Personal identity and the image-based culture of Catholicism

By

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PLEASE NOTE

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Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.
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Abstract

*Australian Moon Over Cumbria and the Procession of Life*

Casula Powerhouse Regional Arts Museum, Casula N.S.W.

11th-22nd September 1996.

*Australian Moon Over Cumbria and the Procession of Life* was the first of a series of three Doctoral exhibitions. This exhibition evolved from a series of watercolours, based on the biblical figures of Eve and the serpent. I produced these watercolours while travelling in Europe in 1995; upon my return to Australia, I used the images as the basis for a series of linocuts and wooden sculptures. These matured through the prints I made during a 1996 printmaking residency, at Lowick House Print Workshop, Cumbria U.K. The exhibition consisted of the woodcuts, lithographs and collagraphs I produced at the workshop. The earlier linocuts and wooden sculptures were also shown, along with two paintings.

All of the works were influenced by the Biblical text *Genesis* 3:6, the writings of Barbara Walker and paintings by Gustav Klimt. The sculptures of Alberto Giacometti, plus the sculptures and lithographs of Kathe Kollwitz, were also inspiring. These influences are discussed in the essay ‘Interpreting and re-interpreting Eve’.

This volume contains images and a critique from *Australian Moon Over Cumbria*. Also included are images that influenced the work, essays, and information on relevant minor exhibitions.
Sisters and Spinsters,
the Misses Swann of Elizabeth Farm.
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Abstract

*Sisters and Spinsters, the Misses Swann of Elizabeth Farm*

Elizabeth Farm

a property of the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales

Rosehill N.S.W.

20<sup>th</sup> September – 9<sup>th</sup> November 1998.

*Sisters and Spinsters, the Misses Swann of Elizabeth Farm* was the second in a series of three Doctoral exhibitions. This exhibition was produced in association with Fiona Davies and was designed and executed as site-specific. The Misses Swann were nine sisters, eight of whom never married. The exhibition focused on the sisters’ working lives, their contribution to their local communities, and their personalities. My installations used needlepoint and damask table napkins as vehicles for the storytelling. They also emphasised the domestic nature of the space. All the images were computer generated.

This volume contains images of and from the exhibition. Also included are critical writings and extensive reference material.
ARTIST’S STATEMENT

Sisters, spinsters, mothers embroidered d’olys, the Hills Hoist, laundries and tearoom all have a place in the lives and histories of Australian women and their friends.

My reconstruction of the lives and personalities of the nine Swann sisters in this installation arises out of my Ph.D research into the ways identity is constructed through images within the culture of Catholicism. I have combined images of the Swanns as young women with the motif of the embroidered d’oly to create a series of ephemeral secular icons.

For me anonymous domestic items such as d’olys are closely associated with traditional concepts of home making and the crafts practised by women in the Edwardian and Between Wars period. In fact the Swanns’ mother, Elizabeth, took up embroidery after she retired from running the household at Elizabeth Farm. Sadly only one or two of her works survive.

The d’olys I have used come from different sources. Some were purchased in opportunity shops, others borrowed from relatives, friends, mothers of friends and friends of friends. All the d’olys were scanned into my computer and the information about each of the Swann sisters and the events which shaped their lives were overlaid onto the image. The completed text and image was then printed as a transfer and ironed on to the damask napkin or tablecloth.

You will find most of these icons hanging on the Hills Hoist in the tearoom courtyard, where the Swanns in later years had a clothes line, but which was removed when Elizabeth Farm became a museum in the early 1980s. The tearooms were built on the site of the Swanns’ laundry and it is fitting that my installation finds itself located on such an archaeological site.

Patricia Prociv
September 1998
Constructing Identity Within Catholicism.
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Abstract

*Constructing Identity Within Catholicism*

The Australian Catholic University, Strathfield N.S.W.

*Constructing Identity Within Catholicism* was the third in a series of three Doctoral exhibitions. This exhibition was based on the hypothesis that images of the culture of Catholicism have the capacity to influence personal identity. The exhibition was constructed of four parts. Sacred and secular images of mothers and sons were juxtaposed on cushions, providing comfort on the hard seats. Stories and anecdotes from women who spent their formative years within the culture were framed and placed on the walls. A book with stories of saints and martyrs, an integral part of every 1950’s schoolchild’s experiences, was placed on the lectern, from where the truth of the church is spoken. More stories of sacrifice were ironed on to an altar cloth, a traditional site of sacrifice.

All of the work was designed to complement the design and spiritual meaning of the chapel. My intention was to allow the viewer to experience the work and the space as one.

This volume contains a critical assessment and images of the exhibition and the work. Included along with the essays are supporting images and documentation.
Constructing Identity Within Catholicism
The Chapel, Australian Catholic University, Strathfield.

Constructing Identity Within Catholicism was my final exhibition for the Doctorate in Creative Arts and explores stories and myths associated with pre-Vatican II Australian Catholicism. The wall texts provided a forum for the thoughts and opinions of women who had spent their formative years within the culture of Catholicism. Representations of the Virgin Mary, her son Jesus and her mother St. Anne, were explored through the cushion images ‘Mothers and Sons’ and ‘Mothers, Daughters, Grandmothers, Sons and Grandsons’. Stories of female sacrifice are detailed in the book Saints and Martyrs, which was placed on the lectern, from which the gospel of the church is imparted. Like the book, the altar cloth ‘The Communion of Saints’ focuses on the lives and deaths of female saints and martyrs, whose stories and images have shaped the lives of those who have experienced the culture of pre-Vatican II Australian Catholicism.

After visiting the chapel, the curator Con Gouriotis and I discussed the possibility of working with the space. We decided that the best way to use the chapel, without overpowering the existing imagery, was to keep the exhibition as simple as possible. Less is more.

Working in the Chapel was akin to my experience of working at Elizabeth Farm. Like the previous exhibition, this was one where the work was made for the viewer, allowing them to gain a different perspective of the location and the exhibition’s content. As soon as I entered I began to focus on how to make work that would not interfere with the Chapel’s purpose as a place of prayer and contemplation.

I decided to seek permission to use the prayer stalls, walls, lectern and altar as sites for the work. Con suggested using
cross-stitch to create the images. Acknowledging the merit of the idea I quickly realised that time constraints and my lack of expertise made the use of cross-stitch impossible. Considering alternative possibilities led me to using computer-generated images.

All the images in the exhibition are computer generated. Images, texts and photographs were scanned into, and manipulated in the computer. My use of computer generated images was not new. I had used it briefly while creating the postcard ‘Birth in Battery Park’, and more comprehensively with the exhibition *Sisters and Spinsters, The Misses Swann of Elizabeth Farm*.

The wall texts tell the stories of those who have been educated and whose identities have been formed by the culture of Catholicism. The majority of books I read on growing up Catholic made observations about the culture and told personal stories. Some are funny, others, like sharing the costume to have a bath, are full of pathos. All will strike a chord with those raised and educated within the culture.

I had considered using memories of my own, and those of my friends. Some were so outrageous, that I decided that, without any reference points, they could be considered unbelievable. The quote from Maureen Dowd was published on the front page of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and was too good to pass up.

The chosen texts were produced as iron-on transfers and ironed on to linen fabric. The fabric was to have been stretched over wooden frames. I made about twenty frames and associated fabric pieces. When it came to stretching them, the fabric would not stretch evenly over the frames. Through sheer desperation and panic, I cut out A4 size pieces of fabric, starched
them to within an inch of their life, and put them through the printer. They were then stapled to pieces of cardboard and taken to a framer.

Cushions are associated with feelings of comfort. Complete with images of mothers and sons they are placed on hard wooden prayer stalls. These images came about through research into the concept of ancestral connections within the culture of Catholicism. Within this culture, the images of the Virgin and Child are presented as idealised perceptions of a mother and her son. In creating the images, I felt an obligation to retain the religiosity of the Virgin and Child. Deciding on appropriate secular images, I chose photographs of my daughter Amanda and her son Ned. The series follows the progression of Ned’s growth, from four weeks to three years of age. Such a progression was not possible with the Virgin and Child images, the majority of which depict the child as either a small baby or an older child, with nothing in between.

Starting with an image of the Virgin and Jesus image adjoining one of Amanda and Ned, the completed form was produced through manipulation, distortion and layering, within the computer. Flipping the original image horizontally, enlarging it out of proportion, and using filters to change the surface quality, followed by a reduction of the layer’s density from 100% to 55% created the background layer. Text was added as an additional layer, part of which was highlighted with colour and lightly textured with the filters. The original image was placed over top. The completed images were printed as an iron-on transfer.

Two of the ten cushions in the series, ‘Mothers, Daughters, Grandmothers, Sons and Grandsons’ are constructed using the same method as in ‘Mothers and Sons’. These works were influenced by the research into ancestral connection, in particular Leonardo Da Vinci’s ‘Virgin and Child with St. Anne and a Lamb’. With the birth of our grandson the link between grandmothers, daughters and grandchildren became personal. The photos used in these images are of Amanda, Ned and me. Corresponding religious images were impossible to find. The images used are details of paintings by Hugo Van der
Goes and Leonardo Da Vinci.

‘The Book of Saints’ is a collection of traditional images and stories surrounding the life and sacrifice of individual saints. These images were instilled into the hearts and minds of every Catholic school child of my generation and before. For a more comprehensive analysis see the essay ‘Saints and Martyrs’. The book is presented as a bound hardcover book, providing a reference to all books that are intended to promote a sense of truth and permanency, religious and otherwise.

The altar cloth ‘The Communion of Saints and Martyrs’ focuses on the virginal and /or sacrificial female forms of the culture. These figures are best described as the success stories of Catholicism. As with the book, the stories chosen for this work are from a plethora presented to Australian Catholic children of the period.

In placing ‘The Communion of Saints’ on the altar I was making reference to Judy Chicago’s installation, ‘The Dinner Party’ and Leonardo Da Vinci’s painting ‘The Last Supper’. Judy Chicago describes the reasons for creating her installation-based work around a table;

I began to think about the piece as a reinterpretation of the Last Supper from the point of view of women, who throughout history, had prepared the meals and set the table. In my ‘Last Supper’, however the women were honoured guests.

The altar became my table, the cloth a means of conveying the stories.

The altar makes use of the idea of women telling their stories to each other, while sitting at a table communicating their

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1 Chicago, Judy The Dinner Party (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art 1979).
2 Da Vinci, Leonardo The Last Supper (S Maria delle Grazie, Milan 1495 – 97).
contribution to the history of Catholicism. By placing the cloth with the stories and images relating to each saint's life and death on the chapel altar, reference is made to the sacrifice they are said to have made in the name of God and Christianity.

The images on the altar cloth are all created in the computer. I wanted to use an oval plate but couldn't find one. In desperation I got a round white plate from the kitchen and scanned both sides in separately, joining them both in the middle, the plate was then 'stretched' and the colour changed. After deciding which saint's story to tell, it was a matter of obtaining suitable images to represent them. The business people I telephoned were very generous. Opera Australia allowed me to photograph the sword, dagger and pile of books. A dentist gave me permission to photograph a selection of teeth. The breasts and eyes came from those who made prostheses. A hairdresser collected hair, and the baby was a life-like doll I had acquired from somewhere. The photographs were taken with a digital camera and loaded into the computer through the relevant software. The images were 'cleaned up', manipulated, and layered over the plate along with the text. The finished product was printed as a transfer and ironed onto the altar cloth.

This exhibition is the culmination of a number of experiences. When looking for artists who were working on the same subject matter none were to be found. Many have focused on the idea of domesticity and women's needlework, and while their research and work based around these topics is interesting and valid, I found it necessary to create my work in isolation. Having nothing to refer back to and only having a vague idea of where you are going is simultaneously exciting and frustrating. Exciting, because I love the challenge of problem solving; frustrating because there is no one to ask for help.

when stuck in the black hole of despair at the thought of never being able to consolidate an idea or sort out a technical glitch. The work exhibited was the outcome of these experiences.

In much the same way that Catholicism influenced the construction of my identity, I hoped that the work in this exhibition might touch a chord of awareness in those who see and understand it.
Saints, Martyrs and the Construction of Identity within the Culture of Catholicism.

My Catholic childhood was dominated by images of saints and martyrs that were designed to encourage the idea of purity through sacrifice and self-denial. The Catholic Church offers the lives and deaths of these saints and martyrs as ancestral and cultural role models promoting a sacrificial self. Essential elements of this portrayal are stories of individuals who gave their possessions and lives to the service of God. Kenneth Woodward describes the doctrine of saints, in relation to the individual, as being all encompassing. ‘They pray to them, they honour them, they treasure their relics, they name their children and their churches after them’.

Saints are said to possess a piety and unselfishness not available to the ordinary person. This altruistic behaviour is part of a visual and textual mythology recorded and re-told within Catholicism as true accounts of their lives and death.

Saints offer the prayers of men to God. ‘It is good and useful to call upon them with supplication in order to obtain benefits from God’. They are presumed to have lived an extraordinary existence, working and dying for their love of Christ. They are described by De Sola Chervin as having gained sustenance in circumstances of ‘neediness, poverty and illness’.

For a Catholic, the saints fulfil two functions. In the first place, they are a role models, for in the Catholic cosmology there is a saint for every state and condition in life, from milkmaids to major-generals. As role models, their lesson is obvious: they were once like us, whether we are milkmaids or major-generals; so now we can become like them, saints in heaven. The second reason for the cult of the saints flows from the belief that they are powerful members of the family of the faith, who are now in a position to help lesser members of the family by their prayers.

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Martyrs are those saints who have been tortured and have relinquished their mortal body and its parts, through a combination of blind unswerving faith and violent treatment by either their own hand, or those of their contemporaries.  

In early times this title was given generally to those who were distinguished witnesses of Christ, then those who suffered for him, lastly, after the middle of the third century the title was restricted to those who actually died for him.  

A 'sacrificial' death was considered to be the direct route to eternal life. Woodward describes martyrs as being 'perceived and celebrated as imitators of Christ's passion'.  

While martyrs desired the experience of death, Adam and Eve searched for knowledge of life. The young mother Perpetua is reported to have preferred death and the Christian cause to life with her young child. Like Perpetua all saints and martyrs are proffered as desirable role models for the children of the Church to emulate. This type of identification can best be described through the words of Sigmund Freud, as being 'based upon the possibility or desire of putting oneself in the same situation'. Having been drawn/born into this culture of sacrifice 'the addressee is gathered into the narrative so as to extend and elaborate it with her/his own life'. This narrative advances the ideal existence as being one that mimics a life of sacrifice, poverty and suffering as mirrored in Catholic imaging traditions.

The altar cloth ‘The Communion of Saints’ and the book ‘Saints and Martyrs’ from my exhibition Constructing Identity Within  

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Catholicism\textsuperscript{10} are visual reminders of the culture of sacrifice attributed to saints and martyrs. The images of body parts, instruments of torture and even a baby are served up on plates that were placed on the altar of sacrifice and are designed to draw attention to the acts of brutality associated with stories of the saints and martyrs. During the process of making the altar cloth I had to acquire photographs of relevant body parts. Not being over anxious to confront the possibility of using ‘real’ ones, I approached a number of prosthesis makers. The glass eyes I used for Lucy were ones that were ‘traded in’ on new ones. These are sent to war zones and other areas of need free of charge. Apollonia’s teeth came from a dentist and Glyceria’s hair from a hairdresser, who assured me her clients were excited by the prospect of having their hair included in the project. The book was placed on the lectern, from which the gospel of the faith is imparted, and focuses on images and myths surrounding the life and sacrifice of individual saints. The book of saints and martyrs is also intended as a reference to all books that are intended to promote a sense of truth and permanency, religious or otherwise.

Through their commitment to Christianity, saints and martyrs sought a life of poverty and sacrifice as an entree into ‘eternal life’ with their god. This commitment and lifestyle placed them outside the margins of acceptable ideas and behaviour of their time\textsuperscript{11}. In contesting customs and lifestyles, they disrupted traditional social and cultural expectations of behaviour and belief. It is this disruption that influences the saintly texts of Catholicism, texts that promote the willingness of saints and martyrs to become social outcasts in the midst of Pagan worshipping societies, to suffer immense torture and to die for their love of Christ and Christianity.

Christian texts describing the acts of the saints focus on their rebellion against society while at the same time concealing the

\textsuperscript{10} Constructing Identity Within Catholicism an exhibition of computer generated prints. 21\textsuperscript{st} – 28\textsuperscript{th} May 2000, Australian Catholic University, Strathfield N.S.W.
intersection of Christianity and Paganism. It is at this intersection, when Christianity was imposed upon a Pagan society, that saints and martyrs are shown to have chosen to have rebelled and remained marginalised. Eliminating all choices available that involved sexual sin and/or the denial of Christianity, they choose 'purity' in Christianity. It was these choices that placed them as a disruptive force. However the worshipping faithful of Catholicism are encouraged to identify with the choices of martyrdom and persecution not with the disruption. Acts of rebellion are forced into the background, replaced by ideals of sacrifice, penance and good works.

Many of the stories of saints and martyrs mythologise the acts of savagery imposed upon them. The irony is that many of those brutalised then become the patron saints of professions associated with their instruments of torture. One such example is St. Apollonia, who when she refused to obey her captor's demands, had her jaw and teeth broken. She is the patron saint of dentists. Another is Catherine of Alexandria who was attached to a wheel as a means of torture and has become the patron saint of wheelwrights. This practice of creating the victims as patrons of the profession reported to have contributed to their torture and subsequent death places the focus not on the contribution saints and martyrs made during their lifetimes, but on their torturous deaths.

One saint whose life and sacrifice is relevant to a contemporary world and its people is St. Rita. She was unhappily married to a bad tempered man, having two sons who were of the same disposition as their father. Rita had endured so much pain and suffering in her marriage she could not stand by while her sons inflicted the same upon their wives. So great was her determination she prayed they would die young. Her prayers were answered.

Unlike the early martyrs, St. Rita did not sacrifice her body, but the fruit of her body. Her motives were not personal salvation, but the happiness and well being of other women. St. Rita’s patronage of unhappily married women might sound noble, suggesting to them that they are not alone, however, it also promotes the idea that the answers to marital problems and personal dilemmas can be found in, and resolved through, prayer.

The holy card images of St. Rita show two blooming roses on the ground beside her. It is probable that these flowers make reference to her two sons who, having fallen by the way side of acceptable behaviour, died in the blossom of their youth. I presume part of this floral symbolism is because St. Rita’s preparedness to sacrifice her children for the good of humanity, she can now be rewarded visually with another of nature’s gifts.

**Body as Text.**

Stories of martyred virgin female saints come from descriptions of ‘women’s’ torn and broken flesh, revealing the church’s psychological obsession with sexual sin’. 12 Within this context the body becomes the text of sexual sin, and the text becomes the body. The church’s attitude of the body being the source of sin was passed on to generations of Catholic schoolgirls. Stories by some from the 1950s were presented as framed quotations in the exhibition *Constructing Identity Within Catholicism.* Deirdre McQharry’s quote ‘One night we all had to put on a sort of knitted bathing costume before we got into the bath to wash the bad news was there was just one soggy costume – we all had to take turns to share’ 13 could be seen as an extreme illustration of Catholic boarding school life of the era. Such seemingly outrageous stories and events reveal not only the experiences of an individual but also the Church’s desire to ensure its female members remained pure of

mind and body for the longest possible time.

Catholicism inscribes female bodies within an expectation of purity and/or sacrifice. In 1902, when she was 12 years of age, Maria Goretti died from the severity of wounds inflicted by an attempted rapist. Maria is said to have chosen death and virginity rather than be seduced into committing sexual sin.¹⁴ She is also reported to have forgiven her attacker on her deathbed. ‘Ambrose wrote that for a girl to lose her Maidenhead was to deface the work of the creator’.¹⁵ Maria Goretti was for the Catholic Church a maid who had paid the supreme sacrifice in preserving her maidenhead.

The type of emphasis placed on the choice made by Maria Goretti, valuing her virginity above all, assumes that ‘wholeness’ of virginity produces a holy death. ‘Virginity confers extraordinary strength...the image of the virgin body was the supreme image of wholeness, and wholeness was equated with holiness’.¹⁶ Maria has been declared a saint because she chose holiness and death rather than sexual sin and life.

In his public decree at the beatification of Maria Goretti in 1947 Pope Pius XII declared:

Italian girls especially, in the fair flower of their youth should raise their eyes to Heaven and gaze upon this shining example of maidenly virtue which rose from the midst of wickedness as a light shines in the darkness... God is wonderful in His saints... Now he has given to the young girls of our cruel and degraded world a model and protector, the little maid Maria who sanctified the opening of our century with her innocent blood.¹⁷

From the time of her death Maria Goretti’s elevation to sainthood took 48 years. Kenneth Woodward has his own opinion on the results of Maria Goretti’s swift journey to canonisation:

The story of Maria caught the Italians’ fancy, thousands sought her intercession and hundreds reported receiving miracles. In no time, the peasant girl became a powerful symbol of sexual purity. In an address that was reported in newspapers throughout Europe, the Pope used the occasion to denounce those in the movie industry, the fashion industry, the press, the theatre and even the military, which had recently conscripted women.\(^1\)

The Church’s intense focus on Maria’s sacrifice was to provide a role model for the post-war children of Catholicism.

I first heard the story of Maria Goretti when I was 9 years old. Around the same time I was given a ‘relic’ of Maria Goretti’s to make me be ‘good’, whatever that meant. Rather than being overawed by this gesture I was horrified to be carrying part of another person’s body around my neck.

Maria Goretti was not the first 12-year-old girl to give up her body rather than be tempted to indulge in sexual sin. St Agnes lived in the 4\(^{th}\) century and is described by Ronda De Sola Chervin as being ‘Very beautiful and affluent, highly marriageable at the age of 12’.\(^2\)

Farmer says that Agnes took a vow of sexual purity and refused to get married, wanting instead to dedicate herself to Christ, preferring death to the loss of her virginity:\(^3\)

Agnes longed to die for her one true love and witness with her blood. When dragged to do homage to the pagan gods, she made the sign of the cross. Then she was forced into a house of prostitution to be tormented by lustful young men. They stripped her while she prayed but were frustrated when her long hair covered her body. (De Sola

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As an act of revenge her suitor had her taken to a brothel. When he approached her, he is said to have been struck blind, but she forgave him and his sight was restored. St. Agnes is reported to have died when she was stabbed in the throat with a dagger.

It would appear that banishment to brothels was a popular form of punishment for a commitment to Christianity:

St. Lucy was of Greek lineage, living in Sicily in the fourth century. Her parents thought she should be married to a pagan. When her mother was miraculously cured through the intercession of St. Agatha, she expressed her gratitude to God for the healing by allowing her to devote herself to Christ in the service of the poor. When Lucy's suitor discovered he would be deprived of a wife for whom he longed, he denounced her to the governor as a Christian. Ordered to a brothel as punishment for her steadfast fidelity to Christ, Lucy was not able to be moved by the soldier, since by a miracle she became immovable. Not even fire and burning oil could vanquish this courageous woman. Finally she was slain with a sword.  

Lucy is reported to have gouged her eyes out so she would not have lustful thoughts and be attractive to her suitor. Portrayed as carrying her eyes around on a dish, Lucy is patron saint of those with eye troubles.

Many saints and martyrs are portrayed as women who refused offers of becoming prostitutes. St. Agatha is said to have consecrated herself to God as a young girl:

A consul who was enamored of Agatha decided to have a decree issued against the Christians in the hope that fear might lead her to relent. When she refused, the consul had Agatha sent to a house of prostitution. She refused to yield to the stratagems of the proprietor and was sent to be tortured on the rack, her sides were torn by iron rods and her body burned with torches. Observing how God preserved her in cheerfulness in the midst of such torment, the governor ordered her breasts crushed and cut off. Then he sent her to prison without food or medical attention...she

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died of further tortures’. 22

In pagan cultures prostitutes were educated women who occupied significant positions. ‘Temple prostitutes were revered as healers of the sick. Their very secretions were supposed to have medical virtue...even their spittle could perform cures.’ 23 Prostitutes were also considered to be ‘sorceresses, prophets and seers’, 24 but these positions were vilified by the Christians. ‘Churchmen didn’t want to stamp out prostitution altogether, only amputate its spiritual meaning’. 25 In ancient times prostitutes ‘were honoured like queens at centres of learning in Greece and Asia Minor...commanded high social status and were revered for their learning’. (Walker, 822)

St. Catherine of Alexandria is recognised by Christianity as an educated woman, though not a prostitute, who argued with 50 philosophers against the persecution of Christians, and won. 26 As punishment for her success St. Catherine was tied to a wheel, the wheel broke and she was subsequently beheaded. David Farmer describes her as being thought of in the Middle Ages as:

(a) The bride of Christ (b) the successful advocate who triumphed over the philosophers (c) the protectress of the dying...she was the patron of young girls, of students (and hence the clergy), especially philosophers and apologists, of nurses (because milk instead of blood flowed from her severed head), and of craftsmen whose work was based on the wheel such as wheelwrights, spinners and millers. 27

Over time, St. Catherine’s identification with knowledge has disappeared so that in the twenty first century she is not

portrayed as representing the benefits of education, but like so many others is revered because she gave up her body parts, in this case her head, for Christianity.

Sites of Reconstruction.

In response to research carried out on the demise of female martyrs I created work that would restore their femaleness and body parts. Because of the amount of time it takes to construct the torsos that would be used for restoration, they, and their intended identity, become an integral part of daily life. Constructing, removing and restoring the dismembered body brings a certain reality to the original act. On one hand I developed an immense amount of pity for anyone, real or fictional, whose body parts had been removed; on the other I became aware of the physical strength, and/or extremely sharp instruments, needed to undertake jobs like severing a head, breasts or eyes.

‘Therese as Woman’ is a work that is intended to recreate the figure of Therese of Lisieux. Since I was a child I have ‘known’ Therese as a saint; I felt it was time to ‘know’ her as a woman. In creating Therese I felt it necessary to straddle both the historical and contemporary aspects of the cultural text of Catholicism – visual and written. A laminated paper torso was covered with traditional Catholic cultural images of Therese as nun. The female torso provided the biological form of woman; the traditional cultural images provided the reference as to how she is known and venerated within Catholicism. The final metamorphosis of Therese as woman occurred through the addition of hair, traditionally used to refer to sexuality, and a circlet of flowers, a reference to her title in Catholicism as ‘The Little Flower’.

Therese was one saint who had a speedy journey, 28 years, from death to sainthood. Therese joined the order of Carmelite

nuns when she was 16 years old and died when she was 24. Her short life as a nun is described as being one of obedience, self-denial and self-sacrifice. Like many before and after her, Therese accepted all of her suffering as fulfilling the life God had planned for her, and as her passport into the kingdom of heaven.28

The most disturbing thing for me about Therese was that images of her are portraits of a young nun, covered from head to toe, her face and hands being the only visible parts of her body. I felt it was my duty to give Therese the opportunity to be visible, firstly as a woman, then a nun (not that I considered the two to be incompatible).

In 1995 ‘The Communion of Saints – St. Agatha, St. Lucy and St. Catherine of Alexandria’ were exhibited sitting around a table, communing. Each of the saints had a cup covered in red roses, with thorns around the rim, placed before them; an apple was positioned in the centre of the table. By placing the saints around the table I was alluding to the mainly female oriented ritual of morning/afternoon tea. The red roses are symbolic of the blood of the martyrs, the thorns a reference to the suffering experienced by them. The apple referred to all women’s association with the eternal mother, Eve.

The altar cloth ‘The Communion of Saints’ also encompasses the idea of women gathering together. The saints depicted in this work are not only in company with each other, they are also communicating to other women their stories of sacrifice. One of the most important aspects of this work is that the stories could be told on a traditional place of sacrifice, the altar.

‘The Communion of Saints – St. Agatha, St. Lucy and St. Catherine of Alexandria’ was created because of a desire to restore the body parts of these women. In the same way St. Therese became ‘woman’, I felt it was time Saint Agatha, Lucy

and Catherine of Alexandria were made ‘whole’ again. Traditional images of St. Agatha show her sitting on a bench with her instruments of torture beside her. St. Lucy carries her eyes around on a plate. St. Catherine is attached to a large wheel, surrounded by her torturers.

In re-constructing the saints, one of the hardest decisions to make was whose eyes to use for St. Lucy. The problem was solved when a friend’s father in Tasmania sent me a print of Jesus. This Jesus had nice eyes and it seemed appropriate to use them for St. Lucy, particularly since she had gouged her own out in his name. St. Catherine and St. Agatha were much easier; all I needed for them was a hacksaw. Made with the multiple layers of paper and a lot of glue, the torsos were not easy to cut up.

After removing the body parts, I sewed them back on with red string, a reference to the mostly female orientated task of sewing. The colour of the string represented the blood spilt by the martyrs; it also made a nice contrast to the black and white images on the torso. The act of returning body parts to their ‘owners’ also occurs in surgical operations. In both cases the intention is to restore a sense of completeness to the body.

One of the saints I considered reconstructing was St. Maria Goretti. However while her plight is what most women fear, as a subject for re-imaging she had little to offer. It would have been possible to create her as ‘woman’ in the same way as Therese; they both deserved the opportunity to ‘be’ a woman. For me re-creating St. Maria Goretti ‘as woman’ would have meant creating a figure similar to ‘Therese as Woman’, the only difference being that the torso would have been covered with holy cards of Maria Goretti. Recreating this type of figure would have been like travelling on a straight road, easy, but without any challenges. I like to create works that take on a life of their own. With Maria I felt there would have been no challenge with the physical process, that it would have been boring for me and would not have done justice to historical
references through which she is known and revered. I decided to leave Maria alone.

While covering the torsos with their respective images, I realised that all women within Catholicism have been subjected to a history of ‘covering up’ their bodies. In ‘covering up’ the female body, literally and figuratively, the Church has established the body as a site of shame and sacrifice. Marina Warner found the so called ‘learned fathers’ of the church have for centuries maligned women as being the sum total of their bodies:

In the faeces and urine - Augustine’s phrase - of childbirth, the closeness of woman to all that is vile, lowly, corruptible and material was epitomised; in the ‘curse’ of menstruation, she lay closer to the beasts; the lure of her beauty was nothing than an aspect of the death brought about by the seduction of Adam in the garden. St John Chrysostom warned ‘The whole of her bodily beauty is nothing less than phlegm, blood, bile, rheum, and the fluid of digested food... If you consider what is stored up behind those lovely eyes, the angle of the nose, the mouth and cheeks, you will agree that the well-proportioned body is merely a whitened sepulchre.’

Peter Stanford notes that St. Augustine’s teachings

Fed into ideas about women and the basic flaws of their bodies. Menstrual blood was believed to turn wind sour, make crops barren, rust iron and infect dog bites with poison.

In maligning women’s natural functions, male culture denies their association with creation. The continued absence of the menstrual period can only be connected with three stages of femaleness, pre-pubescent girls and pregnant or menopausal women.

I became interested in creating work that made visible the three female life cycles. The laminated paper figures ‘Virgin, Mother and Crone’, are physical manifestations of female cyclic stages and experiences. ‘Virgin’ is the daughter, the

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30 Stanford, Peter The She Pope - A quest for the truth behind the mystery of Pope Joan (London: Heinemann, 1998) 56.
product of her mother’s body, full of potential and life. Donna Wiltshire describes the virgin as ‘one who is pregnant with uncertain but miraculous Possibility’. While all women are daughters, not all daughters choose to become mothers. ‘Mother’ is a representation of all pregnant women whose menstrual period has temporarily ceased while their belly swells and breasts become enlarged. The gold of her body represents the beauty of pregnancy, hidden to the world for the sake of ‘decency’. ‘Mother’ can also be used to describe those women who have not given birth but who nurture and sustain life. ‘Crone’ is the older woman, whose body also is hidden. The crone is the wise woman whose experiences include the skin losing its elasticity, and the drooping of her breasts. When I showed this work to a group of older women they offered to take their clothes off in order to show me that ‘their’ breasts looked nothing like the ones I had portrayed. Initially I wasn’t sure how to react to this offer, then I realised that these women weren’t shocked by the images or ashamed of their bodies, they just wanted to set the record straight.

Language of Self-Sacrifice, through Symbolic Imagery.
Images of saints portray a silent language of self-sacrifice. Most of the images have a direct connection with this language, representing sacrificial acts through a common system of signs, signs that include flowers and the use of colour. Tom Chetwynd describes this type of symbolism as being ‘the language of nature speaking to man, the whole man of emotion and intuition, as well as sensation and intellect’.32

Lilies are used to signify that the figure or act portrayed is one of sacrificing the self for personal salvation and the good of

31 Wiltshire, Donna Virgin Mother Crone: Myths and Mysteries of the Triple Goddess (Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions, 1994) 50.
Christianity. Examples of this use are the representations of Leonardo Da Vinci’s ‘The Annunciation’ and a traditional holy card of St. Catherine of Sienna in which she is holding a bunch of lilies in her left hand, a holy book in the other. In pagan societies the lily was associated with virgin motherhood, women who gave birth to the children of the ‘gods’, who would then become prophets. Only three of the 23 saints and martyrs I have worked are portrayed with lilies: Philumena, Dymphna and Catherine all carry three lilies each.

The idea of associating the lily with purity and sacrifice was carried into Christianity from Paganism and used as a symbol of the impregnation and incorruptibility of the Virgin Mary. ‘Some authorities claimed the lily in Gabriel’s hand filtered God’s semen which entered Mary’s body through her ear.’ In Leonardo’s Annunciation, the Angel Gabriel offers the lilies to the Virgin Mary, possibly with the intention of presenting her with the opportunity to sacrifice herself in the name of Christianity. Barbara Walker says that the annunciation lily is inherited from the Goddess Juno who is said to have conceived her saviour-son Mars with the aid of a lily and that this story is reflected in ‘an early belief in the self-fertilizing power of the yoni (vulva), which the lily symbolized and Juno personified’

The use of colour is important in the Church’s calendar of events. Depending on the occasion, one of five coloured vestments are worn by priests:

The white on the feast of our Lord, of the blessed Virgin, of the Angels, and of the Saints that were not martyrs; the red, on the feast of Pentecost, of the Invention and Exaltation of the Cross, and of the Apostles and Martyrs; the green, on the greater part of Sundays; the violet in penitential times of Advent and Lent, and upon Vigils and

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34 Walker, Barbara The Women’s Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets (San Francisco: Harper, 1983) 543
Emberdays; and the black for Good-Friday, and the Masses for the dead.\textsuperscript{36}

For those of us growing up as children of Catholicism, colour was considered to be a reflection not only of your personal appearance, but also your character. As a signifier of sexual purity, brides always wore white. Wearing white if you had been sexually active before marriage was frowned upon. White and blue were used as colours representing the Virgin Mary. Red was considered to be a colour worn by ‘bold girls’ and ‘fallen women’. Green was okay, mainly because it was the national colour of Ireland. Tom Chetwynd describes green as representing the natural cycles of birth, life and death.\textsuperscript{37} He describes purple or violet as being the concentration of ‘inner spiritual values in to outer concrete events, with suffering involved’.\textsuperscript{38} The plates on the altar cloth \textit{The Communion of Saints} echo Chetwynd’s interpretation and the Church’s use of the colour. Wearing black, unless you were in mourning or a member of a religious order, was considered to be in extremely bad taste. When a friend wore black to our wedding, my mother was mortified as she considered it ‘bad luck’ for the bride and groom if one of the guests were dressed in black.

\textbf{Jeanne d’Arc.}

Ten centuries after the martyrdom of St. Catherine, St. Agnes and St.Lucy, Jeanne d’Arc was burnt at the stake for her anti-Christian activities. Compared to Maria Goretti’s swift elevation to sainthood, there was a considerable delay in recognising Jeanne as a saint. Jeanne, who died in 1431, was not made a saint until 1920. ‘She was imprisoned in Rouen and was tried for witchcraft and heresy by the court of the bishop of Beauvair Pierre Cauchon’.\textsuperscript{39} Jeanne was handed over to the secular arm of the Church and burnt at the stake. Her conviction for heresy was overturned 25 years after her death.

\textsuperscript{39} Farmer, David Hugh \textit{The Oxford Dictionary of Saints} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) 255.
Jeanne d’Arc is one of those saints who could be described as having lived on the margins, in hers or anyone’s lifetime. It is possible to consider that the canonisation of Jeanne as a role model for young girls at the beginning of the twentieth century could have been a mistake on the Church’s behalf. She is said to have heard voices, one of which is said to have been St. Catherine of Alexandria, been insolent to the elders of the church by telling them they were wrong, insisted on wearing men’s clothes and riding her horse astride while leading armies into battle.

Jeanne’s elevation to sainthood by the Catholic Church would seem to sanction her acts and attitude as being those of a revolutionary as well as a visionary. With the canonisation of Maria Goretti following so quickly behind that of Jeanne, the Church could be seen to have been afraid that if the daughters of Catholicism, in the first half of the twentieth century, were to take Jeanne as their role model, they might want to take on all of her. For unlike Maria Goretti, described by Pope Pius XII as a shining example of maidenly virtue, Jeanne is one of the few saints who stood up to the hierarchy of the Church. Stories of Jeanne portray her as a purposeful young woman who was clear about her mission in life and pursued it with conviction. I feel that the personal qualities attributed to Jeanne would make her the perfect role model for young women. With Jeanne as their role model young Catholic women might have been tempted to question the status quo in much the same way she had. The Church fathers of the 1930s, 40s and 50s may have had misgivings about the effect Jeanne would have on the minds and behaviour of young women, but with the rise of 1960s feminism nothing or no one could stop women stating their opinions on a wide range of subjects:

Following the Church’s recognition of its mistake in subjecting Jeanne to her fiery end in the marketplace of Rouen, she joined those who have gone down in the annals of history as having accepted their persecution and death with saintly fortitude. At Winchester Cathedral in England a statue of Joan stands opposite the tomb of cardinal Beaufort,
one of the men who took part in her condemnation.  

This follows on from the Church’s tradition of identifying the martyrs with the figure of their tormentor.

Jeanne is also one of the few ‘secular saints’, whose image spans many faiths and is visible in both secular and sacred places. Unlike the sculptures of saints found in churches world wide, created as three-dimensional forms that are presented as two-dimensional objects, with their back to the wall, sculptures of Jeanne are for the most part created and presented as three-dimensional objects. This mode of presentation makes it possible to walk around these sculptures and view them from a number of different angles and sides. In the same way that it is possible to walk around sculptures of Jeanne, there also exists the possibility of knowing her from many different angles, just as we would like to know ourselves.

**Pope Joan**

There is another not so well known Joan who has been stripped from the legends of Catholicism, Pope Joan. Up until the 17th century the Church accepted Joan’s pontificate as historical fact: ‘Her portrait appeared in a row of papal busts in Sienna Cathedral, labelled Joannes V111, femina ex Anglia: John V111, an English woman’\(^{41}\). Joan is said to have become a member of a religious order by dressing up as a monk; after becoming Pope she became pregnant and gave birth during a street procession. There are a number of versions of what became of her and the child. The most popular one is that they were stoned to death on the spot. ‘Thomas de Elmham’s official list of Popes said ‘A.D. 855, Joannes, this one doesn’t

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count, she was a woman’.\textsuperscript{42} Joan was the only woman to become Pope, and to make sure this ‘mistake’ never happened again, the genitals of all subsequent Popes are reputed to be checked for authenticity. It is interesting that the Pope’s genitals are the defining factor in his appointment as the Bishop of Rome, re-inforcing the Church’s attitude to women as not having the ‘balls’, either literally or colloquially, to rule as head of the Vatican State.

I have always wanted to give Pope Joan back her baby. I have even made the moulds, but somehow it never happened. Some of my works ‘just happen’; some, like Joan, stop mid stream, sitting on the ‘back burner’ waiting for me to get the ‘head space’ to deal with them effectively. Joan waits because I am still thinking about how to create a work that does justice to her and her child. I envision the work as being an extension of the laminated paper figures of the ‘Virgin, Mother, Crone’, by recognising that quite possibly a pregnant woman once held the highest office in the Church of Rome, and ‘The Communion of Saints, St. Agatha, St. Lucy and St. Catherine of Alexandria’, where I returned their body parts to give them a feeling of completion. I feel that returning Pope Joan’s baby would bring some recognition of her existence while at the same time drawing attention to the historical misogyny of the Papacy.

\textbf{Mary Magdalene.}

Another woman who has been maligned by Christian mythology is Mary Magdalene. Early Christian texts describe her as ‘the woman who knew all...endowed with knowledge, wisdom and insight’\textsuperscript{43}. Gnostics suggest that Mary Magdalene ‘was the original ‘Pope’, foundress of Christ’s church’.\textsuperscript{44} Heidi Schlumpf says Mary Magdalene was an important leader in the early Church and that the idea of her being a prostitute feeds into the notion that ‘women are either madonnas or whores...

\hspace{1cm} 42 Walker, Barbara \textit{The Women’s Dictionary of Myths and Secrets} (San Francisco: Harper, 1983) 376.
\hspace{1cm} 44 Walker, Barbara \textit{The Women’s Dictionary of Myths and Secrets} (San Francisco: Harper, 1983) 615-616.
When we cut Mary Magdalene off at the knees and turn her into some evil sex pervert, we deprive men and women, but especially women, of a figure with whom they can identify. As is the case of Catherine of Alexandria her association with knowledge has disappeared over time and she has become the patron saint of prostitutes and penitent sinners.

Piero della Francesca’s fresco Saint Mary in the cathedral of Arezzo, portrays Mary Magdalene wearing a red cape over a green dress. Chetwynd describes red as representing ‘outer worldly activity and existence’, and green being related to the natural cycles of birth, life and death. Laurence Gardner says that Botticelli also used these colours in his work Mary at the Foot of the Cross, and that the red of Mary’s cloak is, like the cardinal’s robes, intended ‘to signify Mary’s perceived high clerical status’.

My ‘Mary Magdalene’ wears the colours of anarchy, black and red. She is also a laminated paper torso, covered in black and white photocopies of an image that portrays her with masses of hair. Mary Magdalene is an integral member of our family: she receives ‘offerings’ like the Russian soldier’s hat from Prague, or a button from the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Mary’s ‘outfit’ was given to her by someone who purported to have found it under a bush in a park. Whatever its provenance, it fitted her ‘like a glove’. The large metal object with the heart came via a friend of one of my sons, who contributed the faux diamond necklace. The cross-shaped earrings come from a $2 shop, and so it goes on. The original figure was meant to reflect her historical positioning as a prostitute, but with her short hair and black and red outfit this Mary is not penitent.

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Like the sculptures of Jeanne d’Arc, the figures of ‘Therese as Woman’, ‘The Communion of Saints, St. Agatha, St. Catherine of Alexandria and St. Lucy’ and ‘Mary Magdalene’ could also be described as images of saints that it is possible to ‘walk around’. The stories of these saints within the annals of Catholicism are two-dimensional, providing very little opportunity to ‘know’ them outside of their flat cultural imaging. My work seeks to create images that are three-dimensional projections of these images. Like the three-dimensional sculptures of Jeanne, ‘Therese’ and ‘The Communion of Saints’ endeavour to provide an opportunity to see these historical figures in a new light, to identify with them, not only as part of a religious mythology, but as women who have had the bodily experiences of other women.

Having the opportunity to view saints as women creates the possibility of being able to identify with their namesake, beyond the cultural structures of Catholicism. ‘Identification is the original form of emotional tie with an object’. Karl E. Scheibe summarises the major component of one’s identity as being formed by the circumstances in which we are raised:

I am myself plus circumstance...incorporated in a particular body in a particular place at a particular time with a particular history, a particular set of Others located on a level with me, with who, I may converse and reflect, and who tell me of my identity.

Achieving the realisation that my identity is influenced by cultural and personal circumstances allows me to develop the capacity to locate my namesake and myself outside of the religious framework of Catholicism.

Introduction

This project is a visual cultural study of the image-based culture of Catholicism and its influence on female identity and experience. The study is visually based, and takes the form of images arranged in several themed series, each of which has been exhibited publicly, and a linking commentary to bring out the underlying concerns and connections. The project raises issues about Catholic traditions of imaging as they have impacted on the formation of identity for women. It is a cultural rather than a sociological study, so the focus is not on enquiries into particular women's responses to Catholic images, but rather on the images themselves, and the kinds of responses they are designed to create. I am interested in giving women the opportunity to respond to a range of images that have a relationship to Catholic icons, but that have very different kinds of meanings and implications for women.

As many feminist studies have emphasized, the construction of female identity is heavily influenced by image cultures, so that ideas and ideals of identity are imposed on women, then become adopted by women as part of a female culture. Most of these feminist studies have concentrated on media imaging of women, but the visual culture of Catholicism has not been subject to the same kind of feminist examination. Such an examination is needed because Catholic imaging traditions present an example of powerful and concentrated influence on the formation of female identity. Their whole purpose is to influence the Catholic's sense of identity and direct its formation along particular lines. From early childhood, Catholic girls are presented with images of particular female figures that serve as a mirror, reflecting back what they should or should not become. 'Once a Catholic always a Catholic,' is a common expression, to which those who have been brought up as Catholics respond with instant recognition. The influence of the Church is so deep seated that those brought up under it can never fully move away. For women this means that their whole sense of physicality is colored by the
doctrinal ethos projected through the female typology created in Catholic imaging.

The Doctorate of Creative Arts presents an ideal format for this kind of enquiry, because it enables the study to be presented primarily through images, which are in themselves a form of analysis and critical response. But they are also art works in their own right that work independently of the thesis and invite women to respond in their own ways, without presuming what the response is going to be. The accompanying commentary aims to bring out the themes of the art works and to offer an insight into the purposes and influences behind them.

As a child of pre-Vatican II Catholicism, I grew up with a range of images that presented woman as a symbolic figure who was either virgin or whore. There was nothing between these polarized types. None of the images gave any sense of the everyday physicality of women. Eve, Mary Magdalene and the Virgin Mary were the archetypes according to which all women were judged. Eve succumbed to temptation; Mary Magdalene was the sexually active woman as whore. The Virgin Mary was the ideal of purity, and her sexual purity extended to the act of childbirth itself so that she was *post partum intactum.* My early impression of the birth of Christ was that Mary was that it was related to the expression ‘in one ear and out the other.’ The seed implanted in Mary’s ear by the Angel Gabrielle was the word, and ‘the word was made flesh.’ This was a denial of flesh and of the physicality of birth. My work is about this denial, and the more recent exhibitions have aimed to present an alternative view: to restore the mother who had been denied and replaced by the virgin, and to place the acts of conception and birth at the center of the representations.

The child’s perspective, from my primary school recollections, was that you could never be as good as the Virgin. It was impossible. She represented a perfection that could never be achieved, yet she was also the positive role model for girls and women, set between the negative models of Eve and the Magdalene. This put female identity into a double bind for girls before they
had even come to adolescence, and before they could understand the reality of being a sexually active woman. The Church honored the saints and martyrs as women who had lived ordinary lives and had been able to overcome the temptations of these lives, particularly temptations of the flesh. Because they resisted these temptations, in the name of the Christian god, they were put to death or imprisoned by pagan societies, whose supposedly false gods were often based on the forces of nature. The saints and martyrs were presented in images that emphasized suffering and the destruction of the body. They had been cut up, dismembered. They were women in pieces. These were our role models. From an early age, you were told that a good Catholic girl would be willing to sacrifice their bodies for their faith.

In the Churches, saints have their backs to the wall. You never know them as rounded women. My saints were sculptural and three-dimensional. Because I wanted them to be sexual human beings, I added hair, which is a traditional symbol of female sexuality. In ‘The Communion of Saints’, I gave them back their body parts by sewing them back on, so they could be whole women again. The Holy Family traditionally consists of a virgin mother, a token human father and a baby with adult features. Some earlier images include Anne as the third member of the family, replacing Joseph. I liked these because they gave a female ancestral connection to the family. Mary was from the flesh of her mother and the Christ child had a grandmother, so the child’s heritage is bound within the flesh. In the Church, gold has a sense of purity and is reserved for the most holy figures; when I made the images of the mother, the child and the crone I used the gold to give them status as female figures, so that they can be looked up to as natural beings who deserved to be celebrated for their ordinary lives.

Eve is a figure of central importance in Catholic mythology because she is the antithesis of all that the Church wants us to be. In Genesis, Eve is a seeker of knowledge, but this is anathema to the Church, because it sets itself up as being the repository of all knowledge for Catholics. They’re not supposed to know anything on their own terms. They must accept its doctrine without reservation as what is true and what is right. Eve’s presentation by
the Church emphasizes the shame in her act, the disobedience and the terrible consequence of being banned from God’s presence. Pre Vatican II Catholic children were not taught the Bible, so we did not know the wording of the story in Genesis. When I read the Genesis version, the story took on a very different meaning. Eve’s role seemed to be turned on its head. It is clear that she ate the apple for the knowledge it could give her, and the snake offered the chance to attain this knowledge to ‘see for herself’. She was given the opportunity, and she took it. She chose knowledge over living in ignorance and dependency, and she chose to share this knowledge, rather than keep it to herself. From a feminist point of view, these are things to celebrate. Eve has value as a role model, and may be seen as the first feminist, choosing independence over a patriarchal model of sheltered life, provided for by an authority figure. The snake is also an important part of the myth. It befriends Eve, and is the catalyst for her receiving knowledge. She did not gain awareness with out help, and the snake can be reclaimed as an image that has certain potency. I wanted to get the snake off the ground, to make its relationship with the apple more dynamic. The snake becomes part of the apple, as the protector of knowledge. It is also an essential part of Eve’s physicality in the image series I created for *Australian Moon over Cumbria*. I wanted to take the wording of Genesis and “make it flesh.”

The project is in three parts, each of which is related to particular exhibition series. A conventional PhD requires a tightness of focus that would prevent the wide ranging approach of this project. This kind of enquiry, though, needs a wide-ranging approach. Through visual explorations, it is possible to bring together images from different symbolic traditions and different times in history. In my artwork, the imaging of Eve is explored in relation to that of the Virgin Mary, and issues about female genealogy are interwoven between them. Some of these issues are picked up in a very different way in the exhibition about the Swann Sisters of Elizabeth Farm. Here the theme of ancestral connections is explored in a secular context, which highlights the everyday lives of women. The exhibition counterpoints Catholic imaging of women in that it focuses on the active contribution these women made to the society of their time. They were an unacknowledged example of early
feminism in Australia. These are women who lived as we have lived, and had experiences that can easily be compared to our own. The ‘family’ of Catholicism can be contrasted with the Swanns’ real family of nine sisters, all independent women who supported themselves and each other throughout their lives. They aren’t symbols, and their experiences do not belong to myth. But the exhibition reflects back on the concerns about Catholicism through contrast. For ‘recovering Catholics’, such as myself, who have difficulty in identifying role models to replace the negative images they were brought up with, the Swanns provide a strong alternative.

For me, leaving the Church meant leaving all this behind and having done that, I was free to create an identity that wasn’t constrained by the tyranny of these death affirming images of women. As an artist, I remained interested in the power of these images. I came back to them with a new kind of awareness after I had done a course in Women’s Studies. I was aware of the need to take these images back to nature, as the pagans did. I wanted to draw attention to the sacrificial nature of the images so that other people could have access to the awareness I had gained. For me, this was a visual awareness. I wanted to make it accessible to everybody through the medium of images, and I found people responded to these images. They were not made for a general art audience. They were made specifically for women who were brought up in the Catholic tradition. They were therapeutic to the extent that all art is an expression of the artist, but working with these images from my childhood, placing them in a different context, was also a difficult and demanding process. I wanted to take the images away from the Church. I wanted to take them off the wall and out of the Church and give them back to the women in forms that were still recognizable as Catholic saints but that had their sexuality restored.
Interpreting and re-interpreting Eve.

The Biblical passage Genesis 3:3 presents Eve as being disobedient to the word of God.

   God did say, 'You must not eat from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die'.

Genesis 3:6 focuses on Eve's reaction after the serpent suggests that the fruit of the tree contained the knowledge of good and evil.

   When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

I believe that Genesis 3:6 can be interpreted as an affirming text that presents Eve as a person in search of enlightenment. I feel it is important to focus not on Eve's act of disobedience but her intention and subsequent actions. Eve ate the apple with the aim of obtaining wisdom; and she did not keep it all for herself, but passed it on to Adam. According to George Every 'the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil got stuck in Adam’s throat'. My initial research into the figure of Eve focused on the snake and apple in Genesis 3:6.

My fascination with the Genesis 3:6 led to many hours in libraries searching catalogues and the Internet attempting to develop a non-biblical connection between apples and women. What I discovered was that non-biblical information was thin on the ground. Three of Barbara Walker's books provided historical material that placed the apple in other cultural contexts.

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Walker says that there are many traditional occasions at which the apple is used as part of a ceremony. At Gypsy weddings, it is the custom for the bride and groom to cut an apple in half to reveal its core, with them eating half each. This practice may be the basis of the Genesis myth, Eve sharing the apple with her husband.\(^5\) Another possible source of the myth could have come from a Goddess icon, showing Eve as personifying the tree of life, handing the fruit of the tree to man with the serpent is entwined around the tree’s branches’. \(^6\) Walker makes reference to Robert Graves’s proposition,

The whole story of Eve, Adam and the serpent in the tree was deliberately misinterpreted from icons showing the Great Goddess offering life to her worshippers, in the form of an apple, with the tree and the serpent in the background.\(^7\)

Walker also notes that ‘the Gnostics honoured Eve and the serpent for providing the essential knowledge that made human beings human...In Arabic the words for ‘Snake’ ‘Life’ and ‘Teaching’ are all related to the name of Eve, the Biblical version of the Goddess with her serpent form, who gave the food of enlightenment to the first man’.\(^8\) The serpent is also described as the guardian of ‘Mother Hera’s life-giving apple tree. Christians adopted the great serpent as a form of devil’. (Walker 1988, 388 – 389)\(^9\)

The various mythological and social interpretations of Eve, the apple and serpent led me to me to explore the serpent’s relationship to the apple through a series of watercolours, prints, paintings, wooden and paper sculptures for my exhibition *Australian Moon Over Cumbria and the Procession of Life*\(^10\).

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\(^10\) *Australian Moon Over Cumbria and the Procession of Life* Casula Powerhouse Museum, Casula N.S.W. 11\(^{th}\) – 22\(^{nd}\) September 1996.
Work for the exhibition was commenced in the four months I travelled with my husband Vic, April – August 1995. Watercolour is not a medium I would normally choose to work in. However, because we were moving around all the time, it was the most portable. Watercolours are traditionally produced with nearly transparent layers of colour overlaid to create representations of landscapes and still life objects. I am unable to work in this way and made the decision to get the medium to work for me. As a screenprinter I have learnt to create works using only primary colours and it was this knowledge that I took into making watercolours.

I treated some of the watercolours like screenprints, laying down the colours and creating the final shapes with a top layer of gold paint. In some I used colour mixed from the primary colours and drew the images onto the paper with a brush. The watercolours focus on the snake and the apple. Some of the images focus on the pregnant body. These works came at the time a friend’s baby was due to be born. This image together with that of the wise woman or the crone were incorporated into some of the serpent and apple images.

When I returned to Australia, I created wooden sculptures that incorporated Eve, the serpent and the apple. These sculptures were inspired by pre-Christian images of the female form I encountered in museums around Europe and by my interest in Cycladic Art. The elongated wooden figure of Eve was inspired by the bronze sculptural figures of Alberto Giacometti. Giacometti’s tall slim figures ‘Man Pointing’¹¹ and ‘Man Walking’¹² were influenced by Cycladic art,¹³ so were the ones I produced. My sculptures vary in height and width but all figures, excluding the base, are 5mm deep and are constructed by laminating layers of wood. ‘The Birthing Mother’ embodies the physical act of giving birth. She is focusing not on herself or the viewer but on

¹¹ Giacometti, Alberto Man Pointing 1947 Bronze 178 x 90.2 x 62.2cm. Collection of Tate Gallery, London.
the job at hand, pushing her baby out of her body. As with the previous figures, ‘The Birthing Mother’ is also influenced by Cycladic art and is 25mm deep. Like the others she is painted, covered in boot polish and buffed back, reducing the intensity of the paint and highlighting the brush strokes. A photograph of this work was scanned into a computer and overlaid with one of the watercolour/collages, to produce ‘Birth in Battery Park’. The completed image was made into a postcard.

The wooden figures and the writings of Barbara Walker inspired the apple and the snake, a series of relief prints featuring Eve. It was from these prints that I was granted a residency at Lowick House Printmaking Workshop in Cumbria from 1st January to 17th February 1996. My proposal was to create screenprints for the first 4 weeks and lithographs for the remaining 2 weeks. When I arrived on the 2\textsuperscript{nd} of January none of the screenprinting supplies were available, so I looked around for another medium to work in and found a piece of wood suitable for woodcuts. I have always liked making woodcuts; while there is a certain amount of control over the image you are also at the mercy of the wood and what it will allow. The thing about making woodcuts, linocuts, etchings, collagraphs and lithographs is that you are working in reverse, creating a mirrored image of the final product. Any prints produced through these processes have an element of surprise. One of the first images I produced was a lithograph: ‘Infinite Eve’, a representation of the eternal mother, who lives on through each generation of woman. The majority of the prints made during this time were woodcuts. The collagraph ‘Eve’ was made into a postcard by the workshop

The first series of woodcuts focused on the cycle’s life. This topic had its beginnings after seeing Gustav Klimt’s painting ‘The Three Ages of Woman’,\textsuperscript{14} an image that awakened my interest in the idea of interweaving the concepts of the life cycle with the Genesis myth. The work I produced made references to both the cyclic encounters and experiences women have with/to their body and also the Christian connection that dates back to Eve.
One of the main aims of these prints was to establish a visual connection between the life cycle and Eve. This connection was made through the use of the shape of the apple, within which life and death experiences are contained. ‘Birth in the Garden’, ‘Life in the Garden’, and ‘Death in the Garden’ provide a bridge from the singular figure of Eve into aspects of female identity with the Garden of Eden.

‘Birth in the Garden’ locates Eve, the apple and serpent in a garden surrounded by an icon from my childhood: the Australian paling fence. Eve gives birth within the apple while the serpent is an interested observer. ‘Life in the Garden’ encloses the apple in a stone wall, a reference to the dry stone walls that were located in the landscape surrounding the studio in which I was working, the paling fence symbolised where I came/come from, the stone fence the foreign landscape, in which I was working and living. Eve nurtures the baby and the serpent has become their protector. ‘Death in the Garden’ contains Eve the grieving mother, serpent and apple within a garden of infinity that knows no boundaries. She cradles her dead child, the serpent stays to help her through the mourning process; it understands Eve’s loss as being similar to the death it experiences every time it sheds its skin.

The three linocuts ‘Giving Birth’, ‘Nurturing Life’ and ‘Embracing Death’ are similar to the previous woodcuts, the difference being they are not situated in a garden. The position of the serpent in ‘Giving Birth’ is once again that of the observer. ‘Nurturing Life’ and ‘Embracing Death’ locate the serpent as an integral part of the figure of Eve.

The woodcuts ‘Gestation’, ‘Infinity’, ‘Seeds of Life’, ‘Birth in the Apple’ and ‘Marriage’ are examples of a series of works that focus on the upper torso. Within the torso is Eve’s apple and within the apple a selection of possible female experiences. ‘Gestation’ contains the foetus being nurtured within the apple. The never ending patterns of nature are part of ‘Infinity’, which features the European winter apple, harvested at the end of spring for

14 Klimt, Gustav The Three Ages of Woman 1905 collection of the National Gallery of
nourishment during the long cold, dark winter months. ‘Seeds of Life’ and ‘Birth in the Apple’ both draw attention to the varied aspects of female imagery: foetus, goddess, and birthing mother. ‘Marriage’ uses the external symbols of human commitment and union.

‘Mother Earth’ compresses the world’s geography into the female form of nourishment and was made for ‘Earth Day’ 1996. The work refers to the convention of describing the earth as female. In the same way that the earth provides sustenance, so does the mother.

The prints ‘The Procession of life’, ‘Water Baby’, ‘Australian Moon Over Cumbria and the Procession of Life’ and ‘Giving Birth to the ‘Procession of Life’ are all influenced by Gustav Klimt’s work ‘The Procession of the Dead’. I was drawn not only to Klimt’s image, but also the title. It occurred to me that if you have a procession of the dead, it is necessary to have a procession of life. Recognising life as a procession towards death also acknowledges the fertility cycles of the female body. In the same way that these life cycles wax and wane, so does the moon which is part of the reason it appears in this work.

When I was in Cumbria the moon appeared to be silver. I told the other artists I was working with that in Australia we had yellow moons. As it was rising one evening, the moon was a bright yellow/orange. ‘Australian Moon Over Cumbria and The Procession of Life’ is a tribute to that moon. ‘The Procession of Life’ and ‘Water Baby’ are enclosed with the egg awaiting birth. ‘Giving Birth to the Procession of Life’ places the act of giving birth within the moon; the procession and the cycles continue.

All of the woodcuts created during the residency were printed with gold ink on purple Khadi paper – those in the folder were printed on blue. This paper comes from India and I had never heard of it before going to the U.K. Khadi

Modern Art, Rome.
paper is available in a deep blues, yellows, reds and purple and is handmade. One of the disadvantages of handmade paper is that it does not have an even surface and contains all sorts of foreign objects. Nevertheless, it does contribute to prints that are rich in colour and texture.

The ‘Eve’ collagraphs are extensions of the woodcuts ‘Gestation’, ‘Infinity’, ‘Seeds of Life’, ‘Birth in the Apple’ and ‘Marriage’, as are the laminated paper figures ‘Eve 1’ and ‘Eve 2’. The figures are fabricated by moulding and laminating the paper around the bust of a store dummy. ‘Eve 1’ was painted with red and green paint, while ‘Eve 2’ was covered with screenprinted gold paper. Both were coated in crackle glaze, used in the craft industry to provide the effect of aging. Both pieces were covered in gold paint, ‘Eve 1’ received an overdose of crackle glaze, resulting in a surface similar to a parched landscape. With ‘Eve 2’ I tried in vain to reproduce the surface, but the final result was a much more sedate covering. The screen-printed paper is only just visible.

*Mother and Crone* are made from wood; each piece is painted gold. This time *Mother* overdosed on crackle glaze, creating an unreproducible effect. *Crone* is much more dignified. The cracked surfaces are highlighted by the obligatory dose of boot polish. *Summer Apple* and *Winter Apple* are also constructed from wood, with a finished surface similar to *Mother and Crone*. The apples in these works contain and are shaped by the serpent. The crackle glaze produced an entirely different effect. Working with this medium it is impossible to predict the outcome; it’s a case of accepting what you get and working with it. Both pieces are mounted on board, covered with the screenprinted gold paper.

As a printmaker I find myself seduced by surfaces, not only the ones created by printing plates but also those of sculptural and painted works. Paint and boot polish is again employed on the paintings *Eve* and *Eve’s Baby*. Thic

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coats of gold paint made it possible to draw through the paint, exposing the canvas and colour below. The painted surface is covered with layers of boot polish interspersed with layers of shellac over the crackle glaze. The rich surface is the result of polishing between each layer, so accentuating the drawing and the cracking.

The works exhibited in 'Australian Moon Over Cumbria and the Procession of Life' emphasise two themes: the female experiences of birth, life and death and Eve embracing the apple of knowledge. The serpent of Genesis, who encouraged Eve to seek knowledge of good and evil, stays close by and in some works becomes an integral part of her form. The apple is symbolic of women's inherited wisdom. The majority of educators in both the public and private sphere are women. Descendants of Eve undergo cyclic encounters each month and have the capacity to give birth to life. Christianity appropriated Eve, her apple and serpent as symbols of humankind's entry into a sinful existence, but my Eve gathers up her symbols and returns them to the female of the species.
Professional assessment
Australian Moon Over Cumbria and
The Procession of Life
- Patricia Prociv

As the double-barreled title of this exhibition suggests, the works before you were created in discrete bursts of creative activity over the past nine months, they are held together however by Patricia Prociv's abiding interest in investigating female experience and fecundity through life's rhythm.

Although Patricia Prociv is principally a printmaker, she long ago abandoned the format which thrives upon mere replication. Hence this exhibition is replete with woodblock, plaster, screen and lino prints, painting and sculpture. All use an economy of images that Prociv has made her own; breast and womb, moon and water, crone and sylph, refracted through Christian creation myth. Patricia Prociv has come to the use of these images over a period of fifteen years of formal art education and practice as an artist. Moreover, this particular lexicon is informed by the experience of being female, of playing out the various roles allowed for one as daughter, wife, and mother. In the midst of middle life Prociv has begun the process of evaluation. Before you on these walls is the result of her exploration to date.

Prociv plays with slippage, the happy accident and the contrived mistake. Printmaking works here as if a kind of drawing, it allows for play and discovery, yet grounds the artist's work with a necessary discipline. Few of Prociv's printed works appear as independent entities, instead they work as parts of a whole. She is trying out ideas, having her way with the audience. We must shift our gaze back and forth, in the process of discovering just where the artist intends taking us; modest adaptations from one work to another, then sudden surprise! The artist leaps forward and offers up work of quiet and dignified beauty, evident foremost in the Cumbria suite of six wood block prints. Here on ink-blue Khadi paper we are offered filigree breasts. Their swirling delicate lines and focus on eye-like aureole, suggest not eroticism, but the soft drag of aging skin. Nestling within each breast are symbols of creation, birth, and infinity, episodic life. The image of the breast is found elsewhere in Prociv's work. In particular, three works on rough canvas provide a resonant accompaniment to the Khadi works, albeit they differ markedly in their lack of restraint. The application of paint is layered red, orange, black and gold with a high gloss finish. The surface of each has been deliberately crazed, giving the impression of hot coals. Here the image of the breast has been mobilized in passionate rage against the ever turning circle.

Literally standing outside of Prociv's two dimensional works are three elegant figurines. Cut from plywood and burnished gold, these maquettes appear self composed and somewhat solitary. Yet they are each Eve figures, as are all women, unable to escape gender destiny. Two figures cradle apples, the third squats ready to give birth. An apt symbol, the apples are redolent with fertility and prosperity yet synonymous also with the fall of humanity. Thus Prociv further marks out her territory of women as life givers, yet doomed to pain in the process.

Whether familiar or not with Patricia Prociv's artwork there are many layers within which reward the viewer upon slow deliberation of its few but complex themes. These are not the artworks of an artist ready to slide gracefully into her middle years. No! These are the works of one who is taking charge, probing the past and present, determined to make sense of change, and determined not to give way to those who would see her as 'crone'.

Lee-Anne Hall
September, 1996
European trip
European Trip

On a European trip I made with my husband Vic, in April 1995, I had the opportunity to study images of women in galleries, museums and sacred sites. This enabled me to explore a rich range of historical associations for my work on the Catholic imaging of women, I was especially interested in Pagan goddess images.

One of the most useful things we took was a small book ‘Goddess Sites of Europe’ which became our bible for finding well-known and obscure sites. I was interested in images of the goddess, in her many forms, and the Virgin Mary as goddess, before leaving. Travelling around Italy gave me the opportunity to seek out sites of former goddess temples, now used as Catholic churches. My Catholic education made me aware of the codes of symbolism used in religious and church images. I developed an awareness of symbols associated with Pagan imagery.

One of my interests is the relationship of virginity with holy women. The Catholic tradition has a strong connection with virginity, associating it with sacrifice and torture. I explored this in my own work. Pagan traditions may not have this association.

Unlike the flat pictures of Christian holy women, the Pagan goddesses we saw were sculptures as strong, able-bodied women. One of the temple sites we visited was that of Vesta and The Vestal Virgins, in the Forum. The Vestals are ‘looked up to’ by those who pass by, positioning them as figures of authority. The Vestals, who were once considered to be the holy women of Rome, had their own temple. Only women were allowed to enter this temple from 7th to 14th June. They had to enter barefoot and offered food to the goddess.
In the same way that the Vestals were offered food, the virgins of Catholicism, like St. Rosalia, were offered jewels, wealth and gold. The Pagan virgins were offered the victuals of life. Catholic virgins are always surrounded by images of their death or torture.

Another Pagan site we read about was the Church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin. Like many Catholic churches in Italy it is built on the site of a temple. This one had been dedicated to the grain goddess Ceres, whose name lives on in supermarkets and on breakfast tables through the word ‘cereal’. Ceres provided another association with the life sustaining aspect of Paganism.

With the help of the book we found a large torso of Isis stuck in a corner, described as being between two buildings, numbers 49 and 50 Piazza San Marcos opposite a large monumental edifice to Vittorio Emanuele II. Isis is huge, but hidden. We visited the square twice before finding her, making us feel like we were discovering a hidden aspect of women. Looking at this portion of the statue made me wish I had seen it in its original form. Figures such as Isis were physically large representing, I think, the cultural positioning of the Goddess. Like the statues of the Vestas, those passing by would have to ‘look up’ to her.

We kept coming across large Goddess figures in museums and smaller one in crypts on the side of buildings. I wasn’t sure what the round object on their head was, then I saw one that was an obvious representation of a city wall. I call them City State Goddesses because I think that the wall represents the old wall of cities such as Rome. Walls were built as a form of defence against invaders. This must have given the citizens a sense of security and power.
over their own destiny. These ‘crowned’ figures are part of community life. The are not outcasts like the saints of Catholicism.

I have found only one image of a Catholic saint wearing a city wall as a crown, a Mexican image of St. Barbara, carrying the monstrance and the chalice. She is also carrying a sword. For her this is not a weapon of defence, but one of death.

In Celtic tradition the crown is an emblem of loyalty. The Claddagh ring carries the symbols of love (the heart), friendship (the hands) and loyalty (the crown). I have tried to find more information on religious and secular uses of the crown, but it is not readily available.

Santa Maria in Ara Coeli is built on the site of an ancient temple to Cybele. The Church is known for its jewel-encrusted statue of the baby Jesus. The large stained glass windows above the door are of three bees. The book informed us that the number three had been sacred to goddess worshippers, and that the bees were traditional companions of the goddess — associated with Persephone, Artemis and Cybele. Barbara Walker says the bee was considered to be ‘a symbol of the feminine potency of nature’.¹

We also visited the Catacombs of Priscilla, memorable because it took ages to find as it has no sign and is accessed through a door off the street. The nuns who run it are extremely efficient and business like. The one on the desk spoke no English we paid our money she took our backpacks - ‘no cameras allowed’ - and we waited. Another nun appeared. She was taking a group of
French people and we would join them. So we went with the woman in full black habit, wearing white sneakers for our tour of the catacombs. It is like a rabbit warren and we trailed behind the group listening to a commentary we didn’t understand. At last we came to the purpose of our visit, a small painted image of the Virgin Mary breastfeeding her child. Towards the end of the tour the rest of the group sang Ava Maria in French (very nice) and we found out they could all speak English. We wanted to see this image for two reasons: it is described as the oldest known depiction of the Virgin Mary and her child. And the difference between this and traditional images. This one shows Mary as a mother, giving her child the food of life.

We went to Agrigento in Sicily looking for a temple to the goddess Demeter. Our book told us there was one on a hill overlooking the Valley of the Temples. We walked down a winding road to a fenced paddock, climbed the fence, walked through the long grass and climbed a long forgotten hill to find the ruins of the temple, which had been converted, to the Church of San Baigio. We sat up there on our own looking at the hordes of people wandering through the Valley of the Temples and felt privileged to be on such a site.

One of the few galleries of contemporary art we visited was the Museum of Modern Art in Rome and it was here that I saw Gustav Klimt’s painting ‘Le tre eta della donna’. Though I had seen some of his works a couple of years before in the Schloss Belvedere in Vienna this one was different in that it was not dominated by gold leaf. For me the beauty lay in the way he had captured the three possible stages in the

1 Walker, Barbara The Woman’s Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets (San Francisco: Harper
life of woman. The mother with the child is eternal; I identified with the older woman - the crone - with her protruding belly that had once nurtured life and in past times was valued for her knowledge.

I had used the figures of the virgin, mother and crone in work I had in 1994. After seeing Klimt’s painting, I became interested in bringing the three figures together in my own work. I had been struggling with how to incorporate the three stages of women into one work, with no success. This painting and Leonardo da Vinci’s ‘Virgin and Child with St. Anne and a Lamb’ inspired the theme of ancestral connections and the work in Constructing Identity Within Catholicism.

The older woman also appears in the ‘Beethoven Frieze’ done by Klimt in the Secession building in Vienna. She is depicted as ‘gluttony’ in a section titled ‘Unchastity’ Lust and Gluttony’. The fact that Klimt depicted gluttony as an older woman doesn’t worry me. I was drawn to them because they unashamedly portrayed the physical characteristics of the crone.

Another older woman I love is the Venus of Willendorf. She lives in the Museum of Natural History in Vienna and even though I had seen photos of her in books and on posters I was not ready for what I saw. This figure from 2,500 BC was so much smaller than I had expected and so beautiful. The belly and breasts of Klimt’s ‘gluttony’ are tight, the Venus’s body comes down in folds she is a rotund crone with a large torso and thighs to match, heaps of cellulite here.
Some of the best parts of this trip were the 'discoveries'. We took a side trip to Köln after learning that there was an exhibition of prints by the German artist Kathe Kollwitz in a bank. In Berlin we went looking for a gallery dedicated to her work. After spending a long time walking up and down a street trying to figure out the numbering system, we eventually worked out that it went up one side and down the other. It was worth the frustration for the chance of seeing more of her prints and sculptures. I have great admiration for a woman who lived through the misery of losing her son in the First World War and was able to create work expressing the horror of war but also the instinctive process of mothers protecting their children.

While in Italy we went to Reggio di Calabria to see the 2 Greek bronze statues 'The Warriors of Riachi'. The warriors were being cleaned, but our trip was not in vain as we found cabinets of tiny pre-Christian female clay figures. Among them were women nursing their children. One was giving birth (I wanted to take it home) and some were goddess figures. They ranged from having a lot of detail to being shaped forms.
Our interest in the different ways the Virgin is imaged lead us to Beauraing, in the south east corner of Belgium near the French border. Beauraing is accessible by two trains from Brussels and is home to a Marian Museum that houses hundred of Virgin Mary statues from all over the world. The book warned us hundreds of pairs of eyes would follow us around the museum, which they did. The statues ranged from some that had been crudely sculptured to those made from porcelain, with delicate features.

All the works I have done between 1995 and 200 has been influenced by the female representation I saw during this adventure. Australian Moon Over Cumbria was influenced by Klimt’s paintings. Sisters and Spinsters, the misses Swann of Elizabeth Farm was an extension of the concept of female ancestral connection as is the exhibition Constructing Identity Within Catholicism, which also ventures into the concept of mother as goddess.
Watercolours
Watercolours with Collage 124x 180mm 1995
'Birthing Mother'
Laminated Wood and Paint
300 x 300mm 1994

Watercolour with Collage 125 x 180mm 1995

'Birth in Battery Park'
Postcard 118 x 172mm 1996
Lowick House Print Workshop residency.

In October 1995 I applied for a printmaking residency with Lowick House Print Workshop in Cumbria U.K. I got to London on the 2\textsuperscript{nd} of January 1996, took the train to Cumbria and was intrigued to discover that it was dark at 4pm. The workshop was on Coal Yeat Farm about 6 miles from Ulverstone; my accommodation was a caravan in the middle of a field, a long way from suburban Rosehill. Working in a well equipped studio again gave me the scope to take existing ideas further and focus on developing new ones. It also provided an opportunity to work with artists from other countries. For the first time since art school, I could indulge in the luxury of making work without disruption.

The workshop stood on a hill – evoking the feeling of being in one of the Bronte sisters’ novels. Everything in this landscape appeared to be brown: the buildings, shrubbery and stone fences; it was amazing how the snow brought such a remarkable transformation.

When I returned to Australia, someone asked me if my work had been influenced by the Cumbrian landscape. My immediate response was ‘I don’t work in landscape’. When I looked more closely, I realised that the environment in which I had been working and living had indeed affected it. The snow and stone fences were reminders that I was in foreign surroundings. The constant dark and cold forced us to stay inside and it seemed a lot of my work was located outside with fences and gardens. The dark was now appearing in my work the moon shines on a dark background. I had never printed on dark paper or with gold inks before. In fact my work had changed and evolved in a way I would have not considered possible.

Part of this change was the progression of my previous sculptural works that dealt with aspects of the female body, towards creating prints of female experiences, including their association with Eve. Making the plate for the series on the upper torso was like knitting something, only in this case the stitches were the marks on the wood following the contours of the body. It
was quite a curious experience as I have done very little knitting, but the process of cutting the design seemed akin to weaving stories and experiences of women into wood. In retrospect I can see that the marks also evoke tribal markings I have seen on the bodies of aboriginal women in the north of Western Australia.

The imagery I developed during my stay at the workshop was carried through into the work I produced for the Body Parts exhibition. For me the value of such a focused period of time in an unfamiliar landscape forced me to examine my perceptions of being a descendant of Eve and extend my knowledge and experiences of printmaking.
Dear Patricia,

Thank you for applying for the Printmaking Residency as part of the Visual Arts Year 1996. There have been over 200 applications from around the world, the majority of which were of the highest quality.

The selection committee consisting of representatives of the sponsors, Robert Home Paper Ltd., Monarch Chemicals Ltd., Abacus (Colour Printers) Ltd., and Lowick House Print Workshop had an impossible task to adjudicate the applications. We have, however, arrived at a decision and your application has been successful.

1996 will be a very busy and stimulating time at the workshops, with 3 artists in residence using different print media, every week of the year. This will include artists not only from the UK but also Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Europe, America and Africa.

None of this would have been possible without the support of the sponsors, Robert Home Paper Ltd., Monarch Chemicals Ltd., Abacus (Colour Printers) Ltd., and A.B.S.A. (the "pairing" scheme). Our thanks must be heartily extended to these companies and organisations for their vision and support of this printmaking programme.

LHPW will not be able to offer any open printmaking facilities during 1996 but in 1997 will again "open the doors" to anyone who wishes to utilise the opportunity of printmaking in the workshops, while paying for this pleasure.

Please sign the enclosed contracts and return a copy immediately to confirm the acceptance of your award. I'm afraid the dates cannot be negotiated as fitting everyone in and balancing the various printmaking media's usage has been a major logistical problem.

With best wishes for Christmas and a happy New Year.

John Sutcliffe
Workshop Director

Please phone to confirm your dates: 1-1-96 - 17-2-96

PS. There will be an exhibition of graduating students' work at the Storey Institute, Lancaster, in July from which the Abacus (Colour Printers) Ltd. student prize of £1,500 will be selected.

Lowick House Print Workshop is a non profiteaking organisation devoted to the Art of Lithography, Intaglio, Relief and Screenprinting. We exist to provide the very best facilities, in a non institutional environment, surrounded by countryside.

Grant aid received from Northern Arts A.B.S.A., GL.A.A., The Arts Council of Great Britain.
THE SCHEDULE

Commencement Date (Clause 2): AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE IN JANUARY
Termination Date (Clause 2): 17 FEB 1996
Number of working days (Clause 9a): 47

Premises (Clause 9a): Coal Yard, Broughton Beck, Nr. Ulverston, Cumbria, LA12 8DX
Open Workshops/Visits: Last Friday of every month 2pm - 4pm.
Value of Residency: £ 1500
Your Sponsor: Robert Howe Paper Ltd
Accommodation: CARAVAN

SIGNED BY (Artist) _______________________
in the presence of _______________________

SIGNED BY (Host) _______________________
in the presence of _______________________

PLEASE IMMEDIATELY RETURN THE SIGNED COPY AS ACCEPTANCE OF THIS RESIDENCY

PROJECT DESCRIPTION/BRIEF

Printmaking Residency Lithography / Etching / Relief / Screen printing as outlined in your application.

Screenprinting all January to 4/2/96
LITHOGRAPHY 4/2/96 to 17/2/96.

A CV is attached to this contact.
LOWICK HOUSE PRINT WORKSHOP
PRINTMAKING RESIDENCIES

HOSTED BY
LOWICK HOUSE PRINT WORKSHOP,
CUMBRIA, UK.

1 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 1996

Applications are invited from artist printmakers worldwide. The residencies will offer selected artists the opportunity to concentrate on their work while having accommodation, materials and workshop time provided free of charge.

LOWICK HOUSE PRINT WORKSHOP

is a multi media residential workshop providing:-
Lithography • Intaglio • Screenprinting • Relief printing

Overlooking the Lake District National Park.

Closing date for applications 21st November 1995.

Further Details overleaf
1996 RESIDENCIES

During 1996 a series of residential opportunities will be awarded for artist/printmakers to use the facilities of Lowick House Print Workshop.

This scheme will be jointly funded by business sponsorship and government funding via arts organisations such as Northern Arts.

This project will be part of Visual Arts UK, a year long celebration of the visual arts in the north of England in 1996.

Visual Arts UK will take place in the north of England in 1996. It is part of the Arts 2000 initiative launched by the Chairman of the Arts Council, Lord Palumbo, in 1991.

Arts 2000 will celebrate an art form in a different part of the country each year between 1991 and the year 2000. Towns, cities and regions throughout the UK were given the opportunity to bid to host the different years. The north of England, consisting of Cumbria, Northumberland, Durham, Cleveland and Tyne & Wear, won the opportunity to host the UK Year of the Visual Arts against intense competition from other parts of the country.

The year has two principal objectives. Firstly, it aims to change the perceptions of the people within the region about the visual arts and the role that the arts can play in their lives. Secondly, it aims to change the perceptions of the people outside the region about the region and, in particular, about the cultural life within the region. It will therefore demonstrate the scale, diversity and quality of visual arts activity within the region and the liveliness and creativity of its communities.

Lowick House Print Workshop will play a vital part in 1996 by bringing together artists and printmakers from a national and international submission.

Application forms and full details are available from the above address. All applicants must complete the application form. Applications close 21 November 1995.

Lowick House Print Workshop would like to thank the main sponsors:

Robert Horne Paper Ltd
Monarch Chemicals Ltd
Abacus (Colour Printers) Ltd.

An application has been submitted to ABSA for £ for £, matching under the "Pairing Scheme".

Lowick House Print Workshop is a non-profitmaking organisation devoted to the Art of Lithography, Intaglio, Relief and Screenprinting. We exist to provide the very best facilities, in a non-institutional environment, surrounded by countryside. Grant Aid received from: Northern Arts, A.B.S.A., E.U.E.A., The Arts Council of Great Britain, The Calvolute Gulbenkian Foundation and the Rural Development Commission.

Further Details overleaf
1996 PRINTMAKING RESIDENCIES

HOW THE RESIDENCIES WORK

There are no fixed residencies regarding the sums of money or time scales involved. Each individual application will be assessed on its artistic merit. The minimum residency will be worth an equivalent of £500 and a maximum of £5,000. When awarded, the residency will be offered as a “block of time” to enable free usage and materials. (The monetary value is held by the workshops to cover all the costs involved). It is envisaged that while in residence you will have sole usage of the workshop of your chosen media.

These sums will relate directly to the workshops usage, accommodation and material usage. The cost of each of these are tabulated below to help you with your calculations. Living expenses of £25/week will be paid as a token gesture.

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<tr>
<th>WORKSHOP USAGE</th>
<th>£20 per day</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CARAVAN/BEDSIT ACCOMMODATION ON SITE</td>
<td>£55 per week (inc. heat &amp; light)</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDITIONING PAPER</td>
<td>£1.25 - £1.50 a sheet size 30 x 20*</td>
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<td>£2.50 - £3.00 a sheet size 30 x 40*</td>
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<td>LITHO STONES</td>
<td>£5 per colour*</td>
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<td>LITHO PLATES 36” x 24”</td>
<td>£40 per plate*</td>
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<td>ZINC ETCHING PLATES</td>
<td>COPPER ETCHING PLATES £80 each*</td>
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<tr>
<td>LIVING EXPENSES</td>
<td>£25 per week</td>
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*These are approximate costs only.

The £20 workshop daily fee is inclusive of proofing inks, proofing papers, tissue and blotters. Major materials such as editioning papers and plates/photoscreens/photographic materials and litho stones are extra. Emma Grover has been appointed 'Studio Manager' for 1996 to provide technical assistance when required.

The workshops/studio are open 24 hours a day - 7 days a week - to ensure that your normal working methods and timetables are easily maintained.

The essence of this residency scheme is to enable you to spend a concentrated period of time on your work. It doesn’t involve any teaching, lectures, public workshops, or any other commitments. Two prints from each edition printed will remain in the workshop’s collection. Should no editions be printed a selection of the artist’s proofs will be required for the workshop’s collection. The sponsors will also require further prints for their collections.

*The workshop will be open to the public in the afternoon of the last Friday in each month during 1996.*
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE / STUDIO MANAGER

Emma Grover will be available throughout most of your residency to provide technical assistance. This will include keeping account of the cost included in your residency. Emma is not there to print your prints for you but will obviously assist with anything that requires several pairs of hands.

THE WORKSHOPS - USAGE

While in residency you will have sole use of the workshop of your choice to enable you to become established in your own working environment. The residencies will be carefully selected to ensure a minimum of multi use of a workshop. The studio is a shared area for all the workshops.

However, when artists wish to use a variety of media the participating artists will have to liaise directly with each other and Emma to ensure the best usage of the facilities. There will be only 3 artists in the 3 workshops at one time.

All the materials and equipment one would expect with a workshop of this size are in place. Should you have any specific requirements which you think may not be covered, please contact Emma.

Photographic facilities are available at the Scan Farm, which has the capacity to produce line or 1/2 tone film up to 30" × 20" from flexible artwork or transparencies. This is not a “hands on situation” and all photographic origination work will be undertaken for you and charged accordingly.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are totally familiar with the workings of all machinery and materials, workshops contain hazardous materials such as acids and solvents, safety gear is provided and should be used. First aid facilities are available on site.

The workshop, studios and accommodation are all a NON SMOKING environment!

TELEPHONE

There is a pay phone situated outside the studio, which can take incoming calls (01229) 885387

LOWICK HOUSE PRINT WORKSHOP

OFFICE - ADMINISTRATION: LOWICK HOUSE, LOWICK GREEN, Nr. ULLERSTON, CUMBRIA LA12 8DX
Telephone (01229) 885698 (9 - 5 only)  Telefax (01229) 885348
WORKSHOPS: COAL YEAT FARM, BROUGHTON BECK, Nr. ULLERSTON, CUMBRIA.
LHPW 1996 PRINTMAKING RESIDENCIES

A pool of £50,000 has been established to provide basic funding for printmaking residencies at LHPW. These first time sponsors of the Arts have applied to A.B.S.A. for matching funding under their "pairing scheme". It is possible that the final figure could be £100,000.

THE SPONSORS

ROBERT HORNE PAPER COMPANY LTD provide a nationwide delivery of fine printing paper to not only commercial printers but also a range of textured sheets to artists and designers - Tel 01204 74714

MONARCH CHEMICALS LTD are rapidly expanding to be one of the major bulk chemical suppliers in Europe. They supply the base materials used in the majority of printmaking materials.

ABACUS (COLOUR PRINTERS) LTD are national leaders in colour postcard, greetings card and fine art printing, offering a mail order service to artists and galleries. Telephone: 01229 885361 for a free sample pack.

ADDITIONAL PRIZES OFFERED AT NATIONAL EXHIBITIONS

Robert Horne Paper Company Ltd will be offering a special prize of £2,500 at the National Print Exhibition, The Mall Galleries in February 1996, to go towards the placement of the selected artist on a residency. The artist will be selected by the exhibition selection committee.

Abacus (Colour Printers) Ltd will be providing a special prize at the exhibition organised by the Printmakers Council, The National Open Print Exhibition at Whiteleys Gallery, London from 24th October to 5th November 1995. This cash equivalent award of up to £2,500 will provide the selected artist with a printmaking residency. The artist will be selected by the exhibition selection committee.

STUDENT PRIZE 1996 - Abacus (Colour Printers) Ltd are also offering a special prize for M.A. students graduating in the summer of 1996. Two artists will be forwarded by their college for a final selection in August 1996. This prize has a cash equivalent of £1,500 to enable the selected artist to be in residency in late 96 early 97.
ACCOMMODATION

The residency is inclusive of caravan/bedsit accommodation. While in residence the caravan will be yours alone, therefore should you wish to share with friends or family this is fine as they are all 4 berth. The bedsits offer accommodation for only one person.

All the caravans have electric heating and lighting, gas cooker with rings, grill and oven, and have running water. The bedsits have full electric heating and cooking facilities. Washing, toilet and shower facilities are available by the bedsits. A fridge and freezer are provided for shared use. The cost of all gas and electricity is included in the basic caravan/bedsit fee.

The caravans are old but clean and warm, with terrific views down the valley looking north to Coniston Old Man, 12 miles away.

HOW TO APPLY: THE APPLICATION

The enclosed application form must be completed in full and be accompanied by a maximum of 10 colour photographs or transparencies (no original work will be accepted). Use the costings overleaf as a guide to estimate the amount of funding you are applying for.

It is essential that your proposals for the residency are clear and concise. It must provide an accurate résumé of how you anticipate to utilise this opportunity, the media you wish to use and the time and approximate dates you wish to spend “in residence”.

For major awards over £2,500 there will be a short listing which will necessitate a further submission of work and two references.

All applications must be clearly marked on the outside of the envelope “Printmaking Residencies”. If you wish for your application to be returned, please enclose a pre-paid envelope/or return postage. Please ensure that all your transparencies/photos are clearly marked with your name.

FINAL SELECTION

All applications will be submitted to a selection committee which will meet in late November. Successful applicants will be offered their residencies in December for an immediate start from 1 January 1996.
Screenprinting...

Lithography.....

Relief Printing ..

Intaglio ..

Photographic...

Views of workshops in promotional brochure
Coal Yeat... was initially built in 1893. To celebrate its centenary we have totally rebuilt the disused farm buildings. Left derelict for 35 years, this major project was only made possible with help from The Rural Development Commission. The workshops are surrounded by 25 acres of their own grazing land.

South Lakeland... as one of the most beautiful areas of Britain, visited by artists since the days of Turner and Rheadie, Grizedale Forest with its award-winning "Sculpture in the Forest" programme is only 5 miles from Coal Yeat and is well worth a full day's visit. Within a 10 mile radius is the whole expanse of landscape. This ranges from the wild estuary of Morecambe Bay, the valleys and hills of High and Low Furness, the lakes and the rugged high mountains of the inner Lake District. This is one of the quieter areas of Cumbria, well away from the main tourist highways.

Accommodation... is available on site either as small "bed and breakfast" or self catering caravans. Locally there are numerous bed and breakfast establishments and hotels. The nearest pub is only 2 miles away. Ulverston, with its railway station, and all the facilities usually associated with a market town, is 5 miles away.

THE WORKSHOPS AND STUDIO ARE NON-SMOKING ENVIRONMENT
It's Two to One at Lewers
'It's Two to One' at Lewers.

Davida Wiley, Fiona Davies and myself formed 'It's Two to One' in 199 the title arose out of connections we had to and with each other. Two were married with children, another combination of two were Catholic, two were in the same year at art school, and so on. After successful exhibitions in Melbourne and Canberra, the Lewers Gallery Penrith asked us to exhibit work celebrating the 20th anniversary of International Women's Day.

When we were notified about the exhibition, we presumed it would be in the small gallery and it was only after accepting the invitation that we realised we been allocated the main gallery space. As this space is loosely divided into 3 small galleries, this meant that we would each have to contribute the equivalent of a one-person exhibition.

The work I exhibited at the Lewers Gallery was based around research I had done on the positioning of the female body within the culture of Catholicism. As a result of this research I discovered a culture that presents and represents the female body as a fragmented text. My work for this exhibition investigated how and why this body is positioned and constructed, and is capable of being sustained.

During this research, I discovered that existing images of women within the culture focus on self-sacrifice. For female saints and martyrs, this sacrifice involves relinquishing their body parts for a belief system. The Virgin Mary is encouraged to offer her body for the same system. My previous work focused on healing, returning dismembered body parts to selected female saints and martyrs. This new work concentrated on revealing the body.

'The Immaculate Conception' draws together two of the Church's stories, St. Anne conceiving the Virgin Mary through divine intervention, and Mary conceiving her son in similar circumstances. This work provides a visual representation of the biological impossibility of these stories. The baby is
collaged on to the work with a piece of printmaking scrim, representing a
placenta. A zip has been employed as a way of drawing attention to the
closed vagina, sealed with wax to ensure virginity.

‘Non Post Partum’ reveals the Virgin through an open vaginal zip. With this
work I wanted to explore the idea of her being a mother who had physically
given birth to her child; an experience that would not leave her post partum
intactum.

Having created work that focused on Mary’s supposed ability to experience
motherhood and remain a virgin, I created ‘Mother’. She is a physical
representation of all pregnant women, whose bellies swell and breasts
become enlarged. The gold of her body portrays the beauty of pregnancy
hidden to the world for the sake of ‘decency’.

‘Crone’ is the older woman, whose body also is hidden. The crone is the wise
woman whose experiences include the skin losing its elasticity, and the
drooping of her breasts. When I showed this work to a group of older women
they offered to take their clothes off in order to show me that ‘their’ breasts
looked nothing like the ones I had portrayed.

Unlike the previous works, constructed of laminated paper formed around a
two-dimensional mould, ‘The Body as Text – Framed’ has been made of
paper moulded around a store dummy. Covered in gold paper covered in
screen-printed text the muted finish was achieved through an application of
brown boot polish. The torso is attached to a board covered with green
damask and placed in an ornate gold frame. Gold is also used for Venus,
whose height is approximately two metres high. Placing Venus on a high
plinth had the effect of viewers having to look up at her, evoking the idea of
holding both secular and religious goddess figures in high esteem, ‘looking
up’ to them. The body clocks form a halo behind Venus. A second hand
moves through the cycles of the moon which, like female cycles of
menstruation and ovulation, are measures of time.
*It's Two to One at Lewers* gave each of us the opportunity to exhibit a substantial body of work, not always possible in group exhibitions. The work I exhibited had previously been shown in fragments; this exhibition provided the opportunity to present it in its entirety, as a comprehensive body of work.
IT'S TWO TO ONE

AT LEWERS

3rd March to
16 April, 1995
Gallery Hours:
Tues-Sun 11am-5pm

THE LEWERS BEQUEST
& PENRITH REGIONAL
ART GALLERY

86 River Road
Emu Plains, NSW 2750
Tel: 047) 35 1100
Fax: 047) 355 663
PREFACE

Patricia Prociv, Davida Wiley and Fiona Davies are three contemporary women artists based in the western Sydney/Blue Mountains region who over the last several years have been working collaboratively on exhibition projects under the title of It's Two To One.

This is their third project and one that continues their ongoing interest in examining and responding to a range of feminist issues dealing with aspects of gender, female identity and constructions of cultural identity.

Personal experiences, cultural observations, critical feminist theories and the relationship between art and social history are some of the issues they have considered and addressed in relation to their individual and collective art practice.

It's Two To One is being presented to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of International Women's Day. The exhibition is also part of a national umbrella event of exhibitions coinciding with the launch of Professor Joan Kerr's research publication Heritage: The National Women's Art Book, 500 works by women artists from colonial times to 1955.

Michael Crayford, Director

The gallery would like to thank the following for their assistance and support of this project.

Patricia Prociv, Davida Wiley and Fiona Davies
Friends of the Lewers Gallery
Professor Joan Kerr
Jo Holder
Beth Wiley

ISBN 0 646 22804 8
This project has been made possible with the assistance from the New South Wales Government through the NSW Ministry for the Arts.
A FEMALE LENS

"Through the brilliance of an image, the distant past resounds with echoes, and it is hard to know at what depth these echoes will reverberate and die away."

This exhibition planned to coincide with the 20th anniversary celebrations of International Women's Day is concerned to engage with representations of the female self. In this task artists Fiona Davies, Patricia Prociv and Davida Wiley working as the group 'It's Two to One', occupy and traverse private worlds and public realms. Theirs is an investigation of those social institutions, beliefs, values and words which have kept women upright, laced, powdered, lipstick and coiffured, yet have kept hidden or denied the existence, desires and dreams of real female bodies and beings.

As members of feminism's broad church, Davies, Prociv and Wiley provide their audience with a diverse exploration of the imaging and absence of women. In so doing they respectively undertake partial deconstructions of women's magazines, Christian myths of the Madonna and womanhood, patriarchal discourses, and the tides of social history, to produce a body of work which operates as a barometer of contemporary women's struggle and thought. Beyond the broader philosophic and political concerns, what is to be found within these walls are the imprints of personal history and gained experience still in the process of intellectual, aesthetic and emotional resolve.

In Chilla Bulbeck's monograph 'The Stone Laurel', women, along with Aborigines and workers, are conspicuous by their absence in commemorative statuary in Australia. Few bronze or stone monuments mark their valour, contribution or sufferings, these being reserved for the male figures of colonial and warring Australia. Instead, officialdom has chosen to memorialise women with small plaques, park benches and the occasional civic rose garden. At home, the memory of women significant in our lives are treasured through tracings found in recipes, crafted objects, belongings and small wisdoms. Precious as these remnants might be, they are modest legacies from the past to the present, and our homage therefore is reliant upon transient personal memory.

In response to the perceivable absence of women from Australia's iconographic historiography Fiona Davies has created a memorial to the pitiful blurring of individual female lives. Her tribute is not chiselled or cemented, but rendered instead using old seats prised from kitchen and dining furniture. Now converted into hanging swings, these seats which have borne the weight of many, are empty.

**Fiona Davies, Detail of installation - "That's such a pretty dress dear"**
Twenty five seats attached to the ceiling are almost imperceptibly swaying. In the corner a fan whirls, churning up the air, making a breeze and conjuring the presence of those long absent. Placed upon these seats are cushions, made of black rich and patterned fabrics, ruched, pleated and embroidered. A complex of ever subtle shades of black resound with the black of velvets, the black of mourning, the blackness of repression, the black of satiny sheets, and none the least to ‘our glorious dead’ black. Bearing golden script these cushions and seats are inscribed with the names of women and well worn phrases. The sum of women’s lives are noted with biographical scraps; born, married, died. The drab similarity of female life is repeated as if part of a funerary roll-call; Tottie and Queenie, Merle, Edith and Olive. What did their lives amount to? Why should they have our attention? What did they have to create? Where have their battles been fought? Their skills who knows? Their legacy maybe children, their worldly goods few.

Teetering between melancholy and bitterness, between solemnity and playfulness, this is a deeply ambivalent memorial. It resonates of soft, cushiony womanhood, of grandmothers and great aunts, but also of the thin lipped, white gloved manners of a period where women were bound to each other yet forced to compete within a restrictive social order. Conspiratorial and gossip homilies, she’s made her bed, now she will have to lie in it. ‘mutton dressed as lamb’ and ‘vanity doesn’t feel the cold’, are epithets to a past not yet receded.

These smug and ugly expressions between women are voiced in attempt to control, jockey and position for a place in the world. They are made comprehensible with a broad recognition of patriarchal power which maintains women as competitors for male favour. In the absence of feminism’s ‘sisterhood’, women turn upon themselves, tearing their own gender’s flesh. The agents of female oppression go untramelled, and in its place self destructive behaviour is played out. Evidenced here is the notion that women as an oppressed group, often do not resist the institutional means of their oppression, but overwhelmed by seemingly greater forces, their struggles are localised and somewhat misdirected.

Twenty years on from the first International Women’s Day, it is pertinent to ask, what has changed? Women remain captives not only of the homilies dispensed by mothers, sisters and girlfriends, but have these and other ‘home truths’ reinforced through mediated culture, in particular through magazines promoted exclusively for women. The paradox of the ‘woman’s magazine’ is not lost on Davida Wiley. Owned and profited from by males, these magazines employ female editors and journalists in the process of gender control; disguised as entertainment, comfort, gentle guidance, instructing and influencing through quizzing and helpful hints, probing articles and agony aunt columns. These are paper pretenders at being friend and soothsayer, making women more womanly, more desirable and domestic, independent yet male reliant, capable in the workforce yet less threatening to men.

How to kiss/be kissable, how to make love/what does he like? Wiley’s collographs and acetate panels pulsate with magazine one-liners; “you know you’re a bitch when...”, ‘Going Solo’, and ‘Being a Good Girl’. Meant to toughen female hearts to the vicissitudes of love and life, this work betrays a yearning for that which would appear to be incommensurable, the resolve between gender, romance and lust, image and self. Small etched images of apples, hearts, arrows, flames, stars and sailing boats are surrounded by imprints of Wiley’s breasts and thighs, embodied
passion and melancholia, metaphors of desire, passage, love, and loneliness. Throughout, the schizophrenia of women's lives is sharply observed. The modern women caught between love and loveless states. Ambiguous, contradictory and often tension filled, women here look at themselves and at other mothers, daughters, sisters and friends, with a gaze often none too kind. This is sexual bondage, not bonding, it rankles, complains and criticises, jeers and weeps. Women are intimate competitors and the prize is romantic love.

In Patricia Prociv's work, the sexualised female body, and female fertility as a site of power replaces she who is lovelorn and weak. Luminous golden figures hang from the walls. Their cool sculptured forms beckon to be touched, but to do so offers slim reward, for these are hard, crazed and unyielding forms. Heavenly creatures which wear plated amoury: virgin, mother and crone - woman as promise, woman as fecund and woman as barren. Headless and limbless, feminalness exists in the zone between neck and pubis. Patricia Prociv trades in confusion here. Virgin or nymphette, repressed, cross-legged or sexually active? The massive belly mound of the gravid woman pours out at its audience; do we read this as vulcan-like strength, height of creativity or vulnerability? The crone's breasts hang leaden; is she witch or wise? The gilt mirror, the ticking clock with its phases of the moon to remind of seasons passing and the body's own ebb and flows. No comfort is to be found here. Life is segmented and apportioned, feminalness, is destiny not choice. It is men who choose, men who act and women who are. For women the circle's turning, the fulfilment of destiny from daughter, to mother, to crone, brings not veneration, but a diminishment of powers, a desexualised self, a self without social or political presence.

How to read the female body beyond the cyclic paradigm and not zoom in upon the wrinkles and crevices, the body's silk and leather? Prociv answers her audience by removing the gratuitous curves and folds of flesh; by excising the inscribed gaze which is male. Bodies flattened and abstracted through photographic reproduction on paper and damask, are no longer body trunks, but hillocks and humps, clouds of smoke, opalescent fire. Smouldering, beautiful colour and form, the imagination is let loose upon a sensuous and languid landscape. In part shimmering, in part like old wallpaper fading and ready to peel, these photographic images playfully resonate with their rigid golden sisters on plinth and wall. In their scale and texture, as whole reproductions or part, the lens which instructs the gaze is finally female.

Lee-Anne Hall, February 1995


*De Souza in Freire, 1970, The Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p52

* See Foucault in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983, Michel Foucault, Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics: with and afterword and interview with Michel Foucault; p211

5.
'Non Post Partum Intactum' detail laminated paper and collage 1994
'Gestation' laminated paper and collage 700 x 350mm 1994

'Mother' laminated paper and collage 700 x 350mm 1994
Detail Photographs of three-dimensional works, painted and framed 1995
Photograph of sculpture, scanned onto Damask cloth and framed. 1995
'Venus' laminated paper 1995

'Body as Text - framed' laminated paper, screenprinting, cloth and frame 1994
'Birthing Mother' Clock, 300mm in diameter 1995

Installation Mirror and twelve clocks presenting the phases of the moon 1995
Body Parts
Body Parts - owning truth and owning images.

The exhibition Body Parts happened after my return from the printmaking residency at Lowick House. During my time at the workshop, I had been working on images that focused on the female body and the life cycles of birth, life and death. It was from the works I created for this exhibition and an experience involving two of the exhibiting artists that I realised the possibility that identity could be influenced by an image. From this experience my work shifted toward the prospect that the images I had grown up with, those of the saints and martyrs of Catholicism, could be relevant to the construction of personal identity for those raised within the culture of Catholicism.

Body Parts was group exhibition consisting of 5 women who are all printmakers, with each woman creating two and three-dimensional artworks of a nominated section of the body, re-assembling the works to form five composite figures. Part of the challenge of this exhibition was to create images outside of traditional restrictions of printmaking: that is, producing an edition of prints within which all of the images are exactly alike. When we first met to discuss the exhibition, each person was asked to write an artist's statement about the types of images/work they intended to produce, including the materials they would use. Frequent consultations were held for eighteen months prior to the exhibition though, due to family and work commitments, not everyone was able to be present at the same time. The morning the exhibition was to be hung in the gallery a dispute arose between 2 of the artists. One of them, Rachael (who had worked on the head), had used a photograph of the other, Mary, in her work. Mary insisted that Rachael not exhibit the piece of her work which contained the photographic image and that her image also be removed from a work that contained photographs of all the women. Rachael argued that the artistic intention of her work relied on everyone's image being used and that because Mary had agreed to her photograph being taken with the knowledge that it would be used in the exhibition, her permission was not needed. Who owns the image? Rachael, who took the photograph or Mary who was the subject?
While there are a lot of issues that can be raised from this incident - ethical, artistic issues of power, ego etc. - my interest is to explore the issues it raised about the culture of Catholicism. In doing this I think it is important to compare the personal histories of the two women involved. Both are of a similar age and have undergraduate degrees from the same art school. Mary has completed her Masters degree in Fine Arts; Rachael is enrolled in the same degree at the same art school. Both have parents who are divorced and their fathers have connections to the legal profession. Both are married, own property, have exhibited widely in Australia and overseas. Mary was raised within the culture of Catholicism, which has traditionally privileged the visual image over text; Rachael was raised with in the Jewish Culture, which has traditionally privileged text over image. By examining the positioning of images within these two cultures I believe it is possible to show how and why they were able to influence the individual’s perception of herself in the situation that arose.

Within the traditions of Catholicism, images are presented as being representations of truth and truth is revealed through the image. In Genesis 1, God creates all things by his pure word. There is no divine body, no moulding with hands. God spoke and it was done. The second story of creation in Genesis 2 does indeed describe man created out of dust; a direct reference to the creation of man through a physical process that takes place between the created and the creator. God breathes his spirit into man’s nostrils.¹

God speaks to man through the words in the Bible, Genesis 1 describes God as having created man through his word. Man is created through the words of the Bible. Genesis 2 promotes the notion of man being made by God, a product of his creation. In Catholicism this idea is reinforced by stories and images that promote an ethos that we are all God’s children. He is our father and we are his children. As members of his family, we are reminded that he loved us so much he sacrificed his life so that all our earthly sins would be forgiven. We are told that if we love him we will be willing to give our lives for
him. This idea of personal sacrifice is reinforced through images of saints and martyrs who are glorified because of their willingness to discard their earthly bodies in favour of an eternal spiritual life with their creator.

The stories and images of Catholicism are designed to impart a culture of sacrificial willingness. Images that conveyed this truth were declared to be apart from any appearance of idolatry by the Second Holy, Great Ecumenical Synod of Nicea held in Cyprus in 787 AD, which says in part:

We salute the venerable images. We place under anathema those who do not do this. Anathema to them who presume to apply to the venerable images the things said in the Holy Scriptures about idols. Anathema to those who do not salute the holy venerable images. Anathema to those who call the sacred images idols. Anathema to those who say that Christians resort to the sacred images as to gods. Anathema to those who say that any other delivered us from idols except Christ our God. Anathema to those who dare to say that at any time the Catholic Church received idols. ²

With this decree, the Catholic Church moved the worshipping faithful from textual to image based worship. No longer would the children of the Church need to conjure up personal images of their God; the Catholic Church by divine decree would show them. Images of the truth would be revealed and anyone who did not agree or placed these images in the category of idols would be cursed to damnation from every direction. Through image-based worship Catholicism created in its followers the ability to see truth in and through the image. This litany includes images of saints and martyrs whose lives and deaths contain ideals that all members of the Church should try and emulate.

To ensure that their children have access to the saintly life, parents name their children accordingly. Appropriate traditional names for Catholic children are Mary, Joan, Lucy, Katherine, John, Peter and Anthony. Inappropriate

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¹ Parrinder, E.G. What World Religions Teach (London: George Harrap and Co. 1968) 146.

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names would be non-saints names such as Kylie, Raleen, Issac and Trevor. If you are your name, the full effect of this naming procedure can be seen when you know more about the saint involved. St. Lucy is described in the *Treasury of Women Saints* as

Living in Sicily in the fourth century. Her parents thought she should be married to a pagan. When her mother was miraculously cured through the intercession of St. Agatha, she expressed her gratitude to God for this healing by allowing Lucy to devote herself to Christ in the service of the poor. When Lucy’s suitor discovered he would be deprived of a wife for whom he longed, he denounced her to the Governor as a Christian. Ordered to a brothel a punishment for her steadfast fidelity to Christ, Lucy was not able to be taken by the soldiers, since by a miracle she became immovable. Not even fire and burning oil could vanquish this courageous woman. Finally she was slain by a sword.

St. Lucy is portrayed carrying two eyes around in a dish symbolising the story that she gouged out her eyes so she would not have lustful thoughts about or look attractive to her suitor. St. Lucy is patron saint of the blind.

If your name is Catherine, you could be named after at least five St. Cathare: Catherine of Sienna, Catherine de Ricci, Catherine of Bologna, Catherine Labouré, or Catherine of Alexandria. De Sola Chervin describes Catherine of Alexandria:

Born of a noble family of Alexandria and devoted herself from childhood to study, she was converted by a vision of Our Lady. When the persecution of the Church began in Alexandria, Catherine went to rebuke the emperor for his cruelty. Since he could not answer the arguments she raised, he assembled fifty philosophers to refute her. When these sages admitted that she had won the debate, the emperor burned all of them to death. When she was put into prison for refusing to become the consort of the emperor, she managed to aid the conversion of his wife and another high official together with her prison guards. As a result Catherine was sentenced to death by fastening her to a spiked wheel. When her bonds were miraculously broken (the spikes killing bystanders), she was beheaded.

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3 Gabrielle Lord, Mary Jane Frances Cavolina Meara, Jeffrey Allan Joseph Stone, Maureen Anne Teresa Kelly, Richard Glen Michael Davis *Growing Up Catholic* (Sydney: Elysyd Press 1968) 27.

4 De Sola Chervin, Ronda *Treasury of Women Saints, the Stories of over 200 Women, including Mothers, Prophets and Interior Women of the Spirit* (Servant Publications 1991) 139.

5 De Sola Chervin, Ronda *Treasury of Women Saints, the Stories of over 200 Women, including Mothers, Prophets and Interior Women of the Spirit* (Servant Publications 1991) 170
Another way in which the mythology of saints is conveyed to the faithful is through the taking of saints’ names by nuns. Sister Mary Apollonia who taught you in fourth class would have taken the name of St. Apollonia, an aged virgin who had all her teeth pulled out when she refused to blaspheme. Threatened with being burnt alive, she jumped into the fire of her own accord. St. Apollonia is the patroness of dentists. Sister Mary Agatha on the other hand has taken the name of a saint who resisted prostitution.

She refused to yield to the stratagems of the proprietor, and was sent to be tortured on the rack, her sides torn by iron rods and her body burned with torches. Observing how God preserved her in cheerfulness in the midst of such torment, the governor ordered her breasts to be crushed and cut off. Then he sent her to prison without food or medical attention...Finally she died of further tortures.

Images of St. Agatha show her carrying two severed breasts on a plate. She is patron saint of those with breast cancer and nurses.

In much the same way that ‘time reveals itself through the watch’ Catholicism reveals itself through the images of the saints. It is not enough to be a decent human being, you must love God and the church foremost and be prepared, if necessary, to have your body mutilated in the process.

Images of saints can be described as being “good” in that they are of a faith that parents want to pass on to their children. They are “evil” in that they present an “absence of reality” that plays at being the truth. What gives these saints their authenticity is that they chose to mutilate or have their bodies mutilated, rather than deny their love for the Catholic Christian God. With this image a culture of representation is being presented as truth, so the value of ones own personal identity within Catholicism is formed in a system that trades reality for truth within the image. This forces the individual to substitute their identity as a person (who exists in the world) for that of an

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7 De Sola Chervin, Ronda Treasury of Women Saints, the Stories of over 200 Women, including Mothers, Prophets and Interior Women of the Spirit (Servant Publications 1991) 129.
image. If the image is held to be the truth, then the self ceases to exist outside the images. Since the image is of a martyred body, you cannot become the image without defacing your own body. You can’t become Lucy, carrying her eyes around on a plate. Representation then changes from ‘an ideal to be realized to a difficulty to be overcome’\(^\text{10}\).

Within Catholicism, images are presented as ‘truth’ and Catholics have historically identified themselves as being part of the ‘truth’. Their image is constructed accordingly, as one of truth. Having constructed an identity through a perceived reality of the image, difficulty is experienced in recon structing oneself outside the image. Mary believed that her identity existed within a photographic image. Along with this belief comes the notion that such an image reflects your truth, outside of which you do not exist.

Mary and Rachael both believed they owned the photographic image, Rachael because she took the photograph and Mary because it was a photograph of her. Clearly Rachael owns the photograph she took, but is it possible to own your image? Both women had different types of problems with the photograph. Rachael’s was its relationship to the integrity of her work. Mary’s problem was that the situation raised a crisis of personal identity through an image of herself being used in the work of another artist.

Exhibition Installation featuring 'Eve 1' and 'Eve 2'
Installations featuring 'Agatha' and two paintings 1996
The Mirror Stage.

Taken to Myers Department Store by her mother when she was 7 months old, Lynne proceeded to lick every mirror she could reach in the store. At this age Lynne would have been aware of her surrounding environment. However, by reacting to her mirrored image she was beginning to recognise her self as being part of these surroundings; ‘the mirrored image would seem to be the threshold of the visible world’.¹ This event remains imprinted in her mother’s memory because she was preoccupied with a fear about the germs Lynn might get from the mirrors, rather than an awareness that she was entering the mirror stage of her development.

Generations of parents from different geographical and cultural locations have watched their small children’s reactions to their mirrored image without realising its significance in terms of their child’s development. This realisation by the child marks the beginning in the pre-verbal period of development, when the ego is established and they are becoming aware of developing an identity with their physical body.

In exploring the hypothesis that the image based culture of Catholicism has the capacity to act as the ego of the individual, I have been influenced by Jacques Lacan’s theory of the mirror stage of development. Lacan describes this stage as a period when a child begins to identify itself through a mirrored image. I have used the mirror stage to describe the construction of identity within the culture of Catholicism.

Psychoanalysis recognises that, from generation to generation, human development follows certain patterns. The development of the ego is not a biological process in that it does not alter any bodily functions that allow the individual to exist. However, there are correlations between the development of the ego and the individual’s spatial perception of his or her biological self.

Children at around eight months are beginning to be aware of their bodies. This awareness takes the form of them being able to move around, sit up, recognising themselves within a three dimensional space. At this point they are able to get things from in front of and behind themselves. Crawling gives them another perception of themselves, of being able to use their bodies to gain mobility. When they stand up and walk, their spatial perception changes again. The final event in terms of spatial recognition, I think, is when children first learn to jump off the ground, as this act requires belief that they will come back down.

Freud uses four terms to describe the development of the identity of an individual: the id, ego and the super-ego and the ego ideal. The id is in touch with the bodily needs and processes as they relate to instinct. 'Object as image and object as external reality are identities and not separate entities.' The id 'regards the image of an object as though it were the object itself.' The ego is able to control perception of reality, allowing conscious interaction with the environment through recognition of what things are and what they do. The superego allows for a move away from parental to personal authority. Having established this authority the ego ideal directs the way we learn to modify personal behaviour, establishing a desire to please.

Before reaching the mirror stage of their development, babies may look into and appear to react to their mirrored image. However it is not until the mirror stage that the mirrored image is recognised by them as a representation of their bodies. 'We only have to understand the mirror stage “as an identification”...the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image.' Laplanche and Pontalis state that in his definition of the mirror stage, Lacan is describing ‘a counterpart (ie. another who is me) (who) can only exist by virtue of the fact that

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the ego is originally another. Freud describes this recognition as being an object of the self that occurs with the development of the ego. It is not merely a separate entity, but is itself the projection of a surface.

The difference between the ego and id must be attributed not only to the primitive man but even to much simpler organisms, for it is the inevitable expression of the external world. While the id is instinctive, the ego is cognitive. It is the cognitive process that allows the instinctive process to become a reality. The baby has the instinct of hunger; the mother satisfies that instinct through providing food. The mother is the baby’s ego, until it develops one of its own.

As Freud says, the theory of the id and ego can be extended to describe the relationship that the Catholic Church has with its members. ‘Religious ideas, in spite of their incontrovertible lack of authentication, have exercised the strongest influence on mankind’. Through its dogma the Church encourages the faithful to become dependant upon it, advocating the necessity to become part of its congregation.

In much the same way as a foetus is dependant on its mother’s body for nourishment, members of the Catholic Church are encouraged to see themselves as embryos of Catholicism, not able to exist separately from the Church, but rather as an essential functioning part of its body. Eugene Monick says the Catholic Church claims to be many things.

Among these is carrier of the mother archetype, responsible for the spiritual and moral well being of its members. The Church gives birth (baptism), nourishes (holy communion), teaches, binds and unbinds, gathers as clan

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and returns her children to the earth. But the Church is a devouring mother, for rarely does the Church encourage her children to embark upon a journey to find an interconnection with self.  

Self-definition depends on the identity constructed within Catholicism. It is within these terms that the individual creates a sense of self in daily life.

Catholicism aims to provide the main cultural building blocks in the mental and physical world of the faithful. Within this presentation, Catholicism acts as the substitute mother. Just as the baby's initial contact with the external world is through its mother, upon whom it is reliant upon for its nourishment and existence, Catholicism controls the terms in which its followers relate to the world.

Monick describes mother Church as wanting 'ownership of the other's body, control of the other's mind, intimidation of the other's spirit...the narcissistic source of their reality'.  

Susan Bordo describes the mother's face as existing for the child 'only as long as the mother is visually present'.  

Through its imaging practices Catholicism keeps itself within the presence of the individual from the moment they are born.

To ensure that their children have access to the 'saintly life', parents name their children accordingly. It is within this naming process that parents become agents of the Church. If you are your name, the full benefit of this naming procedure can be seen when you know more about the saint involved. The names and lives of saints and martyrs are represented and presented as fragmented bodily texts, and it is within this fragmentation that identity is constructed.

My work, 'The Communion of Saints, St. Lucy, St. Agatha and St. Catherine of Alexandria', strives to reconstruct the bodies of these saints. By returning their severed body parts, I was interested in restoring a sense of visual 'wholeness' to

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11 Bordo, Susan R. Flight to Objectivity: Essays on Cartesianism and Culture (New York: State University, 1987) 30

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their mutilated bodies. Fragmented images of saints, such as these, are part of the mirrored image, from which those of us who have grown up in the culture of Catholicism have constructed our identity. For me, a child of Catholicism, it was important to reconstruct the reflection in the mirror.

This tradition of naming is based on Catholic convention passed from generation to generation in which the identity of the individual is based on the model of another that, according to the Church, is both subject and object through the mythology associated with the given saint’s name. Texts portray saints as being willing to carry out the word of God, regardless of personal sacrifice. In recognition of these acts they are canonized by the Church, and held up to its children as suitable role models for veneration.\(^{12}\) Edith Wyschogrod says ‘the comprehension of a saint’s life understood from within the sphere of hagiography is a practice through which the addressee is gathered into the narrative so as to extend and elaborate it with her/his own life’.\(^{13}\)

The giving or taking of names within Catholicism serves to supply a sense of identity inside a culture that has no external relevance. Naming practices pertaining to the culture of Catholicism are tied to specific characteristics of the saint or martyr the child is named after. In this context the bestowing of a certain name automatically endows them with the Church’s interpretation of that name. This definition focuses entirely on the actions and reactions of the saint within the belief system. It is inside this structure that the name and its associations become the major component of the individual’s identity.

The practice of encouraging the children of Catholicism to identify with saints’ images and accompanying stories is used by the Church to keep them in an id like state. As the ids of the ego of Catholicism, they are encouraged to think of themselves as being integral parts of the Church. ‘For the id, object as image and


object as external reality are identities and not separate entities. Having been constituted through the hagiography and imagery of the Church, identification for the individual within Catholicism remains in this state.

With the individual members of the Church remaining in an id like state, the Church takes on the role of ego. 'The ego is that part of the id which has been modified by the direct influence of the external world.' The ego's position is like that of a constitutional monarch without whose sanction no law can be passed. The Church, through its naming process, requires members of the faithful to identify with the image of the chosen name. The majority of these images represent the saint's worth in terms of virtue and sacrifice; the Church then encourages individuals to emulate these values. 'The ego is in the habit of transforming the id's will into action as if it were one of its own.' This form of identification has parallels with the baby's entry into the mirror stage.

In the same way the baby learns to identify with its mirrored image, the individual within Catholicism identifies with the image of the saint. Unable to develop beyond the mirror stage in their search for an identity, individuals continually bounce to and from the image of the saint and the cultural context imposed by the Church. The result of this type of identification is that it becomes impossible to construct an identity for oneself as a freethinking individual.

It is this lack of identification with and to an independent self that makes it difficult for many people to move away from the Catholic Church. Leaving the Church is like migrating from the country of your ancestors: both require leaving behind physical and emotional associations with childhood and family. Any leaving

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14 Hall, Calvin S. A Primer of Freudian Psychology (New York: World Publishing Company, 154)


requires the individual to break with the past and forge a new identity for themselves.

Like the immigrant, the person attempting to re-define himself or herself outside the culture of Catholicism must move away from the images of the past, in this case those of self-sacrifice proffered in religious icons and holy cards. This move must necessarily sever all links with the authority of the Church, necessitating the creation of a personal sense of purpose and reality.

In assuming the role of ego for its followers the Church misrepresents the reality principle of the ego, through imposition of the authoritarian superego. ‘The superego can best be described as a successful instance of identification with the parental agency’.\(^\text{18}\) It could be argued that in taking on the role of parent, Catholicism also takes on the role of disciplinarian for its children.

While parental punishment may be of this world, the Church works at creating a superego based on guilt, guilt that is not only part of the present, but also of the past and future. This form of guilt is passed onto the individual by imposing penance for things like missing mass on Sunday, not doing your homework, not eating all the food on your plate (think of all the starving people in India, China etc.). One is meant to feel not only responsible for the agony of Christ but also the Reverend Mother’s toothache.

Thoughts are the same as deeds with the superego, and within Catholicism the same principles apply; impure thoughts are considered to be as bad as impure deeds. ‘The energy from the id becomes channelled into the ego and the superego by mechanism of identification’.\(^\text{19}\) The Church presents its superego to the faithful through theological teachings: ‘Buried beneath ecclesiastic din fostering

dependence based upon an inflated and pretentious misunderstanding
...unconsciously possessed and consumed. 20

While presenting itself as ego and superego of its faithful, the Church is acting as
an ego ideal, an ego ideal that strives for perfect values.

Objects and interests are determined more by their moralistic than by their
realistic values...more concerned with differentiating between the good from
the bad...than between the true and the false...virtue is more important than
truth. 21

The ego ideal takes pride in the ego being virtuous.

Images of saints and martyrs are crucial for the dissemination of Catholicism and
the construction of identity. These images depict them as ideal mirrors, within
which the children of the Church are encouraged to create their identity. Like the
images in a mirror, those of saints and martyrs are presented in a two-dimensional
format, creating a narrow view of the projected image. Such a perspective restricts
knowledge to the ‘mirrored’ image, so that those searching for an identity outside
of the image are continually drawn back into the mirror. The reflected self exists
only within the mirrored image. Unable to move beyond the mirror, the child of
Catholicism becomes caught in the reflection, which serves to inhibit a person’s
ture knowledge of himself or herself.

Just as the child becomes aware of spatial concepts and moves forward in its
development, so does the individual when they attempt to move away from the
culture of Catholicism. The child becomes aware of the placement of objects
behind and in front of it; those raised within Catholicism also need to become
aware of the possibilities outside the two dimensional identity constructed for
them. Having achieved this recognition, they are then able to move around in a
three dimensional space, seeing what the world outside of the culture has to offer.
Finally as the child learns to trust itself by jumping off the ground, those who have

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20 Monick, Eugene Evil, Sexuality and Disease in Grunewald’s Body of Christ (Delft, Netherlands:
discarded the cloak of the Church's culture are able to begin to trust their instincts, having taken that leap into the unknown, beginning the journey of recognition of self.

To leave Catholicism, you have to cease identifying with its mirrored images. You have to construct a new relationship with the image: for women, this means creating a personal connection with the image of the female body.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{21}}\text{Hall, Calvin S.} \textit{A primer of Freudian Psychology} (\text{New York: World Publishing Company, 1954}) \text{197.}\]
Mirrors
Mirrors.

Mirrors have appeared in my work for the past 16 years. When I began making work that included images of Catholicism, one of the first sculptural pieces was a mirror. This mirror is shaped into the sign for female, covered with images of saints from my youth. When I looked in the completed mirror, I realised that it was reflecting my present image surrounded by ones from the past. ‘Reflecting the Past’ collages the past with the past.

Using images from the past, such as holy cards, drew me into a time when my life had been enveloped by representations of saints, martyrs, the Virgin Mary and the bleeding Sacred Heart of Jesus. Buying the holy cards for these works meant re-collating images that were as familiar to me as my reflection in a mirror. Contemplating the impact of these images as an adult, I realised that they had contributed to the construction of my mirrored image.

Mirrors also play an integral part in my hypothesis that images have the capacity to influence the construction of identity. Within this hypothesis, the image becomes the mirror within which identity is constructed. As thinking individuals we are able to observe our surroundings; to see ourselves, we must look into a mirror in which we will not see a true likeness but a reflection. Our identities are constructed through reflections.

Photographs provide an external view of people or places. When two people travel together, photographs usually show one or the other. By utilising windows and mirrors it becomes possible for the photographer to document and reflect their presence in a particular place, photographing themselves photographing themselves. When Vic and I were travelling in 1995, I took photos of our reflections in shop windows and mirrors as a way of documenting our presence in a foreign place. I began taking these photographs in the mirrored wall of a supermarket, a familiar environment in an unfamiliar place. I then moved onto documenting our presence through glass shopfronts, in mirrors that were in shopwindows and on the street. In much the same way that images of saints and martyrs are part of my past,
the photographs I took of Vic and I documented a mirrored presence that is
now part of our past.
'Reflections of the Past'
Handmirror with Collage 135 x 250mm 1995
'Self Portraits in Mirrors' Photographs 1995
'Self Portraits in Mirrors' Photographs 1995
'Brussels Self Portrait' Photograph 1995
Dublin Heliport.
Dublin heliport.

The Dublin heliport is located in a fenced off area at the rear of Dublin Castle and was built to serve Ireland’s hosting of the E.E.U. Presidency in 1996. We gained access after a policeman saw us peering through the fence and opened the gate.

An outstanding feature of the heliport is the use of the snake in the design and surrounding areas. The significance of the snake in Ireland is that there are none. Legend says that St. Patrick cast them out when he brought Christianity. Others say snakes were never a part of the Irish landscape because of the soil. Whatever the reason, they are integral parts of the heliport design.

The design of this heliport showcases the possibilities of public art playing a vital part in the construction of a utilitarian environment. The bodies of the snakes are made of reddish colour bricks and weave an intricate pattern through the green grass of the heliport. The snake’s eyes have been put to use as landing lights. A sculpture of glass, stone and brick is located in a park like space in one corner and a ceramic sculpture and has been built in front of wall. The bright colours of other buildings surrounding the heliport contrast the sandstone castle.

I have often thought that the use of the snake in this design reflects contemporary Ireland. The snake sheds its old skin to display a new one. Through its membership in the E.E.U., Ireland has received funds to assist in economic and cultural growth, permitting it to display the possibilities of its distinct geography and culture.
Dublin Castle and Snake Sculpture

Detail of Snake Sculpture
Snake Mosaic at Heliport Dublin Castle
Reference images
"Procession of the Dead" Gustav Klimt 1903. Destroyed by fire in 1945
Public Sculpture, Copenhagen 1995
KATHE KOLLWITZ
Mutter mit Zwilling, Bronze, 1924-1937
Kathe-Kollwitz-Museum Berlin

KATHE KOLLWITZ
Sidende Mutter auf dem Schoß, um 1927
Museum Ludwig, Köln.
Alberto Giacometti
'Man Pointing' 1947
Bronze 178 x 90.2 x 62.2cm.
Collection of Tate Gallery, London.

Alberto Giacometti
'Man Walking' 1947
Bronze 170 x 23 x 53cm.
Collection of Alberto Giacometti Foundation, Kunsthauz Zurich.
"Venus of Willendorf"
65 x 100mm (approx.) 2500 B.C.
Collection of Natural History Museum Vienna

"Lilith"
Terracotta Relief 2000 B.C.
Photographs of exhibits in Italian Museums 1995
Sisters and Spinsters, The Misses Swann of Elizabeth Farm.

*Sisters and Spinsters, the Misses Swann of Elizabeth Farm* was the second in a series of three Doctoral exhibitions. Fiona Davies and I worked independently to produce work that focused on different aspects of the sisters' lives. My work concentrated on telling the stories of nine sisters, their experiences and achievements as women who had lived in the first half of the 20th century.

*Sisters and Spinsters* was influenced by research I had been doing into the lack of female ancestral connections within the culture of Australian Catholicism. (See essay ‘Ancestral Connections’) My previous exhibition, *Australian Moon Over Cumbria and the Procession of Life*, had commented on the female experience of being a descendant of Eve. This exhibition was based around images of a group of women who had a secular ancestral connection, drawing attention to the individual personalities and activities of each sister. Researching their stories was akin to discovering the history of Australian women. The sisters were suffragettes, social activists and reformers, educators, historians and businesswomen who worked to improve local and global communities of their time.

The sisters' contribution to the Parramatta area was great. Margaret, Rebecca and Elizabeth were Headmistresses of local infant schools. Ruth ran a business college, with occasional help from her sister. Nona established and ran her own school and kindergarten, as well as being an accomplished musician. Edith was also a musician, who taught music to local children. Mary was a businesswoman who was also the Rosehill postmistress. Priscilla practiced as a chiropodist, and Isabel was the first surgeon-dentist in Parramatta. Their father encouraged their participation in the suffragette movement. They were also active in the peace movement, local history, anti-conscription, the Red Cross, promoting children's literacy, education and prison reform and the Quakers.
Eight of the sisters, with an age difference of twenty-seven years from eldest to youngest, lived happily (according to their niece Isabel) together from birth to death. The youngest, Nona, was aware of the age difference and generation gap between the sisters. She was the only one to wear make-up, but so as not to upset her siblings she would apply it after leaving home, and remove it before her return. This closeness, and their social status as spinsters, meant that they would have had to rely on each other for emotional and physical support. By the time Elizabeth Farm was sold, six of the sisters had died while still in residence; the remaining two were physically and financially unable to look after the property.

The work and achievements of many women from the past, like the Swanns, has rippled through time un-noticed, and is still visible in contemporary society. The Swann family home, Elizabeth Farm, was built by John Macarthur and is recognised as being the oldest house in Australia. It is not generally acknowledged however, that the Swanns saved the house from demolition in the early 20th century. Or that the sisters maintained it for over sixty years.

Because of their relationship to the site, and the fact that two of their nieces were still alive, it was necessary to describe the sisters with accuracy and to do justice to their stories and memory. For me this meant creating a series of portraits through which visitors to the exhibition would be able to develop an understanding of their personalities and lives.

Since we had been told that there were those who did not believe that contemporary art had a place in historical buildings, our challenge was to straddle this divide. To create a successful exhibition meant muddying the waters of both contemporary art and history. This involved working away from the notion that art is a means of expressing your inner-most thoughts to one where it became possible to express the inner-most thoughts of others.
In order to get ‘into the heads’ of the sisters it was necessary to sift through family archives, which contained letters, photographs, newspaper articles, invitations and handbills, to interview friends and relatives and read two books written by one of the nieces. By the time I had finished, I felt I knew as much about the sisters as there was to know.

After hearing the story that Elizabeth Swann Sr. (Granny) had retired to the front verandah at sixty years of age and taken up embroidery following her resignation from the position of housekeeper/cook etc., I became interested in using embroidery as part of the story-telling device. As none of Granny’s handiwork had survived, I began acquiring other women’s work. I scanned 100 d’olys and tray-clothes, collected from second-hand shops, markets, friends and friends of friends, into my computer. I scanned them because some of the d’olys I bought were too precious to take the chance of ruining them if the work went wrong, and some people wanted theirs returned. By scanning them into the computer I found I could have my cake and eat it.

After creating computer-generated images of the embroidery, I assembled a folder in which I could see what I had and keep track of which ones I used. In the computer I overlaid photographs, stories and images of objects over representations of the doilies; they were then printed out as iron-on transfers, commonly used for t-shirts. They were then ironed on to damask table napkins and hung on a Hills hoist clothes line.

The clothes line was installed in the same location as the one that had been there when the Swanns were in residence. Damask table napkins were a way of connecting the sisters to an age when they were an essential part of domesticity and dining. The napkins were pegged onto the line with ‘dolly pegs’, a reference to Elizabeth Farm having once been a domestic space. The hanging napkins told the stories while at the same time drawing attention to an activity done by women, hanging clothes out to dry.
Working on this exhibition gave me awareness of spatial environments and the necessity of maintaining the integrity of the space. Working at Elizabeth Farm I saw the benefits of not interfering with the purpose of the space. This appreciation continued with *Constructing Identity Within Catholicism*. When considering the work for the chapel, it was important to maintain its integrity as a sacred place. The experience of making work for both exhibitions drew my attention to the possibilities site specific exhibitions have to offer both the artist and the viewer. As the artist I have had opportunities to change the viewer’s perception of a space. Elizabeth Farm is thought of as an ‘historic house’, the chapel a place of worship. By encountering contemporary art in unexpected areas the viewer is faced with the prospect of re-defining their ideas of the purpose of a space and contemporary art.

The work from all three exhibitions gives ‘voice’ to women’s experiences. *Australian Moon Over Cumbria* emphasises women’s bodily experiences, and their association with Eve. *Sisters and Spinsters* brings the unrecognised lives and achievements of the Swann sisters into the public sphere. *Constructing Identity* provides an opportunity for reflection on stories from women who spent their formative years being influenced by the culture of Catholicism, the female sacrificial elements of church history, and the juxtaposition of secular maternal images with those of ‘the divine’.

Since Elizabeth Farm is an historic space in which local and overseas visitors come to experience a sense of Australia’s colonial history, any artwork on the site had to be sympathetic to their expectations. Because the work for this exhibition was so site specific, it was not suitable for viewing outside the space. We declined requests to exhibit the work away from its intended site.

From this exhibition came the offer to create an installation on the Swann sisters for a 5 year exhibition on the history of Parramatta, opening in September 2000. I am happy that the sisters are getting the long overdue recognition for their contribution to the history of the area, and delighted to have been given the opportunity to be a part of it.
Australian Moon Over Cumbria
and The Procession of Life
prints and related work from printmaking residency in Cumbria

Patricia Prociv
11th - 22nd September 1996
opening Saturday 14th September, 2pm to 4 pm

residency sponsored by: Lewick House Print Workshop, U.K.,
'Birth In the Garden' Woodcut 300 x 300mm 1996
'Life in the Garden' Woodcut 300 x 300mm 1996
'Giving Birth' Linocut 170 x 110mm 1996
"Embracing Death' Linocut 170 x 110mm 1996
'Birthing Mother' laminated wood, paint and boot polish 300 x 300mm 1995

'Birthing Mother' detail
'Birth in the Apple' Woodcut 300 x 265mm 1996
'Seeds of Life' Woodcut 300 x 265mm 1996
'Marriage' Woodcut 300 x 265mm 1996
'Mother Earth' Woodcut 400 x 330mm 1996
'Eve's Baby' Paint on Canvas 600 x 845mm 1996
'Eve 1'
Laminated Paper, Paint, Crackle Glaze and Boot Polish
320 x 450mm 1996

'Eve 2'
Laminated Paper, Paint, Crackle Glaze and Boot Polish
320 x 450mm 1996
'Summer Apple'

'Winter Apple'
Wooden Sculptures on Screenprinted background
350 x 450mm 1996
'Water Baby' Woodcut 300 x 220mm 1996
'Procession of Life' Woodcut 300 x 220mm 1996
'Australian Moon Over Cumbria and the Procession of Life'
Woodcut 150 x 100mm 1996
'A Mother's Love' Linocut 100 x 170mm 1996
'Eve' Collagraph 92 x 145mm 1996
EVE SAW THAT THE FRUIT OF THE TREE WAS GOOD TO EAT......AND DESIREABLE FOR THE KNOWLEGE IT COULD GIVE

‘Knowlege’ Linocut 79x 110mm 1995
Serpents were considered immortal because of their ability to renew themselves. Women's immortality comes from the children she produces.

'Immortality' Linocut 82 x 105mm 1995
ARABIC
FOR
SNAKE
LIFE
AND
TEACHING
ARE
ALL
RELATED
TO
THE
NAME
OF
EVE...

'Teaching' Linocut 55 x 100mm 1995
'Three Generations'
Hand Coloured Plaster Print
165x 65mm 1996
'Hera and the Power of Life'
Hand Coloured Linocut 575 x 220mm 1996
'Cycladic Eve 1'
Laminated Wood and Paint
580 x 100mm 1995
'Eve' laminated wood, paint and boot polish 200 x 230mm 1996
Eve Sculptures with drawers (baby and apple)
85 x 210mm 1997
Exhibition images.
THE HISTORIC HOUSES TRUST OF N.S.W. INVITES YOU TO ATTEND THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF
SISTERS AND SPINSTERS
THE MUSEUM SWANN OF ELIZABETH FARM
AN INSTALLATION BY ARTIST ROMA DAVIES AND FAMILY FRIENDS, ALUMNI OF THE ELIZABETH FARM COLLEGE. ANGER VON DEYNOCK AND AIDE-MEMOIRE FOR THE CURTIS HOUSES PROGRAMME. EXPLORE THE LIVES OF THE NINE SWANN SISTERS, WHOSE FAMILY OWNED ELIZABETH FARM FROM 1804 TO 1968. THE EVENING WILL BE OFFICIALLY OPENED BY
PROFESSOR JOHN STEVENS, CONSERVATOR NATURAL HISTORICAL紀念
TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE UNVEILING OF A COLLABORATIVE PLAQUE ACKNOWLEDGING THE EFFORTS MADE BY THE SWANN FAMILY TO PRESERVE ELIZABETH FARM FOR THE NATION.
SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 30, 1998 AT 3 P.M.
AT ELIZABETH FARM, 70 ALICE STREET, ROSEHILL
R.S.V.P.
SEPTEMBER 16TH, 1998
TEL 9625 9999

Computer Generated Image 135 x 195mm 1998
Installation “Sisters and Spinsters the Misses Swann of Elizabeth Farm.”
Installation "Sisters and Spinsters the Misses Swann of Elizabeth Farm."
Margaret Swann
1871 - 1963
Daughter
Sister
Aunt
Historian
Suffragette
Author
Prison Visitor
School Teacher
Holder of a Miners Right
Rebecca Swann
1873 - 1959
Daughter
Sister
Aunt
Suffragette
Peace Activist
School Teacher
Infants Headmistress

Computer Generated Image 180 x 210mm 1998
Priscilla Swann
1875 - 1955
Daughter
Sister
Aunt
Chiropodist
Masseuse
Chatelaine
Dressmaker
Photographer
Projectionist
Post Mistress
School Teacher

Computer Generated Image 180 x 210mm 1998
Mary Swann
1877 - 1957
Daughter
Sister
Aunt
Podiatrist
Book Keeper
Postmistress
Business Woman
Commercial Teacher
Peace Activist
Sunday School Teacher
Elizabeth Swann
1879 - 1961
Daughter
Sister
Aunt
School Teacher
Infants Headmistress
Isabel Swann
1881 - 1961
Daughter
Sister
Wife
Mother
Dentist
Author
Peace Activist
Edith Swann
1883 - 1973
Daughter
Sister
Aunt
Musician
Music Teacher
Business Woman

Computer Generated Image 180 x 210mm 1998
Ruth Swann
1892 - 1980
Daughter
Sister
Aunt
Teacher
Business Woman
First Female
Sanitary Inspector
in N.S.W.
Nona Swann
1898 - 1969
Daughter
Sister
Aunt
Musician
Business Woman
School Teacher
Music Teacher

Computer Generated Image 180 x 210mm 1998
TEN YEARS AFTER HER HUSBAND'S DEATH, ELIZABETH SWANN DECIDED TO RETIRE, LEAVING THE DOMESTIC AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT TO HER ADULT DAUGHTERS. DURING HER RETIREMENT ELIZABETH SPENT SOME OF HER TIME EMBROIDERING LINEN FOR THE FAMILY AND LOOKING AFTER HER CHOOKS.
Mary ran the Rosehill Post Office and general store. Her friend Agnes Meers says that Mary's shop was popular with the local children, she was very patient as they chose their lollies carefully.
Mary received a letter from the Taxation Department, in which they stated she was considered to be understating her income. Concerned of the imputation of dishonesty, Mary bundled up a pair of her patched, mended and darned knickers and posted them to the Taxation Department, as proof of her thriftiness.
The 'Nothing Under 100 Club' was a social club founded by Ruth to encourage her business school students in the pursuit of excellence.
After she retired
Ruth became a member of the
Country Women's Association,
and was particularly proud
of her scones, which were
awarded Second Prize at
the Castle Hill Show.
EXPLANATORY  
FRENCH GRAMMAR  

REBECCA  
STUDIED  
BOTH FRENCH  
AND GERMAN  
FROM  
AVAILABLE  
TEXTS.
Rebecca's favorite colour for her clothes was fawn, which she viewed as a 'modest' and 'ladylike' colour, that did not draw attention.
Priscilla took charge of the household matters after Elizabeth retired. Her sisters might have been seen to be in positions of authority in the 'outside' world. But at home Priscilla's word was law.
This is to Certify that

Priscilla conducted a Chiropody Practice in the small room on the North Eastern corner of the house, now known as Mrs Macarthur's writing room.
Isabel is quoted in the Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate as saying: 'My objective is to turn the United Nations Organization into a world government and eradicate all present military powers. If this happened it would be the end of all wars.'
18th March, 1954.
Isabel was the first registered lady Surgeon-Dentist in Parramatta. She conducted a surgery at Elizabeth Farm in what is now known as Mrs Macarthur's writing room.
Margaret had a keen interest in Australian History. Her study was lined with convict made bricks, which she acquired from demolition sites.
'Margaret
was a vegetarian
(the only one in the family),
it was unacceptable to her
for other creatures to go through
the fear and pain of being killed, just
so she could eat them. She never
made a fuss about her vegetarianism,
simply ate normal meals with the
family, minus the meat.'

Isabel Longworth · Higgins 1998.
Edith has been described as the most 'artistic and stylish member of the family'.
Miss Edith R. Swann

Pianoforte Recital

Town Hall, Parramatta

Thursday, Dec 7, 1911

Edith's life revolved around music, and was a dedicated teacher of young people.
Elizabeth (Jnr.) was a pacifist. During the war she informed the Department of Education that her school would not take part in the negative aspects of war. And they respected her position.
Elizabeth (Jnr.) has been described as a quietly spoken, humble and understanding person, whose life motto was "Live in love as Christian Brethren, ready to be helpful for one another"
Nona is remembered by one of her nieces as a 'vision of pink and gold'. When she was going to play with the Sydney Philharmonic Orchestra, she wore a pink dress with golden jewelery. Her hair was also a golden colour.
Nona is described as having been 'a modern woman' who wore makeup. So as not to meet with the disapproval of her older sisters, Nona would apply her makeup after she had left the house, removing it before returning.
When the women of Australia became eligible to vote in 1902 seven members of the Swann family registered; Elizabeth (Snr.) Margaret, Rebecca Priscilla Mary Elizabeth (Jnr.) and Isabel.
The pantry of Elizabeth Farm was well stocked with preserved fruit from local trees and vegetables, by Elizabeth (jnr.) and Mary.
'A Boiled Plumb Pudding-
from a 1760 Cookery Book.

Take a pound of sewet cut into little pieces, not too fine; a pound of currants, and a pound of raisins stoned, eight eggs, half the whites, the crumbs of a penny loaf grated fine, half a nutmeg grated, and a teaspoonful of beaten ginger, a little salt, a pound of flour, a pint of milk; beat the eggs first, then half the milk; beat them together and by degrees stir in the flour and bread together, then the sewet, spice and fruit and as much milk as will mix it together very thick. Boil it for 5 hours.

Miss M. Swann.

From 'A Parramatta Book of Recipes in aid of the funds of the Girls Guides. September 1937'
"A little girl wrote an essay on 'True Greatness'. 'Once there was a woman that had done a big washing and hung it on the line. The line broke and let it all down in the mud, she didn't say a word, only did it all over again, only this time she spread it on the grass where it couldn't fall. But that night a dog with dirty feet ran all over it. When she saw what was done she sat down but didn't cry a bit all she said was "Aint it queer that it didn't miss nothing". That was true greatness."
Priscilla sat in the kitchen on a straight backed chair.
AN INSTALLATION
BY ARTISTS
FIONA DAVIES AND
PATRICIA PROCY
THAT EXPLORES THE
LIVES OF THE NINE
SWANN SISTERS,
WHOSE FAMILY OWNED
ELIZABETH FARM
FROM 1904 TO 1968.

Exhibition Advertisment, Parramatta Heritage Centre
Computer generated image 120 x 166mm 1998
Professional assessment
Subject: Sisters and Spinsters  
Date: Wed, 10 Feb 1999 17:22:35 +1100 (EST)  
From: Joan Kerr <Joan.Kerr@anu.edu.au>  
To: Patricia Prociv <prociv@spin.net.au>

Dear Patricia,

On the evidence of your contribution to the exhibition 'Sisters and Spinsters', which I opened at Elizabeth Farm last year, I most strongly support your application to transfer to a PhD in Creative Arts. Not only were your fabric prints a beautiful, well-researched and most historically appropriate addition to Elizabeth Farm, but they also pointed out the contribution of the Swann sisters to the history of the property in images that were sophisticated and thoroughly contemporary in both conception and execution. The reinstated Hills Hoist (used by the Swanns) hung with your white dinner napkins printed with doyleys containing precise details of the sisters' lives cleverly echoed the transitory, everyday artworks made by these women, yet at the same time celebrated their achievements in a manner that went far beyond uncritical pastiche.

The visual evidence on the family 'washing line' drew the viewer's attention to important historical facts, like Margaret Swann's celebrated collection of convict bricks made when she was President of the Parramatta Historical Society (now dispersed), Isabel's certificate as the first woman dentist in Parramatta, and proofs of Ruth's eleven years as secretary of the Society for the Protection of Native Races. But banal details of the sisters' lives were presented with equal force, including legendary tales of the sort treasured in any family, notably the story of the parcel of darned underpants sent by Mary to the taxation department after it dared to suggest she had understated her income. The combination - along with the dining table laid with napkins printed with images of the sole surviving cup and saucer from the dinner service in daily use and the other details of your installation - gave substance and meaning to the intimate, personal and normally fugitive memories of these women's lives - and, through them, of the lives of generations of forgotten white, middle-class women.

I thought your work was outstanding in its originality, power and historical appropriateness. This vivid, unmistakeably contemporary, feminist statement succeeded in adding a dimension hitherto missing at Elizabeth Farm. The Historic Houses Trust's senior curator, the noted colonial architectural historian Dr James Broadbent, similarly admired it, although he has always been highly critical of contemporary art in historic houses, claiming that art is far less effective than curatorial interpretation in such contexts. The power of your work was due both to the care you took in the historical investigation and to the meticulous, witty execution. By collecting and interpreting apparently minor details, you brought the Swann sisters back to life as individual presences in the place.

It was a great achievement to have been able to present past women's 'minor' arts so respectfully yet still create such a personal contemporary work from them. I hope you intend to build on this direction you have taken in your work and will continue to produce key contributions that cut across past and present just as effectively.

Best wishes,

Joan Kerr  
Professor Joan Kerr  
Centre for Cross-Cultural Research  
Australian National University  
Canberra ACT 0200  
tel. (02) 6249 4372, fax (02) 6249 2438  
The Centre's home page is http://www.anu.edu.au/culture
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

PATRICIA PROCIV, ARTIST

In my capacity as a Curator with the Historic Houses Trust of NSW I worked closely with Patricia Prociw during 1998 developing and creating "Sisters and Spinsters"; an installation at Elizabeth Farm, Australia’s oldest surviving European building (c.1793). Our collaboration was an entirely successful one, the outcome of which was coherent and innovative interpretation of some “hidden” aspects of the history of Elizabeth Farm.

Patricia and fellow artist Fiona Davies collaborated closely with me to establish an ‘appropriate’ style for their own work which would suit Elizabeth Farm. Patricia approached the task in a very open minded way. She responded to the extreme limitations of a sensitive heritage site and embraced the research required to such an ‘unresearched’ topic with diligence, enthusiasm and sensitivity. The resulting artworks revealed much about Patricia’s view of Feminism and her attitudes towards domestic history. Her art it seemed to me evolved out of her understanding of the women of Elizabeth Farm and revealed much more than a “received” or cliched view of femininity. The art brought lives back into a museum in a way I couldn’t have imagined possible at the outset of our collaboration. Her use of computer graphics, text, domestic textiles and furniture were appropriate to the context of the domestic setting and engaged our visitor’s attention.

Patricia is a great networker, a good communicator and is passionate about art, ideas and people. Above all she is generous with her ideas and her art reveals her openness to new ideas and challenges.

Peter Struthers
Curator/Manager
5 February 1999
To Whom It May Concern

I have known Patricia Prociv since 1994 in my capacity as Cultural Planner for Parramatta City Council.

Patricia Prociv is an extremely active member of the community. As a member of Council’s Arts Advisory Committee, she represents contemporary visual artists. In recognition of her active interest in the integration and promotion of the arts in development of the city, the Arts Advisory Committee elected Patricia to represent them at the Council’s Olympic Support Advisory Committee.

Mrs Prociv is committed and effective in her representation of the arts. Her strong networking skills, ability to conceive ideas and work through issues with a diversity of people in the community has contributed to the cultural development of Parramatta in a positive manner.

Apart from her contribution to the arts in Parramatta through her representation on various committees, Patricia employs her personal artworks to demonstrate the place of art in the contemporary urban environment. Projects such as the David Jones window exhibition engaged a wide cross section of the community in a healthy debate of artwork and contributed to the discourse that is necessary for a city undergoing development.

The most recent exhibition of artwork drew upon the early colonial history of Parramatta and developed common ground between the conservative heritage sector and contemporary visual artists. Her initiative provides a role model and inspiration for other artists and members of the community. The reinterpretation of one of Australia’s earliest pieces of colonial architecture was a brave approach that has resulted in a richer cultural fabric existing in Parramatta.

Patricia’s ability to use her artwork to build bridges between groups often with conflicting views is an exceptional talent. Her ability to dissect layers of meaning in sites and historical events and then interpret and present these to the community is a very valuable skill in the contemporary urban community.

Susan Gibbeson
5 February 1999.
Research material
D'olys 6 up No.9
Reference Material.

Information for the exhibition ‘Sisters and Spinsters The Misses Swann of Elizabeth Farm’ came from a number of sources including two books written by two of the Swann Sisters nieces. ‘Once Upon a Family – One Hundred Years of History 1871 – 1976 As Seen Through the Eyes of the Nine Swann Sisters of Elizabeth Farm House Parramatta’ by Elizabeth Plimer and ‘A House Re-Born’ by Elizabeth Plimer and Ellen Errey. Another niece, Isabel Higgins, the only child of Isabel Swann, provided insights into the sisters’ personalities and lives through reams of letters and interviews. I was also granted unlimited access to family papers and photographs.

I simplified all this information into biographical notes on each sister and it was from these that most of the text on the exhibition images was taken.
Margaret Swann
1871 – 1961

Daughter
Sister
Aunt
Author
Historian
Suffragette
School teacher
Headmistress Rosehill Infants School
Prison Visitor Parramatta Gaol
Member of the Teachers Musical Union
Holder of a ‘Miner’s Right’

She is described by one of her nieces as being a kindly, sympathetic, smiling and optimistic woman who was generous and open hearted. She had a genuine sense of humour was very public spirited and gained the respect and affection of all who came in contact with her.

Margaret was a bowerbird, visiting demolition sites in search of bricks that were marked with a broad arrow. The walls of her study were lined with these bricks. She was president of the Parramatta and District Historical Society from 1921 – 1922.

She was a champion for the rights of equal pay and the vote for women, was a member of the Parramatta women’s electoral bee and president of the Granville branch of the Women’s Suffrage League from 1896 – 1897.
She was also sympathetic to the advancement of the living conditions and education of Aboriginal women.
In an article on women preachers in June 1918 Margaret wrote that in the Quaker book of Christian Discipline women share equally in the Christian ministry and that most children hear the gospel message from the lips of women.
She was the author of *The Immigrants Friend*, a book on Caroline Chisholm and many journal articles including ‘The First Australian Actress – Eliza Winstanley’ – published in *The Sydney Mail* on Wednesday May 6th, 1931 and *Mothers as Teachers*.

Margaret was an active member of the New South Wales Teachers Federation. She was president of the Infants Mistresses Association. President of the Cumberland Confederation of the New South Wales Teachers Federation. Federal Council representative of the New South Wales Teachers Federation. Vice President of the Parramatta Teachers Association. Teachers Federation representative on the Henry Lawson Literary Society and was elected President in 1931. She gave a talk on the forgotten women poets of Australia.

She earnestly believed that children described as ‘backward’ often suffered from physical ailments. In a speech given at the Parramatta Teachers Association she said that she considered these children to be suffering from hearing defects.

She was a trustee and founder of Stewart House Preventorium for children and was honoured in 1934 as being one of three persons who had long connection with Stewart House.

First woman to be elected Vice-President of the Hospital and Relief Committee.

She was awarded a medal for Community Service in 1935.
Rebecca Swann
1873 – 1959

Daughter
Sister
Aunt
School Teacher
Infants’ Headmistress of Rosehill School

Rebecca is described as having flaxen hair, fair skin and blue eyes, whose paramount concern was for ‘order’. She liked things to look fresh and bright and would, according to Isabel, ‘slop paint inexpertly on anything that didn’t measure up’. She was also a woman of upright bearing and precise speech who was patient, kind and understanding.

She wrote an anti-conscription leaflet for World War 1, and was a member of the New South Wales Branch of the London Peace Society. She was also a member of the Women’s Political Education League. Through the Quaker organisation she was a courageous and committed worker for peace.

As a member of the Women’s Political Education League she wrote a leaflet ‘Concerning your vote’ in which she encouraged women to vote and view politics in the way it affected their homes and children and not allow the drunkard, the Gaol bird, the tramp, to wield greater power than themselves in the making of laws which affected their interests.

Like her sister Margaret she was an active member of the New South Wales Teachers Federation and was interested in the education of ‘feeble minded children’. In 1910 she addressed the Australasian Friends Fellowship Union on Literature for Children.

She was a foundation member of a tree-planting group when she was teaching in Broken Hill. When she was in Broken Hill she discontinued the accepted practice of singing the National Anthem. She was described by a schools Inspector as
being a 'divinely inspired teacher who did not know her place in the education system'.

Through her connection with the Quakers Rebecca did much to bring about improvements at the Aboriginal Reserve at La Perouse.

She was also an active member of the Women’s Inter-Church Council and a member of the State Executive of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union.

She was awarded a medal for Community Service in 1937.
Priscilla Swann
1875 – 1955

Daughter
Sister
Aunt
Chiropodist
Masseuse
Dressmaker
Photographer
Projectionist
School Teacher
Chatelaine

Priscilla is remembered as vivacious redhead with a cheerful personality who was warm and cuddly and sweet. Her favourite colours were autumn tones. She was also the accepted disciplinarian of the younger members of the family.

She was awarded a certificate in 'Dressmaking and Ladies Tailoring' from Granville Trades School.

She also ran a chiropractic practice from the room now described as Mrs Macarthur's writing room.

Priscilla took over the running of the Swann household when her mother decided to retire. She organised the house from her favourite chair in the kitchen. She had the kitchen floor covered in lino for comfort. She made curtains, mended sheets, decided the positioning of the furniture, what needed cleaning and what was for dinner. She hung herbs to dry in the kitchen and had lots of plants in the courtyard outside of the kitchen door.

She was a volunteer at Parramatta Hospital.

As a young woman she was active in Jack Lang’s Labour Party.
Mary Swann
1877 – 1957

Daughter
Sister
Aunt
Podiatrist
Book Keeper
Businesswoman
Sunday school teacher
Grocery store manager
Postmistress Rosehill Post Office
Commercial Teacher in the Public School system

Mary is described as a tiny woman who was very sincere and determined. She was a sweet kind Christian person who had a youthful outlook and was very thoughtful to others.

She patterned her life on the Christian principles of the Presbyterian Church and was secretary of the North Parramatta branch of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union.

She wrote a leaflet for the anti-conscription campaign of World War 1.

After she retired Mary received a letter from the Taxation Department in which they stated that she was suspected of under-stating her income. Concerned at the imputation of dishonesty, she bundled up a pair of patched, mended and darned knickers and posted it to them as proof of her thriftiness. There is no record of a reply.
Elizabeth Swann  
1879 - 1961  

Daughter  
Sister  
Aunt  
School Teacher  
Headmistress, Granville Infants School

Described by her niece Isobel as 'a sweet little round woman with soft brown hair and blue eyes', tolerant with great courage and kindness.

Her motto was 'live in love as Christian Brethren ready to be helpful to each other'.

She was active in education and social reform.

Her movements and mind were quick and she never procrastinated.

During the First World War she told the Education Department that her school would not take part in the negative aspects of the war and they accepted her decision.

Coached maths at Ruth's Business College.

She was made a life member of the Hospital and Relief Society of the New South Wales Teachers Federation in 1938.
Isabel Swann
1881 – 1961

Daughter
Sister
Aunt
Mother
Author
Activist for International Peace

A newspaper clipping in the Swann family archives describes Isabel as a woman of great ideals and tremendous devotion, worker for peace and international understanding.

She is the author of a book entitled *An Open Road to International Order* and is quoted in the *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate* of March 18th 1954 as saying "my objective is to turn the United Nations Organisation into a world government and eradicate all present military powers. If this happened it would be the end of all wars".

Worked for improvement in the lives of working class people.
It was because of her belief in the equality of her fellow man that she became involved in her struggle for the welfare of under privileged people.

She was the first registered Surgeon-Dentist in Parramatta and was described in the Sydney magazine *Splashes* as a successful city dentist.

Isobel was the secretary of the Prison Reform Society.

She became the first secretary of the Howard league of Penal Reform and was made a life member in 1938.
Ruth Swann
1882 – 1980

Daughter
Sister
Aunt
Teacher
Businesswoman
First female sanitary inspector in New South Wales

Ruth had a jolly personality and was a mentor for the younger members of the family.

She was a devoted member of the Society of Friends and was elected clerk (a combination of secretary and president) of the Australian General Meeting of Quakers 1926 – 1933. She received a one year scholarship to attend the Quaker Tertiary College in Birmingham U.K.

She was a founding member of the Business and Professional Womens Association and a life member of the Commercial Education Society of Australia.

Ruth combined her interests in teaching and business to form the Rosehill Business College at Elizabeth Farm. She taught English, spelling and elocation and founded the 'Nothing under 100 Club', a social club designed to encourage her students in the pursuit of excellence.

Ruth held certificates in Machine Fencing and Sanitary Law Inspection and was a member of the C.W.A.

She was the Honorary Secretary of the Association for the Protection of Native Races.
Edith Swann  
1883 – 1973  

Daughter  
Sister  
Aunt  
Musician  
Very artistic  
Tallest of the sisters  
Teacher of piano, violin and guitar  

An Associate of Trinity College London.  

Member of the Teachers Musical Union.  

In 1936 she was listed on the Commonwealth register of qualified teachers of music.  

Dedicated to teaching music to young people.  

Always on time.  

Her surroundings were gently ordered and tastefully decorated.  

Member of the Yorkshire Society, her father William came from Bradford.
Nona Fila Swann
1898 – 1969

Daughter
Sister
Aunt
Musician
Music Teacher
School Teacher
Nursery School Teacher
Business woman

Nona was the youngest child and ninth daughter of William and Elizabeth and is described as a delicate child with fair skin and blue eyes. One of her nieces described her hair as red/gold, with a matching temper.

She was a modern woman who wore make-up. So as not to meet with the disapproval of her sisters Nona would apply her make-up after she had left the house, removing it before returning.

Her niece Isabel remembers her as a vision of pink and gold. When performing with the Sydney Philharmonic Orchestra she wore a pink dress with golden jewellery to match her hair.

In 1938 she established and ran St. Paul’s Preparatory School in Castle Hill. The school became a Certified School able to provide efficient and regular instruction up to a standard required by the Education Department. At a later date the department refused to renew the certification because Nona persisted with the heretical practice of teaching cursive writing.

She ran a Kindergarten in Harris Park. Isabel described Nona’s schools as being ‘in a place suiting her convenience at the time’.
Nona encouraged the children's parents to send them in clothes suitable for playing as she felt that children should not be burdened by being told not to dirty their clothes.

She ran Ruth's Business School while she was in England.
Public documentation.
Plaque honours Swann family

AFTER 30 years the Swann family has received the recognition it has strived for with the unveiling of the Swann family plaque at Elizabeth House last weekend.

Elizabeth Plimer said the plaque, which now hangs over the mantle, represented the 65 years of restoration her grandfather and his eight spinster daughters dedicated to Elizabeth Farm.

The Swann family included nine daughters and three sons.

Local artists Fiona Davies and Patricia Prociv were commissioned by the house to honor the Swann sisters with a series of installations on display at the farm until Sunday, October 18.

Mrs Plimer holds fond childhood memories of growing up at Elizabeth Farm among her aunts — all of whom were linked to a seemingly endless list of charities in the Parramatta area during the early to mid-1900s.

"This is what I have been working for," she said.

Mrs Plimer who inherited boxes of family documents with the death of the last Swann sister in 1976 now focuses her energy on instilling a family heritage into her own children and grandchildren.

Elizabeth house is holding lectures on the Swann sisters during September for more information call Peter Struthers on 9635 9488.
Swann ladies the stars of the show

AN EXHIBITION of works by artists Fiona Davies and Patricia Proctor which explore the hidden past of Elizabeth Farm will be held until Sunday, October 18.

The exhibition depicts aspects of the lives of the Swan family who lived at Elizabeth Farm between 1904 and 1968.

The women of the Swann family - Margaret, Rebecca, Priscilla, Mary, Elizabeth, Isabella, Edith, Ruth and Nona - are the highlight of the exhibition.

The Swanns are recognised as the family who saved and conserved Elizabeth Farm by carrying out repairs during their stay there and then selling the house to the Elizabeth Farm Museum Trust in 1968.

The ladies of the Swann family are well known for their contribution to early Parramatta through their teaching, campaigning for women's rights, community service, campaigning for Aboriginal rights, and their work with the Hospital and Relief Society.

Also on display at the exhibition on Saturday October 17 will be a collection of the Swan ladies' aprons.

For further details, call 9635 9488.
Exploring the Swann Family and their aprons
A PRESENTATION BY THE NATIONAL APRON FRONT
Elizabeth Farm
Saturday 19 September
Using aprons from the National Apron Front’s collection, heritage specialists Kylie Winkworth and Meredith Walker present a different view of domestic life and household arrangements. Participants are encouraged to BYO aprons and apron stories. Afternoon tea will be served on the eastern verandah at the conclusion of the programme.

Spinsters Indispensable
Elizabeth Farm
Saturday 26 September
Dr. Katie Holmes from Melbourne’s LaTrobe University will present an informal lecture on the phenomenon of spinsterhood in Australia during the late Victorian and Edwardian period. The lives of the eight unmarried Swann sisters are placed in the broad social context of feminism and the suffragette movement. The lecture will be followed by an afternoon tea of Edwardian proportions.

Sisters and Spinsters
THE MISSES SWANN OF ELIZABETH FARM — AN INSTALLATION
Elizabeth Farm
14 September - 11 October
Western Sydney artists Fiona Davies and Patricia Prociv explore a ‘hidden’ past at Elizabeth Farm looking into the lives of Margaret, Rebecca, Priscilla, Mary, Elizabeth, Isabella, Edith, Ruth and Nona Swann.
Ancestral connections
Ancestral Connections.

On our trip to Europe in 1995, Vic and I visited a Norwegian friend who lives in a house built by her ancestors. Coming from a family who hasn’t stayed in one place long enough to remember who their ancestors are, I became interested in the idea of being surrounded by and using their belongings in the same way they had. The sugar bowl and milk jug I have that belonged to my grandmother are valued and kept in a special place. My friend uses items that belonged to her great-grandmother on an everyday basis.

In 1997, I accompanied an Australian friend to her cousin’s wedding on a small island off the coast of Norway. My friend’s paternal family had lived on the island for three generations. Her father migrated to Australia in the 1940s and had returned to Norway once in the 50 something years he had been away, but an aunt and uncle had visited Australia briefly during that time. Upon meeting her family, my friend realised the little quirks that she thought belonged to members of her immediate family were also visible in her extended family. Being able to see and be part of these connections was an emotional encounter both for her and me. It was through these experiences I realised the importance of establishing an identity within the context of ancestral connections.

Part of the 1997 trip took us to Paris, where I spent two days in the Louvre, sitting in front of Leonardo Da Vinci’s painting ‘Virgin and Child with St. Anne and a Lamb’. ¹ In between the groups of German and Italian tourists, I recognised that this painting was an image that represented female ancestral relationships. I also contemplated the possibility that these relationships could be as relevant to my identity as the association my Norwegian friend has with her ancestors, and my Australian friend’s connection to her family in Norway. I believe that in this painting Leonardo provides an external image of the female lineage and genealogy of St. Anne, the Virgin and Child.

Looking at Leonardo’s painting, I considered the proposition that this work would

¹ Da Vinci, Leonardo Virgin and Child with St. Anne and a Lamb, c.1508, oil on wood panel Louvre Museum, Paris.
be thought of as one with a religious theme and that Gustav Klimt’s painting ‘The Three Ages of Woman’ could be viewed as a secular counterpart to Leonardo’s work, the link being that they both portray female ancestral lineage. After making the connection between the work of the two artists I researched the availability of images like those produced by Leonardo and Klimt, promoting the female ancestral connections of daughters, mothers and grandmothers – virgins, mothers and crones - in Australian Catholicism. Few are available.

Images of women within Pre-Vatican II Australian Catholicism commonly depict single figures of angels, saints and martyrs, Mary and her son and the Holy Family of St. Joseph, Mary and Child plus the occasional one of St. Anne teaching Mary to read. For those of us who experienced the culture of this era, traditional religious images were part of our daily lives. As Catholic schoolgirls of the 1950s we wore ‘Miraculous Medals’ around our necks, received our education sitting in class rooms looking at images of ‘Our Lady of Grace’, ate our meals and went to bed sleep secure in the knowledge we were in the presence of ‘The Immaculate Heart of Mary’. We carried around these and other images, including the Virgin Mary nursing the child Jesus, in the form of Holy Cards; pocket sized cards that were treasured and traded in much the same way cricket and football cards are today. These cards and the images imprinted upon them were our truth of female representation.

‘Virgin and Child with St. Anne and a Lamb’ can be thought of as an image that through its title and subject matter contributes to the doctrinal beliefs of the Virgin and Child mythology of the Catholic Church. It is only within the Catholic Faith that the biblical figure Mary of Nazareth is named and honoured as having virginal status. While Leonardo’s image would appear to contribute to the maintenance of that status, it has never been constituted by the church as being one that contained symbolic values suitable for personal identification by the faithful.

The connection members of the faithful make to an individual image relates to pre determined symbolic values contained within that image. If your name is Mary, you are undoubtedly named after Mary of Nazareth, the mother of Jesus, a figure

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venerated because of the belief that she was able to conceive and give birth to the child Jesus while remaining virginal. If your name is Anne, you will have been named after St. Anne, the mother of Mary, honoured because of her ability to conceive through divine intervention in old age. As a member of the congregation, you would be expected to identify with these and other images presented and represented by the Church.

Luce Irigaray describes seeing for the first time a small sculpture of St. Anne and Mary in Venice.

I went to Torcello island. In the museum there is a statue of a woman who resembles Mary, Jesus's mother, sitting with a child before her knee facing the observer. I was admiring this beautiful wooden sculpture when I noticed that this Jesus was a girl! I felt freed from the tensions of that cultural truth-imperative which is also practised in art: a virgin-mother and her son depicted as the models of redemption we should believe in. Standing before this statue representing Mary and her Mother, Anne, I felt once again at ease and joyous, in touch with my body and my emotions, and my history as a woman. ³

The Church names St. Anne as being the mother of Mary. Mary however is rarely referred to as being the daughter of Anne. The absence of an immediate association of mother and daughter creates a void in the Catholic female connection. This void separates not only Anne and Mary, but all mothers seeking reference to their daughters and to themselves, and all daughters seeking a connection to their mothers.

The subsequent effect of church practice, of all but denying the existence of a female lineage, is that a basic genealogy such as St. Anne being the grandmother of Mary's son Jesus, is also absent. With the fleeting reference within Australian Catholic mythology to Mary as a daughter, and the lack of a continuum of images that present Mary and Anne together, these images have been discounted as being irrelevant in/to the lives of the faithful. The absence of Anne and Mary together also relegated another female link to obscurity, that of the grandmother figure.

Generational Connections.

In ‘Virgin and Child with St. Anne and a Lamb’ St. Anne, as both mother and grandmother sits at the apex of the triangle from which the figures of her daughter, grandson and the lamb emerge. The daughter Mary sits upon her mother’s knee, so that together mother and daughter create a single form, a form from which the daughter as mother emerges, reaching out to the product of her own form, the child Jesus. With their bare feet all the figures are seen to be on holy ground, the Virgin’s left foot is hidden, her right one glows with the same gold/yellow palette as her upper body which unlike the other figures, neither has shadow extending across it nor extends any shadow. Leonardo has highlighted the Virgin’s body to shine like the sun, conjuring up an association of bodily warmth oozing energy and light. Through this emphasis he literally leaves no doubt that it is the Virgin Mary who is the central character of this tableau. This glowing image with its lack of shadow compels the viewer to associate the Virgin with the power of life.

The Virgin Mary may be the central figure in Leonardo’s tableau, yet it is St. Anne who encourages the viewer to follow her lowered eyes to the act that is occurring between a mother and her child, her daughter and grandchild. Artists conventionally use these types of eyes as a way of expressing humility. Anthony Blunt asserts that in Leonardo’s theories on art he stressed ‘the importance of showing the emotions and ideas in a person’s mind by means of his gestures and facial expression’. It appears to me that Anne and Mary’s downcast eyes coupled with their smile and the angular positioning of their heads, makes it possible to interpret these two figures as expressing the love felt by mothers and grandmothers for their children and grandchildren.

Through its title, Leonardo’s painting relates to the philosophy of Catholicism. I believe that through its content, this image argues against the culture’s exclusion of the grandmother figure, the crone. In the painting, the child sits in the lower right-hand side of the triangle with a lamb, a reference to his future position as shepherd of the flock. He resists his mother’s attempt to entice him back to her, yet the three generations remain connected child to mother, mother to child; they

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are of each other. Through the use of a compositional triangular form, Leonardo has created a balanced connection that does not require any of the three individuals portrayed to dominate the other in order to exist as a whole. This work is a genealogical portrait, where each generation relies on the other for its existence. Leonardo’s image allows the mother to be a grandmother, the mother to be a daughter and the daughter to be a mother. This is an image that not only recognises the female genealogy of Christ but celebrates it.

Leonardo was not the first artist to use a triangular composition for images of St. Anne, the Virgin and child. Examples of similar elements are evident in Masolino and Masaccio’s ‘Madonna e Sant’Anna Metterza’. Leonardo arrived in Florence approximately 30 years after the death of Masaccio. In his painting ‘Virgin and Child with St. Anne and a Lamb’, Leonardo would appear to have been influenced by the composition used by Masolino and Masaccio. The most prominent example of this is the pyramidal positioning of the three figures of St. Anne the Virgin and Child. Masaccio and Masolino have placed St. Anne at the apex of the pyramid; this elevation probably reflects the importance of her cult during the fifteenth century, particularly in Florence where she was considered to be one of the most important patron saints of the city.

St. Anne became the patron of the city through the actions of its citizens, who gave her credit for aiding their republican cause and victory in 1343. The people of Florence used public money to erect a statue of the saint in one of the most important buildings in the city, the Orsanmichele, which was used not only as a place of worship but also a market place. The establishment of this shrine clearly indicates the civic nature of her veneration.

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5 Masaccio (Tomasso Di Giovanni Cassi, 1401 – 1428) collaborated with his master Massolino (Massolino Di Panicale, 1383 – 1440) to produce the painting Madonna e Sant’Anna Metterza. Originally housed in the church of St. Ambrogio Florence, the painting is now located in the Uffizi Gallery Florence.
With the patronage of St. Anne being commemorated as a civic event, it became easier for artists working in or around Florence to create images of her in a secular framework. Leonardo seems to have taken up this challenge in a work commissioned by the Servite Friars, a group of monks in Florence. The work, a charcoal drawing on brown paper, is known as ‘The Cartoon of the Virgin and Child with St. Anne and John the Baptist’ and was executed approximately five years before the painting. The cartoon depicts a group of figures similar to those in painting, the exception being that John the Baptist has replaced the lamb. Many similarities can be found between the two works and it is thought that the unfinished cartoon may have been intended as a preliminary drawing for the painting.

In the cartoon Leonardo has relocated St. Anne from a standing figure behind her daughter, as in ‘Madonna e Sant’Anna Metterza’, to one seated on a corresponding horizontal plane. This relocation of St. Anne must not have displeased the monks as they put the cartoon on public display, enabling the citizens of Florence to view the work.

In his painting, Leonardo has portrayed St. Anne as the matriarch, sitting at the pinnacle of the group surveying all that is being represented. In the cartoon he has moved her from the apex of the triangle, as in ‘Madonna e Sant’Anna Metterza’, to what would appear to be a less dominant position, on the same level as the Virgin, mothers and daughters together.

The St. Anne of the cartoon is not the sensitive St. Anne of the painting. Leonardo has portrayed her as a mother partaking in what appears to be a one way conversation with her daughter. Possibly a mother intent on giving advice to a daughter who has little interest in listening. St. Anne’s insistence in the face of

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8 Da Vinci, Leonardo The Cartoon of the Virgin and Child with St. Anne and John the Baptist c. 1505 The National Gallery London.
adversity is indicated partly by the configuration of her left hand. Even though it
has a glove like appearance and appears to be unfinished,¹¹ the quality of the
drawing takes nothing away from the strength of the gesture and the presence of
St. Anne remains undiminished. The left hand of St. Anne does not contain the
same gesture of protection afforded to the child by Masaccio and Masolino. This is
not the hand of a woman whose only mission in life is to stand behind her
daughter and grandson providing protection.

La Sinistra - the shadow side.

In the cartoon, Leonardo has constructed the faces of the Virgin and St. Anne in
opposition to each other, using a technique known as Chiaroscuro; the balance of
light and shadow. St. Anne’s face is formed through use of shadow areas, known
to us all as dark places without any physical substance; instead of highlighting
certain areas Leonardo’s minimum use of light serves to strengthen the darker
ones, and what we initially read as the face of the mother of the Virgin becomes
more like a shadowy mask. In contrast to the mask-like face of St. Anne the Virgin
glows with light, and the effect of the Chiaroscuro provides her with a sense of
inner radiance, accentuated by the shadow areas.

This visual description of St. Anne being a shadowy figure gives her the
appearance of being sinister, which in fact she is. The word sinister comes from
the Latin and translates as ‘left hand’, Leonardo has positioned St. Anne ‘moto
sinistra’, to the left, of her mother. The sinister ways are not to be found in those
who sit at the right hand but in those who sit on the left, ‘la Sinistra’, the shadow
side. With the shadow being considered to be without substance the position of
women, in particular older women within Catholicism, seems to be stated rather
obviously in the upper portion of St. Anne. Doomed by their doctrinal association
with Eve, women are thought to be lacking substance.

¹¹ Iris Noble suggests that Leonardo purposely left his works unfinished ‘in order to express human
beings in the haunted gloomy dusk of their lives’. Iris Noble Leonardo Da Vinci (New York: W.W.
The Immaculate Conception.

In order to distance both Jesus and his mother Mary from the shadow side of women, it was necessary for the Church to create a series of legendary events that would locate the conception and birth of both as having occurred through divine intervention. For Mary to become the mother of the saviour of the world, she could not be stained by the ‘original sin’ of Adam and Eve, inherited from Eve and transmitted by women through the birth process. Her soul must be declared to be without stain of original sin. Marina Warner describes Mary as being ‘the only human creature ever to be preserved from the taint of original sin’.  

Mary's purity was maintained by her ability to conceive her child through the planting of sacred semen in her ear by the Angel Gabrielle, and being able to give birth to a child while remaining virginal. In order to assure and maintain a sense of the purity of Mary, The Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary was established around the fifteenth century. The Church's dogma of The Immaculate Conception was declared as doctrine in 1854, which Warner says was ‘intended to reinforce the holiness of the Virgin Mary and by the same token to confirm the importance of her cult’. The Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary sought to honour the purity of the Virgin Mary through the circumstances of her conception.

The feast of The Immaculate Conception of Mary by St. Anne has been part of the Church's liturgical calendar from around the 7th century, the focus of the celebration being that Mary was considered a miracle child because of St. Anne's ability to conceive in old age. Without the construction of these events, it would have been impossible to place either Anne or Mary in a state of purity that was not attainable by any other individual. The cult of the Immaculate Conception was not without its detractors: around 1150 Bernard of Clairvaux protested that celebrating the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary by St. Anne was nothing more than

‘worshipping the copulation of her parents’. To overcome the possibility of any thoughts that involved copulation, legend has placed St. Anne and her husband Joachim in different geographical locations at the precise moment Mary was conceived. Having negated any need for references to the flesh, the cult of The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary could proceed.

Any serious attempt to create a genealogy of purity for the infant Jesus and Mary could not stop at St. Anne and an infinite number of divine interventions was necessary. The next in line of descent from St. Anne had to be her mother; Marina Warner best describes this sequence of events.

The Virgin birth of Christ began to redound along the line of the Virgin’s ancestors in infinite regression. St Anne’s parents, Stollanus and Esmeria were also singled out by divine prodigies. Esmeria, it was said, had joined the Carmelite order, but after a vision, her colleagues realised she was to be the ancestress of the saviour and encouraged her to leave the monastic life and marry. After five different husbands, each struck down by the jealous and threatened Satan; Esmeria succeeded with Stollanus and conceived St. Anne.

There appears to be some confusion about Esmeria’s relationship to St. Anne. Warner describes her as Anne’s mother, Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn describe Esmeria as Anne’s sister. It would appear that St. Anne inherited Esmeria’s practice of multiple marriages:

St. Anne represented not just the marital state but the thrice-married state, thus violating social norms in a flamboyant way...It is related that Collette of Corbie refused to pray to St. Anne because she was appalled by Anne’s three marriages...When Collette prayed, it was to saints renowned for their virginity...In a culture that had valued virginity and seen marriage as a necessary evil, the three marriages of Anne were a potential scandal.

The only iconic reference known to me that recognises St. Esmeria as being part of an ancestral connection with St. Anne, the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child is a

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small polychrome sculpture in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, 'Christ, The Virgin, St. Anne and St. Esmeria'. This work provides a visual acknowledgment of an ancestor who, if the legend is to believed, was obviously a woman committed to her position as an ancestress of an immaculate conception, even if it meant forgoing the cloistered spiritual life and becoming a woman of the flesh.

Constructing a Female Connection.

In both the cartoon and the painting Leonardo has moved away from wooden stylised figures in artificial settings with stiff upright poses and stylised expressions of human emotion - such as those used by Masaccio and Masolino - towards a fluidity of the composition not seen in any other representations before or since. The figures in 'Virgin and Child with St. Anne and a Lamb' are represented through unstructured gestures, imitating the way people can be seen to exist in the physical world. Leonardo's St. Anne supports the seated weight of her daughter, who in turn allows her self to be supported by her mother. Leonardo does not appear to be interested in constructing an image of the two women where a cynosure would be viewed outside of the narrative. The importance of the narrative hinges on the inclusion of the characters as part of an ancestral connection.

The figures in the painting exist within a split second of time, as in a photograph. Within this time Leonardo captures a sense of balance and a fluidity of movement that expands and contracts around each of the figures. St. Anne supports her daughter, the daughter as mother reaches out to her child, St. Anne gazes at her grandson, the Virgin's eyes meet those of her son and it is within this split second of time that Leonardo records the Virgin's realisation that her son belongs to the flock.

In 'Virgin and Child with St. Anne and a Lamb' Leonardo makes it possible to

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understand that the religious figures of St. Anne and the Virgin can also be known as a being part of a secular ancestral connection. The possibility of such an understanding creates a sense of awareness of the importance of the connection between mothers and daughters. It is within these possibilities that Leonardo has depicted the significance of the female connection as a cultural system of belonging, re-positioning the commonality of experience.

Leonardo re-inforces his secular positioning of Anne and Mary in both the cartoon and the painting through the omission of the tradition of placing haloes on figures to denote a religious representation. This lack of haloes guarantees these works will never be included as part of any religious texts. It is possible Leonardo’s intention was not to present these works as supporting the doctrine of the Church, but as a challenge to it. As part of this challenge Leonardo has positioned the figure of St. Anne in the painting as a crone/grandmother figure, the literal and ancestral source of creation.

The concept of female ancestral connections is not available in the images of Australian Catholicism. Through its focus on single figure images, Australian Catholicism excludes a visible female connection. It is within this absence that the possibilities for spiritual reflection on female ancestral connections are denied. The absence of this connection, through the figures of St. Esmeria, St. Anne and the Virgin Mary, pre-supposes that the most important spiritual ancestral inheritance is male. It is in the construction of an all-encompassing male God that female ancestry is excluded.

With a commitment to the spiritual father, all genetic female ancestral connections are severed, leaving a void for many women like Irigaray who are searching for a female connection; the ancestral link between the Virgin, St. Anne and St. Esmeria provides this association. They are part of the infinite, the link back and back and back to the eternal mother. Within the culture of Catholicism there is no indication of this bond other than the unspoken knowledge that St. Anne is from the flesh of her mother St. Esmeria, who has disappeared from the mythology and exists only through a small statue. To be born of the flesh roots you firmly within the ancestral connections of that flesh. And it is within that connection, formed in and by women
that virgin mother and crone are created.

Christianity has assimilated the figures of virgin mother and crone. Combining the purity of the virgin and the nurturing of the mother they have discarded the crone. Having been rejected by Christianity, her position within the female experience disappears. 'The Crone's title was related to the word 'crown' and she represented the power of the ancient tribal matriarch who made moral and legal descents for her subject and descendants'.

Within cultural terms, the grandmother is the crone, recognised as having the wisdom of her life experiences to draw upon, the old wise woman whose counsel was once sought and valued. St. Anne and St. Esmeria are crones, whose wisdom would not necessarily have been learnt in formal training but is the result of living. Crones traditionally pass their knowledge and wisdom on to their daughters and grand-daughters. Leonardo's painting places the inner experience of being / becoming a Crone into an external image. The value of this image is as an outer construction of an interior experience, leading to a re-valuing of both. In the words of Mikhail Bakhtin

This recognition or acceptance descends upon me from others like a gift, like grace, which is incapable of being understood and founded from within myself. And it is only in this case that certainty in the outer value of my body is possible, whereas an immediately intuitable experience of the value is impossible - all I can do is have pretensions to it.

Women need images that articulate an ancestral relationship between mothers and daughters. Walker describes religious images as being 'no more than projections of human imagination, but they have evident effects on human behaviour, in the manner of the feedback loop...a change in the divine image can produce social change'.

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Through his cartoon and painting, Leonardo moves the female experience from a religious frame of reference to one that presents Anne and Mary as representing a female ancestral connection. Leonardo describes a connection that has over time been historically and culturally bent and twisted, but never completely broken. These are images that argue successfully for the inevitable connection between a mother and her daughter, at the same time providing an insight into the role played by Catholicism in the separation of the mother/grandmother from the child, through its lack of suitable images.

St Anne as daughter, mother, crone understands both the actions of her daughter attempting to bring her child upon her knee and the child wanting to resist his mother. The child looks back at his mother, with a sense of joy at his triumph of separation. Having experienced a similar separation, the grandmother is there with the wisdom of her experience. As a mother, she understands the sacrifice mothers make in separating from their children. As a child, she has also experienced the joy of independence from her mother.

In encouraging women to re-establish a generational connection, Luce Irigaray says, ‘we must restore the missing pillar of our culture: the Mother Daughter relationship’.24 For those of us raised within the culture of Australian Catholicism, Leonardo’s painting allows us to see ourselves as we are; daughters upon our mother’s knees, mothers who reach out to our children and, depending on our age, grandmothers. Having successfully challenged St. Anne’s exclusion as the grandmother of Jesus, Leonardo’s painting promotes her to her rightful position as crone.

'The Three Ages of Woman' (Le tre età della donna) Gustav Klimt
Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Roma
'Virgin and Child with St. Anne and a Lamb' oil on wood panel
Leonardo DaVinci 1168 x 1112mm c.1508
'Virgin and Child with St. Anne and John the Baptist' Charcoal on brown paper
Leonardo DaVinci 1139 x 1101mm c.1505
National Gallery, London.
‘S. Anna, la Madonna col Babbino e cinque angeli’
Masolino and Masaccio c.1568.
Uffizi Gallery, Florence
"Christ the Virgin, St. Anne, her mother, and St. Emerentia (or Esmeria), her grandmother"

Exhibition images.
CONSTRUCTING
IDENTITY WITHIN
CATHOLICISM

computer generated works by
Patricia Prociv

The Exhibition will be opened by
Con Gouriotis
Director of Casula Power House Museum
on Sunday 21st May at 2pm

The Chapel
Australian Catholic University
179 Albert Rd., Strathfield

Exhibition open 10am - 4pm
22nd - 28th May 2000
Altar Cloth - The Communion of Saints
'Mothers and Sons' Cushions
'Mothers and Daughters and Sons. Grandsons and Grandmothers' Computer Generated Print 160 x 256mm 2000
'James Mc Auley once said that the church he entered in 1953 had only one word over its door:

SUBMIT

Edmund Campion 1982
'In the Church's eyes there were only three kinds of women: nuns, mothers and sources of temptation'.

Edmund Campion 1987
'Our Lady had a very important role, and some people felt that this was awkward in that she represented the impossible role model; both virgin and mother'.

Mary Kenny 1991
'LITTLE GIRLS LOVE THE ACCESSORIES OF RELIGION; THE HOLY COMMUNION FROCKS, THE PETAL PROCESSIONS... AND PRETTY LITTLE HOLY PICTURES OF ST. MARIA GORETTI EXCHANGED WITH FRIENDS, WITH TENDER LITTLE SENTIMENTS ON THE BACK'.

MARY KENNY 1991
'There were details of the Stations of the Cross and pictures of bleeding hearts, literally, Maria Goretti being chopped up...'.

Polly Devlin 1991
'There is one famous and much loved Irish hymn 'Faith of Our Fathers', in which one pleads that our children may be tortured for their faith'.

Polly Devlin 1991
'There was great emphasis on the suffering of women; on the martyrdom and sainthood; on women who endured agony for the Catholic cause'.

Deidre McIharry 1991
'Show me a girl with a cross around her neck and I will show you a dead cert'.

Deidre McGharry 1991
'One night we all had to put on a sort of knitted bathing costume before we got into the bath to wash. The bad news was there was just one, soggy costume - we all had to take turns to share.'

Deirdre McGharry 1991
'Our Lady blushes every time you cross your legs'.

Deidre McGharry 1991
'Boys suffer the shame of uncontrollable genitals.
Girls bear the 'curse' of menstruation and the sole responsibility of leading boys into sin'.

Kate Saunders 1991
'Girls revealed that a nun had said in a class that they should not wear patent leather shoes because boys could see their private parts in the reflection'.

Kate Saunders 1991
'When sex is a sin, everyone has something to confess, right down to the little old ladies who have glimpsed a nipple on television'.

Kate Saunders 1991
'Like Eve woman moves man to sin, and so, as little children and then as teenagers girls were identified with this problem'.

Marina Warner 1991
'Basically if you were raped by a Gorilla it was your fault for wearing frosted pink lipstick, you tart'.

Marcella Evarisle 1991
'I DO THINK THAT IF YOU HAVE EVER STOOD ON A CHAIR IN FRONT OF 200 GIRLS WITH YOUR GREEN KNICKERS SHOWING, READING OUT ALoud FROM A HOLY BOOK - NOTHING TRULy DAUNTS YOU'.

ANNE ROBINSON 1991
'The long term effect of my convent education is the guilt. I am not a Catholic, but I've got guilt. I just don't know why but it stays - it seems to stay with me forever'.

Anne Nightingale 1991
'To be Catholic is one thing. To be a convent girl is another'.

Germaine Greer 1991
'I am still a Catholic, I just don't believe in God. I am an atheist Catholic - there's a lot of us around'.

Germaine Greer 1991
'One thing lapsed
Catholics don't do is
go for an 'inferior'
religion with less in
the way of tradition
and intellectual
content'.

Germaine Greer 1993
'Saying a complete Rosary is very soporific and much better for you, both spiritually and physically, than a Mogadon. By the time you have said fifty Hail Marys, five Our Fathers and five Glory Be's, you're asleep.'

Gabrielle Lord et al 1986
'When I was young, I used to go into a dark box at church and confess all kinds of guilt: about talking back to my parents, about unkindness and impure thoughts. But now I feel guilty about just one thing: not being a millionaire'.

Maureen Dowd 2000
St. Agatha

was a wealthy girl who dedicated her life and virginity to Christianity. Because she resisted all attempts of seduction, her breasts were cut off.
St. Glyceria

Glyceria was ordered to make a sacrifice to the pagan god Jupiter. She broke the statue and was hung by her hair and beaten. Miraculously she survived. After suffering many tortures, she had her hair pulled out and was fed to the beasts.
St. Agnes

When she was 13 years old, Agnes decided to remain a virgin for life. Refusing to marry, she preferred death to losing her virginity and offered herself as a martyr. She was stabbed to death.
St. Apollonia

an aged deaconess of Alexandria
Apollonia had all her teeth pulled out rather than give up her Christian beliefs.
St. Barbara

was locked in a tower by her Father to keep her safe from the many men who wanted to marry her. Barbara became a Christian. Her Father was angry about her decision and killed her with a sword.
St. Catherine of Alexandria
Successfully argued with 50 Philosophers against the persecution of Christians. Catherine was sentenced to death she was attached to a wheel, the wheel broke and she was beheaded.
St. Perpetua
was imprisoned with her
baby, because of her
Christian beliefs.
When she refused to deny
her beliefs the baby was
taken from her and she
was killed with a sword.
St. Lucy was a beautiful girl who refused offers of marriage and gave all her goods to the poor. Because of her desire to remain a virgin she was sent to a brothel. Lucy removed her eyes in order to make herself unattractive to men.
SAINTS AND MARTYRS

© Patricia Prociv 2000.
'Whether through legends or folk stories the lives of the saints constitute an important – some would say most important – medium for transmitting the meaning of the Christian Faith'.

St. Anne is the mother of the Virgin Mary and grandmother of Christ.
According to tradition she and her husband Joachim were childless. Joachim fasted and prayed for 40 days in the desert while Anne prayed beneath a laurel bush.
Both saw angelic visions in which they were assured they would have a child.
St. Domitilla was a rich Roman girl who decided at an early age to belong only to Jesus. Her prospective husband heard of Domitilla's plans and accused her of being a Christian. When she refused to give up her faith she was burnt to death.
St. Cecila was a Christian who lived in Rome in the Third Century. When the organ began to play at her wedding she sang to Christ. She refused to make sacrifices to pagan gods and was condemned to death. Three attempts to cut off her head failed to kill her and she survived half-dead for three days.
St. Monica was the mother of St. Augustine, who is said to have been a troublesome, self-indulgent youth who led a life of debauchery. Her life was far from pleasant, between living with her mother-in-law and Augustine, she took refuge in alcohol. After overcoming her addiction she pursued Augustine in order to convert him to Christianity. She is the patron saint of parents who put up with wayward youth.
St. Apollonia has been described as a 'marvellous aged virgin', who was martyred for her faith when she refused to recite blasphemous sayings. 

With repeated blows to her jaw, her captors broke all her teeth. 

A bonfire was built; she leapt into the flames and was burnt to death. 

She is the patron saint of dentists.
Saints and martyrs hold honoured positions within the Church. Their body parts and clothing, in the form of relics, are revered as treasured objects, children are named after them and their help is invoked through continuous prayer and devotion.
St. Philumena was a virgin and martyr of early Rome. Many miracles were attributed to her. Her followers became upset when the Church began to question the validity of her miracles. She was struck off the official list of saints in 1960.
St Catherine of Alexandria was an educated woman, who successfully argued with 50 philosophers against the persecution of Christians. For her trouble, Catherine was sentenced to death by being attached to a wheel (the Catherine wheel is named after her): the wheel broke and she was beheaded.
St. Agatha consecrated herself to God in her youth. She is said to have refused many proposals to prostitute herself, refusing to lose her virginity. She was placed on a rack and burnt with iron rods. With God's help she remained cheerful. The final act of torture committed against her was to have her breasts crushed.
St. Lucy refused offers of marriage, preferring to dedicate her life to God. In an attempt to deter suitors she is said to have disfigured herself by gouging her eyes out. When one of her suitors accused her of being a Christian, a Judge ordered her to be sent to a brothel, but they were unable to move her. She is patron saint of the blind and is usually imaged carrying her eyes on a plate.
St. Catherine of Sienna was the youngest of 20 children. She is said to have never learned to read and write, dictating her thoughts to others. She is known for the work she did in uniting the papacies of Rome and Avignon. She is the patron saint of those subject to demonic temptations.
St. Elizabeth of Hungary was born the daughter of a King. She was an extremely generous woman to those less fortunate than herself. When her husband died she was overcome with grief and was driven from the court when she refused to remarry. She lived out her life in austerity and prayer.
St. Rita was married to a bad tempered brutal man, offering all her suffering to God. Her two sons had the same disposition as their father. Rather than sit by while they inflicted on others the same punishment she had suffered, Rita prayed they would both die young. Her prayers were answered. She is the patron saint of women with matrimonial difficulties.
St. Teresa of Avila showed precocious piety from an early age. She played monasteries with her brother and ran away to Morocco, hoping to die as a martyr.

As an adolescent she was drawn to all the world had to offer in terms of fashion and romance. Entering the Carmelite convent she began a double life of entertaining in the parlor, prayer and contemplation. She chose the latter and founded an order of Carmelites dedicated to this way of life.
St. Dymphna was the daughter of a Celtic king. Her father fell in love with her; when she resisted his incestuous intentions he killed her. Many cures from epilepsy have been attributed to her.
St. Mary Magdalene appears in the New Testament as one of the followers of Jesus. She stood at the foot of the cross as he was being crucified and helped to bury him. When she went to anoint his body, the tomb was empty.

Mary Magdalene is thought to have been a prostitute and to this end is always imaged with long hair, a reference to sexuality.
St. Veronica is traditionally imaged as an older woman.
She is known for wiping the face of Christ on his way to Calvary; an imprint of his image remained on the cloth.
Some say her name means 'true image' others believe that it could be a corruption of the name Bernike, given to women in the Middle East during menstrual bleeding.
St. Therese of Lisieux was raised in an extremely pious family. When she was 15, Therese followed two of her sisters into the Carmelite order of nuns. She contacted Tuberculosis, dying when she was 24 years old. Therese is always imaged in a Carmelite habit with a bunch of roses, a reference to a vision that a shower of roses would fall upon her death.
The Movie ‘Household Saints’ parallels the life of St. Therese of Lisieux within a contemporary context. The character Teresa grows up in the shadow of her grandmother, a devout catholic. ‘She prays, she meditates and spends her days in penance and good works. She develops a special devotion to her namesake St. Therese of Lisieux, known as the little flower of Jesus. She agrees with the saint that it is not necessary to do great things in this world to be holy, one can do god’s work anywhere, and there is grace to be won by scrubbing floors’. Not being permitted to enter the convent by her father ‘I don’t want no daughter of mine lining the Pope’s pockets’. Teresa turns to the ways of the flesh, offering all sexual activity, along with her ironing, up to god.
Sources of information on the lives of the saints.

Many books have been written on the lives and deaths of various saints. Among this plethora of information available I found the dictionaries of saints. The traditional purpose of dictionaries is to supply concise information on Christian saints and martyrs. The earliest surviving calendar providing this information is from the 8th century. In the 11th century Aelfric of Eynsham circulated his book Lives of the Saints, which focused on European saints. Writing about collections of the lives of English saints, Farmer says ‘The earliest known to me is that written c1300 in a book which belonged to the nuns of Romsey (British Library, Lansdowne 436). It contains forty-seven Lives, most of which are abridged. Its compiler is unknown, but its purpose is plain: edification through public and private reading’.

The church calendar for the veneration of saints and martyrs was reformed in 1969. ‘The reform was part of a program of aggiornamento initiated by John XXXIII (1958-62) and continued by Paul VI (1963-78). A number of saints and martyrs who had previously been held in high regard were discarded; ‘these included SS. Philomena, Margaret of Antioch and Catherine of Alexandria’. With the church’s pruning of

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selective saints from its calendar one might wonder where this puts the children who have been named after these saints, and all those nuns who took these names as part of their religious identity.

In *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints and Martyrs*, Farmer provides a trimmed and tidied version of 1500 universally venerated saints and martyrs. This dictionary focuses on saints of British origin who died in foreign countries and foreign saints who died in Britain. The separatist tradition of describing female saints and martyrs as ‘virgins’ continues in Farmer, at the same time any reference to the sexual activity of male saints and martyrs is markedly absent.

Farmer’s dictionary has 2 appendices. The first lists ‘Principal Patron Saints’ and included among these are Catherine of Alexandria (students) and Margaret of Antioch (pregnant women). The second, ‘Principal Iconographical Emblems of Saints’, mentions Margaret of Antioch (Dragon) and Catherine of Alexandria (Wheel). Philumena is usually imaged with an anchor; Farmer gives this to Clement. With Philumena being given the anchor by past generations it could be surmised that she was once the patron saint of sailors.

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In contrast to Farmer, De Sola Chervin focuses on 200 traditional and non-traditional female saints and martyrs. De Sola Chervin is a convert to Catholicism and she describes her purpose in writing a book devoted entirely to women saints as being to help those women who ‘are undergoing identity crises about their role in the church and society.’

Maintaining the dictionary format, Treasury of Women Saints expands the abbreviated configuration by including with each biographical sketch two forms of spiritual guidance; ‘For Your Life’ and ‘Prayer – Meditation’.

These additions encourage the reader to consider the acts and intentions of the saints as being worthy examples to follow.

Apart from a traditional alphabetical index, DeSola Chervin has developed an index of categories similar to that used by Joanna Carroll Cruz in her book Secular Saints. These classifications guide the reader to the different forms of self sacrifice endured by the individual saint or martyr, including ‘Young Saints’, ‘Motherly Saints’, those who suffered ‘Abusive or Unfaithful Husbands’, were ‘Battered by Relatives or Others’, suffered ‘Demonic Temptations’, were ‘Subject to Extreme Sexual Temptation’ and had ‘In-Law Problems’.

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After choosing the category of ‘anguish’ the reader is then encouraged to reflect on the life of the saint and consider how the saint’s actions and intentions might be applied to their own lives.

*Butler’s Lives of the Saints* is regarded as the definitive reference book on the subject. Farmer describes it as being ‘useful to scholars of the present day’. The Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Basil Hume, has written the Forward, in which he quotes former editor Father Herbert Thurston as saying ‘this book is not intended for scholars’. Whoever it is written for, my own experience with the book, not withstanding this is an edited version of a series of four volumes, is that it was next to useless to me, mainly because the saints I was focusing on in my research were missing.

*Butler’s* might be short on my favourite saints, but it does contain an over abundance of founders of religious orders (44), abbots’ (42), bishops’ (74), archbishops’ (34) and popes’ (11). Out of the 361 individual saints listed in the biographical section of *Butler’s* 205 are directly associated with the church. The other 156 are saints, virgins or martyrs.

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Butler's differs from the others in that a selection of saints are presented in a yearly calendar, set out in the order of their feast days, the anniversary of their death. Alexander of Alexandria and Cyril of Alexandria have replaced Catherine. She might be missing from the main body of the book but 'A List of Patron Saints' at the back of the book includes Catherine of Alexandria as the patron saint of Maidens, Preachers and Philosophers.

The Oxford Dictionary of Saints and Martyrs, Treasury of Women Saints and Butler's are all paperback editions, Hallam's Saints, Over 150 Patron Saints for Today\(^{10}\), with its hard cover and beautifully illustrated slip cover is definitely a 'coffee table' book. While the others seem to be intended as reference books, the flyleaf of Saints suggests it would be 'The perfect gift book'. Hallam has listed her saints in order of their patronage, apart from the usual biographical information each story is accompanied by a variety of illustrations. Catherine of Alexandria is classified as the patron saint of 'Millers'. A brief account of her legend, which includes information that she was 'suppressed in 1969'\(^{11}\), is illustrated with two black and white wood engravings, three paintings and a wooden sculpture. In spite of her suppression, Hallam includes Catherine in the 'Calendar of Feast Days'. Catherine of Alexandria may

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have been removed from the church’s official list of saints but her legend lives on.

_Saints Preserve Us_\(^{12}\) includes snippets of folklore about each saint. Catherine of Alexandria is described as ‘One of the most popular saints in Christendom’\(^{13}\). Because her feast day (25 November) fell just before Advent, and no weddings were allowed to take place during this time, women of the Middle Ages prayed:

‘A husband, Saint Catherine,

A good one, Saint Catherine,

A handsome one, Saint Catherine-

And soon, Saint Catherine’\(^{14}\).

An accurate description of the book appears on the back cover, ‘Religiously Researched! Fanatically Comprehensive! Compulsively Cross-Indexed! Incredibly Credulous!’\(^{15}\).

_Magnificent Corpses, Searching Through Europe for St. Peter’s Head, St. Chiara’s Heart, St. Stephen’s Hand and Other Saints Relics_\(^{16}\) is written by a non-catholic who has a fascination with relics. Tales of saints are

\(^{12}\) Kelly, Sean and Rosemary Rogers _Saints Preserve Us_ (U. S. and Canada: Random House, 1993).

\(^{13}\) Kelly, Sean and Rosemary Rogers _Saints Preserve Us_ (U. S. and Canada: Random House, 1993) 53.

\(^{14}\) Kelly, Sean and Rosemary Rogers _Saints Preserve Us_ (U. S. and Canada: Random House, 1993) 54.

\(^{15}\) Kelly, Sean and Rosemary Rogers _Saints Preserve Us_ (U. S. and Canada: Random House, 1993) back cover.

\(^{16}\) Rufus, Annel Magnificent Corpses, Searching Through Europe for St. Peter’s Head, St. Chiara’s Heart, St. Stephen’s Hand and Other Saints Relics (New York: Marlowe and Company, 1999)
intertwined with everyday scenes and experiences. In describing her surroundings, Rufus weaves the stories of saints and martyrs under such headings as ‘A Kitchen Full of Angels’ (St. Zita) and ‘Until I am Nailed’ (St. Gemma Galgani).

A children’s book Saints for Young People for Everyday of the Year is set out in 2 volumes, January to June and July to December. Emphasis is placed more on the pious attitudes than on the acts of those saints listed; children are encouraged to consider them as ‘365 heavenly helpers’.

During this research I became quiet fond of some of these books and a number of saints, particularly Catherine of Alexandria. It was these attachments that drove me to search for more information. The more you learn the more you want to know. This book uses an abbreviated format to tell the stories of some of the saints

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17 Daughters of St. Paul Saints for Young People for Every Day of the Year (St. Paul Books and Media, 1993).


PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning the following pages. The best possible results have been obtained.
Constructing Identity Within Catholicism

Computer generated works by

Patricia Prociv

The day I saw this exhibition I was in a dreadful rush. I’d driven around Strathfield having left my road directory at home, phoning various people on my mobile who I thought could talk me through to Albert St and the ACU campus. Hassled and annoyed, I finally found the right place. As I raced across the university quadrangle, I spotted the Chapel and made a beeline, a quite unusual action for a resolute ex-Catholic. How could I hurtle my body and soul toward a church, the site of so much oppression? Only because of a context which involved viewing an exhibition by a postgraduate student that I knew had been and was grappling with the same issues of identity and loss that a Catholic socialisation brings. I had no idea what to expect, except that I was soon to learn that I had some pretty solid pre-conceived ideas of what an exhibition should look like. This was made only too clear as I ran breathless into the chapel. Nothing. Just a chapel. A woman was sitting in the back seat reading the paper. Great, I thought, some poor academic trying to get a minutes respite. A typical nun response rises within me “but does she have to read the paper in the chapel?” I turned away thinking I’d got the wrong chapel and even possibly the wrong university. I threw my hands up in frustration and turned back to ask this woman for help - even if she was reading the paper. Of course, it was Patricia, patiently waiting to talk to anyone wanting to see the exhibition. Thankfully, she wasn’t on her knees praying because then I really would just have given up and gone home.

By this time, my agitation at being late and getting just about everything wrong burst out when I said “Where’s the exhibition then Patricia”, who very calmly replied “Oh... here.” I looked closely. Still nothing special to see. Was Patricia enjoying this moment, or feeling desperate that it wasn’t visible to me? Slowly, she pointed out the cushions placed on the choir chairs at the back of the chapel. I hope I wasn’t sitting on one. Then she pointed out the framed texts hanging cleverly under the stations of the cross on the side walls. She pointed to the altar and the lectern: all points where her works were visible.

I began to see that the beauty of this exhibition lies in a form of multiple layering of symbols, image and text. It is staggeringly minimalist, but in such a way that it creates a subversiveness, yet avoids sacrilege: a very difficult boundary to first set up and second get right. If it is sacrilegious, one could just write it off. But on the thin edge: I was drawn into the logic of it all. The cushions, at once domestic objects associated with women’s work and comfort - yet not at all out of place in a church - had been printed with computer generated images that showed images of Mary and child alongside photographic images of Patricia’s daughter and her baby son. Some of the images of mother and son mimicked each other across the divide of time and art. Where Jesus is shown with arms outstretched in an iconic representation of the holy child, so Patricia’s baby grandson and art. Where Jesus is shown with arms outstretched and held closely by his mother. The effect of this was double: to expose the was smiling happily with arms outstretched, and held closely by his mother. The effect of this was double: to expose the relationship between Mary and Jesus as a constructed form of holiness; and to suggest that Mary and Jesus as mother and
child sacralise all mothers and all sons. In a really quiet, yet subversive way, the images brought into focus the fact that mothers cuddle and love their baby sons every day and that this is a moment of divinity. Lovely.

I moved on to look at the computer generated texts that hung in frames along the two side walls of the chapel. They consisted mostly of sections of text taken from one of the many quite recent books where women reflected on growing up Catholic in the 1950s and 60s, which could be considered one of the most successful socialisation projects in modern times. The text bites included potent insights: from Marina Warner on Catholic girls bearing upon their bodies and souls the ‘curse’ of Eve - forever sexualised and embodied, incapable of true divinity; to Germaine Greer’s great announcement that she is an atheist Catholic who doesn’t believe in God but remains fervently Catholic. Beautiful. Just about wraps up Catholicism as a modern culture, where one doesn’t necessarily need to believe in the symbols and texts to feel that one still belongs. Its imprint is similar to the experience of nationhood: even if one leaves the shores forever, or rebels against the dominance of particular public values, your identity - and deepest sense of self - is inextricably bound up with your birth nation. The texts on the wall brought out the contradictions of self and the struggle for identity very clearly and again subtly. I was further struck by the fact that these text bites sat neatly underneath the stations of the cross. The effect of this for me was that again, the constructedness of Catholic ideology and architecture was cleverly revealed: and I thought to myself: who said churches had to have stations of the cross and how come there are 12 and not 20? The sections of Catholicism (ie the clerical hierarchies) which try so hard to deny the historicity of its practices by insisting on an ahistorical universalism, should be made to see this exhibition, just to remind them that these practices are largely cultural and constantly changing.

On the altar, that great symbolic monument of male sacrifice, Patricia had laid out in image and text, the dreadful fate of a group of women saints and what men did to them. Among them: Saint Agnes and Saint Theresa, the martyrs and heroines of my childhood, whose lives we were exhorted to follow are here laid out and martryered to a patriarchal church and society which refused to allow them autonomy and most of all, their own bodies. It was over women’s bodies that Catholicism fought its great battles against the sexual devils, and this is all too clear in the violent and dreadful deaths that these women faced. What was so powerful about the placement of these women on the altar was the boundary that was crossed. There were no sweet holy cards or scapulas here - only the broken, torn bodies of women. The altar is sacred only because Jesus dies and faithful. How should I read this? I’m not sure but what I find valuable in this is how much the exhibition opens up questions around belief, the value of faith, the site of the sacred, the meaning of motherhood, and most of all the struggle over
identity and soul. In the gesture of opening up possibilities, questions, multiple readings and meanings, Patricia has done what the formal church could not: point towards the possibility of multiple levels of subjectivity and hence inclusion of body, soul, experience, thought, emotion in a life of faith and the struggle for meaning.

The final piece was a beautifully crafted book on the lives of some of the women saints, placed upon the lectern. From the image and symbol of the altar we move to the articulation of text and voice: the word of god is spoken from this site. In this case, the word of god tells the tales of women’s torture and suffering, and in a strange way I found this very redemptive. Especially after the violence of the altar. It somehow moved the grief and anger to a possibility of change and hope: hope in the sense that women can tell the real stories of their oppression in the church and at the same time, pull out those elements and experiences that have sustained them: without complete loss in divinity and the sacred. Telling those true and real stories from the lectern in a church is a very radical but right place to do so. And brings with it a powerful sense of redemption, forgiveness and hope that one’s soul and self has indeed been nurtured and enlarged by the painful struggle for identity.

The minimalism of the exhibition is what remains with me. The artist consciously and cleverly playing with the theme of hidden histories, of bodies and souls, and even when they are visible, of how they are contextualised, and read. It is an exhibition of insight and of generosity in the way it offers multiple possibilities for identity and therefore Catholicism.

KATH McPHILLIPS
JUNE 2000
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning the following pages. The best possible results have been obtained.
Supporting images.
Saints and martyrs.
Additional works created during the development stage, not included in the exhibition.
Wood and collage 480 x 850mm 1999
Centre panel of unfinished work
wood and collage 315 x 560 1999

3 panel unfinished work, wood and collage 630 x 506mm 1999
Saints and martyrs.
'The Communion of Saints
St. Lucy, St. Agatha and St. Catherine of Alexandria'.
laminated paper, collage, thread and found objects.
Each figure 28 X 78cm. 1994.
'Mary Magdalene'.
Laminated paper, collage and found objects.
21 x 78cm. 1994.
'St. Therese as Woman'.
Laminated paper, collage and found objects.
Detail of figure 28 x 78cm. 1994.
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning the following pages. The best possible results have been obtained.
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**On-line reference material**

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**Works of Art**

Chicago, Judy *The Dinner Party* San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

Da Vinci, Leonardo *Virgin and Child with St. Anne and a Lamb*, c. 1508, oil on wood panel, Musee da Louvre, Paris.

--- *The Annunciation* Uffizi Gallery, Florence

--- *The Cartoon of the Virgin and Child with St. Anne and John the Baptist* c.1505 National Gallery, London.

--- *The Last Supper* fresco Santa Maria delle Grazi, Milan.


--- *Procession of the Dead* 1903, destroyed by fire in 1945.
Masaccio (Tomasso Di Giovanni Cassi, 1401 – 1408) and Massolino (Massolino Di Panicale, 1383 – 1440) Madonna e Sant Anna Metterza Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

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Glossary

*Australian Catholicism* – used to differentiate between European and Australian Catholicism.

*Body Clock* - clock face covered with phases of the moon, or images of the body.

*Cartoon* – drawing on paper used by artists and crafts people, to develop a design for a finished artwork.

*Chiaroscuro* - a pronounced contrast between light and dark areas, on a work of art.

*Collagraph* – image made from a plate that has had objects adhered to it. Ink is applied to the plate, before printing

*Computer generated prints* – prints that use external images that have been scanned into a computer. The images are then overlaid and manipulated in the computer.

*Holy Card* - card that has an image of a saint or martyr, and / or a prayer or dedication.

*Iron on transfer* – produced by printing on to a specially prepared surface, and ironed onto fabric.

*Laminating* – gluing two surfaces together.
Laminated paper – small pieces of wet paper that are glued while being pressed into a mould, usually plastic.

Laminated wooden sculpture – shaped pieces of wood, glued to form layers of detail.

Lino cut - an image that has been printed from a design carved from a piece of lino. Ink is applied to the plate, before printing.

Lithograph – print produced from a flat fine-grained metal plate, or block of limestone. The process relies on an oily surface of crayon, being repelled by water. Ink is applied to the plate, before printing.

Screenprint – an image that has been created as the result of ink being forced through a screen covered in fine mesh, where the non-printing areas have been blocked out.

Sculpture – a two or three-dimensional object, or image that has been produced through carving and / or laminating.

Woodcut – an image that has been printed from a design carved from a piece of wood. Ink is applied to the plate, before printing.