

Gender, Ideology and Display

Suzanne de Villiers Human

Dept of History of Art and Visual Culture Studies, University of the Free State,
P O Box 339, Bloemfontein 9300, South Africa
Tel: (051) 401-2315. Email: humane.hum@mail.uovs.ac.za

A visual argument is put forward by means of the association of motifs related to the image of the Fool and its metaphorical meanings, like many mirrors reflecting into one another. This method of shaping and argument by intuitively associating visual images, rather than commencing with theoretical debate, aids in confronting the power of images over scholars of visual culture. The analytical strategy to hunt down, tease out and uncover underlying meanings in visual material is modelled upon the example of the wilful and mischievous strategies favoured in the humorously subversive visual examples selected. This is a deliberately picaresque hermeneutic act, because it transgressively aims at exposing various ideological prejudices. This process acknowledges that art historians do not only bring modes of interpretation to works of art, but that objects of art suggest rhetorical possibilities for their interpretation; that images have power over scholars selecting and analysing them. These strategies of Ideology sensitive art and analysis alert to the fact that the act of looking at cultural images is an act of witnessing. It is not a passive reception but an act of bearing witness through sight.¹

Gender, ideologie en vertoon

'n Visuele argument word gevoer deur middel van die assosiasie van motiewe wat verband hou met die beeld van die Dwaas en die metaforiese betekenis daarvan – soos baie speëls wat in mekaar reflekteer. Hierdie metode om 'n argument op te bou deur die intuitiewe assosiasie van visuele voorstellings eerder as om weg te spring met teoretiese debatvoering, dra daartoe by om die mag van voorstellings oor navorsers van visuele materiaal, te konfronteer. Die analitiese strategie om onderliggende betekenis op speelse wyse in visuele materiaal na te speur, uit te lig en te onthul boots die opsetlike en ondeunde strategieë wat in die geselekteerde visuele materiaal gebruik word, na. Dit is 'n doelbewuste pikareske hermeneutiese handeling, omdat dit ten doel het om verskeie ideologiese vooroordele aan die kaak te stel. Deur hierdie proses word erken dat kunshistorici nie net interpretasiemetodes na visuele voorstellings bring nie, maar dat voorstellings retoriese interpretasiemoontlikhede suggereer; dat voorstellings mag het oor die navorsers wat dit selekteer en ondersoek. Hierdie strategieë van ideologie-sensitiewe kuns en ontleding rig die aandag daarop dat om te kyk na kulturele voorstellings 'n daad van getuienis is. Dit is nie passiewe resepsie nie, maar 'n handeling van visuele getuienislewering.

The comparison of images in reproduced form, including the arbitrary alterations of their dimensions and their reproductive distortions, displacements and manipulations, is part of the fabric of art history as a discipline. The slide lecture has enabled Art Historians since the nineteenth century to construct or orchestrate arguments that are visually persuasive. For Wölfflin - who is credited for the invention of the art historical practice of showing two slides at one time - the slide lecture was superior to the printed book, because it could take the linear path of the page, but it might also assume a

more complicated structure (Nelson 2000: 430). Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne--Bilderatlas* which aimed at transmitting "social memory" in a non-linear and visual way, through reproductions of images fastened to forty panels in the Warburg library, is another example (Warburg 1999, Baumgart 1993).

Reproductive techniques have always been considered to increase the art historian's capacity to do scientific research. Early in the history of the discipline, in 1893, Bernard Berenson wrote that: "when this continuous study of originals is supplemented by isochromatic photographs, such

comparison attains almost the accuracy of the physical science” (Nelson 2000: 431). On the other hand, there is the awareness among art historians of the power of images in reproduced form. In tracing the historical pre-figurations of the art historical slide lecture Nelson (2000: 424 ff.) finds similarities between scientific lectures, and the popular entertainments of travelling showmen during the nineteenth century. Special phantasmagorical effects like the magic lantern - a variant of the *camera obscura* -, projected and reflected images, painted slides, smoke, and so on, were used in both cases. Recently, researchers in Visual Culture Studies have become increasingly sensitive to the effects of the ideological powers of reproduced visual images.

In an age of electronic journals in the field of Visual Culture Studies it seems appropriate to demonstrate how an ideologically biased presentation of visual images anamorphically distorts them in the minds’ eye. By juxtaposing seemingly disparate images, their visual links based on shared motifs and metaphoric references, sometimes over centuries, are brought to the fore. In this way, some veiled nuances of ideological meaning can be teased out.

In this article an argument is put forward by means of the visual association of motifs and their metaphorical meanings within specific contexts, like many mirrors reflecting into one another.² The selected images are not interspersed with the written text, but rather presented together, to form a visual argument parallel to the text.

In an endeavour to self-critically confront the very anamorphically manipulated sequences of display, the article is concluded with a reflection on the power of images over the scholar of visual culture. Patterned directives, blindspots and insights

behind the scholar’s own intuitive predilections for and selections of certain images are sought.

Foolish bodily postures

The (explicit or implicit) application of clownish bodily postures relates the visual images in this presentation. Alertness to bodily postures and gestures builds upon Aby Warburg’s *kulturwissenschaftliche* legacy (Warburg 1999, Baumgart 1993). My reading of these clownish postures is enriched by a spectrum of nuances or layers of meaning – of what Vandebroek (1987: 149) calls a “*boodschapperwaaier*” or “denotatie-en connotatie spektrum”³ – ensconced in the history of the representation of the Fool as a type. Vandebroek argues that grotesque representations of the figure of the marginalized Fool often uncovers the dark and unfathomable underside of civilized societies in which Knowledge and Reason are overvalued.⁴ The recurring clownish postures in the following analysis, albeit ludicrously, has the explosive power (“*innere Sprengkraft*”) of a pathos formula which expresses the “limits of rationality” where ideology is palpable.

The argument is introduced through a painting by David Salle, *Symphony Concertante II* (1987) (figure 1). Two of Salle’s characteristic *grisaille* nude dancers are posed, one in leg warmers and T-shirt, provocatively baring a view of her buttocks, the other half-clothed in a ballet skirt. Both hold strenuous poses, reminiscent of the muscle aching toil of artists’ models working for “great masters” who have been painting apparently relaxed and passive female nudes in the nude genre since the Renaissance. Salle’s monochrome gray treatment of his provocative models reminds of black and white

photography - the cheapest form of mass image reproduction.

Each youthful woman holds a violin behind her back. The association of music and eroticism is common in “high art”, but also in the spheres of kitsch and soft porn. Salle may well be overtly referring to Man Ray’s well known photograph *Le violon d’Ingres* (1924).

Two more images are painted over the *grisaille* nudes. One is a small brightly coloured portrait painting of a military officer with a distinctly smug facial expression, maybe a representation of a voyeur, and the other is of a familiar gaudily decorated vessel floating in the air, a recurrent motif in paintings by Salle.

There is also an illusionary painting of a black and white photographic print at the top of the painting, the right. It depicts a female in a clownish pose, reminiscent of some photographs of female hysterics taken by Jean Martin Charcot (Figure 2). Charcot provided this photograph with the caption *Attitudes Passionnelles: Menacé*.

Charcot was Freud’s mentor and the discoverer/inventor of the female psychic affliction of “hysteria”, at the Salpêtrière asylum in Paris. He endeavoured to lay bare the underlying pathology of hysteria, which afflicted an extraordinary number of women in the nineteenth century, by photographically “recording the stages” of various women’s hysterical fits, and constructing “a typical fit” from all these photographs. The “grande attaque hystérique, complète et régulière” (one stage of which is called “clownism”) is a masterful conjecture, consisting of several images of different women with “incomplete” hysterical attacks, assembled to complete the “clinical picture” and provide an image of completion (Schade 1993: 465-570,

Isaak 1996: 165). The photograph reproduced here is from Charcot’s full series published in *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière* in 1877-80. The undefined dark background, the luminosity of the figure, the lack of distinguishing clothing (similar to the Salle “photograph” at the top right), all drawing attention to the facial expression, bear evidence of the manipulative hand of Charcot, who also considered himself to be an artist.

There are striking visual resemblances between this clownish female in Salle’s painting and some images of amusingly silly female models in a series of advertisements selected by Irving Goffman under the rubric “The ritualization of subordination” in his *Gender advertisements* (1976). In e.g. the *New Freedom* advertisement (Figure 3) from this series the likeness is remarkable.

Goffman, a sociologist, assembled and systematized contemporary advertising images in which charming and enviable male and (more numerous) female models are displayed to attract the attention of potential consumers of a variety of goods. His aim in his book is to exhibit how human bodily postures and gestures of self-presentation, represented in isolation, as well as in various social and gendered relationships, unwittingly reflect social hierarchies and women’s social domination by men in patriarchal culture. He argues that the clownish postures under the above rubric display the female character’s childlike manageability and self-effacement.

Seen in this context, the similarity between Salle’s *grisaille* nude exhibiting her bare behind, and the posture of the female in another Goffman advertisement under the same rubric (Figure 4), is also striking. The

clownish protrusion of the lower rear in this advertisement can be read, in line with Goffman, as a defiant, but playful gesture, ingratiating in purpose. These comparisons highlight the similarity in ambience of the posture of the Salle model in *grisaille* and the clownish antics of the Salle female in the illusionary photograph at the top of the painting.

Composed of representations of the female body in the nude, David Salle's post-modern paintings serve to simultaneously arouse and to initiate an intellectual response. On the one hand, it is true that his images are often culled and developed from soft porn magazine photographs, and on the other hand, his work has been described as hyper-literate (Whitney 1994: 40). The remoteness, coldness and greyness of his nudes are often cited in defence against allegations of his pornographic objectification of women. His work refers overtly and even oppressively to pornography, but is simultaneously a renewed and post-modern confrontation with the "high art" subject of the female nude in Western art. The representation of the female body in the nude has been problematic ever since feminism and Salle knows that "his hand is right in the fuse" (Whitney 1994: 48).

Salle's fascination with the ambivalence of remoteness and familiarity; distance and earthy sensuousness; coldness and warmth; contemplation and arousal; melancholy and humour; blandness and eroticism; reverie and action; *grisaille* and warm colours; sardonic and scabrous humour, is augmented by the subtle play between concealment and revelation; veiling and revealing; concealing and uncovering.

On the thinly painted surface of the canvas, representations are seemingly superimposed on one another in the manner of a palimpsest.

Sanford Schwarz wrote in the *New Yorker* in 1984 (Whitney 1994: 51):

Perhaps only in movies have we seen something of the gentle and diaphanous effect he gets, of different images simultaneously drifting back into and rising up from other images.

Salle succeeds in disturbing the typical erotic and delicate "high art" balance between concealment and exposure. He upsets the distinction between the obscenity of pornography and the containment of the "high art" nude genre by posing his model to revealingly thrust her lower rear in the direction of the spectator, and simultaneously suggesting the remoteness of the female form by means of the monochrome grey tones and the polished, non-tactile application of paint.

The significance of the representation of acts of concealing and revealing is made evident in the so-called *Venus Pudica* or *Aphrodite of Modesty* that can be considered to be the epitome of the female nude in Western culture. The example presented here is the marble *Medici Venus* in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence (Figures 5 and 6), represented as covering her genitals and breasts with draped fabric. The act of modestly covering her body from a frontal viewer is at the same time a charming exposure of the view of her naked body from the back – in particular since it was made for exhibition in a circular temple, exposed to viewers from all sides.

It is evident from the next two images that the gesture of revelation and exposure of the *Venus of Modesty* is considered to be worthy of imitation over many centuries. In a *Maidenform* advertisement (Figure 7) that derives from the famous photograph of Marilyn Monroe (Figure 8) posing over a subway grill and coquettishly pushing down the front of her gust

blown dress to reveal her backside, the ineffectual concealing gesture is repeated.

The stance of the youthful female model in the *Maidenform* advertisement of 1987 can be compared with the clownish stance of Cucuba in an anonymous seventeenth-century Bolognese painting (Figure 9). The comparison is admittedly "picaresque" or subversively humorous in intention, but not too far-fetched. Both figures strain their backsides for rhetorical effect. Earthy sexuality is suggested by the protruded male buttocks in the picaresque painting, of two male *commedia dell'arte* characters acting out their gestural altercation. Cucuba's silly gesticulations with raised arms are reminiscent of those of the Charcot and *New Freedom* models in figure 2 and Figure 3. Not only the prancing stances and attenuated noses of the two male characters in the painting, but also their lifted and lowered swords, respectively implying momentary victory and defeat, are exaggerated low mode pointers to the erotic undertones of macho masculine competition.

The association of female erotic attraction and clownish antics has been referred to in the context of the Salpêtrière photographs, the two "clownish" Salle characters, as well as in the advertisements selected by Goffman, all suggesting the "ritualization of subordination". The clownish female role of amorous trickster, or of the erotic *ingénue*, ironically at once aware of her exposure, and modest, like the *Venus Pudica*, is also evident in the *Maidenform* advertisement.

The "trickster connection"

Yet it is not only social subservience that is suggested with reference to the metaphor of the marginalized Fool. There is also a

"trickster connection" to the Fool as cultural type and an association with magic and sinister forces (cf. Berger 1997: 80,73, Vandebroek 1987: 133-136, Welsford 1935: 123).

Hannah Wilke refers to such connotations in her final exhibition *INTRA-VENUS* that was shown posthumously. She documented in thirteen larger-than-life photographs, set out like the twelve Stations of the Cross, her confrontation with her own death from lymphatic cancer.

In one of these photographs, *January 30, 1992: #1* (figure 10) she shows clowns, with a body covered in medical apparatus, like the South American dancer and movie star, Carmen Miranda, balancing, with raised arms, a bouquet of plastic flowers on her head. It is as if her whole oeuvre is re-assessed in this final clownish exhibition.

In her signature style of humorous self-assured exhibitionist, she plays her last role - that of the grotesque dying crone. Bald, naked, bloated, scarred by chemotherapy and bone marrow treatments, hooked to IV tubes, Wilke assumes the whole array of stereotypical poses she has always assumed (Isaak 1996: 223).

Wilke's previous performances like *Hannah Wilke: Super-T-Art and S. O. S. - Starification Object* (1974) (figure 11) were condemned for their exhibitionism and narcissistic indulgence, because of the obvious similarities between her seductive posing and the attractions of the *femme fatale*:

The *femme fatale*, the ambiguous woman capable of many disguises, is the character in *film noir* who most embodies deception and deceitfulness, 'a woman whose promise of surplus enjoyment conceals mortal danger' ... (Isaak 1996: 221).

In her final exhibition her disguise is that of the clown. The *femme fatale*'s ability to beguile, enmesh and ensnare is likened to the lures of the

trickster. In a final trick she inverts the menacing associations of the *femme fatale* and death (Creed 1993: 151-166) by posing as the dying clown.

The David Salle painting and the effective contemporary *Maidenform* advertisement produced for the mass print media are related by their subtle play on concealment and exposure. The comparison of these two images with images revealing the sinister aspects of the Fool, have brought veiled undercurrents of meaning to the fore. The power of images to sometimes transcend the conscious intentions of those who use and choose them is evident.

Self-critical reflection: the spectator as witness

My analytical strategy used to hunt down, tease out and uncover underlying meanings in visual material is modelled upon the example of those favoured in humorously subversive art. As in the Salle painting, the juxtaposition of these disparate images, is wilful and mischievous. It is a deliberately picaresque hermeneutic act, because it transgressively aims at exposing various ideological prejudices. This process acknowledges that art historians do not only bring modes of interpretation to works of art, but that objects of art suggest rhetorical possibilities for their interpretation; that images have power over scholars selecting and analysing them (cf. Holly 1990: 395, Cf. Baxandall 1979, Flax 1984).

What the images I have shown have obviously in common is their references to the metaphor of the Fool. But the Fool is not only a popular subject in subversively humorous or ideology alert art, there also seem to be distinct representational strategies associated with the role of the picaresque Fool in such art.

Some characteristic picaresque strategies shared over centuries by the Salle painting, the Wilke photograph, the seventeenth-century Bolognese painting and my presentation are:

- An interest in bodily postures and gestures and an endeavour to foreground and move corporeal subjects, or at least subjects in whom the contemplative faculty is not privileged or disembodied. The Fool is known to communicate most effectively through bodily postures and gestures. This interest in the body, and more specifically the ribaldry of the lower body, conveys a basic, picaresque low mode sensibility. The carnal and corporeal dimensions of life are often invoked in order to humorously reverse the celebration of mind and intellect in more refined circles. The method of shaping and argument by intuitively associating images, rather than commencing with theoretical debate, aids in confronting the power of images over scholars of visual culture.
- The Fool personifies play. The play impulse, the desire to invent and experiment, is always a factor in artistic creation, but has a specific character in ideology alert art where the critical breaking down, deconstruction and restructuring of familiar societal and artistic conventions and habits are at stake. Such debunking and resistance takes place by playing the fool; through improvisation and parody, or through mischievous juxtapositions and inversions. This presentation shows that the enviable image of female beauty and happiness is related to the marginalized cultural role of the Fool in society and to sinister

associations in the history of its representation.

- The simultaneous presence of anxiety and pleasure is a picaresque metaphoric attribute brought to the fore by the Fool's posture. In the image of the Fool, associations of deception, illusion and magic, in a sinister as well as in a numinous sense, are often contracted. In modern usage the terms *fool* and *folly* refer either to stupidity or to sinister madness, and certain Fool's attributes like the cap and bells still refer to the "trickster connection" of the Fool. In ideology alert texts the Fool often mediates to grotesquely suggest undercurrents of anxiety, pain, fear and desire in which ideologies are most palpable.
- They alert viewers to the significance that interested responses to art have for gender difference. They employ the strategy of shock or direct address to pique viewers into an "ethical" response to art; to awaken viewers to their "witness function" (Van den Berg 1996, Bordo 1996) and the function of "solicitude" (Ricoeur 1992). It is in this embarrassingly vulgar sexual provocation that the ideological character of art is revealed. Spectators are made to realize that they are implicated in judgements and pleasures.

The resemblances between the strategies used in my representation and those used in the selected visual images do not seem to be coincidental; rather they seem patterned. The process of the selection of images was guided not only by the biased predilections of the researcher who found similarities between them, but also by the visual images themselves which "looked back". The resemblance

in the strategies used cannot be attributed to direct influence, but rather to being compromised to similar ideological motives.

In his recent book *The object stares back* (1996), James Elkins not only draws attention to the subjective fallibility of the person who perceives, but also to the power that objects exert in the process of seeing. The result is that things are not what they appear to be. Seeing is not a straightforward natural process; seeing involves commitment and interpretation. This implies that in order to understand the world we need to decipher various presentations of meaning. Cultural presentations of meaning are rooted in cultural traditions and bear ideological baggage. Ideology alert art and analysis alert to the fact that the act of looking at cultural images is an act of witnessing. It is not a passive reception but "an act of bearing witness through sight" (Bordo 1996: 183).

Sources cited

- Baumgart, S. et al. (hrsg.) 1993. *Denkräume zwischen kunst und wissenschaft*. 5. Kunsthistorikerinnentagung in hamburg. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer.
- Baxandall, M. 1979. The language of art history. *New literary history* 10(3): 453-465. [reprinted in Kemal & Gaskell (eds.) 1991: 67-75.]
- Benjamin, W. 1969. The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction. Arendt, H. (ed.) 1969. *Illuminations*. New York: Schocken: 217-251. Original source: *Zeitschrift für sozialforschung* 5 (1) 1936.
- Berger, P. L. 1997. *Redeeming laughter. The comic dimension of human experience*. New York: Walter de Gruyter.

- Bordo, J. 1996. The witness in the errings of contemporary art. Duro (ed.) 1996: 178-202.
- Owens, C. 1992. *Beyond recognition. Representation, power and culture.* Bryson, N. et al. (eds.). 1992. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Buck-Morss, S. 1989. *The dialectics of seeing: Walter Benjamin and the arcades project.* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT.
- Charcot, J. M. 1877. *Lectures on the diseases of the nervous system, delivered at la salpêtrière.* Transl. by G Sigerson. London: New Sydenham Society.
- Creed, B. 1993. *The monstrous feminine: film, feminism, psychoanalysis.* London: Routledge.
- Elkins, J. 1997. *The object stares back: on the nature of seeing.* New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Flax, N. 1984. Fiction wars of art. *Representations* 7: 1-25.
- Goffman, E. 1976. *Gender advertisements.* New York: Harper & Row.
- Holly, M. A. 1990. Past looking. *Critical inquiry* 16: 371-298.
- Holly, M. A. 1996. *Past looking.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Isaak, J. A. 1996. *Feminism and contemporary art. The revolutionary power of women's laughter.* London: Routledge.
- Kearney, R. 1988. *The wake of the imagination. Ideas of creativity in western culture.* London: Hutchinson.
- Malraux, A. 1953. Museum without walls. *The voices of silence.* Trans. Stuart Gilbert. New York: Doubleday.
- Nelson, R. S. 2000. The slide lecture, or the work of art history in the age of mechanical reproduction. *Critical inquiry* 26(3): 414 – 434.
- Preziosi, D. 1989. The panoptic gaze and the anamorphic archive. Preziosi 1989. *Rethinking art history. Meditations on a coy science.* New Haven: Yale University Press: 54-79.
- Ricoeur, P. 1992. *Oneself as another.* Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Schade, S. 1993. Charcot und das schauspiel des hysterischen körpers. Die "pathosformel" als ästhetische inszenierung des psychiatrischen diskurses – ein blinder fleck in der warburg-rezeption.
- Baumgart, S. et al. (hrsg.) 1993. *Denkräume zwischen kunst und wissenschaft. 5.* Kunsthistorikerinnentagung in Hamburg. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer.
- Van den berg, D. J. 1996. A rhetorical typology of traditions of visual power. *Acta Academica* 28(3): 1-28.
- Vandenbroeck, P. 1987. *Over wilden en narren, boeren en bedelaars. Beeld van de andere, vertoog over het zelf.* Ministerie van de vlaamse gemeenschap. Antwerpen: koninklijk museum voor schone kunsten.
- Warburg, A. (1866-1929). 1999. *The renewal of pagan antiquity: contributions to the cultural history*

of the european renaissance.
Translated by David Britt. Los Angeles: Getty Research institute for the history of art and the humanities.

Welsford, E. 1935. *The fool. His social and literary history*. London: Faber and Faber.

Whitney, D. 1994. *David Salle*. New York: Rizzoli.

List of figures

1. David Salle (b. 1952). *Symphony Concertante II* (1987). Oil, acrylic and photosensitized linen on canvas, 78 x 96 cm. Ellyn and Saul Dannison Family Collection (Whitney 1994:118).
2. Jean Martin Charcot. *Attitudes passionnelles: menacé* from his *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière* (1877-80) (Isaak 1996: 159).
3. *New Freedom* advertisement (no. 209) reproduced in Irving Goffman's *Gender advertisements* under the rubric "The ritualization of subordination" (Goffman 1976: 50).
4. Advertisement (no. 215) reproduced in Irving Goffman's *Gender advertisements* under the rubric "The ritualization of

- subordination" (Goffman 1976: 50).
5. *Medici Venus. Front view*. (3rd century A.D). Roman. Marble copy of Greek original. Florence: Uffizi Gallery (Hinz 1988: 123).
6. *Medici Venus. Back view*. (3rd century A.D). Roman. Marble copy of Greek original. Florence: Uffizi Gallery (Hinz 1988: 123).
7. *Maidenform* advertisement M185 (1987) (Goodrum & Dalrymple 1990: 81).
8. Photograph of Marilyn Monroe.
www.artfrombella.com/mm.html and
www.teezz.co.uk/movies/index.shtml⁵
9. Anonymous Bolognese artist. *Cucuba and other "commedia dell'arte" characters* (seventeenth century). Oil copy of one in a series of engravings by Jacques Callot. Published in Naples (1622) (Burke 1987: 4).
10. Hannah Wilke (1940 - 1993). *INTRA-VENUS. January 30, 1992: #1,1992-1993*. Chromogenic supergloss print, 10,4 x 15,8 cm. Edition of 3 (Isaak 1996: 224).
11. Hannah Wilke. *S. O. S. - Starification Object* (1974).

Figures

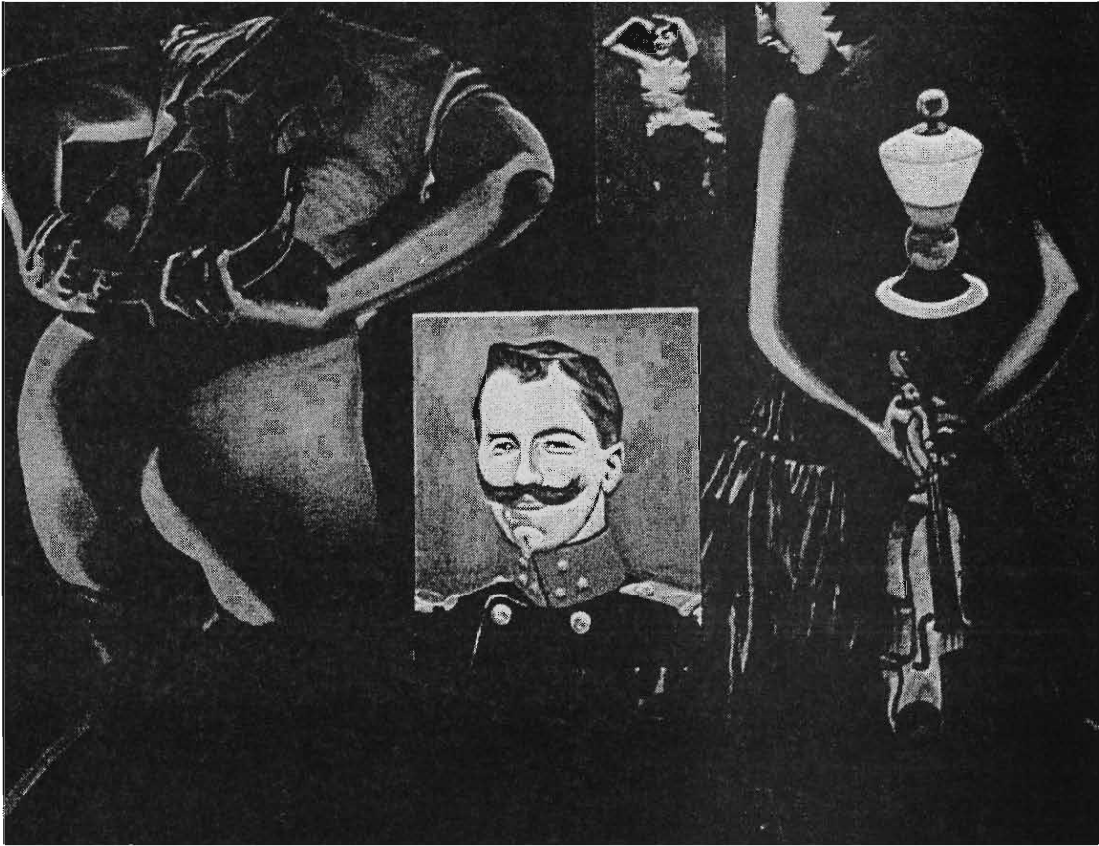


Figure 1: David Salle. *Symphony Concertante II*. 1987.



Figure 2
Photograph. Jean Martin Charcot.



Figure 3
New Freedom advertisement.

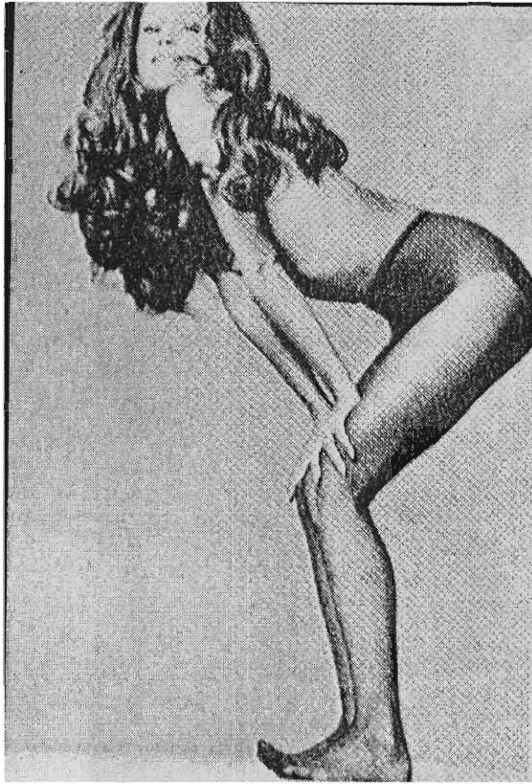


Figure 4: Advertisement.

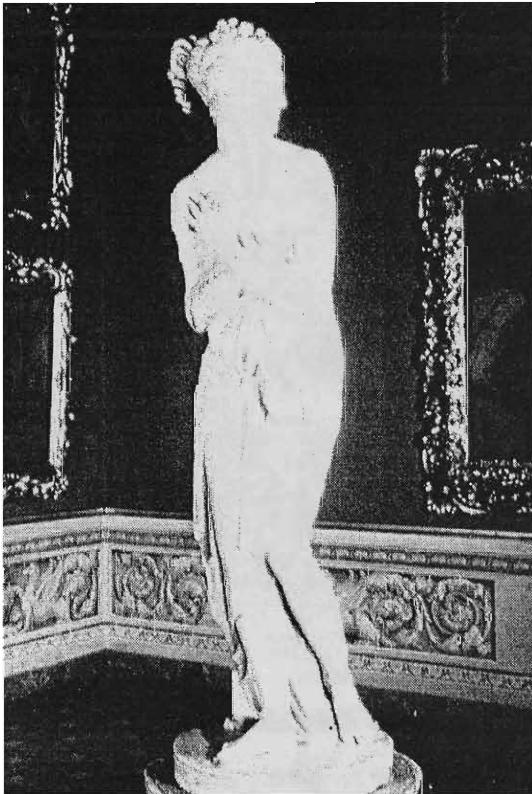


Figure 5: *Medici Venus*. Front view.

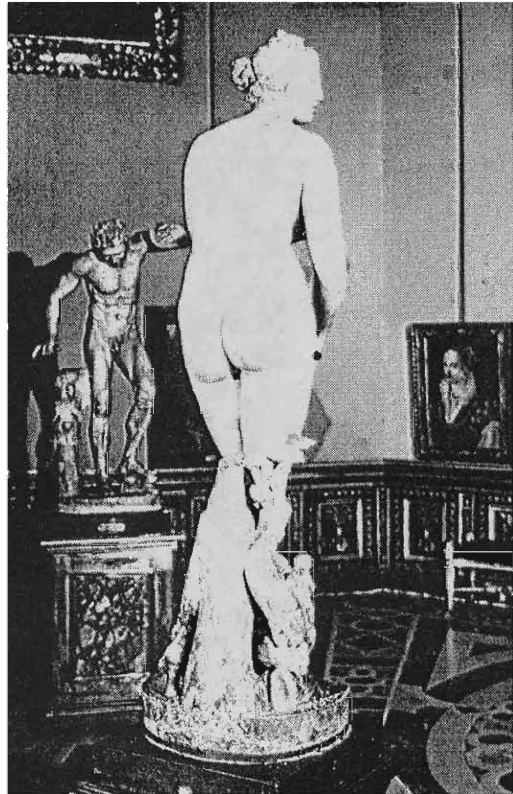


Figure 6: *Medici Venus*. Back view.

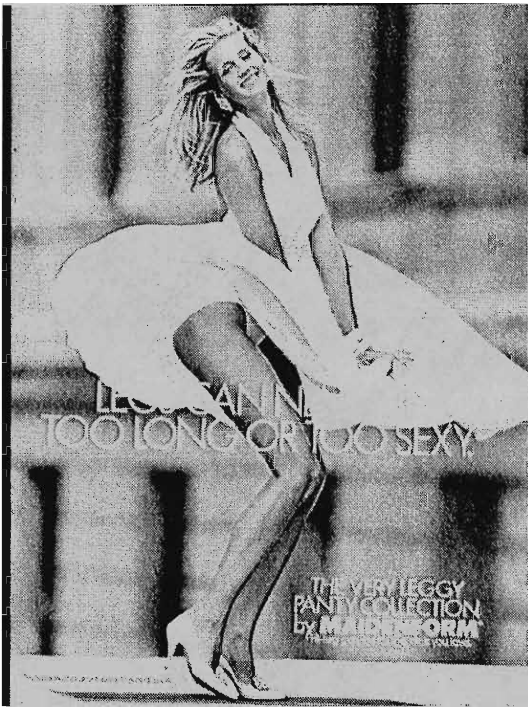


Figure 7: Maidenform advertisement.



Figure 8: Marilyn Monroe

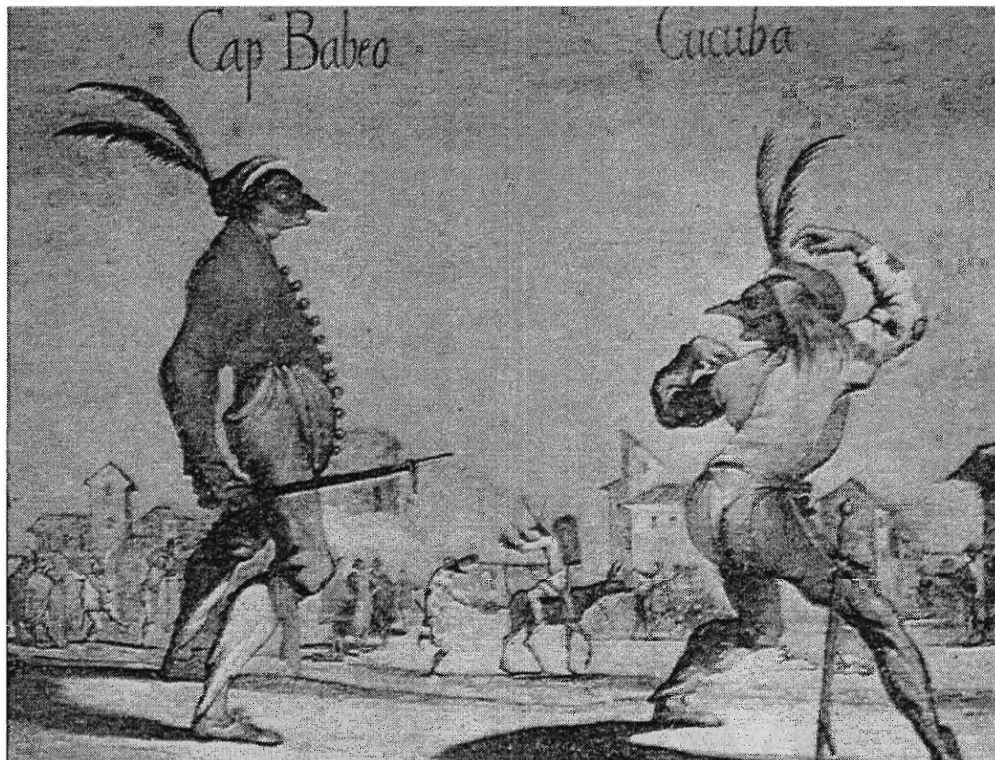


Figure 9: Anonymous. *Cucuba and other "commedia dell'arte" characters.* Seventeenth century.

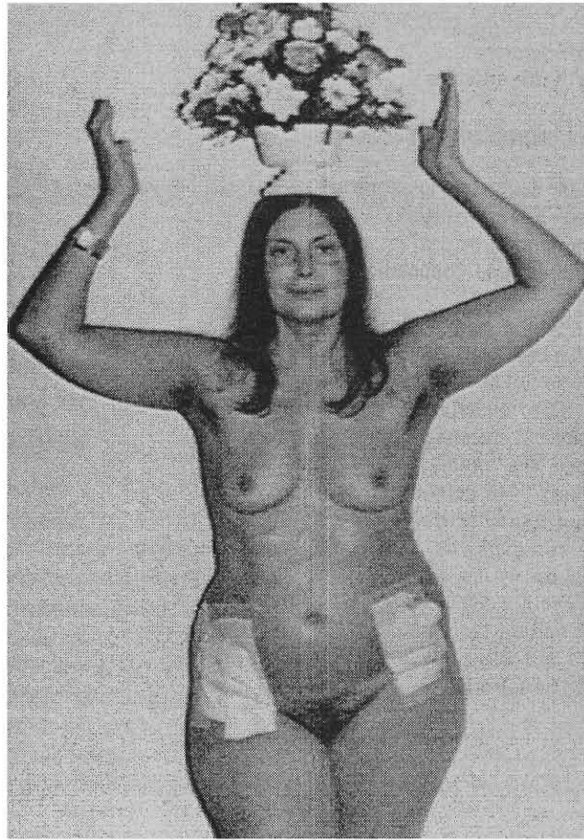


Figure 10: Hannah Wilke. *INTRA-VENUS*.
January 30 1992: #1. 1992-1993.

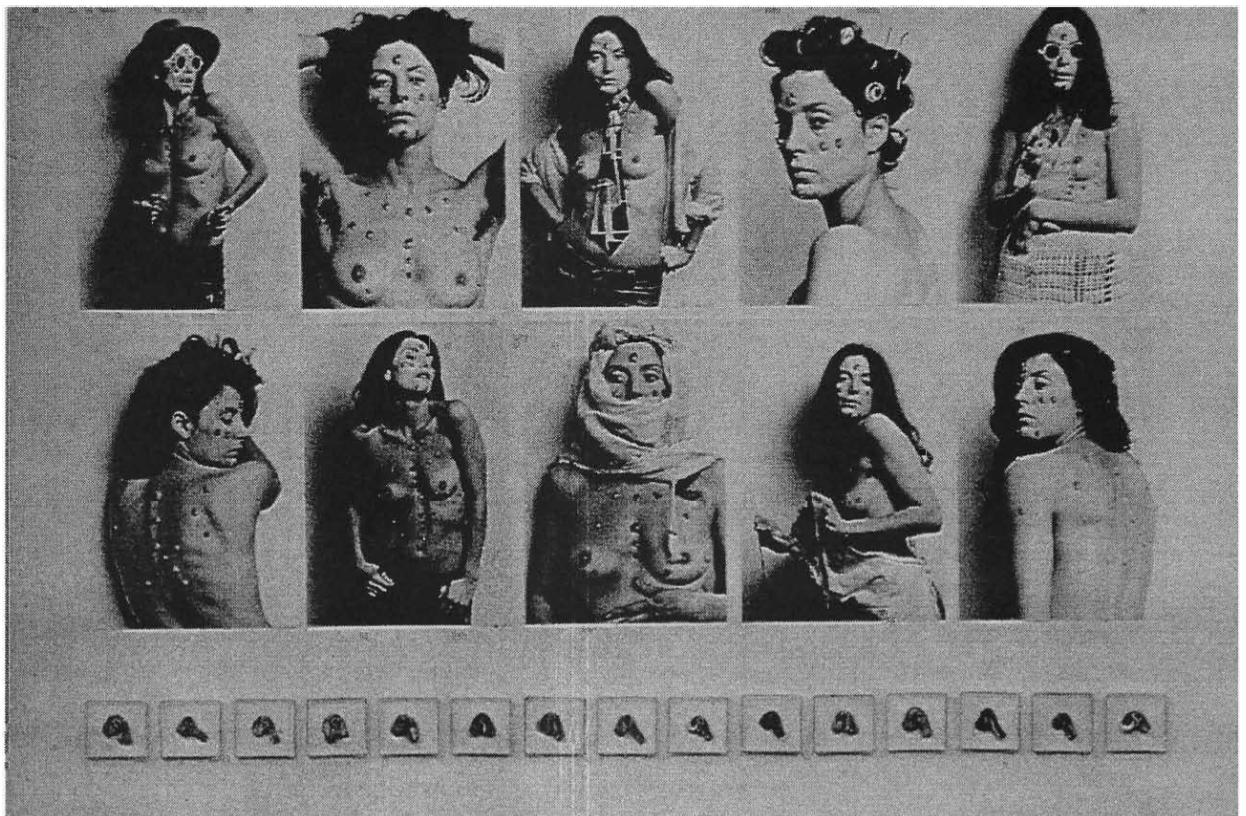


Figure 11: Hannah Wilke. *S.O.S. – Starification Object*. 1974.

Notes

¹ A slightly different version of this article is accessible on the web at:

<http://www.imageandnarrative.be/gender/suzannedevilliershuman.htm>

² The image of many mirrors reflecting into one another is used by Richard Kearney (1988) to describe the postmodern imagination.

³ A fan of meaning; a denotation and connotation spectrum.

⁴ Vandenbroeck (1987: 148), whose *métier* is early Dutch art, sets out on a “speurtocht” (detective search) in order to bring to light “historische zingevingsstructuren [...] die “onderhuids” de cultuurproductie sturen (historical meaning giving structures [...] that navigate the production of culture from beneath the skin).” He demonstrates the close relationships among four recurring types (the clown, the peasant, the wild man/wild woman, and the beggar) as represented in the art of the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries. He concludes that in a specific culture the amount of attention given to foolishness and folly is relative to the value attributed to its inversion, Reason.

⁵