



University
of Glasgow

Paterson, D. (2017) Making up mothers: Georgina Starr's channelling of the maternal. *Performance Research*, 22(4), pp. 44-52.

There may be differences between this version and the published version. You are advised to consult the publisher's version if you wish to cite from it.

<http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/146992/>

Deposited on: 22 November 2017

Enlighten – Research publications by members of the University of Glasgow_
<http://eprints.gla.ac.uk>

‘Making up mothers’: Georgina Starr’s channelling of the maternal

Dominic Paterson

I would like us to play at being the same and different. You/I exchanging selves endlessly and each staying herself. Living mirrors.

(Irigaray 1981: 61)

Flesh

The video documentation of Georgina Starr’s FLESH (Six Sculptures) (2008) opens with a still of a neoclassical interior in which polychromatic statues inconspicuously adorn a balcony (fig. 1). Everything implies stasis, the motionless image rhyming with the rigidity of the institutions of art, of certain aesthetic traditions, of sculpture itself. Superimposed text arrives to announce the work’s title, and that this is a performance at the Royal Academy of Arts (RA). We cut abruptly to handheld footage relaying the sights and sounds of what is—for some, at least—a familiar social ritual: the exhibition private view. If there is a palpable sense of excitement, this doesn’t seem to be on account of the art on show, to which audience and camera alike pay scant attention. Glimpsed in passing, raised on plinths, are the titular six ceramic sculptures—all female, all nude, or partially nude, and all demurely posed. They call up any number of similarly coy representations of ideal femininity—muses, mythological beauties, goddesses. One proffers an apple in her raised hand: an Eve? Like her companions, this sculpture is pristine, her surface glossily reflective; there is no question but that this is newly produced work. And yet formally, iconographically, the figures scarcely register as contemporary art at all.

[{figure1}]

After a minute or so, the restless camera settles on a close-up of the naked breasts of one of the sculptures. Just as it does so, a loud bang, followed by audible expressions of shock, disrupts its contemplation. Urgently seeking the source of the commotion, the camera now presses past open-mouthed witnesses to whatever has occurred. We see another of the figures in motion and realize that the disturbance cannot have been a mere accident. Georgina Starr enters the shot, raises a sculpture aloft and, ordering the crowd out of harm's way, smashes it against the wall and floor (fig. 2). At first unsettled by Starr's commanding intervention, the audience quickly accommodates itself to this turn of events. As each figure is dispatched in turn, nervous shock cedes to rowdy encouragement; a cry of 'Do it!' rings out as the last of the six meets its end. Interviewed for the present essay, Starr (2016) intimated that she could hardly wait to begin destroying the sculptures, even as unsuspecting attendees expressed interest in acquiring them for collections, and despite the fact that she had painstakingly hand-painted and varnished the casts, bought readymade from an Italian supplier. The destruction wrought in FLESH was surely motivated by a passionate need—but of what kind?

[{figure2}]

It will be among this essay's claims that this iconoclastic performance should be considered part of Starr's inspired ongoing artistic work on the maternal. As Jacqueline Rose has wryly noted, since Freud 'there is no getting away from mothers' (even as detaching from the mother has been thought by psychoanalysis to be a girl's vital developmental project), so this claim is hardly surprising in itself (2002: 108). And, indeed, the maternal has been perhaps the most patent, the most insistent, of the themes in Starr's work, as she affirms (2016). Nonetheless, there has yet to be a convincing account of this fact. I aim to redress this omission here, by attending to certain signal works in Starr's oeuvre, and by sketching an art-historical and theoretical context in which the particular character of her avowedly feminist project of performing the maternal, in a joyously destructive key, becomes clearer.

At stake will be a reevaluation of that aesthetics of destructiveness so emphatically performed in FLESH. At first blush, the vehemence with which Starr reduced her sculptures to shatters might seem to echo the violence Melanie Klein (1997) famously claimed attends the infant's relation to their mother during the developmental phase in which the 'paranoid-schizoid' position, with its splitting of both self and object, yields to the depressive one. In Klein's account, the child's innate psychic aggressivity towards the mother means that we find that 'the destructive impulse is turned against the object and is first expressed in phantasied oral-sadistic attacks on the mother's breast, which soon develop into onslaughts on her body by all sadistic means' (cited in Kristeva 2001: 61). In a recent poetic performance script, reproduced in the artist's book The History of Sculpture (2013, unpaginated), Starr seems to express just such aggression in a text entitled 'Exorcism of the Luna Milk Orb':

I attack the mother
I pulverize her face
I kick her to the floor and stamp on her head
I rule!

If in FLESH and other of Starr's works something like matricidal violence is undoubtedly played out, it is less clear that she conforms to the Kleinian notion that such attacks on the maternal body are followed—in the depressive phase of development (and thereafter)—by reparative measures. More precisely, it is not obvious what is being repaired in Starr's work, or by what means. This is partly because of the absence of the gestures that most readily symbolize such a project—binding, stitching, nurturing, holding and other putatively 'maternal' activities. Nor are Starr's maternal preoccupations easily aligned with those of certain contemporary artistic projects that seek to render visible mothering as a form of precarious and affective labour. A key dimension of such projects has been the recovery of earlier feminist (and broadly Marxian) political interventions such as the International Wages for Housework Campaign co-founded by Selma James in 1972, artistic endeavours

such as Margaret Harrison, Kay Hunt and Mary Kelly's collaborative Women and Work: A document on the division of labour in industry (1973–5) or Jo Spence's pioneering 'photo-therapy'. Contemporary artists have often sought such precedents in response to what Lisa Baraitser (2008: 67) has characterized as the 'interruptive' character of motherhood and the status of the new mother as interrupted subject.¹ Starr's work, which adopts the perspective of a daughter imagining her mother, mirroring her, merging with and embodying her, stands somewhat apart from this treatment of mother as care-worker and from the contemporary emphasis on the forms of subjectivity contingent on being, rather than having, a mother.

Kleinian psychic destructiveness understood as a prelude to a necessary reparation misses the force of Starr's practice, too, I think, because her work attempts to move beyond the limitations of a culturally dominant model of the maternal in which the fantasized inchoate, visceral and threatening interior of the mother's body is the converse of the (equally imaginary) idealized vision of her as unified and endlessly beneficent provider. These imbricated conceptions haunt many theoretical projects of course, not least Klein's, and are, as Julia Kristeva suggests, perhaps inseparable from any discourse on the maternal given their deep roots in Western culture (1980: 237–91). They have been convincingly shown to underpin visual economies both fetishistic and iconoclastic, from Hollywood cinema to Andy Warhol's screen prints and Cindy Sherman's photographs (Mulvey 1991; 1993). They can be discerned, too, in the production and reception of works made by Starr's peers within the group of so-called 'young British artists' (or 'yBas') alongside whom she came to prominence in the 1990s.

That Starr's maternal preoccupations have been generally overlooked is also partly consequent on the fact that mothers appeared rarely in the yBa canon—Gillian

¹ Selected examples here would include: Moyra Davey's edited book *Mother Reader* (2001) and Corin Sworn's 2016 performative response to it; Kate Davis's 'The Unswept Floor', Dunedin Public Art Gallery, New Zealand, 2016, inspired in part by Marilyn Waring's feminist economics and by Spence's practice; Georgia Horgan's recent work drawing on Silvia Federici's writing, including *Saturday* (2016); Ciara Phillips' collaboration with the Justice for Domestic Workers campaign at The Showroom, London in 2010; and Margaret Salmon's films *Ninna Nanna* (2007) and *Housework* (2014), among others.

Wearing's practice being the obvious exception—and then usually as vehicles of transgression, to be travestied. Sensation, the infamous exhibition of Charles Saatchi's collection of yBa art staged at the Royal Academy of Arts in 1997, and subsequently at Brooklyn Museum, was notable for two particular scandals, exemplary in this regard. In London, it was Marcus Harvey's portrait of Myra Hindley (Myra) that prompted vituperative comment, a protest outside the gallery by the mother of one of her victims and a series of physical attacks on the painting itself. The image of Hindley was familiar enough, a media staple over many years; what provoked the anger was the fact that Harvey had used a child's handprint stencilled in blacks, whites and greys to render the image—means that imbued it with a sense of pathological anti-maternity (Warner 1998). Elizabeth Legge insightfully suggests that 'during the autumn of 1997... [the] portrait functioned as a short-haired blonde demonic double of Diana-the-good-mother' (2000: 1). When 'Sensation' reached New York, Chris Ofili's more literally iconic The Holy Virgin Mary (1996), with its inclusion of collaged fragments of pornographic magazines and elephant dung roundels on a canvas depicting a black Madonna, it drew charges of blasphemy. One man was even moved to 'purify' it with white paint in an act of redemptive iconoclasm (Barber and Boldrick 2013: 130). Here the very medium of painting seems overdetermined by that Christian doubling of Eve by Mary, the inviolate maternal completeness and purity of the latter (her hymen supposedly unbroken even in childbirth) standing as the redemptive counterpart to the fallen, concupiscent Eve in perhaps the most consequential of those cultural splittings that simultaneously idealize and denigrate maternity (Warner 1990: 43–5). These examples suggest that representations of the maternal as at once pure and defiled, sacred and profane, in turn serve as the grounds for reinstatements of maternal ideals (whether of blank purity or endless, vigilant grief). A deep cultural familiarity with such maternal doubleness may also explain the disconcerting ease with which the audience for FLESH accommodated both Starr's representations of immaculate femininity and ultimately her attack on them, too.

The economy that Klein posits as that of the child making reparations is homologous with exactly such a construction of the maternal as what sinks beneath and rises above the cultural proper:

It is a 'perfect' object which is in pieces; thus the effort to undo the state of disintegration to which it has been reduced presupposes the necessity to make it beautiful and 'perfect.' The idea of perfection is, moreover, so compelling because it disproves the idea of disintegration. (Klein cited in Kristeva 2001: 79)

In FLESH, and elsewhere in her practice, Starr avoids any figuring of reparation as any restoration of the ideal. Instead, it is the playing out of the destruction of that binary itself that is, paradoxically, her reparative gesture. Crucially, while the maternal is often thought of as the very threshold between nature and culture, Starr performs it as culture through and through. To see how FLESH may enact this, we need to set it in relation to some of the artist's other key works.

The clearest statement of the centrality of maternal themes to Starr's practice comes in the artist's book I am a Record (2010). This volume accompanied I am a Record and I am the Medium, a solo exhibition at Le Confort Moderne, Poitiers, France (2010) focusing on the many sound-based works that the artist has made over her career. Songs, audio recordings (of events ranging from family conversations to seances) and video soundtracks, taken from extant works from the early 1990s onwards, were cut as vinyl records for the exhibition, and visitors could select and play the records in bespoke listening booths. Functioning as a kind of annotated family album, I am a Record provides first-person, seemingly factual, accounts of the genesis of these works. In these texts, as often in Starr's early work, family history is transposed into a medium par excellence of mass culture—in this case the pop record, elsewhere the TV show or the B-movie—and the forced jollity often characteristic of these forms becomes a carrier of more complex affects. The artist's own mother emerges as a vivid presence here, as, in fact, the very medium of her encounter with popular culture. Starr (2016) recalls that her initial exposure to musicals, films and television was in the company of her mum, and that in this she was acting as a companion to someone struggling with depression and with the realities of being a young mother and housewife.

I am a Record makes frequent, specific reference to maternal depression. For instance, Starr claims that her 'first performance' was a 1974 rendition of Little Jimmy Osmond's 'Long Haired Lover from Liverpool' that was overshadowed by the removal of a fostered child from the family home:

On 22nd December... my father returned home from work laden with presents only to find my mother collapsed in tears on the floor. The adoption agency had taken the baby back. The loss of the child had dampened all our spirits, but I still sang my song at the party. (Starr 2010: n.p.)

Starr casts herself here as a version of the child described in Donald Winnicott's paper 'Reparation in respect of mother's organized defence against depression', a child who is obliged to attempt to enliven their mother, to commence their own projects only after dealing 'with mother's mood' (1982: 93). The risk in such a situation, Winnicott argues, is that the child evades their own depression in reflecting the mother's, and so misses the authentic aggression and reparation crucial to forming a true self. This latter formulation is Kleinian in origin, but Winnicott, as Adam Philips (2007) clarifies, is aiming above all to counter Klein's influence on British child analysis, which he figures exactly as a mother forcing her own depression on to her offspring. Winnicott wishes to correct the hypostatization of Klein's view of the depressive position and her ventriloquism of the child's inner world according to her own fixed script, arguing instead that there is no set template for the psychic exchanges at work between 'this mother and this child' (2005: 110). If Starr constructs an account in which she is the precociously animating child dealing with mother's mood by miming pop culture, we should perhaps read this construction as itself a form of reparative self-analysis or of creative play, one made idiosyncratically out of the very circumstances that Winnicott takes as precluding such a response. In situating the beginnings of her own exuberant creativity in 'dealing with mother's mood', Starr seems to affirm that indeed this mother can be 'good enough' for this child, and that the identificatory repertoire of culture at large is what fails to provide for such an eventuality. With the caveat that Starr's practice has

been forged independently of such sources, I will expand on some facets of Winnicott's account of the maternal in what follows. I will use his ideas to specify further how Starr deploys the matricidal impulse that Kristeva posits as essential to selfhood—'our vital necessity, the sine-qua-non of our individuation' (1989: 27)—not in the name of a mature independence from the mother, but as a means to work back through the earliest stages of dependency. This has been the trajectory, I suggest, that Starr's practice has followed over the past two decades.

Living mirrors

The very first work detailed in I am a Record is framed with reference to depression. It has its origins in a 1994 answerphone recording made by Georgina's mother at her request. In it, Christine Starr gives an a cappella rendition of the Lionel Richie hit 'Hello'. This affectingly stark version at once poses Starr's mother as a pop star and plays out a version of maternal seduction—this is after all a love song, including lines such as 'And in my dreams I've kissed your lips/A thousand times'. A striking photograph of the 16-year-old Christine graces the cover of I am a Record and illustrates Hello within its pages, accompanied by an account of her taking prescription drugs for depression and anxiety, and of becoming 'quite distressed by the ageing process' in her twenties (Starr 2010). Starr writes that she was frequently consulted on the matter:

My job as a child beauty advisor was to try to convince her that only she could see the fine lines that had begun to appear... On good days she would let me make her face up. I would always use the things in her make-up bag that were almost untouched: black eye-shadow, white powder, kohl liners and dark red lipsticks... When she saw her reflection she would laugh at her dark eyed doppelgänger. She said she looked like Theda Bara... (Starr 2010: n.p.)

That last reference is a telling one. Starr's presentation of her memory is here in the service of articulating her own artistic cosmos rather than of any biographical accuracy, for the allusion to silent-era movie star Theda Bara functions to forge a connection between Hello and a major film project, THEDA, which Starr had undertaken in 2006. This work began with the artist's astonishment at the uncanny resemblance between the subject of a found photograph (Bara, it turned out) and her mother. That many of Bara's films are no longer extant was the spur for Starr to undertake an extraordinary work of imaginative 'restoration', making her own versions of these lost films in her studio over a period of a year: building sets, making costumes, enacting scenes and assembling this material into a narrative of her own. The resulting film is some forty minutes in length, and has been shown both as an installation and in a number of performance screenings with live improvised musical accompaniment. In a strategy that she had also used in a number of early video works, Starr plays all the characters in the film, including several that reprise Bara's lost roles.

[{figure3}]

THEDA opens with a discrete section titled 'Prelude', a remarkable single-take, 12-minute sequence (fig. 3). Starr faces the camera in close-up; seamlessly, in performed slow motion, she shifts through enactments of radically disparate emotions. We see, for instance, a beatific smile segue to a teeth-baring grimace with fists clenched, which in turn gives way to wide-eyed plaint. While individual moments are legible (as exaggerated expressions of joy, anger, despair and so forth), the overall effect is ambiguous: the very continuity between contrasting emotions places each in a state of suspended meaning. Recalling that Starr-as-Bara is embodying her own perceived identification of the actress with her mother, might we read the camera's perspective as that of a child attempting to read emotion from the mother's face? That such an attempt is a crucial part of pre-linguistic self-formation is one thesis of Winnicott's Playing and Reality (2005). Here Winnicott takes the insights of Lacan's 'mirror stage' and traces these back to a still-earlier developmental point. Winnicott's thesis, starkly stated, is that 'the precursor of the mirror is the mother's

face' (2005: 149), and that in this maternal mirror what the child seeks and finds is their own self. For Winnicott, the 'good-enough' ideal here is perception as apperception, facilitated by a responsive mother. This reflecting function of the face is hampered if the mother's own mood predominates. He notes 'half-way states' are possible, in which babies 'tantalized by this type of relative maternal failure, study the variable maternal visage in an attempt to predict the mother's mood, just exactly as we all study the weather' (152). But such relative failures are of minor concern compared to a rigid predictability of the face, which leads towards pathology. 'If the mother's face is unresponsive, then a mirror is a thing to be looked at but not to be looked into,' Winnicott writes; in such circumstances, no lively self can be found there (ibid.). 'Prelude', then, uses an archaic language of silent cinematic emoting to point to a pre-symbolic relation to the maternal. Starr herself becomes the site at which these various dimensions of maternal culture coexist, her face on screen recording an inability to contain or symbolize a maternal plenitude in which the subject's self is herself contained and dissolved.

For Winnicott, mirrors are maternal, just as mothers enact a mirroring function: normal adults spend time 'getting the mirror to notice and approve' (153). He gives the example of a woman with three sons who was 'always near to depression'. On waking she would feel 'paralysing depression', which could only be resolved when she 'put on her face'. This is truly a performance, for in the analyst's view, she 'had to be her own mother', to perform, in the mirror, a face able to hold her self together, making up for the failure of her own mother to mirror in this way (ibid.). The dizzying complexities of role-playing here resonate with Starr's project: in THEDA Starr plays her mother as a mirror via a mirroring found within popular culture (Bara as Christine's double). Winnicott, in a telling aside, imagines that had his patient borne a daughter, the girl would have risked being conscripted into mirroring the mother to replace the mother's mother and her inadequate mirroring (ibid.). It is not hard to see how selves could get lost in these scenarios.

[{figure4}]

Winnicott mentions another patient with a depressed mother, who had a marked absence of interest in the face: 'now she looks in the mirror only to remind herself that she "looks like an old hag" (patient's own words)' (2005: 155). Here the mirror reflects not an objective reality, but an inadequate instantiation of the mirroring function of the mother's face. Winnicott's patient strangely anticipates THEDA's central plot, in which Starr 'is' her own mother and confronts precisely such a challenge to self-regard. The film's main sequence, 'Act', opens on a seance, in which Starr-as-Bara-as-medium is seemingly overwhelmed by spirits; it then moves to a scene of crystal-ball reading in Ancient Egypt. Both sequences are full of foreboding. The film shifts to London, and to the early twentieth century, via an intertitle of an antique postcard showing the Sphinx on the Thames Embankment (an icon of feminine unreadability to double those implacable maternal visages invoked by Winnicott). From here the film proceeds to tell the story of a male artist's/dandy's infatuation with Bara, whom he sees performing a revue of some of her iconic roles. Starr-as-Theda's appearance is billed as a portrayal of 'Madame du Cleosalosappho'—a conflation of female identities in a notably powerful, not to say imperious, register. The artist/dandy invites Theda to pose for a likeness, and we see her strike various silhouetted attitudes behind a screen, while he works furiously at a lump of clay and wire, producing the crudest of bodies and seeming to revel in its visceral materiality (fig. 4). When she sneaks back to the studio to preview the completed study, she finds herself facing a representation not of beauty, but of decay. Seeing that she has been sculpted with exaggeratedly sagging breasts, missing hair and teeth, she recoils in horror and weeps. Motivated by the knowledge that this monstrosity will soon go on public view, Theda—in cat-burglar costume and with appropriate agility—returns to the artist's studio by night. We now see that the finished work, a cast, painted, and varnished elaboration of the study, is an allegory of vanity: a beautiful young woman is fused, back to back, with a hideous, shrunken portrayal of old age. (Here Starr references the c. 1470/80 Allegory of Vanity in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, omitting the male figure from that tripartite version.) As in FLESH, the remedy to the tyranny of such representations is an act of destruction: Theda smashes the work, drawing the film towards its conclusion and plunging the male artist into despair, left clutching the fragments of his allegory (fig. 5). FLESH, in fact, functions as a live enactment of this portion of the film, and once we see it in this light, Starr's iconoclastic act can be read as performed not against

the maternal, but from a position of identification with a mother so inadequately mirrored by visual culture at large. This reading also clarifies that it is not vanity that drives Starr's Theda, but a basic refusal of the two modes of appearance given to women within the logic of the allegory of vanity, that is, as virginal beauty, as per the sculptural iconography of FLESH, or death-bearing crone. When Starr's Theda plays the muse—a role often taken on by the real Bara—what the male artist 'sees' is that oscillation between perfection and disintegration, ideal image and exorbitant, formless materiality that, as already noted, is characteristic of the normative duality of maternal culture. I suggest, then, that we read Starr's actions in FLESH as a performance of, or rather as, her mother as iconoclast, one in which the iconic character of the maternal itself is targeted.

[[figure5]]

'Hullo object! I destroyed you'

We might return here to the link Starr makes between her mother's fraught attentiveness to signs of ageing, the narrative of THEDA and the recording of Hello. In 2009, Mum Sings Hello became a stand-alone piece consisting of a vinyl pressing of Starr's year-on-year re-recording of the original answerphone message (fig. 6). The resultant incremental loss of fidelity yielded a set of versions derived from Starr's mother's voice but progressively shearing any audible sense from it. It is as if time's forward march here takes Starr back to her own beginnings in the tenderness, the fidelity even, with which the work brings forth the mother of pre-symbolic development. Mum Sings Hello makes a pop song convey that immersion in maternal vocalicity that produces, in Didier Anzieu's beautiful phrase, a 'sonorous envelope' that mirrors, holds and contains the infant's self, just as do the mother's arms, or the child's own skin (2016). Starr (2016) points out that in requesting the original iteration of 'Hello' she was mindful of the connection thus forged with her mother through physical cables running under the ocean in that pre-digital era.

Telephonic cables here recall the play with string that for Winnicott instances his concept of the 'potential space': 'that hypothetical area that exists (but cannot exist) between the baby and the object (mother or part of mother) during the phase of the repudiation of the object as not-me' (2005: 144). Starr's access to the Winnicottian potential space relies to some extent on effacing her mother's voice: this brings us back to the question of the creative destructiveness so present in FLESH and THEDA.

[[figure6]]

In 'The Use of an Object and Relating Through Identifications' Winnicott insists that any use of a thing necessitates that it have first been made real 'in the sense of being part of shared reality, not a bundle of projections' (2005: 118). Crucially, and counter to the Freudian and Kleinian orthodoxies that had led him to this position, Winnicott claims that this 'making real' is undertaken by means of attempting to destroy the object in question. It is, in short, aggression that makes the object, not the object's resistance to omnipotent control that provokes aggression (Phillips 2007: 127–37). Here is Winnicott's wonderfully ventriloquized summation:

The subject says to the object: 'I destroyed you,' and the object is there to receive the communication. From now on the subject says: 'Hullo object!' 'I destroyed you.' 'I love you.' 'You have value for me because of your survival of my destruction of you.' (2005: 120).

On this account, Starr's playing at being her mother as mirrored or echoed in a larger cultural environment is a way of using her as a transitional object in acts of creative destruction that make real what survives them. Certain representations of the maternal in the guise of ideal femininity or radical non-being pass through this same process and are found to crumble—like the six sculptures in FLESH, or the allegory of vanity in THEDA. Starr's mother, however, emerges as the ever-more real survivor of such a process, albeit that the representation of her realness tends more

and more to abstraction. This is the case most clearly in the suite of recent exhibitions, films and performances in which Starr has used the form of the bubblegum bubble—a literally inspired form—to suggest the potentiality of the female body. This potential is not just related to pregnancy and birth (although these capacities are certainly part of Starr’s bubble iconography) but to form-giving per se. In the 2016 video work The Lesson (fig. 7) we see gum-chewing women produce a series of bubbles, sometimes merging, sometimes collapsing, that Starr names as if their always precarious volumes described the most fundamental of processes, positions or states: ‘Androgynous Egg; Infinite Recognition; Incorruptible Replica; Hostile Placental Twin; Electrostatic Ectoplasmic Error... Psychotic Concave Mirror... Immaculate Amniotic Desire...’ Here, and in the related video, The Birth of Sculpture, Starr seems to conceive of a new imaginary, having worked through and broken up that that she inherited as so many readymade forms from an extant maternal culture.

[{figure7}]

In performatively embodying a constellation of readymade icons constitutive of popular culture in a technological age, Georgina Starr has perhaps played with the implications of the name she inherited from her father. It should be clear, however, that it is her mother who emerges as the real star of her work. By channelling—like a psychic medium—the ways in which her own mother might be reflected everywhere and nowhere in the culture, Starr suggests that mothers have been to a considerable extent made up, and that they can be made up differently, too. ‘Matricide’ functions in her work as a loving gesture, a way of reckoning with her own emergence as her mother’s daughter, and with the possibility of a maternal culture, as yet unknown, beyond mothers good and bad.

Notes

1 Selected examples here would include: Moyra Davey's edited book Mother Reader (2001) and Corin Sworn's 2016 performative response to it; Kate Davis's 'The Unswept Floor', Dunedin Public Art Gallery, New Zealand, 2016, inspired in part by Marilyn Waring's feminist economics and by Spence's practice; Georgia Horgan's recent work drawing on Silvia Federici's writing, including the performance / installation Saturday (2016); Ciara Phillips' collaboration with the Justice for Domestic Workers campaign in Workshop (2010-ongoing) at The Showroom, London in 2010; and Margaret Salmon's films Ninna Nanna (2007) and Housework (2014), among others.

References

Anzieu, Didier (2016) The Skin-Ego, trans. Naomi Segal, London: Karnac Books.

Baraitser, Lisa (2008) Maternal Encounters: The ethics of interruption, London: Routledge.

Barber, Tabitha and Boldrick, Stacy, eds (2013) Art under Attack: Histories of British iconoclasm, London: Tate Publishing.

Davey, Moyra (2001), Mother Reader: Essential writings on motherhood, New York: Seven Stories

Irigaray, Luce (1981) 'And the one doesn't stir without the other', Signs 7(1): 60—7.

Klein, Melanie (1997) Envy and Gratitude and Other Works 1946-63, London: Vintage.

Kristeva, Julia (1980) Desire in Language: A semiotic approach to literature and art, trans Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez, New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Kristeva, Julia (1989) Black Sun: Depression and melancholia, trans. Leon S. Roudiez, New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

- Kristeva, Julia (2001), Melanie Klein, trans. Ross Guberman, New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Legge, Elizabeth (2000) 'Reinventing derivation: Roles, stereotypes, and "young British art"', Representations 71: 1—23.
- Mulvey, Laura (1991) 'A phantasmagoria of the female body: The work of Cindy Sherman', New Left Review 0 (188):136—51.
- Mulvey, Laura (1993) 'Some thoughts on theories of fetishism in the context of contemporary culture', October 65: 3—20.
- Phillips, Adam (2007) Winnicott, London: Penguin.
- Rose, Jacqueline (2002) 'Of knowledge and mothers: On the work of Christopher Bollas', in Joseph Scalia (ed.) The Vitality of Objects: Exploring the work of Christopher Bollas, London: Continuum, pp. 108–24.
- Starr, Georgina (2010) I am a Record, Poitiers: Le Confort Moderne.
- Starr, Georgina (2013) The History of Sculpture, Dundee: Cooper Gallery.
- Starr, Georgina (2016) Interview with the author, Hackney Wick, London, 13 December.
- Warner, Marina (1990) Alone of All Her Sex: The myth and cult of the Virgin Mary, London: Picador.
- Warner, Marina (1998) 'Peroxide mug-shot: Women who kill children', London Review of Books 20(1): 10—11.
- Winnicott, Donald W. (1982) 'Reparation in respect of mother's organized defence against depression,' in Through Paediatrics to Psycho-Analysis, London: The Hogarth Press, pp. 91—6.
- Winnicott, Donald W. (2005) Playing and Reality, London: Routledge.

