

Performing Periods:
Challenging Menstrual Normativity through Art Practice

(Volume One)

Bee Hughes

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
of Liverpool John Moores University for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

March 2020

Biography	
Abstract	
Introduction	1
Literature Review	12
Methodology	20
Chapter One: Everyday Languages of Menstruation	30
Framing Menstruation in Online Medical Advice	32
Menstrual Normativity	41
Menstruation as Failed Fertilisation	44
Menstruation as Positive or Problematic	49
Menstrual Advertising: Visible Stigma, Invisible Bleeding	59
Conclusions	74
Chapter Two: Reframing Menstrual Art	79
Menstrual Blood	89
Menstrual Ritual	96
Menstrual Needlework	107
Menstrual Time	112
Menstrual Performance	116
Menstrual Space	124
Menstrual Protest	129
Conclusions	136
Three: Deconstructing Menstrual Norms through Art Practice	140
Background	142
Towards Performing Periods	146
Shifting Cycles, Fluid Genders	150
Period Poems & Performances	172
Appropriation & the Feminist Nude	183
Conclusions	190
Thesis Conclusion	192
Bibliography	202
Endnotes	257
List of Illustrations	263
Illustrations	268
Acknowledgements	308

Biography

Bee Hughes is an academic and artist whose research explores embodied experiences of menstruation through performative artworks which draw on everyday rituals, practices, and the feminist tradition of self-examination. Their works in visual, performance, poetry and sound art explore resistance to socially constructed narratives of menstrual normativity and reflect on the relationship between sites of medical authority and everyday experiences of menstruation. Bee has presented their research and exhibited in the UK and internationally.

Bee is a founding member of the Wellcome Trust funded Menstruation Research Network, where they are responsible for website design and content, and a member and the administrator for the Royal Society of Edinburgh funded 'Ending Period Poverty in Scotland: A Historical and International Perspective' project. They are a recipient of a Doctoral Fees Bursary from the School of Humanities & Social Sciences at LJMU and Bee has received multiple funding awards to support their research, including the Susan Cotton Travel Award (2012) and Society for Menstrual Cycle Research conference bursary (2019). They have worked as a lecturer since 2012, teaching in several subject areas at undergraduate and postgraduate level including: Graphic Design & Illustration, Fine Art, History of Art & Museum Studies, Contemporary Art History & Theory, Sociology, and Media & Cultural Studies.

Bee managed the Atrium Gallery at Liverpool School of Art and Design for over two years alongside their PhD research, coordinating over thirty exhibitions between August 2017 and November 2019. Bee's curatorial projects include collaborative works such as *Comfort Zones* (2017) with Eva Petersen, and *CoLab* (2018), a two-week programme of events centring on postgraduate research in the arts and humanities produced with a collective of fellow doctoral students. Their solo curatorial projects include *Periodical* (2018), an exhibition of menstrual art and UK menstrual product print advertising, which was part of Being Human festival of the humanities. Bee also collaboratively devised and facilitated workshops with Matt Johnson as part of The World Transformed festival (2018) and Anti-University Now festival (2019).

Bee has published on several topics, including Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* (1897), illustration history and theory, the visual culture of menstruation, menstrual normativity, and menstrual art. Their recent writing will be published in *The International Encyclopaedia of Gender, Media and Communication* (edited by Karen Ross) and *The Routledge Companion to Sexuality and Culture* (edited by Emma Rees). In 2020 Bee commenced new projects including developing a podcast about art institutions in North West England in collaboration with Rebecca Smith, funded by the Association for Art History, and a collaborative project researching the menstrual history of St Andrews as Artist in Residence at the Centre for Contemporary Art and the Institute for Gender Studies at the University of St Andrews.

Abstract

This practice-led research explores the visual culture of menstruation from an interdisciplinary perspective rooted in art practice and autoethnographic reflection. The thesis aims to interrogate notions of menstrual normativity in anglophone culture, centring on, but not limited to art in the Global North. These notions are informed and reinforced through everyday beliefs, medical authority, advertising and representations of menstruation in art. With reference to art historical, sociological, political / cultural context and my own art and curatorial practice, I propose that menstrual art can be a powerful medium to re-frame academic, medical and everyday discussions about menstruation by revealing varied experiences of menstruation. The practical element of this work employs an interdisciplinary queered practice-led research approach to explore and critique themes including subjectivity, agency, ritual and performance in embodied experience, essentialist conceptions of gender, and the intersection of medical knowledge with everyday life.

The art practice discussed in Volume One, and documented in Volume Two, develops artistic methods to critically examine the everyday embodied experience of menstruating through performative works which combine everyday practices with the feminist tradition of self-examination. Works in poetry and sound explore ritual and repetition encountered through medical advice, considering how these now common sites of medical authority form part of the everyday experience of medicine. In linking research to practice explicitly throughout the thesis, this research contributes unique insights to the fields of practice-led research, art and cultural studies, critical menstruation studies and the critical medical humanities. Through considering the role of online medical advice in shaping contemporary attitudes towards menstruation this research aims to expand the site of clinical encounter, as conceptualised in the critical medical humanities, to include everyday and individual engagement with medical authority and ideas in the online sphere. Through thematic analysis of multiple case studies this thesis presents a 'queering' of historic and contemporary menstrual art since 1970, and of contemporary menstrual norms.

Key Words:

menstruation
menstrual normativity
nonbinary
body art
queered practice-led research

Introduction

This practice-led research aims to investigate artworks, artistic strategies, and art-making methods which challenge normative cultural representations of menstruation. Alongside this thesis I present a body of original artworks (catalogued in Appendix One), and published via peer reviewed journal articles, multiple online platforms, and through exhibition in the UK and USA. The thesis includes critical reflection on this practice and offers a significant contribution to the art historical study of menstrual art through an analytical chapter and a database of fifty years menstrual art, included in Appendix Three. The thesis also makes an original contribution to understandings of the construction of menstrual norms through the analysis of advertising and the exploration of online medical advice, which are further documented in Appendix Two and Appendix Four respectively.

The research is approached from an interdisciplinary perspective rooted in artistic practice and autoethnographic reflection, situating the body of artwork produced as part of the research within an art historical context of feminist art practice from 1970 to the present day. In response to themes and questions developed through practice-as-research, the thesis also aims to interrogate notions of menstrual normativity in anglophone culture in the Global North, which are informed and reinforced through everyday 'folk' beliefs (Newton 2016), sites of medical authority and practices, and the advertising of menstrual products.¹ While my research is situated geographically and economically in the Global North, and linguistically in Anglophone contexts, I will incorporate examples of art / activism from around the

world. This is in recognition both of the global scale of the discourse(s) around menstruation at this cultural moment, and in order to – as Professor Chris Bobel asked of the menstruation research community gathered at the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research in June 2019 – *expand the frame* (Bobel 2019) of menstruation studies, as well as those of Western (menstrual) art history to include a more diverse range of voices and practices.

As a piece of autoethnographic and reflexive research, it is necessary to define the socio-cultural context within which I am producing art and research (see Methodology). Therefore, I aim to establish the specific stigmatising conditions of menstrual normativity I have encountered which provide a cultural frame to my art practice, following Buckley and Gottlieb’s assertion that there is no universal menstrual taboo, but instead ‘a wide range of distinct rules for conduct regarding menstruation that bespeak quite different, even opposite purposes and meanings’ (Buckley & Gottlieb in Buckley & Gottlieb (eds) 1988: 7).

Menstruation has often been conceived of as a ‘women’s issue’, however this can be undermined by the recognition that menstruation is a phenomenon which can impact people of any gender – if they menstruate or know someone who does – and in recognising that not all cis gender women menstruate, and some nonbinary people and trans men / trans-masculine people do (see for e.g. Bobel 2010; Fahs 2016; Chrisler et al 2016; Quint 2017, 2019 and the activism of Cass Bliss (formerly known as Clemmer) which attracted much mainstream press attention, e.g. Clemmer

2017; Glamour 2017).² The autoethnographic position of this research aims to contribute to a broader movement towards what journalist Anna Dahlqvist has referred to as ‘the deconstruction of the connection between gender and menstruation’ (Dahlqvist 2018: 36). This echoes the work of psychologist and academic Breanne Fahs who, reflecting on her work with cis and trans menstruators, notes:

Unworking notions of male and female bodies, questioning the inherent meanings and symbolism of menstruation, and working toward seeing menstruation as potentially masculine or feminine or genderqueer all helped to underscore the power of menstruation to make and remake gender.

(Fahs 2016: 9-10)

In my research I produce artworks and reflexive analysis which might “‘queer” menstruation [as] a strategy for combatting shame’ (Dahlqvist 2018: 36) through an exploration of my fluid and shifting experiences of gender identity through the duration of the project. This approach draws on Baker’s notion of queered practice-led research (2011) which centres subjective experience within practice-led work. My work also draws on notions which have informed queer theory approaches such as Judith Butler’s concepts of gender trouble (2007 [1990]) and performativity (1988).

Drawing on art historical analysis and my own art and curatorial practice, I propose that menstrual art can be a powerful medium to re-frame academic, medical and everyday discussions about menstruation by revealing varied experiences of menstruation. While the history and theory of feminist art and craft has been a highly productive area of scholarship (see e.g. Parker 1984; Pollock & Parker 1987;

Pollock 1988; Jones 1998; Wark 2006; Battista 2013), and a growing body of work on menstruation and its visual culture is being established, formalised and newly named as the academic discipline of critical menstruation studies, comparatively little academic writing has centred specifically on menstrual art. Notable recent exceptions include Ruth Green-Cole's short essays (Green-Cole 2015a, 2015b), and a recently published essay by Camilla Mørk Røstvik on Judy Chicago and the impact of her work on menstrual art since 1970 (Røstvik 2019b). This thesis therefore aims to contribute a substantial critical (re)evaluation of menstrual art as a distinct artistic sub-genre, situated within the context of a broader movement of activism and consciousness-raising associated with feminist movements since the 1960s. These, as Kathy Battista notes, have been influential on the arts (along with a turn towards conceptual or de-materialised art forms) (Battista 2013: 1).

I use the term *sub-genre* to acknowledge the many attributes menstrual art has in common with the broader practices of body art, performance art, and feminist art/activism, but also in order to offer a queering of the traditional classifying concept of the artistic genre. The term genre, though possibly outdated, is still in use in arts institutions, though different emphases are evident in their definitions. For example, the Museum of Modern Art's (MoMA) *Glossary of Art Terms* defines *genre* as 'a category of artistic practice having a particular form, content, or technique' (MoMA Learning date unknown: para 123) – which may certainly be applied here given the common content of the vast majority of menstrual art. Tate offers a definition which centres *genre* as a historic, hierarchical classifying system 'codified

in the seventeenth century' (Tate date unknown: para 1). Tate's rather more traditional and rigid definition of the term is perhaps not in keeping with the aims of this research, and it is here that I propose a queered use of the term.

Whereas *genre* has been historically used as a restrictive and hierarchical tool wielded as a signal of cultural capital, my use of it here is as much about establishing a cohesive identity for the artworks which are the subject of my research as expanding the historically bounded definition of *genres* themselves. Indeed, feminist art has been recognised as a genre that is itself difficult to define neatly, as it 'straddles the categories of conceptual, body-oriented and political or theoretically based art' (Battista 2013: 2). Perhaps, in re-claiming the classifying power of a genre for art-form(s) which would certainly have been derided and discounted by the men of the seventeenth-century Royal French Academy (Tate date unknown: para 1) and their academic descendants, it might be possible that this fluid and diverse vein of art production can contribute to a re-consideration of the boundaries of art genres; if the seventeenth century could make a genre of still life, why can the twenty-first not make a genre of artworks which reflect the fluctuations of everyday life?

Art can be a powerful tool to create spaces of resistance to menstrual stigma and to counter cultural notions about menstruation. This is especially effective when artworks challenge essentialist framings of menstruation, which I argue are present in both normative medical *and* spiritual or universalising interpretations.³ It may be tempting to consider these positions to be oppositional, particularly given our

cultural proclivity for binary thinking. The tendency to define a group based on its difference to others is present in contemporary feminism. For example, Bobel notes that second and third-wave generations of feminists have both engaged 'in the same sort of generalizing' (Bobel 2010: 5) which leads to the neglect of 'points of connection between the waves' (ibid). Bobel's 2010 study has been highly influential in defining the two core wings of North American menstrual activism within the third-wave feminist movement, summarised as: feminist-spiritualists whose 'work centers [sic] on celebrating what they see as the uniqueness of womanhood' (ibid: 12) and 'in contrast, radical menstruation activists' (ibid) who 'deploy a gender-neutral discourse of menstruation and resist corporate control of bodies' (ibid).

In her MA thesis Josefin Persdotter challenges Bobel's model as dichotomous and geographically narrow, which excludes people challenging menstrual norms in different places and using methods outside (relatively) organised activism (Persdotter 2013: 11). Persdotter offers the term *menstrual countermovement* (ibid: 12) in an attempt to capture the breadth of activity undertaken by individuals and groups to resist menstrual norms, which draws on resistance to menstrual cultural practices - Bobel's *menstrual activism* - as well as Elizabeth Kissling's notion of a *menstrual counterculture* (2006), which largely centres on those who aim to resist consumerist menstrual culture.

Recognising the complexity of menstruation, gender, and feminist / menstrual movements beyond binary categorisation, my research finds similarities which result

from both biomedical and spiritual-feminist models of menstruation framing bleeding as an essential component of womanhood. Through the analysis of my own art practice and comparative and typological analyses of other menstrual art, I argue that representations of menstruation in sound, creative writing, visual and performance art can offer insights into the diversity of menstrual experiences which are not represented in broader visual cultures and cultural expectations of regular, regulated and invisible bleeding. In the face of deeply held stigma, menstrual art has often been read as celebratory as a default, as it propels a usually hidden phenomenon into the public realm.⁴ However, uncritically foregrounding the celebration of menstruation through art can perpetuate essentialist ideas around gender, rather than working against stigmatising and exclusionary ideas and language.

In positioning this research within feminist praxis, I recognise the importance of intersectional praxis within the everyday (Ahmed 2017). Following Lynda Nead, it is also acknowledged that while my work is produced within a collegiate community and field of feminist practitioners, 'there can be no 'safe place', outside of institutional frameworks and untouched by mainstream cultural discourses, that feminist art can occupy' (Nead 2002: 62). My work may therefore be considered within a context of what Rita Felski has called a realm of feminist counter-cultural practices, defined as 'a series of cultural strategies which can be effective across a range of levels both outside and inside existing institutional structures' (Felski 1989: 171). As I note in Chapter Three, I work from a relatively privileged position within the permissive institutional structures offered by the art school, and / or the

intellectual space fostered by strong feminist relationships, a situation which, as Kathy Battista notes, has been significant in the development of feminist art practices (2013: 17-18). Through the production and dissemination of my research and practice in a variety of contexts from social media, blogs and peer reviewed publication, specialist and non-specialist conferences, exhibitions, workshops and public engagement opportunities I have purposefully engaged in 'the creation of a public forum for oppositional debate and practices' (Nead 2002: 62) regarding the norms associated with traditionally binary gender roles and behavioural expectations which are deeply tied to (gendered) cultural norms surrounding menstruation.

This thesis is structured in three chapters which aim to explore the formation of menstrual norms and analyse how artists have challenged or reiterated these within their work. The first chapter 'Everyday Languages of Menstruation' presents two case studies which were selected in response to the use of secondary materials and developing themes within my art and curatorial practice. The chapter builds on previous work which interrogates medical models of menstruation (e.g. Lander 1988; Martin 2001) within the context of the everyday. The first case study analyses three examples of online medical advice available in the United Kingdom between 2016 and 2018 which I had previously consulted as a patient and appropriated in my art practice. I evaluate how these examples frame menstruation and consider how this framing contributes to the construction of menstrual normativity in contemporary culture. The second case study presented in Chapter One analyses advertising materials from the Femorabilia Collection, part of Liverpool John Moores University

Special Collections and Archives, which were utilised in my curatorial project *Periodical* (Hughes 2018b). The analysis conducted within this case study offers unique insights into the representation of menstruation in print advertisement in the United Kingdom, building on previous research which has often centred on advertising in a North American context, or on television advertising, as I note below in the Literature Review. The case studies presented in Chapter One aim to make unique contributions to the field of critical menstruation studies and the critical medical humanities in expanding the site of medical authority into the online sphere. They also provide a rigorous analytical context for the discussion of the art practice presented in Chapter Three.

The second chapter, 'Reframing Menstrual Art', aims to identify a typology of menstrual art under the headings: *menstrual blood*, *menstrual ritual*, *menstrual needlework*, *menstrual performance*, *menstrual time*, *menstrual space*, and *menstrual protest*. The typology, and the sub-themes which are identified within and across it, provide an original contribution to knowledge through a critical discussion of the canon of menstrual art, which I propose as a specific sub-genre of feminist art. The chapter also aims to (re)evaluate menstrual art produced in the Global North, including menstrual artworks by Judy Chicago (1971, 1972), Kanonklubben (1970), Christen Clifford (2015) Vanessa Tiegs (2000 – 2003) and Jane Woollatt (2018, 2019 - ongoing). I also aim to broaden the existing canon of menstrual art, which has tended to focus on white women artists living or working in and around liberal art schools. I include work by artists working outside this context and artists of colour -

such as Chilean artist Carina Úbeda (2013), Nepalese artist Ashmina Ranjit (2003, 2010), South African artist / visual activist Zanele Muholi (2006), and Indian artist Poulomi Basu (2013 – 2016) - who continue to be under-represented in art historical accounts and museum collections, despite the turn towards (at least the beginnings of) de-colonising collections and increasing representation in the museum (e.g. see Mercer 1990; Simpson 2001; Rice 2009; Robert 2014). The chapter will outline the limited critical response to menstrual art and consider some of the problems of foregrounding menstrual art as a celebration of womanhood through the concept of romanticised menstruation. Chapter Two is accompanied by fifteen illustrations of artworks included in the analysis, provided with the permission of the artists.

In Chapter Three, *Deconstructing Menstrual Norms through Art Practice*, I present an extended analytical commentary on the development of my own practice-as-research. Drawing on the work of scholars such as Chris Bobel (2010) and Breanne Fahs (2016) I consider my practice in relation to scholarship in the field of critical menstruation studies (see Literature Review), which has provided a richly interdisciplinary disciplinary home, and academic network to my work.

Through reflecting on the development of my practice alongside shifts in how I identify my gender - at the start of the project identifying as cis gender (but questioning) and at the end identifying as nonbinary and genderfluid – I suggest that it is indeed possible to ‘appropriate female nudity’ (Striff 1997: 6), and nonbinary, trans and/or gender non-conforming nudity, ‘for feminist purposes’ (ibid). This

chapter frames my practice as a method of blurring assumed conventions of menstrual representation, menstrual normativity and gender norms, drawing on theories of queered practice-led research (Baker 2011) and performativity (Butler 1988). The third chapter also aims to situate my artworks in relation to the analysis presented in Chapter Two and evaluate my theoretical position as a feminist artist in relation to debates around the representation of the body in art and the agency of individual artists.

Literature Review

The interdisciplinary field of critical menstruation studies, currently emerging as a coherently constituted discipline with the forthcoming publication of *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Menstruation Studies* (edited by Bobel et al 2020), provides part of the disciplinary backdrop for this research.⁵ *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Menstruation Studies* will be the first large-scale publication which brings together comprehensive, interdisciplinary and intersectional analyses of menstruation across different strata of society, and the human life-course, and though it will not be published before the submission of this thesis, it is anticipated to be a significant and field-defining publication.

Though my project engages with literature from other areas, which will be explored in each chapter, the literature review aims to situate my research specifically in relation to research on menstruation and menstrual art history. There is an established body of literature on the social construction of menstrual normativity through everyday 'folk' beliefs (Newton 2016), sites of medical authority (Martin 1987; Lander 1988; Hughes 2018a), and media and advertising (Houppert 1999; Johnston-Robledo & Chrisler 2011; Rosewarne 2012; Erchull 2013; Røstvik 2018). There is also an established body of research (Bobel 2006, 2007, 2010; Fahs 2014, 2016), which is relevant to the study of menstrual art as a site of resistance to menstrual stigma through activism. The interface of art with everyday practices, such as those found in examples of menstrual activism outlined by Bobel and Fahs is explored through the embedding of my art production with my everyday life, for

example in *Cycles* (2016 - 2017). This research contributes new insights to literature on aspects of the field including menstrual normativity as constructed in medical models of menstruation and the advertising of menstrual products in the United Kingdom; the representation of menstruation in art; and the potential of artists to challenge and expand on normative representations of menstruation.

Literature on the visual cultures of menstruation has been dominated by studies of advertising and popular culture representations of menstruation, with limited scholarly work making critical interventions into menstrual art. One of the most influential studies in the analysis of menstrual product advertising is Ingrid Johnston-Robledo and Joan C. Chrisler's article 'The Menstrual Mark: Menstruation as Social Stigma' (2011). In this article the authors advance a detailed discussion of the social construction of menstruation as a stigmatised condition, for example through discourses of respectability, practices of menstrual concealment, menstrual product advertising, and other venues such as 'books, magazine and newspaper articles, jokes, and other cultural artifacts [sic], such as "humorous" products like greeting cards and refrigerator magnets' (Johnston-Robledo & Chrisler 2011: 11). Their work is one of many examples of the analysis of menstrual art produced from academic positions outside art history or art practice, which frames these art practices positively, and often unproblematically, as examples of resistance to stigma. My first chapter will explore the literature on menstrual product advertising in greater detail.

Much scholarship on menstrual art centres on well-known examples that have been the main subject of critical writing on menstrual art, or on artwork produced since the turn of the 21st century, as discussed in Manica & Rios (2017), such as Judy Chicago's *Red Flag* (1971) and *Menstruation Bathroom* (1972) (see e.g. Rees 2015: 121, 133; Delaney, Lupton & Toth 1988: 275; Fahs 2016: 108) or Vanessa Tiegs' *Menstrala* paintings (2000-2003) (e.g. Johnston-Robledo & Chrisler 2011; Bobel & Kissling 2011). Delaney, Lupton and Toth reference Chicago (and Faith Wilding) in the conclusion of their landmark book *The Curse: A Cultural History of Menstruation* (1988), declaring after 274 pages outlining the construction of menstrual taboo in religious, medical, popular imaginary and literary contexts, that Chicago 'is most responsible for the breaking of the menstrual taboo in modern art' (Delaney, Lupton & Toth: 275).⁶ As Røstvik notes, while many articles on menstruation and menstrual activism cite Chicago's artwork they are 'seldom discussed in detail as works of art' (Røstvik 2019b: 1) in these analyses.

Chris Bobel and Elizabeth Kissling position artworks alongside other media interventions such as film, zine-making, story books, creative writing and academic publication as 'examples of contemporary menstrual activism' (Bobel & Kissling 2011). The works of Emma Rees (2015), Amelia Jones (1998), Kathy Battista (2013) and Jayne Wark (2006) have been particularly useful in developing an understanding of menstrual art in relation to the histories of the vagina in literary and cultural history, body art, British feminist art and North American performance art respectively. Rees, for example, dedicates an entire chapter in *The Vagina: A Literary*

and Cultural History (2015) to the work of Judy Chicago, providing in-depth analysis of her menstrual and vaginal works. As a work focused on the vagina, rather than menstruation, Rees' book has informed the analytical approach of my research. The inclusion of trans identities within Rees' analysis is also of central importance to the development of this research. Through encountering this along with the gender inclusive works such as Bobel (2010) and Fahs (2016) I have been empowered in relating my practice to my embodied experiences of menstruation and gender identity.

Camilla Mørk Røstvik's work forms an important bridge between the scholarship surrounding menstrual product advertising, corporate practices, and menstrual art. She is one of the few scholars producing work on menstruation from an art historical perspective, for example the article 'Blood Works: Judy Chicago and Menstrual Art Since 1970' published in *Oxford Art Journal* in December 2019. This is a crucial piece of scholarship which not only offers a critical appraisal of Judy Chicago's menstrual artworks (where more critical attention has tended to centre on her largescale installation *The Dinner Party* (1974 – 1979) than her menstrual work) but also situates contemporary developments in menstrual art (including my own work) within the historical legacy of Chicago's pioneering practice. 'Blood Works' offers detailed and innovative historical and aesthetic analysis, complicating the interpretation of Chicago's work by emphasising ambiguity, such as the observation that *Reg Flag* (1971) may 'appropriate and reclaim phallic imagery of penetration, through its focus on the gendered and decidedly asexual object of the tampon'

(Rostvik 2019b: 8). Røstvik's article 'Blood in the Shower: A Visual History of Menstruation and Clean Bodies' (2018a) analyses recent developments in menstrual product advertising in comparison to strategies of representation utilised in filmic and artistic representations of menstruation. This work convincingly establishes menstrual artworks as resistance by demonstrating the recent feminist turn in menstrual product advertising which foregrounds empowering representations of menstrual blood as part of marketing campaigns.

The art historian Ruth Green-Cole published two essays on menstrual art in 2015, one of those as the (short) introduction to *Widening the Cycle* exhibition (Green-Cole 2015a), as part of the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research biennial conference.

Green-Cole (2015a, 2015b) theorises menstruation in relation to Judith Butler's work on gender performance - which is a central concept in my art practice - and provides art historical depth, linking menstrual art in the 21st century to the development of feminist art practices in the 1960s and 1970s. I position my work in dialogue with Green-Cole's analysis, aiming to develop the critical conversation around menstrual art through my own insights as an arts practitioner in an under-researched field.

Daniela Tonelli Manica and Clarice Rios present examples of menstrual art since the turn of the 21st century, considering 'the notion of performance and the experiential dimension of symbolic action' (Manica & Rios 2017: 2). Their analysis centres on the use of menstrual blood (it is unspecified whether the blood is genuine or simulated) as an art medium, utilising the term *menstrual performance* to refer 'to various ways

in which women are currently using their menstrual blood to express themselves through art (performances, paintings and photographs' (ibid). Their research draws predominantly on the anthropological theorisation of menstruation (e.g. Douglas 2001 [1966]; Turner 1967; Buckley & Gottlieb (eds) 1988) rather than situating contemporary menstrual artworks in any specific art historical context. Their evaluation is, overall, consistent with the conclusions of the works cited above, framing menstrual art positively as a radical form of resistance which 'orchestrate[s] a slow but deep reconfiguration of the symbolic uses of bodily processes' (Manica & Rios 2017: 21). While Manica and Rios focus specifically on the aesthetics of blood and the use of the internet in their conceptualisation of menstrual performance, my research takes a broader art historical approach to analyse a range of approaches, materials and strategies employed by artists working with menstruation. This research aims to contribute a new critical interpretation of the role of menstrual art as *both* a form of resistance to menstrual stigma *and* as a venue for the reiteration of problematic menstrual norms.

The interaction of and tension between medical and everyday discourses of menstruation is a site of exploration in the case study of my own art practice, and as such is an important element of the literature in menstruation studies explored as part of this research. The understanding of menstruation as an everyday phenomenon is the subject of Victoria Newton's book *Everyday Discourses of Menstruation: Cultural and Social Perspectives* (2016), which explores contemporary menstrual attitudes in the United Kingdom. Newton's work analyses the 'historical

shift from the invisible menstruating woman to invisible menstruation' (Newton 2016: 183) through case studies of historical and contemporary discourses, menarche and adolescence, popular representations and the use of menstrual euphemism. Her research takes a cross-generational approach, combining in-depth interviews as part of field work conducted in Derbyshire, England (2016: 2) with textual analysis to present an in-depth portrait of what she terms 'the folklore of menstruation' (2016:1); that is, vernacular knowledge and practices in the everyday. She notes in the first chapter that vernacular knowledge(s) can influence medical-related choices, such as contraception (ibid).

The Western medical model of menstruation has been explored in detail in *The Woman in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction* (Martin 2001 [1987]) and Louise Lander's *Images of Bleeding: Menstruation as Ideology* (1988). Lander's work traces the influence of moralistic Christian ideologies on medical understandings and the treatment of menstruation in lieu of evidence-based clinical practice in the long nineteenth century (Lander 1988: 10-25) and develops the notion of menstruation as both a biological and social phenomenon. The influence of medical discourses on the everyday is a core concern of my art practice. Lander demonstrates the influence of cultural ideology on clinical practice, and establishes that medicine and the social construction of menstrual norms exist in a reciprocal relationship, rather than in separate spheres. Emily Martin's research also analyses nineteenth-century medical narratives, which she presents as often characterising menstruation as traumatic and debilitating (Martin 2001: 35). She also explores the prevalence of metaphors in

medical texts, which often position bodily processes as analogous to various dominant technological discourses and developments at specific historical moments. Like Lander, Martin is concerned with the social aspects of menstruation, noting that 'when women talk about menstruation they usually do not see it as a private function relegated to the sphere of home and family, but as inextricable from the rest of life at work and school' (Martin 2001: 92). Lander and Martin both consider the translation of attitudes towards menstruation in everyday contexts, through various historical documents including medical advice books for the home; literary sources; and illustrations.

My research directly builds on the work of Martin and Lander, investigating the construction and framing of menstruation in contemporary online medical advice. Though there is evidence that these online resources are increasingly important in the contemporary landscape of everyday medical advice (Tan & Goonawardene 2016; Smart & Burling 2001), my work is the first to analyse these sources of extra-clinical information in relation to menstruation. This thesis aims to develop critical perspectives on menstrual art history significantly, both challenging and expanding the current literature in this field. It presents unique contributions to writing at intersections between art practice, practice-led research, queer studies and gender studies through the synthesis of critical artistic and autoethnographic reflection, and archival research which extends existing work on the history of menstrual product advertising.

Methodology

This thesis and accompanying body of practical work centre on the critical exploration and analysis of menstrual normativity in historical and contemporary artworks / art practices and everyday cultural texts. The research employs a case study approach, implementing a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods in order reflexively to analyse the development of the art practice discussed in Chapter Three, and to situate this practice within relevant social and art historical contexts. Chapter Two presents a critical analysis of menstrual art since 1970 and considers how the artistic approaches discussed might reiterate or disrupt dominant discourses of menstruation. The first chapter presents two case studies in order to identify contributing factors to the social construction of menstruation in contemporary British culture. The research may be divided into three broad methodological areas, which are: exploratory art practice; art historical enquiry and analysis; thematic analysis of cultural texts.

This research synthesises art practice, art historical and socio-cultural enquiry, following Smith and Dean's conceptualisation of practice-led research and research-led practice not 'as separate processes' (Smith & Dean 2009: 2) but as a distinct methodological approach which foregrounds a 'reciprocal relationship between research and creative practice' (ibid: 1). Art practice is central to the research, with the development of my printmaking techniques and embodied exploration of artistic labour as ritual, which positions the body as dynamic tool rather than static image through the juxtaposition of bodily processes with art process. The building of

practice through ritualised bodily acts – including private and public performances – is presented as a process of feminist making and enquiry, ‘to build theory from description of where I was in the world, to build theory from description of not being accommodated by a world’ (Ahmed 2017: 12). This approach to art-making follows Ahmed’s suggestion, that ‘patriarchal reasoning goes all the way down’ (Ahmed 2017: 4), and these works are an attempt to ‘find ways not to reproduce its grammar’ (ibid). This is echoed in the writings of Kathy Acker, who states that her writing method is a form of ‘looking for the body, my body, which exists outside patriarchal definitions’ (Acker 2006: 166). Through the various performative methods utilised in my art practice, and discussed in detail in Chapter Three, the thesis draws on embodied experiences of menstruation and gender identity as a starting point for critical intervention.

The space between the moments of art making, reflection and interpretation, and later presentations of the work has become a rich area of dialogue within my practice. The reiterative process of my art-making engages with Judith Butler’s reading of de Beauvoir which suggests ‘the body is always an embodying of possibilities both conditioned and circumscribed by historical convention’ (Butler 1988: 521). Furthermore, the artistic ritual refers to the bodily rituals of menstruation, as one of the ways in which gender is socially performed as ‘in time - an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts’ (Butler, 1988, 519). Though the artworks presented as part of this thesis take various forms, the practical research is defined broadly following Wark’s definition of performance which is

expanded here beyond Goldberg's conception of it as "live art by artists" to include not only live performance done either for an art audience or for a nonart public, but also private performances documented through photographs or written accounts, certain photographic works that incorporate an aspect of performative self-display... (Wark 2006: 10)

The adoption of Wark's definition of performance art, rather than Goldberg's deliberately vague one (Goldberg 2011: 9), unifies different elements of my practice to produce a cohesive whole which includes durational private performance, body-prints and photographs as performance documentation, and live performance (see Chapter Three). Lynda Nead's observations on the female nude are also salient to this methodological position, recognising that while 'interpretation cannot be guaranteed' (Nead 2002: 61), and that the work is 'open to a range of interpretive possibilities, including re-appropriation into the voyeuristic structures of the female nude' (ibid). I nevertheless assert that in the production of my art practice I participate in 'claiming the right to representation' (ibid) on my terms, rather than those of anybody else.

Drawing on the work of Foucault and Butler, Dallas J. Baker (2011) describes his creative writing as a form of queered practice-led research (PLR), or as *performative bricolage* (39):

that is, as a complex and performative process drawing on multiple disciplines, methodologies, theories and knowledges in which subjectivity, creative practice and critical research combine to produce interdisciplinary artefacts (creative and critical writing) that discuss, understand, express, explore and describe gender or sexual difference and are components in an ethics of the self, or self-making. (Baker 2011: 39-40)

He also states that ‘a queered PLR produces creative and critical artefacts through which notions of sexual and gender difference can be explored and expressed’ (ibid: 41). A key aspect of queered practice-led research is the centring of subjectivity ‘as the core practice leading both research and creative endeavour whilst simultaneously seeing creative practice, research and subjectivity as intertwined and mutually informing each other’ (ibid: 34). As I discuss in Chapter Three, Baker’s engagement with performativity, rather than essentialist and romanticised notions of creative practice (ibid: 43), is a key methodological shift which centres a critical engagement with subjectivity.

My research and art practice can also be understood as a form of autoethnography, which ‘blends ethnography and autobiography’ (Reed-Danahay 1997: 6) and ‘does not adopt the “objective outsider” convention of writing common to traditional ethnography’ (ibid). By combining my lived experiences with analysis of wider socio-cultural debates on menstruation, my work becomes a ‘form of self-narrative that places the self within a social context’ (ibid: 9). Fabian A. Rojas has written on the use of self-portraiture as an autoethnographic method for exploring the dual identities of the artist / art educator. As both a method and a text, autoethnographic art practice forms ‘a platform of self-discovery as we enter the daily living arena and explore the significant incidents of our lives as a way to reveal how we represent ourselves’ (Rojas 2012: 46). It can be particularly fruitful for artists working reflexively with their own life-narratives, as I have through my research interest in menstruation which stems from exploring my own experience of menstruating, undertaking dual roles as

both the researcher and the researched at multiple points. My work may further be considered autoethnographic I am inextricably embedded in my research subject as a person who menstruates. Furthermore, some of my art techniques might be considered as drawing on ethnographic methods, such the long-term observation of a phenomenon. For example, in the case of the artwork *Cycles* (2016 - 2017), I observe and record my own menstrual cycle for six months.

In addition to considering my approach through autobiography / (auto)ethnography, the artwork is also seen as a resource. Christine Miller states that when she started her painting 'it did not occur to' (Miller & Kaufmann 2017: 26) her that she 'was in fact beginning to deconstruct a myth' (ibid). My work is part physical and artistic curiosity and part political statement which makes the unseen and unheard seen and heard. The myth being deconstructed here is my attachment to and complicity in the ways we are taught to think, behave and talk about menstruation and an attempt to deviate from what Chris Bobel called the 'acceptable menstrual discourse' (2010: 7), 'limited to complaints about cramps, jokes about mood swings, and increasingly, the appeal of continuous oral contraceptives to suppress menstruation' (ibid). Through my art and curatorial practices this research aims to confront the bodily reality of bleeding. It also considers whether pinpointing 'normal' or 'ideal' periods is a potentially helpful or harmful practice, and draws into question the myth that hormonal contraceptives are consistently able to cure all menstruation related woes by predictably suppressing the menstrual cycle.

Miller & Kaufman expand on the relationship between painting and theory in Miller's work. They suggest that 'painting as a research method embodies four aspects: theory; form; idea and action' (Miller & Kaufmann 2017: 23). Their reflection on theory resonates particularly strongly with the relationship between making and thinking explored in this thesis. They write that when Miller is painting, her 'subject becomes objectified as language in the technical aspects of painting. The subject whatever it is, becomes an object and, at that point, has no meaning' (ibid). The creation of my artwork is embedded firmly in process, which in the moment(s) of making acts temporarily to suspend my role as a subject of the work, even while using my own body as a tool and material. This is at odds with the reflexive intimacy and attention also at work – it is a point of convergence and collapse of external and interior, self and other.

Cut-up and repetition are central methodological strategies which aim to (re)produce the feeling of frustration that arose while reading online advice which presents little space for variation, outliers or non-conforming bodies and cycles. In the reiteration and fragmentation of these phrases from these sources, the artwork opens this orthodoxy to question – to repeat the words until they lose their meaning in an abstracted visual (linguistic / sonic) field and lose their power to define menstrual experience. By translating poetic artworks into soundworks, and through collaboration with other artists, my work plays on the expectations of a performance, and the etiquette of silence that surrounds menstruation. By directly appropriating the clinical and detached language of medical sources into

fragmented, repetitive soundworks, these works are deployed as a form of performative critique through installation and live performance.

The interpretation of cut-up in this thesis has been informed by the writings of Brion Gysin and William Burroughs, Kathy Acker, and the art of Gilbert & George. From Gysin and Burroughs, I take the notion that the literal cutting up of language could potentially 'destroy the assumed natural links, that in the end are but expressions of Power, the favourite weapon of control or even the essence of control' (Gysin in Fabre 1986 in Kuri 2003: 164). Through permuted poems and cut-up novels, Gysin and Burroughs aimed to subvert and resist the status quo of capitalist control on thought and society, which to Burroughs was represented and enforced by the viral workings of language. Acker's use of cut-up as a strategy for resistance against patriarchal hegemony in Western culture and storytelling has also been an important touchstone, particularly what she referred to as 'looking for the body' (Acker 2006: 166). This research draws on the work of Gilbert & George, which is explored as a form of environmental and self-reflexive cut-up, through their appropriation of graffiti in combination with (self)portraiture, such as in *Queer* (1977). In Chapter Three these connections are developed in greater detail, considering how these methods can fragment meaning and disrupt or subvert didactic authorial voices.

Thematic analysis is utilised in Chapter One to explore the construction of menstrual norms in online medical advice, in direct response to the deconstruction of these texts in my art practice. This section employs a more rigid methodological framework

than later chapters, reflecting the rigid representations and conventions represented in the source material being analysed. This research combines quantitative and qualitative analysis to identify and evaluate the underlying discourses present in what are often considered to be 'neutral' or 'objective' texts of medical (or medical adjacent) authority from a social constructionist perspective. This approach aims to identify themes and 'theorize the sociocultural contexts, and structural conditions' (Braun & Clarke 2006: 85) informing the framing of menstruation in these texts. Though informed by contextual research, such as the work of Martin (2001), Lander (1988) and Karen Houppert (1999), which suggest medical models of menstruation tend to render menstruation as a problematic phenomenon, this thesis aims to counter this through a combination of theoretical and inductive analytical lenses. As in Chapter One, my approach aims to identify themes which are presented in existing research –affording continuity and comparison with existing academic literature – and also to identify new themes which are 'strongly linked to the data themselves' (Braun & Clarke 2006: 83). Through this combination of approaches to textual / thematic analysis the research aims to acknowledge and mitigate bias in the analytical method.

A similar approach is utilised throughout the analysis in Chapter Two, where the reiteration or rejection of menstrual stigma in the context of menstrual art and menstrual activism is explored. Chapter Two presents a consciously fluid and discursive mode of analysis, in contrast to the relatively rigid and quantitatively rooted methodology utilised in the first chapter, in recognition of the different

subject area and subject matter this chapter centres. Art historical research is a key method in this project, drawing on the work of Amelia Jones (1998) and Jones and Warr (eds) (2012) to produce thematic and typological analyses of menstrual art. The development of a database of menstrual art which diachronically maps menstrual art since 1970 (see Appendix Three) via synthesis of information from a range of journalistic articles, academic books, journal articles, and archived thematic content such as that available through the website of *n.paradoxa* journal, edited by Katy Deepwell, has enabled a detailed comparative analysis of the examples of menstrual art. The analysis of artworks was conducted using a combination of semiotic analysis and thematic analysis in order to facilitate comparisons across media and form. In situating the interpretation of these artworks within the context of menstruation research and activism, the research can draw links between the artworks and the socio-cultural contexts which inform their production.

Archival research and curatorial methods are also employed to provide depth to the analysis of the visual cultures of menstruation, specifically the (re)construction of menstrual normativity through menstrual product advertising. Exploratory archival research was conducted at The Women's Art Library Collection at Goldsmith's, University of London. This exploratory research yielded some interesting contextual information regarding the production and dissemination of feminist art in the late twentieth century, however this approach did not provide materials which would ultimately be included for analysis in this thesis. Having learned from this speculative approach producing limited results, archival research undertaken at the LJMU Special

Collections and Archives was conducted in a targeted and systematic manner. A selection of the Femorabilia Collection encompassing 1960s–1990s magazines for adolescent girls was surveyed to produce a case study of British print menstrual product advertisements. This facilitated a combination of semiotic, discourse and thematic analysis of these artworks as examples of the reproduction of menstrual normativity which is discussed in detail in Chapter One. The archival research was paired with curatorial practice (discussed in Chapter Three), to produce the public exhibition, *Periodical* (Hughes 2018b). Curatorial practice serves multiple purposes in this research: it is a form of creative production in its own right; it is a form of publishing research outcomes; and, it is a method of ordering and analysing research data.

In order to explore methods and strategies employed by me and other artists to subvert, challenge, or expand menstrual normativity, it is first necessary to ground the thesis in how these norms are formed and reproduced. Therefore, I will open this thesis with an exploration of everyday languages of menstruation in the United Kingdom through two case studies of menstrual norms. The first case study analyses three examples of online medical advice, and the second analyses print advertisements for menstrual products in British magazines.

Chapter One: Everyday Languages of Menstruation

The first chapter of the thesis explores sites which demonstrate attitudes towards menstruation embedded within contemporary culture in the United Kingdom through the languages we encounter in everyday life. Victoria Newton's work (2016) traces historical interpretations of menstruation through to contemporary British cultural and social understandings, presenting an ethnographic study on 'contemporary vernacular knowledge' (Newton 2016: 113), or menstrual 'folklore' (ibid). Organisations such as Plan International UK (Tingle & Vora 2018) have conducted studies into the attitudes of girls to various aspects of their identities and bodies. In this chapter I discuss and analyse the historic and contemporary cultural construction of menstrual norms in the United Kingdom, drawing on online health resources and examples of print advertising from the 20th century held in the Femorabilia Collection, LJM Special Collections and Archives. The selected texts and advertisements directly inform, are incorporated into, and / or are critiqued in my art practice (discussed in Chapter Three) and in the examples of menstrual art analysed in chapter two.

It is striking that many of the observations and critiques made in menstrual studies over ten, twenty or even thirty years ago still arise when considering contemporary social constructions and cultural practices of menstruation. Researchers such as Emily Martin (2001) and Louise Lander (1988) have analysed the construction of menstruation in medical and scientific texts, exposing the gender biases and Christian ideologies which have influenced much medical practice around menstruation from the Enlightenment to the late twentieth century. Chris Bobel's

(2010) ethnographic work in the USA identified two dominant ideological positions prevalent in much menstrual activism developing from spiritual feminisms - often manifesting as essentialist and sometimes culturally appropriative practices - or from radical feminist practices often rooted in consciousness raising and anti-corporate actions. In contemporary cultural discourse tension continues to exist between the often (justifiably) sceptical wing of feminist health advocacy, who are wary of the many dubious and damaging practices promoted by mainstream Western medicine, and feminist medical practitioners.⁷ These medical practitioners justifiably base their confidence in expertise derived from evidence-based medical research, which can ignore the experiences and expertise of patients themselves, as explored in Hoffman and Tarzian's (2008) article exploring gendered differences in the experience and treatment of pain.⁸

My analysis is concerned with the everyday, rather than the specialist medical language of scientific and clinical settings such as academic journals or medical textbooks. Publications such as these are not readily and freely available to the public, who may be unfamiliar with accessing specialist texts or unable to afford access to paywall-locked journals. It is also important to consider that most lay people may lack the subject specific knowledge and vocabulary necessary to interpret the data presented in scientific publications, as well as the frequent misreporting of scientific studies in the mainstream media. Misreporting may contribute to an overall mistrust of expert research, as according to the BBC Radio 4 *Today* 'only a third of us trust the evidence coming from medical research and two-

thirds of people think their friends and family are a more trustworthy source of information about which drugs to take' (BBC 2017: para 10).

This chapter explores how attitudes may be formed, informed and reflected through various cultural texts. The primary source texts I draw on have been selected as they are readily accessible and either free or inexpensive and aim to provide information and advice about menstruation. I analyse how these texts reflect experiences of menstruation in the Anglophone Global North, particularly considering how they might uphold deep-rooted cultural notions surrounding menstruation. I also consider how people who menstruate – most, but crucially not all, of whom are cis gender women – encounter medical and scientific language in everyday settings. I consider how these interactions are informed by the actions and experiences we associate with menstruation and the menstrual cycle and explore how everyday encounters with medicine have simultaneously pathologised and trivialised the experiences of individuals seeking advice and treatment for menstrual / gynaecological matters.

Framing Menstruation in Online Medical Advice⁹

In order to explore understandings of menstruation at an interface between the clinical and personal, the following section analyses the framing of menstruation in online health advice available in 2018 aimed at a UK audience from a socio-cultural perspective. The selected texts - *NHS Choices*, *Patient.info* and *Boots WebMD* - are from established reputable sources with direct links to sources of medical authority.¹⁰ I define these resources as everyday medical texts, as they are *specialised* - dealing with specific areas of life, health and well-being - but are not

specialist, as lay readers should be able to understand their content and they exist as part of everyday internet use. *Boots WebMD*, *NHS Choices* and *Patient.info*, in their role as medical reference resources, are situated within a medical model of menstruation. However, as internet resources they sit outside the traditional boundaries of medical authority – for example the physical space of the consulting room or the intellectual space of medical textbooks or research publications – and are a part of the fabric of our everyday interactions with the online world. The increasing use of online health advice (Smart & Burling 2001) reflects the ubiquity of such technologies in every realm of everyday life and the impact of neoliberal ideology on therapeutic culture (Rose 1999) and personal healthcare.

As part of the cultural fabric of contemporary healthcare advice, it is pertinent to consider to what extent these platforms reflect the ongoing cultural discourses surrounding menstruation rather than to accept them at face value as objective medical texts. The analysis of this case study presents a rigorous thematic analysis of the selected examples, combining quantitative and qualitative analysis to identify discourses and themes, reflecting the scientific, bounded and rigid tone of the source materials. In Chapter Three, I analyse these texts through practice-based methods, bringing the findings outlined here into dialogue with art works. The juxtaposition of methodological rigidity with methodological fluidity in this research may be related to Sara Ahmed's notion of 'sweaty concepts' (Ahmed 2017: 13) which 'come[s] out of a description of a body that is not at home in the world [...] that might come out of a bodily experience that is trying' (ibid). And, as Ahmed writes, 'the task is to stay with

the difficulty, to keep exploring and exposing this difficulty' (ibid), as is my aim in investigating menstrual norms and medical advice from multiple perspectives.

A systematic review of the impact of the use of the internet to seek medical advice on the patient-physician relationship sheds light on the positive role online medical advice can have on the patient experience. The report proposed that 'patients used the information found on the Internet to help them prepare for their visit, ask better questions, and understand what the physicians told them' (Tan & Goonawardene 2016: para 34). This suggests that online medical advice has become a fully integrated part of contemporary healthcare and has the potential partially to democratise the clinical encounter, providing a baseline of information common to both patient and physician. These sources are also particularly useful as they are clearly set apart from often sensationalist narratives of the media or commercially driven platforms (MacCabe & Hull 2014). However, it is important to note that while these sources provide some information, they are quite limited and lack much recognition of the broad variety of experience of menstruation. All three examples discussed below are authored and / or medically reviewed by qualified medical doctors, but they tend not to provide reference to wider research or external information. Rather, they uphold the clinician as the primary recognised source of authority rather than acting as gateways to information that might potentially engender conflict between patient and clinician in a small number of cases (Tan & Goonawardene 2016).

All three texts are relatively short and written in an accessible style, and the analysis includes only the main text of the article. Additional content, such as advertisements - which were present on *Boots WebMD* and *Patient.info* - and other secondary content were omitted from the sample. The articles varied slightly in length and format, the *NHS Choices* piece being shortest at 906 words over a single web page. The *Boots WebMD* article was presented over three click-through pages, with the main body of the text totalling 1477 words. The article available on *Patient.info* is the longest of the three examples, with the main text of the article totalling 1767 words over a single page. Appendix Four includes screen grabs of each website taken at the date of initial analysis, with detailed tables of data coding and initial analytical notes.

In order to identify similarities and divergences between the example articles, a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis was used (see Methodology). This includes thematic analysis, a method used in social sciences 'to theorize [...] sociocultural contexts, and structural conditions' (Braun & Clarke 2006: 85). I analysed the search results returned under the search term *menstruation* from the home page of each selected platform, and initially coded according to the categories provided by each individual platform. *Boots WebMD* returned seventy-eight results, fifty-three of which were categorised as medical reference articles. The largest group of results returned by the *NHS Choices* search was the 'uncategorised' group, at twenty-five of the forty-seven total search results. *Patient.info* returned by far the greatest number of results – 475 – however the majority of these were user-generated topics from the platform's discussion forum. This user-generated content was omitted from the analysis in this article, which concentrated solely on the main

authored editorial articles from each website on the topic of menstruation. However, user generated content generated a significant amount of discussion by the platforms users that could be fruitfully explored in further research. Of the remaining eighty-one results returned by the search conducted on *Patient.info*, sixty-four were aimed at medical professionals and the remaining seventeen at a general lay audience. As noted above, *Patient.info* is the only website with two defined streams of content – one for medical professionals, the other for lay readers.

This initial analysis illustrates the broad similarities and differences across the three platforms. For example, it reveals that *Boots WebMD* is the only one that presents sponsored advertorial alongside its medically reviewed content. The majority of the content across all three websites relates to reference articles providing some form of medical information. To gain a thematic overview, the search results were coded under the following broad themes which aim to capture aspects of menstruation, menarche and related experiences: *neutral information on menstruation; problems relating to menstruation; hormones and contraception; menopause; pregnancy and related conditions; puberty or growing up; other*. The search results grouped under the theme *other* include articles on connected but not necessarily directly related topics such as ‘Headaches basics’ from *Boots WebMD*, ‘Do I have an anxiety disorder?’ from *NHS Choices*, and ‘Cold Sores’ from the *Patient.info* website. *Other* is the largest thematic grouping for *Boots WebMD* and *Patient.info*, in the latter case representing a greater proportion than all the other themes combined.

THEME	Boots WebMD	NHS Choices	Patient.info
neutral	13 (16.67%)	4 (8.51%)	2 (2.47%)
problems	19 (24.36%)	12 (25.53%)	10 (12.35%)
hormones & contraceptives	4 (5.13%)	5 (10.63%)	11 (13.58%)
menopause	5 (6.41%)	5 (10.63%)	4 (4.94%)
pregnancy	8 (10.26%)	9 (19.15%)	4 (4.94%)
puberty	8 (10.26%)	4 (8.51%)	0
other	21 (26.92%)	7 (14.9%)	50 (61.73%)

Table 1: Frequency and percentage of coded categories found in search results for menstruation on *Boots WebMD*, *NHS Choices* and *Patient.info*. Percentages are rounded to two decimal places, and therefore do not equal 100.

In two cases - *Boots WebMD* and *NHS Choices* – the next largest thematic category (after *other*) is *problems*, with *Patient.info* presenting slightly more articles on the theme of *hormones and contraceptives*. Overall, fewer articles were coded *neutral*, which includes articles that provide general information on anatomy and physical processes such as the menstrual cycle, than *problems*, with the lowest number and proportion of *neutral* articles appearing on the *Patient.info* website. This is perhaps not surprising if we consider that advice is more likely to be sought to explain anomalous or negative experiences rather than to confirm a positive one.

Patient.info is the only platform where I found no article titles that directly reference puberty and growing up, perhaps reflecting the medical focus of this resource, as it caters to both medical professionals and lay readers, with nearly 80% of the articles

returned under the *menstruation* search being directed specifically towards their professional user base.

The analysis of menstruation-related content across the search results and the detailed analysis of specific articles from the three platforms suggested three key narratives through which menstruation is framed. These are: menstrual normativity; pregnancy and menstruation as failed fertilisation within a heteronormative framework; and positive versus problematic periods.¹¹ There are multiple discourses surrounding menstruation in Western culture which have overlapped and influenced each other. For example, late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century medical views on menstruation were heavily informed by moralistic Christian ideologies (Lander 1988: 10-25), and nineteenth-century medical narratives often characterised menstruation as traumatic and debilitating (Martin 2001: 35).

In contrast, third-wave feminist activists have strongly resisted the tendency of medicalised models to view menstruation as a 'problem in need of a solution' (Bobel 2010: 7). This is reflected in the contemporary framing of menstruation simultaneously as a biological and social phenomenon (Lander 1988) which 'symbolizes both reproductive and sexual potential' (Lee 1994: 360) of the menstruating body. Menstruation has only begun to emerge from a culture of silence and shame relatively recently, not helped by the sex-segregation of topics such as puberty in the classroom which means that boys (and therefore adult men) have rarely benefitted from menstrual education at school. As stated by UK Member of Parliament, Paula Sherriff, menstrual education for children of all genders is crucial

as many 'boys will go on to be husbands, fathers, teachers or doctors' (Hansard 2017: c175WH).

In order to identify themes within each article a keyword search was conducted (see Table 2). Keywords were selected to search for established notions of menstrual norms and further keywords were added – such as *childbearing* and *men* – as they emerged from an initial reading of each of the articles. Many of the search term keywords yielded no results in the three selected articles – these were terms relating to gender-neutral language, negative terms that might suggest stigmatisation, and types of alternative menstrual products.

KEYWORD	BOOTS WEBMD	NHS CHOICES	PATIENT. INFO	TOTAL
period(s)	21	34	64	140
you(r)	3	53	78	134
menstrual cycle / menstrual period	26	2	11	39
woman / women	14	7	9	30
pain / painful	6	1	14	21
tampon	3	10	8	21
pregnant / pregnancy	8	7	5	20
normal	11	0	7	18
change(s/d)	3	3	9	15
girl(s)	3	6	5	14
sanitary pad	2	7	2	11
average	3	2	3	8
female	1	0	7	8
premenstrual	1	3	3	7
abnormal / abnormalities	0	1	4	5
menstrual cup	0	4	1	5
vary(ing) / varies	3	0	2	5
emotion(al)	3	1	0	4
PMS / PMT	0	4	0	4
baby	3	0	0	3
typical(ly)	2	1	0	3
childbearing	1	0	0	1
dirty	0	0	1	1
man / men	1	0	0	1
mood	0	1	0	1
childbirth	1	0	0	1

Table 2: Keyword frequency within the *Boots WebMD*, *NHS Choices*, and *Patient.info* articles on menstruation.

The keyword analysis illustrates that while menstrual activism and contemporary feminist discourse discuss menstruation without constraining it to any single gender identity, these everyday medical texts continue to utilise a traditional binary gender framework. Within the selected articles, the words *woman* or *women* appeared 21

times and *girls* appeared four times [see Table 2]. The more scientific word, *female*, referring to biological sex was utilised infrequently - appearing most in the *Patient.info* article - demonstrating that while these texts have roots in medico-scientific language, their language is heavily influenced by more cultural constructions of gender. No gender-neutral terms such as *menstruator* appear across the material reviewed in any of the articles. This also reinforces traditional binary understandings of gender that codify menstruation as a strictly biological phenomenon that happens to cis women and leaves nonbinary and/or trans menstruators out of discussion. It is interesting to note that while none of the articles contain words that explicitly reference stigma, no explicitly positive words are used to describe menstruation either. Other than the reader, assumed to be a woman or girl, the articles refer only to medical professionals, or a man who might provide sperm to fertilise an egg. Thus, the articles reinforce a narrative of menstruation that is personal and private.

Menstrual Normativity

Emily Martin (2001) contrasts prevailing medical metaphors used to describe menstruation, pregnancy and menopause in terms of mechanical production with the oral testimonies of the lived experience of these phenomena of women from different class and ethnic backgrounds. She states that 'in the current medical model, regular periodicity between well-defined limits is considered normal' (Martin 2001: xi), and that while 'regularity is normal, good, and valued; irregularity is abnormal and negatively valued' (ibid). In contrast she goes on to draw on scholarship from heart health and epidemiological research which suggests that

increased flexibility and variance might suggest a greater ability to adapt to the various stresses of life such as changing environments or life circumstances (Martin 2001: xii). The influence of medicine on broader understandings of menstruation is underscored in Lander's analysis of menstruation as 'simultaneously a biological event and a cultural event' (Lander 1988: 9) which has often been presented to women through the lens of 'medical ideology, reflecting social ideology' (ibid).

The cultural representation of menstruation has been explored in different forms, with researchers exploring areas from menstrual activism (Bobel 2010), to art and literature (Manica & Rios 2017; Bobel & Kissling 2011), to print culture and advertising (e.g. see Houppert 1999; Røstvik 2018a, 2018b, 2018e). What emerges from this body of literature about menstruation and the many other recorded accounts of the phenomenological experience of menstruation from people who menstruate, is that menstruation is a highly individual and varied experience. From the physical experience of menstruating through to attitudes informed by the differing intersections of class, gender, culture, racial and socio-economic identities, for all the physiological things people who menstruate might have in common, there are many other aspects – physical and social – that might differ considerably.

Of the three selected articles on menstruation, *Boots WebMD* uses the term *normal* most frequently (11 times in total), while the *NHS Choices* article does not use it at all. The *Boots WebMD* article is titled 'Normal menstrual cycle and periods' (Boots WebMD, 2016: 1), with the term repeated in the first subtitle: 'what occurs during a normal menstrual cycle?' (ibid). The doubling of the term *normal* at the opening of

the article reinforces the notion of a normative menstrual experience, which in this text is presented almost exclusively in relation to pregnancy:

During a woman's childbearing years, her body will usually experience a menstrual cycle: a complicated cycle controlled by hormones to prepare her body for pregnancy.
(Boots WebMD 2016: 1)

The first sentence of the article firmly situates menstruation in a context of 'childbearing' and 'pregnancy', alienating those menstruators who do not associate their menstrual cycle and flow with a desire - or who are unable - to become pregnant. The sentence also constructs a dichotomy between the menstruating person and their body. The subject - in this instance the woman - and her body are alienated by a process that is described as controlled and experienced outside the menstruator. The rest of the article echoes this oddly detached language referring to 'a woman' or 'a girl' and 'her body', or to the reproductive organs and gametes as though they are independent entities instead of parts of one whole. This reinforces the notion that the process of menstruating is something unpleasant and unnatural that should be kept at arm's length. The framing here contrasts starkly with both the *NHS Choices* and *Patient.info* articles which both use the terms *you/yours* frequently, and develop a more individualised, and perhaps patient-conscious tone and description of menstrual experience.

Instead of describing or qualifying menstruation itself as something with a normal standard, *Patient.info* refers to 'the common variations which are normal' (Patient.info 2017: para 1), as well as 'some common problems' (ibid). This is a small but significant difference in the conceptualisation of menstruation presented across

the three examples: instead of establishing a description of menstruation that is itself normative, variation is framed as the norm. It is especially important that sources of information with some perceived form of medical authority are careful to establish variation as a key feature of menstruation, and to define clearly ranges of expected experience that are not considered to be pathological. In contrast, *Boots WebMD* cites a vague cycle length of 'around 28 days' (Boots WebMD, 2016: 1) which 'varies from woman to woman' (ibid). None of the advice provided across the three articles establishes clearly how much variation outside twenty-eight days a person might experience before needing to seek further advice from a healthcare provider, other than to suggest they should take a pregnancy test. As Rees notes, in socio-cultural terms, 'the tyranny of the notion of a bodily norm means that, in the act of being human, our very humanity – our age, weight, ability – sets us up to fail' (Rees 2017: 7). In my experience this is no less true for menstruation: it is an event that varies greatly between - and for - individuals, but has often been framed as an unchanging, regularly cyclical and predictable event.

Menstruation as Failed Fertilisation

Fertility and reproduction are central to contemporary Western debates on gender, and as Cordelia Fine observes, we are 'spellbound' (Fine 2017: 14) by debates surrounding hormones and the contested ground of reproductive evolutionary divergences between the two traditionally recognised biological sexes (ibid).

Menstruation - and its absence - are powerful signs and sources of anxiety for people who are trying to conceive or are worried they may be facing an unwanted or difficult pregnancy. Despite my own experience of severe dysmenorrhoea, there

have been times when the arrival of my period has been a huge relief.¹² I can only begin to imagine the depth of grief that might accompany starting your period if you are hoping to become pregnant.

While the absence of menstruation due to pregnancy may be good news for some, and it is entirely reasonable to discuss fertility in the context of the menstrual cycle, it is also important to consider that not all people who menstruate want to become pregnant at all. For example, a report by NHS Digital states that 79% of women attending Sexual and Reproductive Health Services (SRH) in England in 2016-17 were visiting to start or maintain contraception methods (NHS Digital 2017: 10).

Additionally, use of Long Acting Reversible Contraceptives increased from 18% in 2002-3 to 31% of women accessing SRHs in England (Health and Social Care Information Centre 2014: 6). Martin's (2001) examination of the language of medical textbooks revealed that many described menstruation negatively as the result of a failed fertilisation process. It is striking that over thirty years later this narrative is still evident in the way *Boots WebMD* frames its discussion of menstruation overwhelmingly through the lens of 'childbearing' (Boots WebMD 2016: 1).

To frame menstruation entirely through a reproductive lens assumes that the menstruator desires pregnancy and reduces the potential of their bodies being seen only as vessels for carrying babies. As Janet Lee notes, the onset of menstruation 'signifies both emerging sexual availability and reproductive potential' (Lee 1994: 344) which in Western patriarchal society is often understood through heteronormative desires. This perspective designates the post-menarche body as

reaching adulthood, and therefore ready to fulfil the dual roles of object of sexual desire and mother (e.g. Lee 1994; Haug et al. 1987; Young 1990). Of the three articles analysed, *Boots WebMD* presents a model of menstruation that most emphasises pregnancy. Words relating to pregnancy are used more frequently in the *Boots WebMD* article (see Table 2) than either of the other texts, reinforcing the sexualisation of menstruators within a heteronormative narrative of sex for reproduction. *Patient.info* and *NHS Choices* briefly discuss pregnancy within the broader context of the menstrual cycle, foregrounding individual experience and cyclicity rather than fertility, going some way towards decentring traditional gendered childbearing roles and heteronormative expectations from the cultural construction and understanding of menstruation.

Patient.info frames menstruation as a cycle of hormonally mediated bodily changes. It makes very little mention of pregnancy at all until its explanation of the phases of the menstrual cycle, noting that it is possible to become pregnant if ‘you have recently had sex and there are sperm in your womb’ (*Patient.info* 2017: para 9) during the first half of the menstrual cycle. *NHS Choices* takes a similar approach and tone, restricting the discussion of pregnancy to a discrete section within the article, and places fertility within the broader context of the menstrual cycle and contraception through providing links to these topics. Both platforms describe menstruation as an internally regulated process that is affected by fluctuating hormones within the individual. In contrast, *Boots WebMD* presents menstruation in terms of not becoming pregnant. The article presents an unnecessary tautology of a ‘man’s sperm’ (*Boots WebMD* 2016: 2) fertilising the passive egg, noting that if that

does not happen then menstruation begins. Instead of emphasising menstruation as a cyclic process, it presents the interaction of an external factor as the core agent of influence in the process. *Patient.info* and *NHS Choices* discuss pregnancy in a comparatively clinical and neutral tone, and while both mention sperm, neither of these articles mention men. While their discussion of sexual intercourse and pregnancy draws on scientific definitions of biological sex in the context of reproduction, they do not explicitly frame this within a heteronormative narrative of sex to the same extent as *Boots WebMD*.

Furthermore, the topic of pregnancy is threaded throughout the *Boots WebMD* article, bookending the advice from the first paragraph to the final section sensitively titled 'How many eggs does a woman have?' (Boots WebMD 2016: 3). While all three examples contain sections that address related conditions and problems which might impact the menstrual cycle, *Boots WebMD* names pregnancy first and foremost (ibid). This may be true in the sense that being pregnant stops periods, but there are many other factors that impact the menstrual cycle. The article does list other factors, but only after a short paragraph detailing pregnancy as a separate and overriding condition. Even in the list of other conditions that might affect menstruation, emotional stress is linked directly to pregnancy – even though it seems reasonable to assume that any number of different areas in the life of anyone that menstruates could induce stress. This demonstrates the depth of the investment in the model of menstruation as failed pregnancy, and the overarching outdated and sexist model which emphasises the woman-as-mother role, defined by heterosexual relationships and a pre-supposed normative desire to produce babies.

This approach seems out-of-step with changing contemporary cultural attitudes towards childbearing. For example, recent data from the UK's Office for National Statistics (ONS) reveals three significant trends: in England and Wales, fewer children are being born than in previous generations; more women are delaying their pregnancies until later than they did in previous generations; and the number of women without children is also rising (ONS 2017). By foregrounding pregnancy as the most central issue relating to menstruation consistently through the advice, the proprietors of *Boots WebMD* seem clearly invested in a traditional ideological view of women in society, with the female body bounded by a rigid definition as a reproductive vessel.

The framing of menstruation as failed pregnancy is alienating to cis women who do not want to have children, and also, to quote Bobel, reinscribes 'a reproductive paradigm that conflates "womanhood" and "reproductive being"' (Bobel 2010: 92). It is also an insensitive and unnecessary reminder to those who would like to become pregnant but cannot, especially as it draws on fertility anxieties, detailing in the closing of the article that 'the vast majority of eggs within the ovaries steadily die' (Boots WebMD 2016: 3). It is also alienating to cis and trans and/or nonbinary menstruators who experience physical and/or psychological difficulties relating to menstruation and it further reinforces traditional binary gender roles. For example, a poem by menstrual activist Cass Bliss illustrates this poignantly. The piece, posted to their website, *Bleeding While Trans*, describes menstrual bleeding as experiencing 'another day I shed my gender' (Bliss 2018). Highly gendered and binary

representations of menstruation are exclusionary, forcing the definition of women as menstruators, and menstruators as women in a rigid and damaging way. To continue to frame menstruation in the terms of failed reproduction is both a failure to recognise that cultural norms have started to shift away from the patriarchal binaries of gender and is a stubborn continuation of traditional roles that represent an increasingly outdated and contested attitude.

That two of the three cases studied can discuss menstruation without emphasising pregnancy suggests that there may be an ideological agenda at play in the *Boots WebMD* resource. This might be fruitfully explored further in light of the recent and ongoing campaign from the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS), which lobbied the senior management of Boots to reduce the price of emergency contraception in line with other retailers (BPAS 2017). The campaign was met with a conservative and moralistic response, stating in a letter to BPAS that they 'would not want to be accused of incentivising inappropriate use' (Donovan in Slawson 2017: para 4). Their corporate position created an economic burden for those who have limited access to emergency contraception through either geography or economic status and justifies both commercial gain and control of women's bodies in a highly paternalistic performance of 'caring'.

Menstruation as Positive or Problematic

As well as constructing and reflecting notions of menstrual normativity to different degrees, the articles present menstruation as positive or problematic in varying ways. The overall framing of menstruation across all three articles is overwhelmingly

as problematic, with only one of the articles making any positive statement about menstruation. Menstruation is discussed in each of the texts as an experience that must be coped with in two key areas: dealing with unwanted physical and emotional side-effects and the management of menstrual flow.

Patient.info provides the closest thing to a positive statement regarding menstruation in all three examples, answering a sub-heading that questions whether there is a need to change your behaviour while bleeding:

No. Carry on as normal. If you find the periods painful, regular exercise sometimes helps. Periods are not dirty; they are a normal part of a woman's life. You can go swimming, have a bath, etc. You may prefer to use tampons if you enjoy swimming.
(*Patient.info* 2017: para 7)

To state that menstruating is not unclean falls quite far short of positive affirmation, but to even go this far is more than we see in the other selected texts. The enduring influence of conservative Christian values on UK menstrual culture is reflected in the continued encouragement of modesty and silence to ensure that menstruation remains hidden. While menstruators have been segregated (or have possibly chosen to be sequestered away during menstruation) across many religions and societies, Victoria Newton observes that in a contemporary UK context 'we have witnessed a historical shift from the invisible menstruating woman to invisible menstruation' (Newton 2016: 183).

The hesitant positivity presented by *Patient.info* is barely a cause for celebration: the rest of the paragraph is far from innocuous. Directing menstruators to exercise their

pain away and to 'carry on as normal' is paternalistic and dismissive of both the deeply ingrained shame that accompanies menstruating, as well as the reality that according to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) anywhere between 50 and 90 per cent of people who menstruate in the UK are affected by dysmenorrhoea (NICE 2014). Beyond the prevalence of dysmenorrhoea among menstruators, this instruction towards stoicism is consistent with the gender biases that are well documented across different areas of medicine (Holdcroft 2007; Hamberg 2008; Samulowitz et al 2018). Research and media reports on this topic point towards a culture of disbelief of women's pain and their ability to report their own experiences accurately (for example see Fassler 2015; Fillingim et al 2009; Hoffman and Tarzian 2008).

Simple changes to the framing of menstruation at points in the text such as this could be made to acknowledge the broad variety of menstrual experience and menstruating individuals. For example, stating that exercise *and* painkillers can provide relief or instead of ring-fencing menstruation as being a normal part of women's lives, it would be far more inclusive to state they are *a normal part of life*. This would include trans and/or nonbinary menstruators, as well as acknowledging that menstruation is part of life for everybody to some degree - even people who do not menstruate might have family members, partners, or friends that do menstruate, and it should be framed and promoted as a normal part of their lives too.

Menstrual management is discussed in all three texts. On the one hand these sections provide (limited) practical information on what to do while bleeding. On the

other hand, other than the single example noted above, the articles frame menstruation as something unclean that needs to be cleaned up and disposed of, particularly in the use of the term *sanitary* rather than *menstrual* products in the *Patient.info* and *NHS Choices* articles. Feminist scholars and activists have criticised the term *feminine hygiene product* (e.g. Fahs 2016; Quint 2017), though *sanitary product* seems to have elicited less robust critique. As Breanne Fahs states:

The phrase *feminine hygiene* [original emphasis] implies “products to keep the unkempt, unruly, unhygienic, dirty, unsanitary, bloody vagina in check” rather than simply stating the actual terms for what women use. (Fahs 2016: 48)

While *sanitary product* avoids ‘needlessly gender[ing]’ (ibid) products as the term *feminine hygiene product* does, it still maintains the notion that menstruation – and therefore people who are menstruating - are fundamentally unclean. The term *sanitary product* also continues to shroud menstruation in euphemism, reinforcing the ‘private, personal nature of bleeding’ (Houppert 1999: 81). While *Patient.info* and *NHS Choices* do at least provide sub-sections specifically addressing menstrual products - even if the terminology used is problematic - the *Boots WebMD* article provides no general practical advice for what to do while bleeding.

Perhaps most perplexing - and worrying - is that menstrual management is only mentioned by the *Boots WebMD* article in the context of problems relating to menstruation. Instead of providing practical advice or menstrual product suggestions, the article only refers to tampons in relation to Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS). Furthermore, while alerting readers to the danger of contracting TSS, additional information, explanation or context is only subtly signposted by an

embedded text hyperlink. This reflects the lasting cultural association between tampon use and TSS following the emergence of menstrual toxic shock syndrome as ‘a public health threat to women of reproductive age’ (Hajjeh, Reingold et al 1999: 807) following the full commercial launch of the super-absorbent Rely tampon developed (and later discontinued) by Procter and Gamble (Vostral 2018; Bobel 2010: 53; Houppert 1999: 26).¹³ However, following the introduction of guidance for proper use of tampons and changes to the manufacturing of tampons, cases of TSS have greatly reduced and now most UK cases of TSS are not related to menstruation (Sharma et al 2018). *Boots WebMD* only otherwise mentions menstrual pads and tampons in relation to using many pads for a heavy flow. Both instances provide very little practical everyday advice, and without further research from the reader could potentially cause considerable alarm. It is particularly irksome to find that an article supposedly about menstruation provides much more information and advice on pregnancy and fertility than it does how to manage periods on a day-to-day basis.

The types of menstrual products mentioned in each article are largely restricted to single-use, commercial products. This is, on one level, positive, as the articles therefore centre on menstruation itself, rather than its concealment. However, the type of products foregrounded reflects the significant influence – including promoting and upholding menstrual stigma - major brands have had over menstrual management (Røstvik 2018b) and menstrual education (Houppert 1999: 60-74). All three articles mention pads and tampons. The only alternative, reusable method suggested - menstrual cups - is noted by *Patient.info* and *NHS Choices*. None of the articles mention products such as period underwear or reusable cloth pads and none

enter any discussion of the positive and negative aspects - such as comfort or environmental considerations - of these methods other than how they collect or absorb the blood or that tampons might be 'more convenient' (Patient.info 2017: para 5).

This is another area where cis-normativity might be productively countered through basic information, as new menstrual products have been developed - such as absorbent boxer shorts - that break gender binaries and the gendered expectations that are deeply ingrained in the use of and marketing of traditional menstrual products. Non-conventional products such as menstrual cups or absorbent period underwear in a variety of styles other than traditionally feminine styles are important for trans and/or nonbinary menstruators who might be at risk of violence if found to be menstruating.¹⁴ As Fahs describes the experience of one of her psychotherapy clients:

Nash spent his entire menstrual cycle hoping not to bleed through, and he constantly feared that other men would hurt or even kill him if they discovered him as FTM [female-to-male]. Menstruation felt like a lethal form of "outing" him as a trans man.
(Fahs 2016: 82)

Providing a greater range of information is crucial to enable all menstruators to find methods that are most suitable to their individual situation. These might include environmental or health concerns, as well as serious issues surrounding personal safety. Alternatives to single-use menstrual products should be more comprehensively incorporated into medical advice and information resources.

The final aspect of the three articles to compare is the information presented on the physical and emotional symptoms associated with pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS) and other problems such as painful, irregular, heavy or absent periods. The quantitative analysis suggests that *Patient.info* places most emphasis on physical symptoms of PMS; it has by far the most instances of the word *pain* (see Table 2). However, a close comparative reading of the three articles provides a more nuanced picture of their presentation of negative premenstrual symptoms.

Patient.info and *NHS Choices* provide links to further information on PMS whereas *Boots WebMD* does not, linking only to general pages relating to some premenstrual symptoms - such as bloating, depression and headaches - rather than providing further information in the specific context of the menstrual cycle. *Boots WebMD* lists the most premenstrual symptoms of all three articles – ten in total – including a broader range of emotional and physical complaints, such as trouble sleeping or concentrating and feeling upset or depressed. The broader list of potential negative premenstrual symptoms presented is one of the most positive aspects of the *Boots WebMD* article. Listing a range of symptoms, rather than hiding most behind a click-through link, gives a more detailed and accessible understanding for the reader and normalises a broader range of symptoms overall. It is also worth noting that *Boots WebMD* is the only of the three articles to refer to premenstrual symptoms, rather than using more clinical terms including PMS, PMT (premenstrual tension) and PMD (premenstrual disorder). This perhaps reflects a more individualised and emotive approach – also expressed in a different way in the framing of menstruation around pregnancy – by this resource, in contrast to the more straightforwardly clinical tone

and content presented by *Patient.info* and *NHS Choices* which are both directly associated with the medical profession in the UK.

Among the description of negative aspects of menstruation the *Patient.info* article notes that 'you may feel irritable before a period' (Patient.info 2017: para 17), that such symptoms are 'normal' (ibid), and that if you experience more 'severe' (ibid) symptoms then you may be experiencing PMS. There is no indication of what constitutes a normal or severe level of discomfort or distress, which on the one hand may encourage menstruators to consider what is normal for them, but on the other provides no frame of reference to suggest what symptoms should warrant further investigation. Moreover, the only emotional impact mentioned is that you might 'feel irritable' (ibid). This is a vague and reductive description which plays into the stereotypical and stigmatising view of premenstrual people as potentially 'violent, irrational, emotionally labile, out-of-control, and physically or mentally ill' (Johnston-Robledo & Chrisler 2011: 11). Adverse physical symptoms such as period pain and heavy periods are afforded more detailed and reassuring advice, reiterating that experiences vary: 'some women have more pain than others' (Patient.info 2017: para 20). The weighting of the advice towards physical symptoms reflects recent and ongoing public, political (such as the equality4mentalhealth.uk campaign launched in 2015 (see Wax 2016)) and clinical debates (Millard & Wessely 2014) surrounding the lack of parity between physical and mental health care in the UK.

NHS Choices places very little emphasis on menstrual problems such as pain and excessive bleeding, instead providing links to these related conditions at the end of

the first section of the article. Unlike the other examples, which frame periods in terms of related problems or through establishing normal menstruation in their titles, the *NHS Choices* article is neutrally titled 'Periods'. This neutral framing is carried through the article, which though quite generalised and brief provides ample links to related pages and notes that menstruation is a varied experience. The article neither dwells on nor dismisses unwelcome physical conditions such as dysmenorrhea, and along with the straightforward title this potentially creates a more neutral space for readers to construct their own meanings around menstruation. While possible related physical conditions are given little attention, PMS is afforded its own sub-headed section. This provides a link to a more detailed page, and while it adds 'mood swings' (NHS Choices 2016: para 20) to the list of possible symptoms, the only other emotional effect named is 'feeling irritable' and 'loss of interest in sex' (ibid). While a much broader range of symptoms appears on the linked page on PMS, it would be useful to include a broader range of possible emotional symptoms within the main article in order to reassure those affected and promote a more nuanced understanding of PMS overall.

The articles also fail to recognise the impact of disability on menstruation, an area of practical concern to many people who menstruate, which could be introduced for example through discussion of menstrual management or negative symptoms. This is not to suggest that the inclusion of menstruators of all abilities and those with neurodivergence should not be included overall, as a bare minimum. Indeed, the lack of additional information (or linked content) considering these people who menstruate is an illustration of the depth of ableism in contemporary everyday and

medical cultures. While work is being done by academics (see e.g. Chu, Lu, Wang, Lan & Lin 2008; Rogers & Lipscombe 2009; Zacharin, Sarasi & Grover 2010; Grover 2011; Hamilton, Marshal & Murray 2011; Remnant & Sang 2019) and activists (Steward 2019) it is clear that much more is required to translate this work into clinical and care-giving practice as well as the broader discourses of critical menstruation studies.

Overall, the analysis of these sources demonstrates that the medical discourses of menstruation explored by scholars such as Emily Martin and Louise Lander continue to be present in extra-clinical spaces such as online medical advice. While we perhaps expect medical perspectives to present practical, inclusive and neutral information, these everyday medical texts largely reproduce out-dated and exclusionary framings of menstruation through the prisms of traditional binary gender roles and identities, ableism, fertility, and as a hygienic crisis (Merskin 1999: 941). These texts construct and reproduce menstrual normativity – through explicitly heteronormative, binary gendered, and ableist lenses. I aim to deconstruct these lenses through the art practice I discuss and analyse in Chapter Three.

The remainder of this chapter analyses menstrual norms as they are constructed in advertising, which was explored through my curatorial practice in *Periodical* (Hughes 2018b), produced as part of Being Human festival of the humanities in November 2018 (see Chapter Three and Appendix Two). Advertising both constructs and reproduces menstrual normativity, deploying discourses of embarrassment, secrecy and methods of coping - which are present but not primary in the discourses of

online medical advice in order to maintain and increase corporate profit margins. Advertisements also foreground different aspects of 'emphasised femininity' (Connell 2005: 183) than those present in the online medical advice analysed. Whereas medical discourses tend to emphasise models of femininity built around fertility (and implicitly therefore, motherhood), the advertising analysed here draws on notions of independence, aspiration and leisure to frame ideal femininity. Both of these case studies arguably align with the neoliberal paradigm which exists within contemporary healthcare and body management practices (see Rose 1999).

Menstrual Advertising: Visible Stigma, Invisible Bleeding

This section analyses a selection of images from the Femorabilia Collection, LJMU Special Collections and Archives, to explore the framing of menstruation in print advertising. Through print advertising targeted at women and girls in magazines as part of their everyday cultures which, alongside romantic fiction, 'have been recognised as key cultural forms reflective of distinctively female pleasures' (McRobbie 1991: 135), national and multi-national corporations have presented images which exploit deep-seated beliefs that menstruation is unclean and should be hidden from public view to sell the latest products that will keep you 'fresh' and 'safe' from dreaded leaks.

This discussion contextualises the discussion of artworks which follow in Chapter Two, exemplifying the representations which many artists creating works on

menstruation actively resist. The archival research is part of a pilot study¹⁵ of the Femorabilia Collection conducted as part of the curation of the *Periodical* exhibition and provides an overview of typical print-based advertising for menstrual products found in the United Kingdom from the 1960s – 1990s, building on existing scholarship in this area. Many of the selected advertisements appeared multiple times and in multiple publications during their period of use, in line with the findings of Simes and Berg (2001) which suggest that ‘variation in menstrual product advertisements tends to be time based, rather than associated with specific magazines’ (Simes & Berg 2001: 457). This analysis contributes new thematic insights within a UK context, and builds on previous studies which often centre on North American advertising.

A brief history of menstrual product advertising in the twentieth century is provided by Debra Merskin. She notes the consistency between early examples which ‘presented products in a scientific way, focusing on the value and convenience of their brand’ (Merskin 1999: 946) while attempting to present the facts of menstruation as inoffensively as possible, and late-twentieth century advertising which ‘continues to present a world akin to the past’ (Merskin 1999: 954). Merskin notes that throughout the last century, menstrual advertising in the USA has reflected the dominant ideology of menstruation as a ‘hygienic crisis’ (Merskin 1999: 941) and ‘that evidence of femininity, that fact that women bleed, is best kept hidden’ (Merskin 1999: 954).

As noted by Hughes & Røstvik (2020), until the notable exception of Bodyform/Libresse's 'Blood Normal' campaign (created by advertising agency AMV BBDO) in 2017, the images presented by the menstrual product industry - or *big tampon*, to use Chella Quint's term (2019b) - create a visual cultural field of menstruation where the process and materiality of bleeding itself is entirely invisible. Popular culture also provides many representations of menstruation, for example Lauren Rosewarne identified almost 200 scenes from television and film which featured menstruation in some way in her book *Periods in Pop Culture* (2012). Rosewarne's detailed work reveals the most prevalent framings of menstruation in popular culture through narratives of coming of age – i.e. menarche – or in drawing on predominantly negative stereotypes about menstruation and menstruating people.

Following Merskin (1999), Ingrid Johnston-Robledo and Joan C. Chrisler note the 'important role' (2011: 11) advertisements play 'in the social construction of meaning' (ibid), and briefly summarise findings of scholarship on menstrual product advertising. They list themes scholars have identified in their analysis of adverts, which include:

Emphasizing secrecy, avoidance of embarrassment, and freshness (Coutts and Berg 1993; Delaney et al. 1987; Houppert 1999; Merskin 1999). Allegorical images, such as flowers and hearts, and blue rather than reddish liquid, have been used euphemistically to promote secrecy and delicacy (Merskin 1999). Ads play on women's fear of being discovered as menstruating because discovery means stigma (Coutts and Berg 1993).
(Johnston-Robledo & Chrisler 2011: 11)

The analysis which follows found multiple examples of advertising which foreground secrecy and embarrassment in relation to menstruation, but few that directly reference freshness, blue liquids or allegorical images.

In *The Curse: Confronting the Last Taboo* (1999) Houppert devotes her chapter on adolescents to explore the world of the teen magazine, which she characterises as contradictory and filled with 'Fem Lite articles' (1999: 94) that 'are as antithetical to the beauty tips as the ads are to the editorial content' (ibid). She identifies these publications, devoured by many girls and young women during their formative teenage years, as a huge contributor to the perpetuation of the mind-body dichotomy and the body as abject in Western culture, noting that 'while women's magazines have a long tradition of compartmentalizing body and self, today's girls feel the pinch – the difficulty of integrating the two – at the intersection of sex' (Houppert 1999: 94). Houppert asserts that the dominant Cartesian dualism and further categorisations of clean and unclean, and good and bad (actions, processes, or thoughts) are cemented into the psyche of teenage girls through media designed specifically to appeal to them and filled with advertisements designed to train them into becoming consumers of the right kind of products for a good, clean girl¹⁶. This notion is given more theoretical weight in Sharra L. Vostral's concept of technological passing (Vostral 2008) and Bobel's exploration of how the managed menstrual body produces the *good body* (2018).

For Houppert, teen magazines do more to muddy the waters than provide clarity, leaving girls 'perplexed about why sex, or more specifically desire, and menstruation seem to share the same concealment taboos' (Houppert 1999: 95). The idea that 'sex and menstruation are linked under the heading of 'Naughty'(ibid) is one of the dominant ideologies surrounding menarche and menstruation in Western culture (Lee 1994). As Houppert notes, 'menstruation announces to the world that you're a sexual being, and the world denounces your sexuality' (Houppert, 1999: 95).

More recently, Røstvik has analysed contemporary television advertising of menstrual products to expand scholarship on 'the ways in which late-capitalism embraces and co-opts feminism in depictions of menstruation' (Røstvik 2018: 1). Echoing Merskin and Johnston-Robledo and Chrisler, Røstvik's article draws links between popular culture and art representations of menstruation to analyse the link between menstruation and water in menstrual advertising which capitalise 'on their products' ability to give consumers "that shower-fresh feeling," thus directly suggesting that menstruators should pay close attention to hygiene' (Røstvik 2018: 5).

The Femorabilia Collection holds examples of women's and girls' magazines dating from the 1920s onwards, and the exhibition selection centred on magazines aimed at teenagers and young women in the second half of the twentieth century. For the purposes of *Periodical* (Hughes 2018b), a survey of the Femorabilia collection identified an initial sample of forty-three pieces of menstruation related content

which were thematically analysed (and curated for display in vitrines). The sample includes the following publications: *Blue Jeans* (1977–1990), *Fabulous* (later *Fabulous 208*, and *Fab 208*) (1964–1980), *Jackie* (1964 – 1993), *Just Seventeen* (1983-2004), *My Guy* (1978 – merged with *Oh Boy* in 1984). The earliest example in the sample is from 1964 and the latest is from 1990. There is a clear shift across the sample from inconspicuous inset adverts in the earlier magazines to bolder, full colour full-page and double-page spreads in the later examples. This perhaps mirrors shifts not only in printing technology and reflects the position of advertising within the business model of the magazine, but also suggests a broader cultural acceptance in the later 1970s and 1980s that menstruation *can* be part of public discourse, though paradoxically, only in the guise of showing us how to regulate and control our bodies and render it invisible.

Of the forty-three examples, thirty-five were advertisements for menstrual products representing nine different brand names which are included in this analysis. There are two duplicated advertisements in the sample which are single / double page variations from the same campaign.

Brand Name	Owner	Number of Adverts in Sample
Bodyform	Essity	3
Dr White's	Smith & Nephew	2
Kotex	Kimberly Clark Corp	4
Libresse	Mölnlycke Limited	1
Lil-lets	Smith & Nephew	7
Simplicity	Kimberly Clark Corp	1
Tampax	Tambrands	11

Table 3: The number of advertisements included in the sample from nine menstrual product brands and the companies who owned them at time of advert publication.

Of the remaining examples five were advertisements for pain relief which reference menstruation, two were educational features and one advertisement was from Boots – a retailer – rather than the product manufacturers themselves. The themes identified in earlier studies (see above) – particularly secrecy, embarrassment, and delicacy – were present in the sample. My analysis of the sample of 35 advertisements led to the identification of nine core themes which overlap with and build on those from earlier research, and inform the curatorial work discussed in Chapter Three / Appendix Two.

Theme	Frequency	Brands
passage of time	4	Tampax
imprisonment / freedom	4	Tampax
innovations	7	Kotex, Dr White's, Lil-lets
fashion, style, and lifestyle	8	Tampax, Bodyform, Dr White's, Simplicity
difficulty or problem	4	Lil-lets, Libresse, Dr White's
younger menstruators / advice	7	Tampax, Lil-lets
secrecy / embarrassment	4	Dr White's, Lil-lets
self-defence / safety	3	Kotex, Lil-lets
humour	3	Dr White's

Table 4: The thematic make-up of the sample, and which brands presented each theme. Note: nearly all adverts were categorised under one primary theme, however some contained two dominant themes, therefore the total frequency is higher than the sample size.

Almost all the core themes identified – the exception being *fashion, style and lifestyle* – have negative connotations. While elements of lightness and humour are present across a number of these categories, there is an overarching suggestion of menstruation as a burden or as shameful or embarrassing. Perhaps surprisingly, given the emphasis on hygienic crisis and cleanliness suggested by previous studies – such as the ‘menstrual product advertising campaigns focused instead on women showering in private and beautiful bathrooms’ (Røstvik 2018: 58) identified by Røstvik – only one of the print advertisements in the sample is clearly situated in a bathroom space, and references cleansing practices. Magazines such as *Just Seventeen*, aimed at an older-teenage reader tended to contain adverts that drew on humour, freedom, and style or aspirational themes. Perhaps predictably, the magazines aimed at a younger readership tended to contain advertisements with a more practical, reassuring, or advisory tone (see Appendix 2 Part A). It is interesting that several advertisements appealed to a sense of fashion or lifestyle, presenting

menstrual products as a technology which provides access to maturity, adventure, and independence.

This is demonstrated clearly in the earliest selected example, from the 18th April 1964 edition of *Fabulous* (1964 – 1980), a music magazine filled with the latest pop music news, listings and poster pull-outs. The half-page Lil-lets advertisement (Figure 1) presents a box of tampons – the product itself is not shown – and encourages the reader to ‘discover the blessings’ (Lil-lets 1964) of confidence in the tampon.¹⁷

Though not stated explicitly, it is the blessing of confidence that the Lil-lets tampon will provide adequate protection from menstrual leakage and is discreet enough to enable the menstruating person to *pass* (Vostral 2008) as not menstruating thanks to their ‘perfect internal protection’ (Lil-lets 1964). The main image presents an attractive and stylish young woman, Joanna, introduced as 23-years-old, single, and employed. The image here is one of aspiration, confidence, and independence, reinforced by the text below in which Joanna describes the extra confidence and security provided by Lil-lets tampons. The relatively common offer of a free sample is provided, with the explicit promise to receive your tampons in a plain envelope to avoid embarrassment.

The 1986 advertisements from Bodyform published in *Just Seventeen* also make explicit links to lifestyle, particularly foregrounding the emancipatory potential of fashion and shopping culture. Their campaign features one advertisement with the tagline ‘why not buy your towel the same way you buy jeans’ (Bodyform 1986a) and

features a photograph of a young woman wearing a pair of fashionable jeans (Figure 2). She is naked from the waist up and facing away from the camera. The poses in both the double page and single page versions are reminiscent of contemporary advertising for jeans: stripped back, simple and straight to the point. Another Bodyform advert asks: 'how come nobody suggests you try on a towel to see if it fits you?' (Bodyform 1986b), this time presenting a woman trying on a tight-fitting dress (Figure 3). Both advertisements allude to the power of consumer choice and urge the customer to question the way they have bought menstrual products in the past without any real offer of a new way of doing so; they must simply trust that Bodyform's new design will slip on as well as their favourite jeans or coveted little black dress. These advertisements explicitly draw on discourses of fashion consumption from within a magazine form. This form of cultural text is, at least in part, a medium which reinforces normative ideals through the emancipatory potential of shopping, fashion, and beauty related cultural practices.

Multiple advertisements in the sample draw on lifestyle related themes indirectly through the appeal to a sense of using time productively, whether for work in the case of aforementioned 23-year-old Joanna, or in appealing to uses of leisure time. In an example of a Tampax advertisement published in *Jackie* (1973) (Figure 4) the tampon is framed as a technology of convenience that will ensure menstruation does not disrupt – or indeed even enter the consideration of – the planning of a holiday. The text of the advert reinforces the theme of convenience: any time can be a holiday; you do not need to plan for your period arriving; you do not need to

consider curtailing your leisure activities; you do not even need to worry about packing all the menstrual management materials you might need, all because 'you're counting on Tampax tampons' (Tampax 1973). The double photograph of the young, independent, capable woman - taking her own photograph, rather than simply being a passive spectator - is clearly unphased by the potential arrival of her period. The discourses of leisure, desire, consumption and activity are echoed in the other features of the page, as stylish rings, pop music, and 'heart-throb' Rod Stewart all vie for the readers' attention.

This connection with leisure time and the technology of menstrual management enabling the menstruator to forget they are menstruating appears again in a later advertisement for Simplicity stowaway towels, published in *Jackie* in 1988 (Figure 5). This full-page illustrated advertisement offers a stylised and anonymised representation of an active menstruator releasing a red bowling ball off-page, with a row of purple bowling balls in the background. The message - 'wear what you like, do what you like, Stowaway slim towels won't give you away' (Simplicity 1988) - is reiterated in the visuals of the advertisement. We are shown the (anonymous) subject, active in their leisure time, bowling their (red ball of) menstruation away. The illustrated, faceless figure signals the achievement of anonymity (in this case through passing as non-menstruating), security (from leaks or discovery) and freedom from the restrictions and stigma of bleeding.

Whereas the examples discussed so far frame menstrual products through the positive and aspirational lens of leisure time and freedom, there are a number of advertisements in the sample which frame menstruation as an event with the potential to disrupt or infringe on lifestyle, or even to produce an experience akin to *doing time* through the invocation of language and imagery usually associated with incarceration. Tampax adverts seen in 1986 and 1987 editions of *Just Seventeen* explore how menstruation, and the menstrual management devices being used, might impact on the time available to their reader. One advertisement asks, 'is it any wonder towel users have a smaller social calendar?' (Tampax 1987) (Figure 6), juxtaposed with a very literal representation of a menstrual pad blocking out more space on a calendar than a tampon. The imagery here appeals to a common-sense notion that managing menstruation is a time-consuming activity - here taking up five days a month - and that menstrual pads are a further encumbrance to a busy social calendar. The advertisement engages with other familiar normative discourses of menstruation, invoking the good sense of 'millions of other women' as well as the medical discourse and authority of 'thousands of family doctors' who agree that Tampax tampons are convenient, safe, and hygienic.

Another advertisement which draws on time in the context of the calendar presents the reader with the concept of 'the towel user's year' (Tampax 1986a) (Figure 7), adapting the nostalgic and commonplace rhyme *Thirty days has September...* but subtracting five days from each month to demonstrate the inconvenience of menstruating and using a menstrual pad. Here we have an even more dramatic

framing of the reduction in available time the towel user experiences, as the advertisement's closing line states 'with a little help from us you could discover there are 365 days in every year. Not 305' (Tampax 1986a). Whereas the former example foregrounds a loss of leisure time, the latter raises the stakes considerably to remove sixty days from the menstruator's year. We see a further dramatisation through the concept of lost time in two more examples of Tampax advertisements from *Just Seventeen* in the same year.

These examples adopt a much bleaker tone, shedding the nostalgic and playful visual imagery seen in the others. In *Figure 8*, we are presented with a (labelled) photograph of a tampon and applicator on a starkly lit blue background, above the headline 'it can add 6.2 years to your life' (Tampax 1986b). The text of the advert again relies on common-sense discourses of menstruation: they are inconvenient and being a woman is not easy; it takes mental effort to be menstruating. There is again an appeal to a normative experience, providing an average amount of time spent menstruating - 6.2 years - which the advert claims will be 'given back' once the switch from pads to tampons is made. The construction of the tampon as a technology which frees up space for the menstruator by minimising the tangible experiences of menstruation once again reinforces menstruation as a burden to be overcome. There is also a sense that tampons may be in some way more difficult to use or require practice (a theme that also surfaces in other examples), which makes them the menstrual management choice of the connoisseur: a certain degree of patience, knowledge, and resilience is required to master their use. Furthermore, the

advert minimises the potential discomfort of a new tampon user by juxtaposing the brief months they might spend getting used to the new device with the 6.2 years they will regain in the long run. This message echoes medical discourses towards people who menstruate where discomfort, pain, and serious conditions have often been minimised or missed entirely (see the above discussion of dysmenorrhoea). The minimisation of possible discomfort in the language of this advert also echoes the scientific discourses deployed by menstrual product manufacturer Procter & Gamble in their (attempted) defence of Rely superabsorbent tampons (withdrawn in 1980) (see Vostral 2018, Hughes 2019).

The most extreme iteration of this theme is presented in *Figure 9*, which utilises a similar composition, colour palette and lighting, but this time depicts a naked woman, whose skin is adorned with twenty blue broad arrows, a motif often associated with the uniforms of British prisoners. The headline in this example ominously reads: 'five days a month this girl is imprisoned by her own body' (Tampax 1986c). The narrative text below continues:

It's a sentence no court in the land would possibly deem fair.
And the crime?
Nothing more serious than simply wearing a towel during your period.
(Tampax 1986c)

The hyperbolic language, symbolism and cold colours create a paternalistic tone more akin to a police appeal than a menstrual product, in a clear departure from the aspirational, carefree and encouraging tone possessed by many other examples in the sample. Another divergence from the expected in this advert is the depiction of a completely nude figure. Though we only see her from behind, here the

advertisement's creators present the body in a direct manner that is unusual for a genre of advert usually invested in concealing as much of the material, living, fleshy and leaky body as possible. Though this is an image that conforms with normative Western aesthetic standards, and there is no hint of a menstrual leak in the photograph, the broad arrow markings proliferating over the woman's skin stand in for the menstrual mark, making it clear that this is an image of an encumbered menstruating woman.

Whereas the Tampax adverts above frame menstruation as a life-draining event, a softer approach is taken in a Lil-lets advertisement from 1988 (Figure 10). These examples adopt a reassuring and maternalistic tone, noting that a woman designed these tampons. They conform to a softer, more 'feminine' aesthetic, with a lighter colour palette of pastel pink, blue and white. However, all is not positive as the photography depicts a (another) blonde-haired young woman wrapped in a towel and sitting with her back to the camera in a softly lit - purely white - bathroom. The model's awkward, down-cast body language is explained by the headline which states: 'some girls find it difficult to insert a tampon the first time. But it's only a mental block' (Lil-lets 1988). Though the tone of the copy text seems on the surface to be reassuring and friendly, the overall dismissal of menstrual and body related anxieties is reminiscent of the medical framing of menstruation and menstruation related problems, such as PMS, discussed in the first part of the chapter.

As with the Tampax advertisements discussed above, there is a sense that menstrual management is time consuming and tricky, again appearing to minimise experiences of discomfort. Lil-lets perhaps work harder to persuade the consumer that their product is the connoisseur's choice, drawing on multiple familiar themes: secrecy and discretion, noting the branding is removed with the box wrapper; the importance of comfort, telling the viewer to relax past any misgivings; and the ultimate freedom that can be achieved through using the tampons. Here there is a sense that Lil-lets might provide a more holistic relief to the apparent problems of menstruation, even while drawing on typically negative framings of menstruation.

Conclusions

Late twentieth-century advertising provided a range of visual strategies for representing the positive technological fix (Vostral 2008) of menstrual products without representing the embodied experience or visual appearance of menstruation. The menstrual product manufacturers (and their advertising agencies) represented within the Femorabilia Collection reproduce a range of normative understandings of menstruation and gender roles to position themselves as a solution to the problem of menstruation as a source of embarrassment, discomfort and inconvenience, and a burden on the time and aspirations of the menstruator. The emphasis on the alleviation of the burden on time situates these examples clearly within the dominant discourses of capitalism - which demands we use our time productively - and modernity - through an increased emphasis on convenience and leisure.

While many of the advertisements in the sample frame their products as positive, and menstruation necessarily as negative, the starkest representation of this binary comes from the 1988 Tampax 'prisoner' example. Here, menstruation is not only a time-burden, but is positioned both as an event which is a restriction, and as an anachronistic burden, through the deployment of the historical emblem of prisoners' broad-arrow uniform. Furthermore, these advertisements do not represent non-normative bodies, experiences or desires, and as in the online medical advice, the body is fragmented, produced in fleeting images which minimise and obscure menstrual experience.

Similarly, my analysis of 21st-century online medical texts reflect that these examples of health advice remain grounded in traditional binary conceptions of gender and focus specifically on menstruation as a phenomenon that happens to cis women. *Boots WebMD*, *NHS Choices* and *Patient.info* present menstruation in relation to problems yet offer limited practical advice on managing or coping with the experience of bleeding and any other related symptoms. Limited positive framing of menstruation can be found in the suggestion across all three studied sources that variation between individual experiences is normal. However, there remains an emphasis on defining and reinforcing normative notions of menstruation which correlate with essentialist constructions of femininity and demonstrate a limited potential for democratising medical knowledge between patients and physicians.

Instead of providing a clear measure by which to understand whether your experience is medically normal, the construction of menstrual normativity has obscured, ignored or minimised difficulties experienced by non-normative menstruators. Framing menstruation around pregnancy is particularly problematic in terms of younger readers seeking practical advice via this familiar and seemingly authoritative platform and receiving only messages about their bodies in relation to pregnancy, presented through cis-heteronormative and passive account of the body. The example texts form a bridge between medical practitioners and everyday life, presenting an outward impression of objectivity, trustworthiness and medical authority. They lack room for nuance, present limited practical advice and reinforce a highly binary and essentialist view of womanhood, constructed as dependent on the ability to menstruate and bear children.

For the most part, this backdrop of pervasive cultural messaging across different areas of everyday life renders the experience of menstruating as invisible, yet simultaneously aestheticised, commodified, and open to comparison with the limited, normative experiences portrayed in the service of selling more products. This is supported by the stylised images prevalent in the advertisements analysed through the *Periodical* pilot study which present menstruation as something which should be hidden and may hold the menstruator back in some way unless they harness their potential through the products being sold. While the advertisements do not present the same framing for menstruation as the contemporary online medical advice, they do present a similarly narrow conception of menstruation that

falls within (some) cyclical norms, for example the apparent theft of five days a month suggested by Tampax.

Though there is certainly a sense in the advertisements studied here that menstruation can be a source of embarrassment or difficulty, I would not agree that there is a strong sense of menstruation as 'hygienic crisis' (Merskin 1999) in these examples. Rather, the advertisements here present menstruation as a *social* crisis – manifested through embarrassment and / or inconvenience - which can be (predictably) alleviated or even eliminated by these products. The advertisements studied foreground the notion of menstruation as something to be hidden and coped with – unsurprisingly by using their own single-use products – which was also promoted as the most common method in the examples of online medical advice.

The discourses of advertising and medical advice significantly diverge in the values and aspirations of femininity drawn on. Whereas the medical discourses of femininity are framed around biological models of fertility, and menstruation as failed pregnancy, menstrual advertising – notably in publications aimed at teenage girls – severed the link to fertility and pregnancy (though heteronormative relationships are indeed still portrayed). Both domains are concerned with productivity, though medical discourses concentrate on biological productivity and the capitalist discourses of advertising are centred on work (in employment or school) and leisure.

As Røstvik states, 'some artists have critiqued socialized notions of menstruation as unclean and tend to refuse the discourse that insists that periods are grimy' (2018: 7). Artists – including me – have deployed various visual and performative strategies to destabilise notions of menstrual normativity, including and beyond the discourse of uncleanliness. In the following chapter, my analysis turns to examples of artworks since the 1970s to develop a thematic typology of contemporary menstrual art. The analyses which follow are presented from multiple perspectives. As an art historian, I consider the artworks as aesthetic objects and cultural texts that form an understudied part of the canon of contemporary feminist art history. As an artist with an interest in cultural studies I also consider the processes of art production as experiential, embodied practices undertaken by individual subjects in their everyday lives informed by socio-political and autobiographical experience. This will be developed further as I turn in the third chapter to analyse the development of my own art practice, situated within the context of contemporary menstrual activism and the lens of subjective experience as queered practice-led research (Baker 2011).

Chapter Two: Reframing Menstrual Art

This chapter identifies key examples of menstrual art from the 1970s to the present, conducting thematic analysis in order to present a typology of the genre. This critical intervention is necessary within the thesis as although feminist art is an area of rich scholarship (see thesis Introduction), and there is a growing body of work in critical menstruation studies (see Literature Review), comparatively little academic attention has centred on menstrual art as a specific sub-genre, theme, or recognisably cohesive subject within contemporary feminist art practice. Menstrual art is significant in the context of feminist art theory and practice as it explicitly disrupts traditional expectations and assumptions of much Western philosophy where ‘we have removed bodily fluids from the intellectual / rational / masculine realm, exiling them to the material / emotional / feminine world where, paradoxically, we can ignore them by exerting control over them’ (MacDonald 2007: 341). Menstrual art blurs the gendered boundary of rational/emotional and offers an alternative, often ambivalent, representation of bodily fluids that are not ignored and are both controlled and uncontrolled.

As discussed in Chapter One, menstrual product advertising has been examined in several studies. Other areas of the visual cultures of menstruation have also been examined in some detail, for example television, film (Rosewarne 2012) and contemporary media (ed. Kaite 2019). Activist and educator Chella Quint combines education, science communication and comedy in her zine series and stand-up show *Adventures in Menstruating* (2005 - ongoing) which highlight representations of

menstruation in advertising, sanitary disposal bags, and other menstruation related ephemera. As established in the Literature Review, there have been a limited number of publications on menstrual art and visual cultures, particularly by Ruth Green-Cole (2015a, 2015b), Daniella Tonelli Manica and Clarice Rios (2017) and Camilla Mørk Røstvik (2018a, 2019b).¹⁸ However, to date detailed art historical surveys of this area of creative practice are limited.

Examples of menstrual art have been produced predominantly by artists who self-identify, or have been identified by scholars, as being within the feminist art tradition, particularly in the Anglo-American canon of feminist art history. There have also been contributions from artists working outside the traditional structures of fine arts, for example works produced in fanzines on the topic of menstruation provide clear evidence of resistance to menstrual stigma in subculture and countercultural communities, including LGBTQIA+ and queer activism (Bobel 2010; Persdotter 2013; Fahs 2016), though these are not the focus of this analysis.¹⁹ Significant contributors to the scholarship of menstrual art, such as Manica and Rios and Green-Cole, do not include menstrual experiences and perspectives that fall outside cis gender binary identities explicitly in their analysis.

As Manica and Rios (2017) argue, the now widespread use of online communities and image-focused social media sites such as Instagram has created space for early career and established artists, illustrators and image-makers, and these have provided important 'mundane contexts' (Manica & Rios 2017: 2) where a 'menstrual

countermovement' (Persdotter 2013: 2) has flourished. The representations we find here share common themes with earlier print-based counter-culture, such as feminist zines (Erikstrup & Røstvik 2018) where menstruators present candid and often humorous, sometimes sarcastic, reflections on their experiences and their own takes on menstrual norms and stereotypes.

Artworks concerned with menstruation can be situated - but are not always intentionally being produced – within a broader movement of consciousness-raising around menstruation. In the context of menstrual activism, menstruation and menstrual art may be experienced or perceived as celebratory: they aim to make menstruation visible, often highlighting the material qualities of menstrual blood as beautiful, such as relatively well-known examples like Vanessa Tiegs' *Menstrala* (2000-2003) and Jen Lewis' *Beauty in Blood* project (2015b-n). As I will argue below, Tiegs and Lewis frame their menstrual art in very different terms, however both artists produce works elevating menstrual fluid / blood to a legitimate art medium, rather than an abject substance.²⁰

While Lewis produces (in collaboration with her husband) ethereal photographs of menstrual blood suspended and mixing into vessels of clear water, Tiegs employs the fluid as a drawing medium. Both celebrate menstruation through a beautification of menstrual blood, potentially replacing the common reaction of disgust with wonder at the vivid liquid. Lewis' work foregrounds the beauty of menstrual blood (as the title of her work aptly suggests) as something inherent: the substance, and its

dynamic qualities are enough for its elevation to art. In contrast, Tiegs' representation of menstruation-as-art requires a further intervention to transform it into legitimate art, as she produces abstract and figurative drawings, photographed before the bright red blood dries and oxidises. I argue in this chapter that while menstrual art is a useful tool for expanding the frame of menstrual representation and menstrual normativity, it is also important that, as Johnston-Robledo and Chrisler state, we avoid the romanticisation of the menstrual cycle, and resist the idea 'that all women should celebrate every menses experience, or that menstruation is central to womanhood or femininity' (2011: 14).

The recent menstrual movement has been revived by the concept of period positivity, championed through the #periodpositive campaign founded by Chella Quint in 2006. While Quint does not advocate for all menstrual experiences to be framed positively, the phrase has been adopted into the cultural lexicon without the critical, reflexive nuances she, and others, advocate. In Quint's terms, being period positive means developing and supporting body literacy for people of all ages and genders, to neutralise menstrual stigma, rather than simply the enjoyment of a menstrual period. This sentiment is echoed by many activists and scholars, including leading academics such as Chris Bobel, who stated in a recent podcast interview that we should not necessarily aim for 'exchanging negativity for positivity' (Bobel in Laird 2019: 16m).²¹

Through exploring and expanding the canon of menstrual art in further detail, I argue that menstrual art can provide a space through which to turn away from - to quote Rees again - 'the tyranny of the notion of a bodily norm' (Rees 2017: 7), as clearly demonstrated in commercial and clinical contexts. It is especially through the exposure of the leaking, living body in flux that menstrual art disrupts the message that 'the act of being human, our very humanity – our age, weight, ability – sets us up to fail' (ibid). However, in order to fulfil its potential as a tool to create spaces of resistance to menstrual stigma and to counter normative cultural notions about menstruation it is important that the impulse to frame these works as celebratory is challenged. The power of menstrual art to resist menstrual norms is particularly clear when artworks challenge normative medical and spiritual or universalising understandings of the artworks and of menstruation itself where they are positioned as women's issues, and produced by a certain type of woman/girl and body. Representations of menstruation in various art media can offer insights into the diversity of menstrual experiences which are not represented in broader visual culture and expectations of regular, regulated and invisible bleeding: what Chris Bobel refers to as *the managed body* (Bobel 2018).

One of the key strengths of menstrual art is that it makes menstruation visible, contrary to the layered and multi-faceted social stigma of the menstrual mark (Johnston-Robledo & Chrisler 2011) and menstrual etiquette (Houppert 1999), which compel people who menstruate to keep their bleeding hidden. Manica and Rios have noted that the increased number of 'aesthetical [sic] and political experiences

involving menstrual blood' (Manica & Rios 2017: 2) are (after Bobel 2010) part of 'a global trend towards turning menstruation into a publicly shared experience [...] now considered to be part of the larger reconfiguration of the feminist movement' (Manica & Rios 2017: 5). As is well established in the field of critical menstruation studies, in the Global North much of this stigma and social convention of hiding menstruation has been promoted and reinforced by the menstrual product industry, who have profited greatly from marketing products which will keep menstruation under wraps through technologies of passing (Vostral 2008) and promote the notion of the *good body* and the good girl (Bobel 2018).²² This cultural representation has been serviced further by the tendency for pop cultural references to menstruation to centre on the dilemma of menarche, and the use of negative stereotypes around menstruators as emotionally unstable (Rosewarne 2012; Linton 2019).

It is also crucial to note that resistance to these stereotypes and conventions is not a new phenomenon. As lawyer and menstrual equity activist Jennifer Weiss-Wolff notes in the opening chapter of her memoir-style book *Periods Gone Public: Taking a Stand for Menstrual Equity* (2017) *Cosmopolitan* declared 2015 'The Year the Period Went Public' (Weiss-Wolff 2017: 4) and 2016 the year of 'period power' (ibid).

However, while the recent rise of menstrual advocacy and awareness in the Global North has been seemingly meteoric, with attention from mainstream politicians and media largely centring on the hot-topic of period poverty, menstrual activism has a long history as part of the women's health and environmental movements from at least the 1970s (for example, see Chapter One for discussion of Toxic Shock

Syndrome). Bobel (2010) and Fahs (2016), have detailed the work American menstrual activists have undertaken to challenge the proliferation of commercial menstrual products, resist the pathologisation of menstruation, and encourage more nuanced relationships to bleeding for menstruators and non-menstruators alike (Fahs 2016: 96-97).

An element of menstrual activism that is particularly pertinent to the understanding of menstrual art is different strategies that go beyond the traditional focus on avoiding commercial menstrual products (Fahs, 2016: 104). These strategies include 'rebellious against the culture of secrecy and shame around menstruation' (ibid) and 'adopting radical postures of "outing" oneself as menstruating women' (ibid). I propose that menstrual 'outing' has traditionally been an act predominantly associated with Western white, cis gender menstrual activism, which I will discuss in the context of my own art practice in Chapter Three.

Menstrual art could at the most basic level be divided into three categories: art which centres on menstrual blood; artworks exploring the materials of menstrual management; and artworks which aim to represent menstruating bodies. Artworks in all three categories can adopt varying positions to produce intensely personal, emotionally charged, or ambivalent representations of menstruation. The first and third groups of works are made from an explicit position that presents the subjectivity of the artist as a person who menstruates, and incorporates clear images of them menstruating, or utilises their menstrual blood in the artwork. In contrast,

works in the second group tend to be produced from an ambiguous position which foregrounds the material culture associated with menstruation rather than the viscera of the experience.

The use of menstrual blood as a material in an artwork declares the artist as a person who menstruates, which Manica and Rios would define as a *menstrual performance* (2016). Manica and Rios' work on menstrual performance is underpinned by a traditional anthropological approach, particularly drawing on Victor Turner's work on performance (1986) and experience (1987) and Janet Carsten's work connecting 'the material properties of blood with its symbolic potential and emotional resonance' (Manica and Rios 2016: 4).

This provides an interesting perspective, and also diverges theoretically from my work and that of other menstrual scholars such as Green-Cole which draws on Butler's theories of performativity (1988, 1990) stating that to conceptualise 'menstruation as gendered blood is to recognise the ritualisation of difference through cleansing practices, psychoanalytic classifying and other constructs that affect the position of women' (Green-Cole 2015a: 11). Here Green-Cole argues (and I concur) that the performance of menstruation in everyday life – whether constructed by the individual as visible *or* invisible – is part of the 'cyclic continuation of performative acts to create the appearance of a 'natural' state' (ibid: 12) which reinforces the construction of gendered subjectivity. While gender non-conformity has always had a place within the radical menstrual activist movement (as

demonstrated in Bobel 2010: 99-100, for example), most menstrual art has been created by cis gender women - a notable exception being the South African nonbinary visual activist Zanele Muholi - reflecting the importance of this subject matter within the history of women's art but also the complicated relationship towards menstruation that gender non-conforming menstruators experience. While much of my art historical analysis will also focus on cis women, moving into the reflection on my own art practice enables me to broaden this discussion to include my own experiences as someone whose gender identity has shifted since beginning to make menstrual art.

My analysis deliberately omits menstrual artworks produced by cis male artists, such as paintings exhibited by Anish Kapoor at Lisson Gallery in 2019. *Out of Me* (2018) and *Dirt* (2018) - large oils on canvas in fleshy tones with ambiguous gestural mark-making suggestive of wounds *or* orifices, and (blood) red brushstrokes cascading down - are described by Lisson's press release as 'swollen and fecund organs that ooze and leak from their dark interiors' (Lisson Gallery 2019: para 3). Other works from the same exhibition are described in terms of their 'brutal eroticism' (Lisson Gallery 2019: para 4). For Kapoor, then, the menstruating body is coded as a site of both sexualisation and fertility, and leaking, unknowable, disorder. The titles of the paintings are invested in the notion of menstruation as abject - dirty and separated from the body. This is a theme prevalent in his practice, as explored in depth in *Blood and Light: In Conversation with Julia Kristeva* (2015), an essay accompanying his 2015 exhibition at the Palace of Versailles. Here, Kapoor and Kristeva situate the body

within discourses of abjection, disorder, and across the boundary of 'corporeal integrity' (Kristeva 1982: 101). Kapoor's interest in the abject body suggests his engagement with menstruation is as a process (and product) that is separated from the self - a position which my research explicitly avoids. Furthermore, as demonstrated by the works analysed in this chapter, and appended database, menstrual art is a long-established and varied area of artistic practice which does not require validation or supplementation by the late arrival of a male artists who holds mainstream success and acclaim to a conversation which has been undertaken by women and gender non-conforming artists for decades.

There has perhaps been a tendency to characterise menstrual art as a powerful feminist statement because it evokes - for some - divine or spiritual aspects of womanhood. Bobel - a historian of women and ethnographic researcher, rather than an expert in art history - identifies a wing of North American menstrual activism she refers to as grounded in spiritual feminism (2010: 66), noting that she is 'troubled by the feminist-spiritualist tendency to collapse womanhood with reproduction' (Bobel 2010: 91). Following Bobel's analysis of spiritual feminist menstrual activism, I propose that foregrounding the celebration of menstruation can perpetuate gender essentialism, rather than challenging it.

From an art historical perspective, Ruth Green-Cole argues for the importance of keeping 'in mind that there is not one right or correct way to understand what menstruation, menstrual blood and taboo mean (2015b: para 27) and that through

their 'diverse and personal' (ibid) works, 'artists should be allowed to analyse and expose how traditional structures of power can make people feel vulnerable and ashamed' (ibid). She cites a tension in the canon between those artists who follow a more Butlerian model which aims to reject the construction of women as inferior, who perhaps produce more performative and overtly political works and those who 'celebrate[...] menstruation in their art as a way to turn stigma into transgressive and creative acts' (ibid) more in the tradition of Luce Irigaray (1985). Though she argues that this tension remains in the plurality of approaches to menstrual art, the most important facet of this genre is that 'discursivity be aired in public, made visible and divested of any historical or habitual residues of shame or deference that favors [sic] models of decorum and femininity' (Green-Cole 2015b: para 27). I argue that while maintaining this plural approach is important, the development of a critical underpinning of menstrual art that moves away from simplistic narratives of celebration and / or aesthetic enjoyment towards more disruptive and radical practices is vital in order to diversify and deepen the art historical menstrual canon. It is with this in mind that I present the following thematic discussion of menstrual art, beginning with artworks which centre on the aesthetics of blood.

Menstrual Blood

Vanessa Tiegs is an American artist who coined the term *menstrala* to describe her series of 88 paintings made with menstrual blood (2000-2003). In their article on the social stigma of menstruation, Ingrid Johnston-Robledo and Joan Chrisler describe reactions to the menstrual art of Tiegs and the German artist Petra Paul as including

‘shock at their audacity, amazement at their creativity and disgust at their willingness to exhibit one of nature’s most stigmatized fluids’ (Johnston-Robledo & Chrisler 2011: 9). They follow Stallabrass (2006) in suggesting shock is the aim of contemporary artists, however they suggest that there is more to menstrual artists than the desire to provoke:

They seem to want us to ask ourselves why a mundane product of nature is so shocking, given that most women experience menses and manage their own menstrual flow for decades of their lives. They want us to consider why menstruation, a benign process essential to the production of human life, evokes fear, disgust, and comparison to toxic waste. We believe that viewers of Tiegs’ and Paul’s art react the way they do because menstrual blood is a stigmatized substance.
(Johnston-Robledo & Chrisler 2011: 9)

Though the article provides an engaging analysis of menstrual stigma, there is little depth to the interrogation of the artworks or the artist’s motivations; the analysis unproblematically reinforces the transgressive act of deploying menstrual blood as art medium. In an artist’s statement published in a special issue of *Women’s Studies* on the representation of the menstrual cycle, Tiegs writes that these works affirm ‘the hidden, forbidden, bright red renewal cycle and embraces the wonders of womanhood’ (Tiegs 2011: 222), and that her aim is to make work about the creativity inherent in women’s fertility, and ‘this part of life we choose to forget’ (ibid).

Though less a part of public discourse in 2011, I dispute that menstruation is predominantly part of life that is forgotten (even if the desire is to forget)²³. In order to conform to the conventions of menstrual etiquette, people who menstruate simply cannot choose to forget about menstruation (even if menstrual product

advertising would like to suggest their customers could – see Chapter One); to do so would mean they might be unprepared for their menstrual flow and risk a leak, an accidental *outing*. Aside from the potential social embarrassment, there is also the reality – as discussed in Chapter One – that many menstruators experience mild to severe forms of dysmenorrhoea during their menstrual period, along with the potential for additional stress due to a lack of access to suitable menstrual products for a variety of reasons, including (dis)ability and/or poverty (see Vora 2017; Tingle & Vora 2018; Scottish Government 2018; Sang, Myhill & Remnant 2020). Therefore, the need to manage menstrual flow and / or manage pain, potentially alongside financial hardship, means that menstruation is not something that most people who menstruate forget, even if they might want to.

Tiegs' statement (quoted above) is brief but demonstrates her positioning of menstruation as a spiritual phenomenon which binds women together as a distinct group who share a unifying experience, linking menstruation with fertility and creativity. Here we see a parallel between spiritual and medical models of menstruation, which is surprising as these are often considered to be at opposing ends of a spectrum of understanding. Both spiritual feminist interpretations and the medical models discussed in Chapter One centre fertility as a core component in the importance of menstruation (see also Bobel 2010: 91-92). While there is a convergence here between the central importance of fertility in the menstrual cycle, there is a clear divergence in how the purpose of fertility is framed. Within a medical model, menstruation occurs when the goal of the cycle - pregnancy - is not fulfilled

(Martin 2000). There is constant tension between the mechanical metaphor of the body in these models, succeeding or failing in the goal of reproduction, versus the reality that many people who menstruate do not want to become pregnant, borne out in the lack of practical advice on menstrual management provided in everyday medical spaces.

In spiritual framings of menstruation, it is not a product of a failed process, but a sign of abundance and the special creativity afforded to women as they alone are able to produce menstrual flow and become pregnant. Both medical and spiritual framings, such as Tieg's', render menstruation as a biologically essentialist facet of womanhood. Tieg's' words illustrate some of the ways the conceptualisation of menstruation and menstrual art through a spiritual lens can be problematic - though that is not to say that only viewing menstruation through a scientific lens is itself unproblematic, as I have argued. Tieg's' investment in the universality of menstruation and the menstrual cycle is ultimately restrictive rather than liberating; defining women by their ability to bleed excludes those who do not and suggests that the inability to bleed is an impediment to creativity.

There is also a tendency to romanticise the figure of the menstruating woman-as-creative (of both life and art) in a striking parallel to the valorisation of the male artist-as-genius. These framings also present vague, mystically inflected tone, and scientifically inaccurate statements in order to reinforce the image of the romantic (menstruating) woman. For example, on the *Menstrala* Facebook page Tieg's writes:

We do not know how long our moon has been orbiting the Earth or where it came from, however, we do know that the human female fertility cycle is unquestionably linked to it [...] In mainstream society, menstrual blood is still being used as a tool for invalidation instead of being respected as a coveted symbol of woman's cyclical reproductive capacity and her natural ability to bleed for days without dying.
(Tiegs 2017)

While I agree that menstruation is still a site of oppression and invalidation, this statement illustrates some of the ways thinking about menstruation and menstrual art through a spiritual lens can be problematic. Similarly, the application of clinical practice or scientific knowledge without consideration of individual embodied experiences in specific culturally and historically contingent contexts, can also be problematic.

Though exploring menstruation through spiritual or religious beliefs is not itself necessarily problematic, both scientific and spiritual frameworks can lean heavily on essentialist and binary thinking to describe or appreciate menstruation and the menstrual cycle.²⁴ Both scientific consensus and essentialised spiritual perspectives on menstruation also rely on claims of universality, at the expense of individual experience; building community in the development of conformity, rather than in embracing plurality and difference. Thus, even while many can derive comfort and empowerment from spiritual perspectives on menstruation, it is important - as I argue with regards to online medical advice in Chapter One - that these practices aim not to exclude trans and cis women who cannot menstruate, or who no longer menstruate due to illness or menopause, or trans men and nonbinary people who do. Tiegs' statement draws deep links between the ability to menstruate and womanhood, positioning menstrual blood as a mystic substance, and ties

menstruation and fertility to nature in ways that might - perhaps not intentionally - exclude from their definition of womanhood people who cannot menstruate or who are not able to become pregnant.

Furthermore, what does the broader rejection of contemporary scientific consensus beyond bodily experience represent? What is at stake in the sowing of doubt around well-established knowledge such as the age of the moon and the manner of its formation, particularly as this kind of scientific knowledge is no longer only the preserve of specialists with access to academic libraries?²⁵ In creating a romanticised link with nature – and the universe beyond Earth – it positions menstruation, therefore women, as outside the scientific laws of nature, which are a product of modern, male-driven discourses. Again, this is not itself necessarily dangerous, and in the context of medical incompetence, violence and misogyny (see note ^{vii}) it is quite understandable that some would wish to extract themselves from this system. However, in offering a vague and universalising picture of menstruation which asserts the ‘fertility cycle’ as not bound by Earth, science, or time, Tiegs builds an essentialist rendering of women and menstruation as ahistorical and constant categories.

The link to the moon is central to this rendering, despite the potentially negative connotation of the figure of the lunatic, and current evidence-based research where the period tracking app Clue’s ‘data science team analyzed [sic] 7.5 million cycles and found no correlation between the lunar phases and the menstrual cycle or period

start date' (Clue 2019: para 3).²⁶ There is in the further (re)production of misinformation an additional heroic element in the figure of the romanticised menstruating woman; she can survive each menstrual period of blood loss without dying. While clinically defined abnormal menstrual bleeding (AMB) has been found to affect 11-13% of people who menstruate (Marret, Fauconnier, Chabbert-Bufferet, Cravello & Golfier, et al 2010), Tiegs' hyperbolic description of menstruating conveniently forgets that menstruation does not consist of a constant flow of blood, and for most menstruators, however unpleasant the side-effects of menstruation might be, the level of blood loss is not life-threatening (see e.g. *ibid*; Warrilow, Kirkham, Ismail, Wyatt & Dimmick et al 2004).

Though less spiritual in tone, Pipilotti Rist has described the use of representations of menstrual blood in her works (for example the video piece *Blood Room* 1993/1998) as foregrounding essential material and cyclical qualities, as getting 'the blood out into the open, to show this red fluid, this marvellous liquid, this flesh-clock' (Rist in Doswold, in Jones 2006: 240). Rist's description of the menstruating body as a 'flesh-clock' again draws on heavily gendered notions, conjuring the image of the (woman's) biological clock ticking, and reducing the menstruating figure to flesh – in Cartesian terms, decidedly a female characteristic. In contrast, Jen Lewis' *Beauty in Blood* (Lewis 2015b-n) presents menstrual blood in abstracted forms dropped into water. In an artist's statement, published on her website, Lewis foregrounds the need to destigmatise and re-evaluate our relationship to menstrual blood as a part of everyday life (Lewis date unknown: para 4). While Lewis cites the reclamation of

'feminine power' (ibid: para 2), she also makes it clear that menstruation is part of everyday life through the presentation of 'candid, real-life photos' (ibid: para 6).

Through close collaboration with her husband Rob Lewis in the staging and production of the photographs, Lewis demonstrates that feminist action and gender equality is as much a task for men as it is women (ibid: para 4).

Menstrual Ritual

Tiegs is not the only artist to utilise a spiritual perspective to present a romanticised image of menstruation. In Isa Sanz's fifteen-minute collaborative performance piece *Sangro, pero no muero* [tr. (*I bleed, but I do not die*)] (2010) a group of seven women perform a ritualistic act. The artist describes the work as 'a performance of alchemy through menstrual blood perceived here as the essence of femininity, as a cyclic element that contains life-death-life itself' (Sanz 2010 in Manica & Rios 2017: 11). As well as the foregrounding of essential femininity through the substance of menstrual blood, Sanz's use of the term 'alchemy' draws on ahistorical and non-scientific notions of the bleeding woman, reinforced using red costume, nudity, a group chant, and circular forms in the performance choreography.

This approach to, and framing of, menstrual art is at odds with many scholars (me included) who work in the field of critical menstruation studies. As noted above, Johnston-Robledo and Chrisler warned against the notion that 'the menstrual cycle should be romanticized [sic]' (2011: 14) and the notion 'that menstruation is central to womanhood or femininity' (ibid) should be resisted, however their challenge and

critique do not tend to extend explicitly to the analysis of menstrual art in any sustained way.²⁷ The lack of interest in menstrual art in mainstream art history and theory has meant that artists' engagements with menstruation have been evaluated largely outside an art context. Within an academic-activist culture invested in the destigmatisation of menstruation, artworks such as the *Menstrala* paintings have been framed as necessary interventions into the overwhelmingly negatively framed, medicine and corporation-led visual cultures of menstruation.

With menstrual blood being so markedly absent from most visual cultural representations of menstruation (see Chapter One), the deep, luxurious red of the *Menstrala*, defiantly standing in pools of relief on white paper, and their intricate patterns and confident lines are visually striking and seductive. Tieg's work is one of the best-known examples of menstrual art since the turn of the millennium and should be credited for opening up conversations around menstruation - evidenced by ample write-ups in online news and arts media (e.g. Bitch HQ 2012; Vartanian 2013; Martinčič 2016) - beyond the circles of menstrual researchers. Likewise, Jen Lewis' work has received wide attention with many online articles citing her work (see e.g. Heiser 2012; Orr 2016; Quint 2019c), and the exhibition *Widening the Cycle* (2015), which she curated as part of the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research's 2015 conference.

There has also been some tendency to romanticise the transformative power of art itself, for example Lewis writes in a post for the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research (SMCR) *Menstruation Matters* blog:

When it comes to modern political and social activism, one of the most powerful tools one can use to make a statement and shift public perception is art. Whether it's film, fine art or the written word, art has the ability to challenge society's deepest assumptions by sparking new ideas, catalyzing critical thinking, and inspiring individuals to take steps in new directions that facilitate social change.
(Lewis 2015a: para 1)

While I am hopeful about the potential of menstrual art to shift perceptions and conversations around menstruation, I am also cautious. Lewis' is a somewhat utopian view of the affective power of art, and its potential to make change in wider society, which fails to consider the impact of differing socio-cultural contexts on the access to and interpretation of artworks. If artworks are not embedded in everyday experience (and beyond the boundaries of political and social activist circles), or are without a supporting discourse, their ability to effect change is neutralised.²⁸ Indeed, I am aware of the need to address these issues in my own practice and explore various forms of dissemination and communication I utilise in Chapter Three and Appendix Two.

Breanne Fahs reflects on the continuing absence of menstruation from museum culture.²⁹ She notes that with the exception of 'a few radical feminist performance artists' (Fahs 2016: 60-61) - citing two pieces that are not performance: Linder Sterling's 'menstrual jewellery' (ibid: 61) (though one could perhaps argue that wearing the jewellery might constitute a performative gesture) and Mako Idemitsu's

video *What a Woman Made* (1973) - 'the normally edgy and forward-thinking art world has yet to fully recognize menstruation as a valid subject of interest' (ibid). Though Fahs notes the tendency for censorship of sex-related content, particularly by feminist and women artists (ibid: 59) she also suggests (likely unintentionally) the construction of a one-dimensional and unified 'art-world' that does not differentiate between individual practitioners and/or movements and groups they may belong to, the commercial art industry driven by private collectors and gallerists, and the institutional world of museums which are often part of the public sphere, supported and (to greater or lesser degrees) beholden to the politics of the state and funding bodies.

There are many ways in which the art world can be impenetrable, for supposed insiders and outsiders alike. One facet of this impenetrability is the lack of transparency in valuation and the art market, for example Chloe Preece and Aleksandra Bida note that 'there has always been a significant lack of understanding as to how this market operates and how art is valued' (Preece & Bida in Raviola & Zackarassion (eds) 2017: 91). In a brief review of the 2016 Art Basel art fair, Ari Akkermans hints at the detachment of the art world from the real world, as 'only a microcosm of what is happening in the real world; it may be helpful for understanding the global atmosphere, but it's not the whole picture' (Akkermans 2016: 5). In relation to public funding for the arts, the UK state-funded Arts Council(s) has been demonstrably influenced by Westminster politics at a level beyond Treasury allocation of national spending, as politicians recognise that 'the

distribution of those grants can lead to political benefits as awards are situated across the political geography' (Bertelli et al 2014: 342). There is also the question of how these publicly funded cultural projects are valued and evaluated, and how public reaction is measured, as discussed by Belfiore (2014). It is my contention that as the field of critical menstruation studies matures, it is vital that the art and visual cultures of menstruation are evaluated with a degree of criticality commensurate to the broader study of menstruation.

Menstrual rituals are presented in an entirely different light in the theatre cabaret performance *Dr Carnesky's Incredible Bleeding Woman* (Figure 11) devised by Marisa Carr and performed at Soho Theatre, Underbelly, Southbank, Edinburgh Fringe Festival and Adelaide Fringe Festival in 2017 before touring the UK (27 October – 24 November 2018). Informed by Carr's doctoral research into menstrual ritual and her engagement with the Radical Anthropology Group in London, the production was devised following regular collaborative 'performance-making, spell-casting, dream diaries and cathartic sharing' (Carnesky.com date unknown: para 4) at Metal³¹ in Southend-on-Sea over a nine-month period in 2015 which resulted in a piece which reflected the 'diverse lived experiences of menstruation' (ibid) of the participants, who formed a still-active group of menstrual activists, the Menstruants.³⁰

In her doctoral thesis, Carr explains the use of menstrual synchrony as a narrative device in the collaborative development of the piece:

inspired by the enduring idea of menstrual synchrony and its relationship to menstrual ritual, both in indigenous myths and in new feminist practices, the structure for the performance work was informed by and drew on elements of the synchrony studies as a devising process and narrative device, combined with the creation of live art rituals. (Carr 2019: 33)

Throughout the performance, synchrony and menstrual ritual are referenced (and the performers enact menstrual rituals), specifically invoking notions of community and collaboration, both through the ensemble format and the script, for example Carr (as the character Carnesky) asks: 'Could it be that the secret ingredient behind menstrual synchrony is in the performance as a group of rituals?' (Carnesky 2017: 2 in Carr 2019: 44). The performance is threaded together by Carr, playing the role of part-lecturer and part-compere (Figure 12), presenting tongue-in-cheek mini lectures on menstrual rituals, taboos and representations. The cabaret slots are filled by other performers from the Menstruants group, which involves video screenings and physical acts including (as I witnessed at an Edinburgh Fringe Festival performance): dance; sword swallowing; a feminist reclamation of the magician sawing a woman in half; the storing and removal of a bright red lipstick from the performer's vagina; suspension by the hair; the sharing of jelly made from breast milk with a performer's infant daughter; and the creation of a new menstrual ritual by a trans woman.

Carr and her collaborators deftly reject the spiritual binary and bind of blood as an essential symbol of fertility and femininity and emphasise the 'multiple and sometimes contradictory' (Coetzee 2019: 2) meanings of blood. Essentialism is first repudiated by Carr's own video section, which sees her naked and submerged in a bathtub of a blood-like substance, symbolising and reflecting on her experience of

multiple miscarriages. Carr's segment of the performance is also linked to her Jewish heritage and the tradition of mikveh which 'is supposed to cleanse you and make you ready for the ovulatory phase by washing away menstrual blood and the past month' (Carr in Chen 2019: para 14). As Lyn Gardner, reviewing the production at Soho Theatre for *The Guardian* points out, Carr produces a poignant moment where the ritualisation of menstrual 'blood is not a symbol of fertility but infertility' (Gardner 2016: para 7), in a stark contrast to the way it is more usually symbolically deployed.

Second, essential (bloody) femininity is disrupted by the candid and vulnerable performance by Rhyannon Styles. As a trans woman, Styles does not menstruate, however embedded in the inclusive atmosphere of the Menstruants group she develops her own monthly ritual where she visits the sea at Southend-on-Sea. Styles writes in *The Sunday Times* that for her, 'revealing my true self became a physical act of defiance, a personal conquest of years of shaming about my identity, and my way of saying: "This is who I am, this is who 'we' are"' (Styles 2017: para 1), producing a powerful performance that encouraged me to consider the fluidity of sex and gender, and significant limitation on the breadth of human experience that is perpetuated by rigidly policing binary definitions of both.

This mirrors Fahs' psychological practice working with trans men who menstruate, noting that by focusing 'on undoing binary notions of male and female bodies' (Fahs 2016: 88) it is possible to 'powerfully resituate the implied meanings of and symbolism around menstruation' (ibid). Styles' linking to nature through the sea, and

its tides, reminds us that while menstruation may be a process that comes from the sex organs labelled as biologically female, all human beings maintain their body along rhythms and cycles and we are linked to the natural world around us. While on the surface this might seem aligned completely with the feminist-spiritualist position, there is significant divergence from the spiritualism presented by artists such as Vanessa Tiegs and Isa Sanz, who lean heavily on menstruation as the foundation of the essentialist figure of the romantic female. Carr and her collaborators access elements of mysticism, religion, and spiritualism while continually refuting binary understandings of sex and gender and their associated cultural roles.

The bloody rituals explored above highlights the importance of presenting images of menstrual flow to erode notions of uncleanness and disgust surrounding menstruation. Mary Douglas notes in *Purity and Danger* (2001 [1966]) that menstruation is seen as unclean due to it rupturing the boundary of the (usually contained, and fixed) body using 'the old definition of dirt as matter out of place' (Douglas 2001: 36). Julia Kristeva identifies two types of 'polluting objects' (Kristeva tr. Roudiez 1982: 71) that are expelled from the body (here, with less given and fixed boundaries) and therefore become abject: excremental and menstrual. She defines excremental pollutants as those which threaten from the outside – 'life by death' (ibid) – and menstrual polluting objects as 'danger issuing from within the identity [...] of each sex in the face of sexual difference' (ibid), as specifically gendered blood. Kristeva's theory of abjection (1982) has provided a powerful framework for understanding the complex relationships between disgust and desire in psychoanalytic and aesthetic terms. Her work is often cited in relation to myriad

forms of creative practice which feature bodies and bodily fluids, (for example see above discussion of Kapoor, Arya & Chare (eds) 2016; Astore 2017; Harradine 2000; Houser et al 1993; Riddell 1995; Seegert 2014). However, as the primary concern of my research is to reject narratives of stigma - to reposition menstruation as everyday, rather than othered - and to destabilise essentialist narratives which place menstruation within a binary sex/gender system. As I note below, this research aims to situate menstrual blood within the everyday, and in bodily context, as opposed to as a separate, discarded substance. As I have written elsewhere, 'by continuing to repeat [these] negative ideas, we risk reinforcing the very stigmas and exclusionary practices' (Hughes & Standing 2018: para 3) that activists, academics, and policy-makers are working to challenge.

Emilia Sanabria has built on these in a contemporary context in her study of menstrual management and gynaecology in Brazil, suggesting that though 'menstrual blood itself is not clean or dirty' (Sanabria 2011: 99) the context in which it is encountered defines the relationship of the viewer to the blood. In her ethnographic study of clinical practices in Salvador, she suggests that in this setting 'parts that may initially appear to belong to the body's interior – such as the vagina and the uterus – cannot be clearly considered as inside or outside the body' (Sanabria 2011: 94) as they 'attest to the porous nature of bodily boundaries' (ibid). This fundamental challenge to notions of inside/outside through the practice of gynaecological examination is also represented by the flow of menstrual blood. However, menstrual blood – especially that which has leaked onto clothes or bed linen or been discarded

– might be disgusting outside the clinical setting which allows the troubling of the bodily boundary, and it is now detached from the body; abject.

Menstrual artworks which present blood (real or fake) complicate the assumed binary between the clinical and the everyday, but also present the blood as a legitimised substance through the language and status of the art object. I propose that artworks which maintain a cohesive link to the body in some way – perhaps as a live performance, a film or photograph, or through an implicit action may maintain this balance between disruption, abjection and physicality or experience. Conversely, context-free images such as Tiegs’ menstrual blood paintings are abstracted from a recognisable corporeal space, maintaining the trope of blood-as-abject as it has been symbolically discarded, even though it has been claimed as an art object (despite being included in their article on this subject). These artworks fail to achieve what Manica and Rios expect from menstrual performances, as although they present menstrual blood, they do not work as ‘aesthetic experiments that explore the transition of menstrual blood from its expected public invisibility to a state in which it is not only turned visible, as an image, but also made part of an aethetico-political statement’ (Manica & Rios 2017: 9-10). In works such as Tiegs’ *Menstrala*, the blood has always already been expelled and detached from the menstruator and its potential as political is stunted by this fracture.

I suggest these works instead favour the figure of the romantic female, which is only political in attempting to be the binary opposite of (paradoxical) romantic-rational

male. It is also interesting to note that Tiegs' paintings are presented as photographs of fresh, in some cases still liquid, blood, which emphasises what Manica and Rios have referred to as 'menstrual blood's plastic agency as ink' (Manica & Rios 2017: 17). Tiegs' images present a snapshot of menstruation, emphasising the material and aesthetic qualities of menstrual blood, rather than foregrounding the passage of time, bodily rhythms and cyclical changes. However, due to their removal from a corporeal context, the only clue the viewer has to their menstrual link is the title. Thus, viewed in isolation, or without the label of the title or supplementary text, Tiegs' work (and other works such as Lani Beloso's *The Period Piece* (2010)) are not explicitly menstrual - they could relatively easily be taken as blood-art, or even red ink - and their significance as representations of menstruation could be easily lost.

As these images are no longer linked to a body that produced the menstrual material (though they are to the hand which drew them, a notion I will return to in Chapter Three) they lack a corporeal anchor through which to understand them. The images are at risk of being interpreted as merely decorative, and valorise menstrual blood as a mystic substance, which contributes to cultural notions of menstruation which ascribe the ability to menstruate as a defining feature of being a woman. I propose instead that menstrual artworks may have greater impact if read through a revelatory lens, as well as (for some) possessing mystical elements, and by exploring how they might draw on a range of visual and performative strategies to eschew stigma and afford insights into the usually private phenomenon of menstruation.

My queered framing of menstrual art foregrounds a radical alternative which reflects multiple realities of menstruation while bypassing the polished, sanitised, and censored visual narratives of the menstrual product industry and the romanticised feminine of spiritual feminism. Menstrual art may be most powerful when it opens our eyes to a range of menstrual experiences, as well as presenting blood as an overlooked and beautiful medium. One method which has been employed to demonstrate the individual experiences of menstruators has been to combine menstrual themes and materials with stitch and knitting.

Menstrual Needlework

Menstrual needlework has been used to critique attitudes, expectations, and the big business of single-use menstrual products. *Cloths* (2013) by Carina Úbeda is a mixed media installation, exhibited at the Center of Culture and Health in Quillota, Chile (Figure 13). In her history of embroidery, *The Subversive Stitch* (1984), Rozsika Parker connects embroidery, gender identity and sexuality, stating: 'embroidery [also] evokes the stereotype of the virgin in opposition to the whore, an infantilising representation of women's sexuality' (Parker 1984: 2) and 'has become indelibly associated with stereotypes of femininity' (ibid). Furthermore, the combination of menstruation and stitch in artworks reiterates the onset of menstruation which, as Lee notes, 'signifies both emerging sexual availability and reproductive potential' (Lee 1994: 344) of Western patriarchal heteronormativity.

Parker also links the use of fabric or simulated fabric as a semiotic device in menstrual product advertising: 'Thus, Lil-lets [the menstrual] tampons were recently packed in a box masquerading as fabric, embroidered with pastel flowers to represent menstruation as natural and entirely non-threatening' (Parker 1983: 2). When deployed in service of multi-national menstrual product manufacturers, this floral fabric is used to mask and neutralise the disruptive power of menstruation. However, when artists incorporate stitch into menstrual art, the effect is reversed, with the transgressive act of making menstruation visible juxtaposed with the stitch in a radical reclamation of both menstruation and of the historically denigrated so-called women's work.

I will discuss the notion of using menstruation in art as a *refused embroidery* in the context of my art practice in Chapter Three, however here Úbeda adopts the familiarly gendered iconography of embroidery to present five years of menstrual fluid on ninety cloths mounted in embroidery hoops hung from the ceiling of the gallery. Each cloth is hand-embroidered with phrases such as *se procesa* [tr. (*it is processed*)], *se domine* [tr. (*it dominates*)], *se traspara* [tr. (*it is transferred*)]. The work was installed to hang at around eye level, according to Úbeda to encourage even 'modest' (Riquelme 2013: para 8) viewers to engage with the work.

The embroidery frames are interspersed with decomposing apples intended to symbolise the vagina (Riquelme 2013), an icon of femininity deriving from Christian tradition and the story of Eve's temptation. On an aesthetic level, the inclusion of

decomposing apples with the now-oxidised blood - neither of which retain their original (likely) redness - alludes to the passage of time and the transience of life and bodily boundaries. Úbeda began this piece as a confrontation of menstrual discomfort – she started using the cloths to collect her menstrual flow instead of commercial disposable pads which gave her an allergic reaction, an unwanted side-effect which threatened the integrity of her body. The work represents an alternative mode of menstruating outside the norms of single-use commercial products, which enabled a return to her body without the earlier discomfort. Úbeda has created a documentary artwork which highlights the iterative process of menstruation: it is not a single event but a loop of continuing serialised occurrences.

Menstruation at a different stage of the life-course is explored by British artist Jane Woollatt. She also utilises stitch to reflect on menstruation, and specifically its cessation at menopause. She describes her work as a ‘material based practice with a strong performative element’ (Woollatt 2019: 2) through her methodological approach which ‘involves repetition of processes that enables the objects to have an existence beyond [herself] as the maker’ (Woollatt 2019: 3). Woollatt describes the menopause as a time when ‘the body becomes precarious’ (Woollatt 2019: 7) as the hormonal cycles she is used to become less predictable and eventually cease. She found a reciprocal relationship between the process of artmaking which provided a space for reflection on this biological process, while that space for reflection also became a subject for her art production. She also wanted to produce alternative

imagery for menopause away from anatomical diagrams and the pathologisation of the medical gaze.

In the work in progress, provisionally entitled *Insecurity Blankets* (2019 - ongoing) Woollatt uses second-hand blankets bought from charity shops which she carefully washes as the base material for creating new textile pieces (Figures 13 & 14). She cuts-up - which she describes as 'an attack an act of aggression' (Woollatt 2019: 26) - before reassembling the blankets into new configurations, inlaying them with tightly detailed areas of stitching. It is interesting that she chooses to treat the fabrics with care *and* aggression, in a process that gives new life to these once discarded objects.

She states:

I think of menopause as like a wilderness an uncharted space, new unpredictable territory that I needed to learn to navigate and understand. I also thought about the effect of loosing [sic] the protective influence of the hormones. I thought of them as like a comfort blanket surrounding me in softness and safety. The blanket piece is my attempt to explore this uncertain exposed state and a process of mapping the unpredictable territory.
(Woollatt 2019: 27)

Here, the artist interweaves the familiar with the unfamiliar, the secure with the insecure, and through this process gives herself – the menopausal woman – and the blankets a new, positive narrative. She also explicitly links the labour-heavy process of embroidery with the act of mourning, though this is not mourning only an ending – 'letting go of my former self' (Woollatt 2019: 30) - but also utilising the artmaking process as an opportunity intentionally to witness the beginning of a new phase of life. Like Úbeda, Woollatt uses the brown hues of oxidisation, though here they are

derived from rust not menstrual blood, alluding to the passing of time and the gradual process of becoming unable to menstruate.

Moving from embroidery and object-focused practices into performance and knitting needles, *Casting off My Womb* (2013) (Figure 15) is a performance by Australian artist Casey Jenkins, which has been called a 'natural heir' (Rees 2015: xi) to Carolee Schneemann's *Interior Scroll* (1975). The durational performance lasted 28 days, with the artist inserting balls of wool into her vagina and knitting a scarf over the course of one menstrual cycle. Jenkins notes 'the yarn was initially white, threaded slowly to red as it soaked with period blood, then back to white again' (Casey-jenkins.com, no date: para 1). Both Schneemann's and Jenkins' performances disrupt the contingency of the bodily boundary, through the dual action of inserting an object into the vagina and then removing it. Jenkins' piece is especially transgressive in the theoretical context provided by Sanabria (2011) as she undertakes this action outside the established and approved safety of the clinic. Jenkins' performance asserts the artist's agency in co-opting the menstrual cycle and vagina as a site for art practice. The performance also up-ends the negative connotations of knitting needles - an item associated with do-it-yourself abortion attempts (Pripas 2016, para 1) - with women's reproductive anatomy, as Jenkins utilises the needles and her body space to produce rather than end an event.

The umbilical reference in Jenkins' (and Schneemann's) performances has been read as suggesting 'the inextricability of her reproductive capacity' (Stevens 2011: 170) in

producing an artwork-as-offspring. Though I am wary of this interpretation's potential to be extended into an essentialist romanticisation of women's fertility as *the* source of their creativity, it is interesting to note that Jenkins' recent performance works, such as *Drawn and Halved* (2019) have involved her child as co-performer and part of the artwork. Stevens' (2011) comparative analysis of Jenkins' original performance and subsequent edited video version posted online as *Vaginal Knitting* (2013) uses the term 'slow dramaturgy' (Eckersall & Paterson 2011) to emphasise the affective power of durational performance in *Casting off My Womb*. Contrasting the detached immediacy of the video with the gallery performance, Stevens observes:

The compression of time in the mediated version of the work meant that the performance lacked the duration necessary to make the knitting and the blood ordinary, banal, or, as Jenkins had hoped, "uneventful" and "boring".
(Stevens 2011: 169)

The compression, elongation or perhaps cessation of time through permutation is a technique I have developed in my own practice, particularly through the different methods of display used alongside the original *Cycles* (2016 - 2017) project (see Chapter Three). However, it is perhaps in my case a more deliberate experiment with modularity and scale, rather than a performance documentation as it appears to be in the case of Jenkins' work.

Menstrual Time

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the temporal experience of menstruation and emphasis in experiential, idiomatic (euphemisms such as *time of the month*,

monthlies, etc.), spiritual and medical narratives of cyclicity, time is a theme which surfaces frequently in menstrual art. As Carli Coetzee notes, in the repeated cyclical shedding of uterine lining 'menstrual blood is the body's mode of self-regulation, but it also structures and punctuates time' (Coetzee 2019: 147). This connection to time can be made in a variety of ways, such as performance, or in the material traces of labour left in the work, for example in the use of stitching and embroidery discussed above. Titles of menstrual artworks often reference the passage of time, either in a bounded way – for example I have titled some of my limited-edition digital prints after the month the original prints were created. More commonly, titles tend to allude to time with less specificity. My project *Cycles* (Hughes 2016 – 2017), Carolee Schneemann's *Blood Work Diary* (1972), Leslie-Labowitz Starus' *Menstruation Wait* (1971) or Timi Páll's photograph *The Diary of My Period* (2017) all allude to the recording or passing of time without giving a specific boundary, alluding to everyday actions such as keeping a diary, or waiting, based on the body, rather than on conventional and standardised timekeeping. Time is also represented through the serialisation and repetition of images, as in many of the works already discussed.

The theme of time is often made explicit through the media of some menstrual artworks such as Mako Idemitsu's video *What A Woman Made* (1973), my multi-screen installation *Infinite Cycles* (2017) and the looped soundwork *Un-Voiced* (Hughes & Petersen 2017c) I produced in collaboration with Eva Petersen (see Chapter Three). Idemitsu's piece is an 11 minute, black-and-white film which features a blood-laden tampon slowly leaking away its load into a closely filmed toilet

bowl. Ann-Sargent Wooster contextualises the work alongside the 'rarely political' (Wooster in Hanley & Wooster (eds.) 1993: 35) conventions of Japanese avant-garde film and the 'aesthetics of boredom as in Andy Warhol's film, *Sleep*' (ibid) prevalent in early 1970s New York. She continues, observing that 'this mute, uninflected image, subdued by the use of black-and-white, is actually a 'dangerous' object. Its depiction is a radical act of representation' (ibid). Though not the first artist to commit the transgressive act of depicting a used menstrual product, Idemitsu frames the film in a way which plunges the viewer into an unexpected and perhaps unfamiliar viewpoint. With eyes trained into the centre of the toilet bowl, focusing on the discarded, bloody, tampon, the viewer is forced into an action which might otherwise only occur in the most private moments in the bathroom, if indeed at all. I will return to the bathroom as a setting later in this chapter, while considering the spatial elements of menstrual art. The composition, viewing perspective and minimalism of Idemitsu's work, along with the slow pacing which means the video is silent until the latter half, create a sense of stillness with the viewer in time and space.

Outside performance and video, other artists including Carina Úbeda (discussed above), and Lani Beloso's *The Period Piece* (2010) have translated the temporal experience of menstruation into the materials and form their artworks take, often resulting in a serialised or iterative process linked to their menstrual cycle. Though the specific duration of Úbeda's project is unclear in the form of the work, the presentation of the cloths filling the installation space creates the impression of time

passed. Beloso initially produced 13 canvases with menstrual blood and mixed media paintings, over a year-long project. Beloso is also noted as experiencing menorrhagia³² in multiple press features (see Suarez de Jesus 2011; Langley 2010). Her art-making process is described on a (now defunct) website dedicated to the project:

As a long sufferer of dysmenorrhea, the artist often remarked that it was astonishing that she did not bleed to death each month. Curious to the amount of blood that actually came out of her, she set out to sit over a canvas for the entire period. The first piece in the series is that first attempt in which she sat over a canvas for 12 hours. Now, she collects the entire product and then utilizes it within each piece. Each piece reflects the mood, location, feeling and setting of each ones creation. (Author Unknown, Theperiodpiece.com, date unknown, para 3, original spelling and grammar)

Here we see Beloso not only linking to the temporal aspect of menstruation through creating a serialised work, but again utilising the art process as a method of reconciliation with a negative embodied experience of menstruation, though Beloso discusses the work without the reverential tone Tiegs presents.

These works have less formal structure than other menstrual blood paintings, such as those by Vanessa Tiegs, or Zanele Muholi's digitally manipulated images of menstrual blood, for example *Ummeli* (2011a) and *Case 200/07/2007 MURDER* (2011b) (see also Muholi 2011c-2011h) and present the viscera of excessive menstruation. The ambivalence combined with curiosity that is found in menstrual artworks which are produced by artists - me included - who are confronted with discontinuity or discomfort has been used as a creative method of taking control of,

making sense of, or making a positive intervention into, an otherwise negative experience.

Multiple artists – including Beloso, Úbeda, and Woollatt - present menstruation as neither regular nor regulated, and thus create representations that do not conform to contemporary ideals of menstruation. Presenting these narratives complicates the traditionally assumed binaries of ‘health / disease, whole / broken, normal / abnormal’ (Price & Shildrick 1998: 4) that Janet Price identifies as attached to biomedical discourses of the body, and I would suggest also permeate everyday cultural practices. Though, as Price and Shildrick observe, these binaries have been eroded through the turn towards a reinstatement of the ‘materiality of the body’ (ibid) in feminist critical theory, this turn has also been criticised for remaining ‘highly abstract’ (ibid). Artworks, particularly autobiographically entangled, visceral and phenomenologically produced through the body, have the potential to foreground – literally and figuratively – ‘the material body in the very acts of academic production’ (ibid) and anchor theoretical explanations in tangible, relatable situations.

Menstrual Performance

Damebilleder (1970) is an early piece of menstrual performance art, produced by Danish activist-artist group, Kanonklubben. The group is named after the Canon super 8 camera they had purchased at the Academy of Arts (Justesen in Deepwell 1999: 36). This early work is often eclipsed in the (Global-North-centric) canon by the notoriety of Judy Chicago’s menstrual works *Red Flag* (1971) and *Menstruation*

Bathroom (1972), despite pre-dating Chicago's pieces (and her lesser known, unpublished play *My Menstrual Life* (1971)).

First conceptualised (in translations) as *Images of Women* and later re-named *Female Pictures*, *Damebilleder* (1970) aimed to challenge the patronising label of 'little misses' (Justesen in Deepwell 1999: 36) directed at the women artists by the Professors at the academy. By evoking the inexperienced *Miss*, rather than a worldly or mature *Ms* or *Mrs*, the male professors deploy sexist tropes to dismiss the artist collective. The performance consisted of a fortnight of co-produced actions within the tightly knit, explicitly feminist group, who according to Kirsten Justesen, wanted to create work 'about what women are and what they represent' (ibid) in reaction to the men who surrounded them at the academy who she characterised as 'rather typical males' (ibid). The series did not begin as a work with deliberate menstrual references or significance but is described as evolving towards this point over the course of a week (see Deepwell 1999).

At the end of the fortnight, after a previous performance involving red fabric, which they linked to Maoist ideology (Justesen in Deepwell 1999: 37), their discussion turned to menstruation:

So we moved into the gallery and were sleeping in our new red bedsheets, wearing our red dresses and eating red food. And then we started talking about menstruation. And this was the first time many of us had talked about menstruation. And I very clearly remember in the afternoon how the word developed from menses to menstruation, and it was fantastic thinking why hadn't we talked about this before – and how

emotional and traumatic it had been for some of us and secret.
(Justesen in Deepwell 1999: 37)

The act of communal art and place making over the course of several days and multiple tableau performances – where the Kanonklubben members took over gallery spaces at the Academy of Fine Arts and other spaces in Copenhagen – opened up the possibility of discussing menstruation in a way that had been previously inaccessible to them. This resonates with Jane Woollatt’s experience of working through the mourning phase of her menopause consciously through her artmaking practice.

The processes of making - whether communal or individual - offer both time and space for reflection and reclamation at both art and personal levels. Unusually for works that can be considered within the canon of menstrual art, however, there does not seem to be evidence that Kanonklubben deliberately set out to create work relating to menstruation. Their choice of red fabrics was political and ideological, rather than symbolising menstrual blood: it only comes to be associated with it after the work organically evolved during the performance process. This is a pertinent parallel with my own practice, as I discuss in Chapter Three, as though I set out to make a durational work with the body, it only became *about* menstruation once I reached the point in my menstrual cycle where I bled onto the artwork as an incidental part of the making process.

One of the most visually and conceptually visceral examples of recent menstrual art is American artist Christen Clifford’s performance work *1 Want Your Blood: A*

Menstrual Symphony (2015) (Figure 16).³³ In the dramatic performance piece, Clifford employs two young, naked men as her 'living brushes' to produce a visceral and blood drenched subversion of Yves Klein's performance *Monotone Symphony* (1960). Klein's performance piece, where he directed naked women to produce body prints in his unique International Klein Blue (IKB) pigment, has been parodied and subverted multiple times since its creation in 1960, with critique often centring on the power dynamic of the formally dressed male artist ordering naked women to create his artwork for him. Criticisms include, for example, James M. Harding's characterisation of 'the artistic fetishization of the female body in contemporary works by artists such as Yves Klein and Piero Manzoni' (Harding 2001: 155). Amelia Jones presents a more nuanced analysis of Klein's performance work in her article on the use of clothes as performative objects for male artists:

... he directed several women to cover themselves with Kleinian blue paint and to stain canvases with their paint smeared bodies. And yet, as flamboyantly dandified as Klein's formally dressed body was, the photographs of the event show that he effectively veiled it behind the classic - and, within patriarchal culture, more readily visible - trope of modernist painting, the naked female form. He kept himself clean, hovering among the women to direct their movements.
(Jones 1995: 25)

Jones' language hints at least at discomfort at the gendered power dynamics in Klein's practice, particularly the use of the word *smeared*. Though Jones does not directly label Klein's practice as sexist, the implication that he projected an image of himself as too important to bother with the physical work of painting, surrounded by naked women who undertake this labour, certainly implies a criticism of the gender politics of Klein's piece.

Klein's work remains a source of tension and contradiction for me, as the choreography of the piece places the male artist in a position of power and authority in contrast to literally stripped, powerless women. However, there is also a lack of engagement in much of the literature with the women with whom Klein collaborates leading to an erasure of their role which upholds, rather than challenges, Klein's central role in the work (see Jones 1995; Jones 1998; Berggruen et al 2004; Banai 2014).

His work is controlled carefully by the Klein Estate, which must benefit from upholding the mythology of the artist's life and work. In the context of an estate which controls the legacy of Klein then perhaps this erasure is central to maintaining the artist's mythology in the decades since his death in 1962. This tight grasp on Klein's creative legacy was illustrated during an 'in conversation' event with one of the women who performed with Klein - Elena Polumbo-Mosca - held at Tate Liverpool as part of the *Yves Klein* exhibition (21 October 2016 – 5 March 2017).

The event was described as an opportunity to hear Polumbo-Mosca 'talk about her involvement in Klein's experiments with the expressive potential of the body' (Tate 2016: para 1). This promotional text follows the typical description of the women as models, rather than providing them any creative agency as collaborators. The event itself had a different tone, and was framed by the Chair, Dr Cathy Butterworth, as an opportunity to reclaim and explore the collaborative nature of Klein's work, which Polumbo-Mosca utilised as an opportunity to emphasise her role as an active

subject, and not one of Klein's brushes, not an object in the work (Tate Liverpool 2016).³⁴ Polumbo-Mosca also described her decision to participate in the work as an opportunity for rebellion against her bourgeoisie background and family, which while perhaps a youthful and reactionary impulse, does speak to her pleasure in utilising the collaboration as a method of forging her own identity outside the expectations of her family. While the event itself did offer space to consider the work from Polumbo-Mosca's perspective, the overall framing of the talk alongside the exhibition and promotional materials continued the erasure of her creative agency at the point of production. Polumbo-Mosca is still largely denied a voice in shaping how the paintings are interpreted and historicised nearly seventy years later.

These experiments were only concerned with the expressiveness of the *female* body: Klein (and the men who are part of the orchestra) assume controlled poses and movements, and are dressed in formal attire. Klein – the male artist – is the archetype of rational, cerebral, Cartesian contemplation, though as Amelia Jones argues, Klein's performance is 'more ambiguous - both productive and destabilizing' (Jones 1998: 89) of masculine norms of the period. Jones convincingly argues that 'Klein's self-performance points to the male artistic genius as a construct while still getting mileage out of it' (ibid). Nonetheless, Jones' analysis does little to consider the women in Klein's performance beyond their use as a tool to veil the male artist through the 'trope of modernist painting, the naked female form' (Jones 1998: 88). Polumbo-Mosca and her co-performers are the other side of the mind/body divide:

embodied, active, reactive bodies enacting all the physical labour in the service of the male mind.

Christen Clifford's work is a multi-layered subversion of Klein's 1960 performance, following a legacy of women and feminist artists since the 1960s - such as Carolee Schneemann, Hannah Wilke, Yoko Ono, Marina Abramović and Yayoi Kusama - who used their naked bodies in 'radicalized gestures [...] wresting control of the aesthetic process from male artists' (Jay 2002: 59). Clifford's first subversion of the Kleinian performative aesthetic is achieved by turning Klein's careful choreography and gendered power dynamic on its head. Clifford assumes the authoritative role, dressed in formal attire, and shifts the performative language of the *Monotone Symphony* (1960) into her own *menstrual symphony*.

Once this role reversal is established, the male participants are drenched in a mixture of menstrual blood (collected from multiple donors), fake blood, and a small amount of bleach. Clifford directly substitutes IKB – the pigment developed by Klein to represent the purest essence of colour (and thus artistic sensibility) (Klein & Ottman (tr) 2016: 31) with menstrual blood, producing a stark contrast between the two works. The contrast is first and most evidently at the aesthetic level: here we have a bright, lusciously red, substance in place of Klein's cool 'immaterial' (Klein & Ottman (tr) 2016: 31) blue. We are also faced with the contrast between the artificial blue pigment of IKB, and the inclusion of real menstrual blood in Clifford's work. In contrast, the symbolic importance of menstrual blood may be framed as a signifier

for life itself. For example, Buckley and Gottlieb evaluate scholarship on interpretations of menstruation from multiple cultures where menstruation was linked to fertility and reproduction (Buckley & Gottlieb in Buckley & Gottlieb (eds) 1988: 38-40).

Another layer of feminist subversion is found in the collaboration and community around Clifford which enabled the production of *1 Want Your Blood* (2015), and her further iterations of the work, such as the display of 20 shelves of menstrual blood in perfume bottles - *1 Want Your Blood* (2013 - 2020) - as part of the exhibition *Abortion is Normal!* (Wahi & Jampol (curators) 2020) (Figure 17). To execute the pieces, Clifford literally did *want your blood*, and the collection and storing of menstrual blood from multiple individuals is instrumental to the subversive power of the work. Klein, and subsequently the Klein estate, tightly control the participatory element of his work as well as the use of IKB. For Klein, only he could permit this work to be made with his pigment, and under his control, whereas Clifford harnesses collective experience in the very fabric and material of her work. Finally, Clifford's work subverts the organisational strictness of Klein's performative language. The gendered roles are reversed, and the tone of the work is also transformed into an unapologetic celebration of the visceral materials which drench the male participants.

Menstrual Space

Different kinds of space can be found in menstrual artwork. Moving from the heightened performance space of Clifford's work, many other menstrual artworks are situated within domestic spaces. While menstrual spaces are not always domestic – they may be symbolic spaces, or bodily spaces – their construction often involves the intrusion of private moments into public space. In a *Hyperallergic* article, the art and culture website's editor-in-chief Hrag Vartanian makes some interesting – though ultimately flawed - connections between the pop cultural focus of Rosewarne, and artistic representations of menstruation:

...many pop cultural references – and even art works like Chicago's relegate the bodily function to the bathroom, which is a space that is often gendered and segregated [...] more recent work, at least in the art world, often removes the connotation of a bathroom into a more neutral space like the gallery's white box...
(Vartanian, 2013: para 14)

The artwork referenced - Judy Chicago's installation *Menstruation Bathroom* (1972) - is indeed what the title suggests: part of *Womanhouse* at CalArts, the piece features bloodied menstrual products spilling out of a domestic bathroom bin, and shelves stocked with branded menstrual products. Chicago's other famous menstrual artwork, *Red Flag* (1971), is not situated explicitly in a bathroom, however the depiction of a tampon being removed suggests the action may be taking place in a bathroom.

Red Flag is a radical representation which 'captures a private moment – the functional, not the pornographic or pathologized cunt' (Rees 2015: 121), and it is arguable that the bathroom setting is not the most significant element of these

artistically constructed menstrual spaces. As Rees states regarding *Red Flag*, all these works foreground moments usually hidden from view, bringing the private actions into a public performative realm (ibid).

Contrary to Vartanian's assertion, bathroom adjacent scenes are not the most typical setting depicted in menstrual art. In my research to-date, only four are clearly set in, or refer to, bathrooms: Chicago's *Menstruation Bathroom* (1972), Idemitsu's *What a Woman Made* (1973), Amy Jenkins' *Ebb* (1996) (Figure 18) – a video projection of a woman in a bath - and *You Beaut* (2013, 2014, 2017a, 2017b) (Figures 19 & 20), a sugar-based installation exhibited in Melbourne and London. Paying closer attention to the history of menstrual art reveals that from its emergence within the radical feminist practices of the 1970s onwards it has *always* been situated in more (apparently) neutral spaces. Of course, even that claim relies on our acceptance of the gallery space as neutral, a position that I personally would not wish to take given the entanglement of the museums sector with national and international politics (see e.g. Bertelli et al 2014), capitalist funding structures and corporate sponsorship, such as BP's controversial sponsorship of Tate, which ended in 2016 after twenty-seven years (Brown 2016: para 1) and the furore surrounding arts funding provided by the Sackler family, who have made vast sums from Oxycontin and the opioid addiction crisis (Marshall 2019: para 3). There are also politics surrounding cultural capital and class, as discussed above, which mean that museums and galleries can be inaccessible to those who are not fluent in the workings of the art world.

Domestic space on a grand scale is combined with the elevation of menstrual management materials in Joana Vasconcelos' *A Noiva* [tr. *The Bride*] (2001 - 2005). This six-metre high sculpture is made from 25,000 tampons, transforming the small and usually hidden object into a centrepiece of interior design. Ruth Green-Cole juxtaposes the pristine aesthetic of Vasconcelos' elaborate chandelier with the blood and mess of Judy Chicago's *Menstruation Bathroom*, stating that 'Vasconcelos constructs something beautiful out of an object of material culture that is associated with the abject' (Green-Cole 2015b: para 15), the mass of menstrual products providing a conceptual representation of 'the notions of consumerism and control of women's bodies' (ibid). *A Noiva* transforms the tampon from an everyday, disposable, object into a monumental domestic fixture and combines menstruation with careful crafting, a technique which is common to much menstrual art, for example the artists who utilise needlework discussed above.

There is also a notable tendency to transform menstrual materials – often tampons – into more permanent forms, which correspond to other objects of artistic or monetary value. For example, I fix the ephemerality of tampons in clay in the sculptures of *Lifetime Supply* (2017 - 2019) (see Chapter Three). The Society for Menstrual Cycle Research owns a ceremonial *bronzed tampon*, which is passed from president to president at each bi-annual conference, and there are many examples of wearable menstrual art in different forms which often use humour and surprise to deliver more complicated meditations on menstrual management.

For example, Sasha Spyrou created tampon ghost earrings (2019a) (Figure 21) based on an illustration she produced for *Periodical* (Hughes 2018b). *The Ghosts of Tampons Past* (Spyrou 2018) (Figure 22), her mural of the same name produced as part of Contrast Mural Festival, Liverpool (2019b) (Figure 23), and the earrings, are playful and personal explorations of the physical resemblance to tampons to a ghostly form. As highlighted in the wall texts for *Periodical* (Hughes 2018c), the ghosts also symbolise both the environmental spectre of a lifetime's worth of tampons, and their potential to become a dead technology, as their popularity wanes in an era of the growing popularity of reusable menstrual produces (e.g. see Owen 2019; Higbee 2019). Chella Quint's playful *STAINS™* (2011) aims to transform the embarrassing symbol of a menstrual stain into a radical fashion statement, through an array of felted and laser cut acrylic accessories and jewellery. Josefin Persdotter has also produced bloody tampon earrings, which she urges people to wear to banish menstrual stigma (Persdotter 2013: 31); and jeweller Lili Murphy Johnson's graduate collection *On the Rag* (2015) is intricate and subversive, thoughtful and direct bejewelled representations of menstrual blood and pre-menstrual symptoms such as PMS. Many of these wearable artworks shift the focus of menstrual staining and menstrual materials from private and stigma-laden spaces into the more playful space of fashion and styling.

Rather than considering the spatial component of menstrual artworks through a domestic / architectural lens as suggested by Vartanian it is perhaps more pertinent to consider the *bodyspace* (Duncan 1996) of these works. The term *bodyspace* is

central to a collection of essays in geography edited by Nancy Duncan which aim to relate sexuality and gender to 'place, space and other geographic concepts that are useful in contextualizing and situating social relations' (Duncan 1996: 1). In engaging explicitly with a turn in feminist theory towards an 'epistemological viewpoint based on the idea of knowledge as embodied, engendered and embedded in the material context of place and space' (ibid), *bodyspace* enables us to think about the materiality of the body, individualised embodied experiences, but also emphasises the contingency of the social, cultural, and (geo)political context on those experiences.

Therefore, in considering the *bodyspace* of menstrual artworks, we might explore the ways artists create a sense of closeness to their bodies in the composition, medium and form the artwork takes, for example through the direct presence of bodies and traces of bodies in the work, or indeed in the desire to make wearable menstrual art. Conversely, other artists create a distance or sense of disjointedness, through a conspicuous absence of the body that produced the menstrual blood presented, or through the presentation of un-bloodied menstrual materials. Thinking about *bodyspace* emphasises the culturally and historically specific conditions of these works, which are integral to the production of the individual embodied experiences of the individual artists. There is, however, one bodily element which is conspicuously absent from the majority of menstrual artworks - the body parts which form the boundary between menstruation and the world - the vulva.

Menstrual artworks tend to present menstruation through emphasis on the material culture of menstruation management or the material quality of menstruation itself in utilising blood as a medium and material within the production process. Those already discussed here, and others including Portia Munson (1991, 1993), Charon Luebbers (1996), Marshlore (1980), Judy Clark (1973), Carlota Berard (2004), Ingrid Berthon-Moine (2009), M Parfitt (2012) and Zoe James (2017) have all included menstrual blood as an art medium in performative or documentary form. Other artists situate menstruation as an embodied experience through performance work – such as in Catherine Elwes’ *Menstruation 1* and *Menstruation 2*, performed at the Slade School of Fine Art in 1979.³⁵ In *Menstruation 2* (1979), Elwes was sequestered in a small white room, where she remained for the duration of her three-day menstrual period. Eight years earlier, Leslie Labowitz-Starus had performed *Menstruation Wait* (1971) in Los Angeles, in this piece sitting and waiting for her menstrual period to begin. These artworks situate menstruation as an embodied and temporal phenomenon: the whole body waits, and the whole body waits for menstruation to be over.

Menstrual Protest

As well as moving personal resistance to menstrual norms from private space into public discourses, artists have utilised menstruation as a medium and subject matter to engage with broader political and social issues. These works often form an explicit, rather than implicit, political intervention which further blurs the lines between protest, activism and art practice. This may be achieved through a single moment of

action, such as Aliaa Magda Elmahdy's *Photo Action Against Isis* (2014). Elmahdy is a controversial Egyptian FEMEN activist (who now lives in Sweden), and has attracted sharp criticism from both conservatives and progressives for the photo-protest which depicts Elmahdy, naked and sitting open-legged, menstruating on an Islamic State flag.³⁶ A veiled woman is seated next to her on the flag behind a pile of excrement, facing away from the camera and lifting her middle finger. The women are painted with the letters 'IS' and 'IS', and the FEMEN logo of a line between two circles. Though the piece is staged as a protest, given the careful staging and composition, and conscious decision by the artist and FEMEN to move from direct action to photographic documentation, I propose this intervention by Elmahdy could be considered as an artwork, or as 'iconic representations of a new kind of ethico-aesthetics' (Al-Mahadin 2015: 390) rather than only a call to 'espouse public nudity as a brand of resistance' (ibid).

The conceptualisation of this piece as artwork is a site of controversy, with Jillian Steinhauer observing that the piece is 'not quite art, not quite meme' (Steinhauer 2014: para 7). Sarah Dornhof explores Elmahdy's photograph in the context of her evolving blog post stream, which Dornhof argues foregrounds nakedness 'as a manifestation of artistic and cultural portrayals of the female body' (Dornhof 2015: 276) which 'becomes an art, or an artistic performance of freedom' (ibid). Thus, the action/artwork might be located within a Western performative tradition of feminist art and activism, deploying (simulated or actual) abject bodily excretions as an act of political violence against a repressive and misogynistic regime. However, the

adoption of the tactics championed by FEMEN's brand of 'feminism without boundaries' (Natalle 2015: 381) which foregrounds Western paradigms of (women's) protest through nudity, has been criticised by many as racist, colonial and fetishistic feminism (see Nagarajan 2013). Elmadhy's action - routed through FEMEN's performative, monolithic protest tactic – may have been intended as a denunciation of Islamic State, but 'her actions were construed as a desecration of the whole belief system of Islam rather than a denunciation of ISIS' (Al-Mahadin 2015: 390), particularly 'those for whom the veil is a form of piety and devotion to God' (ibid: 391).

It is important to situate Elmadhy's action / art within the context of this debate, and to ensure that her individual perspective, or interpretations of it, do not fall into the trope of seeing Muslim women as in need of rescue from 'their' culture. This notion is prevalent in Western media cultures, becoming increasingly prevalent since the terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001 (see Abu-Lughod 2002, 2013: 6-7). Indeed, despite Elmadhy's entanglement with the FEMEN group, it is important to emphasise her individuality and agency in producing a specific politically charged work, within a particular geo-political context. Indeed, menstrual art in the West / Global North might find its own specific political targets. One such example is Sarah Levy's *Whatever (Bloody Trump)* (2015)(Figure 24), painted in direct response to the then-Presidential candidate's open misogyny on the campaign trail (Levy, date unknown: para 4), and specifically Trump's dismissal of CNN host Megyn Kelly as having 'blood coming out of her wherever' (Trump in CNN Tonight 2015: 48 seconds – 52 seconds).

The comment, widely interpreted as referring to menstruation and gendered emotional / intellectual instability sparked outrage, exacerbated by the apparent inability of Trump to use the words menstruation or vagina. In Levy's piece we see a parallel with Elmadhy, in the clear and directed attack against their respective political adversaries.

Economic violence rather than extremist religious violence is the subject of British sociologist, activist and artist Amanda Atkinson's installation *£306* (2016). Atkinson presents £306 in silver and copper coins as a powerful materialisation of the highly topical issue of period poverty (Figure 25). The artwork (and title) consists of the average amount, calculated by Atkinson, spent annually by women on menstruation management and related items and pain relief. The piece powerfully lays bare the financial cost of menstruating, underscoring the need for universal access to free menstrual products as it spills across the gallery floor. The coins refuse to be contained in a tidy arrangement, reflecting an insidious, creeping feeling of poverty that may be familiar to many who have experienced living on a limited income.

The political issue of period poverty and its relevance to wider social problems produced by the Conservative-led UK Government's policies of economic austerity from 2010 onwards is highlighted by the work through the deliberate linking to austerity and homelessness (Atkinson 2016: para 1). This critique is strengthened in the context of Atkinson's collaboration with organisations such as Liverpool's homelessness charity The Whitechapel Centre and Period Project Merseyside, where

Atkinson is a volunteer and committee member. This piece was exhibited in an explicitly political exhibition, first hosted at ROAD Studios, Liverpool, entitled *Homeless: The Human Cost of Austerity* (Atkinson (curator) 2016), which aimed to highlight 'the issue of homelessness in Liverpool, and beyond, in the context of austerity as an ideological choice, with human consequences' (Art in Liverpool 2016: para 2).

Political resistance has also been embedded in long-term art practices, for example in the menstrual imagery featured in Zanele Muholi's exhibition *Only Half the Picture* (2006) and the multiple kaleidoscopic patterned digital prints exhibited as part of *Isilumo Siyaluma* (2011). These works juxtapose gender-based homophobic violence with notions of the erotic, the abject, and acceptable discourses of womanhood. Muholi's artistic engagement with menstrual blood - as both medium and subject matter - creates bodies of work has been described as carving 'out a space of eroticism in the face of sexual violence; she uses blood as an abstracted visual metaphor which fruitfully connects menstruation and female desire to sexual trauma' (Selvick 2015: 447). As Coetzee writes, drawing on Pumla Dineo Gqola (2006), menstrual blood *on display* thus becomes an activist form of documenting women's lives, but also a provocation to patriarchy' (Coetzee 2019: 148, original emphasis). In *Only Half the Picture* (2006) Muholi presents fifty-seven intimate, candid, and often fragmented portraits of black lesbians, a community which Natasha Bissonauth (2014) has observed is simultaneously invisible and hyper visible in South Africa. Images of these members of Muholi's queer community are

presented alongside images of menstrual blood on the ground, on menstrual pads, on paper, in a bath, and on a tampon held in someone's mouth.

The series, according to Selvick, 'shows the potential for blood to be linked to the broader language of lesbian eroticism' (457). Though Selvick suggests parallels between the tampon-in-mouth in Muholi's work and the tampon-in-vagina in Chicago's *Reg Flag* (1971), I would suggest formal differences – Muholi's piece appears un-edited, while Chicago's is stylised – and differing contexts of sexuality and gender identity – Muholi's work foregrounds nonbinary and lesbian perspectives, Chicago's a cis and heterosexual one – and finally the geo-political contexts of South Africa and the United States of America produce works of very different character. While radical in their own ways, and in their own contexts, there is perhaps limited value in drawing parallels between these works by Muholi - 'a form of testimony' (Coetzee 2019: 148) for a complexly marginalised community - and Chicago, as they diverge at many points beyond the representation of a tampon in/and a body.

In a South Asian context, Nepali performance artist Ashmina Ranjit has a long-established practice which 'interrogate[s], challenge[s] and confront[s] cultural stereotypes' (Bangdel in Ranjit *et al* (eds) 2018: 74), through the deliberate alignment of her artwork with social and political activism through the use of the term *artivism*. Ranjit's menstrual works such as the installation *Shakti Svaroop* (2003) and performance *Feminine Force* (2010) make visible, and challenge, Nepal's

menstrual taboo which renders menstrual blood 'at once unclean, dangerous, yet the latent and forbidden symbol of women's sexuality, desire, and procreative powers' (Bangdel in Ranjit *et al* (eds) 2018: 76). As well as exploring taboo and gender politics, these works also reflect on the materials and duration of menstruation over a lifetime, for example through wearing a costume in *Feminine Force* made of pieces of menstrual pads in '10,725 individual pieces [...] signifying the number of pads a woman would use in her reproductive cycle' (ibid). We might connect this use of menstrual materials to make the process and management of menstruation visible with works discussed above such as *A Noiva* (Vasconcelos 2001 – 2005) and *Cloths* (Úbeda 2013), though Ranjit brings her exploration into embodied and performative experience, rather than interior architecture or alternative menstrual management practices.

Poulomi Basu has also produced menstrual artworks in a South Asian context, such as *A Ritual of Exile: Blood Speaks* (2013 - 2016), which explores culturally specific forms of violence against women found in Nepal. This series of documentary photographs and immersive video investigates the causes and consequences of ritual violence against Nepali women through the practice of *chhaupadi* in which menstruating women and girls are exiled from the home. Basu presents defiant images of courage in the face of extreme adversity, which she states 'will bring the audience emotionally close to the subjects, making them walk a mile in their shoes' (Basu date unknown: para 4).

In contrast with Ranjit's bold, self-embodied performative practice, Basu makes her interventions from an ethnographic perspective, foregrounding the experiences of the many people she works with and documents in her photography and films. Basu makes a crucial point in interviews about the project that while it 'deals with patriarchy, misogyny and untouchability, which is practiced [sic.] within the hierarchy of the caste system' (Basu in Mayes 2017: para 14) specific to its location in Nepal, menstrual stigma is a global issue. She states:

And while these practices are less apparent in the West, they exist nonetheless. These practices keep the issue of menstruation shrouded in mystery. For instance, advertisements for sanitary pads, predominantly portray blood as blue. The bloody truth is somehow unpalatable and must be kept hidden. Some of the responses to *A Ritual Of Exile* have revealed that the ignorance of menstruation and other related issues is global and not just consigned to a corner of western Nepal.
(Basu in Mayes 2017: para 20)

This underlines perhaps the most significant message embodied by political menstrual art. It is essential that we acknowledge that menstrual stigma has many manifestations across cultures, rather than viewing related issues of gender-based oppression and violence, or economic inequality, as something which affects somebody else, someone and somewhere *other*.

Conclusions

In this chapter I have advanced an in-depth typological analysis of menstrual art, considering the approaches of artists working in European, North American, South American, African, South Asian and Japanese contexts, and across generations from the 1970s to the present day. I have developed a typology which identifies seven key types or emphases within menstrual art: menstrual blood; menstrual ritual;

menstrual needlework; menstrual performance; menstrual time; menstrual space, and menstrual protest. Though I have produced this typology under these seven broad headings, it is important to state that - given the dearth of scholarly writing on menstrual art - these categories are intended as a starting point for discourse, and a framing device for deepening the critical understanding of menstrual artworks. Many of the works discussed may be interpreted in relation to several of these categories or move fluidly between them, and almost all of the artworks embody the theme of resistance in some form.

Interwoven with the main types, I have identified a number of sub-themes which surface within multiple menstrual artworks. This demonstrates the richness and diversity of this sub-genre of feminist art practice. The practices analysed here suggest that artists working with menstruation aim to provoke much more complex engagements than simply to shock the audience through the presentation of 'stigmatized fluids' (Johnston-Robledo & Chrisler 2011: 9). For example, we might consider the spirit of community building and communal action in the works of Christen Clifford, Kanonklubben, Marisa Carr and Zanele Muholi. Clifford's work also brings the subversion of gendered roles and Cartesian duality into sharp focus, while the work of Carr and Jane Woollatt evokes menstruation in different contexts of mourning. Carina Úbeda and Amanda Atkinson's works encourage reflections on anti-capitalist practices and accessibility to self-care. Menstrual materials, and tension between ephemerality and fixity are also present in many of the works, including those by Judy Chicago, Joana Vasconcelos and Lili Murphy Johnson, and

Sasha Spyrou's work fuses considerations of environmental impact and sustainability with a humorous sensibility.

I have argued that artworks with the most transformational potential for social and political attitudes are those which represent menstruation as an embodied, and bodily-situated practice, rather than valorising the materiality of menstrual blood in isolation. Though situating menstruation in relation to menstruating bodies may seem counter-intuitive in relation to reducing the potential of essentialist narratives, I propose that in anchoring to the body that menstruates, through a variety of lived experiences across the sub-genre of menstrual art, this approach emphasises the ordinary over the romantic, in what Manica and Rios might refer to as 'an aesthetic-political statement' (Manica & Rios 2017: 10).

In order to de-stigmatise menstruation it is vital that cultural representations – including artworks – do more to reveal the multiple realities and experiences of bleeding than to shroud the process in mysticism, as I discussed in relation to the work of Vanessa Tiegs. There is much critical tension between those who consider feminist art as an attempt at 'claiming the right to representation' (Nead 2002: 61) and 'the societal insistence that women be complicit in their own objectification' (McGill 2018: 2). As I will argue in Chapter Three, this cannot be achieved without rooting these representations in diverse bodies and bodies of experience, and in recognising the agency of the artists and people who menstruate being represented. In Chapter Three I link the discussion of my own art practice to the typological

analysis of menstrual art presented here. The third chapter also expands on the overarching theme of resistance which runs through the artworks analysed here, exploring how I have drawn on my own subjective experiences as a tool for challenging menstrual normativity in my art practice.

Chapter Three: Deconstructing Menstrual Norms through Art Practice

This chapter offers a critical discussion of the conditions and debates which have informed my established art practice within the subject area of critical menstrual studies, and positions my work in relation to the contemporary art history of feminist art. I present a critically informed narrative of the specific methods and strategies I utilise in dialogue with these debates, tracing how my work moves across the traditionally performative field of body art and the politicised practices and responses within the emerging historical field of menstrual art, as analysed in Chapter Two. I reflect on my art practice as a method through which to deconstruct attitudes towards menstruation and to break the conventions of what Houppert has called 'menstrual etiquette' (Houppert 1999: 2).

As a body of work, my professional practice aims to explore, subvert and critique socially constructed practices of menstrual normativity and gender performance. My practice may be defined as explicitly feminist, following Griselda Pollock's observation that feminist art should have 'a political effect as a feminist intervention according to the way the work acts on, makes demands of, and produces positions for its viewers' (Pollock in Parker & Pollock (eds) 1987: 93) due to the 'way it works as a text within a specific social space in relation to dominant codes and conventions of art and to dominant ideologies of femininity' (ibid). My practice and research are situated at an interface of broader cultural discourse and subjective experience to engage with the social, cultural, medical and political construction of menstrual normativity within a tradition of body art which developed in the latter half of the

20th century 'as a locus of the self and the site where the public domain meets the private, where the social is negotiated, produced and made sense of' (Jones in Jones & Warr 2012: 20-21). Drawing on the notion of queered practice-led research (Baker 2011), I consider the potential of my work as a tool for challenging menstrual normativity through the centring of my subjective experience through elements of my practice.

My practice significantly developed over the course of the PhD programme and it was during practical experimentation that I came to the subject of menstruation. I have moved from a background in traditional printmaking and graphic arts, producing work usually in response to literature, into performance and body-based practices which draw on a combination of art historical, socio-cultural, and autobiographical sources. I have also moved from a position of producing works which often distanced the self in order to foreground narratives produced by other people towards creating work which draws explicitly on my own subjectivity and appropriate source materials in a more discursive and critical mode through the adoption of the 'possibility of the performative act as an instantiation of political change' (Wark 2006: 87). Drawing on Rachel Allen's analysis of radical performance art in the context of critical medical humanities, the performative body explored in my visual work and fragmented text/voice of poetic experiments moves towards an image of the body 'hinged between nature and culture, "the personal as political", objecthood and subjecthood, the biological and the psychical' (Allen 2016: 195), and an embodied, fragmented and ever-changing subjective experience.

Through engagement with exhibition and the opportunity to situate my work within the discourses of critical menstruation studies, I have come to understand my practice as aiming to oppose traditional notions of an always-already objectified body while exposing both traditional creative methods and menstrual norms as examples of socially encoded and gendered 'stylized repetition of acts through time' (Butler, 1988, in Jones, 2005: 392). First, the work decentres traditional drawing-related practices in favour of the performative; second, it challenges representational conventions of the vulva and of menstruation, co-opting my body, menstrual cycle and menstrual / cervical fluid as driving components of artworks. Third, while making and reflecting on the works produced as part of this research I have experienced a shifting in my gender identity and have been empowered to identify as genderfluid and nonbinary, further disrupting gendered and menstrual performances in personal, socio-political and art contexts.

Background

One of the chief concerns of my long-term practice has been the development of performative printmaking techniques which position art labour as ritual, and the body as a dynamic tool rather than static image, through the juxtaposition of bodily processes with art process. Throughout the research process I have reflected on my current practice as the work itself, and my interpretation of it, which has shifted in relation to theoretical and disciplinary discourses and my own subjective experiences. Through this process I have also been able to excavate moments in my

earlier works that now emerge as early attempts to resist traditional art conventions and assert a more body-oriented approach to artmaking. First, I will offer some context for the development of these techniques, as I aim to de-mystify the art process in order to move into more theoretical discussion.

This reflexive process has involved re-tracing the emergence of the use of my body and the method of utilising direct physical gesture in my visual and performance work. I have identified the first appearance of these methods in a series of large-scale paintings made during life drawing sessions as a college student in 2007. While most of my fellow students worked with paper on drawing boards, using traditional drawing tools such as pencil and charcoal or painting with brushes, I had instinctively increased the scale of my paintings, taping large sheets to the walls of the studio, at first using palette knives or decorators' paint brushes (wider, stiffer and rougher than artists' brushes) and later my fingers and hands to mould the paint onto the flat surface of the paper.

I choose the word 'mould' to foreground the tactile and gestural qualities of this technique. I distinctly recall the sensation of cold paint covering my hands and of my skin tracing out the lines and shapes of the image in direct contact with the surface of the paper. Though working in a two-dimensional medium, the level of direct physical contact with the materials being used is more like working with a three-dimensional medium such as clay. The action of translating the form of the life model into the form of the painting felt like sculpting, mediated only through the

movement and sensory feedback of the body as opposed to through an external, inanimate object (e.g. a brush). In painting with my hands, I experienced a direct physical connection to the artwork which generated a sensation that can be described more like building or modelling the forms rather than drawing or painting them.

This experiment did not continue, and my subsequent work was shaped quite profoundly by my streaming into Graphic Design and Illustration at college, and in undertaking a BA (Hons) in Graphic Arts, specialising in Illustration, where I worked predominantly through the medium of silkscreen print. I recall feeling uneasy at college, and later perhaps resigned to following this trajectory, unsure of my interest in pursuing a career in this field, lacking confidence in my skills, and later feeling burdened by my perceived need to produce work in a certain way that fitted with the definitions of illustration to which I was exposed. At the commencement of my PhD in 2014, my practical work had stalled until I was invited by one of my supervisors, Prof. Colin Fallows, to participate in regular rehearsals towards a series of sound and performance productions as a member of the Colin Fallows Ensemble. This encounter with another artist's practice, and entering a process of questioning and deconstructing the conventions of twentieth-century western electric guitar playing, opened up new areas of enquiry. Through participating in this rigorous rehearsal and performance series, I was encouraged to embrace the body in its capacity to produce and perform artwork, of re-definition, of the creative possibilities of chance methods.

In the midst of this rigorous process, I found a renewed interest in my own creative work and sought to connect my earlier practice as a printmaker to performative techniques. I returned to my practice, aiming to make a connection between my interest in print and desire to develop a working method that no longer relied on the use of traditional drawing and painting, but instead opened out the creative process to thinking and making through the body.

A starting point for this development was considering the physical action of printmaking through a lens of performance and embodiment. As a printmaker I often thought of and produced work in multiples, producing images using tools and basic machines such as a silkscreen bed or a printing press, my actions in rhythm with the process and the machines in use, becoming a hybrid machine making the artwork (as we are in many other areas of modern life albeit in a more direct and industrialised form, for example factory workers as part of the assembly line). I frequently incorporated rubbings into my prints (Figure 27) as textures and re-evaluated these as elements of chance in my practice, informed by the compositional methods (e.g. see Cage in Kostelanetz 2003: 74) and printmaking techniques of John Cage, as documented in Kathan Brown's film (Brown 2013). I began a sketchbook of rubbings - of the surfaces I found in my usual routines, of nature while out walking, and from places I visited on holiday - snapshots, memories, a physical relationship to the surfaces, objects and locations.

Through the rigorous eighteen-month weekly rehearsal schedule- and later performances - undertaken with the Colin Fallows Ensemble (see Appendix Two: Part E), I developed a parallel object-relationship to the machinery of printmaking in the use of the electric guitar and amplifiers as an extension of performative gestures. I made rubbings and silkscreen prints of the guitar, cables and plectra (Figure 28), interested in the creation of artistic representations, not through my skill at drawing, but using the direct contact of the material with a surface. I wanted to connect chance, surface and performance more closely, and this led me to my initial experiments with body printing.

Towards Performing Periods

I refer to my practice as performative printmaking, as it goes beyond traditional printmaking techniques that utilise mechanical apparatus to create images. Instead, I utilise my body as printing plate and press, with the resulting – often serialised – images forming a material document of the gesture. The action of making a rubbing or body-print invites us to interact with our surroundings in a new way – whether visiting a familiar place or encountering a space or object for the first time. It provides an opportunity for discovery and a connection with the surface being recorded – whether the surface is part of a building or a road, a grassy field or leafy trail, a scrap of clothing or someone’s body.

These simple techniques produce layered and sometimes complex visual documentation of a surface which may be disrupted or augmented by the gestural

movements the artist makes. The rubbing and the body-print are both direct renderings of the surface and a reduction of it, as the drawn marks fill in and distort through the transition from three-dimensional object to a two-dimensional image on another surface. In examples where the artist's mark-making is foregrounded the image is also an expansion on the original object, infusing the image of the surface with the active presence of the image-maker and reminding the viewer that they are reading an image of an object, not the object itself. Repeating the print time and time again, whether working with external objects or your own body reinforces this discovery and develops an interactive relationship between the surface, the action of making, and the artist as invested participant rather than objective or detached observer.

Body-printing simultaneously reveals and masks the body as a fragmented portrait. The marks are made directly by the body, hold a trace of its texture and shape, yet the image created does not necessarily depict the body explicitly or in detail unlike a conventional drawing, painting or photograph might, especially within the genres of portraiture and self-portraiture where a likeness is traditionally valued. Body-printing speaks to the notion of theoretical production outlined by Sara Ahmed as developing 'her own experiences as a resource' (Ahmed 2017: 12) which enables her 'to build theory from description of where I was in the world, to build theory from description of not being accommodated by a world' (ibid). Body-printing is a key strategy and is part of my 'feminist toolbox' (Ahmed 2017: 241), for decentring the focal point of art production from traditional drawing practices to the rest of the body, recasting the

body as a site of possible thought and communication through action, rather than only in representation.

Artistic accomplishment has often been judged by the proficiency of artists to produce works of great technical detail, with manual dexterity / skill as corresponding to intellectual dexterity / skill. While using the same art media as classical traditions (paints, inks, paper, canvas) body-printing redefines the relationship between artist and media; shifting the concentration of thought/action from mind and (disembodied) hand (and visual aesthetic appreciation) to an alliance between mind and body through immediate physical gesture. The establishment of art criticism built by and around patriarchal structures - represented by the (male) genius artist in their studio undertaking an ostensibly cerebral activity by painting or sculpting fine detail with the accepted tools of the trade - relies on a paradigm which was only partially shifted by Jackson Pollock's action painting. My work draws on strategies developed by artists from the 1960s onwards whose performative work sought to demonstrate that 'the body has a language and that this language of the body, like other semantic systems, is unstable' (Warr in Jones & Warr 2012: 13). This is demonstrated in the contextualisation of my body and menstrual cycle in flux alongside the shifting of my understanding of my subjectivity and embodiment in relation to the world over the course of the research.

Body art and body-printing can disrupt this mythologised image to foreground the artist's living, moving body as a central component of production as an embodied

performative practice and puts Baker's theory of queer practice-led research into action as it 'displace[s] the entrenched Romantic model of the creative genius' (Baker 2011: 43) in a visual field (as opposed to the literary field Baker theorises). In blurring the lines between art process, autobiography, literal and figurative representation and performativity, the creative act and outputs of body-printing also significantly build on the collaboratively produced body-prints of artists such as Yves Klein, and function to disrupt 'the notion that discursive subjectivities appearing within creative artefacts are representations of the internal stable identity of the creator' (ibid). Through the deployment of my body in the artwork I produce, and the multiple potential interpretations I have experienced through time, and that can be applied by others outside my own position as a nonbinary menstruator, this body of work has developed 'as a deliberate inscription and dissemination of non-normative discursive subjectivities' (ibid).

Artistic explorations have existed alongside and within menstrual activism since the 1970s (Bobel 2007, 2010; Fahs 2016; Johnston-Robledo & Chrisler 2011) in addition to other forms of feminist art which have actively challenged the pervasive double-standards of sexism and misogyny (for example Jones 1998, 2005; Rees 2015). My research interest in menstruation stems from the development of an autobiographical art practice exploring my own experience of menstruating alongside theoretical enquiry into menstruation in everyday culture. The following reflexive text analyses artworks in different media produced as part of my research, considering their (potential) significance in relation to developing artistic processes,

the subject area of critical menstrual studies and menstrual art history, and the impact of the production of these works on me.

Shifting Cycles, Fluid Genders

Cycles (2016-2017) (Figures 29 & 30) is a series of six three-metre-long hand stitched scrolls, each divided into 28 sections - sometimes a few more or less – by a knotted red stitch. The project became a way to confront my painful, inconsistent menstrual cycle, by making a single print each evening over a six-month period by applying paint to my vulva with a small brush or my fingers. Once inked, I carefully pressed the linen against my vulva, transferring the paint and any body fluids present to the cloth. The artworks form a documented performance of my body over time, as has been seen in earlier feminist artworks, such as Eleanor Antin's *Carving: A Traditional Sculpture* (1972).

Antin's performative photographic work represents 'her body getting smaller over time, thereby subverting the idea of traditional figurative statuary as well as the usual split between male sculptor and female subject' (Shvartz 2011: 157). The work subverts the dominant masculinist / Cartesian influence on contemporary art where the subject and object are separate, as 'the tradition of figuration and the fact of Antin's own body collapse onto the single plane of her flesh, and representational art becomes a type of political representation, an exercise in feminist politics' (ibid). Thus, it could be said that Antin subverts and expands the traditional definition

of sculpture, critiquing the prevalence of diet culture and dominant Western bodily practices.

Lisa Bloom points to the erasure of Antin's Jewish identity in many interpretations of *Carving* (1972), noting that 'it is significant that Antin's body is not the generic body of any woman' (Bloom in Jones & Stephenson (eds) 1999: 156). Bloom explains that the work 'also has a great deal to do with societal constructions built on differences, a legacy not only of art history but also the physiognomically based racial theories of the last century' (ibid), referencing medical and policing conventions of photography, as well as early twentieth-century photographic practices (ibid), or perhaps earlier sequential photographs such as Eadweard Muybridge's *The Horse in Motion* (1878). *Carving* (1972) may therefore be read as a site of tension between subject and object. Antin's refusal or 'willful "failure"' (Bloom in Jones & Stephenson (eds) 1999: 157) to conform to Western gendered and ethnic ideals doubly foregrounds her subjectivity while formally mirroring scientifically 'neutral' aesthetic codes often designed to de-humanise their subjects.

The durational ritual of Antin's method has been an important influence in the development of my practice, as I developed this work as a representation of an irregular and changing menstrual cycle, a direct and public challenge to the practices and norms associated with the 'stigma of menstruation' (Johnston-Robledo and Chrisler 2011: 9). Drawing out the pace of production to mirror the rhythm of everyday life also reflects Stevens' (2011) conceptualisation of Casey Jenkins'

performance work as a form of slow dramaturgy (see Chapter Two). In producing and articulating the project as a series of actions performed over time, the artwork forms a performative document that mirrors Butler's theory of gender constitution (Butler 1988), producing and later disrupting the notion of a fixed subjectivity. The material and formal qualities of *Cycles* – regularly spaced bodily impressions on white cloth – suggests a clinical or observational setting. This may be linked with the regulatory / authoritative practices referenced in *Carving* (Antin 1972), though here it is my gender identity outside binary norms under scrutiny, rather than ethnic identity as in Antin's work. In the finished work, my menstruating body is deployed in a performative gesture that both *outs* me as a menstruator and illustrates a menstrual cycle that does not fit the normal descriptors provided by medical texts, such as those analysed in Chapter One.

To return to Fah's concept of *outing* oneself as a menstruator (Fahs 2016: 104) discussed in Chapter Two, it is important to highlight that this is not a straightforward act – as Fahs' own work with trans menstruators underscores. Menstrual *outing* is predicated on 'the deep history and presumed "naturalness" of the gender/sex binary, non-normative bodies are marginalized for their state of "otherness"' (Frank 2020: 373), and this marginalisation is not experienced uniformly across identities and communities. Therefore, it is important further to recognise that the act of menstrual outing is an act more open to some than others, in that it may carry different weights of symbolic or actual violence for different people, dependent on multiple intersecting factors. I have lived much of my life as or

perceived as a cis woman, and while my experience of gender is more as fluid and the closest term that describes my gender identity is nonbinary, I benefit from cis-heterosexual privilege in my day-to-day life, whether I identify with that gender or sexuality or not. This is in part because gender and sexuality are read as relative to their context of culturally available representations, and through the Western cultural lens of heteronormativity. In Ahmed's (2006) terms, which I will discuss below, the world is oriented towards cis-heteronormativity, and the erasure of my gender identity in my day-to-day life stems from to the cultural orientation of others to read me as cis and heterosexual because I am in a long-term relationship with a cis man.

It is important that I acknowledge that my public visibility as a menstruator is also made (safely) possible due to my position as a white person working in the relatively liberal higher education sector in the United Kingdom. The image of my body does not carry the weight of centuries of colonialist hypersexualisation and racial discrimination that continues to be projected onto black people and people of colour. This position means I am less at risk - at multiple personal and professional levels - in performing and revealing my body and breaking social conventions by utilising menstrual blood in artworks than others might be who do not benefit from those privileges.

The persistence of 'menstruation as a factor of womanhood' (Frank 2020: 382) can trigger, or exacerbate, gender dysphoria for trans and nonbinary people. Sarah E.

Frank refers to the splintering of identity by the mis-match between the gendered identity experienced by trans and nonbinary people, the experience of menstruation, and the social construction of menstruation as feminine as 'the contested self' (Frank 2020: 371). I am fortunate not to experience these feelings so acutely in relation to menstrual bleeding (though I *do* feel alienated from my body by other cyclic symptoms such as pre-menstrual swollen, tender breasts). Frank's work with trans and nonbinary menstruators speaks to Ahmed's discussion of (dis)orientation in *Queer Phenomenology* (2006), as well as to my own experience of reorienting menstruation (and having a vulva/vagina) as not exclusively cis.

Ahmed discusses the work of Teresa de Lauretis (1994) which distinguished those who always knew they were lesbians, and those who find this sexuality later:

This does not mean that those who "were always that way" don't have to "become lesbians": they might just become lesbians in a different way. While lesbians might have different temporal relations to "becoming lesbians," even lesbians who feel they were "always that way," still have to "become lesbians," [...] it requires a reorientation of one's body such that other objects, those that are not reachable on the vertical and horizontal lines of straight culture, can be reached. (Ahmed 2006: 100)

The concept of reorientation in/of/through sexuality can also be applied to trans and nonbinary people, as the personal understanding of gender and its outward expression requires us to reach beyond the static, binary lines of binary gender. This concept is represented in the entanglement of my academic engagement with menstruation and gender with my gender identity, which enables me to articulate my art practice as a site of dis- and then re-orientation. I propose that the Ahmed's concept of orientation may be a more fruitful path for conceptualising menstrual art,

and queer menstruation, than the discourses of *outing* and *passing* which tend to dominate menstruation research.

It is notable - and a subject of perhaps surprisingly little tension - that concepts relating to gender, sexual identity and sexuality have become part of the lexicon of menstrual research. Passing is a concept that has historically been associated with race (Vostral 2008: 15), as well as being part of the LGBTQIA+ cultural lexicon; for example, passing as cis or heterosexual, or being outed as trans, bi- or homosexual. Both Vostral's concept of menstrual *passing* (Vostral 2018) and Fahs' menstrual *outing* are borrowed from situations which have much more potentially violent or dangerous outcomes as they constitute a more concrete threat to the boundaries of heteronormativity.³⁷ For most (cis) menstruators, particularly in the Global North where menstrual stigma tends to manifest as investment in products for concealment and period poverty rather than cultural taboos and exclusions, the biggest threat relating to being known to menstruate is social embarrassment. Indeed, though often framed as an abject substance, and certainly a source of embarrassment if caught out with a leak, for most menstruators, the ability to menstruate and maintain a clinically normal menstrual cycle is a sign of good health (e.g. see American Academy of Pediatrics et al 2006; Stubbs 2008; Hillard 2014; Jamieson 2015). This is often different for trans and nonbinary people who menstruate, where gender dysphoria is a deeply damaging product of the binary gendering of menstruation (Fahs 2016: 82; Frank 2020).

Furthermore, I would like to call into question the usefulness of relying on trauma-laden terms such as *passing* and *outing* for articulating experiences of menstruation and gender. These terms are instruments of the interlinked structures of patriarchy, white supremacy, and cis-heteronormativity, which inscribe anyone who is not male, white, cis and straight as a deviant Other. How, then, can menstruators of all genders (and non-menstruators of all genders and sexualities) extricate their experience and identity from these restrictive regimes while the very language available to describe their identity and experience is derived directly from it? On passing and nonbinary experience, Kat Gupta writes:

To 'pass' places the burden of intelligibility on the person who seeks to 'pass': if we are not interpreted correctly, it is because we have failed to make our meaning clear. I reject that [...] I reject the implication that failure can be read - failure to be *seen* - is our fault. Instead, all we can offer is ourselves. We can guide an interpretation [/]but we cannot control it.
(Gupta 2020: 36-37)

The personal failure projected onto the unintelligible person here signals a need to reorient our notions of gender, which renders the only intelligible genders as those which conform to binary expectations. By refusing to orient *Cycles* and my later artworks (see below) primarily as representations of a cis woman's vulva, in recognition of my shifted gender identity, I am practicing a clear reorientation of menstruation from only an experience that aligns with womanhood to one that can represent (and be represented through) multiple different gendered experiences.

More than transgressing the norm of menstrual concealment, and representing a non-normative menstrual cyclical pattern, my body is also shown as not conforming

to the promise of menstruation rendered invisible and fully under control through the technological manipulation provided by hormonal contraceptives. My body continues to bleed despite a consistent use of progesterone only contraceptive. To use Bobel's term, I do not conform to the expectations of the what she refers to as the *good* or the *managed body* (Bobel 2018); I do not have a good, managed body, and in presenting the artwork I refuse to perform the good body. At a cultural high point for menstrual activism, where governments across the world are taking part in the conversation, and creating new initiatives and policies about menstrual equity, menstrual talk seems to be everywhere, the contemporary "managed body" is a narrow frame that puts control above embodied knowledge, pleasure, or power' (Bobel 2018: 33) and means that menstrual blood is still often invisible.

As Bobel discusses with Amanda Laird in an interview for Laird's popular podcast *Heavy Flow*, while menstrual activism and stigma busting talk is accepted in the mainstream, provision of products does not solve the problems of stigma, Bobel asserts that there are still very few who are inclined to show their menstruation through practices such as free bleeding, even among leading menstrual activists (Bobel in Laird 2019: 24m05s – 25m46s). Therefore, to perform and display an unruly, bleeding body, even at a time when menstruation is seemingly becoming an accepted topic of public discourse, is still a transgressive act.

To stay with the image of blood on fabric, the decision to work on fabric was in part ergonomic, being more intuitive to move flexible fabric around the forms of the body

than paper. Rather than using the printmaker's method of soaking paper in a water bath to reduce creasing and improve flexibility (and the depth of impression achieved in traditional relief print), I wanted to access the associations of fabric with clothing, the body, and everyday domesticity. In Chapter Two I discussed how Úbeda, Woollatt, and Jenkins produce contemplative works which embody the subversive potential of stitch and knit through tangible connection to their bodies, body fluid and experiences. In my work, the red stitch dividing each print is left loose and unfinished, becoming a refused embroidery. Instead, in places the oxidised menstrual blood permeates the fabric (while the acrylic paint remains sitting on the surface). My blood penetrates the fibres with blood and clots enmeshing into the warp and weft, becoming part of the base fabric, in the place of the properly embroidered threads.

Though this project led me to the subject area of menstruation and is (in its permutations) my most exhibited work, when I began making *Cycles* I did not plan what would become a durational piece of menstrual art. Through the experiences and experiments described above, I gained confidence in working with my body, and curiosity in the material and aesthetic qualities of body-printing and the rhythm of everyday life. I had produced prints of most of the surfaces of my body on paper (Figure 31) and wanted to create representations of the vulva that diverged from the 'covert visibility' (Rees 2015: 31) of the vagina where 'its reality is hidden in the overt exposure of pornography and in the controlling discursive practises of medicine' (ibid: 37). Rees argues that 'despite the apparent cultural ubiquity of the cunt' (ibid:

36) in literary and art contexts they have ‘nevertheless become separated from the “woman”’ (ibid: 12). Not only have representations of vulvae been separated from the human in these contexts, but from the practices of everyday life.

Representations of the vulva and the vagina are not absent from feminist art practices (Rees 2015): whether explicitly in the cunt art of artists such as Miriam Shapiro and Faith Wilding, and the ‘fuck paintings’ of Betty Tompkins; or symbolically, such as in the floral paintings of Georgia O’Keeffe; the highly decorative vulvae of Judy Chicago’s *The Dinner Party* (1974 – 1979), or the playful and ambiguous chewing gum sculptures of Hannah Wilke.

Carolee Schneemann’s iconic performance *Interior Scroll* (1975, 1977) is recognised as a ground-breaking moment in radical feminist performance art (Rees 2015: 227) as a reclamation of agency over the vulvic space and an exposure of ‘the myths of disinterestedness and universality’ (Jones 1998: 5) which dominated modernist conventions of art criticism and art history. Schneemann wrote in *More than Meat Joy* that she ‘thought of the vagina in many ways – physically, conceptually: as a sculptural form, an architectural referent, the source of sacred knowledge, ecstasy, birth passage, transformation’ (Schneemann & McPherson (ed.) 1979: 234). Shigeko Kubota famously parodied the perceived phallocentrism of the action painters – particularly Jackson Pollock’s particularly ejaculatory gestures – in her *Vagina Painting* performance of 1965. Here she did not reveal the vagina but produced a cutting critique of her male contemporaries with a brush attached to her gusset,

drawing erratic lines in menstrual blood red on a canvas on the floor. The vagina/vulva is, however, conspicuously absent from much menstrual art. Blood and bodies are represented in much of the work, however there are very few examples where the actual bodily sites of the leaky menstrual body is represented.

Braun and Wilkinson mapped 'various meanings of the vagina' (Braun & Wilkinson 2003: 28) reported by women which they suggest 'map onto culturally available representations of the vagina' (ibid) which are limited *and* limiting. They note that space was created for 'a number of [...] western feminists' (ibid) (citing Judy Chicago and Germaine Greer in passing) to produce creative works drawing on their engagement with the practices of women's liberation and women's health movements' such as self-examination. Lara Stevens echoes Braun and Wilkinson's observations, arguing that while pornography and the internet have greatly increased the availability of images of the vagina 'the ways in which the vagina appears, or is expected to appear, are limited [to] predominantly neat, clipped and 'clean' representations' (Stevens 2011: 171). The embedding of the vulva printing process in my everyday routine is therefore a significant act. It is a method of creating personal space, and through sharing the artwork becomes a public representation of a – *my* – cunt, not separated from my embodied experiences through eroticisation, pornification, or pathologisation. The repetitive process of producing *Cycles* was a durational performance of breaking menstrual etiquette, which then evolved through a process of reflection, dissemination and re-composition, in relation to my subjective experiences.

The aforementioned shift in my personal understanding of my gender identity significantly changes the social, cultural and political context of the work, representing an anti-essentialist reading of the body by presenting a menstruating vulva that belongs to someone who identifies outside the binary category of 'woman'. The work questions the contemporary western context of our binary gender system which reproduces the hierarchical categorisation of people and groups by gender 'rooted in a capitalist system which required femininity to be the "opposite" to masculinity in various ways' (Barker & Iantaffi 2019: 55) by deliberately presenting the project in the context of my gender identity. The work is disseminated, with contextual statements, online, in conference presentations, in exhibitions, and alongside visual representations of my menstruating body (a traditionally feminised leaky body). My practice / artworks are both a material and discursive '*embodied resistance*' (Bobel & Kwan 2019: 3 [original emphasis]) as defined by Chris Bobel and Samantha Kwan 'as acts, be they material or discursive, that oppose hegemonic norms, customs, and conventions about the body in a given context.' (ibid). The situation of the project specifically in this autobiographical context is an action which expands the frames (Bobel 2019) of menstrual discourse, the 'bloodless respectability' (Bobel & Winkler 2019) of menstrual politics and pushes against the erasure and invisibility of nonbinary identities and experiences in contemporary culture.

An important consideration in developing this project was the resistance to the prevalence of romanticised or decorated cunts which have manifested in recent artistic renderings. These might include the floral paintings of Georgia O’Keeffe in the 1920s which were often read in highly sexualised terms by contemporary male art critics (Betterton 2009: 88), the construction of a semi-mythical intellectual lineage in Judy Chicago’s *The Dinner Party* (1975), or the many illustrated vulvae, vaginas, wombs and ovaries that sit within a reinvigorated feminist visual cultural terrain found on contemporary social media. The white scrolls of *Cycles* with their carefully divided sections are intended to evoke notions of the sanitary, suggesting both the clinical setting and the private sphere: white sheets; white pads and tampons; white cotton knickers; the dread of staining any of them. In her analysis of menstrual stains in relation to Kristeva’s (1982) exploration on the abject, Breanne Fahs notes that if a menstruator has bled through their clothing, ‘they have *bled through* not only their literal underwear and pants but also transformed the boundary between public/private, self/other, and animal/human’ (Fahs 2016: 38[original emphasis]).

The ink and blood left on the scrolls are incorporated into the art process as a mark-making technique in a direct retort to the persistent ‘emphasis on the private, personal nature of bleeding’ (Houppert 1999: 81) and standardised rather than individualised notions of the menstrual cycle. Furthermore, in exposing the variations in my own cycle through the *Cycles* prints, alongside my other works in poetry, and in talking openly about my periods in relation to these works, I aim to counter this normalised period and present a personalised account of a menstruating body.

Through engaging in this menstrual performance and through the formal continuity of the six scrolls, and the material signifier of my presence in the labour of the hand-sewn hems and dividers and my body/blood, I hint at a more complete subject in relation to an otherwise fragmented image of the body.

The reiterative process of making the prints, and the repetition in my other works, are my attempt - to paraphrase Sara Ahmed - at not reproducing the grammar of patriarchy (2017: 4) which underpins the narrative of menstrual taboo. Judith Butler refers to 'a recurrent moment [...] when we grasp that we are in the midst of reiterating a norm, even that a norm has entered into a basic sense of who we are, and start to deviate [...] from that more obedient sense of repetition' (Butler in Ahmed 2016: 484). My art practice begins and stays with a realisation that for most of my adolescent and adult life I too had been reiterating the gendered norms of menstrual stigma. To make these works is *to fall out of alignment* (Ahmed 2017: 55) with what is expected: silence, shame and deference to taboo and to recalibrate the way in which I act out my period, both at a personal level and as an artist facing an outside audience.

At the core of the *Cycles* project is a desire to de-mystify menstruation and bodies that menstruate as distinct from the norm, as a phenomenon that affects most of the population in some way – directly as menstruators, or indirectly as the partners, friends or relatives of people who menstruate. It aims to broaden the representation of vulvae and vaginas to exist outside the erotic, the sensational, the medical and the

abject. This seems particularly important in the current politically febrile and polarised cultural context, where the rights and experiences of women and other minority groups seem to be questioned or denied.³⁸ Rather than a phenomenon that we continue to conceal - with public revelation constituting an *outing* - I aim to present the everyday-ness of menstruation, and suggest an ever-changing, fluctuating body, as no two vulva prints or blood stains are the same. These works are at once intensely personal and present a fragmented and incomplete picture of myself as the artist, which can only be understood within the context of my personal narrative of *coming into* my gender, which are available through discussion, gallery presentation, additional writings such as this thesis and / or oral presentations.

Though my work presents an alternative image of menstruation, when read alongside the online medical advice (analysed in Chapter One), it becomes apparent that neither art nor medicine can provide a complete picture alone. Both medical and 'vernacular knowledge and belief' (Newton 2016: 1) which inform the overarching cultural constructions of menstruation outlined above are incomplete. Reading cultural, medical and artistic articulations through each other offers the potential to entangle everyday 'folk' (Newton 2016) meanings, medical knowledge and personal experience towards surfacing empowered, nuanced understandings of menstruating bodies made accessible through the dissemination of artworks and autobiographical context in multiple forms.

Cycles is an example of a project which has multiple possible reconfigurations to be presented in different contexts, formats, budgetary constraints and locations.

Diversifying the project beyond the original form also became an important exit strategy, as the commitment to producing daily body-prints became a restriction rather than a liberation. While the initial months created an empowering space for self-exploration and reflection, this itself became a restrictive regime which mirrored the increasing sense of medicalised bodily surveillance I experienced in taking the contraceptive pill. Rather than feeling in control of my reproductive health and menstrual cycle through the use of hormonal contraceptives, I felt under constant (self-) scrutiny to take the medication at the correct time each day, or risk pregnancy or disrupting the balance of my cycles further. This feeling became entwined with the ongoing art project and precipitated the end of the daily body-printing and a desire to present the work in different forms which could distance them from the original process. This artistic process of aesthetic and conceptual re-presentation mirrored the personal process of what I now think of as *coming into* my gender gradually, as my confidence and understanding grew - rather than a single moment of *coming out*. Rather than understanding my journey with gender as an outward facing process of *coming out* - of the metaphorical closet, or of cis-heteronormativity - or even coming out into a new community, I have experienced it as a deeply personal and reflexive process of *coming in*: to self-knowledge, self-care, and self-recognition.

Infinite Cycles (2017) (Figure 32) is an installation produced for *Comfort Zones* (Hughes & Petersen 2017a), a collaborative exhibition with Eva Petersen at Liverpool School of Art & Design. In this piece I aimed to reconfigure the static images of *Cycles* using moving image to emphasise the constantly shifting process of menstruation, in contrast to the regimented pattern we are culturally primed to expect. The piece also aimed to foreground the way the imprint of my vulva changed each day, undermining the normative idea of the body as stable and constant. *Infinite Cycles* consisted of four digital screens housed in a custom-built plinth. Following our agreed theme of exploring our own comfort zones, and those of the viewers, the plinth was designed at coffee table height with a wide margin around the four central screens. This forced the viewer to lean over the plinth, while vinyl lettering on the floor instructed *no climbing on the artwork* to produce a sense of discomfort and contradiction between the implied invitation to lean in to look, and the disembodied authority of the text within the context of a gallery space. Each screen played a looped slideshow film of vulva prints (digitally photographed from the *Cycles* scrolls), with the films set to different frame timings on each screen. This aimed to enhance the discomforting effect, further suggesting the irregular experience of time through literally elongating or shortening each cycle as it played, depending on which screen the viewer focused on.

The installation was placed in the centre of the space with *Yes, I am Looking at You* (2017) by Petersen exhibited on the adjacent wall (Figure 33) and reflected into the room on the gallery windows. Petersen's triptych of large-scale gloss prints is part of

a series of self-portrait photographs of close-ups of her mouth, taken before, during and after a vocal performance. Here Petersen reclaims the eroticised and fetishised mouth of the female musician in 'response to the objectification of her performances and the stereotypical photography sessions and an exploration of the threat of leading women performers' (Hughes & Petersen 2017b) she experienced in her career in the music industry. Petersen's prints dominated the space, commanding the attention of the viewer (or the casual passer-by through the space's floor-to-ceiling windows) in the use of vivid colour, gloss print finishing, and the monumental scale of the image. In contrast, I designed the plinth to restrict the movement of the viewer around the space and direct their gaze downwards into the comparatively small screens and idiosyncratic film timings. Both our artworks unapologetically presented our bodies, and the blurring of the line between public and private, and professional identities versus intimacy, especially as the exhibition took place in our place of work and study.

In 2018 the opportunity arose to develop my curatorial experience through a collaborative project, as I was invited by Dr Kay Standing to be co-applicant for funding in a public engagement project on menstruation. Our application was successful, and we were invited to participate in Being Human, an annual festival of humanities research across UK institutions. As part of our programme of events, I curated an exhibition of menstrual art entitled *Periodical* (see Appendix Two Part A). The enthusiastic reception of the project from the festival organisers demonstrates

the contemporary relevance of menstrual studies, and the role of art and curatorial practices in communicating research in this area to the public.

Though on a much smaller scale, the project drew reference from recent exhibitions at the Wellcome Collection, through the deliberate juxtaposition of archival materials with contemporary artworks. As an organisation, the Wellcome Collection specialises in producing events and publications that ‘encourage new ways of thinking about health by connecting science, medicine, life and art’ (Robertson et al 2017: 5).³⁹ Similarly, *Periodical* aimed to contextualise my practice in relation to the visual cultures of menstruation, and with menstrual practices across time and location, for example through the inclusion of Poulomi Basu’s *A Ritual of Exile* (2013 - 2016) and menstrual product advertisements from magazines held in the Liverpool John Moores Special Collections and Archives. The advertisements were displayed thematically, though they were not labelled using these themes to avoid an overly didactic or leading approach, and to allow for the interpretive agency of the viewer within the curation. This approach aimed to offer a familiar and accessible grounding for visitors to engage with the materials on display and draw their own conclusions around how the materials contributed to their own menstrual attitudes.

Through this project, curatorial practice has become a core research method and means of publication and presentation within my wider practice. The production of an exhibition requires the synthesis of different methods, expertise and processes in order to compile, curate and publicly present a coherent body of work. As discussed

in Chapter One, the archival work undertaken as part of the *Periodical* project became the basis of the case study of menstrual tropes presented through print advertising in the United Kingdom. The curatorial process of archival research, thematic analysis, and display design produced a space to synthesise theoretical and historical work with my art practice. The curatorial texts I produced for the exhibition have been significantly expanded on within this thesis, as a basis for Chapter Two and conference presentations, as well as acting as starting points to invited online publications with Standing, and a forthcoming contribution to the *Encyclopaedia of Gender, Media and Communication* (ed. Ross 2020) in collaboration with Dr Camilla Mørk Røstvik. These developments underscore the significance of the visual, temporal and spacial thinking often materialised through curatorial practice as part of my wider approach to research.

The exhibition also pushed my practice forward, providing further opportunity to explore scale in the re-presentation of *Cycles*, adding a further two months of (existing) prints to the initial six-month block. *Almost Eight Cycles* (2018) (Figure 34) reconfigures *Cycles* as a large-scale print installation composed of 242 individual digital reproductions of the original body-prints. This iteration of the project contrasts with the presentation in *Comfort Zones* (2017), and the original format which was exhibited in a vitrine at both events. While the part-unfurled scrolls in the vitrine, and the wide border of the plinth suggested a gentler pushing of the boundary between private and public, the grid of prints in *Almost Eight Cycles* fill the entire wall in an overt gesture which removes this boundary. The neat, rigid gridlines

of the bare wall behind the prints produce a pacing effect, akin to the rhythmic lines of Bridget Riley's paintings. The slightly-larger-than-life vulva prints covering the wall nearly from floor to ceiling suggest the inescapability of the cycle as a central focus in the lives of menstruators, a theme I have also addressed in poetic works that explore and deconstruct medically constructed notions of menstrual normativity.

In contrast to the regimented grid of *Almost Eight Cycles*, I produced *unmade, remade, 28 days* in 2019, a digital collage combining 28 daily body-prints of my vulva overlaid with handwritten notes drawn from influential texts (such as Kathy Acker, Dallas Baker and Roszika Parker) alongside diaristic personal reflections and excerpts from my thesis-in-progress (Figure 35). This work was produced at a time when I wanted to re-affirm my gender identity as nonbinary and fluid following an unpleasant incident of online mis-gendering. In addition to combining words which I felt affirmed my personal experience of gender and artmaking, I attempted to re-configure the vulva prints to reflect a breaking of the regulatory norm of binary gender. The piece abandons the framing device of the grid; instead the irregular borders of the printed image are formed by the overlapping of the rectangular digital photographs of each body-print as they overlay and weave together.

My body-prints and photographic self-portraits such as *Dys-men-o-rrho-ea* (2019) (Figures 36) weave together to present different, interlinked facets of my everyday experiences of menstruation. In *Dys-men-o-rrho-ea* I stage a series of private performances, to make visible the physical and emotional discomfort created by

severe period-related pain. The performances also produced body-prints on paper (Figure 37) which contain fragmented medical texts and are documented in video, with a series of photographs taken at the end of each session.

I also explore the theme of menstrual management materials in my sculpture *Lifetime Supply* (2017 - 2019) (Figure 38). This piece is unfinished (and will remain open-ended), as I produce hand-made tampons in painted clay. The sculptures are deliberately ambiguous, appearing at first like an actual tampon, but as they are inspected more closely it is clear they are something else entirely, more like a drawing than a realistic rendering of a tampon. They are small, incongruently heavy objects - similar in size and shape to a bullet, another penetrating object - and more solid than an actual tampon. This is quite interesting when we think about the iconography of the tampon in relation to the vagina and in the context of other menstrual artworks (see Chapter Two).⁴⁰ The tampon can be considered to be a solid plug - an object with definite form - inserted into the negative space of the vagina to hold back the menstrual flow. This follows the traditional rhetoric of the woman as vessel, a being cast by Cartesian notions of transcendence and psychoanalysis as being eternally lacking and leaking. The tampon is, however, a receptacle used to collect menstrual blood. The object itself is not as solid as it seems and is only a matrix to be filled as it absorbs menstrual blood from the vaginal canal. Like any other vessel, it can overflow. The tampon is a tricky object: an icon for periods and their associated (social and physical) discomfort and more recently an icon for the environmental damage caused by single-use menstrual products.

Period Poems & Performances

Key themes in my poetic artworks are appropriation and control. I draw on literary cut-up through an explicitly feminist lens following Kathy Acker's notion of languages of the body, which she referred to as '...languages which I can only come upon (as I disappear)' (Acker 2006: 166), which are plural, rather than essential or singular (Acker 2006: 167). Acker describes her writing method as blurring the boundary between 'fake and real autobiography' (Acker in Kuipers 1998 in Scholder & Martin 2018: 36) in her early work as a form of creative play. She works in an 'autobiographical mode' (ibid) despite working with source material that 'is not very autobiographical' (ibid). The use of appropriated material opens a possibility to write in a mode that has elements of autobiography - in my poetry, an emotional resonance - while decentring and distancing an individual subject, in contrast to the explicitly subjective context of the visual works discussed earlier. I intend for these text-based works to be read alongside and against my visual performative practice, as an ongoing dialogue between experiential and critical modes.

I began a series of explorations of cut-up (documented in Appendix One, Part A) in 2015, in parallel with my early body-prints. While I had engaged in various forms of writing within and outside education, I had rarely felt confident or qualified to approach writing anything creative or expressive in the same way I have visual art. My approach to cut-up poetry began intuitively - inspired by Acker, Gysin, and Burroughs - as an experiment prompted through a chance encounter while browsing colour swatches at a Do-It-Yourself superstore. The paint swatch names were in

themselves a form of cut-up, with words and names borrowed from the arts and popular culture. The juxtaposition of these single or paired words, gridded in the display cabinet, blurred the distinction between so-called high and low culture to the point of abstraction. I brought a selection of these cards home, which, kept in the same (chance) order they were selected from the display, became my first poem, tentatively and obviously entitled *Paint*:

...crown jewels love junkie,
dante's cardigan
spontaneous combustion dressed to the nines

dog rose merlin's robes...
(Hughes 2015a: lines 20-24)

From here, I discovered a well-known paint producer's database of colour swatches, which I transcribed into a notebook in pen and pencil, following the same grid layout as the original but omitting any visualisation of colour. This transcription removed the words from their association with colours - and any meanings this produced - which I then used as the basis for producing the word-palette for my poems. The selection was completed using a range of chance methods, such as dropping a length of string across the page or throwing dots of white-tack at the grid, as documented in my short films *Chance Methods Number Two* (2015b) and *Chance Methods Number Five* (2015c).

Influenced directly by Acker's cut-up method, I began to mix a palette of paint swatches with fragments of text from a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. This

enabled me to form more recognisable sentences, rather than the straightforward juxtaposition of phrases in my initial experiments. This provided a verbal equivalent of creating a ground or a wash in painting – over and into which I pour the abstracted colour-words. I pushed these words around the page, writing by hand and re-writing – collaging by another means, echoing my incomplete creative process. This quasi-cut-up method utilised chance to create a limited verbal palette from which to shape, collage, or sculpt my poetry. It was a sorting device, which enabled me to work with few found materials to create something new.

Instead of attempting to write from my whole vocabulary, or to create deeply personal or highly emotional works, the poem and its images and allusions are generated by sculpting what emerges from the word-palette, not a specific or pre-determined idea. This might be compared to the incorporation of silence and/or ambient noises in soundworks by John Cage (see Kostelanetz 2003), or to collage or readymade art. By ordering and re-ordering the words and phrases that emerge from chance processes and intuitive selections, through the introduction of rhythm, shape, texture, I aimed to produce poems akin to abstract visual works; colourfields, non-figurative, and ambiguous. The following excerpt from *Tomato* (2015) demonstrates how I combined paint swatch words with connecting fragments from another text:

edible naked light is a red desert,
berry-type pin cushion -
nightshade in painted bark spell.
tongue library, consumed

weathered hide behind volcanic
brick lip gloss...
(Hughes 2015d: lines 1-6)

Though these writing methods included some physical gestures (dropping, throwing, hand-writing), I wanted to develop a new chance method which combined the immediate corporeality of body-printing with cut-up writing. By preparing paper with blocks of text in masking fluid before body-printing, and later erasing the masking fluid, I was able to produce three different creative outputs at once. First, the (private or filmed) performance of body-printing; second, body-prints in acrylic on paper; third, poems composed entirely by the unpredictable interaction of fleshy body with paint, brush, paper and the hard floor beneath it through the performative action of my body. These works include the largescale *Space* triptych (2016) and the *Dys-men-o-rrho-ea (one - sixteen)* series (2019j) (see above and Appendix One, Part A).

The direct physical link to my body is central to both of these works, albeit in very different contexts. An outward, neutral position is assumed in *Space* triptych (figure 30). These works, produced before menstruation became the central theme in my practice, are life-sized full body-prints in black paint on large sheets of paper. The bodily forms appear striated with gestural marks from my coarse brushes, and surrounded by wide margins of empty paper. The printing process physically cut-up blocks of text copied from Wikipedia articles relating to space, and the fragmented - partially erased and illegible - text running the print hints at the vastness of the

universe in comparison to the human form. In contrast, the sixteen smaller prints of *Dys-men-o-rrho-ea* represent my body in fragments, with phrases from the NHS Choices article about menstruation (analysed in Chapter One, see Appendix Four) scrawled into the prints using the method outlined above. Here, my gaze is turned inwards, with scraping, swirling, and dripping marks shooting through the blood-red and purple-blue-bruise tones suggestive of the fleshy interior of the body and the physical pain and psychological strain of severe dysmenorrhoea. These were amongst the final works produced during the course of this research project, and synthesise the key elements of appropriation, cut-up and performative printmaking with the subject matter of menstruation. This approach followed a series of earlier experiments in appropriating and re-working the online medical texts into text-only poems and live performances.

a period is... (2016a) and *a period is...ii* (2018) (Figures 39 & 40) developed in response to the texts analysed in Chapter One, and was composed by selecting, redacting and permuting phrases, stemming from a desire to explore my experience of not feeling accounted for and listened to in my ongoing encounters with medical professionals regarding my own menstruation. In the tradition of cut-up writing, the source text is re-appropriated into a radically different context. Barry Miles' biography of William Burroughs - one of the earliest and most well-known of literary cut-up writers - discusses the analogy of language as a virus. Here, Miles outlines Burroughs' conviction that the only way to neutralise the power of those in control 'is to destroy their means of control: their language' (Miles 2010: 126). While my

poems are collaged from found words that are themselves divorced from any single subjective experience, they can still hold an emotional resonance. Through permuting and repeating these phrases and words, I attempt to recreate the feeling of searching for medical advice online, skimming texts and finding little reassurance.

The poem appropriates text from the *NHS Choices* website, intertwining words of medical authority with personal experience and emotion. This intervention aims to deconstruct and complicate the language of menstruation I found while consulting everyday medical resources online. I enmesh my embodied experience with these texts as a personal means of questioning and reconfiguring the ways in which menstruation and menstruating bodies are understood by moving the text from its assumed original context as medical to a more explicitly cultural space. Through these experiments there is a potential to highlight the complex entanglement of culture and medicine in the understanding of menstruation that has been so well-articulated by many of the scholars cited here. Through exposing and entangling the medical with the cultural in this way, my research underscores the extra-clinical space of online medical advice as part of everyday experience, as a cultural medical hybrid text rather than a strictly specialist part medical authority that is traditionally inaccessible to lay audiences.

In the poem I aim to mirror the feeling of frustration that arose while reading online advice which presents little space for variation, outliers or non-conforming bodies and cycles. For example, the repetition of *a woman* and *bleeds* reflects my irritation

that the original text described bleeding categorically as something women do. The exasperation was twofold: first, the implication that womanhood should be defined by the ability to menstruate; second was the idea that only cis women menstruate. In the reiteration and fragmentation of these phrases, I open this orthodoxy up to question rather than reinforce it as fact, repeating the words until they lose their meaning and their power to define menstrual experience.

This sentiment is carried through as my poems are translated into soundworks, as a process of returning the words to the body through the use of my voice reflects the performative form of the visual works. *Un-voiced* (Hughes & Petersen 2017c) combines a spoken word poem composed by redacting the same advice used for *a period is...* (2016a) with non-vocal breathing sounds composed and performed by Eva Petersen. The piece plays on the expectations of a performance, and the expectation of silence that surrounds the social stigmatisation of menstruation. Petersen is a vocal artist whose entire performance for the piece is comprised of pre-vocal breathing exercises. In contrast, I dispassionately read words pulled from the medical text: the people addressed in the text – *you, woman, girl* – and the words *period* and *vagina* emerge from the breathing sounds. The tension between the intimate breathing sounds and the disjointed, context-free words alludes to the various ways contemporary culture tends to silence or homogenise individual experiences. When played on a loop (as the piece was conceived) during the *Comfort Zones* exhibition (Hughes & Petersen 2017a), the repetitive, fragmented phrases echo (sonically as well as metaphorically) the growing sense of frustration associated with my ongoing

exploration of everyday medical texts and traditional ideologies and attitudes surrounding menstruation.

The most radical example of appropriation in my text-based work to date was presented in the performance *Conditions: Period* (2019) first performed as part of the 'Blood Moon Howl' closing event for the 2019 Society for Menstrual Cycle Research conference.⁴¹ This performance combined a playback of *Un-Voiced* with a live reading of the *NHS Choices* article on menstruation (analysed in Chapter One), with occasional comments and gestures scripted as 'asides' to the audience. Here, the everyday medical advice was lifted wholesale, and read to a room of feminist scholars and leaders in the interdisciplinary field of critical menstruation studies. The context of the audience immediately subverted the sense of authority that might usually be attributed to such a text by the reader (as discussed in Chapter One). Instead, the text was turned into a semi-autobiographical comedy, as I performed a fluid character - expert, believer, cynic, 'sanitary product' salesperson, comedian – that acted as a critique of the tone and content of the published advice. By combining live performance with recorded soundwork I was able to produce a layered and disjointed experience, with the closeness of Petersen's breathing this time contrasting with both the staccato recorded phrases and my hyperbolic live reading. In the re-appropriation of medical texts and re-embodiment of my work through sound and performance I engage my voice and understanding of menstruation, to investigate sites of tension where my own work might further

deconstruct or become complicit in normative ideas and practices of menstruation in wider culture.

My experiment with this writing method also draws on an inability to find the words to express my feelings of unease and constriction perpetuated by menstrual norms. The cut-up method provides a vehicle to home in on single phrases to allude to moments of clarity among the chaos of feeling, fleeting, and barely tangible images. The writings of Brion Gysin and William Burroughs have informed my approach, particularly the notion that the literal cutting up of language could potentially 'destroy the assumed natural links, that in the end are but expressions of Power, the favourite weapon of control or even the essence of control' (Gysin in Fabre 1986 in Kuri 2003: 164). In their respective works, Gysin and Burroughs aimed to subvert and resist the status quo of capitalist control on thought and society, which to Burroughs was proliferated and enforced by the viral workings of language.

Kathy Acker also worked with cut-up in her novels as a strategy for resistance against patriarchal dominance of Western culture and storytelling. She collaged passages from other published texts into her work, in what she has referred to as 'looking for the body, my body...' (Acker 2006:166). Acker's description of her methods resonates deeply with my own process. My writing method fragments meaning and disrupts interpretation as a challenge to the audience(s) through a subversion of the didactic authorial voice. As with Acker's work, the methods I developed in order to open my practice to include language – my poems constructed of things which 'I

cannot *make up*' (ibid [original emphasis]) – provide me with the raw materials I need to make something new. My method constructs a limited verbal palette from which to collage or sculpt my poetry. It is a sorting device, which enables me to work with few found materials to create something new. Instead of attempting to write from my whole vocabulary. Importantly, this does not mean that this verbal palette cannot be used to write from a subjective perspective, and my process has developed from using cut-up to both create abstract works without a pre-determined idea (as in the earlier poems discussed above and documented in Appendix One) *and* deliberately to appropriate specific texts in order to critique and subvert their usual meaning(s).

By ordering and re-ordering the words and phrases I obscure the 'host' texts, remove their original purpose, and impose my own structures, potential meanings and ideas on them through a process of juxtaposition and layering. I delete, obscure, de-contextualise, reshape and remodel the poem from outwards from this skeleton. Acker explains the importance of revisiting and recycling texts as a fundamental expression of life and communication and a form of resistance against control, stating:

I've never been sure about the need for literary criticism. If a work is immediate, alive enough, the proper response isn't to be academic, to write about it, but to use it, to go on. By using each other, each other's texts, we keep on living, imagining, making, fucking, and we fight this society to death.
(Acker 2006: 7)

Acker artfully deployed the visceral power of the written word when reading and writing is approached as an experience rather than an academic exercise. Her writing

method and its products foreground the affective possibility of writing as a medium, producing the immediate affective responses more typically associated with visual art, sound art or music.

Another influence in the adoption of texts found in my everyday and research environment into my artwork is the work of Gilbert & George. London-based art duo Gilbert & George also bring the personal into their work through the collection, photographic documentation and collaging of words from their immediate environment in the streets surrounding their home in Fournier Street, East London, into what could be considered a semi-autobiographical environmental cut-up. Through the appropriation of graffiti, and sensitive photographic portraits of local locations and residents, they access the performative and disruptive power of the cut-up in their works, through combining visual and linguistic collage.

I propose that these compositions are expressions of found texts that operate as fragmented cut-up poems running parallel to the figures presented in their works. A clear illustration of their appropriation of the written word into their visual works is the *Dirty Words Pictures* (1977) series. As Jonquet observes, in these works the artists 'abandoned the intimacy of [their] *tête-à-tête* with each other' (Jonquet 2004: 90) and 'opened up [their] pictures to other people' (ibid). These works feature people other than the artists themselves, and while they are not the first of their works to contain text, they are the works that most strongly align with my developing understanding of an expanded cut-up. One work from the *Dirty Word*

Pictures series which incorporates found texts into their work, *Queer* (1977)

incorporates portraits of the artists, the London skyline, broken windows, two male models from their neighbourhood, and the word 'queer' collaged from photographs of graffiti.

Through the inclusion of the graffiti in the work – an act almost certainly intended to threaten, embarrass or hurt - along with their self-portraits and the portraits of other men, the artists claim the word for themselves, subverting and neutralising its original intended meaning. This claiming of language beyond their control, and its appropriation within their own world and work is for me a clear illustration of Gysin's call to take the words 'of someone else living or dead [...] words don't belong to anyone' (Gysin in Gysin & Burroughs 1978: edition has no page numbers) – and of the spirit of cut-up in action in predominantly visual works.

Appropriation and the Feminist Nude

In this section I return to my observations on essentialism and representations of the body at the end of Chapter Two. Women artists and feminist artists – particularly those working with the body – have been often placed within the art historical and critical canon as those who deploy 'a set of performative practices that [...] instantiate the dislocation or decentering [sic] of the Cartesian subject of modernism' (Jones 1998: 1).⁴² Amelia Jones identifies the performance works of Carolee Schneemann as an important early example of this decentring in which Schneemann deliberately established her own body 'as visual territory'

(Schneemann, 1979 in Jones, 1998, 2) where she worked 'within the language of abstract expressionism but against the grain of masculinist assumptions' (Jones 1998: 2-3).

Schneemann's works such as *Eye Body* (1963) and *Interior Scroll* (1975) remain highly relevant, as masculinist assumptions prevalent in the 1960s and 1970s in the West, and the sexual objectification of women's bodies, continue to penetrate contemporary art and culture. In 2020 the cultural hegemony is still constructed through and for the male gaze (Mulvey 1975), awash with visual material that seems designed to appeal directly to a homogenised heterosexual male audience.

Contemporary visual culture is repeatedly reinvested with complicated and contradictory messages which continuously contest the ownership of women's bodies as ominously decried in Barbara Kruger's graphic print *Untitled (Your Body is a Battleground)* (1979). For all the 'potential to achieve radically dislocating effects' (Jones, 1998: 9) Jones attributes to the works of Schneemann and her contemporaries such as Yayoi Kusama, she concedes that they have not fully displaced modernist assumptions and that 'these structures are still so firmly in place so much of the time' (ibid). As Jones points out, we are not outside the structures and assumptions of patriarchal society (ibid).

This brings to mind Sara Ahmed's observation that '...patriarchal reasoning goes all the way down, to the letter, to the bone' (2017: 4) and her need 'to find ways to not reproduce its grammar in what I said, in what I wrote; in what I did, in who I was'

(ibid). In terms of art practices, how, then, can the continued framing and interpretation of these practices through the assumptions of modernism (even while opposing them) possibly support the potential radically to dislocate the grip of patriarchy from cultural production? These overarching discourses – the grammar of patriarchy – must be resisted.

One of the defining questions of third-wave feminist debate was succinctly articulated by Chris Bobel: ‘What should feminists do about the category “woman”? [...] work within it or destroy it?’ (Bobel 2010: 155). The place and legitimacy of women in art both as producers and as represented in artworks has been debated by feminist art historians and art critics. Jones summarises criticisms of body art in the 1980s as often centred on an ‘absolute need to remove the female body from representation’ (Jones, 1998, 23) as it is impossible to remove the female body from its pre-existing encoded meaning as a sex-object of the male gaze. Echoing Janet Wolff (1990), Jones observes that for those invested in this line of argument, in patriarchy:

any presentation or representation of the female body was seen as necessarily participating in the phallogentric dynamic of fetishism whereby the female body can only be seen (and, again, the regime is visual in these arguments) as “lacking” in relation to the mythical plenitude represented by the phallus. Feminist artists, then, simply must avoid any signification of the female body (since it is always already an object).

(Jones 1998: 23)

If we take this to be the case, then what does this signify in terms of bodily autonomy and agency – in terms of artistic and everyday practices? How can we

move towards gender equity if the overriding narrative that we must abide by is that of the very system we are attempting to overthrow?

As many artists and activists have already done, it is necessary to take control of the types of images that are presented of women's bodies, in all their forms, rather than to continue to uphold a visual regime of images made by, through and for the male gaze, or to live in fear of its shadow. It is not our bodies, our flesh and its processes, that are at fault, it is their inscription within a signifying regime that is overwhelmingly patriarchal and masculine. Janet Wolff has suggested that this means it is impossible to present images of female bodies without the risks of being 're-appropriated by the dominant culture, and read against the grain of their intended meaning' (Wolff in Jones (ed) 2003: 424) or 'that they may collude with a kind of sexist thinking which identifies woman with the body, and assumes an unchanging, pre-given essence of the female' (ibid). It may be impossible to control how visual representations of *any* bodies are received by individuals in the everyday, however to attempt to avoid any signification of one's own body at the very least closes down all potential to effect change in any individual personal perception and, in my opinion, acquiesces to the hegemony of normative power relations under patriarchy.

One of the critics of works that present the (woman) artist's own body, Mary Kelly, describes the strategic avoidance of placing her own body within *Post-Partum Document* (1973-1979) because she identifies the presentation of images of

women's bodies in art as 'extremely problematic' (Kelly in Smith 1985: 152). She continues:

Most women artists who have presented themselves in some way, visibly, in the work have been unable to find the kind of distancing devices which would cut across the predominant representations of woman as object of the look, or question the notion of femininity as a pre-given entity.
(Kelly in Smith 1985: 152)

This kind of ideological censorship undermines the possibility of women and nonbinary artists to claim ownership and agency over their bodies and images of them, based solely on how others might interpret them. It is the very same oppressive impulse as the patriarchal structuring of the male gaze which Kelly and others attempt to curtail. Though Kelly is herself an artist, this position assumes a critical distance which does not bear witness to the process of making or the duration and embodied experience of practice and performance. It is an image oriented critical position offering little creative agency to the practitioner within their work, and fetishises them as object in the suggestion of the body image as potentially being wholly owned by anyone other than the artist themselves.

Jones explains this 'negative attitude towards body art on the part of many feminists' (Jones 1998: 23), stems not only as unease at the production of women's bodies 'as objects of the gaze' (ibid), but also 'in part from an anxiety about the dangers of the artist (especially the female artist) exposing her own embodiment (her own supposed "lack") and this compromising her authority' (ibid). This kind of anxiety can only be formed through compliance with the oppressive terms of structural patriarchy: by constructing individuals who are not / do not conform to cis-

heteronormative masculinity as sex objects to whom patriarchy denies agency and self-determination; it imposes a single cultural reading on the body which strategically undermines other aspects of their existence outside objectification; and finally, it renders any action against this, or reclamation and re-presentation on their own terms as subject rather than objects as impossible.

To move towards this space requires a proliferation of culturally available representations of the body, rather than a reduction of them. In my work, for example, I present multiple fractured and shifting performative self-portraits; there can be no essential body in *Cycles* (2016 - 2017) as each print is completely unique, exposing an absence of continuity in one subject, let alone claiming it for any category of person. If language, as Burroughs asserted, is a virus, then the grammar of patriarchy (Ahmed 2017: 4) seems to have found an unknowing host in this strand of feminist thought. There is still a need to expand the parameters of representations of the body available in contemporary culture, and to assert control over the images we make available in order to counter the continued polarisation of gendered oppression in contemporary culture.

Comments such as those made by Kelly, Wolff, and others are examples of one group of feminists policing what another group may say and do, which Sara Ahmed refers to 'as part of feminist history [...] associated with the moralizing or even policing stance of what might be called or might have been called, usually dismissively, cultural feminism' (Ahmed 2017: 2). These policing voices are easily co-

opted as 'antifeminist tools' (ibid). As Ahmed says, 'hearing feminists as police is a way of not hearing feminism' (ibid) - these readings of body art are complicit in the policing and upholding of traditional gendered behavioural standards, and an attempt to keep women within these boundaries. Instead of falling into the trap of agreeing that the bodies of women - and trans, nonbinary and gender non-conforming people - are always already objectified, we might acknowledge that this gendered notion of the body is always a cultural performance. In accepting gender as performed, as Butler urges, then it is possible to recognise that we all possess multiple identities that might conflict and intersect rather than one essential and fixed subjectivity. This alternative reading of gender offers a fluid framework that frustrates the imposition of a single reading on any one image – to some it may be sexualised, but to others in another context and moment it is not; instead of always already being sexualised, this becomes one potential reading of many, not the defining characteristic.

Drawing on the work of Foucault and Butler, Dallas J. Baker (2011) describes his creative writing as a form of queered practice-led research (PLR), or as *performative bricolage* (2011: 39):

that is, as a complex and performative process drawing on multiple disciplines, methodologies, theories and knowledges in which subjectivity, creative practice and critical research combine to produce interdisciplinary artefacts (creative and critical writing) that discuss, understand, express, explore and describe gender or sexual difference and are components in an ethics of the self, or self-making.
(Baker 2011: 39-40)

He also states that 'a queered PLR produces creative and critical artefacts through which notions of sexual and gender difference can be explored and expressed' (ibid: 41). Core to the definition of queered practice-led research is the centring of subjectivity 'as the core practice leading both research and creative endeavour whilst simultaneously seeing creative practice, research and subjectivity as intertwined and mutually informing each other' (ibid: 34). Through engagement with Butler's theory of performativity, rather than traditional notions of practice-led research which are often formalised around the 'entrenched and essentialist Romantic model of creative genius' (ibid: 43), Baker advances a theory of practice-led research that 'foregrounds the appearance of subjectivities within creative artefacts as a *deployment* or intervention into discourse for a critical or creative purpose' (ibid [original emphasis]). While Baker's practice is centred on creative writing, mine covers a range of art media - including text, performance, and various forms of image - in a performative deployment of subjectivity that draws up on a range of critical practical, and disciplinary traditions.

Conclusions

I do not consider the works produced and analysed here as a finished product; rather my art practice continues as a fluid work-in-progress which will continue to develop and respond as my experiences shift. Through my engagement with cultural texts in Chapter One, menstrual art history in Chapter Two, and critical menstruation studies throughout the thesis, I have situated my practice alongside menstrual activism, as it continues to evolve as a method through which to question and challenge socio-

cultural stigma and normative assumptions constructed through sources of medical and cultural authority. My practice has become a space of personal resistance to normative constructions of menstruation, and through its dissemination I hope to contribute to ongoing discussions that erode binary gendered norms of this physical process and gendered socio-cultural phenomenon.

Depicting menstruation that conforms to neither contemporary ideal — the regular or the regulated — as an everyday rather than pathologised occurrence, complicates the traditionally assumed binaries of ‘health/disease, whole/broken, normal/abnormal’ (Price & Shildrick 1998: 4) often attached to biomedicine. Though these binaries have been eroded through the turn towards a reinstatement of the ‘materiality of the body’ (ibid: 7) in feminist critical theory, this turn has also been criticised for remaining ‘highly abstract’ (ibid). The practice of art-making, particularly autobiographically entangled, visceral and phenomenologically produced through the body, has the potential to foreground — literally and figuratively — ‘the material body in the very acts of academic production’ (ibid) and anchor theoretical explorations in tangible, relatable situations. Through a queered practice-led research approach, my work situates subjectivity and self-reflection as integral to the research process and contributing to the ongoing lineage of feminist enquiry which aims to destabilise essentialist interpretations of gender as well as *expanding the frame* of menstrual normativity, to borrow a phrase from Chris Bobel’s keynote presentation at the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research conference (Bobel 2019).

Thesis Conclusion

By rooting my professional practice as an artist in autoethnographic reflection this research aimed to investigate artworks, art strategies and art-making methods which challenge normative cultural representations of menstruation in anglophone countries in the Global North. My work may be situated clearly within the interdisciplinary fields of critical menstruation studies and gender studies. However, my findings also contribute to ongoing debates within multiple disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields.

First, through case studies of online medical advice and print advertising, this thesis establishes the context of recent and contemporary constructions of menstrual normativity to identify key themes and representational motifs. This research expands on scholarship on medical framings of menstruation in the everyday sphere, offering unique analysis of the overlooked space of online medical advice rather than at interactions within a clinical setting which are the more common consideration of studies in the critical medical humanities.

My analysis of medical texts as extra clinical spaces found that contemporary examples of health advice remain grounded in traditional binary conceptions of gender and focus specifically on menstruation as a biologically female or cis gender experience. Though I was able to identify some elements of positive framing of menstruation – such as the framing of menstrual cycle variation as normal - there remains an emphasis on defining and reinforcing normative notions of menstruation

which correlate with essentialist constructions of femininity. The sources analysed in the first case study suggest there is limited potential for democratising medical knowledge between patients and physicians through these texts, or in providing care or reassurance to people who do not conform to contemporary socially constructed medical and cultural norms.

Second, my research presents in-depth analysis of print advertising aimed at teenagers and young adults in a UK context, building on existing research which focuses on North American advertising, which contributes to the fields of media and cultural studies. I found that these advertisements do not represent non-normative bodies, experiences or desires, and as in the online medical advice, the representation of the body in these advertisements is fragmented, produced in fleeting images which minimise and obscure menstrual experience. My analysis of examples of print advertising held in the Femorabilia Collection aligns with the findings of earlier studies, offering a range of visual strategies for representing the positive technological fix of menstrual products without representing the embodied experience or visual appearance of menstruation. While the advertisements do not frame menstruation in the same ways as contemporary online medical advice, they do present a similarly narrow conception of menstruation that falls within culturally proscribed cyclical norms. Notably, my analysis found a strong emphasis on the alleviation of the burden on time, which situates these examples clearly within the dominant discourses of capitalism and modernity, which demand we use our time productively, and place increased emphasis on seeking convenience and leisure.

Third, I have contributed to the fields of art history and visual cultures through in-depth analysis of menstrual art since 1970. Through the identification and analysis of artistic interventions which challenge, subvert, or expand these menstrual norms I advance a thematic typology of menstrual art as a distinct sub-genre of feminist art practice. Through the synthesis and analysis conducted through the research and the database of menstrual art presented in Appendix Three, my research offers a significant resource for future research(ers) to build on.

I was surprised to find examples of menstrual art which represent a fragmentation of subjecthood which echo the medical and advertising discourses explored in Chapter one, such as the emphasis on aesthetic qualities of menstrual blood in the work of Vanessa Tiegs, Lani Beloso and Jen Lewis. While most pictorial, linguistic and sonic representations can only be considered a part or moment of a whole subject, this fragmentation need not be reductive. Some of the artworks analysed in Chapter Two present more expansive perspectives, such as those by Kanonklubben, Christen Clifford and Poulomi Basu, who represent menstruation through different methods which construct communities of people who menstruate. Zanele Muholi and Jane Woollatt work contrary to the minimisation or fragmentation of the body by offering insights into deeper emotional worlds. There are multiple examples which produce tension and resist fragmentation by putting menstruation back into the body as an embodied experience, like *Red Flag* (Chicago 1971), *Cloths* (Úbeda 2013), or my own work *Cycles* (Hughes 2016 – 2017).

Fourth, my work expands knowledge and praxis in the fields of practice-led research, arts practice, and queer studies. Drawing on my earlier case studies, in the third chapter I present a detailed, art historically and sociologically informed critical reflection which explores the development of my art practice. This written commentary offers insights into the production of art within an interdisciplinary framework at an intersection of art practice with multiple academic disciplines.

The substantial body of practical work presented as part of this thesis began as a process-driven enquiry, evolved into a method of claiming control over my irregular menstrual cycle, and has shifted towards what may be described as an art practice not developed 'in service or opposition to the clinical and life sciences, but as productively entangled with a 'biomedical culture'' (Viney *et al* 2005: 2). In relation to the interface between creative practice and critical medical humanities, my research is innovative as it is produced in the context of a broadened notion of the medical 'beyond the primal scene of the clinical encounter' (ibid) through engagement with online medical texts utilised outside (as well as within, in some cases) the clinic. In this sense, my practice may be presented as a catalyst for other modes of research, or in Smith and Dean's terms, my practice illustrates the 'reciprocal relationship between research and creative practice' (Smith & Dean 2009: 1) in the engagement with more traditional modes of analysing cultural texts precipitated in response to my poetry and performances.

Through the processes of practice-as-research and critical reflection I have developed novel working practices which emphasise modularity, permutation and (re)appropriation as core themes and strategies, beyond their immediately apparent use in poetry and performance. I have utilised different exhibition opportunities in order to produce variations of the original *Cycles* project which respond to my shifting and fluid perceptions of my body, everyday practices that feel restrictive, and my gender identity at given points. This approach is also a pragmatic one, which enables me to increase the exhibition potential of my work and therefore reach a broader audience, as a modularity enables me to re-produce projects for almost any display situation.

Through the research process I have also come to understand the significance of curation within my practice, as it has emerged in many different forms throughout the project. Curatorial practice first offers a mode of publication and public engagement through exhibitions. It is an important and versatile research method, threaded through the textual analysis and art historical research in the first and second chapters of the thesis and in their corresponding appendices. Curatorial practice is also an important mode of reflection in my professional practice as an artist, not only in terms of exhibition, but as an extended methodology which might position the development and production of a practice-led thesis itself as a curatorial project.

Approaching my work, practice, and self as an autoethnographic subject has enabled me to adapt the project in response to my shifting experiences, which positions my menstrual art practice as an empowering rather than restrictive component in my everyday experience. In reflecting on my personal gender identity journey as part of my practice and research I have demonstrated how adopting a reflexive queered practice-led research approach can produce multiple layers of comprehension of artworks and/through subjective experience. Through a fluid rather than fixed approach to defining, interpreting and meaning-making in my own art practice, I offer unique insights into how shifting gender identity (in this instance from cis woman to nonbinary person) can impact personal and political interpretation of artworks. I also offer a dynamic mode of reflection which enables multiple meanings to co-exist and overlap, as the understanding and representation of my artwork while identifying as a cis woman can exist alongside my later comprehension as nonbinary, rather than the latter completely erasing the former.

The artwork itself, *Cycles* (2016 – 2017), its various iterations, and particularly its re-presentation in *unmade, remade, 28 days* (2019) clearly demonstrate how art practice may be used to subvert and challenge gendered norms and expectations of bodies that menstruate. My work offers a multi-faceted challenge to these norms. First, I challenge the conventions of representation of the vulva and of menstruation – as pornified, beautified, sterilised, clinical, or indeed, invisible – by presenting works which represent a vulva which refuses to be consistent, static, clean, un-leaky and hidden. Second, I challenge cultural assumptions about bodies that menstruate,

and essentialist notions which associate menstruation and / or vulvae exclusively with women by presenting these works as a nonbinary identified artist.

During this research I have developed my technical skills as an artist, the historical and conceptual underpinnings of my practice, and my personal and professional understanding of gender identity through the development of my voice as a nonbinary artist. There remain questions which I cannot yet answer, for example, as I was provocatively asked by Chris Bobel at the SMCR conference in June 2019: *how do we make menstruation nonbinary?* The extraction of menstruation from binary understandings of sex and gender is an issue which sits within a much broader cultural conversation, which I cannot answer fully, but hope my work can make a positive contribution to the advancement of this debate. In the coming year I aim to take this work forward through expanding archival research and beginning a new phase of practical work through collaboration and artist residencies.

This research project has resulted in the development of my research and art practice from a speculative enquiry into a nationally and internationally published and exhibited body of research and art practice. The impact and significance of my research is demonstrated by the breadth of dissemination opportunities I have engaged with since 2017, which include peer review, securing external funding, and multiple invitations to exhibit. My menstruation research and related practice will be further developed in 2020 as I begin a new project as the first Artist in Residence at the School of Art History, University of St Andrews, co-hosted by the St Andrews

Centre for Contemporary Art and the Institute for Gender Studies. This project will offer opportunities to expand my art-making practices as a public-facing project, working with multiple partners and stakeholders to produce artworks rooted in a specific location and its history, rather than my own autobiography.

The research presented in the first part of Chapter One, and short passages from Chapter Three, have been published as part of a special issue of *Feminist Encounters: A Journal of Critical Studies in Culture & Politics*, 'Feminist Encounters with the Medical Humanities' (Funke & Foster (eds) 2018), the first collection of essays to interrogate the intersection of feminist theory and the critical medical humanities. In terms of art and curatorial practice, over the course of the project I have participated in: two international group exhibitions and five UK-based group exhibitions; one solo exhibition at the University of St Andrews; and curated - and exhibited as part of - five exhibitions in the United Kingdom, three of these as part of wider festivals or externally funded programmes. The international and art historical significance of my practice is further demonstrated by the citation of my work *Lifetime Supply* (2017 – 2019) in Røstvik's article 'Blood Works: Judy Chicago and Menstrual Art Since 1970' (Røstvik 2019b), published in the internationally significant *Oxford Art Journal* (see Appendix 2 Part D), and the acquisition of two custom reproduction prints of my work by the University of St Andrews (see Appendix 2 Part B).

In the coming months I aim to develop my research on everyday health advice through an historical lens with archival research at the Wellcome Collection, exploring themes relating to menstruation and gynaecological health in texts for use

in the home, rather than those produced for a scientific audience or for use in a clinical setting. The research will examine the language and imagery presented in texts held in the Wellcome Collection such as Henry Burchstead Skinner's *The Female's Medical Guide and Married Woman's Adviser...* (1849) and A.G Hall's *Womanhood: Causes of its Premature Decline, Respectfully Illustrated* (1845). The research will compare this historical perspective with the findings from this thesis, considering the similarities and differences in the framing of menstruation in everyday medical advice over the last two centuries. The initial findings of this work will be presented at a one-day public symposium at Wellcome Collection in March 2020.

My art practice will be developed in several directions during my time as Artist-in-Residence at the University of St Andrews in 2020. The project - 'Blood Lines: The History of Menstruation at the University of St Andrews' - developed in collaboration with Dr Camilla Mørk Røstvik and Dr Catherine Spencer will combine historic perspectives with tracking the impact of the Scottish Government's recent free period product legislation on the town. I aim to use various art-making and research methods to open my practice out and include collaborative and participatory interventions with people in St Andrews. I will also aim to develop my practice through potential residency opportunities in Nepal, and via exhibition, for example the partner exhibition of the 'Menstruation: Representing Experiences from the Global South and North' British Academy conference in October 2020. While my doctoral research has centred on understanding and representing my own menstrual

story, in my future research I aim to develop methods for communicating and representing the menstrual stories of others.

Bibliography

Books

- Abu-Lughod, L (2015) *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press
- Ahmed, S (2006) *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*, Durham & London: Duke University Press
- Ahmed, S (2017) *Living a Feminist Life*, Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press
- Ahmed, S & Stacey, J (2001) *Thinking Through the Skin*, London: Routledge
- Acker, K (2006) *Bodies of Work: Essays*, London: Serpent's Tail [1993]
- Acker, K (2017) *Blood and Guts in High School*, London: Penguin Classics [1984]
- Acker, K (2018) *New York City in 1979*, London: Penguin Classics [1981]
- Banai, N (2014) *Yves Klein*, London: Reaktion
- Barker, M-J & Iantaffi, A (2019) *Life Isn't Binary: On Being Both, Beyond, and In-Between*, London & Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley
- Barker, M-J & Scheele, J (2016) *Queer: A Graphic History*, London: Icon
- Barthes, R (1977) *Image, Music, Text*, London: Fontana
- Battista, K (2013) *Renegotiating the Body: Feminist Art in 1970s London*, London & New York: IB Tauris & Co
- Bayley, S & Connors, K (eds) (2007) *Eye Rhymes: Sylvia Plath's Art of the Visual*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Betterton, R (2009) *An Intimate Distance: Women, Artists and the Body*, New York: Routledge [1996]
- Berggruen, O, Hollein, M & Pfeiffer, I (2005) *Yves Klein*, Ostfilden-Ruit: Hatje Cantz
- Bobel, C (2010) *New Blood: Third-Wave Feminism and the Politics of Menstruation*, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press
- Bobel, C (2018) *The Managed Body: Developing Girls and Menstrual Health in the Global South*, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan
- Bobel, C & Kwan, S (eds) (2019) *Body Battlegrounds: Transgressions, Tensions and Transformations*, Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press

- Bordo, S (1995) *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*, Paperback Edition, Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press
- Brady, A & Schirato, T (2011) *Understanding Judith Butler*, Los Angeles & London: Sage
- Buckley, T & Gottlieb, A (eds) (1988) *Blood Magic: The Anthropology of Menstruation*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press
- Burroughs, WS & Gysin, B (1978) *The Third Mind*, New York: Viking
- Butler, J (2007) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York & London: Routledge Classics [1990]
- Butler, J (2011) *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*, Abingdon & New York: Routledge Classics
- Butler, J (1997) *The Psychic Life of Power*, Stanford: Stanford University Press
- Camerawork (ed) *Silent Health: Women, Health, and Representation*, Exhibition Catalogue, London: Camerawork
- Castleman, R, Smith, C & Wye, D (1994) *The Prints of Louise Bourgeois*, New York: The Museum of Modern Art
- Chicago, J (2006) *Through the Flower: My Struggle as a Woman Artists*, Lincoln, Nevada: Aurora
- Clemmer, C (2016) *The Adventures of Toni the Tampon*, Location Unknown: Bloody Queer
- Cobbing, B & Mayer, P (compilers) (2014) *Concerning Concrete Poetry*, London: Slimvolume [1978]
- Coetzee, C (2019) *Written Under the Skin: Blood and Intergenerational Memory in South Africa*, Woodbridge & Rochester: James Currey & Johannesburg: Wits University Press
- Connell, RW (2005) *Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics*, Second Edition, Cambridge: Polity
- Crafts Council Gallery (1999) *Only Human: An Exhibition About Body and Soul*, London: Crafts Council Gallery
- Cranny-Francis, A, Kirkby, J, Stavropoulos & Waring, W (2003) *Gender Studies: Terms and Debates*, Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan

- Crawford, P (1993) *Women and Religion in England 1500 – 1720*, London & New York: Routledge
- Dahlqvist, A (2018) *It's Only Blood: Shattering the Taboo of Menstruation*, London: Zed
- Davies, K (ed) (1997) *Embodied Practices: Feminist Perspectives on the Body*, London, Thousand Oaks & New Delhi: Sage
- Debord, G (2009) *Society of the Spectacle*, Eastbourne: Soul Bay [1967]
- Delaney, J., Lupton, M. J., & Toth, E. (1988). *The Curse: A Cultural History of Menstruation*, Revised Edition, Urbana: University of Illinois Press
- de Laurentis, T (1994) *Practices of Love: Lesbian Sexuality and Perverse Desire*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press
- Deleuze, G & Guattari, F (2015) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translated by Massumi, B, London & New York: Bloomsbury Academic [1988]
- Douglas, M (2001) *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, London & New York: Routledge [1966]
- Duncan, N (ed) (1996) *Bodyspace: Destabilizing Geographies of Gender and Sexuality*, London & New York: Routledge
- Dusinberre, D (tr) (2004) *Orlan: Carnal Art*, Paris: Flammarion
- Elliot, P, Hare, B & Wilson, A (2003) *Boyle Family*, Exhibition Catalogue, Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland
- Fahs, B (2016) *Out for Blood: Essays on Menstruation and Resistance*, New York: SUNY Press
- Fallows, C, Gemzer, S & Kunsthalle Wien (eds) (2013) *Cut-ups, Cut-ins, Cut-outs: The Art of William S. Burroughs*, Exhibition Catalogue, Kunsthalle Wien & International Centre of Graphic Arts, Ljubljana, Nuremberg: Verlag für moderne Kunst Nürnberg GmbH
- Felski, R (1989) *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change*, London: Hutchinson Radius
- Ferrari, CG & Arte Contemporanea, Milan (1996) *Nudo & Crudo: Corpo Sensibili / Corpo Visible*, Exhibition Catalogue, Milan: Edizioni Charta

- Friedman, D, Gass, WH & Updike, J (2007) *The Writer's Brush: Paintings, Drawing, and Sculpture by Writers*, New York: Welcome
- Fine, C (2017) *Testosterone Rex: Unmaking the Myths of our Gendered Minds*, New York: Icon
- Greenberg, D, Smith, JW, Smith P (2002) *Strange Messenger: The Work of Patti Smith*, Exhibition Catalogue, Pittsburgh: The Andy Warhol Museum
- Grosz, E (1995) *Space, Time and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies*, Abingdon & New York: Routledge
- Gunter, J (2019) *The Vagina Bible: The Vulva and the Vagina – Separating the Myth from the Medicine*, London: Piaktus
- Hanley, J & Wooster, A (1993) *The First Generation: Women and Video, 1970 – 1975*, Exhibition Catalogue, New York: Independent Curators Incorporated
- Haug, V (ed) (1987) *Female Sexualization: A Collective Work of Memory*, London: Verso
- Houppert, K (1999) *The Curse: Confronting the Last Unmentionable Taboo: Menstruation*, London: Profile
- Houser, C, Jones, LC, Taylor, S & Ben-Levi, J (1993) *Abject Art: Repulsion and Desire in American Art: Selections from the Permanent Collections*, Exhibition Catalogue, New York: Whitney Museum of American Art
- Hutton, R (2013) *Pagan Britain*, New Haven: Yale University Press
- Iversen, M (ed) (2010) *Chance*, Documents of Contemporary Art Series, London & Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press & Whitechapel Gallery
- Jones, A (1998) *Body Art: Performing the Subject*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press
- Jones, A (ed) (2005) *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, Oxon & New York: Routledge
- Jones, A (2006) *Self/Image: Technology, Representation and the Contemporary Subject*, London & New York: Routledge
- Jones, A & Warr, T (eds) (2012) *The Artist's Body*, 3rd Edition, London: Phaidon [2000]
- Jonquet, F (2004) *Intimate Conversations with Gilbert & George*, London & New York: Phaidon

- Kaite, B (ed) (2019) *Menstruation Now: What Does Blood Perform?*, Bradford: Demeter
- King, JCH, British Library, British Museum (2000) *Human Image*, Exhibition Catalogue, London: British Museum
- Kissling, EA (2009) *Capitalizing on the Curse: The Business of Menstruation*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner
- Klein, Y (2016) *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, translated by K Ottman, Third Edition, Spring Publications: Paris
- Kostelanetz, R (2003) *Conversing with Cage*, Second Edition, New York & London: Routledge
- Kristeva, J (1982) *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, New York: Columbia University Press
- Kuri, JF (ed) (2003) *Brion Gysin: Tuning in to the Multimedia Age*, London: Thames & Hudson
- Laird, A (2019) *Heavy Flow: Breaking the Curse of Menstruation*, Toronto: Dundurn
- Lander, L (1988) *Images of Bleeding: Menstruation as Ideology*, New York: Orlando
- Lydenberg, R & Skerl, J (eds) (1991) *William S. Burroughs At the Front: Critical Reception, 1959-1989*, Carbondale & Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press
- Macritchie, L, Potter, S, Tisdall, C, et al (1980) *About Time: Video, Performance and Installation by 21 Women Artists*, Exhibition Catalogue, London: ICA
- Massumi, B (1993) *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press
- McRobbie, A (1991) *Feminism and Youth Culture: From 'Jackie' to 'Just Seventeen'*, Basingstoke & London: Macmillan
- Mermikides, A & Bouchard, G (2016) *Performance and the Medical Body*, London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama
- Miles, B (2010) *William Burroughs: el Hombre Invisible*, Croydon: Virgin
- Miller, C, Nead, L & Pollock, G (1989) *Images of Women*, Exhibition Catalogue, Leeds: Leeds City Art Galleries
- Mirzoeff, N (1995) *Bodyscape: Art, Modernity and the Ideal Figure*, London & New York: Routledge
- Mitchie, H (1987) *The Flesh Made Word: Female Figures and Women's Bodies*, New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press

- Moran, J (2002) *Interdisciplinarity*, London & New York: Routledge
- Moran, J (2005) *Reading the Everyday*, London & New York: Routledge
- Musico, I (2002) *Cunt: A Declaration of Independence*, Second Edition, Berkeley: Seal
- Nettleton, S & Watson, J (1998) *The Body in Everyday Life*, London & New York: Routledge
- Newton, VL (2016) *Everyday Discourses of Menstruation: Cultural and Social Perspectives*, London: Palgrave Macmillan
- Oudshoorn, N (1994) *Beyond the Natural Body: An Archaeology of Sex Hormones*, London: Routledge
- Parker, R (1984) *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine*, London: Women's
- Plath, S & Hughes, T (ed) (1989) *Sylvia Plath: Collected Poems*, London: Faber & Faber
- Pollock, G (1988) *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and Histories of Art*, London: Routledge
- Pollock, G & Parker, R (eds) (1987) *Framing Feminism: Art and the Women's Movement 1970-85*, London: Pandora
- Price, J & Shildrick, M (1998) *Vital Signs: Feminist Reconfigurations of the Bio/Logical Body*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press
- Price, J & Shildrick, M (1999) *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press
- Raviola, E & Zackariasson, P (eds) (2017) *Arts and Business: Building a Common Ground for Understanding Society*, Oxon: Routledge
- Ranjit, A, Thapa, D, Pradham, J, Kunreuther, L, et al (eds) (2018) *Silence No Longer: Artivism of Ashmina*, Kathmandu: Varja
- Reed-Danahay, D (ed) (1997) *Auto/Ethnography: Rewriting the Self and the Social*, Oxford & New York: Berg
- Rees, EL (2015) *Vagina: A Literary and Cultural History*, Paperback Edition, New York, London, Oxford, New Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic
- Retallack, J (ed) & Stein, G (2008) *Gertrude Stein: Selections*, London, Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press
- Richardson, J & Tonfoni, G (1994) *Writing as a Visual Art*, London: Intellect

- Rose, N (1999) *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*, London and New York: Free Association
- Rosewarne, A (2012) *Periods in Pop Culture: Menstruation in Film and Television*, Lanham, Maryland: Lexington
- Saini, A (2017) *Inferior: How Science Got Women Wrong and the New Research That's Rewriting the Story*, London: 4th Estate
- Scott, S & Morgan, D (eds) (1993) *Body Matters: Essays on the Sociology of the Body*, New York: Taylor & Francis
- Schneemann, C & McPherson, BR (1997) *More Than Meat Joy: Performance Works and Selected Writings*, New York: McPherson & Co
- Schneider, R (1997) *The Explicit Body in Performance*, London & New York: Routledge
- Simpson, MG (2001) *Making Representations: Museums in the Post-Colonial Era*, Paperback Edition, London & New York: Routledge
- Stallabrass, J (2006) *Contemporary Art: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Steward, R (2019) *The Autism-Friendly Guide to Periods*, London: Jessica Kingsley
- Turner, V (1967) *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press
- Venes, D (ed) (2013) *Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary, 22nd Edition*, Philadelphia: FA Davis
- Vostral, S (2008) *Under Wraps: A History of Menstrual Hygiene Technology*, Plymouth: Lexington
- Vostral, S (2018) *Toxic Shock: A Social History*, New York: New York University Press
- Warner, M (ed) (1993) *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press
- Wark, J (2006) *Radical Gestures: Feminism and Performance Art in North America*, Canada: McGill Queen's University Press
- Weiss-Wolff, J (2017) *Periods Gone Public: Taking a Stand for Menstrual Equity*, New York: Arcade

Wilcox, H, McWatters, K, Thompson, A & Williams, LR (eds) (1990) *The Body and the Text: Helene Cixous, Reading and Teaching*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf

Wolf, N (2013) *Vagina: A New Biography*, Second Edition, London: Virago

Young, I (1990) *Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays in Feminist Philosophy*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Chapters

- Allen, R (2016) The Body Beyond the Anatomy Lab: (Re)Addressing Arts Methodologies for the Critical Medical Humanities, in A Whitehead and A Woods (eds), *The Edinburgh Companion to the Critical Medical Humanities*, 186-208, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press
- Arya, R & Chare, N (eds) (2016) *Abject Visions: Powers of Horror in Art and Visual Culture*, Manchester, Manchester University Press
- Astore, M (2007) Art, Autobiography, and the Maternal Object, in NA Golley (ed) *Arab Women's Lives Retold: Exploring Identity Through Writing*, New York: Syracuse University Press
- Balsamo, A (1996) Forms of Technological Embodiment: Reading the Body in Contemporary Culture, in J Price and M Shildrick (eds) (1999) *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*, 278-289, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press
- Bloom, L (1999) Contests for Meaning in Body Politics and Feminist Conceptual Art: Revisiting the 1970s through the Work of Eleanor Antin, in A Jones & A Stephenson (eds) *Performing the Body / Performing the Text*, 153-169, London & New York: Routledge
- Bobel, C (2006) Resistance with a Wink: Young Women, Feminism and the (Radical) Menstruating Body, in J Lorber and LJ Moore (eds), *Gendered bodies: Feminist perspectives*, 87-91, Los Angeles: Roxbury
- Bobel, C & Fahs, B (2019) The Messy Politics of Menstrual Activism, in J Reger (ed) *Nevertheless They Persisted: Feminisms and Continued Resistance in the U.S. Women's Movement*, Paperback Edition, 151-169, New York & Oxon: Routledge
- Bildhauer, B (2005) The Secrets of Women (c. 1300): A Medieval Perspective on Menstruation, in G Howie & A Shail (eds) *Menstruation: A Cultural History*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- Dornhof, S (2015) Embodied Protest: Nakedness and the Partition of Gazes, in U. Brunotte, A-D Ludewig & A Stähler (eds) *Orientalism, Gender, and the Jews: Literary and Artistic Transformations of European National Discourses*, 268-283, Berlin & Munich: De Gruyter
- Eileraas, K (2016) Revolution Undressed: The Politics of Rage and Aesthetics in Aliaa Elmahdy's Body Activism, FS Hasso & Z Salime (eds) *Freedom without Permission: Bodies and Space in the Arab Revolutions*, Durham: Duke University Press

- Evans, J (1990) A Feminist Interest in the Mind/Body Problem, in Camerawork (ed) *Silent Health: Women, Health, and Representation*, 11-16, Exhibition Catalogue, London: Camerawork
- Green-Cole, R. (2015a). Introduction, *Widening the Cycle: A Menstrual Cycle & Reproductive Justice Art Show*, Exhibition Catalogue, Menstrual Health & Reproductive Justice Conference Proceedings, Society for Menstrual Cycle Research, Suffolk University Law School: Boston, Massachusetts: Society for Menstrual Cycle Research
- Gupta, K (2020) The Me I Am When I Am Not Me, in J Twist, B Vincent, M Barker & K Gupta (eds) *Non-Binary Lives: An Anthology of Intersecting Identities*, 31-37, London & Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley
- Hughes, B & Røstvik, CM (2020) Menstruation in Art & Visual Cultures, in K Ross (ed) *The International Encyclopaedia of Gender, Media & Communication*, Published Online: John Wiley & Sons
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119429128.iegmc282>
- Kapoor, A (2015) Blood and Light: In Conversation with Julia Kristeva, first published in *Anish Kapoor. Versailles*, Flammarion: Paris, Available at: <http://anishkapoor.com/4330/blood-and-light-in-conversation-with-julia-kristeva>
- McGrath, R (1990) Health, Education & Femininity, in Camerawork (ed) *Silent Health: Women, Health, and Representation*, 29-31, Exhibition Catalogue, London: Camerawork
- Persdotter, J (2020) Introducing Menstrunormativity: Toward a Complex Understanding of 'Menstrual Monsterings', in C Bobel, B Fahs, KA Hasson, E Kissling, T Roberts and I Winkler (eds), *The Handbook of Critical Menstruation Studies*, 357-372, Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan
- Rees, E (2017) Varieties of Embodiment and 'Corporeal Style', in E. Rees (ed), *Talking Bodies*, 1-15, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan
- Shildrick, M and Price, J (1998) Introduction, in M Shildrick and J Price (eds), *Vital Signs: Feminist Reconfigurations of the Bio/Logical Body*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press
- Spence, J (1990) No I Can't Do That, My Consultant Wouldn't Like It, in Camerawork (ed) *Silent Health: Women, Health, and Representation*, 75-85, Exhibition Catalogue, London: Camerawork
- Spence, J (1988) No I Can't Do That, My Consultant Wouldn't Like It, in Kidel, M & Rowe-Leete (eds) *The Meaning of Illness*, New York: Routledge

Turner, V (1986) Dewey, Dilthey and Drama: An Essay in the Anthropology of Experience, in V Turner & E Bruner (eds), *The Anthropology of Experience*, 33-55, Urbana: University of Illinois Press

Journal Articles and Special Issues

- Abu-Lughod, L (2008) Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others, *American Anthropologist*, 104(3), 783-790, DOI: 10.1525/aa.2002.104.3.783
- Ahmed, S (2016) Interview with Judith Butler, *Sexualities*, 19(4), 482–492
DOI: 10.1177/1363460716629607
- Alpert, AB, CichoskiKelly, EM, Fox, AD (2017) What Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Patients Say Doctors Should Know and Do: A Qualitative Study, *Journal of Homosexuality*, 64(10), 1368–1389, DOI: 10.1080/00918369.2017.1321376
- Agnew, S & Sandretto, S (2016) A Case for Critical Literacy Analysis of the Advertising Texts of Menstruation: Responding to Missed Opportunities, *Gender and Education*, 28(4), 510–526,
DOI: 10.1080/09540253.2015.1114073
- American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Adolescence, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and Committee on Adolescent Health Care (2006) Menstruation in Girls and Adolescents: Using the Menstrual Cycle as a Vital Sign, *Pediatrics*, 118(5), 2245-2250,
DOI: 10.1542/peds.2006-2481
- Baker, DJ (2011) Queering Practice-Led Research: Subjectivity, Performative Research and the Creative Arts, *Creative Industries Journal*, 4:1, 33-51
DOI: 10.1386/cij.4.1.33_1
- Barolsky, P (2010) There is No Such Thing as Narrative Art, *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics*, 18(2), Autumn 2010, 49–62
- Belifore, E (2014) ‘Impact’, ‘Value’ and ‘Bad Economics’: Making Sense of the Problem of Value in the Arts and Humanities, *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 14(1), 95-110, DOI: 10.1177/1474022214531503
- Bertelli, AM, Connolly, JM, Mason, DP & Conover, LC (2014) Politics, Management, and the Allocation of Arts Funding: Evidence from Public Support for the Arts in the UK, *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 20(3), 341-359,
DOI: 10.1080/10286632.2013.786057
- Berthon-Moine, I (2011) “Red is the Colour” (2009), *Women’s Studies*, 40(2), 247-248, DOI: 10.1080/00497878.2011.538001
- Bhartyia, A (2013) Menstruation, Religion and Society, *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, 3(6), 523-527,
DOI: 10.7763/IJSSH.2013.V3.296

- Bildhauer, B (2006) Blood in Medieval Cultures, *History Compass*, 4(6), 1049-1059, DOI: 10.1111/j.1478-0542.2006.00365.x
- Bildhauer, B (2013) Medieval European Conceptions of Blood: Truth and Human Integrity, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 19(S1), S57-S76, DOI: 10.1111/1467-9655.12016
- Bissonauth, N (2014) Zanele Muholi's Affective Appeal to Act, *Photography & Culture*, 7(3), 239-252, DOI: 10.2752/175145214X14153800234801
- Bobel, C (2007) 'I'm not an activist, though I've done a lot of it': Doing Activism, Being Activist and the 'Perfect Standard' in a Contemporary Movement, *Social Movement Studies*, 6(2), 147–159, DOI: 10.1080/14742830701497277
- Bobel, C (2008) From Convenience to Hazard: A Short History of the Emergence of the Menstrual Activism Movement, 1971–1992, *Health Care for Women International*, 29(7), 738–754, DOI: 10.1080/07399330802188909
- Bobel, C and Kissling E A (2011) Menstruation Matters: Introduction to Representations of the Menstrual Cycle, *Women's Studies*, 40(2), 121–126, DOI: 10.1080/00497878.2011.537981
- Braun, V & Clarke V (2006) Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101, DOI: 10.1191/1478088706qp063oa
- Braun, V & Wilkinson, S (2001) Socio-cultural Representations of the Vagina, *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology*, 19(1), 17-32, DOI: 10.1080/02646830020032374
- Braun, V & Wilkinson, S (2003) Liability or Asset? Women Talk About the Vagina, *Psychology of Women Section Review*, 5(2), 28-42
- Braun, V & Wilkinson, S (2005) Vagina Equals Woman? On Genitals and Gendered Identity, *Women's Studies International Forum*, 28(6) 509-522, DOI: 10.1016/j.wsif.2005.09.007
- Butler, J (1988) Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory, *Theatre Journal*, 40(4), 519-531
- Clayton, AH (2008) Symptoms Related to the Menstrual Cycle: Diagnosis, Prevalence, and Treatment, *Journal of Psychiatric Practice*, 14(1), January 2008, 13–21, DOI: 10.1097/01.pra.0000308491.54885.f8

- Chanter, T (2001) Abject Images: Kristeva, Art, and Third Cinema, *Philosophy Today*, 45, Issue Supplement, 83-98, DOI: 10.5840/philtoday200145Supplement10
- Chou, Y-C, Lu, Z-Y J, Wang, FTY, Lan, C-F, & Lin, L-C (2008) Meanings and Experiences of Menstruation: Perceptions of Institutionalized Women with an Intellectual Disability, *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 21(6), 575-584, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-3148.2008.00430.x
- Chrisler, JC, Gorman, JA, Manion, J, Murgo, M, et al (2016) Queer Periods: Attitudes Toward and Experiences with Menstruation in the Masculine of Centre and Transgender Community, *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 18(11), 1238–1250, DOI: 10.1080/13691058.2016.1182645
- Corinna, H (2011) I, Being Born Woman and Suppressed, *Women's Studies*, 40(2), 206–217, DOI: 10.1080/00497878.2011.537998
- Courts, LB & Berg DH (1993) The Portrayal of the Menstruating Woman in Menstrual Product Advertisements, *Health Care for Women International*, 14(2), 179–191, DOI: 10.1080/07399339309516039
- Davidson, A (2012) Narratives of Menstrual Product Consumption: Convenience, Culture, or Commoditization?, *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, 32(1), 56–70, DOI: 10.1177/0270467612444579
- Davis, K (2007) Reclaiming Women's Bodies: Colonialist Trope or Critical Epistemology?, *Sociological Review*, 55(S1), May 2007, 60–64, DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-954X.2007.00692.x
- Deepwell, K (1999) Interview with Kirsten Justesen, *n-paradoxa*, 3: Body, Space and Memory, January 1999, 30–43
- Docherty, S (2010) Smear It on Your Face, Rub It on Your Body, It's Time to Start a Menstrual Party!, *Critical Theory and Social Justice Journal of Undergraduate Research Occidental College*, 1(1), Spring 2010
- Eckersall, P & Paterson, E (2011) Slow Dramaturgy: Renegotiating Politics and Staging the Everyday, *Australian Drama Studies*, 58, April 2011, 178-192
- Erchull, MJ (2013) Distancing Through Objectification? Depictions of Women's Bodies in Menstrual Product Advertisements, *Sex Roles*, 68(1-2), 33–40, DOI: 10.1007/s11199-011-0004-7
- Erikstrup, HN & Røstvik, CM (2018) Menstruation in the 1990s: Feminist Resistance in Saskia's *Heavy Flow* Zine, *Nursing Clio*, 7 August 2018, Available at: <https://nursingclio.org/2018/08/07/menstruation-in-the-1990s-feminist-resistance-in-saskias-heavy-flow-zine/>

- Fahs, B (2014) Genital Panics: Constructing the Vagina in Women's Qualitative Narratives about Pubic Hair, Menstrual Sex, and Vaginal Self-image, *Body Image*, 11(3), June 2014, 210–218, DOI: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2014.03.002
- Fillingim, RB, King, CD, Ribeiro-Dasilva, MC, Rahim-Williams, Riley III, L (2009) Sex, Gender, and Pain: A Review of Recent Clinical and Experimental Findings, *The Journal of Pain*, 10(5), 447–485, DOI: 10.1016/j.jpain.2008.12.001
- Frank, SE (2020) Queering Menstruation: Trans and Non-Binary Identity and Body Politics, *Sociological Inquiry*, 90(2), May 2020, 371-404, DOI: 10.1111/soin.12355
- Fraser, IS, Warner, P & Marantos, PA (2001) Estimating Menstrual Blood Loss in Women with Normal and Excessive Menstrual Fluid Volume, *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 98(5:1), 806-814, DOI: 10.1016/S0029-7844(01)01581-2
- Fraser, IS, Critchley, HOD, Munro, MG & Broder, M (2007) Can We Achieve International Agreement on Terminologies and Definitions Used to Describe Abnormalities of Menstrual Bleeding?, *Human Reproduction*, 22(2), 635-643, DOI: 10.1093/humrep/del478
- Funke, J & Foster, SL (eds) (2018) Feminist Encounters with the Medical Humanities, Special Issue of *Feminist Encounters: A Journal of Critical Studies in Culture & Politics*, 2(2), September 2018
- Graham, CA (2007) Medicalization of Women's Sexual Problems: A Different Story?, *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, Vol. 33, No. 5, 443–447
- Green-Cole, R. (2015b) Bloody Women Artists, *The Occasional Journal: Love Feminisms*, November 2015, Available at: <http://enjoy.org.nz/publishing/the-occasional-journal/love-feminisms/text-bloody-women-artists#article>
- Grover, SR (2011) Gynaecological Issues in Adolescents With Disability, *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*, 47(9), 610-613, DOI: doi.org/10.1111/j.1440-1754.2011.02163.x
- Hajjeh, RA, Reingold, AL, Weil, A, Shutt, K, Schuchat, A, Perkins, B A (1999) Toxic Shock Syndrome in the United States: Surveillance Update, 1979–1996, *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, 5(6), 807–810, DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid0506.990611>
- Hamberg, K (2008) Gender Bias in Medicine, *Women's Health*, 4(3), 1 May 2008, 237–243, DOI: 10.2217/17455057.4.3.237

- Hamilton, A, Marshal, MP & Murray, PJ (2011) Autism Spectrum Disorders and Menstruation, *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 49(4), 443-445, DOI: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2011.01.015
- Harradine, D (2000) Abject Identities and Fluid Performances: Theorizing the Leaking Body, *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 10(3), 68-85, DOI: 0.1080/10486800008568597
- Haraway, DJ (1997) The Virtual Speculum in the New World Order, *Feminist Review*, 55, Consuming Cultures Special Issue, Spring 1997, 22–72
- Harding, JM (2001) The Simplest Surrealist Act: Valerie Solanas and the (Re)Assertion of Avantgarde Priorities, *The Drama Review*, 45(4) (T172), 142-162, DOI: 10.1162/105420401772990388
- Hillard, PJA (2014) Menstruation in Adolescents: What Do We Know? and What Do We Do with the Information?, *Journal of Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology*, 27(6), 309-319, DOI: 10.1016/j.jpag.2013.12.001
- Hoffmann, DE & Tarzian, AJ (2001) The Girl Who Cried Pain: A Bias Against Women in the Treatment of Pain, *The Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, 28, 13–27 DOI: 10.1111/j.1748-720X.2001.tb00037.x
- Holdcroft, A (2007) Gender Bias in Research: How Does it Affect Evidence Based Medicine?, *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 100(1), 1 January 2007, 2–3 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/014107680710000102>
- Hughes, B (2018a) Challenging Menstrual Norms in Online Medical Advice: Deconstructing Stigma through Entangled Art Practice, *Feminist Encounters*, 2(2), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20897/femenc/3883>
- Jamieson, ML (2015) Disorders of Menstruation in Adolescent Girls, *Pediatric Clinics*, 62(4), 943-961, DOI: 10.1016/j.pcl.2015.04.007
- Jamison, L (2014) Grand Unified Theory of Female Pain, *The Virginia Quarterly Review: A National Journal of Literature and Discussion*, 90(2), Spring 2014
- Jay, M (2002) Somaesthetics and Democracy: Dewey and Contemporary Body Art, *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 36(4), Winter 2002, 55–69
- Johnston-Robledo, I & Chrisler, JC (2011) The Menstrual Mark: Menstruation as Social Stigma, *Sex Roles*, 68, 9–18, DOI: DOI 10.1007/s11199-011-0052-z
- Jones, A (1995) 'Clothes Make the Man': The Male Artist as a Performative Function, *Oxford Art Journal*, 18(2), 18-31
- Kissling, EA (1996) Bleeding Out Loud: Communication About Menstruation, *Feminism & Psychology*, 6(4), 481–504, DOI: 10.1177/0959353596064002

- Kissling, EA (1996) "That's Just a Basic Teen-Age Rule": Girls' Linguistic Strategies for Managing the Menstrual Communication Taboo, *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 24(4), 292–309, DOI: 10.1080/00909889609365458
- Lee, J (1994) Menarche and the (Hetero)Sexualization of the Female Body, *Gender & Society*, 8(3), September 1994, 343–362, DOI: 10.1177/089124394008003004
- Makhubu, NM (2012) Violence and the Cultural Logics of Pain: Representations of Sexuality in the Work of Nicholas Hlobo and Zanele Muholi, *Critical Arts: South-North Cultural and Media Studies*, 26(4), 504-524, DOI: 10.1080/02560046.2012.723843
- Manica, DT & Rios, C (2017) (In)visible Blood: Menstrual Performances and Body Art, *Vibrant: Virtual Brazilian Anthropology*, 14(1), DOI: 10.1590/1809-43412017v14n1p124
- Marret, H, Fauconnier, A, Chabbert-Buffet, N, Cravello, L & Golfier, F, et al (2010) Clinical Practice Guidelines on Menorrhagia: Management of Abnormal Uterine Bleeding Before Menopause, *European Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology and Reproductive Biology*, 152(2), 133-137, DOI: 10.1016/j.ejogrb.2010.07.016
- Maybin, JA & Critchley, HOD (2016) Medical Management of Heavy Menstrual Bleeding, *Women's Health*, 12(1), 27-34, DOI: 10.2217/whe.15.100
- McGill, M (2018) How the Light Gets in: Notes on the Female Gaze and Selfie Culture, *MAI: Feminism & Visual Culture*, 1, Spring 2018, 6 pages
- Mercer, K (1990) Black Art and the Burden of Representation, *Third Text*, 4(10), DOI: 10.1080/09528829008576253
- Merskin, D (1999) Adolescence, Advertising, and the Ideology of Menstruation, *Sex Roles*, 40(11-12), 941–957, DOI: 10.1023/A:101888120
- Miller, CD & Kaufmann, J (2017) Reimagining Cancer: An Arts Based Autoethnography, *Art Research International: A Transdisciplinary Journal*, 2(1), 20–31
- Millard, C and Wessely, S (2014) Parity of Esteem between Mental and Physical Health Means Different Things to Different People, Making it Difficult to Enforce, *British Medical Journal*, 14 November 2014, 2014(349), DOI: 10.1136/bmj.g6821
- Morgan, SW & Stevens, PE (2009) Transgender Identity Development as Represented by a Group of Female-to- Male Transgendered Adults, *Issues*

in Mental Health Nursing, 29(6), 9 July 2009, 585–599,
DOI: 10.1080/01612840802048782

Moynihan, R (2003) The Making of a Disease: Female Sexual Dysfunction, *British Medical Journal*, 326(7379), DOI: 10.1136/bmj.326.7379.45

Moynihan, R (2005) The Marketing of a Disease: Female Sexual Dysfunction, *British Medical Journal*, 330(7484), 192–194,
DOI: 10.1136/bmj.330.7484.192

Mulvey, L (1975) Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema, *Screen*, 16(3), Autumn 1975,
6-18, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/16.3.6>

Phipps, WE (1980) The Menstrual Taboo in the Judeo-Christian Tradition, *Journal of Religion and Health*, 19, 298-303, DOI: 10.1007/BF00996252

Quint, C (2019a) From Embodied Shame to Reclaiming the Stain: Reflections on a Career in Menstrual Activism, *The Sociological Review*, 67(4), 927-942,
DOI: 10.1177/0038026119854275

Read, JG & Gorman, BK (2010) Gender and Health Inequality, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 36, 371–386, DOI: 10.1146/annurev.soc.012809.102535

Rice, A (2009) Revealing Histories, Dialogising Collections: Museums and Galleries in North West England Commemorating the Abolition of the Slave Trade, *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies*, 30(2),
DOI: doi.org/10.1080/01440390902819011

Rich, A (1980) Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence, *Signs*, 5(4),
Summer 1980, 631-660 DOI: 10.1086/493756

Riva, P, Sacchi, S, Montali, L and Frigerio, A (2012) Gender Effects in Pain Detection: Speed and Accuracy in Decoding Female and Male Pain Expressions, *European Journal of Pain*, 15(9), 985.e1-985.e11,
DOI: 10.1016/j.ejpain.2011.02.006

Robert, N (2014) Getting Intersectional in Museums, *Museums & Social Issues: A Journal of Reflective Discourse*, 9(1),
DOI: 10.1179/1559689314Z.00000000017

Roberts, TK and Fantz CR (2014) Barriers to Quality Health Care for the Transgender Population, *Clinical Biochemistry*, 47(10-11), 983-987,
DOI: 10.1016/j.clinbiochem.2014.02.009

Rodgers, J & Lipscombe, J (2009) The Nature and Extent of Help Given to Women With Intellectual Disabilities to Manage Menstruation, *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability*, 30(1), 45-52,
DOI: doi.org/10.1080/13668250500033094

- Rojas, FA (2012) Re-constructing the Self: Self-portraiture as Exploration of Personal and Professional Identity, *Creative Approaches to Research*, 5(3), 35-61
- Røstvik, CM (2018a) Blood in the Shower: A Visual History of Menstruation and Clean Bodies, *Visual Culture and Gender*, 13, 54-63
- Røstvik, CM (2019a) 'Do Not Flush Feminine Products!' The Environmental History, Biohazards and Norms Contained in the UK Sanitary Bin Industry Since 1960, *Environment and History Fast Track*, 2-31, DOI: 0.3197/096734019X15740974883807
- Røstvik, CM (2019b) Blood Works: Judy Chicago and Menstrual Art Since 1970, *Oxford Art Journal*, kcz021, DOI: 10.1093/oxartj/kcz021
- Saltonstall, R (1993) Healthy Bodies, Social Bodies: Men's and Women's Concepts and Practices of Health in Everyday Life, *Social Science & Medicine*, 36(1), 7-14, DOI: 10.1016/0277-9536(93)90300-s
- Samulowitz, A, Gremyr, I, Eriksson, E, and Hensing, G (2018) "Brave Men" and "Emotional Women": A Theory-Guided Literature Review on Gender Bias in Health Care and Gendered Norms towards Patients with Chronic Pain, *Pain Research and Management*, 2018(6358624), DOI:10.1155/2018/6358624
- Schapiro, M (1971) A Feminist Art Program, *Art Journal*, 31(1), 44-48, DOI: 10.1080/00043249.1971.10792970
- Scott-Samuel, A (2009) Patriarchy, Masculinities and Health Inequalities, *Gaceta Sanitaria*, 23(2), 159-160
- Scott-Samuel, A, Crawshaw, P & Oakley, A (2015) "Men Behaving Badly": Patriarchy, Public Policy and Health Inequalities, *International Journal of Men's Health*, 14(3), Autumn 2015, 250-258, DOI: 10.3149/jmh.1403.250
- Schoer, M, Amos, E, Bee, S, Drucker, J, *et al* (1999) Contemporary Feminism: Art Practice, Theory, and Activism – An Intergenerational Perspective, *Art Journal*, 58(4), Winter 1999, 8-29
- Seegert, N (2014) Dirty, Pretty, Trash: Confronting Perceptions through the Aesthetics of the Abject, *The Journal of Ecocriticism*, 6(1), Spring 2014, 12 pages
- Sharma, H, Smith, D, Turner, CE, Game, L, *et al* (2018) Clinical and Molecular Epidemiology of Staphylococcal Toxic Shock Syndrome in the United Kingdom, *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, 24(2), 258-266 DOI: 10.3201/eid2402.170606

- Shvarts, A (2011) Figuration and Failure, Pedagogy and Performance: Reflections Three Years Later, *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory*, 21(1), 155-162 DOI: 10.1080/0740770X.2011.563047
- Simes, MR & Berg, DH (2001) Surreptitious Learning: Menarche and Menstrual Product Advertisements, *Health Care for Women International*, 22(5), 455-469, DOI: 10.1080/073993301317094281
- Smart, JM & Burling, D (2001) Radiology and the Internet: A Systematic Review of Patient Information Resources, *Clinical Radiology*, 56, 867-870, DOI: 10.1053/crad.2001.0738
- Smellie, WSA (2006) When is “abnormal” abnormal? Dealing with the Slightly out of Range Laboratory Result, *Journal of Clinical Pathology*, 59(10), 1005-1007, DOI: 10.1136/jcp.2005.035048
- Snelgrove, JW *et al* (2012) “Completely out-at- sea” with “two-gender Medicine”: A Qualitative Analysis of Physician-side Barriers to Providing Healthcare for Transgender Patients, *BMC Health Services Research*, 12(110), DOI: 10.1186/1472-6963- 12-110
- Stevens, L (2016) ‘Sometimes Uncomfortable, Sometimes Arousing’: The Slow Dramaturgy of Casey Jenkins’ Craftivist Performances, *Theatre Research International*, 41(2) 168-180, DOI: 10.1017/S0307883316000079
- Striff, E (1997) Bodies of Evidence: Feminist Performance Art, *Critical Survey*, 9(1), 1-18, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/i40075033>
- Stubbs, ML (2008) Cultural Perceptions and Practices around Menarche and Adolescent Menstruation in the United States, *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1135(1), 58-66, DOI: 10.1196/annals.1429.008
- Sullivan, L & Egel, B (2005) Leveling the Playing Field: Recognizing and Rectifying Disparities in Management of Pain, *Pain Medicine*, 6(1), 5–10, DOI: 10.1111/j.1526-4637.2005.05016.x
- Tan, S S-L, and Goonawardene, N (2017) Internet Health Information Seeking and the Patient-Physician Relationship: A Systematic Review, *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 19(1), DOI: 10.2196/jmir.5729
- van der Vlies, A (2012) Queer Knowledge and the Politics of the Gaze in Contemporary South African Photography: Zanele Muholi and Others, *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 24(2)140-156, DOI: 10.1080/13696815.2012.697647

- Viney, W, Callard, F and Woods, A (2015) Critical Medical Humanities: Embracing Entanglement, Taking Risks, *Medical Humanities*, 41(1), 2-7, DOI: 10.1136/medhum-2015-010692
- Warrilow, G, Kirkham, C, Ismail, KMK, Wyatt, K, Dimmock, P & O'Brien, S (2004) Quantification of Menstrual Blood Loss, *The Obstetrician & Gynaecologist*, 6, 88-92, DOI: 10.1576/toag.6.2.88.26983
- Watkins, EJ (2012) How the Pill Became a Lifestyle Drug: The Pharmaceutical Industry and Birth Control in the United States Since 1960, *Public Health Then and Now*, 102(8), 1462-1472, DOI: 10.2015/AJPH.2012.300706
- Winter, S, Diamond, M, Green, J, Karasic, D, *et al* (2016) Transgender People: Health at the Margins of Society, *The Lancet*, 388(10042), 390-400, DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(16\)00683-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(16)00683-8)
- Zacharin, M, Savansi, I & Glover, S (2010) The Impact of Menstruation in Adolescents With Disabilities Related to Cerebral Palsy, *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, 95(7), 526-530, DOI: 10.1136/adc.2009.174680

Conference Papers, Symposium Papers and Public Lectures

- Amrouche, C (2019) Leaky Activism: Women's Embodied Experiences of Resistance, Oral Presentation, *Traversing the Ridge: Connecting Menstrual Research and Advocacy*, 23rd Biennial Conference of the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research, Colorado College, 8th June 2019
- Bildhauer, B (2019) Perceptions of Menstruation in the Middle Ages and Today: Pollution, Control, Integrity, and Gender, Oral Presentation, *Critical Perspectives on Menstruation*, Menstruation Research Network Workshop, 31 May 2019, University of St Andrews
- Bobel, C (2019) What We Talk About When We Talk About Menstruation, Keynote Presentation, *Traversing the Ridge: Connecting Menstrual Research and Advocacy*, 23rd Biennial Conference of the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research, Colorado College, 7th June 2019
- Bobel, C & Fahs B (2019) From Private to Public: Shifting from the Politics of Bloodless Respectability to Radical Menstrual Embodiment, Oral Presentation, *Traversing the Ridge: Connecting Menstrual Research and Advocacy*, 23rd Biennial Conference of the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research, Colorado College, 8th June 2019
- Bobel, C & Winkler, I (2019) Myth-Busting, Modernity, and Saviourism in Representations of Menstrual Beliefs and Practices in the Popular Media, Oral Presentation, *Traversing the Ridge: Connecting Menstrual Research and Advocacy*, 23rd Biennial Conference of the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research, Colorado College, 7th June 2019
- Graves, E (2019) Page to Stage: Translating, and Re-translating the Show, 'You Menstrual Me', Oral Presentation, *Traversing the Ridge: Connecting Menstrual Research and Advocacy*, 23rd Biennial Conference of the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research, Colorado College, 7th June 2019
- Higbee, D (2019) Reduce, Reuse, Menstrual Cycle: Studying Menstrual Hygiene Product Usage and Knowledge of their Environmental Impact on Allegheny College Campus, Oral Presentation, *Traversing the Ridge: Connecting Menstrual Research and Advocacy*, 23rd Biennial Conference of the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research, Colorado College, 7th June 2019
- Hughes, B (2018b) Menstrual Culture: Personal Ritual & Performance, Oral Presentation, *Menstruation Symposium*, University of St Andrews, 17th January 2018
- Hughes, B (2019a) Performing Periods: Challenging Menstrual Normativity through Art Practice, Oral Presentation, *Blood in Modern & Contemporary Art Panel, Association for Art History Annual Conference*, University of Brighton, 5th April 2019

- Hughes, B (2019b) Performing Periods: Challenging Menstrual Normativity through Art Practice, Oral Presentation, *Talking Bodies Fourth Biennial Conference*, Institute of Gender Studies, University of Chester, 10th April 2019
- Hughes, B (2019c) Performing Periods: Challenging Menstrual Normativity through Art Practice, Oral Presentation, *Protests Past and Present: Resistance and Persistence Towards Equality*, Liverpool John Moores University, 24th May 2019
- Hughes, B (2019d) Reframing Menstrual Art, Oral Presentation at *Critical Perspectives on Menstruation*, Menstruation Research Network Workshop, University of St Andrews, 31 May 2019
- Hughes, B (2019e) Performing Periods: Challenging Menstrual Normativity through Art Practice, Oral Presentation, *Traversing the Ridge: Connecting Menstrual Research and Advocacy*, 23rd Biennial Conference of the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research, Colorado College, 7th June 2019
- Hughes, B (2019f) Performing Periods: Challenging Menstrual Normativity Through Art Practice, Oral Presentation, Research Café: Practice-Based Research, Liverpool John Moores University, 13th November 2019
- Hughes, B (2019g) What Do we Mean When We Talk About Period Positivity?, John Moores Students' Union, Outpost Liverpool, Public Event, 3rd December 2019
- Hughes, B (2020) Bee Hughes: From Performative Printmaking to Performing Periods, Artist in Residence Lecture, Barns-Graham Room, School of Art History, University of St Andrews, 29th January 2020
- Hodson, C & Brown, M (2019) Reflections on Scottish Roll Out of Period Products, Menstrual Education, and Social Enterprise as a Solution to Period Poverty, Oral Presentation, *Critical Perspectives on Menstruation*, Menstruation Research Network Workshop, University of St Andrews, 31st May 2019
- Laruelle, F (2018) In Conversation & Q&A, *Art Disarming Philosophy: A Symposium on Non-Philosophy and Aesthetics*, Tate Liverpool, 24th February 2018
- Lincoln, S & Pih, D (2016) Bedroom Culture: Dr Siân Lincoln In Conversation with Darren Pih, Tate Liverpool, 17th September 2016
- Linton, D (2019) Singing the Menstrual Blues, Oral Presentation, *Traversing the Ridge: Connecting Menstrual Research and Advocacy*, 23rd Biennial Conference of the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research, Colorado College, 7th June 2019

- Ludlow, J (2019) 'Everybody Bleeds... Sometimes': Graphic Menstruation Narratives, Oral Presentation, *Traversing the Ridge: Connecting Menstrual Research and Advocacy*, 23rd Biennial Conference of the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research, Colorado College, 8th June 2019
- Owen, L (2019) Menstrual Cup Use in Urban Young Women: The Simultaneous Disruption and Reproduction of Menstrual Stigma Oral Presentation, *Critical Perspectives on Menstruation*, Menstruation Research Network Workshop, University of St Andrews, 31st May 2019
- Quint, C (2019b) Everybody Had a Room That Was a Womb: to Achieve Period Positive Scotland, Champion Menstrual Vitality, Oral Presentation at *Critical Perspectives on Menstruation*, Menstruation Research Network Workshop, University of St Andrews, 31st May 2019
- Røstvik, CM (2018b) Cash Flow: Creativity in Menstrual Advertising, Oral Presentation, *Menstruation Symposium*, University of St Andrews, 17th January 2018
- Røstvik, CM (2019a) Project Hyacinth: Unilever's Menstrual Product Arms Race 1965-1980, Oral Presentation, *Traversing the Ridge: Connecting Menstrual Research and Advocacy*, 23rd Biennial Conference of the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research, Colorado College, 7th June 2019
- Røstvik, CM (2019b) Corporate Sponsorship, Free Products, and Historical Change in Scotland, Oral Presentation, *Traversing the Ridge: Connecting Menstrual Research and Advocacy*, 23rd Biennial Conference of the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research, Colorado College, 8th June 2019
- Scranton, A (2019) Are Those Tampons Toxic? A Review of Recent Chemical Testing on Tampons and Pads: What Does it Tell us and Where do we Need to Go from Here?, Oral Presentation, *Traversing the Ridge: Connecting Menstrual Research and Advocacy*, 23rd Biennial Conference of the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research, Colorado College, 7th June 2019
- Standing, K & Zipp, S (2019) Getting 'On the Ball' – The Campaign for Free Menstrual Products at Football Clubs in the UK, Oral Presentation, *Traversing the Ridge: Connecting Menstrual Research and Advocacy*, 23rd Biennial Conference of the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research, Colorado College, 8th June 2019
- Vostral, S (2019a) Tampon Risk and Tampon Safety: A History of Testing and Labeling, Keynote Presentation, *Critical Perspectives on Menstruation*, Menstruation Research Network Workshop, University of St Andrews, 31st May 2019

Vostral S (2019b) Tampons & Medical Privacy: A Legacy of Toxic Shock Syndrome, Oral Presentation, *Traversing the Ridge: Connecting Menstrual Research and Advocacy*, 23rd Biennial Conference of the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research, Colorado College, 7th June 2019

Warner, P (2019) Clinical Health Perspectives on Menstruation in Scotland, Oral Presentation, *Traversing the Ridge: Connecting Menstrual Research and Advocacy*, 23rd Biennial Conference of the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research, Colorado College, 8th June 2019

Woollatt, J (2019) Images of Menopause, Oral Presentation, *Talking Bodies Fourth Biennial Conference*, Institute of Gender Studies, University of Chester, 10th April 2019 [presentation transcript kindly shared by the artist]

Theses

Baugher, J (2007) *Feminist Vision: Visual Art, the Act of Writing, and the Female Body in the Novels of Clarice Lispector, Lya Luft, and Diamella Eltit*, Doctoral Thesis, Tulane University School of Liberal Arts, USA

Carr, M (2019) *Dr Carnesky's Incredible Bleeding Woman: Reinventing Menstrual Rituals Through New Performance Practices*, Doctoral Thesis, School of Media and Performing Arts, Middlesex University, UK

Persdotter, J (2013) *Countering the Menstrual Mainstream: A Study of the European Menstrual Countermovement*, MA Thesis, University of Gothenberg, Sweden

Tikai, T (2009) *Towards a Digital Folk Music*, Doctoral Thesis, Liverpool School of Art & Design, Doctoral Thesis, Liverpool John Moores University, UK

Press Articles, Press Releases & Academic-Related Blogs

ADM (2019) The Body and the Blood: Anish Kapoor's Menstrual Art and The Vexed Question of Appropriation, *The Economist*, 14 May 2019, Available at: <https://www.economist.com/prospero/2019/05/14/anish-kapoors-menstrual-art-and-the-vexed-question-of-appropriation> [Accessed 30 December 2019]

Akkermans, A (2016) Hints of the Real World in Art Basel's Elitist Bubble, *Hyperallergic*, 22 June 2016, Available at: https://bitforms.art/pdfs/bibliography/lozano-hemmer/2016Hyperallergic_Basel.pdf [Accessed 31 December 2019]

Armitage, S (2017) This is What It's Like to Get a Period When You Aren't A Woman, *Buzzfeed*, 25 February 2017, Available at: https://www.buzzfeed.com/susiearmitage/heres-what-its-like-to-have-your-period-when-youre-trans?utm_term=.foRBJ79p5#.if1zn2IMG [Accessed 25 January 2019]

Arnold, A (2020) You Might Want to Throw Away Your Thinx Underwear, *The Cut*, 14 January 2020, Available at: <https://www.thecut.com/2020/01/thinx-underwear-reportedly-contains-toxic-chemicals-pfas.html> [Accessed 26 January 2020]

Bitch HQ (2012) Sm{art}: 5 Menstrual Blood Artists/Projects Worth Seeing, *Bitch Media*, 28 March 2012, Available at: <https://www.bitchmedia.org/post/smart-menstrual-blood-art-feminism> [Accessed 30 December 2019]

Bridgett, R (2003) An Appraisal of the Films of William Burroughs, Brion Gysin, and Anthony Balch in terms of Recent Avant Garde Theory, *Bright Lights Film Journal*, 1 February 2003

British Pregnancy Advisory Service (2017) BPAS Comment on Boots' Failure to Meet Its Deadline for Providing Affordable Emergency Contraception. *Press Release*, 31 October 2017, Available at: <https://www.bpas.org/about-our-charity/press-office/press-releases/bpas-comment-on-boots-failure-to-meet-its-deadline-for-providing-affordable-emergency-contraception/> [Accessed 4 April 2017]

Brown, JM (2016) BP Ends 27-year Sponsorship of Tate as Falling Oil Price Takes Toll: Oil Group Denies Decision Influenced by Climate Change Protests, *Financial Times*, 11 March 2016, Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/fc89bc54-e78f-11e5-bc31-138df2ae9ee6> [Accessed 2 January 2020]

- Chen, L (2018) A Guide to Period Art: Period Art is Currently Having A Moment, But Menstruation has Long Been a Source of Creative Inspiration, *Clue Blog*, Available at:
<https://helloclue.com/articles/culture/a-guide-to-period-art>
 [Accessed 30 December 2019]
- Chen, L (2019) Bloodbaths & Cycle-Syncing: The Art of The Menstrual Ritual, *Clue Blog*, 21 February 2019, Available at:
<https://helloclue.com/articles/culture/bloodbaths-and-cycle-syncing-the-art-of-the-menstrual-ritual>
 [Accessed 30 December 2019]
- Clemmer, C (2017) Tampons and Death Threats: Tackling Transphobia and the Period Taboo, *Huffington Post*, 20 March 2017, Available at:
https://www.huffpost.com/entry/tampons-death-threats-tackling-transphobia-and-the_b_58d01179e4b0537abd95734d
 [Accessed 3 January 2020]
- Clue (2019) Cycle A-Z: The Myth of the Moon Phases and Menstruation, *Clue Blog*, originally published 14 July 2016, Available at:
<https://helloclue.com/articles/cycle-a-z/myth-moon-phases-menstruation>
 [Accessed 5 November 2019]
- Dusenbery, M (2019) Set it And Forget it? The IUD is Held up as the Gold Standard of Birth Control. That Says a Lot About the Slothful Pace of Innovation, *Scientific American*, May 2019, 40-47
- Fassler, J (2015) How Doctors Take Women’s Pain Less Seriously, *The Atlantic*, 15 October 2015, Available at:
<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/10/emergency-room-wait-times-sexism/410515/>
 [Accessed: 23 August 2017]
- Fenton, S (2016) How Sexist Stereotypes Mean Doctors Ignore Women’s Pain, *The Independent*, 27 July 2016, Available at:
<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/how-sexist-stereotypes-mean-doctors-ignore-womens-pain-a7157931.html>
 [Accessed: 23 August 2017]
- Gardner, L (2016) Dr Carnesky’s Incredible Bleeding Woman Review – Menstrual Mystery Tour, *The Guardian*, 19 December 2016, Available at:
<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/dec/19/dr-carneskys-incredible-bleeding-woman-review-soho-theatre-london>
 [Accessed 2 September 2019]

- Ghosh, S (date unknown) Radiant Shame: the performance of femininity, with Rhyannon Styles, *The Demented Goddess*, Available at: <https://www.thedementedgoddess.com/radiant-shame-the-performance-of-femininity-with-rhyannon-styles/> [Accessed 2 January 2020]
- Glamour (2017) This Trans Activist Photographed Themselves Free-Bleeding to Make an Important Point About Periods and Gender, *Glamour*, 25 July 2017, Available at: <https://www.glamour.com/story/cass-clemmer-instagram-freebleeding> [Accessed 3 January 2020]
- Hagen, JJ (2012) Artist Attack! Zanele Muholi Boldly Archives the Difficult Love of South Africa's Black Lesbian Community, *Autostraddle*, 20 February 2012, Available at: autostraddle.com/artist-attack-zanele-muholi-13277/ [Accessed 30 December 2019]
- Heiser, G (2015) This Artist Uses Period Blood in Her Work—See the Stunning Images: You'll never look at Aunt Flo the same way again, *Women's Health*, 8 May 2015, Available at: <https://www.womenshealthmag.com/health/a19919899/period-blood-art/> [Accessed 30 December 2019]
- Hinde, N (2015) Donald Trump's Portrait Painted in Period Blood to Protest 'Sexist' Remarks, *Huffington Post UK*, 15 September 2015, Available at: https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/09/15/donald-trump-painted-in-period-blood_n_8138186.html [Accessed 5 January 2020]
- Hughes, B & Standing, K (2018) Menstrual Art: Why Everyone Should Go and See It, *The Conversation*, 12 November 2018, Available at: <https://theconversation.com/menstrual-art-why-everyone-should-go-and-see-it-105778> [Accessed 5 November 2019]
- Jenkins, C (2013) I'm the 'Vaginal Knitting' Performance [sic] Artist – and I Want to Defend my Work, *The Guardian*, Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/dec/17/vaginal-knitting-artist-defence> [Accessed 30 December 2019]
- Jenkins, C (date unknown) Casting off My Womb, *Casey-Jenkins*, Available at: <https://casey-jenkins.com/works/casting-off-my-womb/> [Accessed 2 January 2020]

- Jones, A (2017a) This Comic Shows Why Doctors Need to Take Women's Pain More Seriously, *The Pool*, 31 July 2017, Available at:
<https://www.the-pool.com/health/health/2017/31/this-comic-shows-why-doctors-need-to-take-womens-pain-more-seriously>
[Accessed: 23 August 2017]
- Jones, A (2017b) We Wrote About Women's Health Not Being Taken Seriously, and your Stories Came Flooding in, *The Pool*, 2 August 2017, Available at: <https://www.the-pool.com/health/health/2017/31/we-wrote-about-womens-health-not-being-taken-seriously-and-your-stories-came-flooding-in>
[Accessed: 23 August 2017]
- Kresge, N, Khrennikov, I & Ramli, D (2019) Period-Tracking Apps Are Monetizing Women's Extremely Personal Data, *Bloomberg Businessweek*, 24 January 2019, Available at:
<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-01-24/how-period-tracking-apps-are-monetizing-women-s-extremely-personal-data>
[Accessed 30 December 2019]
- Langley, L (2010) Artist Paints Canvases with Her Own Menstrual Blood, *Jezebel*, 22 July 2010, Available at:
<https://jezebel.com/artist-paints-canvas-with-her-own-menstrual-blood-5590501>
[Accessed 3 September 2019].
- Lewis, J (2015a) Weekend Links at re:Cycling – Menstrual Activism & the Arts, *Menstruation Matters*, Society for Menstrual Cycle Research, Blog, 10 October 2015, Available at:
www.menstruationresearch.org/2015/10/10/weekend-links-at-recycling-menstrual-activism-the-arts/
[Accessed 17 September 2019]
- Lewis, RC (2020) Patriarchy Proof: Thinx and the Perils of Emphasizing Female Founders, *Bitch Media*, 16 January 2020, Available at:
<https://www.bitchmedia.org/article/thinx-miki-agrawal-female-founders-and-toxic-products>
[Accessed 26 January 2020]
- Levy, S (date unknown) About, *Sarah Levy Art*, Available at:
<https://www.sarahlevyart.com/about> [Accessed 5 January 2020]
- MacCabe, K & Hull, D (2014) How Patients use Online Sources for Information, *Nursing Times*, 110(42), 24-45, Available at:
<https://www.pscsupport.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/141015How-patients-use-online-sources-for-information.pdf>
[Accessed 5 November 2019]

- Macneil, K (2017) Spilling Blood in Art, a Tale of Tampons, Trump and Taboos, *The Conversation*, 31 July 2017, Available at: <https://theconversation.com/spilling-blood-in-art-a-tale-of-tampons-trump-and-taboos-81455> [Accessed 5 November 2019]
- Marshall, A (2019) Museums Cut Ties With Sacklers as Outrage Over Opioid Crisis Grows, *The New York Times*, 25 March 2019, Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/25/arts/design/sackler-museums-donations-oxycontin.html> [Accessed 2 January 2020]
- Martinčič, J (2016) Let it Bleed – Art’s Revival of Menstrual Blood, *The Guardian*, 2 December 2016, Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/dec/12/let-it-bleed-arts-revival-of-menstrual-blood> [Accessed 30 December 2019]
- Metal (date unknown) About Us, *Metal*, Available at: <http://www.metalculture.com/about-us/> [Accessed 2 January 2020]
- Nagarajan, C (2013) FEMEN's Obsession with Nudity Feeds a Racist Colonial Feminism, *The Guardian*, 11 April 2013, Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/apr/11/femen-nudity-racist-colonial-feminism> [Accessed 3 January 2020]
- Orr, G (2016) These Artists Use Menstrual Blood in Their Work, *Refinery 29*, 24 April 2016, Available at: <https://www.refinery29.com/en-gb/period-blood-art> [Accessed 30 December 2019]
- Petter, O (2018) More Than Half of Women Feel Ashamed of Their Periods, Finds Survey, *The Independent*, 5 January 2018, Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/women-periods-ashamed-menstruation-half-survey-a8143416.html> [Accessed 10 January 2018]
- Pripas, S (2016) Coat Hangers and Knitting Needles: A Brief History of Self-Induced Abortion, *Nursing Clio*, 10 March 2016, Available at: <https://nursingclio.org/2016/03/10/coat-hangers-and-knitting-needles-a-brief-history-of-self-induced-abortion/> [Accessed 25 October 2019]
- Radical Anthropology Group (date unknown) About, *Radical Anthropology Group*, Available at: <http://radicalanthropologygroup.org/about> [Accessed 2 January 2020]

- Reading, W (2014) My Period and Me: A Trans Guy's Guide to Menstruation, *Everyday Feminism*, 4 November 2014, Available at: <https://everydayfeminism.com/2014/11/trans-guys-guide-menstruation/> [Accessed 25 January 2019]
- Rees, E (2013) Casting off Shame through Vagina Knitting, *The Conversation*, 5 December 2013, Available at: <https://theconversation.com/casting-off-shame-through-vagina-knitting-21044> [Accessed 5 November 2019]
- Remnant, J & Sang, K (2019) Her Bloody Project – Managing Menstruation at Work, *Cost of Living Blog*, 29 May 2019, Available at: <https://www.cost-of-living.net/her-bloody-project-managing-menstruation-at-work/> [Accessed 30 December 2019]
- Riddell, JL (1995) The Abject Object: A Recent History of the Ephemeral Found Object in Contemporary Art, *New Art Examiner*, 23(2), October 1995
- Riquelme JD (2013) Guardó su sangre menstrual por cinco años para hacer una obra de arte [tr. She kept her menstrual blood for five years to make a work of art], *Soy Quillota*, 21 June 2013, Available at: <https://www.soychile.cl/Quillota/Cultura/2013/06/21/181775/Guardo-su-sangre-menstrual-por-cinco-anos-para-hacer-una-obra-de-arte.aspx> [Accessed 1 April 2019]
- Røstvik, CM (2018e) Adventures in Menstruation: How Period Product Ads Have Changed to Reflect a More Realistic Experience for Women, *The Conversation*, 9 March 2018, Available at: <https://theconversation.com/adventures-in-menstruation-how-period-product-ads-have-changed-to-reflect-a-more-realistic-experience-for-women-91417> [Accessed 5 November 2019]
- Sang, K, Myhill, K & Remnant, J (2020) Period Poverty is a Workplace Issue, *Period Poverty Scotland*, Blog, 4 February 2020, Available at: <http://periodpovertyscotland.weebly.com/blog/period-poverty-is-a-workplace-issue> [Accessed 11 February 2020]
- Sole-Smith, V (2019) The Point of a Period: Age-old Taboos Against Menstruation Have Led to a Lack of Research on How Women's Cycles Work with Serious Consequences for their Health, *Scientific American*, May 2019, 33-36
- Standing, K & Hughes, B (2019a) How Cultural Attitudes to Menstruation Have Finally Started to Shift, *British Academy Turning Points*, Blog, 28 May 2019, Available at:

<https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/blog/summer-showcase-2019-how-cultural-attitudes-menstruation-have-finally-started-shift>
[Accessed 5 November 2019]

Steinem, G (1978) If Men Could Menstruate: A Political Fantasy, *Ms.*, October 1978, 110

Steinhauer, J (2014) Feminist Activists Bleed and Defecate on Islamic State Flag #NSFW, *Hyperallergic*, 27 August 2014, Available at: <https://hyperallergic.com/145768/feminist-activists-bleed-and-shit-on-islamic-state-flag-nsfw/>
[Accessed 5 January 2020]

Styles, R (2017) A Trans Review of the Year, *The Sunday Times*, 24 December 2017, Available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/a-trans-review-of-the-year-ssvfjkps2#>
[Accessed 2 January 2020]

Thinx (2020) How We Ensure Thinx Are Body-Safe, *Thinx Blog Op-Ed*, 14 January 2020, Available at: <https://www.shethinx.com/blogs/thinx-piece/how-we-ensure-thinx-are-body-safe> [Accessed: 26 January 2020]

William, R (2014) Facebook's 71 Gender Options Come to UK Users, *The Telegraph*, 27 June 2014, Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/facebook/10930654/Facebooks-71-gender-options-come-to-UK-users.html>
[Accessed 30 September 2019]

Quint, C (2017) I've Stopped Saying 'Feminine Hygiene Products'. Here's Why You Should Too, *The Independent*, 14 October 2017, Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/periods-period-poverty-tampons-menstruation-empowerment-language-sanitary-a8000641.html>
[Accessed 14 April 2018]

Quint, C (2019c) Menstrual Art: What It Is? Why It Is Important?, *Outlook India*, 14 January 2019, Available at: <https://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/society-news-its-bloody-art-isnt-it/301034>
[Accessed 30 December 2019]

Slawson, N (2017) Boots Faces Boycott Over Refusal to Lower Cost Of Morning-After Pill, *The Guardian*, 20 July 2017, Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/jul/20/boots-faces-boycott-over-refusal-to-lower-cost-of-morning-after-pill>
[Accessed 19 October 2019]

Suarez de Jesus, C (2011) Five Artworks Made from Urine, Crap, or Semen, *Miami New Times*, 18 January 2011. Available at: shorturl.at/nuzLT [Accessed 3 September 2019].

Telegraph Reporters (2017) Mother died after paramedics accused her of faking symptoms 'for attention', inquest hears, *The Telegraph*, 31 July 2017 Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/07/31/mother-died-paramedics-accused-faking-symptoms-attention-inquest/> [Accessed 20 March 2018]

Wax, R (2016) Equality 4 Mental Health, *Huffington Post Blog*, 3 November 2016, Available at: https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/ruby-wax/equality-4-mental-health_b_8459466.html [Accessed 3 April 2013]

Vartanian, H (2013) Calm Down, Menstrual Blood Isn't a Big Deal, *Hyperallergic*, 25 June 2013, Available at: <https://hyperallergic.com/74107/calm-down-menstual-blood-art-isnt-a-big-deal/> [Accessed 1 April 2019]

Weiner, S (2015) This Artist Takes Photos of Her Own Menstrual Blood: Jen Lewis's Macro Photography Aims to Kill the Stigma Surrounding Menstruation, *Fast Company*, 8 May 2015, Available at: <https://www.fastcompany.com/3046005/experimental-photo-series-reveals-the-beautiful-side-of-menstruation> [Accessed 30 December 2019]

Zipp, S, Røstvik, CM & Purcell, C (2018) Ending Period Poverty: Scotland's Plan for Free Menstrual Products Shatters Taboos and Leads a Global Movement, *The Conversation*, 18 September 2018, Available at: <https://theconversation.com/ending-period-poverty-scotlands-plan-for-free-menstrual-products-shatters-taboos-and-leads-a-global-movement-103138> [Accessed 5 November 2019]

Video & Audio

Barker, M-J (2014) *Non-Binary Genders*, Keynote Presentation at *Trans* Emerging Trends* Conference, 30 minutes 12 seconds, Available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lu7aRvhM-Ng>

[Accessed 6 November 2019]

BBC (2017) *Today*, BBC Radio 4, 20 June 2017, 3 hours, Available at:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08tvjb7>

[Accessed 19 October 2019]

Brown, K (2013) *John Cage at Work (1978-1992)*, Crown Point Press, published online 14 January 2014, 44 minutes 4 seconds, Available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WGNwiQviiGU>

[Accessed 6 November 2019]

Dick, K (dir) (2018) *The Bleeding Edge*, Shark Island Productions, 1 hour 39 minutes

Laird, A (2019) Episode 57 – The Managed Body with Chris Bobel, *Heavy Flow*, podcast, 1 hour 14 minutes, 21 February 2019

Tate Liverpool (2016) *Elena Palumbo-Mosca in Conversation*, 26 November 2016, 53 minutes 44 seconds [DVD in collection of the author]

CNN Tonight (2015) Trump on Kelly: Blood was Coming Out of Her Eyes, *CNN Tonight*, 8 August 2015, 52 seconds, Available at:

<https://edition.cnn.com/videos/us/2015/08/08/donald-trump-megyn-kelly-blood-lemon-intv-ctn.cnn> [Accessed 5 January 2020]

Documents & Reports

Health and Social Care Information Centre (2014) *NHS Contraceptive Services: England, Community Contraceptive Clinics Statistics for 2013-14*, Report, NHS Digital, 30 October 2014, Available at: <http://digital.nhs.uk/catalogue/PUB15746> [Accessed 3 April 2018]

Hansard (2017) *Sanitary Products*, 29 November 2017, Volume 632, C175WH Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2017-11-29/debates/1892E11C-640C-4B9E-A426-38B1F32B4E4F/SanitaryProducts> [Accessed 6 April 2018]

NHS Digital (2017) *Statistics on Sexual and Reproductive Health Services: England 2016/17*, NHS Digital, 5 October 2017, Available at: <https://digital.nhs.uk/catalogue/PUB30094> [Accessed 3 April 2018]

ONS (2017) *Childbearing for women born in different years, England and Wales: 2016*, Statistical Bulletin, Office for National Statistics, Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/conceptionandfertilityrates/bulletins/childbearingforwomenbornindifferentyearsenglandandwales/2016> [Accessed 18 March 2018]

Tingle, C & Vora, S (2018) *Break the Barriers: Girl's Experiences of Menstruation in the UK*, Plan International UK: London.

Robertson, D, Gibbons, P, Peto, J, Haynes, J, *et al* (2017) *Wellcome Collection: Who We Are and What We Do*, Wellcome Collection, 10 October 2017, Available at: https://wellcomecollection.cdn.prismic.io/wellcomecollection%2F4207b8c8-70d1-461e-bea6-f9da13f9a55a_wellcome+collection+who+we+are+and+what+we+do_2.pdf#_ga=2.210398037.1581914192.1572011501-1101721499.1567164566 [Accessed 31 October 2019]

Scottish Government (2018) *Access to Sanitary Products Aberdeen Pilot: Evaluation Report*, Scottish Government, Housing and Social Justice Directorate, May 2018 Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/access-sanitary-products-aberdeen-pilot-evaluation-report/> [Accessed 30 December 2019]

Vora, S (2017) *Tackling Period Poverty Report 2017*, No More Taboo, April 2017
Available at:
<https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/0659695e/files/uploaded/TPP-Report.pdf>
[Accessed 30 December 2019]

Exhibitions & Exhibition Materials

BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art (2019 – 2020) *Judy Chicago*, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK, 16 November 2019 – 19 April 2020, See:

<https://baltic.art/whats-on/judy-chicago>
[Accessed 11 January 2020]

Hughes, B (2018c) *Periodical*, curated by Bee Hughes as part of Being Human Festival of the humanities, Atrium Gallery, Liverpool School of Art & Design, 15th - 24th November 2018

Hughes, B & Petersen, E (2017a). *Comfort Zones*, curated by Bee Hughes, Exhibition at Atrium Gallery, Liverpool School of Art and Design, 26 October – 3 November 2017

Hughes, B. and Petersen, C. (2017b) *Comfort Zones*, Curatorial Text, Exhibition at Atrium Gallery, Liverpool School of Art & Design, 26 October – 3 November 2017, Available at: <https://bee-hughes.tumblr.com/post/166786423628/comfort-zones-is-an-exhibition-of-works-in>
[Accessed 26 September 2019]

ICA (2019) *I, I, I, I, I, I, I, Kathy Acker*, Exhibition, ICA, London, UK, 1st May – 4th August 2019, See: <https://www.ica.art/exhibitions/i-i-i-i-i-i-i-kathy-acker>
[Accessed 11 January 2020]

Jenkins, C & SBS News (201) *Vaginal Knitting*, Video, 2 minutes 48 seconds, SBS2, 27 November 2013, Available at: www.sbs.com/au/news/thefeed/story/vaginalknitting
[Accessed 11 November 2019]

Lisson Gallery (2015) Anish Kapoor, 15 May-22 June 2019, *Exhibitions*, Available at: <https://www.lissongallery.com/exhibitions/anish-kapoor-96b01a03-f8c1-461d-84f4-89c6b7d82154>
[Accessed 23 July 2020]

National Museums Liverpool (2018 – 2019) *Double Fantasy: John & Yoko*, Museum of Liverpool, Liverpool, UK, 18 May 2018 – 3 November 2019, See: <https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/mol/exhibitions/double-fantasy/>
[Accessed 11 January 2020]

Newell, LB (curator) *Somewhere in Between*, Wellcome Collection, London, UK, 8th March 2018 – 27th August 2018, See: <https://wellcomecollection.org/exhibitions/WhvoAykAACgAIDoo>
[Accessed 11 January 2020]

- Open Eye Gallery (2018 - 2019) *Wake Up Together: Ren Hang & Where Love is Illegal*, Open Eye Gallery, Liverpool, UK, 16th November 2018 – 17th February 2019, See:
<https://openeye.org.uk/whatson/wake-up-together/>
[Accessed 11 January 2020]
- Rodriguez, B & Vasey, G (curators) (2019 – 2020) *Jo Spence & Oreet Ashery: Misbehaving Bodies*, Wellcome Collection, London, 30th May 2019 – 26th January 2020, See:
https://wellcomecollection.org/exhibitions/XFHSHUAAAU_pE70
[Accessed 11 January 2020]
- Scott, E-J (curator) (2017 – 2020) *Museum of Transology*, Brighton Museum, Brighton, UK, 20th July 2017 – 5th February 2020, See:
<https://brightonmuseums.org.uk/brighton/exhibitions-displays/brighton-museum-past-exhibitions/past-exhibitions-2019/the-museum-of-transology/>
[Accessed 11 January 2020]
- Tate Liverpool (2016 – 2017) *Yves Klein*, curated by Darren Pih, Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, UK, 21st October 2016 – 5 March 2017, See:
<https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-liverpool/exhibition/yves-klein>
[Accessed 11 January 2020]
- Wahi, J & Jampol, RP (2020) *Abortion is Normal!* Eva Presenhuber Gallery, New York, USA, 9th – 16th January 2020, See:
<https://www.abortionisnormal.org/>
[Accessed 6 January 2020]
- Wellcome Collection (2013 – 2014) *Foreign Bodies, Common Ground*, Wellcome Collection, London, UK, See: <https://wellcomecollection.org/exhibitions/W31I-ykAAcAPvh1>
[Accessed 11 January 2020]
- Wellcome Collection (2016) *This is A Voice*, Wellcome Collection, London, UK, See:
<https://wellcomecollection.org/exhibitions/W31tHikAACgAP5gi>
[Accessed 11 January 2020]

Artworks

- Antin, E (1972) *Carving: A Traditional Sculpture*, 148 silver gelatin prints, 17.7 x 12.7 cm each, Twentieth-Century Discretionary Fund, Art Institute Chicago, reference number 1996.44, See: <https://www.artic.edu/artworks/144356/carving-a-traditional-sculpture> [Accessed 26 January 2020]
- Atkinson, A (2016) *£306*, installation: copper and silver coins, dimensions variable, artist's collection, See: <https://amandamarieatkinson.tumblr.com/post/153945023187/306-2016-the-piece-presents-306-pounds-in> [Accessed 6 January 2020]
- Basu, P (2013-2016) *A Ritual of Exile: Blood Speaks*, Multiple artworks including photography series, 360-degree immersive video, book, See: <http://www.poulomibasu.com/aro-360> [Accessed 9 January 2020]
- Beloso, L (2010) *The Period Piece*, 13 canvases, menstrual blood and mixed media paintings, USA
- Berard, C (2004) *Aqua Permanens*, performance: dance while free bleeding onto 200 x 200 cm cloth, graphite, collage; artefact made of fragments of the cloth, UK, See: <https://youtu.be/Ykd1arDHWB8> [Accessed 9 January 2020]
- Berthon-Moine, I (2009) *Red Is the Colour*, 12 photographic portraits, London, UK, See: https://66.media.tumblr.com/573862eb8167130f3582ff01460ad79d/tumblr_inline_neu5qmgHvX1rhwyt9.jpg [Accessed 9 January 2020]
- Carr, M (2015 - 2018) *Dr Carnesky's Incredible Bleeding Woman*, ensemble performance, 60 minutes, See: <http://carnesky.com/project/dr-carneskys-incredible-bleeding-woman/> [Accessed 6 January 2020]
- Chicago, J (1971) *Red Flag*, photolithograph printed in black and red on paper, edition of 94, 40.64 cm x 50.4825 cm
- Chicago, J (1972) *Menstruation Bathroom*, installation, bathroom fixtures and menstrual products, part of *Womanhouse*, group installation, 553N Mariposa Avenue, Hollywood, USA, 30 January – 28 February 1972
- Chicago, J (1972) *My Menstrual Life*, unpublished play, USA

- Chicago, J (1974 – 1979) *The Dinner Party*, installation, ceramic, porcelain, textile, 576 × 576 inches, Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, 4th Floor, Brooklyn Museum, New York, Gift of the Elizabeth A. Sackler Foundation, reference number: 2002.10
- Clark, J (1973) *Menstruation*, installation: vitrine, blood stains on slides, See: <https://www.EnglandGallery.com/judy-clark/> [Accessed 9 January 2020]
- Clifford, C (2015) *1 Want Your Blood: A Menstrual Symphony*, performance with The No Wave Performance Task Force, Grace Exhibition Space, Brooklyn, USA, See: <https://vimeo.com/122099876> [Accessed 6 January 2020]
- Clifford, C (2013 - 2020) *1 Want Your Blood*, installation, menstrual fluid and mixed liquid in perfume bottles, in *Abortion is Normal* curated by Jasmine Wahj & Rebecca Pauline Jampol, Eva Presenhuber Gallery, New York, USA, 9th – 16th January 2020, See: <https://www.abortionisnormal.org/> [Accessed 6 January 2020]
- Elmahdy, AM (2014) *Photo Action Against Isis*, digital photograph, in *A Rebel's Diary* blog, See: <http://arebelsdiary.blogspot.com/?zx=64b5f09f704c1e85> [Accessed 6 January 2020]
- Elwes, C (1979a) *Menstruation 1*, performance: White Room, Slade School of Fine Art, London, UK, See: https://www.luxonline.org.uk/artists/catherine_elwes/menstruation_1.html [Accessed 9 January 2020]
- Elwes, C (1979b) *Menstruation 2*, performance: White Room, Slade School of Fine Art, London, UK, See: https://www.luxonline.org.uk/artists/catherine_elwes/menstruation_2.html [Accessed 9 January 2020]
- Fletcher, VD (2019) *Menstrual Accessory*, Performance at Society for Menstrual Cycle Research Conference, Cornerstone Arts Centre, Colorado College, 8th June 2019 [author attended performance]
- Gilbert & George (1977) *Queer*, part of *Dirty Words Pictures* series, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

- Hotham Street Ladies (Cassandra Chilton, Molly O’Shaughnessy, Sarah Parkes, Caroline Price & Lyndal Walker) (2013) *You Beaut*, installation, confectionary, men’s bathroom at Margaret Lawrence Gallery, exhibited at L Castigini (curator) *Backflip*, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, Australia, 26th April – 25th May 2013, See: <http://www.hothamstreetladies.com/work/beaut/> [Accessed 7 January 2020]
- Hotham Street Ladies (Cassandra Chilton, Molly O’Shaughnessy, Sarah Parkes, Caroline Price & Lyndal Walker) (2014-15) *You Beaut*, billboard installation, Melbourne, Australia
- Hotham Street Ladies (Cassandra Chilton, Molly O’Shaughnessy, Sarah Parkes, Caroline Price & Lyndal Walker) (2017a) *You Beaut*, installation, bathroom fixtures and confectionary, exhibited at A. Franzkowiak (series producer) *Blood: Life Uncut*, Science Gallery, London, UK, 27th July – 13th November 2017, See: <https://london.sciencegallery.com/blood/artworks/you-beaut-3/> [Accessed 7 January 2020]
- Hotham Street Ladies (Cassandra Chilton, Molly O’Shaughnessy, Sarah Parkes, Caroline Price & Lyndal Walker) (2017b) *You Beaut*, installation, bathroom fixtures and confectionary, exhibited at *Blood: Attract and Repel*, Science Gallery, Melbourne, Australia, 2nd August – 23rd September 2017, See: <https://melbourne.sciencegallery.com/blood/index.html?p=163.html> [Accessed 7 January 2020]
- Hughes, B (2015a) *Paint*, unpublished poem, artist’s collection
- Hughes, B (2015b) *Chance Methods Number Two*, video, 1 minute 28 seconds, See: <https://vimeo.com/171598210>
- Hughes, B (2015c) *Chance Methods Number Five*, video, 1 minute 30 seconds , See: <https://vimeo.com/161489351>
- Hughes, B (2015d) *Tomato*, unpublished poem, artist’s collection
- Hughes, B (2016a) *a period is...*, visual poem, published in B Hughes (2018) Challenging Menstrual Norms in Online Medical Advice: Deconstructing Stigma through Entangled Art Practice, *Feminist Encounters: A Journal of Critical Studies in Culture and Politics*, 2(2), DOI: 10.20897/femenc/3883
- Hughes, B (2016b) *Space* triptych, three acrylic body-prints on paper, 2m x 1.77m each
- Hughes, B (2016 – 2017) *Cycles*, 6 hand-stitched linen scrolls, menstrual fluid and acrylic paint, each scroll 20 x 300 cm, artist’s collection

- Hughes, B (2017) *Infinite Cycles*, mixed media installation: looped video on 4 screens, white plinth, c. 150 x 150 x 45, exhibited at B Hughes (curator) *Comfort Zones*, Atrium Gallery, Liverpool School of Art & Design, 26th October – 3rd November 2017
- Hughes, B (2017 – 2019) *Lifetime Supply*, multiple painted clay sculptures: air dry clay, acrylic, size variable, artist's collection
- Hughes, B (2018d) *a period is...ii*, vinyl installation: visual poem, c. 150 x 300 cm, exhibited at B Hughes (curator) *Periodical* (2018), Being Human festival, Atrium Gallery, Liverpool School of Art & Design, 15th – 24th November 2018
- Hughes, B (2018e) *Almost Eight Cycles*, installation size variable, 242 digital prints, 148mm x 210 mm each, exhibited at B Hughes (curator) *Periodical* (2018), Being Human festival, Atrium Gallery, Liverpool School of Art & Design, 15th – 24th November 2018, Artist's collection
- Hughes, B (2019h) *Dys-men-o-rrho-ea*, private performance, body-prints and digital photographs, exhibited (in part) at The Cloisters, University of St Andrews, 31st May – 5th June 2019, digital print 119 x 84 cm collected University of St Andrews Museums and Collections, Object Number C2019.10(2) / Artist's collection
- Hughes, B (2019i) *unmade, remade, 28 days*, digital print with handwritten ink details, 2m x 0.6m, Artist's collection
- Hughes, B (2019j) *Dys-men-o-rrho-ea (one - sixteen)*, 16 monotype body-prints in acrylic, 29.7cm x 42cm each
- Hughes, B & Petersen, E (2017) *Unvoiced*, soundwork, 2 minutes 22 seconds
Available at: <https://soundcloud.com/comfort-zones>
- Idemitsu, M (1973) *What A Woman Made*, video: black and white, sound, MoMA, New York, USA, Object Number: 371.2009
- James, Z (2017) *Free Bleed*, painting in menstrual blood, exhibited at *Menstruation Matters*, The Women's Bookshop, Auckland, New Zealand, See: https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11873076
[Accessed 9 January 2020]
- James, Z (2017) *An Expensive Habit*, painting in menstrual blood, Auckland, New Zealand,
See: <https://metro.co.uk/2017/06/13/artist-creates-painting-out-of-her-own-menstrual-blood-to-start-a-conversation-around-period-poverty-6704890/>
[Accessed 9 January 2020]

- Jenkins, A (1996) *Ebb*, installation: video projection on miniature ceramic tub, tiled pedestal, audio; sculpture dimensions 14 x 20 x 26 inches, original running time: 4 minutes, See:
<http://www.amyjenkins.net/video%20pages/ebb.html>
 [Accessed 9 January 2020]
- Jenkins, C (2013) *Casting off My Womb*, 28-day durational performance, October 2013, Darwin Visual Arts Association, Darwin, Australia, See:
<https://casey-jenkins.com/works/casting-off-my-womb/>
 [Accessed 7 January 2020]
- Jenkins, C & Sailor, O (2019) *Drawn and Halved*, Performance at Lapsody 7th International Art & Performance Festival, Theatre Academy of the University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland, 20 – 23 February 2019
- Jenkins, C & SBS News (2013) *Vaginal Knitting*, Video, 2 minutes 48 seconds, SBS2, 27 November 2013, Available at:
www.sbs.com/au/news/thefeed/story/vaginalknitting
 [Accessed 11 November 2019]
- Johnson, LM (2015) *On the Rag*, jewellery collection: necklace; beaded underwear; beaded garment; multiple rings; multiple bracelets, created at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts, London, UK, See:
<https://www.lili-mj.com/graduate-collection>
 [Accessed 6 January 2020]
- Kanonklubben (Lene Bille, Marie Bille, Rikke Diemer, Kirsten Dufour, Kirsten Justesen, Jytte Keller, Jytte Rex & Birgitte Skjold-Jensen) (1970) *Damebilleder*, collaborative tableau performances, 10 – 24 April 1970, Copenhagen, Denmark
- Kelly, M (1973-1979) *Post-Partum Document*, mixed media, held in multiple collections, See:
https://www.marykellyartist.com/post_partum_document.html
 [Accessed 26 January 2020]
- Klein, Y (1960) *Monotone Symphony*, collaborative performance, 9 March 1960, Galerie Internationale d'Art Contemporain, Paris, France
- Kubota, S (1965) *Vagina Painting*, performance, performed during *Perpetual Fluxfest*, Cinematheque, New York, 4th July 1965, documentation: gelatin silver print, 14 x 14 inches, MoMA, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift, object number, 2308.2008
- Labowitz-Starus, L (1971) *Menstruation Wait*, performance, Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles, USA, See:
<http://www.reactfeminism.org/entry.php?l=lb&id=86&e=>
 [Accessed 9 January 2020]

- Labowitz-Starus, L (1972) *Menstruation Wait*, performance, Düsseldorf, Germany,
See:
<http://www.reactfeminism.org/entry.php?l=lb&id=86&e=>
[Accessed 9 January 2020]
- Levy, S (2015) *Whatever (Bloody Trump)*, menstrual blood on paper, dimensions
unknown, Bundeswehr Museum of Military History, Dresden Germany
- Lewis, J (2015b) *If I Bled Blue*, from *Beauty in Blood* project, digital photographic
print, 18 x 24 inches, Denver, USA, See:
<http://www.beautyinblood.com/media.html>
[Accessed 7 January 2020]
- Lewis, J (2015c) *The Crimson Wave*, from *Beauty in Blood* project, digital
photographic print, 24 x 18 inches, Denver, USA, See:
<http://www.beautyinblood.com/media.html>
[Accessed 7 January 2020]
- Lewis, J (2015d) *Bursting Through*, from *Beauty in Blood* project, digital
photographic print, 24 x 18 inches, Denver, USA, See:
<http://www.beautyinblood.com/media.html>
[Accessed 7 January 2020]
- Lewis, J (2015e) *Cobra*, from *Beauty in Blood* project, digital photographic print,
24 x 18 inches, Denver, USA, See:
<http://www.beautyinblood.com/media.html>
[Accessed 7 January 2020]
- Lewis, J (2015f) *Let it Flow #1*, from *Beauty in Blood* project, digital photographic
print, 18 x 24 inches, Denver, USA, See:
<http://www.beautyinblood.com/media.html>
[Accessed 7 January 2020]
- Lewis, J (2015g) *Let it Flow #2*, from *Beauty in Blood* project, digital photographic
print, 18 x 24 inches, Denver, USA, See:
<http://www.beautyinblood.com/media.html>
[Accessed 7 January 2020]
- Lewis, J (2015h) *Is the Grass Always Greener?*, from *Beauty in Blood* project, digital
photographic print, 24 x 18 inches, Denver, USA, See:
<http://www.beautyinblood.com/media.html>
[Accessed 7 January 2020]
- Lewis, J (2015i) *Untitled Series #1*, from *Beauty in Blood* project, digital
photographic print, 3 18 x 12 inches, Denver, USA, See:
<http://www.beautyinblood.com/media.html>
[Accessed 7 January 2020]

- Lewis, J (2015j) *A Beautiful Bloody Dance*, from *Beauty in Blood* project, digital photographic print, 3 18 x 12 inches, Denver, USA, See: <http://www.beautyinblood.com/media.html> [Accessed 7 January 2020]
- Lewis, J (2015k) *Pink Parachute*, from *Beauty in Blood* project, digital photographic print, 18 x 24 inches, Denver, USA, See: <http://www.beautyinblood.com/media.html> [Accessed 7 January 2020]
- Lewis, J (2015l) *Making Bubbles*, from *Beauty in Blood* project, digital photographic print, 9 10 x 8 inches, Denver, USA, See: <http://www.beautyinblood.com/media.html> [Accessed 7 January 2020]
- Lewis, J (2015m) *The Writing on the Wall*, from *Beauty in Blood* project, digital photographic print, 3 18 x 12 inches, Denver, USA, See: <http://www.beautyinblood.com/media.html> [Accessed 7 January 2020]
- Lewis, J (2015n) *Truth & Perception*, from *Beauty in Blood* project, digital photographic print, 24 x 18 inches, Denver, USA, See: <http://www.beautyinblood.com/media.html> [Accessed 7 January 2020]
- Luebbers, C (1996) *Menstrual Hut*, installation: 6 x 6 x 5 feet booth, menstrual blood prints, Sarasota, USA
- Marshlore (1980) *Trop(e)ism*, performance: silent screams, smears blood from vagina onto face, smokes a cigarette, Montreal, Canada
- Muholi, Z (2006) *Only Half the Picture*, Exhibition: 28 black and white photographs; 29 colour photographs, Michael Stevenson gallery, 29th March – 29th April 2006, See: <http://archive.stevenson.info/exhibitions/muholi/muholi.htm> [Accessed 9 January 2020]
- Muholi, Z (2011a) *Ummeli*, digital print on cotton rag of a digital collage of menstrual blood stains, exhibited at *Isilumo Siyaluma*, Blank project, Cape Town, South Africa, 1st – 26th November 2011, See: <http://www.blankprojects.com/exhibitions/isilumo-siyaluma/> [Accessed 9 January 2020]
- Muholi, Z (2011b) *Case 200/07/2007 MURDER*, digital print on cotton rag of a digital collage of menstrual blood stains, exhibited at *Isilumo Siyaluma*,

Blank project, Cape Town, South Africa, 1st – 26th November 2011, See:
<http://www.blankprojects.com/exhibitions/isilumo-siyaluma/>
[Accessed 9 January 2020]

Muholi, Z (2011c) *Case 216/02/2*, digital print on cotton rag of a digital collage of menstrual blood stains exhibited at *Isilumo Siyaluma*, Blank project, Cape Town, South Africa, 1st – 26th November 2011, See:
<http://www.blankprojects.com/exhibitions/isilumo-siyaluma/>
[Accessed 9 January 2020]

Muholi, Z (2011d) *Case 608/06/2008 RAPE*, digital print on cotton rag of a digital collage of menstrual blood stains, exhibited at *Isilumo Siyaluma*, Blank project, Cape Town, South Africa, 1st – 26th November 2011, See:
<http://www.blankprojects.com/exhibitions/isilumo-siyaluma/>
[Accessed 9 January 2020]

Muholi, Z (2011e) *Abammeli*, patterned menstrual blood on paper, exhibited at *Isilumo Siyaluma*, Blank project, Cape Town, South Africa, 1st – 26th November 2011, See:
<http://www.blankprojects.com/exhibitions/isilumo-siyaluma/>
[Accessed 9 January 2020]

Muholi, Z (2011f) *ARM Siyabhubha*, koki on gladwrap, found material, exhibited at *Isilumo Siyaluma*, Blank project, Cape Town, South Africa, 1st – 26th November 2011, See:
<http://www.blankprojects.com/exhibitions/isilumo-siyaluma/>
[Accessed 9 January 2020]

Muholi, Z (2011g) *ondabazabantu, no-no-nqo-ntsi*, menstrual blood on paper, exhibited at *Isilumo Siyaluma*, Blank project, Cape Town, South Africa, 1st – 26th November 2011, See:
<http://www.blankprojects.com/exhibitions/isilumo-siyaluma/>
[Accessed 9 January 2020]

Muholi, Z (2011h) *Ubuntu bami*, (a self-portrait) digital print on cotton rag, exhibited at *Isilumo Siyaluma*, Blank project, Cape Town, South Africa, 1st – 26th November 2011, See:
<http://www.blankprojects.com/exhibitions/isilumo-siyaluma/>
[Accessed 9 January 2020]

Munson, P (1991) *Menstrual Print*, 8.5" x 11", 11/1991, menstrual fluid on paper, USA, See:
<http://www.portiamunson.com/>
[Accessed 9 January 2020]

- Munson, P (1993) *Menstrual Print*, 8.5" x 11", 1991, menstrual fluid on paper, USA, See:
<http://www.portiamunson.com/>
 [Accessed 9 January 2020]
- Muybridge, E (1978) *The Horse in Motion*, photo series, Prints & Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC
- Páll, T (2017) *The Diary of my Period and Self-portrait: Feeling Complete*, 9 menstrual blood paintings on canvas, Oradea, Romania, See:
https://www.facebook.com/pg/timimagination/photos/?tab=album&album_id=952130794797524
 [Accessed 9 January 2020]
- Parfitt, M (2012) title unknown, quilt: mixed media, fabric, menstrual blood, Sacramento, USA, See:
<http://www.mum.org/armenpar.htm>
 [Accessed 9 January 2020]
- Quint, C (2011) *STAINS™*, installation: hand-cut felt, installation size variable, exhibited at *Periodical* curated by B Hughes (2018) Being Human festival, Atrium Gallery, Liverpool School of Art & Design, 15th – 24th November 2018
- Ranjit, A (2003) *Shakti Svaroop*, installation, red fabric and thread, New Delhi, India
- Ranjit, A (2010) *Feminine Force*, performance, white dress made from 10,275 pieces of single-use menstrual pads, read thread, Nepal
- Rist, P (1993/1998) *Blood Room*, video installation, exhibited at *Pipilotti Rist*, FACT, Liverpool, UK, 27th June – 31st August 2008, See:
<https://www.fact.co.uk/artwork/blood-room-1993-1998>
 [Accessed 7 January 2020]
- Sanz, I (2010) *Sangro, pero no muero*, tr. *I bleed, but I do not die*, ensemble performance, c. 15 minutes, International Theater and Arts Festival of TAC Street, Valladolid, Spain, See:
<https://www.isasanz.com/obra-art%C3%ADstica/obra/sangro-pero-no-muero-performance-art/>
 [Accessed 9 January 2020]
- Schneemann, C (1972) *Blood Work Diary*, 5 framed panels, 23 x 29 inches each: menstrual blood on tissue paper, egg yolk, 20 blottings on menstrual blood per panel, call number: 3000/ S3582/ 1971a, Accession number: 28754029 (Minaret) MC-80768, Fisher Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania, See:
http://dla.library.upenn.edu/dla/fisher/detail.html?id=FISHER_28754029
 [Accessed 9 January 2020]

- Schneemann, C (1975) *Interior Scroll*, performance. See documentation on paper 905 x 1830, beet juice, urine and coffee on screenprint on paper, Tate, reference number P13282
- Spyrou, S (2018) *The Ghosts of Tampons Past*, inkjet print on Fabriano paper, 29.7 x 42 cm, exhibited at *Periodical* curated by B Hughes (2018) Being Human festival, Atrium Gallery, Liverpool School of Art & Design, Liverpool, UK, 15th – 24th November 2018, author's collection
- Spyrou, S (2019a) tampon ghost earrings, jewellery: laser cut iridescent acrylic; plastic beads; silver plated findings, c. 5 x 2cm, author's collection
- Spyrou, S (2019b) *Ghost Tampons*, temporary mural: acrylic, emulsion and spray paint on wood, c. 182 x 182 cm, painted 7 June 2019, Stafford Street Liverpool, UK, artwork destroyed
- Tiegs, V (2000 – 2003) *Menstrala*, 88 paintings: menstrual fluid on paper, dimensions unknown, location unknown, See: <https://www.vanessatiegs.com/menstrala/> [Accessed 7 January 2020]
- Úbeda, C (2013) *Cloths*, mixed media installation, exhibited at Centro de Promoción de Salud e Cultura, June 2013, See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzwHFJDP_oU [Accessed 7 January 2020]
- Vasconcelos, J (2001 – 2005) *A Noiva*, tr. *The Bride*, OB tampons, stainless steel, cotton thread, steel cables, 600 x Ø300 cm, António Cachola Collection, Elvas, See: http://joanavasconcelos.com/info_en.aspx?oid=616 [Accessed 7 January 2020]
- Woollatt, J (2019 – ongoing) *Insecurity Blankets*, multiple objects: recycled blankets; stitching, artist's collection

Archival Material

Bodyform (1986a) Why Not Buy Your Towel the Same Way You Buy Your Jeans, in *Just Seventeen*, 18th June 1986, 21, Box: Just 17 1986-87 (incomplete), Femorabilia Collection, Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives

Bodyform (1986b) How Come Nobody Suggests You Try on a Towel to See if it Fits You, *Just Seventeen*, 27th August 1986, 21, Box: Just 17 1986-87, Femorabilia Collection, Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives

Lil-lets (1964) Discover the Blessings of Lil-lets Confidence for Yourself This Month, in *Fabulous*, 18th April 1964, 23, Box: 1964, Femorabilia Collection, Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives

Lil-lets (1988) Some Girls Find It Difficult Inserting a Tampon for the First Time but it's Only a Mental Block, in *Jackie*, 16 January 1988, 30-31, Box: 1988-89, Femorabilia Collection, Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives

Simplicity (1988) With Simplicity Stowaway Towels and Simplicity Tampons There's No Chance You'll Give the Game Away, in *Jackie*, 23 January 1988, 15, Box: 1988-89, Femorabilia Collection, Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives

Tampax (1973) Any Time of the Month can be Vacation Time, in *Jackie*, 17 November 1973, 12, Box: Jackie 1964-86, Femorabilia Collection, Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives

Tampax (1986a) The Towel User's Year, in *Just Seventeen*, 10 December 1986, 16-17, Box: 1986 – 87, Femorabilia Collection, Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives

Tampax (1986b) It Can Add 6.2 Years to Your Life..., in *Just Seventeen*, 11 June 1986, 16-17, Box: 1986 – 87, Femorabilia Collection, Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives

Tampax (1986c) Five Days a Month this Girl was Imprisoned by Her Own Body, in *Just Seventeen*, 6 August 1986, 2, Box: 1986-87, Femorabilia Collection, Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives

Tampax (1987) Is it Any Wonder Towel Users Have a Smaller Social Calendar?, in *Just Seventeen*, 13 June 1987, 16-17, Box: Mar-Dec 1987, Femorabilia Collection, Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives

Online Resources

- Art in Liverpool (2016) Road Studios: Homeless: The Human Cost of Austerity, *Art in Liverpool*, Available at:
<https://www.artinliverpool.com/events/road-studios-homeless-human-cost-austerity/> /road-studios-homeless-human-cost-austerity/
[Accessed 30 December 2019]
- Atkinson, A (2016) £306 (2016), *Amanda Marie Atkinson* Blog, 2 December 2016, Available at:
<https://amandamarieatkinson.tumblr.com/post/153945023187/306-2016-the-piece-presents-306-pounds-in>
[Accessed 30 December 2019]
- Basu, P (date unknown) Untitled Page, *Poulomi Basu*, Available at:
<http://www.poulomibasu.com/aro-360> [Accessed 2 January 2020]
- Boots WebMD (date unknown) About BootsWebMD, *Boots WebMD*, Available at:
<https://web.archive.org/web/20180503201000/https://www.webmd.boots.com/about-webmd-policies/default.htm?ss=ftr>
[Accessed 12 August 2018]
- Boots WebMD (2016) Normal Menstrual Cycle and Periods, *Boots WebMD Women's Health Guide*, medically reviewed by Hicks, R, 5 December 2016, Available at:
<https://web.archive.org/web/20180328192117/https://www.webmd.boots.com/women/guide/normal-menstrual-cycle-periods>
[Accessed 12 August 2018]
- Carnesky.com (date unknown) Dr Carnesky's Incredible Bleeding Woman, *Carnesky.com*, Available at:
<http://carnesky.com/project/dr-carneskys-incredible-bleeding-woman/>
[Accessed 5 January 2020]
- Clemmer, CB (2018) Rainbow Bleeding, *Bleeding While Trans Blog*, 22 March 2018 Available at:
<https://www.bleedingwhiletrans.com/single-post/2018/03/22/Rainbow-Bleeding-Poem>
[Accessed 12 August 2018]
- Clifford, C (date 2015) *1 Want Your Blood*, Blog, Available at:
<https://1wentyourblood.tumblr.com/projectdescription>
[Accessed 6 January 2020]

- Fahs, B (2012) Collateral Damage: Throwing Menstruation out of the Museum Narrative, *Menstruation Matters*, Society for Menstrual Cycle Research, Blog, Available at:
www.menstruationresearch.org/2012/07/27/collateral-damage-throwing-menstruation-out-of-the-museum-narrative
 [Accessed 17 September 2018]
- Gunter, J (2018) I Reviewed all 161 of GOOP's Wellness Products for Pseudoscience. Here's What I Found, *Dr Jen Gunter Blog*, 13 October 2018, Available at:
<https://drjengunter.com/2018/10/13/i-reviewed-all-161-of-goops-wellness-products-for-pseudoscience-heres-what-i-found/>
 [Accessed 30 December 2019]
- Harding, M (2016) Menstruation and its Disorders, *Patient.info*, 18 April 2016, Available at:
<https://patient.info/doctor/menstruation-and-its-disorders>
 [Accessed 18 March 2018]
- Lang, J (2019) Open Letter to Dr Jen Gunter, *Facebook*, 9 September 2019, Available at:
<https://www.facebook.com/1148438801/posts/10219624608502955?sfns=mo>
 [Accessed 30 December 2019]
- Lewis, J (date unknown) Artist Statement, *Beauty in Blood*, Available at:
<http://www.beautyinblood.com/about.html>
 [Accessed 5 January 2020]
- Mayes, S (2017) Poulomi Basu on Her Project "Ritual of Exile": In Discussion with Stephen Mayes, *Tim Hetherington Trust*, 19 July 2017, Available at:
<https://www.timhetheringtontrust.org/news-and-calendar/2017/07/poulomi-basu-her-project-ritual-exile-discussion-stephen-mayes>
 [Accessed 2 January 2020]
- MoMA Learning (date unknown) Glossary of Art Terms, *MoMA*, Available at:
https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/glossary/#g
 [Accessed 2 January 2020]
- NASA, Erickson, K & Wasser, M (producer) (no date) About the Moon, *NASA Science: Earth's Moon*, date unknown, Available at:
<https://moon.nasa.gov/about/in-depth/>
 [Accessed 9 December 2019]

- NHS (2015) NHS Choices – What We Do, *NHS Choices*, last reviewed 30 November 2015, Available at:
<https://www.nhs.uk/aboutNHSChoices/aboutnhschoices/Pages/what-we-do.aspx>
[Accessed 12 August 2018]
- NHS (2016) Periods, *NHS Choices*, Last Reviewed 28 July 2016, Available at:
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/periods/>
[Accessed 4 April 2018]
- NICE (2014) Dysmenorrhoea, *Clinical Knowledge Summaries*, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, Available at:
<https://cks.nice.org.uk/dysmenorrhoea#!topicsummary>
[Accessed 18 March 2018]
- n.paradoxa (date unknown) Artworks by Women Artists on 30 Topics Related to Feminism and Contemporary Art: Menstruation / Abortion, *n.paradoxa journal*, KT Press, Available at:
<https://www.ktpress.co.uk/feminist-art-topics.asp?About=4>
[Accessed 21 January 2020]
- Patient.info (2017) Periods and Period Problems, *Patient.info*, authored by Tidy, C, 1 November 2017, Available at:
<https://.info/health/periods-and-period-problems>
[Accessed 18 March 2018]
- Tate (2016) In Conversation with Elena Palumbo-Mosca (One Of Yves Klein’s Models), *Tate*, Available at:
<https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-liverpool/exhibition/yves-klein/conversation-elena-palumbo-mosca>
[Accessed 3 September 2019]
- Tate (date unknown) Art Terms: Genre, *Tate*, Available at:
<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/g/genres> [Accessed 2 January 2020]
- Author Unknown (date unknown) *The Period Pieces*, defunct website, archive saved 8 October 2018, Available at:
<https://web.archive.org/web/20181009203801/https://www.theperiodpiece.com/>
[Accessed 30 July 2020]
- Tiegs, V (date unknown) *Menstrala*, Available at:
<https://www.vanessatiegs.com/menstrala/>
[Accessed 1 April 2019]
- Tiegs, V (2017) Post to Menstrala Facebook page dated 12 June 2017, Available at:
<https://www.facebook.com/Menstrala/>
[Accessed 1 April 2019]

Endnotes

1. Josefin Persdotter uses the term *menstrunormativity* in the forthcoming publication 'Introducing Menstrunormativity' (2020). This book was not published when this thesis was submitted in March 2020. See also Hughes (2018a) and Chapter One for further definition.

2. In this thesis the following terms and definitions are used:

- cis gender refers to people (men or women) who identify as the gender they were assigned at birth
- trans men and trans women are used to describe transgender people who currently identify as men or women. This is to denote clarity within the discussion of menstruation, which is often considered as a completely sex and gender divergent characteristic in humans. This does not mean that I consider trans men and women to be any less men and women than their cis siblings, and I hope that readers will understand the use of this differentiating terminology in the context of this thesis.
- nonbinary (also spelled as non-binary, and sometimes shortened to enby) is an umbrella term which encompasses many different gender identities (and is a gender identity in its own right). The term nonbinary is used here to refer to people who to identify as outside, against, beyond, or in order to complicate binary understandings of gender.
- This thesis does not specifically address menstrual experience within indigenous genders that exist outside the (Western) binary construction of gender, though these are also important expressions of the spectrum of sex and gender in human experience. A useful and accessible book which offers in-depth definitions and discussions of a range of gender identities is Barker & Iantaffi's *Life Isn't Binary* (2019) (see bibliography).

3. Essentialism refers to the philosophical notion that all things can be distilled to their intrinsic, 'natural', and unalterable form. In reference to gender, essentialism refers to the belief that gender and sex are both binary and biologically fixed, i.e. women and men have immutable, innate differences rooted in their biology. Essentialist viewpoints are often framed as 'gender critical' in contemporary discourse, in what is very often an attempt to deny the rights and existence of trans, nonbinary, gender non-conforming and intersex people. In relation to feminist discourse, essentialism has been defined by Elizabeth Grosz as: 'the attribution of a fixed essence to women. Women's essence is assumed to be given and universal and is usually, though not necessarily, identified with women's biology and "natural" characteristics' (Grosz 1995: 47) which may be biological or behavioural.

4. There have been a number of media articles in recent years which overwhelmingly offer a positive reading of menstrual art. These include publications such as news outlets including *The Guardian* and *The Economist Women's Health* magazine, business media publication *Fast Company*, global media platform aimed at young women *Refinery 29*, feminist magazine *Bitch Media*, Indian magazine *Outlook India*, and the blog of menstrual tracking app *Clue* (see bibliography).

5. The term 'critical menstruation studies' was coined by Professor Sharra Vostral.
6. Another example which 'parachutes in' is Weiss-Wolf 2017: 25.
7. Recent failures of medical science relating to gynaecological health include not only the Rely tampon / Toxic Shock Syndrome crisis of the late 1970s, and more recently the scandals surrounding vaginal mesh surgery and other medical devices, as exposed in the recent Netflix documentary, *The Bleeding Edge* (2018).
8. Controversy continues around the advocacy work undertaken by well-known gynaecologists, such as Canadian doctor Dr Jen Gunter. Gunter has spearheaded criticism of the lifestyle website *GOOP* fronted by actor Gwyneth Paltrow for taking advantage of women's insecurities and lack of body literacy to sell potentially dangerous products, the most notorious being the 'jade yoni egg' (see Gunter's blog for example for detailed ripostes to *GOOP*). On the other hand, other gynaecologists (and feminist health advocates) take issue with Gunter's tendency to privilege medical and scientific authority over the varied lived experiences of women, despite ample historic evidence which demonstrates the many erroneous treatments and outright cruelties inflicted on people under the authority of medical practitioners (see the open letter published by gynaecologist Jennifer Lang on her Facebook page on 9th September 2019).
9. Part of this chapter was published as part of a Special Edition of the journal *Feminist Encounters* on Feminist Encounters with the Medical Humanities, cited as (Hughes 2018a).
10. While operational, *Boots WebMD* was a collaboration between the well-established USA health website *WebMD* and the UK pharmacy chain Boots, designed to provide basic information on health and wellbeing. *Patient.info* is owned by Egton Medical Information Systems Ltd, which provides IT systems to UK General Practices. *NHS Choices* is published by the UK National Health Service and has UK Government Information Standard accreditation, and with 'more than 48 million visits per month' (NHS 2015) has become the most visited UK health website (ibid). *Patient.info* differs from the other examples as it features two distinct strands of content, both written and reviewed by medical professionals, but aimed at distinct user groups. For the purposes of this research, the analysis will be focussed on the 'Conditions' pages, which are explicitly aimed at a lay audience as opposed to a clinical practitioner, in alignment with the other examples which are also produced with a general audience in mind.
11. The term *heteronormative* was first used in Michael Warner's *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory* (1993), referring to the cultural socialisation of humans into naturalised heterosexual relationships and behavioural conventions. It is also associated with Judith Butler's concept of the 'heterosexual matrix' (2007 [1990]: 47) and to Adrienne Rich's *compulsory heterosexuality*, put forward in her essay 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence' (1980). The term is now commonly used in research on gender and in queer theory to describe

heterosexuality as the status quo in terms of actual and perceived relationships and gendered behaviours.

12. Dysmenorrhoea is the medical term for period pain.

13. For a detailed analysis of the epidemiological research, women's health advocacy, and court cases surrounding Rely tampons, see Sharra Vostral's *Toxic Shock: A Social History* (2018), which I reviewed for *Women's Reproductive Health* journal (Hughes 2019).

14. In January 2020 period underwear company THINX and reusable pad company Lunapads came under fire, with widespread reports in the media of a study conducted by University of Notre Dame nuclear scientist Graham Peaslee, which found their products contain a potentially unsafe level of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). THINX have refuted this claim. See for e.g. Arnold 2020 for *The Cut*, Lewis 2020 for Bitch Media, and THINX blog piece from 14 January 2020.

15. As the focus of this research is art historical and practice-led, the pilot study did not have time or resources to fully map this data. It is included as a contextualising component, and I hope to extend this project post-PhD.

16. Though I use the terms menstruator and person / people who menstruate elsewhere in this thesis to be inclusive of people of all gender identities who menstruate, I will use the terms girls / young women / women in this section on advertising, in recognition that girls and young women are the specific target audience of these magazines and menstrual product advertisements.

17. I have consulted archives including the Penn State University 'The Advertising Archives', The History of Advertising Trust, and Adforum, aiming to identify the advertising agencies who created each print advertisement included in this research. Unfortunately, at this stage, I have not had the time or financial resources to visit or consult the archives of individual brands and have been unable to cite the advertising agency accurately. I have therefore included as much bibliographic information within the thesis as possible including brand, parent company, and publication details, in order to give accountable citation and facilitate later research (by myself or others) who might be able to identify the relevant agencies.

18. Green-Cole has a chapter in *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Menstruation Studies*, published in 2020 after the submission of this thesis (ed. Chris Bobel *et al*), and Røstvik has articles currently in press that will not be published before the completion of this thesis.

19. While menstrual activism has long been associated with LGBTQIA+, queer and gender non-conformity (see Bobel 2010), the scholarship of menstrual art has been much more centred on cis women, who are often heterosexual, or ambiguous in their sexual orientation.

20. I use the term *menstrual blood* to signify the overarching importance of the blood component of menstrual fluid, which is in fact composed of vaginal / cervical secretions, blood, and clots.

21. I include podcast and journalistic sources in my citations alongside traditional academic sources as it is important to illustrate that menstruation research is indebted to those outside the academy, particularly the pioneers of menstrual health advocacy such as the authors of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (Boston Women's Health Collective, 1970). It is also important to illustrate how ideas developed within the academy move into more mainstream discourses through the work of academics working alongside colleagues in other professions.

22. I aim to complicate the use of Vostral's term *passing* as well as Branne Fahs' concept of menstrual *outing* (2016) in Chapter Three.

23. For example, the contraceptive pill is a popular method of menstrual suppression, demonstrating that many people would like to be 'free' of menstruation if possible (see e.g. Watkins 2012 on the contraceptive pill as a lifestyle drug, or Health and Social Care Information Centre 2014 report on increasing contraceptive service use in England and Wales. It is my contention that, even though many (increasing) numbers of people who menstruate use hormonal contraceptives to – intentionally or incidentally – suppress menstruation, this is not necessarily an escape from menstruation. In one sense, menstruation is not uniformly suppressed for all people who menstruate by all hormonal contraceptives, and in another, the management of menstruation is replaced with the self-surveillance and clinical surveillance inherent in the use of hormonal contraceptives.

24. Beliefs, rituals and religious practices surrounding menstruation have existed for millennia, globally, and continue to this day in major religions including Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism and Islam. On menstruation and the symbolism of the colour red in pre-Christian Britain see Hutton (2013: 23-23); on menstrual taboos in major religions see Bhartiya (2013); and menstruation taboos in Judeo-Christian religion see Phipps (1980); for readings on menstruation in Early Modern England see Crawford (1993); medieval European beliefs and practices around menstruation are explored in Bildhauer (2005, 2006, 2013, 2019); and foundational anthropological studies of menstruation across different cultures include Douglas (1966) and Buckley & Gottlieb (1989).

25. According to NASA, the moon is c. 4.5 billion years old and the most accepted hypothesis is that it is formed through the impact of Earth with another astronomical body, around the size of Mars (NASA no date: para 4).

26. Clue is one of the many popular menstrual cycle tracking applications (apps) available for use on mobile phones. The companies behind these apps are able to harvest vast amounts of data for research purposes, which has raised a number of ethical questions, not least in questioning *how* this data will be used, by whom exactly, and whether these companies are subject to adequate safeguarding of data

and accuracy (see e.g. Kresge, Khrennikov & Ramli (2019) reporting in *Bloomberg Businessweek*).

27. This is less criticism, and more an acknowledgement of the disciplinary expertise of the authors: Robledo-Chrisler is expert in gender studies and Chrisler is Professor of Psychology, and both are experts in menstruation research and theory, however, neither are trained or expert in art or art history.

28. The de-politicisation of culture is explored in Guy Debord's 1967 book *Society of the Spectacle*.

29. Again, though expert in menstruation research and theory, a clinical psychologist, and Professor of Women and Gender Studies, Fahs is not an expert in art or art history, which does not invalidate her right to comment on art, though it does explain some of the analytical inconsistencies that can surface from arts analysis conducted by those without disciplinary care and expertise.

30. The Radical Anthropology Group was founded in 1984, following the closure of the 'Introduction to Anthropology' course at Morley college, led by Chris Knight. Knight's students raised funds to enable Knight to continue delivering the course at a local library. The group has strong ties to the University of East London (UEL) (see the Radical Anthropology Group's website).

31. Metal was founded in 2002 by Jude Kelly CBE and Collette Bailey. The arts organisation has sites in Liverpool, Southend-on-Sea and Peterborough, offering artist residencies, studio spaces, various arts and community events (see Metal website).

32. Menorrhagia is the medical term for clinically abnormally heavy bleeding at menstruation.

33. An interview was conducted with Clifford as part of this research, however written consent was not received in time to include it as part of the thesis.

34. Though Tate Liverpool kindly made a recording of the discussion available to me for my research, I was also asked by the institution not to quote from the discussion verbatim in my work, as the Klein estate did not permit this kind of engagement with the event.

35. As noted earlier, the development of explicitly feminist spaces, particularly within formal art education and activist spaces has been crucial in the development of many feminist artists' practices. Elwes' menstrual performances at the Slade were influenced by encountering the work of her tutor Stuart Brisley (see Battista 2013: 79-80). Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro have been vocal in their belief that the Feminist Art Programme they ran at the California Institute of the Arts (1970-1976), Valencia, California was central to their development as artists (see Schapiro 1971; Chicago 2006). Kathy Battista also argues for the importance of alternative spaces to

the male-dominated white cube gallery for the development of feminist practices in the USA and UK, including artist-led spaces, publications, and domestic spaces (Battista 2013: 17-18).

36. FEMEN is a radical feminist activist group founded in Ukraine (now based in Paris) in 2008 by Anna Hutsol. They are known for performative protests which often include nudity, and campaign broadly around women's rights and equalities issues.

37. Vostral explores 'the technological politics of passing' (2008: 10) in detail in the second chapter of *Under Wraps*, unpacking a historical and theoretical lineage with deep roots in the limited Western, white, patriarchal conventions which assume a supposedly neutral (male) model of technology. She points to the incongruence of recognising menstrual management (and women's reproductive) solutions as technologies and develops the theorisation of 'the agency engendered by the technological pass, co-produced by both the user and the artifact' [sic] (2008: 11).

38. For example: the xenophobic rhetoric surrounding the UK's membership of the European Union in the lead up to, and since, the 2016 Referendum; the election of Donald Trump and subsequent restriction of reproductive healthcare in some US states; the 'hostile environment' and Windrush scandal in the UK and Donald Trump's increasingly brutal treatment of immigrants at the USA's Southern border; the attempts by a loud minority of trans-exclusionary activists to remove National Lottery funding from transgender youth charity Mermaids in 2019.

39. In March 2020 I will engage directly with items from the Wellcome Collection, presenting a paper as part of an invited symposium alongside colleagues from Menstruation Research Network.

40. *Lifetime Supply* (2017 – 2019) featured in the context of tampons in art since 1970 as part of an art historical article by Røstvik published in *Oxford Art Journal* (Rostvik 2019b).

41. The second performance of *Conditions: Period* took place at the opening event of *Uncovered* (2019) curated by Aisling Harrison at MAKE North Docks, Liverpool, 23 July 2019.

42. To reiterate, I include in my definition of women the broad range of identities which may be considered as non-cis male, including anyone who identifies as a woman, trans, nonbinary, genderqueer, genderfluid, agender, or a variant of such identities.

List of Illustrations

Figure 1:

Lil-lets Advertisement

Discover the Blessings of Lil-lets Confidence for Yourself This Month, 1964

Figure 2:

Bodyform Advertisement

Why Not Buy Your Towel the Same Way You Buy Your Jeans, 1986

Figure 3:

Bodyform Advertisement

How Come Nobody Suggests You Try on a Towel to See if it Fits You, 1986

Figure 4:

Tampax Advertisement

Any Time of the Month can be Vacation Time, 1973

Figure 5:

Simplicity Advertisement

With Simplicity Stowaway Towels and Simplicity Tampons There's No Chance You'll Give the Game Away, 1988

Figure 6:

Tampax Advertisement

Is it Any Wonder Towel Users Have a Smaller Social Calendar?, 1987

Figure 7:

Tampax Advertisement

The Towel User's Year, 1986

Figure 8:

Tampax Advertisement

It Can Add 6.2 Years to Your Life..., 1986

Figure 9:

Tampax Advertisement

Five Days a Month this Girl was Imprisoned by Her Own Body, 1986

Figure 10:
Lil-lets Advertisement
Some Girls Find It Difficult Inserting a Tampon for the First Time
but it's Only a Mental Block, 1988

Figure 11:
Marisa Carr
Dr Carnesky's Incredible Bleeding Woman 2015 – 2018

Figure 12:
Marisa Carr
Dr Carnesky's Incredible Bleeding Woman 2015 – 2018

Figure 13:
Jane Woollatt
Insecurity Blankets 2019 – ongoing

Figure 14:
Jane Woollatt
Insecurity Blankets (detail) 2019 – ongoing

Figure 15:
Casey Jenkins
Casting off My Womb 2013

Figure 16:
Christen Clifford
1 Want Your 3lood: A Menstrual Symphony 2015

Figure 17:
Christen Clifford
1 Want Your 3lood (2013 - 2020)

Figure 18:
Amy Jenkins
Ebb 1996

Figure 19:
Hotham Street Ladies
You Beaut 2017

Figure 20:
Hotham Street Ladies
You Beaut 2017

Figure 21:
Sasha Spyrou
untitled / tampon ghost earrings 2019

Figure 22:
Sasha Spyrou
The Ghosts of Tampons Past, 2018

Figure 23:
Sasha Spyrou
untitled / ghost tampons mural 2019

Figure 24:
Sarah Levy
Whatever (Bloody Trump) 2015

Figure 25:
Amanda Atkinson
£306 2016

Figure 26:
Bee Hughes
illustration for *Dracula* 2012

Figure 27:
Bee Hughes
Plectra 2015

Figure 28:
Bee Hughes
Cycles 2016-2017

Figure 29:
Bee Hughes
Cycles (detail) 2016-2017

Figure 30:
Bee Hughes
Andromeda 2016

Figure 31:
Bee Hughes
Infinite Cycles 2017

Figure 32:
Bee Hughes & Eva Petersen
Comfort Zones exhibition 2017

Figure 33:
Bee Hughes
Almost Eight Cycles 2018

Figure 34:
Bee Hughes
unmade, remade, 28 days 2019

Figure 35:
Bee Hughes
Dys-men-o-rrho-ea 2019

Figure 36:
Bee Hughes
Dys-men-o-rrho-ea 2019

Figure 37:
Bee Hughes
Lifetime Supply 2017 – 2019

Figure 38:
Bee Hughes
... a period is 2016

Figure 39:
Bee Hughes
a period is...ii 2018

Illustrations

The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via LJMU E-Theses Collection because of copyright. The image was sourced from the Femorabilia Collection, LJMU Special Collections and Archives, as noted in the caption below.

Figure 1:

Lil-lets Advertisement

Discover the Blessings of Lil-lets Confidence for Yourself This Month, 1964

in *Fabulous*, 18 April 1964, 23

Box: 1964, Femorabilia Collection

Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives

The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via LJMU E-Theses Collection because of copyright. The image was sourced from the Femorabilia Collection, LJMU Special Collections and Archives, as noted in the caption below.

Figure 2:

Bodyform Advertisement

Why Not Buy Your Towel the Same Way You Buy Your Jeans, 1986
in *Just Seventeen*, 1 October 1986, 21

Box: Just 17 1986-87 (incomplete), Femorabilia Collection
Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives

The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via LJMU E-Theses Collection because of copyright. The image was sourced from the Femorabilia Collection, LJMU Special Collections and Archives, as noted in the caption below.

Figure 3:

Bodyform Advertisement

How Come Nobody Suggests You Try on a Towel to See if it Fits You, 1986
in *Just Seventeen*, 27 August 1986, 21

Box: Just 17 1986-87, Femorabilia Collection

Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives

The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via LJMU E-Theses Collection because of copyright. The image was sourced from the Femorabilia Collection, LJMU Special Collections and Archives, as noted in the caption below.

Figure 4:

Tampax Advertisement (left column)

Any Time of the Month can be Vacation Time, 1973

in *Jackie*, 17 November 1973, 12

Box: Jackie 1964-86, Femorabilia Collection

Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives

The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via LJMU E-Theses Collection because of copyright. The image was sourced from the Femorabilia Collection, LJMU Special Collections and Archives, as noted in the caption below.

Figure 5:

Simplicity Advertisement

With Simplicity Stowaway Towels and Simplicity Tampons There's No Chance You'll Give the Game Away, 1988

in *Jackie*, 23 January 1988, 15

Box: 1988-89, Femorabilia Collection

Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives

The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via LJMU E-Theses Collection because of copyright. The image was sourced from the Femorabilia Collection, LJMU Special Collections and Archives, as noted in the caption below.

Figure 6:

Tampax Advertisement

Is it Any Wonder Towel Users Have a Smaller Social Calendar?, 1987

in *Just Seventeen*, 13 June 1987, 16-17

Box: Mar-Dec 1987, Femorabilia Collection

Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives

The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via LJMU E-Theses Collection because of copyright. The image was sourced from the Femorabilia Collection, LJMU Special Collections and Archives, as noted in the caption below.

Figure 7:

Tampax Advertisement

The Towel User's Year, 1986

in *Just Seventeen*, 10 December 1986, 16-17

Box: 1986 – 87, Femorabilia Collection

Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives

The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via LJMU E-Theses Collection because of copyright. The image was sourced from the Femorabilia Collection, LJMU Special Collections and Archives, as noted in the caption below.

Figure 8:

Tampax Advertisement

It Can Add 6.2 Years to Your Life..., 1986

in *Just Seventeen*, 16 July 1986

Box: 1986 – 87, Femorabilia Collection

Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives

The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via LJMU E-Theses Collection because of copyright. The image was sourced from the Femorabilia Collection, LJMU Special Collections and Archives, as noted in the caption below.

Figure 9:

Tampax Advertisement

Five Days a Month this Girl was Imprisoned by Her Own Body, 1986
in *Just Seventeen*, 6 August 1986, 2

Box: 1986-87, Femorabilia Collection

Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives

The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via LJMU E-Theses Collection because of copyright. The image was sourced from the Femorabilia Collection, LJMU Special Collections and Archives, as noted in the caption below.

Figure 10:

Lil-lets Advertisement

Some Girls Find It Difficult Inserting a Tampon for the First Time.

But it's Only a Mental Block, 1988

in *Jackie*, 16 January 1988, 30-31

Box: 1988-89, Femorabilia Collection

Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives

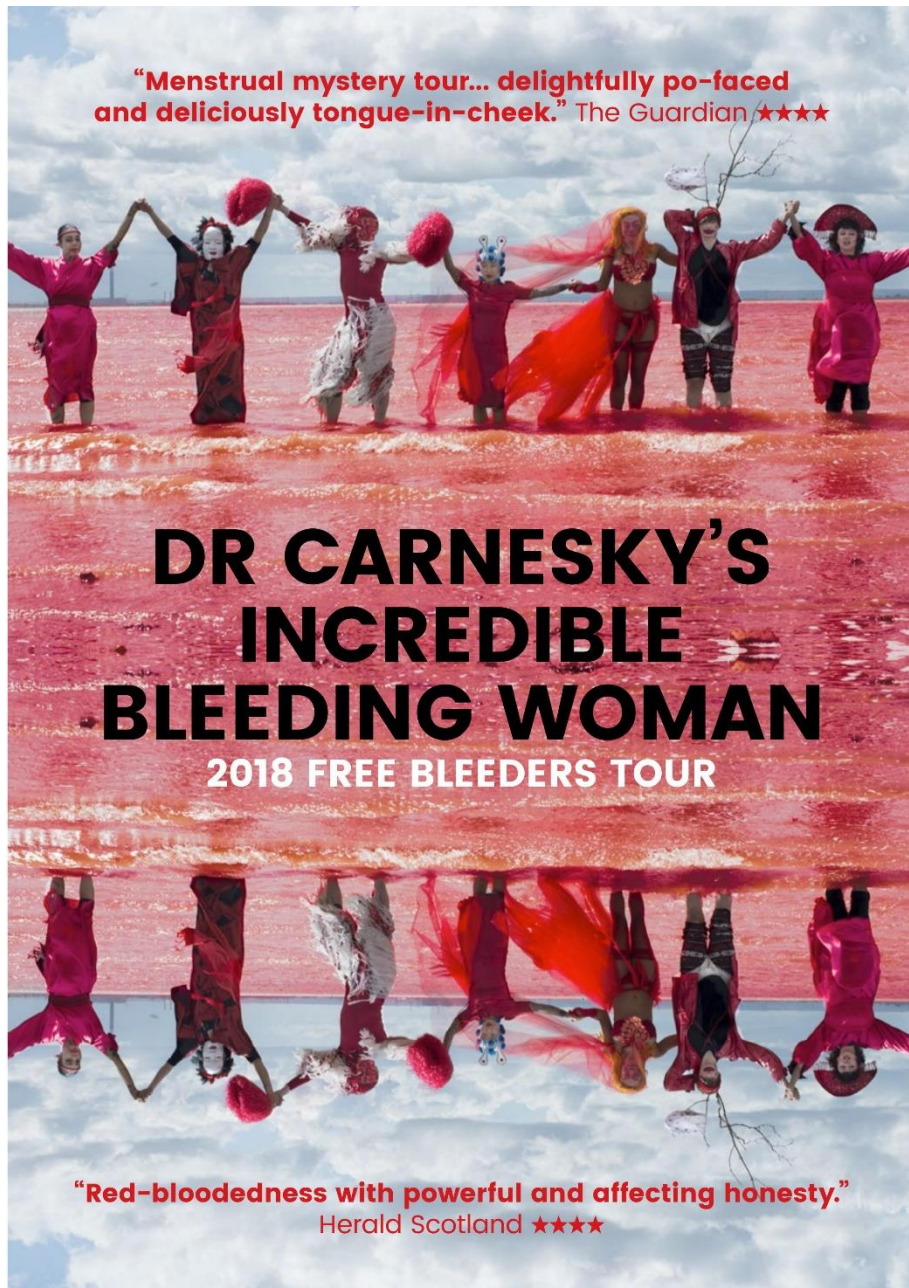


Figure 11:

Marisa Carr

Dr Carnesky's Incredible Bleeding Woman 2015 – 2018

ensemble theatre performance

promotional image

artist's collection

© and with kind permission of Marisa Carr



Figure 12:

Marisa Carr

Dr Carnesky's Incredible Bleeding Woman 2015 – 2018

ensemble theatre performance

performance photograph of Carr as Dr Carnesky

artist's collection

© and with kind permission of Marisa Carr



Figure 13:

Jane Woollatt
Insecurity Blankets 2019 – ongoing
multiple objects: recycled blankets; stitching,
artist's collection
© and with kind permission of Jane Woollatt

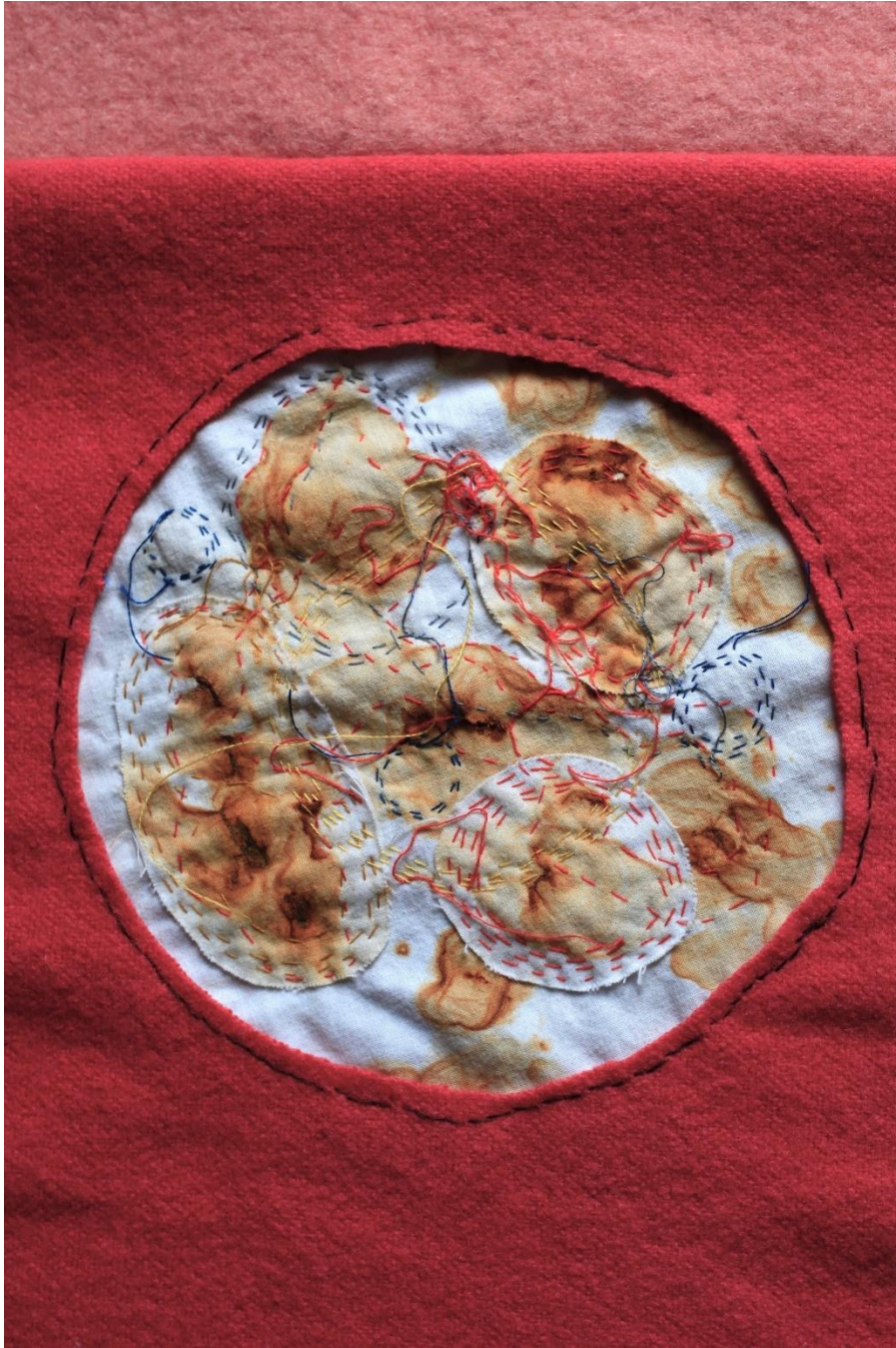


Figure 14:

Jane Woollatt

Insecurity Blankets (detail) 2019 – ongoing
multiple objects: recycled blankets; stitching,
artist's collection

© and with kind permission of Jane Woollatt



Figure 15:

Casey Jenkins

Casting off My Womb 2013

photo documentation of 28-day durational performance, October 2013

Darwin Visual Arts Association, Darwin, Australia

© and with kind permission of Casey Jenkins



Figure 16:

Christen Clifford

I Want Your Blood: A Menstrual Symphony 2015

performance with The No Wave Performance Task Force

Grace Exhibition Space, Brooklyn, USA

© and with the kind permission of Christen Clifford



Figure 17:

Christen Clifford

1 Want Your Blood 2013 – 2020

installation, menstrual fluid and mixed liquid in perfume bottles

exhibited at *Abortion is Normal!* curated by Jasmine Wahj & Rebecca Pauline Jampol

Eva Presenhuber Gallery, New York, USA, 9th – 16th January 2020

© and with the kind permission of Christen Clifford



Figure 18:

Amy Jenkins

Ebb 1996

installation and video projection

artist's collection

© and with the kind permission of Amy Jenkins



Figure 19:

Hotham Street Ladies

You Beaut 2017

installation, bathroom fixtures and confectionary

Science Gallery, Melbourne

© and with the kind permission of Hotham Street Ladies



Figure 20:

Hotham Street Ladies

You Beaut 2017

installation, bathroom fixtures and confectionary

Science Gallery, Melbourne

© and with the kind permission of Hotham Street Ladies



Figure 21:

Sasha Spyrou

tampon ghost earrings 2019

pearlescent acrylic, plastic bead, stainless steel jewellery fixings

c. 5 x 2cm

© and with kind permission of Sasha Spyrou



Figure 22:

Sasha Spyrou

The Ghosts of Tampons Past 2018

digital inkjet print on Fabriano paper

29.7 x 42 cm

as exhibited at *Periodical* (Hughes 2018)

author's collection

© and with the kind permission of Sasha Spyrou



Figure 23:

Sasha Spyrou

Ghost Tampons 2019

mural, emulsion, acrylic and spray paint on board

c. 6 x 6 feet

Stafford Street, Liverpool

artwork destroyed

© and with the kind permission of Sasha Spyrou



Figure 24:

Sarah Levy

Whatever (Bloody Trump) 2015

menstrual blood on paper

Bundeswehr Museum of Military History, Dresden Germany

© and with the kind permission of Sarah Levy



Figure 25:

Amanda Atkinson

£306 2016

installation: copper and silver coins

dimensions variable

artist's collection

© and with the kind permission of Amanda Atkinson

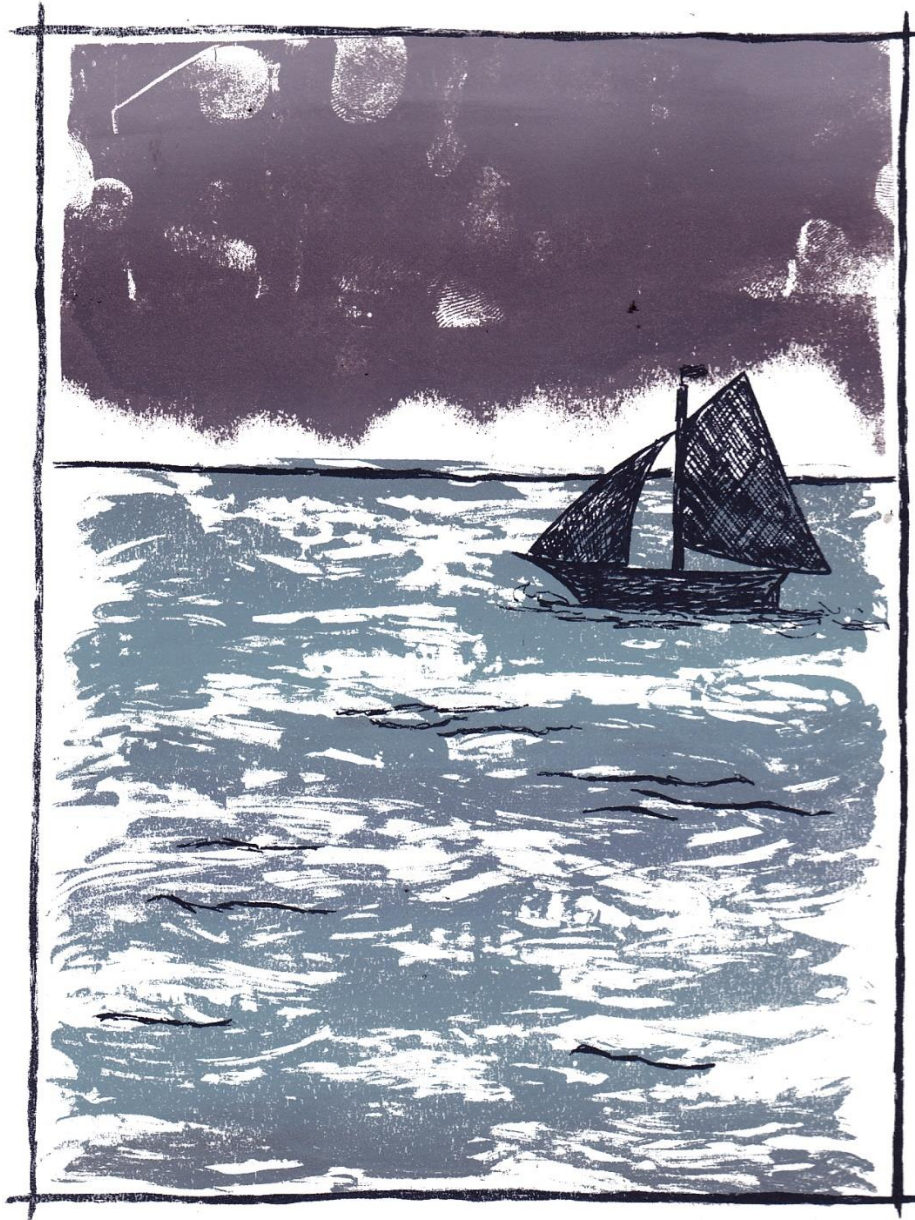


Figure 26:

Bee Hughes
illustration for *Dracula* 2012
acrylic silkscreen ink and medium on paper
29.7 x 42 cm
artist's collection
© Bee Hughes



Figure 27:

Bee Hughes

Plectra (detail) 2015

acrylic silkscreen ink and medium on paper

29.7 x 42 cm

artist's collection

© Bee Hughes

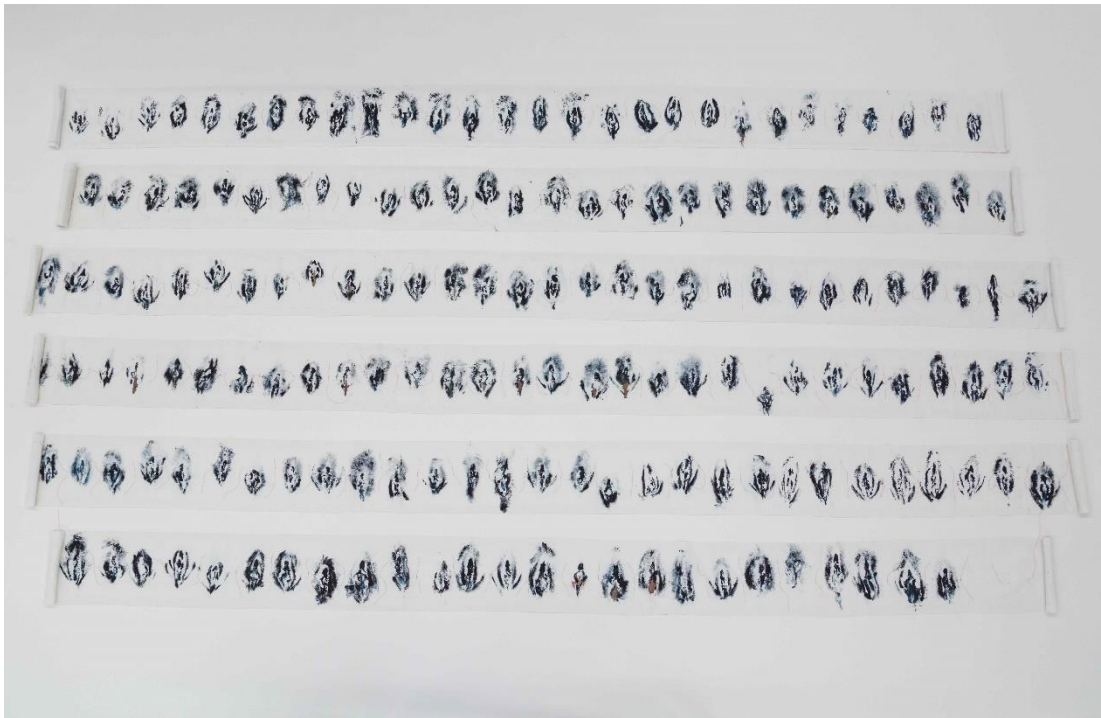


Figure 28:

Bee Hughes

Cycles 2016-2017

6 hand-stitched linen scrolls, menstrual fluid and acrylic paint

each scroll 20 x 300 cm

artist's collection

© Bee Hughes



Figure 29:

Bee Hughes

Cycles (detail) 2016-2017

6 hand-stitched linen scrolls, menstrual fluid and acrylic paint

each scroll 20 x 300 cm

artist's collection

© Bee Hughes

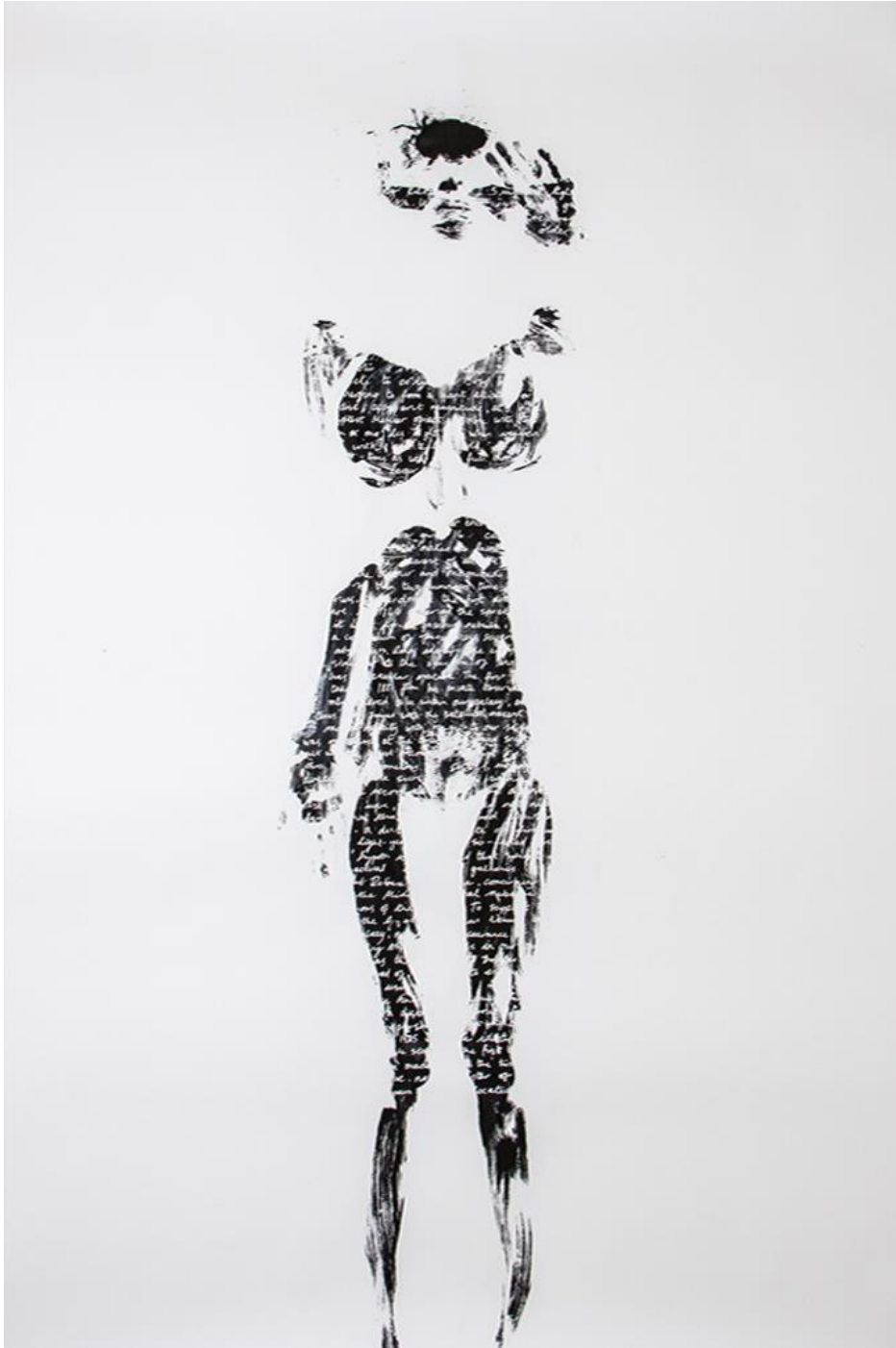


Figure 30:

Bee Hughes
Andromeda 2016
(Part of *Space* triptych 2016)
acrylic on paper
2m x 1.77m
artist's collection
© Bee Hughes

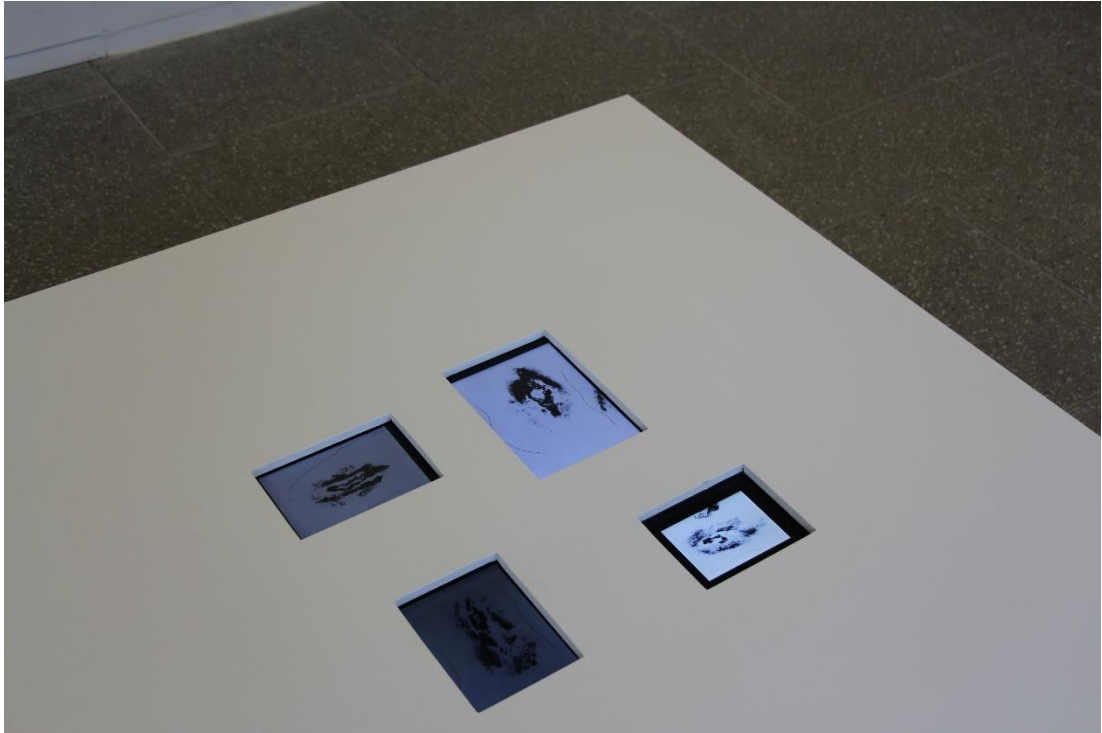


Figure 31:

Bee Hughes

Infinite Cycles 2017

mixed media installation: looped video on 4 screens, white plinth

c. 150 x 150 x 45cm

artist's collection

© Bee Hughes



Figure 32:

Bee Hughes & Eva Petersen

Comfort Zones exhibition 2017

pictured:

Yes, I Am Looking Straight at You (Petersen 2017)

and *Infinite Cycles* (Hughes 2017)

Atrium Gallery, Liverpool School of Art and Design

26 October – 3 November 2017

© Bee Hughes



Figure 33:

Bee Hughes

Almost Eight Cycles 2018

installation size variable

242 digital prints 148mm x 210 mm each

exhibited at B Hughes (curator) *Periodical* (2018)

Being Human festival, Atrium Gallery, Liverpool School of Art & Design

15th – 24th November 2018

artist's collection

© Bee Hughes

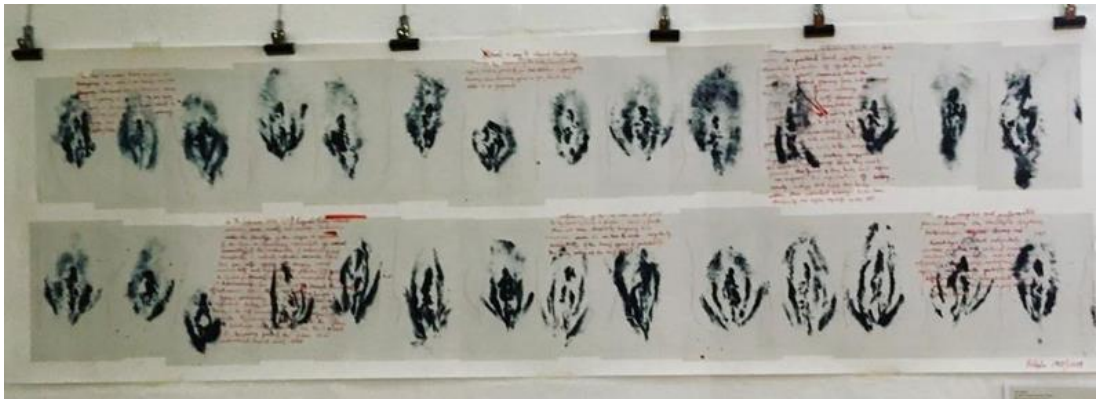


Figure 34:

Bee Hughes

unmade, remade, 28 days 2019

digital print with handwritten ink details

2m x 0.6m

artist's collection

© Bee Hughes



Figure 35:

Bee Hughes

Dys-men-o-rrho-ea 2019

private performance and digital photographs

digital print 119 x 84 cm collected University of St Andrews MUSA

Object Number C2019.10(2) / artist's collection

© Bee Hughes



Figure 36:

Bee Hughes
from *Dys-men-o-rrho-ea* 2019
16 monotype body-prints
acrylic on paper
29.7 x 42 cm
artist's collection
© Bee Hughes



Figure 37:

Bee Hughes

Lifetime Supply 2017 – 2019

multiple painted clay sculptures: air dry clay, acrylic

sizes variable

artist's collection / private collections

© Bee Hughes

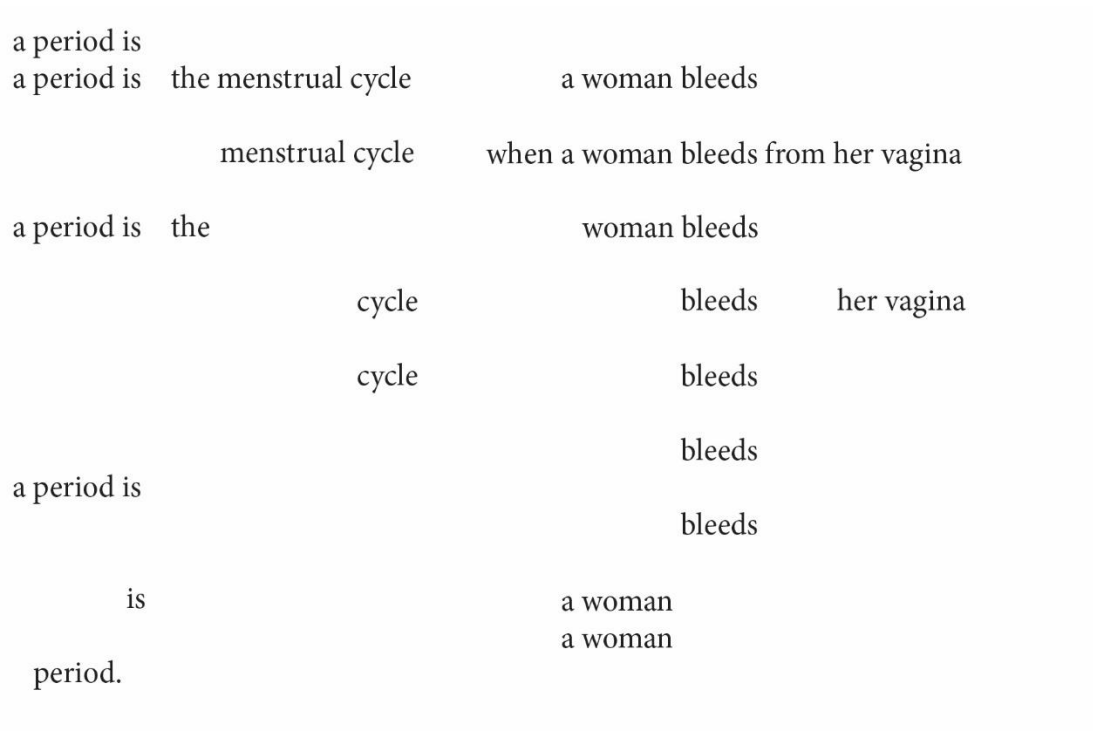


Figure 38:

Bee Hughes

... a period is 2016

visual poem

as published in B Hughes (2018) Challenging Menstrual Norms

in Online Medical Advice: Deconstructing Stigma through Entangled

Art Practice, *Feminist Encounters: A Journal of Critical Studies in Culture and Politics*,

2(2), DOI: 10.20897/femenc/3883

© Bee Hughes



Figure 39:

Bee Hughes

a period is...ii 2018

vinyl installation: visual poem

c. 150 x 300 cm

as exhibited at B Hughes (curator) *Periodical* (2018)

Being Human festival, Atrium Gallery, Liverpool School of Art & Design

15th – 24th November 2018

artwork destroyed

© Bee Hughes

Acknowledgements

I would not have been able to complete this research without the support and kindness of my friends, family and colleagues at LJMU and beyond, and would like to thank the following people:

My partner Milo, for supporting me in so many ways throughout this project and every day in our lives together. My Mum, Liz, my Dad, Graham, my Nain, Mary and my brother James who are always pleased to hear how my work is going and for supporting my career path. My dear friends in the postgraduate research community within Liverpool School of Art & Design and the School of Humanities & Social Science at LJMU, who have laughed, snacked and grumbled with me as needed for the last five years. Thank you to my colleagues Dr Kay Standing and Dr Sara Parker for their support and collaboration, and to my supervisors Dr Siân Lincoln, Professor Colin Fallows & Dr Nedim Hassan for their support, friendship, and trust in my research skills. Thank you to Emily Parsons at LJMU Special Collections and Archives for brilliant archival research expertise and assistance. Special thank you to Dr Camilla Mørk Røstvik, who kindly provided constructive feedback on Chapter Two and continues to support the development of my work. Finally, thank you to my colleagues in the Menstruation Research Network & Society for Menstrual Cycle Research for supporting my work and welcoming me into the menstruation research community.

Performing Periods:
Challenging Menstrual Normativity through Art Practice

(Volume Two)

Bee Hughes

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
of Liverpool John Moores University for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

March 2020

Appendices

Appendix One:	
Catalogue of Practical Work (2015 - 2019)	1
Part A: Solo Practice	2
Part B: Collaborative Practice	54
Appendix Two:	
Exhibitions, Public Engagement & Curatorial Projects	56
Part A:	
Curatorial Projects	57
BARE (2016)	58
Comfort Zones (2017)	61
Periodical (2018)	75
Public Engagement: Blood Rituals (2019)	120
Public Engagement: How Can We Challenge Cultural Attitudes Around Periods? (2019)	139
Part B:	
Solo Exhibition	153
Performing Periods (2019)	154
Part C:	
Group Exhibition	163
A Womb with a View (2017)	164
Exhibitionist (2017)	168
Agored / Open (2018)	172
Sorry Not Sorry – An Unapologetic Art Show (2018)	173
Poetry Exhibition (2018)	175
Uncovered (2019)	181
Environmenstrual Festival (2019)	183
Part D:	
Miscellaneous Press and Citations	193
Part E:	
Project Roles, Publications & Presentations	202
Appendix Three:	
Database of Menstrual Art (1970-2020)	210
Appendix Four:	
Online Medical Advice	230
BootsWebMD	231
NHS Choices	250
Patient.info	263

Appendix One: Catalogue of Practical Work

This appendix catalogues exploratory pieces and finalised artworks produced as part of this research. The works are presented in chronological order, designed to offer a narrative overview of the development of my practice over the course of the PhD journey. The Catalogue is divided into two parts. Part A includes solo practice, and Part B includes works produced collaboratively.

Part A: Solo Practice

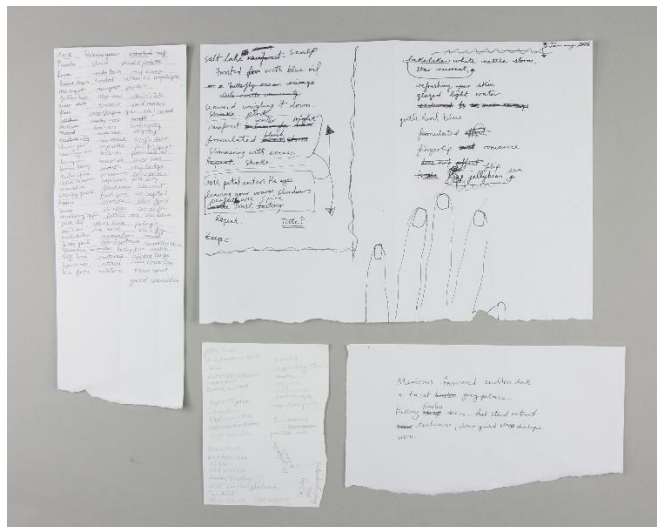
Chance Methods: Poetry

This body of work developed in response to the chance methodologies of John Cage, William Burroughs, Brion Gysin and Kathy Acker. The sketchbook contains transcriptions from catalogues of domestic paint colours from various manufacturers. Chance methods were devised and used to compose colourfield poems from these transcribed words and phrases, sometimes in combination with other found texts.

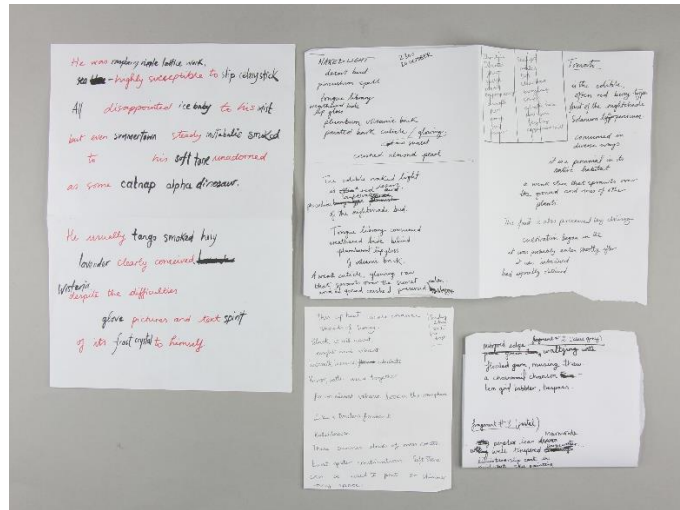
Bee Hughes
untitled (i) 2015
cut-up poetry project: notes
and drafts from cut-up and
appropriated text poems
composed using chance
methods



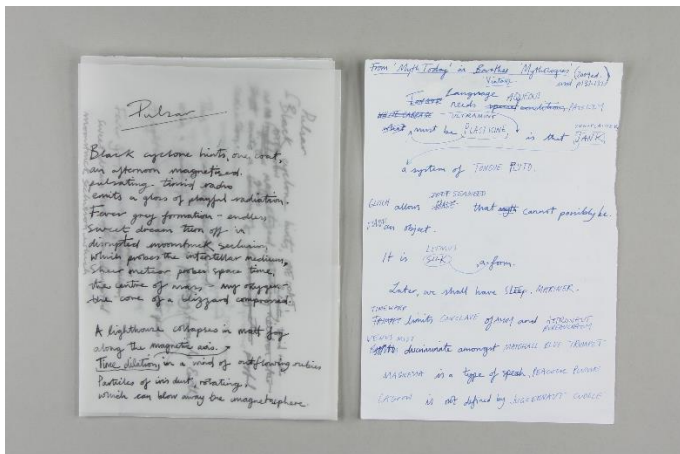
Bee Hughes
untitled (ii) 2015
cut-up poetry project: notes
and drafts from cut-up and
appropriated text poems
composed using chance
methods



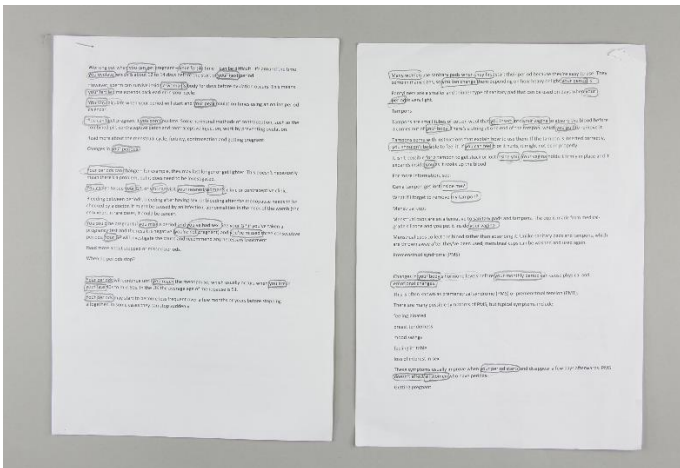
Bee Hughes
untitled (iii) 2015
 cut-up poetry project: notes
 and drafts from cut-up and
 appropriated text poems
 composed using chance
 methods



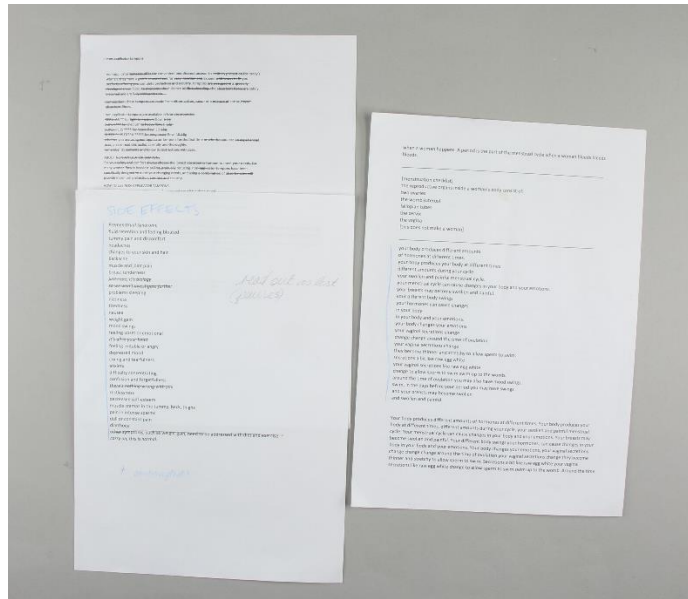
Bee Hughes
untitled (iv) 2015
 cut-up poetry project: notes
 and drafts from cut-up and
 appropriated text poems
 composed using chance
 methods



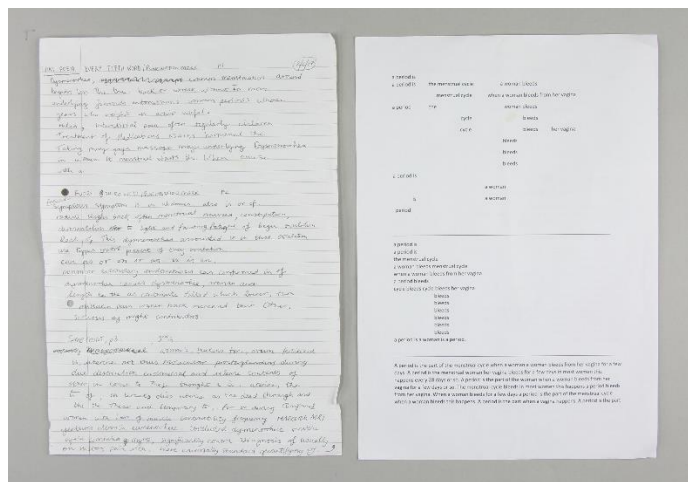
Bee Hughes
untitled (v) 2015
 cut-up poetry project: notes
 and drafts from cut-up and
 appropriated text poems
 composed using chance
 methods



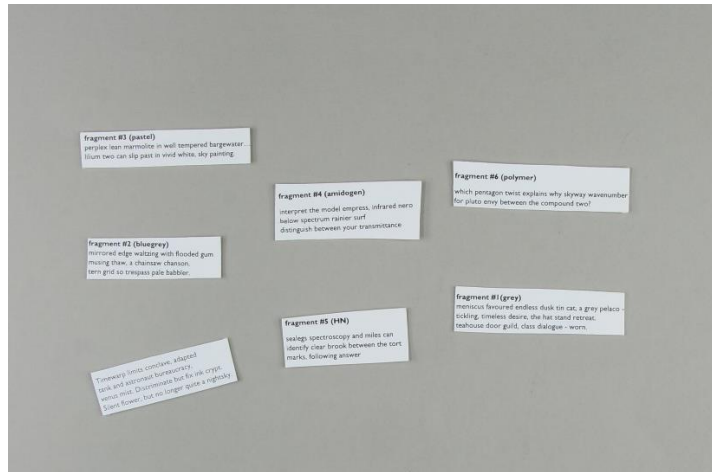
Bee Hughes
untitled (vi) 2015
 cut-up poetry project: notes
 and drafts from cut-up and
 appropriated text poems
 composed using chance
 methods



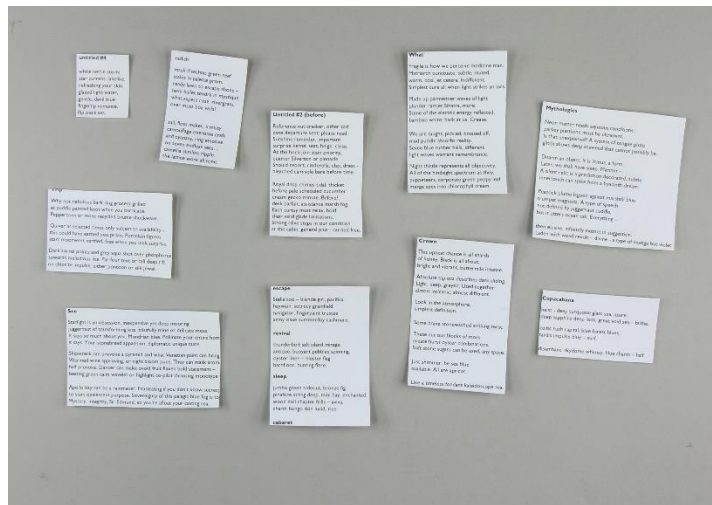
Bee Hughes
untitled (vii) 2015
 cut-up poetry project: notes
 and drafts from cut-up and
 appropriated text poems
 composed using chance
 methods



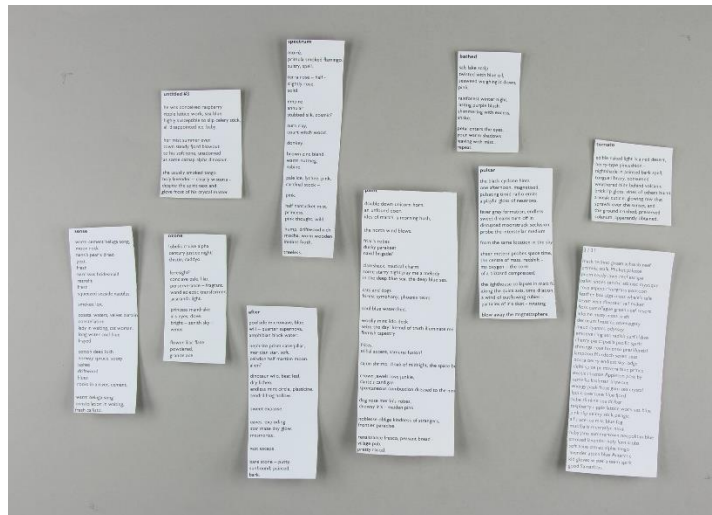
Bee Hughes
Paint (i) 2015
 poetry collection
 29 poems and poem
 fragments composed using
 chance methods
 [unpublished]



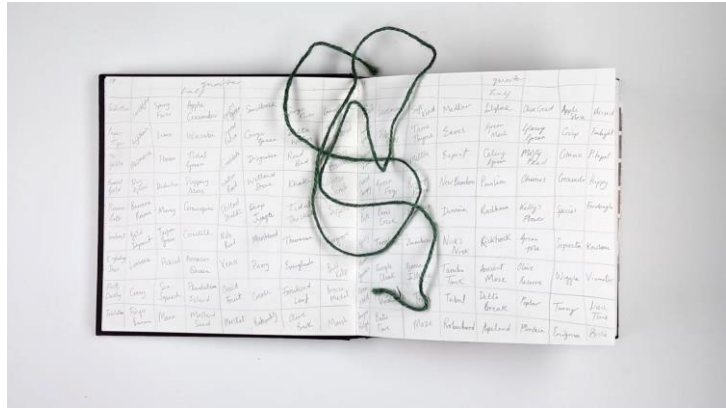
Bee Hughes
Paint (ii) 2015
 poetry collection
 29 poems and poem
 fragments composed using
 chance methods
 [unpublished]



Bee Hughes
Paint (iii) 2015
 poetry collection
 29 poems and poem
 fragments composed using
 chance methods
 [unpublished]



Bee Hughes
Chance Methods Number Two
2015
video, 1 minute 28 seconds
<https://vimeo.com/171598210>



Bee Hughes
Chance Methods Number Five
2015
video, 1 minute 30 seconds
<https://vimeo.com/161489351>



**Chance Methods:
Body-printing**

In these works, I began experimenting with performative printmaking, aiming to combine traditional printmaking practices with performative, body-oriented works. I also began a process of incorporating body-printing as a chance method which could be used to produce cut-up texts.

Bee Hughes
Untitled body-print (i)
2015
acrylic on paper



Bee Hughes
Untitled body-print in four
pieces
2015
acrylic on paper



Bee Hughes
Untitled body-print (ii)
2015
acrylic on paper



Bee Hughes
Untitled body-print (iii)
2015
acrylic on paper



Bee Hughes
Untitled body-print (iv)
2015
acrylic on paper



Bee Hughes
Untitled (Tomato) 2016
monoprint with poem
acrylic on paper
29.7cm x 42 cm



Bee Hughes
untitled (i) 2016
body-print on canvas:
left hand



Bee Hughes
untitled (ii) 2016
body-print on canvas:
left arm



Bee Hughes
untitled (iii) 2016
body-print on canvas: leg



Bee Hughes
untitled (iv) 2016
body-print on canvas:
shoulders / chest



Bee Hughes
untitled (v) 2016
body-print on canvas:
left & right lower legs and
feet

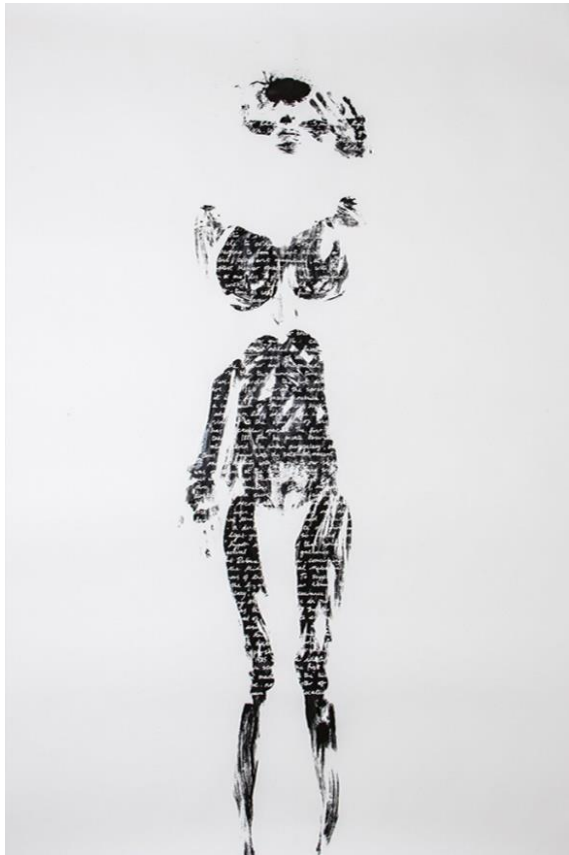


Bee Hughes
untitled (vi) 2016
body-print on canvas:
face, neck, shoulder &
breast



**Chance Methods: Body-
printing and poetry**

Bee Hughes
Andromeda 2016
Part of *Space* triptych
acrylic on paper
2m x 1.77m



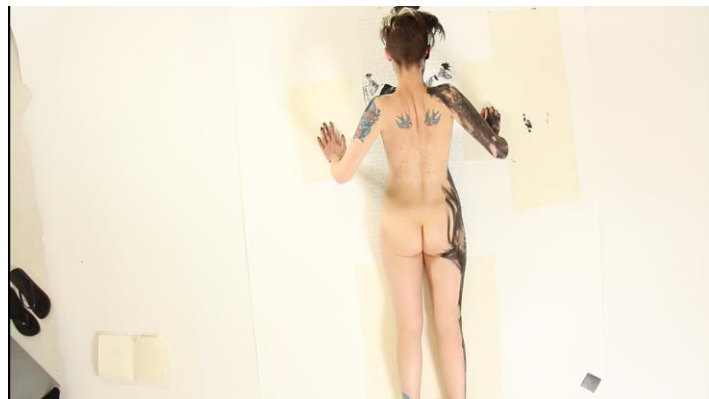
Bee Hughes
Black Hole 2016
Part of *Space* triptych
acrylic on paper
2m x 1.77m



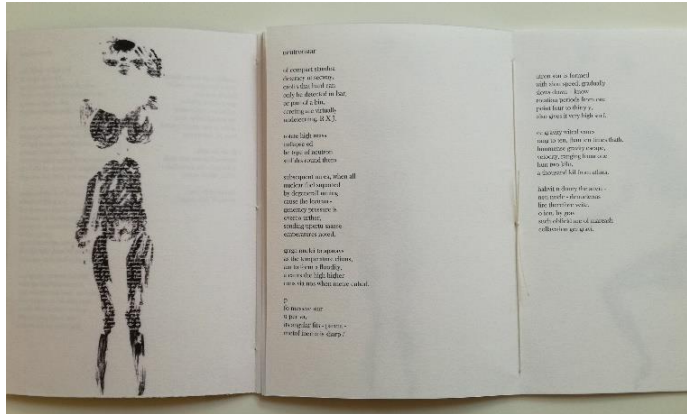
Bee Hughes
Neutron Star 2016
Part of *Space* triptych
acrylic on paper
2m x 1.77m



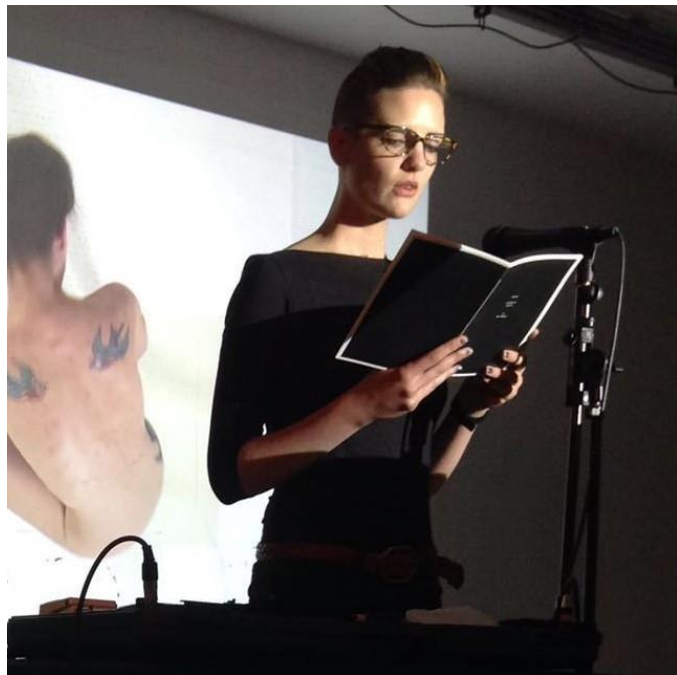
Bee Hughes
Untitled video 2016
unedited footage, 2 parts
24 minutes 18 seconds
& 5 minutes 30 seconds
video documentation of
performance



Bee Hughes
Space Triptych 2016
poetry zine
A5 matte paper, hand stitched



Bee Hughes
Space Triptych 2016
poetry reading
Liverpool School of Art &
Design 1 June 2016



Bee Hughes
Erased Poems 2016
mixed media sculpture:
miniature glass bottles, cork,
eraser and asking fluid dust
installation image from *Poetry
Exhibition* curated by Dan
Waine, as part of Liverpool
Independent's Biennial 2018



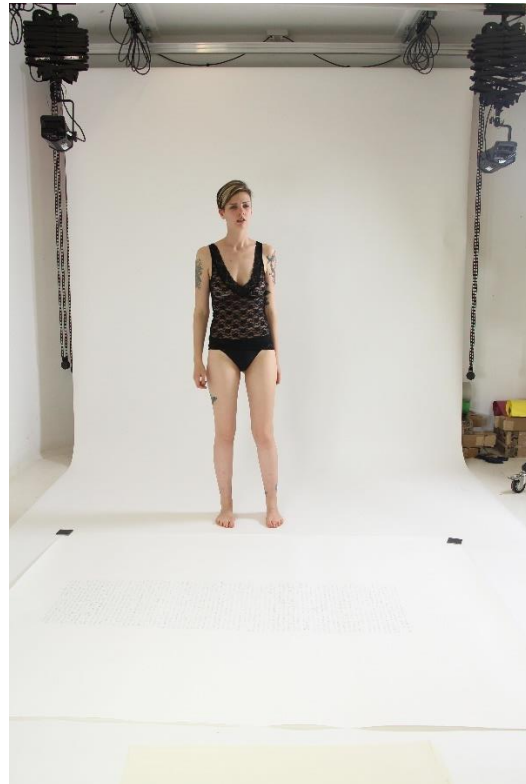
Portraits

These are a selection of photographs taken as part of a private performance documentation conducted in May 2016 at Liverpool School of Art & Design. The camera was set to take a photograph every 5 seconds for the duration of the session. Technical support provided by Milos Simpraga.

Bee Hughes
untitled performance (i) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled performance (ii) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled performance (iii) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled performance (iv) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled performance (v) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled performance (vi) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled performance (vii) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled performance (viii) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled performance (ix) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled performance (x) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled performance (xi) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled performance (xii) 2016
digital photograph



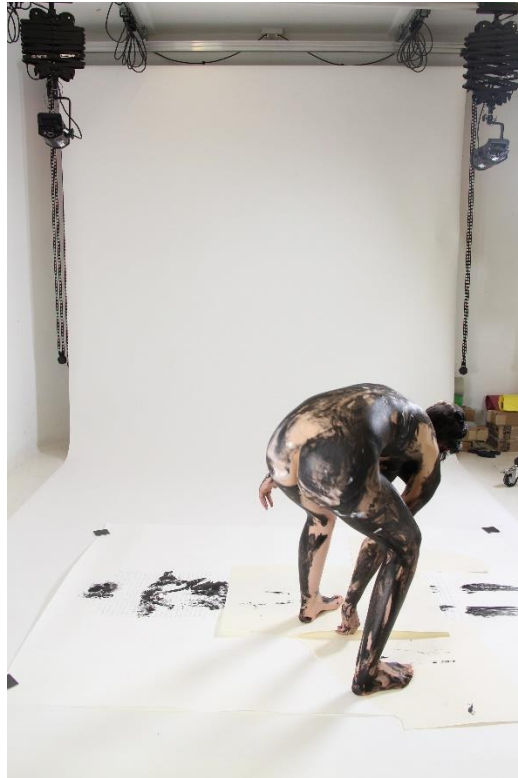
Bee Hughes
untitled performance (xiii) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled performance (xiv) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled performance (xv) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled performance (xvi) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled performance (xvii) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled performance (xvii) 2016
digital photograph



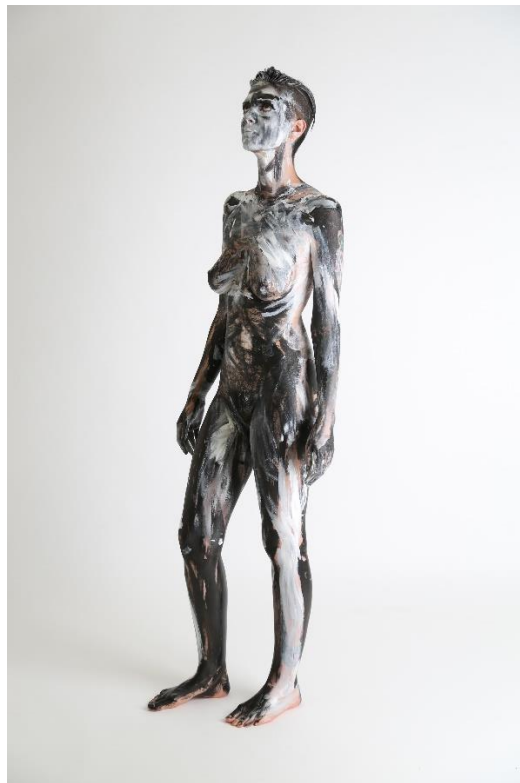
Portraits

These are a selection of photographs taken as part of a private performance documentation conducted in May 2016 at Liverpool School of Art & Design. Choreographed and Art Directed by Bee Hughes, with support and photography by Milos Simpraga.

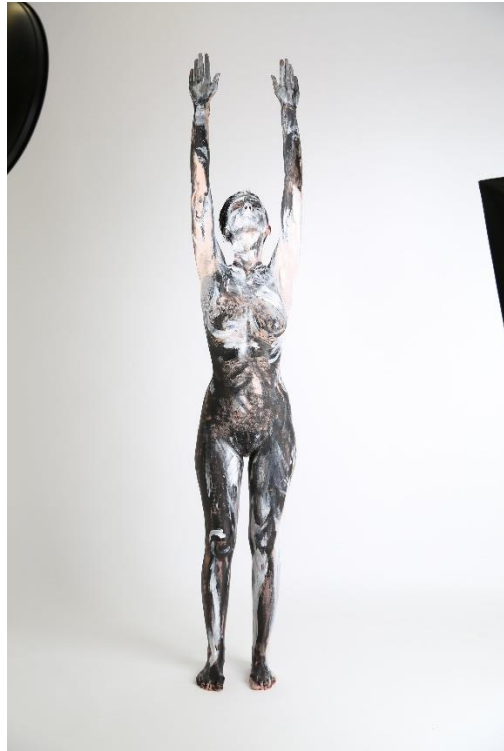
Bee Hughes
untitled portrait (i) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled portrait (ii) 2016
digital photograph



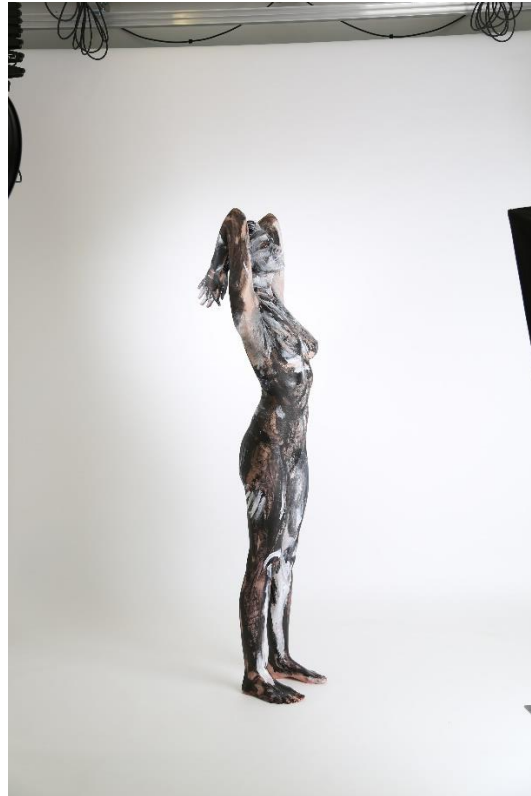
Bee Hughes
untitled portrait (iii) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled portrait (iv) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled portrait (v) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled portrait (vi) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled portrait (vii) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled portrait (viii) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled portrait (ix) 2016
digital photograph



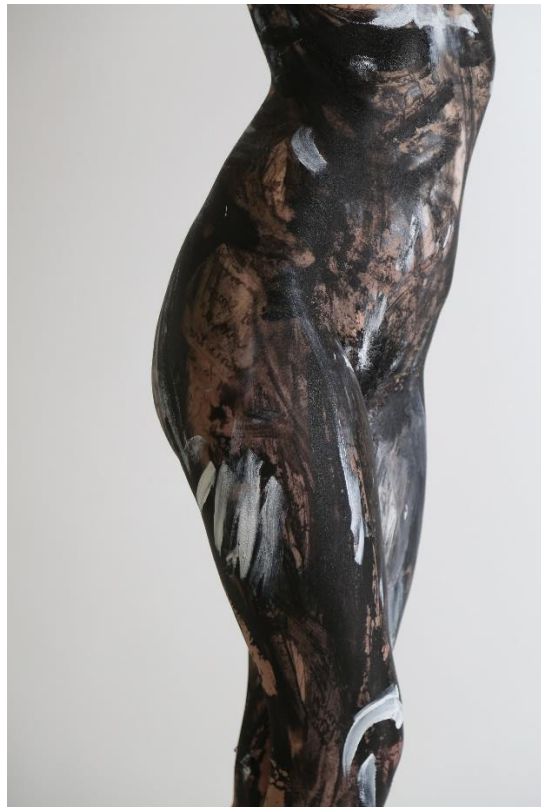
Bee Hughes
untitled portrait (x) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled portrait (xi) 2016
digital photograph



Bee Hughes
untitled portrait (xii) 2016
digital photograph



**Vulva Printing
& Menstrual Art**

The following are various artworks which developed from the earlier performative practices, which incorporate menstruation as a central theme.

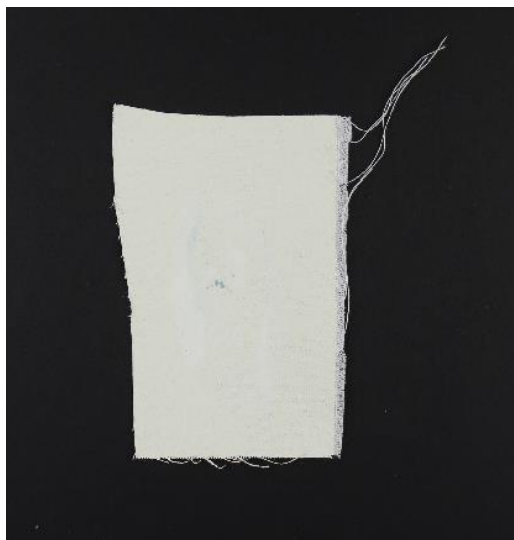
Bee Hughes
Untitled: test print (i) 2016
vulva prints in acrylic on
paper and fabric



Bee Hughes
Untitled: test print (ii) 2016
vulva prints in acrylic on
paper and fabric



Bee Hughes
Untitled: test print (iii) 2016
vulva prints in acrylic on
paper and fabric



Bee Hughes
Untitled: test print (iv) 2016
vulva prints in acrylic on
paper and fabric



Bee Hughes
Untitled: test print (v) 2016
vulva prints in acrylic on
paper and fabric



Bee Hughes
Untitled: test print (vi) 2016
vulva prints in acrylic on
paper and fabric



Bee Hughes
Untitled: test print (vii) 2016
vulva prints in acrylic on
paper and fabric



Bee Hughes
Untitled: test print (viii)
2016
vulva prints in acrylic on
paper and fabric



Bee Hughes
Untitled: test print (ix) 2016
vulva prints in acrylic on
paper and fabric



Bee Hughes
Untitled: test print (x) 2016
vulva prints in acrylic on
paper and fabric



Bee Hughes
Untitled: test print (xi) 2016
vulva prints in acrylic on
paper and fabric



Bee Hughes
Untitled: test print (xii) 2016
vulva prints in acrylic on
paper and fabric



Bee Hughes
Untitled: test print (xiii)
2016
vulva prints in acrylic on
paper and fabric



Bee Hughes
Untitled: test print (xiv)
2016
vulva prints in acrylic on
paper and fabric



Bee Hughes
a period is... 2016
 visual poem
 published in
 Challenging Menstrual
 Norms in Online Medical
 Advice: Deconstructing
 Stigma through
 Entangled Art Practice
 (Hughes 2018)

a period is
 a period is the menstrual cycle
 menstrual cycle
 when a woman bleeds from her vagina
 a period is the woman bleeds
 cycle bleeds her vagina
 cycle bleeds
 a period is bleeds
 bleeds
 is a woman
 a woman
 period.

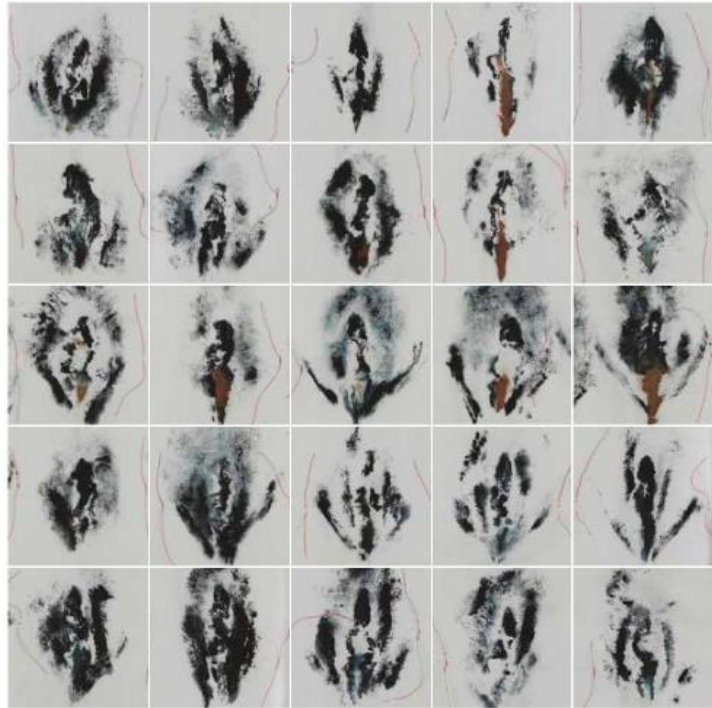
Bee Hughes
Cycles 2016-2017
 6 scrolls, 3m x 0.2m
 linen scrolls, cotton
 thread, acrylic and
 menstrual fluid



Bee Hughes
Cycles 2016-2017
 (detail)
 6 scrolls, 3m x 0.2m
 linen scrolls, cotton
 thread, acrylic and
 menstrual fluid



Bee Hughes
Incomplete Cycles
(December) 2017
81.2 x 81.2 cm
digital photographic print
on heavyweight paper
A/P 1st Edition held in:
Inner Space Gallery, USA
Vagina Museum, UK
A/P 2nd Edition held in:
MUSA, University of St
Andrews



Bee Hughes
untitled scrolls
2017-2018
2 scrolls 3m x 0.2m
linen scrolls, cotton
thread, acrylic and
menstrual fluid



Bee Hughes
Lifetime Supply
2017 - 2019
installation size variable
mixed media: air dry clay,
acrylic paint, acrylic
varnish



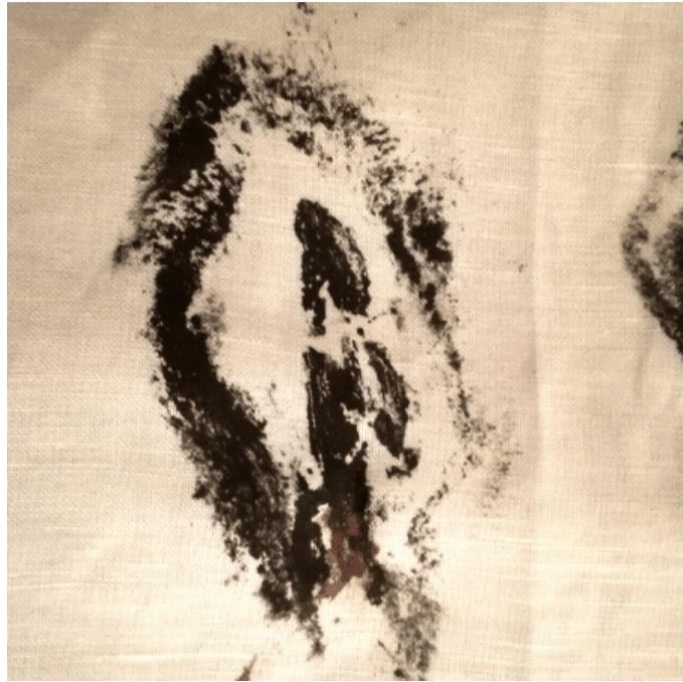
Bee Hughes
Infinite Cycles 2017
installation view
size variable, duration
variable
installation: digital photo
frames, digital photo
animation, custom plinth



Bee Hughes
Infinite Cycles 2017
deconstructed view



Bee Hughes
Cycles: Series Two / Month One / Week One 2018
gif animation
dimensions variable
<https://bee-hughes.tumblr.com/post/171342634493/cycles-series-two-month-one-week-one>



Bee Hughes
Cycles: Series 2 / Month 1 / Week 2 2018
gif animation
dimensions variable
<https://bee-hughes.tumblr.com/post/171342671063/cycles-series-2-month-1-week-2>



Bee Hughes
untitled cycle
2018
100cm x 145cm
cotton thread, acrylic
and menstrual fluid on
linen



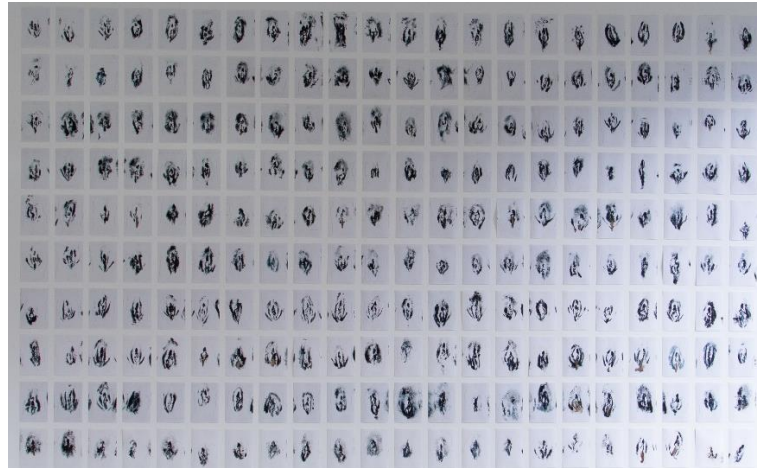
Bee Hughes
untitled cycle
2018
100cm x 145cm
cotton thread, acrylic
and menstrual fluid on
linen



Bee Hughes
Lifetime Supply
2018
installation produced for
Periodical Exhibition
(Hughes 2018) / Being
Human festival
installation size variable
mixed media: air dry clay,
acrylic paint, acrylic
varnish



Bee Hughes
Almost Eight Cycles 2018
installation produced for
Periodical Exhibition
(Hughes 2018) / Being
Human festival
installation size variable
242 digital prints 148mm
x 210 mm each



Bee Hughes
Almost Eight Cycles 2018
detail view



Bee Hughes
a period is... ii 2018
visual poem in vinyl
lettering
installation produced for
Periodical Exhibition
(Hughes 2018) / Being
Human festival
3m x 1.5m



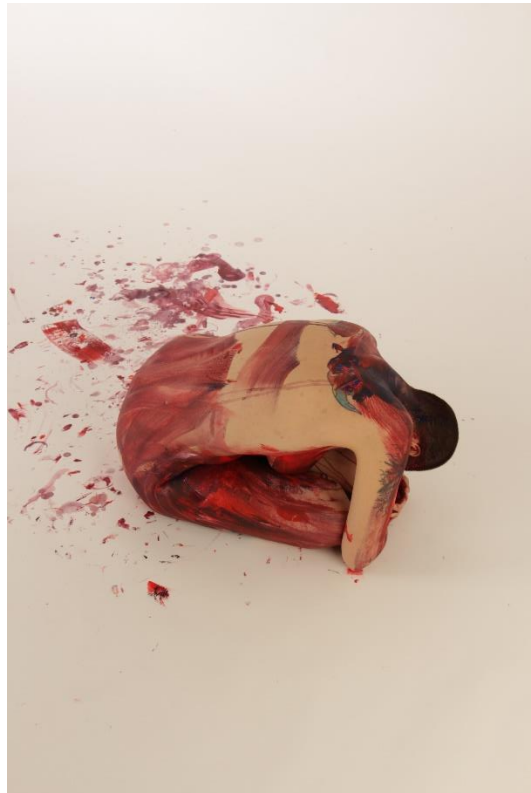
Bee Hughes
Dys-men-o-rrho-ea (i)
2019
selection from private
performance
documentation, digital
photographs



Bee Hughes
Dys-men-o-rrho-ea (ii)
2019
selection from private
performance
documentation, digital
photographs



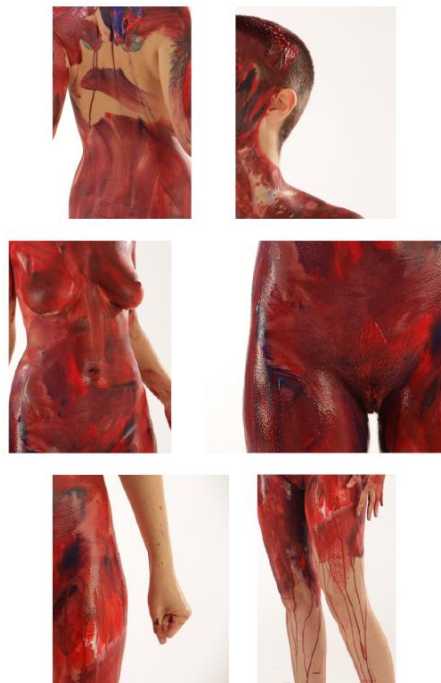
Bee Hughes
Dys-men-o-rrho-ea (iii)
2019
selection from private
performance
documentation, digital
photographs



Bee Hughes
Dys-men-o-rrho-ea (iv)
2019
selection from private
performance
documentation, digital
photographs



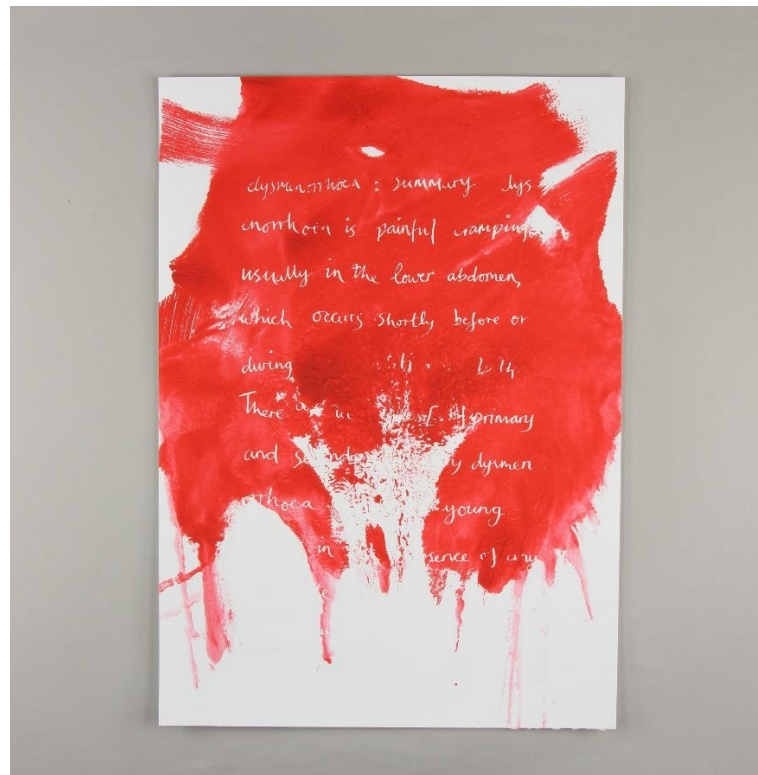
Bee Hughes
Dys-men-o-rrho-ea
2019
performance
documentation as digital
photograph collage
0.67m x 1.7m
A/P held at MUSA
University of St Andrews



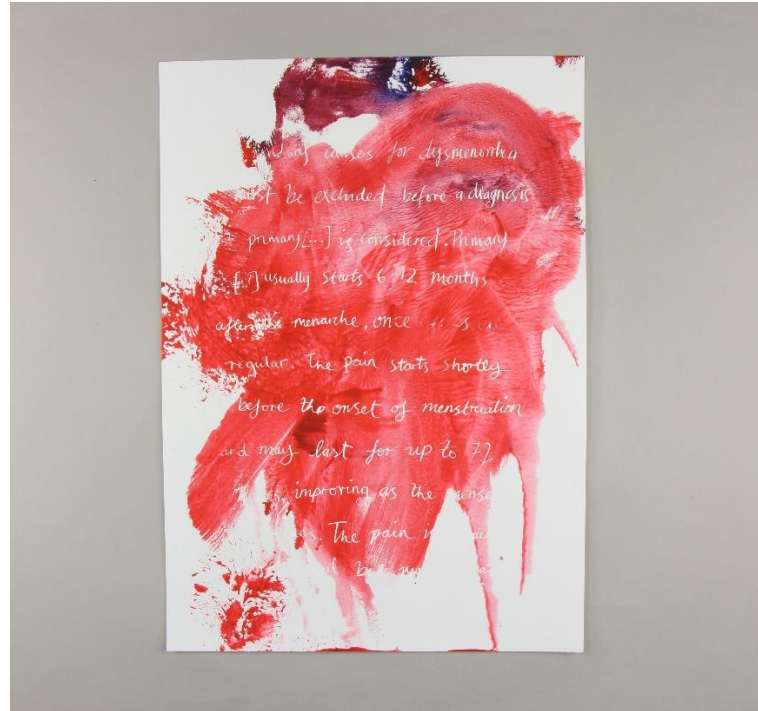
Bee Hughes
Dys-men-o-rrho-ea (one)
2019
1/16 monotype body-
prints in acrylic
29.7cm x 42cm



Bee Hughes
Dys-men-o-rrho-ea (two)
2019
2/16 monotype body-
prints in acrylic
29.7cm x 42cm



Bee Hughes
Dys-men-o-rrho-ea
(three) 2019
3/16 monotype body-
prints in acrylic
29.7cm x 42cm



Bee Hughes
Dys-men-o-rrho-ea (four)
2019
4/16 monotype body-
prints in acrylic
29.7cm x 42cm



Bee Hughes
Dys-men-o-rrho-ea (five)
2019
5/16 monotype body-
prints in acrylic
29.7cm x 42cm



Bee Hughes
Dys-men-o-rrho-ea (six)
2019
6/16 monotype body-
prints in acrylic
29.7cm x 42cm



Bee Hughes
Dys-men-o-rrho-ea
(seven) 2019
7/16 monotype body-
prints in acrylic
29.7cm x 42cm



Bee Hughes
Dys-men-o-rrho-ea
(eight) 2019
8/16 monotype body-
prints in acrylic
29.7cm x 42cm



Bee Hughes
Dys-men-o-rrho-ea (nine)
2019
9/16 monotype body-
prints in acrylic
29.7cm x 42cm



Bee Hughes
Dys-men-o-rrho-ea (ten)
2019
10/16 monotype body-
prints in acrylic
29.7cm x 42cm



Bee Hughes
Dys-men-o-rrho-ea
(eleven) 2019
11/16 monotype body-
prints in acrylic
29.7cm x 42cm



Bee Hughes
Dys-men-o-rrho-ea
(twelve) 2019
12/16 monotype body-
prints in acrylic
29.7cm x 42cm



Bee Hughes
Dys-men-o-rrho-ea
(thirteen) 2019
13/16 monotype body-
prints in acrylic
29.7cm x 42cm



Bee Hughes
Dys-men-o-rrho-ea
(fourteen) 2019
14/16 monotype body-
prints in acrylic
29.7cm x 42cm



Bee Hughes
Dys-men-o-rrho-ea
(fifteen) 2019
15/16 monotype body-
prints in acrylic
29.7cm x 42cm



Bee Hughes
Dys-men-o-rrho-ea
(sixteen) 2019
16/16 monotype body-
prints in acrylic
29.7cm x 42cm



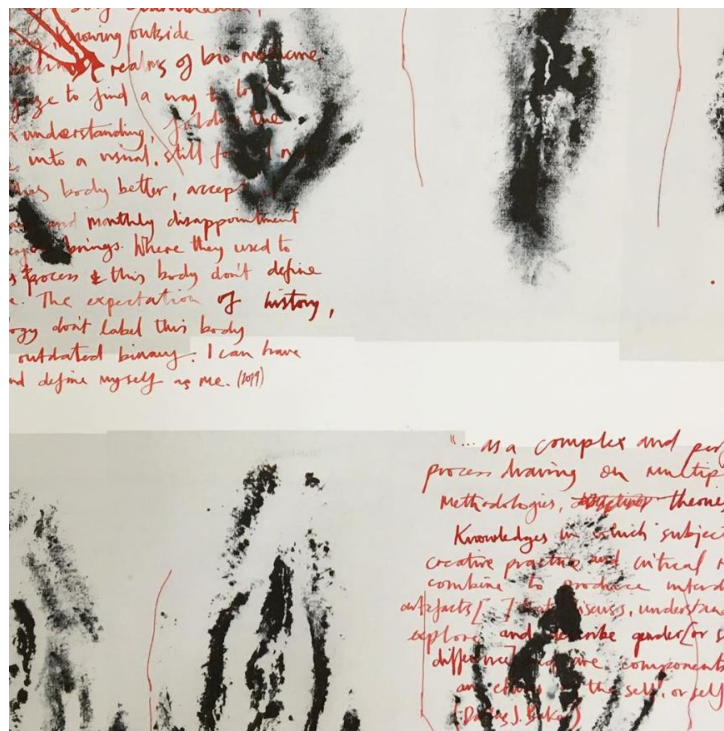
Bee Hughes
Conditions: Period 2019
 performance, duration
 variable
 performed at
 Cornerstone Arts Centre,
 Colorado College,
 Colorado, 8 June 2019
 photograph by
 Sarah Baumann



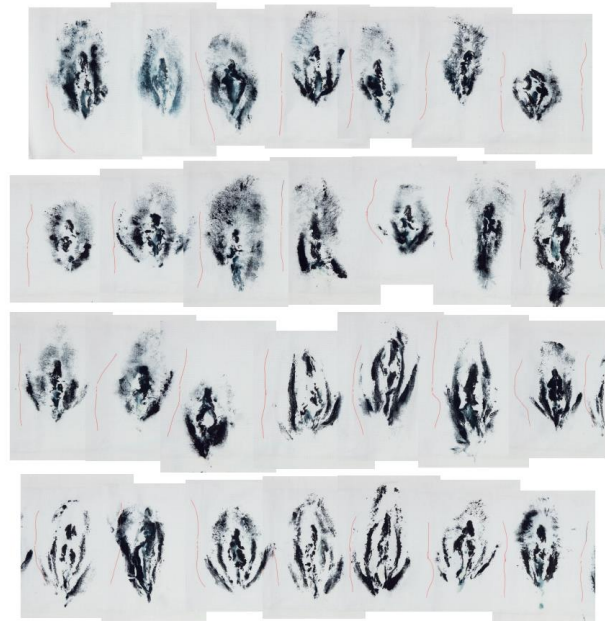
Bee Hughes
Unmade, remade, 28
days 2019
 digital print with
 handwritten ink details
 2m x 0.6 m



Bee Hughes
Unmade, remade, 28
days 2019
 detail view



Bee Hughes
Untitled 2019
81.2 x 81.2 cm
digital photographic print
on heavyweight paper
A/P held in Private
Collection



Part B: Collaborative Practice

These works were produced in collaboration with Eva Petersen in 2016 and 2017 as part of collaborative performances and exhibitions presenting our practice-in-progress at Liverpool School of Art & Design.

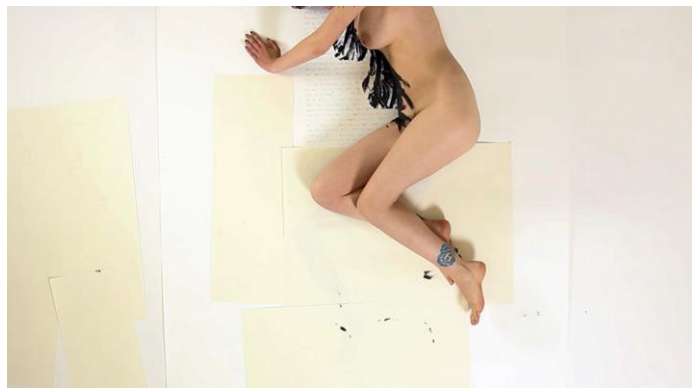
Poster for BARE
designed by Bee Hughes
2016

BARE
a performance by
Bee Hughes and Eva Petersen



John Lennon Art and Design Building
Lower Ground Floor Photography Studio
Wednesday 1st June at 12:30

Bee Hughes & Eva Petersen
2016
BARE video
19 minutes 39 seconds
[still]



Bee Hughes & Eva Petersen
2016
BARE video
19 minutes 39 seconds
[still]



Bee Hughes & Eva Petersen
2017
Unvoiced
digital sound recording
2 minutes 22 seconds
<https://soundcloud.com/comfort-zones/un-voiced-2017-bee-hughes-eva-petersen>



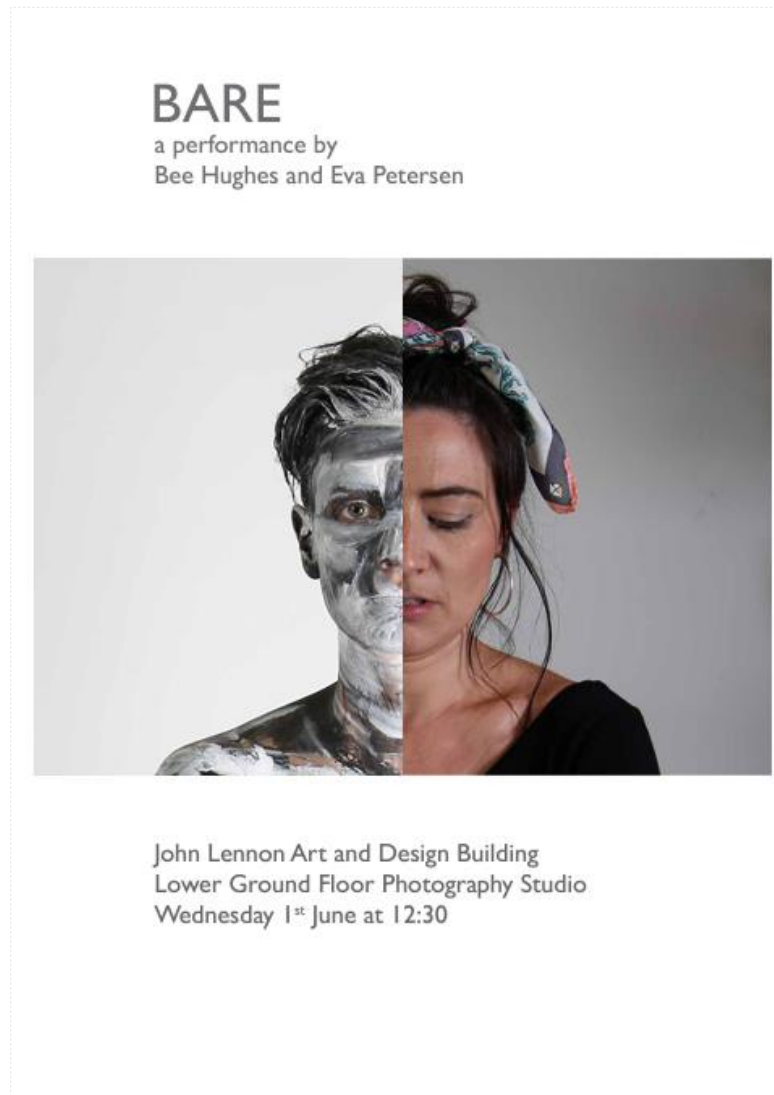
Appendix Two: Exhibitions, Public Engagement & Curatorial Projects

Part A of Appendix Two catalogues key examples of exhibitions and events undertaken alongside the main body of practice during my Doctoral study where I took the lead or only curatorial role. In Part B, this appendix also catalogues exhibitions I have exhibited in as either solo or contributing artist. Both parts A and B are presented in chronological order.

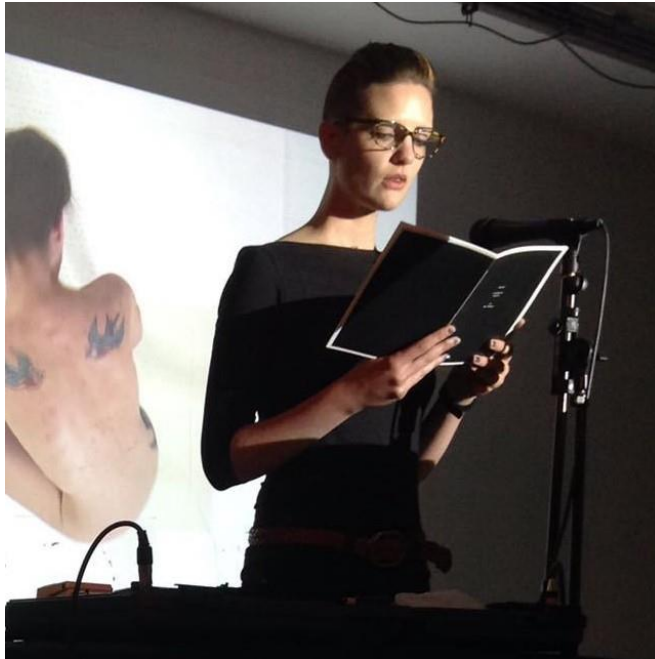
Appendix Two Part A: Curatorial Projects

BARE (2016)

Curated and performed by Bee Hughes & Eva Petersen
Multimedia performance
Photography Studio, Liverpool School of Art and Design,
Wednesday 1st June 2016, 45 minutes



Poster Design by Bee Hughes (2016)
Photography: Milos Simpraga & Eva Petersen



Bee Hughes with video of self, reading from *Space Triptych* (see Appendix One).
Photograph by Sian Lincoln.



Bee Hughes with video and shadow of self, reading from *Space Triptych* (see Appendix One).
Photograph by Sian Lincoln.



Bee Hughes: video still (see Appendix One) in performance space.
Photograph by Sian Lincoln.

Comfort Zones (2017)

Curated by Bee Hughes

Contributing Artists: Bee Hughes & Eva Petersen

Multimedia exhibition

Atrium Gallery, Liverpool School of Art & Design

26 October – 3 November 2017



Poster Design by Bee Hughes (2017)

Exhibition Text:

Comfort Zones is an exhibition of works in progress by Bee Hughes and Eva Petersen which brings together pieces created as part of their individual PhD research with a new collaborative soundwork.

The works presented were developed from an interrogation of their own comfort zones regarding the representation of female bodies and confront how different aspects of female identities are perceived and received. Through their visual works both artists aim to question the simultaneous objectification and censorship of female bodies and experiences in different areas of contemporary culture.

The soundwork – *Un-voiced* (2017) – embraces ambiguity, drawing on themes including identity and cultural performance and cultures of performance. The piece combines spoken word with non-vocal sounds, alluding to the various ways our contemporary culture tends to silence or homogenise individual female experiences.

Bee's research explores menstruation and its associated rituals and behaviours – from people who have periods and do not - as a process which reinforces certain social performances of gender. Through the documentation of her own bodily cycles Bee aims to present menstruation as a constantly shifting process that fluctuates within everyday life, as opposed to the static and regimented pattern we often expect it to be. The daily ritual of making prints eventually becomes a long-term record, establishing a space of resistance to everyday cultural narratives of menstruation. The creation of this work has been embedded in Bee's daily routines, forming an archival document of the changes in her body over an extended period of time. The ritual of making prints establishes a space of resistance to everyday cultural narratives which regard menstruation as a taboo subject, and as a 'problem' for individual women to deal with.

Eva's research is a response to the restrictions she faced as a woman performing, writing and composing music within the music industry. Through her autobiographical work, she aims to reclaim creative autonomy by creating an album entitled *Voices of Winter Palace* of which she has total creative control - from the composition of the music, lyrics, melodies to artwork, video, studio recording, music production and performance. Eva's compositions are created using graphic scores and non-traditional notation which she developed as an aide-memoir whilst on tour as a recording artist at the beginning of her music career. The graphic scores and notation have become a piece of visual artwork in their own right. Through her work, Eva questions the perceptions of a woman's body and her own comfort zones as a performer within the music industry. Eva's three photographic prints *Yes, I Am Looking Straight at You* (2017) are a series of self-portraits taken before, during and after singing. The series is a response to the objectification of her performances, the stereotypical photography sessions she experienced as a musician and an exploration of the threat of leading women performers.

List of Artworks:

Vitrines:

Bee Hughes

Cycles (2016-2017)

archival work documenting the artist's body on a daily basis
twelve hand-stitched, mono-printed linen scrolls

Eva Petersen

Untitled (2017)

cut-out and cut-up graphic notation
acrylic paint on paper

Central Installation:

Bee Hughes

Infinite Cycle (version i.) (2017)

digital reproductions of the original *Cycles* in continuous playback
mixed media installation, custom plinth and multiple screens

Bee Hughes & Eva Petersen

Un-voiced (2017) vocal performance

digital recording

Wall:

Eva Petersen

Yes, I am Looking Straight at You (2017)

series of photographic self-portraits taken before, during and after a vocal
performance

Installation Photos



Photograph by Milos Simpraga



Photograph by Milos Simpraga



Photograph by Milos Simpraga



Photograph by Milos Simpraga



Photograph by Milos Simpraga



Photograph by Milos Simpraga



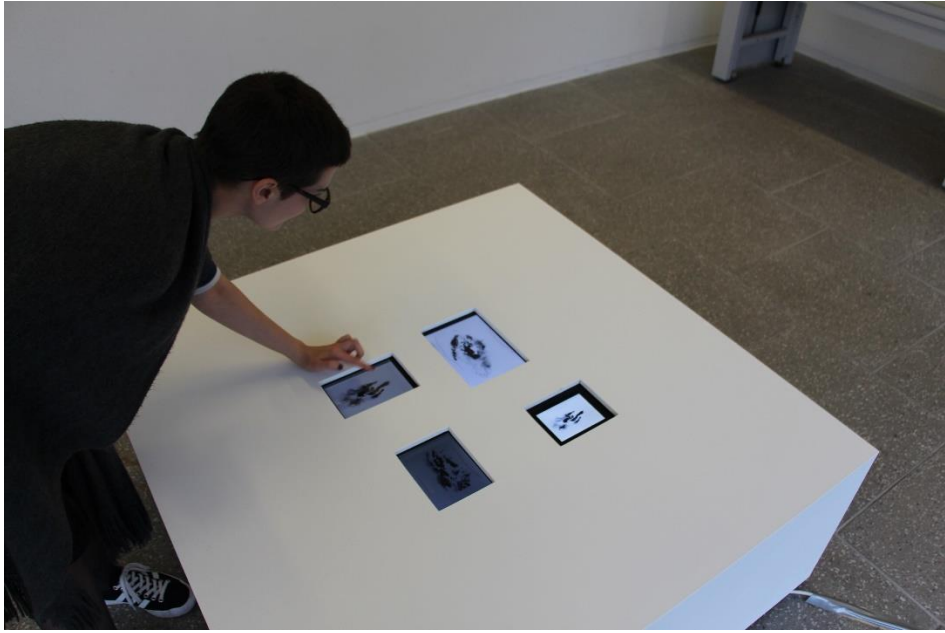
Photograph by Milos Simpraga



Photograph by Milos Simpraga



Photograph by Milos Simpraga



Photograph by Milos Simpraga



Photograph by Milos Simpraga

Periodical (2018)

Curated by Bee Hughes

15th – 24th November 2018

Part of *Being Human* festival of the humanities

Atrium Gallery, Liverpool School of Art & Design



Poster design template by Being Human festival

Photography and tampon sculptures by Bee Hughes (see Appendix One)

Curatorial Text:

Periodical is an exhibition of menstrual art, photography, and archival material exploring and challenging cultural ideas about periods in the UK and Nepal. We invite people of all ages and genders to come together to break the cycle of secrecy and misinformation that has contributed to the stigmatisation of menstruation, period poverty, and harmful practices and restrictions that impact the everyday lives of people who menstruate. Whether you are a menstrual maestro or curious about cycles, *Periodical* is a shame-free space to discuss menstruation for people who do and do not menstruate.

The Being Human Festival theme for 2018 - 'Origins and Endings' - is threaded throughout this exhibition. Menstruation is often seen as the beginning of life as an adult for adolescent girls with menarche (the first period in a menstruator's life) considered a rite of passage. Equally, menopause - the ending of the menstrual cycle - is considered by many to be the beginning of a new phase of life. *Periodical* presents some of the origins of our cultural attitudes to menstruation shaped by medicine and media representations and suggests ways to change prevailing negative associations through new representations and education, bringing periods fuss-free into our everyday conversations.

Join us to explore attitudes to menstruation in the late 20th century through our cabinets of specially selected items from the LJMU Femorabilia Archive of magazines for girls and women. Through thematically curated displays, we invite you to think about the similarities and differences in advertising messages from the 1960s to the 1990s and consider key ideas used to sell menstrual products. We round off our vitrine displays by contrasting the mainstream and commercial perspectives found in advertising materials with examples of educational publications and zines.

Artworks by Bee Hughes ask us to question stigma around menstruation and the menstruating body as both unclean and overly sexualised and challenges the medicalised notion of a regular and regulated menstrual cycle that happens like clockwork for all people who menstruate. Bee's visual works explore her own experience of menstruating, while her poetic works deconstruct the language of menstrual health advice, questioning the rigid use of gendered language that often conflates the ability to menstruate with womanhood. Her recently published analysis of UK health advice websites found their language reflects rigid and binary notions of gender, and present menstruation as a problem to be solved, but give little consideration to alternatives to commercial, disposable menstrual products.

Amanda Atkinson's installation lays bare the financial cost of menstruating, underscoring the need for universal access to free menstrual products. The issue of period poverty and its relevance to wider social problems linked to the UK Government's policies of economic austerity is highlighted by the work of the Homeless Period Liverpool to provide menstrual products to homeless people, school pupils and food bank users across Merseyside.

Poulomi Basu's photographs investigate the causes and consequences of ritual violence against Nepali women through the practice of 'chaupadi' which exiles menstruating women from the home. The photos are not those of passive victims but of a courage in the face of extreme adversity. The women have come forward to share their stories and break menstrual taboos. The project is a form of dissent and protest. Poulomi has played a huge role in putting pressure on the Nepalese government to ban the practice of chaupadi, a practice finally made illegal in August 2017. Nonetheless, a huge amount of work remains: chaupadi is much more than an issue of law and order.

Sara Parker and Kay Standing's installation reflects their British Academy funded collaborative research on menstruation in Nepal which focuses on the right to a dignified menstruation. Working with local partners across Nepal it explores artefacts and stories around menstruation they aim to develop in-depth understanding of nuances of religious, social and cultural beliefs underpinning menstrual stigmas and exclusionary practices, in order to challenge these at the local level.

Chella Quint' is a dedicated campaigner and leading expert on menstrual education. She is an author, comedian, designer, writer and researcher who coined the term 'period positive'. As founder of the #periodpositive campaign, Chella makes a huge contribution to dispelling stigma and opening up discussions about periods in the UK and around the world. Described as a 'force of nature' by Shami Chakrabarti, all aspects of Chella's work is infused with careful research and her signature sense of humour.

Sasha Spyrou's illustrations invite us into a world where everyday objects become uncanny characters. Her work has been described as having an enchanted quality, conjuring a fantastical world with colourful narratives and histories woven around characters. Sasha's illustrations are deceptively lighthearted, fusing charm and uncanny nostalgia with a deeply thoughtful edge.

Thanks to Emma Ashman, Jennifer Lynch, Emily Parsons, Rebecca Smith, Milos Simpraga, Kay Standing, LJMU Special Collections and Archives, The Homeless Period Liverpool and all contributing artists.

This event is part of the national Being Human festival of the humanities, which will be taking place in around 50 towns and cities across the UK between 15-24 November.

Being Human is the only national festival dedicated entirely to celebrating research across the humanities – from archaeology, history, languages, philosophy and more. This year the festival explores the theme of 'Origins and Endings'. Being Human aims to make the humanities accessible and fun for all, and is run by the School of Advanced Study, University of London in partnership with the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the British Academy.

Curatorial Essay: Menstruation in Visual Culture

by Bee Hughes

The last one hundred years has seen a rich and varied terrain of materials in the arts and broader visual culture relating to menstruation. The most prominent images of menstruation we have come from mainstream visual culture in the form of advertising, TV, and films. Adverts tend to present images that exploit deep-seated beliefs that menstruation is unclean and should be hidden from public view and discussion in order to sell the latest products that will keep you 'fresh' and 'safe' from dreaded leaks. From early-20th century, the language of advertising built around the newly available disposable menstrual products set the tone that has only very recently begun to shift.

As Jennifer Weiss-Wolf observes in her 2017 book on the campaign for menstrual equity in the United States, to sell menstrual products the message from companies 'was always the same. No leaks, no stains. No pain. No problem'. The first advertising campaign for a disposable menstrual product to feature (fake) red blood instead of blue liquid was Bodyform's 'Blood Normal' campaign video, released in 2017. It was seen as ground-breaking, but seems more a marketing strategy than a genuine representation of an ordinary bodily function. In her article 'Blood in the Shower' (2018) Camilla Mørk Røstvik argues artists and activists have built up alternative depictions and discussions of menstruation. While they challenge the commercialisation of menstruation, she notes that this work is often appropriated by commercial menstrual product companies.

Stephen King's novel *Carrie* (1974) and its film adaptation(s) (1976, 2002, 2013) provide perhaps the most memorable depictions of menstruation in pop culture with the supernaturally-powered Carrie exacting fiery revenge on the classmates who bully her after the onset of her first period. The story is dripping with stereotypes about periods, from the idea that they are unclean to the exaggerated presentation of a menstruating woman with no control of her emotions. It's safe to say that these everyday and pop depictions have dominated the formation of menstrual norms in our cultural consciousness.

Though perhaps less well-known in the public sphere, artists have been countering the secrecy and shame surrounding periods since at least the early 1970s. In 1970 in Denmark, a collective of feminist artists, Kannonclubben, created a series of tableau performances called *Damebilleder* (Images of Women) which culminated in a live-in installation where they created a living space filled with red furnishings, which then prompted discussions of their experiences of menstruation.

In the USA, Judy Chicago produced the now iconic photolithograph *Red Flag* (1971), a tightly framed image of the artist removing a bloody tampon from her vagina. In the same year, Leslie Labowitz-Starus performed her *Menstruation Wait*, in Los Angeles and Dusseldorf, sitting quietly on the floor waiting for her period to begin. There have been numerous visual and performance works where artists use both

their own blood or fake blood defiantly presenting menstruation to their audiences in all their visceral and messy reality.

Whereas everyday representations in visual culture often present negative narratives of menstruation that should be kept under wraps, artists have countered the mainstream with unapologetic images of menstruators and their blood that are almost completely absent from advertising and popular culture. Art plays an important role in promoting a radical alternative view of menstruation, which reflects the bloody realities of menstruation and presents a range of experiences. It's important that space is created to show and share these responses to menstruation outside the polished, sanitised visual narratives of the menstrual product industry.

List of Artworks and Artist Information

Amanda Atkinson

£306, 2016

Coins, installation

The piece presents £306 in silver and copper coins, the average amount spent annually by women on menstruation related items and pain relief for periods. Highlighting how such items are often unattainable for homeless and low income women, it calls on the UK Government to take action to #endPeriodPoverty. The amount displayed was donated to The Homeless Period, Liverpool.

Artist's Biography:

Amanda Marie Atkinson is a Senior Researcher (sociologist, LJMU), artist, and feminist activist based in Liverpool. She creates accessible art that is methodologically, theoretically and empirically informed to visually question and critique a number of social, political and cultural issues through the use of word, simple imagery, photography and everyday items.

Poulomi Basu

A Ritual of Exile, 2017

Poulomi Basu's work reveals the consequences of violence perpetrated on women in Nepal. Focusing on physical controls imposed on women during menstruation Basu's narrative challenges ignorance and apathy. Using photography, photogrammetry and more, Poulomi's seeks to transform her subjects into activists working to contest traditional perceptions of women and dynamic participants in the writing of their own history.

Artist's Biography:

Poulomi Basu is a storyteller, artist and activist. Poulomi's work has become known for documenting the role of women in isolated communities and conflict zones and more generally for advocating for the rights of women.

Natalie Denny

The Bloody Bard, 2018

Poem, installed in vinyl lettering

Natalie Denny is an author and activist based in Liverpool. She is founder and Chair of Period Project Merseyside, and a founder of The Goddess Projects, Liverpool.

Bee Hughes

Almost Eight Cycles, 2018

Digital prints, installation

Almost Eight Cycles reconfigures an earlier work as a customised print installation. The original piece, *Cycles* (2016-17) combines performative practices, body art and printmaking, making one image every evening for eight months. The grid presentation contrasts the unpredictability of my menstrual cycle and the fluctuating form, accumulating over time to establish spaces of personal resistance to dominant cultural narratives of menstruation. By exposing the variations in my own cycle, I aim to counter the idea of a medically defined and regulated period and present a performative and embodied account of a menstruating body.

Bee Hughes

a period is... ii, 2018

Poem, installed in vinyl lettering

Bee Hughes

untitled, 2018

Hand-stitched oversized reusable menstrual pad

Bee Hughes

Lifetime Supply, 2017 – 2019

Sculptures in clay, acrylic paint, acrylic varnish

This sculptural piece brings a familiar but often blush-inducing everyday object into public view. Through substituting the white cotton for clay solidifies these ephemeral objects and the unfinished making process asks us to consider the accumulation of disposable menstrual products over a lifetime.

Bee Hughes

Cycles, 2016 – 2017

In *Cycles* Bee combines performative practices and printmaking, drawing out the usually fast and repetitive process of printmaking to the pace of everyday life, hybridising the rhythm of mechanised production and the rituals of daily existence. Instead of producing an edition of exact multiples in quick succession using a plate or silkscreen, her body becomes the plate and the printing press, producing a series of prints over days, weeks and months, to establish a space of resistance to established cultural narratives of menstruation.

Sara Parker & Kay Standing

Dignity Without Danger, 2018

This presents a number of reusable menstrual projects made in Nepal which highlight both the need for menstrual dignity and the grassroots activism of organisations and women in Nepal in challenging menstrual stigma.

Artist Biographies:

Sara Parker is a Reader in Development Studies at Liverpool John Moores University. She has over 30 years of research experience in Nepal focussing on gender education and development. She is the principal investigator on the BA GCRF project *Dignity without Danger*.

Kay Standing is a Reader in Gender Studies at Liverpool John Moores University. Her research interests are on gender-based violence and period poverty in Nepal and the UK. She also receives BA funding.

Sasha Spyrou

The Ghosts of Tampons Past, 2018

Digital print on paper, A3

This illustration is a playful and personal take on the physical resemblance of tampons to a ghostly form. The ghosts also symbolise both the environmental spectre of a lifetime's worth of tampons, and their demise as menstrual material of choice since discovering the menstrual cup.

Artist's Biography:

Sasha Spyrou is an illustrator and printmaker, and assistant manager of Road Studios, Liverpool. She gained her MRes Art and Design at LJMU in 2017, and achieved a BA (Hons) in Graphic Arts Illustration at LJMU in 2011. Sasha's work explores how the sense of character may be found in everyday objects, creating taxonomies of both the mundane and strange.

Chella Quint

STAINS™ (no date provided)

Caption text provided by Quint:

STAINS™ is a spoof aspirational brand. It is a line of bloodstain-themed fashions and accessories complete with adverts, spokesmodels, a CEO, brand identity guidelines, social media street team, and a 'mockumentarian', culminating in a merging of art, activism and science. *STAINS™* critiques disposable menstrual product advertising's lack of engagement with blood, except for when they use 'leakage fear' and words like 'whisper' and 'discreet' to shame consumers into seeking out their innovation.

The *STAINSTM* logo is a stylised bloodstain inspired by the silhouette of the prehistoric fertility sculpture, now believed to be a self-portrait, *The Venus of Willendorf*. Supporters are encouraged to take their fashions to the streets, and reclaim the biggest period worry reported to education by generations of young people.

Visitors are invited to become brand ambassadors: viewing a history of leakage fear in advertising, browsing the latest fashion spreads, modifying their own clothes with *STAINSTM* logos, and taking selfies to upload to the #periodpositive hashtag on Instagram and Twitter. Also on display are jewellery items from the newly launched *STAINSTM* Permanent Stains Collection from which all profits go toward trialling and disseminating free, accurate and unbranded menstruation education resources and periodpositive.com.

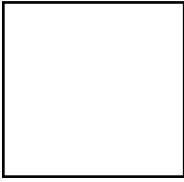
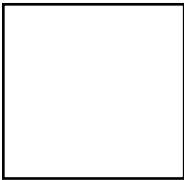
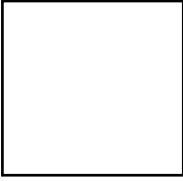
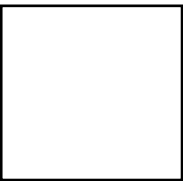

Artist's Biography:

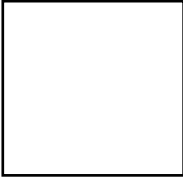
Chella Quint is a writer, researcher, performer, the UK's leading expert on menstruation education and the founder of #periodpositive. Quint performed her comedy show *Adventures in Menstruating* as part of our Being Human festival events, and facilitated a *STAINSTM* creation workshop as part of the Period Project Merseyside packing party.

Archival Research

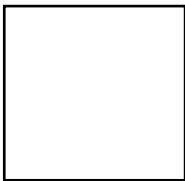
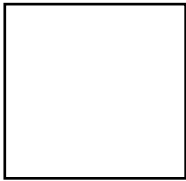
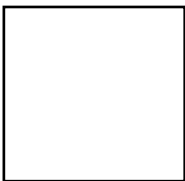
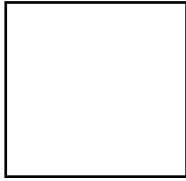
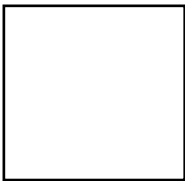
*Please note: The images originally presented here cannot be made freely available via LJMU E-Theses Collection because of copyright. The image was sourced from the Femorabilia Collection, LJMU Special Collections and Archives.

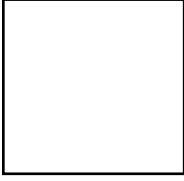
Time / Doing Time

Advert	Thumbnail	Magazine/Date	Page	Size
Tampax: It can add 6.2 years to your life		<i>Just 17</i> 16 July 1986	2	Single page
Tampax: The Towel User's Year		<i>Just 17</i> 10 December 1986	16-17	Double page
Tampax: Any time of the month can be vacation time		<i>Jackie</i> 17 November 1973	12	Small black & white
Tampax: It can add 6.2 years to your life		<i>Just 17</i> 11 June 1986	16 – 17	Double page
Tampax: Is it any wonder towel users have a smaller social calendar?		<i>Just 17</i> 3 June 1986	16 – 17	Double page

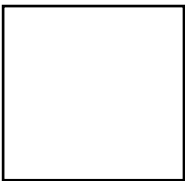
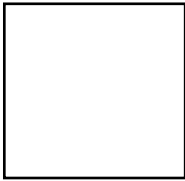
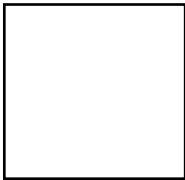

Tampax: Five days a month this girl was imprisoned by her own body		<i>Just 17</i> 6 August 1986	2	Single page
--	---	---------------------------------	---	-------------

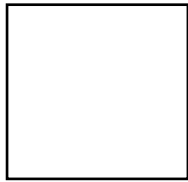
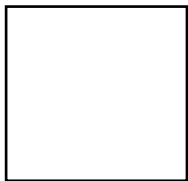
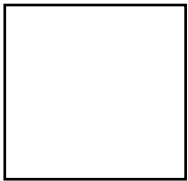
Fashion / Lifestyle / Style

Advert	Thumbnail	Magazine/Date	Page	Size
Bodyform: Why not buy your towel the same way you buy your jeans		<i>Just 17</i> 1 October 1986	12-13	Double page
Lil-lets: Discover the blessings of Lil-lets confidence for yourself this month		<i>Fabulous</i> 15 April 1964	23	Single page
Bodyform: try on a towel to see if it fits you (Dress)		<i>Just 17</i> 27 August 1986	21	Single page
Bodyform: Why not buy your towel the same way you buy your jeans		<i>Just 17</i> 18 June 1986	21	Single page
Dr White's: when you wear panty pads you wear what you like...		<i>Blue Jeans</i> 7 April 1979	11	Single page

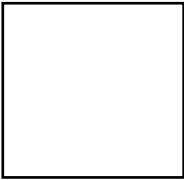


Simplicity: Stowaway towels		<i>Jackie</i> 23 January 1988	15	Single page
---------------------------------------	---	----------------------------------	----	----------------

Starting Out

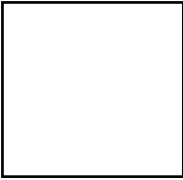
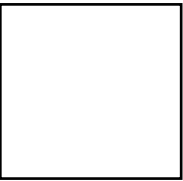
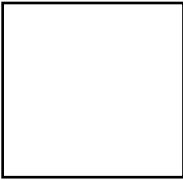
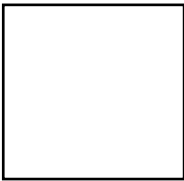
Advert	Thumbnail	Magazine/Date	Page	Size
<p>Tampax: What is so special about Tampax tampons</p>		<p><i>My Guy</i> 4 July 1987</p>	8	Single page
<p>Lil-lets: Do you know enough about tampons to choose the right one?</p>		<p><i>Jackie</i> 17 November 1973</p>	14	Small black & white
<p>Lil-lets: How old do you have to be to try your first tampon?</p>		<p><i>Blue Jeans</i> 7 April 1969</p>	-	Single
<p>Tampax: Starting my periods hasn't stopped me being one of the girls</p>		<p><i>Jackie</i> 16 January 1988</p>	15	Single page

<p>Tampax: How to deal with periods as explained by Sharon aged 13</p>		<p><i>My Guy</i> 13 December 1986</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>Single page</p>
<p>Tampax: Thanks to our applicator, a tampon also becomes easy to use with a little practice</p>		<p><i>Jackie</i> 5 August 1989</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>Single page</p>
<p>Tampax: How to deal with periods explained by Kate aged 13</p>		<p><i>My Guy</i> 28 December 1985</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>Single page</p>


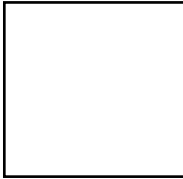
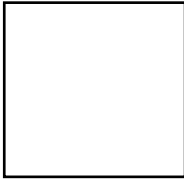
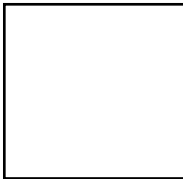
Difficulty or Problems



<p>Lil-lets: Some girls find it difficult to insert a tampon the first time, but it's only a mental block</p>		<p><i>Jackie</i> 26 January 1988</p>	<p>30-31</p>	<p>Double page</p>
<p>Libresse: problems... problems... problems... Solution</p>		<p><i>Jackie</i> 21 September 1974</p>	<p>36</p>	<p>Single</p>
<p>Dr White's: Have you ever wondered how men would carry on if they had period?</p>		<p><i>Just 17</i> 18 June 1986</p>	<p>12-13</p>	<p>Double</p>

Secrecy / Embarrassment


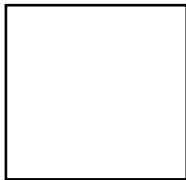
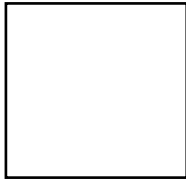
Advert	Thumbnail	Magazine/Date	Page	Size
Dr White's: Deep Blush		<i>Just 17</i> 19 November 1986	14-15	Double page
Dr White's: Call it what you like, a period's a bloody nuisance		<i>Just 17</i> 19 July 1987	20 – 21	Double page
Lil-lets: Do you want the whole class to know you're having a period?		<i>Jackie</i> 17 November 1990	8-9	Double page
Lil-lets: How to make a packet of tampons disappear		<i>Jackie</i> 30 January 1988	30 – 31	Double page

Innovation

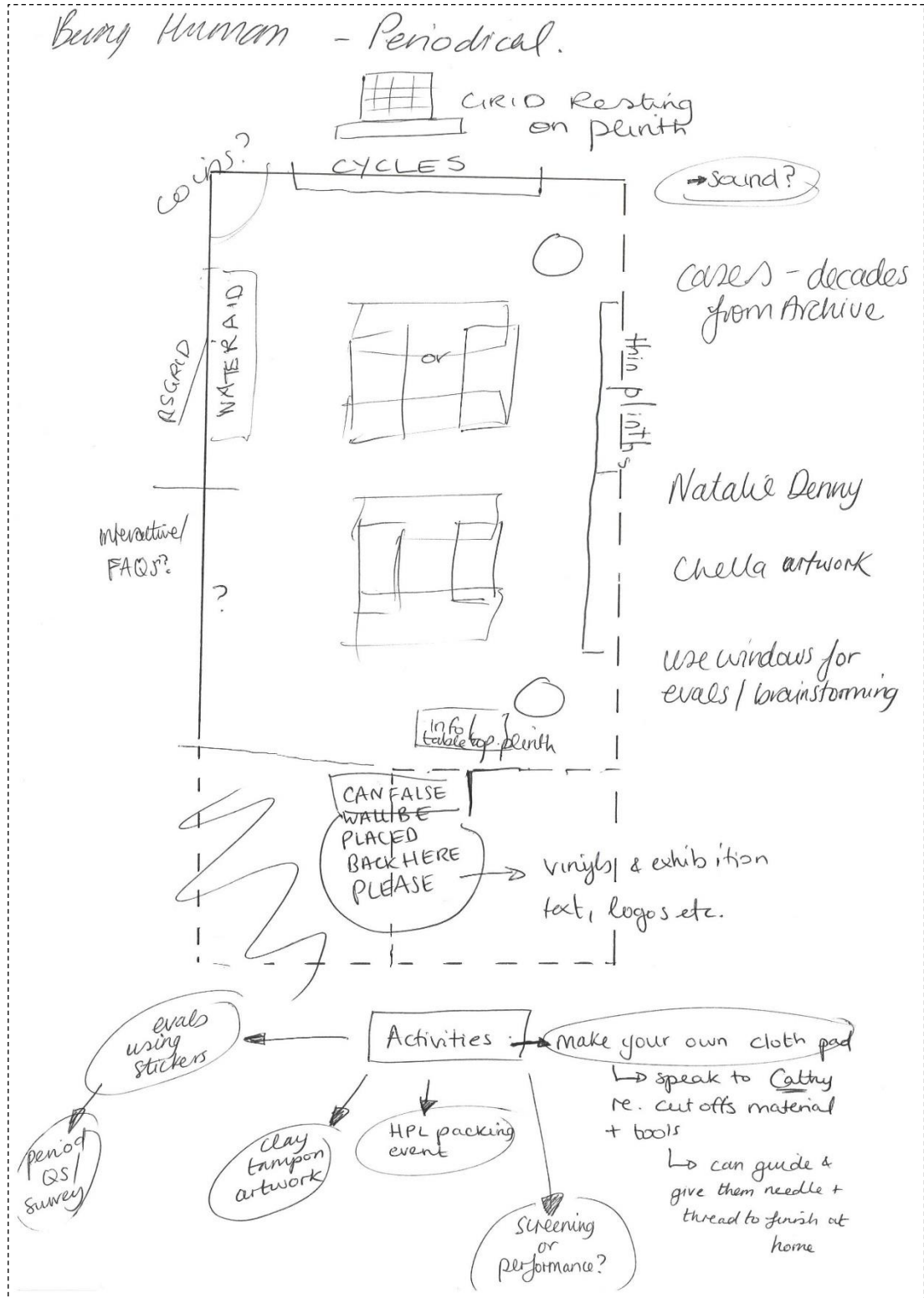
Advert	Thumbnail	Magazine/Date	Page	Size
<p>Dr White's: If men were shaped like tampons...</p>		<p><i>Just 17</i> 8 April 1987</p>	<p>16-17</p>	<p>Double page</p>
<p>Lil-lets: improvement ...</p>		<p><i>Just 17</i> 5 November 1986</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Single page</p>
<p>Kotex: no belts, no pins, no loops. This towel is Simplicity itself</p>		<p><i>Jackie</i> 19 April 1975</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>Single page</p>
<p>Kotex: Feminine towels now with delicate deodorant</p>		<p><i>Jackie</i> 17 November 1978</p>	<p>33</p>	<p>Single page</p>

<p>Kotex: Confidence is New Freedom towels and pantie set: a new kind of comfort</p>		<p><i>Jackie</i> 24 November 1973</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>Single page</p>
<p>Dr White's: Panty-liners – why are we trying to get you to stop wearing tampons?</p>		<p><i>Just 17</i> 17 December 1986</p>	<p>10- 11</p>	<p>double</p>

Protection / Safety / Freedom

Advert	Box	Magazine/Date	Page	Size
Kotex: One of 4 simple reasons why Kotex towels make a woman feel safe (also innovation)		<i>Jackie</i> 21 September 1974	36	Single page
Lil-lets: Ball & Chain Streetwise		<i>Just 17</i> 2 September 1986	8-9	Double page
Lil-lets: Ball & Chain Karate		<i>Just 17</i> 30 July 1986	12-13	Double page

Exhibition Planning Sketch



Exhibition Photographs

A selection of installation photographs documenting the exhibition.
Photography by Milos Simpraga.



Left to Right: Basu (2017) selected images from *A Ritual of Exile* series, Atkinson (2016) *£306*, Hughes (2018) *Almost Eight Cycles*, Denny (2018) *The Bloody Bard*.



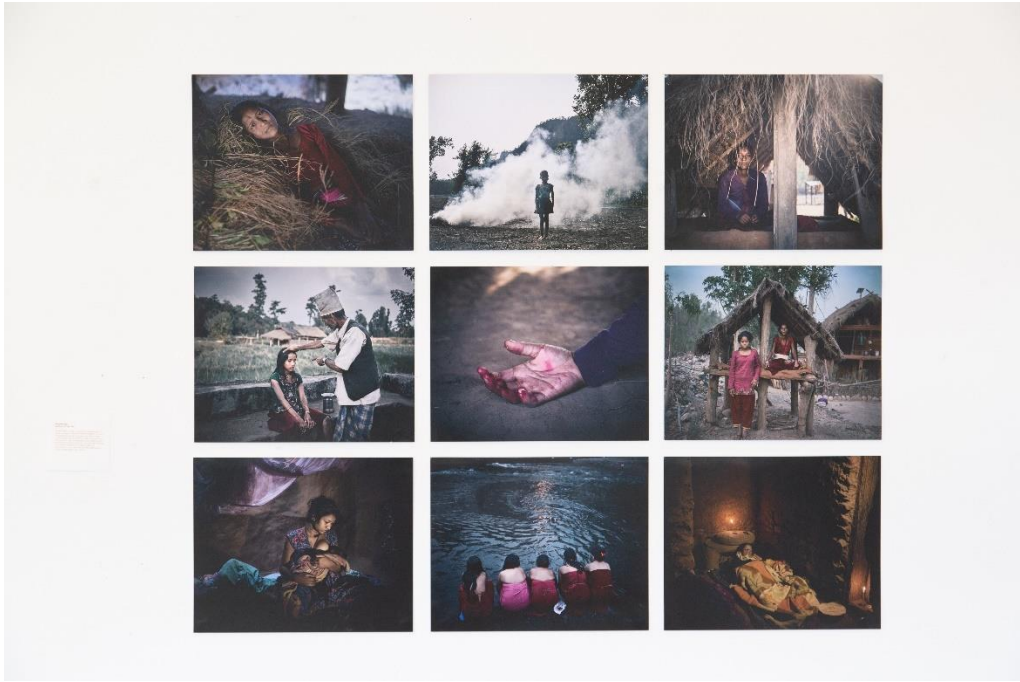
Left to Right: Atkinson (2016) £306, Hughes (2018) *Almost Eight Cycles*.



Left to Right: Spyrou (2018) *The Ghosts of Tampons Past*, Parker & Standing (2018) text for *Dignity Without Danger* display, Hughes (2018) *Untitled*, oversized reusable menstrual pad.



Left to Right: Quint (2018) *STAINSTM* installation, Basu (2017) selected images from *A Ritual of Exile* series.



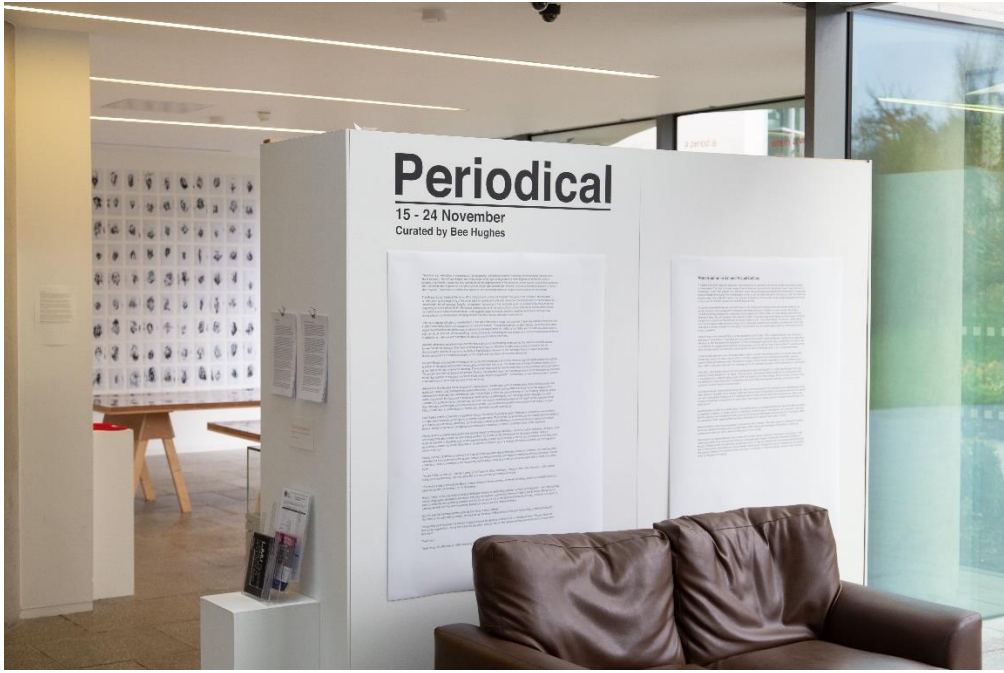
Basu (2017) selected images from *A Ritual of Exile* series.



Basu (2017) selected images from *A Ritual of Exile* series.

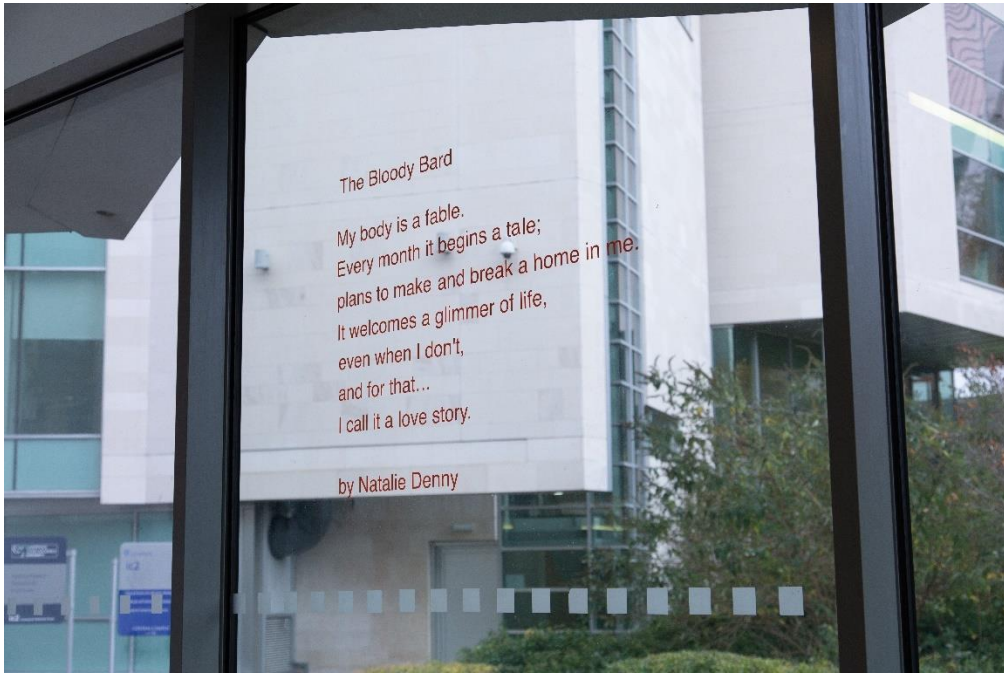


Hughes (2018) *Almost Eight Cycles*.



Background: Hughes (2018) *Almost Eight Cycles*.

Foreground: Curatorial text and curatorial essay, evaluation, and 'take-away' texts.



Denny (2018) *The Bloody Bard*.



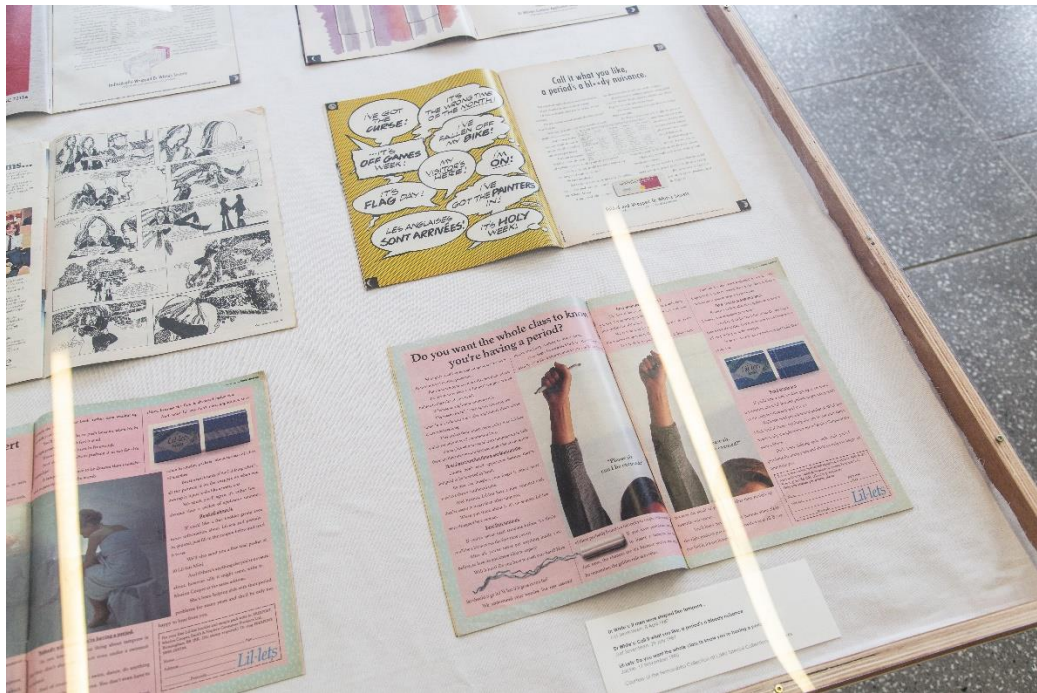
Hughes (2018) *a period is...* (ii).



Walls, Left to Right: Spyrou (2018) *The Ghosts of Tampons Past*, Hughes (2018) *untitled*, Quint (2018) *STAINS™* installation, Basu (2017) *A Ritual of Exile*.



Atkinson (2016) £306, Hughes (2018) *Almost Eight Cycles*.



Magazines courtesy of the Femorabilia Collection, Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives.



Magazines courtesy of the Femorabilia Collection, Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives.



Magazines courtesy of the Femorabilia Collection, Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives.



Magazines courtesy of the Femorabilia Collection, Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives.



Magazines courtesy of the Femorabilia Collection, Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives, Zines in foreground, author's collection.



Magazines courtesy of the Femorabilia Collection, Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives.



Parker & Standing (2018) *Dignity Without Danger* display: Gupta et al (2012) *Menstrupedia*, selection of reusable menstrual pads used in Nepal, menstrual cup and soap.



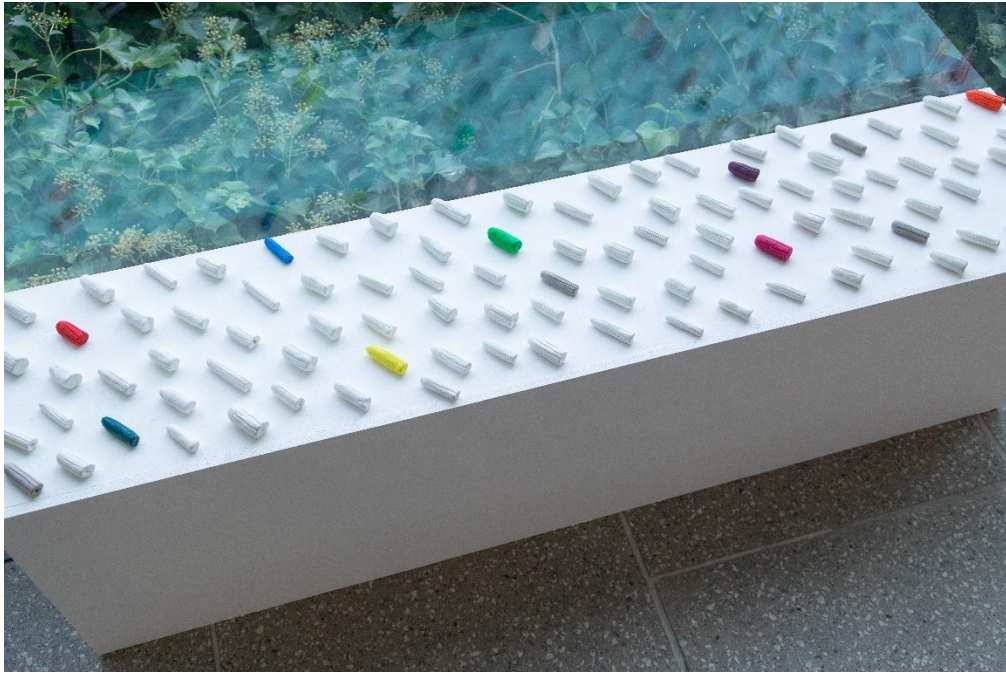
Parker & Standing (2018) *Dignity Without Danger* display: Gupta et al (2012) *Menstrupedia*, selection of reusable menstrual pads used in Nepal, menstrual education literature.



Hughes (2016 – 2017) *Cycles*.



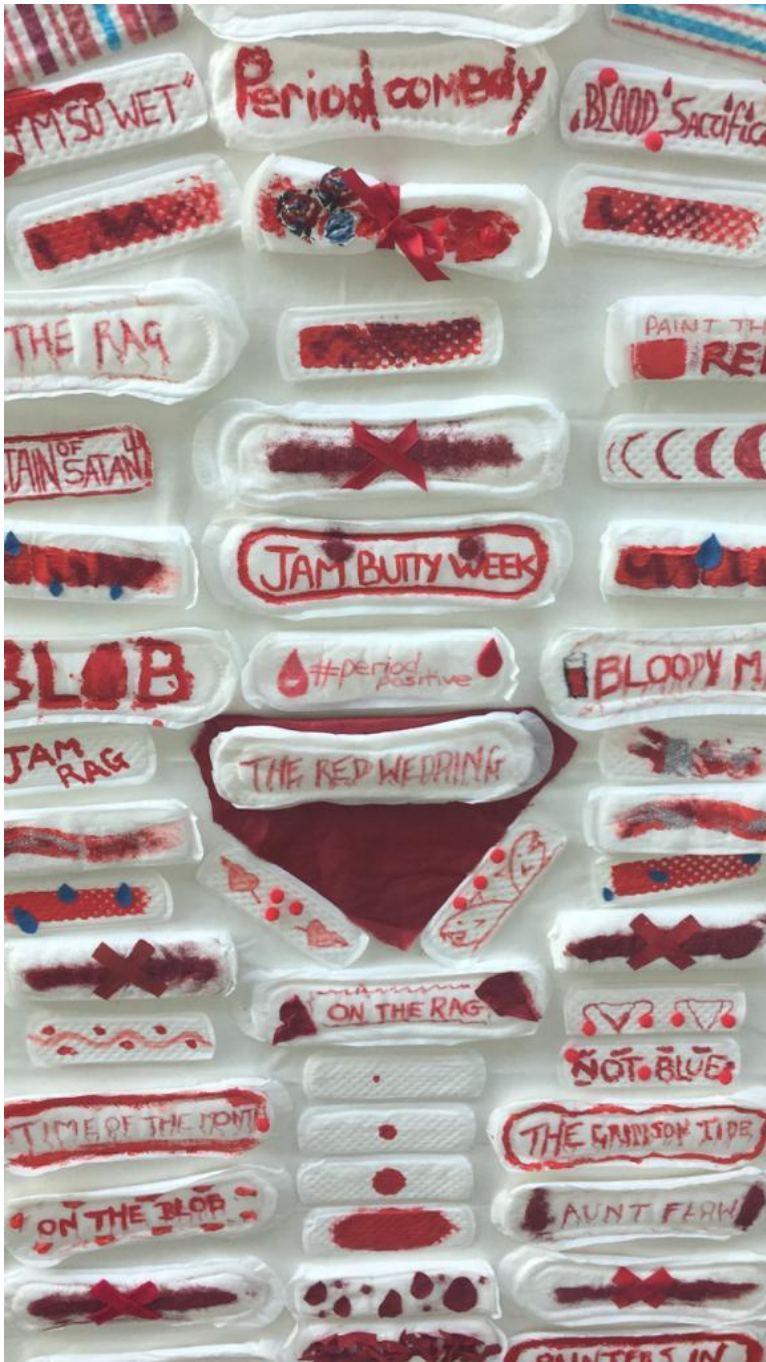
Hughes (2016 – 2017) *Cycles*.



Hughes (2017 – 2019) *Lifetime Supply*.



Atkinson (2016) £306.



Selection of menstrual pads decorated by participants in the Period Project Merseyside packing event and craft activities Saturday 17th November 2018.

Blood Rituals (2019)

Curated by Bee Hughes

with research and support from Sara Parker & Kay Standing / Dignity Without Danger

17th May 2019

Part of *Light Night* Liverpool, the free one-night arts festival

Public Exhibition Space, Liverpool School of Art & Design

Programme Text

by Bee Hughes, Sara Parker & Kay Standing

Dignity Without Danger presents a collaborative multi-part installation examining rituals surrounding menstruation.


Blood Rituals combines virtual reality, photography and film exploring menstrual experiences in Nepal with material from LJMU's Femorabilia collection, artworks and craft activities with Period Project Merseyside to reflect on menstrual stigma in the UK and globally.

Light Night Website

BLOOD RITUALS

17:00 – 22:00
LJMU John Lennon Building
Exhibitions

LJMU John Lennon Building
2 Duckinfield St
L3 5RD
0151 231 2121
ljmu.ac.uk
[ACCESS INFO & MAP](#)



Lecture Rooms 1 & 2

Dignity Without Danger presents a collaborative multi-part installation examining rituals surrounding menstruation.

Blood Rituals combines virtual reality, photography and film exploring menstrual experiences in Nepal with material from LJMU's Femorabilia collection, artworks and craft activities with Period Project Merseyside to reflect on menstrual stigma in the UK and globally.

[ADD TO ITINERARY](#) [VIEW MY ITINERARY](#)

Curatorial Reflection

by Bee Hughes

This event drew together my own research on the visual cultures of menstruation with research undertaken in Nepal by Parker and Standing as part of the British Academy funded Dignity Without Danger project. As a one-night event, taking place in a busy building with last-minute room changes, this project required a rather different curatorial strategy to the one employed for my previous projects. Due to scheduling hiccups from the Light Night organisers (which is understandable given the large scale of the event, working in collaboration with multiple large institutions across Liverpool) the Public Exhibition Space was confirmed as our venue on the day before the event, and we were only able to access the space from 4:30pm onwards, for a 6pm start. This dynamic situation required a collaborative effort – with Standing and Parker negotiating extra resources such as banner printing and funding for student interns to assist with set-up and running the craft activities, as well as sourcing artworks from Basu and Baumann through their professional network and existing research (see below).

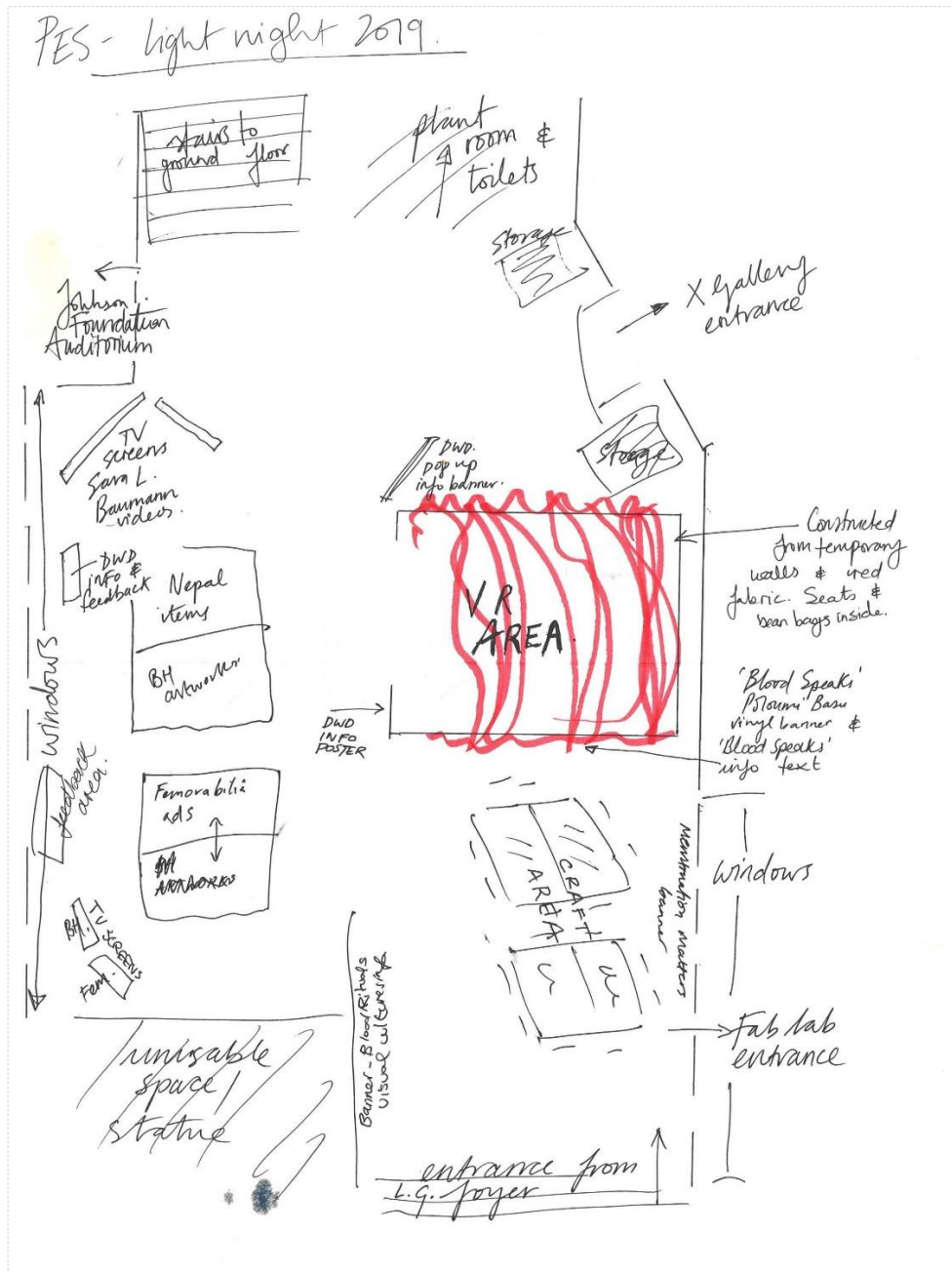
The event space was divided into three sections: the experience in Nepal, through the work of Poulomi Basu and the Dignity Without Danger project; menstrual stigma in the UK through my artworks and archival displays utilising a selection of items from the Femorabilia Collection, LJMU; and a craft area in collaboration with Period Project Merseyside which used a workshop activity (decorating menstrual pads) to open up dialogue with visitors about menstruation.

We brought experiences of menstruation in Nepal to the audience through Poulomi Basu's Virtual Reality (VR), immersive video work created as part of the *A Ritual of Exile: Blood Speaks* (2016 – 2017) project, presented on VR headsets situated within a 'safe zone' constructed with mobile walls and red fabric. A television screen presented a film by Sara Liza Baumann, *Collaborative Filmmaking for Exploring Traditional Menstrual Practices in Far-West Nepal* (2017).

We also included a range of contextual information about menstruation in Nepal using posters and vitrine displays of menstrual materials from Nepal, following the style of layout I devised for *Periodical*. Menstruation in a UK context was presented by the display of my artworks *Cycles* (2016 – 2017) and *Lifetime Supply* (2017 - 2019) and a small selection of archival materials presented in vitrines. The full sample of advertisements selected as part of the *Periodical* (2018) pilot study were presented via a slide-show timeline on a television screen, along with further contextualising images relating to my own art practice.

We also provided a craft area in collaboration with Beth Meadows and Natalie Denny from Period Project Merseyside (PPM). This activity was first tested as part of *Periodical* (2018), where we invited attendees to a 'packing party' where donations of menstrual products were made up into packs for donation to different organisations PPM support. We then used some of the donated menstrual pads which were unsuitable for hygiene reasons (e.g. not individually wrapped, or past their use-by date) as materials for a patchwork 'menstrual quilt'. At both events, visitors were invited to decorate any number of pads for addition to the quilt, which acted as a vehicle for discussing menstruation with people of all ages and genders. The craft activity offered a space where people could reflect on their experiences of menstruation and build community (even if only temporarily) around sharing of stories and knowledge on the subject.

Exhibition Space Plan



Plan of the Public Exhibition Space, Liverpool School of Art & Design by Bee Hughes (2019).

CASE 1

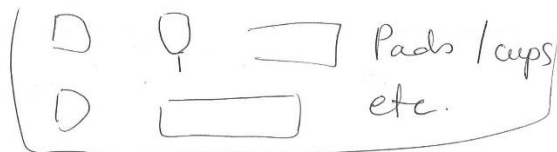
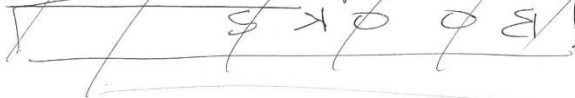
Femorabilia - SEE PHOTOS

→ EACH CASE
MUST BE LINED
WITH WHITE
FABRIC

CASE 2 ① NEPAL
② BEE ARTWORK.

①

DWB - Nepal: pads, books, etc



②

SCROLLS

CLAY
SCULPTURES.

Bee will lay out.

LIGHT NIGHT 17 May 2019



Vitrine layout instructions (using photographs from *Periodical* (2018).
by Bee Hughes (2019).

Event Photographs



Window text by Bee Hughes

Photograph courtesy of Sara Parker.



Banner designed by Bee Hughes
Photograph courtesy of Sara Parker.



Photograph courtesy of Sara Parker.



Photograph courtesy of Sara Parker.



Photograph courtesy of Sara Parker.



Photograph courtesy of Sara Parker.



Photograph courtesy of Sara Parker.



Photograph courtesy of Sara Parker.



Photograph courtesy of Sara Parker.



Photograph courtesy of Sara Parker.



Archival material (L) courtesy of LJMU Special Collections & Archives

Artwork (R) Bee Hughes, Photograph courtesy of Sara Parker.



Photograph courtesy of Sara Parker.



Banner design by Bee Hughes, Photograph courtesy of Sara Parker.

How Can We Challenge Cultural Attitudes About Periods? (2019)

Curated by Bee Hughes

with research by Kay Standing and Sara Parker

event run with Kay Standing, Janette Porter and Lilja Jakobsdottir

as part of the British Academy Summer Showcase 2019

21st – 22nd June 2019

The British Academy, 10-11 Carlton House Terrace, London

Programme Text

by Bee Hughes & Kay Standing

Throughout history, our attitudes to menstruation have been shaped by cultural, medical, and media representations. These contribute to the stigmatisation of menstruation, period poverty and harmful practices and restrictions that impact on the everyday lives of people who menstruate. Through their work in the UK and Nepal, this exhibit invites visitors to challenge preconceptions and misconceptions about periods. Explore and reflect on historical and contemporary ideas about periods, make your own activist badge and challenge age-old negative associations.

Curatorial Reflection

by Bee Hughes

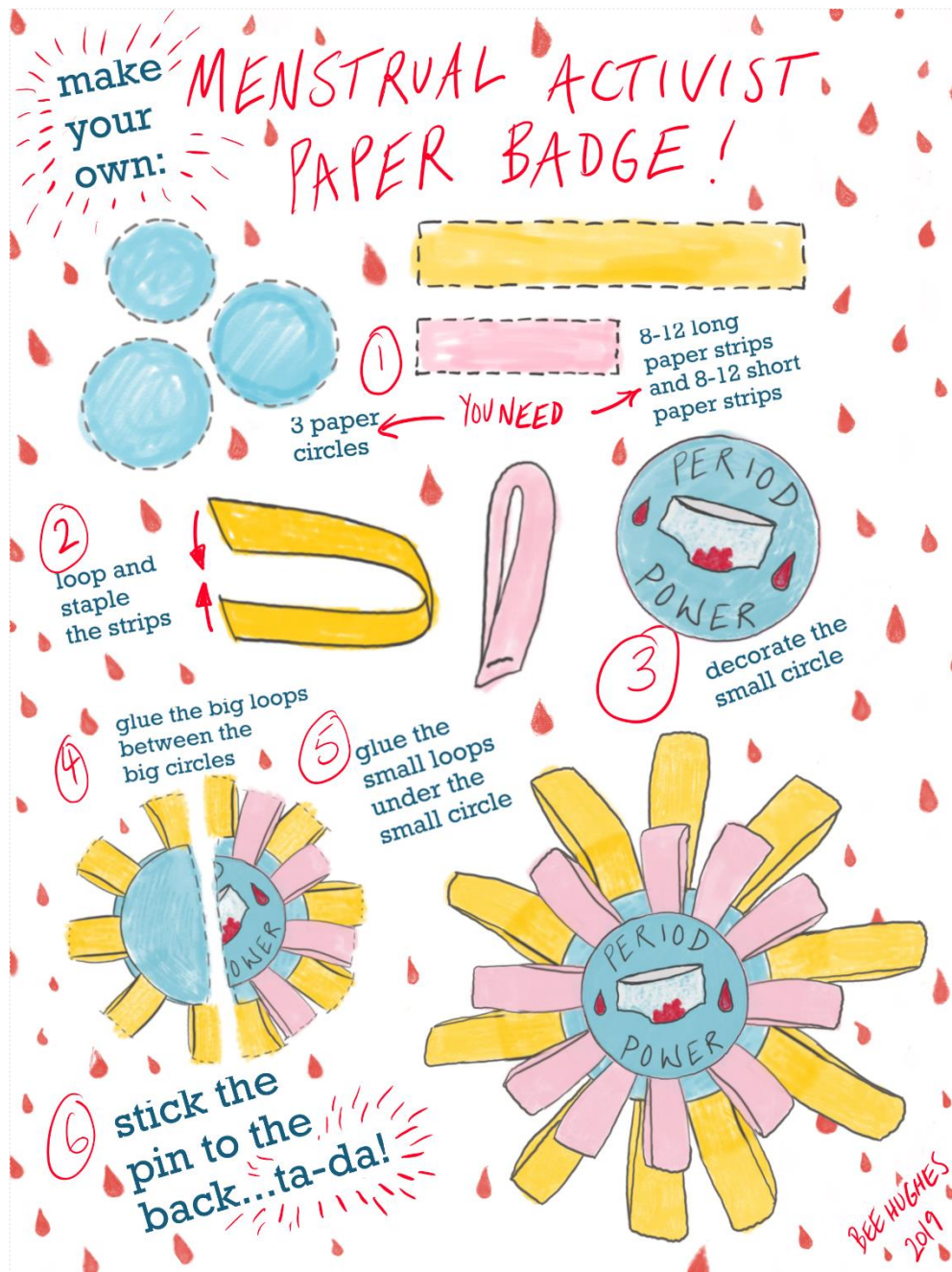
This event drew on the curatorial strategy developed for *Blood Rituals* (2019) and posed similar challenges, again as we had limited set-up time, and this was an unfamiliar space. The remit of this event was to showcase the British Academy funded work undertaken by Standing through the Dignity Without Danger Project, however we felt it was important – from academic and activist / political standpoints – to ensure this work was seen in a global context, and in relation to menstrual stigma as it manifests in the United Kingdom. This is a crucial element to our individual scholarship and collaborative work, where we insist that menstrual stigma – and exclusionary practices - must not be presented as something which only happens in the Global South. Thus, in addition to showcasing the Dignity Without Danger work alongside Poulomi Basu's VR film, I also produced a long slideshow which provided a context for menstrual stigma in the Global North as well as expanding on Standing and Parker's work in Nepal.

We also selected a range of 'show and tell' items, such as a selection of reusable menstrual pads and menstrual cups which were displayed on a table-top alongside an anatomical model of a female pelvis (provided by Sara Parker) and several of the tampon sculptures from *Lifetime Supply* (Hughes 2017 - 2019) which would be

available to be handled by members of the public. This enabled the team to have meaningful discussions around anatomy, the menstrual cycle and menstrual management, with many of our visitors who were non-menstruators or perhaps younger being unfamiliar with these everyday objects and/or lacking the body literacy to understand the anatomical structures relating to the menstrual cycle.

Public engagement was the most significant aim of this event, and I was keen to provide a craft activity which would facilitate discussions around in a similar way to our previous pad decoration workshops. This meant devising an activity which was straightforward enough to be approached by people of all ages and abilities (with support from myself or the team as appropriate) and find the balance of not taking so long to complete as to be off-putting, while taking enough time to enable us to develop conversations with our visiting participants. Our decoration activity fulfilled these criteria, however liquid paint and glue were not suitable materials for the historic British Academy venue. Following discussions with the British Academy event lead, Johanna Empson, I devised a paper rosette making activity which could be prepared in advance, for customization and assembly by the visitors. This proved to be an engaging activity, with visitors of all ages and genders participating over the course of the event (see event photographs below). The activity was especially successful with the groups of secondary school pupils who visited on the first day, and I had many productive, sensitive and exciting conversations about menstruation, empowerment and supporting people who menstruate with groups from schools across London. It was a joy to walk around the venue and see many visitors (and co-exhibitors) happily wearing their rosettes for the rest of the event.

Workshop Activity



designed by Bee Hughes 2019
digital drawing

Event Photographs

All Photographs courtesy of British Academy / named photographer.



Alastair Fyfe (2019)



Alastair Fyfe (2019)



Alastair Fyfe (2019)



Alastair Fyfe (2019)



Alastair Fyfe (2019)



Alastair Fyfe (2019)



Benedict Johnson (2019)



Benedict Johnson (2019)



Benedict Johnson (2019)



Benedict Johnson (2019)



Benedict Johnson (2019)

Appendix Two Part B: Solo Exhibition

Performing Periods (2019)

The Cloisters, University of St Andrews

31st May – 5th June 2019

Artworks Exhibited

Dys-men-o-rrho-ea (2019)

digital print on paper

University of St Andrews Museums and Collections, Object Number HC2019.10(2)

119 x 84 cm

Incomplete Cycles (December) (3rd edition)

digital print on paper

University of St Andrews Museums and Collections, Object Number HC2019.10(1)

118.6 x 84.6 cm

Exhibition Information



Bee Hughes
Dysmenorrhea (Unseen Performance ii) 2019



Bee Hughes
Cycles 2016-2017

Bee Hughes ***Performing Periods***


Bee Hughes is an interdisciplinary artist and researcher exploring with embodied experiences of menstruation through performative works which draw upon everyday rituals and routine and the feminist tradition of self-examination. Her works in poetry and sound explore repetition and menstrual normativity encountered through medical advice, considering how these frequently visited sites of medical authority now form part of the everyday experience of menstruation. Bee's project *Cycles* (2016-17) documented her irregular menstrual cycle for 6 months by making daily vulva prints on hand-stitched linen scrolls. Her recent performance and photographic works reflect upon her experiences of severe period pain and as-yet undiagnosed gynaecological disorder.

Poster by Bee Hughes (2019)

This exhibition took place as part of the first workshop (of three funded by the Wellcome Trust) organised by Menstruation Research Network, led by Dr Camilla Mørk Røstvik, of which I am a founding member (see menstruationresearchnetwork.co.uk).

menstruation research network


Critical Perspectives on Menstruation



Friday 31st May 2019
10:00 am - 5:00 pm
Lower College Hall
University of St Andrews

Image: Bee Hughes (2018) *untitled sculptures*, digital photograph

10.05 - 10.15	Welcome (Tea and Coffee)
10.15 - 11.00	Sharra Vostral, Keynote speaker <i>Tampon Risk and Tampon Safety: A History of Testing and Labeling</i>
11.00 - 11.25	Chella Quint <i>Everybody Had a Room That Was a Womb: to Achieve Period Positive Scotland, Champion Menstrual Vitality</i>
11.25 - 11.50	Lara Owen <i>Menstrual Cup Use in Urban Young Women: the Simultaneous Disruption and Reproduction of Menstrual Stigma</i>
11.50 - 12.10	Break (Tea, Coffee, Snacks)
12.10 - 12.35	Bee Hughes <i>Reframing Menstrual Art</i>
12.35 - 13.00	Bettina Bildhauer <i>Perceptions of Menstruation in the Middle Ages and Today: Pollution, Control, Integrity and Gender</i>
13.00 - 13.25	Celia Hodson & Molly Brown (Hey Girls) <i>Reflections on Scottish Roll out of Period Products, Menstrual Education, and Social Enterprise as a Solution to Period Poverty</i>
13.30 - 14.30	Lunch (provided, vegan)
14.30 - 17.00	Workshop / Discussion



Poster by Bee Hughes (2019)

Acquisition of Artworks

At the close of the exhibition, the works were acquired by Museums at the University of St Andrews (MUSA). The following images are screen grabs from the University of St Andrews Museums and Collections Website:

The screenshot displays the University of St Andrews Museums and Collections website interface. At the top, the university's logo and name are visible, along with the founding year 'FOUNDED 1413'. Below the header, a navigation bar includes links for 'Introduction', 'Search', 'Results', 'Details', 'Selection', and 'Search History'. The main content area shows search results for 'bee hughes', with 2 hits. On the left, there are sections for 'Actions' (Print, Download, Select all, Clear selection) and 'Displays' (List Display, Gallery display). The search results list two items:

- 1. **'Incomplete Cycles (December)' (3rd edition)**
HUGHES, Bee (Created by)
2019 - 2019
digital print
HC2019.10(1)
- 2. **'Dys-men-o-rrho-ea'**
HUGHES, Bee
2019 - 2019
digital print
HC2019.10(2)

Actions

- Print
- Download



Object number
HC2019.10(1)

Title
"Incomplete Cycles (December)" (3rd edition),

Creator
HUGHES, Bee (Created by)

Description
Digital collage containing 25 daily body prints of the artist's vulva during menstruation. The Collage re-presents Cycles (2016-2017): a series of six hand-stitched linen scrolls, each 0.2m x 3m, divided into c. 28 sections, each containing a print by a single red knotted stitch. The irregular number of sections reflects the inconsistent rhythm of the artist's menstrual cycle and pushes against normative contemporary construction of the menstrual cycle as being regular and regulated, often by hormonal contraceptives. Over the course of the project, the daily ritual established a space of resistance to everyday cultural narratives of menstruation. By working with and depicting variations in her own cycle, the artist aims to counter the idea of the invisible, regulated and medically stabilised period and present a performative and embodied account of a menstruating body. The Cycles project, and its various manifestations in print and digital work, combines performative practices and printmaking to synthesise the rhythms of mechanised graphic reproduction and rituals of daily existence. Through this process, the artist juxtaposes the occasional unpredictability of her menstrual cycle and the softly fluctuating form of her body depicted in these repetitively structured prints. Hughes developed the performative printmaking technique to combine her previous work in traditional printmaking with elements of performance, autobiography, chance, and poetic works. This print is the third edition, printed on lightweight matte, acid free paper. (Description prepared by the artist, Bee Hughes).

Production date
2019 - 2019

Object name
digital print

Material
paper

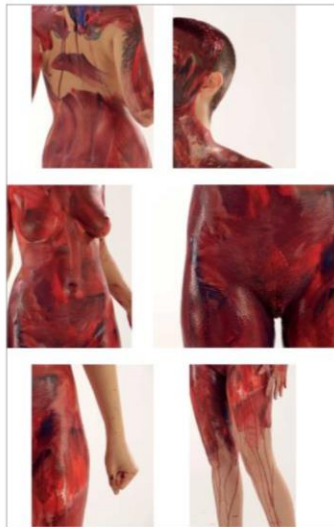
Dimensions
whole height 118.6 cm
width 84.6 cm

Actions

- Print
- Download



1 2



Object number
HC2019.10(2)

Title
'Dys-men-o-rrho-ea',

Creator
HUGHES, Bee

Description
The photographs presented here were taken during a private performance at Liverpool School of Art & Design on Tuesday 28th May 2019. The performance was choreographed and art directed by Bee Hughes, and photographed by Milos Simpraga. The closely cropped images fragment the body, echoing the severe discomfort and feelings of disjointedness, and sometimes disorientation, the artist experiences as part of her cyclical period-related pain. The performances produce a number of artefacts in the form of body prints on paper which contain fragmented medical texts and are sometimes documented in video, with a series of photographs taken at the end of each session. (Description prepared by artist, Bee Hughes)

Production place
Liverpool

Production date
2019 - 2019

Object name
digital print

Material
paper

Dimensions
whole height 119 cm
width 84 cm



Exhibition Photographs



Photograph courtesy of Edward Broughton, University of St Andrews, and Menstruation Research Network.



Photograph courtesy of Edward Broughton, University of St Andrews, and Menstruation Research Network.



Photograph courtesy of Edward Broughton, University of St Andrews,
and Menstruation Research Network.

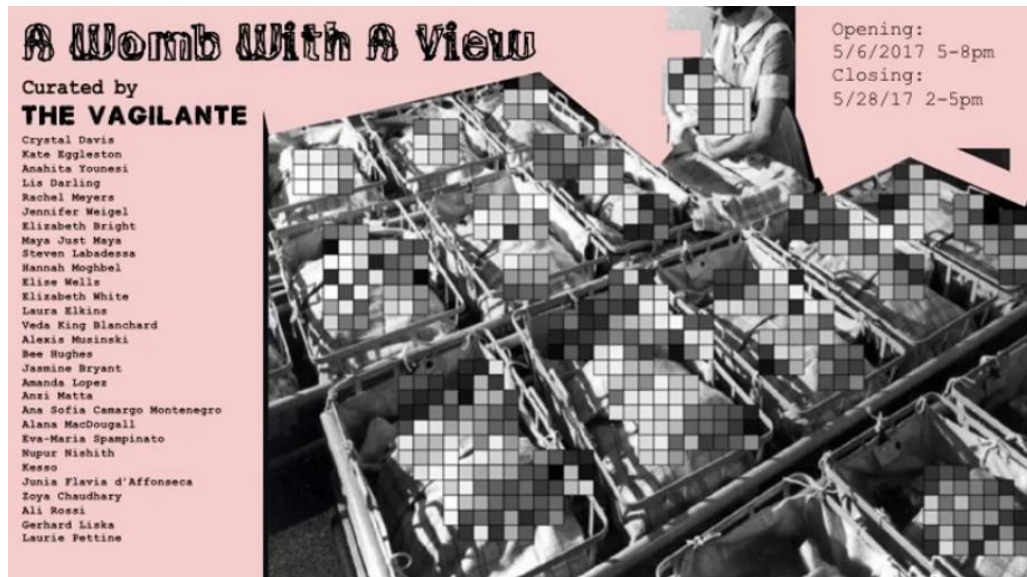


Photograph courtesy of Edward Broughton, University of St Andrews,
and Menstruation Research Network.

Appendix Two Part C: Group Exhibitions

A Womb with A View (2017)

Curated by The Vigilante
Inner Space Chamber Gallery, Jersey City, New Jersey, USA
6th May – 28th May 2017



Poster courtesy of Inner Space Gallery (2017)

Curatorial Statement

by The Vagilante

The world is almost 50% women.... and 51% of the population of the United States, but for some reason the female gender and the experience of being female is discounted on so many social levels. This group art show is meant to create a snap shot of "femaleness" in 2017. I am interested in the internal world of today's female and female identifying individuals. What are our struggles? Fears? Joys? Secrets? What are we shouting from the rooftops? I am excited to see a narrative develop through the commonalities and differences of each story, as told through visual representation. The name and theme of this group show is an intentional double entendre. It is meant to induce the idea of seeing out of and in to, the womb.

About the curator:

The Vagilante is a feminist human rights superhero with a prominent mons pubis.

Artworks Exhibited

Bee Hughes

Infinite Cycles (December) (first edition) (2017)

digital photographic print on heavyweight archive paper

32" x 32"

Exhibition Photographs



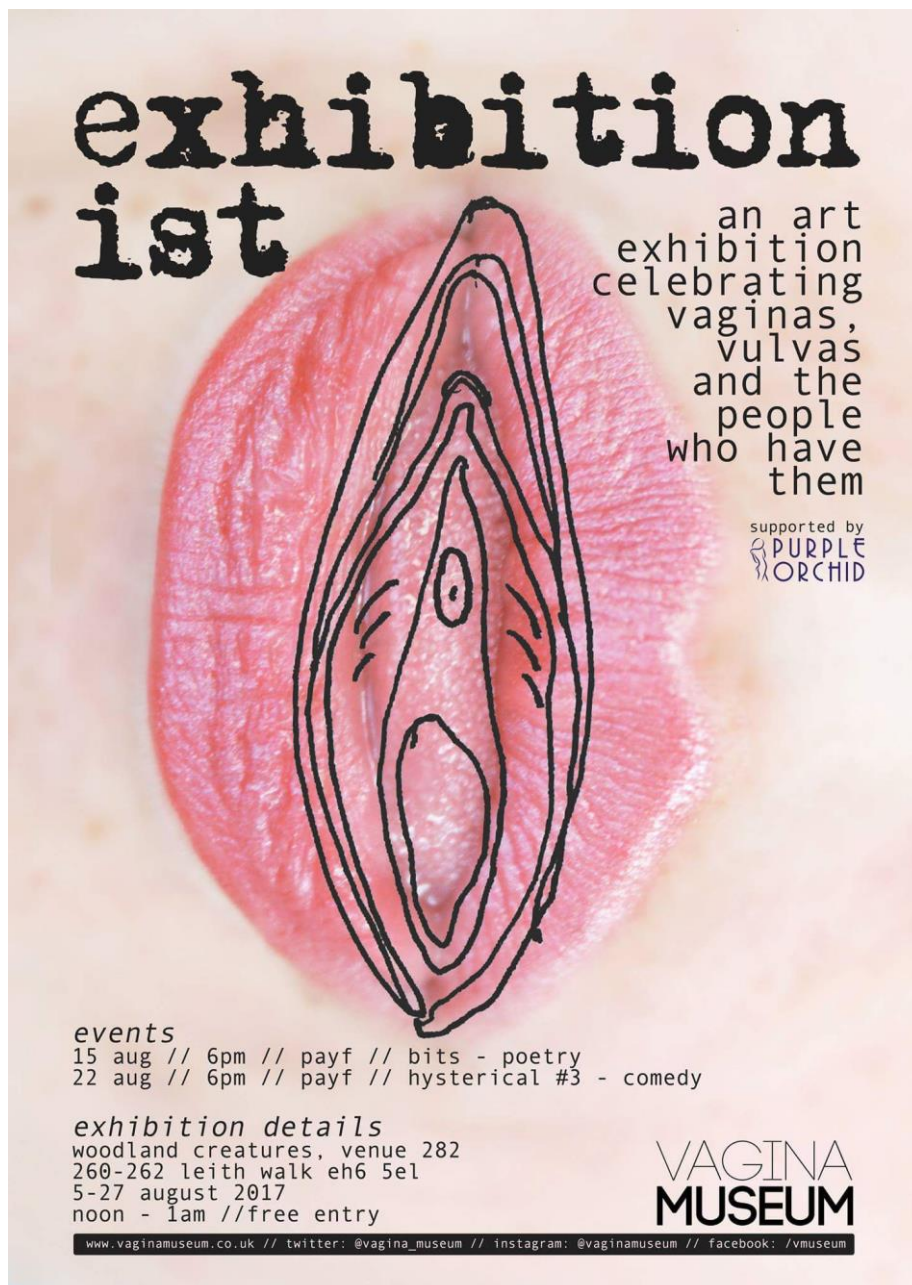
Exhibition install photograph from @inner_space_chamber gallery Instagram account



Exhibition Photograph from @thevagilante's Instagram account

Exhibitionist (2017)

Curated by Florence Schechter
Vagina Museum Pop up Exhibition, Edinburgh Fringe Festival
Woodland Creatures, Leith Walk, Edinburgh
5 – 27 August 2017



Poster Design by Miriam Schechter, image by Sophia Weisstub (2017)

Artwork Exhibited

Bee Hughes

Infinite Cycles (December) (second edition) (2017)

digital photographic print on heavyweight archive paper
32" x 32"

Full list of participating artists unavailable.

For further information about Vagina Museum see:

<https://www.vaginamuseum.co.uk/>

Exhibition Photographs



Photograph by Bee Hughes



Photograph by Bee Hughes

Agored / Open (2018)

Curated by Lisa Taylor
Galeri, Caernarfon, Wales
5th September – 27th October 2018

Artwork Exhibited:

Bee Hughes
Cycles (Detail) (2018)
digital photograph on heavyweight paper

Full list of exhibition artworks unavailable.



Photograph from the opening event by Bee Hughes

Sorry Not Sorry – An Unapologetic Art Show (2018)

curated by The Vigilante
LITM, Jersey City, USA
2nd January – 28th February 2018



Poster courtesy of @thevigilante on Instagram

Artworks Exhibited:

Bee Hughes

Cycles (Detail) (2018)

digital photograph on heavyweight paper

Bee Hughes & Eva Petersen

Un-voiced (2017)

in collaboration with Eva Petersen

soundwork, 2 minutes

Full list of exhibition artworks unavailable.

Poetry Exhibition (2018)

Curated by Dan Waine
as part of Independents Biennial
George Henry Lees Building, Liverpool, UK
18th October 2018 – 25th October 2018



Poster by Dan Waine

Artworks Exhibited:

Bee Hughes
Andromeda (2016)
body-print on paper

Bee Hughes
Black Hole (2016)
body-print on paper

Bee Hughes
Neutron Star (2016)
body-print on paper

Bee Hughes
Erased Poems (2016)
sculpture

Bee Hughes
Space Triptych Poetry Zine (2016)
self-published zine, digital print on paper

Performances:

Bee Hughes
A poem I did not write... (2018)
instant chance methods cut-up poem

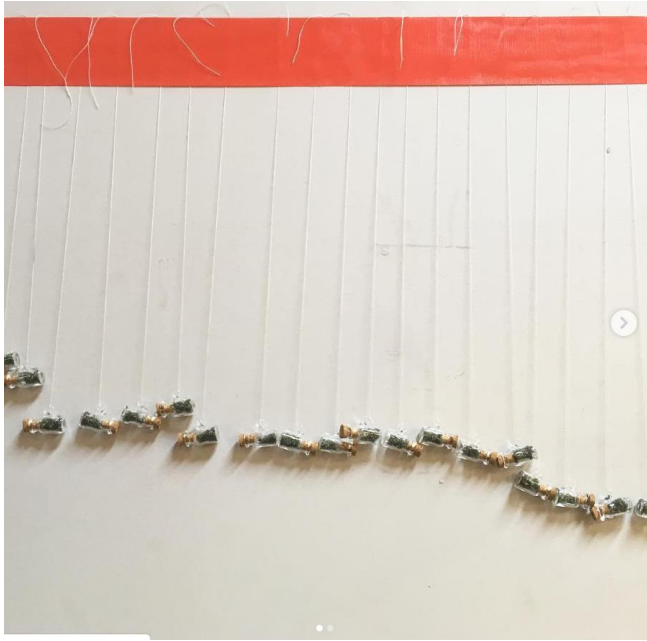
Bee Hughes
Reading from *Space Triptych* (2016)

Full list of exhibition artworks unavailable.

Exhibition Photographs



Image courtesy of Liverpool Independent Biennial on Instagram: @indybiennial



indybiennial • Following



indybiennial It's all in the detail. Part of the poetry exhibition on the second floor of the #georgehenryleesbuilding. The tiny vials contain the rubbings out of handwritten poetry. #ib18 #indybiennial #indybiennial2018 #givepoetryachance #art #liverpool #artinliverpool #poetry #liverpoolwriters #liverpoolpoets #handwritten #rubout

60w



chrisoliver_art Ahh, I was wondering that :)👍



60w 1 like Reply



beehughes Thanks for posting my work! X



Liked by crafty_dan and 26 others

OCTOBER 23, 2018

Add a comment...

Post

Image courtesy of Liverpool Independent Biennial on Instagram: @indybiennial



Image courtesy of Liverpool Independent Biennial on Instagram: @indybiennial

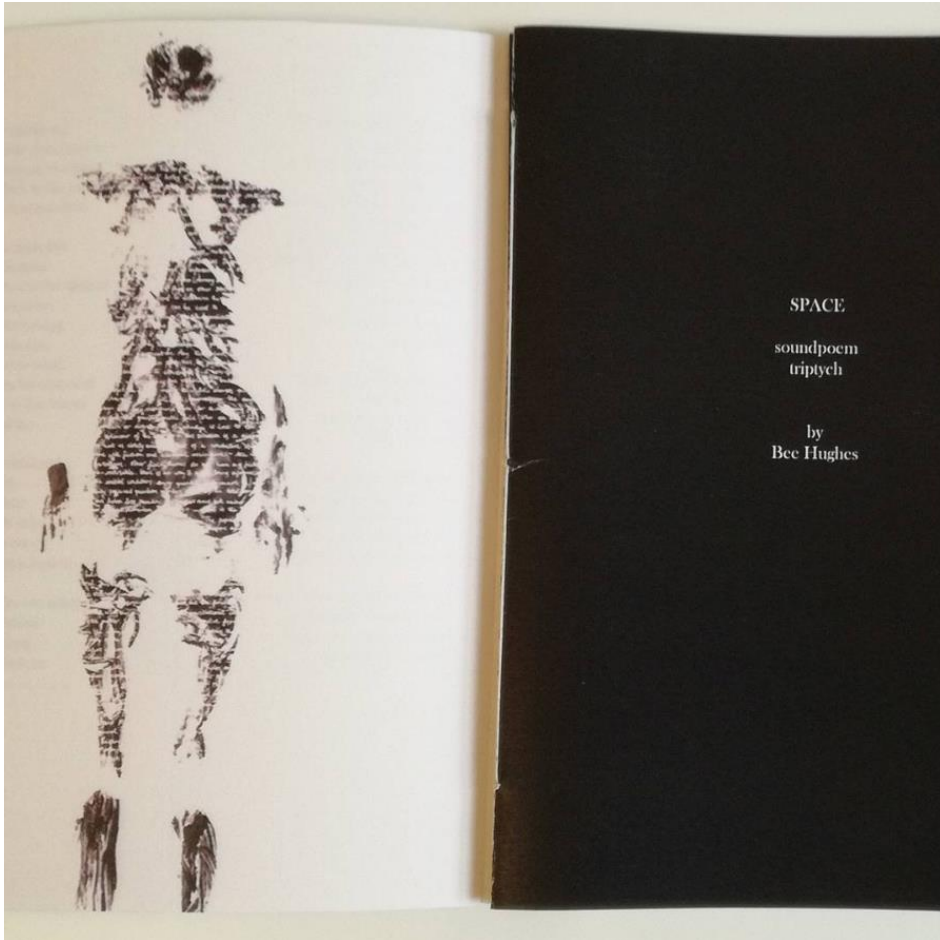


Image of *SPACE ZINE* (Hughes 2016)

Uncovered (2019)

curated by Aisling Harrison
The Atrium, MAKE North Docks, Liverpool
23rd – 26th July 2019



Poster by Aisling Harrison

Artworks Exhibited:

Bee Hughes

unmade, remade, 28 days (2019)

digital print on paper, red ink overlay

200 cm x 60 cm

Environmenstrual Festival (2019)

curated by Natasha Piette-Basheer
Amnesty International UK, London
16th October 2019



ENVIRONMENSTRUAL FESTIVAL

Wednesday 16 October 2019 / 18.30 - 21.30
Amnesty International UK, 25 New Inn Yard London EC2
WORKSHOPS, STALLS, ART, TALKS, GOODIE BAGS & REFRESHMENTS

Come join the fun and celebrate the
#Plasticfreeperiods movement. Enjoy a fun packed
evening of workshops, stalls, art, talks and drinks &
nibbles and take home a goodie bag. TICKETS £10:
wen.org.uk

Kindly supported by:

INTIMINA

WAITROSE
& PARTNERS

WOMEN'S
ENVIRONMENTAL
NETWORK

Poster courtesy of Women's Environmental Network (WEN)

Exhibition Information

by Women's Environmental Network

Come join the fun and get inspired to take #PeriodAction at the second Environmenstrual Festival with a fun packed evening of workshops, stalls, art, talks and drinks & nibbles. Plus we will have goody bags to give out - packed with fab period products including an Intimina menstrual cup!

Speakers:

- Natalie Byrne, Illustrator
- Manjit Gill, CEO & Founder, Binti International
- Natalie Fee, Environmental Campaigner & Founder of City to Sea
- Danela Žagar, Global Brand Manager, INTIMINA
- Francesca de la Torre from Ethical Consumer
- Mandu Reid (Chair), The Cup Effect & Women's Equality Party Leader
- Natasha Piette-Basheer, Environmenstrual Campaign Manager, WEN

Workshops:

- Pad making - by WEN
- Vulva making workshop - by Jo Corral, This is a Vulva
- CupAware workshop - by The Cup Effect
- Period education in schools - by City to Sea

Period art:

- Natalie Byrne
- Bee Hughes
- This is a Vulva
- My Hairy Vag and Me

Artworks Exhibited:

Bee Hughes

unmade, remade, 28 days (2019)

digital print on paper, red ink overlay

200 cm x 60 cm

Bee Hughes

Lifetime Supply (2017 – 2019)

air dry clay, paint

installation size variable

Bee Hughes

Dysmenorrhoea (2019)

selection of digital prints on paper

2 prints, 42cm x 59cm

Full list of artworks unavailable.

Exhibition Photographs



Photograph via @beehughes_art on Instagram



Image via @environmenstrual on Instagram



Image via @thisisnaomigale on Instagram



mamadotgang



[@beehughes_art](#)

Image via @mamadotgang on Instagram



Image via @mamadotgang on Instagram



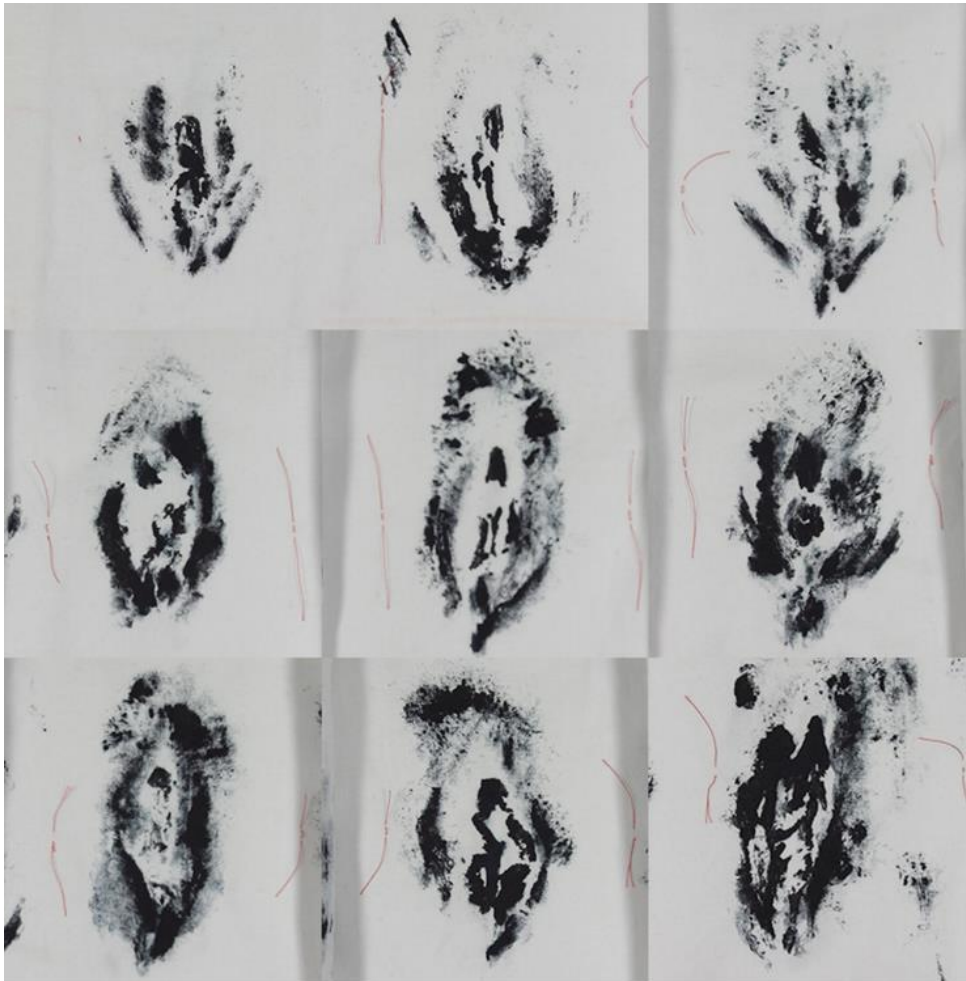
Photograph by Bee Hughes



Photograph by Bee Hughes

Appendix Two Part D: Miscellaneous Press & Citations

Menstruation Symposium



Menstruation Symposium

17 January 2018

Boswell Room, School of Art History,
79 North Street, University of St Andrews

9.30am–5pm

Join us for a one-day interdisciplinary symposium about menstruation. 12 speakers from various fields will share their ongoing research, with plenty of time for discussion.

Sign up via cmr30@st-andrews.ac.uk (vegan lunch provided, but you must sign up!)

Image: Bee Hughes, *Printed Periods* (2016), Month 1 / Days 1-9.

LEVERHULME
TRUST

School of Art History

University of St Andrews | FOUNDED 1413

Poster for Menstruation Symposium at University of St Andrews

17 January 2018


Image by Bee Hughes

Poster by Camilla Mørk Røstvik

guardianwitness [Tips and Tricks](#) | [About](#)

We're introducing some changes to how we showcase your content [Visit our new Beta homepage](#)

[Assignments](#) [W is for women: share your artwork now](#) [Cycles \(2016-2017\)](#)



Cycles (2016-2017) [Like 0](#) [Tweet](#) [Embed](#) [1 Recommend](#)

Cycles (Hughes 2016 – 2017) submitted and published via *Guardian Witness* September 2017

30TH APRIL 2019

THE WORLD'S FIRST VAGINA MUSEUM



V / \ A C T N I A

- MAGAZINE
- CONFESSIONS
- AUTHORS
- SEX ARTICLES
- SEX TIPS & INSIGHTS
- SEX HEALTH & WELLNESS
- NEWS



Infinite Cycle (December) (Hughes 2017) featured on *Frolic* website
April 2019
<https://www.frolicme.com/blog/sex-articles/first-vagina-museum/>

The screenshot shows the Outlook India website interface. At the top, the Outlook logo is displayed with the tagline 'THE FULLY LOADED MAGAZINE'. A navigation bar includes categories like MAGAZINE, INDIA, CRICKET, OPINION, VIDEOS, PHOTOS, WORLD, ENTERTAINMENT, BUSINESS, ARCHIVES, and SUBSCRIPTION. Below this, a secondary navigation bar lists topics such as HINDI, BUSINESS, MONEY, TRAVELLER, RESPONSIBLE TOURISM, POSHAN, and OTHERS. Social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and RSS are also present.

The main article content is titled "Menstrual Art: What It Is? Why It Is Important?" and is attributed to Chella Quint, dated 14 January 2019. The article's sub-headline reads: "What it is, where to find it, why it's important, and how to make your own". A small thumbnail image of the magazine cover for the "ISSUE OF THE YEAR" is shown on the right side of the article header.

The article text includes a paragraph: "Chance to touch about reusable and disposable menstrual products, to show pupils how many options they had. I call it The Menstrual Product Mambo." Below this text is a photograph of various menstrual products, including pads and tampons, arranged in a grid on a dark surface. The caption for the image is: "'Lifetime Supply' by Bee Hughes (The Periodical Exhibition, curated by Bee Hughes, Liverpool, UK.)".

At the bottom of the page, there is a social media sharing section with buttons for Like (1.2M), Follow, and 210K followers. Below this are three news snippets: "Strangled And Pushed Me': Priyanka Gandhi Accuses UP Police Of Manhandling Her", "India's Judiciary Is Facing An Increasing Lack Of Trust By Public", and "CAA, NRC Part Of Their Agenda For Hindu Rashtra: P. Chidambaram".

Lifetime Supply (Hughes 2017 – 2019) featured in *Outlook India* article by Chella Quint
January 2019
<https://www.outlookindia.com/author/chella-quint/18851>

The screenshot shows the top section of a news article on the Liverpool Echo website. The header features the 'ECHO' logo with a phoenix icon, navigation links for 'NEWS', 'IN YOUR AREA', 'WHAT'S ON', 'LIVERPOOL FC', 'EVERTON FC', and 'MORE'. Social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are also present. The article title is 'Meet the inspirational activists tackling period poverty among Liverpool's homeless women'. Below the title is a sub-headline: 'The ECHO spoke to the women at the front line of the crisis'. The author is 'Jasmine Cameron-Chileshe', dated '08:49, 5 MAY 2019', with an 'UPDATED' timestamp of '08:50, 5 MAY 2019'. There are '1009 SHARES' and a 'COMMENTS' button. A 'NEWS' button is on the right. Below the header is a search bar for local news and info, and a 'MOST READ' section featuring a police van and the headline 'Forensics probe scene after man's body found in property by police'.

"The terminology surrounding periods is exclusionary and in built with shame and stigma"

According to Bee Hughes, a PhD researcher and lecturer at [Liverpool John Moores University](#), part of the problem surrounding period poverty is how little data there is - meaning that there are no agreed figures on the number of people suffering within the UK.

She said: "One of the biggest barriers to addressing period poverty on a bigger scale has been that there is not much research - because initially it is an issue that I think people didn't realise was impacting people in the West in general and specifically in the UK."

30 year old Bee Hughes is a founding member of the Menstruation Research Network, a collective of academics, artists, health professionals and writers who have sought to address practical issues around the distribution of menstrual products as well as systemic concerns surrounding menstrual education.

READ MORE

▶ This woman's heart-wrenching twitter thread brings home the brutal reality of rough sleeping

While Ms Hughes argues that the homeless and vulnerable within society should undoubtedly be given menstrual products, she says that it is important to be mindful that many of the large companies producing these items have been complicit in creating the lingering stigma around periods.

"The terms such as sanitary products and feminine hygiene -are words that have been given use by the menstrual product industry - this terminology is exclusionary and in built with shame and stigma - it's about hiding menstruation."

Interviewed as part of *Liverpool Echo* article on period poverty by Jasmine Cameron-Chileshe, May 2019

See: <https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/meet-inspirational-activists-tackling-period-16219106>

Menstruation Research Network



The image shows a screenshot of the Twitter profile for the Menstruation Research Network (@menstruationRN). The profile header includes the name "Menstruation Research Network" and "1,044 Tweets". The profile picture is a circular image of a person writing "menstruation matters" on a chalkboard, with a circular inset showing a close-up of a multi-colored pill blister pack. The bio states: "Interdisciplinary network aiming to bring together menstruation experts. Funded by @wellcometrust 2019-2020. Tweets about menstrual research across disciplines." It also lists the location as "United Kingdom", the website as "menstruationresearchnetwork.co.uk", and the date as "Born March 8" and "Joined March 2019". The profile shows "445 Following" and "1,312 Followers". A pinned tweet from August 15, 2019, repeats the bio information and adds "Next workshops: 14 Nov and Jan 2020." The tweet is followed by Sarah Creed, Girls In Red Organization (GIRO), and 205 others.

Photograph (2018) by Bee Hughes and photograph of the artist taken at Society for Menstrual Cycle Research Conference (2019) used as avatar and profile images for Wellcome Trust funded UK Menstruation Research Network.

OXFORD ACADEMIC Liverpool John Moores University Sign In Register

oxford art journal

Issues More Content Submit Purchase Alerts About All Oxford Art Journs Advanced Search

Blood Works: Judy Chicago and Menstrual Art Since 1970

Camilla Merk Røstvik

Oxford Art Journal, kcz021, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxartj/kcz021>
Published: 03 December 2019

PDF Split View Cite Permissions Share

Issue Section: Article


13 View Metrics

Email alerts
Article activity alert
Advance article alerts
New issue alert

PDF Split View Cite Permissions Share

care about the menstrual experience.

Fig. 3



Open in new tab Download slide

Bee Hughes, *Lifetime Supply*, 2017 – 2019, digital photograph of painted clay sculptures, both by the artist and forming part of an ongoing project (© 2019 Bee Hughes).

Lifetime Supply (Hughes 2017 – 2019) cited in Røstvik (2019) 'Blood Works: Judy Chicago and Menstrual Art Since 1970', *Oxford Art Journal* 42(3).

Oxford Art Journal Cover



Lifetime Supply (Hughes 2017 – 2019) cover of *Oxford Art Journal* (2019) 42(3).

Appendix Two Part E: Project Roles, Publications and Presentations

The following is a curriculum vitae of relevant project roles, publications, presentations and performances I have completed (or will complete) alongside, and in relation to, the thesis and practical work.

Project Roles

Member, Website Manager & Network Administrator

(January 2020 – January 2021)

Royal Society of Edinburgh Ending Period Poverty Network

University of St Andrews, funded by the Royal Society of Edinburgh

Principal Investigator: Prof. Bettina Bildhauer

Artist in Residence

(September January 2020 – January 2021)

Centre for Contemporary Art & Institute for Gender Studies, University of St

Andrews, funded by the University of St Andrews Gender, Diversity & Inclusion fund

Co-Investigators: Dr Camilla Mørk Røstvik & Dr Catherine Spencer

Menstruation Research Network Website Manager & Content Editor

(March 2019 – March 2020)

University of St Andrews, funded by Wellcome Trust

Principal Investigator: Dr Camilla Mørk Røstvik

Co-Producer and Co-Curator, Co-Lab

(April - June 2018)

Two-week programme of events about postgraduate research in the arts and humanities, funded by LJMU Faculty of Arts, Professional & Social Studies

Collaborators: Emma E Ashman, Davide Landi, Jennifer Lynch & Rebecca Smith

Gallery Co-ordinator, Atrium Gallery, Liverpool School of Art & Design

(August 2017 - November 2019)

Co-ordinator and founder of Atrium Gallery's first regular exhibition programme, Liverpool School of Art & Design. Over 30 exhibitions took place in the gallery during my tenure as co-ordinator, making a significant contribution to public engagement within the school. The gallery hosted exhibitions from students, staff and external artists.

Publications

Ravenscroft, M, Hughes, B, Dann, C & Nixon, P (eds) (in preparation) *Talking Bodies III: Transformations, Movements and Expression*, TBC

Hughes, B (submitted) Expanding Menstrual Normativity: Artistic Interventions in the Representation of Menstruation', in E Rees (ed) *The Routledge Companion to Sexuality and Culture*, TBC: Routledge.

Hughes, B & Røstvik, CM (forthcoming 2021) Menstruation in Art & Visual Culture, in K Ross (ed) *Encyclopaedia of Gender, Media and Communication*, TBC: Wiley-Blackwell

Fallows, C (2020) *Reverb Variations 1 & 2*, Colin Fallows Ensemble vinyl LP. Electric guitar group performance recordings (with Fallows, C, Hughes, B, Lawrie, L & Petersen, E), composed, arranged and produced by Fallows, C. (2015, 2017, 2020). Recorded live at Wilkinson Gallery, London. Mastered from original ambisonic recordings made by the British Library. Limited edition of 300. White vinyl. Audio Research Editions, AREMLP103, UK

Fallows, C (2019) *Reverbs*, Colin Fallows Ensemble vinyl LP. Electric guitar group performance recordings (with Fallows, C, Hughes, B, Lawrie, L & Petersen, E), composed, arranged and produced by Fallows, C. (2015, 2017, 2019). Recorded live at Wilkinson Gallery, London. Mastered from original ambisonic recordings made by the British Library. Liner notes by Michael Bracewell. Limited edition of 300. 180 gram audiophile vinyl. Audio Research Editions, ARELP103, UK

Fallows, C (2019) *Reverbs*, Colin Fallows Ensemble CD. Electric guitar group performance recordings (with Fallows, C, Hughes, B, Lawrie, L & Petersen, E), composed, arranged and produced by Fallows, C. (2015, 2017, 2019). Recorded live at Wilkinson Gallery, London. Mastered from original ambisonic recordings made by the British Library. 12-page booklet with liner notes by Michael Bracewell. Limited edition of 500. Audio Research Editions, ARECD103, UK

Hughes, B (2019) The Shocking History of Procter & Gamble's Rely Tampons, Book Review, *Women's Reproductive Health*, 6(3), 222-224, DOI: 10.1080/23293691.2019.1619049

Bildhauer, B, Hughes, B, Owen, L & Røstvik, CM (2019) Introducing the Menstruation Research Network, *The Polyphony*, Institute for Medical Humanities, Durham University

Hughes, B & Standing, K (2019) Challenging Cultural Attitudes to Menstruation,
British Academy Turning Points, Blog, 28 May 2019

Hughes, B & Standing, K (2018) Menstrual Art: Why Everyone Should Go and See It,
The Conversation, 12 November 2018

Hughes, B (2018) Challenging Menstrual Norms in Online Medical Advice:
Deconstructing Stigma through Entangled Art Practice, *Feminist Encounters:
A Journal of Critical Studies in Culture and Politics* 2(2), 15 pages,
<https://doi.org/10.20897/femenc/3883>

Presentations

Hughes, B (2020) Expanding Menstrual Normativity Through Queered Practice-led Research, CHASE Feminist Network Symposium, Foundling Museum, London, 29th February 2020

Hughes, B (2019) What Do We Mean When We Talk About Period Positivity and Period Poverty?, *Festive Period*, Outpost Liverpool, 3 December 2019 [oral presentation]

Hughes, B (2019) Performing Periods: Challenging Menstrual Normativity through Art Practice, *Research Café: Practice-Based Research*, Liverpool John Moores University, 13 December 2019 [oral presentation]

Hughes, B (2019) Performing Periods: Challenging Menstrual Normativity through Art Practice, *Traversing the Ridge: Connecting Menstrual Research and Advocacy*, Society for Menstrual Cycle Research Conference, Colorado College, Colorado Springs, 6th – 8th June 2019 [oral presentation]

Hughes, B (2019) Performing Periods: Challenging Menstrual Normativity through Art Practice, *Protests Past and Present: Resistance and Persistence Towards Equality*, Liverpool John Moores University, 24 May 2019 [oral presentation]

Hughes, B (2019) Performing Periods: Challenging Menstrual Normativity through Art Practice, *Talking Bodies Fourth Biennial Conference*, Institute of Gender Studies, University of Chester, 10th – 13th April 2019 [oral presentation]

Hughes, B (2019) Performing Periods: Challenging Menstrual Normativity through Art Practice, Blood in Modern and Contemporary Art Panel, *Association for Art History Annual Conference*, University of Brighton, 4th – 6th April 2019 [oral presentation]

Hughes, B (2018) Panel Discussion at *A Bloody Good Show: Adventures in Menstruating*, as part of Being Human Festival of the Humanities, The Casa Theatre, Liverpool, 16 November 2018, [Panel Speaker & co-organiser]

Hughes, B (2018) Challenging Menstrual Norms in Online Healthcare Advice, *Improving and Understanding Health: PhD Symposium 2018*, Public Health Institute, Liverpool John Moores University, 3rd – 4th July 2018 [oral presentation]

Hughes, B (2018) Periods are Normal! There are No Normal Periods!, *Feminist Art Activism and Artivism Conference*, Middlesex University, 2 July 2018 [poster presentation]

Hughes, B (2018) Challenging Menstrual Normativity Through Autobiographical Art Practice, *MATERIAL: Creative Approaches to Research Conference*, Bath Spa University, 14th June 2018 [oral presentation]

Hughes, B (2018) Menstrual Culture: Personal Ritual and Performance, *Menstruation Symposium*, University of St Andrews, 18 January 2018 [oral presentation]

Collaborative Performances

Simic, L (dir) & Ensler, E (au) (2019) *The Vagina Monologues*, performed by Hughes, B (with various), collaborative performance at Merseyside Labour Women's International Women's Day event, Liverpool Hope University Creative Campus, Liverpool, 9 March 2019

Fallows, C (2017) *Spring Reverb*, Colin Fallows Ensemble performance (with Fallows, C, Hughes, B, Lawrie, L, Petersen, E & Chambers, A), composed arranged, directed and produced by Fallows, C, Wilkinson Gallery, London.
In collaboration with Boudicca (Broach, Z & Kirkby, B). In conjunction with *The Last of England* paintings by Derek Jarman; Catalogue/programme with accompanying essay by Michael Bracewell. In association with Art Night curated by the Whitechapel Gallery, London, 1 July 2017

Fallows, C (2017) *Analogue*, Colin Fallows Ensemble performance (with Fallows, C, Hughes, B, Lawrie, L & Petersen, E), composed, arranged, directed and produced by Fallows, C, Wilkinson Gallery, London.
In collaboration with Boudicca (Broach, Z & Kirkby, B) and the British Library Sound Archive. Catalogue/programme with accompanying essay by Michael Bracewell. As part of *The Expanded Analogue: Re-thinking the Analogue through Technology, Art and Philosophy* conference hosted by Kingston University in conjunction with Wilkinson Gallery, London, 29 June 2017

Fallows, C (2017) *Light Night Reverbs*, Colin Fallows Ensemble performance (with Fallows, C, Hughes, B, Lawrie, L, & Petersen, E), composed, arranged, directed and produced by Fallows, C Gallery A, Special Exhibitions, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. In association with Light Night, Liverpool, 19 May 2017

Fallows, C (2015), *Winter Reverb II*, Colin Fallows Ensemble performance (with Fallows, C, Hughes, B, & Petersen, E), composed, arranged, directed and produced by Fallows, C, Wilkinson Gallery, London.
In collaboration with Boudicca Fashion House (Broach, Z & Kirkby, B, Royal College of Art, London) and the British Library Sound Archive.
Catalogue/programme with accompanying essay by Michael Bracewell, 15 December 2015

Fallows, C (2015), *Autumn Reverb*, Colin Fallows Ensemble performance (with Fallows, C, Hughes, B & Petersen, E), composed, arranged, directed and produced by Fallows, C Wilkinson Gallery, London.
In collaboration with Boudicca Fashion House (Broach, Z & Kirkby, B, Royal College of Art, London) and the British Library Sound Archive. In association with East End Night / Frieze Art Fair, 14 October 2015

Fallows, C (2015), *Summer Reverb*, Colin Fallows Ensemble performance (with Fallows, C, Hughes, B & Petersen, E), composed, arranged, directed and produced by Fallows, C, Wilkinson Gallery, London.
In collaboration with Boudicca Fashion House (Broach, Z & Kirkby, B, Royal College of Art, London), 23 June 2015

Fallows, C. (2015), *Winter Reverb*, Colin Fallows Ensemble performance (with Fallows, C, Hughes, B, Petersen, E & Hill, S), composed, arranged, directed and produced by Fallows, C. Wilkinson Gallery, London, 16 June 2015

Appendix Three: Menstrual Art Database

The following table is a work-in-progress database of menstrual art produced since 1970. The database is presented in chronological order and provides thematic keywords for each artwork. The database synthesises several existing sources, including *n.paradoxa* journal's thematic list of artworks on the subject of menstruation and abortion, and the Museum of Menstruation and Women's Health (MoM) list of menstrual artworks, with research I have conducted through the duration of the PhD project.

I do not include every example of menstrual art produced in every medium as, for example, the MoM lists many works submitted by individual artists, however there is not always enough information provided to catalogue these works, for example, a date of production is not published. Where available I have included the location each artwork was produced, or where the artist was / is active.

This Appendix aims to establish a working database which will be of use for my future research, and to others working on menstrual art history. It records over 110 individual artworks produced by artists from, or working in, every continent (except Antarctica) over the last fifty years.

Year	Artwork Details	Coding Notes
1970	Kanonclubben <i>Damebilleder,</i> Tableau 6: <i>The Garments</i> Tableau 7: <i>The Camp and The Celebration</i> collaborative tableau performances over 2 weeks Copenhagen, Denmark	performance collaboration community time dialogue fabric
1971	Judy Chicago <i>Reg Flag</i> photolithograph 51 x 61 cm USA	blood print menstrual product body
	Leslie Labowitz-Starus <i>Menstruation Wait</i> performance Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles, USA	performance body time
	Sheila Levrant de Bretteville & Women's Design Programme <i>Menstruation: A Discussion among 12-14 Year-Old Girls</i> videotapes and literature The California Institute of the Arts, Santa Clarita, USA	collaboration video dialogue storytelling
	(to 1974) Anne Bean, Suzy Adderley, Betsy Bailey, Polly Eltes, Rod Melvin, Mary Anne Holiday, Annie Sloane perform as <i>Moody and the Menstruators</i> , a cover band and art project UK	performance collaboration humour music
1972	Judy Chicago <i>Menstruation Bathroom</i> part of <i>Womanhouse</i> 553N Maripose Avenue, Hollywood, USA	menstrual product bathroom installation
	Judy Chicago <i>My Menstrual Life</i> unpublished play USA	play performance
	Carolee Schneemann <i>Blood Work Diary</i> 5 framed panels, 23 x 29 inches each: menstrual blood on tissue paper, egg yolk, 20 blottings on menstrual blood per panel, Fisher Fine Arts Library Image Collection University of Pennsylvania, USA	blood time autobiography
	Leslie Labowitz-Starus <i>Menstruation Wait</i> performance Düsseldorf, Germany	performance time body

	<p>Jan Legnitto & Isabel Welsh <i>Menstrual Blood</i> theatre piece: U.C. Art Museum during the Festival of Bay Area women artists, 1st October 1972 audio track:42 minutes PRA Archive # BC0985, Pacifica Radio Archives</p>	<p>blood performance sound collaboration storytelling</p>
1973	<p>Mako Idemitsu <i>What a Woman Made</i> video, sound, 11 minutes USA</p>	<p>blood video bathroom menstrual product</p>
	<p>The Woman's Building <i>Menstruation Weekend Performances,</i> collaborative video / performance 9-10th February, Womanspace Gallery at The California Institute of the Arts Santa Clarita, USA</p>	<p>collaboration performance video storytelling</p>
	<p>Judy Clark <i>Menstruation</i> installation: vitrine, blood stains on slides UK</p>	<p>blood slides</p>
	<p>Pauline Barrie <i>Menstruation</i> print exhibited at Women's Workshop of the Artist's Union, Almost Free Theatre, UK</p>	<p>print</p>
1976	<p>Yocheved Weinfeld <i>Untitled</i> performance, black and white photographs, Dawel Gallery, Jerusalem</p>	<p>performance photography</p>
1977	<p>(to 1988) Sophie Rivera <i>Rouge et Noir (Red and Black)</i> two photographs: blood-soaked tampon in a toilet bowl USA</p>	<p>red photography bathroom menstrual product</p>
	<p>Nelson Soucasaux <i>Art of Gyneycology</i> two pencil drawings Rio de Janeiro, Brazil</p>	<p>drawing male perspectives medicine</p>
	<p>Mierle Laderman Ukeles <i>Mikvah Dreams – A Performance</i> performance: read text, white sheet, photograph, paper Franklin Furnace Gallery, New York</p>	<p>performance ritual religion storytelling</p>

1979	<p>Catherine Elwes <i>Menstruation 1</i> performance White Room, Slade School of Fine Art, London, UK</p>	performance
	<p>Catherine Elwes <i>Menstruation 2</i> performance White Room, Slade School of Fine Art, London, UK</p>	performance
1980	<p>Marshlore <i>Trop(e)ism</i> performance Canada</p>	performance
1981	<p>Maria Evelia Marmolejo <i>Il de morso-ritual a la menstruacion, digno de toda mujer como antecedente del origen de la vida (ritual in honour of menstruation, worthy of every woman as a precursor to the origin of life)</i> 11 March 1981 performance documentation: photographs of the artist with menstrual pads on her head and body, menstrual blood leaking onto pads</p>	performance photography menstrual product blood
1983	<p>Ana Mendieta <i>Our Menstruation</i> Photo-etching on cream chine, laid on white woven paper (chine collé) 13.2 x 10 cm 1990.461.5, Margaret Fisher Endowment, Art Institute Chicago, USA</p>	print
1984	<p>Miriam Cahn <i>Reading in the Dust, the Wild Love,</i> 4 charcoal drawings on paper, 59.5 x 84 cm (Switzerland)</p>	performative rhythm drawing
1985	<p>Judy Jones <i>Self Exploration, looking for Aunt Martha</i> pastel on paper 16 x 20 inches</p>	autobiography taboo drawing
1986	<p>Kiki Smith <i>Untitled</i> twelve glass jars, empty, labelled as body fluids Germany / USA</p>	conceptual body blood invisible

1989	<p>Tamara Wyndham <i>Red Tide</i> performance: white walls, a white sheet of paper on the wall, a small table with a white tablecloth, white teapot, white carton of white eggs, a metal egg beater, clear glass bowl, white t-shirt, white drawstring trousers 22 July 1989 Kate Millett Art Colony, Poughkeepsie, New York</p>	performance body white egg cycle time food
1991	<p>Portia Munson <i>Menstrual Print</i> series menstrual fluid on paper 8.5 x 11 inches New York, USA</p>	blood print
	<p>Lutz Bacher <i>Menstrual Extraction Kit</i>, a replica self-induced abortion kit New York, USA</p>	abortion
1993	<p>Portia Munson <i>Menstrual Print</i> with text menstrual fluid on paper 8.5 x 11 inches New York, USA</p>	blood print
	<p>(and 1998) Pipilotti Rist <i>Blood Room</i> video installation</p>	video installation
	<p>Kiki Smith <i>Train</i> wax sculpture, red beads New York, USA</p>	wax beads trail body nude
1995	<p>Mayra Alþizar <i>Altar</i> applique & embroidery 110 x 156 cm Cuba</p>	fabric embroidery religion
1996	<p>Amy Jenkins <i>Ebb</i> installation: video projection on miniature ceramic tub, tiled pedestal, audio sculpture dimensions 14 x 20 x 26 inches original running time: 4 minutes USA</p>	blood video installation sculpture rhythm autobiography storytelling

	<p>Charon Luebbers <i>Menstrual Hut</i> installation: isolation booth lined with self-portraits printed in menstrual blood, 6 x 6 x 5 feet Donn Roll Contemporary Museum in Sarasota, USA</p>	<p>blood installation taboo</p>
1997	<p>Martina Hoffmann <i>Female Crucifixion</i> painting USA</p>	<p>religion blood body</p>
	<p>Martina Hoffmann The Goddess Triangle multimedia installation c. 3 x 6 m USA</p>	<p>installation religion body fertility</p>
	<p>Brina Katz <i>Lillith's Cave</i> medium unknown Cumbria, England</p>	<p>religion mysterious red</p>
1998	<p>Tracy Emin <i>My Bed</i> installation: box frame, mattress, linens, pillows and various objects, installation size variable The Duerckheim Collection, on long-term loan to Tate since 2015, L03662 London, UK</p>	<p>menstrual products everyday autobiography bedroom</p>
1999	<p>Ana Elena Pena <i>My First Menstruation</i> <i>My First Menstruation II</i> photographs</p>	<p>menarche performance photography</p>
	<p>Elinor Carucci <i>Menstrual Period and PMS</i> part of <i>Closer</i> series. Chromogenic Print. New York, USA</p>	<p>photography autobiography storytelling</p>
	<p>Chen Lingyang <i>Twelve Flower Months</i> series of twelve photographs China / Taipei, Taiwan</p>	<p>photography</p>
	<p>Vanessa Tiegs <i>Menstrala</i> series of 88 paintings in menstrual blood USA</p>	<p>blood abstract decorative</p>

	<p>Elentye Paulauskas-Poelker <i>venus sits down</i> digital artwork USA / Lithuania</p>	red poetry
2000	<p>Paula Speakman <i>Mary Mary</i> mixed media assemblage 50 cm Ø</p>	menstrual product scented religion
	<p>(to 2005) Joana Vasconcelos <i>A Noiva (tr. The Bride)</i> sculpture: OB tampons, stainless steel, cotton thread, steel cables, 600 x Ø300 cm António Cachola Collection, Elvas, Portugal</p>	sculpture menstrual products luxury
2001	<p>Shilpa Gupta <i>Untitled</i> installation / video: hand stitching, stained cloth, pyjamas India</p>	blood fabric stitch
	<p>Isa Menziest <i>Shove It!</i> bronze sculpture c. 100 x 30 cm Australia</p>	menstrual product sculpture political money
	<p>Chiharu Shiota <i>My Stomachache</i> performance video: mini-DV, colour, sound, 4:3 8 minutes Japan</p>	video pain storytelling
	<p>Melina Szapiro <i>Menstrual Inspiration 1</i> mixed media assemblage Buenos Aires, Argentina</p>	secret menstrual product sculpture
	<p>Melina Szapiro <i>Menstrual Inspiration 2</i> mixed media assemblage Buenos Aires, Argentina</p>	secret menstrual product sculpture vulva
2002	<p>Ghada Amer <i>Red and Colored Drips</i> acrylic, embroidery, gel medium on canvas 182.8 x 214 cm Egypt / France</p>	red abstract

	<p>Fanni Fazekas <i>Uterus</i> pencil, pen and coloured pencil on paper 50 x 80 cm</p>	<p>body drawing</p>
	<p>Pelagie Gbaguidi <i>La Parole est la Glaise du Corps (Speech is the Clay of the Body)</i> colour photograph Brussels / Senegal</p>	<p>video body clay</p>
	<p>Petra Paul <i>Menstrual Blood Pictures</i> 8 pieces, menstrual blood on paper 30 x 21 cm each Vienna, Austria</p>	<p>blood abstract</p>
	<p>Jennifer Weigel <i>Neurotica</i> performance: 1 h 30 minutes & photographic documentation Nadadada performance art festival USA</p>	<p>performance red time</p>
2003	<p>(to 2007) Catherine Bell <i>Making a Baby</i> monthly ritual: baking and icing a cake every menstrual cycle. Cake presented to pregnant women</p>	<p>fertility cycle rhythm food</p>
	<p>Ashmina Ranjit <i>Shakti Svaroop</i> installation: red thread, fabric New Delhi, India</p>	<p>red installation</p>
	<p>Mayra Alpizar <i>Quipu of Fertility</i> knotted ribbons, carved and coloured wood 37 x 94 cm Cuba</p>	<p>ritual fertility religion time menopause</p>
	<p>Tamara Wyndham <i>vulva prints</i> menstrual blood on Japanese paper USA</p>	<p>blood vulva paper time</p>
2004	<p>Carlota Berard <i>Aqua Permanens</i> performance: dance while free bleeding onto 2 x 2 m cloth menstrual blood & graphite performed in UK</p>	<p>performance dance blood fabric</p>

	<p>Roz Bonnet title unknown mixed media installation: figures, menstrual products UK</p>	<p>menstrual product body installation sculpture</p>
	<p>Leigh Radtke <i>Freedom with Wix,</i> <i>Fax 1930,</i> <i>LOX, the Tampon for the Theater</i> encaustic collage 5 x 7 inches USA</p>	<p>advertising collage menstrual product</p>
	<p>Leigh Radtke <i>Cashay Tampon Insertion Instructions</i> encaustic collage and batik 8 x 11 inches USA</p>	<p>advertising collage menstrual product</p>
	<p>Leigh Radtke <i>Wix and Sears, 1934</i> encaustic collage 8 x 11 inches USA</p>	<p>advertising collage menstrual product</p>
	<p>Leigh Radtke <i>Tampax, the Leader in Protection Since 1936</i> mixed media 9 x 12 inches UA</p>	<p>advertising collage menstrual product</p>
	<p>Nelson Soucasaux <i>Bleeding Rose 1</i> <i>Bleeding Rose 2</i> pencil drawings Rio de Janeiro, Brazil</p>	<p>male perspective drawing medicine</p>
2005	<p>Gina title unknown menstrual blood on paper</p>	<p>blood paper performative</p>
	<p>Nelson Soucasaux untitled (based on the original by Weibel, reproduced by Botella Lluisa) pencil drawing Rio de Janeiro, Brazil</p>	<p>male perspective drawing medicine</p>
	<p>Jennifer Weigel <i>Menstruation Series</i> menstrual blood on paper January 2005 St. Louis, USA</p>	<p>blood body</p>

2006	Hélène Epaud title unknown mixed media installation(s)	installation flowers bathroom menstrual product
	Ashmina Ranjit <i>Innate Deepness</i> installation Denmark / Nepal	red vulva fabric
	Cecilia Vicuña <i>El Quipu Menstruel</i> video, 4 minutes Santiago, Chile / London, UK	ritual thread knot communication
2007	Jelena <i>From My Point of View & From Your Point of View</i> 2 paintings, medium unknown Serbia / The Hague, Netherlands	blood bathroom underwear autobiography storytelling
	Margaret Kalms <i>Miss Menstruation Girl</i> <i>Soothing Bloody Mary</i> <i>Australian Jilaroo</i> <i>Wild West Tampons</i> <i>Wine Glass</i> <i>Burning Pain</i> photographs Australia	body euphemism menarche pain performative menstrual product humour
2008	Vladislav Shabalin <i>Portrait of a Shared Secret</i> painting Friuli, Italy / Russia	male perspective red body sex
	Vladislav Shabalin <i>Catharsis</i> sculpture: acrylic on Piasentina stone c. 16.5 cm Friuli, Italy / Russia	male perspective red mythology
	Isa Sanz <i>Revelation</i> <i>Alchemy</i> <i>I Am You</i> <i>Blood Sisters</i> four photographs Spain	blood body performance collaboration
2009	Ingrid Berthon-Moine <i>Red is the Colour</i> 12 colour photographs: portraits London, UK	blood photography portrait

	<p>Beatrice Cussol <i>No. 489</i> ballpoint pen and watercolour on paper part of <i>Rude Girls</i> series c. 55 x 78 inches Paris, France</p>	drawing
	<p>Sandy Kim XXX series of photographs, personal photo diary Los Angeles, USA</p>	blood photography sex autobiography storytelling
	<p>Jacquelyn Rixon <i>Encrusted Lace</i> antique lace, embroidery hoop, menstrual blood, glass and beads UK</p>	blood fabric garments time
	<p>Jacquelyn Rixon <i>After Vesalius 1543</i> drawing on fabric, menstrual blood UK</p>	time medicine blood fabric
	<p>Jacquelyn Rixon <i>Cathedral Stained Window</i> fabric, menstrual blood, stitching UK</p>	sewing blood religion
	<p>Jacquelyn Rixon <i>Hackett - Body Gift</i> branded Hackett box, blood, mixed media UK</p>	blood gift
	<p>Sangre Menstrual <i>Manifiesto por la Visibilidad de la Regla (tr. Manifiesto for the Visibility of the Period)</i> collaborative performance protest wearing white, blood-stained trousers Madrid, Spain</p>	performance blood public protest
	<p>Vadis Turner <i>Reception</i> installation: twin bed, fabric, bedding, bibles, tampons, underwear, and other objects Brooklyn Museum, USA</p>	menstrual product installation fabric bedroom
2010	<p>Lani Beloso <i>The Period Piece</i> 13 canvases menstrual blood and mixed media paintings USA</p>	blood painting time
	<p>Carol Nathan Levin <i>xx-Rated</i> 391 ceramic menstrual pads Johannesburg / New York</p>	menstrual product time / lifetime ceramic

		menarche oophorectomy
	May Ling Su <i>On My Period</i> multiple outputs: photo series, documentation of menstruation; book	blood photography sex / sex work storytelling
	(2010-2011) Sarah Maple <i>Menstruate with Pride</i> oil on canvas Sussex, UK	painting
	Ashmina Ranjit <i>Feminine Force</i> performance: white dress made from 10,275 pieces of menstrual pads, read thread Nepal	performance menstrual product lifetime disposables
	Isa Sanz <i>Sangro, pero no muero</i> (tr. <i>I bleed, but I do not die</i>) ensemble performance c. 15 minutes International Theater and Arts Festival of TAC Street Valladolid, Spain	performance collaboration ritual
	Sputniko! <i>Menstruation Machine – Takashi’s Take</i> film: 3 minutes 23 seconds Boston & New York / Japan	film blood posthuman gender
	Alexandra Steiner <i>Moonflower #1</i> <i>Moonflower #2</i> <i>Moonflower #4</i> <i>Moonflower #6</i> <i>Moonflower #11</i> <i>Moonflower #13</i> paintings Austria	moon nature cycle abstract
2011	Katy Luxion title unknown installation: wooden boxes, blood-stained chaise longue; latex gloves USA	blood secret storage memory stain broken
	Zanele Muholi <i>Ummeli</i> menstrual blood on cloth, digitally photographed in symmetrical patterns prints on paper and wallpaper South Africa	blood violence protest pattern LGBT+ storytelling
	Zanele Muholi <i>Case 200/07/2007 MURDER</i>	blood violence

digital print on cotton rag of a digital collage of menstrual blood stains South Africa	print fabric LGBT+ storytelling
Zanele Muholi <i>Case 216/02/2</i> digital print on cotton rag of a digital collage of menstrual blood stains South Africa	blood violence print fabric LGBT+ storytelling
Zanele Muholi <i>Case 608/06/2008 RAPE</i> digital print on cotton rag of a digital collage of menstrual blood stains South Africa	blood violence print fabric LGBT+ storytelling
Zanele Muholi <i>Abammeli</i> patterned menstrual blood on paper South Africa	blood violence paper pattern LGBT+ storytelling
Zanele Muholi <i>ARM Siyabhubha</i> koki on gladwrap, found material South Africa	blood violence pattern LGBT+ storytelling
Zanele Muholi <i>ondabazabantu, no-no-nqo-ntsi</i> menstrual blood on paper South Africa	blood violence paper LGBT+ storytelling
Zanele Muholi <i>Ubuntu bami</i> (a self-portrait) digital print on cotton rag South Africa	blood violence fabric LGBT+ storytelling
Penny Siopsis <i>How Do I Love Thee?</i> ink and glue on canvas 200 x 125 cm South Africa	love blood / red
Chella Quint <i>STAINS™</i> installation: hand-cut felt, installation size variable, exhibited widely, including <i>Periodical</i> curated by B Hughes (2018)	blood / red humour fabric

2012	<p>M. Parfitt title unknown quilt, mixed media with menstrual blood Sacramento, USA</p>	<p>cycle moon eggs</p>
	<p>Emily Gui <i>How I Got Here</i> mixed media installation San Francisco, USA</p>	<p>moon cycle eggs blue print / installation</p>
2013	<p>(to 2016) Poulomi Basu <i>A Ritual of Exile: Blood Speaks</i> multiple artworks including: photography series, 360-degree immersive video, book Nepal</p>	<p>photography immersive storytelling</p>
	<p>Christen Clifford <i>I Want Your Blood</i> (2013 – 2020) project including: collection of menstrual blood; performances; decanted bottles of menstrual blood New York, USA</p>	<p>performance collaboration blood perfume</p>
	<p>Casey Jenkins <i>Casting off My Womb</i> 28-day durational performance: wool and knitting needles, October 2013, Darwin Visual Arts Association, Darwin, Australia</p>	<p>performance fabric / knitting blood cycle</p>
	<p>Carina Úbeda <i>Cloths</i> mixed media installation (5 years of) menstrual blood mounted on 90 cloths in embroidery hoops, embroidered text, apples Center of Culture and Health, Quillota, Chile</p>	<p>fabric performative blood menstrual product</p>
	<p>(circa 2013) Sarah Anne Ward <i>Rorschach Cycle</i> photographs: red stains on garments / fabric USA</p>	<p>red blood stain garment fabric</p>
	<p>Petra Collins, Alice Lancaster & The Arduous <i>Period Power Wash tee</i> t-shirt for American Apparel</p>	<p>fabric apparel</p>
	<p>Agnes van Dijk <i>AllDayPearlDress</i> garment: fabric and pantyliners The Netherlands</p>	<p>menstrual product garment fashion fabric</p>

	<p>Aliaa Magda Elmahdy <i>Photo Action Against ISIS</i> photograph circulated online</p>	photography protest religion terrorism
	<p>Poppy Jackson <i>Television Lounge</i> performance at a derelict police headquarters building, Spill Festival of Performance Ipswich, UK</p>	performance body
2015	<p>Ingrid Goldbloom Bloch <i>Feminine Protection</i> poster series and sculpture of a gun made from pink plastic tampon applicators Needham, USA</p>	gun violence / defence menstrual product
	<p>(c. 2015) Arvida Byström <i>There Will Be Blood</i> photography series Sweden</p>	blood photography everyday leak
	<p>(to 2018) Marisa Carr (Marisa Carnesky) <i>Dr Carnesky's Incredible Bleeding Woman</i> collaborative theatrical performance (nine tours over three years, 70+ performances) Essex / London, UK</p>	performance collaboration ritual LGBT+ miscarriage birth body blood red humour
	<p>Christen Clifford and the No Wave Performance Task Force <i>1 Want Your Blood: A Feminist Public Action in Three Parts</i> performance New York, USA</p>	blood performance body
	<p>Poppy Jackson <i>Constellation</i> 2-hour performance with a stick, compact mirror and (donated) menstrual blood, FUSE Art Space Bradford, UK</p>	performance blood time
	<p>Lili Murphy Johnson <i>On the Rag</i> graduate jewellery collection: necklace; beaded underwear; beaded garment; multiple rings; multiple bracelets created at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts, London, UK</p>	decorative adornment jewellery luxury
	<p>Sarah Levy <i>Whatever (Bloody Trump)</i> menstrual blood on paper</p>	blood protest painting

	USA, held at Bundeswehr Museum of Military History, Dresden Germany	
	Jen Lewis <i>Beauty in Blood</i> photography series menstrual blood suspended in water Denver, USA	blood photography collaboration
	Bjørk Grue Lidin <i>Fuck Consent</i> performance with menstrual blood, May 2015 Neuköln, Berlin, Germany	performance
	Rupi Kaur and Prabh Kaur <i>period</i> photo series Published on Instagram Canada	photography blood autobiography everyday
	Marie Louise Juul Søndergaard and Lone Koefoed Hansen <i>PeriodShare</i> speculative design / performance Aarhus, Denmark	performance speculative gender blood garment
2016	Amanda Atkinson <i>£306</i> installation: copper and silver coins, dimensions variable Liverpool, UK	menstrual product money protest / politics
	Mary Hamill <i>Semper Augustus</i> hardback book: edition of 250 with case and 13 x 17cm C-Print UK	menstrual product flower / tulip photography book
	Cecile Hübner <i>Cyclus</i> video and livestream performance Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands	video performance menstrual product
	Bee Hughes <i>Cycles</i> 6 hand-stitched linen scrolls, menstrual fluid and acrylic paint each scroll 20 x 300 cm Liverpool, UK	blood performative fabric cycle vulva
	Bee Hughes <i>a period is...</i> visual poem published in B Hughes (2018) Challenging Menstrual Norms in Online Medical Advice: Deconstructing Stigma through Entangled Art Practice Liverpool, UK	cycle medicine poem

	<p>Poppy Jackson <i>Constellation</i> 2 hour performance with a stick, compact mirror and (donated) menstrual blood, Gold + Beton Cologne, Germany</p>	performance blood time
	<p>Sarah Naqvi (untitled) embroidered tampon and embroidered menstrual pad Mumbai, India</p>	embroidery menstrual product decorative red
	<p>Tanya Maheshwari (title unknown) embroidery: representation of underpants with menstrual blood New Delhi, India</p>	embroidery menstrual product decorative blood
2017	<p>Rhine Bernardino & Anna Gray <i>Regla Installation</i> installation: glass, menstrual blood and water 180 x 180 cm Fiumano Clasa Gallery, London</p>	blood installation collaboration
	<p>Esther Cappon <i>Bosnia Losing Innocence</i> ongoing photo series Bosnia / Netherlands</p>	photography violence menstrual product
	<p>Bee Hughes & Eva Petersen <i>Un-Voiced</i> soundwork, 2 minutes 22 seconds Liverpool, UK</p>	sound performance collaboration
	<p>Bee Hughes <i>Infinite Cycles</i> mixed media installation: looped video on 4 screens, white plinth c. 150 x 150 x 45 Liverpool, UK</p>	video installation cycle time vulva
	<p>Bee Hughes <i>Lifetime Supply</i> multiple painted clay sculptures: air dry clay, acrylic paint and acrylic varnish sizes variable Liverpool, UK</p>	sculpture menstrual product time
	<p>Zoe James <i>Free Bleed</i> painting in menstrual blood Auckland, New Zealand</p>	blood painting
	<p>Zoe James <i>An Expensive Habit</i></p>	blood painting money

<p>painting in menstrual blood Auckland, New Zealand</p>	
<p>Charlotte Luijendijk <i>Houd je Portemonneetje Gesloten (tr. Keep Your Wallet Closed)</i> Artist's book prototype Netherlands</p>	<p>book euphemism photography</p>
<p>Sarah Naqvi <i>Crimson Wave</i> embroidery: female hips with menstrual blood tassel Mumbai, India</p>	<p>red embroidery</p>
<p>Timi Páll <i>The Diary of my Period and Self-portrait: Feeling Complete</i> 9 menstrual blood paintings on canvas Oradea, Romania</p>	<p>blood pregnancy time autobiography</p>
<p>Walter Raes <i>tampon top</i> garment constructed from tampons Belgium / London, UK</p>	<p>menstrual product garment humour</p>
<p>Pippa Robinson <i>One Story: My Menarche</i> participatory project UK</p>	<p>participation collaboration menarche storytelling</p>
<p>Liv Stromquist <i>The Night Garden</i> illustrated billboards Stockholm, Sweden</p>	<p>public illustration body red</p>
<p>Hotham Street Ladies <i>You Beaut</i> installation(s): confectionary and bathroom fixtures Science Gallery London & Science Gallery Melbourne installation: Margaret Lawrence Gallery billboard: Punt Road, Melbourne Australia</p>	<p>bathroom food red / blood uterus</p>
<p>Raegan Truax <i>Sloughing</i> 9th February – 8th March 2017 durational performance: 28 days menstrual blood, 4x4ft plywood boards, blue collar shirts. Franconia Performance Salon, Royal NoneSuch Gallery, Lake Lagunita, Memorial Auditorium, 8th Street Gallery, Lake Merritt, Robley Studios, The Women's Building (Audre Lorde room), Bakers Dozen, Museum of Performance & Design, CounterPulse, Various Living Rooms San Francisco, USA</p>	<p>performance collaboration time blood</p>

	<p>(to 2020)</p> <p>Annie Wong <i>Ovary Actions</i> series of animated gifs USA</p>	animation cute menstrual product humour euphemism
2018	<p>Bee Hughes <i>a period is...ii</i> vinyl installation: visual poem c. 150 x 300 cm Liverpool School of Art & Design, Liverpool, UK</p>	cycle medicine poem installation
	<p>Bee Hughes <i>Almost Eight Cycles</i> installation: size variable, 242 digital prints 148mm x 210 mm each Liverpool, UK</p>	cycle time installation print blood vulva
	<p>La Dame en Rouge <i>Tampole</i> street art: painted bollard Saint-Étienne, France</p>	humour menstrual product red
	<p>Sarah Naqvi <i>1; Day 2</i> painting(s) Mumbai, India</p>	painting red
	<p>Sasha Spyrou <i>The Ghosts of Tampons Past</i> inkjet print on paper 29.7 x 42 cm Liverpool, UK</p>	menstrual product time humour
	<p>Sasha Spyrou untitled tampon ghost earrings jewellery: laser cut iridescent acrylic; plastic beads; silver plated findings c. 5 x 2cm Liverpool, UK</p>	menstrual product time humour jewellery adornment
	<p>Sasha Spyrou <i>Ghost Tampons</i> temporary mural: acrylic, emulsion and spray paint on wood c. 182 x 182 cm painted 7 June 2019 Stafford Street, Liverpool, UK</p>	menstrual product time humour public
2019	<p>Lena Chen <i>Blood Scry</i> performance: menstrual blood, mirror, candles, fruit, dog fur, key, chocolate, bowls</p>	performance ritual blood

	23 rd February 2019, HAEMA Gelegenheiten, Berlin, Germany	
	Vanessa Dion Fletcher <i>Menstrual Accessory</i> performance Cornerstone Arts Centre 8 th June 2019 Colorado Springs, USA	blood performance humour
	Bee Hughes <i>Dys-men-o-rrho-ea</i> private performance, body-prints and digital photographs, digital print 119 x 84 cm collected University of St Andrews Museums and Collections, Object Number C2019.10(2) Liverpool, UK	performance pain photography print red body
	Bee Hughes <i>unmade, remade, 28 days</i> digital print with handwritten ink details 2m x 0.6m Liverpool, UK	
	Anish Kapoor <i>Menstruation Paintings</i> series of paintings on gauze covered canvas UK	red paint male perspective blood
	(ongoing) Jane Woollatt <i>Insecurity Blankets</i> multiple objects: recycled blankets; stitching Essex, UK	fabric menopause mourning
2020	Christen Clifford <i>I Want Your Blood</i> installation: 26 shelves of vintage perfume bottles, filled with menstrual blood Eva Presenheuber Gallery, New York	blood collaboration perfume / luxury body

Appendix Four: Thematic Analysis of Online Medical Advice

Appendix Four includes screen grabs of each of the websites analysed in Chapter One, taken at the time the analysis was conducted. This method of documentation proved to be very important when conducting the research, and since, as it provides clear evidence of the websites *as they were* when the analysis took place. Though I have also utilised online resources such as The Internet Archive to view web pages that have changed over time, or that no longer exist, this is not a reliable method for detailed analysis as there is no guarantee an archived page will be available from the required date range.

Following the screen grabs of each website, I include the initial coding and analysis notes which inform the extended analysis which appears in Chapter One, and in my article 'Challenging Menstrual Norms in Online Medical Advice: Deconstructing Stigma through Entangled Art Practice' (2018).

BootsWebMD

Search conducted 13 February 2018:

“menstruation”

= 78 results

“periods”

= 535 Results (includes anything relating to periods of time, e.g. incubation periods)

“period”


= 788 Results

(includes anything relating to periods of time, e.g. incubation periods)

All search results for “menstruation”:

rchresults/results?query=menstruation

pregnancy information.
BootsWebMD Advertorial: Clearblue

 **Drug results for menstruation**
View patient information for uses, side effects and interactions.
Boots Drug Reference

Normal menstrual cycle and periods
During a woman's childbearing years, her body will usually experience a menstrual cycle, a complicated cycle controlled by hormones to prepare her body for pregnancy.
WebMD Medical Reference

How your menstrual cycle affects performance in sport
What are the facts on periods affecting a woman's sporting performance?
WebMD Medical Reference

Early puberty 'may trigger later depression'
Girls who enter puberty early may have a higher risk of mental health problems in adulthood than their later-developing peers, new research suggests.
WebMD UK Health News

Pregnancy and conception date
Learn more about the pregnancy calendar and conception date.
WebMD Medical Reference

Slideshow: Answers to your top period questions
Get answers for your period and menstruation questions. BootsWebMD shows you what's normal and what's not for flow, missed periods, and more. Plus, PMS coping tips.
WebMD Health Tools

Periods
Find BootsWebMD's comprehensive coverage of menstruation, including medical reference, news, pictures, videos and more.
WebMD Health & Wellness Directory

Avoiding periods
Eliminating periods with continuous birth control may sound like a woman's dream, but is it safe?
WebMD Feature

Menstrual blood problems: Clots, colour and thickness
It is normal for the colour and consistency of menstrual blood to vary during a period. However, some unusual changes in colour, thickness or clotting may be a blood problem that may need medical attention.
WebMD Medical Reference

Ovulation
Find BootsWebMD's comprehensive coverage of ovulation including medical reference, news, pictures, videos and more.
WebMD Health & Wellness Directory

Hormones and oral health
A woman's oral health can be affected by hormone changes over the years, from puberty, to periods, taking the Pill and menopause.
WebMD Medical Reference

1-10 of 78 results 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 ▶

Results for: menstruation (78 results found)

11-20 of 78 results



What your teenage daughter needs to know about sexual health

Teenage years can be tough for girls. They have to deal with the physical and emotional changes of becoming a woman and leaving childhood behind. What does your teenage daughter needs to know about sexual health?

[WebMD Feature](#)

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) triggers and prevention

With irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), there are some steps that can be taken to help avoid triggers and prevent symptom flare-ups.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Premenstrual syndrome (PMS)

Find BootsWebMD's comprehensive coverage of premenstrual syndrome (PMS) including medical reference, news, pictures, videos and more.

[WebMD Health & Wellness Directory](#)

Six things you may not know about your periods

You may have been getting your period for decades or might just be starting out down the long road of menstruation but however well you know your body there may be things that you aren't entirely sure of. We get the facts from the experts.

[WebMD Feature](#)

How to guide: Ovulation calculator

One way to help increase the odds of getting pregnant is to identify the most fertile times in the menstrual cycle with an ovulation calculator, or by charting fertility.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Slideshow: A visual guide to Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)

From mood swings to the munchies, learn about the symptoms, causes and treatments of premenstrual syndrome in BootsWebMD's slideshow on PMS.

[WebMD Health Tools](#)

Menopause basics

Menopause, or the change of life, is when a woman stops having periods, usually around the age of 51.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Menstrual cramps and relief

Period pain and menstrual cramps are common for most women, and may be called dysmenorrhoea by doctors.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Pregnancy week by week: Introduction

How an immature egg in an ovary can develop into a baby is a complex process, so no wonder it takes on average 40 weeks from the first day of the last menstrual period to the birth of a child.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Abnormal vaginal bleeding

Unexpected bleeding other than during the normal menstrual period, or even an abnormally heavy period, can be great cause for alarm for any woman. Learn about causes, symptoms and treatment of abnormal vaginal bleeding.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

11-20 of 78 results



Results for: menstruation (78 results found)

21-30 of 78 results



Quiz: Is my period normal?

BootsWebMD Quiz: Is my period normal? Period symptoms can be painful and perplexing. This quiz lets you know when to worry about problems like an irregular period, and how to help PMS.

Ovulation

When an ovary makes and releases an ovum, or egg, it is referred to as ovulation. Once a girl reaches puberty, she should ovulate on average once a month until she reaches menopause.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Can I get pregnant if...? Sex and pregnancy myths

Pregnancy myths are alive and well. Make sure you know the facts about pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STIs).

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Slideshow: All about menopause and perimenopause

Menopause, also called perimenopause, will eventually affect every woman. Learn more about menopause and perimenopause and the symptoms, causes, side effects, treatments and complications.

[WebMD Health Tools](#)

Quiz: The truth about the vagina

Do you have all the facts about the vagina? Take this BootsWebMD quiz and find out.

Breast cancer: Chemotherapy treatment

Offers information on breast cancer chemotherapy, how and when chemotherapy is given, and potential side effects.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

4 0 Increase your chances of getting pregnant

Learn about the Clearblue Advanced Fertility Monitor-- the only monitor that tracks and stores fertility and pregnancy information.

[BootsWebMD Advertorial: Clearblue](#)

Blood clots

Although a blood clot can lead to a potentially life-threatening condition, most blood clots are preventable.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Vaginal bleeding between periods

Vaginal bleeding can occur between normal periods. Some causes might be minor, but rarely there may be need for immediate medical treatment.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Parenting older children and teenagers FAQs

Get answers to frequently asked questions about parenting older children and teenagers.

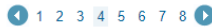
[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

21-30 of 78 results



Results for: menstruation (78 results found)

31-40 of 78 results



The uterus (womb)

Your uterus, also known as your womb, is a crucial, female reproductive organ. It looks about the size and shape of an upside-down pear and has a central cavity with a soft lining.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Heavy periods (menorrhagia)

Heavy periods (menorrhagia)

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

What are the side effects of long-term steroid use?

We look at the possible side effects of long-term use of steroids.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Why is my teenager always sick?

Most teenagers enjoy good health, though they will get everyday colds, flu and other infections just like everyone else. However, sometimes they develop health issues due to the physical changes that young people go through as their bodies evolve through puberty.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Period problems during menopause

Problems with periods are very common around the time of the menopause.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Phyto-oestrogens and menopause

Phyto-oestrogens have been promoted to help relieve the symptoms of hot flushes and night sweats in women during the menopause, but do they work?

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

The fertility evaluation

If a couple hasn't conceived after a year of trying for a baby with regular unprotected sex, a GP may be able to arrange fertility testing or evaluation for the woman, the man, or both partners.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Headaches basics

Most people experience a headache at some time in their lives. Get the basics on headaches.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Girls and puberty

Going through puberty means a lot of physical changes for girls. Learn more.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Cold sores - symptoms, diagnosis, treatment and prevention

Cold sores are common and painful blisters around the lips and mouth caused by the herpes simplex virus.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

31-40 of 78 results



Results for: menstruation (78 results found)

41-50 of 78 results



Major depression (clinical depression)

Major depression is also known as clinical depression. People with major depression feel a profound and constant sense of hopelessness and despair.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Depression, the thyroid and hormones

Depression is a common symptom of an underactive thyroid, also called hypothyroidism.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

What is a migraine with aura?

Migraine with aura is a type of migraine that has warning signs before the pain begins, called an aura.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Premenstrual syndrome (PMS)

Premenstrual syndrome, or PMS, is also known as premenstrual tension or PMT.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Endometriosis

Endometriosis is a painful female reproductive condition where lining of the womb is found outside the uterus. Know how to spot these 8 signs and symptoms.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Breast problems: Symptoms and treatment

Most changes in breasts are natural and nothing to worry about. However, you may experience any of several conditions that require medical attention, including breast pain and masses or lumps.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Premenstrual dysphoric disorder

Premenstrual dysphoric disorder, or PMDD, is a relatively rare but severe form of premenstrual syndrome (PMS).

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Migraine headaches and pregnancy

Women who tend to have migraines may find that pregnancy affects the condition for the better, or worse. The hormonal changes during pregnancy can be a trigger for migraine for some women.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Normal testosterone and oestrogen levels in women

Although testosterone is better known as a male hormone, it still plays an important role for women's bodies and is produced in relatively small quantities by the ovaries and adrenal glands.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Missed period

Missing a period doesn't always mean a woman is pregnant. Missing a period, but having a negative pregnancy test, is one of the most common complaints women seek advice about.

[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

41-50 of 78 results



Results for: menstruation (78 results found)

51-60 of 78 results



Iron deficiency anaemia: Symptoms, causes, treatments & diagnosis

Read about the symptoms, causes, treatments & diagnosis for iron deficiency anaemia
[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Low blood pressure: Symptoms, diagnosis and treatment

Low blood pressure is also known as hypotension and is usually diagnosed with a blood pressure reading that is consistently lower than 90/60 mm/Hg.
[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Teenage acne

Acne is a skin problem that affects almost all teenagers. The condition results from the action of hormones on the skin's oil glands, known as sebaceous glands.
[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Candidiasis (yeast infection)

Candida is a type of yeast, or fungus, and Candidiasis is a yeast infection that can cause oral thrush, vaginal thrush and some nappy rashes.
[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

What are silent migraines?

Silent migraines are also known as migraine without headache, when a person has all the symptoms of a migraine, but not the headache. These migraine symptoms can include the aura warning signs before the migraine comes on.
[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Benign breast lumps

Not all lumps found in breasts signal breast cancer. These are called benign breast lumps, and although they are not cancerous, they may still need medical attention.
[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

What is a migraine without aura?

An aura is a warning sign some people experience before a migraine comes on. In migraine without aura, there is no warning.
[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Inherited liver diseases

There are more than 100 types of liver disease, some of which are inherited. The two most common inherited liver diseases are haemochromatosis and alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency.
[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Breast cancer and the menopause

Although reaching the menopause is not linked to an increased risk of breast cancer, breast cancer risks do increase with age.
[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Trimethylaminuria (fish odour syndrome)

Fish odour syndrome, also called trimethylaminuria, is a rare disorder in which the body is unable to break down trimethylamine, a compound derived from the diet that has a strong smell of rotting fish.
[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

51-60 of 78 results



Results for: menstruation (78 results found)

61-70 of 78 results



Epilepsy

Epilepsy is a brain condition causing a person to have seizures or fits. Around 1 in 100 people in the UK are affected.
[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Abdominal pain

Abdominal pain is a common symptom, and although is not usually a cause for concern it can be a sign of a serious illness. It is important to be able to recognise symptoms that are severe and know when to seek medical advice.
[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

CA 125

CA 125 is a protein that is a tumour marker or biomarker, which is a substance that is found in greater concentration in tumour cells than in other cells of the body.
[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Von Willebrand disease

In a bleeding disorder known as von Willebrand disease, there is a problem with a protein in the blood, so it doesn't clot properly.
[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Sore, swollen and bleeding gums

Gum problems are as big a risk to a person's oral health as tooth decay, and problems with the gums can lead to a loss of teeth. Swollen and bleeding gums can be symptoms of gum disease.
[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Endometrial cancer (womb cancer)

The most common cancer of the womb in the UK is endometrial cancer, also known as uterine cancer.
[WebMD Medical Reference](#)

Girls and friendship

Deep and lasting friendships can develop at the pre-teen to early teen stage, but there may be issues along the way
[WebMD Feature](#)

2 0 what causes constipation

Find out what can make constipation more likely to develop.
[BootsWebMD Advertorial: Reckitt Benckiser](#)

Quiz: Migraine myths and facts

Have a headache? Take this BootsWebMD quiz to see how much you know about migraines and how you can ease the pain with migraine treatment.

8 lifestyle habits to improve your sex life

Having a good sex life isn't all about what goes on in the bedroom. How you live your life day to day can have a big impact too. Get expert tips here.
[WebMD Feature](#)

61-70 of 78 results



Results for: menstruation (78 results found)

71-78 of 78 results



Womens health guide

Every woman deserves to thrive. That means handling stress, getting the best women's health care and nurturing yourself. This guide provides key facts and practical tips on women's health.

[Health & Wellness Centre](#)

Slideshow: Coping with cold sores

Besides being itchy and painful, cold sores make you feel self-conscious. This BootsWebMD slideshow shows you how to prevent and treat cold sores caused by the herpes virus.

[WebMD Health Tools](#)

Women slideshow index page

See the pictures and slideshows about women's health at BootsWebMD.

[Health & Wellness Centre](#)

Slideshow: A visual guide to endometriosis

Pain, abnormal periods and infertility are symptoms of endometriosis. BootsWebMD's pictures and illustrations show the causes, tests and treatments for endometriosis.

[WebMD Health Tools](#)

Quiz: Is your sex life ageing well?

Take this BootsWebMD quiz to see how much you know about ageing and sexual activity.

Slideshow: Facts to help you get pregnant

Trying to get pregnant? See how ovulation and fertility work so you can increase your chances of conception.

[WebMD Health Tools](#)

Slideshow: Stages of puberty

See what to expect as your child goes through puberty. BootsWebMD shows you the changes you'll see, including growth spurts, spots and more.

[WebMD Health Tools](#)

Slideshow: Common adult skin problems

Itchy skin? Spots? Nasty rash? Learn to spot common adult skin problems in this BootsWebMD slideshow.

[WebMD Health Tools](#)

71-78 of 78 results




Main page for menstruation identified as:


<https://www.webmd.boots.com/women/guide/normal-menstrual-cycle-periods>

General Notes:

- prevalence of adverts (Boots partnership)
- links and adverts largely fertility / pregnancy or a product to treat thrush / bacterial vaginosis, or similar. Did search on own laptop – to analyse this control needed on another computer without my data profile.
- Women's health Guide / other articles on the right hand side
- Top Result: "Normal menstrual cycle and periods", 3 pages, within a series of linked articles you can click through to.
- "Medical Reference" article.
- In 'Women's Health Guide' Menu at top, menstruation is placed on the 'Sex & Intimacy' section, below Contraception, Pregnancy tests, but about Sexual Health

Webpage Screen Grabs:





13 February 2018

Symptoms | Medicines | Conditions

Home
Health A-Z
WebMD Symptom Checker
Medicines & treatments
Women's health
Men's health
Children's health
News

BootsWebMD home > Women's health centre > Women's health guide
Print article | Email a friend

Women's health guide

- Just the facts
- Healthy eating
- Get fit
- Rest & relaxation
- Sex & intimacy
- Head to Toe

Healthy living centres

- Children's health
- Coping with stress
- Diet and weight loss
- Fitness
- Healthy ageing
- Men's health
- Parenting
- Pregnancy
- Quizzes
- Slideshows
- Reference
- News & features

Women's health topics by age

Age

- Essential vitamins
- Workout options
- Hormone levels
- Insomnia

Women's health guide

Just the facts
Healthy eating
Get fit
Rest & relaxation
Sex & intimacy
Head to Toe

Select a topic to explore more.

Select An Article
All Subchapter Articles:

Font size:
Share this:

Facebook
Twitter

Normal menstrual cycle and periods

During a woman's childbearing years, her body will usually experience a menstrual cycle: a complicated cycle controlled by hormones to prepare her body for pregnancy. This usually lasts around 28 days but varies from woman to woman.

What occurs during a normal menstrual cycle?

When a girl reaches puberty, her reproduction organs - her ovaries (which develop and store eggs), fallopian tubes and uterus (the womb) - have normally matured enough for her to conceive a baby.

Within each cycle, **ovulation** can occur when an ovary releases an egg into a fallopian tube - a thin tube that runs between the ovary and womb. If the egg is fertilised by a **sperm**, it can implant into the lining of the womb (the endometrium), which will supply the fertilised egg with the nutrients it needs to develop into an embryo.

If there is no implantation of a fertilised egg, or pregnancy, the womb sheds the nutrient-filled lining of the womb, which is the blood-like flow (or period) that leaves the womb through the **vagina**, and the cycle begins again. This cycle is known as the menstrual cycle.

It should be noted that having a menstrual cycle is not a guarantee of ovulation, but indicates that the body's hormones and reproductive organs are working.

How are hormones linked to the menstrual cycle?

Hormones are responsible for regulating the menstrual cycle. The pituitary gland at the base of the brain produces luteinising hormones (LH) and follicle-stimulating hormones (FSH), which in turn stimulate the ovaries to produce two other hormones: **oestrogen** and progesterone. The latter two hormones trigger the womb and **breasts** to prepare for pregnancy. There are several phases to the hormone cycle:

- Follicular phase occurs before the release of the egg
- Ovulatory phase occurs during the egg release
- Luteal phase occurs after the egg release.

Follicular phase

The follicular phase starts on the first day of your period:

Two hormones, FSH and LH, are released from the brain and travel in the blood to the ovaries.

The hormones stimulate the growth of about 15 to 20 eggs in the ovaries, each in its own 'shell', called a follicle.

FSH and LH also trigger an increase in the production of the female hormone oestrogen.


As oestrogen levels rise, like a switch it turns off the production of FSH. This careful balance of hormones enables the body to limit the number of follicles that complete maturation, or growth, in any one cycle.

As the follicular phase progresses, one follicle in one ovary becomes dominant and continues to mature. This dominant follicle suppresses all of the other follicles in the group. As a result, they stop growing and die. The dominant follicle continues to produce oestrogen.


Ovulatory phase

The ovulatory phase, or ovulation, starts about 14 days after the follicular phase starts. The ovulatory phase is the midpoint of the menstrual cycle, with the next menstrual period starting about 2 weeks later. During this phase, the following events occur:


Today in women's health




SLIDESHOW
Is your body ready for pregnancy?



SLIDESHOW
In a rut? Try these tips to shake it off



SLIDESHOW
Could you have a hormone imbalance?



SLIDESHOW
Better skin after age 50






From our sponsors

- What is heart failure?
- How to treat dry skin
- Unintended weight gain
- Find your most fertile days
- Protecting your family from meningitis
- How to treat a cold

ADVERTISEMENT

Are you heart healthy?

Find out with our quick and easy tool

Find out more >

ADVERTISEMENT

ADVERTISEMENT



ADVERTISEMENT

1 2 3

Next Article:

WebMD Medical Reference

Women's health newsletter

Health news, features and tools for your life.



ARTICLE
What's a good pre-pregnancy diet?



SLIDESHOW
16 tips when you have a lot of weight to lose



SLIDESHOW
21 of the best foods for your heart



SLIDESHOW
Could it be your thyroid?

ADVERTISEMENT

Canesintima

With a light, non-sticky formula



Learn more

From the makers of **Canesten**

ADVERTISEMENT

starts in the ovulatory phase to the throughout of the menstrual cycle, with the final menstrual period starting about 2 weeks later. During this phase, the following events occur.

Next Article:

WebMD Medical Reference

From Our Sponsor **Clearblue**

Help maximise your chances of conceiving


- Understand your cycle
- 5 top tips to maximise your chances
- Get your body ready for baby

Find out how 




ADVERTISEMENT

ADVERTISEMENT




SLIDESHOW
21 of the best foods for your heart




SLIDESHOW
Could it be your thyroid?


Popular Slideshows & Tools on **WebMD**




Headache relief
How to help headache pain



Eczema
Top eczema triggers to avoid



Fatigue
Causes of fatigue & how to fight it



Better digestion
Tips to support digestive health

[» Find us on Twitter](#)

Health information from our sponsors/advertorials

- Treating child's cold, flu and fever
- Early pregnancy signs
- Meningitis Can Be Fatal
- Constipation symptoms
- How to relieve your cough
- Unintended weight gain
- Find your fertile days
- Heart failure signs
- Understanding malnutrition

Who we are: [About us](#) | [Terms and conditions](#) | [Security and privacy](#) | [Sponsor policy](#) | [Help](#) | [Cookies](#) | [Sitemap](#) | [Contact us](#) | [Advertise with us](#) | [WebMD](#) | [MedicineNet](#) | [eMedicineHealth](#) | [Medscape](#) | [RxList](#) | [Medscape Reference](#) | [Medscape Germany](#) | [Medscape France](#)

Services from Boots: [Store Locator](#) | [NHS & Private Prescriptions](#) | [Free Repeat Prescription Service](#) | [Medicines Check Up](#) | [Male hair loss clinic](#)
[Flu vaccination](#) | [Erectile Dysfunction Clinic](#) | [Over 60s](#) | [Parenting Club](#) | [Opticians](#) | [Travel Insurance](#) | [Online clinic](#) | [Stop Smoking](#) | [Travel Vaccination](#)

©2009-2016 WebMD UK Limited and Boots UK Limited. All rights reserved. Boots/WebMD does not provide medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. See additional information.



ADVERTISEMENT



COPD: good nutrition helps you to manage your condition



Advanced Medical Nutrition

[LEARN MORE](#)

ADVERTISEMENT



13 February 2016

Enter search term here

Search

[Symptoms](#) | [Medicines](#) | [Conditions](#)

[Home](#) | [Health A-Z](#) | [WebMD Symptom Checker](#) | [Medicines & treatments](#) | [Women's health](#) | [Men's health](#) | [Children's health](#) | [News](#)

[Boots/WebMD home](#) > [Women's health centre](#) > [Women's health guide](#)

[Print article](#) [Email a friend](#)

Women's health guide

- Just the facts
- Healthy eating
- Get fit
- Rest & relaxation
- Sex & intimacy
- Head to Toe

Healthy living centres

- Children's health
- Coping with stress
- Diet and weight loss
- Fitness
- Healthy ageing
- Men's health
- Parenting
- Pregnancy
- Quizzes
- Slideshows
- Reference
- News & features

Women's health topics by age

Age

- Essential vitamins
- Workout options
- Hormone levels
- Insomnia

Women's health guide

Just the facts | Healthy eating | Get fit | Rest & relaxation | Sex & intimacy | Head to Toe

Select a topic to explore more.

Select An Article

Normal menstrual cycle and periods

(continued)

Ovulatory phase continued...

The rise in oestrogen from the dominant follicle triggers a surge in the amount of LH that is produced by the brain.

This causes the dominant follicle to release its egg from the ovary.

As the egg is released (a process called ovulation) it is captured by finger-like projections on the end of the fallopian tubes (fimbriae). The fimbriae sweep the egg into the tube.

Also during this phase, there is an increase in the amount and a change in the consistency of mucus produced by the cervix (lower part of the uterus.) If a woman were to have intercourse during this time, this receptive mucus captures the man's sperm, nourishes it, and helps it to move towards the egg for fertilisation.

Luteal phase

The luteal phase begins right after ovulation and involves the following processes: Once it releases its egg, the empty follicle develops into a new structure called the corpus luteum.

The corpus luteum secretes the hormone progesterone. Progesterone prepares the uterus for a fertilised egg to implant.

Font size:

[A](#) [A](#) [A](#)

Share this:

[f](#) [t](#)

Today in women's health



SLIDESHOW
Is your body ready for pregnancy?



SLIDESHOW
In a rut? Try these tips to shake it off



SLIDESHOW
Could you have a hormone imbalance?



SLIDESHOW
Better skin after age 50

ADVERTISEMENT

CanesOasis From the makers of **Canesten**

Effective relief from the burning & stinging of cystitis



Contains sodium citrate. Always read the label. [Learn more](#)


ADVERTISEMENT

- Time for yourself
- Pregnancy after 35
- Thyroid problems
- Fibromyalgia
- Low blood pressure
- Osteopenia

From our sponsors

- What is heart failure?
- How to treat dry skin
- Unintended weight gain
- Find your most fertile days
- Protecting your family from meningitis
- How to treat a cold

ADVERTISEMENT



Let's get digital

Read our interactive Health & Beauty magazine on your tablet or laptop

Visit Boots.com

ADVERTISEMENT

Canesintima

With a light, non-sticky formula



If intercourse has taken place and a man's sperm has fertilised the egg (a process called **conception**), the fertilised egg (embryo) will travel through the fallopian tube to implant in the uterus. The woman is now considered pregnant.

If the egg is not fertilised, it passes through the uterus. Not needed to support a pregnancy, the lining of the uterus breaks down and sheds, and the next menstrual period begins.

When does menstruation normally begin?

The menstrual cycle begins when a girl reaches puberty, and the first menstrual period is known as the menarche. Today, the average age in which girls start their menstrual cycle is about 12 years. However, normal menarche can occur as early as 8 years old or begin as late as 16. If menarche begins before 8 years or after 16 years, it should be investigated by a healthcare professional.

How long is an average menstrual cycle?

The first day of a period, where there is a blood-like flow from the vagina, marks the first day of the menstrual cycle. The cycle ends the day before the start of your next period. On average, a menstrual cycle lasts about 28 days, but anywhere between 24 and 35 days is considered normal.

How much menstrual flow is normal?

The duration of the menstrual period - which starts and ends with the flow of blood from the vagina - and the amount of blood flow varies. Bleeding normally lasts about 5 days but it can occur for up to 8 days or can be fewer days. Typically, the first 2 days are the heaviest. The amount of bleeding involved is not as much as most women think, it's 30-40ml (about 2-3 tbsp).

Next Article:

WebMD Medical Reference

ADVERTISEMENT

From our Sponsor **Clearblue**

Fertility myths and facts

- Did you know? Find out the truth about fertility and conception

Watch the video 



ADVERTISEMENT

Canesintima

With a light, non-sticky formula



Learn more

From the makers of **Canesten**

ADVERTISEMENT

From our Sponsor **Clearblue**


Fertility myths and facts

- Did you know? Find out the truth about fertility and conception

Watch the video 



ADVERTISEMENT



Online repeat prescription service


Manage your regular prescriptions online


Visit Boots.com

ADVERTISEMENT





Women's health newsletter

Health news, features and tools for your life.

Sign up 





ADVERTISEMENT



 <p>ARTICLE What's a good pre-pregnancy diet?</p>	 <p>SLIDESHOW 16 tips when you have a lot of weight to lose</p>
 <p>SLIDESHOW 21 of the best foods for your heart</p>	 <p>SLIDESHOW Could it be your thyroid?</p>


ADVERTISEMENT





Popular Slideshows & Tools on 

 <p>What's your cholesterol IQ? Take the quiz</p>	 <p>Pre-pregnancy Is your body ready for pregnancy?</p>
---	---

ADVERTISEMENT

 <p>SLIDESHOW 21 of the best foods for your heart</p>	 <p>SLIDESHOW Could it be your thyroid?</p>
--	--

Popular Slideshows & Tools on 

 <p>Child illness Illnesses every parent should know</p>	 <p>Liver damage Surprising things that harm your liver</p>
 <p>What is IBS? Understand this common condition</p>	 <p>Fingernail file What your nails say about your health</p>

[» Find us on Twitter](#)

Health information from our sponsors/advertisers

- Treating child's cold, flu and fever
- Unintended weight gain
- Early pregnancy signs
- Find your fertile days
- Meningitis Can Be Fatal
- Heart failure signs
- Constipation symptoms
- Understanding malnutrition
- How to relieve your cough

Who we are: [About us](#) | [Terms and conditions](#) | [Security and privacy](#) | [Sponsor policy](#) | [Help](#) | [Cookies](#) | [Sitemap](#) | [Contact us](#) | [Advertise with us](#) | [WebMD](#) | [MedicineNet](#) |

Services from Boots: [Store Locator](#) | [NHS & Private Prescriptions](#) | [Free Repeat Prescription Service](#) | [Medicines Check Up](#) | [Male hair loss clinic](#)
[Flu vaccination](#) | [Erectile Dysfunction Clinic](#) | [Over 60s](#) | [Parenting Club](#) | [Opticians](#) | [Travel Insurance](#) | [Online clinic](#) | [Stop Smoking](#) | [Travel Vaccination](#)

©2009-2018 WebMD UK Limited and Boots UK Limited. All rights reserved.
 Boots/WebMD does not provide medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. See additional information.





Dementia: advice to help support nutritional needs



13 February 2018

Enter search term here

Search

Symptoms | Medicines | Conditions

Home Health A-Z WebMD Symptom Checker Medicines & treatments Women's health Men's health Children's health News

BootsWebMD home > Women's health centre > Women's health guide

Print article Email a friend

Women's health guide

- Just the facts
- Healthy eating
- Get fit
- Rest & relaxation
- Sex & intimacy
- Head to Toe

Healthy living centres

- Children's health
- Coping with stress
- Diet and weight loss
- Fitness
- Healthy ageing
- Men's health
- Parenting
- Pregnancy
- Quizzes
- Slideshows
- Reference
- News & features

Women's health topics by age

Age 30-50

- Essential vitamins
- Workout options
- Hormone levels
- Insomnia
- Time for yourself

Women's health guide

Just the facts Healthy eating Get fit Rest & relaxation Sex & intimacy Head to Toe

Select a topic to explore more.

Select An Article: All Subchapter Articles:

Normal menstrual cycle and periods

(continued)

Are there any signs when a period is about to start?

Although some women don't have any symptoms, the changes in the hormone levels that occur during the menstrual cycle can have physical and emotional effects on women. These symptoms are known as premenstrual symptoms and include:

- Bloating
- Breast tenderness
- Up to 1kg weight gain
- Backache
- Headaches
- Irritability
- Feeling emotional or a general feeling of being upset
- Feeling depressed
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty sleeping.

The symptoms usually get better once the period starts and will disappear altogether by the end of the period.

What problems are associated with menstruation?

Today in women's health

SLIDESHOW Is your body ready for pregnancy?

SLIDESHOW In a rut? Try these tips to shake it off

SLIDESHOW Could you have a hormone imbalance?

SLIDESHOW Better skin after age 50

always for sensitive bladder

PLAY WITH SOUND

Expert answers for your sensitive bladder questions.

★★★★★ - Peachymum
"Does what it says"
Thin and great absorbency with a pleasant scent to keep you...

- Insomnia
- Time for yourself
- Pregnancy after 35
- Thyroid problems
- Fibromyalgia
- Low blood pressure
- Osteopenia

From our sponsors

- What is heart failure?
- How to treat dry skin
- Unintended weight gain
- Find your most fertile days
- Protecting your family from meningitis
- How to treat a cold

Are you heart healthy?

Find out with our quick and easy tool

Find out more >

CanesOasis

Help ease the discomfort with CanesOasis!

CanesOasis Cystitis Relief

4g Granules for Oral Solution

What problems are associated with menstruation?

Some women have painful periods, known as dysmenorrhoea, where there is pain in the abdomen, back or vagina. The pain normally begins before a period starts and can last for a couple of days. The reason for the pain is not known, but anti-inflammatory drugs can help relieve the pain.

Heavier periods than normal are known as menorrhagia. Bleeding of 60ml (4tbsp) or more during one cycle is considered heavy menstrual bleeding. Signs of heavy bleeding include using a large number of tampons or pads, needing to use both tampons and pads at the same time, and flooding, with bleeding going through your clothes or bedding. There may also be clots in the blood.

If periods are irregular, with varying intervals between periods, ovulation may not be occurring and there could be a problem with the balance of hormones. While younger women with irregular periods should seek medical advice, irregular periods are common in the few years before menopause.

Using super-absorbent tampons without changing them regularly has been linked to toxic shock syndrome (TSS), a dangerous condition that affects a number of organs and is characterised by fever and chills, nausea and vomiting, light-headedness, and watery diarrhoea with abdominal pain. Greater awareness of the problem has made it less common today.

Are there any conditions that could change the menstrual cycle?

When a woman is pregnant she will not have menstrual cycles and periods. Once the baby is born, breast-feeding the baby can delay the start of the menstrual cycle. However, fertility can return before the first period occurs after childbirth.

Other factors that can affect the menstrual cycle include:

- A rapid increase or decrease in body weight
- Low body weight, such as when there is an eating disorder, especially anorexia nervosa
- Emotional stress such as being fearful of pregnancy
- Medical drugs such as cytotoxics and hormones
- Failure of the body's ability to clot blood
- Hormonal contraceptive methods.

When does menstruation normally end?

When a woman reaches menopause, typically between the ages of 45 and 55, her menstrual cycle will come to an end.

How many eggs does a woman have?

The vast majority of the eggs within the ovaries steadily die, until they are depleted at the menopause. At birth, there are approximately a million eggs, and by the time of puberty, only about 300,000 remain. Of these, 300 to 400 will be ovulated during a woman's reproductive lifetime. The eggs continue to degenerate during pregnancy, with the use of oral contraceptives and in the presence or absence of regular menstrual cycles.

Further reading:

- Slideshow: Answers to your top period questions
- Slideshow: All about menopause and perimenopause
- Preparing your daughter for her period

pleasant scent to keep you...

Boots

Online repeat prescription service

Manage your regular prescriptions online

Visit Boots.com >

Women's health newsletter

Health news, features and tools for your life.

Sign up

ARTICLE What's a good pre-pregnancy diet?

SLIDESHOW 16 tips when you have a lot of weight to lose

SLIDESHOW 21 of the best foods for your heart

SLIDESHOW Could it be your thyroid?

Popular Slideshows & Tools on Boots WebMD

Child illness Illnesses every parent should know

Liver damage Surprising things that harm your liver

Effective relief from the burning & stinging of cystitis



CanesOasis®
Cystitis Relief
4g Granules for Oral Solution
sodium citrate
cystitis relief

48hr
complete course

Learn more

Contains sodium citrate. Always read the label.
From the makers of **Canesten®**

ADVERTISEMENT

When does menstruation normally end?

When a woman reaches **menopause**, typically between the ages of 45 and 55, her menstrual cycle will come to an end.

How many eggs does a woman have?

The vast majority of the eggs within the ovaries steadily die, until they are depleted at the menopause. At birth, there are approximately a million eggs, and by the time of puberty, only about 300,000 remain. Of these, 300 to 400 will be ovulated during a woman's reproductive lifetime. The eggs continue to degenerate during pregnancy, with the use of oral contraceptives and in the presence or absence of regular menstrual cycles.

Further reading:

- ◆ Slideshow: Answers to your top period questions
- ◆ Slideshow: All about menopause and perimenopause
- ◆ Preparing your daughter for her period
- ◆ Six things you may not know about your periods
- ◆ How to Avoid Periods
- ◆ All about menstrual cups
- ◆ Heavy periods (menorrhagia)
- ▶ See all Menstruation topics

1 2 3


Next Article:

WebMD Medical Reference


View Article Sources

Medically Reviewed by Dr Rob Hicks on December 05, 2016

© 2016 WebMD, LLC. All rights reserved.

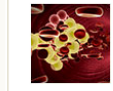


SLIDESHOW
21 of the best foods
for your heart



SLIDESHOW
Could it be your
thyroid?

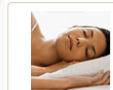
Popular Slideshows & Tools on WebMD



What's your
cholesterol IQ?
Take the quiz



Pre-pregnancy
is your body ready
for pregnancy?



Sleep tips
Sleep better tonight



Cold & fever
Treating your child's
cold or fever

» Find us on Twitter

ADVERTISEMENT

From Our Sponsor **Clearblue**

Help maximise your chances of conceiving

- Understand your cycle
- 5 top tips to maximise your chances
- Get your body ready for baby

Find out how →



ADVERTISEMENT

Health information from our sponsors/advertorials

- Treating child's cold, flu and fever
- Unintended weight gain
- Early pregnancy signs
- Find your fertile days
- Meningitis Can Be Fatal
- Heart failure signs
- Constipation symptoms
- Understanding malnutrition
- How to relieve your cough

BootsWebMD Analysis

Typology of Articles from 78 Search Results for “menstruation” (13/2/18)

Menstruation / cycle related / anatomy (13 = 16.67%)

Problems e.g. Problems / negative menstruation related symptoms or conditions (19 = 24.36%)

Hormones (4 = 5.13%)

Menopause (5 = 6.41%)

Pregnancy (8 = 10.26%)

Puberty / growing up (8 = 10.26%)

Other (21 = 26.92%)

Type	Titles	Tally
Advertorial	2 0 what causes constipation (Reckitt Bensicker)	2
	4 0 Increase your chances of getting pregnant (Clearblue)	
Feature	Avoiding Periods	5
	What your teenage daughter needs to know about sexual health	
	Six things you may not know about your periods	
	Girls and friendship	
	8 lifestyle habits to improve your sex life	
Health Tools	Slideshow: Answers to your top period questions	8
	Slideshow: A visual guide to Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)	
	Slideshow: All about menopause and perimenopause	
	Slideshow: Coping with Cold sores	
	Slideshow: A visual guide to endometriosis	
	Slideshow: Facts to help you get pregnant	
	Slideshow: Stages of puberty	
	Slideshow: Common adult skin problems	
Health & Wellness Centre	Womens health guide	2
	Women slideshow index page	
Health & Wellness Directory	Periods	3
	Ovulation	
	Premenstrual syndrome (PMS)	
Medical Reference	Normal menstrual cycle and periods	53
	How your menstrual cycle affects performance in sport	
	Pregnancy and conception date	
	Menstrual blood problems: Clots, colour and thickness	
	Hormones and oral health	
	Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) triggers and prevention	
	How to guide: Ovulation calculator	
	Menopause basics	
	Menstrual cramps and relief	
	Pregnancy week by week: Introduction	
	Abnormal vaginal bleeding	
	Ovulation	
	Can I get pregnant if...? Sex and pregnancy myths	
	Breast cancer: Chemotherapy treatment	
	Blood clots	
	Vaginal bleeding between periods	
	Parenting older children and teenagers FAQs	
	The uterus (womb)	
	Heavy periods (menorrhagia)	
	What are the side effects of long term steroid use?	
	Why is my teenager always sick?	
	Period problems during menopause	
	Phyto-oestrogens and menopause	

	The fertility evaluation	
	Headaches basics	
	Girls and puberty	
	Cold sores – symptoms, diagnosis, treatment and prevention	
	Major depression (clinical depression)	
	Depression, the thyroid and hormones	
	What is a migraine with aura?	
	Premenstrual syndrome (PMS)	
	Endometriosis	
	Breast problems: Symptoms and treatment	
	Premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD)	
	Migraine headaches and pregnancy	
	Normal testosterone and oestrogen levels in women	
	Missed period	
	Iron deficiency anaemia: Symptoms, causes, treatments & diagnosis	
	Low blood pressure: Symptoms, diagnosis and treatment	
	Teenage acne	
	Candidiasis (yeast infection)	
	What are silent migraines?	
	Benign breast lumps	
	What is a migraine without aura?	
	Inherited liver diseases	
	Breast cancer and the menopause	
	Trimethylaminuria (fish odour syndrome)	
	Epilepsy	
	Abdominal pain	
	CA 125	
	Sore, swollen and bleeding gums	
	Endometrial cancer (womb cancer)	
Quiz	Is my period normal?	4
	The truth about the vagina	
	Migraine myths and facts	
	Is your sex life ageing well?	
UK Health News	Early puberty ‘may trigger later depression’	1

Keyword Frequency in Main Article:

Article = 1477 words
normal / normally = 11 (0.74%)
abnormal = 0
typical[ly] = 2 (0.14%)
average = 3 (0.20%)
vary[ing] / varies = 3 (0.20%)
change(s) = 3 (0.20%)
range = 0
[not] dirty = 0
shame / ashamed = 0
hide / hidden / secret = 0
proud = 0
woman / women = 14 (0.95%)
female = 1 (0.07%)
girl(s) = 3 (0.20%)
pregnant / pregnancy = 8 (0.54%)
childbearing = 1 (0.07%)
childbirth = 1 (0.07%)
baby = 3 (0.20%)
foetus =
you / your = 3 (0.20%)
menstruate = 0
menstrual (cycle or period) = 26 (1.76%)
period(s) = 21 (1.42%)
menstuator = 0
[person who] menstruates = 0
man / men = 1 (0.07%)
menstrual cup(s) = 0
tampon(s) = 3 (0.20%)
sanitary pad(s) = 2 (0.14%)
sponge = 0
premenstrual = 1 (0.07%)
pms / pmt = 0
pain / painful = 6 (0.41%)
mood = 0
emotion[al] = 3 (0.20%)
stress = 0

Initial Analysis Notes:

(Text in regular or **bold** is text from the article, and text in *italics* are my notes.)

Normal Menstrual Cycle and Periods

During a **woman's childbearing years**, her body will usually experience a **menstrual cycle**: a complicated cycle **controlled by hormones** to **prepare her body for pregnancy**. This usually lasts around 28 days but **varies from woman to woman**.

What occurs during a normal menstrual cycle?

When a **girl** reaches puberty, her reproduction organs – her ovaries (which develop and store eggs), fallopian tubes and uterus (the womb) – have **normally matured enough for her to conceive a baby**.

- *Woman... (3 times in first paragraph)*
 - *normal – medical versus lay understanding of the term?*
 - *her body / experience / controlled by hormones... a process that happens to you, alienating: outside your control.*
 - *teleological model (Martin, 1989) i.e. childbearing years & prep for pregnancy*
 - *positive note: that it varies*
- Goes on to briefly outline the role of hormones and the different phases of the menstrual cycle (follicular, ovulatory, luteal)*

If **intercourse** has taken place and a **man's sperm** has fertilised the egg (a process called conception), the fertilised egg (embryo) will travel through the fallopian tube to implant in the uterus. **The woman is now considered pregnant**. If the egg is **not fertilised**, it passes through the uterus. **Not needed to support a pregnancy**, the lining of the uterus breaks down and sheds, and the next menstrual period begins.

- *heteronormative*
- *teleological / failed pregnancy model*

When does menstruation normally begin?

The menstrual cycle begins when a **girl reaches puberty**, and the first menstrual period is known as the menarche. Today, the **average age** in which girls start their menstrual cycle is about 12 years. However, **normal menarche can occur** as early as 8 years old or begin as late as 16. If menarche begins before 8 years or after 16 years, it should be investigated by a healthcare professional.

How long is the average menstrual cycle?

The first day of a period, where there is a blood-like flow from the vagina, marks the first day of the menstrual cycle. The cycle ends the day before the start of your next period. **On average, a menstrual cycle lasts about 28 days, but anywhere between 24 and 35 days is considered normal**.

How much menstrual flow is normal?

The duration of the menstrual period – which starts and ends with the flow of blood from the vagina – and **the amount of blood flow varies**. **Bleeding normally lasts about 5 days but it can occur for up to 8 days or can be fewer days**.

Typically, the first 2 days are the heaviest. The amount of bleeding involved is not as much as most women think, it's 30-40ml (about 2-3 tbsps).

- normal / average?

- states clearly that the age of menarche, length of cycle / period and amount of blood varies.

Are there any signs when a period is about to start?

Although some women don't have any symptoms, the changes in the hormone levels that occur during the menstrual cycle can have physical and emotional effects on women. These symptoms are known as premenstrual symptoms and include:

Bloating

Breast tenderness

Up to 1kg weight gain

Backache

Headaches

Irritability

Feeling emotional or a general feeling of being upset

Feeling depressed

Difficulty concentrating

Difficulty sleeping.

These symptoms usually get better once the period starts and will disappear altogether by the end of the period.

- notes a broader range of emotions than the other pages: irritability, feeling upset, depressed, but does not link to a page with more detailed information about PMS.

- ALSO: uses premenstrual symptoms rather than PMS / PMT as others do. Minimising or non-medicalising?

What problems are associated with menstruation?

Some women have **painful periods, known as dysmenorrhoea**, where there is **pain in the abdomen, back or vagina**. The pain normally begins before a period starts and can last for a couple of days. The reason for the pain is not known, but anti-inflammatory drugs can help relieve the pain.

Heavier periods than normal are known as **menorrhagia**. Bleeding of 60ml (4tbsps) or more during one cycle is considered heavy menstrual bleeding. Signs of heavy bleeding include using a large number of tampons or pads, needing to use both tampons and pads at the same time, and flooding, with bleeding going through your clothes or bedding. There may also be clots in the blood.

If periods are irregular, with varying intervals between periods, ovulation may not be occurring and there could be a problem with the balance of hormones.

While younger women with irregular periods should seek medical advice, irregular periods are common in the few years before menopause.

Using super-absorbent tampons without changing them regularly has been linked to toxic shock syndrome (TSS), a dangerous condition that affects a number of organs and is characterised by fever and chills, nausea and vomiting, light-headedness, and watery diarrhoea with abdominal pain. Greater awareness of the problem has made it less common today.

Are there any conditions that could change the menstrual cycle?

When a woman is pregnant she will not have menstrual cycles and periods. Once the baby is born, breast-feeding the baby can delay the start of the menstrual cycle. However, fertility can return before the first period occurs after childbirth.

Other factors that can affect the menstrual cycle include:

A rapid increase or decrease in body weight
Low body weight, such as when there is an eating disorder, especially anorexia nervosa

Emotional stress such as being fearful of pregnancy

Medical drugs such as cytotoxics and hormones

Failure of the body's ability to clot blood

Hormonal contraceptive methods.

When does menstruation normally end?

When a woman reaches menopause, typically between the ages of 45 and 55, her menstrual cycle will come to an end.

How many eggs does a woman have?

The vast majority of the eggs within the ovaries steadily die, until they are depleted at the menopause. At birth, there are approximately a million eggs, and by the time of puberty, only about 300,000 remain. Of these, 300 to 400 will be ovulated during a woman's reproductive lifetime. The eggs continue to degenerate during pregnancy, with the use of oral contraceptives and in the presence or absence of regular menstrual cycles.

- The article ends on a question of fertility. The discussion in this article frames fertility and pregnancy as quite central to menstruation, and the ending is no exception. The final section 'how many eggs does a woman have?' seems very heavily loaded, perhaps emphasising a sense of cultural anxiety (or cultural pressure) that women might face regarding fertility and pregnancy.

- Menstrual products are only mentioned in the context of period problems: using a large number of pads for a heavy flow; TSS with tampons. There is no practical – let alone positive – advice regarding how to manage menstrual flow, which seems like an odd oversight: there are more mentions of fertility / pregnancy than menstrual products.

- NB: all of the websites mention pads and tampons (though BWMD only in passing). The other sites outline pads and tampons as the main two options (disposable assumed re. pads, but not specified, though reusable ones would be pretty clear as it would mention cleaning). Menstrual cups are noted by P and NHS. No websites mention products such as period pants, reusable cloth pads, or menstrual sponges (for e.g.) and none of the case studies enter into any discussion of the positive and negative aspects of the methods mentioned, other than how they collect or absorb the blood or that tampons might be 'more convenient' (Patient). Is this an appropriate venue to mention the environmental considerations for using certain products – i.e. challenging the orthodoxy of big monopolies on disposable products? If this isn't a place to mention these issues, as part of a wider informational/education context regarding menstruation, then where is? Some of these ideas are making their way into school SRE curricula via enterprises such as The Real Period CC – but what about providing up-to-date information to older people outside the education system?

- The main condition that might affect cycle is pregnancy. This may be true in the sense that being pregnant stops periods, but there are many other factors that impact the menstrual cycle, and it doesn't necessarily need to be framed in this way, as a separate and overriding condition to the other ones that are listed afterwards. Even in the list of other conditions that might affect menstruation, emotional stress is linked directly to pregnancy – even though stress might come from many different areas in any menstruator's life such as the workplace. It demonstrates the depth of the investment in the model of menstruation as failed pregnancy, and the overarching outdated and sexist model which emphasises the woman-as-mother role, defined by heterosexual relationships and a supposed normative desire to produce babies. By signposting this position consistently through the advice, the WebMD site is revealed to be invested in a traditional ideological view of women in society, with the female body bounded by a rigid definition as a reproductive vessel. Alienating of cis women who do not want to have children (or can't have them), of cis and trans women who experience severe difficulties relating to menstruation (from a physical or psychological point of view) and especially of non-binary and trans menstruators. It flattens the experience of menstruating to something that happens **to** you that you have little control over. It conforms more to the medical model outlined by Martin (1989), with an especially strong association between menstruation and reproduction. Given the recent widely reported news of Boots' moralistic position relating to providing emergency birth control at an affordable price, one might be forgiven for considering their advice to be heavily ideologically and morally driven, as opposed to an impartial source of information – which is what is generally expected of any text in the medical arena, despite many studies demonstrating the reach of ideology and bias in medical practice.

Boots WebMD Editorial Policy and Medical Review

Has the NHS Information Standard quality mark: 'awarded to organisations with a commitment to trustworthy health and care information with high quality working processes to achieve this. This includes our content being reviewed by medically qualified UK doctors and other appropriately qualified healthcare professionals'

See: webmd.boots.com/about-webmd-policies/nhs-information-standard

About

States that the aim of BootsWebMD is to bring 'you UK specific, GP reviewed health information' – so the content is tailored to meet a UK audience, or reflect the values of the partnership, clearly distinct from the WebMD USA pages.

'The combination of years of Boots expertise and WebMD's comprehensive medical information enables us to present you with compelling, credible and up-to-date content on the latest health topics, news and research.'

'...should not be used as a substitute for medical advice...'

'The BootsWebMD content staff blends award-winning expertise in journalism, content creation, expert commentary, and medical review to give our users what they are looking for – the best health information possible.'

Editorial Policy (2009)

'Our mission is to bring you objective and trustworthy information on the web.'

'We are committed to providing information on a wide variety of health topics, and rather than filtering certain types of information that may or may not be applicable to any one individual's personal health, we rely on you, our reader, to choose the information that is most appropriate for you.'

'In a medium often accused of providing outdated and inaccurate information, we aim to send out as a credible, authoritative source of health news.'

Medical Re-Review

'Our medical reference articles, features, slideshows and quizzes go through a medical re-review process at least every 2 years from the last reviewed date that is displayed on every article.'

Medically Reviewed by Dr Rob Hicks, 5 December 2016

www.webmd.boots.com/rob-hicks

According to his WebMD profile, Hicks is a GP locum, and also works in a sexual health clinic in a hospital. He notes his 'special interests' as 'women's, men's and children's health, complementary therapies, health promotion and lifestyle management' (Boots Web MD, nd). These interests are very broad and seem to cover almost any aspect of medicine, other than the care of elderly people.

He also writes for NHS Choices.

Much emphasis is given to his status as a 'celebrity doctor' and his regular TV and radio appearances or consulting work, as well as his work as a public speaker / spokesperson 'for many successful health campaigns' (ibid).

Also noted are his 3 books, charity ambassador / patron activities and hobbies which include being a 'singer/songwriter and keyboard player' and 'cycling, driving and writing about cars'.

Further investigation of his personal website - www.drrobhicks.co.uk – provides a longer biography in the 'about' section. A banner photograph completed with his professional suffixes and accompanying by-line 'media doctor' which seems to give this as much significance and gravity as his three medical qualifications. These are listed as impressively as MBBS, DRCOG, MRCP, which are: the standard medical degree, awarded after 5 years training along with the title of medical doctor; a Diploma of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists undertaken voluntarily during GP training which recognises specialist knowledge in this field; and the certification of training in General Practice. I do not wish to undermine these professional qualifications, however they reflect very standard medical training and listing them as abbreviations like this – as people in many fields and professionals do – gives the impression of extra importance or significance, especially to a lay audience that is unfamiliar with any given profession. My own suffixes to date read as BA(Hons) MRes AFHEA, with BA and BSc qualifications being more widely familiar to most people outside medicine. MBBS – while clearly important – does not signify anything extra to the Dr prefix.

Note: US Site is very different in tone – perhaps surprising given the standard of privatisation of American healthcare?

- not affiliated with Boots (or on the surface any other business)*
- mentions contraception, but not anywhere near as focussed on pregnancy*
- tone is very different, much friendlier and encourages reflection on personal experience in the opening lines.*
- focuses on change, and has a 'normal' disclaimer, and reiterates that different things, e.g. flow rates are all normal.*
- less detailed, more general, doesn't go into detail of phases etc.*
- less loaded language: lining 'sheds', when pregnancy doesn't occur: there is no mention of sex, with a man, or failed pregnancy, simply if the egg 'isn't fertilized'.*
- notes that hormonal contraceptives might affect your cycle, no mention of pregnancy there.*
- broader range for 'normal' length of cycle than presented on UK site (up to 45 rather than 35 days)*

NHS Choices

Search conducted 14th February 2018

“menstruation” = 47 results

“period” = 5,702 results

“periods” = 5,702 results

All Search Results for “menstruation”:

The screenshot shows the NHS Choices website search results for the term "menstruation". The page features a navigation bar with links to Home, About, Contact, Tools, Video, e-Referral Service, and Communities. A search bar at the top right contains the text "menstruation". Below the navigation bar, there are five tabs: Health A-Z, Live Well, Care and support, Health news, and Services near you. The main content area displays "Search results for 'menstruation'" with 47 results found. The first result is a video titled "NHS VIDEOS | Menstrual cycle: animation". Below this, there are several text-based results with titles and brief descriptions, including "Periods, fertility, menstrual cycle - Live Well", "Starting periods - Live Well", "Stopped or missed periods ...", "Is PMT a myth? ...", "Heavy periods self-assessment", "What causes bleeding between periods? - Health questions", "Citalopram: an antidepressant - NHS.UK", and "Am I pregnant? Information for young people - Live Well". At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with sections for "NHS Choices information", "Choices e-newsletters", and "Your pages". The footer also includes the NHS logo, the GOV.UK logo, and the Health & care information you can trust logo.

Home | About | Contact | Tools | Video | e-Referral Service | Communities Translate ▾ ▲ Log in or create an account

NHS choices Your health, your choices

Health A-Z | Live Well | Care and support | Health news | Services near you

Search results for 'menstruation'

47 search results found

NHS VIDEOS | Menstrual cycle: animation
This animation explains in detail how the menstrual cycle works.

Periods, fertility, menstrual cycle - Live Well
Find links to articles about periods and the menstrual cycle, including PMS, fertility, contraception, ovulation and period problems.

Starting periods - Live Well
Tips for parents on when to talk to daughters about periods and what to tell them, including common questions and answers.

Stopped or missed periods ...
Read about the common causes of stopped periods and when to seek medical help. Sometimes underlying medical conditions can also affect periods.

Is PMT a myth? ...
Premenstrual tension "may be all in the mind", the Daily Mail reported today. This story is based on research that looked at whether there is any good evidence to support the widely held view that women suffer negative moods. ...

Heavy periods self-assessment
A self-assessment designed to help women gauge whether their periods are heavy and if so, what to do next.

What causes bleeding between periods? - Health questions
There are many different causes of bleeding between periods. Some may not be anything to worry about, but seek medical advice if you're concerned.

Citalopram: an antidepressant - NHS.UK
NHS medicines information on citalopram – what it's used for, side effects, dosage and who can take it.

Am I pregnant? Information for young people - Live Well
Facts for young people about when a girl can get pregnant, signs and symptoms of pregnancy and where to go for support.

Periods ...
Find out about periods, including when they usually start and finish, sanitary products, premenstrual syndrome, getting pregnant, and changes to your periods.

1 2 3 4 5 [Next](#)

NHS Choices information | Choices e-newsletters | Your pages

Site policies	Other NHS sites	About the NHS	Other channels	Other Languages	Contact NHS Choices
Terms and conditions	NHS e-Referral Service	The NHS in England	Follow us on Twitter	Visit our language section for more health websites in foreign languages.	Choices helpdesk
Editorial policy	Summary Care Records	About NHS services	Facebook		Freedom of Information requests
Comments policy	NHS Scotland	Choice in the NHS	YouTube		Working for NHS Choices
Syndication	NHS Northern Ireland	Quality accounts	Video library		Request content evidence sources
Privacy policy	NHS Wales	PROMs	Links library		NHS Direct legacy enquiries
Cookies policy	NHS Careers	Find authorities and trusts	NHS Choices Training		Press enquiries
Links policy	NHS Jobs	Healthwatch England			
Personal accounts	Department of Health	The NHS Constitution			
Accessibility	NHS England				
Sitemap					

Period problems - Live Well

Find information about your periods and what can go wrong, including painful periods, heavy periods, PMS, ovulation pain, and what to do if you're having no periods.

How soon can I use tampons after giving birth? - Health questions

You shouldn't use tampons until you've had your postnatal check, which usually happens six weeks after giving birth. This is because you'll still have a wound at the site where the placenta joined with your uterine wall.



NHS VIDEOS | Coping with the menopause

Watch two women describe their experience of the menopause and find out about its effect on women's bodies, common symptoms and treatments.

Early periods and depression studied ...

'Girls who go through puberty early are more likely to suffer mental health problems in their teenage years,' The Daily Telegraph has reported. The newspaper suggested that these problems may be due to 'rows with parents and boyfriend troubles'. The news...

Ovulation pain ...

Find out about ovulation pain, how to treat it, its effect on your fertility, and when you need to see a doctor.

Hormone headaches - Live Well

Most headaches in women are caused by hormones. At least 5 million women experience hormone headaches each month, say researchers.

Endometriosis ...

Endometriosis is a common condition where small pieces of the womb lining (the endometrium) are found outside the womb.

HRT and joint problems ...

'HRT can increase the risk of needing a joint replacement' reports The Daily Telegraph today, claiming that women using hormone replacement therapy are 1.5 times

Fibroids - Treatment ...

Read about the treatments for fibroids including medication for symptoms, medication to shrink fibroids, and the different types of surgical and non-surgical procedures.

Can saucapans cause early menopause? ...

'Gender-bending chemicals found in non-stick pans and food packaging are linked to early menopause,' reported the Daily Mail. It said researchers have found that perfluorocarbons (PFCs) are associated with hormone disruption in women.

[Previous](#) [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [Next](#)

Blood clots ...

Every year, thousands of people in the UK develop a blood clot in a vein. It's known as venous thromboembolism (VTE) and is a serious, potentially fatal, medical condition.

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) ...

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a common, long-term condition of the digestive system. It can cause bouts of stomach cramps, bloating, diarrhoea and/or constipation.

Postmenopausal bleeding ...

Postmenopausal bleeding is vaginal bleeding that happens at least 12 months after your periods have stopped.

How soon can I use tampons after giving birth? - Health questions

You shouldn't use tampons until you've had your postnatal check, which usually happens six weeks after giving birth. This is because you'll still have a wound at the site where the placenta joined with your uterine wall.

Signs of puberty: what happens to boys and girls

Find out when puberty begins, the signs of puberty in boys and girls, and how long puberty lasts.

What causes bleeding during pregnancy? - Health questions

Bleeding during pregnancy is relatively common, with around 1 in 10 women experiencing some bleeding.

Do I have an anxiety disorder? - Health questions

You may have an anxiety disorder if you have long-term symptoms of anxiety. See your GP if anxiety symptoms are causing you distress.

You and your body just after birth ...

How you might feel straight after the birth, including your breasts, vagina, stitches, plus checks and tests. Also, recovering from a caesarean section.

Work out if you're at risk of breaking a bone

Work out if you're at risk of developing osteoporosis and breaking a bone in the next 10 years.

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) ...

Find out what hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is, why it's used, the different types available, and what the main risks and side effects are.

[Previous](#) [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [Next](#)

PMT drug? Not yet ...

"Discovery raises hopes of drug for PMT," says the headline in The Daily Telegraph. The newspaper article reports that scientists studying the condition have "isolated"

Heavy periods - Treatment ...

Read about the various treatment options for heavy periods. Medication is the main treatment but surgery may be used in some cases.

How soon can I use tampons after giving birth? - Health questions

You shouldn't use tampons until you've had your postnatal check, which usually happens six weeks after giving birth. This is because you'll still have a wound at the site where the placenta joined with your uterine wall.

The continuous contraceptive 'super pill' ...

A new contraceptive pill that is taken every day could end pre-menstrual tension, newspapers reported on September 27 2007. The so-called 'super pill', Lybrel, is

How soon can I use tampons after giving birth? - Health questions

You shouldn't use tampons until you've had your postnatal check, which usually happens six weeks after giving birth. This is because you'll still have a wound at the site where the placenta joined with your uterine wall.

How soon can I use tampons after giving birth? - Health questions

You shouldn't use tampons until you've had your postnatal check, which usually happens six weeks after giving birth. This is because you'll still have a wound at the site where the placenta joined with your uterine wall.

How soon can I use tampons after giving birth? - Health questions

You shouldn't use tampons until you've had your postnatal check, which usually happens six weeks after giving birth. This is because you'll still have a wound at the site where the placenta joined with your uterine wall.

Where's your pain?

Find information on all kinds of pain in different parts of the body, including headache, abdominal pain, hip pain, knee pain, period pain and chest pain.

Can you have sex during a period? - Health questions

Yes, you can. However, some people may feel uncomfortable having sex during a woman's monthly period because it can be messy, and the presence of blood can be off-putting. Some people may also oppose it on religious grounds.

Hormone may ease menopause symptoms ...

A hormone pill 'may help women through the menopause and give their sex lives a boost,' according to the Daily Mail. The newspaper reported that the hormone pill, called DHEA, could become an...

[Previous](#) [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [Next](#)

Search results for 'menstruation'

47 search results found

what you need to know All girls and women ...

MENSTRUATION Another word for period. **MENSTRUAL CYCLE** The time from the beginning of one period to the beginning of the next.

New clue to early menopause ...

"A test could warn women of early menopause," according to The Guardian. The newspaper reported that the test might aid the "growing number of women who put off children until their thirties but then find that they cannot conceive..."

Sugary soft drinks linked to earlier periods in girls ...

"Sugary drinks may cause menstruation to start earlier, study suggests," The Guardian reports. A US study found that girls drinking more than one and a half drinks a day had their period around three months earlier than girls drinking two or less a week...

Overview - Ariana Pharmacy

Official information from NHS about Ariana Pharmacy including contact details, directions, opening hours and service/treatment details

Services & clinics - Derby Road Health Centre

Official information from NHS about Derby Road Health Centre including contact details, directions, opening hours and service/treatment details

Study suggests that inflammation is behind period pain ...

"Scientists have finally discovered why periods hurt so much, following a ground breaking study into menstrual pain," The Independent reports. A new study suggests that the pain is caused by acute inflammation, as measured by the C-reactive protein...

Would you trust a smartphone app as a contraceptive? ...

"An innovative new app might provide a more effective form of birth control than the contraceptive pill," The Sun reports. The Natural Cycles fertility app combines the use of a thermometer to measure body temperature with calendar calculating...

[Previous](#) [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#)

[NHS Choices information](#)

[Choices e-newsletters](#)

[Your pages](#)

Webpage Screenshot:

The screenshot shows the NHS Choices website page for 'Periods'. The page has a blue header with the NHS logo and 'choices Your health, your choices' text. A search bar is located in the top right corner. Below the header, there are navigation links: 'Health A-Z', 'Live Well', 'Care and support', 'Health news', and 'Services near you'. The breadcrumb trail reads 'Home > Health A-Z > Periods'. The main content area has a blue background with the word 'Periods' in white. Below this, there are two sections. The first section is titled 'Page contents' and lists five items: 'When do periods start?', 'Sanitary products', 'Premenstrual syndrome (PMS)', 'Getting pregnant', and 'Changes in your periods'. The second section is titled 'Page contents' and lists the same five items. The main text area contains several paragraphs of text, including a definition of a period, information about the menstrual cycle, and details about blood loss and color. There are also links to related articles like 'heavy periods', 'period pain', 'irregular periods', and 'stopped or missed periods'. The page is scrollable, as indicated by the vertical scrollbar on the right side.

User Accounts

Enter a search term

Health A-Z Live Well Care and support Health news Services near you

Home > Health A-Z > Periods

Periods

Page contents

- [When do periods start?](#)
- [Sanitary products](#)
- [Premenstrual syndrome \(PMS\)](#)
- [Getting pregnant](#)
- [Changes in your periods](#)
- [When do periods stop?](#)

A period is the part of the [menstrual cycle](#) when a woman bleeds from her vagina for a few days.

For most women this happens every 28 days or so, but it's common for periods to start sooner or later than this, ranging from day 21 to day 40.

Your period can last between 3 and 8 days, but it will usually last for about 5 days. The bleeding tends to be heaviest in the first 2 days.

When your period is at its heaviest, the blood will be red. On lighter days, it may be pink, brown or black.

You'll lose about 30 to 72 millilitres (5 to 12 teaspoons) of blood during your period, although some women bleed more heavily than this.

Read more about [heavy periods](#), [period pain](#), [irregular periods](#) and [stopped or missed periods](#).

When do periods start?

Girls have their first period during [puberty](#) – 11 is the average age for puberty to start in girls.

A girl's monthly periods usually begin at around the age of 12, although some girls will start them later.

A delay in [starting periods](#) isn't usually a cause for concern. Most girls will have regular periods from age 16 to 18.

Read more about [girls and puberty](#).

Sanitary products

Sanitary products absorb or collect the blood released during your period. The main types of sanitary products are described below.

Sanitary pads

Sanitary pads are strips of padding that have a sticky side you attach to your underwear to hold them in place. One side of the pad is made of a special absorbent material that soaks up the blood.

Page contents

- [When do periods start?](#)
- [Sanitary products](#)
- [Premenstrual syndrome \(PMS\)](#)
- [Getting pregnant](#)
- [Changes in your periods](#)
- [When do periods stop?](#)

Many women use sanitary pads when they first start their period because they're easy to use. They come in many sizes, so you can change them depending on how heavy or light your period is.

Pantyliners are a smaller and thinner type of sanitary pad that can be used on days when your period is very light.

Tampons

Tampons are small tubes of cotton wool that you insert into your vagina to absorb the blood before it comes out of your body. There's a string at one end of the tampon, which you pull to remove it.

Tampons come with instructions that explain how to use them. If the tampon is inserted correctly, you shouldn't be able to feel it. If you can feel it or it hurts, it might not be in properly.

It isn't possible for a tampon to get stuck or lost inside you. Your vagina holds it firmly in place and it expands inside you as it soaks up the blood.

For more information, see:

- [Can a tampon get lost inside me?](#)
- [What if I forget to remove my tampon?](#)

[What if I forget to remove my tampon?](#)

Page contents

- [When do periods start?](#)
- [Sanitary products](#)
- [Premenstrual syndrome \(PMS\)](#)
- [Getting pregnant](#)
- [Changes in your periods](#)
- [When do periods stop?](#)

Menstrual cups

Menstrual cups are an alternative to sanitary pads and tampons. The cup is made from medical-grade silicone and you put it inside your vagina.

Menstrual cups collect the blood rather than absorbing it. Unlike sanitary pads and tampons, which are thrown away after they've been used, menstrual cups can be washed and used again.

Premenstrual syndrome (PMS)

Changes in your body's hormone levels before your monthly period can cause physical and emotional changes.

This is often known as premenstrual syndrome (PMS) or premenstrual tension (PMT).

There are many possible [symptoms of PMS](#), but typical symptoms include:

- feeling bloated
- breast tenderness
- mood swings
- feeling irritable
- [loss of interest in sex](#)

These symptoms usually improve when your period starts and

Page contents

- [When do periods start?](#)
- [Sanitary products](#)
- [Premenstrual syndrome \(PMS\)](#)
- [Getting pregnant](#)
- [Changes in your periods](#)
- [When do periods stop?](#)

These symptoms usually improve when your period starts and disappear a few days afterwards. PMS doesn't affect all women who have periods.

Getting pregnant

Working out when you can get pregnant – your fertile time – can be difficult. It's around the time you ovulate, which is about 12 to 14 days before the start of your next period.

But sperm can survive inside a woman's body for days before ovulation occurs. This means your fertile time extends back earlier in your cycle.

You can calculate when your period will start and your peak ovulation times using an [online period calendar](#).

You can't get pregnant if you don't ovulate. Some hormonal methods of contraception, such as the [combined pill](#), [contraceptive patch](#) and [contraceptive injection](#), work by preventing ovulation.

Read more about the [menstrual cycle](#), [fertility](#), [contraception](#) and [getting pregnant](#).

Changes in your periods

Your periods can change – for example, they may last longer or get lighter. This doesn't necessarily mean there's a problem, but it does need to be investigated.

You can go to see your GP, or you can visit your nearest women's clinic or [contraceptive clinic](#).

[Bleeding between periods](#), bleeding after having sex, or [bleeding after the menopause](#) needs to be checked by a doctor.

It might be caused by an infection, abnormalities in the neck of the womb (the cervix) or, in rare cases, it could be [cancer](#).

You could be pregnant if you miss a period and you've had sex. See your GP if you've taken a [pregnancy test](#) and the result is negative (you're not pregnant) and you've missed 3 consecutive periods.

They will investigate the cause and recommend any necessary treatment.

Read more about [stopped or missed periods](#).

When do periods stop?

Your periods will continue until you reach the [menopause](#), which usually occurs when you are in your late 40s to mid-50s. In the UK the average age of menopause is 51.

Your periods may start to become less frequent over a few months or years before stopping altogether. In some cases they can stop suddenly.



Page contents

- [When do periods start?](#)
- [Sanitary products](#)
- [Premenstrual syndrome \(PMS\)](#)
- [Getting pregnant](#)
- [Changes in your periods](#)
- [When do periods stop?](#)

Page contents

- When do periods start?
- Sanitary products
- Premenstrual syndrome (PMS)
- Getting pregnant
- Changes in your periods
- [When do periods stop?](#)

Menstrual cycle: animation
This animation explains in detail how the menstrual cycle works.



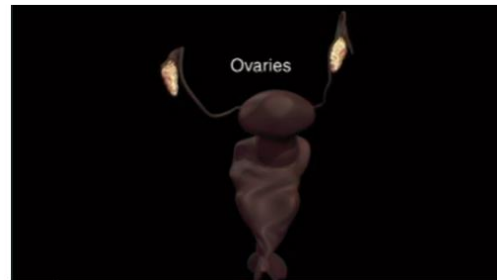
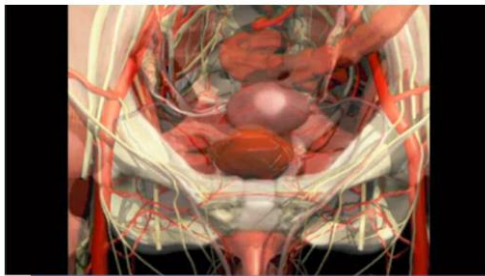
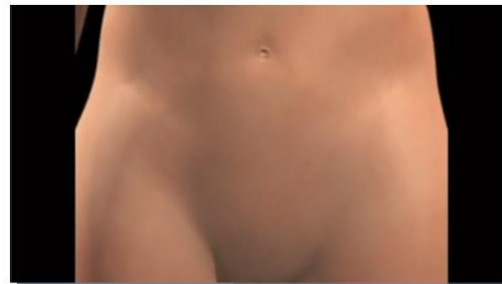
Media last reviewed: 21/10/2017
Next review due: 21/10/2020

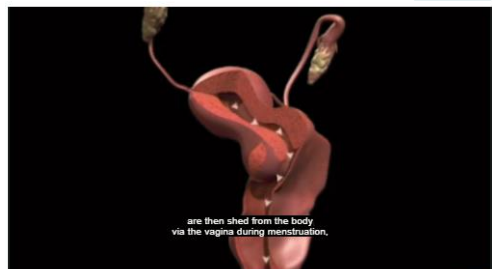
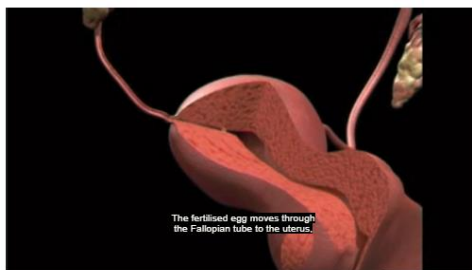
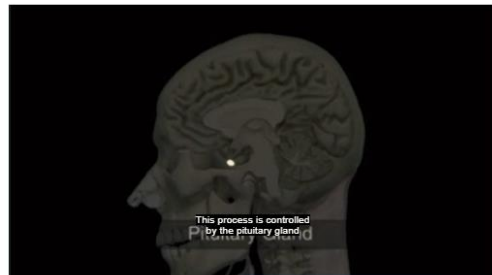
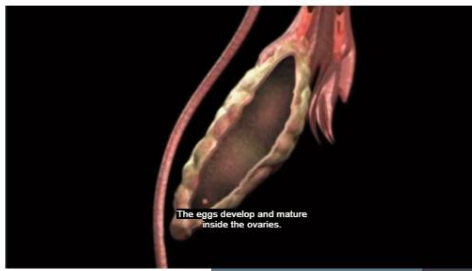
Page last reviewed: 28/07/2016
Next review due: 28/07/2019

NHS [NHS sites](#) [About us](#) [Contact us](#)

[Sitemap](#) [Accessibility](#) [Our policies](#) © Crown Copyright

Video Stills:





NHS Choices Analysis

Typology of Articles from 47 Search Results for “menstruation” (14/2/18)

Menstruation / cycle related / anatomy (4 = 8.51%)

Problems / negative menstruation related or linked symptoms or conditions. (12 = 25.53%)

Hormones / contraception (5 = 10.63%)

Menopause (5 = 10.63%)

Pregnancy / related conditions (9 = 19.15%)

Puberty / growing up (4 = 8.51%)

Other (7 = 14.90%)

Type	Title	Tally
Uncategorised	Stopped or missed periods ...	25
	Is PMT a myth? ...	
	Heavy periods self-assessment	
	Periods...	
	Early periods and depression studied...	
	Ovulation pain...	
	Endometriosis...	
	HRT and joint problems...	
	Can saucepans cause early menopause?...	
	Blood clots	
	Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)...	
	Postmenopausal bleeding ...	
	Signs of puberty: what happens to boys and girls	
	You and your body just after birth ...	
	Work out if you're at risk of breaking a bone...	
	Hormone replacement therapy (HRT)...	
	PMT drug? Not yet...	
	The continuous contraceptive 'super pill' ...	
	Where's your pain?	
	Hormone may ease menopause symptoms...	
What you need to know All girls and women ...		
New clue to early menopause...		
Sugary soft drinks linked to earlier periods in girls...		
Study suggest that inflammation is behind period pain...		
Would you trust a smartphone app as a contraceptive?...		
Video	NHS VIDEOS Menstrual cycle: animation	2
	NHS VIDEOS Coping with the menopause	
Live Well	Periods, fertility, menstrual cycle	5
	Starting periods	
	Am I pregnant? Information for young people	
	Period problems	
	Hormone headaches	
Health Questions	What causes bleeding between periods?	10 [5 repeats]
	How soon can I use tampons after giving birth? [appears multiple times]	
	How soon can I use tampons after giving birth?	
	What causes bleeding during pregnancy?	
	Do I have an anxiety disorder?	
How soon can I use tampons after giving birth?		

	How soon can I use tampons after giving birth?	
	How soon can I use tampons after giving birth?	
	Can you have sex during a period?	
NHS.UK	Citalopram: an antidepressant	1
Treatment	Fibroids	2
	Heavy periods	
Overview	Ariana Pharmacy	1
Services & Clinics	Derby Road Health Centre	1

Main Article

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/periods/>

(NB: multiple authors over the series, but I will only be looking at the first article here.)

Article = 906 words (not inclusive of links)
normal = 0
abnormal = [-ities] 1 (0.11%)
typical = 1 (0.11%) [typical symptoms]
average = 2 [age of menarche/menopause]
vary / varies = 0
changes = 3 (0.33%)
range = 0
[not] dirty = 0
shame / ashamed = 0
hide / hidden / secret = 0
proud = 0
woman / women = 7 (0.77%)
female = 0
girl(s) = 6 (0.66%)
pregnant / pregnancy = 7 (0.77%)
childbearing = 0
childbirth = 0
baby = 0
foetus = 0
you / your = 53 (5.85%)
menstruate = 0
menstrual (cycle or period) = 2 (0.22%)
period(s) = 34 (3.75%)
premenstrual = 3 (0.33%)
pms / pmt = 4 (0.44%) / 1 (0.11%)
mood = 1 (0.11%)
emotion[al] = 1 (0.11%)
stress = 0
Pain = 1 (0.11%)
menstuator = 0
[person who] menstruates = 0
man / men = 0
menstrual cups = 4 (0.44%)
tampons = 10 (1.10%)
sanitary pads = 7 (0.77%)
sponge = 0

Sections:

1. When do periods start?
2. Sanitary Products
 - Sanitary Pads
 - Tampons
 - Menstrual Cups
3. Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)
4. Getting Pregnant
5. Changes in your periods
6. When do periods stop?

A period is the part of the menstrual cycle when a woman bleeds from her vagina for a few days.

For most women this happens every 28 days or so, but it's common for periods to start sooner or later than this, ranging from day 21 to day 40.

- 'a few days' – a bit dismissive?
- places it immediately within the menstrual cycle
- wide range of variance in length of 19 days, versus 9 days – 24 and 35 – from Boots (desc. normal) and Patient (desc. common).

When your period is at its heaviest, the blood will be red. On lighter days, it may be pink, brown or black.

You'll lose about 30 to 72 millilitres (5 to 12 teaspoons) of blood during your period, although some women bleed more heavily than this.

- variety of flow highlighted.
- some **women** bleed more highlighted (could say people).
- amount: 30 to 72 millilitres (5 to 12 **teaspoons**)
- Comparison: Patient: A normal amount of blood loss during each period is between 20 and 60 ml. (This is about 4 to 12 **teaspoonfuls**.)
- WebMD: The amount of bleeding involved is not as much as most women think, it's 30-40ml (about 2-3 **tbsp**).

Girls have their first period during puberty – 11 is the average age for puberty to start in girls. A girl's monthly periods usually begin at around the age of 12, although some girls will start them later. A delay in starting periods isn't usually a cause for concern. Most girls will have regular periods from age 16 to 18.

- Quite general advice, not too prescriptive and uses average instead of normal, which has a different connotation in everyday use.

Products

- specifies 'main types', i.e. leaves suggestion that other solutions are available.
- 'Sanitary products collect or absorb the blood released during your period': quite neutral, not particularly suggesting something unpleasant. Blood being 'released' is particularly neutral.
- Sani pads: 'easy to use' / 'soaks up the blood' – notes different types incl. pantyliners available for different flows.
- Straightforward and reassuring advice regarding tampons: safety, absorbs blood before comes out, links to further information about worries e.g. losing a tampon.
- Menstrual cups: mentions that they are reusable 'unlike sanitary pads and tampons' – so alluding to economic and environmental benefits, if not mentioning explicitly.

Premenstrual syndrome (PMS)

Changes in your body's hormone levels before your monthly period can cause physical and emotional changes.

This is often known as premenstrual syndrome (PMS) or premenstrual tension (PMT).

There are many possible [symptoms of PMS](#), but typical symptoms include:

- feeling bloated
- breast tenderness
- mood swings
- feeling irritable
- [loss of interest in sex](#)

These symptoms usually improve when your period starts and disappear a few days afterwards. PMS doesn't affect all women who have periods.

- quite generalised, but with links to other pages and notes it is a varied experience.
- 'can cause physical and emotional changes'
- similar to the BWMD page: 'the changes in the hormone levels that occur during the menstrual cycle can have physical and emotional affects on women'. Affects: having an effect; move emotionally... it seems unnecessary to add this word, it makes it seem less concrete than simply the word changes.
- mood swings / irritable : no other emotions mentioned. Like P. Is there any research on PMS amplifying emotions, or being used to delegitimise feelings?
- more detailed list of psychological and behavioural symptoms are provided on the NHS page: mood swings, feeling upset or emotional, feeling irritable or angry, crying, anxiety, difficulty concentrating, confusion and forgetfulness, clumsiness, restlessness, tiredness, decreased self-esteem, loss of libido – loss of interest in sex, appetite changes or food cravings (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pre-menstrual-syndrome/symptoms/>) – it would be useful to note more clearly on the main page that there is a broad range of possible emotional symptoms, rather than leave it fully to a click through.

- Patient and NHS Choices both offer links to more detailed information, and use the terms PMS (and PMT, PMD) – whereas BWMD refers only to premenstrual symptoms and provides no clear link through to more information.

Getting pregnant

- has its own section, stating it can be hard to work out your fertile time, and suggesting calculating peak ovulation using an online calculator.

- notes that hormonal contraceptives can affect ovulation and therefore getting pregnant. Links to these methods, menstrual cycle, fertility, contraception and getting pregnant pages.

- States that sperm can survive inside body 'for days' in context of extending the fertile time – however this is the only mention of sperm / getting pregnant until this point. There is no mention of men, or fertilisation: it is much more detached and clinical – in stark contrast to the BWMD article. The Patientinfo article explains the phases of the menstrual cycle, noting 'the egg may be fertilised if you have recently had sex and there are sperm in your womb' (P), but it is not explained in terms of pregnancy, fertilisation. Other than noting the presence of sperm, sexual intercourse itself is presented in fairly gender / sexuality neutral terms – again is stark contrast to BWMD, which mentions having 'a baby' and goes on to describe the menstrual flow as occurring due to non-fertilisation, rather than as a part of the menstrual cycle – which would decentre traditional gendered childbearing roles and heteronormative expectations from the cultural construction and understanding of menstruation.

When do periods stop?

Your periods will continue until you reach the menopause, which usually occurs when you are in your late 40s to mid-50s. In the UK the average age of menopause is 51.

- BWMD: first paragraph defines menstruation as during childbearing years, and on last page states: 'When a woman reaches [menopause](#), typically between the ages of 45 and 55, her menstrual cycle will come to an end'.

- Patient: contextualises menopause in the first sub-section 'what is a period' in relation to menarche. There is a hyperlink to further information, but menopause is not discussed any further on this page.

Patient ends on problems (links to next article)

NHS ends on when periods stop (menopause)

Boots ends on 'how many eggs does a woman have?'

Patient.Info Analysis

Search conducted on 14th February 2018

“menstruation” = 556 results → filtered to 81 as most of these were user-generated ‘Forum’ topics. Results filtered to include: Professional; Conditions; Features; Medicines; Video to make results comparable to others without forum discussion

“period” = 36,637 results

“periods” = 36,637 results

Search Results for “menstruation”:

[Menstruation and its Disorders](#) PROFESSIONAL

Menstruation and its Disorders, Normal *menstruation* is the monthly cycle of blood loss per vagina, resulting from the breakdown of the uterine lining when implantation of a fertili...

[Female Reproductive System](#) CONDITIONS

This is the bleeding known as having a period, or *menstruation*. Traditionally, the first day of bleeding is known as day one of the reproductive cycle.

[Amenorrhoea](#) PROFESSIONAL

This may be taken as age 14 years in the absence of secondary sexual characteristics; however, it is worth waiting until age 16 years if other *features* are developing normally. Secondary a...

[Progestogen-only Contraceptive Pill](#) PROFESSIONAL

It may produce irregular *menstruation* or amenorrhoea. This may be severe enough for some that it leads to cessation of using the POCp.

[Cold Sores](#) CONDITIONS

Cold sores may occur during feverish illnesses such as colds, coughs and flu. *Menstruation*. Cold sores are common around the time of monthly periods. Stress or just being 'run ...

[Living with Epilepsy](#) CONDITIONS

Periods (*menstruation*). Illnesses which cause a high temperature (fever) such as flu or other infections.

[Hot Flashes](#) PROFESSIONAL

Flashes last for fewer years when they are first felt after the cessation of *menstruation* [2]. There is variation in frequency and duration between different races. Japanese women seem ...

[Migraine Prophylaxis in Adults](#) PROFESSIONAL

This should be confirmed with diary evidence to show migraine without aura occurring regularly within up to two days of onset of *menstruation* and at no other time over three months. Mef...

[Cancer Antigen 125 \(CA 125\)](#) PROFESSIONAL

Pregnancy and *menstruation*. (CA 125 can increase two- to three-fold during *menstruation*.) Leiomyoma, including fibroids.

[Pemphigoid Gestationis](#) PROFESSIONAL

It may recur with the resumption of *menstruation*, use of oral contraception and with subsequent pregnancies. Differential diagnosis It is an uncommon condition and shares some feat...

[Periods and Period Problems](#) CONDITIONS

This leaflet explains the menstrual cycle and periods (*menstruation*). It mentions the common variations which are normal. Some common problems are also briefly discussed, such as heavy period...

[Diets Suitable for People with Anaemia](#) CONDITIONS

In women, it is also lost during monthly periods (*menstruation*), which is why women need more iron in their diet. We need enough iron from our diet to maintain adequate iron levels in the lon...

[Haematuria](#) PROFESSIONAL

Others: genital bleeding, including child abuse; *menstruation*; Münchhausen's syndrome or fabricated or induced illness by carers. Presentation Take a full urological hist...

[Treatments for Epilepsy](#) CONDITIONS

Periods (*menstruation*). Illnesses which cause a high temperature (fever), such as flu or other infections.

[Postpartum Contraception](#) PROFESSIONAL

Whether ovulation may have restarted based on when the was baby delivered, method of feeding and recurrence of *menstruation*. This can affect the starting regime of the contraceptive chosen an...

[Premenstrual Syndrome](#) PROFESSIONAL

This is a condition which manifests with "distressing physical, behavioural and psychological symptoms, in the absence of organic or underlying psychiatric disease, which regularly recurs during ...

[Intrauterine Contraceptive Device](#) PROFESSIONAL

Disadvantages include heavier and more painful *menstruation* (see 'Side-effects', below) and the discomfort of fitting. Fitting an IUCD is technically a little less difficult than a...

[Pneumothorax](#) PROFESSIONAL

Catamenial pneumothorax refers to pneumothorax at the time of *menstruation*. Over 90% occur in the right lung and it occurs up to 24 hours before or within 72 hours from the onset of menstruat...

[Antifibrinolytic Drugs and Haemostatics](#) PROFESSIONAL

Initiation of treatment [1] Tranexamic acid: For menorrhagia - 1 g tds for up to four days, starting with commencement of *menstruation*. Maximum dose of 4 g daily. For hereditar...

[Erythema Annulare Centrifugum](#) PROFESSIONAL

An annually recurring form has been described. [8] Other causes include: Recurrent acute appendicitis Sarcoidosis Osteoarthritis Cholestatic liver disease Graves' disease ...

[Toxic Shock Syndrome](#) PROFESSIONAL

A UK series showed an incidence of STSS increasing from 1 to 9.5 per million population per year in the 1990s. [3] Infections not associated with *menstruation* have become more common as...

[Meigs' Syndrome](#) PROFESSIONAL

Amenorrhoea or irregular *menstruation*. Examination Reduction in lung capacity may produce tachypnoea and tachycardia.

[Female Genital Mutilation](#) PROFESSIONAL

Difficulties in *menstruation*. In women with type 3 mutilation, the introitus may be too narrow for childbirth, and the tissues that have sealed together need to be separated.

[Non-allergic Rhinitis](#) PROFESSIONAL

Such states can occur in pregnancy, *menstruation* and puberty, and with the use of oestrogen medication. In pregnancy the condition usually occurs in the second month and stops after delivery...

[Epilepsy with Tonic-clonic Seizures](#) CONDITIONS

Periods (*menstruation*). Illnesses which cause a high temperature (fever), such as flu or other infections.

[Epilepsy with Focal Seizures](#) CONDITIONS

Periods (*menstruation*). Illnesses which cause fever, such as flu or other infections. How is epilepsy diagnosed?

[Epilepsy and Seizures](#) CONDITIONS

Flickering lights such as from strobe lighting or video games. Periods (*menstruation*). Illnesses which cause high temperature (fever) such as flu or other infections.

[Porphyria](#) CONDITIONS

Periods (*menstruation*). Injury. A surgical procedure. Sometimes, infection somewhere in the body.

[Intrauterine Contraceptive Device \(The Coil\)](#) CONDITIONS

These expulsions happen most frequently during *menstruation*. This is generally thought not to be the fault of the Mooncup®. There should always be a space between the Mooncup® an...

[Migraine](#) CONDITIONS

Periods (*menstruation*), shift work, different sleep patterns, and the menopause. It may help to keep a migraine diary.

[Intrauterine System](#) CONDITIONS

Easily reversible Fertility returns as soon as the IUS is removed, although regular periods (*menstruation*) sometimes take a few months to return. Other uses and benefits The 52 mg LN...

[Menopause and its Management](#) PROFESSIONAL

As women move towards the menopause *menstruation* becomes erratic and eventually stops. There are a number of secondary effects described as 'menopausal symptoms' - see 'Presentati...

[Migraine Management](#) PROFESSIONAL

There is also evidence of a small incidence of well-recognised but sometimes serious adverse events, including embolisation (reported in less than 1% of patients). [7] Menstrual migraine Th...

[Breast Pain](#) PROFESSIONAL

Pain has usually settled by the time *menstruation* ends. Pain tends to be in the upper outer quadrant(s) and may extend to the axillae.

[Endometriosis](#) PROFESSIONAL

Historically, suggested theories have included retrograde *menstruation*, lymphatic or haematogenous spread, and metaplasia. However, currently the consensus is that endometriosis has a mult...

[Benign Breast Disease](#) PROFESSIONAL

It rapidly resolves as *menstruation* starts. Conditions to exclude by history and examination are infection, pregnancy and malignancy.

[Menorrhagia](#) PROFESSIONAL

Dysmenorrhoea - pain with *menstruation*. The average menstrual blood loss is about 30-40 ml. [2] Many women who complain of heavy menstruation do not in fact have blood loss in excess ...

[Interstitial Cystitis/Painful Bladder Syndrome](#) PROFESSIONAL

In women the symptoms are often worse during *menstruation*. There is wide variation in symptoms between individuals and in any one individual over time.

[Pelvic Pain](#) PROFESSIONAL

Not occurring exclusively with *menstruation* or sexual intercourse. Not being associated with pregnancy. Chronic pelvic pain is a symptom, not a diagnosis.

[Progestogens](#) PROFESSIONAL

Normal *menstruation* will occur 2-3 days after stopping. Contraception [8] Progestogens are used widely for contraception, as they provide an alternative form of hormonal contrac...

[Bullous Dermatoses \(Blisters and Bullae\)](#) PROFESSIONAL

It may recur with the resumption of *menstruation*, use of oral contraception and with subsequent pregnancies. This is unaffected by a change in partner.

[Tumour Markers](#) PROFESSIONAL

Endometrial, Fallopian tube, breast, lung, oesophageal, gastric, hepatic and pancreatic cancers, *menstruation*, pregnancy, fibroids, ovarian cysts, pelvic inflammation, cirrhosis, ascites, ple...

[Dysmenorrhoea](#) PROFESSIONAL

Secondary dysmenorrhoea Secondary dysmenorrhoea occurs in association with some form of pelvic pathology: It is more likely to occur years after onset of *menstruation*. The pain ca...

[Childhood Anaemia](#) PROFESSIONAL

Anaemia due to blood loss Including gastrointestinal blood loss and heavy *menstruation* in girls. Presentation [4] Symptoms May be asymptomatic. Fatigue.

[Contraception and Young People](#) PROFESSIONAL

Treatment courses can also be run together to avoid *menstruation* during examinations, etc. Effectiveness depends upon taking the pill as instructed and in typical use associated with a pre...

[Galactorrhoea](#) PROFESSIONAL

MRI scan - needed, for example, if PRL levels are significantly raised and not explained by any other cause, or if there is irregular *menstruation*. CT scans may be used if MRI is unavailable,...

[Herpes Viruses](#) PROFESSIONAL

The delicate balance of latency may be upset by various disturbances - physical (eg, injury, ultraviolet light, hormones, *menstruation*) or psychological (eg, stress, emotional upset). Reac...

[Premature Ovarian Insufficiency](#) PROFESSIONAL

Later menarche, irregular *menstruation* and longer breastfeeding are all protective from POI [7].
Presentation The most common presentations are primary or secondary amenorrhoea...

[Intrauterine System](#) PROFESSIONAL

Where pregnancy is not desired The LNG-IUS should be removed with *menstruation* or, if there has been no unprotected sexual intercourse in the previous seven days, at other times.

[Sexual Assault](#) CONDITIONS

Problems with *menstruation* and fertility are also common. Psychological effects About half of survivors have recovered from psychological effects at 12 weeks but for many, the symptoms ...

[Progestogen-only Subdermal Implants](#) PROFESSIONAL

No studies have demonstrated increased pregnancy rates attributable to high body weight up to 149 kg. [3 , 8]
Contra-indications [2]
Pregnancy: Exclude pregnancy before insertion;...

[Progestogen-only Injectable Contraceptives](#) PROFESSIONAL

Pregnancy - this should be excluded before injection (a history of recent normal *menstruation* is adequate). Noristerat ® may not be used during breast-feeding of neonates with severe...

[Vaginal and Vulval Candidiasis](#) PROFESSIONAL

Symptoms tend to be exacerbated premenstrually and remit during *menstruation* [3]. Signs Vulval erythema, possibly with fissuring. Vulval oedema.

[HIV Post-exposure Prophylaxis](#) PROFESSIONAL

Transmission via sexual contact depends on several factors, including the viral load of the infected partner, local prevalence, host factors (eg, *menstruation* increases risk in vaginal contac...

[Herpes Simplex Eye Infections](#) PROFESSIONAL

Trauma (including surgical), *Menstruation*. Cold wind. Use of contact lenses. [5]
Immunosuppression. Trigeminal nerve manipulation.

[Migraine](#) PROFESSIONAL

Menstrual migraine This is migraine without aura, occurring regularly within a day or two of the onset of *menstruation* and at no other time. It is probably due to falling oestrogen l...

[Varicose Veins](#) PROFESSIONAL

Aggravating factors may include pregnancy, exogenous hormones, *menstruation* and, occasionally, sexual intercourse. Apart from the presenting symptoms, the history should include: His...

[Drugs and Sport](#) PROFESSIONAL

As well as making *menstruation* more tolerable, they can be used to adjust its timing so that the competitor is not premenstrual or menstruating during an important event.

[Bleeding Disorders](#) PROFESSIONAL

Whilst the sex-linked nature of haemophilia results in those affected being predominantly male, women are much more likely to present with mild bleeding disorders due to the demands of *menstruation*...

[Benign Ovarian Tumours](#) PROFESSIONAL

Diverticulitis, endometriosis, liver cirrhosis, uterine fibroids, *menstruation*, pregnancy, benign ovarian neoplasms and other malignancies (pancreatic, bladder, breast, liver, lung) can all r...

[Diabetic Ketoacidosis](#) PROFESSIONAL

Some women are more likely to go into DKA at the time of *menstruation*. [4] Presentation The diagnosis is not always apparent and should be considered in anyone with diabetes who is u...

[Hypoparathyroidism](#) PROFESSIONAL

Painful *menstruation*. Important points to elicit in the history include: History of previous neck surgery.

[Intermenstrual and Postcoital Bleeding](#) PROFESSIONAL

Intermenstrual bleeding (IMB) refers to vaginal bleeding (other than postcoital) at any time during the menstrual cycle other than during normal *menstruation*. It can sometimes be difficult t...

[Non-anaemic Iron Deficiency](#) PROFESSIONAL

Iron requirements increase at times of growth (early childhood and adolescence); during pregnancy and with *menstruation*. Dietary iron is in two forms, haem iron (the organic form, mainly f...

[Urinary Tract Obstruction](#) PROFESSIONAL

Where not due to infection or contamination (eg, from *menstruation*), urine cytology and further work-up for haematuria is required (ie cystoscopy and upper urinary tract imaging).

[Fatigue and TATT](#) PROFESSIONAL

Ask about *menstruation*, if applicable : Hypothyroidism may cause menorrhagia but as a cause it is uncommon.

[Infertility - Female](#) PROFESSIONAL

Aim for an ideal BMI: Women with a BMI of < 19 and who have irregular *menstruation* or are not menstruating should be advised that increasing body weight is likely to improve their fert...

[Porphyrias](#) PROFESSIONAL

Emotional/psychological distress. *Menstruation* (premenstrual attacks can occur). Pregnancy. Infection. Differential diagnosis Guillain-Barré syndrome .

[Iron-deficiency Anaemia](#) PROFESSIONAL

Angiodysplasia. Heavy *menstruation*. Other causes include: Other GI tract malignancies. Bleeding oesophageal varices.

[Headache](#) PROFESSIONAL

Relationship of headaches to *menstruation*. How many different headache types does the patient experience? Separate histories are necessary for each headache It is sensible to c...

[Somatic Symptom Disorder](#) PROFESSIONAL

Dysmenorrhoea, irregular *menstruation* and menorrhagia. Making a diagnosis A thorough physical examination and diagnostic tests are performed to rule out physical causes - which ...

[Gestational Trophoblastic Disease](#) PROFESSIONAL

Women with menarche over the age of 12, light *menstruation* and a history of use of the oral contraceptive pill may have higher risk. Asian women have a higher incidence of GTD.

[Oral Herpes Simplex](#) PROFESSIONAL

Factors that may trigger a recurrence of oral herpes simplex include immunosuppression (eg, corticosteroids), upper respiratory tract infections, fatigue, emotional stress, physical trauma, exposure t...

[Hirsutism](#) PROFESSIONAL

TFTs: thyroid dysfunction can affect *menstruation* and hypothyroidism is associated with changes in hair. Ultrasound: patients with either menstrual disturbances or clinical or biochemical ...

[Hereditary Angio-oedema](#) PROFESSIONAL

Psychological stress. *Menstruation*. Prolonged standing or repetitive daily activities. Drugs - angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors, oestrogens (progestogens may be protect...

[Intrauterine Contraceptives \(IUCD and IUS\) - Management](#) PROFESSIONAL

Overall it occurs in 1 in 20 women, most commonly in the first three months during *menstruation*: the patient may be unaware that expulsion has taken place. Expulsion is more common with co...



[What is a CA125 blood test?](#) FEATURE

The level of CA125 in the blood can rise for many reasons which include endometriosis, *menstruation*, ovarian cysts and, sometimes, ovarian cancer. Why has my GP asked m...

[Corneal Problems - Acute and Non-acute](#) PROFESSIONAL

Triggers for viral reactivation include ultraviolet (UV) light, trauma, cold, *menstruation* and psychological stress. VZV: years to decades after the primary varicella infection there is an...

[Epilepsy in Adults](#) PROFESSIONAL

In ovulatory cycles, peaks occur around the time of ovulation and in the few days before *menstruation*. In anovulatory cycles, there is an increase in seizures during the second half of the me...



[Is your period causing your migraines?](#) FEATURE

Wilkie reveals: "Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs [such as aspirin or ibuprofen] taken two to three days before the expected start of the period and for the first two to three days of me...



[How to have great sex during and after the menopause](#) FEATURE

Many women in the menopause find that the absence of *menstruation* actually increases their sexual desire. No pregnancy fears Good news: if you are aged over 50, you can stop using cont...

Webpage Screen Grabs:

The screenshot shows the Patient website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Patient Access', 'Register', and 'Sign in'. The Patient logo is on the left, and a search bar and 'MENU' button are on the right. Below the navigation bar, the page title 'Periods and Period Problems' is displayed, along with the author 'Dr Colin Tidy, 01 Nov 2017'. A list of related topics is provided, including 'Missed Periods', 'Heavy Periods (Menorrhagia)', 'Period Pain (Dysmenorrhoea)', 'Premenstrual Syndrome', 'Fibroids', 'Hysterectomy', 'Menorrhagia Surgery', and 'Delaying a Period'. The main text explains the menstrual cycle and common variations. A 'What is a period?' section follows, describing the start of periods and what happens during one. A 'Sanitary towels or tampons?' section discusses different options and their use. A 'Can you get pregnant during your period?' section explains the possibility of pregnancy. Finally, a 'Do I have to avoid anything when I have a period?' section provides advice on staying active.

Patient Access > Register Sign in

Patient Making lives better

Search MENU

Women's Health Save Print Share Actions

Periods and Period Problems

Authorised by Dr Colin Tidy, 01 Nov 2017

In this series: [Missed Periods](#) [Heavy Periods \(Menorrhagia\)](#) [Period Pain \(Dysmenorrhoea\)](#) [Premenstrual Syndrome](#) [Fibroids](#) [Hysterectomy](#) [Menorrhagia Surgery](#) [Delaying a Period](#)

This leaflet explains the menstrual cycle and periods (menstruation). It mentions the common variations which are normal. Some common problems are also briefly discussed, such as heavy periods, painful periods, irregular periods, periods that stop and abnormal bleeding between periods.

IN THIS ARTICLE

- ↓ [What is a period?](#)
- ↓ [What is the menstrual cycle?](#)
- ↓ [Other effects of the female hormones](#)
- ↓ [Some symptoms relating to periods](#)

What is a period?

Starting to have periods is part of growing up for girls. Periods usually start to occur around the same time as other changes happen to the body, such as starting to develop breasts or to grow public hair. The average age to start periods is 13 but it is normal to start at any time between the ages of 9 and 15. A small number of girls may start before or after this. Periods continue until the menopause which is usually around the age of 50 years.

What happens during a period?

For several days each month there is blood loss from the vagina. The amount of blood loss varies from period to period, and from woman to woman. Some women have a dark scanty loss, some have a heavier loss which is a brighter red. Sometimes clots are passed, especially if the loss is heavy. Sometimes there are small flaky fragments in with the menstrual blood. A normal amount of blood loss during each period is between 20 and 60 ml. (This is about 4 to 12 teaspoonfuls.) Bleeding can last up to eight days but five days is the average. The bleeding is usually heaviest on the first two days. Some pain in the lower tummy (abdomen) - period pain - is common and normal.

Sanitary towels or tampons?

When you have a period, you will need to use something to absorb the blood you lose. It is common for girls to use sanitary towels when periods first start. These are placed in your underwear to soak up the blood. They come in different sizes and styles. You may need a pad which is bigger or bulkier at night, or on the heavy days of your period. When it is light, a small panty liner may be enough.

Tampons, which you insert into your vagina to absorb the blood, can be more convenient. They need to be changed regularly. You can start to use tampons at any age after you start having periods. They may feel uncomfortable to start with and may take a little bit of practice to get used to. There are different sizes, so start with the smallest to get used to it. You may need to use several sizes of tampon during a period, depending on how heavy the bleeding is. A larger size may be needed in the early heavy stages, then a smaller one when bleeding becomes lighter. Some tampons come with an applicator. Other types are put in with your fingers. Some women and girls find one type easier; others prefer the other. Find the one which is easiest for you.

Sometimes you may like to mix and match - for example, using tampons for swimming but pads at other times. For very heavy periods you may even need to use both together.

An alternative to towels and tampons is a menstrual cup. This is a reusable device, about two inches long which is made from soft medical-grade silicone. It is placed in the vagina. The cup collects menstrual blood. It is folded and inserted into the vagina, then removed. It can be rinsed and reinserted up to every eight hours.

Can you get pregnant during your period?

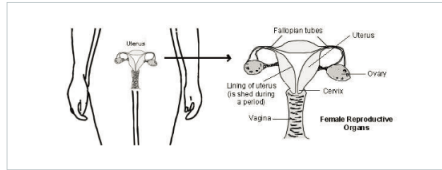
Although unlikely, it is possible to get pregnant by having sex during your period. Sperm can stay alive inside you for up to five days. So if you ovulate early and have a short menstrual cycle (see below) then it is possible for you to become pregnant. See below for more information about ovulation and the menstrual cycle.

Do I have to avoid anything when I have a period?

No. Carry on as normal. If you find the periods painful, regular exercise sometimes helps. Periods are not dirty, they are a normal part of a woman's life. You can go swimming, have a bath, etc. You may prefer to use tampons if you enjoy swimming.

What is the menstrual cycle?

Females have small organs called ovaries in the lower part of their tummy (abdomen). The ovaries lie either side of the womb (uterus). The ovaries start to produce female hormones in girls around puberty which cause changes to the lining of the womb. Every month during your period the lining of your womb is shed together with some blood.



The time between the start of one period and the start of the next is called the menstrual cycle. The average length of a menstrual cycle is 28 days. However, anything between 24 and 35 days is common. During the cycle various changes occur in your body. The changes are controlled by chemical substances called hormones, which act like messengers in your body. There are changing amounts of your female hormones at different times of your cycle. The menstrual cycle is split roughly into two halves:

The first half of your cycle is called the follicular or proliferative phase. The levels of your two main female hormones, oestrogen and progesterone, are low to start with and you shed the inner lining of your womb (endometrium). This causes your period (menstrual bleeding).

During this phase your ovaries are stimulated by other hormones. These travel to the ovary in the bloodstream from a gland near your brain, called the pituitary gland. One of these hormones causes some eggs in your ovaries to grow and develop in tiny fluid-filled cavities called follicles. The follicles produce oestrogen. Throughout the first half of your cycle the level of oestrogen in your blood rises. One function of oestrogen is to cause the lining of your womb to thicken (proliferate).

Ovulation occurs about halfway through your cycle (about 14 days after the start of your period). Ovulation is the release of an egg into your Fallopian tube from a follicle in an ovary. The egg travels along your Fallopian tube into your womb. The egg may be fertilised if you have recently had sex and there are sperm in your womb.

The second half of the cycle is called the secretory or luteal phase. After ovulation, the follicle that released the egg makes a hormone called progesterone as well as oestrogen. Progesterone causes the lining of the uterus to swell and be ready to receive a fertilised egg. If the egg is not fertilised, the levels of progesterone and oestrogen gradually fall. When they fall to a low level, they lose their effect on your womb. The lining of your womb is then shed (a period) and a new cycle then begins.

Other effects of the female hormones

The female hormones (oestrogen and progesterone) have other effects which you may notice apart from causing periods. For example, the texture of the mucus in your vagina changes at different times of your cycle. Your vagina tends to be drier and the mucus thicker, in the first half of your cycle. Shortly after ovulation, when progesterone levels rise, the vaginal mucus becomes thinner, more watery and slippery. It becomes thicker again towards your next period as the progesterone level falls.

Progesterone may also cause water retention in various parts of your body. Your breasts may become slightly bigger or tender and your tummy (abdomen) may swell a little before a period. You may feel irritable before a period, which may be due to the hormone changes. To have such symptoms before a period is normal. Sometimes the symptoms prior to periods can be more severe. This is then called premenstrual syndrome or premenstrual tension. Read more about [premenstrual syndrome](#).

PERIOD PAIN



Most women regularly experience period pain, but it should not be severe. If your periods are becoming progressively more painful and heavy, it is a good idea to see your GP, especially if simple painkillers do not help in the way they used to.

— Dr Jennifer Kelly, GP, [Could your period pain be endometriosis?](#)

Some symptoms relating to periods

In general, if you have a **change** from your usual pattern that lasts for several periods, it may be abnormal. You should see a doctor if this occurs.

Heavy periods (menorrhagia)

This is common. It is difficult to measure blood loss accurately. Periods are considered heavy if they are affecting your life and causing problems. Learn more about [heavy periods](#).

Painful periods (dysmenorrhoea)

It is common to experience an ache in your lower abdomen, back and tops of your legs, especially in the first few days of your period. The first two days are usually the worst. Some women have more pain than others. The cause of the pain in most women is not fully understood. Sometimes conditions [such as endometriosis](#) can make period pains become worse. Find out more about [painful periods](#).

Bleeding at abnormal times

If you have vaginal bleeding at times apart from your expected periods, you should see a doctor. This includes if bleeding occurs after you have sex, or after the menopause. Bleeding after sex is also called postcoital bleeding.

Bleeding in between your periods (intermenstrual bleeding) can also occur. This has several causes. They include infections or polyps. Polyps are small fleshy lumps that can occur on the neck of the womb or inside the cavity of the womb. There are various causes of bleeding between periods:

- One common cause is called breakthrough bleeding, which is small bleeds that occur in the first few months after starting the contraceptive pill. This usually settles over a few months.
- It may be because the neck of the womb (cervix) is sore and inflamed. This can make it more likely to bleed after sex. The most common reasons for this are infections - such as chlamydia - and hormonal changes.
- It is very important to see your doctor because abnormal vaginal bleeding can be caused by cancer - for example, cancer of the vagina or cancer of the womb.

Periods which stop (amenorrhoea) or are irregular

Pregnancy is the most common reason for periods to stop. However, it is not uncommon to miss the odd period for no apparent reason. Apart from pregnancy, other causes of periods stopping include stress, losing weight, exercising too much and hormonal problems.

The interval between periods can also vary in some women. Irregular periods may indicate that you do not ovulate every month. Irregular periods are common in the few years [leading up to the menopause](#). Read more about [absent or irregular periods](#).

→ Next page:
[Missed Periods](#)

Did you find this information useful?

FURTHER READING AND REFERENCES

- [Heavy menstrual bleeding - assessment and management](#); NICE Clinical Guideline (August 2016)
- [Management of Premenstrual Syndrome](#); Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (2016)
- [Nevatte T, O'Brien PM, Backstrom T, et al](#); ISPM consensus on the management of premenstrual disorders. Arch Womens Ment Health. 2013 Aug;16(4):279-91. doi: 10.1007/s00737-013-0346-y. Epub 2013 Apr 27.
- [Amenorrhoea](#); NICE CKS, July 2014 (UK access only)
- [Dysmenorrhoea](#); NICE CKS, May 2014 (UK access only)
- [Menorrhagia](#); NICE CKS, June 2017 (UK access only)
- [Fibroids](#); NICE CKS, June 2017 (UK access only)
- [Singh SS, Belland L](#); Contemporary management of uterine fibroids: focus on emerging medical treatments. Curr Med Res Opin. 2015 Jan;31(1):1-12. doi: 10.1185/03007995.2014.982246. Epub 2014 Nov 12.
- [Orozco LJ, Tristan M, Vreugdenhil MM, et al](#); Hysterectomy versus hysterectomy plus oophorectomy for premenopausal women. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2014

From the web



Brilliant Way To Check If You Have Had PPI
PPI Wise



Brilliant Way To Check If You Had PPI
Money Tips Online



The Cost Of Dental Implants Might Surprise You
Dental Implants | Sponsored Links



This Is What Your Hearing Aids Should Actually Cost
Clinic Compare Quotes



The Most Addictive Strategy Game of 2017!
Your Battle: Online Strategy Game



There Are 7 Types of English Surnames – Which One Is Yours?
 ancestry

Sponsored Links by Taboola

RELATED INFORMATION

- [Polycystic Ovary Syndrome](#)
- [Dysmenorrhoea](#) PRO
- [Norethisterone for painful or heavy periods \(Primolut N, Utovlan\)](#)
- [Menstruation and its Disorders](#) PRO
- [Menorrhagia](#) PRO

→ [View all](#)



Could your period pain be endometriosis?

3 minutes reading time



Period Blood Loss Chart

1 minutes reading time

Patient.Info Analysis Notes

Typology of Articles from 81 Search Results for “Menstruation” (14/2/18)

The search results were filtered to remove user generated forum topics, of which there were 475. This was to create parity across the three websites analysed as only material authored by the site authors is included. Patient is the only of the three sites where forum topics were available.

The analysis below will utilise the ‘Conditions’ page entitled ‘Periods and their problems’ rather than the professional reference article designed for health professionals to use. This is to ensure parity between the other sites, which are public rather than medic oriented.

Menstruation / cycle related / anatomy (2 = 2.47%)

Problems / negative menstruation related or linked symptoms or conditions. (10 = 12.35 %)

Hormones / contraception (11 = 13.58%)

Menopause (4 = 4.94%)

Pregnancy / related conditions (4 = 4.94%)

Puberty / growing up (0)

Other (50 = 61.73%)

Type	Title	Tally
Professional - Reference articles are written by UK doctors and are based on research evidence, UK and European Guidelines. They are designed for health professionals to use.	Menstruation and its Disorders	64
	Amenorrhoea	
	Progestogen-only Contraceptive Pill	
	Hot Flushes	
	Migraine Prophylaxis in Adults	
	Cancer Antigen 125 (CA 125)	
	Pemphigoid Gestationis	
	Haematuria	
	Postpartum Contraception	
	Premenstrual Syndrome	
	Intrauterine Contraceptive Device	
	Pneumothorax	
	Antifibrinolytic Drugs and Haemostatics	
	Erythema Annulare Centrifugum	
	Toxic Shock Syndrome	
	Meigs' Syndrome	
	Female Genital Mutilation	
	Non-allergic Rhinitis	
	Menopause and its Management	
	Migraine Management	
	Breast Pain	
	Endometriosis	
	Benign Breast Disease	
	Menorrhagia	
	Interstitial Cystitis / Painful Bladder Syndrome	
	Pelvic Pain	
	Progestogens	
	Bullous Dermatoses (Blisters and Bullae)	
	Tumour Markers	
	Dysmenorrhoea	
Childhood Anaemia		
Contraception and Young People		
Galactorrhoea		

	Herpes Viruses	
	Premature Ovarian Insufficiency	
	Intrauterine System	
	Progestogen-only Subdermal Implants	
	Progestogen-only Injectable Contraceptives	
	Vaginal and Vulval Candidiasis	
	HIV Post-exposure Prophylaxis	
	Herpes Simplex Eye Infections	
	Migraine	
	Varicose Veins	
	Drugs and Sport	
	Bleeding Disorders	
	Benign Ovarian Tumours	
	Diabetic Ketoacidosis	
	Hypoparathyroidism	
	Intermenstrual and Postcoital Bleeding	
	Non-anaemic Iron Deficiency	
	Urinary Tract Obstruction	
	Fatigue and TATT	
	Infertility – Female	
	Porphyrias	
	Iron-deficiency Anaemia	
	Headache	
	Somatic Symptom Disorder	
	Gestational Trophoblastic Disease	
	Oral Herpes Simplex	
	Hirsutism	
	Hereditary Angio-oedema	
	Intrauterine Contraceptives (IUCD and IUS) – Management	
	Corneal Problems – Acute and Non-acute	
	Epilepsy in Adults	
Conditions	Cold Sores	14
	Female Reproductive System	
	Living with Epilepsy	
	Periods and Period Problems	
	Diets Suitable for People with Anaemia	
	Treatments for Epilepsy	
	Epilepsy with Tonic-clonic Seizures	
	Epilepsy with Focal Seizures	
	Epilepsy and Seizures	
	Porphyria	
	Intrauterine Contraceptive Device (The Coil)	
	Migraine	
	Intrauterine System	
	Sexual Assault	
Features	What is a CA125 blood test?	3
	Is your period causing your migraines?	
	How to have sex during and after the menopause	
Medicines		0
Video		0

Main Article:

<https://patient.info/health/periods-and-period-problems>

(NB: multiple authors over the series, but I will only be analysing the first article here.)

Article = 1767 words (not inclusive of links)

normal = 7 (0.40%)
abnormal = 4 (0.23%)
typical = 0
average = 3 (0.17%)
vary / varies = 2 (0.11%)
range = 0
change(s/d) = 9 (0.51%)
[not] dirty = 1 (0.06%)
shame / ashamed = 0
hide / hidden / secret = 0
proud = 0
woman / women = 9 / 0.51%
female = 7 (0.40%)
girl(s) = 5 / 0.28%
pregnant / pregnancy = 5 / 0.28%
childbearing = 0
childbirth = 0
baby = 0
foetus = 0
you / your = 78 (4.41%)
menstruate = 0
menstrual (cycle or period) = 11 (0.62%)
period(s) = 64 (3.62%)
menstuator = 0
[person who] menstruates = 0
man / men = 0
menstrual cup(s) = 1 (0.06%)
tampon(s) = 8 (0.45%)
sanitary pad(s) = 2
sponge = 0
premenstrual = 3 (0.17%)
pms / pmt = 0
pain / painful = 14 (0.79%)
mood = 0
emotion[al] = 0
stress = 0

Sub-sections:

1. What is a period?
2. What happens during a period?
3. Sanitary towels or tampons?
4. What is the menstrual cycle?
5. Other effects of the female hormones
6. Some symptoms relating to periods
 - a) Heavy periods (menorrhagia)
 - b) Painful periods (dysmenorrhoea)
 - c) Bleeding at abnormal times
 - d) Periods which stop (amenorrhoea) or are irregular

The Patient website differs from BootsWebMD and NHS Choices as it has two distinct strands within its content, both authored and reviewed by medical professionals, but aimed at two distinct user groups. Patient has been run by Egton Medical Information Systems Ltd (EMIS) – a company that develops and supplies IT systems to General Practices. The site filters its authored and editorial content into two main strands: ‘Professional’, an encyclopaedic resource aimed at medical practitioners and is a resource used during patient consultation and diagnosis and are written in formal medical language; and ‘Conditions’, which written using lay terminology and are presented as printable informational leaflets for patients. Many ‘Professional’ direct patient users to a corresponding ‘Conditions’ page, for example, the ‘Professional’ article entitled ‘Menstruation and its Disorders’ directs users as following:

Professional Reference articles are written by UK doctors and are based on research evidence, UK and European Guidelines. They are designed for health professionals to use. You may find the [Periods and Period Problems](#) article more useful, or one of our other [health articles](#).
(Harding & Willacy (ed), 2016)

For the purposes of this research, the analysis will be focussed on the ‘Conditions’ article, which is explicitly aimed at a lay audience as opposed to a clinical reader – in alignment with the other case studies under examination which are also produced with a general, rather than specialist audience in mind.

Periods and Period Problems

This leaflet explains the menstrual cycle and periods (menstruation). **It mentions the common variations which are normal.** Some common problems are also briefly discussed, such as heavy periods, painful periods, irregular periods, periods that stop and abnormal bleeding between periods.

(Tidy & Willacy (ed), 2017)

The patient-oriented article is entitled ‘Periods and Period Problems’, mirroring the clinical reference article’s title of ‘Menstruation and its Disorders’. This mirroring appears to be an attempt to create a direct translation from clinical to lay language, creating and reinforcing the split between user groups on the website. This is a useful

editorial device, on the one hand linking the two sides of the website together and establishing parity of information between the articles at a glance. However, perhaps in considering the changed context of the reader, a problem might emerge. Clinicians become accustomed to the classification of anatomy, bodily processes, and related disorders, however lay readers – especially those with concerns and seeking medical reassurance – might be less so inclined to see the process and associated disorders as separate (though linked). Thus, the translation from clinical to lay language in the titles of these aligned articles could be seen as problematic as periods are presented as closely related to ‘problems’ (Tidy & Willacy (ed), 2017) from the very beginning of the article; and in a broader socio-cultural context, potentially reinforcing the notion of menstruation as inherently problematic.

Unlike the other websites which frame the idea of a ‘normal’ period in their opening sentences, Patient’s framing of a normative period is very different. Instead of describing menstruation itself as normal, Patient refers to ‘the common variations which are normal’ (Tidy, 2017), as well as ‘some common problems’ (ibid). This is a small but significant distinction in the conceptualisation of menstruation: instead of establishing a description of menstruation that is itself normative, variation is framed as the norm. This is an important distinction to draw, as the establishment of a normative standard for a bodily process with so much variation between individuals – with some of the variances, such as the causes of primary dysmenorrhoea or duration of menstrual flow still not having a fully formed clinical explanation – has the potential to cause much anxiety for people who menstruate whose cycles and phenomenological experience of menstruating differs to the described norm.

Furthermore, the term normal itself has subtly different connotations in clinical and lay, or everyday, contexts. In medical parlance, as in everyday use, normal is used to denote something that is typical, and falls within an established set of standards. Correspondingly, abnormal suggests something which is outside expected parameters: in a medical context this might suggest a situation which requires further investigation, while in an everyday setting, to be abnormal might denote anything between quirky or completely unacceptable. While the clinical definition of normal and abnormal menstrual patterns is clear from the perspective of identifying the parameters where medical intervention might be required, translating this into the language of the everyday, or for lay use, is not straightforward. Texts that foreground the term normal in relation to the expected experience of menstruation – such as cycle length and menstrual flow duration – implicitly suggest that experiencing outside this range is abnormal. In the context of medical laboratory test results, Smellie notes that

the perception by users that results which lie outside our quoted reference ranges are “abnormal” and therefore require action results in additional testing and further investigation. It is also a source of worry for patients.

(Smellie, 2006; 1005)

It therefore seems especially important that sources of information with some form of medical authority – in these cases conferred by their affiliation to a well-known

pharmacy chain (BootsWebMD), a company with close ties to General Practice primary care (Patient) and direct affiliation with the UK National Health Service (NHS Choices) are careful to establish variation as a key feature of menstruation, and to clearly define ranges of expected experience that are not considered to be pathological. In utilising a definite number rather than a broader range when describing aspects of menstruation - a cycle length of 'around 28 days' (BootsWebMD & Hicks (reviewer), 2016) which 'varies from woman to woman' (ibid)

– the advice provided by BootsWebMD fails to establish clearly how much variation outside twenty-eight days a menstruator might experience before needing to seek further advice from a primary care provider.

Starting to have periods is part of growing up for girls. Periods usually start to occur around the same time as other changes happen to the body, such as starting to develop breasts or to grow pubic hair.

- Quite matter of fact, places in context of other changes.*
- Does not contextualise and define in terms of being able to bear children (BootsWebMD does).*

For several days each month there is blood loss from the vagina. The amount of blood loss varies from period to period, and from woman to woman. Some women have a dark scanty loss, some have a heavier loss which is a brighter red. Sometimes clots are passed, especially if the loss is heavy. Sometimes there are small flaky fragments in with the menstrual blood.

- Detailed descriptions. Not too prescriptive about duration.*
- Variety of colour, flow, texture described, emphasis on variance between individuals and for individuals.*
- 'Some pain in the lower tummy (abdomen) is common and normal' – reassuring or vague?*

Products:

Sanitary towels or tampons?

- basic information regarding both of these types of menstrual products.*
- sanitary rather than menstrual – see Chella Quint, also re abjection, sanitary = unclean.*
- menstrual cup: only alternative product mentioned (across all 3 case studies?)*

An alternative to towels and tampons is a menstrual cup. This is a reusable device, about two inches long which is made from soft medical-grade silicone. It is placed in the vagina. The cup collects menstrual blood. It is folded and inserted into the vagina, then removed. It can be rinsed and reinserted up to every eight hours.

- no other alternative or reusable products mentioned, such as cloth pads.
- soak up / absorb the blood / collects menstrual blood...rinsed and reinserted.
- quite stand-off-ish, i.e. dispose of the blood and keep it in the sanitary product
- very minimal range of products
- does not mention disadvantages of sanitary pads, such as stickiness, irritation, or the possibility of leakage with any product.
- notes personal choice is necessary

'Can you get pregnant during your period?'

– main mention of pregnancy so far. Factual, reassuring, encourages you to be familiar with your cycle: 'if you ovulate early and have a short menstrual cycle (see below) then it is possible for you to become pregnant'.

Do I have to avoid anything when I have a period?

No. Carry on as normal. If you find the periods painful, regular exercise sometimes helps. Periods are not dirty; they are a normal part of a woman's life. You can go swimming, have a bath, etc. You may prefer to use tampons if you enjoy swimming.

- Straightforward, reassuring. Could say 'normal part of life' instead of 'a woman'...

What is the menstrual cycle?

Females have small organs called ovaries in the lower part of their tummy (abdomen). The ovaries lie either side of the womb (uterus). The ovaries start to produce female hormones in girls around puberty which cause changes to the lining of the womb. Every month during your period the lining of your womb is shed together with some blood.

- Females, rather than women. More scientific / biological basis (not specific to humans), rather than woman – more descriptive than culturally loaded, in this case / sense.

The average length of a menstrual cycle is 28 days. However, anything between 24 and 35 days is common. During the cycle various changes occur in your body [...] There are changing amounts of your female hormones at different times of your cycle.

- average, rather than normal.
- immediately followed up with broader range than 28 days.
- again, emphasises changes

Progesterone causes the lining of the uterus to swell and be ready to receive a fertilised egg. If the egg is not fertilised, the levels of progesterone and oestrogen gradually fall. When they fall to a low level, they lose their effect on your womb. The lining of your womb is then shed (a period) and a new cycle then begins.

- fairly neutral language: does not mention men, sperm or intercourse, or the mention pregnancy. Unlike BootsWebMD.
 - framed around hormonal levels within the body, not external factors or interactions, other than stating an egg not fertilised.
- Other effects of hormones, e.g. mucus - meaning discharge – perhaps this would be a more commonly understood term to use, but it is more medical (and less abject) to say mucus?

You may feel irritable before a period, which may be due to the hormone changes. To have such symptoms before a period is normal. Sometimes the symptoms prior to periods can be more severe. This is then called premenstrual syndrome or premenstrual tension. Read more about premenstrual syndrome.

- Above is the only mention of emotional effects and PMS in the Patient article. Though it notes that these 'symptoms' are normal.
- Only 'emotion' mentioned is that you might 'feel irritable'. This is quite vague, and reductive, and rather plays into the stereotypical view of premenstrual women being grumpy. There is a range of emotions that might be involved, or amplified by hormonal changes - anxiety, sadness, depression, alienation, worry, fear – it is not just about being irritable. It is a classic minimisation and silencing of experience to brush it off as irritability.
- Does link through to a more detailed page. See note re. NHS page...

Problems:

Quote from Dr Jennifer Kelly, GP, link to article about endometriosis:

Most women regularly experience period pain, but it should not be severe. If your periods are becoming progressively more painful and heavy, it is a good idea to see your GP, especially if simple painkillers do not help in the way they used to.

Some symptoms relating to periods

In general, if you have a **change** from your usual pattern that lasts for several periods, it may be abnormal. You should see a doctor if this occurs.

- emphasises change from what you are used to: personal, reassuring, not dismissive.
- urges to seek advice.
- states sometimes periods are most commonly missed due to pregnancy but can also miss the occasional one 'for no apparent reason' – again, reassuring and admits there might be gaps in understanding or knowledge.