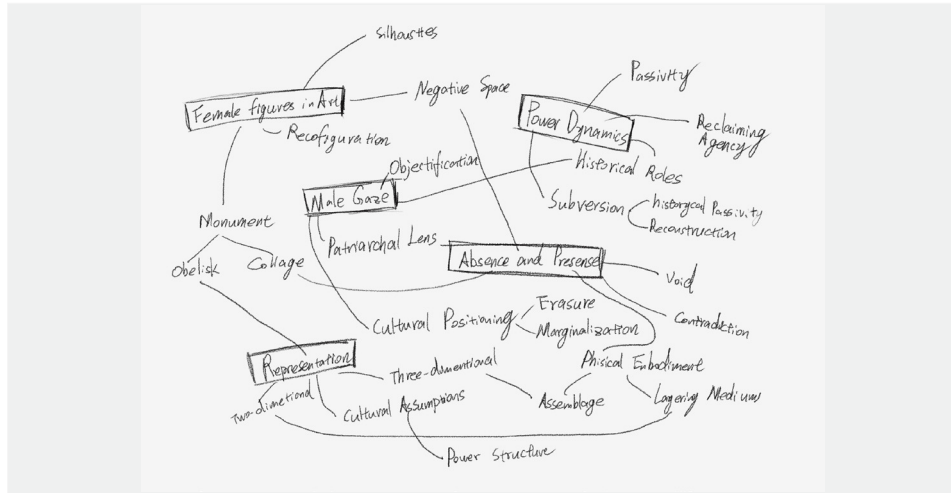


Herstory of Art

A Contemplation on the Objectified Gaze



Mind Map

Inspired by my research on art history and the male gaze theory, this installation reinterprets how women have been portrayed throughout history. By deconstructing and reconstructing iconic representations, I aim to challenge their historical and cultural positioning. The work invites viewers to reflect on the roles women have been assigned and how they've been shaped by a patriarchal lens.

The installation incorporates both two-dimensional and three-dimensional elements, creating a dynamic interplay between visual representation and conceptual form. I studied various renowned female figures from classical artworks, extracting and isolating their silhouettes to form "negative spaces" on the walls. These missing women are contrasted by the obelisk in the center of the installation, which is covered in an assemblage of these female figures. The obelisk stands as a central monument, physically embodying the presence and significance of women in art history.

Materials such as printed images, wood, and sculptural elements are used to emphasize the absence and presence of female figures. This deliberate void and the accumulation of female images on the obelisk reverse the conventional power dynamics inherent in these historical works. The method combines collage, negative space, and the physical layering of mediums to create a multi-faceted reflection on representation.



Research & Collage

Representation of Women of Colour in Art History

Hyper-representation and Objectification: Women of colour have been depicted as hyper-sexualized, exotic, and "other" in contrast to the European ideal of beauty and femininity. The excessive sexualized racial stereotypes.

Blackness vs. Whiteness in Art: The black female body is represented in art with a context that is not without "whiteness" or "venus," classified and portrayed as according to a binary, where the figure is either ideal or objectified and devalued.

Anonymous Background Figures: Black and brown women, often depicted in the background of art, are used to accentuate the whiteness of the main subjects. Usually, whether in the role of Objectification. While white women are portrayed as higher status in the visual hierarchy, women of color are often depicted as other, sexualized, and subordinate in the art.

Exclusion from the Venus Tradition: The classical depiction of Venus historically excluded women of colour, deriving from her depiction as a symbol of beauty or cultural value. In modern art, Sabine Welton's 1999 artwork 'The Voyage of the Black Venus' depicts a black woman of African descent, whose body is depicted in a way that is both beautiful and objectified, highlighting the racialized gaze made by portraying her as an aesthetic, objectified figure.

Women as Mothers

Home as a Metaphor: In the Dutch Republic, the home was viewed as a reflection of the official order, embodying order and restraint through cleanliness and hygiene.

Male Venus through Interior Art: From the Old Dutch Republic, male Venus figures, symbolizing the moral view of the Dutch Republic and existing religious imagery.

Metaphor for Female Chastity: These women, shown often with children, became a metaphor for female chastity and obedience, similar to images of the Virgin Mary, which were suppressed in the Catholic Reformation.

Reinforcing of Maternal Archetype: With religious imagery, the archetype of the virtuous woman associated with the Madonna archetype in depictions of women caring for children, which were still depicted in art.

Marie's Courtesan Parallel: The objectification of courtesans in art was linked to the imagery of Marie in the Dutch Republic, which was used to reinforce the idea of a prostitute.

Classical Domestic Fantasy: Recent interpretations suggest these home scenes were depicted in art to comfort their viewers at sea, portraying a fantasy of domestic bliss and safe, idealized images, the search for women's body involvement, such as objects, physical reality, and the struggles of solo parenting.

Modern Domestic Model: Today's images of women in the home, seen on social media, advertisements, and celebrity press photos, were always idealized and objectified from reality.

Taboos in Contemporary Motherhood: While not explicitly interfering with the Virgin Mary, contemporary art has explored the complexities of motherhood, venturing into their vulnerabilities, depicting an emotional portrait of mother, successful or not.

Controversial Gaze

Female Body: The nude woman in the painting contrasts with the draped men, representing the women's bodies were often objectified and viewed as objects from their own agency in the gallery space.

Gaze: The viewer's ability directly at the viewer, challenging traditional passive observation of women in art and creating a sense of interaction, making the viewer question their own role in looking.

Contrast with Men: The men in the painting (some the naked women), highlighting the marginalization of women in art and their objectification, as the men are depicted as more active and engaged in the scene.

Challenge Tradition: The painting deconstructs traditional norms, questioning the power dynamics of who gets to be the subject and who gets to be the object of the gaze in art and gallery.

Inversion of Gaze Dynamics: The woman's direct gaze reverses the historical dynamic, making the viewer feel observed and turning the power of the gaze back onto the viewer.

Venus

Venus as Mythological Figure: The painting depicts Venus, the goddess of love and beauty, but also represents a nude woman who is objectified for the viewer's gaze, highlighting the tension between myth and reality.

Valliquera's Role in Creation: In 17th-century Spain, painting a nude woman was considered a sin, often resulting in censorship. Valliquera may have created the work during a time of religious tolerance.

Ownership and Status Symbol: The painting was owned by the Marquis de Campo in 1607, symbolizing the wealth, status, and power of the aristocracy, highlighting the tension between myth and reality.

Risky Venus Name: The painting's controversial name comes from the fact that it was considered a sin to paint a nude woman, highlighting the tension between myth and reality.

History of Male Ownership: Before being displayed at the National Gallery, the painting was owned by powerful men, including a general and a diplomat, highlighting the tension between myth and reality.

Cultural Symbolism: How depicted at the National Gallery, the painting is a cultural symbol, representing the tension between myth and reality, and the power of the aristocracy.

Venus as a Rich Man's Plaything: Venus is depicted as a rich man's plaything, highlighting the tension between myth and reality, and the power of the aristocracy.





Sunlit Sustainability

*Cyanotype on paper, Transparent plastic waste
76 cm*105 cm each
2024*



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By shifting the perspective of these works, this project critiques the historical passivity and objectification of women in art, interrogating the male gaze that has shaped their portrayal. The absence of these figures from their original contexts serves as a metaphor for how women have been erased or marginalized in history, while their reconfiguration reclaims agency.

The project invites viewers to reconsider women's roles in art history and challenges broader cultural assumptions about power, gender, and representation.