Feminist Art Fragments: The Interactive Installations of Wynne Greenwood and Sondra Perry

by

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ABSTRACT

Feminist Art Fragments: The Interactive Installations of Wynne Greenwood and Sondra Perry

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This thesis re-examines the fragmented body trend in contemporary feminist art—a subversive strategy that was first historicized from the 1960s up until the 1990s—by focusing on new media works from the late 2010s that engage viewers in identity performances. The paper looks at Wynne Greenwood's *More Heads* series (2011–2015) and several works from Sondra Perry's *Typhoon coming on* show (2018), arguing that these kinds of multimedia experiences represent a development in the mode where bodily fragmentation evokes more nuanced ideas about gender, sexuality, race, and related feminist issues. Greenwood, Perry, and their contemporaries use intimate forms of disembodiment to imagine alternate realities for the self, creating public dialogue through interactive digital-physical exhibitions. Their installations, which address less visible cultural inequalities such as ableism, internalized oppression, and historic trauma that have been absent from most conversations about feminist art, speak to the plurality of feminisms today.

Keywords: Feminist art, fragmented body, gender representation, installation art, interactive art, multimedia, new media art, performance art, Sondra Perry, Wynne Greenwood

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<u>Introduction</u>

Two waves of feminism later and fifty years after *Womanhouse* (1971–1972),[1]

contemporary feminist artists continue to employ interventionist practices, using their bodies to

alter public spaces in ways that create dialogue about gender identity issues. While their ultimate

strategy has not changed, both the medium and the messages have evolved beyond those early

examples of performative practice. This paper examines a set of installation artworks produced

during the current, fourth wave of feminisms,[2] considering how developments in new media and

cultural progress for female-identifying people have affected how feminist artists are

reconstructing female figures within exhibition spaces.

Inspired by examples of what the feminist art historian Linda Nochlin referred to as "the

fragmented body"[3] in relation to these digital–physical installations from the last decade,[4] the

paper focuses on two serial works by two different artists, Wynne Greenwood and Sondra Perry.

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[1] Chicago and Shapiro, *Womanhouse*. This was a feminist installation and performance space organized by artists Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro, along with students from their Feminist Art Program at California Institute of the Arts and artists from the surrounding community. The collaborative project took place at an abandoned Victorian house in Hollywood and featured work by dozens of women artists. Over ten thousand people visited the month-long exhibition, receiving national publicity. Judy Chicago's next collaboration, *The Dinner Party* (1974–1979), has also become an iconic feminist artwork. The installation consists of a triangular table with 39 hand-crafted place settings for historical and mythical figures from feminist history that resemble female anatomy. With the exception of Sojourner Truth, the work excludes women of color as well as many female-identifying people.

[2] The demarcation of a fourth wave of feminism refers to the time period from 2010 to the present day when a resurgence of gender-related identity conversations coincided with the popularity of digital and social media as a daily source of information sharing. This label is in line with popular categorization for the sake of clarity, with the first wave spanning from the mid- 1800s to the 1950s, the second wave spanning the early 1960s to the 1980s, and the third wave spanning the 1990s and 2000s: however, there are arguments about whether the fourth wave has indeed come and whether it has already passed. The references to waves of feminism and groups of feminists included in this analysis are meant to organize the information succinctly. Hopefully, they do not reduce the discourse given the much larger history of feminist thinking from multitude perspectives, both within and outside of the U.S. and beyond the field of contemporary art.

[3] Nochlin, *The Body in Pieces*.

[4] These examples are discussed in the "Bits and Pieces" and "Glitches" sections of the paper.

As evident in Wynne Greenwood's *More Heads* series (2011–2015),[5] and the works from Sondra Perry's show *Typhoon coming on* (2018),[6] both of these artists experiment with multiple forms of media, using bodily fragmentation as a device to explore identity-related interactions. Their approaches are iterative and interdisciplinary, meaning that they make works that address a broad range of sociocultural issues relating to gender that also help to expand the scope of feminist discourse. Both Greenwood's *More Heads* and Perry's *Typhoon coming on* include disembodied heads. These fragments, which are likenesses of the artists, appear as animations, avatars, busts, characters, personas, sculptures, and voice-overs, and are presented as different constructions of self. Greenwood's practice has been described as "culture healing,"[7] while Perry's works have been referred to as "interfaces."[8] The artists use these personifications to analyze negotiations of female, queer, and black subjectivities, asking viewers to participate in the process. Furthermore, by raising these political questions about the accessibility of cultural production for certain types of bodies, their works make space for people to discuss feminist concerns.

Greenwood's heads are sculptures with expressive faces that are made out of children's art materials and objects such as decorative butterfly wings, a brightly-colored soccer ball, modeling clay, cartoon stickers, and toy bricks that reference her queer feminist experience in a

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[5] New Museum, "Wynne Greenwood: Kelly." Works from this series were exhibited most recently in *Wynne Greenwood: Kelly* at the New Museum in 2015–2016.

[6] Perry, "by image," https://sondraperry.com/Typhoon-coming-on-at-ICA-Miami. This exhibition took place at the Institute of Contemporary Art Miami. It included many of the same works from prior exhibitions, e.g., *Resident Evil* at the Kitchen in 2016 and *flesh out* at Squeaky Wheel in 2018, yet it used wave animations as a primary motif for the first time.

[7] New Museum, "Wynne Greenwood: "Kelly." This phrase comes from the press release for *Kelly* and refers to Greenwood's ongoing interest in the restorative potential of artistic role play to resist harmful cultural narratives.

[8] Khan, Nora, "No Safe Mode." Khan used the term in her essay, writing, "In her video piece *Graft and Ash for a Three Monitor Workstation* (2016) Sondra Perry subtly interrogates and undoes these pervasive technological claims about our ontological position, and our being in the world, stitched into the programs, interfaces, and systems that dominate and organize our lives." Khan also contributed an essay for the *Typhoon Coming On* catalog called "Acquisition, God Object; Acquisition, Source Code."

layered, lo-fi aesthetic. To date, she has produced *More Heads* as sculptures, installations, performances, videos, collages, music videos, and as an album (some of these works are pictured in Figures 1.1–1.4).[9] As Figure 1.5 shows, their latest exhibition was much like a concert; as viewers moved through the exhibition space looking at the sculptures, they could watch and listen to performance videos featuring the heads. Viewers could replay the experience after the show by reading exclusive content in the exhibition catalog or watching music videos and downloading songs from the series.[10]

Perry's heads are avatars and animations made from images of her face that reference her black feminist experience in a sci-fi aesthetic involving recombined technology hacks. She started the set of works by making a sculpture/video "efficiency prototype," which incorporated an exercise bike that had been adapted to accommodate a three-monitor workstation.[11] The trio of screens displayed a video of an avatar against an animated flesh background, which she narrated (shown in Figures 2.1–2.3). She extended this piece into an installation, which has been shown as separate works or combined for exhibitions ever since. The exercise machines—bikes, rowing machines, and treadmills—are meant to be activated by viewers who sit on them and work out while watching and listening to the videos with headphones. Meanwhile, the animations, which started out as moving images of flesh and later morphed into waves, are often

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[9] These works are documented in a mix of online platforms: the artist's site, the artist's social media pages—Bandcamp, Instagram, and Vimeo—and pages on gallery and museum sites where the work has been exhibited: Cooley Gallery at Reed College, Fourteen30 Contemporary, New Museum, Soloway, and Vielmetter Los Angeles.

[10] Snyder, Burton, Jaffe, Roysdon, and O'Keefe, *Wynne Greenwood: Stacy...Kelly.*

[11] Perry, "by image," https://sondraperry.com/Efficiency-Prototype. This work from 2016 is titled *Efficiency Prototype #1 (working title)*.

displayed on a large scale to immerse viewers or cover their bodies as they move through the gallery.[12] Examples of these installations and works are pictured in Figures 2.2–2.5.

Greenwood and Perry's hybrid installations defy categorization, working against the reductionist constraints that feminist artists often face. Indeed, *More Heads* and *Typhoon coming on* demonstrate the communicative potential of new media to enable alternative interactions that speak to the intersectional complexities of identity that have been largely absent from feminist art surveys and scholarship, e.g., agism, ablism, classism, cultural violence, historic trauma, homophobia, internalized oppression, racism, sexism, and size discrimination.[13] By re-examining the fragmented body in these works, this paper will redefine the feminist art trend against a backdrop of a fourth-wave of media intervention. As Greenwood and Perry started exhibiting in the late 1990s and early 2010s respectively, and have taken breaks from making art since then, the documentation for these works is scattered and somewhat inconsistent.[14] Consequently, this paper will connect various sources and separate parts of their archives by looking in depth at multiple iterations of their works. Moreover, to situate the works within the larger art historical record and provide context to the ways in which they employ bodily fragmentation, it will cover

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[12] Perry, "by image." The works referenced include *Wet and Wavy Looks—Typhon coming on for a Three Monitor Workstation* (2016), *Graft and Ash for a Three Monitor Workstation* (2016), *Wet and Wavy Looks—Typhon coming on: Fields* (2017), *Ashes for Three Monitor Workstation* (2017), *Wall 2* (2017), and *Typhoon coming on* (2018). There were also three exhibitions titled *Typhoon coming on* that featured some of these works during 2018 and 2019.

[13] The term "intersectional" was coined by professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in a 1989 paper titled "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics" to describe the overlapping intersections between class, gender, race, and other identity issues. Although it is often used in reference to individual identities, it was originally used in a legal context to illustrate the interdependent structural inequalities involved in systematic identity-based discrimination.

[14] This comes from the artists' biographies listed on the Vielmetter Los Angeles and Bridget Donahue websites as well as information shared by the artists in various interviews and on social platforms.

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an intergenerational collection of feminist art exhibitions and texts from the 1980s to present day that considered alternative notions of gender identity.[15]

The purpose of reading these two bodies of work adjacent to one another is to complicate the associations that many people have with contemporary feminist art. Greenwood, Perry, and their contemporaries examine gender issues in their practices in ways that influence and are affected by many other aspects of identity. Their works reflect an expansion of feminisms that started to influence mainstream culture in the 2010s. If art institutions were to show more recognition and support for the work of artists such as Wynne Greenwood and Sondra Perry, they could reframe contemporary feminist art for a mainstream audience, going beyond a handful of 50-year-old artworks that depict female body parts,[16] and including examples of black feminism, queer feminism, trans feminism, and the many other forms of identity-based empowerment.

<u>Dis/embodiments</u>

Part One: Bits and Pieces

Before proceeding, there are a couple of queries that need to be answered: Why heads? And why new media installation? The research that led to this thesis was inspired by *Mika*

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[15] They are listed in the "Fragments" and "Glitches" sections of "Dis/embodiments." The selection is certainly not exhaustive, but it was chosen with the intention of presenting a broad context for the nuanced notions of identity expressed in Greenwood's and Perry's works. Scholars whose work was referenced repeatedly in this research but are not specifically mentioned in the paper include Sarah Ahmed, Tina Campt, Michel Foucault, Jennifer González, Lucy Lippard, Laura Marks, Laura Mulvey, and José Esteban Muñoz.

[16] This refers to the works from Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro's *Womanhouse* (1971–1972), Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* (1974–1979), and later feminist artworks with similar, direct references to female body parts, e.g., installations by Genesis Belanger.

Rottenberg: Easypieces (2019–2020),[17] an exhibition of sculpture and video installations that

provoked a question: Why are there so many fragmented body parts in feminist art? The show

prompted a self-taught, feminist art history research project that went back in time to the 1960s

and progressed outwards to a wide range of mediums, identifying a larger art trend within the

genre. There were interesting conversations among some of those artworks, such as Pipilotti

Rist's *Open My Glade (Flatten)* (2000–2017), Sondra Perry's *Flesh Wall* (2016–2020), and

RaFia Santana's *Dizzillusions* (2018), three video works addressing the gendered political

dimensions of image representation that have been exhibited in Times Square.[18] Snippets like

these encouraged a closer look at how feminist artists were using bodily fragmentation within

screen-based installations and across different forms of media.

Even though the category has strong associations with artworks by women artists that

feature female body parts, namely breasts and vaginas, the research indicated that many artists

who identify as female and feminist are interested in alternate parts of the body. Likewise,

feminist performance has moved beyond body art to include digital presentations of self, such as

avatars or renderings that project senses of detachment and extension. The singular consideration

of gender has become less of a primary concern for artists given its intersections with other

identity variables such as sexuality, race, class, age, and ability. Despite the prevalence of

domestic themes and settings in historic surveys, many contemporary artists experiment with

media mixes that translate to multiple social spaces and private/public formats.

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[17] Norton, *Mika Rottenberg: Easypieces*. This exhibition, which was curated by Margot Norton, took place at the New Museum and then traveled to the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago.

[18] Midnight Moment Project, "Pipilotti Rist: Open My Glade (Flatten)" shown in 2017, "RaFia Santana: Dizzillusions" shown in 2019, and "Sondra Perry: Flesh Wall" shown in 2021. These three works were all part of the same ongoing show that takes over digital billboards in Times Square, New York late at night when no advertisers have paid to use the spaces.

Scores of feminist artists have or are working with the fragmented body,[19] but recent multimedia installations demonstrate nuances in the way that fragmentation is being used to engage viewers in discussions of identity politics. The question then became, is this a new development within feminist art practice? There was something about this latter subset, with its open, inside-out explorations of gender, that felt distinct. Among them, the thread between Wynne Greenwood and Sondra Perry, two artists who combine media in experiential installations that explore restorative reconstructions of identity, seemed particularly relevant.[20] This is because both Greenwood's *More Heads* series and the set of works within Perry's *Typhoon coming on* exhibition use the head—a body part not associated with any particular gender that references the mind—as personae. Much like people, who are changing, complex, and often contradictory beings, their works are relatable but difficult to fully understand. This paper will discuss how fragmentation is employed in these bodies of work, noting the progressive ways the works address complex notions of gender-related identity.

Part Two: Wynne Greenwood's *Heads*

"I am this place. This place is me."
Wynne Greenwood performing as *Two-Faced Head* (2012) in *More Heads* (2013).[21]

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[19] These artists, artworks, and exhibitions informed this research, in addition to those already mentioned: Kelly Akashi, Janine Antoni, Valerie Blass, Anna Bunting-Branch, Liz Collins' *Cave of Secrets* (2017–2018), Doreen Garner, Aneta Grzeszykowska, Mona Hatoum's *Corps Étranger* (1994), Lynn Hershman Leeson, Simone Leigh, Cathy Lu, Navine Mahmoud, Narcisster, Natani Notah, Yoko Ono's *Eyeblink* (1966) and *touch me* (2008), Lygia Pape's *Tupinambà* (2001), Laure Prouvost, Diamond Stingily, Alina Szapocnikow, Jala Wahid, and Hannah Wilke.

[20] Even though it is not the focus of this paper, the research found that Greenwood and Perry are both twins. Perhaps the twin experience provides a unique understanding of sameness and difference, multiplicity, synchronicity, and the variability of identity. Greenwood has stated in an interview that all of her work is influenced by her twin experience. Perry, who has made works about her twin brother Sandy, is also interested in psychology. She is currently studying psychoanalysis as part of the Respecialization Program at the Institute for Psychoanalytic Training and Research (IPTAR) in New York.

[21] Vimeo, Greenwood, "More Heads, Belgrade," https://vimeo.com/82861267.

Wynne Greenwood is a queer, feminist performance artist whose practice involves "culture healing" and creative responses to the harmful effects of internalized cultural violence.[22] Greenwood is best known for her *Tracy + the Plastics* performances (1999–2006) where the artist played all members of a three-person electropop band, staging music shows that featured costumes, dialogue/monologue, handmade sets, and videos that collaged recordings with digital drawings.[23] Nevertheless, the artist has produced a significant amount of work apart from *Tracy + the Plastics*.[24] One of these is a series called *More Heads* (2011–2015), which incorporates two separate but related groups of installations featuring music, performances, sculptures, and videos.[25]

Greenwood produced the first version of *More Heads* in 2008 for the "Face It" exhibition at Vielmetter Los Angeles. The show included an installation, two sculptures, and a music video (as pictured in Figure 1.1).[26] One sculpture titled *Suspicion* (2008) was placed on the floor and consisted of two round plaster heads that were painted pink and yellow, which had their dual open/closed expressions outlined in black. *Suspicion* was placed next to an installation called *Quiet in Forming* (2008) that included a partial wall with an arched doorway that was painted red, a looped video projection, and two lookalike counterparts to the pink head. Both *Suspicion*

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[22] New Museum. "Wynne Greenwood: Kelly."

[23] Greenwood, "Tracy + the Plastics." This body of work was last exhibited in 2016, including a series of re-performances that were completed from 2012 until 2015. Greenwood's performances often included collaborations, as noted in the Syllabus section of her *Tracy + the Plastics* site.

[24] Though not covered specifically in this paper, these works include *Other Looking with Faces* (2007) and *Peas* (2007) from "Peas" at Vielmetter Los Angeles, *The Women's Spa* (2011), and *Poor Medusa* (2011) in "How We Pray" at Vielmetter Los Angeles. These works explore alternate social body/media constructions as well as icons, myths, and other forms of imagined narratives.

[25] Greenwood, "Wynne Greenwood."

[26] Vielmetter Los Angeles, "Artist Wynne Greenwood." "Face It" also included a sculpture of a kneeling torso titled *Basket Case* (2008) that is featured in the *Big Candy* music video.

and *Quiet in Forming* featured in the music video for the song *Big Candy* (2008) that Greenwood filmed in the exhibition space. In the video performance, Greenwood interacts with the camera and sculptures on set while playing guitar and signing, "There is an older looking face in the mirror. There is a younger sounding voice in the air."[27] In one scene, you see a closeup of her face made up with eyeliner drawings, and she alternately opens and closes her eyes and mouth as she sings, doubling the expressions of the *Suspicion* heads.

In this imaginative group of works, Greenwood blurs the boundaries between digital media and physical objects, devising spatial overlaps that allow for introspection. During a 2009 interview, the artist said, "I'm interested in creating realities that are feminist and queer and self-aware. That are interdependent in their structure. Realities that have integrated surfaces and structures."[28] The patterns in the works formed by her combined mix of mediums and facial juxtapositions, which illuminate the inherent contradictions of identity where a self, or selves, that are constructed and are therefore changeable. Greenwood revisited these ideas for a 2012 show at Lawrimore Project titled "Peace In."[29] She displayed seven sculptures in the exhibition: *Head #1 with Pillar* (2012) (pictured in Figure 1.2), *Head #2 with Pillar* (2012), and so on. Six of the sculptures were painted ceramics that were placed on fabric-covered pedestals, and the heads and structures were decorated in alternating shades of gray, white, purple, red, and green. The seventh sculpture was made of fabric that was dyed gray and placed directly on the floor. Some of the heads had multiple faces while others included partial busts and they conveyed a

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[27] Vimeo, Greenwood, "Wynne Greenwood, Big Candy, 2008," https://vimeo.com/574964067.

[28] Onli, "Interview with Wynne Greenwood."

[29] Gilsdorf, "Help Desk: Building Character." There is little documentation of this exhibition available since the organization is no longer in operation.

range of shaped facial expressions. One had a scar over its eye. Two wore makeup that was pink and green. Three had ponytails. A few revealed carved drawings such as handprints, a silhouette, or a peace sign.

"Peace In" crossed over into two more works—the album *A Fire to Keep You Warm* (2012)[30] and a music video for a song on the album called "Culture Keeper." The record opened with "Big Candy" and also included the songs "New Mouth" and "Mirrors." Moreover, Greenwood used an installation photograph that showed *Head #1 with Pillar* from the exhibition documentation as the cover art for *A Fire to Keep You Warm*. One of the *Head* sculptures, which was painted purple, had a place to insert a compact disc and doubled as a limited-edition album cover. Greenwood also made the *Culture Keeper* (2012) video (pictured in Figure 1.3) by utilizing footage from a performance she gave during exhibition. As in *Big Candy*, the artist sang to the sculptures and to camera in costume, wearing cardboard sunglasses that were painted the same shade of gray as three of the sculptures.[31] In this video, the performance scenes were also interspersed with footage of the sky at sunset, which was painted with scattered pink and blue clouds.

Greenwood continued to play with staging in this part of the series, introducing more facial expressions and interactions with the sculptural heads. Her color palette and material constructions more clearly referenced do-it-yourself also known as DIY punk aesthetics, which had an influence on the artist while growing up in the Pacific Northwest during the 1980s and

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[30] Bandcamp, Greenwood, "A Fire To Keep You Warm by Wynne Greenwood," https://wynnegreenwood.bandcamp.com/album/a-fire-to-keep-you-warm. This was Greenwood's first solo album not associated with *Tracy + the Plastics*.

[31] Vimeo, Greenwood, "Wynne Greenwood, Culture Keeper, 2012," https://vimeo.com/574967809. She also crawled around the floor of the gallery dressed as a faceless tiger.

1990s. Furthermore, she began to sample elements from the works, using them elsewhere in the series; because her productions have a familiar feel, the works allow people to project onto them. The artist exhibited *More Heads* again the following year as a pair of videos and trio of sculptures in a show at Soloway also titled "More Heads."[32] The sculptures included the gray fabric *Head* from "Peace In," which was dubbed *Old Girl* (2012), and two new *Heads* that were displayed on shelves and the floor. One new sculpture was made of plaster and then painted pink with black outlines around the eyes and called *Pink Head* (2013), while the other—*Earth Head* (2013)—was made from the gray cardboard insides of used cereal boxes, which were taped together and decorated with black and white eye drawings and a stud nose ring.

In the videos, pictured in Figure 1.4, Greenwood performed voiceovers for the three sculptures on display, which incorporated two others from "Peace In," that were later named *Looking-over-Shoulder Head* (2012) and *Two-Faced Head* (2012) as well as two other new sculptures. *Plastic Head* (2013) was an off-white, translucent form made from a broken lamp, a water bottle, and an ashtray, while *Kid Head* (2013) was made out of a brightly colored soccer ball and children's toy parts. *Looking-over-Shoulder Head* wore the cardboard sunglasses Greenwood wore in *Culture Keeper,* and *Two-Faced Head* was repainted with another eye and spots. The camera alternated between closeup shots of the *Heads* in a nondescript room as the artist spoke over a crackling electronic track. Their lines included, "Patriarchy still exists. It didn't end" and "Hey, peace sister. Peace."[33] The artist described these videos on her Vimeo page saying,

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[32] Soloway, "Wynne Greenwood: More Heads Sept 22 - Nov. 3, 2013."

[33] Snyder, Burton, Jaffe, Roysdon, and O'Keefe, *Wynne Greenwood: Stacy...Kelly.*

More Heads puts my sculptural heads into conversation to explore internalized cultural violence and how peace can include conflict and difference. I perform the voice of each character. Playing multiple characters is a strategy I've used before, most prominently in my past project Tracy + the Plastics. I believe embodying multiple roles within a dynamic, hierarchy or system is a healing process, emotionally, socially and politically. The conversation in the video *More Heads* is disjointed at times. One character seems to be responding directly to another, but is also perhaps talking to itself or starting a new conversation. I wanted the conversation to be both an internal one, possibly existing within one individual, and a communal one, held between different members of a community.[34]

Greenwood's artistic strategy connects with larger dialogues within queer and feminist communities, which recognize that the conflicts that arise from difference are integral to sociocultural progress. She mimics these disputes in her performance works, using a collection of personas and popular media formats to share her own commentary. Her focus on the therapeutic potential of artistic practice presents creative self-exploration as an alternative to harmful media narratives built on oppressive societal norms, and her installations model this form of collective intervention based on individual expression.

More Heads was exhibited most recently in 2014–2016 for a pair of shows titled *Stacy* and *Kelly* at the Cooley Gallery and the New Museum, which were co-curated by Johanna Burton, Margot Norton, and Stephanie Snyder (pictured in Figure 1.5).[35] Greenwood started producing the two-part exhibition during a six-month residency at both institutions, expanding her body of work. The exhibitions included sculptures, projected videos, and a set of collages. The twelve sculptures were a mix of existing works—*Earth Head, Kid Head, Looking-over-Shoulder Head, Old Girl, Pink Head,* and *Two-Faced Head*—plus four new pieces. The new

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[34] Vimeo, Greenwood, "More Heads," https://vimeo.com/80310791.

[35] Snyder, Stephanie, Burton, Jaffe, Roysdon, and O'Keefe. *Wynne Greenwood: Stacy...Kelly.* This exhibition also featured Greenwood's *Tracy + the Plastics* work, with re-performances and a new archive/band website. A year after *Kelly*, curators Johanna Burton and Margot Norton exhibited *Trigger*.

sculptures were titled *Gargoyle 1* (2014), *Gargoyle 2* (2014), *Gargoyle 3* (2014), *Brick Wall*

Head (2015), *Butterfly Wing Head* (2015), and *Theo* (2015). They were made using cardboard,

children's blocks designed to look like bricks, colored light gels, decorative wire and mesh

butterflies, and paper and plastic bags, which were glued, stapled, and taped together then

decorated with drawings, paint, stickers, earrings, and eyeballs. Like the rest of the sculptures in

the series, they were all between eight and seventeen inches in size.

The three videos included the two shown at "Peace In" and a new work titled *More*

Heads, Museum (2015), which featured the new sculptures. Greenwood also produced ten *Head*

Collages (2015) for an exhibition titled *Stacy…Kelly.* To make these, she selected images of her

works and grouped them with related images; for example, pics of video props, studies for

shows, and residency studio shots. She arranged each group to resemble a face that consisted of

photos set in the place of the eyes, nose, and mouth, and an oval drawn around them. The artist

also organized programs for *Kelly* that included "temporary arrangement" concerts and panel

discussions about queer video production and archival processes.[36] Greenwood gave an interview

to Johanna Fateman from *Artforum* about the show in 2015. Referring to *More Heads*, she said,

> With my newer work, I'm trying to situate queerness within conversations about peace,
> cultural peace—and violence. For example, the most recent piece I made is a
> conversation between a head made of fake bricks and a head made of decorative butterfly
> wings about "compromise." The heads' materials really inform their personalities and
> ideology. I love the way that feminists talk and take time to hear each other. I like that
> still water treading.[37]

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[36] New Museum, "Wynne Greenwood: "Kelly." Greenwood performed in one of these concerts. The panel on queer archival practice was titled "Let's piece our knowing together."

[37] Fateman, "Exploding Plastics Inevitable."

This metaphor also describes the experience of interacting with Greenwood's accessible, yet complicated works. The fragmented dialogue in the videos can be difficult to follow and the cast of characters/sculptures in the series are hard to tell apart, which is intentional, meaning it requires more effort to look at, listen to, and understand them. Through playful uses of media, she creates spaces for projection, imagination, and debate, which offer a means to process the impact of cultural violence and think up peaceful alternatives.

In the "About" section of her *Tracy + the Plastics* site, Greenwood writes,

When an individual in a marginalized group talks to a recorded image of themselves it empowers the individual to open the door to the understanding and celebration that she/ he/it can be deliberate. It is an interaction with a fragmented self. By fragmented, I mean a cohesive identity that's constructed from different, often conflicting, parts of society, culture, and life that we relate to because popular culture has no whole identity to offer its audience other than one that resembles the ruling class. We can come out. And then come out again. We can rearrange our world how we want it.[38]

With *More Heads*, Greenwood re-presents different but related personas across media, using bodily fragmentation as a queer feminist strategy for empowerment. The way that she mixes formats, layers dialogue, and shapes materials in this series complicates specific categorizations of identity, such as gender, sexuality, and age. Through the *Heads,* she seems to say that who we are and the way we perform our identities is an ever changing, often contradictory construction. Her installations contribute to the feminist discourse concerning identity by reimagining fixed definitions of self as multiple public presentations.

Greenwood thinks of *More Heads* as episodic and plans to continue her ongoing relationship with the series.[39] The artist is currently working on a new album called *Horizon*, and

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[38] Greenwood, "Tracy + the Plastics."

[39] Graves, "Wynne Greenwood Talks About Sexism, Gargoyles, and the Age of the Plastics."

she has released one song from the record so far called "Distant Dream" which includes the lyrics, "Bodies are terminal / Brutally terminal / Magically terminal."[40] Additionally, there is a dirt-covered plaster sculpture titled *Outside Head* (2017), which is listed online by Greenwood's gallery and could be a one-off; however, it may hint at forthcoming work.[41] In 2019, she posted a drawing of two faces in a fire with the caption, "One face looks to be experiencing existential terror while the other face smiles at them like 'this is so fun, right? What do you think happens next?'"[42] Everyone will have to wait for Wynne Greenwood's conversation to be continued.

Part Three: Fragments

Flashback to 1994 when art historian Linda Nochlin wrote about the fragmented body as a metaphor for the modern condition in *The Body in Pieces: The Fragment as a Metaphor of Modernity*; in so doing, she introduced a term for the technique that had been adopted by feminist artists starting in the 1960s.[43] Unlike many feminist contemporaries whose beliefs and theories emphasized the commonalities of womanhood, Nochlin framed her idea around difference, charging readers not to forcibly reassemble distinct parts into "a unified field of discourse."[44] Her foundational concept has been reinterpreted in feminist art exhibitions and

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[40] Bandcamp, "Wynne Greenwood." The artist shared more about her new album on her Instagram account @wynnegreenwood in posts from late 2021.

[41] Artspace, "Wynne Greenwood."

[42] Instagram, "@wynnegreenwood," post from June 7, 2019.

[43] Nochlin, *The Body in Pieces*. She presented a selection of artworks as illustrations, tracing the recurring theme from modernism, through to the late 1960s and on into the 1990s. Nochlin was a seminal figure in the foundation of feminist art history. The term "fragmented body" refers to psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's mirror stage theory, which he proposed in 1936 then evolved in an essay from 1960 titled "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire." Lacan's essay was translated into English in 1977 as a part of the book *Écrits: A Selection*.

[44] Nochlin, *The Body in Pieces*, 56. Despite Nochlin's directive, most feminist art survey shows and texts that pay homage to her concept have insisted on a global perspective, which has maintained a focus on traditional mediums and gathered together works made primarily by cisgender, heterosexual, and white women.

history books by numerous curators and writers since. What follows is a selection of these influential texts and exhibitions that gave forward-thinking consideration to gender differences.

The same year Nochlin published her essay, Marcia Tucker exhibited *Bad Girls* at the New Museum in a show that recognized transgressive bodies, or bodies that redefine themselves in multiple ways, meaning they refuse to inhabit a fixed form.[45] Two years later, Catherine de Zegher curated an exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art Boston called *Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of 20th Century Art in, of, and From the Feminine.* The show had a section called "Parts of" that discussed the trauma and objectification of feminine bodies, and acknowledged the capacity of artworks to operate "within patriarchal discourse to destabilize fixed categories."[46] Fast forward a decade to 2007, when major survey shows opened on both the West and East Coasts.[47] Connie Butler curated *WACK!: Art and The Feminist Revolution* at the Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, an exhibition that considered various articulations of feminine space and underscored the psychological effects of layering and fragmentation.[48] Meanwhile, *Global Feminisms: New Directions in Contemporary Art* at the Brooklyn Museum,[49]

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[45] Yohn and Tucker, *Bad Girls*. This exhibition was accompanied by *Bad Girls West* at the University of California Los Angeles Wight Gallery.

[46] de Zegher, *Inside the Visible*. In her curatorial essay, de Zegher reiterated Nochlin's closing sentiments by acknowledging the complex, often unstated, entanglement of difference.

[47] Two feminist art history books were also produced and published around this same time. *Women Artists at the Millenium*, a book Catherine de Zegher and Carol Armstrong released in 2011, reflected on the political implications of gender in public spaces noting the potential for installations to function as "a space between mediums." Meanwhile, *Women Making Art: History, Subjectivity, Aesthetics*, Marsha Meskimmon's 2013 book, recognized "female subjectivity in all its complex and sophisticated difference," yet similarly reduced the conversation to gender identity.

[48] Butler and Mark, *WACK!*. Exhibition themes included body trauma, gendered space and gender performance. The show traveled to the Museum of Modern Art the following year. In 2007, Eve Fowler, Emily Roysdon, and A.L. Steiner curated *Shared Women* at Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions as a gay feminist response to *WACK!* that challenged feminist art historical categories.

[49] Reilly and Nochlin, *Global Feminisms*. This was the inaugural exhibition at the newly opened Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art.

which was curated by Linda Nochlin and Maura Reilly, advocated for a plurality of feminisms with an emphasis on multiculturalism.

Then, swipe right to 2021 when Apsara DiQuinzio curated *New Time: Art & Feminisms in the 21st Century* at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive.[50] One section of the exhibition titled "The Body in Pieces" directly referenced Nochlin's work, grouping pieces that endeavored to break apart from oppressive systems. Another section titled "Gender Alchemy" grouped works that explored shifting gender categories in resistance to bodily binaries. Meanwhile, *New Time* presented a plurality of feminisms with the artists and artworks it spanned, yet it lacked new media and installation works. Moreover, this year, an exhibition called "Womanhouse" that was organized by Stefano Di Paola opened at Anat Egbi.[51] The show revisited the famous project half a century later, presenting mostly two-dimensional pieces and recent works by some of the original artists together with a selection of artwork and documentation from the 1972 installation.

There were other concepts besides Nochlin's fragments that addressed the disconnections of contemporary experience, offering feminist artists a new language. In 1985, scholar Donna Haraway introduced her popular cyborg in the essay "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century;"[52] therein, she wrote about the technological possibilities for hybrid beings, breaking down boundaries to bring class, labor, and

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[50] DiQuinzio, *New Time*.

[51] Anat Egbi, "Womanhouse."

[52] Haraway, *Manifestly Haraway*. The cyborg metaphor has attracted the attention of many feminist artists in the decades since it was published, especially new media artists who identify as cyberfeminist, digital feminist, technofeminist, and xenofeminist in critiques. In 2016, Haraway published another influential book titled *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* that referenced Judith Butler's work and extended her concept of hybridity to other species through an ecological rather than a technological lens.

race into the gender conversation. The feminists she envisioned were part human/part machine as a way of accepting the fluid and contradictory nature of identities. In a section called "Fractured Identities," Haraway referenced Nochlin's later writing on difference, stating that false premises of inherent gender unity had fragmented the feminist movement since "no construction is whole."[53]

Five years after Haraway produced her manifesto, scholar Judith Butler published "Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity," an essay that argued sex and gender are constructions and performances that are complicated by other social identities and cultural taboos.[54] Butler also pointed out the failure of prevailing gender theories to acknowledge every possibility of identity, such as class, race, and sexuality, and she advocated instead for a strategy of making trouble in a kind of improvisational transformation that challenges gender binaries and offers "a new departure for feminist political theorizing."[55] These ideas of fragmentation, hybridity, and trouble have been reformed by contemporary feminist artists in recent decades who explore relationships between identity performance and media technology.

Part Four: Sondra Perry's Interfaces

"Is it a body? Or, what's not a body? What's an un-body of work?"
Arthur Jafa, from a 2017 interview with Sondra Perry.[56]

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[53] Haraway, *Manifestly Haraway*, 21.

[54] Butler, *Gender Trouble*. Butler's strategy has influenced many queer feminist artists in recent decades.

[55] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 196.

[56] Daderko, "Conversations: Ill Suns: Arthur Jafa and Sondra Perry."

Sondra Perry is a Black interdisciplinary artist who creates sculpture and video installations that explore issues of visibility. These works, which have been aptly referred to as "interfaces,"[57] combine modified machines with computer-generated animations in active configurations that question modes of production and representation. Perry often incorporates her own body in the motion graphics, recording performances of herself for audiovisual clips and using images of her face and skin to make "animated pictures."[58] The animations have appeared within Perry's works as avatars, backgrounds, moving images, spheres, still images, and wallpaper, and they are displayed on screens, projected onto walls, and printed. Two recurring themes among these animations are flesh and water. Perry first exhibited both forms of graphics in 2016 for *Resident Evil* at The Kitchen,[59] with a set of works that led to the 2018 exhibition *Typhoon coming on* at the Serpentine Galleries.[60] There were three primary works exhibited in both shows, which Perry has continued to iterate since 2016. They include two interactive sculptures, *Graft and Ash for a Three Monitor Workstation* (2016) and *Wet and Wavy Looks—Typhon coming on for a Three Monitor Workstation* (2016),[61] which the artist refers to as "nonfunctional exercise machines,"[62] and one variously titled video projection that is referred to

[57] The term was used by Perry in her *netherrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr* works (2016–2017). Soyoung Yoon also used the term in a 2018 essay titled "Figure versus Ground, White versus Black (Blue), or: Sondra Perry's Blue Room and Technologies of Race." Nora Khan also used it in a 2017 essay titled "No Safe Mode." Khan curated *Manual Override* at The Shed in 2020, a small group exhibition that featured work by Sondra Perry and had a bio for the artist that read, "Sondra Perry makes videos and performances that foreground the tools of digital production as a way to critically reflect on new technologies of representation and to remobilize their potential."

[58] Daderko, "Conversations."

[59] Perry, "by image," https://sondraperry.com/Resident-Evil. The image section of the artist's site also includes documentation of the individual works in the exhibition.

[60] Perry, "by image," https://sondraperry.com/Typhoon-coming-on-at-Serpentine-Sackler-Gallery.

[61] Perry, "by image,? https://sondraperry.com/Wet-and-Wavy-Looks-Typhon-coming-on-for-a-Three-Monitor-Workstation. On the page, Perry provides a link to watch the full video.

[62] Daderko, "Conversations."

as *Flesh Wall* (2016–2021). The dual motifs have featured throughout these versions, both in tandem and later as part of composite arrangements.

Perry first merged an avatar with a machine in *Efficiency Prototype #1 (working title)* (2016).[63] The work consisted of a modified exercise bike with a three-monitor workstation attached to its handlebars, and a video played on the screens while viewers sat on the bike, pedaled, and listened via headphones. Perry has shared that the work was inspired by her mother's experience of working for a corporate employer that required greater productivity from its employees while also penalizing them for the adverse health effects of those efforts.[64] In the video, a 3D avatar of Perry, which is larger than the seated viewer, bald, visible only from the shoulders up, and seemingly nude, speaks directly to the camera and is set against backgrounds of solid blue and a flesh pattern. The flesh images were made with an open-source software for computer animation called Blender. Perry took closeup photos of her facial skin and then used the tool to remove features, heighten the contrast, and morph them together.[65] These abstractions create micro/macro perceptual shifts that operate on multiple levels. They have an inside-out feel; even though the images can be perceived as flesh, it is not immediately clear whether you are viewing an exterior or interior surface as they confuse identity markers and are zoomed in so close that gender and race are indistinguishable. Furthermore, they form new associations by expanding the small visual details of her skin, meaning they become landscapes, oceans, and galaxies.

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[63] Perry, "by image," https://sondraperry.com/Efficiency-Prototype. The work was produced for a group residency showcase at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston.

[64] Vimeo, Luma Foundation, "In Conversation: Sondra Perry & Hans Ulrich Obrist."

[65] YouTube, Hammer Museum, "Artist Talk: Sondra Perry".

Perry developed *Graft and Ash for a Three Monitor Workstation* (2016) from this prototype. The second version also had an exercise bike workstation and a portrait-oriented, three-channel video that featured Perry's avatar and animated flesh (pictured in Figure 2.1). However, the bike's resistance settings were adjusted so that the viewer had to work hard to pedal, and the video included a third flesh graphic in the form of a rotating morphing sphere. In the video, Perry's avatar gradually emerges from a solid blue background while electronic music that is designed for relaxation plays. The blue screen also cuts back and forth to a roiling flesh pattern. Meanwhile, the artist, who narrated the video using a voice changer, says,

> Hi there. Nice to meet you. We're the second version of ourselves that we know of. We were made with Sondra Perry's image. One of them. Captured with a Sony RX100 under fluorescent lighting in her studio in Houston, Texas on April 15, 2016. We were rendered to Sondra's fullest ability. But she could not replicate her fatness in the software that was used to make us. Sondra's body type was not an accessible pre-existing template.[66]

Perry, as an avatar, goes on to describe the components of the machine and how they were procured, before questioning its function and glitching. After that, the video shows found footage of a religious exorcism that is inset in a smaller window, followed by a floating grid and a hovering flesh sphere, followed by a full screen of purple and black waves, which is another Blender creation in a color the program uses to indicate processing errors. Screams and sounds of distress accompany these last scenes. Perry's avatar subsequently reappears to summarize a study about the negative impact of racial discrimination on the health of Black people, going on to comment, "we have no safe mode." The avatar confronts the viewer next, questioning the privilege inherent in visiting a gallery during the day. She asks, "How does your body feel inside of us?" Then, she shares a few more thoughts and fades back into blue.

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[66] Perry, "by image," https://sondraperry.com/Graft-and-Ash-for-a-Three-Monitor-Workstation. On the page, Perry provides a link to watch the full video.

Perry exhibited *Graft and Ash* in 2016 for *Resident Evil*, which was curated by Lumi

Tan.[67] She presented it alongside *Wet and Wavy Looks—Typhon coming on for a Three Monitor*

Workstation (2016), a modified rowing machine with a landscape-oriented three monitor setup.

The machine had hair gel inside instead of water for resistance. Moreover, the video showed

alternating scenes of closeup flesh patterns, purple and black waves, and detail images of J.M.W.

Turner's *The Slave Ship* (1840), which were all set to distorted relaxation music.[68] The exhibition

included a wall projection with a similar flesh animation as found in the *Graft and Ash* video.

Additionally, in another cue from the video, the gallery walls were painted in chroma key blue—

a color used to produce images of darker skin tones as an alternative to green screens. Perry

spoke about these then-new works with Arthur Jafa and Dean Daderko as part of a 2017 article in

Mousse, saying,

> I think that the idea of humanness is fundamentally an illusion, and in order to avoid
> White normativity, I prefer to disassemble my own body. To take my skin, reanimate it
> into fluid waves, and make exercise machines that have their own artificial intelligence.[69]

Perry's installations reference her experience as a Black female while also considering

issues of invisibility and hypervisibility. She makes connections with subjects and objects that

revolve around her by blending the personal with the social. Her approach also plays with scale

and overlaps time. The multimedia works she assembles move between the interior and exterior,

the current and the historic as well as the physical and the digital. Those careful conflations result

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[67] Gad, *Sondra Perry: Typhoon Coming On*. The exhibition catalog was a zine that had contributions from Hannah Black, Aria Dean, and Sable Elyse Smith as well as an epilogue by Perry that presented an excerpt from a lecture by Sun Ra that provided insight into the show's title, which doubles as a reference to a popular video game series.

[68] J.M.W. Turner's painting *The Slave Ship* (1840), originally titled *Slavers Throwing overboard the Dead and Dying —Typhon coming on*, is about a massacre that took place in 1781 aboard the Zong where 133 enslaved people were tossed into the ocean by the ship's crew. Christina Sharpe's *Into the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (2016) provides a thorough overview of this historic event and its impact across time.

[69] Daderko, "Conversations."

in images that feel vast, heavy, and accessible, yet inconceivable. In an early version of her artist

biography, Perry refers to her installations as "paraspaces" or spaces that exist parallel to normal

life that allow for "identity slippages."[70] The works operate on multiple levels—visceral,

physical, intellectual, etcetera—seeking out a new language for communicating the weight of

racism.

Perry exhibited another version of her exercise machines and wall projection in 2018 for

flesh out at Squeaky Wheel.[71] These works were titled *Ashes for Three Monitor Workstation*

(2017), *Wet and Wavy Looks—Typhon coming on: Fields* (2017), and *Wall 2* (2017). *Ashes* was a

treadmill workstation instead of a bike, *Wall 2* was a re-rendering of the wall projection from

Resident Evil that was shown full bleed on one of the gallery walls over chroma key blue paint,

and *Wet and Wavy Looks* was displayed within a window space, enhancing the work's

commentary about bodies as commodities. Soyoung Yoon described the space in an essay for the

exhibition brochure by saying, "The manipulated presence of the artist's skin, voice, and person

throughout the exhibition map an interface in which representation and refusal are utilized and

fleshed out." Yoon calls Perry's installations "blue rooms," or places where fraught issues of

subjectivity can be explored.[72] Later that year, Perry talked about race and technological image

reproduction in an interview with Tamar Clark-Brown for *AQNB*. Connecting contemporary

ideas about representation in media production to the transatlantic slave trade, she stated,

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[70] Museum of Fine Arts Houston, "Core Program artist residents present new work at annual showcase." This was the show where Perry exhibited *Efficiency Prototype*. The term was coined by science-fiction author Samuel Delaney to describe spaces existing in parallel to the normal or ordinary world. These rhetorical other realms are a popular construction within the sci-fi genre, e.g., cyberspace.

[71] Perry, "by image," https://sondraperry.com/flesh-out-at-Squeaky-Wheel. This exhibition also included *netherrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr 2.0.1* (2017).

[72] Yoon's full essay is available for download through a link on Perry's website page.

> I talk about blackness and technology, or blackness as technological a lot because our bodies, our flesh (I'll say our flesh) is technologically connected to these things that I'm talking about. Our coming over here was related to our object associations. We were machinery. We were chattel. We were production spaces. But we were also doing a bunch of other types of production; cultural production, spiritual production.[73]

Perry's installations demonstrate recognition for the body politics that are inherent to each of their component parts, such as the devices, images, materials, messages, persons, places, and programs used to construct them, and the associations that those combinations evoke. The artist does not separate gender from ability, class, health, race, or any other aspect of identity in the works, which highlights the consideration she gives to the interconnected nature of individual experience. In these blended assemblies, which have a hyperreal, science-fiction feel, she exposes inner elements of the human–technological being to involve the viewer in a process of imagining new potential for the spaces.

The next major exhibition of these interactive works was *Typhoon coming on* at the Serpentine Galleries in 2018, which was curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Amira Gad. Billed as an "immersive environment," the show presented a version of the video from *Wet and Wavy Looks* as projections that wrapped around two walls of the gallery along with a new soundscape titled *Typhoon coming on* (2018).[74] Perry also exhibited *Graft and Ash*, *Wet and Wavy Looks*, and a *Flesh Wall* animation as a standalone backdrop.[75] This installation more directly referenced the Middle Passage, projecting the *Typhoon* animations onto walls as well as viewers' bodies as they walked around the space, and the video projections alternated between roiling flesh-tone hues

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[73] Clark-Brown, "Adrift in the chroma key blues".

[74] Serpentine Galleries, "What's On: Sondra Perry: Typhoon coming on," https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/whats-on/sondra-perry-typhoon-coming-on/#images. Perry is quoted on the page saying, "When making a piece I want people to feel like they have space and agency."

[75] It was displayed behind a video work about body cameras and surveillance titled *TK (Suspicious Glorious Absence)* (2018).

from the painting and vibrant purple and black waves.[76] The exhibition catalog included multiple

pages of stills from the flesh and water graphics, a revised version of Soyoung Yoon's essay, and

an essay by Nora Khan about the commodification of digital bodies.[77]

Typhoon coming on traveled to the Institute of Contemporary Art in 2018[78] and the

LUMA Foundation in 2018–2019. The ICA Miami exhibition, which is pictured in Figure 2.2,

displayed Typhoon on one exterior and three interior gallery walls, surrounding viewers with

projections. The show again featured Graft and Ash, Wet and Wavy, and a Flesh Wall backdrop as

a two-sided screen; moreover, the half walls in the center area of the gallery were painted in

chroma key blue and there was a self-colored carpet. The LUMA Foundation exhibition

displayed Typhoon on every wall of one gallery and a Flesh Wall backdrop with chroma key blue

walls in the other gallery.[79] Perry spoke with Obrist about this third show and noted, "I'm very

preoccupied with bodies but I'm always trying to figure out if there's more, if there's a different

way of relating."[80] This expansive thinking translates to the installations. The works allow

viewers to experience, or at least consider, parts of the systematic oppression that Black people

have faced for generations. There is a complex relationship within these interactions between the

repeated alterations of multimedia formats and the traumatic subject matter that they engage. The

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[76] Perry referred to this purple as "deep" and "invasive" in an interview with Anna Coatman for the Royal Academy.

[77] Gad, Sondra Perry: Typhoon Coming On. The catalog also included a reprint of the Resident Evil zine and a contribution from Simone Brown. Khan's essay was titled "Acquisition, God Object: Acquisition, Source Code." Yoon's revised and extended essay was called "Figure Versus Ground, White Versus Black (Blue), or: Sondra Perry's Blue Room and Technologies of Race." Meanwhile, Brown's essay was titled "Branding Blackness — Biometric Technology and the Surveillance of Blackness."

[78] Perry, "by image," https://sondraperry.com/Typhoon-coming-on-at-ICA-Miami. The show also featured TK and a sculpture titled Historic Jamestowne: Share in the Discovery and Take Several Seats (2016), which was a half couch covered with plastic that was sitting atop cinderblocks; this was also a part of Resident Evil.

[79] Perry, "by image," https://sondraperry.com/Typhoon-coming-on-at-The-Luma-Foundation. The backdrop again accompanied TK.

[80] Vimeo, Luma Foundation, "In Conversation: Sondra Perry & Hans Ulrich Obrist."

artist revisits these image configurations, experimenting with new ways to make productive

connections among personal experiences, social histories, cultural narratives, identity

performances, object associations, spatial locations, and technical processes.

Perry has presented numerous other versions of these shifting works.[81] For example,

Flesh Wall (2021) was a recent outdoor installation that she exhibited for Times Square Arts'

Midnight Moment project (pictured in Figure 2.3).[82] She has made the flesh and water animations

into transprints for lightboxes and lenticular prints on aluminum, as pictured in Figure 2.4.[83]

Furthermore, she has explored similar approaches and themes throughout her practice, describing

her works as collaborative sculptures and video performances that sometimes exist as

installations "about the spatial relations of people, places, and objects."[84] In relation to this, Perry

gave a virtual artist talk for The Hammer Museum in 2021 where she commented on her use of

digital production tools, saying,

> I want to find comfort in the good death of mediocre images, mine included, by making
> moving images and installations that challenge our understandings of who we are and
> where we are, and make that also clear. I hope to use imagination to think through and
> past where we are as well.[85]

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[81] These include a two-channel video titled *I'm Afraid I Can't Do That* (2016) for an installation collaboration with Sheila Pepe at DiverseWorks, which was projected onto a clay-filled plastic bag titled *Untitled Installation* (2017) at the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, and *…you out here look n like you don't belong to nobody… (For Flesh Wall #3 and Metallic Scent)* (2019) at Westfälischer Kunstverein. Perry has also shown *Graft and Ash* as a standalone work, most notably in *Art in the Age of the Internet, 1989 to Today* and *The Body Electric*.

[82] Midnight Moment Project, "Sondra Perry: Flesh Wall."

[83] These include an edition of lenticular prints from *Typhoon* that accompanied the 2018 Serpentine exhibition, a trio of C-trans prints in lightboxes made from stills titled *flesh, graft, & ash #1* (2020), and a combination of still wallpaper and lenticular prints titled *Ocean Modifier* at Moody Center for the Arts in 2020–2021.

[84] Drew, "Towards a New Digital Landscape." These include Perry's *Lineage for a Multiple-Monitor Workstation: Number One* (2015), *netherrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr* works (2016), *ffffffffffffoooooooooooouuuuuuuuuuurrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr* (2017), *IT'S IN THE GAME* series (2017–2018), *Ecologue* works (2017–2020), and *A Terrible Thing* (2019).

[85] YouTube, Hammer Museum, "Artist Talk: Sondra Perry."

Sondra Perry merges animation, performance, video, sculpture, and installation to produce interactions between the viewer and extensions of herself that interrogate the commodification of bodies produced by corporate, cultural, legal, social, and technological systems that enable racial oppression. She uses her parts of her own Black female body— likenesses formatted as avatars and animations—to address the multidimensional issue of visibility. These extensions of the self expand out to include other bodily experiences that are human, object-based, or otherwise. Her works position the viewer in a proximate place to confront the situation; in so doing, she elevates feminist conversations by introducing race before gender and alongside other aspects of identity. The installations seem to be designed to work out the dregs of historic injustices embedded in our interpersonal relationships.

So, what does the artist have to say next? Perry is currently taking a break from making art to complete a graduate program in psychoanalysis. However, *A Terrible Thing,* the catalog for her 2019 exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, has just been released. Perry made a video-based installation for the show that personified the museum building to expose histories relating to the site.[86] The video, also titled *A Terrible Thing* (2019), closed onto a chroma key blue frame with a modulated voiceover saying, "We are highly visible, and we have sight. We are alive." And she recently opened an exhibition called *Lineage for a Phantom Zone* at Fondation Beyeler that presents an immersive audiovisual installation. The show combines cypress trees, orange scents, and screens built into furniture, in an exploration of environmental and mental landscapes related to her family history, and the catalog includes images of orange

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[86] Brown, *Sondra Perry: A Terrible Thing*. The catalog includes stills and a transcription from the video in the installation.

rind with purple overlay, black waves, and a glitched snapshot/landscape.[87] Perry describes this

new work as "a dream that the artist Sondra Perry wishes that she could have had." Hopefully

her studies will create even more space for imaging and imagining.

Part Five: Glitches

Over the past five decades, artists, scholars, and social activists have worked to broaden

feminist discourse beyond issues of female gender identity, steering the conversation toward

numerous other overlapping sources of identification. When social media became mainstream in

the 2010s, the audiences for these feminist discussions also grew. Two survey exhibitions from

the period after MySpace and Facebook went mainstream,[88] which were not about feminist art

per se,[89] yet they explored intersections between gender, body politics, and technology, meaning

that they stood out from the rest: *Trigger: Gender as a Tool and a Weapon* at the New Museum

in 2017–2018[90] and *The Body Electric* at the Walker Art Center in 2019 then Yerba Buena Center

for the Arts in 2019–2020.[91]

Instead of organizing *Trigger* by categories, curators Johanna Burton, Sara O'Keefe, and

Natalie Bell featured a range of works that confronted repressive orders in different ways out of a

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[87] Fondation Beyeler, "Sondra Perry—Lineage for a Phantom Zone," https://www.fondationbeyeler.ch/en/exhibitions/sondra-perry. The page has a link to download the exhibition catalog, which also includes a text by M.K. Jemisin, an interview with Isaac Julien, and a dream diary. This exhibition was produced for the Serpentine Galleries' Dream Commission award.

[88] MySpace became popular in 2004, followed by YouTube in 2005, Facebook in 2009, and Instagram in 2012.

[89] One smaller exhibition to note is "Producing Futures: An Exhibition on Post-Cyber-Feminisms" which took place at the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst in 2019. The show presented different feminist approaches, focusing on discriminatory gender norms and tensions between the body and technology.

[90] Burton and Bell. *Trigger.* Burton, O'Keefe, and Bell developed the show along with an advisory group that included Fred Moten and J. Jack Halberstam. In a curatorial essay for the catalog, Burton wrote, "If there is an ongoing—indeed, renewed—place for art in larger culture, it might, counterintuitively, make space not for a 'shared' vocabulary but for contested, messy, sustained interactions that bring us closer and hold us apart."

[91] Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, "The Body Electric."

desire to "speculate on new forms" and "picture other futures."[92] This open format allowed for the inclusion of artworks that represented multiple feminisms. Many of the works included hybrid, modified, or partial bodies, and there were a number of installation, new media, and performance works in the show, including a portable sculpture with an audio-visual component by Sondra Perry with a blank title (2017).[93] A partial transcript from the audio track read, "I'm a vessel ready to be used." Meanwhile, curated by Pavel Pyś, *The Body Electric* grouped works according to theme but included multiple aspects of digital identity that have parallels in the real world such as "embodiment, race, gender, sexuality, and belonging."[94] Sections included "The Malleable Body" and "Extending the Self," which placed Sondra Perry's *Graft and Ash* near works by Lynn Hershman Leeson and Martine Syms. Although the show did not directly comment on feminism, it featured works by a number of feminist artists who engage with intersecting identity issues in their practices.

More nuanced discussions about identity and new media have also been taking place within feminist art history. In 2006, Amelia Jones proposed the term "parafeminism" to describe a form of feminism that understands gender as open-ended and inextricably linked to other subjective social identifications in *Self/Image: Technology, Representation, and the Contemporary Subject*.[95] Moreover, in 2019, Kate Mondloch introduced the idea of "critical proximity" to describe how certain artworks can comment on unnoticed parts of technoculture via simultaneously distanced and immersive experiences in *A Capsule Aesthetic: Feminist*

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[92] New Museum, "Trigger: Gender as a Tool and a Weapon."

[93] Johnson, "Trigger."

[94] Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, "The Body Electric."

[95] Jones, *Self/Image*, 213. The book uses the work of Pipilotti Rist as a primary case study. Jones has also written extensively about feminist art, queer feminist art and queer performance art.

Materialisms in New Media Art.[96] Additionally, in 2020, Legacy Russell espoused a Black,

digital, queer feminism with *Glitch Feminism: A Manifesto*;[97] celebrating the fluidity of online

expressions, where Russell charged readers to usurp the body and become their own avatars.[98] In

sections that included "Glitch is Anti-Body," "Glitch is Remix," "Glitch is Skin," and "Glitch

Survives," she referenced a selection of artworks that refute the fixed categorizations of any

singular medium, one of which was Sondra Perry's *Typhoon coming on.* Combining and

evolving ideas from fellow feminists, Russell wrote,

> The open-ended question of the body is one of the greatest of our time. Our embodiment
> of glitch is thus an expression of spatial desire, a curious inquiry in service of remapping
> the physical form and how we perform and re(structure) it. Gender as a construct is a
> falsehood.[99]

These shows and texts indicate the extent to which gender conversations have developed

since feminist art emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. Many feminist artworks from the past two

decades, which have been produced against a backdrop of social media sharing on politically

polarized platforms designed to amplify interactions, indicate a greater understanding of and

engagement with intersecting identity issues. For example, Faith Holland has presented parts of

her serial work *The Fetishes* (2017–2018), which explores bodily metaphors through Graphics

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[96] Mondloch, *A Capsule Aesthetic*, 62. Mondlach explored the overlap between technoscience and new materialism
in new media installation art from a feminist perspective, citing Haraway to frame her critical proximity concept.
Her analysis focused on three contemporary artists, including Pipilotti Rist, and connected them to artists from the
1970s and 1980s who expressed similar themes with earlier mediums.

[97] Russell, *Glitch Feminism.*

[98] Russell, *Glitch Feminism*, 215.

[99] Russell, *Glitch Feminism*, 204–205.

Interchange Formats also known as GIFs and modified devices, in galleries, on gallery websites, and via her Instagram account.[100]

Wynne Greenwood and Sondra Perry, who both identify as feminists, have each been creating artworks that are situated within these recent discourses. Greenwood started her career in the 2000s, while Perry began hers in the 2010s. Both Greenwood's *More Heads* series and the works linked to Perry's *Typhoon coming on* exhibition portray interactive types of 'fragmented bodies' within feminist art. Their new media installations function as transformative experiences, making spaces for people to imagine other realities by talking and working through ideas about ability, age, class, health, race, and sexuality as well as gender.

<u>In Conclusion</u>

In her introduction to *Otherwise: Imagining queer feminist art histories*, Amelia Jones comments on how a coalitional drive within feminism has set the trajectory of feminist art history.[101] From the 1970s to the 2010s, debates about artistic forms of the feminine experience that were based on ideas of sexual difference have defined the movement. Noting a recent cultural shift away from gender within a larger social debate about reclaiming identities, she proposes an alternative framework, which artist Allyson Mitchell calls "non-essentialized feminist and politicized art practice."[102] These 2016 reiterations of Nochlin's advice from

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[100] Instagram, @asugarhigh. The works are also displayed on the artist's website, https://www.faithholland.com/portfolio_page/the-fetishes/, which shows documentation of an installation for the exhibition *Speculative Fetish* at Transfer Gallery in 2017–2018.

[101] Jones, Amelia. *Otherwise: Imagining queer feminist art histories.*

[102] Jones, Amelia. *Otherwise*, 356. This comes from a conversation between Allyson Mitchell and Deirdre Logue, artists and co-founders of the Feminist Art Gallery in Toronto, and curator Helena Reckitt titled "Not at the beginning and not at the end."

feminism past express how Wynne Greenwood and Sondra Perry approach making installations. The artists use bodily fragmentation to reconstruct the spaces around them with multimedia experiences where people can imagine more just worlds. Indeed, Greenwood's *More Heads* and Perry's *Typhoon coming on* represent feminisms that value personhood over gender in recognition of the complexities of self-identification. The works demonstrate the restorative potential of new media that is applied to considerations of identity in an artistic context. They offer ways to reinterpret internalized oppression and generational trauma stored in the mind and the body by queering oppressive cultural associations and empowering viewers to do likewise.[103]

Greenwood and Perry's installation-based works give the fragmented body trend new resonance by addressing these interconnected complexities of lived experience across different in-person and on-screen formats. Their media combinations set up various phenomenological juxtapositions that bring the outside in and vice versa by putting people in contact with their likenesses, e.g., the internal conversations among Greenwood's *Heads* that were brought into public forums and projections of Perry's flesh and water animations that were placed onto the visitors' bodies. These experiential contrasts have the capacity to communicate a broad range of ideas about identity. Simultaneously intimate and immersive, the installations function as shared spaces for engaging in conversations surrounding gender and the layered issues that intersect with it, making room for new forms of feminist discourse.

The intention behind placing their works alongside one another in this project was to deepen the dialogue around their practices; and in so doing, this widens the frames of reference

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[103] It is worth noting that both artists archive their own practices, acknowledging peers or collaborators, describing the ideas within their works, and making them accessible to the public online through their personal digital archives and social pages, links to shared files, bibliographies for works, and lists of collaborators and relevant references.

for contemporary feminist art. As exhibitions such as *Trigger* and *The Body Electric* or texts such as *Self/Image* and *Glitch Feminism* indicate, feminist art conversations have moved far beyond surveys of gender identity, now exploring the myriad of ways gender interacts with different forms of digital and physical identity in complicated, shifting constructions that resist categorization. In an essay called "Refiguring dis/embodiments" for Doina Petrescu's *Altering Practices: Feminist Politics and Poetics of Space*, Niran Abbas writes, "If we think of the body not as a product, but rather as a process—and embodiment as an effect—we can begin to ask questions about how the body is staged differently in different realities."[104] Artists such as Wynne Greenwood and Sondra Perry engage in identity performances that translate across media, focusing on the transgressive possibilities of the installation process to imagine new configurations of self.

This practice begs the question: What cultural structures are imposed on people that cause feminist artists to intervene with self-portraiture? The answer is complicated and would require further research to attempt a thorough response. But it revolves around issues of representation, both within more traditional art historical contexts such as exhibitions and publications, as well as on newer digital platforms where artworks are being displayed and mentioned with increasing prominence. The reply also touches on profiling and the psychological aspects of visual communication that are literally staring us in the face as we interact with affective content through screens on a daily basis. The questions about the fragmented face/body that shaped this thesis are a product of a dual career in marketing and art, which has provided me with a unique perspective for interpreting these works.

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[104] Petrescu, *Altering Practices*, 252–253.

When set in an artistic practice, self-objectification can counter some of the harmful media messages related to identity circulated by corporations and institutions out of a profit motive. This type of content contains explicit and implicit biases that reinforce gender-related roles in society, encouraging and discouraging certain behaviors associated with those gendered expectations. Real life stereotypes also appear online, reinforcing the underrepresentation of women artists within museums, galleries, and other collections, especially trans artists, queer artists, non-binary artists, and artists of color.[105] Thus, despite the significant progress that recent generations of feminists have achieved, many of the same identity issues they faced are being replayed today.

These two bodies of work by Wynne Greenwood and Sondra Perry represent a small part of the larger art historical conversation that is taking place against the backdrop of fourth wave feminism.[106] From applications to the metaverse, feminist artists are experimenting with many other forms of hybrid technology in addition to the new media combinations that these works employ.[107] Feminist art has taken many shapes, and there will be many more in the future. The potential of the subgenre to generate progressive critical discourse adapts, finding new ways to elicit the frustrations of enduring injustices. Revisiting her famous essay about women artists from 1970 in 2000, Linda Nochlin wrote, "At its strongest, a feminist art history is transgressive

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[105] For further reading, The National Museum of Women in the Arts compiles statistics about gender inequity from various sources within the art industry.

[106] Mainstream cultural changes after 2000 that are related to these works include the Black Lives Matter movement (2013–present) along with a push for the inclusion of the voices of Black people, Indigenous people, and people of Color and mass institutional reforms, lesbian, gay bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual rights/queer and trans visibility, the #MeToo movement (2006–present) and ripple campaigns, and the widespread adoption of facial and voice recognition systems, on-demand streaming services, podcasts, and social media.

[107] These include augmented reality, generative algorithms, Graphics Interchange Formats (GIFs), net art, non-fungible tokens (NFTs), robotics, virtual reality, wearables, and many other creative uses of code and devices.

and antiestablishment practice meant to call many of the major precepts of the discipline into

question."[108] Hopefully, artists working during the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth waves of

feminisms will continue to embrace the contradictions of identity, producing progressively

nuanced understandings of the multiple simultaneous realities of various bodies in digital and

physical spaces, fragmented or otherwise.

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[108] Armstrong and deZegher. *Women Artists at the Millenium*, 30. Nochlin's essay is titled "'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?' Thirty Years After." Earlier in the paragraph, she references Butler's trouble strategy. Her original essay is titled "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?"

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FIGURE 1.1. A still from Wynne Greenwood's music video *Big Candy* (2008). It shows a sculpture titled *Suspicion* (2008) and part of the installation titled *Quiet in Forming* (2008) that was exhibited as part of "Face It" at Vielmetter Los Angeles (2008).

Source: https://vielmetter.com/exhibitions/2008-02-wynne-greenwood-face-it.

FIGURE 1.2. A photo of Wynne Greenwood's sculpture *Head #1 with Pillar* (2012). The image, which was taken from part of an installation for the "Peace In" exhibition at Lawrimore Project in Seattle (2012), was also used as album cover art for *A Fire to Keep You Warm* (2012).

Source: https://wynnegreenwood.bandcamp.com/album/a-fire-to-keep-you-warm.

FIGURE 1.3. A still from Wynne Greenwood's music video *Culture Keeper* (2012). The still shows a sculpture titled *Two-Faced Head* (2012) that was part of the installation titled "Peace In" at Lawrimore Project in Seattle (2012).

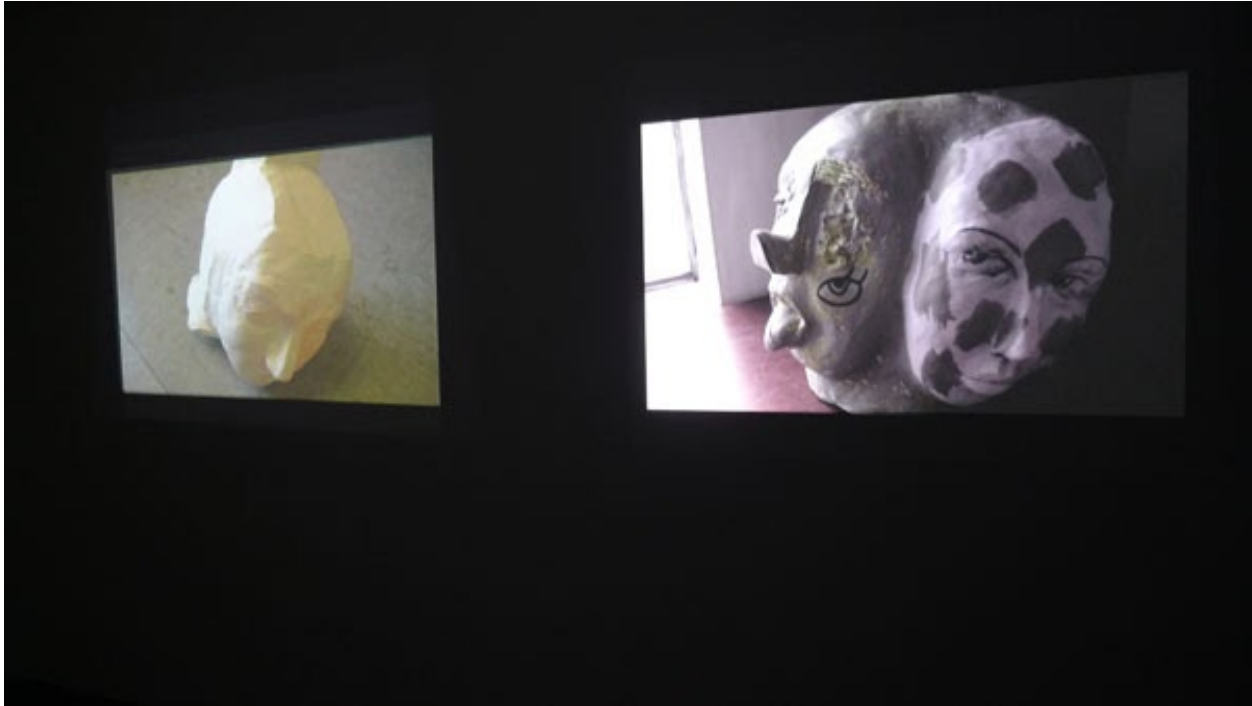Source: https://vimeo.com/user22989635 (a still from the video).

FIGURE 1.4. An installation view of *More Heads, Belgrade* (2013) in "More Heads" at Soloway in Belgrade (2013). The photo shows two stills from Wynne Greenwood's *More Heads* performance videos that were made using sculptural heads; *Two-Faced Head* (2012) is pictured on the right-hand side.

Source: http://www.soloway.info/Shows/27WynneGreenwood/02WynneGreenwood.html.

FIGURE 1.5. An installation view of *Wynne Greenwood: Kelly* at the New Museum in New York (2016). The photo shows four works from Wynne Greenwood's multimedia series *More Heads* (2011–2015) on the left-hand side, which were projected onto the wall and displayed in the case. They include *More Heads, Museum* (2015), *Kid Head* (2013), *Theo* (2015), and *Butterfly Wing Head* (2015).

Source: https://www.newmuseum.org/exhibitions/view/wynne-greenwood-kelly.

FIGURE 2.1. A still from the video component of Sondra Perry's multimedia work *Graft and Ash for a Three Monitor Workstation* (2016). The work was exhibited in *Resident Evil* at The Kitchen in New York (2016).

Source: https://sondraperry.com/Graft-and-Ash-for-a-Three-Monitor-Workstation (a still from the linked video).

FIGURE 2.2. An installation view of *Resident Evil* at The Kitchen in New York (2016). The photo shows Sondra Perry's *Graft and Ash for a Three Monitor Workstation* (2016) in the foreground as well as walls covered in chroma key blue paint and Perry's animated flesh projections.

Source: https://sondraperry.com/Graft-and-Ash-for-a-Three-Monitor-Workstation.

FIGURE 2.3. An installation view of *Sondra Perry: Typhoon coming on*, which was exhibited at the Institute of Contemporary Art Miami (2018). The photo shows *Graft and Ash for a Three Monitor Workstation* (2016) on the right-hand side, *Wet and Wavy Looks—Typhon coming on for a Three Monitor Workstation* (2016) on the lefthand side, and a flesh projection on the surrounding gallery walls.

Source: https://sondraperry.com/Typhoon-coming-on-at-ICA-Miami.

FIGURE 2.4. A Graphics Interchange Format also known as a GIF made from video of a lenticular print by Sondra Perry titled *Typhoon coming on* (2018) that shows a transition between her rendered flesh and wave images.

Source: https://sondraperry.com/Typhoon-coming-on-Lenticular-print-mounted-on-aluminium.

FIGURE 2.5 An installation view of Sondra Perry's *Flesh Wall* (2016–2020) as exhibited by Times Square Arts in 2021 as part of the "Midnight Moment" project in New York.

Source: http://arts.timessquarenyc.org/times-square-arts/projects/midnight-moment/flesh-wall/index.aspx.