

Women Artists and the Grotesque Figure:

Jenny Saville and Janine Antoni Interpret the Female Body as Grotesque

By Chloe Brown

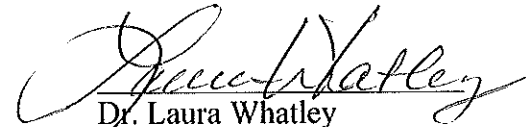
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Introduction: The Shape of Women in Art

Looking at a Renaissance portrait or Grecian sculpture, the figures depicted are markedly male or female. For female subjects, the artist pictures specific features like light-pink skin or softly rounded anatomy in order to communicate a body that is idealized to embody the society's ideas about how women are supposed to behave or how they should look. In contrast, contemporary women artists have become increasingly diverse in their depictions of the female body. Museums exhibit paintings of large-bodied, nude women positioned at views that emphasize their heavy mass, art biennales feature portrait busts with disintegrating female faces, and galleries contain canvases that picture varied body types painted so that they seem to merge together. Works such as these represent contemporary social critiques regarding women, their bodies, and the social construction of gender. This shift in figural representation, from the ideal to the real, may disturb some, because it challenges fixed ideas about the female body and how it should appear and behave. Socially prescribed gender ideas enforce particular modes of representation for and by the human body. In contrast, contemporary art increasingly promotes the body as mutable and subjective, as both growing and decaying, and as individual, taking a wide variety of shapes and actions. In representing the anti-ideal or non-normative, many of these artists reveal the body as grotesque.

In this thesis I examine examples of grotesque images of the female body created by contemporary artists Jenny Saville (b. 1970) and Janine Antoni (b. 1964) in order to understand how both artists use the female body to explore anxieties about the tight boundaries that circumscribe gender, body shape, and the traditional roles of women in

Western society.¹ I argue that their work is informed by the feminist movement and an awareness of gender differences, but also works against gender distinctions by utilizing methods that are grotesque. Applying the scholarship of historian Annamari Vänskä and philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin, this thesis defines the grotesque as a breaking of cultural rules that are used to describe the ideal female, creating an ambivalent identity that is not fixed by traditional cultural codes of gender and that emphasizes bodily process in art.² According to both Bakhtin and Vänskä the grotesque incorporates the parts of the body that formal society encourages women to keep hidden. In Vänskä's view, grotesque art counters the idealized, classical female body and the work of grotesque artists considers alternative body types.³ Bakhtin claims that the grotesque is an alternative to the formal or official view of the body, which is a "strictly completed, finished product."⁴ Saville and Antoni's artworks counter fixed ideas about the female body, creating new methods to visualize the female body. This allows the feminine ideal to grow and change instead of remaining static. For example, Jenny Saville paints monstrous female figures from views that emphasize their body size, so that they take on a traditionally masculine bulk. This creates a figure that does not embody the ideal, but rather adopts a more ambivalent identity and makes gender boundaries more permeable. Likewise, Janine Antoni uses her

¹ This thesis explicitly addresses Western cultural norms, as they pertain to body culture and the feminine ideal. In other words, a consideration of non-western body standards for women is beyond the scope of this project and will not be addressed.

² Annamari Vänskä, "A Heroic Male and a Beautiful Woman. Teemu Maki, Orlan and the Ambivalence of the Grotesque Body," *Nordic Journal of Women's Studies*, no. 3 (December 2002): 165. *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 4, 2016).

³ Annamari Vänskä, "A Heroic Male and a Beautiful Woman. Teemu Maki, Orlan and the Ambivalence of the Grotesque Body," 165.

⁴ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 29.

body to perform actions that are considered grotesque, so that her role as a western female becomes less than ideal. While the ideal female maintains a prescribed appearance and bodily practices, the grotesque body is open to growth and change.⁵ While the classical body has been perfected and is in a fixed state, the grotesque offers an alternate conception of the body.⁶ Both Saville and Antoni engage with the female figure in ways that expose the parts of the body that are often covered up by the ideal.

The works of Antoni and Saville react to feminist ideology, as women artists who depict the female body and challenge gender roles. According to the scholarship of the art historian and feminist scholar Whitney Chadwick, Saville and Antoni are feminist artists.⁷ Their art rejects traditional patriarchal ideals of femininity, such as depictions of small, incompetent women, who do not consume large amounts. Chadwick sees the feminine ideal as a method used by male artists to unfairly deny women artists' dignity. While Chadwick describes how the history of western art is male dominant and maintains an idealized knowledge of women, I argue that a consideration of the art of Antoni and Saville uncovers the ways in which idealized notions of gender fail to describe many aspects of the body. Bodies are not just one way, nor is one particular body correct. The work of Saville and Antoni reveals that, when it comes to the female body, female figures can act and appear differently than how women are traditionally expected to appear. In other words, artistic depictions of women are not necessarily controlled by societal

⁵ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 25.

⁶ Annamari Vänskä, "A Heroic Male and a Beautiful Woman. Teemu Maki, Orlan and the Ambivalence of the Grotesque Body," 165.

⁷ Whitney Chadwick, *Women, Art, and Society* (Fourth Edition ed. London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 2007).

expectations of women in the same ways. These representations reflect the potential of the female body, without being held to the same social expectations and pressures placed on individuals.

Works like Antoni's *Gnaw* (Fig. 1) and Saville's *Propped*, (Fig. 2) expose aspects of the female body, such as large size and actions like biting and spitting, that Western culture often considers un-feminine or even masculine. While society denies or conceals these physical features and actions, Saville and Antoni embrace them. They revel in the body's fleshiness, explore the act of consumption, and record aspects of the body that are often labeled as flaws. They emphasize growth and the uncertainty of the body. Saville paints the bodies of large women, who society might consider unacceptable or "grotesque." Indeed, art historian Michelle Meager describes Saville's work as depicting "bodies rarely appreciated in western contemporary culture. In a cultural climate that encourages women to conceal, if not excise, those parts of the body considered fat, jiggly, out of control, and excessive."⁸ Saville's women show off parts of their bodies that are not represented in idealized imagery. In contrast, Antoni renders grotesque actions, like overindulgent eating. This is a behavior that is discouraged for women and considered unattractive, due to its perceived effect on the body as causing over-abundant fat. She also explores actions like bathing, which are not encouraged in public spaces and instead are limited to private areas. In an interview with curator Klaus Ottoman, Antoni describes the pressures on women "to control fat in [their] body" and outlines the purpose of her materials, saying she wants to "seduce with chocolate... disgust with lard... [and include]

⁸ Michelle Meager, "Jennie Saville and a Feminine Aesthetics of Disgust," *Hypatia* 4 no. 18 (Fall/Winter 2003), 23.

lipstick for attraction.”⁹ Creating a contrast between idealized female action and grotesque female action, these two artists intentionally counter images of stereotypically beautiful women, ideal body shapes, and uniform depictions of gender. Rather, these two contemporary artists picture female bodies that can be described as “grotesque,” inspiring what Meager calls “disgust,” because their depictions oppose Western societal norms. Utilizing the scholarship of figures such as Annamari Vänskä, Mikhail Bakhtin, Samantha Murray, Tara Chittenden, and Karen Ingram, this thesis explores the commonalities and differences between the artworks of Janine Antoni and Jenny Saville in order to understand how each utilizes the grotesque to explore issues of femininity and gender in their depictions of the female body.

Chapter one will outline key questions, define terms, such as “feminism,” “ideal,” and “grotesque,” and introduce the theory and historiography of the topic. Figures that are central to this foundation chapter include art historian Whitney Chadwick, cultural anthropologist Jacqueline Urla, educator Clare Stanhope, theorist Amelia Jones, visual culture historian Annamari Vänskä, cultural historian Samantha Murray, law researcher Tara Chittenden, artist Karen Ingram, and theorist Mikhail Bakhtin. After introducing this key scholarship on the female figure, gender, and the grotesque, this thesis will examine these ideas in relation to the artworks of two artists: painter Jenny Saville (b. 1970) and mixed-media sculptor Janine Antoni (b. 1964). In particular, this thesis considers how each artist explores the grotesque and depicts the female figure in their artworks.

⁹Janine Antoni interviewed by Klaus Ottoman, “2013 Distinguished Artists' Interview with Janine Antoni (FULL INTERVIEW)|CAA,” Youtube video, 46:03, posted by “College Art Association,” accessed August 12, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUoAO9C2yxQ>.

Chapter two of this thesis will consider Saville's interest in depicting the female body alongside women's desires to alter their bodies through plastic surgery, connecting them to Vänskä's ideas about the grotesque body as "opposed to the Classical body," Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the grotesque, which focuses on "images of bodily life ... fertility, growth, and a brimming-over abundance," and contrasting the grotesque to the contemporary ideals encouraged by plastic surgery, exemplified by the Barbie doll and Billboard women and described in the scholarship of Jaqueline Urla and Clare Stanhope.¹¹ In her paintings, Saville's subjects are presented as individual bodies that operate beyond idealized gender expectations. Art historian Michelle Meagher describes her paintings as evoking an "Aesthetic of Disgust."¹³ This reaction of discomfort is a result of the normalization of ideal body types and the deviance from that norm that Saville's bodies present. This opposition to traditional rules is part of what makes Saville's images grotesque. The bodies she paints oppose classical canons. Bakhtin describes the classical canon saying, "As conceived by these canons, the body was first of all a strictly completed, finished product. Furthermore, it was isolated, alone, fenced off from all other bodies."¹⁴ In Bakhtin's view, the classical body is not connected to the growth and development that all humans experience; rather the classical body describes

¹¹ Annamari Vänskä, "A heroic male and a beautiful woman. Teemu Maki, Orlan and the Ambivalence of the Grotesque Body," 158; Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 19; Jacqueline Urla, "The Anthropometry of Barbie: Unsettling Ideals of the Feminine Body in Popular Culture," in *Deviant Bodies Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture*, ed. Alan Swedlund (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995): 277-307; Clare Stanhope, "Beauty and the Beast – Can Life Drawing Support Female Students in Challenging Gendered Media Imagery?" *International Journal of Art & Design Education* 32, no. 3 (October 2013): 352-361. *Academic OneFile*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 21, 2016).

¹³ Michelle Meagher, "The Feminine Aesthetics of Disgust," 23.

¹⁴ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 29.

an already attained perfection. The Aphrodite of Knidos (fig. 3), for example, is the perfect body of a goddess. Her body is not an example of a typical Grecian woman, but rather represents the best woman imaginable. While the goddess is immortal and never changes, the human body is mortal; it has flaws and it wears down. Likewise, the contemporary ideal, like the billboard women, are similarly perfected bodies, composed in order to display a flawless physical appearance. Like Bakhtin, Vänskä likewise defines the classical body as “monumental and static, a closed surface, corresponding to the aspirations of the ‘official’, i.e. bourgeois individualism.”¹⁵ In her view, this body is exclusive, rejects change, and allows no space for aging, blemishes, or bodily fluctuation. For both authors, the classical body is counter to the grotesque body, which is influenced by decay and the resulting growth, change, and fertility. In interviews with Saville, she highlights how she considers the bodies which society deems to be irregular as more truthful. I would argue that these “truthful” figures illustrate the unofficial grotesque. Saville paints bodies that are fleshy and squishy, exposing body shapes and forms that fulfill neither the classical or contemporary ideal, and are often ignored or excised in favor of today’s barely attainable beauty standards.

In picturing female bodies that deviate from the norm, Saville challenges the idea that the female body should look one way and that the outer appearance can describe the interior person. Saville expresses how people experience her paintings with disdain when she “present[s] a body that’s not behaving or behaving badly...”¹⁶ While the women she paints are not literally acting badly, in the sense that they are harming another human

¹⁵ Annamari Vänskä, “A Heroic Male and a Beautiful Woman,” 158.

¹⁶ Jenny Saville interviewed by Eline C. Smith, “Arts and Parts,” YouTube video, posted by “STV people,” 2010, <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=oWvAFXkW1pp>.

being, they are credited with acting badly because their body shape is contrary to the normative body. Saville continues, saying: “anything that challenges a restriction or a border is seen as really dangerous.”¹⁷ In light of this quotation, it becomes clear that Saville’s figures challenge restrictions placed upon bodies, especially female bodies, which are promoted by ideals. Her paintings therefore are “dangerous” and threaten the stability of a culturally coded ideal of the female body: ideal is good, non-ideal is bad. In contrast to the contemporary ideal epitomized by billboard women and Barbie, Saville’s figures are big and dominant, sometimes taking up entire canvases. She describes these bodies as ambiguous and difficult to comprehend. Rather than painting women who fit into normative categories, I argue that Saville intentionally paints ambiguous bodies that fall outside of traditional normative categories. Vänskä defines the grotesque as “a concept by which phenomena are described in a state of transformation, a state in which they no longer fit into any fixed category.”¹⁸ This chapter will argue that Saville’s paintings reflect this definition, as they create “new possibilities for living” in bodies that do not fit into traditional categories. In her paintings, the irregular body is not an object of “shame and disgust” and there is not a “sense that [sic] bodies were in some way bad or wrong.”⁶⁸ Rather the figures represented in Saville’s paintings offer a pointed critique of gender norms and attempt to reveal a fleshly truth that is hidden by western society’s feminine ideals.

Chapter three focuses on the mixed-media sculpture and performance works of Janine Antoni. It begins by establishing her work as feminist and then explains how she uses grotesque action to dismiss the bodily ideas that western society maintains for

¹⁷ Jenny Saville, interviewed by Eline C. Smith, “Arts and Parts.”

¹⁸ Annamari Vänskä, “A Heroic Male and a Beautiful Woman,” 158.

women. Antoni uses her body as a tool to make artworks that create records of the female body. For example, in *Lick and Lather* (fig. 4), Antoni casts a series of self-portrait busts made of soap and chocolate. She then uses her tongue to lick away at the chocolate and uses the soap to wash herself, so that the busts begin to look worn down and weathered. Antoni describes how she “reshaped” her image using her tongue and bathing. In an interview at Moore College of Art, Antoni describes the influence for her piece saying: “why make a self-portrait traditionally, why would artists do that... one is to immortalize yourself, of course I’m working with ephemeral material working against that.”¹⁹ In this quotation, Antoni compares her work to artists of the past who created similar works, yet sought to immortalize themselves. In this way, she inserts herself into the progression of art history. This act gives her work and ideas legitimacy, as these sculptures react to the many artists who came before her. In other examples, wherein Saville guest curates exhibitions, she similarly compares her work to that of other artists, choosing renowned paintings from the past to sit in conversation with her own work. In the gallery, Antoni invites the audience to consider each work. While the history of art has been predominantly male, Antoni – as a female artist – inserts herself into the long narrative of art. This action is important for women artists, who have a limited selection of female role models from the past. The female artist must establish legitimacy for their art, so that it is not dismissed as feminine craft. Therefore, Antoni must establish her artistic authority, without allowing gender to restrain expression.

¹⁹ Janine Antoni interviewed by Janet Kaplan and Johnathan Welis, “Graduate Studies // Studio Conversation with Janine Antoni,” YouTube video, 1:11:00, posted by “Moore College of Art and Design,” April 14, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mvV0fxY1YAU>.

In relation to the grotesque, Antoni does not copy from classical canons to create a representation that aligns with traditional ideals about how the female body should be represented. Nor does she restrain her body to exemplify the contemporary standards for the ideal. She instead creates objects that record action considered inappropriate for the public, actions that women are frequently taught to restrain. She explores the functions of her body and her art is formed by processes, like licking, bathing, and biting, and from sculpting chewed up and spit out materials. These bodily actions are a part of Antoni's human existence, however women are often taught to conceal behaviors like these from the public, so that they are hidden from view. Because these actions are not polite, they are seen as grotesque. In contrast to minimalist artists, such as Donald Judd (1928-1994), who created works based on machine made perfection and therefore show complete control over materials, Antoni's work displays a more mutable reality that communicates how bodies are not always controllable. While women are taught to control their bodies, they often feel that their bodies are out of control.

This thesis considers Antoni's works, like *Gnaw*, as records of bodily processes and understands them in relation to the ways that society perceives the female body and its behaviors. Vänskä describes "the grotesque body" as "the open protruding body, depicted from the perspective of its functions and bodily substances – eating, drinking, excretion of wastes..."⁷³ In *Gnaw*, two large exhibited blocks of lard and chocolate are covered with records of Antoni's bites. However, Antoni does not swallow the chocolate or lard. Rather, she spits out the chewed materials and uses them to form lipsticks and chocolate boxes. Her art is created through her body, inside of her mouth. Although *Gnaw* does not depict a female figure in the traditional sense, it describes the actions of a

female body and records Antoni's bodily functions that are used to create the work of art. Antoni contrasts actions that are appropriate for women, through sculpted lipstick tubes and chocolate boxes, with actions that are considered grotesque, by gnawing the lard and chocolate blocks. While Antoni is a woman, she exhibits actions that are not typically associated with the female body. This dichotomy creates a shifting state between clearly defined gender stereotypes and the breaking of those gender roles. Antoni mirrors the confusion and ambiguity that Vänskä explains in her definition of the grotesque, when she describes it as "a concept by which phenomena are described in a state of transformation, a state in which they no longer fit into any fixed category."²⁰ Antoni's *Gnaw* challenges fixed stereotypes about femininity, because she mauls the blocks with her teeth. However, the work is also about transformation, as the adjacent room displays her lipsticks and chocolate boxes, which describe traditional female activities. While these traditional depictions present a comfortable representation of femininity and do not challenge western social norms, the grotesque action of gnawing, present in the blocks displayed in the first room, break this order and reveal an ambiguity about gender. This ambiguity causes discomfort because the work's reference to the female body is non-normative, in comparison to western society's standards.

This discomfort can be likened to feeling out of control in one's own body. Antoni claims that, "we all know how hard it is to control lard in our own body."²¹ As Whitney Chadwick explains, this feeling of being out of control is typical of female

²⁰ Annamari Vänskä, "A Heroic Male and a Beautiful Woman," 158.

²¹ Janine Antoni interviewed by Klaus Ottoman, "2013 Distinguished Artists' Interview with Janine Antoni (FULL INTERVIEW)|CAA," Youtube video, 46:03, posted by "College Art Association," accessed August 12, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUoAO9C2yxQ>.

experience and derives from the patriarchal system, where men attempt to maintain control over women. Chadwick describes how traditional female roles are reinforced through “moralizing” via cultural means, including works of art. For example, “paintings based on these themes often exploit the idea that women who reject their natural roles become temptresses who lead men into sin.”²² In other words, these artworks represent an idea that women who reject their natural feminine roles become sinful. Artworks such as these propose that females need to be contained by a patriarchal force for their own good. This control proscribes proper modes of behavior, appearance, and action for the female body.

In this thesis, I will argue that Saville and Antoni counter these controlling messages by presenting women who act or look non-normative and are not necessarily immoral. For example, in *Gnaw* Antoni utilizes a method of artistic production that allows the viewer to re-examine set ideas about how women can act through indexical marks (bites) that indicate a body out of control. She explores the power of her jawbone when it bites into the blocks and underscores the abilities that her body has when it is unrestrained by polite action. Rather than ascribe to traditional notions of femininity that limit her potential, she celebrates her body’s functions. In using her body this way her actions become grotesque. The scholar Carla Rice argues that: “bodies do not come to be before their interactions but emerge through interacting,”²³ therefore, while bodies are shaped through social relationships and cultural causes, Rice emphasizes the role that

²² Whitney Chadwick, *Women, Art, and Society*, 124.

²³ Carla Rice, “Rethinking Fat: From Bio- to Body- Becoming Pedagogies,” *Cultural Studies > Critical Methodologies* 15 no. 5 (2015): 389. SAGE Publications, (accessed November 1, 2016).

social forces and culture can have on individual actions. In her artworks, Antoni is not controlled by society's expectations. Rather, she challenges these expectations in order to form her own version of grotesque art and underscore feminine behaviors and stereotypes. While Saville explores the visual grotesque, Antoni displays its action.

Chapter One: What the Scholars Say About the Body and Art

In order to understand how female contemporary artists Jenny Saville and Janine Antoni depict the female body in their art, chapter one will outline key questions that arise from these two artists work and briefly introduce some of the ways in which the female body has been historically depicted. I will define key terms, such as “feminism,” “ideal,” and “grotesque,” and introduce the theory and historiography of each. Figures that are central to this chapter include art historian Whitney Chadwick, cultural anthropologist Jacqueline Urla, educator Clare Stanhope, theorist Amelia Jones, visual culture historian Annamari Vänskä, Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin, cultural historian Samantha Murray, Law researcher Tara Chittenden, and artist Karen Ingram.

Whitney Chadwick:

In her publication, *Women, Art and Society* (2007), the art historian Whitney Chadwick reconsiders western art history as it relates to women as both subjects and makers of art. As an art historian, Chadwick constructs a feminist analysis of the female body as a subject of art. Her re-evaluation of key works of art is a re-reading of historical works that were not made during the feminist movement, but are interpreted as feminist via her analytical method. Chadwick surveys women as artists or as subjects in art across western history, from the medieval era to modern and contemporary art.

A key topic in her analysis is the limited visual depictions of women in comparison to men, who are depicted in a wider array of subjects. For example, in the middle ages visual representations of women were largely contained to Mary or Eve, mother or wife, while men were represented as Jesus, the apostles, and numerous saints. Chadwick claims that viewers understand art not only by the gender of the subject being

represented but also through the gender of the artist. In judging artworks, the female artist is treated differently than their male counterparts. For example, the work of female artist Edmonia Lewis (1844-1907) was largely interpreted as the work of a woman, rather than the work of an artist. While the male artist does not have his work labeled as male art, the female artist almost always has her work discredited as “female art.” The viewer forms a “lens” to interpret a work of art. Whereas an audience considers the work of a male artist as normal and does not define it by gender experience, the work of a female artist is seen as atypical and placed into an alternate category. Chadwick describes this as the “feminine lens.”

Chadwick organizes the chapters of her study in different periods of art history, pointing out social and stylistic changes and discussing how these developments affected women. For example, in the French Academy men were regarded with a “masculine ideal, honueterie or virtue,” meaning that they were depicted in roles such as hero, soldier, or king, and male artists with ambition were expected to paint large monumental history paintings, considered the most challenging and most valued genre of painting.²⁴ A separate role was formed for women who were expected to stay in their “natural sphere.”²⁵ Women artists were restricted to domestic settings, and limited from participation in the French Academy. Those women who did not fulfill “the ideal of femininity” had “unnatural’ ambitions.²⁶ Chadwick emphasizes how men prescribe gender roles because they have authority, while women are repressed by their ideas about the inferior nature of the female sex. In the Northern Renaissance, Chadwick presents

²⁴ Whitney Chadwick, *Women Art and Society*, 145.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 146.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 148.

Jacob Cat who stated, “The husband must be on the street... [While] the wife must stay at home,” describing the perceived public nature of the male sex and the domestic nature of women.²⁷ Although both examples reference separate time periods, both create separate spheres for women who are expected to remain inferior in comparison to their male counterparts.

In her text, Chadwick repeatedly describes the ways in which feminine power is subverted by masculine control over women. For example, Northern Renaissance artists commonly created compositions with a theme of “moralizing: paintings based on these themes often exploit the idea that women who reject their natural roles become temptress who lead men into sin.”²⁸ Women who wanted to advance were considered dangerous; the solution was for women to follow the restrictive social roles dictated by men. In visual representations, the female nude is not depicted with power when painted by men. Male artists typically compose the female nude as an object to be seen by the masculine viewer, who adopts what Chadwick defines as the *male gaze*. Similarly, Chadwick describes the combination of the “Idealized female body... [And] mass produced goods” in modern works, which are used to sell products, as proof of a continued *male gaze* in later decades.²⁹ Chadwick aligns these products with the modern artists’ “male sexual energy, presenting women as powerless and sexually subjugated female identity and female body.”³⁰ The woman is seen by men as lesser and as a second-class citizen.

Through this scholarly assessment of art history, Chadwick presents a societal predisposition to separate the two genders and enforce a hierarchy of the two sexes. One

²⁷ Ibid. 124.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 271.

³⁰ Ibid., 279.

way that this has occurred is through the creation of ideals of feminine beauty, enforced as a social requirement. In this way women are ranked depending on how near their characteristics are to the ideal woman. In the Italian Renaissance, the author Giovanni Boccaccio prescribed a “specific set of character traits for the IDEAL WOMEN.”³¹ Another male artist created a “Renaissance Treatise on Beauty [containing] preferred attributes of female beauty.”³² Male authorities dictated what qualities made a woman beautiful and women were expected to enact these roles, keeping them in their social position. Throughout, Chadwick exposes the overall lack of control that women have in shaping their own identity and the limited choices they have had when it comes to occupation or opportunity. She also describes the ideas that men have about women and the ways that these stereotypes translate into visual depictions, creating visual depictions of women who are frequently powerless. Finally, female artists have also been defined by their gender, resulting in unfair bias when it comes to evaluations of their art. In this thesis, I describe the many ways artists Jenny Saville and Janine Antoni work against preconceived ideas about their gender and picture women who are not defined by gender bias or stereotypes.

Jacqueline Urla:

Continuing an examination of expectations placed on women, this thesis introduces the cultural anthropologist Jaqueline Urla’s feminist scholarship on media, popular culture, and the beauty industry, as an example of a feminist critique on culture, which controls women’s bodies. In *The Anthropometry of Barbie: Unsettling Ideals of*

³¹ Ibid., 35.

³² Ibid., 84.

the Feminine Body in Popular Culture (1995), Urla studies the shape of the Barbie doll (fig. 5) and critiques Barbie's figure claiming it sets inappropriate ideal standards for women and children.³³ The ideals that shape the figure of the Barbie doll are a reflection of the identity of the western female. Urla explains what aspects of female social identity have resulted in this figure.

A major theme that emerges in Urla's scholarship is the lack of control that women feel over their bodies. There is a need for their bodies to align to the idealized version pushed by society. She writes that: "women seek to take control over their unruly physical selves."³⁴ However, the body is not a stable, plastic doll like Barbie; rather, it tends to bloat and expand, hair becomes oily, and skin sags with age. While women want control over their bodies, it seems that "female bodies [are] never female enough."³⁵ Urla describes the idealized, perfected shape of the Barbie doll, with its faultless, plastic material, and contrasts it to the more inconsistent bodies of women. She argues that the standards for contemporary women are too high and that women can never reach this level of perfection.

Rather than readjust their own beauty standards, many women feel that there must be something wrong with their bodies. Some resort to methods like plastic surgery, extreme dieting, or intense exercise to maintain a perfect figure. For Urla, the Barbie motto "be all that you can be" is troubling. She writes: "the idea that you can choose the body that you want to have – is a pervasive feature of consumer culture...norms of

³³ Jacqueline Urla, "The Anthropometry of Barbie: Unsettling Ideals of the Feminine Body in Popular Culture" In *Deviant Bodies Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture*, ed. Alan Swedlund (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995): 277-307.

³⁴ Ibid., 277.

³⁵ Ibid., 298.

fitness and weight [become] signs of an individual's social and moral worth."³⁶ In other words, Mattel promotes the idea that the individual can control and perfect their body, as modeled by their product. Urla points out that this "perfected figure" is considered natural, while a less perfected figure is considered irregular. She writes that women "must be deliberately and often times painfully remade to be what 'nature' intended."³⁷ Unfortunately, the bodies that women are born with are not always the bodies that society encourages.

Urla introduces the commercialization of the beauty business, which required marketing a myth of beauty, as one cause for average measurements for the female body. The beauty industry markets their products by saying that they can create beauty and solve the problem of the imperfect body. They claim that purchasing their products allows user to reach this ideal. Urla studies how Barbie dolls influence women and girls and claims that Mattel and other industries that target women use Barbie to sell a skewed and idealized version of femininity to women. She presents an example of a woman who recreates her body, through plastic surgery, in order to look like a human Barbie doll, and the rise in eating disorders among young women, as a way to control their bodies and its shape. She describes the pressure women feel because of a "tantalizing ideal of a well-managed self in which all is in order despite the contradictions of consumer culture."³⁸ In Urla's view, the industry promotes a paradox: that the body is imperfect, but through use of their products one can achieve perfection. Therefore, women continue to work towards attaining a perfect figure. When the United States government established the Dublin

³⁶ Ibid., 300.

³⁷ Ibid., 277.

³⁸ Ibid., 298.

standard table of heights and weights and the bathroom scale because a common household object, women were able to chart their path to perfection. The United States army also established a standard for the female body called the Norma that measured a strong and fit physique. In addition, the fashion industry favored thin-hipped fashion models with sex appeal rather than physical fitness. All of these cite ways that women are expected to use societal norms in order control their appearance and their actions, so that their bodies become more ideal.

Urla illustrates how Western culture promotes the idea of a needy woman, by presenting weakness. The Barbie doll is a proportionally unattainable body, an actual woman with her proportions would be unstable. Furthermore, the plastic Barbie doll is flawless and unchanging, exposing insecurity and a lack of confidence in the fleshy and fluctuating body of women. The woman who operates outside of the established ideals is seen as unideal and uncontrolled. Women who control and perfect their bodies emphasize their ability to follow rules, and therefore their superior morality. As a feminist, Urla wants women to feel confident in their bodies despite the fluctuation of the body, and in opposition to ideals that promote a weak and needy woman. This thesis uses Urla's observations on the female ideal and the Barbie doll in order to compare the works of Saville and Antoni to contemporary culturally approved body standards. The works of Saville and Antoni push away from notions of an ideal body and instead expose body parts that are traditionally hidden. By showing different female bodies, each artist works against the perceived immorality of the unideal or imperfect body, and counters the desire for a plastic Barbie body.

Clare Stanhope:

In “Beauty and the Beast – Can Life Drawing Support Female Students in Challenging Gendered Media Imagery?” Professor of Art Education, Clare Stanhope, describes her experiences teaching a life drawing class to teens in 2013.³⁹ Stanhope claims that teenagers are so saturated with images from the media that they have a delusional perception of the female body. The nude model for the class was middle-aged and slim, however she was not the airbrushed media model that has become the normative body in western society’s visual representations. Because of this, the students perceived the actual body of the life model to be atypical and even offensive. Stanhope’s research is based on her observations about the role media advertisements or, as she describes, “Billboard” women (fig. 6) and the beauty industry play in constructing female identity. One student, who was particularly engaged by the drawing class and enjoyed the experience, claimed to be against media representations of women, however after later reflections on her drawings she noted that she had unconsciously distorted her figures so that they were more curvy and glamorous, like the images in the media. Another student commented “Although I don’t think its right to have perfect women on billboards, I don’t want to see women that are not perfect.”⁴⁰ On one hand, the students knew that images from fashion magazines and billboards were touched up, airbrushed, and posed. On the other hand, they preferred looking at these versions. Students did not want to see the common female body represented on a billboard. Instead, they wanted to see the

³⁹ Clare Stanhope, “Beauty and the Beast – Can Life Drawing Support Female Students in Challenging Gendered Media Imagery?” *International Journal of Art & Design Education* 32, no. 3 (October 2013): 352-361. *Academic OneFile*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 21, 2016).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 356.

idealized versions, stating, “Looking at an older women was not ‘nice.’”⁴¹ Stanhope reflects that “young women will never be happy with who they are, because of these unachievable goals. I feel the answer to that lies in the implicit meanings behind advertising and the media.”⁴² Stanhope argues that these images construct a damaging understanding of the female figure. Because these body shapes are so prominent and public, her students take them as normative. They consider the thin flawless bodies of billboard women to be the standard, and judge the bodies of other women in comparison to these bodies. While the media and beauty industry present an unrealistic, ideal standard for young women to aspire to, the artwork of Antoni and Saville create alternative images of female bodies that are based on their experience of bodily behavior and shapes.

Amelia Jones:

Media images and advertisements perfect the bodies of women and then display them in order to sell their products. Similarly, industries like Mattel encourage one type of female body by mass-producing dolls marketed to women and girls. These visual representations and material objects promote the idea that women should look a particular way. Amelia Jones, Chair in Visual Culture at the University of Southern California, argues that gender is a theatrical display, which she describes as the masquerade of femininity.⁴³ Rather than gender being a reflection of biological sex, Jones argues that gender is developed through social interactions.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Amelia G. Jones, "The ambivalence of male masquerade: Duchamp as Rrose Sélavy," in *The Body Imaged : the Human Form and Visual Culture Since the Renaissance*, ed. Kathleen Adler and Marcia Pointon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 31.

In "Contemporary Feminism: Art Practice, Theory, and Activism," she describes Marcel Duchamp's *Rose Selavy* photographs (fig. 7) and explains how he "wore femininity."⁴⁴ Her argument makes a clear distinction between the cultural characteristics of gender and the biological features of a woman's body. Jones claims that the feminine is "put on" and does not necessarily describe biological gender.⁴⁵ It is a combination of appearance and behaviors that are used to define social roles. Explaining that clothing and social actions are used in order to define gender in western culture, Jones uses the example of Marcel Duchamp's adoption of the female persona "Rose Selevy" in order to probe the ways that gender is culturally produced. Jones believes that:

Duchamp's gesture can be seen ... as disrupting patriarchy's desire to fix firm boundaries defining sexual difference, meaning that Duchamp's photographs expose the cultural production of gender, and run counter to the masculine, dominant, social order... Duchamp's adoption of femininity can be understood as exposing the instability of gender itself as a continually shifting, fundamentally unstable scaffolding of socially articulated roles and visually and psychically determined identities.⁴⁶

Here Jones describes the fluidity of gender as a more ambiguous social role.

Western culture promotes specific ideas about how women should present themselves and Duchamp, in these photographs from 1921, provides a visual example of what women are expected to do and how they are expected to act. He puts on a fur coat and a decorative hat and then poses with daintily curved hands that denote a delicate touch and sensitivity, indicators of early twentieth century femininity. Even though he is a male, he dons the masquerade of femininity and communicates cultural codes of femininity to his audience. This allows Duchamp to highlight these assumed codes and emphasize the difference between gender and biological sex.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 33.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 31.

For Jones, the masquerade of femininity consists of rules that prescribe normal behavior and appearance for women. These tight rules do not allow for the diversity of body shapes and unique features that are a part of lived reality. Additionally, while the body is affected by time – it grows and ages, changing its shape throughout different stages of life – cultural ideas about women’s bodies do not take this into account. The human body is not a finished Greek statue or well-composed Renaissance painting; it forms scars, gains weight, becomes wrinkly, and hair and skin become oily. Both the representation of the female Ideal and cultural rules about gender adopt different parts of particular bodies at particular stages of life and compile them into a resulting shape that is very specific. The resulting body does not accurately describe any one individual body; it is an average instead of an exclusive form.

In their works, Jenny Saville and Janine Antoni attempt to depict a more ambiguous body, which is less clearly defined by gender norms. They expose different parts and functions of the body that are supposed to be controlled and hidden from society. For example, Antoni uses her body to gnaw at huge blocks of chocolate and lard. While actions like biting are seen as aggressive and coded as unfeminine, she is female. Her large blocks do not describe the actions of an ideally thin-waisted woman. Because Antoni adopts unfamiliarly gendered actions with her female body, she acts in ways that are outside of the prescribed activities associated with the masquerade of femininity. Additionally, Saville paints heavy-bodied women who dominate the canvas area and do not conform to strict gender ideals. Visually their appearance runs counter to a slenderer shape prescribed by the masquerade of femininity. I argue that the work of both artists reconsiders strict ideas about the actions and appearances of feminine bodies.

Finally, in *Body Art: Performing the Subject* (1998) Amelia Jones describes how female artists use the body as a medium in art making and as an illustration of cultural roles for the female subject. She surveys the work of many postmodern artists in order to describe how the use of the artist's body in their work creates meaning. She argues that Western society sees the white, male body as normalized, while the female body and any other non-white body is considered non-normative. Jones analyzes the works of artists who use their bodies as art, in order to claim that they exaggerate cultural views about bodies and therefore magnify the exclusion that women have experienced by the discipline of art history. Exclusion is indicated through the normative status of the white male. Furthermore, while the male artist is able to make universal statements about art, the female perspective is often dismissed due to a 'disinterestedness' or a lack of authority. Jones explains:

... the issue of potentially heightened effects of feminist body art, as well as body-oriented projects by otherwise non-normative artists who *particularize* their bodies/selves in order to expose and challenge the masculinism embedded in the assumption of 'disinterestedness' behind conventional art history and criticism.... By surfacing the effects of the body as an integral component (a material enactment) of the self, the body artists strategically unveils the dynamic through which the artistic body is occluded (to ensure its phallic privilege) in conventional art history and criticism. By exaggeratedly performing the sexual, gender, ethnic, or other particularities of this body/self, the feminist or otherwise non-normative body artists even more aggressively explodes the myths of disinterestedness and universality that authorize these conventional modes of evaluation."⁴⁷

In this quotation, Jones describes how the normative white male has a privileged position in the art world, while the female or non-white artist has an inferior position and their work is excluded from the tradition of art history. Non-normative artists have used their

⁴⁷ Amelia G. Jones, *Body Art: Performing the Subject*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998) 5.

bodies to “*particularize*” or pin-point their bodily differences in order to clearly demonstrate how their bodies are perceived by their audiences. Saville and Antoni both use the female body in order to “*particularize*” and construct their art. Saville’s figural paintings emphasize flesh and fat on the female body. Her figures are considered irregular, as they are not the skinny normalized body that society commonly sees depicted. Saville’s figures are composed in a way that exposes their *particularized* difference from the normalized body and emphasizes how the Western viewer conceptualizes the female figure. Antoni uses her own body in order to create and record her actions, clearly demonstrating non-normative activities that the female body is expected to abstain from due to culturally prescribed gender boundaries.

The Ideal Body: Stewart, Simeons, Zipolo, Goffen, Ulna, Stanhope

As this thesis deals extensively with the ideal, it is necessary to spend time carefully defining the “ideal,” parsing its meaning across time, and outlining its representation in various artworks. First, it is important to note that the ideal body is an idea that has shaped the art of many societies from different locations and periods of art history. The ideal body varies in different cultures and time periods and takes on a different shape in the art of contemporary artists. In addition, art is also read differently across diverse cultures and the normative practices of viewers. For example, the contemporary viewer understands the Greek statue differently than the ancient Greek did. Therefore, the ideal is not one particular woman; rather it is an idea that is constructed by social, political, and religious components of society.

The Classical Ideal originates from the ancient Greek tradition of art making. The ideal female body can be understood by analyzing the sculpture Aphrodite of Knidos by

Praxiteles (fig. 3). The artist faced the difficult task of converting the goddess of love and beauty into a marble figure. She had to embody beauty and the Grecian ideal female shape. Praxiteles carved Aphrodite in the pudica pose, with a hand positioned to cover the space between her legs and the other hand covering a breast. This is a feminine pose that denotes female vulnerability and the power of a viewing man. A more open stance would read as authoritative and masculine. The sculpture is very smooth, lacking any flaws of the skin, such as acne or wrinkles. One ancient Greek viewer claimed that she was “neither too thin and close to the bone or too endowed with a great quantity of fat.”⁴⁸ Her ideal body was not too slender, nor too thick. It has a curve in the stomach and her thighs touch, physical features that are not encouraged in contemporary society. As she is made of stone, her body does not fluctuate; she is caught in a timeless state of perfection. The goddess looks sideways and higher than eye level, so that she does not make eye contact with the viewer. Viewers could gaze upon her without meeting her glance. This sculpture by Praxiteles is a female figure with power over men: they can look at and desire her, but they cannot have her. In this way, men who gazed at Aphrodite were controlled by her beauty. However, she is a goddess. Typical Grecian women lacked power over their own bodies. They were subject to men, fathers, husbands, political authority, military power, and economic control. The sculpture of Aphrodite holds power over men, her perfect beauty is unattainable; at the same time, she is a venerable female figure depicted nude in the modest pudica pose. The ideal body was a popular subject for Greek artists, as evidenced by the artist Polycleitus who wrote a *Kanon*, a mathematical instruction book,

⁴⁸ Andrew F Stewart, “Of War and Peace,” in *Art, Desire, and the Body in Ancient Greece*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 100.

for sculpting the perfect human body.⁴⁹ The numbers and ratios of his Kanon were not measurements of a specific body, but rather a conglomeration of the best parts of many bodies translated into numeric proportions to create the ideal body. This orderly representation of the ideal based upon symmetry was considered beautiful in ancient Greece.

The Renaissance female ideal differs from the ancient Greek ideal and can be understood by examining representations of women produced by Renaissance artists. Patricia Simons argues that the ideal Renaissance woman is embodied in Italian Renaissance profile portraits, which were shaped by gender roles.⁵⁰ In “Women in Frames: The Gaze, the Eye, the Profile in Renaissance Portraiture,” Simons claims that Renaissance portraits were created in order to facilitate the male gaze on the female profile and consider the worthiness of the woman through their image. Paintings, such as Domenico Ghirlandaio’s *Portrait of Giovanna Tornabuoni* (c.1489-90) (fig. 8), show women in magnificent dresses, jewelry, and hairstyles, these indulgent accouterments typically were not worn, as they broke moral codes. In general, these Renaissance portraits emphasized long necks and flattened female faces, and rendered each woman with a similar blank expression. They were painted for the male viewer and were often sent to potential spouses or kept in family homes. The profile is an easy face to scrutinize, as viewers can look at the woman without being seen. These Renaissance portraits reveal the importance of physical beauty and material wealth. While profile portraits of female sitters do show some distinctive features of individual women, they do not reveal

⁴⁹ Andrew F. Stewart, “Of War and Peace,” 88.

⁵⁰ Patricia Simeons, “Women in Frames: The Gaze, the Eye, the Profile in Renaissance Portraiture,” *History Workshop: A Journal of Sociologists and Feminist Historians* (Spring 1998): 4-30.

individual mood, character, or intelligence. These women did not pursue careers or seek authority; instead, they were submissive to the power of men. In these portraits, artists emphasize outward appearance, rather than interior characteristics, such as ambition, creativity, or intelligence. The woman's beautiful appearance added to her family's pride and women were expected to adopt actions and behaviors proper to their gender by developing a personal "dowry of virtue" that in turn would be passed on to their daughters.⁵¹

Another example of the ideal Renaissance woman can be seen in Sandro Botticelli's *Primavera* (1477-82) (fig. 9). This painting contains multiple female figures, with curved stomachs covered by flowing fabrics, who dance and throw flowers, actions designated for woman. Lilian Zipolo describes this painting as a marriage painting.⁵² She interprets the image as illuminating mythology that exemplifies behaviors for the aspiring bride, as it encourages submission of the virgin to wifhood in order to continue social stability and order. It hints at the disorder and chaos of women who reject marriage and highlights the rewards of marriage and connection to a man. In the painting, the three graces reveal how proper women should act, as they dance with calculated evenness. This bodily order, and control is something that wives should aspire to. Cupid, with a flaming arrow, symbolizes the beginning of marriage as he aims his arrow to shoot and ignite a love inspired by the gods.

One final exemplar of the female Renaissance ideal is the 1538 painting *Venus of Urbino* by Titian (fig. 10). The main figure is a woman with smooth, unblemished skin

⁵¹ Patricia Simons, "Women in Frames: The Gaze, the Eye, the Profile in Renaissance Portraiture," 8.

⁵² Lilian Zipolo, "Botticelli's 'Primevera': A Lesson for the Bride," *Woman's Art Journal* 12, no. 2, (Winter 1992): 102.

and flowing golden hair. She has long limbs, with a small curve of the stomach and thighs. Her body is surrounded by a darker outline that controls and defines her shape. The scholar Rona Goffen sees the *Venus of Urbino* as a marriage painting, with a wife painted for the eyes of her husband.⁵³ Her wifely body is defined by consummation and fulfilment, sex and children. Therefore, in contrast to the title, the painting does not represent a mythological subject, even if it does reference Renaissance depictions of Venus, the goddess of love. Unlike the Aphrodite of Knidos (the Greek equivalent of Venus), this figure does not cover her breasts and meets the viewer's gaze. Many artists visually reference this work, including in Manet's *Olympia* (1865) (fig. 11).

Finally, the Contemporary Ideal differs from both the Classical Greek and Italian Renaissance Ideals. It is epitomized by the figure of the Barbie doll (fig. 5), a toy for girls created by Mattel and first released in 1959. The "Barbie ideal" is highlighted in product advertisements, which sell the doll through the presentation of an idealized body. Barbie has an exaggerated hourglass figure with thin hips and large breasts. She lacks the curved belly of the Renaissance or Greek Ideal. She is a solid, smooth plastic figure with no visible flaws. Her legs are long and, unlike the Renaissance and Greek ideals, her thighs never touch. Barbie also has very small feet. Her favorite activity is shopping and wearing new outfits. Fashion is the main pursuit for Barbie, who always has the correct clothing no matter what the occasion. Both Jaqueline Ulna and Claire Stanhope describe the unrealistic body ideals and standards set by the Barbie body and, what Stanhope defines as "billboard" women, models who appear on advertisements and mirror a Barbie body. These models present lofty idealized bodies, which contemporary viewers

⁵³ Rona Goffen, *Venus of Urbino* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1997) 64.

subconsciously internalize as desirable. These flawless female ideals, with small waists and big breasts, are impossible to embody.

In summary, while the ideal female body changes across time, it also shares similarities. In each period, the female body is given worth through its exemplary outward physical appearance rather than interior characteristics of the subject, such as superior intellect or ambition. Ideally pursuits like education and professional drive are unattractive for women. Each example of the Ideal female body is also youthful but fully developed, and smooth and solid; it does not show flaws, such as wrinkles or scars. These examples of the ideal emphasize the female body in a way that makes gender a defining category of the figure. These bodies easily to read as female. Finally, these Western examples of the feminine ideal are all white. In contrast, a global survey, or one that focuses on particular racial groups or cultures, might present different standards for the feminine ideal. For example, contemporary African American art and culture values very different bodily proportions and attributes than the skinny ideal outlined here. While this contrast presents opportunities to expand this research on the ideal body, it is outside the current scope of this thesis. Perhaps future research and writing might address other global examples, such as the African American ideal of the female body, in contrast to those examined here.

The Grotesque: Vänskä, Murray, Chittenden, Rice, Ingram, Bakhtin

An integral component of this thesis is the examination of the grotesque, as applied to female artists' depictions of the female body. Annamari Vänskä, a researcher at University of Helsinki, Finland, describes two grotesque artists in "A Heroic Male and

a Beautiful Woman.”⁵⁴ She defines the grotesque as “a concept by which phenomena are described in a state of transformation, a state in which they no longer fit into any fixed category.”⁵⁵ Vänskä also defines the grotesque by outlining how it diverges from the classical body, writing: “the grotesque body is opposed to the Classical body, which is monumental and static... the grotesque body is the open protruding body, depicted from the perspective of its functions and bodily substances – eating, drinking, excretion of wastes...”⁵⁶ Where the classical body is controlled and rational, the grotesque is not.⁵⁷

Jenny Saville paints large-framed women who do not fit into the thin, Barbie-like contemporary ideal, nor are they shaped for the male viewing pleasure. Her painting *Propped* (Fig. 2) illustrates a female figure, which is not defined by the static category of the ideal. In chapter two, I describe how Saville creates a more ambivalent reading of the female body. In addition, chapter three explains how Janine Antoni adopts the grotesque by describing bodily functions in her work. For example, in *Gnaw* (Fig. 1) she gorges her teeth into blocks of chocolate and lard and then spits out the chewed material to be transferred into molds that shape it into lipsticks and chocolate boxes, items that are associated with ideal female bodies. However, these items are made through grotesque action and directly reference the functions of Antoni’s female body. In traditional works of art history, the ideal female body is not shown consuming, gnawing, or spitting out

⁵⁴ Annamari Vänskä, “A heroic male and a beautiful woman,” 154-167.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 158.

⁵⁷ While the classical body during the Ancient Greek era was a new style, it is now a widely studied form. Artists have learned from it for centuries and it has become familiar. Vänskä describes the classical form as closed and static. The form would have been more dynamic and novel for the Greek viewer. At the same time, the ideal body was based on unrealistic body proportions and borrowed shapes from many different bodies, so that it personified the best body. In this way, the Greek and contemporary ideals are the same.

chewed food. Contrary to the ideal, Antoni does not hide her bodily functions. Vänskä argues that the grotesque reveals the abilities of the body, which are hidden by the classical Canon, and “gives women tools to become embodied subjects instead of mere bodies.”⁵⁸ Both Saville and Antoni depict strong, dynamic subjects, rather than simple aesthetically attractive bodies. While both artists focus on female subjects, they do not define “female” according to the traditional canon, resulting in a less clear reading of the body.

Vänskä writes that the “Grotesque enables the search for alternative models and ways of thinking” which in turn tends to “problematize the hierarchical boundaries between the canonical and non-canonical representation of femininity and masculinity.”⁵⁹ Vänskä claims that defining bodies by category creates a hierarchy of body shapes, dividing bodies between those that comply with the canon and those that do not. This creates a method for visual judgment of bodies. In contrast to the Ideal, the grotesque describes bodies that exist outside of these strict definitions, or somewhere in the middle of ideal and unideal, creating more open definitions of the body. Both Jenny Saville and Janine Antoni create artworks that challenge Classical, Renaissance, and Contemporary Ideals through their use of the grotesque. While grotesque depictions of women may be distressing or unpleasant, due to their divergent, unfamiliar modes of representation, they also cause viewers to question or rethink established categories for the female body. Their work demands that knowledge about the female body be reconsidered.

The artworks created by Jenny Saville and Janine Antoni are ambiguous and difficult to read. Rather than align the female bodies depicted in and referenced by their

⁵⁸ Annamari Vänskä, “A heroic male and a beautiful woman,” 164.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 165.

works to societal expectations of femininity, these two artists choose to challenge and expand the category of female. As Vänskä explains: “the body is not necessarily something that we have to learn to live with, but rather something we can increasingly rework to correspond to those demands on our appearance, through which the world around us evaluates a person’s inner qualities.”⁶⁰ While society defines people by their appearance, that appearance is changeable based upon how an individual wants to be perceived by society. Vänskä argues that the classical body is fixed, while the grotesque emphasizes bodily growth and change. In this thesis, I argue that Saville and Antoni counter society’s fixed ideals about the female body and expose ways that the body can be reworked. Their works reference the grotesque body, which has the ability to adapt and is mutable. While the classical or ideal body is a category that demands a specific appearance or action, the grotesque is a more open state of being that does not follow rules and does not “evaluate a person’s inner qualities.” Antoni and Saville both offer alternative methods for depicting the female form, which defy the ideal established by art history.

Finally, Vänskä claims that “Beauty is a cultural discourse and it cannot be understood without taking into account gender and power.”⁶¹ While the body exists and is an actual physical thing, beauty is more elusive and based upon subjective opinion. Vänskä claims that beauty is built through culture, gender, and power. It is not a fixed category, but should be understood more loosely as constructed, and differs across periods and locations.

A key figure in understanding the grotesque is the Russian philosopher Mikhail

⁶⁰ Ibid., 163.

⁶¹ Ibid., 163.

Bakhtin. Bakhtin characterized the grotesque as the part of a culture that is “presented not in a private, egotistic form, severed from the other spheres of life, but as something universal, and representing all the people.... The leading themes of these images of bodily life are fertility, growth, and a brimming-over abundance.”⁶² He traces the grotesque to the Middle Ages, where it formed an alternative culture typified by carnival. These were periods of celebration that opposed the official hierarchical ordering of social classes and the strict piety of the church. Carnival was a time that typical boundaries were loosened and hierarchical distinctions were suspended. It was a period of laughter and abundance, which emphasized aspects of the body, such as fertility and growth that are common among all people. Bakhtin contrasts this carnival culture to the development of the Renaissance view of the body, dominated by rules. He writes:

The Renaissance saw the body in quite a different light than the Middle Ages, in a different aspect of its life, and a different relation to the exterior non-bodily world. As conceived by these canons, the body was first of all a strictly completed, finished product. Furthermore, it was isolated, alone, fenced off from all other bodies...Such were the fundamental tendencies of the classic canons, it is quite obvious that from the point of view of these canons the body of grotesque realism was hideous and formless. It did not fit the framework of the ‘aesthetics of the beautiful’ as conceived by the Renaissance⁶³

As he explains, while carnival culture explored the interior of the body and allowed for growth within the self, the Renaissance ideal emphasized a tight, controlled exterior. The new Renaissance classical canon of the body was in a state of perfection, existed unaffected by time, and therefore opposed the mutable nature of the body. I will argue that Saville and Antoni’s work more closely follows the tradition of the grotesque, theorized by Bahktin as originating in the Middle Ages. Their works do not describe

⁶² Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 19.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 29.

women as “the bourgeois conception of the completed atomized being” or the “the petty, inert ‘material principle’ of class society”⁶⁴ Their women are not shaped by the canons of classical tradition, nor are they static figures. Rather their figures are bodily and abundant; they consume and suggest the growth and decay of a body that operates in time. Their bodies have the grotesque quality of “The ever-growing, inexhaustible, ever-laughing principle, which uncrowns and renews.”⁶⁵ Their representations do not satisfy the official, hierarchical view of the female form; rather, their bodies are a part of the common body, which connects every human. Their figures follow the traditions of carnival culture and the grotesque, as outlined by Bakhtin, and therefore oppose classical traditions and Renaissance ideals.

While the classical tradition promotes one fixed ideal shape, the grotesque, which embraces difference, counters the classical and is often invoked in Fat Theory. Although the grotesque and Fat Theory are two separate lines of scholarship, they overlap in their focus on bodies that fall outside of the ideal. The bodies that Saville paints evoke both the grotesque and current scholarship on fat theory, in that her bodies are overabundant. Fat theory has become an increasingly active field of scholarship, as the fat body is increasingly seen as unfit, unhealthy, and even immoral in comparison to the normative thin body. Samantha Murray, a scholar of fat theory, writes about the need for alternate depictions of the female body in her article “Locating Aesthetics: Sexing the Fat Women.”⁶⁶ She discusses how the ideal body has left fat women socially excluded and examines the social consequences of this type of categorization. She argues that

⁶⁴Ibid., 24.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Samantha Murray, “Locating Aesthetics: Sexing the Fat Woman,” *Social Semiotics* 14 no. 3, (December 2004): 237-247. EBSCOhost (accessed October 4, 2006).

aesthetics is a learned discourse and not a static, objective truth. The methods that are used to determine the ideal body change in different cultures and time periods, therefore they are a product of social and cultural ideas. For Murray, the ideal body shape is created by what she labels “an aesthetics of existence,” which determines what bodies and lifestyles are beautiful and consequentially shapes those that are not.⁶⁷ The current aesthetics of existence has created a society where the fat body is not beautiful. Murray argues that humans are taught to judge beauty, claiming that Greco-Roman society taught its subjects “to live a ‘beautiful life,’ avoid regimes of excess, and practice control in all aspects of one’s existence.”⁶⁸ In this way, achieving beauty relies on the actions of the individual, who must take control of the cultivation of their own body in order to attain beauty. However, Murray argues that this is misleading. Rather, she emphasizes that ideal bodies are formed through comparison to other bodies and learned behaviors, implying that the ideal is actually socially developed. While classical traditions and contemporary ideals place the responsibility for the shape of one’s body on the individual, Murray emphasizes the role that society has on forming body ideals. She finds that the fat female body is categorized outside of the normalized ideal, so that it disrupts normal assumptions about the body based on the ideal. Building upon Murray’s ideas, I will outline how both Saville and Antoni work with big-bodied women and materials like lard that run counter to a slender ideal. They create art that counters the normalized ideal and represents the excluded bodies often dismissed or placed into the category of “other.”

Murray also points out the social consequences of excluding the fat body. She writes that Western culture is “a culture seduced by particular notions of beauty and

⁶⁷ Ibid., 246.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 241.

attractiveness...the body has come to be our visible representation to the world of our ... ‘correct’ and ‘healthy’ diets, exercise regimes, and most importantly a reflection of the inner self.”⁶⁹ Essentially Murray argues that the thin body is regarded as a morally correct body, and, in contrast, the fat female body is seen negatively, as uncultivated. She writes that “understanding of the fat female body relies on an understanding that the fat body houses an ‘uncultivated self.’ In cultivating this self, the body that reflects this completed process is necessarily a thin one.”⁷⁰ Murray describes the pressure to train and cultivate the female body in order to attain feminine beauty, but argues that the fat body should not be understood as morally incorrect. Instead, Murray finds that ideal beauty and body training “prioritizes the self over the other and [is] a form of individualism over a theory of inter-subjective becoming.”⁷¹ In other words, Murray claims that while ideas about the body and habits that affect body shape are formed through interactions with others, the pursuit of the ideal places responsibility for the body on the individual, so that the fat body is incorrectly labeled as deviant. Finally, Murray emphasizes the role that communities play in creating ideals of beauty.

Both Saville and Antoni explore similar notions about the fat female figure. While the ideal is often aligned with moral correctness, Saville finds truth in bodies that are “deviant” or anti-ideal. She paints bodies that are traditionally excluded from visual representations and which she feels exposes a brutal reality about embodiment and representation. While her figures are often aligned with the baroque artist Peter Paul Rubens, because of their comparably fleshy bodies, Saville claims that her work differs.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 237.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 240.

⁷¹ Ibid., 246.

She finds that Rubens depicts women who are “flouncy,” meaning that they are composed to emphasize their soft femininity and idealized to look unthreatening. Rubens creates a female body that contrasts masculine bodies and fulfill male expectations. Rather, Saville finds herself drawn to the works of artist Egon Schiele, who exposes a “brutal truth” about the female figure.⁷² His figures are composed from realistically awkward views. They are simple illustrations of the female body without elaborate context, like Rubens’s mythological or courtly settings. Schiele’s women are shaped by severe angles, rather than flouncy curves. Antoni similarly does not attempt to make beautiful works of art though her use of the female figure. Rather she makes a distinction between beauty and meaning, using her art to disconnect beauty or the ideal from truth or significance.⁷³ Both artists expand upon standard depictions of the female body, explore the “fat” body, and challenge the significance of ideals by engaging with the grotesque.

In “Body-Building” (2013), Tara Chittenden, of the British Museum, discusses the representation of fat, ‘grotesque’ female body and how the artist is reacts to social beliefs and practices concerning the body, as well as the effect social relationships have on the formation of the body.⁷⁴ In particular, she follows the development of one fat-bodied art student who uses self-portraiture to understand her body and create an identity for herself. Chittenden describes the feelings of exclusion experienced by the student,

⁷² Martin Gayford, “Living in flesh,” *Apollo* 180.623 (September 2014): 72.

⁷³ Janine Antoni interviewed by Klaus Ottoman, “2013 Distinguished Artists' Interview with Janine Antoni (FULL INTERVIEW)|CAA,” Youtube video, 46:03, posted by “College Art Association,” accessed August 12, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUoAO9C2yxQ>.

⁷⁴ Tara Chittenden, “Body-Building: A Female Student’s Use of the Transitional Spaces of a Painting Degree Course to Explore her Sexual Desirability and Aesthetics as a ‘Grotesque’ Female Body,” *International Journal of Art & Design Education*, (2013): 59. EBSCOhost (accessed October 5, 2016).

who held the belief that her body was “monstrous, disgusting, and grotesque.”⁷⁵

Chittenden outlines a concrete example of the individual exclusion that ideal body types enforce within Western society. While experiencing social exclusion, this student was able to use her art in order to explore her body and produce imagery that visually communicates a social identity; she used her art in order to overcome feelings of exclusion. Chittenden labels this as “self-making,” which she defines as “the idea of the image as a space for the production of the self.”⁷⁶ Chittenden finds imagery is able to create identity for the excluded subject, which counters the normative effects of the ideal. While society subjects individuals to exclusion based on body type, imagery and artists are able to operate outside of this influence and create new methods of conceptualizing the body. While the ideal excludes particular bodies, “self-making” expands the potential of the human body.

Carla Rice of the University of Guelph also deals with body acceptance, which she describes as “body-becoming.”⁷⁷ Rice looks at the fat female body as a contrast to the ideal female body. She critiques the ideal, writing: “idealized femininity and beauty... [limits] possibilities for women’s lives and [contributes] to sexual inequality.”⁷⁸ Rice argues that the ideal is a strict standard that creates restrictions for bodies. In her view, bodies should not be seen as “bounded, stable entities but as fluid forms that come to be through relations with natural and cultural forces that surround and shape them”⁷⁹ She

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 64.

⁷⁷ Carla Rice, “Rethinking Fat: From Bio- to Body- Becoming Pedagogies,” *Cultural Studies & Critical Methodologies* 15 no. 5 (2015): 387-397. SAGE Publications, (accessed November 1, 2016).

⁷⁸ Ibid., 388.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

believes that social interactions are responsible for creating our understanding of how bodies should look and how bodies should act. While the ideal limits the body, seeing the body as fluid creates potential. Specifically, Rice looks to artists to help break down the ideal and reimagine bodies and credits Jenny Saville for her ability to “capture the solid yet ephemeral quality of embodiment as well as women’s relationship with their fat flesh in a fat-phobic world.”⁸⁰ Rice discourages the strict ideal that causes women to fear fat and suggests that women should “find ways of living with/in the ambiguity of human embodiment.”⁸¹ As the body is a changing, growing, adapting entity, it cannot always embody the ideal, and furthermore the ideal limits the mutable nature of the body, disrupting its potential. Therefore, Rice proposes a system of “body-becoming” that “reclaims sensory pleasure and bodily self-celebration in [sic] lives” and an end to ideals that “enforce physical conformity over diversity and creativity.”⁸² This concept of the body aligns with Bakhtin and the carnivalesque grotesque, which steps over the hierarchical ordering of the world and embraces the bodily life, typified by laughter, abundance, decay, and the functions of the body that all humans experience. Both the grotesque and “body-becoming” emphasize an enjoyment of the body as it is, rather than the pursuit of the ideal body as it may be. The ideal body is an abstracted idea that enforces separation through hierarchical ordering, which places bodies into categories of morally superior and inferior.

Finally, in “Art and the Theatre of Mind and Body” (2009) Karen Ingram describes the clinical gaze and medical science’s interpretation of the body as something

⁸⁰ Ibid., 393.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid., 395.

that can be cured with medical intervention. Historically, the arts and science were connected. Ingram claims that during the Renaissance and the Enlightenment learning anatomy was connected to creative processes and artists used “drawing from cadavers and dissected body parts as an aide to understanding the form and structure of the body.”⁸³ Ingram contrasts the clinical gaze with how artists look at and depict the human body, claiming, “the reading of any image is heavily dependent on the interpretation and contextualization.”⁸⁴ While science is considered a more objective field than the arts, because it is based on the scientific method and numerical data, individuals read imagery differently depending upon their individual perspective. Ingram argues that the medical sciences have separated the physical body from the individual person, creating a view of the body that has a “psychological deceit” and is lacking in “consciousness and subjectivity.”⁸⁵ Because of this, the clinical gaze allows the body of the subject to become detached from the person it belongs to.⁸⁶ The body is important, as it is alive. However, medical science does not consider the patient as a distinctive person with individual emotion, memories, and consciousness. Ingram claims that medical science has created a system of knowing the body that is overly ordered.⁸⁷ The medical gaze sees the body as something that can be categorized. While this view has furthered the study of science and medicine, it fails to recognize the “subjective nature” of the human body or acknowledge its less controllable aspects.

⁸³Karen Ingram, “Art and the Theatre of Mind and Body,” *Anatomical Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 2009, 253. EBSCOhost (accessed October 4, 2026).

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 259.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 257.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

In comparison to medicine, Ingram finds that art has the ability to “prompt us to pause and reflect on our preconceptions and assumptions.”⁸⁸ While medical science can ignore the psychological aspects of the human body, art can enable the viewer to think more deeply about human interconnectedness. In a contemporary example, Ingram describes the artist Andrew Kötting, who “explored questions of perception, selfhood, and normality through an exploration of Kötting’s relationship with his daughter Eden who suffers from the rare... condition Joubert syndrome... with Eden as the subject of anatomical scrutiny and investigation rais[ing] questions about the nature of medical knowledge and understanding and definition of what is defined as ‘normal’.”⁸⁹ While the medical view of the body is generalizing, causing the body to be seen as an object to be fixed, Ingram claims that artists have the ability to describe “the nature of selfhood, consciousness and subjectivity” experienced by the human body.⁹⁰ And while the medical field creates objective categories for all patients like healthy or unhealthy, contemporary art often takes on a more subjective and ambiguous approach to interpreting and representing the body. As Ingram explains, “If we consider the organ as being emblematic of the whole, a metonym so to speak, then it is possible to invest the object with subjective meaning, for example the larynx of a women... renowned for the beauty of her singing voice.”⁹¹ Rather than seeing the organ as just an organ, Ingram asks her readers to consider the function of the organ as a part of its subjective meaning. Applying Ingram’s ideas, I argue that Janine Antoni exemplifies this ability of artists to focus on the person within, versus the exterior appearance. In her self-portrait *Lick and*

⁸⁸ Ibid., 259.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 254.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 259.

⁹¹ Ibid., 262.

Lather (fig. 11), she creates an obscured portrait bust through the private actions of bathing and licking. Similarly, Jenny Saville paints a body that has a fleshly significance, rather than a medically objective view of body parts described by the medical gaze. Rather than compose pictures of female bodies as medically healthy, or medically correct; bodies that are prescribed by society's ideals, Saville attempts to create ambiguity with her less than perfect body shapes.

After introducing this key scholarship on the female figure, gender, and the grotesque, chapter two and three will continue by examining these ideas in relation to specific artworks from two artists: painter Jenny Saville (b. 1970) and mixed-media sculptor Janine Antoni (b. 1964). In particular, these two chapters will consider how each artist explores the grotesque and depicts the female figure in their works of art.

Chapter Two: How to Look like a Woman, as Drawn by Jenny Saville

In this chapter, I examine Western female body standards in relation to the work of Jenny Saville, who paints bodies that are deemed abnormal and could therefore be considered grotesque. Saville illustrates the bodies that fall outside of western ideals. She paints large bodied women or women who are overabundant in relation to standards for women. While Barbie and billboard women represent societal expectations of the female appearance, Saville's figures oppose those expectations. Through this deviation, Saville rejects society's standards and broadens ideas about the shape of the female body. She critiques body standards by depicting bodies that fluctuate in size and shape, rather than making each body fit into the standards society expects. Throughout this chapter I argue that Saville's works can be read as grotesque because her figures counteract the strict feminine ideals women are expected to fulfill.

Applying Tradition of Past Artists

In 2015, Farah Nayeri, Arts journalist for *The New York Times*, reviewed the exhibition "Rubens and his Legacy," at the Royal Academy of Arts in London. As Nayeri explains, for the exhibition Jenny Saville was invited to fill one gallery with twenty-one works she selected by major artists, including the male artists Willem de Kooning and Pablo Picasso, along with one of her own works. Explaining Saville's works, Nayeri says: "Jenny Saville is best known for painting monumental close-ups of large nude women exposing parts that are usually left unshown; flab, fat, bulge."⁹² Saville is a women painter who paints the female nude body, adding her own interpretation into the

⁹² Farah Nayeri, "A Contemporary Twist on Rubens Legacy," *New York Times*, January 28, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/29/arts/international/a-contemporary-twist-on-rubens-legacy.html> (accessed May 31, 2016).

traditionally male field of painting. By placing her work in a gallery with male artists, she compares her own work with theirs, positioning her paintings at a similar level of achievement, and including her paintings within the tradition of western art history. Her work has often been compared to the Flemish painter Peter Paul Rubens, which is why she was invited to curate the gallery with works influenced by his painterly ability. He composed many paintings based upon Greek and Roman mythology, most of which include female figures. Rubens is renowned for his depictions of fleshy female nudes, whose bodies are fuller than those by Rubens' contemporaries, such as Rembrandt. Finally, Rubens is known for his use of undulating brush strokes and writhing figures depicted in pink flesh tones. Saville similarly depicts full, fleshy nudes. Her work is also composed of organic and undulating brush strokes that emphasize the body and flesh of the figure.

For example, Saville's painting *Prop* (1993) (fig. 12) depicts a seated woman on a stool. Her thick thigh propels out at the viewer. The belly and thigh are the brightest parts of the painting, spotlighting the two fleshy parts of the body where women fear fat. *Prop* is full of flesh tones: beiges, yellows, dark browns, and pinks. In comparison to de Kooning and Picasso, Saville uses highly saturated colors sparingly, focusing instead on earth tones. The composition of *Prop* is full of curvilinear and diagonal lines. The belly, the thigh, and the hips are rendered as curves. Similar to the full-bodied women painted by Rubens, Saville uses undulating lines to describe flesh. The woman has a body defined by blocky brushwork, rather than the smooth color transitions that Renaissance painters like Titian perfected in paintings like *Venus of Urbino* (Fig 10). In *Prop*, four very straight black lines are confined to the bottom left corner of the painting and describe the

legs of a stool that the figure sits upon, however the seat of the stool is covered by the flesh of the figure's thigh. In the center of the painting Saville places a thick circular thigh, foreshortening it so that it juts out at the viewer. This thick, curvy thigh is met by the four thin, straight lines at the bottom. The stark contrast between angular line and curvilinear form causes the flesh of the thigh to be amplified. In the top left corner, the arms cross to form sharp diagonal lines that meet in an angular intersection. Near the center, the figure's legs cross forming a second set of sharp diagonals and angular intersections. Most of the painting is dominated by soft curves and swirling lines, paired with these diagonal lines and angular intersections. Saville creates a chaotic composition, while the lack of stable horizontal lines limits any sense of stability. While there are straight vertical lines that form the legs of the stool, they meet the curvy shape of the body in a way that seems to poke at the circular shape, rather than steadily uphold it. The straight lines contrast and emphasize the curvy full-bodiedness of the woman. Saville composes the body so that the majority of the figure's mass is contained in the top, left portion of the painting. Most of the bottom and right portions of the painting are empty of subject matter. This creates a sense of ungrounded mass; while the figure feels heavy, it also seems to hover at the top of the composition so that it appears precarious and might fall. While a stool holds up the body, the skinny lines of the stool's legs do not seem substantial enough to hold up the figure. The flesh of her right hip and thigh cover most of the seat of the stool, so that it is almost unnoticeable and the stool's skinny legs appear to poke into the woman's heavy thigh.

There seems to be a strong spotlight shining on the figure that creates pronounced dark shadows and bright highlights. Shadows swirl around the composition forming a

spiral. Beginning at the bottom right edge of the thigh, the shadow moves upwards curving along the figure's right hip and rib. The shadow cuts across the painting under the figure's folded arms and travels down the left side of the body, culminating at the top of the left thigh. This spiraling shadow is made more evident by a bright highlight in the center of the painting that describes the curvy belly and shapely right thigh. The stool's very straight vertical lines are a dark black, so that they feel severe in comparison to the pink and yellow tones of the flesh of the body. The area surrounding the figure is very bright, almost creating a halo around the woman. The background is a gradient that fades into a dark neutral color as it recedes further away from the body of the figure.

The painting is done on a two dimensional canvas, however it is rendered illusionistically and creates a sense of depth and recession. The forward most point is the knee of the right thigh at the center of the composition. Saville foreshortens the knee so that the shape propels forward at the viewer. From here, there is recession back into space so that the head is the furthest shape away from the viewer. In an interaction with another person the head is normally encountered first. However, in this painting the viewer sees the thighs and the belly first. The background is flat and undetailed and receives little attention in comparison to the extremely dynamic body. It feels less important than the figure. In contrast, the figure and her flesh are dominated by swirling lights and darks and diagonal lines that meet at angular intersections. The composition is unsymmetrical, as it is all pushed into the top left corner. It is a somewhat uncomfortable painting to look at. While illusionistic painters, such as those of the Renaissance, emphasized symmetry and balance in order to create a harmonious image that is easy to look at, Saville's painting does the opposite. Her painting is full of ambiguity, confusion, and asymmetry.

While Rubens and Saville use similar techniques to depict the female body, Saville finds that their figures contrast due to Rembrandt's "flounciness" and her figures' "grunginess."⁹³ She says that her figures "focus on physical facts such as genitals and awkward sags... that artists – like Rubens or ... Renoir – might have airbrushed away."⁹⁴ Rubens's women tend to be more edited. They appear as ideal female figures, drawn from Rubens's imagination, and cast as characters in his illustrations of mythological tales. Saville does not compose her figures to be a focal point in a story or narrative setting, rather the body is the entire painting. Additionally, Saville does not edit her work to look less "awkward," rather her work incorporates the parts of women that are often seen as less desirable. While Rubens also pictured full-figured women, they were his idealized version of a female body that fit with the myth that he was attempting to paint. For example, in his *Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus* (1617) (fig. 13) Rubens paints women as weak, helpless, and dominated by men. In the painting, men on horseback grab the women in order to rape them. Rubens paints the female body through his experience as a male, while Saville uses her experiences as a woman to paint a female figure.

One work that Saville selected for "Rubens and his Legacy" is Willem de Kooning's *Untitled XI* (1970) (fig. 14). In this abstracted painting, de Kooning continues the legacy of Peter Paul Rubens and uses oil paint to create undulating brush strokes and flesh tones. This is continued in his *Untitled* (1970), where he uses a similarly brushy style to create a female nude. Nayeri describes his work saying "de Kooning's large abstract *Untitled IX* (1977), a web of undulating brushstrokes that evoke Rubens's writhing figures and pink flesh tones. His nearby *Untitled* (1970) is a female figure

⁹³ Martin Gayford, "Living in flesh," *Apollo* 180.623 (September 2014): 71.

⁹⁴ Martin Gayford, "Living in flesh," 72.

painted expressionistically on newsprint; all you see are her bright-red lips and shapely breasts."⁹⁵ Both Saville and de Kooning make paintings that depict the female nude. They have similar approaches to brush work and the use of organic line. Both artists can be connected to the fleshy tradition of Ruben's nudes. However, while Rubens clearly communicates distinct male and female bodies, de Kooning and Saville do not. Rather than ascribe to a clear reading of the body, both artists allow for ambiguity in their figures. In his biography of de Kooning, the Pulitzer Prize winning author Mark Stevens comments on the ambiguity of de Kooning's female figures, contemplating whether "he really hates women... [or] Perhaps he loves them too much."⁹⁶ While de Kooning focuses on the lips and breasts of his female subjects, Saville focuses on areas like thighs, belly, and bulge. de Kooning's women are grotesque and ambiguous, however they are still represented from a male perspective as something foreign to the artist, whereas Saville adopts the traditions of painting, but presents her subjects as familiar to the artist. Art journalist Jonathan Jones, who writes for *The Guardian*, describes de Kooning's painting *Woman I* with "mountainous breasts," as "exaggeratedly, absurdly physical ... a spewed monster of fantasy."⁹⁷ This woman is interpreted through the mind of a male artist who desires the woman. Even the *Encyclopedia Britannica* describes de Kooning's later works, such as *Pastorale* and *Clam Diggers* (fig. 15), as "controversial" and "satiric

⁹⁵ Farah Nayeri, "A Contemporary Twist on Rubens Legacy."

⁹⁶ Mark Stevens, "Willem de Kooning Still Dazzles." *Smithsonian Magazine*, October 2011, http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/willem-de-kooning-still-dazzles-74063391/?all_

⁹⁷ Johnathan Jones, "Woman I, Willem de Kooning (1950-52)," *The Guardian*, (August 2002). <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2002/aug/24/art> (accessed April 27, 2017).

attacks on the female anatomy.”⁹⁸ Saville’s women are less a product of male desire. They are not an attack on the figures’ anatomy, rather they are about the way that women see their own body. The paintings suggest that the figures are not irregular bodies, but a part of humanity. Saville is able to interpret and represent female anatomy through her own experiences as a woman. Her work therefore creates a new way to envision the painted female body.

It is clear that the traditions of western painting influence Saville’s work. In an interview Saville claims “the association of paint and flesh it’s really closely linked for me anyway so it just seems the ideal medium for me to talk about flesh in the way I do... if the piece works using enough irony of traditional techniques of painting then that’s what I need to make the work.”⁹⁹ Here she describes the harmony of her medium and subject matter, as well as her incorporation of historical elements into her work. Saville learned painting at the Glasgow School of Art, where she describes attaining a very traditional education.¹⁰⁰ This is made evident in her art, as she adheres to traditional painterly methods, like illusionism and perspective, so common to western art. Her paintings demonstrate skill at depicting space and depth and knowledge of elements like foreshortening, perspective, scale, and point of view, all elements developed in the long tradition of Western painting. Artists like De Kooning applied abstract expressionism, a very loose style of painting. Saville uses a more representational style of painting.

⁹⁸ "Willem de Kooning: American Artist" *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Last modified April 20, 2016 <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Willem-de-Kooning>.

⁹⁹ Jenny Saville, Interviewed by Eline C. Smith, “Arts and Parts,” STVPeople video, John McDonald, YouTube, 2010, <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=oWvAFXkW1pp>.

¹⁰⁰ Jenny Saville interviewed by Eline C. Smith, “Arts and Parts,” YouTube video, posted by “STV people,” 2010, <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=oWvAFXkW1pp>.

Creating a New Style

While Saville uses ideas from the master painters of the past, I argue that her work also diverges from the history of art. Art history often lacks narratives about women painters and requires a more complete gender perspective in order to tell a more complete history. In a 2014 interview in *Porter Magazine*, Saville recounts her college education describing, “I suddenly realized there were no female artists in the books. But it only made me wonder why not?”¹⁰¹ She was influenced by feminist texts, like Luce Irigaray’s *Ce Sexe Qui N’en est Pas Un* (1977), and even inscribed a translated quote from the text into her painting *Propped* (1992). The quote, “If we continue to speak in this sameness—speak as men have spoken for centuries, we will fail each other.” In other words, Saville claims that women who follow male traditions reduce their fellow woman. Saville’s early works included text to rewrite the classical language of the nude figure from the perspective of a woman. However, Saville later found that including texts did not completely describe the female body in the way she experienced it. Art critic Rachel Campbell-Johnson records Saville describing *Propped*, “‘I wanted to find a way to paint the female body from a female point of view’ she explains but soon she gave up the scripts ‘words were so fixed and painting finds its strength in ambiguity and contradiction. I didn’t want people to stand there and literally read the paintings.’”¹⁰² In this quotation, Saville describes the way that her early use of text with representations of the female body conveyed a message that was too clear. It did not describe an ambiguous body. The words on the painting told the viewer how to interpret the body, rather than letting the

¹⁰¹ Johnathan Jones, “Woman I, Willem de Kooning (1950-52),” *The Guardian*, (August 2002). <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2002/aug/24/art> (accessed April 27, 2017).

¹⁰² Rachel Campbell-Johnson, “In the Flesh,” *Porter Magazine*, Winter 2014, 174.

body convey the message. In fact, Saville claims “I’ve never wanted to put a body in a situation. I want the narrative to be in the body itself.”¹⁰³ While society often dictates how women’s bodies should look, Saville describes her attempts to express the body of an individual, without labels or expectations.

Following this conceptual breakthrough, Saville’s paintings shift in focus and the body becomes more ambiguous. Her subjects do not encourage a clear reading of the female body. While Luce Irigaray encourages female empowerment, citing male authority as the source of women’s problems, Saville’s paintings attempt to challenge authority and ideals by adopting the traditions of the grotesque, which by Bakhtin’s definition operates outside of formal hierarchical culture and therefore limits gender differences.¹⁰⁴ For Irigaray, gender is the most prominent identity of the body. However, in Saville’s view, creating a female language of painting was too simple and did not

¹⁰³ Rachel Campbell-Johnson, “In the Flesh,” 174.

¹⁰⁴ Hilary Robinson, “Approaching Painting through Feminine Morphology,” *Paragraph* 25, no. 3 (2002): 93-104. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43263699>. In her article, Robinson claims that Saville’s images help women relate to each other by opening up body standards and making the body more relatable to others. In a response to Robinson’s essay published within this article, Irigaray writes that grotesque paintings are not “a way of respecting the other,” rather in order “to relate with the other... we have to know something about respective identities and the manner of expressing them.” Irigaray points out the differences between genders, rather than promoting their similarities, and emphasizes the wide variety of female figures that exist. Outlining the separation of genders, she insists that “All the work I carry out... has taught me more about the difference(s) between masculine and feminine subjective.” Irigaray insists on separating the male and female. Luce Irigaray, “Approaching Painting through Feminine Morphology,” 101-103. In this thesis, I argue that the grotesque broadens definitions of the female body. While, separating genders creates idealized images and enforces estrangement between genders, I claim that representations of the female body image have become increasingly idealized. This idealization decreases the representation of regular bodies and increases the social categories of irregular bodies. Irigaray’s focus on gender differences, outlined in her response to Robinson, promotes idealization. However, Janine Saville’s paintings counter the ideal image of the female body through their adoption of the grotesque.

express the complex identity that can be found in the shape of the body. Feminism values empowerment and focuses on gender differences. In contrast, the grotesque operates outside of hierarchical society. Additionally, using text in paintings dictated ideas, rather than allowing the body to communicate multiple messages. Irigaray's feminist message did not give Saville the ability to fully communicate the message she wanted her figures to impart. She describes how "painting finds its strength in ambiguity and contradictions."¹⁰⁵ In other words, the medium of paint mixed with the subject of flesh is at its best when its message is less obvious or ambiguous. This can be seen in a comparison of *Prop* (1993) with pieces like *Hybrid* (1997) (fig. 16) and *Shift* (1997) (fig. 17). The earlier work shows a nude woman painted from a female perspective, while the latter two are composed of multiple bodies in sections and have a more obscure message. While *Prop* represents a woman painted from the perspective of a female artist, *Hybrid* and *Shift* create a less evident statement about the female body and gender. These two works reveal a variety of female bodies in a diversity of shapes.

Shift in particular merges six different long vertical bodies into one square composition. While the subject matter clearly consists of different bodies, these sections are blended together because the colors and textures are so similar. At certain points the edges of the bodies are clearly defined by a change in skin tone, while at other points the border is completely lost because there is no tonal difference. The palette of the entire painting is dominated by traditional flesh tones: whites, yellows and pinks. The middle and right most figures are pinker, while the other sections contain more yellow-toned bodies. Occasionally Saville uses dark tones, like deep burgundies, dark maroons, and

¹⁰⁵ Rachel Campbell-Johnson, "In the Flesh," 173.

blacks; one section uses a muted blue to describe a darker, shadowy area. Whereas de Kooning and Rubens incorporated bright color in their paintings, Saville utilizes a more muted color range. While she does not completely avoid color – there are areas of burgundy and hints of blue and yellow – her colors are not saturated or emphasized.

In *Shift*, Saville employs an earthy palette and organic lines, which are curvilinear and undulate throughout the different sections, describing the flesh of different bodies. Each section is related through similar style of line and brush work. Although the painting is dominated by organic lines, there is also a heavy vertical created by the long rectangular sections. While these lines are not always defined, they extend from the bottom of the painting to the top along the edges of the bodies and create both an upward soaring movement and a downward stretch that extends beyond the canvas in both directions. On the far right of the painting, one body bends at a pronounced angle, while a body in the middle feels squeezed, with knees twisting on top of each other. These dynamic angles create tension in comparison to the organic quality of other lines. While overall the lines are organic and curvilinear, making the composition feel natural, this is offset by the strong verticals, that seem to stretch the bodies, and the sharp angles, which cause tension.

The majority of the painting is very bright and seems to be illuminated with a spotlight. The bodies are stuck together so closely that their sides are cropped and there are no shadows. Dark values are almost absent in the painting. The bodies are aligned in such a way that the highlights and shadows match, making the bodies blend together smoothly. Shadows between the sections would create a clear contrast between them. However, the painting is rendered so that the sections blend and cause ambiguity between

the bodies. The entire canvas is consumed with bodies and flesh. Each section is full of mass. There is very limited negative space and the space that does exist is rendered as an off-white billowy texture. There is only one plane, the foreground. The painting has depth and the subjects are rendered illusionistically, however the subject matter does not recede back into the picture area or extend out towards the viewer. Because of the shallow pictorial plane, the bodies are right in front of the viewer, with no background recession. The viewer must consider these female bodies; there is nowhere else to look.

The composition of the painting is simple, in that it is composed on one plane. It is composed mainly of organic lines and is therefore comfortable to look at. The subject matter is rendered in a bright light and presented in a straightforward manner. At the same time, there is a vertical movement to the work, which causes the bodies to feel stretched and squeezed, and pronounced angles that cause tension. The bright bodies and lack of shadows cause the sections to blend rather than be clearly defined. This causes some ambiguity in the subject matter, as to where one body ends and another begins. The absence of negative space means there is no room to rest the eye, making the composition chaotic. Shift is confusing and the bodies depicted are complex and ambiguous. In this painting, Saville illustrates the complexity of gender and communicates that women cannot be limited to one body type.

Saville describes the complex nature of bodies saying:

... and people who would play with their gender, or who were not specifically one way of the other, and I find that interesting I find that the idea of identity... people who are saying well my identity is not fixed over here or over here and I am a little bit like this and I feel convinced that in a female there are many masculine qualities and in a male there are many

female qualities. We are often not encouraged to develop those parts of each other.¹⁰⁶

As this quotation illustrates, Saville's paintings do not express gender in one way, because, for her, the body is not defined solely through gender. She also suggests that people are encouraged to act either feminine or masculine. Society has constructed ideas about gender that create expectations about appearance. While people may have characteristics from either gender, acting on those is not encouraged. In regards to painting, a clear mode of representation creates a normalized image of gender, which is easier for the viewer to understand. Representations like these simplify the body, so that the viewer does not have to think about the complex nature of gender or the human body. However, the human body does not have to be expressed in a strict, gendered way. It can be represented as more complex and messy, as "grotesque." A "grotesque" body is abnormal, over abundant or decaying, and is not limited by the idealized notions of gender.

Contemporary Influences and Grotesque Women

Saville's subjects are a range of different models, allowing her to paint a diversity of figures. In America, she was inspired by obese women in grocery stores. In Italy, she hired a hermaphrodite prostitute in order to take photographs of the body and paint from these images. In New York, she observed a plastic surgery clinic and used that experience to hire figure models.¹⁰⁷ Saville also uses her own body as a model for compositions depending on the message that she is trying to express. She is able to depict her own body

¹⁰⁶ Jenny Seville, "Artist Jenny Seville: why human bodies fascinate," YouTube video, 5:06, posted by "Channel 4 News London," accessed April 27, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgXNp8ToVHk>.

¹⁰⁷ Rachel Cooke, "Jenny Saville: I want to be a painter of modern life and modern bodies," *The Guardian*, June 9, 2012.

and move it into poses that models might be unwilling to adopt. Finally, she sources illustrations from surgical books and magazines that picture ungendered or ambiguous figures. Rather than promoting the ideal and representing one perfect female body shape, through these different sources, Saville is able to imagine female bodies differently. This is evident in images like *Shift*, where Saville composes one image with multiple nude figures separated into different sections and organized into long verticals. While it is clear that the different sections depict different bodies, the sections also merge together where the color tones between sections are blended. At certain points the border is clearly defined by a change in skin tone, at other points the border is completely lost because there is no tonal difference. This causes ambiguity in the subject matter as to where one figure ends and another begins. Using ambiguity and blurring different bodies together, Saville illustrates how the female body does not look one particular way and is not defined solely by its gender.

While Saville paints different body types, explores the “grotesque,” and understands the variability of the human body, not all women appreciate those areas of their body that are not ideal. The grotesque is the representation of unofficial culture, while the official culture promotes a standard body. Saville paints figures who oppose body standards, however many women want to have an ideal body shape. This is because they are not willing to be labeled as having an irregular body type. This phenomenon is exemplified in cosmetic surgery. Saville has repeatedly emphasized how this industry has influenced her work. After a visit to a plastic surgery clinic, Saville describes patients who held “the notion that [they] were somehow sick [who] had a fictional normality ... if

only I had these breasts I would be normal.”¹⁰⁸ The patients saw their bodies as irregular, as their bodies did not conform to the ideal body shape that is prescribed for the female gender. This ideal and the need to conform to it causes women to surgically alter their bodies.

Saville describes her ideas about plastic surgery in an interview with Eline C.

Smith, saying:

I think what happened is ... we would decide what we thought was a normal body and what was an abnormal body, an abnormal body usually meant they had some sort of disease or they didn't have a limb, and now the category of normal is becoming smaller and smaller and smaller. So if you have bigger thighs, which before would have been perfectly normal you know she is a bigger girl than that girl, is seen as slightly abnormal so therefore you're not very well you're sick. And plastic surgery cosmetic surgeon's play on this to sell cosmetic surgery I can give you normal thighs or a normal nose or a normal mouth cause that category of normal is getting smaller and smaller and smaller. And because plastic surgery is there to correct us or diet or workout is there, then we take it... cosmetic surgery is something that is available so therefore we feel that we need it... I think that's what we do is that technology makes something available and we advertise so that it looks as though we need it... when it's not necessarily that we need it it's just it's there...¹⁰⁹

In this quote, Saville describes how the ideal body has become normalized and any other body type has become irregular. Saville does not paint bodies that conform to this normalized ideal. Her figures are irregular and emphasize parts typically erased in the western ideal. They have therefore been described as “grotesque” women.¹¹⁰ This thesis argues that the female bodies in Saville's work are examples of grotesque figures. In addition, Saville presents figures from unflattering views and uses a very painterly style

¹⁰⁸Jenny Seville, “Artist Jenny Seville: why human bodies fascinate,” YouTube video, 5:06, posted by “Channel 4 News London,” accessed April 27, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgXNp8ToVHk>.

¹⁰⁹Jenny Saville interviewed by Eline C. Smith, “Arts and Parts,” YouTube video, posted by “STV people,” 2010, <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=oWvAFXkWIpp>.

¹¹⁰Tara Chittenden, “Body-Building,” 59.

to emphasize the fleshiness of the bodies. They do not conform to cultural ideals of the female body communicated by figures such as Barbie. Her women are not made of hard plastic with perfect curves; they are complete, uncut, and are not changed in Photoshop. They include bulging thighs and stomach folds. Saville's paintings show parts of the body that are normally left out of visual images, like the "trained" and "cultivated" bodies that the fat theorist Samantha Murray criticizes. Murry describes the social consequences of leaving the fat body out of representations and emphasizes the role that society has on shaping the fat body.

In the painting *Strategy: South Face/ Front Face/ North Face* (fig. 18) Saville depicts one woman from three different perspectives. The middle panel presents the woman straight on, the left has her turned towards the right, and the right has her turned leftward. All of the figures look down at the viewer from above. Saville emphasizes the flesh on the belly, arms, and thighs, rather than the breasts or an attractive face. The flesh is mostly described with muted flesh tones. However, as Saville uses oil paint, she is able to layer colors so that undertones of yellow, blue, and purple shine through the top layers. Saville also uses blues and purples to describe shadows, and yellows to describe highlights. As the brightest and most yellow of the three, the central panel attracts the viewer's attention first. This panel focuses on the figure's belly, showing a large roll of fat. The two side panels are darker and are rendered with more blue and purple shadows. They show the weight on the thighs and the arms that sag downward at the viewer. The background, on the other hand, is a neutral grey, a color that does not distract from the body. This color contrasts with the figure, so that the body and flesh become the emphasis.

In each of the three sections, the background is brightest nearest to the body. Further from each body the background becomes darker, so that the figure seems to glow or project an aura into the space immediately surrounding it. The background is a flat, nondescript negative space. This negative space is composed so as not to distract the viewer from the body of the woman. The painting is all about her, not the setting or the space around her. The bodies are placed in the center of each section. This central position gives the torso prominence, as it is not pushed to the side. None of the torsos are cropped and the body is shown in full focus. They are symmetrical and balanced versus an asymmetrical placement, which would feel more chaotic. The body in *Strategy* (South Face/ Front Face/ North Face) is composed and symmetrical, creating stability and importance. In comparison to the contemporary ideal, this body type is irregular. Yet, Saville is able to create a composition that allows her anti-ideal body to dominate, thereby establishing an alternative.

The mass of the body is emphasized by a low vantage point. The viewer is near the bottom of the composition and looks up at the massiveness of the curvy figure, which seems to hang down towards the viewer. Low vantage points are irregular in depictions of the female body, as this view emphasizes unflattering curves, making the body look heavy and robust. While the symmetrical composition feels balanced, the low vantage point is not a comfortable view. It is an irregular depiction of the female body and creates visual confusion. The mass of the body is shaped by curvilinear, organic lines, which curve around the composition creating circles and ellipses. Any angles are softened by curves across the canvas. The outer edge of the mass starts at the bottom and heads upwards so that it creates a vertical movement. This vertical movement makes the figures

seem taller or transcendent, like they are rising upwards and the viewer is shrinking downwards. There are also two straight lines that divide the sections, making a clear distinction between the panels. The figures recede up and back, so that the belly and thighs are the nearest part of the body and the head is the furthest. The top of the canvas crops the head before it ends. This suggests that there is more to the painting that cannot be seen by the viewer and that the space of the painting goes on further than the edges of the canvas. The woman is depicted in a way that she feels tall and big. She challenges the ideal body. The body that Saville paints has a dominance not normally associated with women; because of this, the woman is interpreted as threatening.

A glowing background emphasizes the form of the woman, making her appear bigger and more pronounced. The body recedes upwards and backwards, but is cut off by the top of the canvas at the forehead. The low vantage point emphasizes the hanging flesh of the body and causes the figure to tower above the viewer. At the bottom of the composition, the viewer looks up at the mass. Because of these details, the figure feels dominant and looming. She looks down, watching the viewer who is comparably small. While the ideal for women has become as Saville describes “smaller and smaller and smaller,” so that the normal body is a thin body, the body of the figure hangs in a way that most people would consider unflattering. This figure does not represent the ideal, which does not reflect reality. Saville’s compositions emphasize the fleshy nature of an irregular body that opposes Western beauty standards.

While Saville’s figures are therefore composed to emphasize their fleshiness, most images of women are composed so that female figures embody the ideal. Clare Stanhope, an art educator who taught high school life drawing, found that her female

students and, more broadly, women at large are surrounded by images of ideal bodies, from the Internet and advertisements, and that these images inform their conception of how the body should look. These images only show one type of body, a thin-hipped Barbie-like version. Most human bodies do not fit this ideal, therefore they are considered flawed. As Stanhope claims, women see images of women “on an advert, they always have big tits and a flat waist.”¹¹¹ Saville’s early works aim to counter this fixation on the ideal, giving women a different way to visualize the female body, and presenting alternate body types. She “paint[s] the female body from a female point of view.”¹¹²

Saville’s interest in plastic surgery resulted in visits to a plastic surgery clinic. There she interviewed female patients who felt that their bodies were not normal and needed to be corrected. She was fascinated that, rather than accept their shape, these women focused on features of their body that looked excessive or imperfect in comparison to the tight figures of other bodies they saw. Saville’s paintings go beyond criticizing the work of plastic surgeons; rather plastic surgeons embody ideals of the body that western society seeks to achieve. Saville works against these ideals. Rather than paint with an abbreviated vocabulary and representing only the ideal, Saville creates an unabridged representation of women. She achieves this by painting the bodies that patients dislike and attempt to fix. I argue that Saville’s interest in irregular bodies connects to Vänškä’s ideas about the grotesque body as “opposed to the Classical body,” introduced in Chapter One, and Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory of the grotesque that finds the

¹¹¹ Clare Stanhope, “Beauty and the Beast,” 356.

¹¹² Gagosian Gallery, “In the Flesh,” 177.

“themes of these images of bodily life are fertility, growth, and a brimming-over abundance.”¹¹³ Saville’s figures are individual bodies that defy female Western ideals.¹¹⁴

As her interest in plastic surgery conveys, contemporary women dislike being seen with “fat, flab, bulge.”¹¹⁵ Her bodies oppose contemporary canons that idealize gender and create a sense of discomfort, fulfilling the grotesque, as defined by Mikhail Bakhtin. Bakhtin describes the classical canon saying, “As conceived by these canons, the body was first of all a strictly completed, finished product. Furthermore, it was isolated, alone, fenced off from all other bodies.”¹¹⁶ In other words, the classical body was not connected to the growth and development that humans experience; rather, the classical body described an already attained perfection. Vänskä also defines the classical body as “monumental and static, a closed surface, corresponding to the aspirations of the ‘official’, i.e. bourgeois individualism.”¹¹⁷ This body is static, hard, perfected, and it rejects change. The classical body is counter to the grotesque body, which is influenced by decay and the resulting growth, change, and fertility.

I find that the ideal body that cosmetic surgery patients desire is similar to the classical canon that Vänskä and Bakhtin reference. It serves as a point of contrast for the grotesque. The classical ideal has become common, reproduced, and well understood. It does not reflect one particular body, but rather the conglomeration of bodies that form an ideal female body. The body that surgery produces is also a compilation of types. Both strive towards a static state of perfection. In contrast, the grotesque body is always going

¹¹³ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 19.

¹¹⁴ Annamari Vänskä, “A Heroic Male and a Beautiful Woman,” 158.

¹¹⁵ Farah Nayeri, “A Contemporary Twist on Rubens Legacy.”

¹¹⁶ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 29.

¹¹⁷ Annamari Vänskä, “A Heroic Male and a Beautiful Woman,” 159.

through cycles of growth or decay. The grotesque is an unperfected body. I contend that there is a hidden truth in Saville's women; the women who are considered irregular and illustrate the grotesque, such as are depicted in *Prop* and *Strategy*, highlight a counter ideal. The larger than ideal belly and thighs of the main figures are the brightest parts of the painting and are therefore emphasized. Saville uses mostly diagonal and curvilinear lines that create a chaotic composition and exaggerate the figure's deviance from the ideal. The few straight lines in *Prop* are the four skinny black legs of a stool, whose seat has been covered up by the flesh of the figure's thigh. Because the seat is covered up, the mass feels ungrounded or floating. The skinny lines feel too thin to hold the heavy body. Figures like the woman in *Prop* are fleshy and squishy, and Saville's compositions illuminate body parts that many women avoid or cover up.

In picturing female bodies that deviate from the norm, Saville challenges the idea that body shape can describe the interior person. Saville expresses how people experience her paintings with shock when she "present[s] a body that's not behaving or behaving badly..."¹¹⁸ While the women she paints are not acting badly, in the sense that they are not harming another human or breaking laws, they are credited with acting badly because their body shape is contrary to the normalized body. Saville describes her viewer's reaction, saying, "anything that challenges a restriction or a border is seen as really dangerous."¹¹⁹ Saville challenges this norm, making her paintings dangerous. They threaten established ideals. She describes her bodies as ambiguous and difficult to comprehend. Saville's figures are big and dominant, two adjectives that women are not supposed to fill. Vänskä defines the grotesque as "a concept by which phenomena are

¹¹⁸ Jenny Saville, Interviewed by Eline C. Smith, "Arts and Parts." 2010.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

described in a state of transformation, a state in which they no longer fit into any fixed category.”¹²⁰ Saville’s paintings reflect this definition, as they create “new possibilities for living” in bodies that do not fit into traditional categories. Rather than display an already attained perfection, they allude to decay, growth, and fertility, all a part of the grotesque. In the paintings, the irregular body is not an object of “shame and disgust” and there is not a “sense that [sic] bodies were in some way bad or wrong.”¹²¹ Rather Saville’s figures offer a critique of the ideal, which reveals Western body stereotypes.

Art historian Michelle Meagher considers Saville’s representations of the female bodies and the ways in which they inspire disgust in the viewer. In “Jenny Saville and a Feminist Aesthetics of Disgust,” Meagher describes Saville’s figures saying: “The bodies she depicts are not the refined and evenly proportioned nudes of classical art.”¹²² Rather, “Saville represents bodies rarely represented in western art” or in modern visual depictions. Claiming that Saville’s paintings explore the act of “experiencing oneself as disgusting,” Meagher finds that this emotion is caused by “a cultural system that regularly establishes boundaries between different types of bodies: rendering some beautiful, some acceptable, and others simply disgusting.”¹²³ In other words, women often see their bodies as grotesque because they do not fit the established ideal. While Meagher argues that Saville’s paintings are about the female experience of disgust, Saville herself claims not to make a political statement about what the body should look like or how the body should be experienced. She challenges a categorical and gendered understanding of the body. In an interview with the artist for *Porter Magazine*, Saville

¹²⁰ Annamari Vänskä, “A Heroic Male and a Beautiful Woman,” 165.

¹²¹ Carla Rice, “Rethinking Fat,” 395.

¹²² Michelle Meagher, “The Feminine Aesthetics of Disgust,” 23.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 24.

emphasizes her desire to paint flesh, saying: “I don’t want a narrative in my paintings.

I’ve never wanted to put a body in a situation. I want the narrative to be in the body itself.”¹²⁴ Saville wants all of the emphasis to be on the body, but does not demand a

particular reading of the body. In *Porter Magazine* she describes her painting’s “strong link to our animal nature, reminding us that humans are, after all, just animals.”¹²⁵

Women, who strive after the ideal, look at their body negatively and contrast it with their idea of a perfect body, a shape that is unattainable, because bodies are constantly changing. While women often feel that they must get better and better, their image must improve, and they must keep up with certain standards, Saville questions this assumption by linking women to animals. Saville’s paintings do not force the female body to fulfill a particular category. Instead, Saville’s paintings show the body, its flesh, and the distinct variations it possesses.

Saville paints female figures from her own female experience. Her figures fill the entire canvas and are clearly about the body, not about illustrating a mythological tale or an imagined character. Saville offers a different way to think about living in a body. In *Porter Magazine* she describes her experience painting during pregnancy and recounts how men told her “having children would change everything that I wouldn’t have time to paint anymore.”¹²⁶ This type of comment is based on Saville’s female body and defines her by her gender. However, rather than catering to the ideas that men had about her female body, Saville saw pregnancy as something powerful. She describes how it aided her painting and was an experience that the male master painters of the past never

¹²⁴ Rachel Campbell-Johnson, “In the Flesh,” 177.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 173.

understood, saying: “Picasso didn’t know what this felt like.”¹²⁷ She describes the connection she felt as she was “painting flesh and then making flesh,” connecting the creative act of painting with the creation of a child growing inside of her.¹²⁸ This experience shaped Saville’s paintings.

Saville also studied Roman sculpture in Italy, where she viewed works depicting fertility goddesses. Later in life, as a mother, she returned to the primal idea of fertility and childbirth in her work. Saville describes attempting to evoke the “the rawness of giving birth,” by including her pregnant body in depictions of the cycles of nature thereby acknowledging her body’s ability and power. She rejects a more passive and sentimental ideal of motherhood expressed in a “Mary-Cassatt baby-in-a-crib way.”¹²⁹ Cassatt painted numerous paintings of smiling mothers holding babies who look up at them admiringly; the babies are never crying or throwing a tantrum. The scenes are peaceful and represent an idyllic relationship between mother and child. Cassatt’s version of motherhood is sweet and idealized and does not expose the difficult, messy parts of childhood. These are the raw parts of female experience that Saville describes wanting to paint.

Saville describes her work as more comparable to Egon Schiele, because of “the honesty and the brutality of his drawings, of both himself and the females that he was drawing.”¹³⁰ Schiele paints women in unusual angular poses, in positions that are not flattering or feel uncomfortable for example his (fig. 19). Saville also attempts a raw truth

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ella Cue, “Interview with Jenny Saville,” *Huffington Post*, June 8, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/elena-cue/interview-with-jenny-savi_b_10324460.html.

that is not smoothed over by ideals, which might make the work easier to look at or more “appealing” to the eye. While women pay for plastic surgery to alter their appearance and billboard women are posed and photoshopped to embody an unnatural perfection, Saville's paintings honestly reveal the body. It is not altered in order to attain perfection. Her paintings are not made to be beautiful figures, but instead elicit disgust. They reveal aspects of the body that many women feel pressured to keep hidden: large bellies, rolling fat, and thighs with bulk, presented from low vantage points, with knees and arms bent at awkward angles. While Saville's work focuses on what Western society considers non-normative bodies, in reality these bodies are normal. Saville's paintings reveal the inaccuracies of a Western ideal based upon gender. After drawing bodies repetitively, she reflects: “parts of the male body become the female body, and that becomes really exciting because it almost represents more what we’re like as humans, rather than these separate sexes.”¹³¹ In her view, gender categories are irrelevant and create boundaries by dictating what the body can and cannot look like. Rather than passively follow these standards, Saville focuses on the experiences she has had living in her body in order to express a truth about the body that she believes is concealed. She therefore focuses on painting the body itself, instead of a female body personified by gender. Saville uses her paint to create bodies, rather than ideals.

Saville's paintings illustrate how body ideals have become disconnected from the fleshy reality of the body. In a *Huffington Post* article, Saville observes how she finds truth in the bodies she paints, saying “that there’s something within that truth; that there are truths greater than knowledge. And if there’s a knowledge, sometimes you have to let

¹³¹ Ibid.

go and follow your instinct to get to that greater truth.”¹³² Saville here describes how her bodies reveal a deeper truth. In order to reach this truth, her body becomes a tool in her paintings. I would argue that she is able to communicate the body in a way that she cannot otherwise express, because she uses her body as a tool in her paintings to understand the flesh. In this way, her paintings expose something that has been overlooked. Saville turns to grotesque representations in the painting tradition, in order to pin-down this “overlooked” element. She says: “If you look at the Velázquez dwarf paintings, there’s an identity that goes across all of humanity. Or a great Rembrandt portrait - it covers everybody. I’m not an old woman in a Rembrandt painting; I don’t know what it’s like to be a seventy year old woman, but I feel the humanity when I look at that painting, so that’s the way I’ve looked at it.”¹³³ As Saville explains, as grotesque figures the dwarf and the old woman reveal a hidden truth about universal humanity. It is rooted in bodily imperfection and in the bodies of those categorized as irregular. Saville critiques ideal bodies saying, “I’m not so interested in a kind of surface beauty, I think there’s a certain humility to getting underneath the surface of something or being prepared to show the reality of something.”¹³⁴ Saville is drawn to bodily complexity instead of an appealing exterior. Following the demands of the ideal allows one to achieve surface beauty, but that is only a shell that encapsulates the reality of the human body.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has argued that Saville's grotesque paintings break down gendered ideals that limit the expression of the female body. By comparing Saville's paintings to the work of traditional masters, such as Rubens and de Kooning, Saville's work becomes more significant. In their awareness of depth and space, her paintings follow academic standards. Her subjects seem to mirror the work of Peter Paul Rubens, who depicts full-bodied women with curves and rounder shapes. Saville's work can also be productively compared to the brushy style of Willem de Kooning, who incorporates pink flesh tones and undulating lines into his paintings of women. While the tradition of painting has long included female nudes, they have predominately been painted by male artists, who see the female body differently than a female painter. Tradition also teaches a canon of proportion, which creates an idealized body shape. Saville's use of traditional techniques and reference to art historical precedents reveals her mastery of the medium and knowledge of the innovations of past masters. However, Saville also creates a new style of depiction, which stands out from her predecessors and communicates a unique message. Saville fashions chaotic images of women that are neither idealized nor perfected. She chooses elements of design, such as a low-vantage point and diagonal lines, which expand the way that bodies can be painted.

In contemporary society there is an ideal body that women seek to achieve, as illuminated by cosmetic surgery. The idealized body of contemporary society is similar to the classical body, in that they are both perfected shapes that reject the fluctuating nature of the body. The contemporary ideal has become normalized for women, causing women with body shapes outside of the ideal to be considered irregular. Saville's paintings

expressly counteract the feminine ideal. Rather than show a perfect female figure, she instead paints fleshy bodies. Saville's figures are not idealized or photo-shopped; they reject "normality." Because of this, I consider her work to be "grotesque," as described by Bakhtin and Vänkä, in that it both counters the ideal body and embraces decay, growth, and fertility. Her bodies are not perfected like the ideal shape of Barbie or billboard women and they are rather ambiguous in their representation of gender. Her paintings use flesh as a tool to convey a "brutal reality" and have been described as "shocking." They therefore contrast sentimental and passive depictions of women. Her paintings represent women as complex and gender as ambiguous. They illustrate grotesque bodies that defy the standards of the normalized figure. Saville's paintings are able therefore to span boundaries and challenge an ideal definition of the female body.

Chapter Three: How To Use Your Body as Defined by Janine Antoni

This chapter focuses on the mixed-media sculpture and performance works of Janine Antoni. I will first establish her work as feminist, describing the ways in which she creates works of art from a female perspective, and then explain how she uses grotesque action to challenge western body standards for women. Antoni communicates her female gender by using her body as a tool to make art. While her works do not depict her body through classical self-portrait mediums or techniques, they do suggest the presence of her body and therefore create a physical record of her actions. I argue that Antoni's works are feminist and challenge the societal standards that dictate female action, as she performs and exhibits actions that women's bodies are regularly discouraged from enacting. By referencing activities considered irregular for women, her art confronts standardized female behavior and reconsiders what it means to be a woman. By using her body's functions to form her art, Antoni expresses the realities of a growing and decaying body that is in a state of transformation, therefore referencing the grotesque body.

Lick and Lather

Lick and Lather (fig. 4) embodies Antoni's feminist ideas and references the grotesque. For *Lick and Lather*, she cast a series of fourteen portrait busts of herself. Half are made of soap and half are made of chocolate. She uses her tongue to lick away the chocolate and the soap to bathe her body, so that the cast busts gradually lose their original form. By the time Antoni displayed the busts for exhibition, she had worked at them long enough that they look weathered. Through this process, the clear, molded image of Antoni's head becomes obscured. Her process emphasizes the material's decay

and is about transformation, rather than the production of a classically accurate object. Antoni creates a physical record of licking and bathing and forms self-portraits, which speak to bodily processes that her audiences can identify with. This alternative sculpting process engages and requires Antoni's body, referencing both its functions and its needs.

In a 2011 interview at Moore College of Art, Antoni describes the inspiration for her piece, saying: “why make a self-portrait traditionally, why would artists do that... one is to immortalize yourself, of course I’m working with ephemeral material working against that.”¹³⁵ In this quotation, Antoni compares her work to past sculptors who create self-portraits. Particularly influenced by Italian Renaissance and Classical sculptures, *Lick and Lather* was originally installed at the Venice Biennale (1993), in a city full of classical sculptures in the tradition of the *Portrait Bust of a Flavian Woman (Fonseca Bust)*, (c. 100 C.E.) (Fig. 20). This juxtaposition placed *Lick and Lather* in conversation with canonical works of art history and legitimized Antoni’s works as visual responses to the innovations of the artists of the past. *Lick and Lather* is comprised of three-dimensional sculptures. While two-dimensional works, like paintings, create the pictorial illusion of space and light and require viewers to walk up to a flat wall, a sculptural installation creates a different dynamic allowing the viewer to walk around the pieces and experience depth and shadow in real space. Sculptures therefore necessitate action from the viewer.

In some exhibitions of *Lick and Lather* the white soap busts are organized on one side of a gallery facing the brown chocolate ones. In figure 21 the sculptures are arranged

¹³⁵Janine Antoni interviewed by Janet Kaplan and Johnathan Welis, “Graduate Studies // Studio Conversation with Janine Antoni,” YouTube video, 1:11:00, posted by “Moore College of Art and Design,” April 14, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mvV0fxY1YAU>.

so that they create a hallway of portrait busts. In other installations all of the busts are installed in a single line facing the viewer, with all the soap versions preceding the chocolate busts. Both installations are designed to create a clear distinction between materials and processes. In order to look at each head the viewer must walk in a straight line to the end of the busts. In this way, Antoni organizes the viewer's actions so that they experience the busts sequentially. While Antoni could have installed the sculptures on a diagonal, curvilinear, or organic line, she instead installs them symmetrically, invoking a columned hall, similar to a Greek or Roman temple arrangement. The organization of the sculptures into straight lines creates stability and makes the sculptures feel more formal and official. The installation and style of the sculptures, reference classical and renaissance portraiture, common in Venice, and further demonstrates Antoni's knowledge of past precedents.

At the same time that Antoni references the classical past, she uses materials that are ephemeral and have a relatively short life. Most portrait busts are made from durable materials like stone or plaster, which hold their form. For example, the Roman *Fonseca Bust* is made from carved marble. Long-lasting materials preserve and maintain a sculpture's form as a finished product. The person represented is similarly fixed as a finished work of art. They are in a state of timeless perfection and will not change or grow old. The represented subject is preserved by the sculpture, while their actual body ages, dies, and decays, as all humans eventually do. The sculpture is unaffected by human decay or growth. Rather than a mortal body, Antoni claims that these classical sculptures aim to "immortalize" the body. *Lick and Lather* detaches itself from the sculptural tradition of utilizing impermeable materials; resultantly, Antoni's sculpting does not

create a memorial to or record of her physical appearance forever. Rather, her work captures a different aspect of human existence. It demonstrates that the human body is not fixed, but in a constant state of fluctuation. Her sculptures, made of chocolate and soap, have broken down through her artistic process of licking and bathing and will continue to deteriorate after their installation. Antoni communicates this when she states: “it’s not as though I have a certain identity and I’m trying to make an object that depicts it so you can see my identity. Rather it’s about going through a transformation, through the process, in the hopes that you see it in the object.”¹³⁶ For Antoni, living is a process that cannot be described through static imagery.

I would argue that in works like *Lick and Lather* Antoni captures the “transitional” aspects of life, described by Mikhail Bakhtin and Annamari Vänskä as “grotesque.”¹³⁷ While classical sculptures communicate an ideal body in a stable state of perfection, the grotesque describes a body in a cycle from growth to decline. Antoni’s sculptures describe an active body that changes. Unlike Jenny Saville, whose work is explored in the previous chapter, Antoni’s approach to the grotesque is different. Saville paints figures that appear fleshy, lumpy, and growing. Her bodies suggest an over-abundant growth, and her paintings challenge the idea of the body as static and solid through their non-normative appearance. While Antoni's sculptures similarly reflect a body affected by time, they also describe the grotesque action of decay in order to represent a body that is non-normative and mutable rather than perfect.

¹³⁶ Marsha Gordon, “A Great Desire, Janine Antoni” *Grrrh*, no. 9 (Spring 2008): 3. <http://www.luhringaugustine.com/attachment/en/556d89b2cfaf3421548b4568/Press/556d8b69cfaf3421548b9284> (accessed April 27, 2017).

¹³⁷ Annamari Vänskä, “A Heroic Male and a Beautiful Woman,” 157.

Classical sculptures often capture a public image, which does not represent an individual but instead represents how society expects the individual to act or look. For women, this public image is gendered, static, and unchanging. As Antoni describes: “the other thing is this notion of making a public image, the image you present to the world, and I thought maybe we are more ourselves alone in the bathtub, or alone eating our dinner at night.”¹³⁸ In Antoni’s view, public appearance does not reflect the interior conditions of the body. Traditional portraiture captures a public moment, while the subject depicted experiences a lifetime of moments. The sculpture is a public image that responds to social expectations and presents a perfected image of the subject. In her work, Antoni questions whether an individual can be accurately depicted in a sculpture or a work of art. Perhaps this “accuracy” can only be captured through the representation of moments when the subject of an artwork does not act according to societal expectations. In chapter one, I discussed the research of Amelia Jones, who analyzes Marcel Duchamp’s photographic cross-dressing and “masquerades” of femininity.¹³⁹ As a man, Duchamp used the static medium of photography to describe one public moment where he dressed as a woman or “put on” femininity. Similarly, classical sculptures of women represent an ideal and express publicly understood presentation of femininity. In both Duchamp’s photographs and classical sculpture, the subjects are depicted with particular virtues that may not truly describe their individuality. These still, static works of art do

¹³⁸ Janine Antoni interviewed by Janet Kaplan and Johnathan Welis, “Graduate Studies // Studio Conversation with Janine Antoni,” YouTube video, 1:11:00, posted by “Moore College of Art and Design,” April 14, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mvV0fxY1YAU>.

¹³⁹ Amelia G. Jones, “The ambivalence of male masquerade: Duchamp as Rrose Sélavy,” in *The Body Imaged : the Human Form and Visual Culture Since the Renaissance*, ed. Kathleen Adler and Marcia Pointon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

not accurately reflect the complex, dynamic attributes of the subjects depicted. Rather they describe the social context in which they were created. Antoni's works challenge gendered stereotypes, proving that there may be more to a person than what they present in public moments. Antoni presents the idea that the exterior or public self is less sincere than the interior or private self. The public self is often an idealized version of the subject. In private, the individual may have alternate qualities that are unexplored in public or may reveal a more authentic self.

Janine Antoni's busts are formed from temporary materials and will wear down over a relatively short period of time. Each bust is created from the same mold, so they initially look similar. However, each has been worn away separately by licking and bathing, so that over time each one takes on a shape of its own. The sharp edges of the molded objects turn to soft curves. The result is a sculpture that looks weathered and feels organic. The soap loses its original shape and holes develop in the surface creating small dips in Antoni's sculpted face and hair. While the brown chocolate sculptures retain more of their original shape than the soap versions, the chocolate surface becomes discolored, turning a lighter brown in certain areas.

Antoni represents different aspects of the body through her sculptures than are traditionally represented. Her work communicates a body that changes naturally and therefore reflects the lack of control that people have over their bodies. Idealized subjects, like classical sculptures, are commonly represented as static and frozen in time. A contemporary example of this are the billboard women described by art educator, Tara Chittenden. These women are captured in one artificial moment that has been "set up"

through lighting, props, and pose in order to fit a contemporary ideal.¹⁴⁰ This public image is intentionally perfected and the focus is solely on the model's body fulfilling the marketing needs of consumer culture. The billboard does not capture the intimate moments or interior experiences of the women on display. Their true feelings are masked and their intellect is irrelevant. I would argue that *Lick and Lather* expresses the mutability and active nature of the human body, in contrast to the superficial representation of an ideal exterior appearance, typified by the billboard women.

The ideal image is a public image that looks perfect at all times and is made for others to look at. Antoni recognizes that these public images are not authentic representations of the subject because individuals have emotions and intellect that are not captured in idealized images. In addition, Antoni's work is about the fluctuating nature of the human body and presents moments when the body is out of control. These moments are often covered up in public because the social body is trained to perform particular polite action. When these moments are exposed, they are seen as grotesque. I contend that Antoni's artworks should be considered grotesque because they capture the "reality" of individuals' lives and therefore achieve a fuller representation of the body than the ideal. Works like *Lick and Lather* demonstrate that the human body ages and changes. *Lick and Lather* is an example of the mutability of the human body. Through her process, Antoni describes the human need to consume and bathe, both uncontrollable impulses that counteract natural feelings of hunger and uncleanness and contribute to bodily growth and decay. By using licking and bathing as her artistic processes, Antoni references moments when the body is out of control and potentially unstable. While

¹⁴⁰ Clare Stanhope, "Beauty and the Beast," 352-361.

Antoni's self-portrait busts begin with her molded image, her face is obscured before installation. The work's significance, therefore, is not in Antoni's physical appearance; rather, it is the temporary nature of her materials and the bodily processes that she uses to create the sculptures that signify decay. Because of its focus on transitional states and bodily processes, I argue that Antoni's work counters the classical tradition and is instead grotesque.

Gnaw

Another work by Antoni, *Gnaw* (fig. 1), is also formed through the bodily actions of the artist and references similar ideas about women and the grotesque as are found in *Lick and Lather*. The work consists of one 600 lb. block of chocolate and one 600 lb. block of lard, which Antoni shapes by literally gnawing away at the blocks. Their straight edges become irregular through Antoni's bites. Initially, the blocks were a perfectly formed cube, constructed with machine-like straight edges. However, when Antoni places the work on exhibition the form has gone through a process of erosion and become a more organic-looking structure. While a square block is made up of horizontal and vertical planes and therefore feels stable, jagged lines mark the surface of *Gnaw*, so that it is covered with a chaotic pattern. These are not controlled marks formed by a machine. They have no grid-like organization or order to their pattern. The lines of marks eat away at the blocks in a disordered manner. While the block of lard is a bright white, the chocolate is a dark brown. The two colors oppose and contrast. While the blocks are unified by their similar mass, size, and method of production, the blocks contrast in both material and color.

An adjacent room contains a display case with 45 heart-shaped packages, which contain chocolates made from the chewed chocolate removed from the chocolate cube, and 400 lipsticks made with pigment, beeswax, and chewed lard removed from the lard cube (fig. 22). This room feels much more orderly. The lines of objects are linearly organized and are very straight and precise. All of these straight, horizontal lines feel very stable. These lines contrast the chaotic lines scarring the large cubes in the first room. The jagged lines formed by Antoni's mouth biting into the blocks are comparatively unfamiliar, when contrasted with the lipstick and chocolate boxes on view. The shelves in this room are organized into a grid-like pattern and the objects are molded into imitations of perfect machine-made objects, which are familiar to the viewer. The lipsticks are bright, saturated red. They reflect off of mirrors installed behind the shelves on the walls of the room. The mirrors reflect the viewer as they look back at the objects, so that the lipsticks, chocolate boxes, and viewer all become part of the spectacle to be viewed in the adjacent room. Lipsticks and chocolate boxes are common items. The viewer understands that women use lipstick on their lips to emphasize this physical feature. The viewer likely also understands that chocolate boxes are common romantic gifts, which a woman eats modestly or in a coy fashion. Both are objects that designate a female experience.

In her article "Janine Antoni's Gnawing Idea," curator Laura Heon describes how *Gnaw* (fig. 1) borrows from past artists in order to communicate new ideas.¹⁴¹ Heon argues that Antoni's work contrasts with block-like, objective Minimalist sculptures that appear untouched by human hands. I agree with Heon's argument and likewise consider

¹⁴¹ Laura Heon, "Janine Antoni's Gnawing Idea," *Gastronomica* 1, no. 2 (2001): 6.

Antoni's work to be a response to the tradition of minimalism. Minimalists, such as Donald Judd (b. 1928), made block-like works that are void of human emotions. Judd's *Galvanized Iron* (1973) (fig. 23), located in the Boijmans Museum, is comprised of four iron cubes that are placed on the floor of the museum near the wall. Made from industrial materials, these cubes show no trace of their production. The piece attempts to be "pure" art, formed only to communicate the elements of art and principles of design, and remain separate from any social commentary. Antoni's *Gnaw* mirrors minimalism in her massive cube-shaped blocks of chocolate and lard installed on the floor. However, her work is completely shaped through her body and personal interaction with the material. The blocks of chocolate and lard are marred by her teeth. Laura Cottingham describes minimalism as a male tradition and sees *Gnaw* as Antoni literally copying the work of male minimalist artists, biting at it, and humorously overturning the ideas of the past.¹⁴²

Building upon the scholarship of Heon and Cottingham, I find that *Gnaw's* meaning is less about making beautiful forms, than about social significance. Antoni is not making aesthetically pleasing conglomerations; rather, she is putting meaning into materials and forming ideas into matter. In relation to the grotesque, Antoni does not copy from the classical canon to create a representation that aligns with traditional ideals about the female body. She instead creates objects that record the physical actions of her body and its functions. Her artworks are formed through bodily processes, like licking, biting, and bathing, and then sculpting objects from the materials that she chews up and spits out. In contrast to this emphatic corporeal engagement, minimalist artists, such as Donald Judd, create works of art that are based on machine-made perfection. His

¹⁴² Laura Heon, "Janine Antoni's Gnawing Idea," 7.

Galvanized Iron shows complete control over materials and mathematical precision.

Unlike Judd, Antoni's blocks are formed by her own teeth and marked by her individual body. Her works reveal that humans are not always in control; rather, they often have little control over their own bodies.

Gender is a significant factor in this comparison. While young women are taught particular bodily behaviors that they must perform in polite society, Antoni's works reference an out of control body. Heon explains that *Gnaw* represents a contrast between what society expects women to do with their mouths and what they are forbidden to do with their mouths. On one hand, Antoni sculpts lipsticks and chocolate boxes, referencing activities associated with the female body and the mouth. These are neat and elegant objects. On the other hand, Antoni literally gnaws and scrapes at the large blocks with her teeth, an action that is considered abnormal behavior for women. Formally, the blocks are also heavy and massive, and are therefore more masculine forms. This contrast between both the size of the works and the activities that they indicate underscores those actions that society deems appropriate for the female body and those considered unsuitable.

Antoni's work therefore displays alternative ideas about how the female body should act. Traditional gender roles prescribe certain activities, like wearing lipstick, which do not always describe the subject. These activities can cover up or restrict an individual from displaying a more authentic self. Works like *Gnaw* represent Antoni's body and her hidden self. She does not hide behind socially correct actions and a proper public appearance. In the catalogue published for the exhibition of *Gnaw*, Dan Cameron describes how "the 'disputed' realm of the body offers the opportunity to put up a

symbolic resistance to this control.”¹⁴³ Because society creates so many rules about the female body, using it as a medium is one of the clearest and most meaningful ways to examine the reality of these normative rules. While the scope of acceptable action for a female body is narrower than that of a male, Antoni uses her body in order to show the abilities of her female body. In a similar vein, scholars such as Carla Rice argue that: “bodies do not come to be before their interactions but emerge through interaction.”¹⁴⁴ Therefore, bodies are shaped through social relationships and cultural causes. The normative female body is believed to have certain capabilities and limits, which are defined by society and perceived via interactions with other people. Through her artistic process, Antoni identifies a broader range of actions than are traditionally available for women. Antoni does not let normative standards control her actions; rather, she uses them to form her art.

Antoni explains the significance of her materials as something that her viewers will find relatable. In an interview for PBS Arizona, she describes her desire to use the body as a relatable medium and a tool that the viewer will understand. Her art uses materials that everyone knows and processes that everyone uses, but imitates traditional artistic processes. She describes her use of lard in *Gnaw* saying, “We all know how hard it is to control lard in our own body.”¹⁴⁵ This quotation highlights Antoni's experience

¹⁴³Dan Cameron, “Habaeus Corpus,” *Slip of the Tongue*, Glasgow: Centre for Contemporary Arts. Accessed April 27, 2017. <http://www.luhringaugustine.com/attachment/en/556d89b2cfaf3421548b4568/Press/556d8afccfaf3421548b8e9b>

¹⁴⁴ Carla Rice, “Rethinking Fat,” 395.

¹⁴⁵ Janine Antoni interviewed by Janet Kaplan and Johnathan Welis, “Graduate Studies // Studio Conversation with Janine Antoni,” YouTube video, 1:11:00, posted by “Moore College of Art and Design”, April 14, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mvV0fxY1YAU>.

living in a female body and having feelings of being out of control. For Antoni, the lard conveys an attempt to control the body. Ironically, at the first exhibition of *Gnaw*, the lard block melted, losing its weathered block form. Instead of reshaping it, she found the melting became a part of the meaning. Her lack of artistic control over the block became another metaphor for attempts to control fat in the human body.

Jaqueline Urla describes weight expectations placed on the female body by the medical and fashion industries and credits the invention and popularity of the common bathroom scale and female representations, like the Barbie Doll, with establishing body standards.¹⁴⁶ The medical and fashion industries create systems of measurement, like standardized sizing and BMI. These numbers allow for the comparison of body size and image, allowing women to actively quantify their bodies and measure their worth. Because of this, many women desire the precise control of fat/lard in their bodies, regulating it to particular areas and restricting it from others. This creates unrealistic beauty standards and cultivates a culture of public judgment. For example, women with too much fat on their bellies are seen as out of control, however large breasts are viewed positively. In Clare Stanhope's article, her fourteen to sixteen year-old design students state: "I don't want to see women that are not perfect," while perfect women: "always have big tits and a flat waist."¹⁴⁷ Her students have internalized what society sees as the ideal female body type and value that type. These ideas about the female body are built socially and do not describe how the female body actually is. Rather they create an idea of how the body should be and are aspirational. Antoni's block of lard is an artistic

¹⁴⁶ Jaqueline Urla, "The Anthropometry of Barbie: Unsettling Ideals of the Feminine Body in Popular Culture," 283.

¹⁴⁷ Clare Stanhope, "Beauty and the Beast," 360.

reaction to these societal pressures. By gnawing at the block, her bodily actions counter the social pressures and cultural forces that prescribe particular actions for and appearances of the female body.

In addition to the lard cube, Antoni displays a chocolate block, another material that is connected to the human experience and that viewers will find relatable. The human body has a need to consume and eat. While the body craves chocolate and sweet, fatty foods, too much creates weight and mass in the body. For women, mass is considered grotesque. Growth and overabundance are both key aspects of the grotesque, as outlined by Mikhail Bakhtin. Consumption, likewise, is connected with the grotesque, as it pertains to overabundance or a growing body. The perfect female body is a fixed shape and is not supposed to grow. While the perfect body is therefore in control, the growing body is out of control. As Antoni gnaws at 600-pound blocks of chocolate and lard, *Gnaw* describes a bodily overabundance and a lack of control. Art historian Whitney Chadwick explains how a feeling of being out of control is typical of female experience, claiming it derives from the patriarchal system, where men attempt to keep women in control. Chadwick describes how traditional female roles are reinforced through cultural “moralizing.” For example, she describes how Northern Renaissance “paintings based on these themes often exploit the idea that women who reject their natural roles become temptresses who lead men into sin.”¹⁴⁸ In other words, women who deviate from normative feminine actions are sinful. In order to avoid being perceived as sinful or out of control, women must control their bodies by behaving normally. Antoni defies these patriarchal systems of control by using her body in ways that seem out of control.

¹⁴⁸ Whitney Chadwick, *Women, Art, and Society*, 124.

Literally biting at cubes that reflect a masculine, minimalist tradition, and licking and bathing with her self-portraits modeled upon classical traditions, Antoni exhibits non-normative bodily action rather than restricting her body.

While Jenny Saville, examined in chapter two, explores the visually grotesque female body in her paintings, Antoni references the grotesque through the artistic actions that she uses to create her sculptures. These artworks are explicitly grotesque. This thesis reads Antoni's artworks as records of bodily processes and understands them as critiques of the ways that society perceives the female body and its actions. Annamari Vänskä describes the "the grotesque body" as "the open protruding body, depicted from the perspective of its functions and bodily substances – eating, drinking, excretion of wastes..."¹⁴⁹ The blocks of *Gnaw* are covered with records of Antoni's bites. However, Antoni does not actually eat the chocolate or lard. Rather, she spits out the chewed materials and uses them to form chocolate boxes and lipstick tubes. Her art is formed using her body and what comes out of her body. *Gnaw* is not a classical female figure, but instead records the actions of a real body. Rather than combine the features of multiple bodies to form an ideal woman, Antoni uses her bodily functions to describe an actual body.

Loving Care

Another work that records Antoni's bodily action is *Loving Care* (1993) (fig. 24). *Loving Care* is a performance where Antoni dips her hair into hair dye and paints the studio floor with that dye. She attempts to copy the pushing and pulling action of a woman using a mop as she paints the gallery floor with her hair. The lines she creates are curvilinear and swirl around the gallery floor, covering up any white space. They are very

¹⁴⁹ Annamari Vänskä, "A Heroic Male and a Beautiful Woman," 158.

similar to the marks that a mop makes, as it covers a floor with mop water. A mopper typically cleans in sections, i.e. back, middle, and front. Similarly, Antoni pulls her hair and her body around in sections, back to front, slowly pushing her audience out of the room. While a woman's hair is typically a precious feature, Antoni uses it as a tool to clean a dirty floor. This work prompts a reassessment of the significance behind women's long hair and a rethinking of the traditionally female activity of mopping. In her performance, Antoni dominates the gallery space and covers the entire floor with her marks. Finally, she creates a record of her performance, as the hair dye is left on the floor and exhibited for later viewers, as seen in figure 24.

In *Loving Care*, Antoni intentionally drives the viewer out of the room during the performance, directing their action. While the act of mopping is typically female work, Antoni's performance pushes the viewers out of the room. This action is more aggressive and masculine. These two actions, pushing and mopping, create an ambiguous representation of the female subject. Antoni uses this contrast in order to describe how the female body is idealized. Society labels particular actions as feminine, while others are labeled masculine. Scholar Amelia Jones observes that gender differences are made clear when artists use the body as a tool, because the body "is one of the most dramatic and thorough (ways) to do so *if it is engaged with on the deepest levels of its production*, precisely because of its entailment of the subject as embodied in all of its particularities of race, class, gender, sexuality, and so on."¹⁵⁰ In other words, Jones claims that certain behaviors are expected of the female body, and when it does not conform to those behaviors the viewer is forced to reconsider these assumptions. Female or male actions

¹⁵⁰ Amelia Jones, *Body Art: Performing the Subject*, 3.

do not necessarily describe individual people. Instead, these actions embody socially proscribed ideas about gender that are constructed by society. Women can perform masculine roles and men can perform feminine roles; the fact that actions are gendered does not accurately describe the individual and their ability or preference, rather it describes how society expects the individual to act according to their gender. These gendered performances emphasize gender stereotypes, making them clear and unavoidable to the viewer. In the case of *Loving Care*, Antoni is drawing attention to the stereotype that women do housework, have long feminine hair, and use hair dye. Antoni selects a particular brand of hair dye, “Loving Care,” which her mother used. The front of the box of hair dye shows a smiling woman with luscious, shining hair. (Fig. 25)

The marks on the floor of the gallery made by her dyed hair are a record of Antoni’s existence. They show the action of the artist and describe an event that she created in the space. The tiled floor of the installation is like a two-dimensional piece of paper, smeared with black paint. After the performance, the mass of the artist’s body is absent, but remains referenced through the marks. The resulting painting describes how Antoni crawled on her hands and knees during the performance, pushing her dye-coated hair around the studio floor. The viewer can use their imagination to visualize her body, even after the artist has left the space. The performance is time based, however the resulting marks create an imagined body and act as a remnant of the artist for the viewer to imagine.

The hair dye that Antoni uses is black and the floor and gallery walls are white. There is no color and no tonal gradation. The black is very dark and contrasts with the white of the floor and the walls. Similarly, traditional female roles are often black and

white and socially prescribed. Women are told how to look and what actions they should or should not enact. The ideal woman is expected to embody the actions and appearance of femininity. When women act against the ideal, the result is non-gender normative and therefore grotesque. Antoni's mopping of the floor with her hair is a clear example of grotesque action. She uses her body in an irregular action. The lack of color in this performance is similar to the lack of flexibility that women experience, when gender is applied through social interaction. The simple black and white is also a minimal color scheme. Similar to *Gnaw*, where Antoni challenges the minimalist tradition, Antoni references the masculine minimalist canon in *Loving Care*. Minimalism aims to produce pure artistry based on elements of art and principals of design untainted by social or human interaction. While Antoni uses a minimalist color scheme of black and white, she also incorporates a swirling organic pattern, which is created with her own hair. Produced through human action, *Loving Care* is intended as social critique social. She presents the themes of gender conformity and masculine artistic traditions, in order to overturn them.

Finally, the lack of color in *Loving Care* also emphasizes the formal attributes of the installation, including the marks, which are organized into a sort of chaotic pattern. The swirling lines of paint are organic. Unlike *Lick and Lather*, where the pedestals are set up in a straight line, or *Gnaw*, where the objects are organized on a gridded shelf, *Loving Care* has a less controlled, more curvilinear design. The bodily motion of the absent artist, indicated by the organic marks on the floor, more closely mirror the bite marks in *Gnaw* and obscurity of the disintegrating soap and chocolate in *Lick and Lather*. These works are all references to an out of control, grotesque body. While the controlled body places objects rationally in straight lines and organized on

shelves, the out of control body is symbolized through bite marks that follow no pattern or swirling lines created with hair and dye. These works use the body and its functions, rather than human intelligence, to give authority to the human body over the mind. In an interview in the *Huffington Post*, Saville echoes this tension between body and mind when she describes having to trust her body, rather than what other people tell her.¹⁵¹ In this way, Saville attempts to find truth through the experience of her female body, rather than through knowledge and rationality.

Conclusion

In her artworks, Janine Antoni contrasts actions that are deemed appropriate for women, such as hair dying, lipstick wearing, and chocolate eating, with actions that are considered grotesque, such as gnawing on chocolate and lard blocks, spitting out material, and publicly describing her bathing habits. While she is a woman, she exhibits actions that are not traditionally associated with the female body. This dichotomy creates a shifting state between clearly defined female stereotypes and the breaking of gender roles. Antoni mirrors the confusion and ambiguity of gender, which Vänskä outlines when she describes the grotesque as “a concept by which phenomena are described in a state of transformation, a state in which they no longer fit into any fixed category.”¹⁵²

Antoni’s *Gnaw* challenges fixed ideas about femininity. The main room exhibits blocks that Antoni mauls with her teeth, transforming her female body from a normative one into a monstrous one. The adjacent room exhibits lipsticks and chocolate boxes,

¹⁵¹ Saville claims: “there’s something within that truth; that there are truths greater than knowledge. And if there’s a knowledge, sometimes you have to let go and follow your instinct to get to that greater truth.” Ella Cue, “Interview with Jenny Saville,” *Huffington Post*, June 8, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/elena-cue/interview-with-jenny-savi_b_10324460.html.

¹⁵² Annamari Vänskä, “A Heroic Male and a Beautiful Woman,” 158.

which reference traditional female action. *Gnaw* references the experience of being in a female body and its constant state of variability. The work challenges normative bodies and reconsiders the abilities of the female body. Likewise, *Lick and Lather* represents the tension between public and private female action. It uses ephemeral materials that do not immortalize the subject or represent an inauthentic public image. Additionally, Antoni shapes the work through the bodily functions of licking and bathing in order to visualize actions that women are restricted from performing in public. Finally, *Loving Care* is created through the use of the female body in ways that are considered irregular. Her extreme performance of mopping with her head, hair, and body are not how the female body is expected to behave in public. While Antoni references normative gender constraints, like lipstick and hair dye, in these works she is not endorsing these kinds of socially prescribed behaviors for women. Rather, she references them in order to critique them and reveal their inauthentic nature. In each case, Antoni's artworks directly reference the grotesque, counter prescribed notions of feminine action, and reveal that women do not have to act according to prescribed notions of femininity.

Conclusion: Other Perspectives on Women and their Bodies

In conclusion, this thesis focuses on the work of two contemporary women artists, Jenny Saville and Janine Antoni and their connections to the tradition of visually depicting the female body. However, during the process there were some ideas that could not be developed or explored. One area that could use future consideration is the relationship between the Christianity, the Catholic Church, and women's relationships with their bodies. Both contemporary artists examined in this thesis were very influenced by western art history, which is deeply connected to Christianity. While my research circled around religion, I was not able to fully address the connections between religion, the representation of women, and gender expectations. Art historian Whitney Chadwick begins her research into art history and feminism in the Medieval and Renaissance periods, when the Catholic Church was a major patron and most works pictured Christian subject matter. While I referenced the moralizing role of Northern Renaissance artworks, which dictated female expectations and taught that women who acted outside of normative roles were sinful, it would be interesting to consider what role the church had in creating and cementing those expectations. Additionally, many of the scholars I reference in my thesis discuss the ways in which patriarchal control enforces the insecurity that women feel towards their bodies. Patriarchy and male leadership is supported through the organized church. Ironically, the church also maintains female Saints, including Joan of Arc, who adopt very masculine qualities. In a future study, I would like to explore the writings of theologians during the medieval period and the Renaissance and consider what the Bible says about the female body in relation to its depiction in art.

I also did not fully explore connections between my research, the LGBTQ movement, and gender identity in this thesis. While I focus on the effects of gender roles on women and their bodies, much of the scholarship that I read and referenced could be extended further and applied to LGBTQ individuals. Marcel Duchamp's *Rose Selevy* photographs and some of Jenny Saville's quotations dismiss categories of gender entirely, address issues that affect the LGBTQ community, and correspond to Queer scholarship. While gender is something that is culturally constructed and involves physical appearance and action, biological sex is determined by medical science and anatomy. In further research I would like to explore how gender identity is created, whether it is based on biology or determined by birth and how much of gender and sexuality is cultural, as determined by personal identity or society. In order to examine this, I would consider artworks by LGBTQ artists in comparison to their life experiences, so that the cultural influences of their experience could be analyzed through visual imagery.

A final viewpoint for additional consideration is that of the white male. Some of the scholars that I cite use the white male as a basis of normality for western society, so that every other category becomes irregular. This positioning could be offensive to white men, who may consider this scholarship to hold them at fault or identify them as morally corrupt. While I do not personally cite white men at fault for the position of women in western society, I have found that in explaining my research I have been very careful to describe my findings to white men in ways that will not offend them or cause them to dismiss this scholarship entirely. Additionally, I have been careful to position my thesis as a need for increased tolerance for a variety of female bodies, rather than as an empowerment of the female artists at the expense of male artists. As I have argued,

women are expected to control and contain their bodies in ways that do not apply to men. It should be okay to question and challenge these expectations rather than follow them passively. Men are also affected by these female stereotypes and body expectations, as most men are somehow connected to women, as mothers, sisters, friends, lovers, etc. It is important for women to consider what forces may be holding them down and for men to allow women to express themselves in alternative fashions.

While these are just a few of the areas that remain unexplored in this thesis, my examination of two contemporary female artists, Jenny Saville and Janine Antoni, revealed the ways in which their artworks challenge normative female body ideals in radically different ways. The works of these two distinct contemporary artists relate to theories of the grotesque and feminist scholarship. Saville paints soft fleshy nudes, as in *Propped*, which defy feminine ideals as represented by Barbie. Saville's bodies are abundant, standing in opposition to classical norms. Her works can therefore be understood as grotesque. Similarly, Antoni's works, such as *Gnaw*, are also grotesque, as they reference bodily functions like biting and spitting. In *Lick and Lather* she uses bathing and licking to break down soap and chocolate self-portrait busts. Antoni does not act in culturally accepted feminine ways. Her actions happen outside of socially and culturally proscribed polite female activities. Both artists visually explore societal expectations about the female body and address cultural expectations for women.

Figures



Figure 1. Janine Antoni, *Gnaw*, 1992. 600 lbs. of chocolate and 600 lbs. of lard gnawed by the artist each cube, 61 x 61 x 61 cm, Saatchi Gallery, London.



Figure 2. Jenny Saville, *Propped*, 1993-1994. Oil on canvas, 84 x 72 inches, Saatchi Gallery, London.



Figure 3. Ippolito Buzzi copy of Praxiteles, *Aphrodite of Knidos*, 17th century copy of 4th century. Marble, National Museum of Rome Museum Altemps.



Figure 4. Janine Antoni, *Lick and Lather*, 1993. 7 soap and 7 chocolate self-portrait busts, 24 x 16 x 13 inches each, Luhring Augustine, Collection of Jeffery Deitch, New York.



Figure 5. Barbie Fashionistas Pink Ruffled Dress Barbie Doll, accessed February 22, 2017. Online image, 1000 x 1000 pixels, <https://www.gottatoy.com/barbie-fashionistas-pink-ruffled-dress-barbie-doll.html>.



Figure 6. The Perfect 'Body', 2014. Online image, 2000 x 1334 pixels, <http://nypost.com/2014/10/31/victorias-secret-perfect-body-campaign-sparks-backlash/>.



Figure 7. Marcel Duchamp, *Rose Sélavy*, 1920-1921. Gelatin silver print, 21.6 x 17.3 cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art.

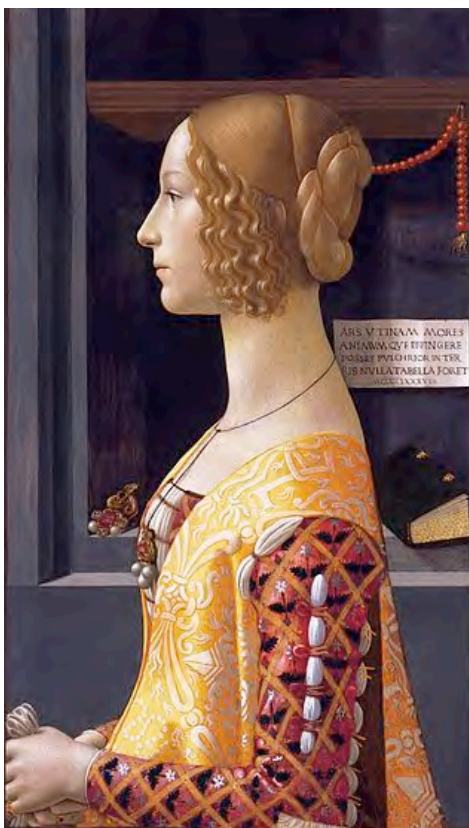


Figure 8. Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Portrait of Giovanna Tornabuoni*, 1489-90. Tempera on Panel, 77cm x 49 cm, Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum.



Figure 9. Sandro Botticelli, *Primavera* (Allegory of Spring), 1482. Tempera on Panel, 202 cm x 314 cm, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.



Figure 10. Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, 1538. Oil on Canvas, 119 cm x 165.5 cm, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

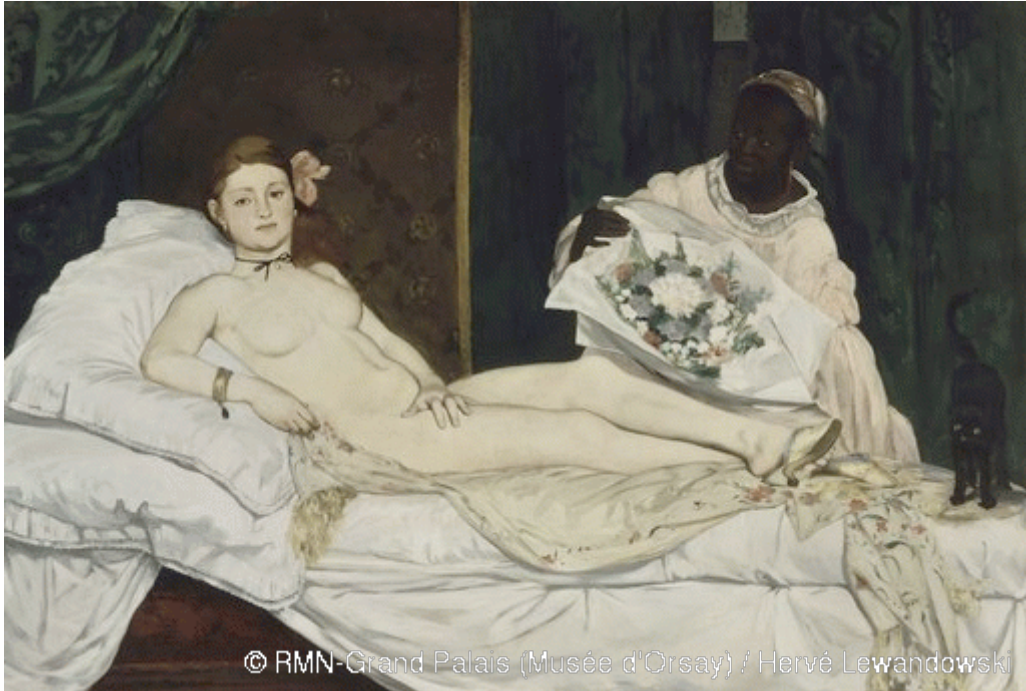


Figure 11. Edouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863. Oil on Canvas, 130 cm x 190 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



Figure 12. Jenny Saville, *Prop*, 1993. Oil on canvas, 213.5 x 183 cm, Saatchi Gallery, London.



Figure 13. Peter Paul Rubens, *Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus*, 1617. Oil on canvas, 224 x 211 cm, Alte Pinakothek, Munich.



Figure 14. Willem de Kooning, *Untitled IX*, 1970-77. Oil on canvas, 76 x 87 in, Foundation for Herbert Looser, Zurich.



Figure 15. Willem de Kooning, *Clam Diggers*, 1977. Oil on paper on Composition Board, 20 x 14 inches, Private Collection, New York.



Figure 16. Jenny Saville, *Hybrid*, 1997. Oil on canvas, 274.3 x 213.4 cm, Saatchi Gallery, London.



Figure 17. Jenny Saville, *Shift*, 1996-97. Oil on canvas, 330.2 x 330.2 cm, Saatchi Gallery, London.



Figure 18. Jenny Saville, *Strategy (South Face/Front Face/North Fact)*, 1993-94. Oil on canvas, 274 x 640 cm, Saatchi Gallery, London.



Figure 19. Egon Schiele, *Nude with a Pregnant Red Belly*, 1910. Gouche, Watercolor, Black Crayon, 274 x 640 cm, Saatchi Gallery, London.



Figure 20. Unknown Artist, *Portrait Bust of a Flavian Woman (Fonseca Bust)*, c. 101 C.E. Carved Marble, 63 cm, Capitoline Museum, Rome.



Figure 21. Janine Antoni, *Lick and Lather*, 1993. 7 soap and 7 chocolate self-portrait busts, 60.96 x 40.64 x 33.02 cm each, Installation from the Hirschhorn Institute, Washington DC.



Figure 22. Janine Antoni, *Gnaw*, 1992. Display case with 45 heart-shaped packages for chocolate made from chewed chocolate removed from the chocolate cube and 400 lipsticks made with pigment, beeswax, and chewed lard removed from the lard cube dimensions variable, Saatchi Gallery, London.

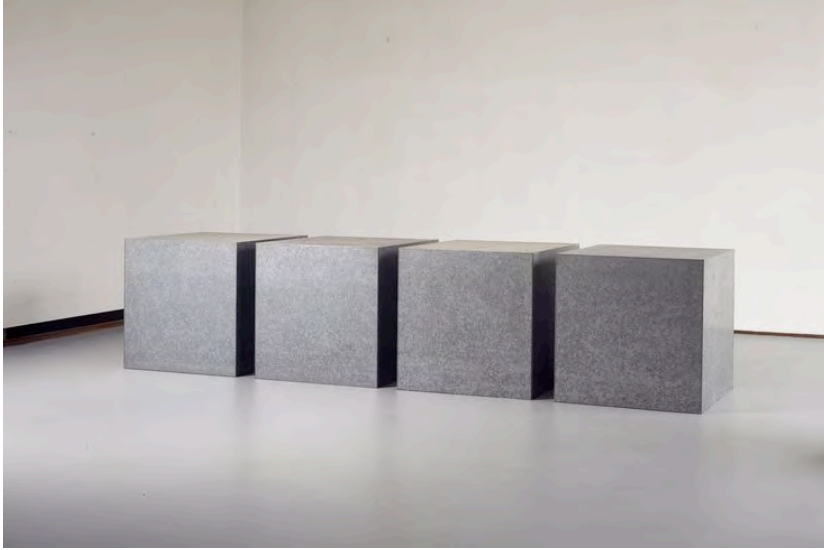


Figure 23. Donald Judd, *Galvanized Iron*, 1967. Galvanized Iron, 101 x 482 x 101 cm, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Netherlands.



Figure 24. Janine Antoni, *Loving Care*, 1993. The artist dipped her hair in dye and mopped the floor with it, Installation view at Anthony D'Offay Gallery, London.



Figure. 25 Loving Care Hair Dye by Clairol, accessed March 8, 2017. Digital image, https://www.walgreens.com/dbimagecache/38151018713_450x450_a.jpg.

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