

**Myndlist**

# **From Shouting to Subtlety**

*Why feminist art needs a new direction*

**Ritgerð til BA / MA-prófs í Myndlist  
Snædís Malmquist**

**Vorönn 2016**

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Feminist art originated during the beginning of the second wave of feminism, starting in the late 1960s. In this time, women began to mobilize and speak out against many of the oppressive issues that women had long endured, voiceless. Feminist artists contributed to this shift with their unique, subjective, often radical viewpoints, and forms of expression that challenged male domination norms and styles of being. Facing a long history of oppression, many feminist artists of this time responded with anger and shock value in their art. In the fifty years since feminist art, feminist artists have reflected upon the nature of effective art. In a changed social climate and a more subtle set of issues to face, feminist artists should focus on creating high quality, beautiful, multi-dimensional art that interacts with the viewer in more subtle ways. As feminist artists move forward, we should use the technologies and networking tools at our disposal and attempt to create art that challenges the still prevalent oppressive norms and belief systems, while holding the highest degree of originality in terms of quality aesthetic.

## Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>SECOND WAVE FEMINISM AND FEMINIST ART</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<i>Feminist Art</i> .....	<b>8</b>
<i>The Personal is Political</i> .....	<b>9</b>
<i>Revolutionary Methods</i> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>ANALYSIS OF ART WORKS</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<i>The Feminine - Iconography</i> .....	<b>13</b>
<i>The Artist's Body</i> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>CHAPTER 3</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>REVIEW AND MOVING FORWARD</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<i>Future Feminist Artists and New Technologies</i> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>Works Cited</b> .....	<b>22</b>

## INTRODUCTION

The struggle for woman's rights is deeply rooted in history considering the thousands of years that women have been made voiceless and subjected to the will of male rulers. The feminist art movement is a recent and ongoing phenomenon in the art world. It is strongly connected to the shift from a modernist worldview to one that is postmodernist and pluralistic in elevating the value of egalitarianism across the different dimensions of society. Feminist art has contributed to breaking the spell of the masculine and dominating modernist norms, such as objectification and sexualisation of the female and her body, including views such as that women lack mental or other capacities that men have, and many other subtle yet pervasive forms of subjugation and repression that women have faced through history.

In this essay, I will discuss the movement and the purpose of feminism and feminist artworks. I will observe different dimensions of feminist artworks, such as those that are politically and activist inspired. The essential question is: how feminist artwork contributes most fully to the process of change, which relieves people everywhere of inequalities and oppressions within the dynamics of our relatedness?

In exploration of this question, I will start in the first chapter with an overview of second wave feminism and the beginning of feminist art. In the second chapter, I will analyze my artistic process and the realisation of specific feminist artworks. The works will be analysed and compared, in relation to other artists and their works as well as theorists and writers, in order to garner their effective feminist qualities. I will explore Johanna's Fueh's text on Hannah Wilke and the representation of female genitalia, as well as Barbara Rose's 'vaginal iconology' of the early 1970s feminist work in connection to my own work. I will examine the works of John Coplans with special focus on his studies of the naked body and also Joan Semmel's paintings where she aims to dissolve the passive female nude. Furthermore, I will touch on the deconstruction of the feminine figure, as fabricated by the patriarchal discourses of Western society and how my own feminist views and artworks strive to disrupt the traditions of female representation. Lastly, in chapter three I offer some suggestions about the direction feminist art may take as we continue on in the future.

I will contend that changing social conditions and consciousness calls for feminist art with a new directive. The methods of early feminist artists of the 1960s and 1970s, and even 1980s and 1990s, are mostly no longer contextually suitable for

our time. Whereas early feminist art largely depended upon shock value through introduction of new and largely repressed viewpoints and emotions, today's feminist art should concern itself with the aesthetic value inherent to great contemporary art. This kind of art touches the dimensions of human conscience that need to be accessed and is more effectively transformative than angry shocking art.

## CHAPTER 1

### SECOND WAVE FEMINISM AND FEMINIST ART

History was written by men from their singular perspective, often depicting women as the other or the opposite of men. In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir (1949) reviews the passive and objectified status of women in male dominated history. For instance, Aristotle said, “The female is a female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities”, and St. Thomas described woman as an “imperfect man” and an “incidental being” (de Beauvoir, 1949, p. 3). In patriarchal society, the male and masculine features such as objectivity and reason have been assumed primary and essential while the female and feminine qualities have been assumed as either the absence of the male or secondary to the male (de Beauvoir, 1949, p. 3).

In this uneven relationship between man and woman, the man has almost always played the role of Subject and the woman, the Other (de Beauvoir, 1949, p. 5). To relate to other people requires an interchange of roles between self and other, subject and object. In the case between men and women, this reciprocity has been mostly absent in our history. The relationship between men and women has been that of a master-slave dynamic—the man has been the dominant, primary role, while the woman has been the reactive, submissive, secondary role (de Beauvoir, 1949, p. 5). In this type of relationship, the master sustains his role only through relating to the submissive slave. If the one in the submissive role rebels and refuses to perpetuate this unequal dynamic, the relationship can be disrupted and ended.

Subjected as mysterious, castrated objects of desire, women have been depicted throughout the ages without a voice of their own. Understandably women have felt the need to bring their voice to the surface, as political and social inferiority sometimes prompts revolution and reactionary opposition to what is considered socially acceptable norms. In the 1960s, in what is known as the second wave of feminism, women organized, in response against conditions such as non-representation in social spaces, that all fields deemed feminine were less valued, subjected to unequal pay and less opportunities than their male counterparts, gender based violence and harassments. The feminist artists of our time are the latest in a lineage fighting for equality and justice between the two sexes that goes back to the work of first wave feminists such as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

## *Feminist Art*

The feminist art movement, beginning as part of the second wave of feminism, was a reaction of various factors. Women had been the subject of male artists all throughout history. In the history of Western art women are passively looked upon while the men are actively looking. In this patriarchal dynamic, women have often been portrayed and held up to a standard of an ideal feminine figure and sexualised objects of desire. As Frigga Haug (1983) says, “the ordering of women into sexual categories is intimately bound up in female subordination” (p. 36). Likewise, Naomi Scheman (1993) describes how the male dominating gaze functions in visual art:

Vision is the sense best adapted to express this dehumanization: it works at a distance and need not be reciprocal, it provides a great deal of easily categorized information, it enables the perceiver accurately to locate (pin down) the object, and it provides the gaze, a way of making the visual object aware that she is a visual object. Vision is political, as is visual art, whatever (else) it may be about (p. 159).

The twentieth century brought along mass media and so a sea of sexualized images of women; this perpetuated this idea of the woman as object. Well known personalities such as Marilyn Monroe and Jayne Mansfield were depicted as sexual objects in the form of pin ups with the sole purpose of flaunting their sexuality for the pleasure of men (Schildgen, 2015).

The second wave feminist reaction was a movement of radical art, too shocking to be ignored by the male dominated art world. Much of this art was meant to “perplex, astound, offend, and exasperate” so as to disrupt the values and norms of patriarchy (Korsmeyer, 2004, paragraph 40). This period started in the late 1960s, led by women artists, such as Judy Chicago and Hannah Wilke who rebelled against the constraints they had been forced into by tradition by presenting the female subject from a female perspective and thus creating a new paradigm in the art world. For example, Chicago’s widely known *Dinner Party* installation featured 39 plates, each vaginal in form, representing famous women through history (Brooklyn Museum 2016). The representation of the female body became a powerful tool to propel women’s agenda to shift the social constructs of gender. These artists attempted to

appropriate power by breaking up the misogynist images found everywhere in popular culture that went unquestioned.

What differentiates this movement from other art movements through time, such as geometric abstraction, is that there was no singular style or aesthetic. Rather than encompassing any specific art practice, it was simply a movement of recognition through factions of thought and consideration. As art critic and writer of feminist themes Lucy Lippard (1980) says about the contribution of feminism to art in the 1970s, “Feminism is an ideology, a value system, a revolutionary strategy, a way of life” (p. 362). The term ‘feminist art’ encompasses a wide range of art practices and is therefore not really an ‘ism’ or art movement in a sense but only a factor. Personally, for example, I consider myself a feminist artist because I am a feminist and not because my work is produced with the intention of working within any kind of margins of a movement.

### *The Personal is Political*

The personal is political, this means that the personal experiences of women are a universal voice. As Carol Hanisch (1969) says, “personal problems are political problems,” and “There are no personal solutions at this time. There is only collective action for a collective solution” (p.4). Some people have criticised feminism as making political issues out of what really are personal problems, such as internal feeling states and personal aspects of women’s lives such as sexuality. Those are erroneous views—the oppression that women have faced in these “personal” aspects of life are systematically embedded in the normal relations and beliefs of society (Hanisch, 1969, p. 5).

Facing this social-political climate full of people who misunderstand the dimensions of feminine oppression, it is understandable that early feminists similarly adopted a binary view of all men as oppressor and enemy. Chicago speaks on this and her later more developed understanding:

In the '70s I and my sister feminists defined it entirely in terms of gender, you know, and made the erroneous assumption that all women were our friends and all men were our enemies. It became clear to me that it's about values. It was always about values actually, and about

trying to work for a world in which everybody has a voice, and there is equality for all creatures, human or not, and that's a very different world than we live in. It's not just about women in the West gaining rights; it's about a world-wide transformation (Berryman, 2012).

The question then is how to best cause the shift in values that brings a world-wide transformation. I argue that to be able to create a value shift in society with feminist art, it needs to aim for high quality contemporary art with universal and or timeless appeal that touches the point of justice and beauty in humanity in general.

### *Revolutionary Methods*

The role of anger in social change is tenuous. Sometimes it is empowering in mobilizing passive people being oppressed. When awareness comes to light on a longstanding oppression, we often see an initial outburst of anger as repression turns to expression. Lydia Lynch, an influential singer, poet, writer and actress of the 1980s, evidences this with a harsh statement saying, “Well, this is our fucking planet. We gave birth to it, and it is in our likeness that it is created. You are fucking with us—so fuck you” (Juno, 2000, p. 54). Recognizing that righteous energized anger has a purpose in “rallying the troops”, as Lynch (Juno, 2000, p. 54) says, feminists and other change agents must also consider whether their expressions alienate or resonate with people.

Today's western social climate doesn't call for angry radical political statements because anger only gets you so far. The way to impose social justice and equality is subtler, and also, I argue, more effective. The goal is to wake up one person, one artwork at a time, but not with a shake down. The content should not be shocking or confrontational to the point where it suffocates what could otherwise be this transcendent, beautiful, yet hard to describe quality about the image presented. I for one need my work to be something else, an alternative or anecdote to what we are constantly surrounded by in the media and history. With my photography of different body types and unfamiliar distortion I aim to disrupt the normativity of the ideal body standard. To remind all, and especially women affected by the pressure of fitting into a standard, that we are all in fact very different and we can all be beautiful.

For people to look at things through a more critical lens, some feminists insist that people have to defamiliarise the familiar to recontextualise meaning, for it will give a new perspective that jars people out of their prejudices and complacencies. Art critic and cultural theorist Bell Hooks (1995) stresses the importance of the creative imagination in defamiliarising and opening up new channels of seeing and thinking about the world. Hooks (1995) says, “whether art is overtly political or not, artistic work that emerges from an unfettered imagination affirms the primacy of art as that space of cultural production where we can find the deepest, most intimate understanding of what it means to be free” (p. 38). When we are able to shine light on the silence and shake up the taboo then we can start talking about what people do not really want to talk about. To make it uncomfortable without shouting might be the conclusion, but always through the means of high quality art such as that of Chicago.

Some, such as Amy Mullin (2003) have discussed the differences between feminist activist art and feminist political art. Mullin’s (2003) definition of feminist art is artworks that have a “focus on sex and gender and work toward politically progressive change” (p. 191). Further, Mullin’s (2003) sense of political art is socially concerned, whereas activist art is socially involved (p. 191). Activist art implies an urge for a specific political action, such as to end a war or support a certain policy. Political art is more focused on exploring a political subject, which, as we’ve discussed, includes the personal sphere of women’s lives, but does not necessarily mean engaging in a political action (Mullin, 2003, p.191).

With regard to feminist issues, there may be certain political actions one can take to improve conditions of equality or recognise the value that women contribute to society. For instance, standards of equality in pay and work, or providing ample resources to assist families in raising their children. More broadly and more deeply, the revolution for equality means transforming society on the level of values and other cultural conditioning that is ingrained in the individuals of society. To effect change on this level requires the subtlety in approach that I mentioned as important to my own artwork. Rather than pushing for a certain agenda or set of policies, the aim of this type of feminist political art is to examine that which exists—the form of the body, sexuality, and other themes of womanhood.

## CHAPTER 2

### ANALYSIS OF ART WORKS

The body has always been the subject of my work in one way or another--from thinking about what it is to have a body to how it is and has been represented throughout history. When I start from the point of creating with the intention of analysing the body from a universal perspective such as the link between mind and body and the language our bodies use to communicate emotions, I am free to work within the confines of intuition and aesthetics, which is where I am at my best. I am interested in looking at the representation of female form from a feminist perspective to rid it of conventional body standards made up by the patriarchal culture we live in.

For the last few years I have focused on electronic media such as video and photography to explore the female form. However, in the last year I have been drawn to a more physical process of creating where I use my own body to talk about bodies. It usually starts with photographing others or myself and then drawing, painting or printing from these photographs, using various methods to obscure or combine. Body language and representation has been the main focus of my work to re-imagine the female form from my own perspective, as evident in the work *Stúdia* (see fig. 1.).

The picture has no specific focal point; there is no middle or end wherein I create an 'all over' composition. However, there are multiple focal points in the composition placed in balance to each other – the details in fingers, legs and nipples create an inner composition that enhances the realism of the painting. When confronted with the challenge of situating the body parts I needed to take explicit notice to what the bodies were saying with their positioning. They could not be overtly sexual, nor too personal, perfect or imperfect. They were meant to be without individual visual identity, but rather diverse but still universal as the painting was supposed to analyse and question rather than putting forth a statement. It was a way for me to study the female form, to understand how we read body language, positions and what meanings we draw from them.

This understanding I gathered can then influence the viewer or at least awaken questions about the way we represent female bodies. The two vaginas in the picture have different connotations for example. The one in the top right corner is an imitation of Gustav Courbet's *L'Origine du monde* (see fig.2.) painted in 1866. Courbet's vagina was a provocative artwork in its time and considered very erotic, but

compared to the other vagina on the picture that is spread open with a clear view of the clitoris and opening, adds a dialogue with time in art history. Some would say that today everything is allowed and there is nothing shocking about a vagina anymore. With this work I aim to create an effective feminist art that attempts to disrupt norms of domination male relation to the female. I believe that with this piece I managed to create an effective feminist art that came not from a place of anger with the intent to shock but rather a need to understand and the intent to create something aesthetically appealing with layers of meaning.

The political effectiveness in this type of art is in how the male gaze is forced to look and linger on the female body, not as a voyeur but as part of an earnest communication, thus disrupting the dehumanizing power of the gaze. Feminist art should vie for this kind of effect while still pursuing the expression of timeless, unfettered imagination.

### *The Feminine – Iconography*

Male dominant culture has seen to it that the vagina is unseen, veiled and denied. Western art has supported this idea of the unsightly genitalia in classical nude sculptures where the male has a penis and testicles are visible while the females don't have pubic hair or labia, not even a crack to suggest there is anything more there than a mysterious blank surface. This misrepresentation of female genitalia as simply a hole to be covered up and masked has not only had visual repercussions, but has infected our language as well.

Hannah Wilke talks about how society can easily use the word phallic. We refer to objects of masculinity or even just things with the shape of a penis as phallic, whilst things considered 'feminine' would not be described as 'vaginal' without offense (Robinson. 2001 p. 582). The Freudian theory of 'Penis envy' where Freud proclaims that girls experience anxiety in their psychosexual development because they do not have a penis, this is a laughable idea in this day and age. However, it seems as though a small part of that notion still lingers on in Western society as women often refer to their genitals with euphemisms and don't have many nicknames that are not used in a negative manner, while men have countless names that indicate their affection and adoration for their own. This might also be a result of the Mother/Whore ideology that has been supported throughout history by literature, art, mythology and religion, where the woman's body is separated into either the

dangerous, seductive and impure or the 'sacred, nurturing, and asexual'. This is truly what makes it hard for women to be proud of their bodies and be able to hold their sexual organs up to the same iconic standard as the phallus (Robinson, 2001 p. 575-577).

Barbara Rose (2001) talked about 'Vaginal Iconology' in her article "Venus Envy" as a means for feminist artists to take pride in their "differences". She goes further to explain that feminist art that depicts images of female genitalia is not necessarily erotic but rather is made to 'arouse women, but not sexually.' The depiction of vaginal imagery in early 1970s feminist art was rather a means to unveil the vagina as "strong, clean, well made and whole" like we're used to looking at the male genitalia. Women are then inspired to look at themselves as whole and with self-respect, and to reject and attack male supremacy similar to Freud's theory on 'Penis envy' (Rose, 2001, p. 575).

In the work *Pika* (see fig.3.) I wrote the word vagina continuously for 8 hours on a photograph of an outside wall and highlighted the letters that form the shape of one. With the intent on glorifying the word as well as the image, I attempt to obliterate the negative notion of both and to reject that a vagina is the reason for inferiority between the sexes. The fact that it's written on a photograph of a wall refers to graffiti used as feminist propaganda. While it might have had a stronger message if actually written on a wall, the decision not to do so was purely practical in order to avoid legal complications.

### ***The Artist's Body***

When using a body to create a universal dialogue with other bodies, how it is to live in a body, how it is to look upon a body, whether it is one's own or not should not matter in this context and furthermore the identity of the body should not matter. John Coplans' photographs are a frank study of the naked aging body. He photographed every part of his body from his wrinkled toes to his palms. However, Coplans never photographed his face, and therefore he loses the indication of class, culture and era (Di Certo, 2006 p. 12). The inspiration I draw from Coplans' photography are mainly the aesthetics and the ambiguous personality of the subject that turns the attention to perception and representation which then again enables me to create a more universal meaning open to interpretation. Coplans' body becomes all

bodies. As Sharp (2000) points out in her survey the “Artist Body”, the artists of the 1960s and 1970s who used their own bodies did not feel the need to involve their personal emotions in their work. Their works are not a ‘celebration of the self’ or autobiographical, but rather they use the body to create an impersonalised self (Sharp, 2000, p.231).

This is what I aimed to do with my photographs of bodies (see figs. 5, 7, 8.), to be able to talk about the body without identity and personality. These photographs of naked bodies are taken with the aim to show diversity in body images that go on to question and disrupt the ‘ideal’ body standard made up by western media and historical representation and sexualisation of the female form. The distortion of the bodies in *Unfamiliar* (see fig.7.) and *Transformation* (see fig.8) is aimed to take the familiar form of an ideal body and make it unfamiliar—to recontextualise and question what we accept as normal and even idealise to the point where what is ‘real’ is unrecognisable. We are sold distortions of female bodies every day to induce normative behaviour; everything from the cosmetic market telling women to buy the newest age prevention creams to cosmetic surgery. More recently I have produced paintings that focus in on the skin, reproducing in microscopic detail the texture and ‘imperfections’ found by looking closer. (see fig.6.)

Another usage of the body as iconography to subvert male subject defined art practices is Joan Semmel’s *Antonio and I*. (see fig.3.) In this piece, Semmel draws from her own perspective as lying naked next to a male who is also naked (Brodsky and Olin, 2008, p. 331). In most forms of art through western history, the perspective is from the male painter and thus carries the biases of lustful objectification present in the male gaze. Semmel transforms the viewer’s experience of witnessing a nude woman because she is an active subject role. The viewer witnesses her own body through her own eyes—this is very different than viewing a naked woman erotically posing. Semmel does not only take back the viewpoint she also disrupts the passive female nude as well as presenting the sexual male without objectification and both the male and female are equally represented. With the use of bright yellow and reddish browns for skin tones Semmel addresses the preconceived ideas of race and miscegenation. Then ultimately the question is, does this painting go beyond its feminist cause of highlighting oppression? It might be up to the culture of taste, I however argue that the painting is aesthetically pleasing and has layers of meaning that transcends feminism and is relatable to all genders and races.

### CHAPTER 3

#### REVIEW AND MOVING FORWARD

Feminist art is a powerful tool to employ needed social changes because it is an avenue for women's perspectives and voices to be seen and heard. This in itself, the very act of creating art or statements on society, it jostles the status-quo that we have inherited from modernity and previously, because it presents women as subjective agents rather than objects to be acted upon in the world. From this point of importance, the voice of the woman herself, feminist artists have gone much deeper in their novel ways of exploring themes and motifs such as vaginal iconography that are essential to the female body and history of objectification.

So far, this paper has started with Simone de Beauvoir, who has been referred to as "the progenitrix of the feminist theory of gender" (Hein, 1995, p. 448), and then has examined key feminist artists' and theorists contributions to the world, such as Judy Chicago, Hannah Wilke, John Coplans and Joan Semmel, and also has discussed my own art work's relevance as feminist art. Given the recent nature of feminism and the important observations and perspectives of women just recently coming to light, we can as Hilde Hein (1995) suggests, say that feminism and its aesthetic theory is still in its infancy and just only beginning to find itself (p. 459). Considering the long and dark history from which we are emerging, this is only natural.

While the second wave of feminism was defined by women breaking free from traditional submissive roles such as the housewife, gaining reproductive rights such as the right to choose in *Roe vs. Wade*, access to birth control pills, and also gaining access to leadership positions and cultural expressive positions such as prominent artist, the times and issues have since changed.

Moving forward, perhaps all supporters of feminist art can be on board with cautioning artists to be strong enough to resist the co-opting and commoditizing pressures of mainstream society. Tracey Emin, whom some cite as the most famous contemporary artist in Britain, is an example (Molyneux, 2005). Some say that Emin's intensively auto-biographical art has been a powerful tool for raising social consciousness of feminine issues, such as her famous work *My Bed*, which shows a dirty bed and bedroom for the public to see (Molyneux, 2005). Others, however, criticise Emin for being concerned with non-feminist matters such as how much

money her pieces are worth and what her status is within the world defined largely by conventional art critics (Jones, 2014).

More broadly than Emin's case, when feminist artists of the 1970s and 1980s were becoming accepted into the art establishment, we see a drawing back of the second wave of feminism. In this time, other gains made in the revolutionary atmosphere of the 1960s and 1970s likewise receded, as the youth grew older and absorbed into more conservative roles within society. The lull in widespread feminist engagement led to the beginning of the third wave of feminism, as suggested by Rebecca Walker (Alice Walker's daughter) in her essay "Becoming the Third Wave". As feminist art moves on, we do not want the pressures of society and doctrines of normalcy to sway us from engagement with the essential aspects of who we are and what it is we stand for (Ms. 1992).

On that note, touching again on the intention of creating feminist art that has value in its own right as quality art, in their creative expression, women should be artists first and feminists second. Womanhood is essential to being a woman, it is not something that must be devised, added, or concocted. As a woman artist, it does not help me to think about how I can put my 'femininity' or 'woman-ness' into my works—it unavoidably happens because that's what I am—a woman artist. Furthermore, women artists should seek to fulfil the intention stated early on in this paper—to create art with value beyond a feminist message. Cornelia Butler expresses this idea well: "Most women artists want to have their work seen in an equitable situation where history is evaluated by criteria other than the socio-political or gender based mandates of "the all women group show" (2007, p.22). Whereas art such as the Guerrilla Girls' posters of the 1980s expresses a strong and angry activist message, Feminist art will be most effective when it is powerfully representing quality art (Guerrilla Girls, 2016).

### ***Future Feminist Artists and New Technologies***

As discussed, since the climate of our social culture has changed since second wave feminism, new purposes need to guide feminist art creation. One artist group called The Future Feminists intend to fuse the relationship between art and activism and to highlight the future of women in power (Brooks, 2014). Their depictions of women in power do not simply mirror the hierarchical power structures of patriarchy,

but rather intend to replace the systems and modes of thinking that stem from male values in our history of domination and exploitation. This approach embodies the wisdom that the next generation of feminist art should embody—it is not about gaining equal status with men’s art, nor in simply deconstructing men’s art or otherwise serving as a reaction to patriarchy, but is about transcending the injustice and creating something new that brings to light the beauty in front of us, but not losing sight of the problems that still affect society. (Brooks, 2014). The power of aesthetically valuable, soulful art, combined with a message of empowering women or connecting to environmental issues or other aspects of the male dominating system, is the ideal feminist art of today and tomorrow.

In addition to this kind of powerful feminist art, the art of our time must consider the latest computer technologies and social media networks. One artist, Ashley Armitage, has recently taken pictures of the realistic female form, including an emphasis on body hair, stretch marks, scars, spots and other aspects that have been considered unsightly by traditional patriarchal beauty standards (Gamble, 2016). Armitage uses social media to proliferate her photography, and she has caused an uproar from her process. Armitage’s work is also a good example showing us that some of the issues that the second wave feminist artists worked on are still relevant. There is still unease with the female body and still impossibly specific beauty standards that unavoidably cause most women to believe that their form is inadequate.

## CONCLUSION

As has become apparent I am very much influenced by the feminist movement of the 1970s and 1980s, drawing inspiration from artists and theorists alike. The need to represent the female form as I see it from my female perspective is as important as it has been and is still very much under- or misrepresented in Western art. Additionally, as the feminist movement has changed through time, we as artists need to be especially sensitive to the dynamics underlying the systems and norms of patriarchy, so that we may be able to cultivate the most effective art in expressing ourselves and in creating effective, transformative statements.

I feel my role, as a feminist artist is to challenge the ridiculous societal norms on beauty standards as well as to look back at history and to keep up a dialogue with past representation as well as to form the new. In this process I intend to create quality art that is valuable for the sake of it being art, with the hope that I can reach people through multiple perspectives and from a wellspring of deep meaning and aesthetical value.

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## Works Cited



Figure 1. Snædis Malmquist. (2014) *Studia* [drawing on canvas] In possession of: The author: Iceland



Figure 2. Courbet, Gustaf. (1866) *L'Origine du monde* [Oil on canvas] At: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L'Origine\\_du\\_monde](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L'Origine_du_monde) (Accessed on 12.10.15)



Figure 3. Snædís Malmquist. (2014) *Pika* [Drawing on photograph] In possession of:  
The author: Iceland



Figure 4. Joan Semmel. (1974) *Antonio and I*. [Oil on Canvas] At:  
<http://www.newyorkartworld.com/reviews-nyaw/snugharbor.html> (Accessed on  
06.01.16)

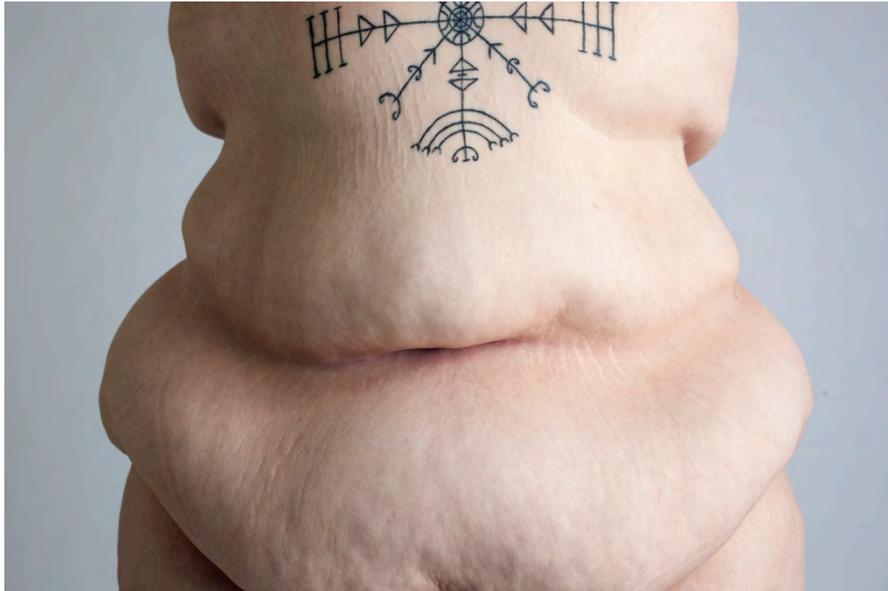


Figure 5. Snædís Malmquist. (2014) *Bjúkur* [Photograph] In possession of: The author:  
Iceland



Figure 6. Snædís Malmquist. (2015) *Skinscape* [Acrylic on canvas] In possession of:  
The Author: Iceland



Figure 7. Snædís Malmquist. (2013) *Unfamiliar* [Mounted photograph on aluminium plate] In possession of: The Author: Iceland



Figure 8. Snædís Malmquist (2012) *Transformation* [Photograph] In possession of: The Author: Iceland

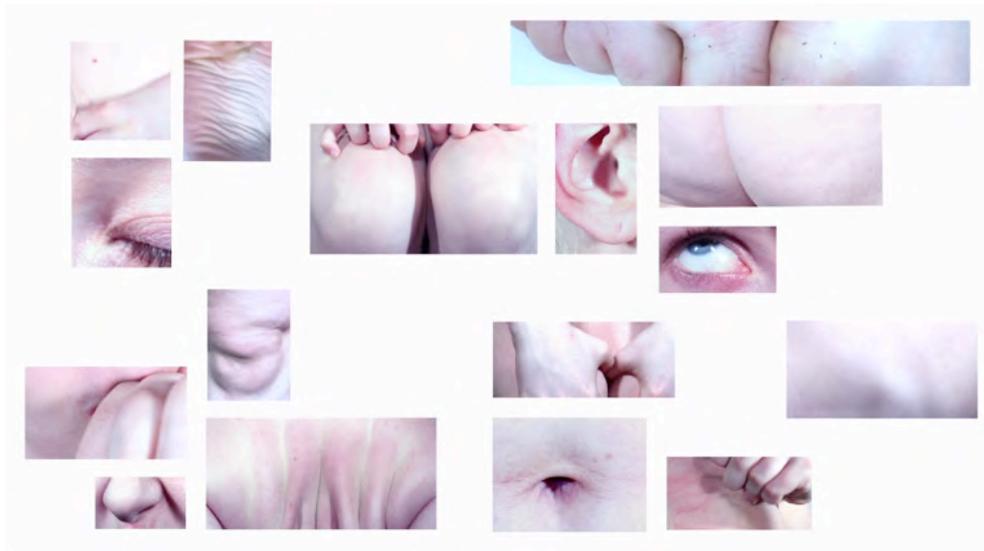


Figure 9. Snædís Malmquist. (2012) *Body-Mind* [Video Installation still] In possession of: The Author: Iceland



Figure 10. Snædís Malmquist. (2014) *Self portrait* [Watercolor on paper] In possession of: The Author: Iceland

