Duden, "Disembodied Health," *New Perspectives Quarterly,* Vol. 17, no. 1 (2000):57.
[194] Julie Russell-Steuart, "A Forensic Examination of Women's Reproductive Rights" New Artists Book" http://www.caveworkspress.com/forensic-examination-womens-reproductive-rights-new-artists-book/

with discarded and test prints, in particular my relief printed versions of the early modern *Ballad of a Bad Woman*, I experimented with cutting patterns into the prints. This action disrupted the legibility of the ballad. Moreover, I came to realise that by fracturing and fragmenting the text with my hand, something shifted in the power of the anonymous early modern voice who decried women as bad and the "bane of mankind." My performativity, in the cutting of prints, opened ways to converse with historical sources. Through this process I was drawn to feminist theorist Sara Ahmed's call to consider "what is repeated but also about how the repetitions of actions take us in certain directions."[195] I came to see that the actions of fracturing, cutting into and re-imagining historical uterine imagery, through the reflexive artefacts and broader research, revealed and disrupted anatomical imagery which reinscribed ideas of reproductive function.



Figure 69: Julie Russell-Steuart, A Forensic Examination of Women's Reproductive Rights, artist book, n.d.

Image source: Julie Russell-Steuart, artist website, accessed June 2023, http://www.caveworkspress.com/forensic-examination-womens-reproductive-rights-new-artists-book/

[195] Ahmed, "Orientations Matter," 246.



Figure 70: Angelica Harris-Faull, Ballad of a Bad Woman, concertina, 2017.

Image source: Photograph by Rosina Possingham.

Building on the emotive and affective potential of paper cutting as disruptive and a way to carve spaces of absence and presence within the reflexive artefacts, I carved words with a scalpel blade into paper. In the work (cut out piece) I reflect on my encounters with early modern midwifery guides, searching for a sense of the everyday lives of the female bodies depicted as woodblock prints. The action of cutting into and removing parts of prints created spaces of absence. The removal of paper, to form the words 'looking,' explored the contradictions between ubiquity and absence that I found in historical archives. Furthermore, there was a tension in looking again and again at the flat, stuck image of the anatomised early modern female body. Once carved, printed, and assembled as an artefact, I placed the circular piece on my studio table. and began to play with lighting. As the artefact was stretched out across the table with a desk lamp projecting light from above, I was intrigued by the shadows cast by the artefact and their resonance with historical traces. While these artefacts mirror the analogue or raw style of the Interview books the former reveals delicacy and ephemeral qualities. 'Looking' is segmented and sequential and evokes unstable movement. It literally and figuratively cast shadows, which caused me to think about the ways that history and social

constructions cast shadows through time. How might these traces be unsettled through contemporary experience and printmaking? I reflected again on the early modern female bodies that were cut into and splayed open to reveal their inner workings and reproductive value - a fixed image or idea embedded in a historical archive. These ideas formed through this reflexive practice and connected with my research questions. I began to visualise ways that the iterative power of printmaking and the embodied nature of ink could actively destabilise early modern depictions of the female, specifically the uterus. I posit this practice as a way to reimagine the early modern, medicalised imagery of the uterus and understand the traces, the cutting into, and embedding of text and imagery, as foreshadowing evocations that manifest in the video works, which are discussed in the next chapter.

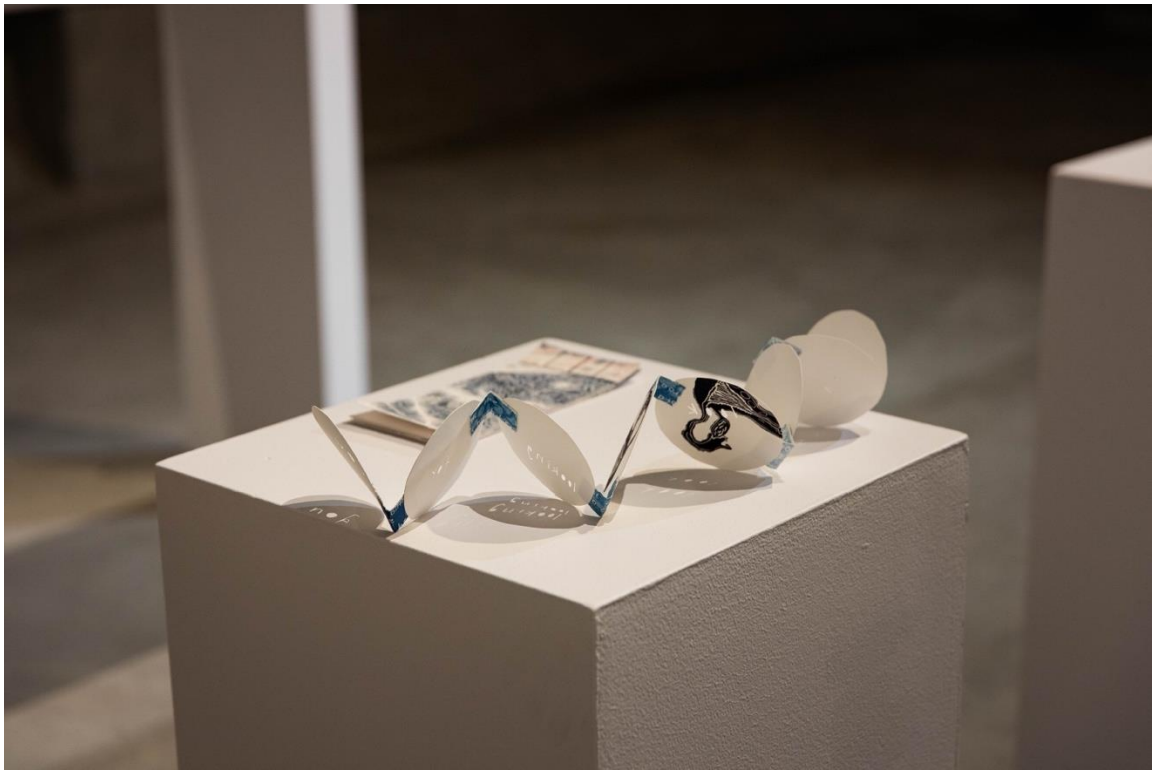

Figure 71: Installation view at SASA Gallery, University of South Australia. Works documented: Angelica Harris-Faull, *Looking*, circular concertina piece, 2017 and *Contraception Study 3: The Bloody Flux (tracing herbals)*, stitched and paper cut work, 2017.

Image source: Photograph by Rosina Possingham.



Figure 72: Installation view at SASA Gallery, University of South Australia. Works documented: Angelica Harris-Faull, *Looking*, circular concertina piece, 2017 and *Contraception Study 3: The Bloody Flux (tracing herbals)*, stitched and paper cut work, 2017.

Image source: Photograph by Rosina Possingham.

Through this practice-based research, I recorded my experiences of embodiment, specifically in relation to my reproductive organs. I was drawn to other artist's explorations of positionality and embodiment. For example, American artist Mary Kelly's *Post-Partum Document,* made from 1973 to 1979, explored her multifaceted relationship with her child from birth. *Post-Partum Document* was made during a period of challenging social systems through political activism; Kelly was an "active member of the women's movement of this time."[196] Her reflexive work employs the everyday materials of mothering to explore psychanalytic concepts, care-giving and embodied gendered labour.[197] Noting the traces of embodiment evoked through the textual and material qualities in Kelly's work, in my own work, reflexive writing and artefact making became a way to understand to my uterine experiences.



Figure 73: Mary Kelly, Post-Partum Document: Documentation 11, Installation View, Generali Foundation, Perspex units, white card, wood, ink, rubber, 1973-1979.

Image source: Mary Kelly, artist website, accessed June 2023, https://www.marykellyartist.com/post-partum-document-1973-79

[196] Paula McCloskey, "Post-Partum Document and Affect", *Studies in the Maternal,* vol. 5, no. 1 (2013): 2.
[197] "Post-Partum Document, 1973-79," Mary Kelly, accessed 2 May 2023, https://www.marykellyartist.com/post-partum-document-1973-79

Pap smears, taking contraception, menstruation and interactions with health professionals shaped my sense of the uterus inside my body. The small artefact titled *A Stilted Morning* documented my visit to the doctor for a pap smear. In black pen and serif styled handwriting, I explored a poetic writing style to evoke the cold plastic against my skin and the doctor's repeated attempts to insert the speculum into my vagina. Recording this uncomfortable encounter made the event, that happens behind closed doors, visible. Other reflexive artefacts and diffractive writing pieces, including *You only know if you try – the Mirena* and *The Pill* considered experiences of menstruation and contraception. These pieces document my experiences and were critical in helping me to thinking through what it meant to have this unpredictable, temporal organ inside my body. The artefacts and writing also helped me to position these experiences as just one way of understanding the uterus. The interviews, discussed in the previous chapter, revealed the many different and varied experiences of people with uteri.



Figure 74: Angelica Harris-Faull, *Contraceptive Study 4: A Stilted Morning (cheeky cervix)*, stitched book, 10 x 10 cm, 2017.

Image source: Photograph by Rosina Possingham.



Figure 75: Angelica Harris-Faull, *Contraceptive Study 4: A Stilted Morning (cheeky cervix)*, stitched book, 10 x 10 cm, 2017.
Image source: Photograph by Rosina Possingham.



Figure 76: *Contraception Study 3: The Bloody Flux (tracing herbals)*, stitched and paper cut work, 2017.
Image source: Photograph by Rosina Possingham.

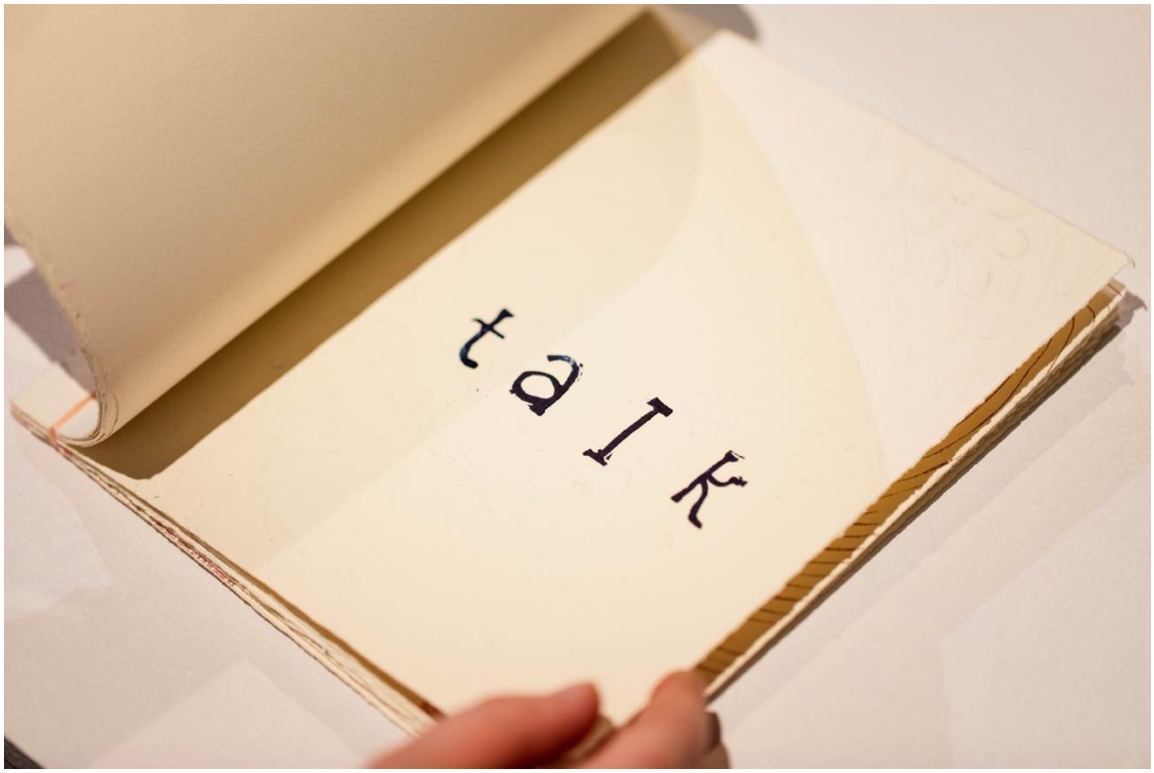

Figure 77: Angelica Harris-Faull, *All the women talk about is their cunts*, linoleum prints on paper, embossing, stitched book, 20 x 19 cm, 2017-2018.

Image source: Photograph by Rosina Possingham.

In conclusion, the reflexive artefacts and diffractive experimental writing developed through my engagement with the practice-based research. These experimental pieces became ways to think through the doing of the creative practice and bring reflexivity into the project. This turning back on oneself recalled a consideration of positioning, which was key to working in the studio. Furthermore, everyday social practices and embodied experiences were made visible. Importantly, these fragmentary pieces formed key bridges to the generation of other artworks, specifically the video works which are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Eight

The Cyclic Uterus: temporality and embodiment in video works

Introduction

> *…our bodies are full of power, and furthermore their power is not despite but because of their manifest vulnerabilities.*[198]
>
> Olivia Laing, 2021

This chapter explores the development of video works which extended my use of relief printmaking processes to investigate themes of embodiment, temporality, and the uterus as a space of ambiguity, contradiction, and paradox. It became clear from my research that women understood their uterus through temporality and a sense of ambiguity. A uterus is experienced through cycles of contraception, menstruation, pregnancy, and menopause and through absence, removal, miscarriage, abortion, change, loss, growth, and associated emotions. This insight, generated from conversations with women and people with a uterus, came to deeply shape my actions in the studio and my practice. In this chapter, I discuss the making of key video works: *Two thousand six hundred and eighty-eight pills* and *I am not my uterus.* I also discuss *Pressing 1* and *Flow (in my body)*, two works that were formative explorations of video methods that shaped the final video work, *I am not my uterus.* I posit repetition, voice, ink, and temporality as affective means to unsettle and re-imagine uterine representations. These video works chart experimentation with print processes, as I used my body as a substrate for inking and printed materials. The final video work, *I am not my uterus,* returns to the body as a site of embodied knowledge. To contextualise these video works, I discuss artworks by Polish artist Zuzanna Dyrda, Ukrainian American artist Katrina Majkut, Costa Rican artist Priscilla Romero, English artist Bee Hughes.

[198] Olivia Laing, *Everybody A Book about Freedom* (London: Picador, 2021), 15.

Embodied Labour, Contraception, and the Uterus

Every day, for over 7 years, I swallowed a contraceptive Pill. I used the Pill to have sex without getting pregnant, to control my period, and because it was the only option suggested by my doctor when I was a teenager. Contraception is used for a broad range of reasons; it prevents pregnancy enabling choice and agency.[199] It is used to manage menstruation, pain, and medical conditions. Contraceptives support non-binary and trans people's gender-affirmation processes.[200] There is no singular history of contraceptives; they are complex, politicised, and replete with issues of eugenics, class, and access.[201] Barrier, hormonal, long-acting reversible, fertility tracking, and emergency contraception require different levels of temporal and economic work. Medical sociologist Katrina Kimport states that "fertility work" reflects "the physical burdens, of contraception, including side effects, but also the associated time, attention and stress."[202] Contraception is embodied labour.[203]

Labour materialised as a key theme in conversations with women who spoke about the financial and emotional work, over time, involved in living with a uterus. Kaitlin expressed her frustration with the Pill and stated, "I can do other contraceptives that I don't have to remember to take every day and that don't cost me as much money."[204] Similarly, Deidre stated "it was

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[199] See for example: Helen Calabretto, "Emergency Contraception - Knowledge and Attitudes in a Group of Australian University Students." *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* 33, no. 3 (2009): 234–39. And: Britta Wigginton, Melissa L. Harris, Deborah Loxton, Danielle Herbert, and Jayne Lucke, "The Feminisation of Contraceptive Use: Australian Women's Accounts of Accessing Contraception," *Feminism & Psychology* 25, no. 2 (2015): 178–98.

[200] I referred to resources developed by *TransHub: Health and Gender Affirmation in NSW*, and specifically "Contraception," accessed 20 June, 2023, https://www.transhub.org.au/contraception Additionally: Claire E. Lunde, Rebecca Spigel, Catherine M Gordon, Christine B. Sieberg, Beyond the Binary: Sexual and Reproductive Health Considerations for Transgender and Gender Expansive Adolescents, Frontiers in Reproductive Health, vol. 3 (2021): https://doi.org/10.3389/frph.2021.670919

[201] As stated there are numerous histories of contraception. Reference points which I looked to were: Hera Cook, *The Long Sexual Revolution* (United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2004) and as an introduction: Carol A. Quarini, "A History of Contraception," *Women's Health Medicine*, vol. 2, no. 5 (2005): 28-30.

[202] Katrina Kimport, "More Than a physical Burden: Women's Mental and Emotional Work in Preventing Pregnancy," *The Journal of Sex Research,* vol. 55, 9, (2018): 1096.

[203] Britta Wigginton, Mellissa L. Harris, Deb Loxton, and Jayne Lucke, "Who takes responsibility for contraception, according to young Australian women?", *Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare*, vol. 15 (2018): 2-9.

[204] Kaitlin, (pseudonym), research participant, interview by Angelica Harris-Faull, 2018, 6.

irritating to be taking it all the time."[205] In addition to this onerous labour women objected to attitudes of health professionals. Evelyn stated,

> I felt like I was being judged for going on the pill and the doctor was always saying 'you know you must take it every day and if you miss a pill, you know you're going to get pregnant, and make sure your partner, boyfriend, whoever is wearing a condom as well because the pill is only 97%.[206]

Evelyn is positioned by the doctor as responsible not only, for daily management, but also ensuring the contraceptive use of her partner. She highlights the unequal nature of fertility work, and sexual and gendered assumptions within that inequity.[207] For the women the often-daily labour of the uterus shaped their quotidian experiences. Reflecting on the linking of labour and the uterus I was interested in how artists represented contraceptives, and in particular I was drawn to Ukrainian American artist Katrina Majkut's embroidered works.

Majkut's textile-based series *In Control,* employs embroidery as a "feminist empowerment tool" to document a range of devices and practices associated with the reproductive body, including contraceptives and surgical instruments for abortion procedures.[208] Contraception in Majkut's works intersect the personal and the political. *In Control* evokes questions of choice and bodily autonomy. The works speak to the feminist history of textiles and also the contested landscape of reproductive rights in America. Majkut's labour-intensive stitching recalls artist Sera Water's concept of "repetitive crafting," where a "relationship between body and material is bound by

[205] Deidre, (pseudonym), research participant, interview by Angelica Harris-Faull, 2018, 5.
[206] Evelyn, (pseudonym), research participant, interview by Angelica Harris-Faull, 2018, 10.
[207] A large study (2544 participants from USA, UK, Germany, Italy, and Spain) which employed a quantitative survey of heterosexual women aged between 25-44 found that medical practitioners, and specifically doctors are a major influence on individual's contraceptive decisions and choices. Additionally, the study found that changing contraception methods was frequent, with concerns of side effects a factor. See: Sarah Johnson, Christine Pion, Victoria Jennings, "Current methods and attitudes of women towards contraception in Europe and America," *Reproductive Health,* vol. 10, no. 7 (2013): 9.
[208] "Artist Statement," Katrina Majkut, artist website, accessed 23 June 2023, https://www.katrinamajkut.com/artist-statement

long periods of concentrated time."[209] The "repetitive crafting" employed in Majkut's *In Control* makes visible the labour of reproductive health care. Majkut's needlepoint embroidery employs precise and systematic stitching that amplify a sense of controlling and ordering the reproductive body. The works contribute to conversations about autonomy, reproductive choice, and power. The repetitive crafting in Majkut's works resonated with my labour-intensive lino carving.



Figure 78: Katrina Majkut, *In Control 5*, thread on aida cloth, 10 x 10 in., 2017.

Image source: Katrina Majkut, artist website, accessed June 2023, https://www.katrinamajkut.com/cross-stitch-works

[209] Sera Waters, "Repetitive Crafting: The Shared Aesthetic of Time in Australian Contemporary Art," 69.



Figure 79: Katrina Majkut, *Contraceptive Implant*, thread on aida cloth, 10 x 10 in., 2015.

Image source: Katrina Majkut, artist website, accessed June 2023, https://www.katrinamajkut.com/cross-stitch-works

In my practice I was interested in visualising contraception, as it was key to many women's discussions of their uterus. In the studio, pondering the ways in which the uterus is entangled with embodied, financial, and emotional labour, I decided to carve a life-sized lino version of my contraceptive pill packet. The words of my participants resonated; the daily use of a contraceptive had also shaped my experience of reproductive organs. This connection became the instigator for examining notions of labour and time in the stop-motion video work *Two thousand six hundred and eighty-eight pills*. Over several weeks in the studio, as I took the pill at the same time each day, I also repeatedly printed the Pill packet matrix at the same time each day. Enacting this practice of cumulative, time focused, printing became a way to make tangible and visible the uterine work described by participants and my own labour. Eventually, I printed the total number of contraceptive pills that I had consumed in my lifetime; *Two thousand six hundred and eighty-eight pills.*

Initially, I decided to test print the matrix in black as a response to the ink used in early modern woodblocks. However, as I reached the end of the hormonal pills in my packet and the cyclical

bleeding from my uterus began, I observed a spectrum of changing colours on my menstrual pad. In evaluating these colours, I shifted my approach in the studio as I recognised the potential for ink as an affective material. In response to the blood changing over time, I experimented with mixing and printing inks that ranged from pale pinks to muddy deep reds. I mixed the ink roughly so that different hues maintained some integrity and then applied it variably, thinly, and at other times to excess across the matrix. The ink began to bleed and seep into the carved marks of the matrix, disrupting the legibility of the pill packet. The uneven, messy ink resonated with the variable and changing blood. In contrast to Majkut's fixed and measured works, in my practice I was interested in how these ink-based disruptions altered each impression of the pill packet, thereby, evoking a sense of shifting temporality and embodiment. I consciously disrupted the ink, and inking process recognising an affective means to express the cycles of the uterus, its bleeding, and to evoke an experience of the daily labour of contraception.

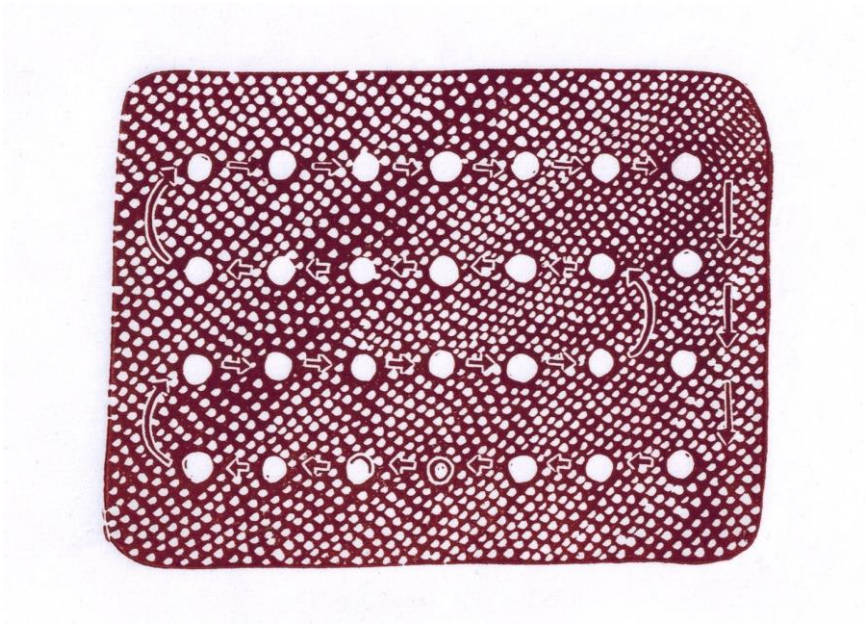

Figure 80: Angelica Harris-Faull, *Two thousand six hundred and eighty-eight pills*, test lino print on paper, 2018.

Image source: Photograph by author.



Figure 81: *Two thousand six hundred and eighty-eight pills*, 96 lino prints on paper, 2018. Variant of three lino plates. 2018 documentation of test installation in studio, shingled wall prints.

Image source: Photograph by the author.

The repetitive printing of the contraceptive pill packet matrix resulted in a large stack of prints. In the studio, and for critiques, I tested different installation approaches, investigating how to communicate to an audience my thinking about the work involved in having a uterus. This led to layering the wall with prints to amplify the scale of the contraceptive pills, and trialling sequencing the pill packets to draw out ideas of time shifting. I tried placing the prints as a tall stack on a table. In contrast to the sequencing of the wall arrangement, this created a sense of weight. In evaluating the effects of different installation choices, I questioned the static nature of these prints. Thinking about time, movement, and destabilising static qualities, I flicked through the prints as if they were a small flip book, which created a series of fast-moving images. I was intrigued by the flickering movement across the pill packets; and realised

movement might enact this notion of temporal labour and managing the uterus. Further investigating movement and experimenting with methods to activate the prints, I decided to scan the static prints and sequence them in an editing program. The prints accumulated and started to pulse and jolt as one inky contraceptive pill packet merged into another. Seeping disordered inked prints developed an energy evoking the passage of time and inflecting the works with a sense of embodiment and temporality.

As I continued to edit *Two thousand six hundred and eighty-eight pills*, the women's comments about the daily work of contraception played through my mind. I wanted to heighten the cyclical repetition of the prints as a way to bring attention to this work. I recorded myself repeating the days of the week, first evenly and then imbued with pauses. I was drawn to academic Lisa Hodge who describes reading aloud as: "it is in the pauses and gaps and motion that readers can insert their own lived experiences and their 'various selves to create embodied knowledges.'"[210] In *Two thousand six hundred and eighty-eight pills* an image of a contraceptive pill packet repeats, and we hear the rhythm of this labour as the days of the week are spoken. Hodge highlights the affective qualities of reading for a listener and my voice brought an affective quality to the video. Seeking other affective ways to connect with an audience I decided to present the video on a small screen; this afforded proximity, and with the voice, another way to draw a viewer closer to the work. Furthermore, the intimate size of the video, enabled me to contrast the scale of the daily work involved in managing the uterus.

The development of this work, and specifically the experimentation with ink, voice, and repetition pointed toward the capacity for video methods to generate emotion and consider ambiguity. *Two thousand six hundred and eighty-eight pills* documented uterine labour to affectively communicate the temporality of the uterus. This formative work with video methods

[210] Lisa Hodge, "Creative Endeavours in Eating Disorder Research," in *Critical and Creative Research Methodologies in Social Work,* ed. Lia Bryant (London: Routledge, 2015), 161.

became an avenue for thinking through research themes and informed subsequent works discussed in this chapter.

The Body and Matrix

The activation of prints through stop-motion methods led to considering works by contemporary artists who have shifted traditional printmaking processes through performance and with their body. Zuzanna Dyrda, a Polish artist, presents performance and installation work in which the body becomes both the matrix and the substrate. Dyrda's 2017 series *Brudas,* challenges the matrix-press relationship as bodies become the imprinted surface. Dyrda states, "parts of the matrix are printed on different body parts; they overlap and blur."[211] This work becomes performative as individuals choose to engage with specific inked areas in the carved wooden structure. Costa Rican print-based artist Priscilla Romero also works with the body in an expanded print field. She casts from the surface of the body to form matrices for print installation works. Cast with liquid latex, Romero's "graphic objects," hold intimate impressions of human skin.[212] Dyrda and Romero's works resist and extend printmaking conventions; revealing transformative and liminal embodied experiences with printmaking processes.[213] The matrices in these works become participatory sites; multiple bodies engage with the matrix or impart their own bodily traces as both matrix and printed form. These expanded and embodied print practices informed the development of video work in this project, and my experimentation with the body as a matrix.

[211] Zuzanna Dyrda, "Zuzanna Dyrda: Works," accessed 15 May, 2020, http://zuzannadyrda.weebly.com/bio.html
[212] Barbara Chojnacka and Kajetan Giziński, *Embodied Memory, Exhibition of works by Priscilla Romero* (Krakow, Poland: Modern Art Gallery), n.p
[213] Art historical antecedents for Dyrda and Romero's bodily print works could be traced to performative body-impression works, for example Yves Klein's 1960's series, *Anthropometries.*



Figure 82: Zuzanna Dyrda, *Brudas*, print on skin, digital print, 105 x 70 cm, 2017.

Image source: Zuzanna Dyrda, artist website, accessed June 2023, https://zuzannadyrda.weebly.com/brudas--slob.html



Figure 83: Priscilla Romero, Details of the artwork *Raise your hand*, 2019.

Image source: Priscilla Romero, artist website, accessed June 2023, http://www.priscillaromeroart.com

Relationships with time and the body are intertwined through the performative nature of Dyrda and Romero's print-based works. Dyrda's performance and installation work *Brudas* and *I am Just Pawn* alters a temporal and sensorial relationship with printmaking processes, as the participant becomes the substrate for ink. The performance becomes a time lapsed video artwork documenting the body becoming inked. Romero's print installations record the ephemeral surface of the human body through inky lines and marks, in effect pausing a moment of embodied temporality. In the studio, I reflected on the relationship between my own body and the printed materials I had generated through the practice led research. I realised that the feelings of social and personal pressure and different emotions connected to the uterus, which I had encountered through the historical and interview research processes, had come to shape my thinking in studio. These observations led me to film myself interacting with printed matter. I documented my hand rolling ink, my skin flecked with ink, and explored sticking dried prints dipped in water onto my skin. These tactile experiments brought me closer to the sensorial processes of printmaking – I felt the stickiness of the ink and the pressure of the prints applied to my body. This became the foundation for two experimental video works, *Pressing 1* and *Flow (being in my body)* which I have come to understand as pathways to the final video work, *I am not my uterus,* discussed later in this chapter.

Pressing I, began as I cut a red print into a circular shape and noted the abstracted patterns that evoked internal organs and the linework in early modern woodblocks. The circular print reminded me of the earlier re-imagining of the uterine interior in the *Womb Imaginings* series, discussed in Chapter Five. Recognising the static nature of this earlier wall-based work, I tested what would happen if I placed the print onto my own abdomen. With the camera recording, I began feeling the print on my stomach with my fingers – tracing its outline and watching it bulge as I pressed into it. These actions, and specifically the physical registers of pressure, connected to the experience of printing a relief matrix with the press. Working in an editing program with the recordings; I drew again on the process of repetition and duplicated my hand pressing into the print. Emerging from this performative process was a sense of uncertainty

and a feeling of pressure located in and arising from my body. This pressure was ambiguous, and the performative actions alluded to social constructions of reproductive function. I decided to intercut the footage of my abdomen with found archival recordings that document the pressurised canning of vegetables in a factory production line. This footage represented a ceaseless reproduction recalling early modern connections of the uterus as a field to be farmed. In contrast to the intimacy of earlier small-scale video works, *Pressing 1* explored heightened scale in a bid to consider the relentless, timeless, and ubiquitous, connection of the uterus with reproductive function.

In evaluating this work, I came to recognise the disconnect, or disjunct between the mechanised footage and the video recording of my hand and body. Through further reflection the footage of mechanised canning was attempting to draw on notions of agrarian reproduction and allude to the uterus as a reproductive vessel. These connections, I realised were unclear and restricted in their capacity to address the research questions. While overall the realisation of *Pressing 1* held limitations, the process of making the work, specifically the interaction between my body and printed matter, video editing and working with large scale projection, generated a further way to explore the uterus as a time-based organ inflected with socio-cultural meanings. Importantly, these evaluations and video-based experiments informed my decision to further investigate the relationship between my body and printing processes in the development of the final video work, *I am not my uterus.*

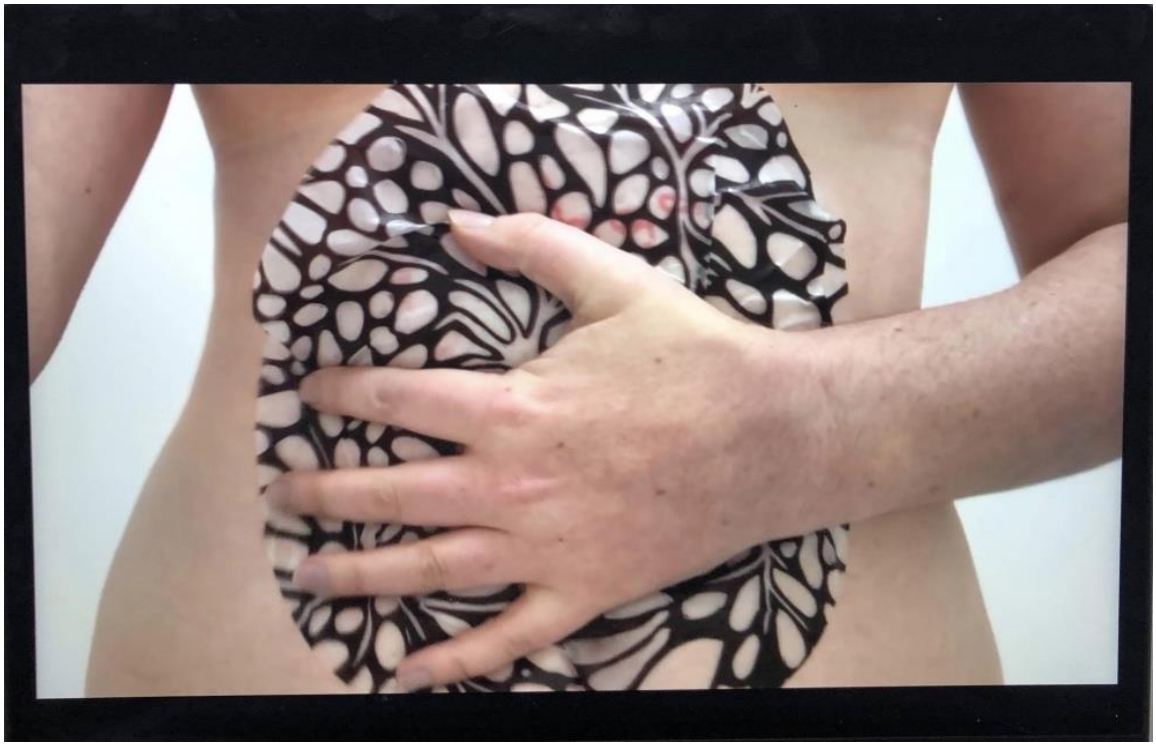

Figure 84: Angelica Harris-Faull, video experimentation: *Pressing 1*, 2019.

Image source: Photograph by author.



Figure 85: Angelica Harris-Faull, *Pressing 1,* 2019. Presented as a large video projection for the examination exhibition, SASA Gallery, University of South Australia.

Image source: Photograph by Rosina Possingham.

In *Flow (being in my body),* I recalled the early modern *Ballad of a Bad Woman*, which I had re-imagined as a lino carving in Chapter 3 and 7. Building on the pressing of prints onto my body in *Pressing 1,* I wondered what the experience of this lino carving would be if I became immersed in the print. Experimenting with physically interacting with prints led to projecting images and light onto my body. In appraising this work, I recognised limitations as images lost legibility when projected. I saw these studio-based experiments as bringing my body into relationship with ink and prints, but they lacked clarity. I sought to push these methods further to investigate my research question. How could ink and printmaking, in conversation with video and my body re-imagine the early modern understanding of the uterus? The insights gained through evaluating *Pressing 1* and *Flow (being in my body)* were foundational in further exploring the potential of video and printmaking processes culminating in the final video work titled, *I am not my uterus.*

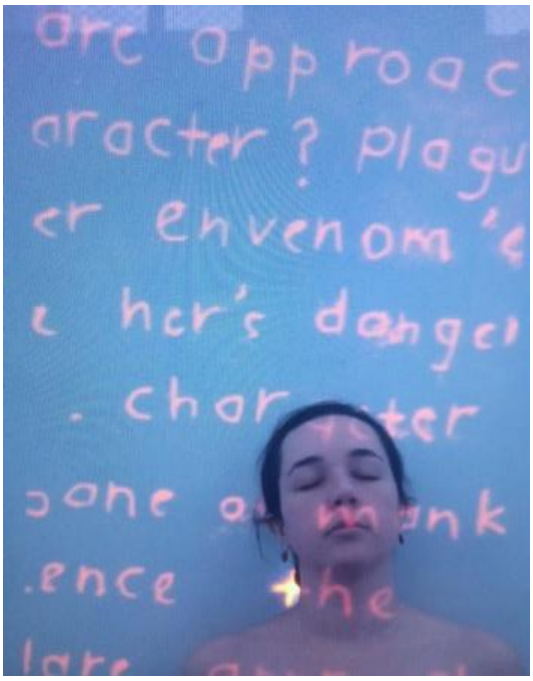

Figure 86: Angelica Harris-Faull, *The Character of a Bad Woman*, early modern ballad carved into linoleum and projected on my body, video experimentation, 2017.

Image source: Photograph by author.

Embodied Knowledge and Diffractive Disruptions in *I am not my uterus*

Historian Barbara Baird states that "histories are active constructions of the past which play a key role in constructing the present, both discursively and materially."[214] My practice led research has shown that significations and representations of the uterus have accumulated and sedimented over time. Baird and Ahmed's theories of sedimentation and stickiness underpin the video work *I am not my uterus.* This video addresses my research questions through building on insights from earlier video work, specifically drawing on the affective potential of ink, voice, and reiteration. Importantly, in the making of this work, I returned to uterine understandings generated through the women's conversations and drawings. As explained in Chapter 6, the embodied knowledge communicated by the women reflected the complexities and ambiguous or varied experiences that were absent in both early modern imagery and in contemporary medicalised imagery of the uterus. The women's affective articulations of what it meant to live with a uterus unsettled the historical imagery discussed earlier in this exegesis.

Early iterations of I am not my uterus

I am not my uterus reimagines early modern conceptions of the uterus through embodied Lino printing and video. The approaches taken in earlier video works, where I filmed printed glassine adhered onto my body and prints projected onto my body felt unresolved. I decided to return to the source so to speak – to the pages of Jane Sharp's midwifery guide and the enduring image of the anatomised and anonymised woman. Ideas explored throughout this research, specifically about time, the repetition of historical imagery, movement, and embodied contemporary women's experiences began to coalesce in the studio in unexpected and uncertain ways. I considered how moving image might tease out these thoughts and experiences. In the studio I started to transfer diffractive actions of cutting, layering and collaging through a digital video editing program. The pages of Sharp's guide became the foundation for the video. In Figure 87, I digitally 'papercut' layers of the early modern uterus to create a flower-like form to amplify the dissection of the uterus and the anatomised figure. I

[214] Barbara Baird, "The self-aborting women," *Australian Feminist Studies,* vol. 13, no. 28 (1998): 324.

positioned the papercut layers to draw attention to the woman's face; it felt like she was at the core of this work. As more and more layers of cut historical imagery accumulated, I experimented with animating the sequence to create a sense of shifting or moving through the print-based imagery. Documented in Figure 88, to amplify the movement, I disrupted the historical imagery by introducing my own prints that were abstracted through digital distortions of changes in colour, transparency, and focus.

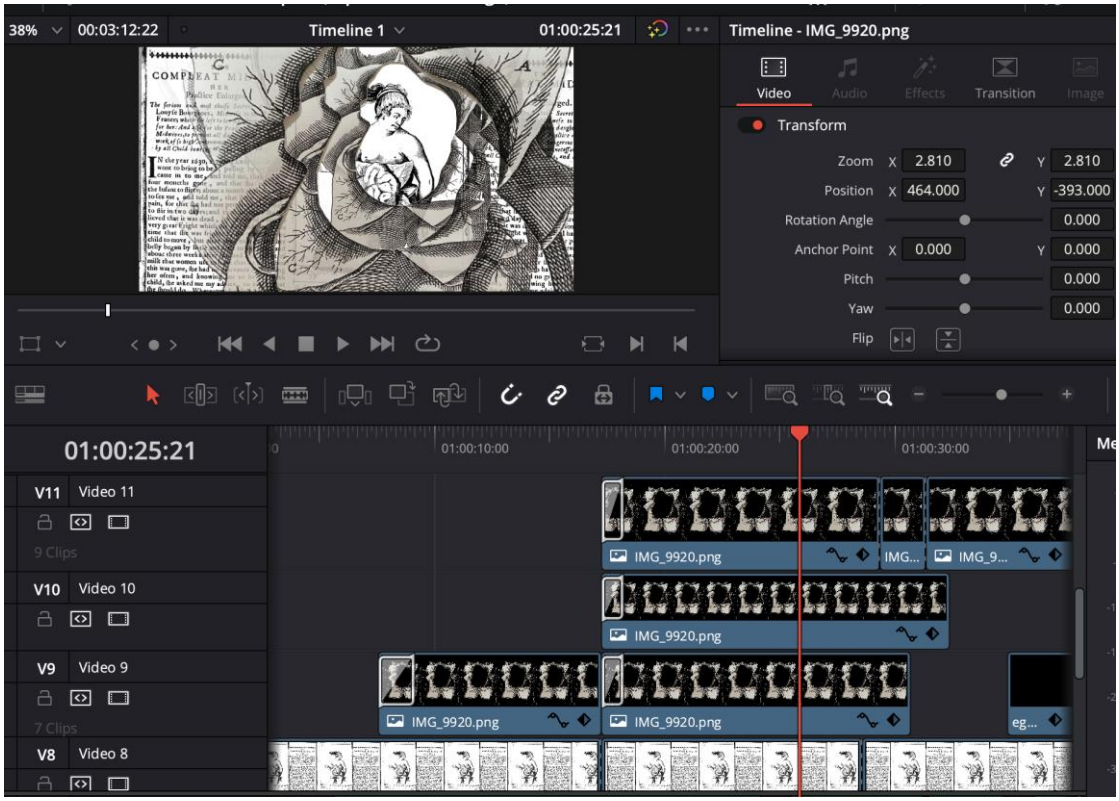

Figure 87: Angelica Harris-Faull, *I am not my uterus*, documentation of layering and working with transparency, video editing in development, 2023.

Image source: Photograph by author.



Figure 88: Angelica Harris-Faull, *I am not my uterus*, video still: documentation of the layering and abstracting lino prints through editing in development, 2023.

Image source: Photograph by author

The pages of the midwifery text were formative for the initial structure and conception of *I am not my uterus.* As the work developed, I recognised the constraints of working within the physical parameters of the early modern guide, and questioned whether this processes of animating historical imagery were speaking to the numerous present-day uterine experiences that I had come to understand throughout the project. UK based artist and researcher, Bee Hughes' work resonated as I was developing, *I am not my uterus*. Hughes works with their body to create impressions that reveal menstruation, and bodily cycles, as complex, individual, and formed by socio-cultural notions. The still-image work, *Dys-men-o-rrho-ea* (2019) documents a private performance in which Hughes' naked body is painted with broad brush strokes of different tones of deep red paint. The paint that coagulates across Hughes' abdomen make perceptible and tangible the "physical and emotional pain, discomfort and dislocation" caused by period-related pain and conditions.[215] The "performative gestures" drawn on in Hughes'

[215] Bee Hughes, artist website, accessed 20 June 2023, https://www.beehughes.co.uk/selectedworks

work evoke an experience of, and "illustrate a menstrual cycle that does not fit the normal descriptors provided by medical texts."[216] In a similar vein, Majkut's contraceptive works, press home the notion that the representation and visibility of varied uterine experiences matter. To call on Ahmed, "a body has to accumulate momentum to have any capacity to intervene in a sedimented history."[217] It is through the cumulative presentation and imagining of different uterine images and experiences that we see ourselves reflected. Through different methods, Hughes, and I both employ our bodies and the evocative potential of ink, or paint, to make visible the embodied processes of the uterus, as complicated and contextual. Where my work departs from these considerations is through the inclusion of voice and video.



Figure 89: Bee Hughes, Dys-*men-o-rrho-ea* (2019).

Image source: Bee Hughes, artist website, accessed June 2023,

https://www.beehughes.co.uk/selectedworks/hr50lv5h9tik6l3migev2jtsvkfgzi

[216] Bee Hughes, "Challenging Menstrual Norms in Online Medical Advice: Deconstructing Stigma through Entangled Art Practice," *Feminist Encounters: A Journal of Critical Studies in Culture and Politics,* vol. 2, no. 2 (2018): 9.
[217] Sigrid Schmitz, Sara Ahmed, "Affect/Emotion: Orientation Matters. A Conversation between Sigrid Schmitz and Sara Ahmed," *Freiburger Zeitschrift für GeschlechterStudien,* (December 2014): 106, DOI: 10.3224/fzg.v20i2.17137

Two thousand six hundred and eighty-eight pills revealed the affective potential of the voice in video works, with this awareness I decided to again call upon the registers of voice. While immersed in cutting, collaging, and layering imagery generated through the research, and the woodblocks from Sharp's text, a key turning point in the development of the work emerged. Instead of the earlier investigations of absence and presence, I decided to approach Sharp's anatomised woman differently. I imagined her and her voice. The script evolved to explore what it felt like to be the woman in the guide – peeled open by other people's hands and reduced to a reproductive field to be farmed. I found connections with Hughes's caution that if people who menstruate and menstruation are only framed through a "reproductive lens… (it) assumes that the menstruator desires pregnancy and reduces the potential of their bodies to be and be seen only as vessels for carrying babies."[218] I wondered what would happen if I drew together the early modern woman's voice and the themes which arose through the interviews, specifically the different experiences that the women associated with their uterus.

Returning to Ahmed's evocation of accumulation and sedimentation as active and embodied processes, in the script I decided to draw on the different emotions described by the women – "apprehension, pain, joy, fear, uncertainty, anger, frustration, potential, and entangled."[219] Drawing together the contemporary voices and the imagined voice of the early modern woman spoke to the complexities and ambiguities of one organ holding so many multiple meanings: "I am my uterus. I am not my uterus."[220] In its final form, the script was voiced by actor and writer Sheila Duncan who inflected the text with an emotive resonance and depth to effectively disrupt reproductive narratives of early modern uterine imagery.

Embodied Temporality, Cycles and Reiterations

In response to the script and looking to different modes to reimagine and unsettle the historical uterine imagery, I returned to sketching the woodblock of the anatomised woman and the vein-

[218] Hughes, "Challenging Menstrual Norms," 5.
[219] Video script. See *I am not my uterus,* video artwork.
[220] Video script. See *I am not my uterus,* video artwork.

like patterns on the placenta, an element which I had not previously explored. A network of veins connects the body to the uterus, and vice versa. These veins suggest connectivity and relationality. Looking to expand on these ideas, I re-carved an abstracted version of the veins. I printed the matrix on glassine, the transparent paper used in *Pressing 1,* for its strength and capacity to stick to the body when wet.

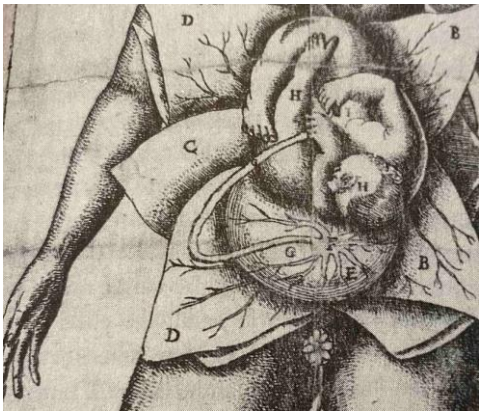

Figure 90: Artist unknown. Detail from woodblock in Jane Sharp's Midwifery guide.

Image source: Jane Sharp, *The midwives book, or, The Whole Art of Midwifry Discovered,* ed. Elaine Hobby (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999): 121.



Figure 91: Angelica Harris-Faull, test print on glassine of lino carving made in response to Sharp's woodblock, 2023.

Image source: Photograph by the author.

While editing, I reflected on the shifting approach in this new video work that was motivated by my overall investigation of the iterative potential of relief printmaking, the temporal capacity of video, and the affective potential of ink to unsettle early modern uterine representations and contemporary experiences. In the studio, I moved away from printing on paper, and instead decided to ink the matrix and print directly onto my skin to connect with notions of embodiment. I set up lights, a backdrop, and an inking table in my living room. Standing naked I held the pose of the early modern woman holding a rose. I inked up the first plate and pressed

the cold sticky ink onto my body. This was repeated until my body was covered in ink, a process that made visible the embodied labour of printmaking. This tactile and performative action, that connected to "the haptic move within print," alluded to the body as networked and became a conduit for ideas of interiority becoming visible.[221] Zuzanna Dyrda's works, discussed earlier in this chapter, also investigate printing directly onto the body and often incorporate text and abstract marks.[222] In contrast with Dyrda's work, in my practice I employed video editing and performative actions. These methods were further avenues for exploring embodied uterine knowledge.

I am not my uterus employs repeated physical movements, shifts in temporality, and the process of re-iteration to explore the complexities of the uterus. The video was realised to include three channels of the body in movement, and three iterations of the video with subtle differences in speed and holding on specific images. I began the editing process and, in its final stages I worked with editor, Samantha Marinos. The video evolved as a method to communicate a sense of time, and cyclical ideas of the uterus, and its meanings. The video starts with the body on the left and right standing with hands held open positioned as silent witnesses observing the central body becoming inked. Once the central body is fully inked all three bodies begin bending, folding, and unfolding as the voice describes the multiplicity of the uterus. The blurring, in the central image sequence, plays with movement and a sense of time to become indefinite. The fluid movement connected to a sense of freedom and autonomy. This ambiguity recalled the complexities and contradictory ideas about the uterus, thus holding multiplicities which are encapsulated in the lines "I am my uterus. I am not my uterus."[223]

[221] Jan Pettersson, "Introduction," in *Printmaking in the Expanded Field,* ed. Jan Pettersson, (Oslo: Oslo National Academy of the Arts, 2017): 31.
[222] Zuzanna Dyrda, "Zuzanna Dyrda: Works," accessed 20 June, 2023, http://zuzannadyrda.weebly.com/bio.html
[223] Video script. See *I am not my uterus,* video artwork, time stamp:



Figure 92: Angelica Harris-Faull, *I am not my uterus,* video still, 2023.

Image source: Photograph by Miranda Harris. Video edited by Samantha Marinos.



Figure 93: Angelica Harris-Faull, *I am not my uterus,* video still, 2023.

Image source: Photograph by Miranda Harris. Video edited by Samantha Marinos.



Figure 94: Angelica Harris-Faull, *I am not my uterus,* video still, 2023.

Image source: Photograph by Miranda Harris. Video edited by Samantha Marinos.

Conclusion

I came to understand through the making of this video that it was the seeping ink, the blurring images, the process of holding the early modern pose and the affective script that revealed the uterus as an embodied experience that, to draw on anthropologist Megan Warin "could not be placed into neat, categorical, and homogenous times or spaces."[224] Demonstrating the iterative and affective potential of printmaking, as the body is brought into relationship with ink and videoed sequential movement, this work challenges early modern framing of the uterus as a reproductive vessel for procreation. *I am not my uterus* reveals moments of in-betweenness that open spaces for multiple meanings and reveal the centrality of embodied knowledge.[225]

[224] Megan Warin, *Abject Relations Everyday Worlds of Anorexia* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010): 19.
[225] Megan Warin, *Abject Relations Everyday Worlds of Anorexia* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010): 125.

Conclusion

Introduction

At the outset, this inquiry asked - how can multidisciplinary practice-led research explore the representations, significations and lived experiences of the uterus, and female reproductive body? As framed in the Introduction, creative residencies in anatomical museums, reflecting on the experience of living with a uterus, and observing the medicalisation of my brother's cochlear-implanted body motivated my interest in this subject. In response to the research questions, I have investigated through the making of artwork the iterative potential of relief printmaking, the temporal capacity of video and the affective quality of ink as a means to unsettle early modern uterine representations and reflect contemporary uterine experiences. Print-based research materials, historical sources and knowledge generated through conversations with women were iteratively turned and re-turned via a diffractive methodology. My body was brought into conversation with video, ink, and printmaking processes to explore themes of embodiment and temporality and to contribute to a print-based reimagining of the uterus. This concluding chapter summarises research understandings and contributions, and briefly clarifies key considerations in the installation of the examination exhibition.

Research Contribution

My contribution to the field of contemporary visual arts practice sits beside artists who explore embodiment through expanded print processes and who work performatively with their body. My studio practice is underpinned by a diffractive and affective methodology informed by Karen Barad and Sara Ahmed's theoretical work. These theoretical positions, and insights on reflexivity, grounded my understandings of print processes and my position in the research. As Barad reminds us, we are part of the world, and the world is part of us.

I have engaged a creative practice that has worked with modes of repetition, iteration, layering, experimentation with ink, and expanded print processes to video methods as avenues to guide

my investigation of uterine representations and significations. I posit that experimentation with unconventional modes of ink mixing, application and printing allowed for ambiguous and affective states to emerge in print-installations and video works. While my practice of iteratively, and repeatedly printing, cutting into prints and wall collaging methods drew attention to the ongoing framing of the uterus with reproductive functions, I draw attention to the effects and problematic nature of singular representations of reproductive bodies and organs, through repeated printing.

Drawing together printmaking with my body in video works formed a critical space to reply to, and reflect on, a complex nexus of societal expectations and significations of the uterus. In this way my practice led research contributes to understanding the capacity of printmaking and to the ways it can be extended into other media. Demonstrating printmaking in video, specifically stop-motion recording of my body and performative gestures with ink and prints, I argue affectively disrupts and complicates narratives of reproductive function. This is particularly explicated in the discussion of the works; *I am not my uterus* and *Two thousand six hundred and eighty-eight pills* in Chapter Eight. The result was the revelation of multiplicities and, at times mysterious, metaphor-rich uterine discourses.

Additionally, this creative practice contributes to multi-disciplinary fields of visual art, early modern women's history and gender studies through a diffractive methodology that fosters dynamic engagements. Furthermore, the research offers novel methods to visually present and respond to interview conversations with women. I posit that taking an, if you will, ethnographic approach to a practice led research, highlights valuable ways of drawing together creative visual methods with lived experience.

Conversations with women, and their uterine drawings, were a central generator for studio practice and underpin the research contribution. The uterus was understood through embodied cycles, physical changes, and a myriad of associated emotions. Women made

meaning of their uterus through different practices, including contraception use, interactions with health care professionals, and contextual social narratives about the functions and potential of the uterus. Colour, texture, tone, abstraction, and figuration was used to visualise and make meaning of reproductive organs. Documenting unique experiences; I posit that the visual method demonstrated the limitations of medical and diagrammatic uterine representations. Centrally, I establish that the conversations with women and the drawing process formed creative and agential modes for individuals to represent and communicate their experiences of their reproductive organs.

Rationale for installation of exhibited works

In the following rationale for the installation of the research in the examination exhibition, I briefly map key considerations including scale, tactility, and presentation. Over the duration of the project iterations of artworks were exhibited in Melbourne and Adelaide in Australia and Manila in the Philippines. Public exhibitions offered the opportunity to reflect on the work over time, engage in audience discussions and experiment with different installation modes. These exhibitions, and the practice-led decisions explicated in the themed chapters, informed the realisation of the examination exhibition. This exhibition presented the works discussed in the exegesis, including the experimental video works that while evaluated in Chapter 8 for their limitations, informed the final work *I am not my uterus.* This final work was developed after the examination exhibition and builds on the insights gained through the making of earlier artworks.

In deciding how to present and install work for the examination exhibition I was guided by the diffractive methodology which continued to shape my practice. For example, Chapter Five discusses the rationale for the making of *Temporal Abruptions* and I realised that I wanted the exhibition to hold a sense of the time and labour reflecting my iterative process of making artwork in this project. With this in mind the intention was to recreate the experience of

walking into my studio. I wanted an audience to catch sight of my diffractive thinking and engage with the way the research aims were enacted.

As discussed in Chapter 6, I recognised that the interview books needed care and sensitivity in the way they were presented in the exhibition. I wanted to create a space for them both physically, conceptually, and emotionally. I offered each participant the opportunity to see the exhibition before it opened, and while all women chose to attend the opening, I was aware of an ethics of care in the way the books and their shared experienced were presented. Accordingly, books were placed on a long table in front of a chair, to afford viewers space and time to sit with the women's conversations. This intentional arrangement, in a quiet corner of the gallery space, encouraged conversation and the exchanging of personal stories between viewers.

Concluding statement: *I am my uterus; I am not my uterus.*

I am compelled to return to the embodied uterine drawings made by women, and their conversations, as a way forward. The women reflected on the unique experience of drawing how their uterus felt. In contrast, they noted the limitations of medical images; they did not see their experiences reflected in these representations of the uterus. At the start of this research, I was immersed in early modern midwifery guides and their descriptions of procreation. These texts have persisted through time and are now part of digitised archives. However, these midwifery guides carry absences; they do not include women's voices. In this research, I offer a creative response that pays attention to, and redresses these silences.

This body of work highlights the persistent medicalisation of uterine imagery and the framing of reproductive organs with specific functions. I have investigated and presented print-based and video works that offer multiple, and ambiguous evocations of the uterus, thereby unsettling historical images and introducing insights from embodied observations, quotidian experiences and autoethnography. I have instigated open and inclusive conversations about our

relationship with our reproductive organs. These are ongoing and political conversations; there is more work to do here. Future research could expand the age and demographic of research participants, further investigate materiality, investigate the tools of reproductive health, and collaborative creative processes with participants. The uterus remains contested and legislated. The rights and choices of people with a uterus are restricted in many parts of the world. This research draws attention to ongoing practices of imprinting the uterus with constructed and contextual significations. I sift through the past, and dwell in the present, to reveal the uterus as complicated, multiple, and centrally, rich with embodied knowledge. *I am my uterus; I am not my uterus.*

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Artwork List: Examination Exhibition

Reflexive Artefacts

- *Historical Research Notebooks,* 2017-2019.
- *Contraceptive Study 1: can you keep a secret,* recycled linoleum prints, stitched unique state book, 2018.
- *All that women talk about it their cunts,* linoleum prints on paper, embossing, hand printed text, stitched unique state book, 2017-2018.
- *Contraceptive Study 2: The Thin Blue Line (pregnancy test – waiting),* concertina unique state book, 2019.
- *Contraceptive Study 3: The Bloody Flux (tracing herbals*), stitched unique state book, 2017.
- *In my body I c/leave,* stitched unique state book,
- *Contraceptive Study 4: A Stilted Morning (cheeky cervix),* stitched unique state book, 2017.
- *Word-flesh-word layers,* stitched unique state book, 2018.

Video works

- *Pressing 1*, video, wettened linoleum print on glassine, body of the artist, found footage, 2019.
- *Flow (in my body),* video, 2019-2020.
- *Two thousand six hundred and eight-eight pills*, stop motion video, 2018.
- *I Am Not My Uterus,* video, 2022-23.

Installation/print works

- *In body, in time*, linoleum print on fabric, 2018-2019.
- *Temporal abruptions: making and unmaking the body*, wall collage installation (which came to incorporate She c/leaves and elements of the contraceptive works), linoleum prints on paper, test prints, monotypes, photocopies, notes. 2018-2020.

- *Womb Imaginings*, multiplate linoleum prints and embossing on paper, 2017-2018.

Interview Books

- Nora
- Lily
- Deidre
- Kaitlin
- Evelyn
- Stella

Appendix 1: Diffractive Writing

The Book

Here is a small book. It is light in my hands. The red stamps inside the cover mark it's time in other people's hands.

***

I consider how the book has been touched and held through time.

***

I open it. As my fingers turn the pages, temporal traces coalesce: historical images printed and re-printed.

***

I trace my fingers — feeling printed lines of dissected bodies. Images unfold across the pages. They cleave: stitch together and apart — they stick together and apart.

***

Embedded in the pages is an exchange between an unnamed patient and an unnamed doctor. Held in the inky words are traces of a gendered power relation between the doctor and patient.

***

Images and words are inter-stitched. They collide together and apart. These images ooze authority and control.

***

Here is the small brown book. I touch the edges, graze the surfaces, feel for indents and textures.

I enter the codex.

The Pill

Monday I push out the small cream coloured pill.
I swallow it whole.

Tuesday I swallow it.

Wednesday I look at the creased packet, I didn't start the packet with my period – hard to tell which Wednesday has been and which has not.

Thursday Another day, another pill. Another day, another pill.

Friday I wake and forget about the pill packet.
I go back, pop it out and swallow it down.

Saturday I squeeze the pill out from the perforated foil, I swallow it with a gulp of water.

Sunday I remember to take the pill on time. I roll it over my tongue, it leaves sweet traces in my mouth.

It repeats and repeats
And repeats and repeats

All Women Talk About Is Their Cunts

You hold the book. Raised and indented paper. *Trace your fingers around the shapes.* Pink wombs. Intra-uterine devices. *Your fingers graze the torn, softened paper edges. Fingers reading. Feeling matter.* Single carved letters pressed into printed paper.

all women talk about is their cunts

all women talk about is their cunts

I collected these words. Held them tight.

all women talk about is their cunts

all women talk about is their cunts

all women talk about is their cunts

The ballad and my words teem with feeling. *Sharp. Accusatory. Palpable.* They reduce and generalise. *All* reaches out with wordy fingers to pull the world around inwards. *Women* becomes universal. *all…talk…cunts* becomes reductive.

all women talk about is their cunts

all women talk about is their cunts

all women talk about is their cunts

I print these words and reclaim them

Appendix 2: Project Documents

Consent Form

UniSA Research and Innovation Services

Human Research Ethics Committee
CONSENT FORM
Retention of taped materials, photographs or original works

This project has been approved by the University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any ethical concerns about the project or questions about your rights as a participant please contact the Executive Officer of this Committee, Tel: +61 8 8302 3118; Email: humanethics@unisa.edu.au

SECTION 1: CONTACT AND PROJECT DETAILS	
Researcher's Full Name:	Angelica Harris-Faull
Contact Details:	M [redacted] E: angelica.harris-faull@mymail.unisa.edu.au
Supervisor's Full Name:	Dr Stephen Atkinson
Contact Details:	T: +61 8 830 20862 E: Stephen.Atkinson@unisa.edu.au
Protocol Number:	0000036686
Project Title:	Representations and understandings of the womb: semi-structured qualitative interviews with young women to learn about their relationship with, and understanding of their reproductive organs.

SECTION 2: CERTIFICATION

Participant Certification

In signing this form, I confirm that:

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet, and the nature and the purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand that I may not directly benefit from taking part in the project.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that if I withdraw from the study my interview data will be securely destroyed, or it will be returned to me in its entirety.
- I confirm that I am over 18 years of age.
- I understand that I will be audiotaped during the study.
- I understand that any artwork produced will be photographed during the study. Participants will not be photographed.
- I understand that I can still participate in the project if I do not want my artwork produced to be photographed.
- I understand that from the date of my interview I will be provided with a six-month time frame to request to review the transcript of my interview. The researcher will provide this date in writing to the participant.
- I understand that the tapes and photographs will be securely stored on a USB drive and in a notebook by the researcher in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office at (80 Grant Avenue, Rose Park) for the duration of the PhD. Only the researcher will have access to this cabinet.
- Collected data will be stored for 5 years, at a secure location at the University of South Australia. It

will be stored in a locked cabinet at K3-02, office of the Associate Head of Research for the School of Art, Architecture and Design as per the University Policy. This is in accordance with recommendations by the Australian Code for Responsible Conduct for Research, Management of Research and Primary Materials, section 2.1.1. After 5 years all data will be securely destroyed.		
Participant Signature	*Printed Name*	*Date*

Researcher's Certification		
I have explained the study to subject and consider that he/she understands what is involved.		
Researcher's Signature	*Printed Name*	*Date*

Research tools: Interview Questions

Text in italics is reflective of anticipated/potential responses and areas of further discussion.

Draft Participant Interview Questions:

Prelude: Hi……I'm Angelica I'm researching historical and contemporary representations and understandings of women's reproductive bodies. I'm a PhD candidate and I'm also an artist. I would like to hear about reproductive organs, agency and choice from your point of view. I want to let you know that there are no right or wrong answers; this interview is about your opinions and understandings. It is up to you how much you share and it is ok to stop the interview at any point. Before we start, let's go through the participant information and consent forms.

1. Could you please tell me a bit about some early body experiences, and perhaps in reference to your reproductive organs?

    - *Social or cultural experiences, puberty, contraception, if interviewee has had children.*

2. If you have had experiences things which interact with, or effect your reproductive organs like menstrual or contraceptive products, could you please share some of these? What are they like, how do they feel?

    - *Types, frequency, why used or not used*

- Illustration Process and tea break -

3. Could you describe what informs your knowledge and understanding of your reproductive body? For example, these could include: conversations with friends or relatives, educational programs, visits to the doctor.

    - *What forms of information do you use? Where does the information come from? How does it influence you?*

4. How does the information or sources you use to learn about your body influence you?

- *How you feel about your body, things you choose to do or not do, sexual and health practices.*

5. Sensory experiences of reproductive organs – smell, sight, touch, taste, feel?

6. Is there anything else you would like to share?